

OPNAV Report Symbol 5750-1
Command Serial Number:

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Classification (when filled in): Unclassified

Command Operations Report

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.

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.

1. Command Data (Boxes will expand as information is typed)

Name of your Command or Organization: Strike Fighter Squadron FOURTEEN

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

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

Last: Emme **First:** Brian **M.I.:** C **Rank:** CDR

Date Assumed Command (date format YYYY-MM-DD): 2016-05-19

Mission/Command Employment/Area of Operations:

We are a professional maritime-based warfighting unit who will, on order, project power, presence, and our platform's full capability to dictate the speed of war against our enemy. We train to take the fight to our nation's foes and dominate through employment of superior tactics and lethal precision from fully mission capable F/A-18E Super Hornets.

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):

N/A

Name(s) of Forces, Commands, Ships, Squadrons or Units assigned or under your operational control (if applicable):

N/A

Type and number of Aircraft Assigned and Tail Codes, if applicable:

From January 2016 until August 2016, 12 F/A-18E Super Hornets were assigned to VFA-14:

200-166434

201-166435

202-166428

203-166433

205-166431

207-166429

211-166436

212-166425

213-166420

214-166422

215-166424

216-166439

In August 2016 VFA-14 underwent an aircraft transition from Lot 26 F/A-18E Super Hornets, to Lot 35, 36, and 37 F/A-18E Super Hornets, the side numbers and bureau numbers of the newly assigned aircraft are listed below:

200-168927

201-168926

202-168905

203-168868

204-168865

210-168481

211-168482

212-168483

213-168484

214-168468

215-168469

216-168470

Commands, Detachments or Units deployed on board or stationed aboard as tenant activities (as applicable):

N/A

Number of Personnel Assigned:

Officers: 20

Enlisted: 187

Civilian: 0

Command Point of Contact (required entry, complete in full):

Name (Rank, First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name): LT [REDACTED]

Job Title/Office Code: Aircraft Division Officer, Public Affairs Officer

E-mail (both classified and unclassified, if available): [REDACTED]

Phone number(s): [REDACTED]

Command Mailing Address: NAS Lemoore, Hangar 2, Mod 4
NAS Lemoore, CA 93246

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 nearly a century ago. The TOPHATTERS excelled during a 12-month period of increased operational tempo in 2016. Their continued superior performance operating at sea led to the squadron receiving both the CVW-9 "Golden Wrench" and "Top Hook" awards for the WESTPAC deployment, and the pace did not slow after returning home. Fighting FOURTEEN leaned on the steady-fast work ethic of their award winning maintainers to accomplish an aircraft transition despite just arriving home from deployment. The TOPHATTERS continue to prove themselves as leaders within the Strike Fighter Community and more importantly within Naval Aviation as a whole.

3. Chronology

Jan 20th: Embarked on USS John C. Stennis (CVN-74) with Carrier Air Wing NINE (CVW-9)

Feb 9th-17th: Strike training at FDM range

Mar 11th-26th: Participated in Republic of Korea/United States joint exercise Foal Eagle

Apr 1st-Jun 6th: Normal CVN operations in the South China Sea

May 19th: Airborne Change of Command conducted

Jun 8th-19th: Strike training at ODJ range

Jun 28th-Aug 5th: Participated in Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) multinational joint exercise

Jul 20th: Aircraft transition began

Jul 31st: Awarded Golden Wrench, and overall Top Hook for the 2016 WESTPAC Deployment

Aug 8th: WESTPAC Deployment fly-off and homecoming flyover

Nov 14th-22nd: Red-Air Detachment to NAS North Island in support of CVW-2 COMPTUEX

Narrative

On January 20th, 2016, after completion of a normal workup cycle, VFA-14 embarked on USS John C. Stennis (CVN-74) as a part of Carrier Strike Group THREE (CSG-3) and Carrier Air Wing NINE (CVW-9) for a scheduled WESTPAC deployment. After CVW-9 finished carrier qualifications in the Southern California working areas, the ship turned west to begin the 2016 WESTPAC deployment.

As CSG-3 pressed west, the air wing had a chance to execute normal CVN flight operations in the vicinity of Hawaii while the surface ships participated in USWEX in early February. VFA-14 dropped light inert practice bombs on the small island range nicknamed "K-rock", and live ordnance on the PTA bombing range located on the big island of Hawaii in order to maintain strike proficiency.

The next opportunity for training came when the ship arrived off the coast of Guam in early February. VFA-14 once again had the opportunity to brush up their strike skills dropping light inert ordnance on the small island bombing range north of Guam called FDM.

After a brief port call in Guam, CSG-3 headed northwest towards the first island chain. From March 11th to 26th VFA-14 conducted operations in support of Foal Eagle, an annual joint exercise between the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the United States. In the cold waters of the Sea of Japan, CVW-9 flew joint missions with the ROK for two weeks. CSG-3 made another port call in Busan, South Korea for a few days, and then steamed south toward the South China Sea.

CVW-9 maintained routine Defensive Counter Air (DCA) patrols, Surface Search and Combat (SSC) patrols, as well as regular Unit Level Training (ULT) during their time in the South China Sea. CSG-3 garnered both national and international attention while operating in the Pacific Area of Responsibility (AOR). Partner and ally nations in the region welcomed our cooperation and support, and the CSG-3 team was visited by numerous foreign and domestic dignitaries; including the Chief of Naval Operations, Secretary of Defense from both the United States and the Philippines, and the Vice President of the United States.

On May 19th, while still in the South China Sea, VFA-14 held an airborne change of command to welcome their new Commanding Officer CDR Brian "Stickit" Emme. CDR Emme replaced CDR Corey Pritchard as the 86th Commanding Officer of VFA-14.

USS John C. Stennis started the long journey home in early June. After a brief delay near the ODJ bombing range near Okinawa, CSG-3 entered port in Pearl Harbor to participate in the biennial Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC). During RIMPAC, Fighting FOURTEEN worked with both aircraft and surface ships from the navies of 26 different nations, further improving the multi-national and joint capabilities of modern naval forces to respond and cooperate through a multitude of modern day Pacific challenges.

After the conclusion of RIMPAC, John C. Stennis turned east toward home. Fighting FOURTEEN welcomed their pilots back to Lemoore after being away from family and friends for seven months at a fly-in event on August 8th.

Over the course of the deployment VFA-14 flew 1779 sorties for 2930.2 hours, and qualified one strike lead, four division leads, and one section lead. The continued superior performance by the "TOPHATTERS" led to the squadron receiving both the CVW-9 "Golden Wrench" and "Top Hook" awards for deployment.

Waiting for the "TOPHATTERS" when they arrived home was a jet transition to high-lot Super Hornets as part of the Naval Aviation Enterprise's efforts to manage service life across the fleet. During the transition, the squadron leaned on the steady-fast work ethic of their award winning maintainers to get the job done despite just arriving home from deployment.

As the year came to a close, VFA-14 provided REDAIR support for CVW-2 during their COMPTUEX. Fighting FOURTEEN operated out of NAS North Island from November 14th-22nd.

In total, VFA-14 flew approximately 2700 sorties for 4200 hours in the calendar year of 2016.

4. Supporting Reports

2016 CVW-9 Golden Wrench Award
Overall TOP HOOK for 2016 WESTPAC Deployment

5. Published Documents

Preparing for Deployment, LT Justin Calabretta. Published in Spring '16 Tailhook Magazine
Welcome Home, LT Justin Calabretta. Published in Winter '16 Tailhook Magazine

6. Photographs

CD-ROM mailed separately:

1. VFA-14 Command Picture, taken on 4/17/2016 in the South China Sea
 - a. Commanding Officer: CDR Corey "Humble" Pritchard
 - b. Executive Officer: CDR Brian "Stickit" Emme
 - c. Senior Enlisted Advisor: ATCS ██████████
2. VFA-14 aircraft 203 crossing the ramp on a rainy day in the Sea of Japan
3. VFA-14 aircraft 202 snagging the 2-wire on a calm day in the South China Sea
4. VFA-14 aircraft 202 mid catapult stroke on a calm day in the South China Sea
5. VFA-14 aircraft 213 (configured as a tanker with external wing tanks and centerline aerial refueling store) takes the cat-3 shot in the South China Sea
6. VFA-14 aircraft 201 traveling down cat-2

7. VFA-14 Airborne Change of Command
 - a. Aircraft 200: CAPT Richard "Snap" Brophy (CVW-9)
 - b. Aircraft 201: CDR Corey "Humble" Pritchard (Outgoing C.O. VFA-14)
 - c. Aircraft 202: CDR Brian "Stickit" Emme (Incoming C.O. VFA-14)
 8. VFA-14 Airborne Change of Command
 9. VFA-14 Airborne Change of Command
 - a. TOPHATTER Sailors look on as CDR Emme leads a flyover of USS John C. Stennis
 10. VFA-14 Airborne Change of Command
 11. VFA-14 Airborne Change of Command
 12. CAPT Richard "Snap" Brophy shortly after making his 1000th career trap in VFA-14 aircraft 200
 13. VFA-14 aircraft 212 tail insignia
 14. VFA-14 aircraft 200 "CAG bird" tail paint
 15. VFA-14 aircraft 205 taxis to the catapult for the 2016 WESTPAC fly-off
 - a. An AAW-13 Data-link pod can be seen under the right wing
 16. VFA-14 aircraft 200 starts up in preparation for the 2016 WESTPAC fly-off
 17. VFA-14 aircraft 200 mid cat-stroke during the 2016 WESTPAC fly-off
 18. VFA-14 aircraft 200 takes flight towards home at the conclusion of the 2016 WESTPAC deployment
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