



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON SEVEN SEVEN
NAVAL AIR STATION ATLANTA
1000 HALSEY AVE
MARIETTA GEORGIA 30080-5099

IN REPLY REFER TO:

5750
Ser N00/247
AUG 14 1998

From: Commanding Officer, Airborne Early Warning Squadron
SEVEN SEVEN

To: Director of Naval History (N09BH), Naval Historical
Center

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12F

Encl: (1) Biography of CDR K.G. Williamson

1. Per reference (a), the following information is submitted:

a. Command Composition and Organization. Airborne Early Warning Squadron SEVEN SEVEN's (VAW-77) primary mission is to serve as a Counter-Drug Command and Control platform in our Nation's war on drugs. The command falls under the administrative control of Carrier Air Wing Reserve TWO ZERO based at NAS Atlanta, GA, and under the operational control of Joint Interagency Task Force East located in Key West, FL. The squadron routinely deploys throughout the United States and the Caribbean for a minimum of 120 days every year directly supporting the counter-drug effort. The command is a Naval Reserve Squadron based at NAS Atlanta, GA, flying four Northrop Grumman E-2C Hawkeye aircraft. Commander K. G. Williamson assumed command on 15 August 98 and is the squadron's third Commanding Officer. Squadron manning is made up of 17 full time Training and Administration of the Reserves (TAR) officers and 19 enlisted, 26 Selected Reserve Officers and 10 enlisted, and 39 Northrop Grumman contractor personnel who perform maintenance on the aircraft.

b. Chronology

(1) 15 March 97 - VAW-77 Change-of-Command ceremony held at NAS Atlanta, GA, CDR C. P. Valliere assumed command. CDR K. G. Williamson assumed the duties of Executive Officer.

(2) 03 May 97 to 02 July 97 - Counter-Drug deployment to NS Roosevelt Roads.

(3) 14 October 97 to 14 December 97 - Counter-Drug deployment to NS Roosevelt Roads.

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY

(4) 26 March 98 - "AF 00", BUNO #161783 became the first E-2C Hawkeye in the U. S. Navy equipped with the VHF Omnidirectional Range/Instrument Landing System(VOR/ILS) navigation upgrade.

(5) 29 March 98 to 28 May 98 - Counter-Drug deployment to NS Roosevelt Roads.

(6) 15 August 98 - VAW-77 Change-of-Command ceremony held at NAS Atlanta, GA, CDR K. G. Williamson assumed command. CDR G. P. Bouts assumed the duties of Executive Officer.

b. Narrative

VAW-77 was established 01 October 95. The reserve command was established to replace VAW-122 as a full time counter-drug E-2C squadron following that squadron's decommissioning. On 25 October 95, VAW-77 flew the first command E-2C flight with CDR T. D. Lindsey as the Aircraft Commander, LCDR B. P. Cutchen as the co-pilot and CDR S. L. Wetzel as the Mission Commander.

On 18 November 95 the squadron held its Establishment Ceremony. The ceremony was conducted in a format similar to a change of command. CDR T. D. Lindsey was the Commanding Officer and CDR S. L. Wetzel was the Executive Officer. Only five months following its establishment, VAW-77 deployed for the first time to Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico to conduct Counter-Drug operations. VAW-77 quickly established itself as the premiere Counter-Drug squadron in the Caribbean Area of Responsibility. The success was attributed to aggressive and talented personnel, a focused mission, and unprecedented availability of full mission capable aircraft due to outstanding civilian contract maintenance.

Following the squadron's second Counter-Drug deployment to NS Roosevelt Roads, PR from 17 October 96 to 15 December 96, the squadron was awarded the Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendation for its support of Operation FRONTIER SHIELD. This was a Coast Guard operation which employed Coast Guard air and surface assets to essentially 'blockade' Puerto Rico from drug smugglers.

In January of 1997, VAW-77 Executive Officer CDR S. L. Wetzel declined to assume command of the squadron. The Change-of-Command ceremony was postponed until 15 March 97 when CDR C. P. Valliere assumed command during a ceremony at NAS Atlanta, GA, CDR K. G. Williamson assumed the duties of Executive Officer.

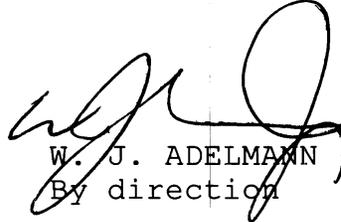
While continuing to operate in the Caribbean Area of Responsibility, it became readily apparent that the standard E-2C instrument navigation package was not well suited for the area of

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY

operations where the squadron was frequently tasked to provide radar coverage. It was decided that the optimal method to enhance safety-of-flight in these regions was to install a VOR/ILS instrument navigation package in all VAW-77 aircraft. On 26 March 98, "AF 00" flew the first U. S. Navy E-2C Hawkeye test and evaluation flight for the VOR/ILS upgrade package. The testing and evaluation was completed at GSAC, St. Augustine, FL with LT L. G. Hushour acting as the test pilot. Following an extremely successful operational evaluation period during the Spring 1998 deployment to NS Roosevelt Roads, the E-2C Hawkeye VOR/ILS system was granted an unrestricted operational clearance on 30 June 98.

On 15 August 98 a Change-of-Command ceremony was held at NAS Atlanta. CDR K. G. Williamson assumed command and CDR G. P. Bouts assumed the duties of Executive Officer. To date VAW-77 has flown 4090.2 hours and 1107 sorties in support of Counter-Drug operations. The squadron has been directly responsible for the seizure of 15.4 metric tons of cocaine and 7.2 metric tons of marijuana enroute to the United States.

d. Supporting Documents. Enclosure (1) is CDR Williamson's biography.



W. J. ADELMANN
By direction