

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

04 OCT-TRCS Meeting  
11 OCT-TRCS Meeting  
15 OCT-CTWG Rocketry Contest  
18 OCT-TRCS Meeting  
21-23 OCT-CTWG Conference  
25 OCT -TRCS Meeting

### ANNUAL CITRUS FRUIT FUNDRAISER



Members who have not picked up their sales packages should see Maj Rocketto as soon as possible.

### CADET MEETING NOTES

*27 September, 2011*

*submitted by*

*C/Capt Brendan Flynn*

The meeting opened with a uniform inspection. During the inspection, C/A1C Paquin talked to new and prospective cadets about customs and courtesies and the chain of command.

The Cadet Cadre and Capt Wojtcuk held a staff meeting throughout the evening to set goals for the coming year and review those of this year.

Maj Bourque talked with and tested cadets on various Emergency Services topics. C/A1C Paquin and C/SrA VaVanDevander talked with new and prospective cadets about hot weather injuries.

Capt Wojtcuk and Maj Noniewicz talked to cadets about glider flights, which have been canceled due to uncertainties funding.

C/2Lt Wojtcuk and C/Capt Flynn reminded cadets on how to act as a good audience during classes.

### SENIOR MEETING

*27 September, 2011*

*Commander's Call*

Capt Farley reported on some of the seminars which he attended at the AOPA Aviation Summit in Hartford last week. Some of the information garnered was passed on. This including information on navigating the national airspace, ditching, and the mitigation of risk when making emergency landings or crashing.

Both he and Maj Rocketto discussed operations with the USCGA Auxiliary members who were operating an information booth. They operate along both shores of Long Island, the Connecticut coastline, and the inland waterways of the Hudson, Housatonic, and Connecticut Rivers and Lake Champlain.

Maj Rocketto also met Col Peter Jensen, our former Wing Commander who is now flying with the Coast Guard Auxiliary. They have a structured program including a swimming test. The aircraft are their personal planes

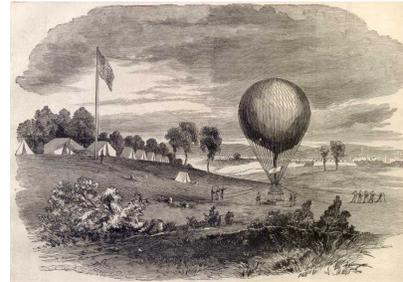
**THE WEEK'S AEROSPACE HISTORY**

01 OCT 1861-The United States Army Balloon Corps is formed. Prof. Thaddeus S. C. Lowe, the grandfather of famed aviatrix Pancho Barnes, is named Chief Aeronaut.

**CAPT PETRY EARNS YEAGER**



Capt Thomas Petry has completed the Aerospace Education Program for Senior Members and earned the Yeager Ribbon.



Reconnaissance Balloon at First Bull Run (sketched by Edward Pietsch for Harper's Weekly.)

02 OCT, 1974-Roy Anderson of General Electric demonstrates feasibility of a GPS navigation system.

03 OCT, 1923-USS Lexington (CV-2) launched at Quincy, Massachusetts

04 OCT, 1958-BOAC flies the first jet airliner, a deHavilland Comet, across the Atlantic Ocean.

05 OCT, XXXX-The first test of the first USN amphibian is carried out at Hammondsport, N.Y.

**TRCS AOPA ATTENDEES**

CAP ran an information booth at the Airplane Owners and Pilots Association Aviation Summit in Hartford last week. Some of our members took turns informing the public about our mission and trying to recruit new members. Our participants were Maj's deAndrade, Mode, and Rocketto and Capt Lintelmann



*Replica of Curtiss A-1 Triad at the Museum of US Navy Aviation, Pensacola, Florida*



*Capt Lintelmann and Marie Vogt of CAP NHQ manning the booth at the Hartford Convention Center*

06 OCT, 1938-D.C.T. Bennett and Ian Harvey set a still standing world record for seaplanes by flying the Short Mercury from Dundee Scotland to Port Nolloth, South Africa, a distance of 5,997.5 miles in 42.5 hours.

07 OCT, 1909-Glenn Curtiss becomes the first American to hold a license issued by the Federation Aeronautique Internationale.

## CURRENT EVENTS

### *DREAMLINER DELIVERED*

All Nippon Airways took delivery of the first Boeing 787 Dreamliner in Everett, Washington last Sunday. The Dreamliner is Boeing's first new transport design in two decades. The aircraft is the first to use fiber composite material for the fuselage, equipped with Rolls-Royce Trent engines, and promises greater fuel efficiency. One interesting feature is that the cabin will be pressurized at 6,000 ft rather than the standard 8,000 ft which promises a more comfortable environment for the passengers.

### *ASTRONAUTS CRITICIZE US SPACE PROGRAM*

In testimony before the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Neil Armstrong said that the termination of the space shuttle program has left the United States in an "embarrassing and unacceptable" situation. He states that "that NASA needs a stronger vision for the future and should focus on returning humans to the Moon and to the International Space Station." Eugene Cernan recommended returning the space shuttle to service and returning humans to the moon.

## OCTOBER HISTORICAL FEATURE ARTICLE

### THE HIGHEST LATITUDES AIRCRAFT AND POLAR EXPLORATION

#### *PART ONE Antarctica*

#### *First Landing at the South Pole*

The month of October makes the anniversary of the first landing of an aircraft at the South Pole. On 31 October, 1956, a US Navy Douglas R4D-5 Skytrain, named *Que Sera Sera*, the naval version

of the the legendary DC-3. Piloted by Lt. Com. Gus Shinn, the aircraft touched down and immediately disgorged its crew led by Rear Admiral George Dufek, the first US citizens to set foot at the southernmost point of the earth. A USAF Douglas C-124 Globemaster circled overhead, ready to drop emergency supplies if necessary.

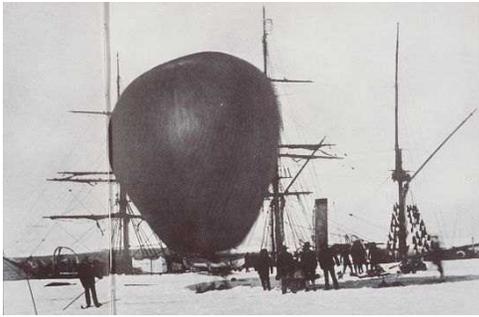


*Que Sera Sera on Display in Museum of US Navy Aviation*

In less than an hour, they unloaded supplies for a planned scientific station and found out that the aircraft's skis were frozen to the ice. Fortunately, the aircraft was equipped with jet assisted take-off bottles (JATO) and Shinn fired them in four successive volleys to break free and help the aircraft lift off from the 10,000 foot ice plateau.

#### *First Flights-Captive Balloons*

One of the first sightings, in 1820, of the Antarctic land mass is attributed to Connecticut native Nathaniel Palmer of Stonington, who was hunting seal in Hero, a 47 foot sloop! Aerial exploration of Antarctica can be traced back to the 1902 Scott Expedition. Captain Robert Falcon Scott was one of the hard men who tackled the formidable challenges of polar exploration. In his first expedition, he brought a British army captive balloon, *Eva*, and on 04 February made the first ascent. The second flight was manned by Ernest Shackleton, another famed polar explorer, who took the first aerial photographs of Antarctica. About two months later, members of the German South Polar Expedition repeated the feats with two similar ascents.



*First Aircraft on the Continent*

In 1912, the Australasian Antarctic Expedition, led by Douglas Mawson, brought a Vickers No. 1 monoplane designed by the noted Frenchman, Robert Esnault-Pelterie, inventor of the joystick. The aircraft never flew in Antarctica. It was converted to an air-tractor to haul sledges, broke down on its second trip, and was abandoned.

*The Pre-World War Two Era*

A host of expeditions headed south with aircraft to explore the coldest and largest desert in the world. The Australian Sir Hubert Wilkins brought two Lockheed Vegas to Deception Island and two pioneer Arctic pilots, the Americans Ben Eielson and Joseph Crosson. Piloted by Eielson, the aircraft overflew the Antarctic Peninsula, thus earning priority as the heavier than air flight in Antarctica.

*First Flight Over the South Pole*

The largest of all Antarctic expeditions during this period were those commanded by Richard Byrd. In 1928, Byrd's party landed on the Ross Ice Shelf and constructed the base known as Little America. They also assembled three aircraft: a Ford Tri-Motor named *Floyd Bennett*, a Fairchild FC-2W2, denominated *Stars and Stripes*, and the *Virginia*, a Fokker F.XI Universal.



*Fort Tri-Motor Floyd Bennett at the Henry Ford Museum*

*Fairchild FC-2W@ Stars and Stripes at the Virginia A&S Museum*



On 28 November, 1929, navigator Byrd, pilot Bernt Balchen, co-pilot/radio operator Harold Godeard, and photographer Ashley McKinley flew a 19 hour round trip from Little America to the geographic South Pole and back.

*Norway Enters the Arena*

The greatest of all Norwegian aviators, Hjalmar Riiser-Larsen, led a series of privately funded expeditions south in the early '30s. Norway was intent on claiming land and locating whaling grounds with some scientific research thrown in as dressing. A geographically positive achievement was the production of maps for a large part what is now known as Queen Maud Land. Riiser-Larsen, already noted for his arctic air explorations, went on to command the Norwegian Air Force and, as a civilian airline executive, promote the development of Scandinavian Air Systems polar routes

*First Flight Across Antarctica*

Lincoln Ellsworth, scion of a wealthy Pennsylvania family that had made a fortune in coal, funded and accompanied a number of arctic and antarctic expeditions. In 1934, he outfitted a former herring boat and renamed it *Wyatt Earp*. Part of its cargo was a ski equipped Northrop Gamma named *Polar Star*.



*Polar Star at the NA&SM, The Mall, Washington*

After several misadventures, on 23 November, 1935, Ellsworth and his pilot, Herbert Hollick-Kenyon, departed Dundee Island in the Weddell Sea and started on the first trans-Antarctic flight. Their goal was Byrd's former station at Little America. The voyage required four landings, flew 2,400 miles but on 5 December, fuel exhaustion forced them to land 25 miles short of Little America. They spent the next six days walking. A British research vessel rescued them a month later.

*Post World War Two Activities*

*Operation Highjump*

In 1946 and 1947, the US Navy sent a task force of over a dozen ships equipped with about two dozen aircraft to study and develop military techniques for operating in polar conditions and to gather knowledge about a wide range of subjects of interest to the military. Three navy flight crew members were killed when their Martin PBM Mariner crashed during blizzard conditions.

In addition to two Mariners, the Navy also deployed one Sikorsky HNS-1 Hoverfly, two Sikorsky HNS-1 Hoverflies, four Sikorsky HO3S-1 Dragonflies, a Noorduyn Norseman, two Grumman J2F-6 Ducks, two Stinson OT-1 Sentinels, and six Douglas R4D-5L Skytrains.

The ski-equipped Skytrains, equipped with JATO, were launched from the aircraft carrier USS Philippine Sea. These were the heaviest aircraft ever launched from a carrier up to that time.



*Skytrain on Deck of USS Philippine Sea (CV-47)*  
(US Navy Photo)

Two seaplane tenders, the USS Carrituck and the USS Pine Island also supported air operations.



*USS Carrituck (AV-7) (USN photo)*

Aircraft were used to perform photographic mapping, transport supplies and personnel, and perform search and rescue.

*The International Geophysical Year (July 1957-December 1958)*

*Operation Deep Freeze I*

Once again the US Navy deployed a large force to Antarctica to support the scientific studies of the IGY. The dates coincided with the maximum solar activity in the eleven year solar cycle. About a dozen nations participated and set up stations all over Antarctica. The major US base was at McMurdo Sound and a permanent camp was established at the geographic South Pole. By this time, air operations had matured and permanent airports had been established on the continent, notably Williams Field at McMurdo. By this time, VX-6, a special navy squadron, based at Quonset, R.I., had been assigned the overall duties of supporting polar exploration. During the IGY, they operated the Lockheed P2V Neptune, Douglas R5D Skymaster, the deHavilland of Canada UC-1 Otter, Grumman's UF-1 Albatross, Sikorsky HO4S-3 XXXXX, and the last appearance for the military of the DC-3 airframe, the LC-117D Skytrooper. The USAF also flew in cargo in Douglas C-124 Globemasters.

*The Air National Guard and the New Aviation Face of Subsequent "Deep Freeze" Operations*

The United States, among many other nations, continued research and exploration and aircraft became larger, navigational methods improved

dramatically, and techniques were improved. Much of the work was carried out under the auspices of the National Science Foundation. For many years, the Navy's VX-6 provided the air support in a long line of "Deep Freeze" operations, supplemented by USAF aircraft. Both military and civilian scientific projects benefited from the airlifts which supplied transport to the continent and provided logistic and personnel support to the many outlying stations.



*Sikorsky LH-34D Seabat at New England Air Museum*

In 1988, the United States started shutting down the Distant Early Warning radar stations in Greenland. This artifact of the Cold War, called the DEW Line, had been developed to provide early warning of a Soviet air attack over the arctic. A changing political situation and technological advances made the DEW line redundant. Air support for the DEW Line had been provided by the 109<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing but the mission was ending. The Navy, facing maintenance problems on their old LC-130s requested that the 109<sup>th</sup> and their ski-equipped LC-130s take over search and rescue responsibilities in Antarctica. Over time the Air Force entered into the cargo mission to support the US run Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station. It was extremely hazardous to fly supplies in during the long dark months of the Antarctic winter so the summer season required a busy schedule of flights. The addition of the USAF aircraft took some of the pressure off the Navy flight schedulers, crews, maintenance personnel and especially aircraft.



*New York Air National Guard LC-130 Hercules*

Committee's met, negotiations were held, and over a five year period, a new plan emerged. Essentially, the 109<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, based at Schenectady County Airport in New York, received a full complement LC-130H ski-equipped aircraft and the USAF assumed full responsibility for aerial military support of the US Antarctic Program run under by a contractor under National Science Foundation direction. USAF McDonnell-Douglas C-17 Globemaster IIIs operated by the Air Mobility Command stage from Christchurch, New Zealand and deliver their cargos to "The Ice," a name used to refer to the southernmost continent. The Air Guard LC-130s then take the supplies and personnel to the many remote sites where research is being conducted.

#### *Civilian Flight Activities in Antarctica*

The United States discourages civilians from engaging in Antarctic activities and are often somewhat reluctant to offer assistance. Nonetheless, "The Ice" has a magnetic appeal for a certain brand of adventurer. Trans-continent treks, mountain climbing, and overflights are some of these activities. An organization, Antarctic Logistics and Expeditionss, operating out of Punta Arenas, Argentina flies Ilyushin IL-76s and Havilland of Canada Twin Otters to selected private fields such as Patriot Hills and the South Pole. For prices ranging from \$20,00 to \$50,000 dollars, you can visit the Emperor Penguin breeding grounds, climb the Vinson Massif, or ski at the Pole!

Back in 1966, the great American long distance flier Max Conrad was engaged to fly a Piper PA-24 Aztec named *White Penguin* to carry a group of climbers who wished to ascend Mt. Vinson. The leader of the expedition, Woodrow Wilson Sayre, a grandson of President Wilson, had previously offended the Communist Chinese government by an unauthorized ascent of Mt. Everest, via Tibet, which China claims as its own. The plan to climb Mt. Vinson failed but several years later, he returned to Punta Arenas, attached skis, and headed south. Conrad made several landings on the continent, incurring some damage and then aborting the mission due to maintenance problems and fuel shortages.

In 1970, Conrad returned, under protest by Navy officialdom but with the support of Senator Barry Goldwater! VX-6 escorted him from McMurdo and he made it to the Pole, the first civilian aircraft to do so, but crashed on take-off on his return flight. VX-6 flew him out but the aircraft remained and is now buried under a 40 year accumulation of snow.



*Conrad's Wrecked Aztec N123LF (for Let's Fly) (USN/NSF Photo)*

*The aircraft pictured in this article are the actual aircraft which have been to "The Ice.*

Part II, The Arctic, will appear in a future issue.

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

Let us visit some past and one current naval aviation facility.



*Ramp area at Grumman Peconic River Airport now Calverton Executive Airpark. The site of Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant Six. Note the F-14s and the A-6.*



*The former NAS Wallops Island now a government aircraft test and rocket launch facility administered by NASA..*



*Ramp at NAS Brunswick and a Baker's Dozen of P-3s.*



*NAS North Island with three types of aircraft visible and the San Diego skyline in the background.*