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Col. Ross E. Veta
California Wing Commander

Lt. Col. David Oberhettinger
Asst. Director of Public Affairs
Editor, *Bear Facts* Magazine

Commander's Corner

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



Dear Fellow California Wing Members,

This is the last time that I will be addressing you as California Wing Commander. This has been an amazing 4 years for us all! This Wing has grown tremendously through this past 4 years and we have evolved in exciting and unexpected ways. Together we have coalesced into a single unit, capable of achieving anything we desire. Although we all sacrificed during the pandemic, it acted as a catalyst, a common enemy against which we fought together and triumphed. It was through this adversity and time of sacrifice that we graduated to a whole new level of organizational excellence. California Wing was recognized with the award of the National Commander's Unit Citation for our dedication and performance during the pandemic. Though the pandemic was a foe, it was also the driving force that made us what we are today. Our membership numbers are higher than ever. Our missions are more diverse and exciting as ever. The opportunities that we offer our members and the public have expanded in scope and complexity. From the beginning, we shared and still share a common vision, of being the premier Disaster Preparedness, Prevention and Relief Organization in the Country. Our bright future is certain because of you and all you do.

I wish to thank each and every member individually for your diligence, your dedication and your commitment to excellence. You are what makes California Wing Civil Air Patrol the most capable and greatest organization in the world. It has been and will continue to be my greatest honor to have the privilege of serving others with people as fine as you.

Thank you all for all you do.

Best regards,
Col. Ross E. Veta, CAP
California Wing Commander

ON THE COVER: Cadet Capt. Samhita Srivatsan and Cadet 1st Lt. Esme Chen have been presented with the CAP Lifesaving Award for their swift and effective response to a 4 March medical emergency at a Cupertino restaurant.



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Teen Cadets Save Choking Woman

By 1st Lt. Kai Chen, CAP

Three cadets having lunch at a Cupertino, California, restaurant sprang into action to save a choking elderly woman's life on 4 March.

Cadet Capt. Samhita Srivatsan, Cadet 2nd Lt. Esme Chen, and Cadet Tech. Sgt. Maxim Manokhin, all members of the California Wing's Jón E. Kramer Composite Squadron 10, were finishing their meal when one of the waitstaff came to their table to ask if anyone knew the Heimlich maneuver. Because they were seated in a far corner, the cadets were the second-to-last customers to be asked to help.



Cadet 2nd Lt. Esme Chen (left) and Cadet Capt. Samhita Srivatsan (right). Photo credit: 1st Lt. Kai Chen

All three immediately rushed over to the emergency. The choking victim, a 78-year-old, was trapped in a dining booth. Her skin was already cold and pale and her lips blue, indicating loss of blood oxygen. She was surrounded by her frantic family – husband, son, and grandchildren. The cadets were shocked at how severe the situation already was. “I remember thinking, ‘Please don’t let it be too late...please don’t let this be the day I see someone die,’” Srivatsan recalled.

Chen, who had completed her American Red Cross first aid/CPR/automated external defibrillator certification in February as part of Civil Air Patrol Emergency Services ground team training, started to draw on what she learned. She quickly assessed the scene for safety hazards while Srivatsan dialed 911. The cadets took charge, assuring worried family members that Chen was first aid-certified. “We had to get the lady out of the booth first, but she was already unconscious,” Manokhin said. They came together as a team to clear the area of tables and lower the woman out of the booth and to the ground. Srivatsan remained on the phone with 911 to provide critical information about the woman's condition and ensure first responders were enroute. She and Manokhin also managed the growing crowd and chaos to allow space for Chen to perform back blows and abdominal thrusts.

After several sets, the obstruction the woman had choked on was partially dislodged. She started wheezing and was able to breathe again. Within five minutes, firefighters and paramedics arrived. The cadets continued to help by calming the shocked grandchildren. “One of them told us she was twelve and the other was probably eight,” Srivatsan said. “They were in tears when they hugged us. We were all so relieved.”



Cadet Manokhin at home. Photo credit: Mrs. Tatiana Shuvalova

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Cadets Srivatsan and Chen at the restaurant right after the incident was over. Photo credit: Cadet Technical Sgt. Maxim Manokhin




Cadets Manokhin, Chen, and Srivatsan at one of the cadet's home after the incident. Photo credit: Mr. Srivatsan Rajagopal

After being cleared by paramedics, the woman thanked the cadets. She told them she suffered from Parkinson's Disease, putting her at particularly high risk during the incident. Restaurant staff said they were grateful and impressed by the teenagers who stepped up – the only ones among many patrons and staff who knew what to do and acted calmly and without hesitation.

An emergency room physician presented with the scenario and asked to comment said that since the

patient already had discolored blue skin, was elderly, had a pre-existing neurological condition, and had to wait five minutes until paramedics arrived, "I have little doubt that those kids saved her life and saved her from possible brain damage. Good on them, more people should get training and be willing to act."

On 4 April, Group 2 Commander Lt. Col. Shawn Lawson presented Cadet Capt. Samhita Srivatsan and Cadet 1st Lt. Esme Chen with the CAP Lifesaving Award for their swift and effective response to this medical emergency. 



Cadets Srivatsan and Chen being presented CAP Lifesaving Award by California Wing Group 2 Commander Lt. Col. Shawn Lawson. Photo credit: 1st Lt. Kai Chen



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Training Leaders of Cadets

The Mystical World of CAP Cadet Programs

*By Lt. Col. James A. Miller, CAP
Commander, Cadet Squadron 137*



For many Senior members, cadets are a mystery. They have all these strange things—special rules, three deep, two seniors must be present at most events, all those ranks and how do they earn them, what are these National Cadet Special Activities, Drill and Ceremonies, and always saying “Yes sir” and “Yes ma’am.” They really scare us.

But how did they get that way? Is there someone in Civil Air Patrol responsible for these respectful young people. There are, and you could and should be one!

[Training Leaders of Cadets](#) is the premiere venue for Cadet Programs Officers to learn how to become better mentors of cadets and more effective managers of cadet squadrons. The three-course program is a component of CAP’s Cadet Programs Officer specialty track.

Squadron 137, on behalf of Los Angeles Group 1, hosted an in-person Training Leaders of Cadets (TLC) class, the first since the COVID pandemic struck. The in-person model is the favored method of teaching the course because the students have the opportunity to network and discuss individual questions with each other and the instructors during breaks and lunch. This process helps to cross pollinate units and strengthen the whole organization. The classes are for Senior Members only. They are designed for group discussions because, as we all know, there is synergy in groups, where the group knows more than any one member of the group. So, what do we discuss?

Elements, Traits, & Outcomes

Who are these 21,000+ young people who join CAP? They are youth interested in aviation, leadership, and making themselves better citizens. They belong to one of 1,300 squadrons with a cadet component. The average cadet is 15 years old, 73% are male and 27% female, 64% Caucasian, 27% non-white, 9% declined to state, with their parents spending \$400-\$800 annually for them to participate.

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The key traits of Cadet life are the uniform, opportunities to lead, aerospace-themed activities, mental and physical challenges, and most importantly FUN.

What do we hope to accomplish? CAP has been tasked by Congress to “**Develop dynamic Americans and Aerospace leaders**”. This is our Mission, one of three. Our Vision, “**Today’s cadets...tomorrow’s aerospace leaders**”. Former cadets have become astronauts, Thunderbird pilots, Harvard professors, leaders in law enforcement, aviation, judges, lawyers, politicians, and fighter pilots, just to name a few careers. One thing is certain: they all are leaders in their fields.

Cadet Programs Leaders

Who are the adults (senior members) who guide these cadets and how do they do it? Cadet Programs Officer is an umbrella term, not a duty title, that encompasses senior members who hold position titles such as Aerospace Education Officer (another of our missions), Leadership Education Officer, Cyber Education Officer, Fitness Education Officer, Character Development Instructor, Recruiting and Retention Officer, Testing Officer, Unit Commander and Unit Deputy Commander, among others. They lead cadets in exploring and participating in Leadership, Aerospace, Character Development, and Fitness activities.

Cadet Program Officers create a safe place for cadets to fail. Failure IS an option and really a good thing. Think about it, where do we learn the most? In our successes or failures? We all remember the failures much longer than the successes. We learn critical thinking skills, coping skills, and how to improve ourselves. Within this environment, we introduce cadets to Service Learning.

Service Learning

Service learning, what in the world is that? We engage in Service Learning when we take on positions or responsibilities to support others, either by leading them or supporting an activity others benefit from. Cadets engage in Service Learning to exercise the knowledge they gained studying leadership. Real world work with cadets in various levels of command provides them with a opportunity to serve and lead.

Here is an example. Cadets are assigned to assist at an airport open house. The organizers have a number of needs to be filled:

- They need perimeter and static display monitoring.
- There is an active taxiway dividing the static display area and visitors to the open house must be able to cross it safely. One hundred and fifty youth have signed up for EAA Young Eagle flights and each need to be escorted to one of nine aircraft safely.
- A color guard is needed for the opening ceremony.

The organizers have asked CAP to help fill these needs. Over 50 cadets and 20 senior members join together to make the event a success. The cadets are placed under the command of a Cadet Commander who must allocate cadets to various assignments. Senior members provide oversight; however, the cadets are tasked with developing a personnel plan and assigning cadets to all the tasks. In addition, members participating must have breaks, hydration, and nutrition. While senior members handle procurement of the supplies, the responsibility to make sure everyone has breaks, hydration and nutrition is given to the Cadet Commander. Managing an activity of this scale requires the cadets to develop and exercise all of their leadership and communication skills. Will there be missteps and miscommunications—absolutely. These would happen even if this was managed entirely by senior members. The key here is that senior

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members are present to backstop the cadets, while allowing them to manage the activity. What a great experience for the cadets, and just think how it will sound at that first job interview! Oh, by the way, senior members are engaging in Service Learning as well.

Squadron-level Cadet Programs


Much of the TLC course is devoted to discussing activities at the local squadron and how to support all three of CAP's missions. In the training we discuss how to plan a meeting and what it should look like. This material is as valuable to a senior squadron as it is for cadet squadrons.

Cadets participate in all three parts of CAP—Emergency Services, Aerospace Education, and the Cadet Program—do you?

- Cadet Program Officers prepare cadets for Emergency Services. Did you know cadets are allowed to fly Search Missions? They have to be over 18 years old, but they can become Scanners, Observers, and even Mission Pilots!
- Cadet and Composite Squadrons are mandated to provide Aerospace Education every month and to also hold weekend activities once a month. Aerospace Education is a key component of Cadet Life and there are a number of fun things that go on. STEM kits are provided by National Headquarters.
- The Cadet Program includes summer and national Cadet Special Activities that offer cadets activities that allow them explore career opportunities. Encampments, usually held in the summer, provide cadets with a look at military life, and they provide 40 hours of instruction in everything from Customs and Courtesies to how CAP fits into the Air Force chain of command. National Cadet Summer Activities include 17 Flight Academies, five Search and Rescue Operations schools, five technology academies, eight Air Force sponsored schools (which include Pararescue and survival schools and Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training Orientations), two Space Force sponsored academies, two Aviation Business related academies, and nine Leadership training activities including Blue Beret at AirVenture and the International Air Cadet Exchange. These exciting and educational activities all require senior supervision.

Compliance and Quality

Finally, the TLC class reviews the compliance and quality measures of the program. These include Subordinate Unit Inspections which look at all aspects of a squadron's operations and the Quality Cadet Unit Award. TLC training is mandatory for squadrons with cadets. Both the Subordinate Unit Inspection and Quality Cadet Unit Award evaluate the cadet and composite squadrons' involvement in Emergency Services and Aerospace Education.

Come by a cadet or composite squadron and see what is going on. Don't be afraid: cadets don't bite (hard). Sign up for the next Training Leaders of Cadets course and learn more about this important CAP mission. 

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California Cadets Place 2nd in CyberPatriot XV Cisco Challenge

Reprinted from CAP.NEWS



The Fullerton Composite Squadron 56 CyberPatriot team

The California Wing's Fullerton Composite Squadron 56 added a second-place finish in the Cisco Network Academy Challenge to its record of success – including three straight national finals and five in six years – in the CyberPatriot National Youth Cyber Defense Competition when results were announced March 20.

Each Fullerton team member will receive a \$1,500 education grant from Cisco. The 2021 Fullerton team won the Cisco challenge in 2021 and also finished third overall in CyberPatriot's All-Service Division.

Results of the 2022-2023 competition, administered by the Air & Space Forces Association, were announced in Rockville, Maryland.

This year's Fullerton Composite team consisted of:

- Cadet Col. Jesse James II
- Cadet 2nd Lt. Ryan Kim
- Cadet Airman 1st Class David Song
- Cadet Airman Minseo Kim
- Cadet Airman Basics Peter Feng and Isaac Kim

Their coach was Capt. Brian Vu. All but Feng and Isaac Kim also competed on last year's team.



Three Civil Air Patrol cadet teams reached the national finals, with first-time finalists from the Idaho Wing's Boise Composite Squadron and the New Jersey Wing's Raritan Valley Composite Squadron joining the Fullerton cadets.

CyberPatriot is intended to spur high school and middle school students' interest in cyber-security or other science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

The nation's largest cyber defense competition, CyberPatriot puts high school and middle school students in charge of securing virtual networks, challenging them to harden simulated computer systems and resolve real-life cybersecurity situations faced by industry professionals.

Participants from Civil Air Patrol compete in the All Service Division, which also includes Junior

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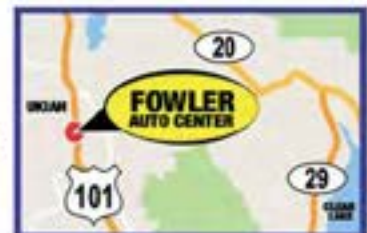
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ROTC teams from each of the military services as well as the Naval Sea Cadet Corps. This year a total of 1,519 teams competed.

CAP teams have finished first nationally three times – in 2011, 2012, and 2015 – and second or third eight times.

The **Boise Composite** team consisted of:

Cadet Capt. Owen Klein

Cadet 2nd Lts. Siyu Hwang and Natalie Salyer

Cadet Chief Master Sgt. Finnegan Cretser

Cadet Senior Master Sgt. Nathan Pearl

Adult mentors were Micron employees Randy Deshazer and Matt Howell.


The **Raritan Valley Composite** team consisted of:

Cadet Capt. Aditya Patwal

Cadet 1st Lt. Pranav Jithesh

Cadet 2nd Lts. Carl Furtado, Clarissa Furtado, and Amit Sail

Cadet Chief Master Sgt. Tiffany Tian

Capt. Carol Faaland-Kronmaier and 2nd Lt. Giri Sonty served as coaches and mentors. 



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Chaplain Diversity Initiative Kicks Off To Better Serve Member Needs

By 1st Lt. Kai Chen, CAP

California Wing (CAWG) is leading a Civil Air Patrol (CAP) effort to better support all members through the chaplain roles of helping assure their moral and spiritual welfare and providing guidance on CAP's core values. This initiative focuses on recruiting additional chaplains, especially from underrepresented groups. Starting off this effort is a series of visits by the National Headquarters Recruiter for Jewish Affairs, CAP Chaplain (Maj.) Dovid Grossman accompanied by Pacific Coast Region Chaplain (Maj.) Michael Morison and CAWG Chaplain (Maj.) Annamae Taubeneck.

In spearheading the campaign, Chaplain (Maj.) Taubeneck expressed her desire to grow the CAWG Chaplain Corps to better support and represent the diversity of the membership. In particular, she identified that female chaplains and several faiths, such as Judaism, were areas needing more representation. "Civil Air Patrol is a pluralistic, diverse community and together we are one Civil Air Patrol united by our mission and values" said Chaplain Taubeneck, noting that she wanted to "make our Chaplain Corps as diverse as our membership!"



Left to right: Chana Scop, Rabbi Hillel of Mill Valley, California, Chaplain (Maj.) Dovid Grossman of Illinois Wing. Photo credit: Chaplain (Maj.) Michael Morison, PCR

Together with Chaplain Morison, who helped facilitate these efforts, they reached out to CAP's



Top row, left to right: Rabbi Laivy Mochkin, Max Cheslow, Cadet Senior Airman Noam Morris, Robin Morris, CAWG, Lt. Col. Steve Dolgin, CAWG, Rachel Raphaelsohn, Stella Filler, Ilya Ravkin, Yigal, Rabbi Zalman Levin. Bottom row, left to right: Chaplain (Maj.) Dovid Grossman, Illinois Wing, Shmuel Raphaelsohn, Philip Hammer, Vic Filler, Chaplain (Maj.) Annamae Taubeneck, CAWG. Photo credit: Chaplain (Maj.) Michael Morison, PCR

National Chaplain of the Year, Chaplain Grossman. In addition to being the Illinois Wing Chaplain, he also directs the Institute of Jewish Chaplaincy, serving Jewish American Veterans across the nation. "Jews have proudly served in the American military since the original 13 colonies," noted Chaplain Grossman.

Chaplain Grossman traveled to California, and together with Chaplain Taubeneck and Chaplain Morison, embarked on a week-long tour throughout the state visiting and speaking to the Jewish community. Members of the public, religious leaders, Jewish War Veterans (JWV) members, and CAP members



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were all invited, and the response has been very positive. "We all have community service and service-above-self in common," remarked Chaplain Grossman. Indeed, the conversations covered many topics, and the atmosphere has been very harmonious. Rabbi Hillel of Mill Valley even brought up some similarities between CAP and Jewish tools for youth development, such as the books and rank award coins for "Tzivos Hashem," a children's "Army of G-d" which also carries a concept of rank and medals earned for achievement and growth.



Chaplain (Maj.) Dovid Grossman, Illinois Wing, with cadets from Pancho Barnes Composite Squadron 49. Photo credit: Chaplain (Maj.) Michael Morison, PCR

the JWV national commander supported this effort by sending an email inviting their members to please come join the meetings and support CAP's efforts, and their response definitely brought more people to each meeting.

The Chaplain Corps is an essential part of CAP's missions—Emergency Services, Cadet Programs, and Aerospace Education. They watch out for the well-being of every member and serve as a moral and ethical thermostat, keeping the commanders apprised of any issues or concerns. They provide counsel and caring regardless of a person's faith, and are trained to help for everything from religious services to crisis response. Joining this very important group fulfills not only all the requirements for CAP senior membership, but also brings aboard a fully ordained or qualified religious professional of their faith group, along with other training and education. 



Left to right: Lt. Col. Marc Cohen, CAWG, Chaplain (Maj.) Dovid Grossman, Illinois Wing. Photo credit: Chaplain (Maj.) Michael Morison, PCR

During Chaplain Grossman's visits, attendees all engaged and the experience was positive for adults and youth alike, including for CAP cadets who attended. "What a thrill to share stories and have conversations with young Civil Air Patrol cadets as well as older Jewish War Veterans together," noted Chaplain Grossman. One of the CAP cadets who attended a gathering, Cadet Senior Airman Noam Morris from Jon E Kramer Composite Squadron 10 in Palo Alto, said the meeting was eye opening about CAP chaplains in general. It made him realize that "CAP Chaplain Corps is there for everyone, and really made me feel they are there for me if I ever felt the need to reach out." The synergy extended from membership to leadership of all groups. For example,

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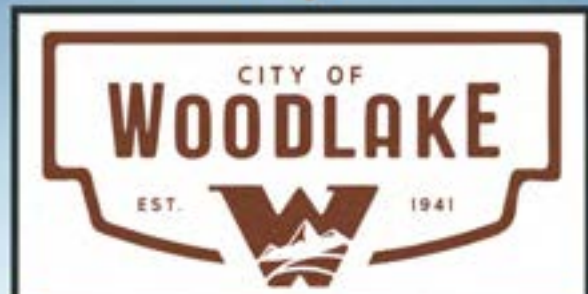


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“A Familiar Face” A CAP Story

By 2nd Lt. Nicholas Pegis, CAP

On April 30, 2023 I arrived at the Dream Machines Airshow in Half Moon Bay California. I grabbed my gear and began walking to our staging area. It seemed like any other airshow I have been to with the Civil Air Patrol. Off in the distance I could see the outline of a P-51 Mustang. There was something about this particular plane that seemed familiar to me. From the dark blue paint design on the nose, and the black and white D-DAY invasion stripes on the wings. I had to take a closer look; could this be the same plane?

It was spring of 1997 and I was a cadet volunteering at the annual Watsonville Fly-In Air Show. It was my first real activity outside of my home unit, and it was a wonderful experience. I got to meet people from all over the group, and worked a lot of different shifts over the course of the three-day weekend. I also got time to explore the show and buy some keepsakes from the vendors. One of them I still have to this day. A cassette tape of a P-51 Mustang flying, with the sounds of its engine almost as if it was music.

What I really wanted to do that weekend was to see and get an up-close photo with a P-51 Mustang. I loved that plane and had never seen one in person—only in books and movies. When first saw a Mustang that weekend it was flying overhead. What a beautiful sight and sound that was. You never forget the distinct sound of a P-51 passing by. But I wanted to get up close to one.

I was working crowd control at the event one afternoon and so far had seen a great many worthwhile aircraft-- but not the one I really wanted to see. I looked up and suddenly there she was— a P-51 Mustang up close, and in person. What a sight: it was beautiful. I noticed the plane was getting ready to leave the show; and I had to move quickly or I would miss my chance. I asked another cadet if he would take a photo of me standing in front of the Mustang and he agreed. I stood in front of the plane, assumed the position of parade rest, and he snapped the photo.

That photo has stayed with me over the years. It's moved from a prominent place on my desk, to a photo album, and then to a box in my closet. Just recently I uploaded my old photos to the cloud. The 1997 photo clearly shows me, in my BDU's (uniform of the time), and a P-51 Mustang behind me with dark blue paint design on the nose, black and white D-DAY invasion stripes on the wings, and sporting the name, “Straw Boss 2” on the port side.

Back in Half Moon Bay I approached this familiar plane and I looked to the port side of the nose, and there it was written; “Straw Boss 2”. It is the same plane I had my photo taken with all those years ago.



2nd Lt. Nick Pegis attending the 2023 Dream Machines Airshow. Photo credit: Cadet Chief Master Sgt. Marc Chemtob



Cadet Airman Nick Pegis at the 1997 Watsonville Fly-In.

I decided I wanted to recreate the same photo I did as a cadet sometime during the day. The day went by and things got rather busy. I kept reminding myself I have to take the photo.

The show was getting close to the end and I saw people getting ready to move the “Straw Boss 2.” Here we go again, I suddenly thought. I hastily grabbed one of my cadets and asked him to take a photo of me. I then assumed the same pose I did in my youth, and let him take the picture.

It's funny, in the photo, the aircraft still looks the same. It's me that looks older. Oh well, until we meet again, old friend.

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P-51D "StrawBoss 2"



Model: P-51D-20NA
Serial #: 44-72192
Date Built: January 5th, 1945
Registration: N5460V
Wing Span: 37' 0
Length: 32' 2"
Height: 13' 8"
Max Speed: 505 mph
Gross Weight: 10,500 lbs
Power Plant: RollsRoyce V-1650

“With over 15,000 built by North American Aviation and less than 200 flyable or restorable, the P-51 remains one of the most recognized airplanes in the world. Many credit the airplane for being the reason the Allies won the air war over Europe with the ability to escort bombers all the way to Berlin and back. After seeing Mustangs escorting B-17's, one Luftwaffe commander said “When I saw Mustangs over Berlin. I knew the war was lost.”

The California Warbirds Air Museum, located at Hollister Municipal Airport ([KCVH](#)), has maintained and operated N5460V since the late 1960's. Over the years, StrawBoss has worn different schemes but is currently painted as the mount flown by 328 Fighter Squadron/352nd FG, [Col. James D. Mayden](#). Mayden had 2 air victories, 4 ground kills and commanded the 352nd FG from July 1944 to September 1945. The right side "Little Sandra" is painted as the crew chief side, while the left wears "StrawBoss 2."

To view more photos of StrawBoss 2 over the years visit our photo gallery. For more info on the original StrawBoss and Mayden, [click here.](#) 



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Recruiting for Loyalty

*By Capt. Adam Staley, CAP
CAWG Recruiting and Retention Officer*

It is largely known that one of the hardest struggles at the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) unit level is recruiting new members and retaining current members. This problem was made even larger and more complicated when the COVID-19 pandemic struck in March of 2020. But something interesting and very telling happened as a result of the COVID lockdowns in 2020. Membership began to rise from March to June of 2020 even though the entire nation and the world was in lockdown. In June, despite the lockdowns, CAP was experiencing an all-time high for membership, having 38,718 senior members and 28,579 cadets. But from June onward, membership numbers plummeted throughout CAP, with only a few units maintaining their membership numbers and even fewer units being able to grow. The rapid decline continued until March of 2021, almost exactly a year after the COVID lockdowns started. From June of 2020 to March of 2021, CAP lost 15 percent of its senior member population and 26.6 percent of its cadet population.

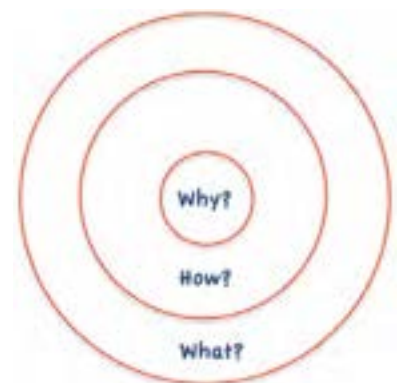
This rapid loss of membership indicates a bigger problem within CAP beyond the COVID pandemic and restrictions. Why did these members stay through three months of lockdowns only to quit in July of 2020? What was the catalyst that caused this mass exodus? The timing of the membership drop is more than just a coincidence. Many members will remember that in mid to late June, almost every wing in CAP announced that they were cancelling encampment for 2020. Almost overnight, membership started dropping. This is not a coincidence.

To be sure, encampment is one of the highlights of the Cadet Program and is a lot of fun, teaches valuable lessons, and helps cadets progress into Phase 3 and 4 of the Cadet Program, but the fact that encampment seems to be the glue that keeps members in CAP is a problem. CAP is much more than a single event in the summer. As CAP has recovered from the COVID pandemic and each wing continues to work on regaining lost ground with membership, CAP is in danger of making the same mistake that led to a quarter of the cadets walking away. CAP needs to recruit specifically for loyalty, but is this possible?

It is not only possible, but it works. The answer was there the whole time. Part of the Squadron Leadership School curriculum has a video by Simon Sinek called “How Leaders Inspire Action.” That video and the book that it is based on, Leaders Start with Why by Simon Sinek lays the foundation for this article. Much of the principles and explanations in this article are from Simon Sinek; however, the application is unique to CAP.

The answer to *how to recruit for loyalty* lies in what is called The Golden Circle. Imagine three concentric circles. The outermost circle is called What, the middle circle is called How, and the innermost circle is called Why. Every organization and movement, knows what they do, some know how they do it, but very few know why they do it. Why do you get out of bed in the morning? Most every organization communicates from the outside in, talking about what they do, mentioning how they do it, and alluding to why they do it. But truly inspirational organizations do the exact opposite. They speak from the inside out.

Take the example of Apple in 2007. If Apple was like most companies in 2007, their marketing pitch would go something like this:



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good or service. But this approach is not very inspirational.

Here is how Apple actually communicated back in 2007:

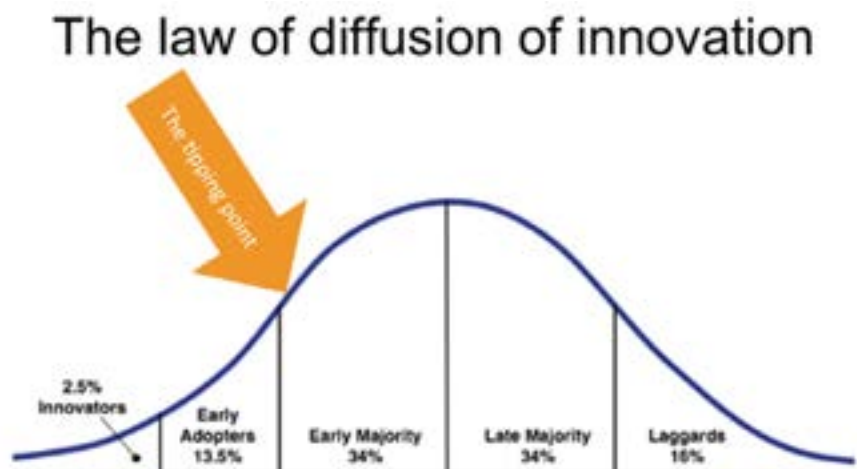
“Everything we do we believe in challenging the status quo; we believe in thinking differently (Why). The way we challenge the status quo is by making our products beautifully designed, easy to use, and user-friendly (How). We just happen to make computers (What). Want to buy one?”

This marketing approach has significantly different results. This is part of the reason why Apple has such an avid following of people who are willing to stand in line for hours for the latest iPhone when they could come and get one off the shelf a week later. The truth of the matter is that people become loyal to a product not because of the bells and whistles, but because the belief of the company or organization matches with their own belief.

This theory is not based on psychology; it is based on biology. If you take a cross-section of the human brain and look at it from the top down, you will find that there are sections of the brain that correspond almost perfectly with the Golden Circle. The outermost layers of the brain, the neocortex, corresponds to the What level of the Golden Circle. The neocortex is responsible for rational thought, controlling senses, spatial reasoning, analytical thinking, and language. The inner portions of the brain, called the limbic brain corresponds to the How and Why level. The limbic brain is responsible for feelings like trust and loyalty, making decisions, and has no capacity for language. The limbic brain is the decision center for humans, but since it has no capacity for language, that means that the limbic brain is responsible for “gut feelings.” You can be told all types of complex data and facts and figures but if you have a bad gut feeling, it is because the decision center of your brain, the limbic brain, is saying “No, something is wrong.”

The goal in all of marketing, and especially in recruiting and retention, is to speak directly to the limbic brains of the audience because the limbic brain controls behavior. This is important because it can make an organization or movement transformational. To understand this, it is important to know what is called the Law of Diffusion of Innovation. Imagine a standard Bell Curve in statistics. The first 2.5 percent of this curve are the innovators, the next 13.5 percent are the early adopters, the next 34 percent are the early majority, the next 34 percent are the late majority, and the last 16 percent are the laggards. The Law of Diffusion of Innovation states that in order to have mass market success of a product or an idea, there must be at least 15-18 percent market penetration: then the system flips. Generally, about one in ten people will “just get it” and join with hardly any convincing, but where does the other 5 percent of people come from to buy the product? The middle 68 percent of the population, namely the Early and Late Majorities will only try something if someone else has tried it first. This is where speaking to the limbic brain comes into play. By starting with “Why,” you are speaking to people who hopefully share your same belief. The Innovators and the Early Adopters are more comfortable making gut decisions and therefore can make up the additional 5 percent of market penetration needed to have mass market success.

A famous failure of the Law of Diffusion of Innovation is Tivo. Tivo is one of the most popular products in recent history. Its popularity has grown to the point where its name is used as a verb. The problem is that Tivo never made



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any money from its products, and it no longer exists. They marketed Tivo like this: “We have a product that pauses live TV, fast forwards through commercials, and memorizes your viewing habits without you even asking.” Tivo was trying to sell to the center of the Bell Curve, the Early and Late Majorities, but the result was the company shares plummeting into eventual bankruptcy. Imagine how different things could have been if Tivo would have started with “Why.” Their marketing approach might have sounded like this: “If you are the type of person who wants total and complete control over every aspect of your life, boy is this product for you! It pauses live TV, it fast-forwards through commercials, and memorizes your viewing habits without you even asking.” Things could have been very different for Tivo if they would have started with “Why.”

A famous success of the Law of Diffusion of innovation is Martin Luther King Jr’s “I Have a Dream” speech. A quarter of a million people showed up on a hot day in August to Washington, D.C. and protested for civil rights. There were no invitations, and there were no save the dates. How did that happen? Dr. King was not the only great orator of the day, nor was he the only person to suffer in a pre-civil rights America. What made Dr. King’s movement so special? Dr. King had a gift. He had the ability to communicate a vision of what he believed America could be. He would say, “I believe... I believe... I believe.” People who listened to him took his belief and made it their own because it resonated with their own belief about the world. So when 250,000 people showed up to Washington, D.C. in August, they were not there because of Dr. King. They were there for themselves. Driving for hours and standing in the hot and humid streets of Washington, D.C. was the price they were willing to pay for showing what they believed. People are willing to suffer sometimes great inconveniences for organizations that share their beliefs.

Those are some of the principles outlined in Simon Sinek’s book Leaders Start with Why. Now how should CAP apply these principles to the way that it recruits and retains members? A typical CAP recruiting pitch to a cadet would probably sound like, “Hey, would you like to join CAP? We do all sorts of great activities like go to encampment, fly in airplanes and learn to fly, go to really fun weekend activities, and we also go on search and rescue missions. Want to join?” There are pros and cons to this approach. One pro of this approach is that it shows a commitment to maximizing the cadet’s first year in CAP. Another pro is that all of the activities mentioned in the recruiting pitch are worthwhile and outstanding activities to attend. But one major con to this approach is that most of the responsibility for meeting that cadet’s expectations lies outside of the Squadron Commander’s control. Another major con is that there is little or no importance placed on weekly squadron meetings. If a cadet joins CAP based on the above recruiting pitch and they realize that the majority of their time is going to be spent at the local unit, they might be disappointed. If you apply the circumstances around the COVID-19 pandemic to this scenario, would this cadet stay when things get tough? Probably not.

Here is a recruiting pitch that starts with “Why.” “Are you the type of person who wants to serve others and serve your community? Are you the type of person who wants to learn leadership, communication, and life skills? Are you the type of person who wants to be ahead of your peers in preparation for your future? Well, CAP is the organization for you. CAP enables you to do all those things by training you at the squadron and sending you to outstanding activities such as schools and air shows. Would you like to join?”

This approach also has pros and cons. One pro of having a recruiting pitch that starts with “Why” is that all the responsibility for meeting the new recruit’s expectations are within the Squadron Commander’s control. Another pro of this approach is a balanced importance between squadron meetings and activities. Another pro of this approach is that this approach is specifically designed to inspire to action the exact types of people that CAP wants as members. CAP is not a perfect fit for all individuals, but having this approach is attractive to the types of people who want to serve others, who want to help their communities, and who want to learn-- not people who want something to do over the summer. Now, if you apply the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, will this member stay when things get tough? It is not guaranteed, but the probability of the member who joins based off of a recruiting pitch that starts

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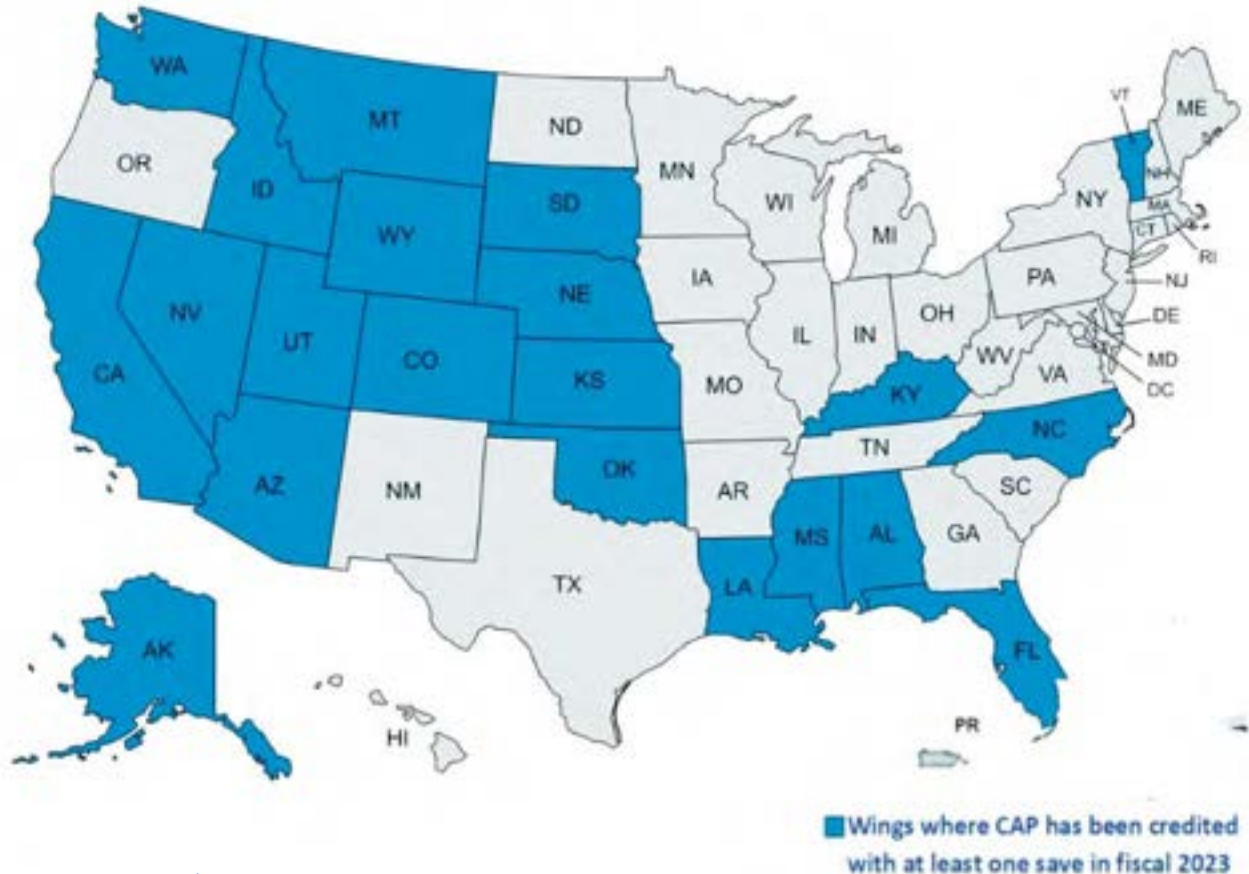
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with “Why” is significantly increased.

A specific example of the success of this way of recruiting can be found in Southern California with the Pancho Barnes Composite Squadron 49 based in Palmdale, California. In July of 2019, the members of Squadron 49 had a big problem. For the entire month of July, the average attendance for Squadron 49 was five members per meeting. Something had to change. The 3 active senior members decided to drastically change the way they recruited and incorporated starting with “Why” into their recruiting pitches. The three active senior members and two active cadets worked very hard for the rest of the year and by December 2019, attendance had increased to almost seven members per meeting. The members of Squadron 49 didn’t stop there. They continued working on perfecting their recruiting efforts, and it paid off in 2020. Because of the recruiting efforts of the members of Squadron 49, that squadron was the only squadron in all California to grow during 2020.

CAP cannot afford to lose another third of its members if there is another pandemic or adverse circumstance in the future. If CAP is going to continue being relevant and thriving, CAP will have to continue to adapt and change its strategies and tactics and that includes its recruiting and retention strategies. Starting with “Why” when recruiting members seems to have positive results wherever it is applied. If CAP recruits starting with “Why,” CAP will not only have substantially increased retention numbers, but it will find itself alongside other inspirational organizations and movements such as Martin Luther King Jr, Apple, and others. 

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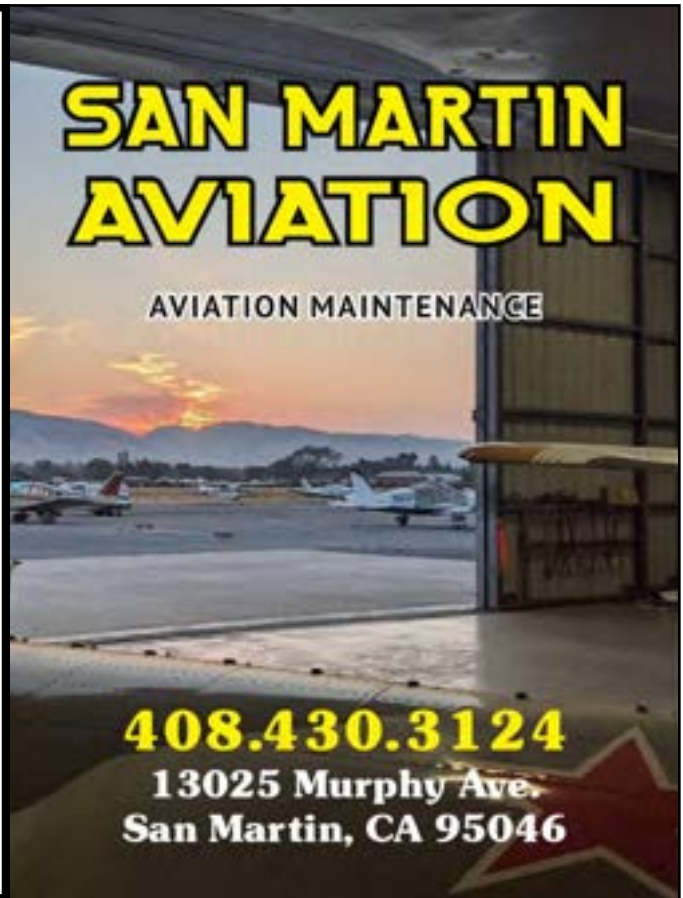
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By Maj. Gordon Heinrichs & 1st Lt. Christine Heinrichs, CAP

About 25 members and supporters of Civil Air Patrol's Vandenberg Composite Squadron 101 and San Luis Obispo Bob Beever's Squadron 103 toured the 576th Flight Test Squadron at Vandenberg Space Force Base on Saturday, May 6th. Cadets got a chance to see how this Space Force Base tests ICBMs and works as a team with other bases. Maj. Morgan Mitchell of the 576th Flight Test Squadron at Vandenberg SFB and the Vandenberg Composite Squadron organized the tour.



Tour group of the senior members, cadets, and supporters of CAP Vandenberg Composite Squadron 101 and San Luis Obispo Bob Beever's Squadron 103 spent a day touring Vandenberg Space Force Base. Photo credit: Maj. David Andrews



The Space Force Base sign welcomes visitors to one of the Air Force's largest bases. Its protected landscape of nearly 100,000 acres also protects wildlife and vegetation. Photo credit: 1st Lt. Christine Heinrichs

Saturday morning was a clear, bright day, a crisp chill in the air. As the group assembled in the parking lot, a large hawk flew overhead-- from one towering eucalyptus tree to another. Vandenberg is one of the Department of the Air Force's largest bases, at 40,104 ha (99,099 acres). Because it is protected from development and none of the backcountry areas are open to the public, the base contains some of the highest quality coastal habitat remaining in southern or central California. Much of the base is rugged and mountainous. The predominant groundcover is chaparral with coastal sage scrub and oak woodland. The base's biological programs include an annual program to protect the threatened Western Snowy Plover and its nesting habitat under the Endangered Species Act.

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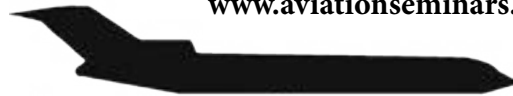
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Above ground, the entry to the underground bunker complex for the ICBM Minuteman III test missile launch facility is a simple looking building. Photo credit: Maj. David Andrews

Maj. Mitchell drove the first of the three vans that caravanned CAP members out to a Missile Alert Facility. There, she introduced Captain Maggie Schuetz, who led the tour of the underground bunker from which officers launch the ICBM Minuteman III test missiles. The group divided into two smaller groups to take the accordion elevator down about 50 feet into the control capsule. About the size of a railroad car, the facility has two chairs on tracks in front of the electronics displays and keyboards. Two-officer crews work 24-hour shifts.

Vandenberg tests about four missiles a year. Most are launched utilizing the below-ground Launch Control Center. Some are launched utilizing the Airborne Launch Control Center from the E6B Navy aircraft with Air Force Missileers on board. None of them are armed, and all nuclear material is removed from the weapon system before it is sent to Vandenberg.

Missiles are aimed at the Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands, about 4,200 miles distant. The three-stage solid fuel missile drops its first three stages after about a minute each, then flies the rest of the 30-minute flight to its destination. The underground capsule and its electronic equipment mirror the operational bunkers “up North,” at bases in Montana, Wyoming and North Dakota, from which armed nuclear warhead missiles would be launched in the event of Presidential orders. Officers from those bases train at Vandenberg. Tests aim to simulate flight characteristics of armed missiles. Operational Realism is second



Active duty Maj. Morgan Mitchell of the 576th Flight Test Squadron at Vandenberg Space Force Base, a member of CAP Vandenberg Composite Squadron, hosted the tour and provided the tour group briefing. Photo credit: 1st Lt. Christine Heinrichs



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The Air Force and Space Force operate the Vandenberg Range, which includes much of the Pacific Ocean. The Western Range begins at the coastal boundaries of Vandenberg and extends westward from the California coast to the Western Pacific, including sites in Hawaii. Accuracy and reliability are paramount. “Bombers are recallable,” Maj. Mitchell said. “Missiles are not.”

The group, mostly cadets, returned to the squadron briefing room. Maj. Mitchell presented the standard briefing on the 576th Flight Test Squadron’s test mission. The 576th is the only ICBM Test Squadron in the U.S. It is responsible for Weapon System Testing of the Minuteman III ICBM, executing four test launches a year to validate the reliability and accuracy of the Minuteman III weapons system. Specifically, the 576th prepares for and conducts ground and flight tests to collect, analyze, and report performance, accuracy, and reliability data for the Joint Staff, USSTRATCOM, Air Staff, and Air Force Global Strike Command. It identifies missile system requirements, demonstrates current and future war fighting capabilities, and validates missile system improvements and upgrades.

Vandenberg is also involved in supporting civil and commercial launches. Operations at Vandenberg SFB involve dozens of federal and commercial interests. [SpaceX](#), [United Launch Alliance](#), and [Firefly Aerospace](#) are private companies that send up launch vehicles from Vandenberg. Maj. Mitchell drove the group past a launch site where a Firefly launch vehicle was being prepared for a future launch.

Our tour organizer, Maj. Morgan Mitchell, of both the 576th Flight Test Squadron at Vandenberg SFB and the CAP Vandenberg Composite Squadron, is also a pilot, and she is currently demonstrating her commitment to CAP by pursuing her Mission Pilot rating. 

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For more information, go to Operation Pulse Lift's [new webpage](#) on GoCivilAirPatrol.com. There you will find the latest Blood Donation Center schedules, instructions on how to set up a BDC, and other mission information.

Source: [PROPS Newsletter](#)

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Los Angeles STEM Day 2023

By Lt. Col. Dee Chester, CAP

On 1 April 2023, over 22,000 guests enjoyed the LA STEM Day at Grand Park in downtown Los Angeles. What started as a small 35-booth event in Downey, California a few years earlier, has developed into a 175-booth festival that showcases organizations, companies and individuals and their science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) resources. This festival was for all age levels.

I had visited the 2022 Downey event, and the first thing that popped into my mind was “Why isn’t CAP here?” I contacted the Columbia Memorial Museum that was organizing the event and added Civil Air Patrol’s (CAP’s) name to the list for 2023. As the organizing meetings were taking place, I knew that I would be needing some help.

As the Group 1 Aerospace Education Officer, I put out a call to cadet squadrons for assistance. Squadrons 51, 64, 107, 137 and 138, along with Cols. Hartwell and Williams (squadron commanders) and Maj. Collom (CAWG Director of Aerospace Education) assisted in manning the 10 x 20’ booth. Squadron 64’s award winning rockets were displayed, as well as many of the CAP STEM kits. We recruited not only future cadets and senior members, but also Aerospace Education members (AEMs). The ‘Make and Take’ table allowed guests to learn flight aerodynamics through paper airplanes that the guests designed under the watchful eyes of, and instruction by, the cadets. Networking for future events and speakers also took place. Group 1 Public Affairs Officer (PAO) Paul Rivera attended to document the event. Other support came from Group 1’s Commander Lt. Col. Olsen and Lt. Col. Wiest.

During the event, the booth personnel had two hours of free time to enjoy the festival. Other vendors included NASA/Caltech Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), U.S. Space Force, other military, colleges and universities, museums, and U.S. Park Rangers, and featured lasers and 3D creations. The keynote speaker was “Bill Nye the Science Guy!”



CAWG cadets introduce CAP to visitors. Photo credit: 1st Lt. Paul Rivera



Many of the CAP STEM kits were on display. Photo credit: 1st Lt. Paul Rivera



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The CAP 10 x 20 ft. booth. Photo credit: 1st Lt. Paul Rivera

The day was long (0730-1630), but very rewarding! The CAWG personnel did outstanding work and are to be commended. Plans are already in the works for next year as I have already ordered a 20x40' booth with thoughts of displaying one of our gliders! 



CAP personnel at LA STEM Day. Photo credit: 1st Lt. Paul Rivera

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Working With Maj. Doug Miller

By Maj. Jeff Goeggel, CAP

On 24 February, not only did Civil Air Patrol lose an extremely valuable volunteer, but the member was very important to the success of the cadet program-- not only in the California Wing, but also regionally and nationally. Personally, I lost a good friend with the passing of Maj. Doug Miller. I came to know Doug Miller when I re-joined Fullerton Composite Squadron 56. I was returning to the squadron at about the same time that Maj. Miller was joining the unit at the urging of his grandson Michael. I became the squadron's public affairs officer after Doug had asked me to take on the role of PAO as he was becoming the next Squadron Commander.

As time went on, Doug and I became good friends and were promoted through the ranks together. Doug was an excellent commander as he always gave his command staff the room to do their jobs, but his first love was working with the cadets in the squadron. Just to name a few of the events that I had the pleasure of working on with Miller was an annual trip taking twelve cadets on a tour of the U.S. Air Force Academy as well as a tour of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) in Colorado Springs. Of all the events that he arranged, I think that the academy tour was one of Doug's favorites. Miller had also forged a great working relationship with the academy staff, as well as with the cadets that were more than a little interested in joining the Academy.

Another fun trip with Doug was taking new Squadron 56 cadets out to Los Angeles Air Force Base or March Air Reserve base to get the new cadets their uniforms. After making a trip to the military clothing store we always made a side trip for lunch before heading back to Fullerton. It can be said of Doug that he always gave the cadets a ride in the squadron van whether it be going out to get uniforms or trips out to the Inland Empire Railroad Museum for Thomas the Train, or back out to March ARB to go on military O-rides with the 452 Air Mobility Wing, or to spend a day taking the squadron Honor Guard out to the base to work with the Base Honor Guard.

In addition to having a close relationship with his cadets, Doug was very closely connected with the parents of the cadets. Doug always spent as much time with the parents as he did with the cadets. It could always be said of Maj. Miller that there was not any place that he could go where he did not make friends wherever he went. One trip that really stood out was a trip I took with Doug to Detroit, MI where we attended a squadron extravaganza with the unit that became Squadron 56's sister squadron—all due in large part to the work of Maj. Miller. Yet another new friend that Doug made was with Maj Duane Reid, USAF, the Airfield Commander at Davis Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, AZ. A cadet trip that Doug arranged was a stopover at D-M AFB where the cadets were able to spend a dinner with some of the junior officers under Maj Reid's command. The officers spent time with the cadets discussing careers as Air Force officers. As a PAO, Doug gave me ideas for stories that would ultimately get published in Bear Facts and the Volunteer magazine. Miller also gave me the encouragement to get my rating as a Public Information Officer. Again, it can always be said of my friend Doug that he ALWAYS encouraged his cadets to live up to their fullest potential. Not only did Doug encourage his cadets, but also members of his command staff.

Living close to Fullerton Airport, I was usually one of the first to arrive for Squadron 56 meetings: it was not unusual to see Doug sitting in the hangar having a bite to eat prior to the meeting. We always



Maj. Doug Miller

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had some close conversations while we ate. Doug not only looked after his officers and cadets, but their families as well. Two years ago, I had to spend a month in the hospital at St. Jude Medical Center. The hospital had Covid requirements in place, but Doug called my wife Christine every day just to check in with her to see how I was doing.

The number of lives touched by Doug Miller was immeasurable, and yet again, he always made a friend wherever he went. I always felt a part of Doug's family, and he was always a part of mine. I always felt honored to watch Miller progress—whether it be trips back and forth to the Academy to watch former cadets commissioned as new lieutenants, or going to Maxwell AFB to teach Cadet Officer School.

I have described many of the outstanding things that Doug accomplished during his term as an officer, vice-commander, and commander of Squadron 56. I think it is important that we, as officers and cadets, continue the example set by Maj. Miller. It was an honor to work with Doug Miller in the many projects that he undertook, and we all should strive to follow his legacy into the future that Miller could so clearly envision. Thank you for your friendship, Doug, and you will be sorely missed by those you have left behind.

Your Friend,
Jeff



The graphic features a dark blue background with the Civil Air Patrol logo in the top right corner. The text 'DO YOU WANT TO BE A PILOT?' is in yellow, 'CADET WINGS' is in large white letters, and 'IS NOW OPEN!' is in large red letters. Below this, it states 'Cadet Wings takes cadets from solo to PPC at zero cost. Funding for Cadet Wings is provided by the U.S. Air Force and the Roy Foundation.' A list of requirements follows: 'Ideally will have: 3rd Class Medical, Passing score on the FAA Written Exam, Student Pilot Certificate, Cadet Wings commitment statement, and Activities list.' On the right, a photograph shows two men in flight suits standing next to a small aircraft on a tarmac.

The Cadet Wings application window for the upcoming fiscal year opened July 1. It will close at noon Sept. 30.

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Squadron 44's Cadet Chief Master Sgt. Jasmyne Commiskey Receives National Honor

On 29 June, the National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS) announced that student Jasmyne Commiskey, of Diablo Composite Squadron 44, has been selected to become a member of the esteemed organization. The Society recognizes top scholars who have demonstrated outstanding leadership, scholarship, and community commitment. The announcement recognizing Jasmyne's superior academic achievement at the high school level was made by NSHSS Co-founder and President James W. Lewis. "On behalf of NSHSS and our co-founder Claes Nobel, a member of the family that established the Nobel Prizes, I am honored to recognize the hard work, passion, and commitment that Jasmyne has demon-

strated to achieve this exceptional level of academic excellence," said Lewis. "Jasmyne is now a member of a unique community of scholars — a community that represents our very best hope for the future." "We are proud to provide lifetime membership to young scholars to support their growth and development," stated Lewis. "We help students like Jasmyne build on their academic success by connecting them with learning experiences and resources to help prepare them for college and meaningful careers. "NSHSS members automatically become lifetime members at the time of their initial membership. Each step along the way — from high school to college to career — [NSHSS](http://www.nshss.org) connects outstanding young scholars with the resources they need, including unique learning experiences, scholarships, internships, international study, and peer networks, to develop their strengths and pursue their passions. Currently there are more than 1,700,000 members in over 170 countries. For more information about NSHSS, visit www.nshss.org.

Cadet Chief Master Sgt. Commiskey serves on the California Wing Public Affairs staff, and as the Tango Flight Commander and CAC Representative for Diablo Composite Squadron 44 in Concord (San Francisco Bay Area). Recent accomplishments include helping to organize and staff the 2022 Wing Conference, assisting with community service projects such as Young Falcons and Young Eagles, and working on the Curriculum and Planning team for the 2023 Encampment.

- NSHSS contributions to this article are acknowledged.



Cadet Chief Master Sgt. Jasmyne Commiskey in formation at The Presideo in San Francisco.
Photo credit: SM Heilig Commiskey

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NHQ News

Annual Report Touts CAP Support, Impact



The past fiscal year was a year of growth as represented in Civil Air Patrol's 2022 Annual Report. The publication is now available online, providing valued CAP supporters with an opportunity to see their impact in America's communities.

"We are appreciative of your support, and because of you, we continue to pursue opportunities to build America's future that are life-changing through our cadet programs and scholarships, emergency services, and aerospace education," said Maj. Gen. Edward D. Phelka, CAP's national commander/CEO, and Kristina Jones, CAP's chief of philanthropy, in a joint letter to those

supporters.

The publication lists CAP contributors in its Commander's Circle recognition society and reflects growth in the number of endowments within the Civil Air Patrol Foundation.

Several donor features are included as well, including a look at a CAP Foundation board trustee and longtime CAP member who has established a cadet flight scholarship in memory of his cousin, Cornelia Fort. Fort was a CAP member during the early 1940s, when female pilots were still a novelty.

"This scholarship is a reminder of the diversity of our membership," Jones said.

[Download a Digital Copy of the 2022 Annual Report](#)

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Many aircraft are equipped with sensors or payloads for special missions, such as multi-spectral or infrared imaging systems and communication relay stations. At an average operating cost of \$165 per flying hour, the Civil Air Patrol fleet provides significant cost savings over alternatives in many mission applications.



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The extensive sUAS fleet also expands CAP's airborne emergency services capabilities for units that do not operate manned aircraft or as an interim solution while an aircraft is in transit. CAP's sUAS fleet can be used to inspect dams, bridges, powerlines, and other infrastructure, support search and rescue missions, provide photography and high-resolution video, and more.




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Some Civil Air Patrol aircraft are equipped with special camera pods to collect post-disaster imagery with an advanced sensor that processes into high-resolution 3D models. In addition, some CAP aircraft and drones have 3D laser scanning LIDAR (light detection and ranging) packages, allowing CAP to see through vegetation and other obstructions, making them valuable assets for search and damage assessment missions.


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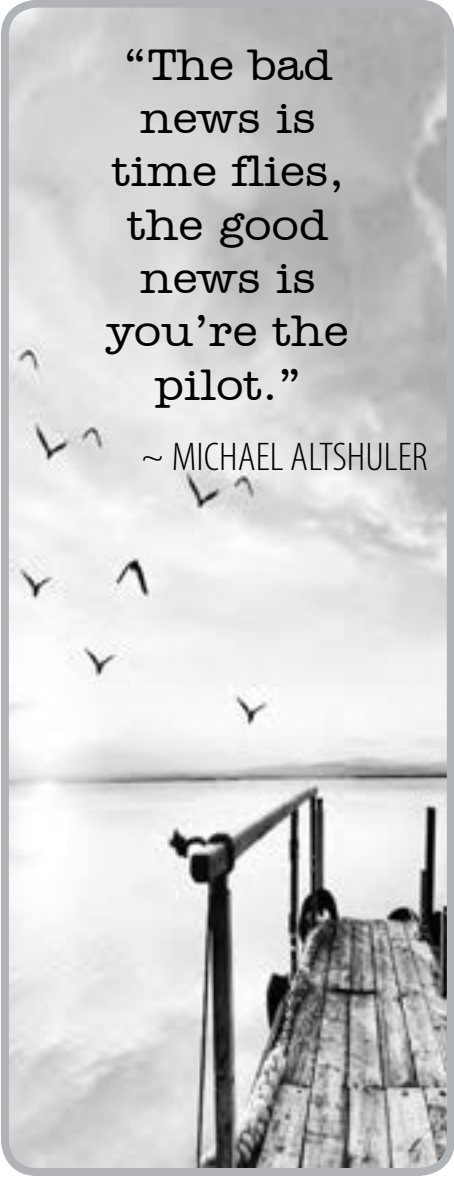
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CALIFORNIA WING

2022



Second Lt. Nick Irvine of the California Wing launches a small Unmanned Aerial System to capture post-wildfire images in the Feather River Canyon.

True to Tradition, Wing Remains an Innovation Leader

In 2022, the California Wing worked diligently to fulfill one of Civil Air Patrol's strategic organizational goals — to "innovate and explore new ways to provide relevant solutions to the dynamic nation we serve."

With traditional aircraft, small Unmanned Aerial Systems, and ground teams standing ready around the clock, the California Wing is positioned to provide disaster relief services, including high-quality imagery vital for federal and state disaster response.

Given the hundreds of gigabytes of data the wing has been able to capture during missions, effective and efficient processing of images to derive useful data has posed a significant challenge. In response, wing staff partnered with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to create a platform that not only can stitch thousands of images together to form a seamless map layer but also allows for subdivision of that layer to enable crowdsourcing of image analysis.

Now, imagery representing hundreds of square miles of terrain can be overlaid with structure footprints, property plot lines, and other important data before it's systematically divided into sections that several hundred CAP members trained in damage classification can review in a matter of hours.

This California Wing innovation isn't limited to disaster response. Recognizing the value of the wing's image collection and analysis products, agencies like NASA, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the California Geological Survey, as well as nonprofits like the Universities Space Research Association, have all approached the wing to partner with them as they analyze climate change impacts. NASA and the USGS have combined the wing's post-wildfire images with their own climate data to further understand the extent of the ecologic disaster the Dixie Fire caused in the Feather River Canyon in 2021.

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2 other state support missions

Significant Events Supported in Fiscal Year 2022

Felix Keynotes; Felix Hawks; Super Bowl LVI Temporary Flight Restrictions; Travis AFB radar certification; Joint Task Force North; Universities Space Research Association aerial imaging; Edwards AFB chaplain needs

Cadet Flying

2,001 CAP, Air Force ROTC, and Junior ROTC cadet orientation flights

Total Hours Flown

7,197

Financial

\$88,000 in state funding
\$15,396,547 value of wing's volunteer hours

National Commander

Maj. Gen. Edward D. Phelka
ephelka@capnhq.gov

Region Commander

Col. Virginia M. Nelson
vnelson@capnhq.gov

Wing Commander

Col. Ross E. Veta
ross.veta@cawg.cap.gov

Government Relations Advisor

Lt. Col. Mark Kempton
mark.kempton@cawg.cap.gov

Wing Info

P.O. Box 7688
Van Nuys, CA 91409-7688
858-672-1754

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We proudly salute and support the men, women, and young cadets for their hard work and dedication in the California CAP...Keep up the great work!

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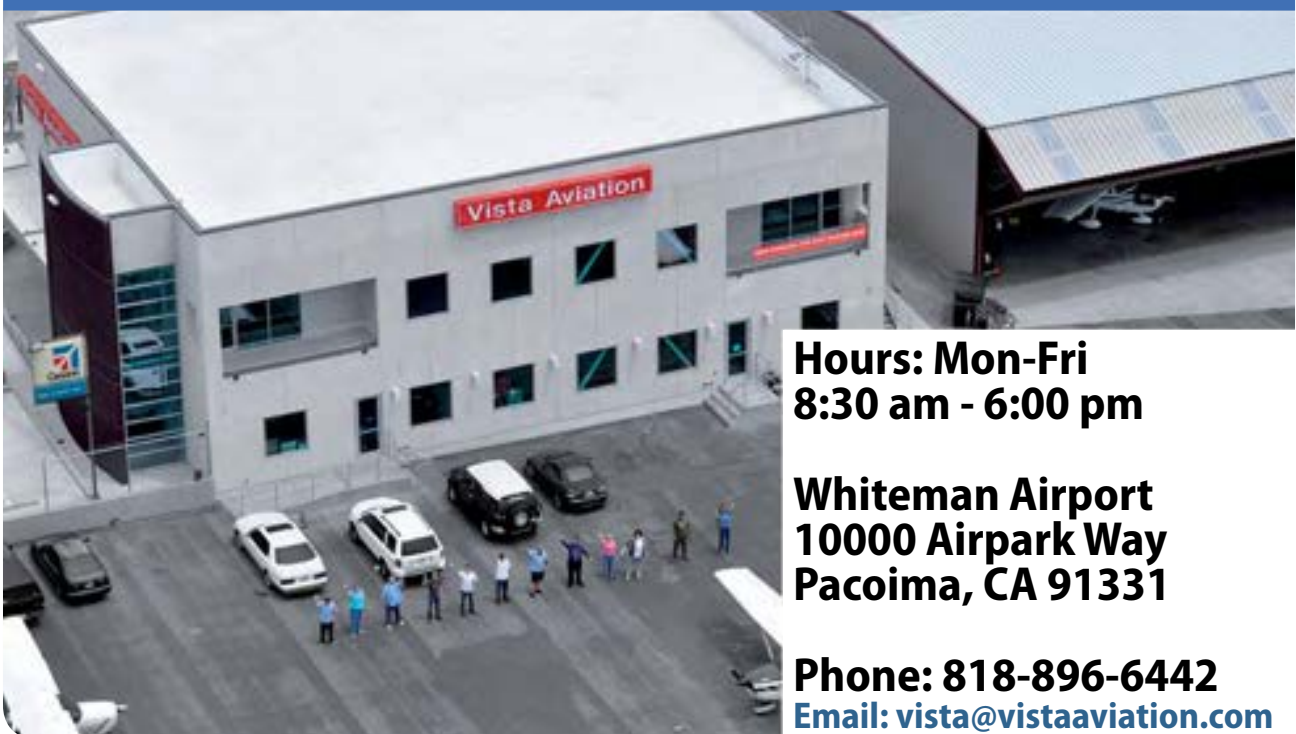
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