



FLORIDA WING, CIVIL AIR PATROL

GATOR GAZETTE

JULY 2023



SAVE THE DATES

August 17-19: CAP National Conference, Bellevue, WA

August 25-27: Florida Wing Color Guard Academy, Elks Youth Camp, Umatilla

September 22-24: Fall Florida Leadership Academy (FLA), Elks Youth Camp, Umatilla

November 3-5: Ultimate Cadet Challenge, Flaming Arrow Scout Reservation, Lake Wales

December 5: Sunshine State Drone Expos, Azalea Middle School, St. Pete

December 16: Various locations across the state

Feb 23-25, 2024: Cadet Competition, Patrick Space Force Base

April 4-6, 2024: Florida Wing Conference, Pre-Conference Courses, Annual Awards Banquet

The Gator Gazette is a monthly e-magazine published by Florida Wing, Civil Air Patrol.

To submit an article, please send copy and photos (jpg or png format, attached file, largest size available) to: sybrian.castleman@flwg.cap.gov

July cover photo by: Cadet CMSgt. Emma Dewey



All Florida Wing units are now at HURCON 5 which is a seasonal alert condition that is automatically set for all units in FLWG from 1 June through 30 November each year unless directed otherwise by the FLWG/CC.

All units need to complete the HURCON 5 checklist as soon as possible. Please review and refer to Florida Wing Pamphlet 60-004, Tropical Weather/Hurricane Response Plan for additional HURCON information and checklists.

The FLWG HURCON Plan and HURCON Status updates can be found at <https://flwg.cap.gov/news/hurcon-status>

2023 Florida Wing Summer Encampment

By Maj. Sybrian Castleman, CAP

Photos by Maj. Steve Lampasona

The Florida Wing (FLWG) Summer Encampment is a training program that took place from July 7th to July 16th at Camp Blanding National Guard Joint Training Center, located near Starke, Florida. The encampment was led by Captain Christian Dominguez, who served as the Encampment Commander, and C/Lt. Col. Justin McDonald, who took on the role of Cadet Encampment Commander.

Major Larry Spangler was the Encampment Deputy Commander of Support. The support team is vital to the success of an encampment as they serve in positions in logistics, food services, operations, transportation, administration, safety, health services, communications, and public affairs. Serving as part of the encampment cadet leadership team were C/Lt. Col. Elias Paver as the Cadet Deputy of Support and C/Capt. Kristina Duncan as the Cadet Deputy of Operations.

Captain Amon Russell served as the Encampment Commandant to oversee curriculum, mentor the cadet command team and line staff, and serve as a resource for senior member training officers. This summer's Chief Training Officer was Major Anthony Rios who helps coordinate with the commandant and operations to smoothly transition cadets from one activity to the next and to assure cadets' safety throughout the week.

The encampment hosted a total of 336 participants, including 182 first-time student cadets, 34 returning cadets as part of the Advanced Training Squadron, 76 cadet staff members, and 44 adult staff members. Each group of cadets received tailored training based on their level of experience and responsibilities.



Senior member and cadet staff arrived two days before the student cadets to complete required training and to prepare the site for the student arrival. Once the training has been completed, staff members participate in the traditional “hat ceremony” where they receive their encampment hats with embroidered duty assignment designations across the front.



For first-time student cadets, the encampment focused on a standard curriculum provided by Civil Air Patrol National Headquarters Cadet Programs. This curriculum covered various aspects of Civil Air Patrol, including drill exercises, uniform inspections, knowledge about the organization, fitness training, and learning about customs and courtesies. The encampment offered a wide range of special activities for all cadets, providing them with unique and exciting experiences throughout their training. Here are some of the activities they participated in:

Daily Sports: Cadets engaged in various sports activities, promoting physical fitness, teamwork, and friendly competition.

Leadership Reaction Course (LRC): The LRC involved a team-based obstacle course that required cadets to work together, think critically, and communicate effectively to overcome challenges and complete tasks successfully.



Counter Drug Task Force Obstacle Course: Cadets faced obstacle courses designed to simulate the challenges encountered by law enforcement and counter-drug task force members. This course included unique elements such as the A-Frame obstacle, rope wall, and vertical wall.

Air Assault Obstacle Course: In this activity, cadets encountered various physical challenges that tested their endurance, strength, and agility.

Rappelling Tower: Cadets had the opportunity to experience rappelling, completing a controlled vertical descent, which fosters courage and confidence while following safety protocols. Rappel masters from the National Guard gave instruction to cadets and provided additional support for the activity to assure the safety of all participating Civil Air Patrol members.

Visiting the On-Base Fire Station: Cadets visited the on-base fire station to learn about firefighting and emergency response procedures.

Static Displays: Cadet flights took a self-guided tour through the static displays outside the Camp Blanding Museum, showcasing military equipment and vehicles, offering cadets a chance to learn more about military history and technology.

As a special activity, Sea Cadets who were also training at Camp Blanding for the week, joined Civil Air Patrol cadets in a special Jeopardy-style basic knowledge competition. This fun activity helped build the relationship between cadets from the two organizations.

Encampment activities aim to provide cadets with hands-on experiences, leadership opportunities, and exposure to various aspects of military and emergency services. By participating in these diverse activities, the cadets not only enhanced their physical and technical skills but also learned valuable lessons in teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving.



Cadets in the Advanced Training Squadron (ATS) not only participate in many of the same activities as the first-time student cadets, but they also receive a higher level of leadership training, focusing on more advanced leadership lessons. They also learned and practiced various skill sets used in emergency services, preparing them to handle critical situations effectively. The importance of teamwork was emphasized throughout their training. Their training included the following:

Advanced Leadership Lessons: Covered more complex and leadership concepts and practices.

Flight Fitness Challenge: Cadets engaged in physical fitness activities tailored to aviation-related fitness requirements.

Emergency Services Skill Sets: ATS cadets learned and practiced various skills used in emergency services. This included training in search and rescue techniques, disaster response, and other critical emergency procedures.

Teamwork Emphasis: The importance of teamwork was highlighted during ATS training. Cadets were encouraged to work collaboratively, communicate effectively, and support each other to achieve common goals.



NRA Winchester Rifle Marksmanship Program: ATS cadets had the opportunity to participate in this program, with a heavy emphasis on firearm safety and provides them with a chance to develop their shooting skills using Winchester rifles under the supervision of experienced firearms instructors.

ATS cadets also enjoyed an educational aerospace trip to Cape Canaveral where they explored the history of space flight at the Space Force Museum on a tour led by Florida Wing's Lt. Col. Gary Dahlke who is also a volunteer at the museum.

A Blackhawk helicopter from Patrick Space Force Base landed at Camp Blanding for a special meet and greet and tour of the helicopter with ATS cadets.

At the end of the week, all cadets and senior members enjoyed a social "combat dining-out" at the pavilion which was followed by an awards ceremony for the presentation of encampment awards for the training week to flights, squadrons and individual members and cadet officer promotion presentations.

During the Pass-in-Review, cadets demonstrated their newly acquired skills in drill and uniform precision, showcasing their professionalism and discipline. This momentous occasion provided an opportunity for cadets to feel a sense of pride in their achievements, and for their families and friends to witness firsthand the growth and development of the cadets during their time at the encampment. The live broadcast on Facebook further extended the reach of the event, making it a memorable and inclusive experience for family members and friends who could not attend the ceremony in person the ability to join in and experience the celebration in real-time.

2023 National AEO School - Launchpad for Aerospace Education Exploration

*Florida's Space Coast plays host to Civil Air Patrol
Aerospace Education Officers and Aerospace Education Members*

By: 2nd Lt. Beth Crane, CAP

Civil Air Patrol Aerospace Education Officers (AEOs) and Aerospace Education Members (AEMs) have a passion for teaching others about the amazing world of aerospace and cybertechnology—and several from Florida - recently launched into greater altitudes of aerospace education exploration at a school planned exclusively for them.



In June, Civil Air Patrol hosted the 2023 National Aerospace Education Officers School in our own Florida backyard. Celebrating its 20th year, the school took place in Cocoa Beach, Florida, home to Patrick Space Force Base. This area is a gateway to NASA's Kennedy Space Center and the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, offering aerospace enthusiasts a closeup experience with our nation's historic rocket program as well as its exciting present and optimistic future.



2nd Lt. Don Keister, FLWG Lake Composite Sq. works on STEM kit with Lt. Col. Randy Carlson of CAWG.

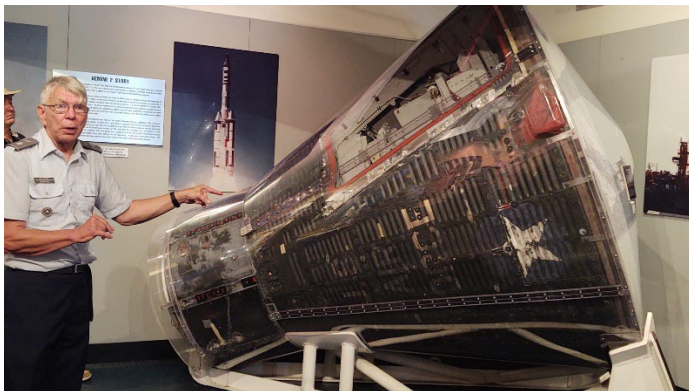
AEOs and AEMs from around the United States and Puerto Rico gathered to learn, network, and be inspired, returning to their local squadrons and schools armed with information to build and strengthen their aerospace and cyber education programs. 2nd Lt. Tara Hendry, AEO at the Hernando County Composite Squadron, enthusiastically declared, "I am very grateful for the opportunity to network with other AEOs and AEMs. Being able to have the hands-on experience with CAP STEM Kits inspired me to want to get them into our squadron!"

The school week kicked off with an opportunity to witness the early morning launch of the SpaceX Falcon 9 Starlink Satellite mission. Then the classroom sessions began aboard Patrick Space Force Base. Aerospace Education Officers received instruction regarding the particulars of their duty assignment and CAP regulations which superintend their role. AEOs are Civil Air Patrol members who oversee the aerospace education portion of the cadet and senior member programs at their local squadrons. They ensure cadet orientation flights are taking place, facilitate weekly aerospace current events discussion and lessons, and work with the unit activities officer to plan enrichment activities for the cadets and senior members.

Aerospace Education Members (AEMs) later joined the classroom training for orientation to CAP's vast library of aerospace and cyber education materials, STEM kits, and manipulatives. AEMs are K-12 formal and informal educators at schools, youth organizations, museums, and libraries. They are members of the CAP National HQ group rather than a local squadron and do not wear a CAP uniform. However, AEMs provide an extension to the educational mission by exposing students of all ages to STEM-related subjects and careers, in partnership with Civil Air Patrol. AEMs may also benefit from the Teacher Orientation Program (TOP) where they can receive a free orientation flight in one of Civil Air Patrol's fleet of Cessna aircraft.

Kimberly Forsch, AEM at Laurel Nokomis K-8 School, in Venice Beach, explained that "As a K-5th grade computer science teacher, it was great to collaborate with other teachers and the CAP STEM programs and facilitators. I can't wait to use what I learned in the next school year. I'm already planning a STEM Escape activity and look forward to a TOP flight!"

Because the AEO school is held so close to Cape Canaveral, this year's National Aerospace Education Officers School provided unique field trips highlighting historical and futuristic aerospace experiences. Participants and their families were treated to a private dinner at the Cape Canaveral Space Force Museum, Sands Space History Center. National AE HQ staff were on hand as students explored the variety of historic artifacts which outline the history of rocket launches from the Cape. Local CAP members, Major Ed Lovins and Major Pat Lovins of the Patrick Composite Squadron who also volunteer at the museum, were at the dinner to keep the gift shop open after hours to give attendees an opportunity to purchase keepsakes of their visit.



Lt. Col. Dahlke shares history of the Gemini space program during Space Force Museum tour.

Lt. Col. Gary Dahlke, CAP Florida Wing Deputy Director of Aerospace Education, escorted NAES participants on guided tours of the world's most iconic space exploration centers: Cape Canaveral and Kennedy Space Center. Lt. Col. Dahlke is a co-author of the CAP textbook [Aerospace: The Journey of Flight](#), as well as numerous other CAP publications. He contributed a wealth of personal experience and technical knowledge to the tours, drawing from his active-duty experience in the Air Force in the fields of Ballistic Missile Maintenance, Command and Control as well as his extensive civilian career in the aerospace industry working with NASA's Shuttle program.

"This was my first time attending the AE School and I would highly recommend it to others! I really enjoyed the behind-the-scenes tours and appreciated the knowledge and experience of Lt. Col. Dahlke and the manager of Launch Complex 39A who facilitated a tour of the historic launch pad. I'm looking forward to going back again," reflected 2nd Lt. Donald Keister, AEO at Lake Composite Squadron.

To top off the week, the 2023 National Aerospace Education Officers School participants enjoyed a day at the Kennedy Space Center Visitor's Complex. The Visitor's Complex features exhibits and displays, historic spacecraft and memorabilia, and hosts daily presentations from veteran NASA astronauts. It was a fitting final experience to an educational and fun-filled week, preparing the Civil Air Patrol aerospace educators to return to their squadrons and classrooms armed with new knowledge and professional connections. These dedicated AEOs and AEMs are now better poised to ignite the imaginations of their students, launching the next generation of aerospace and cybertechnology professionals.

The National Aerospace Education School continues to be a cornerstone in Civil Air Patrol's commitment to aerospace and cyber security education, nurturing a love for exploration and discovery that will positively shape the future of these industries.