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VAM-123/PAG/dg
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Sert 010
3 March 1972

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From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE
HUNDRED TWENTY THREE

To: Chief of Naval Operations (Op-0502)

Subj: Command History; submission of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12B of 20 MAY 71

Encl: (1) Command History

1. In accordance with reference (a), Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY THREE's Command History for calendar year 1971 is hereby submitted.

GLENN G. DIERODER

Copy to:
Director of Naval History
(Op-0989)

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COMMAND HISTORY

CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON
ONE HUNDRED TWENTY THREE
FPO NEW YORK 09501

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CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

Events 1 JAN 71 - 31 DEC 71

January, February and March - Pre-deployment work-up

April

- 03 - Embarked in USS SARATOGA (CVA-60) Naval Station, Mayport, Florida
- 09 - Commander Glen G. DEBRODER relieved Commander W. R. EELS as Commanding Officer
- 11-13 - Inport, Naval Station, Mayport, Florida
- 14-23 - At sea in Jacksonville operating area for type training
- 23-28 - Inport, Naval Station, Mayport, Florida
- 28-03 - At sea in Jacksonville operating area for type training

May

- 03 - Anchorage, Naval Station, Mayport, Florida
- 04-07 - Operational Readiness Evaluation off coast of Jacksonville
- 08 - Return to Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia
- 21 - ADMAT Inspection by COMCARAEM Wing 12

June

- 06 - Deployed aboard USS SARATOGA (CVA-60) for CV evaluation cruise
- 11-12 - Commenced SECOND Fleet operations off the coast of Bermuda
- 12-16 - Transient
- 17-20 - Anchorage, Greenock, Scotland
- 21-22 - Participated in MAGIC SWORD II Exercise in North Sea
- 26-28 - Anchorage in Bay of Cadiz, Rota, Spain
- 28 - Passed through Straits of Gibraltar inbound to Mediterranean Sea
- 29-30 - Conducted TU operations near Balearic Islands

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July

- 01-06 - Inport, Cannes, France
- 07-13 - Conducted TG operations in Tyrrhenian Sea
- 14-23 - Inport, Corfu, Greece
- 23-28 - Operating South of Greece in the Ionian Sea
- 29-31 - Anchorage Souda Bay, Crete

August

- 05-20 - Inport Athens, Greece
- 20-22 - At sea operating in Aegean Sea
- 23-06 - Inport Athens, Greece

September

- 06 - Departed Athens, Greece
- 06-08 - Carrier refresher landing operations in Ionian Sea
- 09 - All E-2B aircraft grounded for prop/truss assembly inspection
- 13-17 - Inport Genoa, Italy
- 28 - Entered port of Naples, Italy

October

- 02 - Departed Naples, Italy
- 03 - Operating East of Sardinia in the Mediterranean Sea
- 04-08 - Inport Palma de Majorica
- 09 - Operations enroute to Rota, Spain in the Mediterranean Sea
- 10 - Passed through the Straits of Gibraltar
- 11-13 - Inport Rota, Spain
- 19 - Anchored at Bermuda
- 21 - Around the clock ASW operations vicinity of Bermuda
- 28 - Squadron disembarked at Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia

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November

01-30 - Post-deployment activities

December

01-31 - Post-deployment activities

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BASIC NARRATIVE HISTORY 1971

Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY THREE (VAW-123) is commanded by Commander Glen G. DEBRODER, USN. The squadron is under the administrative and operational control of Attack Carrier Air Wing THREE. Carrier Airborne Early Warning Wing TWELVE serves as a Supervisory Authority while ashore at Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia. The internal command organization is as follows:

Commanding Officer

Safety

Executive Officer

Operations

Pilot Training
NFO Training
Pilot Standardization
NFO Standardization
Communications
Air Intelligence
Registered Publications
System
Analysts
Landing Signal Officer
Ground Training Officer
Flight Schedules
Logs and Records
Navigation
Survival
HURREVAC
NBC

Maintenance

Assistant Maintenance
Quality Assurance
Maintenance/Material
Control
Aircraft
Avionics
Line

Administration

Education
Personnel
Public Affairs
First Lieutenant
CMCO
COMTAC
Career Counseling
Minority Affairs
USAFI Test Control

In November 1970, VAW-123 received a fleet of four Grumman E-2B "HAWKEYES" to replace the E-2A aircraft. The E-2B, although unchanged in physical dimensions, has incorporated within its internal structure, several modifications including a highly advanced computer system which provides increased efficiency and reliability. From January 1971 through March 1971, operational priorities were given to transitioning to this new aircraft in anticipation of the upcoming SIXTH Fleet deployment.

In April 1971, VAW-123 deployed aboard USS SARATOGA (CVA-60) for a pre-deployment work-up. On 9 April 1971, while at sea, Commander Glen G. DEBRODER relieved Commander W. R. KELS as Commanding Officer. Late in April, the squadron received a grade of Excellent on the operational readiness evaluation.

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VAW-123 began its second extended SIXTH Fleet deployment aboard USS SARATOGA on 7 June 1971. This cruise would provide the initial evaluation of the new CV concept, which incorporates the mission of Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) with that of the Attack Carrier Air Wing. From the outset VAW-123 would be able to evaluate the capabilities of the E-2B as an ASW command and control platform.

The first exercise of the cruise from 9-12 June 1971, off the coast of Bermuda required VAW-123 to provide Airborne Early Warning (AEW) and surface, sub-surface, surveillance in ASW operations. During this period, E-2B controllers utilized the APS-96 radar to produce impressive results in this squadrons' first encounter with sub-surface elements. A report of the exercise revealed that the E-2B prosecuted three surface contacts which were evaluated as one possible and two confirmed submarines operating at periscope depth.

On 17 June 1971, following an uneventful transatlantic, SARATOGA anchored at Greenock, Scotland for two days. VAW-123's entry into the North Sea marked a first for E-2B squadrons. Upon leaving Greenock, the squadron participated in operation "MAGIC SWORD II"; an exercise which required E-2B radar surveillance for the attack and fighter squadrons enroute to assigned strike points in Denmark and Norway.

Concluding operations in the North Sea, SARATOGA departed for Rota, Spain where turnover proceedings were completed with USS FORRESTAL on 26 June 1971.

In July, VAW-123 visited the ports of Cannes, France (1-5) and Corfu, Greece (14-22). The two operating periods of the month were highlighted by Passing Exercises (PASSEX) with USS F. D. ROOSEVELT and HMS LONDON. VAW-123 was tasked with the responsibility of formulation and execution of search plans for both PASSEX operations. The squadron proved to be superbly effective in accomplishing these missions.

Completely unaware of a series of events which would greatly alter the tempo of the cruise, VAW-123 personnel anxiously awaited SARATOGA's arrival at Athens, Greece, where many families would be united. On 6 August 1971, many squadron wives arrived in Athens on the first dependent's flight in VAW-123's history. These families enjoyed this historical city together for the eleven day period. While anchored, VAW-123 launched one aircraft to Souda Bay, Crete to provide the ship with early warning.

On 16 August 1971, SARATOGA's scheduled departure from Athens was postponed indefinitely due to an engineering casualty. It took a corps of expert engineers including ship's company, working around the clock, to effect repairs to the ship. On 20 August SARATOGA got underway to continue the cruise, but during flight operations on the 21st she suffered another engineering casualty. All aircraft airborne at the time of the casualty were diverted to Souda Bay, Crete. VAW-123 had one aircraft airborne. During the flight to Crete, an E-2B controller received distress calls from Greece. A Greek woman was in need of immediate medical help! The VAW-123 controller relayed the report to SARATOGA and a helicopter was dispatched

for rescue under E-2B control. The woman was subsequently flown to a medical facility. Meanwhile, SARATOGA limped back to Athens, Greece for more repairs to her engineering stations. Although the month of August yielded only a few days of operating time, VAW-123 again won the monthly "Golden Tailhook Award".

On 6 September 1971, SARATOGA departed Athens utilizing the first two days of operations for carrier qualifications.

On 9 September 1971, VAW-123 was notified that all E-2B and C-2 aircraft were grounded pending propeller inspections. The squadron detailed a small detachment of maintenance personnel and three E-2B aircraft to Naval Station, Rota, Spain. In Rota, all propellers were disassembled and shipped to CONUS for inspection. The VAW-123 detachment at Rota also effected all maintenance inspection requirements on E-2B and C-2 aircraft for VAW-124 and VRC-24. Late in September, when the aircraft were returned to a flying status, VAW-123 sent an E-2B to Lajes Air Base, Azores to control a tanking rendezvous for the transatlantic operations of several A-7's enroute to CONUS.

In early October 1971, VAW-123 pilots were given deck time for refresher landing practice after another extended period of non-flying. On 11 October the SARATOGA anchored at Rota, Spain for a post Mediterranean brief with USS INDEPENDENCE.

On 13 October 1971, SARATOGA departed Rota, Spain enroute to CONUS. During the transatlantic VAW-123 was presented with SARATOGA's Self-Help Habitability Award for improvements made to squadron spaces. Most significant was the complete renovation of the VAW-123 crew's compartment by transforming a bleak gray lounge into a wood paneled den with acoustical tile and soft music.

At 0800, 21 October 1971, VAW-123 began around the clock operations which concluded at 0800 on the 28th of October. This was the largest ASW operations of the cruise and the squadron's performance was outstanding. On the morning of the 28th, three aircraft were flown ashore to NAS Norfolk, Virginia. Later that day, SARATOGA tied up at Pier 12 and the remainder of the squadron moved ashore.

From 28 October 1971 to 31 December 1971, VAW-123 emphasized crew and personnel training anticipating a short type training period before returning to sea. VAW-123 participated in Exercise BLUE AX during this period.

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SPECIAL REPORT

1. CV EVALUATION: One of the most important objectives of VAW-123's 1971 deployment was to evaluate the E-2B as an element of the CV concept. This evaluation was handicapped to a degree by SARATOGA's engineering casualties and the grounding of all E-2B's for the propeller and truss assembly inspections. This resulted in a loss of 21 at-sea operating days including participation in National Week I.

Throughout the cruise the E-2B was utilized primarily in it's basic role as an airborne command and control platform with emphasis on AEW. The evaluation of the E-2B as an ASW command and control unit was somewhat limited since most Air Wing ASW operations were conducted within UHF range of the ship. Consequently, the ship was able to control ASW aircraft without E-2B assistance. However, when datum was at some distance from the ship, the E-2B took effective control of the ASW situation, vectoring aircraft in searches, directing sonobuoy drops, and acting as a communications relay station. If the force were in emission control or datum was not in close proximity of the carrier, the E-2B could be used effectively in ASW operations.

2. Submarine detections from 7 June to 28 October 1971 by the E-2B:

	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>EVALUATION</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
SNORKELS	2	1 possible	67 NM from E-2
		1 possible	86 NM from E-2
PERISCOPES	4	1 probable (USSR)	110 NM from E-2
		1 possible	
		1 positive	60 NM from E-2
		1 probable	80 NM from E-2
SURFACED	3	1 positive	90 NM from E-2
		1 positive	3 NM from E-2 (visual)
		1 positive	135 NM from E-2 (approx posit known)

3. SHORE BASING EVALUATION: The squadron shore based aircraft at Souda Bay, Crete from 5 August to 6 September 1971, because of SARATOGA's engineering casualties. During this period an alert status was maintained from sunrise to sunset to provide interim early warning for CTF 60 in the Eastern Mediterranean. Support equipment was extremely limited and morale was low due to poor berthing and messing facilities.