

CIVIL AIR PATROL



Celebrating 75 years of Service

1940s

1941
Aviation leader Gill Robb Wilson and others won approval for a national Civil Air Patrol. On Dec. 1, 1941, CAP was founded by the federal Office of Civilian Defense (OCD).

1942
Beginning on March 5, CAP Coastal Patrol operations began at Coastal Patrol Base No. 5, Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, with an eventual 21 bases established from Maine to the Texas-Mexico border by September. The cadet program was founded on Oct. 1.

1943
On Feb. 17, President Franklin D. Roosevelt awarded CAP pilots Hugh Sharp and Eddie Edwards the Air Medal for heroism, the first ever presented to civilians. On April 29, by Executive Order, CAP is moved from the Office of Civilian Defense to the War Department.

1944
By this time, one in four members of Civil Air Patrol was a woman flying in a variety of important inland missions.

1945
CAP's hazardous target tow mission came to an end after many months of CAP aircrews serving as practice targets for gunners and searchlight operators.



1945

1946
On July 1, President Harry S. Truman signed Public Law 79-476, making CAP a federally chartered nonprofit corporation. Shortly thereafter, CAP's headquarters was established at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, D.C.

1947
Air Force Maj. Gen. Lucas V. Beau was appointed CAP national commander. In addition, the first CAP cadet summer encampment was held.

1948
Air Force Gen. Carl A. Spaatz was named chairman of the CAP National Board. The International Air Cadet Exchange and National Drill Competition became official CAP activities. Also, Public Law 80-557 established Civil Air Patrol as the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force.

1949
CAP leadership viewed the cadet program as the primary peacetime mission of CAP. This changed dramatically the next year.

1950s

1950
CAP membership topped 70,000 early in the Korean War. Search and rescue became CAP's primary mission. Also, the CAP Chaplain Corps was established.

1951
CAP supported the Korean War effort by continuing to provide SAR services and a Cadet Ground Observer Corps to monitor unidentified aircraft.

1952
The National Aviation Education Workshop was established with the help of Dr. Mervin K. Strickler Jr., then head of the CAP Aerospace Education Program and a renowned aerospace education pioneer. Today, the NAEW is known as the National Coalition for Aviation and Space Education.

1953
The CAP/Air Force ground rescue school was founded by longtime Pennsylvania Wing Commander Col. Phil Neuweiler. Three years later, the school was moved to CAP's Hawk Mountain Search and Rescue School.

1954
During the nationwide "Operation Alert" Civil Defense drill, CAP flew 1,700 pints of blood into an athletic field in downtown Washington, D.C., following a simulated nuclear attack on the capital.



1955
CAP flew radiological air sampling missions for the "Operation Cue" Nevada atomic bomb tests. Also, CAP membership briefly topped 90,000.

1956
National Geographic published a 27-page feature story on Civil Air Patrol in its May issue, complete with a host of photos depicting the organization's cadet program, emergency services mission and Civil Defense functions.

1957
The Soviet Union launched the first artificial satellite in space, Sputnik. CAP members towed simulated satellites during Operation Moonwatch flights to train ground observers visually tracking it and future artificial satellites.

1958
CAP's national radio network was used to support American scientists who were optically tracking new Earth satellites. CAP radio operators transmitted over-flight data to thousands of observation sites.

1959
CAP moved its headquarters to Ellington Air Force Base, Texas, after it began operating under the Air Force's Continental Air Command, which was responsible for overseeing domestic Reserve and Air Guard operations. Also, CAP established the Office of Safety at National Headquarters.

1960s

1960
Silver and Bronze Medals of Valor were instituted to honor CAP members who performed heroic actions. The first Silver Medal of Valor was awarded to Virginia Wing Staff Sgt. Charles T. Foster.

1961
As part of the space race with the Soviet Union, Illinois Wing member Irene Leverson is selected as one of the Mercury 13 — composed of 13 skilled female astronauts who passed the same intense physical and psychological tests as the male astronauts of Mercury VII, though none of the "13" ever left Earth.



1962
President John F. Kennedy accepted an honorary lifetime CAP membership from cadets during a White House Rose Garden ceremony.

1963
As part of CAP's commitment to aerospace education, 15 academic achievements in aerospace education were added to the cadet program.

1964
CAP established the Gen. Carl A. Spaatz Award as the pinnacle achievement in the CAP cadet program. To date, fewer than 2,100 cadets have earned the award.

1965
New Mexico Wing cadet Gwen Sawyer became the first female Gen. Carl A. Spaatz Award recipient. Also, the first CAP cadet flying encampment was conducted at Elmira, New York.

1966
A full-length feature story was published in *Flying*, an influential aviation magazine, in honor of CAP's 25th anniversary.

1967
CAP members honored Gill Robb Wilson, one of CAP's founders, by dedicating a plaque that now rests on his burial site in Woodlawn Cemetery in Covina, California. Also, CAP moved its national headquarters from Ellington Air Force Base to Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

1968
CAP National Board Chairman Brig. Gen. Lyle Castle became CAP's first general officer. Astronaut Air Force Col. Frank Borman and a former CAP cadet (Arizona Wing, 1944) commanded Apollo VIII, the first manned mission to orbit the moon.

1969
CAP added newer, faster, more durable military surplus aircraft to its fleet.



1970s

1970
CAP offered two new categories of membership. Business Membership was offered to companies and businesses in the aviation industry. Similarly, General Aviation Membership was offered to pilots in the general aviation industry who wanted to assist with missions only.

1971
CAP celebrated its 30th anniversary with a Zack Mosley commemorative cartoon.

1972
Puerto Rico Wing commander and aerospace education pioneer Clara Livingston became the first woman inducted into the CAP Hall of Honor.

1973
CAP National Commander Brig. Gen. Leslie J. Westberg presented Great Lakes Region Commander Col. Richard R. Dooley the keys to CAP's first T-41 Mescalero during a ceremony at National Headquarters.

1974
CAP began tracking electronic locator transmitters for the U.S. Air Force Rescue Coordination Center. The CAP fleet consisted of 780 aircraft — 450 of which were military surplus.

1975
During Brig. Gen. William M. Patterson's tenure as CAP National Board chairman, the board chairman's title was changed to CAP national commander, marking the first time a CAP volunteer served as national commander. Also, the USC 9441 Supply Bill authorized CAP to purchase modern off-the-shelf general aviation aircraft from commercial manufacturers.



1974

1976
Col. Louisa S. Morse, Delaware Wing commander, was named CAP's first female region commander. The CAP Medal of Valor was awarded to Dorothy Kelley, a New Hampshire Wing member and Pan Am flight attendant, for her heroic efforts following the collision of two Boeing 747 airliners on the island of Tenerife, Canary Islands.

1978
The intensive search and rescue effort waged by Colorado Wing members for a downed commuter flight resulted in 21 saves.

1979
When Col. Johnnie Boyd, an Oklahoma Wing cadet in 1943, was selected to serve as CAP national commander, he became the first former CAP cadet to serve in that capacity.



1983

1980s

1980
CAP played a vital role in emergency services after the violent eruption in May of Mount St. Helens in Washington.

1981
CAP partnered with the Federal Emergency Management Agency on disaster relief missions.

1982
CAP aerospace education leader Jack V. Sorenson was awarded the Frank G. Brewer Trophy, the aviation industry's highest aerospace education honor.

1983
A Cessna L-19 or O-1 Bird Dog painted in CAP colors was placed on a display base in front of CAP National Headquarters in memory of all the CAP members who gave their lives in service to America.

1984
In Exercise Friendship, CAP provided message traffic support to Strategic Air Command bombers and tankers and Aerospace Defense Command interceptors.

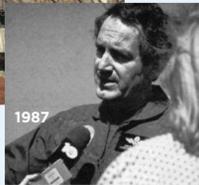
1985
CAP began drug interdiction missions in support of the U.S. Customs Service.

1986
CAP purchased new Cessna aircraft, without distinctive CAP markings, to be used during drug interdiction missions.

1987
Sen. Tom Harkin, of Iowa, a CAP Congressional Squadron member and pilot, joined members of the Florida Wing for a drug interdiction mission.

1988
Famed test pilots A. Scott Crossfield and Chuck Yeager were inducted into the Crown Circle for Aerospace Education during CAP's 10th National Congress on Aviation and Space Education.

1989
CAP joined forces with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the U.S. Forest Service in the War on Drugs and also launched a massive effort after Hurricane Hugo slammed into the Carolinas.



1987

1990s



1990
CAP National Vice Commander Col. Richard Anderson coined CAP's slogan for modern times, "Missions for America," when he wrote a note to National Commander Brig. Gen. Warren Barry during discussions with the Air Force on CAP's roles and missions.

1991
During Operation Desert Storm, Georgia Wing aircraft flew 20 sorties in support of training for Special Operations forces preparing to deploy to the Middle East.

1992
CAP provided major humanitarian relief in Florida and Louisiana in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew and in Hawaii after Hurricane Iniki. Also, CAP largely replaced its fleet of 530 military surplus planes with Cessna aircraft.

1993
In recognition of CAP's leadership in emergency relief, the organization was granted temporary emergency control of 12,400 square miles of Midwestern airspace, establishing an "air bridge" during the catastrophic 1993 Mississippi River floods. In addition, CAP dedicated its memorial at Arlington National Cemetery to honor members who died in the line of duty in the U.S. Armed Forces.

1994
To address the needs of the future, CAP initiated the Drug Demand Reduction program, which focused on antidrug activities for military youth living within 30 miles of an Air Force base.

1995
CAP changed its corporate structure, as Air Force and civil service positions were reduced at National Headquarters. Headquarters staff members became employees of Civil Air Patrol Corp. and the CAP-U.S. Air Force commander became the senior Air Force adviser.

1996
CAP responded with humanitarian relief in the aftermath of hurricanes Bertha, Fran and Hortense. Also, CAP redesigned its National Digital Radio Network to transmit email.

1997
The Sikorsky S-39 amphibious aircraft CAP subchaser and Air Medal recipient

Hugh Sharp flew during World War II was put on permanent display in the New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks, Connecticut.

1998
In a continuation of the War on Drugs, CAP was enlisted in Operation Drop-In and used its manpower nationwide to inspect local airfields for evidence of drug smuggling.



1999
Texas Wing Cadet Lt. Col. Jeff Paddon presented Air Force Gen. Lloyd W. "Fig" Newton with a CAP Honorary Membership certificate. At the time, Newton was the commander of Air Education and Training Command.

2000s



2005
More than 1,800 CAP members generated a massive multi-wing response in the wake of hurricanes Katrina, Ophelia, Wilma and Rita. Missions included high-tech mapping and imaging of the devastated areas. Also, Maj. Nicole (Ellingwood) Malachowski, a former California and Nevada Wing cadet, became the first female Air Force Thunderbird pilot.

2006
The Michigan Wing's Amy Courter became CAP's first female national vice commander and brigadier general after her election by the CAP National Board in August. Also, CAP reconnaissance flights assisted in the seizure of over \$1 billion worth of illegal drugs.

2007
Severe flooding in Minnesota, Oregon and Washington spurred members of those wings to provide assistance to officials and residents in devastated local communities.

2008
U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Eric Boe, whose interest in aviation began during his days as a Georgia Wing cadet, carried the Gen. Carl A. Spaatz Award he earned in 1983 with him into space when he piloted Space Shuttle Endeavour for its 16-day mission. Boe, now a CAP lieutenant colonel in the Texas Wing, returned to space a second time in 2011 as pilot of Space Shuttle Discovery.

2009
Flying CAP Cessnas converted into "Surrogate Predators" with a sophisticated high-tech ball placed underneath the plane's left wing, CAP pilots began providing training for military operators preparing for deployment. The ball enables the Cessna to mimic unmanned aircraft used to provide real-time data to U.S. warfighters.



2013

2010s

2010
After the Deepwater Horizon oil spill sent millions of gallons gushing into the Gulf of Mexico, CAP assisted the federal and state response by carrying out a 118-day mission that involved some 150 members contributing more than 20,000 man-hours to monitor and photograph damage — at the time, the largest mission in the organization's history.

2011
A team of cadets from three central Florida squadrons took first place in the All Services Division of CyberPatriot, the Air Force Association's annual cyber security competition for high school teams. The following year, the team from the Colorado Springs Cadet Squadron gave CAP two straight overall championships.



2014

line to generate more than 158,000 damage assessment photos for the Federal Emergency Management Agency and state and local agencies.

2013
CAP's cell phone and radar forensics teams gained new national prominence with their role in the searches for a missing plane in Idaho and a family of six stranded in Nevada.

2014
Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives John Boehner presented the Congressional Gold Medal to Civil Air Patrol in recognition of its distinguished service during World War II. Also, CAP developed the Surrogate Unmanned Aircraft System program, which allowed CAP aircraft to lock on and track other aircraft using real-time motion video.

2015
CAP flew humanitarian relief missions in the aftermath of severe floods in South Carolina, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Dakota and Texas. As part of its homeland security mission, CAP assisted in the seizure of \$1.2 billion in illegal drugs. CAP operated a fleet of 550 powered aircraft, 55 gliders and two hot-air balloons.

2016
CAP will complete its 75th year of service in December, having served over 300 million Americans as "Citizens Serving Communities."