To restate my acceptance speech at the change of command at the 2008 Minnesota Wing Conference, “I would like to thank Colonel Miller, the staff of Minnesota Wing Headquarters, the four Group Commanders and their staff, and our 24 squadron commanders and their members for passing on a program that is highly respected throughout the Region and nation. This success could not have been accomplished without the dedication and service of the over 1200 members of the Wing.

I am honored to be counted among those who have served before me and look forward to their guidance and wisdom during the next four years.

Some of my personal goals as commander, are to ensure that the successes established by my predecessors continue; attempt to make activities of the wing accessible to all members of the wing, especially members of greater Minnesota; ensure all members of the Wing can appreciate a feeling of self-worth and appreciation for the service(s) they provide and ensure fair and equitable treatment for all members regardless of status or position…”

There have been a number of staff changes made in the weeks following taking command. The most significant of these appointments is naming my closest assistants in the management of the Wing, Major Jerry Rendahl as Vice Commander and Major Sherrie Herzfeld as the Chief of Staff.

At the Monday night meeting following the conference, I began placing an emphasis of professionalism at the Wing level. To meet that end, I have reminded Wing staff to remember they are serving at the corporate level of the Civil Air Patrol program. It is important for the staff to have the experience and working knowledge in their selected areas of service in order to best serve the units for which we are responsible. Although there are always exceptions to the rule, future appointees to Wing directorate and officer positions (will not apply to assistants) will be expected to have graduated from a Squadron Leadership School (SLS), Corporate Learning Course (CLC) and have attained a Senior rating in the function in which they are seeking appointment. Personnel already appointed to positions who have not yet attained this training, will be grand-fathered in and assisted in attaining this goal.

The transition from Colonel Miller to my accepting command was less than customary. Having a couple months behind us, I hope that we can all refocus our efforts into the tasks at hand, supporting the missions of Civil Air Patrol as best we can, at the level of excellence we, our communities, Region and Nation have become accustomed.

Semper Vigilans (Always Vigilant)
Colonel Thomas B. Theis
Commander
and “living in the field” due to his CAP ES experiences also prepared him to stand out in Army ROTC.

Other CAP opportunities included Hawk Mountain Ranger School, National Honor Guard Academy, and International Air Cadet Exchange where Cox spent 2 ½ weeks in England calling it, “One of the biggest and best honors, as well as overall experiences I’ve had in CAP.”

A 2007 graduate of Edina High School, Cadet Cox became a member of Viking Squadron in 2003 where he held every position from element leader to cadet commander before joining Ft. Snelling Cadet Squadron in Minneapolis last September.

Cox said CAP also provided him something that many young military leaders and young adults lack: confidence. His confidence level has soared because of his CAP leadership experiences.

“When Cadet Cox first joined Viking Squadron, he was fairly quiet and unsure of himself,” Maj. Matson said. “As he progressed through the ranks he kept seeking new responsibilities, and he quickly mastered each of the new tasks that we assigned to him. We could tell early on that he would develop into a top cadet, because he exhibited all of the traits of a leader.” CAP learned traits that Cox now applies to ROTC.

“I learned how to look after people, work with people, communicate effectively with subordinates, peers and superiors, and be a mentor,” Cox said. “CAP provided me an avenue to succeed, so I strongly recommend it to any young adult, whether they’re thinking of a military career or not.”

Already recognizing that a job in the business world would be rather unsatisfying, Cox hopes for a long career as an Army Infantry Officer.

“Nothing against the Air Force, but for me, I think with the Army there is a lot of satisfaction in what you do as well as something different, exciting, and even dangerous at times,” Cox said. “I never want to sit at a desk.”

Cadet Cox is the son of Mark Cox of St. Paul and the son and stepson of Suzanne and Grant Hartman of Edina.
Thomas Theis was promoted to the rank of colonel and named commander of the Minnesota Wing of the Civil Air Patrol during the 61st Annual Minnesota Wing Conference, April 11-13, in Alexandria, MN. He succeeded Colonel Stephen Miller who had served as wing commander for the past four years.

Theis, a CAP member since 1980, has held staff positions at Wing Headquarters including Administration Officer Assistant, Director of Cadet Programs, and two terms as Inspector General, his most recent position.

Theis has also been commander of Bloomington, North Hennepin, Valley, Viking, West Metro and 130th squadrons, as well as Group III Headquarters.

Major awards and recognition received include a Master Rating in Cadet Programs and Senior Rating in Inspector General; Paul Garber and Charles E. “Chuck” Yeager Aerospace Awards; three Commander’s Commendations; and numerous additional CAP awards including the CAP-USAF “Torch Award.” He has also received the “Air Force Association Aerospace Excellence” award, and the “WTCN ’11 Who Care’ Award.”

Theis’ military experience includes 24 years of active and reserve service in the US Air Force. He’s scheduled to retire from the Reserves this August.

His civilian occupation includes 20 years service as a Department of Defense employee with the Defense Logistics Agency and the 934th Airlift Wing at the Minneapolis Air Reserve Station, Minnesota.

A pilot, his FAA qualifications include a Ground Instructor rating, Fixed Wing Private Pilot and Rotary Wing, Commercial, licenses.
CAC, or Cadet Advisory Counsel, is a group of our Wing’s sterling cadets; those who shape the fabric of our cadet program in Minnesota Wing.

Although, even with the significant responsibility placed on the cadets of the CAC, I was doubtful that these cadets could have much of an impact on Minnesota Wing. I was poorly mistaken, and having now attended the meeting at Wing Conference this year, I can now conclude that I have the utmost respect for the officers and representatives of the CAC.

The meeting was extremely informative and covered a multitude of different subjects. One of the first major subjects discussed was the wing conference itself. We discussed the classes and cadet activities. It was decided that more cadet classes should be held next year as well as inter-squadron activities, to encourage the cadets of Minnesota Wing get to know one another. Many ideas where put forth, including a military ball as well as a cadet pizza party on Friday night.

Next we moved on to the planning of future weekend activities in the wing such as, SnoDayz, St. Cloud Lock-in and Volleyball Competition and the Cadet Competition.

The most discussed of these activities was the Cadet Competition. This year seven squadrons participated in the competition, which is outstanding. Last year there were only three. We discussed ways to try to get more teams to the competition. The consensus was to have cadets who were able to send a team the previous year go to other squadrons to instruct them on the finer points of color guard.

Next was the election of the new Wing Executive Council, who will be taking command in August of this year. After several nominations and short speeches from those running, the Wing Executive Council stands thus: Chair, C/Maj. Joshua Woodard of Crow Wing Composite Squadron; Vice Chair, C/1st Lt. Jacob Otterson of North Hennepin Composite Squadron; and Recorder, C/2nd Lt. Travis Parker of South East Composite Squadron.

The Wing Conference CAC meeting was a very good experience for me and I plan on attending more in the future.
Minnesota Wing Cadets Take Second in the NCR Color Guard Competition
Maj. Janelle Gates

Congratulations and thank you to our Cadets for representing Minnesota Wing.

The cadets competed at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska April 18-20th. Five Wings from the region were represented at the competition.

It was a full day filled with leadership, team building, and camaraderie. The cadets really pulled together and did an outstanding job in their performance.

Top Fleet Foot Awards went to C/TSgt. Lance Myron (Anoka - CG) 6.11 minute mile and C/Capt. Jared Hendler (Valley - DT) 6.02 minute mile.

Thanks to the senior officers; Capt. Ryan Kenny, 1st Lt. Norine Olson and 2nd Lt. Russ Olson, who made sure the cadets were well taken care of with extra food and beverages for the long weekend and driving them safely there and home.

A special thank you to 1st Lt. Norine Olson and 2nd Lt. Russ Olson for all their extra efforts. Many cadets had to be picked up and dropped off at various locations not only for the competition but a few of the practices as well. Both Lt’s Olson worked with several parents and cadets to help in getting this team together.

Anoka represented Minnesota in the Color Guard Competition

C/MSgt. Peter Mayhew (Color Guard Commander).
C/SSgt. Emily Tholen
C/T Sgt. Lance Myren
C/SSgt. Hanna Olsen

The drill team consisted of many squadrons uniting together

C/Maj. Mike Kenny (Drill Team Commander) - Anoka
C/Maj. David Lucey - Anoka
C/Capt. Jared Hendler - Valley
C/MSgt. Jonathan Whitcomb - Anoka

C/MSgt. David Trudeau – St. Croix
C/TSgt. Matthew Frame - Anoka
C/TSgt. Andrew Prestegaard – St. Paul
C/TSgt. Dane Bjorkman - Anoka
C/SSgt. Kaelyn Olson - Valley
C/SRA Joseph Pahr – St. Paul
C/SRA Christian Lysholm - Anoka
C/A1C Caleb Schmidt – St. Paul
C/Amn Dylan Jackson - Valley

Minneapolis Wing cadets placed second in the North Central Region Color Guard Competition held at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska. Cadets came from several squadrons across the wing that included Anoka, St. Croix, St. Paul and Valley.
Cadet and Officer Members from four squadrons met with many state legislators when they presented the Civil Air Patrol Annual Report to Congress to the senators and representatives at the State Capitol. The reports contained information about each of CAP’s three missions, membership statistics, exciting new initiatives, and the overall direction of the corporation. In addition to the national report, a Minnesota-specific report and an invitation to join the Legislative Squadron were delivered as well.

Hand delivering each copy, the cadets had the chance to meet with multiple representatives and senators during the day. “To be able to meet such influential people and talk to them about CAP and what it is and has done for me personally, that was a rare opportunity. It was a great time,” said C/CMSgt. Stefan Hall. The cadets enjoyed meeting with their representatives and presenting what CAP has to offer to their communities.

After delivering the reports, the cadets were showed around the Capitol by Col. Kevin Sliwinski, the Wing Government Relations Officer. The group sat in the upper gallery and watched the proceedings on the floor of the House of Representatives and the Senate Chambers. It was a great chance to see the state government at work debating bills and conducting business.

Many members from across the Air Force gathered on April 26 for the 2008 Annual Awards Dinner hosted by the Air Force Association and Air Force Sergeant’s Association.

Those in attendance had the opportunity to enjoy a great meal and excellent company. Brig. Gen. Dennis Schulstad was the guest speaker for the evening.

Five members of Minnesota Wing were recognized for their work and contributions to their communities. Those members were C/1st Lt. Jason Anderson, 130th; Maj. Conrad Peterson, Group Two; C/SSgt. Kaelyn Olson, Valley; C/Col. Laura Broker, Ft. Snelling and Maj. Ryan Brovold, St. Cloud.
Chaplain (Maj.) Robert McLawhorn shows off his Samurai skills while teaching one of the Cadet Programs classes at Wing Conference.

Chap. McLawhorn’s class was based on self-discipline and standing up to peer pressure.