

The Challenge Has Just Begun...

The Challenge has really only begun for the thirteen cadets that accepted the mission and completed the training to become the first DDR Cadet Task Force during Minnesota Wing's DDR Task Force Challenge Weekend on September 12-14. The rigorous Task Force Challenge Weekend is the brainstorm of Minnesota Wing DDRO, 1st Lt. Nanette Stevens, and consists of learning components coupled with competitive team and leadership exercises and activities.

When she heard that many D.A.R.E. programs have been eliminated from schools throughout the state, or are on the chopping block due to budget constraints, she hoped to fill the gap with cadets educated in drug related issues by forming a DDR Cadet Task Force that could be available for presentations and educational sessions to school districts within the state.

Cadets earned their DDRx Certificates the first day by completing 6 activities each from the DDRx program. Presenters for the weekend included a licensed protective agent, detective and contract government investigator with Special Agent Clearance. It also included canine officer, Sgt. Matt Maier and his partner, Gator, as well as a Character Development and Constitutional Leadership History Class, and lessons on the physiological and biological effects of drugs. A "how-to" implement DDR in your community session provided them the tools to begin the process of introducing DDR in their schools.



Competitive team and leadership activities were designed to bond the task force members, as well as to determine which flight would receive the honor flight for the weekend. Designing a guidon, canoeing, geocaching, a dance contest, and producing a commercial, and an ADL Relay were some of the many challenges the participants faced. The ADL Relay consisted of doing many Activities for Daily Living (ADL's) that a person does every day, such as writing your name, getting dressed, operating a motorized vehicle (scooter), and eating. However, participants experienced the loss of perception, perspective, and control that a person under the influence of alcohol might contend with, by having to wear Fatal Vision Goggles and gloves during the relay. It was a challenge!

(Photo on Left: Officer Matt Maier, and his partner, Gator; Photo on Top Right, C/Abraham Berg, North Hennepin Squadron, C/Sarah Rogers, Northland Squadron, and C/Joshua Sechser, Crow Wing Squadron during canoeing challenge; Photo on Lower Right, C/Alex Scheglowksi participating in "The Cone Zone" DDRx Activity)

As the weekend came to a close, the first Minnesota Wing Cadet DDR Task Force was formed as cadets took the Task Force Oath, and participants were presented with a DDR Task Force cap and T-shirt, as well as their completion of training certificates. The smiling faces of the cadets tell the story of their success. However, the challenge has really just begun for them, as they have a mission to complete. Yes, the mission of "The Task Force" has just begun, as the challenge continues to be to reduce the demand for drugs.

(Photo Top Left, C/Justin Petersen and C/Chris Trana during geocaching challenge with members of their flight; Photo Top Right, C/ Alex Scheglowksi with his cap/t-shirt/certificate; Photo Lower Left, C/Joshua Sechser participating in "The Eyes Have It" DDRx activity with Lt. Col Bonnie Braun, NCR DDRO; Photo Lower Right, Cap and rear view of Task Force T-shirt)

