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1986

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

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

DECLASSIFIED

5000
Ser 00C004
06 MAR 1987

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (Unclassified upon removal of enclosures (3), and (5))

From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 123
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH), Washington Navy Yard, Washington, DC 20374-0571

Subj: 1986 COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12D

Encl: (1) Command Organization (U)
(2) Chronology of Events CY-86 (U)
(3) Amplyfying Narrative (C)
(4) Supporting Documents (U)
(5) 1986 End of Deployment Report (C)

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (5) are submitted for VAW-123 1986 Calendar Year History.

C O McDonald
C. O. MCDONALD
By direction

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VAW-123 COMMAND ORGANIZATION

Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 123 (VAW-123). The SCREWTOPS fly the Grumman E-2C Hawkeye and are assigned to Carrier Air Wing ONE (CVW-1) when embarked aboard USS AMERICA (CV 66). While ashore, VAW-123 is attached to Carrier Airborne Early Warning Wing TWELVE based at Naval Air Station Norfolk, Virginia. The squadron's primary mission is to provide airborne early warning (AEW) and command and control services to fleet forces with prompt and sustained combat operations at sea in direct support of the carrier air wing, carrier battle group and the Navy's global maritime strategy. VAW-123 is presently commanded by Commander W. D. Holbrook.

Enclosure (1)

VAW-123 CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS CY 1986

JANUARY

02 Two day post holiday safety standdown at NAS Norfolk.
07 VAW-123 participated in link excercises with USS BOSTON (SSN-703) at Montauk Point, NY.
22 Provided range clearance for VF-33 missile excercise.
23 Provided range clearance for USS DETROIT missile excercise.

FEBUARY

03 Screwtop carrier qualification aboard USS AMERICA.
06 Commencenced FLEET EXCERCISE 1-86 in Puerto Rico operating area.
25 Completed FLEET EXCERCISE 1-86 and returned to Norfolk.

MARCH

09 Loaded aboard USS AMERICA and underway for six month Mediterranean deployment.
22 Three Carrier Battle Group operations in the vicinity of Libya; USS AMERICA, USS SARATOGA, USS CORAL SEA.
31 Training anchorage Augusta Bay, Sicily turnover with the USS SARATOGA and Air Wing SEVENTEEN.

APRIL

04 Port visit to Livorno, Italy.
09 Return to the Gulf of Sidra for dual Carrier Battle Group operations with USS CORAL SEA
28 Port visit to Naples Italy.

MAY

05 Participated in NATO excercise DISTANT HAMMER.
17 Dual carrier operation with USS ENTERPRISE in central Mediterranean Sea.
20 Port visit to Cannes, France.
23 VAW-123 Change of Command, CDR Holbrook relieved CDR Liebe.
29 Squadron safety standdown.
31 Central Mediterranean operations.

JUNE

11 Participated in Excercise POOPDECK with the Spanish Air Force.
13 Port visit to Palma De Majorca, Spain.
19 NATO Excercise TRIDENTE.
24 Dual carrier operations with USS FORRESTAL.
28 Port visit to Naples, Italy.

Enclosure (2)

JULY

08 Central Mediterranean operation NATIONAL WEEK.
13 Port visit to Catania, Sicily.
23 Western Mediterranean operations.
28 Port visit to Benidorm, Spain.

AUGUST

07 Western Mediterranean operations.
11 Port visit to Naples, Italy.
18 Western Mediterranean operations.
21 Central Mediterranean operations.
28 Inport Rota, Spain to turnover with USS KENNEDY.
21 Outchop 6th Fleet.

SEPTEMBER

01 Trans-Atlantic crossing enroute to home port Norfolk, Virginia.
09 Screwtops fly off USS AMERICA to NAS Norfolk to complete squadrons 17th deployment since commissioning.
10 USS AMERICA Battle Group inport Norfolk.

OCTOBER

16 Squadron celebrated 18 years of mishap free flying.
25 Participated in Excercise Red Flag 87-1 at AFB Nellis, Nevada.

NOVEMBER

12 Drug interdiction operations at NAS Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

DECEMBER

01 Fleet fighter air combat maneuver refresher program in Virginia Vacapes operating area with VF-33 and VF-102.

JANUARY

Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 123 began 1986 with a two day post holiday safety standdown, and prepared for an earlier than expected deployment. The Screwtops also provided range clearnance for VF-33 and USS DETROIT missile excercise in the Virginia Capes operating area.

FEBUARY

In early Febuary, the squadron moved aboard USS AMERICA (CV-66) and participated in carrier qualifications. The Screwtops then steamed south to the Puerto Rico operating area and participated in one of the most successful excercises this squadron has ever undertaken, FLEETEX 1-86. The results were the successful employment and refinement of new Anti-Air Warfare Battle Force procedures.

MARCH

On March 10, two weeks earlier than expected, the Screwtops moved aboard USS AMERICA for a Mediterranean deployment. A short trans-Atlantic crossing allowed only limited carrier qualifications but expedited our arrival in the vicinity of Libya. The Screwtops and the USS AMERICA Battle Group took station with the USS SARATOGA and USS CORAL SEA in the central Ionian. Due to increased activity of terrorists, the three carrier battle groups moved South into the Gulf of Sidra. See the classified narrative in enclosure (3).

APRIL

After the USS AMERICA turnover with the USS SARATOGA, the Screwtops returned to the Gulf of Sidra for dual carrier battle group operations. The results of those operations were described in detail in various national media. During strikes against Libya, the Screwtops provided combat air patrol, electronic support measures, command and control support for Airwing one attack aircraft on the eastern targets and delousing and tanker control for the FB-111's returning from the Tripoli targets. After following the USN/USAF strikes into Libya, the Screwtops settled into rountine Central Mediterranean operations which consisted primarily of surface search and combat air patrol. See the classified narrative in enclosure (3).

MAY

The Screwtops started the month of May with NATO excercise DISTANT HAMMER. Designed to enhance Allied tactical interoperability, the excercise was significantly curtailed due to real world tension in the southern Mediterranean. During the excercise, one Screwtop NFO flew with the NE-3A AWACS and three NAEW controllers visited the Screwtops for some eye-opening carrier experience. Following DISTANT HAMMER, the squadron participated briefly in dual carrier operations with the USS ENTERPRISE and also B-52 over the horizon targeting (OTHT) excercises in the western Mediterranean. On 23 May, VAW-123 held a change of command ceremony aboard USS AMERICA in which CDR W. D. Holbrook relieved CDR W. C. Liebe.

JUNE

During the first half of the June, Screwtops patrolled the central Mediterranean and participated in excercise POOPDECK with the Spanish Air Force. A USAF controller and two Spanish Air Force controllers flew with the Screwtops to control USAF/SAF fighters against embarked F-14 Tomcats. After a short port visit to Palma De Majorca, Spain, the Screwtops participated in excercise TRIDENTE, and dual carrier operations with the USS CORAL SEA as she transited to Naples Italy.

JULY

After a port visit to Naples, Italy, the Screwtops returned to flight operations in the central Mediterranean and participated in NATO excercise NATIONAL WEEK. Then came port visits to Cantania, Sicily and Benidorm, Spain followed by more central Mediterranean flight operations.

AUGUST

Western Mediterranean flight operations continued during the month. On 28 August, while inport Rota, Spain, USS AMERICA turned over with USS KENNEDY. After the turnover was completed, USS AMERICA outchopped from 6th Fleet and began a trans-Atlantic crossing enroute to its homeport of Norfolk, VA.

SEPTEMBER

On the 9 September, Screwtops flew back to NAS Norfolk concluding a six month Mediterranean deployment. During the post deployment standown period, the Screwtops coordinated two missile excercises with VC-12 and the USS BARNEY. The remainder of the month, the Screwtops concentrated on maintaining aircrew proficient in primary mission areas in preparation for Red Flag 87-1.

OCTOBER

The Screwtops were inport during the month to celebrate 18 years of mishap free flying having accumulated 35,900 total hours, 8850 arrested landings during 9 major deployments. The ground training efforts kicked off the turnaround training plan and preparation for the NATOPS unit evaluation. Nearing the end of the month, the Screwtops participated excercise Red Flag 87-1 in Nellis AFB, Nevada.

NOVEMBER

The Screwtops flew to NAS Guantanamo Bay, Cuba to conduct drug interdiction operation THUNDERBOLT.

DECEMBER

During the first part of the month, Screwtops participated in a Fleet Fighter Air combat maneuver Refresher Program (FFARP) for VF-33 and VF-102 in the Virginia Capes operating area. The remainder of the month was dominated by a holiday standdown and preparation for upcoming shakedown training in USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

COMMAND HISTORY (Classified)

MARCH

(C) During the second day of operations in the vicinity of Libya, the Libyan SA-5 site at Sirte launched two surface air missile at the southern combat air patrol stations. This action escalated the weapons status of the task force and the Battle Group Commander ordered a strike against the offending SA-5 site. Screwtop 600 controlled a USS SARATOGA A-7 in this first combat test of the HARM missile, a shot which disabled one of the SA-5 sites. Screwtop 602 then directed a VA-34 A-6, Blaster 507, via voice vectors and Link-4 for an attack on a closing hostile surface contact in the first and successful combat use of the HARPOON missile. 602 then controlled VA-34 and VA-85 A-6's in MK-20 "Rockeye" strikes against hostile craft sites.

APRIL

(C) Operation "El Dorado Canyon" was subsequently executed by USS AMERICA, USS CORAL SEA and USAF assets based in Great Britain. CVW-1 A-6's struck target in Benghazi, while CVW-13 A-6's attacked the airfield at Benina while the Air Force 48th TWF FB-111 struck selected targets around Tripoli. During these operations, the Screwtops provided command and control for Airwing One including combat air patrol and surface search in support of battle group operations.

CLASSIFIED BY: NWP 12-6-1 (Rev F)
DECLASSIFY ON: OADR

1986 AWARDS

SQUADRON

1986 Battle "E"
Navy Expeditionary Award (23-31 Mar 86)
Meritorious Unit Commendation (21 Mar-27 Jun 86)
COMNAVAIRLANT nomination for 1986 AEW Excellence Award
COMNAVAIRLANT Nomination for 1986 Secretary of Defense Maintenance Award

INDIVIDUAL

1986 Sailor of the Year - AE1 Robert N. Diggs, USN
1986 Hawkeye of the Year - LCDR John M. Yurchak, USN
1986 Junior Pilot of the Year - LT Phillip M. Tinsley, USNR
LCDR James L. DELANEY Award - LT Barry A. Abshire, USNR
LCDR Paul M. WRIGHT Safety Award - LCDR Timothy Leighton, USN
Command Advancement Program (CAP) - DK2 Rick S. Allen, USN
AMH1 Nicholas Garcia, USN
Navy Achievement Medals - LT Rick W. Smith, USN
LT Scott D. Miller, USN
AMS1 Michael E. Dubose, USN
AT2 Michael A. Ratajczak, USN

END OF DEPLOYMENT AWARDS

NAVY COMMENDATION MEDAL:

AFCM Charles E. BOYD, USN
LCDR George H. MEARS, USN
AMS1 Graig A. WARREN, USN

NAVY ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL:

DK2 Rick S. ALLEN, USN
AE2 Robert N. DIGGS, USN
AMH2 Jerry G. DREWYOR, USN
AT1 David M. FAIRCHILD, USN
ATC Harry E. HAUN, USN
AT2 Thomas O. MARKLE, USN
HM1 Charles T. RAY, USN
LT Paul K. REIMANN, USN
LT Wayne D. SHARER, USN
ATC Frederick L. THOMAS, USN
AT1 Randy G. WOLTER, USN
LCDR John M. YURCHAK, USN

COMCRUDESGRU 12 LETTERS OF COMMENDATION:

AT2 William J. CHILDS, USN
AMS2 Phillip T. CLARK, USN
PN3 Harry D. DRISCOLL, USN
AT2 Christopher D. HOURIGAN, USN
AT2 John K. HUDSON, USN
YNC Alfred E. PARRA, USN
ADC Wilfredo A. RAGUINI, USN
AE1 Dale E. SCHLIEP, USN
AMS3 Mark A. SHEETENHELM, USN
AMS3 Carl B. STIGGINS, USN
AE3 George A. TRUJILLO, USN
AEC Robert C. WALKER, JR., USN
AMH1 David J. WHITE, USN

Enclosure (4)

USS AMERICA LETTERS OF COMMENDATION:

AMCS Billy T. HENDRIX, USN
AT2 Mark E. JOHNSON, USN
ATAN Richard D. KUEHNER, USN
AT3 John A. MEASEL, USN
AMS3 Raymond L. PIERSALL, USN
AD2 Dale A. RYAN, USN
ATAN Mark C. SERBAN, USN
AE3 Richard F. CARTER, USN

USS AMERICA LETTERS OF APPRECIATION:

AT2 Robert B. ARMSTRONG, USN
AMSAN Scott L. CARPENTER, USN
AT1 Greg D. DUNHAM, USN
PN1 Stephen C. LOSEE, USN
AD1 Martin J. O'DONNELL, USN
AT2 Peter S. SEABORN, USN
AD2 John E. SIEBERT, USN
AD3 Victor W. WOERNER, USN
AMEAN Charles R. YOUNG, USN