



# Civil Air Patrol

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**Winchester Composite Squadron  
December 14, 2009**

## **News Release**

**POC: Christopher Colvin, Captain, CAP**  
**Phone: (540) 667-2601**  
**E-mail: [cpcolvin@live.com](mailto:cpcolvin@live.com)**

### **Banquet Features Dual Change of Command / Aviation Pioneer**

Winchester, VA – The members of the Winchester Composite Squadron During recently held their year-end dining out and honored the service squadron members. At the close of the banquet a dual change of command ceremony was presided over by Virginia Wing Commander, Colonel David Carter. The first ceremony was the appointment of Captain Christopher Colvin as the new squadron commander replacing the outgoing commander, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Gittins.

The second ceremony featured the appointment of Cadet Second Lieutenant Chris Colvin as the new cadet commander replacing Cadet Captain Israel Groves. This was a unique change of command insofar as a father and son were appointed on the same night for the same squadron. The many success and contributions made by Lt Colonel Charles Gittins and Cadet Commander, Cadet Captain Israel Groves were lauded by the one hundred person audience.

Normally a dual change of command would be the highlight of a dining out evening but in this case, the change of command was overshadowed keynote speaker, Colonel Mary Feik.

Colonel Feik began to tune aircraft engines and military aircraft by age of 18. She continued her passion by teaching aircraft maintenance to crew chiefs and mechanics for the U.S. Army Air Force in 1942. During WWII, she became an expert on many military aircraft and is credited with becoming the first woman engineer in research and development in the Air Technical Service Command's Engineering Division at Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio. Colonel Feik flew more than 5,000 hours as a B-29 flight engineer, engineering observer, and pilot in fighter, attack, bomber, cargo, and training aircraft.

She designed high-performance and jet fighter pilot transition trainers as well as aircraft maintenance trainers. She has authored pilot training operational manuals for many of the military aircraft and reports in engineering and the physical sciences for distribution throughout the armed forces.

Colonel Feik retired from the National Air and Space Museum Paul E. Garber Restoration Facility as a Restoration Specialist but continues to restore antique and classic aircraft. She has had a life-long dedication to aviation education with the U.S. Air Force, the Civil Air Patrol, and other aviation

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organizations. She has received numerous awards and recognition for her life-time of accomplishments and continues to conduct speaking engagements across the nation.

CAP responds day or night when planes are overdue and emergency locator transmitters go off. Its volunteers perform 90 percent of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions, as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center, and were credited by the AFRCC with saving ninety-one lives in fiscal year 2008.

The Civil Air Patrol provides disaster relief during hurricanes, floods, wildfires, earthquakes, tornados and countless other emergencies. In addition, members perform homeland security and counterdrug missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies.

CAP plays a leading role in aerospace education and mentors more than 23,000 young Americans through its cadet program. By partnering with 900 educators nationwide, members nurture the talents of generations of the nation's sons and daughters with cadet programs that stress leadership and moral responsibility and teach aviation and emergency response skills.

For more information about the Winchester Composite Squadron, please visit [merva040.org](http://merva040.org).

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