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VAW-121
1967

SQUADRON HISTORY 1967

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INTRODUCTION

The history of Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE goes back to 6 July 1948 when Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron TWO was commissioned at Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia. Shortly after being formed, the squadron moved to Naval Air Station, Quonset Point, Rhode Island and was redesignated Composite Squadron TWELVE (VC-12). In those early days, the squadron successfully operated the LBM "Avenger", the AF "Guardian", and the AD5W "Skyraider". In 1956, the squadron was redesignated Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron TWELVE (CARAEMRON-12). The first E1B "Tracers" began replacing the AD "Skyraiders" in early 1960.

In September 1962, the squadron moved back to NAS, Norfolk, Virginia. In January 1966, CARAEMRON 12 received the first E2A "Hawkeye". The squadron was supplying detachments utilizing two different aircraft aboard ten Atlantic Fleet aircraft carriers. With over two hundred officers and eight hundred enlisted personnel, it became advantageous to split the squadron into smaller groups and move to a wing concept.

Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE was commissioned by Admiral T. E. Moore, then CINCLANTFLEET, on 1 April 1967. The squadron was commissioned in a triple commissioning ceremony along with CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING WING TWELVE (CAEWW-12) and Carrier Airborne Early Warning Training Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY (RVAW-120). Captain J. A. Pariseau was the first Commanding Officer of all three commands. The ceremony was held at Sea Plane Hangar ONE aboard Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia.

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The squadron now operated permanently formed detachments of ELB "Tracers". The "squadron" history is thus composed mainly of the various detachment histories; which are included as documentary annexes. Those events of major importance to the squadron as a whole are reflected in the chronology and the narrative parts.

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CARAEWRON - 121 1967 CHRONOLOGY

- 1 April Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE commissioned.
- CAPTAIN J. A. Pariseau assumed first command of the new squadron.
- 3 April Special Court Martial convened for Avionics Electricians Chief W. P. Wright, 369 3282.
- 2 May Detachment SIXTY deployed to the Mediterranean aboard the USS SARATOGA (CVA-60).
- 11 May Detachment ELEVEN deployed to the Western Pacific aboard the USS INTREPID (CVS-11).
- 29 May Detachment NINE deployed to the North Atlantic aboard the USS ESSEX (CVS-9).
- 9 June CAPTAIN J. A. Pariseau was relieved by CAPTAIN S. L. Corner as Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Wing TWELVE, Airborne Early Warning Training Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY, and Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE.
- 1 July COMMANDER R. A. Pettigrew relieved CAPTAIN S. L. Corner as Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE.
- 12 July LIEUTENANT COMMANDER Donald W. Bohl was killed in the crash of a CIA aircraft in Sigonella, Sicily.
- 24 July The squadron moved from Sea Plane Hangar ONE at NAS Norfolk to Sea Plane Hangar THIRTY ONE at NAS Norfolk.
- 23 August Detachment FORTY TWO deployed to the Mediterranean aboard the USS ROOSEVELT (CVA-42).
- 22 September Detachment FIFTEEN deployed to the Mediterranean aboard the USS RANDOLPH (CVS-15).

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- 24 September Detachment NINE returned to NAS Norfolk from a four month NATO cruise.
- 13 October Detachment EIGHTEEN deployed to the Atlantic aboard the USS WASP (CVS-18).
- 17 October Carrier Airborne Early Warning Wing TWELVE received the CNO Safety Award.
- 26 October The squadron received its annual Administrative and Material Inspection.
- 17 November Detachment EIGHTEEN returned from exercise CANUS SILEX.
- 6 December Detachment SIXTY returned from a nine month cruise in the Mediterranean.
- 16 December Detachment FIFTEEN returned from a three month cruise in the Mediterranean.
- 30 December Detachment ELEVEN returned from a nine month cruise in the Western Pacific.

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NARRATIVE

May was a month for major deployments. Detachment SIXTY deployed from Mayport, Florida aboard the USS SARATOGA (CVA-60) on 2 May. The detachment deployed to provide Airborne Early Warning and Radio/Radar Relay services to the ship. For Carrier Air Wing THREE, the detachment ELBs provided Airborne Intercept Control. Detachment SIXTY was to spend the next nine months in the Mediterranean.

Later in the month, on 11 May, the USS INTREPID (CVS-11) steamed from Pier 12 at the Norfolk Naval Station enroute to the Tonkin Gulf. Detachment ELEVEN embarked aboard INTREPID as a member of CARRIER AIR WING TEN. The detachment deployed to provide Airborne Early Warning services to the ship and to provide combat support to Air Wing TEN. This support was to take the form of Strike Control, Radio/Radar Relay, Radar Search, and, if necessary, Search and Rescue.

Detachment NINE deployed on 29 May. The detachment loaded aboard the USS ESSEX (CVS-9) at Naval Air Station, Quonset Point, Rhode Island. The detachment deployed to provide Radar Search, Airborne Early Warning, Airborne Command and Control, and Radio/Radar Relay services to the USS ESSEX and Carrier Anti Submarine Air Group FIFTY FOUR. The anticipated cruising schedule included both North Atlantic and Mediterranean countries.

On 9 June, the squadron was involved in its first change of command. Captain S. L. Corner relieved Captain J. A. Pariseau as Commander Carrier Airborne Early Warning Wing TWELVE and Commanding Officer Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE. The ceremony was held in Sea Plane Hangar ONE aboard the Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia.

Less than a month later, another change of command ceremony took place.

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The ties holding CAEWW-12 and CARAEWRON-121 together as unified commands were broken. Commander R. A. Pettigrew assumed command of CARAEWRON-121 and, for the first time, the squadron was under separate command from the Wing and Training squadrons. Though Commander Pettigrew's young squadron was still sharing spaces in SP-1 with the Air Wing and other units of the Air Wing, plans were being formulated to move the squadron to a separate hangar. Sea Plane Hangar THIRTY ONE was selected and all the problems of cleaning and assigning spaces in the new location were encountered.

In the midst of the plans and preparations for moving, CARAEWRON-121 received news of the first squadron personnel casualty. Lieutenant Commander Donald W. Bohls was killed in the crash of a CIA in Sigonella, Sicily on 12 July. The aircraft was making a touch and go landing when it rose off the ground, banked steeply, and crashed to the ground. The aircraft came to rest in an inverted position. There were no survivors.

On 24 July, a ceremony was held at Sea Plane Hangar THIRTY ONE. Commander R. A. Pettigrew cut the ribbon officially opening the new home of the East Coast ELB detachments. The move cut the last physical ties between CARAEWRON-121 and the other Early Warning Squadrons based at Norfolk.

Detachment FORTY TWO began loading aboard the USS ROOSEVELT (CVA-42) in late August. On 23 August, the ship steamed from Mayport, Florida carrying Detachment FORTY TWO to the Mediterranean. The detachment provided Airborne Early Warning and Radio/Radar Relay services to the squadrons of Carrier Air Wing ONE.

Detachment FIFTEEN went to sea on 22 September aboard the USS RANDOLPH (CVS-15) as she departed for the Mediterranean. The detachment was embarked as a member of Carrier Anti-Submarine Air Group FIFTY SIX. The detachment

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deployed to provide Radar Search and Radio/Radar Relay.

On 24 September, Detachment NINE returned to Norfolk. The detachment was met by a bevy of happy wives and children.

Detachment EIGHTEEN deployed to the Eastern Atlantic and Caribbean waters for a CANUS SILEX exercise on 13 October. The detachment provided Radar Search and Radar/Radio Relay services to the forces participating in the exercise. The detachment embarked as a unit of Carrier Anti-Submarine Air Group SIXTY.

On 17 October, CAEWW-12 received the CNO Safety Award. CARAEWRON-121, as a part of the Air Wing, proudly displayed the CNO Safety Award stickers.

The annual Administrative and Material Inspection was completed on 26 October. The long hours of hard work spent in preparing for the inspections were rewarded with a high passing grade.

Detachment EIGHTEEN returned from the special exercise, CANUS SILEX, on 17 November.

In December, three more of the squadron's far-flung detachments returned to their home port in Norfolk. On 6 December, Detachment SIXTY returned from eight months deployment to the Mediterranean. On the sixteenth, Detachment FIFTEEN returned from a three month cruise to the Mediterranean. Finally, on 30 December, Detachment ELEVEN returned from deployment to the Vietnam war zone.

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COMMAND ORGANIZATION

CHRONOLOGY OF CARAEWRON-121 COMMANDING OFFICERS

CAPTAIN Joseph A. PARISEAU, USN, 124265/1310 1 April 1967 to 9 June 1967
CAPTAIN Sheldon L. CORNER, USN, 407279/1310 9 June 1967 to 1 July 1967
COMMANDER Raymond A. PETTIGREW, USN, 540343/1310 1 July 1967 to present

MISSION OF COMMAND

To provide Airborne Early Warning to Fleet units involving intercept control, strike control, radio and radar relay, search and rescue, and radar and visual reconnaissance as directed by higher authority.

COMPOSITION OF COMMAND

CARAEWRON-121 is organized according to a Detachment Concept. That is, each Detachment functions as a squadron within a squadron at all times. In addition to the squadron Operations, Administrative, and Maintenance Departments, each Detachment has its own Departments and Divisions.

The Officer in Charge of each Detachment is selected by the Commanding Officer. Each Detachment Officer in Charge functions both as a Commanding Officer and a Department Head. Ashore, the Officer in Charge functions as a Department Head responsible to the Commanding Officer, CARAEWRON-121. At sea, he is responsible to the Air Group Commander or Air Wing Commander as well as to the Commanding Officer of the squadron for administration. The Officer in Charge status aboard ship is equal to that of an embarked squadron Commanding Officer.

The Detachment number coincides with the hull number of the ship on which the Detachment is embarked.

More detailed information may be found in the Squadron and Detachment Organizational Manuals enclosed as annexes J and K.

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COMPOSITION OF DETACHMENTS

Six (6) detachments which deploy with the following personnel and equipment: THREE AIRCRAFT DETACHMENT - 5 Pilots, 4 Co-Pilots, 6 Naval Flight Officers, 5 Enlisted Air Crewmen, and a total of 45 Enlisted personnel; A total complement of 61.

FOUR AIRCRAFT DETACHMENT - 6 Pilots, 6 Co-Pilots, 8 Naval Flight Officers, 6 Enlisted Air Crewmen, and a total of 52 Enlisted personnel; a total complement of 72.

Past procedure has been that CVA Detachments deploy with three aircraft and CVS Detachments deploy with four aircraft. Changes to this policy are anticipated in the coming year.

PERSONNEL COMPLEMENT

139 Officers, of which 137 are flight personnel; 402 Enlisted, of which 28 are flight personnel. No complement of civilians was allotted or assigned.

THE ELB "TRACER" (WILLY FUDD)

CARAEWRON-121 flies the ELB "Tracer" aircraft from the decks of Atlantic Fleet aircraft carriers. The aircraft is a twin-engined, high wing, carrier based aircraft built by the Grumman Aircraft Engineering Corporation. It's primary mission is to provide airborne radar coverage to an assigned area or force at sea. It is equipped for all weather flight and is operated by a crew of four (4). The crew consists of a Pilot, a Co-Pilot, a Naval Flight Officer and an Enlisted Air Crewman.

The aircraft features a top mounted radar that houses a 17 1/2 foot by 4 foot radar antenna, giving it a search range of approximately two hundred (200) miles. The ELB has performed admirably with all the Detachments considering the age of the aircraft and the inherent maintenance problems.

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COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS

Confusion as to which frequencies are available for ARC-97 automatic VHF radio relay (Autocat) and how the system works has hampered fleet operations with squadron aircraft. A pending frequency change to a two frequency configuration for both groups should improve this situation. A successful trial cruise by Detachment NINE has aided in this decision for a modification which will definitely simplify and improve the system.

ADEQUACY OF MANNING LEVEL

Although the squadron is manned over the allowance, the critical skill rates operate considerably under requirements in most cases. In December, the percentages of allowances were: AE-80%, ATR-75%, and ATN-115%. This does not reflect an overabundance of Comm/Nav Technicians, but, rather, errors in the squadron allowance. A total of 21 ATN's are allowed the squadron, but the six detachments are allowed four men each. It should also be noted that the level of skilled technicians is low and that many of our men do not have the skill or experience needed to effectively implement the detachment concept. A readjustment in squadron allowance is being sought.

OPERATIONAL STATISTICS

Total hours flown:	11, 198
Average hours per month:	1244.2
Total carrier landings:	2771
Total sorties:	3614

ACCIDENTS, INCIDENTS, AND GROUND ACCIDENTS

1. ACCIDENTS.

(a) DET-9 01-68A, 7 August 1967, 148910

a. USS ESSEX, CVS-9, LT D. F. HOLMES

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b. Damage to tail strut on Cat shot and landing

(b) DET-11, 01-68A, 20 November 1967, 148902

a. USS INTREPID, CVA-11, LTjg L. L. Waggoner

b. Damage to aircraft during single engine barricade landing.

2. INCIDENTS.

(a) Staff.

(1) 01-68I, 7 November 1967, 148902

(2) 02-68I, 27 November 1967, 147231

(3) 03-68I, 29 November 1967, 148904

(4) 04-68I, 5 December 1967, 148145

(b) DET-11.

(1) 01-68I, 17 November 1967, 148136

(c) DET-15.

(1) 01-68I, 1 August 1967, 147230

(2) 02-68I, 14 August 1967, 147219

(3) 03-68I, 30 September 1967, 148913

(d) DET-18.

(1) 01-68I, 5 July 1967, 147231

(2) 02-68I, 18 September 1967, 147213

(3) 03-68I, 25 September 1967, 147233

(e) DET-42.

(1) 01-68I, 19 July 1967, 148901

(2) 02-68I, 25 July 1967, 147321

(3) 03-68I, 26 July 1967, 148912

(4) 04-68I, 16 August 1967, 148912

(5) 05-68I, 22 August 1967, 148912

(6) 06-68I, 25 August 1967, 148905

(7) 07-68I, 16 September 1967, 148901

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(8) 08-68I, 18 October 1967, 148901

(f) DET-60.

(1) 01-68I, 11 August 1967, 148146

3. GROUND ACCIDENTS.

(a) Staff.

(1) 01-68G, 27 November 1967, 147233

(b) DET-11.

(1) 01-68G, 5 August 1967, 148136 and 149588

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