

CITIZEN AIRMAN

The background of the entire cover is a dark, textured, brownish-gold surface that looks like rusted metal. In the center, a man in flight gear, including a flight suit and goggles, is walking across a large, dark, metallic aircraft engine propeller. The propeller is angled upwards and to the right, with its blades clearly visible. The man is walking towards the left side of the frame.

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RESERVISTS **RALLY** IN THE PACIFIC TO ENSURE THEY ARE READY NOW

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— By Bo Joyner

THE CIVIL AIR PATROL:

RESERVISTS PLAY CRITICAL ROLE ON CAP-USAF TEAM

Senior Master Sgt. Shane Williams is a huge fan of the Civil Air Patrol. He joined CAP's cadet program in 1989 and has been involved with the Air Force's official auxiliary continuously since then. Today, he serves as the Reserve Forces superintendent for CAP's Rocky Mountain Liaison Region where he provides support to all CAP units within Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, Idaho and Montana. He also supports the CAP-U.S. Air Force headquarters as a subject matter expert for small unmanned aerial systems.

Williams is one of a handful of Reserve Citizen Airmen assigned to CAP-USAF, and he's proud of the work these Reservists do to support the Civil Air Patrol.

"As a prior CAP cadet and senior member, I really enjoy the opportunity to work with, support and mentor the volunteer members," he said. "CAP is one of the most important volunteer organizations in the country, and as the auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, it's a privilege to assist and advise them."

Lt. Col. Jackie Fleming is CAP-USAF's Reserve Forces director. In her seven years of working with CAP, she has served in four of the organization's eight regions, and today she acts as the liaison between the Civil Air Patrol and the Air Force to help train, equip and support the almost 70,000 members of the Air Force Auxiliary in emergency services, cadet programs and aerospace education.

"I love working with the patriotic, hard working and dedicated volunteers, from the youngest of cadets to the most experienced seniors," she said. "Their innate sense of helping others and serving their country is exemplary."

Established on Dec. 1, 1941, to mobilize the nation's civilian aviation resources for national defense service, CAP has evolved into a premier public service organization that carries out emergency service missions when needed, both in the air and on the ground. Its more than 64,000 members devote their time, energy and expertise toward the well-being

of their communities while also promoting aviation and related fields through aerospace/STEM education and helping shape future leaders through CAP's cadet program.

CAP-USAF, headquartered at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, provides day-to-day support, advice and liaison to the Civil Air Patrol and provides oversight for CAP programs. CAP-USAF personnel are the primary functional interface between CAP and other federal agencies.

In addition, CAP-USAF serves as the Air Force program office for the cooperative agreement between CAP and the Air Force. The CAP-USAF commander, as the program manager, is responsible for the oversight and validation of CAP's performance under the cooperative agreement. CAP-USAF advocates for CAP at all levels of the Air Force as well as providing advice and support to CAP field operations, to include homeland defense, homeland security, disaster response, and search and rescue. CAP-USAF falls

under the First Air Force and Air Combat Command.

The Civil Air Patrol is a federally chartered non-profit corporation that is also the Air Force auxiliary. CAP's mission is supporting America's communities with emergency response, diverse aviation and ground services, youth development and promotion of air, space and cyber power through aerospace education. CAP flies a wide range of operational missions daily, including search and rescue, disaster response and supporting counterdrug operations. CAP specialists also execute aerial target missions to maintain combat readiness of air defense assets, conduct special-use airspace surveys and fly orientation flights for teachers and Air Force ROTC and Air Force JROTC cadets.

Recognized by Air Force doctrine as a member of the Total Force, CAP has more than 38,000 adult members and more than 28,000 cadets in more than 1,500 units with an organizational pattern and rank structure similar to that of the Air Force. CAP has eight geographical regions composed of 52 wings, one for each state, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. Wings are divided into

groups, squadrons and flights. The CAP national headquarters is co-located with the CAP-USAF headquarters at Maxwell.

CAP is always there when the nation calls. Most recently, CAP supported relief efforts following Hurricane Idalia, the deadly brush fires in Maui and severe flooding in Vermont.

As the individual mobilization augmentee to the commander of CAP-USAF, Col. Daniela Martian is on a mission to educate Reserve Citizen Airmen about the Civil Air Patrol and the opportunities available to work with the Air Force's official auxiliary.

"The Reserve population of CAP-USAF currently sits at about 120 people," Martian said. "Of those, 20 are CAT B Reservists and 100 are CAT E Reservists. Of the 20 CAT Bs, seven have waivers to fly in their positions and they pilot CAP airplanes. The 100 CAT E Reservists technically are on 'points, no-pay status,' but through ACC, many execute man-days."

The colonel said the Reservists currently working with CAP "assist CAP unit commanders with administration and leadership, teach

aerospace subjects to cadets, and serve as staff officers and advisors at cadet summer encampments, flight clinics and leadership workshops. Primarily, we support annual encampments that CAP hosts for its cadets, but honestly we do so many other things."

Between June and December 2022, CAP conducted 45 summer encampments and six winter encampments. A total of 7,361 cadets attended these 51 encampments.

"Our Reservists were at 92% of these encampments teaching academics, providing mentorship and educating cadets about Air Force careers, coordinating installation, logistical and aircraft support locally or with Air Force units, and monitoring safety, training intensity and cadet protection practices at the activity," Martian said.

Maj. Alejandro Reyes, a Cat-E Reservist, is the flight commander for CAP-USAF in the Florida Region. He joined CAP-USAF in January 2022.

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Air Force Reservists discuss Air Force careers and aviation opportunities with cadets at Wendover Field in Utah. Opposite page, cadets prepare for an orientation flight at a Civil Air Patrol encampment in Nevada. (Courtesy photos)





CAP cadets pose at an encampment fire demonstration. (Courtesy photo)

"I love getting to interact with young cadet leaders, teaching courses on leadership and aviation, and being able to make an impact in their future by answering questions and sharing professional development opportunities," he said.

"It is very touching when cadets recognize you from a previous encampment or event," he added. "Even if it has been a while, they recall events, classes or statements I may have made and which made an impact on them. It is so exciting to get to see their confidence and leadership style grow through the years and as they promote from entry-level cadets to encampment leadership roles."

Lt. Col. Gia Petz, the Reserve forces director for CAP-USAF's Rocky Mountain Liaison Region, said she loves mentoring and inspiring cadets.

"They are some of the most motivated kids I have met, and I am thrilled to help them plan their futures," she said.

Petz recently had the opportunity to plan orientation flights in Blackhawk and Chinook helicopters with the Colorado Army National Guard for some of her cadets.

"A total of 127 cadets got the experience of flying in a military aircraft, many for the first time," she said. "Their excitement was contagious."

As she nears the end of her military career, Petz said it is rewarding to share experiences, stories and lessons with CAP cadets. "It's kind of like passing the torch to the next generation," she said.

Williams said he particularly enjoys seeing first-time cadets at encampments each year.

"Over the course of seven days, their confidence, enthusiasm and pride grow exponentially," he said.

Lt. Col. Brian Conn is the Reserve forces director for CAP-USAF's Detachment 5. He said the most rewarding aspect of working with CAP is building trusted relationships.

"Our relationships are the foundation of everything we do," he said. "I learned a long time ago to speak less, listen more and focus on relationships. Otherwise, all the work and goals I envision or have set simply won't materialize or last. Part of building a trusted relationship is intentionally learning another's story, and few things are more powerful or compelling than a story."

Conn said he will never forget one connection he made at Cadet Officer School, the premier leadership school offered through CAP for cadets.

"Seeing cadets from around the United States and from sister organizations in Canada and the United Kingdom come together has been a highlight of my Air Force career," he said. "It was during one of these schools I had the opportunity to mentor a cadet from Quebec, Canada. English was a second language for her. She ended up winning the schoolhouse's award for the best capstone essay. I could not have been more proud of and happy for this cadet."

Reyes said he would definitely encourage Reservists to consider getting involved with CAP.

"CAP-USAF is very fulfilling and provides an avenue for our military experience to be used as motivation and impact in up-and-coming leaders," he said. "Additionally, CAP-USAF offers tremendous life-work balance and flexibility that other Reserve programs cannot."

Williams agreed.

"CAP-USAF is an amazing way to serve, either as an assigned Cat E or attached traditional Reservist or IMA," he said. "Our Reserve corps is key to the success of our advise and assist mission, and is one of the most unique opportunities available."

From his perspective as a senior NCO, Williams said the CAP-USAF NCO corps has room to grow.

"I would love to chat with other senior NCO Reservists about some of the benefits CAP-USAF service could provide," he said. "Our program will benefit greatly from the wide array of experienced enlisted members in the Reserve."

"I always encourage Reservists to consider CAP if they are interested in engaging with cadets who may very well be the next generation of our Air Force, Space Force, Army or Navy," Fleming said. "As we all work together during challenging times, the members of CAP restore my faith in humanity with their spirit and selflessness. It is an honor to serve alongside the CAP." To find out more, e-mail capusaf.css@us.af.mil.



Clockwise from top right, CAP cadets and instructors at a glider academy; Lt. Col. Gia Petz, Maj. Dan Silk and Maj. John Wimberly discuss CAP activities with Troy McIntosh, deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force for Reserve Affairs and Airman and Guardian Readiness; Cadets get an up-close look at an F-35; CAP leaders at the Space Operations National Cadet Special Activity at Peterson Space Force Base, Colorado; Lt. Col. Shawn Barber pilots junior ROTC students during an orientation flight; Maj. Steve Latham instructs a CAP cadet at a virtual reality lab. (Courtesy photos)

