



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

1983

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IN REPLY REFER TO:  
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From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron  
ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE  
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)  
Subj: Command History; submission of  
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12C

Encl: (1) Command History  
(2) ~~Periodic Operating Report, 1 January to 31 December 1983~~  
(3) ~~Periodic Operating Report, 1 February to 31 March 1983~~  
(4) ~~Periodic Operating Report, 1 May to 31 June 1983~~  
(5) ~~Periodic Operating Report, 1 June to 31 July 1983~~  
(6) ~~Periodic Operating Report, 1 August to 31 October 1983~~  
(7) ~~Periodic Operating Report, 27 April to 2 December 1983~~

1. Enclosure (1) contains the Command History from 1 January to 31 December 1983 as required by reference (a), with the exception of the chronology and narrative.

2. Enclosures (2) through (7) are squadron Periodic Operating Reports for the period 1 January to 31 December 1983 and are submitted in accordance with reference (a) to reduce duplication of effort.

*T. Wendt*  
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Director of Naval History

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## VAW-121 BLUETAILS

Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE (VAW-121) traces its origin, along with all other VAW squadrons, to Project Cadillac, begun in 1942 as a means of providing an airborne radar relay platform. By June 1945 the first group of extensively modified AEW TBM-3W AVENGERS was conducting trials onboard USS RANGER. The war ended before these first AEW units could see action, however, Fleet Aviation Electronics Training Units (FAETU's) were established on both coasts and continued to train pilots, operators, and maintenance personnel on AEW equipment. VAW-1 (West Coast) and VAW-2 (East Coast) were formed to replace the FAETU's in July 1948. Barely a year later VAW-2 was redesignated as VC-12, and relocated to Quonset Point, Rhode Island. The TBM-3W was replaced with the AD-3W SKYRAIDER, or "Guppy Spad", beginning in 1948. When the Korean War broke out in 1950 VC-12 was fully outfitted with the AD-3W's. During the course of the war VC-12 provided additional aid to VC-11 by sending dets to deploy on West Coast carriers bound for Korea.

After the war VC-12 continued to operate an improved version of the "Guppy Spad", the AD-5W, until 1960 when they were traded for the new WF-2 TRACER, later redesignated as the E-1B. The squadron was redesignated VAW-12 in 1960 and moved from Quonset Point, Rhode Island, to NAS Norfolk, Virginia in April 1962.

In 1966 the first E-2A for the East Coast arrived and in 1967 the Chief of Naval Operations directed that separate squadrons be formed out of VAW-12 under the cognizance of a functional wing. On April 1, 1967 the simultaneous creation of Carrier Airborne Early Warning Wing TWELVE, RVAW-120, VAW-121, VAW-122, and VAW-123 occurred. VAW-121 continued to operate the E-1B in dets on USS INTREPID and USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT until the last det was disestablished in 1973. From then until 1975 VAW-121 deployed exclusively on FDR as the sole remaining Fleet E-1B squadron. When VAW-121 gave up its E-1B's in 1975, the squadron made the transition from the oldest AEW aircraft in the Navy's inventory, to the newest, the E-2C HAWKEYE incorporating the new Advanced Radar Processing System (ARPS).

Deploying aboard the newly commissioned USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN 69) in January 1978, VAW-121 became the first E-2C ARPS squadron to operate from a carrier. From January through July 1979 VAW-121 made the first E-2C ARPS squadron overseas deployment. During this deployment the "Bluetails" set records for the E-2C which continued to enhance VAW-121's reputation for superior performance throughout the fleet. In recognition of this superior performance, VAW-121 was awarded the Commander Naval Air Force U. S. Atlantic Fleet Battle Efficiency "E" for 1979, as well as the 1979 Chief of Naval Operations Airborne Early Warning Excellence Award and the CNO Aviation Safety "S". From April to December 1980 the Battle "E" "Bluetails" again deployed aboard "IKE", this time to the Indian Ocean. During the eight and one-half month cruise, the squadron set new monthly, quarterly and annual flight hour records for the E-2 community. The squadron was again recognized for its outstanding performance by being awarded a second consecutive Battle Efficiency "E" for 1980 as well as the 1980 AEW Excellence Award and the 1980 CNO Aviation Safety "S".

After a six week turnaround VAW-121 deployed to the NATO Base in Keflavik, Iceland, from February to May 1981 operating in support of Iceland Defense Force to detect, track, and, as necessary, intercept any unknown aircraft approaching Iceland.

Following their return from Iceland and subsequent workups that summer, VAW-121 and IKE deployed to the North Atlantic for the largest NATO exercise in over twenty years. During OCEAN VENTURE/MAGIC SWORD/OCEAN SAFARI, VAW-121 set new community records by flying over 630 hours in thirty days and remaining continuously aloft for 23 days during that period. The Bluetails returned to the Mediterranean Sea in January 1982 and garnered unprecedented third consecutive CNAL Battle "E" and CNO AEW Excellence Award's, both firsts for the VAW community. Returning from the deployment during which the Bluetails were involved in everything from joint NATO exercises to overseeing the evacuation of Americans from Beirut, Lebanon, the Bluetails embraced a short post deployment standdown before participating in Operation Thunderbolt, working with the Customs Service.

Late in 1982, VAW-121 was back at sea in IKE for Refresher Training, and during the first months of 1983 they operated in the Caribbean Sea in preparation for a seven and one-half month Mediteranean deployment.

The 1983 Med deployment was one of the most rigorous in the squadron's history. It included operations near Libya, and several multi-national exercises including BRIGHT STAR, DISTANT DRUM, and DISPLAY DETERMINATION. At one point, the Bluetails spent 95 consecutive days at sea, most of which off the coast of Lebanon. Unexpected events in that troubled nation caused the squadron to maintain an exceptionally high state of readiness and flexibility. During the deployment, VAW-121 flew over 2400 hours and exceeded 76,000 accident-free flight hours- the best safety record in the VAW community and third best in carrier aviation.

Since its inception in 1948, VAW-121 has been involved in two wars and provided airborne early warning and battle management from the South China Sea to Iceland and from the Indian Ocean to Florida and Nevada. Few squadrons have seen the broad spectrum of operations experienced by the "Battle E Bluetails" of VAW-121, and fewer still have consistently met the challenges with such outstanding performance.

Enclosure (1)

## MISSION OF COMMAND

To provide the task force Officer in Tactical Command (OTC) with new data on all targets entering the surrounding airspace. In addition to this mission, the squadron is capable of performing the following tasks:

1. Detect airborne targets within its surveillance envelope.
2. Determine position, course, speed, altitude and IFF status of each target.
3. Transmit target data to Tactical Data System (TDS) units.
4. Fighter Interceptor control.
5. Aircraft control/flight following
6. Surface threat defense.
7. Missile shoot exercise control.
8. Hummer controlled carrier approaches
9. Search and rescue (SAR) coordination.

Compatibility of the above tasks is set forth in tactical doctrine. Tasks are assigned at the discretion of the OTC.

# GRUMMAN E-2C HAWKEYE

## DIMENSIONS

Wing Area	700 sq ft/65.03 sq m
Wing Span	80 ft 7 in/24.56 m
Overall Length	57 ft 7 in/17.55 m
Height	18 ft 4 in/5.59 m

## GENERAL DATA

Crew	5
Power Plant	
Number	2
Manufacturer	Allison
Type	T56-A-425
Rating (Maximum Power)	4910 ESHP (each)

## PERFORMANCE

Minimum Take Off Distance	1890 ft/576 m
Take Off Over 50 ft/ 15.24 m Obstacle	2520 ft/768 m
Service Ceiling	30,800/9388 m
Maximum Speed	325 kt/602 km/hr
Cruise Speed (ferry)	269 kt/498 km/hr
Stall Speed (landing)	74 kt/137 km/hr
Ferry Range	1394 nm/2582 km

## WEIGHT

Weight Empty	37,678 lb/17,091 kg
Max Fuel (internal)	12,400 lb/5625 kg
Max Take Off Gross Weight	52,000 lb/23,392 kg