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From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning
Squadron 124
To: Director, Naval Historic Center, Washington Navy Yard,
805 Kidder Breese SE, Washington, DC 20374-5060
Subj: CALENDAR YEAR 2002 COMMAND HISTORY REPORT
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12H
Encl: (1) VAW-124 Calendar Year 2002 Command History
1. Per reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted.

V. C. BOWHERS

VAW-124 CALENDAR YEAR 2002 COMMAND HISTORY

1. COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION:

a. Short Title: VAW-124.

b. Unit Identification Code: 09526.

c. Mission: The primary mission of VAW-124 is to provide Carrier Battle Groups with early detection and warning of enemy forces and to apply command and control required to neutralize that threat. The squadron is fully integrated into the delivery of combat air power from the sea.

d. Organizational Structure:

Immediate Senior Command: CARRIER AIR WING EIGHT

Personnel:

Officers:	30
Flying Status:	27
Intel/Maint:	3
Enlisted:	133

e. Commanding Officer:

(1) Commander John S. Andrews, 1 JAN - 3 SEP

(2) Commander Vincent C. Bowhens, 3 SEP - DEC

f. Duty Station: Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE TWO FOUR, Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia.

g. Aircraft: Four Grumman Group II E-2C Hawkeyes

AJ 600	163540
AJ 601	164496
AJ 602	163697
AJ 603	163696

Encl (1)

2. **CHRONOLOGY:**

1 JAN-08 JAN	Holiday Leave Period
8 Jan-15 JAN	Support flights for VAW-120
15 JAN-28 JAN	Field Carrier Landing Practices at NAF Fentress
23 JAN-25 JAN	Orange Air in support of Carrier Air Wing-7
28 JAN-31 JAN	CQ of eight pilots aboard USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN-73)
5 FEB-6 FEB	Link exercises with Aegis testing facility at Wallops
11 FEB-14 FEB	Orange Air flights in support of CVW-7 and USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV-67)
27 FEB-1 MAR	Aircraft #602 fly to San Diego for new dome.
1 MAR-5 MAR	Aircraft #602 in San Diego for dome replacement.
20 MAR-22 MAR	Executive Officer and Public Affairs Officer visit SUNY Maritime, US Merchant Marine Academy for Reserve Officer Training Course.
11 APR-21 APR	Orange Air in support of CVW-17 and USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN-73) at NAS Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico
24 APR-22 MAY	Counter Narcotics Operations Naval Air Station Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico
7 JUN-21 JUN	Maple Flag Exercise in Cold Lake, Canada
20 JUN-25 JUN	Carrier Qualifications for two squadron pilots aboard USS HARRY S. TRUMAN (CVN-75)

10 JUL-26 JUL	Air to Air Strike Fighter Advance Readiness Program (SFARP) with VFA-15, VFA-87 and VF-213 at Naval Air Station Oceana
10 SEP-27 SEP	Air to Ground Strike Fighter Advance Readiness Program (SFARP) with VFA-15, VFA-87 and VF-213 at Naval Air Station Fallon, NV
19 OCT-10 NOV	Carrier Air Wing-8 Weapons Detachment Training at Naval Air Station Fallon, NV
3 DEC-18 DEC	Tailored Ship Training and Availability (TSTA) aboard USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN-71)

3. **NARRATIVE:**

a. The "BEAR ACES" of VAW-124 started 2002 in their homeport of Norfolk, Virginia. Preparation for deployment began with VAW-124 acting as Orange Air forces in support of Carrier Air Wing Seven from the 23rd of January to the 25th of January. Unit Level Training (ULT) continued with Carrier Qualifying eight pilots aboard USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN-73) before another exercise as Orange Air verses Carrier Air Wing Seven, and USS JOHN F. KENNEDY.

b. The Executive Officer and the Public Affairs Officer where privileged to visit SUNY Maritime and the US Merchant Marine Academy for Reserve Officer Training.

c. On the 11th of April, VAW-124 began it's trip down to Puerto Rico to act as Orange Air for Carrier Air Wing 17 and the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN-73) Battle Group, and stayed until the 22nd of May performing Counter Narcotic (CN) Operations. During this time the "Bear Aces" conducted critical training to detect and track small fast boats in a littoral environment.

d. In early June, VAW-124 participated in a combined exercise called Maple Flag, which took place in Cold Lake, Canada. This was an exercise involving numerous aircraft from 15 different countries, with VAW-124 acting as the primary strike controller. This multi-national exercise provided excellent training and integration with multi-national strike assets.

e. In July the Bears, along with VFA-15, VFA-87 and VF-213 began training together at Naval Air Station Oceana, VA. This course, known as Air to Air Strike Fighter Advance Readiness Program (A/A SFARP), though designed to provide advance air to air tactics training for the fighter squadrons, also provided an excellent opportunity to train VAW-124's junior controllers.

f. For most of the period September through November, VAW-124 was located at Naval Air Station Fallon, NV, for continued training with Carrier Air Wing Eight, while conducting both Air to Ground SFARP, and Air Wing Fallon. The Bears also said farewell to CDR John S. Andrews when he was relieved by CDR Vincent C. Bowers as the VAW-124 Commanding Officer on 3 September.

g. At the beginning of December, the USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT Battle Group left the confines of Norfolk, VA and the Bears took part in Tailored Ship Training and Availability (TSTA). The focus of this training was to develop standardization with Carrier Wing Eight and the USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT's crew. VAW-124 successfully qualified all pilots for carrier operations. The squadron returned from TSTA on December 18th. From the 19th of December to the 5th of January 2003, the Bears spent time with family and friends for the holiday season.

Operations and Maintenance Department Head for the SCREWTOPS of VAW-123 while embarked on USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN-73) for a Mediterranean/Persian Gulf deployment. Prior to reporting to the BEAR ACES of VAW-124 he was serving as an action officer in the Joint Staff Operations Directorate.

CDR Bowhens has over 4000 hours in the E-2C "Hawkeye". Decorations include the Joint Defense Meritorious Service Medal, two Air Medals, and six Navy Commendation Medals.

5. Operational Highlights/ Achievements*

a. Flight Hours

(1) Total Flight Hours Ashore (1353.2 hrs/96%)

(a) Day 1176.7 hrs/87%

(b) Night 176.5 hrs/13%

(c) Primary Mission 758.7/56%

(2) Total Sorties Ashore

(a) Day 430 sorties

(b) Night 68 sorties

(3) Total Embarked Hours (190.4 hours/12%)

(a) Day 113.3 hours/7% of total/60% embarked

(b) Night 77.1 hours/5% of total/40% embarked

(c) Primary Mission 89.8/47%

(4) Total Sorties Embarked

(a) Day 42 sorties

(b) Night 26 sorties

(5) Utilization Rate

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
25.1	15.9	15.0	49.6	87.4	33.9	26.5	10.0	46.4	28.8	37.5	43.4

b. Shipboard Landing Statistics

(1) Total Carrier Arrested Landings:

(a) Day (78/50.3%)

(b) Night (77/49.7%)

(2) Carrier Landing Grades 3.25

(3) Boarding Rate (Overall) 97.55%

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Day	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	97.3
Nx	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	89.7
Overall	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	95.1

c. OPTAR Management

(1) Total Flight Hours 1340.4

(2) Initial Dollar Grant (FY) \$665,000

(3) Total Augmented Grant (FY) \$702,400

(4) Percent Utilization of Initial 100%

(5) Percent Utilization of total 94.7%

6. **Training Readiness***

a. AIC hours 423.6

b. Intercepts 1487

7. **Weapon System Readiness***

a. Aircraft Material Readiness

(1) Full Mission Capable (FMC) Rate (CY 02)

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
48.3	62.9	53.5	64.7	49.8	54.0	50.1	31.1	30.4	8.3	24.0	17.0

(2) Mission Capable Rate

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
70.6	70.1	66.0	82.3	67.8	74.5	69.1	79.8	78.5	50.8	61.4	54.8

b. Cannibalization rate per 100 Flight Hours

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
12.9	9.4	13.3	6.1	8.0	4.9	5.1	4.4	15.6	33.7	0.0	4.0

c. Squadron I level A799 Rate Per 100 Removals for Cause
3.0

d. Aircraft Material Readiness Reporting Accuracy: 100%

e. Total number of FOD occurrences: 3

f. Average number of aircraft in inventory: 4

g. Direct maintenance man-hours per Flight Hour: 47.7

h. NMCS/PMCS validation rate: 100%

i. NAMDRP reports. As part of our continuing effort to improve community-wide system reliability, 15 reports were submitted, including:

- (1) HMR/EI 4
- (2) HMR 7
- (3) QDR (CAT I) 1
- (4) QDR (CAT II) 1
- (5) TPDR (CAT I) 0
- (6) TPDR (CAT II) 2

8. **Personnel Readiness***

a. Retention rate

(1) First Term 36.36%

(2) Second Term 100%

(3) Third and Subsequent Term 100%

b. Advancement

Cycle 174	Eligible	Adv.	PNA	Adv. %
Overall	14	3	N/A	21%
Board Elig E-6's	11	3	N/A	27%
Cycle 175	Eligible	Adv.	PNA	Adv. %
	Adv.			

Overall	56	14	40	25%
E-5	14	0	12	0%
E-4	26	4	22	15%
E-3	16	10	6	63%
Cycle 176	Eligible	Adv.	PNA	Adv. %
Overall	58	6	43	10%
E-5	14	1	8	7%
E-4	29	3	22	10%
E-3	15	2	13	13%

9. **Command Readiness Inspections And Exercises**

a. Inspection Results

(1) Outstanding grades on COMAEWINGLANT Aircraft Material Condition/Corrosion inspection, only seven aircraft discrepancies and COMNAVAIRLANT Aviation Maintenance Management Team inspection, zero programs off-line and 18 of 39 with no discrepancies, four programs cited as model programs. Inspector's comments "Best they have seen."

b. Major Exercises/Special Operations

- (1) Orange Air VACAPES 22-25 JAN 2002
- (2) Orange Air PROA 10-21 APR 2002
- (3) CN Operations 21 APR - 22 MAY 2002
- (4) MAPLE FLAG 06-20 JUN 2002
- (5) SFARP 10-27 SEP 2002
- (6) Fallon Weapons Det 20 OCT - 10 NOV 2002
- (7) TSTA (CVN-71) 02-20 DEC 2002

c. Range Surveillance Exercises

- (1) Orange Air MISSLEX PROA 02-03 APR; 17 APR 2002
- (2) CVW-8 MISSLEX VACAPES 21-22 AUG 2002

10. **Achievements In Aviation Safety**

- a. 0 Alpha F/FR/AG mishaps
- b. 0 Bravo F/FR/AG mishaps

- c. 7 Hazard reports submitted
- d. 37 NATOPS changes submitted
- e. 7 Professional articles submitted

11. **Contributions to Weapons System Development**

a. During CN Ops, VAW-124 took part in Exercise BEAR CUB. The objective was to determine a good station and platform to provide the E-2C aircrew the best opportunity to detect and track a small fiberglass surface contact, such as a go-fast or small sail boat in the littoral environment. Two VAW-124 aircrew rode in the boat as Bear 600 stationed north of Puerto Rico. Despite high sea states, the aircrew were able to detect, track, and VID the boat. VAW-124 established the maximum detection range, best station altitude, and radar set-up to track the "go fast" boats typically used by drug smugglers. These recommendations were forwarded to NSAWC.

12. **Contributions to Tactics Development**

a. VAW-124 was the first E-2C squadron to participate in Exercise MAPLE FLAG at Cold Lake, Canada in ten years. MAPLE FLAG is a multi-national exercise with over 15 participating nations. MAPLE FLAG provided an excellent opportunity for the squadron to participate in large-scale air exercises early in the Inter-deployment Training Cycle (IDTC). Exposure to USAF and other nations' tactics and aviators was very productive and rewarding on a professional and personal level. VAW-124's participation enabled the squadron to start work-up type evolutions early in the IDTC.

b. VAW-124 and CVW-8 completed the Air-to-Ground SFARP syllabus in September where the squadron had a 96% sortie completion rate. The skills honed at SFARP were put to the test during the CVW-8 Airwing Weapons Training Detachment in October and November. During the compressed three week syllabus VAW-124 flew 87 sorties with a 93% completion rate. VAW-124 completed the detachment with outstanding performance including no blue-on-blue losses, no area spill-outs, 100% detection of squawking bandits, and an impressive 100% detection of non-squawking bandits during Advanced Tactics Phase (ATP).

c. VAW-124 proved to be the subject matter expert in all matters involving Have Quick (HQ) radios and procedures. They developed a training program for the Airwing, which involved training videos played on site TV and coordinated, technically

difficult solutions for dissimilar HQ radios used by the Battle Group. The efforts of the BEAR ACES were directly responsible for the outstanding HQ capable strike missions for CVW-8 throughout the IDTC.

13. **General Contributions to AEW Community**

a. VAW-124 and PMA-231 took the lead in establishing the first E-2C/C-2A squadron webpage that is compliant with all CNO directives. The site is accessible from any computer with internet connectivity and offers password protected access to community information such as a database of naval messages, the community aircrew list, organization charts, and the monthly Hawkeye/Greyhound newsletter.

b. VAW-124 achieved outstanding grades on the COMAEWINGLANT Aircraft Material Condition/Corrosion inspection with only seven aircraft discrepancies. COMNAVAIRLANT Aviation Maintenance Management Team inspection had zero programs off-line and 18 of 39 with no discrepancies. Four programs were cited as model programs. Inspector's comments "Best they have seen".

14. **Squadron recognition**

a. Squadron Awards:

Navy Unit Commendation
Meritorious Unit Commendation
Safety "S"

b. Individual Awards:

CDR John S. Andrews	Bronze Star for OEF
Aircrew that participated in OEF	Navy Commendation Medal
LT [REDACTED]	East Coast Hawkeye Pilot of the Year

15. **Commanding Officer's Comments**

The "BEAR ACES" of VAW-124 have had a very busy year. Although this year was considered down time between deployments, the Bears were on the road for 113 days out of the year. We successfully completed an accelerated Inter-Deployment Training Cycle (IDTC) in preparation for our deployment aboard USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN-71) scheduled in early 2003. At the same time we packed in the extra support operations mentioned

earlier, highlighted by the first-ever extended use of Curacao by the E-2C for counter-narcotics events and fulfilling the mission of the AWACS at Maple Flag.

Our participation in Orange Air and Maple Flag provided multi-national strike warfare experience that was excellent preparation for the soon to follow Air-Wing specific IDTC events of Air-to-Air SFARP, Air-to-Ground SFARP, and CVW-8's Fallon Weapons Detachment. With this foundation, and the initial Battle Group integration provided by TSTA and COMPTUEX, the BEAR ACES of VAW-124 were ready to lead CVW-8 and the ROOSEVELT Battle Group into 2003 for an early surge deployment supporting the war against terrorism.