

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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SCHEDULE OF COMING EVENTS

20 SEP-TRCS Meeting
22-24 SEP-AOPA Summit-Hartford
24 SEP-Cadet Ball-Courtyard Marriott, Cromwell
22-23 OCT-CTWG Convention
27 SEP-TRCS Meeting

15 OCT-CTWG Rocketry Contest
21-23 OCT-CTWG Conference

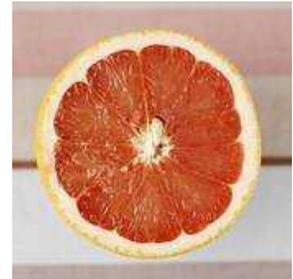
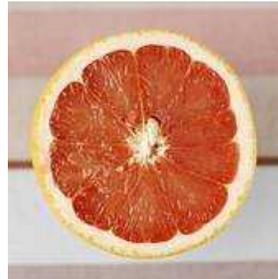
ANNUAL CITRUS FRUIT FUNDRAISER



Our annual squadron fund raising drive will start at the end of the month. All of the sales materials have been received and meetings will be held within the next two weeks to brief the membership

on sales strategy and record keeping.

This fund drive is crucial for the financial well-being of our squadron. We are encouraging full participation by everyone and hope to average 10 cases per member.



CADET MEETING NOTES

13 September, 2011

submitted by

C/Capt Brendan Flynn

In a PT session, cadets participated in the mile run, shuttle run, push ups, sit ups, and sit-and-reach.

C/Capt Flynn gave cadets a briefing on CAP scholarships. This class went over the application procedures, requirements, websites, and benefits of flight and academic scholarships offered for CAP cadets. Some scholarships that Cadet Flynn went over were the CAP corporate scholarships, Spaatz Aerospace-Leadership scholarship, the Order of Daedalians flight scholarship, and USAA academic scholarships

A leadership lesson on the "Leader as an Expert and Teacher" was given by C/Capt Flynn. In this lesson, cadets observed how the roles of expert and teacher are related, how being an expert/teacher is related to leadership, and what a leader should not do as an expert and teacher.

A briefing about the details of the cadet ball was given.

SENIOR MEETING

*13 September, 2011
Commander's Call*

Maj Noniewicz discussed the nuances of the WIMRS system with special attention to aircraft maintenance status and location.

Maj Heath has been appointed the CTWG Emergency Services Officer. Three major wing exercises and three table top exercises are in planning for next year.

Maj Bourque gave a safety briefing on van operation and van safety. The status of the "F" class license issue and the options open to the wing and squadron were discussed.

The Subordinate Unit Inspection scheduled for this year has been cancelled due to scheduling problems and our satisfactory performance on the last SUI. The next SUI will be due in December of 2012

The Wing Convention opens with a reception on 22 October. Squadron aerospace displays and safety displays have been re-instituted. Mary Feik and MajGen James Skiff, will be guest speakers

The issue of Cadet flight training was discussed and a plan is under consideration.

Capt Farley reported that a Red Cross/CPR renewal course will be offered at a date to be announced.

Capt Lintelmann reported that the replacement of the heating unit in the cadet trailer will be our next major maintenance project. A unit has been donated and we need to acquire some cabling and plan the installation.

Maj Rocketto reported that the annual citrus fruit fundraiser will start at the end of the month.



FATHER MODE PROMOTED



Maj Daniel Mode, the US Coast Guard Academy Chaplain, has been promoted to Commander, United States Navy, and will soon become Thames River's newest lieutenant colonel.



Question: Why is this man smiling?

Answer: Because he has won the Ontological Argument

THE WEEK'S AEROSPACE HISTORY

18 Sept., 1984-Joe Kittinger lands his helium filled balloon, the *Rosie O'Grady*, in Savona, Italy. He departed from Caribou, Me, on 14 Sept. This achievement is the first balloon solo of the Atlantic Ocean.

19 Sept., 1911-H.H. Bales of Ashcroft, British Columbia files the first patent for JATO.

20 Sept., 1904-Wilbur Wright performs the first 360 degree turn in a heavier than air, man carrying flying machine.

21 Sept., 1964-First flight of the North American XB-70 Valkyrie.



Valkyrie at National Museum of the USAF

CURRENT EVENTS

ATK Booster Tested in Utah

ATK Space Systems tested a five stage booster rocket in Utah last week. The 154 foot long rocket produces 22 million horsepower and is touted as a candidate for incorporation into future NASA and privately funded vehicles. The purpose of the test was make sure that components could withstand high temperatures and the check the functioning of on board sensors.



ATK Test Firing (ATK photo)

NASA Announces Plans for Space Launch System

NASA plans to return to liquid fueled rockets for its planned massive Space Launch System vehicle. The new rocket will use hydrogen fuel and be capable of lifting approximately 150 tons into space. This compares with the 25 tons of today's vehicles and the 130 tons of the Saturn V.

Capable of a Mars mission, the SLS is scheduled for its first test in 2017 and its first manned flight in 2021.

A400M Passes Flight Test Milestone

Airbus Military has announced that the four A400M Grizzly have logged 2,000 hours of flight testing in 684 flights. One of the aircraft encountered an engine shutdown in flight for unknown reasons and an investigation is seeking the cause of the problem.

Over 150 of the new military transport have been ordered by European nations. The vehicle's performance is midway between the C-130 and the C-17 but overlaps both of their capabilities to some extent.



A400 Rotates (Airbus Military Photo)

GRAIL Launched

NASA used a Delta II rocket to send a pair of spacecraft named Gravity Recovery and Interior Laboratory on a mission to map the moon's gravitational field. Data acquired can then be used to determine details about the interior of the moon.

BETTY SKELTON GOES WEST

Noted aerobatics pilot Betty Skelton died at the age of 85 at her home in Florida on August 31st.

Skelton's life was deeply involved with aviation. According to her National Aviation Hall of Fame biography, she soloed at the age of 12 in 1938. She began her air show career in a Fairchild PT-19 and later, a Great Lakes 2T1A.

Her most famous plane, the Pitts Special S-1X, Little Stinker, is on display at the Udvar-Hazy Annex of the National Air and Space Museum.



Little Stinker

Skelton was the first woman to accomplish an inverted ribbon cut. On one occasion, when her engine failed while attempting the cut at an altitude of 10 feet, she rolled upright and successfully landed.

Between 1948 and 1951, she won three Feminine International Acrobatic Championships and set two world light plane records for altitude.

She also like fast cars, raced in stock events, and worked as an advertising executive for General Motors. She owned a total of 10 Corvettes. Her driving career paralleled her flying achievements. During her lifetime, she held numerous speed records and participated in long distance races in Baja California and the Andes Mountains.

She has been recognized by inductions into the National Aviation Hall of Fame, the International Motorsports Hall of Fame, the Women in Aviation, Pioneer Hall of Fame, and the Corvette Hall of Fame.

We are diminished.

HISTORICAL FEATURE

This is the second part of an essay examining the early career of Billy Mitchell and factors which led to recognition of his authority as an air power expert, his advocacy of air power, and his failings to win the approval of the high command.

A MAJOR SEPTEMBER AEROSPACE HISTORIC EVENT

The first part of this feature discussed Billy Mitchell's early enlistment in the army and his assignment to the Signal Corps. At that time, the Signal Corps was the branch of the army most involved with new technologies: telegraph and radio communications and balloons and aircraft as reconnaissance tools. Mitchell served in a number of assignments which showcased his initiative and his energetic application of knowledge and experience to novel problems. He also displayed a penchant for publicity seeking and insubordination which resulted in friction with the higher levels of command. Nonetheless, his talents were recognized and he was given command of what would become the largest force of aircraft and observation balloons ever mustered for a combat operation.

Billy Mitchell's Air Attack on the St. Mahiel Salient

12-16 September, 1918

by
Stephen M. Rocketto

Part II

The Battle to Reduce the St. Mihiel Salient

In September of 1918, the War to End All Wars had been bitterly contested for four years. The

European Theatre has been stalemated for almost the entire time. Western Front trench lines extended from Flanders to Switzerland, a straight line distance of around 350 miles! A panoply of new weapons had been brought to bear to break the stalemate: poison gas, tanks, and even aircraft but the the Allied and Central Power positions remained static.

In July, US troops in France had been consolidated into the American Expeditionary Force under the direct command of Pershing. One of their first tasks was to eliminate the St. Mihiel Salient, a bulge in the German lines east of the French fortifications at Verdun. Mitchell envisioned a plan which would use the most massive concentration of air power in history to support the American effort.

The Battle Plan

The battle plan was threefold. Destruction of enemy air assets with the express purpose of preventing their flight over allied front lines and rear areas was a priority. Mitchell recognized that enemy aerial reconnaissance had to be prevented in order to blind the enemy as to the allied intentions and disposition of forces. He also was aware that elimination of enemy bombing and strafing attacks would give a moral boost to the ground troops.

Conversely, he planned two other objectives: reconnaissance of enemy positions and control of artillery fire and the bombing and strafing of enemy troops, supply lines and depots.

Mitchell overtly included many of the missions which would become the bread and butter of military aviation: air supremacy, aerial intelligence, tactical support of ground troops, and interdiction of supplies and troop movements. Although the missions planned behind the German lines were labeled strategic, they were not precursors to the eventual doctrine of strategic bombardment that Mitchell would foster and the Army Air Force would adopt.

In order to carry out the plan, Mitchell directly commanded a joint force of almost 1500 aircraft from the United States, France, Italy, and Portugal. The Royal Flying Corps remained under direct British control but was fully integrated into the attack plan.

Mitchell's organization of his staff and his succinct and clear instructions outlining the duties of the staff officers, the functions of the various departments, and the role which each unit would play in achieving the objectives set forth in the battle plan was a model of good planning.. But Mitchell was not satisfied to issue written orders so he traveled from unit to unit, discussing the details of the battle plan and welding the diverse elements of his force into a unified team. A unique feature of his organization was the concept of composite wings in which bombardment aircraft and pursuit aircraft would be combined in a single organization so that the bombers would have a modicum of protection from enemy fighters,

The Attack

The battle commenced in poor flying weather at 0500 on September 12th. Mitchell has artfully concealed his intentions from the Germans and the attack was assisted by the element of surprise. Following von Clausewitz's dictum of mass, Mitchell planned to use some 500 aircraft to strike simultaneously and repeatedly at German positions, day and night. On the first day, less than 400 sorties were flown. The second day brought no relief from the weather but reconnaissance and ground attacks continued.

However, US ground forces pushed forward. Fortunately, the Germans had been in the process of a withdrawal and their artillery was out of position. German troops surrendered in large numbers and the independent American Expeditionary Force was well on its way to its first great victory.

On September 14th the weather cleared and the sortie rate climbed. Allied ground forces pushed forward, aided by the photographs and reports brought back by the reconnaissance aircraft. By September 16th, the last day of the campaign, US aircraft alone had flown some 2,500 sorties and were recognized for their contribution to the rollback of the German forces and the elimination of the St. Mihiel Salient.

Some of the Aircraft Types Employed by Mitchell in the St. Mihiel Attack



DeHavilland DH9



Caproni Ca.36



SPAD XIII

Analysis of the Air Attack

Mitchell's plan for a massive and coordinated attack was not fully executed due to weather but the aircraft certainly contributed to the eventual outcome and a nascent doctrine of ground support by air forces was created. Mitchell emphasized the importance of air supremacy and provided a paradigm of planning and organization for future air operations.

Moreover, the lessons learned were soon applied in the Allied air attacks in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the last great battle of the Great War.

Mitchell never got a real opportunity to conduct true strategic bombardment as Trenchard and Douhet advocated but the concept, for better or worse, would become the linchpin of US air strategy in World War II.

Mitchell also recognized the lack of preparedness, inexperience of the US forces and their lack of modern, US designed and manufactured equipment as a critical factor for future planning of our national defense.

Even though World War I had been raging for three years before the US entry, when the country entered the war, the Signal Corps had about 50 obsolete trainers, two airfields, and not a single combat worthy aircraft. The entire Aviation Section had about 1,000 troops of which 26 were qualified aviators

When the war ended, a year and a half later, the Air Service had 200,000 troops. Forty-five combat squadrons with 740 aircraft were in stationed in Europe along with 23 balloon companies. But almost none of the aircraft or engines were of US manufacture. Mitchell would note these deficiencies and preach against making the same mistake again, a sermon ignored.

Conclusions

Mitchell's position as an authority on air power stems directly from his success at St. Mihiel. He was honored by both the French and United States governments and publicly lauded. In October, he received a temporary promotion to brigadier general. His success at St Mihiel might then be traced back to this fortuitous transfer to the Signal Corps which placed him in the center of the organization which was the technological nexus of the US Army. His success in the Signal Corps might then be traced to his self-study, inquiring mind, ambition, and an influential family.

Historians argue about the efficacy of Billy Mitchell's personal crusade for airpower. He was egotistic, arrogant and unable to compromise. He repeatedly went outside the chain of command, publicly demeaned higher authorities, and was insubordinate. This did nothing to promote his vision within the defense establishment. No less an aviation icon than Jimmy Doolittle opined that "He was ahead of his time but the methods he used...destroyed him, and probably delayed the development of airpower for a period of time." But he provided a vision for the future and left behind a coterie of disciples: Hap Arnold, Tooey Spaatz, and Ira Eaker who saw his dream fulfilled.

OUR CONTINUING TRIBUTE TO US NAVAL AVIATION ON ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

Great Navy and Marine Aircraft of World War II



*Patrol
Bomber*

*The
Consolidated
PBY-5A
Catalina*



*Basic
Trainer*

*Stearman
N2S-5
Kaydet*



Fighter
Grumman F6F-3 Hellcat



Dive Bomber
Douglas SBD-2 Dauntless



Torpedo Bomber
Grumman TBM-3E Avenger