

MER COMMANDER'S COMMENTARY OCT 2014

In my letter to the region a week ago I mentioned a plan. I would like to share some of that with you now.

Goal 1 - Leadership/Communication - I would like to improve the level of communication between the MER, the MER staff, wing staffs and individual members. It is important to continue these improvements in a positive leadership tone so we can break down any barriers that might impede mission readiness.

This commentary is an example of opening up levels of communication. Everyone lives in an isolated world and you don't always have the opportunity to hear about what is going on at the national and region levels of CAP. I want all of us to celebrate successes and continue collaboration across the MER. I signed on a long time ago to the "no borders, no boundaries" concept.

Awards are a very important part of how we pay our members. I want to make it easier for members to recognize their fellow members. We will work on this at the region level and, if you have some thoughts, send them along through your chain of command. Additionally, we will aggressively support the new proposed online award nomination process.

I will be holding quarterly scheduled commanders' calls for the wing commanders and their staffs. This will also provide you with input into the region and national by sending up your ideas and concerns through the chain of command. We will do this with both in-person meetings and webinar/call-ins.

Goal 2 - Region/Wing Staff Support - The MER staff is a support organization for the individual wings in the region, just as each wing's staff serves its members as a support function for the squadrons and individual members in the wing. The MER staff will be the subject matter experts in their field.

We will be establishing a new organizational chart that supports the intent of the new NHQ Single Staff directed by the BoG using the U.S. Air Force A-Staff format as guide. Currently a number of the wings and the SER use this format that has a proven track record of supporting and streamlining the staffing process. More importantly, moving to this standard aligns our vernacular with the Air Force and with the National Guard. This change provides an opportunity for improvement from the status quo.

You have already seen evidence of this next item. While selecting any new staff members I will be asking each wing commander in the region to provide two names for each major staff position. I would like to build the region staff with an emphasis on including all the wing's personnel in the region.

We will utilize a standard, template-driven Commander's Update Brief (CUB). This concept is currently used by the USAF staff to communicate to the wing commanders and their staff

sections during the quarterly commanders calls. I know of two wings in the MER that already use this format so at least a few of us are familiar with how it works. One of the added major benefits of the end product of our commanders call will be a copy of the slide deck available to be reviewed by everyone in the region.

I will be asking each major staff section to establish quarterly staff calls, on a different month than the wing commanders calls, for every staff section in the MER with their counterparts in the wings. All the cadet programs or operations people should be talking to each other regularly. Now we know it will happen at least once a quarter. Let me be clear on this: Commander's command while staff advises and works to solve problems and come up with best practices. Staff members in the wings work for the wing commander. However, if they decide not to attend these meetings because "I don't work for you," then I will be having a chat with your boss.

Goal 3 - Strategic Planning - Following the National CAP Strategic Plan, we will develop a Region level plan that works to meet the goals of the national commander.

I will require every wing in the region to build on the OPS Annual Training Program (ATP), now required by the USAF, to include the other mission areas - AE and CP - and publish it annually. Included in this ATP will be a set of goals for each wing. These goals will be reviewed at least annually with each wing commander.

During our commanders call we will identify which CAP Strategic Goals should be tasked to region and wing and subordinate units. We will then include these goals within the wing and region ATP. The MER goal review will be part of the annual MER staff review done by the MER/XO (CS) and MER vice commander.

My command philosophy isn't complicated or particularly brilliant, but I do my best to be fair with everyone. I try to let people know what I expect from them; if they don't meet those expectations but they want to, we'll come up with an improvement plan. If they still aren't hitting the mark, then I may be forced to do something about it. I work very hard to uphold the core value of integrity in everything I do. However, I expect people to do their jobs. If I ask them to have a report done by the 30th, I expect it to be done. If there is a reason it isn't going to be done, I want to hear about it as soon as possible. Bad news doesn't get better with time, Be honest. If I am being unreasonable, let me know. I truly believe in the concept of our members being "unpaid professionals" and I expect everyone to act accordingly. When the doors are closed I want to hear honest opinions and I am OK with you expressing them passionately but once the decision is made, no one outside the closed door will know who didn't agree with it. We will be one team united in one purpose.

I am excited about this new journey we are all about to take together. The Middle East Region is one of the top regions in the Civil Air Patrol. Together we will go even farther serving our communities, states and our nation...no borders, no boundaries.