

## 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***

## 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-Corporal Leader's Course

## PEARL HARBOR LECTURE

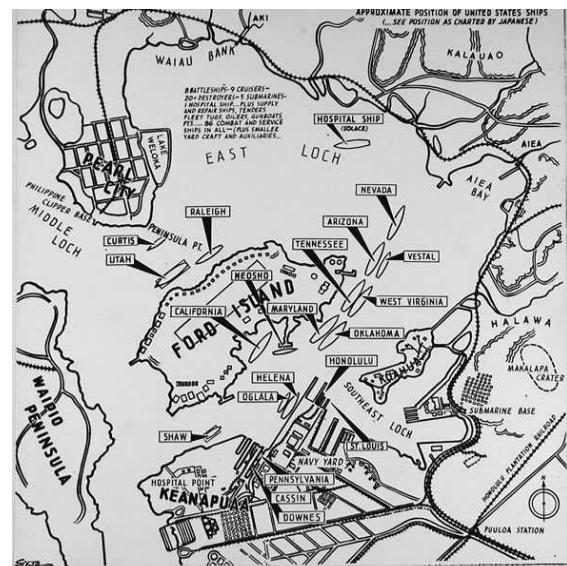
by  
SM T. H. Merritt

Thames River Composite Squadron enjoyed a rare treat at our regular meeting on 06 December. Electrician's Mate First Class Paul M. Welch, USN, one of the last survivors of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii 71 years ago, was on hand to recount his experiences and share the importance of sea and air power.



*EMI Welch*

Welch, now 91, recalled the events of that Sunday morning in vivid detail. Welch was assigned to the *USS Maryland* (BB 46). At the time of commissioning in the summer of 1921, *USS Maryland* was America's most powerful battleship and was the pride of the American fleet. "It was a quiet Sunday morning," said Welch. "I had just stepped out of the shower and was getting ready to go to church services topside. That's when the alarm sounded and we begin to hear these deafening explosions." Word soon followed across the ship that they were under attack from Japanese forces.



## *Ship Positions at Pearl Harbor (USN)*

What followed for the next few hours that morning and into the evening was a scene of horror and destruction as he witnessed the battleship *USS Oklahoma*, which was moored next to the

Maryland torpedoed and then capsize, trapping lessons they learned and share with us now," numerous men below decks. As common among men of that greatest generation, Welch doesn't view his actions as "heroic." Instead, he quickly

gives credit to his shipmates and the collective efforts of all to rescue those blown into the water, many suffering from burns and blast injuries. "I was called topside to rig light and power circuits for rescue work and we began pulling survivors out of the water and we managed to save many of them," Welch said. "I could hardly believe my eyes. The *USS Arizona* was right behind us and was blown to bits. There were men swimming in oil two inches deep."



*USS Maryland Alongside Capsized USS Oklahoma (US Navy Photo)*

Today, in an age of instant communications, Welch said they didn't have the luxury of being able to hear President Roosevelt's famous "Day of Infamy" speech to Congress and the nation the next day. However, one thing was clear. The United States was at war. He also couldn't call his family back on the east coast. "They came around the next afternoon and gave us all a postcard that simply said "I survived the attack at Pearl Harbor" and that was it. We signed it and they mailed it to our family," he added.

Major Paul Noniewicz, Squadron Commander of TRCS 075, said the presentation was a significant moment and highlight for the cadets and senior members of the Squadron. "These men are living history and we should pay close attention to the

A Bristol, Connecticut native, Welch joined the Navy in 1940 and soon found himself on the west coast headed for Hawaii. Though he escaped death at Pearl Harbor, he went on to have many more close calls during World War II as his ship raced across the Pacific from island to island engaging Japanese forces. In the book *Memoirs of the Crew of The Battleship Maryland, BB 46*, Welch said Tarawa was the first of many battles in which he engaged. In the taking of Tarawa Atoll in the Gilbert Islands, he saw Marines leap into the water forging toward the enemy. "Many were easy targets and were slaughtered in withering enemy fire as they approached the beaches," Welch said. "This carnage imprinted itself on my mind more than anything I had witnessed during the remainder of the war."



*"Fighting Mary" later in the war sporting a coat of Measure 32 camouflage. Note the SB2U scout aircraft on the fantail.*

Welch is a member of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association but says the group will be disbanded at the end of the year because there aren't many left now. The youngest would be in their late 80s but most have been swept into history with the hands of time. "I'm 91 now. There are very few of us left," said Welch. Though his walk is slow, his voice is strong and clear. With a standing room

only crowd hanging on his every word, Welch closed his presentation reminding everyone about the importance of vigilance in a dangerous world and with the simple words from the PHSAs motto: "Remember Pearl Harbor – Keep America Alert."

Later in the day, in an assembly, the trio explained CAP's history, missions, and opportunities for service to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

### **FRUIT SALE**

The fruit was delivered to Grasso Technical School on Friday last. Tech students from the Information Systems Technology and Bio-Environmental shops and the Rifle Team under the supervision of Mr. Carpenter and Mr. Fritsch unloaded and stacked five tons in one half hour. LtCol Doucette, Maj Rocketto, Lt Looney and two volunteers, Harry Rogers and Hap Rocketto, from the Magnum Rifle Team then transferred over 300 cases to our trailers. Unloading was assisted by C/Capt Flynn and C/2Lt Wojtcuk

Most of the fruit has been distributed to our contributors at this time and a full report on the sale will be forthcoming in a future issue.

### **CADET SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS**

by  
Dawn Brouillard

On the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CAP's founding, Thursday, the 1<sup>st</sup>, three members of the Squadron, Cadets Xavier Stout, Trevor Sanders, and Nicholas Brouillard, presented a set of CAP information briefings to the students at Lisbon Central School. Each of the cadets gave a 15 minute talk in their respective social studies classes.



*Cadet Brouillard comments on Cadet activities as Cadets Sanders and Stout wait their turn.*



*Cadets Address the Assembly*

### **ANNUAL BOWLING TOURNAMENT**

Over 40 members of the Squadron and their families reported to the lanes in Norwich for our third annual bowling tournament.

Team Woj, consisting of Cadets C. Bourque and Adcock, Major Noniewicz, and SM Wojtcuk tallied the top score of the evening with a 914. They were followed by Team Bourque, Cadets Wojtcuk, J. Bourque, Sanders, and Maj R. Bourque.

Cadet Bunevich's 178 was the high score of the night. Maj Noniewicz led the seniors with a 163.

Cadet Schultz passed the "Backwards Bowler" to Cadet Newland.

### **AEROSPACE CURRENT EVENTS**

#### **USAF Reduces Air Show Commitments**

The USAF Air Combat Command (ACC) announced that single-ship demonstration flights at air shows will face major reductions. Due to "fiscal constraints," one the F-22 demo team will go on the road and perform at 20 events. The A-10, F-16, and F-15 teams will not fly. However,

the Thunderbirds schedule will not be curtailed and they will fly for a full season. The schedule reduction will allow the ACC to add 900 training sorties for combat readiness training.

*Drone Pilots Trained Will Exceed Fighter and Bomber Pilots Trained*

The Air Force has announced that in the coming year, more operators of remote piloted vehicles will be trained than fighter and bomber pilots combined. Holloman AFB in New Mexico will be the primary training facility.

**AEROSPACE HISTORY**

*The Next Week's Anniversary's*

08 DEC, 1964-Little Joe II, the Apollo escape system, is tested at White Sands, N.M.



*Little Joe and Stapp's Sonic Wing on Display at Holloman AFB*

09 DEC, 1936-Juan de la Cierva, developer of the autogiro is killed in crash of KLM airliner.



*Pitcairn PCA-2, a license built modification of Cierva's unique design, on display at the EAA Museum, Oshkosh, Wisconsin.*

10 DEC, 1954-Lt. Col. John Paul Stapp, M.D., PhD riding Sonic Wind 1 rocket sled experiences 40G forces during deceleration experiments at Holloman, N.M. (See photo above.)

11 DEC, 1913-First Flight of Sikorsky's *Ilya Muromets* at St. Petersburg, Russia. Igor Sikorsky was famous for his large aircraft long before he became famous for helicopters. The *Ilya Muromets*, built as both a passenger aircraft and a bomber, was the first mass produced large aircraft. The manufacturer was the Russo-Baltic Wagon Company!



*Ilya Muromets flying at Ikorpusnoi Aerodrome, 1914 (NASM photo)*

12 DEC, 1925-Maj Charles Yeager flies the Bell X-1A to Mach 2.5



*X-1A on Lakebed at Edwards AFB (Dryden FRC photo)*

13 DEC, 1951-Major George Davis of the 334th Fighter Interceptor Squadron flying an F-86 Sabre, shot down four MiG-15s in a single day. Davis was the first US pilot to be an ace in two wars and scored 21 aerial victories, seven over Japan, and 14 in Korea before he was shot down and killed. He was awarded the Medal of Honor.



*The Sabre on display at Udvar-Hazy displays the markings of the 334<sup>th</sup> FIW, 4<sup>th</sup> FIG and was based at Kimpo during the Korean War.*

14 DEC, 1927-The aircraft carrier U.S.S. Lexington (CV-2) commissioned.



*Lady Lex at Sea  
Note Brewster Buffalo Fighters Forward,  
Dauntless Scout Bombers Midship and  
Devastator Torpedo Bombers Aft. (US Navy Photo)*



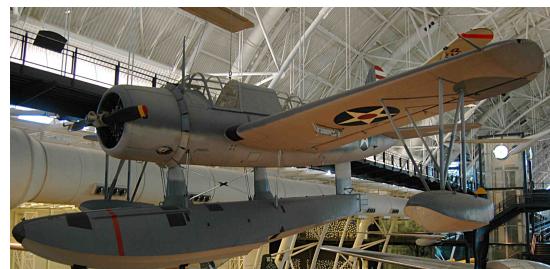
*Brewster F2A Buffalo  
(US Navy Photo)*



*Douglas SBD Dauntless*



*Douglas TBD Devastator  
(US Navy Photo)*



*Vought SB2U  
Kingfisher, Scout Bomber Carried on USS Maryland*