

TITLE: Civil Air Patrol-Squadron 508 Collection

DATE RANGE: 1952-2003

CALL NUMBER: Y-MS 1

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: .75 linear feet (2 boxes)

PROVENANCE: Donated by James Gillaspie, 2004

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CREDIT LINE: Civil Air Patrol-Squadron 508 Collection, Arizona Historical Society-Rio Colorado Division

PROCESSED BY: Linda Whitaker, February 2013

HISTORICAL NOTE:

The Civil Air Patrol (CAP) was founded December 1, 1941 under the Office of Civil Defense to mobilize the civilian airmen of the country with their airplanes and equipment for wartime .The CAP Cadet Program was founded a year later.

From 1942-1943, CAP was called upon to patrol both coasts and perform anti-submarine work. During that time it logged over 24,000,000 miles, spotted 173 submarines and located hundreds of survivors of downed military aircraft and sinking ships. These low level, single engine flights were dangerous, often venturing 100 miles or from land. Twenty-six pilots lost their lives.

In 1946, President Harry Truman established CAP as a “federally chartered benevolent civilian corporation.” Public Law 557, passed in 1948, charged CAP with three primary missions: aerospace education, cadet programs and emergency services. With the passage of Public Law 106-398 in October 2000, Congress provided that the Civil Air Patrol is a volunteer civilian auxiliary of the Air Force when the services of the Civil Air Patrol are used by any department or agency in any branch of the federal government.

Today, CAP conducts 90% of all inland search and rescue efforts; performs aerial reconnaissance for homeland security; flies border patrols on narcotics trafficking; provides disaster relief; and transports time-sensitive medical supplies, blood and body tissue when commercial flights are unavailable. The Cadet Program offers a wide range of activities including ground school and flight instruction for youth and college scholarships in aerospace.

Unlike the early founders, many of whom flew their own airplanes and performed life-threatening missions without any formal training, the 60,000+ CAP members are now

provided with year-round professional development training and with aircraft equipped with the most advanced technologies available for search and rescue.

The history of Squadron 508 in Yuma mirrors that of the national organization. During WWII it flew thousands of hours towing gunnery targets, tracking for guns and searchlights, and patrolling the U.S.-Mexico border. Since the 1990s, Squadron 508 has conducted border patrol missions to monitor narcotics trafficking. It has won numerous awards and national recognition for its search and rescue work.

Sources: <http://yuma508.webs.com/> and <http://www.gocivilairpatrol.com/>

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE:

No series. Arranged according to the titles on five original notebooks “Civil Air Patrol Squadron 508 Historical Record 1941-2001+.” The contents reflect the order in which the documents were found. The materials are in excellent condition. However, the news clippings had deteriorated significantly and were copied to improve access.

Highlights of this collection include: official reports, debriefings, news clippings and correspondence related to search and rescue missions; documentation related to border intelligence flights for U.S. Customs; flight plans and logs; rosters of senior members and cadets; pilot training and certifications; aircraft maintenance records; military correspondence, rules and regulations; newsletters and a few photographs.

CONTAINER LIST:

Box	Folder	Title	Dates
1	1	“Historical Record 1941-1959” Correspondence (includes early history and chronology of Squadron 508) 1 of 4	1952-2004
	2	“Historical Record 1941-1959” Correspondence 2 of 4	1952-1960
	3	“Historical Record 1941-1959” Wing Tips (newsletter) 3 of 4	1954-1957
	4	“Historical Record 1941-1959” Civil Air Patrol Encampment 4 of 4	1957-1959
	5	“Historical Record 1960-1969” Correspondence 1 of 5	1960-1969
	6	“Historical Record 1960-1969” Correspondence 2 of 5	1960-1969
	7	“Historical Record 1960-1969” Correspondence (includes photos) 3 of 5	1960-1969
	8	“Historical Record 1960-1969” Western Air Rescue Center; Civil Air Patrol Southwest Regional Conference 4 of 5	1969-1970
	9	“Historical Record 1960-1969” Correspondence (includes photos)	1960-1969

		5 of 5	
2	1	“Historical Record 1970-1979” Correspondence 1 of 2	1970-1979
	2	“Historical Record 1970-1979” Correspondence (includes newsletters and photos) 2 of 2	1970-1979
	3	“Historical Record 1980-2000” Correspondence 1 of 4	1980-2000
	4	“Historical Record 1980-2000” Correspondence 2 of 4	1980-2000
	5	“Historical Record 1980-2000” Correspondence 3 of 4	1980-2000
	6	“Historical Record 1980-2000” Correspondence 4 of 4	1980-2000
	7	“Historical Record 2001+” Correspondence	2001-2003
	8	Plaque: Maj. Ruben Acosta, for more than 60 years of service (joined CAP December 1, 1941	2002