



Photo by Susan Robertson, CAP National Headquarters

Higher Ground

Training catapults CAP leaders

CAP members participating in National Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., listen attentively to a presentation on leadership trends by Air Force Maj. Dan Connelly, director of education and curriculum at Squadron Officer College. Seventy-six members took part in the weeklong course, which helps them earn their Gill Robb Wilson Award and qualifies them for higher leadership positions in CAP.

By Neil Probst

F

For 76 Civil Air Patrol members, a week at the organization's 40th annual National Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., set the stage for a heightened role within the organization.

"The curriculum is fantastic, and the people here are fantastic. The instructors here are top-notch," said Lt. Col. Marianne Ferland of the New Jersey Wing.

For Ferland and her comrades, graduating was a requirement for earning the Gill Robb Wilson Award, CAP's highest recognition for professional development.

And it was a step toward higher command.

Col. Larry Myrick, Pacific Region vice commander, inspired the volunteer students with a lecture on “Local to Global: A Broader View of CAP.”

Myrick’s presentation capped a week of lectures and leadership-enhancing activities in which the students learned about transformational and ethical leadership, financial management, governance, federal interagency relationships and more.

CAP National Commander Maj. Gen. Amy S. Courter and National Vice Commander Brig. Gen. Reggie Chitwood also participated in the college. Courter even taught two classes.

After the civilian, military and CAP speakers spoke, the students broke into small groups to discuss the lectures and compete in team leadership exercises.

Lt. Col. Peggy Myrick, who had traveled cross-country from the California Wing, volunteered to lead NSC for a fourth year.

“I truly enjoy professional development, and I have a passion for being part of the professional development of our members,” said Myrick. “NSC is also a challenge in that it changes every year. It’s not a static process.”

She was joined by Lt. Col. Amos Plante, deputy NSC director and a 2001 graduate.

Plante said the school is unique because the students are already CAP leaders, many with executive-level experience.

“Intellectually, it’s very stimulating to work with a

group like this,” Plante said.

Participants studied personality types so they could better understand their own personalities and their subordinates’ moods and feelings, and they learned characteristics that typify positive, productive leaders.

Leaders like Lt. Col. Roy Campbell, vice commander of the Nevada Wing, said he really benefited from the experience.

“They hit the right spots as far as I’m concerned. Everything was interesting to me. I took everything in, and I think I’m going to be a better leader from here on in,” Campbell said. ▲

WORKING FOR WILSON

Lt. Col. Peggy Myrick, National Staff College director, said graduates must complete NSC to earn their Gill Robb Wilson Award, the highest award given to members for professional development.

Wilson, regarded as the founder of Civil Air Patrol, conceived of the need for the organization before World War II. He directed efforts that led to CAP’s creation, and his work was blessed by U.S. leaders of his day, including Gen. H.H. “Hap” Arnold and the Civil Aeronautics Authority.



Photo by Lt. Col. Maurice “Moe” Thomas III, Middle East Region

CAP members, from left, Pennsylvania Wing Maj. Harold J. Frankel, Florida Wing Lt. Col. Sergio B. Seoane, Georgia Wing Maj. Scott G. Hamre, Michigan Wing Maj. Betty L. Dumont and Alabama Wing Col. William R. Bass, take part in a National Staff College discussion. The students’ coursework focused on transformational and ethical leadership, financial management, governance and the importance of federal interagency relationships.