

Missions for America

Semper vigilans!
Semper volans!



The Coastwatcher

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

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SCHEDULE OF COMING EVENTS

For Future Planning

9-11 SEP-Danielson Bivouac
13 SEP-TRCS Meeting
10 SEP-Multi-Squadron SAREX-Tentative
17-18 SEP-USAF SAV (Wing)
20 SEP-TRCS Meeting
22-24 SEP-AOPA Summit-Hartford
24 SEP-Cadet Ball-Courtyard Marriott, Cromwell
22-23 OCT-CTWG Convention
27 SEP-TRCS Meeting

15 OCT-?CTWG Rocketry Contest
21-23 OCT-CTWG Conference

CADET MEETING NOTES

30 August, 2011

submitted by

C/Capt Brendan Flynn

The meeting opened with an extended drill practice and testing session. Drill test three was emphasized.

Maj Bourque taught C/2ndLt Wojtcuk and C/Capt Flynn about performing an airfield search (ramp check). After finishing that task, he headed an Emergency Services training session. Cadets studied and were tested on natural hazards and hot and cold weather injuries.

C/SMSGt Schultz reminded cadets to bring in cans and bottles to redeem for the recycling fundraiser. The amount of recyclables brought in will count as points for honor flight.

CADET MEETING NOTES

06 August, 2011

submitted by

C/Capt Brendan Flynn

C/2ndLt Wojtcuk reminded that if cadets plan to attend the cadet ball, they must bring in a forty-five dollar check next week. Hopefully everyone will come to this event, as it is a lot of fun and a great way to get to know other cadets.

Capt Wojtcuk informed cadets that parents, whether they are senior members or not, are allowed to transport other cadets.

Cadet slotting for the glider trip on October 2nd were finalized, except there is still one opening. Those who are going must watch the ground handling video on e-services and complete the wing runner course. You must bring your certificate for the wing runner course and a complete form 60 with you.

Cadets worked on and finished rockets in a rocketry building session.

Capt Wojtcuk held a character development class and discussion on the core values--integrity, volunteer service, excellence, and respect. Cadets talked about the core values in their lives and defined the values in their own words.

C/SrAmn Bourque gave a safety lesson on home intruders. He gave differences between night and day intruders, what they are looking for, how to protect your home, and what to do if a burglar does invade your home.

Capt Wojtcuk reminded cadets to have their lessons ready weeks in advance so that you will be ready if there is a schedule change.

In a flight time session, cadet Flight Sergeants Daniels and Bourque talked with their flights about the regulation PT uniform, promotion processes, and the recycling program. The First Sergeant, C/SMSGt Schultz, briefed cadets on titles, grades, and saluting as part of a "customs and courtesies" review.

In the closing ceremonies, C/A1C Barbara Paquin was awarded a certificate of recognition for winning the innovative drill competition at encampment.

SENIOR MEETING

06 September, 2011

Maj Noniewicz summarized the activities of the CTWG during the recent hurricane alert.

LtCol Doucette used computer projections to demonstrate the method and correct way to insert data on aerial photographs using the CAP Image Processing Program.

A consideration of ways to muster members during complete power losses was discussed.

The possibility of a first air/CPR course in October was raised.

THE WEEK'S AEROSPACE HISTORY

11 Sept., 1919-The stickless, spin stabilized Hale rocket, which replaced the Congreve rocket immortalized in *The National Anthem* is declared obsolete by the British War Office.

12 Sept., 1925-President Calvin Coolidge appoints to Morrow Board to assess methods of using aircraft for the national defense.

13 Sept., 1961-An unmanned Mercury-Atlas vehicle is launched in a test of NASA hardware.

14 Sept., 1938-The LZ-130, the *Graf Zeppelin II*, a Hindenburg class airship is christened by Dr. Hugo Eckener. The United States refuses to supply helium so the hydrogen filled craft never enters commercial service but is used by Nazi Germany for propaganda and to survey the British Chain Home radar network.

15 Sept., 1916-An Austrian flying boat bombs and sinks the French submarine *Foucault* in the Adriatic Sea. This is the first time a submarine has been destroyed by an aircraft. The Austrian aviators then land their craft and rescue the survivors.

16 Sept., 1931-The Ludington Line, using the Lockheed Electra, commence passenger operations on a New York-Philadelphia-Washington route.

17 Sept., 1908-Lt. Thomas E. Selfridge is the first U.S. military officer killed in an aviation accident during acceptance trials of the Wright Flyer at Ft. Myers, Va. Orville Wright is seriously injured.



CURRENT EVENTS

REMOTELY MANNED CONTROL TOWERS!

Saab has developed a remotely manned control tower, two of which will be tested in Sweden next year. The towers are 82 foot high structures with cameras, meteorological sensors, and microphones which will send data back to a control center where the controllers will sit in the center of a 360 degree panoramic screen. The unmanned tower is even equipped with a remotely controlled light gun for signaling aircraft without radio communication.

CONNECTICUT'S K-MAX EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS AS AN UNMANNED BATTLE FIELD SUPPLY VEHICLE

According to spokesmen for Lockheed-Martin, lead contractor on the Kaman built helicopter, a quick reaction assessment run at the USMC's Yuma Proving Grounds proved that the K-Max is capable of moving 30,000 lb of cargo over five days, day and night, in an operational environment. If a formal report is accepted, the K-Max will be deployed to Afghanistan for a six month test under combat conditions.



K-Max in Kaman's Bloomfield Hangar

HISTORICAL FEATURE

Due to length, this feature will be published in two parts. The second part will appear in the next issue

A MAJOR SEPTEMBER AEROSPACE HISTORIC EVENT

Billy Mitchell's Air Attack on the St. Mahiel Salient

12-16 September, 1918

by

Stephen M. Rocketto

Prologue

In early September of 1925, the US Navy suffered both a serious embarrassment and a tragic loss. The embarrassment was the failure of two Naval Aircraft Factory PN-9 flying boats to complete an attempt to fly from the west coast to the Hawaiian islands. Both aircraft were forced down at sea and the crews rescued. The tragedy was the crash of the airship *USS Shenandoah*, destroyed by a line squall over Ohio with the loss of 14 lives.

At that time, Col. Billy Mitchell, best known for his uncompromising advocacy of air power and a separate United States air arm issued several public and highly provocative statements about the leadership of the army and navy. One such statement said that "These incidents are the direct result of the incompetency, criminal negligence and almost treasonable administration of the national defense by the Navy and War Departments," Under the 96th Article of War, a court-martial was convened in which Mitchell was charged with insubordination and conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline. Mitchell was convicted and suspended from the service for five years.

The Signal Corps

The roots of Mitchell's role as a crusader for airpower, his authority as an expert, and his influence may be found grounded in several episodes in his army career. In 1898, the Spanish-American War broke out and a woefully unprepared American military mobilized. The 18 year old Mitchell enlisted, against his father's wishes, as a private in his father's old regiment, the 1st Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry. Mitchell came from a wealthy family, grown rich in banking and the railroad business. His grandfather had been a Wisconsin governor and his father, a US senator. But within a month, he had been appointed a second lieutenant and transferred to the 2nd Volunteer Signal Company. His orders were signed by General Adolphus Greely, a friend of Senator Mitchell.

The transfer to the Signal Corps was an important step in developing the professional military education of young Mitchell. The Signal Corps was in the forefront of technological innovation in the US Army. The Civil War balloon observations and telegraph service were Signal Corps responsibilities. A national weather service was established in the 1870s and a young Lt Greely was instrumental in its development. Telephones, photography, and wireless communications all became Signal Corps projects between the Spanish-American War, and most important, the Wright and Curtiss experimental heavier than air aircraft were assigned to Corps.

Cuba and the Philippines

As a result, Mitchell was immediately immersed in important work with a vision of improvements in the art of war. Assignments in Cuba and the Philippines followed with duties in laying out telegraph networks and fighting the insurgents, now free of Spanish rule and intolerant of the *Yanqui* liberators. He considered resigning from the army but General Greely offered Mitchell a new challenge.

Alaska

The Territory of Alaska has been purchased from Russian in 1867 but little development occurred until the discovery of gold at Bonanza Creek in the Yukon. Although the center of the gold discovery was in Canada, most of the prospectors used Alaska as their entry point and staging base. Communications with the "lower 48" was tenuous. A submarine cable linked Seattle and Valdez but the interior was unmapped and communications were non-existent. Greely, now Chief of the Signal Corps decided to visit Alaska. Greely was not unfamiliar with Arctic exploration. He had commanded a three year scientific expedition which achieved some notoriety after becoming trapped in the ice and losing 80% of his party. Nonetheless, upon their return to civilization, they were feted as heroes despite reports of cannibalism and mutiny. Upon his return, Greely filed a report which promoted the development of the new territory.

Greely then offered Mitchell the opportunity to ramrod the effort to link the interior of Alaska with the coast. Mitchell had developed a reputation as a vigorous and competent officer with a firm grasp of the technicalities involving telegraphic communication. The offer was tempting. Mitchell would have what would essentially be an independent command, enormous responsibilities for an important mission, and most important, the novel adventure which he craved. He accepted and over the next two years, ran a 1700 mile main line into the interior, established a radio link between Anchorage and Nome, and used his spare time to study the latest advances in military technology.

Mitchell then served in a number of posts, returned to the Philippines, and took two trips to the far east, observing Chinese and Japanese military methodology and equipment and filing detailed reports with his superiors in Washington.

A Promising Future and Questionable Behavior

In 1910, Capt. Mitchell became the youngest officer ever appointed to the US Army's General Staff and became committed to a career as a military professional. He worked in intelligence, studying European military activities and his long term interest in novel technologies led to a study of the utility of aircraft in warfare. As a member of the Signal Corps, he adhered to their policy and stated that the usefulness of aircraft would require study and a period of experimentation. But he also submitted manuscripts to the army criticizing our defense plans. In 1915, the second year of the Great War in Europe, one of his criticisms of the Navy was reported in a Washington newspaper. The Army issued orders that no officer would issue public opinions under any circumstances but Mitchell ignored it. He engaged in writing and publishing, under a pseudonym, articles which commented unfavorably on military policy. Mitchell's zeal and ambition overwhelmed prudence and although not officially noted by the Army at this time, his actions were clearly insubordinate. However, the Army did recognize his special talents, promoted him to major, and prepared to send him back to the field in the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps.

The US Road to War

Mitchell commenced flight training in Newport, paying for most of it out of his own funds. He soloed and was rated an aviator. While stationed in Washington, he made contacts with the first army aviators, notably Benjamin Foulois and Hap Arnold and the small group of army pilots experimenting with aerial gunnery and bombing. In early 1917, two and a half years after hostilities had commenced in Europe, he learned that the Army would be sending a small group of observers to France and he managed to maneuver himself into one of the slots. His assignment: to learn about the design and manufacture of aircraft and the French methods of training and employment of aircraft in combat.

Mitchell Arrives in France

Mitchell's return to France was somewhat of a "homecoming." He had been born in France and spent the first three years of his life there so he had some familiarity with the language, a fortunate circumstance which would serve him well. Mitchell entered into his assignment with his customary energy and initiative. The parsimonious officials in Washington refused his request for funding, he enlisted volunteers, raised contributions, and used his own funds to establish an office.

Eager to learn as much as possible as soon as possible, he took further flight instruction under combat experienced French instructors, became friendly with the French Minister of Aviation and other influential French politicians, became the first American officer to visit the front and come under enemy fire, and wrote voluminous reports on all that he observed. He noted that European military aviation was far in front of that of the United States in both equipment and doctrine.

In June of 1917, a month after the United States, again woefully unprepared, entered the war, General Pershing arrived but Mitchell found that Pershing's views on air power lacked merit and with his usual impetuosity, became involved in a number of power struggles over the command of the US aviation effort. Ultimately, Pershing resolved the conflicts and Mitchell, his vision, experience and knowledge recognized, was appointed Chief of the First Army Air Service. Although this was not the highest aviation command position in Europe, it placed Mitchell in direct command of the "tip of the spear," the combat aviation units at the front.

End
Part One