



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON
ONE HUNDRED TWENTY FIVE
FLEET POST OFFICE, NEW YORK 09507-6411

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From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning
Squadron 125

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

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY FOR CY1989

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative
(4) Squadron History
(5) Command Photo
(6) Commanding Officer's Photo
(7) Commanding Officer's Biography

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (7) are forwarded.


G. H. MEARS

Copy to:
Director of Naval History

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Command Composition and Organization

a. Squadron Mission: The primary mission of VAW-125 is to provide units of the fleet with early detection and warning of approaching enemy forces. The principle is as old as warfare itself, but as practiced by VAW-125, involves the use of long range radar and sophisticated computer controlled electronic systems to detect, identify and report enemy contacts while still many miles from the task force.

b. Organizational Structure: Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 125 reports to Carrier Airborne Early Warning Wing 12, (shore) and Carrier Air Wing 17 while deployed.

c. Name of Commander: CDR G. H. MEARS 26 May 89-31 Dec 89
CDR D. R. NEWMAN 26 Jan 88-26 May 89

d. Permanent Duty Station: Naval Air Station, Norfolk, VA

e. Type and Number of Aircraft:

AA602	E-2C Hawkeye, Buno #158638	(Jan 89-Dec 89)
AA601	E-2C Hawkeye, Buno #158643	(Jan 89-Dec 89)
AA600	E-2C Hawkeye, Buno #159107	(Jan 89-Dec 89)
AA603	E-2C Hawkeye, Buno #160700	(Nov 89-Dec 89)

Chronology

	9 - 14	JAN	SFARP VFA-83 NAS KEY WEST	
	22 - 26	JAN	CQ USS AMERICA (CV 66)	
	25 - 26	JAN	AEGIS SERVICES VACAPES	
	30 - 31	JAN	CORONET PHANTOM 89-02 R-5314	
	4 - 12	FEB	FFARP VF-74/VF-142 NAS KEY WEST	
		15	FEB	MISSILEX VF-74 VACAPES
	16 - 17	FEB	CVW-17 TACPRO REVIEW NAS CECIL	
		21	FEB	ITDA 2.1 UPDATE CONFERENCE NADC WARMINISTER PA
		23	FEB	VS-30 WASEX JAX OPAREA
		24	FEB	COMCVW-17 INSPECTION
27	FEB - 3	MAR	FAST NAS OCEANA	
	5 - 18	MAR	FFARP VF-103 NAS KEY WEST	
	20 - 25	MAR	CQ CV-69 VACAPES	
29	MAR - 15	APR	RED FLAG 89-3 NELLIS AFB	
	21 - 30	APR	CQ CV-59/FLEETWEEK NYC	
	1 - 4	MAY	EC-24/B-52 JAMMEX VACAPES	
	5 - 7	MAY	MAPLE LEAF BURLINGTON VT	
		8	MAY	EC-24/B-52 JAMMEX VACAPES
	14 - 19	MAY	CVW-17 MISSILE/EX ROOSEVELT ROADS	
		26	MAY	VAW-125 COC CHANGE OF COMMAND
	4 - 18	JUN	SFARP VFA-83 NAS KEY WEST	
	19 - 29	JUN	CQ CV-60 JAX OPAREA	
		21	JUN	CNO PROJECT 801
	26 - 28	JUN	I-HAWK MISSILEX MCAS CHERRY PT	
	27 - 29	JUN	WING 12 SEMI ANNUAL CORROSION INSPECTION	
	9 - 21	JUL	SFARP VFA-81 NAS KEY WEST	
	10 - 14	JUL	CYCLIC OPS CV-60 JAX OPAREA	
		17	JUL	CG-62 AEGIS SERVICES PENSACOLA
	25 - 30	JUL	FCLP'S MAYPORT (NGU CLOSED)	
31	JUL - 04	AUG	FAST CRUISE CV-60 MAYPORT	
	10 - 25	AUG	SHAKEDOWN CRUISE CV-60 JAX OPAREA	
5	SEP - 6	OCT	FFARP NORFOLK VA	
	12 - 14	SEP	QUICK THRUST (CJTF-4 OPS) NAS KEY WEST FL	
	10 - 18	OCT	CJTF-4 OPS NAS KEY WEST	
	20 - 29	OCT	CVW 17 WEAPONS DET NAS FALLON NV	
	20 - 22	NOV	STS-33 PATRICK AFB FL	
	27 - 30	NOV	CJTF-4 OPS GUANTANAMO BAY CUBA	
	1 - 10	DEC	CVW-17 MISSILE EX ROOSEVELT ROADS PR	

NARRATIVE

Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 125 began 1989 at home at NAS Norfolk, Virginia conducting turnaround training with Carrier Air Wing 17 in preparation for a 1990 extended deployment onboard USS SARATOGA (CV 60). The month of January saw the TIGERTAILS deploy to NAS Key West to participate in SFARP with VFA-83. Additionally, VAW 125 participated in several operations in the Virginia Capes Operating Area including exercise Coronet Phantom 89-02 and support services for newly commissioned Aegis cruisers. Supporting fighter tactics training, the TIGERTAILS deployed on three additional occasions in 1989 to NAS Key West, conducting FFARP in March and July and SFARP in June. A final FFARP was conducted in September, operating out of NAS Norfolk. Further assistance toward fighter skill enhancement was provided through range surveillance during live air to air missile firing exercises, including an Air Wing 17 Missile Exercise, conducted from Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico. A deployment to Nellis AFB in April to support Red Flag 89-3 was both beneficial to the fighter community as well as our own aircrew control training. The TIGERTAILS received praise for their outstanding air coverage of "Red" and "Blue" forces. While at Nellis in response to a plea by the FAA for assistance, the TIGERTAILS located and directed a low on fuel lost civilian aircraft to a safe landing.

In spite of a long shipyard upkeep period for our mother ship USS SARATOGA, the pilots of VAW 125 seized the opportunity to maintain their carrier landing currencies by participating in Carrier Qualifications onboard USS AMERICA (CV 66) in January, USS EISENHOWER (CVN 69) in March, and aboard USS FORRESTAL (CV 59) in April.

Jamming exercises in the VACAPES operating area during May provided TIGERTAIL aircrews the opportunity to operate and evaluate their weapon systems in a jamming environment provided by B-52 and EC-24 aircraft.

On 26 May 1989 CDR G. H. Mears relieved CDR D. R. Newman as Commanding Officer of VAW 125 in the traditional Change of Command ceremony at NAS Norfolk, VA.

The second half of 1989 brought about an increase in the pace of turnaround training and detachments for VAW-125 and CVW-17.

The return of USS SARATOGA saw the TIGERTAILS back aboard for Carrier Qualifications in June, and Airwing cyclic operations in both July and August.

Additionally, the increased emphasis on the "war on drugs" led to the deployment of VAW-125 to NAS Key West in September, and to Guantamano Bay, Cuba in November in support of Commander Joint Task Force 4 operations. The TIGERTAILS were tasked with providing airborne surveillance in search of both air and surface suspected drug traffickers. Also in October VAW 125 deployed to NAS Fallon, Nevada with CVW-17, controlling Air Wing coordinated strikes and fighter versus adversary control.

The TIGERTAILS closed out 1989 with a deployment to Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico to provide command, control and range surveillance during a CVW-17 air to air missile exercise.

With a 1990 scheduled deployment to the Mediterranean on board USS SARATOGA, VAW 125 has laid the ground work for training aircrew and maintenance personnel in the successful employment of the E-2C aircraft. This ground work will most certainly become the cornerstone for excellence anticipated during 1990.

SQUADRON HISTORY

VAW-125, nicknamed the Tigertails and also known as the Torchbearers, was commissioned on October 1, 1968 at NAS Norfolk under command of Commander J.R. Schaub, Jr. The squadron's first sea deployment was to the Caribbean with Carrier Air Wing Three aboard the USS Saratoga (CVA-60). Following the Caribbean workup cycle, the squadron left on its first major cruise to the Mediterranean in July 1969. Upon returning from that cruise, VAW-125 became the first East Coast squadron to take delivery of the new E-2B "Hawkeye".

VAW-125 became part of Carrier Air Wing One aboard the USS John F. Kennedy (CVA-67) in the early 70's. During this period, the Tigertails made several Mediterranean deployments. In 1975, VAW-125 deployed utilizing the newest version of the Hawkeye, the E-2C.

In December 1976, Vice Admiral Greer, COMNAVAIRLANT, presented VAW-125 with the COMNAVAIRLANT Battle "E" for readiness, the CINCLANTFLT "Golden Anchor" Award for career retention, and the CNO Safety "S" Award. VAW-125 is believed to be the first Navy unit to win all three awards in the same fiscal year.

In late 1977 and early 1978, the Tigertails were once again selected to operationally test and evaluate the newest version of the E-2C: the ARPS (Advanced Radar Processing System). In June of 1978 VAW-125 took "ARPS" to sea for the first time.

In June of 1979, The "Torchbearers" joined Carrier Air Wing Seventeen and began work-ups aboard the USS Forrestal (CV-59) in preparation for a Mediterranean deployment. On 27 November 1979, the squadron left for its eighth Mediterranean cruise and its first aboard the USS Forrestal (CV-59).

The Tigertails were presented with a unique opportunity in May 1981 when they were selected to provide range control services for the launch of the NASA space shuttle. Enthusiastically, the Tigertails traveled to Florida to participate in the historic event.

In May 1983, CVW-17 joined USS Saratoga (CV-60) for her post SLEP shakedown cruise in preparation for the upcoming Mediterranean deployment. During workups for the cruise, the squadron took three of the brand new TRAC-A E-2C's to Fallon, Nevada for testing of the APS-138 radar and the ALR-73 passive detection system in an overland environment.

While on routine deployment in October 1985, the Tigertails found themselves playing an instrumental role in the successful interception of the Egyptian Airliner carrying the hijackers of the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro. From January through March 1986, the squadron participated in Freedom of Navigation ops off the coast of Libya.

After a successful Mediterranean deployment concluding in November 1987, the Tigertails were honored by being selected to escort the USS Independence (CV 62) "Around the Horn" to San Diego, California in August 1988. CDR George H. Mears relieved CDR Don R. Newman as Commanding Officer on 26 May 1989.

Participating in various detachments including NAS Key West, Florida; NAS Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, Nellis AFB, Nevada and NAS Fallon, Nevada enabled the Tigertails to maintain its tactical expertise while also continuing a twenty one year period of mishap free aircraft operations.

As the new decade approaches, VAW-125 anticipates a new era for AEW. With REFTRA, advanced phase, and the six month Mediterranean cruise on the USS Saratoga all in 1990, the Tigertails expect to excell and be a strong competitor for the coveted "Battle E" award. As always, VAW-125 will remain ever vigilant and tactically proficient to protect against any threat that may arise in our future.