Northeast Region's Cooper to Lead Education and Training Program



A former Rhode Island Wing commander and the longtime character development instructor for the Northeast Region, Col. Bryan W. Cooper, has been named chief of Civil Air Patrol's Senor Member Education and Training Program.

Cooper's selection was approved last week by Maj. Gen. Edward D. Phelka, CAP's national commander/CEO.

"Col. Cooper is one of CAP's most experienced commanders," Phelka said. "This expertise, together with his professional education credentials and nearly 30 years in front of a classroom, make him an ideal candidate to assume the role of chief of Education and Training."

Cooper succeeds Col. Joe Winter, who has directed the program since August 2021. Winter is leaving the national staff leadership position to serve as vice commander of the Mid-Atlantic Region.

Cooper will be responsible for the execution of CAP member training opportunities in leadership, management, and functional tasks. The program is managed through Volunteer University and offers opportunities to help senior members learn specific mission-related skills while preparing them for leadership opportunities.

In addition, he will provide strategic oversight of the mentoring and specialty track program as well as the Wing Commanders College.

"I have found that at every step in a CAP career you need education and training," Cooper said. "The ET team and I are committed to providing applicable, high-quality, practical, and effective education and training that is accessible to every member."

Winter, who served on the selection committee that recommended Cooper, said he was "thrilled" by Phelka's choice.

"I've personally worked with Bryan over the years at Cadet Officer School," Winter said. "He is an outstanding choice to lead the organization forward."

Cooper's 40-year CAP career includes leadership at the command level — he served as Rhode Island Wing commander on three different occasions in 2010 and 2011. As wing commander, he was a corporate officer who dealt with state lawmakers and participated in Legislative Day on Capitol Hill. He just concluded working with the Rhode Island general treasurer to pass an educational bill into law.

His six region staff positions have involved education and training, plans and programs, and cadet program development. He led region conferences for three commanders and has served on the staffs of eight national commanders. Those assignments included National Staff College director and national Professional Development officer (before it was changed to Education and Training).

“Over my CAP career I have enjoyed contributing to the training in all three core programs and almost every school and course in the Education and Training program,” he said. “I feel a great responsibility to maintain the high standards and the foresight my predecessors had. Fortunately, I am joining a great team that will ensure CAP is trained for today and prepared for the future.”

His awards include National Moral Leadership Officer of the Year as well as five Exceptional Service Awards, three Distinguished Service Awards, and nine Meritorious Service awards.

Outside CAP, Cooper has a master's degree in education and nearly 30 years of experience in the classroom. He has led curriculum development and recertification teams as part of that experience. He has developed and delivered curriculum for the Cadet Officer School, the chaplain corps, Region Cadet Leadership School, and Aerospace Education Officer School.

He resides in Barrington, Rhode Island, with his wife Karen, who is also active in CAP.