



THE CHALLENGER

No Challenge, Unchallenged!



DIABLO COMPOSITE SQUADRON 44 • CIVIL AIR PATROL • U.S. AIR FORCE AUXILIARY
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January 2007

Civilian Pilots Provide Target Practice

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Military Aircraft Chase Cessnas in Nighttime Drills Over Capital

Civilian Pilots Provide Target Practice

By Mary Beth Sheridan, Washington Post Staff Writer
Wednesday, January 17, 2007

Editor's Comments

As his watch ticks toward midnight, Paul Gardella checks the oil on the small Cessna 182 parked on a cold, dark airstrip in Fairfax County. He knows what he soon could be facing: Coast Guard helicopters chasing him. F-16s intercepting him. Ground-to-air missiles tracking his every turn.

Photographers and Reporters Wanted

That's because Gardella – a software engineer and former military officer – is taking on a new role. Enemy of the U.S. government. "In the Navy, I was on the other side of the ones that were shooting," he muses. Gardella, 50, is among a group of pilots who pose as nighttime intruders, penetrating restricted airspace over Washington in drills that take place every few weeks. While area residents slumber, the volunteers allow the U.S. military to practice intercepting them – or worse.

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The pilots are with the Civil Air Patrol, a national organization with a proud history of service. During World War II, its daredevil pilots chased German U-boats along the U.S. Coast. In the ensuing decades, volunteers ran bomb shelter exercises and helped the Air Force search for crashed airplanes. During World War II, its daredevil pilots chased German U-boats along the U.S. coast. In the ensuing decades, volunteers ran bomb-shelter exercises and helped the Air Force search for crashed planes. Now, with the country facing terrorist threats, the Civil Air Patrol is returning to its homeland-defense roots. "I understand there has to be practice," said Gardella, a laid-back father of three from Burke. "If bad guys are what Uncle Sam needs," he declared, "I'm happy to help out."

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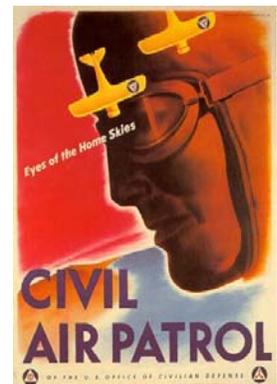
Coming Events

Join Us

In the low-slung flight operations center at Fort Belvoir, Gardella and three other pilots met on a recent wintry night to prepare for their mission. Clad in olive flight suits with Civil Air Patrol patches, they sat on couches in a wood-paneled room, studying maps and listening to a flight briefing from Gene Hartman, 72, a patrol member from Springfield. It was Gardella's first homeland security exercise, but his companions were veteran invaders.

Air Force Col. Keith Siegel, 47, won a Silver Star for bombing an Iraqi-held air base in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. After being promoted to a desk job, he joined the Civil Air Patrol to fly in his spare time. After the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, he was asked to take part in military exercises again – this time, over Washington.

As the Target. "I said, 'Can you assure me that I won't be shot down?'" the Vienna resident laughed.



Kylie McDonald, 35, has been flying missions for two years. The Centreville resident grew up in a military family and always felt the tug of national service. "Now I'm getting a similar opportunity, even though I'm a civilian," said McDonald, who works for a company that provides aviation services.

Outside the room, in a pressed navy-blue uniform, sat Jane Davies, 52, of Springfield, who joined the Civil Air Patrol in 1969 as a "Star Trek"-obsessed teenager. She is commander of the patrol's D.C. area branch, or wing, which includes more than 200 volunteers and nearly 300 cadets under age 21. Only a small group of them are allowed to fly the Civil Air Patrol's red-white-and-blue Cessnas, Davies explained. Other patrol members are trained in activities such as hunting for vanished planes or handing out relief supplies after floods or hurricanes. For decades, the roughly 56,000 members nationwide have helped out the Air Force or local governments with such tasks.

Now they are back doing homeland security—"exactly as we did 65 years ago," Davies said, referring to the founding of the Civil Air Patrol by aviation enthusiasts at the dawn of World War II. Nationally, the patrol takes part in a variety of anti-terror activities. Some pilots periodically snap photographs of sensitive sites such as nuclear plants or dams for the government. Sometimes patrol members are asked to fly military offices or government officials over certain areas. "We're not necessarily made privy to what they're looking at," said Rick Greenhut, head of homeland security for the patrol. "We're kind of the bus driver."

Perhaps the most exciting missions, though, are the exercises known as Falcon Virgo, which take place over cities such as New York and Washington. They are directed by officials from the 1st Air Force at Tyndall Air Base in Florida, who coordinate air defense for the continental United States.

Details of the Falcon Virgo exercises are often secret. "They ask us not to discuss it, for everyone's safety," McDonald said. The volunteer pilot simply informs friends she's "on a special mission for homeland security."

But this much is known: The exercises test Washington's air-defense radar system and the aircraft that might have to confront an intruder. Those include the Air Force jets that fly continuously over the capital, planes that scramble from Andrews Air Force Base and Coast Guard helicopters. Participants include officials up the chain of command who must decide whether to intercept or shoot down an aircraft. Many involved in the exercises are not told that the Cessnas are "friendlies" until after they have been picked up on radar – but well before any decision would be made to shoot them down.

During some exercises, the military also tracks the Cessnas with ground-to-air missiles. "which can be kind of disconcerting if you're flying then," observed Lt. Col. Gerry Sohan of the Air Force District of Washington. None are fired, though.

The Civil Air Patrol is an auxiliary of the Air Force, which evaluates each wing every two years and provides about \$30 million a year for planes, fuel and other expenses. The patrol owns more than 500 Cessnas, the biggest fleet in the world. But the Air Force doesn't pay the volunteers, thus saving a huge amount of money. "Just for the national capital region, one exercise would probably save close to \$10,000," said Mark O'Brien, an employee with the 1st Air Force who is in charge of liaison with the Civil Air Patrol.

Civil Air Patrol members pay \$65 a year in dues and buy their own uniforms. In return, they get the opportunity to fly at reduced rates or take cheap flying lessons. But Gardella said, they receive something more important. "Most of my flying has been for myself, for my own enjoyment," he said, referring to his many years as a private pilot. "I started to feel the Lord gave me the ability and resources and passion to fly, and so I ought to give something back." That explains why he was lifting off into the sky in a Cessna shortly before midnight with Zuegel at his side. It was to be a long night: they were supposed to invade Washington twice.

Gardella isn't allowed to reveal what transpired in the nightlong exercise. But, contacted a few days later, he said he finished with such an adrenaline rush that he actually went to work instead of taking time off to sleep. And were his co-workers impressed that he had been out all night trying to help defend the United States from enemies, zooming his little Cessna into restricted airspace to be a target for fighter airplanes, helicopters and ground-to-air missiles? "They're not that into it," he said. "They're like, 'That's nice.' "

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Editor's Comments

Having recently completed another year, let's briefly look back at some of our accomplishments during 2006. Our meeting schedule increased from every other week to every week. The training schedule was revamped and training is now on a predetermined schedule. Additional personnel completed training and were certified as qualified for flight operations and for ground operations which substantially improved mission readiness. Senior membership held steady and cadet membership increased dramatically. The squadron's website was re-established. We passed the unit inspection with high grades in a number of areas and high overall for the squadron.

Now let's look forward to what is ahead for 2007. For several months, the Plans and Program Committee has been developing an interesting and productive schedule. Some goals have been set for several sections, however, more input is needed from the heads of the various sections. These goals ought to be squadron goals, not goals set by the Plans and Program Committee.

Since you are reading this newsletter it means we have already started to accomplish one of our goals – to publish a squadron newsletter on a quarterly schedule. Another goal being accomplished as this newsletter is going to press is hosting a SAREX; another SAREX will be held by the squadron in the Fall. You can expect to see in these newsletters articles from the various sections and information on coming activities, results of missions we participated in, and other newsworthy articles. We will also welcome new members, acknowledge promotions and awards, and inform you about changes to regulations. Overall we expect that it will be a busy and exciting during 2007.

Welcome aboard to our new members who joined during 2006:

Senior members: Kevin Hanrahan (March), Matthew Post (April), Charles Allen (August), Phillip Friesen, and Gene Golfus (November). Transfers: Gordon Ziegler (September) and Catherine Ziegler (September), and joining so far in 2007: William O'Brian (January).

Cadets: Richard Hanrahan (March), David Hollenback (March), Tyler Lenarz (August), Jonathan Hollenback (November), Arthur Gilbert (December), Elisabeth Gilbert (December), Robert Gilbert (December), and John Shelton (December).

Public Affairs

As mentioned earlier, this is the first newsletter we published in quite some time. If anyone is interested in working in Public Affairs, see Lt. Col. Gordon Ziegler. We are looking for someone who is interested in taking photos and writing articles for the newsletter. In addition, we need members to assist in contacting government officials, the media, civic groups and schools.

\$\$ Finance \$\$

Department heads are requested to submit their budgets for the remainder of CY2007 ASAP. This year will be considered as the base year for budgets in following years. Consider what your section will be doing throughout the year and estimate the expenses needed for your section's activities.

Administration

Normally during the year there are a number of changes to the various National Headquarters, Pacific Region and California Wing (CAWG) regulations, manuals and pamphlets that govern our operations. 2006 was no exception! As expected, National Headquarters issued the greatest number of changes. If you look at CAPR 0-2, you will see about 50 changes to National regulations and manuals and one change to a pamphlet. In addition, there were several publications that were either rescinded or superseded by online courses.

You can go to the Publications sections of the National (www.cap.gov), Region (www.pcr.cap.gov) and CAWG (www.cawg.cap.gov) websites to look up and print current regulations, manuals, pamphlets and forms. If you want to see a hard copy of a particular publication, ask the administrative officer for assistance. There is a complete set of all current publications in the Administrative Office.

Personnel

A semi-annual review of each member's personnel file will be conducted each year. This gives us an opportunity to review your personnel file with you to ensure that all of your training courses, awards and decorations, etc. are recorded. Each member will be notified when to meet with the personnel officer for your review.

Our initial personnel assignments for 2007 have been published and many of the staff positions have been filled, however, we still have several staff positions that are vacant. We are asking all senior members to look at the vacant positions and, if you are interested in filling any of those positions, talk to Lt. Col. Frank Opelski, Lt. Col. Dennis Edmondson or 1LT Kevin Hanrahan.

Presently we need a senior member to take on the duties of the internal aerospace education officer (AEO). Until we get a second person in AE, the primary AEO will fill the AEO positions for both the senior program and the cadet program. Anyone interested in these positions should see Lt. Col. Dennis Edmondson, deputy commander for seniors, for the senior program and 1LT Kevin Hanrahan, deputy commander for cadets, for the cadet program.

Due to the relocation and transfer of our former Personnel Officer, we are looking for someone to fill that position.

Aerospace Education



All members are encouraged to bring an article related to aviation or aerospace to the weekly meetings. We will spend a few minutes discussing one or two of the articles. If your article is not selected for discussion, don't give up, we will use some of the articles in our newsletter.

Cadet Program



The cadet program has literally taken off! At this time last year, there were 7 cadets on the rolls, we now have 17 cadets. That is an amazing 243% increase – without conducting a recruiting drive. Not only that, these cadets have really been busy.

- ★ We now have a color guard. The members of the color guard are: C/TSgt Richard Hanrahan (Commander), C/MSgt Daniel Freisen, C/A1C Zachary Aguiar, C/A1C Barry Harper, C/Amn Anthony Scaletta, and C/ John Sheldon. C/MSgt Andrew Smith and the members of the color guard participated in the Veteran's Day parade in Petaluma. This was their first public performance. Look for more appearances to come.
- ★ C/SrA Tyler Peterson and C/A1C Elliott Moon earned their private pilot licenses.
- ★ C/A1C Elliott Moon was awarded a four year ROTC scholarship with the U.S. Army.
- ★ C/MSgt Daniel Friesen and C/Amn Anthony Scaletta survived summer encampment.
- ★ C/TSgt Richard Hanrahan attended CAWG Cadet Officer Basic (COB) Course at NAS Lemoore during 26 December – 1 January.
- ★ C/A1C Zachary Aguiar attended Airman Training School (ATS) during 26-28 January 2007.
- ★ C/SrA David Hollenbeck, C/AB Jonathan Hollenbeck, C/AB Arthur Gilbert, C/AB Robert Gilbert and C/AB Elisabeth Gilbert attended Basic Cadet School (BCS) during 26-28 January 2007.
- ★ 24 cadet orientation flights were given during the last six months.

Quotation. Think about it!

"Importance has to do with results. If something is important, it contributes to your mission, your values, and your high priority goals. But, if we don't have a clear idea of what is important in the results we desire in our lives, we are easily diverted into responding to the urgent."

Safety

ICE Alert Medics. Enter your **ICE** (In Case of Emergency) contacts into your mobile phone.

In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that in 2003, 900,000 emergency room patients could not provide contact information because they were incapacitated.

Type the acronym **ICE** into your cell phone followed by the name. Examples: ICE-1 Jake and ICE-2 Kylie followed by their phone numbers. Be sure to alert the person(s) that they are an ICE contact for you.

Communications

An Advanced Communicator User Training (ACUT) class will be held on Saturday, 10 March 2007 at the CCR terminal building. Officers and cadets can attend provided they have completed OPSEC training. This is the first one in more than a year, so sign up early. This should be easy to do since we are hosting it. Holding a radio operator permit (ACUT or BCUT) is a requirement for many emergency services specialties, including mission pilot. Now would be a good time to complete this requirement because you never know when the next one will be offered here.

Pacific Region Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) Academy

If you joined Civil Air Patrol because you thought you would have a chance to SAVE LIVES, then Pacific Region has the training activity just for you!

The Pacific Region Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) Academy will be held 15-22 July 2007 at Fort Lewis, Washington. It will be an opportunity to experience a realistic ground search and rescue training environment that combines teamwork and individual skills to become proficient in the ground team mission.

The academy is conducted almost exclusively in the field environment and proper preparation cannot be overemphasized. Be prepared – this academy requires extensive foot travel with your SAR pack through all kinds of terrain. Due to the remoteness of the site and post security policies, there will be no late arrivals or early departures for students. Officers and cadets are welcome to apply. Attendance is limited so apply early. Applications to CAWG Headquarters must be postmarked by 10 February 2007. For more information, go to www.cawgcadets.org today.

Coming Activities and Events in 2007

16-19 Feb	Cadet Programs Conference at Camp San Luis Obispo.
24-25 Feb	Squadron Leadership School & Corporate Learning Course at Moffett Federal Airfield
3-4 Mar	GSAR at Coalinga
10 Mar	ACUT/BCUT Comm Class at Concord
10-11 Mar	Tabletop Exercise, SAR EVAL at Castle Airport

Coming Activities and Events in 2007 - Continued

- 11-12 Mar Training Leaders of Cadets at Travis AFB – *for Officers!*
- 31 Mar Aircraft Manager/IC Meeting at Castle AFB
- 25-28 May Watsonville Antique Fly-in at Watsonville Airport on Memorial Day Weekend.
- 11-18 Aug CAWG Cadet Encampment at Camp San Luis Obispo.
- 26-28 Oct CAWG Conference at TBD

Note: This is only a partial listing of coming activities and events. Be sure to check the CAWG Calendar and the CAWG Cadet Program websites for late changes plus other activities and events. Those respective websites are www.cawg.cap.gov and www.cawgcadets.org.

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Join Us Meetings: Mondays at 1900-2100 (7:00 pm – 9:00 pm)
Northwest Side, Buchanan Airport, Sally Ride Blvd, Concord CA

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