HM-12

1978

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HELICOPTER MINE COUNTERMEASURES SQUADRON FOURTEEN (HM-14)
NAVAL AIR STATION
NORFOLK, VIRGINIA 23511

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T. H. Hoivik
T. H. HOIVIK

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Director of Naval History

COMMAND HISTORY

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I. ORIGIN AND COMMISSIONING.

As Airborne Mine Countermeasures came of age and proved it's value in Vietnam and Egypt, several organizational changes in the Mine Warfare Community evolved to better accomodate both surface and airborne mine countermeasures (AMCM). COMNINEWARFOR was changed from type command to a field activity directly under the Chief of Naval Operations; the Mobile Mine Command (MOMCOM) and Mine Flotilla Two (MINEFLOTTWO) were disestablished. The AMCM detachments, formerly under MOMCOM, became AMCM units Alpha and Bravo and absorbed the command and control functions previously held by MOMCOM and MINEFLOTTWO.

In mid 1975, the AMCM units shifted their operations from Charleston, S. C. to NAS Norfolk to co-locate with HM-12 under the Commander Helicopter Sea Control Wing ONE. Under this organizational structure HM-12 and the two AMCM units remained singularly unique and separate commands. HM-12 provided the AMCM Sikorsky RH-53D aircraft and the AMCM units provided the mine sweeping equipment. Each AMCM unit also performed staff type planning responsive to the total mine countermeasures scenerio including directing surface and subsurface efforts prior to airborne mine sweeping operations. During operations and training deployments, the AMCM units exercised command and control of both the AMCM detachment and the mine sweeping ships.

As the AMCM community grew in size and operational experience, the need for self-contained, operational squadrons became apparent and HM-14 was conceived.

II. MISSION AND ORGANIZATION

On 12 May 1978, AMCM Unit ALPHA and HM-12's Detachment ONE were combined and redesignated Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron FOURTEEN, the Navy's first independent and self-contained AMCM squadron. Commander James P. Bullock of AMCM Unit Alpha was relieved by Commander Robert E. Jones in ceremonies at hangar LP-13, NAS, Norfolk.

Under the Command of Helicopter Sea Control Wing ONE, HM-14 combines all the capabilities and responsibilities associated with an AMCM unit and an aircraft squadron; this includes mission systems and equipment, navigation networks and the computer hardware and software required for conducting a total mine sweeping operation. HM-14 possesses the officers and men to operate and maintain the eight Sikorsky RH-53D aircraft, five MK 105 hydrofoils and other equipment as well as providing the expertise required for planning, executing and evaluating the effectiveness of a complete mine sweeping operation.

III. CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS/EVENTS

12 MAY — AMCM Unit Alpha redesignated HM-14 in ceremonies at Hangar LP-13, NAS Norfolk. Commander R. E. JONES became the first Commanding Officer of the squadron. HM-14 immediately begins preparation for the upcoming Nuclear Weapons Acceptance Inspection (NWAI), the Wing's corrosion inspection and Mediterranean deployment. Seven aircraft are received initially from HM-12 along with five MK-105 hydrofoil sleds received from AMCM Unit Alpha.

13 JUN — A squadron representative attends the RH-53D Ground support Equipment Review Conference. Attendees discuss GSE Items peculiar to the RH-53D as well as equipment shortages and possible solutions.

26 JUN — HM-14 receives a NWAI technical assist visit from FASOTRAGRULANT in preparation for the upcoming inspection.

29 JUN — Squadron members attend and AMCM ILSMT Conference in Washington D. C. and discuss AMCM equipment problems with NAVAIR.

10-13 JUL — CHSCW-1 holds a corrosion inspection on squadron aircraft, MK-105 sleds and the corrosion control program.

18-20 JUL — Two thousand man-hours spent in preparation for the Nuclear Weapons Acceptance Inspection culminate in individual ratings of outstanding in all sub-areas and an overall score of satisfactory.

4 AUG — Technicians begin the installation of Collins VHF radios and Raydist in-cockpit displays in squadron aircraft.

8-12 AUG — NAVAIRLANT Maintenance Advisory Team assists in reviewing the squadrons' maintenance organization and procedures. The team pointed out problem areas and recommended courses of action.

20-25 AUG — The teardown of aircraft and MK-105 sleds is conducted for the upcoming deployment.

1 OCT — The first of six USAF C-5 transport aircraft depart Norfolk for Marseille, France to begin HM-14's first deployment. Following the buildup of aircraft at Marseille, the squadron flew to Toulon for operation Olives Noires with the French, Italian, German, Greek and U. S. Forces. The squadron was based at B. A. N. Saint Mandrier and conducted operations in the adjoining bay. This exercise required coordination between AMCM and surface forces and involved sweeping in actual harbors and approach channels. Following this, the squadron combined the use of flatbed trucks and selflift of personnel in moving to La Spezia, Italy. Operating out of Luni Naval Air Base, the Squadron participated with Italian surface mine sweeping forces in Operation Crazy Horse conducted nearby in the Bay of La Spezia. Both exercises were highly successful and afforded all

III. CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF OPERATION/EVENTS (CON'T)

personnel the opportunity to excercise the many facets of the squadron's primary mission in the forward deployed environment. The squadron returned to the U.S. again via C-5 transport; the last of the men and equipment returned on 20 December.

IV DEPARTMENT BRIEFS

A. OPERATIONS

1. Since the establishment of HM-14 in May 1978 this squadron has successfully participated in two major minesweeping exercises and achieved outstanding results in a Nuclear Weapons Acceptance Inspection. Although established with a relatively small number of mission qualified personnel, the squadron subsequently established an aggressive in-house training program to meet readiness requirements. All of these achievements were completed within the first six months of the squadron's establishment and have led to a significant increase in squadron training and readiness.

a. HM-14 successfully completed a Nuclear Weapons Acceptance Inspection in July 1978, just two months after its establishment. This milestone achievement was reached as a result of hundreds of manhours of dedicated preparation and training. Service records were screened and background investigations initiated to induct personnel into the Personnel Reliability Program, and all inductees attended a one week FASOTRAGRULANT Nuclear Weapons Loading School. A periodic training syllabus was written for the requalification of loading crews as well as all program associated instructions, including a quick-response accident/incident folder, PRP, and nuclear weapons safety and security instructions. Laudatory comments written by the COMNAVAIRLANT inspection team and the subsequent adoption of the squadron training syllabus into the FASOTRAGRULANT training program reflected the success of the squadron effort. Finally, the Nuclear Weapons Officer received the Navy Commendation Medal for his efforts.

b. Beginning with squadron establishment, HM-14 set forth a rigorous training program to meet personnel qualifications and readiness requirements. Flying a total of 1209 flight hours and accumulating 240 hours of aircraft tow time, a sufficient number of mission commanders and aircrewmen were qualified. Additional local area and in-house training produced two qualified air controllers, utilized for helicopter control during minesweeping operations, and a data analysis team necessary for the planning and execution of the mine sweep plan. All FRS, FRAC, and FRAMP students reporting to the squadron were enrolled in the appropriate HM-14 syllabus necessary to obtain final squadron qualification. The result of all formal and on-the-job training was a significant increase in the operational readiness of the squadron.

QUALIFICATIONS

AIRCREW	TRANSFERRED AT REDESIGNATION	DESIGNATED IN 1978	PRESENT
CREW CHIEF	0	3	3
1ST CREWMAN	4	5	6
2ND CREWMEN	15	5	16
TRAINEES	21		19
TOTAL	40		44
PILOTS			
AHACs	7	4	9
HACs	9	0	5
H2Ps	9	0	9
PQMs	7		5
TOTAL	32		28

IV DEPARTMENT BRIEFS

A. OPERATIONS (CON'T)

	HOURS OF TRAINING CONDUCTED
Officer Ground Training	920.5
Aircrew Ground Training	636.0
Nuclear Weapons Training	406.2
Formal Schools	3550.0
Technical Training	1691.5
General Military Training	17781.3
Total	26491.6

B. SAFETY NATOPS

During 1978, the Safety Department was heavily involved in all aspects of squadron life. The results of an all hands effort toward Safety consciousness was the ability of the squadron to redesignate, build-up and deploy without experiencing an aircraft accident. Programs were established to promote safety in all areas of endeavor.

The Safety Department began its program with an extensive effort to make the working spaces, hangar and flight line safer places to work and the aircraft a more reliable maintenance product. This program was started by a series of scheduled safety inspections by the Air Station General Safety Office and the Air Station Fire Department. The results of these inspections yeilded current status and assisted in developing guidelines for improvement.

During 1978, an aggressive NATOPS program at the squadron was maintained. This program included regularly scheduled NATOPS lectures and examinations for pilots and aircrewmen at weekly training sessions. A formal lectures series ensured refresher training in aircraft systems and emergency procedures. Accurate records were maintained on pilots and aircrewmen to ensure currency and identification and correction of deficiencies in the squadrons' training program.

APPENDIX A

AMCM Mediterranean deployment 78 commenced 1 October with a six C-5/one C-141 phase arrival in Marseille, France. All aircraft were operationally ready by 7 October and HM-14 helicopters self-lifted all squadron personnel to St. Mandrier, France 10 October to participate in exercise Olives Noires 1978.

Exercise Olives Noires was conducted with surface MCM units operating in exercise areas near Marseille, while the airborne MCM element, HM-14, was located and operated approximately 40 miles away in the Toulon area. AMCM forces were assigned by the French OTC to clear two minefiled areas as well as two connecting channels. Exercise objectives for all forces were to increase operational readiness, study problems created by trying to sanitize an area with minimal disturbance to port traffic and to train national commands in planning and coordinating a joint operation. The exercise mission for AMCM forces was first, to determine if mines were present and second, to clear the designated areas of mines as completely as possible within exercise time limits.

All exercise objectives were successfully met. On 6 November HM-14 commenced an air/land movement by helo and flatbed trucks to Luni, La Spezia, Italy to participate in a bilateral (Italian and U. S. Navy) mine laying and minesweeping exercise. Designated exercise Crazy Horse, this exercise was conducted in the La Spezia Gulf with the following objectives:

(1) Evaluate effectiveness of combined operations between SMCM and AMCM forces.

(2) Compare the relative effectiveness of SMCM versus AMCM.

(3) Train Italian and U. S. Navy personnel in planning and executing joint exercises.

(4) Train Italian national command in the proper employment of U. S. Navy AMCM.

(5) Determine capability of experimental mine devices to resist AMCM sweep equipment.

(6) Determine AMCM and MSC sweep equipment parameters.

(7) Determine AMCM Helo and MSC navigational error.

Once again AMCM forces successfully achieved all exercise objectives. Upon completion of exercise Crazy Horse HM-14 made preparations to return to CONUS. The majority of personnel departed Pisa, Italy by two C141 lifts, 4 and 6 December while aircraft/equipment teardown and loadout was conducted in Naples, Italy. All aircraft, personnel, and equipment had returned to NAS Norfolk by 20 December.