



“THE SKYCHASER”

South Dakota Wing Electronic Newsletter for March 2014

Official Auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force - Citizens Serving Communities: Above and Beyond

Publishers: Wing Commander Colonel John Seten / Wing Vice Commander Lieutenant Colonel Richard Larson
Editor: Major Bruce Kipp • Wing Public Affairs Officer • (605) 261-4507 • paa.sdwg@gmail.com

WING TIPS

- **HOTTEST NEWS:** RENAME THE ROUNDUP CONTEST. A wing-wide contest is underway for a new name and a new logo for the Wing magazine currently called the Roundup. The contest is open to all SDWG members. Each member may submit as many entries for a new name and/or logo as they wish. Any logo must not violate anyone's copyright. If a logo is copyrighted you must first obtain the copyright holder's written permission to use it. The logo must be free use, no royalties will be paid. Submit all entries to Maj. Kipp. The contest closes 8 April. Col. Seten, Lt. Col. Larson and Maj. Kipp will select the top three (maybe top five) name and logo candidates and they will be put out to a wing-wide vote in mid-April. The winning name and logo will be used for the next issue of the SDWG magazine which is currently set for publication in mid-May.
- **REDCAP:** Late in the afternoon of 10 March, the South Dakota Wing was placed on alert by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center at Tyndall AFB, Florida. The mission request, initiated by the Lawrence County Office of Emergency Management and the City of Spearfish Police Department, was to search for a person reported as missing in the Lookout Mountain area near Spearfish. Col. Mike Beason was the Incident Commander. A SDWG Cessna-182T took off from Spearfish Municipal Airport about 6:45pm piloted by Lt. Col. Rodney DeWeese with Capt. Bill Collister as observer. The search area encompassed Spearfish and from I-90 Exit 12 to Lookout Mountain. The aircraft flew for about 1.3 hours before darkness fell. The mission was suspended on 11 March due to severe weather in the search area. The mission resumed on 12 March with the City of Spearfish Police Department taking the lead supported by the Lookout Mountain Composite Squadron who fielded a ground team to search the west side of Lookout Mountain. In addition, the Cessna-182T searched the Spearfish area from the air for an additional 1.5 hours. Lt. Col. DeWeese was again the Mission Pilot with Lt. Col. Jim Hopewell and Capt. Gary Schroeder as Mission Observers.
- **AERIAL WILDLIFE SURVEYS:** SDWG flew aerial surveys of terrestrial wildlife on the 10th, 12th and 25th of March in support of the state Department of Game, Fish & Parks and South Dakota State University. The GF&P surveyed deer, mountain goats, mountain lions, and elk. The SDSU surveyed elk and bobcats. 7.8 flight hours were in support of GF&P and 7.7 flight hours were in support of SDSU for a total of 15.5 hours flying over western South Dakota and the Black Hills. The CAP pilot for the March surveys was Lt. Col. Gary Hewett.

- **CAP JOINS SEARCH FOR MISSING MALAYSIAN AIRLINER:** “It’s a normal search and rescue mission,” Lt. Col. John Henderson said of Civil Air Patrol’s role in the search for missing Malaysia Airline Flight 370. Henderson, a radar analyst for the U.S. Air Force’s 84th Radar Evaluation Squadron (RADES) at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, is vice commander of CAP’s 10-member National Radar Analysis Team. “CAP brings different and unique tools to the table,” said Henderson, who is working 24/7 to narrow the search area based on the airline’s radar forensics information. “We have a lot of experience using different types of radar data, and our software tools are designed to use a lot of different formats of radar data. The goal is to utilize the radar data and radar signatures from the aircraft to determine its ultimate flight path,” he said. “Between the 84 RADES and Civil Air Patrol, we have a very robust capability to reduce radar data into usable and actionable forms, to include stitching together tracks from multiple radar systems,” said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Ian Kemp, commander of the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center. CAP performs 85 percent of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the AFRCC. Henderson’s SAR track record is impressive. In 13 years, he has participated in more than 600 CAP radar analysis missions with “well over 150 finds” and about 45 lives saved, he said. In 2007 he helped narrow the search for Adam Flight 574, an Indonesian B-737 that went missing during a flight between Surabaya and Manado with 96 passengers and six crewmembers aboard. Recruited by the U.S. State Department for assistance after a massive effort to find the jet failed, Henderson was able to direct searchers within a mile of the crash site in 6,500 feet of water in the Makassar Strait. “Searchers were having a hard time picking up the black box pings, and the more time that goes by, the weaker it becomes,” he said, adding, “My analysis got ships in a very close position so they could pick up the pings.” “The black box is really key to knowing what happened, besides finding the wreckage,” he said. Radar analysis “can be extremely accurate,” Henderson said. In the CAP team’s case, “over 90 percent of the time we narrow the search area based on forensics information. We’ve come within 65 feet of where a crash occurred and sometimes miles. It depends on the radar environment.”

Source: www.capvolunteernow.com/todays-features/?cap_joins_search_for_missing_malaysian airliner&show=news&newsID=18283

- **GARMIN G1000 TRAINING CLINIC IN RAPID CITY.** Submitted by SM Scott Kuznicki with input from Maj. Craig Goodrich: The South Dakota Wing is fortunate to have two Cessna-182 aircraft, both equipped with Garmin's leading-edge G1000 avionics packages. Aircrew familiarity with the operation of these systems is essential for use at their full potential and to ensure standards of safety and pilot proficiency continue to be met at the highest levels.



Over the weekend of 22-23 March, members from five squadrons from the South Dakota Wing attended a CAP-sponsored G1000 training clinic in Rapid City. At this event, 20 members spent 12 hours working with the G1000 in classroom and hands-on settings. CAP instructors taught the basics of G1000 operation, and covered flight operations for both VFR and IFR flight conditions. Instructor pilot candidates and current instructor pilots attended an instructor pilot module while pilots not seeking instructor status were able to enter the cockpit and operate actual G1000 consoles in the aircraft, with auxiliary power being provided to ensure the aircraft would remain mission-capable.

CAP members shared their knowledge in an interactive classroom environment, which included use of Garmin's G1000 simulator to conduct IFR procedures. Classroom instructors were 2nd Lt. Jeremy Swier, Maj. Craig Goodrich, Capt. Joe Oye, Lt. Col. Greg Lair, and Capt. Scott Giles. Although Lt. Col. Gary Hewett didn't do any platform instruction, he monitored the new G1000 instructors, and added commentary based on his extensive experience in the glass cockpit. He reminded participants of the importance having a backup plan when all the electronics fail. Col. Mike Beason capably assisted Lt. Col. Hewett with the hands-on portion of the training, which included a North Dakota Wing aircraft flown in by the CAP-USAF Liaison Region Assistant Director of Operations, Mr. Greg Maier. The closing question-and-answer session was informative and lively, focusing on instrument approach "gotchas" and the coordination of air traffic control between the towers and approach control serving Rapid City Regional Airport and Ellsworth Air Force Base.

The evening session on Saturday night was a "bring your own steak" event at Sioux Falls Composite Squadron Commander Erickson's home near Lead. Capt. Erickson and his wife graciously opened their home to hungry pilots and friends old and new gathered to enjoy a few hours of camaraderie and, of course, airplane stories.

Our pilots and instructors have gained new knowledge, refreshed their skills, and gained an understanding of how CAP expects the G1000 to be utilized for maximum mission performance. The Wing is providing a limited number of flights for members who attended, with an emphasis on current instructor currency, instructor candidate development and certification, and mission and transport pilot currency and development.

Major Goodrich, the Project Officer for the event said, "I think we all learned a lot, and we all had a good time. It was great to have so many pilots at this training. Building relationships with our CAP flying buddies and interactive discussion while learning made this into a fantastic weekend."

The Wing wishes to express gratitude to Maj. Goodrich for his dedication to planning and organizing this event. The attendees express sincere appreciation to Melissa Goodrich for preparing a delicious lunch on Saturday and to 2nd Lt. Jon "Jack" Jensen and SM Deb Jensen for the terrific bagels from Black Hills Bagels on Sunday morning. The Wing also thanks the Rapid City Fire Department for providing a meeting space at Fire Station 8 at the Rapid City Regional Airport.



PHOTOS BY MAJ. CRAIG GOODRICH

- Updated versions of CAPF-12, *Application for Senior Membership*, and CAPF-15, *Application for Cadet Membership* are available on eServices at www.capmembers.com/media/cms/F012_15378C3760422.pdf and www.capmembers.com/media/cms/F015_9C2337B9FC619.pdf respectively.

STAFF NOTES



WING VICE COMMANDER

Lt. Col. Richard Larson, CAP

During the evening of 17 March I was a phone-in guest on Sioux Falls radio station KSOO (1140 AM) on-air program View Point University to discuss how lost aircraft searches are conducted and its application to the Malaysia Airlines aircraft disappearance. Topics discussed encompassed: how a search like this is coordinated, how this search is complicated because of the number of nations involved, factors that complicate a search, the differences between primary and secondary radar, why the airliner's sharp turn to the southwest between Malaysia and Vietnam important, and finally how SDWG's train to find lost aircraft.



WING STANDARDIZATION/EVALUATION OFFICER

Maj. Craig Goodrich, CAP

Pilots are requested to NOT use the Spidertracks device on training flights unless they want to self-fund the use of the device at \$2.10 per hour used. This includes G-1000 training flights under the USAF Mission. Pilots should use the Spidertracks units for all actual search missions and missions paid by the State of SD, as well as SAREX's and the upcoming SAREVAL. Also, it is acceptable to use them briefly while on CAPF 5/91 check rides to ensure that all pilots understand how they are to be used.

SQUADRON HIGHLIGHTS

BIG SIOUX COMPOSITE SQUADRON (SD-058, BROOKINGS)

(Item by: Maj. Gengler and Maj. Kipp)



- **CYBERPATRIOT.** The cadet cybersecurity team of the Big Sioux Composite Squadron has returned to South Dakota after participating in the national finals of “CyberPatriot-VI,” the Air Force Association’s national high school cyber-defense competition held 26-29 March at the Gaylord National Harbor Hotel and Convention Center near Washington, D.C.

The members of this year’s cyber-security team, led by Cadet Captain Joshua Klosterman were Cadet Master Sergeant Chris Dinnel, Cadet Master Sergeant Laura Rudnik, Cadet Airman Basic Josiah Jorenby and Cadet Airman Zebadiah Nelson. The team is coached by Cadet Second Lieutenant Tyler Gross and mentored by First Lieutenant Shannon Hofer.

Although the squadron’s team did not place in the top three of the cybersecurity competition they did take first place in the scavenger hunt at the museums. It wasn't part of the original competition but the team members did win iPod Nanos for their success.

The Big Sioux team competed in the “All Service Division”, comprised of CAP Cadets and Naval Sea Cadets, and Junior ROTC units from all four military services. CAP teams accounted for 360 of the 864 teams in the All Service Division. For the third consecutive year CAP had three of 14 finalist slots in the All Service category.

The South Dakota Wing and the Big Sioux Composite Squadron thank the “Dakotah Chapter” of the Air Force Association for their donation of \$300 to help defray the travel expenses of the squadron’s cybersecurity team to the national competition.

CRAZY HORSE COMPOSITE SQUADRON (SD-068, CUSTER)

(Items by Lt K. Bierwirth, photos by Lt. K. Bierwirth and Katie Ping of Custer Chamber of Commerce)



COUNTER-NARCOTICS SEMINAR. On the 6th of March we had a very interesting seminar on marijuana given by an agent from the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigations (name withheld). He answered a lot of questions and greatly clarified for us what is fact and what is fiction about the use of marijuana and its effects on the human body. The squadron expresses its appreciation the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigations and their agent for his visit to our squadron. In the photo Lt. V. Bierwirth, C/MSgt Jason Parry, C/SSgt Thomas Dillon and C/1st Lt James Dillon.

• **MEET AND GREET AT THE CUSTER TRADE SHOW.** On the 8th of March we were asked to be greeters for the Custer Trade Show held at the Custer High School. We got to meet and greet a bunch of people, welcome them to the trade show and talk to them about Civil Air Patrol.



Best of all we got lucky! Two CAP Lieutenant Colonels will transfer to our squadron. Between the two of them we are gaining 70 years of Civil Air Patrol experience!

In the photo taken by taken by Ms. Katie Ping of the Custer Chamber of Commerce, Lt. Kris Bierwirth, Capt. Sharon Moad, C/MSgt Jason Parry, C/TSgt Kyle Parry and C/SSgt Thomas Dillon man the table at the entrance to the Custer Trade Show.

LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN COMPOSITE SQUADRON (SD-063, SPEARFISH)

(Items by Lt. Col. Hopewell and Capt. Small, photos by Capt. Small)

• **SQUADRON RECEIVES GRANT FROM SPEARFISH OPTIMISTS CLUB.** As reported on 20 March in the “Local Scene” section of the Black Hills Pioneer newspaper, on 19 March the squadron was honored to receive a \$900 grant from the Spearfish Optimists Club. The grant will be used to fund the squadron’s Color Guard, aerospace education program and search and rescue operations. C/SSgt Justin Harris, squadron Cadet Commander, accepted the check on behalf of the squadron.

• **NEW OLD SENIOR MEMBER.** Welcome back aboard to Tom Irvin who has rejoined CAP after an absence of over 40 years. Tom was a CAP pilot back in the '60's but has not been active since. He recently retired to the Spearfish area and has joined our squadron. We welcome his knowledge and experience.

• **MODEL & REMOTE CONTROL AIRCRAFT STEM KIT.** We’re working on our second Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Kit. Each kit contains several hundred dollars’ worth of materials. In the case of our most recent kit, Model & Remote Controlled Aircraft, it contained a 6-foot wing-span remote controlled airplane and a flight simulator. All a squadron needs to do is request one of the five STEM Kits then spend six hours working with it and then you can get a new kit. These activities count toward the unit’s CAP Aerospace Excellence (AEX) Award.

The STEM Kit Program, managed by the USAF STEM Outreach Coordination Office in partnership with CAP and AFJROTC, provides financial support for STEM education. The program’s goal is to generate enthusiasm among cadets for STEM’s hands-on, inquiry-based learning. The conduit for the STEM Kit Program is CAP AE Officers. Five STEM Kits are available: Astronomy, Flight Simulator, Model & Remote Control Aircraft, Robotics, and Rocketry. Check out www.capmembers.com/aerospace_education/general/stemkit



LEFT PHOTO: C/MSGT CONNOR CANEVA (SEATED), C/TSGT JUSTIN HARRIS, C/SSGT KEYVIN RAUSCHER AND C/CAPT SAM HUNTINGTON (MEMBER OF SIOUX FALLS SQUADRON) EXAMINE THE FLIGHT SIMULATOR
RIGHT PHOTO: C/SSGT KEYVIN RAUSCHER AND C/SRA RYAN HARRIS WORK ON MODEL AIRCRAFT

PIERRE COMPOSITE SQUADRON (SD-038, PIERRE)

(Item by Lt. Col. Gatje, photos by Lt. Col. Christensen)

- **THE SOUTH DAKOTA DISCOVERY CENTER AVIATION DAYS.** Members of the squadron recently participated in the Elk's Aviation Day sponsored by the Pierre Elk's Lodge and held at the Discovery Center. This gave an opportunity for area youth to develop an interest in the CAP Cadet Program. Students were invited to a free admission to the Discovery Center on a day that featured an "early release" for the local schools. Over 500 people attended. CAP members worked with young people interested in aviation. They built and flew pencil rockets and soda straw airplanes. Kids were encouraged to fly their creations from the Center's second floor balcony area toward targets on the first floor. Our participants included Lt. Col. Myra Christensen, 1st Lt. Roberta Vaughan, Lt. Col. Nancy McKenney and SM Ruth Carley.



LEFT PHOTO: CAP MEMBERS SM CARLEY (LEFT) AND LT. VAUGHAN WORK WITH AVIATION DAY ATTENDEES ON A PROJECT. RIGHT PHOTO: LT. COL. MCKENNEY (RIGHT) HELPS A GIRL WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF HER SODA STRAW AIRPLANE.

RUSHMORE COMPOSITE SQUADRON (SD-031, RAPID CITY)

(Item by Lt. Col. Hopewell and 1st Lt. Black)

- **SOUTH DAKOTA AIRPORTS CONFERENCE.** On Thursday, 27 March Maj. Craig Goodrich stood in for Col. Seten and Lt. Col. Larson who had planned to present a briefing at the South Dakota Department of Transportation Airport Conference, in Spearfish. They had planned to fly there for the presentation, but the weather didn't cooperate.

The state of the State of South Dakota aviation was the theme of the annual conference. Among the over 150 attendees were distinguished aeronautics luminaries, airport managers, numerous public sector leaders including the head of the state's Department of Public Safety, local and national FAA officials, the head of the National Business Aviation Association, and Air Force representatives.

Maj. Goodrich spoke about the history and organization of CAP, detailed many of the types of missions CAP does nationwide, reported on the recent history of SDWG missions here in South Dakota. He enumerated the benefits SDWG provides to communities and the state and highlighted the economic impact SDWG provides to airport businesses in South Dakota each year. For example: SDWG will purchase approximately \$60,000 of fuel in Fiscal year 2014; SDWG currently has contracts with aircraft maintenance facilities at Rapid City, Huron and Sioux Falls where annual inspections and scheduled major maintenance are done; oil changes and unscheduled maintenance are usually done by local Fixed Base Operators.

He also spoke on the CAP Cadet Program and its positive influence on young men and women where the South Dakota Wing's squadrons are based.

SIoux FALLS COMPOSITE SQUADRON (SD-050, SIoux FALLS)

(Items by: Capt. Schmid, photo by Cadet Fischer's parent)

• **THREE CADETS EARN "FIRST FLIGHT" CERTIFICATES.** A break in the cold and wind on the 8th of March gave three cadets the opportunity to earn their "First Flight" Certificates. Cadets Tristan Fischer, Christopher Schuppan and Cadet Airman Kyle Clement experienced their initial orientation flights. The three excited and enthusiastic cadets enjoyed their pilot duties, each flying the aircraft for one hour.



Cadets Clement and Fischer flew with pilot Capt. Neil Schmid. The first o-ride consisted of two sorties. The first, with Cadet Fischer at the controls, was from Sioux Falls Regional Airport to Madison Municipal Airport where they landed, switched the cadet at the controls, then Cadet Clement flew the aircraft back to Sioux Falls. The second o-ride was a single sortie with Lt. Col. Greg Lair as pilot with Cadet Schuppan at the controls. That flight was around the local Sioux Falls area.

The orientation ride program exposes the cadets to the excitement and adventure of aviation, teaches general aerodynamic principles and familiarizes them with light aircraft and general aviation. More flights for these and other qualified cadets are planned in the near future.

★ ★ PROMOTIONS ★ ★

Senior Member Promotions



Congratulations to Jeffrey Dill of Rushmore Composite Squadron and to Gregory Lair of Sioux Falls Composite Squadron on their promotion to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel! Both Lt. Col. Dill and Lt. Col. Lair received advanced appointment based on their prior military service.

Cadet Officer Promotion



Congratulations to Samuel Huntington of Big Sioux Composite Squadron on his promotion to the rank of Cadet Captain and receipt of the Earhart Award!



Cadet Noncommissioned Officer Promotions



Congratulations to Austin Cole of Sioux Falls Composite Squadron on his promotion to the rank of Cadet Chief Master Sergeant and receipt of the Goddard Award!





Congratulations to Brianna Lynn of Big Sioux Composite Squadron and to Nicholas Nash of Sioux Falls Composite Squadron on their promotion to the rank of Cadet Senior Master Sergeant and receipt of the General Jimmy Doolittle Award!



Congratulations to Thomas Dillon of Crazy Horse Composite Squadron; to Jaden Petersen of Big Sioux Composite Squadron; and to Franklin Michael of Sioux Falls Composite Squadron on promotion to the rank of Cadet Staff Sergeant and receipt of the Wright Brothers Award!



Cadet Airman Promotions



Congratulations to Ivan Kreger and to Kyle Kreger, both of Sioux Falls Composite Squadron, on their promotion to the rank of Cadet Senior Airman and receipt of the Mary Feik Award!



Congratulations to Peter Iverson of Lookout Mountain Composite Squadron and to Julia Lair of Sioux Falls Composite Squadron on their promotion to the rank of Cadet Airman First Class and receipt of the General Hap Arnold Award!



Congratulations to Kyle Clement of Sioux Falls Composite Squadron on his promotion to the rank of Cadet Airman and receipt of the General Curry Award!



★ ★ KUDOS ★ ★



Double congratulations to First Lieutenant Victoria Bierwirth of Crazy Horse Composite Squadron who earned “Technician” Level in Specialty Track – Aerospace Education Officer and “Technician” Level in Specialty Track – Logistics Officer in the Senior Member Professional Development Program.



Congratulations to C/1st Lt Sullivan Busch of Big Sioux Composite Squadron on his appointment as the squadron’s Cadet administrative Officer.



Congratulations to C/Maj Brandon West of Sioux Falls Composite Squadron on his appointment as the squadron’s Cadet Operations Officer.



Congratulations to Lt. Jamie Nowlin, Rushmore Composite Squadron’s Emergency Services Officer, who graduated from ICS-300, Incident Command System for Expanding Incidents class held during the week of 24 March in Rapid City and from ICS-400, Advanced ICS for Command and General Staff, Complex Incidents and MACS for Operational First Responders was held during the week of 31 March in Rapid City, SD. Both courses required a considerable commitment of time.

★ Congratulations to Capt. Gary Schroeder, Rushmore Composite Squadron's Squadron Maintenance and Assistant Operations Officer, who graduated from ICS-300, the Incident Command System for Expanding Incidents class held during the week of 24 March and from ICS-400, Advanced ICS for Command and General Staff, Complex Incidents and MACS for Operational First Responders was held during the week of 31 March in Rapid City, SD. Both courses required a considerable commitment of time.

★ Congratulations to C/A1C Blake Berry of Rushmore Composite Squadron on successful completion of the Leadership Chapter 3 test!

★ Congratulations to SM Gregory Klatt of Rushmore Composite Squadron on completing Level I of the CAP Senior Member Professional Development Program and the award of the Membership Ribbon!



★ Congratulations to Lt. Col. Jeff Dill of Rushmore Composite Squadron and to Lt. Col. Greg Lair of Sioux Falls Composite Squadron on completing Level I of the CAP Senior Member Professional Development Program and the award of the Membership Ribbon! Although newcomers to CAP their advanced rank is derived from prior military service. This accounts for why a Lieutenant Colonel is just now completing Level I.



★ ★ TRIBUTE ★ ★



BRYN MAWR, Pa. — Referred to as the Father of Black Aviation, Chief Flight Instructor of the prestigious Tuskegee Airmen C. Alfred “Chief” Anderson, was immortalized on a stamp on 13 March.

“The Postal Service is proud to honor Charles Alfred “Chief” Anderson, a Black aviation pioneer who inspired, motivated and educated thousands of young people in aviation careers, including the famed Tuskegee Airmen of World War II,” said U.S. Postal Service Judicial Officer William Campbell.

The Father of Black Aviation

“Chief” Anderson (1907-1996), traced his fascination with airplanes to his early childhood when he lived with his grandmother in the Shenandoah Valley near Staunton, VA. She was troubled by his habit of running off in search of planes.

After returning to his parents’ home in Bryn Mawr, PA, Anderson pursued his dream of becoming a pilot. Since no flight schools would accept him as a student because of his race, he needed a plane of his own to learn how to fly. Incredibly, he was able to raise \$2,500 from supportive members of his community and bought a used plane. As Anderson later recalled, he learned to fly by reading books, getting some help from a few friendly white pilots, and, in his own words, “fooling around with” the plane. By 1929, he taught himself well enough, against all odds, to obtain a private pilot’s license.

To help him qualify for an air transport, or commercial license, Anderson eventually found an instructor, the owner of a flying school near Philadelphia, who was able to refine his techniques and even persuade a federal

examiner to let Anderson take the commercial pilot's test. When Anderson secured the license in 1932, he was the only African-American in the nation qualified to serve as a flight instructor or to fly commercially.

The Charles Lindbergh of Black Aviation

Anderson was soon breaking flight records and inspiring other blacks to become pilots. In 1933, he and Albert E. Forsythe, an African-American physician and Tuskegee Institute alumnus, teamed up to become the first black pilots to complete a round-trip transcontinental flight. With that flight and their goodwill tour to the Caribbean in 1934, they sought to prove to the world the abilities and skills of black aviators. It was this flight that led to Anderson's being dubbed "The Charles Lindbergh of Black Aviation."

The Tuskegee Airmen

World War II gave Anderson the opening he needed to make a career in aviation. In 1939, as war erupted in Europe, Congress created the Civilian Pilot Training Program at the urging of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The program provided funding to train tens of thousands of young people who could be transitioned to military service in the event of war. A provision in the legislation permitted civilian flight training for blacks, a significant step toward the long-range goal of opening up the all-white Army Air Corps to black applicants.

Tuskegee Institute won a government contract to establish a Civilian Pilot Training Program and named Anderson chief flight instructor soon after hiring him in 1940. To those who learned their piloting skills in the program, he was affectionately known as "Chief."

Tuskegee's subsequent role in training the nation's first African-American military pilots began in January of 1941, the year leading up to the country's entry into World War II. The War Department announced plans to create a "Negro pursuit squadron" that would be trained at Tuskegee. In March, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, a champion of equal opportunity, came to the airfield Tuskegee was using for flight instruction and was introduced to Anderson. He later recalled her saying that everybody told her blacks couldn't fly. "I'm going up with you," she told him, "to find out for sure." After Anderson gave her an aerial tour of the campus and surrounding area, she announced, "Well, you can fly all right."

Soon after her flight, Roosevelt participated in the decision to finance the construction of Tuskegee Institute's own airfield, Moton Field, for a primary flying school. Under a contract with the War Department, the flying school would conduct the first phase of pilot training for black aviation cadets. Construction also began in the summer of 1941 on the Tuskegee Army Air Field, the military airfield where graduates of the primary flying school moved on to complete basic and advanced military flight training.

The War Department's plans for a black pursuit squadron took shape when ground crews of the 99th Pursuit Squadron (later renamed the 99th Fighter Squadron) began their training in March 1941. The first class of black pilots graduated in March 1942, and soon thereafter the nation's first all-black military aviation unit became fully manned. In 1943, the 99th of the U.S. Army Air Forces began combat operations in North Africa. Members— along with members of several other all-black flying units whose pilots began their training under Anderson at Moton Field — are now commonly known as the Tuskegee Airmen.

During the war, the Tuskegee Airmen escorted heavy bombers on hundreds of missions in the European theater. They flew thousands of sorties, destroyed more than a hundred German aircraft, and received scores of Distinguished Flying Crosses. Their professionalism and effectiveness in combat was a significant reason that in 1949 the newly independent U.S. Air Force became the nation's first armed service to desegregate.

For the rest of his life after the war, Anderson pursued his passion for flying and for teaching others to fly. In 1967, he helped organize Negro Airmen International to encourage interest in aviation among African-American youth. In 1996, the "father of black aviation," as Anderson is often called, died at his home in Tuskegee at age 89.



Susan Carol Larson, mother of Lt. Col. Rick Larson, passed away on Wednesday, 26 March 2014. The South Dakota Wing expresses its sincere condolences to the Larson family in their time of sorrow.

