

= Civil Air Patrol =

The Civil Air Patrol ( CAP ) is a congressionally chartered , federally supported non @-@ profit corporation that serves as the official civilian auxiliary of the United States Air Force ( USAF ) . CAP is a volunteer organization with an aviation @-@ minded membership that includes people from all backgrounds , lifestyles , and occupations . It performs three congressionally assigned key missions : emergency services , which includes search and rescue ( by air and ground ) and disaster relief operations ; aerospace education for youth and the general public ; and cadet programs for teenage youth . In addition , CAP has recently been tasked with homeland security and courier service missions . CAP also performs non @-@ auxiliary missions for various governmental and private agencies , such as local law enforcement and the American Red Cross . The program is established as an organization by Title 10 of the United States Code and its purposes defined by Title 36 .

Membership in the organization consists of cadets ranging from 12 to just under 21 years of age , and senior members 18 years of age and up . These two groups each have the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of pursuits ; the cadet program contributes to the development of the former group with a structured syllabus and an organization based upon United States Air Force ranks and pay grades , while the older members serve as instructors , supervisors , and operators . All members wear uniforms while performing their duties .

Nationwide , CAP is a major operator of single @-@ engine general aviation aircraft , used in the execution of its various missions , including orientation flights for cadets and the provision of significant emergency services capabilities . Because of these extensive flying opportunities , many CAP members become licensed pilots .

The hierarchical and military auxiliary organization is headed by the National Headquarters ( with authority over the national organization ) followed by eight regional commands and 52 wings ( each of the 50 states plus Washington , D.C. and Puerto Rico ) . Each wing supervises the individual groups and squadrons that comprise the basic operational unit of the organization .

= = History = =

Civil Air Patrol was conceived in the late 1930s by aviation advocate Gill Robb Wilson , who foresaw general aviation 's potential to supplement America 's military operations . With the help of New York Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia , in his capacity as then @-@ Director of the Office of Civilian Defense , CAP was created with Administrative Order 9 , signed by LaGuardia on 1 December 1941 and published 8 December 1941 . The Civil Air Patrol had 90 days to prove themselves to Congress . Major General John F. Curry was appointed as the first national commander . Texas oilman David Harold Byrd was a co @-@ founder of CAP .

During World War II , CAP was seen as a way to use America 's civilian aviation resources to aid the war effort instead of grounding them . The organization assumed many missions including anti @-@ submarine patrol and warfare , border patrols , and courier services . During World War II CAP 's coastal patrol flew 24 million miles , found 173 enemy U @-@ boats , attacked 57 , hit 10 and sank two , dropping a total of 83 bombs and depth charges throughout the conflict . By the end of the war , 64 CAP members had lost their lives in the line of duty .

After the end of World War II , CAP became the civilian auxiliary of the United States Air Force , and its incorporating charter declared that it would never again be involved in direct combat activities , but would be of a benevolent nature . The " supervisory " USAF organization overseeing CAP has changed several times . This has included the former Continental Air Command in 1959 , the former Headquarters Command , USAF in 1968 , to the Air University ( AU ) in 1976 . Following Air University 's reassignment as a subordinate command to the Air Education and Training Command ( AETC ) in 1993 , USAF oversight of CAP has flowed from AETC at the 4 @-@ star level , to AU at the 3 @-@ star level , to AU 's Jeanne M. Holm Center for Officer Accessions and Citizen Development at the 1 @-@ star level , to a subordinate unit of 1st Air Force at the 3 @-@ star level with Civil Air Patrol @-@ U.S. Air Force as a stand alone unit lead at the Colonel ( O @-@ 6 ) level . Since its incorporation charter , CAP has maintained its relationship with the USAF , and has

continued its three congressionally mandated missions .

During the 113th United States Congress , both the United States Senate and the United States House of Representatives voted to pass S. 309 , a bill that would award the Congressional Gold Medal to the World War II members of the Civil Air Patrol . The medal would be presented " in recognition of their military service and exemplary record during World War II . "

= = Missions = =

Civil Air Patrol has three congressionally mandated missions : emergency services , aerospace education and cadet programs .

= = = Emergency services = = =

Civil Air Patrol covers several emergency services areas . The principal categories include search and rescue missions , disaster relief , humanitarian services , and United States Air Force support . Other services , such as homeland security and actions against drug @-@ trafficking operations , are becoming increasingly important .

Civil Air Patrol is well known for its search activities in conjunction with search and rescue ( SAR ) operations . CAP is involved with approximately three quarters of all aerial inland SAR missions directed by the United States Air Force Rescue Coordination Center at Tyndall Air Force Base , Florida . Outside of the continental United States , CAP directly supports the Joint Rescue Coordination Centers in Alaska , Hawaii , and Puerto Rico . CAP is credited with saving an average of 100 lives per year .

CAP is active in disaster relief operations , especially in areas such as Florida , Mississippi and Louisiana that are frequently struck by hurricanes as well as Oklahoma and Texas which are frequented by large , damaging tornadoes . CAP aircrews and ground personnel provide transportation for cargo and officials , aerial imagery to aid emergency managers in assessing damage , and donations of personnel and equipment to local , state and federal disaster relief organizations during times of need . In 2004 , several hurricanes hit the southeast coast of the United States , with Florida being the worst damaged ; CAP was instrumental in providing help to affected areas .

Civil Air Patrol conducts humanitarian service missions , usually in support of the Red Cross . CAP aircrews transport time @-@ sensitive medical materials , including blood and human tissue , when other means of transportation ( such as ambulances ) are not practical or possible . Following the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City when all general aviation was grounded , one of the first planes to fly over the World Trade Center site was a CAP aircraft taking photographs .

CAP performs several missions that are not combat @-@ related in support of the United States Air Force , including damage assessment , transportation of officials , communications support and low @-@ altitude route surveys . The CAP fleet is used in training exercises to prepare USAF pilots to intercept enemy aircraft over the Continental United States . Civil Air Patrol aircraft are flown into restricted airspace , where United States Air Force pilots may practice high @-@ speed intercepts .

As a humanitarian service organization , CAP assists federal , state and local agencies in preparing for and responding to homeland security needs .

The Red Cross , Salvation Army and other civilian agencies frequently ask Civil Air Patrol aircraft to transport vital supplies including medical technicians , medication , and other vital supplies . They often rely on CAP to provide airlift and communications for disaster relief operations . CAP also assists the United States Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary .

Civil Air Patrol assists the U.S. Customs and Border Protection , Drug Enforcement Administration , and United States Forest Service in the War on Drugs . In 2005 , CAP flew over 12 @,@ 000 hours in support of this mission and led these agencies to the confiscation of illegal substances valued at over US \$ 400 million . Civil Air Patrol makes extensive use of the Airborne Real @-@ time Cueing Hyperspectral Enhanced Reconnaissance system , mounted on the Gippssland GA8 Airvan . The

system is able to evaluate spectral signatures given off by certain objects , allowing the system to identify , for example , a possible marijuana crop .

= = = Aerospace education = = =

The Aerospace Education Program provides aviation related education and educational activities for members , including formal , graded courses about all aspects of aviation including flight physics , dynamics , history , and application . Courses covering the space program , and new technologies and advances in aviation and space exploration , are also available . There are several programs for CAP pilots to improve their flying skills and earn Federal Aviation Administration ratings .

The Cadet Program has a mandatory aerospace education program ; in order to progress , a cadet must take a number of courses and tests relating to aviation . Cadets also have educational opportunities through museum tours , National Cadet Special Activities , military and civilian orientation rides , and guest speakers .

Senior members may study aerospace through the Senior Member Professional Development Program . CAP encourages its senior members to learn about aviation and its history , although this is not mandatory . Those who complete the Aerospace Education Program for Senior Members may earn the Charles E. " Chuck " Yeager Aerospace Education Award .

Through outreach programs , including the External Aerospace Education program , CAP helps school teachers integrate aviation and aerospace into the classroom by providing seminars , course materials and through sponsorship of the National Congress on Aviation and Space Education . Members also provide their communities with resources for better management of airports and other aviation @-@ related facilities , and promote the benefits of such facilities . The organization also works with other groups , such as the Boy Scouts of America , the Girl Scouts of the USA and 4 @-@ H to fulfill the education goal set down in the organization 's Congressional charter ? to " encourage and foster civil aviation in local communities . "

= = = Cadet programs = = =

Civil Air Patrol 's first cadet program was started during World War II in 1942 as a way to provide training for future pilots . Since then , the program has flourished , combining aerospace education with leadership and career training .

Today , CAP cadets are those members who join from age 12 through age 18 . Cadets who turn 18 may either become a senior member or remain a cadet until their 21st birthday at their own discretion . Cadets who join the military and wish to remain in CAP must become senior members when they begin active duty . Cadets who join the National Guard or Reserve may remain cadets until they are activated for a purpose other than training .

As a cadet progresses through the cadet program , he / she earns various achievements by successfully passing both Leadership and Aerospace Education tests . Test questions are derived from reading materials supplied to cadets , but the program is also designed to allow cadets to fill ever increasing leadership roles that are pertinent to their Leadership Studies questions .

As cadets advance through the ranks , they also progress through four stages of development . The first phase , The Learning Phase , introduces cadets to the CAP program , and cadets who pass all requirements receive the Wright Brothers award . The second phase , The Leadership Phase , begins placing more responsibility on cadets as leaders of newer cadets . Cadets who complete The Leadership Phase receive their Mitchell Award , and are eligible for advanced promotion upon enlisting in the military . The third phase , The Command Phase , places cadets directly in command of other cadets , allowing cadets to accomplish tasks through their staff members for the first time . Cadets who complete The Command Phase are awarded the Earhart Award . The Executive Phase is the last phase of the cadet program , and focus cadets on the operations of an entire unit . Cadets completing The Executive Phase are awarded the Eaker Award . The highest cadet award is the Spaatz Award and is awarded upon passing an extensive cumulative test .

As cadets progress through the program , they are placed in charge of lower ranking cadets .

Cadets aren't given full reign over the others, but instead are expected to instruct classes and mentor each other. Senior members, the adults of the program, also play a large role in mentoring and evaluating cadets. The numerous awards, achievements, and opportunities available to Civil Air Patrol cadets allows them to foster their leadership in an academic and forgiving environment.

Civil Air Patrol also has several cadet squadrons located in middle schools. CAP's School Enrichment Program (formerly known as Middle School Initiative) is a ready @-@ to @-@ use program for teachers and other mentors conduct leadership training through Aerospace Education classes. Students are introduced to the principles of flight, model rocketry, and also leadership. CAP's SEP program is similar to a Junior ROTC program. CAP has 47 units located in Middle School classrooms throughout the country.

The Cadet Program is overseen and administered by senior members, who generally specialize in the Cadet Program. For composite squadrons (which has Senior Member programs as well), the Cadet Commander's chain of command passes through the Deputy Commander for Cadets before reaching the squadron commander, with the Cadet Commander reporting directly to the squadron commander in cadet squadrons. There are 'Director of Cadet Programs' positions at all command levels higher than squadron. In addition to the Deputy Commander for Cadets, squadrons also have a Leadership Officer, a senior member whose job is to see to the military aspects of the cadet program, such as uniforms, customs and courtesies.

= = Membership = =

As of 31 August 2013, CAP had 60 @, @ 760 members ? 34 @, @ 740 senior members and 26 @, @ 020 cadets ? in over 1 @, @ 600 local units in all fifty states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and at numerous overseas United States Air Force installations. CAP members are civilians and are not paid by the United States government for their service. Rather, members are responsible for paying annual membership fees, and must pay for their own uniforms and other related expenses.

Senior membership is open to all U.S. citizens, and resident aliens aged 18 and over who are able to pass an FBI background check. There is no upper age limit, nor membership restrictions for physical disabilities, due to the number of different tasks which members may be called on to perform. Cadet membership is open to those aged between 12 and 18 who maintain satisfactory progress in school, as determined by the cadet's unit commander; upon their 18th birthday, cadets may become senior members or remain in the Cadet Program until they are 21.

The Civil Air Patrol motto, to which all members ascribe, is "Semper Vigilans", Latin for "Always Vigilant". All CAP members are also obligated by their service to the organization to abide by its core values: integrity, respect, excellence, and volunteer service.

= = = Senior members = = =

Senior members are members who joined CAP for the first time past the age of 18, or who are former cadets who transferred to the senior member program, which must happen by the cadet's 21st birthday. Senior members who have not yet turned 21 years are eligible for flight officer grades, which include flight officer, technical flight officer, and senior flight officer. There is no mandatory retirement age for CAP members, and there are no physical requirements for joining. Members may enter retired status after twenty years of service. The only physical requirements an officer must follow are the grooming and weight standards required of members who wear the United States Air Force @-@ style uniforms (these do not apply to members who choose to wear those uniform designs unique to Civil Air Patrol).

Officer grades up to lieutenant colonel reflect progression in training and organizational seniority, rather than command authority. Because of this, it is not uncommon for senior members commanding groups and squadrons to have members of superior grades serving under them. Current, retired and former members of the United States Armed Forces may be promoted directly to the CAP grade equivalent to their military grade, although some choose to follow the same

standards as non @-@ prior @-@ service members . Except for a few exceptional cases , senior members are only promoted to the grade of CAP colonel upon appointment as wing commander , responsible for the administration of CAP units across an entire state . Former military enlisted personnel may choose to retain their grade as senior members , with grades E @-@ 4 ( CAP sergeant ) through E @-@ 9 ( CAP chief master sergeant ) available . Current CAP National Commander Maj Gen Carr has recently unveiled plans to restructure the CAP NCO program to allow individuals to ' enlist ' as an NCO and progress through a specific professional development program . According to an AF.mil article on the subject , " The current design of the NCO corps in the CAP only allows former active @-@ duty NCOs to be a part of the corps , with no upgrade training for promotion within the ranks . The newly signed corps structure will mirror the Air Force NCO force structure with an established process to promote and develop NCOs . "

Senior members are provided with an optional Senior Member Professional Development program and are encouraged to progress within it . The professional development program consists of five levels , corresponding with grades from second lieutenant to lieutenant colonel . Each level of development has components of leadership training , corporate familiarization and aerospace education , as well as professional development within chosen " Specialty Tracks " . There are many Specialty Tracks and they are designed both to support the organization and to provide opportunities for senior members to take advantage of skills they have from their private lives . Available Specialty Tracks include Logistics , Communications , Cadet Programs , Public Affairs , Legal , Administration , Emergency Services , Finance , and many more . Additionally senior members with specific civilian professional qualifications may be awarded grade on the basis of their professional qualifications . Examples include FAA Certified Flight Instructors , Certified Ground Instructors , attorneys , medical professionals , Certified Public Accountants , clergy , and licensed educators or administrators who are often promoted directly to first lieutenant or captain .

= = = Cadet members = = =

Civil Air Patrol 's cadet program is a traditional military @-@ style cadet program , and is one of the three main missions of the Civil Air Patrol . CAP cadets wear modified versions of United States Air Force uniforms , hold rank and grade , and practice military customs and courtesies . They are required to maintain physical fitness standards , and are tested on their knowledge of leadership and aerospace subjects at each promotion opportunity .

= = = Concept = = =

The current CAP Cadet Program was designed by John V. " Jack " Sorenson who held the position of Civil Air Patrol 's Director of Aerospace Education in the 1960s . This program is composed of four phases ( Learning , Leadership , Command , and Executive ) each of which is divided into several achievements . Achievements generally correspond to grade promotions , while phases are tied to levels of responsibility . The Cadet Program operates at a local unit ( squadron ) level with weekly meetings and weekend activities , but also has national and wing @-@ sponsored events , including week @-@ long and multi @-@ week summer activities and camps .

As cadets progress through the program , they are given additional responsibility for scheduling , teaching , guiding and commanding the other cadets in their units . They also assist their senior staff in executing the Cadet Program . It is not unusual for a cadet officer to command an encampment of hundreds of junior Cadets . Cadets are given many opportunities to lead and to follow ; they may hold leadership positions at squadron and wing activities , and are often involved in planning these activities . Cadets may complete paperwork , command other cadets , and teach at weekly meetings and at weekend and summer events . The U.S. Congress stated in the Recruiting , Retention , and Reservist Promotion Act of 2000 that CAP and similar programs " provide significant benefits for the Armed Forces , including significant public relations benefits " .

= = = Cadet program awards and grade structure = = =

Cadets have a rank structure similar to the United States Air Force enlisted and officer grades , excluding those of general officers . A cadet starts as a cadet airman basic , and is promoted as he or she completes each achievement . Unlike the regular armed forces , where it is possible to enter as either directly as a commissioned following completion of some form of officer training ( service academy , college ROTC , or OCS / OTS , etc . ) , or enlist and eventually advance to non @-@ commissioned officer or petty officer status , a CAP cadet must be promoted through every CAP cadet enlisted grade in order to achieve the rank of CAP cadet second lieutenant . To complete an achievement , a cadet must pass a physical fitness test as well as two written tests , one for leadership and one for aerospace education . The only exceptions to this rule are the promotions to cadet airman and cadet staff sergeant , which have no aerospace test . For some achievements , an additional test of drill proficiency is required . In the new promotion system , effective as of 2010 , there is a drill test for all CAP cadet enlisted grades .

The milestones in the Civil Air Patrol Cadet Program are the Wright brothers Award , the General Billy Mitchell Award , the Amelia Earhart Award , the General Ira C. Eaker Award and the General Carl A. Spaatz Award . As of 27 August 2013 , 1 @,@ 905 Spaatz Awards had been earned since the first was awarded to Cadet Douglas Roach in 1964 . Cadet Roach went on to a United States Air Force career and later became a pilot in the US Air Force Thunderbirds aerial demonstration team .

Each milestone award in Civil Air Patrol confers upon a cadet various benefits . Upon earning the Mitchell Award and the grade of cadet second lieutenant , a cadet is eligible for promotion the rank of airman first class ( E @-@ 3 ) upon enlistment in the United States Air Force . A cadet earning the Earhart Award and being promoted to C / Capt and , if age 17 or older , may be selected to attend the International Air Cadet Exchange .

According to the CAP Knowledgebase website , the percentages for cadets receiving the milestone awards are estimated to be as follows :

Mitchell : 15 %

Earhart : 5 %

Eaker : 2 %

Spaatz : ? 0 @.@ 5 %

Cadets that transfer to the senior member side between the ages of 18 and 20 receive the grade of flight officer ( if the highest cadet award earned was the Mitchell ) , technical flight officer ( if the highest cadet award earned was the Earhart ) or senior flight officer ( if the highest cadet award earned was the Spaatz ) . If the cadet waits until their 21st birthday , at which point they are required to transfer to the senior member program , they are eligible for the grade of second lieutenant ( if the highest cadet award was the Mitchell ) , first lieutenant ( if the highest cadet award was the Earhart ) , or captain ( if the highest cadet award was the Spaatz ) .

= = = = Activities = = = =

Cadets under the age of 18 are eligible for ten orientation flights in Civil Air Patrol aircraft , including five glider and airplane flights . Glider flights can be replaced by " powered " flights at the discretion of the Wing Commander , depending on the availability of the aircraft . Cadets over 18 years of age can still participate in military orientation flights , and some CAP wings have flight academies where cadets can learn to fly . The United States Air Force and United States Army also frequently schedule orientation flights for CAP cadets in transport aircraft such as the KC @-@ 135 Stratotanker , KC @-@ 10 Extender , C @-@ 130 Hercules and the C @-@ 17 Globemaster III or , in the case of the Army , UH @-@ 60 Black Hawk and CH @-@ 47 Chinook helicopters .

Civil Air Patrol 's core cadet activity is the summer encampment . Typically a week- to ten @-@ day @-@ long event , cadets are put into an intense , military @-@ structured environment similar in certain respects to USAF Basic Military Training ( BMT ) for enlisted personnel , or the first few weeks of USAFA 4th class cadet training , college Air Force ROTC summer Field Training , or USAF Officer Training School for officers , with emphasis on physically and mentally demanding tasks and required classes and activities . These classes include aerospace education , United States Air

Force organization , cadet programs , and drug demand reduction . Activities include the classroom courses , physical training , leadership development , and drill & ceremonies . Encampments are usually held at the wing ( state ) level and , when available are usually at military installations , preferably active United States Air Force , Air Force Reserve Command or Air National Guard installations , with military support .

The Region Cadet Leadership Schools ( RCLS ) provide training to increase knowledge , skills , and attitudes as they pertain to leadership and management . To be eligible to attend , cadets must be serving in , or preparing to enter , cadet leadership positions within their squadron . RCLSs are conducted at region level , or at wing level with region approval . The RCLS programs are more or less modeled on USAFA upper classmen programs , the college Air Force ROTC Professional Officer Course ( POC ) and latter stages of OTS . One variation on this theme are CAP Cadet Non @-@ Commissioned Officer Schools and Academies , which are cadet NCO schools designed to teach basic leadership and principles to cadet leaders during their earlier duty positions in the cadet program .

= = = = Oath = = = =

Cadets ascribe to the following oath during their membership :

I pledge that I will serve faithfully in the Civil Air Patrol Cadet Program , and that I will attend meetings regularly , participate actively in unit activities , obey my officers , wear my uniform properly , and advance my education and training rapidly to prepare myself to be of service to my community , state , and nation .

One requirement for promotion in the Cadet Program is the ability to recite this oath , verbatim , from memory .

= = Relationship to the military = =

While CAP is chartered by Congress and is the auxiliary of the Air Force , it is not an operating reserve component under the United States Air Force or the federal government . As stated by 10 U.S.C. § 9442 , the Secretary of the Air Force may use the services of the Civil Air Patrol to fulfill the non @-@ combat programs and missions of the Department of the Air Force . Additionally , the Civil Air Patrol shall be deemed to be an instrumentality of the United States with respect to any act or omission of the Civil Air Patrol , including any member of the Civil Air Patrol , in carrying out a mission assigned by the Secretary of the Air Force .

Civil Air Patrol members are not subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice and do not have command or authority over any members of the United States military . Similarly , military officers have no command authority over CAP members . As part of recognition of CAP 's service to the USAF , however , senior members in the grade of second lieutenant and above are allowed to wear " U.S. " collar insignia as an official part of their dress blue uniform . All CAP members are required to render military courtesies to all members of the US military and those of friendly foreign nations ; however , as CAP officers are not commissioned by the President of the United States , military personnel are not required to render military courtesies to CAP personnel , though this can be done as a courtesy . CAP members are expected to render military courtesies to one another , though the implementation of this varies widely . Some squadrons are more military @-@ orientated , with saluting and addressing by rank , while others are more informal .

Although CAP retains the title " United States Air Force Auxiliary " , 10 U.S.C. § 9442 clarifies that this auxiliary status is only applicable when CAP members and resources are on a United States Air Force @-@ assigned mission with an Air Force @-@ assigned mission number . When CAP resources are engaged in a USAF mission they are reimbursed by the Air Force for communications expenses , fuel and oil , and a share of aircraft maintenance expenses . In addition , CAP members are covered by the Federal Employees Compensation Act ( FECA ) in the event of injury while participating in the mission . At all other times , such as when aiding civilian authorities , the CAP remains and acts as a private , non @-@ profit corporation .

The USAF 's Air Combat Command ( ACC ) , through 1st Air Force , is the parent command of CAP . In October 2002 , the USAF announced plans to move CAP " operational " mission activities from the Air Force 's operations directorate ( HAF / A3 ) to the Air Force 's newly created homeland security directorate

In an announcement on 28 August 2015 by Gen. Mark Welsh , Air Force Chief of Staff , the Civil Air Patrol is included in the U.S. Air Force 's definition of the " total force " . To accomplish this , the USAF updated Doctrine Volume 2 , Leadership , to expand the descriptions of total force and " Airmen " to consist of regular , Guard , Reserve , civilian and auxiliary members . Part of that Total Force inclusion was a realignment in the responsible command which moved Civil Air Patrol @-@ U.S. Air Force ( CAP @-@ USAF ) from Air Education and Training Command through the Jeanne M. Holm Center for Officer Accession and Citizen Development at Maxwell AFB , Alabama , to Air Combat Command through 1st Air Force . This change took place on 24 June 2016 .

= = = Uniforms = = =

Civil Air Patrol 's uniforms provide a distinctive and standard set of uniform items intended to provide a positive public image , build morale , and enhance the professionalism of the organization 's membership .

CAP members wear uniforms similar to the U.S. Air Force 's uniforms worn with distinctive emblems , insignia and badges to identify them as CAP members ; these are categorized as " USAF @-@ style uniforms " . USAF @-@ style uniforms may be worn by all cadets under age 18 , and by cadets over age 18 and senior members who meet height and weight standards set by CAP 's uniform manual . In addition , CAP has a series of what are categorized as " Corporate @-@ style uniforms " which may be worn by all senior members , and also by those cadets over age 18 who do not meet height and weight standards set for the USAF @-@ style uniform .

Uniforms are categorized in CAP 's uniform manual by the environment in which the uniform is to be worn or the work to be accomplished .

These uniform types are composed of :

United States Air Force @-@ style uniforms :

Service Dress Uniform ( Class A ) ? the United States Air Force 's service dress uniform , consisting of dark blue trousers , light blue shirt with tie , dark blue jacket , and a flight or service cap . Rank is indicated on CAP @-@ distinctive gray shoulder marks ( for senior member officers ) or sleeve stripes ( for senior member non @-@ commissioned officers ) . Cadet ranks are shown by shoulder marks or pin @-@ on insignia .

Blue Service Uniform ( Class B ) ? identical to the service dress uniform , except without the dark blue jacket . The tie is optional when in short sleeves . Cadet enlisted and NCOs wear metal grade insignia on the collar .

Airman Battle Uniform - the current style United States Air Force field uniform , with dark blue name tapes , silver text , metal insignia on the collar for enlisted grade cadets , and cloth insignia for cadet officers and senior members .

Battle Dress Uniform ( BDU ) - the old style United States Air Force " woodland camouflage " field uniform , with ultramarine name tapes , metal insignia on the collar for enlisted grade cadets , and cloth insignia for cadet officers and senior members .

Flight Duty Uniform - green Nomex one @-@ piece CWU 27 / P flight suit worn by United States Air Force flight crews , styled in a manner similar to Air Mobility Command flight crews , but with CAP insignia . This is worn by CAP flight personnel only .

Mess Dress Uniform ? the dark blue United States Air Force mess dress uniform with CAP @-@ distinctive insignia and sleeve braid . This is worn by senior members only .

Corporate @-@ style ( " CAP distinctive " ) uniforms :

Corporate Field Uniform ? a Navy Blue version of the battle dress uniform .

Aviator Shirt Uniform ? an aviator white shirt with shoulder marks , and gray trousers .

Corporate Flight Duty Uniform ? a dark blue version of the one @-@ piece flight suit in either Nomex or cotton material . This is worn by CAP flight personnel only .



Corporate Service Dress Uniform ? a dark blue blazer jacket worn with a white shirt , gray trousers , and a CAP or United States Air Force tie .

Corporate Working Uniform ? a dark blue short @-@ sleeve golf shirt with the CAP seal screened or embroidered on the chest , and gray trousers . This is only worn by senior members .

= = Equipment = =

Civil Air Patrol operates and maintains fixed @-@ wing aircraft , training gliders , ground vehicles , and a national radio communications network .

Civil Air Patrol owns and operates a fleet not to exceed 550 single @-@ engine aircraft , predominantly Cessna 172 Skyhawk and Cessna 182 Skylane aircraft . The aircraft are in a phased refurbishment program which began in 2008 , replacing engines , interior , avionics , and paint at a lower cost than new purchases .

In 2003 , the Australian designed and built eight @-@ seat Gippsland GA8 Airvan was added to the corporate fleet . 16 of Civil Air Patrol 's fleet of 18 Airvans carry the Airborne Real @-@ time Cueing Hyperspectral Enhanced Reconnaissance ( ARCHER ) system , which can be used to search for aircraft wreckage based on its spectral signature . Other aircraft types include the Cessna 206 and the Maule MT @-@ 235 . CAP also has a number of gliders , such as the L @-@ 23 Super @-@ Blanik , the Schleicher ASK 21 and the Schweizer SGS 2 @-@ 33 , used mainly for cadet orientation flights .

In addition to CAP 's own corporate fleet , many member @-@ owned aircraft are made available for official tasking by CAP 's volunteers should the need arise . Aircraft on search missions are generally crewed by at least three qualified aircrew members : a Mission Pilot , responsible for the safe flying of the aircraft ; a mission observer , responsible for navigation , communications and coordination of the mission as well as ground observation ; and a mission scanner who is responsible for looking for crash sites and damage clues . Additionally , the mission scanner may double as an Satellite Digital Imaging System ( SDIS ) operator . Larger aircraft may have additional scanners aboard , providing greater visual coverage . Because of the additional ARCHER equipment , the crew of a Civil Air Patrol GA8 Airvan may also include an operator of the ARCHER system , depending upon the requirements of the mission and the capabilities of the aircraft .

CAP owns over 1 @, @ 000 vehicles ( mostly vans for carrying personnel ) and assigns them to units for use in the organization 's missions . Members who use their own vehicles are reimbursed for fuel , oil and communications costs during a USAF @-@ assigned emergency services mission .

CAP operates a national radio network of HF ( SSB ) and VHF ( FM ) radio repeaters . There are over 500 of these repeaters strategically located across the United States . Radio communications are now facilitated under NTIA specifications , to which Civil Air Patrol directorates have applied even more stringent standards . CAP 's radio network is designed for use during a national or regional emergency when existing telephone and Internet communications infrastructure is not available . Outside of such emergencies , most of CAP 's internal communications are conducted on the Internet . CAP frequencies and specific repeater locations are designated by the Department of Defense as Unclassified ? For Official Use Only information , and as such may only be released to those individuals who have a recognized " need @-@ to @-@ know . "

Some aircraft in the CAP fleet are equipped with the SDIS . This system allows CAP to send back real @-@ time images of a disaster or crash site to anyone with an e @-@ mail address , allowing the mission coordinators to make more informed decisions . There are approximately 100 federally funded SDIS systems strategically located across the United States , with more than 20 additional systems funded by state and local governments .

The ARCHER imaging system , mounted aboard the GA8 Airvan , uses visible and near @-@ infrared light to examine the surface of the Earth and find suspected crash sites , evaluate areas affected by disasters , or examine foliage from an airborne perspective in order to flag possible marijuana plantations . Both the SDIS and ARCHER systems were used to great success in the response to Hurricane Katrina ; ARCHER may be used in coordination with the SDIS system .

A hand @-@ held radio direction finder , the L @-@ Tronics Little L @-@ Per , is used by ground

teams to search for downed aircraft . The ground teams carry equipment on their person that they use while in the field . This equipment includes flashlights , signal mirrors , tactical vests , safety vests , and food that will last them at least 24 hours . The equipment carried by ground teams varies much by the mission at hand . Urban Direction Finding ( UDF ) missions necessitate only a small kit of gear . But intensive mountain search and rescue can require packs that provide for up to 72 hours of operational supplies and tool for the location , rescue and extraction of lost or crashed parties . This gear includes the above , plus additional water , meals , and survival gear . Although a standardized list is provided by the national command , many teams modify the list to match the needs of the mission .

= = Organization = =

Civil Air Patrol is organized along a military model , with a streamlined and strictly hierarchical chain of command . There are several distinct echelons in this structure : National Headquarters , regions , wings , and squadrons or flights . An additional group echelon may be used that is placed between the wing and the squadrons / flights , at the wing commander 's discretion .

Civil Air Patrol is headed by a national commander , currently Major General Joseph Vazquez . The organization is governed by a board of governors , established by federal law in 2001 and consisting of 11 members : four Civil Air Patrol members ( currently the national commander , national vice commander , and two members @-@ at @-@ large appointed by the CAP National Executive Committee ) , four United States Air Force representatives appointed by the Secretary of the Air Force , and three members from the aviation community jointly appointed by the CAP national commander and the Secretary of the Air Force . The board of governors generally meets two or three times annually and primarily provides strategic vision and guidance to the volunteer leadership and corporate staff . The volunteer leadership consists of the national commander and his staff , comprising a Vice Commander , Chief of Staff , National Legal Officer , National comptroller , the Chief of the CAP Chaplain Service , and the CAP Inspector General . The national commander holds the grade of CAP major general ; the national vice commander holds the grade of CAP brigadier general . The rest of the national commander 's staff hold the grade of CAP colonel .

CAP National Headquarters is located at Maxwell Air Force Base outside Montgomery , Alabama . The headquarters employs a professional staff of over 100 and is led by the CAP Executive Director ( analogous to a corporate chief operating officer ) , who reports to the board of governors . The national headquarters staff provides program management for the organization and membership support for the 1 @, @ 700 + volunteer field units across the country .

Below the national headquarters level there are eight geographic regions and a handful of overseas squadrons at various military installations worldwide . Each region , commanded by a CAP colonel , encompasses several statewide organizations referred to as wings . The eight regions are the Northeast , Middle East , Southeast , Great Lakes , Southwest , North Central , Rocky Mountain , and Pacific Regions .

The CAP units in each of the fifty states , and Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia , are coordinated by the CAP wing for that state ; each wing has a commander who is a CAP colonel and the sole corporate officer for each state . Each wing commander oversees a wing headquarters staff made up of experienced volunteer members . Larger wings may have an optional subordinate echelon of groups , at the discretion of the wing commander . Each Group encompasses at least five squadrons or flights .

Local units are called squadrons . A squadron is broken into flights . Squadrons are the main functioning body of Civil Air Patrol . Civil Air Patrol squadrons are designated as either cadet , senior , or composite squadrons . A CAP composite squadron consists of both cadets and senior members , who may be involved in any of the three missions of Civil Air Patrol . Composite squadrons have two deputy commanders to assist the squadron commander : a Deputy Commander for Seniors and a Deputy Commander for Cadets . A senior squadron includes only senior members , who participate in the emergency services or aerospace education missions of Civil Air Patrol . A cadet squadron is largely made up of cadets , with a small number of senior members as necessary for

supervision of cadets and the proper execution of the cadet program . Overseas squadrons operate independently of this structure , reporting directly to the National Headquarters .

A CAP flight is a semi independent unit that is used mainly as a stepping stone for a new unit until they are large enough to be designated a squadron . Due to their transitory nature , there are very few flights within the CAP structure at any one time . A flight will be assigned to a squadron ' parent ' , and it is the job of the flight and squadron commanders to work together to build the flight into a full and independent squadron .. Flights are also used as temporary units within a squadron . These flights are dismissed after the activity or meeting they were created for . A flight within a squadron is assigned a letter , so a flight could be designated " Charlie Flight , Thunderbolt Squadron " , for example . In larger squadrons , flights are permanent subunits and cadets are assigned to them .

Headquarters Civil Air Patrol U.S. Air Force ( CAP USAF ) is an active duty unit that operates under the joint jurisdiction of CAP National Headquarters and the USAF Air Combat Command , 1st Air Force . Commanded by an aeronautically rated Air Force Colonel , HQ CAP USAF consists of approximately 75 active duty Air Force , Air Force Reserve , Air National Guard , and civilian United States Air Force personnel ( with all of the Air Force civil service personnel at CAP USAF also being CAP members ) , 22 of whom are stationed at National Headquarters , staff CAP USAF . These members advise , assist , and oversee Civil Air Patrol 's operations and provide liaison between CAP and the USAF . As of August 2014 , the commander of CAP USAF is Colonel Michael D. Tyynismaa , USAF .

= = Funding = =

Civil Air Patrol is a non profit corporation established by Public Law 79 476 . It receives its funding from four major sources : membership dues , corporate donations , Congressional appropriations , and private donations .

Squadron and group financial support comes from donations and fundraising . Some units charge their own membership dues above and beyond CAP membership dues . These donations and fund raisers are how the squadrons and groups pay for their equipment , rent for facilities , and activities at the local level .

Today , apart from member dues , Civil Air Patrol receives funding from donations and grants from individuals , foundations and corporations ; from grants and payments from state governments for patrolling and other tasks as agreed by memorandums of understanding ; and from federal funding for reimbursement of fuel , oil and maintenance plus capital expenses for aircraft , vehicles and communications equipment .

There are few paid positions in Civil Air Patrol . Most are located at National Headquarters , although some wings have paid administrators or accountants . During 2011 , Civil Air Patrol had 182 paid employees .