



The Sandy Springs Cadet Squadron

Civil Air Patrol

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HISTORY of the C.A.P.

Welcome to the Sandy Springs Cadet Squadron, St Jude's squadron in the Civil Air Patrol. For many the Civil Air Patrol is an unfamiliar organization often resulting in the question, *'Who are those young guys in uniform?'*

The story begins in 1941, when a group of civilian airmen, who foresaw aviation's role in war and general aviation's potential to supplement America's military operations, banded together to assist the Army Air Corps just days before the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Civil Air Patrol was established on December 1, 1941. A CAP crew first interrupted a sub attack on a flight out of Rehoboth Beach, saving a tanker off Cape May, N.J. Since radio calls for military bombers were often unproductive, unarmed CAP fliers dived in mock attacks to force subs to break and run. During the course of the war the CAP coastal patrol flew 24 million miles, found 173 submarines, attacked 57, hit 10 and sank two. By Presidential Executive Order, CAP became an auxiliary of the Army Air Forces in 1943.



In all, CAP flew a half-million hours during the war, and 64 CAP aviators lost their lives in the line of duty.

When the U.S. Air Force was created as an



independent armed service in 1947, and CAP was designated as its official civilian auxiliary the following year.

Today the CAP continues as a volunteer service to the nation through three interrelated missions. These missions include 1) Assisting in providing Emergency Services assistance to the communities, 2) Fostering an awareness and knowledge of aerospace oriented education throughout the nation, and 3) Enhancing the leadership and maturity of America's youth through an effective implementation of a Cadet Program.

The CAP is organized in "Wings" by each state. Each Wing has several "Squadrons" belonging to that wing. These squadrons often meet at airports but some squadrons, such as the one at our church, meet in civic places where room has been graciously provided.





The CAP Unit at St. Jude's

The CAP squadron at St. Jude's actually began as the Sandy Springs Optimus Squadron, and



originally met at the Mt. Vernon Presbyterian Church. Shortly afterwards, the unit moved to its present location. In an arrangement with St. Jude the Apostle, the unit was allowed to move into the basement of the newly-constructed church. The squadron originally used what is now the 'Bride's Room' as its old 'Commanders Office' and 'Library' in the late 1960's. It is not well known that the head of the parish, Monsignor Kiernan, held the grade of Major in the CAP during the late 60's and was also the Squadron Chaplain. Although its membership has grown and shrunk over the years, the Sandy Springs Cadet Squadron,



as the unit is now known, has existed continuously at St. Jude for almost half a century. The unit is easily distinguishable from other Civil Air Patrol squadrons by its unique "Snoopy Patch", located on the right

breast pocket of their uniform. This patch has a history in itself as it is one of the few patches officially authorized though personal correspondence with the late Charles Schultz, the

creator of the "Peanuts" comic strip often seen in many newspapers around the nation.

The unit involves young men and women from ages 13 to 21 and meets every Wednesday night at 7:00 for about two and a half hours to attend to local training and to coordinate upcoming events. Adult members, known as "Senior Members", also make up part of the unit and serve as advisors and instructors for the cadet training. The "Snoopy Squadron" is one of the Georgia Wing's most active cadet units when it comes to cadet program activity. This squadron is often engaged in routine searches for lost or crashed civilian aircraft around the state as part of its commitment to the CAP's Emergency Services mission. Often, their searches end up as little more than finding emergency locator transmitters (ELTs) whose emergency signals have been triggered through hard landings. However, about once a year, a real aircraft accident will bring the cadets out on missions that could involve them tapping all the skills taught to them at their weekly squadron meetings.

One such mission happened in 1989, when this unit was called out to search for a lost private airplane that resulted in an opportunity to fulfill any CAP unit's most precious goal, the saving of a 14 year old girl's life.





A life saved

During a Search Mission in 1989 the Sandy Springs and Dekalb County Cadet Squadrons were activated to search for a private airplane that failed to show up at its intended destination. The account of the story involving incident was written in the following story in the Atlanta Journal newspaper at the time:

Girl, 14, Survives N. Ga.. Plane Crash "Teen Waited 15 Hours on Mountain Near Bodies of Family, Wreckage"

Author: BRONSTEIN, SCOTT, Staff Writer

Date: May 1, 1989

The Atlanta Journal and The Atlanta Constitution

A 14-year old McDonough girl was found huddled under a blanket of leaves in a dense patch of woods early Sunday morning, nearly 15 hours after she was left the sole survivor of a plane crash that killed her immediate family on a desolate mountaintop near Dahlonega. The girl suffered a broken shoulder in the crash of the single-engine Beechcraft, about 9 a.m. Saturday.

Despite her injury, she managed to crawl more than 200 yards from the plane's wreckage and then waited there alone, not far from the bodies of her mother, stepfather, older sister, and a younger male relative -- all of whom were killed in the crash, the authorities said.

The girl waited through the entire day Saturday and much of the night, until she was finally found shortly after midnight Sunday. She was listed in stable condition in St. Joseph's Hospital in Dahlonega early today. The names of the surviving teenager and the crash victims, who are from McDonough, were not released Sunday, pending notification of other relatives.

Their plane was en route from Griffin to Dahlonega when crashed in foggy weather near the top of Gooch Mountain in central Lumpkin County, according to Sheriff Randy Pruitt. "I do not see how she got out the plane alive, said Donald Seebolt, the emergency management director for Lumpkin County and leader of the search team. "The plane was totaled. The whole body of the plane from the back seat forward is just twisted up and turned upside down ... I think there was somebody looking after her." "Teen Is Sole Survivor of N. Georgia Plane Crash"

Other rescue workers said she likely wouldn't have survived a whole night, on the mountain.

The Civil Air Patrol were among the first rescue workers on the scene, First Lieutenant David White of the Civil Air Patrol in Atlanta,

said the girl told him that her stepfather lost control of the plane, which crashed and burned. Despite being cold hungry and complaining of a hurt arm, the girl was remarkably coherent, he said.

Rescue workers found the wreckage about a mile north of the Lumpkin County airport, about 12:30 am. and did not know immediate that there were any survivors. The CAP found her after hearing her soft cries. "She was calling out for help and it was real faint in the background," said Lieutenant White. "We heard it off in the distance. We all stopped to listen. We almost didn't think we were hearing anything at all." When they finally reached her they found "she had cover herself with leaves in keep herself dry and warm. Only her head was showing. When we get her clear, we saw that all she had on was a T-shirt and some shorts.

Lieutenant White said the girl, overcome by the loss of her family, told him "I should have died with them." "She was real quiet," he said. "Like you would expect a child to be." The girl told her rescuers that she may have been the only member of her family wearing a seat belt.

"She said she unhooked herself [from her seat belt], and went out the door of the plane. But there we no doors on the plane anymore. There's just no doors left," said First Lieutenant David L. Reed of the Sandy Springs cadet Squadron, the ground operations officer on the mission.

"She told me that she had crawled down to the plane after of crash, and that she had seen all as bodies. And then she crawled away again." Lieutenant White said.

Near the middle of her ordeal, around 3 p.m., the girl tried to signal a Plane passing overhead. But the plane spotted neither the girl nor the wreckage in the thick woods below, and she was left alone again to maintain her vigil by her dead family for nearly 10 hours more, the authorities said.

The search for on plane took hours, Sheriff Pruitt said, because the woods are so thick and the area so mountainous. "The signal could have been bounced off from anywhere up there. The mountaintops we high, and the valleys are very steep, too." The sheriff said the wreckage finally was found only about 250 yards from a small mountain road running between Union and Lumpkin Counties.

"The plane clipped the top of the trees. We feel like the fog caused accident. The pilot just didn't realize how low he was. I guess." Sheriff Pruitt said.

In addition to searching for lost aircraft the Civil Air Patrol also assists the Department of Homeland Security and the Drug Enforcement



Agency by providing aircraft support of coastal observation and border patrol with specialized private aircraft.

SNOOPY'S Other Missions

The Snoopy Squadron's normal training also focuses on cadet leadership and aerospace orientation.



The cadets can often be found flying gliders at Rome Airport or engaging in other activity designed to familiarize them with all aspects of flight and the aviation community in general. There are even scholarships and other programs offered for those cadets who are interested in obtaining their pilots license.

Cadets have several summer special activities available to them that allow them to travel to many parts of the United States and overseas to visit

other countries as well. Although no cadet has



any obligation to serve in the U. S. military, the Cadet Program syllabus carries forward a paramilitary training format to instill unit discipline and enhance unit teamwork. This is evident through the weekly drill activity often seen in the church parking lot every Wednesday night.

However, not all aspects of the cadet life are low key. The cadets occasionally stand in as the color guard for all three major Atlanta sports teams and rarely miss and opportunity to have fun during squadron activities. These activities are quite varied and take the cadets from plant tours of the Lockheed Martin assembly plant in Marietta to crowd control duty at local Atlanta air shows. The unit prides itself on a track record that has helped place an average of at least one SSCS cadet in a military academy each year for the last 30 years.



During the annual cadet competition earlier this year, the Sandy Spring Cadets placed second in the annual GA Wing Cadet Competition, missing



first place by only 1 point in the scoring. In fact, the St Jude cadets have performed so well in recent years that the unit was awarded *The Outstanding Unit Citation* in 2004, and is the *2005 Georgia Wing Outstanding Cadet Squadron of the Year*.

So, the next time you hear the words “*Who are those young guys in uniform?*”, know that these young teenagers are St Jude’s very own Civil Air Patrol cadet squadron. And based on its historical performance, this parish’s very own are among the best in the nation.



**Mike Reed, Cpt/CAP
Public Affairs Officer**