



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

<http://ct075.org>

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Issue 14.04

21 January, 2020

### SQUADRON CALENDAR

28 JAN-TRCS Meeting  
04 FEB-TRCS Staff Meeting  
11 FEB-TRCS Commander's Call  
18 FEB-TRCS Meeting  
25 FEB-TRCS Meeting-Safety Down Day  
29 FEB-01 MAR-Squadron Leadership School  
03 MAR-TRCS Staff Meeting  
10 MAR-TSRCS Commander's Call  
17 MAR-TRCS Meeting  
24 MAR-TRCS Meeting  
31 MAR-TRCS Meeting  
XX MAR-Water Safety Course-Date TBD

### CADET MEETING

21 January 2020

Missions for  
America

The weekly check-in with the CTWG radio net was carried out.

*Semper vigilans!*

C/SMSGt Burton passed out personal first aid kits and briefed the cadets about the contents and their use.

*Semper volans!*

Lt Col Rocketto explained what next week's aerospace education lesson will cover and urged the cadets to study the material which will be forwarded by e-mail.

He also provided a mini-lesson involving basic astronomy and the interpretation of photographs,

### SENIOR MEETINGS

21 January, 2020

Lt Kopycienski briefed the senior members about the CTWG net procedures.

Capt. Johnson provided a detailed and coherent briefing on land survival techniques.

### PROMOTIONS, QUALIFICATIONS,

#### AWARDS

Lt Jason Otrin has qualified as a Mission Observer.

#### MISSIONS

Maj Noniewicz and Lts Spreccace and Otrin flew and ice patrol mission. Over the eastern sector. Fragmented ice was observed on the Connecticut River north of Middletown.

### AVIATION HISTORY

#### A Singular Aircraft Hijacking

Malta July 28, 1942. Lt. Ted Strever, a South African Air Force pilot flying with RAF Squadron 217, departed with eight other Bristol Beauforts

for a torpedo attack on an Italian convoy bound to North Africa. His crew consisted of Pilot Officer William Dunsmore, navigator and two New Zealanders, Sergeants John Wilkinson and Alexander Brown, air gunner and radio operator.



*Strever and a Beaufort*



While attacking the convoy, Strever's aircraft was badly damaged and he ditched it. He and his crewmen managed to get into a dinghy but were spotted by an Italian Cant Z506B float plane which landed and they were taken prisoner.

The aircraft took off and landed at a German-held Greek port with Strever and his crew. A overnight hiatus allowed them time to plan an escape but the next morning they were loaded aboard another Cant bound for Taranto, an Italian naval port on the heel of Italy's boot.

A stretch in a prison of war camp did not appeal to them so they acted. Their first objectives were to disarm the guard who was armed with a pistol and also prevent the radio operator from sending a distress message. They were successful but the pilot turned and pulled a pistol. In the melee which followed, the pistol was knocked out of the pilot's hand, grabbed by Dunsmore and the RAF crew gained control of the Italian aircraft.

The next step was to set course for Malta. Strever estimated their position and came up with a new course. But another problem arose. They were in

an Italian aircraft and wanted to land at Malta. At that time, Malta was the most bombed place in the world and British anti-aircraft defenses were on high alert.

Spitfires soon intercepted them and started shooting, badly damaging the aircraft. Strever put the Italian pilot back into his seat and made him land on the water. They climbed out on the wing and took a white vest and waved it as a sign of surrender. The "Spits" broke off their attack. Soon an RAF rescue launch appeared and towed them back to Malta.

Strever and Dunsmore both received Distinguished Flying Cross and the two sergeants were awarded Distinguished Flying Medals. The aircraft was "inducted" into the RAF and based in Alexandria, Egypt as part of the air-sea rescue force.



Go to:

<https://weaponsandwarfare.com/2019/05/22/the-worlds-first-air-hijack/>

for a film about this incident using stock cinema.

(The film narrator is incorrect. This was not the first aerial hijacking but it was as far as *The Coastwatcher* can determine the first and only incident in which POWs escaped by hijacking an aircraft while in flight.

## AEROSPACE CHRONOLOGY

JAN 22, 1914 – Death of New Britain, Connecticut native, Charles Keeney Hamilton, known as the "Crazy Man of the Air." He started as a parachutist and lighter-than-air pilot but in 1909 learned to fly under Glenn Curtiss and then joined his exhibition team. His career was marked by repeated dare-devil stunting and numerous crashes.



*Connecticut's Crazy Man of the Air*

Hamilton's soon left Curtiss and started a mid-western and western tour of the United States during which he set a number of records. He returned to the east coast and won \$10,000 for the first round trip between New York and Philadelphia and then made the first night flight in America. In August of 1910, he received pilot certificate #12.

Curtiss repossessed the Reims Racer which Hamilton had purchased because he had fallen behind on payments. Hamilton then had J. Walter Christie build a new aircraft for him with a 110 HP engine which he christened the *Hamiltonian*. Incidentally, Christie was a talented inventor and industrialist and invented the "Christie suspension" which was used by the highly successful Soviet T-34 and a series of British tanks. Alas, within two months the *Hamiltonian* was destroyed in a stall induced crash but the cut, bruised, and burned Hamilton was flying again within a week.

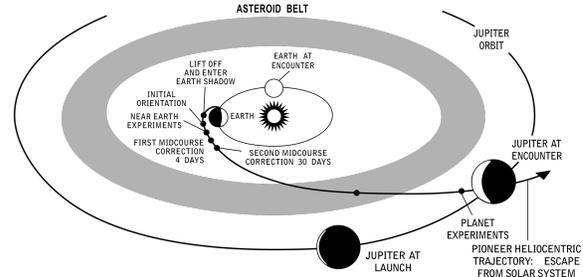
A drinker, smoker, and spendthrift, Hamilton died of tuberculosis and is buried in Hartford, Connecticut

JAN 23, 2003 – The final communication is made between Earth and Pioneer 10, a spacecraft intended to fly past Jupiter. It was launched in 1972 and performed well for over three decades.



*Pioneer Ten Mounted on its "Kick Motor."*  
(Credit: NASA Ames)

Pioneer 10 was the first spacecraft placed on a trajectory to escape the solar system and travel into interstellar space and first to fly beyond Mars, the main asteroid belt, Jupiter, and Neptune and first to use all-nuclear power.



*The Trajectory of Pioneer 10* (Credit: Smirnoff 103)

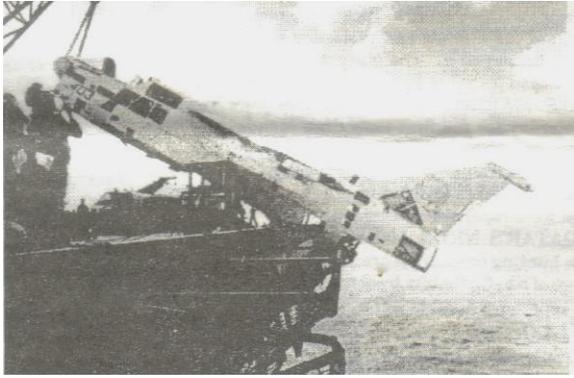
The spacecraft is heading in the general direction of the red star Aldebaran in the constellation Taurus. It is expected to pass by Aldebaran in about two million years.

JAN. 24, 1991 – A Ling-Temco-Vought A-7E flown by Lt. Tom Drostie was retired with honor. She was the last Corsair II to need a barrier net landing aboard a U.S. carrier after damaging its nose-wheel upon launch.



*Drostie's A-7E on board the USS John F. Kennedy*  
(Credit PH 2 Moore, USN)

The A-7E type was about to retire so the Navy stripped it of all usable parts, over three million dollars worth. The crew then desecrated it with graffiti but the Captain declared it unseemly for an aircraft which had done noble service so he had it repainted and buried at sea with full military honors. It was dropped by a crane over the port side



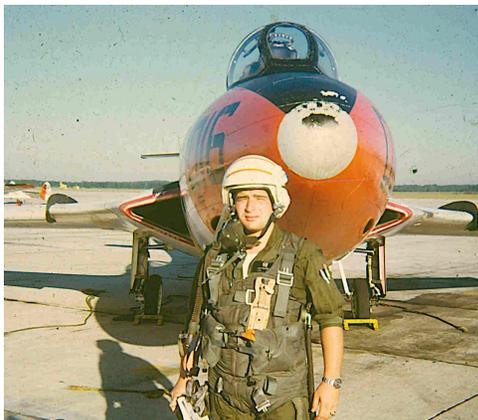
Unfortunately or otherwise, the wing fuel tanks were declared not worth saving and left in the wings which provided enough buoyancy to keep the aircraft afloat. The *Kennedy's* Marines had to sink it with machine gun fire.



(Photo Credits: PH2 Mickey Moore and PH# Paul Hawthorne)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pNOyd-W\\_uU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pNOyd-W_uU)

JAN 25, 1947– Birth of Hap Rocketto, Coastwatcher Feature Writer.



*Pensacola Naval Air Station circa 1970*

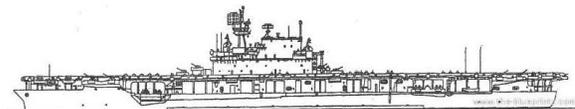
JAN 26, 1953 – The first meeting of the Experimental Aircraft Association takes place at Milwaukee, Wisconsin's Curtiss Wright Field.



*Paul Poberezny, First President EAA*

JAN 27, 1928 – 30 miles south of Rhode Island – The first rigid airship to aircraft carrier mooring is achieved when United States Navy dirigible *Los Angeles* moors to *USS Saratoga* at sea. The experiment was hampered by gusty winds and rough sea conditions and not repeated. However, during World War II, blimps did successfully moor to aircraft carrier to transfer personnel or stores.

Photo # NH 63067 USS Los Angeles landing on USS Saratoga, Jan. 1928



*The two bottom images are to scale and show the relative lengths of each ship.*

JAN 28, 1942 – Piloting a PBO-1 Hudson patrol bomber over the North Atlantic, U. S. Navy Chief Aviation Machinist’s Mate Donald Francis Mason attacks a German submarine, which submerges and escapes. Thinking he had sunk it, he signals “SIGHTED SUB, SANK SAME.”



*Chief Mason*

It becomes one of the most famous signals of World War II. Unfortunately there is clear evidence that the sub was not sunk. Civil Air Patrol claims two sinkings of Nazi U-boats but there is no solid evidence that these events occurred. In the heat and fog of battle, eye-witness testimony is untrustworthy and with good reason. For example, WWII claims of enemy aircraft shot down can be reduced by at least half and probably 2/3 to get an accurate account of losses.

The Hudson bomber flown by Chief Mason was one of 20 former lend-lease RAF Hudson IIAs which the USN repossessed and supplied to Patrol Squadron 82 operating out of Argentia, Newfoundland.



*A Hudson bomber from Mason's VP-82 (Credit" US Naval Historical Center)*

The US military faced a shortage of aircraft and pilots and during this time period, from 5 March 1942 to 31 August, 1943, the Civil Air Patrol flew almost 87,000 patrol missions logging almost 250,000 hours. 173 U-boats were sighted and 82 bombs or depth charges dropped but the true value was not in a sub sunk but in assisting in the rescue of 363 survivors of U-Boat attacks and forcing the U-boats to remain submerged where their speed and attack ability was limited



*CAP Stinson 10A at New England Air Museum.*

Note the bomb attached under the fuselage. The aircraft is marked as one assigned to CAP Coastal Patrol Base 3, Latana Florida. It also bears the WWII CAP white triangle applied directly over a factory paint job.