

South Eastern Group Contributes to Multi- Agency Hurricane Relief Effort.

Hurricane Irene may have had big plans for the northeast, but Civil Air Patrol had plans for her, too. The ferocious storm proved to be a powerful example of how CAP'S careful planning and efficient interaction with outside agencies helped area residents deal with the massive storm- both before and after it hit.

While Irene was blowing up the coast in their direction, New York Wing got down to business. Major Darren Cioffi, NYW IC, and Planning Section Chief, Major Sharon Brana acted as coordinators reporting directly to Area Command personnel. Over twenty South Eastern Group members were put on standby. SEG aircrews from Poughkeepsie and HPN relocated planes to storm- safe hangers for post Irene taskings. SEG's Lt Col Malcolm Dickinson was sent to support Connecticut Wing as IC.

As the storm pounded the area and many residents were forced to abandon their homes for safer quarters, SEG assisted at several area shelters. At the request of the City of Yonkers Office of Emergency Management, members helped with supervision of evacuees there while others joined forces with the American Red Cross in the Town Of Mamaroneck. In addition, group volunteers crossed the Connecticut line to help the Red Cross deal with the state's misplaced families. " We were able to send trained personnel to assist in any way necessary to serve our local communities," says Major Brana, "From working directly with local disaster relief organizations in the community to assisting government officials in making appropriate disaster assessment decisions, we were able to provide aid to communities that desperately needed it. "

Assisting with damage assessment, SEG aided the Orange County Emergency Operations Center, by performing photo reconnaissance of flood ravaged areas. At the request of FEMA 2, another recon mission was flown in Upstate New York, this time with a NYS Department of Transportation member on board.

In the days before the storm, until the stand down order was given two weeks later, the aggressive planning, inter-agency cooperation, and coordinated effort on the part of CAP personnel provided invaluable disaster relief. According to Major Brana, "Many of these agencies that had never even heard of CAP previously learned what an asset we can be. It strengthened and supported our ability to serve communities and live up to our motto –Citizens Serving Communities."

In light of their contribution to this effort, SEG volunteers will be awarded the Disaster Relief ribbon with "v" device