National Commander's Perspective
Student Guide

The E&T program uses the **flipped classroom format** where students read the material before class and come prepared to discuss the topics. All students are required to come prepared to participate, which includes completing the reading and all assignments in advance.

Work submitted for this assignment should reflect your own knowledge, analysis, and effort. AI tools may be used to support research, brainstorming, and editing, but should not replace your original work. Any AI-generated content included in the submission should be appropriately acknowledged in accordance with course requirements and the VOLU Academic Integrity Standards.

Lesson Objective: Gain knowledge about the National Commander's leadership philosophy, her roles in Civil Air Patrol (CAP), and CAP's Strategic Plan, including current initiatives.

Desired Learning Objectives:
1. Reflect on the role of the National Commander/CEO in CAP, including how she works with the Board of Governors, the Air Force, and strategic partners.
2. Explain the selection process utilized for the National Commander and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) position.
3. Relate the importance of strategic partnerships and why building outside relationships is vital to CAP's success.
4. Recognize how the leadership philosophy of the National Commander/CEO provides the foundation for her leadership of the organization.
5. Connect the goals outlined in CAP's Strategic Plan to your work in the organization.
6. Describe CAP's direction in the next few years, its challenges, and some current initiatives it is pursuing.
7. Understand how you support current CAP initiatives through your role in the organization.

Suggested Time to Complete Module (reading, discussions, and assignments:
Synchronous Onsite/ViR Classes: 60-75 minutes
Asynchronous Online: 60-75 minutes

Required Reading: Student Guide, Current Civil Air Patrol Strategic Plan, Maj. Gen. Regena Aye's Leadership Philosophy document, Maj. Gen. Aye's National Commander/CEO Leader Briefing



Introduction: Welcome to the National Commander's Perspective module. I am grateful you are growing your skills through the Education and Training program. CAP needs leaders like you to step up, help us capitalize on opportunities, and set our future course. In this module, you will learn about the selection process, role, and work of the National Commander/CEO. You will learn about my leadership philosophy and how it impacts the culture of our organization. You will learn about groups and partnerships and how they are vital for our success. You will also learn about where this great organization is going based on our Strategic Plan and initiatives. Finally, we will explore the challenges facing CAP.

1. Reflect on the role of the National Commander/CEO in CAP, including how she works with the Board of Governors, the Air Force, and strategic partners.

First, let's discuss the role of the National Commander and Chief Executive Officer (CEO). This position is dual-hatted. As National Commander, I serve as CAP's top leader of volunteers. I also serve as the CEO of a non-profit corporation, which is also called CAP. Therefore, I am responsible for both the traditional leadership of our volunteers and the business of CAP.

This combination of roles results from governance changes made about a dozen years ago. Previously, we had two different positions. The National Commander served as the top volunteer, and the Executive Director, an employee, led the paid staff. Two separate teams existed: one volunteer and one paid. As you can imagine, there was sometimes friction and conflicting goals and priorities between the paid and volunteer staff. If you participated in the Year of Ownership kickoff, you know we must be one team to cover and move together. Our Board realized the same thing in 2012, and the governance change put one person in charge. That is why I have the dual role of National Commander and CEO. The Executive Director position was changed to the Chief Operating Officer (COO), a paid employee responsible for the national staff (both paid and volunteer) and day-to-day operations of the corporation. Today, the COO reports to the CEO. Which comes first? Commander or CEO? National Commander comes first because of how the position is introduced in the CAP Constitution and Bylaws. On any given day, I may balance the two roles, or one may be emphasized more than the other, depending on the tasks I am completing.

Although this construct has been in place for several years, the actual functionality of the dual-role position has become more effective as CAP leadership, including the Board of Governors (Board), developed and approved CAP's strategic plan. Our current strategic plan sets the vision for CAP for 2035. I am excited about the direction we are going as an organization, as set by our Board of Governors. As National Commander/CEO, a key role of mine is to prepare and position CAP for future success by building upon the foundation laid over more than eight decades of CAP service to the nation. Today, we build upon CAP's proud past with a strategic plan that looks ten years

ahead. As CEO, I work with the Board to develop and enhance the ever-evolving strategic plan. I also work with CAP professionals, both paid and volunteer, to enact programs that help realize the goals and objectives outlined in the strategic plan. It takes all of us working together to move this fantastic organization forward. The headquarters staff cannot move CAP forward without leaders and members in the field implementing great programs. The field cannot move CAP forward without the support and leadership of the headquarters staff. All our efforts are supported by our CAP-USAF partners, who want us to be successful in all we do.

According to CAPR 30-1, para 2.2, "The National Commander is designated by the CAP Constitution and Bylaws as the commander of Civil Air Patrol, serves as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Corporation, and is responsible for overall control of the organization. The National Commander manages the allocation and use of corporate assets for safety and efficiency in accordance with federal law, CAP Constitution and Bylaws, and the regulations they promulgate. The Board of Governors selects the National Commander in accordance with the CAP Constitution, and the procedures for that selection are found in CAP regulations."

There is more to this incredible role than being in command. Being National Commander and CEO involves partnering with our Board in everything from strategy to enterprise risk management, legislative agendas, and the approval of corporate and appropriated budgets. I speak with Board leadership each week. A healthy relationship between the governing Board and the chief executive is an essential characteristic of successful corporations. Ensuring that a relationship exists takes work on both sides. The National Commander/CEO also has a role in shaping the Board, working with the CAP Senior Advisory Group (CSAG) to appoint both CAP members of the Board and working with the Secretary of the Air Force (SecAF) to appoint industry partner members. Doing this thoughtfully ensures incumbent and future National Commander/CEOs have a great Board to support and direct their efforts. I believe that success in this area is gained by understanding and respecting roles and responsibilities and fostering trust and confidence in the National Commander/CEO through excellent performance, responsiveness, collaboration, and follow-through. Open, candid communication is critical. The Board and the National Commander/CEO must work together for CAP to succeed.

What surprised you about the role of the National Commander?

What aspects of the role would you enjoy most?

What aspects of the role would you enjoy least?

A critical element of the partnership between the Board and the National Commander/CEO is collaboration in developing the strategic plan. We make sure that we know each other's priorities, interests, and concerns and fold them in as appropriate. Another way to ensure we are aligned in priorities and direction for the organization is through the Board's oversight and supervision of me as National Commander/CEO. The Board selected me and rates my performance. One way the Board oversees my work is through the periodic updates I provide them on CAP's progress in achieving the strategic plan's objectives, tasks,

and metrics. Our report card is based broadly on how well CAP achieves the strategic plan's goals. We also work jointly on an evaluation program so that I receive timely and helpful feedback from the Board.

Two Department of the Air Force Instructions (DAFIs) outline the relationship between CAP and the USAF:

- 10 USC § 9492, *Status as volunteer civilian auxiliary of the Air Force*, identifies CAP as the Auxiliary of the DAF when its services are used by any department or agency in any branch of the federal government. (DAFI 10-2701)
- In accordance with Headquarters Air Force Mission Directive (HAFMD) 1-24, *Headquarters Air Force Mission Directive*, SAF/MRR, on behalf of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (SAF/MR), serves as the primary Secretariat of the Department of the Air Force (DAF) office for matters pertaining to policy and oversight affecting CAP as the Air Force Auxiliary. (DAFI 10-2702)
- In addition to federal funds specifically appropriated for CAP use, the DAF provides personnel, logistical, and financial support assistance to CAP, including installation or garrison-level support. CAP-USAF coordinates with CAP to budget, purchase, distribute, and maintain assets necessary for CAP to fulfill its congressionally-mandated purposes. These assets include (but are not limited to) aircraft, vehicles, computers, communications equipment, and cadet uniforms. (DAFI 10-2701)
- As set forth in 10 USC § 9498, *Regulations*, the Secretary of the Air Force (SecAF) governs the conduct of the CAP when operating as a volunteer civilian auxiliary of the Air Force, prescribes regulations governing the activities of the CAP and, subject to Secretary of Defense approval, arranging assistance by other agencies to support the CAP as an auxiliary of the Air Force. Furthermore, the SecAF may regulate and oversee CAP corporate activities that are supported by appropriated funds, use assets procured with appropriated funds, or involve matters where CAP's activities could give the appearance of endorsement of the action by the Air Force or could be detrimental to the federal government." (DAFI 10-2702)



What does that mean? In practical terms, CAP-USAF is the Air Force organization directly responsible for overseeing CAP. They are essentially our program managers. They report to 1st Air Force (1AF), which is part of Air Combat Command (ACC). The 1AF/CD is an ex-officio member of our Board, and the CAP-USAF/CC is an ex-officio advisor to the Board. It seems obvious that the Air Force is our most important relationship. Yet, there have been times in the past when this relationship has been rocky. As National Commander/CEO, I prioritize ensuring we have a good relationship with CAP-USAF. We do this through joint work on

groups such as the Compliance Action Team, Operations Evaluation Working Group, and Glider Working Group, as well as regular, open, candid communication.

To flourish, any relationship needs to be constantly nourished. Effective, open, and honest communication is a vital attribute of a healthy relationship. When CAP-USAF sees a challenge, I want them to let me know. I want to make sure CAP-USAF knows when we are having a challenge. CAP-USAF and CAP National Headquarters are co-located, facilitating communication. CAP is responsive to CAP-USAF requests, questions, and concerns. We work from a position of cooperation, teamwork, and collaboration. Perhaps the most important is performance. We strive to perform at a level of excellence and professionalism that demonstrates to CAP-USAF that we are good stewards of Air Force money and well execute our Congressionally assigned missions. Our parent service expects as much from us as our other customers and members. We need to work every day to continue earning the trust of our Air Force partners. The US Air Force has embraced CAP as a Total Force Partner and includes the National Commander as a non-voting Air Reserve Forces Policy Committee member. Additional exposure includes attending semiannual Air Combat Command conferences, the USAF Air Crew Summit, and other high-level USAF conferences and meetings. Our Air Force Recruiting Service teammates have included us in the Aim High App and on their web pages. The National Commander/CEO interacts frequently with the SAF/MR office. This office at the Pentagon coordinates CAP's legislative agenda, budget needs, Board appointments, USAF partnership and support, and much more. Our performance can impact the Air Force's reputation. We must always think about how our actions reflect on the Air Force and strive for the auxiliary to make the Air Force proud of our work.

How have you seen CAP and CAP-USAF work together in your wing or region?

2. Explain the selection process utilized for the National Commander and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) position.

In surveys, members often tell us they do not know how to serve in senior roles in the organization. It surprises many people that the National Commander/CEO is an unpaid volunteer! So, how does one become the National Commander and CEO of Civil Air Patrol? Article XIII of the CAP Constitution and Bylaws governs the selection of the National Commander/CEO. CAP members self-nominate for the position by creating an application package that meets the requirements set forth by the Board. The Board has a standing Personnel Committee, which establishes and defines the criteria each time the position is announced and then completes an initial screening of applicants. The Board reviews all applications and interviews top candidates. Selection to the three-year term requires a 2/3 vote of the Board (at least 8 of the 11 members). The minimum qualifications for National Commander/CEO are defined in the CAP Constitution and Bylaws and may surprise you. They are:

- Be a CAP member in good standing;
- Have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university;

- Have completed Level V of the CAP Professional Development (Education and Training) Program; and
- Have served as a CAP Wing Commander who completed their term of office other than removal for cause.

The Board Personnel Committee may create additional qualifications and waive any qualifications for candidates with comparable skills or experience. In recent years, the Board has added other qualifications such as demonstrated experience leading large organizations, experience in all of CAP's Congressionally directed missions, and availability for substantial time and travel commitments. Practically, a candidate for the National Commander/CEO position has submitted the following documents as part of self-nomination: a cover letter, a biography/background that addresses each of the required and desired qualifications as well as CAP and other professional experience, proof of bachelor's degree or higher, evidence of Level V completion, three letters of recommendation, a statement of command philosophy, and requests for any waivers required. Packages are evaluated, and interviews are scheduled with top candidates. Additional information or materials may be requested, including presentations. In 2021, the Board required interviewees to make a 20-minute presentation to open the interview. In 2024, candidates were allowed to make a presentation, but one was not required.

What surprised you about the selection of the National Commander?

Would you consider applying? Why or why not?

3. Relate the importance of strategic partnerships and why building outside relationships is vital to CAP's success.

I think strategic partnerships provide two main benefits: strengthening and extending the organization's reach. Strengthening the organization is realized by partnerships where we can share best practices and learn from one another. Therefore, to our mutual benefit, each organization is strengthened. Examples of such strategic partnerships include the Air Cadet League of Canada, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Women in Aviation, the Ray Foundation, Air and Space Forces Association, and the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. Extending an organization's reach is gained by partnering with another organization with whom we can collaborate to enhance the breadth, scope, and depth of our impact in a key mission area. These partnerships include the Air and Space Forces Association (local chapter and squadron cooperation at the community level) and the National Homeschool Association (ability to reach and serve homeschool students).

Did you know we partnered with all these groups? Which group resonates with you as a partner?

4. Recognize how the leadership philosophy of the National Commander/CEO provides the foundation for her leadership of the organization.

My vision is a strong, relevant CAP. We should attract and retain talent and funding to accomplish missions for our communities. I want every stakeholder to have a world-class experience in CAP. That means every cadet, pilot, adult member, parent, Aerospace Education Member, partner, CAP-USAF partner, and employee talks about what a great decision it was to be a part of CAP. Some key principles are woven into the framework that helps us achieve a world-class experience.

My leadership philosophy has evolved throughout my leadership journey but has always been grounded in CAP's Core Values of integrity, volunteer service, excellence, and respect. I believe respect is the value that tempers the other values and makes them positive. Integrity without respect is brutal honesty, and it can hurt people. Service without respect is helping people with things they do not wish to do, and they are not grateful when we do so. Excellence without respect is a toxic, competitive environment where winning is the most important thing regardless of the cost. Respect is the core value that makes the other three more effective. I've added four important principles to the framework that guides my leadership philosophy. I've added vision because it allows CAP to be relevant in the future. If we were still chasing German submarines off the coast, we would not be the great organization we are today. Our predecessors had a great vision for our potential to serve our communities and nation. Vision helps us thrive today and in the future. I've added people because we can't accomplish anything without our stakeholders--cadets, adult leaders, Air Force teammates, partners in other organizations, and Board leaders. Our people need missions, which are our meaningful work to motivate them to serve. Action pairs with vision and turns ideas into reality. Action is decisive and energizes CAP. Balance is a critical tenet in our framework. Our teammates are so motivated to accomplish our missions and so selfless they neglect themselves to serve others. Balance ensures we can sustain our work well into the future. We must take care of ourselves, or we cannot care for others.

You can read more about expectations and the end state I want for CAP in my leadership philosophy, which is included as part of this lesson.

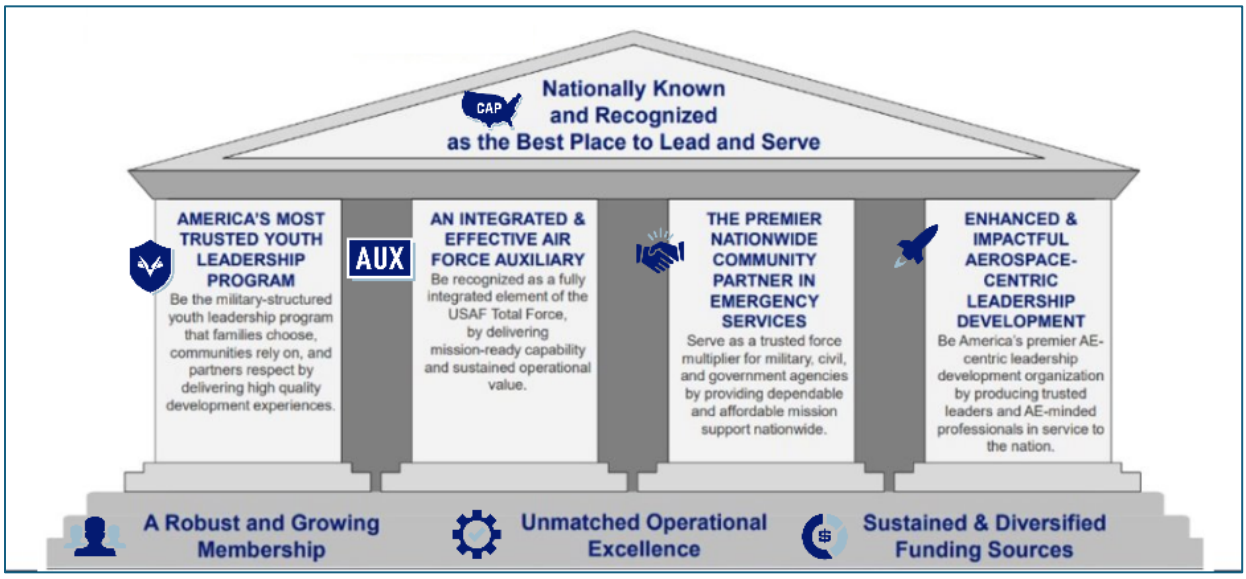
Does anything in my leadership philosophy resonate with you? What? Have you found any of the items in my philosophy helpful in your experiences?

My preferred leadership style is servant leadership. Genuinely caring for those under my charge has been the best and most effective core principle that forms an important aspect of my leadership philosophy. You can see servant leadership in both my philosophy and my actions. As a leader, I have always seen it as my job to create opportunities for others while understanding that they must decide if those opportunities are right for them. This is done through establishing the best possible cadet activities and adult professional development courses that are regularly available and accessible to members, breaking down barriers that obstruct members' success, and making it easy for the average member to navigate being a participant and contributor within CAP. Programs and opportunities created must be in harmony with the organization's best interests. Command decisions must reinforce the core values of the organization.

By incorporating these items into my leadership philosophy, I endeavor daily to be the leader I would want to follow, creating opportunities for others to succeed by empowering people, giving people meaningful work, communicating up and down the chain of command, representing the organization well, providing inspiration, seeking personal improvement every day, and leading by good example. I endeavor to demonstrate and emphasize what I value and the above principles in all I do as a leader.

5. Connect the goals outlined in CAP's Strategic Plan to your work in the organization.

Our Board has provided an outstanding Strategic Plan for CAP. I could not be more enthusiastic about how it will impact our organization through 2035. The Strategic Plan was created by the Board, CSAG, C-Suite, key directors, CAP-USAF representatives, and representatives from our National Cadet Advisory Council. Each icon on the plan represents it in documents and presentations. The Board has given us goals for each of these areas.



- To be nationally known and recognized as the best place to lead and serve we are working on a new site (WhatisCAP.org), new industry partnerships with organizations like the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), and relationships with influencers like Sam Eckholm. We will also need to pursue some type of rating from our employees that shows we are a great place to work.
- Efforts surrounding being America's most trusted youth leadership program include our Youth Protection Advisory Committee that brings together military-adjacent youth organization leaders to discuss best practices, a new Reporting and Accountability Management System (RAMS), new National Cadet Special Activities (NCSAs), outstanding programs that help cadets learn to fly (Cadet Wings), and curriculum updates.

- Being an integrated and effective Air Force Auxiliary means a joint rewrite of our Cooperative Agreement/Statement of Objectives with CAP-USAF, support for the Rated Preparatory Program, continued Air Intercept Training, increasing Air Force Assigned Missions (AFAMs) for our Chaplain Corps, Inspector General Program enhancements, and the ACES program (Aerospace Competition and Economic Security initiative).
- Being the premier community partner in Emergency Services means upgrading our tools such as WMIRS, and our ops quals (moving to Professional Levels), aligning our terminology and tasks, cataloging our current missions, and exploring new missions.
- Having enhanced and impactful aerospace centric leadership development is for our cadets and our adult leaders as well. This includes initiatives like our work with NASA, the High Altitude Balloon Challenge, StellarXplorers, and CyberPatriot, as well as our AEO schools, model rocketry material updates, and making material more accessible in Absorb.
- Supporting robust and growing membership includes our efforts to have retention officers (recruit, train, retain) who can help us keep more members, moving our specialty tracks online, and building infrastructure.
- Unmatched operational excellence means we focus on systems and processes and do things with less burden. That includes Workday for Financial Management, publications updates, ServiceNow for workflow management, contracting process improvements, MIS (Maintenance Information System for our fleet (PlaneLogix), a vehicle management system (replacing paper forms), and CAPNET, which will provide Microsoft Office and a single tenant for all of CAP.
- Diversified and sustainable funding means growing our grant funding and endowment. We are at nearly $7M due to the hard work of our development team and the generosity of members; however, we learned in the government shutdown how important this goal is for CAP. Our new systems and processes should allow us to pursue and track more grant funding.

The heart of each item in the strategic plan is trust. A commander's intent is a statement that describes my vision and helps everyone work toward achieving it. I can't accomplish the vision without all of you helping! A commander's intent gives us focus. My Commander's Intent is below and aligns with our Business Plan and Strategic Plan. My current intent is, "Build and sustain a Civil Air Patrol worthy of the trust placed in us through disciplined execution, exceptional stewardship, and an unwavering commitment to our stakeholders."

Our Focus in 2025, 2026, and 2027

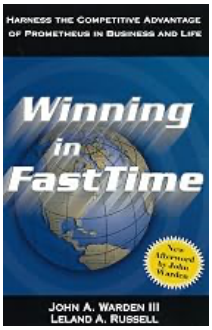
You may have heard me talk about 2025 being a Year of Ownership. This concept is based on a book by two Navy SEALS—Jocko Willink and Leif Babin. Extreme Ownership is the theme we are using in 2025 and beyond to tie all our work together. We continue to use the Year of

What in my commander's intent aligns with your work in CAP?

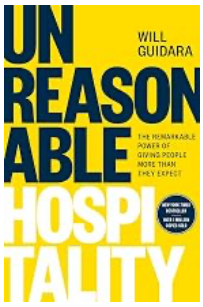
What tenets of the Ownership framework resonate with you most? Why?

Ownership tenets to accomplish our goals and my commander's intent. The key tenets of Extreme Ownership are below.

- Take ownership of your failures and your success. Be vulnerable when you make mistakes. Celebrate success.
- There are no bad teams. Leaders must adjust to their teams and help them be successful. Leaders must be accountable for the team and its success.
- Believe in the mission. You can't accomplish the mission if you don't believe in it. We all want to be a part of something bigger than ourselves.
- Check your ego. It's not about you. It's about accomplishing the mission.
- Cover and Move as One Team. Bust silos and be one team.
- Keep it simple. Complex plans are more challenging to enact.
- Prioritize and execute. We can't do it all.
- Decentralized command. We don't just need followers—we need teams of leaders.
- Plan how you will achieve your objectives.
- Lead up and down the chain. Speak the truth to your leaders. Ask questions. Communicate the goals down the chain so everyone understands.
- Take action and be decisive. You will never be in an ideal situation with all the necessary resources.
- Discipline equals freedom. The more disciplined you are, the more opportunities you have.



Our book in 2026 is Winning in Fast Time by Col John Warden III and Leland Russell. This book is the foundation for the framework for our strategic plan. You can learn more about the framework in the Strategic Plan module. It uses a five-ring model to help us understand how to think in systems related to organizational change.



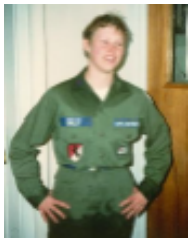
Our book for 2027 will be Unreasonable Hospitality by Will Guidara. This book supports several of our strategic efforts and especially stakeholder experience.

6. Describe CAP's direction in the next few years, its challenges, and some current initiatives it is pursuing.

The strategic plan is the roadmap that the National Commander/CEO follows. They should not bring their own personal "agenda" to the role. The National Commander/CEO might have some projects in mind, but those should relate to the organization's strategic direction. In 2021, a group of leaders, including me, created a new mission/vision statement for this incredible organization. The new statement is

short and elegant. It sums up our work together perfectly. It is: "Volunteers serving America's communities, saving lives, and shaping futures." When the Board adopted this new mission/vision statement, they updated the organization's three strategic goals. These three goals can be summarized with one action verb each: Prepare, Shape, Innovate. A little later, we will explore each in a bit more detail.

The prepare goal brings the opportunity to address many things, from keeping our members safe to maintaining mission readiness and working collaboratively to re-baselining our budget with the Air Force. This will require the efforts of our USAF partners, CAP members, CAP employees, and our Board. The job of preparing is never done!



The shape goal also touches many areas. It can connect to improving the volunteer experience, reducing burden without sacrificing accountability, and increasing our reach into diverse populations and locations. This goal also means that the tools and resources coordinated at the national level are flexible enough for our wings and units to implement. As a former cadet shaped by my experience in CAP, you might imagine that this goal resonates with me personally!

The innovate goal includes the increased use of data analytics to help us with recruiting, retention, diversity, operations, logistics, and more. Innovation means a more accessible CAP. Virtual and hybrid meetings during the pandemic demonstrated that CAP can be more accessible and our mission execution more flexible. Could we have virtual units to serve potential members in areas hundreds of miles away from traditional CAP squadrons? It's an idea that needs to be explored! And everything that we do has to be grounded in our Core Values. We must persist in our efforts to achieve excellence and enhance professionalism.

In addition to the specifics in the Strategic Plan, we have several critical efforts underway in CAP. Our momentum must continue in these areas:

- Branding
- Airworthiness
- Wellness (Resiliency and Suicide Prevention)
- Philanthropy
- Relevant Operations (sUAS, aerial imagery, advancing technologies)
- Publications overhaul
- Recruiting the next generation of volunteers
- Retaining our volunteers
- Managing our portfolio of programs
- Prioritizing our projects
- Building our "One Team."

CAP is constantly evolving and changing. Occasionally, those changes are large and transformational, as we saw during 2017-2021. When large-scale changes are made, we need to take time to institutionalize those program enhancements into the way we do business as an organization. Transformational change ebbs and flows, driven by both internal and external factors. The COVID-19 pandemic is an example of an external factor that forced CAP to examine how we operate. Often, positive outcomes can result if the organization is flexible enough to adapt to changes. For example, virtual Incident Command Posts (ICPs) were utilized extensively during the pandemic and have proven highly effective. Therefore, a key part of the job of the National Commander/CEO is to establish and maintain an environment where CAP remains flexible enough to adapt to external factors – all while carefully guiding evolutionary change from within – to stay relevant for current and future missions. Initiatives and programs are usually the results of a perceived need. When established, these must be grounded in the core values, supported and connected to our strategic plan, and enact our mission/vision. To achieve our goals, our volunteers need meaningful work and inspiring leadership. I am seeking senior leaders to help me inspire our team toward excellence.

The way in which the strategic plan is developed has continued to evolve. In 2021, working groups of national staff and key leaders from throughout CAP (including employees and volunteers) worked with consultants and created the next generation of the strategic plan. Our new plan was anchored in the mission/vision statement describing our work. It was more deliberate and included a predictable, measurable process. Stakeholders such as the Board and Command Council had specific roles in enacting the plan. It was a five-year plan. The new model was designed to be cascaded down to the region and wing levels. A Strategic Implementation Plan template was developed to make cascading the plan easier for commanders. A few years later, we determined that the model did not serve our needs best.

The National Commander/CEO plays a significant role in developing the strategic plan. I try to use a light touch to influence what is built into the plan without unduly exerting the role of Commander/CEO. I believe an inclusive leadership approach is essential and leads to a better product. Diversity of thought is critical in developing the best plan for CAP. I also guide (not direct) CSAG and Command Council participation in the process to avoid undue influence and allow unfettered inputs and ideas. The result is a well-crafted plan to execute the top-level goals and overall strategic plan. My goals, by nature, will be aligned with the strategic plan. After the Board approves it, the Strategic Plan is released to other echelons. I expect that regions and wings will align their efforts with what has been established at the national level. We reduce the burden by focusing on the same goals and objectives. We no longer ask squadrons, wings, and regions to make their own separate plans. That effort was a tremendous burden and led to our organization going in different directions. We now all align to the single Strategic Plan for CAP and ensure our goals align. We like to say One CAP, One Plan.

What does the National Commander/CEO believe are the major challenges the organization and membership face?

CAP has been overcoming challenges with dedication and innovation since its founding. Innovation is part of who we are. Challenges always exist, and they allow us to innovate and improve. We cannot fear the challenges we face—we must embrace them. Here are some challenges I see facing CAP:

- Consistent squadron climate (welcoming environment, meaningful opportunities). According to Gen Goldfein and Gen Welsh, former Chiefs of Staff of the Air Force, the squadron is the most important unit in the Air Force. The same is true of CAP. Strong, engaging squadrons that treat people well attract and keep our members. Squadrons are where CAP is experienced every week.
- Increasing organizational efficiency. We mut remove barriers and gatekeeping from our organization. When people earn promotions, awards, and opportunities, celebrate with them!
- Improving the stakeholder experience. We must treat people well. We must mentor them and help them learn CAP if we are to keep them.
- Finding ways to expand CAP to serve more of America's communities. This is done locally. The NHQ cannot hold local relationships. Members hold those with their communities. Your actions and your reliability matter.
- Diversifying CAP's funding. This is critical.
- Ensuring that our members are in the safest possible environment (includes traditional safety functions, nurturing a safety culture, and our always-improving approach to cadet protection).
- Improving overall management and efficiency of aircraft and vehicle fleets (maintenance, distribution, utilization, etc.)
- Establishing a culture that is open to innovation / breaking down barriers to innovation. We cannot continue to do things 'the way we have always done them" if we are to complete for members and missions. We must evolve.

What would you add to this list? If you had the opportunity to speak with the National Commander or help to emphasize one or more items (on this list or not), what would you highlight? What positives would you share about how we prepare, shape, and innovate? What strategic challenges might you add to the list above?

7. Understand how you support current CAP initiatives through your role in the organization.

I would encourage you to read our strategic plan and consider how you support it. We all do. After reading the plan, do you see how all our efforts connect at the strategic level? Every member of CAP contributes to our strategic efforts. Expanding your vision and thinking about how your contributions apply to the strategic plan and goals can be challenging. With some practice, we can learn to step outside of tactical leadership and grow our strategic vision. There is a lot of pride in what you accomplish and in

understanding what you contribute to the effort. CAP could not be successful without the members' and employees' hard work and dedication. Our one team is instrumental in our success.

If I could ask you to support our work, it would be through these efforts:

- Strengthen your squadron, wing, region, and area.
- Improve the stakeholder experience.We all make a difference in how we treat people and interact with them.
- Interact intentionally. Every interaction counts.
- Be good stewards.We must take care of resources, or we will suffer shortages.
- Align your efforts to executing the plan. We must move in one direction to find success; otherwise, our priorities compete.
- Support change. I know it can be a lot, but we are building a bright future together.
- Trust the future we are building together.

Together, we can build a world-class experience. We have limited time, people, and resources. Let's make it count!

Lesson Summary and Closure
Through your discussion and participation, you have been shown some of the complexities and thought processes the National Commander/CEO goes through while leading the organization. Their strategic vision must be distilled into our roles and how we help carry the organization forward.

Assignment: Write a summary in memorandum format that outlines how you can support CAP's strategic efforts through your role in the organization or through a role you would like to fill at the region level or higher. Use the memorandum template on the National Publications page at https://www.gocivilairpatrol.com/members/publications/publications-management. This assignment is required to earn credit for the module.

Instructions for Synchronous Onsite/ViR Classes
Submit your plan to your instructor for grading.

Instructions for Asynchronous Online Students

1. Upload your assignment to Absorb for an instructor to grade.
2. Answer the following review questions. These can be short answers, 2-3 sentences each. Do not simply recite material from the module or submit AI-generated work.

    - What are some things that surprised you about the role and selection of the National Commander/CEO?

- Would you consider applying for National Commander/CEO? Why or why not?
- If you want to be the National Commander/CEO one day, how do you need to begin preparing?
- How does the leadership philosophy of the National Commander/CEO provide the foundation of her leadership?
- What in her leadership philosophy resonated with you?
- Who does the National Commander/CEO partner with to develop the strategic plan?
- What are some of the key goals and objectives from the CAP Strategic Plan?
- How does your specific role within CAP fit into the Strategic Plan and upcoming initiatives?
- Which goals or objectives do you impact most directly with your work?
- Why is it important that we maintain a positive working relationship with our strategic partners?
- Who are some of our key strategic partners?
- What are some challenges facing CAP? How are we addressing them?
- How would you prioritize the challenges we are facing as an organization?

Aim Higher! (optional activities)
In Absorb, watch some of the Year of Ownership presentations on some of the current organizational challenges.

Review Article XIII of the CAP Constitution and Bylaws for the requirements and process for selection of the National Commander/CEO. Identify three actions, duty positions, and/or activities that would help you to be competitive for this appointment at a time in the future that you choose (10, 20, 30 years?). Develop and execute a plan to accomplish these.

Read the book, "Extreme Ownership: How U.S. Navy SEALS Lead and Win", by Jocko Willink and Leif Babin. Consider how you can incorporate these concepts into your CAP leadership style. Available at archive.org for no cost at https://ia801207.us.archive.org/12/items/extreme-ownership.-jocko-willink/EXTREME%20OWNERSHIP.%20JOCKO%20WILLINK.pdf.

Acronyms and Abbreviations Used in this Document

- 1AF: First Air Force
- ACC: Air Combat Command
- ACES: Aerospace Competition and Economic Security
- AFAM: Air Force Assigned Mission
- AOPA: Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
- Board: Board of Governors
- CAP: Civil Air Patrol
- CAP/CC: Civil Air Patrol National Commander
- CD: Deputy Commander

- CAP-USAF/CC: Civil Air Patrol-United States Air Force Commander
- CAPR: Civil Air Patrol Regulation
- CEO: Chief Executive Officer
- COO: Chief Operating Officer
- CSAG: CAP Senior Advisory Group
- DAF: Department of the Air Force
- DAFI: Department of the Air Force Instruction
- DLO: Desired Learning Objective
- HAFMD: Headquarters Air Force Mission Directive
- ICP: Incident Command Post
- MIS: Maintenance Information System
- NASA: National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- NCSA: National Cadet Special Activity
- NHQ: National Headquarters
- RAMS: Reporting and Accountability Management System
- SAF/MR: Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs
- SecAF: Secretary of the Air Force
- USAF: United States Air Force
- U.S.C.: United States Code
- ViR: Virtual In-Residence

Closely Related Lessons: Level V - CAP Governance, Financial Management, Government Relations, The Civil Air Patrol Strategic Plan