

4/69-6/70

VAW-126



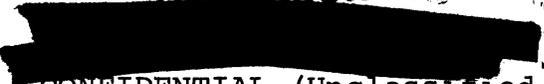
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON  
ONE HUNDRED TWENTY SIX  
FPO NEW YORK 09501

IN REPLY REFER TO

VAW-126/15/jtc  
5750  
Ser: 01  
15 JAN 1971

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From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-SIX  
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)  
Subj: Command History (OPNAV 5750-1) for 1 April 1969 to 30 June 1970  
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12 series  
Encl: (1) Chronology of Major Events  
(2) Basic Narrative  
(3) Documentary Annex

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1), (2) and (3) are forwarded.

*R. M. Lee*

R. M. LEE  
By direction

Copy to:  
Director of Naval History (OP-09B9)  
COMNAVAIRLANT Public Affairs (w/o enclosures (2) and (3))



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CHRONOLOGY

- 1 APR 69: Squadron commissioned at Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia.
- 11 AUG -  
26 SEP: VAW-126 commenced its first refresher training period at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, aboard USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59).
- 24 OCT -  
7 NOV: VAW-126 proceeded aboard USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59) off the coast of Mayport, Florida for the final phases of refresher training and the Operational Readiness Inspection which was given on 3 to 5 November. The Squadron received the highest grade ever given to an East Coast VAW squadron on its first ORI.
- 2 DEC 69: VAW-126 departed Norfolk, Virginia aboard USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59) on its first Mediterranean deployment.
- 11 DEC 69: VAW-126 inchooped to the Sixth Fleet. A schedule of port visits is included in enclosure (3).
- 12 DEC 69: VAW-126 aboard USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59) relieved VAW-121 detachment aboard USS JOHN F. KENNEDY at St. Paul's Bay, Palma, Majorca.
- 15 JAN 70: CDR A. W. OLDHAM, USN, was relieved as Commanding Officer by CDR R. M. HARP, USN.
- 30 JUN 70: VAW-126 aboard USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59) was relieved by VAW-123 aboard USS SARATOGA (CVA-60) at Barcelona, Spain. USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59) sailed for Norfolk, Virginia.

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BASIC NARRATIVES

On April 1969 a combined ceremony was held incorporating the change of command of Carrier Airborne Early Warning Wing TWELVE from Captain S. L. CORNER, USN to Captain T. D. QUINN, USN, and the commissioning of Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-SIX as the sixth and final E-2A squadron on the East Coast. The squadron's first commanding officer was CDR Albert W. OLDHAM, USN. Homeported at Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia, VAW-126 is under the operational command of Commander Carrier Airborne Early Warning Wing TWELVE.

As an E-2A squadron, VAW-126 has as its prime mission Carrier Airborne Early Warning, also possessing capabilities for such secondary missions as intercept control and strike control. At commissioning, the squadron had 2 aircraft, 24 officers, and 38 enlisted men. When the squadron deployed aboard USS FORRESTAL, CVA-59, with a full compliment of 4 aircraft, 25 officers, and 126 enlisted men, it came under the operational command of Attack Carrier Air Wing SEVENTEEN.

From 11 August to 26 September 1969, VAW-126 engaged in refresher training aboard USS FORRESTAL. Although the squadron was usually able to launch an aircraft when scheduled, the cruise was a frustrating experience in several respects. The Avionics personnel generally lacked sufficient experience to troubleshoot the ATDS system, and the ship's Supply Department proved to have an insufficient stock of needed parts. The presence of a Grumman/COMNAVIAIRLANT Supply Representative aboard ship was a great help, however, in alleviating the latter problem. Inexperience was probably also a contributing factor in causing six minor aircraft "crunches".

Only one Squadron aircraft had a generally reliable computer system during this period, and it unfortunately had repeated problems with its IFF interrogation gear.

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As a result, flight crews frequently operated the ATDS in "degraded modes". The squadron at the time had only four Flight Technicians and less than a full complement of Naval Flight Officers, none of whom had any previous operational experience in the B-2. Flying in less than perfect aircraft, they were only able to complete about one third of assigned air control and strike control missions.

The performance of the high frequency data link with the NTDS data link system was less than satisfactory; the system was operational for only 7.3 of ninety flight hours, and a successful two-way exchange of data was rare.

Other problems plaguing the squadron were the necessity to change an engine on what was otherwise the most reliable aircraft when metal particles were discovered in the oil pump, and the generally unsatisfactory performance of the electronics gear when operating that equipment on the ship for test purposes. The unit proved incapable of supplying sufficient cooled and dehumidified air during operations in the Caribbean; moreover, the hose in one unit disintegrated internally and blew bits of aluminum foil into the "black boxes" of one aircraft.

VAW-126 boarded the FORRESTAL once more on 24 October for its Operational Readiness Inspection cruise. The squadron's readiness had been appreciably enhanced during the period ashore by the work of a team of civilian specialists who thoroughly checked the avionics system of two aircraft. More senior maintenance personnel had arrived, and the squadron began the process of training inexperienced men to become specialists in one very specific area of the ATDS. Factory representatives accompanied the squadron to aid in maintenance and training. From 25 October to 1 November the squadron flew seventy hours in preparation for the inspection, which took place on 3-5 November. The inspection itself involved forty-three hours of triple-cycle flights, in which the E-2's were scheduled for over-lapping

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periods so that for the first and third cycle of each flight, two planes were airborne.

Throughout the ORI VAW-126 had a mission-ready aircraft available for every launch with a spare aircraft available on the flight deck in case of unexpected difficulties. The performance of the data link improved spectacularly; in forty hours of attempted operations, a successful exchange of data was accomplished for over twenty-one hours. The efforts of squadron personnel were rewarded with a grade of 88.12, the second highest awarded to the Air Wing.

Other than the need to replace a propeller damaged during aircraft handling aboard ship, no unusual maintenance problems arose.

The IFF problem in one of the squadrons aircraft was solved by replacing the rotary joint linking the IFF transmitter to the rotary antenna.

With VAW-126 aboard, the FORRESTAL sailed for the Mediterranean on 2 December. While crossing the Atlantic the squadron provided early warning for the ship in anticipation of reconnaissance flights by Soviet aircraft.

After relieving the USS JOHN F. KENNEDY at Majorca, the FORRESTAL commenced operations in the Mediterranean which are summarized in operations reports included in enclosure (3).

Special topics covering such areas as Operational statistics flight hours, weapons systems, tactics, logistics, etc. are included in full in the Documentary Annexes.

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