

Fall 2020

Bear Facts

The Official Magazine of California Wing Civil Air Patrol



CAWG Supports COVID-19 Relief

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California Wing Commander

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Commander's Corner

By Col. Ross E. Veta, CAP
Commander, California Wing



Dear Fellow California Wing Members,

We have all rediscovered and embraced the term “resilience” this year. Resilience is defined as: “the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.” Psychological resilience is “the ability to mentally or emotionally cope with a crisis or to return to pre-crisis status quickly.”

Of the many writing on resilience, these two stand out for me:

“On the other side of a storm is the strength that comes from having navigated through it. Raise your sail and begin.”— Gregory S. Williams;

“When we learn how to become resilient, we learn how to embrace the beautifully broad spectrum of the human experience.” — Jaeda Dewalt

Since early 2020 we have been faced with numerous obstacles and challenges THROUGH which we have and continue to persevere; TO which we have reacted in support of our communities and each other; and FROM which we derive the strength that will make us better and stronger as history will show. While the primary obstacles were the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and now rampant wildfires in our State, the secondary and tertiary obstacles are far reaching and range

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ON THE COVER: C/Lt Col Collin Rodriguez organizing food at one of the LA points of distribution (PODs). Photo credit: mission stock photos

COVID-19 Relief: A Case Study in Resilience

CAWG was the first CAP Wing in the nation to respond to the 2020 pandemic, assisting with food distribution for the Los Angeles Unified School District.

By Maj. Dave Kalahar, Asst. Wing PAO, and 1st Lt. Jerry Camp, Wing PAO

The United States of America has always been a resilient nation. During wars, disasters, and political crises, Americans have found a way to move forward. Where our country has responded well to emergencies, resilience has proven key. Demand for resilience has increased for almost everyone, as we've had to adapt during the pandemic.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, in the "Presidential Policy Directive PPD-8: National Preparedness," defines resilience as "the ability to adapt to changing conditions and withstand and rapidly recover from disruption due to emergencies." On New Year's Day 2020, nobody anticipated how our world would change in March. The COVID-19 pandemic redefined life in California and how Civil Air Patrol functions. Resilience would soon make enormous demands on our CAP volunteers.

The magnitude of change required in everyone's daily life was going to bring hardships as "normal" disappeared. California state and municipal officials faced some unprecedented challenges. In Los Angeles, California's largest city, more than 600,000 students attend school within the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). More than 80 percent of these students depended on LAUSD to provide daily nutrition through a meals program. When COVID-19 required schools to shut down, resilience required us to find a way to provide food for these children.

LAUSD decided to build a support system for students and families most in need by providing over 250,000 meals a day through more than 60 Grab & Go food centers. The Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management called on the Red Cross, Los Angeles Region, for disaster assistance to help feed these children and families. Resilience would demand a logistics system on the scale of a military campaign.

Day 1 for CAP CAWG members was March 17, 2020. The Red Cross, Los Angeles Region, called CAP for help with food distribution on behalf of LAUSD. It would take multiple agencies working together to provide the people power and management skills to efficiently get food packages into the hands of students. Simultaneously, we would need to manage the risks of COVID-19 infection and protect both the CAWG volunteers and the families who would benefit from CAWG support. Resilience would require leadership for which there is no model readily available.

Long before CAP set foot in a Grab and Go food distribution location, CAWG leadership recognized a need to build a relationship with one of our existing partners, the American Red Cross. CAP has a long-term memorandum of understanding with the Red Cross. When Col. Ross Veta assumed command of the California



Maj. Bob Oberiter (back row on right) and others working at the Red Cross Emergency Operations Center on the first day of operations. Photo credit: Red Cross

Wing in October 2019, he challenged the Wing to become more involved in disaster recovery. Col. Veta recognized that having dedicated liaison personnel engaged with agency partners would give CAP more flexibility in times of response. Not long after, Maj. Robert Obreiter took up the Wing Commander's challenge and became the California Wing's first Liaison Training and Development Officer. Maj. Obreiter was already working with Red Cross and had set up training and operational opportunities when the COVID-19 crisis hit. Such pre-established relationships enable resilience.

When the Red Cross first contacted CAWG looking for a partner agency to assist in the LAUSD meal program, *"California Wing stood up an Incident Command Team and mission within 72 hours."* said Col. Veta. From the beginning of the mission, Maj. Obreiter served CAP by working in the Red Cross Emergency Operations Center.

According to Maj. Obreiter, *"It's my job to maintain the relationship between the two organizations - to have a 360-degree view of the mission and to be an information broker."* In a crisis, Liaison Officers play an essential role in keeping the mission moving forward in tandem with other agencies. Both Maj. Obreiter and 1st Lt. Gerald Cosey served as the Mission Liaison team throughout the mission, nurturing the relationship with the Red Cross. Resilience enables results.

On March 18, fifty CAP members, both cadets and seniors, kicked off the operational phase of the mission. Our people distributed more than 12,000 meals at 20 locations on that first day. CAP members throughout Southern California, some from as far away as San Diego, provided breakfast and lunch meal kits starting early in the morning. The CAP members worked side-by-side with Red Cross and community volunteers to assemble and distribute the meals. Overall, on that first day, different volunteers in 60 locations assembled and distributed 36,000 meals provided by the Red Cross



C/Lt Col Collin Rodriguez organizing food at one of the LA points of distribution (PODs). Photo credit: mission stock photos

The Red Cross saw results. According to David Englin, the Los Angeles Region's Chief Operating Officer for the Red Cross, *"The Civil Air Patrol has been a rock-solid partner to the Red Cross Los Angeles Region. Volunteers power both of our organizations, and we are ready to roll up sleeves and do what it takes. Thanks to our shared values of service and volunteerism, both organizations have been in lockstep, distributing meals to Los Angeles children who otherwise would go without during this Crisis."* Resilience requires people with determination.

Lifesaving aid changes the lives of the people who receive it. But it also changes the lives of the volunteers who make it happen. *"It was a great experience,"* said CAP volunteer and Group Eight Commander, Maj. Jennifer Davenport. *"People from all walks of life were coming together to help the community."* Davenport and her team responded to Manual Arts High School from her home squadron in San Diego, assembling the meals in the school cafeteria. *"Volunteers distributed meals at the walkthrough and drive-through locations at the high school,"* according to Davenport.

Cadets were making an impact too. Cadet Lt. Col. Colin Rodriguez is a 20-year-old student who joined CAP at 13 years of age. At that time,

Rodriguez never imagined he would be helping to serve meals to underserved families during a pandemic. *“When I joined, I thought it was going to be like Boy Scouts. Going camping, performing drill, and that type of stuff.”* According to Rodriguez, *“CAP turned out to be so much more, I liked the program, so I stayed in.”*

To support COVID-19 relief, Rodriguez had to awaken at 0430 to be at McClay Middle School on time. *“Our job was to unbox meals, then place them on the tables and trays. The other volunteers delivered them to the cars.”* Rodriguez says, *“It was fun to see the kids in the back of the cars waving and saying thank you. The parents were very appreciative.”* The cadet had a life-changing experience as a CAP volunteer. *“This is an important mission. With the current stay at home order and families not working, where else are they going to get their food,”* asked Rodriguez. *“Handing out these meals keep people calm and provide a service to the community. It was amazing to perform this mission!”*

Throughout the mission, the dangers of COVID-19 were at the forefront of everyone’s mind. Protecting against a possible exposure required regular evaluation. Plus, factors like stress, fatigue, and worry are common during disaster relief work. However, CAWG is blessed to have members who are medical practitioners—such as Lt. Col. Gregg Olsen, M.D., the CAWG Medical Officer.

Dr. Olson briefed the operational staff daily. He provided pandemic status updates in weekly briefings to the entire Wing, and he advised Incident Commanders on measures consistent with an abundance of caution in leading our field staff during the food distribution mission. Lt. Col. Olson pointed out, *“It’s a marathon, not a sprint,”* and *“We have to administer care to the caregiver constantly.”* Some CAP members travel from Antelope Valley, San Diego, and Temecula—arising at 0300. *“We have to look out for their welfare since they are traveling so far,”* said Olson.

“All protocols for the protection of CAP members and the general public will be followed,” declared Colonel Ross Veta, our CAWG Commander from Day One of the relief mission. *“At no time will CAP members have direct contact with the students.”* Only trained Red Cross volunteers placed the meals in the cars. Nevertheless, CAP volunteers practiced good hygiene with the use of gloves, sanitizer, hand washing, and social distancing during mission operations.

Resilience requires flexibility.

As the days of the mission passed by, daily needs and precautions changed. *“The COVID-19 crisis has added layers of requirements not generally found in others CAP missions,”* according to Maj. Steve Groner, Deputy Incident Commander. *“Our members have done a great job working within constantly evolving parameters set by the Center for Disease Control and our customer, to protect their health and safety, as well as the general public.”*

CAP has had more than 100

members in the field at one time or another during this mission. But behind the scenes was another story of operational flexibility. The incident response command group, or base staff, included members working throughout the state-- some virtually-- in the areas of Logistics, Operations, Safety, Planning, Medical, Public Information, and others. *“These missions cannot be successful without Base Staff behind the scenes orchestrating today’s plan and developing the plan for tomorrow,”* said Maj. Groner. *“The mis-*



Three cadets from San Diego working in the American Red Cross warehouse making snacks for the volunteers. Photo credit: mission stock photos

sion is fluid with many locations and evolving health and safety requirements. The Base Staff works late into the night and early in the morning to plan and execute the customers' objectives," according to Maj. Groner. "I am proud of all of our volunteers for the awesome job they have done and continue to do." The alerting, organizing, and transporting of volunteers from all over Southern California was another considerable task that fell upon the base staff.

Flexibility must accommodate the necessity that CAP officers in critical positions rotate out of the mission. We needed to help staff stay fresh. Because of past planning and recruitment, CAWG had plenty of qualified officers to substitute for the weary team.

Time and again, the Red Cross volunteers expected our CAP personnel to take hours to complete the tasks. And time and again, we completed tasks quickly. During times of crisis, the people of America have always unified and risen to meet the challenge. CAP members raised their hands, saying, "Send me." "We asked our members to step up in a way that we have not asked of them in 79 years," said Maj. Kathy Brown, the Planning Section Chief. "With no surprise, they not only stepped up but have gone above and beyond expectations during this unique and challenging time. From members willing to deploy because the need of the community is greater than the needs of one, to the members unable to deploy being willing to work from home on the base staff to make it all happen."

Resilience requires the dedication of CAP's volunteers.

Maj. Tom Barbre, one of CAP's on-site team leaders, also raised his hand and said, "send me" Barbre's job each day was to brief and monitor his team, and to ensure they returned home safely. "My day started at 0500 with texts (from my team)," says Maj. Barbre. "The team stays in communication until they get to the Point of Distribution or POD. Once at the POD, the members unpack trucks, and assemble and organize meals, while following the Center for Disease Control guidelines."



Capt. Eric Ferdinandwalters, SQ-144, assembling food at one of the LAUSD POD's. Photo credit: mission stock photos

It was a long day for some CAP volunteers, according to Barbre, "I debrief the team, complete the computer work, and make sure everyone gets home safely. The cycle starts again at about 1500 with team assignments and briefing for the members for the next morning."

"The field staff feels very positive about the experience," says Maj. Barbre. "The Red Cross people ask if they are coming back the next day. Many members have worked the entire mission." That commitment is at the heart of a CAP volunteer.

In the end, resilience won. Over the 18 calendar days (11 mission days), the California Wing of the Civil Air Patrol assisted the Red Cross Los Angeles Region as partners to get the LAUSD's meal program up and running during the COVID-19 crisis. CAWG members responded quickly and acted as a force multiplier to assist the Red Cross in getting food out as soon as possible.

Over 140 CAP members worked on this mission. CAP personnel assisted in delivering just

under 200,000 meals of the approximately 1.6 million meals served by the end of April 2020. CAP accomplished ninety-eight ground transportation sorties-- all for the cost of less than \$1,500 in gasoline. "We are proud of how the membership has embraced the role of disaster prevention, preparedness, and response," said Maj. Charles Christian. He is the Wing Emergency Services Officer, as well as one of four Incident Commanders for this mission. The other Incident Commanders for this included Lt. Col.

David Boehm, Maj. Steve Groner, and Maj. Jeffrey Ironfield. *“The California Wing has met the challenge of this mission, and its performance has exceeded all expectations. This mission is a model for the future partnership of this kind,”* according to Maj. Christian.

“Words cannot express the pride I feel for the professional volunteers on this mission,” said Col. Ross Veta, the CAWG Commander. *“Their performance has far exceeded all expectations. The entire Wing is grateful to them all for taking the time away from their families to serve the communities, State, and Nation during this crisis.”*



A CAP member serving the public at a drive-through POD. Photo credit: mission stock photos

Writers Note: The Public Affairs Team for this mission gathered story information each day of this mission. Many of the quotes in this story reflected the work of that team and the daily news releases sent to the media and CAWG membership through social media. The photos were all gathered from the mission participants at large. (Please note that some of the above photos were taken during a period when the authorities were discouraging the wearing of masks.) We are grateful for the team effort that has allowed us to tell this story of resilience. ✈️

Commander’s Corner *Continued from page 1*

all the way into our homes. Yet through it all we remain the stronger and cohesive Wing that we are, through your dedication, determination and enthusiasm. This is resilience.

From my view I am able to see members throughout the Wing reaching out to help others even when they themselves may be suffering. I see members working with the community for long periods of time, longer than any mission we’ve had in our modern history, supporting the foodbanks, distributing hundreds of thousands meals so that others won’t go hungry. I see members lending a hand to other members, offering them assistance in any manner that they may need even though they themselves may have limited resources. This is resilience.

Through adversity each and every one of us has had the chance to grow, to strengthen and to achieve in ways that heretofore have not been possible. Through adversity we have been reminded that we have the unique privilege to work with and contribute with heroes. You are all heroes not only

to the other members in CAP but to your community, your State, and your Country. Through your contributions and your dedication, CAP has and still does remain a stalwart and dedicated foundation of our State. This is resilience.

The entire Wing is driving forward because we are resilient. We are moving forward because we are all dedicated to our missions and to our Country. Through new and innovative initiatives and technology we have been able to maintain continuity through this “storm” supporting all of our missions. The adversity that we are all facing WILL be over someday. We WILL get through all of this together. We are optimistic and are plotting our course for growth not only now, but also for the time that we are able to resume in-person activities. It is our shared resilience that allows us to keep moving forward. Keep going, keep moving forward, keep supporting each other the way you are now, because it is through your support that we remain resilient together.

Thank you all for all that you do.

Overcoming Adversity on the Mountain

Capt. Jenny Lynn Burnett, CAWG Diversity Officer

All of us are compelled to serve with a purpose. No matter who we are, race, color or background, we serve for a deeper reason and give our time freely.

My story began with CAP Ground Team (GT) training 16 years ago. As we all know, ground operations are a critical function to CAP's mission operations, because there can be no rescue in search and rescue without ground teams. There were very few women in my Squadron 128 based at Van Nuys Airport, but my Squadron Commander, Lt. Col. Denise Edwards, was a woman role-model who changed my life. She took me under her wing in a mostly male-dominated atmosphere. I always felt included. Aside from being an emergency room nurse, Lt., Col. Edwards was highly respected in the Wilderness Medical Society and served as one of the leading Emergency Services GT leaders and wilderness survival instructors in California Wing. I spent almost every weekend either flying or participating in GT Training.

Prior to joining CAP as a senior member, my prior outdoor experiences consisted of backpacking trips in Alaska and across Europe and hiking the local mountains of Southern California. Soon my adventures progressed into beginner mountaineering expeditions in New Zealand and climbing mountains over 14,000 feet within our very own Sierra Nevada. I loved adventure, hiking, and the great outdoors! However, in a million years, I never thought that my invaluable GT training would prepare me for what was coming next.

I acquired two hiking day-use permits to climb Mount Whitney (elevation 14,505'), the tallest mountain in the lower 48 states. Thousands of people from all over the world flock to Mount Whitney each year, but they don't always make it to the top due to lack of proper physical training or acute mountain sickness (AMS). The high elevation and thin air can prevent one from breathing normally, as at sea level. By the time I acquired the permit to climb Mount Whitney, I had already summited the "SoCal Six Pack," which are the six highest peaks in Southern California, which prepare you for hiking the "14er" mountains.



JLB with storm in background. Photo credit: Capt. Jenny Lynn Burnett

My hiking partner was someone I met through the local hiking club, but she had no formal survival or navigational training. Our dark trek up the mountain began shortly after midnight, and our headlamps guided us into the sunrise. The first several hours of our hike presented a few red flags, including my partner experiencing lethargy. In GT, we are taught to collaborate as a team and rely on each other, so it only felt natural to wait with my partner while she acclimatized to the thin air and to take a few minutes of rest. If you are not properly rested or hydrated, your body and mind will feel tired. Along the way, we


passed many hikers with either tales of woe about not summiting the mountain or words of success that inspired our perseverance. We knew the summit would soon be rewarding us with views that no words could describe.

On our final stretch to the summit, we met a stranger concerned about the approaching storm heading our way. He offered to meet us at the John Muir Trail Junction and stick with us for our descent after reaching the peak. My partner and I reached the summit but stayed only briefly due to rain and fog setting in. Now there was a sense of urgency to descend. My partner was filled with fear and began boulder-hopping downward away from the trail in the wrong direction. I could see the stranger waiting for us almost a mile away. I hollered for him to wait at the top of my lungs so the wind would carry my voice. He couldn't see me in my fluorescent salmon-colored rain jacket, but he could hear my voice. My partner was panicked and running ahead, so I followed her. I knew she was going in the wrong direction, but I had to make a core value decision by staying close to her for safety reasons in case something happened. In her panic, she slipped on a wet boulder and hit her head while the sprinkles were turning into rain, and the thick fog began to roll in. The stranger was still standing at the trail like a beacon at an emergency. Before finally meeting up with the stranger, we had to re-climb part of the mountain above 14,000 feet.

All three of us took a quick break to prepare ourselves for the challenging downhill 99 switchbacks ahead. At this point, my partner ran out of water, and the stranger was low as well. My partner ran ahead, as if to beat us down the mountain, but it was now dark with rain blowing sideways. I chose to move more carefully down the mountain due to the slippery granite with drifts of ice next to the cliff. Suddenly, the stranger squealed, "MY KNEE!" The stranger not only lost his ability to walk but now he was experiencing brain fog due to the high altitude. My body was already shaking from the wet cold, and I knew he wouldn't last through the storm with poor decision making and the onset of hypothermia. He began to display "resignation," which is one of the hazardous attitudes of aeronautical decision making. I physically couldn't carry this man nine miles and another 5,300 feet down, so I decided to methodically talk him down the mountain and encourage him to push through his pain. I positioned him in front of me, so if he fell, I could grab his backpack and try to save him. If he had been walking behind me, there would be a greater risk of him falling on top of me due to the steepness and wiping me off the mountain. He told me later that he was walking in a dreamlike state and could have easily fallen off the trail over the cliff.

Eventually, the stranger and I met up with my hiking partner at a plateau half-way down the mountain, who was suffering from AMS and dehydration. The rain was pouring so hard that it created ruts in the trail, making it hard to follow. It was like walking in soup. We lost our way many times in the dark because we were losing our perspective and our headlamps were beginning to dim. Our GPS signals were

bouncing in the canyon and not giving us accurate readings. I had no choice but to scout ahead in the darkness with boots submerged in water, while my partner and the stranger followed behind waiting for directions. Eventually, we made our way back after sunrise. The entire hike took us 31 hours, approximately 24 miles and 6,500 feet gain/loss.

Looking back, I was on this mountain for a reason. My experiences and Civil Air Patrol ground team training gave me the necessary foundation I needed to forge ahead during a time of need. This is how I chose to serve, and this is how I made a difference in one man's life. 



JLB with Whitney in background Photo credit: Calabasas Day Hikers group

Vision for California Wing's sUAS Program

Capt. Karin Hollerbach, Director of CAWG sUAS Operations

Most CAWG members are aware that the wing is taking steps to establish a capability to conduct small unmanned aircraft system (sUAS) mission operations. But I find myself frequently fielding questions from CAP members and the public eager to learn where CAWG stands towards attaining CAWG-wide sUAS mission operability, including scheduling regular missions and training a cadre of qualified personnel.

CAWG's sUAS program started in November 2018 with Red Cell, where CAP was tasked to provide an aggressor force for USAF to practice counter-UAS tactics. Although Red Cell is no longer the driving force behind CAWG's sUAS program, we maintain our readiness to provide equipment and base staff for this mission.

As our CAWG Emergency Services (ES) mission has evolved, so has the sUAS program. Our expanded vision presently includes:

- Using sUAS in a variety of ES operations, potentially including search and rescue (SAR), disaster relief (DR), and other CAWG ES missions.
- Including cadets in ES roles as rated sUAS team members.
- Helping bridge the gap between CAP's ES and aerospace education (AE) missions.
- Collaborating with outside agencies, both in providing sUAS services to partners and in supporting their own training, research and development, and other programs.
- Becoming a leader in applying cutting edge UAS services, as well as image acquisition and processing technologies within an ES context.

To work toward that vision, CAWG established an sUAS leadership team, including Deputy Officers for sUAS Operations, Maj. Marc Sobel, Capt. Jeff Rayden, and Capt. Jeff Clish, as well as a Cadet Deputy, C/Capt Luca Hoang. Further, we have established an sUAS lead for each CAWG group, who serves as a point of contact for all training and operational activities within that group. My role is as the Director of CAWG sUAS Operations.

Following training activities last fall and throughout the winter, CAWG has become what CAP NHQ terms "fully operational" with regard to sUAS capabilities—one of only five CAP wings that have attained this status. This represents a significant advancement based largely on the hard work of CAWG's first sUAS Operations Officer, Maj. Sobel, as well as the current team. As of early June, we have trained more than ten sUAS Mission Pilots and forty sUAS Technicians/Trainees, including our first cadet Trainee.



Capt. Tim Roberts (center) preparing for a training flight with 1st Lt. Jeff Clish, Instructor (left), and Capt. Karin Hollerbach, Technician (right), during a Fall 2019 sUAS Mission Aircrew School in NorCal. Photo credit: 1st Lt. Chris Devine

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“Member Highlights”

Brought to you by your Diversity team

This is the third in a series of articles highlighting our diverse corps of volunteers in the California Wing. Our greatest strength as a wing is embracing who we are while sharing the same core values and representing the Total Force. As we profile a CAWG member with whom you may have worked, you may gain a deeper appreciation of their contributions, and of the breadth and uniqueness of the background they bring to our mission.

Capt. Louise Mateos, CAP



Photo credit: Miguel Mateos

Capt. Louise Mateos joined the Civil Air Patrol in November, 2016, and is a member of Squadron 10 in Palo Alto, which is part of Group 2. She quickly earned Mission Scanner, Mission Observer, Airborne Photographer, and Mission Pilot aircrew ratings and initially served as the squadron Professional Development Officer. She is now the squadron Deputy Commander for Cadets.

Capt. Mateos came to CAP in a roundabout way. She grew up in California, studied aerospace engineering, and spent some time in the U.S. Army Reserves as a Signal Officer. After earning a pilot certificate and instrument rating 30+ years ago, she took some time off flying to pursue a career at Lockheed Martin in the area of spacecraft flight software and raise three daughters. This involved coaching soccer, leading girl scout troops, and taekwondo. It also involved volunteering in local STEM outreach organizations. But she always wanted to fly again.

Capt. Mateos returned to flight in 2015 where she was looking for a community to join, spend her time volunteering, and continue learning. At a local airshow, she was recruited by a Squadron 10 cadet and quickly joined. Since then, she has learned that she enjoys taking cadets on orientation rides and being part of a crew.

1st Lt Dennis Lau, CAP



Photo credit: Charles Bruno, LAXPD

1st Lt. Dennis Lau, joined CAP in 1972 as a cadet in San Fernando Cadet Squadron 7 and earned his Earhart Award within two years. He was recognized as honor cadet of the Travis AFB encampment in 1973, promoted to C/Lt Col, squadron cadet commander, chairman of the Group 1 Cadet Advisory Council, and encampment commander.

As a young man, 1st Lt. Lau worked in the family business, a procurement office for foreign governments, militaries, and airlines. His family also operated an FAA repair station at Burbank

Airport. Lt. Lau has traveled to various third-world nations and helped organize and operate a challenging last-minute Hajj airlift between Africa and Saudi Arabia. He holds commercial, instrument, multi-engine and CFII certificates, as well as an A&P certificate. A believer that there are no “perfectly good airplanes,” Lt. Lau is a USPA Master Rated Skydiver and authored the article, “the same air,” about jumping with the members of the former Soviet skydiving team outside of Moscow, shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

1st Lt. Lau holds a B.S. in Criminal Justice and an MPA in public management and leadership, POST Management, HAZMAT technician, and an Airport Certified Employee. Lt Lau has been shooting competitively since the 1980s and has competed with a team in the World Police and Fire Games. Previously an Airport Police watch commander at LAX, today you can find 1st Lt. Lau at the Van Nuys Airport, partnering with the aviation community, leading a team of law enforcement professionals as their OIC. 1st Lt. Lau is a current member of Van Nuys Hawker Squadron 128 and enjoys spending time with his wife and family. He can be seen in the following CAP Sq.128 video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=raVpYgxmnnY>

C/Maj. Thea Kirkpatrick, CAP

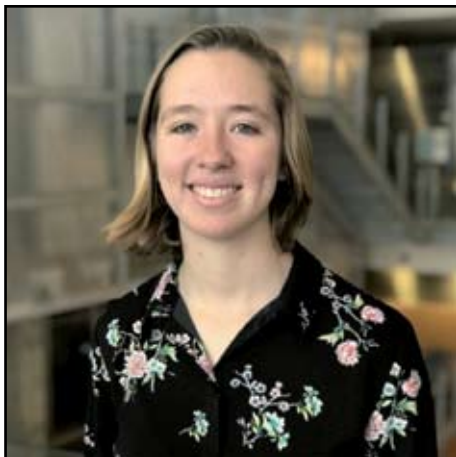


Photo credit: UW Madison TEAM Lab

Cadet Major Thea Kirkpatrick has served CAP, California Wing for five years. She recently served as cadet commander for Cable Composite

Squadron 25, and has been involved in prominent CAP roles, including March ARB Airshow basecamp manager, Riverside Airshow cadet commander, and Alaska Wing Encampment squadron first sergeant. C/Maj. Kirkpatrick has earned her Amelia Earhart Award, as well as a Commander’s Commendation. Squadron 25 obtained the Quality Cadet Unit Award under her leadership as cadet commander. She also participated in Civil Air Patrol’s national CAP Week event at Cessna’s Independence, KS manufacturing facility, where she worked with employees on the assembly line.

C/Maj. Kirkpatrick is currently enrolled in her third year at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where she is studying mechanical engineering and serves as a TEAM Lab student technician and woodworking instructor. She is also a braking system team member for UW-Madison’s SAE Formula chassis team, where she works on a variety of fabrication projects for the production of the team’s formula car.

Most recently, C/Maj. Kirkpatrick earned a Textron Aviation Process Engineering internship, where she completed blueprint and sheet metal training, updated floorplans using AutoCAD, assisted the tooling and jig shop by welding and adjusting a new jig and performing tolerance checks on the old ‘50s era jig. During this internship, she assisted in Cessna’s 206 and 182 fuselage redesign by laying down jigs for both airframes.

She serves as a role-model for others who choose to pursue a STEM related career. She can be seen in a video called “Becoming a Civil Air Patrol [CAP] Intern at Textron Aviation.”

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/-bO0dv2dQwc>

Continued . . .

Member Highlights *Continued*

Maj. Raymond Gould, CAP



Photo credit: Maj. Aaron Stout

Maj. Raymond Gould has served as a CAP member for almost 11 years, most recently as commander of March Field Composite Squadron 45 at March Air Reserve Base and Group 3 Aerospace Education Officer. Originally from Queens, New York, Maj. Gould joined the U.S. Marine Corps and served in various roles such as drill instructor, UH-1N (Huey) helicopter combat door gunner in the Gulf War, post theater, and coordinating special projects associated with equipment updates including hardware and software. He served 12 years in the Marine Corps and retired as a SSgt. While serving his country, he also earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree.

Maj. Gould's civilian experience includes a dynamic career building companies including a web solutions firm that provided web designs and market-

ing services, as well as a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business called Gould Government Product Solutions. Maj. Gould also served as a chaplain and service officer for an American Legion Post, as an associate pastor of his church, and as Captain for the SoCal Patriot Guard Riders, a diverse group of motorcycle riders who share their respect for fallen soldiers and their families.

Maj. Gould has a love of aviation that goes beyond CAP. He served as past president of an RC club, Menifee Valley Flyers, which flies remote controlled airplanes and helicopters. He is a Contest Director/Advisor for the Academy of Model Aeronautics. Maj. Gould enjoys spending time with his family and volunteering his time in helping other veteran's gain their benefits from the Veteran's Administration.



sUAS Program *Cont. from page 17*

Along with everyone else, the sUAS team had to pivot in the face of COVID-19 restrictions. For example, we are now implementing virtual training, and rolling it out in phases. Self-study materials are available to all interested members—for all phases of sUAS training—from studying for FAA certification to preparing for the sUAS MP rating. We are also providing online sUAS presentations for any squadron or group that requests one, as well as virtual familiarization and preparation (Fam & Prep) training for each group.

Going forward, we envision a hybrid training model in which we deliver online introductory material, FAA Part 107 preparation, and Fam & Prep training, as well as virtual SAREX/DREX opportunities. Beginning in the near term, we are looking forward to following up the virtual training with small group, socially distant, “in real life” training for those groups where NHQ determines it can be done safely.

In parallel, the CAWG sUAS team is developing collaborations with outside agencies and companies. The objective here is for CAWG to attain a leadership position where our customers recognize our technological capabilities in providing sUAS imaging and data products.

If you are interested in flying sUAS for CAP, please reach out to your group's sUAS leader; for cadets, contact our Cadet Deputy. Alternatively, please send me a note. If you haven't yet seen CAWG's introductory presentation on sUAS, please ask your squadron commander or view one of the recorded versions in Microsoft Teams®: The sUAS Pilots and Technicians group in Teams is open to all CAWG members.



Group 2 Tests Disaster Relief Training in a Fully Virtual Environment

Capt. Karin Hollerbach, Capt. Keith Breton, and Capt. Joseph Spears

How do we keep our members engaged with the mission and each other during a period of CAP demobilization when we can't even meet in person? How do we maintain, and even possibly expand, our readiness in these unprecedented times? These are the questions posed by Lt. Col. Noel Luneau, Commander, San Francisco Bay Area Group 2.

The solution? A virtual exercise or VEX. One with sufficient realism so that members can receive training toward their skills qualifications without leaving their homes.

On two consecutive weekends in May, forty-five Group 2 members participated in air, ground, and base operations as part of CAWG's first VEX. A total of seven air sorties and two ground sorties were conducted, incorporating both disaster relief (DR) and search and rescue (SAR) scenarios. The mission represented the first fully virtual training exercise of its kind.

It is a formidable challenge to simulate an authentic Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX), or even an actual mission, in a totally virtual environment. To make all this happen, the project officer, Capt. Keith Breton, formed a project team. Similar to an in-person SAREX, the team decided they would need air, ground, and small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS) scenarios for the crews to follow. Unlike in an in-person SAREX, the scenarios needed to be complemented with detailed scripting to help flesh out the simulation.

Aircrew training included three emergency locator transmitter (ELT) searches, three visual searches, and one airborne photography sortie. One of the searches resulted in a successful find of a simulated downed aircraft, and the aircrew saw just how challenging it is to see an aircraft on the ground-- even when the aircraft was a fully intact (virtual) airliner! The find also enabled further training on the process of coordinating with a ground team to direct it to the site.



Aircraft track for ELT search. Photo credit: Lt. Col. Kevin McDowell



Aircrew identifies a missing aircraft during a route search. (Missing aircraft circled in red.) Photo credit: Capt. Joseph Spears

The second ground sortie was conducted by an sUAS team for a virtual damage assessment of a site in Fremont, following a simulated earthquake on the Hayward fault. sUAS sorties present special challenges, as the process for obtaining releases is somewhat complex, involving both ground sortie releases and flight releases. The team consisted of two sUAS Mission Pilots (UASMPs) and Technicians (UASTs),

as well as two trainees. Together, they walked through the details of the process, from briefing to getting to the operational area and eventually back to base for debriefing. Not only did the team have fun learning, they were also able to refine CAWG's sUAS training procedures. Although the focus of the SAREX was on demonstrating virtual training, it also provided CAWG one of its first opportunities to conduct field training in the new field of sUAS.

Due to our Wing-wide access to the software application, Microsoft Teams® was chosen as the primary tool for operating the VEX. It was used to keep participants in communication with each other (via video conferencing and text chatting), and it aided coordination with its file storage and shared access capabilities. Capt. Joe Spears, Group 2 Aerospace Education Officer and qualified Mission Observer (MO), was challenged with developing a flight simulation environment for the aircrews. He found a way to integrate multiple commercially available flight simulators in order to allow full aircrews to work together in the same virtual aircraft. We flew Mission Pilots (MPs), MOs, and either Mission Scanners or Airborne Photographers together, even though they were physically in different locations-- even different cities! Capt. Spears designed and developed a new tool to track the mission aircraft and display the result in Google Earth® for the base staff to monitor, very much like how we utilize the Tracs program to monitor real CAP aircraft. Capt. Spears aptly named it VexTracs.



View from the cockpit. Photo credit: Capt. Joseph Spears

The virtual base was staffed with an incident commander; a mission safety officer; a public information officer; several branch directors, including air ops, ground ops, and the unofficial sUAS ops; as well as mission staff assistants and mission radio operators.

In addition to the staffing one might expect to find in a normal mission as part of the incident

command system (ICS), we added the concept of channel controllers. These individuals were signed in to the mission as branch directors and provided scenario guidance as well as mentoring on a combination of topics, such as technology and sortie planning and execution. This gave VEX planners greater flexibility in crew selection than would be possible in real life missions. This enabled, for example, the channel controller to simultaneously mentor an MP



Part of the virtual incident command post. Photo credit: Capt. Karin Hollerbach

trainee and an MO trainee.

No full-scale SAREX would be complete without a black hat team. Since this was our first time conducting a fully virtual exercise, a lot of the unforeseen events that occurred were self-induced (unintentionally!) by either the planning team or the participants. As a result, during the first operational period the black hat team was more inclined to positively support existing operations than to create the fault injects we would normally associate with black hats. By the second weekend, however, all bets were off – and teams found themselves having to deal with events such as simulated alternator failures and debris encountered while taxiing to the runway, resulting in virtual flat tires.

Participants came from across California but were primarily composed of members of Groups 2 and 5, all participating remotely from their home locations. The VEX was made possible through a combination of technologies, including Microsoft Teams, various flight simulators, and other tools that allowed computers to share virtual location data. Prior to the mission dates, participants were given training in the specific technologies used, and they were coached on critical software installations, so they could concentrate fully on the mission environment during the exercise’s operational periods. The event was managed and tracked as if it were a traditional, in-person mission, using CAP’s Web Mission Information and Reporting System (WMIRS).

According to the mission’s incident commander, Lt. Col. Chris Suter, the exercise “was a tremendous opportunity to hone basic skills during a time where operating in a face-to-face training environment is not possible. Without this virtual training, skills would erode. It also allows us to develop a training regimen and hone skills when the weather is poor during the winter.”

Using technologies in a virtual world enables participants to practice scenarios that are not possible in the real world, such as placing an aircraft in the search area for participants to find. Similarly, an MP could fly with multiple mission scanners, while the number of occupants in the aircraft in a live mission would be limited due to safety considerations.

Cadets are normally not given opportunities to learn many of CAP’s advanced emergency services skills due to the risks involved in the field, and another benefit of the VEX was that cadets could expand their critical skill sets using these online tools.

Even with room for improvement, the exercise allowed for increased engagement of members and provided previously unavailable training and interaction in a low or no-risk environment. One of the participants, 2nd Lt. Paul Rainville, summarized what many VEX participants expressed: “I want to do more of these. We have only begun to unlock their potential.”

VEX training arose out of COVID-19 restrictions on in-person meetings. Beyond that, we see it as an additional tool once restrictions are eased. For example, use of VEXs may enable new members to more easily transition from ground schools to their first SAREX/DREX experiences. Group 2, and we hope CAWG, is looking forward to refining and integrating VEXs into an expanded training tool portfolio.



**INTEGRITY • VOLUNTEER SERVICE
EXCELLENCE • RESPECT**

Semper Exploro

Lt. Col. David Oberhettinger, Bear Facts Editor

Editor's Note: The editor of Bear Facts also serves as the Chief Knowledge Officer Emeritus of the NASA/Caltech Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena, California-- this world's preeminent development and operations center for the robotic exploration of deep space. It is his great privilege to serve on the only team that will be the first to explore the solar system.

On July 30, JPL launched Perseverance, the fifth Mars rover, into the black of deep space on a trajectory for Mars. Its mission—to seek signs of ancient life and collect rock and soil samples for possible return to Earth. Landing in Jezero Crater on Mars on February 18 of next year, the expectation is that the rover will operate at least one Martian year while exploring the surface, searching for signs of ancient microbial life that offer clues to the past habitability of Mars, taking samples of Martian rocks and soil and storing them for later shipment to Earth, and testing technologies to help pave the way for future human exploration of Mars.



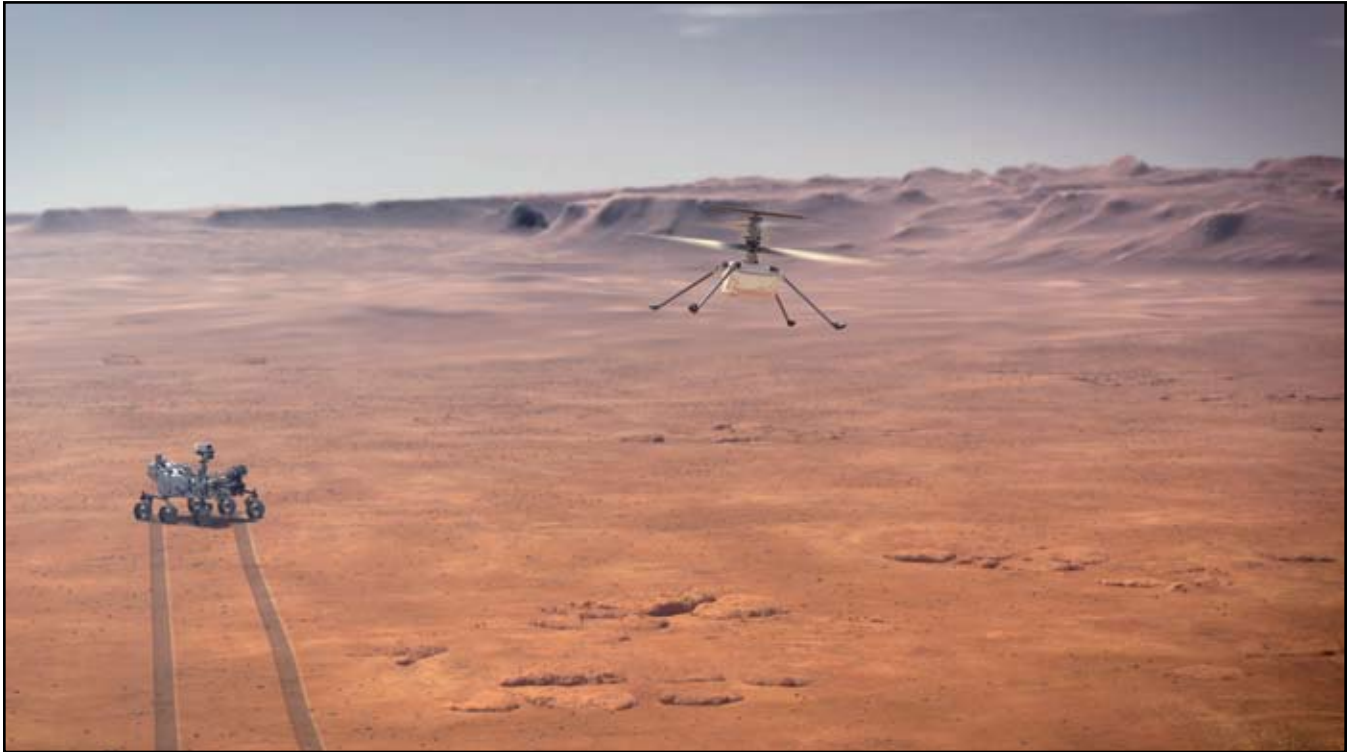
The Mars 2020 "Perseverance" rover. Image credit: NASA

Mars surface exploration is only a single facet of our nation's deep space exploration mission. JPL spacecraft have visited all the planets, landed by a liquid methane lake on Titan, placed nine landers and rovers on Mars, fired a guided penetrator into a moving comet, and Voyager has left the solar system and is still radioing back science product from interstellar space. Central to these voyages of discovery is the Search for Life—though not necessarily life as we know it.

JPL's motto is "Dare Mighty Things." This summons recognizes that space exploration is a very risky business, because the deep space that we do know is an extremely hostile environment—plus there are also many unknown threats. Perseverance's cruise to Mars and its operations on the Martian surface must endure launch vibration and shock, zero gravity, vacuum, high energy solar particle impacts, cosmic radiation dose, temperature extremes, hypersonic descent, deployment re-contact, gravitational variations, landing shock, dust contamination, damage induced by mechanical wear and by terrain, ionizing radiation, thermal cycling, one-way light time (OWLT) commanding delays, and other yet unknown hazards. Various nations have made at least twenty attempts to land spacecraft on Mars, and only the U.S. has been successful (with nine successes to date).

The Mars 2020 mission includes a full suite of science instruments mounted on the rover's deck, plus an amazing Wright Brothers-class experiment slung underneath. The density of Earth's atmosphere,

which provides lift for aircraft, is approximately 166 times the density of Mars' thin atmosphere. (Walking into a 300-mph headwind on Mars, you would not even have to lean into the 2 mph-equivalent wind.) Yet slung under Perseverance's chassis is a 4-lb. Mars Helicopter experiment—the first aircraft to attempt controlled flight on another planet—enabled by large and fast-spinning rotor blades. Named “Ingenuity,” the copter will remain within a 0.6-mile radius of Perseverance so it can communicate wirelessly with the rover, which will in turn relay the 13-megapixel color photos back to Earth. The helicopter will attempt up to five flights, lasting up to 90 seconds at a time, over the course of 30 “sols” (Martian days). We expect to




When the “Ingenuity” Mars Helicopter attempts its first test flight on the Red Planet, the Mars 2020 Perseverance rover will be close by. Image credit: NASA



The author holds one of Mars Helicopter's lightweight, carbon fiber, rotor blades in a photo taken prior to Ingenuity's integration with the Perseverance rover. Photo credit: Lt. Col. David Oberhettinger

learn a lot about flying a helicopter on Mars with each flight. Said my vanpool mate, Ingenuity's Chief Engineer Bob Balaram, “Someday, if we send astronauts, these could be the eyes of the astronauts across Mars.”

My reading of astrophysics suggests that a career in space exploration will literally have no bounds (i.e., in an expanding universe). For cadets who also wish to “Dare Mighty Things,” I'd recommend academic study in engineering, physics, mathematics, or a similar technology field. NASA-JPL offers a 10-week, full-time, summer internship program to selected undergraduate and graduate students. And California is the home to many astronomical engineering companies like SpaceX, Northrop Grumman, and Aerojet Rocketdyne who offer employment opportunities. Space exploration is an unending quest. 

CAWG Cadet Earns Solo Wings

Capt. Wil Geck, CAP

The COVID-19 pandemic has created hardships for all of us. For C/Maj. Brian Di Mascio from San Fernando Cadet Squadron 137, it has created a whole series of disappointments. A competitive swimmer and water polo player for Burbank High School, he has had to deal with his entire athletic season being cancelled. Then he was selected by CAP to go to South Korea with the International Air Cadet Exchange (IACE), he was assigned the position of Cadet Commander of the Los Angeles County Air Show at Fox Field in Lancaster, he was appointed Cadet Commander for the Aerospace Education and STEM Academy (AESAs), and he was selected to attend the United States Air Force Academy's competitive Summer Seminar program. Due to the pandemic, all these events were either cancelled or changed to an online format.

"But then", says Di Mascio, "CAP turned the worst year of my life into the best year!" Last October, Brian was selected to participate in CAWG's SoCal Flight Academy. Under the tutelage of his CAP flight instructor, Maj. Robin Kim, from Clover Field Composite Squadron 51 in Santa Monica, Brian has taken another step towards his dream of becoming a U.S. Air Force fighter pilot. And so, after 21.8 dual training hours in a CAP Cessna 172, he earned his solo flight wings on Saturday, July 18th, 2020.

The day started with C/Maj. Di Mascio and Maj. Kim taking off at 0800 from Whiteman Airport in Pacoima. They made three full stop landings before Maj. Kim and his student returned to the parking ramp for CAP aircraft. Maj. Kim then got out of the aircraft, and C/Maj. Di Mascio taxied CAP471 back to the departure end of Runway 12. He took off, and under the watchful eyes of his parents (Anna Di Mascio and Capt. Thomas Di Mascio (SQ137)), Major Kim, Lt. Col. James Miller (SQ137), Lt. Col. Mark Beutel (SQ35), he performed three perfect takeoffs and landings before returning to the CAP parking ramp at Whiteman Airport.

When asked about how he felt during his first solo flight, Di Mascio stated, "I wanted to fly airplanes as long as I remember. But I always wondered if I could really learn to fly. I guess you never know until you actually do it. When I was flying in the airplane by myself, I thought, yes I can!"

After the cheers from the crowd had died down, Maj. Kim performed the tradition of cutting up and signing Brian's t-shirt, and then he pinned CAP cadet solo wings on his uniform. Well done, C/Maj. Di Mascio! You make your squadron members and all of CAP proud. We wish you all the best in the pursuit of your dreams of becoming an Air Force pilot.

Brian is already continuing his flight instruction with Maj. Kim, who expects Brian to take his check ride for his private pilot license in late November to early December.



C/Maj. Di Mascio's first solo takeoff. Photo credit: Capt. Wilfried Geck



New solo pilot C/Maj. Di Mascio back at the CAP parking ramp. Photo credit: Capt. Wilfried Geck

A Missing Person Search

By Maj. Jennifer Davenport, Group 8 Commander and Ground Team Leader

We received the call late on a Thursday evening in September asking if we were mission ready for a missing person search in a county eight hours away. Could we be on site at 0730 for the morning brief with the local Sheriff agency? After coordinating with ground team members and hearing the details of the mission, it was determined who would drive through the night to answer the call. Many domestic duties needed to be delegated before the journey began, knowing that this mission could take several days or longer.

The mission's possible proximity to the ongoing Creek Fire was at the forefront of everyone's mind during the drive. Other unknowns related to the search area included air quality and visibility the local terrain, overnight realities, natural hazards, area predators, and supply needs. At the time, there were widespread wildfires throughout the area, and they were only growing. The air quality was past the red zone and off the index chart. Could we even use a "highbird" aircraft for communication support due to the current weather and firestorm conditions? And when is a mission too unsafe to proceed?

At daybreak, we found the air was filled with smoke. Thankfully, the visibility was clear enough to search the local area. The fires were far enough away to allow for safe deployment. Having driven through the night, our search teams assembled at 0730 on Friday morning as requested by the customer. Local sheriff, search and rescue teams, mission radio operators, Civil Air Patrol members, and dog search teams gathered around to hear the most current details and the desired goals for the day. Most of them were volunteers. Most of them either drove all night to be there or had been up all night completing a hasty search in high probability areas for clues.



Early morning General Briefing with all inter-agency search and rescue (SAR) teams. Mariposa and Tuolumne County SAR in red; Fresno County SAR in orange; and Civil Air Patrol in ABU uniform with orange vests. Photo credit: Maj. Jennifer Davenport

At the general brief, we learned that the missing person was in his early 90s; resided in the local area; was able-bodied enough that he typically walked two to three miles a day both on and off trails; split his own oak firewood; and was loved by his neighbors. It was unclear what day he actually went missing since he lived alone. Interviews with neighbors revealed he could not have been missing more than a few days. He did not have a cell phone or carry any personal items on his walks such as a water bottle or backpack. He was known to be forgetful at times. His favorite shoes were a pair of loafers.



Ground team briefing before deployment, from left, with Maj. James Bertz, Lt. Col. Brett Dolnick, SM Seth Rifkin, 1st Lt Ryan Moore, Col Ross Veta, 1st Lt Ryan Uhles, C/2Lt Apolinar Acevedo, C/1LT Jayden Cardona. Photo credit: Maj. Jennifer Davenport

Once the teams were assigned their search areas, we deployed the first day covering our assigned areas within a short distance from his home. Line searches were requested, with Garmin tracking devices turned on, “Ops Normal” check-ins expected, and scanning techniques employed. Some ground teams were small. One team was a Search and Rescue person and their trained rescue dog. Occasionally, a single searcher would deploy, though more often there were teams of two. The area assigned determined the size of teams. Each daily team assignment consisted of a new area on a different part of a larger map. Our team name changed daily based on a reference to the areas we searched. The assignments were given using a QR code that uploaded the image onto our phones or tracking devices. Our movements were recorded in real time, and all of our tracks were overlaid collectively to the larger map. Technology maximized our effectiveness as we utilized two geolocation apps—SARTopo and Avenza Map.

The terrain varied drastically. A search team might face thick brush and burnt manzanita, lush woodlands and poison oak, or open meadows and steep drop-offs in yet another area. Some areas had been burned from previous forest fires in which the burnt pine trees had fallen. The burnt manzanita was upright and threatening to impale us, and the new growth of a few years was higher than my tallest ground team member. Areas untouched by fires reminded me of walking through a scene in the movie Avatar, as active hunters drove by heading to their favorite spot.



Line search in "Area 3." Photo credit: Maj. Jennifer Davenport



Line search in "Area 35." Photo credit: Maj. Jennifer Davenport

The sky released rain showers on Friday. Refreshing at first—only to be reminded that the rain ultimately affected foot traffic and lowered the probability of tracking a scent. The search dog teams had just begun covering the roads and creek beds. Search dog teams were on the mission every day: occasionally, a scent would be picked up and hope would resurface, only to turn inconclusive.

The thought of not finding the missing man or finding him deceased weighed heavy on us. We would vacillate from hope at the beginning of the day due to reminders of his athletic capabilities, to discouragement at the end of the day with us returning to base with no real clues. Yet people from all over the county and state worked together day after day searching for a beloved neighbor in hopes of finding him alive, or at least helping his loved ones complete his story.

All our ground team skills and training were put to use—navigation, radio comms, scanning technique, line searches, planning sorties, following, leading, and teamwork. The “high bird” skills from our aircrew allowed all types of ground teams from various agencies to work effectively and efficiently. Our base staff was phenomenal. Our SAREXs (Search and Rescue Exercises) and emergency service training prepared us well for this mission. By the end of the seven-day mission, we had responded with 65 mission-ready CAP members from California Wing, and one from Pacific Region, in which 30 were ground team members, 10 were cadets, 25 were air crew members, and 12 were base staff. All of them efficiently provided the essentials for search and rescue efforts in rugged terrain. This was an incredible response as California Wing Civil Air Patrol collaborated with local agencies. Together with our local agency partners, we faced extensive travel, enormous wildfires, and the novel COVID-19 pandemic.

The story ends with closure for the family and neighbors. On the following Friday, the missing person was found deceased in an area that had not been previously searched and within a half mile of his residence. He was found off the main trail hidden in thick underbrush. We are honored to be a part of this important effort and we sincerely send our deepest condolences to the family and community.

There are many important lessons for each of us from this experience. Stay current in your Emergency Services trainings. Remind your family to take a working electronic device with them on a hike so we can more easily find them if they become lost or missing. Stay safe out there during these unprecedented times. Until then, see you in the field at our next training! 