

GAINESVILLE COMPOSITE SQUADRON HISTORY

The current Gainesville Composite Squadron came into existence on 23 May 1953 when Col Joe Moody gave MSgt W.R. Breeze permission to organize a Squadron. Breeze assumed Command 25 May) About half of the members of the new unit were cadets or former cadets that transferred from St. Petersburg Cadet Squadron who were attending the University of Florida. Within six months the membership had grown to 20 seniors and 20 cadets. In 1955 MSgt Breeze turned over command to Capt. Ed Gocek, who also served as Communications Officer.

While the Squadron had facilities at the Gainesville Municipal Airport, meetings were held in two rooms behind the ROTC Building on Campus (now the site of the O'Connell Center) Prior to World War II, the rooms had been part of the Army ROTC Cavalry stables. The Squadron also had two small rooms in a hanger at Stengel Field.

While the unit was organized in 1953, there had been a World War II unit in Gainesville. It was organized in February, 1942 and was disbanded in 1946. During its existence it served supporting Alachua Army Air Field and Camp Blanding Army Training Center. It reportedly also did coastal patrol for boaters in distress from Crystal River north to the Perry area. (NOT an anti-submarine patrol) Three members of the original Squadron who had retained their CAP membership, H.H. Henderson, W. Joes and Robert Richards joined the new Squadron. Thus it can be said that Gainesville Composite Squadron had it's roots in World War II.

Since 1953, Gainesville Cadet Squadron has undergone several changes. In 1956 it split into a cadet Squadron and a Senior Squadron. However by 1959 the Senior Squadron merged back into the Cadet Squadron which became Gainesville Composite Squadron. Over the years Gainesville Composite Squadron has had Flights at Interlachen, Cross City, Cedar Key, Williston and Lake City. It also supported a Cadet Squadron in Ocala (when

the Ocala Senior Squadron had split off to form their own unit) and a Composite unit at Keystone Heights. While the Flight was in existence in Interlachen Commanded by Lt Jim Woods the Squadron had 149 members on the National roster. In 1965, Headquarters Cadet Squadron, FL-002 came into existence in Gainesville. Composed of cadets and seniors attending the University of Florida, the unit met jointly with Gainesville Composite Squadron. Classes were held in different rooms of the ROTC building on Campus. A Flight of FL-002 was also organized at Florida State University. There was a small overlap of staff where FL-002 members served on the staff of FL-142. and visa-versa.

INCOMPLETE LISTING OF GAINESVILLE SQUADRON COMMANDERS (Not in chronological order)

Lt Rogers Aiton
Lt David Reiser
Capt Ed Gocek (twice)
Capt Tom Buekelmen (twice)
Capt W. R. Breeze (three times)
Maj Fred Swearingen (acting, twice)
Capt Brooks Jones
Capt Leslie Ballard
Capt Joe Barron
Capt Sandy Barron
Capt Dee Parrish
Capt Kirby Smith
Capt Duane Andrews
Capt Richard Leali (later Wing Commander)
LCol Ed Amsbury (twice)
Lt Rodney McGinnes
Capt Jim Cogswell
Lt William Hallock
Capt Larry Oshines
Capt John Barber
Lt Authur F. Pray
Lt Doug Abruzzo

