



Missions for
America

Semper vigilans!

Semper volans!

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

<http://ct075.org>

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Issue 13.05

05 February, 2019

SQUADRON CALENDAR

- 10 FEB-Army Aviation Support/Springfield H.S.
- 12 FEB-TRCS Meeting-Commander's Call
- 19 FEB-TRCS Meeting+Pratt and Whitney Tour
- 22 FEB-TRCS Meeting
- 23 FEB-Special Olympics-volunteers needed
- 23-24 FEB-ICS300 Course & ICS400 Course
- 26 FEB-TRCS Meeting-squadron Down Day
- 26-27 FEB-CAP Legislative Weekend-
Washington
- 05 FEB-TRCS Meeting-Staff
- 12 FEB-TRCS Meeting-Commander's Call
- 19 FEB-TRCS Meeting
- 26 FEB-TRCS Meeting
- 16 MAR-CTWG SAREX
- 29-31 MAR-Cadet Competition-Camp Nianti06
- 06 APR-CTWG SAREX
- 17-19 MAY-USAF Evaluation of CTWG
- 15 JUN-Commander's Cup Rocket Contest
- 10-17 AUG-CTWG Encampment



The Channel Dash

World War II-The British believed that the English Channel defensive networks were near impregnable to penetration by German capital ships. In February of 1942, the Kriegsmarine proved them wrong.

Vice Admiral Ciliax has succeeded where the Duke of Medina Sidonia failed. Nothing more mortifying to the pride of our sea-power has happened since the seventeenth century. [...] It spelled the end of the Royal Navy legend that in wartime no enemy battle fleet could pass through what we proudly call the English Channel
—The Times (14 February 1942—

CADET MEETING

05 February, 2019

A video-taped speech by Adm. William H McRaven was watched and discussed by the cadets.

Lt Diaz offered a presentation entitled “Stop the Bleed.”

SENIOR MEETING

05 February,

Squadron Commander Farley explained how hangar fees are posted in WIMRS.

Department, Committee, and Project status reports were presented by those officers responsible.

GONE WEST



Capt Rosemary Mariner, USN, the first Navy jet pilot went West on January 24th. Mariner

completed flight training in 1974 and flew the A-4E/L Skyhawk and the A-7E Corsair II and logged 3,5000 hours in 15 different types of aircraft. During Operation Desert Storm, Mariner was the first female military aviator to command an operational air squadron, Electronic Warfare Squadron Thirty-Four.

An all female group of naval aviators from NAS Oceana flying F/A-18E/F Super Hornets performed the traditional Missing Man Flyover at her funeral.

AEROSPACE HISTORY AND CHRONOLOGY

Feb. 7, 1918 – The Hewitt-Speery Automatic Airplane was a WWI project to develop what is now called a cruise missile. The drone, a modified Curtiss N-9, suffered numerous problems so it was fitted out with normal controls so that a test pilot might better study the problems. Lawrence Speery, the developer of the automatic pilot assumed the role of test pilot.



N-9 on its launch rails.



Lawrence Speery and his father Elmer, the inventor of the gyro-compass and ship stabilizers.

On a first attempt, Speery, encountered icy conditions on the ground and the aircraft was wrecked in a taxiing accident. Afterwards, more experiments led to limited success but the end of

the war brought an end to the project.

Feb. 8, 1988 – For the first time, the Federal Aviation Administration retires an aircraft registration number: NR16020, Amelia Earhart's Electra. 'N' is the prefix assigned to all U.S. registered aircraft and 'R' stands for "restricted," an aircraft registered for a special purpose only.



Earhart and her Lockheed Electra, NR16020

Big Day For First Flights February 9

1916-The Sopwith Pup makes its first flight with Harry Hawker at the controls. Almost 1,000 were produced as served as fighters and trainers. The Pup was the first aircraft to land on a moving ship, *HMS Furious*.



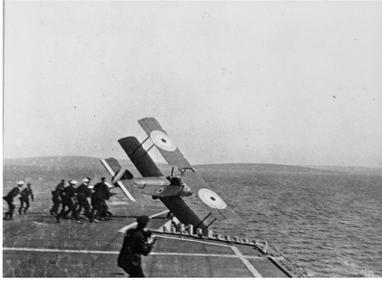
Furious had no arresting gear. Crew members grabbed the aircraft to stop the forward roll.

HMS Furious configured for the first aircraft landing on a moving ship.



Squadron Commander Edwin Dunning performed the feat on the 2nd of August in 1917. Five days later he made his second landing. On the third

attempt, the aircraft slid off the starboard side of the bow. Dunning was trapped in the wreckage and drowned.



Dunning's Fatal Accident.

The *Furious* was originally a battlecruiser with two 18 inc guns mounted fore and aft. The forward gun was removed and a platform constructed.

In the second modification, a platform was also mounted aft. Planes landing aft had to negotiate the superstructure by being towed along pathways on the port and starboard side! This was somewhat inconvenient.

So the final iteration resulted in the elimination of the superstructure and the installation of a flush deck, *sans* island.

1933 – The Boeing 247 was the first to incorporate a wide range of structural and control improvements: an all metal semi-monocoque fuselage, fully cantilevered wing, retractable landing gear, deicing boots, autopilot, and trim tabs.



The 247 was the first “modern” airliner but Boeing was affiliated with United Airlines and United was a preferred customer. An offer by Jack Frye of TWA to purchase 247s was rejected so Frye went to see Donald Douglas with his requirements and Douglas produced the DC-2 and DC-3 series, superior aircraft, and the 247 production line was

closed after only 75 were manufactured.

The 247D in the photo was flown by Roscoe Turner and Clyde Pangborn in the 1934 England to Australia Robertson Trophy Race and finished third.

1937 – The Blackburn Skua was used by the British Fleet Air Arm as a carrier based fighter and dive bomber. It achieved its moment of glory when two squadrons of Skuas sank the German cruiser *Königsberg* in Bergen Harbor during the Nazi invasion of Norway.



Painting by John Dell of the Skua attack on the Königsberg.

1955 – The 540 was a turbo-prop conversion of the Convair 340, a development of the Convair 240. The Convair 240 series was Convair's hope to be the replacement for the ubiquitous DC-3 and first flew in 1947.



1963 – The jet tri-motor Boeing 727 was configured for short and medium length routes and provided excellent take-off performance on short runways.



*Roll-out of the 737
(Photos by Boeing)*

1997 – Boeing 737 Next Generation takes flight. More Boeing 737s have been manufactured than any other airliner in history. There have been five generations of 737s produced: Original, Classic, Next Generation, Boeing Business Jet, and Max comprising 22 different models. The Next Generation was designed to compete with the popular Airbus 320.



The 727 control surfaces extended.

This was due to a clean wing with no engine mounts and the provision of Kreuger leading edge flaps, leading edge slats, and triple slotted Fowler flaps.

1969 – Boeing bet the company on Joe Sutter's 747 design team and won big! The first of the jumbo jets and the first wide-body aircraft.



The First 747 (Photos by Boeing)

1972 – First flight of the Boeing E-3 Sentry, an airborne warning and control aircraft based on the Boeing 707. A 30 foot rotating radar dome is mounted on two struts above the fuselage.



E-3 practicing take-offs and landing at Tinker AFB.



*737-800, the Next Generation
(Photos by Boeing)*

Feb. 10, 2000 – Igor Bensen goes West. Benson was one of the talented Russian aeronautical engineers who immigrated to the United States. He is best known for developing autogyros and gyrocopters.



Bensen and his B-8M gyrocopter in a parking lot outside the Smithsonian Institution's Arts and Industries Building.

Dressed for the cold, an enthusiast props his gyrocopter on the taxiway at the long gone Waterford Airport.



Benson was one of a group of talented aeronautical engineers who left Bolshevik Russia and ended up in the United States. Best known of the Russians is Igor Sikorsky.

However, lesser known but highly talented names abound. Alexander Seversky founded what became Republic Aircraft and Alexander Kartveli designed a line of Seversky/Republic aircraft including the P-47 Thunderbolt, the F-84 Thunderjet and the F-105 Thunderstreak. Michael Stroukoff was president of Chase Aircraft, their best known design being the C-123 Provider. Finally, the peripatetic Michael Gregor who started work in Rhode Island with the Gallaudet Aircraft Company, moved to Dayton-Wright, founded Gregor Aircraft, headed north and joined Canadian Car and Foundry and finally settled down at Chase.

Feb 11, 1959 – A US meteorological balloon carrying an instrument package sets a new altitude record., 146,000 feet.

The record was broken in 2002 when a balloon with a polyethylene skin was launched from the Sanriku Balloon Center at Ofunato City, Iwate, Japan and reached 173,900 feet. The thickness of the skin of the balloon, 3.4 μm , is a little less than the diameter of a strand of spider web!



Launch of the polyethylene balloon.

Feb 12, 1942 – The “Channel Dash!” Since the year of the Spanish Armada, 1588, the English race has regarded the English Channel as their exclusive waterway, the moat which guarded their islands from the always quarreling Europeans. Even Napoleon, perhaps the greatest war leader since Alexander the Great, regarded what he called *La Manche* inviolable. Hitler himself dared not the

challenge the Royal Navy and cancelled his invasion of England in favor of an ill conceived 1941 foray against the Soviet Union. But early in 1942, German Vice Admiral Otto Ciliax rose to the challenge and executed the daring operation *Unternehmen Zerebus* (*Operation Cerebus*), breaching the British defenses and humiliating the British defense establishment.

Cerebus was not a cross-channel invasion but a north run up the channel by three major *Kriegsmarine* warships, the battlecruiser *Scharnhorst* and *Gnienau* and the heavy cruiser *Prinz Eugen*. All three ships were tied up in the occupied French port of Brest and subject to British bombing attacks. Removing them from Brest to German ports on the North Sea not only reduced their vulnerability to British bombing but placed them in position to counter a British invasion of Norway or attack the supply convoys bound for the Russian ports of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk.

On the night of February 11th, the three capital ships accompanied by six destroyer and around 40 torpedo boats cast off and headed north. Darkness winter weather and radar countermeasures prevented detection of the German departure for 12 hours.



Annotated Map of the Channel Dash

While running the Straits of Dover, the Germans faced the quadruple threat of coastal defense batteries, mines, the Royal Navy, and the Royal Air Force. German air defenses consisted of electronic jamming, raids on British airfields, and some 250 aircraft under the command of Adolf Galland. The British committed around 450 aircraft to the battle.

Around nine in the morning, aircraft and radar

alerted the British that the Germans had come out and were heading north. Cloud cover prevented attacks by the 100 British bomber standing alert. They were armed with semi-armor piercing bombs which had to be dropped from a minimum altitude of 7,000 feet. The coast defense artillery was ineffective due to the poor visibility. And the Germans had swept for mines and stuck close to the French coast to avoid the mine barrage off Dover.

At noon, a heroic attack was launched by 825 Naval Air Squadron, Swordfish torpedo bombers under the command of Lt. Cmdr. Eugene Esmonde. The Swordfish were open cockpit biplanes and the launching of a torpedos required a low and slow straight line run towards the target. When attacking warships protected by air cover, this is near suicidal as Torpedo Eight discovered during the Battle of Midway four months later.



The heroic torpedo attack by Squadron 825 in a futile attempt to prevent a German flotilla from transiting the English Channel.

(Painting by Mike Steele-Morgan available from Art Prints Direct UK)

Esmonde had previously led the Swordfish which had attacked and crippled the Battleship *Bismarck* a year earlier but the *Bismarck* had lacked air cover and anti-aircraft escort vessels. The German flotilla had both and Esmonde and his squadron demonstrated how brave men could die.



Esmonde and squadron mates in Royal Navy summer dress.

All six Swordfish were downed by fighter cover or anti-aircraft and only four crew member survived. Esmonde was awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously. The German commander, Adm. Ciliax remarked that "...the mothball attack of a handful of ancient planes, piloted by men whose bravery surpasses any other action by either side that day"

All through the day, British ships and aircraft sortied but confused orders, insufficient intelligence, and the abominable weather prevented the attackers from fatally damaging or stopping the capital ships as they steamed north. The naval and air forces of both sides incurred major losses and men were killed or wounded. By battle's end, the British had lost 42 aircraft and had about 240 casualties. German losses were 22 aircraft and 38 casualties. The score for damage to the escort and attacking vessels was about even. Both German battlecruisers received damage from mines but suffered little loss of their combat capability.

In the words of one authority, the "Channel Dash" was ...a classic example of befuddled tactical thinking, poor co-operation and almost non-existent co-ordination." But the German tactical success was a strategic failure. The Germans exchanged Brest, a port positioned to allow sorties into the Atlantic capable of attacking the vital convoys carrying food, equipment and troops to the United Kingdom for less valuable bases on the North Sea. And the British did not invade Norway.

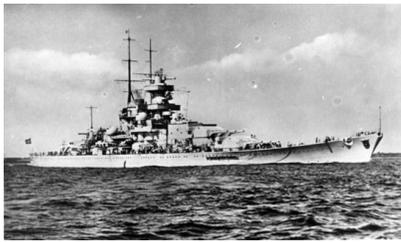
The *Scharnhorst* was sunk at the Battle of the North Cape while attempting to intercept a Russia bound convoy which was escorted by superior forces of the Royal Navy. Paralleling the respect which Adm Ciliax displayed to the gallantry of Lt. Comdr. Esmonde and 825 Squadron, Adm Bruce Fraser, the British fleet commander stated:

"Gentlemen, the battle against the Scharnhorst has ended in victory for us. I hope that any of you who are ever called upon to lead a ship into action against an opponent many times superior, will command your ship as gallantly as the Scharnhorst was commanded today."



Scharnhorst (Credit U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command)

The *Gneisnau* had been dry-docked in Kiel to repair the damage caused by a mine. Repairs completed, ordnance was restocked and as the ship was being prepared to deploy, a heavy bombing raid caused major damage. A rebuild was attempted but cancelled by Hitler. The *Gneisnau's* turrets were removed and installed as shore batteries and she was sunk as a blockship in the harbor of Gdynia, Poland.



Gneisnau (Credit: Bundesarchiv)

The Heavy Cruiser *Prinz Eugen* survived the war and was taken as a war prize by the U.S. Navy and commissioned *USS Prinz Eugen*, IX-300, an unclassified miscellaneous vessel. Naval intelligence made a thorough examination of her passive array sonar and fire control system. Eventually, she was towed to Bikini Atoll where she survived two atomic bomb tests. Badly damaged, The *Prinz Eugen* eventually capsized and sank.



Prinz Eugen (Credit: Bundesarchiv)

Feb 13, 1943 – Seven weeks after declared fully operational, both USMC VMF-124 and the Vought F4U-1 Corsair made their operational debut. Arriving at Henderson Field, Guadalcanal, the squadron performed its first mission, escorting a PBY Catalina to Sandfly Bay, Vella Lavella, to rescue two downed pilots. But then ext day, *Lady Luck* went AWOL.



VMF-124 and Corsairs at Henderson Field. (Credit: USMC)

Valentine's Day, February 14. VMF-124 is assigned escort for nine PB4Y-1 Liberators to attack enemy shipping south of Bougainville. PB4Y-1



Navy Lib departing Henderson Field.

Ten USAAF P-38 Lightnings provide top cover. The bombers inflicted some damage on one or two Japanese freighters but a Japanese force consisting of 18 A6M Zeros and 11 A6M2-N float Zero float planes jumped the raiders. In the melee that followed, one Liberator, four Lightnings and two Corsairs went down. The Japanese lost one Zero.

The mission became known as the “Saint Valentine's Day Massacre” and all daylight bombing missions in the northern Solomon Islands were suspended until adequate fighter protections could be provided. This did not occur until October.