



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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California Wing supports Air Force's Super Bowl airspace security missions

SANTA CLARA, Calif. – Civil Air Patrol's California Wing will fly Tuesday in Fresno and on Feb. 3 in Oakland to help ensure the safety and security of airspace around Super Bowl 50.

In order to help train Air Force fighter aircrews and maintain their proficiency, Civil Air Patrol flies its Cessna airplanes into "restricted airspace" to simulate a trespassing aircraft while Air Force jet crews practice intercept techniques. The Air Force pilots fly alongside the CAP plane, make radio contact and guide it out of the restricted airspace.

Since the terroristic attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the Federal Aviation Administration routinely implements "no-fly zones" referred to as a Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFR) around major events like the Super Bowl. Airspace around the venue is restricted from all general aviation traffic for a specified radius to ensure no aircraft enter. The TFR is enforced by the U.S. Air Force, which has fighter aircraft patrolling the area during the time of the restriction.

Two Cessna 182s from the California Wing will perform these missions when they fly as intercept targets for fighters from the California Air National Guard. CAP's "low and slow" planes are considered ideal intercept targets for these exercises. A third CAP Cessna will fly "high bird," handling communications from participants on the ground and other aircraft.

These missions mark CAP's 15th year as a participant in North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) air-defense exercises designed to protect the Super Bowl's airspace. CAP is involved in similar exercises around the U.S. throughout the year to test airspace security.

The exercises, known as Falcon Virgo, are carried out as part of Operation Noble Eagle, launched by 1st Air Force/Continental U.S. NORAD Region (CONR) after the 2001 terrorist attacks. Along with CONR's Western Air Defense Sector and CAP, the exercises are conducted in coordination with the Federal Aviation Administration and Customs and Border Protection.

"Civil Air Patrol is proud to again partner with the U.S. Air Force on this vital homeland security exercise. The opportunity to ensure safe skies around Levi's Stadium is a mission CAP takes very seriously," said CAP National Commander Maj. Gen. Joe Vazquez. "Our aircrews are trained to simulate either threat or duress flights that inadvertently or purposely enter into restricted airspace. The Air Force depends on CAP to ensure its readiness in guarding America's airspace."

“TFRs are a normal part of general aviation flying, and at any given time there can be 30-40 TFRs in various areas around the country,” said California Wing Commander Colonel Alan Ferguson, “including whenever the president of the United States flies in Air Force One.”

CAP is also responsible for raising general aviation community awareness of TFRs. Aircrews from throughout the California Wing will fly to numerous airports to inform pilots about the TFRs and the penalties for violation.

A training flight will be conducted on February 3, 2016 at Oakland Airport and credentialed media are invited to attend. For more information on this media opportunity, please contact the CAP contact listed below.

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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