

U. S. S. ENTERPRISE (CVA(N)-65)

F.P.O. SAN FRANCISCO 96601

CVA(N) 65/17
5750
Ser: 602

From: Commanding Officer, USS ENTERPRISE (CVA(N) 65)
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-291SH)

2 FEB 1967

Subj: Command History

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.7

1965

- Encl: (1) Narrative History of USS ENTERPRISE (CVA(N) 65) 1 January 1965 to 31 December 1965
- (2) Photo of ENTERPRISE in Newport News Shipyard
- (3) Biography and photo of CAPT J. L. Holloway III, USN, Commanding Officer
- (4) Photo of COMNAVAIRLANT, Special Assistant for ASSTSECNAV(R&D) and Commanding Officer
- (5) Photo of ENTERPRISE, BAINBRIDGE and INDEPENDENCE during inchop/outchop meeting
- (6) Photo of Premier Ky and his staff aboard ENTERPRISE
- (7) Photo of Premier Ky, his staff and RADM H. L. Miller, USN, COMCARDIV THREE
- (8) Photo of extreme wide-angle "fish-eye" lens view of ENTERPRISE planes bombing North Vietnam

TO PHOTO SECTION ←

1. This report is submitted in compliance with reference (a). Enclosures (1) through (8) augment this report.

a. Commanding Officer and period served:

- (1) CAPT F. H. Michaelis, USN, 20 July 1963 - 17 July 1965
(2) CAPT J. L. Holloway III, USN, 17 July 1965 to present

b. Principal ship's movements and engagements:

(1) 2 November 1964 - 22 June 1965. Entered Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co., for first refueling and overhaul.

(2) 22-24 June. ENTERPRISE underway for sea trials and carrier qualifications in the Virginia Capes.

(3) 19-24 July. Independent ship exercise off the Atlantic Coast to test the ship's combat readiness.

(4) 9 August - 8 September. ENTERPRISE sailed for underway training in waters off Guantanamo Bay.

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(5) 26 October. Underway Operational Readiness Inspection off St. Thomas, V. I., and Roosevelt Roads, P. R.

(6) 2 November. Departed Roosevelt Roads, P. R. for Subic Bay, R. P. and the Pacific Fleet Arriving 27 November.

(7) 30 November. Departed Subic Bay for the Gulf of Tonkin with USS BAINBRIDGE (DLG(N)25), USS ROBERTS (DD-823), and USS BARRY (DD-933).

(8) 2 December. ENTERPRISE became the first nuclear powered warship to engage in combat operations when aircraft of Attack Carrier Air Wing NINE launched 118 sorties against the Viet Cong in South Vietnam. For the rest of the month, the Big E carried out a relentless campaign against the enemy, primarily in North Vietnam, blasting military facilities, transportation networks, military storage areas, and barges and junks carrying supplies to the Communist forces in South Vietnam.

c. Any Special Awards or Outstanding Events:

(1) 2 November. ENTERPRISE received a grade of Excellent for her Operational Readiness Inspection conducted in the Carribbean Sea.

(2) 2 December. Big E became the first nuclear powered warship to engage in combat operations.

(3) 11 December. ENTERPRISE's Air Wing NINE set a new high of 165 strike sorties in one day.

J. L. Holloway III
J. L. HOLLOWAY III

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NARRATIVE HISTORY OF THE USS ENTERPRISE CVA(N)65 1 JAN - 31 DEC 65

New Year's Day 1965 found ENTERPRISE in drydock receiving her first refueling and overhaul since her commissioning three years before. She underwent extensive rejuvenation and was introduced to new systems and concepts.

The Integrated Operational Intelligence System (IOIS), a most significant technological improvement, was installed. Developed by North American Aviation, it is composed of an IOI Center, an Airborne Systems Support Center (ASSC), and a squadron of RA5C supersonic reconnaissance aircraft.

IOIC receives and develops the film received from a RA5C Vigilante reconnaissance plane. The significant photos are then selected, miniaturized and filed. The information extracted from the photos is transferred to IBM cards and recorded on magnetic tapes to be stored for future use. Included in IOIC are computers which rapidly research and plot desired targets and their defenses. This computerized method of storing and researching targets reduces the old system of hand filing and retrieval from days and hours to a matter of minutes.

The Satellite Navigation System, which exceeds the Loran System in precision fixes, was also installed. The system, developed by Johns Hopkins University, uses the Transit Satellite which orbits the earth five times per day.

To provide space for the new system's receivers, and for greater range on the Loran, the mainmast was raised 10 feet and a second yard-arm was added. The Yard installed an oil-fired boiler which provides

"Hotel" circuit when the ship is in port for long periods of time.

This permits the reactors to be shut down while "fossil power" takes over the duties of heating, lighting and air-conditioning.

All the aviation electronic shops were remodeled to better handle the increasing complex of electronic gear on modern aircraft. To allow for even greater needs, two new shops were built. Two sponsons were added. The old port missile sponson was turned into a 280-man compartment to provide for a war complement.

All four shafts were removed and two were replaced. A variety of other repairs were performed on the ship's hull and compartments.

The dry docks were flooded February 17 and ENTERPRISE moved to the shipyard piers for refueling. She had steamed over 200,000 miles, equivalent to eight times around the world, on her original fuel supply.

In replacing the cores, a 15-foot hole was cut in the flight deck and eight smaller holes were cut in the hangar deck over each of the reactors and shielded, new fuel clusters were placed in the reactors after the old cells, encased in water, were removed to a nuclear disposal plant.

During the refueling and overhaul period, VADM Hyman Rickover made several trips to Norfolk to observe the operation. He praised the ship's performance and predicted even better performance as nuclear cores were perfected. CDR John A. Smith, ship's reactor officer, was awarded a Navy Commendation Medal for Special Achievement by the Secretary of the Navy.

In May, the tempo of operations increased as systems were tested and new personnel reported aboard from special schools and training commands.

CAPT James L. Holloway III, the ship's new commanding officer, reported aboard May 10 after 18 months of nuclear training.

ENTERPRISE was notified June 1 that as of October 1 her home-port was to be changed from Norfolk, Va., to Alameda, Calif. She was originally scheduled to steam to the West Coast around South America in a leisurely trip that would put her into several ports.

On June 9, the ship was ready to test her propulsion systems. She had to turn around, stern away from the waterfront area so her four powerful screws would not damage the docks. A week later, ENTERPRISE began a unique type of operation called "fast cruise." Tied fast to the docks, the ship simulated underway conditions for five days.

On June 22 ENTERPRISE got underway for sea trials and carrier qualifications off the Virginia Capes.

The Big E moved on July 9 to Pier 12 at the Norfolk Naval Base. A week later, RADM J.O. Cobb relieved RADM B.M. Strean as Commander Carrier Division TWO. In almost a double ceremony, CAPT F.H. Michaelis, commanding officer, was relieved by CAPT J.L. Holloway III, on the 17th.

On the 19th, ENTERPRISE cast off the mooring lines to begin one of the many steps testing her combat readiness. She sailed on her Independent Ship Exercise off the Atlantic Coast. Captain Holloway put the ship through an exhaustive series of drills; general quarters,

man overboard and nuclear attack. After five days of practice, the ship anchored for two days in Hampton Roads before steaming out again for carrier qualifications off the Virginia Capes in the company of destroyers BYRD and SAMPSON from the 26th until 1 August.

On August 9, ENTERPRISE sailed for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba for the last full practice before Operational Readiness Inspection. Every drill that might appear on the ORI was conducted and graded by a special team.

The drill ended, September 3, and a ready but weary crew headed ENTERPRISE toward home. For three weeks the ship remained in port, taking on supplies and receiving an endless stream of visitors.

At this time, word was received that because of the buildup in the U.S. commitment in Vietnam, the ship would take the much faster route around Africa and report directly to the Seventh Fleet as Carrier Task Unit 77.7.1 under the Commander Carrier Division THREE. Departure was scheduled for late October.

September 25 ENTERPRISE received her weapons, when Carrier Air Wing NINE reported aboard, led by CDR F.T. Brown. With seven squadrons and three detachments, the Big E now had her powerful broad sword and shield which was to slash at the Viet Cong war effort.

The Air Wing was comprised of two fighter squadrons, VF-92 and VF-96, both flying the supersonic F-4 Phantom jet; four attack squadrons, VA-36, VA-76, VA-93, and VA-94, all flying the A-4 Skyhawk; and a reconnaissance squadron, RVAH-7, flying the supersonic photo-recon RA5C Vigilante.

The Air Wing also carried three special detachments; and squadrons; VAW-11, an early warning squadron flying the E1B Tracer; a tanker squadron, VAH-4 flying the tanker version of the KA3B Skywarrior; and a combat

support helicopter squadron, HC-1, flying the jet-turbine UH2A Sea-prite. CVW-9's 1,800 officers and men pushed the crew of the Big E to a complement of nearly 5,400 personnel.

Three days later, the ship steamed to the Virginia Capes again for a refresher training period with the destroyers RICH and STRINAKER. This exercise placed emphasis on night flight operations. On October 9, the ship headed south to the Jacksonville operation area, and on the 11th recorded her 45,000th arrested landing.

On the 15th, the carrier anchored for three days in Hampton Roads, and three days later, moored to Pier 12.

On October 18, RADM Henry L. Miller, Commander Carrier Division THREE, reported aboard with his staff.

In the morning of October 26, VADM C.T. Booth, Commander Naval Air Forces, Atlantic, spoke to the crew praising them for an illustrious past history, and wishing them well in the future. After the ceremonies, the world's largest warship put to sea. In company with the nuclear-powered frigate BAINBRIDGE, she steamed south to St. Thomas, Virgin Islands for ORI.

October 30, the ship dropped anchor in the harbor of St. Thomas and embarked a special team of inspectors assigned to evaluate the ship's condition of readiness. Drill after drill was conducted day and night, while a swarm of clipboard-armed officers pored over the ship observing every detail. Two days later, the ship was given a grade of "Excellent", and set sail for the Philippines.

Enroute, the ship had the audacity to transgress the realm of King Neptune with a crew mainly consisting of pollywogs. The delighted sovereign and his bloodthirsty court came aboard at the equator on November 7 to properly initiate over 4,000 new shellbacks with garbage, dye and

shillelaghs.

The next day tragedy struck the ENTERPRISE when a crewman was blown off the flight deck by a jet exhaust during night landings. After recovering aircraft, the carrier combed the seas to search for her lost member but no sign of the man could be found after an all-night search.

On October 14 ENTERPRISE rounded the Cape of Good Hope and entered the Indian Ocean. Six days later, one day out of the Straits of Malacca, she met and relieved the aircraft carrier INDEPENDENCE. After exchanging gear and personnel, the ships passed honors and continued on their voyages--the Fighting I to Norfolk and a well-deserved rest and the Big E to Subic Bay. In the passage through the straits, the ship encountered the diverse shipping peculiar to those waters; British warships, Japanese freighters, and a myriad of Far East junks and sampans.

On November 27 the ship moored to Leyte Pier in the Philippines to take aboard the last of the supplies and provide liberty for her crew which had been 32 days at sea.

On the 30th ENTERPRISE and her escorts BAINBRIDGE, ROBERTS, and BARRY got underway for a momentous event in naval history. The task group headed for the coast of Vietnam and war.

On a warm grey morning, December 2, men in multi-colored jerseys wrestled their bomb-laden planes to the catapults. The deafening roar of the jet engines increased. With the drop of an arm, the planes were flung off the bow toward South Vietnam. The ship's bridge and every available spot on deck were covered with newsmen and military observers

watching the unprecedented first in the history of war on the seas--the use of a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier in combat operations.

She was assigned to Dixie Station for two weeks to allow her pilots and crew to get accustomed to combat. Then Big E was to steam north to strike at the heart of North Vietnam.

On the first day, CDR O.E. Krueger, skipper of VA-94's Screaming Shrikes, became the first pilot of Air Wing NINE to enter combat. He led a flight of A-4's against Viet Cong strongholds near Bien Hoa. During the day, pilots attacked Communist positions the entire 450-mile length of South Vietnam, flying 125 combat sorties and unloading 167 tons of bombs and rockets on the enemy.

On December 10, Hanson Baldwin, military editor of the New York Times and one of the nation's foremost writers, visited the ship. The next day he observed ENTERPRISE in action when she set a record of 165 strike sorties on South Vietnam in a single day.

Almost daily, the bosun's whistle announced the arrival of dignitaries to watch ENTERPRISE's efforts against the Communists. Congressmen from New York, California, Ohio, and Maryland were among the visiting VIP's.

U.S. Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge escorted Vietnamese Premier Nguyen Ky and his staff aboard ENTERPRISE on December 14. Before he departed the ship, Premier Ky signed a North Vietnam-bound bomb.

On December 15 LT John Sutor, flying an RA5C Vigilante, was injured when he was forced to eject from his flak-damaged plane. He received the Purple Heart Medal.

The next day ENTERPRISE steamed northward to begin attacks on North Vietnam. The Air Wing's primary function was to carry out a systematic destruction of bridges and roads leading south, and to strike supply centers, both purposes intended to interdict the flow of guns, ammunition, and supplies to Communist belligerents in South Vietnam. Great care was exercised to insure that all strikes were made only on military installations involved in logistics, and not on centers of civilian population.

Since these targets are essential to the Communist efforts, they are heavily defended by an elaborate anti-aircraft system; the most sophisticated in the history of warfare. For the first time in air warfare, plans had to be made to strike these emplacements before the targets themselves could be hit. ENTERPRISE's complex intelligence and planning system sent to work on the project that lay ahead of them. The necessity to distinguish the exact use of the target, to separate friend from foe, soldier from civilian, and missile site from Triple-A emplacement, extended the electronic resources of the Big E to the maximum.

On the 22nd, pilots of ENTERPRISE, KITTY HAWK, and TICONDEROGA launched one of the major strikes of the war on the Uong Bi power plant which provided two-thirds of all the electricity for Hanoi and the largest seaport at Haiphong. The raid was completely successful, demolishing the plant.

Christmas Day, without the accustomed snow and cold, dawned with a truce, in an attempt to invite the North Vietnamese government to open peace negotiations.

On the 27th, LT J.A. Promersberger of VF-92, nosed a Phantom jet

fighter onto the ship's flight deck, recording ENTERPRISE's 50,000th arrested landing.

The year ended with the men of ENTERPRISE sitting out the uneasy truce, waiting for the Communists to move one way or the other--toward peace or toward continuing aggression.

The ship had lost four Phantoms, two Skyhawks, and one Vigilante to Communist guns. Three pilots and one flight officer were lost over North Vietnam.

Thus, the most eventful year in the history of ENTERPRISE came to a close. After overhaul and many drills, the world's largest warship had entered the war and proved herself in performances exceeding that of any other carrier. The oft disputed practicality of nuclear power was seemingly resolved as the ship performed a gargantuan task. With her entrance into combat, a new era was opened before the world.

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