



Commander's Commentary—September 2011



August was a very big month for Civil Air Patrol. We held the summer national board meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, where the national board, selected the next national commander, Maj. Gen. Chuck Carr and the new national vice commander, Brig. Gen. Joe Vazquez. The national commander serves a three year term and the vice commander serves a one year term. As many of you know, General Vazquez is the former Middle East Region commander, and a former member of the Maryland Wing. General Vazquez, is a strong supporter of our Wing, and we are excited that he has been selected to represent our organization at the national level.

For us in Maryland, the big news is that next year's national board meeting will be here in Baltimore in August 2012. This will give all of us a great opportunity to see just what goes on at these meetings. There will also be a large number of training opportunities for you to attend. Our current plan for 2012 is to encourage all our members to attend the national board meeting and, instead of holding our Wing Conference in November that year, we will most likely have a commander's call and a Wing Banquet and Awards Dinner. We might even take to time to have a birthday cake to celebrate our 70th birthday!

I mention this now so that everyone can plan to attend the meeting as well as helping us with the set up and all the behind the scenes running of the conference. The home wing has the opportunity to show the rest of CAP how great we are at running activities and to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that Maryland is the best Wing in CAP.

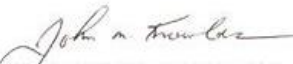
Another national activity I would also like to mention is the Air Force Association sponsored CyberPatriot competition. CyberPatriot tests the ability of the students to defend a simulated corporate network from external hostile attacks. But, it is far more than just a competition. It is designed to educate and motivate your cadets to become the cyber defenders the nation needs while promoting science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Last year a CAP team from Florida Wing won the competition. This year I hope it will be a team from Maryland Wing. As of the end of August, Maryland had three teams signed up but there is still time to beat the October 8th deadline. Look for additional information on the national website.

Hurricane Irene brought out the best in our emergency service professionals. We started by moving all our aircraft out of way of the storm. This was a major undertaking accomplished with our outstanding aircrews and the A5 and A2 staff coordinating the operations. Our Incident Commanders manned the CAP desk at the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) starting at 0800 on Saturday running through Sunday night around the clock. We stood up an Incident Command Post (ICP) at Martin State Airport Sunday morning just hours after the storm passed through. High winds kept many of our aircraft on the ground but they did not keep our ground teams out of the field. We sent 14 ground teams and 2 aircraft into the state to take a look at 54 known areas of interest (NAI). These are areas that historically are known to flood throughout the state. Photos and reports about each area were forwarded to MEMA (Maryland Emergency Management Agency) for their evaluation. We also took on several additional disaster assessment missions throughout the event. Governor O'Malley and the personnel at MEMA were very impressed with our operations. I want to especially thank the A5 (Plans and Programs) section under Col. Jerry Weiss and the A2 (Special Missions) section under Maj John Henderson as well as the Incident Commanders who served as our Agency Liaisons at MEMA, Lt. Col. Kevin Redman and Lt. Col. Jim Steinmeier.

For those of you reading this and saying “I want to help but no one called.” In order work a mission you have to prepare and train for it. The time to start doing that is today. Take a look at the A3 (Operations) tab on the website to find out what you need to do or ask the Emergency Services officer at your local squadron.

The Wing conference is just around the corner. It will be held once again at the Turf Valley Resort and Conference Center in Ellicott City, Md., on November 11 – 13th. It’s a beautiful venue and those that attended last year gave us positive reviews. There will be many training sessions during the day for both seniors and cadets on Saturday. We will hold our formal Wing Military Ball on Saturday night and a brief Commanders Call on Sunday morning for all squadron commanders in Maryland. I urge everyone to attend both for the educational opportunities and the social (FUN) opportunities. Yes, I said fun. We all have common calling for service and share many of the same values, especially our core values. Taking time to enjoy each other’s company and meet new friends and family is just as important as learning how to upload receipts in WMIRS (or other similar stuff). I would love to see all of you in November. Turf Valley has a lot of things for non CAP members to do during the day to relax so give yourself a treat and join us in November. Look for more information on the Wing website.

In closing I hope most you have taken to time to congratulate our three newest Spaatz cadets, Cadet Cols. LaPre, Olson and Roberts. They are all very active in the Wing and are a great example of model cadets. Please remember to be safe, especially as all our children head back to school, and to keep yourself ready to go as we move through hurricane season.


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