



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON
ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE
UNIT 60136, FPO AE 09507-6406

VAW-121

1995 ✓

IN REPLY REFER TO:

5750

Ser/ 066

06 Mar 96

From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning
Squadron 121

To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH)

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) VAW-121 Command History

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "C. M. June".

C. M. JUNE

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

The **BLUETAILS** of VAW-121, under the command of Commander Carl M. June, continued their long and proud tradition with Carrier Air Wing SEVEN (CVW-7) in 1995. Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron One Hundred Twenty One operates and maintains 4 Grumman E-2C Hawkeye aircraft. The Hawkeye is the primary surveillance aircraft of the fleet and uses extended range radar and detection systems to protect the joint battle space from hostile air and surface threats while exercising command, control and coordination for all warfare areas. Other missions include surface surveillance, search and rescue, strike control and communications relay.

This year found the **BLUETAILS** and CVW-7 operating many detachments from different bases as well as participating in workups with the USS George Washington (CVN 73) in preparation for Mediterranean Cruise 1-96.

VAW-121 has over one hundred and sixty men assigned. This includes aircrew, administration and maintenance personnel who support and fly four aircraft (BUNOs 161552, 161341, 161547, and 159111). The **BLUETAILS** have one of the finest maintenance departments in the Hawkeye community and the best carrier-based safety record in the Atlantic Fleet with over 29 years and 57,000 hours of mishap-free flight operations.

VAW-121 is based at NAS Norfolk, VA and proudly call Carrier Air Wing SEVEN and the USS George Washington their home away from home.

VAW-121 1995 CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

JANUARY

10-11 Fighter Wing Atlantic missile exercise, W-72
17 VAW-121 visits Pax Elementary School, Pax, WV

FEBRUARY

2 VAW-121 Change of Command - CDR Philip S. Pritulsky
relieved by CDR Carl M. June, NAS Norfolk, VA
8 DDG 55 (USS Stout) missile exercise, Virginia Capes
13-14 VF-142 Missile exercise, Virginia Capes
15 VMAQ-1 HARM missile exercise, W-122
20-24 DDG 61 (USS Ramage), AEGIS services, NAS Brunswick, ME

MARCH

1-2 VF-143 Missile exercise, Virginia Capes
5-17 VFA-136 Strike Fighter Advanced Readiness Program
(SFARP), NAS Key West, FL
21-22 Field carrier landing practice, NALF Fentress, VA
20-24 NATOPS Unit evaluation
27-31 DDG 62 (USS Fitzgerald), AEGIS services, NAS Brunswick,
ME

APRIL

3-7 Field carrier landing practice, NALF Fentress, VA
4-5 DDG AEGIS services, Virginia Capes
7-10 Carrier qualification, Virginia Capes (CVN 73)
10-21 VFA-131 Strike Fighter Advanced Readiness Program
(SFARP)
17-20 Field carrier landing practice, NAS Key West, FL
24 Pax Elementary School visit to VAW-121, NAS Norfolk, VA
24-28 VF-143 Fleet Fighter Advanced Readiness Program (FFARP)
25-27 Fleet Air Superiority Training (FAST), NAS Norfolk, VA
28-30 Azalea Festival Airshow, NAS Norfolk, VA

MAY

4-7 Carrier qualification, Virginia Capes (CVN 73)
8 VF-84 Missile exercise, Virginia Capes
10-26 CVW-7 Weapons detachment / Orange Air, Naval Station
Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico
17 VFA-136 HARM missile exercise, Puerto Rican Operation
Area
30-31 Field carrier landing practice, NALF Fentress, VA

JUNE

1-2 Field carrier landing practice, NALF Fentress, VA
7-23 Carrier qualifications / TSTA I & II, Virginia Capes
(CVN 73)
27-29 DDG 55 (USS Stout), AEGIS services, NAS Pensacola, FL

JULY

13-14 VFA-131 / VF-143 Missile exercise, Virginia Capes,
22 Dependents Day Cruise (CVN 73)

AUGUST

7 VAW-121 Pistol qualification, NS Yorktown, VA
15-31 CVW-7 Weapons detachment, NAS Fallon, NV

SEPTEMBER

1-8 CVW-7 Weapons detachment, NAS Fallon, NV
11-20 Field carrier landing practice, NALF Fentress, VA
21-26 Carrier Qualification / TSTA III, Virginia Capes
(CVN 73)
27-30 COMPTUEX 96-1, Puerto Rican Operation Area (CVN 73)

OCTOBER

1-31 COMPTUEX 96-1, Puerto Rican Operation Area (CVN 73)

NOVEMBER

1-9 COMPTUEX 96-1, Virginia Capes (CVN 73)
19-28 Field carrier landing practice, NALF Fentress, VA
29-30 Joint Task Force Exercise 96-1, Virginia Capes (CVN 73)

DECEMBER

1-16 Joint Task Force Exercise 96-1, Virginia Capes (CVN 73)
16-31 POM, NAS Norfolk, VA

VAW-121 1995 NARRATIVE OF EVENTS

JANUARY:

The beginning of the year found VAW-121 in port at NAS Norfolk, Virginia. Having returned from a six month Mediterranean cruise just six weeks earlier, VAW-121's brief reprieve was over.

A missile exercise occurred on 10th and 11th in Warning Area W-72. The **BLUETAILS** provided range surveillance, command and control to clear the area for the firing of missiles.

On the 17th of January VAW-121 flew a squadron E-2C Hawkeye to Pax, West Virginia to visit Pax Elementary School in support of the Adopt-a-School Program.

FEBRUARY:

On the 2nd of February, the squadron held a change of command ceremony. Commander Carl M. June relieved Commander Philip S. Pritulsky. Commander Pritulsky transferred to the USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) to become the Combat Direction Center Officer.

From the 8th until the 15th of February the **BLUETAILS** provided support to several missile exercises off the Virginia Capes. These exercises included a variety of services, missile types and commands, including the VF-142 GHOSTRIDERS and VMAQ-1 a Marine Corps EA-6B squadron firing HARM missiles. Specifically, VAW-121 provided range surveillance, command, control and LINK-11 services.

The 20th through the 24th of the month found a squadron detachment in NAS Brunswick, ME. Flying high over the Gulf of Maine, the **BLUETAILS** provided radar coverage and LINK-11 services to the USS Ramage (DDG 61) to test AEGIS and Digital Data Link systems.

MARCH:

March began with another missile exercise with the VF-143 DOGS off the Virginia Capes.

VAW-121 flew to sunny NAS Key West on the 5th to participate in the Strike Fighter Advanced Readiness Program with the VFA-136 KNIGHTHAWKS until the 17th of March. Training in Key West was crucial to the development of many new NFOs and the progression of their fighter control skills.

The week of 20 - 24 March, VAW-121 had their annual NATOPS (Naval Air Training and Operating Procedures Standardization) unit evaluation. The **BLUETAILS** passed with flying colors, displaying their outstanding knowledge of aircraft systems and operating procedures.

The end of the month the **BLUETAILS** were once again detached to NAS Brunswick, ME for AEGIS services. The USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) was working on its initial sea trials.

APRIL:

The first week of April the **BLUETAIL** pilots were honing their ball flying skills at NALF Fentress in preparation for carrier qualification aboard the USS George Washington (CVN 73) from the 7th through the 10th.

Another detachment was sent to NAS Key West from the 10th to the 21st to work with the VFA-131 WILDCATS on their Strike Fighter Advanced Readiness Program. **BLUETAIL** NFOs received valuable air control and tactical intercept training working with the F/A-18s. In addition, the pilots conducted FCLPs to maintain their ball flying proficiency.

On the 24th of April, the children from Pax Elementary, WV arrived on a field trip to NAS Norfolk, VA to visit the **BLUETAILS** of VAW-121. These students received guided tours of the squadron, an E-2C Hawkeye aircraft, the pilot and NFO simulators and the USS George Washington (CVN 73). A good time and educational experience was had by all.

From the 24th through the 28th, NFO training was at the forefront. The **BLUETAIL** NFOs were instrumental in the command and control of the VF-143 DOGS as they participated in their Fleet Fighter Advanced Readiness Program / Fleet Air Superiority Training.

MAY:

May 4th - 7th the **BLUETAIL** pilots carrier qualified aboard the USS George Washington (CVN 73).

The 8th of May was the fifth missile exercise of the year for the **BLUETAILS**. VAW-121 provided range surveillance, command and control for the VF-84 JOLLY ROGERS missile shoot.

VAW-121 detached with CVW-7 to NAS Roosevelt Roads from the 10th to the 26th of May as part of the Orange Air opposition for the USS America Battlegroup. The **BLUETAILS** functioned as adversary asset control against CVW-1 as they prepared for their upcoming deployment.

JUNE:

FCLPs were conducted at NALF Fentress, VA from May 30th until June 5th in order to prepare the pilots for TSTA I/II, which took place from June 7th - 23rd. TSTA I/II signaled the beginning of workups onboard the USS George Washington (CVN 73), including carrier qualifications and 11 days of cyclic operations. **BLUETAIL** E-2Cs provided airborne early warning, control of Anti Air Warfare events and Dissimilar Aircraft Combat Training (DACT) against U.S. Air Force units.

The **BLUETAILS** detached to NAS Pensacola, Florida from the 27th to the 29th to provide additional AEGIS services to the USS Stout (DDG 55) operating in the Gulf of Mexico.

JULY:

The operations tempo was greatly reduced in July and the **BLUETAILS** had a chance to fallback and regroup before pressing on in August. The only events for the month were missile shoots with the VFA-131 KNIGHTHAWKS and the VF-143 DOGS off the Virginia Capes on the 13th and 14th and a Dependents Day Cruise aboard the USS George Washington on the 22nd.

The Dependent's cruise allowed the families to see first hand the safe and professional manner in which the **BLUETAILS** accomplish their mission. Two pilots were required to do a short FCLP period and carrier qualify for the airshow on the ship.

AUGUST:

On the 7th of August all **BLUETAIL** aircrew went to Naval Station Yorktown to qualify with .45 caliber pistols. Everyone shot and many ribbons and medals were awarded.

With Hurricane Felix rapidly approaching the Virginia coast, VAW-121 was forced to expeditiously leave for NAS Fallon, Nevada ahead of schedule for the CVW-7 Weapons detachment. On very short notice, the **BLUETAILS** said good-bye to their families and HURREVACED four aircraft to NAS Fallon 3 days early.

In Fallon, the CVW-7 Weapons Detachment provided continued air wing training and enhanced air wing readiness to conduct day and night overland power projection and ground forces support missions. Air wing units employed live, inert and captive carry ordinance in the conduct of battlefield air interdiction, strike rescue, defense suppression and training sorties. VAW-121 provided total radar coverage, command, control and communications services in every aspect of operations during this detachment.

SEPTEMBER:

VAW-121 returned from NAS Fallon on the 8th and immediately began preparing the pilots for TSTA III by conducting FCLPs at NALF Fentress from the 11th to the 20th of September.

On the 21st of September, the **BLUETAILS** boarded the USS George Washington for carrier qualifications, TSTA III and COMPTUEX, which lasted through 9 November. These exercises were a continuation of the workup cycle for the George Washington Battlegroup. Highlights of this period included a long range strike, EMCON operations, HAWKEYE controlled approaches, several missile and AAW exercises, WASEX's, alerts and several days of 24 hour flight operations.

NOVEMBER:

The **BLUETAILS** returned from COMPTUEX to their home port on November 9th. Just over a week later, on the 19th, VAW-121's E-2Cs were heard in the early morning darkness over NALF Fentress again preparing the pilots to go to sea. The FCLPs continued through November 27th, excluding the Thanksgiving holiday period.

On the 29th, VAW-121 boarded the ship to participate in Joint Task Force Exercise 96-1.

DECEMBER:

The **BLUETAILS** were an integral part of JTFEX 96-1 coordinating numerous joint operations including Air Force B-52 bombers, F-16 fighters, Army CH-47F Chinooks, Marine Corps Harriers and helicopters, and the aircraft of CVW-7. Highlights of the exercise were: Amphibious operations, 8 straight days of 24 hour operations and coordination with U.S. Air Force E-3B AWACS.

VAW-121 returned to NAS Norfolk on 16 December to begin a POM period prior to departing on Med Cruise 96-1. In addition, the **BLUETAILS** celebrated another safety milestone that day, their 29th anniversary of mishap free flying, completing over 57,000 flight hours without a class A mishap. This record is unprecedented and the absolute finest in Atlantic Fleet carrier aviation!