



1993 ✓

**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY**  
CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON  
ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE  
UNIT 60136, FPO AE 09507-6406

IN REPLY REFER TO:

1 March 1994

UNCLASSIFIED

To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH)

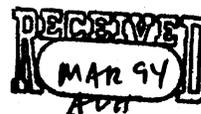
Subj: Command History (OPNAV Report 5750-1)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) CARAEWRON 121 (VAW-121) Squadron History 1993

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is forwarded.

J.W. SCIUTTI  
by direction



## COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

The **BLUETAILS** of VAW-121, under the command of Commander Philip S. Pritulsky, continued their long and proud tradition with Carrier Air Wing SEVEN (CVW 7). Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron One Hundred Twenty One operates and maintains 4 Grumman E-2C Hawkeye aircraft. The Hawkeye is the primary surveillance aircraft of the fleet and uses extended range radar and detection systems to protect the joint battle space from hostile air and surface threats while exercising command, control and coordination for all warfare areas. Other missions include surface surveillance, search and rescue, strike control and communications relay.

This year found the **BLUETAILS** and CVW-7 operating many detachments from different bases as well as workups with USS George Washington (CVN-73).

VAW-121 has over one hundred and sixty men assigned. This includes aircrew, administration, and maintenance personnel who support and fly four aircraft (BUNO 161552, 161341, 161547, and 159111). The **BLUETAILS** have one of the finest maintenance departments in the Hawkeye community and the best carrier-based safety record in the Atlantic Fleet with over 27 years and 53,000 hours of mishap-free flight operations.

VAW-121 is based at NAS Norfolk, VA and proudly calls Carrier Air Wing SEVEN and the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73) their home away from home.

## VAW-121 1993 CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

### JANUARY

09-17 Special Project - NAS Fallon, NV  
20-29 Aircraft Material Condition Inspection

### FEBRUARY

01-03 Bronze Nickel - VA CAPES (CVN 73)  
17-28 JTF-4 Counter Drug Operations - Howard AFB, Panama

### MARCH

01-31 Continuation of JTF-4 Operations - Howard AFB, Panama

### APRIL

01-09 Completion of JTF-4 Operations - Howard AFB, Panama  
24-25 Azalea Airshow - NAS Norfolk, VA  
25-28 Gulf of Maine, DDG 53 Sea Trials  
30 CVW-7 Long Range Strike - NAS Cecil Field, FL

### MAY

09-12 Gulf of Mexico, CG 72 Sea Trials  
18 Dissimilar Aircraft Combat Training - NAS Cecil Field, FL

### JUNE

01-18 FCLPs  
16-29 TSTA I - VACAPES (CVN 73)

### JULY

05-09 VX-4 F/A-18 UPGRADE - NAS KEY WEST, FL  
12-14 Gulf of Maine, DDG 53 Sea Trials  
12-16 HAWKEYE WEEK  
16 HAWKEYE BALL  
13-16 MISSILEX, CLAW-1 - NAS CECIL FIELD, FL  
17 NASA Space Shuttle Support  
22-28 FCLPs  
24 NASA Spcae Shuttle Support  
29-30 Carrier Qualification - VACAPES (CVN 73)

## AUGUST

01-02 Carrier Qualification - VACAPES (CNV 73)  
03 Dependent's Day Cruise - VACAPES (CVN 73)  
04-09 Gulf of Mexico, CG-59 Sea Trials  
12-18 FCLPs  
24-31 TSTA II - VACAPES, JAX OP AREA (CVN 73)  
28 MISSILEX (CVN 73)

## SEPTEMBER

01-14 TSTA II - VACAPES (CVN 73)  
02-06 In Port - Fort Lauderdale, FL  
08-10 Bronze Quarter - VACAPES (CVN 73)  
21-22 MAG-49 MISSILEX - VACAPES (CVN 73)  
23-28 AMRAAM MISSILEX - NAVSTA Roosevelt Roads, PR

## OCTOBER

04-07 MISSILEX - NAS Cecil Field, FL  
15-31 CVW-7 Weapons Detachment - NAS Fallon, NV

## NOVEMBER

01-05 CVW-7 Weapons Detachment - NAS Fallon, NV  
15-17 MISSILEX CLAW-1 - NAS Cecil Field, FL  
17-19 BRONZE DIME - VACAPES  
24 Change of Command - CDR Lawrence E. Tant relieved by CDR Philip S. Pritulsky

## DECEMBER

07-15 TSTA III - VACAPES (CVN 73)  
16 Safety Milestone - 27 years and over 53,000 hours of Class-A mishap free flight

**VAW-121**  
**A NARRATIVE OF EVENTS FOR 1993**

JANUARY:

The beginning of the new year found VAW-121 in port at NAS Norfolk.

The operations tempo started quickly with a special project at NAS Fallon from 9 - 17 January. The BLUETAILS flew test flights in support of missions dictated by project leaders at the air station.

The period of 20 - 29 January was spent conducting Aircraft Maintenance Condition Inspections.

FEBRUARY:

The first of February marked the first BRONZE exercise for the year. These joint-force exercises gave the BLUETAILS experience working with sister services in strike execution. Working with Air Wing Seven and the 9th Air Force, simulated strikes were flown into Cherry Point, North Carolina with both live and inert weapons dropped in the Dare County bombing range.

On 17 February, the BLUETAILS departed their homeport for Howard AFB in Panama. Here they began JTF-4 counter drug operations which would last until 12 April. VAW-121 provided long range surveillance and acted as primary air interceptor controller in the detection of narcotics traffic flying from South and Central America.

MARCH:

The month of March was spent in Panama in the continuation of JTF-4 counter drug operations.

APRIL:

The first part of April was spent completing JTF-4 counter drug operations in Panama. On 9 April the BLUETAILS returned to NAS Norfolk.

Two aircraft were provided for static displays during the Azalea Airshow which occurred on the 24th and 25th at NAS Norfolk.

From 25 - 28 April, VAW-121 operated over the Gulf of Maine in support of USS John Paul Jones (DDG 53). Radar coverage and LINK-11 were provided to test Aegis and Digital Data Link systems.

On 30 April a long-range strike was conducted from NAS Cecil Field, Florida with CVW-7. In this strike, VAW-121 provided continuous close control of 29 "blue" aircraft opposed by 10 "red" aircraft.

MAY:

From 9-12 May, the Bluetails provided support in the Gulf of Mexico for CG-72 sea trials. Radar coverage and LINK-11 were again utilized to test various weapons and data link systems.

Dissimilar Aircraft Combat Training took place 18 May at NAS Cecil Field, FL. VAW-121 controlled Navy F/A-18 Hornets against Air Force F-16 Falcons.

JUNE:

FCLPs were conducted 1 - 18 June in order to prepare the pilots for TSTA I, which took place from the 21st to the 29th. TSTA I provided initial workups onboard USS George Washington (CVN 73), including carrier qualifications and five days of cyclic operations. BLUETAIL E-2Cs provided airborne early warning, as well as control of WASEX and STRIKEX events.

JULY:

The month opened with a detachment to NAS Key West in support of VX-4. BLUETAIL E-2Cs provided radar coverage and data link for F/A-18 software upgrades. All aspects of communication and data link systems were evaluated with excellent results.

VAW-121 flew north to the Gulf of Maine on the 12th of July in support of more system evaluations with USS John Paul Jones (DDG 53). These flights lasted until 14 July.

A MISSILEX occurred from 13 - 16 July at NAS Cecil Field, FL. The BLUETAILS provided range surveillance and command and control for CLAW-1 and the firing of AIM-7 and AIM-9 missiles.

Hawkeye week commenced 12 July. This annual E-2 community celebration included competition in various sporting events, taken quite seriously by all commands. It concluded with the formal Hawkeye Ball dinner party for all E-2 community officers, wives and guests.

The BLUETAILS of VAW-121 won the volleyball tournament with flying colors.

The 17th of July brought the opportunity for the BLUETAILS to

work with the NASA space shuttle. VAW-121 flew as SAR aircraft for shuttle launches, with one aircraft turning on the deck and another ready to launch with the crew in the ready room. The alerts lasted from one hour prior to scheduled launch until told to stand down by the shuttle command center.

BLUETAIL pilots honed their flying skills 22 - 28 July during FCLPs. In addition to these flights, another space shuttle alert was stood on the 24th.

The end of the month brought carrier qualifications aboard USS George Washington off the coast of Virginia.

#### AUGUST:

The first two days of August were spent completing carrier qualifications on the GW. These were followed by a dependent's day cruise which occurred on the 3rd. This gave the families a chance to see firsthand the professional manner in which BLUETAILS accomplish their mission.

The squadron then flew a detachment south to the Gulf of Mexico in support of more system evaluations for CG 72, which lasted until 9 August.

NALF Fentress saw the BLUETAIL E-2Cs again as they completed more FCLP periods from 12 - 18 August.

From the 24th on, the rest of August was spent onboard USS George Washington for TSTA II. This exercise continued the workup cycle for Air Wing Seven, including MISSILEXs and cyclic operations.

## SEPTEMBER:

The first half of September was spent completing TSTA II, with a port call in Fort Lauderdale, FL 2 - 6 September. Immediately following the port call, BRONZE QUARTER operations began. These exercises again gave an opportunity for the BLUETAILS to operate with sister services and supply command and control for many different aircraft types. In addition, work was conducted with SEAL Team 8, including combat SAR. TSTA II and BRONZE QUARTER concluded on the 10th of September.

The third and fourth MISSILEXs for the squadron occurred at the end of September. VAW-121 worked with MAG-49 onboard the GW on the 21st and 22nd, and then went south to Roosevelt Roads for the first Atlantic AMRAAM shoot on the 23rd to the 28th.

## OCTOBER:

The BLUETAILS flew from NAS Cecil Field in Florida from the 4th until the 7th in support of their fifth MISSILEX of the year. This was followed by preparation for CVW-7 Weapons Detachment to NAS Fallon, NV on 15 October.

The Fallon detachment signalled the beginning of workups for the squadron's May 1994 deployment. The primary goals of the detachment were to provide continued air wing training, enhance air wing readiness to conduct day and night overland power projection and ground forces support missions. Air wing units employed live, inert and captive carry ordnance in the conduct of battlefield air interdiction, strike rescue, defense suppression and training sorties. VAW-121 provided total radar coverage and command and

control services in every aspect of operations during these exercises.

NOVEMBER:

The squadron returned to NAS Norfolk from NAS Fallon on 5 November. Another detachment was soon underway to NAS Cecil Field for a MISSILEX which occurred 15 - 17 November.

The last of the BRONZE exercises occurred 17 - 19 November with BRONZE DIME. Once again, the BLUETAILS provided complete radar coverage and command and control to different services' aircraft.

On the 24th, the squadron held a change of command ceremony. Commander Philip S. Pritulsky relieved Commander Lawrence E. Tant. Commander Tant left to join the staff of Commander, Carrier Group Four.

DECEMBER:

Six days of FCLPs took place in the beginning of the month, followed by TSTA III on the 7th.

TSTA III began with carrier qualifications on CVN 73, soon followed with operations in Warning Areas 72 and 386. Highlights of this period include a long range strike, EMCON operations, E-2 controlled approaches, WASEX and alerts. The tempo of sorties was fast, but the BLUETAILS continued to excel at all assigned tasks. TSTA III was completed on 15 December and VAW-121 returned to NAS Norfolk for the holiday season.

On the 16th of December, VAW-121 set another safety milestone,

surpassing 27 years and over 53,000 hours of Class-A mishap free flight. This represents a record unmatched by any squadron in the Atlantic Fleet.