

TWICE AS NICE

By Steve Cox

For the second straight year, Civil Air Patrol is CyberChamp



Cadet Senior Master Sgt. Chris Vasquez, Colorado Spring Cadet Squadron Wolfpack team captain, beams with pride while holding the Commander-in-Chief's Cup at the awards banquet held on the evening of the competition. He is joined by his fellow team members, from left, Cadet Chief Master Sgt. Kyal Lanum, Cadet Airman Basic Stephen Parish, Cadet Senior Airman Christopher Ottesen, Senior Member John Parish and Cadet 2nd Lt. Carlin Idle.

Like all good cybersleuths, the members of the Colorado Springs Cadet Squadron's Wolfpack played on their team experience and a little bit of luck to capture the 2012 Commander-in-Chief's Cup.

Presentation of the trophy, given to the top military service team in the Air Force Association's CyberPatriot IV finals showdown in late

Photo courtesy of the Air Force Association

March, was the second straight for Civil Air Patrol. Last year, a team of cadets from three central Florida units hoisted the cup after CyberPatriot III.

“These young men and women represent America’s next generation of cyber defenders,” said CAP National Commander Maj. Gen. Chuck Carr, who was on hand for the championship round held during the CyberFutures Conference and Technology Exposition held in National Harbor, Md., down the Potomac River from Washington, D.C. “It was my honor, along with Secretary of the U.S. Air Force Michael Donley, to watch CAP’s teams on such a national platform. They all performed at a very high level, ensuring CAP has a seat at the cybersecurity table for years to come.”

“I am especially proud of the CAP team coaches who, as unpaid professionals, volunteer to mentor our cadets year-round,” he added.

During the daylong event, the Colorado Springs cadets and their 11 competitors in the All Service Division — three teams from other CAP squadrons, as well as two each from the U.S. Air Force, Army, Navy and Marine Corps Junior ROTCs — also participated in a cyber forensics challenge new to the finals that involved looking over a mock crime scene for evidence.

Afterward, the teams worked for five hours to fend off computer attacks and hackers from a professional aggressor team, shutting down pop-ups and locking out key loggers (those who covertly track the keys struck on a remote keyboard in order to glean the information being typed on-screen) to keep their competition website systems running smoothly.

It was the second straight year the team from Colorado Springs has competed in the CyberPatriot’s championship round. That experience played “a very big role” in the outcome of this year’s competition, said Cadet Senior Master Sgt. and team captain Chris Vasquez, a three-year CyberPatriot veteran.

“We kind of knew more of what to expect the second time around.”

The Wolfpack’s reliance on the basics of cybersecurity also helped, said team coach Capt. Bill Blatchley. “Throughout the year, I was always stressing the checklists and the fundamentals,” he said, which seemed to pay off toward the end of the competition, when teams weren’t allowed to use customized tools. “I’m thinking many teams had well-developed automation. We weren’t reliant on automation.”

Even then, winning was “a surprise,” Vasquez said. “We had no idea we were going to win.”

When the winner was announced, “all our hearts were pounding,” he said.

“This year’s team has set the bar, and hopefully it will keep interest going, not only in my unit but also the Colorado Wing and the rest of CAP,” said Lt. Col. Jeff Mueller, the winning team’s squadron commander. “It is an exciting opportunity for our cadets to continue to show how they will be the future leaders of our great nation.”

In addition to the trophy, Vasquez and his teammates – Cadet 2nd Lt. Carlin Idle, Cadet Chief Master Sgt.

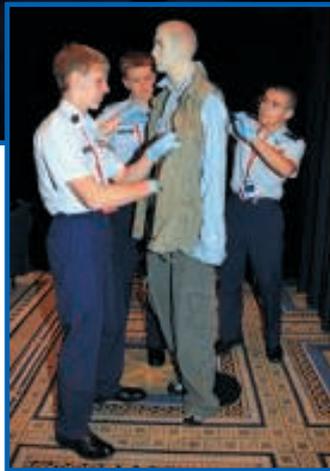


Photo by John Swain, CAP National Headquarters

Four of the Colorado Spring Cadet Squadron’s Wolfpack members – from left, Cadet 2nd Lt. Carlin Idle, Cadet Chief Master Sgt. Kyal Lanum, Cadet Airman Basic Stephen Parish and Senior Member John Parish – concentrate on the task at hand during CyberPatriot IV.



From left, Big Sioux Composite Squadron teammates Cadet 2nd Lt. Daniel Klosterman, Cadet Senior Master Sgt. James Skon, Cadet Staff Sgt. Tyler Gross and Cadet 2nd Lt. Josh Klosterman confer during the cyber forensics portion of the national competition. Not visible is Cadet Chief Master Sgt. Simon Pulscher, the fifth member of the team, which took top honors for their work, inset. Working the cyber crime scene and interrogating the “suspect,” from left, are Pulscher, Gross and Josh Klosterman.



ARS Composite Squadron in Vienna, Ohio, also competed in the finals, with the Big Sioux team taking home the Cyber Forensics hardware.

The U.S. Department of Defense Cyber Crime Center conducted the new forensics portion of the competition, teaching and testing the competitors’ knowledge of cyber forensics through application of crime scene analysis, evidence

gathering and critical thinking.

“The team was to, as quickly as possible, locate all possible evidence as well as analyze the one possible device that was proof of a breach,” said 1st Lt. Shannon Hofer, coach of the winning Big Sioux team. “I am very proud to have worked with this group of competitors. They are very ambitious and bright.”

The Big Sioux team consisted of Cadet 2nd Lts. Daniel Klosterman, team captain, and Josh Klosterman; Cadet Chief Master Sgt. Simon Pulscher; Cadet Senior Master Sgt. James Skon; and Cadet Staff Sgt. Tyler Gross.

Kyal Lanum, Cadet Senior Airman Christopher Ottesen, Cadet Airman Basic Stephen Parish and Senior Member John Parish – received \$2,000 each in college scholarships from the Northrop Grumman Foundation, CyberPatriot’s presenting sponsor, which also treated them to a tour of the company’s facility.

Wolfpack wasn’t the only CAP team in the CyberPatriot IV spotlight. Teams from Big Sioux Composite Squadron in Brookings, S.D.; Springville Composite Squadron in Ashville, Ala.; and Youngstown

Second Lt. Michael Klosterman was team mentor.

Blatchley said the real success of CyberPatriot lies ahead. "Through this program, we've launched new careers for at least three of our members," he said.

Vasquez, a high school senior, has been accepted to Colorado State University, where he will study computer security. "The computer world's gain is the marine

biology world's loss," said Blatchley, noting that Vasquez was previously interested in studying marine biology.

Blatchley said his assistant coaches, son Simeon and Thomas Jessop, both cadet first lieutenants, also are interested in computer science and cybersecurity-related careers. Who knows? Perhaps they will one day be a part of America's next generation of cyber defenders! ▲

'CyberSentinel' is CAP cadet's winning newsletter entry

The cadets from Colorado and South Dakota aren't the only CyberPatriot standouts for Civil Air Patrol in 2012.

Cadet Chief Master Sgt. Caitlin Albright of the Anoka County Composite Squadron of CAP's Minnesota Wing is the winner of the "Name This Newsletter" contest sponsored by the Air Force Association, which hosts the national high school cyber defense competition.

"It was difficult to choose a winner from the number of great newsletter names that we received," said Frank Zaborowski, the newsletter's editor, but Albright's "The CyberSentinel" captured the honor.

Albright received an Apple iPod Shuffle for the winning entry.

To read "The CyberSentinel," go to www.uscyberpatriot.org.
http://www.uscyberpatriot.org/CP4/CP%20IV%20Documents/CyberSentinel_March2012.pdf



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About CyberPatriot

The nation's largest and fastest-growing high school cyber defense competition, CyberPatriot IV began last October with 1,019 teams – including 218 from Civil Air Patrol units across the U.S. – vying for a chance to compete among the top qualifying teams in March in National Harbor, Md.

All 50 states and U.S. Department of Defense Dependent Schools in Europe and the Pacific were represented in the two-track competition. Junior ROTC units of all services and CAP squadrons – 617 in all – filled the All Service Division while 402 teams from public, private, parochial and home schools competed in the Open Division.

After three online preliminary rounds of hands-on cyber security, CyberPatriot finalists participated in an in-person challenge, competing face-to-face and defending virtual networks from a professional aggressor team in the championship round. They hunted malware and fended off mock hack attacks to earn top cybersecurity honors.

CyberPatriot IV also brought an international flavor to the competition, with several teams from Manitoba in Canada competing parallel to the American teams as the first international exhibition teams.

“CyberPatriot has introduced the area of cyber defense to tens of thousands of students across the country, and they've embraced the opportunity to learn and develop the skills to be successful in a field critical to America,” said CyberPatriot Commissioner Bernie Skoch.

“All of the finalists of CyberPatriot IV displayed a tremendous amount of effort over the past six months and proved they were the nation's most exceptionally talented students. We congratulate them all for being among the top 24 teams in the nation.”

Registration for CyberPatriot V opens in April. More information on CyberPatriot IV is available at www.uscyberpatriot.org.

Members of Civil Air Patrol's four CyberPatriot IV finalists take time out for a photo with CyberPatriot Commissioner Bernie Skoch inside the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center, site of the 2012 competition. From left are cadets from the South Dakota Wing's Big Sioux Composite Squadron, the Colorado Wing's Colorado Springs Cadet Squadron, the Alabama Wing's Springville Composite Squadron and the Ohio Wing's Youngstown ARS Composite Squadron.