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

1990

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5750
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24 July 1991

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From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 125
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH), Washington Navy Yard, Washington, DC
Subj: COMMAND HISTORY FOR CY1990 (U)
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E
Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative
(4) Command History
(5) Command Photo
(6) Commanding Officer Photo
(7) Commanding Officer Biography
(8) (S) Operation Desert Shield Lessons Learned ltr dtd 15 Sep 90
(9) Red Sea AAW (FAAWC) Feedback and Lessons Learned ltr dtd 29 Dec 90
(10) (S) Operations Desert Shield Lessons Learned ltr dtd 10 Jan 91
(11) VAW-125 Lessons Learned Display Determination 90

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (11) are forwarded.

H. O. MCDANIEL

R317-378-896

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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 warning detection of approaching enemy forces and battle management. 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 (deployed).

c. Name of Commander: CDR H.O. McDANIEL 14 Nov 90-Present
CDR G.H. MEARS 26 May 89-14 Nov 90

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

e. Type and Number of Aircraft:

AA602	E-2C Hawkeye, Buno #158638
AA601	E-2C Hawkeye, Buno #158643
AA600	E-2C Hawkeye, Buno #158107
AA603	E-2C Hawkeye, Buno #158700

f. The four departments that make up the squadron are Operations, Administration, Safety and Maintenance. The squadron is manned by approximately 120 enlisted and 30 officer personnel.

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~~SECRET~~SQUADRON CHRONOLOGY FOR CY 1990

CVW-17 WEAPONS DET	NAS FALLON, NV	05 JAN- 28 JAN
INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE SURVEY	NORFOLK, VA	05 FEB
CQ	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)	12 FEB- 16 FEB
INPORT MAYPORT, FL	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)	17 FEB- 19 FEB
REFTRA/ADV PHASE	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)/ CCG-4	20 FEB- 28 MAR
INPORT ST THOMAS, V.I	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)/ CCG-4	29 MAR- 01 APR
REFTRA/ADV PHASE	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)/ CCG-4	02 APR- 16 APR
NAVOSH SURVEY	NORFOLK, VA	26 APR
ADMAT/PRE-CRUISE CORROSION INSPECTION	NORFOLK, VA	14 MAY- 17 MAY
FLEETEX 3-90	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)/ CCDG-8	07 JUN- 18 JUN
SOCEX	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)/ CCDG-8	23 JUN- 25 JUN
DEPARTED MAYPORT, FL MED 3-90 DEPLOYMENT	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)/ CCDG-8	07 AUG
TRANSIT/OPS	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)	08 AUG- 14 AUG
INCHOP/MED OPS	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)	14 AUG- 14 AUG
TRANSIT SUEZ CANAL (#1)	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)	23 AUG
DESERT SHIELD/ RED SEA AOR	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)/ CCDG-8/CTF 150.1	24 AUG- 20 SEP
	USS J F KENNEDY (CV 67)/ CCG-2/CTF 150.1	15 SEP- 20 SEP
TRANSIT SUEZ CANAL (#2)	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)/ CCDG-8/CTF-60	21 SEP

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MED OPS	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)/ CCDG-8/CTF-60	22 SEP- 23 SEP
INPORT IZMIR, TURKEY	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)/ CCDG-8/CTF-60	24 SEP- 27 SEP
DD-90/MED/AEGEAN	USS SARATOGA (CV 60) CCDG-8/CTF-60/CTF-502	28 SEP- 13 OCT
INPORT ISTANBUL,	USS SARATOGA (CV 60) CCDG-8/CTF-60	14 OCT- 22 OCT
TRANSIT SUEZ CANAL (#3)	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)/ CCDG-8/CTF-60	19 OCT-
DESERT SHIELD/ RED SEA AOR	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)/ CCDG-8/TG 150.1	24 OCT- 08 DEC
CHANGE OF COMMAND	VAW-125	14 NOV
MID-CRUISE CORROSION INSPECTION	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)/ CVW-17	18 NOV- 19 NOV
TRANSIT SUEZ CANAL (#4)	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)/ CCDG-8/CTF 60	09 DEC
EAST MED OPS	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)/ CCDG-8/CTF 60	10 DEC- 11 DEC
INPORT ANTALYA, TURKEY	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)/ CCDG-8/CTF 60	12 DEC- 17 DEC
EAST MED OPS	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)/ CCDG-8/CTF 60	17 DEC- 20 DEC
INPORT HAIFA, ISRAEL	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)/ CCDG-8/CTF 60	21 DEC- 27 DEC
EAST MED OPS	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)/ CCDG-8/CTF 60	27 DEC- 30 DEC
INPORT ANTALYA, TURKEY	USS SARATOGA (CV 60)/ CCDG-8/CTF 60	31 DEC

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NARRATIVE

Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 125 began 1990 at NAS Fallon, NV conducting a CVW-17 Weapons Det in preparation for the Med 3-90 Deployment onboard USS SARATOGA (CV 60). By the end of January the Air Wing was well on its way to working in concert with one another and the "Tigertails" developed a new appreciation of and genuine respect for the overland detection capability of the APS-138 radar. February saw the "Tigertails" leave for Mayport, Florida to join the USS SARATOGA (CV 60) and the rest of the Air Wing for Carrier Landing Qualifications as well as the commencement of Refresher Training (REFTRA). Throughout February and most of March the "Tigertails" and CVW-17 worked closely with the USS SARATOGA (CV 60), in the Puerto Rican Operating Area (PROA), enhancing ship and Air Wing interoperability. The "Advanced Phase" portion of the pre-deployment workup cycle came the first half of April after a short hiatus in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. Both the Air Wing and USS SARATOGA (CV 60) functioned as a well integrated team during high tempo carrier operations which climaxed in around-the-clock flying against "Orange Air" opponents. The "Tigertails" received well deserved praise for their outstanding air control and battle management skills. FLEETEX 3-90 gave the USS SARATOGA and her embarked Air Wing the opportunity to integrate with the remainder of the Med 3-90 battlegroup with each unit demonstrating their individual capabilities in a difficult battle scenario in the Northern Puerto Rican Operating Area. Completing FLEETEX on 18 June, the USS SARATOGA (CV 60) headed north to the Carolinas to participate in a short duration Special Operations (SOCEX) exercise with the Marines before returning to Mayport, Florida.

On August 7th, five days following the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, the "Tigertails" departed Mayport, Florida on a scheduled 6 month deployment as part of the Med 3-90 Battle Group. Transiting the Atlantic at flank speed, the battlegroup inchooped the Mediterranean on 14 August and was subsequently directed to proceed through the Suez Canal into the Red Sea to support multinational coalition forces in Operation Desert Shield and Maritime Interdiction Forces (MIF) as they enforce the United Nations Embargo against Iraq. The "Tigertails" along with CVW-17 practiced long range power projection procedures in preparation for possible combat action against Iraqi defense forces. The E-2C provided direct control of Air Wing strike assets during "Desert Triangle" and "Mirror Image" flights. The Hawkeye APS-138 overland radar detection capability against tactical aircraft at extended (100-200 nm) range proved to be superb and exceeded any previous expectation or demonstration in any environment. Operations with USAF E-3B AWACS and F-15 fighter aircraft served to reemphasize the importance of pursuing opportunities to conduct joint operations with sister services at every opportunity.

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Turning over responsibility for the defense of the Red Sea to the USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV 67), and her battlegroup, the USS SARATOGA (CV 60) steamed north through the Suez into the Aegean Sea to participate with NATO Forces in Display Determination 90. The "Tigertails" provided tactical training by conducting War-at-Sea exercises as well as many bombing exercises over Turkey and heavy ACM training. By mid-October, the task was complete and we journeyed south to resume our duties in the Red Sea as an integral part of Operation Desert Shield.

On 14 November 1990 CDR H. O. "CAL" McDaniel relieved CDR G. H. Mears as Commanding Officer of VAW-125 in the traditional Change of Command ceremony held at sea onboard USS SARATOGA (CV 60).

After more than a month and a half in the Red Sea VAW-125 Tigertails and the SARATOGA battlegroup transitted the Suez Canal for a record breaking fourth time on 9 December.

The Tigertails closed out the year by stopping in several well deserved liberty ports including Antalya, Turkey and Haifa Israel. On the evening of 22 December 1990, Tigertails distinguished themselves by their selfless response to their stricken shipmates during the tragic sinking of the ferry "Al Tovia" in Haifa Bay. Seventeen Tigertails were decorated or commended for their participation in the rescue and recovery of 32 of their shipmates and their continuing support of recovery operations during the tragedies aftermath.

VAW-125's high tempo 1990 schedule required the "Tigertails" to operate nearly 10 months away from homeport. The "Tigertails" flew an all Navy record 3,065 flight hours in 1990, the vast majority embarked in SARATOGA, despite having only four aircraft and five crews. The 1990 CNO Safety "S" was awarded for the outstanding commitment to readiness through safety throughout the year.

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COMMAND HISTORY

VAW-125, nicknamed the Tigertails and also known as the Torchbearers, was commissioned on 1 October 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 using 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 E-2C version: 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 (STS-2). 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 to prepare for the upcoming Mediterranean deployment. During work-ups for the cruise, the squadron took three of the brand new Trac-A E-2C's to Fallon, Nevada to test 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 when they successfully intercepted 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 operations off the coast of Libya.

In May 1986, the Tigertails were presented with the 1985 COMNAVAIRLANT Battle "E" and CNO Safety "S". In June 1986 the squadron was named the AEW Excellence Award winner. The squadron was notified in December 1986 that VAW-125 had been selected for another CINCLANTFLT "Golden Anchor" Award for career retention.

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The Tigertails finished a successful deployment in the Mediterranean on board the USS SARATOGA (CV 60) between June and November 1987.

VAW-125 participated in the transfer of the USS INDEPENDENCE (CV 62) "Around the Horn" to San Diego, California from mid August to October 1988. After completing the fleet transfer on 8 October 1988, the Tigertails participated in various tactical training missions during detachments to NAS Key West, Florida; NAS Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico and Nellis AFB, Nevada participating in Red Flag 3-89.

VAW-125 and Airwing SEVENTEEN rejoined the USS SARATOGA (CV 60) following her lengthy SLEP overhaul beginning with Refresher Training in August 1989, and began a Mediterranean/Red Sea deployment on 7 August 1990 in support of Operation Desert Shield and Sixth Fleet Operations. The future holds many challenges for the men of VAW-125. They will continue to meet those challenges and provide the fleet with the finest Airborne Early Warning and Battle Management services available.

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