



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Azle Composite Squadron, Civil Air Patrol, Presents Three with Brigadier General Billy Mitchell Award

AZLE, Tex. (November 30, 2021) – Tret King, Tristan Range, and Shyanne Shrake of the Azle Composite Squadron, Civil Air Patrol (CAP), have been awarded the official cadet rank of Cadet Second Lieutenant, the Brigadier General Billy Mitchell Award. These are the fourth, fifth, and sixth Mitchell recipients of the Unit and is the first time in the Squadron's history to have three receive the award at the same time.



Major Brian Kilian, Cadet 2nd Lt. Shyanne Shrake, Cadet 2nd Lt. Tristan Range, Cadet 2nd Lt. Tret King, Colonel William Schroder

Distinguished guests from CAP were Texas Wing Commander, Colonel William Schroder, Texas Group VI Commander, Major Jason Quick, Texas Wing Senior NCO, MSgt McDade. In addition, Charlie Cripliver, District Director, Justin Allbright, Field Representative, John Walker, Administrative Assistant, all part of Congresswoman Kay Granger's office attended the ceremony.



Cadet King joined CAP in February 2020 with the first Cadet Great Start class of that year. “I was told [about CAP] by a friend and thought it could be an enriching experience. It teaches the next generation fundamental values and builds leadership within the cadets. It feels good to reach the halfway point in [the] CAP cadet program, but I have honestly found more joy in achieving things previously that other may see as small,” remarked Cadet King when asked about his time in CAP and achieving this award. Cadet King has a goal of completing the Pararescue and Survival Orientation course offered as a National Cadet Special activity. King, a homeschooled sophomore, is also working to become a journeyman electrician.

To those interested in becoming part of the CAP cadet program, King offered, “CAP has helped in developing my ability to lead, organize plans, and even my public speaking. But most of all, it has helped me to see and appreciate the uniqueness of the individuals around me. He encouraged other cadets with, “don’t be afraid to step into the unknown; an individual who dwells in complacency can never truly experience CAP to its fullest degree. Remember, everyone deserves a certain degree of respect and as a new cadet you should listen carefully to your leaders because they are there to assist and teach you how to thrive within the program.”

The parents of Cadet King, reflected on his time in CAP by beginning with a story of Cadet King as the youngest of six boys who was the bottom of the pecking order. King’s mother, Tina King, stated, “CAP has been a very visible avenue for him to shine. He has found his voice and an understanding of authority combined with heart. I am thankful for the senior members who also see his potential and have been marvelously encouraging him. I am very proud of him for this achievement and I am looking forward to the next three [achievements] and I know they are well within his reach.”



Cadet Range joined CAP in 2017 with the Virginia Wing and transferred to the local Unit in June 2020 becoming an active member in both the CyberPatriot team and Rocketry team. Range indicated that he was inspired to join CAP for the Aerospace component and the opportunity to get his private pilot's license. In regards to achieving the Mitchell Award, he stated, "It feels great; I was lazy for two years but finally started regularly promoting and now that I am here I am glad I did it."

Cadet Range, a homeschooled junior, has a goal of entering the United States Air Force Academy and serving his country by flying in the military. Range reflected, "CAP has developed me as a leader and taught me not to be afraid to talk, call drill, or lead. To other cadets Range encouraged, "don't stress out about being the best cadet or promoting just for the sake of it. Take your time in CAP and just try to learn and expand your abilities." To anyone considering joining the cadet program, Range advised, "even if you don't plan on being a leader or going into the military, CAP teaches you better how to conduct yourself in a professional setting, encourages you to be responsible, and teaches you how to be a better person."

The parents of Cadet Range, Jane and Remy Range, when asked about their cadet achieving this award, remarked, "We are so proud and glad and we never doubted that he would reach his goal." They further explained, "Tristan was a shy, quiet young man as a new cadet in 2017, at age 12. Over the years, he has found his voice, grown in his leadership skills, and learned a lot, through CAP, that will benefit him for years to come in his military career. He has become a lot more motivated and driven to achieve his goals. He does not let much stand in his way or discourage him." Both Jane and Remy Range are active contributing senior members in the CAP program.



Cadet Shrake joined CAP in October 2019 with the last Cadet Great Start class of that year. She admitted while she originally joined with her sister, she had no intentions of staying in the program long. Shrake expressed, "After attending several meetings, I was inspired and realized the great benefits that Civil Air Patrol could have in my life." Shrake named drill and marching as her favorite aspect of the program. In reference to her achievement, Shrake replied, "It didn't feel real at first. When I first joined, I never thought I would be able to make it this far. But after having amazing mentors guide me through this challenge, I was able to reach a goal that few have reached. I am still going to strive to achieve higher goals and challenge my limits."

Cadet Shrake, a homeschooled junior, has plans of becoming In regards a diesel mechanic for Caterpillar or an F-35 inspector for Lockheed Martin. Shrake voiced, "When I first joined Civil Air Patrol, I was the timid, shy person who would rather hide in a corner than talk to anyone. But through CAP, I have gained self-confidence and leadership abilities. I have learned basic aerospace knowledge, professionalism, diligence, and determination." She offered advice to other cadets, "continue to push yourself. Even if you think you can't do it. Never stop striving for your absolute best!" To others contemplating joining CAP Shrake encourages, "In my opinion, this is by far the best youth organization for helping anyone gain self-confidence, responsibility, respect for others, and knowledge that could help you in any career you choose."

Cadet Shrake's mother, Julie Shrake, who also serves as a Senior Member in the Azle Unit, reflected, "she worked hard for this honor. It's not only this accomplishment, but all the others before this one as well that culminated with her receiving the Mitchell Award." She also commented on the increase in self-confidence, assertiveness, and decisiveness that she has seen in her daughter.

These new cadet officers along with the Unit's Cadet Commander, Cadet 2nd Lt. Emilou Shrake, are responsible for leading a group of 32 cadets in the Unit. These leaders, under the mentorship of the senior members of the Unit, will help plan, lead, and teach the cadet programs within the Unit.

Colonel William Schroder commented on the remarkable growth of the Unit since his previous visit and applauded the Squadron for persevering especially over the last eighteen months despite national restrictions. He congratulated the cadets on this major achievement, but cautioned them not to settle with stopping at this one. He encouraged them to continue on to even higher and greater levels.

The Unit Commander, Major Brian Kilian, enthusiastically and proudly swore in the cadet officers. He explained to the audience how these three cadets along with the Cadet Commander had been an integral part of improving the cadet program experience. Kilian shared, "These cadets were leaders when we changed how we ran the cadet program. They were each assigned a group of cadets to lead and teach during designated cadet time and did a fantastic job of equipping them to move forward in the program."

Major Kilian went on to comment on Cadet Shrake's maturing from a timid cadet basic to an impressive, confident leader full of self-reflection. He praise her for an essay she wrote and shared with the Unit in which she recounted how she learned not to hold herself back from success. He indicated this would now be required reading for all cadets that join the squadron. Kilian complimented Cadet King for his quiet, measured efforts and steadfast beliefs. He described King as thoughtful and positive and noted King truly cared about his cadets' success. Kilian described Cadet Range as a go-getter who is not afraid of new challenges. To all the cadets of the Unit he challenged, "You can all achieve the Mitchell Award. The statistic is 15% of cadets achieve it, but in TX456, I say you ALL can do it and I am here to help you out."

The Gen. Billy Mitchell Award became part of CAP in 1964. The award honors the late Brigadier General Billy Mitchell, an aviation pioneer and advocate for military airpower. Only about 15% of CAP cadets earn this award. To earn this award, a cadet must complete not only the first eight achievements of the cadet program, but also pass an intensive examination of leadership theory and aerospace topics. In addition, to achieve this award, a cadet must also possess a positive attitude, be an encouragement to others, display the CAP Core Values, be proficient in informal speaking, be trustworthy in supervising and leading a team of cadets, and guide/coach junior cadets. This award is a noteworthy achievement that earns a recipient eligibility for a variety of scholarships and CAP special activities. The military also looks favorably on Mitchell Award recipients when evaluating AFROTC and Academy applicants and if they choose to enlist in the Air Force, they enter at the grade of E-3.

Civil Air Patrol is the longtime auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force and as such is a valued member of its Total Force. In its auxiliary role, CAP operates a fleet of 560 single-engine aircraft and more than 2,100 small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS). It performs about 90% of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center and is credited by the AFRCC with saving an average of 82 lives annually. CAP's 56,000 members also perform homeland security, disaster relief and drug interdiction missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. Operating as a nonprofit organization, CAP also plays a leading role in STEM/aerospace education, and its members serve as mentors to more than 23,000 young people participating in CAP's Cadet Programs.

Visit azle.cap.gov or www.GoCivilAirPatrol.com for more information.

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