



The Fly-By

The official newsletter of the
La Crosse Composite Squadron

COMMANDER'S NOTES

Congratulations to everyone in our unit on earning Wisconsin Wing's Squadron of Merit Award for 2016! This award recognizes the top cadet or composite squadron in each state. This year marks the second time in three years and fourth time in six years that La Crosse has received this honor.

But while awards are great, what they represent is greater. A squadron isn't one person or one thing; rather it is lots of people doing jobs, big and little, to make things happen. Whether it's getting the cans recycled, flying the airplane, training cadets, or running the radios; each job is important. Sometimes it may seem like there's not enough of us to go around and there's more to do than we have time and people for, but by working together we get the job done. Of course this doesn't mean we can rest on our laurels!

Seniors – we need to keep executing our mission and can always use another volunteer to take on another role. Help in planning the next great cadet activity, the next SAREX, or the next aircrew training is always needed. If you've been thinking about volunteering, then now is a great time! If you already have a squadron job, then thank you for what you do!

Cadets – This award has a lot to do with what you do. Promotions, attendance, and training are all parts of this award. Keep promoting and keep pushing others to promote. Find your battle buddy, challenge each other's goals, and go for it!

Parents/Supporters – This award is also about you and what you do to support us. Helping your cadet prep for a test, attend encampment, or working a Brat Barn are all ways you help us be the best unit we can be.

We will continue to work and grow as a unit. We have a strategic plan to execute and new and bigger goals to reach. So let's keep working together and showing Wisconsin Wing how it's done!

Major Todd Mandel, Commander

OPERATIONS UPDATE

Our aircraft is fully operational and has been flying a bit more. It flew 9.8 in March. Total for the fiscal year at end of March was 61.5 hours.

On 13 and 14 May we will have a Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX) for aircrews and ground teams.

If you are in need of a renewal or initial qualification for ES or Mission Pilot, Mission Observer, Mission Radio Operator, or Mission Scanner it is a good time to complete it.

Also, if you need renewal of operations tasks or would like training for mission tasks such as Mission Staff Assistant, AOB, etc., let me know and we can work on them as well.

All Mission Pilots -- please be available for air sorties!

Ground Team Members -- please prepare your 24-hour pack. Ground Teams will be Saturday only.

- REMINDER -

ALL pilots should attend the Pilot meeting at 0900 hours, prior to the monthly Squadron meeting on Saturday, 6 May.

Fly and drive safely!

Major Richard M. Martin, Operations

6 MAY - FREEDOM HONOR FLIGHT

All Cadets and Seniors are welcome to participate in the next Freedom Honor Flight Honor Guard on 6 May, prior to our monthly Squadron meeting.

Please plan to arrive at CAP HQ by 0530 hours, as we need to be at Colgan Hangar #4 at 0545.

Uniform of the Day is Blues/Corporate. Please dress to be outside for this event. We should be done about 0700.

BEGINNING ASTRONOMY

With the squadron's recent and future events centering on the world of astronomy, it is appropriate that we begin to look at resources that are readily available to all beginning astronomers.

It is only human nature to look up at night and see the stars and the moon, and perhaps even be able to identify a constellation or two. In order to be most successful with astronomy, you need to start with the basics. Learning the constellations helps you engage in what is called star hopping - or moving from one target to another in the night sky. Basically, the more you become familiar with the night sky the easier it will be for you to locate whatever it is you may be looking for.

A great place to start is www.skymaps.com. On Sky Maps you will find downloadable sky charts for each month that identifies various constellations and where they will be positioned in the night sky, and targets that are easily located with a decent pair of binoculars or a small telescope.

Additionally, www.skyandtelescope.com is an online resource for information for stargazers. One of the best features is the downloadable "this week's Sky at a Glance." It tells you about positions of the various planets, and other relevant information that you may want to use as you begin your quest for the stars.

When you begin using your telescope at night, you may find it frustrating. Do not be discouraged - it just takes practice!

Because the Earth is always rotating, what was within your field of view in the telescope lens will quickly move out of sight. Learn to position the target on the outer edge of the lens and then you have the greatest length of time for viewing. Other options are to add a motor to your telescope which enables you to track things for a greater period of time, or even add a camera with a simple attachment to take photos directly through your telescope.

Another great resource is a planisphere, which shows you the position day by day and hour by hour of the constellations, planets along the ecliptic, and much more. A final favorite tool is an outstanding moon map for as what is familiar to us often in just a pair of binoculars becomes more real as you can see the mountains, lunar maria, and even identify the approximate landing sites of the Apollo missions where men walked on the moon so long ago.

Wishing you all clear, dark skies as you begin this journey!

Captain Mary Beth Marx, Aerospace Education Officer

AEROSPACE EDUCATION UPDATE

Have you ever wondered how flight training works for CAP cadets? Here's a brief walk-through of the process:

- Cadets request permission to enter flight training by talking with Lt Scott Tiedeman, the Deputy Commander for Cadets. Generally, cadets must be the rank of Master Sergeant before they'll be considered.
- Once a request is made, the staff will review a cadet's participation, behavior, and progression.
- Cadets who are approved for flight training then have to work with one of the squadron's Certified Flight Instructors. Flight training requires that one of these CFIs have the ability to take on a new student.
- Cadets entering flight training are also strongly encouraged to have a minimum of \$1,000 on hand to begin training. This money can be placed on deposit with the squadron or held in their own account. However, the squadron will ask for proof of the funds during the approval process. The reason for having this money on deposit is that it allows cadets to keep flying through their Solo Wings without having to stop for long periods. Stopping for periods of time is highly inefficient and wastes the cadet's money as well as the CFI's time. Cadets who need financial assistance can talk with the Squadron Commander about options for finding help.
- Flying costs roughly \$100 per hour. The airplane itself costs \$49 per hour and then you must also pay for gas.
- Once a cadet turns 16 they need to get a Class 3 medical and when their CFI is ready they can begin flying.
- Typically it takes 10-20 hours to get to the first solo flight. Overall it takes a minimum of 40 hours before you can test for your pilot's license, but usually it requires closer to 50 or 60 hours.

Cadets who want to know more about flight training or discuss next steps should talk with Major Mandel or Lt. Tiedeman. STEM Kits are provided free of charge to squadrons.

Major Todd Mandel, Commander

SQUADRON FINANCE

We are about half way through spring with the warm summer months on the horizon. First, it's important to note that your fundraising work last year positioned our squadron well to transition through the winter months with the financial resources needed to ensure that our squadron's operations continued to run smoothly. It may have been one of the only winters we did not have to ask AVCAP for a supplementary monetary contribution.

Second, we now look forward to the important fundraising months of 2017 as we hope to repeat, and maybe even exceed, the success we had last year. In the plans are the following fundraisers: (1) a family/parent donation opportunity; (2) Festival Foods Brat Barn events in June and July; (3) the Waffle Breakfast and Airport 5K Run scheduled for September 9, 2017; (4) the annual Wreaths Across America event in December; and (5) several other opportunities during the year.

We take this opportunity to thank squadron members, families, the community, and all of the others who give to this organization and we look forward to another successful and productive season.

Captain Orin Wiseman, Finance Officer