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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 for CY 82; submission of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12

Encl: (1) VAW-126 Command History For 1982
(2) Commanding Officer's Biography
(3) Senior Command and Aircraft Listing
(4) 1982 Battle "E" and AEW Excellence Award submission (U)
(5) End of Cruise Report (U)
(6) Periodic Operating Report Excerpts (Since Cruise) (U)

1. (U) In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) thru (6) are provided to supply the Command History for CY 1982 of Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY SIX.

J. W. BOOKHULTZ

Copy to:

→ Director of Naval History (w/o encls (4) through (6))

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VAW-126 COMMAND HISTORY FOR 1982

1982 constituted the most fruitful year for airborne early warning and command and control flight time in VAW-126's existence, as the squadron flew a record nearly 2,300 hours. In the past 14 years since commissioning, the Seahawks have flown nearly 24,000 hours accident free. Starting in January with a Mediterranean/Indian Ocean deployment with Carrier Air Wing THREE on the USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV-67), high points of the year included our February change of command, port visits to three continents including the squadron's first visit to Australia, and the awarding of the COMNAVAIRLANT Silver Anchor Award.

The Seahawks conducted refresher/carrier qualifications training in the Virginia - Cape Hatteras area (4-6 January), followed by an Atlantic crossing from the 7th through the 16th. We joined the Mediterranean SIXTH FLEET on 17 January just before our first port visit to Malaga, Spain, (17th-21st). Western Med flight operations (22-23 January) and the multi-battle group exercise NATIONAL WEEK, which pitted the "Blue" friendly forces (USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV-67) and USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN-69)) against the "Orange" adversaries (primarily USS NIMITZ (CVN-68)), finished out the month.

February brought us a new Commanding Officer, CDR John W. Bookhultz, with the change of command occurring aboard on the 2nd. RADM B. Fuller, Commander Carrier Group FOUR and a former Vietnam P.O.W., spoke to the squadron on the rewards of a Naval Career. Squadron goals were established by the new CO; (1) Maximum readiness and maximum risk reduction while doing our AEW mission; (2) Best possible material condition of aircraft, equipment, and spaces; (3) Constant training and documentation; (4) Retention of only quality personnel; (5) Drug and alcohol abuse prevention; and (6) Exemplary behavior especially ashore in foreign ports.

After transiting the Eastern Mediterranean and a historic transit of the Suez Canal on 3 February, and the Red Sea by 6 February, we then joined the SEVENTH FLEET and began operations in the Gulf of Aden on the 8th. After operating in the North Arabian Sea and conducting an exercise in carrier power projection ashore (BEACON FLASH) with the Omani Military Forces (22nd-23th) we were ready to transit to the Diego Garcia operating area.

Starting on 4 March, a dual-carrier operation GONZOEX 82-2 (a North Indian Ocean station named after a "muppet" puppet) went on with the USS CONSTELLATION (CV-64) until the 9th when we continued single carrier flight operations while enroute to Perth, Australia. This transit south was the first of four crossings of the Equator and the initiation of many "Pollywoq" Seahawks into the realm of Neptune as Shellbacks. A port visit to Perth lasted only six days (19 to 25 March) but will last much longer in the memory of Seahawks.

After getting back in the Diego Garcia area, the squadron conducted another "Connie"/JFK dual-CV operation, CONZO 82-3, (29 March to 1 April). On the 1st of April, the squadron celebrated it's 13th anniversary since commissioning. This was made doubly sweet since this date also marked our 13th year of accident-free operations, a record unequalled by any exclusively E-2 "Hawkeye" VAW squadron, and we are justly proud of our safety record. WEAPONS WEEK (2-5 April) was probably the most important exercise of the cruise and it highlighted the importance of the E-2 to the airwing. In it the E-2 was designated the range control officer, coordinating all airwing, carrier, surface exercises, and providing a close approximation of the workload which would probably be experienced in combat in a multi-threat three dimensional environment. Operations were conducted enroute to the North Arabian Sea area where it was time for Operation DOUBLE TEAM on the 16th, our Anti-Submarine Warfare involvement to sanitize an area where we were to subsequently operate. Another BEACON FLASH (82-5) exercise occurred on the 20th in the North Arabian Sea.

The month of May was significant for distinguished visitors. During a port visit to Mombasa, Kenya, at the beginning of May our officers were entertained at the home of the Commander of the Kenyan Navy, Brigadier E. Simon Mbilu. Following this port visit the squadron controlled a 25 aircraft air power demonstration and air show for the President of Somalia, Somalian Vice President, Minister of Defense, and Ministers of their Army, Navy, and Air Force.

We moved north on the 13th to the Gulf of Oman (called GOO-OPS!), to rendezvous with the U.S. Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable John Lehman. During his visit, he asked aloud if "the current CV aircraft mix provides an adequate number of E-2C aircraft." Another operation BEACON FLASH 82-6 rounded out a busy operational month.

During the deployment to the Indian Ocean, the USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV-67) and CVW-3 participated in a number of comprehensive exercises. VAW-126 provided command and control for all events and helped ensure the battle force met the demands each situation presented. The ship transited the Red Sea and Suez Canal early in June for a port visit in Haifa, Israel. However, just prior to our arrival, the Lebanon crisis erupted (Israeli invasion of Beirut) and we began Eastern Mediterranean operations instead, which allowed VAW-126 to observe the war from 150 miles and a balcony seat at 25,000 feet for several weeks. On the 21st, we made a three day port visit in Toulon, France. The multi-battle group exercise DAILY DOUBLE occurred on the 24th through the 26th. It was an exercise in maintaining local sea control, strike support, protection against Soviet surface and air attacks, and coordination of ashore air defense. After transiting the Western Mediterranean we made another port visit to Malaga, Spain.

The three day Coast de Sol port visit was particularly enjoyable and noteworthy. Some 150 male relatives of members of the airwing and ship's company joined us for liberty in Spain and to sail with us back to Norfolk. This unique experience for father's, brother's, son's, etc., was memorable for all of us and an experience they will never forget.

The second half of the year was just as busy and eventful. Our return to Norfolk on the 13th of July was followed by a well deserved two week standdown for the squadron. Determined to "stay up on a step" the squadron volunteered for all taskings. A back-in-the-saddle safety program was followed immediately with a large multi-service AAWEX (Anti-Air Warfare Exercise) at Beaufort, South Carolina. Involved were U.S. Army missile batteries, U.S. Air Force fighters and AWACS planes, U.S. Marine Corps fighters, and even the U.S. Coast Guard. Carrier qualifications on the USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV-67) (17-23 August), a missile exercise (18-19 August), Operation SEABAT (Fighter Air Intercept Control and E-3A/E-2C Interoperability), and finally, Chief of Naval Operations Project 547 in Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico ended the hectic month of August.

The month of September started and ended in Puerto Rico with Project 547 running through the 10th and three of the squadron's four aircraft returning to Roosevelt Roads for one month on the 30th to support Orange Air operations in a readiness exercise (war at sea) against the USS NIMITZ (CVN 68) and later in October against USS AMERICA (CV 66). During this period, the squadron became very involved with planning, executing, and controlling Soviet-style simulated massive aircraft raids on the carrier battle groups.

In November, another Operation SEABAT (2-5 November), Operation THUNDERBOLT II, and the FELIX INVITATIONAL with Fighter Squadron THIRTY-ONE kept us very busy. The FELIX INVITATIONAL involved fighter control and air combat maneuvers with an eye towards "real-world" situations and tactics. At the conclusion of THUNDERBOLT II, an anti drug traffic round-the-clock surveillance mission, the Seahawks provided the backdrop display aircraft and crew for a Presidential visit to Homestead Air Force Base. There, President Ronald Reagan made a major policy statement on combating illegal drugs in the United States. Seahawk aircraft had helped stem the flow of illegal drugs to our shores and in recognition and appreciation of this, Vice President George Bush (a former Navy pilot himself) sent the squadron a letter of commendation.

The SEAHAWKS 1982 tradition of excellence and achievement was capped off in December with a special and unique recognition. We were awarded the Commander Naval Air Force, Atlantic Fleet Silver Anchor Award for the best personnel retention program of all East Coast VAW squadrons.

The role of carrier based airborne early warning aircraft during the year of 1982 with VAW-126 E2-C Hawkeyes in Carrier Air Wing THREE aboard the USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV-67) for 6½ months, ashore in Norfolk, Virginia, for 5 months, and on shore detachments in excess of 2 months, demonstrated the vital role and contributions of Airborne Early Warning units in all areas of Composite Warfare Command (i.e. Anti-Air, Anti-Surface, and Anti-Submarine Warfare). We had completed 1550 hours on cruise and over 750 hours while shore based since the end of deployment in many and varied exercises, all without missing a single scheduled flight. The Seahawks approach their 14th accident-free year with the sure and certain knowledge that we of VAW-126 do things right.

VAW-126

Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-SIX is a major element of the Carrier Airborne Early Warning (VAW) forces of the United States Navy. The squadron's primary mission is to use long range radars installed in our aircraft to provide the Carrier Task Force Commander with the earliest possible warning of impending air attack, and using the computer based weapons system, defend the force by directing fighter aircraft to meet the threat. Moreover, the capabilities of our four Grumman E-2C HAWKEYE aircraft have proven to be exceptionally versatile, enabling the squadron's aircrews to play important roles in other varied operations, among them strike control, surface surveillance, and search and rescue missions.

Immediate Senior Command:

Administrative: COMCAEWING TWELVE

Operational: COMCARGRU THREE

Aircraft Assigned: Grumman E2-C "Hawkeye"

Bureau #'s: AC600 - 160988

AC601 - 160418

AC602 - 159497

AC603 - 159107