



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAP honored with Air Force Organizational Excellence Award

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – Civil Air Patrol received one of the U.S. Air Force’s top honors today at the Air Force Association’s annual conference.

Deborah James, secretary of the Air Force, and Gen. David L. Goldfein, Air Force chief of staff, presented Maj. Gen. Joe Vazquez, CAP national commander, with the Air Force Organizational Excellence Award during this morning’s session at the AFA’s Air, Space & Cyber Conference at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center. James also affixed the CAP flag presented on the stage with a red, white and blue streamer signifying the honor for the period Oct. 1, 2012 to Aug. 31, 2016.

The accompanying citation makes note of CAP’s “exceptionally meritorious service” during that interval – described as a period in which the organization “emerged as a true Total Force partner, flying 34,367 operational sorties as the Air Force Auxiliary.”

During those years, the citation said, CAP:

- Served as “the cornerstone of Air Force rescue operations” in carrying out 2,943 search and rescue missions for the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center, flying 5,040 hours and saving 272 lives;
- Functioned as “an integral part of our homeland defense” in the course of conducting 1,950 flights as targets during intercept training for military jet pilots;
- Provided 158,000 images for emergency agencies’ use in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, a massive mission in which aircrews from 21 states made 696 flights in 73 planes;
- Participated in 959 exercises in which aircrews simulated unmanned aircraft systems for training of Air Force, Army and Navy joint terminal attack controllers; and
- Totaled 29,395 flight hours assisting law enforcement agencies in the seizure of illegal drugs valued at \$2.9 billion.

The Air Force announced CAP’s addition to its Total Force in August 2015.

The award also recognized CAP’s aerospace education program, praised for reaching 20,000 elementary schoolchildren and promoting academics and fitness through an engaging STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) curriculum.

The organization's performance in the AFA's annual CyberPatriot National Youth Cyber Defense Competition was cited as well, with teams of CAP cadets finishing second overall in 2015 and third in 2016 in national fields totaling more than 3,000 teams. CAP cadets took first place nationally in 2011 and 2012.

The citation also hailed CAP's Cadet Encampment Assistance Program, which has provided financial assistance for 3,700 cadets to attend wing encampments and has increased participation in those activities by 20 percent.

"As your Air Force Auxiliary, the Civil Air Patrol is extremely proud to be considered a member of the Air Force Total Force and to be recognized for our service with the Air Force Organizational Excellence Award," Vazquez said.

"This prestigious honor is an inspiration to our 56,000 volunteer Airmen nationwide," he added.

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 for more information.

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