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Cessna Employees rally and raise funds for wounded Veterans mission



Cessna Aircraft Company, a Textron Inc. (NYSE: TXT) company, donated \$25,000 on behalf of Cessna employees to benefit the Veterans Airlift Command today at the Sun 'n Fun International Fly-In & Expo in Lakeland, Fla. The Veterans Airlift Command (VAC) is a nonprofit organization that provides free transportation for injured veterans. Cessna has designated a Citation Mustang, named “American Patriot,” to fly VAC missions. The donated funds were raised through Cessna employee purchases of 2,152 commemorative Citation Mustang, American Patriot limited edition t-shirts.

The VAC provides free medical or compassionate transportation for wounded veterans and their families through a national network of aircraft owners and pilots. The organization’s priority is to assist veterans of Iraqi Freedom or Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan). “Many of our veterans return from combat facing devastating injuries and long-term rehabilitation. Many times, they are recuperating hundreds of miles away from family. Our goal at VAC is to be that bridge that brings families together to help our veterans heal,” said Walt Fricke, VAC founder and air boss. “We are fortunate to have Cessna join us in providing our wounded warriors with this crucial service.”

The fundraising campaign was conceived and executed by Cessna employees. “We wanted to demonstrate the pride we felt in the Citation Mustang product, and also wanted to figure out a way to show support for the VAC and their mission,” said Ashley Parks, Cessna employee and project coordinator for the American Patriot t-shirt fundraising campaign. Cessna employees ran the project and raised \$25,000 for the VAC.

The VAC mission will transport Sgt. Adam Kisielewski of Frederick, Maryland to the Sun ‘n Fun air show. Sgt. Kisielewski joined the Marine Delayed Entry program during his junior year in high school, when he was only 17. He served at Camp Pendleton and was selected for the prestigious “Yankee White” squad, part of the U.S. Marine Corps Security Forces hand selected to serve the President directly at Camp David.

Kisielewski rejoined the Infantry after his tour at Camp David, and was deployed to Iraq. During his time there, Kisielewski was severely injured by an IED explosion while on foot patrol. His wounds required a complete amputation of his left arm, and the amputation of his right leg just below the knee. His numerous wounds required extensive treatment at the National Naval Medical Center as well as at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, and resulted in 14 months of recovery. Sgt. Kisielewski was medically retired from the USMC and has since worked as a project officer for the U.S. Army’s Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center at Fort Detrick, MD. Kisielewski’s role was to enable government funded projects to develop relevant cutting edge technologies that would aid US service men and women injured in conflict areas.

In 2006 Kisielewski began volunteering much of his free time to Operation Second Chance, a 501c3 nonprofit that assists wounded injured and ill service members and their families. In March of 2010 Kisielewski left his job with the Army and began working for Operation Second Chance full time as Vice President. He is pursuing his private pilot’s license, and has already performed his first solo flight. Cessna is proud to host Sgt. Kisielewski and his family at the Sun ‘n Fun air show.

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