



VF-213 on a combat air patrol mission on 3 November 1959. The squadron was on a Pacific cruise aboard the USS Lexington (CVA-16) at the time. Notice the checkerboard pattern has been reduced to a narrow band above the tail code. (U.S. Navy via Nick Williams Collection)



A VF-213 in full burner prepares to launch from the USS Lexington (CVA-16). (Tailhook Association via CDR Doug Siegfried)



A two-ship formation of VF-213 Skyraiders over NAAS El Centro, California, on 14 April 1958 at the start of the Third Annual Naval Air Weapons Meet. (U.S. Navy via Nick Williams Collection)



The markings worn by VF-102 during the Mediterranean cruise aboard the USS Forrestal (CVA-59) in the fall of 1958. The diamondback scheme was painted on the dorsal spine, and the tail code was AK. (Mark Nankivil Collection)



A two-ship formation of VF-102 Skyraiders from the USS Forrestal (CVA-59) in April 1960. The squadron used the tail code AJ as part of Carrier Air Group Eight during this cruise. (U.S. Navy via Nick Williams Collection)



The early markings of VF-102 Skyraiders were very simple. The squadron used a tail code of AQ and there were no markings on the upper right wing. (U.S. Navy via Nick Williams Collection)

participated in Operation Blue Skies, a 7th Fleet exercise in the Taiwan Straits, where they provided Combat Air Patrol.

In January 1959 VF-213 flew to NAAS Fallon for additional weapons training, returning to the *Lexington* in March for another series of carrier qualifications. On 25 April 1959 the squadron boarded the *Lexington* for their final WestPac cruise.

In Hawaii VF-213 underwent an Operational Readiness Inspection and received an admirable score of 94.48. From July to December 1959 the WestPac cruise continued and VF-213 participated in three exercises, which included simulated strikes on Taiwan and the southern coast of Japan. During the cruise 14 VF-213 pilots logged more than 1,000 hours, and 10 pilots logged their 100th arrested landing. On 14 December 1959 the