District I—Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

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The Wintonbury Flying Club celebrated its first National Model Aviation Day with special guests Lt. Col. Greg Lachenmayer and his cadets from the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) squadron NER-CT-071-Royal Charter. The event took place at the Hartford-Brainard Airport in Hartford, Connecticut. Club president and AMA associate vice president, Tom Rocheleau, provided the following report:

The Wintonbury Flying Club celebrated National Model Aviation Day with CAP cadets.

“We were thrilled and honored to host this group of young adults already seeking to serve the public by enlisting the CAP. This was a perfect opportunity to introduce cadets to the AMA and aeromodeling technology.

“Six cadets and their senior leadership spent the day at the club. They were given ground school safety training and basic flight instruction on simulators. They were then assigned to a flight instructor and had a chance to fly club trainers, taking turns on both electric and nitro-powered aircraft. The cadets’ knowledge of full-scale aircraft and flying made their transition to RC flying that much easier.

“After a cookout, the cadets were introduced to different configurations of multirotor aircraft and told about their real-world applications in videography, cinematography, infrastructure inspection, security, precision agriculture, and search-and-rescue operations. Club member Ron Nadeau volunteered to do this presentation and explained how he built his 3-D Robotics X8 octocopter. He answered questions about each of its components for power, thrust, navigation, control systems, and its sensors for data and image collection and video display.

The CAP cadets participated in a multirotor simulated search-and-rescue mission.

“Before the presentation, Ron hid a rescue beacon in the club’s field. A laptop computer utilizing mission-planner software allowed Ron to work with the cadets to program an array of waypoints in a gridlike flight plan. This was done over a Google Earth image of the club’s flying site displayed on a video monitor.

“The waypoints were transmitted to Ron’s multirotor autopilot controller, allowing it to autonomously navigate the entire field area. Its onboard camera transmitted video images to the ground station receiver monitor, where the cadets anxiously watched the video to locate the beacon.

“After a number of passes over the field, the beacon location coordinates were identified and it was retrieved. Of all of the day’s activities, this simulated search-and-rescue mission impressed the cadets the most. It definitely demonstrated the good tasks multirotors or drones are capable of doing.

Cadets engaged in a variety of RC flying.

“The cadets and their leaders thanked us for a great National Model Aviation Day experience. Club members were thrilled to introduce the cadets to RC aeromodeling and look forward to forming a more permanent relationship with CAP cadets.”

Thanks Tom, Ron, and club members for this unique celebration of model aviation.

Happy holidays, everyone!

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