

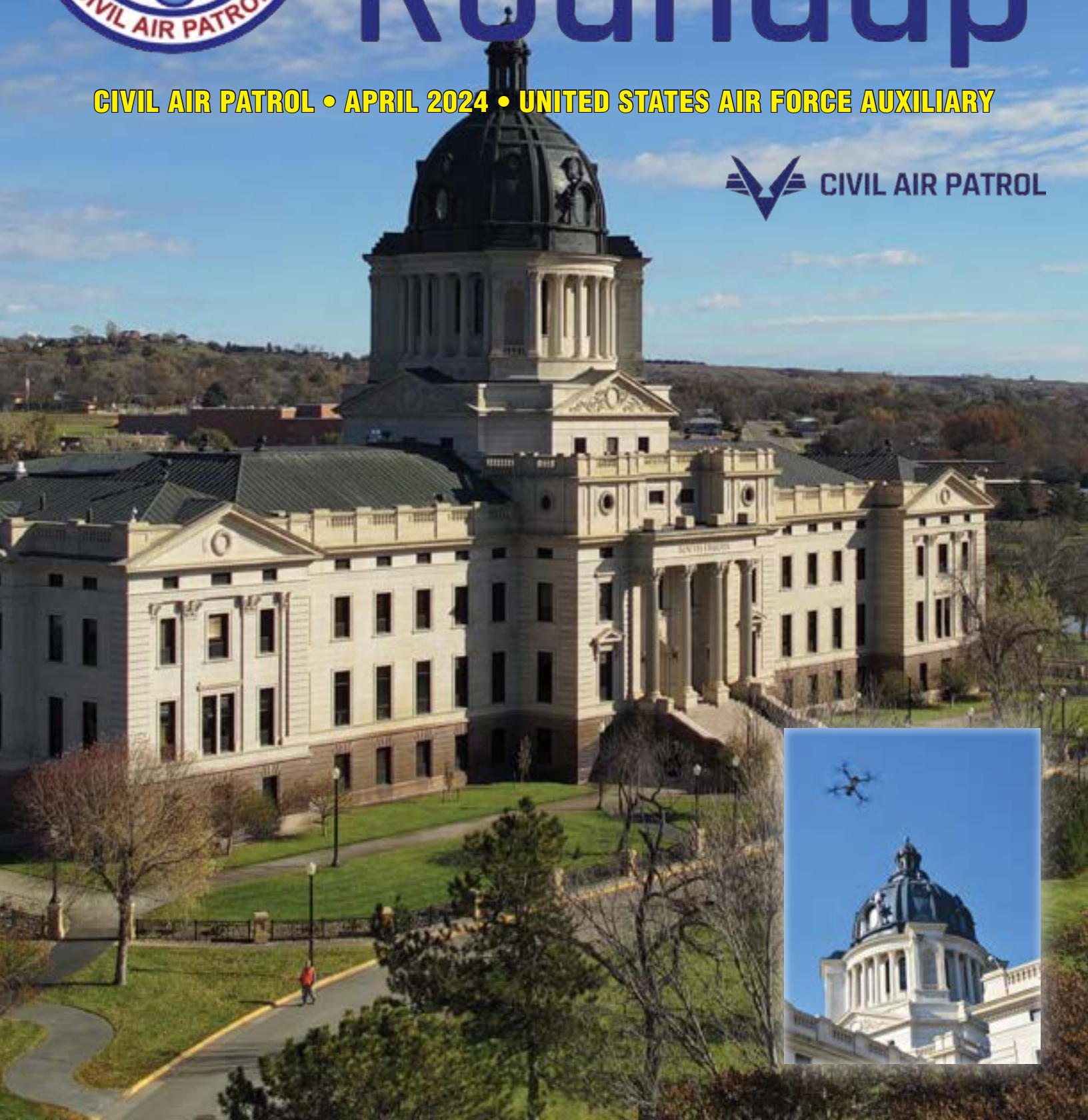


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Col. Michael Marek

Commander, South Dakota Wing
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Civil Air Patrol is a non-profit volunteer organization federally chartered by Congress under 36 U.S.C. §§201-28, which is dedicated to emergency services, aerospace education and motivation of America's youth to the highest ideals of leadership and public service. Funds received by the advertising sales are used to support this publication and to support various CAP activities throughout the state of South Dakota.

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Commander's Column

Greetings and welcome to the latest edition of *South Dakota Wing Roundup*! In this issue, we delve into the intricacies of how Civil Air Patrol operates and explore the underlying motivations of our members.

As the civilian auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, CAP operates under a Congressional charter with three core program areas, which we call our missions. They form the backbone of our commitment to implementing the Congressional charter that made us the civilian auxiliary of the U.S.

Air Force. Collaborating closely with the Air Force, CAP undertakes search, disaster relief, and various other missions to respond swiftly to domestic nonmilitary threats. The overarching goal of Defense Support of Civil Authorities is to save lives, alleviate suffering, prevent property damage, and extend humanitarian assistance.

The Air Force credits CAP with saving five lives in South Dakota over the past three years, a noteworthy achievement!

Our premier missions today extend support to local, state, tribal, and federal agencies, covering a wide spectrum from missing person searches and disaster relief to providing air and drone photography for research scientists and serving as intercept targets for 114th Fighter Wing training.

Adding to our multifaceted contributions, CAP and South Dakota Wing operate a world-class youth program – the CAP Cadet program. This program emphasizes leadership, and the Air Force looks to our cadets as the future leaders in Aerospace and STEM.

CAP's pivotal third mission addresses Aerospace and STEM education, both within CAP and for the public. In collaboration with the Air and Space Forces Association, we engage with educators across the state, offering CAP aerospace curriculum and active learning STEM kits to educators, including homeschool teachers, creating engaging technology experiences for students.

CAP follows a military structure because we are the auxiliary of

Continued on page 3 . . .



Colonel Michael Marek, CAP, South Dakota Wing commander

COVER PHOTO: The South Dakota Wing drone team used the state capitol building in Pierre as a target for 3D mapping in November 2023. CAP has the technology to stitch together hundreds or thousands of images taken by small remote-piloted photography drones to create 3D models of buildings, flooded areas and other targets. Such maps and models can be highly beneficial for disaster relief planners.



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Commander's Column

Continued from page 1 . . .

the Air Force, entrusted with Congressional appropriations. Many dedicated individuals in South Dakota Wing staff positions work behind the scenes to ensure CAP remains mission-ready.

While our missions often take center stage in public narratives, this *Roundup* issue shifts the spotlight to these steadfast members working behind the scenes. Through regular news stories and features, we highlight the crucial work conducted behind the scenes, showcasing the people who contribute to making CAP a robust and effective organization. The articles, written by the individuals themselves, offer insights into their roles and underscore the importance of their contributions to CAP's success as a service organization.

This focus is important, because we are "Volunteers serving America's communities, saving lives, and shaping futures." 📱



South Dakota Adjutant General Inspects CAP Aircraft

Major General Mark Morrell, South Dakota adjutant general, recently inspected two Civil Air Patrol aircraft. South Dakota Wing, Civil Air Patrol (CAP) receives state funding as part of the state Department of Military.



Maj. Gen. Mark Morrell, South Dakota adjutant general (right) checks out the cockpit of a Civil Air Patrol mission aircraft, with Lt. Col. Mike Cassidy, South Dakota Wing director of operations.

Morrell's orientation to CAP's mission aircraft came at the conclusion of a meeting with CAP's South Dakota Wing (SDWG) Commander Col. Michael Marek, and several members of CAP operations team in South Dakota. The wide-ranging meeting covered CAP's operational capabilities, its "cadet" youth program, and CAP's aerospace and STEM education efforts.

"The South Dakota National Guard has a long history of working together with the South Dakota Wing of CAP to serve citizens in our communities, state, and surrounding region," said Morrell. "It was a great opportunity to get educated on CAP capabilities and to meet some of their impressive cadets and senior members. I look forward to working with them more in the future!"

Other CAP members participating in the meeting in Sioux Falls were Lt. Col. Michael Veltman from the Air Force CAP liaison headquarters; Lt. Col. Mike Cassidy, SDWG director of operations; Lt. Col. Justin Johnson, aircraft maintenance officer; Cadet Col. Keonden Hoed, and Flight Officer Skye Timmer.

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Den Hoed Earns Prestigious CAP Spaatz Award

Cadet Colonel Keon den Hoed, CAP, received the General Carl A. Spaatz Award on November 2, 2023, the highest achievement in CAP youth program. Representatives of U.S. Senator Mike Rounds (SD), and U.S. Representative Randy Feenstra (IA) participated in the ceremony. Col. Michael Marek, CAP's South Dakota Wing commander, presented den Hoed's award certificate.

Den Hoed, from Boyden, Iowa, is a member of Sioux Falls Composite Squadron in South Dakota Wing. He joined CAP in 2018 with the intention of becoming a private pilot after attending a 2018 home school conference where the wing had a recruiting booth. Earlier this year, den Hoed earned his pilot's wings under CAP's Cadet Wings flight scholarship program. He plans to become a commercial pilot.

"I am honored to have joined the ranks of a prestigious few," said den Hoed, noting that his was only the 2,484th since the Spaatz Award was created in 1964. "When I joined this amazing program 5 1/2 years ago, I never thought I could receive this promotion. In my time in CAP, I have learned that the quote by motivational speaker Zig Ziglar is true: 'The difference between a big shot and a little shot is a big shot is a little shot that kept shooting.' By taking advantage of the opportunities CAP has to offer and taking it one step at a time, anyone with the determination to can achieve what I have."

Den Hoed graduated from homeschool high school in May. He is the son of Allen and Teresa den Hoed. Three of the Spaatz award recipient's brothers are also CAP members.

His accomplishments in Civil Air Patrol include progressively higher leadership roles in his home squadron including cadet commander, eight encampments in Iowa, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wyoming, as well as Kansas, where he served as cadet commander for the 2023 winter encampment. He has served in wing and region Cadet Advisory Councils (CAC) and is now the North Central Region secondary representative on the National CAC.



"Cadet Col. Keon den Hoed is a remarkable young man," said Lt. Col. Tom Anez, CAP's cadet program director in South Dakota. "I have watched him pursue progressive leadership roles and was pleased to see him succeed by earning such a monumental achievement. I look forward to seeing what further opportunities he chases, both in Civil Air Patrol and in our communities."

Photo credit: All taken by Flight Officer Skye Timmer, Sioux Falls Composite Squadron



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Civil Air Patrol Supports Air Force B-1 Crash Investigation

Civil Air Patrol's South Dakota Wing flew aircraft and drone photography surveys over Ellsworth Air Force Base Saturday to document the scene where a B-1 crashed on Jan. 4.



Acting in its role as the auxiliary of the Air Force, CAP was tasked by the Air Force Interim Safety Board to fly photography surveys around the area of the crash, which happened as the bomber was attempting to land. About 15 CAP members participated in the sorties and served as mission staff.

“We used cameras in a small unmanned aerial system (sUAS), or drone, to provide high quality photos of the mishap area to the safety board investigators,” said Col. Mike Beason, the wing’s incident commander for the mission. “From those photos, we provided an overview map of the area to the investigators. We also captured aerial images taken from a handheld camera in a CAP aircraft.”

“CAP’s single-engine aircraft and unmanned aerial system photography drones are ideally suited for this kind of air-to-ground photo survey work,” said CAP Col. Michael Marek, South Dakota Wing commander. “We’re here to support federal, state and local agencies. One of our squadrons meets on base at Ellsworth and we are happy to make this photography mission part of our auxiliary and active-duty partnership.”

South Dakota Wing Administrative Officer

*By Maj. Karla West, CAP
South Dakota Wing Staff*

As the South Dakota Wing’s administrative officer, my official position is to implement, manage, and direct administrative services activities.

Now this sounds like a big job, but with having a full-time paid employee of the national offices of CAP as our wing administrator, most of these duties fall on her.

In addition, with wing commanders taking a more personal role in preparing their own correspondences, and official letters from the wing the only major role I as the administrative officer is to see that our wing supplements to the national regulations are up to date and approved by the correct chain of command to be posted on the Civil Air Patrol national web site.

In addition to being the administrative officer for the wing, I also hold the duty of South Dakota Wing personnel officer. This position has duties of managing and updating the membership records for the wing staff each year by saving a record of accomplishments and duties of each staff member; seeing that the paperwork is filed with national for organizational actions, such as activating new charters and deactivation of charters; staff promotions, demotions, and change of commands for squadrons; and filing paperwork and for duty assignments, transfers, retirements, and membership terminations.

I also serve on the awards committee reviewing all nominations and providing input to their approval or denial.

Outside of the wing staff records I also make sure each squadron is keeping records of their individual members.

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South Dakota Wing Chaplain

*By Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Gary Rae, CAP
South Dakota Wing Staff*

Civil Air Patrol chaplains are appointed by the national chaplain when they meet credentials like Air Force chaplains.

These include having a seminary degree, an endorsement from their denomination, and ordination. Unlike other duty positions, it is a lengthy process.

As wing chaplain, it is my additional duty, to recruit character development instructors and clergy who wish to be appointed to teach character development to our cadets and be trained to respond to disaster events.

Character instruction from chaplains and CDI's enable cadets to discuss life issues based on our core values of Respect, Integrity, Excellence and Volunteer Service.

Lessons include vision and goals, perseverance, confidence, humility, gratitude, fortitude, inclusivity and more. Though not chaplains or clergy, CDIs are chaplain assistants, but may not counsel in confidential matters. As people of integrity and character, they may be called upon to deal with conflict situations that arise.

CAP is a volunteer organization; its members come from all walks of life and deal with the same issues we all face sometimes. Chaplains may serve as a pastor to CAP members.

Chaplains may be trained to respond to the traumatic, emotional and spiritual needs of both CAP members engaged in a mission, and the families that anxiously await news of a loved one who have gone missing in an aircraft, or a missing elder person or child.

When traumatic and unhappy results to our missions' leave families and CAP members traumatized, the chaplain can organize a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing to help persons process the experience and mitigate the physical, emotional, and spiritual stresses.

Though not always seen on the forefront of command staff, we are always called to be in a ministry of presence to bring compassion, encouragement, and counsel.



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South Dakota Wing Chief of Staff

*By Lt. Col. Todd Epp, CAP
South Dakota Wing Staff*

My formal position title is "chief of staff."

However, I think of my job as, at least partly, "chief of simplification."

As COS, I try to take command's ideas and put them in a workable and understandable form to all our members--from the 12-year-old cadet to the 50-year-plus senior members.

Our organization has many moving parts, so I help keep those parts moving as well and as simply as possible. I subscribe to "KISS"—Keep It Simple Stupid (with me playing the part of Stupid). Part of this philosophy comes from my days as a TV and radio journalist. In broadcast news, the audience only gets one chance to understand what you are saying. You also deal with people from diverse backgrounds, ages, and education. Clarity is essential in all that we do, from safety to planning to mission readiness.

Another part of my job is to be the wing commander's consigliere. If you're not a "Sopranos" fan, that means I am a trusted adviser. And, when necessary, the person who helps implement the solution or resolve tricky issues. If Col. Michael Marek is the "good cop" (and the Godfather), I'm the "bad cop." I want everyone to like and help our wing commander. Col. Marek has a crushing workload and many responsibilities not just to our members but also to North Central Region, National Headquarters, the state of South Dakota, and other stakeholders. If anyone needs to take the heat, I try to absorb it for the command staff.

Still, another part of my job is to head up or monitor special projects. Col. Marek and Col. Nick Gengler before him, whom I also served as COS, have aggressively aimed to improve the wing and make our members' experiences enjoyable and productive.

I also see part of my role as a mentor and someone who helps identify talented members we can develop into future leaders for the wing. We always need to replenish our "bench" and think about who will be leading our organization in the future.

Another role I've taken on is strategic planning officer. This is new to our wing. In that role, I look over the horizon and see what new opportunities and threats the wing and our squadrons will experience in the mid to long term. Some of the issues I'm looking at include upgrading our squadron facilities, finding new missions, identifying potential new partnerships, and enhancing our current relationships.

I have enjoyed serving with Col. Marek and Col. Gengler. We have been blessed with outstanding wing commanders in my nearly 15 years as a member, including Colonels Mary Donley, Mike Beason, John Seten, and the late David Small. You cannot imagine the demands on their time, the difficult decisions they must make, the loads of paperwork they deal with, and their dedication to CAP and its members.

The bottom line? My job is to help make the wing commander's job a little easier.



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South Dakota Wing Director of Cadet Programs

*By Lt. Col. Tom Anez, CAP
South Dakota Wing Staff*

The cadet program is a youth development program designed for youth between the ages of 12 and 20.

It focuses on leadership, aerospace education, physical fitness, and moral and ethical decision-making.

The cadet program provides young people with opportunities to develop leadership skills, participate in aviation-related activities, learn about aerospace science, and engage in community service.

Cadets can also participate in various competitions and special activities, such as search and rescue missions, color guard ceremonies, encampment, and military-style drill competitions.

In the program, cadets progress through a series of achievements, which are recognized with promotions and awards. Cadets can earn promotions by completing various requirements, such as passing exams, participating in leadership training, and accumulating service hours.

As the director of cadet programs for the South Dakota Wing, my primary responsibility is to oversee and manage the overall operation of the CAP cadet program at the wing level. I report directly to the wing commander.

Some of my responsibilities include developing and implementing policies and procedures for the cadet program within the wing and providing guidance and support to unit-level cadet program officers. They are responsible for overseeing the cadet program at the local level.

I also ensure that the cadet program is conducted in a safe and effective manner, with appropriate training and supervision for cadets and adult leaders.

In addition, I monitor the progress and performance of cadets within the wing and oversee the process for promoting cadets through the cadet program.

I also coordinate and network with other CAP units and outside organizations to provide opportunities for cadets to participate in special activities, such as encampments, competitions, and community service projects. I work closely with the recruiting officer in promoting the cadet program to potential cadets and their parents.

South Dakota Wing Government Relations Advisor

*By Lt. Col. Tom Anez, CAP
South Dakota Wing Staff*

The government relations advisor in Civil Air Patrol is responsible for representing the organization's interests to elected officials, government agencies, and other organizations at the federal, state, and local levels.

As the GRA, I report to the wing commander.

Some of my responsibilities include monitoring legislative and regulatory activity at the federal, state, and local levels that could affect CAP's mission or operations.

I represent CAP's interests with elected officials, government agencies, and other organizations, through education, testimony, and other forms of communication. I also focus on building relationships with elected officials and other key stakeholders to promote CAP's mission and objectives.

In addition, I advise the wing commander and other CAP leaders on legislative and regulatory issues that could affect the organization. I coordinate and network with other CAP units and outside organizations to support joint advocacy efforts.

This position also requires me to develop and implement strategies to promote CAP's mission and objectives to the broader public.

Overall, I play a role in promoting CAP's interests and advocating for its mission and objectives to key stakeholders in the government and beyond. I also help to ensure that CAP can operate effectively and fulfill its mission of serving the community, the nation, and the Air Force.

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South Dakota Wing Director of Education and Training

*By Col. Mary Donley, CAP
South Dakota Wing Staff*

The Civil Air Patrol education and training program helps train adult members.

This program not only teaches them about Civil Air Patrol and leadership, but through mentoring, assists members to learn new skills. This professional education starts with the basics, then continues to build on that through the five levels of the program.

Members take courses on their own, but also with qualified Volunteer University instructors. Courses cover communication, ethical decision making, diversity and inclusion, mentoring, problem solving, conflict management, critical thinking, leadership challenges, leadership trends, ethical leadership, safety and risk management, and finance.

We also have courses to help active-duty military and veterans to put their skills to use in our volunteer organization.

Members learn new skills with on-the-job training through our mentorship program. Members with experience in a field share that knowledge with new members.

Members learn first to serve at the squadron level, then at the state and region level. Each step helps members gain knowledge that can serve them in both Civil Air Patrol and in their personal and professional lives.

Many of our adult members choose positions in CAP that go hand in hand with their career choice, but many choose to learn a new skill. Some learning areas include safety and risk management, aircraft maintenance, operations, logistics, emergency services, aerospace education, cadet programs, finance, health services, and public affairs. Members learn about these areas while serving the local squadron.

The education and training program is a vital part of Civil Air Patrol. It is how we train and develop our adult leaders, from the local squadron level, all the way to the National level.

South Dakota Wing Director of Logistics

*By Jonathan Owen, CAP
Former Director of Logistics
South Dakota Wing Staff*

As wing logistics officer, it is my responsibility to keep an accurate, perpetual inventory of all supplies and equipment utilized by all CAP members.

To have equipment available for missions, critical and training, it is essential that they are kept in usable condition. Without an accurate record, we would be unable to secure funding for replacements, leaving us unable to continue our mission.

Every year by October, it comes time to complete an audit for all CAP property in South Dakota to ensure all property is accounted for. Every squadron must verify the condition and location for all equipment tracked in ORMS, the Operational Resource Management System database.

Equipment that needs to be repaired or is unserviceable must be disposed of per CAP procedures and regulations to ensure accountability.

By having an up-to-date record, we can secure funding for replacements and additional equipment as technology evolves. In South Dakota, CAP has over 400 members, all of whom utilize thousands of pieces of equipment, from laptops, radio supplies, vehicles, drones and aircraft for their respective missions.

It is essential that everything is catalogued and tracked, as all property is held in trust from governmental and private sources. Currently, the South Dakota Wing has property valued at over \$2 million, so accountability and accuracy is essential.

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South Dakota Wing Director of Aerospace Education

*By Lt. Col. Bill Strandell, CAP
South Dakota Wing Staff*

Aerospace education is a dual-purpose mission for Civil Air Patrol.

We have an internal and external mission. The internal mission is focused on inspiring our cadets to take an interest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math topics. We do this with our STEM kit program and orientation rides. This program offers kits on topics like astronomy, engineering, rocketry, and coding to expose them to these topics at a young age. We also offer cadet orientation flights.

Once someone becomes a cadet, they are allowed five flights in an airplane at no cost to reinforce STEM topics that have been discussed within their aerospace classes, and for fun. The goal is to give every new cadet an orientation ride within the first 60 days of their joining. STEM kits can also be used by any of our aerospace education members for a one-time fee of \$35.

Our external mission includes providing aerospace education materials, training, and support for our communities. CAP works with any school-teacher to come in and explain aerospace topics to their classes.

The Civil Air Patrol also offers Teacher Orientation Program Flights at no cost to participating teachers. It is one flight per teacher and is fairly similar to one of the flights that one of the cadets goes on. They are introduced to a new side of aviation that most people don't know about, general aviation. The flight usually lasts about an hour and there's about an hour of introduction on the ground going over the different flight controls and basic aerodynamics.

South Dakota Wing Legal Officer

*By Capt. Justin Smith, CAP
South Dakota Wing Staff*

Greetings from the wing legal officer for South Dakota Wing.

Col. Michael Marek appointed me as the South Dakota wing legal officer in September 2022, not long after I joined Civil Air Patrol. For the last six months, it has been my privilege to serve the South Dakota Wing.

The role of a wing legal officer is carried out almost entirely behind the scenes. As a licensed South Dakota attorney, I advise the wing commander and South Dakota Wing generally. According to CAPR 111-1, "Civil Air Patrol is the client of each and every attorney assigned as a legal officer."

Thus, I have invested time in studying the federal statutes and regulations that created and govern Civil Air Patrol. It has also been my goal to become familiar with critical CAP Regulations and other authority. This legal background has assisted me in advising Col. Marek and the South Dakota Wing on various issues and projects.

One of the most frequent duties of a wing legal officer is to review and offer guidance on Memoranda of Understanding and other contracts involving the wing. Without revealing confidential information, I can tell you that our wing has been busy!

The amount of time and talent invested in South Dakota Wing activities is clearly reflected in the contracts that come across my desk. South Dakota Wing has crucial relationships with a number of federal, state, and local government entities. The South Dakota Wing also depends on business relationships with multiple private entities. The terms by which these relationships are governed are carefully negotiated and executed.

I have enjoyed the chance to assist in this process over the course of my relatively new role with South Dakota Wing.



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Safety Officer

*By Lt. Col. Mark K. Huntington, CAP
Director of Safety, South Dakota Wing*

Emergency services may occur in inclement weather and hazardous terrain, and involve the use of potentially hazardous equipment. Cadet activities are very engaging and strenuous; they may present the potential for injury. The focus of safety in CAP is to avoid injury and illness of members or damage to equipment. This is accomplished through a number of activities at each level within the organization, from national to the wing to the local squadron. In addition to formal safety training, these include formal proactive risk assessment, risk management, and educational safety briefings before and during CAP activities as well as structured reviews and remediation/mitigation interventions if mishaps occur. CAP safety officers lead these efforts.



However, safety is more than policies and procedures: it involves a mindset. The ultimate task of the safety officer is to inspire a *culture of safety* among members. Educating and leading by example, the safety officers strive to instill a habit of continually being aware of objects and activity in one's surroundings, deliberately detecting and assessing of hazards that might present themselves, and rationally taking steps to blunt the risk. In such a culture, safety isn't merely something tacked on to activities, safety permeates

them. In a very real sense, *every* member becomes a safety officer.

My role as the wing director of safety is to ensure compliance with CAPR160-1 policies and practices. More importantly, I am here to support the safety officers and command staff of each subunit a resource for all things safety. Need advice on a safety-related question? Reach out! Trying to navigate safety/risk management paperwork? I can help! Want ideas on how to creatively cultivate a safety culture in your unit? Let's brainstorm together! Looking for training and personal or professional development in safety? Let's talk. Doc



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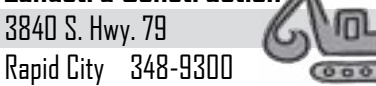


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South Dakota Wing Director of Operations

*By Lt. Col. Mike Cassidy, CAP
South Dakota Wing Staff*

Question: What is a director of operations in the Civil Air Patrol? What does that person do?

Before I attempt to answer these questions let me introduce myself.

I'm Mike Cassidy. I moved to South Dakota from North Carolina almost two years ago to be near family (especially grandkids). I started volunteering in CAP when I lived in North Carolina. Before that, I had the privilege to serve in the USAF for 30 years.

During most of my 30 years in the Air Force, I was in the operations directorate at various levels (which means I worked for a director of operations). In simple language this means I was involved in the primary functions of the Air Force. I was not in a supporting role, for example I was not a medical or a legal officer. In the Air Force I flew, and supervised the flying, of cargo and air refueling aircraft. I "operated" these aircraft to accomplish the Air Force mission.

You probably know Civil Air Patrol is an auxiliary organization to the USAF run primarily by volunteers, so it's not surprising that CAP's organization structure lines up with USAF's. With those thoughts in mind, you probably already guessed the director of operations for any Civil Air Patrol wing is responsible for "operating" and accomplishing CAP's key missions. Like most organizations, CAP has several missions.

So let me answer the question above; as the director of operations, my job is to make sure we can complete our mission of providing emergency services. Emergency services includes conducting search and rescue missions and disaster relief (think flooding, earthquakes, tornados) support missions.

To make sure we're prepared to complete these missions I keep an eye on a few key areas. Working with a team of super CAP volunteers I closely monitor aircrew and ground team training and qualifications. I need to make sure we have trained and qualified pilots, observers, scanners and photographers in our airplanes across the state.

Likewise, I make sure we have sufficient ground team leaders and members ready for the next missions. This integration of aircrew and ground-teams gives CAP a unique capability in our search and rescue or disaster relief missions.

Before closing, I need to discuss two other important areas the operations team watches closely. First, is aircraft maintenance—without regular, professional maintenance we could not do our job. Secondly, without both robust ground and airborne communications equipment for the aircrew, ground team integration we also could not complete our mission.

One last item, Civil Air Patrol is one of many organizations making incredible strides integrating drones to complete our missions of search and rescue and disaster relief. We recently completed successful exercises in which aircrew, ground teams and drone teams worked together to take multi-perspective photos of flooding and potential flood areas.

I hope this helps you understand my role in CAP as the SDWG/DO. To summarize, my job is to make sure we're ready to serve our community when a search and rescue is needed or when disaster strikes.

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South Dakota Wing Historian

*By Maj. Karla West, CAP
South Dakota Wing Staff*

The South Dakota Wing historian's job is to collect and supervise historical data and accounts from squadrons and the wing for preservation.

I assemble and maintain copies of CAP historical documentation. This includes archival materials, artifacts, photographs, and calendars. I also prepare a yearly wing report for the national office.

Being a historian in the wing is a challenging position. It takes detective work and requires a lot of cooperation from everyone in the wing.

Twice each year I dive deep into hundreds of online reports, copy, and organize them into folders so we have a good account of numbers, activities, personal records, and missions to be documented for future use.

On a weekly basis I try to document what is going on in the squadrons and the wing so we can use that data to learn and grow from. History is not only the documentation of good work we have done but the things that did not work so well. One of the best ways to learn is by studying our mistakes.

Personal computers make it easy to keep a good record of the who, what, why, and where of activities and events, but it is also not on record with the wing when that member is gone, so is their history. Sharing data and photos is the key to keeping a good record and preserving history.

Having a detailed record of South Dakota Wing history is valuable in many ways. It is a documented record of everything we have done to help local and state agencies so we can get the word out on how we can help these agencies in the future and how we work with all agencies.

Historical records also help with recruitment of volunteers, both cadets and senior members, by showing them how we train and the implementation of that training in our community. History is the ultimate recruiting tool and everyone can and should be a historian by documenting and sharing your information.

South Dakota Wing Public Affairs

*Col. Michael Marek, CAP
South Dakota Wing Staff*

In the United States Air Force, a public affairs officer's job is to tell the public about the organization and capabilities of the Air Force.

In Civil Air Patrol, the role is fundamentally the same - interpreting for the public what CAP does and why it's important.

I could talk about job functions, like planning, writing news releases, shooting photographs and video, developing newsletters and magazines (like *Roundup*), managing social media, managing website content, and similar tasks.

But the overarching goal is to strengthen the organization through telling the many positive stories about CAP, and in our case, South Dakota Wing.

In marketing communications theory, you can't just tell someone something once and expect them to internalize it. Persuasion about the value of CAP takes repetition, a continual flow of positive information. That's why CAP's public affairs professionals are more and more talking about the Civil Air Patrol brand and how we support that brand in everything we do. If we do this well, we will tell a consistent message about CAP that the public will perceive as important, believable, and distinctive.

I was working in the media when I first joined CAP, so it is natural that I was asked to serve as a public affairs officer. It was not long before I was serving in that role at the state level, then in the CAP region, and eventually on the national CAP public affairs staff.

I often heard in those early years that CAP was "America's best kept secret." As a PAO, my response to that became "it's only America's best kept secret because we keep it that way."

For years, CAP was inconsistent in telling its story, keeping much of the best news internal. CAP is striving for its next generation of public affairs officers and marketing communications professionals to achieve higher and higher levels of consistency and professionalism, so that like our emergency services training, we are volunteers trained to professional levels.



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South Dakota Wing Commander

*By Col. Michael Marek, CAP
South Dakota Wing Staff*

The public sees commanders in military organizations as giving orders, which subordinates faithfully obey.

The reality of command means seeking robust input from staff members who are “subject matter experts” and seeking consensus among senior advisors.

Civil Air Patrol uses a military structure because it is part of the Air Force Total Force, but CAP is also a volunteer organization, where terse commands top-down often don’t work very well.

Civil Air Patrol commanders serve for a three-year term. During that time, they are expected to support and strengthen the CAP mission. We divide this mission into three program areas - 1) The operations and emergency services program, 2) The cadet program, and 3) the aerospace and STEM, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, education program. But the commander can’t do everything, and in most cases, does not have broad enough experience in CAP to even try to do everything.

So, the commander gathers staff to provide leadership in these areas - the workhorses who do the hands-on work, as representatives of the commander. Counter to the popular perception of the commander, it is usually these subject matter experts who identify problems and opportunities and propose courses of action for the commander’s consideration.

In addition, any commander, and certainly in CAP, has responsibilities upward and downward in the organization. Our local volunteer squadron leadership and our volunteer state staff report to me, but above me in CAP is our volunteer region commander, above whom is the volunteer national commander, who reports to CAP National Board of Governors.

All CAP state commanders represent higher-level policy and directives downward to the wing membership. They also represent the concerns, problems, and issues of the wing membership upward and advocate for them via CAP chain of command.

Success in the commander’s job means listening and appreciating the perspectives, experience, and dedication of CAP’s volunteer members. And it means actively showing that appreciation and thanking our volunteer members for what they do and how they serve America’s communities, save lives, and shape futures.



Col. Marek and a team of adult and cadet members from South Dakota Wing visited congressional offices and the United States Capitol in February 2024 to report to South Dakota’s members of Congress, stopping in the capitol rotunda in the process.



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SOUTH DAKOTA WING | 2023



The South Dakota Wing flies drones and aerial photography for county emergency management officers. Here, at Spencer, S.D., Wolf Creek is far out of its banks. CAP photos documented the extent of floodwater encroachment on private and municipal property.

A Year of Emergency Services for South Dakota Wing

Civil Air Patrol's South Dakota Wing continues to embrace the CAP motto, "Semper Vigilans" — always vigilant.

Since the end of the coronavirus pandemic, the wing has redoubled its efforts to maintain members' readiness for search and rescue, disaster relief and assessment, and U.S. Air Force-assigned missions.

Accordingly, the wing is holding search and rescue exercises and quarterly emergency services academies across the state — all part of the wing's Year of Emergency Services.

"With changing technology and mission sets, South Dakota Wing members need to be ready for any emergency services contingency to help our communities," said Lt. Col. Mike Cassidy, the wing's director of operations and architect of the Year of Emergency Services. "Our 'Year of ES' will keep our members motivated, well-trained, and ready when called upon."

The wing also plans to:

- Contact emergency managers to help spot potential flooding trouble spots in local rivers, streams, and ditches via airborne and drone photography.
- Elevate readiness planning and training to expand operational mission capabilities. This includes new missions, such as supporting shelter managers, and ground team photography and assessment.
- Continue building partnerships with the state and local and tribal emergency management officials.
- Attend major gatherings of first responders and emergency managers across the state.

The wing renewed CAP's memorandum of understanding with the state in 2023. The new agreement strengthens an already mutually beneficial relationship.

In addition, the South Dakota Department of Military included funding in its successful budget request to replace the wing's state trunking interoperability radios to work on the upgraded state system.

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SOUTH DAKOTA | 2023

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40 aircrew personnel
239 emergency responders

Squadrons

7 locations statewide

Aircraft

6 single-engine

Vehicles

19 vehicles

Interoperable Communications

10 VHF/FM repeaters
160 VHF/FM stations
34 HF stations

Missions

2 search and rescue missions
 2 lives saved*
 3 finds*
**Includes lives saved and finds credited with national team support*
3 air defense intercept training and evaluation missions
3 CAP, Air Force ROTC, and Junior ROTC cadet orientation flight missions
3 other Air Force support missions
14 training missions
5 other missions in support of partner agencies and organizations or local municipalities

Significant Events Supported in Fiscal Year 2023

Felix Keynote
Sioux Falls Airshow
Winter Storm "Feeding South Dakota" support
Joint Dakota Encampment
Iron Lake missing person search
Custer County missing snowmobilers search
Discover Aviation Day
Wind Cave National Park "Horse Search"

Cadet Flying

279 CAP, Air Force ROTC, and Junior ROTC cadet orientation flights

Total Hours Flown

810

Financial

\$60,023 in state funding
\$1,406,244 value of wing's volunteer hours

National Commander

Maj. Gen. Edward D. Phelka
ephelka@capnhq.gov

Region Commander

Col. John O'Neill
joneill@ncr.cap.gov

Wing Commander

Col. Michael Marek
michael.marek@sdwg.cap.gov

Government Relations Advisor

Lt. Col. Tom Anez
tom.anez@sdwg.cap.gov

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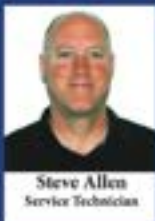
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