

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

06 DEC-TRCS-Parents Meeting/Guest Speaker
07 DEC-CTWG Staff Fest
13 DEC-TRCS Meeting
20 DEC-TRCS Holiday Meeting

04-05 FEB-Unit Commander's Course
10-11 MAR-Squadron Leader's Course
21-22 APR-Corporate Leader's Course

ANNUAL BOWLING TOURNAMENT

The tournament was held in place of the weekly meeting. A report on results will be posted in a future edition of *The Coastwatcher*.

AIR FORCE HERITAGE AND HISTORY WRITING COMPETITION

The National Museum of the United States Air Forces proudly announces its Annual Air Force Heritage and History Writing Competition.

Competition Theme

The topic for the papers submitted for this writing competition is based on Air Force History and Heritage. This year, the theme is based upon the famed "Doolittle Mission." The question follows:

"The Doolittle Raiders" encountered various problems prior to and in route to their mission. Identify three of these problems and the remedies implemented. Based on the remedies, do you believe that the overall mission was successful? Why or why not, use research evidence to support your arguments.

Submission Rules and Requirements

Eligibility - This competition is open to public, private school or home-schooled students between the ages of 13-18. One entry per student.

Deadline - All papers must be submitted via email in Word format to erin.craig@wpafb.af.mil .

Submissions must be made by 12:00 a.m. (EST) 17 February 2012. **The competition will accept only the first 250 entrants.**

Students must provide "notification of intent to compete" and submit via email by 31 December 2011, 12:00 a.m. (EST). This notification should consist of a one sentence email stating that the student will be entering the competition. Email to erin.craig@wpafb.af.mil Those who fail to provide "notification of intent to compete" email will not be permitted to submit entries.

Three awards of \$1,000, \$700, and \$300 will be presented to the three winners.

Go to the website of the Museum of the US Air Force for complete details.

AEROSPACE CURRENT EVENTS

Curiosity Launched

NASA's newest Mars explorer, *Curiosity*, departed Saturday last on a 354 million mile journey with an ETA set at August 5th, 2012. The launch has been delayed to replace a faulty battery.

The Mars Science Laboratory, as the mission is formally named, plans to land *Curiosity*, a one ton, six wheeled vehicle outfitted with a wide range of scientific data collectors.

Once on the ground, *Curiosity* is scheduled to spend about two earth years exploring Gale Crater, a region rich in sedimentary rocks. The site is believed to hold rich possibilities for understanding the geologic history of Mars.

AEROSPACE HISTORY ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

Some Civil Air Patrol Aircraft in World War II

CAP celebrates its 70th anniversary on Thursday, December 1st. On that date in 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order which established a civilian organization for emergency service. One week later, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and her major allies, Germany and Italy, declared war on the United States. Now, American shipping was fair game and the slaughter began.

The primary problem which led to CAP's first wartime mission was the German submarine threat along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the United States. The U-boats had plagued the British Atlantic supply lines for two years. In late December of 1941, Admiral Dönitz launched Operation *Paukenschlag* (Drumbeat). Five long range Type IX U-boats were dispatched to the US east coast. In a ten day period, they sank 25 ships. The beaches along the east coast were stained with oil and littered with the debris of sunken ships. Shoreline observers noted the palls of smoke from burning tankers which darkened the daylight skies and the flames which illuminated the night. A second and third wave of U-boats followed and the attacks extended to the Gulf coast and the Caribbean.

The US Army Air Corps, Navy, and Coast Guard resources were inadequate to counter the attacks. The Eastern Sea Frontier, the command charged with defending the east coast, had 20 small patrol boats and 103 aircraft, three-quarters of which were not combat ready. CAP was given a 90 day trial period to prove that small civilian aircraft flown by civilian pilots could contribute to the defensive forces of the military.

World War II submarines were not true undersea attack vessels. Their underwater range and speed was circumscribed by the limited energy stored in the wet cell batteries. Much of their time transiting to a patrol area, searching for targets, and even attacking was done on the surface, propelled by diesel engines which also recharged the batteries. Consequently, aerial surveillance was an effective tool to curb the U-boats by forcing them to submerge, reducing their search radius, and depleting their resources.

On February 28th, 1942, three months after Pearl Harbor 1942, the first Coastal Patrol Base was activated at Bader Field, Atlantic City, N.J. The mission: serve as scouts to locate lurking U-boats and report their position by radio and to locate survivors of sunken ships for the rescue forces.

Edmond Edwards received a call that a CAP

Two other bases, Latana, Fl., and Rehoboth, Del. were also authorized. The aircraft were anything but martial...Cubs, Stinsons, WACOs and an occasional twin engine amphibian were employed. Equipment was minimal. Survival gear consisted on inner tubes to serve a make-shift life jackets and navigation depended upon a wet compass, clock, and airspeed indicator. Anti-submarine patrols commenced on March 5th.

In May, a Nazi submarine was surprised by a CAP aircraft off Cape Canaveral, Fl., and became stranded on a sand bar. The CAP plane, flown by Doc Rinker and fruitlessly radioed for armed assistance and circled for a half hour until the U-boat freed itself and escaped. Within a short time, CAP was authorized to carry bombs. The smaller aircraft were fitted with 100 pounders and the larger aircraft might carry up to two 325 lb. depth charges! Bomb sights were improvised locally using scrap lumber, tin cans, nails, and wire.



A Stinson Model 10A, also known as the Model 105, bearing CAP insignia over its factory paint. Note the 100 lb high explosive bomb. She was equipped with an 80 hp Continental engine and had a range of about 370 miles. This aircraft is on display at the New England Air Museum.

The single engine overwater patrols were dangerous and during the course of the war, about half of the total CAP fatalities were lost at sea. On July 21st, 1942, Maj Hugh Sharp and Lt

aircraft had ditched and they immediately launched a search from Coastal Patrol Base 2, Rehoboth Beach flying a single engine Sikorsky S-39 amphibian. After locating the crash site, they landed in eight to ten foot swells which damaged the left pontoon. They found one survivor, Lt Henry Cross whom they took aboard. Unfortunately the sea state and the damaged pontoon prevented a take-off so Lt Edwards crawled out on the right wing and used his weight to keep the aircraft on an even keel. He stayed on the wing throughout the night until a Coast Guard vessel appeared and took the S-39 in tow. Sharp and Edwards were both awarded the Air Medal by President Roosevelt at the White House. The S-39 was repaired and now resides in a place of honor at the New England Air Museum, at Connecticut's Bradley International Airport.



This is the Sikorsky S-39A which effected the rescue of Lt Cross related above. The aircraft, which carries a Pratt & Whitney Wasp Jr. engine which produces 300 hp. She cruises at 100 mph and has a range of about 400 miles. The plane is on display, along with an extensive explanation of the mission, at the New England Air Museum.

The first sinking of a submarine which was credited to CAP was claimed by a Grumman G-44 Widgeon crewed by Maj Wynant Farr and Capt Johnny Haggin flying out of Atlantic City. They made two runs on the crash diving sub and reported oil and debris. In the next year and a half, the military assets devoted to anti-submarine work increased but by the time the coastal patrols

ended, on August 31, 1943, a second sub had been claimed, 173 subs had been spotted, 57 attacks prosecuted, and claims for ten damaged subs recorded. In addition, coastal patrol aircraft assisted in the rescue of 363 survivors. A total of 21 coastal patrol bases had been established extending from Maine to Texas.



The Widgeon also served the US Navy and US Coast Guard as the J4F and the Army Air Corps as the OA-10. The "Petulant Porpoise," a J4F-2, is on display at the Pima Air & Space Museum in Tucson. The Widgeon is equipped with a pair of Fairchild Ranger L-440 engines which develop 200 hp each. She could cruise at 150 mph and had a range of around 900 miles.

As the war progressed, CAP found itself tasked with more and more missions. The target towing assignment started when the anti-aircraft training unit at Ft. Sheridan, Ill. requested CAP assistance. In order to train gunners under realistic conditions, CAP aircraft towed a long banner on a 1,000 foot line. The banner served as a target but the green and sometimes over enthusiastic gunners sometimes hit the CAP aircraft. CAP aircraft also served as targets in the development of radar guided anti-aircraft guns and associated radar testing and were used to train search light crews. Over 220,000 missions were flown but CAP lost 27 aircraft and seven crew during these operations.



The Fairchild 24 C8F with CAP insignia and pre-war paint. The C8F utilized a Fairchild Ranger 150 hp engine and may be seen at the Museum of the U.S. Air Force. The aircraft pictured served with Coastal Patrol Base 2 and its owner, CAP 1Lt Wilder was awarded the Air Medal.



The Fairchild F24G, photographed at the Mid Atlantic Air Museum, Reading, Penn., also carries CAP insignia over a "civilian" paint scheme. Note that the engine is a radial, a Warner SS40&50 which developed 90 hp. Aircraft such as this were useful for courier and cargo duties,

The civil airlines and military transport service were swamped with passengers and cargo. CAP's light aircraft proved ideal for use in moving couriers or officials and light priority cargo. The small aircraft were extremely cost effective in serving smaller fields and moved millions of pounds of freight and thousands of personnel during the course of the war. Some say that CAP's operation was a fore-runner of today's hub and spoke airline service.

The national timber reserves were a valuable strategic resource so CAP started running forest fire patrols in an attempt to detect fires in the early stages when they could be easily managed.

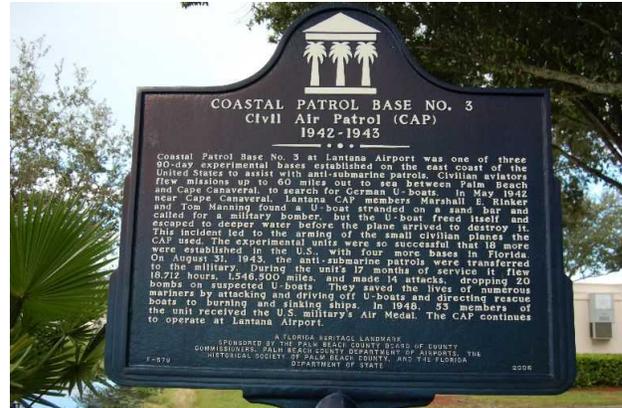


The classic Piper J-3 Cub was stand-by for CAP. The Cub was powered by a 65 hp Continental engine. The aircraft, on display at the National Museum of the United States Air Force, was donated by the Greene County Composite Squadron of Xenia, Ohio.

A CAP unit was organized to patrol the Mexican border from Texas to Arizona. The purpose was the detection of saboteurs who might enter the United States via Mexico.

The CAP tradition in search and rescue came to the fore in World War II. The heavy training schedules at the airbases scattered across the country meant that novice pilots would get lost, have engine problems, or run out of fuel. CAP aircraft were dispatched to locate the missing planes and the local knowledge of their pilots and the low speed and maneuverability of their aircraft were an asset. Over 20,000 hours were logged in search and rescue.

At war's end after accumulating three quarters of a million hours of flight time, CAP lost most of these missions and was almost disbanded. However, a plan was implemented to establish CAP as an auxiliary of the new US Air Force and over time, developed into the organization which now celebrates the 70th anniversary of its birth.



Florida Historical Marker Honoring Coastal Patrol Base 3 at Latana. (Enlarge Photo to Read Plaque.)

SUPPORT THE CAP HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

Visit the website at

<http://www.caphistory.org/>

