

FLEET COMPOSITE SQUADRON EIGHT
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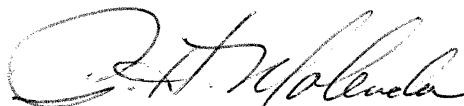
From: Commanding Officer, Fleet Composite Squadron EIGHT
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)

Subj: Command History

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12B

Encl: (1) Command History 1975

1. In compliance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is hereby submitted.



P. H. MOLESDA

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Director of Naval History
COMNAVAIRLANT
COMFAIRCARIB
COMTACSUPWING ONE



FLEET COMPOSITE SQUADRON EIGHT

COMMAND HISTORY 1975

COMMAND ORGANIZATION

Commander Stephen B. SLOANE, USN, Commanding Officer during the first half of 1975, reported to Fleet Composite Squadron EIGHT (VC-8) as Executive Officer on 11 July 1973. Commander SLOANE assumed command of the squadron on 14 June 1974, and was relieved by Commander Paul H. MOLENDI, USN, on 3 July 1975. In attendance during the change of command ceremonies were Rear Admiral D. F. EMERSON, Commander, South Atlantic Force and Captain A. W. HOWARD, Jr., Commander, Fleet Tactical Support Wing ONE. Commander SLOANE received orders to Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island. Commander Keith A. BOATRIGHT, USN, assumed duties as Executive Officer of VC-8 on 3 July 1975.

VC-8 aircraft logged 3,125 flight hours in support of the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility (AFWTF) during 1975. Assigned missions included logistics, airborne data link, target tow, adversary services, radar tracking exercises, unmanned drone launch and recovery evolutions, medical evacuations, and search and rescue flights. In addition, VC-8 flew 1,102 hours conducting pilot and aircrew training, for a total of 4,409 flight hours for the year.

A significant change in VC-8's assigned mission occurred with the transfer of all US-2C aircraft. This resulted in a loss of the capability of providing low speed banner tow services.

An organizational change occurred 1 August 1975 with the formation of the Helicopter Aircrew Division, whose primary mission is training of SH-3G aircrewmembers in drone recovery, and search and rescue procedures. Through the efforts of this Division, the overall capabilities of squadron helicopter aircrewmembers have greatly improved.

VC-8 became a member of Fleet Tactical Support Wing ONE during 1975. The squadron's administrative chain of command now includes COMTACSUPWING ONE, while operational control remains with Commander, Fleet Air Caribbean.

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

JANUARY

January marked the beginning of Operation Springboard,

Enclosure (1)

traditionally one of the largest exercises of the year. VC-8 provided a variety of services to USS TALBOT, HMS ARK ROYAL, HMS TARTAR, USS FAIRFAX COUNTY, HNLMS LINDBERG, USS NEWPORT, USS PAPAGO, and USS FRANCIS MARION. In addition to the 262 flight hours flown in conjunction with Operation Springboard, the squadron flew 114 hours of pilot and aircrew training flights.

Also in January, VC-8 hosted COMNAVAIRLANT and COMFAIR-CARIB at a command briefing that included comprehensive discussions of operational readiness, aircraft inventory, personnel manning and station support problems.

FEBRUARY

Operation Springboard concluded near the end of the month, with VC-8 aircraft providing 302 flight hours in support of HMS FEARLESS, HMS OLDEEN, USS JESSE L. BROWN, USS SARFIELD, USS RICHARD E. KRAUS, and HMS ORACLE.

Inspector General of the Navy, RADM SHEPHERD, visited VC-8, received a briefing and inspected squadron spaces.

An extensive questionnaire survey was administered to squadron personnel by members of the Jacksonville Detachment of the Human Resources Management Development Center.

MARCH

LANTREADEX 2-75, the first Atlantic Fleet readiness exercise of the calendar year, took place between 10 March and 27 March. VC-8 flew 459 flight hours of which 380 were operational and devoted primarily to providing services to USS INCHON, USS SHREVEPORT, USS MOUNT WHITNEY, USS SAGINAW, and USS RICKETTS.

The squadron also hosted a detachment from the 845th Royal Navy Squadron, operating Wessex V helicopters. The detachment was deployed on the LPD HMS FEARLESS, and awaited the arrival of their mother ship the LPH HMS HERMES, which carried on board H. R. H. Prince CHARLES.

APRIL

While no major exercise was scheduled during this month, VC-8 aircraft continued to provide services for special projects; 270 operational hours were flown, the majority of which were for USS FARRAGUT and USS CALIFORNIA.

COMTACSUPWING ONE took VC-8 under its wing along with VC-10 on 1 April.

MAY

The squadron flew a total of 192 operational flight hours in support of FGN LUEGENS, HMS GUERKA, HMS MINERVA, and USS TATTNALL. Although this was a slow month for flight operations, considerable effort was dedicated to moving the squadron from Hangar 200 to Hangar 1625. The new location resulted in greatly improved working spaces and closer proximity to AIMD, thereby providing an environment for improved liaison and efficiency.

Captain A. W. HOWARD, Commander, Fleet Tactical Support Wing ONE visited VC-8 for the purpose of observing operations and assisting in resolving problem areas.

May marked the completion of one year and over 4000 hours of accident free flying.

JUNE

During the month, VC-8 flew a total of 350 operational flight hours, working much of this time with the USS HARRY E. YARNELL.

VC-8's last US-2C departed for the boneyard at Davis Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. On the same day, the squadron received three TA-4J aircraft from VA-45 in Jacksonville, Florida.

JULY

After a slow start in observance of the Change of Command ceremonies, the squadron flew a total of 334 flight hours, 219 of which were operational in support of HNLMS UTRECHT, USS SELLERS, HMS NUBIAN, and USS DAHLGREN.

AUGUST

Operational commitments were heavy as a result of involvement in CARIBREX 1-76. In addition to CARIBREX, services were provided USS PAUL, USS CHARLESTON, USS CONE, and the USS VESOLE. VC-8 hosted VC-10, VC-13, and VAQ-33. A total of 270 operational flight hours were flown.

SEPTEMBER

VC-8 helicopters were involved in multiple search and rescue operations in the wake of hurricane ELOISE. Working in marginal weather conditions, VC-8 crews worked to evacuate people stranded by the flooding and mud slides on Puerto Rico.

The squadron logged 110 hours of training flights and 158 operational hours.

OCTOBER

Parachute re-qualifications for SEAL team members, external hoisting, placement of a Threat Platform Simulator (TPS) by helicopter and AFWTF support services for the USS COONTZ, USS CONYNGHAM and the USS JONAS INGRAM accounted for the major portions of the squadron's 227 operational flight hours.

NOVEMBER

VC-8 was privileged to have Brigadier General Charles BLAIR, USAF (RET), and his wife, Maureen O'Hara Blair, as guests of honor at the VC-8 Dining Out held at the Naval Station Roosevelt Roads Officers' Club.

Services were provided for USS MCCLOY with 167 hours flown on operational commitments.

DECEMBER

A DC-130 from VC-3, Naval Air Station, North Island, California, assisted VC-8 because of maintenance problems with the squadron's venerable P-2 aircraft.

Nevertheless, a total of 104 pilot and aircrew training hours and 278 total operational flight hours were flown.

VC-8 had a Children's Christmas Party for Squadron families. Also, children from a local orphanage were invited to see Santa Claus. Accompanying Santa, was Mrs. Claus, who brought many presents for the children.

SPECIAL TOPICS

VC-8 played a significant role in training and operational readiness exercises conducted by naval units deploying to the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility. In support of these

exercises, VC-8 air-launched 138 BQM-34A/E unmanned drones and recovered 153 (the remainder were ground-launched). Twenty-one AQM-37A drones were air-launched and 61 TDU-22 towed target flights were flown. Naturally, these figures represent only a portion of the total effort put forth by Fleet Composite Squadron EIGHT (VC-8) personnel for the year.

A total of 134 enlisted and officer personnel checked into VC-8 during the year, while 147 detached during that time. This required a large amount of training for the new personnel to achieve necessary qualifications.

The squadron retention rate for CY-75 was 39 percent first term and 88 percent career.

VC-8 sponsored many sports activities during the year from football to the championship female volleyball team. As a result of its fine showing in intramural sports, VC-8 became the winner of the ADM Ralph A. OFSTIE Trophy for excellence in sports.

VC-8 completed Phase I of the Navy's Human Goals Program which included Equal Opportunity/Race Relations seminars for squadron personnel, and launched into a vigorous program to complete Phase II.