

1985 ✓



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON
ONE HUNDRED TWENTY FOUR
FLEET POST OFFICE
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From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron
ONE HUNDRED TWENTY FOUR
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)
Subj: COMMAND HISTORY OPNAV 5750-1
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12C
Encl: (1) Command Organization
(2) Chronological Order of Events
(3) Operations
(4) Statistics

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (4) are forwarded.

[Handwritten Signature]
H. R. RUSSELL

Copy to:
Director of Naval History (OP-09B4)

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VAW-124 COMMAND HISTORY
FOR 1985
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VAW-124 COMMAND HISTORY FOR CALENDER YEAR 1985

I. Command Organization

a. Commanding Officer

Commander R. A. ENGLE - Commander H. R. RUSSELL
01 JAN - 22 MAY 85 22 MAY 85 - PRESENT

b. Executive Officer

Commander H. R. RUSSELL - Commander S. T. WESSELHOFF
01 JAN - 22 MAY 85 22 MAY 85 - PRESENT

c. Squadron Mission

To function as an airborne tactical command and control center for offensive and defensive fleet operations by providing Airborne Early Warning and Aircraft control through data link and voice communications.

d. Command Composition

Aircraft: Four (4) Grumman E-2C "Hawkeye" (TRAC-A APS 138/ALR-73)

Personnel:

Officers

Flight Status: 27
Maint/Intel: 5

Enlisted

Enlisted on Board: 133
Flight Status: 2

e. Squadron Nickname: "BEAR ACES"

f. Squadron Motto: "BEAR ACES - When you're out of hummers, you're out of control"

II. Chronological Order of Events

01 JAN - 07 JAN 1985	NAS NORFOLK
08 JAN - 26 JAN 1985	CENTAM OPS/PHASE 1B
27 JAN - 30 JAN 1985	INPORT PORT EVERGLADES
31 JAN - 7 FEB 1985	SOPWITH CAMEL JAXOPAREA
8 FEB - 7 MAR 1985	POM PERIOD NORVA
8 MAR - 27 MAR 1985	ENCOUNTEREX/PHASE II/READEX/ORE
28 MAR - 8 APR 1985	CENTAM OPS
9 APR - 18 APR 1985	TRANSLANT
19 APRIL 1985	INCHOP 6TH FLEET
20 APR - 23 APR 1985	TURNOVER AGUSTA BAY SICILY WITH CVN-69
24 APR - 25 APR 1985	TRANSIT TYRRHENIAN SEA
26 APR - 2 MAY 1985	INPORT TOULON
3 MAY - 18 MAY 1985	MED OPS/DISTANT HAMMER
19 MAY - 26 MAY 1985	INPORT HAIFA, ISREAL
27 MAY - 31 MAY 1985	EAST MED OPS
1 JUN - 11 JUN 1985	WEST/CENIMED OPS
12 JUN - 13 JUN 1985	POOPDECK 1-85
14 JUN - 31 JUL 1985	EASTMED OPS
1 AUG - 3 AUG 1985	INPORT ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT
4 AUG - 9 AUG 1985	BRIGHT STAR 85
10 AUG - 17 AUG 1985	EASTMED OPS
18 AUG - 19 AUG 1985	TRANSIT TO CENIMED
20 AUG - 29 AUG 1985	INPORT NAPLES, ITALY
30 AUG - 1 SEP 1985	WEST MED OPS
2 SEP - 5 SEP 1985	INPORT PALMA

Enclosure (2)

6 SEP - 10 SEP 1985	WESTMED OPS
11 SEP - 12 SEP 1985	TURNOVER AGUSTA BAY SICILY WITH CV-60
13 SEP - 22 SEP 1985	EASTMED OPS
23 SEP - 2 OCT 1985	TRANSIT NORVA
3 OCT 1985	AIRWING FLYOFF
4 OCT 1985	INPORT NORVA
5 OCT - 31 OCT 1985	STANDDOWN
1 NOV - 3 NOV 1985	NAS NORFOLK
4 NOV - 8 NOV 1985	THUNDERBOLT DET GUANTANAMO BAY, CUBA
9 NOV - 23 NOV 1985	NAS NORVA
24 NOV - 27 NOV 1985	THUNDERBOLT DET CORPUS CHRISTI, TX
28 NOV - 31 DEC 1985	NAS NORVA

III. OPERATIONS

The beginning of the new year found the Bear Aces of VAW-124 preparing to resume an ambitious workup cycle with Carrier Air Wing EIGHT and NIMITZ. Most of the month of January was spent in the GITMO operating area south of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The last four days of the month were spent on a port visit in Port Everglades (FT. Lauderdale) Florida.

Most of February and the first week of March were spent completing the preparation for an extended overseas deployment. NIMITZ and VAW-124 said goodbye to Norfolk on 8 March and immediately prepared for the ensuing Readiness Exercise and ORE. During the ORE the Bear Aces furnished the Battle Group Commander with 'Round the Clock' Airborne Early Warning, Strike, and CAP Control, and Command and Control for 72 hours.

The first half of April was spent on a Central American Swing and then translant. NIMITZ and CVW-8 operated off the coast of Nicaragua and Panama for 5 days on a "show the flag/show of force" mission. Most of the translant was spent "Getting up on the Step" for the higher tempo of operations that would greet us once we came under the operational control of Commander Battle Force, Sixth Fleet.

The turnover was completed with VAW-121 and the EISENHOWER Battle Group on 23 April. From there NIMITZ and VAW-124 made for port at Toulon, France, the heart of the French Riviera.

Shortly after the Toulon port visit, NIMITZ and CVW-8 participated in the NATO Exercise "Distant Hammer". VAW-124 provided Airborne Early Warning for the Battle Group Commander, Dissimilar Air Combat Training Control for the "Jolly Rogers" of VF-84 and "Black Aces" of VF-41, against French, Italian, and Turkish Air Force aircraft as well as overland strike coordination for the "Black Panthers" of VA-35, "Marauders" of VA-82, and the "Sidewinders" of VA-86. At the completion of this extremely successful and highly visible exercise was a reward. NIMITZ and the Bear Aces were granted a port call in Haifa, Israel. During this seven day port visit command of the Bear Aces was transferred from CDR Robert Engle to CDR Roy Russell. The last 5 days in May were spent off the coast of Lebanon and Syria running cyclic flight operations.

NIMITZ and CVW-8 headed west to participate in the joint US-Spanish exercise "Poop Deck 1-85". During this two day exercise the Bear Aces once again provided timely and accurate AEW, overland Strike Control, CAP and Vector Logic Grid Control. At the completion of this exercise NIMITZ made for another port call, Livorno, Italy.

Only twelve hours prior to dropping anchor in Livorno, NIMITZ received an urgent message to take up a station off of Beirut in response to the TWA Flight 847 hijacking. During the transit to "BENO" Station, VAW-124 Hawkeyes launched to facilitate tracking of the TWA 727 as it crisscrossed the MED between Algiers and Beirut. Once established on "BENO" Station in the Eastern MED the Bear Aces prepared for what was to be a 45 day stay in the MODLOC position off of Beirut.

Enclosure (3)

July saw tensions ease, the release of all of the hostages and a "Beer Day" on NIMITZ. Excitement arose even at the news of a possible port visit in Alexandria, Egypt.

August started off with a 3 day visit to Alexandria, Egypt. The conclusion of that visit started the joint US-Egyptian exercise "Bright Star". Again VAW-124 was at the center of operations. In addition to providing overland Strike Control, Dissimilar Air Combat Training (DACT) Control, and Airborne Early Warning and Command and Control, the Bear Aces were involved in the detecting, tracking, and controlling of intercepts on forward deployed Soviet Reconnaissance aircraft. The last week of August was spent in port Naples, Italy.

September saw a 5 day port call in the island paradise of Palma De Mallorca, Spain, and the much awaited turnover with VAW-125 and the SARATOGA Battle Group. Immediately following the turnover however, instead of proceeding to Naples for a short 3 day port visit, NIMITZ and CVW-8 were ordered once again to take station off of Lebanon. After spending 9 days there NIMITZ, CVW-8, and VAW-124 were finally ordered home.

On 3 October VAW-124's 4 E-2C's flew off NIMITZ and returned to eagerly awaiting family and friends at NAS Norfolk. The following day, NIMITZ returned to pier 12 amidst the cheers of anxiously waiting family and friends.

During the last 3 months of 1985 the Bear Aces sent 2 plane detachments to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and Corpus Christi, Texas in support of the Vice Presidential Drug Interdiction Program. While in Guantanamo Bay, VAW-124 Hawkeyes worked in conjunction with U.S. Customs Service aircraft and located and siezed 1 aircraft with 700 pounds of cocaine. The Corpus Christi Det was equally as successful; 430 pounds of marijuana, 1 aircraft, and 3 individuals were taken into custody.

IV. STATISTICS

a. Milestones:

Flight Hours for CY 1985	<u>2607.7</u>
Highest Monthly Flight Month CY 1985	<u>349.1</u>
Average Monthly Flight Hours CY 1985	<u>217.3</u>
21 July Thirteenth Consecutive Year Accident Free — OVER 25,000 Hours	

Enclosure (4)