

History of Civil Air Patrol

Written by Administrator

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Volunteers Serving America in Times of Need



Civil Air Patrol was conceived in the late 1930s by legendary New Jersey aviation advocate Gill Robb Wilson, who foresaw aviation's role in war and general aviation's potential to supplement America's military operations. With the help of New York Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, the new Civil Air Patrol was established on December 1, 1941, just days before the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor.

The CAP insignia, a red three-bladed propeller in the Civil Defense white-triangle-in-blue-circle, began appearing on private aircraft everywhere. CAP initially planned only on liaison and reconnaissance flying, but the civilian group's mission expanded when German submarines began to prey on American ships off the coast of the United States and CAP planes began carrying bombs and depth charges."



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.

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.

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The Civil Air Patrol is a non-profit organization that provides search and rescue services for the United States Air Force. It is the largest civilian organization in the world and has a long history of service to the military and the public.