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CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON
ONE HUNDRED SIXTEEN
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96601

VAW-116
1974

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5700
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From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED SIXTEEN

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

Subj: Command History for Calendar Year of 1974

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12B

Encl: (1) VAW-116 Command History of 1974

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

J. A. Moore
J. A. MOORE

Copy to:
CNO (OP-05B9)
COMFITAEEWINGPAC
CINCPACFLT
COMCVW-9

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1974 NARRATIVE

With a year of unmatched accomplishments behind them, the SUN KINGS of VAW-116 began 1974 with a vigorous training program to ready themselves for their scheduled June deployment to WestPac. All but eight officers were destined to detach prior to deployment, necessitating a positive training program in which the many talents of the departing "seasoned veterans" would be passed on to the new arrivals.

During the month of January emphasis was placed on ground training, with daily lectures/discussions on such subjects as: SAR, emergency procedures, anti-PT tactics, APS-96, Link 11, the Allison T-56 engine, other various aircraft systems, and airways procedures. Maximum usage was made of the ATDS Weapons System Trainer (WST) and the Operational Flight Trainer (OFT), with NFO's/FT's working on crew coordination and air wing tactics, while pilots practiced emergency and instrument procedures. Having but two aircraft assigned, and trying to train new maintenance personnel, flying was limited to a maximum of two flights per day. In the latter portion of the month, the SUN KINGS participated in two exercises, which tested the E-2 radar's ability to locate surface units, particularly small high speed patrol boats. On the nights of 23, and 31 January, the squadron was tasked to locate and prosecute a hydrofoil transiting from San Clemente Island to San Diego. A-7's from VX-4, VA-146, and VA-147 were used as "scrappers". Each night the hydrofoil was located and successfully prosecuted, verifying the E-2's role in anti-PT/shipping protection of the task group. During this same time period a SOCAL LINKEX was conducted. This exercise simulated a AAWEX environment, with both the E-2 and multiple surface NTDS units reporting and engaging simulated bogies, controlling simulated CAP, while making maximum use of Link 11 and the RF SNIP Net.

With the Fallon pre-deployment work-ups scheduled for late February, and the receipt of a third aircraft, the SUN KINGS took to the air for maximum NFO training. Between 1 February and 21 February a total of 16 system flights (full five man crew) and 13 front end flights (pilots only) were completed. These flights consisted of link and radio checks for USS CONSTELLATION, work on crew coordination, tape familiarization (the latest ATDS program), plus instrument flight and FCLP practice for the pilots. On Sunday 24 February, VAW-116's three E-2's were

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flown to NAS Fallon, Nevada for the work-ups scheduled to start the next morning. Unfortunately, high winds and blowing dust severely limited Air Wing flight operations. During the five day period, only eight sorties were flown. All but two of these were ALPHA Strikes, with the SUN KINGS tasked as the controlling agency providing ARTCC interface. The most valuable portion of these flights were the simulated SAR situation toward the end of each sortie, which provided all aircrew an opportunity to practice SAR techniques they had studied but never actually used. The two remaining flights were in the Annual Bombing Derby, were the reigning champs the SUN KINGS, failed to repeat their remarkable performance of the previous year throwing hand held MK 76's out the overhead hatch.

In March, the squadron received its long awaited fourth E-2 and used it to full advantage as the pilots flew daily FCLP flights to prepare for the upcoming April Carrier Landing Qualification (CQ) period. While the pilots were busy "bouncing", the NFO/FT's again concentrated on crew coordination, tactics, and air intercept control (AIC) in the Weapon System Trainer (WST). On 13 March the SUN KINGS participated in OPERATION LIMESTONE, an amphibious exercise, in the Camp Pendleton area. This afforded the squadron the opportunity to work with an MTDS unit, a rarity for a VAW squadron.

On 3 April a detachment of maintenance personnel and aircrew embarked in USS CONSTELLATION for a brief CQ period and limited cyclic operations. Operating in the SOCAL Ops Area, the SUN KINGS staged the majority of its CQ flights from NORIS, until 8 April when the aircraft and full crews flew aboard for the last two days of operations. Upon returning to NORIS, the SUN KINGS concluded preparations for its Change of Command and on 18 April Commander James A. MOORE relieved Commander John K. GARDELLA as Commanding Officer. At this time, Commander Richard H. MARTIN became the SUN KING'S new Executive Officer.

On 1 May, Air Wing NINE departed in USS CONSTELLATION for its final at sea work-ups and Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI). During the next 23 days, except for a brief 4 day NORIS inport period, the SUN KINGS participated in concentrated cyclic operations, consisting of 8 AAWEX's, 6 KOMAREX's, 3 NOREX's, 4 MINEX's, 8 ALPHA STRIKES, 2 SNOOPEREX's, along with numerous AIC, SSSC, and type

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training flights. The final outcome was a highly successful ORI for all, with VAW-116's score of 93.65 being the second highest in the Air Wing. The SUN KINGS performance was so exceptional that Rear Admiral COOGAN personally complimented the SUN KINGS for a job well done.

During the closing days of May and the first three weeks of June, the squadron observed a pre-deployment standdown period, with many of the crew taking leave. At the same time, however, efforts continued on final preparations for the soon to arrive deployment.

On 21 June the SUN KINGS said their good-byes and set sail in USS CONSTELLATION, destined for WESTPAC. The non-stop transit was via Hawaii, Gaum, and the San Bernardino Straights, to Subic Bay. Transit air operations were limited to one-half day in the vicinity of Hawaii (27 June) and two launches in response to BEAR intelligence reports in the vicinity of Wake Island on 4 July. The SUN KINGS launched in the early morning from an alert 30 status, and maintained FSC aircraft airborne for 7.7 hours. Of particular note was the classical "blue water environment" for which the E-2 was designed. The E-2's system detected, automatically acquired and tracked 6 BEAR aircraft to ranges in excess of 200 miles from the E-2. Data link information was relayed to CONSTELLATION during the entire evolution, but due a minimum CPA of 250 miles, no intercepts were required.

The keyword for the transit was "training" with daily formal lectures and discussions for all aircrew covering NATOPS procedures, CVA operations, Air Wing tactics, OP Plans and Orders, and SAR procedures. Major emphasis was placed on aircrew cross training with aircraft mission/type briefs exchanged between all squadrons. The main purpose of these briefs were to convey the capabilities and limitations of the various aircraft and to gain a better working relationship between the squadrons.

On 9 July, one day prior to the CONSTELLATION's arrival in Subic Bay, three E-2's flew to NAS Cubi Pt. with the Air Wing. As in the past, VAW-116 was tasked with enroute coordination of the fly-off. It is the standard policy of CVW-9 to launch an E-2 first and recover it last, in order to provide radar flight following and to act as an interface between Air Wing aircraft and the local ARTCC.

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While inport Subic, operations centered around FCLP's for the squadron pilots, due to the lack of deck time since the May ORI. During this period the NFO/FT's continued their ground training with lectures on various aircraft systems. One of the training evolutions enjoyed by all aircrew was Jungle Environment Survival Training (JEST), consisting of nine hours of training in combat SAR and jungle survival. With the approach of the first of many typhoons to plague the cruise, CONSTELLATION was forced to leave port for one day of typhoon evasion. Returning to Subic, CONSTELLATION finished loading supplies and departed on the morning of 23 July. Light winds and an almost open deck permitted all the squadron's pilots, as well as those of the other squadrons, to undergo a carrier requalification period for two days. With all pilots requalified, normal cyclic operations commenced on 25 July, with the SUN KINGS tasked with Airborne Command and Control (ABCCC) and Surface-Subsurface Surveillance Coordination (SSSC), which proved to be the major tasking throughout the deployment. Three exercises were conducted; the first being an AAWEX, in which CVW-9 attacked aircraft proceeded outbound to approximately 100-150 miles, turned inbound after they ceased squawking and attempted to penetrate the CVA's defenses. VAW-116 provided AEW coverage and CAP control throughout the evolution. The second exercise, a MINEX, saw the squadron giving positive radar control and communications relay for the attack aircraft transiting to their drop area. The last major exercise was an ANTI-SHIPEX, in which USS DECATOR simulated a Russian Komar. Within five minutes after launch, the E-2 located the closing surface contact, relayed the information, and controlled the launching alert aircraft onto the helpless intruder.

One aircraft was flown off to Cubi on both 4 and 5 August, with CONSTELLATION entering port on the 6th. This inport period, like the last, was accompanied by heavy rains, thus limiting the squadron to four flights.

CONSTELLATION got underway 15 August in the same weather that had plagued the inport period. IFR weather was the norm with less than 1,000 foot ceilings and visibilities of 1/2 to 2 miles in the torrential rains and winds in excess of 75 knots. This, accompanied by heavy seas, precluded the planned carrier refresher landings scheduled for the first four days. The weather finally subsided and normal cyclic ops were flown beginning 19 August, with VAW-116 again being tasked with ABCCC and SSSC.

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The three day period 23-25 August was devoted to a joint U. S./Philippine amphibious exercise, PAGASA III. Forces involved, included Philippine Marine units plus U. S. Naval units (surface, subsurface, amphibious, and air). Amphibious operations were conducted against Northern Panay Island with CVW-9 providing air support and the SUN KINGS acting as an AEW platform. While close air support and strike missions were being flown, a full three day AAWEX was included. It became apparent as the exercise progressed that the E-2, with its inherent versatility, would be active in more areas than the AAWEX, for the crews found themselves tasked with bogie detection, intercept control, air corridor control, and radio relay.

With PAGASA III completed, 26 August was dedicated to a Safety Standdown, with all aircrew attending lectures and discussions on NATOPS and safety. Cyclic operations followed the standdown. On 28 August the first missile shoot of the cruise was conducted, with the SUN KINGS providing range sanitation for the F-4 Phantoms. On 29 August an E-2 was launched from an alert-15 status, signaling the beginning of the largest of the exercises held this period, MULTIPLEX 1-75. Opposition forces included CVW-2, VQ-1, and VP-6 aircraft, as well as other naval surface and subsurface units. VAW-116, again with multiple tasking, provided AEW, CAP control, SSSC, radio relay and Bingo control. In doing so, the SUN KINGS "bagged" six intercepts and sanitized the carrier out to 125 miles. Due to distance from land, poor weather, and field requirements, VAW-116 was again tasked as primary control for the Air Wing fly-off as the exercise concluded. Aircraft were put into holding as necessary to ensure a staggered arrival at NAS Cubi Point, preventing an overload of the Cubi tower due to field arrestments necessitated by the wet runways.

Finally, the sun, Subic, and CONSTELLATION remained in harmony, and a rain free inport period was enjoyed. Taking advantage of the fair weather, numerous Link-11 test flights were made in an effort to define and resolve problem areas effecting link operation. With the help of USS CHICAGO and USS BERKELEY acting as Net Control Station (NCS), doppler correction circuitry problems were validated and troubleshooting progress was made which proved most beneficial in the upcoming operating periods.

On 16 September, CONSTELLATION departed the Subic for two days of carrier landing refreshers, followed by

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cyclic operations with heavy emphasis on SSSC. Receiving the call to develop a feasible SSSC plan, VAW-116 produced the CVW-9 Surface Surveillance Tacnote. It encompassed three basic search plans, the first of which involved rapid sanitation of a 250 mile radius around the carrier. The remaining two plans were designed for location of High Interest Units (HIU) within 400 miles of the carrier.

On 18 and 19 September, the Air Wing was tasked on short notice to locate two transiting Soviet HIU's. Search was conducted out to 300 miles under E-2 control. Though the two units were not located, valuable training was gained and our initial theories about search group composition, deployment, capabilities, and procedures were evaluated.

On 23 September, CONSTELLATION arrived in Hong Kong, where all hands enjoyed seven days of maximum liberty. As CONSTELLATION departed Hong Kong on 30 September, she was tasked to locate and "sink" a simulated hostile surface combatant. USS CHICAGO was assigned as the opposition and proved to be a very formidable opponent. The search and tracking range of her radars, coupled with the range of the TALOS missile batteries, greatly hampered the search phase and raised the question of E-2 survivability against a ship of this capability. Total EMCON was maintained by CONSTELLATION and CVW-9 search aircraft, with the E-2 the only active emitter. Radar tracking the search aircraft, the E-2 located the opposition and controlled co-ordinated strikes against it.

The remainder of the at sea period was spent updating and improving Air Wing procedures. The eventual outcome proved all the hours of training most worthwhile, for on 6 October, CVW-9 aircraft, under SUN KING control, were able to identify virtually every contact within the Philippine ADIZ south of 18° 00N. latitude and west of Luzon. Approximately 30 to 40 contacts could now be routinely handled by the E-2 in one double cycle flights. On 7 October, prior to the Air Wing fly-off to Cubi, a major three cycle AAWEX was conducted with VAW-116 in her usual AEW role along with control of one section of CAP. Previous maintenance effort on the radar and link systems was rewarded with consistent Link-11 operation and radar match filter tracking of multiple non-squawkers.

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The remainder of October was a shamble due to weather, with CONSTELLATION entering port on 8 October only to be forced out two days later for three days of typhoon evasion. She then returned for three days before departing on 16 October for a four day period of cyclic operations. This too was hampered by weather, as it became necessary to evade still another typhoon. Returning to Subic on 21 October, the next eight days were to be spent preparing for the upcoming Indian Ocean deployment. Again, efforts were hampered for on the 27th, typhoon ELAINE chased CONSTELLATION to sea for two days. In spite of the weather, one MISSILEX, one SAMEX, and multiple SSSC and training flights were conducted.

On 29 October CONSTELLATION tied up to Leyte Pier, Cubi Point for eight hours to complete replenishment for the final phase of her deployment, the crossing of the Equator, a visit to Singapore, and the long anticipated journey to the Indian Ocean.

From 29 October through 2 November the ship conducted cyclic operations while enroute to Singapore. With the exception of FORCE-CAP launched under control of CONSTELLATION, all Air Wing assets were dedicated to putting the SSSC Tacnote to the test. The objective of the search plan was to locate, identify, and track (on a cycle to cycle basis) every surface vessel of 1,000 tons or greater within 250 miles of the carrier. On 3 November CONSTELLATION crossed the Equator and the "Pollywogs" were treated to a enthusiastic initiation into the Domain of Neptunus Rex by the trusty "Shellbacks". The next day, CONSTELLATION anchored in Singapore harbor, signaling the beginning of an enjoyable four day visit to the "Lion City".

After the luxurious Singapore routine, CONSTELLATION conducted routine cyclic operations enroute to the Indian Ocean. The primary Air Wing tasking was to provide CONSTELLATION with SSSC coverage out to 250 miles within 120 degrees either side of her track and out to 50 miles behind the track. As usual, VAW-116 was tasked to organize, coordinate, and control the entire evolution.

As CONSTELLATION entered the Arabian Sea on 16 November, the first pre-MIDLINK PASSEX was conducted, and was designed to test our long range surface search and anti-ship strike procedures. Early on the morning of the 16th, the E-2 was launched to locate the "Orange" Task Group, lead by the heavy cruiser HMS BLAKE. After establishing itself on

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on station, the E-2 was able to fix the position of the Orange Task Group on its radar and verified with the aid of two lines of bearing provided by Air Wing E-A6 aircraft. The SUN KINGS vectored strike aircraft "on top" at 325 miles from CONSTELLATION, for a total of about one hour from launch to target prosecution. VAW-116 continued their coverage of the surface and air picture throughout the day as simulated ALPHA STRIKES were flown by CVW-9 aircraft. The following day, the E-2 relocated the Orange Forces, now moving in two dispersed formations, and the strikes continued for a second day.

On 18 November, CONSTELLATION and Air Wing NINE were involved in an AAWEX with HMS BLAKE, who served as the AEW coordinator and primary CAP controlling agency. During this exercise, the E-2 was under the control of HMS BLAKE, providing 6.4 hours of AEW coverage, and was responsible for over half of the detections and intercepts completed. The exercise was a definite success and demonstrated the excellent "blue water" AEW capabilities of the E-2.

Between 19 and 21 November, the CENTO task force, including CONSTELLATION, assembled in Karachi harbor for OPERATION MIDLINK briefings. And while doing so, many of the crew enjoyed liberty in this new and different port.

Upon departure from Karachi, it was expected that CONSTELLATION would continue its participation in MIDLINK, but a change in tasking on 22 November directed CONSTELLATION into the Persian Gulf. Arriving at the mouth of the Gulf early the morning of 24 November, CONSTELLATION delayed until the early afternoon before actually transiting into the Gulf. On the morning of 25 November, SUN KING 011, became the first fixed wing aircraft to catapult from a U. S. carrier in the Persian Gulf in 26 years! During the one day of flight operations in the Persian Gulf, the SUN KINGS provided 11.0 hours of SSSC, flight following, and buffer warning service for the Air Wing. At the completion of flight operations that day, CONSTELLATION left the Persian Gulf returning to OPERATION MIDLINK 74 in the Arabian Sea.

After two days transit, CONSTELLATION commenced two of the most demanding flying days of the cruise. The first day's schedule called for 18 flying hours, a six hour rest period, and then 12 more flying hours. This was a joint exercise involving all the CENTO participants (U.S., Great Britian, Pakistan, and Iran). CONSTELLATION was tasked with searching out and destroying the opposing (Orange) task group, as well as maintaining an AAW posture.

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The SUN KINGS quickly found the task group and directed continuous strikes against it. The U.S. Air Force launched numerous F-111 raids out of Manroor, Pakistan, in an attempt to find CONSTELLATION. VAW-116, working again with HMS BLAKE, cheerfully provided each F-111 with an "F-4 escort" inbound. Also, numerous Vulcan, F-4, and B-57 Canberra raid aircraft approaching the force from Iran and Saudi Arabia, were detected by the SUN KINGS. The exercise dramatically demonstrated that the E-2 in a "blue water" environment, performs as advertized.

After the completion of all exercise phases of OPERATION MIDLINK, a Fire Power Demonstration was held on 29 November by CVW-9. Observers present were Chief of Army Staff, Pakistan; Chief of Naval Staff, Pakistan; Commander in Chief, Imperial Iranian Navy; Air Marshall, Royal Air Force; and deputy CINCUSEUR. At the conclusion of the demonstration, culminating a full day of static displays, tours, briefings and surface ship demonstrations, CONSTELLATION was saluted by an over-flight of F-111's, B-57's, Vulcans, and Iranian F-4's, providing an impressive display of CENTO airpower.

With the completion of MIDLINK, it was time for CONSTELLATION to steam to Subic and the long awaited return to CONUS. The journey between the I.O. and Subic saw no flight operations except for the launching of two E-2's on the 7th to facilitate a transfer of two aircraft to VAW-115. One of the two aircraft obtained from VAW-115 flew aboard the morning of 8 December and the other was craned aboard shortly after CONSTELLATION arrived latter than same day. The day and a half inport was used for the off-load of armament and the on-load of necessary supplies for the rapid transit across the Pacific.

On the morning of 10 December, CONSTELLATION departed Subic for the last time with her next stop being San Diego, California-----HOME!!!! The non-stop transit was quite uneventful and culminated with all four SUN KING E-2's flying off on the morning of 22 December for NAS North Island.

Christmas 1974 was a truly unforgetably happy occasion for all SUN KINGS and their families as they were able to share it together after the long separation. On 27 December all squadron material was moved from CONSTELLATION to the squadron spaces at North Island. The year closed with a half workday on 31 December, as the SUN KINGS prepared to celebrate the end of another successful year and welcome 1975 and its many new challenges.

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1974 FLIGHT DATA

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	<u>A/C HOURS</u>	<u>PILOT HOURS</u>	<u>LAND</u> <u>FLIGHTS</u>	<u>FIELD LANDINGS</u>	<u>FCLP</u>
DAY	385.0	770.0	145	518	509
NIGHT	95.6	191.2	46	126	479
TOTAL	480.6	961.2	191	644	988

SHIP

A/C HOURS*PILOT HOURS*FLTS*ARRESTED LANDINGS*FLD LANDINGS*BOLTERS*TOUCH & GO

DAY	720.3	1440.6	305	347	167	18	20
NIGHT	237.5	475.0	78	130	185	25	1
TOTAL	957.8	1915.6	383	477	352	43	21

SHIP AND LAND TOTALS

	<u>FLIGHTS</u>	<u>LANDINGS</u>	<u>FLIGHT HOURS</u>
DAY	450	1032	1105.3
NIGHT	124	441	333.1
TOTAL	574	1473	1438.4

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IN CONCLUSION

As one reflects back on 1974, the accomplishments of VAW-116 speak for themselves. As a member of Attack Carrier Air Wing NINE, embarked in USS CONSTELLATION, we completed a highly successful WESTPAC deployment. This included providing the utmost in airborne early warning, intercept control, flight following, surface-subsurface surveillance coordination, radio relay, and command control, as well as having the honor of being the first fixed wing aircraft to launch in the Gulf of Persia in 26 years.

Excellence is a tradition with the SUN KINGS---a tradition they will carry boldly into 1975.

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