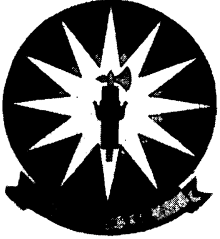


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CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON 116

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER

FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO 96601
VAW-116/ADMIN:vpc
5750
Ser 05
MAR 31 1973

[REDACTED]

(unclassified upon removal of enclosure (1))

From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron
ONE HUNDRED SIXTEEN

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

Subj: Command History for the Calendar Year 1972 (OPNAV REPORT
5750-1); submission of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12B

Encl: (1) VAW-116 Command History - 1972

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


R. L. WATKINS

Copy to:
Chief of Naval Operations (OP-09B9)
COMFAIRSDIEGO
CINCPACFLT

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1972

The New Year found the SUNKINGS enjoying a Subic Bay inport period between "Yankee" station assignments. On the 8th of January the relaxation ended and it was back to work and cyclic operations. Twice during this, the third line period of the deployment, VAW-116 participated in BLUETREE photo-reconnaissance missions. It was on the mission of the 19th of January that LT Cunningham of VF-96 shot down his first MIG-21. The "Hummer" crew on station during this evolution received a "well done" from CTF 77 for their superior radar and communications control throughout this most successful flight. The remainder of the month, with the exception of the 27th was spent providing airborne early warning coverage, and ABCCC coverage to the fleet. On the 27th, during a stand-down, the 13th Annual Constellation Athletic Relays were held. Despite the previous heavy work load that prevailed, spirits ran high, and the mighty SUNKINGS won the Captain's trophy. Superior performance while airborne and now superior performance while on the deck.

February began with the Constellation and Air Wing beginning a long needed liberty period in Hong Kong, however on February 10th the "Connie" was suddenly recalled to the line due to the TET offensive and our subsequent fourth line period. 250 + Connie wives bid Bon Voyage to their husbands on that untimely departure, cutting short their long planned visit. This line period saw for the first time in several years, three CVA's operating simultaneously in the Gulf of Tonkin. On 27 February, Connie, along with other Yankee Station units, was visited by Admiral E. R. Zumwalt, Chief of Naval Operations.

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March proved to be a month of variety, from a visit to the "Riviera" of the Far East, Subic Bay, to tying up in Yokosuka, Japan. The SUNKINGS participated in an AAMEX, providing range sanitation, communications relay and flight following for participating air wing aircraft. Our fifth and supposedly last line period started on March 21st.

Throughout this particular line period Commander Task Force Seventy-Seven put to practical use the information made available by the experimental equipment installed in each of our aircraft - the refractometer. Also during this month, Constellation and Air Wing Nine participated in five separate exercises including two surface-to-air missile firing exercises. An Exercise NEWBOY conducted as a NOREX enroute to the Philippines, and two defense exercises conducted enroute to Japan. Of significance was the exercises BLUE SKY on 28 March, when a simulated "attack" by Air Wing Nine aircraft was made against the Taiwan Air Defense Forces and the exercise COMMAND MILAGE, on the 29th, which did the same against the Okinawan Air Defense Forces. After the completion of the exercises, Constellation steamed toward Japan. On this transit, two Soviet TU-95 Bear aircraft made an over-flight. It was a matter of routine to the SUNKINGS to detect and provide timely NTDS data which lead to the successful intercept of these aircraft by CVW-9 F-4's. On the 31st, CONNIE/CVW-9 arrived Yokosuka Naval Station, for what was supposed to be the last stop before home. However, instead of the expected eastward transit back to the states, April brought the first of 3 extensions to this WESTPAC cruise. CONNIE was ordered back to the line and on 7 April, VAW-116 began its task of providing Airborne Command and Control services, along with its vital Airborne Early Warning mission. The aircraft, its crews and squadron maintenance personnel were strenuously tested during the numerous strikes into North Viet-

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nam, MIG engagements, and SAR evolutions. The SUNKINGS provided support for twenty-five Alpha strikes, each requiring two fully operational E-2's on station. It was during this, the longest line period (41 days) that LT Randy Cunningham made his famous flight where he bagged his 3rd, 4th, and 5th MIG then subsequently was shot down himself. The "Hummers" of 116 were right there all the while assisting in tactical operations and SAR coordination.

On 10 May, VAW-116 bid farewell to the skipper, Commander J. G. McIntyre, and welcomed the new CO, Commander R. L. Watkins. On 15 May, Commander J. K. Gardella, the new XO reported aboard with news that the United States was in fact still there. Completing this grueling line period on 18 May, Connie and CVW-9 personnel relaxed in Cubi for 6 days then off to Singapore where 5 glorious days of well earned liberty was enjoyed by all.

On 30 May it was back to work, this time at Dixie Station. A more relaxed operation but none-the-less a demanding one for all squadron personnel. The strain of time and salt air was taking its toll on the birds, not to mention the men.

A high point of this line period was the coordination VAW-116 provided between the CTF-77 forces and the 7th Air Force ground control units. As a direct result of the SUNKING effort, more ordnance was delivered on targets with less waste, due solely to new heights of coordination between Air Force and Naval units. This, therefore, firmly established the E-2B's role as a viable Airborne Command and Control Center.

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With seven line periods behind them, tired birds, tired crews and exhausted maintenance types, VAW-116 was heading home. After a brief stop in Cubi and Yokosuka, the Connie, CVW-9, and the SUNKINGS arrive home in late June, tired but proud to have been a key element in our nation's effort to preserve its ideals.

July was a stand-down month and nine months of separation became lost in the joys and pleasures of being home.

As August and September rolled around, it was back to training, organizing, and equipping a combat ready early warning squadron. This meant ground training for the new men, familiarization flights, systems check-out flights, and test flights on the newly reworked aircraft.

Early in October, the SUNKINGS were off to NAS Fallon, Nevada. Here the training intensified as the Air Wing was again back together. When the "Hummers" rolled into town, all the Air Wing was to feel their presence. Not only did the steely-eyed E-2'ers provide the usual top notch AEW, SAR, and ABCCC services but were the dark horse during the traditional "bombing derby". Through skill, aeronautical ability, expertly timed coordination, and some luck, the SUNKINGS out bombed them all and walked away with both the squadron and individual awards. It should be noted that our delivery capability is limited to the strength of a crewmember's arms, since he has the job of holding the bomb (MK-76) out the escape hatch and dropping it on the pilot's command. Not very elaborate, but it works.

The SUNKINGS returned to NORIS on October 5th and continued an arduous ground and flight training program which stressed more and more crew co-

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ordination. In the latter half of the month, all pilots went through field carrier landing practice and subsequently were carrier qualified on the Connie.

November and early December found the SUNKINGS back aboard their home-away-from-home, the USS CONSTELLATION. This time it was for Air Wing work-up exercises, pilot qualifications, and finally the ORI. Proudly, CVW-9 came through with flying colors.

Sandwiched in between these two short deployments, Captain C. A. Merryman, Commander Fleet Air San Diego, presented the SUNKINGS with the Annual CNO Aviation Safety Award for FY 1972, the epitome of safety recognition.

Commencing on 13 December, VAW-116 began their pre-deployment stand down by holding their first "SUNKING SWEETHEART DAY". Wives and girl friends came to work with their men and watched them go through a typical working day on the beach.

Though in a stand-down status WESTPAC preparations still continued, for through past experience, the SUNKINGS had learned that success depends on maximum readiness.

As usual, when the 5 January sail date rolled around, VAW-116 was ready to meet the challenges of 1973 and departed San Diego looking into the future, seeking new ways to better the already renowned best.

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1972 FLIGHT TIME

AND

MAINTAINANCE DATA

Direct Maintenance Manhours Per Flight Hours Distribution

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JAN 1972 - DEC 1972*
 JAN 72 thru JUL 72 deployed WESTPAC

BUNO	UNSCHED MAINT	CALENDAR LOOK	INSP. FIX	ACCEPT INSP.	CONDITION INSP.	TDC	PRO-RATED SUPPORT	IMA MH	TOTAL MH	FLT HRS
151704	3809.7	585.8	509.4	0	808.9	126.2	4821.6	1860.2	12849.7	399.6
151712	3139.0	282.0	106.1	0	533.6	133.9	6819.8	2085.4	13209.8	588.5
151717	3280.7	248.5	111.0	24.5	399.0	139.7	6656.6	3221.4	14081.4	586.5
151718	3438.0	446.8	369.6	0	359.3	197.2	5378.6	1829.2	12018.7	414.1
151916	1177.8	256.5	171.4	22.5	272.6	5.0	1945.7	545.4	4396.9	212.6
150531	401.9	0	0	0	82.8	15.5	555.3	185.5	1225.7	61.4
150534	48.5	0	0	5.0	1.0	3.5	32.6	226.5	317.1	1.1
TOTALS	15,295.6	1819.6	1267.5	52.0	2457.2	621.0	26,210.2	9958.6	58,099.3	2263.8

Condition Inspect - hard landing, engine overheat checks, etc
 TDC - Technical Directive Compliance like airframe changes and avionics changes
 Pro-rated Supp - includes daily inspect, plane captain checks
 DMMH - Direct Maintenance Manhours per Flight Hour
 Calendar Inspect - presently on an 18 week cycle, time split into checks and repairs required
 Accept Inspect - checks required prior to acceptance of aircraft from PAR
 IMA - time component units are undergoing repair in an intermediate Maintenance activity

* DECEMBER 72 information not available

1972 FLIGHT TIME STATISTICS - PART I

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	Total Flight Hours	Day Flight Hours	Night Flight Hours	Non-Combat Sorties	Combat Support Sorties	Total Combat Hours Flown
JAN	351.3	262.4	88.9	4	97	345.1
FEB	344.2	270.8	73.4	0	99	344.2
MAR	242.2	224.0	18.2	21	43	161.9
APR	420.3	382.9	37.4	12	113	379.4
MAY	274.2	245.3	28.9	11	84	243.5
JUN	251.4	241.2	10.2	2	62	298.5
JUL	3.8	3.8	0	2	0	0
AUG	52.2	49.2	3.0	20	0	0
SEP	72.0	54.4	17.6	26	0	0
OCT	130.3	95.6	34.7	12	0	0
NOV	92.0	62.7	29.3	30	0	0
DEC	151.6	110.2	41.4	44	0	0
YR TOTAL	2385.5	2002.5	383.0	184	498	1692.5

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1972 FLIGHT TIME STATISTICS - PART II

Day Carrier Landings	514
Night Carrier Landings	161
Day Field Landings	317
Night Field Landings	83
Day FCLP	307
Night FCLP	219