



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

IN REPLY REFER TO:

1650  
Ser 00/016  
22 Jan 02

From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning  
Squadron 121

To: Director, Naval Historical Center

Subj: CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON 121 COMMAND  
HISTORY FOR FY 2000

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12G

Encl: (1) VAW 121 Command History for CY 2000

~~(2) Biography of CDR R. W. Oakes, CO, VAW 121~~

~~(3) Biography of CDR M. J. Morris, CO, VAW 121~~

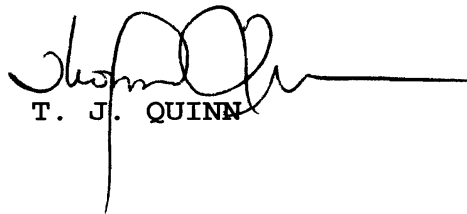
~~(4) Report of Change of Command~~

~~(5) Battle "E" and Michael Burke package for CY 2000~~

~~(6) Annual Evaluation Safety Award package for CY 2000~~

~~(7) Final Operational Information for CY 2000~~

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (7) are submitted.

  
T. J. QUINN

**CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON 121  
2000 HISTORY**

**MISSION:** To safely train professionals in order to provide Airborne Early Warning and Command/Control to the Battle Group Commander in support of National Command Directives.

**COMMAND:** VAW-121

**UIC:** 09467

**ORGANIZATION:** Commanded by Airborne Early Warning Wing Atlantic, attached to Carrier Air Wing Seven onboard the USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN 69)

**COMMANDERS:** Commanding Officer CDR MICHAEL J. MORRIS, USN  
Executive Officer CDR KEVIN W. OAKES, USN

**LOCATION:** NAS Norfolk, Virginia

**AIRCRAFT:** E-2C Hawkeye Group II

**TAILCODE/BUNO:** 600/163538  
601/163694  
602/163697  
603/163539

**CHRONOLOGY**

**January**

25-29 Field Carrier Landing Practice (FCLPs)  
25-27 Carrier Qualifications, USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

**February**

18 Deploy with the USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CV 69) Battle Group (IKEBATGRU)

**March**

01-04 NATO AEW (Magic) PASSEX  
05-09 Balkans Operations  
19-27 Exercise JUNIPER STALLION

**April**

05-09 Fleet Battle Experiment - GOLF  
10-13 Exercise NOBLE SUZANNE  
26-29 Exercise JACK HOWL  
27-30 Balkans Operations

**May**

05-08 Balkans Operations  
20 Transit Suez Canal

|                  |       |  |
|------------------|-------|--|
|                  | 25-29 | Operation SOUTHERN WATCH                           |
| <b>June</b>      | 06-23 | Operation SOUTHERN WATCH                           |
|                  | 10-13 | Exercise NAUTICAL ARTIST                           |
|                  | 29-30 | Operation SOUTHERN WATCH                           |
| <b>July</b>      | 01-14 | Operation SOUTHERN WATCH                           |
|                  | 24-26 | Exercise INDIGO ANVIL                              |
|                  | 28    | Transit Suez Canal                                 |
| <b>August</b>    |       |  |
|                  | 18    | Return to Norfolk with IKEBATGRU                   |
| <b>September</b> |       |  |
|                  | 22-26 | COOPERATIVE ENGAGEMENT CAPABILITY (CEC)<br>Testing |
| <b>October</b>   |       |  |
|                  | 04-11 | STS-92 Space Shuttle Launch                        |
|                  | 22-31 | Counter-Narcotics Operations, Puerto Rico          |
| <b>November</b>  |       |  |
|                  | 01-18 | Counter-Narcotics Operations, Puerto Rico          |
|                  | 28-30 | FCLPs  |
| <b>December</b>  |       |  |
|                  | 01-05 | Operation BRIDGE CUTTER                            |
|                  | 01-08 | FCLPs  |
|                  | 10-18 | USS JOHN F. KENNEDY Flight Deck<br>Certification   |
|                  | 13-15 | CEC Testing  |

## **NARRATIVE**

The Bluetails, as part of Carrier Air Wing Seven (CVW 7), were assigned to the USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CV 69) for the most recent deployment. In December of 1999, the Bluetails passed the 33 years and 64,000 hours mishap free mark, the best safety record in carrier aviation. The tradition of professionalism and teamwork continue in the Bluetails. On our latest six month deployment, VAW 121 supported peace-keeping missions over Kosovo and Albania while operating in the Adriatic Sea. In the Gulf, the Bluetails again supported Operation SOUTHERN WATCH and flew multiple missions over Kuwait in support of strikes against Iraq. The Bluetails provided critical command and control for the first strikes in the EISENHOWER's 22 year history to actually drop bombs on

foreign soil. Having won the second consecutive CNO's Safety "S" award in 1999, VAW 121 continues their tradition of safe operations. VAW 121 is tentatively scheduled to next deploy with CVW 7 aboard the USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV 67) in 2002.

1. Contributions to Weapons System Development:

a. Tactical Laptop. Building on their previous use of the tactical laptop during All Services Combat Identification Training (ASCIET)'99, VAW 121 deployed with two tactical laptops for use by aircrew during missions in both the Balkans Area of Responsibility (AOR) and 5th Fleet/Operation SOUTHERN WATCH (OSW). Squadron pilots used the laptops to increase cockpit situational awareness, enabling them to assist with Surface Search Control (SSC) by monitoring multiple aircraft that were under Bluetail control, assisting with Link-16 management, and as a playback device for OSW missions. The Bluetails developed a squadron Tactical Laptop Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that is available for other squadrons and AEWINGLANT.

b. CEC Testing/Technical Evaluation (Techeval). After returning from deployment the Bluetails provided E-2C support for CEC testing and the CEC techeval onboard USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV 67), assisting in the effort to ensure that CEC systems are installed throughout the fleet and ultimately in the E-2C. The Bluetails in conjunction with Space and Naval Warfare (SPAWAR) designed, developed, and built three networks within JNL 505 to facilitate the testing and evaluation of CEC. These networks were instrumental in the Bluetails 100% connectivity, an achievement obtained by few platforms during testing.

c. Fast Tactical Imagery (FTI). The Bluetails implemented and exercised the capability to relay FTI data from strike-fighters to intelligence analysts on JFK, enhancing the real time intelligence capability of the Battle Group. This ability significantly improved Joint Task Force - Southern Watch Area (JTF-SWA) targeting and Response Option implementation.

2. Contributions to Tactics Development and Training:

a. Air Intercept Control (AIC) Training. As a direct result of a Bluetail initiative, spearheaded by LT [REDACTED]

██████, the training syllabus for all ship-based air intercept controllers will be reviewed and revised to more closely follow the AIC procedures currently taught by VAW 120 and Naval Strike Air Warfare Center (NSAWC) among others. While many have complained about the poor and out-of-date training received by enlisted controllers prior to reporting to the fleet, the Bluetails took action to correct the problem. LT ██████ developed a point paper that was submitted by the Bluetails to CVW 7, USS CAPE ST. GEORGE (CG 71), and Commander Cruiser Destroyer Group Eight (CCDG 8) proposing a complete revision of the training track. This proposal was forwarded up the chain of command and resulted in a conference in November 2000 bringing together fleet users and the schoolhouse leaders. The goal of the conference was to ensure that shipboard controllers are properly trained in the same joint intercept controller procedures used by E-2C controllers and strike-fighter aircrew. This initiative should result in improved readiness throughout the fleet and a significant decrease in the training time required during Tailored Ships Training Availability (TSTA) and Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX) for basic air intercept control training. This will allow strike-fighter aircrew and controllers to begin aggressive and complex training scenarios earlier in the Inter-Deployment Training Cycle (IDTC).

b. NATO PASSING EXERCISE (PASSEX). In January 2000, one month prior to deployment, CCDG 8 received a request from the NATO AEW (NAEW) Force for an exercise with IKEBATGRU. The purpose of the exercise was to provide NAEW aircrew, flying AWACS aircraft, the opportunity to train with a Battle Group prior to conducting real world operations in the Balkans AOR. CCDG 8 tasked VAW-121 with planning every aspect of the three-day exercise, including scheduling events, writing an airplan for the exercise and coordinating exchange visits for NAEW aircrew. These exchange visits allowed Bluetail Liaison Officers (LNOs) to fly aboard the AWACS and NATO crewmembers to fly aboard Bluetail aircraft. VAW-121 developed a challenging series of events that provided excellent refresher training for the CVW 7, as well as giving the NAEW aircrew an excellent introduction to Air Wing tactics and procedures. The exercises included AIC and SSC events, voice and data communications checks, Air Defense Exercises and War-at-Sea strikes against simulated orange ships. The exercise also allowed IKEBATGRU units to

verify communications and link procedures that would later be used in the Balkans AOR. In an after-action report, the NAEW Force commanders stated that they were extremely pleased with the results of the exercise. As a result of Bluetail excellence, NATO AEW PASSEX is becoming a routine event with Battle Groups entering the Mediterranean Sea.

c. Air Defense Exercises. As the liaison between the Air Defense Commander, CCDG 8 and CVW 7, the Bluetails planned and executed ten Air Defense exercises that provided essential air defense training for CVW 7, the Air Defense Commander, USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN 69) and other ships in IKEBATGRU.

d. Current Operations Watch Officer (COPWO) program. VAW 121 was tasked with running the entire Air Wing COPWO program. This included coordinating all required training, scheduling watch officers and maintaining current operations binders that directly improved the efficiency and readiness of the air wing and the battle group.

### 3. Contributions to the VAW Community:

a. Air Defense Liaison. In a new experience for the Bluetails, the Commanding Officer of VAW 121 served as the Executive Agent for the Air Defense Commander in the Eisenhower Battle Group. Whether sitting in the Admiral's Warfare Board, serving as a member of the Battle Group Crisis Action Team or planning Air Defense exercises or operations, VAW 121 was a key player in the Battle Group. The Bluetails set the standard as a representative of the Air Defense Commander, a role that we believe will become standard for VAW Commanding Officers.

b. Balkans Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) Liaison/Red Crown Liaison. Prior to the arrival of IKEBATGRU in the Adriatic Sea there had not been an aircraft carrier operating in that AOR for approximately one year. The CAOC procedures that had developed in that time were not compatible with Air Wing and Battle Group operations. A VAW 121 LNO was key in identifying and correcting interoperability problems, resulting in a complete revision of the Special Instructions (SPINS) and paving the way for successful Air Wing operations for

IKEBATGRU and follow-on Battle Groups operating in the Adriatic Sea. At the same time other Bluetail LNOs were aboard the USS MAHAN and the USS LABOON assisting those ships in their duties as Red Crown. The expertise and efforts of these officers were truly appreciated and demonstrated to the crews aboard these AEGIS destroyers the professionalism, knowledge and skill common throughout the VAW community.

c. JTF-SWA CAOC Liaison. Just as in the Balkans AOR, a Bluetail LNO was essential to successful Battle Group operations in the Persian Gulf. The LNO worked closely with squadron and Air Wing officers to ensure that all IKEBATGRU commitments in support of JTF-SWA operations were properly coordinated. His actions at the quarterly OSW Tactics Review Board and the Mission Commanders Conference led to SPINS changes necessary for vulnerability windows and Response Options consisting of US Navy-only assets. More importantly, he set diplomatic and military processes in motion that resulted in follow-on E-2s flying over southern Iraq. As a result of his efforts, the Bluetails were the primary controllers for three OSW vulnerability windows in addition to picking up control of other missions when scheduled AWACS aircraft were not able to control events.

d. Tactical Tape Cartridges. The Bluetails identified numerous defective tactical tape cartridges (TTC) early in deployment. Working with SPAWAR, the Bluetails identified and documented the cause of the problem and notified the community of this potential problem.

e. Joint Tactical Integrated Data System (JTIDS) Network 243. The day before deployment, the Bluetails received JTIDS Network Library 17 (JNL 17) that included network 243, a network specifically designed for the Balkans AOR. The Bluetails recommended that IKEBATGRU immediately begin operating with this new network. As a result of the testing, the Bluetails and others in IKEBATGRU identified significant problems with this network and its use for Battle Group operations. The Bluetails detailed these problems to Naval Telecommunications Systems Interoperability (NTCSI) in March 2000 to have the deficiencies corrected.

f. Windward Passage Ops. The Bluetails planned, proposed and flew operations in the Western Caribbean

during Counter-Narcotics (CN) operations. These hops were briefed regularly at the twice-weekly CTG 40.7 meetings and included out/ins to Guantanamo Bay and Key West. This strategy allowed the Bluetail aircrew to control various Operation CARIB SHIELD assets performing SSC in the vicinity of Haiti and Jamaica and provided coverage of the Windward Passage. Based on the detection of numerous air and surface targets of interest and the flag-level attention these operations had, flights in West Caribbean will become routine for follow-on squadrons.

g. Maintenance Training. The Bluetails were the driving force in a cross-training program to train over 80 CVW 7 personnel on the basic safety, servicing, launching, and recovery procedures of all Air Wing aircraft. This training has made it possible for any Hawkeye to utilize NAS Jacksonville, NAS Whidbey Island, or NAS Oceana.

h. Required Operational Capability/Projected Operational Environment (ROC/POE) Changes. Lack of an Intelligence Specialist in fleet squadrons has been a problem in the VAW community for years. The Bluetails have attacked this shortcoming head-on with a series of messages and phone calls with the goal of a community ROC/POE change - - as well as a change to individual squadron manning documents -- making the IS rate common to VAW.