



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HELICOPTER MINE COUNTERMEASURES SQUADRON FOURTEEN (HM-14)
UNIT 60180
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From: Commanding Officer, Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 14
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Subj: SUBMISSION OF 1997 COMMAND HISTORY

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Encl: (1) 1997 Command History for HELMINERON FOURTEEN (HM-14)
(2) Narrative Summary
(3) HM-14 Change of Command Program of 7 Sep
(4) Photo of HM-14 Sikorsky MH-53E Sea Dragon Helicopter

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (4) are submitted.


R. K. YOUNG

1997 COMMAND HISTORY FOR HELMINERON FOURTEEN (HM-14)

HM-14 is based at Naval Air Station Norfolk, Virginia. The Squadron reports operationally to Commander, Mine Countermeasures Squadron Two (MCMRON 2) and administratively to Commander, Helicopter Tactical Wing, U.S. Atlantic Fleet (COMHELTACWINGLANT). HM-14 combines all the capabilities and responsibilities associated with an Airborne Mine Countermeasures (AMCM) squadron to include mission systems and equipment and the computer hardware and software required for conducting mine hunting/minesweeping operations. HM-14 provides a rapid response AMCM capability worldwide. The squadron is manned to operate and maintain twelve Sikorsky MH-53E Sea Dragon aircraft, numerous minesweeping and minehunting devices and related equipment, and provides expertise required for planning, executing and evaluating the effectiveness of a complete minesweeping operation. CDR J.D. Scott was relieved by CDR R.K. Young as the Commanding Officer on 5 September 1997. CDR B.F. Dagnall assumed the duties of Executive Officer.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS, 1 JANUARY - 31 DECEMBER 1997

January

15-30 - Eight aircraft embarked aboard USS INCHON for GOMEX 97-1

February

27 - HM-14 deployed in support of EURO 97

March

1 - HM-14 embarked 8 aircraft onboard the USS INCHON for EURO 97 deployment. HM-14 DET 3 (4 aircraft) remained in Norfolk.
14-17 - Conducted VOD operations aboard USS INCHON

April

4 - Conducted VOD operations aboard USS INCHON
22-30 - Conducted NATO exercise (BLUE HARRIER 97) in the Kattegat Straits near Denmark

May

8 - DET 3 provided external lift support of a grounded buoy to USCG
12-16 - Conducted VOD operations aboard USS INCHON

- 20-29 - Conducted NATO exercise (OLIVES VERTES 97) in the Mediterranean Sea
- 22-24 - Conducted VOD operations aboard USS INCHON
- 22 - DET 3 provided VOD support to USS ROOSEVELT

June

- 3-11 - Conducted NATO exercise (ALCUDRA 97) off the Spanish Balearic Islands
- 6-26 - Conducted VOD operations aboard USS INCHON
- 12 - DET 3 provided VOD support to USS EISENHOWER
- 13 - DET 3 provided VOD support to USS STENNIS
- 18 - DET 3 provided VOD support to USS WASP

July

- 5 - Conducted VOD operations aboard USS INCHON
- 12 - DET 3 provided VOD support to USS WASP
- 19 - HM-14 eight aircraft deployment returned from EURO 97

August

- 15 - Provided VOD support to USS STENNIS
- 18-22 - Completed Mine Warfare Readiness Certification Inspection and NATOPS Evaluation
- 18 - Provided personnel support to JTFX 97-3
- 25-29 - Completed Quality Review

September

- 5 - HM-14 change of command

October

- 4 - Provided VOD support to USS GEORGE WASHINGTON
- 9 - Conducted paradrops with SEALS
- 23 - Conducted paradrops with SEALS
- 24 - Participated in COMHELTACWINGLANT change of command

November

- 1 - Conducted C-5 loadout with the Air Mobility Command (AMC)
- 15-20 - Conducted VULCANEX 98-1, in the VACAPES operating area.
- 19 - HM-14 soccer team wins COMNAVBASE Soccer Tournament

December

- 5 - Provided VOD support to USS MOUNT WHITNEY
- 9 - HM-14 volunteers assisted in the American Red Cross Holiday Helper Program
- 13 - Provided VOD support to USS WHIDBEY ISLAND
- 15 - Conducted paradrops with SEALS
- 19 - Provided VOD support to USS SAIPAN

NARRATIVE OF EVENTS

January

GOMEX 97-1, a COMINEWARCOM-hosted exercise, was conducted as the final workup for EURO 97 and emphasized training on MK-103 and AN/AQS-14A mine sweeping/hunting systems. Eight aircraft embarked aboard USS INCHON (MCS-12) and completed 316.3 flight hours (111.2 embarked hours). HM-14 also conducted the fleet evaluation of the prototype Shallow Water Influence Minesweeping System (SWIMS), supporting the development and evaluation of advanced technology magnetic minesweeping systems. This exercise proved that eight aircraft is the optimum number for embarked AMCM operations. Significant training was conducted for flight deck personnel in the simultaneous handling of a large number of aircraft.

The squadron conducted routine training and operational flights logging 435.8 flight hours for the month.

February

The squadron conducted routine training and operational flights logging 236.7 flight hours for the month.

March

HM-14 embarked onboard the USS INCHON (MCS-12) in Ingleside, TX with eight aircraft, 414 personnel, and over 400,000 pounds of weapons systems and equipment. This evolution validated AMCM operational wartime loading aboard the Mine Countermeasures Command Ship. The squadron deployed in support of EURO 97 under the operational command of Commander Mine Countermeasures Squadron Two (COMCMRON TWO).

The squadron conducted routine training and operational flights logging 373.2 flight hours for the month while enroute to the North Atlantic.

April

Exercise Blue Harrier 97, NATO's largest and most comprehensive mine warfare exercise, was conducted in the Kattegat Straits near Denmark under the direction of Commander Baltic Approaches (COMBALTAP). Exercise participants included mine warfare forces from Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as Standing Naval Force Channel.

During exercise Blue Harrier 97, limited bottom mapping of the Southern Kattegat was successfully conducted prior to the start of the exercise. Later comparisons of the same area during the exercise identified new contacts which were quickly identified as probable mines. Bottom mapping offers the potential of significantly reducing the number of non-mine contacts, allowing EOD efforts to be efficiently focused on the threat.

During the exercise, HM-14 conducted AN/AQS-14A, MK-103, and SWIMS missions.

Accomplishments included: completing 66 of 68 scheduled sorties, flew 270.9 flight hours and 179.4 tow hours, covered 1854.1 linear miles and 198.2 square miles, and detected 8 mines, including 3 W.W.II mines which had gone undetected for over 50 years.

The squadron conducted routine training and operational flights logging 423.3 flight hours for the month.

May

Exercise Olives Vertes was the mine warfare portion of the larger integrated NATO exercise Iles Dior conducted in the Mediterranean Sea off the southern coast of France under the direction of Commander Mediterranean Forces (CECMED). Mine warfare forces from seven NATO countries participated in the exercise. During the exercise, HM-14 conducted AN/AQS-14A operations completing: 78 of 80 scheduled sorties, covered 1220.5 linear miles and 138.2 square miles, and located 88% of the exercise mines.

The squadron conducted routine training and operational flights logging 416 flight hours for the month.

June

Exercise ALCUDRA 97 was a mine warfare exercise conducted by CONTEMECOM of the Spanish Navy. Conducted off the Spanish Balearic Islands, it included mine warfare participants from eight NATO countries. HM-14 conducted AN/AQS-14A operations completing: 92 of 99 scheduled sorties, flew 301.4 hours and 184.5 tow hours, covered 1921.2 linear miles and 185.3 square miles, located 88% of the exercise mines and ten decoys.

Although HM-14's primary mission is AMCM, frequent tasking was received to provide short-fused, essential logistic support. The VANGUARD provided requested services 100% of the time, moving 231 passengers (including 4 MEDEVAC missions), 25,500 lbs of mail and 62,100 lbs of cargo during EURO 97.

The squadron conducted routine training and operational flights logging 416.8 flight hours for the month.

July

HM-14 returned to Norfolk from the EURO 97 deployment, concluding the longest scheduled deployment of an AMCM squadron in over 11 years. During the deployment, the squadron completed 462 mishap-free mission sorties amassing 1451.7 operational flight hours (1336.6 embarked hours), 937 day/night DLQ's, and 695.2 operational tow hours while successfully clearing over 5000 linear nautical miles in less than 20 days of operational exercise tasking. The squadron received commendations from CNO, CINCUSNAVEUR, SIXTH FLEET, CMWC, and SECOND FLEET.

During the EURO 97 deployment, HM-14 spearheaded the tactical employment of the AN/AQS-14 sonar as an alternative to the MK-103 against the shallow moored mine threat. Operating the AQS-14 in the 10 foot depth mode allowed for a more rapid and efficient exploratory search rate against the moored mine threat while eliminating the cumbersome requirement for support spotter helicopters. This new tactic was effectively employed during all three EURO 97 exercises resulting in significantly reduced mine clearance timelines by a factor

of two over those during Blue Harrier 93. Moreover, the squadron successfully located over 87% of available moored mine opportunities which were later successfully reacquired by U.S. and Allied MCMV's and EOD divers.

During EURO 97, the squadron employed the AN/AQS-14 environmental reconnaissance capacity. This new tactic allowed the MCM Commander to rapidly assess environmental conditions in assigned areas and alter tactics as required to more successfully prosecute the mine threat or recommend diversions. The linear coverage rate of the AQS-14 provides a virtual real time assessment of bottom type and/or clutter density over a large geographic area in a matter of hours.

Also during EURO 97, the SEABIRD profiler was deployed from MH-53E helicopters to rapidly gather specific environmental data critical to successful sonar operations. Operating in this capacity, the MCM commander was able to gather environmental data from an approximately 100 sq. NM area.

The squadron conducted routine training and operational flights logging 185 flight hours for the month.

August

The squadron conducted routine training and operational flights logging 315.2 flight hours for the month.

September

The squadron conducted routine training and operational flights logging 232.3 flight hours for the month.

October

The squadron conducted routine training and operational flights logging 422.7 flight hours for the month.

November

To maintain rapid deployment capabilities, HM-14 worked in concert with Commander, Helicopter Tactical Wing, U.S. Atlantic Fleet and the Air Mobility Command (AMC) to conduct annual C-5 Loadout Training. Forty-seven personnel were qualified in the Equipment Palletization Course and twenty-three personnel were qualified in the week-long Aircraft Planners Course. The process culminated in practical training for 120 Active Duty and SELRES personnel, who performed two complete MH-53E mission loads onto a C-5 transport aircraft. The squadron maintains a thorough understanding of how to efficiently stage equipment for loadout in order to provide a rapid deployable capability for regional CINC contingency operations.

HM-14 conducted an in-house exercise, VULCANEX 98-1. Utilizing eight aircraft, the squadron completed 60 sorties, 178.3 flight hours and 102.0 tow hours achieving 1205.8 linear miles under tow covering 127.2 square nautical miles. The results of this highly important exercise, which was conducted in a simulated shipboard environment, provided vital planning

criteria and tactical information relative to real world scenarios. HM-14 conducted the first-ever field test of the new MPS Flashcard system in an exercise environment during VULCANEX 98-1. This test and evaluation proved to be extremely valuable toward identifying the systems' benefits and shortcomings. From the data collected during VULCANEX 98-1, improvements will be implemented in the system which will greatly enhance AMCM Post Mission Analysis (PMA) capability.

The squadron conducted routine training and operational flights logging 266.1 flight hours for the month.

December

The squadron conducted routine training and operational flights logging 177.8 flight hours for the month.