

Missions for America
Semper vigilans!
Semper volans!



The Coastwatcher

Newsletter of the Thames River Composite Squadron
Connecticut Wing
Civil Air Patrol

Tower Rd., Groton, CT
<http://ct075.org>

S. Rocketto, Editor
srocketto@aquilasys.com

C/Maj Brendan Flynn, Foreign Correspondent

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This issue of *The Daedalean* contains the first part of Major Keith Neilson's dramatic report on CTWG's participation in the delivery of medical supplies to New York subsequent to the 911 terrorist attack.

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SCHEDULE OF COMING EVENTS

21-23 SEP-USAFA Compliance Inspection
29 SEP-Wings Over Westerly 1000-1500

10-11 OCT-NER A/S Education Academy
12-14 CT-NER Conference
20 OCT-Commander's Cup Rocket Competition
03 NOV-Basic Communications Course
10 NOV-CTWG Conference-Cromwell
18 DEC-Annual Squadron Holiday Party
25 DEC—1 JAN No Meetings

CADET MEETING MINUTES

11 September, 2012

by
C/Maj Brendan Flynn

The meeting opened with drill. Cadets practiced both marching movements and stationary drill.

C/1Lt Daniels led a Drug Demand Reduction class on inhalants. He discussed different kinds of inhalants, and the long and short term effects of them.

C/SrAmn Johnstone and C/MSgt VanDevander offered a safety lesson on downed power lines and the precautions to take around them.

Capt Wojtcuk and the cadets finalized plans for a cadet ES day at her place of residence on 22 September.

SENIOR MEETING MINUTES

11 September, 2012

Commander's Call

Major Paul Noniewicz briefed the squadron on the Wing Squadron Commander's meeting.

Aircraft are in short supply. Two of our five are awaiting 100 hour inspections at Fitchburg and a C172 is very near its 100 hour inspection deadline.

A Wing communications exercise was completed during the last week.

The proper wearing of uniforms, both corporate and air force style was reviewed.

A discussion about the new communication requirements for the ICUT qualification ensued but no resolution about the details were reached. The matter will be further investigated.

The lack of ground team radios was discussed. The Wing will be queried as to their availability, either at headquarters or as surplus at some other squadron.

The question of whether or not polaroid sun glasses are suitable for aviation use was discussed and followed up with an FAA letter on the subject.

Members are encouraged to consider personal and squadron goals for 2013.

Maj Bourque reported that six cadets and two seniors will attend the Olde Rhinebeck Airshow on Sunday next.

Capt Lintelmann reported that the squadron has closed out the fiscal year in a financially sound position. The squadron has two more annual payments of approximately \$1.000 to make to wing to close out our mortgage.

LtCol Doucette announced that Long Island Sound Patrol funding will allow the squadron to fly ten more hours. An email will be dispatched to eligible crew to ascertain availability.

Maj Neilson spoke briefly about the squadron role in flying medical supplies to New York after the attack on the World Trade Center. The first part of an article by Maj Neilson about this unique phase of our squadron history will be found below.

Maj Rocketto announced that the Yeager Award is now required to earn Stage Three, the Grover Loening Award, of the CAP Professional Development Program.

INTERNATIONAL AIR CADET EXCHANGE PROGRAM TRIP TO AUSTRALIA

*by
C/Maj Brendan Flynn*

My trip started when my alarm went off at 2:50 AM on Saturday morning, July 14, following which I drove to Bradley International to catch my flight to Detroit. From there I journeyed to San

Francisco, where I spent the day exploring the city with other cadets going to the Pacific Ring (including the other five Australian bound cadets.)

We bought ice cream at the Ghirardelli chocolate shop, saw the Golden Gate Bridge, ate some crab on the pier, and ended the day exhausted, full, and in need of charging our cameras.



The next day, (after awaking at a much more reasonable time and going to Mass in the city with another cadet) those bound for Australia left San Francisco for Las Angeles International airport, and from there flew to Australia in an all night, fourteen hour direct flight to Sydney Airport.

After spending the greater part of the day nodding off in Sydney Airport, we flew to the city of Brisbane (pronounced "Brisbin"), which is almost 600 miles north of Sydney. In Brisbane, we were welcomed by the Australian coordinators of the exchange. While we got settled into the Army barracks we would stay at for the next few days, we began to get to know the other ambassadors on the exchange, who hailed from Canada, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Turkey, France, and Hong Kong. While in Brisbane, we went swimming at Coolangetta beach on the Gold Coast, explored the city, toured the Brisbane river, petted koalas at the Australia Zoo, went to two air museums, visited the Boeing Defense Australia headquarters (where we flew on their flight simulators), saw a KC-30 refueling airplane and watched F-18s do touch-and-goes at the Amberly Royal Australian Air Force base.



*IACE Contingent
inspects RAAF C-17
at Amberly.*

We departed Amberly and rode a C-130J down to Canberra (or, as one should pronounce it, "Canbra"), the capital city of Australia. Although we knew that it was winter in that hemisphere, the cold of Canberra nevertheless shocked us all after the more tropical warm of Brisbane. The cold did not mar the beauty of Australia's capital city, however, which we saw in its totality from the heights of the Black Mountain Tower, which is situated above in the mountains bordering the city. During our stay in Canberra, we learned about Australia's system of government, went inside Parliament House and the Australian War memorial, toured Lake Burley Griffin (the man-made lake situated in the middle of the city), visited the NASA's Deep Space Communication Complex south of the city, discovered the the Australian Defense Force Academy (ADFA), and participated in a formal dinner held to thank the sponsor so the program.

*Deep Space
Station 43, NASA's
70 metre dish at
Canberra. It is the
largest steerable
antenna in the
southern
hemisphere.*



After our stay in Canberra was complete, we drove by bus up to Sydney. We quickly adjusted to the climate in Sydney, which was cooler than in Brisbane, but warmer than in Canberra. The first thing we did was see the nighttime city, including the Opera House and Harbour Bridge, which was an unforgettable experience. Throughout the remainder of our visit, we toured Sydney Harbour,

hiked in the majestic Blue Mountains outside of the city, shopped in the city markets, saw *The Dark Knight Rises* at largest IMAX in the world, went to Australia's National Maritime Museum, received a surfing lesson at Bondi Beach, and, on our final day in Australia (a free day), we went to Manly Beach.



*The Sydney
Opera House*

In the past, when I thought of visiting other countries, I never thought that to do so would end with a deeper patriotism for one's home country. However, that is exactly what IACE did for me. During the trip, as I became great friends with people from places like Turkey, Canada, and Australia, I gained immense knowledge about their cultures and came to have the kind of respect for them that can only be gained from firsthand experience. I learned how to say "bless you" in Turkish, "happy birthday" in Dutch, and ate "lamb on the barbie" and crocodile sausage for the first time, all while doing my best to exhibit our American values to the other ambassadors. After leaving Australia, while on the airplane descending to

Los Angeles, the words "WELCOME TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA" popped up on the screen. As I realized that the exchange had come to an end, I did not have the sorry feeling in the pit of my stomach that I had thought I would have at this moment. Instead there was a bubbling sense of pride in returning to the country, my country, that we six U.S. ambassadors had represented for the past two weeks. Australia was a blast, but this is where I belong.

AEROSPACE HISTORY I

Collings Foundation Warbirds Visit GON. Three Key Aircraft in the USAAF Bombing Campaign in Europe

The visit of three World War II aircraft offered an opportunity for a “field” lesson about US Army Air Force History. The aircraft, a Boeing B-17G Flying Fortress, Consolidated B-24J Liberator, and a North American P-51C Mustang presented a triad which represented key elements in the strategic bombing campaign waged by the Eighth Air Force in Europe between 1943 and 1945.

With the aircraft behind him, Major Rocketto drew the audience of cadets and parents back into the 1930s when a small cadre of faculty members at the Air Corps Tactical School (ACTS) first based at Langley Field, Virginia and then at Maxwell Field, Alabama, developed the framework of the doctrine which dominated US military aviation from WW II until the dissolution of the Strategic Air Command in 1992, a period of over 50 years!



Maj Rocketto delivers an impromptu talk about the role of the B-17, B-24, and P-51 in testing a US theory of air warfare.

During WWI, the aircraft's role was to perform as an extension of the ground forces. It was used for observation and reconnaissance: to direct artillery fire and to report the dispositions and movements of enemy forces. Fighter aircraft originally evolved to protect the aircraft performing observation functions. Close air support was also performed but long range strategic bombardment was limited due to a lack of suitable aircraft.

Military planners, confounded by the bloody stalemates of World War I, sought to find military means to avoid the drawn out carnage of trench warfare. Airpower was seen by many to be the solution.

Theorists such as the Italian Giulio Douhet and the British Hugh Trenchard supported mass attacks against population centers believing that this would break the will of a nation to resist. The offensive power of aircraft, able to swiftly strike at an enemy's population centers would demoralize the civil populations and bring a swift end to the war. This view argued that in the long run, lives would be saved. A somewhat different concept developed in the United States.

The major contributors to a new way of waging warfare were almost all destined to become general officers within a decade. In the Second World War, Robert Olds and Harold George led Ferry Command and Air Transport Command respectively. Kenneth Walker earned a posthumous Medal of Honor leading 5th Bomber Command. Heywood Hansell was the first commander of B-29s in the Pacific Theatre. (CAP HQ is located on Maxwell AFB at 105 South Hansell St.) Laurence Kuter rose to four star rank and headed North American Air Defense Command during the Cold War.

These officers, all faculty members at the ACTS, developed and taught a new way to wage war using aircraft: unescorted high altitude daylight precision bombardment (UHADPB). In order to practice this method, equipment and techniques, were needed.

The revolutionary Norden bombsight, ironically first developed for the US Navy, seemed to provide a tool of aiming bombs with precision from high altitude. The instrument was an analog computer attached to a gyro stabilized aiming telescope. The sight was linked to the aircraft control system and guided the aircraft

on the bomb run. Popular belief was that the instrument was so accurate that it was possible to hit a “pickle barrel” from an altitude of 30,000 ft.



Norden Bombsight on display at the Virginia Aviation Museum.

Two aircraft, the B-17 first flown in 1937, and the B-24 a 1940 aircraft fit the bill as bomb carriers. They were powered by four turbo-supercharged engines and could carry bombs, normally the 500 pound high explosive weapon, over long distances at high altitudes. Each was also equipped with numerous .50 caliber machine guns to provide defensive armament and it was believed that the interlocking fire from a massed formation of bombers would make them invulnerable to fighter attack.



B-17G, Nine O Nine on final at runway 23 Groton.



Collings Foundation B-24J, Witchcraft, displays the controversial Davis airfoil on descent into Groton.

However, weaponry, no matter how effective is useless unless directed at the appropriate targets. The faculty members at the ACTS believed that striking at critical industries, nodes of transportation, and energy sources would be the most expedient and economical way to defeat an enemy. Intelligence about enemy industrial capabilities which could guide targeting decisions was of paramount importance.

Bombing tests during this period of time indicated that the accuracy possible using the Norden bomb sight was far less than that assumed by the theoreticians. A fellow faculty member at the ACTS, Major Claire Chennault also argued that improvements in fighter aircraft performance and tactics made unescorted daylight bombing untenable but his reasoning was ignored. Also ignored was other frictions of war, enemy anti-aircraft batteries, resiliency of the enemy, and weather.

Nevertheless, the strategic bombing advocates at the ACTS, turned a blind eye towards the contrary data and succeeded in establishing UHADPB as a the US air warfare doctrine. When the United States entered the war in Europe, that doctrine would be sorely tested.

Coincidentally, this new strategy diminished the importance of both the navy and land forces and supported the arguments for a separate air force. Aircraft would be cheaper than battleships to protect the US coastline and the main function of a land army would be to occupy the enemy homeland after they had been bombed into submission.

Although the European phase of WWII commenced in September of 1939 when the Germans invaded Poland, the US Army Air Force spent the next three and a half years training airmen and building and inventory of warplanes. In the fall of 1943, almost two years after Pearl Harbor, the Eighth Air Force,

the US strategic bombing force in England, launched Mission Number One. A dozen B-17s, attacked a marshaling yard in France.

Larger raids were mounted but the accuracy of the bombing was not even close to that predicted by theory. On the average, in 1943, only about 15% of the bombs struck within 1,000 feet of the target. And the 500 pound bombs used needed to be with a hundred feet or so to be effective. The cloudy weather prevalent in Europe, unpredictable winds over the target, ignorance about the trajectory of falling bombs, attacks by enemy interceptors, and flak all contributed to diminishing the effect of the bombers.

The Royal Air Force's Bomber Command, led by Air Marshal Arthur Harris, tried to convince the US generals Ira Eaker and Carl Spaatz that daylight precision bombing would not work. Harris unabashedly promoted mass bombing of population centers at night. British experiences earlier in the war convincingly showed that unescorted bombers were slaughtered by fighter and ground based anti-aircraft defenses and that real precision was a chimera, unachievable in practice.

Harris sarcastically referred to strategic targets such as oil production facilities as “panacea targets” and pursued a policy of leveling the German cities, “dehousing” the workers and breaking the morale of the nation. In a famous remark, he stated that:

The Nazis entered this war under the rather childish delusion that they were going to bomb everyone else, and nobody was going to bomb them. At Rotterdam, London, Warsaw, and half a hundred other places, they put their rather naive theory into operation. They sowed the wind and now they are going to reap the whirlwind.

What resulted was a combination of both policies; US bombing in daylight and RAF bombing at

night. What also resulted was extraordinary high loss rates by the unescorted Eighth Air Force B-17s and B-24s. When about 300 Eighth Air Force bombers attacked the ball bearing works at Schweinfurt, 60 aircraft were shot down and over 100 damaged. 14 August, 1943 became known as “Black Thursday.”

Enter the P-51 Mustang, the third aircraft which the Collings Foundation brought to Groton. The aircraft was designed by a team under the leadership of Edgar Schmued, ironically a German immigrant, at the request of the British. The original design was powered by an Allison engine which provided lackluster performance. The installation of a supercharged Packard built Rolls-Royce Merlin and drop tanks turned the Mustang into the best long range escort fighter of the war and the bomber formations were soon chaperoned by squadrons of Mustangs. A directive from Jimmy Doolittle, who now commanded the Eighth, released the fighters from close escort duty and freed them to hunt out German aircraft both before and after they attacked. The new tactic severely depleted the German interceptor force and gradually, air superiority over Germany was gained. Doolittle regarded his decision to allow the fighters to leave the formation as one of the best decisions he ever made.



Betty Jane, a P-51C, converted to a two seat configuration waits out the night in the Lanmar One Hangar.

By the end of the war, the USAAF still ran high altitude daylight missions but with heavy fighter escort.

In the Pacific Theatre, Curtis LeMay, leading the B-29 Superfortress offensive against Japan, discovered the ineffectiveness of high altitude daylight bombing. LeMay's solution was to send the Superfortresses in a medium altitude at night. There they were not bothered by the jet stream winds which were prevalent at their normal operational altitude and relatively safe from Japanese interceptors. Additionally, he loaded the aircraft with incendiary bombs and used Harris's carpet bombing techniques to burn down vast sections of Japanese cities. So much for the "high altitude, daylight, precision" part of the ACTS doctrine!

Epilogue

Experiments and some deployed weaponry during the war and afterwards explored the use of aerodynamic surfaces on bombs for course correction and television and even trained animals for guidance but the efforts were desultory and little progress resulted.

However, from Vietnam on, advances in technology and the employment of laser and GPS guidance systems made "precision" attainable. "High altitude" was problematic due to improvements in missile technology and low altitude was even more dangerous due to advances in radar guided guns and man portable air defense systems (MANPADS), light shoulder launched homing anti-aircraft missiles. Middle altitudes often gave aircraft time to see and avoid missiles and stay out of the range of the guns and also allowed for better accuracy.

Escorts for the bomber, which now operated individually or in very small formations, became even more complicated. Even stealth aircraft require complex course planning to either avoid radar sights or present their more stealthy aspects to the radar. A small fleet of electronic counter measure aircraft, electronic jamming aircraft, and "wild weasels," aircraft charged with using electronically guided missiles to seek and destroy

the anti-aircraft sights support the stealth bombers and the whole packet is tended by tanker support and protected by a combat air patrol cover!

Intelligence about worthwhile enemy targets and their defenses improved but the information was not always received in a timely manner. When Iraq invaded Kuwait, the USAF and its coalition partners utilized a theory which was in many ways, a throwback to the old ACTS doctrine. The theory advanced by Col John Warden and known as the "five ring model" provided the basis for targeting.

The model envisioned the enemy as a set of five concentric circles. The leadership stood in the center and became a primary target. Behead a dragon and the dragon dies. The next ring outward consisted of the command and control network and its electrical power sources. Impair the network and the leader loses control of his resources. The third ring is the national infrastructure. Disrupt the transportation network and the military cannot function efficiently. Population and food supply occupies the fourth ring and Warden believed that the most immediate effect might be a lowering of morale and a lessening of enthusiasm to support their government in the war. Finally, and the enemy field forces, the combat troops, occupied the outermost and least important ring. Warden argued that they were analogous to the body of a dragon and severing the head would render them impotent.

The employment of the new weaponry and new strategic view led to what seemed to be an air power triumph in Iraq but fell far short of its promise. The leadership were immune to bombing. Many targets such as the Scud missiles were rarely found and destroyed from the air, and the Iraqi field forces, the least significant targets in Warden's model were subjected to the bulk of the bombing. Unfortunately, good intelligence about the enemy, despite satellites dedicated to visual and

radar reconnaissance and communications interception, was sorely lacking.

The Iraqi war machine did not collapse and infantry and armor, boots on the ground and clanking treads, were needed to secure a victory. The dream that airpower alone was a war winning weapon remained a dream.

Nonetheless, the Coalition established aerial supremacy almost immediately and this allowed the free deployment of attack aircraft which without doubt, hastened the Iraqi defeat and minimized the Coalition casualty count. The world's fourth largest military power had been ground down in less than a month of combat. Air power contributed heavily to the victory but not in the way imagined by its advocates.

AEROSPACE HISTORY II

*Thames River Composite Squadron's Role after
the 911 Attack*

*by
Maj Keith Neilson*

(editor's note)

Major Keith Neilson kept a detailed journal of his participation in CAP's medical supply flights immediately after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. Maj Neilson is a long time member of CAP, former TRCS squadron commander, who holds mission pilot, instructor pilot, and check pilot ratings. He is also a qualified operations section chief, planning sections chief, and air operations branch director. An unremitting advocate of aviation safety, he practices what he preaches and is a credit to CAP and the aviation community.

Major Paul Noniewicz, who, as a lieutenant, accompanied Neilson on the mission related below is a mission pilot and qualified as an Air Operations Branch Director and Mission Safety Officer. He is the commander of TRCS and an enthusiastic supporter of CAP's congressionally mandated missions.

On September 11th, 2001, Frank Culbertson was serving as Commander of Expedition 3, International Space Station. He took the photo below from an altitude of several hundred miles.



(NASA Photo)

The following article is a partially abridged version of Maj Neilson's journal. Abridgment are indicated by standard ellipsis marks, three or four dots. The material removed from the report consists mainly of details not immediately pertinent to the dramatic story of the relief flight.

KEITH B. NEILSON

JOURNAL OF SEPTEMBER 11 – 12, 2001

On the morning of September 11, 2001 I was at the office when my partner Tom Law got a call from his son Mike in New York City saying that he was okay. Tom was concerned about the statement and asked why the notification, and Mike indicated that the Trade Center, North Tower, had been hit by an airplane and was on fire. Tom advised me and asked me to quickly turn on the radio which we did, and tuned to 8.80 in New York City, WCBS News.

It was hard for me to believe that an airplane could actually hit the Trade Center. I had had this thought once before when the Trade Centers were first being built. My dad's company, Adler & Neilson had a contract to build all the stairs in the Trade Center complex. This included basement construction, concrete

stairwells with hosings and pipe handrails but the bulk of the work was the eight sets of staircases that ran up through each tower; the whole 110 stories.

I had helped Adler & Neilson during my summer employment stints there in 1969, 71, 72 and 73, so I had been in the Trade Centers while they were under construction and knew how strong they were and what massive steelwork went into them. To think that they could be hit had crossed my mind during construction. One day I was talking with one of the engineers on the project and he said that, in fact, they were designed to be struck by a 707 and that made sense at the time. In the late 60's, the 707 was the workhorse of all the modern airline systems. The 747 had not yet come on line and every national and international carrier was flying the 707. Since the towers stood approximately 1,400 feet high, one of my first recollections was that they were an obvious collision hazard, especially on instrument approaches into the New York area airports.

But this was a beautiful, clear blue-sky day, typical of the weather we wait for all year long after a hot, hazy, humid summer. This day was perfect. There were scattered clouds at 2,000 to 3,000 feet and visibility was probably 20 or 30 miles. So how could a plane have gotten so far off course that it could have hit the Trade Center?

Tom had to go to a meeting at about this time and I decided to leave the radio on and find out a little bit more....As we listened, the second airplane hit the south tower. At this point it was obvious that there was an attack underway and the mood changed from one of basic disbelief to being dumbfounded at who might be behind this, and what else might go on.

...

At about 10:00, I got a call from Major Len Schindler, the Director of Operations for Connecticut Wing Civil Air Patrol organization....The obvious question was put forth. "Am I available to fly today and am I ready to go

at their signal?" I answered "yes" to both of the questions. My flight stuff was all packed in the car and as always, I had current charts and log book endorsements indicating my qualifications and currency to fly any airplane in Civil Air Patrol under any conditions...I went through the rest of the day thinking, "Let me get everything done today that I can while I am here and can focus on it because I may have other assignments from Civil Air Patrol in the next day or two or three." So I finished everything I could that afternoon but no word came from Civil Air Patrol.

...getting home at five or six, I had just dumped my briefcase on the table and was standing in the kitchen...when the phone rang. It was Captain Jack Daly from Civil Air Patrol and he was at Mission Headquarters in Middletown. Without too much cordial chit chat, he asked me if I was ready to go. My immediate answer was "yes", and first question was "where?" Captain Daly was either not informed enough or not at liberty to discuss what our mission would probably be but he said they had initially designated me to go to Hartford and pick up CPF 604, a Cessna 182 Skylane normally based at Hartford's Brainard Airport just southeast of downtown and on the west bank of the Connecticut River. Captain Daly also suggested that I get a flight crew, proceed directly to Brainard Airport and preflight the aircraft. They would have further instructions awaiting me there. I announced my decision and responsibilities to my family and grabbed a quick bite of dinner as I thought of my crew options for the flight.

CAP 604 was TRCS's well liked N9573X, since transferred to the Rocky Mountain Region.



Colonel Larry Kinch and I have flown together on many occasions on several different types of missions for Civil Air Patrol and he was my

first choice. Colonel Kinch is a veteran of the US Air Force and the Vietnam War and is one of the men that I really admire in Civil Air Patrol. He is a true leader, a doer, never misses an opportunity to participate, and has outstanding navigational background and tactical intuition from his Air Force experience. He is always willing to go and always well-prepared. His phone line was busy! I tried again two minutes later and it was still busy!

The thought occurred to me, if Colonel Kinch can't go, it's probably best that I take a Mission Pilot in training or a qualified observer. I needed someone who would benefit from this as well as serve as an active participant. Certainly I could fly the plane, but if I can take an aspiring Mission Pilot with me, I will spread the experience around and will have more and better-qualified crewmen in the Squadron as a result. Sounds like a good plan. Obvious choices were Lt. Roy Bourque and Lt. Paul Noniewicz. I dialed up Paul Noniewicz first and his wife answered the phone.

I said "hi" to Jackie, his wife, and she said, "Oh God Keith, you're not taking Paul to New York are you?", and I said, "Jackie, as a matter of fact, I am, if he's available." The silence was deafening. About 15 seconds later Paul Noniewicz got on the phone and said, "Hi". I explained the circumstances to him and asked him if he'd like to be a part of the mission. His immediate resounding response was "YES!", and I asked him if he could be ready to go in 15 minutes. Again, his answer was, "YES!". We agreed to meet....I finished packing a dinner which consisted of three apples and two bananas, a candy bar and some typical pilot food, Granola Crunchies. I kissed everybody goodbye and ran off to my car. It was now about 6:15 p.m. I don't remember much about the drive to Old Lyme, but by 6:30 I had arrived and Paul was getting into the car with his flight gear...

My first thought was that we had better have some pretty blunt talk about what we might be asked to do and what we might see if we went to New York. The images from the TV which I'd caught a

glimpse of during my 15 minutes at home were pretty stark and I was still in "disbelief mode." If we were to fly into New York it was fairly certain that we would go to Kennedy or LaGuardia Airports under very high security.

I told Paul about my previous experiences flying into Kennedy Airport when I was in the FAA and how confusing it was to operate on their taxiway system with inners and outers and all the letters of the alphabet covered at least once and most, twice (taxiway FF). I don't know how many taxiways they have, but it must be 50. I also indicated that my conversation with Capt Daly requested my specific IFR currency status, so I expected whatever we did would be via instrument flight plan. Other than that there were no specific details I could offer on the upcoming flight. So we reverted to a discussion of general mission tactics. We basically went through our entire pre-flight briefing in the 35 minute trip to Brainard Field.

...

Our discussions were explicit and professional dealing with every facet of the flight that we could think of. I mentioned to Paul that I would like him to do a lot of the flying but that I would be the manager of the flight. In view of the fact that they were asking for actual IFR certified pilots I would fly in the left seat...We reached the airport at about 7:10. Sunset was an hour away. We took out equipment and publications to the plane and I locked the car.

We proceeded through the security gate at the southeast corner of the US Army National Guard hangar which stands at the north end of Brainard Field. I had never utilized this particular parking lot before....At any rate, when we proceeded through the gate we were immediately approached by a State Trooper in his vehicle and asked about our intentions. We displayed our Civil Air Patrol identification and

emergencies service cards and explained that we were ready to leave the airport on a mission, the details of which we were not yet sure of. The trooper informed us that we weren't going anywhere, that the airport was closed to all operations, and they had not been alerted to any exceptions. We had been prepared for this eventuality and asked him to call the Office of Emergency Management in Hartford to verify the authenticity of our mission and if they were unable, to call the Connecticut Wing Civil Air Patrol Headquarters and provided both numbers for him. He contacted OEM by radio and they confirmed that Civil Air Patrol was in fact, due to fly out of state and thus verified our mission status. We proceeded to pre-flight the airplane and get ready to go.

At about 7:45 with the sun just on the horizon, we called Wing Headquarters and said we were reporting ready to go and they said, "Plan to take off and fly via instrument flight rules to Bedford Hanscom Field. Make the necessary IFR flight plan. File it with Bridgeport and pick up your discreet transponder code from Bradley approach via landline." We headed back to the car...to pick up our flight gear and my flight suit. Even though we had been told that we could anticipate wearing civilian clothes on these flights, I felt better flying in my flight suit. It's got all my pens and pencils and several flashlights, flight computers, note paper, ear plugs, gum, first aid kit, sewing kit (for all the difference that makes) and I just feel better flying with the suit. When we got to the car I realized that instead of keeping my car keys with me when I locked it, I had two sets of airplane keys, one of which looks identical to my car keys. First bungle of the day.

The police were very helpful in assisting me to break into my car although their equipment, including the jimmy stick were ineffective. We had to call in a wrecker from the local AAA towing service. At any rate, it took about two minutes for the wrecker service and police to break into my car. Paul and I donned our flight suits, grabbed our flight bags, climbed into the

plane and prepared for departure.

Our instrument flight plan was to be as direct as possible and I wanted to have a safe altitude, anticipating the ability to glide to an airport in the event of an engine failure. This is the one part of night flying that concerns me and I generally do not volunteer to fly cross-country at night because of the limited emergency landing options. Tonight's flight was an exception.

One of our rules in Civil Air Patrol is that we all abide by our personal minimums and for the most part we know each other's personal minimums and do not encourage our pilots to fly beyond what they feel is prudent and safe for their experience and skill level. On the other hand, when there is someone in need, what we call "a person on the ground", we will collectively determine prudent and safe minimum standards for the conduct of a specific mission. My mission minimums for tonight's flight would be an altitude of at least 5,000 feet and flight over airports at no more than 10 mile intervals. The flight plan route that Paul and I determined, would fill that bill....

The FAA actually has a plan that shuts down the Air Traffic Control system so virtually no airplanes can fly to cause a threat to national security during times of national crisis. This closure was effectuated immediately after the Trade Center tower attacks and the attack on the Pentagon. The only airplanes flying today have been the ones that were in the air and ordered to land immediately and the military that was riding shotgun on everybody tonight. At any rate, we called Boston approach and got our flight plan clearance and transponder code and went back to the airplane.

THIS ENDS THE FIRST PART OF MAJOR NELSON'S NARRATIVE OF HIS ROLE IN THE EVENTS OF 911. THE NEXT PART, THE FLIGHT AND SUPPLY DELIVERY, WILL APPEAR IN THE NEXT EDITION OF THE COASTWATCHER.