



NEWS

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Civil Air Patrol heads to Nashville during historic 75th year of service

700+ volunteers to gather Aug. 11-13 for National Conference

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – More than 700 Civil Air Patrol members will convene at the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center this week for the organization's **2016 National Conference**, which will devote several days to training, networking and focusing on the U.S. Air Force Auxiliary's historic past as well as its promising future.

Special guests for the National Conference will include two former NASA astronauts — **retired U.S. Navy Capt. Robert L. Gibson** and **Dr. Rhea Seddon**.

"Civil Air Patrol is honored to have two NASA astronauts in attendance for this year's National Conference," said **CAP National Commander Maj. Gen. Joe Vazquez**. "Their presence with us during our **75th anniversary year** draws added attention to CAP and helps solidify our status as one of the nation's premier public service organizations."

CAP officially turns 75 on Dec. 1, 2016, and is celebrating its anniversary throughout the year. The theme for the 75th anniversary celebration is "**Civil Air Patrol: Always Vigilant for America, 1941-2016.**"

Gibson and Seddon will attend the General Assembly, which begins at 8 a.m. Friday, Aug. 12, and will participate in a special astronaut presentation afterwards. Seddon — one of the first six women to enter the Astronaut Program — will sign her book, "**Go For Orbit**," following the presentation.

The National Conference will culminate with a banquet at 7 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 13, featuring a keynote speech by **Daniel R. Sitterly**, principal deputy assistant Air Force secretary for manpower and reserve affairs at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Sitterly was instrumental in helping secure Air Force funding for Civil Air Patrol's **Cadet Encampment Assistance Program**, which has enabled 3,600 underprivileged youth to attend CAP wing encampments over the past two years.

Other highlights of CAP's 2016 National Conference include:

National Awards

Also **Aug. 13**, top CAP members will be honored for their service during an **Awards Recognition** ceremony set to begin at 8:30 a.m. Those being recognized include **Cadet Col. Klara G. Olcott** of the **Arizona Wing** as **Cadet of the Year** and **Lt. Col. Charles E. Wiest** of the **California Wing** as **Senior Member of the Year**. Several CAP units will also be honored, including the **Arkansas Wing's 115th Composite Squadron**, selected as the **2015 Squadron of Distinction**.

Cadet Day

In addition, **Aug. 13** will feature **Col. Mary S. Feik Memorial Cadet Day** activities for CAP's younger members, which offers youth an opportunity to learn more about cyber defense, participate in color guard training and visit with special guests. Participating cadets will also find out more about CAP's new Active Fitness Program and receive information about the United States Air Force Academy and Air Force ROTC.

Feik, one of CAP's most iconic and revered members, died in June at the age of 92.

Learning Labs

In addition, some **60 learning labs** are planned for **Aug. 12-13**. The seminars, led by CAP national staff and other experts, will focus on such topics as finance, communications, safety, logistics, aircraft operations, professional development and leadership, fundraising, recruitment and retention, the chaplaincy, government relations, CAP history, information technology, cadet programs, aerospace education and public affairs.

Preconference Workshops

Ten preconference workshops will be offered **Aug. 9-11**. Those sessions, customized to fulfill members' professional development needs, include a Cessna G-1000 Ground School and a Federal Emergency Management Agency course on joint information center planning; examinations of government relations and fundraising; a two-day session aimed at public information officers and public affairs officers; and day-long classes for both current and future wing commanders and leaders of cadets.

#CAPNC16

#CivilAirPatrol

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 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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