

Missions for America
Semper vigilans!
Semper volans!



The Coastwatcher

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

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SCHEDULE OF COMING EVENTS

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

25 March, 2014
submitted by
C/SrA Virginia Poe

An inspection and drill opened the meeting.

C/A1C Brouillard delivered a DDR lesson on the hazards of tobacco and alcohol.

Flight sergeants taught CAP general knowledge and history to cadets. This was reinforced by C/1Lt Tynan who followed up with an informal oral quiz.

LtCol Rocketto presented demonstrations, photographs, and a handout which explored the reason why we have seasons, why it is warmer in summer than winter, and how the earth orbits the sun. The lesson was accompanied by spirited discussions.

C/1Lt Tynan gave a team building exercise where cadets practiced written communication, teamwork, and critical thinking.

SENIOR MEETING

25 March, 2014
submitted by
SM Raoul Lufberry

Maj Farley led a instructional session for mission observers. The group used lap tops equipped with the G1000 learning modules to practice setting up way points and using them for search and rescue and navigation.

TRCS TRAINING EXERCISE

22 March, 2014

The Squadron held a coordinated ground and air training exercise on Saturday to work on ground team and air crew proficiency and air-ground-mission base communications..

Maj Roy Bourque led a ground team consisting of Lt David Meers and cadets Christian Tynan, Matthew Johnstone, and John Meers. Their first mission teamed them with the air crew and the two teams successfully located an emergency locator transmitter (ELT) in the East Lyme area. After silencing the beacon, the ground team was dispatched to the Black Hall River Bridge on Mile Creek Road in Old Lyme to check for debris which was reported to be piled up on the upstream side. No debris was found and the ground team returned to base.

The air team consisted of Maj Jay Farley, Mission Pilot, Capt Willi Lintelmann, Observer, and LtCol Lawrence Kinch, scanner. After locating the ELT and assisting the ground team to the area, they were air dispatched to Crescent Beach, Niantic Bay to photograph an eroded bluff and a blocked trail. They then received a third mission which sent them to Fishers Island to survey reported ice on the supply pond used as part of the water distribution system.

Maj Keith Neilson ran Groton Mission Base and LtCol Stephen Rocketto was the Mission Radio Operator.

AEROSPACE CURRENT EVENTS

EAA-FAA Agreement of Fees

The Experimental Aircraft Association and the Federal Aviation Administration have reached an agreement about fee payments for the week long AirVenture air show sponsored by the EAA at Oshkosh each year.

The FAA costs for 87 air traffic controllers and supervisors runs around \$450,000 and the EAA paid this under protest in 2013. A nine year agreement signed by both parties will govern future payments and provide a modicum of stability for planning the event.

The EAA has protested the past payment and has asked an appeals court to review the decision to charge fees which they claim was made without the normal notice and comment period. The FAA

counters by stating that the automatic budget cuts imposed by Congress forces it to seek payment.

The fees cover the travel, lodging, and supplementary expenses incurred by the FAA in providing air traffic control services for the week long event.

AEROSPACE HISTORY

*Keeping the Russkies at Bay
Hap, Me, and the G.O.C.*

*by
Stephen M. Rocketto*

The Civil Air Patrol has not been the only cadre of civilian volunteers enlisted by the U.S. Air Force. At the end of World War II, the United States had a monopoly on atomic weaponry and an exhausted world settled back to enjoy what was expected to be the peaceful fruits of victory. But the astute diplomat, George Kennan, warned that Marxist-Leninism was not the driving force behind Soviet doctrines. Rather one need study the powerful force of Russian nationalism. For half a millennium, from the time when the Grand Duchy of Moscow assumed the standard of both Roman and Byzantine Christianity through the imperial expansion of the Romanov dynasty to Soviet ambitions after World War II, the acquisition of empire has been a driving force in the policies adopted by the rulers of Russia.

The reasons are manifold. Access to natural resources and trade routes are driving forces. A warm water port and unimpeded access to the world's oceans was seen as an economic and military necessity. The felt need for security buffers between the Russian lands and the western and eastern powers has played a role. Westerners often forget the invasions of Russia by Napoleon and Hitler. Little known is the landing of British and U.S. troops in Russia as World War I ended and Russian struggles against Japanese imperial interests which resulted in wars in 1904-05 and 1939. Pan-Slavism and the interests of the Russian Orthodox Church has played roles at various times.

And so, the end of World War II saw the Soviet government gain political and military control of large tracts of eastern Europe and extend its influence in western Asia. Winston Churchill's "Iron Curtain Speech, delivered at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri in 1946 sums up the geo-political situation:

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in many cases, increasing measure of control from Moscow.

In August of 1949, four years after Hiroshima, the Soviet Union tested its first atomic weapon and built a fleet of cloned B-29s, the Tupolev TU-4 bomber, capable of a one-way delivery mission to U.S. targets. Left wing insurrections in Greece, the North Korean invasion of South Korea, the fall of the Nationalists in China and the French defeat in a little known valley called Dien Bien Phu in Indo-China supported those who argued for the "domino theory," that the western nations were but a row of dominoes standing in line and if pushed, would fall in succession.

What came to be known as the Cold War had begun.

Fear of a Soviet nuclear strike resulted in a wide range of civil defense plans in the United States. Fallout shelters were established and stocked with crackers, water, and toilet facilities. School children practiced the "duck-and-cover drill," and air defenses were strengthened.

Geography and the performance of aircraft meant that a Russian first strike would come in over the arctic. Interesting, the Russians had pioneered polar flight to the United States in the 1930s. The established stations on the Arctic Ocean ice and landed aircraft near the North Pole. A low aspect ratio Tupolev ANT-25 commanded by Valery Chkalov flew from Moscow to Vancouver, Washington covering 5,300 miles in 63 hours. A second somewhat longer flight from Moscow to San Jacinto, California followed.

The radar technology and radar network of the 1950s could not cover our northern borders sufficiently so the USAF established the Ground Observer Corps (GOC). The idea was not new. The Chinese and the British used ground observers in World War II to warn of incoming bombers. The United States also used volunteers to man observation posts along the east and west coast but they were decommissioned in 1944 when the threat of an Axis air attack became improbable.

The Korean War and the knowledge about Russian nuclear bombs and a delivery system raised the specter of a surprise aerial attack and in 1950, the USAF launched a program to re-establish the ground observer corps which had served in World War II. After experimentation, Operation Skywatch started on 14 July, 1952. Ultimately, during the seven year duration of the program, 21,000 volunteers manned 16,000 observation posts and reported their sightings to 26 filter centers.



(Photo Credit: Marvin Richmond, Worcester, Mass.)



The local observation post was located on the south side of the old Waterford Town Hall. Mrs. Bradford, a super-patriotic lady who lived across the street from us was the supervisor. Somehow, our boyish knowledge of aircraft our enthusiasm, and a likely shortage of volunteers convinced her to take on a 15 year old and 11 year old team of brothers as observers.

A typical duty period would start when my younger brother Hap and I donned our GOC wings, put together our lunches for the day, and headed out to Waterford. We were the youngest members of the post and honored to be allowed to run it without adult supervision. We lived in New London near the Lawrence and Memorial Hospital and the walk took about an hour. Once inside the building, we would climb the stairs to the top floor and then ascend a vertical ladder to the one room observation post. A porch allowed access to the outdoors from where we stood watch.

The room was sparsely furnished. The key items were a magneto operated telephone, a pair of 7X50 binoculars, and the official Department of the Air Force publication, *AF Manual 355-10, Aircraft Recognition for the Ground Observer*.

The manual spoke of the our “role” as an element in national defense, the organization of the GOC, instructions of logging data, a glossary of aviation terms, and page after page of aircraft identification

pictures.

First, we signed in and filled out the data sheet called an “Aircraft Flash Record Message.” The date and post name, Charlie Mike 52 Black were recorded, the sheet was attached to a clipboard and we went out on the porch to watch for aircraft. The details recorded were: number of aircraft, type (single engine, jet, *etc.*, function (cargo, seaplane, *etc.*), Altitude (from very low to very high), time delay in reporting, observation post (OP) code name (CM52B), direction from OP, distance from OP, direction of flight, and special remarks. As soon as we filled in the observation, one of us would crank the handle of the magneto operated telephone and contact the filter center which was in New Haven. A typical report might be:

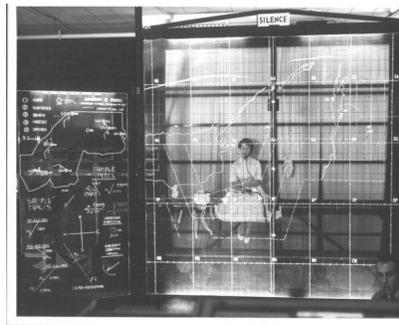
*One/multiprop/airliner/low/no
delay/CM52B/South/2 mi/E/Allegheny Convair
inbound to Trumbull Airport.*

The filter centers were set up more or less like they were in World War II. A horizontal table displayed a map of the area and tokens representing aircraft were positioned and moved as the reports came in. A transparent status board kept up to date and a bank of supervisors, both Air

Force and civilian, overlooked the floor workers. Information was forwarded to the Air Force control and warning centers which made decisions based up their appreciation of the situation.



Filter center displays at the Syracuse, N.Y. Facility.



In researching this article, I discovered that one filter center, Albany, N.Y., was manned by CAP Cadets on week-ends when it was hard to get enough adults to volunteer..

Many times, the duty was comfortable, even pleasant, but New England's weather posed problems. Especially disliked were the cold clear windy days in winter when the walk to the post and standing watch became physically painful. Rain and fog led to days off since we could only observe visually.

During nice flying weather, we were kept pretty busy. Waterford Airport was a mile or two north and a steady stream of Cubs, Luscombes, Tri-Pacers, Stinsons, "Airknockers," and Stearmans kept us watching, writing, and reporting. A south

wind meant we saw a lot of take-offs and climb-outs and a north wind meant that we would see the final approaches. The airport itself was not visible to us.

As 'junior duty officer', Hap was detailed to cranking the telephone, a job which he did with enthusiasm and a touch of elan. From time to time, I would, as a special treat, allow him to view aircraft through the binoculars. After a while, he qualified as a telephone talker and took special delight in reading the observation data to the filter center operators.

A highlight of the duty period was tearing into our rations and having a hot or cold drink. A special treat was for one of us to cross the Boston Post Road and get grinders at the convenience store opposite the town hall.

You might well imagine what thoughts ran through our fevered teen age and sub-teen minds as we believed that we were the last line of defense against atomic oblivion. It was like being at Fort McHenry, the Alamo, Corregidor, or Bastogne. This was pretty heady stuff for a couple of kids.

And we had a personal reason to stand on the air defense ramparts. Both our paternal and maternal grandparents had fled the Russian Bear seeking a better life in America. This was a grudge fight against the minions of Ivan the Terrible, Czar Nicholas, and Joe Stalin. Could we do less?

I was bothered by the fact that the observation post faced south. I knew that the polar route was the anticipated path of the potential Russian strike force. The attic of the building rose above our balcony and located, as we were, on the south side of the building, we had no view north. Why was that so? The simple explanation, that it was the only site available did not occur to me.

But I figured it all out. My technical readings discovered that the Soviets has a fleet of amphibious aircraft capable of carrying bombs. The Beriev Be-6, code-named “Madge” and thousands of PBV/PBN Catalinas gained through lend-lease or license built in the Soviet Union as the Amtorg GST. It became obvious to me. The Russians would come in from the south, refueled by submarines, and surprise us from behind. Our military leaders had obviously discerned Soviet tactics and set up our post to catch those canny commies as they flew low over Waterford to avoid our air defenses. Hap, knowing what was good for him, agreed with his older bother and we acquired new respect for our military leadership and their acute analysis of Russian tactics. Well, we never spotted the Russkie but an occasional sighting of a Republic Seabee or a Grumman Goose did get the adrenalin flowing.



A Navy A-4 escorts a Soviet Madge off the coast of Japan.

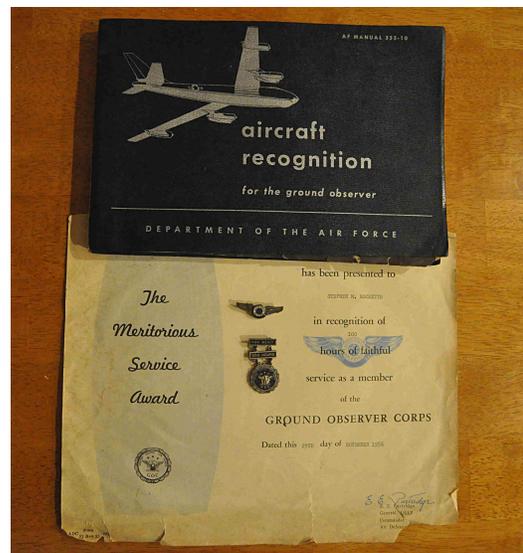


A PBV-6A displays Soviet markings but the some USN markings are still visible on the vertical stabilizer and rudder.

(Photo Credit: Marc Commandeur)

Well, late in the 1950s, the Bendix AN/FPS-14 radar system was developed and used as “gap-fillers,” supplementing the long range units which were blind at low altitudes due to topography of the curvature of the earth. The GOC was redundant and the USAF Air Defense Command disestablished the Corps on 31 January, 1959.

Hap and I enjoyed our time as GOC volunteers and were proud of the role which we played, as insignificant as it turned out to be. We were issued certificates of service and medals commemorating our hours of service. But the real medals are worn internally and hang on a rich store of memories in the minds of a thousands of aging citizens who manned Operation Skywatch as members of the Cold War's Ground Observer Corps.



Aircraft Recognition Booklet, Certificate, Wings, and 250 Hour Medal of Merit



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