



Carroll cadet represents CAP in Normandy

Civil Air Patrol Cadet Staff Sgt. Katelyn Davis visits the American Cemetery in Normandy, France, and remembers Capt. Edward Peters, USA, who died serving in World War II. Davis was there as part of a National History Day institute.

Cadet Staff Sgt. Davis selected for National History Day institute

By Cadet Staff Sgt. Katelyn Davis, CAP
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WESTMINSTER, Md. -- Cadet Staff Sgt. Katelyn Davis, a member of Carroll Composite Squadron, part of the Civil Air Patrol Maryland Wing, recently participated in the Albert H. Small travel seminar on Normandy: Sacrifice for Freedom Institute organized by National History Day in June 2011 to honor the fallen men and women of the D-Day campaign. Fifteen high school student and teacher teams were selected from a national contest to engage in educational seminars, a trip to the National Mall in Washington, DC, and a trip to both Normandy and Paris, France. Each student was expected to read eight World War II books and research a specific soldier from their state prior to the actual seminar.

Cadet Staff Sgt. Davis researched Capt. Edward Peters, commander of HQ Company, 506th PIR, 101st Airborne. With help from his son and college researchers, Davis was able to piece together the soldier's life from his days as a football star at McDaniel College to his actions on D-Day that posthumously awarded him the Bronze Star.

"It's a different experience getting to know a specific soldier first hand," Davis remarked about researching Capt. Peters. "Most people only know the top names, like MacArthur and Patton, but looking into a specific soldier's life and trials brings WWII home."

Prior to leaving for France, Cadet Davis, her teacher, and the other student-teacher teams spent four days in Washington, DC, listening to lectures from professors at George Washington University and West Point Military Academy, researching more about their soldiers and their respective units, visiting the National Mall, and attending the Marine Parade and the Changing of the Guard Ceremony.

Cadet Davis also participated in the wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington with four other students. "It was a beautiful and awe-inspiring moment," Davis stated. "It felt great to finally show my gratitude for these brave men and women who had died protecting our freedoms."

Early on the fifth day, the participants arrived at Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris. From there, the student-teacher teams were able to enjoy the fast-paced, colorful atmosphere of Paris. The next day the teams went to Pegasus Bridge, made famous in the movie *The Longest Day*, then traveled to an intact German bunker.

“Looking out from the German bunker, I realized just how amazing the land invasion had been. The Germans had a clear, open path and such heavily-defended fortifications that it’s a true miracle our boys made it. It just goes to show that those fighting for the common good will always win against a corrupted society,” recalled Davis.

The following day, the teams traveled to Ste. Mere-Eglise, the American Airborne Museum, the German Cemetery, and Pointe-du-Hoc. While traveling along the French countryside, Davis was able to pass through Vierville, known as her soldier’s place of death. She was able to connect with her soldier while passing the fields in which had been littered with the machine gun nests he had taken by himself 67 years ago.

The last day in Normandy was devoted to visiting the beaches and the American cemetery. While at the cemetery, Davis and the other fifteen students presented eulogies at their soldiers’ graves, honoring the men they had researched for several months. The visit to the cemetery ended with a few of the students folding the American flag, as “Taps” played quietly in the background.

The trip ended with a dinner at a Parisian palace where the students took time to reflect on their experiences and hopes traveling back to the United States.

“I realized through this trip and the research process that there’s more than just statistics to battles,” said Davis. “There are faces of men, young and old, rich and poor, from all different types of communities and societies that gave up all so that others may be freed. I truly hope to go back to the United States and honor these soldiers, sailors, and airmen in the best way possible: by helping to get their stories told.”

Currently, Cadet Staff Sgt. Davis is heading a project to honor all Marylanders who died in the D-Day campaigns through publishing their stories online with the American Battlefield Monuments Commission. If you are interested in helping research a soldier, or if you have knowledge of a soldier who died in the Normandy campaign, feel free to contact Carroll Composite Squadron at carrollcomposite@yahoo.com.

Cadet Davis’s participation in National History Day at Arlington Cemetery which was held in conjunction with the Institute can be viewed on www.army.mil/article/60128/NationalHistoryDayParticipantsLayWreathinArlington

If you are interested in viewing Cadet Davis’ research in its entirety, feel free to visit her website at <http://38347415.nhd.weebly.com/index.html>

Civil Air Patrol, the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, is a nonprofit organization with more than 61,000 members nationwide. CAP, in its Air Force auxiliary role, performs 90 percent of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center and was credited by the AFRCC with saving 113 lives in fiscal year 2010. Its volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief and drug interdiction missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. The members play a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to the more than 26,000 young people currently participating in CAP cadet programs. CAP has been performing missions for America for nearly 70 years. It is a major partner of Wreaths Across America, an initiative to remember,

honor and teach about the sacrifices of U.S. military veterans. For more information on Civil Air Patrol, visit www.gocivilairpatrol.com or www.capvolunteernow.com.

More than 1,500 members of CAP serve in Maryland. Last fiscal year wing members flew 42 search and rescue missions and were credited with 31 finds. For more information, visit www.mdcap.org.

The Carroll Composite Squadron meets weekly on Tuesday evening at 7:00 P.M. at the Hilltop Assembly of God Church in Westminster, Md. For more information, visit the squadron's website at www.carrollcap.org.

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