



**Civil Air Patrol  
Minnesota Wing**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Civil Air Patrol Celebrates 75 Years**

(South St. Paul, MN) CAP will complete seventy-five years of volunteer service on December 1, 2016, having served over 300 million Americans as “Citizens Serving Communities.”

Seventy five years ago, the United States was just six days from entering World War II. While thousands traveled overseas to fight, there were many who volunteered to protect America's coasts – and Civil Air Patrol was born.

Although its mission has changed over the years and new technology has been added, the core of civic duty and volunteerism remains strong among its members. Acting as the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force and headquartered at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama, more than 56,000 CAP volunteers nationwide assist in hundreds of inland search and rescue missions, homeland security and disaster relief missions annually. Cap was recently included in the U.S. Air Force's Total Force concept, and in 2014, CAP received the Congressional Gold Medal, the nation's highest honor, for its heroic efforts in World War II.

CAP has come a long way from its beginnings during World War II. It has grown to include cadet (youth) and STEM programs, educational outreach in our public and private schools, and now aids in 90 percent of the nation's natural disasters and search and rescue missions, including the Gulf Coast oil spill, 911 and the great Midwest floods in 1997 and 2001.

Minnesota Wing has played an important and pivotal role in CAP's history with the launching of the first Civil Air Patrol cadet program in 1942, with 41 cadets led by Cadet Commander Harlan Petersburg in Minneapolis.

While there are many youth oriented programs in America today, CAP's cadet program is unique in that it uses aviation as a cornerstone. Thousands of young people from 12 years through age 21 are introduced to aviation through CAP's cadet program. The program allows young people to progress at their own pace through a 16-step program including aerospace education, leadership training, physical fitness and moral leadership. Cadets compete for academic scholarships to further their studies in fields such as engineering, science, aircraft mechanics, aerospace medicine, meteorology, as well as many others. Those cadets who earn cadet officer status may enter the Air Force as an E3 (airman first class) rather than an E1 (airman basic).

Whatever interests a young person has;-survival training, flight training, photography, astronomy, there's a place in CAP's cadet program. Each year, cadets have the opportunity to participate in special activities at the local, state, regional or national level. Many cadets will have the opportunity to solo an airplane for the first time through a CAP flight training academy. Others will enjoy traveling abroad through the International Air Cadet Exchange Program. Still others assist at major air shows throughout the nation. Launched here in Minnesota, the CAP cadet program has provided more than one million young people with a place to explore career options and experience leadership to prepare to be of service to the community, state and nation.

Some highlights of Minnesota Wing's activities in the past seventy-five years include assisting in several floods, including the floods in 1997 that resulted in millions of dollars of damage and even left the CAP Wing Headquarters underwater for several weeks. Aircrews flew as many as six daily missions and members provided local assistance including sandbagging, dike patrol, communications, food and shelter, hotlines, damage surveys, photos, lock and dam inspections, and road and bridge status reports.

During floods in 2001, CAP members filled thousands of sandbags in dusk-to-dawn operations to protect buildings at the St. Paul airport. CAP also assisted in 2008 after floods and mudslides washed away land and destroyed bridges and houses.

After tornadoes and floods in 1969 caused \$15 million worth of damages, the Wing performed aerial surveillance, communications, levee patrols and victim evacuations and transported supplies and equipment.

After the 1963 fatal crash in Minnesota of a U.S. Air Force B-47 from the 98th Bombardment Wing at Lincoln Air Force Base, Nebraska, Minnesota Wing personnel staffed the command post and provided round-the-clock assistance to USAF and local officials.

The Wing's longest, most intensive search on record involved a private plane missing 73 days in 1959. In a search extending from the Twin Cities to the Canadian border, CAP flew 500 search missions with up to 40 planes. Two mobile ground units struggled through a mile and half's worth of brush and swampland to reach the plane and bodies of the four fishermen aboard, bringing solace to their families.

Minnesota Wing stands ready to perform these missions and more for another seventy five years.

**For more information:**

To learn more about Civil Air Patrol, visit online at [www.capvolunteernow.com](http://www.capvolunteernow.com).

*Civil Air Patrol, the longtime all-volunteer U.S. Air Force auxiliary, is the newest member of the Air Force's Total Force, which consists of regular Air Force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, along with Air Force retired military and civilian employees. CAP, in its Total Force role, operates a fleet of 550 aircraft and 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. Civil Air Patrol's 56,000 members nationwide also perform homeland security, disaster relief and drug interdiction missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. Its members additionally play a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to more than 24,000 young people currently participating in the CAP cadet program. Performing missions for America for the past 75 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](http://www.capvolunteernow.com) for more information.

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