



1970

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

DECLASSIFIED

VAW123/PA0/swf  
5700  
Ser 04-71  
15 MAR 1971

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From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE  
HUNDRED TWENTY THREE (VAW-123)


To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)

Subj: Command History; submission of

Ref: (a) OPNAV INST 5750.12A

Encl: (1) Command History

1. In accordance with reference (a), Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY THREE's Command History for calendar year 1970 is hereby submitted.

  
W. R. EELS, Jr.

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

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CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON  
ONE HUNDRED TWENTY THREE

COMMAND HISTORY  
1970

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Enclosure (1)

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## 1970 CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY

25 March Vice Admiral Townsend presented CNAL Battle "E".

6 April Deployed aboard USS SARATOGA; departed port of Mayport, Florida.

24 April Entered port of Mayport, Florida.

27 April Departed Mayport

6 May Entered port of Mayport, Fla. Squadron returned to Norfolk, Va.

12 May Commander William R. EELS, Jr. relieved Commander Charles J. BERTHE, Jr. as Commanding Officer of VAW-123.

2 June Deployed aboard USS SARATOGA; departed port of Mayport, Fla.

7 June Anchorage at Mayport, Fla.

8 June Commenced ORI in Jacksonville Op area.

11 June Entered port of Mayport, Fla.

17 June Departed Mayport, Enroute to the Mediterranean.

26 June Passed through Straits of Gibraltar.

28 June Entered port of Barcelona, Spain.

1 July Received CNAL Safety Award for fiscal year 1970.

6 July Departed Barcelona.

13 July Anchorage at St. Paul's Bay, Malta.

17 July Departed St. Paul's Bay.

24 July Entered port of Athens, Greece.

3 August Departed Athens.

9 August Anchorage at Argostoli Bay, Greece.

11 August Departed Argostoli Bay.

13 August Entered port of Trieste, Italy.

20 August Departed Trieste.

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22 August Commenced National Week Exercise.  
24 August Completed National Week Exercise.  
26 August Entered port of Naples, Italy.  
2 September Departed Naples.  
7 September Entered port of Valencia, Spain.  
12 September Departed Valencia.  
28 September President Richard M. Nixon arrived on board USS SARATOGA.  
29 September President Nixon departed. USS SARATOGA entered port of Naples, Italy.  
3 October Departed Naples.  
20 October Anchorage at St. Paul's Bay, Malta.  
22 October Entered port of Naples, Italy.  
26 October Departed Naples.  
28 October Entered port of Palma, Majorca.  
1 November Departed Palma.  
2 November Passed through Straits of Gibraltar; anchorage at Rota, Spain.  
Departed Rota enroute to the USA.  
9 November Entered port of Norfolk, Virginia; alongside pier 12.  
Squadron offloaded to hangar SP-1.  
1 December Received first E-2B aircraft.

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## Basic Narrative Summary 1970

Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY THREE (VAW-123) is commanded by Commander William R. EELS, Jr. He assumed command on 12 May 1970. VAW-123 is a part of Carrier Airborne Early Warning Wing TWELVE when shore-based and of Attack Carrier Air Wing THREE when aboard the USS SARATOGA (CVA-60). The squadron's internal command organization is as follows:

Commanding Officer

Safety

Executive Officer

### Operations

Pilot Training

NFO Training

Pilot Standardization

NFO Standardization

Communications

Air Intelligence

Registered Publications System Analyst

Landing Signal Officer

Ground Training Officer

Flight Schedules

Logs & Records

Navigation

Survival

HURREVAC

NEC

### Maintenance

Assistance Maintenance

Quality Assurance

Maintenance/Mat'l Control

Aircraft

Avionics

Line

System Analyst

### Administration

Education

Personnel

Legal

Public Affairs

1st Lieutenant

CMCO

COMTAC

Career Counseling

Minority Affairs

USAFI Test Control

VAW-123 has a fleet of four Grumman built E-2A "Hawkeyes," a 5 seat, twin turbo-prop aircraft. Its large rotodome and 80 foot wing span make it one of the largest and most unique in appearance on attack carriers. After returning from the Mediterranean cruise, the squadron began transition to the E-2B.

The squadron began the new decade based ashore at NAS Norfolk, Virginia. Operations included local training flights in preparation for the forthcoming cruise to the Sixth Fleet. During this time period the squadron also took

part in several "Quicklant" operations. Here the squadron's E-2's operating out of Bermuda assisted fleet aircraft making flights across the Atlantic. The most valuable assistance provided was that of the critical join-up with the tankers.

In February, VAW-123 was notified it was to be the recipient of the Commander Naval Air Force Atlantic Battle Efficiency "E" for outstanding performance from July 1968 through December 1969. On the 25th of March, VADM R. L. TOWNSEND, Commander Naval Air Force Atlantic, personally presented the Battle "E" plaque to CDR C. J. BERTHE, Jr., Commanding Officer.

In April the squadron ended a long eleven-month turnaround. On 6 April VAW-123, now a part of Attack Carrier Air Wing THREE on board the USS SARATOGA (CVA-60), departed Mayport, Florida for a short Caribbean cruise. Training was intense in preparation for both the Operational Readiness Inspection and the Mediterranean cruise. VAW-123 was frequently involved in Anti-Aircraft Warfare Exercises and strike control missions in addition to the routine mission. The last part of the cruise was conducted in the Jacksonville operating area; on the 6th of May the ship returned to Mayport and VAW-123 departed for Norfolk.

On the 12th of May Commander William R. EELS, Jr., relieved Commander Charles J. BERTHE, Jr., to become the squadron's fourth commanding officer. The ceremony was in Hangar SP-1 at NAS Norfolk, Virginia with Captain T. D. QUINN, Commander, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Wing TWELVE as the guest speaker.

On the 2nd of June, the SARATOGA and VAW-123 were again at sea operating in the Jacksonville area. The Operational Readiness Inspection was conducted from 8 to 11 June. VAW-123 received an overall grade of "Good."

The SARATOGA returned to Mayport from the 11th to the 16th. VAW-123 was airlifted to Norfolk for several days to say goodbye to friends and loved ones. On 17 June VAW-123 left with the USS SARATOGA for the Mediterranean. In passing the Azores, the long, slow transit suddenly became interesting when two days in a row, Russian Bears flew past the ship at low altitude. Initial detection of two of these aircraft was made by the squadron. On the 26th, the SARATOGA passed through the Straits of Gibraltar and two days later entered the port of Barcelona, Spain for liberty and turnover with the USS FORRESTAL (CVA-59).

VAW-123 received a COMNAVIAIRLANT Aviation Safety Award for the period 1 July 1969 to 1 July 1970. This was for having no major accidents during that period.

During July and August, the SARATOGA conducted training operations in the Mediterranean. The ports of Athens, Greece and Trieste, Italy were visited for liberty. There were anchorages at St. Paul's Bay, Malta and Argostoli Bay, Greece for upkeep and training.

In late August the ship and Air Wing, along with numerous other Sixth Fleet units conducted their largest exercise for the cruise, "National Week." VAW-123 did an outstanding job for the three day exercise by searching for, finding, and monitoring the location of Russian and "Orange" force ships. The E-2A was one of the most important aircraft in the Air Wing for this exercise and the squadron was duly commended by both CAG and shipboard personnel.

Operations in September started as usual with routine training operations and port calls in Naples, Italy, and Valencia, Spain. However, after departing Valencia on 12 September the tempo of operations quickly stepped up. This was in response to the civil strife in Jordan and the possible

involvement by Sixth Fleet units should Americans have to be evacuated. The SARATOGA operated south of Cyprus until late in the month when it was necessary to leave and steam toward Naples to prepare for President Richard NIXON's visit. On the 28th the President arrived by helicopter. The next day the Air Wing and VAW-123 along with units of the Sixth Fleet performed for the President and guests. The President departed that afternoon and the ship entered Naples.

Most of October was spent back on "Camel Station" south of Cyprus. Late in the month the ship worked its way westward stopping at Malta, Naples, and Palma, Majorca. On the 2nd of November the SARATOGA passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, anchored a short time at Rota, Spain, then steamed on toward the U.S. The 9th of November the ship moored at Pier 12, Naval Station, Norfolk to offload the squadron and other units based in the area.

In summation, the Mediterranean cruise was highly successful for VAW-123. The squadron earned its place in the air wing during National Week exercises and operations in the eastern Mediterranean. Carrier Air Group THREE sent the squadron a highly complimentary and congratulatory letter which aptly stated the feelings of all the air wing squadrons and the ships personnel. VAW-123 pilots were rated second overall in the air wing for landing proficiency and during two individual months were in first place.

After the return from the Mediterranean, the squadron was in a stand-down period followed by the Christmas leave periods. Operations were slow and easy with more emphasis on administrative details. The first E-2B's were received late in the year. The E-2B utilizes the same E-2A airframe and radar. The major change is in the main computer which greatly enhances



the aircraft's ability to perform its mission,

Flight hours and sorties for the year were as follows:

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>FLT HOURS</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>
JAN	55.3	26
FEB	116.2	48
MAR	105.2	55
APR	240.4	78
MAY	107.9	49
JUN	136.2	49
JUL	127.7	51
AUG	105.4	44
SEP	194.4	68
OCT	162.8	54
NOV	17.2	13
DEC	110.8	51
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>1479.5</u>	<u>586</u>

VAW-123 pilots made a total of 369 carrier landings during 1970.