

American flag raised at Stavatti Niagara by USAF Civil Air Patrol

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY MICHAEL DEPIETRO
Tribune Editor

In honor of Flag Day, USAF Civil Air Patrol cadets from the Niagara Falls Composite Squadron No. 1 raised a 15-foot American flag at Stavatti Niagara's newly acquired SNAPPER facility (Stavatti Niagara Aerospace Prototype Production Engineering and Research) at 9400 Porter Road in the Town of Niagara. It marked the first time in over 17 years the Stars and Stripes were permanently



flown from the 70-foot mast since the former U.S. Army Reserve Center was closed.

"This American flag is a symbol of patriotism; three colors, which hold meaning and unite us," said Stavatti Niagara's CEO, John R. Simon. "Today's an important occasion for Stavatti Aerospace. To permanently fly Old Glory over the SNAPPER facility is an honor and responsibility we fully acknowledge."

Some local veterans, including New York State Assemblyman Angelo Morinello and Niagara County Legislator David Godfrey, stood at the base of the flag as the CAP hoisted it into the air. The small crowd then recited the Pledge of Allegiance as the flag unfurled gallantly in the warm, sunny breeze.

Simon said the company specifically asked for the USAF CAP to do the honors. CAP is a volunteer organization with an aviation-minded membership that includes people from all backgrounds, lifestyles and occupations. It performs three congressionally assigned key missions: emergency services, aerospace education for youth and the general public; and cadet programs for teenage youth. Additionally, the CAP has recently been tasked with homeland security and courier service missions and also performs non-military missions for various governmental and private agencies such as local law enforcement and the American Red Cross.

"The vision that Stavatti has for both today and far into the future can only be carried out if we can attract and keep young people, such



as the Civil Air Patrol in aviation-related education and activities," he said.

Simon went on to thank numerous organizations and business partners for their support, including Old Glory Flag & Banner Co. (7350 Porter Road, Route 182), who provided the flag that now flies above the SNAPPER facility.

"We are lucky here in the Town of Niagara to have an organization like that," Simon said. "We've actually gone to them for several flags and it's good to have them as a neighbor."

He also thanked the local officials in attendance, including Morinello, Godfrey, City of Niagara Falls Mayor Robert Restaino, Wilson Mayor Arthur Lawson and Town of Niagara Supervisor Lee Wallace and asked for their continued support.

"The Western New York Region has a rich, illustrious history of successful companies that are recognized in the Niagara Aerospace Museum, just down the road, highlighting over 100 years of aviation history. Stavatti Aerospace has selected this site and this airport as most ideal for SNAPPER activity," Simon said. "We're here to partner with all of you and the people of New York, the people of the United States of America, American Allies and NATO members. We are asking you to become engaged with us, starting today and advancing forward, as we add to the robust aviation activities in the region."

Simon also gave an extended nod to the City of Niagara Falls School District and NCCC for their commitment to providing the "well-trained people" that the company is going to require in "two and three years out"

"We're going to need thousands of employees and hopefully the Niagara Falls School System along with NCCC can build that labor pool for us," Simon said.

The SNAPPER facility will be used for the, "designing and manufacturing of military, commercial, general aviation and other aerospace vehicles."

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