



High Flight 2.0

The Official Newsletter of
Albuquerque Heights
"Spirit" Composite Squadron
New Mexico Wing, Civil Air Patrol



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FLIGHT LINE is published quarterly, by and for the members of Albuquerque Heights "Spirit" Composite Squadron. Submission deadline is the third Tuesday of the month preceding publication.

Text may be submitted in the body of the e-mail (preferred), or sent as an attachment in Word format.

Photos must be in JPG format, unretouched, uncropped, and at least 1200 by 900 pixels.

Credits: in all cases, please give the grade, full name and duty assignment of the author of the article, the photographer, and anybody mentioned in the article.

Send submissions to:

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(Photo by 2Lt Randy Roth: (L to R Front Row) C/Amn Joseph Keleher, C/Amn Andrew Gallegos, C/Amn Gabriel Wusciewski, C/Amn Abigail Henry, C/Emery Byers (L to R Back Row) Squadron Deputy Commander for Cadets Major John H Brennan, Instructor C/SSgt Aiden Jones, Instructor C/SSgt Sarah Roth, Squadron Commander Major Mary A Fox)

Spirit Squadron Graduates its First Great Start Class

By Michael Roger Saul, First Lieutenant, CAP

Albuquerque, NM: On January 23, 2020, Albuquerque Heights Composite Squadron (Spirit Squadron) completed its first, ever, Great Start Graduation Ceremony. The ceremony culminated eight weeks of training, led by Major John H Brennan, the squadron Cadet Program Officer. Cadets enrolled

in the Great Start program had been sworn in to the Civil Air Patrol leadership program by early December and were working together, as a class, to complete their first promotion stripe. Graduating cadets were: Cadet Airman Andrew Gallegos, Cadet Airman Abigail Henry, Cadet Airman Emery Byers, Cadet Airman Joseph Keleher, and Cadet Airman

Gabriel Wusciewski. Absent on the date of graduation, but graduating two weeks later, was Cadet Airman Nicholas Mora.

The Great Start program is a format of training that involves bringing all new cadets together into one group, and keeping those cadets together until they have mastered the material necessary for Leadership Chapter 1 and Drill 1. Once the group has accomplished this task, learned their cadet oath and attended their Wingman course, they are then eligible to earn their first achievement--the Curry Achievement, which is their first stripe. While learning together, the group grows in esprit de corps and strengthens in foundations of leadership. When asked how his entrance into the Civil Air Patrol as a new cadet was, Cadet Airman Byers said, the Great Start class "was very informative, and I was able to learn a lot through the various teaching techniques. The cadets who taught the course were great!" Cadet Airman Byers.

Major John Brennan, an active Air Force Lieutenant, has been actively involved with the Civil Air Patrol Cadet Programs, since he converted from a Spaatz cadet in 2013 to the present day. His experience has been invaluable to Spirit Squadron, which is clearly evident by the graduation of the squadron's first Great Start class. C/TSgt Aiden Jones and C/TSgt Sarah Roth assisted Major Brennan as cadet instructors for the class.

Cadet Becomes a United States' Citizen

by Michael R. Saul, 1 Lt, CAP

Albuquerque, NM: On Thursday, March 5, at 2:30 PM, Cadet Staff Sergeant Hussein Khalid Al Ithawi became a United States' citizen. Al Ithawi, along with his younger brother, Mohanad Jasim Al Ithawi, joined two other young people to say their oath for citizenship at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, on Mercantile Avenue, in Albuquerque. The cadet joined Albuquerque Heights Composite Squadron in April 2016 after patiently waiting 3 months for his application to process. His love of aviation, and desire to become a pilot, kept him focused and on task, as he worked his way through language barriers and military jargon, to earn the rank of Staff Sergeant in 2018.

The Al Ithawi family has been on a long road to citizenship that began back in 2014, when they arrived in the country as refugees. Two of the family members, Jwlan Muhssen (mother) and Mustafa Al Ithawi (oldest son), received their citizenship in the fall of 2019, while the two others (Al Ithawi and his younger brother) received their citizenship on this date. There is still one more member of the family awaiting his date to take citizenship oath, the cadet's dad, Khalid Al Ithawi. The older



C/SSgt Hussein Al Ithawi and younger brother, Mohanad Jasim, recite the United States Citizenship Oath (photo by Major Mary Fox)

High Flight 2.0 – April, 2020

members of the family participated in tutoring, and the education of United States



The Kahlid Al Ithawi family pose for a congratulatory photo at the swearing in ceremony for Cadet Hussein Al Ithawi and younger brother, Mohanad Jasim (photo by Major Mary Fox)

history, while members under the age 18 were presented their Certificate of Citizenship after repeating the oath for citizenship.

"The wonderful thing about this family is that they 'refuge-ed' out, and spent quite a few years in Dubai, UAE, until they could get permission to enter the US. The family was fleeing the oppression of Iraq," said Lt Colonel Beverly Vito, who attended the ceremony today. "The entire process was a testament to the courage of a family wanting nothing more the 'better' for their children. They have waited a long time for this citizenship to happen," said Major Mary Fox, commander of the

Albuquerque Heights Composite Squadron (aka Spirit Squadron), who also attended the ceremony.

The squadron held a celebration in honor of the citizenship at the end of their squadron meeting. (Photos by Major Mary Fox)

Physical Fitness Training Goes Well in the Midst of a Pandemic

by Michael Roger Saul, First Lieutenant, CAP, PAO

Albuquerque, NM: On Thursday, April 9, 2020, Captain Karen Barela, PT Officer at Albuquerque Heights Composite Squadron (aka Spirit Squadron), carried out the squadron's first virtual Physical Fitness Training session. The squadron has been meeting via a virtual platform since March 13, 2020, and this particular meeting, PT night, completed the first round of "first time" successes for all of the monthly Cadet program requirements.

The physical training appeared "normal," as cadets followed a program developed by Cadet Staff Sergeant Dylan Mamawal, designed specifically for online training. C/SSgt Mamawal, trained as a competitive gymnast, used his own expertise as a gymnast to put together a set of exercises that would not only benefit his fellow cadets, but also work in the land of virtual training. A major lesson learned from this first time virtual PT session was to ask the cadets to turn their computer display screens downward so that their body could be seen as they complete the various exercises. It was pretty

High Flight 2.0 – April, 2020

humorous to see an occasional back or head pop up into the display as cadets completed their floor exercises.

The physical training session was a great way of getting cadets moving and exercised. Cadet Dylan Mamawal began with stretches, then moved forward into 30 minutes of cardio exercises including jumping jacks, sit-ups, and push-ups. It was not like one of those fitness videos, which typically play annoying music and have a nagging instructor. Instead, the Cadet led the exercises while all the cadets and senior members presented and performed the actions.



The COVID-19, corona virus, has significantly impaired Civil Air Patrol programs across the country. Virtual meetings have become a reality for the success of Cadet Programs. In an effort towards helping stop the spread of the virus, Spirit Squadron has been carrying out their weekly meetings via a virtual platform. On this particular evening, they completed their first time physical fitness training.

As of this article, the squadron has held virtual Character Development, Emergency Services, Aerospace Education, Drug Demand Reduction and Drill and Ceremony sessions. Major Mary Fox and Lt Col Beverly Vito practice the Character Development session prior to its implementation on Thursday, March 26, 2020. The squadron has also successfully completed promotion boards. Squadron virtual "pinning ceremonies" allowed the parents to stand proud while their cadet was promoted. The cadet's promotion included the announcing of his/her next rank and grade, the Deputy Cadet Commander gave a verbal congratulations to the cadet, and the squadron all un-muted their screens to clap in congratulations. C/TSgt Trevor Anderson is promoted to TSgt during the April 2, 2020 virtual meeting. "COVID-19 may change how we live and play, but it cannot take us down as a squadron. We will meet its challenge," said squadron commander Major Mary Fox.



Spirit Squadron Keeps Active!

*By 2nd Lt. Michael R. Saul, CAP
Public Affairs Officer*

The Albuquerque Heights Composite Squadron has been **VERY ACTIVE** lately. Have YOU?

- *October 10, 2020 – Outdoor PT
- *October 17, 2020 – Outdoor Drill
- *October 24, 2020 – Orientation Flights
- *November 7, 2020 – Squadron Clothing Drive
- **December 17, 2020- Squadron Winter Award Banquet

(*) dependent on Covid restrictions at the time

(**) virtual meeting