



Mission for America

*Semper vigilans!*  
*Semper volans!*

## The Coastwatcher

Newsletter of the Thames River Composite  
Squadron  
GON  
Connecticut Wing  
Civil Air Patrol

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### SCHEDULE OF COMING EVENTS

#### FEBRUARY

21 FEB-TRCS Orientation Flights  
24 FEB-TRCS Weekly Meeting-BDU  
28 FEB-Wing-Wide Orientation Flights

#### FOR FUTURE PLANNING

12-18 APR-RIWG Encampment  
TBA APR-Wing DC Trip ((10-17 Apr)  
TBA-MAY-Westover Trip  
TBA MAY-Wing Rifle Competition  
TBA-JUN-Rocketry Contest  
27-28 JUN-RING Open House-Quonset, RI  
4-11 JUL-CTWG Cadet Encampment  
10-18 JUL-NER Staff College  
16-17 OCT-CTWG Conference and Cadet Ball

### CADET MEETING MINUTES 17 FEB, 2009

C/2IT Jonathan Scannell called the Squadron to order and conducted the opening ceremonies.

Lt Wojtcuk reminded the Cadets that those who wish to fly on O Flights on the coming Saturday need to contact her in order to be scheduled.

Captain Rocketto delivered the following history and current events reports:

On this date, in 1947, the USS *Cusk* launched a Republic Aircraft JB-2 Loon missile from its deck while surfaced, the first missile launch from a submarine. The Loon was a copy of the German V-1. One example of this missile is located at the Bradley Air Museum just forward and starboard of the Douglas A-4 Skyraider.



*Bradley's Loon*

The extraordinary aviation skills of Capt Chesley Sullenberger, the Captain of US Air Flight 1549, recalls a similar feat performed by Pan American Capt Richard Ogg who successfully ditched a Boeing Stratocruiser, *Sovereign of the Skies*, Flight 943, on a San Francisco-Honolulu flight on 16 October, 1956. Losing two engines in the middle of the night and unable to reach either San Francisco or Hawaii, Capt Ogg elected to make for the USCG Cutter, *Pontchartrain*, a weather and communications relay ship holding at Ocean Station November. Waiting for daylight and burning off fuel, the crew prepared the passengers for the ditching, clearing the aft section of the ship since a previous ditching resulted in the tail breaking off.

The *Pontchartrain* prepared a section of ocean for landing and after a practice run, Capt Ogg brought the aircraft down just after sunrise. The aircraft tail did break off, as anticipated, but the 24 passengers and crew of seven, evacuated to the wing and then inflated and boarded the life rafts. Coast Guard personnel, in launches facilitated the transfer to the Cutter and all were then safely returned to San Francisco.

Notably, Capt Ogg made two passes up and down the cabin, just as Sullenberger did, to make sure that all passengers and crew had left. Observing tradition, The Captain was the last to leave. Twenty minutes after the landing, the *Sovereign of the Skies* sank, taking its only living casualties, two dogs and 44 cases of canaries which were stowed in the cargo hold and unreachable.

The economic crisis has hurt the aviation industry. The public notion that "fat cat" executives ride in luxurious private jets to plush resorts has caused a backlash. Companies and even states are considering cutbacks in their flight departments. Manufacturers are noting drops in orders and lay-offs and cuts in work hours are becoming common. In defense of corporation flight departments, flights are used not only to ferry top executives to lush resorts. Three weeks ago, Thames River Composite Squadron met with the flight departments of Whelen Engineering and the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics Corporation. Whelen operates a Cessna Sovereign 680 and EB runs two Beech 1900s and an Israeli Aviation Industry's Galaxy. The Whelen jet is generally used to ferry technicians and engineers. Likewise, the EB Beeches run scheduled operations between Groton, Norfolk, and Washington carrying engineers, technicians, and administrators on direct work related business. The Galaxy was on a business flight to Great Britain. The use of general aviation aircraft for such purposes is generally quicker than other modes of transport and saves valuable time for key personnel.

During the second part of the meeting, the Cadet Squadron was split into two sections. Any Cadet who had not passed Module One of *Aerospace Dimensions*, "Introduction to Flight," attended a class conducted by Captain Noniewicz. The legend of Daedalus and Icarus, the concepts of Bernoulli's Principle and Newton's three laws of dynamics, the four forces acting on an airplane in steady state flight, and the factors which influence the amount of lift generated by a wing were all discussed. Chapters two and three will be covered next week.

The second group of Cadets adjourned to the front

room and worked on projects related to the rocketry badge and the Wing rocketry contest.

### **SENIOR MEETING MINUTES** **17 FEB, 2009**

Maj Neilson conducted Scanner and Observer training for LtCol Doucette and Lts Jalbert and Manner. The topics were density altitude, icing, and search patterns.

### **TRCS SAR TRAINING** **14 FEB, 2009**

The Squadron conducted three SAR training flights last weekend. LtCol Wisheart, Maj deAndrade, and Capt Noniewicz were the instructor pilots. Officer students were William Bridgewater, Christopher Manner, Richard Doucette, and Timothy Ceritello. The exercise trained observer candidates in the use of the Becker Direction Finder and Scanner candidates in correct search techniques. The simulated debris field, in the Norwich area, was correctly identified on all three flights.

### **SQUADRON TEE SHIRTS FOR SALE**

The Squadron has black tee shirts with the squadron insignia on the left breast. These are suitable for wear with BDUs, flight suits or as PT dress. Cost is \$10 each. Contact Col Kinch or Capt Rocketto if you wish to purchase some of them.

### **SUGGESTIONS SOLICITED**

The Coastwatcher is interested in receiving suggestions from the readership about how the newsletter may better serve the CAP community. Post your comments to [srocketto@aquilasys.com](mailto:srocketto@aquilasys.com).

### **MEET A MEMBER**

Major Keith Neilson  
by  
C/MSgt Abigail Wojtcuk



Major Keith Neilson joined the Thames River squadron in October of 1993, when it was still an all-cadet squadron. Since he was already a pilot and Certified Flight Instructor, he received a professional appointment to the grade of Captain.. He then enlisted the help of ten other pilots to run the program and obtained a plane for Groton-New London Airport in order to promote the orientation flights program. . He became the commander of our squadron in 1995 and helped the squadron grow. When he stepped down as commander in 2000 the Squadron consisting of 25 senior members and 45 cadets.

He became a Mission Pilot and Check Pilot in 1994. Major Neilson has flown more than 175 missions which included the Lear Jet search during the Christmas season of 1996 and the search for John F. Kennedy, Jr., in 1999. When terrorists destroyed the Twin Towers on 9/11, he and Capt. Noniewicz were the second non-military aircraft allowed to land at Kennedy Airport in New York, early in the pre-dawn hours of September 12<sup>th</sup>. They delivered blood and intravenous transfusion kits from Massachusetts hospitals to New York City and then flew back home again. Major Neilson stated that during their flight, as they were approaching Bedford 's Hanscom Field, Captain Noniewicz pointed out a couple of F-15s headed straight for them. When Major Neilson called the Boston Air Traffic Control Center to make sure the fighters knew

“who we were”, the reply was, “Yeah, you’re the guys with all the lights on!” Major Neilson said “OK, just checking.” He is still an active member of our squadron as he does flight checks, is the Air Operations Officer for the Wing and is an amazing O’ Flight pilot. And for all of our Cadets who want to learn to fly, Major Neilson would love to instruct again but has to work that activity into a jam-packed work schedule of more than 3,000 hours per year.

Maj. Neilson owns and directs Docko Inc., which is the busiest water-front design and permitting company in Connecticut. He is a licensed Professional Engineer and has worked there for more than 20 years. During that time, , Docko has completed over 1500 projects. Before working at Docko, Inc., Major Neilson was an airport designer with the Federal Aviation Administration and designed water treatment plants.

Even though he is a busy man, he still finds time to do the things he enjoys. Some of these are skiing, building model airplanes, playing hockey, and scuba diving. He did like to ride motorcycles and went cross country in 1970 by himself, camping and visiting friends along the way. When he graduated from college and got married he gave up motorcycles. In 2005, Major Neilson organized, and was the Master of Ceremonies for, the Doolittle Raiders 63<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary Reunion here in the Groton Mystic Area with 11 of the the 18 surviving Raiders in attendance. He has made it a point to meet and hear the stories of hundreds of World War II soldiers, sailors and pilots and has collected autographs of a hundred or so famous fighter and bomber pilots such as General Chuck Yeager, General Joe Foss, General Robert Scott, Mrs. Claire Chennault, Colonel Francis Gabreski, Major John Glenn, and Scott Crossfield to name just a few. He has run the MATHCOUNTS Competition at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy for the last twenty years.

He has been happily married for 33 years to his wonderful wife Candace and they have four children, Sarah who is 27 and married, Mathew, 24, and working as an IT, Kate, 21, a senior at UCONN, and JP, 19, a freshman at UCONN.

