

## COMMAND HISTORY

VAW-123 was commissioned in 1964 as VAW-12, officially known as Carrier Early Warning Squadron TWELVE, which flew the E-2A aircraft. Through reorganization, VAW-12 Detachment 59 was commissioned VAW-123 in April 1967, under the command of CDR W. L. Hill.

Initially attached to Carrier Air Wing SEVENTEEN (CVW 17) aboard the USS FORRESTAL (CV 59) the squadron was part of CVW-3 as well as USS SAROTOGA (CV 60), USS AMERICA (CV-66) and USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN-71). Today VAW-123 is attached to Carrier Air Wing One and USS Enterprise (CVN-65). The squadron throughout the years has made deployments to the Caribbean Sea, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, Arabian and Red Sea and the North Atlantic.

The SCREWTOPS were key participants in the 1986 Gulf of Sidra operations off the coast of Libya, and were directly involved in the first combat use of the HARM (High speed Anti- Radiation Missile) and Harpoon anti-ship weapon systems. During Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, VAW-123 was the only E-2 squadron to operate in both the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf, as well as operating a two aircraft expeditionary detachment out of Kuwait. In support of national goals, the squadron executed countless flights for Operations Deny Flight and Deliberate Force over Bosnia-Herzegovina and Operation Southern Watch over Iraq. In March 2002, the SCREWTOPS were critical participants to the War on Terror acting as airborne command and control for Operation Enduring Freedom in the skies over Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Deploying with USS ENTERPRISE (CVN 65) in August 2003, VAW-123 opened a new chapter in carrier aviation by being the first carrier-based Navy squadron to operate an expeditionary detachment in support of special warfare units. Under combat conditions with hostile fire in Northern Afghanistan, the squadron provided airborne command control to coalition aircraft and time sensitive targeting coordination to special operations forces for Operation Mountain Resolve. In addition, the squadron pioneered Night Vision for the Hawkeye through dedicated research and usage during this critical operation. Integrating into forward deployed operations, VAW 123 became the squadron of choice for conventional units as well as special operations forces deployed to Iraq. The squadron continued its evolution into expeditionary warfare when it deployed to Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar and performed important diplomatic liaison in Dubai, UAE.

Each member of VAW-123 is an integral part of an innovative, resourceful and dedicated worldwide combat team. Able to deploy to any location around the globe, the VAW-123 team changed its mission statement to reflect its evolving operations. "To provide the airborne element of the theater command and control network capable of supporting combat forces in the performance of air, ground and naval operations. We provide the means for joint force commanders to plan, direct and control operations and coordinate these operations within a coalition and interagency environment. We will accomplish this mission through training and development of each member of this squadron into an effective, forward-thinking combat team." This is the legacy of Airborne Command and Control Squadron ONE TWENTY THREE.