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**PUTNAM COUNTY COMPOSITE SQUADRON**

Paladin Center, 39 Seminary Hill Road  
Carmel, New York 10512

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Putnam County Composite Squadron trains cadets to combat cyber vulnerabilities**

CARMEL, New York – April 7, 2017 – Civil Air Patrol, performing missions for America for the past 75 years, also plays a leading role in educating the next generation of virtual defenders of America’s cyberspace and its underlying infrastructure. As the nation becomes increasingly reliant on communication over computer networks (cyberspace) it faces risks from cyberattacks against critical institutions designed to disrupt, destroy, or threaten essential services, economic vitality, and national security.

Cadets from Civil Air Patrol’s Putnam County Composite Squadron are learning how to combat cyber threats by identifying vulnerabilities and securing networks in the *CyberPatriot* program. *CyberPatriot*, created by the Air Force Association, is designed to inspire students, grades 6-12, to pursue careers in cyber security and also in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), disciplines critical to our nation’s future.

Classes are held at the Putnam County Bureau of Emergency Services under the direction of Second Lieutenant Bruce Geller, Putnam County Composite Squadron Information Technology Officer, and are geared to prepare students to secure computers from cyberattacks through lectures and hands-on work. “Students who join the *CyberPatriot* program do not need to know anything about computers or about cyber threats. They will learn about computer security, computer operating systems, computer networks, computer vulnerabilities and how to fix them, cyber threats and how to prevent cyberattacks,” said Geller.

Students learn how to properly configure network equipment, how to perform computer forensics and test for possible system penetrations on major operating systems. Geller noted that “Topics covered include the Windows Operating System, Windows Desktop and Windows Server Operating System security, the UNIX Operating System, UNIX Desktop and UNIX Server Operating System security, and Networks, including how to configure networking equipment.”

*CyberPatriot* members test their knowledge and skills in defending virtual networks by taking part in cyber defense competitions at state, region and national levels. Teams receive virtual images of operating systems with cybersecurity vulnerabilities and are tasked with finding the flaws while keeping the computers working. The Putnam County Composite Squadron team, the *Mustangs*, placed fourth in the 2016 Northeast Region competition. “The *CyberPatriot* program is a great way to learn about cyber security and gain insight and experience in one of the most important and fastest growing fields in information technology,” said Geller.

Join the Putnam County Composite Squadron at a *CyberPatriot* open house on Sunday, April 23, 2017, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., at the Putnam County Bureau of Emergency Services, 112 Old Route 6, Carmel, NY 10512. For additional information about *CyberPatriot* or the Putnam County Composite Squadron, contact Captain E. MacDermant at (845) 216-5433 or email Elenamac@aol.com.

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Civil Air Patrol, the longtime all-volunteer U.S. Air Force auxiliary, is the newest member of the Air Force's Total Force, which consists of regular Air Force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, along with Air Force retired military and civilian employees. Civil Air Patrol, in its Total Force role, operates a fleet of 550 aircraft and performs about 90 percent of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center and is credited by the AFRCC with saving an average of 78 lives annually. Civil Air Patrol's 56,000 members nationwide also perform homeland security, disaster relief and drug interdiction missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. Its members additionally play a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to more than 24,000 young people currently participating in the Civil Air Patrol cadet program. Performing missions for America for the past 75 years, Civil Air Patrol received the Congressional Gold Medal in 2014 in honor of the heroic efforts of its World War II veterans. Civil Air Patrol also participates in Wreaths Across America, an initiative to remember, honor and teach about the sacrifices of U.S. military veterans. Visit [www.capvolunteernow.com](http://www.capvolunteernow.com) for more information.