

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON
ONE HUNDRED TWENTY FOUR
Fleet Post Office
New York 09501

C O M M A N D H I S T O R Y

1 9 7 3

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

NARRATIVE OF EVENTS

COMMAND ORGANIZATION

- (a) Commanding Officers
- (b) Executive Officers
- (c) Location of Command
- (d) Mission of Command
- (e) Composition of Command
- (f) Squadron Nickname
- (g) Squadron Motto
- (h) Flight Hours/Statistics

Maintenance History

Awards, Citations, and Special Congratulatory Messages

- 1. Awards Received
- 2. Awards Recommended
- 3. Congratulatory Messages
- 4. Citations

Annexes

- 1) Commanding Officer History and Executive Officer History
 - 2) Periodic Operating reports and end of Cruise Report.
-

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

28 DEC - 4 JAN 73 INPORT HONG KONG

4 JAN ENROUTE

5-7 JAN SUBIC BAY PHILIPPINES

8-9 JAN ENROUTE

10 JAN - 2 FEB YANKEE STATION - A few day periods of the midnight to noon schedule were followed by the signing of the Peace Treaty. Strikes continued into Laos until 2 FEB.

3 FEB ENROUTE

4-10 FEB INPORT SUBIC BAY PHILIPPINES

11 FEB ENROUTE

12-16 FEB YANKEE STATION - Air Operations were drastically reduced during this period. The main mission was to support the demining Operations in the North.

17 FEB ENROUTE

17-19 FEB INPORT SUBIC BAY PHILIPPINES

20 FEB - 24 MAR ENROUTE NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

5 MAR INCHOP SECOND FLEET
No scheduled operations were conducted during this transit. Time was utilized for ground training and aircraft preventive maintenance.

21 MAR The Hummers successfully ran 3 aircraft intercepts against 2 Bears attempting an overflight at Bermuda triangle.

24 MAR Arrival Norfolk, Virginia

24 MAR - 29 OCT Naval Air Station Norfolk, Virginia

29 OCT Sorties Vacapes OP Area

30 OCT 7 NOV TYT II JAX OP Area - Efforts were made to establish standard procedures and iron out any difficulties among Air Wing Squadrons during this training period.

8 - 11 NOV Inport FT. LAUDERDALE, FLA.
12-16 NOV TYT III JAX OP Area
17 NOV PRE-ORE Standdown
18-20 NOV ORE- The near flawless performance
of the squadron resulted in an overall
grade of high excellent.
21-25 NOV Inport NORFOLK, VIRGINIA
26 NOV Underway NORFOLK, VIRGINIA
27 NOV Transit AFWR, Commence LANTREADEX 2-74
29-3 DEC COLD/HOT WAR -Blue Forces vs. Orange
Forces.
4-7 DEC AAMEX/RIMEX - AFWR
8 DEC HOT WASHUP
9-10 DEC Enroute MAYPORT
11 DEC Inport MAYPORT
12 DEC Enroute NORFOLK, VIRGINIA
13 DEC - 3 JAN 74 Inport NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

Narrative of Events

The events that occurred during the periods, 1 January 1973 through 23 March 1973, and 29 October 1973 through 31 December 1973 are well documented in Annex 2, the periodic operating reports and end of the West-Pac cruise, therefore, the events of the period 24 March 1973 through 28 October 1973 will be the bulk of the narrative.

On 23 March 1973, the squadron returned to NAS Norfolk from its second WESTPAC cruise in only three years. A traditional thirty (30) day standdown period was immediately authorized and a maximum amount of personnel were given leave for rest and recuperation.

The main concern of the Operations Officer in April, May and June was completion of pilots' and NFO's standardization checks. Written exams were conducted by the standardization officers of RVAW 120, but the flight portions of the checks became a real problem due to aircraft unavailability. It was not until mid summer that most of the "stan checks" were completed.

The pilots and NFO's were also receiving annual instrument school training during this period. Federal Aviation rules and regulations were the main topics, although essential elements of navigation, communications and meteorology were also discussed.

To improve the air intercept control of the NFO's, many operators were sent to Fleet Combat Direction System Training Center Atlantic Fleet, Dam Neck, Virginia for refresher training or requalification as Air Intercept Control Officers. VAW 124 allowed the squadron unlimited use of their E-1B trainer for air intercept control work also. Ground Training in the E-2 was available to all NFO's but the inability to simulate accurate air intercepts limited the training to pre-flights and general troubleshooting.

In late June, the 849th B Flight of the HMS Ark Royal, docked in Mayport Florida, was hosted by VAW 124. Two "Gannets" British early warning aircraft, were flown to NAS Norfolk, so that an exchange of AEW ideas could be made. Tactics, capabilities and limitations of the squadron's aircraft were discussed and future exchanges of ideas were encouraged.

On 12 July 1973, Commander C. A. TIETGEN, Jr. relieved Commander S. A. FINK and became the seventh Commanding Officer of VAW 124. Commander C. J. KING, Jr. assumed the Office of Executive officer. Rear Admiral Roland FREEMAN was the guest speaker at the change of command held in SP-1 Hangar, NAS Norfolk.

In August, the pilots made preparation for the first scheduled TYT by flying day and night FCLPS at Fentress Field, an outlying field near NAS, Norfolk. Enroute training to Fentress Field was encouraged through constant review of emergency procedures.

The Human Relations Council was busy in August preparing individuals for the long Mediterranean cruise ahead. Approximately 85% of the squadron attended UPWARD Seminars and many squadron personnel attended a five day, special seminar conducted by Captain PAULSON, CHC, USN, which emphasized the importance of communications to human relations.

10-19 September 1973 was designated as the carrier qualification period for the pilots. Plans were made to fly the aircraft back to NAS, Norfolk each night, so that pilots could be exchanged and vital maintenance work accomplished. Unfortunately, a large portion of the training had to be cancelled due to boiler problems aboard the USS AMERICA. It was not until TYT-2 in November that the pilots finally received complete qualification.

13 - 3 JAN 74

Inport NAS, Norfolk, Virginia

Mission of Command:

To act as an Airborne Tactical Command and Control Center for offensive and defensive fleet operations by providing Airborne Early Warning and aircraft services through data link and voice communications.

Composition of Command:

AirCRAFT: Four Grumman E-2B "Hawkeye" aircraft.

Personnel on Board (31 December 1973) = 144 Enlisted
17 Officers

Officers in a flight status = 16

Enlisted in a flight status = 6

Squadron Nickname: "The Bullseye Hummers"

Squadron Motto: "The Bullseye Squadron - Center of Fleet Defense"

Flight Hours/Statistics:

Total Hours.....1037

Average Hours/Month.....86.4

Carrier Landings.....239

Carrier Launches.....232

MAINTENANCE HISTORY

The squadron's maintenance history for the periods 1 January 1973 through 23 March 1973 and 29 October 1973 through 31 December 1973 are well documented by Annex 2, Periodic Operating Reports, and a comprehensive end of the cruise report, so no further amplifying information is deemed necessary. However, the turnaround period 24 March 1973 through 29 October 1973, filled with significant aircraft changes and transfers, will be thoroughly discussed.

Upon arrival at NAS NorVa, 24 March 1973, two (2) aircraft, Bureau Numbers 151702 and 152483, were transferred to RVAW 120 and VAW 122 respectively. One aircraft, Bureau Number 151708, was inducted into NARF, NAS NorVa, to incorporate AFC 148 Engine Cowling latches, and AFC 153 Engine Chip Detector. These transfers and changes left the squadron with only one aircraft, Bureau Number 151720, which commenced its second extension on 1 April 1973.

Following the AFC incorporations, BUNO 151708 was returned from NARF, NAS NorVA, to an "A" status on 3 April 1973. Ironically however, BUNO 151708 was placed in a "G3" status on 27 April 1973, only four (4) days after the squadron's completion of a thirty (30) day standdown. The aircraft was "down" for extensive corrosion repairs for the next three (3) months.

Because of the serious corrosion damage, a wing change had to be made on BUNO 151708. This very demanding task for the maintenance Personnel was aggravated by inexperience with the work involved. NARF, NAS NorVA, supplied qualified personnel to assist in the wing change and corrosion repairs.

On 7 May 1973, the squadron received an aircraft, Bureau Number 152478, from VAW 122. Because of a tremendous number of NORS and several significant problems discovered during the acceptance check, the aircraft was not flyable until Mid October.

Due to possible cracks in the E-2B struts, E-2 squadrons were notified that "B" modified or "C" struts would have to be used on all aircraft operating from a carrier. Since BUNO 152478 was not flyable, its "B" modified struts were removed and sent to VAW 122, deployed in the Mediterranean. Heavy demands by deployed squadrons for the necessary struts caused serious shortages in the supply system, consequently no replacements were immediately available for BUNO 152478. On 7 July 1973 a special interest message was drafted by the squadron indicating that BUNO 152478 had been on jacks for thirty (30) days.

Although three (3) aircraft were assigned to the squadron during the period 7 May 1973 through 7 June 1973, the squadron had no flyable aircraft. Several requests for assistance were made to alleviate this frustrating situation, and on 7 June 1973, we received aircraft, BUNO 152489, from VAW 123, NAS NorVa. A prop regulator change, ruddex actuator change and an aileron actuator change prevented immediate use of this aircraft also.

Aircraft, Bureau 151715, was received from RVAW 120 on 7 July 1973. Major hydraulic leaks, traced to a cracked strut, were corrected and the aircraft's first launch was anxiously awaited by all squadron personnel. Disappointment followed as an external oil line leak developed on its first flight and the starboard engine had to be pulled three (3) times before the difficulties could be pin-pointed. Realizing the importance of the aircraft for pilot training, maintenance personnel worked swiftly and dilligently, and in just ten (10) days the aircraft was repaired.

Both BUNO 151720 and 151708 were returned to "A" status in late July following the corrosion work by NARF, NAS NorVa. BUNO 152488 was also received from VAW 126, NAS NorVa on 27 July 1973.

BUNO 152489 developed severe rotodome vibration in early August. Subsequent replacement of the rotodome gear box and clutch assembly followed. Avionics worked hard to replace servos and switches to the rotodome. Unknown rudder trim problems at this time necessitated a request for technical assistance. On 8 August 1973, BUNO 152489 was transferred to RVAW 120, NAS NorVa.

In mid August, the squadron received a message indicating all E-2B aircraft might have faulty heat exchangers. A thorough inspection followed and revealed that all the aircraft had cracked exchangers and needed replacement.

The status of BUNO 151708 was changed to F50 on 24 August 1973 when it was released for progressive Aircraft Rework (PAR)

On 29 August 1973, two weeks prior to the pilots scheduled Carrier Qualifications, the port engine (102907) of BUNO 151715 was fodded. The engine was replaced and just six (6) days later, on 4 September 1973, the port engine (104675) of BUNO 151715 was fodded again. The starboard engine of BUNO 152488 was used on BUNO 151715 until another engine could be obtained through supply.

Fortunately, BUNO 152484 was received from VAW 126, NAS NorVa, on 5 September 1973, and after a strut change and oil pump change, it was ready to fly.

A squadron detachment was established for USS AMERICA on 10 September 1973 for carrier qualifications. All squadron aircraft operated from NAS NorVa to facilitate maximum maintenance response to possible difficulties.

The pilots were not able to complete carrier qualifications in September due to carrier problems. Another attempt was made in October to qualify the pilots, but efforts fell short of complete success. Finally during TYT II, the pilots completed the necessary training.

On 23 October 1973, BUNO 152478 was transferred to VAW 113, NAS NorIs. The squadron deployed on 29 October 1973 and commenced TYTII. Four aircraft were available upon deployment. The systems of all the aircraft were in excellent condition prior to TYT II. The numerous problems encountered by Airframes and Power Plants allowed Avionics sufficient time to correct all computer difficulties.