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1992

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON
ONE HUNDRED SIXTEEN
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96601-6404

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From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE ONE SIX
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH)
Subj: COMMAND HISTORY FOR CY 1992
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12 (Series)
Encl: (1) Command History
(2) Command Mission
(3) CO/XO Biographies
(4) 1992 Chronology
(5) AEW Excellence Award Submission

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (5) are hereby submitted.

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VAW-116 COMMAND HISTORY

Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE ONE SIX (VAW-116) is one of seven Carrier Airborne Early Warning squadrons located on the West coast under the cognizance of Commander, Fighter Airborne Early Warning Wing, U.S. Pacific Fleet (COMFITAEEWWINGPAC).

On April 20, 1967 VAW-116 was commissioned and received the E-2B aircraft. The "Sun Kings" completed three far-east deployments as part of Attack Carrier Air Wing FIFTEEN and two while attached to Attack Carrier Air Wing NINE.

In July 1975, VAW-116 transferred to Attack Carrier Air Wing EIGHT. Concurrently, the west-coast VAW community, including VAW-116, moved from Naval Air Station, North Island to Naval Air Station, Miramar. As a unit of Carrier Air Wing EIGHT, the "Sun Kings" saw duty in the North Atlantic in 1975.

In 1976 VAW-116 deployed aboard U.S.S. NIMITZ (CVN-68) for a Mediterranean cruise. The squadron transferred to Carrier Air Wing SEVENTEEN embarked on U.S.S. FORESTALL (CV-59) in 1977 and deployed to the Mediterranean and North Atlantic in March of 1978.

VAW-116 then transitioned ~~to the~~ E-2C and made a Western Pacific/Indian Ocean cruise from February 26, 1980 to October 15, 1980 aboard U.S.S. CONSTELLATION (CV-64) in support of the Iranian Contingency Operations.

The squadron was assigned to Carrier Air Wing TWO in July of 1981. On April 7, 1982, the squadron embarked on U.S.S. RANGER (CV-61) for a Western Pacific/Indian Ocean cruise. Returning in October 1982, the "Sun Kings" remained with Carrier Air Wing TWO aboard the U.S.S. KITTY HAWK (CV-63), deploying on January 13, 1984.

In July of 1987, the "Sun Kings" deployed aboard U.S.S. RANGER (CV-61) for a six month Western Pacific/Indian Ocean cruise, during which they provided support for the reflagged Kuwaiti Tanker missions. On February 24, 1989 the squadron deployed aboard U.S.S. RANGER (CV-61) for another Western Pacific/Indian Ocean cruise. This deployment included extensive training operations with the Omani and Royal Thai Air Forces.

After successful workups, VAW-116 deployed aboard U.S.S. RANGER (CV-61) on December 8, 1990 for a western Pacific cruise in support of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. During Operation Desert Storm the squadron flew 1,364 total flight hours and spent 93 days on station in the Arabian Gulf.

After a two month detachment to Panama, the "Sun Kings" completed their preparation for their next deployment aboard U.S.S. RANGER (CV-61).

The "Sun Kings" recently completed a highly successful deployment in support of Operation Southern Watch in Iraq and Operation Restore Hope in Somalia. VAW-116 is now transitioning to the new Group II Hawkeye, with improved avionics and more powerful engines.

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" aircraft, 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 six 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 (FT/RO). 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), including interface with S-3A's 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. Communications Relay, both manual and automatic.
10. Airborne Search and Rescue Coordination (SAR).

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VAW-116
COMMAND CHRONOLOGY 1992

8-29 Jan: Airwing Weapons Training NAS Fallon NV.
7 Feb-2 Mar: CV Airops (USS RANGER CV-61)
3-5 Mar: Intermediate Training Assessment (ITA)
22-29 Apr: Operation QUICK FORCE
18 May-22 May: COMPTUEX
26 May-2 Jun: FLEETEX 92-1A
6-17 Jun: FLEETEX 92-1B
15-16 Jun: Mobile Sea Range (MSR)
18-21 Jun: FLEETEX 92-1C/Battle Group Evaluation (BGE)
1 Aug-31 Jan: Deployed, WESTPAC '92-93, USS RANGER (CV-61)
17 Sep-3 Dec: Operation SOUTHERN WATCH
7-18 Dec: Operation RESTORE HOPE

NARRATIVE

The "Sun Kings" of VAW-116 spent 1992 preparing for and participating in a highly successful six-month deployment to the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean. During the months preceding their 1 August deployment date, the squadron deployed away from NAS Miramar on several occasions to test their skills as a part of the Airwing TWO/RANGER Battle Group team.

During their deployment, VAW-116 participated in two intensive contingency operations. Operation Southern Watch saw the squadron use its E-2C Hawkeye aircraft to help enforce the United Nations No-Fly Zone over Southern Iraq. Typical missions included Airborne Early Warning, control of U.S. aircraft over Iraq, and Electronic Surveillance. Hawkeyes were also instrumental in providing a link between Navy assets in the Arabian Gulf and the Joint Task Force commander ashore.

The RANGER Battle Group sortied out of the Arabian Gulf in early December to join the USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10) Amphibious Ready Group off Somalia. The Sun Kings found themselves instrumental in providing communications support to Marine forces on the ground. Additionally, the squadron controlled Close Air Support and TARPS reconnaissance missions throughout the country. The most important role for the Hawkeye in Restore Hope, however, was providing Air Traffic Control (ATC) services for the hundreds of military and civilian aircraft delivering troops and relief supplies. On an ad-hoc basis, E-2 crews developed and implemented an ATC system that assured a smooth flow of traffic in and out of Somalia's overcrowded airfields.

VAW-116 continued their deployment into 1993, returning to NAS Miramar on 31 January.