

TO: CAP Board of Governors & National Board

FROM: Brig Gen Amy Courter
Col Russ Hodgkins
Don Rowland

RE: VSAF Program Clarification

DATE: January 17, 2008

CAP recently announced the launch of a new pilot program – Volunteer Support to the Air Force (VSAF). Immediately following the announcement, several concerns were expressed by members regarding the viability and credibility of the program. In particular, questions were raised regarding the reasons for selecting a new name and a new uniform. Is VSAF designed to replace CAP? Are uniformed CAP members an embarrassment to the Air Force? Certainly there is a need to address these concerns as we move toward the program's January 28 kickoff at Wright-Patterson and Randolph Air Force Bases.

VSAF was conceived at the highest level of the Air Force leadership to augment the U.S. Air Force's existing resources and to address military personnel shortages caused by deployments and manning reductions. CAP volunteers participating in VSAF will provide vital support functions -- including those that support operational missions or enhance the quality of life on base -- that have been reduced or eliminated due to a lack of Air Force personnel. Examples of support for operational missions include working at base operations, supporting mobility deployment processing centers, and helping administration in flying squadrons. Examples of support for quality of life on base include staffing family readiness centers, which provide military families and single military members with the quality-of-life support they need to cope with the demands of Air Force life. Similarly, staffing at fitness centers, skills development centers, libraries, and special events improves Air Force life for those service members and their families. After a test period, other bases nationwide may participate in the program, and additional support areas may be developed.

VSAF provides CAP another valuable opportunity to serve this great nation. It is designed to complement our Missions for America, not to replace our entire program of service or replace any current mission area. It is an additive mission; a perfect example of CAP's growth into the future!

The selection of the distinctive polo and khaki uniform, rather than a military-style uniform, was a conscious decision as well. Since it is anticipated that members will frequently work side-by-side Air Force civilian employees and enlisted personnel, many of whom may not be familiar with CAP's rank structure and because members may be providing customer service to junior enlisted personnel or dependents, we did not want the uniform to become an obstacle that distracts from the support our volunteers will provide to the Air Force through this program.

Finally, VSAF is simply the promotional name selected for this new mission. It is unique in that it is truly one of the first missions CAP has undertaken in which individual CAP members will be working with individual Air Force personnel versus CAP providing service as a group. Within the Air Force, we expect that the name will be CAP-VSAF: providing enhanced visibility to the Civil Air Patrol, while also being descriptive of what the service members should expect – our support!

We hope this memorandum provides you the additional information needed to generate enthusiasm to support this initiative! As always, if you have questions, suggestions, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us, or your CAP leadership.