
PUTNAM COUNTY COMPOSITE SQUADRON

Paladin Center, 39 Seminary Hill Road
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 10, 2017

Putnam County Composite Squadron holds awards and promotions ceremony

CARMEL, New York – May 10, 2017 – Civil Air Patrol’s Putnam County Composite Squadron held an end of year promotion ceremony at the Putnam County Bureau of Emergency Services in Carmel, New York on March 31, 2017.

Captain Elena MacDermant, Commander, officiated and welcomed the forty friends and family attending the ceremony. Attendees included Captain Roy Coates, Commander, New York Guard 89th Army Band and Putnam County Sheriff Donald B. Smith who delivered the opening invocation.

Cadets and senior officers received certificates for achievements and awards earned over the past year. The program is designated as the Four Winds Ceremony, with each wind emanating from the four cardinal points and representing the core values of Civil Air Patrol; integrity, volunteer service, excellence and respect.

Cadet Second Lieutenant Austin Giacomelli, Cadet Commander, was awarded *Cadet of the Year*. Giacomelli joined Civil Air Patrol in February 2012. Over the years he’s held positions with increasing levels of responsibility on the cadet chain of command, providing him with a strong sense of duty and excellent leadership skills. Giacomelli was presented with a *Certificate of Appreciation* from Captain Roy Coates in thanks for his participation playing trombone with the 89th Army Band as a Civil Air Patrol Cadet in several Honor Flights Missions and Base Ceremonies. He also received a *Certificate of Appointment* from the squadron designating him as cadet commanding officer.

Cadets Austin Giacomelli, Alexxis Hoernes and Brendon Villegas received the Mitchell Award. Cadets earn the Mitchell Award after completion of the first eight achievements in the Civil Air Patrol cadet program. Cadets study and demonstrate competence in program areas encompassing aerospace education, leadership, physical fitness, and ethical values. Cadets earning the Mitchell Award and the grade of cadet second lieutenant are eligible for promotion to the rank of airman first class (E-3) upon enlistment in the United States Air Force. Only 15% of cadets receive this milestone award. Giacomelli and Villegas promoted to cadet second lieutenant. Hoernes promoted to cadet first lieutenant and was also awarded the Model Rocketry Badge and a *Certificate of Merit* from the New York State Assembly.

Cadets Brian Kelleher and Kevin Pinerio received the Goddard Achievement ribbon and promoted to Chief Master Sergeant. Cadets earning this achievement display a commitment to Civil Air Patrol Core Values, promote team spirit, show proficiency in informal public speaking, are able to supervise a small team and coach junior cadets. To qualify they pass leadership achievement, aerospace education, and physical fitness tests.

Cadets Joseph Kelleher and Jeily Morocho received the Arnold Achievement ribbon and promoted to Airman First Class, completing the second achievement in the cadet program by passing an aerospace test along with leadership, drill and physical fitness tests.

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The following cadets received the Curry Achievement ribbon and promoted to Airman, indicating completion of the first stage in the cadet program, passing tests on the fundamentals of leadership, drill performance and physical fitness: Nick De Benedictis; Joseph DePaola; Bridget Donelan; Brendan Donelan; Nathaniel Esteves; Diego Gonzalez; Eduardo Gonzalez; Eve Henderson; Christopher Pfaffenberger and Alexander Watts.

Cadet Austin Simmons was awarded a CyberPatriot commendation for outstanding performance in the CyberPatriot program which is designed to inspire students, grades 6-12, to pursue careers in cyber security, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Putnam County Composite Squadron Officers also received awards and promotions. Philip Feldman, Deputy Commander and Safety Officer, and Ralph Langham, Aerospace Education Officer, promoted to Major. Ed Hoernes, Emergency Services and Operations Officer, promoted to Captain and Second Lieutenant Bruce Geller, Information Technology Officer, received a CyberPatriot commendation.

The Putnam County Composite Squadron received Civil Air Patrol's Quality Cadet Unit Award for commendable cadet programs and has been designated a Civil Air Patrol Quality Cadet Squadron. The award, which is administered by Cadet Programs at Civil Air Patrol National Headquarters, recognizes units with an active cadet corps that display "strong program fundamentals." Units must achieve and maintain specific percentage increases in six out of 10 criteria which include excellence in aerospace education, individual cadet achievement, completion of the Drug Demand Reduction program, encampment and orientation flight participation, increasing cadet enrollment and retaining first year cadets, and fielding a CyberPatriot team. This is the second consecutive award achieved by the squadron under the leadership of Squadron Commander, Captain Elena MacDermant.

Members of the Putnam County Composite Squadron meet on Friday's from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the Paladin Center, located at 39 Seminary Hill Road, Carmel, NY. For additional information contact Captain Elena MacDermant at (845) 216-5433, email Elenamac@aol.com or visit www.facebook.com/PutnamCountyCompositeSquadron.

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

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Across America, an initiative to remember, honor and teach about the sacrifices of U.S. military veterans. Visit www.gocivilairpatrol.com for more information.