

Coming Out of the Woodwork: Lt Colonel Bill Turner, AZ Wing Director of Aerospace Education
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"When you think of aerospace education, the Arizona Wing has been blessed with a person who might be considered to be amongst the most outstanding aerospace education directors' in the Nation. As evidence of this, Lt Colonel Turner was awarded the Frank G Brewer Civil Air Patrol Memorial Aerospace Award in 1997 for his outstanding service." (Lt Colonel Pete Feltz, AZ Wing Deputy Director of Aerospace Education).

Throughout the years, the Arizona Wing has been most fortunate to have attracted individuals who have brought their own unique skills and talents into the CAP program. One such member who has made a difference in the lives of many cadets over the years is Lt Colonel Bill Turner. Originally from California, Lt Colonel Turner decided while he was still in elementary school that he wanted to become an industrial arts teacher, so that he would be able to teach students how to use the necessary motor skills to produce high quality wood, metal, drafting, and aerospace projects. A graduate of San Jose State University, Lt Colonel Turner taught in the Upland, CA school district for 30 years before retiring and moving to Arizona.

Lt Colonel Turner's interest in aviation began at an early age, starting with his enlistment into the USAF in 1951. Lt Colonel Turner served four years of active duty time, then transferred to the USAF Reserves where he served an additional 34 years. During his service time, Lt Colonel Turner was a flight engineer on a C-119 and C-141 aircraft in which he logged over 3,000 hours of flight time. Putting his practical skills to use as a flight engineer, Lt Colonel Turner was responsible for controlling the aircraft fuel systems and troubleshooting in-flight problems.

While still in the USAF Reserves, Lt Colonel Turner joined the Cable Airport CAP Squadron in Upland, CA in 1981. Between 1981 through the present, Lt Colonel Turner held various Aerospace Education positions at the squadron and Group levels before becoming the AZ Wing Director of Aerospace Education in 1996. *"Everything to do with the cadet program hinges on Aerospace Education....they go hand-and-hand together. The cadets cannot get promoted to their next grade level as their achievements are based on aerospace*

education,” Lt Colonel Turner told me. According to Lt Colonel Turner, the aerospace education program applies mathematics, various sciences, engineering, English, history and theory, along with the necessary practical motor skills for the cadets to design build their own AE projects.

As proof of his success, under Lt Colonel Turner's command, the Arizona Wing has received the National Outstanding AE Award and two Southwest Region Outstanding AE awards. Perhaps his biggest achievement, however, was the design and implementation of an aerospace education trailer in which various military and CAP uniforms are on display as well as several different CAP medals and achievements. The trailer has traveled around Arizona to air shows and conferences, and has been used as a recruiting tool.

Whether Lt Colonel Turner is traveling with his trailer or overseeing the AE program in the AZ Wing, Lt Colonel Turner told me that he could not have accomplished all that he did by himself. This was a team effort in which the assistance of Lt Colonel's Feltz, Fred Seifritz, John Eggen Captain Rick Yang, and Lt Colonel Turner's mentor, Lt Colonel Ray Johnson, all came together to make the AE program work.