

Grandfather's funeral inspires Danny Spence

By Kyle LoJacono

klojacono@cnewspubs.com

When Danny Spence saw the reverence given to his grandfather during his military funeral, he knew he wanted to receive honor guard training.

"I fell in love with it seeing all the respect and honor given to him during the ceremony," Danny said. "There was so much respect for every detail."

That high regard made Danny apply for



Danny Spence was selected to attend the

special training through the CAP at the National Honor Guard Academy in Westminster, Md. Only 140 cadets were accepted for the training nationally.

"I was amazed," Spence said of being selected. "I wasn't the best cadet applying in Florida, more like a mid-level cadet, so I was very surprised I was selected. When I heard I made it I was literally running through the house screaming."

Cheryl Spence, Danny's mother, could not have been prouder of her son.

"He was so happy with being selected that I couldn't help but be just as thrilled," Cheryl said. "He's talked about trying to do something like this since my dad died, so it was very nice to see it come true for him."

At the training Danny was taught how to perform various military ceremonies, while gaining the understanding that he is representing all military personnel while performing.

"What's so great is he's bringing back what he learned so the other cadets can see how to do the ceremonies too," said Steve Lampasona, the squadron's adult leader.

Danny's family has a long tradition of military service. His grandfather, Edwin Wolski Sr., was a 31-year veteran and was in both the U.S. Army and Air Force. He fought in WWII, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Wolski died of heart failure a year ago.

Cheryl and her husband, Dan, were in the Florida National Guard and reached the rank of major Danny's younger broth-

Civil Air Patrol cadets complete training

Cadet Tech. Sgt. Danny Spence and Cadet Capt. Alec Lampasona of the Wesley Chapel Cadet Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) recently returned from special training at different locations around the country. Thousands of CAP cadets applied for the slots nationally. Both cadets are 16 and attend Wiregrass Ranch High.

The Wesley Chapel squadron was chartered in November 2009 and currently has 34 cadets and 10 senior members. The group meets from 6:30-9 p.m. each Wednesday at the Tampa North Aero Park in Wesley Chapel. Those interested in joining can attend one of the meetings or visit www.wesleychapelcap.com for more information.

Alec Lampasona member of the Blue Berets

Thousands of CAP cadets from around the country applied for Blue Beret training and only 130 were selected, 11 from Florida. Among those few was Wesley Chapel resident Alec Lampasona.

The training involved directing planes at the Experimental Aircraft airshow in Oshkosh, Wis.

"It was an amazing experience, especially with so few people being accepted," Alec said. "We got to marshal the planes at the biggest air show in the county and even had to help during a crash."

Jack Roush, owner of Roush Fenway Racing NASCAR team, crashed his Sesna Citation jet while at the event. Roush was OK after the crash.

"We went out around 11 at night and didn't get back until after 1 (a.m.)," Alec said. "We had our uniforms set up like firefighters so we could put them on in a couple seconds in case something like that happened. We went out and secured a perimeter and made sure everyone was ok."

Alec said the hardest part of directing the planes was how quickly they came up on him.

"They were so big and moved so fast," Alec said. "They would be far off, I'd look away and then they'd be right on top of



Alec Lampasona wearing his beret he received after completing his training. (Photo courtesy of Steve Lampasona)

ished the training.

"Getting the beret is very cool," Alex said. "I'll be able to wear that with my uniform."

Alec's father, Steve, is the leader of the Wesley Chapel squadron. Steve said 7,000 cadets applied for the Blue Beret training.

"It was great. Just a terrific opportunity for him," Steve said. "It was nice to see him selected and to get to go to such a large air show."

Alec is the cadet leader of the squadron.