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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
FIGHTER SQUADRON FOURTEEN
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From: Commanding Officer, Fighter Squadron FOURTEEN
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH), Washington Navy Yard, Washington, DC
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SUBJ: COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) VF-14 1996 Command History
(2) Commanding Officer Biography
(3) Commanding Officer Picture
(4) Squadron Aircraft Picture

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (4) are forwarded.


J.W. Snedeker

FIGHTER SQUADRON FOURTEEN 1996 COMMAND HISTORY

1. Fighter Squadron FOURTEEN is an F-14A Tomcat squadron attached to Commander, Carrier Air Wing EIGHT. The mission of Fighter Squadron FOURTEEN is to intercept and destroy enemy aircraft in all weather conditions, establish and maintain local air superiority, and deliver ordnance on target, on time, first pass. Commander John W. Snedeker, Jr. is the Commanding Officer and Commander Luke R. Parent is the Executive Officer. The squadron is homeported at Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia.

2. The following is a chronology of significant events during 1996:

01 JAN	VF-14 joins CVW-8, NAS Oceana, VA
20 JAN-03 FEB	Desert Rescue V, NAS Fallon, NV & Royal Canadian Air Force DACT
01 MAR-02 APR	Orange Air, USS JOHN C STENNIS (CVN 74)
08 APR-26 APR	Air-to-Air SFARP, NAS Oceana, VA
18 MAY-25 MAY	Air-to-Ground SFARP, NAF El Centro, CA
17 JUN-26 JUL	NORLANT, USS JOHN F KENNEDY (CV 67)
12 AUG	VF-14 becomes NVD capable
01 SEP-13 SEP	TSTA I/II, USS JOHN F KENNEDY (CV 67)
23 SEP	VF-14 receives first LANTIRN pod
01 OCT-04 OCT	FAC(A) Detachment, NAS Fallon, NV
04 OCT-25 OCT	CVW-8 Weapons Detachment, NAS Fallon, NV
04 NOV-13 NOV	TSTA III, USS JOHN F KENNEDY (CV 67)
14 NOV-22 NOV	NVD Training Detachment, NAS Roosevelt Roads, PR
14 NOV-13 DEC	COMPTUEX, USS JOHN F KENNEDY (CV 67)

3. Fighter Squadron FOURTEEN spent 1996 detached around the United States in support of several major exercises, as well as conducting intensive unit-level training and participating in CVW-8 work-ups.

January marked an important milestone in TOPHATTER history when they became a part of Carrier Air Wing EIGHT. The TOPHATTERS then traveled to NAS Fallon, Nevada for two weeks participating in Desert Rescue V, a joint Combat Search and Rescue exercise, and for Dissimilar Air Combat Training with the Royal Canadian Air Force.

The TOPHATTERS deployed onboard USS JOHN C STENNIS (CVN 74) for its shakedown cruise during the month of March. During this time, CVW-8 acted as Orange Air against the USS ENTERPRISE (CVN 65) battle group. It was the first at-sea period for the TOPHATTERS since 1993.

In a ceremony held at NAS Oceana on the 12th of April, the reins of the squadron were passed. Commander Emmitt D. Dickens, Jr. was relieved by Commander John W. Snedeker, Jr. Commander Dickens reported to NAS Patuxent River, MD, as Chief Test Pilot, of the Strike Aircraft Test Squadron. Commander Luke R. Parent reported as the Executive Officer.

The TOPHATTERS spent May undergoing intensive air-to-air and air-to-ground training during the Strike Fighter Advanced Readiness Program (SFARP). Many hours of lectures coupled with extensive flying in the warning areas of the VACAPES Operating Area and the desert terrain of El Centro, California honed their combat skills.

During the summer of 1996, the USS JOHN F KENNEDY (CV 67), along with Carrier Air Wing EIGHT, deployed to the North Atlantic (NORLANT) and visited the Irish port of Dublin on the Fourth of July, marking the first time since WWII an American carrier visited Ireland. Fighter Squadron FOURTEEN helped host over 10,000 Irish guests onboard the JFK. After another port visit to Portsmouth, England, the USS JOHN F KENNEDY (CV 67) and Carrier Air Wing EIGHT made the journey home after an extremely successful goodwill visit.

The TOPHATTERS received their first set of Night Vision Devices (NVD) in early August and their first LANTIRN pod in September. Several squadron aircrew went through training to be instructors for those systems while most of the squadron was onboard the USS JOHN F KENNEDY for TSTA I/II during the first two weeks of September.

October brought Fighting FOURTEEN together again with the rest of Carrier Air Wing EIGHT for integrated strike training during the CVW-8 Weapons Detachment to NAS Fallon, NV. VF-14 successfully participated in a variety of air-to-air and air-to-ground missions. Also, the TOPHATTERS became the first Tomcat squadron to employ and validate the LANTIRN pod as the primary air wing strike asset during major strike missions. Several TOPHATTER aircrew served as Airwing Strike Leads throughout the detachment.

November and December were very busy months for VF-14. The TOPHATTERS returned to the JFK for the rigors of TSTA III and COMPTUEX. Additionally, the squadron established a detachment at NAS Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico to continue NVD training. Fighting FOURTEEN, together with the rest of Carrier Air Wing EIGHT, performed spectacularly in all stages of COMPTUEX. The reward was a great Christmas break, knowing they had performed a job well done.

Always on the "cutting edge" of Air-to-Air and Air-to-Ground tactics and combat capability, in 1996 the TOPHATTERS fired 11 AIM-54 Phoenix, 4 AIM-7 Sparrow, and 5 AIM-9 Sidewinder missiles as well as delivering over 250,000 pounds of Air-to-Ground ordnance. Night Vision Device and LANTIRN technology, along with VF-14's FAC(A) capabilities, will prove to be an invaluable asset in carrying out our missions.

Justifiably proud of their lineage dating back to 1919, the Fighting FOURTEEN TOPHATTERS proudly uphold their heritage as the “Oldest and Boldest” Fighter Squadron in the United States Navy. Our motto: “Missiles in enemy cockpits, and bombs on target, on time, first pass.”