



FLEET COMPOSITE SQUADRON EIGHT
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COMNAVAIRLANT
COMTACSUPWING ONE
Director of Naval History

FLEET COMPOSITE SQUADRON EIGHT COMMAND HISTORY--1978

JANUARY

January saw the beginning of Springboard 1978 with VC-8 aircraft flying a total of 339.1 hours (A-4's - 121.9; P-2's - 48.8; H-3's - 168.4). These hours consisted of 77 operational flights, 24 training flights, one SAR flight, 58 logistic flights and eleven functional check flights. The operational flights were launched in support of the USS EISENHOWER, USS FORRESTAL, USS PAUL, HMCS ASSINIBOINE, HMCS MARGAREE, HNLMS DRENTH and HMCS HURON. VC-8 also assisted Carrier Air Wing 7 and Carrier Air Wing 17. Squadron aircraft were used for ADLs, TDUs, drone drops and recoveries, trackexes, AAWEXes and vertreps.

During the heavy operations, 15 much-needed enlisted personnel checked in and one officer reported aboard. Leaving the squadron were six enlisted persons and two officers.

During January, four members of the squadron (two officers and two enlisted) received the Igor Sikorsky Winged "S" award for a life-saving rescue in a Sikorsky helicopter.

FEBRUARY

As far as flying goes, February was an even bigger month for VC-8. A total of 492.6 hours were flown, with A-4's flying 215.3 hours, H-3's 206.5 hours and P-2's added 70.8 hours.

Operational flights were flown to serve the following ships and Air Wing: HMS FEARLESS, HMCS NIPIGON, HNLMS DRENTHE, USS PAUL, HMCS HURON, HMCS ANNAPOLIS, HMCS ONONDAGA, USS MACDONOUGH, HMCS IROQUOIS, USS LUCE, HNLMS OVERIJESSEL, HNLMS TROMP, USS WAINWRIGHT, USS TRIPPE, USS TEXAS, USS DALE, USS EISENHOWER, ARV CARABOBO, ARV MORAN, ARV CLEMENTE and CVW 7. VC-8 also hosted VAQ-33 during February.

On 8 February 1978, a crew of five (two pilots and three crewmen) flew to NAS Jacksonville, Florida to pick up a DP-2H aircraft. This brought to six the number of P-2 aircraft in use by VC-8. The crew arrived back at Fleet Composite Squadron EIGHT on 12 February.

Once again, four members of VC-8 received the Igor Sikorsky Winged "S" award for a life-saving rescue. On 19 December 1977, LTJG Tom ROSE, ENS Robert HERBERT, AMS1 Russell MAXHAM and AMS2 Hector RODRIGUEZ were involved in saving the lives of five people after the crash of an Islander plane south of the island of Vieques. The aforementioned crew received the award on 27 February 1978.

Checking in during February were one officer and seven enlisted men. One officer and five enlisted men left the unit.

MARCH

As the end of "Springboard--78" came around, the number of flight hours put in by pilots and aircrewmembers decreased. H-3's flew 134.5 hours, A-4's flew 109.2 hours and P-2's contributed 73.8 hours for a total of 317.5 hours being flown by VC-8 aircraft. Included in these hours were one SAR and three MEDEVACs.

The ships, air group, and squadron assisted by VC-8 were USS VIRGINIA, USS TEXAS, USS PHARRIS, USS PAUL, FGS LUETJENS, HNLMS TROMP, Marine Air Group 31 and VAW 123.

On 31 March 1978, a command inspection, in summer dress uniform, was held in the hangar bay for all VC-8 personnel. The inspecting officer was CDR R. W. CHANDLER, Commanding Officer of Fleet Composite Squadron EIGHT. The purpose of the inspection was to prepare personnel for an upcoming ADMAT inspection during April 1978.

In March, one officer and five enlisted personnel checked aboard. Leaving the squadron were five enlisted men.

APRIL

Flight time for VC-8 pilots and aircrewmembers decreased during this month. A total of 273.6 hours were flown by the squadron. H-3's contributed most of the flight time with 123.4 hours; P-2's, flying most of the month with only one plane captain, had 71.9 hours; and A-4's had 78.3 hours. 200.6 of these hours were used for logistics, TDU's, SAR/MEDEVAC, and raids. 57.2 hours were used for training flights and 15.8 hours for functional check flights.

Air support was also provided for: USS MULLINNIX, USS BYRD, HMS ANTELOPE, HMS ARK ROYAL, HNLMS DRENTHE, CTF 21, and CVW 3.

VC-8 had two major life-saving flights during April; one by P-2 and one by H-3.

On 5 April 1978, a VC-8 helo crew was involved in saving the lives of seven people when an Antilles Airboat crashed in the Caribbean.

The following day, a P-2 crew began a search for three persons in a small boat. The search was carried on the next day by another crew, which spotted the lost boat. The men who had been out for five days were in good health.

The ADMAT Inspection was held on 24 April with several divisions in VC-8 receiving "outstanding" or "excellent" ratings. There were no major discrepancies noted.

Four enlisted personnel checked into VC-8 and seven checked out during April.

MAY

A total of 359.8 hours were flown during May. These hours consisted of 15 operational flights, 64 training sorties, 13 functional check flights, 77 logistics, and two MEDEVAC's. During May, H-3's flew 186.8 hours, P-2's flew 82.6 hours, and A-4's flew 90.4 hours.

Ships assisted by our aircraft were USS FRISKE, HMS ARK ROYAL, HMS ANTELOPE, and HMS DEVONSHIRE.

Two persons were airlifted by VC-8 helicopters in May. One civilian and one Marine from Camp Garcia were aided during MEDEVAC operations.

Seven persons were received on-board VC-8 during the month; four were officers and three were enlisted personnel. Leaving the squadron in May were three officers and seven enlisted persons.

JUNE

A total of 334 hours were flown by VC-8 aircraft during the month of June. A-4's flew 117.9 hours; P-2's contributed 66.5 of the hours; and H-3's had a total of 149.6 hours. 7.9 of the hours were SAR/MEDEVAC flights; one was flown by a P-2 and one by an H-3.

Operational flights supported the following ships and Air Wing: USS CARON, USS FORREST SHERMAN, USS MONTGOMERY, USS TALBOT, USS KING, USS PAUL, USS COONTZ, HNLMS UTRECHT, and 2nd MAW.

On 15 June a P-2 was called out to search for an overdue boat. The pilots and navigator were LCDR Marty MERRICK, LT Jim JETER, and LCDR Bob BURROWS. AD3 Mike LYNCH, AT1 Ed RICHARDSON, AD3 Mike KEENEN, ATAN Robert VANDAGRIFF, and ADAN Ken DOKE were the participating aircrew. The crew spent 6.5 hours looking for the survivors, who were eventually found in Grand Turk, and were returned home unharmed.

LT Martin FOX, LTJG Robert HERBERT, AD1 Earl SHEPLEY, and ADAN Brian DONIA were out searching for torpedoes when they were called to rescue an Antilles Airboat that had crashed near St. Thomas. The crew spotted the Airboat, but the passengers were rescued by a civilian boat at the scene.

Checking in during June were one officer and two enlisted personnel.

JULY

In July, VC-8 aircraft flew 297.4 total hours. The A-4's total was 94.0 hours, with 70.6 hours for the P-2's, and 132.8 H-3 hours. These totals includes 3.9 SAR/MEDEVAC hours.

VC-8 flew operational flights in support of these ships and Air Wing: USS MCDONNEL, USS BOWEN, USS DUPONT, USS COONTZ, USS PRATT, USS ARTHUR V. RADFORD, USS DYESS, and CVW3.

On 3 July an SH-3G, Saltspray #22, was dispatched to St. Croix Airport to transport two injured men from the USS COONTZ. The pilots were LT Wayne WALSEMANN and LTJG Robert HERBERT, crewmembers AD1 Earl SHEPLEY and AMS1 Russell MAXHAM assisted in the mission.

On 23 July 1978, LT Wayne WALSEMANN, LTJG Dean PRICE, AMH2 Hector RODRIGUEZ, and ADAN Taylor KENNEDY were alerted for a MEDEVAC involving a diver working off the Vieques shoreline. The crew transported him from Sun Bay to Roosevelt Roads Hospital.

The flight crew of Saltspray #25 transported a heart patient from Roosevelt Roads Hospital to the San Juan VA Hospital on 31 July. The aircraft's pilots were LT Steve CAREY and ENS Mike POCALYKO. Crewmembers were ADAN Brian DONIA and AMH1 Randy SHIELDS. This MEDEVAC mission was covered in Spanish by San Juan's Channel 2 news program.

During the month of July one officer and 7 enlisted personnel checked aboard.

Commander Ralph W. CHANDLER was relieved by Commander Daniel M. DUDA as Commanding Officer of Fleet Composite Squadron EIGHT during the Change of Command Ceremony on 13 July 1978.

AUGUST

A total of 377.4 hours were flown by VC-8 aircraft during the month of August. A-4's flew 149.4 hours; P-2's contributed 66.3 of the hours; and H-3's had a total of 152.5 hours.

Operational flights were flown in support of the following ships and squadrons: USS R. K. TURNER, VA-87, VF-142, CTF 28, USS SAMPSON, and USS SARATOGA.

On 4 August 1978 an SH-3G, Saltspray #20, was dispatched to USS VIRGINIA (CGN 38) to airlift a commander with an injured left arm. The pilots were LT Wayne WALSEMANN and LTJG Dean PRICE; crewmembers AD3 Ronald MILLER and ADAN James GOWANS assisted in the mission.

Checking in during the month of August were two officers and six enlisted personnel. Four officers and ten enlisted personnel left VC-8.

SEPTEMBER

A total of 320.9 hours were flown by VC-8 aircraft during the month of September. A-4's flew 119.6 hours; P-2's contributed 81.9 of the hours; and H-2's had a total of 119.4 hours.

Operational flights were flown in support of the following ships and Air Wing: USS HEWES, USS MAHAN, USS EISENHOWER, USS CALIFORNIA, USCGC GALLITIN, CVW-7, USS O. H. PERRY, USS R. K. TURNER.

On 14 September 1979 a VC-8 helicopter, Saltspray #23, was called out to transport a sailor with lacerations on his leg. The pilots were LT Troy DEGROOT, and LTJG Dennis FANDEY; crewmembers were ADAN Brian DONIA and AMSAN Mitchell AMUNDSON.

Saltspray #21 was, while on a logistics run, diverted on a Search and Rescue mission for a lost scuba diver who had been swept away in the current. The diver was located and rescued by pilots LT Steve CAREY, and LTJG Milady BLAHA; crewmembers were AMS1 Russell MAXHAM and ADAN John BERGERON.

Checking in during the month of September were one officer and eight enlisted personnel. Leaving the squadron were three officers and eight enlisted men.

OCTOBER

375.4 operational hours were flown by VC-8 aircraft during the month of October. Squadron A-4's flew 162.1 hours; P-2's had 55.5 hours; and H-3's 157.8 hours.

Operational flights supported the following ships and Air Wings: USS MAHAN, USS MISSISSIPPI, USS TEXAS, USS EISENHOWER, CVW-6, and CVW-7.

Eight enlisted personnel checked in during the month of October, while one officer and eight enlisted personnel departed the unit.

NOVEMBER

VC-8 aircraft accumulated 270.4 flight hours during the month of November. A-4's had 105.5 hours; P-2's flew 41.3 of the hours; and H-3's amassed 123.6 hours.

Operational and support flights were flown for the following ships and Air Wing: USS COONTZ, USS FARRAGUT, HMS IROQUOIS, USS JOHNSTON, USS MAHAN, USS MISSISSIPPI, and CVW-8.

Checking in during the month of November were one officer and six enlisted personnel. One officer and nine enlisted personnel left during the month.

DECEMBER

In December, a total of 314.8 hours were flown by VC-8 aircraft. A-4's flew 93.5 hours; P-2's contributed 93.7 of the hours; and H-3's had a total 127.6 hours.

Operational flights supported the USS MAHAN, CVW-8, and CAG-8.

On 3 December 1978 an SH-3G, Saltspray #22, was dispatched to Vieques' Mosquito Pier to pick up a patient with respiratory arrest and transfer him to Roosevelt Roads Naval Hospital. Pilots were LT Wayne WALSEMANN and LTJG Milady BLAHA; crewmembers were AMS3 Drazen GARDILCIC and AMSAN Mitchell AMUNDSON.

Checking in during the month of December were one officer and ten enlisted men. Leaving the squadron were one officer and eleven enlisted personnel.