

Civil Air Patrol National Headquarters Gippsland GA8 Airvan



At left, the Gippsland GA8 Airvan with the CAP paint scheme

About the Airvan

April 5, 2004 – Civil Air Patrol owns two of only three Gippsland GA8 Airvans currently in use in the United States. The Airvan, shown above, is an eight-seat, single-engine, single-propeller, high-wing utility aircraft. It is built by Gippsland Aeronautics, Australia's leading manufacturer of commercial aircraft, at their manufacturing base at Latrobe Regional Airport in Victoria's Latrobe Valley. Although it is built in Australia, approximately 85 percent of its parts are manufactured in the United States.

The Airvan captured CAP's interest during the 2002 Experimental Aircraft Association's AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wis. CAP personnel were impressed with the Airvan's large cabin and wide door, which could provide space for mission equipment and additional crew. The Airvan's large windows also would provide excellent visibility, important for missions requiring aerial photography or videography. Its fuel capacity allows the Gippsland to remain airborne for approximately 10 hours.

CAP conducted initial flight trials for the Airvan at Buena Vista Airport in the Colorado Rocky Mountains, with flights also made from Leadville Airport, the highest airport in North America, and third highest in the world with an elevation of 9,927 feet.

CAP put the Airvan through rigorous performance and handling tests with particular emphasis on the ability to maneuver the aircraft at slow speeds, a capability necessary for CAP operations. The Airvan met or exceeded all of the CAP mission criteria.

In January 2003, CAP contracted with Gippsland to provide Airvans on an Indefinite Delivery - Indefinite Quantity basis for the next three years. CAP has already purchased two Airvans, with one currently hangared at Maxwell AFB, Ala.

The other Airvan is located in CAP's Pacific Region. CAP will use that Airvan later this month as the platform for hyperspectral imaging equipment now being tested for mission use.

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