

# Cadets get to work at one of the largest, most prestigious air shows in the world

By Maj. Steven Solomon

Photo by Capt. Darren Jaeger, Texas Wing



Cadet Maj. Ehren Rauch participates in one of Blue Beret's activities for cadets, building wing ribs.

It's hard to ignore the popularity of the Experimental Aircraft Association's annual AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wis. A whopping 541,000 visitors from 68 countries attended this year, drawn to the daily air shows, forums, workshops and demonstrations.

Contributing to the success of AirVenture are the cadets who participate in Civil Air Patrol's national cadet special activity, National Blue Beret, held July 19 to Aug. 1. It's one of the most popular of CAP's 34 summer activities.

"AirVenture and NBB afford us the opportunity to put the youth of today in touch with the greatest aviators in the world, let them see the newest technological innovations and touch the past by hearing the history of aviation from the people who lived it," said Lt. Col. James D. Peace, NBB activity director.

Peace described NBB as a partnership between CAP and EAA, enabling cadets to train in emergency services, learn about aerospace and provide support for AirVenture.

Each cadet worked in several areas, including the flight line and exhibits. The training included techniques of aircraft marshaling and electronic direction finding.

"We had four main duty stations," said Cadet Lt. Col. Piper Morgan of Edmond, Okla., cadet commander at the activity. She listed them: "The flight line, where cadets

lined the taxiways to direct inbound and outbound taxing aircraft; providing assistance with the vintage military warbird flight line; searching the airport for active electronic locator transmitters and overdue aircraft; and supporting flight line operations in the ultra-light/rotorcraft areas.”

AirVenture, formerly known as the EAA Fly-In Convention, started in 1953 as part of the Milwaukee Air Pageant. CAP has been involved since the 1970s. This year 137 CAP cadets and 44 senior members from 43 wings participated, traveling from as far away as Puerto Rico.

“I saw a bunch of individuals from all corners of our country turn into one finely tuned and efficient team, ready for anything that was thrown at them,” said 1st Lt. Mark Ginnard, an NBB staff member. “You would be amazed every day at what our CAP cadets are capable of.”

The selection process, NBB Public Affairs Officer Capt. Daren Jaeger said, begins every December and continues over the following six months, when 800 CAP members apply for the honor of serving in one of only 175 NBB slots at AirVenture. Many of the participating CAP members are also EAA members, Jaeger said.

EAA recorded more than 10,000 aircraft arriving at Wittman Regional Airport in Oshkosh and other airports in east-central Wisconsin for the event. CAP was responsible for finding any emergency locator transmitters that were mistakenly activated, as well as recording the tail numbers of all incoming airplanes in the event an aircraft was overdue.

Cadets were also able to meet and talk for about an hour to retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Dick Rutan, the heavily decorated Vietnam War fighter pilot who flew



Photo by Cadet Capt. Alex Lewallen, California Wing

Retired Air Force Lt. Col. Dick Rutan signs autographs for cadets who were able to meet and talk to him for about an hour.

the Voyager aircraft nonstop around the world with co-pilot Jeana Yeager in December 1986.

“My hope for the cadets is the experience will inspire new dreams, give them options for their future and provide input necessary for each and every one of them to shape their lives,” Peace said. ▲

**CYBERPATRIOT IV**  
*“Have you got what it takes?”*

The **LARGEST** high school cyber defense competition in the nation!

Now accepting registrations for teams.

Join over 30,000 students and coaches and make learning fun, while preparing for a cyber future!

REGISTRATION DEADLINE  
 October 8, 2011

LEARN MORE AT  
[www.cyberpatriot.org](http://www.cyberpatriot.org)  
[facebook.com/cyberpatriot](https://www.facebook.com/cyberpatriot)

Photo by Cadet 2nd Lt. Lorene Parker, Washington Wing



Lt. Col. James D. Peace, National Blue Beret activity director, center, greets Doreen Welsh, flight attendant, and Jeffrey B. Skiles, first officer from U.S. Airways Flight 1549, known as the Miracle on the Hudson.