THE DRAGON

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HELLO

This is the first of what is hoped to be many issues of New Jersey Wings' first historical newsletter. It will not be published on a regular baisis but instead at random times when enough information is obtained and put together to make up an issue. Although it will be mostly a New Jersey based publication, important stories of national historical interest will also be included. Anyone in the wing is welcome to submit stories or old photos. Since this is going to be reproduced on the copy machine, pictures submitted by not always be usable or may not print clearly but we will do our best. To all members of New Jersey Wing, hello, and welcome to the proud and exciting history of the New Jersey Wing.

Museum Planned

Plans are now under way for the construction of a small museum to be located at New Jersey Wing Headquarters. Approval for the project has been given by NJ Wing Commander, Colonel Fred Camenzind. The design and construction of the museum will be carried out by Lt. Colonel George Redfern and Major Gregory Weidenfeld.

Once completed, the museum will be open to all members of the wing. Exibits will be changed from time to time so that there will always be new things to see. Exibits that are already being planned include: NJ Wing in WWII, The Dragon Lady, and 50 years of CAP Uniforms and Insignia.

Any units or individuales who would like to donate funds to help pay for constructions costs may send checks made out to NJ Wing, and sent C/O Major Weidenfeld, Wing Historian.

Farr was CO at Atlantic City

Major Wynant C. Farr

When the Civil Air Patrols' first coastal patrol base was set up in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in March of 1942, a very special kind of man was needed to be its' commander. That man was Major Wynant C. Farr. Although not from New Jersey Farr used natural skills as a leader in making Coastal Patrol I the most successful and exciting base in all of the coastal patrol.

Wynant Farr of Monroe, New York grew up with an interest in aviation. He learned to fly at a small field in Montgomery, NY. Soon he owned his first airplane, a Curtiss-Wright Jr. He traded this plane for a larger one, a Travelair, and made Walden Airfield his new "home" field.

(FARR continued)

The Travelair was traded for a Stinson, and then the Stinson for a Fairchild.

Like Gill Robb Wilson, Farr recognized the capabilities of civil aviation, and openly advocated the use of civilian pilots and airplanes for coastal defense. Farr and Wilson knew each other through the aviation orginazation, the Quiet Birdmen. Farr was enthusiastic about the newly formed Civil Air Patrol and after Pearl Harbor was bombed, the two began serious planning in their proposed coastal patrol idea.

The base opened on March 6, 1942. At first it was run by Wilson, but once things were operating smoothly, he departed for Lantnana, Florida to assist in the startup of Coastal Patrol 3. At first, the jobs of commander, operations officer etc. were rotated around. Farr and others quickly recognized the need for a single command. "There's going to be one commander around here, and I'm it!", declared Farr, and he was until the bases close in late August of 1943.

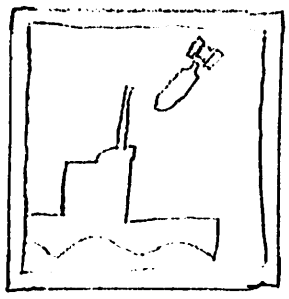
Under his guidance and leadership, the Atlantic City base became the pride of the coastal patrol. Farr realized both the danger and the importance of what he and his men were doing, and he demanded professionalism in all that they did; from flying, the wearing of the uniform. He wanted his men to look good, the Civil Air Patrol to look good, and the Army Air Corp to look good. Although not all his men agreed with him all of the time, he always had their respect and soon came to be affectionatly known as "The Old Man".

Farr was one to lead by example. He took the risk of flying the first patrol out of Atlantic City on March 10, with long time friend Al Muthig as his observer. When stories of "the one that got away" had convinced authorities in Washington to experiment with arming CAP planes, it was Farr and his Fairchild that served as the quinea pig. Farr succesfully flew his plane with a 225 lb bomb tucked under its belly, but a flight later in the day nearly proved disastrous. Farr, along with observer Jim Gibson, were escorting a huge convoy into New York Harbor when their plane caught fire 25 miles out to sea. Knowing he carried fuel above him in the wing tanks and a bomb below, Farr kept calm and flew the flaming plane back to Atlantic City. Trailing smoke behind, the Fairchild landed smoothly on the runway and groundcrews quickly extinguished the fire.

Perhaps the greatest of Farrs' acomplishments came on July 11, 1942 when he and pilot John Ben Ali Haggin, sank a German U-Boat 25 miles off the coast of Absecon, NJ. By the end of Coastal Patrol, on August 31, 1943, Farr had logged 420 hours as a pilot and 120 as an observer, for a total of 540 hours on antisubmarine patrol. This in addition to being the base CO.

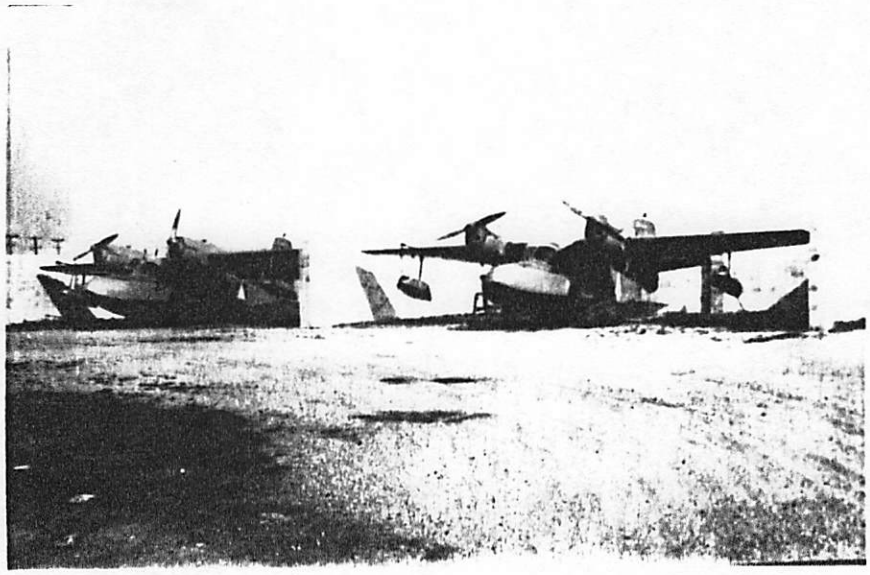
Even when the base was out of money, in June of 1942, Farrs' determanation to keep 'em flying came through. He put it plainly to officials of Sun Oil that if his planes were to continue to fly and protect their tankers, they needed funds. Ten minutes after his arrival, a courier was dispatched on what has come to be known as the Sun Oil Run. Sun Oil came through with $1000 on that day and another $1000 the next.

Farr stayed with the base until it was finally moved north to Hadley Field near New Brunswick where it became Tow Target Squadron 1. A short time later, Farr relinquished command to Captain Al Muthig after 18 months of continuos Civil Air Patrol duty. He eventually returned to New York to once again take over the running of his paperbox works factory in New York City.

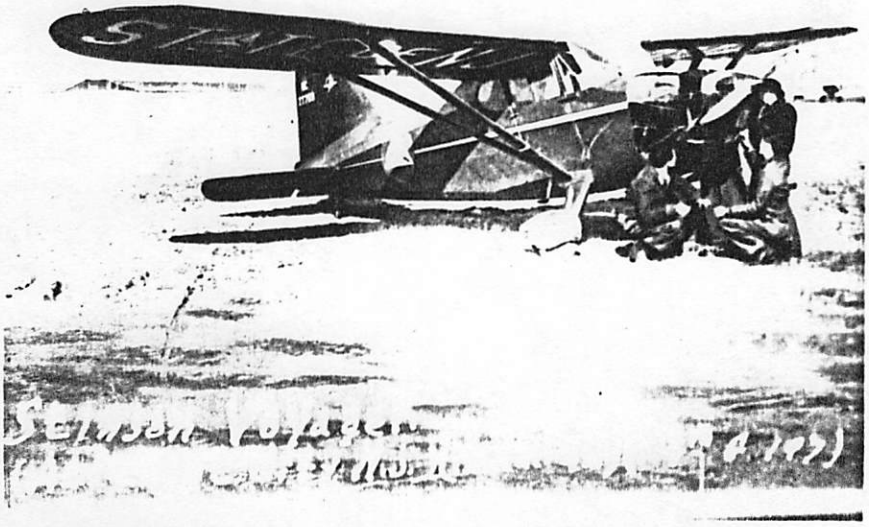


Coastal Patrol Insignia

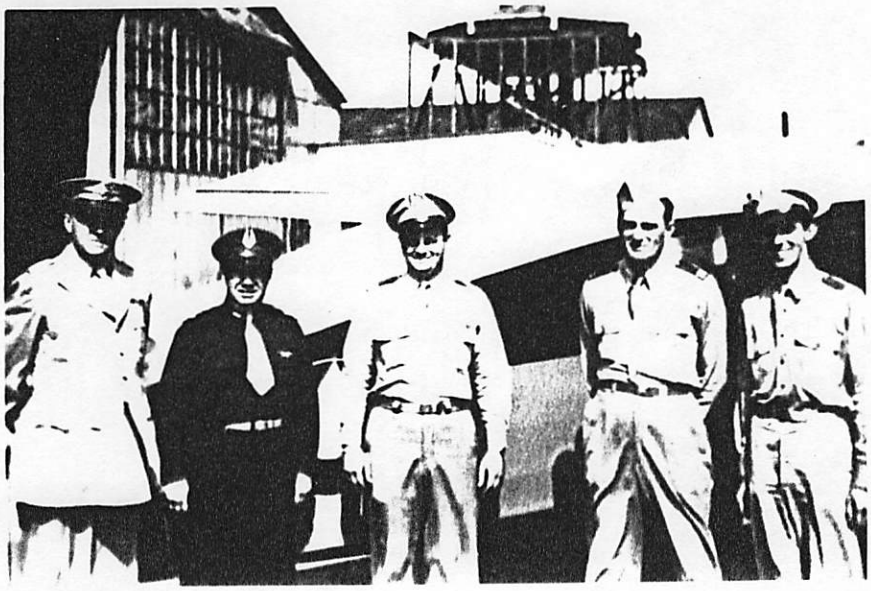
The original members of Coastal Patrol 1 in Atlantic City, on March, 13, 1942. The base would later peak at 150 members.



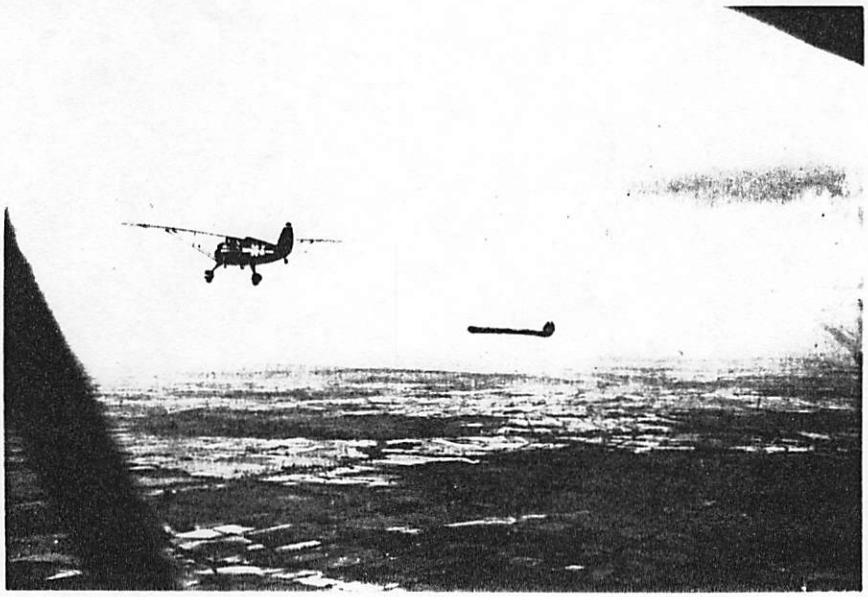
Grumman Widgeon amphibians used by Task Force I, belonging to Bill Zelcer(left) and Tom Eastman(right). Zelcers plane was flown by Capt. John Ben Ali Haggin and Major Wynant C. Farr to sink a German U-Boat of the coast of Absecon, NJ, on July 11, 1942.



This State of New Jersey Stinson Voyager was brought to Atlantic City by State Aviation Director, Gill Robb Wilson. Wilson also served as the Civil Air Patrols first Executive Officer.



Coastal Patrol 1 is visited by National Operations Officer, Col. Harry Blee. From Left to Right are Blee, Major Wynant Farr, Captain Al Muthig, Captain Pete Johnson, and Captain Randolph Custer.



Plane from Tow Target Squadron 22, pulls sleeve type target from Hadley Field in 1944. Tow Target 1 had by this time become a part of 22

Members of Tow Target 22 show of a patriotic target sleeve at Hadley Field, near New Brunswick, New Jersey.

THE DUCK CLUB

During the Civil Air Patrols' World War II days, members of the antisubmarine coastal patrols biggest fear was a crash at sea. From New Jerseys' Task Force I, operating from Bader Field at Atlantic City, a total of 13 flyers took the frightening plunge into the Atlantic. All of them survived.

Although the base had anphibians, two Widgeons and an old Sikorsky, for the most part they flew single engine land planes. A few of the members had life jackets which they had purchased before the military had banned their sale to civilians. Most simply carried innertubes in the aircraft cabins for survival.

It only took a few weeks of operations before New Jersey had its first mishap. Pilot Jim "Shorty" Knox and his observer Ralph Binder were flying a patrol off the coast of Cape May in a Stinson Reliant. They were 15 miles out and were so engrossed in their sub searching, they made a terrible mistake—they forgot to watch the gas gauge. With no fuel, the engine sputtered to a stop, and down they went.

By March of 1943, throughout the Civil Air Patrol Coastal Patrol, a total of 51 airplanes had gone down. 87 crewman survived, but 16 did not. It was around this time that the Duck Club came to be. Based on the Army Air Corps' Caterpillar Club for those who had bailed out of an airplane, the Duck Club was for those CAP members who had gone down at sea. The idea belonged to Colonel L. A. Vilas and soon letters and duck club patches and pins were being sent out from National Headquarters to all those who had gone down.

The emblem consisted of a blue disc with a red drake with wavy blue lines for the detail of water. On the metal version the wavey lines were a metalic silver. Duck club emblems were authorized for wear on the left pocket of the uniform.

The only New Jersey native to become a member of the duck club was the bases engineering officer, Captian Rudy Chalow. Along with fellow mechanic Floyd Eggenweiler, the two fix-it men crashed into icy 40 degree waters off Atlantic City on 15 March, 1943.

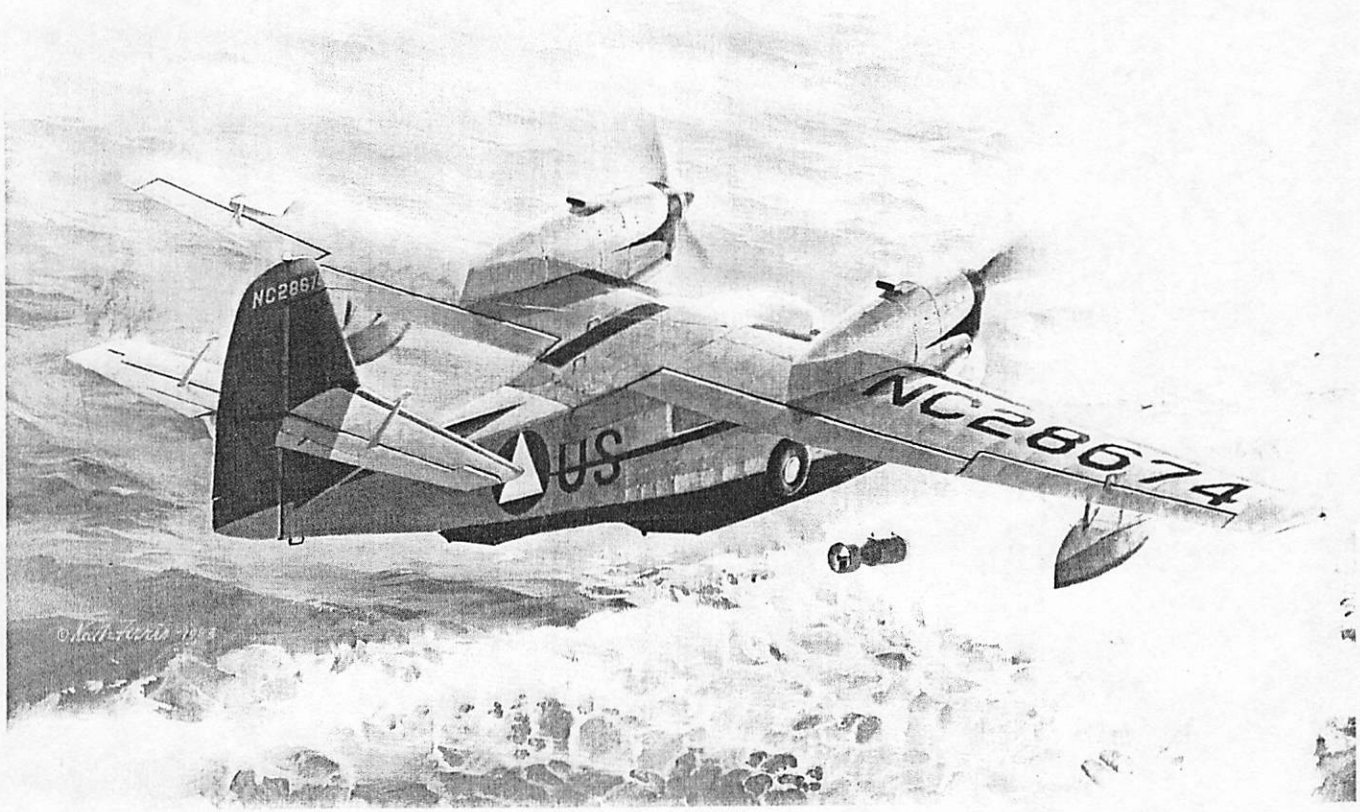
The Duck Club Emblem

It was Chalow however, who unintentionally helped to create a version of the Duck Club that was unique to New Jersey.

Among those at the base were two local brothers, Robert and William Datz. The Datz boys, as they were often called, were both apprentice mechanics. After duty hours however, the two took to salt marshes which surrounded the airfield and became intent duck hunters.

On one fatefull evening, the two headed out in the small boat they kept at the base. That same evening, Captain Chalow took off on a test flight of an airplane he had been working on. As he flew out over the boat, he notice what looked like a thousand ducks just out of sight of the hunters and an idea struck him. Circling around he dove down and buzzed the ducks. Hundreds of them took to the air and as he looked over his shoulder, he saw the boys happily blasting away. He also saw what looked like someone had thrown pebbles into the water all around the boat. Puzzled, Chalow landed the plane.

A short time later, he had the answer to his puzzle. The boat returned and it and its occupants were absolutely covered with duck droppings. Seems that the airplane and the gunshots had scared the poop out of the birds, thus making William and Robert Datz, the only members of New Jerseys' very special version of the Duck Club.



CIVIL AIR PATROL GRUMMAN "WIDGEON"
ATTACKING GERMAN SUBMARINE
OFF EAST COAST OF UNITED STATES
JULY 1942
Painting by Keith Ferris