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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON
ONE HUNDRED SIXTEEN
SAN FRANCISCO 96601

1983

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[REDACTED] UNCLASSIFIED UPON REMOVAL OF ENCLOSURES (3) AND (4)

From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED SIXTEEN
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)
Subj: Command History for Calendar Year 1983 (OPNAV Report 5750-1)
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12C
Encl: (1) Command Mission
(2) The Officers and Men
(3) Monthly Operating/Training Reports for the months of January 1983 - December 1983
(4) AEW Excellence Award Submission

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

P. A. Shepard
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Copy to:
CINCPACFLT
Director of Naval History

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COMMAND MISSION

Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED SIXTEEN (VAW-116) is a four plane, Airborne Early Warning (AEW) squadron under the command of Commander, Carrier Air Wing TWO.

VAW-116 operates the five place, twin turboprop E-2C "Hawkeye" which is capable of all-weather carrier and shore-based operations. The E-2C is 57 1/2 feet long, has an 81 foot wing span and weighs 52,000 pounds when operationally loaded. Its most distinguishing physical characteristics are its four vertical stabilizers and its 24 foot diameter, dish-shaped rotodome mounted 6 feet above the fuselage.

The five man crew consists of a pilot, co-pilot, Combat Information Center Officer (CICO), Air Control Officer (ACO) and a Flight Technician/Radar Operator. This highly skilled crew, when working as a coordinated team, can perform the following missions.

1. Airborne Early Warning (AEW), the detection of unknown air contacts closing the Task Force.
2. Tactical Aircraft Intercept Control (AIC).
3. Strike flight following/control.
4. Surface/Subsurface Surveillance Coordination (SSSC) (includes interface with S-3A via voice and Link-11).
5. Helicopter control.
6. Aerial mining control.
7. Tactical reconnaissance aircraft control.
8. Secondary approach assistance for carrier aircraft.
9. Communication relay (automatic and manual).
10. Airborne Search and Rescue Coordination (SAR).

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VAW-116 COMMAND HISTORY

VAW-116 is one of 6 VAW squadrons located on the west coast under the cognizance of COMFITAEEWINGPAC. VAW had its early beginnings as a research development of project "Cadillac" at Massachusetts Institute of Technology at the end of World War II. The Navy continued this work in early 1948 by forming an Airborne Early Warning (AEW) department at one of the electronic training units in San Diego. Later that year this department was commissioned as VAW-1. A month later the name was changed to Composite Squadron Eleven (VC-11). VC-11 continued the work in the developing of the AEW concept, and in 1950 deployed detachments aboard aircraft carriers to provide both Anti-Submarine (ASW) and Airborne Early Warning protection to the fleet throughout the Korean conflict. In July 1956, VC-11 became Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron Eleven (VAW-11). Its missions were to provide all-weather Airborne Early Warning services to the fleet forces and shore warning nets. When E-1B's replaced TBM-3W's and AD4/5W's, VAW-11 became VAW-111 with a series of detachments each consisting of three E-1B's. With the advent of the newer E-2A in 1964 and recognizing the complexity and responsibility of AEW support missions the Chief of Naval Operations directed that the E-2A detachments be commissioned as squadrons in their own right. On 20 April 1967 VAW-116 was commissioned and received the E-2B aircraft. Since then the VAW-116 "SUN KINGS" have completed three far east deployments as part of Attack Carrier Air Wing FIFTEEN and two while attached to Attack Carrier Air Wing NINE. VAW-116 was awarded the Commander Naval Air Pacific, Battle Efficiency Pennant "E" in February 1970, for the period July 1968 through December 1969 and again in March 1973 for the period July 1971 through December 1972. VAW-116 was the recipient of the coveted Chief of Naval Operations, Annual Aviation Safety Award for FY-72 and again for FY-73. Additionally, VAW-116 was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary performance of duty in action against the enemy in Southeast Asia in 1972. In July 1975, VAW-116 transferred to Attack Carrier Air Wing EIGHT. Concurrently the VAW community including VAW-116 moved from Naval Air Station, North Island to Naval Air Station, Miramar. As a unit of CVW-8 the "SUN KINGS" saw duty in the North Atlantic in 1975. In 1976 VAW-116 again deployed aboard the USS NIMITZ (CVN-68), for a Mediterranean cruise. The squadron transferred to Carrier Air Wing SEVENTEEN embarked in USS FORRESTAL (CV-59) in 1977 and deployed to the Mediterranean and North Atlantic in March 1978.

VAW-116 then transitioned to the E-2C and made a Western Pacific/Indian Ocean cruise from 26 February to 15 October 1980 aboard USS CONSTELLATION (CV-64) in support of Iranian contingency operations. During this cruise the "SUN KINGS" saw 110 consecutive days at sea without a port call. Upon return to Naval Air Station Miramar, VAW-116 began preparation for transition to the E-2C ARPS. At the completion of transition, the "SUN KINGS" became the first west coast VAW squadron to operate the APS 125 Radar. VAW-116 was assigned to Carrier Air

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Wing TWO in July 1981. On 7 April 1982, the squadron embarked on the USS Ranger (CV-61) for another Western Pacific/Indian Ocean cruise. Returning in October 1982 the "SUN KINGS" remained with Carrier Air Wing TWO aboard the USS Kitty Hawk (CV-63).