



# Behind the 8 Ball



## Blue Beret National Cadet Special Activity Oshkosh, Wisconsin

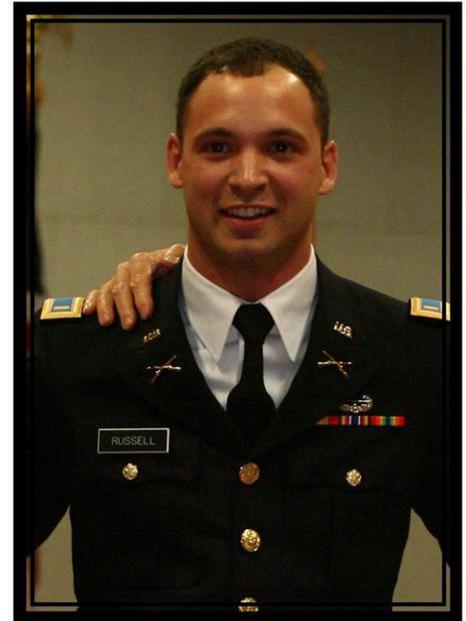
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### 1LT Jonam Russell

There are various stories behind the origin of what we now know as the “challenge coin”. The most popular one is about a well-to-do lieutenant who had unit medallions struck out of bronze for his squadron during WWI. According to the story, one of the squadron’s pilots had been shot down behind German lines. After escaping, he had nothing to prove who he was except the medallion saving him from being executed as a spy by the French.

The medallion has since become the modern “challenge coin” seen in all branches of the military and Civil Air Patrol. The coin is used to boost morale, encourage esprit de corps, and honor service.

Army 1LT Jonam Russell, a former CAP cadet and Beret, perished in the line of duty in Afghanistan on July 23, 2013 along with two others from his unit. On Monday evening the NBB coin, along with a St. Alban’s pin, was used to honor the memory of LT Russell. The ceremony consisted of the guideons from every flight, including staff, standing at attention while the coin and pin were laid on the Beret Rock in front of the flag poles on the compound by Capt. Thorpe and C/Lt. Olcott. After the coin and pin were placed, those in attendance presented arms and held their salute for a moment of silence before C/CMSgt. Irechekwu played “Amazing Grace” on bagpipes, in honor of Lt. Russell, signaling the end of the ceremony.



**Maj. Carolyn S. Franz**  
Public Affairs Officer



## **Leadership at Beret**

In Civil Air Patrol, our core curriculum for advancement in the Cadet Program includes topics on leadership. Cadets are expected to learn and grow in areas such as communications, planning, and mentoring, as well as many others. The Cadet Program is divided into four phases; the Learning Phase, the Leadership Phase, the Command Phase, and the Executive Phase. Blue Beret is the perfect activity to see all four phases work together seamlessly to run an Air Force assigned mission, and is outstanding practice for when cadets move on from the Cadet Program and go off to do greater things with their lives.



The Learning Phase and the Leadership Phase tend to morph together here. Cadets in all phases are forced to begin learning many new skills to accomplish the wide variety of tasks they are involved in at Blue Beret. Teamwork is an absolute necessity; without teamwork, nothing gets done. Often a Cadet Lieutenant Colonel will be in a flight led by a Cadet Captain, due to the captain's previous experiences with Beret or operations in general. This shows that leaders completed these phases have the opportunity to re-visit, re-learn, and reapply concepts from these phases, an opportunity that is rarely found elsewhere.

Flight Leaders and Flight Commanders are given the freedom and responsibility to lead the flights on the mission. They are able to develop the skills that they have learned through their previous experiences at Beret or elsewhere. Part of their job is to mentor their flight members, as well as making sure they stay safe and hydrated out on the flight line. This is only properly operated by someone who has a certain ability to read people. This skill is attained through the camaraderie and experience gained from two weeks working with a very diverse group.



Executive level leadership is put into practice by the Cadet Command Staff. The Cadet Deputy Commander's job is to mentor the flight staff and make sure they are leading their flights correctly dealing with any situations that may arise and passing

the torch to the Chief Tactical Officer when necessary. The Cadet Executive Officer deals with much pre-planning in conjunction with the Cadet Commander and also has many administrative duties such as liaising with the NBB ES crew for scheduling purposes. Finally, the Cadet Commander oversees all of the operations pertaining to cadets and makes sure that the staff is all on track with their duties.

Leadership is not limited to the cadets here at National Blue Beret. Slots for seniors are also extremely competitive and there are positions at all levels for the senior staff. This makes for an activity that is fully supported and led by very experienced personnel. The leadership opportunities at Blue Beret are endless, and make it one of the premier activities Civil Air Patrol has to offer.



**NOAH V. M. MEYERS, C/Lt Col**  
**Cadet Executive Officer**



### **Operation Thirst: A Cadet Favorite**

There is no more welcoming sight to a tired and hungry cadet on the flight line at EAA AirVenture than the appearance of the Operation Thirst van. One of two Operation Thirst vans travels up and down the flight line and distributes sandwiches, lots of different cold drinks and coffee, and a variety of snacks.

Operation Thirst is a project run entirely by EAA since the 70s. Today it is led by Ann Hamilton of Bellville, Ohio, who oversees a team of almost 15 volunteers who make 3,000 sandwiches a day and mix 20 packages of lemonade just for starters. “We also use 90 cases of cookies in six days along with 100 six pound cases of potato chips and nine cases of popcorn,” explains Hamilton, “plus 1,000 pounds of meat along with 70 bricks of cheese for sandwiches.”

Len and Eileen Krenik of White Bear, MN have been Operation Thirst volunteers for four years. Len drives one of the vans which operates on both the north and south runways of Wittman Regional Airport while Eileen dispenses the food. Both Len and Eileen enjoy serving the needs of the NBB cadets. “I love the camaraderie with all of the guys. We really have a ball,” he explains enthusiastically. “It’s so much fun interacting with the cadets.” Eileen added, “They are so polite and they always say ‘Thank you.’” Operation Thirst, a cadet’s best friend on the flight line.

*Dennis Maloney, Capt  
Public Affairs Officer*

### **Symptoms of Dehydration**

It is important to recognize the signs of dehydration. It can lead to other heat related emergencies.

- Frequent thirst
- Dry lips and tongue
- Muscle cramping
- Bright-colored or dark urine

By keeping your body rested and full of fluids, you can help prevent dehydration.

- Drink plenty of water, even if you are not thirsty.
- Avoid caffeinated, carbonated, and alcoholic beverages, which can dehydrate the body.
- Wear light-colored, absorbent, loose-fitting clothing and a hat.
- Stay in the shade when possible.
- Avoid strenuous outdoor activity, especially in the middle of the day.
- Take breaks when exercising.

Be aware of your medications. Antihistamines and decongestants can interfere with your natural ability to sweat. If you think you are dehydrated, drink plenty of water and sports drinks that have added salt. Don’t be afraid to tell some that you are getting dehydrated!

*Nathan Runck, C/Col  
Cadet Public Affairs Officer*

### Cadets Assist at Ultralights

Cadets at National Blue Beret enjoy assisting at the Ultralight Field. They provide perimeter security and make sure that people do not cross the small but busy grass runway.



“It’s a fairly easy job,” C/Capt Alexander Durr explains, “We get to talk to people and learn new things.”

The Ultralight field handles over 200 take offs and landings on a typical day. Debbie Hayden is the volunteer that is in charge of things at Ultralights. “It all depends on the weather,” she adds. Hayden really enjoys having the cadets helping at the field. “Luckily we have not needed them this year, but in the past we’ve had some incidents with extrications and crowd control.”



“I love them,” tells Hayden. “They are always so polite and enthusiastic. It’s a great learning experience for them.”

**Dennis Maloney, Capt  
Public Affairs Officer**

### Flight Patch



**Flight Commander: Capt Thorpe**  
**Flight Leader: Capt Leslie & 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Thomas**  
**TAC: Lt. Col Boyle**

Lt. Col Boyle’s specialty is making breakfast in the morning for the eager and hungry cadets while the other three specialists prep and serve lunch and dinner. They choose the apple for their patch to show their dedication to healthy nutritious food. They know Russian, Mandarin, French, Spanish, English and American Sign Language.



## Final Thoughts from Chief Cadet PAO

Service before self, this idea sums up the entire National Blue Beret activity and is the driving factor. While this is my third time at National Blue Beret, each time that idea is slammed home and I remember every year I was here distinctly. When we come here we work together to achieve excellence and we aim for nothing lower. After working thousands of man hours serving the public, the idea of service before self stops becoming an idea and is now a reality.

When I was here in 2011 I had a blast. I was put in Delta Flight and we rocked like none other. We were down one cadet, that's nearly 10% when you figure 11 cadets per flight, but everything else was flawless. Our TAC was Lt Ginnard and was really chill because our flight commander was C/Col O'Conner the previous NBB Deputy Cadet Commander. You couldn't ask for a better man. Our flight lead was C/Lt Rogers from New York and he knew what he was doing. Our flight bonded quickly, I think we had nicknames for everyone by day three. When the airshow kicked off we worked hard and had such a hectic week. Our flight was on duty for six crashes, it was insane. Luckily no one was hurt but we quickly changed our name from Delta Droids to Delta Doom. We had outstanding camaraderie and great morale which earned us honor flight for 2011.

I came back in 2012 as the flight commander of Delta Flight and had another outstanding year. My TAC was Major Sharpe and my flight leader was C/Capt Fitzpatrick. We worked hard and fast, advancing the name and honor of Delta flight even more for the second year in a row. Again we bonded fast under our competent leadership and destroyed the boy scouts in volleyball winning some respect for NBB. Leading here is so much more different than being a basic because now you have ten people to care about during one of the most demanding NCSA's CAP has to offer.



I was slotted nine days before the activity began in 2013 because I was busy with other things and only managed to get a slot at the last second. I was assigned to Delta flight again. I was pumped to be heading back even as a basic for my third year when I heard all the PAO staff positions were open. Generally three returning berets are selected as PAO's but, through the grape vine, I heard that I was the only one currently that didn't have a staff position. I thought about it and decided I'll try it because it was a career field I hadn't worked before. Maj. Jaeger is my commander and while my writing and picture

taking skills were better than average I have grown by leaps and bounds to say the least. The PAO staff is well talented and you learn quickly it's hard to be creative. All the behind the scenes work that goes into NBB is amazing and it's nice to part of the group that won't be recognized because they shine all their glory on the cadre working hard in front of the public.

I'm starting to look back on NBB with longing. The people here are family for life and no matter how much time you spend with them you will always wish you had more. They are great people and amazingly professional. I hope to come back next year but that might not work if the Air Force decides to intervene. We all have a call to answer and service before self is one that NBB teaches you to follow for the rest of your life.

Ancora Imparo  
Cadet PAO James Eimers

*James Eimers, C/Capt  
Chief Cadet Public Affairs Officer*