



NEWS

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CAP to launch 75th anniversary celebration

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala. – As Civil Air Patrol’s Command Council convenes in Washington, D.C., next week to brief Congress on the U.S. Air Force auxiliary’s primary missions, members will also pause to help launch the yearlong celebration of the organization’s 75th anniversary.

CAP’s 2016 Legislative Day is scheduled for Feb. 25 on Capitol Hill. Every year, delegations from each of Civil Air Patrol’s 52 wings meet with their representatives in the U.S. House and U.S. Senate to update them on CAP’s congressionally mandated missions of emergency services, aerospace education and cadet programs.

“This will be a special Legislative Day,” said CAP National Commander Maj. Gen. Joe Vazquez. “In addition to the opportunity to tell CAP’s stories of service, sacrifice and love of country to our representatives and senators, we will also celebrate the start of our 75th anniversary year.”

In advance of the celebration kickoff in the nation’s capital, a new Civil Air Patrol website has been set up. For more information, visit www.CAP75th.com.

Civil Air Patrol’s chief historian, Col. Frank Blazich, said the organization’s milestone anniversary provides “a unique opportunity” to elevate public awareness about CAP, its heritage, programs and future missions. “Notably, we are able to reflect upon the accomplishments of our membership and organization to better position both for the next 75 years,” he said.

CAP doesn’t officially turn 75 years old until Dec. 1, 2016, but officials believe the birthday is worthy of a yearlong celebration, beginning with a reception on Capitol Hill on the evening of Feb. 25. The anniversary launch event will feature remarks from Capt. Jill Paulson, granddaughter of CAP’s founder Gill Robb Wilson.

“This will give us a chance to thank the many people who have supported Civil Air Patrol — members of Congress, our Air Force partners and others. Their support has helped make CAP the premier public service organization it is today,” said Vazquez.

CAP’s 75th Anniversary theme is “Civil Air Patrol — Always Vigilant for America, 1941-2016.”

Anniversary activities and displays are planned throughout the year – at EAA’s AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wisconsin; the Air Force Association’s Air & Space Conference in National Harbor, Maryland; the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum’s World War II Weekend in Reading, Pennsylvania; and the Vectren Air Show in Dayton, Ohio. The observances will culminate with a 75th Anniversary Gala back in the nation’s capital at the Smithsonian’s Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center on Dec. 1.

“Since its earliest days, when more than 200,000 Americans responded to the call for service by volunteering during World War II, CAP has kept a vigilant watch on the homeland,” said Blazich. “Today that vigilance continues in a myriad of emergency services, disaster relief and homeland security missions, each focused on the well-being and protection of our citizens.”

Since 2010, CAP has responded to both natural and manmade disasters, including the Deepwater Horizon oil spill on the Gulf Coast, Hurricane Sandy on the Eastern Seaboard, flooding in the Midwest, tornadoes in the South and Southwest, wildfires in California, a mudslide in Washington state and a blizzard in South Dakota. Aircrews have also provided tsunami warnings in Hawaii.

CAP’s search and rescue efforts, aided by advances in technology, have resulted in nearly 400 saves nationwide in the past six years.

Homeland security missions include aerial reconnaissance conducted near America’s shipyards and on the nation’s waterways. CAP also provides air defense exercises for Air Force fighters protecting U.S. airspace and helps train U.S. troops before they deploy overseas.

“This 75th anniversary celebration is our time to raise our flag, to show our colors,” said Vazquez, who will oversee CAP’s activities on Capitol Hill, as well as the Command Council’s annual winter meeting, scheduled for Feb. 26-27 at the Crystal City Marriott at the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

The Command Council consists of CAP’s national commander, national vice commander and chief of staff, as well as CAP’s eight region commanders and its 52 wing commanders representing the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Its members serve as advisers to the national commander.

Civil Air Patrol, the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, is a nonprofit organization with 56,000 members nationwide, operating a fleet of 550 aircraft. CAP, in its Air Force auxiliary role, performs about 90 percent of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center and is credited by the AFRCC with saving an average of 78 lives annually. Its unpaid professionals also perform homeland security, disaster relief and drug interdiction missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. The members play a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to 24,000 young people currently participating in the CAP cadet programs. Performing missions for America for the past 74 years, CAP received the Congressional Gold Medal in 2014 in honor of the heroic efforts of its World War II veterans. CAP also participates in Wreaths Across America, an initiative to remember, honor and teach about the sacrifices of U.S. military veterans. Visit www.capvolunteernow.com for more information.

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