

# VP-40 Profiles the Anatomy of a Command History

By Wendy Leland

**Q: What does Patrol Squadron (VP) 40 have that almost 300 other Naval Aviation commands don't?**

**A: A complete, well-organized and informative command history that is now a permanent asset to the history of Naval Aviation. (Another plus: it was submitted in time for the 1 March deadline!)**

Submitting an annual command history to the Naval Aviation History Office in Washington, D.C., is more than just the official requirement as outlined in OPNAVINST 5750.12G—it's a chance to tell your command's story before it is forgotten. If your command is one of the hundreds that didn't submit a report at all or is one of the many that submitted just a cursory paragraph or two, read on to see what you are missing.

**Why should you bother submitting a command history? (It's such a pain!)**

It may seem like just another paperwork drill, but the impact of the report you submit will be felt for years to come, ensuring that the historical record recognizes your command's accomplishments and lessons learned. How else will people

know that you were established, renamed or reorganized; achieved a milestone or got that Battle E or Safety S; received or lost aircraft; or deployed? The words you write today can be the basis of future analyses of not just your command, but Naval Aviation as a whole.

**Why is a report required for each year?**

Researchers rely on the Naval Aviation History Office as the primary source for official records. Imagine someone writing a book about Naval Aviation a few years from now, then visualize a big, gaping hole where your command should be because no one submitted a history for a given year or more. Right now it might not seem like a big deal to skip a year, but as time goes on the damage done by that gap in recordkeeping becomes irreparable.

**How do you get started?**

You probably already have the basis for a command history in your records, all you'll need to do is organize the information. For example, VP-40's 1999 report expanded upon data the squadron already had at hand for a Battle E citation.

**What makes a good history?**

In a word, *information*. Any significant event that happened in your command during a calendar year is fair game. The second watchword, however, is *succinct*. Do the annals of history need to show

what your command served at the annual cookout? Nope. Should the official record reflect that a squadron deployed here, there and everywhere; had a change of command; or named a Sailor of the Year? You bet!

Describe important events throughout the calendar year in as much detail as necessary, including names, dates and places. But remember, this isn't just a chest-thumping, feel-good press release. To be the most complete—and the most helpful for future researchers—include the good, the bad and the ugly.

The following page illustrates a format that makes a command history both easy to write and read.

**How do you submit your command history?**

Before sending your history, make sure that classified items are marked appropriately. But don't get overzealous—mark *only* the classified material.

Refer to the complete instruction and in-depth guidelines available at [www.history.navy.mil/nhc10.htm](http://www.history.navy.mil/nhc10.htm) to ensure that your history meets the requirements. You may also call 202-433-4355 if you have questions.

Mail your submission (including a copy of the report on disk in MS Word format) to the Naval Aviation History Office, 1231 10th Street SE, Suite 1000, Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5059.

Show that you are as proud of your command's accomplishments as the *Fighting Marlins* of VP-40 are of theirs. Provide a command history so that your story can last for posterity.

## Command Organization

Provide a brief description of your command. Include identifying information, such as the command's full name, abbreviated name and nickname, location, mission, command structure, commander's name, and aircraft or other assets, if applicable.

## Chronology


List significant events and specific dates, if known, organized by month.

## Narrative

Doesn't this just repeat the chronology? No. This is where you can expand upon your command's accomplishments in a more descriptive fashion, and include other less tangible events. Keep in mind, though, that it's not a story for a magazine, it's a historical record. In the infamous words of Joe Friday, "Just the facts, ma'am."

## Supporting Documents

Here, you can include just about anything that expands on the information contained in the history, or helps tell the story. This includes, but is not limited to, copies of certificates, letters, biographies of commanding officers, lists of aircraft and operational summaries or statistics.

Photographs are extremely useful additions to a command history. But photographs are useless without captions! Attach a full caption directly to each photo or illustration, listing the complete date (including the year), describing the event or item depicted and fully identifying as many people as possible. 

## 1999 Patrol Squadron FORTY Command History

### I. Command Composition and Organization

- The Command's short title is VP-40. Its Unit Identification Code is 09674.
- VP-40 is a maritime patrol squadron, with missions of underway warfare, anti-surface warfare, reconnaissance, search and rescue, and counter-drug interdiction.
- VP-40 is under the direct command of Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing TEN, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Washington.
- VP-40 is commanded by Carlos M. Chavez, Commander, USN (see Encl. (2)).
- VP-40 is based at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Washington.
- VP-40 employs 9 Lockheed P-3C Update III Orion aircraft, tail code QE.

### II. Chronology

- January:**
- Deployed to Misawa and Kadana, Japan from 1-31 January.
  - Combat Air Crews (CACs) 2, 4 to Masirah, Oman for DESERT FOX 1-31 January.
  - CAC 7 to Utapao, Thailand for Boxer ARG Support 11-14 January.
  - CAC 9 to Utapao, Thailand for Thai SEASURVEX 18-23 January.
  - Participated in high altitude ROCKEYE development.
  - Received 1998 Arnold J. Isbell Award for ASW Excellence.
- February:**
- Deployed to Misawa and Kadana, Japan 01-28 February.
  - CACs 2, 4, 7, 8 to Masirah, Oman for DESERT FOX 1-28 February.
  - CAC 3 to Utapao, Thailand 15-17 February.
  - Flew in support of SHAREM-127 21-28 February.
  - Change of Command, CDR Chavez assumes command February 22.
  - CAC 12 Medevac U.S. citizen from Chuuk, Micronesia to Guam.
- March:**
- Deployed to Misawa and Kadana, Japan; Detachments to Masirah, Oman and Diego Garcia 1-31 March.
  - Participated in TANDEM THRUST 99.
  - Conducted AGM 65 strikes during TANDEM THRUST 99.
  - AIP integrated into OPLAN 5027.
- April:**
- Deployed to Misawa and Kadana, Japan 1-31 April.
  - CACs 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 12 participated in TANDEM THRUST 99 from 1-3 April.
- December:**
- to PDM, modifications, and...
  - Winner of 1999 VP Battle Efficiency Award.

### III. Narrative

During 1999 Patrol Squadron FORTY successfully operated both abroad and at home. From December 1998 to June 1999 VP-40 was deployed to the Western Pacific and Arabian Gulf in support of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Fleets under the operational control of CT and Arabi... Kadana, Japan; Masirah, Oman; Utapao and Phuket, Thailand; Diego Garcia, BIOT; and Guam. The highlights of the deployment included participation in operations TANDEM...