

OPNAV Report Symbol 5750-1  
Command Serial Number:  
Date Submitted:

Classification (when filled in): UNCLASSIFIED

## Command Operations Report

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This report is **required** by commands listed in **SNDL Parts 1 & 2** and all operational **Task Forces, Groups and Units** temporarily established to meet operational requirements.

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The report format is divided into six sections: Command Data, Commander's Assessment, Chronology and Narrative, Supporting Reports, Published Documents, and Photographs. Required information is identified in specific sections of the form. See instructions appendices for assistance in compiling and on submitting this form and any attachments.

Electronic documents should be in a Microsoft Office format (Word, Excel, Power Point, or Access), HTML, PDF, JPG, GIF or plain text. Documents in electronic format are to be submitted via e-mail or on CD-ROM as explained at the end of this form. It is unnecessary to convert non-electronic documents to electronic format. List any enclosures that are not electronic and submit in hardcopy in the same manner as a CD-ROM. Photographs submitted electronically should be in JPG, TIFF or GIF format.

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### 1. Command Data

**Name of your Command or Organization:** STRKFITRON 14 TOPHATTERS

**Unit Identification Code (UIC), per the SNDL:** 09084

**Name and Rank of Commander/Commanding Officer/Officer in Charge:**

**Last:** Locke **First:** Tommy **M.I.:** F **Rank:** CDR

**Date Assumed Command:** 2013-12-12

**Mission/Command Employment/Area of Operations:** Strike Fighter Squadron FOURTEEN, as a part of U.S. Naval Aviation, utilizes the F/A-18E Super Hornet aircraft to project power ashore and at sea, to defend the Fleet against air and sea threats and to carry out all other missions which may be assigned by cognizant authority.

**Permanent Location (Home Port for deployable units):** NAS Lemoore, CA

**Immediate Superior In Command:**

**Operational:** Commander, Carrier Air Wing NINE

**Administrative:** Commander, Strike Fighter Wing Pacific

**Identify your assigned Task Force/Group/Unit name(s) and mission(s). Include OPLAN(s) and or named operations you participated in during Task Force assignment (if applicable):**

Not Applicable

**Type and number of Aircraft Assigned and Tail Codes:**

Twelve FA-18E Super Hornets, Tail Code NG:

<b>Modex</b>	<b>Buno</b>
200	166434
201	166435
202	166428
203	166433
205	166431
207	166429
210	166446
212	166425
213	166420
214	166422
215	166424
216	166439

**Flight Hours Conducted:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Night</b>
Jan	281.7	216.9	64.8
Feb	290.0	261.8	28.2
Mar	323.2	316.1	7.1
Apr	337.8	307.5	30.3
May	331.3	286.9	44.4
June	209.2	179.8	29.4
July	328.0	271.4	56.6
Aug	289.7	236.4	53.3
Sept	239.9	209.3	30.6
Oct	310.2	270.9	39.3
Nov	337.3	333.1	4.2
Dec	169.5	136.1	33.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>3447.8</b>	<b>3026.2</b>	<b>421.6</b>

**Ordnance Expended:**

<b>Ordnance</b>	<b># Expended</b>	<b>Weight (lbs)</b>
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20MM HEI	1143	2034
20MM (PGU-27B)	8333	14831
BDU-48	12	120
MK-76	1012	25300
LGTR	88	7832
BDU-45	20	10900
MK-83 (INERT)	20	18500
MK-83	12	11100
MK-83 (JDAM)	4	3700
BLU-111	23	12535
AIM-7M	2	
AIM-9M	2	
AIM-9X	1	
<b>Total</b>		<b>106852</b>

**Number of Personnel Assigned:**

Officers:	20
Enlisted:	190
Civilian:	0

**Cost-Wise Performance and Efficiency:**

Aircraft Material Readiness:	95.6%
Schedule Performance Matrix:	1

**Performance Readiness:**

**Operational Achievements:**

Squadron Landing Grades (Index):	1.03
Squadron Boarding Rates (Day Index):	0.98
Squadron Boarding Rates (Night Index):	1.00
Total Embarked Hours:	111.6
Total Night Carrier Landings:	36

**Training and Readiness:**

Non-FRTP Exercise/Detachment Participation:	99.5%
Weapons Training Efficiency:	95%
Simulator Utilization:	75.1%
SFWT Progress:	100%

**Inspections:**

NATOPS Unit Evaluation:	100%
CWTPI:	100%

**Material Readiness:**

Aviation Maintenance Inspection (AMI):	88.6%
Qualified Proficient Technician (QPT) Fit:	92.33%

**Personnel Readiness:**

Retention Rate as a Percentage of Zones A/B/C:	47.1%
Advancement Rate (E-4 – E-6):	24%
PNA Rate (E-4 – E-6):	74.6%
Physical Readiness Standard:	96.3%
Medical Readiness Score:	96.7%
Health Promotion Score:	100%

**Safety:**

Class Alpha Mishaps:	0
Class Bravo Mishaps:	0
FOD Occurrences:	1
Hazard Reports Submitted:	4
NAMDRP Reports Submitted:	30

**Command Point of Contact:**

**Name:** LT [REDACTED]  
**Job Title/Office Code:** Public Affairs Officer/Schedules Officer/Operations  
**E-mail:** [REDACTED]  
**Phone number(s):** [REDACTED]  
**Command Mailing Address:** NAS Lemoore, Hangar 2, Mod 4,  
NAS Lemoore, CA 93246

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**2. Commander's Assessment**

As the "Oldest and Boldest" squadron in the United States Navy, the Officers and Sailors of Strike Fighter Squadron FOURTEEN are honored to continue the tradition of excellence that began 95 years ago. Superb operational mission effectiveness and a flawless safety record while operating during the maintenance phase are testament to the cohesiveness, esprit-de-corps and professionalism of this command. The TOPHATTERS have proven themselves as leaders within the Strike Fighter Community and more importantly within Naval Aviation as a whole.

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**3. Chronology**

Jan – Mar: During the transition of Strike Fighter Squadron ONE NINE TWO (VFA-192) to the F/A-18E Super Hornet, the TOPHATTERS dedicated countless maintenance hours to developing the GOLDEN DRAGONS' knowledge and expertise in order to streamline their process. Additionally, VFA-14 provided aircraft to the

GOLDEN DRAGON pilots, allowing them to execute more than 120 sorties and nearly 200 flight hours during a time of extreme asset shortages in their command. This dedicated support allowed VFA-192 to maintain an acceptable and safe level of proficiency, while reinvigorated their Strike Fighter Weapons Tactics progression. The TOPHATTERS' investment in the flight line not only made for safer mission execution, but allowed fellow pilots to reach critical career milestones that would have otherwise been insurmountable.

- Jan 17-31: The TOPHATTERS participated in a Green Flag exercise at Nellis AFB, sharpening their Close Air Support skills in a joint operations environment and building and maintaining relationships with the U.S. Air Force, U.S Army, and U.S Marine Corps forces.
- Mar: Strike Fighter Squadron FOURTEEN won the Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet Battle Efficiency Award for 2013. The Battle "E" is one of the most coveted awards in Naval Aviation based on the overall performance of the Command. Evaluation categories include operational achievement, training, inspection results, material and personnel readiness, aviation safety, and tactical progression.
- Mar: The TOPHATTERS were privileged to have two of their pilots recognized for excellence within the Strike Fighter community. LCDR [REDACTED] received the LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MICHAEL HOFF ATTACK AVIATOR OF THE YEAR award for tactical ability and leadership amongst his peers, an award reserved for the most tactical Lieutenant Commander Strike Fighter Pilot on each coast. Additionally, LT [REDACTED] received the PRESIDENT GEORGE H. W. BUSH award, exemplifying the skills, leadership, and personal performance that embody the spirit of Naval Aviation.
- Mar 15-29: The TOPHATTERS along with two other Carrier Air Wing NINE (CVW-9) squadrons participated in a two-week detachment to Tyndall Air Force Base. The training was in support of the Navy Weapon System Evaluation Program (NWSEP). As the Navy element attached to the Air Force's 83rd Fighter Weapons Squadron, NWSEP allows fleet squadrons to employ live air-to-air missiles from fleet aircraft against various targets to verify weapon system performance, reliability, capability, and determine any deficiencies within the system. In addition, VFA-14 pilots practiced air-to-air gunnery on towed banners and executed daily joint large force missions integrating FA-18E/F with F-22, F-35, Kfir, Hawker Hunter, and A-10 aircraft. The TOPHATTERS employed two AIM-7M, two AIM-9M, one AIM-9X, and 4,000 rounds of 20MM during aerial gunnery training.
- Mar 30: Four TOPHATTERS aircraft had the privilege and honor of conducting a missing man flyover in Tyler, Tx for the memorial service of a World War II veteran Naval Aviator and NAVY CROSS recipient. CAPT Mercer Lee Jackson, Jr. (ret), who passed away on Feb 11, 2014, was decorated for his heroism as the pilot of a Torpedo Plane attached to the USS LEXINGTON in actions against enemy Japanese forces in the Philippine Sea on October 25, 1944.
- May 5-6: The TOPHATTERS took to the sea in support of the Deck Certification for the USS NIMITZ (CVN-68). VFA-14 pilots refreshed the valuable skills required to operate aboard an aircraft carrier, successfully completing day and night carrier qualification and accumulating 32 traps. The TOPHATTERS received a special

- thank you from the Commanding Officer, CVN-68 and Commander, Carrier Air Wing ELEVEN for their role in the successful Deck Certification.
- May 9: VFA-14 played a vital role in the successful Joint Chiefs of Staff Ground to Air Situational Awareness Operational Assessment Project, Holloman Air Force Base (AFB). As the only F/A-18 squadron to participate in this critical emerging capability enhancing Joint survivability, VFA-14 received laudatory commits by the project directors for our efforts and effective integration.
- June 3-5: The squadron honed their Close Air Support (CAS) skills working with the Marine 1<sup>st</sup> Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO) in Operation Thunderstruck. During the weeklong training exercise, VFA-14 executed multiple urban CAS missions with the Marine Joint Terminal Air Controller (JTAC) trainees, fine tuning both GPS and laser guided weapon employment tactics. The exercise provided an opportunity to evaluate techniques and procedures used in the joint environment in order to be the most effective and lethal possible.
- June 9-13: The TOPHATTERS put their dogfighting, or Basic Fighter Maneuvering (BFM), skills to test and eagerly took on F-22 Raptors from the 422nd Test and Evaluation Squadron. Fighting Raptors provided the pilots a unique opportunity for Dissimilar Air Combat Training (DACT).
- June 25: VFA-14 competed in a BFM derby against the VFA-151 Vigilantes. The BFM derby helped build esprit de corps both within the squadron and the Air Wing.
- July 18-Aug 1: The squadron integrated with the rest of Carrier Air Wing NINE in Large Force Exercises (LFEs) while on detachment in Fallon, NV. The TOPHATTERS participated in 25-plane simulated strikes, delivering over 29,000 lbs of ordnance, and took full advantage of the Fallon ranges to complete several unit level training events.
- Aug 28-29: The TOPHATTERS spearheaded a 24 hour Endurance Air Defense Exercise (ADEX) with Carrier Air Wing NINE (CVW-9), Carrier Air Wing ELEVEN (CVW-11), Air Test and Evaluation Squadron THREE ZERO, and the USS MOBILE BAY (CG-53). The mission required CVW-9 to provide sanctuary over CG-53 for 24 hours, simulating a United States naval vessel being disabled near a threat nation. SHOGUN fighters were overhead the ship for the duration of the exercise with VFA-14 flying over 35 flight hours. The TOPHATTERS excelled during this arduous test of endurance and tactics and provided a pivotal role in the overall success of the operation.
- Sept 10-12: VFA-14 continued to hone their carrier landing skills in September aboard the USS NIMITZ (CVN-68). During the two days of carrier qualifications, the TOPHATTERS logged a total of 65 day and night traps. The landings aboard the USS NIMITZ provided invaluable training for pilots and Landing Signal Officers (LSOs).
- Sept 19-21: VFA-14 took advantage of a unique opportunity to showcase naval aviation to the Navy Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) of the Iowa State University Cyclone Battalion in Ames, Iowa. The midshipmen were afforded the chance to tour two of VFA-14's FA-18E Super Hornets as well as interact with the pilots in a personal question and answer session. The opportunity was presented from the Naval Air Forces Sponsorship Program for NROTC, where fleet squadrons are paired up with NROTC units in order to answer questions that may arise from midshipmen and to be able to better promote aviation to incoming Officers prior to their respective service selection.

- Oct 24: The TOPHATTERS was hand selected to represent the Navy by performing the Game 3 flyover of the 2014 World Series where the Kansas City Royals took on the San Francisco Giants at AT&T Park. The Giants graciously provided tickets to the flyover pilots as well as a few additional ones for sailors that were picked by Command Master Chief Conduff for their hard work and dedication to the Command.
- Nov 4: VFA-14 gained valuable urban CAS experience while training with the Air Force 3d Air Support Operations Squadron (3 ASOS) JTACs. The squadron simulated delivering JDAMs and Laser Guided Bombs on JTAC assigned targets.
- Nov 5: The TOPHATTERS sponsored the Hanford Elementary School 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Graders as “Pilots for the Day.” The children toured the Water Survival building, VFA-14’s hangar and ready room, and the Air Traffic Control Tower.
- Nov 10-21: The TOPHATTERS and Carrier Air Wing NINE (CVW-9) traveled down to Key West for two grueling weeks of Air-to-Air SFARP training with the support of Strike Fighter Squadron TWO ZERO FOUR (VFA-204), Fighter Squadron Composite TWELVE (VFC-12) and Fighter Squadron Composite ONE ELEVEN (VFC-111). SFARP Key West utilized a building block learning structure, culminating in a 4 versus 10+ Air-to-Air engagement.
- Dec 5-14: With the USS JOHN C. STENNIS recently getting out of dry dock, VFA-14 played a crucial role participating in the ship’s Flight Deck Certification. The squadron helped certify the Precision Approach Landing System (PALS), catapults, Carrier Air Traffic Control Center (CATCC) as well as be available for the flight deck crew to gain their certification of taxiing, launching, and landing aircraft safely. VFA-14 safely logged 39 day and night traps during the week long underway.
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#### **4. Supporting Reports (Refer to specific guide for Ship/Shore/Aviation or Fleet Command)**

Joint Chiefs of Staff Ground to Air Situational Awareness Operational Assessment Project  
Pacific Fleet, Retention Excellent Award

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#### **5. Published Documents**

1. *Camelot - Up and Ready for 2014*, LT Lachenmaier. Published in Spring '14 Tailhook magazine.
  2. *TOPHATTERS Awarded 2013 Battle "E"*, LT Lachenmaier. Published in NAS Lemoore Newspaper, 13 March 2014.
  3. *Always Ready*, LT Lachenmaier. Published in NAS Lemoore Newspaper, 15 April 2014.
  4. *Always Ready*, LT Lachenmaier. Published in Summer '14 Tailhook magazine.
  5. *Always Tactical, Always Ready*, LT Henderson. Published in Fall '14 Tailhook magazine.
  6. *Preparing for the Future*, LT Henderson. Published in Winter '14 Tailhook magazine.
  7. <https://www.facebook.com/VFA14Tophatters>
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#### **6. Photographs**

1. Commanding Officer: CDR Tommy "GIMP" Locke
  2. Executive Officer: CDR Corey "Humble" Pritchard
  3. Dec 2014 VFA-14 Command Photo
  4. Dec 2014 VFA-14 CO/XO/CMC
  5. Dec 2014 VFA-14 Officers
  6. Dec 2014 VFA-14 Chief's Mess
  7. Dec 2014 VFA-14 First Class Petty Officers
  8. Dec 2014 VFA-14 Shooters
  9. Dec 2014 VFA-14 Line Shack
  10. Dec 2014 VFA-14 Operations Dept
  11. Dec 2014 VFA-14 Maintenance Dept
  12. Dec 2014 VFA-14 AO Shop
  13. Dec 2014 VFA-14 AE Shop
  14. Dec 2014 VFA-14 AT Shop
  15. Dec 2014 VFA-14 PR Shop
  16. Dec 2014 VFA-14 Powerplants Shop
  17. Dec 2014 VFA-14 AME Shop
  18. Dec 2014 VFA-14 Airframe Shop
  19. Dec 2014 VFA-14 Supply Shop
  20. Dec 2014 VFA-14 AZ's
  21. Dec 2014 VFA-14 Quality Assurance
  22. Dec 2014 VFA-14 Maintenance Training
  23. World Series Game 3 Flyover
  24. Missing Man Flyover
  25. AIM-9X Shoot
  26. A/C 200 on Touchdown
  27. A/C 207 Trap on CVN 70
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