



## NCR Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Cultural Observances, Awareness Information and Events

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### Women's History Month Women of North Central Region

#### Colonel Sheila Waldorf

Iowa Wing Commander  
1996 - 1998

Central Region Commander  
1998 - 2002

The 1958 school year was winding down, and the student sitting at the desk across from me asked if I would like to learn how to fly. It sounded like something I might like to do. Within two months later, I was a Civil Air Patrol cadet member here in Iowa. That began a most exciting and fulfilling adventure.

While helping with fellow cadets as a cadet officer, I learned that I loved teaching. So, I earned bachelor's and master's degrees in education. During the next thirty years, I taught at secondary and community college institutions, retiring as the Dean of Vocational Education at Southeastern Community College in West Burlington, Iowa.

Through the years, Civil Air Patrol offered the opportunity to work with dedicated volunteers in challenging and rewarding activities. I served as a commander of the composite squadron where I joined in 1958 (Burlington), the wing (Iowa) and the region (North Central). Between command assignments, I worked seventeen years on the staff of the National Staff College, which was great fun. I stayed active after the command assignments by becoming a member of the National Inspector General Corps as an inspector on compliance inspections.

All in all, my six and half decades in CAP have been quite an adventure, even though I never took the time to learn how to fly!

#### Colonel Mary Donley

South Dakota Wing Commander  
2001 - 2005

I first heard about Civil Air Patrol while helping my Girl Scout Troop at an event at the Sioux Falls Airport in October 1967. There were a whole bunch of young men, in uniform, helping with loading and unloading the airplanes. My friend got super excited about the program when they said girls can join too! So, she dragged me to a few meetings and we joined. She stayed a member for about a year and here I am 57 years later still going strong!

I joke that I joined for "the boys," but in reality it was the leadership opportunities, the friendships I made and the overall confidence I gained as I progressed in the program—eventually earning my Billy Mitchell Award. As a cadet, I am proud of being the commander of our all-female drill team that won Wing and North Central Region Drill Competitions three years in a row—there was no National Competition at the time.

At age 21, I made the decision to turn senior member and continue working with the cadets in my home squadron—Sioux Falls Cadet Squadron. In time, I became the Squadron Commander later transferring to wing becoming Director of Cadet Program for many years. I took over Wing Personnel and Senior Training. In 2001 our wing commander had to step down and no one else was stepping up—at least no one that was qualified—so I became South Dakota Wing Commander from 2001-2005. I ran the North Central Region Staff College from 1999-2013 and again in 2018. After my time as wing commander, I went back to being the wing Professional Development Officer and that is my current duty assignment.

Those formative cadet years helped me during my 40 years as an elementary school teacher and in just about every aspect of my life. I try to instill this into the cadets I work with as a Character Development Instructor in the wing: take advantage of all that the program has to offer!

Lt Col Bonnie Braun  
NCR Diversity Officer