

# CAP unit chartered with the name of an American president



Photo by Susan Robertson, CAP National Headquarters

Lt. Col. Brooks Cima, left, and former President George H.W. Bush, center, hold the charter for the George H.W. Bush Composite Squadron as the commander of the new Texas Wing unit, Lt. Col. Don Wheeler, looks on. Behind them are representatives of the squadron's 30 cadets and senior members.

**F**ormer President George H.W. Bush recently presented the Civil Air Patrol charter to the squadron that now bears his name. The event was held at the George H.W. Bush Library and Museum on the campus of Texas A&M University in College Station.

On an easel next to the lectern was a large drawing of the colorful unit patch designed by Jacob Haldeman, graphics designer and heraldry expert. Based on the Seal of the President of the United States, it was modified to reflect Bush's life of service.

The president arrived without fanfare and immediately greeted the assembled members. Ever polite and easy-going, he approached the new squadron's commander, Lt. Col. Don Wheeler, a 24-year U.S. Air Force veteran, pointed at one of the ribbons on Wheeler's CAP uniform and asked, "How did this one come about?"

Wheeler was speechless the president would recognize the wartime Air Force award. He replied, "Vietnam, Mr. President," and gave him the date.

As the ceremony got under way, Wheeler welcomed the president and guests and then introduced Lt. Col. Brooks Cima, Texas Wing director of emergency services, who offered the wing congratulations.

Bush then spoke, saying, "I wish you every success," and encouraging the cadets to serve their community and nation.

When Bush was ready to leave, Capt. Arthur E. Woodgate, director of public affairs, Southwest Region, said, "Mr. President, I campaigned for you."

The former president's eyes grew bright and he turned to him to ask, "When was that?"

"When you ran against Yarborough, sir," said Woodgate, referring to Bush's 1964 bid for the U.S. Senate

seat held by Ralph Yarborough.

"Ah, that was a long time ago," mused the elder statesman, and, for the second time in 45 years, he shook hands with Woodgate. ▲

*Cadet Capt. Sean Stewart of Texas Wing's Pegasus Composite Squadron contributed to this report.*

Based on the presidential seal, the brightly colored emblem for the Texas Wing's newest unit, the George H.W. Bush Composite Squadron, was on display at the charter ceremony.

Photo by  
Capt. Arthur E. Woodgate,  
Southwest Region



## Many CAP units carry notable monikers

One other Civil Air Patrol squadron bears a president's name. The Independence Composite Squadron in Independence, Mo., founded in 1951, was renamed the Harry S. Truman Composite Squadron in 1973.

Several CAP units carry the name of notable aviators and famous people:

- Lewis & Clark Composite Squadron, Tyndall, S.D.
- Amelia Earhart Cadet Squadron, Yonkers, N.Y.
- Amelia Earhart Senior Squadron 188, Oakland, Calif.
- Sam Houston Composite Squadron, Magnolia, Texas
- Billy Mitchell Senior Squadron, River Ridge, La.
- Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker Composite Squadron, Delaware, Ohio
- Will Rogers Composite Squadron, Collinsville, Okla.
- William Rogers Memorial Senior Squadron 104, Mirana, Ariz.
- Walter M. Schirra Jr. Composite Squadron, Wyckoff, N.J.
- Gen. Carl A. Spatz Composite Squadron 812, Boyertown, Pa.
- Jimmy Stewart Composite Squadron 714, Carrolltown, Pa.
- Gen. Chuck Yeager Cadet Squadron, Brandon, Fla.