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# *Heraldry of the* **SOUTH DAKOTA WING RANGER PATCH**

Beginning in the 1980s and possibly lasting into the mid-1990s the South Dakota Wing had a special Ranger training program for ground search and rescue team members. The program was loosely based on the national CAP Ranger program taught at Hawk Mountain in Pennsylvania. South Dakota Wing's Ranger program placed special emphasis on ground search procedures, land navigation, radio-direction-finding techniques, field first aid, wilderness survival skills and physical fitness. The Wing's Ranger program gradually died out in the mid-to-late 1990s when not enough Senior Members were willing to undergo the intense level of training.



3-1/8 INCH VERSION



4-INCH VARIANT

The 3-1/8 inch, fully embroidered round patch has a merrowed edge. The complex design consists of an outer ring of light blue bearing the words "Civil Air Patrol" at the top and "Rangers" at the bottom in bold black block letters. There is a thin black dividing line between the outer and inner ring. The upper three quarters of the inner ring are medium blue; the bottom quarter is dark blue. At the top of the medium blue inner ring is a stylized depiction of a Cessna aircraft in white with a large radio antenna pointing downwards. From the bottom of the aircraft is a downwards pointing dark red cone. Reading upwards toward the nose of the aircraft along the left edge of the cone are the words "Search & Rescue" in thin black block letters. Reading downwards from the tail of the aircraft along the right edge of the cone is the word "Communications" in thin black block letters. Within the dark blue field are the block letters "SD" in white, one letter on each side of the red cone. Within the red cone, directly below the aircraft, reading vertically is the word "Air" in black medium block letters. In the center of the cone is a large golden yellow lightning bolt at an angle from upper left to lower right. Below the lightning bolt, reading vertically, is the word "Air Support" in black medium block letters.

There is a 4-inch variant of this patch that is identical in design with the exception that the aircraft at top center is just a silver blob, the outer ring is silver instead of light blue and the cone is much brighter red than in the smaller patch. The purpose for this patch is not known.

Upon successful completion of a Ranger Encampment the graduate was presented with the unique South Dakota Wing Ranger Patch. In addition, he/she was also presented with a maroon beret. The beret bore a shield

shaped flash on the front. The embroidered flash consisted of a black field with a wide golden yellow border. In the center of the black field was a golden yellow lightning bolt running from upper right to lower left.



**PHOTO COURTESY OF LT. COL. DAVID JEFFRIES**

A maroon tee-shirt with the beret flash printed on the shirt exists. It is not known what the purpose of the tee-shirt was. Anecdotally, it has been reported that in addition to the maroon beret the Ranger instructor staff at the encampments also wore a maroon ascot with their fatigue uniform.

The South Dakota Wing Ranger patch, and presumably the Ranger beret flash, was designed by two cadets of the Rushmore Composite Squadron one of whom was David Dirkson. It is likely that the patch was initially approved by Col. Jerry Haden who commanded the Wing from 1985-1990 and was reapproved by his successors; Col. Alden House, 1990-1994 and Col. Rob Moore, 1994-1996.