1987

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HELICOPTER COMBAT SUPPORT SQUADRON FOUR (HC-4)
FPO NEW YORK 09523

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From: Commanding Officer, Helicopter Combat Support Squadron FOUR
To: Director of Naval History (Op-09BH), Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C. 20374-0571

Subj: CY 1987 COMMAND HISTORY SUBMISSION

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12D

Encl: (1) Biography of CDR P. W. Schempf
      (2) Biography of CDR R. L. Payne, Jr.
      (3) HC-4 CY 87 Battle Efficiency and CNO Annual Aviation Safety awards submission (C)

1. In accordance with reference (a), the HELSUPPRON FOUR Command History with enclosures (1) through (3) are submitted for review.

J. W. MULLARKY
By direction

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COMMAND HISTORY

I. Comand Composition and Organization.

A. Mission - To provide day/night logistic support to SIXTH Fleet units and U.S. Forces Europe.

B. Organizational structure - Chief of Naval Operations, COMNAVAIRLANT, COMHELTACWING ONE, COMFAIRMED, HC-4.

C. Commanding Officers - 01 January-29 May, CDR P.W. Schempf. 29 May-31 December, CDR R.L. Payne, Jr. See enclosures (1) and (2) for biographical information.

D. Permanent Duty Station: Naval Air Station (NAS) Sigonella, Sicily, Italy.

E. Assets: Six (6) Sikorsky CH-53E helicopters:
  BUNO's: 161532, 161536, 161537, 161538, 161539, 161540.

II. Chronology

Dates(s)	Event
01-03 January	Detachment (Det) to Palma, Spain in support of CV 67.
05 January	Designated first runner up in CINCUSNAVEUR Golden Anchor Award for 1986
05-18 January	Det to Hyeres, France in support of CV 67, AOR 6.
09 January	Medevac one patient from Comiso Air Base Italy to NAS Sigonella.
11-18 January	Det to Palma, Spain in support of CV 67, CVN 68.
12 January	Medevac one patient from CV 67 to Hyeres, France.
24-28 January	Det to Naples, Italy in support of LHA 2.
27 January - 02 February	Det to Rota, Spain in support of CV 67.
30 January	Medevac two patients from CV 67 to Naval Station Rota, Spain.
08 February - 08 March	Det Tel Aviv in support of CV 67, CVN 68, LPH 12.
12-26 February	Deployed on board USS Nimitz in support of CV 67, CVN 68.

06-11 March	Det to Naples in support of CVN 68.
12-18 March	Det to Antalya, Turkey in support of CVN 68.
24 March	Medevac one patient from CVN 68 to NAS, Sigonella.
25 March - 08 April	Det to Hyeres, France in support of CVN 68.
29 March	Medevac one patient from CVN 68 to Hyeres, France.
6 April	Medevac one patient from LPH 12 to NAS, Sigonella.
10 April	Medevac one patient from LPH 12 to NAS, Sigonella.
12-21 April	Det to Palma, Spain in support of CVN 68.
23 April - 06 May	Det to Hyeres, France in support of CVN 68.
May 87	Det to Souda Bay, Greece in support of CVN 68.
17 May	LCDR Douglas M. Hamilton, Operations Officer is killed in an auto accident.
19 May	Humanitarian Mission: Transported human remains from NAS Sigonella to Naval Support Activity Naples.
24 May - 01 June	Det to Palma, Spain in support of CV 63.
28 May	Medevac one patient from Palma, Spain to CV 63.
29 May	Change of Command: CDR R. L. Payne, Jr. relieves CDR P.W. Schempf as Commanding Officer, HC-4.
31 May	Medevac three patients from CV 63 to Palma, Spain.
06-13 June	Det to Hyeres, France in support of CV 63.
15-21 June	Det to Rota, Spain in support of CV 60, CV 63.
22 June	Medevac one patient from CV 60 to Alicante, Spain.
21-27 June	Det to Palma, Spain in support of CV 60, CV 63.
05-17 July	Det to Hyeres, France in support of CV 60.

21 July	Received Commander Naval Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet Safety Citation for four years Class A mishap free flight operations.
21-27 July	Det to Alicante, Spain to support CV 60.
24 July	Medevac one patient from Ragusa, Italy to NAS Sigonella.
31 July - 05 August	Det to Naples, Italy in support of CV 60.
05 August	AMSAN James Music is killed in an auto accident.
07-22 August	Det to Alexandria, Egypt in support of CV 60 and "Operation Bright Star," joint U.S./Egypt exercises.
07 August	Humanitarian mission: Transport human remains from NAS Sigonella to NSA Naples.
19 August	Humanitarian Mission: Transport human remains from NAS Sigonella to NSA Naples.
22-28 August	Det to Athens, Greece in support of CV 60.
24-29 August	NATOPS evaluation.
30 August - 05 September	Det to Naples in support of CV 60.
06-15 September	Det to Palma, Spain in support of CV 60.
17-24 September	Det to Naples, Italy and Hyeres, France in support of CV 60.
21-24 September	Supported "Display Determination 87" in Hyeres, France.
18-22 September	Det to Rota, Spain in support of BB 61.
20 September	Medevac one patient from BB 61 to NS Rota.
21 September	Medevac one patient from LPD 4 to NAS, Sigonella.
23 September	Medevac one patient from LPD 4 to NAS, Sigonella.
28 September	Medevac one patient from LPD 4 to NAS, Sigonella.

01-13 October	Det to Cigli, Turkey in support of CV 60, LPH 4, and BB 61.
14 October	Medevac one patient from LPH 4 to NAS, Sigonella.
14-17 October	Supported exercises in the central Mediterranean during, "National Week 87".
20-29 October	Det to Tel Aviv, Israel in support of CV 60.
26-27 October	ISIC inspection.
21-24 October	Det to Rota, Spain in support of BB 61.
01-05 November	Det to Palma, Spain in support of CV 60.
05-11 November	Det to Rota, Spain in support of CV 60 and BB 61.
16-20 November	Det to Naples, Italy and Hyeres, France in support of CV 43.
19-30 November	Det to Hyeres, France in support of CV 43 and BB 61.
25 November - 09 December	Det to Rota, Spain in support of CV 43 and LHA 4.
1-21 December	Supported "African Eagle 87" in Rota, Spain.
09-31 December	Det to Rota, Spain in support of CV 43 and LHA 4.

NARRATIVE

The operational tempo for the Black Stallions of HC-4 during 1987 was higher than in previous years even though it was the first year the squadron did not support U.S. diplomatic and peace keeping missions in Beirut, Lebanon. This increased operational tempo was accomplished despite a reduction in the squadron's manpower allocation.

The Change-of-Command in May brought about a greater level of Combat Support, "HC" thinking to the squadron. Both the Commanding Officer and the Executive Officer had extensive Combat Support experience in the CH-46 helicopter. Prior HC-4 CO's and XO's had most of their experience in the Helicopter Mine Warfare Community.

HC-4 experimented with one major organizational change during 1987. In January, the squadron implemented the "Detachment Concept" which dedicated specific maintenance and flight crew personnel to designated aircraft. The Det would deploy together each time they were tasked while continually maintaining its assigned aircraft. Although this concept fostered esprit-de-corps among the detachments, it tended to place an excessive workload on some Dets while others were under tasked. For this reason, the project was rescinded in March 1987.

Regarding manpower policy, a small portion of the squadron was changed from sea to shore duty. The policy applied to mainly personnel in the Yeoman (YN) and aviation storekeeper (AK) ratings. In the end, those personnel already on board were grandfathered into full credit sea duty and all newly assigned personnel were granted one half sea duty credit.

Overall, HC-4 had a phenomenal year providing unprecedented support to Sixth Fleet Units. To preclude duplication of reporting, enclosure (3) has been provided as supporting documentation to the narrative. It includes explanations of the support provided by HC-4 to key Sixth Fleet operations, in addition to achievements in maintenance, personnel retention and advancement, safety, awards and commendations, tactical and weapon systems improvements, and lessons learned.