

DECLASSIFIED

BOMBING SQUADRON FOUR

(VB-4)

12 May 1945 - ^{December 1946}~~15 September 1945~~

UNITED STATES ATLANTIC FLEET
AIR FORCE
BOMBING SQUADRON FOUR

DECLASSIFIED

3 Fleet Post Office,
New York City, N. Y.
29 October 1943.

From: The Historical Officer, Bombing Squadron FOUR.
To: The Chief of Naval Operation, (History Unit, Op-33-J-6,
Office of Editorial Research).
Via: The Commanding Officer, Bombing Squadron FOUR.
The Commander, Carrier Air Group FOUR.
Subject: Squadron History, 12 May - 12 September 1945, Inclusive.
Reference: (a) Aviation circular Letter No. 77-44 of 25 July 1944.
Enclosure: (A) Squadron Insignia.

1. The following history of this squadron is submitted in compliance with reference (a). Records are not available which would make possible preparation of a history covering events prior to 12 May 1945, when the squadron was reformed.

2. On 12 May 1945, this squadron was reformed at FAS, Alameda, California, as a part of Carrier Air Group FOUR under Commander, Air Force, Pacific Fleet. Lt.(jg) Duncan H. McCauley, (A1), USNR, Sausalito, Calif., was designated Acting Commanding Officer. The squadron then consisted of 25 officers (all naval aviators) and 27 men.

3. On 6 June, Lt. Harold W. Calhoun, USN, Niagra Falls, N. Y., reported aboard as Acting Commanding Officer. On 12 August Lt. Calhoun was promoted to Lt. Comdr. and was designated Commanding Officer.

4. On 21 May, the squadron was transferred to MAAS, Watsonville, California, and on 22 May began the Combat Training Syllabus.

5. During the training period at Watsonville there was one accident: on 15 June, Lt. H. W. Calhoun made a successful emergency landing after his plane caught fire in mid-air. Lt. Calhoun was uninjured; his rear-seatman parachuted safely. The plane was destroyed by fire.

6. On 3 July this squadron was detached from the Pacific Fleet and transferred to the U. S. Atlantic Fleet under Commander Fleet Air, Quonset Point.

7. On 17 July, the squadron reported to FAS, Wildwood, New Jersey, where, on 19 July, it began the Fleet Air Quonset Combat Training Syllabus for CV Bombing Squadrons.

FU MTD 8. During the training period at Wildwood there were three (3) minor accidents, none resulting in injury to personnel.

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BOMBING SQUADRON FOUR

Subject: Squadron History, 12 May - 15 September 1945, Inclusive.

9. On 14 August the squadron was assigned 24 new SB2C-5's, replacing SB2C-4E's.

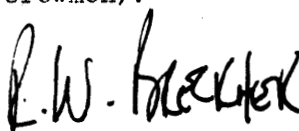
10. On 24 August 14 new officers and 9 new crewmen reported for duty raising the total aboard to 43 officers (40 in flying status) and 49 enlisted men (37 aircrewmen).

11. On 9 September VB-4 was transferred to the NAAS, Groton, Connecticut, where it joined the other squadrons of CAG-4 for final group training.

12. There was one accident during the period: on 13 September Ensign Thomas D. Murphy was fatally injured when his plane went into a spin, crashed and burned near Mansfield, Massachusetts.

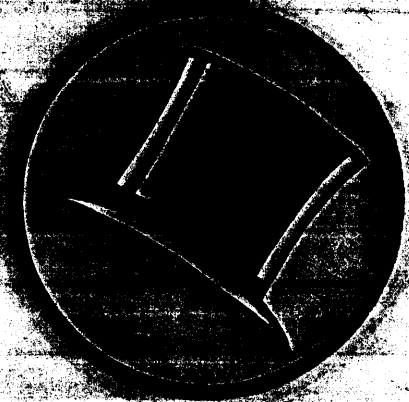
13. On 15 September the new authorized compliment was issued consisting of 29 pilots, 29 ARM's, and 6 groundcrewmen flying 24 SB2C-5's.

14. Aboard at the end of the period covered were 37 officers (34 in flying status) and 45 enlisted men (36 aircrewmen).



R. W. BRECKNER,
Lieut. USNR.

ENCLOSURE (A)



"TOP HAT"

VB 4

INSIGNIA

BOMBING SQUADRON FOUR
c/o F.P.O. New York, New York

JUL 19 1946 PM



OP-519
Z.R.P.

28 June, 1946

RECEIVED
NAVY DEPARTMENT
EXCS-Reading Section

A12-1/VB-4
Serial 0004

DECLASSIFIED

From: The Commanding Officer
To : The Chief of Naval Operations, Aviation History Unit,
OP-519B.
Via : Commander Air Force, Atlantic Fleet.
Subject: Historical Reports, Submission of.
Reference: (a) Manual for Historical Officers, Navaer 00-250-26
(b) Aviation Circular Ltr. No. 71-46 of 30 April 1946
Enclosure: (a) VB-4 History outline for the period 2 Sept. 1945
to 28 June 1946.

1. Enclosure (a) is submitted herewith in compliance
with references (a) and (b).

H. W. CALHOUN
LCDR USN

BOMBING SQUADRON FOUR
c/o Fleet Post Office
New York, N. Y.

I. CHRONOLOGY

- 2 Sept. 1945: Squadron based at N.A.S., Wildwood, N.J. as a unit of the Air Force, Atlantic Fleet undergoing preparations for embarkation in carrier of that fleet. Commanding Officer; LCDR Harold W. Calhoun, USN of Niagara Falls, New York.
- 9 Sept. 1945: Squadron moved to NAAS, Groton, Conn. joining entire Air Group.
- 17 Sept. 1945: Squadron evacuated to Schenectady, N.Y. following a Hurricane warning.
- 24-25 Sept. 1945: Carrier qualification landings conducted aboard the USS CROATAN.
- 5 Oct. 1945: Squadron participated in Nimitz Day parade over Washington, D.C..
- 22-26 Oct. 1945: Engaged in pre-Navy Day activities at Buffalo, N.Y.
- 27 Oct. 1945: Squadron flew in Navy Day parade over New York City.
- 18 Jan. 1946: Squadron moved to NAS Norfolk, Va.
- 4-8 Feb. 1946: Conducted carrier qualifications aboard USS GUADACANAL.
- 14 Feb. 1946: Embarked as a unit of Air Group Four aboard the USS TARAWA.
- 15 Feb. 1946: Departed Norfolk, Va. for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for shake-down cruise aboard the USS TARAWA.
- 2-5 April 1946: Conducted practice strikes on Culebra Island.
- 15 April 1946: Returned to Norfolk, Va. and disembarked with entire Air Group FOUR. Based at N.A.S., Norfolk, Va.
- 20 April 1946: Twenty-four new SB2C-5 aircraft equipped with ASG-10 toss-bombing gear assigned to Squadron.
- 27-29 April 1946: Participated in exhibition of carrier operations for the Secretary of the Navy's Civilian Advisory Committee in company with Air Group FOUR and the USS TARAWA.

- 19 May 1946: Participated in Air show over Washington, D.C., in connection with "I Am An American Day".
- 8 June 1946: Participated in air show over Pottstown, Pa., in connection with "Welcome Home" victory celebration.
- 28 June 1946: Embarked aboard the USS TARAWA (CV-40), and departed for duty with the Pacific Fleet from N.O.B. Norfolk, Va.

II NARRATIVE

Bombing Squadron FOUR, a component of Air Group FOUR, Air Force, Atlantic Fleet, was based at NAS Wildwood, New Jersey, on 3 Sept. 1945, and had been in commission since 12 May 1945. LTJG D.H. McCauley was appointed as acting skipper until 6 June 1945 when LT H.W. Calhoun was placed in Command (acting). On 20 July LT H.W. Calhoun was promoted to LCDR, and then designated as Commanding Officer on 13 August.

At this date (3 Sept. 1945) sixty percent of the flight training and seventy five percent of the ground program had been completed. There were thirty pilots, three ground officers (ACI, Personnel, Gunnery), thirty-six enlisted men and there were twenty-four SB2C-5 Aircraft assigned. Air work being conducted at this time consisted of rocket firing, glide, dive, and mast head bombing, strafing, navigation, instrument, section tactics, cross-countries, and day and night F.C.L.P. Ground school included link trainer flights, air sea rescue, navigation, code, blinker, ordnance, engines, and athletics.

On 9 September 1945, the Squadron moved to NAAS Groton, Conn., joining the entire air group, and resumed training program on 12

September 1945. Pilots were given refresher periods in FCLP, and on 24-25 September 1945, carrier qualification landings were conducted aboard the USS CROATAN.

On 17 September 1945, the squadron evacuated 24 aircraft to Schenectady, New York, Municipal Airport which had been designated a refuge field following a hurricane warning. All planes returned intact to NAS Groton, Conn. on 19 September 1945.

During October 1945, parade formations were practiced in preparation for a number of special group flights scheduled for the month.

The squadron flew in the Aerial parade over Washington, D.C. on 5 October 1945 in honor of Fleet Admiral C.W. Nimitz; engaged in pre-Navy Day activities at Buffalo, N.Y. from 22 to 26 October 1945; participated in the Navy Day air parade over New York City on 26 Oct. 1945; and on 29 October 1945 accompanied the Air Group in a Victory Bond Drive exhibition flight over several New England Cities.

Anticipating winter in New England with attendant danger and difficulties in carrying on flight operations, the squadron arranged a series of refresher instruction periods in aerology, instruments, survival, and care of engines in cold temperatures. During November and December limited flight and ground training was conducted because of bad weather and constant personnel change due to the demobilization program.

The squadron moved to NAS Norfolk, Va. on 18 January, 1946 where Commander Carrier Air Group FOUR reported to the Commanding Officer, USS TARAWA (CV-40). Flight operations at Norfolk

consisted primarily of FCLP in preparation for going aboard. New pilots were qualified on the USS GUADALCANAL. Ground training emphasized shipboard life and carrier operations.

Between 2 September 1945, and the date of embarkation on the USS TARAWA, Bombing Squadron FOUR released 28 officers (25 pilots and 3 ground officers) for demobilization and other Commands, and was assigned 20 pilots in exchange. Because of this constant turnover a great deal of the squadron's early work was nullified, and most of the final weeks of the shore based period had to be spent in such elementary training as familiarization, touch and go landings, IBP bombing, and formation tactics. The release of ground officers placed an additional administrative load on pilots. The demobilization program left many CASU's with inexperienced and insufficient personnel making close pilot supervision of aircraft maintenance and repair work mandatory in order to keep up desired standards of safety. The squadron was therefore inadequately trained in many phases of carrier operations at the time of embarkation.

On 15 February 1946, the TARAWA departed Norfolk, Va. for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba with VB-4 aboard. Carrier based air operations were started the next day, and were continued throughout the following six weeks embracing tactics, rocket firing, glide, dive, mast head bombing, navigation, strafing, radar hops, and coordinated attacks with the other squadrons of the air group.

From 2 April 1946 to 5 April, strikes were conducted on Culebra Island in the final phase of shakedown training. On 12 April one flight was made as part of the TARAWA's military inspection and

battle problem.

After returning to Norfolk on 15 April 1946, the next cruise was to New York City where on the 27 and 29 of April, operating with the Air Group from the TARAWA, VB-4 staged exhibitions of carrier operations for various high ranking Naval Officers and Civilian guests.

Throughout the shakedown and the carrier demonstration the squadron flew approximately 1200 hours and made 380 carrier landings. During this time one plane was lost due to a catapult failure, the pilot and aircrewman getting out uninjured.

During the later part of April, 13 new pilots reported aboard, replacing those getting discharged.

On 20 April 1946, 24 new SB2C-5 aircraft, equipped with ASG-10 toss bombing gear, were received from CASU 21.

During May and June 1946 the squadron concentrated on acquiring final touches of proficiency in all phases of carrier operations. It also took part in two air shows. On 19 May 1946 the squadron flew over Washington D.C. in connection with "I Am An American Day" festivities, and on 8 June 1946 it participated in an air show over Pottstown Pa. in connection with their "Home-Coming" celebration.

On 27 June, the squadron embarked aboard the USS TARAWA WITH 23 aircraft, 34 pilots, and 28 enlisted personnel.

Between 2 September and this date of embarkation, there had been approximately 120 % change over in officer personnel. Departure was made the next day from Norfolk, Va. for duty with the Pacific Fleet.

III APPENDICES

Biographical Sketch of Commanding Officer

Lieutenant Commander Harold W. Calhoun, USN, of Niagara Falls, New York became Commanding Officer of Bombing Squadron FOUR on 13 August 1945, after being acting commander since May 1945. At that time he had eight years of Naval experience, including completion of the Naval Academy course, two years of wartime destroyer duties in the Pacific, and two and one half years of varied duty involving flying.

He received a Congressional appointment to the Naval Academy and reported there in June 1937. Upon graduation in February 1941 as Ensign Calhoun, he was assigned to the destroyer USS GAMBLE, and on that ship participated in anti-sub patrols, mine laying, and convoy escort in war areas of the Pacific. He served on the GAMBLE as Communication Officer, and had been promoted to Lieutenant by the time he was detached in January 1943 to return to the United States for flight training.

Lieutenant Calhoun was designated Naval Aviator at Pensacola, Florida on 1 October 1943, and received operational training at Daytona Beach, Florida in bomber type aircraft. After three months as operational instructor at N.A.S. Daytona Beach, Florida, he was ordered to Bombing Squadron FIVE and assumed Flight officer duties. He was aboard the USS FRANKLIN when it was severely hit and damaged by enemy aircraft on her second cruise.

When Bombing Squadron FIVE reformed he became acting Comm-

anding Officer and remained in that capacity until ordered to Bombing Squadron FOUR in May, 1945. He was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Commander on 20 July 1945.

BOMBING SQUADRON FOUR
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, Calif.

DECLASSIFIED

1 October 1946

From: The Commanding Officer.
To: The Chief of Naval Operations, Aviation History Unit, OP-519B.
Subject: Historical Report, submission of.
Reference: 8 (a) Manual for Historical Officers, NavAer 00-250-26.
Enclosure: (a) VB-4 History outline for period 28 June 1946 to 28 September 1946.
1. Enclosure (a) is submitted herewith in compliance with references
(a) and (b).

H. W. Calhoun
H. W. CALHOUN LCDR USN
Commanding

cc: CNO(OP-519B)(Orig & 1)
CCDIWO
CO CV40
CAG-4
File

I. CHRONOLOGY

- 28 June 1946: Embarked aboard the USS TARAWA (CV40), and departed for duty with the Pacific Fleet from NOB, Norfolk, Virginia. Commanding Officer: LCDR H. W. Calhoun, USN of Niagara Falls, New York.
- 3 July 1946: USS TARAWA anchored at Colon, Canal Zone, Republic of Panama.
- 5 July 1946: USS TARAWA made transit of Panama Canal.
- 8 July 1946: USS TARAWA departed Balboa, Canal Zone for San Diego.
- 15 July 1946: USS TARAWA arrived at San Diego. Bombing Squadron Four flew ashore and became temporarily shore based at North Island, San Diego, California.
- 23 July 1946: Squadron aboard USS TARAWA for Pacific Fleet "Reporting In" Inspection by Rear Admiral McMahon, ComCarDivTWO.
- 1 August 1946: Squadron aboard USS TARAWA departed San Diego for Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
- 7 August 1946: USS TARAWA anchored at Pearl Harbor.
- 11 August 1946: USS TARAWA departed Pearl Harbor for Saipan, Marianas Group.
- 15 August 1946: Air Group Four aboard the USS TARAWA crossed the International Date Line.
- 21 August 1946: Bombing Squadron Four flew ashore to become temporarily shore based at NAB, Kobler Field, Saipan.
- 18 September 1946: Prebeglec, E. A., ACMMA, and Vasel, C. M., ARMAC1, awarded Presidential Unit Citations.
- 19 September 1946: Bombing Squadron Four again returned to the USS TARAWA to begin a cruise to Japan and China.
- 20 September 1946: USS TARAWA departed Saipan, going in a southerly direction to avoid a typhoon.
- 21 September 1946: USS TARAWA reversed course and announced Tokyo Bay as the next stop.
- 28 September 1946: USS TARAWA moored in Tokyo Bay near Yokosuka.

ENCLOSURE "A" TO BOMBING SQUADRON FOUR HISTORICAL REPORT

II. NARRATIVE

Bombing Squadron Four, a component of Air Group Four, Air Force, Atlantic Fleet, was aboard the USS TARAWA at NOB, Norfolk, Virginia, on 28 June 1946, and had been in commission since 12 May 1945. LCDR H. W. Calhoun was the Commanding Officer and LCDR G. E. Miller was the Executive Officer.

On this date (28 June 1946) the squadron was composed of thirty-three pilots and twenty-eight enlisted men; twenty-four new SB2C-5 aircraft were assigned to the squadron.

The USS TARAWA with Air Group Four aboard left Norfolk for San Diego via Panama Canal on 28 June 1946. The carrier and her destroyer escort arrived at Colon Canal Zone on 3 July and made the passage through the canal on 5 July. On 8 July 1946, the USS TARAWA left Balboa with San Diego as the immediate destination.

Bombing Squadron Four became a shore based squadron at North Island, San Diego, when it flew ashore on 15 July. An intensive training period was begun at this time with emphasis on dive, glide, and toss bombing and FCLP whenever possible.

On 23 July the squadron flew aboard the USS TARAWA for the Pacific Fleet Reporting In Inspection conducted by Rear Admiral McMahon, Commander Carrier Division TWO. Operations and inspection continued until 25 July when the squadron returned to North Island. The USS TARAWA and Air Group Four were accepted as part of the Pacific Fleet.

On the first of August planes were hoisted aboard and Bombing Squadron Four again became carrier based aboard the USS TARAWA bound for the Marianas Islands with Pearl Harbor as an intermediate stop.

The USS TARAWA moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on 7 August for a three day stop. On 11 August, departure was taken for Saipan the ultimate destination. The ship had a night-fighter squadron and a Marine detachment aboard for transit purposes so no operations could be conducted. On 15 August the USS TARAWA crossed the INTERNATIONAL Date Line thereby losing a day.

ENCLOSURE "A" TO BOMBING SQUADRON FOUR HISTORICAL REPORT

II. NARRATIVE (Cont'd)

Early on the morning of August 21, Bombing Squadron Four was launched to become temporarily shore based again, this time, at NAB, Kobler Field, Saipan. An intensive flying and training schedule was immediately set up which stressed dive-bombing, rocket fire, free and fixed gunnery, and strafing. LST's were available for targets once each week and sleeves or banners were always available as targets. FCLP training continued whenever possible, but a single strip which was often cross wind was not ideal for FCLP.

18 September, with due pomp and ceremony, CDR S. L. SILBER, Commander of Air Group Four, presented Prebeglec, E. A., ACMMA of Lonsdale, Rhode Island and Vasel, C. M., ARMACI of Lisbon Falls, Maine the Presidential Unit Citation for past duty with Air Group Four aboard the USS ESSEX.

Air Group Four became carrier based aboard the USS TARAWA on 19 September after preparations for a cruise to Japan and China had been completed. Operations schedule for the period 20 September to 27 September included several attacks, with and without live ammo, on spars and the ships of the Task Force which was carried out with routine precision.

On the morning of September 28 the USS TARAWA moored near Yokosuka in Tokyo Bay.

During the period 28 June to 28 September five pilots were detached from the squadron and two pilots joined the squadron. One pilot who had recently received his commission as USN received orders to attend school at UCLA, the other four received discharges. Five men of the crew were transferred, four to discharge centers and one to the USS TARAWA.

ATTACK SQUADRON ONE ABLE
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, Calif.

~~DECLASSIFIED~~

1 January 1947

From: The Commanding Officer.
To : The Chief of Naval Operations, Aviation History Unit,
OP-519B.
Subject: Historical Report, submission of.
References: (a) Manual for Historical Officers, NavAer 00-250-26.
Enclosure: (A) VB-4 History outline for period 28 September 1946 to
28 December 1946.

1. Enclosure (A) is submitted herewith in compliance with reference
(a).

H. W. Calhoun
H. W. CALHOUN LCDR USN
Commanding Officer

cc: CNO (OP-519B) (Orig & 1)
GGB2
CG CV40
GOVG-1
File

(18-4)

I CHRONOLOGY

- 28 September 1946: Aboard the U.S.S. TARAWA anchored in Tokyo Bay, Japan. Commanding Officer: LCDR H. W. CALHOUN, USN of Niagara Falls, New York.
- 4 October 1946: U.S.S. TARAWA departed Tokyo Bay, Japan for Sasebo, Japan.
- 7 October 1946: U.S.S. TARAWA arrived Sasebo, Japan.
- 11 October 1946: U.S.S. TARAWA departed Sasebo, Japan for Battle Problem to Tsingtao, China.
- 15 October 1946: U.S.S. TARAWA arrived Tsingtao, China.
- 31 October 1946: U.S.S. TARAWA departed Tsingtao, China for Battle Problem retiring to Saipan, Marianas, Islands.
- 7 November 1946: U.S.S. TARAWA arrived Saipan, Marianas Islands, Bombing Squadron Four flew ashore to become temporarily shore based at NAB Kobler Field, Saipan.
- 15 November 1946: Bombing Squadron Four redesignated Attack Squadron One Able.
- 13 December 1946: Attack Squadron One Able flew aboard U.S.S. TARAWA for strikes on Pagan Island.
- 19 December 1946: U.S.S. TARAWA arrived Saipan, Marianas Islands. Attack Squadron One Able flew ashore to become temporarily shore based at NAB, Kobler Field, Saipan.
- 28 December 1946: Attack Squadron One Able temporarily shore based at NAB, Kobler Field, Saipan.

II NARRATIVE

Bombing Squadron Four, a component of Air Group Four, Air Force, Pacific Fleet, was aboard the U.S.S. TARAWA anchored at Tokyo Bay, Japan, on 28 September 1946, and had been in commission since 12 May 1945. LCDR H. W. CALHOUN was the squadron's Commanding Officer and LCDR G. E. MILLER was the Executive Officer.

The U.S.S. TARAWA with Air Group Four aboard departed from Tokyo Bay, Japan for Sasebo, Japan, on 4 October 1946. Training hops were flown from the U.S.S. TARAWA during this time until arriving at Sasebo, Japan, on 7 October 1946.

After preparations for the Battle Problem to relieve a fictitious Marine Garrison at Tsingtao, China were completed, the U.S.S. TARAWA departed Sasebo, Japan, on 11 October 1946 for Tsingtao China. Many searches and strikes were flown against Task Force Seventy-One by Bombing Squadron Four before arriving at Tsingtao, China, on 15 October 1946.

The U.S.S. TARAWA departed Tsingtao, China, on 31 October 1946 on a Retirement Battle Problem with the immediate destination of Saipan, Marianas Islands. Strikes were flown against Task Force Seventy-One during retirement.

Bombing Squadron Four became temporarily shore based at NAB Kobler Field, Saipan when it flew ashore on 7 November 1946. An intensive flying and training schedule was set up which stressed dive-bombing, rocket-fire, free and fixed gunnery, strafing, type instruments, navigation, and qualifying new pilots.

During this time ashore Bombing Squadron Four shifted from the streamlined CASU system to the FASRON system of aircraft maintenance. The transition was smooth and successful as Bombing Squadron Four obtained most of the new personnel from the U.S.S. TARAWA.

On 15 November 1946 Bombing Squadron Four was redesignated Attack Squadron One Able.

During the training on Saipan, Attack Squadron One Able lost two aircraft due to engine failure. On 27 November 1946 Ensign T.G. McCLELLAN USNR of Layton, Pennsylvania had engine failure near Saipan and made a water landing. He was picked up by a crash boat from Tanapag and sustained no injuries. On 4 December 1946 LCDR H.W. CALHOUN USN, of Niagara Falls, New York and VASEL, C.M. ARMLE USN of Lisbon, Maine had complete engine failure on take off from the U.S.S. TARAWA during a carrier refresher hop and made a water landing. The pilot and radioman were picked up by the destroyer escort with no injuries to personnel.

On 13 December 1946 Attack Squadron One Able Flew aboard the U.S.S. TARAWA for a week's cruise. Strikes were flown against Pagan Island. Attack Squadron One Able again became temporarily shore based at NAB Kobler Field, Saipan when it flew ashore on 19 December 1946.

II NARRATIVE (Cont'd)

On 28 December 1946 Attack Squadron One Able was temporarily shore based on NAB Kessler Field, Saipan. The Squadron was composed of thirty-four pilots and ninety-two enlisted men. Twenty SB2C-5's and two SBW-5's were assigned to the Squadron.

During the period from 28 September 1946 to 28 December 1946 nine pilots were detached from the squadron and twelve new pilots joined the squadron. Seventeen enlisted men were transferred from the squadron and eighty-four enlisted men joined the squadron due to the change from the streamlined status to the PASRON system of aircraft maintenance.