

Missions for America
Semper vigilans!
Semper volans!



The Coastwatcher

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Connecticut Wing
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SCHEDULE OF COMING EVENTS

25 MAR-TRCS Meeting
29-30 MAR-CTWG West Group SLS-DXR

19 APR-CSRRA AR-15 Rifle Rifle Clinic
26 APR-04 May-NER Mission Aircrew School

10-11 MAY-CTWG East Group CLC-HFD
17 MAY-Commander's Cup Rocketry (tentative)
17-18 MAY-Quonset Airshow
30 MAY-Ledyard Aerospace Festival

16-21 JUN-Bi-State SAREX (CT/RI/)
19 JUL-02 AUG-Nat'l Emergency Services Acad.
08-16 AUG-CTWG Encampment-Camp Niantic
23 AUG-Wing Wide SAREX-HFD
20 SEP-Cadet Ball-USCGA (tentative)
01 OCT-CTWG Commander's Call and CAC
17-19 OCT-CTWG/NER Conference
16-18 OCT-NER AEO Course at Conference
18-25 OCT-NER Staff College-New Jersey

CADET MEETING

18 March, 2014
submitted by
C/SrA Virginia Poe

The meeting opened with outside drill.

The cadets constructed “junk rockets” and “fizzy flyers” as part of the first stage to earn a Rocketry Badge.

LtCol Rocketto presented certificates and medals to the cadets who earned awards in the Rifle Safety and Marksmanship Program. The following cadets qualified:



Cadets Poe, Conway, Tynan, Foley, and Carter qualified as Marksman. Cadet Robinson and Jaskiewicz earned Marksman First Class. The Sharpshooter level was achieved by John Meers. Cadets Trotochaud, D. Hollingsworth, and M. Hollingsworth received Sharpshooter Bar 9 awards.

SENIOR MEETING

18 March, 2014
submitted by
SM Raoul Lufberry

LtCol Rocketto briefed Squadron officers on CAP's Aerospace Education and Public Affairs Programs.

Maj Farley explained using the G1000 nav display to set up an improvised grid search using four way

points and offsets.

Maj Neilson explained anomalies which he discovered when he used a hand-held transceiver equipped with a navigation function to track a VOR.

TRCS ATTENDS MIT CLUB OF HARTFORD SCIENCE MEETING

*submitted by
Maj Roy Bourque*

On Saturday, 15 March, the MIT Club of Hartford sponsored a science and engineering colloquium at the Pratt & Whitney Training Center in East Hartford. A variety of different learning activities were provided for cadets, officers, and teachers.

TRCS attendees were cadets Drost, Meers, and Tynan and Maj Bourque and Lt Meers.

Avi Ornstein, the event organizer, offered some hands-on activities for the cadets. In one experiment, cadets Drost and Meers poured 50ml of water and alcohol in separate beakers and then combined them in a third beaker. The total came to 97ml. The difference was due to the fact that water molecules are smaller than alcohol molecules allowing the water molecules to tuck in tighter between the alcohol molecules.



As Dr. Ornstein watches, Cadets Meers and Drost find out that the aggregate can be smaller than its constituents.

(Photo Credits: All photographs in this article by Maj Roy Bourque)

Susan Mathews, a board member of NEST, a fellowship of teachers affiliated with MIT, described opportunities for teachers offered by the MIT programs and scholarships which fund summer programs at MIT.

Professor Susan Solomon, Ellen Swallow Richards Professor of Atmospheric Chemistry & Climate Science at MIT, spoke on climate science and ozone depletion. Prof. Solomon conducted her research in Antarctica and has also written a lucid account of the unusually harsh winter conditions which contributed to the failure of Robert Falcon Scott's expedition to survive their trek back from the South Pole.

Scott Candler, Manager for Aftermarket Business Development led a tour of the state-of-the-art training center and explained fundamental design requirements which account for differences in the engines supplied to the military and commercial interests.



Mr. Candler explains the intricacies of the fan engine to Cadets Tynan and Drost.



The intake of the Pratt and Whitney PW4000 112 inch high-bypass turbofan dwarfs Cadet Meers.

This engine was especially developed for the Boeing 777.

TRCS FLIGHT PROFICIENCY TRAINING CONTINUES

Maj Scott Farley, Mission Pilot, and LtCol Larry Kinch, Observer flew a 1.5 hour training mission on 18 March. The crew practiced grid search techniques using the G1000 system.

Major John deAndrade and LtCol Stephen Rocketto flew several sorties utilizing the G1000 and working on aircraft handling proficiency.

AEROSPACE CURRENT EVENTS

First Lasers, Now Heliostats!

A recent spate of incidents in which aircraft have been targeted by lasers and pilots temporarily blinded has been followed by another source of intense light which has the potential to endanger aircraft.

The Ivanpah Solar Electric Generating System occupies some five square miles in the Mojave Desert. An array of mirrors track the sun and focus sunlight on boilers which are mounted on the tops of towers. Water is turned to steam and the steam is used to drive turbines connected to electrical generators. The light, most intense around the mid-day. An investigation is underway to remedy the situation.

AEROSPACE HISTORY

*Antoine de St-Exupéry, La Compagnie Générale
Aéropostale, and the War Among the French*
by
Stephen M. Rocketto

Introduction

The next time that you see a teenager wearing a garment marked "Aéropostale," ask what it means.

I bet that the answer will be that it is the name of the company that manufactured the garment. So soon we forget. *Aéropostale*, more formally *La Compagnie Générale Aéropostale* was one of the first and the largest companies engaged in international airmail. Its reputation and fame was such that mention of *La Ligne* (The Line) was immediately recognized as a reference to *Aéropostale*.

Saint-Ex was a man of many talents. As a writer he was an essayist, novelist, and journalist. He was a pioneer air mail pilot who logged over 6,000 hours of flight over some of the harshest terrain and worst weather but was noted for a his insouciance for the routine. He could be ranked an ace for aircraft he wrecked but showed extraordinary aplomb when faced with difficult and dangerous flight. Henri Alias, his commanding officer when the Germans invaded France remarked "When a flight is normal, St-Exupéry is dangerous; given complications, he's brilliant."

Desultory student, womanizer, artist, prestidigitator, patriot, social critic, spendthrift, aesthete, inventor! He was all of these. An aristocrat who preferred the company of mechanics and artisans, nonetheless, he moved easily through the intellectual salons of Paris and New York. Unpretentious but willing to use his political, artistic, and military connections to return to combat, St-Exupéry was a man of complexities and contradictions.

Today, Antoine de St-Exupéry is remembered not as an aviator, but as the author of *The Little Prince*. Among single volume novels, the book ranks third in sales behind *A Tale of Two Cities* and *The Lord of the Rings!* A pilot, stranded in the desert meets a child-like prince, fallen to earth from an asteroid. During their time together, the little prince recounts tales of adults which he has met, each a type study of a particular human weakness. *The Little Prince* is ostensibly a children's fable but like all fables, layered in meanings with moral messages about relationships, duty, responsibility, and friendship.



Saint-Exupéry's watercolor of the Little Prince observing the stranded airman.



Saint-Ex dressed for the open cockpit mail plane.

But St-Exupéry also wrote great books about aviation and the brotherhood of airmen: *Night Flight*, *Wind, Sand, and Stars*, and *Flight to Arras* are my three favorites. Tom Wolfe, in *The Right Stuff*, says this about St-Exupéry;

A saint in short, true to his name, flying up here at the right hand of God. The good Saint-Ex! And he was not the only one. He was merely the one who put it into words most beautifully and anointed himself before the altar of the right stuff.

St-Exupéry as an Aéropostale Mail Pilot and Station Official

Saint-Ex joined The Line in 1926 after some years in and out of schools, jobs, and the military. He learned to fly privately but then underwent military training after transferring from the army to the air force. He left the air force for several years before joining *Aéropostale*. After a mandatory apprenticeship as a mechanic, Saint-Ex received line training and flew the Toulouse-Alicante route. The trip required flying over the Pyrenees Mountains and took about five hours. He completed his first run south successfully but on the return, became lost in the fog and made a precautionary landing in a meadow where he was found by a search crew. This would be the first of a multitude of off-airport landings, either forced by mechanical problems or weather or made as part of a rescue effort.

The expeditious carriage of mail was considered to the French government to be a vital factor in controlling their colonial empire, fostering business relationships with other nations, and maintaining contact with their ex-patriot communities. The airmail was expensive to maintain. Unreliable aircraft forced the company to maintain an excessive fleet, foreign bases were expensive to build and operate, and negotiations with foreign government officials had to be greased with monetary lubricants. Consequently, large subsidies were offered to the airmail operators but in turn, reliability and punctuality were demanded.

For three years, Saint-Ex flew *Aéropostale's* European and African routes which stretched from Toulouse southward, across the Mediterranean, to Casablanca and on to Agadir, Cap Juby, Villa Cisneros, terminating at Dakar in Senegal. Initially, the mail was loaded onto a ship at Dakar and dispatched to South America. In 1930, *Aéropostale* established an air route from Senegal to Natal, Brazil. This reduced the transit time from France to South America by eighty percent!

By that time, Saint-Ex had been transferred to Buenos Aires as operations manager of *Aeroposta Argentina*, an *Aéropostale* subsidiary, and charged with establishing regular service to Patagonia and the important oil fields at Comodoro Rivadavia, terminating at Rio Gallegos on the Straits of Magellan. The Andes westward and the South Atlantic ocean to the east create katabatic winds called williwaws. The cold mountain environment creates a high density air mass which flows downhill towards the ocean. They have been known to reach speeds of 120 knots. In *Wind*,

Sand, and Stars, Saint-Ex writes about an encounter with a williwaw. He was flying a Laté 25 south to Comodoro Rividavia when he encountered extreme turbulence and was carried five miles out to sea. It took him an hour to get back to the mainland. When he finally landed, he found that the aircraft structure and control cables had been seriously compromised. The aircraft was capable of a top speed of around 100 knots so one can speculate that the wind was running around 95 knots!

St-Exupery's Colleagues

The African and South American topography and weather constantly challenged *Aéropostale* operations. The pathfinder for many of the routes was the undeniable star of *La Ligne*, St-Exupery's friend, Jean Mermoz. When a new route had to be explored or record flight times challenged, Mermoz was the pilot of choice. He understood that night flight was a key element in efficient air mail delivery and proved that it could be done. In 1930, Mermoz initiated the air link between Africa and South America.



A Brazilian first day cover celebrates Mermoz and the first crossing of the South Atlantic from Senegal to Natal in the Laté 28 "Comte-de-la-Vaulx."

Mermoz was a national hero in both France and Argentina. Journalist sought him out and his picture appeared on a range of commercial products. His adventures became legendary; Forced landings in the desert, captured and held hostage by the Moors, and stalked by aeronautical "groupies." Worshipped by the public, nonetheless, he was modest and was quick to point out that *Aéropostale* was a team effort.



Mermoz and his crew ready the Laté 300 Croix du Sud for a trans-Atlantic flight.

In 1936, Mermoz commanded the Latécoère 300 *Croix-du-Sud* scheduled for a flight from Dakar to Natal. A balky engine forced him to return and after repairs, he departed once more saying "Quick, let's not waste time anymore." Four hours after departure, he radioed Dakar stating that he had cut the power on the aft starboard engine. No more messages were received and neither wreckage nor bodies were ever recovered.

While in Argentina, Saint-Ex continued to gather experiences for his writings. The heart of his novel, *Night Flight*, is based upon struggles with the treacherous vicissitudes of weather in the Argentine and the need for speed which required flight by night. The protagonist of *Night Flight*, Riviére, is the steel-willed, mission oriented manager of the air mail service, a character based upon the real life *Aéropostale* Director of Operations, Didier Daurat.



Daurat at his desk.

Daurat was a World War I veteran who transferred to the French air arm after surviving the carnage of Verdun. He distinguished himself as a pilot and is noted as the man who discovered the location of the “Paris Gun,” the long range artillery piece which was bombarding Paris from 75 miles away! As an airline executive he was relentless in the pursuit of excellence and unforgiving of failure. Respected and feared, Daurat provided the leadership needed in the forging of an air mail system. Daurat found, in later life, that people had trouble separating his real self from the sharply defined image created by Saint-Ex.

That image, the image of great leadership and its price is strikingly portrayed by St-Exupery's genius in the very last paragraph of *Night Flight*. A pilot has died but the mission continues. Rivière issues orders, mail is loaded, and aircraft dispatched into the night. The work, which gives meaning to life and transcends death continues and

“Rivière went back to his work, and as he passed, the clerks quailed under his stern eyes; Rivière, the Great, Rivière, the Conqueror, bearing his heavy load of victory.”

The real Daurat was shabbily treated and lost his job when *Aéropostale* was dissolved in 1933 and the French government amalgamated what remained into a national air carrier, Air France. For a while, he ran his own airmail line, *Air Bleu*, but World War II intervened and the French commandeered his aircraft for liaison duties. After the liberation of France, Daurat returned to the air mail service and retired as head of operations for Air France at Orly Airport. Fittingly, he was buried at Toulouse's Montaudran Airport, former headquarters of *Aéropostale*.

Saint-Ex's best friend was a fellow pilot, Henri Guillaumet. Daurat regarded him as the best pilot he ever knew. Among his many achievements, Guillaumet pioneered the air mail service between Argentina and Chile. This required crossing the 20,000 foot Andes Mountains in aircraft whose service ceilings might be 20,000 feet. On his 92nd

crossing, diverted by a winter storm, he crashed near Laguna del Diamante. Saint-Ex and his fellow pilots launched a search as soon as the weather cleared but were unable to locate the wreckage. Guillaumet decided to walk out. His one week trial is an epic of strength of will and the spirit of survival and was chronicled by Saint-Ex in one of the best known chapters of *Wind, Sand, and Stars*.



Saint-Ex holds Guillaumet after his extraordinary winter trek out of the Andes.

Later, he was one of the *Aéropostale* pilots who flew the South Atlantic route from St. Louis, Senegal to Natal, Brazil. When the French government created Air France, he became managing director but still flew the line. In 1940, Guillaumet was lost when his Syrian bound Air France flight was shot down over the Mediterranean by an Italian fighter. Neither wreckage nor bodies were recovered.



A French 15 franc stamp and first day cover memorializes the long distance flight of the Laté 521, Lieutenant de Vaisseau Paris.

St-Exupery After Aéropostale

Aéropostale, after just over a decade of operation ran into political and financial problems. The instability and inept social programs of the French governments, financial scandals, and the Great Depression combined to force The Line into bankruptcy. Saint-Ex was disgusted with the treatment accorded Daurat and the pettiness of the new management and left. He took a job as a test pilot for *Latécoère* but lost the job after several crashes. He attempted to set a speed record between France and Saigon but crashed in the Egyptian desert and had to walk-out. His most serious accident occurred in Guatemala and resulted in eight broken bones and injuries which would plague him for the rest of his life. He continued to write and was a war correspondent in Spain during their Civil War.



Saint-Ex stands next to his wrecked Caudron Simoun in the Sahara. He crashed in a second Simoun in Guatemala.

During this period of time, he produced *Wind, Sand, and Stars*. It is indicative of the the complex and contradictory nature of Saint-Ex that in 1939, this book won the *Gran Prix du roman de L'Académie française* (The French Academy's Grand Prize for fiction) and the US. National Book Award for non-fiction!

St-Exupéry suffered melancholia due to the spiritual and psychological malaise which infected France during the decade running up to the start of

World War II. The French Third Republic, reeling from the effects of the depression and the internal tensions of its political and cultural heritage had some 30 different heads of state representing eight different parties in those 10 years! When war came, chaos reigned as Frenchmen engaged in a spiteful political civil war for power.

Saint-Ex Goes To War

Saint-Ex was mobilized and returned to the French Air Force where he joined the *La Hache*, the Axe Squadron of the 2nd Group in the 3rd Reconnaissance Wing flying the Potez 637. The French military was collapsing and mission assignments were often pointless but Saint-Ex found that the spirit of the unit trumped the morale destroying power of defeat. As France fell, the 2/33 fled the Nazi grasp and flew to North Africa.

When France signed an armistice with Germany, Marshal Philip Pétain ascended to power and ruled the unoccupied portion of metropolitan France from Vichy. The Vichyites managed to keep the colonial empire, especially North Africa, and the French Fleet out of the hands of the Nazis. They also were able to offer a modicum of protection to the their citizenry. But nothing can be gained without paying a price and the price paid was the charge of treason by those Frenchmen who refused to be collaborationists and chose to continue to resist.

Chief among these was the Free French Movement led by Charles de Gaulle. The Gaullists were both uncompromising in their attitude towards Vichy but unfortunately, viciously antagonistic against any Frenchmen who would not swear unswerving allegiance to de Gaulle. The French forces who would not join the Gaullists were not united. General Henri Giraud, operating out of unoccupied France and North Africa was the most formidable of the opponents of Gaullism. However, the Gaullists, based in London and New York, were more astute politically and closer the the British and U.S power bases and ultimately were recognized as the representatives of France.

Saint-Ex was demobilized but characteristically refused to join any of the political factions. He was actually given a position within the Vichy government, without his permission or even knowledge, which he repudiated. He was extremely suspicious of de Gaulle, whose “cult of personality” seemed to take precedence over the interests of the French people. As a result, he managed to offend everyone and found it difficult to regain a position to continue the fight for the soul of France. His fame as a writer led to offers to serve in various propaganda posts but flying a desk was not his forte. This most intellectual of men wanted a warrior's role.

Saint-Ex Enters a Self-Imposed Exile

He believed that the salvation of France lay in the hands of the United States and was disappointed that the New World's great democracy did not enter the fray. So he traveled to the United States. His book, *Flight to Arras*, a compendium and condensation of his combat during the fall of France was published two months after the Pearl Harbor attack and was influential in that it demonstrated that the French would fight under the most desperate conditions and that defeat in a battle is not an harbinger of defeat in life. Saint-Ex summarizes his belief and his hope in a quote from *Night Flight*.

Victory, defeat—the words were meaningless. Life lies behind these symbols and life is ever bringing new symbols into being. One nation is weakened by victory, another finds new forces in defeat. To-night's defeat conveyed perhaps a lesson which would speed the coming of final victory. The work in progress was all that matters.

Ironically, but indicative of the character of the man, *Flight to Arras*, was censored by the Germans, the Vichy French, and the Gaullists.

During his travels in the United States, Saint-Ex had the opportunity to meet with all of the political factions who sought to recruit his talents. Before Pearl Harbor, Vichy France maintained a diplomatic relationship with the United States.

U.S. Policy sought to keep Vichy from any close collaboration with Germany and Italy but at the same time, the United States supported various French groups who were maintaining an armed resistance against Germany and repudiated the legitimacy of the Pétain government. To use a British cricket term, a diplomatic “sticky wicket” if there ever was one. Saint-Ex was forthright in stating his repugnance for the ferocious infighting among the French factions and the primacy which they placed on personal political power before France's national interests. His answer was to eschew politics and try to get back into action as a pilot. It took enormous effort on his part to finally convince key U.S. and French officials to allow his return to North Africa.

Saint-Ex Returns to the War

With difficulty, St-Exupéry managed to return to North Africa but found it even more difficult to re-enroll in the Air Force. He used all of his influence and all of his friendships but was foiled by both friend and foe. His friends knew of his value as a public figure and they knew of his age and infirmities and were determined to keep him out of combat. His foes, primarily the Gaullists, regarded him as an enemy because of his repudiation of *Le Gran Charles* and did all they could to prevent his re-engagement in the war. Fortune smiled. The Allies landed and successfully drove the Axis out of North Africa. General Giraud took command of the French Forces in North Africa when the fascist leaning Admiral Darlan had been assassinated by a royalist and Giraud harbored no ill will towards Saint-Ex.

His old outfit, the 2/33 was part of the allies Northwest African Photographic Reconnaissance Wing and under the command of Col Elliot Roosevelt, the President's son. Friends lobbied, debts were collected, and with some misgiving from the authorities, Saint-Ex was accepted for training as a photo-reconnaissance pilot. So the 43 year old veteran, hampered by his old injuries and officially declared too old to fly combat, started his training in the Lockheed F-5 Lightning. The F-5 was the photo-reconnaissance version of the P-38 fighter.

The aircraft assigned to the French were anything but first rate. Col. Karl Polifka, Roosevelt's successor and noted as the "most outstanding reconnaissance pilot of WWII" said that they "war-weary, non-airworthy aircraft" and casualties ensued. On his second sortie, Saint-Ex ran off the end of the landing strip and damaged his aircraft. Whether the fault was brake failure or pilot error is open to question. A new commander discovered that Saint-Ex was thirteen years over the age limit for a pilot and grounded him.



Capt Ed Miller built this model of one of the F-5s flown by Saint-Exupéry.

While grounded, the war moved north. French factions continued to bitterly bicker and undercut each others' efforts. And Saint-Ex engaged in a struggle to get the order which grounded him revoked. He continued his rounds of the social and military circles in Algiers and worked assiduously for ten months to get back into the air.

Saint-Ex formed an acquaintanceship with Col. Paul Rockwell and they frequently dined together. Saint-Exupéry suggested that he might write a book, similar to *Flight to Arras* but with an emphasis on the Franco-American relationships among pilots. Rockwell, who had served with the French liaison section when General Carl Spaatz commanded in North Africa took the bait. Spaatz and an officer who had been hostile to Saint-Ex's restoration to flying status had moved on to England so Col. Rockwell wrote a strong letter of recommendation to one of General Ira Eaker's

aides. Eaker had replaced Spaatz in North Africa. Unacquainted with the history of Saint-Ex's grounding, the new commanders might be convinced to decide in favor of lifting the order.

Saint-Ex then enlisted the assistance of a *Life* photographer, John Phillips. He suggested that he would like to write for *Life* about flying in combat but his commentary would be without value unless he could back up his words with deeds. Phillips was sympathetic and contacted an officer on Eaker's staff who then spoke to General Eaker, himself. Paperwork got ground out and Eaker lifted the grounding, specifying permission to participate in five war missions with the 2/33. St-Exupéry rejoined his old squadron, The Axes, in Sardinia. Phillips accompanied to him to take photographs for *Life*.

On June 6th, 1944, almost a year after his grounding, Saint-Ex flew his first mission over the Marseille region but an engine fire forced his early return. On the ground, the squadron learned of the allied landings on the Normandy beaches. On June 29th, his 44th birthday, he flew deep into France, lost an engine but made it back to Corsica. A scheme was developed by officials interested in Saint-Ex's welfare to brief him about the upcoming invasion of Southern France which would automatically ground him but Saint-Ex caught on and avoided the briefing. The five combat mission limitation was also ignored.

The high altitude missions in a unpressurized cockpit also caused him great pain from his collection of bones which had been broken in crashes. Saint-Ex sensed that his time was running out. He adopted a fatalistic attitude. In a letter to a friend he writes:

I have experienced everything since my return to the squadron....I experienced engine failure, fainting from oxygen malfunctioning, being chased by fighters, and also fire in mid-flight....If I am shot down, I shall regret absolutely nothing....Four times already I almost failed to return. But it is a matter of vertiginous indifference to me....



Saint-Exupéry in the cockpit of a Lightning.

*Reconnaissance Mission No. 9
31 July, 1944*

At 0845, Commandant Antoine de St-Exupéry departed Poretta Airstrip, Corsica in Lightning 223 for a mapping mission east of Lyon. His expected RTB time was 1200. At 1430, the time at which the F-5's fuel supply would be exhausted, the aircraft had neither returned nor reported. Like his comrades Mermoz and Guillaumet, the sea had claimed him.

07 September, 1998

A fisherman trawling south of Marseilles finds a silver bracelet in his net. He wipes off the tarnish which reveals the name Saint-Exupéry and the 4th Avenue address of a New York publishing house. The provenance of the relic was determined to be the identification bracelet given to St-Exupéry by Reynal & Hitchcock.

Three years later, salvage crews raised wreckage which proved to be that of the F-5 flown by Saint-Ex. These relics now form part of the St-Exupéry exhibit at the *Musee de l'Air* at Le Bourget in Paris. But if you hurry to New York, you can visit the Morgan Library and Museum where the bracelet and memorabilia will be on exhibit until April 27th.



Saint-Ex died as he lived, carrying out the kind of mission which gives meaning to life and raises a man to the level of Man.

To be a man is to be responsible. It is to feel shame at the sight of what seems to be unmerited misery. It is to take pride in a victory won by one's comrades. It is to feel, when setting one's stone, that one is contributing to the building of the world.

-Wind, Sand, and Stars-

