



Missions for America

Semper vigilans!
Semper volans!

The Coastwatcher

Newsletter of the Thames River Composite
Squadron
GON
Connecticut Wing
Civil Air Patrol
<http://cap-ct075.com/default.aspx>

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SCHEDULE OF COMING EVENTS

OCTOBER

20 OCT-BDUs
24 OCT-CTWG Conference and Cadet Ball
27 OCT-BDUs
31 OCT-CAP Safety Down Day
-TRCS Command Post Exercise

FOR FUTURE PLANNING

02-07 NOV-USAF Evaluation
03 NOV-PT-Citrus Fruit Fundraiser ends
-Maj Lesick, Director of Cadet Programs visit
10 NOV-Character Development-Blues
17 NOV-Aerospace-BDUs
18 NOV-USCGA Lecture
21 NOV-TRCS Rifle Training
24 NOV-Emergency Services-BDUs
TBA-Danielson Bivouac
TBA-IG visit

CADET MEETING MINUTES

15 October, 2009

C/2Lt Scannell led the Cadets in the opening ceremonies.

Lt Wojtcuk led the Cadets in a Character Development Seminar on personal relationships and reacting to adverse behavior by others.

C/SMSgt Abigail Wojtcuk was promoted to C/CMSgt.

C/CSMSgt Alexis Wojtcuk was awarded the Community Service Ribbon for service at Backus Hospital.

C/2Lt Jonathan Scannell was awarded a clasp to his Red Service Ribbon for five years of CAP activity.

C/A1C Jorge Barberan and C/Amn Jennifer Johnson were awarded the Red Service Ribbon.



Thames River Composite Squadron

DANIELSON BIVOUAC

An Emergency Services Training Bivouac is planned for the Danielson Airport campground in December. No details are available at this time but Col Provost cautions Cadets to wear wool socks. Wool retains heat even when wet. Other fabrics result in cold feet and increase the chance of frostbite. In addition, Cadets will not wear jungle boots. Only combat or civilian boots will be allowed. Uniform regulations are suspended for this variance in footwear.

FLAGPOLE DONATION

Col Frederick Herbert, former Wing Commander and a Squadron member, has donated funds to replace our flagpole.

The previous pole was suffering from a serious case of dry rot at its base and one night, in despair, committed suicide by running into Maj Rocketto's car. Maj Rocketto has, in addition to the pole, downed one white tailed deer, one mule deer, one coyote, and a small boy on a bicycle making him the Ace of the Base.

We have located a local vendor who can supply us with a 25 foot fiberglass pole and plan to purchase it and install it in the near future.

COMMANDER'S CALL **15 OCTOBER, 2009**

Col Kinch reported reported that Wing has released the following information:

1. Vice Commander Valleau has announced that the Wing Rocketry Contest will be held during the third week in June. Rules of engagement will be announced in December.
2. Col Provost and Maj Flynn will be in charge of the 2010 Wing Encampment. Applicants for Cadet Commander must submit their forms by the December Wing Commander's Call.
3. The USAF SAR Evaluation will be held from 3 November to 7 November. We might expect a call for a mission in the middle of the week. On the 7th, a wing-wide exercise will be held based at HFD.
4. The new call sign for Civil Air Patrol Flights is *CAP*.

Communications Officer Lt Manning, has had our van and base radio converted to analog narrow band. Both CTWG Cessna 172s are similarly equipped.

Col Kinch requests that all Squadron members update their 101 cards and make sure that mission information is inserted in WIMRS.

SQTR forms should be kept up to date by inserting completed training tasks as they occur rather than waiting until near expiration.

Regulations require that a member newly assigned to a job must be assigned a specialty track within 30 days. Professional Development Officer Maj Rocketto will post email to the membership with a summary of their assigned duties and attached supplementary material to assist them in earning Technician Level or higher in the pertinent Specialty Track.

The CTWG Inspector General will visit next month and the Squadron is in the process of assembling the SUI reports. Officers responsible for a report must work assiduously to complete this task immediately. The uniform of the day will be BDUs or flight suits.

Col Kinch reminded all Officers that it is their responsibility to know the regulations which pertain to their duties. An up-to-date paper copy of CAP regulations is kept in the Operations Office and an explanation of how to find the regulations on eServices was given.

Safety Officer Capt Noniewicz explained the new requirements for documentation which must be kept in the file jackets of Officers rated as pilots.

Capt Noniewicz briefed the Squadron on salient points from the last issue of *The Sentinel* and led a discussion on the duties of the Flight Release Officer.

The annual Squadron "Safety Down Day" will be held on 31 October commencing at 0800. All Officers are required to attend.

In order to practice for the upcoming USAF evaluation, Lt Farley announced that a Command Post Exercise will follow the "Safety Down Day" on October 31. The exercise will consist of preparations for and a debriefing of a simulated mission.

Maj Rocketto briefed the Squadron on D.C.T Bennett's world record seaplane flight 71 years ago in October. The contract difficulties faced by the USAF in issuing contracts for a new air tanker and a combat search and rescue helicopter were also mentioned/

SQUADRON WORK PARTY

About a dozen and a half Squadron members showed up for the maintenance field day on Saturday, the 10th.



Col Wisheart, an employee of UConn Med, performs a skin graft on the trailer;

Stairs were constructed and/or installed in our storage trailer and on the west side of the walk which connects the Cadet Trailer and the Senior Trailer.

Maj Bridgewater pilots a rotary cutting device as Col Doucette navigates.



Air conditioner vents were sealed and draft strips on doors were installed wherever needed. Rain gutters were installed.



Cadet team prepares inside of new supply trailer.

The ceiling in the Senior trailer was stabilized and patches were affixed to the north exterior walls. Fluorescent light fixtures were replaced and the electrical system was improved.



Capt Noniewicz trims out electric drill at FL 0.008 while displaying the second handsomest pair of calves in Christendom.

The Cadet meeting room and the Cadet Staff office area was reorganized and cleaned.

Members contributed doughnuts, bagels and cream cheese and soda.

SM Owens and Lt Farley install door seals.



Cadet workers were Lexie Wojtcuk, George Abbiati, Jorge Barberan, Andrew Molinari, and Brendan Flynn.

Senior Members participating were Col Kinch, Rich Doucette, Chris Manner, Ed Miller, Keith Neilson, Paul Noniewicz, Scott Owens, Tom Wisheart, Scott Farley, Adam Wojtcuk, Bill Bridgewater, Steve Rocketto, and a parent who wished to remain anonymous. The romantic in Maj Rocketto likes to think that he is in the Witness Protection Program or that a terrorist group has issued a death warrant on him but the real reason is probably much more prosaic

CITRUS FRUIT FUND RAISER

Three Weeks to Go!

We are selling 25 and 35 pound boxes of navel oranges, pink grapefruit, or a mix of both. The prices remain the same as last year, \$25 for a 20 lb box and \$35 for a 40 lb box.



*Uncle Steve Needs
You to Sell Fruit!*

The sale will run from now until 03 November and delivery is expected in the first weeks of December. If you have not picked up your fundraising supplies, get to the next meeting and see Maj Rocketto.

At the present time, Maj Rocketto is the leader with 27 boxes sold followed by Lts Lintelmann and Miller with seven, Col Kinch with six, and Maj deAndrade with two. Maj Bridgeman and Lt Humes made generous donations in lieu of selling fruit.

CTWG CONFERENCE

The Annual Wing Conference will be held at the University of Connecticut on 23-25 October. The primary events will be held on Saturday, the 24th.

The Federal Aviation Administration Safety Team (FAAST) will present a series of safety seminars. Wing will run training for check pilots, and a Garmin 1000 workshop will be featured.

Cadets who attend will participate in a field exercise with UConn USAF ROTC students.

In the evening, the traditional Awards Banquet will be held followed by the Col Howard E. Palmer Cadet Ball.

A provisional schedule follows:

Saturday, October 24th, 2009
0700-0900hrs Breakfast Buffet-Lounge
0700-0900hrs Registration-Front Hall
0900-1000hrs General Assembly-Pavilion
0900-1600hrs Field Exercise (includes MRE lunch) TBD
1000-1050hrs FAAST Class (Wings Program)-Pavilion
Check Pilot School-Mansfield Room
eServices Basics-Coventry Room
1100-1150hrs FAAST Class (Runway Safety)-Pavilion
Check Pilot School-Mansfield Room
Recruiting and Retention Forum-Coventry Room
1200-1300hrs Lunch Buffet-Pavilion
1300-1350hrs FAAST Class (The Aging Pilot)- Pavilion
Check Pilot School-Mansfield Room
Squadron Activities Workshop-Coventry Room
1400-1450hrs FAAST Class (Survivability)-Pavilion
Garmin 1000 Training-Mansfield Room
Public Affairs Workshop-Coventry Room
1500-1550hrs FAASTClass (Non Twr Airport Ops-Pavilion
Garmin 1000 Training-Mansfield Room
The AEX Program-Coventry Room
1600-1700hrs Mid Afternoon Break-Front Hall
1700-1800hrs Adult Happy Hour-Pavilion
1700-1800hrs Cadet Happy Hour-Mansfield Room
1800-2000hrs Annual Awards Banquet-Pavilion
2000-2300hrs Col. Howard E. Palmer Cadet Ball-Pavilion

SHARACK GOES WEIGHTLESS

Stuart Sharack, Thames River's award winning teacher from Juliet Long Elementary School, added an unusual aerospace adventure to his resume last month when departed from Stewart Airport in Newburgh and rode *G-Force One*, a modified Boeing 727-200 through a series of maneuvers which created martian, lunar, and gravitational forces.



A Faucett Airlines 727 at Aeropuerto Rodriguez Ballon, Arequipa, Peru. This is the type of aircraft employed by Zero-G.

The Grumman-Northrop Corporation and Zero-G Corporation collaborate to offer weightless flight to teachers in an effort to promote student progress in the study of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The participants pre-planned experiments which they were able to conduct in the free fall environment created as the aircraft performed a series of parabolic trajectories, diving to pick up speed and then climbing and diving. As the aircraft descended from the maximum height reached in the climb, the teachers fell at the same rate as the plane, becoming weightless. The maneuver is repeated 15 times.

Sharack's main concern was that he would become airsick. He reports that:

The night before flight, I ate very little. It happened to be *Yom Kippur* and I had fasted all day. I broke the fast with a few vegetables and bread. We were advised to minimize dairy, protein, and high acid foods. I also had a ginger ale. The morning of the flight all I ate for breakfast was some apple juice and a bagel. In regards to any other preparation, I had read that mental attitude was a large component of motion sickness so I tried to mentally relax myself and not think I would get sick.

The flight was just so much fun and it all went too fast. I am anxious to view the videos as I now can barely remember that I really had this experience. I am a little disappointed that it seemed often when I was weightless, that I was trying to protect myself from falling which was impossible and unnecessary. I missed some opportunities to do certain planned body motions and positions because of this. I never did get to flip over backwards or sit up straight in the air with my feet crossed.



Sharack endeavors to imitate Superman.

Tom Hanks used the Zero-G flight to prepare for his role in the filming of *Apollo 13*. NASA sponsors flights for qualified undergraduate students. As an unsponsored member of the general public, the tariff is \$5,000 but there is no charge for baggage.

D.C.T. BENNETT, NAVIGATOR EXTRAORDINAIRE

One of the more remarkable seaplane flights marks its anniversary during the first week in October. Perhaps the most proficient navigator-pilot in aviation history flew a unique aircraft into the record books. Eight aircraft engines roared to life on October 6, 1938 ruffling the water on the Firth of Tay just off shore of Dundee, Scotland signaling the eminent departure of the experimental Mayo Composite aircraft. The Composite was simply a conjoining of a Short *Maia*, a four engine variant of the famous Empire Class flying boat, and a Short *Mercury*, a four engine float plane. The Mercury was mounted atop the larger *Maia* in a similar fashion used by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to transport the shuttle orbiter on a Boeing 747. The piggy back design was developed to launch the Mercury aloft with enough fuel to be able complete a trans-Atlantic flight. D.C.T. Bennett, an Imperial Airways Captain had promoted the project and commanded its initial voyage from Foynes, Ireland to Montreal, Canada in July of 1938.



A crane lowers Mercury atop Maia.

Accompanied by First Officer and Radio Operator Ian Harvey, Bennett's goal was to fly non stop from Dundee to Cape Town, South Africa, establishing a new absolute long distance record

for airplanes. The Composite staggered into the air and the 27,500 pound *Mercury* separated from *Maia* to commence its flight south. Bennett navigated through the night by sextant but from the start it seemed as if nothing went right. One of the nacelles lost a panel, causing excess drag. They encountered icing, strong headwinds, and thunderstorms. The fuel pump failed and the two crewmen were forced to hand pump 1,400 gallons of fuel by hand at 12,000 feet without supplementary oxygen. Ultimately, they were forced to land on the Orange River on the Namibia-South Africa border. Although they failed to set an absolute record, the official distance of 5,997.5 miles established a seaplane record which stands to this day.

Donald Clifford Tyndall Bennett was born in Toowoomba, South Queensland, Australia, on September 14, 1910. The youngest of four talented and successful brothers, Donald's early interest in aviation was sparked by reading about the many famous Australia aviators of the day and by the pilots who flew the medical missions to the remote cattle stations such as Lester Brain, the first pilot to be hired by Queensland and Northwest Territories Air Service (QANTAS). Bennett was determined to enlist in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) to and become a pilot.

Unfortunately Bennett was medically rejected by the RAAF, because he still had his tonsils. Undeterred he had them removed and reapplied only to be rejected again. The resolute Bennett then made the 1,500 mile rail journey to Melbourne to plead his case. As it turns out, his second rejection was because a powerful politician had exerted his influence to enroll his nephew, usurping Bennett's place. However, the RAAF authorities were so taken with Bennett's determination that they placed him in the next course of instruction.

Bennett placed first in flying ability and second in the ground school segment at flight school and was commissioned a Pilot Officer in the RAAF. Alas, the financially strapped RAAF had no employment for its new pilot graduates and they were given the choice of resignation or secondment to the British Royal Air Force (RAF). Grateful for a chance to fly, Bennett soon departed for Great Britain.

The knowledge and techniques used in aerial navigation intrigued Bennett and he lobbied for an appointment to the RAF School of Naval Cooperation and Aerial Navigation at Calshot on Southampton Water. It was there that he mastered the intricacies of navigation and fell under the spell of the flying boats as he learned and became proficient in the idiosyncrasies of aquatic aircraft.

During the early 1930s, Bennett was promoted to Flight Officer and assigned as an instructor at the Navigation School with the additional duty of instructing RAF pilots in flying boat operations. On the side, he qualified for the First Class Navigator's License awarded by the prestigious Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators, only the seventh person to do so, bought his first airplane, got married, earned a civil commercial license, flew part time for Jersey Airways, crewed as a navigator in the McRobertson London to Melbourne air race, and qualified as a civil wireless operator, a civil flight instructor, and a ground engineer certified to work on airframes, power plants, and instruments! He was a busy young man. Raised a Methodist, he did not drink alcohol, smoke, or swear which made him the odd man out in the pilot's mess. Bennett's spartan life style and his demanding insistence that his way was the best way, and the fact that he was so often right, did little to endear him to his fellow officers. Seeing little opportunity in the military to exercise his remarkable talents, he began to consider a civilian career in aviation.

When his short term RAAF commission expired in 1935, Bennett took his bride and sailed home to Australia. To occupy his time and curb his boundless energy on the journey, he began writing. *The Complete Air Navigator*, which was a standard text for three decades, was the result. Disappointed to find that there was little opportunity in Australian aviation in which to exercise his wide range of skills, he returned to England, Arthur Harris, a former commanding officer who held a high opinion about the brash Australian's potential, arranged an interview for him with Imperial Airways. Bennett was hired and started flying on their European land plane routes but eventually transferred to the flying boat service which connected the British Commonwealth with its world girdling colonies. To serve these far flung destinations, Imperial ordered a fleet of the new Short S.23 flying boats, known as the C Class or Empire Class. They were the Boeing 747s of their day. Bennett captained the fourth of these luxurious two decked four engine behemoths, christened *Cassiopeia*. He also wrote a second book, *The Air Mariner*, a textbook detailing the operation of flying boats which, like his first book, became a standard reference.

The major design problem facing Imperial during Bennett's tenure was that the aircraft engines of the day were not powerful enough to lift the fuel needed to complete any flight of long duration if any reasonable payload were included in the aircraft's gross weight. Seeking a solution, Major Robert Mayo, the Technical Manager of Imperial, and Arthur Gouge, Chief Designer at Short Brothers Aviation, collaborated to construct the S.20 *Mercury* and then modified a C Class ship, designated S.21, to carry the *Mercury* aloft. This elegant solution using the energy developed by all eight engines allowed enough fuel and payload to be launched to make crossing the Atlantic feasible.

Seeing the potential Bennett requested assignment to the project. Permission was granted and Bennett ran many of the fuel consumption tests. On July 20, 1938, Bennett was at the controls of Mercury, carrying 600 pounds of mail, when it departed on its first trans-Atlantic voyage flying non-stop from Foynes, Ireland to Montreal, Canada and then on to New York. For this accomplishment, The Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators honored Bennett with the Johnston Memorial Trophy for outstanding airmanship and the development of navigational techniques and equipment. Bennett next planned an attempt on the absolute long distance record and flew it with limited success.

Bennett's next project was experimenting with Alan Cobham's air-to-air refueling system but the German invasion of Poland and Britain's declaration of hostilities led to a new posting. At that time Bennett was flying the Short S.30 which relied on in-flight refueling to complete the Atlantic run for what was now British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC). One of his more notable BOAC missions was the evacuation of General Wladyslaw Sikorski, wartime leader of free Poland's government-in-exile, and his staff, from a French beach on the Bay of Biscay just ahead of the onrushing German troops. But Britain was desperately in need of aircraft and Nazi U-boats were sinking many of the freighters carrying the precious cargo from the United States.

Lord Beaverbrook, British Minister of Aircraft Production, asked Bennett to assist in developing the Atlantic Ferry Organization under the aegis of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. Flying the North Atlantic, especially in winter, was generally regarded as suicidal but with characteristic energy and enthusiasm, Bennett went to work to repudiate the conventional wisdom. As Flying Superintendent, Bennett visited Lockheed, test flew the Lockheed Hudson bomber and made a number of suggestions to improve its range,

vetted pilots and trained aircrews, and on November 10, 1940, led the first formation of seven Hudsons from Canada to England.



RAAF Hudson at RAF Museum, Hendon

Political decisions influenced the operation of the ferry service and in 1941, Bennett rejoined the RAF as a Wing Commander, second-in-command of the navigation school. Bennett agitated for a combat command and was given a bomber squadron equipped with Armstrong-Whitworth Whitleys. Flying with a different crew each night, he mentored his men and accumulated experience in the arcane art of night bombing. Posted to a new squadron flying the Handley Page Halifax, his aircraft was shot down over Norway after attacking the Battleship *Tirpitz*. Bennett and some of his crew evaded the Germans, made it to neutral Sweden, and were interned. After a month long legal wrangle with the Swedes, Bennett was repatriated and returned to England.

The war was going badly for Bomber Command. Intolerable losses forced them to give up daylight bomb raids. The British resorted to night time attacks, unescorted by fighter protection, flying individually, in a long "bomber stream" rather than in the tight massed formations later used by the United States Eighth Air Force. Losses were heavy and evidence existed to show that only one out of three aircraft managed to drop their bombs within 5 miles of the target! But the darkness, weather, inexperience, and German flak and fighters all contributed to accuracy little better than the abandoned daylight tactics.

Because of his vast long distance piloting and navigational experience, Bennett was tasked to remedy the problem but RAF regulars were unhappy that Bennett, not only a "jumped up" short-term commission officer, but a former airline pilot who was a "bloody colonial" to boot was so deeply involved in high command military policy decisions. Bennett's youth, he was 31, and his forceful personality did nothing to make him a popular figure within the ranks of the senior members of the RAF.

Bennett now worked under his former commander, Harris, now the Air Marshal in charge of Bomber Command and was appointed Acting Group Captain and directed to organize a unit to find and mark targets for the aircraft in the Main Force bomber stream. Harris was not in favor of this idea as he felt that an elite unit would be harmful to the general morale of the his command. However, he did know Bennett to be extraordinarily professional and pressure from the Air Ministry forced him to accede.

Bennett devised new tactics, adopted specially designed pyrotechnics, improved the use of electronic guidance systems, and recruited highly motivated crews for Pathfinder Force (PFF), soon to become No. 8 Group of Bomber Command, with himself promoted to Acting Air Commodore. Attracting highly motivated aircrews, he drove them hard and pushed training in navigation: pilotage, dead reckoning, celestial, and the rather primitive electronic techniques available were all utilized in order to improve the chances of finding the designated target in the dark European night.

Competition for facilities, personnel, and aircraft was fierce and Bennett infuriated fellow Group Commanders by repeatedly pirating the best crews. Downed Pathfinder crews had to be replaced from the units from which they had originated which further aggravated the

victimized commanders and increased tension between PFF and their own groups. Nonetheless, the Pathfinder concept worked and bombing results improved.

Originally formed from four squadrons taken from four groups, PFF utilized Avro Lancasters, Handley Page Halifaxes, Vickers Wellingtons, and Short Stirlings. Eventually, the Avro Lancaster, became the principal aircraft during the prime of PFF operations.



Lancaster displays its cavernous bomb bay.

Bennett scored a major coup when he organized the Light Night Striking Force employing the wooden wonder, the two man DH 98 De Havilland Mosquito. The wooden construction of the Mosquito allowed swift construction and its loss rate was low so Bennett was able to establish nine Mosquito squadrons within PFF.



A "Mossie" in the colors of a USAAF Weather Reconnaissance ship assigned to the 653 Bombardment Squadron.

The swift, high flying flying "Mossie" had been regarded with some disdain for bomber duties by higher headquarters because of its wooden construction and its lack of defensive armament. But Bennet saw its potential and turned it into a potent weapon, which could carry 4000 lb of bombs to Berlin, sometimes twice a night, as well as flying photographic and weather missions.

Bennett's tactical doctrine utilized navigational planning to avoid flak concentrations, pre-mission weather reconnaissance, and nuisance raids to harass German fighter stations. Mosquitos were frequently employed as "spoofers," flying to a target ahead of a Main Force attack elsewhere and using PFF marking tactics to mislead the Germans as to the actual target selected. German fighter controllers would send their interceptors to the diversionary target and Main Force bombers would face less opposition.

Bennett also believed that commanders needed the experience only learned by participation in operations. Although forbidden to fly combat missions, he is credited with at least twenty of them, flying overhead in a Mosquito, taking notes, and then beating his crews back to the debriefing where he would join them in rehashing the details of the mission,

Under Bennett's tutelage, navigation and bombing accuracy improved radically as the well trained Pathfinder crews used the special pyrotechnics to mark the targets for the less experienced Main Force crews. A *Luftwaffe* report remarks on "the conscientious work of the Pathfinder group and...the high training standard (especially regarding navigation) of the crews.

At the age of 33, Bennett was promoted to Acting Air Vice Marshal, the youngest ever to hold that rank, but this was to be one of the last honors bestowed upon him by the government. At war's end he was the only Group Commander not knighted for his service, a terrible slight in light of the undisputed value of his contribution. But he

did not wear "the old school tie" and his personality did nothing to endear him to his peers so retribution took the form of denial of honors.



Bennett's tunic on display at the RAF Museum, Hendon. The medal ribbons below the RAF Pilot's Wings indicate awards of the Order of the Bath, Order of the British Empire (Military), Distinguished Service Order, 1939-1945 Star, Air Crew Europe Star, Defense Medal, and the Order of Alexander Nevsky, a Soviet decoration! The small wings on the pocket flap are the special device awarded to the Pathfinders. This was not a qualification award but was earned by either completing 45 missions or being killed on operations.

Harris commented that :

His courage both moral and physical, is outstanding, and as a technician, he is unrivaled...his consciousness of his own intellectual powers sometimes made him impatient with slower or differentially constituted minds, so that some people found him difficult to work with. He could not suffer fools gladly, and by his own high standards, there were many fools.

When the war ended, Bennett, within months of discharge, became involved in a squabble with the RAF over a tract with political overtones which he had written, received permission to publish and then had permission withdrawn. So the 35 year

old Bennett was released from service to enter politics. He briefly held a seat in the House of Commons but was never again elected to political office.

Furthermore, he was disgusted with the government's apparent enmity towards Bomber Command. Officialdom denied Bomber Command a campaign medal on the grounds that the airmen and ground support troops had not been based overseas and Harris, their commander, was the only member of the British High Command denied a peerage. Yet Bennett continued to be politically active and aggressively independent, opposed his party's favoring of the Common Market, resigned, and founded an independent party.

His aviation career continued when he assumed leadership of British South American Airways. He was a proud promoter of the British aircraft industry and selected four engine tail draggers such as Avro Lancastrians, Yorks, and the ill-fated Tudors for his line. BSAA earned a profit but Bennett clashed with Lord Nathan, Minister of Civil Aviation over a grounding of the Tudor after a crash and his tenure with the nationalized airline was short and unhappy. Undaunted, he formed a small charter outfit, Airflight, Ltd. which participated in the Berlin Airlift and was afterwards was reorganized as Fairflight, Ltd. specializing in long distance charter work.

Among his other enterprises was ownership and operation of Hampshire's Blackbushe Airport. Characteristically, he became involved in a dispute with the Hampshire County officials over land acquisition for airport expansion and sold his holdings.

He also formed an aircraft company, Fairtravel, Ltd. which produced and marketed the Piel CP-30, renamed the Linnet, a French designed two seat light aircraft. Unfortunately, his private enterprise was forced to compete with government subsidized competitors and produced enjoyed limited success.



This Linnet was for sale on the Medway Airsports Club website and advertised as originally built for AVM Bennett.

He also founded Fairthorpe, Ltd. which produced a line of fiberglass bodied vehicles and supplied enthusiasts with kits for sports cars for over 20 years.

Bennett had not lost his taste for, or skill in, writing and in 1958, published his wartime memoirs, *Pathfinder*.

That stormy petrel of British military and civil aviation, Air Vice Marshal D.C.T. Bennett, CB, CBE, DSO, and FRAeS went West on September 15th, 1966, ironically Battle of Britain Day. In the words of his old commander, Marshal of the Royal Air Force Arthur Harris, "He was the most efficient airman I ever met."

THE NAVIGATOR AS THINKING MAN

A freshly minted navigator, fresh out of Mather AFB, was assigned to a C-130 heading overseas. Someplace over "The Pond," the young lieutenant noticed that the grizzled old pilot, a major who had soled when Pontius was a "co-pilote," had drawn his S&W .38 cal service revolver and placed it on top of the instrument panel.

The lieutenant inquired why. The Major replied that "This is to take care of you in case you get us lost." At which point, the navigator withdrew his 1911 Colt .45. When the pilot inquired as to why he had done so, the navigator replied, "Sir, with no disrespect, I will know if we are lost before you know we are lost."