



High Flight

The Official Quarterly Newsletter of
Albuquerque Heights
“Spirit” Composite Squadron
New Mexico Wing, Civil Air Patrol



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Text may be submitted in the body of an e-mail (preferred), or as a document attached to an e-mail (a text file, or if generated on a word processor, saved to .RTF format. **Images** must be in JPG format, unretouched, un-cropped and at least 1200 by 900 pixels. **Credits**: In all cases, please give full name, grade and unit assignment of the article's author; the photographer, and anybody mentioned in the article.

Send submissions to the Editor at:

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Message size limit: 15M

Squadron Celebrates 10th Birthday With Promotions, Awards

By Lt. Col. Jay T. Tourtel, CAP

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. – Albuquerque Heights “Spirit” Composite Squadron celebrated its 10th birthday on July 9, 2015. The squadron was officially chartered on July 11, 2005.

Spirit Squadron literally had its genesis at the Albuquerque Heights First Church of the Nazarene (the squadron’s meeting place), when the church’s senior pastor, CAP Maj. William B. Nielson, announced that he wanted to start a squadron at the church. This announcement caught the attention of two of its congregants: Lt. Col. Beverly A. Vito, who in 1971 became the second cadet from New Mexico to earn the Gen. Carl A. Spaatz Award—the highest cadet program award a cadet can earn—and Col. Mark E. Smith, a retired Air Force colonel, who went on to serve as New Mexico wing commander from 2011-2015, and who was recently appointed CAP’s Southwest Region commander. (See Story, Page 4)

(Continued on Page 2)



Above: Cadet commander Cadet Capt. Alexander J. Salazar, founding commander Lt. Col Beverly A. Vito and current commander Maj. Lloyd J. Voights cut the squadron’s birthday cake. (All Photos: Capt. Nicki L. Voights, CAP)

Squadron Celebrates 10th Birthday With Promotions, Awards

(Continued from Page 1)

How did Spirit Squadron get its name? According to Lt. Col. Vito, at the squadron's organizational meeting, she and Col. Smith had a list of all the aircraft flown by the Air Force. Since Col. Smith had flown the F-22 Raptor in the Air Force, he wanted the squadron to be named Raptor Composite Squadron, but that name was already taken by another unit. They went further down the list until they came to the B-2."Spirit" bomber, also known as the Spirit of America, which was a name that everybody liked. In addition, the members thought that a unit named Spirit Squadron that met at a church was appropriate—and the rest is history.

Lt. Col. Vito was the founding commander, from July 2005 to January 2006, when Col. Smith took over. He commanded the squadron until March 2008, and then left the squadron in 2009 to pursue other projects at Wing. Col. Vito again took command until May 2012, when she passed command of the squadron to Maj. Michael E. Eckert. (It was under Eckert's command that Spirit Squadron was named Squadron of Distinction in 2013.) On March 5, 2015, Maj. Lloyd J. Voights became the squadron's fifth and current commander.

The squadron recognized cadets and senior members with promotions and awards. Among them, squadron safety officer Capt. Karen Barela received the award for Southwest Region Safety Officer of the Year, and cadet executive officer Josias Valdez was promoted to cadet first lieutenant. Following the awards and promotions, the squadron celebrated with cake and ice cream. 🍰



Above (L-R): Maj. Voights presents Capt. Karen Barela with the award for Southwest Region Safety Officer of the Year.

Albuquerque Heights "Spirit" Composite Squadron Meeting Schedule

The squadron meets Thursday nights from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The squadron operates on a four-week meeting schedule, with each week having a different area of focus.

FIRST THURSDAY

Uniform of the Day: Class A's/Class B's (blues)
Cadet Training: Aerospace Education, Safety, Drug Demand Reduction, Promotions
Senior Training: Admin

SECOND THURSDAY

Uniform of the Day—Cadets: PT Gear
Uniform of the Day—Seniors: Any approved CAP uniform
Cadet Training: PT (Physical Training)
Senior Training: PT/Admin

THIRD THURSDAY

Uniform of the Day—Cadets: BDUs
Uniform of the Day—Seniors: Any approved CAP uniform
Cadet Training: Emergency Services, Drill
Senior Training: Admin

FOURTH THURSDAY

Uniform of the Day: Class B's
Cadet Training: Character Development, Drill, Promotion Board
Senior Training: Admin

FIFTH THURSDAY

Commander's discretion (as needed)

ABOUT THE SQUADRON

Albuquerque Heights "Spirit" Composite Squadron is a unit of the Civil Air Patrol, the official civilian auxiliary of the United States Air Force. Its threefold mission includes voluntarily using its resources to meet emergencies, encouraging aerospace education of the general public, and motivating young men and women to ideals of leadership and service through aerospace education and training.

Cadets may join from age 12, up through their 18th birthday, and may remain in the cadet program until age 21. Senior members may join at age 18, with no upper age limit. For more information, please visit our squadron website: www.abqspirit.com.

May Promotions



Top Left: Jacob Hensley is promoted to cadet senior airman at the May 7 meeting. He has been a member of CAP and the squadron since August 2014.

Top Right: Victor Padilla is promoted to cadet technical sergeant. He has been a member of CAP and the squadron since February 2012.

Center Left: James G. Johnson is promoted to cadet senior master sergeant. He has been a member of CAP and the squadron since September 2013.

Center Right: Cadet commander Alexander J. Salazar is promoted to cadet captain. He has been a member of CAP and the squadron since December 2011.

Bottom Left: Squadron information technology officer Cael Chappell is promoted to first lieutenant. He has been a member of CAP and the squadron since November 2013. 🇺🇸

New Southwest Region Commander: Col. Mark E. Smith

By Lt. Col. David G. Finley, CAP
New Mexico Wing Public Affairs Officer

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. – Civil Air Patrol's new Southwest Region Commander, Col. Mark E. Smith of Albuquerque, N.M., assumed command of the Region after completing his term as New Mexico Wing commander. In a double change-of-command ceremony, Smith handed over command of the New Mexico Wing to Maj. Mike Lee of Roswell, N.M.—who was promoted to colonel prior to assuming command—and replaced Col. Frank Buethe, who completed his term as Region Commander. (See story, Page 5)

The command changes were marked in a ceremony at Kirtland Air Force Base's Mountain View Club on June 27, 2015. CAP's National Vice Commander, Brig. Gen. Larry F. Myrick, presided over the Region change of command. The Adjutant General of the New Mexico National Guard, Brig. Gen. Andrew Salas, also attended the ceremony, along with members throughout the Southwest Region.

Prior to relinquishing command, Buethe presented awards to members of the Region staff, and complimented the staff and members of the Region for their performance during his term as commander.

In remarks following the transfer of command, Smith announced the focus of his Region leadership with the theme, "Southwest Region: Leading the Way to Mission Success!"

Smith is a graduate of the United States Air Force Academy and served 26 years in the Air Force, retiring in 2000 as a colonel. As a fighter pilot, he flew more than 3,500 hours, mostly in the F-4D, AT-388 and F-15C. He is a veteran of Desert Shield/Desert Storm, and commanded a fighter squadron. Following his military service, he served in executive positions in defense-related industries, as a consultant, and in nonprofit professional corporations.

He joined CAP in 2005, and served as commander of Albuquerque Heights "Spirit" Composite Squadron, and in numerous jobs at the wing and region levels. Smith has a Master's Degree in Aviation Management from Embry-Riddle University, and is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Education in Ethical Leadership from Olivet Nazarene University. He is a pilot, and also a recipient of Civil Air Patrol's Gill Robb Wilson Award—the highest professional development award that can be earned by senior members. 🇺🇸



Above: Newly-appointed Southwest Region Commander Col. Mark E. Smith will exercise command and control over the Region's six wings: Arizona, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. (CAP Official Photo)



Above Left (L-R): National Vice Commander Brig. Gen. Larry F. Myrick passes the Region flag to incoming Southwest Region Commander Col. Mark E. Smith, as outgoing region commander Col. Frank A. Buethe looks on. **Above Right (L-R):** Brig. Gen. Myrick presents Col. Buethe with Civil Air Patrol's Distinguished Service Award for his outstanding service to the Region. (Photos: Lt. Col. David G. Finley, CAP)



Lee Succeeds Smith as New Mexico Wing Commander

By Lt. Col. Jay T. Tourtel, CAP

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. - On June 27, 2015, in a custom dating back to the Norman Conquests—created so soldiers could recognize their leaders—members of the New Mexico Wing witnessed the orderly transition of power at Kirtland Air Force Base's Mountain View Club, as Col. Mike Lee succeeded Col. Mark Smith as commander of New Mexico Wing.

The wing change of command ceremony was held concurrently with the change of command for Southwest Region. (See story, Page 4) Following the presentation of the colors by the Albuquerque Heights "Spirit" Composite Squadron Color Guard, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the invocation by Wing Chaplain (Capt.) Randolph Nolen, members of both the region and the wing were recognized by their respective commanders for outstanding duty performance.

Following the awards presentation, National Vice Commander Brig. Gen. Larry F. Myrick had high praise for both the region and the wing. "You guys just get things done," he said. Noting the humility with which its members accomplished their missions, he added, "You do a great job, and you're really quiet about it."

Next came the wing change of command. Region commander Col. Frank A. Buethe, Wing commander Col. Mark E. Smith and Wing

Commander-select Maj. Mike Lee took center stage. Lee was promoted to the temporary grade of colonel, which will become permanent upon completion of his tour as wing commander. Smith was presented with the Distinguished Service Award in honor of his outstanding service as wing commander.

Smith then passed the wing flag to Buethe—signifying his relinquishing of command—and stepped aside. Buethe then passed the flag to Lee, who accepted command of the wing and became New Mexico's 31st wing commander.

Lee has been a member of CAP since December 2007. He was commander of Roswell Composite Squadron from February 2010 to September 2013. Most recently, he served as wing vice commander for the southern part of New Mexico. He is a recipient of the Gill Robb Wilson Award, which he earned in June 2014.

Lee's objectives for the wing include recruiting and retention of quality members, having all units accomplish CAP's three missions—emergency services, aerospace education, and the cadet program—and training and mentoring of all members. His vision for the wing is simple: "I want the New Mexico Wing to be the best wing ever." Next came the region change of command, where Smith succeeded Buethe as Southwest Region commander. 🇺🇸



Above Left (L-R): Southwest Region commander Col. Frank A. Buethe presents the wing flag to incoming wing commander Col. Mike Lee, as outgoing wing commander Col. Mark E. Smith observes. **Above Right (L-R):** National Vice Commander Brig. Gen. Larry F. Myrick and Col. Buethe present Col. Smith with CAP's Distinguished Service Award, for his outstanding service to the wing. (Photos: Lt. Col., David G. Finley, CAP)

“Breakfast in the Skies” Combines Model Rocketry, Team Building

By Lt. Col. Jay T. Tourtel, CAP

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. – Cadets and senior members of Albuquerque Heights “Spirit” Composite Squadron, as well as their friends and family, participated in a potluck breakfast and model rocketry workshop at Albuquerque’s Balloon Fiesta Park on June 20, 2015. The event was designed to help cadets earn their model rocketry badge, as well as to foster camaraderie between squadron member and their families.

After a breakfast buffet of bagels, donuts, fresh fruit and sweet rolls, squadron aerospace education officer Capt. Mary A. Fox led cadets through the Redstone stage of the squadron’s model rocketry program. The cadets constructed a Goddard rocket – a foam tube launched with a rubber band, similar to a slingshot – named after Dr. Robert H. Goddard, often known as the Father of Modern Rocketry.

Fox explained the importance of Dr. Goddard to aerospace. “He brought aerospace to the United States,” she said.

After successfully launching their Goddard rockets, Fox led cadets, as well as any senior members who wanted to participate, through the Redstone stage of the model rocketry program, where participants must first assemble a pre-fabricated commercial model rocket, followed by their own rocket, which must be assembled from raw materials not available in a kit. The final assembled rocket must hold a rocket engine and be able to be launched from a model rocket launchpad.

Most of the members only got as far as assembling the rocket body, but according to Fox, the activity will be continued on July 11, when the squadron will host Lunch in the Skies, to continue where they left off. 🇺🇸



Top: Senior Member Michael Saul (left) and Capt. Mary Fox assist Cadet Senior Airman Tyler Tourtel with the construction of his Goddard rocket.

Bottom: Cadet Sponsor Member Jonathan Fox (foreground) prepares to launch his Goddard rocket, along with other adult participants. (Photos: Lt. Col. Jay T. Tourtel, CAP)