



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON
ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE
FPO NEW YORK 09501

1976

1975

IN REPLY REFER TO:

CARAEWRON ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE SQUADRON
HISTORY FY 1975 - 1976

CARAEWRON ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE deployed almost immediately in 1975, leaving its home port of Norfolk, Virginia with three F-1B's on Jan 3 aboard the USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (CV-42). Six months in the Mediterranean as part of the 6th Fleet ended with the squadrons return on July 16. During those six months, the squadron established a deserved reputation as an outstanding Airborne Early Warning unit capable of accomplishing its mission, despite such obstacles as high NORS items and a lack of qualified maintenance personnel. All aircrew and maintenance training was accomplished within the squadron as the replacement air group F-1B syllabus had been terminated with the beginning of transition to the E-2C aircraft.

During the deployment, VAW121 tripled its number of air intercepts from its last sea tour, completing 481. The squadron was able to reach a four-year record in flight hours for FY 1975 primarily due to the high level of operations during the cruise. Among the many and varied tasks assigned the squadron were the following exercises:

- a. 23-24 January 1975 - MISSELEX NAEI missile range in Sardinia, Italy providing range surveillance and CAP control.
- b. 17-28 February 1975 - Tasked to provide airborne radar coverage and middleman support for vertical on-board delivery (VOD) operations. This required continuous radar surveillance and communications coverage over a 400 mile area for CH-53 helicopters flying between Sigonella and Kithira anchorage.
- c. 6-12 May 1975 - PASEX with USS ROOSEVELT and USS FORRESTAL, providing AEW and SSSC coverage.
- d. 25-30 May 1975 - Exercise "Quick Look", providing range surveillance and CAP control.
- e. 18-26 June 1975 - Exercise "Dawn Patrol", a combined Allied Forces Southern Europe Exercise, providing AEW/SSSC coverage for both the carrier task group and the amphibious operation area.

With the return to Norfolk in July, VAW121 concluded a highly successful fiscal year for 1975 in terms of both operations and safety, as evidenced by the figures below:

CARAEWRON ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE
SQUADRON HISTORY FY 1975-1976 (CONT'D)

a. Total flight hours flown day/night	1246/279
b. Total sorties flown day/night	438/156
c. Total carrier landings day/night	323/93
d. Boarding rate day/night	98%/99%
e. Squadron LSO landing grade average	3.5
f. Total number air intercepts	591
g. Total number air-to-surface intercepts	1361
h. Accidents during FY 75	0
i. Accident free flight hours embarked	930
	Disembarked 595
	FY 75 Total 1525

VAW121 was also selected as a pilot squadron for Phase II of the Equal Opportunity Race Relations Program and received a letter of appreciation from CINCLANTFLT upon successful completion of the program. The squadron continued to be involved in a variety of community programs in the Norfolk area, including Scouting, the Virginia Beach Symphony, Tidewater Assoc. of Hearing Impaired Children, and numerous church activities. While deployed aboard the USS ROOSEVELT (CV42), VAW 121 was in charge of the CVW6 Cosa Materna Orphanage fund-raising drive and also organized volunteer painting, repair and clean up working parties for the orphanage.

The squadron changed leadership on 31 July 1975, when CDR Paul E. Ellison relieved CDR Joseph T. Niedbala as Commanding Officer. Taking over as Executive Officer was LCDR James A. WAGNER.

On Aug 29, 1975, BuNo. 148146 was transferred to NARF Pensacola for display at the Naval Aviation Museum. Commencing Sept. 15, 1975 initial transition pilots began RAG training with RVAW-120 and NFO training began on Oct 3, 1975. Maintenance personnel were sent TAD to schools in Norfolk and San Diego. During Fiscal Year 1976, over eighty (80) quotas for E-2C related schools of more than one week were filled by VAW 121.

Personnel remaining at the squadron continued to fly and maintain the E-1B during this period until January 1976 when the last two E-1B's were transferred to Davis-Monthan AFB Arizona. BuNo. 148904 was transferred on January 14, 1976. On Jan 19, 1976, the last E-1B on the East Coast, BuNo. 148913, was flown to Davis-Monthan by CAPT R.A. Pettigrew, COMCARAEWW TWELVE and LT [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]. Meanwhile, the first E-2C, BuNo 159502 had been accepted from Grum-

CARAEWRON ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE
SQUADRON HISTORY FY 1975-1976 (CONT'D)

man on 19 December 1975. With the transition to the E-2C also came a move to new quarters, Hangar SP-1 in January of 1976.

With only one E-2C, the squadron nevertheless was able to accumulate 605 hours of E-2C flight time in FY 1976, along with an additional 317 hours in the last E-1B, flying 220 E-2C sorties and 95 E-1B sorties. Due to the transition period, at-sea operations were limited to 6 day sorties, 14.7 day hours and 3 carrier landings - all in E-1B's.

A second E-2C was accepted on 23 April 1976, BuNo 159107 from VAW 125; however, maintenance problems and waiting time for replacement parts severely limited its use. Maintenance operations at the squadron continued despite many periods in which manning levels decreased to 40% due to transition and E-2C school assignments.

The squadron also began a training syllabus for junior pilots in May 1976, resulting in the designation of four Second Pilots and two Third Pilots. When not flying squadron operational flights, VAW 121 flew RVAW-120 crews on 24 NFO training syllabus flights in FY 1976. In order to increase pilot experience for Second Pilots, cross-country flights were regularly scheduled. E-2C's were provided for air shows at NAS Brunswick in August 1976 and the Cleveland National Air Show in September 1976. Aircraft briefings and demonstrations were given for prospective E-2C pilots at NAS Corpus Christi on 10 June 1976 and a Passive Detection System demonstration for the USAF AWACS Wing at Tinker AFB was held in October 76. Overall, a total of 33 cross-country or overnight flights were completed.

On 12 August 1976, the squadron again received a new Commanding Officer, as CDR James A. Wagner relieved CDR Paul E. Ellison. LCDR David E. Beyman became the new Executive Officer.

A third E-2C was received by the squadron from RVAW-120 on November 18, 1976, BuNo 159108. With this addition, VAW-121 began preparation for receiving the new ARPS E-2C's in the spring of 1977. Several visits to the Grumman Aerospace factory in New York were made by the CO and squadron representatives during the fall in connection with the upcoming arrivals.

In late FY 1976 and calendar year 1976, the squadron again compiled an outstanding record.

Number of accidents during FY 76/7T	1.0
Accident free flight hours-FY 76/7T Embarked	15
Disembarked	923
Since last major accident	16,475(DEC'66)

CARAEWRON ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE
SQUADRON HISTORY FY 1975-1976 (CONT'D)

At the conclusion of the calendar year, VAW 121 had achieved the longest accident-free record in the VAW community, 16,850 hours, with over 800 hours in the E-2C.

Flight time for the calendar year was as follows:

Total Day Hours	696.3
Total Night Hours	147.3
Total Day Flights	238
Total Night Flights	67
Total Day Landings	906
Total Night Landings	294
Total Hours	843.6

OFFICERS ON BOARD VAW 121

FY 1975 .

	<u>DATE RECEIVED</u>	<u>DATE TRANSFERRED</u>
CDR J.T. NIEDBALA-CO		31 JUL 75
CDR J.L. BAYNE-XO		22 JAN 75
LCDR J.A. WAGNER-XO	ON BOARD ENTIRE YEAR	
LCDR [REDACTED]	31 JUL 74	
LT [REDACTED]	ON BOARD ENTIRE YEAR	
LT [REDACTED]		22 NOV 74
LT [REDACTED]		19 NOV 74
LT [REDACTED]	ON BOARD ENTIRE YEAR	
LT [REDACTED]	ON BOARD ENTIRE YEAR	
LT [REDACTED]	ON BOARD ENTIRE YEAR	
LT [REDACTED]	ON BOARD ENTIRE YEAR	
LT [REDACTED]	26 JUL 74	
LT [REDACTED]	ON BOARD ENTIRE YEAR	
LT [REDACTED]	ON BOARD ENTIRE YEAR	
LT [REDACTED]	ON BOARD ENTIRE YEAR	
LT [REDACTED]	ON BOARD ENTIRE YEAR	
LTJG [REDACTED]	ON BOARD ENTIRE YEAR	
LTJG [REDACTED]	31 JUL 74	
LTJG [REDACTED]	ON BOARD ENTIRE YEAR	
ENS [REDACTED]	16 JUL 75	15 SEP 75
CWO2 [REDACTED]	ON BOARD ENTIRE YEAR	

OFFICERS ON BOARD VAW 121
FY 1976

	<u>DATE RECEIVED</u>	<u>DATE TRANSFERRED</u>
CDR J.T. NIEDBALA - CO		13 JUL 75
CDR P.E. ELLISON - CO	31 JUL 75	
LCDR J.A. WAGNER - XO		ON BOARD ENTIRE YEAR
LCDR [REDACTED]		29 MAR 76
LCDR [REDACTED]		ON BOARD ENTIRE YEAR
LT [REDACTED]	19 NOV 75	
LT [REDACTED]	27 MAR 76	
LT [REDACTED]	19 MAR 76	
LT [REDACTED]		1 MAR 76
LT [REDACTED]		14 DEC 75
LT [REDACTED]		19 NOV 75
LT [REDACTED]		15 SEP 75
LT [REDACTED]		ON BOARD ENTIRE YEAR
LT [REDACTED]		15 AUG 75
LT [REDACTED]		1 AUG 75
LT [REDACTED]		17 DEC 75
LT [REDACTED]		31 OCT 75
LT [REDACTED]		ON BOARD ENTIRE YEAR
LTJG [REDACTED]		ON BOARD ENTIRE YEAR
LTJG [REDACTED]		ON BOARD ENTIRE YEAR
LTJG [REDACTED]	19 MAR 76	
LTJG [REDACTED]	23 APR 76	
ENS [REDACTED]	8 MAR 76	
CWO2 [REDACTED]		ON BOARD ENTIRE YEAR