

CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON 115  
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96601

VAW-115  
1973  
B-



DECLASSIFIED

VAW-115  
OPS:HDB:em  
5750  
Ser: C2  
3 March 1974

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (Unclassified upon removal of enclosure (1))

From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron  
ONE HUNDRED FIFTEEN  
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)  
Subj: Command History (OPNAV Report 5750-1); submission of  
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12B  
Encl: (1) Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED FIFTEEN  
Command History for calendar year 1973

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted.

*F. R. Miller*  
F. R. MILLER

Copy to:  
Director of Naval History (OP-09B9)

VAW-115 CLASSIFIED MATERIAL CONTROL

Control No. \_\_\_\_\_

Reg. Mail No. 6408

Copy 1 of 4

DECLASSIFIED

[REDACTED]

~~Declassified 1 Nov, 1974?~~

A. (U) Command Organization.

1. CDR S. P. HUHNS, USN, [REDACTED]/1310: 1 January to 28 April 1973.
2. CDR F. R. MILLER, USN, [REDACTED]/1320: 28 April to 31 December 1973.

3. The squadron's primary mission utilizing four E-2B aircraft is to provide the task force Officer in Tactical Command (OTC) with Airborne Early Warning (AEW) data on targets entering the surrounding airspace. An Airborne Tactical Data System (ATDS) unit is incorporated in the E-2 to accomplish this mission. In addition, the ATDS unit is capable of performing many secondary command and control functions.

4. Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED FIFTEEN was homeported at NAS North Island, California from 1 January to 30 June 1973. During that time the squadron was embarked on board USS MIDWAY (CVA-41) from 1 January to 3 March 1973. In June 1973 the homeport was officially changed to Yokosuka, Japan. Although the homeport change was effective 30 June 1973, VAW-115 remained at NAS North Island until 11 September 1973. On 11 September, embarked on board USS MIDWAY, the squadron commenced transit to Yokosuka, Japan where it remained homeported throughout the remainder of 1973.

5. During the year the squadron reported to Commander Attack Carrier Air Wing FIVE and COMFITAEEWINGPAC.

6. The standard organizational structure for VAW aviation commands was maintained by the squadron throughout the year. An average of 21 officers and 118 enlisted men were assigned. Twenty-six (10 aviators, 10 naval flight officers, and 6 flight technicians) flight crew personnel comprised five crews for continuous operation of four E-2 aircraft. One ground maintenance officer was assigned.

B. (U) Summary of Operations.

1. General: Calendar year 1973 was subdivided into three major periods as follows:

a. Period I: From 1 January - 3 March the squadron was embarked on board USS MIDWAY conducting type training and combat operations in Southeast Asia.

b. Period II: From 3 March - 11 September the squadron was temporarily based ashore at NAS North Island undergoing training for deployment and initiation of the Overseas Family Residence Program (OFRP).

c. Period III: From 11 September - 31 December the squadron was embarked on board USS MIDWAY conducting type training and operating from the new homeport of Yokosuka, Japan.

2. Detailed Schedule:

Period I:

1 JAN	Enroute Subic, R.P.
2 JAN	Inport Subic, R.P.
3 JAN	Enroute Yankee Station
4-23 JAN	Yankee Station Operations
24 JAN	Enroute Subic, R.P.
25 JAN-1 FEB	Inport Subic, R.P.
2 FEB	Enroute Yankee Station
3-9 FEB	Yankee Station Operations
9 FEB	Enroute Subic, R.P.
10-16 FEB	Inport Subic, R.P.
17 FEB-2 MAR	Enroute CONUS
2 MAR	Fly Off NAS North Island

Period II:

3 MAR-1 APR	Stand Down
2 APR	Back in the Saddle Program
3 APR	First flight since arrival CONUS
26 APR	AAWEX with USS TRUXTON
28 APR	Change of Command
1-31 MAY	North Island Ops
4 JUN	Deployed Fallon, Nevada
15 JUN	Returned NAS North Island
21 JUN	LINK-11 exercise USS MIDWAY
26 JUN	LINK-11 exercise USS MIDWAY
27 JUN	Pacific Missile Range Services
28 JUN	AAWEX FLTCOMBATDIRSYSSACT
1-17 JUL	North Island Ops; primarily FCLP
18 JUL	CQ aboard USS MIDWAY
21-22 JUL	Load aboard USS MIDWAY
23-31 JUL	CQ/Cyclic Ops SOCAL
6-14 AUG	Weapons Training Exercise
20-26 AUG	Operational Readiness Inspection
27 AUG-9 SEP	Preparation for Overseas Movement

Period III:

10 SEP	Enroute NAS North Island to NAS Alameda
11 SEP	Depart NAS Alameda
11-16 SEP	Transit MIDPAC
17 SEP	Inport Hawaii
18-23 SEP	MIDPAC Ops

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

24-25 SEP	Inport Hawaii
26 SEP-5 OCT	Transit Yokosuka
6-17 OCT	Inport Yokosuka
18-28 OCT	Cyclic Ops Okinawa Area
29 OCT-25 NOV	Inport Yokosuka
26-27 NOV	Enroute Okinawa
28-29 NOV	Cyclic Ops Okinawa Area
30 NOV-1 DEC	Enroute Subic Op Area
2-3 DEC	Cyclic Ops Subic Area
4 DEC	Enroute Yankee Station
5-8 DEC	Cyclic Ops Yankee Station
9 DEC	Enroute Subic, R.P.
10-11 DEC	Inport Subic
12-16 DEC	Cyclic Ops Subic Area
17-18 DEC	Enroute Okinawa Op Area
19 DEC	Cyclic Ops Okinawa Area
20-22 DEC	Enroute Yokosuka
22-31 DEC	Inport Yokosuka

3. (C) Period I Summary:

a. (U) General: With the new year just initiated USS MIDWAY and CVW-5 departed Subic to continue their familiar Gulf of Tonkin (GOT) role. This commenced the eighth line period for USS MIDWAY; however, in spite of the length of time at sea morale was high. The anticipated cease fire and optimism of CONUS return were stimulating effects on all personnel. VAW-115 was continually tasked to provide varied services throughout the remainder of the WESTPAC assignment. With USS MIDWAY and CVW-5 relying heavily on the "Liberty Bell's" ability, a new sense of responsibility was developed which created a challenge to all squadron aircrews. This challenge was accepted and performed with tremendous pride and professionalism. Completing the ninth line period USS MIDWAY and CVW-5 established a record 205 days on station in the Gulf of Tonkin. Finally, on 17 February with the Vietnam cease fire essentially completed, orders directed USS MIDWAY back to CONUS. USS MIDWAY and CVW-5 arrived in Alameda 3 March 1973; soon to be awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for their efforts the previous 11 months.

b. (C) Eighth Line Period: In addition to the usual support provided by the "Bells" during ALPHA strikes the squadron continued to be heavily tasked with strike control and flight following. Diversionary strikes by air wing aircraft just prior to scheduled B-52 raids in NVN required close coordination of strike/support aircraft by the E-2. With continued wide dispersion of GOT units, helicopter flight following was an important secondary mission. The E-2 was also required to maintain surface surveillance in assigned threat areas; this was to preclude the unannounced arrival of NVN KOMAR high speed

DECLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

patrol boats. Unfortunately the line period was not without aircraft/ personnel losses; subsequently, the E-2 provided SAR assistance. The bombing halt above the DMZ on 16 January produced an apparent tranquility over NVN never observed during this deployment. VAW-115 continued surveillance of the GOT; however, naval air operations were drastically reduced with air wing strike aircraft fraged into SVN.

c. (C) Ninth Line Period: During the last line period, along with AEW, the E-2 was utilized as a command and control center. With a "no bomb" restriction placed on Vietnam the air wing strike aircraft were diverted to Laos. Two 10 mile wide corridors were established through SVN to Laos. USS MIDWAY aircraft were required to remain within these corridors when crossing SVN; also, to have radio contact with Laos ABCCC prior to entering Laos. The E-2 provided a necessary communications platform between ABCCC and air wing strike flights. The squadron was responsible for relaying mission/armament data to ABCCC and providing radar control for Navy TACAIR transiting the corridors. On 9 February, after completing 205 days on station, USS MIDWAY and CVW-5 departed the Gulf of Tonkin for the final time.

d. (U) Transit: USS MIDWAY and CVW-5 departed Subic, R.P. on 19 February enroute to Alameda Naval Air Station. All four E-2's were flown from USS MIDWAY to NAS North Island on 2 March. The following day USS MIDWAY docked at NAS Alameda ending the longest deployment of an attack carrier to Southeast Asia during the Vietnam conflict.

4. (C) Period II Summary:

a. (U) Training: VAW-115 wasted little time initiating a ground training program. Long overdue school quotas were quickly obtained and a good portion of the squadron attended one school or another during the first few months of the turn-around. Although the squadron was standing down through March, aircrews soon became familiar with the E-2 tactics/flight trainers. The first flight after CONUS arrival was in April. The following 60 days were spent wringing out aircraft systems, developing crew coordination with newly arrived personnel, and preparing for the June weapons deployment. Most of July was utilized for carrier qualification and preparation for the WEPTRAEX and ORI scheduled for August. Except for a few FCLP periods, CONUS training was completed with the conclusion of the ORI on 26 August.

b. (C) Training Exercises: Prior to the August WEPTRAEX two AAWEX's were completed utilizing USS TRUXTON. In June VAW-115 completed two LINK-11 exercises with USS MIDWAY. These exercises were considered extremely valuable as they afforded squadron crews the opportunity to increase proficiency on the newly acquired ASA-27A computer magnetic tape (Number 25). The WEPTRAEX was an eight day exercise involving AEW,

DECLASSIFIED

4

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

AIC, KOMAREX's, mini ALPHA's and full scale ALPHA's. The training period afforded maintenance personnel and aircrews ample opportunity to sharpen their individual skills in a simulated hostile environment. The following ORI tested the full capability of the ATDS system and crews. Three AAWEX's were conducted, along with AIC, strike control, ALPHA strikes, LINK-11, PT boat defense and SAR missions. In spite of the close proximity to San Clemente Island, an excellent detection and tracking rate was achieved due to outstanding radar AMTI performance. The ORI culminated with a NOREX fly-off and three E-2's returning to NAS North Island.

c. (C) Weapons Deployment: The squadron was deployed to NAS Fallon from 4-15 June for initial training with the Air Wing FIVE complement. The majority of E-2 flighttime was utilized supporting eight major ALPHA strikes. Each strike was composed of approximately 25 aircraft including two E-2's. The squadron's primary responsibilities were strike control and opposition aircraft control for the strike groups. Assistance was also provided in SAR exercises and relay of required ARTCC position reports for the strike cells. All squadron commitments were accomplished including two FCLP periods, various logistic flights, and a significant amount of formation flying. The E-2 again proved to be highly effective although working overland in an environment of radar ineffectiveness.

5. (C) Period III Summary:

a. (U) General: Eleven September commenced an entirely new adventure for an attack carrier; permanent assignment to an overseas homeport. The Overseas Family Residence Program (OFRP), as the new operation was labeled, precipitated unique problems for VAW-115. Because of the volunteer nature of OFRP, a major turnover in personnel was experienced. The squadron reflected a 22% loss of qualified/experienced personnel and a 14% gain of qualified but inexperienced personnel during the four month North Island turnaround period. This change in personnel required an extensive training program which was developed during the turnaround and continued throughout the homeporting in Japan. Another major problem was the relocation of families to accommodate the Navy's desire for less family separation. Through coordination and cooperation between COMNAVFORJAPAN, USS MIDWAY, CVW-5 and the Twelfth Naval District Transportation Office, all families were adequately situated, mostly in the Yokohama/Yokosuka housing areas. Upon arrival in Japan the squadron encountered additional difficulties operationally. The central location for CVW-5 operations was established at NAF Atsugi; however, operating restrictions initially precluded using the field for training purposes. The only available alternate was Misawa Air Base, 350 miles to the North. With materials and personnel transported from Yokosuka Naval Base, via Atsugi to Misawa, many logistic problems were created. Eventually, due to decreased Atsugi restrictions, the field was utilized for a majority of VAW-115 sorties. Additional operating restrictions at sea forced USS MIDWAY and CVW-5 to proceed South to the Okinawa and Subic operating areas to ensure sufficient aircrew training. Very few carrier sorties were flown in the Japanese operating area.

DECLASSIFIED

5

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

b. (C) Transit: MIDPAC operations commenced after one day inport Pearl Harbor and lasted six days. Major emphasis was on AAW, AIC, and LINK-11 exercises. After leaving Pearl Harbor the ship and air wing were in constant ready alert status anticipating Russian "Bear" overflights. The squadron's efforts were rewarded as two "Bears" were detected one day prior to USS MIDWAY's arrival in Yokosuka. E-2 radar performance was outstanding in the blue water environment; subsequently, both "Bears" were detected and successful intercepts conducted. In addition to 15/30 minute alerts a good deal of ground training was conducted during the transit.

c. (U) In Port Period: The 1973 Japan in port periods were devoted primarily to familiarization flights, FCLP's, and LINK-11 exercises. Operating under ICAO rules required some adjustment and considerable practice for all aircrews. Along with the new aviation regulations a language barrier was encountered when utilizing Japanese controllers. These factors combined to create some interesting experiences for all aircrews.

d. (C) At Sea Periods: For the first at sea operations USS MIDWAY and CVW-5 moved South to the Okinawa operating area. Carrier qualifications were conducted and a majority of the air wing received day and night refresher landings. The "Liberty Bells" were tasked with AIC and flight following to ensure area boundaries were not exceeded. Over 13 hours of flight time was devoted to a SAR effort following the tragic loss of three air wing aircraft on 23 October. Two ALPHA strikes and two AAWEX's were conducted to conclude the first at sea period. On 26 November USS MIDWAY departed Yokosuka and proceeded South to Okinawa for one day; to Subic for two days; and Yankee Station for four days of cyclic operations. The E-2's were specifically tasked with radio relay and the prevention of buffer violations. After returning to Subic for one day in port CVW-5 commenced night operations. Primary emphasis for the "Liberty Bells" was AIC and LINK-11 with some canned AAWEXES during non-flying hours.

C. (C) Special Topics.

1. (C) Statistics:

a. (U) The following squadron aircraft were assigned:

Bureau No. 151706	(01 JAN - 12 MAR)
Bureau No. 152480	(01 JAN - 13 APR)
Bureau No. 150538	(01 JAN - 01 JUL)
Bureau No. 151714	(01 JAN - 04 OCT)
Bureau No. 151724	(13 APR - 31 DEC)
Bureau No. 151712	(24 APR - 31 DEC)
Bureau No. 150539	(31 MAY - 31 DEC)
Bureau No. 151718	(05 JUN - 31 DEC)

DECLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

b. (C) The following summary of performance data are for combat operations (1 JAN - 10 FEB):

Sorties Scheduled	93
Sorties Flown	85
Hours Scheduled	276.5
Hours on Station	260.6
Hours AEW System Coverage	252.3
Hours Successful LINK-11	237.8
Hours FSC	237.8
Hours AEW Degraded	0
AEW Coverage Unscheduled	77.4
Total Hours Flown	341.5
Total Carrier Landings	97

c. (C) The following operational statistics are for the shore based period (3 MAR - 10 SEP):

Sorties Scheduled	343
Sorties Flown	267
Hours Scheduled	810.1
Hours on Station	359.7
Hours AEW System Coverage	314.7
Hours Successful LINK-11	250.1
Hours FSC	250.1
Hours AEW Degraded	66.0
AEW Coverage Unscheduled	0
Total Hours Flown	664.3
Total Carrier Landings	115

d. (C) The following operational statistics are for the WESTPAC transit period (11 SEP - 5 OCT):

Sorties Flown	27
Hours Flown	72.9
Successful LINK-11 Hours	44.7
Total Carrier Landings	30

e. (C) The following operational statistics are for the Yokosuka homeported period (6 OCT - 31 DEC):

Sorties Flown	135
Hours Flown	329
Successful LINK-11 Hours	128.5
Total Carrier Landings	106

7

DECLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED

f. (C) The following operational statistics are for the calendar year 1973:

Sorties Flown:	504
Hours Flown	1506.3
Successful LINK-11 Hours	636.6
Total Carrier Landings	348

2. (C) New Equipment/Modifications:

a. (C) During the North Island turnaround period the squadron received a new ASA-27A computer magnetic tape (No. 25). The new tape provided several modifications, one of which was data link control of F-14's. The most useful improvement was the NAVFIX function which greatly enhanced the E-2 capability of maintaining an updated data display. Sequence lists, flight paths, and a new intercept program also improved overall E-2 capabilities.

b. (C) All VAW-115 aircraft were configured with the RT-988A. This new installation (AIMS System) offered Mode IV utilization and afforded increased security for IFF coding.

3. (U) Notable Records/Firsts:

a. On 9 February VAW-115 completed the ninth line period of the deployment and established a record 205 days on station in the Gulf of Tonkin. This surpassed the amount of SPECOPS time achieved by any other CVA/Air Wing since the beginning of the Vietnam conflict.

b. On 28 April CDR F. R. MILLER assumed command of Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED FIFTEEN. CDR MILLER was the first naval flight officer (NFO) to assume command of VAW-115.

c. VAW-115 was the first AEW squadron to be homeported overseas aboard an attack carrier. Official homeport change for USS MIDWAY and CVW-5 was 30 June; actual CONUS departure date was 11 September.

DECLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~