Navy E-2 Hawkeye Squadrons Renamed to Reflect Expanded Capabilities



A E-2D Hawkeye approaches the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Ryan Carter

ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. Navy has given its E-2 Hawkeye squadrons a new designation to more accurately reflect the aircraft's expanded capabilities and missions.

The service has changed the name from Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron to Airborne Command and Control Squadron, effective Jan. 1, said Lt. Travis Callaghan, a spokesman for commander, Naval Air Forces, in response to a query from *Seapower*.

The E-2 was fielded in 1965 during the Vietnam War as a radar early warning aircraft that was able to detect and track airborne targets and provide radio voice commands and data link tracks to enable fighters to intercept enemy aircraft or cruise missiles. Over the succeeding decades and as the sophistication of the E-2's radar increased and other sensors were added, the aircraft added to its portfolio battle management, strike control, land force support, rescue coordination, drug-interdiction operations and other tasks that went beyond simple early warning.

The current version in production, the E-2D Advanced Hawkeye, built by Northrop Grumman and equipped with Lockheed Martin's APY-9 radar, includes modern capabilities such as Cooperative Engagement Capability and Navy Integrated Fire Control, which enhance its role as the Navy's "quarterback in the sky."

Each of the Navy’s nine carrier air wings is equipped with one E-2C or E-2D squadron. Four squadrons are based at Naval Air Station Point Mugu, California, and one is based at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, while five are stationed at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia, one being a replacement training squadron.

The airborne command and control squadrons will retain the VAW acronym that has been in use since the 1950s.