

VF-43/ A12/WGH:ln
SERIAL:

UNITED STATES ATLANTIC FLEET
AIR FORCE

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FIGHTER SQUADRON FORTY THREE
CARE OF FLEET POST OFFICE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

FEB 7 1951

From: Commanding Officer, Fighter Squadron FORTY THREE
To: Chief of Naval Operations (Aviation History Unit)

Subj: Historical Report

Ref: (a) ACL 18-49

Encl: (1) Subject report

1. In accordance with reference (a) the historical report for the period
1 September to 31 December 1950 is herewith submitted.

C. W. Gunnels, Jr.
C.W. GUNNELS, Jr.

*"Rebel Raiders"
Commissioned 1 Aug 1950
at NAS Jax*

FIGHTER SQUADRON FORTY THREE

HISTORICAL REPORT

ENCLOSURE (1)

CHRONOLOGY

1. Fighter Squadron FORTY THREE commissioned 1 September 1950 at Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida.
2. Commanding Officer Lieutenant Commander Charles W. Gunnels, Jr., 100125/1310, USN.
3. Stationed at Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida 1 September 1950 to 18 September 1950.
4. ATO 782-50 directed transfer of eighteen F4U-5N's from FasRon TWO to Fighter Squadron FORTY THREE.
5. Stationed at Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Cecil Field, Jacksonville, Florida 18 September 1950 to present.
6. Quota of twenty-two officers filled 22 September 1950. Sixty-three enlisted men aboard at that time.
7. Twenty-seventh officer reported aboard 14 October 1950. Seventy-four enlisted men aboard at that time.
8. Received ATO 920-50 on 15 October 1950 transferring eighteen F4U-5's from FasRon SIX to Fighter Squadron FORTY THREE.
9. Received ATO 919-50 transferring eighteen F4U-5N's from Fighter Squadron FORTY THREE to CGAIRFMFLANT on 19 October 1950.
10. Commenced training Phase I on 1 November 1950.
11. Ensign Charles T. Phillips, 507395/1310, USN, crash landed near Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Cecil Field, 21 November 1950 because of engine failure.
12. Received the last of eighteen F4U-5's on 27 November 1950 to complete allowance of eighteen.
13. 9 December 1950, transferred the last of eighteen F4U-5N's to CGAIRFMFLANT.

14. Enlisted quota filled, one hundred and nine enlisted men aboard 14
December 1950.

15. Conducted Carrier Qualifications aboard USS ORISKANY 14 December 1950.

16. Completed Training Phase I 31 December 1950.

NARRATIVE

1. Fighter Squadron FORTY THREE was commissioned at the Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida on 1 September 1950 pursuant to COMAIRLANT dispatch 252233 of August 1950. Lieutenant Commander C.W. Gunnels, Jr., USN assumed command in accordance with BuPers Dispatch 252056 of August 1950. (See Note 1)
2. The following pilots of the squadron were aboard for the commissioning: LCDR. C.W. Gunnels, Jr., USN, LCDR. C.V. Pierson, USNR, LT. W.G. Horton, USN, LT. E.J. Becker, USNR, and LT. H.E. Mitchell, USNR. (See Note 1) The neophyte squadron was commissioned Rebel's Raiders.
3. The Squadron Organization:

Commanding Officer:	LCDR. C.W. Gunnels, Jr.
Executive Officer:	LCDR. C.V. Pierson
Operations Officer:	LCDR. L. Barker
Administrative Officer:	LT. W.G. Horton
Maintenance Officer:	LT. E.J. Becker
Material Officer:	LT. H.E. Mitchell
Ordnance Officer:	LTJG. R.L. Scott
Leading Chief:	J.M. Young, ADC
4. ATO 782-50 transferred 18 F4U-5N's to Fighter Squadron FORTY THREE. These were new planes and were located at FaaRon TWO, Quonset Point, Rhode Island. On 13 September 1950 the first four of these planes were accepted by Fighter Squadron FORTY THREE. (See Note 2)
5. Carrier Air Group FOUR moved from the Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida to the Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Cecil Field on 18 September 1950 and made its headquarters in Building 13 of that field. (See Note 3)

- NOTES:
1. Fighter Squadron FORTY THREE log entries for 1 September 1950.
 2. Daily Aircraft Status Change Report (X) VF-43 Serial 1-50 of 13 September 1950.
 3. Fighter Squadron FORTY THREE log entries for 18 September 1950.

6. Fighter Squadron FORTY THREE accepted the last of its F4U-5N night fighters on 30 October 1950 which completed its full allowance of eighteen aircraft. (See Note 1)

7. Flight operations commenced with the first training flight on 22 September 1950. (See Note 2) Flight operations progressed rapidly, and a large amount of flight time was built up while the planes were new. Training operations decreased rapidly as discrepancies put planes out of commission. The reason for this was that the small crew was too busy performing acceptance checks on the aircraft to keep up with the usual F4U aircraft discrepancies.

8. On 20 October 1950 the squadron flew three planes to Naval Air Station, Atlanta, Georgia on a Hurricane Flyaway, the remaining planes were stored in the hangar. The flight was led by LCDR. C.V. Pierson, USNR and was accomplished without incident. (See Note 3) Flight operations would have been aided if the squadron had been able to hangar all of its aircraft instead of those of outside activities. By doing so, there would have been no delay in resuming training operations after the Hurricane Condition had been secured.

- NOTES:
1. Daily Aircraft Status Change Report (X), VF-43 Serial 3-50 of 3 October 1950.
 2. Fighter Squadron FORTY THREE, Master Flight Time Log.
 3. Fighter Squadron FORTY THREE log entries of 20 October 1950.

9. By authority of ATO 919-50 of 19 October 1950 the squadron transferred the first of the F4U-5N night fighters on 23 October 1950. (See Note 1) These aircraft were to be replaced by overhauled F4U-5's in accordance with ATO 920-50 of 20 October 1950. The first F4U-5 was accepted on 24 October 1950. (See Note 2) This shift in types of aircraft hampered the squadron operations for at least a month. The night fighters were transferred as the day fighters were received, but the transfer and acceptance checks kept the under complemented maintenance crews too busy to do their regular work. Availability of aircraft suffered. The total complement of enlisted men at this time was ninety-two.

10. Due to the excellent job done by the Maintenance Department during and after the acceptance of aircraft, flight training operations progressed steadily and the first bombing hop was flown on 24 October 1950, the first high altitude hop on 25 October 1950 and the first gunnery practice on 1 November 1950. (See Note 3)

11. Proficiency in fixed gunnery was slow and in the opinion of the squadron pilots this was caused by the Mark Six fire control system. This gun sight gave a great deal of trouble for several reasons, the biggest being non-availability of parts for the Aero 2B controller. The pilots needed a great deal of training in the use of the sight and the ordnance crew also needed training in maintenance of the sight.

- NOTES:
1. Daily Aircraft Status Change Report (X) VF-43 Serial 4-50 of 23 October 1950.
 2. Daily Aircraft Status Change Report (X) VF-43 Serial 4-50 of 23 October 1950.
 3. Fighter Squadron FORTY THREE Master Flight Time Log.

12. During the month of November the squadron began to function as an organized unit with the initiation of a tactical organization. (See Note 1) Up to this time the pilots had been shifted around flying with different people in order to establish standard flight procedures.

13. The squadron's first Field Carrier Landing Practice flight was on 3 November 1950 followed by Carrier Qualifications on 14 December 1950 aboard the USS ORISKANY. (See Note 2) These operations were cut short by the ship and were scheduled to be resumed at a later date.

14. The only serious accident occurred on 21 November 1950 when Ensign C.T. Phillips crash landed as a result of engine failure and was unable to jettison his full belly tank, (See Note 3) which burst into flames. Ensign Phillips escaped but was very severely burned.

15. The physical training program was hampered by the heavy work load. The Athletic Officer, Ensign T.E. Haddock, set up an adequate physical training program which was adhered to as much as possible. The recreational facilities of the squadron, while not the most elaborate, were sufficient and enjoyed by all.

- NOTES:
1. VF-43 Squadron Order No. 14-50
 2. Fighter Squadron FORTY THREE Master Flight Time Log
 3. VF-43 Aircraft Accident Report 1-50

16. New squadrons, such as this one, could use some extra help in the administrative functions until they are thoroughly organized. If some officers were attached to the unit to organize the paper work the flight training operations and flight proficiency would progress more rapidly. After the squadron is functioning smoothly these administrative officers could be removed. It is also felt that the long delay in filling the squadron enlisted complement and the fact that there is still a shortage of certain rates at this time, namely AD's and AE's, has posed an additional burden on the Maintenance Department.

17. With the full complement aboard and settled down to the routine of squadron work, a big year is expected in 1951.

APPENDICES

I Monthly Ordnance Proficiency

All flights conducted under competition rules and standards

WEAPON	PILOTS QUALIFIED BY MONTHS			
	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Fixed Air-to-Air Gunnery	0	0	2	4
Practice Bombs	0	4	16	16
Rockets	None Fired			

II The following pilots qualified aboard the USS ORISKANY 14 December 1950

LCDR C.W. GUNNELS, Jr
LTJG H.F. DONNELLY, Jr
LTJG D.L. MCGRAW
ENS T.E. HADDOCK