



BIOGRAPHY

JOHN W. "MOOSE" DESMARAIS SR.

John W. "Moose" Desmarais Sr. is the chief operating officer at Civil Air Patrol National Headquarters at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. In this role, he manages the day-to-day operations of National Headquarters. This includes ensuring CAP's compliance with all applicable U.S. Air Force, U.S. Department of Defense, and federal grants laws/directives along with centralized procurement of all major equipment, vehicles, and aircraft. He also serves as executive secretary of the CAP Board of Governors — the organization's governing body.

Civil Air Patrol, the official Air Force auxiliary, is a volunteer, nonprofit, benevolent organization with more than 62,000 members nationwide. CAP performs approximately 90% of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center and is credited by the Air Force with saving 151 lives in 2022. Its volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief, and drug interdiction missions at the request of federal, state, and local agencies. Members play a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to more than 26,000 young people participating in CAP cadet programs. CAP has been performing missions for America for more than 80 years and was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 2014 for its founding members' service during World War II.



Desmarais was born in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. He graduated from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University with a bachelor's degree in aviation business administration focused on management information systems with a minor in safety of flight and a master's degree in aeronautical science specializing in aviation/aerospace safety systems. He also graduated from CAP National Staff College, the Air Force's Squadron Officers School, Air Command and Staff College, Incident Management Course, Basic Inland Search and Rescue Course, Inland Search and Rescue Planners Course, and the National Interagency Counterdrug Institute's Military Support to Civil Authorities Course.

He is a certificated private pilot, incident command system instructor, first responder instructor, and a technician-class amateur radio operator. He is also a certified professional innovator, a designation earned through Project Mercury Cohort 7 at Air University in 2022. He was on the cohort's winning team and was selected as its most valuable player. He coached another team in Cohort 8.

Desmarais joined Civil Air Patrol as a cadet in 1987 and has served in the organization ever since, achieving the rank of lieutenant colonel in 2003. He holds Master ratings in Emergency Services and Cadet Programs and is also a qualified incident commander, aircrew member, and ground team leader. Since arriving at National Headquarters in 1995, he has moved up progressively, serving as director of operations since 2012 before becoming COO. In 1996, he founded the National Emergency Services Academy, one of CAP's premier national events. In 2001, he served as one of the national-level duty officers responding to the events of 9/11. In 2002, he served as the National Headquarters project officer for CAP support to the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. In 2003, he served as an agency liaison for CAP's support to Task Force Columbia. In addition to his normal duties as director of operations, he has represented CAP in varied industry forums addressing emergency management youth aviation, rated diversity initiatives, and aviation career-focused supply issues across the country.

His CAP awards and decorations include the Exceptional Service Award, Meritorious Service Award, Commander's Commendation, Certificate of Lifesaving, Search and Rescue Ribbon, Disaster Relief Ribbon with "V" Device, Counterdrug Ribbon, and Community Service Ribbon. John also received CAP's General Ira C. Eaker Award for completing Phase IV of the CAP Cadet Program, CAP's highest academic award – the Gill Robb Wilson Award and was also selected as the CAP Employee of the Year in 2002. Desmarais received the President of the United States Call to Service Award in 2008 for his volunteer work with CAP. He was recognized in 2021 as the International Association of Emergency Managers' USA Auxiliary Emergency Manager of the Year.

He is married to the former Mary Leigh Strickland, and they reside in Pike Road, Alabama. They have two sons, Will and Wade.

Current as of March 2023.