



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

1994✓

IN REPLY REFER TO:
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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 1994 Command History 1994
(2) AEW Excellence/Battle Efficiency Award Input
(3) Commanding Officer's Biography
(4) Photograph of Commanding Officer
(5) Photograph of E-2C Hawkeye

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (5) are submitted.



D. T. KEUHLEN

VAW 117 COMMAND HISTORY 1994

1. Command Composition and Organization

a. Mission

VAW-117 is an Airborne Early Warning (AEW) squadron operating the E2C Group II 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 THREE
Commander Naval Air Force U.S. Pacific Fleet

c. Commanding Officer: Commander D. T. KEUHLEN

d. Permanent Duty Station: NAS Miramar

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

Buno 164352 - Side 600
Buno 164108 - Side 601
Buno 164354 - Side 602
Buno 164483 - Side 603

2. Major Exercises and Special Operations

- a. Group II Transition Commenced, 18 Jan 94
- b. Exercise Desert Rescue III, 14 Feb - 22 Feb 94
- c. First Female Officer Member, 8 Mar 94
- d. Change of Command, 31 Mar 94
- e. Operation ROVING SANDS, 28 Apr - 12 May 94
- f. TSTA I/II, 3 - 16 Jun 94
- g. FFARP, 21 Jul - 5 Aug 94
- h. SFARP, 21 Jul - 5 Aug 94
- i. First Female Enlisted Member, 23 Jul 94
- j. TSTA III, 23 - 31 Aug 94
- k. CVW-11 Airwing Fallon, 18 Sep - 7 Oct 94
- l. COMPTUEX 95A/ITA, 25 Oct - 10 Nov 94
- m. COMPTUEX 95B, 13 - 19 Dec 94

3. Narrative

This has been an exciting year of transitions for the VAW-117 Wallbangers. Introduction of the E-2C Group II aircraft, arrival of female members to the squadron and a short, aggressive turn-around training plan all presented special challenges for VAW-117. The squadron used these formidable challenges as an opportunity to once again showcase the excellence and hard work for which the VAW-117 Wallbangers are so well known. Looking back at 1994, I am filled with immense pride and a deep sense of satisfaction at all the men and women of VAW-117 have accomplished.

The year got off to a fast start. As POM ended, we transitioned to the E2C Group II equipped with the complex APS-145 radar weapons system. After two weeks of formal training, the aircrew of VAW-117 immersed themselves in mastering the complicated E-2C Group II. A parallel effort began in the maintenance department. Soon, VAW-117 came to be recognized as the community experts in the Navy's premier command and control platform. This new expertise was validated in the extremely successful Exercise Desert Rescue III. VAW-117's super performance was integral to the success of this important Joint Combat Search and Rescue (JCSAR) evolution.

Another milestone was reached when LT [REDACTED] checked aboard VAW-117 after completing her initial carrier qualification. She was eagerly accepted into the wardroom and soon established a reputation as both an outstanding Officer and Aviator. The ease of this transition is a testament to the professionalism of the entire wardroom. The next big transition occurred March 31, 1994 when Commander Dan "TEX" Keuhlen relieved Commander James "J.C." Tellefson as the squadron's Commanding Officer. Simultaneously, Commander Nicholas "Vito" Trongale assumed the duties as Executive Officer.

VAW-117's next opportunity to demonstrate their community and airwing leadership came at Operation Roving Sands, the largest Joint Air Defense Exercise. This comprehensive exercise involved elements from every service branch. VAW-117 immersed itself into Roving Sands and through superb attention to detail and phenomenal hard work, insured complete success in this complicated evolution. After Roving Sands, the squadron began an aggressive turn around training plan (f through m of the chronology). Throughout every evolution in the turnaround training, the Wallbangers were at the forefront. Devising tactics, planning strikes and fleet defense, and ensuring the smoothest possible introduction of multi-link operations to the Lincoln Battle Group, it truly seemed there were "a thousand Wallbangers" in VAW-117 and CAG 11.

Two other milestones of note occurred in July 1994. On July 23, AZC [REDACTED] became the first enlisted female member of VAW-117. The consummate professionalism of the Wallbangers guaranteed a smooth transition to a gender neutral maintenance department. On July 28 the squadron celebrated 17 years and 38,864 flight hours mishap free. This is the best possible testament to the uncompromising quest for excellence that all the VAW-117 Wallbangers display.

As 1994 drew to a close, it was truly overwhelming to reflect on all this squadron had accomplished. Even more impressive was the manner in which it was accomplished. Professionalism and class permeated every endeavor. The hard won reputation as the best E-2C squadron in the Navy is gratefully accepted as recognition of all the hard work by each and every Wallbanger. However, not content to sit and reflect on past accolades, as we enter 1995 and prepare for WestPac 95, the Wallbangers are already eclipsing our own impressive accomplishments while confidently moving ahead.