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1987



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON  
ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE  
FPO NEW YORK 09501-6406

IN REPLY REFER TO:

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From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 121  
To: Director of Naval Histroy

Subj: COMMAND HISTROY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5720.12D

Encl: (1) ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
(1) ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

1. The Bluetails of Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 121 take great pride in accomplishing the Airborne Early Warning mission as part of Carrier Air Wing SEVEN assigned aboard USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN 69).

2. The Commanding Officer since April 1987 has been Ordale Paul Babin, Jr., and the Executive Officer is Edward F. Caffrey, Jr. Together they command 31 officers and 127 enlisted personnel based at Norfolk Naval Air Station, Norfolk, VA. VAW-121 is under the administrative command of Carrier Air Wing TWELVE and the operational command of Carrier Air Wing SEVEN while deployed. Four E-2C Hawkeye aircraft are assigned to VAW-121 with bureau numbers and side numbers; 160703, AG600; 161346 AG601; 161096 AG602; 160987 AG603.

3. Chronology of significant events. VAW-121 participated in several major exercises listed below:

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| a. CVW-7 Weapons DET (Puerto Rico)            | 10-24 Jan       |
| b. Thunderbolt (GITMO)                        | 22-28 Feb       |
| c. Green Flag (NELLIS)                        | 14-28 Mar       |
| d. CVW-7 Weapons DET/CNO Project 080 (FALJON) | 01-23 May       |
| e. Shakedown (USS DWIGHT D EISENHOWER)        | 15 Jun - 23 Jul |
| g. Advanced Phase (USS DWIGHT D EISENHOWER)   | 20 Oct - 23 Nov |



In CY-87 VAW-121 spent 92 days underway and an additional 78 days away on detachment.

VAW-121 submitted 10 software changes affecting LINK-4A, LINK-11 and radar video selections in an overland environment. The Bluetails also achieved several milestones in 1987 as follows:

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- attained twenty-one years mishap free flying and no alpha or bravo flight/flight related mishaps.

- achieved 100% readiness in all primary mission areas with all crews "combat ready."

- LCDR ██████████ passed 3000 hummer hours and 200 traps.

*O. P. Babin Jr*  
O. P. BABIN, JR

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1.0 (U) SQUADRON EMPLOYMENT

10-24 JAN	CVW-7 DETACHMENT ROOSEVELT ROADS - PR
02-04 FEB	ANTIETAM SEA TRIALS, EGLIN AFB, FLA
11-12 FEB	I-HAWK SVC'S
19-20 FEB	MARINE AAWEX
22-28 FEB	THUNDERBOLT, GUANTANAMO BAY, CUBA

2.0 (C) PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT

10-11 MAR	MISSILEX
14-28.	
APR	IKE SVC'S

3.0 (C) OPERATIONS

3.1 (U) GENERAL. This reporting period marked accomplishment of several major milestones in our turn-around training program. The squadron deployed with Carrier Air Wing SEVEN to Naval Station, Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico for a two week dedicated air wing weapons training exercise. Other training events included Fleet Air Superiority Training conducted by Navy Fighter Weapons School at Oceana and Norfolk and a two day AAWEX sponsored by MAG-31 held in the Northern Jacksonville operating area. At the squadron's request, the COMNAVAIRLANT Maintenance Management Team and the staff of COMCAEWING-12 both conducted Maintenance Inspections during February. Service support included a two plane drug interdiction detachment to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, conducted concurrently with FAST and the CNAL Maintenance Management Team visit, and range support for ANTIETAM Sea Trials.

3.2 (C) CVW-7 DETACHMENT The 15 day air wing detachment to Roosevelt Roads was an unqualified success. Training included strike support, basic air intercept control and advanced AIC (F-14 versus helo and F-14 versus A-4 in a jamming environment). The AFWTF EW range facilities provided the first opportunity for several BLUETAIL crews to fully exploit the capabilities of the AN/ALR-73 Passive Detection System. Equally important from the long term training perspective was the completion of air wing missile requirements. BLUETAILS provided range surveillance for nine air-to-air missile exercises and a SHRIKEX. The AFWTF range complex offers an outstanding environment to conduct CVW Missilaxes. The airspace and waterspace available minimizes the number of sorties lost due to fouled ranges. The highlight of the deployment was a highly successful open ocean live fire HARM/HARPOONEX conducted against a target hulk, the ex-HOFFMAN. The large missile hazard space, in excess of 20,000 square miles, combined with VX-5 requirements to fire in the emitter main lobe made range management particularly challenging. S-3's equipped with hand held marine band radios were essential in clearing the area of transiting surface vessels. By launching the E-2 three hours prior to the scheduled time on target, the crew was able to assess the surface picture prior to the launch of any other assets and project a realistic revised time on target. Strike aircraft launched to meet the revised time on target and encountered no delays in receiving a "green" range.

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3.3 (U) DRUG INTERDICTION OPERATIONS The BLUETAILS were active in three separate drug interdiction operations. In addition to the two plane detachment to Guantanamo Bay, the squadron provided the mission commander for the first operational USCG E-2C deployment and both the aircraft and mission commander for the second USCG deployment. Overall, BLUETAIL crews enjoyed exceptional success with five interdiction's in 15 days. Key ingredients were inter-agency cooperation among U.S. Customs Service, U.S. Coast Guard and other foreign and domestic law enforcement agencies and an unpredictable pattern of operations. The USCG deployment to Roosevelt Roads, PR coincided with the squadron detachment to Guantanamo Bay. The result was nearly 20 hours of surveillance a day. Multi-site coordinated operations make it difficult for the drug traffickers to circumvent the E-2 surveillance area. Even greater success may be attained as the various agencies gain additional experience operating together.

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1.0 (U) SQUADRON EMPLOYMENT

10-11 MAR	MISSILEX
14-28 MAR	GREEN FLAG, NELLIS AFB
07-08 APR	IKE SVCS
10,14 APR	CNO PROJ 124

2.0 (C) PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT

01-23 MAY	FALLON WEAPONS DET
23 MAY-16 JUN	NORFOLK VA
17 JUN-23 JUL	CVN 69 SHAKEDOWN

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1. (U) OPERATIONS

A. (U) SQUADRON EMPLOYMENT

01-23 MAY CVW-7 TRAINING DEPLOYMENT, NAS FALLON, NV  
24 MAY - 14 JUN INPORT NORFOLK  
15-30 JUN EMBARKED USS EISENHOWER (CVN 69), SHAKEDOWN

B. (C) PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT

01-22 JUL EMBARKED USS EISENHOWER (CVN 69), SHAKEDOWN  
23 JUL - 13 AUG INPORT NORFOLK  
14-26 AUG EMBARKED USS EISENHOWER (CVN 69), REFTRA  
27-31 AUG INPORT NORFOLK

C. (U) FALLON DEPLOYMENT

(1) (U) Ask any Air Wing that's been to Fallon in the last two years and they'll tell you times have changed. The days are gone when a weapons deployment was an ordnance DUMPEX/ACM Derby. In its place is a more structured program focusing on Air Wing strike execution against an Integrated Air Defense System (IADS) of fighters, SAM's and AAA. The goal: fuzed bombs on target with minimum aircraft attrition.

(2) (U) The role of the E-2 has changed also, shifting from passive administrator (a.k.a. "Battle Mountain ATC") to active participant in the strike warfare mission. Clearly, the E-2 has emerged as the only CVBG organic platform that can build a cohesive air picture overland through the fusion of active radar and SIGINT information and pass it to friendly fighters. Without <sup>the</sup>E-2 provided <sup>the</sup>situation awareness (SA), CAP are unable to effectively counter/influence the hostile air threat. As a result, strike aircraft suffer unacceptably high attrition during ingress, in the target area and on egress.

(3) (U) Overland strike is probably any VAW squadron's weakest warfare area. Recognizing our deficiencies, we planned to be ready for Fallon by using every available training opportunity. A two week detachment to Nellis AFB in April in support of GREEN FLAG gave us a chance to practice manual radar detection and tracking of fighter-size targets in an overland environment. An aggressive ground training syllabus re-familiarized all aircrew with current Soviet/Third World surface-to-air missiles and air-to-air platforms, weapons and tactics. Discussions with VF 143 updated everyone on the evolving forward quarter air-to-air missile threat and F-14 counter-tactics. Lastly, we spent a number of hours analyzing charts of the projected operating area, the probable threats and how to best set up and use the APS 138 and ALR 73.

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1. (U) OPERATIONS

A. (U) SQUADRON EMPLOYMENT

01-23 JUL	EMBARKED USS EISENHOWER, CVN-69 (SHAKEDOWN)
23 JUL - 14 AUG	INPORT NORFOLK
14-25 AUG	EMBARKED USS EISENHOWER, CVN-69 (REFTRA)
25-31 AUG	INPORT NORFOLK

B. (C) PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT

01 SEP - 21 OCT	INPORT NORFOLK
21 OCT - 23 NOV	EMBARKED USS EISENHOWER, CVN-69 (CQ/ADVANCED PHASE)

1. (U) OPERATIONS

A. (U) SQUADRON EMPLOYMENT

1 - 5 NOV	USS EISENHOWER (CVN-69) (ADVANCED PHASE)
6 - 8 NOV	PORT VISIT ST THOMAS USVI
9 - 23 NOV	USS EISENHOWER (CVN-69) (ADVANCED PHASE)
24 - 31 NOV	IN PORT NORVA
1 - 9 NOV	USS EISENHOWER (CVN-69) 2 PLANE DET
10 - 31 DEC	IN PORT NORVA

B. (C) PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT

1 - 10 JAN	IN PORT NORVA
11 - 27 JAN	USS EISENHOWER (CVN-69) (BATTLE GROUP PHASE)
28 JAN - 28 FEB	IN PORT NORVA (PCM)
29 FEB	USS EISENHOWER (CVN-69) (ENROUTE MEDITERRANEAN)

C. (C) ADVANCED PHASE

Advanced phase provided numerous opportunities to practice and refine our AAW and ASUW skills. OPTAR constraints frequently prevented overlapping E-2 coverage to support major warfare areas. Instead, E-2's remained "flexible" and often managed conflicting mission taskings such as AEW, WAS, and EMCON recoveries. In spite of limited funding, VAW-121 achieved 100% readiness in all primary mission areas with 5 crews "Combat Ready".

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