



# The Fly-By

A Quarterly Newsletter of the  
**Southwest Region**  
October, 2008



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## ***Hurricane Season Keeps SWR Busy***

During September, Hurricanes Gustav and Ike kept SWR Wings quite busy. Gustav threatened to make landfall as a very powerful storm, but on 1 September it hit the Louisiana coast near Cocodrie as a strong category 2 (1 mph short of category 3), causing an estimated \$15 billion in damages to the state's southern area. The good news is that the levees in New Orleans, repaired since Katrina and Rita, held. However, Louisiana soon was without electrical power in most of the state, and torrential rains caused extensive flooding. Lesser damage was inflicted upon Texas and Arkansas.

Hurricane Ike proved an elusive and capricious traveler. It reached category 4 strength in the Gulf of Mexico, after having devastated much of Cuba, without a clear landing target as it kept changing direction. Eventually, less than two weeks after Gustav, Ike made landfall in Texas on the east end of Galveston, causing an estimated \$27 billion in damages, the fourth costliest in history. The strongest storm of the 2008 season, Hurricane Ike was preceded by a surge of up to 20' high waters that affected a coastal area spanning Corpus Christi to New Orleans. Almost immediately, nearly 3 million customers in Houston alone were without electrical power. Flooding over the entire area was a commonplace.

Ike's rain fell mostly to the east of the hurricane's path, drenching East Texas and Louisiana. Thanks to timely evacuation, potentially heavy fatalities were kept down, but many people in the Galveston/Houston area were rendered homeless. As Ike had approached the mainland, Louisiana Wing was still flying damage assessment photo reconnaissance missions in Gustav's aftermath. After Ike moved past Texas and into Louisiana and Arkansas, CAP damage assessment flights multiplied, generating 33,999 high-resolution images, posted at <http://magic.csr.utexas.edu/Storm/08ike/imageryNOAA.php>. A small sampling of CAP photos from Texas and Louisiana has been posted on CAP's national Web site at [http://www.cap.gov/visitors/news/2008\\_hurricane\\_season/ike\\_photos/](http://www.cap.gov/visitors/news/2008_hurricane_season/ike_photos/).

Both Gustav and Ike had been expected to disrupt oil production and refining capacity, but this failed to materialize. Damage remediation and reconstruction, though, will take some time. CAP volunteers in SWR have risen to the challenge, and continue to provide a valuable and necessary service to the community, their states, and the nation.

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## ***Texas Wing Gets the Job Done***

BROOKS CITY-BASE, Texas – On 14 September, Texas Wing has gathered air and ground assets from all over Texas, expecting to be tasked with taking aerial photographs of the coastal area extensively damaged by Hurricane Ike. The Incident Commander is Lt. Col. Gwynn Groggel. As the sorties to be launched survey the area, they will report any people in distress to the authorities. As the mission starts, several agencies have requested these services for an indefinite period of time. Louisiana, just recovering from the effects of Hurricane Gustav, also suffered the effects of Hurricane Ike, though to a lesser extent than Texas.

STINSON MISSION BASE, Texas – On 15 September, as the mission was activated, damage assessment work started in earnest. This San Antonio base would be home to Texas Wing operations until 17 September, when it would move permanently to Houston. From the onset, the mission decided to evaluate the Spot Tracker system that uses GPS technology. In conjunction with computer-based mapping software, this setup can give the near-real-time positioning of a number of simultaneous sorties.

This way, help would be sent to people in distress with minimum radio traffic. By 16 September, the CAP flight crews have taken in excess of 3,000 high resolution images of the ravaged coastal area.

WEST HOUSTON MISSION BASE, Texas – With electrical power restored to the area, operations moved from San Antonio to Houston, significantly shortening the distance from mission base to the target areas. The Incident Commander is Lt. Col. Brooks Cima. On average, nine air sorties have been aloft simultaneously, working a grueling sunup to sundown schedule. It has become apparent that the photo reconnaissance effort in support of Hurricane Ike damage assessment might become the most massive such operation ever attempted by any non-military organization. *(At right, Lt. Col. Jack Jackson, Texas Wing Vice Commander, with President George W. Bush at the Texas SOC. Photo: CAP)*



By 22 September, 173 CAP senior members and cadets have volunteered, contributing 3,250 man-hours to the mission. At any one time, 55 to 60 volunteers are on duty. There are 20 aircraft flying in and out of mission base, so that eight to ten are available for the job every day. That's how the mission has been able to mount 10 to 15 daily sorties, accumulating the 142 sorties flown as of this day.

Ground teams are busy too, finding their way to the seemingly endless radio signals from the Emergency Positioning Indicating Radio Beacons on the boats piled up, helter-skelter, along the shore. Their job is to turn off the beacons. There are also many Emergency Locator Transmitters in airplanes stacked up on Galveston Island and other places along the coast. These, too, must be switched off. The relentless heat makes the work harder.

An estimated 18,500 very-high-definition photographs have been taken thus far. For the Houston ABC affiliate's TV coverage of Hurricane Ike, please visit <http://abclocal.go.com/ktrk/video?id=6404441>

By 23 September, FEMA asks the CAP team to photograph enough of east Texas to outline the damage wrought by Hurricane Ike to the coastal area. This is a monumental task that CAP volunteers have resolved to finish, no matter how long it takes. By the end of the day, aircrews have taken a total of 24,361 photos. "And we still have Wednesday, Thursday and Friday to go," said Lt Col Brooks Cima.

On 24 September, Texas Wing's Group III Commander, Lt. Col. Owen Younger, has been the Incident Commander for the previous two days, while Lt. Col. Brooks Cima and Lt. Col. Dennis Cima take a two-day break. "We never know exactly where a hurricane will hit or who will be affected, so we maintain a high state of readiness," said Lt. Col. Younger. After a moment of reflection he added, "The Civil Air Patrol is proud to have the opportunity to serve our community, state and nation in its time of need." That pride is reflected in the quality of work carried out by CAP members.

Today only one ground team has gone out, but the aircrews have been much busier. "There are four still up, out of sixteen sorties today," said Maj. Paul Nelson near the end of the day. This evening, one of those flights will take the day's collection of storm damage photos to the Texas State Operations Center in Austin, where they will be processed.

The highlight of the day was a visit from Texas Governor Rick Perry, on a tour with various officials, to see for himself the extent of the damage.

On 25 September, more planes and aircrews are rotated. Arkansas and Oklahoma aircrews will return home, and planes from west Texas will begin arriving this afternoon. New Mexico Wing has been ready too, but not called. As of yesterday, CAP has completed 313 missions for FEMA and the state of Texas. Over 26,000 photos of Galveston and Houston areas have been taken, and more requests are pouring in from towns in the affected area. Ground teams have gone out in search of Emergency Locator Transmitters on Galveston Island; they will turn them off if they can reach them. CAP planes are flying 6 to 9 hours a day. Some of the sorties carry FEMA personnel to selected areas for aerial observation; others transport assets from maintenance facilities back to mission base.

It is now 26 September, and the latest photo count stands at 27,536, filling 99 gigabytes of storage. Second Lieutenant James Moody manages the collecting and forwarding of this daily data stream. "We're

sending photos not only to the Texas State Operation Center but to FEMA, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Harris County Emergency Operations Center and other requesting agencies," he says. CAP NHQ has posted the following on its website, "The digital aerial images taken by the aircrews are being stored on a public Web site, <http://magic.csr.utexas.edu/Storm/08ike/Imagery.php> (click on the "Maps" link at the top). A sampling of the photos also has been posted on CAP's national Web site. They can be assessed at [http://www.cap.gov/visitors/news/2008\\_hurricane\\_season/ike\\_photos/](http://www.cap.gov/visitors/news/2008_hurricane_season/ike_photos/)

By 27 September, the work pace has yet to slacken. CAP volunteers continue to perform at peak level, as ground teams find and silence emergency radio beacons, helping in whatever way they can. The aircrews have been ferrying officials and carrying supplies, in addition to taking yet more photos of the damage wrought by Hurricane Ike. So far, 212 men, women and cadets have worked 13 days for a total of 18,793 man-hours, using 22 aircraft, 21 vans and 10 Nikon D200 cameras in 340 sorties to acquire an astounding 31,417 high-definition photographs. These record the entire width and length of the coastal damage done by Hurricane Ike in Texas. From CAP's Southwest Region, two planes and crews from Oklahoma, and two more from Arkansas have contributed to the mission, but most of the work has been done by Texas volunteers.

Already, the photo collection is by far the largest ever accomplished by a civilian organization. Gov. Perry, the Texas legislature, and many Harris County offices are using it to facilitate their plans for recovery. Other customers are the National Weather Service, NOAA, Homeland Security and FEMA. The assembled photo-mosaics were shown to our Commander-in-Chief at the morning briefing during his visit to the Texas SOC. This amazing record might well be used for years.

Before the hurricane hit, 1.2 million people had evacuated the threatened coastal area of Texas. CAP's current customer is the Harris County EOC and Judge Ed Emmett, focusing on images of damaged homes. Hurricane Ike, that damaged an area equal to that of the entire State of New Jersey, triggered the largest search and rescue mission in history. By the end of Saturday, 27 September, CAP had taken 33,999 photos (requiring 121.91 GB of storage space). Although the client agencies were surprised at the uniformly high quality of the images, 46.84% of the photographers were first-timers, most of whom had attended a Wing or Squadron camera training course. Each CAP sortie took an average of 430 images.

*Maj. Robert Brecount, Information Officer*

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### **PAO Academy and National Boards Conference, 5-10 August**

KISSIMMEE, Fla. – On this second year of the PAO Academy, the emphasis was on training and planning. As a result of the comments and evaluations gathered in 2007 and in post-evaluation queries, some of the hands-on training sessions were divided into "basic" and "advanced" streams, with excellent results. Many wings were represented by squadron members, who profited from the basic presentations. Some Wing PAOs, too, attended the basic courses as a means to update their own knowledge in an effort to better support their subordinate units.

As in 2007, the Interim National Commander, Brig. Gen. Amy S. Courter, was very much involved in the proceedings and presided the presentation of awards at the Wednesday Awards Ceremony. This year, CNN correspondent Miles O'Brien delivered the keynote address. Southwest Region award winners were Capt. Jerry Porter, Arizona Wing (2 awards); 2nd Lt. Norman D. Reames, New Mexico Wing PAO; and Capt. Arthur E. Woodgate, SWR DPA (2 awards).

The event everyone was waiting for, however, was the election of CAP's Commander and Vice-Commander. It came as no surprise that Brig. Gen. Amy S. Courter was confirmed as the new National Commander.





Later in the day, Col. Reggie Chitwood was elected the new Vice-Commander. That evening, they were promoted to Major General and Brigadier General, respectively.

The breakout sessions had something for everyone. The presentation on PA Planning was thorough, stressing the 4-step planning process that is a recognized business standard. CAP, as a business (even though not-for-profit), and the official auxiliary of the USAF, first required that all units prepare a Public Affairs Plan and a Crisis Communications Plan when the new CAPR 190-1 was published on 4 June 2007. The PA Plans will be considered living documents to be reviewed at least semi-annually (preferably quarterly) and updated, added to, or revised as often as necessary.



SWR DCS Cadet Programs/DDR Lt. Col. Steven Trupp, SWR Deputy Commander East Col. André Davis and his guest Carol Anne, SWR Chief of Staff Lt. Col. Larry Mattiello and his guest Letitia, and Louisiana Wing Commander Col. Mike DuBois and his guest Cathy.

During this event, The posting of a new Public Affairs Officer Toolkit was also announced, [http://www.cap.gov/visitors/members/public\\_affairs/pa\\_toolkit/toolkit\\_contents/](http://www.cap.gov/visitors/members/public_affairs/pa_toolkit/toolkit_contents/) emphasizing the PA Planning Guidelines: "Writing Your Crisis Communications Plan" and "Writing your PA Plan." The PAO Toolkit can be downloaded in its entirety at the CAP Channel [http://www.capchannel.com/pao\\_downloads](http://www.capchannel.com/pao_downloads) site. Approximately 100 PAOs attended the Academy.

Opportunities to network with old friends and meet new ones abounded, and some very productive high-level planning took place as well. All Region DPAs attended the Conference, and there were many Wing PAOs as well. National's top-tier PA staff was there too. The result was a series of highly productive talks and pre-planning, establishing the parameters for optimal corporate growth and development.

Starting this year, the PAO Academy will be held every two years (2010's will take place in San Diego, in conjunction with the National Boards Conference). Since some potential attendees couldn't do so because of distance and/or cost considerations, it was proposed that Regions hold local PAO Academies on the off-year.

As always, the banquet was a perfect occasion for networking, as well as for rewarding those most deserving. The chosen location was excellent, and the weather perfect.

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### **Southwest Region Staff College**



The latest class of SWRSC students graduated on 19 July, 2008. Taught at Kirtland AFB, the student body included members from Arizona, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas Wings, as well as one member from Nevada Wing. Lt. Col. Sharon Lane was the course director.

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### **Safety is Priority One**

Please check the revised CAPR 62-1 and CAPP 217 that are now posted at [www.cap.gov/pubs](http://www.cap.gov/pubs)

- Safety must be on every CAP member's mind, at all times.
- Before engaging in any CAP activity, a safety briefing must be conducted.
- Monthly, members must read The Sentinel and follow its timely advice.  
<http://level2.cap.gov/documents/Sentinel.pdf>
- **Safety is our Number One Priority.**

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### **Cadet News**

For the first time ever, the Air Force Space Command Familiarization Course (Florida), a National Cadet Special Activity, was reported by cadet PAOs. Both of them members of Texas Wing, their work has been posted on the activity's website, <http://www.afspsc.org/afspsc/content/news.asp>

Congratulations to the Arizona Wing Drill Team, for having won first place in the National Competition.

Congratulations to the 115<sup>th</sup> Composite Squadron, Arkansas Wing for having won the SWR Color Guard Competition and placed 2<sup>nd</sup> overall at the National Competition.