



NEWS

CAP National Headquarters
Public Affairs
105 S. Hansell St.
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112
Toll free: 877-227-9142, x250

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Civil Air Patrol to observe long legacy of service

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala. – Civil Air Patrol’s rich history of protecting America comes full circle Saturday when the U.S. Air Force auxiliary officially celebrates its 71st anniversary.

The all-volunteer, nonprofit organization of more than 61,000 members was founded on Dec. 1, 1941, less than a week before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor led to America’s involvement in World War II. Its members soon proved their worth by conducting aerial patrols on their own, heroism that discouraged and eventually stopped deadly German U-boat attacks in American waterways. Fifty-nine members died, 26 were lost at sea and seven others were seriously injured while carrying out CAP missions during the war.

Much as they did in CAP’s early days, today’s members are becoming more and more involved in homeland security, regularly acting as targets in various air defense exercises that support training for both U.S. air defense forces and the nation’s ground forces. Over the past two years, CAP has used its planes to help train the nation’s military ground forces in remotely piloted aircraft operations before they deploy to Afghanistan and Iraq.

“Each day, our members provide a valuable service to their communities,” said CAP National Commander Maj. Gen. Chuck Carr. “They help mentor America’s youth through our outstanding aerospace education and cadet programs and save lives and preserve liberty for all through search and rescue missions and emergency service, disaster relief and homeland security missions nationwide. As this anniversary approaches, be sure to say ‘thanks’ to these unsung heroes in your communities who provide such selfless service, often without fanfare.”

As the Air Force auxiliary, today’s Civil Air Patrol performs a multitude of missions in communities throughout the nation’s 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico:

- CAP provides disaster relief during and after hurricanes, floods, wildfires, earthquakes, tornadoes and countless other emergencies – like the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico two years ago, the largest modern-day mission in CAP history until the organization’s response this fall to Hurricane Sandy, which is still ongoing. To date, CAP aircrews have taken more than 150,000 aerial images to assist the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other federal, state and local agencies involved in cleanup and recovery from the superstorm, which ravaged the coastlines of several states in the Northeast, including New Jersey and New York.

- CAP responds day or night when planes are overdue and emergency locator transmitters go off. Its volunteer professionals perform 90 percent of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions, as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center, and are credited by the AFRCC with saving an average of 80 lives annually. Members of the Oregon Wing were honored recently with the AFNORTH Commander's Award for locating the crash site of well-known air show performer Jacqueline "Jacquie B" Warda, who survived the accident.
- CAP plays a leading role in aerospace education and mentors nearly 27,000 young Americans through its cadet program. By partnering with more than 2,000 educators nationwide, members nurture the talents of generations of the nation's sons and daughters with aerospace education programs that stress leadership and character development and teach aviation and emergency response skills. CAP's award-winning aerospace education program uses national standards-based materials to help nearly 200,000 school-aged children in grades K-12 to excel in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) subjects. In addition, CAP's cadets are involved in a wide variety of activities, including CyberPatriot, the national cyber defense competition won by cadet teams in 2011 and 2012.
- CAP is a major partner of Wreaths Across America, an initiative to remember, honor and teach about the sacrifices of U.S. military veterans. This year, CAP is teaming up with the Maine-based nonprofit organization to raise funds to place Christmas wreaths on veterans' graves at nearly 700 locations throughout the nation as well as in several countries overseas.

Civil Air Patrol, the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, is a nonprofit organization with more than 61,000 members nationwide, operating a fleet of 550 aircraft. CAP, in its Air Force auxiliary role, performs 90 percent of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center and is credited by the AFRCC with saving an average of 80 lives annually. Its volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief and drug interdiction missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. The members play a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to nearly 27,000 young people currently participating in the CAP cadet program. Visit www.gocivilairpatrol.com or www.capvolunteernow.com for more information.

Contact info: Julie DeBardelaben – jdebardelaben@capnhq.gov – 334-953-7748, ext. 250
Steve Cox – scox@capnhq.gov – 334-953-7748, ext. 251