



Civil Air Patrol

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**Winchester Composite Squadron
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News Release

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CAP UNIT ATTENDS D-DAY CERMONY, MEETS D-DAY VETERAN

June 5, 2010- Winchester, VA – Members from the Winchester Composite Squadron were invited to attend the 66th Anniversary of Day ceremony held at the National Guard Cherry-Beasley Readiness Center in Winchester, Virginia. The Readiness Center, which opened last year, is named after two fallen soldiers from the war in Afghanistan.

With veterans dating back to World War II history came to life in front of the dozen or so members from the Winchester Composite Squadron. An especially memorable moment when retired Warrant Officer, Charles Lillis, who was on the beach at Normandy sixty six years ago, took the time to speak with the members of the squadron. "It kind-of brought tears to my eyes because I have to think of all the people I have served with that are no longer here," says WWII Veteran Charles Lillis who was eager to shake the hands of the cadets.

"D-Day marked the beginning of the end of World War II and the re-emergence of the promises of democracy and freedom," wrote John O. Marsh, Jr., in a Richmond Times Dispatch editorial. "Many Virginians may have forgotten, and many may never have known, that the 29th National Guard Division consisting of men from Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia was the only Guard unit selected to participate in the initial invasion of France at Normandy on that pivotal day in June of 1944."

Marsh, a World War II veteran, served in the Virginia National Guard and retired as a lieutenant colonel. He served as the Secretary of the Army between 1981 and 1989 and also served in the House of Representatives from Virginia from 1963 to 1971.

"The spirit of the heroes of D-Day lives on in the men and women who form the 116th of today," Marsh wrote. "They come from the same Virginia communities, train in the same armories and are displaying similar dedication and courage by fighting for freedom and democracy in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. On this coming D-Day, we should celebrate the sacrifices of these young men and women and their families even as we remember with profound gratitude the sacrifices of the men who fought and died at Omaha."

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To top off the day as the cadets were leaving the ceremony two Army Blackhawk helicopters flew in formation and landed a short distance away which was an exciting end to a memorable day for members of the Winchester Composite Squadron.

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.