

CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON 115
SAN FRANCISCO 94101



VAW-115
PAO:DED:pdh
5750
Ser: 170
MAR 13 1972

From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron
ONE HUNDRED FIFTEEN (VAW-115)

To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)

Subj: Command History

Ref: (a) OPNAV INSTRUCTION 5750.12B

Encl: (1) Part I: Chronology of Highlights
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 (a) Biography of Commander F. S. BLACKMAR III
 (b) Biography of Commander R. J. MIELDAZIS
 (c) Biography of Commander S. P. HUHN
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 (5) Part V: Documentary Appendix
 (a) Photograph of Commander F. S. BLACKMAR III
 (b) Photograph of Commander R. J. MIELDAZIS
 (c) Photograph of Commander S. P. HUHN

1. In accordance with reference (a), the following enclosures are forwarded.

R. J. Mieldazis
R. J. MIELDAZIS

Copy to:
Director of Naval History
COMFAIRSDIEGO (w/o encl 5)
CCAEMW-11 (w/o encl 5)

CHRONOLOGY OF HIGHLIGHTS

A. GENERAL. Calendar Year 1971 can be subdivided into three major periods as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. 1 January - 15 April | Temporarily based at NAS North Island undergoing training for deployment. |
| 2. 16 April - 6 November | Deployed to the Western Pacific on board the USS MIDWAY (CVA-41). |
| 3. 7 November - 31 December | Temporarily based at NAS North Island undergoing training for deployment. |

B. DETAILED SCHEDULE

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1 - 11 January | Training period based at NAS North Island. |
| 12 - 21 January | Detachment at NAAS Fallon with CVW-5 for Air Wing Exercises and work-up. |
| 22 January - 17 February | Training and PAR rework cycle at NAS North Island. |
| 18 February - 6 March | <u>ADMIXTURE</u> on board USS MIDWAY (Southern California Operating Area). |
| 7 - 18 March | Operational Readiness Inspection on board USS MIDWAY (Southern California Operating Area). |
| 19 March - 10 April | Pre-deployment work-up based at NAS North Island. |
| 11 April | Airlift of squadron personnel and gear to NAS Alameda. |
| 12 - 15 April | 4 E-2B's flown to NAS Alameda and loaded on board USS MIDWAY. |
| 16 - 20 April | Enroute Hawaii. |
| 21 - 25 April | Operational Readiness Exercise (Hawaiian Operating Area). |
| 26 - 30 April | In port Pearl Harbor. |
| 1 - 12 May | Enroute Subic Bay, Philippines. |
| 13 - 14 May | In port Subic Bay, Philippines. |
| 14 May | Commander Richard J. MIELDAZIS relieved Commander Fredrick S. BLACKMAR III as Commanding Officer. |
| 15 - 17 May | Enroute Yankee Station. |
| 18 May - 9 June | Special Operations at Yankee Station as a part of Commander, Task Force 77. |

Enclosure (1)

10 - 13 June	Enroute Yokosuka, Japan.
14 - 24 June	In port Yokosuka, Japan.
25 - 28 June	Enroute Yankee Station.
29 June - 20 July	Special Operations at Yankee Station as a part of Commander, Task Force 77.
21 July	Enroute Subic Bay, Philippines.
22 - 29 July	In port Subic Bay, Philippines.
30 - 31 July	Enroute Yankee Station
1 - 16 August	Special Operations at Yankee Station as a part of Commander, Task Force 77.
17 August	Enroute Subic Bay, Philippines.
18 - 23 August	In port Subic Bay, Philippines.
24 - 25 August	Enroute Hong Kong, BCG.
26 August - 1 September	In port Hong Kong, BCG.
2 - 5 September	Enroute Yokosuka, Japan.
6 - 19 September	In port Yokosuka, Japan.
20 - 26 September	Enroute Yankee Station.
27 September - 10 October	Special Operations at Yankee Station as a part of Commander, Task Force 77.
11 October	In port Subic Bay, Philippines.
12 - 17 October	Enroute Sea of Japan.
18 - 19 October	Special Operations at Sea of Japan.
19 October	Midair collision of E-2B Bureau # 151721 and VA-56 A-7 aircraft. Five squadron crewmembers lost at sea.
20 October	Enroute Sasebo, Japan.
21 - 23 October	In port Sasebo, Japan.
24 October - 5 November	Enroute CONUS.
6 November - 31 December	Post deployment leave and PAR rework period.

SUMMARY OF CALENDAR YEAR 1971

A. GENERAL. Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED FIFTEEN was assigned operationally to Attack Carrier Air Wing FIVE and was deployed to the Western Pacific on board USS MIDWAY (CVA-41) from 12 April through 6 November. The remaining period was spent based ashore at Naval Air Station North Island, San Diego, California, undergoing training for deployment. The squadron was commanded by Commander Frederick Seward BLACKMAR III until 14 May when he was relieved by Commander Richard J. MIELDAZIS.

B. COMPOSITION. Four E-2B's: NF 011 (Bureau Number 150539), NF 012 (Bureau Number 151716), NF 013 (Bureau Number 151719), and NF 014 (Bureau Number 151721) were assigned to the squadron. Twenty-one officers were assigned. The breakdown included ten aviators, ten naval flight officers, and one ground maintenance warrant officer. Approximately one hundred ten enlisted personnel were assigned, of which six were also assigned as airborne flight technicians (FT).

C. MISSION. The basic mission of the squadron is to provide airborne early warning coverage on a continuous basis and to make this information readily available to the Commander Task Force through the Airborne Tactical Data System.

D. SPECIAL TOPICS.

1. Statistics. Total operational statistics for the year are provided below. Figures are broken down by month or operating period in the detailed narrative.

TABLE I

AIRCRAFT CUSTODY

<u>AIRCRAFT BUREAU NUMBER</u>	<u>CUSTODY DATES</u>
151721	4-17-70 to 10-19-71
150539	1-1-71 to PRESENT
151716	1-1-71 to 1-10-72
151719	1-1-71 to PRESENT

TABLE II

OPERATIONS

<u>SORTIES</u>	510
<u>FLIGHT HOURS</u>	1446.4
<u>CARRIER LANDINGS DAY/NIGHT</u>	160/84
<u>AIRCRAFT INCIDENTS</u>	NONE
<u>AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS</u>	BUREAU NUMBER 151721 LOST AT SEA

2. Major Conversions and Modifications. Receipt of converted E-2A to E-2B from Naval Rework Facility.

3. Casualties of Men. LCDR K. L. RASMUSSEN, LT N. J. TUCKER, LT D. H. VON PRITSCHYNS, LT E. B. PEARLMAN, AT2 R. E. POE: LOST AT SEA.

4. Research and Development. NONE

5. Awards and Commendations. Squadron personnel were recipients of one Bronze Star, twenty-five Air Medals, three Navy Commendation Medals, six Navy Achievement Medals, and eight Seventh Fleet Letters of Commendation.

6. Notable Firsts. Scope Photography.

DETAILED NARRATIVE OF CALENDAR YEAR 1971

A. GENERAL. Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED FIFTEEN was commanded by Commander Frederick Seward BLACKMAR III until 14 May when Commander Richard Jerome MEIDAZIS assumed command. Commander MEIDAZIS had command during the Western Pacific deployment. The squadron was based on board USS MIDWAY (CVA-41) as a part of Attack Carrier Air Wing FIVE with the exception of periods 1 January through 11 April and 7 November through 31 December. During these periods the squadron underwent E-2B training while based at Naval Air Station North Island. The squadron reported to Commander Attack Carrier Air Wing FIVE and Commander Carrier Airborne Early Warning Wing ELEVEN. The standard organizational structure for aviation commands was maintained by the squadron throughout the year. An average of twenty-one officers and one hundred ten enlisted men were assigned. Twenty-six (ten aviators, ten naval flight officers, six flight technicians) flight crew personnel comprised five crews for continuous operation of four E-2B aircraft. One ground maintenance officer was assigned.

B. 1 January to 11 April

TABLE III

HOURS FLOWN	519.9
SORTIES FLOWN	213

The period 12 - 21 January was spent with a detachment deployed to Naval Auxiliary Air Station Fallon with Carrier Air Wing FIVE for Air Wing exercises/weapons deployment. 18 February - 6 March involved a shipboard training exercise known as ADMIXTURE. The Operational Readiness Inspection took place 7 - 8 March. Both exercises were conducted

Enclosure (3)

In the Southern California Operating Area.

The period during which the squadron was at Naval Air Station North Island normally entails an extensive training cycle preparing for the upcoming deployment. Squadron pilots underwent carrier landing refresher training and Naval Flight Officers were concerned with weapons system training in the E-2B Weapons Systems Trainer. Due to rework cycles and post deployment maintenance, few tactical missions were flown.

C. 12 April to 9 June.

TABLE IV

HOURS FLOWN	196.4
SORTIES	60
AEW OPERATIONAL COVERAGE	161.7
SUCCESSFUL LINK 11 TIME	102.5

This period was spent loading on board USS MIDWAY and in transit through Pearl Harbor to Seventh Fleet operations in the Gulf of Tonkin. After departing Continental United States on 16 April, MIDWAY entered Pearl Harbor for an unscheduled yard period to repair storm damage incurred in transit.

Arrival in Cubi Point was highlighted on 14 May when Commander R. J. MIELDAZIS relieved Commander F. S. BLACKMAR III as Commanding Officer.

MIDWAY arrived on Yankee Station on 18 May relieving the USS RANGER and conducted single-carrier operations until joined by the USS KITTY HAWK on 2 June.

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Enclosure (3)

During the Hawaiian Operations the squadron transitioned easily to covered Link 11 operations which was greatly enhanced by the rapport developed between the Airborne Tactical Data Systems personnel and the Naval Tactical Data Systems personnel.

The missions on Yankee Station included Airborne Early Warning for the task force plus Strike Control, Air Intercept Control, and Special Mission Control (Blue Tree). Secure voice relay between Seventh Air Force and Task Force Commander received special attention. The squadron was able to control Combat Air Patrol (F-4 aircraft) daily.

Link 4 was in initial stages of installation in F-4 aircraft. Towards the latter part of the cruise, thirteen E2 controlled Link 4 intercepts were conducted.

Prior to the Hawaiian Operations, two Grumman technicians fine-tuned the APS 96 radar. Subsequently, aircraft radar performance was considerably improved suggesting the significance of fine-tuning radars prior to any Fleet exercise or deployment.

During the first Yankee Station, VAW-115 personnel motivation and desire were responsible in the splendid aircraft availability to the Task Force.

Maintenance personnel discovered that through replacement of two capacitors they were able to considerably improve Ultra High Frequency secure voice AUTOCAT.

The squadron reenlisted AT2 [REDACTED] and AMH2 [REDACTED].

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Enclosure (3)

D. 10 June to 20 July.

TABLE V

HOURS FLOWN	184.6
SORTIES	67
AEW OPERATIONAL COVERAGE	184.6
SUCCESSFUL LINK 11 TIME	134.4

VAW-115 was enroute to Yokosuka from 10 - 14 June and in port from 14 - 24 June. The period 25 - 29 June was spent controlling air-to-air missile exercises and enroute to Yankee Station. Yankee Station II commenced on 30 June and ended 20 July.

Typhoons in the Gulf of Tonkin brought a curtailment to flight operations during this line period. In addition to normal cyclic operations, the squadron flew five midshipmen orientation flights. These flights enabled prospective officers to obtain a glimpse of carrier aviation and permitted pilots to obtain additional carrier landings.

Three of our naval flight officers, LCDR [REDACTED], LCDR [REDACTED], and LT [REDACTED] visited the USS PREBLE which was serving as the Positive Identification Radar Advisory Zone for the task force. Three other exchanges of duty took place with the 23rd Tactical Air Support Squadron at Nakon Phenom Royal Thai Air Force Base. The transfer of Navy-Air Force personnel enhanced the relationship between various units in the Vietnam conflict.

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Enclosure (3)

Maintenance personnel expended two hundred seventy-seven manhours in the removal and reinstallation of one hundred thirty-five cannibalized items. The high-cannibalization items included computer memories and the Time Multi-Servo Modules.

Difficulties with supply hampered VAW-115 aircraft availability during this Yankee Station. For example, one critical component, the APS 96 Radar Duplexer, was received damaged from transit, having been improperly packed.

The primary lesson learned during this line period was that four E-2's on board are necessary to maintain the 100% coverage as desired. Past performance with three E-2 Aircraft demonstrated a considerably reduced readiness capability.

E. 21 July to 16 August.

TABLE VI

HOURS FLOWN	139.3
SORTIES	45
AEW OPERATIONAL COVERAGE	108.4
SUCCESSFUL LINE LL TIME	97.5

The Subic Bay in port flight training period was curtailed due to rain.

Special flights with Combat Information Center personnel of various ships on board the E-2 were conducted. Such flights enabled these persons to gain a greater appreciation and understanding of the E-2 and its capabilities.

Operational readiness was reduced during the third line period when our most reliable aircraft was found to have a cracked rudder bushing. Nevertheless, VAW-115's naval flight officers controlled one hundred seventy-four intercepts, ninety-three handled from the Naval Tactical Data System consoles in the Combat Information Center of USS MIDWAY.

██████████ was designated Plane Commander.

Maintenance personnel became quite proficient in the adjustment and diagnosis of the ALQ 91 Electronic Countermeasures Set.

F. END OF CRUISE REPORT

TABLE VII

FLIGHT HOURS	560.5
SORTIES	182
AEW OPERATIONAL COVERAGE	484.3
SUCCESSFUL LINK 11 TIME	346.9

Five line periods were originally scheduled for the deployment. The reduction in activity over Laos and South Vietnam in the latter part of 1971 caused our final line period to be cancelled. Shorter line periods were experienced with the longest being twenty-one days.

The tertiary priority assigned the squadron for replacement propellers during the September propeller inspection, resulted in a reduced aircraft availability for the last line period. Thirty-four and six tenths hours were flown during this time frame.

Two of our Naval Flight Officers, LCDR [REDACTED] and LT [REDACTED], were designated Air Intercept Control Supervisors, and four obtained the designation of Operations Conductors, LT [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED], LCDR [REDACTED] and LT [REDACTED]. The Naval Flight Officers proved invaluable both to the E2 and to the Combat Information Center on MIDWAY.

Sections of jet aircraft were controlled from the Combat Information Center on board MIDWAY by VAW-115 Naval Flight Officers thus providing them with a wider experience in the use of radar consoles and relieving the few ship's company Air Intercept Controllers.

G. LESSONS LEARNED

- a. Maximum effort while in the Eastern Pacific must be expended in order to insure proper operation of the covered Link 11.
- b. E2 squadrons should have at least one Air Intercept Control Supervisor on board. This asset proved invaluable to Task Force Operations.

H. FIRSTS

- a. E2 orientation flights for midshipmen.
- b. E2 Scope photography.
- c. Use of squadron Operations Conductors on board Task Force Destroyers for missile shoots.

I. RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. Operations Conductors participate in the planning of air-to-air missile exercises.

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Enclosure (3)

- b. Higher priority of maintenance facility (STRAAD) NAS Cubi Point for the E2.
- c. Contractor technical assistance continue to be utilized for E2 maintenance.
- d. Better prepositioning of material at Subic Bay Supply Depot.

(8)

Enclosure (3)
