



Missions for
America

*Semper
vigilans!*

Semper volans!

Publication of the Thames River Composite
Squadron
Connecticut Wing
Civil Air Patrol

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04 December, 2018

SQUADRON CALENDAR

08-09 DEC-Training Leaders of Cadets Course
11 DEC-TRCS Meeting-Mitchell Ceremony
15 DEC-Ground Branch Directors Course
16 DEC- TASMG Holiday Party
18 DEC-TRCS Holiday Party
26-31 DEC-Regional Cadet Leadership School
25 DEC & 01 JAN-No Meetings

THE FRUIT IS IN!

The fruit arrived at Grasso Tech this morning and Mr. Shawn Carpenter and his IT students unloaded the truck.

Squadron members reported to Grasso at 1400 and shifted our share of the citrus, about three tons to our building. The working party consisted of Senior Members Doucette, Bourque, Kopycienski,

Trotochaud and Farley, Cadets Schantz and Trotochaud and the impressed and impressive Miss Miriam Trotochaud.



Squadron members present at the meeting took the merchandise which they purchased or will deliver.

CADET MEETING

04 December, 2018

C/CMSgt briefed the Squadron on the relationships among a leader and followers.

The Cadets engaged in a team geography contest in which they tried to find particular locales on a globe when given its name and clues. Many of the localities had a relationship to aerospace history.

SENIOR MEETING

04 December, 2018

Seniors worked on individual projects.

CURRENT EVENTS

Gone West

*George H.W. Bush, Naval Aviator
June 12, 1924-November 30, 2018*

Eighteen year old George H.W. Bush graduated from Phillips-Andover and immediately enlisted in the United States Navy. After completing flight school at Pensacola, he qualified as a Naval Aviator by completing carrier qualification aboard the *USS Sable*, a converted side-wheel excursion steamer based at Chicago. His commissioning date, June 9, 1943 was three day before his 19th birthday making him the youngest naval aviator at that time.



*Midshipman Bush and Lieutenant Bush
(Credit: Bush Library)*

His combat assignment found him aboard the light carrier *USS San Jacinto* flying a Grumman Avenger torpedo bomber in VT-51. He named his aircraft after his fiancée Barbara whom he married and maintained a loving relationship with for 73 years until her death earlier this year.



An Avenger, hook and gear down, enters the San Jacinto landing pattern. Coincidentally, Bush, born a Yankee, ended up a Texan. San Jacinto is the battlefield where Texas won its independence from Mexico. (Credit: US Navy)

In the fall of 1944, he was promoted to lieutenant junior grade. A month later, while attacking a Japanese radio base on Chichijima in the Bonin Islands, his aircraft was severely damaged by anti-aircraft fire. Bush flew out to sea and bailed out but his two crew-mates did not survive

This was Bush's second time in the water. The first occasion occurred during the Battle of the Philippine Sea. Bush's aircraft was sitting on the catapult when the carrier came under air attack. The launch was delayed and when the attack ended, Bush noticed that his engine had lost oil pressure. He signaled to abort the launch but too late. The Avenger was shot into the drink and a guard destroyer picked up Bush and his two crew members.

On his second involuntary dip into the Pacific, he spent some hours floating about in a life raft before a submarine on lifeguard duty, the *USS Finback*, picked him up. The *Finback* stayed on station for a month more, rescuing more airmen before returning to port. Two months later he was back on board the *San Jacinto* flying missions against Japanese installations in the Philippines.



*After four hours afloat, the Finback surfaces and prepares to haul Bush aboard and he will abandon his less than spacious raft for a month in a crowded submarine.
(Credit: Bush Library)*

Bush returned stateside after logging 58 combat missions and wearing a Distinguished Flying Cross and three Air Medals. He completed his naval career training flight crews in Norfolk, Virginia and Grosse Ile, Michigan. A month after Japan surrendered, he was honorably discharged and for the next 72 years led an interesting and productive life.

According to Veterans Department statistics, George Bush was one of about 350 World War II veterans who died on November 30th. Of the 16

million Americans who fought in World War II, about 500,000 are still alive. The men and women who fought that good fight will soon be gone but the memory of what George Bush and his fellow comrades-in-arms achieved will not be lost.

Mars Lander

NASA's *InSight* (Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport) Mars lander became the Jet Propulsion Labs eighth successful Mars lander. As the acronym suggests, its primary function will be to gather data on the surface geology and internal structure of Mars.



JPL/NASA/Lockheed

The 1,500 lb lander under inspection in a clean room. (Credits:

AVIATION HISTORY

*Maj. General John F. Curry
First Commander of the Civil Air Patrol*



There are Air Force officers whose combat deeds are legendary: Eddie Rickenbacker, Curtis LeMay, and Robin Olds are just three representing World War I and II and Vietnam. But behind all of the celebrities are crews of officers and men who support them and make their deeds possible. Someone has to run the training command, move the supplies, build the bases, and assume the burden of staff work which melds the myriad activities and focuses them to win air superiority.

The initial step on the promotion ladder for new cadets is to meet the standards of the General J.F. Curry Achievement. After a new cadet fulfills specified requirements in leadership, physical fitness and character development, he is promoted to Cadet Airman and awarded the J.F. Curry ribbon.

The Curry award is appropriately named as General Curry was the first National Commander of the Civil Air Patrol. But aside for that one fact, a CAP member would be hard pressed to name any other detail about the career of this remarkable officer.

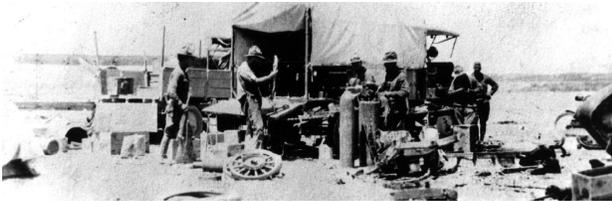
Curry was born in New York and graduated from the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York in 1908. From 1910 to 1914, he served as an instructor at West Point. When the Aviation Section, Signal Corps of the U.S. Army assumed responsibilities for flight, Curry reported for training at North Island, San Diego, now a major Navy air facility.

He earned his wings and was assigned to the 1st Aero Squadron which was posted at San Antonio, Texas. Action followed. Mexico was in the midst of a revolution and on the 9th of March, 1916, Francisco "Pancho" Villa crossed the border and raided Columbus, New Mexico. The United States dispatched a "punitive expedition" into Mexico under Maj. Gen. John J. Pershing to pursue and disperse Villa's raiders. The 1st Aero Squadron was attached to Pershing's force to be used for reconnaissance and courier duties.



Uncle Sam leaps "The Wall" to pursue Villa into Mexico.

The 1st Aero Squadron consisted of about 100 men, pilots, mechanics, and support personnel. They were supplied with eight Curtiss JN-3 aircraft and their own organic truck transportation, perhaps the first such Army unit so equipped.



The Jeffrey Quad was accepted as a standard truck body. This one is fitted out as a machine shop.

The commander was Capt. Benjamin Foulois, a Washington, Connecticut native and a future Chief of the Air Corps. Curry commanded the aviation detachment stationed at Colonia Dublan, about 100 miles south of the border.



Ironically, the first marking used to identify a U.S. aircraft was a red star, visible on the tail of this J-3.

Their aircraft were unsuitable for the hot dry weather and the 10,000 foot mountain ranges and a week after commencing operations, only five were left. A month later, their number was down to two. The supply chain fed in some improved versions of the Curtiss design and they were used to maintain contact with Pershing's cavalry patrols and carry dispatches between units. As the very first air units deployed outside of the United States, they engaged in valuable training in real field conditions during their year in Mexico.

On April 6, 1917, the United States declared war on Germany. The 1st Aero Squadron left Columbus for Fort Jay, New Jersey and shipment to Europe. There Curry served on the staff of the Air Service of the Second Army.

In October of 1918, he was shot down but escaped capture. Two weeks later, flying as an observer with the 168th Aero Squadron, his aircraft and another shared in the shoot-down of a German observation balloon.



Airco DH-4B showing the "winged skull" insignia of the 168th and a pair of .303 Lewis guns mounted on a Scarff Ring for use by the observer and a single forward firing .303 controlled by the pilot.

(Credit: Enciclopedia Ilustrada de la Aviacion, Editorial Delta 1981/1982)

Curry's post war duty assignment was in the Hawaiian Islands where he commanded the 6th Aero Squadron. He surveyed Oahu for suitable landing fields and found one on Ford Island in Pearl Harbor. Capt. Curry was invested by the War Department with plenipotentiary powers and arranged for its purchase for \$236,000. Originally named Luke Field, it was later renamed Naval Air

Station Ford Island. The deep water along the southeastern shore was the chosen spot for the mooring of the Pacific Fleet battleships.

Major Curry's technical acumen led to a 1924 posting as Chief of the Air Service Engineering Division at McCook Field, Dayton, Ohio. The Division had been set up in World War I to evaluate the feasibility of building foreign designed aircraft in the United States, build experimental aircraft, and engage in flight testing. Eventually, the facility was expanded and Curry was instrumental in the development of what is now Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.



Orville Wright, Curry, and Charles Lindbergh meet at McCook Field in 1927.

He then became Commandant of the Air Corps Technical School at Langley, Virginia. The bases in Ohio and Virginia are now both major sites for aeronautical research and development programs.

His experience in infrastructure development led to promotion as a field officer and to a 1931-35 assignment as Post Commander and Commandant of the Air Corps Tactical School (ACTS) at Maxwell Field, Montgomery, Alabama, current site of Civil Air Patrol Headquarters.



Curry, second from left, at the September, 1931 opening of the first class of the ACTS. Maj, Gen, James Fechet, Chief of the Air Corps is on the far left. The civilian is Congressman Joseph Lister who secured funding.

(Credit: Air University Office of History)

Curry had previously criticized the fact that the Army War College and Air Corps Tactical doctrine diverged and since the airmen were not part of the curriculum development process, ground officers were not taught the proper use of air power.

Curry reorganized the ACTS curriculum along functional lines. Air tactics covered the application of bombardment, pursuit, observation, and attack aircraft. Logistics, staff work, and ground tactics training programs were established. During this period 1.6 million dollars was appropriated for building and infrastructure improvements and the supervision of the work was directed by Curry's office.



Classroom at the ACTS

While Curry was at ACTS, the doctrine of high altitude precision bombardment was formulated and became a principal air force tactic in World War II. one ACTS officer, Claire Chennault who was Senior Instructor in fighter tactics, spoke in opposition to this doctrine but the bomber advocates prevailed

Curry provided a moderating voice. Fighter would have two missions, as bomber escorts and as bomber interceptors. Both functions were important but the improvement in bomber performance, range, made escort duties moot. He argued that first determine the mission of the pursuit aircraft and then, the most efficient aircraft for that mission can be built.

In World War II, the bomber advocates vastly over-estimated the ability of daylight bombers "flying fortresses," to defend themselves from fighters. Heavy bomber casualties forced a decision to provide long range escort fighters and

the Merlin powered P-51 Mustang became the “little friend” of the bombers in the skies over Germany.

As a sidelight, while at Maxwell, Chennault formed one of the first air demonstrations teams, “The Three Men on the Flying Trapeze,” the fore-runners of The Thunderbirds.



Sgt. W.C. "Billy" McDonald, Capt. Claire Chennault and Sgt. J.H. "Luke" Williamson, the "Three Men on a Flying Trapeze." The team flew maneuvers in their P-12s linked together by twenty foot lengths of rope! (Credit: National Archives)

Duties on the General Staff of the War Department kept Curry in Washington from 1936 to 1938. As war clouds gathered, he was sent to the west coast as Commanding Officer of Hamilton Field just north of San Francisco. Hamilton was a pursuit base housing five wings, mostly flying Curtiss P-40 Warhawks. The overcrowding led to serious housing problems and Curry's experience in base construction at Maxwell proved useful in resolving the crisis.

Bombsight technicians training at Lowrey Field, Denver, Colorado



By now a major general, Curry spent most of World War II as Commanding General in the Rocky Mountain and Western Technical Training Commands. The technical training commands ran schools for enlisted men and non-rated officers in over 20 specialties: parachute riggers, weather observers mechanics, civil engineers, quartermasters, ordnance men, and photographers, all of whom filled important slots in the air force

organization.

His final assignment was President of the Evaluation Board U.S. Army Air Forces Mediterranean Theatre of Operations. The Board investigated and evaluated the over-all operation and tactics of the various Air Force components which served in North Africa and Italy and presented a multi-volume report on the findings.

At war's end, after 41 years in the Army, Curry retired to Denver where he became very active in civic affairs. He directed Aviation Colorado, served as a leader in the Boy Scouts and Red Cross. Perhaps his most lasting contribution to the USAF is the enormous effort which he exerted to bring the USAF Academy to Colorado.

AEROSPACE CHRONOLOGY

Dec. 6, 1928 – North American Aviation Inc. is founded when Clement Melville Keys, sometimes called the “father of commercial aviation in America” is forced to break up his holding company by the “Air Mail Act of 1934.”



The manufacturing division, which retained the North American name was taken over by James H. “Dutch” Kindelberger, a World War I pilot and former employee of Glenn Martin and Donald Douglas.

During the next 26 years, under Kindelberger's leadership, he company produced such well known aircraft as the T-6 Texan, B-25 Mitchell, P-51 Mustang, F-86 Sabre X-15, and the Command Module for Apollo.

Dec. 7, 1972 – Apollo 17, the last Apollo moon mission, is launched. The crew take the photograph known as “The Blue Marble” as they leave the Earth.



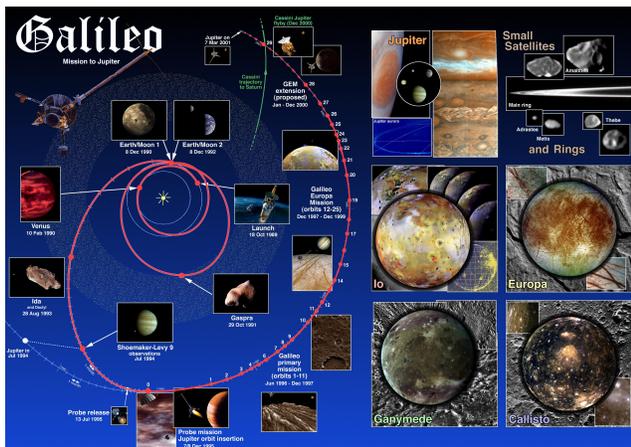
The Big Blue Marble

Note that the Southern Hemisphere is to the top.

(Credit JPL/NASA)

Twenty three years later, in 1995, the *Galileo* spacecraft arrives at Jupiter, just over six years after it was launched by Space Shuttle *Atlantis*. After a six year journey, she arrived on station and commenced studies of Jupiter's surface, atmosphere, magnetic fields, and satellites.

The first observed volcanic eruption on a planet other than the earth was seen on Jupiter's satellite Io. Ganymede was discovered to have magnetic fields, the first discovered on a planet's satellite. Evidence was gathered about the liquid layers on Ganymede, Callisto, and Europa. (The satellites mentioned were discovered by Galileo Galilei when he first turned a telescope to the heavens in 1610.)



Credits: NASA/JPL)

The spacecraft, expected to last eight years, finally ran low on fuel. Damaged by radiation and micro-meteorite impacts, it was intentionally crashed into Jupiter ending a 17 year 2.88 billion mile journey.

Dec. 8, 1949 – Muroc Army Airfield is renamed Edwards Air Force Base in honor of test pilot Glen Edwards who was killed in the crash of one a Northrop's YB-49, the jet powered version of the YB-35 flying wing.



Capt. Glen Edwards

(Credit: National Museum of the USAF)

During World War II, Muroc Army Air Force Base served as a training base and bombing range. One of its unusual targets was the *Muroc Maru*, a 650 foot long model of a Japanese cruiser built out of lumber and chicken wire.



A B-29 making a pass on the Muroc Maru.

After the war, the base became the home of the Air Force Test Center and Test Pilot School and NASA's Armstrong Flight Research Center. Notable aircraft tested there were the Bell P-59,

first U.S. jet, Bell's X-series starting with the X-1 in which Yeager became first to break the sound barrier, and the North American X-15. A goodly part of the Air Force inventory went through their initial tests at Edwards.



Edwards today. The world's largest compass rose is just visible in the northwest quadrant formed by the runways on the lakebed. (Credit: U.S. Geodetic Survey)

Dec. 9, 1983 – Delta Airlines receives the 1,000th production Boeing 737. The 737 first flew in 1967 and is still being manufactured today. It is the highest selling commercial airliner in history with over 10,000 produced.



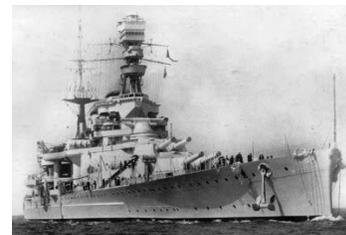
Dec 10, 1941 – Three days after the Pearl Harbor disaster and 20 years after Billy Mitchell's bombing experiments off the Virginia Capes, the Japanese Imperial Navy prove that armed and maneuvering capital ships are vulnerable to air

attack. French Indochina-based Imperial Japanese Navy Mitsubishi G3M bombers (Allied reporting name "Nell") sink the Royal Navy battleship *Prince of Wales* and battlecruiser *Repulse* in the South China Sea east of Malaya. They are the first capital ships while sunk while at sea by aircraft alone.



The Mitsubishi G3M Nell attackers.

HMS Prince of Wales



HMS Repulse

Repulse had just been struck by a bomb and near misses are evident. Prince of Wales is increasing speed and turning to starboard.



Dec 11, 1941 – a 19 year old American pilot and poet, John Gillespie Magee, Jr. is killed when the Supermarine Mk Vb Spitfire which he is flying collides with an Airspeed Oxford over Lincolnshire, England.

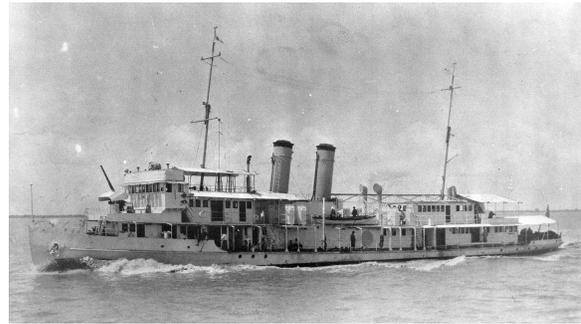


McGee was born in Shanghai, China. His father and mother were Episcopalian missionaries. Due to the war, he returned to the United States in 1939 and attended Avon Old Farms School in Connecticut. Accepted by Yale University, he chose instead to enroll in the Royal Canadian Air Force. As a school boy, he exhibited some talent in writing poetry highly influenced by Rupert Brooke, an eminent English soldier poet who died in World War I.

After basic training in Canada, McGee shipped off to England and received operational training in Wales. Upon completion of this phase of training, he was assigned to 412 Squadron and flew some fighter sweeps and convoy protection patrols. On December 11th, while descending at high speed in a formation through a break in a low cloud deck, he struck the Oxford. McGee attempted to bail out but was too low and his parachute did not open in time.

His most well-known sonnet, *High Flight*, has acquired a circle of admirers within the aviation community. It is the official poem of the RCAF and the RAF and is inscribed on the memorial to the *Challenger* astronauts. Many who have “...danced their skies on laughter silvered wings...” have sensed the magic that McGee so beautifully articulated.

Dec. 12, 1937 – The *USS Panay*, a gunboat stationed on the Yangtze River near Nanking is attacked and sunk by aircraft of the Imperial Japanese Navy. The *Panay* was part of the United States Asiatic Fleet which maintained a gunboat presence on main Chinese rivers to protect American lives and property during the turmoil caused by the civil disorders in China.



On a Sunday afternoon, Yokosuka B4Ys and Nakajima A4N fighters bombed and strafed the *Panay* which was clearly marked as a United States vessel.



Yokosuka B4Y



Nakajima A4N

There is evidence that the attack was deliberate but the Japanese took responsibility for the attack and paid reparations, about two million dollars, for the loss of the ship, the deaths of four sailors and the wounding of 43 sailors and civilians.