

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AUXILIARY
OREGON WING CIVIL AIR PATROL
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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OREGON CIVIL AIR PATROL COMPLETES STATE WIDE TRAINING TEST

Medford, OR From a command center located at the Medford Airport, the Oregon Civil Air Patrol completed an intensive, USAF evaluated state wide training exercise Sunday, Sept 7th.

The exercise, dubbed "Operation Oregon Silver", began Friday Sept 5th and included training scenarios that tasked the Oregon Wing of the nationwide USAF Auxiliary with components of air search and rescue, Homeland Security, disaster relief and counter drug operations.

Operating from multiple bases in Salem, Troutdale, Bend, Aurora and Medford, the CAP coordinated the multi faceted exercise from their command center located at the Medford Airport.

Over 7 aircraft, 9 ground vehicles and nearly 50 personnel were tasked with such missions as locating downed aircraft, assisting in forest fire aerial reconnaissance, infrastructure reconnaissance including dams and roadways and aerial counter drug operations.

While some missions, such as air search and rescue fell within the structure of more traditional CAP missions, other tasking such as counter drug and Homeland Security included new tasking involving new technology and new techniques such as the transmission of digital aerial photography

"Overall the exercise was a great success" said Lt Col Deb Savageau of the USAF Reserve." The participation level was high and with a lot of enthusiasm and dedication. The Wing was tasked with a wide variety of missions and they did a great job of prioritizing them. The Wing effectively used all available air and ground resources and got the job done." she said. "The cadets were involved in communications and they also did a fantastic job accomplishing ground team search and rescue missions" added Savageau.

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OPERATION OREGON SILVER EXERCISE

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.”While Air Force evaluators identified some areas for improvement, they also rated many areas "Excellent" or "Outstanding," commented Lt Col Wayne Schulz, USAF (ret) of the Oregon CAP-USAF liaison office. “And all of the participants proved once again they are quite capable of performing the missions they are called upon to do for this country.” he said.

First formed in 1941 during World War II to perform border and coastal patrol duties, CAP continues to support a variety of homeland security and humanitarian efforts. For several years CAP personnel have supported federal, state, and local agencies in counter drug missions. Since becoming involved in the war on drugs, CAP has assisted law enforcement agencies in taking billions of dollars in illegal drugs off the street. After the events of Sept. 11, 2001, CAP personnel took some of the first damage assessment photos, manned critical positions in several FEMA regional operations centers, and transported thousands of pints of blood and tissue samples that otherwise would have spoiled due to transportation problems throughout the country following the closure of airspace and curtailment of all commercial flight operations. Military and Civil Air Patrol aircraft were the only aircraft permitted to fly. The Oregon Civil Air Patrol responded within hours, transporting several tons of blood between Oregon American Red Cross facilities and their testing labs in California.

Last year, CAP flew almost 600 hours of reconnaissance for the Olympic Games, and was the only volunteer organization providing full-time aviation support for dozens of federal and state agencies represented in the aviation task force.

So far this year nationally, CAP has flown more than 15,000 hours and has been credited with saving 115 lives. CAP has also flown over 475 hours in response to the Shuttle Columbia disaster and expended over 1,000 man days searching for debris. “CAP volunteers are definitely making a difference,” said CAP National Commander Maj. Gen. Richard Bowling. “Every day we improve our technology, resources and training so we can continue to provide cost-effective, professional services for many years to come.”

Civil Air Patrol, the official Air Force Auxiliary, is a nonprofit organization with more than 64,000 members nationwide. It performs 95% of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center. Volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief and counter drug missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. The members take a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to the almost 27,000 young people currently participating in CAP cadet programs. CAP has been performing missions for America for more than 60 years. On the Web for National Headquarters of CAP.: <http://www.cap.gov>

For downloadable digital photos of the Oregon mission, please go to <http://www.orwg.cap.gov> and click on the public affairs page. Please credit photos to Oregon CAP.