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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON
ONE HUNDRED SIXTEEN
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96601-6404

5750
Ser 00/C-2
13 MAR 1989

[REDACTED] Declassified upon removal of enclosure (4)

From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED SIXTEEN
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)
Subj: **COMMAND HISTORY FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1987 (OPNAV REPORT 5750-1)**
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12 (Series)
Encl: (1) Command Mission and Command History
(2) The Officers and Men
(3) 1987 Awards
(4) AEW Excellence Award Submission

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) through (4) are hereby submitted.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "L. R. Zimmerman".

L. R. ZIMMERMAN
By direction

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

R397 496 298

A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely "L. R. Zimmerman".

Classified by: OPNAVINST C5513.2B
Declassify on: OADR

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1987 SQUADRON HISTORY

. 02 MAR - 28 APR	SURGE/TEAM SPIRIT
. 15 APR - 16 APR	B-52 MAR OPS
. 04 MAY - 08 MAY	FAST
. 18 MAY - 20 MAY	ECCM COMPEX
. 02 JUN - 11 JUN	READIEX 87-3A
. 05 JUN - 06 JUN	EWTPI
. 14 JUL - 30 DEC	WESTPAC
. 21 JUL - 25 JUL	READIEX 87-3B
. 05 AUG - 06 AUG	MAR OPS
. 08 AUG - 10 AUG	INCHOPEX
. 28 AUG - 10 NOV	EARNEST WILL
. 28 AUG	REEF PT
. 08 SEP	STRONG WAKE
. 19 OCT - 20 OCT	NIMBLE ARCHER

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In late January 1987 VAW-116 was at sea for 2 weeks in preparation for SURGE II/Team Spirit 87. In March the SUN KINGS deployed on board USS RANGER (CV-61) to the Western Pacific for Team Spirit 87, the most extensive joint AEW operation ever coordinated with the Korean Defense Forces. The two months at sea period included port visits to Pusan, Korean and Sasebo, Japan. In July the Sun Kings deployed for a 6 month Western Pacific/Indian Oceans cruise aboard USS RANGER. VAW-116 repeated their 1984 performance by deploying with five E-2C aircraft a feat of which no other VAW squadron can boast. VAW-116 also provided AEW protection in support of the Reflagged Kuwaiti Tanker missions. This deployment also included visits to the cities of Hong Kong, Singapore, Pattaya Beach, Thailand and Subic Bay, Philippines. In late December the Sun Kings returned to their homeport, Naval Air Station, Miramar, California.

Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE ONE SIX (VAW-116) is one of seven Carrier Airborne Early Warning (VAW) squadrons located on the west-coast under the cognizance of Commander, Fighter Airborne Early Warning Wing, U. S. Pacific Fleet (COMFITAEEWWINGPAC).

The VAW community began as a research development, called "Project CADILLAC", at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology at the end of World War II. The Navy continued work on the VAW concept in early 1948 by forming an Airborne Early Warning (AEW) department at one of its Electronic Training Units in San Diego. Later that year this department was converted to an aviation squadron and was commissioned as VAW-1. A month later its name was changed to Composite Squadron ELEVEN (VC-11). VC-11 continued the work of developing the AEW concept, and in 1950 deployed detachments aboard aircraft carriers to provide both Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) and Airborne Early Warning protection to the fleet throughout the Korean conflict.

In July 1956, VC-11 became Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ELEVEN (VAW-11). Its mission was to provide all-weather Airborne Early Warning services to fleet forces and shore warning nets. When E-1B's replaced TBM-3W's and AD4/5W's, VAW-11 became VAW-111, with a series of detachments each consisting of three E-1B's. With the advent of the newer E-2A in 1964, and in recognition of the complexity and responsibility of AEW support missions, the Chief of Naval Operations directed that the E-2A detachments be commissioned as aviation squadrons in their own right.

On 20 April 1967 VAW-116 was commissioned and received the E-2B aircraft. Since then the VAW-116 "Sun Kings" have completed three far-east deployments as part of Attack Carrier Air wing FIFTEEN and two while attached to Attack Carrier Air wing NINE. VAW-116 was awarded the Commander Naval Air Pacific, Battle Efficiency Pennant "E" in February 1970 (for the period July 1968 through December 1969), and again in March 1973 (for the period July 1971 through December 1972). VAW-116 was the recipient of the coveted Chief of Naval Operations Aviation Safety Award for both FY-72 and FY-73. Additionally, VAW-116 was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary performance of duty in action against the enemy in Southeast Asia in 1972.

In July 1975, VAW-116 transferred to Attack Carrier Air Wing EIGHT. Concurrently, the west-coast VAW community, including VAW-116, moved from Naval Air Station, North Island to Naval Air Station, Miramar. As a unit of CVW-8, the "Sun Kings" saw duty in the North Atlantic in 1975. In 1976 VAW-116 again deployed aboard the USS NIMITZ (CVN-68) for a Mediterranean cruise. The squadron transferred to Carrier Air Wing SEVENTEEN embarked on USS FORRESTAL (CV-59) in 1977 and deployed to the Mediterranean and North Atlantic in March 1978.

Enclosure (1)

VAW-116 then transitioned to the E-2C and made a Western Pacific/Indian Ocean cruise from 26 February to 15 October 1980 aboard USS CONSTELLATION (CV-64) in support of Iranian contingency operations. During this cruise the "Sun Kings" saw 110 consecutive days at sea without a port call. Upon return to Naval Air Station Miramar, VAW-116 began preparation for transition to the E-2C Advanced Radar Processing System (ARPS) Update. At the completion of transition, the "Sun Kings" became the first west-coast VAW squadron to operate the AN/APS-125 radar. VAW-116 was assigned to Carrier Air Wing TWO in July 1981. On 7 April 1982, the squadron embarked on the USS RANGER (CV-61) for another Western Pacific/Indian Ocean cruise. Returning in October 1982 the "Sun Kings" remained with Carrier Air wing TWO aboard the USS KITTY HAWK (CV-63).

In December 1983, VAW-116 became the first E-2 squadron to finish first overall during Operational Readiness Exercises (ORE). On 13 January 1984, Carrier Air Wing TWO deployed aboard USS KITTY HAWK, and the "Sun Kings" became the first E-2 squadron in the world to make an extended deployment with five aircraft. The "Sun Kings" returned to NAS Miramar on 1 August 1984. While ashore, VAW-116 became the first E-2C squadron to provide overland intercept control to Fighter Derby participants during the 1985 Fleet Fighter Air Combat Maneuvering Readiness Program (FFARP).

In April 1986 the "Sun Kings" were at sea again to start refresher training (REFTRA). This was followed by the five week RIMPAC '86 exercise which included a week long visit to Honolulu, Hawaii. The year's at-sea schedule concluded with SURGE-OPS: a two month mini-cruise during which VAW-116 celebrated it's first foreign port call since being aboard USS KITTY HAWK.

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Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron One Hundred Sixteen (VAW-116) is a four plane, Airborne Early Warning (AEW) Squadron under the operational control of Commander Carrier Air Wing Two. VAW-116 reports also to the functional Wing Commander, Commander Fighter Airborne Early Warning Wing, U. S. Pacific Fleet (COMFITAEEWINGPAC), and is within the fleet structure of Commander Naval Air Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet (COMNAVAIRPAC).

Based at NAS Miramar, San Diego, California VAW-116 operates the five plane, twin turbo prop E-2C "Hawkeye" which is capable of both shore and carrier based operations.

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A review of 1987 quickly inspires a feeling of accomplishment. Unique challenges were met and dealt with in a traditional "Sun King" fashion. Operational flexibility and adaptability were hall marks of VAW-116 as they supported numerous intensive operations such as Team Spirit 87, and the reflagged Kuwaiti tanker missions. Nineteen Hundred and Eighty Seven was truly a year of rewarding experiences gained through hard work and sacrifices of many dedicated individuals, reaffirming a proud "Sun King" heritage.