

The Candy Bomber Flies Again

By Russ Lewey,

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Drawing from Civil Air Patrol's aerospace education materials, Russ Lewey and his wife, Diane, recently provided a long-distance, virtual class on flight and the story of the "Candy Bomber" from Titusville, FL, to 19 second graders in Bartlesville, OK. Russ's daughter, Erin Perry, a teacher at Richard Kane Elementary, recalled that in 2015 her parents conducted an aviation class in Huntsville, AL, that included the story of Col Gail Halvorsen, the Candy Bomber (aka Uncle Wiggly Wings). ([AFA Wingman September 2015](#)) So, Erin reached out to see if Uncle Wiggly Wings could fly again!

It was agreed that to truly appreciate the story of the Candy Bomber, the students needed to have their own candy parachutes. Not needing the assistance of the *Defense Production Act*, Russ and Diane (mainly the latter) set out to make 19 parachutes with little packs of "Gummy Bears" attached. A parachute, along with four Candy Bomber worksheets, and a letter was mailed to each student. Erin said the students were so excited to get their own package, with many working on their worksheets right away! But, as requested, the students held off opening their parachute packages until their assigned day of the Zoom virtual lesson from FL.

To maximize participation, Erin's class was divided in half, with two sessions scheduled, allowing each student a better chance to be a part of the virtual program at home. A couple of practice "Zoom sessions" and Russ was ready to launch. Each lesson session lasted approximately 30 minutes and included teaching the basic parts of an airplane and how a plane flies (with a demonstration where students participated), and, finally, the story of Uncle Wiggly Wings. The students were truly engaged and asked some pretty insightful questions about flying and Russ's Air Force career, such as, "What was the scariest thing about learning to fly?" and "Why did you join the Air Force?" Following the completion of the class,

many of the students rushed outside to be their own "Candy Bomber" by tossing their parachutes up into the spring sky!

It was a great opportunity to intermix aerospace education with Lt Gail Halvorsen's story, truly one of our Air Force's heroes. We are always ready to fly alongside Uncle Wiggly Wings!

[CAP's Virtual Ed](#) [Uncle Wiggly Wings Booklet & Teachers Guide](#) *AFA COVID-19 Virtual Learning ~May 2020



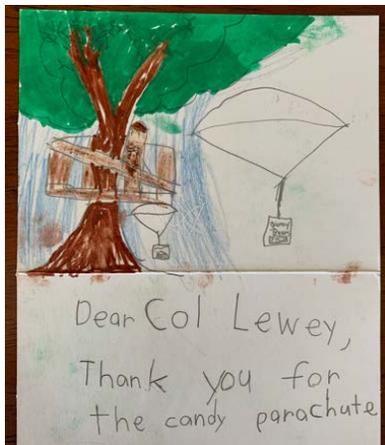
Work at the Candy Bomber Parachute



Russ telling the story of the Candy Bomber



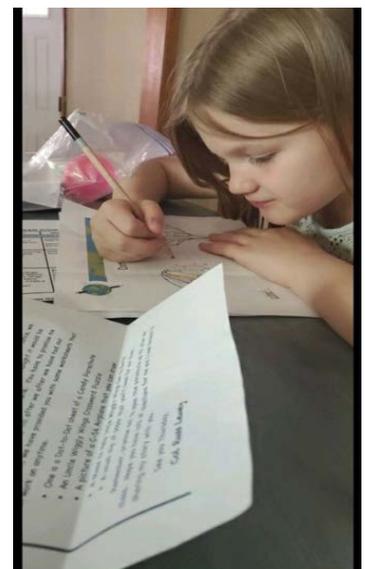
The class learning about flying and Uncle Wiggly Wings via Zoom



The lesson was fun, but I really liked the candy parachute



Young Candy Bomber hard at play



Working on her worksheets