



Missions for
America
Semper vigilans!
Semper volans!

The Coastwatcher

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27 March, 2018

03 APR-TRCS Meeting
6-8 APR-NER Cadet Competition
07 APR-CTWG TRANEX
10 APR-TRCS Meeting
17 APR-TRCS Meeting
18 APR-State Capitol Tour
21 APR-Rocket Building (0900-1400)
24 APR-TRCS Meeting
28-29 APR-Corporate Leadership Course
07 MAY-Special Wing Exercise (USAF)
19 MAY-Commander's Cup Rocket Contest
29 SEP-Glider Flights-Springfield, Vt.

CADET MEETING

27 March, 2018

The customary drill, pledge, oath, inspection, and GES testing opened the meeting.

Maj Bourque and Lt Col Rocketto supervised a continuation of the rocket building session started on Saturday last.



Cadets Schantz, Simmons, and Wischman at work.

SENIOR MEETING

27 March, 2018

The senior member of the flight crews reviewed the requirements and the actions which must be taken if re-tasked by the Coast Guard while on Long Island Sound Patrol.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Senior Members Jennifer Thornell and Michael Kopycienski passed the FCC test for their amateur radio licenses.

ACTIVITIES,

Saturday Rocket Program

Fourteen TRCS Capsters met on Saturday, the 24th for a marathon six hour rocket building session interrupted only by breaks for cookies and pizza.

Lt Col Rocketto explained the purposes of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics program: to provide a guided route to earning the CAP Rocketry Badge and developing a strong team for the CTWG Commander's Cup Rocket Contest in May.

The cadets were shown examples of good rocket construction and poor rocket construction and then were split into groups and teamed with a senior member or senior cadet who mentored them.



Step One: Cadet Martin inventories the kit parts and studies the directions.

C/CMSgt Hannah Ramsey assisted Cadet Burton and Candidate Candidate Trinidad.



Maj Borque and Cadet Burton study and engine mount while C/CMSgt Ramsey peruses the plans.

SM Michael Kopycienski devoted his time working with Cadets Simmons, Munzner, and Kelly.



SM Kopycienski and Cadet Kelly discuss an assembly while Cadet Simmons uses the delete key on his wooden word processor to correct a mistaken measuring mark.

Maj Bourque circulated among Cadets Fitzpatrick,

Race, Martin, Thornell.



Cadet Martin strings a parachute and Cadet Thornell considers the alignment of his rocket's fins.

C/CMSgt Daniel Ramsey worked independently.

Lt Col Rocketto and SM Jennifer Thornell spent

most of their time inventorying the engines, rocket kits, materials, and tools.

AVIATION HISTORY

The First Flight Over Mount Everest

Part I

by

Stephen M. Rocketto

Introduction

This week marks the 85th anniversary of the first flight over Mount Everest. The expedition which the British assembled for the flight brought together a very remarkable cast of characters. By chance, the March winter storms brought about repeated power failures, fallen trees, a blocked driveway, and a "blitzed" computer router. With a full larder of food, a supply of unread books, and a generator to keep my furnace and lights going, I settled in for an quiet few days given to serious reading.

I have always had a fascination with that tough breed of British explorers and travelers, men such as Ernest Shackleton and Wilfred Thesinger. Anyway, I was reading a biography about Stewart Blacker billed as a soldier, aviation, and weapons inventor and as it turns out, organizer of the first flight over Mount Everest.

Maj Latham Valentine Stewart Blacker was a descendent of Valentine Blacker, Surveyor General of India, the man in charge of the Indian

trigonometric survey which filled in many of the white spaces on the map of the sub-continent. He was killed in a duel over a woman and under his successor, Col George Everest, the highest peak in the world was measured and named.

Our Maj Blacker was born into a world in which the sun never set on the British Empire and enjoyed all of the rights, privileges, and obligations of the Empire's aristocratic upper class. He learned to fly in 1911 and in World War I, flew combat with the Royal Flying Corps and was shot down and wounded a number of times.



*Blacker's FAI
Aviator's
Certificate #211*

When the war ended, he joined the 69th Punjabis, Queen's Own Corps of Guides, an elite unit in the Indian Army, and became a player in Kipling's "Great Game," the cold war between Great Britain and Russia in Central Asia, Afghanistan, Turkestan, and Persia. He mastered a number of esoteric languages and served as an intelligence officer, keeping track of Russian territorial ambitions and local tribal politics.

While reading about his involvement in the first flight over Mount Everest, the names of a number of the players involved struck chords in my memory. With little to distract me, I started digging into my library and discovered a complex tapestry of characters and events. My mind wandered through a world of wild and surprising events.

A Digression

About 40 years ago, when I still had a television, a BBC series aired called *Connections*. A British

science writer, James Burke, wove an interdisciplinary story about how culture, science, and technology are interrelated, not in the

tradition story of guided linear development but rather as isolated events which have implications far beyond those which are immediately obvious.

For example, an episode titled "Eat, Drink, and Be Merry" started in the 1400's when the Dukes of Burgundy used credit to live the good life and finance their professional military forces. The Swiss militia resisted and over time, armies became larger highly dependent the lower classes rather than the aristocracy. Napoleon is reputed to say that "an army travels on its stomach. Foraging, living off the land, was impossible for Napoleon's citizen armies which led to the development of canned foods. When some of the cans failed, and the food spoiled "bad air" was blamed. Investigations of these gases led to the development of refrigeration and then the Dewar flask. A Dewar flask is basically a thermos, a container which can keep a container hot or cold. And in the large iteration becomes the tanks which house liquid oxygen and liquid hydrogen and send the Saturn V to the moon. Got it!

A similar concept was developed by Frigyes Karinthy, a Hungarian intellectual whose story "Chains" proposed that human beings and social phenomena are chains of relationships, such that no one person or event is connected to some other person or event by no more than six steps.

For example, my college philosophy of science advisor, Marx Wartofsky met Bertrand Russell whose grandfather was Earl Russell who served as Prime Minister under Queen Victoria who knew John Brudenell, the 7th Earl of Cardigan who led the Light Brigade "Into the jaws of Death, Into the mouth of hell." So there you have it. I am five steps removed from Queen Victoria, and the man who led the Charge of the Light Brigade.

And what has all of this got to do with the first flight over Mount Everest? As it turns out, Blacker was involved were related by blood, profession, or incident to a wide range of achievements involving diverse individuals and episodes of historical significance, from the first Academy Award for a documentary, the

authorship of “Downton Abbey” and the mysterious flight of Hitler's #2 man to Scotland early in World War II!

The Aerial Assault on Everest

The mountain with the highest summit above sea level, Everest attracted adventurers like honey attracted bears. Two Americans, Richard Halliburton and Moya Stephens made a pass at Everest while on their round-the-world Flying Carpet Expedition. Halliburton was a well known adventurer, famous for swimming the length of the Panama Canal and paying the lowest toll ever, 34 cents! Moya Stephens went on to work as a test pilot at Northrop and was one of the first to pilot the flying wing.

British Alan Cobham, one of the greatest of long distance aviators and a developer of modern in-flight refueling took a DeHavilland 50 to its service altitude of 17,000 feet on an Everest flight. However, engine technology and the lack of an oxygen system limited their ascent to 17,000 ft, about 12,000 feet short of the summit.

British pride was at stake. Aviation was a tool used by governments for their publicity value. The Russians specialized in very large aircraft and very long range flights. The Italians, British, and the United States competed internationally in setting speed records and racing against each other. Each of these nations competed to be the alpha bird in the flock.

There was the prestige of being FIRST. Consider the US-Soviet space race, justified scientifically and technologically by benefits such as zero-gravity research, knowledge of the moon's geology, and of course Tang. But politically, the program was driven by national pride emanating from Washington and Moscow. Things were no different in the 1930s.

In the five years preceding the Everest flight, other nations had been achieving headlines for aviation firsts: Lindberg's New York to Paris solo, Byrd over the South Pole, Germany's Graf Zeppelin world flight, French, German, and

Spanish pioneering the South Atlantic routes and the mass long distance flights led by Italy's General Italo Balbo.

The noted author, John Buchan, MP representing the Scottish Universities closeted himself with another Member of Parliament, Douglas Douglas-Hamilton, Marquis of Clydesdale. Hamilton was commanding officer of the City of Glasgow Squadron and a talented pilot and bought into Buchan's vision of the first flight over Mount Everest.



*Top: John Buchan
Left: The Marquis of Clydesdale*



Everest had captured the imagination of the British public since two climbers, Andrew Comyn Irvine and George Herbert Leigh-Mallory made their assault on the summit and went missing on June 8th, 1924. Mountains were not kind to the Leigh-Mallory family. In November of 1944, George's younger brother, Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory set out for Ceylon to assume the post of Air Chief Marshal Southeast Asia Command. His aircraft crashed in the French Alps and all were killed.

Initial Planning and Organization The Committee

The Buchan-Hamilton meeting called together the assembly of a committee of influential and able men tasked with planning a program to mount an expedition to overfly Everest. Blacker was in charge of organization. Members included a secretary, Col. Percy Thomas Etherton, a cohort of Blacker's in the Great Game and a renowned

traveler and author.



Etherton dressed for the arctic chill of the Central Asian mountains.

Col. The Master of Semphill, William Francis Forbes-Sempill and Lt. Colonel John (Jean) Eugène de Salis, 8th Count de Salis served on the committee. Semphill was a British military pilot, an awardee of the Air Force Cross, and the holder of several long-distance flying records.



Capt. Sempill showing a Gloster Sparrowhawk to Admiral Togo Heihachiro, 1921. Later, Semphill showed more than an airplane to the Japanese military.

Lt. Col. De Salis, Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society was a marksman of considerable skill and was twice wounded in World War I.

Lt. Colonel John (Jean) Eugène de Salis, 8th Count de Salis



William Robert Wellesley Peel, 1st Earl Peel (Blacker's father-in-law) was the son of a British

Prime Minister and held a number of government posts including Secretary of State for India. He headed the commission which recommended the partition of the British mandate in Palestine into separate Arab and Jewish states.

Neville Stephen Bulwer-Lytton, 3rd Earl of Lytton, soldier, artist, and winner of a bronze medal for tennis in the 1908 Olympics. He served in World War I and the French decorated him with the Chevalier of the Legion of Honor.

As might be expected, the committee possessed all the credentials of the British upper class: ancestors, titles, private means, education at the finest public schools and universities, and service in fashionable or exotic regiments. This allowed them access to the corridors of power in Great Britain, India, and Nepal and the means to make things happen.

Expedition Preparations

The expedition field team needed to be selected. Diplomatic arrangements made with India and Nepal, aircraft chosen, travel, food, fuel, and lodgings arranged and finances secured. Any adventure is improved with a veneer of respectable goals. The advancement of geographic, geologic, and meteorological knowledge satisfied the Royal Geographic Society. The committee was in business.

Well, not quite. Expeditions need funding and as the world's financial depression went into its third year, money was short. The committee needed a sugar daddy or as it turns out found a "sugar mommy." Etherton recalled that the wealthy and generous Lady Houston had financed the British Schneider Cup Team to the tune of £100,000 in 1931 and enabled them to defeat the Italians and gain permanent possession of the Schneider Trophy. They appealed to Lady Houston and won her financial support.



The eccentric Lady Houston, former showgirl and three times married, was an passionate British nationalist and a thorn in the side of the Labour government.

(Credit: Nat'l Gallery of Art)

Meanwhile, in Germany, an aviation-minded official, Rudolph Hess, newly appointed as Deputy Führer to Adolph Hitler followed the expedition with interest. This will have astounding repercussions in 1941.



Hitler would come to regret that Hess was an pilot.

Expedition Members

The expedition members who would go into the field were selected. Air Commodore Peregrine Forbes Morant Fellowes was chosen to be the expedition leader with Etherton as adjutant.



Sub-Lieutenant R.F.M. Fellowes, Royal Naval Air Service



Wing Commander Fellowes and fellow prisoners at Karlsruhe, 2nd from left. He was shot down attempting to bomb the locks at Zeebrugge and incarcerated at Karlsruhe P.O.W. Camp.

The chief pilot was to be Douglas Hamilton supported by Flt. Lt. David Fowler McIntyre in a second aircraft with Flying Officer R.C.W. Ellison as reserve pilot.

Blacker would fly with Hamilton as the observer-photographer. Sidney R. G. Bonnett of Gaumont News would fly in McIntyre's plane operating still and cinema cameras to document the flight.



McIntyre in his flying togs and Bonnett in a pensive mood.

A supporting team consisting of a coterie of mechanics, a meteorologist, and sundry auxiliaries would accompany the primary team members to India where locals would be hired for transport and camp needs.

Part II detailing the journey to base camp, the flight, the aftermath, and the unusual careers of the cast of characters will follow in the next edition of The Coastwatcher.

AEROSPACE CHRONOLOGY

29 MAR, 2001 – The Boeing X-32 B Joint Strike Fighter Concept Demonstration Aircraft makes its first flight. The word among the aeronautical cognoscenti was that nothing that ugly would be accepted by the U.S. military.



Do you think anything this ugly would be chosen by US aviation forces? The Lockheed-Martin X-35 went on to win the fly-off and adopted as the Lightning II.

30 MAR, 1982–Shuttle mission STS-3, Columbia landed at Northrop Strip, White Sands, New Mexico due to flooding at its primary site, Edwards Air Force Base.



STS-3 and two T-38 chase planes five seconds before touchdown



Runway 23

One of the two 35,000 foot strips each equipped with a 10,000 extension at each end. Pilots Lousma and Fullerton chose New Mexico over Florida as the alternate because they had trained there in the Grumman Gulfstream II training aircraft.



The approach used engines in thrust reverse and the nose wheel retracted.

The Grumman has been modified to allow pilots to simulate the approach profile and handling characteristics during. The port side of the cockpit was also reconfigured to duplicate the controls, instruments, and view of an orbiter.

31 MARS, 1931 – A Transcontinental and Western Fokker F-10 crashed in Kansas killing all eight aboard, one of whom was a national icon, Knute Rockne, Notre Dame's football coach. The pilot reported turbulence and it is suspected that the stresses caused failure in the wood laminate wing which has previously weakened by water weakening the glue bonding the laminates.



NC999E, the aircraft involved, at Grand Central Air Terminal, Glendale, California.

The public and government reactions spelled the end of air transports with wood construction and advances in technology led to the Ford Trimotor,

the Boeing 247, and the Douglas DC-2.

01 April-Big Day for First Flights



1911
*AVRO Type D-
A.V. Roe's first
biplane.*



1948

The first of Convair's delta line. Only one was built but it gave birth to the F-102, F-106, B-58, the sea-ski XF2Y Sea Dart and the VTOL XFY Pogo.

1935

*North American T-6
Texan, WWII
advanced trainer,
know to the Navy as
the SNJ and the
Brits as the
Harvard.
15,000 were built*



Only one was built and both Chuck Yeager and Scott Crossfield commented on its handling qualities. Yeager stated "It was a trick plane to fly..." Crossfield's pungent comment was that "Nobody wanted to fly the XF-92. There was no lineup of pilots for that airplane. It was a miserable flying beast."

1939

*Mitsubishi A6M3
Zero
11,000 built
including the
Rufe, a float
plane version.*



02 April 1794 — The world's first air force, the Aerostatic Corps of the Artillery Service is formed in France. A hydrogen filled balloon, *L'Entreprenant* is demonstrated and within three months is first used at the Battle of Fleurus to observe the enemy. Two ascents were made and flight time totaled nine hours. Messages were sent to the ground by flag signals and dispatched dropped in weighted bags.

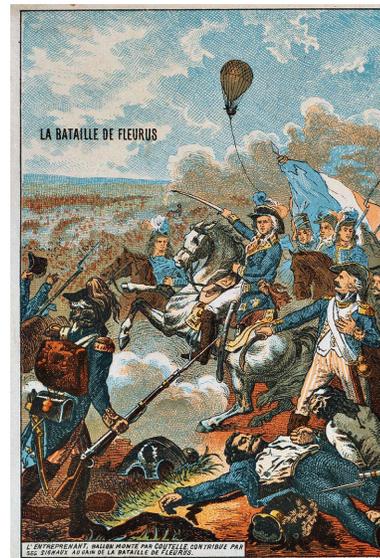
1940

*Grumman XF5F
Skyrocket-A one-
off but olde timers
remember this as
the first aircraft
of the Blackhawks
International
Squadron.*



1947

*Blackburn
Firecrest-A
fortnight late and
a shilling short,
doomed by the
turbine engine.*



03 APR, 1965 – The U. S. Air Force mounts the first and largest U. S. air strike against the Thanh H \acute{o} a Railroad and Highway Bridge over the Song Ma River in North Vietnam. The bridge survives.

Seven years later, the bridge falls on April of 1972. after 873 sorties and the loss of eleven aircraft by the Air Force and Navy.



*Before
&
After*



A cornucopia of weaponry was used from standard gravity bombs to laser guided bombs.



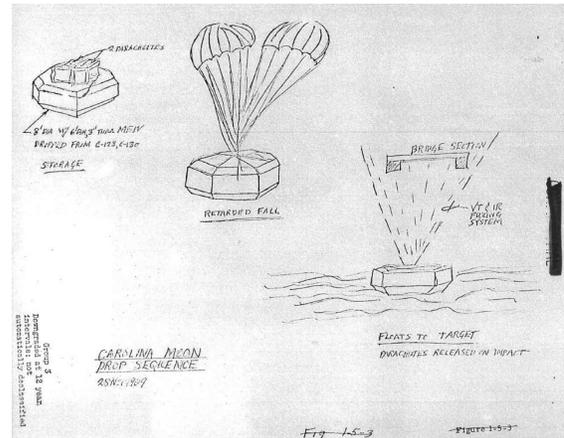
Vought A-7 Corsair II with a load of 750 pound bombs.



Bull Pup missiles were delivered by F-4s but their 250 pound warhead were ineffective.

The most unusual were two attacks each mounted by a single C-130 from low altitude. The C-130s carried what was termed a “mass focus bomb.” The bomb was a pancake shaped weapon

weighing 2.5 tons.



It was basically a floating mine, designed to be dropped upstream and float to the bridge where its shaped charge directed the force of the explosion horizontally to destroy the abutments. The bridge was not damaged and one of the C-130s was lost.



F-4s with laser guided bombs eventually destroyed the bridge.

This was the second time that this particular bridge was destroyed. The Viet Minh guerrillas destroyed it in 1945 by ramming two dynamite laden locomotives together at its mid-point.

Corrections

There was a mistake and an omission from the last issue. Cadet Kelly who flew on the orientation flight is male.

Cadet Kirkpatrick should be credited for the last photograph on the second page.