



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

1/71 - 9/71 PH

IN REPLY REFER TO

VAW-126/11/fr
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From: Commanding Officer, Carrier Airborne Early Warning
Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-SIX
To: Chief of Naval Operations {OP-05D2}
Subj: Command History {OPNAV 5750-1} for 1 Jul 1971 to 31 Dec 1971
Ref: {a} OPNAVINST 5750.12B
Encl: {1} Chronology of Major Events
{2} Basic Narrative
{3} Documentary Annex

1. In accordance with reference {a}, enclosures {1}, {2}, and {3} are forwarded.


G. ORMOND, Jr.

Copy to:
Director of Naval History {OP-09B9} {w/o Annexes G and I to
encl {3}}
COMNAVAIRLANT Public Affairs {w/o encl {3}}

CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR EVENTS

2 July 1971. VAW-126 returned to Norfolk, Virginia aboard USS FORRESTAL {CVA-59}, completing its second Mediterranean deployment.

13-16 August 1971. With two VAW-126 pilots at the controls, BUNO 151702 became the first E-2 to fly across the Atlantic.

10 September - 21 October 1971. All VAW-126 E-2B aircraft were grounded while propellers were removed and inspected for areas of possible metal fatigue.

14 September 1971. Vice Admiral Robert L. Townsend, COMNAVAIRLANT, presented the NAVAIRLANT "Battle E" and the CNO Aviation Safety Award to VAW-126.

15-16 November 1971. VAW-126 deployed to NAS Jacksonville, Florida to operate as a component of "Orange" forces opposing the USS JOHN F. KENNEDY {CVA-67} in an Operational Readiness Exercise.

16-30 December 1971. VAW-126 participated in Exercise Blue Ax, a Second Marine Air Wing exercise designed to provide training in the use of MTDS {Link 11} and Link 4 {automatic interceptor control}.

Enclosure {1}

BASIC NARRATIVE

The second half of calendar year 1971 was essentially a period of shore-based training for VAW-126. USS FORRESTAL {CVA-59} returned the squadron to its Norfolk home on 2 July and shortly thereafter commenced a major overhaul at Norfolk Naval Shipyard which continued into 1972. The squadron, meanwhile, enjoyed a thirty day post deployment period during which most personnel took long-awaited leave. During this period, E-2B BUNO 149819 was delivered to the local Naval Air Rework Facility for repairs to its port wingtip and empennage, which had been severely damaged when, on one of its last days in the Mediterranean, FORRESTAL and an accompanying oiler collided during a refueling evolution. Later in July, another aircraft was transferred to VAW-125 in accordance with Wing TWELVE's policy of giving the greatest share of its limited aircraft resources to those squadrons with the shortest time remaining before their next deployments.

With no major commitments of its own in the late summer, the squadron was able to support two other operations of interest to the entire VAW community. Beginning in early August, small groups of maintenance personnel were ordered on a rotating basis to NAS Patuxent River, Maryland to support flight test operations evaluating the AIMS {IFF} installation in the E-2 and a new pilot-actuated cabin fire extinguisher system. The aircraft used for these tests, BUNO 152476, was transferred to VAW-126 at their conclusion in December. In addition, Commander Carrier Airborne Early Warning Wing TWELVE chose the squadron to ferry an E-2 across the Atlantic for delivery to USS AMERICA and VAW-124 as a replacement for one of the latter's aircraft which had lost a propeller in flight. VAW-126 received a freshly reworked aircraft, BUNO 151702, from NARF North Island, brought it to a fully "up" status, and test-flew it prior to its departure for the Mediterranean on 13 August. The flight, which involved stops at St. John's, Newfoundland; Lajes in the Azores; Rota, Spain; and Naples, was a history-maker of sorts in that it marked the first occasion on which an E-2 had been flown across the Atlantic. The pilot and co-pilot for the flight were CDR Floyd A. Friesen, Commanding Officer of VAW-126, and LT [REDACTED] respectively. The crewmen were LCDR [REDACTED] of the Wing TWELVE staff, AT1 [REDACTED], and AEE [REDACTED].

The investigation of the VAW-124 propeller-failure accident led to the decision to ground all E-2 and C-2 aircraft while their propellers were removed, inspected for corrosion or scratches, and repaired as necessary. Because it was not deployed and had no major operational or training commitments

Enclosure {2}

scheduled in the near future, VAW-126 was the last E-2 squadron on the East Coast to receive newly inspected props, and from 10 September to 21 October it conducted no flight operations whatsoever. It was thus necessary, prior to the resumption of flying, to conduct an extensive "Back in the Saddle" program of reviewing safety and operating procedures, and to fly intensively once aircraft did become available in order to bring aircrews back to their normal proficiency.

On 15 and 16 November the squadron was deployed to NAS Jacksonville as a part of Task Force 29, the "Orange" forces opposing the USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CVA-67) and other "Blue" units involved in an Operational Readiness Exercise prior to their Mediterranean cruise. The E-2's mission was primarily to aid in the search for "Blue" ships and vector strike aircraft against them. Unfortunately, due to the unexpected early termination of the exercise, the squadron flew only two sorties in what had been scheduled as an around-the-clock operation. During the latter half of December, VAW-126 aircraft served as Link 11 (Tactical Data System) terminals in Exercise Blue Ax, a Second Marine Air Wing (Cherry Point) exercise designed to provide a thorough test of the capabilities of the Marine Tactical Data System.

VAW-126 was awarded both the NAVAIRLANT Battle Readiness Efficiency "E" and the Chief of Naval Operations Safety Award for outstanding performance during the respective grading cycles ending 30 June 1971. Vice Admiral Robert L. Townsend, Commander Naval Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, presented both awards in a formal ceremony before all hands on 14 September 1971.

Enclosure {2}

E-2B AIRCRAFT ASSIGNED TO VAW-126
1 July - 31 December 1971

<u>Bureau Number</u>	<u>Status</u>
149819	On board entire period, but undergoing repairs at NARF Norfolk 6 July - 10 December.
151722	Transferred to VAW-125 27 July.
152476	Received 22 December from service test facility, NAS Patuxent River, Maryland.
152479	Received 22 October from VAW-124.
152482	Transferred to VAW-122 10 August 1971.
152488	On board entire period.