



## DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

APR. 20 1982

CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON  
ONE HUNDRED TWENTY THREE  
FPO NEW YORK 09501

DECLASSIFIED

VAW123/00/rhs

5700

Ser 125

08 APR 1982

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] (Unclassified upon removal of enclosure (1))

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) OPNAVINST 5750.12C

Encl: (1) VAW-123 Command History

1. In accordance with reference (a), Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY THREE's Command History for calendar year 1981 is hereby submitted as enclosure (1).

*J. N. Mahood*  
J. N. MAHOOD

Copy to:  
DIRECTOR OF NAVAL HISTORY (OP-09B9)

DECLASSIFIED

CLASSIFIED BY: MULTIPLE SOURCES  
DECLASSIFIED: 30 APRIL 1988

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

DECLASSIFIED

VAW123/00/rhs  
5700  
Ser

VAW-123 COMMAND HISTORY

I. SUMMARY OF EVENTS

	01 JANUARY - 31 DECEMBER 1981
01 JAN - 27 JAN	Shore based at NAS Norfolk, VA
28 JAN - 09 FEB	Embarked aboard USS AMERICA (CV-66) for Carrier qualifications and TYT-1
10 FEB - 12 FEB	Shore based at NAS Norfolk, VA
13 FEB	Embarked aboard USS AMERICA (CV-66)
14 FEB - 18 FEB	Enroute Puerto Rican Operations Area
19 FEB - 28 FEB	Conducted operations in the Puerto Rican Operations Area
01 MAR - 04 MAR	Inport St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.
05 MAR - 14 MAR	Conducted Operations in the Puerto Rican Operations Area
15 MAR - 18 MAR	Enroute Norfolk, VA
19 MAR - 12 APR	Shore based NAS Norfolk, VA. Preparation for overseas movement
13 APR	Embarked aboard USS AMERICA (CV-66)
14 APR - 23 APR	Enroute to the Mediterranean Sea
24 APR - 27 APR	Inport Palma de Mallorca, Spain
28 APR - 01 MAY	Conducted operations in the Central Mediterranean
02 MAY	Enroute Port Said, Egypt
03 MAY - 04 MAY	Anchored at Port Said, Egypt
05 MAY	Conducted operations in the Eastern Mediterranean
06 MAY	Transited the Suez Canal
07 MAY - 08 MAY	Conducted operations in the Red Sea

1  
DECLASSIFIED

Enclosure (1)

DECLASSIFIED

VAW123/00/rhs  
5700  
Ser

09 MAY - 10 MAY	Conducted operations in the Gulf of Aden
11 MAY - 12 MAY	Enroute Gonzo Station, Indian Ocean
13 MAY - 04 JUN	Conducted operations on Gonzo Station
05 JUN - 11 JUN	Enroute Singapore
12 JUN - 17 JUN	Inport, Republic of Singapore
18 JUN - 24 JUN	Enroute to the Indian Ocean
25 JUN - 07 AUG	Conducted operations on Gonzo Station
08 AUG - 12 AUG	Enroute Diego Garcia
13 AUG - 17 AUG	Conducted operations in the Indian Ocean near Diego Garcia
18 AUG - 23 AUG	Enroute Australia
24 AUG - 30 AUG	Inport Fremantle, Australia
31 AUG - 15 SEP	Enroute Gonzo Station
16 SEP - 17 OCT	Conducted operations on Gonzo Station
18 OCT - 20 OCT	Enroute Port Suez, Egypt
21 OCT	Transited the Suez Canal
22 OCT - 24 OCT	Enroute to Palma de Mallorca, Spain
25 OCT - 27 OCT	Inport Palma de Mallorca, Spain
28 OCT - 01 NOV	Conducted operations in the Western Mediterranean
02 NOV - 12 NOV	Enroute Norfolk, VA
13 NOV - 31 DEC	Based ashore at NAS Norfolk, VA

DECLASSIFIED

Enclosure (1)

**DECLASSIFIED**

VAW123/03/rhs  
5700  
Ser

II. Calendar year 1981 narrative:

As 1981 opened, the SCREWTOPS were preparing to go to sea once again. During January the squadron was continuing its intensive preparations to join CVW-11 and USS AMERICA at the end of the month. Training included FCLP's and LINK-11 training with the RCA Corporation's AEGIS development laboratory in Southern New Jersey. From the 12th through the 17th of January the squadron was involved in NAVEX 1-81, a joint service exercise employing Navy and Air Force units as Orange Air operation for USS FORRESTAL's TYT III. The Air Force units took advantage of the opportunity by exercising its Tactical Air Control/Tactical Air Defense System's (TACS/TADS) digital LINK interface. Operating out of Shaw AFB in Sumter, S.C., the SCREWTOPS provided air control and LINK-11 services to the Tactical Command Center (TACC) at Shaw. It was a very productive training effort, giving all SCREWTOP aircrews exposure to the joint arena of tactical operations and data link.

Following NAVEX, the SCREWTOPS finished the tedious process of packing and on the 28th put out to sea embarked aboard USS AMERICA (CV-66) for TYT-1. Due to an A-7 aircraft accident on the flight deck, very little of the squadron's airborne tactical training could be accomplished. Nonetheless, the squadron was able to carrier qualify 8 out of 9 pilots and conduct extensive ground training in many areas. Returning to shore the first week of February, the squadron participated in SEABAT 2-81, a large scale electronic warfare exercise conducted by Fighter Wing ONE. The exercise provided many opportunities to operate against jamming and control aircraft in the jamming environment.

The process of pre-deployment training began in earnest on the 12th of February when USS AMERICA (CV-66) got underway for TYT-2. Following a short anchorage in Hampton Roads, so the ship could conduct its Propulsion Examination, USS AMERICA (CV-66) proceeded south to the Puerto Rican operating area where TYT-II was conducted. The TYT's were conducted in conjunction with READEX 1-81, an anti-air warfare exercise that tested the battle group in an ECM environment. After a four-day port visit to ST Thomas, U.S.V.I. on the 1st of March, USS AMERICA (CV-66) was underway again for TYT-III and the Operational Readiness Examination (ORE). Following the conclusion of the ORE on the 15th, USS AMERICA (CV-66) headed north and arrived back in Norfolk on the 18th.

The remainder of March was a standdown period characterized by reduced activity as the SCREWTOPS prepared for an arduous Indian Ocean deployment. Squadron pilots flew FCLP's to maintain currency. Also, during this period the squadron experienced a large turnover in personnel.

As April began, the tempo of operations increased. Final preparations for the deployment were completed with the on-load of the squadron aboard USS AMERICA (CV-66) on the 6th for a short at-sea period for carrier qualification. Following a final weekend at home, the USS AMERICA (CV-66) left Norfolk on the 14th for the Indian Ocean via the Mediterranean Sea. Flight operations were conducted during the trans-Atlantic crossing to prepare aircrews for exercise Daily

**DECLASSIFIED**

Enclosure (1)

[REDACTED]

DECLASSIFIED

VAW123/00/rhs  
5700  
Ser

Double, a NATO exercise to be held from the 28th through the 3rd of May. After a four day visit to Palma de Mallorca, Spain beginning on the 23rd, the exercise commenced on the morning of the 28th as USS AMERICA (CV-66), USS FORRESTAL (CV-59), USS NASSAU (LPH-4), and their escorts formed a single task force. SCREWTOP mission crews gained valuable experience in large scale operations and LINK-11 coordination.

Following completion of the exercise, USS AMERICA (CV-66) steamed to Port Said, Egypt to make preparations for her historic transit of the Suez Canal. The ever deepening crisis in Lebanon forced USS AMERICA (CV-66) to delay her transit and put back to sea on the 5th, but on the 6th the ship was permitted to transit the Suez Canal. Thus, USS AMERICA (CV-66) became the first U.S. carrier to transit the canal since the USS INTREPID (CVA-11) made the trip in 1967. The ten hour and ten minute trip was quite interesting and all SCREWTOPS took advantage of the opportunity to come to the flight deck and see the canal firsthand. On the 7th and 8th USS AMERICA (CV-66) transited the Red Sea. The SCREWTOPS became the first E-2 squadron to ever operate in the Red Sea gaining many valuable lessons on the employment of the E-2 radar in this highly critical and restricted area of the world.

Upon arrival in the Indian Ocean, USS AMERICA (CV-66) and her battle group commenced turnover with the USS INDEPENDENCE (CV-62). This was completed on the 12th of May and with the departure of the USS INDEPENDENCE (CV-62), USS AMERICA (CV-66) was left as the only CV on Gonzo Station. On the 13th the squadron conducted combined operations with Air Force B-52's operating out of Australia. The B-52's provided many varied opportunities for training including the chance for the squadron aircraft to fly in formation with the B-52's for photo purposes.

From the 20th through the 24th the USS AMERICA (CV-66)/CVW-11 team conducted War-at-Sea against the French Ship DUQUESNE and HMAS BRISBANE. On the 25th, CVW-11 participated in SOAFEX 81-2, a low level bombing exercise designed to take advantage of the overland bombing range at Rubkut, Oman. SCREWTOP aircrews provided liaison with Omani controllers as well as range surveillance and strike support. This provided a new and important way to perfect weapons delivery techniques in the desert environment. On the 28th another exercise with USAF B-52's was conducted.

June began with ADEX 81-3, an extensive anti-air and War-at-Sea exercise against USS KITTY HAWK (CV-63) steaming to relieve USS AMERICA (CV-66) on Gonzo Station. Conducted in three phases, the exercise gave all aircrews training in surface search coordination, as well as anti-air warfare. The exercise gave both Airwings the opportunity to experiment with the vector logic concept of long range anti-air warfare.

DECLASSIFIED

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
DECLASSIFIED

VAW123/00/rhs  
5700  
Ser

With the completion of ADEX, USS AMERICA (CV-66) sailed eastward for a six day port visit in the Republic of Singapore, arriving in Singapore on the 12th of June. After 46 days at sea the squadron was awaiting a much needed rest and the Republic of Singapore provided all hands with this break.

Rested and refreshed, USS AMERICA (CV-66) got underway on the 18th of June to return to Gonzo Station. As the battle group approached Gonzo Station, it commenced GONZOEX 81-4 a maritime air superiority exercise testing the vector logic theory once again. The exercise began on the 25th of June and ended on the 2nd of July. For the SCREWTOPS an aircraft mishap on the 26th of June made the exercise remain in many people's minds for months to come.

In the early morning hours of the 26th of June, SCREWTOP 601 was launched from catapult three with LT [REDACTED] at controls and LT [REDACTED], the pilot in command in the right seat. During the night catapult stroke, the aircrew experienced a loud bang and a jolt from the starboard side of the aircraft. The aircraft settled approximately twenty feet while the gear was raised. Upon recovering control of the aircraft, LT [REDACTED] commenced a climb overhead the ship to evaluate the situation. The CIC crew of LTJG's [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] all reported that they could see damage to the starboard wing tip despite the darkness. This was confirmed by an A-6 that joined on 601 who observed that four feet of the leading edge and six feet of the trailing edge were missing. After daybreak, LT [REDACTED] brought the aircraft in for a straight-in approach to a pitching deck. LT [REDACTED] and LT [REDACTED] were named NAVAIRPAC's Pro's of the Week and were later awarded Air Medals for their cool and professional handling of the situation.

Following this excitement the rest of GONZOEX proceeded uneventfully ending on the 2nd of July. USS AMERICA (CV-66) again became the only CV on Gonzo Station. The airwing participated in another SOAFEX on the 6th and 7th of July followed by B-52 operations on the 9th. On the 16th a blue water MISSILEX was conducted with good results. The 20th found USS AMERICA (CV-66) aircrews back over Rubkut, Oman for another SOAFEX followed by B-52 operations on the 23rd. In addition to these exercises the SCREWTOPS were required several times to launch for real-world alerts to detect and intercept Soviet IL-26 MAY aircraft that attempted to overfly the battle group.

August found USS AMERICA (CV-66) still on Gonzo Station preparing for another ADEX, beginning on the 4th of August. Providing another test of vector logic, the USS AMERICA (CV-66) and USS KITTY HAWK (CV-63) airwings tried to outwit each other with the result being better training environment for both ships. On the 8th of August, USS AMERICA (CV-66) turned south and began the long transit toward Australia. On the 10th of August, over 4500 AMERICA men heeded the summons of King Neptune and appeared before his court in crossing the line ceremonies. USS AMERICA (CV-66) and her crew of newly pronounced shellbacks arrived

DECLASSIFIED

Enclosure (1)  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

DECLASSIFIED

VAW123/00/rhs  
5700  
Ser

in the vicinity of Diego Garcia on the 12th of August to begin a week of weapons expenditures. SCREWTOP aircrews played a significant role in these exercises by providing range surveillance for missile shoots, coordination for search and rescue exercises, and air intercept control for Air Combat Manuevering exercises. Additionally, SCREWTOP pilots took advantage of the opportunity to practice field takeoffs and landings, something they had not done in several months. Departing Diego Garcia on the 16th of August, USS AMERICA (CV-66) continued southward. On the 22nd of August, CVW-11 participated in exercise BEACON SOUTH, which took place off the Western coast of Australia. BEACON SOUTH was a combined exercise with CVW-11 and the Royal Australian Air Force. The SCREWTOPS provided flight following for aircraft on extended overland low level routes. A SCREWTOP aircrew, overhearing several Geraldton Flight Service Station transmissions, joined a search for a missing 16 foot fiberglass boat. One of the E-2's radar contacts was verified to be the overturned boat. There were, sadly, no survivors.

On the 24th of August, USS AMERICA (CV-66) dropped anchor in Fremantle, Australia after 69 continuous days at sea. Everyone was eager for a rest in Fremantle and nearby Perth. The hospitality shown by our Australian friends will be remembered by all the SCREWTOPS for a long time to come. As far as port visits went, Australia was generally agreed to be the highlight of the cruise.

Somewhat reluctantly, USS AMERICA (CV-66) set sail on the 31st of August to return for her final line period on Gonzo Station. From the 4th through the 8th of September the squadron conducted jamming exercises with VAQ-133, the EA-6B squadron. These exercises pioneered techniques by which the EA-6B can provide electronic warfare training for the E-2's radar through the use of harmonics. From the 13th through the 15th of September, the USS AMERICA (CV-66)/CVW-11 team participated in GONZOEX 81-5, a large vector logic exercise that included a day of combined CV vector logic operations. With the departure of USS KITTY HAWK (CV-63) on the 16th of September for her final time, USS AMERICA (CV-66) resumed her solitary patrol on Gonzo Station. Daily cyclic operations consumed the rest of September.

USS AMERICA (CV-66) began October by anchoring at Masirah Island, Oman on the 3rd for two days for shipboard maintenance in preparation for the ship's upcoming INSURV Inspection. Another week of cyclic operations concluded with a return to Masirah Island, Oman on the 10th for still more work. Underway on the 11th, USS AMERICA (CV-66) moved to position herself to participate in exercise BEACON FLASH 81-2, a series of opposed overland strikes at the range at Rubkut, Oman, beginning on the 13th. The 15th found USS AMERICA (CV-66) heading westward to begin the trip home. The following day, the 16th, marked the SCREWTOPS 13th ANNIVERSARY of accident-free flying. This occasion was celebrated at an all hands quarters ceremony conducted on the forecastle. The 17th saw USS AMERICA (CV-66) complete preparation for her transit through the Straits of

DECLASSIFIED

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

DECLASSIFIED

VAW-123/00/rhs  
5700  
Ser

Bab-el-Mendeb, a journey made tense due to the threatening signals coming from South Yemen following in the wake of the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar SADAT. The actual transit was completed without incident and USS AMERICA (CV-66) again found herself in the Red Sea. On the morning of the 20th, USS AMERICA (CV-66) anchored at Port Suez to prepare to transit to the Suez Canal for the second time.

On the 21th USS AMERICA (CV-66) proceeded through the canal. Accompanied by beautiful weather, AMERICAmen turned out again to witness the land of Egypt unfolding before their eyes. Due to the death of President Anwar SADAT, the transit was a more subdued event than the first one but it was very successful nonetheless. Upon leaving the Suez Canal, USS AMERICA (CV-66) picked up speed and headed to Palma de Mallorca, Spain for a three day port visit starting on the 25th of October.

On the 28th of October, USS AMERICA (CV-66) was underway for her last major exercise of the cruise, CRISEX. This exercise, a joint US - Spanish amphibious exercise, provided many types of training for CVW-11 aircrews. SCREWTOP aircrews were aloft continuously throughout the exercise providing control services for Dissimilar Air Combat Training (DACT), flight following for overland strikes and anti-air warfare support. Concluding on the 1st of November, the exercise was hailed by NATO as an unqualified success in terms of the teamwork and training gained by both nations.

On the 2nd of November, USS AMERICA (CV-66) turned westward and began to head for home. With eager anticipation the airwing completed its offload preparations. On the 11th of November the airwing aircraft were flown off and on the 12th of November in the early morning hours, USS AMERICA (CV-66) moored at Pier Twelve greeted by a sea of happy faces. The SCREWTOPS completed their offload and on the 13th of November set up shop back at NAS Norfolk, VA. The squadron then commenced a month of standdown marked by minimal flight operations and four hour workdays. Many people in the squadron took advantage of the opportunity to take some well earned leave.

Still in standdown as December opened, the squadron chopped to CVW-1 and made preparations to participate in its first shore based exercise in almost a year, SEABAT 82-1. SEABAT 82-1 is a series of electronic warfare exercises designed to increase training levels in electronic warfare for fleet units. The exercise took place from the 12th through the 16th of December with all SCREWTOP aircrews participating at one point or another. With the completion of SEABAT 82-1, the squadron once again slowed down operations for the Christmas holidays.

DECLASSIFIED