



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

5750  
Ser 00/C009  
1 March 1985

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From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron  
ONE HUNDRED TWENTY THREE

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

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY; SUBMISSION OF (U)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12C

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Encl: (1) 1984 Command History (C)

1. (U) In accordance with reference (a), Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY THREE's Command History for calendar year 1984 is hereby submitted as enclosure (1).

*W. D. Holbrook*  
W. D. HOLBROOK  
By direction

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Director of Naval History (OP-09B9)

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Classified by: CO, VAW-123  
Declassify on: 31 December 1991

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VAW-123  
1984 COMMAND HISTORY

Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY THREE is assigned to Carrier Air Wing ONE (CVW-1) when embarked and to Carrier Airborne Early Warning Wing TWELVE when based ashore at NAS, Norfolk, Virginia. The squadron's mission is to provide Airborne Early Warning (AEW) Command and Control Services to Fleet Forces and/or Shore Warning Nets under all weather conditions in support of the Navy's mission and to conduct prompt and sustained combat operations at sea in support of U.S. National Policy.

January

- 1 - In port Norfolk, Virginia; standdown during holiday period.

February

- 6 - Embarked aboard USS AMERICA (CV-66). Underway to Virginia Capes, Jacksonville and Puerto Rico operating areas.
- 15 - Commenced READEX-84/TYT-I/TYT-II.
- 18 - Underway for FT Lauderdale, FL.
- 21 - Port Visit, FT Lauderdale, FL.
- 26 - Enroute to Puerto Rico operating area.
- 29 - Commenced TYT-III/ORE.

March

- 8 - Completed ORE with 4 aircraft fly-by of USS AMERICA (CV-66).
- 9 - Port Visit, ST Thomas, Virgin Islands.
- 13 - Underway to the Caribbean, Jacksonville and Virginia Capes operating areas.
- 23 - USS AMERICA (CV-66) in port Norfolk; squadron debarked.

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VAW-123  
1984 COMMAND HISTORY (CONTINUED)

April

- 1 - In port, Norfolk. Preparations for Overseas Movement (POM).
- 23 - Embarked aboard USS AMERICA (CV-66). Underway for a 7 month Mediterranean/Indian Ocean deployment. Conducted Carrier Qualifications enroute to the Gulf of Mexico.
- 27 - Participated in Exercise OCEAN VENTURE - 84 in the Gulf of Mexico.

May

- 3 - Enroute, Caracas, Venezuela.
- 5 - In port, Caracas, Venezuela.
- 8 - Underway for Mediterranean Sea operations.
- 21 - INCHOP SIXTH Fleet.
- 22 - In port, Malaga, Spain.
- 31 - Flew one aircraft to NAF, Sigonella during transit to the Eastern Mediterranean for repair of major rotodome pressurization leak.

June

- 1 - Eastern Mediterranean Operations.
- 4 - Recovered AB601 from Sigonella 4 hours prior to Suez transit. Aircraft recovered fully operational.
- 4 - Transited the Suez Canal/Red Sea enroute to the Indian Ocean.
- 10 - VAW-123 and VAW-116 from USS KITTY HAWK (CV-63) conducted turnover following one day of dual Battle Group Operations.
- 11 - Commenced Indian Ocean/North Arabian Sea Operations (GONZO Station).

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**VAW-123**  
**1984 COMMAND HISTORY (CONTINUED)**

**July**

- 8 - Participated in Exercise BEACON FLASH 84-5 (joint exercise with the Omani Air Force).
- 11 - Continued Indian Ocean/North Arabian Sea operations.
- 19 - At anchor, Masirah; conducted safety standdown.

**August**

- 8 - Participated in Exercise MULTIPLEX 84-5 (joint U.S. Navy/British operations).
- 12 - Continued Indian Ocean/North Arabian Sea operations.
- 21 - Turnover with VAW-117 aboard USS ENTERPRISE (CVN-65).
- 27 - Enroute to the Red Sea.

**September**

- 2 - Conducted high speed transit of Suez Canal.
- 3 - Conducted flight operations in Eastern Mediterranean.
- 7 - Port visit, Naples, Italy. First port call in 105 days.
- 12 - Enroute, Monaco.
- 14 - Port visit, Monaco.
- 23 - Commenced initial phases of Exercise DISPLAY DETERMINATION off the south coast of France.
- 29 - Port visit, Naples, Italy.

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VAW-123  
1984 COMMAND HISTORY (CONTINUED)

October

- 3 - Continued Exercise DISPLAY DETERMINATION in the Aegean Sea.
- 14 - Exercise DISPLAY DETERMINATION concluded. Enroute, Central Mediterranean Sea.
- 16 - VAW-123 surpassed 16 years, 31,000 hours, accident free milestone.
- 17 - Port visit, Catania, Sicily.
- 25 - Underway for Central Mediterranean operations. Conducted turnover with VAW-121 aboard USS EISENHOWER (CVN-69).
- 28 - Conducted dual carrier operations with USS EISENHOWER (CVN-69).
- 29 - Enroute, Rota, Spain.

November

- 1 - Port visit, Rota, Spain.
- 2 - Underway. Departed the Mediterranean for Trans-Atlantic crossing, enroute to Bermuda.
- 10 - Bermuda anchorage for weapons off-load.
- 12 - Underway. Enroute, Norfolk, Virginia.
- 13 - Four VAW-123 aircraft fly-off from USS AMERICA (CV-66) for NAS, Norfolk, Virginia.
- 14 - Port visit, Norfolk, Virginia.
- 30 - Embarked aboard USS AMERICA (CV-66) for Fleet Carrier Qualifications and SOPWITH CAMEL tasking. Operations conducted in the Key West Operating Area.

December

- 17 - In port, Norfolk, Virginia. Squadron standdown for holiday period.

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VAW-123  
1984 COMMAND HISTORY (CONTINUED)

January

Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY THREE began 1984 with a continuation of the Christmas holiday standdown. By mid-month, the squadron was back to full strength and preparations for the upcoming TYT/ORE and deployment continued in earnest.

February

In early February, after many hours of preparation, VAW-123 moved aboard USS AMERICA (CV-66) for the beginning of work-ups that would culminate in a battle ready force, ready for deployment. The airwing conducted carrier qualifications enroute to the Virginia Capes operating area. All aircrew regained their sharp edge, ready to begin work-ups.

Readiness exercises and Type Training (TYT-II) were conducted off the coast of Florida, testing the capabilities of the entire Battle Group/Airwing team. At the conclusion of TYT-II, USS AMERICA and CVW-1 made a short port call to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, providing a much needed break prior to TYT-III and ORE. The final work-up phases included numerous war-at-sea scenarios and placed increased emphasis on high tempo operations, including continuous 24-hour operations. The SCREWTOPS were recognized for their Command and Control performance as well as their outstanding landing proficiency by CAPT D.T. SCHWABB, Commanding Officer, USS AMERICA and CDR J.J. COONAN, CVW-1. TYT-III commenced as the AMERICA entered the Puerto Rican operating area.

March

The month of March began with the Operational Readiness Exercise, a culmination of all lessons learned during work-ups. The tempo of operations was similar to actual wartime conditions. Round-the-clock operations became the norm in order to provide the Battle Group Commander with airborne early warning and real time surface force disposition. The SCREWTOPS completed the ORE with all four aircraft fully mission capable, graphically demonstrating that milestone with a low level four-plane fly-by. A four day port call to St. Thomas, Virgin Islands following the ORE provided a perfect ending to the work-up phase. The remainder of March was spent in port, Norfolk, Virginia, preparing for overseas movement (POM).

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**VAW-123**  
**1984 COMMAND HISTORY (CONTINUED)**

**April**

April began with a continuation of the POM period, including FCLPs for pilots and final refresher weapons system trainers for NFOs. On 24 April, VAW-123 departed Pier 12, Norfolk Naval Station, embarked aboard USS AMERICA (CV-66), for their third consecutive Indian Ocean deployment. After departing Norfolk, the task group headed toward the Gulf of Mexico for a joint service exercise, "OCEAN VENTURE - 84", which included overland strikes, war-at-sea scenarios and jamming exercises along the south and west coasts of Florida. April ended with VAW-123 enroute to Caracas, Venezuela, for a brief port call prior to transiting to the Mediterranean Sea.

**May and June**

May and June were spent conducting operations in the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean. On 4 June, AMERICA transited the Suez Canal, enroute to the Indian Ocean and North Arabian Sea. This transit was earlier than anticipated due to heightened hostilities in the Persian Gulf region.

Upon arrival of AMERICA and CVW-1 in the North Arabian Sea, the AMERICA and USS KITTYHAWK (CV-63) transferred responsibility for the safety of oceanic transit lanes in that troubled part of the world.

**July and August**

Normal operations in the North Arabian Sea consisted of daily flights of squadron E-2Cs providing airborne control and early warning services to the Task Force Commander. The threat was real and daily vigilance of airspace and sea lanes in the Persian Gulf and North Arabian Sea was of paramount importance. This was in addition to normal operational commitments such as Exercise BEACON FLASH 84-5 and MULTIPLEX 84-5. Exercise BEACON FLASH consisted of numerous overland strikes and air-to-air engagements with the Omani Air Force; a formidable task for the E-2C. Flights of Omani aircraft consistently flew at 100 feet or below and detection was difficult. Valuable training was achieved and many lessons were learned. Exercise MULTIPLEX 84-5 was a multi-threat exercise for the Battle Group, simulating attacks from the air, surface and sub-surface. Initially, VAW-123 was tasked with surface search to locate designated "hostile" combatants and then vector bombers to those locations.

The remainder of July and August was spent conducting continued airborne early warning operations in the North Arabian Sea.

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VAW-123  
1984 COMMAND HISTORY (CONTINUED)

September

After a complete turnover of duties with the USS ENTERPRISE (CVN-65), VAW-123 transited the Suez Canal, enroute to the Mediterranean Sea and some well deserved port visits after more than 100 days at sea.

The majority of September was spent in port, Naples, Italy and Monaco. As the month drew to a close, VAW-123 began participation in Exercise DISPLAY DETERMINATION, involving NATO Forces in joint exercises in the Central Mediterranean and Aegean Sea.

October and November

Exercise DISPLAY DETERMINATION continued early in October, culminating with major simulated strikes in Turkey while the carrier operated in the extremely limited air space confines of the Aegean Sea. The airborne E-2C provided many of the same services as a stateside air traffic control center, vectoring air wing aircraft along "exercise air routes" in order to avoid overflights of prohibited air space. After a brief port visit to Catania, Sicily, during which VAW-123 and CVW-1 conducted shore-based operations and some low level training, a turnover with USS EISENHOWER (CVN-69) took place, followed by dual carrier operations until AMERICA's Task Group departed the Central Mediterranean. Following a brief port visit to Rota, Spain (where unfortunately, there was no liberty due to poor weather), the AMERICA turned west for the always too long transit to Norfolk.

16 October marked a major milestone in SCREWTOP history; 16 years and 31,000 hours accident free. This was a significant accomplishment and directly reflects the command's continued attitude toward excellence through safety.

Prior to the squadron's return to Norfolk, one last stop was made at Bermuda to off load ammunition and disembark the Flag Staff. Finally, on 13 November, the skies over Norfolk saw the sight of four SCREWTOP E-2s returning home. The AMERICA returned to Pier 11 the next day, bringing with her the backbone of the command, our maintenance and support personnel.

December

Fleet Carrier Qualifications were performed off the coast of Key West, Florida during the first half of December. The remainder of the year was spent in a post-cruise/holiday standdown with the SCREWTOPS spending much deserved time with their families and friends.

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