

1979



FLEET COMPOSITE SQUADRON EIGHT  
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From: Commanding Officer, Fleet Composite Squadron EIGHT  
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1. In compliance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted.



J. A. SKRZYPEK

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COMNAVAIRLANT  
COMTACSUPWING ONE  
Director of Naval History

## FLEET COMPOSITE SQUADRON EIGHT

### COMMAND HISTORY

#### COMMAND ORGANIZATION

Commander Daniel M. DUDA, USN, Commanding Officer during the first half of 1979, reported to and became the Executive Officer of Fleet Composite Squadron EIGHT (VC-8) in August 1979. Commander DUDA was relieved at Change of Command ceremonies by Commander John A. SKRZYPEK, USN, on 20 July 1979. Attending the Change of Command ceremonies were Rear Admiral A. K. KNOIZEN, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Caribbean and Captain John E. PAGANELLI, Commander, Fleet Tactical Support Wing ONE. Commander DUDA received orders to Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico. Commander George W. LUNDY assumed duties as Executive Officer 25 July 1979.

The squadrons aircraft inventory consists of six TA-4J SKYHAWK jets, five SH-3G SEA KING helicopters, and five P-2 NEPTUNE multiengine aircraft.

During 1979, VC-8 pilots logged 4,499 flight hours. In those hours, 1,155 flights were flown for training. Operational missions included logistics, airborne data link, target tow, sound focusing, standoff jamming, unmanned drone launch, medical evacuations and search and rescue flights. VC-8 closed out the year with a total of 22,295 accident free hours.

Total manning for Fleet Composite Squadron EIGHT during 1979 consisted 220 Enlisted personnel and 33 Officers.

FLEET COMPOSITE SQUADRON EIGHT COMMAND HISTORY--1979

JANUARY

January saw the beginning of heavy operations with VC-8 aircraft flying a total of 440.5 hours (A-4's - 100.1; P-2's - 124.0; H-3's - 216.4). These hours consisted of 102 operational flights, 20 training flights, 6 SAR flights, 31 logistic flights and 17 functional check flights. The operational flights were launched in support of the ships USS AMERICA, USS SEMMES, USS MAHAN, HMCS ATHABASKAN, HMCS SKENNA, HMCS MARGAREE, HMCS OTTAWA, USS SAMPSON, USS GUADALCANAL, USS RUSSEL, HMS SCYLLA, HNLMS FRIESLAND, AND HMCS ONONDAGA. VC-8 also assisted Carrier Air Wing 11, MAG-31, and FEWSG. Squadron aircraft were used for ADLs, TDUs, drone drops and recoveries, Trackexes, AAWEXes, and Vertreps.

FEBRUARY

During February, VC-8 continued operational support for READEX 1-79. A total of 365.0 hours were flown, with A-4's flying 104.6 hours, H-3's 82.3 hours and P-2's 178.1 hours. Included in February's operations were three SAR/MEDEVAC flights for a total of 6.4 hours.

Operational flights were flown to serve the following ships and Air Wings: USS MAHAN, USS AMERICA, USS RICKETTS, USS DEWEY, HMCS ALGONQUIN, CVW-7, CVW-11, and USS FARRAGUT.

MARCH

March signaled the completion of the operation period for Springboard 1979. A total of 294.9 flight hours were recorded with H-3's flying 143.3 hours, A-4's 98.3 hours, and P-2's with 53.3 hours.

Forty-eight operational flights were flown in support of the HMS MOHAWK, USS DALE, USS INDEPENDENCE, USS MacDONOUGH, USS EDSON, and CVW-6. Additionally, 50 logistic support flights were completed in support of the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility.

Four Medevac flights were accomplished during March, expending a total of 5.5 hours.

APRIL

April heralded the start of Comptuex 2-79. Support flights were provided for the following ships: USS LUCE, USS DALLAS, USS DUPONT, USS GARCIA, USS DETROIT, USS MCCANDLESS, USS DYESS, USS W.C. LAWE, USS C.P. CECIL, USS JOHNSTON, USS FURER, AND HNLMS FRIESLAND. A total of 236.8 hours were flown with the A-4's flying 117.3 hours, the H-3's 104.9 and the P-2's 44.6 hours. Seventy-four operational flights were conducted with an additional 50 flights being committed toward logistics support.

On 15 April, a VC-8 helo medevaced a SEAL diver suffering from the bends. Evacuated by hoist from a YFU transport craft, he was flown to decompression facilities at Roosevelt Roads.

MAY

VC-8 assisted the following units in May: HMCS ATHABASKAN, USS HAWKINS, USS INDEPENDENCE, USS CALIFORNIA, USS SEMMES, USS PETERSON, USS MISSISSIPPI, USS IWO JIMA, CVW-7 and VA-72. A total of 322.5 hours were flown with 51 operational and 59 logistic flights logged. The H-3's accounted for 137.3 hours, the P-2's flew 91.0 hours, and the A-4's recorded 83.6 hours.

On 11 May, a command inspection was held in the hangar bay for all VC-8 personnel. The inspecting officer was RADM A. K. KNOIZEN, Commanding Officer Naval Forces Caribbean. At the conclusion of the inspection, a plaque was presented to CDR DUDA citing 5 years of accident free flying.

JUNE

June was relatively quiet with 308.2 hours flown. The ships supported were the USS WAINWRIGHT, USS BOWEN and HNLMS GRONIGEN. Twenty-one operational flights and 52 logistics flights were completed. The H-3's flew 121.3 hours, the P-2's flew 85 hours and A-4's logged 83.4 hours.

During this month, 5 SAR/MEDEVAC flights were conducted. Of the 25 hours expended for these flights, 22 were used solely for 2 long range P-2 SAR flights. Operating near Haiti, these flights were searching for a missing boat.



JULY

VC-8 flew support flights for READEX 2-79. Units being provided support were USS CONNOLE, USS TEXAS, USS PERRY, USS NICHOLSON and USS WAINWRIGHT. Of the 354.3 hours flown, the H-3's flew 146.1, the A-4's 124.2 hours, and the P-2's 84.0 hours. Seventy-three operational flights were conducted between the latter 2 aircraft with the H-3's flying 63 logistics flights

Commander Daniel M. DUDA was relieved by Commander John A. SKRZYPEK as Commanding Officer of Fleet Composite Squadron EIGHT during the Change of Command Ceremony on 20 July 1979.

AUGUST

In August the operational tempo quickened as VC-8 accrued 417.9 hours. Services were provided for the USS NICHOLSON, USS KOELSCH, USS NIMITZ, USS CALIFORNIA, and CVW-8. Ninety-three operational and 56 logistics missions were flown. For the first time VC-8 provided aircraft intercept services for the 140th Aircraft Warning and Control Squadron of the Puerto Rican Air National Guard. For this mission, VC-8 A-4's were vectored by the 140th AWC to provided controller training.

## SEPTEMBER

Hurricane Frederick aside, things were relatively quiet. Services were provided to the USS JOHN ROGERS and the USS HART. Of the 406.5 hours flown, H-3's again garnered the top spot by flying 181.8 hours, A-4's flew 139.5 hours and P-2's flew 85.2 hours. Sixty-three logistics flights and 19 operational flights were flown. Ninety-three training flights were flown to allow pilots and aircrews to hone their flying skills for the upcoming months of operation.

## OCTOBER

VC-8 flew a record 573.4 hours. Services were provided for the following units: HNLMS GRONIGEN, CVW-7, CVW-17, USS FORRESTAL, USCGC HAMILTON, USS FISKE, USS JOSEPHUS DANIELS, USS VALDEZ, HMS JUPITER, USS DAHLGREN, and RFS KERSAINT. One hundred twelve operational flights were conducted with an additional 66 logistics runs flown. The H-3 contingent of the squadron flew 251.2 hours, the A-4's expended 175.5 hours, and the P-2's flew 146.7 hours.

During October, 4 medevacs were flown with a total hours expenditure of 12.9 hours. In October, 6 officers accepted augmentation as regular officers in the United States Navy. They were LTJG OLSON, LTJG MORET, LTJG HERBERT, LTJG GHIO, LTJG POCALYKO, and LTJG DORMER.

## NOVEMBER

November was a heavy month with the majority of commitments devoted to non-ship units. Services were provided to the USS SELLERS, USS MOOSEBRUGGER, the missile school ship USS KING, Naval Special Warfare Group TWO, Marine 2nd Force RECON Company, CVW-1, and the Puerto Rican Air National Guard. Of the 406.2 hours flown, the H-3's flew 159.1 hours, A-4's flew 144.8 hours, and the P-2's accounted for 102.3 hours. Forty-three operational and 60 logistics flights were flown.

One SAR and MEDEVAC missions apiece was flown in November.

## DECEMBER

Despite the fact that operations were curtailed for the latter half of the month, VC-8 flew an impressive 342.3 hours. Fifty-eight operational and 75 logistics flights were recorded in support of the following units: USS E. MCDONNELL, USS KING, USS BARNEY, USS COMPASS ISLAND, CVW-1 and HLMS AMSTERDAM. The H-3's flew the lions share of flights with 214.6 hours, the A-4's flew 92.5 hours, and the P-2's logged 35.2 hours. On 3 December VC-8 H-3's conducted medevac operations as a result of the SABANA SECA terrorist attack.

On 14 December VC-8 H-3's conducted an extensive overwater SAR operation for an accident involving a downed F-14 and its crew.