



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
ATTACK SQUADRON FIFTEEN
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1972
VA-15

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From: Commanding Officer, Attack Squadron FIFTEEN
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)

Subj: OPNAV Report 5750-1 *History*

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12A

- Encl:
- (1) Brief chronology for 1972
 - (2) Narrative history for 1972
 - (3) Roster of officers and enlisted men
 - (4) Photographs of CDR F. A. LEES, Jr. and CDR R. C. McCLARY
 - (5) Biographies of CDR F. A. LEES, Jr. and CDR R. C. McCLARY
 - (6) Photograph of VA-15 aircraft

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (6) are submitted.

S. P. Brooks
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By direction

Copy to:
Director of Naval History (OP-09B9)

ATTACK SQUADRON FIFTEEN
Brief Chronology - 1972

March-----VA-15 participated in exercise MAGIC SWORD. CDR F. A. LEES, Jr. relieved CDR D. D. BROWN as Commanding Officer of Attack Squadron FIFTEEN.

April-----Two Valions cross decked to USS J. F. KENNEDY (CVA-67). Valion pilots flew search and simulated strikes in a PASSEX exercise with HMS LONDON. VA-15 provided ten aircraft for the flyover in OPERATION RIVETS. The Valions provided close air support in PHIBLEX 10-72 and then flew search/simulated strike missions in QUICKDRAW 3-72.

May-----The Valions flew over 350 hours of close air support missions during DAWN PATROL 72. More close air support was provided in PHIBLEX 12-72.

June-----VA-15 flew simulated low level strikes into Turkey during exercise SHABAZ. During the CRAE, VA-15 loaded and delivered over 150,000 pounds of ordnance on Avgo Nisi target. One VA-15 aircraft was shorebased 18-27 June to fly reconnaissance missions against an oil slick in the Ionian Sea.

July-----LT [REDACTED] [REDACTED] ejected safely from aircraft 311 (BUNO 154584). Valion pilots flew search and simulated strike missions in NATIONAL WEEK XIII. Two Valions participated in the NATO Bombing Derby - BEST HIT 72 - held at Larissa, Greece. Close air support missions were flown in support of Turkish forces during exercise GOOD FRIENDSHIP.

August-----The Valions participated in another QUICKDRAW exercise.

September--The Valions flew over 600 hours of search/surveillance/strike and close air support missions during exercise DEEP FURROW. Two Valion pilots cross decked to the USS J. F. KENNEDY (CVA-67) which was participating in exercise STRONG EXPRESS in the North Sea. September was the best flying month for VA-15 in their A-7 history with 794.5 hours logged during that month.

October----The Valions flew in the third QUICKDRAW exercise of the cruise.

November---VA-15 provided close air support during PHIBLEX 5-73 and flew search/simulated strikes in a CAWEX with the USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59). The last exercise of the cruise for VA-15 was NATIONAL WEEK XIV. While at anchor in Souda Bay, Crete, LTJG [REDACTED] launched on a cross country flight to Grosseto, Italy.

ENCLOSURE (1)

December---The Valions flew their A7B aircraft off the USS ROOSEVELT (CVA-42) and returned to NAS Cecil Field, Florida.

January---The squadron training cycle begins in earnest.

February---Training continues and VA-15 begins Field Mirror Landing Practice (FMLP) to prepare for carrier qualifications early in March.

SQUADRON HISTORY 1972

The USS ROOSEVELT departed the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Range on 27 February 1972 bound for the Bay of Biscay to participate in exercise MAGIC SWORD. Extremely inclement weather precluded all but five sorties for VA-15 during the exercise. The Valions flew 199 sorties, logged 309.7 hours and accumulated 131 traps in February.

The ROOSEVELT sailed southward on 8 March and arrived in Rota, Spain on 10 March for a one day visit. After leaving Rota, the ROOSEVELT inchooped to Sixth Fleet and conducted routine flight operations for four days. On 15 March, the ROOSEVELT anchored at Palma de Mallorca for a five day visit. The ROOSEVELT departed Palma on 20 March and operated until 25 March when she entered Naples, Italy. On 30 March, CDR F. A. LEES, Jr. relieved CDR D. D. BROWN as Commanding Officer of Attack Squadron FIFTEEN. During March, VA-15 logged 386.7 hours, 197 sorties and 192 traps.

The ROOSEVELT departed Naples 4 April and conducted crossdeck operations with the USS J. F. KENNEDY (CVA-67). The crossdecking enabled two Valion pilots to experience landing on a "big deck". On 5 and 6 April the ROOSEVELT participated in a PASSEX with HMS LONDON and the Valions flew search and simulated strike missions during the two day exercise. On 8 April, practice began for Operation RIVETS which took place on 10 April. Operation RIVETS honored Admiral Horacio RIVERO, Jr. and consisted of a formation of Sixth Fleet ships with a fly-over by the Air Wings of both carriers. During the practice fly-overs, VA-15 had eleven of their twelve aircraft airborne and during the actual fly-over, there were ten "Bluetails" in the formation of 16 aircraft.

The ROOSEVELT entered Cannes, France 11 April and sailed from there on 17 April. PHIBLEX 10-72 was conducted 17 and 18 April South of Sardinia and VA-15 pilots flew highly successful close air support missions during the two day exercise.

April 19 and 20 found the "Valions" flying search and simulated strike missions in QUICKDRAW 3-72.

The ROOSEVELT entered Barcelona, Spain on 21 April for a five day visit. The remainder of April was spent transiting to Athens, Greece. During April the Valions flew 655.9 hours, 335 sorties, and logged 331 traps.

The ROOSEVELT entered Athens on 2 May and departed there on 8 May to participate in DAWN PATROL 72. The "Valions" flew over 350 hours of close air support missions during

ENCLOSURE (2)

the 6 day amphibious exercise. May 15th was spent in transit to Corfu for a four day port call. The ROOSEVELT departed Corfu on 20 May and conducted routine operations northwest of Crete for four days. On 25 May the ROOSEVELT anchored in Souda Bay, Crete. After one day at Souda Bay, she sailed southward to participate in PHIBLEX 12-72 until 30 May. In May, the Valions flew 826.2 hours on 444 sorties. Only 401 arrested landings were recorded in May since 43 of the 444 sorties were landed based.

June began with a port visit to Rhodes, Greece. The ROOSEVELT sailed from Rhodes 6 June and exercise SHABAZ commenced on 7 June. Valion pilots gained invaluable experience in low level navigation during this exercise.

On June 11 and 12 the Combat Readiness Assessment Exercise (CRAE) was conducted and VA-15 loaded and delivered over 150,000 pounds of ordnance on Avgo Nisi target. The 13th and 14th of June was spent at anchor in Souda Bay. The ROOSEVELT conducted routine flight operations 15 to 21 June East of Crete and entered Athens, Greece on 22 June for a week visit. VA-15 kept one aircraft shorebased at Souda Bay 18-27 June to fly reconnaissance missions against an oil slick in the Ionian Sea. The squadron flew 553.7 hours, 286 sorties and made 274 arrested landings during June.

The ROOSEVELT sailed from Athens on 6 July and conducted routine training operations until 11 July when she entered Rhodes for her second visit. On 10 July, LT [REDACTED] [REDACTED] ejected safely from aircraft 311 (BUNO 154384) after having control problems off the catapult. Prior to this aircraft loss, VA-15 had accumulated 12,472 hours without an accident. The ROOSEVELT left Rhodes on 15 July and steamed westward to participate in NATIONAL WEEK XIII. Valion pilots flew search and surveillance missions against other Sixth Fleet units throughout the five day exercise. During this same time frame, BEST HIT 72 was being conducted at Larissa, Greece. Two Valion pilots, LCDR [REDACTED] and LT [REDACTED] were members of the U.S. team. The U.S. team placed second in the overall competition and LT LEHMAN was first in the rocket firing competition.

A post exercise debrief for NATIONAL WEEK XIII was held at Augusta Bay, Sicily 21 and 22 July and then the ROOSEVELT sailed East for exercise GOOD FRIENDSHIP. VA-15 flew close air support missions for an amphibious landing being conducted by Turkish forces during this exercise. Upon completion of GOOD FRIENDSHIP, the ROOSEVELT sailed to Athens for a short port call. VA-15 logged 574.6 hours, 331 sorties, and 273 traps in July.

The ROOSEVELT departed Athens on 4 August and after a short at-sea period which included another QUICKDRAW exercise, she anchored at Golf Juan, France for five days. The ROOSEVELT departed Golf Juan 14 August, operated for 6 days and anchored at Barcelona, Spain. She remained in Barcelona until 25 August and then went to sea until the 29th. The ROOSEVELT then returned to Barcelona until the 8th of September. VA-15 logged 544.1 hours, 302 sorties, and 420 arrested landings in August.

After leaving Barcelona, the ROOSEVELT sailed back to Athens for five days inport prior to commencing exercise DEEP FURROW. This was the longest exercise of the cruise, lasting from 17-29 September. DEEP FURROW was similar to DAWN PATROL in that the Naval forces of our NATO Allies combined into one coordinated fleet. VA-15 pilots flew over 600 hours on search/surveillance/strike and close air support missions during the exercise. On 25 September two Valion pilots - LCDR [REDACTED] and LT [REDACTED] - cross decked with the USS J. F. KENNEDY (CVA-67) which was operating in the North Sea some 1700 nautical miles away from the ROOSEVELT. The month of September proved to be the best flying month in VA-15 (A-7) history. The Valions logged 794.5 hours, 421 sorties, and 420 traps with all the hours being flown off the carrier.

The first days in October were spent in transit to Barcelona and the ROOSEVELT anchored there on 7 October for a two week inport period. Routine operations commenced again on 20 October and the third QUICKDRAW exercise of the cruise was held on the 28th. The remainder of October was spent inport at Naples, Italy. In October, the Valions logged 531.8 hours, 285 sorties, and 287 traps.

The ROOSEVELT departed Naples on 5 November and participated in PHIBLEX 5-73 on 7 and 8 November. A two day anchorage at Augusta Bay was followed by an at sea period from 13-19 November. On 13 November VA-15 flew search and simulated strikes against the USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59) in the only CAWEX of the cruise. The carriers then joined forces and participated in NATIONAL WEEK XIV from 14 through 18 November. This was the last exercise of the cruise for the ROOSEVELT. A two day anchorage in Souda Bay followed NATIONAL WEEK XIV. On 20 November, the Valions' junior pilot, LTJG [REDACTED], launched from anchor in Souda Bay, Crete, on a cross country flight to Grosseto, Italy for the Pilot-to-Pilot Program. After leaving Souda Bay, the ROOSEVELT sailed to Palma for her last port call in the Mediterranean. The ROOSEVELT left Palma on 28 November and after turnover in Rota, Spain on 30 November, outchopped from the Mediterranean. Valion pilots accumulated 513.5 hours, 244 sorties, and 231 arrested landings in November.

The first eleven days in December were spent in transit to Mayport, Florida. The Valions flew their twelve A7B aircraft off the ship on 7 December and returned to NAS Cecil Field. The remainder of December was devoted to a standdown period. 45.8 hours and 18 sorties were logged by VA-15 during December.

The standdown period continued until 10 January. The remainder of January was devoted to training. VA-15 logged 330.8 hours and 159 sorties during January.

The training continued through the month of February and the squadron began FMLP's during the last two weeks of February to prepare for carrier qualifications early in March.