

Luke evaluates new CAP support system

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Luke is one of only three bases chosen to evaluate a program that could expand the Civil Air Patrol's role on installations throughout the Air Force.

The program, Volunteer Support to the Air Force, will provide CAP members with an additional non-combat role, filling a variety of needs on bases.

The main purpose of this program is to augment the Air Force when in need, according to Del Rubi, 56th Range Management office air and range operations assistant.

CAP members could backfill positions left empty by Airmen called away on extended tours of duty or volunteer for any other needs identified to the CAP through the VSAF Web site.

The three areas CAP volunteers will be used the most are base service and support, mission support and operations support.

"Our greatest need is in administrative support," said James Uken, 56th RMO director. "But, we certainly will not turn away volunteers if they come with a different skill set than administration. If they come and want to serve, we will do everything we can to accommodate them."

According to Mr. Uken, Luke is one of three test bases along with Randolph and Wright-Patterson Air Force bases to field this program.

With the success of this program, more installations will adopt the VSAF program as a way of doing business added Mr. Uken.

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"The members of the CAP, all patriotic American citizens, are proud to have this opportunity to help the brave men and women defending our country and the loved ones they leave behind when they deploy," said Brig. Gen. Amy Courter, interim CAP commander.

CAP volunteers will not be used to replace existing volunteers.

"Our other volunteer organizations like the Red Cross will stay where they are, but if they need help CAP will supplement them," Mr. Rubi said.

The CAP, the auxiliary of the Air Force, was founded in 1941 and was charged by Congress in 1948 with three missions — aerospace education, cadet programs and emergency services. It now conducts 90 percent of the inland search-and-rescue missions in the United States.

The success of this program could have a long-term positive impact on the Air Force, Mr. Uken said.

"The Civil Air Patrol is a great organization," he said. "I'm glad to see that they'll be able to have a larger role in Air Force operations."