







# Airtevron Five Reflects On Nineteen Years Of Test, Evaluation

## June 18 Marks Anniversary For Outstanding TEV Squadron

On June 18, VX-5 will celebrate its nineteenth year of existence in the business of testing and evaluating weapons systems for the fleet.

Commanded by Capt. C. W. Fritz, the squadron is under operational control of COMOPTEVFOR, and is known formally as Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Five.

Nineteen years in commission has produced an enviable record of achievement for the versatile unit.

Originally organized at Moffett Field during the deepest throes of the Korean conflict, the squadron's mission has remained virtually the same.

Since it was commissioned in June, 1951, programs that have come under the cognizance of this outstanding organization have run the gamut from earlier attempts at evaluating sophisticated missile systems to advanced air weapons systems.

Under the leadership of Cdr. T. J. Walker, VX-5's first Commanding Officer, the Squadron began its task of finding the most effective method for the delivery of nuclear and conventional weapons under all conceivable conditions.

By the time VX-5 was ordered to China Lake in 1956 by the Chief of Naval Operations, the Squadron was already being hailed as "the Navy's top test squadron" and its importance had increased as the Navy's role in nuclear warfare progressed.

Capt. F. B. Gilkeson, Commanding Officer at the time of the move to China Lake, directed the two-week moving operation, designed to bring VX-5 to the Naval Weapons Center (then NOTS), to take advantage of the excellent desert flying weather, the instrumented test

ranges, and proximity to Michelson Laboratory's technical facilities.

Capt. Gilkeson spoke for the squadron's 30 officers and 200 enlisted men the day after their arrival on July 1, 1956: "We are indeed happy to be aboard. We have had a very fine reception here, and it is exceptionally pleasing to us to be assigned to the Navy's largest ordnance installation to carry out our testing program."

By August the squadron's trademark, a green tail stripe with white "XE" on VX-5 aircraft, had become familiar to China Lake residents and can still be seen today. The aircraft of those early years, however, F-9 Cougars, F-2 Banshees and F-3 Skyknights, have been replaced by more complex A-7 Corsair II's, F-4 Phantoms, and A-6 Intruders. The only aircraft to run through all of the squadron's 14 years at China Lake is the A-4 Skyhawk, which arrived late in 1956 and is still a vital part of VX-5 testing.

PHOTOS BY  
VX-5 Photographer  
PHAN G. Smith.

Today VX-5 is comprised of 38 officers, 275 enlisted men and 13 aircraft at China Lake and 8 officers, 80 enlisted men and 3 aircraft at the squadron's detachment at Oceana, Virginia. Det O specializes in operational tests with the A-6 Intruder.

VX-5 prosecutes between 15 and 20 operational evaluations a year.

To relate the results of these tactical tests to COMOPTEVFOR and the Fleet, VX-5 publishes several types of reports. Among them are formal project reports, which are submitted to COMOPTEVFOR for approval and distribution; Advanced Evaluation Notes, interim reports which are mailed directly to the Fleet; and the Bat Bulletin, an informal question-and-answer periodical.

VX-5 also maintains the Tactical Manuals for the A-4, A-7, A-6 and parts of the F-4 manuals. These TACMAN's give a pilot a ready reference for the correct handling of his aircraft and are updated at frequent intervals.

Among VX-5's current projects are the evaluation of the A-7E, electronic countermeasures against surface-to-air missiles, explosive devices to clear helicopter landing zones, as well as evaluations of a number of air-to-ground weapons.



ATC DON MYERS (r) and ADJ3's Larry Olson (l), and Gary Webb of VX-5's Detachment at Oceana, Virginia, repair an engine on an A-6 Intruder. Det O has a complement of three A-6's and conducts tests of

the Grumman twin-engine all-weather bomber. More than 90 officers and enlisted men are stationed at Oceana. Detachment project officers frequently fly to China Lake to participate in A-6 project briefings.



IN THE OPERATIONS OFFICE—SN John Spinelli, (l), SN George Funk, and Schedules Officer, Lt. Jon Bromberg, prepare the next day's flight schedule. The squadron averages 12 flights per day, most of them operational tests of weapons or aircraft.



AVIONICS TECHNICIANS—From l to r, AT1 J. J. McKenna, ATN3 George Williamson, ATN2 P. Holt, and AQ1 R. Griffin, inspect one of the avionics and computer systems in an A-7. More than 40 avionics technicians work to keep communications, navigation and fire control systems operating at peak efficiency.



AN A-7E, with Maj. Jerry Hoblit, Air Force Liaison Officer at VX-5, heads for home following an operation test of weapons delivery. VX-5 has conducted operational tests of the A-7 since 1966 and began testing the A-7E last fall.



FOLLOWING HIS FLIGHT, Maj. Hoblit confers with plane captain AN Dave Chudy while AOAN Jack Hastings checks a pylon in the background. Data from Maj. Hoblit's flight will be used to compile the VX-5 operational evaluation as well as apprise the Air Force of the test results. Also assigned to VX-5 are Marine Liaison's Maj. Bill Stein and Maj. Bennie Rinehart.



SN DANNY MOORE (seated) and YN1 Frank Cruz transfer rough draft corrections to the final copy on the Magnetic Tape Selectric Typewriter, used for all reports submitted to COMOPTEVFOR. Changes are typed onto the tape itself and the machine then types the smooth copy at a rate of 200 wpm.



AN ORDNANCE CREW loads a 750-lb. bomb aboard an A-7 for a live ordnance test. Approximately 85 per cent of all VX-5 flights carry either live or dummy ordnance for used on the test ranges. The A7E allows a pilot to strike in any weather.



A PROJECT DEPARTMENT BOARD MEETING—Operations Evaluation Group rep Jack Sweeney, Maj. Hoblit, LCdr. Harvey Eikel, LCdr. Bill McGowen, and LCdr. Perry Chambers discuss findings for VX-5's evaluation of the A7E aircraft. Board meetings such as this often take three hours or more, and conclusions are passed on to Command.



THE FINAL PRODUCT—VX-5 Projects Director, Cdr. E. C. Parker (l), submits a final report to Cdr. Bert Creighton, Executive Officer (r), and finally to Capt. Charles W. Fritz, VX-5 Commanding Officer. After Capt. Fritz signs the report, copies are printed and mailed to COMOPTEVFOR in Norfolk, Virginia. Last year VX-5 published more than 50 evaluations on a variety of subjects and procedures.