



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON
ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEEN
UNIT 25416
FPO AP 96601-6405

1993 ✓

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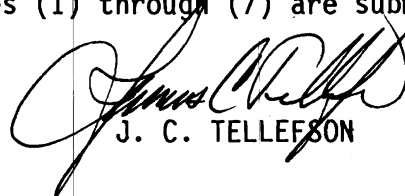
From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 117
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH), Washington Navy Yard,
Washington, DC 20374-0571

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) VAW-117 1993 Command History
(2) AEW Excellence/Battle Efficiency Award Input
(3) VAW-117 Wallbangers: Hawkeye in the Gulf Article
(4) VAW-117 Somalia Operations Article
(5) Commanding Officer's Biography
(6) Photograph of Commanding Officer
(7) Photograph of E-2C Hawkeye

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (7) are submitted.


J. C. TELLEFSON

VAW 117 COMMAND HISTORY 1993

1. Command Composition and Organization

a. Mission

VAW 117 is an Airborne Early Warning (AEW) squadron operating the E2C+ Hawkeye Aircraft. While the E-2C was originally designed for "Blue-water" AEW, innovative Hawkeye crews have proven their platform to be extremely adaptive and effective in complex near land environments such as the Arabian Gulf. Current mission requirements include, command and control, strike interdiction, search and rescue control, and providing fighter control as well as traditional airborne early warning.

b. Organizational Structure

Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 117 operational chain of command:

Carrier Air Wing ELEVEN
Commander Carrier Air Group 3
Commander Naval Air Force U.S. Pacific Fleet

c. Commanding Officer: Commander J. C. Tellefson

d. Permanent Duty Station: NAS Miramar

e. Number and Type Aircraft Assigned: Four E-2C+ Hawkeyes

Buno 163694 - Side 600
Buno 163695 - Side 601
Buno 163696 - Side 602
Buno 163697 - Side 603

2. Chronology

a. Change of Command: Jan 7

b. COMPTUEX 93-9A: 14 Jan - 02 Feb

c. ITA: 03 - 05 Feb

d. COMPTUEX 93-7: 06 - 11 Feb

e. FLEETEX 93-2: 1 - 27 Mar

f. VX-4 MSI for F-18's, and IFF tracking special project: 11 - 20 May

g. WESTPAC 93 deployment: June 15 - December 15

h. PASSEX with Japanese Self Defense Force: 22 June - 12 July

i. OPERATION SOUTHERN WATCH: 26 Jul - 07 Oct 93 (907.0 hrs)

Encl (1)

- j. EAGER ARCHER (93-4) (KUWAIT): 25 - 29 Sep
- k. EASTERN ANGLER (93-1) (QATAR): 18 - 22 Sep
- l. USAF/USN AIRCREW EXCHANGE PROGRAM: 7 Aug - 20 Sep
- m. OPERATION RESTORE HOPE: 09 Oct - 04 Nov 93 (263.7 hrs)

3. Narrative

On January 7, 1993, Commander James "J.C." Tellefson relieved Commander Frank Clark as the squadron's Commanding Officer. Simultaneously, Commander "Tex" Keuhlen assumed the duties as Executive Officer.

The squadron continued pre-cruise preparations (a through e of chronology) through the spring. During work-ups, CVW-11's new medium range AAW tactics were validated. In May, VAW-117's participation in VX-4 Multi Sensor Integration tests proved instrumental in verifying current F-18 software tape upgrades in Link-4 integration. This technology is now used throughout the fleet.

The Wallbangers departed on WESTPAC '93 in June with the Lincoln Battle Group and Carrier Air Wing ELEVEN. They enjoyed a port visit in Hong Kong and then continued to the Arabian Gulf where they operated for 12 weeks in support of Operation Southern Watch and amassed 1750 flight hours. On July 28th, the Wallbangers reached a significant milestone; sixteen years mishap free. During this period, the Wallbangers surpassed 36,700 hours without a major mishap, a distinction which helped earn VAW 117 the CNO Aviation Safety Award for 1993.

The overall mission of Southern Watch was to maintain complete air superiority in the United Nations "No Fly Zone" below the 32nd parallel in Iraq. The mission was a complete success. No Iraqi fixed wing aircraft challenged the "No Fly Zone". While in the Gulf, the Wallbangers demonstrated their ability to operate in the complex overland arena. In addition, they took part in several joint training exercises with Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (j. and k. of chronology) and also conducted regular exchanges with Air Force E-3 AWACS crews.

In October, the Bangers were called to action in support of Operation Restore Hope off Somalia, Africa. The mission was to restore stability to a very tense environment and allow the United Nations to continue their humanitarian relief efforts. The Battle Group and Air Wing's efforts were a complete success. The Wallbangers' specific mission was to provide Air Traffic Control (ATC) services to all of the nearly 400 military and relief aircraft which operated daily in the skies over Somalia. Once properly relieved on station by the USS AMERICA, the USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN started the homeward track. The Wallbangers returned to NAS Miramar on December 15th.

VAW-117 WALLBANGERS: HAWKEYE IN THE GULF

During WESTPAC 93, the VAW-117 Wallbangers spent twelve weeks on station in the Persian Gulf. During this period we flew 506 mission flights, amassing 907 hours in support of Operation Southern Watch. The role of the E-2C Hawkeye in this challenging environment is a varied and important one. Although the E-2C was originally designed for "Blue-water" AEW (airborne early warning), innovative Hawkeye crews proved their platform to be extremely adaptive and effective in the complex near land environment. The Arabian Gulf requirements included: relaying communication, command and control, strike interdiction, search and rescue control, and providing fighter control as well as traditional airborne early warning.

Utilizing our long-range search radar and passive detection system, the Wallbangers have been responsible for enforcing the United Nations no-fly zone over southern Iraq. Our radar provides coverage for hundreds of miles down to the surface, and can detect an aircraft flying anywhere within a three-million cubic mile block of airspace.

Using our mission computer and eight radios, the five man crews provide command, control and communication for the multinational assets in the region. This is no easy task. The forces in the Gulf include both Navy and Air Force aircraft, as well as assets from five other nations. These aircraft fly everyday, and require the E-2C Hawkeye, or its counterpart, the Air Force E-3 AWACS, in order to conduct their missions safely and effectively.

Flying in the Gulf has certainly been a five-man job for Hawkeye aircrews. The primary mission, including all sensor management, is handled by the three Naval Flight Officers in the E-2 Combat Information Center. The two pilots in front are primarily responsible for flying the aircraft. Once airborne however, they become an integral part of the tactical mission, sharing in the enormous task of coordinating, communicating and providing control.

Normal operations in the Gulf included flights at all hours of the day and night. Usually one of the first aircraft to launch, we proceeded to our assigned station and began "checking-in" all of the other aircraft assigned to fly that particular mission. Typically there will be F-14 "Tomcat" or F/A-18 "Hornet" fighter aircraft assigned to orbit "on station," ready to intercept any unknown contacts flying into the no-fly zone. Groups of A-6 "Intruder," along with F/A-18 and F-14 aircraft, conducted daily reconnaissance missions, maintaining their sharp aviation skills. EA-6B Prowlers accompany these strike packages, providing extensive electronic warfare capability and protection. SH-60 "Seahawk" combat helicopters provide low-level reconnaissance, close support, and immediate search and rescue capability.

There were also Air Force counterparts for each of our aircraft. Each of them required the support, control and detection provided by the E-2 Hawkeye. Timely assistance was often required in locating airborne tankers, particularly true at night or in bad weather.

Encl (3)

Most important though, was providing everyone vital early warning of any potential threat. The Hawkeye is, by design, the first to detect and then report all airborne threats.

Not all aircraft aloft were threats however; and this was another way we daily earned our pay. It was essential for Hawkeye controllers to identify and separate possible Iraqi military planes from the many civilian jetliners and UN flights that routinely transited the region. With so many planes airborne, The E-2's air traffic control capability was definitely required for safety of flight. Another very important aspect of the E-2's job was its tactical command and reporting. The Battle Group Commander aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln, as well the Central Command Task Force Commanders in theater, required constant appraisal of the developing tactical situation. The E-2 Mission Commander, usually the senior Naval Flight Officer on board, had both voice and data networks at his disposal for passing along this critical "air picture" necessary for effective tactical decision-making.

While in the Gulf, the Wallbangers took part in several joint training exercises with the nations of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Likewise the Wallbangers conducted regular exchanges with Air Force E-3 AWACS crews. This significantly enhanced the skills of all involved, and made working together in enforcing the "No-Fly Zone" easier and safer.

The Wallbangers of VAW-117 have now successfully completed our support of Operation Southern Watch. The work was challenging and required many flight hours, but we consistently demonstrated the vast capabilities of the E-2C Hawkeye in a complex, multi-threat nearland environment, and again proved our true value to theater commanders and major decision makers. Now it is time to focus on Somalia.

TEAM WORK MAKES THE DIFFERENCE IN SOMALIA

The mighty "ABE" and her hard working crew were summoned to duty in Somalia under the orders of President Clinton. Our mission is to protect U.S. and other UNISOM forces and to provide a secure environment for humanitarian relief. From the mess decks to the flight deck every sailor onboard this ship is contributing to Operation Restore Hope. None of our aircraft would fly without their efforts and a lot of flying is exactly what we have been doing. The aircraft of CVW-11 have provided a major presence in the skies over Mogadishu, raising the morale of U.S. and U.N. ground forces and restoring stability in a tense situation.

One of the first problems encountered as the Lincoln and Air Wing 11 arrived off the Somalia coast was controlling all the military and civilian relief aircraft as they patrolled the region or brought in supplies. To ensure the safe and orderly flow of this sudden increased volume of air traffic, the USS Lincoln Air Operations Department devised arrival and departure procedures for Mogadishu. Additionally, a team of highly skilled Lincoln Air Traffic Controllers were sent to the USS Chandler to act as Mogadishu Approach Control.

The Wallbangers of VAW-117 began working hand in hand with the Chandler and the Mogadishu control tower, providing ATC services to the now nearly 400 aircraft operating daily in the skies over Somalia. Utilizing the extensive capabilities of the E-2C+, Banger aircrews monitor and control all CVW-11 aircraft, deconflict air traffic over Mogadishu, and perform radar advisory services for the numerous U.N. relief flights in and out of Mogadishu. These ATC services are essential to the humanitarian relief effort, expediting the flow of much needed aid and significantly increasing safety for all aircraft.

Although ATC is far from the Battle Group's primary mission, the ABE, Chandler and Banger team have shown a great deal of flexibility in providing this vital service and have done so with great pride and professionalism. We may not distribute the food to hungry people, but air traffic control and ensuring aircraft safety is one of the ways this team of professionals supports Operation Restore Hope. We take pride in helping shape the future as a member of one of the world's most formidable fighting forces, the Lincoln Battle Group. We are making a difference!