SHREVEPORT (AP) — Lt. Col. Rose Macey prefers to keep her feet firmly on the ground in her work with the Civil Air Patrol.

Macey, 82, is celebrating her 50th anniversary with the U.S. Air Force auxiliary organization. The Civil Air Patrol offers aerospace education for children, cadet programs for teens interested in aviation and emergency search and rescue services when planes crash.

Macey commands a cadet squadron in Haughton. Her cadets operate as a ground crew, learning how to search for plane crash survivors and secure crash sites.

“She's really sweet,” said ninth-grader Casey Welch, a Haughton cadet. “She's like the grandmother I never had. She (has) a knowledge of the regulations. She loves the cadets.”

Welch, 10 other Haughton cadets and Macey recently participated in a search-and-rescue drill at Shreveport's Downtown Airport.

The scenario was a midair collision between two airplanes, with the pilots bailing out. By late afternoon, spotter pilots hadn't located objects representing the crash site and pilots. The search continued the next day.

Macey is a whiz at the clerical work that accompanies such CAP operations.

“She taught us how to do the paperwork to make these operations flow,” said Lt. Col. Alan Williams, regional director of CAP operations.

Macey joined the Civil Air Patrol in 1952 while her husband, Bill, a U.S. Air Force maintenance man, was in Korea. She transferred from one CAP squadron to another as she followed her husband's military career around the country.

She praises the organization for its role in shaping children. Her greatest need is more adults in the Haughton squadron. Cadets must be supervised during activities.

“If more people knew the value of the Civil Air Patrol, it would be four or five times bigger than it is now. If more adults were involved, it would keep more kids off the street,” Macey said.

“I plan to be in it 'til I die, and I want to be buried in my military uniform.”