

Missions 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

May

15-16 MAY-Orientation Flights-See article
18 MAY-Cadet AE-Mod 4, Rockets-BDUs
Senior Emergency Services Training
22 MAY-Squadron SAREX-details pending
25 MAY-Cadet AE Mod 4-Color Guard-BDUs
Senior Specialty-Finance Officer
Parents-Meeting with Capt Wojtcuk

For Future Planning

07-09 MAY Great Starts Bivouac-Camp Rell
15-16 MAY TLC Course-TBD
TBA-MAY Joint Danielson-TRCS Activity
18-26 JUN NESAs Camp Atterbury, Indiana
24-25 JUL NER SAREX Competition
31 JUL-7 AUG CTWG Encampment
09 OCT CTWG Olde Rhinebeck Trip (tentative)
22-24 OCT CTWG Conference

CADET MEETING MINUTES

11 May, 2010

Maj Bourque conducted PT training and testing.

Cadets Hall, VanDevander, and Schultz told the Squadron about their Great Starts weekend.



USCG Academy Cadets training TRCS cadre in drill movements.

PARENTS MEETING SCHEDULED

Wed will have a New-Parent Meeting at 6:15 PM on Tuesday, May 25th. We will discuss uniforms, how to promote, encampment, regulations and other information found on the e-Services website. Parents of veteran Cadets are welcome to attend.

SQUADRON GROWTH

Thames River Composite Squadron would like to officially welcome C/AB Tim Chartier and C/AB Matt Rodriguez to our ranks as of May 11, 2010.

This brings our total up to 19 cadets with 2 in the application process and 5 visitors.

We also have one Sponsor in the application process.

Senior and Cadet members are requested to search out new candidates who would be interested in our mission. Cadets are eligible for a recruitment ribbon for each two recruits. A senior becomes eligible after seven seniors or cadets are recruited.

MAY ORIENTATION FLIGHTS

15-16 May

O Flights are scheduled for the weekend of the 15th and 16th of May. Cadets who are interested in flying should contact Capt Wojtcuk and inform her of their weight and whether they wish to fly in the morning or afternoon of Saturday or Sunday.

GREAT STARTS ENCAMPMENT

07-09 MAY

Cadets Hall, Schultz, VanDevander, and D. Rodriguez attended the Great Starts Encampment at Camp Rell last weekend. C/2Lt Lexie Wojtcuk served on the Cadet Staff. Capt Wojtcuk and Maj Rocketto were employed at the Senior level.



Cadet Rodriguez practices "reporting" under the supervision of C/2Lt Wojtcuk.

Cadets were given an orientation to the week's activities scheduled for the August Wing Encampment. These included basic drill, customs and courtesies of the service, wear or the uniform, CAP core values, and the Cadet Oath.



Cadets Schultz and VanDevander await instructions.

C/2Lt Wojtcuk attended staff training activities and participated in leadership and training of the basic Cadet formation.



Cadet VanDevander volunteers!



But volunteering is "thirsty work."

Capt Wojtcuk and Maj Rocketto attended staff training and worked on encampment activity planning, administrative duties, and meal preparation.



Cadet Hall listens attentively.

PROMOTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS



1Lt Christopher Manner was promoted to Captain.



1Lt Edward Miller completed the Senior Officer Correspondence Course.



Maj Daniel Mode completed Scanner Training.

SAREX

08 MAY, 2010

Unfavorable weather forced a cancellation of the flying activities at the air crew SAREX on Saturday. However the time was utilized for ground training. LtCol Doucette received advanced academic Observer training and Maj Mode completed academics for the Scanner rating.

WORK PARTY

08 MAY, 2010

Lt Looney, our Cadet Trailer Refurbishment Project Officer lead the grounded air crew in advanced lessons in the art of hanging ceiling sheet rock in the cadet trailer. Attendees included, LtCols Doucette, Kinch, and Bergey and Lts Manner and Miller. The ceiling in the north meeting room now has been re-insulated and resealed with sheet rock. The next step is to tape, spackle and paint the ceiling.

SENIOR MEETING

11 May, 2010

Squadron Commander Noniewicz discussed the issues raised at the last Wing Squadron Commander's Meeting.

1. Credit cards are now carried by every aircraft and must be used. Aircraft should be refueled to the tabs after changing mission number and at the end of each days flights.

2. National Headquarters is promoting the Wreaths Around America Program (WAAP). Col Doucette has looked into local cemeteries as possible candidates. The Squadron has been asked to supply a parking detail for the WAAP stopover in Groton in the fall.

3. The Wing is emphasizing awareness of the Cadet Protection Program and a Squadron briefing will be held in the near future.

Details of future flying assignments, Long Island Sound Patrol, Orientation Flights, Counterdrug Missions, and Homeland Security Missions were discussed by Lts Farley, Dickenson, and Owens and LtCol Doucette.

Lt Owens provided a safety briefing covering the IMSAFE rubric and thunderstorm identification and avoidance.

In a solo mission, Lt Looney finished the taping and spackling of the roof in the Cadet meeting room.

Maj Rocketto discussed the program at the National Emergency Services Academy and the Wing Cadet Encampment and solicited volunteers to attend. He also called on those members who have not completed the Yeager qualification to do so in order to fulfill a Squadron goal.



Opitz in WW II flying garb. The camera attached to his helmet was used to photograph the instrument panel during the test flights.

AVIATION CURRENT EVENTS AND HISTORY MILEPOSTS

Current Events

Gone West

As World War II ended, the Allies and the Russians engaged in a competition to capture and enlist German scientists and engineers into their own military development programs. "Operation Paperclip," a US Office of Strategic Services program, brought perhaps 1,500 to 2,000 of these men to the United States, mostly rocket scientists, aerodynamicists, and weaponeers. Notable among these were Wernher von Braun, Walter Dornberger, and Hans von Ohain. So many Germans were involved in the Cold War space race that when the Russians were perceived as leading the United States, it was said that it was because "their German rocket scientists were better than our German rocket scientists."

Two members of the German military, Paul "Rudy" Opitz and Gerhard Wendt also came to the United States. Both Opitz and Wendt went West last week and it is worth noting their roles in aviation and space.

During World War II, Opitz was a test pilot on the Messerschmidt 163 Komet, a rocket powered interceptor. The Me 163 was the fastest aircraft in the world at that time and, to this date, the only rocket powered warplane ever deployed.

When the war ended, he was brought to Wright Patterson AFB but afterwards gained employment with Lycoming in Stratford as test pilot working on the development of turbine engines for helicopters.

Opitz became a US citizen, served as an FAA pilot examiner, and held membership in the Quiet Birdmen (Hartford Hangar) and the Society of Experimental Test Pilots. He was named to the National Soaring Hall of Fame at Elmira, N.Y. in 1994 and FAA Instructor of the Year in the New England Region.

Opitz went West in Stratford on 1 May, 2010.

Guenther Wendt served as a navigator in the *Luftwaffe*. An engineer, he came to the United States, achieved citizenship and was employed by McDonnell Aircraft. McDonnell was one of the contractors responsible for launch pad preparation and Wendt eventually became, in the words of John Glenn, Pad *Fuehrer*.

He held the post during the Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo missions. Duties included checking the myriad of last minute details, taking his job very seriously brooking no nonsense. Pete Conrad relates that "It's easy to get along with Guenter. All you have to do is agree with him."

Astronauts respected Wendt but the tension of

launch often gave rise to humor based on his name and German accent. Astronaut Donn Eisele using a mock German accent once asked, "I vonder vere Guenter Vendt?" The line was used by Tom Hanks in the *Apollo 13* movie.

Wendt vent vest on 3 May at Merritt Island, Florida.

History Milestones

20-21 May, 1927-Charles Lindbergh becomes the first pilot to solo the Atlantic, flying from Roosevelt Field, Long Island to Le Bourget Aerodrome, Paris. The flight takes 33 hours, 30 minutes.

21 May, 1977-An Air France Concorde celebrates the 50th anniversary of Lindbergh's flight by flying from Kennedy International Airport, Long Island to Le Bourget Airport, Paris in 3 hours and 44 minutes.

FAVORITE FLYING MOVIES

Part Two World War II

The 1930s were marked by the financial and social strains of the stock market collapse and the aggressive acts of the fascist military dictatorships which were to form the loose alliance known as The Axis.

Seeking to recover the past glory of the Roman Empire, Benito Mussolini sent his fascist army into Ethiopia, Germany fell into the grips of Adolph Hitler and the National Socialist Party. The Versailles Treaty was repudiated, the Rhineland was remilitarized, Czechoslovakia was conquered, and the Austrian Anschluss resulted in the annexation of Austria into the Third Reich. In the Far East, the Japanese Empire seized Manchuria and invaded China.

Neville Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister met with Herr Hitler and the leaders of France and Italy in Munich. An agreement was reached selling out the Czechoslovak nation. On 30 September, 1938, Chamberlain met personally with Hitler and got Hitler to agree to a non-aggression treaty between Germany and Great Britain and was given a signed piece of paper guaranteeing "peace in our times. Eleven months later, on 01 September, 1939, Germany invaded Poland establishing the accepted date for the start of World War II.

This edition's reviews will cover the WWII period in roughly historical order. During and after the war, many films were produced for propaganda purposes. Just about every flying billet was covered and varied aircraft missions. *Coastal Command*, *Bombardier*, *Aerial Gunner*, *Flying Leathernecks*, *Flying Tigers*, *A Yank in the RAF*, *The Purple Heart*, and *Wing and a Prayer*. Flight surgeons get their due in *Dive Bomber* and even blimps are recognized for their role in *This Man's Navy*.

However, our astute readership has been more discriminating and most eclectic in selecting six films, all of them post-war products, for discussion. They will be covered in more or less historical order.

Our most distant reader, Johan Visschedijk, an aviation expert in The Netherlands with a quarter century of aviation experience, and the Editor both included *The Battle of Britain* (1969) on their lists. Mr. Visschedijk commented on the "...very impressive dog-fighting scenes..." and opined that the film was "...arguably one of the best aeronautical movies that ever appeared." The Editor agreed and added that the details of the problems faced by RAF Fighter Command were, within the limits of the screenplay, accurate and the actors represented some of the best of the British, nay, world-wide thespian community.



Heroes of The Battle of Britain, the glamorous Supermarine Spitfire and its dowdy sister, the workhorse Hawker Hurricane-RAF Museum, Hendon

LtCol Vallilo was impressed by *Tora, Tora, Tora.* (1970) He recalls that:

Tora Tora Tora is the best of the movies about WWII that are heavy on flying. The producers gathered many of the extant T-6's and modified them to look very much like the Zero and the other Japanese planes that attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7th. The story, of course, is superb and so is the acting, especially on the Japanese side. The use of subtitles over Japanese is excellent, and the later movie *Midway* is disappointing for the lack of it.



Replica Val, Kate, and Zero used in the filming of Tora, Tora, Tora. The aircraft were constructed from BT-13, BT-15, and T-6 airframes.

As an aside, after a two year stint in South America, the Editor was passing through Hawaii on his way east in 1969 and decided to take the "Pearl Harbor tour." As the excursion boat entered the harbor, our cameras were locked in the cuddy in accordance with security regulations. Immediately afterwards, I heard the sound of radial engines coming in fast from the south, looked up

and saw two aircraft sporting the red *hinomaru*, what our WWII aviators called the "red meatball" under each wing. The planes headed straight for Ford Island where I could make out the tripod and basket weave masts of the old US Pacific Fleet battleships. Explosions went off and an announcement was made that a movie was being made about the Pearl Harbor attack. But for about ten seconds, I was thrown back in a time warp to 07 December, 1941.

The US bomber effort in Europe added three films to our list of favorite movies. The Eighth Air Force operating out of England contributed two of these stories, *Memphis Belle* and *Twelve O'Clock High*.

Memphis Belle was inspired by a B-17G featured in a WWII documentary of the same name. The "Belle" achieved fame as the first B-17 to complete the then required 25 combat missions and returned to the United States to participate in bond drives. Once again, LtCol Tony "Two Thumbs Up" Valillo was the nominator. Once again, the use of real or replica aircraft appealed to him. He says:

Although the script bears virtually no resemblance to the actual last mission of the real *Memphis Belle*, according to Robert Morgan, the aircraft commander of the real airplane (even the names of the crew members are changed), this is still a great movie. The cinematography is superb and the use of real airplanes makes it a great visual film for B-17 lovers. A good percentage of the airworthy B-17's of the 1980's was used in the film.



The original Memphis Belle, Mud Island, Memphis, Tennessee circa the 1980s.



The Memphis Belle, currently undergoing refurbishment to display quality at the Museum of the USAF, Ohio.

The second Eighth Air Force epic, one of the most popular of the selected films was *Twelve O'Clock High* (1949).

LtCol Bergey, a retired Naval Aviator at Thames River Composite Squadron points out that

The military aviation leadership challenges faced by the main character is spot on. In fact the Navy uses this movie as part of our aviation leadership training program. Gregory Peck's portrayal of Brigadier General Savage is legendary. This movie is a must for anyone who intends to lead others during difficult or dangerous circumstances.

Two scenes were also specified by our readership as favorites. The first is when the old Squadron Adjutant, having returned to England after the war, spots a toby, a beer mug with a Robin Hood caricature on it in a shop window. It was the ornament, which when turned face out, announced that a mission was scheduled for the next day. He purchases the toby and then bicycles to his old field, deserted and overgrown with weeds. As he peers down the runway, the sound of Wright R-1820 engines fills the air and he fades back to 1943.

The second scene is a B-17 wheels up landing. The legendary Paul Mantz executed this amazing feat of solo flying, something that many said could

not be done. He was paid \$4,500 dollars, the largest sum ever paid to a stuntman to that time.

The third film about bombers, the black comedy, *Catch-22* (1970), was included because of one scene, a mass take off of B-25s. Stony Stonich, one of the pilots, describes the event:

Imagine sixteen airplanes lined up on the runway, all at 30 inches of manifold pressure. At brake release at one-to-two second intervals, each B-25 goes to takeoff power. This scene was used at the beginning of the

film. The wake turbulence was unbelievable. We did the shot four times. On the first two I was in the number two ship and the turbulence wasn't bad. On the third we were number nine and the turbulence was terrible. We found ourselves drifting left towards the next plane to takeoff, and with both of us on the controls we still couldn't stop the left drift. Then we hit the turbulence going the other way and shot to the right; what a ride! On the fourth takeoff we were number sixteen and we had a runaway propeller right after the gear came up. The prop governor had failed and we had to shut the engine down and feather the prop.



North American B-25J Mitchell Passionate Paulette. This aircraft flew in the movie Catch-22 and is now on display at the Grissom Air Museum.

Joseph Heller, the author of the book upon which the film was based, flew 60 combat missions as a B-25 bombardier in the 12th Air Force. Roger

McQuiggan, a Latin and English teacher from Southington recognized the message of *Catch-22*. So has the the USAF Academy which has adopted the novel to illustrate the dehumanizing effects of a bureaucracy on the spirit and actions of men.

Reader Ray Marineau, a long time aviator and Quiet Birdman was shocked when our original list did not include Ernest Gann's *Island in the Sky* (1953). He immediately protested.

I can't believe CAP hasn't mentioned my favorite movie!!! The movie, a classic crash and rescue story, follows the crew of a downed Douglas C-47, the military version of the venerable DC-3, trying to survive an emergency landing in the frozen wilderness near the Quebec-Labrador border after "icing-up" on a WWII supply run to England.



Douglas C-47 Skytrain at Lackland AFB

While most of movie tells about the crew trying to stay alive, my favorite part is the added story line of the searchers and their determination to find their fellow airmen, flying C-47's with, by today's standards, primitive navigation instruments, completing their search mission using the "age old" techniques of "time and distance", "grid or section flying", "triangulation", and "radio navigation and communications" to get the job done, while calculating for very strong "magnetic deviation" in the far north.

Gann was one of the search pilots in this "real life" story he experienced while flying for the Air Transport Command out of Presque Isle Airfield in Maine in 1943.

The end of the war was aptly depicted by a film, *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946.) The opening depicts three veterans hitching a ride home and peering through the transparent nose of a B-17 at the American landscape beneath. One is a decorated bombardier The second serviceman is a Navy enlisted man who lost both hands when his ship was sunk. (The role was played by Harold Russell, an army veteran who did lose both of his hands in an accidental explosion and won an Oscar for his portrayal.) The third vet is an infantry sergeant who fought in the Pacific. Each carries his personal load of anxieties and trauma from their wartime experiences.

A scene, in which the distraught bombardier visits a "boneyard" where B-17s are being reduced to scrap. The revelation that the aircraft materials will be recycled for peaceful purposes crystallizes his thinking and becomes the first step in the restoration of his spirit. Similarly, each of the protagonists find ways to overcome the horrors of war and return to a more normal world.

In our third section scheduled for the next edition, we will cover films which depict the post World War II era and the space age.

Late Breaking News

Training Mission

13 May, 2010

An ELT search and photography mission was flown Thursday. 1Lt Scott Farley was Mission Pilot, 1Lt Ed Miller was Observer, and Maj Mode was Scanner. The ELT was found and the visual target was successfully photographed.