

Civil Air Patrol squadron dedicates new hangar at Marco airport

By Christopher Tittel

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Marco Island Senior Squadron FL-376, based at Marco Island Executive Airport, dedicated its new hangar last Saturday during a ceremony that drew close to 100



spectators.

From left are Col. Matt Sharkey, 2nd Lt. Joe Wilkins, Tremblay and 2nd Lt. Tom Barthel.

The Squadron, a division of the U.S. Air Force Auxiliary's Civil Air Patrol (CAP), makes daily flights over the waters extending up to 50 miles around Marco Island in search of boaters in distress. The division's 35 volunteers also conduct search and rescue operations for the Air Force when needed and has most recently been called upon to participate in homeland security operations.

"We've rescued a lot of people over the years," 1st Lt. Ron Gordon said.

Gordon was just one of many squadron members who greeted visiting dignitaries, many of whom flew in for the special occasion. Honored guests included, among others, CAP Southeast Regional Commander Col. Tony Pineda, Wing Commander Colonel Matt Sharkey (based at MacDill Air Force Base), Lt. Col. Charles Dinsmoor (Naples Squadron), Collier County Commissioner Donna Fiala and Marco Island City Councilman Heyward Boyce.

Gordon reported that the hangar dedication even prompted a congratulatory phone call to Squadron Commander Maj. E. Jean Tremblay from CAP National Commander Brig. Gen. Richard L. Bowling earlier in the day.

Highlights of the ceremony included Tremblay cutting the ribbon marking the hangar's dedication, a presentation of the colors courtesy of the Naples Cadet Color Guard and remarks from Pineda, Sharkey, Dinsmoor, Fiala and Tremblay.

Fiala congratulated the squadron on finally realizing its goal, after several years of fund-raising efforts that former Squadron Commander Monte Lazarus initiated.

"I'm sure you're proud because you made it happen, and I'm proud too," she said.