



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
ATTACK SQUADRON FIFTEEN  
FPO NEW YORK, 09501

1978

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
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26 February 1979

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

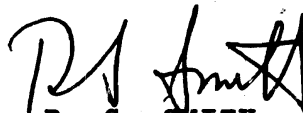
Subj: Command History (OPNAV Report Symbol 5750-1)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12B  
(b) ATKRON FIFTEEN INST 5750.12A

Encl: (1) ATKRON FIFTEEN Chronology of Events for 1978  
(2) ATKRON FIFTEEN Narrative History for 1978  
(3) ATKRON FIFTEEN Flight Statistics for 1978  
(4) ATKRON FIFTEEN Ordnance Expenditure for 1978  
(5) ATKRON FIFTEEN McClusky Award Nomination for 1978  
(6) ATKRON FIFTEEN Advancement/Reenlistment Statistics for 1978  
(7) ATKRON FIFTEEN Safety Award Program for 1978  
(8) ATKRON FIFTEEN Officer Roster for 1978  
(9) Biography of CDR R. S. SMITH, USN  
(10) Photograph of CDR R. S. SMITH, USN  
(11) ATKRON FIFTEEN Enlisted Roster  
(12) COMNAVAIRLANT 292236Z NOV 78  
(13) USS INDEPENDENCE 011551Z DEC 78  
(14) End of Cruise Report

see classified file

1. In accordance with references (a) and (b), enclosures (1) through (14) are forwarded.

  
R. S. SMITH

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

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CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

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JANUARY

- 1-8 VA-15 Embarked in USS AMERICA (CV-66) in port Genoa, Italy.
- 9-13 USS AMERICA conducted Air Operations in the Tyrrhenian Sea.
- 14-19 In port Naples, Italy; Mid-Cruise Corrosion Inspection.
- 20-23 VA-15 conducted simulated war-at-sea strikes, ACM flights, and low levels over Sardinia.
- 24 Training anchorage, Golfo Di Palmas, Sardinia.
- 25-26 VA-15 flew Sardinia low levels and dropped practice ordnance.
- 27-28 Training anchorage, Golfo Di Palmas, Sardinia. RADM C. C. SMITH, Battle Group TWO, presented leadership talk to Squadron Officers.
- 29 Air Operations in the Ionian Sea emphasized low levels over Sicily and practice mining exercise at Pacchino Target, Sicily.
- 29-1 In port Catania, Sicily.

FEBRUARY

- 2-4 USS AMERICA conducted flex-deck operations. VA-15 participated in competitive mining exercise, conducted anti-air warfare raids on CV-66; surface, subsurface, surveillance coordination (SSSC), and expended practice ordnance in preparing for National Week XXIV.
- 5 Commenced exercise National Week XXIV with VA-15 supplying support combat air patrol (SUCAP) aircraft.
- 6 VA-15 participated in simulated air strikes on Gioia De Colle Airfield.
- 7-8 Flight Operations conducted midnight to noon. Missions stressed SUCAP, CAP and strike.
- 9 Naval Safety Center Survey/Inspection. VA-15 conducted bombing missions to Pacchino Target. LT [REDACTED] landed safely aboard USS AMERICA in aircraft 306 after developing compressor stalls which dangerously degraded engine and aircraft performance. He was subsequently officially recognized by Approch Magazine in the "Bravo Zulu" feature.

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**FEBRUARY**

- 10 The final day of National Week XXIV flight operations consisted of SSSC, SUCAP and Sardinia low levels.
- 11 USS AMERICA's attack squadrons conducted simulated war-at-sea strikes on USS JOSEPHUS DANIELS (CG-27) and USS SAMPSON (DDG-10).
- 12 USS AMERICA conducted underway replenishment (no flight operations conducted).
- 13-26 In port, Palma de Mallorca, Balearic Islands.
- 27 VA-15 led flight ordnance demonstration on AMERICA's spar for the U. S. Ambassador to France.
- 28 DASIX - Defense Aerrean SIXTH Fleet exercised the French Air Defense Forces, with VA-15 conducting simulated strikes into Southwest France.

**MARCH**

- 1-2 Flight Operations in the Tyrrhenian Sea consisted of bombing the spar, raids on USS SAMPSON (DDG-10), and Sardinian low levels.
- 2-8 AMERICA Anchored in Pozzvoli Bay for port visit to Naples, Italy.
- 9-10 PASSEX 78, Task Group versus Task Group operations. CDR SMITH and LCDR [REDACTED] led simulated strikes on USS NIMITZ (CVN-68).
- 11-12 Flight operations cancelled due to inclement weather.
- 13-17 VA-15 flew low levels over Sicily, dropped practice ordnance at Pacchino Target, and conducted a flight demonstration for CINCUSNAVEUR.
- 18-19 Flight Operations were in support of PHIBLEX 78.
- 20-28 In port, Barcelona, Spain.
- 29-30 VA-15 conducted practice war-at-sea strikes on CV-66 and strafed her spar.

**APRIL**

- 31-4 In port, Valencia, Spain. CDR George W. WHITE, Jr. assumed command of Carrier Air Wing SIX.

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**APRIL**

- 5-6 The VALIONS conducted daylight operations only, emphasizing raids on surface combatants.
- 7-11 In port, Malaga, Spain.
- 12 VA-15 supplied raid aircraft for USS JOSEPHUS DANIELS (CG-27).
- 13 The VALIONS participated in an Air Wing war-at-sea strike on USS FORRESTAL (CV-59).
- 14-15 In port, Rota, Spain, for turn-over with the USS FORRESTAL (CV-59).
- 16-23 TRANSLANT Crossing.
- 24 Ten VA-15 A7E's fly-off to NAS Cecil Field, Florida.
- 25 USS AMERICA moors at pier 7, Norfolk, Virginia. Squadron personnel fly to NAS Cecil Field, Florida for a long-awaited homecoming.
- 25-16 Squadron standdown with liberal leave policy. VALION pilots conducted weapons verification flights.

**MAY**

- 17-26 Post Deployment Corrosion Inspection; LATWING ONE Bombing Derby held.
- 27-14 VALIONS flew practice and competitive exercises.

**JUNE**

- 15 VA-15 led war-at-sea strike on the HMS Ark Royal in the JAX OPAREA.
- 19-23 All squadron pilots carqualed aboard USS LEXINGTON (AVT-16) off Pensacola, Florida.
- 26-30 Competitive exercises and war-at-sea strikes on USS MAHAN (DDG-42).

**JULY**

- Throughout July the squadron hosted the Royal Navy's 892 Fighter Squadron (F-4K's) from HMS Ark Royal.
- 5-6 COMPEXES.
- 10 COMPEXES emphasizing Air-to-Air Gunnery and search-and-rescue exercises with HS-15.

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**JULY**

25 Administrative/Material Inspection and Rentention Inspection by the staff of Commander Light Attack Wing ONE.

**AUGUST**

4 Squadron pilots practiced water pick-ups in the St. Johns River with the assistance of the HS-15 RED LIONS.

7-8 War-at-Sea with USS OLIVER HAZARD PERRY (FFG-7).

14-18 War-at-Sea Compexes on USS TALBOT (FFG-4).

26-30 QUICKSTRIKE MINE OPEVAL at Fort Lauderdale; Pilot/Aircraft exchange with VA-192 NAS Lemoore, CA.

**SEPTEMBER**

5-18 Compexes held emphasizing Air-to-Ground deliveries; field carrier landing practice.

19-20 CQ aboard USS NIMITZ (CVN-68).

21-26 Continued Air-to-Air and Air-to-Ground delivery compexes.

27-28 War-at-Sea strike conducted against USS SARATOGA (CV-60) and the USS MAHAN (DDG-42).

**OCTOBER**

2-4 Conventional Weapons Technical Proficiency Inspection.

16-3 CVW-6 Weapons Det to NAVSTA Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico.

**NOVEMBER**

6-23 Continued compexing Air-to-Ground events.

27 Embarked in USS AMERICA (CV-66) for Type Training One in place of CVW-11 Squadrons.

29 The squadron was named as the recipient of the COMNAVAIRLANT Battle Efficiency Award for FY 78.

**DECEMBER**

8-31 PAATLANT Inspection Team visit; completed competitive Air-to-Ground exercises prior to enjoying the Christmas Holidays.

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ATTACK SQUADRON FIFTEEN NARRATIVE HISTORY 1978

1. (U) Attack Squadron FIFTEEN celebrated the New Year in the port of Genoa, Italy. The A7E Corsair II squadron was under the command of CDR R. S. SMITH, USN, while embarked in the USS AMERICA (CV-66).
2. (U) It was not long before the America weighed anchor and CAPT R. B. FULLER, USN, gave the command to launch aircraft in the Tyrrhenian Sea. VA-15 flight operations consisted of supplying raid services for U. S. surface combatants, low levels over Sicily, bombing the Capo Frasca Target, Air Combat Maneuvering (ACM) flights, and flight demonstrations for visiting dignitaries.
3. (U) In mid-January the America anchored in the blue waters outside the port of Naples. During the inport period, COMNAVAIRLANT conducted the Mid-Cruise Corrosion Control Inspection. The aircraft GSE/hydraulic contamination program, as well as aircraft tire and wheel safety programs were noted as outstanding. The inspection results were satisfactory.
4. (U) The remainder of January was passed in the Central Mediterranean. VA-15 led simulated War-at-Sea Strikes on AMERICA and USS JOSEPHUS DANIELS (CG-27). The Valions also flew low level missions over Sardinia and Sicily, and conducted ACM and bombing.
5. (U) One special event for the officers while at the Golfo di Palmas training anchorage, Sardinia, was a leadership talk presented by RADM C. C. SMITH, USN, Battle Group TWO.
6. (U) After one more day of flight operations, AMERICA transited the straits of Messina on its way to anchor at Catania, Sicily.
7. (U) Following the brief port call at Catania, the month of February began with a full flight schedule. AMERICA conducted flex deck missions. VA-15 participated in a competitive mining exercises, anti-air warfare raids (AAWEX) on CV-66, Surface, Sub-surface, Surveillance Coordination (SSSC) and expended practice ordnance.
8. (U) During National Week XXIV, a major SIXTH Fleet Exercise conducted 5-10 FEB, VA-15 flew 137 sorties with primary emphasis on War-at-Sea tactics, SSSC, SUCAP, and strike interdiction tactics. VA-15 briefed and led deep interdiction airwing strikes on Gioia de Colle Airfield in Southern Italy.
9. (U) On 9 February, the Naval Safety Center Inspection Team conducted a survey and inspection in which no discrepancies were noted. The squadron's section/division leader PQS program was singled out as outstanding. This inspection team also viewed a perfect example of pilot skill in an emergency situation, when LT [REDACTED] trapped safely aboard AMERICA after developing multiple stage compressor stalls which had dangerously degraded engine performance.

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10. (C) Following the completion of Exercise National Week XXIV, a practice Launch Sequence Plan (LSP), and underway replenishment, AMERICA dropped anchor at Palma de Mallorca, 13-26 February. The dependents' flight and mid-cruise break at Palma were thoroughly enjoyed.

11. (U) While in port, VA-15's LTJG [REDACTED] served as AMERICA liaison with the U. S. Consular Agency in Palma. He was most instrumental in arranging tours of CV-66 for the Mallorcans, as well as visiting tourists. LT [REDACTED] [REDACTED] departed VA-15, having accepted orders to VT-4.

12. (C) Following an enjoyable port visit, AMERICA hosted the U. S. Ambassador to France with VA-15 leading a flight demonstration for the honored guest. This visit was in conjunction with the following day-long exercise, DASIX - Defense Arreant SIXTH Fleet, which exercised the French Air Defense Forces against VA-15's simulated air strikes into Southern France. VA-15 flew 53 sorties, with emphasis on low level interdiction strikes in a high threat anti-air warfare environment. This exercise was particularly beneficial in providing a realistic scenario to develop low level tactics in an environment where enemy aircraft far outnumbered friendly support aircraft.

13. (U) AMERICA anchored in Pozzuoli Bay, 2-8 March, located north of Naples. Pozzuoli Bay proved to be an ideal roadstead with a well-protected harbor which posed no hindrance to liberty boat operations in its calm waters.

14. (C) Following the America's departure from Pozzuoli Bay, task group versus task group operations were conducted against USS NIMITZ (CVN-68) for Passex 78. VA-15's Commanding Officer, CDR Robert "Bo" SMITH, and Operations Officer, LCDR [REDACTED], [REDACTED], briefed and led two of three major War-at-Sea Strikes against a large task force.

15. (U) Subsequent to Passex 78, VA-15 flight operations included low level navigation, bombing, and an impressive flight demonstration for CINCUSNAVEUR, ADM Joseph MOORE.

16. (C) Phiblex 78, 18-19 March, was conducted in Southeastern Spain. VA-15 flew 57 sorties in support of Navy and Marine Forces, emphasizing close air support (CAS) and Command and Control exercises.

17. (U) Barcelona, Spain, 20-28 March, was a welcomed sight following the quick tempo of flight operations of the previous at-sea period. The week-long port call gave sailors ample time to relax and complete required maintenance on the Corsairs II's. During the Barcelona port visit, the Valions welcomed aboard LTJG [REDACTED] [REDACTED] from VA-174.

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18. (U) The next at-sea period proved to be a short one, with VA-15 taking to the air for simulated War-at-Sea strikes and strafing AMERICA's spar while enroute to Valencia, Spain.

19. (U) The final month of the deployment, April, opened in port at Valencia, Spain, 31 March - 4 April, where CDR George W. WHITE, Jr., assumed command of Carrier Air Wing SIX from CAPT R. F. BALL.

20. (U) Following another short transit, AMERICA anchored at Malaga, Spain, 7-11 April, before departing the Mediterranean for turnover with the USS FORRESTAL (CV-59) at Rota, Spain, 14-15 April.

21. (U) The Atlantic crossing proved to be uneventful until AMERICA anxiously moored at Pier Seven, Norfolk, Virginia. Squadron personnel flew to NAS Cecil Field, Florida for a long-anticipated homecoming, the day after all ten Valion Corsairs landed at Cecil.

22. (U) The post deployment standdown was characterized by a liberal leave policy, gradually working into full operations in preparation for the Valion's extensive competitive exercise (compex) program.

23. (U) In May, the Valions welcomed two new pilots to the ranks of the elite with the introduction of LCDR [REDACTED] and LTJG [REDACTED] from VA-174. In June, LCDR [REDACTED] also reported aboard from VA-174.

24. (U) The COMLATWING ONE Post-Cruise Corrosion Inspection was conducted with excellent results. The Valions flew practice and competitive exercises on a daily basis for the remainder of the summer months.

25. (U) Three "old dogs" of VA-15 were farwelled during the month of June - LCDR [REDACTED] to COMLATWING ONE, LCDR [REDACTED] to instructor duty at the U. S. Naval Academy, and LT [REDACTED] to VT-21. When not saying good-by, the Valions were busy organizing, planning, briefing and executing War-at-Sea Strikes on HMS Arc Royal and USS MAHAN (DDG-42) in the Jacksonville OPAREA, Coordinated Strike Complexes at Pinecastle Target, and fleet carrier qualification training aboard USS LEXINGTON (AVT-16).

26. (C) In July, Valion innovators worked with the COMLATWING ONE Weapons School to determine the optimum use of the existing A7E Air-to-Air gunnery solution to achieve hits on the towed

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banner. The squadron conducted numerous training sorties followed by 13 pilots competing in Air-to-Air Gunnery, the best performance to date by any A7 Squadron.

27. (U) A formal Administrative/Material (ADMAT) Inspection was conducted by the staff of COMLATWING ONE on 25 July 1978. The overall grade was satisfactory with Aviation Safety, Maintenance Control, Training, Command Action Plan, and Air Intelligence areas being singled out as being particularly noteworthy.

28. (U) Concomitant with the ADMAT was COMLATWING ONE's Retention Inspection, which assessed the Squadron's Retention Program as outstanding, characterized by intense command level involvement and outstanding career counseling expertise.

29. (U) All squadron pilots practiced water rescue techniques with the assistance of the Red Lions from HELANTISUBRON FIFTEEN. Pilots were recovered from the St. John's River in full flight gear using two SH-3 Helos' and combat recovery techniques. This evolution in August was highly successful, providing pilots with practical experience with signaling devices and flight equipment during water rescue. The Red Lions also received valuable cross-training and the opportunity to practice combat rescue techniques for pilots and as well as their own crewmen.

30. (C) August proved to be an active month with a War-at-Sea strike against USS TALBOT (FFG-4), a pilot exchange program with VA-192, and CNO project 221-1-0T-IIIA-2 Quickstrike Mine OPEVAL.

31. (C) The Valions continued to review and develop War-at-Sea tactics, and conducted training in recognition of both U. S. and Soviet combatants.

32. (C) Four VA-15 aircraft participated in an exchange program with VA-192. The aircraft deployed to China Lake, NAS Lemoore, and NAS Miramar from 27 August to 2 September. LTJG [REDACTED] expended one AGM-45 at China Lake in addition to updating War-at-Sea tactics with VX-5 personnel. Aircrews participated in coordinated strikes at Tolicha Airfield (Nellis AFB Range) while at NAS Lemoore, and successfully led a strike at NAF China Lake's Echo Range opposed by the top gun graduating class while at NAS Miramar. Several multiple practice bombing sorties were also completed at NAS Fallon targets. VA-192 sent two aircraft to NAS Cecil Field during this period, and participated in Air-to-Air Gunnery, War-at-Sea strikes against USS MAHAN (DDG-42), and a West versus East bombing derby at Pinecastle target. This Det served to familiarized VA-192 pilots with local operating areas prior to their workups aboard USS AMERICA (CV-66) with CVW-11.

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33. (C) The final event of August was the Quickstrike Mine OPEVAL. Four VA-15 aircraft dropped Quickstrike Mines EX-62 Mod 0 and EX-65 Mod 0 in a designated area controlled by the Naval Surface Weapons Center off the Fort Lauderdale Coast.

34. (U) September and early October operations emphasized Air-to-Air and Air-to-Ground complexes as well as simulated strikes against USS MAHAN (DDG-42) and USS SARATOGA (CV-60).

35. (U) The Human Resources Availability Survey was conducted early in October and indicated that the command is highly goal-oriented with an extremely effective communications flow.

36. (C) During the latter half of October, VA-15 deployed to NAVSTA Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, for the CVW-6 Weapons Deployment. During this evolution, the squadron successfully evaluated mining procedures using offset bombing techniques at the underwater tracking range off St. Croix Island. The Valions also planned and briefed raid/War-at-Sea Missions on the USS EISENHOWER (CVN-69) for her ORE and participated in the OPTEVFOR TEST PLAN 147-OT-IIIB/265-OT-IIIC OPEVAL for the SPG-48C by planning and briefing fully coordinated multi-threat axis raid profiles on USS MAHAN (DDG-42).

37. (C) While in Puerto Rico the squadron flew 334 sorties and completed 86 complex events (47 E's) despite extremely poor weather throughout most of the deployment. A total of nine squadron pilots completed the Valion Division/Section Leader PQS program and were so designated during this deployment.

38. (U) The Valions returned to NAS Cecil Field in November to say good-bye to LT [REDACTED] and to welcome aboard LTJG [REDACTED] before deploying aboard USS AMERICA (CV-66), 27 November - 7 December for TYT-1.

39. (U) While aboard USS AMERICA (CV-66), the Valions learned that they were awarded the COMNAVAIRLANT Battle "E" in recognition of their fine record of performance in the air and on the ground.

40. (U) The remainder of December was filled with more Air-to-Ground competitive exercises before settling back to enjoy the Christmas Holidays.

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1978 FLIGHT TIME

1. 1. TOTAL FLYING DAYS: 209
2. TOTAL TIME: 5260.7 HOURS
3. TOTAL DAY TIME: 4391.7 HOURS
4. TOTAL NIGHT TIME: 869.0 HOURS
5. TOTAL SORTIES: 3123
6. TOTAL DAY SORTIES: 2585
7. TOTAL NIGHT SORTIES: 538
8. TOTAL TRAPS: 1307
9. TOTAL DAY TRAPS: 1002
10. TOTAL NIGHT TRAPS: 305
11. TOTAL COMPEX EVENTS: 416/251 E'S

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Enclosure (3)

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ATTACK SQUADRON FIFTEEN  
1978 ORDNANCE EXPENDITURE REPORT

MK76 PRACTICE BOMB	8236
MK106 PRACTICE BOMB	738
MK82 LDGP	17
MK82 INERT	138
MK83 INERT	14
MK84 LDGP	0
MK84 INERT	0
AIM-9G	1
AGM-45	2
20MM TP	70,437
20MM HEI	370
MK58 MARINE MARKER	283
MK45 FLARES	58
MK46 DECOY FLARES	0
CHAFF	1560
2.75 INCH ROCKETS	203
5 INCH ROCKETS	0
BDU-20	0
BDU-36	0
BDU-8	0
MK36 MINES	6
MK131	1560
MK2 CTG	9670
MK4 CTG	9104

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ATTACK SQUADRON FIFTEEN  
ADVANCEMENT/REENLISTMENT STATISTICS FOR 'CY 78

ADVANCEMENTS

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>MARCH</u>	<u>SEPTEMBER</u>
EXAMINED	58	61
ADVANCED	39	31
PERCENT	67	51
PASSED NOT ADVANCED	16	29

REENLISTMENTS

	<u>FIRST TERM</u>	<u>CAREER</u>
NOT ELIGIBLE	24	16
ELIGIBLE	6	2
REENLISTED	8	12
PERCENTAGE	26.6	66.6

Enclosure (6)

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