

A Look at the WASP's Air Groups

Two full air squadrons and three detachments from air squadrons -- about 700 men -- are embarked on the WASP for the Mediterranean deployment.

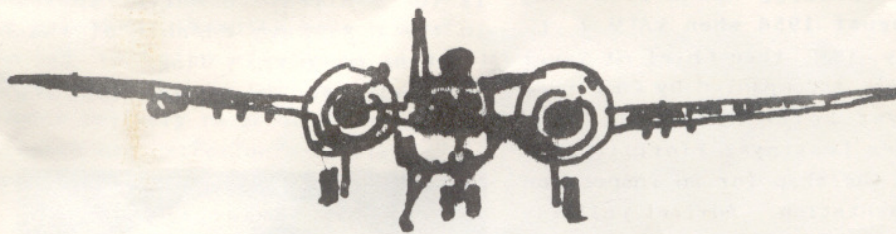
The five air groups are:

AIR ANTISUBMARINE SQUADRON THIRTY ONE (VS-31). The 56 officers and 247 enlisted men of VS-31 man 20 S2F-1 and S2F-2 Trackers twin-engine, high-performance aircraft designed solely for antisubmarine work. These planes can fly night hops as a matter of routine or fly in any kind of weather. The S2F-2, a later model, is equipped to carry weapon BFTTY, an atomic depth charge.

VS-31 is home-based at the Naval Air Station, Quonset Point, Rhode Island. Commanding Officer is CDR H. H. Scales, USN, and Executive Officer is CDR E. S. Umbarger, USN.

HELICOPTER ANTISUBMARINE SQUADRON ELEVEN (HS-11). The 40 officers and 234 enlisted men of HS-11 man the squadron's 15 HSS-1 helicopters which are specially built as anti-submarine hunters. These helos carry the ever-important sonar and TACAN (Tactical Air Navigation System) and are equipped with torpedoes and depth charges.

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S2F TRACKER and HSS-1 HELICOPTER
They search for submarines

HS-11 is home-based at the Naval Air Station, Quonset Point, Rhode Island. Commanding Officer is CDR V. W. Collins, USN, and Executive Officer is LCDR G. I. Dumas, USN.

DETACHMENT 48 OF HELICOPTER UTILITY TWO (HU-2). The two officers and six enlisted men of HU-2's Detachment 48 man the "Angel," a HUP helicopter. Mission of the "Angel" is to maintain a rescue station, hovering off the carrier's starboard beam during aircraft launches and recoveries. In the unlikely event of a plane crashing into the water, the "Angel" would have the plane's crew pulled to safety in a matter of minutes. HU-2 is home-based at the Naval Air Station, Lakehurst, New Jersey. Officer in Charge of HU-2's detachment 48 is LT J. A. Barden.

DETACHMENT 48 OF CARRIER AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SQUADRON TWELVE (VAW-12). The 12 officers and 38 enlisted men of VAW-12's Detachment 48 man four AD5W aircraft, single-engine planes designed to detect

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low-flying enemy craft. These aircraft normally serve on attack carriers, signalling the carrier's jet planes if enemy aircraft were detected at low level. On the WASP, the planes, with their special communications system, are integrated into antisubmarine operations. VAW-12 is home-based at the Naval Air Station, Quonset Point, Rhode Island. The detachment's Officer in Charge is LCDR J. E. Boyle, and the Assistant Officer in Charge is LT A. W. Oldham.

SUB-UNIT I OF HELICOPTER MARINE TRANSFERT (LIGHT) 262. The 20 officers and 40 enlisted men of Sub-unit I HMP (L) 262 man eight HRS-3 helicopters which are used to transport troops and supplies. The unit is part of Marine Air Group 26, home-based at MCAF, Jacksonville, North Carolina. Officer in Charge is Major S. C. Roach. Assistant Officer-in-Charge is Captain R. N. Gehrsitz.

All of these officers and men, working and flying together, means that close coordination is necessary during flight operations. You notice this out on the flight deck as men in brightly colored jerseys, green, brown, yellow, blue and red, perform a smoothly-running check of last-minute details on the planes before the flyers climb aboard and take off.

The men in the green jerseys are members of the catapult (launching) and arresting gear (recovery) crews or photographers or mechanics. Brown jerseys are the plane captains. Bright yellow denotes plane directors, elevator operators, and officers. Blue jerseys are the plane handlers. Men in red jerseys are members of repair parties, refueling crews, firefighters or ordnancemen.

These are the men of the Navy's air wing, both flying and ground crews, who join the surface forces against the common submarine enemy.