



**DECLASSIFIED**  
 DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
 CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON  
 ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE  
 FPO NEW YORK 09501

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
 1980

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
 VAW121/00:e11  
 5750  
 Ser C **2**  
 0 MAY 1981

REGISTERED MAIL

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From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron  
 ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE  
 To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)  
 Subj: Command History  
 Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12C  
 Encl: (1) VAW-121 1980 Command History  
 (2) VAW-121 1980 Flight Incident Summary  
 (3) ~~VAW-121 1980 New York Times Article~~  
 (4) ~~Periodic Operating Report (POR) Summary~~

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1. In response to and in accordance with reference (a), the VAW-121 Command History for calendar year 1980 is submitted.

*J.W. Sprague*  
 J. W. SPRAGUE

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## MISSION OF COMMAND

To provide the task force Officer in Tactical Command (OTC) with new data on all targets entering the surrounding airspace. In addition to this mission, the squadron is capable of performing the following tasks:

1. Detect airborne targets within its surveillance envelope.
2. Determine position course, speed, altitude and IFF status of each target.
3. Transmit target data to Tactical Data System (TDS) units.
4. Fighter Intercept or control.
5. Aircraft control/flight following.
6. Surface threat defense.
7. Missile shoot exercise control.
8. UHF voice/data relay.
9. Search and rescue (SAR) coordination.

Compatibility of the above tasks is set forth in tactical doctrine. Tasks will be assigned at the discretion of the OTC.

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## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE E-2C ARPS

The E-2C, most recent model in the HAWKEYE series, features the latest generation of avionics which expand system capabilities for active and passive detection, tracking and navigation accuracy, display and communications--all with high reliability and excellent maintainability.

The high-wing, twin turbo-prop aircraft is easily identified by its rotodome and four vertical tails, portions of which are fiberglass to reduce radar reflection. The automatic flight control system has maneuvering and operational or flat turn modes as well as TACAN coupling. An advanced cooling system assures operational flexibility on the ground and in the air. Near-STOL performance allows carrier and short field operation. The HAWKEYE was specifically designed from its inception for Airborne Early Warning (AEW) thus maximizing function performance, versatility and flexibility.

The HAWKEYE has a crew of five: Pilot, Co-pilot, Combat Information Center Officer, Air Control Officer and Radar Operator. Control capability is increased over the E-2A/B model aircraft, since each of the combat crew is able to independently utilize all modes of sensor display, data retrieval and automatic control.

The radar features an Airborne Moving Target Indicator (AMTI) function that permits tracking of targets obscured by sea or land return. At long range, the radar can pick up targets of fighter size and pinpoint their position, height and movement regardless of geography or weather. The new radar is more sensitive due to special AMTI signal processing thus giving exceptional target resolution and precision control. Advanced data processing techniques give it the unique ability to operate both off-shore and overland. Also, the Side Lobe Cancellation (SLC) option renders the radar less susceptible to jamming. The Passive Detection System (PDS) enables the crew to accurately evaluate airborne, surface and shore-based missile and electronic threat platforms.

## OPERATIONAL STATISTICS FOR CY 80

TOTAL HOURS FLOWN.....	3426 (A record)
TOTAL CARRIER LANDINGS.....	944
TOTAL NIGHT CARRIER LANDINGS.....	400
TOTAL SORTIES.....	965
SHORE.....	56
CARRIER.....	909

## 1980 CHRONOLOGY

01 JAN - 03 JAN VAW-121 BASED ASHORE AT NAS NORFOLK, VA

04 JAN SQUADRON EMBARKED ABOARD USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN 69)

08 JAN CARRIER AIR WING SEVEN (CVW 7) FLY ABOARD GUANTANAMO OPERATING AREA (GTMO OPAREA)

08 JAN - 15 JAN REFRESHER TRAINING GTMO OPAREA

17 JAN - 23 JAN TYT-1 JACKSONVILLE OPERATING AREA (JAX OPAREA)

26 JAN - 28 JAN PORT VISIT NASSAU, BAHAMAS

30 JAN - 03 FEB TRAINING COMMAND CARRIER QUALIFICATION (CQ) PERIOD IN KEY WEST OPERATING AREA

04 FEB - 19 FEB BASED ASHORE - NAVAL AIR STATION, NORFOLK VA

20 FEB VAW-121 EMBARKED CVN 69

21 FEB CVW 7 FLY ABOARD

21 FEB - 01 MAR TYT-2 AFWTF ROOSEVELT ROADS, PUERTO RICO

02 MAR - 05 MAR PORT VISIT SAINT THOMAS, VIRGIN ISLANDS

06 MAR - 13 MAR TYT-3 AFWTF ROOSEVELT ROADS, PUERTO RICO

14 MAR - 17 MAR OPERATIONAL READINESS EVALUATION (ORE), AFWTF, PUERTO RICO

18 MAR - 20 MAR CVN 69 RETURN FROM AFTWTF ROOSEVELT ROADS, PUERTO RICO

20 MAR CVN 7 FLY-OFF

21 MAR - 14 APR PRE-OVERSEAS MOVEMENT (POM)

26 MAR AIRCRAFT BUNO 160990 DEPARTED SQUADRON

28 MAR AIRCRAFT BUNO 160991 ARRIVED AT SQUADRON

11 APR VAW-121 CHANGE OF COMMANDS

15 APR - 16 APR REFRESHER CQ/FLY ABOARD

17 APR - 07 MAY CV 69 TRANSIT TO INDIAN OCEAN

07 MAY TURNOVER WITH USS NIMITZ (CVN 68)

08 MAY - 20 JUN OPERATIONS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN ON GONZO STATION

CHRONOLOGY (CONT'D)

21 JUN - 23 JUN	GONZO 3-80 EXERCISE
24 JUN - 07 JUL	OPERATIONS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN ON GONZO STATION
08 JUL - 10 JUL	MULTIPLEX 1-80
11 JUL - 16 JUL	OPERATIONS ENROUTE SINGAPORE
17 JUL - 21 JUL	PORT VISIT SINGAPORE
22 JUL - 26 JUL	OPERATIONS ENROUTE GONZO STATION
27 JUL	KERMITEK 1-80
28 JUL - 15 AUG	OPERATIONS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN ON GONZO STATION
16 AUG	JOINING EXERCISE WITH AMPHIBIOUS UNITS
17 AUG - 30 AUG	OPERATIONS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN ON GONZO STATION
31 AUG	PASSING EXERCISE WITH USS MIDWAY (CV 41)
01 SEP	OPERATIONS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN ON GONZO STATION
02 SEP - 05 SEP	OPERATIONS ENROUTE DIEGO GARCIA
06 SEP - 09 SEP	WEAPONS WEEK DIEGO GARCIA
10 SEP - 13 SEP	OPERATIONS ENROUTE MODLOC
14 SEP - 18 SEP	GONZO 5-80 EXERCISE
19 SEP - 28 OCT	OPERATIONS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN ON GONZO STATION
03 OCT	USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER VISITED BY GEN JONES, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
29 OCT - 03 NOV	OPERATION BEACON COMPASS
04 NOV - 01 DEC	OPERATIONS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN ON GONZO STATION
02 DEC - 20 DEC	TRANSIT TO NAVAL STATION, NORFOLK, VA
19 DEC	CNO VISITS USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER
21 DEC	CVW 7 FLYOFF
22 DEC	SQUADRON DISEMBARK USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN 69)
23 DEC - 31 DEC	POM

## NARRATIVE

1. (U) VAW-121 spent the first part of 1980 preparing for its record-breaking deployment as a part of Carrier Air Wing SEVEN (CVW 7) embarked in USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN 69). Refresher training was comprised of mainly Carrier Qualification Currency, ARPS System Refresh/Service Flights and extensive Pre Operational Readiness Evaluation (ORE) ground training.
2. (U) Training 1 (TYT-1) emphasized Aircraft Control (AIC/ASI), Link-11 and Link-4A. Four Combat SAR Exercises (COMSAREX) were conducted in Fort Steward, GA area. E-2C's provided bandit calls, update vectors, helo control, and center (ARTCC) coordination. Also ground training was dedicated to threat platform recognition CVW 7 TACNOTES and damage control.
3. (U) February and March saw the squadron through Type Training 2, 3 and the ORE. Primary emphasis in TYT 2 and 3 for the squadron was control of MISSILEX's, a SINKEX, EMCON operations, Link-11, Link-4A and airborne Tactical Action Officer (TAO). The ORE primarily involved airborne early warning and anti-surface warfare. It also included ALPHA strikes, mining exercises and both briefed and spontaneous war at sea (WAS) strikes which relied heavily upon E-2C support.
4. (U) During this period VAW-121 won several honors. The CVN 69 Silver Wrench Award, presented to the most outstanding squadron maintenance department in CVW 7. Also CDR [REDACTED] was named the CVW 7 tophook with a carrier landing grade of 3.82 and LT [REDACTED] was sixth with a grade of 3.65.
5. (U) Also in March, the squadron achieved a 100% participation in the E-4,5,6 rate advancement exams. A total of 44 personnel participated.
6. (U) On April 11th, CDR Jay W. Sprague relieved CDR A. J. Murphy as commanding officer of VAW-121. The squadron then embarked once more aboard "IKE" and departed Pier 12, Naval Station Norfolk, on 15 April to begin its record-breaking Indian Ocean deployment.
7. (U) Operations during the Indian Ocean deployment were maintained at a high tempo. In May, the first month of Indian Ocean Operations, the squadron flew 345.9 hours with a total of 98 carrier landings.
8. (C) In June, 388.9 hours were flown and 101 traps accumulated. The squadron, with CVW 7 and CVN 69, took part in Exercise GONZO 3-80 against the USS CONSTELLATION Battle Group. Each group spent one day as BLUE and one day as ORANGE. Primarily an exercise employing tactics against Soviet launched SSN's surface and sub-surface platforms, the exercise stressed the elements of ASUW, AAW and WAS strikes.
9. (C) Late that month, it was VAW-121's turn to control Air Force B-52's in their simulated mine laying exercise. In addition to simulated mine laying the B-52's were given the opportunity to conduct defensive tactics in an AIC environment under E-2 control. Finally, the B-52's were vectored for low passes over Soviet TATTLETAILS in the area. The entire training evaluation went extremely well; communications were good, the exercise was well coordinated and cooperation from the B-52 crews was excellent.

10. (U) July saw the squadron make its only port call of this eight-and-a-half-month deployment. Enroute to Singapore, after 93 days at sea the IKE "Spliced the Main Brace" for the first time, with each man being issued two cans of beer. The crew then enjoyed five days of well deserved rest in Singapore.

11. (C) August proved a bonanza month for flying. The squadron set a Navy E-2 monthly flight hour record of 435.1 hours with 114 traps. The emphasis of operations during August, in order to maximize training, was directed toward competitive exercise (COMPEX) qualification of all flight crews. Since no major exercises were scheduled during August, the sharp edge was maintained by conducting 36 graded COMPEX's divided among all crewmembers; additionally the squadron participated in two B-52 exercises, an Amphibious Group JOINEX, the USS MIDWAY PASSEX, and detected 8 IL-38 MAY Soviet aircraft.

12. (C) September proved both a challenging and diverse month operationally for CARAEWRON 121. The squadron detected and intercepted 6 1L-38 MAY, 1 COOT and 1 COCK, conducted 2 B-52 MINEX's, completed a very successful COMPEX program, participated in two interesting and innovative exercises, Weapons Week and GONZO 5-80, responded to the Strait of Hormuz contingency (Operation RAWHIDE) and safely conducted a actual SAR and a single engine E-2C recovery.

13. (U) Although not a record flight hour month, the squadron established new quarterly, 1061 hours, and yearly, 3177 hours (fiscal) flight hour marks for operational E-2 squadrons.

14. (U) In September CARAEWRON 121 achieved a 100% of TIR eligible personnel participating in advancement exams for E-4/E-5/E-6. A total of 31 personnel participated.

15. (U) Due to the Iran-Iraq war, IKE's scheduled port visit to Perth, Australia was cancelled as well as a subsequent port visit to Mombassa, Kenya. The Battle Group remained on MODLOC in support of national tasking to monitor the flow of ship traffic through the Strait of Hormuz (Operation RAWHIDE).

16. (U) During November CARAEWRON 121 received notification that it had been awarded the COMNAVAIRLANT Battle "E" award for 1980, a second consecutive award.

17. (U) Operations continued on GONZO Station until 1 December when the IKE turned "Homeward Bound" at 0001 local time 2 December. IKE conducted a passing exercise and turnover with USS INDEPENDENCE on 7 December and continued for home.

18. (U) On 14 December CARAEWRON 121 marked fourteen years and over 68,200 hours of accident-free flying. This is an unprecedented record in the E-2 community.

19. (U) All "WOGS" were purged from the squadron when King Neptune visited the IKE on 17 December as the ship crossed the equator.



20. (U) During an awards ceremony on 19 December, LT [REDACTED] was recognized as the CVW 7 LSO of the cruise. Also, VAW-121 was cited as the second overall in the CVW 7 carrier landing grade competition with a grade of 3.47. LT [REDACTED] lead the squadron and placed second overall in the individual standings with a grade of 3.75.

21. (U) Twenty of the aircrew flew off on 21 December to a day early reunion with their wives, family and friends with the rest of the squadron arriving about 1030 the next morning to Pier 12, Norfolk, VA.

1980 INCIDENT SUMMARY

SER NO.	DATE	BUNO	NARRATIVE	DTG
01-80I	02 JAN	160990	FIRE WARNING LIGHT	191830Z JAN 80
02-80I	18 JAN	160989	BLOW STARTER - STARBOARD	141620Z FEB 80
03-80I	22 JAN	160419	STARBOARD ENGINE CHIP LIGHT IN-FLIGHT	151900Z FEB 80
04-80I	23 FEB	160989	UNSAFE NOSE GEAR - FLIGHT ABORTED	260031Z FEB 80
05-80I	23 FEB	160990	PROP PUMP LIGHTS	060057Z MAR 80
06-80I	27 FEB	159107	TRAILING WIRE ANTENNA (TWA) DROGUE	080201Z MAR 80
01-80S	01 MAR	159107	ENGINE MOUNT - SAFETY REPORT	151947Z MAR 80
07-80I	07 MAR	160990	STARTER FROZEN	151950Z MAR 80
08-80I	08 MAR	160989	STARTER BLEW	150031Z MAR 80
09-80I	08 MAR	160419	TWA DROGUE	071520Z MAR 80
02-80S	01 MAR	160989	EMERGENCY GENERATOR - SAFETY REPORT	261300Z MAR 80
10-80I	16 MAR	159107	IGNITION RELAY	271230Z MAR 80
11-80I	26 MAR	160990	FLT PORT HYD PRESS	191422Z APR 80
12-80I	29 MAR	160990	LOSS OF FUEL FILLER CAP IN- FLIGHT	191410Z APR 80
01-80GI	04 APR	160991	ROTODOME	191411Z APR 80
13-80I	15 MAR	159107	RT GENERATOR FAILURE	191423Z APR 80
14-80I	16 APR	159107	BLOWN STARTER	210228Z APR 80
15-80I	25 APR	160419	ELEVATOR CONTROL PRESSURE	011311Z MAY 80
16-80I	03 MAY	160989	IGNITION/FUEL CB POPPED	111923Z MAY 80
02-80GI	08 MAY	160991	LOX CONVERTOR FAILURE	180549Z MAY 80
17-80I	12 MAY	160989	FLAP CB POPPED/SECURE PT ENGINE	211155Z MAY 80
18-80I	27 MAY	160419	MASTER CAUTION LIGHT	291519Z MAY 80
19-80I	27 MAY	160991	TWA DROGUE	061122Z JUN 80
20-80I	28 MAY	160991	TWA DROGUE	120703Z JUN 80
21-80I	29 MAY	160991	TWA DROGUE	191331Z JUN 80
22-80I	29 MAY	160419	JURY STRUT HYD LEAK	071837Z JUN 80
23-80I	13 JUN	159107	OIL SERVICE PANEL	251342Z JUN 80
03-80GI	20 JUN	159107	PROP UNFEATHER	261131Z JUN 80
24-80I	20 JUN	160989	HUNG START	260240Z JUN 80
25-80I	27 JUN	160991	COMB HYD LEVEL LIGHT	061106Z JUL 80
26-80I	06 JUL	160991	FLT HYD LOW LEVEL LIGHT	130852Z JUL 80
04-80GI	15 JUL	160989	CRUNCHED LOWER RUDDER CAPS	251837Z JUL 80
27-80I	01 AUG	159107	VAPOR CYCLE FAN	080858Z AUG 80
28-80I	16 AUG	160991	FUEL GAUGE CALIBRATION	252116Z AUG 80
29-80I	19 AUG	160419	STARBOARD CHIP LIGHT	290657Z AUG 80
30-80I	19 AUG	160419	STARBOARD CHIP LIGHT	011723Z SEP 80
31-80I	20 AUG	160991	OIL COOLER DOOR ACT	030822Z SEP 80
32-80I	05 SEP	160419	DROGUE (TWA)	131349Z SEP 80
33-80I	07 SEP	160417	PORT ENGINE FLAMEOUT	121450Z SEP 80
34-80I	08 SEP	160991	DROGUE (TWA)	141307Z SEP 80
35-80I	11 SEP	160989	NO LIGHTOFF ON START	151349Z SEP 80
36-80I	13 SEP	160989	NO LIGHTOFF ON START	190943Z SEP 80
37-80I	28 SEP	159107	TWA DROGUE	080836Z OCT 80
38-80I	01 OCT	160989	CHIP LIGHT PORT ENGINE	080621Z OCT 80

SER NO.	DATE	BUNO	NARRATIVE	DTG
39-80I	07 OCT	159107	STARBOARD JURY STRUT DOOR	140728Z OCT 80
40-80I	21 OCT	160989	LEFT RECTIFIER GENERATOR LIGHT	010715Z NOV 80
41-80I	26 OCT	160989	FLIGHT HYDRAULIC LOW LIGHT	311202Z OCT 80
42-80I	26 OCT	159107	HYDRAULIC LEAK PORT JURY STRUT	050744Z NOV 80
43-80I	29 OCT	160991	FLIGHT HYDRAULIC LOW LIGHT	050741Z NOV 80
44-80I	29 OCT	160991	LIGHT GENERATOR TRIP OFF	060700Z NOV 80
45-80I	30 OCT	160991	TWA JETTISONED	060658Z NOV 80
46-80I	01 NOV	160989	TWA	060850Z NOV 80
47-80I	02 NOV	160989	TWA	100350Z NOV 80
48-80I	21 NOV	160991	TWA	010344Z DEC 80
49-80I	25 NOV	160989	HYDRAULIC LEAK STARBOARD WING	022338Z DEC 80
50-80I	25 NOV	160989	STARBOARD JURY STRUT DOOR	022337Z DEC 80
51-80I	26 NOV	1609890	STARBOARD JURY STRUT DOOR	022340Z DEC 80