



Missions for
America
Semper vigilans!
Semper volans!

The Coastwatcher

Publication of the Thames River Composite
Squadron
Connecticut Wing
Civil Air Patrol
300 Tower Rd., Groton, CT
<http://ct075.org>

LtCol Stephen Rocketto, Editor
srocketto@aquilasys.com

Lt Col deAndrade, Publisher

Lt David Meers & Maj Roy Bourque, Papparazis
Hap Rocketto, 2nd Lt, AUS, (ret'd.), Features
Capt Edward Miller, Features

Issue 11.04

24 January 2017

CADET MEETING

24 January, 2017

submitted by

Lt David Meers

The cadet meeting was dedicated to the theme of rockets. C/Capt Daniel Hollingsworth briefed the squadron on submarine launched rockets.

C/2dLt Poe discussed why rockets are staged and provided examples.

Maj Bourque supervised the squadron as they built rockets to qualify for the CAP Rocketry Badge.

SENIOR MEETING

24 January, 2017

submitted by

Maj Richard Bong

TRCS air crews discussed issues related to the new "ice patrol" mission.

Lt Steven Schmidt demonstrated methods for converting latitude and longitude values from decimal format to degrees/minutes/seconds and *visa versa*. Maj Farley projected a simulated Garmin 1000 navigation screen and reviewed various methods for determining position.

Lt Col Rocketto conducted an Intermediate Communications User Training session

CTWG TRAINING EXERCISE

22 January, 2017

Over 50 Connecticut Wing members gathered at Brainard Field to train for the USAF Operational Evaluation. An operational evaluation is a periodic visit by Air Force personnel which observes and determines the efficiency of the Wing in performing a series of exercises involving emergency services such as search and rescue, disaster relief and damage assessment. Lt Col Daren Cioffi, Deputy Wing Commander of Operations, supervised the training exercise and direct air crews, ground teams, and mission staff.

The training emphasizes the need for urgency and flexibility. Simultaneously, two missions were assigned. One was a USCG request for ice conditions on the Connecticut and Thames River. The second was a USAF Rescue Coordination Center search for a downed aircraft. As the exercise proceeds, additional missions were added such as a police request for lost hikers in Wethersfield. Incident Command Staff, ground teams, aircrews, and headquarters staff scrambled

to meet the difficult and sometimes overlapping demands of the missions assigned.



SMs Heard and Sprecase wait as Maj Farley fills out the training documentation.

Seven members of Thames River attended and all worked on qualifying for air crew of mission staff positions. Members present were C/SrA John Pineau, SM Adam Sprecase and Steven Heard, 2nd Lt David Pineau, Maj Keith Neilson and Squadron Commander Scott Farley, and Lt Col Stephen Rocketto.

CURRENT EVENTS

General Goldfein, Senator McCain and the Warthog

General David L. Goldfein is the new Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force. As the senior uniformed Air Force Officer he is responsible for the organization, training, and equipping the air arm of the United States. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Goldfein will work with the other service chiefs as a military adviser to the President and his defense and security counsels.

Goldfein graduated from the USAF Academy in 1983 and has logged over 4,000 hours as a pilot which include combat assignments in Southwest Asia and the Balkans.

In 1999, Goldfein was flying an F-16 in NATO operations in the Balkans against Serbian forces led Slobodan Milosevic and was shot down by a

surface to air missile. He ejected, evaded, and was rescued by a Pave Hawk helicopter.

During his nomination hearings before the Senate Armed Services Committee chaired by Senator John McCain, he opined that the Republic A-10 Thunderbolt II, better known as the Warthog, is still a viable aircraft for close air support (CAS), praised the aircraft, and stated that he would support its retention for the present time.



General Goldfein and Young John McCain

The A-10 controversy came about because the Air Force wanted to retire the entire fleet to free up funds and maintainers for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. Supporters of the F-35 argue that it will be able to perform CAS operations. In the meantime, the F-16 and F-15E can serve as effective replacements for the A-10.

McCain, a dissenter, praised the capabilities of the A-10 stating that "every Air Force pilot that I know will tell you that the most effective close air support system is the A-10," Army and Marine Corps ground fighters second this opinion.

The alliance between Goldfein and McCain on the A-10 program is not the only similarity between them. Both are former military aviators. McCain served as an attack pilot in the Navy, flying the A-4 Skyhawk. Goldfein has attack experience flying the F-16C/D.

Both were shot down by surface to air missiles. McCain went down over Hanoi in 1967 and spent over five years as a prisoner of war. Goldfein experienced a similar "shot down" experience over Kosovo but was fortunate enough to be

recovered within two hours.

Both McCain and Goldfein are the scions of military families. The McCain family military heritage goes back to the Indian Wars, the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and on the southern side during the Civil War. McCain's grandfather and father were both admirals, the first father and son to earn four stars. Goldfein's grandfather was a WWII Navy veteran, his father has 33 years of Air Force service, and his brother retired from the USAF as a major general. His oldest daughter, 1st Lt. Danille Fleming serves in the Air Force.

Both are graduates of their respective military academies. McCain had a reputation as a hell raiser and graduated fourth from the bottom of his class. Goldfein earned his degree in philosophy.

As an aside, McCain and the Editor of the *Coastwatcher* both attended Harbor School in New London, Connecticut although 10 years apart. Rocketto, whose memory is always in question, claims that a spinster teacher at Harbor admonished him for behaving like that “wild Jacky McCain, the boy who was responsible for her white hair.

TAIL SPIN TOMMY

*-Saturday Afternoon at the Kiddie Matinee-
A Hopalong Cassidy feature, 12 cartoons, the
next segment of the Tail Spin Tommy serial (and
all the Jujubes you can eat.*

*by
Capt Ed Miller*

After Lindberg's New York to Paris flight interest in aviation skyrocketed. In 1928 a new aviation oriented comic strip appeared. The title was *Tailspin Tommy*, and it followed the adventures of Tommy, his sidekick Skeeter and Tommy's girlfriend Betty Lou. The comic strip grew in popularity and appeared in newspapers throughout the country. In 1934 and 1935, a 12 chapter cliff hanger serial movie appeared.

I



In the 1930s, LaVerne Browne was completing the courses for his law degree at the University of Southern California. He abandoned a legal career and took flying lessons. After qualifying for his commercial pilot's license, he was hired by TWA to fly DC-2s.

It was while flying for Transcontinental and Western Air, the forerunner of Trans World Airlines, he was noticed by a Hollywood producer who suggested to Browne that he take a screen test believing that the tall, dark and handsome Brown had potential as an actor. Browne adopted the stage name the stage name John Trent, a common practice for actors. It is worth noting that John Wayne's real name was Marion Morrison.



Actor John Trent

Browne's acting career began with a few small parts which led a few starring rolls in a few movies. In 1939, Monogram Pictures made four full length Tailspin Tommy movies with Trent playing Tailspin Tommy. In all there were four, the first being *Mystery Plane*.



Trent was known for his wooden performance, not having the reticent hero personality of a Jimmy Stewart, or the tough guy screen persona of a Humphrey Bogart. Following the four Tailspin Tommy movies Trent, now La Verne Brown returned to flying and had a long career as a Douglas Aviation test pilot.



Test Pilot Laverne Brown

Photograph courtesy of Neil Corbett, Test and Research Pilots, Flight Test Engineers found at <http://thetartanterror.blogspot.com/>

He conducted flight tests of Skyraiders for many years, later testing Ed Hinnemann's great jet attack aircraft the A-4 and becoming Director of Flight Test at Douglas's El Segundo Division. One of his amusing experiences occurred when interviewing a prospective test pilot. The candidate had a puzzled expression on his face through much of the interview, but finally had to ask- "Aren't you Tailspin Tommy".

When Brown retired from Douglas, his long time friend from his acting days, the actor who played Skeeter, was in attendance. The actor was Milburn Stone, now famous for portraying Doc on Gunsmoke.

And now , as Paul Harvey would say, "You know the rest of the story."

AEROSPACE HISTORY

This article on presidential aircraft will be printed in three parts: pistons, turbine, and helicopters.

Presidential Aircraft The Pistons

Last week's inauguration of the the 45th President of the United States (POTUS) suggests an opportunity to review the aircraft which have served as presidential transportation. Aerial transport of the President and high government officials is the province of the USAF Air Mobility Command (AMC).

The lineage of the AMC stretches back to 1948 when the unit operated from Bolling AFB. Organizational realignments of military airlift operations led successively to creation of the Military Air Transport Service, replaced by the Military Airlift Command and since 1992, the AMC.

The current President will be "stepping up" from his five corporate aircraft to the AMC's Special Airlift Mission fleet operated by the 89th Airlift Wing at Joint Base Andrews and Marine Helicopter Squadron One headquartered at Marine Corps Air Facility Quantico.

As a private citizen, Donald Trump utilized a Boeing 757, a Cessna 750 CitationX and three Sikorsky S-76 helicopters.



The Donald's Corporate Prime Mover

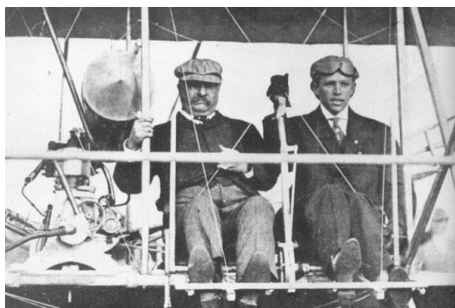
As President Trump, the Air Force and the Marines provide an eclectic variety of aerial

transport. The Boeing VC-25A, based on the 747, is the most well-known of the presidential aircraft but it is only first among equals to carry the Air Force One or Marine Corps One callsign.

In addition to one of two VC-25A planes, POTUS can call upon a number of other aircraft: Boeing VC-32A (a 757), Boeing C-40B Clipper (a 737), a mixed bag of Gulfstreams, and Sikorsky VH-3D Sea Kings and VH-60N Whitehawks.

The AF-One callsign denotes any aircraft carrying the sitting President of the United States. It stems from an incident in 1953 when an Eastern Airlines commercial flight and the presidential aircraft, both using the callsign 8610, entered the same airspace. In order to avoid similar incidents, a unique discrete call sign was needed. The government, operating with its usual blazing speed, settled on Air Force One which was first used officially six years later, in 1959.

The history of presidential aerial transport can arguably go back to October 11th, 1910 when Arch Hoxsey took Theodore Roosevelt aloft in a Wright Type B biplane at Kinloch Field, St. Louis, Missouri. Technically, Roosevelt was a past President but past Presidents are addressed as Mr. President so....

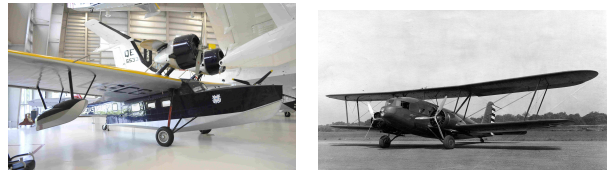


Teddy in the First Officer's Seat

Now fast Forward to 1936. In that year, a former U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Electra* became President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's official yacht and was renamed *Potomac*. A Navy Douglas RD-2 Dolphin amphibian was based at

Naval Air Station Anacostia to carry mail and guests to the ship when President Roosevelt was aboard.

FDR never flew on this aircraft nor on the Army Curtiss YC-30 Condor which was based at Bolling Field and may have been intended for presidential use.



The Dolphin and the Condor

FDR did become the first sitting President to “slip the surly bonds of earth.” In January of 1943, Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Great Britain and FDR met at Casablanca, French Morocco to plan allied plans for the final phases of the War in Europe. Joseph Stalin did not attend, occupied as the Soviet forces were occupied by the Battle of Stalingrad. From this meeting emerged the “Casablanca Declaration” stating that the war would be fought until the unconditional surrender of Axis forces.

It's a long, long way from the Potomac to the northeast coast of Africa and Washington decided that the most expeditious method would be air travel. On February 11th, the presidential party arrived at the Pan American base in Miami and met two Boeing 314s. Roosevelt and key staff members boarded the Dixie Clipper and lesser members of the entourage entered the Atlantic Clipper.



Dixie Clipper in War Time Livery
(Credit: Pan AM)

Departing Miami, the ships flew in stages: Trinidad to Belem Brazil to Bathurst, Gambia. Once in Africa, the party switched to a TWA Douglas C-54 Skymaster (DC-4) and flew on to Casablanca. There is no evidence that anyone paid a visit to Rick's, disappointing Signor Ferrari, the owner at that time.

Perceiving the need for a dedicated presidential aircraft, the transport version of the B-24D Liberator known as the C-97 Liberator Express was proposed. In *Fate is the Hunter*, Ernest Gann who flew Libs for the Air Transport Command (ATC) in World War II. The ATC was a quasi-military outfit which used civilian airline and commercial pilots as air crews.

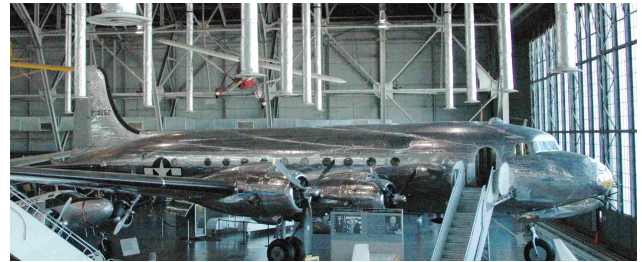
Gann expressed his opinion of the C-87 in the following words. "They are an evil bastard contraption...could not carry enough ice to chill a highball. Worst of all was the fuel transfer system. The complex connection of hoses "invariably leaked, some enough to make troublesome puddles on the floor...a high octane wading pool. The C-109, a fuel tanker version of the Lib was so prone to blowing up that it was called the "c one oh boom."

After studying the safety record of the C-87 family, the U.S. Secret Service was not amused and refused to certify the aircraft for presidential service. The sole C-87 constructed for presidential service, named the *Guess Where II*, never carried FDR. However, it was used as a transport for First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and high ranking government officials.



C-87A Guess Where II

When Roosevelt returned to Washington, a special VC-54E Skymaster, nicknamed the *Sacred Cow*, was purpose-built for him which included a ventral elevator to load and unload the wheelchair bound (now a politically incorrect term) Roosevelt. FDR only made one voyage. In 1945, he was flown to Yalta in the Crimea to meet with Churchill and Joseph Stalin and discuss the post-war organization of Europe.



The Sacred Cow is a militarized and modified version of the Douglas DC-4. Note the navigator's astrodome.

Upon the death of Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman ascended to the Presidency and "inherited" the *Sacred Cow*. Truman signed the National Security Act of 1947 aboard the Sacred Cow, one clause of which created the U.S. Air Force.

About two years later, a Douglas DC-6 was modified into a VC-118 and named, at the suggestion of the pilot, Independence, after Truman's home town in Missouri.



The Independence with its distinctive Bald Eagle motif.

Dwight David Eisenhower succeeded Truman in 1953 and served two terms. The Independence was succeeded by two Lockheed C-121 Constellations, named after the state flower of Colorado.

Columbine II is a VC-121A, a version of the L-749 Constellation and the first aircraft to use the Air Force One callsign. It eventually ended up in private hands and eventually ended up in private hands. It is now being restored by Dynamic Aviation in Bridgewater, Virginia.



Columbine II (Photo Credit: TSgt. Ron Woods, USAF)

Columbine III is a VC-121E, version of the Lockheed 1049 Super Constellation and the only VC-121E built.



Columbine III at the National Museum of the USAF

Parenthetically, Columbine I is a C-121A which was used by General of the Army Eisenhower during his 1950-52 tenure as Commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.



The original Columbine sits partially disassembled at the Pima Air Museum.

Ike had a farm in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania where he would seek respite from the hub-hub of the White House. The Air Force provided two U-6Bs, the Aero Commander 680 Super of which only two were built. These aircraft were the first twin engine aircraft assigned to the President and the first to carry a blue and white livery.



One of the U-6 aircraft at the Air Force Museum

After Eisenhower left office, the aircraft were used by Defense Department officials, then transferred to the USAF Academy for use as a jump plane by cadets. Its final U.S. service was with the Nebraska Civil Air Patrol after which it entered private ownership and was donated to the Museum of the USAF.

During the last half of Eisenhower's second term, jet powered aircraft became the prime transport of POTUS and piston engine aircraft disappeared from the Special Air Missions lineup.

Boeing, Douglas, Consolidated, Lockheed, and Aero Commander all built piston powered presidential aircraft. Civilians piloted two of them. The Dixie Clipper was crewed by Pan American and the first DC-4 had a TWA crew. After that, military pilots commanded presidential flights.

The next installment of this article will examine the fixed wing turbine powered aircraft used to carry the Chief Executive of the United States.