

Grade, Promotions, Decorations and Awards

CAP Officer Basic Course

Introduction

Promotions, Decorations, and Awards are the "pay" we receive for being personally successful in CAP. They also say something positive about our work and dedication to the organization. They indicate that we have reached a certain level of professionalism and are ready to accept greater challenges, responsibilities and possibly new roles in CAP. This section will make you familiar with the procedures involved with being promoted or receiving an award.

Your unit Personnel Officer is the expert in promotions, awards, and decorations. Your role in promotions, awards and decorations is to make the Personnel Officer aware that a member has become eligible for promotion or an award and possibly help recommend them, so that all members can be recognized for their achievements.

1. Describe the purpose of grade and procedures for promotion in CAP.

The attainment of grade is an excellent source of motivation for many cadets and seniors alike. It encourages members to train, serve, strive for excellence and take on more responsibility. But it is more than that. Grade is recognition that they have demonstrated a particular level of management and leadership ability. It is also a statement by their superiors that they have obtained a certain level of professionalism.

Be aware there is a difference between rank and grade. The terms "grade" and "rank" are used interchangeably but that is not correct. Your grade, for instance, is Lt or Capt or General. Rank is determined by the order in which people of the same grade were promoted. The person who has been in that grade the longest is the ranking officer. If 1Lt Jones was promoted on 15 January 2009 and 1Lt Smith was promoted on 1 February 2009, they are the same grade but Lt Jones is the ranking officer.

The purpose of grade is to denote a member's status within the organization. Obviously the more experienced members will usually have a higher grade reflecting their longevity in CAP, their greater ability to manage resources and successfully lead others in the accomplishment of CAP's missions.

INITIAL APPOINTMENTS

All senior members (excepting Aerospace Education Members, Cadet Sponsor Members, Retired Members, and Patron Members) can be promoted if they meet the requirements and are approved. Some members may be appointed to a higher grade in recognition of their previous service, educational background, or professional skill. The criteria for regular duty performance promotions (the most common in CAP), for special appointments, and some subsequent special promotions can be found in CAPR 35-5.

PROMOTIONS

Webster defines promotion as "to advance in rank or position". The procedures for getting promoted are found in CAPR 35-5, *CAP Officer and NCO Appointments and Promotions*. Promotions recognize a combination of training, experience, expertise and successful leadership.

Subsequent promotions are based upon a combination of training, experience, expertise and successful leadership. A good summary of the requirements for duty performance promotions can be found in CAP Senior Member Professional Development Program Progression and Awards chart in the CAPR 50-17, Attachment 1, and is attached to this lesson.

Each duty performance promotion through Lt Colonel is tied to some form of training. Early in the program it is focused on specialty training and work at the unit. As members progress it shifts more to management and leadership. In other words, Attachment 1 outlines the requirements for the award levels in the Professional Development program. These awards, such as the Davis Award, are also requirements (among others, such as time-in-grade, performance in present grade, performance potential, etc); for promotion.

The chart at the bottom of Attachment 1 also shows the minimum time in grade required for promotion to the next higher grade. Just because a member has been a particular grade X years and has the professional development award required does not mean one is automatically promoted. Participation, experience, and performance are also essential.

The measure of professional duty performance is not on diagram 1. Have a look at CAPR 35-5, Section B - Duty Performance Promotions (currently on page 4), paragraph 11(a) (5) and says, "...be performing in an exemplary manner meriting promotion to the grade recommended." The term "exemplary manner" is a pretty high standard. That means members have to be performing their duties professionally and in complete accordance with the training they received. Their personal conduct should be commendable. The quality of decisions they make, and the amount of guidance they require should be appropriate for their level of experience in the program. It is also shows a commander's faith that a member will continue to perform at this level and will develop their potential further in the future.

PROMOTION REQUEST PROCEDURES

There are two ways to initiate a duty performance promotion recommendation: either on-line or by using a CAP Form 2, *Recommendation for Promotion*.

On-line promotions (duty performance) can be submitted by the unit Personnel Officer or by any member designated by the commander and granted on-line permissions to do so. Once initiated on-line, the promotion request will be automatically forwarded to the unit commander for approval. On approval of the unit commander, the request will be automatically forwarded up the chain of command to the approving authority for final action. If approved, the member's record will be automatically updated by NHQ and a new card sent to the unit.

For promotions other than duty performance promotions, or if the unit wishes not to use the on-line utility for a duty performance promotion, one can submit a paper- CAP Form 2 through channels.

The key to the successful recommendation is in section IX Remarks block. This is where the nominator proves the recommended person is "performing in an exemplary manner". Take a moment and think about what the word exemplary means. Simply, average performance does not meet the standard. Answer these questions: why does this member warrant promotion? What is the member's potential for success in the next higher grade? Finally, why should they be promoted NOW?

In most cases this space is not big enough and you will want to put "see attached" in the block. On an additional sheet, a narrative is provided to demonstrate how the member is "performing in an exemplary manner meriting a promotion to the grade recommended." The completed form is given to the unit personnel officer (who checks it and makes the necessary copies) and forwards it to the unit commander for approval.

The commander receives the request for promotion that proves the member is "eligible for consideration" for promotion. It does not mean that they are required to promote the member. By approving the request each commander is putting their reputation on the line that the member has met the training and time in grade criteria and that they are performing in an exemplary manner. The form is then passed up the chain of command to the approving authority (see Figure 1 of CAPR 35-5). At each level of command the request for promotion can be approved, sent back for more information or denied. Once the approving authority signs it, the information is sent to NHQ who enters the promotion into the database and produces a new membership card for the newly promoted member.

SPECIAL GRADES

There are a few grades that are reserved for the purpose of denoting particular positions. They include Major General (national commander only), Brigadier General (national vice commander only) and Colonel (wing commander, region vice commander, region commander and some national staff officers). These grades are temporary until the member completes their term. The NCO grades are reserved for CAP members with prior military service as an NCO and have chosen to be CAP NCOs. Flight Officers are reserved for members between the ages of 18 and 21.

2. Explain the purpose of and procedures for award of decorations.

Decorations and awards recognize achievement and skill. The outward symbols of these achievements are typically ribbons that we wear on our uniforms. Awards and decorations represent your "resume." They instantly let other members know what you have done over your CAP career. As we progress through this portion of the lesson you should refer to the following CAP publications:

- CAPM 39-1, *CAP Uniform Manual*
- CAPR 39-3, *Awards of CAP Medals, Ribbons and Certificates*
- CAPR 50-17, *Professional Development*

As noted earlier decorations are designed to recognize heroism, extraordinary achievements or performance. One of the most rewarding experiences that a member can have is to receive a decoration for service to the organization. Within CAP there are 10 decorations given in CAP, they are:

- Silver Medal of Valor
- Bronze Medal of Valor
- Distinguished Service Medal
- Exceptional Service Award
- Meritorious Service Award
- Commanders Commendation Award
- Achievement Award
- Certificate of Recognition for Lifesaving
- National Commander's Unit Citation
- Unit Citation Award

Each of these has their own criteria which is set forth in CAPR 39-3. Take a moment and scan the criteria for these decorations.

There are some key terms used when explaining the criteria for these decorations. Words like "outstanding" and "unmistakably exceptional" mean the member performance is an example for the nation to follow. Other terms like "great responsibility" and "greatly benefit" mean not just the usual responsibilities inherent in the duty assigned. These terms describe the expectation that a member's performance goes well beyond the standard even for jobs that

normally have a lot of responsibility. They are to recognize those members whose actions will have a great and lasting impact on the organization or have shown great heroism. They are not earned easily.

Anyone who believes that a member has met the criteria for the decoration may nominate them by submitting two copies of a CAP Form 120 through the chain of command, to the approving authority. The higher the decoration, the higher the echelon required for approval. In this, the approval process for decorations is similar to that of promotion. Take a moment and look at the procedure. It can be found on page 4 of the CAPR 39-3.

Extreme care should be exercised to ensure that all items are completed properly, and moreover that the award selected is the award deserved. The critical portion of the form is the narrative, as this is where the action or achievement is documented and the request is defended. Most decorations are denied because the narrative did not clearly portray how the unit's or member's achievement met or exceeded the criteria for the award selected.

3. Explain the purpose of and procedures for nomination and selection of awards.

Awards are different than decorations, they do not speak to quality of performance, or a singular act but rather to meeting some criteria achieved through participation or sustained performance over a long period of time.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

Professional Development awards in the context of this lesson refer to award ribbons in professional development or aerospace. These include

Professional Development

- Membership Ribbon (given on completion of Level I)
- Leadership Ribbon
- Gen Benjamin O Davis Award (Level II, no ribbon)
- Grover Loening Aerospace Award (Level III)
- Paul E. Garber Award (Level IV)
- Gill Robb Wilson Award (Level V) NOTE: This is the highest award for senior member training achievement in CAP, and less than 1 percent of senior members attain this distinction.

Aerospace

- Brig Gen Charles E "Chuck" Yeager Award (Aerospace Education Program for Senior Members)
- A. Scott Crossfield Aerospace Award (for attaining the Master Rating in the AE specialty)

Professional Development Awards are guided by the provisions in CAPR 50-17, and are requested through the chain of command on a CAP Form 24. Aerospace Awards are guided by the provisions outlined in CAPR 280-2.

ACTIVITY and SERVICE AWARDS

There are a variety of service award ribbons denoting service in mission or command areas or community service. These include:

- Command Service Ribbon

- Red Service Ribbon
- Find Ribbon
- Search and Rescue Ribbon
- Counterdrug Ribbon
- Disaster Relief Ribbon
- Homeland Security Ribbon
- Cadet Orientation Pilot Ribbon
- Community Service Ribbon
- Senior Recruiter Ribbon
- Wartime Service Ribbon

There are also a variety of activity award ribbons denoting participation in a particular or group of CAP activities. These include:

- International Air Cadet Exchange Ribbon
- National Cadet Competition Ribbon
- National Color Guard Competition Ribbon
- Cadet Advisory Council Ribbon (earned as a cadet)
- National Cadet Special Activities Ribbon
- Encampment Ribbon

Service Awards are normally requested using a CAP Form 2a. Take a moment now and see if you meet the criteria for any training or service awards by skimming the criteria in CAPR 39-3.

ANNUAL CAP AWARDS

There are annual national awards such as Senior of the Year and the Bud Payton PAO of the Year that recognize individuals. There are also awards such as the Squadron of Distinction and the Paul W. Turner Safety Award that recognize units. These are intended to recognize superior performance by individuals and units. You can read more about this in Section G of CAPR 39-3. There are also numerous equivalents at the wing and region levels. Anybody can nominate a person or unit for these awards, the nomination goes through the chain of command. You should check with your DP for a complete list, their criteria and due dates. These awards usually come with a plaque or certificate rather than a ribbon.

It would be extremely embarrassing to earn an award or decoration and then wear it incorrectly. Please take a moment now and find out exactly where your awards and decorations should be worn on your uniform. CAP decorations will be worn in the order of precedence as outlined in CAPR 39-3. Another good place to go for help with the order and orientation of your ribbons is [McChord Composite Squadron](#) web page and click on "rack builder" on the left. The uniform manual (CAPM 39-1) will describe in detail where your ribbons are worn. It should be noted that AF officers do not wear ribbons but only their badges on their shirt. However CAP officers have the choice of wearing none, some or all of their ribbons and badges on their shirt.

Lesson Summary and Closure

Awards, decorations, and grade are all interrelated. Training awards are requirements for promotion. The training, volunteer service and the proficiency demonstrated to earn service awards, activity awards and decorations help prove that members are performing in an exemplary manner and ready for promotion.

Grade is a vote of confidence in the member and moreover a signal of their potential to do more. It marks the member as a person who is ready and able to take on more

responsibility in CAP. It elevates the member into a position where people of lesser grade can look up to them. But it also raises the standards by which the member will be judged.

Works Cited

CAPR 39-1, CAP Uniform Manual, Civil Air Patrol, Maxwell AFB, AL

CAPR 35-5, CAP Officer and NCO Appointments and Promotions, Civil Air Patrol, Maxwell AFB, AL

CAPR 35-6, Aeronautical Ratings, ES Patches and Badges and Ground Team Badges, Civil Air Patrol, Maxwell AFB, AL

CAPR 39-3, Awards of CAP Medals, Ribbons and Certificates, Civil Air Patrol, Maxwell AFB, AL