CARRIER AIR
WING SIXTEEN
On 28 November 1942, Carrier Air Group Sixteen was commissioned at NAS Quonset Point. Component squadrons were VB-16, VF-16, VT-16, and VS-16. Six months later the Air Group was ready for sea and had its shakedown concurrent with the shakedown of the USS LEXINGTON.

The Group returned to NAS Quonset for advanced training and in June of 1943 again boarded the USS LEXINGTON and proceeded to Pearl Harbor via the Panama Canal. Three months later the Air Group was in combat with the enemy. In September, the Group carried out strikes on Tarawa, in October Wake Island was hit, and in November 1943, Sixteen sent 29 Japanese planes down in flames. Two weeks later in a raid on Kwajalein, the Group's Hellcats, outnumbered three to one, blasted 20 Japanese planes from the air and destroyed three more on the ground. Meanwhile, the bombers and torpedo planes were damaging two enemy cruisers and sinking a cargo ship. In addition, the dive bombers knocked out 20 enemy aircraft.

Two months later, in February 1944, the USS LEXINGTON returned to Pearl Harbor where the Air Group boarded her again and they were off for another engagement with the enemy. During April, the Air Group made repeated strikes in support of the landings on Hollandia, and later raided the enemy stronghold at Truk when Sixteen accounted for seventeen more Japanese aircraft with a loss of four to the Group. On 19 and 20 June, the Group shot down its share of the 400 enemy aircraft destroyed in the famed "Marianas Turkey Shoot."

A month later the Group rejoined at NAS Air Station Wildwood, New Jersey, composed of VB-16, VF-16 and VT-16. The training cycle was repeated and in January 1944 after the addition of VB-18, the Group boarded the USS BON HOMME RICHARD for shakedown and by April had returned to the Pacific. From Pearl Harbor, the Air Group moved to forward bases and in mid-June 1945 embarked on the USS RANDOLPH and became part of Task Force 38. Through July and August, Sixteen made repeated attacks upon the Japanese mainland and shipping in the Sea of Japan, beating back Jap's last ditch opposition, until word was received of Japanese acceptance of surrender terms. The Air Group was returned to the East coast aboard the USS RANDOLPH in October of 1946. The Group was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for action aboard the USS LEXINGTON from September 1943 to July 1944.

On 1 September 1960 Air Group Sixteen was recommissioned at Naval Air Station, Cecil Field, Florida with five component squadrons: VF-161, F-38 Demons; VF-162, F6A Skyscrapers; VA-163 and VA-164, A4D Skyhawks; and VA-165, A4H Skylancers.

In September 1961 Air Group Sixteen traveled across the United States to its new home at U.S. Naval Air Station, Lemoore, California.

Air Group Sixteen, in June of 1963 proudly participated in a fire power demonstration for the late President John F. Kennedy. August 1963 found Sixteen embarked on the ORISKANY sailing to the far East. During the 1963 WestPac deployment, the Air Group was redesignated Attack Carrier Air Wing Sixteen. This deployment was also the last for VF-161's F-38 Demons. VF-161 and VA-165 were assigned to other Air Wings. For the coming operating cycle, Marine All-Weather Fighter Squadron 212 and VA-162 became members of the Air Wing Sixteen, USS ORISKANY team.

On 5 April 1965, Air Wing Sixteen deployed to the Western Pacific aboard USS ORISKANY for eight and one-half months, six months of it being on the line.

During his deployment, Air Wing Sixteen unleashed its fury for the first time since World War II, in support of the policies of the United States in Southeast Asia. In short order, the pilots and men advanced to the combat environment and were soon operating 12 to 15 hours a day, 7 days a week to strike against targets in North and South Vietnam. Over 12,000 combat sorties were flown, more than any carrier had flown to date in a single combat deployment including World War II and Korea. In addition, the Air Wing also recorded 14,800 arrested landings—an all-time record. In doing so, pilots flew an average of 2,525.4 flight hours per month. Air Wing Sixteen also became the Navy's most decorated air unit while fifty-five pilots became 'combat centurions' by flying more than 100 combat missions. The Air Wing dropped 9,997 tons of ordnance and fired over 513,000 rounds of 20mm ammunition on communist targets in North and South Vietnam. The Air Wing averaged up to 130 sorties a day delivering over 100 tons of ordnance.

Upon arrival in the South China Sea in June 1966, Carrier Air Wing Sixteen was committed with other U.S. forces to support the Republic of Vietnam in combating Communist aggression in Southeast Asia. The courage, aggressiveness, and determination of the pilots and men of CVW-16 significantly contributed to the successful combat operations conducted by the Task Force and won them their second Navy Unit Commendation. The highly successful cruise was marred by the tragic fire on the morning of 26 October 1966. The Air Wing lost 20 men, including the Air Wing Commander, CDR Rodney B. Carter. However, as tragic as the fire was, the Air Wing proved again that its teamwork and dedication to the task at hand was equal to the task as its men heroically risked their lives clearing Hanger Bay. One of planes and bombs and undoubted entered the fire area to rescue trapped shipmates. In all 37 men were recommended for awards for their heroic actions by the fire.

On 14 July 1967, Air Wing Sixteen onboard USS ORISKANY began five line periods of extended air strike against North Vietnam which characterized Air Wing Sixteen's third combat cruise. These line periods were highlighted by the highly emotional rescue of LCDR Verch, VF-162, from enemy territory, all out strikes against major airfields and targets for which some four Navy Crosses were awarded, and a fifteen minute dog fight climaxing in the dramatic shoot down of a Mig 17.

On 31 January 1968 Air Wing Sixteen onboard the USS ORISKANY completed one of its most successful combat tours and for it received its third Navy Unit Commendation Citation.

On 1 February 1969, Air Wing Sixteen deployed aboard USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14) for its fourth combat cruise to the Western Pacific with the following units: Atkrons 112, 87, and 25; FF-111 and 112; VAQ-130; Det 14, VAW-111; Det 14, VFP-63, Det 14A and MC-1; Det 14, A-1H, A-1J, and A-4S. After training and Operational Readiness Inspection in the Hawaiian area, a well knitted ship/Air Wing team sailed west to share four difficult line periods on Yankee Station. Air Wing Sixteen briefly took part in Task Force "71", one of the biggest task forces ever since World War II for the support of the Korean conflict in late April 1965. Air Wing Sixteen will soon complete its current deployment and its squadrons and detachments will return to their home ports for rest and leave.
CVW-16
CAPT C.W. Cates
CAG-16
CDR J.E. Smith

CARRIER AIR WING - 16 STAFF

CDR T.O. Nations
LT R. Ludena
LT J.A. Lair
LT C.R. Williams
LT D.G. Pearcy

LCDR H.F. Buchberger
LTJG M.T. Sanford
WO-1 G.D. Stephenson
LTJG D.E. Yates
VA-87
CDR T.E. Dunlop CO
CDR W.H. McCall CO
2 May 1969

GOLDEN WARRIORS

LCDR H.B. Chase  LCDR P.N. Midgarden  LCDR R.P. Nicolls  LT R.D. Sibold  LT J. Baker

LTJG M. Mears  LTJG F. Ameel  LTJG J.J. Mazach  LTJG J.J. Coonan, Jr.  LTJG J.H. Hiltabidle

LTJG J.M. Schreiner  LTJG W.T. Lindsay  LTJG F. Richardson  LTJG C.R. McRae

Air Wing Sixteen 257


Air Wing Sixteen 259
MIDDLE ROW L-R: AMS3 J. Silva, AMH3 R. Crawford, AE1 P.A. Lowell, ATRAN J.C. Flickinger, AQB2 M.M. Reisinger, AQB1 E.L. Pust, AMS2 L.H.
VA-112
CDR T.L. Gatewood CO
CDR F.J. Slyfield XO

BRONCOS

LCDR Hill
LCDR A.C. Newbury
LCDR E. MacAskill, Jr.
LCDR J.K. Schoenfeld
LCDR W.A. Dougherty

LT J. Croteau
LT L.H. Gower
LTJG A.A. Thorstad
LTJG S.L. Webb
LTJG R.D. Brenning

LTJG E. Shipe
LTJG G.W. Fiske
LTJG J.E. Lones
LTJG L.E. Hansen
LTJG F.L. Nolta
FIST OF THE FLEET

LCDR M.F. Hendrix
LCDR D.E. French
LCDR A.J. Finnerty
LCDR J.M. Scuggin
LT S.L. Spear

LT R.H. Underhill
LT J.P. McMahon
LTJG W.H. Skinner
LTJG J.C. Antonio
LTJG L.M. Starr

LTJG J.D. Distad
LTJG C. Taylor
LTJG M.R. Sherman
LTJG G.A. Wilmot
LTJG W.D. Linch
VF-111

CDR J.L. Finney CO

CDR C.G. Dimon CO

CO 23 JUNE 1969

SUNDOWNERS

LCDR D.A. Baker  LCDR N. Donovan  LT R.H. Kiral  LT C.G. Statlin  LT H.J. Risseeun

LT J.B. Best  LTJG J.E. Laughter  LTJG C.B. Scott  LTJG D.D. Kardell  LTJG K.R. Elliot
VF-162

CDR J.A. Muka, Jr. CO
CDR R.G. Conaughton XO

HUNTERS

CDR A.P. Fancher  LCDR T.D. Tyler  LCDR L.P. Walsh  LCDR J.P. O'Neill  LT R.L. Punches

LT J.M. Braly  LT J.E. Shaw  LT W.C. Moody  LT J.K. Kesler  LT J.B. Cannon
VFP-63 DET-14

LCDR F.A. Grant, Jr.

EYES OF THE FLEET


LT L.R. Mortimer  LTJG J.S. Nixdorff
