

HEADQUARTERS
CHINO CADET SQUADRON 20
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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHINO CADET SQUADRON 20 EVACUATES CORONA AIRPORT

(Corona, CA) – January 11, 2005 – Following the record-breaking rainstorms in California, Tuesday offered a needed break in the weather for Corona Airport manager Rich Brodeur. Prado Basin Dam was slowly rising and flooding was occurring down stream. Prado Basin Dam borders the cities of Chino and Corona. Local news reports stated that the west end of the Corona airport was being flooded, and was under at least five feet of water. Rich Brodeur and the City of Corona were making plans to evacuate the West end of the airport. To begin the process he had to have the main gate torn down and widened to accommodate the aircraft, including removing the middle traffic island where the airport gate access card reader and security camera were located.

Capt. John Binder and 2Lt. Chris Mattson from the Civil Air Patrol USAF Auxiliary, Chino Cadet Squadron 20, went to the airport to see if they could be of assistance. Upon arriving at the airport at 3:00 p.m., Manager Rich Brodeur was very relieved to see them, and immediately requested any additional resources they could offer. Capt. John Binder, for the past 3 years, has been in charge of organizing volunteers for the yearly Corona Air Show. He and his squadron have worked closely with the airport for over five years.

Squadron 20 mobilized quickly. Capt. Andrea Binder immediately put out the calls to all the senior members and cadets in the squadron. The response of the parent of CAP Squadron 20's cadets was overwhelming, supportive, and immediate. They brought their cadets either directly to the airport or to Capt. Binder's house for carpooling. In some cases parent's cars were delayed an hour in traffic due to detours caused by the flooding that affected the local streets. Seniors responded directly from work. Most everyone arrived to the airport by 4:30 p.m. The USAF Aux. Civil Air Patrol members who responded to the call for help were C/B Desiree Forteville, C/TSgt Brendan Dougherty, C/B Nick Ruiz, C/A1C Alex Shea, C/SMSgt. Devin Strzok, C/A Travis Toussaint, C/A1C Andre Bodine, and C/A Sabra James responded, as well as Capt. John Binder, 1Lt. Mark Strzok, 1Lt. Chris Martinez, Capt. Andrea Binder, SM Eric Velasco, 2Lt. Chris Mattson and SM Thomas O'Brien.

Corona Police Dept. John Marshall commended the cadets and seniors for their hard work, and could not believe how quickly they moved over 100 aircraft in 5 hours, with out incident. "Your group has done an outstanding job. Everyone paid attention to safety and consistently watched for all obstacles."

Many worried Corona airport pilots and their families were grateful for the extra pushing power that the cadets and seniors provided. They felt reassured their aircraft would be safe, since the CAP is trained how and where to push. These planes may look tuff, but in all the excitement, it would have been very easy for someone who did not know what they were doing, to do a lot of damage. Some cadets were watching wingtips, others the tails, and still others helped avoid potholes as aircraft were moved along Smith Street to Rincon. Over 50 aircraft were safely parked at neighboring businesses. Some were parked across from the airport. Some neighborly businesses opened their parking lots for the evacuated aircraft, and some aircraft were parked along Smith Street. With safety being the utmost concern, most aircraft were moved slowly and meticulously by hand and tow bars. One pilot even used a golf cart. In one case, 2Lt. Mark Strzok had to groom some branches to widen an area to accommodate an aircraft. One pilot commented that earlier in the day, and before the Civil Air Patrol arrived, some aircraft had been moved out of the flooded airport, but then everything stopped. He stated, "Once Capt. John Binder arrived, aircraft began moving again." Rich Brodeur agreed, "I turned over all supervision of the evacuation and placement to Capt. John Binder. He has more experience at this than I do".

Capt. John Binder's response was, "Well, I'm glad he has the confidence in me, however, I don't remember when I was trained to evacuate an airport."

Once the aircraft were placed for the night, the cadets and seniors returned to Capt. John Binder's house for pizza. They suddenly remembered they had not eaten during the evacuation and they were all hungry.

All pilots have requested that when the time comes for the aircraft to go back, they all voted to have Chino Cadet Squadron 20 present when they do it. "They did a great job in getting us out; we want them to be here."