



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>

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26 September, 2017

CALENDAR

See the Squadron Calendar for Meeting Details

30 SEP-Pilot's/Ops Meeting-Hartford
01 OCT-O Flights
06-07 OCT-AOPA GON Fly-in
14-15 OVT CLC
21 OCT-CTWG Smallbore Rifle Clinic
4-5 NOV-UCC
10 NOV-Armed Forces Nights-Groton Elks
11 NOV-Cadet Ball-Berlin

CADET MEETING

26 September, 2017

C/CMSgt Eichelberg led an aerospace education seminar about take-off and landings.

The AOPA video, *Ups and Downs of Takeoffs and Landings* was shown.

SENIOR MEETING

26 September, 2017

Lt Col Kinch stood in for Maj Farley, the Squadron Commander, who is on vacation. He and Maj Roy Bourque briefed the membership on the procedures to use if communication between an aircraft and a ground team is lost. A hot debate arose about the efficacy of the standard system and how it might be improved

Kinch then briefed the officers on the proper wear of the working CAP corporate uniform.

NOTICES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Joel Drost was promoted to 1st Lt at the last awards ceremony. His name was mistakenly listed as Matthew Drost, his son.

Stella Ross, a CAP Aerospace Education Member, visited the Squadron during the last meeting and discussed enrolling in CAP as a regular senior member.

Lt Col Stephen Rocketto joined other pilots at Westerly Airport and flew youngsters as part of the Experimental Aircraft Association Young Eagles Program.

The Squadron flew three LISP missions last week. Maj Paul Noniewicz flew two of them and Maj Keith Neilson, and Lts Steven Schmidt, David Pineau, and Adam Spreccace also served as aircrew.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

From time to time, former members contact or are contacted by The Coastwatcher. Here are some reports about their activities.

Ensign Brendan Flynn, USCG

Ensign Flynn is attending flight school in Pensacola, Florida. He states that he has finished the ground school of the first phase of training. He starts flying next week, Cessna 172s and the T-6A Texan II. He is proud to represent the U.S. Coast Guard at NAS Pensacola and enjoys interacting with his Navy and Marine brethren.



The iconic Mary Feik presents C/Capt Flynn with the Amelia Earhart Award. The aircraft in the background is the NEAM's Lockheed 10, the same type of plane crewed by Earhart and Fred Noonan when they went missing near Howland Island.



While at The Academy, Flynn continued his musical advocacy and in the photo above is playing an original composition which he composed for a Connecticut College music course.

First Lieutenant Timothy Plourde, USAF

1st Lt Plourde, a civil engineer, has just finished a 3.5 year tour of duty at Yakota Air Base, Japan and is currently attending the Air Force Institute of Technology studying for a Masters Degree in Engineering Management. The course is a year and a half and he hopes to also obtain a Professional Engineer License. He will promote to captain in two months.



Cadet Plourde questions Maj Reed Foster, 143rd Airlift Wing, RING about his 1997 flight which earned his crew the Mackay Trophy, awarded for the "the most meritorious flight of the year."

While a cadet, Lt Plourde attended Montville High School where he was a member of the National Honor Society, the National Foreign Language Honor Society and won the Pfizer Mathematics and Science Award.

He served a captain of the Montville High School Rifle Team, earned the Distinguished Expert Medal and was selected as a member of the Connecticut All-State Team.

Active in Scouting, Tim is an Eagle Scout.

Further reports are expected and will appear in future editions of The Coastwatcher

SCARECROW FESTIVAL

The Squadron made its presence known at the 12th Annual Preston Congregational Church Scarecrow Festival. Led by Project Officer Lt Joanne Richardson, 14 cadets and seniors set up

an canopy under which the manned a table highlighting the mission of CAP and how to become a member.

The Festival highlight was the selection of the best scarecrow by popular vote. Children were entertained by a Klyd E. Scope the Clown the Circle K. Petting Zoo, and a Pumpkin Patch area.

A Safety Center included a number of public service organizations and tours and explanations about their equipment. And of course there was food, chili, chowder, a chicken barbecue and the traditional bake sale.



Lt Schmidt points out the fine points of the CAP program to a prospective recruit. (Photo Credit: Maj Roy Bourque)



One of the shifts which took turns manning the booth during the day. (Photo Credit: Lt Joanne Richards)

C/Maj Daniel Hollingsworth and included Cadets Hannah Ramsey, Benjamin Ramsey, Daniel Ramsey, Cameron Wischman, Owen Guilliams, Sarah Johnson, and Rhys Thornell.

In addition to Richards, senior support was provided by Lt Col Larry Bright, Maj Roy Bourque, and Lts Steven Schmidt, Adam Spreace, and Steven Heard.

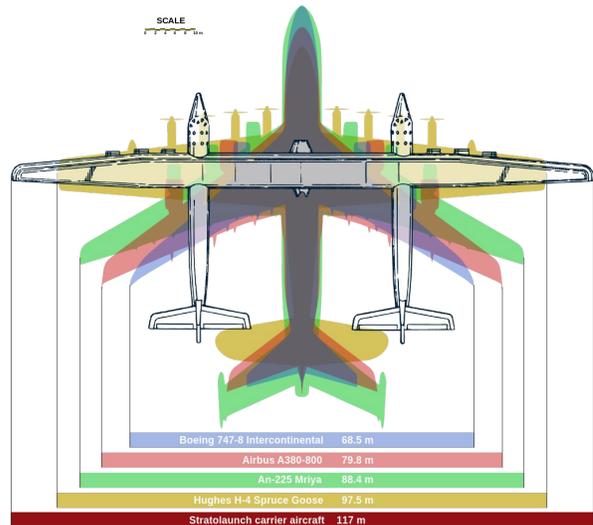
AEROSPACE CURRENT EVENTS

Biggest Wingspan Ever



Stratolaunch Rollout (Credit Stratolaunch Systems)

The Roc, a six engine aircraft with the longest wing spread ever is undergoing engine tests. Stratolaunch systems has developed the aircraft to launch space vehicles from high altitudes rather than from the ground. Air launches radically reduce the fuel needed to get the space vehicle to orbit.



(Credit: Clem AT tillier.net)

Much of the Roc is composed of Boing 747 components: engines, landing gear, avionics, and the hydraulic and electrical system. Much of the 238 foot long fuselage and 385 foot wings are composite materials.

AVIATION CHRONOLOGY

Oct 4, 1984—Leroy Grumman went West. Grumman was a brilliant engineer who developed a unique wing folding system for planes on aircraft carriers and whose line of aircraft has a reputation for ruggedness and reliability.



Grumman's initial wing folding model was constructed from an eraser and two paper clips.
(Credit: Grumman)



The cat is a tribute to the Grumman line of naval fighters: Wildcat, Hellcat, Tigercat, Bearcat, Panther, Cougar, Tiger, and Tomcat produced by the Grumman "Iron Works."

New York's Leroy R. Grumman Cadet Squadron is CAP's tribute to a remarkable man. The officer responsible for the squadron's name is none other than CTWG Commander, Col James A. Ridley, Sr. Ridley advocated for the name so that "...at least one CAP squadron on Long Island is named after this great aviation pioneer and Long Islander."

"Cats" pass in review at the last Pratt and Whitney Airshow: Wildcat, Bearcat, Tigercat, Tomcat, and Hellcat.

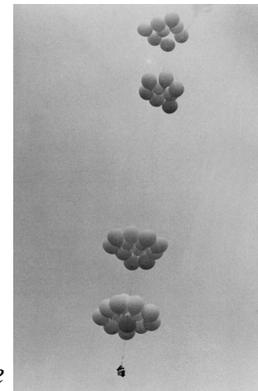


Oct 5, 1918—French pilot Lt Roland Garros is shot down and killed in combat. Garros, was the first person to make a trans-Mediterranean flight, developed a technique which fitted metal deflectors on his propellor so he could shoot through it without destroying it.



When he was shot down, the Germans inspected the propellor and this led to the development a a synchronization mechanism which allowed machine guns to fire through the propellor arc with striking the blades. A devoted tennis player, the French Open is held in a stadium which bears his name.

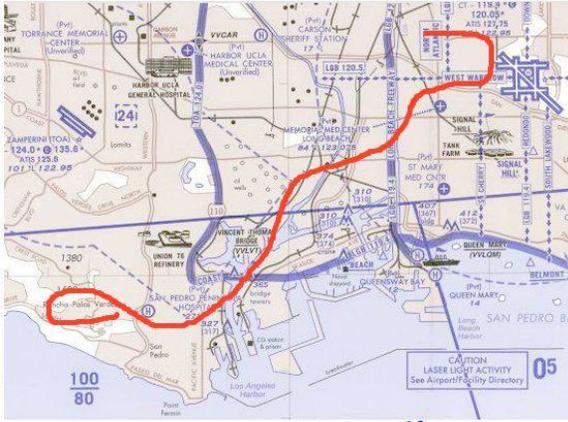
Oct 6, 1993— Larry Walters, "Lawn Chair Larry," went West. On July 2, 1982, he constructed an airship from a lawn chair and 45 helium filled weather balloons and climbed to 16,000 feet. He controlled the craft by dumping water ballast or shooting out a balloon with his airgun. The FAA air traffic controllers in southern California were not amused.



The world's a nicer place in my beautiful balloon

*It wears a nicer face in my beautiful balloon
We can sing a song and sail along the silver sky*

(Lyric Credit: Jimmy Webb)



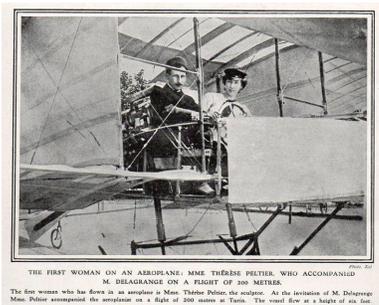
The Lawn Chair Pilot map (estimated) www.markbarry.com
Larry's Meandering Flight Path

Oct 7, 1908—Edith Berg took the right seat next to Wilbur Wright and became the first American woman airplane passenger. She tied her skirt around her ankles so as not to risk an unseemly exposure and inspired a new fashion, the hobble skirt.



*Edith & Wilbur
 Note the hobbled skirt.*

There is some question about the first woman to fly as a passenger. In July of 1908, Therese Peltier went aloft with Leon Delagrangé. She then went on to solo a few months later.



THE FIRST WOMAN ON AN AEROPLANE, MME. THERÈSE PELTIER, WHO ACCOMPANIED M. DELAGRANGÉ ON A FLIGHT OF 200 METERS.
 The first woman who has flown in an aeroplane is Mme. Therese Peltier, the aviator. At the invitation of M. Delagrangé Mme. Peltier accompanied the aviator on a flight of 200 metres in Paris. The vessel flew at a height of six feet.

However, there is a report that Henri Farman made have made a flight with Mlle P. Van Pottelsberghe in late May of 1908.

Oct 8, 1890—Eddie Rickenbacker, auto racer, WWI Ace of Aces, and President of Eastern Airlines is born in Columbus, Ohio.



Eddie Rickenbacker and his SPAD marked with the "Hat in the Ring" of the 94th Fighter Squadron.

Oct 9, 1934-The Fédération Aéronautic Internationale presents its Gold Medal to Wiley Post. His achievements include victory in the National Air Race, two record setting round-the-world flights, one of them solo, and design and development of the first practical pressure suit.



Post displays his pressure suit sitting in front of his Lockheed Vega, the Winnie May.
 (Credit: NASA)

Oct 10, 1933- A United Airlines Boeing 247, NC 13304, crashed near Chesterton, Indiana. All seven on board are killed in the first proven case of the bombing of a commercial aircraft.



Boeing 247 NCI3304

FBI Agent Melvin Purvis, the man who captured more public enemies than any other agent in FBI history led the investigation. No suspect or motive was ever discovered.

The Berlin Airlift 24 June, 1947-13 May, 1948

Part II

The Chocolate Flier

The most celebrated pilot to emerge from the Airlift was an Iowa bachelor, Lt. Gail Halvorsen. Halvorsen, somewhat of a romantic, volunteered as a replacement for a friend whose wife had just given birth to twins. Halvorsen was somewhat more than a run-of-the-mill aviator, not interested in just flying in and flying out. He brought a movie camera with him and wanted to actually visit Berlin and take some pictures. During his off-duty time, he scrounged flights into Berlin and while taking pictures of the operations at the airfield, noticed a gaggle of children watching the airplanes from beyond the fence. A combination of Halvorsen's limited German and the children's limited English sufficed to carry on a conversation and then Halvorsen noticed that the children had never asked him for anything. "You got gum, Joe?" was a phrase used by children all over the world whenever they encountered a GI so Halvorsen found two sticks of gum in his pocket and split them up among the children who had acted as interpreters. Impulsively, he promised that he would drop candy to them from his plane on his next trip if they promised to share it. He would identify his plane by wiggling his wings.



Children Wait at the Airport Fence

(Probable Photo Credit: Henry Ries)

Halvorsen talked both members of his crew, Capt. John Pickering and Sgt. Herschel Elkins to assist. Pickering said that "you're going to get us in a big mess of trouble," and then he and Sgt. Elkins contributed their rations of sweets to the pool. On a subsequent flight, as they approached, Halvorsen wiggled his wings as Pickering pushed three packages of candy, each attached to a parachute fashioned from a handkerchief, out the flare chute.

They continued their unofficial airdrops for the next two flights. Then, a few days later, deteriorating weather grounded Halvorsen and his crew at Tempelhof. He checked in at base operations to determine how long a delay might be expected. In a corner of the room, he noticed an enormous pile of mail. Glancing at the letters, he saw that they were addressed to *Onkel Wackelflügel* (Uncle Waggle Wings) and *Der Schokoladen Fliieger* (The Chocolate Flier). He told the crew and they wondered about the official reaction to their unauthorized supply mission.



Lt. Halvorsen attaching handkerchief parachutes to bags of candy and gum. (USAF Photo)

They decided to back off and did not drop any sweets for two weeks but unilaterally, all three of them started saving their candy and gum. The crowd of kids had been growing at the airport boundary so they decided to risk the wrath of officialdom and make one more drop. The next day, they were summoned to the office of Col. James Haun, the squadron commander who informed them that their activities were making headlines all over the world and that they were to report to Frankfurt for a press conference. Haun also casually reminded them that, in the future, they ought keep their commanding officer informed.

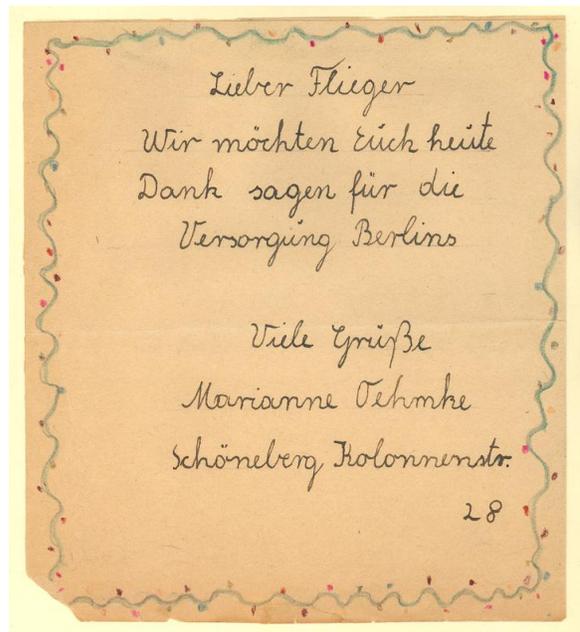
The word spread and military personnel and stateside civilians started sending candy, gum, and handkerchiefs to Halvorsen. In Chicopee, Massachusetts, a former fire station was converted into an assembly point and at its peak, shipped a ton of goodies weekly. Other aircrews joined in and continued the candy drops. One one of his drops, Halvorsen dropped a load of candy into the Russian zone. This cheeky act generated a diplomatic protest from the Russians who accused the western allies of a "capitalistic trick to influence the minds of young people." The protest was duly noted.



Mass Candy Drop

Halvorsen was sent back to the United States for a publicity tour and made contact with an officer of the American Confectioners Association. This

resulted in two shipments of some 7,000 pounds of candy and gum and an increase in the flow of candy to the children of Berlin. On Christmas Eve, 1947, the USAAF and the German Youth Organization staged a series of parties for children. In the cold war skirmish called "Operation Little Vittles," the West counted coup and embarrassed the Soviet occupation forces. Grateful children flooded the German post with notes of thank you.

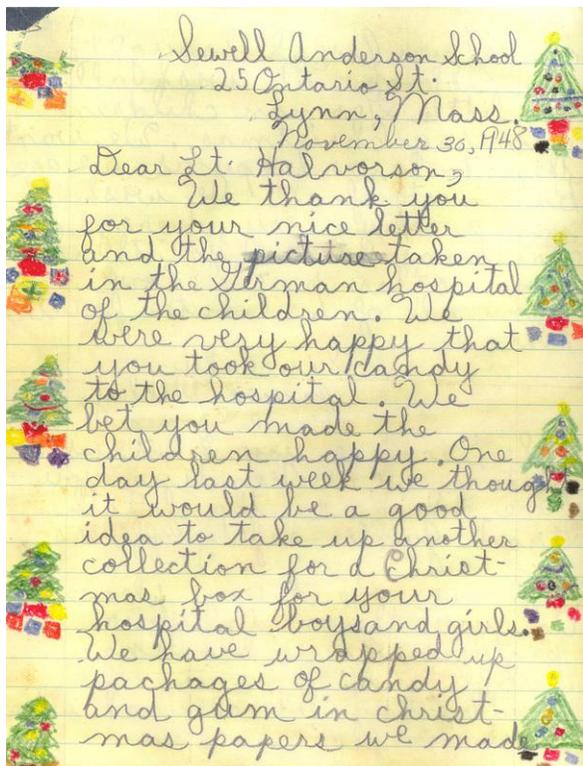


Dear Pilot,

We want to say thanks today for the supplying Berlin.

Many greetings

Marianne Oehmke



A letter from the children of Sewell Anderson School in Lynn, Massachusetts

Slaker Scores a Home Run
(USAF Photo)



Not every episode in the Berlin Airlift was so light-hearted. Capt. Kenneth Slaker, a 50 mission survivor of the bombing raids over Germany, was flying right seat in a C-47 and was 50 miles into the Soviet zone when both engines quit and refused to restart. He and his pilot, Lt Clarence Steber parachuted into the darkness. Slaker was

knocked unconscious upon landing and when he awoke, decided to try to evade any Eastern forces searching for him and cross the border back into the west. While walking west, he met a German ex-POW, Rudolph Schnabel, foraging for food. Schnabel had had his leg saved by an American doctor and was ready to repay the debt in kind. He found clothing for Slaker and took him to his home.

Schnabel then guided Slaker to a meeting with some men who could help them cross the border. Schnabel would act as guide and then using his own documents, return to the Eastern Zone. Getting out of East Germany was the problem. Getting back in was easy. Arrangements were made to bribe an East German policeman. In the final rush to get across, Slaker got tangled up in barbed wire and the East Germans started shooting. He got free and ran, fell, and then was dragged across the border to freedom. Slaker was returned to his unit, but unfortunately, Schnabel lost his papers in the rush and could not get back to his family. The US Army held him in custody and he was somewhat abused. Finally, Slaker got Schnabel released to Air Force custody and helped him get a job with the German Post Office. Later, his wife and daughter joined him in West Berlin.

*The French Demonstrate That Although Faith
Might Move Mountains, Dynamite Does Remove
Towers*

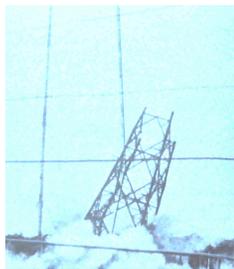
And then there are the French. Given the troubles reconstructing their own country and their military's difficulties with some insurgents in a far off colony called Indo-China, they contributed far less to the Airlift than the British and US forces. They did use some confiscated Junker JU-52s to fly supplies to their own troops and did allow the United States to construct a new airfield in their zone at Tegel from scratch. The first plane in carried ten tons of cheese! However, a singular event occurred at Tegel which deserves mention.

Radio Berlin had a towers located on the approach to Tegel which posed a clear danger to

landing aircraft. The French Commandant, Gen. Jean Ganeval, formally requested the station director to have the towers removed. That request and a second request went unanswered. At nine-o'clock on a December morning, the French shut down the airport and diverted all incoming traffic. Near the towers, French military police entered the small building which housed a small group of Soviet radio engineers. The Russians tried to telephone for instructions but the French has cut the telephone lines. Demolition experts set to work. Two and three quarter hours after the airport had been closed, the French set of demolition charges and the towers came tumbling down. The now unobstructed airport opened for business once again.



Gen. Ganeval (left)



Tumbling Tower (right)

According to some reports, when Gen. Ganeval was asked by Soviet Commander Gen. Alexander Kotikov how he could have done such a deed, Ganeval dryly replied, "With dynamite." It was also reported that NKVD Col. Sergei Tulpanov, head of the Soviet Information Section, became so enraged that he suffered a gallstone attack. Such is the price of commissarship.

The Easter Parade

The will of the Soviet blockaders was broken on April 10th 1949. Tunner decided to break all previous records and stage a marathon delivery day. He had used this technique three years earlier running a "Derby Day" which broke airlift records for "the Hump" and on Air Force Day, September 18, 1945, when the Berlin air lifters celebrated by setting a record and moving 7,000 tons of cargo into the city. Tunner selected Easter Sunday, 1946 for the the next big push.



U.S. Personnel View the Airlift Scoreboard. Tunner used the innate competitive desire of the airmen to foster higher and higher achievement in tonnage moved. (USAF Photo)

Coal would be the only cargo flown and it was stockpiled. Maintenance schedules were manipulated to deliver the largest number of usable aircraft, and flight and ground crews were made ready to fly an Easter Parade of aircraft through the corridors and into Berlin. Squadrons were assigned quotas and the enthusiasm of the participants was peaking. At noon on Saturday, the clock started. Tunner moved from base to base, encouraging the troops, and broke the previous record of 7,000 tons around the 22 hour mark. When the timer stopped at noon on Easter Sunday, the tote board indicated that 1,398 flights had shifted 12,941 tons of coal into Berlin. A day has 1,440 minutes so the crews were running a round trip for about every minute of the day. They had moved the equivalent of twelve 50 car coal trains by air. More remarkably, from then on, the deliveries never fell below 9,000 tons per day.

A whimsical pilot reported to ATC: Here comes a Yankee With a blackened soul. Heading for Gatow with a load of coal.



A month later, the Soviets recognized the futility of the blockade and opened up the roads, rails, and canals. Not trusting the Russians, the air lifters continued for three more months, building up a surplus of supplies in case the blockade resumed. The final figures were over 2.3 million tons flown in by 276,926 flights.

The first battle of the Cold War had ended with a victory for the West. But victory has its price and seventy two British Commonwealth and US fliers, military and civilian, paid that price in blood.

*Capt. James A Vaughn, New Haven, Conn.
18 October, 1948*

Connecticut Citizen Lost on the Airlift



“Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia, The gods themselves throw incense.”

*William Shakespeare
King Lear, Act V,
Scene III*

This first Cold War victory, won by the air, ground, and command staff of the Berlin Airlift, was a propaganda bonanza for the West. But more importantly, it signaled the Russians that appeasement would not be the way of the future and also sent a message to our allies that we had the will to stand behind them. The Cold War would not end for another half century but air power had made a unique contribution towards the ultimate victory.



Enthusiastic Navy crew celebrates the end of the Airlift



A C-54E, the Spirit of Freedom, is maintained and flown by the Berlin Airlift Historical Foundation. The aircraft bears the flags of the United States, Great Britain, and Germany



*Der Luftbrücke Memorial, Rhein Main
The three prongs represent the three air corridors. The base is inscribed with the names of the airmen who were killed during the Airlift. A corresponding monument stands at Tempelhof*

Readers are encouraged to visit the website of the Berlin Airlift Historical Foundation at <http://www.spiritoffreedom.org/> Click on “What was the Berlin Airlift to view eight 1940s newsreels about the Berlin Airlift and an extensive slide collection of aircraft.