



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
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OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR OPERATIONS, PLANS AND  
REQUIREMENTS  
COMMANDER, CIVIL AIR PATROL-UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
COMMANDER, CIVIL AIR PATROL

FROM: Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Manpower and Reserve Affairs)

SUBJECT: Civil Air Patrol NCO Corps CONOP and Implementation Plan

Pursuant to HAF Mission Directive 1-24, para 3.6., providing that SAF/MR is responsible for "oversight" of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), and AFPD 10-27, I am approving the attached CONOP and Implementation plan for the restructuring of the CAP NCO Corps.

A restructured CAP NCO program will:

- Establish a process to promote members within the NCO structure.
- Authorize the wear of CAP specific chevrons.
- Provide CAP commanders with access to the professional military skills, training and experience of former NCOs.
- Train and advise non-prior service members of CAP in the methods and procedures of military organization, leadership and management, and allow them to become NCOs.
- Consolidate CAP military skills training – wear of the uniform, customs and courtesies, drill and ceremonies, and leadership – into a single resource.

Implementing the proposal will enhance recruitment and retention of current and former enlisted members. It will also further empower CAP to employ the civilian talents of volunteers and the unique skill set of our NCO Corps - the "foundation" and "backbone" of today's military services - to bolster CAP's mission capability and readiness.

My point of contact for this matter is Mr. Thomas Shubert, SAF/MRR, 571-256-4044 or via email at [thomas.shubert@pentagon.af.mil](mailto:thomas.shubert@pentagon.af.mil).

DANIEL B. GINSBERG  
Assistant Secretary  
(Manpower and Reserve Affairs)

Attachment:  
CAP NCO Corps CONOP and Implementation Plan

cc:  
AETC/CC

## **PROPOSED RESTRUCTURING of CIVIL AIR PATROL'S NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER (NCO) CORPS**

**1. PURPOSE:** IAW AFI 10-2701, 29 Jul 05, paragraphs 1.3.1, 1.3.2 and 1.3.4, request approval for the following:

- a. To restructure CAP's current non-commissioned officer (NCO) program in order to:
  1. To establish a process to promote members within the NCO structure.
  2. To authorize the wear of CAP specific chevrons (Figure 1.).
  3. To provide CAP commanders with access to the professional military skills, training and experience, of former NCOs.
  4. To train and advise non-prior service members of CAP in the methods and procedures of military organization, leadership and management.
  5. To consolidate CAP military skills training – wear of the uniform, customs and courtesies, drill and ceremonies, and basic leadership – into a single resource at all levels of CAP command.

**2. OBJECTIVE:** CAP NCOs are a diverse group of prior service members from all branches of the armed forces of the United States. Each is unique in military background, training, skills, and experience. To best leverage the NCO resource to support CAP's missions there must be a consistent, well-defined set of expectations, standards and opportunities to weld this diverse group into a unified corps of leaders, trainers, advisors, and mentors in support of CAP, its members and missions. Restructuring and formalizing the NCO program will enhance CAP's ability to perform its missions by providing additional resources for volunteer leaders at all levels.

The restructured NCO Corps will retain its traditional role of technician, leader, mentor, and advisor and will mirror the USAF's structure. The CAP NCO Corps, while based on the active component, will continue to reflect the unique unpaid volunteer professional character of the corporate national structure. Implementation of the restructuring of CAP's NCO Corps will be phased in accordance with Concept of Operations (CONOP) at Annex A. During Phases II and III of the CONOP, plans and development of regulations will occur to implement the process of allowing new CAP adult members, with no prior military service, to enter the NCO Corps.

**3. BACKGROUND:** While CAP encourages citizens with no previous military background to volunteer to support CAP's missions for America, the nature of CAP's mission requires an understanding of military culture. The recruitment of former military members allows CAP to bridge the gap between the civilian talents of volunteers and the unique skill set of the military personnel, especially NCOs - the "foundation" and "backbone" of today's military services.

- a. CAP memberships consist of Senior Members (SM) and Cadet Members (CM). Cadets enter CAP as Cadet Airman Basic (C/AB) and have the ability to progress to Cadet NCO and then to Cadet Officer. Senior members may be NCOs (CAP SSgt thru CAP CMSgt), Officers or simply SM (unranked). Senior Members currently serving or retired from military service may be promoted to the grade rank held in the Service, up to and including CAP Lt Col. Officer ranks of CAP Colonel and above are reserved for CAP Wing Commanders, and Region and National Staff officers.

b. While CAP's officer program allows for SMs to progress in rank based on ability, experience and training, at present, there is currently no avenue for CAP's NCOs to progress in rank. Unlike the Air Force, CAP's NCO Corps has no rank quota limits. For example, if only retired CMSgts joined CAP, and each desired to retain their AF rank, then CAP's NCO Corps would consist of all Chiefs. CAP currently has around 80 former military NCOs who have elected to retain their NCO grade in CAP. Under the proposed restructured NCO Corps program, Service members currently serving or retired from military service can be promoted to the rank held in service up to and including SMSgt. Promotion to the rank of CAP CMSgt will be reserved for designated positions, as are those of CAP colonel and general officer ranks, at Wing, Region and National Headquarters staff positions.

c. The lack of promotion opportunities, defined duty positions and recognition for unique training and skills earned during military service are the explanations most often given by military NCOs to explain their lack of interest or incentive for membership in CAP. Restructuring CAP's NCO Corps will foster greatly expand membership, enhance and complement CAP's Officer Corps, and improve the cadet program – all of which serve to bolster CAP's mission capability and readiness.

#### **4. RESTRUCTURED PROGRAM:**

a. Eligibility: Appointment to the CAP NCO program will initially be restricted to persons who currently hold, or previously held, the grades of E-5 through E-9 in any component of the armed forces to include the US Coast Guard. Eligibility of prior service NCOs is further restricted to include only those honorably discharged from their respective service branch.

b. Rank Structure: CAP NCO Corps ranks will consist of the following:

Staff Sergeant (SSgt)  
Technical Sergeant (TSgt)  
Master Sergeant (MSgt)  
Senior Master Sergeant (SMSgt)  
Chief Master Sergeant (CMSgt)

\* CAP currently has five members holding the rank equivalent of E-4 Sgt (formerly Buck Sergeant). To align with the AF's NCO Corps structure, these members will either seek approval for promotion to CAP SSgt or revert to SM (unranked) status.

c. Duty Positions: NCOs will be eligible to hold any position within CAP, including pilot, except those normally reserved for officers (e.g. Unit Commanders) and will be assigned at any CAP organizational level; Squadron, Group, Wing, Region or National Headquarters. Where possible, assignments will be rank appropriate and consider the member's professional development training, professional military skills and professional and personal goals. CAP Senior NCOs (MSgt, SMSgt, and CMSgt) may be in charge of a unit designated as a flight (if there are no CAP officers assigned); however, NCOs will not be authorized to command a Squadron, Group, Wing, or Region. Typical NCO duty assignments by rank and position are described as follows:

1. CAP Staff Sergeant (SSgt): Level I (Orientation), working towards specific skill set (professional development). Should be given opportunities to further develop technical abilities and to demonstrate leadership skills. Responsible for the effective accomplishment of all assigned tasks.

2. CAP Technical Sergeant (TSgt): Level II (Technical Rating). Fully qualified in a specific professional development track. Assigned to a specific area/position within the unit (i.e., Safety Supervisor, Communications Supervisor, Ground Team Supervisor, Cadet Programs Supervisor, etc.)

3. CAP Master Sergeant (MSgt): Level III (Senior Rating). Experienced member of the unit. Assigned to a specific area/position within the unit (i.e., Safety Supervisor, Ground Team Supervisor, Communications Supervisor, Cadet Programs Supervisor etc.), program, project or policy managers. Role models/mentors of Cadets and newly assigned senior members. Participates in the decision making process, as appropriate, on technical, operational, and organizational issues.

4. CAP Senior Master Sergeant (SMSgt): Level IV, assigned to Group, Wing or Region. Role models/Mentors, program, project or policy managers (i.e., Superintendents of Cadet Programs, Transportation, Aerospace Education). Program/Project oversight responsibilities; Directors of Summer Encampments, Cadet Special Activities, Group, Wing, Region Special Activities. Participates in the decision making process, as appropriate, on technical, operational, and organizational issues.

5. CAP Chief Master Sergeant (CMSgt): Level V, assigned to Wing/Region/National Headquarters. Role model/Mentor, Senior Advisor to the Commander, Program/Project oversight responsibilities, (i.e., Chief Emergency Services, Chief of Finance, Chief of Logistics, etc.). Participates in the decision making process, as appropriate, on technical, operational and organizational issues.

d. Promotion Criteria (Current and Former Military):

1. All members, regardless of current, former or retired military rank, will enter CAP as a Senior Member. Former and retired military rank will be verified using the member's DD Form 214. Before the member can assume a CAP NCO rank, initial skills training must be completed and the member must be granted permission from their commander.

2. Minimum criteria for promotion eligibility include, but is not limited to, time-in-grade (TIG); Professional Development (skill level) training; and duty performance. Promotion eligibility will be tied to progression in a professional development specialty. Promotion limits exist only for key NCO leadership positions. These positions are identified in Table 2. Such promotion to a key leadership position is not restricted by the number of NCOs who already hold a certain rank within that unit.

3. Promotion Authority is as follows:

- a) SSgt and TSgt – Unit Commander
- b) MSgt – Wing Commander (promotion board required)
- c) SMSgt – Region Commander (promotion board required)
- d) CMSgt – National Commander (promotion board required)

4. The tracking of ranks for Senior Members promoted via the CAP NCO Program will be the same as those Senior Members promoted as CAP Officers.

Refer to Table 1. for skill level and TIG requirements for promotion eligibility.

**Table 1. Professional Development Skill Level and Time-in-Grade Criteria**

Promotion to	Minimum Skill Level	Time-in-Grade
SSgt	Orientation (Level I)	6 Months (SM)
TSgt	Technical Rating (Level II)	12 Months
MSgt	Senior Rating (Level III)	24 Months
SMSgt	Level IV	36 Months
CMSgt	Level V	48 Months

**NOTES:**

1. Promotion eligibility is tied to progression in a "Professional Development Specialty."

2. If the member's NCO grade is higher than SSgt they must still complete Level I and a minimum of 6 months in CAP prior to the initial appointment to the equivalent military rank. Subsequent promotions must meet the minimum skill level and time in grade requirements.

3. Time in grade requirements are based on the member's grade in CAP and is not affected by a currently serving member's time in military grade.

4. Once a member enters the NCO Corps, promotion is based entirely on the above criteria and is not affected by a currently serving member's military promotion.

5. NCOs desiring to enter the Officer Corps must satisfy requirements in CAP regulations.

3. Members eligible for promotion may only be promoted if selected for the positions identified in Table 2. Where "any position" is listed, there are no limits to the number of members promotable to the respective grade. Promotion limits exist only for key NCO leadership positions. Promotions to the rank of CAP SSgt or TSgt are permanent. Promotions to the rank of CAP MSgt, SMSgt and CMSgt are temporary (refer to paragraph f).

**Table 2. Proposed Promotion Quota Authorization and Tenure**

<b>Promotion to</b>	<b>Authorized</b>	<b>Position Held</b>	<b>Minimum Tenure</b>
SSgt	No Limit	Any position	NA
TSgt	No Limit	Any position	NA
MSgt	One per unit	Unit/Squadron NCO	2 years
SMSgt	One per Gp/Wg/Region	NCO Advisor	3 years
CMSgt	One per Wing/Region	Senior NCO Advisor	4 years
CMSgt	Nation Headquarters	Command or National Chief	3 years

**NOTES:**

1. Tenure is described in paragraph f.
2. Selection for Command or National Chief is NOT a promotable position, rather only sitting Chiefs are eligible for this position.

**Table 3. Promoting Authority**

<u><b>Promotion to</b></u>	<u><b>Promoting Authority</b></u>
Staff Sergeant	Unit Commander
Technical Sergeant	Unit Commander
Master Sergeant	*Wing Commander
Senior Master Sergeant	*Region Commander
Chief Master Sergeant	*National Commander

**\*Promotion/Selection Board required (see paragraph e below).**

**e. Promotion/Selection Boards:**

1. Panel members will consider the minimum criteria listed in Table 1 and employ the "whole person" concept.
2. Board Presidents will be the appropriate commander (Squadron, Wing, Region or National Commander) for level of promotion. Panel members will be senior in rank to the candidates and will be appointed by the presiding commander. Boards may be held in person or be conducted telephonically and will consist of no less than the President and five panel members.
3. Promotion boards (Unit Level) will be held annually for promotion to SSgt and TSgt. Promotion boards for MSgt (Wing Level) through CMSgt (at least Region Level – requires National Commander approval) will be held as vacancies arise.

When no vacancies exist for SNCOs, members cannot be promoted to any of the senior grades.

4. Just as Wing and Region Commanders meet a "Selection Board," SNCOs will meet a combined Selection/Promotion Board for the positions listed in Table 2.

5. If a vacancy exists, the member selected for that position will be promoted to the rank commensurate with that position. Under no circumstances will a member be promoted more than one grade to fulfill a vacant position (e.g. a CAP SSgt will not be promoted to CAP MSgt for the purpose of filling a vacancy). All members being promoted must meet the professional development skill level and time in grade criteria for the grade. Members not satisfying promotion eligibility requirements may still be appointed to a vacancy; however, they will not be promoted in rank.

f. Tenure:

1. CMSgts will be promoted into key leadership positions. As such, tenure rules as applicable to wing and region commanders will apply, namely one year in probationary status and three years of continuance for a maximum of four years in position to which the CMSgt is appointed. The National Command Chief will serve at the pleasure of the National Commander and does not have a tenure limit.

2. Tenure for MSgt is 2 years; tenure for SMSgt is 3 years.

3. With Region Commander approval, SNCO members will retain their rank following successful completion of their assignment.

4. Members removed early from positions for cause will revert to the rank attained prior to selection. Any member removed for cause could be subject to Membership Action Review Panel proceedings.

g. NCO Chevrons:

1. At present, CAP NCOs wear AF chevrons on their CAP uniforms. The restructured Corps will wear the distinctive proposed chevrons shown in Figure 1 and will serve to distinguish CAP's NCO Corps as a separate professional NCO corps.

2. CAP CMSgts will hold a position equivalent to the AF's Command Chief; however, no "star" is used on the chevron to signify this position.

3. CAP NCO Corps does not have an equivalent First Sergeant position; therefore, no "diamond" is authorized on chevrons.

Figure 1. NCO Chevron Design

Current Wear



AF SSgt

Proposed



CAP SSgt

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Current Wear



AF TSgt

Proposed



CAP TSgt

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Current Wear



AF MSgt

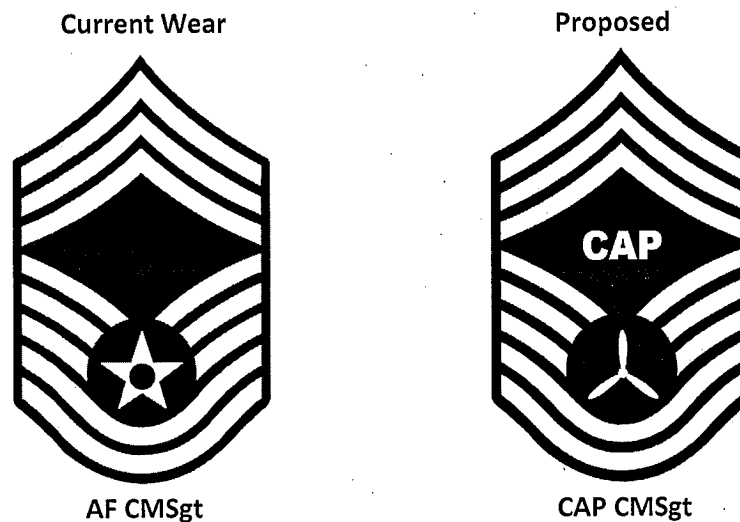
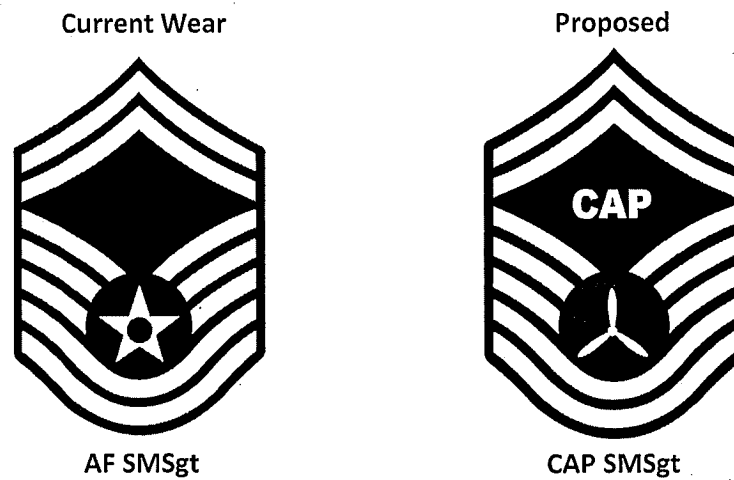
Proposed



CAP MSgt



**Figure 1. NCO Chevron Design (continued)**



**4. NCO Creed:**

a. CAP has developed an NCO creed that draws from their rich heritage of partnering with the Air Force. CAP's leadership plays a critical role in establishing the new NCO culture and this creed lays the foundation for a new belief that will be fostered and promoted, not only with CAP's leaders or the NCO Corps, but with all CAP members. CAP's Officer and Cadet Corps must understand the dedication, professionalism, sage advice and valuable contributions NCO's bring to CAP.

## **Civil Air Patrol Noncommissioned Officer Creed**

*No one is more professional than I. I am a Sergeant in the Civil Air Patrol: a leader of people. I am proud of the Civil Air Patrol Sergeants Program and will, at all times, conduct myself so as to bring credit upon it. I will not use my grade or position to attain profit or safety.*

*Competence is my watchword. I will strive to remain proficient. I will always be aware of my role as a Sergeant in the Civil Air Patrol. I will fulfill my responsibilities and display professionalism at all times. I will strive to know my people and use their skills to the maximum degree possible. I will always place their needs above my own and will communicate with my supervisor and my people and never leave them uninformed.*

*I will exert every effort and risk any ridicule to successfully accomplish my assigned duties. I will not look at a person and see any race, creed, color, religion, sex, age, or national origin, for I will only see the person; nor will I ever show prejudice or bias. I will lead by example and will resort to disciplinary action only when necessary.*

*I will carry out the orders of my superiors to the best of ability and will always obey the decisions of my superiors. I will give all officers my maximum support to ensure mission accomplishments. I will earn their respect, obey their orders, and establish a high degree of integrity with them. I will exercise initiative in the absence of orders and will make decisive and accurate decisions. I will never compromise my integrity, nor my moral courage. I will not forget that I am a Professional, a Leader, but above all a Sergeant in the Civil Air Patrol.*

### **5. NCO Corps Committee:**

a. The CAP NCO Corps Committee serves to advise the CAP National Commander during the development and implementation of this CONOP, and shall further serve at the pleasure of the Commander to address matters pertaining to the NCO Corps. Until this CONOP is fully implemented, the current committee members (all presently serving or retired SNCOs and Officers, several of whom are past CAP wing and region commanders) shall continue to provide their expertise. Once Phase III of the Implementation Plan is complete, CAP/CC will appoint members to the committee, based on CAP/CCC recommendation, that affords the best mix of leadership, expertise and talent to ensure continued success of the NCO Corps program. There is no limit to the number of committee members; however, as a minimum the committee will be chaired by the CAP/CCC and include a representative from each of CAP's eight regions.

## **ANNEX A**

### **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

#### **Phase I - Program Development and Initial Implementation (18-24 months implementation)**

- Resurrect NCO Corps Committee for executing all three phases
- Strategic Communications Plan development
- Chevron development and procurement
- Review/development of promotable positions to include grade classification
- CAP regulation development and/or revision
- Recruitment plan development (existing members)
- Develop gap-filler plan for Wings lacking sufficient number of NCO members
- Identify positions requiring Performance Reports and develop report standards
- Post-phase update to CAP leadership, AF/A3/5 and SAF/MRR

#### **Phase II - Professional Military Education (18-24 months implementation)**

- Identify Active, Reserve and Guard resources available to aid in PME development
- Develop Noncommissioned Officer's School
- Redefined the standards for entry into the CAP Officer program
- Produce and implement NCO Force Development Plan
- Synchronize Officer and NCO PME to complement total force
- Prepare existing NCOs for receiving non-military members
- Develop CAP regulations and guides for non-military members entering NCO corps
- Post-phase update to CAP leadership, AF/A3/5 and SAF/MRR

#### **Phase III - Prepare for Non-Military members (18-24 months implementation)**

- Develop plan for direct entry of non-military members
- Complete revision of promotion eligibility and professional development training criteria to synchronize Officer and NCO Corps
- Refine CAP regulations and guides based on lessons learned
- Post-phase update to CAP leadership, AF/A3/5 and SAF/MRR

#### **Notes:**

- Milestone completion dates as determined by the committee and CAP leadership (anticipate at least eighteen months per phase)
- NCO Corps Committee members will be appointed by CAP/CC upon recommendations from CAP/CCC and region commanders