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1991

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON
ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE
UNIT 60136, FPO AE 09507-6406

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IN REPLY REFER TO:
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Ser/C 002
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From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 121
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH), Washington Navy Yard,
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Mark F. Klaus
MARK F. KLAUSS

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Command Composition and Organization

The **BLUETAILS** of VAW-121, under the command of CDR Mark F. Klauss, carry on a long and proud tradition with Carrier Air Wing Seven (CVW-7) and USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69). The **BLUETAILS** fly the E-2C Hawkeye airborne early warning and detection aircraft. As one of the five original squadrons onboard IKE, VAW-121 Hawkeyes act as the eyes of the carrier battle group by employing their extended range radar and detection systems. The all-weather E-2C is primarily designed for air defense, but secondary missions include surface surveillance, search and rescue, strike control and communications relay.

VAW-121 has over one hundred and fifty men onboard IKE, including aircrews, administration and maintenance personnel who support and fly five complex early warning aircraft (BUNO 162800,162615,162802,161547 & 161341). The **BLUETAILS** have one of the finest Maintenance Departments in the Hawkeye community and claim the best carrier-based safety record in the Atlantic Fleet with over 25 years and 48,000 hours of mishap free flight operations.

VAW-121 is based at NAS Norfolk, VA and is proud to call Carrier Air Wing Seven and USS Dwight D. Eisenhower their home away from home.

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****VAW-121 1991 CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS****

JANUARY

03-04 Participated in MISSLEX with VFA-131/136
07-29 Participated in FFARP with VF-143

FEBRUARY

05 VF-143 MISSLEX
08 **CHANGE OF COMMAND**
18 MISSLEX with USS Dwight D. Eisenhower
22-28 CVW-7 Strike Detachment, Fallon, NV

MARCH

01-08 CVW-7 Strike Detachment, Fallon, NV
11 Received Battle "E" for Calendar Year 1990
Received AEW Excellence Award for Calendar Year 1990
19-29 REFTRA/CQ Detachment onboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower

APRIL

26-30 CVW-7 Strike Detachment, Fallon, NV

MAY

01-10 CVW-7 Strike Detachment, Fallon, NV
15 Completed restoration and flew 16 month old down aircraft
(BUNO 162615)

JUNE

03-30 Advanced Phase training onboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower

JULY

01-02 Advanced Phase training onboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower
23-31 FLEETEX 4-91 onboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower

AUGUST

01-08 FLEETEX 4-91 onboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower
06 Received fifth E-2C BUNO 161341
09-12 SOCEX 3-91

SEPTEMBER

26 Deployed to Arabian Gulf/Indian Ocean onboard USS Dwight D.
Eisenhower with five aircraft

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****VAW-121 1991 CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS CONT.****

OCTOBER

01-05 FLEETEX 5-91 as Orange Forces vs USS America
13 Transit Suez Canal entering hostile fire zone in support of
Operation Desert Storm
14-22 Saudi/Red Sea exercises
26-27 Omani PASSEX
30 Inchop Arabian Gulf- Relieving USS Abraham Lincoln

NOVEMBER

09-13 Inport Dubai, UAE
14-20 EAGER MACE exercise Arabian Gulf
25 CFE GULFEX/Joint Operations
26-30 Inport Dubai, UAE

DECEMBER

01-02 Inport Dubai, UAE
09-11 CFE GULFEX/ Joint Operations
03-21 Arabian Gulf Operations
22-31 Inport Dubai, UAE

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**** NARRATIVE OF EVENTS FOR 1991 ****

JANUARY: On 03-04 JAN, VAW-121 provided range surveillance and control for a live fire missile shoot with VFA-131 and VFA-136. Although the event was primarily training for the F-18's weapons system, the E-2C's command and control aspect was integral to the exercise.

During 07-09 JAN, VAW-121 provided support for the FFARP exercise with VF-143. This training was designed to refresh the F-14 aircrews with air-to-air combat for which the E-2C provided GCI.

FEBRUARY: Supported live fire missile exercise on 05 FEB for VF-143.

VAW-121 change of command took place at NAS Norfolk on 08 FEB with Commander Mark F. Klauss relieving CDR Mark R. Milliken. CDR Milliken went on to command the Carrier Airborne Early Warning Weapons School in San Diego, CA. CDR Philip S. Pritulsky assumed the duties as Executive Officer.

The third missile exercise of the year took place on 18 FEB with the BLUETAILS providing range surveillance for the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69).

VAW-121 and Carrier Air Wing Seven participated in a strike/weapons detachment to Naval Strike Warfare Center ("Strike U") at NAS Fallon, NV. The entire airwing worked together as a team for the first time since returning home from their last extended deployment. Advanced level training was provided to bring the airwing up to speed on strike tactics and marked the beginning of workups for the next deployment.

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MARCH: Upon return from a successful Fallon Detachment, VAW-121 was awarded the prestigious Battle "E" and AEW Excellence Award for the calendar year 1990. These awards set the standard for excellence in the Hawkeye community.

From 19-29 MAR, the squadron participated in refresher training (REFTRA) and carrier qualifications in the VACAPES and JAX operating areas onboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower. The ship and airwing were reunited for training for the first time since September 1990.

APRIL: The airwing returned to NAS Fallon to complete training that was canceled on the previous detachment due to weather.

MAY: The highlight of the month was the completed maintenance and functional check flight of aircraft 601 (BUNO 162615). The aircraft was transferred to VAW-121 in DEC 90, and following over 6000 maintenance man hours flew its first flight in over 16 months.

JUNE: The entire month was spent on Advanced Phase Training onboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower in the Puerto Rican Operation Areas. The ship and airwing operated as part of the CRUDESGRU 12 battle group for exercises involving all aspects of naval warfare.

JULY: The battle group deployed to the Southern Puerto Rican operating area for FLEETEX 4-91. This phase of workups was the final preparation for the Arabian Gulf/Indian Ocean Deployment 4-91.

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AUGUST: On 06 AUG, VAW-121 accepted a fifth E-2C aircraft (BUNO 161341), to meet any contingency operations during the upcoming Arabian Gulf deployment. This was the first time the squadron would deploy on USS Dwight D. Eisenhower with more than four E-2C Hawkeye aircraft.

The BLUETAILS participated in SOCEX 3-91 providing air control and surveillance to Air Wing Seven aircraft supporting special operation exercises off the coast of North Carolina.

SEPTEMBER: The BLUETAILS stood down the first part of the month preparing for the upcoming extended deployment. On 26 SEP, VAW-121 embarked onboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower as an integral component of Carrier Air Wing Seven for the Arabian Gulf/Indian Ocean 4-91 Deployment.

OCTOBER: During the Atlantic Ocean transit, the Eisenhower Battle Group participated in FLEETEX 5-91 acting as opposition forces against the USS America Battle Group. VAW-121 provided long range surveillance and coordinated strikes from 01-05 OCT.

The IKE continued its expeditious transit through the Mediterranean Sea and the Suez Canal. On 13 OCT, the Eisenhower CVBG entered the Desert Storm theater of operations. During a transit through the Red Sea, the BLUETAILS provided C3I for the battle group in exercises with the Royal Saudi Arabian Air Force.

Transiting around the Saudi Arabian peninsula provided an opportunity for the airwing to practice overland strikes with the Omanis including low level training.

On 30 OCT, the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower transited the Straits of Hormuz, entering the Arabian Gulf.

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NOVEMBER: From 14-20 NOV, CVW-7 supported an amphibious operation billed EAGER MACE. VAW-121 provided strike air control for U.S. Marine forces in Kuwait while maintaining air superiority with fighter control.

On 25 NOV, the BLUETAILS participated in a joint exercise with the U.S. Air Force and the Royal Saudi Arabian Air Force coordinating with AWACS for air-to-air combat training.

DECEMBER: The BLUETAILS supported Arabian Gulf operations all month including numerous joint exercises with both the U.S. and Saudi Air Forces. On 14 DEC, the VAW-121 BLUETAILS surpassed 25 years and over 48,000 hours of mishap free flying, the best "tailhook" safety record in the Atlantic Fleet.

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