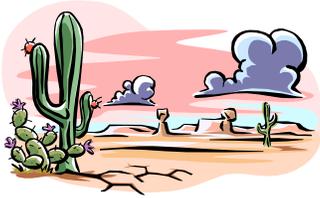


CACTUS COURIER



Col Frank A. Buethe,
Commander



Lt Col Sharon M. Lane, PAO



NOVEMBER - 2003
VOLUME 5, ISSUE 11

NEW MEXICO WING

BE SAFE!

**You just never know when
the dragon is going to jump
up and bite you**

Lt Col Norm Edwards

**Civil Air Patrol
P.O. Box 5069
Kirtland AFB, NM
87185-5069**

NM WING WEBSITE
<http://nmwg.cap.gov/>

National CAP HQ Website
<http://www.capnhq.gov/>

NEW!

Commander's Corner

By Col Frank A. Buethe, NM Wing

The insider's joke is that CAP means "Come And Pay." Yes, but I'd rather think it means "Come And PARTICIPATE." When you join the CAP you join a professional organization with very important missions: Emergency Services, Cadet Programs, and Aerospace Education. To be effective in supporting those missions the New Mexico wing needs the participation of each and every one of its members—without that individual participation there is no wing, because the wing is really made up of all its members.

Each member brings many skills that can be used within the wing structure. I encourage all members to participate in as many ways and in as many activities as possible. For example, Mission Pilots can cross train in ICS staff positions, members in cadets squadrons can become qualified in several Emergency Services areas, and non-pilot members can be qualified in many specialties such as communications, public affairs, safety, logistics, transportation, administration, personnel, etc.

In the Civil Air Patrol participation is especially meaningful. Where else can you make a meaningful change in a cadet's life, or contribute to the professionalism of a national organization, or actually defend the United States from those who would terrorize our citizens and our country? I can't think of any other volunteer organization in which you, as an individual can make that kind of difference—so Come And PARTICIPATE to your hearts content! We are glad you are aboard!

The Wing Holiday Party is to be held on Saturday, 6 Dec at the Mountain View Club, Kirtland AFB. Social hour begins at 1800 (No host bar); dinner begins at 1900. Dinner is all you can eat holiday buffet. There will be door prizes and entertainment during the social hour. Cost is 25.00 per person. **Reservation deadline is November 30th.** To make a

reservation, send payment check made payable to *NM Wing CAP* to Pam Buethe, 38 Desert Mountain Road, Placitas, NM 87043-9552. Your check is your reservation.

There appears to be some confusion about dates for staff meeting/commander's call and Holiday Party. Please make note of the following information, which should clear up any future confusion.

Wing staff meeting/commander's call will ALWAYS be held on the second Saturday of the month in ABQ (unless you are notified otherwise). In December the wing staff meeting/commander's call will be held on December 6th to coincide with the date of the wing Holiday Party. The Holiday Party could only be scheduled on Dec 6th due to the Mountain View Club's schedule of available days. I saw no reason for staff and commanders to come to ABQ two weekends in a row so I moved the staff meeting/commander's call in December ONLY, to coincide with the Holiday Party date. If you have any questions please contact me.

Wing needs members to volunteer as staff members in Operations, Emergency Services, Transportation, and IG. Missions will increase and change due to HLS emphasis there will be more work than in the past. We need more staff to work under the "Many hands make light work" theory. Interested members should contact John Green or David Simonson directly.

New Grandparents!

Chuck and Corliss Grubert are new grandparents! Baby Arian Travis Baldrige was born Wednesday, October 15th. He weighed 7 lbs. 8 oz and was 20" long. According to Corliss, "Mother and son are doing fine!"

Hmmmm, future CAP pilot? Congratulations to the Baldrige/Grubert family!

*The Lord didn't do it all in one day.
What makes you think you can?*

CN NEWS

By Lt Col Jim Gary, CND

Mr. Norm Ginther, National Operations Support Analyst announced the Online Counterdrug Orientation Course, which was originally scheduled to be removed from the National Counterdrug Web Page on 31 October 2003, has an extended date of removal. Mr. Ginther said, " Since many of our members experienced difficulties accessing the course over the last several weeks it will remain available until 30 November 2003." Those CN qualified members who still need to take the refresher course will have until then to complete the task this year. The course will not be given again until spring 2004.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The New Mexico VA Health Care System will be conducting a Patient Reception Exercise on November 20, 2003, to test our ability to receive and process patients being flown in from a major disaster area. 100 volunteers are needed to act as patients arriving in Albuquerque, being triaged by a medical treatment team, and then transported to an area hospital for hospitalization. Following the simulated admission to a local hospital you will be transported back to the VA Hospital. The exercise will run from approximately 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. November 20, 2003.

William W. Thompson, Area Emergency Manager/EMSHG, further announced, " I will be conducting a final exercise briefing at 1000 on November 12, 2003, at the VA Education Building, Classrooms 1 & 2. At this meeting I will walk through the exercise and ask each participating agency for any comments or questions. " He continued, "Please keep in mind that I must provide a list of names for all non-military personnel, who will be attending this exercise and plan to go on Kirtland AFB, to the 377th Security Forces. If your name is not on this list or you do not have a base sticker you may be denied access."

For those of you that don't plan on being at the meeting but will be at the Patient Reception Center on 11/20, please use the Carlisle gate. Go all the way to the end of Carlisle to Clark Street. Turn right and you will drive right in front of hangar 333. There is an entrance in the middle of the building on Clark Street that will take you into the hangar.

One other item of interest is that the Albuquerque Emergency Operations Center will be activated for this exercise. If you have any questions prior to this meeting please do not hesitate to contact me.

William W. Thompson
Area Emergency Manager/EMSHG
NM VA Health Care System
1501 San Pedro SE
Albuquerque, NM 87108
Phone: 505-256-2823
Fax: 505-256-5491
Pager: 800-393-6809
Cell: 505-379-0593
William.Thompson3@med.va.gov

NM CADET COMPETITION TO BE HELD

The New Mexico Wing Cadet Competition will be held Saturday, 8 November on Kirtland Air Force Base. According to Project Officer C/Lt Col Kaycee Gilbert, "People wishing to attend, besides the teams, need to be at wing HQ by 7:45 am on 8 Nov 03. Onlookers who don't wish to witness the Pt part of the competition should be at Wing HQ at 9:00 am." Gilbert added, "I will release the full schedule on 2 Nov to anyone who would like to have it." To contact C/Lt Col Gilbert for the schedule, please email her at kayceegilbert@hotmail.com

AIRCREW TRAINING (Scanner/Observer) TO BE HELD THIS MONTH

Lt Col Milton C. West, USAFR-IMA, announced an Air Crew Course will be conducted on 22 - 23 November at the CAP Wing HQ building. The actual schedule has not been determined at

this time. West said, "I have rearranged the scanner and the observer course material into two days, so the pilots will get the scanner/observer training the first day. The second day will cover the aircraft and other information that pilots should know."

The scanner/observer students need to come both days and take an exam Sunday afternoon. However, if the pilots want to come Saturday and miss the Sunday class, they can take their exam Saturday afternoon. Of course, the pilots will have the option to come Sunday also if they choose.

Anyone needing this training please contact your squadron commander to have your name added to the list that will be forwarded to Lt Col West. Pilots should keep in mind they MUST have at least the scanner training to become a qualified mission pilot.

SLS AND CLC TO BE HELD in 2004

By Col Frank Buethe, NMWGCC

A SLS & CLC professional development weekend is scheduled for 7-8 Feb 2004 at Wing HQ. Those of you who have not completed these courses are highly encouraged to do so at this training opportunity. It is important for your professional and personal development as a Squadron commander, as well as a CAP member, to further your CAP professional education. These courses also will help you in your ability to manage your squadrons because they cover important CAP information.

You are encouraged to urge your squadron members to attend these courses also as part of their personal professional development. They will gain a better understanding of CAP, its missions and organization, which will help them become better contributing squadron members.

Mark your calendars now for this very important professional development training

FLIGHT SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCED

CAP Lt Col Jim Quick, Commander of the Albuquerque Senior Squadron II notified Lt Col Paul Ballmer, NM Wing Cadet Programs Director, that Squadron II is offering a \$500 flight Scholarship toward completion of the solo rating for a New Mexico Wing Civil Air Patrol Cadet.

To be eligible for this scholarship, Cadets must be at least 15.5 years old, a current member in good standing in the Civil Air Patrol and have completed the Wright Brothers Achievement (or earned the rank of C/SSgt or higher).

Cadets interested in applying for this scholarship should submit a CAP Form 95 signed by your squadron commander and write in 150 words or less why you feel you should receive this scholarship.

Squadron II would like to present this scholarship in December, so **the deadline for application is 15 Nov 03**. Mail or e-mail your completed application to Lt Col Jim Quick, CAP at 1109 Monte Largo Drive NE, Albuquerque, NM 87123 or e-mail it to jqquick1@earthlink.net by 15 Nov 03.



Homeland Security News

By Col James Norvell NM Wing Director

As the new director for homeland security, I begin a new and challenging undertaking to provide key information and training to the members of this wing that will afford the awareness and capability to perform the tasks that may be needed to support the *New Mexico and National Strategic Plans*.

President George Bush has stated, "That the September 11, 2001, attacks demonstrated the extent of our vulnerability to the terrorist threat. In the aftermath of these tragic events, we as a Nation have demonstrated firm resolve in protecting our critical infrastructures and key assets from further terrorist exploitation. In this effort, government at all levels, the private sector, and concerned citizens across the country have begun an important

partnership and commitment to action." The president continues, "To address the threat posed by those who wish to harm the United States, critical infrastructure owners and operators are assessing their vulnerabilities and increasing their investment in security. State and municipal governments across the country continue to take important steps to identify and assure the protection of key assets and services within their jurisdictions. The Office of Homeland Security is working closely with key public- and private-sector entities to implement the Homeland Security Advisory System across all levels of government and the critical sectors."

The *National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets* represents the first milestone. Consistent with the *National Strategy for Homeland security*, this document identifies a clear set of goals and objectives and outlines the guiding principles that will underpin our efforts to secure the infrastructures and assets vital to our public health and safety, national security, governance, economy, and public confidence.

As we work to implement this *Strategy*, it is important to remember that protection of our critical infrastructures and key assets is a shared responsibility. Ultimately, success lies in our ability to draw effectively upon the unique core competencies and resources of each stockholder. Given the range and complexity of required protection activities and number of entities involved, clearly defined authority, accountability, and coordinating process will provide the foundation for a successful and sustainable national protection effort.

The mission of the New Mexico Homeland Security Program is to provide leadership and guidance to state, local Government, Volunteer agencies, and the private sector and to coordinate with federal agencies in preventing, responding to and recovering from terrorist attacks or incidents.

It is my goal that the New Mexico Wing be included in the New Mexico Homeland Security Strategic Plan.

Contacts have been made and will continue to be made to work towards this goal.



NEW SQUADRON LED BY FORMER SPAATZ CADET

It has been announced a new middle school cadet squadron has been established at James Monroe Middle School in Albuquerque. Capt Pam Sever is leading the squadron. Capt Sever, a former Spaatz cadet, is putting her talents to work for the youth of the community! The squadron was established at the beginning of this school year.

Capt Sever and her husband Eliot Salgado live in NW Albuquerque. Anyone wishing to contact this new squadron commander can do so by email pamsever@msn.com or by calling her at 505-922-8622. Congratulations on your new squadron Capt Pam Sever!



WINTER ENCAMPMENT STAFF ANNOUNCED

*By Lt Col Paul Ballmer,
Encampment Director*

As indicated earlier, applications for the Cadet Staff of the 2003 New Mexico Wing Winter Encampment are now closed. The staff has been selected and is listed below for your information. All individuals who requested they be assigned to the staff have been assigned. Please note that changes in CAPM 52-16, dated April 2003 prohibit the temporary promotion of cadets to ranks they do not hold, and likewise prohibit the removal of any rank a cadet has earned. For that reason, staff positions for the encampment were selected based on the ranks earned by those who applied. As the possibility always exists that someone may have to back out of attending, these assignments could be subject to change up until the start of the encampment.

One of the reasons I prefer to announce the staff early is to give you the time to prepare and read up on your responsibilities prior to your

arrival. I also like to include as much of the staff in the planning of the encampment so that you can gain some "ownership" in the process. With that in mind, I will be holding a planning meeting on December 6th to cover issues involved in the planning of the encampment and encourage as many of you as can to be present for the meeting. The exact time will be announced later as we are planning a Cadet Advisory Council Meeting, some cadet activities and the Wing Cadet Christmas party on that date as well.

If you have any questions, please feel free to give me a call 505-323-6069 or e-mail me at PJBallmer@worldnet.att.net.

Encampment Director: Lt Col Paul J. Ballmer
Deputy Director: Capt David R. Simonson, CAP
Cadet Commander: C/Lt Col Kaycee D. Gilbert
Cadet Deputy CC: C/Major Justin E. Carr, CAP
Cadet ExO: C/Major Brian J. Bauer, CAP
Operations Officer: Capt Joseph R. Perea, CAP
Cadet Ops Officer: C/Capt David M. Bracken
PAO: 1st Lt Gretta S. Christensen, CAP
Cadet PAO: C/2d Lt Tyler J. Albright, CAP
Finance Officer: 1st Lt Clarence E. Decker, CAP
Medical Officer: 1st Lt John P. Grassham, CAP
Commandant of Cadets: 1st Lt Mark V. Peters
Transportation Officer: 2d Lt James P. Hoy
Administrative Officer: 2d Lt Annette R. Peters
Cadet Admin Officer: C/2d Lt Nathaniel I. Choo
Admin Assistant: C/SrA Daniel C. Andraka
Admin Assistant: C/SrA Jennifer C. Decker
Admin Assistant: C/SrA Michael A. Fernandez
First Sergeant: C/CMSgt Jesse M. Peters, CAP
Alpha Flight CC: C/2d Lt Curtis E. Christensen
Alpha Flight Sergeant: C/SMSgt Kameron F. Ray, CAP
Bravo Flight CC: C/2d Lt Daniel R. Bracken
Bravo Flight Sergeant: C/SMSgt Eric W. Courtois, CAP
Charlie Flight CC: C/2d Lt Crystal M. Simmons
Charlie Flight Sergeant: C/MSgt John C. Decker, CAP
Delta Flight CC: C/2d Lt Marit Christensen, CAP
Delta Flight Sergeant: C/MSgt Lauren A. Legans, CAP

THREE CIVIL AIR PATROL CADETS PROMOTED

By 1Lt Gretta Christensen, PAO

Los Alamos, NM — Three Civil Air Patrol (CAP) cadets, C/SMSgt Jonathan Kressin, C/MSgt Victor Stearns, and C/A1C James Sheppard were promoted during a squadron meeting at Calvary Chapel—Los Alamos, on October 27, 2003. All three cadets have met the challenges of the physical fitness

program, completed the leadership laboratory and aerospace requirements, learned to drill effectively, and have properly maintained Air Force protocol during squadron meetings.

Kressin, who was promoted to Cadet Chief Master Sergeant, has been involved in the cadet program since November 2001. He is currently serving as the acting flight sergeant. He has participated in numerous squadron activities. In addition to attending two winter encampments, Kressin also served on the staff of the 2003 summer encampment held at Kirtland AFB.

Victor Stearns, an element leader, was promoted to Cadet Senior Master Sergeant. A member since August 2001, Stearns has served on the color guard, attended the 2001 Winter Encampment, and the 2002 Sallee Glider Academy in Hobbs, NM where he soloed.

The newest member of the three cadets, James Sheppard, was promoted to Cadet Senior Airman. Sheppard joined CAP in November 2002. He is a member of the color guard and honor guard teams. He will be participating in the New Mexico Wing Cadet Competition on November 8, 2003.

Civil Air Patrol buying a 'better set of eyeballs'

Air Force auxiliary names contractors for new Searchers' Edge Program
By Melanie LeMay, Public Relations Specialist, CAP NHQ

MAXWELL AFB, Ala. - Civil Air Patrol, the civilian auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, has selected two contractors to provide hyperspectral imaging sensors and a visual computing network for its missions. CAP will have these new capabilities, known as the CAP Searchers' Edge Program, in operation by late 2004 or early 2005.

Funding for the new equipment is coming from the Air Force, which has moved CAP under its Homeland Security Directorate and has been stepping up security missions for the all-volunteer, 64,000-member auxiliary.

CAP selected Innovative Technical Solutions (Tradename: NovaSol), a small Honolulu, Hawaii-based company, and The Boeing Company Autometrics Division as its contractors for Searchers' Edge. NovaSol will provide 15 hyperspectral imaging systems to be used on CAP aircraft. Boeing Autometrics will provide the software to support a visual-computing network.

According to Col. Drew Alexa, head of CAP's Advanced Technologies Group, hyperspectral-imaging technology allows a sensor on a moving aircraft to detect objects on the ground by picking up light reflected from those objects. The imaging equipment can detect both man-made and natural objects that have a known spectral "signature," or can be used to survey a scene to determine what is out of place. This form of imaging can discriminate among materials based on physical properties, depending on how light is reflected or emitted from the object. It can detect man-made objects such as a crashed aircraft and can even search for specific types of material such as marijuana plants, if the item's signature is programmed into the imaging equipment.

A visual-computing network (VCN) gives users a three-dimensional view of satellite images, making mission planning, rehearsal and performance more effective. The VCN can be used by both ground and air crews, and Alexa says both the VCN and hyperspectral imaging can enhance the auxiliary's already-efficient reconnaissance operations. "Traditionally we have flown 'low and slow' to physically eyeball the objects of our reconnaissance," Alexa said. "Hyperspectral imaging will just multiply our effectiveness by providing us with a better set of eyeballs."

"All branches of the military are interested in this technology," Alexa said. "What we're looking at first is a fairly basic form of HSI, which is effective only under conditions when light can be detected from the object of the search." That means HSI as used by CAP will work only in daylight and will not be able to pinpoint objects under the ground, underwater or buried in snow. According to CAP

Executive Director, Al Allenback, "These technologies will increase CAP's effectiveness in search and rescue, disaster relief, counterdrug, and homeland security missions. Hyperspectral imaging will allow CAP aircraft to identify an object on the ground as small as three feet in size from half a mile in the air, even if it's hidden from view by trees or bushes. With this new capability, CAP is rapidly positioning itself to become a leader in aerial imaging technology, which will be one of the most effective weapons in our nation's war on terrorism."

"This technology demonstrates CAP's commitment to the homeland security arena," said CAP National Commander Maj. Gen. Richard Bowling. "To support these purchases, we continue to look for the best possible aircraft. Currently we're purchasing Gippsland GA-8 Airvans and Cessna 182s for our aircraft fleet. With the increased capacity in these aircraft, we can carry more equipment and personnel." The \$4.2 million contract awarded to NovaSol requires the company to build and submit a hyperspectral imaging test unit to CAP prior to going into full production on the remaining 14 systems. CAP anticipates delivery of the test unit by February 2004. The Boeing contract for \$684,000 requires Autometrics to load software into 55 CAP-furnished laptop computers.

Safety Bulletin

By Col Larry Harrah, NMWGSO

As I write this bulletin, the weather has been predicted to cool substantially by the weekend! Winter weather may well follow after the unseasonably warm and very dry October. As I suggested in the October bulletin, the bird migration has started in the Rio Grand Flyway and last Saturday I spotted a large flight of sand hill cranes, let's be on the lookout! I hope that you have all inspected your vehicles, aircraft, meeting rooms and homes for the items pertinent to SAFETY in the colder weather to come! Remember that heater defects can generate the

potentially fatal carbon monoxide gas – check their integrity! Electric heaters should be evaluated for SAFE placement and hook-ups! *Editor's note: Not to steal Col Harrah's thunder but it was brought up at a recent safety briefing that **heater filters CAN BE PUT IN UPSIDE DOWN!** If the "airflow" arrow points the wrong way, it can constrict the airflow of a forced air heating system causing carbon monoxide to build up in the furnace and forcing carbon monoxide into the house. Beware!*

We are nearing the holiday season and should give a considerable amount of attention to holiday SAFETY! People do travel more during the holiday season and travel SAFETY is a must. While the birds present a hazard to flight that must be carefully considered. The birds on the road must also be a fear factor; the snowbirds and holiday loons. Don't become a statistic, plan your trips carefully and plan SAFE alternatives. During this time of year we can expect some SARs for lost hunters and holiday travelers. Let's hone our skills so that we can professionally support these SARs!

Our slogan for November may well be:

Don't Take a Holiday from Safety

Our ODM course originally scheduled for 18 October has been postponed to accommodate the necessity of combining it with the NCPSC normally held in January. No firm date has been scheduled yet but expect it in December or January. I have contemplated a Safety Officers conference in conjunction with that event so please, Safety Officers plan on attending the ODM course and the following get together to discuss our Safety Problems!

I note that the deadline for the quarterly Safety Report has passed with a majority of units not yet responding! I also note that the unit Safety Surveys are coming up in January, get busy!

Every other aircraft in the sky is trying to kill you!

By Capt John Lorenz

Not many of us would close our eyes, put a car in gear, and pull forward in a turn for any distance. Yet most pilots initiate a turn in the air before looking in the direction of the turn to clear it. Sure the odds of hitting another plane are low, but a lot of good people spend a lot of good money on lottery tickets where the chances of a hit are probably lower, and sometimes they win.

We usually get away with not looking carefully to clear a turn because the odds are indeed long, but your passenger's life should be worth, at a minimum, the effort of turning your head to take a peek. Especially in the traffic pattern. And since we operate in a three-dimensional environment, the traffic check should include looking for higher aircraft that are descending towards you as well as those below and climbing. Before a turn, lift the wing of a high-wing airplane to check for traffic in all dimensions. If in a low-wing, at least look in the turn direction to clear it. I have a friend who gives me heartburn by flying up beside me in loose formation unannounced and waving hello: it'll be a long drop to the ground if I ever turn blindly in that direction while he's there.

Most pilots start a turn without looking, and then, in high-wing aircraft, try to lean forward far enough to bend their eyeballs around the leading edge of the wing or try to stare magically through the lowered wing as if they have X-ray vision. A better technique, and one that lowers the stress level (especially during a left-hand turn where the pilot's view is most obscured with side-by-side seating), is to raise the wing briefly but well above the horizon before starting the turn, and clearing the airspace you're about to turn into. If turning more than 40-50 degrees in a congested area, it doesn't hurt to interrupt the turn, raise the wing, and look into the turn again. High wing or low wing, such wing waggling also makes you own airplane more visible to others by exposing the broad surface of the wing instead of just its

knife edge to viewers, and the wing movement is eye-catching. Military types use such wing flashes specifically to call attention to their position when several aircraft are maneuvering together. You already know how much easier it is to see an airplane that you're following in the pattern during its turn downwind to final than when you're directly behind it and it's in straight and level flight. This works for clearing turns prior to maneuvering, for course changes, and for turns in the traffic pattern. If flying a high-wing and doing a pair of 90-degree clearing turns before starting maneuvers, clear the airspace into the turn, then the scan *forward and to the opposite or raised-wing side* to clear the vista opened up by the raised wing.

Meanwhile, most traffic-pattern mid-air collisions occur between two aircraft on final, one overtaking the other. The common scenario is the low-wing aircraft, with its minimal downward visibility, descending onto a high-wing aircraft that has minimal upward visibility. Avoid this classic midair by clearing the airspace over the final approach course while flying the downwind and base legs (add it to the million and one other pre-landing duties). On base, diligently look one way to check for aircraft that may be on extended final or approaching straight in, and the other way for aircraft on short final and to make sure the runway is clear.

Maintaining a mental picture of the positions of other aircraft in the pattern through their radio calls helps immeasurably, but don't rely on it exclusively. There are legal aircraft out there without radios, and how many of us have mis-cued the radio switches and only thought we were diligently transmitting our positions in the pattern? Then there are the clowns who don't bother to use the radios they have.

The most efficient visual scanning technique requires conscientious effort: quick glances and sweep scans are worse than useless because 1) they don't work, yet 2) they give a false feeling of comfort because you've done it. They won't pick up a nearby aircraft unless it's obvious, which means it has motion against

the background or across the windshield, or that it's real close. The recommended sector scan, stopping briefly and focusing on successive segments of airspace, is more likely to pick up an aircraft that blends with the background and/or that doesn't have much obvious relative motion across the windshield. This is the dangerous traffic.

Finally, if you're trying to point out another aircraft to someone else in the cockpit, give them a distance, direction, and elevation. It's much easier to find traffic if you know whether to look for it half a mile or several miles out. The clock system still works for direction despite the brave new digital era. And it's easiest to find traffic if someone tells you whether to look for it along, above, or below the horizon. "Twelve O'clock High" is more than just the title of a great movie.



For once, it wasn't about "me"

- From an email -

I sat in my seat of the Boeing 767 waiting for everyone to hurry and stow their carry-ons and grab a seat so we could start what I was sure to be a long, uneventful flight home. With the huge capacity and slow moving people taking their time to stuff luggage far too big for the overhead and never paying much attention to holding up the growing line behind them, I simply shook my head knowing that this flight was not starting out very well. I was anxious to get home to see my loved ones so I was focused on "my" issues and just felt like standing up and yelling for some of these clowns to get their act together. I knew I couldn't say a word so I just thumbed thru the "Sky Mall" magazine from the seat pocket in front of me. You know it's really getting rough when you resort to the over priced, useless sky mall rubbish to break the monotony. With everyone finally seated, we just sat there with the cabin door open and no one in any hurry to get us going although we were well past the scheduled take off time. No wonder the airline industry is in trouble I told myself. Just then, the attendant

came on the intercom to inform us all that we were being delayed. The entire plane let out a collective groan. She resumed speaking to say "We are holding the aircraft for some very special people who are on their way to the plane and the delay shouldn't be more than 5 minutes. The word came after waiting six times as long as we were promised that "I" was finally going to be on my way home. Why the hoopla over "these" folks? I was expecting some celebrity or sport figure to be the reason for the hold up -- "just get their butts in a seat and lets hit the gas", I thought.

The attendant came back on the speaker to announce in a loud and excited voice that we were being joined by several U. S. Marines returning home from Iraq!!!

As they walked on board, the entire plane erupted into applause. The men were a bit taken by surprise by the 340 people cheering for them as they searched for their seats. They were having their hands shook and touched by almost everyone who was within an arms distance of them as they passed down the aisle. One elderly woman kissed the hand of one of the Marines as he passed by her. The applause, whistles and cheering didn't stop for a long time. When we were finally airborne, "I" was not the only civilian checking his conscience as to the delays in "me" getting home, finding my easy chair, a cold beverage and the remote in my hand. These men had done for all of us and I had been complaining silently about "me" and "my" issues. I took for granted the everyday freedoms I enjoy and the conveniences of the American way of life I took for granted others paid the price for my ability to moan and complain about a few minutes delay to "me" those Heroes going home to their loved ones.

I attempted to get my selfish outlook back in order and minutes before we landed I suggested to the attendant that she announce over the speaker a request for everyone to remain in their seats until our hero's were allowed to gather their things and be first off the plane. The cheers and applause continued until the last Marine stepped off and we all rose to go about our too often taken for

granted everyday freedoms. I felt proud of them. I felt it an honor and a privilege to be among the first to welcome them home and say *Thank You!* for a job well done. I vowed that I will never forget that flight nor the lesson learned. I can't say it enough, THANK YOU to those Veterans and active servicemen and women who may read this and a prayer for those who cannot because they are no longer with us.
God love them all.

**TO MAKE YOU SMILE
Guess where road rage
will get ya'?**

The light turns green, but the man doesn't notice. The woman waits, but the man doesn't notice the light change.

The woman begins pounding on her steering wheel and yelling at the man to move. The man doesn't move. The woman is going ballistic inside her car, ranting and raving at the man, pounding on her steering wheel and dash.

The light turns yellow. The woman begins to blow the car horn and scream curses at the man. The man, hearing the commotion, looks up, sees the yellow light and accelerates through the intersection just as the light turns red.

The woman is beside herself, screaming in frustration as she misses her chance to get through the intersection. As she is still in mid-rant she hears a tap on her window and looks up into the barrel of a gun held by a very serious looking policeman. The policeman tells her to shut off her car while keeping both hands in sight.

She complies, speechless at what is happening. After she shuts off the engine, the policeman orders her to exit her car with her hands up. She gets out of the car and he orders her to turn and place her hands on her car. She turns, places her hands on the car roof and quickly is cuffed and hustled into the patrol car.

She is too bewildered by the chain of events to ask any questions and is driven to the police station where she is fingerprinted, photographed,

searched, booked and placed in a cell. After a couple of hours, a policeman approaches the cell and opens the door for her.

She is escorted back to the booking desk where the original officer is waiting with her personal effects. He hands her the bag containing her things, and says, "I'm really sorry for this mistake. But you see I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your horn and cussing a blue streak at the car in front of you. Then I noticed the "Choose Life" license plate holder and the 'Follow Me to Sunday School' bumper sticker and the chrome plated Christian fish emblem on the trunk, so naturally I assumed you had stolen the car."

NEW MEXICO WING CALENDAR

- *Always subject to change* -

NOVEMBER

8 NMWg Staff Mtg & CC Call-Wing HQ
8 NMWg Cadet Competition-KAFB
14-17 SAR/DR/HLS Exercise-Las Cruces
22-23 NMWg Aircrew Training-Wing HQ

DECEMBER

1 CAP's 62nd Anniversary
6 NMWg Staff Mtg & CC Call-Wing HQ
6 NMWg Senior Christmas Party-KAFB
6 NM Wg Cadet Christmas Party-TBA
20-21 CN Exercise-Albuquerque
26-31 NMWg Cadet Winter
Encampment-KAFB

JANUARY

10 NMWg Staff Mtg & CC Call-Wing HQ
17-18 Natl Check Pilot
Standardization Course-SAF
23-26 SAR/DR/HLS Exercise-Alamogordo

FEBRUARY

7-8 Squadron Leadership School &
Corporate Learning Course-Wing HQ
14 NMWg Staff Mtg & CC Call- Wing
HQ
20-23 SAR/DR/HLS Exercise-
Roswell

**Just one person saying to me, "You've
made my day!" makes my day**

Andy Rooney

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27th !

G'day