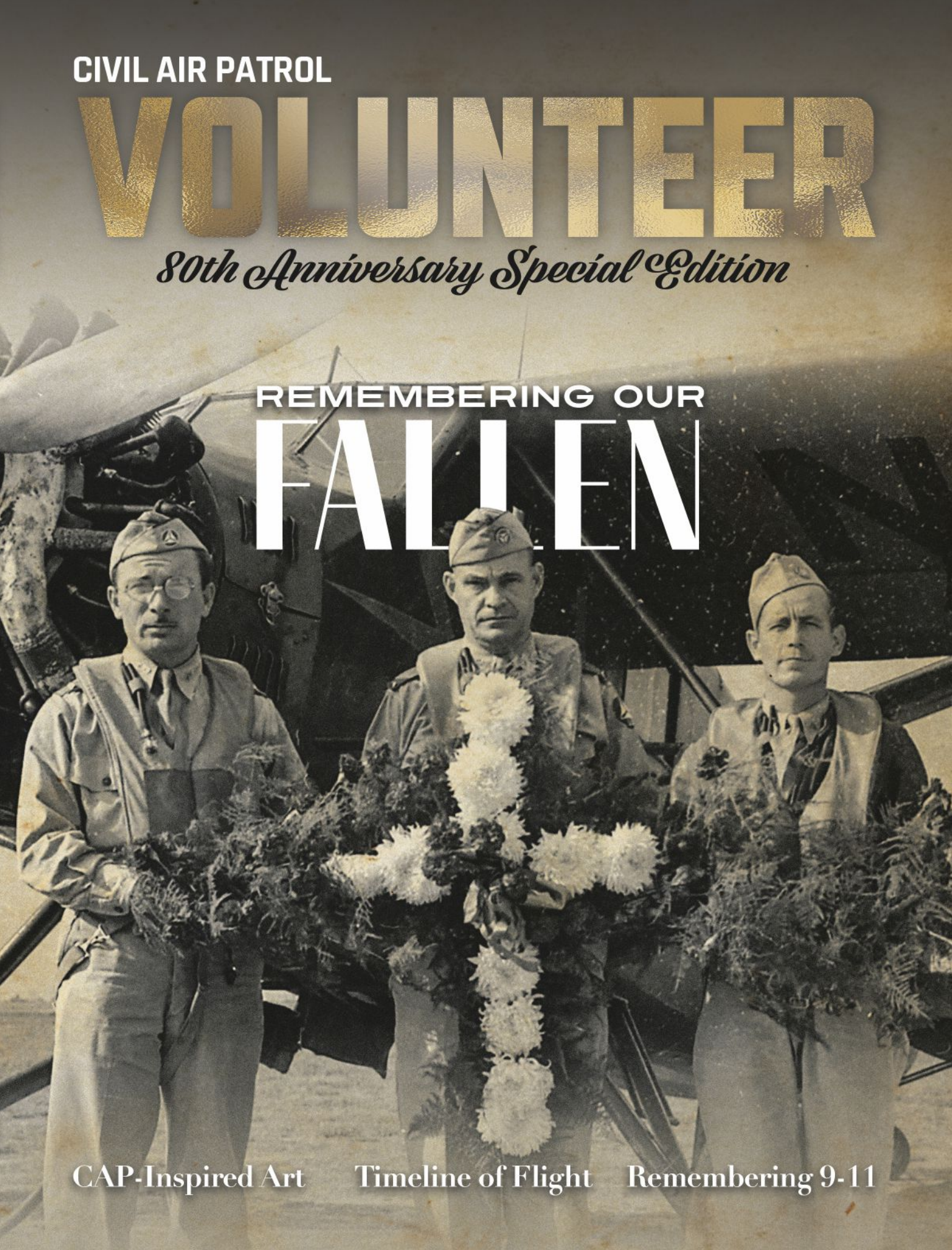
CIVIL AIR PATROL

VOLUNTEER

80th Anniversary Special Edition



REMEMBERING OUR FALLEN

CAP-Inspired Art Timeline of Flight Remembering 9-11

New York Squadron Excels Despite Pandemic

By Jennifer Gerhardt



Members of the New York Wing's Westchester Cadet Squadron 1 pose for a group photo during a recent meeting. The unit was selected as Civil Air Patrol's Squadron of Distinction for 2020.

People join Civil Air Patrol for many reasons. For Capt. Jennifer C. Moon, becoming a senior member was a way to participate in her son's journey through the cadet program and support his squadron, too.

"A successful squadron depends on a team of dedicated adults," Moon said. "Incredibly welcoming and inclusive, I knew Westchester Cadet Squadron 1 was the right squadron for my family."

Inspired by the enthusiasm and dedication of her predecessor as squadron commander, Maj. Kathy Torres, and her husband, Capt. Harry Torres, Moon learned the true meaning of CAP's core value of excellence after joining the organization in January 2015.

She then took those lessons and made sure squadron members achieved excellence in many different ways.

Collaborating with a nonprofit, the Westchester squadron held a grant competition for aviation and aviation careers and space careers, as well as small Unmanned Aircraft Systems engineering and flying. That led to Air Cadet grants for seven cadets, Space Cadet

grants for four, and sUAS cadet grants for two more.

The squadron's space program was the next avenue for excellence. The program began with training for the cadets leading the project. They participated in an intensive eight-week engineering program to prepare for their balloon fleet to meet specific milestones.

Cadets were divided into four teams: balloon systems, payload systems, recovery and tracking systems, and Mission Control command. Each team worked with cadets to design, plan, and model, using software, the performance of each balloon system and each mission. The Mission Control team managed the goals and achievements of the other teams. Each team presented a briefing to the entire squadron, hoping to recruit other cadets to join their team and take on their tasks.

Once everyone was trained, the launch was planned for November 2020. Cadets assembled and tested the pico balloon payload, tested the tracking system, checked weather and the jet stream, and carefully filled the balloons. Under the Mission Control team, they executed the launch.

For the next 22 days, a designated team tracked the balloon's journey around the world and shared telemetry data and the balloon's path each day. The balloon circumnavigated the globe almost twice at speeds up to 150 mph.

The squadron also sponsored Training Leaders of Cadets basic and intermediate courses for the New York Wing's South East Group. The program trains adult leaders for the squadron's youth development program.

"In TLC, cadet program officers learn how to become better mentors of cadets and more effective managers of cadet squadrons," Moon said. "We are very fortunate our squadron has more adult leaders than most other units in the New York Wing. My role was to provide instructors for the TLC courses who would teach adult members from other squadrons in our group."

During the pandemic, the squadron held Zoom meetings and video presentations, conducted cadet activities online, made and donated cloth masks and filters, and assisted at COVID-19 vaccine distribution centers. Field trips were structured differently with squadron alumni visiting cadets.

The squadron totally reorganized the squadron flight structure to ensure every cadet was receiving proper training and experiences. All beginning cadets were grouped in a single flight to provide Airman Training School curriculum, cadet noncommissioned officers were in a flight to provide NCO Leadership School curriculum, and all Phase III officers were assigned training duties with the two schools. The senior cadets managed the concurrent operation of the Airman Training and NCO Leadership schools. That arrangement helped produce highly motivated cadets who excelled in their studies, with everyone operating on the same 56-day promotion schedule.

All the activities aside, Moon feels one thing makes the squadron truly special — "its culture of inclusivity and diversity."

"It is not only a source of pride, but also one of our greatest strengths," she said. ▲



Capt. Jennifer C. Moon is commander of the New York Wing's Westchester Cadet Squadron 1 — Civil Air Patrol's Squadron of Distinction for 2020. As commander of the unit since 2018, Moon is the recipient of the F. Ward Reilly Leadership Award.

"One of the less obvious factors contributing to the squadron's success is its culture of inclusivity and diversity. It is not only a source of pride, but also one of our greatest strengths."
— Capt. Jennifer C. Moon