

Missions for America

*Semper vigilans!*  
*Semper volans!*



## The Coastwatcher

Newsletter of the Thames River Composite Squadron  
GON

Connecticut Wing  
Civil Air Patrol

<http://capct075.web.officelive.com/default.aspx>

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Vol. V, No 14

07 April, 2011

### SCHEDULE OF COMING EVENTS

#### For Future Planning

Cadet meetings normally start with drill and end with aerospace history, current events, and Commander's moment. Blues are worn on the second week of the month and BDUs at other times. Main topics will be indicated on the schedule below. See website for updates.

09 APR-Annual TRCS Officers Banquet  
09-10 APR-Orientation Flights  
12 APR-Commander's Call  
16 APR-CSRRA High Power Rifle Clinic  
16-17 Apr Orientation Flights

19 APR-Squadron Meeting  
26 APR-Squadron Meeting

13-15 MAY-CTWG Great Starts  
21-22 MAY-Corporate Learning Course (tentative)  
21-25 JUN-National AEO School  
9-16 JUL-RSC-McGuire AFB  
9-16 JUL-Reg. Cadet Ldrshp School-Concord, NH  
23 JUL-07 AUG-NESA (two sessions)  
08-14 AUG-CTWG Encampment  
13-20 AUG-Reg. Cadet Ldrshp School-McGuire  
17-20 AUG-CAP Nat'l Summer Conference  
22-24 SEP-AOPA Summit-Hartford  
22-23 OCT-CTWG Convention

### ERRATUM

LtCol Stidsen, CTWG IG, noted that the aircraft labeled Lockheed Tristar in the last edition of *The Coastwatcher* is a Boeing 737-100. Here is a picture of the L-1011 Tristar in TWA livery.



### CADET MEETING NOTES

*05 April, 2011*  
*reported by*  
*C/1Lt Brendan Flynn*

Opening ceremonies and a uniform inspection was conducted.

Capt Wojtcuk lead a character development class on "Fairness." Cadets discussed the quote, "The hope of all who suffer, the dread of all who wrong," aspects of fairness, and whether or not life

C/2Lt Wojtcuk and C/SSgt Hall directed a team-building activity called "Great Balls of Color." The equipment for the class was one red plastic ball and a set of white balls, each with a differently colored ring of duct tape around them. Additionally, Wojtcuk and Hall cut holes in a white bed-sheet, one for every duct tape-encircled ball and each one outlined in one of the duct tape colors. The cadets, divided into two teams, held the blanket elevated and competed to get each ball through the hole with the same color. A ball that went through the correct hole was three points, and there was a two point bonus for balls that fell into the trash under the blanket. One point was subtracted if a ball went through the wrong hole, and five points were subtracted if the full-red ball went through any hole. To make it harder, cadets were "muted" one by one; Cadets Daniels and Flynn were the first to lose their talking privileges.

Cadets practiced basic drill movements and open/close ranks in an indoor mini-drill session.

*Cadets Schultz, VanDevander, and Barberan made progress on their Ground Team Member Level 3 ratings. They were signed off on cold weather injuries, whistle signals, hasty search, using a signal mirror, and keeping a log. Cadet Flynn worked on his GTM2 rating. He was signed off on map terrain feature identification, map topographic symbols, map elevation determination, distance on a map, conversion between map and compass azimuths, determining azimuths on a map, orienting a map to the ground, and orienting a map.*

### **SENIOR MEETING NOTES**

*05 April, 2011*

*notes by*

*Capt Thomas Petry*

The meeting was devoted to an after action review of the Tri-State SAREX held on Saturday,

The day's operations were conducted in a safe manner. Assignments were briefed, executed, and closed out with dispatch. Cooperation of the participants was commendable and improvisations were devised for problems which arose.

The completion of tasks was facilitated by a slow operational tempo but down-time was used to provide additional training. The Cadet ground team members completed a number of tasks on their GT SQTRs and the electronic submission of photographs and the use of WIMRS were practiced.

However, the SAREX revealed a number of areas where improvements ought be made.

Mission organization might be facilitated in a real situation by distributing the OPPlan electronically. The Mission Base ought take more effort to appraise the outlying stations of the "big picture. Finally, our two ground teams were never tasked but did use the time profitably to train.

Communications remain a major issue. The CAP-FM radio at GON is unreliable. Cell phones were crucial in making our part of the mission operate smoothly but the radio problems must be addressed. This would include resolving the CAP-FM problem, getting the HF radio on line, installing a VHF (air band) station and remove the VHF antenna connections to the comm room so that all radios can be monitored by the communications staff.

Suggestions for improving operations included a study of how to arrange the briefings and briefing information efficiently. This would entail a set of "displays," paper or electronic with the following information: the scenario, an organizational chart, personnel procedures and duty schedules, important phone numbers and frequencies, facility lay-out, safety information, weather, specific air ops information, specific ground ops information.

Administration needs improvement. A staff officer should be appointed to check-in personnel and vet their documentation. A ground team briefer should be appointed. Suggestions were made on how to establish working areas for the different functions so as to both avoid interference but at the same time, improve communication between different staffs. Two equipment problems bear mentioning. A scanner would be useful to copy documents for distribution and the internet service should be studied in order to determine how to increase its speed.

### **TRI-STATE SAREX**

#### **Groton's Thames River Squadron Participates in Three State Disaster Drill**

*02 April, 2011*

Thames River Composite Squadron participated in a week-end disaster drill involving Connecticut, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. The drill's objectives were to develop a unified command structure within the region, rehearse standard practices developed in CAP's training programs, and test regional communications.

The scenario for the disaster involved an earthquake on the Ramapoo Fault with an epicenter in Pennsylvania which caused infrastructure damage to the transportation net and the power grid from New Jersey to Connecticut.

The headquarters for the search and rescue exercise was at McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey. Connecticut's leadership was based at Danbury Airport and Groton was the southeast mission base. Two members from Groton, Maj Keith Neilson and Capt Paul Noniewicz reported to Danbury and functioned in the roles of Air Operations Commander and Safety Officer respectively.

Groton supplied three air crews and one ground team and hosted an air crew and a ground team

from Hartford. During the day, the Groton based crews, under base commander LtCol Lief Bergey and Capt Thomas Petry flew two sorties, taking damage assessment photographs on the Connecticut and Thames River and along the eastern Long Island coastline.

Groton air crews were Mission Pilots LtCol Thomas Wisehart and Capt Jay Farley. Navigator-Radio Operators were LtCol Lawrence Kinch and Maj Daniel Mode. LtCol Richard Doucette and Lt Edward Miller were the aerial photographers. The Groton ground team was led by Maj Roy Bourque and Lt Robert Looney. Cadet members of the ground team were C/1Lt Brendan Flynn, and Cadets Brendan Schultz, Austin Vandevander, and Jorge Barberan.

### **MILLER AND ROCKETTO VISIT**

#### **MINUTEMEN**

*04 April, 2011*

Lt Miller and Maj Rocketto visited the New Haven Minutemen for the second time this month. Lt Miller presented the second part of his aircraft design lecture to a selected group of senior Cadets and senior Officers. Maj Rocketto offered a short lesson recent problems with skin failures on the Boeing 737 and demonstrated a metal fatigue failure. The Cadets then took a 15 question quiz based upon CAP and aerospace themes. A prize was awarded to the high scoring Cadet.

### **AEROSPACE CURRENT EVENTS**

#### *Commercial Heavy Launch Rocket*

SpaceX announced that its new Falcon Heavy vehicle will be ready for liftoff in 2013. The rocket, the most powerful since the Apollo Project, will be a cargo carrier but SpaceX will ultimately attempt to get NASA to rate it for manned flight. The plan is to carry out four launches per year at a cost of \$100 million dollars per launch.

The proposed vehicle will stand about 227 feet high and its develop 3.8 million pounds of thrust from a first stage cluster of 27 rockets and will lift 58 tons into orbit. In comparison, the Apollo moon rocket developed about twice as much thrust and lifted around 140 tons.

*NASA Sending UAV To Restudy Kilauea Volcano.*

NASA has dispatched a Gulfstream III equipped with the Jet Propulsion Laboratory's Uninhabited Aerial Vehicle Synthetic Aperture Radar (UAVSAR) to study the the Kilauea Volcano on Hawaii. The new study will follow the 2010 flight paths to a precision of five meters with the intent of comparing the data sets and learning more about how the plutonic processes influence earthquakes.

UAVSAR has also been used to study the Greenland Ice Cap, the recent Gulf of Mexico oil spill, Canada's boreal forests, and the Haitian earthquake.

*Successful Soyuz Launch Heads to Space Station*

Two Russian cosmonauts and a US astronaut expect to reach the ISS sometime on Wednesday. The Soyuz was decorated with a portrait of Yuri Gagarin in remembrance of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his flight.

## **AEROSPACE HISTORY**

Last week's *Coastwatcher* carried the first part of this article in which we learned about the career of Admiral Yamamoto, his role as commander of the Imperial Japanese Navy, and the interception and decoding of a message which detailed the itinerary of an inspection tour which he would make in the Solomon Islands. Part Two discusses the planning and execution of Operation Vengeance, a mission mounted to intercept and shoot down the aircraft carrying Yamamoto and his staff.

### **Executive Action The Shoot Down of Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto 18 April, 1943**

"Now the reason the enlightened prince and the wise general conquer the enemy whenever they move and their achievements surpass those of ordinary men is foreknowledge." Sun Tzu *The Art of War*

### ***PART TWO***

#### *Planning Operation Vengeance*

The information was passed up the US chain of command. Exactly how far it went is open to debate. Some claim the order to kill Yamamoto was issued by Franklin D. Roosevelt, himself. There seems to be no documentary evidence to serve as proof. Nimitz, in overall command of the central Pacific theatre of operations consulted with Secretary of the Navy William Knox and then authorized Admiral William F. Halsey, commander in the South Pacific to proceed with the operation. Halsey bucked the order down to Rear Admiral Marc C. Mitscher, the commander of joint air operations in the Solomons. The operation was code named Vengeance.

However, there was a *caveat*. The mission had to be run in such a way as to conceal the fact that the information had been obtained by breaking the Japanese codes. Stories were prepared that the Yamamoto flight had been reported by Coastwatchers. The Coastwatcher were allied agents, often Australian or New Zealand planters, who has stayed behind enemy lines to report on Japanese activities. Some patrols were flown in the general area of Rabaul so that the planned attack might seem to be a coincidental interception. In case of capture, most of the pilots who flew the mission were not privy to the name of their prey.

Also, the attack had to be launched from Guadalcanal and the extreme range of over 400 miles one way meant that only the US Army Air Force's Lockheed P-38 Lightnings were suitable. The Lightnings still needed to be fitted with two drop tanks, one of the usual 165 gallon tanks and a special 310 gallon tank. The Navy had gathered the intelligence for the mission and the area of operations was a Navy fiefdom so Navy planners believed that the best course of action would be to make the kill while Yamamoto was being transported from Ballae to Shortland by sub chaser. However, Major John Mitchell, the commanding officer of the 339<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron which had been chosen to execute the mission objected due to the unfamiliarity of the army pilots with ship types and decided on an air intercept.

Mitchell secured an excellent navy ship's compass to assist in navigation and selected 18 pilots which he organized into three groups: four shooter, and two cover groups consisting of six and eight aircraft respectively. The flight would be flown at minimum altitude and maintaining radio silence. The course followed a multi-legged northwest course, skirting the New Georgia Islands which form the central part of the Solomon archipelago.

*Executing Operation Vengeance*

Two of Mitchell's shooters aborted. One blew a tire on take off and the other with a malfunctioning drop tank. According to plan, two aircraft assumed their position in the four plane attack flight. Meanwhile, Yamamoto, punctual as usual, departed for Bougainville. His flight consisted of

two G4M Betty bombers with six A6M Zeros as escort. The meticulous planning by both Japanese and US staffs was faultless. After a two hour flight, the P-38s found the Japanese aircraft exactly where they had been expected. The attack commenced and the fog of battle descended on the action.

*The Hunter Aircraft*



*Lockheed P-38 Lightning*

*The Hunted Aircraft*



*Mitsubishi G4M "Betty"*  
(Model and Photo by Lt Ed Miller, TRCS)



*The action as painted by Sgt. Vaughn A. Bass*  
(USAF photo)

Captain Thomas Lanphier and First Lieutenant Rex Barber each claimed a Betty. A third pilot, Lt B. Frank Holmes claimed a third but only two Bettys were present. Lanphier returned first, stated that he had made the kill, and was given credit but this was disputed by Barber. A rather unsavory episode over who killed Yamamoto developed and lasted for over two decades. Eventually, both Barber and Lanphier were give a half credit each by the Air Force. Since then, based upon the testimony of two Japanese survivors, a study of the pilot reports and the performance capabilities of the P-38, many authorities who have studied the battle believe that Barber shot down Yamamoto's plane. Air Force records were not amended.



*The wreckage of Yamamoto's G4M1 "Betty", Tail Number T1-323 lies in the jungle some miles northwest of Ballalle Airfield, its destination.*

Yamamoto's body, with two gunshot wounds, was thrown clear of the wreck. According to witnesses, his body was found the next day under a tree, strapped in his seat and clutching his katana. His staff had his corpse cremated and some of the ashes were returned to Japan where he as honored with a state funeral.

*As cherry trees flower  
With katana sheathed  
I sit at rest*

## SCENES FROM GON PAST



*Joe Fugere, Pilgrim Airlines, a pioneer in the commuter airline business built up a fleet of DHC6 Twin Otters*



*USN Douglas C-9 returns the crew of a Polaris submarine to Connecticut*



*Maj Rocketto, then flying a Cessna 206 for Coastal Airways, delivers another satisfied customer.*



*Nord 262 of Allegheny awaits servicing and passengers at GON*