



SPECIAL  
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## A Matter of Honor

2nd Lt. Linda Dilley

At 11:00 am on Wednesday, February 6, 2008, I arrived at the Willmar Municipal Airport to join other officers and cadets of the Wesota Composite Squadron. One of our cadets, C/SSgt. Jessica Lewison, and her family had asked us to join in welcoming home the body of her uncle, Sergeant First Class (SFC) Matthew Ryan Kahler, 29, who was killed in action on January 26, while serving with the United States Army in Afghanistan.

Family and friends were gathered at the airport and were visiting with each other when word spread that the plane carrying the casket was making its final descent. In an instant, there was silence. I could not even hear people breathing. It was at this point that I knew I was going to experience an extraordinary event in my life.

As the plane landed and taxied to a stop in view of everyone, some members of the Minnesota Patriot Guard, a motorcycle group that attends the funeral services of fallen American soldiers, and their flags had moved from the front of the terminal to the tarmac to form a line near the building. Without a sound, family members moved outside to view the ceremonial removal of SFC Matthew Kahler's body from the plane. Six soldiers in dress uniform carried the pall into the airport terminal.

After a private ceremony for the family in the terminal building the casket was then placed in the hearse. Family and friends made their way to awaiting vehicles while most of the Patriot Guard had moved into positions on both sides of the airport road, their huge flags waving in the breeze. We also moved into a line by the road. The hearse driver gave the signal to begin the procession. As the hearse, family, and military personnel

passed by, our squadron, at attention, saluted until all had passed. We then got in our van and joined the procession to Granite Falls, SFC Kahler's hometown.

I made observations along the way:

In the small town of Raymond, MN, elementary school children in a line were holding and waving flags. Between Raymond and Clara City, one man by the road, reverently held a regulation sized flag. Others along the way held hands over hearts, saluted, or waved.

In Clara City, we were met with lines of people on the street, many holding flags. It appeared that all the Clara City High School students were by the road, all holding regulation sized flags and at attention. The American Legion Post representatives were at attention and bearing flags. Clara City fire trucks joined the procession to the county line.



Procession of vehicles for funeral of SFC Matthew Kahler, US Army.

Continued on following page

## A Matter of Honor (continued from cover)



In tiny Maynard, there was a large group of elementary school children standing some distance away from the road on a bed of snow, holding flags and looking so very serious. I wish I could paint a picture of that scene. Someone had prepared a

large trailer covered with balloons and a sign that read, "Thank You, Matt." Maynard emergency and fire vehicles joined us through town.

Once we neared Granite Falls, nine fire and rescue trucks joined us at the edge of town. A flag was at half-mast at the MARR Valve Co. as employees lined the road, holding flags. As we came around the bend, there were hundreds of people lining the road, holding various sized flags. Students from Yellow Medicine East School, bearing flags, lined the street in front of the school. Red ribbons were on lampposts, trees, and flags everywhere we looked. As the procession passed in front of them, people began saluting, crying, and hugging each other. It was a matter of honor.

We arrived at the funeral home where the Patriot Guard stood silently in line across the road. The funeral home announcement board read:

Sgt. Matthew Kahler  
1:30 Sat. Feb. 9 GFL  
Honoring Our Fallen

Squadron members met up with C/SSgt. Lewison, and we were invited to have pizza at the American Legion, which her grandmother managed. The family was gathering in a room upstairs. When we were ready to leave, we gave C/SSgt. Lewison and her family hugs and much thanks for their hospitality toward us. We commented that it had been quite an honor to take the maiden voyage in our "new" van to such an occasion as this. But it would not be our last trip to Granite Falls.

On Friday, February 8, 2008, we made another trip there for the review. It would have

been difficult to prepare for what we were about to experience. C/SSgt. Lewison led our squadron members to the front of the church where the body was positioned.

We looked in awe at this soldier that we felt we had come to know personally. There was a shrine of honor containing the American, Airborne, Purple Heart, and Battalion flags; a table with his boots in front, his upright rifle with his battle helmet atop; and an array of medals for bravery arranged neatly on the table. There were flowers everywhere. Some people, who had passed in review, took time to sit in the pews to pray. Others went directly to the church basement for a lunch. We followed C/SSgt. Lewison there and while we ate, we watched the life of SFC Matthew Kahler flash before our eyes as we watched a CD production in his honor prepared by the family. When it neared time for us to leave, we went upstairs, and C/SSgt. Lewison led our squadron through the review one more time. Once again, in the back of the church, we said goodbye with hugs and well-wishes for the family for the funeral the next day. We then began the journey home.

Personal note: As I stood in the back of the church looking through a glass sound barrier and in full view of the front of the church where SFC Kahler lay, the honor I felt to be in this place in time could not be put into words. As a citizen of the United States of America, I felt pride for his sacrifice, yet humbled and an overwhelming sense of sadness at the death of this son, husband, father, uncle, and friend.

I asked our cadets and seniors for their thoughts about this experience. Here's what they had to say:

Maj. Ruth Hoffman, Commander: "A very emotional experience."

Lt. Tim Bjur: "Nice to see the plane and ceremony at the airport."

Cadet Hans Hibma: "It was a humbling experience."

Cadet Peter Hibma: "I was glad to see the people that pulled over to the side of the road as the procession went by."

Cadet Tyler Ahrndt: "I felt honored. It was real nice to see the people along the highway. Even the smallest towns had people out there."

## Airplane Found Tied Down to the Ice, “An ELT on a Lake”

2nd Lt. George Supan

U.S. Air Force Rescue Coordination Center received notice of an Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) signal in the Brainerd area. The Anoka Composite Squadron received the search call.

It was just before noon on a bright Sunday, February 24, 2008 when the Anoka Composite Squadron ground team left from Blaine. A CAP aircraft with an air team was in the air searching for the ELT when the ground team arrived in the Brainerd area. The ground team used the directional finder and communicated over the radio with the air team. All indications were the ELT signal was coming from a location somewhere on Mille Lacs Lake!

CAP ground teams train for various situations but to be searching for an ELT on a lake was a new

venture. Of the 10,000 lakes in Minnesota one of the larger is Mille Lacs Lake.

The ground team led by Capt. Andy Bosshart along with 1Lt. Jay Spreitzer, 1Lt. Shelly Supan and C/SSgt. Hanna Olsen proceeded to the lake. They found a local resident to guide them onto and across the lake. His guidance on the lake was needed to know which unusual path plowed in the snow would lead them to the area on the lake where the ELT signal was coming from. As the ground team was heading across the lake the skies changed and a heavy overcast came across the lake.

The guide took the team a long distance through various paths on the lake to a fishing area where they found the airplane. The airplane had snow skis, was in good

condition and tied down to the ice. The ELT signal was coming from the airplane. Looking for the pilot the team knocked on the door of each fish house. The skies continued to darken and the overcast lowered. The local guide informed the team that the time left to be able to get off the lake was soon arriving.

Clearance to enter the airplane was delayed since the pilot was no longer on the lake. The clearance was received, the ELT was found and C/SSgt. Olsen turned off the ELT.

The ELT find in an airplane on the lake experience will enrich the team and was shared as search and rescue training with the Anoka Composite Squadron.

## Mankato Members Tour NWA Training Facility

Maj. John Barsness

On the evening of Thursday, February 29, 2008, nine cadets from Mankato Composite Squadron were privileged to receive a tour of the Northwest Airlines simulator and training facilities.

In addition, they each received a hands-on demonstration of the Boeing 757 simulator from Col. Michael Huttner, USAFR, Wing Reserve Coordinator, CAP-USAF/NCLR, MN.

In a group picture from left to right are Mankato Cadets Wyatt Wehking, Javier Rodriguez, Calan Merchlewitz, James Renville, Callie Fransen, Christian Garman, Jarek Connolly, Jonathan Macemon and Corey Fransen. Standing with them is Col. Michael Huttner.

Pictured in the simulator, Cadet Jarek Connolly takes a turn at the controls of a Boeing 757 and performs a take off from Runway 08 at Honolulu, Hawaii.



## It's Not All Work And No Play For Minnesota Wing Cadets

Capt. Richard Sprouse



When you think of Civil Air Patrol Cadets, images of young adults applying fundamental communication skills, enkindling passion for leadership experience, sharpening responsiveness to community emergencies, discovering how to explore through Aerospace Education, and building camaraderie between members may come to mind.

But as the 2008 Lock-In and Volleyball Competition held March 1-2 at St. Cloud State University

(SCSU) proved, it's not all work and no play for cadets.

Hosted by the St. Cloud Composite Squadron since 2001, the hands-on event included flight simulators, rock climbing, swimming, raquet ball, dodge ball, board games, and more for nearly 200 members and guests from squadrons across Minnesota Wing. Nineteen (19) volleyball teams competed during the event with "Team Ryan" the overall winner.

"It seems everyone had a positive experience," said C/Capt. Steven Parker, cadet organizer of the event. "I had comments that even the teams who finished early in the volleyball competition still had a great time watching the other teams finish."

Long-time organizers of the event said it was a record turnout, and one of the most respectful, punctual groups to attend.

"The cadets were where they needed to be when they needed to be, and if there was an empty seat on the bus, there was always another cadet ready to climb on board," said Capt. Russ Portele, who operated the shuttle bus to the SCSU flight simulator until 2:00 a.m. on Sunday. "Just a great group of young people having good, clean fun."

Julie and Bennet Weidenborner of Princeton make the 35 minute drive to the St. Cloud Armory every Monday with their son, C/SSgt. Korben Weidenborner, a member of the St. Cloud Composite Squadron. It was the first Lock-in for all of them.

"The whole event was very well organized, fun and SAFE," said Julie Weidenborner. "It was a great way for Korben to meet cadets from other squadrons. We'd recommend this event to any cadet or parent." She also went on to praise the adult supervision, as well as the appropriate movies and entertainment chosen for all ages.

It was also the first time for Cadets Jonathan and Tyler Hammer of Crow Wing Composite Squadron in Brainerd.

C/Amn Jonathan Hammer said, "The lock-in helped me to know my squadron better and build stronger friendships."

C/AB Tyler Hammer agreed. "There were many, various activities such as volleyball, which was a blast, and the rock wall was really cool; the flight simulator was also great, CAP is a great way to meet new friends and explore new opportunities. I had a great time even though I didn't get much sleep."

"The highlight for me was hearing what a positive event this was from those who attended," Cadet Parker said. "I think this event is mostly about throwing off the CAP uniform and getting to connect with people around the wing in a fun environment without the pressure of rank or grade."

Food and beverage for the event were provided by Culligan water, Traut Well, Burger King, Subway (Clearwater), Gary's Pizza, Godfather's Pizza, Sammy's Pizza, Waldo's Pizza, Short Stop, Viking Coke, Country Hearth Bread, and Cash Wise Foods.



Cadets participating in volleyball at the 2008 MN Wing Lock-In at SCSU.

# Minnesota Wing Cadets Earn the Gen. Billy Mitchell Award

SE MN-Chap. (Capt.) D. Curtis Martin, Ft. Snelling-Lt. Col. Tony Tarpy

## Southeast Minnesota Composite Squadron

This past December Cadet Ian Davis, Cadet Wesley Davis, and Cadet Travis Parker of the Southeast Minnesota Composite Squadron earned the Gen. Billy Mitchell Award and were promoted to the grade of C/2nd Lt.

The Group Four Commander, Maj. John Barsness, and SE MN Squadron Commander, Maj. Mathew Wiskow, presented the awards to Cadet Wesley Davis and Cadet Travis Parker. The following week Cadet Ian Davis was presented with his award.

“We are very proud of these cadets as this is a milestone in the CAP cadet program”, said SE MN Commander, Maj. Matt Wiskow.



C/2nd Lt. Wesley Davis, Southeast MN



C/2nd Lt. Ian Davis, Southeast MN



C/2nd Lt. Travis Parker, Southeast MN



## Fort Snelling Cadet Squadron

Minnesota Wing Group III Commander, Lt. Col. Mike Moen, recently presented the General Billy Mitchell Award to Cadet Alexander Selner of Fort Snelling Cadet Squadron, who also was promoted to the grade of Cadet 2nd Lt. Cadet Selner also received a \$100.00 monetary award for being the first cadet to receive his Mitchell award at Fort Snelling Squadron in 2008.



C/2nd Lt. Alexander Selner, Ft. Snelling

## Red Wing Member Celebrates Thirty Years Maj. Mari Lucas



Lt. Col. Schaller is presented the Commander's Commendation by Col. Dale Hoium, COS, NCR.

Many would say that 28 years of service to their country was enough, but not Lt. Col. Daniel A Schaller of Red Wing, Minnesota.

Daniel A Schaller enlisted in the Army in 1948, serving four years as a Combat Medic in Korea and Okinawa. After his honorable discharge from the Army and two years as a civilian, Schaller joined the Air Force as an Aviation Cadet. He completed his aviation training in 1956 and continued his service in the Air Force for 24 more years. During those years of service, Schaller flew B-47s during the cold war and Cuban Missile Crisis, RB-66's in Thailand and Vietnam, a Lockheed JetStar in the presidential fleet, instructed in the C-118 and C-141, and participated in Operation Deep Freeze – flying C-141's from New Zealand to Antarctica.

Retiring after 28 years of active duty in the Army and Air Force in 1977, Maj. Schaller wasn't finished serving, he joined Civil Air Patrol and became a member of the Red Wing Composite Squadron. That was 30 years ago. Today, Lt. Col. Dan Schaller is still serving his country, flying the American skies, sharing his exten-

sive aerospace knowledge, mentoring, and watching out for the safety of his fellow squadron members.

Shortly after joining Civil Air Patrol, Schaller purchased his first private plane, a Cessna 172. Schaller used that plane to fly missions for Civil Air Patrol for at least 20 years, until the squadron was assigned an aircraft from Minnesota Wing.

Lt. Col. Schaller's milestone of 30 years in Civil Air Patrol is also a milestone for the Red Wing Composite Squadron, as no other squadron member has stayed an active member longer.

Schaller's active participation at the squadron level throughout the past 30 years has helped to shape the squadron into the successful unit that it is today. Schaller's service has centered around aviation and over the years, he has been active completing cadet orientation flights, and as an instructor pilot, mission pilot, transport pilot, and flight check pilot.

As time has passed, Lt. Col. Schaller has seen many people come and go, a wide variety of meeting locations, and has weathered the many changes within the squadron and CAP. He has also seen more qualified, dedicated individuals join the squadron and remain members.

Red Wing has somewhat of a unique culture with approximately 1/3 of the squadron's Senior Officers being former Civil Air Patrol cadets. He's watched these young men and women join the squadron as cadets, work the cadet program, and then come back to rejoin as adult members. Schaller credits this commitment to the dedicated people willing to put in the time and effort to support and mentor youth.

Lt. Col. Schaller believes that you

cannot have a viable, dynamic CAP squadron without an airplane and qualified, energetic crews. This is one area that he feels that Red Wing Squadron has always excelled.

Lt. Col. Schaller also recognizes that in Red Wing squadron, there is a core group of background supporters, who have moved on from being members of Red Wing to the Wing or Region Level of Civil Air Patrol. The background support also keeps Red Wing a successful squadron.

Lt. Col. Schaller prides himself with being an easy going individual, but draws the line on easy going with safety. He says safety in the squadron and safety while flying are essential elements that cannot be compromised.

Lt. Col. Schaller always has something to say during Red Wing's monthly pilot briefings on safety. He has achieved a master rating as a Civil Air Patrol Safety Officer and a senior rating as an Operations Officer. In 2007, Lt. Col. Schaller was honored by the FAA with the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award, recognizing his efforts in following the precaution and awareness of safe operations. Most importantly, through the award, the FAA recognized Lt. Col. Schaller for his contribution and maintaining safe flight operations for 50 or more consecutive years of piloting aircraft. Remarkably, Dan Schaller has been a pilot for 54 of his 73 years.



Lt. Col. Schaller stepping into a T-6 during his time in the US

## Red Wing Member (continued from previous page)

Lt. Col. Schaller always seems to be one of the first to volunteer to participate in Search and Rescue Exercises (SAREX) and BlueCAPs (unit level emergency services training). He has recruited and mentored many new squadron members throughout the years. He has volunteered an enormous amount of his time, instructing new pilots and completing check rides for other experienced pilots.

After retiring from the Air Force, Lt. Col. Schaller helped farm 400 acres of soybeans and corn. For a time, he worked as a flight instructor for Seifert Airways and later went on to create Schaller Aviation, employing other flight instructors. Always needing to stay busy, he attended HVAC and auto mechanic classes at the local technical college, later serving as a

substitute teacher for those same classes.

He says 'I never worked very hard, and I always made sure that I enjoyed what I was doing.'

Lt. Col. Schaller married his wife Janis in 1956 and she has stood beside him through his military and Civil Air Patrol careers. They recently celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. He and his wife raised four daughters and one son. Surprisingly enough, none of his children have

taken up flying, though all eight of his grandchildren enjoy their grandfather's favorite past time.

When not serving his community, state and country through Civil Air Patrol, he's also active with the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign War, Disabled American Veterans, and the local chapter of the Knights of Columbus.

Lt. Col. Dan Schaller is a living representative of the history of Red Wing Composite Squadron and the history of Civil Air Patrol, and we hope he continues to contribute for many years to come. All Civil Air Patrol members can look to him as an example.

Lt. Col. Dan Schaller was presented with a Commanders Commendation at the annual Red Wing Squadron Banquet on February 23, 2008.



Lt. Col. Schaller and his wife flying together.

## Awards and Promotions

### Officer Promotions

#### **Second Lieutenant**

Allen Alwin, 130th  
Michael Olson, St. Cloud  
Janet Stone, St. Cloud  
David Oldenburg, Anoka  
Monika Oldenburg, Anoka  
Anthony Peltier, St. Cloud

#### **First Lieutenant**

Rodney Walker, Red Wing  
Janelle Vance, Northland  
Gerald Nestel, St. Cloud

#### **Captain**

Jacob Heffron, Crow Wing

#### **Major**

David Myers, Northland  
Bill Ingebrigtsen, MN State Legislative

#### **Lieutenant Colonel**

David Odette, Group One  
Larry Brockshus, MN Wing Headquarters

### Cadet Awards

#### **Brig. Gen. Billy Mitchell**

Ethan Helgager, Northland  
Benjamin Hartley, North Hennepin  
Alexander Selner, Fort Snelling

#### **Wright Brothers**

Derek Cash, St. Cloud  
Anthony Coutlee, Northland  
Andrew Prestegaard, St. Paul  
Tim Blesi, Valley

## The Newsletter of Minnesota Wing, Civil Air Patrol

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## Calendar

### Schedule of Events

- 2-4 May-BlackCAP Emergency Services College at Red Wing Hanger. Contact: Maj. Mari Lucas
- 3-4 May-Squadron Leadership School at Viking Squadron. Contact: Maj. Ronn Winkler
- 16-18 May-Encampment Preparatory School at Red Wing Hanger. Contact: Capt. Ryan Kenny

*MAY 2008*

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The views expressed, either written or implied, are not necessarily those of the U.S. Air Force, Civil Air Patrol or Minnesota Wing. Submissions should be sent to the above email address.

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