

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>

S. Rocketto, Editor  
srocketto@aquilasys.com

C/Capt Brendan Flynn, Reporter  
1Lt Scott Owens, Paparazzi

Vol. VI, No 08

29 February, 2012

### SCHEDULE OF COMING EVENTS

03 MAR-CTWG Cadet Competition Day  
10-11 MAR-Squadron Leader's Course  
15 MAR-CTWG Cadet Competition  
17-18 MAR-Great Starts-Camp Niantic  
17-18 MAR-TLC Course (Seniors)-Camp Niantic  
18 MAR-CTWG SAREX  
31 MAR-CTWG Pilots Meeting  
14 APR-LifeStar Field Trip-Backus Hospital  
21 APR-CTWG SAREX  
21-22 APR-Corporate Leader's Course  
28 APR-Glider Orientation Flight Trip (tentative)  
04 MAY (FRI)-Ledyard A/S Festival-Juliet Long  
16 JUN-CTWG SAREX  
16-17 JUN-Quonset Air Show  
23-30 JUN-PAWG RCLS Course  
12-14 JUL-Casa Wojtcuk Bivouac  
21 JUL-04 AUG-Nat'l. ES Academy  
04-05 AUG-Westover Air Show  
11 AUG-CTWG SAREX  
19-22 SEP-CTWG Guided Training Evaluation  
10 NOV-CTWG Conference-Cromwell

### ERRATUM

The aviation history guru and fact checking conscience of *The Coastwatcher*, LtCol Carl Stidsen, CTWG IG, noted that the P&W Canada engine test bed is actually a Boeing 720, not a 707. The 720 was derived from the 707 but had a shorter fuselage and a shorter range to meet certain airline requirement for an intermediate range aircraft which could operate from shorter fields.

Interestingly, it bore a 717 designation during part of its development stage. The number was officially assigned to the McDonnell-Douglas MD-95, a Douglas DC-9 spin-off.



*The six engined C-FTEB at the last P&W Airshow. She originally flew for American Airlines and Middle East Airlines before P&W acquired her. The aircraft was retired in September of 2010.*

### CADET MEETING MINUTES

28 February, 2012

by

C/Capt Brendan Flynn

Following a uniform inspection, C/Capt Flynn conducted a leadership quiz with questions taken from the material of Learn to Lead, Chapter One.

LtCol Thomas Wisehart talked to cadets about the exciting moments and world-wide travels of his service, including his 28 years in the Navy, working with the Seabees, and work in security operations that took him to countries including Russian and China.

MSgt Dan Jenkins and TSgt Justin Rackliffe, members of the Connecticut Air National Guard, met with cadets. They discussed opportunities in the Air Guard and the military in general and answered cadets' questions on the ANG.

Flight sergeants spoke to their cadets in a flight time session.

Capt Wojtcuk informed cadets of orientation flights to take place on March 31. Anyone who would like to attend must email Capt Wojtcuk stating their wish to fly and their weight.

In the closing ceremonies, Cadets Ariana Henderson and Justin Ketchem were informed that their membership applications were approved and were given their CAP ID numbers. Cadet Nathan Welch, upon his completion of the Curry Achievement, was promoted to Airman.

### SENIOR MEETING MINUTES

*28 February, 2012*

Capt Edward Miller presented a duty briefing on supply and logistics. The three types of properties, expendable, non-expendable, and real were discussed. The CAP computer tracking system and proper disposal of the various types of properties was explained.

Major John deAndrade offered a detailed explanation of FAR and CAP regulations regarding aircraft lighting systems with special emphasis on anti-collision beacons and strobes.

Capt Farley announced that the next TRCS SAREX will be on 17 March.

Major Rocketto distributed copies of the *FAA Wings Pilot Proficiency Program User's Guide*.

### AEROSPACE CURRENT EVENTS

#### *BLIMP BACKERS BUMMED OUT*

Some issues back, *The Coastwacher* reported the acceptance by the Navy of the MZ-3A, a variation on the commercial American Blimp Corporation A-170 airship. But after four months of service and a five year 3.6 million dollar development program, the airship will be deflated and stored at the Navy's Lakehurst, NJ facility.

*MZ-3A In  
Lakehurst  
Hangar 1*

*(US Navy Photo)*



Designed as a flying laboratory to test surveillance and intelligence sensors, the airship was also used to monitor the Deep Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.



*US Navy photo  
of MZ-3A over  
desert terrain.*

The retirement of the blimp is a secondary effect of the budget crisis. Cutbacks have effected programs for which the airship was needed so there are now insufficient missions to keep the blimp busy. However, the blimp will be reactivated if future needs require its services.

But Lakehurst will still be home to military lighter than air. The Army's Long-Endurance Multi-Intelligence Vehicle (LEMV) project, headed by Northrop Grumman will continue in Hangar 6. The battlefield surveillance aircraft is about 250 feet long, has a planned flight endurance of three weeks and an operating altitude as high as 22,000 feet. Flight tests are schedule for this summer.

*Lockheed-Grumman LEMV Concept*



The advantages of airships over fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft are lower per hour operating costs and long loiter times. However, they are slower and more vulnerable to adverse weather.

*Memphis Belle Restoration Proceeds*

Almost 100 staff and volunteers are working at the Museum of the United States Air Force to prepare the legendary B-17F, the Memphis Belle, for display. The “Belle” flew 25 missions over Europe and starred in a widely distributed combat film of its last mission. It then returned to the United States and participated in bond tours. A 2014 completion date is planned.



*The “Belle” over War-time England (USAAF Photo)*



*The “Belle” at its Former Residence, Mud Island, Tennessee*

*“Belle” in MUSAF Restoration Facility*



*NASA Utilizes Zeppelin*

*Eureka*, N704LZ, an airship manufactured by the German firm, *Zeppelin Luftschifftechnik*, will be equipped by NASA with a special shading device. The shade will attenuate reflected light from the atmosphere and allow better viewing of planets in other star systems.



*Eureka, owned by Airship Ventures, carries Farmer's Insurance advertising at Oshkosh, 2011.*

The advantage of the airship is that it has a long loiter time and can hover in one position for up to two days and it produces far less vibration than heavier-than-air vehicles.

*Eureka* is about constructed of composite materials and is comparable to a Boeing 737 in length. The four propellers, powered by Lycoming engines are controlled by a joy stick and can be rotated through a wide range, giving the airship excellent maneuverability.

The airship will also carry air quality monitoring equipment and magnetometers which will be used to search for undiscovered fault lines in California.

**AVIATION HISTORY ARTICLE OF THE  
MONTH**

**The Bombing of Zurich and the New London  
Connection**

04 March, 1945

Part I

*Introduction*

The last history article in *The Coastwatcher* was a reprise of RAF precision attacks on Gestapo facilities during World War II. The raids were carried out at roof-top level by deHavilland Mosquitos with varied success. The US Army Air Force in Europe followed a different path in their attempt at precision bombardment.

*US Strategic Bombing in Europe-Doctrine and  
Equipment*

The USAAF World War II bombing doctrine in Europe was that of precision high altitude daylight attacks on strategic targets using heavy bombers equipped with the vaunted Norden or Sperry bombsights. The Norden, first developed for the US Navy, was a technological achievement of the first order, an optical sight governed by gyroscopes and an analog computer which linked to the aircraft autopilot. Under optimum conditions, attacks from altitudes in the 20,000 foot range might see half of the bombs strike within 1000 feet of the aiming point. However, enemy opposition, poor visibility, and inaccurate wind estimates might result in over half the bombs landing half a mile from the target. Then there were the really bad missions when the bombers misidentified their designated target and showered their munitions upon the wrong city. Zurich, in neutral Switzerland, was the victim of one such mistake.

*The Problems Faced by the Bombardier and  
Navigator*

Readers might be amazed to learn that World War II USAAF bombers could always not find their target and even more amazed that they might bomb a city in the wrong country. However, one must consider the navigational instrumentation and the geographic situation which existed at the time.

First, electronic navigation aids were almost non-existent, especially over enemy held territory. As a result navigators relied upon dead reckoning checked by pilotage. The term “dead reckoning” (DR) derives from “deduced reckoning.” In DR the aviator calculates the course needed to arrive at the destination using simple trigonometry by deducing the effects of the predicted winds on the flight path of the aircraft. The accuracy of the methods depends upon knowing the original position, the position of the destination, true airspeed, and the wind speeds and directions along the flight path. If visibility is good, the track which the aircraft makes over the ground can be checked by reference to landmarks shown on a chart. Pilotage relies upon matching actual ground features to symbols on a chart set a course and to obtain a fix.

Next, the proximity of legitimate targets to the Swiss border was close. The Rhine River marked much of the northern border with Nazi Germany and Nazi ruled Austria was situated to the west. The southern border faced Fascist Italy and to the west was Nazi occupied France. As a result, the Allied bombers made frequent incursions into Swiss air space and, on occasion, loosed munitions on Switzerland.

Near the end of the war, as the USAAF bomber effort intensified, records indicate that between

October of 1943 and March of 1945, US aircraft were involved in at least six accidental bombings and six strafing attacks of Switzerland.. Diplomatic relations between the United States and Switzerland were strained by these attacks but both nations had mutual interests so their relationship remained cordial.

The brunt of the US bombing campaign in Europe was carried out by the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortresses and the Consolidated B-24 Liberators of the Eighth Air Force. The aircraft were equipped with Sperry bombsights and late in the war, when this incident took place, also used two forms of electronics, the H2X and Gee. The H2X or “Mickey” as it was popularly known, was a ground mapping radar with a range of about 30 miles. It suffered from many of the drawbacks of early radar and required skilled interpretation of the returns and had limited utility in providing position fixes. Gee relied on ground stations broadcasting a set of signals which allowed an aircraft to fix its position but it was severely limited in precision by its distance from the transmitters. Furthermore, enemy jamming often rendered it useless.

### *The Dilemma of Neutral Switzerland*

The United States government had been aggravated by the Swiss trading with the Axis powers and what, by many, was taken to be a pro-German stance. Switzerland was completely surrounded by the Axis and dependent upon them for coal, raw materials and much of its food. They also allowed rail transit from Germany to Italy through their territory. In exchange, the Swiss sent precision instrumentation, iron and steel products, and electrical energy to Germany. At the same time Swiss financial interests bought gold from both sides in exchange for Swiss francs. The Swiss franc was a “hard” currency and accepted by most nations as legal tender. This was a boon to the Allies as well as the Axis, but more so for the Allies since they had greater access to world

products than did the Nazis. All of this trade and financial exchange was a legal right of a neutral as set out in the Hague conventions of 1897 and 1907.

Aside from financial considerations, three issues forced the United States to handle the Swiss with faultless diplomatic courtesy. First, neutral Switzerland was a key “listening post” for the Allied spy network. Second, the Swiss had a role as inspectors and mediators in international matters such as treatment of prisoners of war. Finally, the Swiss held almost two thousand US airmen in internment camps. Their welfare had to be considered. Almost 200 US aircraft landed in Switzerland and more crashed there. Under the right circumstances, the crews of damaged US aircraft would attempt to reach a neutral nation such as Sweden or Switzerland rather than crash land or bail out over enemy territory. Internment meant confinement to a camp but one in control of a neutral, not an enemy nation, and was much preferred. In addition, there was always a chance of repatriation.



*Some of the B-24s and B-17s interned at Dübendorf.*

### *“Friendly Fire”*

The accidental killing of ones own troops, known as a blue-on-blue casualty is not unknown and is rather a common occurrence. In the Civil War, at Chancellorsville, Stonewall Jackson died of wounds inflicted by his own troops. David Marcus, an former US Army colonel and the first general officer of the Israeli Army was shot and killed by one of his own sentries a few hours before the cease fire which ended the war.

During the invasion of Sicily, nervous Navy mistook USAAF C-47s flying low overhead carrying paratroopers for German bombers. They opened fire, shot down 23, damaged 37, and killed over 300 men. At Normandy, over 800 US troops, including LtGen Leslie McNair, Commanding General, Army Ground Forces, were killed when US bombers mistakenly dropped short of the bomb line due to smoke obscuration.

A number of “friendly fire” instances have been recorded during the last several decades in southwest Asia. Hamid Karzai, the soon to be President of Afghanistan, was wounded when a US missile, fired from an aircraft, was misdirected by a mistake in the targeting coordinates. The former professional football player, Pat Tillman, was killed in Afghanistan when two allied units fired on each other by mistake. Some one quarter of the albeit light combat casualties in the 1991 Gulf War were due to blue-on-blue mistakes.

*Sorry, Wrong Address!*

The accidental bombing of a non-belligerent nation by a belligerent is rare, but not uncommon. The Swiss were the dubious beneficiaries of multiple attacks and air space incursions by both the Axis and the Allies. Even with the most modern navigational equipment such accidents still happen. In 1999, B-2s using JDAM GPS-guided bombs hit the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, killing three staff members. The Air Force had been given the wrong coordinates by the CIA due to a mix-up in street addresses. There is a difference between precision and accuracy.

*Mission 251*

*The 392nd Bombardment Group Girds for Battle*



In the early morning hours of March, 1945, the combat crews of the 392nd Bombardment Group, 2nd Air Division, Eighth Air Force were briefed for an attack on a tank depot at Aschaffenburg, Germany. The

four squadrons of the 392nd mustered 21 aircraft.

Aircraft 385 of the 579th Squadron was commanded by 1st Lieutenant William Sincock. Four other 1st Lieutenants occupied key positions. Norman Johnson was co-pilot. The navigator was Theodore Balides. Murray Milrod operated the H2X radar. In the nose, George Barger served as pilotage navigator. Accompanying Barger was the bombardier, Alfred Williams. They were a lead crew so they carried two extra crew member to assist in navigation and operate the radar.



*The Sincock Crew*

*Rear: Balides (N), Sincock (P), Johnston (CP), Williams (B)*

(photo courtesy of b24.net)

The mission was Sincock's 22nd and his sixteenth as lead pilot of the high right squadron. The aircraft departed Wendling, a base near Norwich in East Anglia. However, the weather was so poor over England that a formation assembly point was chosen, for the first time, over France. As Sincock climbed into the muck, it was discovered that both their H2X and Gee navigation equipment had failed. This meant that their role as lead ship was not possible. A spare aircraft equipped for lead duties was at Wendling and Sincock received permission to return and change aircraft.



*The B-24 on the right is 44-49385, the original aircraft assigned to the Sincock crew for Mission 251. (photo courtesy of b24.net)*

The change over took less than an hour but the delay put him behind time. In order to make up the lost time, Sincock had Balides plot a direct route to the assembly point. On the way, they repaired a leaking gas heater and compensated for a 15 mile drift to the right. Sincock then reckoned that they would never make the briefed assembly point so he directed Balides to plot a course which paralleled the route to the Division's assembly point. Soon, he spotted aircraft from the 44th Bombardment Group and fell in trail behind them hoping to find his own group.

Meanwhile, major problems were affecting the assembly of the 392nd. The beacon used to mark the assembly point was turned on 40 minutes late and was 15 miles northeast of its briefed position. Clouds ranged from 12,000 to 17,000 feet and the contrails left by the milling bombers further reduced visibility. Assembly altitude was raised to 23,000 feet and the heavily laden Liberators wallowed through the thin air, struggling to maintain some semblance of a formation. When Sincock spotted the 392nd, he noted that the lead squadron only had seven ships and the high squadron, of which he was designated leader, had only two. One ship from the 445th BG and two

from the 491st BG joined up making a six ship formation containing aircraft from three different squadrons. By good fortune, one of the planes from the 491st had H2X gear. By bad fortune each of the other squadron's aircraft had different frequency assignments and no one knew those of the others. Communication was limited to flares and hand signals. Clouds and undercast limited visibility but the Gee data agreed with the DR position so Sincock was relatively sure of his location. Then, the Wing Command Pilot cancelled the attack on the briefed target and radioed that "targets of opportunity" would be attacked instead. Searching for clear air, the 44th started to make a series of turns and the 392nd followed. Sincock lost contact with the aircraft which he was following. Balides, the navigator, struggled to keep his logs up to date. The H2X operator reported that the radar had malfunctioned and the range was down to 10 or 15 miles while the Gee equipment was being jammed by the Germans. A radio report stated that the 44th was in the vicinity of Stuttgart and preparing to bomb.



*This map from Geology.com depicts the relationship of Freiburg to Zurich Freiburg is top center. Zurich is 50 miles southeast. Basel, the city bombed just before Zurich, is at the junction of Switzerland, France, and Germany.*

Once again, Sincock found the 44th and started to follow but when the lead turned sharply right and disappeared in the murk contact was lost. Sincock decided to strike out on his own still leading his composite squadron of six Liberators. The danger of mid-air collision was high and the possibility of locating a suitable target was rapidly diminishing. Sincock called for Balides to plot a course for home. At about that time, Balides plotted an H2X fix but transposed the minute value for the latitude and longitude. The error made them believe they were 25 miles north of their actual position. Sincock instructed his crew to search for targets of opportunity. He also vainly tried to contact his own group and the aircraft from the 491st which was carrying H2X gear.

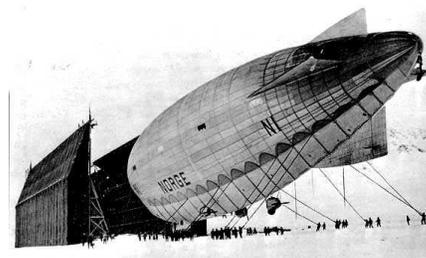
Now the undercast was breaking and there was limited visibility of the ground. Sincock's H2X operator reported that they were approaching a town and Barger, the navigator, with relatively good visibility from his position in the nose turret was called upon for guidance. From about 20,000 feet, Barger could see part of a fair sized town and struggled to match its features with those on his chart. A wooded area, railroad line, and a marshaling yard seemed to match the features of Freiburg, Germany. A hastily set up bomb run was established, flak was observed, and the bombs were released and the bombers headed for home. As they crossed the Rhine a second Gee reading indicated their true position. Because of the navigation errors, they had unknowingly dropped 50,000 pounds of bombs on Zurich, Switzerland!

*End  
Part I*

Next week, the wheels of government bureaucracy grind fast and furious as a court martial is convened. You will be introduced to the affable Jimmy Stewart and New London's gift to martial jurisprudence, the canny Max Sokol.

## AVIATION HISTORY IN THE FIRST WEEK OF MARCH

01 MAR, 1924-First flight of the semi-rigid airship N.1 at Ciampino, Italy. Later renamed *Norge*, she is the first airship to fly over the North Pole.



*Norge at  
Spitzbergen*

04 MAR, 1957-First flight of the Grumman WF-2 Tracer ("Willie Fudd"), an airborne early warning aircraft modified from the S2F, later renamed the E-1B.



*"Willie Fudd,"  
the "Stoff" with a  
Roof*

05 MAR, 1936-First flight of R. J. Mitchell's Supermarine Spitfire, piloted by "Mutt" Summers.



*MK.1 Spitfire*

08 MAR, 1917-Count Ferdinand Zeppelin goes West.