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HEADQUARTERS
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
04 July 2003

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Civil Air Patrol Assists Kern County Sheriff's Department in Ongoing Search for Missing Paraglider

(Bakersfield, CA) – July 4, 2003 – Civil Air Patrol (CAP) has ramped up with additional aircraft and flight crews to proceed with its third day assisting the Kern County Sheriff's Department in an extensive search for missing Palmdale Paraglider, now identified as Ronald Rosepink. He was last seen by a friend on late Saturday afternoon, near his vehicle, in the Black Mountain area, and did not report into family on Tuesday as would have been normal, resulting in a missing persons report filed late Tuesday evening.

In spite of extensive efforts over the past two days, there still has been no sighting of the missing Paraglider or pilot. The CAP will maintain its established a primary mission base at the Bakersfield's Meadows Field airport, with a secondary base to provide more efficient aircraft refueling at the Tehachapi Muni airport throughout the holiday weekend as necessary. Lt Col Steve Asche continues today as the CAP Base Incident Commander (IC), and commented "We will continue providing as many forces as possible, for as long as needed to find this person alive."

Since Wednesday, the Civil Air Patrol provided 98 hours of air search, 15 aircraft and about 50 volunteers, covering areas to Lake Isabella, which is about 20 miles out from the location of Rosepink's recovered auto. This third day in the search effort by Civil Air Patrol volunteers involves a minimum of ten CAP aircraft and crews, and many additional base support-staff.

As the lead agency for this team effort, the Kern County Sheriff's department is conducting the ground search effort, and the Search and Rescue team asks that civilians remain clear of the area to allow the professionals and search dogs unhindered space to do their job. The Civil Air Patrol ground teams are available and standing by if requested.

The Kern County Sheriffs department has also been utilizing its helicopter in the multi-day effort, as well as two helicopters from the Edward's Air Force Base out of a base at Black Mountain.

The search for this aircraft is made even more difficult by the fact that there was no flight plan, and there is no Emergency Location Transmitter (ELT) signal is being received, which offers no homing device for the aircrews to track. This requires the CAP aircraft crews to do visual only grid searches in mountainous terrain, with dense shrub and forest, with intense scrutiny of the most probable flight path.

Rosenpink, 46, is a USAF Lieutenant Colonel, Reserves, and has been well trained in survival. He is friends of, and considered somewhat of an icon to the ballooning community, and is frequently at Edwards Air Force Base where he performs contract test flights. Ron, his wife Debbie, and their son and daughter currently live in Englewood, Colorado. Debbie and the children have remained present at the mission site awaiting positive news.

Anyone who might have seen this bright blue with pink wing tips Paraglider with about a 30 foot wingspan, and capable of ten miles or more flight, within the Black Mountain or surrounding area after its take off on June 28th, or has any additional information is asked to call the Kern County Sheriff's Office at 661/861-3110.

Civil Air Patrol (CAP), the official Auxiliary of the United States Air Force, is a nonprofit organization of approximately 64,000 members nationwide with approximately 4,000 members in California. It performs more than 95% of inland search and rescue missions in the continental United States as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center. CAP volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief and counter-drug missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. Recently, CAP members flew security over the launch site of the space shuttle Columbia and later assisted in the Columbia shuttle recovery. In the days after 9/11, California members flew blood products for the Red Cross when all commercial aviation was grounded. California alone had over 55 crews standing ready to be called into action. The CAP volunteers also take a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to almost 27,000 of America's youth through CAP Cadet Programs.

For additional information and follow-up, please contact Candice Tuttle, 1Lt, CAP, Mission Information Officer; Hm Tel: 650.326.5214, Email: Candice@LadyPIC.com