

1979



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

VAW-116/024/SDB  
5750  
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Squadron ONE HUNDRED SIXTEEN  
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1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is  
submitted.

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By direction

Copy to:  
CINCPACFLT  
Director of Naval History

Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron  
ONE HUNDRED SIXTEEN  
VAW-116

1979

Enclosure (1)

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THE SQUADRON AND ITS MISSION

## COMMAND MISSION

Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED SIXTEEN (VAW-116) is a four plane, Airborne Early Warning (AEW) squadron under the administrative control of Commander, Fighter Airborne Early Warning Wing, U.S. Pacific Fleet for the E-2B to E-2C transition period until 1 September 1979 and thereafter under operational control of Commander, Carrier Airwing NINE.

VAW-116 operates the five place, twin turboprop E-2C "Hawkeye" which is capable of all-weather carrier and shore-based operations. The E-2C is 57 1/2 feet long, has an 81 foot wing span and weighs 52,000 pounds when operationally loaded. Its most distinguishing physical characteristics are its four vertical stabilizers and its 24 foot diameter, dish-shaped rotodome mounted 6 feet above the fuselage.

The five man crew consists of a pilot, co-pilot, Combat Information Center Officer (CICO), Air Control Officer (ACO), and a Flight Technician/Radar Operator. This highly skilled crew, when working as a coordinated team, can perform the following missions.

1. Airborne Early Warning (AEW), the detection of unknown air contacts closing the Task Force.
2. Tactical Aircraft Intercept Control (AIC).
3. Strike flight following/control.
4. Surface/Subsurface Surveillance Coordination (SSSC) - (includes interface with S-3A via voice and Link-11).
5. Helicopter control.
6. Aerial mining control.
7. Tactical reconnaissance aircraft control.
8. Secondary approach assistance for carrier aircraft.
9. Communications relay (automatic and manual).
10. Airborne Search and Rescue Coordination (SAR).

1979 NARRATIVE

## 1979 Narrative

On 1 January 1979, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED SIXTEEN was under the operational and administrative control of Commander, Fighter Airborne Early Warning Wing, U.S. Pacific Fleet based ashore at NAS Miramar, California. VAW-116 was actively engaged in transitioning from the E-2B model aircraft to the E-2C.

During January, aircraft 010 (150538) was prepared and transferred to VAW-88 while aircraft 011 (152476) and 013 (152489) were in final preparations for their transfer to VAW-78 and RVAW-110, respectively. Aircraft rework, in preparation for transfer, occupied a significant portion of maintenance scrutiny. A total of 300 manhours of special rework assistance from NARF North Island Field teams was expended during January. The Commanding Officer, CDR K.D. Denbow, and LTJG [REDACTED] commenced their transition training to E-2C's at Carrier Airborne Early Warning Training Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY (RVAW-120), NAS Norfolk, Virginia. Enlisted transition training for aircrew and Avionics Technicians was also begun. The Sun Kings' Line Division was recognized for their work by being awarded NAS Miramar's AIMD "Betsy" award, for the second consecutive period. This award is given monthly to the squadron with the lowest total GSE safety/mis-use/abuse violation points.

February had the Sun Kings focusing primarily on extensive ground training for officers and enlisted since no aircraft were assigned. The only exception was the utilization of two squadron pilots to continue the eastward ferry of A/C 011 (152476) from NAS Dallas, Texas to VAW-78, NAS Norfolk, Virginia. Ground training was accomplished with the help of the Technical Guidance Unit, NRRF Imperial Beach and the experienced CETS Technicians from Grumman Aerospace Corporation. During February, two full weeks were dedicated to Human Resources Availability (HRAV) training in the squadron spaces and at the HRMC Center at NTC, San Diego, California. CDR Denbow and LTJG [REDACTED] returned from RVAW-120 after completing their transition training while LT [REDACTED], LTJG [REDACTED] and LT [REDACTED] departed for their transition training at RVAW-120.

During March, transition attention was focused towards pilot training and NATOPS qualification in the E-2C due to the arrival of the squadron's first E-2C aircraft 158643 from VAW-125 and 159500 from VAW-122 via NARF North Island, California. All of the available pilots were qualified in the E-2C this month. LT [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED] and LTJG [REDACTED] returned

from RVAW-120 after completing their NFO transition training, bringing the number of NATOPS qualified E-2C NFO's on board to five (5). Formal enlisted training continued with NAMTRADET schools at NAS Norfolk, Virginia, and ground training was conducted by CETS personnel at NAS Miramar. Officer manning was reduced to 13 officers by the end of March when LT [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED] and LCDR [REDACTED] were transferred to the Fleet Replacement Squadron, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Training Squadron ONE HUNDRED TEN (RVAW-110).

April began with the acceptance of one more E-2C aircraft (159499) also from VAW-122 via NARF North Island. The first major operational evolution of the month and the E-2C transition was an 11 April E-2C familiarization flight given to ADM Long, Vice CNO and the prospective CINCPACFLT. The VF-1 "Wolfpack" assisted the Sun Kings by providing F-14's to demonstrate two-way Link 4 data link capability. On 12 April, an aircrew flew to MCAS Yuma, Arizona for a series of briefings and demonstrations of the Marine Tactical Data System utilized by MACS-7. On 18 April, the Sun Kings participated in the Navy Fighter Weapons School "Have Grape" exercise which provided outstanding training in communications coordination, strike following, crew coordination and system airborne troubleshooting. Later in the evening, the Sun Kings were also active in the NORAD exercise "Falling Brave" which consisted of reporting bogies to the NORAD Command Center and intercepting the aggressors with two Navy F-14's under Sun King control. On 20 April the Sun Kings simulated a Bear "D" and gave targeting information to Orange Strike Groups as they attacked the Blue Force Flagship, USS KITTY HAWK, and her escorts. On the 24th and 25th of April, VAW-116 provided contract trial support to USS BELLEAU WOOD (LHA-3) in the form of Link 11 system checkouts and UHF Long Haul services. The COMNAVAIRPAC Maintenance Advisory team visited the Sun Kings and gave the Maintenance Department an excellent review of required maintenance practices. They concurrently provided recommendations for improvements to standard operating procedures. A very successful Open House and picnic were held on 21 April for Sun King families and friends. This gave the command an opportunity to begin to know the new faces who would be so important for the upcoming work-ups and deployment.

The first portion of May was spent in the continued training of available aircrews. This included Field Carrier Landing Practice for the Executive Officer, LCDR M. P. Morgen in preparation for a 6 June Carrier Qualification Deck aboard



USS CORAL SEA (CV-43). On 8-9 May, the Sun Kings participated with FCDSSA, Pt Loma, and VX-5 in evaluating the Link 4 system associated with the "NIGHTRIDER update" installed in the A-7E aircraft. At the same time, VAW-116 crews continued to support contractual trials of the USS BELLEAU WOOD, again providing long-range UHF communication checks and relays along with Link 11 services. Range surveillance and Link 11 services were provided to the USS BLUE RIDGE (LCC-19) during a Southern California operating area live missile exercise. The primary operational commitment during May was in support of a Marine exercise, 16-27 May, with MACS-7 which culminated in a Hawk missile shoot. RADM F. G. Fellows received an E-2C familiarization flight during this exercise. Navy Recruiting and Public Relations efforts were supported with participation in airshows at both Tinker and Ellington Air Force Bases.

Squadron NFO manning took a significant jump in June with the arrival of LCDR [REDACTED], LTJG [REDACTED] and LTJG [REDACTED] from RVAW-120. The 4th of June saw the arrival of the final E-2C (160007) from VAW-122 again via NARF North Island. The extensive FCLP's conducted during May enabled VAW-116's XO, LCDR M. P. Morgen, to become day and night Carrier Qualified. READIEX 3-79 was a significant Third Fleet Exercise which VAW-116 participated in during June. The Sun Kings provided Range Clearance, Communication Relay and Drone Tracking. On 20 June the Sun Kings had the opportunity to work with a Navy Fighter Weapons School "TOPGUN" class in controlling an Alpha Strike into the Edwards AFB operating area around the China Lake, NWC. VAW-116 support of Navy public relations and recruiting efforts continued in June as aircrews participated in an airshow at Provo, Utah and a special E-2C indoctrination presentation at Lowry Air Force Base's Air Intelligence School.

During July, the Sun Kings participated in COMFITAEEWINGPAC's Tactical Development and Evaluation program of Maritime Air Superiority Exercises. Flight evaluation tests of RT 988 noise level adjustments were also conducted concurrently. The COMFITAEEWINGPAC Maritime Air Superiority Exercise 1-79 was developed as an inhouse training vehicle to allow Miramar based Airborne Early Warning and Fighter squadrons to develop and practice tactics against the ASCM and SSCM threat. On three consecutive nights (10, 11 and 12 July), an E-2C was launched with from 2 to 6 F-14's under its control to counter simulated AS-2, AS-5, SSN-3B and SSN-9 attacks. The Maintenance Department was preparing for the squadron's return to full operational readiness with major aircraft system updates. During

the period 9-20 July, all four aircraft underwent an extensive modernization project including MOD 76 Weapons System Update, AFC 273 Mini-Gyro Incorporation, AFB 153 Propeller Junction Box Chafing Inspection, AFB 154 Elevator Control Valve Push Rod Bolts, AFC 262 Nose Cap Flange Modification, AFC 267 Rerouting of PDS Wire Bundle and AFC 291 Rewiring UHF #2 Power to Port Generator. On the 21st of July, the First Annual Sun King Reunion was held as a Dining Out at the Commissioned Officer's Mess (Open), NAS North Island. Guest speaker was Mr. Thomas Guarino, Vice President for Grumman Aerospace Corporation and guests included RADM Gilchrist, Commander, Fighter Airborne Early Warning Wing, Pacific and a number of former Sun King Commanding Officers.

August was the final month of E-2B to E-2C transition. During the week of 6-10 August, VAW-116 supported two simultaneous Tomahawk Missile Flight Test Evaluations. Forty-nine hours of flight time were devoted to Over-the-Horizon Targeting tactics development and ten hours were flown in support of Tomahawk flight-following and air control in conjunction with long range terrain avoidance profiles. On 15 August, TOPGUN again flew an Alpha Strike into the China Lake Echo Range. This was the third opportunity the Sun Kings had to participate in the NFWS graduation exercise. Tasking included FAA coordination, strike group check-in and out, as well as providing bogie calls to the strike group. The Sun Kings' participation was so critical and contributed so significantly to civilian and military safety in the dense Southern California air traffic environment, that FAA's Los Angeles Center rewrote their letter of agreement with the Navy requiring E-2 participation in all such evolutions in the Southern California area. On 21 August, the Sun Kings participated in AMALGAM CHIEF 79-6, another NORAD exercise conducted off the Pacific coast from the Canadian border to Mexico. The Sun Kings' E-2C's were extremely effective in countering a diverse group of adversary aircraft ranging from B-52's to A-7's. Public relations support continued with a Sun King flight crew participating in an airshow at Duluth, Minnesota. The squadron passed a COMFITAEWWINGPAC Command Inspection with an adjective grade of SATISFACTORY. The Sun Kings' transition was complete and they were prepared to take their place on the CVW-9/USS CONSTELLATION team.

On 1 September, VAW-116 came under the operational control of Commander, Carrier Air Wing NINE. The squadron was located at NAS Miramar from 1-15 September, NAS Fallon from 16-29 September, and NAS Miramar on 30 September. Carrier qualifications were conducted from 6-10 September and, concurrent with Fallon operations, from 21 September to 4 October. A special event, Exercise "Falling Brave 79-3", conducted on 12 September,

was organized by NORAD to exercise air defense facilities in the Southern California region. The Sun King E-2C was tasked to provide airborne detection and air control in the vicinity of W-289 and 8 of 8 inbound raids were intercepted by fighters under control of VAW-116 aircrews. From 16-29 September, VAW-116 integrated itself into Airwing operations at NAS Fallon. These operations included Alpha Strikes, SAR exercises, AIC, MASEX, WASEX, a bombing derby and FCLP to prepare the pilots for CQ. The Sun Kings participated in each coordinated strike providing FAA Liaison, flight following, on/off counts, air control, Link 4, AIC, SAR control and overall strike control for CVW-9. September was VAW-116's return "home" to USS CONSTELLATION/CVW-9 after deployments aboard the USS NIMITZ and then the USS FORRESTAL.

The squadron was located at NAS Miramar from 1-19 October and aboard USS CONSTELLATION from 20-31 October. Significant shore operations included FCLP and system training flights prior to the beginning of CVW-9's first pre-deployment at-sea period. Carrier qualification/refresher landings occupied the first four days of October followed by coordinated ship/Airwing operations. On 10 October, a Navy Fighter Weapons School Alpha Strike was again planned, briefed, flown and debriefed with the active cooperation of VAW-116. On 11 October, representatives from the Japanese Air Defense Force (JADF) were treated to briefings on the E-2C. They were particularly interested in proficiency training following initial qualification in the aircraft. On 17 October, two Sun King aircraft received ECM services from a modified P-3 assigned to the Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River. This exercise, which included broadband, continuous wave and noise jamming, was an excellent opportunity to see the effects of ECM on the E-2C. From 20-31 October, VAW-116 was embarked aboard USS CONSTELLATION for the start of workups prior to deployment.

The squadron was aboard USS CONSTELLATION from 1-10 November and 29-30 November. The remainder of the month was spent at NAS Miramar. The at-sea periods involved coordinated ship/Airwing operations. COMCVW NINE tasked VAW-116 to serve as Strike Lead for a KOMAREX conducted on 6 and 7 November. For three consecutive cycles on these evenings, the airwing, under E-2C close control, localized and prosecuted simulated Cruise Missile platforms which were attempting to close the USS CONSTELLATION and achieve a firing solution. On 6 November the Sun Kings participated in a Buzzardex during which USS OKLAHOMA CITY provided TALOS missiles as high speed targets for a variety of fleet missile platforms. A VAW-116 E-2C was on the Pacific Missile Range throughout the day providing control services. RADM Gilchrist, COMFITAEWWINGPAC, observed

the afternoon missile shoot from an airborne Sun King E-2C. Another exercise VAW-116 participated in was one developed by the Light Attack Weapons School at NAS Lemoore. This exercise utilized the services of VA-146, the Sun Kings and the Pacific Missile Test Range to evaluate possible applications of FLIR equipped aircraft in a night fighter role. On 20 November the Sun Kings controlled a VA-146 FLIR equipped A-7E on the PMR utilizing Link 4 for a live AIM-9G launch against an MQM-74C target at night.

The squadron was aboard USS CONSTELLATION from 1-14 December. The remainder of the month was spent at NAS Miramar. From 1-14 December, VAW-116 participated in the CVW-9 WEPTRAEX aboard USS CONSTELLATION by controlling a majority of the graded evolutions flown by the Airwing. Sun King crews assisted in Alpha Strikes, War at Sea Strikes, MINEXS, AAWEXS, Air Intercept Control, ASW coordination, SSSC, E-2 controlled approaches, SAREXS, KOMAREXS and LINKEXS. LCDR Tim Flaherty of RVAW-110 served as the COMFITAEWINGPAC WEPTRAEX VAW observer from 2-7 December. During this period the squadron was able to complete graded FXP-2 competitive exercises A-1-C1, A-2-C1, A-3-C1, A-4-C1, A-5-C1 and A-6-C1. Although overall manning was still a major shortfall prior to cruise, December found VAW-116 with a full complement of pilots aboard and prepared for the arduous workup/deployment cycle ahead. Christmas standdown provided the Sun Kings with their last chance to relax prior to their first WESTPAC deployment since 1976.

1979 FLIGHT DATA

COMMAND HISTORY FLIGHT DATA

LAND

<u>Aircraft Hours</u>	<u>Pilot Hours</u>	<u>Flights</u>	<u>Field Landings</u>	<u>FCLP</u>
Day 791.5	Day 1644.4	Day 225	Day 948	Day 225
Night 211.6	Night 425.4	Night 106	Night 596	Night 250
Total 1003.1	Total 2045.4	Total 331	Total 1544	Total 475

SHIP

<u>Aircraft Hours</u>	<u>Pilot Hours</u>	<u>Flights</u>	<u>Arrestments</u>	<u>Bolters</u>	<u>Touch&amp;Go</u>
Day 164.4	Day 328.8	Day 41	Day 198	Day 11	Day 16
Night 137.1	Night 274.2	Night 50	Night 107	Night 17	Night 2
Total 301.5	Total 603.0	Total 91	Total 305	Total 28	Total 18

SHIP and LAND

<u>Flights</u>		<u>Landings</u>		<u>Aircraft Hours</u>	
Day	266	Day	1146	Day	955.9
Night	156	Night	703	Night	348.7
Total	422	Total	1849	Total	1304.6

IN CONCLUSION

## IN CONCLUSION

Nineteen Hundred Seventy-Nine was a year of transition and training. The change from E-2B to E-2C meant long hard hours of training for both maintenance and aircrew. From the advent of the first E-2C, the squadron realized it had acquired a new tool that could be utilized in many varied scenarios and environments. As the year progressed the steadily increasing operational tempo exercised the numerous capabilities of the new E-2C. The Sun Kings have continually demonstrated the value of this command and control platform in the Carrier Battle Group environment and its necessity to Naval Aviation.