



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON
ONE ONE FIVE
FPO AP 96601-6403

1996 ✓

IN REPLY REFER TO:

5750
Ser ADMIN/ 114
17 April 97

From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 115
To: Director of Naval History (N09HB), Washington Navy Yard, 901 M Street, SE, Washington, DC 20374-5060

Subj: FORWARDING OF COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12F

Encl: (1) Command History

1. Per reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted.


R. J. SCHOPPE

VAW-115 COMMAND HISTORY FOR CY 1996

1. COMMAND COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE: The Liberty Bells of VAW-115 are the pivotal asset of the battle group's air defense network, providing all-weather, beyond-the-horizon surveillance and tactical air control. The E2C Hawkeye employs radar, passive detection, and friendly contact identification systems to detect, track, and identify threats to the INDEPENDENCE battle group. In addition to the missions of airborne early warning, air intercept control, and surface surveillance control, VAW-115 performs a vital role in strike control for coordinated attacks, range control for missile firings, search and rescue efforts, and a multitude of other missions that demand command and control expertise. As the eyes of the battle group, the Liberty Bells control the "big picture" around the battle group. VAW-115 is commanded by Commander Robert J. Schoppe, US Navy. The VAW-115 Liberty Bells, callsign "Liberty", fly and maintain five aircraft, tailcode "NF".

2. CHRONOLOGY:

1 Jan-5 Jan	Temporarily based ashore, NAF Atsugi, Japan
6 Jan-12 Jan	Squadron detachment to Kadena Air Force Base
26 Jan-30 Jan	Squadron detachment to Iwo Jima
9 Feb-28 Mar	Winter Training Deployment
9 Feb-10 Mar	Participated in Operation Valiant Usher
11 Mar-27 Mar	Participated in Taiwan Contingency Operations
28 Mar-1 May	Temporarily based ashore, NAF Atsugi, Japan
2 May-3 Jul	Spring Training Deployment
4 May-6 May	Supported Iwakuni, Japan Airshow
10 May-15 May	Inport Manila, Philippines
21 May-30 May	Participated in Guam Strike Operations
1 Jun-17 Jun	RIMPAC '96
12 Jun-17 Jun	Inport Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
18 Jun-4 Sep	Temporarily based ashore, NAF Atsugi, Japan
11 July	Change of Command
05 Aug-12 Aug	Squadron detachment to Kadena for Fleet Fighter ACM Readiness Exercises (FFARP)
5 Sep-3 Oct	Fall Training Deployment
14 Sep-18 Sep	CV/ARG Interoperability
23 Sep-27 Sep	Inport Hong Kong
4 Oct-16 Oct	Temporarily based ashore, NAF Atsugi, Japan
11 Oct	Far East Hawkeye/Greyhound Ball
17 Oct-15 Nov	Underway Training
28 Oct-2 Nov	Operation Foal Eagle
4 Nov-11 Nov	Operation Keen Sword/ANNUALEX
16 Nov-31 Nov	Temporarily based ashore, NAF, Atsugi, Japan
16 Nov	Friendship Day Airshow
06 Dec-11 Dec	Squadron detachment to Kadena, Okinawa for CTF-70 Missile Exercises

3. NARRATIVE

a. **January:** VAW-115 kicked off 1996 passing a Material Condition Inspection at their home away from home, NAF Atsugi, Japan. Then VAW-115 performed range control for a live missile exercise off of Kadena, Okinawa. At the end of the month VAW-115 conducted day and nighttime Fleet Carrier Landing Practice (FCLP) in Iwo Jima in preparation for their upcoming deployment.

b. **February:** Aircrew preparation complete, VAW-115 deployed after the first week of February for a seven week at-sea period, participating in Operation VALIANT USHER from 09 Feb to 10 Mar. Working in South Korean airspace with USAF assets, VAW-115 provided AEW and airborne control in coordinated strikes, amphibious landings and combat search and rescue operations.

c. **March:** While underway, real world tensions arising from a threat to Taiwan, during her national elections, diverted the Indy battle group from normal operations in the Philippine Sea. The flexibility and deterrent power of the Indy battle group and Carrier Airwing FIVE (I-5) presence mollified tensions between the adversaries. VAW-115's ability to adapt to this no-notice flare-up with mission capable aircraft and aircrews is the essence of our role in Asia. Mission complete, we returned to our home away from home, NAF Atsugi, Japan.

d. **April:** Back home, the Liberty Bells took some well-deserved rest and recreation from the frenetic pace of the past month. They also conducted routine operations at NAF Atsugi in support of Airwing FIVE. The Bells had one static display and flew two aircraft in support of Wings '96, our most successful airshow to date, held at NAF, Atsugi. VAW-115 also celebrated its 29th birthday this month. VAW-115 is the oldest and only original member of Airwing FIVE.

e. **May:** VAW-115 pulled chocks and headed back to sea on 02 May for an eight week Spring Training deployment. Near the end of May, after a port call in Manila, we participated in an Airwing workup exercise off Guam. This was a highly intensive exercise incorporating all aspects of air warfare. VAW-115 for its part, controlled air intercepts, War at Sea Exercises, and miniature strikes. At the end of the week, all the previous training was incorporated into massive Alpha strikes utilizing aircraft from every squadron in Airwing FIVE. VAW-115's participation was essential to the overall success of the exercise. VAW-115 was rewarded with five days inport, Manila, Philippines on 10 May.

f. **June:** VAW-115 participated in RIMPAC '96 from 01-17 June. RIMPAC is a multinational exercise which included combat forces from the US Army, USAF, Navy, USMC, and Coast Guard. Other players included Australian, Canadian, Chilean, South Korean, and Japanese navies. The forces of RIMPAC spanned the Pacific Ocean from the Canadian to Australian coastlines and culminated in multiple, simulated battle scenarios in Hawaiian operating areas. Aircraft participating in RIMPAC included USAF KC-130H's, KC-135's, F-16C's, B-52H's, and B-1B's; Marine Corps KC-130's, AV-8's, and F-16N's; Airwings from USS Independence and USS Kitty Hawk; Air National Guard E-3B/C AWACS, and F-15A's; and Naval Patrol aircraft (P-3's) from Australia, Canada, and United States. Port calls included Manila, Republic of the Philippines and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Mission complete, the Indy battle group transited back to Yokosuka and VAW-115 flew off to NAF Atsugi.

g. **July:** VAW-115 stood down at NAF Atsugi for the entire month of July. On July 11 Commander Robert J. Schoppe succeeded Commander Richard B. Wren as Commanding Officer at a VAW-115 Change of Command ceremony. Skipper Schoppe took the reigns as VAW-115's 25th Commanding Officer. Captain Dick Mauldin, VAW-115's 22nd Commanding Officer, the current Airwing FIVE's Commander and the first Airwing Commander from the E-2C community, was the keynote speaker. Commander Will Dubyak became the new Executive Officer coming off a year of continuing education at Harvard University's JFK School of Government.

h. **August:** On 05 August VAW-115 sent a detachment of three aircraft to Kadena Airbase, Okinawa for a week of FFARP exercises. During the week VAW-115 flew multiple daily hops and controlled Airwing FIVE assets against other USAF assets controlled by AWACS and Marine Corps ground controllers. In preparation for her next deployment, VAW-115 then detached to Iwo Jima for day and night FCLP's.

i. **September:** On 05 September, VAW-115 embarked upon the Indy once again for a four week Fall Training deployment. VAW-115 participated in Indy battle group/ amphibious inter-operability demonstration exercises off of Okinawa from 14 - 18 September. Mission complete, VAW-115 visited Hong Kong on the 23rd for 4 days before transiting once again back to NAF Atsugi.