

BETWEEN WARS

Updated 08/15/2012

CHRONOLOGY

1946 **Commander in Chief = Harry S Truman**

22 January CVG-17 became CVBG-17 – a MIDWAY-Class air group, while squadron designations were unchanged. The four squadrons of CVG-17 that had joined *HORNET* in January 1945 would change designations three times over the next three years:

1943		1946		1948		1950
VF-17	to	VF-5B	to	VF-61		Jolly Rogers
VBF-17	to	VF-6B	to	VF-62		Gladiators
VB-17	to	VA-5B	to	VA-64		to VC-24 in 1949
VT-17	to	VA-6B	to	VA-65		Fist of the Fleet

VA-64 became VC-24 in 1949, then VS-24 in 1950 and disestablished in 1956. A new VA-64 would join the Air Group in February 1950 – ex-VF-131 (later VF-21)

The squadron probably did not use the “Fist of the Fleet” title until June 1949, the same date it adopted the “Fist” patch.

30 January Ens. Richard Bion Kinney was killed while on a check-out flight in SB2C-5 (BuNo 83225). The aircraft entered a spin about 5 miles north of NAAS Fallon, but crashed after three or four partial recoveries.

1 February The squadron prepared to move to NAS Brunswick, Maine, transitioning from the TBM-3E to SB2C-4Es in preparation for AD-1 Skyraiders.

March The squadron moved to NAS Brunswick and began transitioning to SB3C-4E/5 aircraft.

1 June NAAS Fallon was reduced to a caretaker status, only 11 months after the station reached its peak operations.

28 June The Air Group, including VT-17 departed for Cleveland, Ohio for the air races.

After landing at Cleveland, Ens. Mahlon H. King was stopped at a converging runway waiting for an airliner to takeoff. Ltjg Joseph W. Nelson landed and taxied into the tail of Ens. King’s aircraft. Ens. King’s aircraft suffered strike damage, while Ltjg Nelson’s plane only required an engine change.

June The squadron had 26 SB2C-4E and one TBM-3E by the end of the month.

19 July Ens. Alexander McNeill, flying SB2C-4E (BuNo 83078) made an emergency approach to NAS Brunswick, with only minor abrasions to his passenger.

12/13 August VT-17 launched twenty-seven aircraft for NAS Seattle, Washington.

15 August The orders were officially changed to NAS Norfolk, with aircraft scattered across the northern states as far as Rapid City, North Dakota.

20 August The last of the squadron’s aircraft arrived at NAS Norfolk.

9 September Ltjg Vernon Winqvist had an engine failure after takeoff from NAS Norfolk, but skillfully avoided obstacles and landed in a dirt field. The aircraft suffered strike damage, but Ltjg Winqvist was uninjured.

November The squadron began receiving SB2C-5 aircraft, basically the same as the -4E except with more internal fuel.

The SB2C-5 entered production in 1945, with 970 aircraft built. It had the same engine and electronics as the TBM-3, while the cockpit layout was different. Dive-bombing (70°) was a proven technique in both SBDs and SB2Cs. TBM pilots, however, seldom got over 45° while glide bombing. Therefore, flying the SB2C was an obvious preliminary step for a squadron slated to receive Skyraiders.

15 November CVBG-17 became CVBG-5 and VT-17 became VA-6B.

December VA-6B conducted carrier qualifications aboard *USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT* (CVB-42), commonly known as the “Foo D Roo.”

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- 17 January Ens. John Warlick landed SB2C-5 (BuNo 87406) and taxied into F6F-5 (BuNo 80084) while attempting to clear the runway.
- 24 January CVBG-5 embarked in *USS VALLEY FORGE* (CV-45) for a shakedown cruise to the Caribbean. VA-6B flew SB2C-5 Helldivers during this deployment. The other Air Group squadrons were VF-5B and VF-6B flying F4U-4 Corsairs, and VA-5B also flying SB2C-5 Helldivers.
- 5 February Ens. A.C. Shaw, flying SB2C-5 (BuNo 83378), bounced on landing and engaged the barriers with repairable damage to the aircraft.
- 8 February Ens. F. C. Richards, flying SB2C-5 (BuNo 89405), ground-looped while performing FCLP at Leeward Point, Guantanamo. The aircraft suffered strike damage, but no pilot injuries.
- 10 February Ens. W. J. Kuehn, flying TBM-3E (BuNo 91674) collapsed the landing gear on landing and engaged the barriers. The aircraft suffered strike damage, but no pilot injuries.

During this period, the squadron was assigned a few TBM-3Es for towing target banners and utility missions.

- 17 March *VALLEY FORGE* and CVBG-5 participated in an annual inspection.
- 21 March *VALLEY FORGE* and CVBG-5 returned to Norfolk two weeks early. The ship was having difficulties with the steering engine controls.
- 20 May The Secretary of the Navy directed the U.S. Navy Pre-Flight School at NAS Ottumwa, Iowa be relocated to NAS Pensacola.
- 7 July Lt. Richard D. Greer, in SB2C-5 (BuNo 89464), collided with a gasoline truck while taxiing in the parking area. Minor aircraft/truck damage and no injuries.
- 8 August VA-6B received one SNJ-6 for instrument training, and transferred six SB2C-5 Helldivers over the next few days.
- 15-17 Sept. An approaching hurricane forced the evacuation of all NAS Norfolk based aircraft. The aircraft spend the first night at Floyd Bennett Field and then flew on to Rome, New York. All aircraft flew back to NAS Norfolk on the 17th.
- 17 September James Forrestal, took the oath of office as the first Secretary of Defense. Previously, Forrestal was the Secretary of the Navy. The National Security Act of 1947 became effective the next day.
- 23 September The squadron received eight new AD-1 Skyraiders and transferred five SB2C-5 Helldivers over the next few days. VA-6B (and VA-5B) began the transition training in the AD-1 Skyraider.

All AD-1s were later relegated to shore-based training flights after wing-cracks were discovered during carrier operations. It was easier to build the AD-2 than repair the basic flaws. The AD-2 also had an improved cockpit layout and a more powerful engine.

- 1 October The squadron reported aboard *USS CORAL SEA* (CVB-43) for commissioning ceremonies at the Naval Shipyard Portsmouth, Virginia.
- 17 October In the morning, Ens. Charles C. Brown, flying AD-1 (BuNo 09278), landed wheels up at Creeds Field during a familiarization flight. The aircraft received Class C damage, but the pilot was uninjured.
- In the afternoon, Ltjg Everett W. Herman, flying SB2C-5 (BuNo 89484) stalled and ground-looped on take-off after the engine momentarily cut-out. A small fire developed. The aircraft suffered strike damage, but no injuries to the pilot or crew.
- October All pilots attended the AD-1 Mobile Training Unit
- 31 October **LCDR GLEN B. BUTLER** relieved CDR R. H. KONIG as Commanding Officer.
- 4 November Lt. Harvey Broadband, Jr., flying AD-1 (BuNo 09291) experienced a loss of manifold pressure after taking off from Creeds Field. The pilot managed to return to the field, but touched-down about midway down the runway. The aircraft nosed over in the grass about 30-feet from the runway, causing Class D damage, but no pilot injuries.
- 12 November Ens. Fredrick H. Mann, flying SB2C-5 (BuNo 87360), experienced engine failure while at 1000-foot altitude near bombing target #25 in Pocomoke Sound. The pilot ditched in heavy

seas and the pilot and crew swam ashore without injuries. They were picked up by a PBY rescue plane, but their aircraft suffered strike damage.

- 8 December *USS CORAL SEA* (CVB 43) conducted sea trials off the Virginia Capes.
- December During the first two weeks, the squadron engaged in Close Air Support exercises near Camp Pickett, Virginia. These flights were conducted with live ammunition under the direction of Army observers.
- During the last week, pilots attended Air Support School at Camp Pickett.
- 23 December The squadron received the last of their twenty-four AD-1 aircraft and transferred the last of their SB2C-5 aircraft. The Beast would serve a few more years in the Reserves.

1948 **Commander in Chief = Harry S Truman**

- 1 January The headquarters Naval Air Basic Training Command was transferred from NAS Corpus Christi to NAS Pensacola. The subordinate command, Naval Air Advanced Training, was established at NAS Corpus Christi the same day.
- January During the first week, 50% of the squadron's enlisted personnel were embarked in *USS CORAL SEA* to support carrier qualifications, while the remainder of the squadron operated out of NAS Norfolk.
- 7 January Ltjg Robert G. Barnhart, making a carrier qualification landing in an AD-1, floated up the deck, engaging the #10 wire and the barrier. The aircraft suffered Class D damage.
- LCDR G. B. Butler had completed carrier qualifications and was taxing his AD-1 onto the deck edge elevator. The tail-wheel caught on the edge of the elevator and LCDR Butler used power to free the tail-wheel. The ship rolled to starboard and the roll plus power caused to tail-wheel to break free and the aircraft nosed-over nicking the propeller. The aircraft sustained Class D Damage.
- Ens. Donald E. Kinney was high and fast on his second AD-1 carrier qualification landing, and may not have fully retarded the throttle at the cut. The aircraft floated into the barrier, causing Class B damage. A rolling deck with gusty 40-knot winds were contributing factors.
- 12-16 Jan. The remainder of the squadron embarked in *CORAL SEA*.
- 13 January Ens. Walter J. Kuehn dived for the deck after the cut and engaged the #1 wire. The aircraft suffered Class B damage with half-inch wrinkles at both wing roots.
- 19 January *CORAL SEA* conducted a shakedown cruise, with CVBG-5, off the coast of Guantanamo Bay and the Panama Canal. A simulated air strike was conducted against Culebra Island and the ship set course for Norfolk the next day. The air group had the same composition as aboard *VALLEY FORGE* shakedown except VA-5B and VA-6B were both flying AD-1 Skyraiders.
- 27 January Ens. Chandler V. Merrell made a normal approach and landing, but the aircraft suffered Class B damage with half-inch wrinkles at both wing roots.
- February The two AD squadrons were shore-based at Guantanamo, while experimental carrier landings were conducted. Test results showed a slightly faster approach with a flared landing was necessary to avoid structural damage.
- 2 February Lt. James R. Langford could not extend his tail-wheel when attempting to land at NAS Guantanamo Bay. He was advised to land with the dive brakes extended, which damaged only about 9-inches of the bottom brake.
- 12 February Ens. Joseph E. Puccini landed aboard ship. After taxing over the barriers he was turned towards the deck-edge elevator. However, high winds made turning difficult. Using power and left brake, the plane nosed-over and nicked the propeller.
- February During the last week of February, *CORAL SEA* moored at Cristobal, Canal Zone for R&R.
- March During the first part of the month the squadron resumed intensive training for the Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) scheduled for later in the month.
- 4 March Ltjg Anthony S. Kais made a normal approach and carrier landing, but still had half-inch wrinkles at the wing roots. Since this aircraft had popped rivets on previous landings the Aircraft Accident Board concluded the damage resulted from a design weakness – not pilot error.

16 March

Ensign Raymond C. Maxwell made a normal carrier approach and landing. The tail-hook engaged the #2 wire and pulled out about 15-feet of cable before the hook parted about 3-inches from the aircraft swivel. The aircraft continued down the deck into the barriers and suffered Class C damage.



Successful wheels up landing in VA-6B AD-1 aboard *USS CORAL SEA*, 17 March 1948.

17 March

After a normal takeoff, Midshipman Rex R. Berglund noticed the gear handle would not go all the way up. He then discovered the gear would not come down. All efforts to get the gear down failed. He made a commendable landing that resulted in Class C damage. Investigation revealed a deteriorated O-ring in the port actuator cylinder, blocking hydraulic fluid flow to lower the gear.

March

The COMAIRLANT staff conducted a Admin and ORI during the last week of March. The Air Group received an “Outstanding” grade overall, while the squadron received a high-excellent Admin grade.

30 March

Squadron pilots flew familiarization flights over Culebra Island in preparation for two days of Air Support strikes on the first and second of April.

5 April

Disembarked from CORAL SEA and moved ashore to hangar LP-3 at NAS Norfolk

8-21 May

Embarked in CORAL SEA for a Reserve Training Cruise to New York City. Upon return, the squadron conducted intensive instrument training to qualify all pilots for a “White Card.”

May

Carrier squadrons were assigned colors to further distinguish aircraft within an air group.

8 June

The squadron flew twenty-four aircraft to NAS Grosse Ile, Michigan to participate in an air show on the 10th, sponsored by the American Ordnance Association.

19 June

The Soviets announced a blockade of roads and railroads into Berlin.

21 June

Squadron aircraft were transferred to NAS Quonset Point, Rhode Island, at a rate of three every other day, for modifications.

Ltjg Evertt Winfield Herman was killed in a stall spin accident. Ltjg Herman attempted to direct a ground crew to an aerial tow banner on the ground. The aircraft crashed about one mile south of NAAS Creeds Field and the gas tank exploded after the crash.

20 July

The CNO directed the standard Carrier Air Group be changed to three fighter and two attack squadrons, each with a slight reduction in aircraft complements.

26 June

The Berlin Air Lift began, attempting to supply 4,500 tons of supplies per day to the 2.5-million Berliners isolated by the Soviet blockade of the city. At first, barely half the required tonnage arrived in Berlin.

9 July

Ens. Charles C. Brown attempted to taxi his AD-1 behind three AD-1s performing magneto checks. The prop-wash caused his plane to weather-cock into the other planes and it nosed-over when he applied brakes. The propeller was damaged.

22 July

Ens. Raymond C. Maxwell was taxing back to the parking area after a night flight. His right wheel ran off the pavement into soft ground and the plane came to an abrupt stop. The propeller was damaged.

27 July

CVBG-5 became the second CVG-6 and VA-6B became VA-65. The original CVG-6 was established on 15 March 1943 and disestablished on 8 July 1946.

Prior to the Battle of Midway, the USS ENTERPRISE (CV-6) air group was identified as CEAG, with VF-6, VS-6, VB-6, and VT-6. The generic CVG designation came after air groups were reformed following the Battle of Midway. Some squadrons were shifted between ships. New Construction in 1943, generally, had air groups numbered with their first ship, but this lapsed in 1944 as the original air groups were replaced by fresh units.

- 29 July President Truman approved construction of a 65,000-ton flush-deck aircraft carrier, subsequently named *UNITED STATES*.
- Development of TACAN began with a contract to the Federal Telecommunications Laboratory. After tests the following year, contracts were issued for Distance Measuring Equipment (DME).
- August The squadron conducted air-to-air gunnery training during the first half of the month. During the gunnery exercise later in August, all twenty-one pilots made six overhead gunnery runs with an average score of 18.003%. The high score went to Ens. C. C. Brown with 34.92%.
- The remainder of August was devoted to radar navigation training under simulated instrument conditions. The exercise flown over a prearranged course at the end of August resulted in an average score of "Excellent."
- 30 August The squadron flew to Griffiss AFB at Rome, N.Y. during a hurricane evacuation, returning on 1 September.
- September Most of the month was devoted to Toss Bombing using the aircraft's ASG-10 equipment.
- 16 September The squadron moved temporarily to NAAS Oceana while East Field at NAS Norfolk was closed for repairs.
- 8 October The squadron embarked in USS *MIDWAY* (CVB-41) for refresher training.
- 19 October Ens. Rex R. Berglund made a hard landing aboard *MIDWAY* resulting in severe wrinkling of both inboard wing panels.
- 26 October Ens. Robert G. Bowerman made a hard landing aboard *MIDWAY*, resulting in severe wrinkling on the port inboard wing panel.
- 28-29 October The squadron conducted a formal exercise in toss-bombing. The average for all pilots was 48.3-feet, considered outstanding by the exercise observer.
- 1 November The Naval Air Advanced Training Command was transferred from NAS Jacksonville to NAS Corpus Christi.
- 17 November LCDR M. J. Hanley landed aboard *MIDWAY* with his right wing slightly down. This resulted in minor wrinkling of the starboard inboard wing panel.
- 23 November The squadron disembarked from *MIDWAY* and returned to NAS Norfolk.
- 8 December **CDR M. J. HANLEY** relieved LCDR GLEN BUTLER as Commanding Officer.
- December A TBM-3E was added to the squadron's complement for target towing duties while aboard ship.
- 29-30 Dec. Air Group Six embarked in *MIDWAY* for an Operational Training cruise.
- The squadron changed its homeport from NAS Norfolk to NAAS Oceana, Virginia upon return.

1949 Commander in Chief = Harry S Truman

- 04 January VA-65, deployed with CVG-17 aboard *MIDWAY* for a brief Mediterranean deployment, returning on 5 March. This air group had VF-171 flying FH-1 Phantoms, VF-172 with F4U-4 Corsairs and two Marine Corsair squadrons. VA-65 still flew AD-1 Skyraiders, but sported R500 modex numbers. The remainder of CVG-6 deployed in *FDR* to the North Atlantic in October and November.
- 10 February LCDR G. B. Bryon failed to flare after the cut and made a hard wheels landing that wrinkled both inboard wing panels assessed as Class C damage.
- 28 March LOUIS JOHNSON was sworn in as the nation's second Secretary of Defense.
- 23 April Secretary JOHNSON's name became a four-letter word in Navy circles for his cancellation of the USS *UNITED STATES* while the Secretary of the Navy was out of town.
- 5 May Ens. R. C. Harris was flying the last position in a scheduled tail-chase. A USAF F-80 joined the tail-chase, but scooped out of a slow-roll and hit Ens. Harris's starboard elevator. Both aircraft landed safely, but the AD-1 suffered Class D damage.



VA-65 adopted a new squadron patch in June 1949. The original fist was larger. The orientation of the lightning bolt has changed over the years. At one time it was vertical, but diagonal (as shown) is most common. Since then, different scrolls were added at the bottom (VA-65, VA-25, and then VFA-25).

15 June Ens. W. E. Killingbeck ground-looped an SNJ-5 while landing at NAS Jacksonville during a cross-country instrument training flight. The SNJ suffered Class E damage to the left oleo strut and wing-tip.

A ground-loop is unique to tail-wheel aircraft because the aircraft's center-of-gravity is aft of the main landing gear. Essentially, the aircraft wants to swap ends. It is common during cross-wind landings or in gusty wind conditions when the pilot is slow using rudder or brake to maintain directional control. The loss of directional control is compounded by the extra lift generated by the outside wing lifting the wheel necessary for control off the ground and the inside wing-tip dragging on the ground.

5 July After four nights of carrier landing practice, ten pilots night qualified aboard the FDR. However, Lt. J. R. Lanford held off after the cut and engaged #10 wire and the barrier, causing minor damage to his aircraft.

July The squadron's new pilots were engaged in carrier landing practice. On his fourth pass, Ens. J. E. Williams landed left wing low and causing Class C damage to his aircraft.

29 July The squadron was notified of winning Navy Battle Efficiency Award for FY 1949.

August Ens. C. E. Parker and Ens. J. F. Puccini flew two AD-1s to NAAS Cabaniss Field for filming a Navy training movie on Combat Dive and Glide Bombing.

9 August Lt. J. L. Fruin, of VF-171, was the first Navy pilot to use an ejection seat, escaping his F2H-1 Banshee at 500 knots over South Carolina.

29 August The Soviet Union tested a nuclear device, ending America's nuclear monopoly.

15-22 Sept. The squadron embarked in *MIDWAY* for a voyage to New York City and return.

 Ens. J. F. Puccini bounced on landing and engaged the barriers, causing Class D damage to his aircraft.

30 September The Soviet Union lifted the Berlin blockade after it became clear the Western Allies had won the hearts and minds of their former enemy by airlifting supplies into Berlin. The airlift included Navy transport aircraft and flight crews, many of them recalled Reservists.

 Ens. P. J. Bergdahl made a wheels-up landing on returning from a night familiarization hop. His aircraft received Class C damage.

27 October The squadron, less VA-65, embarked in USS *FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT* for a deployment to the North Atlantic,

12 November The *FDR*, with Air Group Six aboard, crossed the Arctic Circle and reached 66°-30' North latitude.

 Ltjg R. D. Webster nosed over while taxiing over the barriers after landing aboard. The propeller nicked the deck, but only a propeller change was required.

- 19 November Ens. J. E. Puccini was high and fast at the cut, with 65 knots WOD. He never engaged a wire, but was stopped by the #3 barrier. His aircraft received Class C damage.
- 23 November The squadron returned to NAAS Oceana.
- 16 December The squadron flight-line consisted of eighteen new AD-4s, one SNB-5, and one AD-1Q.
- 21 December LCDR Roy P. Gee reported aboard, from VA-35, as XO, relieving LCDR G. B. Bryon.

LCDR Roy Gee had previously flown SBDs with VB-8 in 1942, at the Battle of Midway. At the Battle of Santa Cruz, Gee was in the flight from *HORNET* that seriously damaged IJN *Shokaku* .

KOREAN WAR

The international events leading up to the Korean War are complex and confusing. War is sometimes triggered by a single event. More often it evolves from our inability to predict an irrational dictator's mind. The events proceeding 25 June 1950, in our own country, were a sad commentary. Politicians and political appointees' were busy funding nuclear bombers while allowing the world's greatest Army and Navy to deteriorate.

The Army and Navy, including USAF tactical units, were shortchanged in the budget process after USAF bomber pilots convinced Congress that the nuclear bombers could keep the peace or win the next war alone. The United States held a nuclear weapon monopoly, but the Soviets had entered the nuclear arena late in 1949.

Other than some American military assistance programs, South Korea was expected to defend itself, while North Korea received massive military aide from both China and the Soviets. Our closest Army troops were in Japan on occupation duty, ill prepared for combat. Under-manned Marine units sent to Korea required last minute augmentation by ill-trained Reservists.

The USAF was particularly surprised by events. USAF units in Japan were prepared to intercept Soviet bombers, but their bases and aircraft in Japan and Okinawa could only provide token support for ground troops in Korea. B-29 and B-26 bombers dropped tons of bombs on Korea during the first few weeks of the war, but soon ran out of meaningful targets, yet scarcely slowed the North Korean advance on Pusan. Meanwhile, USAF planners worked overtime to find planes with propellers, pilots who could fly them, and Koran bases from which to operate them (Itazuke AFB in Japan was about 140 miles from Pusan, Korea). Maybe we really did need the Navy's aircraft carriers!

Clearly, our national leaders were not thinking about the possibility of another war in the Pacific. The Berlin Airlift, and the events that triggered it, kept the political focus on Europe. Our primary concern in the Pacific, at the time, was the possibility of the mainland Chinese invading Taiwan. To compound these problems, neither Defense Secretary Louis Johnson nor the new Navy Secretary Francis Matthews had an adequate understanding of the Navy's capabilities or needs.

At the end of WW-II, the United States Navy included 28 active fleet carriers (CV and CVL) and 71 active escort carriers (CVE) out of a total force of 833 warships.

By June 1950, this force had dwindled to 11 active fleet carriers (39%) and 4 escort carriers (5%) out of a total of 161 warships (19%).

The United States probably didn't need an 800-ship Navy in 1950, but an 80% reduction could only encourage dictators in their faulty thinking. Fortunately, most of those like-new warships were "mothballed" in the reserve fleet. On 25 June of 1950, the author turned nineteen and was 3-weeks into Preflight and:

The three *MIDWAY*-Class carriers maintained a limited nuclear threat to the Soviets while operating in the Atlantic. *MIDWAY* had just returned to Norfolk on 29 May after being relieved by the *FDR*. *CORAL SEA* also just returned to Norfolk after a post-yard shake-down cruise to Gitmo.

Of the four active Essex Class carriers, *VALLEY FORGE* was anchored in Hong Kong and promptly departed for replenishment at Subic Bay and was then ordered north on 27 June. *BOXER* had just completed a Westpac deployment and was moored at Alameda. *LEYTE* had just began a deployment to the Mediterranean in May. *PHILIPPINE SEA* had departed Norfolk on 24 May, arriving in San Diego on 10 June. She embarked CVG-11 and departed for Pearl Harbor on 5 July to commence combat operations on 5 August. However, these ships had few modifications since WW-II.

Of the four active CVLs, only *BATAAN* deployed to Korea in November 1950 with a Marine F4U squadron aboard. *CABOT* had served during WW-II, but was the Training Carrier at Pensacola. The new *SAIPAN* and *WRIGHT* were deployed in the Atlantic.

Of the four active CVEs, *MINDORO* and *PALAU* remained in the Atlantic. *BODOENG STRAIT* operated with a Marine F4U squadron, arriving off Korea on 14 July 1950. *SICILY* also operated with a Marine F4U squadron arriving off Korea on 3 August 1950. These Marine squadrons were an important asset because they operated with ground-based Forward Air Controllers close to the front lines.

Although ill prepared, the Navy's response to the crisis was swift and decisive.

Fortunately, the British carrier **HMS TRIUMPH** was also deployed in the Pacific and immediately joined **VALLEY FORGE** in the Yellow Sea. Without this early use of naval air power, the North Koreans might have pushed friendly troops into the sea at Pusan before reinforcements could arrive.



CHRONOLOGY

1950

Commander in Chief = Harry S Truman

1 January

CDR Donald M. WHITE relieved CDR John D. BLITCH as CVG-2. CDR White was previously CO of VT-9 in *ESSEX* and had participated in the 11 November 1943 raid against Rabaul. CVG-2 would play a major role in squadron history, but on this date, CVG-2 consisted of:

VF-21	F4U	Mach Busters	to VA-43 in 1959
VF-22	F4U	Cavaliers	disestablished 1958
VF-23	F4U	Flashers	to VF-151 in 1959
VF-24	F4U	Corsairs	was VA-24 in 1949
VA-25	AD-1	Beasts	to VA-65 in 1959

Meanwhile, CVG-6 consisted of:

VF-61	* F8F	Jolly Rogers	disestablished in 1959
VF-62	F8F	Gladiators	to VA-106 in 1955
VF-63	F4U	Fighting Redcocks	to VA-22 in 1959
VF-64	F4U	Free Lancers	was VF-131 in Feb 1950
VA-65	AD-4	Fist of the Fleet	to VA-25 in 1959

* VF-61 transitioned to F9F-2 Panthers in April 1950.

January

LCDR Hanely experienced loss of aileron control during takeoff at NAS Grosse Isle, Michigan. He cut power and attempted to land, but the aircraft hit on the port wing and landing gear, and the latter sheared off. There were no injuries, the plane suffered Class C damage.

22 January

The squadron fired a formal competitive exercise for gunnery. The average score was 12.8%, the Ens. C. E. Parker firing the high score of 34%.

- 1 February **CDR RICARD J. PHILLIPS** relieved LCDR M. J. HANLEY as Commanding Officer.
- February Ltjg P. E. Lunaas was the only pilot to shoot down a small target drone using sub-caliber (70mm) rockets.
- March Midshipman W. M. Lindsey was killed on a routine cross country flight when the port wing folded during takeoff. The pilot had failed to lock the wings in the spread position.
- 17 April The squadron came under operational control of CVG-2 for Operation Swarmer, a joint-services combat training exercise in South Carolina.
- April The squadron flew close air support missions with simulated weapon loads and dropped real mines off the Yorktown Naval Mine Depot.
- 3 May Exercise Swarmer concluded and the squadron returned to CVG-6.
- 27 May The squadron fired a formal exercise in rockets. Squadron average was 42.6-feet, while Ens. J. E. Williams had the best score of 6.66-feet.
- 2 June The squadron held a formal exercise in glide bombing. Squadron average was 63-feet, while Ens. R. R. Sanders had the best score with 8.9-feet.
- 9 June The squadron held a formal exercise in dive bombing. The squadron average was 63-feet, while Ltjg L. J. Roberts, Jr. scored 34-feet.
- 12 June The squadron held a formal exercise in toss-bombing. The squadron average was a 'Not qualifying' 220-feet. Squadron and NAESU technicians concluded there was something basically wrong with the Mark 3 Mod 3 toss bombing equipment installed in the aircraft.
- June VA-65 received its second Battle Efficiency "E" award for being the best single-engine bombing squadron in COMAIRLANT during 1949. The squadron was then based at NAAS Oceana.
- 25 June North Korean ground units invaded South Korea.
- 5 July A portion of the Army's 24th Infantry Division, called Task Force Smith, was landed at Osan, but could not stop the North Korean advance.
- 8 July *USS BOXER (CV-21)* was loaded with 145 P-51s and 6 L-5 aircraft for the USAF. 19 spare Navy aircraft and 1,012 passengers were also loaded for record-breaking runs to Japan and back to Alameda.

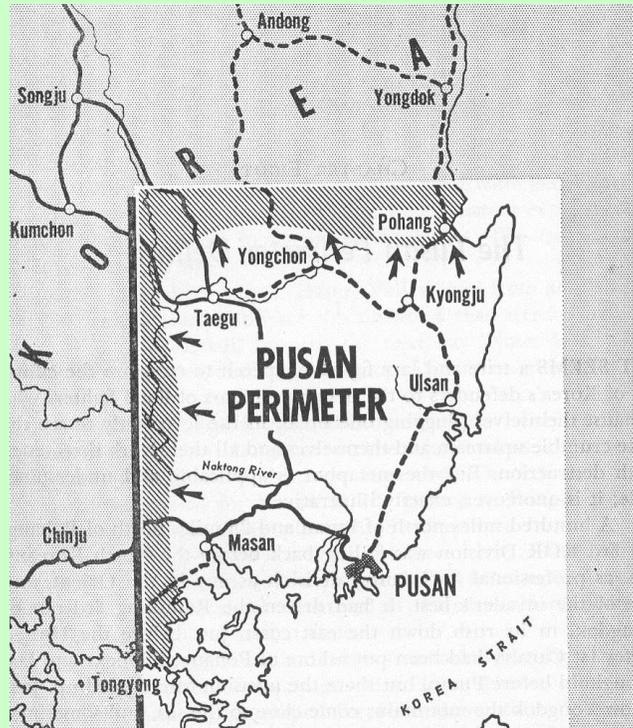
BOXER departed Alameda for Yokosuka, making a record voyage of eight days and seven hours. She beat her time on the return voyage by 12 hours and 24 minutes.

- 14 July Fourteen reserve squadrons were recalled to active duty, including ten VA/VF squadrons.
- 2-7 August The squadron embarked in *CORAL SEA* for carrier qualifications.
1 August CVG-2 and CVG-6 swapped three squadrons, including VA-65. The revised Air Group Two, headed by CDR White, then consisted of:
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|-------|------|-------------------|-------------------|
| VF 64 | F4U | Free Lancers | to VF-21 in 1959 |
| VF-63 | F4U | Fighting Redcocks | to VA-22 in 1959 |
| VF-23 | F4U | *Flashers | to VF-151 in 1959 |
| VF-24 | F4U | *Corsairs | to VF-211 in 1959 |
| VF-65 | AD-4 | Fist of the Fleet | to VA-25 in 1959 |
- *VF-23 and VF-24 later changed their names
- 13 August *USS LEYTE (CV-32)* was in Beirut, Lebanon when ordered to proceed to Korea. She returned to Norfolk on 24 August and departed on 6 September for the Panama Canal. She finally arrived off Korea on 3 October. She was detached on 19 January and then returned to Norfolk.
- 15 August VA-65, and the rest of CVG-2, departed Oceana for NAS Alameda, arriving on 17 August.

24 August

CVG-2, along with the VA-65, embarked in *BOXER*, sailed for Pearl Harbor and then on to Korea. *BOXER* also carried 14 spare aircraft for Kisarazu air base (Tokyo Bay). During this period, VA-65 was assigned 18 aircraft and 28 pilots.

The last three days of August were devoted to Air Group training exercises conducted in Hawaiian waters.



September

North Korean troops had driven American and South Korean troops into a perimeter around Pusan, on the southeast tip of Korea. Allied reinforcements and North Korean over-extended supply lines finally permitted a counter-attack to break out of the Pusan perimeter.

5 September

Carrier strikes were scheduled for Kunsan and other coastal areas as part of an invasion deception. The fleet carriers *VALLEY FORGE* and *PHILIPPINE SEA*, and the escort carriers *BADOENG STRAIT* and *SICILY* were off shore during this period.

12 September

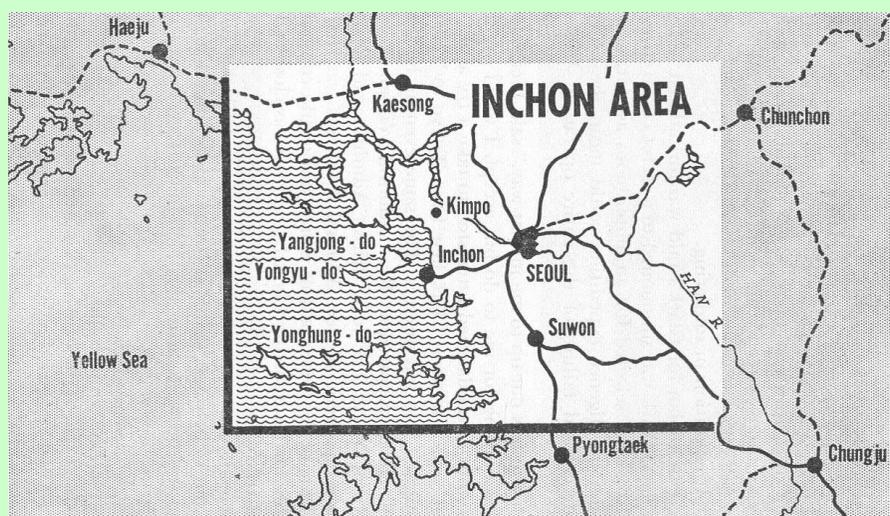
Both *BOXER* and typhoon *KEZIA* arrived off Japan at the same time, forcing *BOXER* on a 400-mile southerly diversion to Naha, Okinawa for offloading the spare aircraft.

13 September

Bombardment of the island fortress of Wolmi-Do on the north side of Inchon harbor began. This Island had a commanding view of the entire harbor and city, and being neutralized was critical for the main landings.

14 September

BOXER arrived in Sasebo with two hours of daylight for loading ammunition. The ship departed at dusk.



15 September

The invasion of Inchon began at 0630 when the first ground units went ashore on Wolmi-Do Island and it was declared secure at 0807.

Air Group Two flew their first strikes near Inchon at 1420 (local time). *BOXER*, however, damaged her #4 reduction gear just before turning into the wind. She used three engines for the remainder of the line period.

- 17 September Ens. R. R. SANDERS, of VA-65, was rescued helicopter after he made a forced landing in his damaged aircraft behind enemy lines.
- 19 September President Truman asked for Louis Johnson's resignation as Secretary of Defense. The poor readiness of military units deploying to Korea was probably a major factor.
- 20 September Ltjg C. E. SEEMAN, of VA-65, was listed as MIA after his plane crashed in enemy territory. His status was changed to KIA on 7 September 1951.
- 1 October CVG-2 launched a successful strike against hidden revetments and an electrical power plant east of Pyongyang.
- 2 October VA-65 made a successful strike against a railroad bridge at Sinanju, 40 miles north of the North Korean capital.



Deck launch of an early AD-4 (2 guns) with a typical combat load, circa November 1950. This particular aircraft belonged to VA-115 aboard *USS Philippine Sea* (CV-47)

- 3-14 Oct. CVG-2 enjoyed R&R in Yokosuka while *BOXER* entered dry-dock for reduction-gear repairs.
- 15 October *BOXER* and CVG-2 rejoined Task Force 77 in the Sea of Japan.
- 22 October *BOXER* headed for Yokosuka for 6 days of off-loading and R&R before steaming for Pearl Harbor and another two days of R&R.
- November UN forces occupied most of North Korea and were within 50 miles of the Yalu River.
- 11 November *BOXER* and CVG-2 returned to NAS Alameda.
- 13 November VA-65 began training 16 replacement pilots
- 15 November VA-65 began a 30-day leave period for 50% of the officer and enlisted personnel.
- 26 November Chinese units, estimated at 250,000 troops, launched a major ground attack south of the Yalu River.
- 2 December VA-65 was called back from leave to mobilize, with CVG-2, for immediate return to Korean waters.
- 4 December CVG-2, including VA-65 departed NAS Alameda for NAS San Diego.

On 4 December, Ens. Jesse Brown, at the time the Navy's only Black Naval Aviator, flying a VF-32 F4U from *LEYTE* was hit in the oil cooler by small-arms fire. Within minutes, the Corsair's engine seized and Jesse was forced to make a dead-stick landing in 6500-foot terrain. Jesse survived the landing, but the bent fuselage trapped him in the cockpit and the aircraft began to burn.

Jesse's wingman, Ltjg Tom Hudner, made a wheels-up landing near Jesse's aircraft and tried without success get him out of the twisted cockpit and put out the fire. A short-time later, Marine Captain Charlie Ward arrived in his HO3S-1. The two men tried to rescue Jesse, still with no success. As darkness approached, the two men had to leave – Jesse was then unresponsive.

On 5 December a division of Corsairs from *LEYTE* dropped their load of napalm, giving Jesse a Viking funeral. Tom Hudner was awarded this nation's highest military honor for his effort.

- 6 December CVG-2, including VA-65, embarked in *USS VALLEY FORGE (CV-45)* with newly acquired AD-2s.
- 7 December *VALLEY FORGE* departed for the Western Pacific. Of the squadron personnel on leave, only one officer and four enlisted were unable to return before sailing.
- 16 December *VALLEY FORGE* arrived in Yokosuka.
- 20 December *VALLEY FORGE* departed Yokosuka for the Sea of Japan.
- 21-22 Dec. *VALLEY FORGE* conducted two days of refresher air operations for CVG-2. Most pilots had little flying time since October.
- 23 December CVG-2, with VA-65, embarked in *VALLEY FORGE* rejoined Task Force 77 for air operations near Hungnam. It was a whole new war against Chinese “volunteers” who had unexpectedly crossed the Yalu River in November.

1951 Commander in Chief = Harry S Truman

- January Communist troops pushed well south to about the 37th parallel, again occupying Seoul, Inchon, and Osan. Here, the advance stalled and began to fall back towards defensive positions along the 38th parallel.
- 3 January Ensign E. J. RICHTER, of VA-65, bounced after landing and floated into the aft gun mount, shearing off the right wing, but with no injuries to the pilot.

Later that day, Ensign Clarke NASH, of VA-65, and Lt. Maurice BEALIEU, of VC-35, had a minor mid-air collision, but both pilots landed safely.
- 7 January CDR Robert W. RYND relieved CDR D. M. White as CAG-Two. The agenda included an awards ceremony from the first *BOXER* deployment
- 19 January *VALLEY FORGE*, with CVG-2, departed Point Oboe for Sasebo, Japan and ten days of R&R.
- 1 February *VALLEY FORGE* returned to Point Oboe, but with bad weather hampering flight operations. However, one day the ship found some clear weather off Pusan while the enemy was near Osan.
- 2 February Ensign C. O. HITCHCOCK, of VA-65, went into the barrier after failing to drop his hook for landing. His mistake was overlooked by the LSO and his assistants.
- 15 February AN J. L. Pierce, a VA-65 ordnance man, was injured in the foot by a 20mm round accidentally fired from an AD-4N that made a wheels-up landing after a hydraulic failure.
- 26 February *VALLE FORGE* departed for Yokosuka and Radm. E. C. Ewen presented awards the CVG-2 personnel.
- 11 March *VALLEY FORGE* returned to Point Oboe.
- 21 March ENSIGN John B. SHANK, of VA-65, made an emergency landing at Wonju airfield after his hydraulic pump caught fire in flight.

On the same day, Lt(jg) Rex R. BERGLUND’s AD-4Q was hit by anti-aircraft fire near Munsan, causing the 20mm ammunition in his wings to catch fire and explode. Despite a complete radio failure and several hundred holes in his wings, he executed a wheels-up landing at Seoul airfield without injuries to the pilot or passenger. The airfield had been in enemy hands a few days earlier.

Pvt. Pierce, USMC, was waiting orders to flight training and was the passenger in Berglund’s aircraft. Pierce had never flown before, and RAdm Ewen requested the flight.

On this one flight, Pierce experienced a catapult shot, AAA fire, a wheels-up landings, and the smell of Korea up close. After returning to “Happy Valley,” Pierce expressed an even greater desire to fly.

- 26 March *BOXER*, with CVG-101, arrived to relieve *VALLEY FORGE* and CVG-11 which at the time, was aboard USS *PHILIPPINE SEA* (CV-47). Thus, CVG-11 and CVG-2 were to swap ships.
- On this same day, RAdm Ewen presented combat awards to CVG-2 pilots.
- 28 March CVG-2 attempted a flyaway transfer to *PHILIPPINE SEA*. Heavy seas made things difficult. After one VF-111 Panther rammed through the barriers and caused Class B damage to one VA-65 aircraft and minor damage to several other aircraft, the effort was aborted.
- 29 March In port at Yokosuka, the transfer of CVG-2 aircraft and equipment to *PHILIPPINE SEA* was completed and *VALLEY FORGE* steamed eastward the next day.
- 2 April Two VF-191 F9F-5Bs were launched with bombs from USS *PRINCETON* (CV-37) for the first use of jet fighters as bombers.
- PHILIPPINE SEA*, with CVG-2, departed Yokosuka for Point Oboe, but with Commander Seventh Fleet embarked.
- 5 April Flight operations resumed as before.
- 8 April *PHILIPPINE SEA* and the rest of the fleet departed Korean waters for a show-of-force in the Formosa Straits.
- 9 April CVG-2 and VA-65 were engaged in an exercise to determine the effectiveness of napalm spread on water and gave the ship's Gunnery Department some practice in tracking erratic aircraft targets
- 11 April A max-effort parade was flown along the Chinese Coast from Foochow to Amoy.
- President Truman relieved General MacArthur for insubordination. MacArthur was replaced by General Ridgeway.
- 13 April A similar parade was flown along the west coast of Formosa. CDR Phillips flew VAdm. Martin to Tai-Pae for a conference.
- 16 April The fleet returned to Korean waters.
- ENSIGN Elwood E. BREY, of VA-65, was listed as MIA after his plane crashed and exploded behind enemy lines, near the town of Pa-up west of Wonsan. His status was changed to KIA on 22 April 1954.
- 18 April The air group and squadron participated in an all-day strike against Chinese Army headquarters pin-pointed near Hamhung. VA-65 flew 41 of the 140 sorties and put an estimated 184,000-pounds of ordnance on the target.
- 25 April Ens. D. S. SAUNDERS and Ltjg C. S. PARKER had a mid-air collision near Ch'orwon. Both landed at Seoul airfield. Ltjg PARKER's landing was uneventful and he returned to the ship after some emergency repairs. However, Ensign. SAUNDERS, missing 4½-feet of a wing, was necessarily fast on a short runway, but completed the landing wheels-up without injury.
- 1 May Eight VA-195 AD-4s launched from *PRINCETON* for a successful torpedo attack on the Hwachon Dam.
- 4 May *PHILIPPINE SEA* departed for Yokosuka, some R&R and replacement aircraft.
- 15 May *PHILIPPINE SEA* returned to Point Oboe.
- 19 May Ltjg Rex R. BERGLUND hit the barriers after engaging a late wire on landing.

28/29 May Five separate missions with 8-10 aircraft were flown against a ridge near Inje. Two of these flights were lead by LCDR Roy GEE and LT(jg) Eugene J. CARROLL, of VA-65. After the last mission, over 1,000 enemy troops were reported killed by air after friendly troops took the ridge without firing a single shot.

LCDR Roy Gee later served as Operations Officer to VX-3 at Atlantic City, and then became CO to VA-25 (later VA-65), in CVG Six, at NAS Oceana.

Ltjg Eugene Carroll took command of the modernized *USS Midway* in 1970.

29 May *USS BON HOMME RICHARD* (CV-31) arrived at Point Oboe.



VA-65 officers with AD-4Q as backdrop, circa 1951

30 May *PHILIPPINE SEA* set course for Yokosuka after VA-65 transferred four aircraft to VA-702 aboard *BOXER*.

1 June VA-65 flew sixteen of the remaining eighteen aircraft to Fasron 11 at NAS Atsugi. *PHILIPPINE SEA* departed Yokouska in the afternoon for San Francisco.

Homeward bound from Yokosuka. From 1 August 1950 through 30 May 1951, VA-65 had received and transferred 65 aircraft, flown a variety of AD-2, AD-3, and AD-4 aircraft on 1718 sorties (1645 combat) and expended 3,126.4-tons of ordnance.

It should be noted this ordnance consisted of 1,762 napalm bombs, 2,816 rockets, 8,740 fragmentation bombs, 295 2,000-lb bombs, 807 1,000-lb bombs, and 1,143 500-lb bombs. This is significant because most ordnance was loaded by hand (human muscle) in all kinds of weather.

9 June *PHILIPPINE SEA* passed under the Golden Gate Bridge at noon and soon tied up at NAS Alameda for a joyous welcome home.

21 June VA-65 received two AD-2 aircraft and prepared to move NALF Santa Rosa, California for training.

1 July CDR RYND had departed for other duty.



Aerial view of NAAS Santa Rosa, circa 1951

25 August *USS ESSEX* (CV-9), newly modernized under SCB-27A, began combat operations. The F2H-2 Banshee, flown by VF-172, made its combat debut. This modernization included removal of the flight deck gun

turrets, an 8-foot increase in the ship's beam, three ready rooms on the 2nd deck, and H-8 catapults with jet blast deflectors. However, the ship was still a straight-deck carrier.



Lake Champlain F2H-2 approaching the ramp with a hung rocket on the right wing, circa 1953

- 30 August CDR ARTHUR L. DOWNING assumed command of CVG-Two. CDR Downing received three Navy Crosses for his extensive service during WW-II. He was CO of VB-14 in *WASP* during the Battle of Leyte Gulf in 1944.
- 31 August **CDR GORDON A. SHERWOOD** relieved CDR R. J. PHILLIPS as Commanding Officer VA-65. During the Battle of Midway (4 June 1942), then LT(jg) Sherwood, led *USS YORKTOWN*'s VB-3's second division during the attack on *Soryu*.
- The squadron continued training for the remainder of 1951.
- 13 September Lt(jg) R. C. MESSERSCHMITT was killed in a crash during simulated dive bombing exercises at Fallon.
- 25 November VA-65 completed field carrier qualifications and deployed aboard *BOXER* for day and night carrier qualifications. Bad weather delayed qualifications, and the squadron barely completed day qualifications in three weeks.
- December Upon return to Santa Rosa, a second detachment was sent to Fallon for further weapons qualifications.
- At Fallon, Ens. E. J. RICHTER was killed in an AD-1 while participating in bombing exercises.
- 11 December *VALLEY FORGE* began combat operations with ATG-1, an unofficial air group composed of squadrons "borrowed" from other air groups to get around congressional limit on the number of air groups. The purpose was to shorten deployment periods and reduce combat exposure.

Then Ltjg Harry Ettinger, flying a VC-35 AD-4NL for *VALLEY FORGE*, was shot down on 13 December. In late January 1952, he was "allowed" to escape as bait for a local guerilla unit operating in North Korea, controlled by the U.S. Army. On 2 February 1951, the guerillas had moved Harry near the coast, but he was in a bad-way physically and a helicopter rescue became necessary. Chief Aviation Pilot Duane Thorin and his HU-1 Unit 13 were aboard cruiser *USS ROCHESTER* off the coast got the nod.

A couple of Army intelligence officers were involved and the rescue effort was botched beyond belief. Two other helicopters came, but Harry and his would-be rescuers were already captured and would spend the rest of the war in a POW camp near the Yalu River. Harry, and his two crewmen, were released during Operation Big Switch in 1953. Harry would later become CO of VA-25 for his third war in a much warmer climate.

However, the way Harry tells the story it is extremely funny, even when you know it wasn't!

1952

Commander in Chief = Harry S Truman

- 11 January Sent a detachment to NAS Alameda to deploy aboard *USS BON HOMME RICHARD* (CV-31) for carrier qualifications,

25 January	Last element of detachment returned to NALF Santa Rosa after carrier qualifications.
6 February	Deployed to NAS Alameda to embark in <i>BOXER</i> .
8 February	CVG-2 and VA-65 departed NAS Alameda in <i>BOXER</i> for its third Korean tour.
13 February	<i>BOXER</i> arrived in Pearl Harbor. CVG-2 aircraft flew off to NAS Barbers Point for additional weapons training.
15 February	CVG-2 aircraft recovered aboard <i>BOXER</i> .
1 March	<i>BOXER</i> departed Hawaiian waters for Yokosuka.
10 March	<i>BOXER</i> arrived in Yokosuka.
16-18 March	Conducted operational training off the east coast of Japan.
28 March	<i>BOXER</i> departed Yokosuka for Korean waters.
31 March	CVG-2 conducted familiarization flight and first strikes over the east coast of Korea.
13 April	At 0600 and again at 1200, the squadron launched 18 AD-4s against military targets near Chongjin.
18 April	LCDR Walter P. NEEL, of VA-65, was declared KIA after his plane crashed 20 miles northwest of Wonsan. His port wing was observed to shear off and no chute was seen.
23 April	Ensign Warren E. McELHENY made an emergency landing at K-18 after his aircraft was heavily damaged from ground fire. His planes was transferred to Japan for repairs.
	Ensign William R VIDETO's aircraft was hit by ground fire while flying at 6,000-feet south of Wonsan. After landing aboard, it was determined Ensign Videto's plane had 107 holes from pinhead to basketball size.
30 April	<i>BOXER</i> departed Point Oboe for Yokosuka.
2 May	<i>BOXER</i> arrived in Yokosuka.
12 May	<i>BOXER</i> departed Yokosuka for Point Oboe.
15 May	<i>BOXER</i> arrived at Point Oboes and resumed combat operations.
16 May	Three squadron aircraft participated in a Rescap for a downed USAF pilot south of Wonsan. These planes had to break the 1500-foot rule while strafing to protect the downed pilot.
22 May	The squadron participated in an all-out strike on the City of Wonsan, with each plane carrying a 5,000-lbs bomb-load.
26 May	<i>BOXER</i> departed Point Oboe for Yokosuka.
28 May	<i>BOXER</i> arrived in Yokosuka and moored to buoy 10 in the harbor.
5 June	The Red Alert was sounded and the ship went to General Quarters. Although many were in their bunks, The squadron was at their GQ stations in less-than three minutes.
9 June	<i>BOXER</i> departed Yokosuka for Point Oboe.
12 June	<i>BOXER</i> arrived at Point Oboe and resumed combat operations.
17 June	LTJG Richard C. ROWE and ENSIGN Dale FALER, of VA-65, both were listed as MIA after their planes were hit by AAA while attacking targets in the City of Hamhung.

	It was later determined that ROWE's plane had plunged into the ground and exploded. His status was changed to KIA on 29 December 1953. FALER's plane had disintegrated in flight and a chute was seen. He was later reported as a POW.
23/24 June	VA-65 and CVG-2 flew successful coordinated strikes against the Suiho hydroelectric plant on the Yalu River. Three other plants were similarly hit by other carriers.
2-5 July	VA-65 participated in highly successful strikes and combat operations were smooth and efficient. However, it was during this period the squadron experienced two barrier crashes, proving the flight is not over until the aircraft is parked and the engine shut-down.
6 July	<i>BOXER</i> departed Point Oboe for Yokosuka.
8 July	<i>BOXER</i> arrived in Yokosuka for R&R.
14 July	The keel of <i>USS FORRESTAL (CV-59)</i> was laid at New Port News shipyard. This ship was initially designed as a straight-deck carrier, but was redesigned with an angled-deck during construction.
21 July	<i>BOXER</i> departed Yokosuka for a three-day operating period at Point Oboe. During this period, the squadron flew simulated strikes against Johnson AFB and Misawa AFB.
24 July	<i>BOXER</i> departed Point Oboe for Yokosuka.
26 July	<i>BOXER</i> arrived in Yokosuka for R&R.
1 August	<i>BOXER</i> departed Yokosuka for Point Oboe. VA-65 planes were spotted for Operation Pin-wheel to assist in maneuvering the ship as she steamed out to sea.
6 August	At 0630 a major shipboard fire resulted in the death of squadron mate, AIRMAN APPRENTICE I. CANALES. (See official report of the <i>BOXER</i> Fire in Delta Pattern.)
9 August	<i>BOXER</i> departed Point Oboe for Yokosuka. Memorial services were conducted for the fire victims.
11 August	<i>BOXER</i> arrived in Yokosuka. The ship's crew, including VA-65, worked 16-hour days to get the ship ready for combat operations again.
23 August	<i>BOXER</i> departed Yokosuka for Point Oboe.
26 August	<i>BOXER</i> arrived at Point Oboe and resumed combat operations.
2 September	VA-65 pilots flew their last combat missions of the deployment as <i>BOXER</i> departed Point Oboe for Yokosuka.
4 September	VA-65 flew twelve aircraft to NAS Atsugi for transfer to Fasron 11 pool.
6 September	<i>BOXER</i> arrived at Yokosuka.
8 September	VAdm Clark presented awards to CVG-2 for combat actions.
9 September	<i>BOXER</i> departed Yokosuka for Pearl Harbor.
17 September	<i>BOXER</i> arrived at Pearl Harbor.
19 September	<i>BOXER</i> departed Pearl Harbor for NAS Alameda.
25 September	<i>BOXER</i> and VA-65 returned to NAS Alameda.
1 October	CV and CVB aircraft carriers were designated CVAs.
3 October	The United Kingdom tested a nuclear device.

- 22 October On leave to his home in Salt Lake City, Utah, **CDR GORDON A. SHERWOOD** passed away unexpectedly. There is a memorial plaque for CDR Sherwood on *The Walkway* at the University of Utah.
- LCDR M. R. NOVAK became acting Commanding Officer.
- 28 October **LIEUTENANT COMMANDER H. M. THOMPSON** assumed command of VA-65. LCDR Thompson was previously a member of CVG-2 staff and had flown with the squadron during the previous training cycle and deployment.
- 5 November CDR PAUL C. LOVELACE relieved CDR A. L. DOWNING as CAG-2.

1953 **Commander in Chief = Harry S. Truman**

1 January **The Squadron's 10th birthday**



Unimproved since WW-II, *USS BOXER* is steaming off Korea, circa July 1953. F9F Panthers, F2H Banshees, F4U Corsairs, and AD Skyraiders are on the flight deck.

- 12 January Test operations began aboard *USS ANTITAM* (CVA-36), the Navy's first (semi) angled-deck carrier.
- 20 January Dwight D. Eisenhower was sworn in as President and Commander in Chief. The retired five-star General was 62-years of age and graduated from West Point in 1915.
- 5 March Joseph Stalin, totalitarian leader of the USSR, died.
- 21 May An AD-4 launched from NAS Dallas with a 10,500-lb bomb load, a useful load of 14,491-lbs.
- 27 July An Armistice was signed ending the 37-month Korean War. The original boundary between North and South Korea became a DMZ.
- 3 August The squadron's fourth Westpac deployment, with CVG-2, was aboard *USS YORKTOWN* (CVA-10) under peace-time conditions, flying AD-4B and AD-4NA (radar removed) aircraft. The squadron flew exercises with the USAF out of Japan and the Nationalist Chinese Air Force on Taiwan.



USS SICILY (L) and USS YORKTOWN (R) at Yokosuka, circa February 1953.

SICILY has an AF ASW squadron and YORKTOWN has CVG-2 embarked.

The ADs are spotted for Pin-Wheel, using their engines to help maneuver the ship.

12 August The Soviet Union detonated a thermo-nuclear warhead.

1 October *HORNET* completed its SCB-27A modernization at the New York Naval shipyard. This was the last of nine ships so modernized. Other ships began modernization to SCB-27C and SCB-125 standards later in this decade.

In June 1953, the United States Navy had 19 (+8) active fleet carriers (CVA/CVL) and 10 active escort carriers (CVE) out of a total force of 326 warships. The number of fleet carriers and total warships continued to climb until 1963. Then, guess what happened...

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