



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

STRIKE FIGHTER SQUADRON 15

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From: Commanding Officer, Strike Fighter Squadron FIFTEEN
To: Director of Naval History, Aviation History Branch,
Naval Historical Center

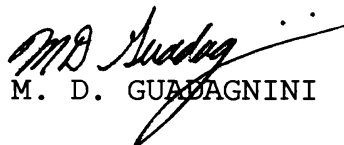
Subj: COMMAND HISTORY REPORT

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12F
(b) U.S. Navy Regulations, 1990
(c) OPNAVINST 3120.32 series

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronological History
(3) VFA-15 Narrative History of 1997
(4) Commanding Officer's biography and picture
(5) Strike Fighter Squadron FIFTEEN History
(6) Squadron Aircraft Photograph
(7) Battle Efficiency Award Summary
(8) VFA-15 Change of Command program
(9) LT Jason Jakubowski Memorial Service program

(10) 1 1.44 3 1/2 in diskette

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (9) are submitted.


M. D. GUBBAGNINI

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

1. The mission of Strike Fighter Squadron FIFTEEN is to maintain a maximum state of air combat readiness in the Carrier Strike Forces and to utilize that readiness as a deterrent or striking capability against any and all enemies of the United States of America, as may be directed by higher command authority. The primary function of Strike Fighter Squadron FIFTEEN within that mission is to conduct offensive air superiority and air-to-surface attack operations.

2. Strike Fighter Squadron FIFTEEN is organized in two primary levels; command and department. The organizational structure has been established within the framework of primary billets authorized by the Chief of Naval Personnel and within the guidelines established in references (b) and (c). In this particular application, the organizational structure and billet descriptions depicted in reference (c) have been tailored, as necessary, to fit the structure of a deployable aviation command.

3. Strike Fighter Squadron FIFTEEN is based at NAS Cecil Field, FL. VFA-15 is commanded by CDR Mark D. Guadagnini, USN, for calendar year 1997 and has an immediate external command relationship as outlined below:

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTROL

- | | |
|--|--|
| a. Command/Operational Control | Commander, Carrier Air Wing EIGHT NAS Oceana, Va |
| b. Administrative Control (embarked) (ashore) | Commander, Carrier Air Wing EIGHT Commander, Strike Fighter Wing, Atlantic NAS Cecil Field, FL |
| c. Technical Material | Commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic/Naval Air Systems Command Control NAS Norfolk, Va |

d. Support Control

Commander, Strike
Fighter Wing,
ATLANTIC

4. The twelve (12) FA-18C HORNET aircraft assigned to the squadron have AJ tail code markings. The bureau number breakdown is as follows:

| AIRCRAFT | BUREAU NUMBER |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| 300 | 164627 |
| 301 | 164629 |
| 302 | 164643 |
| 303 | 164646 |
| 304 | 164655 |
| 305 | 164661 |
| 307 | 164689 |
| 310 | 164673 |
| 311 | 164680 |
| 312 | 164631 |
| 314 | 164678 |
| 315 | 164669 |

5. Strike Fighter Squadron FIFTEEN consists of 173 enlisted members and 23 officers.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY 1997

| | |
|--|---------------|
| VFA-15 AT NAS CECIL FIELD, FL | 01 JAN-03 FEB |
| COMPTUEX PHASE II ON USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV 67) | 04-12 FEB |
| JTFEX ON USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV 67) | 03-21 MAR |
| 97-2 DEPLOYMENT ON USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV 67) | 29 APR |
| MARSEILLE, FRANCE PORT VISIT | 15-19 MAY |
| EXERCISE ILES D'OR, FRANCE | 20-29 MAY |
| PALMA, SPAIN PORT VISIT | 30 MAY-05 JUN |
| BENIDORM, SPAIN PORT VISIT | 10-15 JUN |
| OPERATION DELIBERATE GUARD, BOSNIA | 19-22 JUN |
| KOPER, SLOVENIA PORT VISIT | 23-25 JUN |
| DACT DETACHMENT IN LANDIVISIAU, FRANCE | 27 JUN-08 JUL |
| CANNES, FRANCE PORT VISIT | 01-07 JUL |
| EXERCISE INVITEX 97-2, ITALY | 10-16 JUL |
| OPERATION DELIBERATE GUARD, BOSNIA | 14-16 JUL |
| CORFU, GREECE PORT VISIT | 18-23 JUL |
| VFA-15 CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY | 19 JUL |
| RHODES, GREECE PORT VISIT | 28 JUL-04 AUG |
| HAIFA, ISRAEL PORT VISIT | 08-14 AUG |
| DACT DETACHMENT INFINITE ACCLAIM, JORDAN | 15-20 AUG |
| SUEZ CANAL TRANSIT (SOUTHBOUND) | 17 AUG |
| OPERATION SOUTHERN WATCH, PERSIAN GULF | 01-06 SEP |
| BAHRAIN, BAH PORT VISIT | 07-09 SEP |
| EXERCISE BEACON FLASH, OMAN | 13-17 SEP |
| SUEZ CANAL TRANSIT (NORTHBOUND) | 25 SEP |
| EXERCISE DYNAMIC MIX, ITALY | 01-05 OCT |
| TERRAGONA, SPAIN PORT VISIT | 08-13 OCT |
| JFK TIGER CRUISE | 25-28 OCT |
| 97-2 DEPLOYMENT CONCLUDED | 28 OCT |
| VFA-15 AT NAS CECIL FIELD, FL | 28 OCT-31 DEC |

VFA-15 NARRATIVE HISTORY OF 1997

As one of the oldest squadrons in the Navy, VFA-15 has historically been one of the premiere squadrons in Naval Aviation and 1997 was no exception. The "Year of the VALION" was a busy one for VFA-15 which included operations in the Mediterranean Sea, Persian Gulf, and Red Sea during a long and successful deployment on board USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV 67).

In January and March, pilots completed Carrier Qualifications on board JFK and the VALIONS learned their way around the ship that would be home for six months. After an arduous workup cycle, Carrier Airwing EIGHT, lead by the VALIONS, had developed into a finely tuned team, ready to protect the United States' interests throughout the world.

On 29 April 1998, the VALIONS deployed on JFK. Throughout the busy, six-month deployment, VFA-15 participated in exercises with air forces from France, Italy, Greece, Jordan, Oman, and Kuwait. Pilots flew over 3000 hours and completed over 2000 arrested landings on board JFK. Whether in the Mediterranean Sea or the Persian Gulf, the VALIONS excelled at carrier flight operations and earned Carrier Airwing EIGHT's TOP HOOK AWARD for the final line period of the deployment.

As part of a multinational force, VFA-15 participated in OPERATION DELIBERATE GUARD over Bosnia-Herzegovina in June and July. The VALIONS then transited through the Suez Canal in August and sailed to the Persian Gulf to relieve USS Constellation (CV 64) for OPERATION SOUTHERN WATCH in September. For these operations, the VALIONS were awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal and Armed Forces Service Medal respectively.

On 19 July 98, CDR Mark D. "GUAD" Guadagnini relieved CDR John K. "STU" Stuart as Commanding Officer during a picturesque change of command ceremony in the hangar bay of JFK while anchored off Corfu, Greece. Near the end of the deployment the VALIONS played host to 24 family and friends for the JFK Tiger Cruise. During the three-day Tiger Cruise, guests toured the ship while underway, witnessed carrier flight operations, and enjoyed an impressive air show.

1997 was filled with many happy times for the VALIONS, but it was marked with one tragic loss. While flying a low-level training mission over Oman, LT Jason Eric "GOAT BOY" Jakubowski crashed into a canyon wall on 14 September 1997. He was killed instantly. Memorial services were conducted both on board JFK and at NAS Cecil Field, FL. The tragedy served to pull the

VALION family closer together at home and even more so among the men on the ship. Jason was a great man who was called upon to pay the ultimate sacrifice for his country. He reminds us all of the dangerous nature of carrier aviation. The VALIONS rebounded after the loss of LT Jakubowski and finished their deployment with the same pride and professionalism with which they started.

The VALIONS returned home to NAS Cecil Field, FL on 28 October 1997 for a well-deserved rest. There was not much time for reflection as plans were already being made for the next deployment on board USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN 71) in early 1999. 1998 will be an opportunity once again for the VALIONS to show that they are the very best at their jobs and are ready for another outstanding deployment.