

images and involved 100 members.

None of the Oklahoma members working on the missions were seriously affected by the storms personally. “That helped; it meant all of our focus could be on helping those who had been affected,” Roberts said.

The members did give a lot of time and energy during the missions, proving again that CAP’s volunteers take their work seriously. “Most of our members were on the entire time,” Roberts said. “We used a few flight crews over and over for several weeks, but that is what we do.”

Roberts also praised the members from neighboring wings who stepped up to help out. “One of the great things during all of this was the willingness and cooperation we saw and had with the other wings,” he said. “Those folks were fantastic. They kept calling and asking, ‘How can we help and what can we do?’ It really shows what CAP is all about.” ▲



CAP members are hard at work at the Texas Wing Incident Command Post in Denton. Photo by Maj. Steve

Robertson, Texas Wing

A Tropical Depression in

Missouri Wing prepared for worst when Bill comes calling

By Lt. Col. David A. Miller

June in Missouri often means severe weather, and this year was no exception as the remnants of Tropical Storm Bill pummeled the southwestern section of the state. The weather system added unwanted precipitation to rivers and streams already overflowing from previous weeks of rain.

The second named storm of the 2015 Atlantic hurricane season, Tropical Storm Bill was quickly downgraded to a tropical depression one day after making landfall at Matagorda Island, Texas. But it continued to produce heavy and sustained rainfall over much of Texas, Oklahoma and the central U.S. from Missouri to Ohio. The system remained organized and continued slowly eastward, eventually drenching Washington, D.C., and the East Coast.

Hardest hit was the Springfield, Missouri, area where the James River rose to a new record flood level of 22.2 feet, topping the previous record of 22 feet set in 1909. (Flood stage is 12 feet.) With flash flood warnings across the state from Springfield to St. Louis and continued rain, Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon declared a state of emergency.

A 100-year flood is one of the emergencies the volunteer members of the Missouri Wing train for.

Responding quickly to a request from the Stone County Emergency Management Agency to document the extent of the James River flooding, an aircrew from the Table Rock Lake Composite Squadron — pilot Col. Gene Hartman, observer Capt. Bob Redfield and aerial photographer Maj. Lanna Fletcher — obtained 110 aerial still photographs during one flight above the cresting river.

One of the wing’s newest squadrons, the Branson-based Table Rock Lake unit is often called on to respond to natural emergencies such as tornadoes and severe winter weather, in addition to spring flooding. With a growing





membership of senior members and cadets alike, the squadron has several aircrews and ground teams ready to respond when needed.

Relationships established and nurtured over the years with state agencies — such as the State Emergency Management Agency, the Department of Transportation and the Department of Natural Resources, as well as the Missouri National Guard — have allowed the Missouri Wing to perform additional missions for the communities it serves while remaining a cost-effective resource for these agencies.

“The photos from this mission are being used by Stone County Emergency Services for future mitigation and response planning. Only by having high-quality photos can you really understand the magnitude of this type of flash flooding,” said Tom Martin, Stone County Emergency Management director. “We are very appreciative and thankful to be able to get this flooding event

documented by Civil Air Patrol with such quality and detail.”

Aerial photography training courses across the state have paid off for these disaster response missions, as the Missouri Wing is called on more frequently to document the extent of damage to infrastructure and property from above. In one recent instance, a Missouri aircrew discovered a previously unknown tornado path after a particularly strong spring storm that generated several other twisters.

But even real-world missions also serve as training missions, and this was no exception. Although only one sortie was eventually flown, the request from Stone County set in motion a well-practiced response by mission staff.

“Due to the continued training and excellent response of our citizen volunteers, we were able to approve Stone County’s request within 35 minutes and had an aircrew preparing their flight within an hour,” said

Maj. Austin Worcester, Missouri Wing director of emergency services and incident commander for the mission.

The Missouri Wing is prepared even for a tropical depression in the Midwest. ▲

Aerial photographs taken by the Missouri Wing show the extent of flooding along the James River after the remnants of Tropical Storm Bill moved through the southeastern section of the state. The river rose to a new record flood level of 22.2 feet, topping the previous record of 22 feet set in 1909. Photo by Maj. Lanna Fletcher, Missouri Wing

Inset: An aircrew from the Missouri Wing’s Table Rock Lake Composite Squadron — from left, observer Capt. Bob Redfield, aerial photographer Maj. Lanna Fletcher and pilot Col. Gene Hartman — obtained 110 aerial photographs during one flight above the cresting James River. Photo courtesy of Tom Martin, Stone County EMA