

1980



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON
ONE HUNDRED TWENTY FOUR
FLEET POST OFFICE
NEW YORK 09501

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[REDACTED] Unclassified upon removal of enclosures {2} and {3}.

From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron
ONE HUNDRED TWENTY FOUR
To: Chief of Naval Operations {0p-05D2}

Subj: Command History

Ref: {a} OPNAVINST 5750.12C

- Encl: {1} Command History Narrative
- {2} Periodic Operating Report for TEAM WORK '80
- {3} Periodic Operating Report for Iceland deployment
- {4} Commanding Officer Biography
- {5} Executive Officer Biography

1. In accordance with reference {a}, enclosures {1} through {5} are submitted.

L. N. ODEN

Copy to:
Director of Naval History {0p-09BH}

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THE VAW-124 COMMAND HISTORY
FOR 1980

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Command Organization
- II. Chronology of Events
- III. Operations
- IV. Statistics and Awards
- V. Appendices
 - A. Periodic Operating Report for TEAMWORK 80
 - B. Periodic Operating Report for Iceland deployment
 - C. Commanding Officer biography
 - D. Executive Officer biography

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VAW-124 Command History for Calendar Year 1980.

I. Command Organization.

A. Commanding Officer

Commander J. R. Slaughter (13 December 1978 to 14 March 1980)
Commander L. N. Oden (14 March 1980 to present)

B. Executive Officer.

Commander L. N. Oden (13 December 1978 to 14 March 1980)
Commander H. C. Fortenberry (14 March 1980 to present)

C. Mission.

To act as an airborne tactical command and control center for offensive and defensive fleet operations by providing early warning and aircraft control through data link and voice communications.

D. Composition of Command.

Aircraft: Four (4) Grumman E-2C "Hawkeye"
Personnel on board: Officers in flight status: 20
(31 December 1980) Enlisted in flight status: 01
Officers
(Maintenance and Intelligence) 03
Enlisted on board: 134

Squadron Nickname: "BEAR ACES"

Squadron Motto: "Bear Aces - - On the Road Again"

II. Chronology of Events.

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| 1 Jan - 7 Jan | In port Norfolk |
| 8 Jan - 12 Jan | Detachment to Cecil, Florida for USS SARATOGA NAVEX |
| 13 Jan - 7 Jun | In port Norfolk |
| 6 Feb - 8 Feb | SEABAT 2-80 |
| 25 Feb - 29 Feb | AVELEX 1-80 detachment to Cherry Point, North Carolina |
| 14 March | Change of Command |
| 20 May - 22 May | SEABAT 3-80 |
| 28 May | Federal Vantage |
| 26 May - 30 May | Command Inspection |
| 1 June | Change operational control to CVW-8 |
| 7 Jun - 21 Jun | Detachment to Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico for ComOrange vs. USS JOHN F. KENNEDY |
| 22 Jun - 13 Aug | In port Norfolk |
| 21 July | 9 years accident free |
| 5 August | Federal Vantage |
| 13 Aug - 22 Aug | NIMITZ ISE |
| 23 Aug - 27 Aug | In port Norfolk |
| 29 Aug - 9 Sep | Underway--transit North Atlantic on USS NIMITZ United Effort-80 |
| 10 Sep - 21 Sep | Teamwork-80 |
| 22 Sep - 23 Sep | Cold Fire-80 |

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|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| 24 Sep - 29 Sep | In port Portsmouth, England |
| 30 September | Transit English Channel |
| 1 Oct - 6 Oct | In port Wilhelmshaven, Germany |
| 7 Oct - 17 Oct | Transit Atlantic |
| 18 Oct - 17 Nov | In port Norfolk |
| 18 Nov - 4 Dec | USS AMERICA Reftra with CVW-11 |
| 5 Dec - 9 Dec | In port Norfolk |
| 10 Dec - 31 Dec | Deployed to Keflavik, Iceland |
| 26 December | CNO visit |

III. Operations.

Operations for the first half of 1980 were focused on two objectives; overall turn-around training while shore based and systems training in conjunction with the squadron's transition to the E-2C ARPS aircraft. Ground training was complimented by several short detachments and exercises in the Virginia Capes and Jacksonville operating areas. The first of these involved a two plane detachment to Cecil Field, Florida in Mid-January in which VAW-124 E-2Cs controlled USAF fighter/attack aircraft on mock raids against the USS SARATOGA as part of the ship and airwing's pre-deployment training.

During February the squadron participated in two brief exercises; SEABAT 2-80 and AVELEX 1-80. SEABAT 2-80 was scheduled 6-8 February in the W-72 and W-386 operating area in order to exercise Navy and Air Force fighter crews and air controllers in anti-air operations in a dense electronic warfare environment. AVELEX 1-80 occurred between 25 February and 29 February in the W-122 Cherry Point operating area and required a temporary detachment to Cherry Point, North Carolina. This exercise was designed to test the Marine Corps Air Command and Control System (MACCS) in an amphibious assault scenario involving combined Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force assets with the E-2C providing air control and data link services for the Second Marine Air Wing.

The highlight of March was a squadron change of command in which Commander Jim Slaughter turned over command of VAW-124 to Commander Len Oden. The ceremony was held in hangar SP-1 at the Norfolk Naval Air Station. Captain Sheldon L. Corner, USN, ret. delivered an address which reflected his long career in naval aviation and shared his perceptions on the military's role in a world of heightened tensions.

April was dedicated to the establishment of the new administration, the absorption of a large personnel turnover, and a Human Relations Evaluation. In late May the squadron participated in SEABAT 3-80, which was similar in design to the previous SEABAT exercise. There was a brief stand-down during the last week of May at which time the squadron underwent a command inspection. No major discrepancies were noted. On 28 May VAW-124 provided E-2C services for exercise Federal Vantage 80-3, an Air Force command and control test of the local air defense net.

The tempo of operations increased significantly in June. One week after changing operational control from Carrier Airborne Early Warning Wing Twelve to Carrier Air Wing EIGHT, VAW-124 deployed to Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, as ~~COMMANDER ORANGE FORCES~~ in support of USS JOHN F. KENNEDY'S Operational Readiness Evaluation. For two weeks the

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Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility was extensively used for electronic warfare and data link training. Air intercept control was conducted with two Marine Reserve F-4 "Phantom" and A-4 "Sky Hawk" squadrons (VMA-142 and VMFA-112), and various raids and anti-ship cruise missile profiles were flown on the KENNEDY by the Marines under VAW-124 E-2 control. The squadron provided nearly complete twenty-four hour coverage for a three day period beginning on the evening of the 15th during the operations phase of the ORE. E-2C aircrews controlled F-4s in Combat Air Patrol, War at Sea strikes, Anti-ship Cruise Missile raids, and adversary strike opposition missions against the JFK and CVW-1. The exercise concluded on 18 May, and VAW-124 returned to Naval Air Station Norfolk.

The remainder of June and most of July was dedicated to fleet carrier landing practice and carrier qualifications resulting in high flight hours but little time for exercise participation. A significant milestone was reached on 21 July when VAW-124 successfully achieved 9 years of accident free flying. This represents 12,592 hours of VAW-124 E-2 flight time without a major accident.

During August, the squadron prepared for an upcoming autumn North Atlantic cruise with CVW-8 on USS NIMITZ. During the period 13-22 August, VAW-124 embarked NIMITZ for an Independent Steaming Exercise in the Virginia Capes during which squadron pilots conducted carrier qualifications. This was followed by a one week period in port Norfolk before getting underway for exercise TEAMWORK-80 on 29 August.

After undergoing a brief "work-up" phase off the Virginia coast, NIMITZ with CVW-8 embarked headed east across the North Atlantic towards the western coast of Ireland. Enroute, the NIMITZ Battle Group engaged in exercise United Effort 80 which pitted the American group against a Canadian group before joining for combined ASW exercises. The exercise expanded to TEAMWORK 80 with the inclusion of warships from the British, Dutch, and German navies. In the Norwegian Sea, operating within the framework of an amphibious assault on the Trondelag area of Norway, the NIMITZ conducted mock battles against opposing surface units and land based aircraft. CVW-8 maintained a vigilant alert posture which was repeatedly called into action against both exercise threats and the ever-present real-world threat posed by Soviet long range reconnaissance aircraft and cruise missile bombers. The exercise included an EMCON sprint north in order to conduct a mining exercise off the north-western coast of Norway. NIMITZ crossed the Arctic Circle during this exercise, thus initiating all hands to the Order of Bluenose Sailors. Upon completion of TEAMWORK 80, NIMITZ steamed to the North Sea for Cold Fire 80, an exercise to provide close air support and interdiction strikes on short notice in Northern Europe. In view of heavy fog during most of the period, flight operations were severely limited. On the 24th, after a midnight passage through the English Channel, the NIMITZ pulled into Portsmouth, England for a period of well needed liberty. The following week the ship once again transited the Channel for a port call in Wilhelmshaven, West Germany. After a ten day transit beginning on 7 October, the NIMITZ pulled along side pier 12 in Norfolk. (A copy of the squadron's Periodic Operating Report for the North Atlantic cruise is enclosed.)

After a brief stand-down, VAW-124 commenced operations again with an eye towards the boat. The first half of November was dedicated to local flights and FCLPs in preparation for getting underway with CVW-11 on board the USS AMERICA for refresher training in the Guantanamo Bay Operating Area. The

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two week period was uneventful. VAW-124 participated in training flight operations and provided airborne early warning alert coverage against the Cuban fighter threat and Soviet TU-95 "Bear D" flight activity to and from Jose Marti in Havana.

VAW-124 returned to Norfolk on December 4. After a long weekend the squadron returned to work on the 9th for a retirement ceremony at which time a maximum liberty policy was announced for the holidays. Such was not to be, however. Later that same day the squadron was ordered to Keflavik, Iceland to begin operations with all expediency. The deployment was necessitated by the forward staging of the 2 USAF E-3A AWACS normally on station in Keflavik to Ramstein AFB, West Germany in order to monitor Warsaw Pact forces as they reacted to heightened political/labor tensions in Poland. Two E-2s left Norfolk for Keflavik in the late afternoon of the 9th followed by an airlift the following morning. The second section of E-2s departed Norfolk on the 14th and the last airlift took place on the 15th. Alert AEW operations commenced on the 12th with one aircraft/crew in a one hour alert posture 24 hours a day with a back-up for the duration of the deployment (19 Jan 81). The deployment was highlighted by a visit from Admiral Hayward, Chief of Naval Operations, on the 26th of December. (The squadron Periodic Operating Report for the Keflavik deployment is enclosed.)

IV. Statistics/Awards.

A. Milestones.

Flight hours for calendar year 1980.....1962.5
Highest monthly flight hours for CY 80.....296.2 (September)
Average monthly flight hours for CY 80.....163.5
21 July.....Ninth consecutive year accident free
31 July.....First E-2C barricade arrestment (CVN-68)
18 September....All Hands initiated as Bluenoses

B. Awards

Navy Commendation Medal:
LCDR [REDACTED] (NMPC)

Navy Achievement Medal:
AK2 [REDACTED]
CWO2 [REDACTED]
ATC [REDACTED]

Letters of Appreciation:
AKAN [REDACTED] (NRD Miami)
AZ1 [REDACTED] (VAW-122)
AD1 [REDACTED] (VAW-124)
AT3 [REDACTED] (NRD Boston)
ATC [REDACTED] (CNAL)
ADAN [REDACTED] (NAVCAMSLANT)

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Letter of Commendation:

AMH2 [REDACTED] (COMFAIRKEF)
AD2 [REDACTED] (COMFAIRKEF)
AE3 [REDACTED] (COMFAIRKEF)
AT3 [REDACTED] (COMFAIRKEF)
PN1 [REDACTED] (COMFAIRKEF)
AE3 [REDACTED] (COMFAIRKEF)

Meritorious Unit Commendation:

CDR Fortenberry (VAW-125)

Sailor of the Quarter:

Jan-Mar...PN1 [REDACTED]
Apr-Jun...AD2 [REDACTED]
Jul-Sep...AE3 [REDACTED]
Oct-Dec...AT2 [REDACTED]

Sailor of the Year:

AK2 [REDACTED]

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