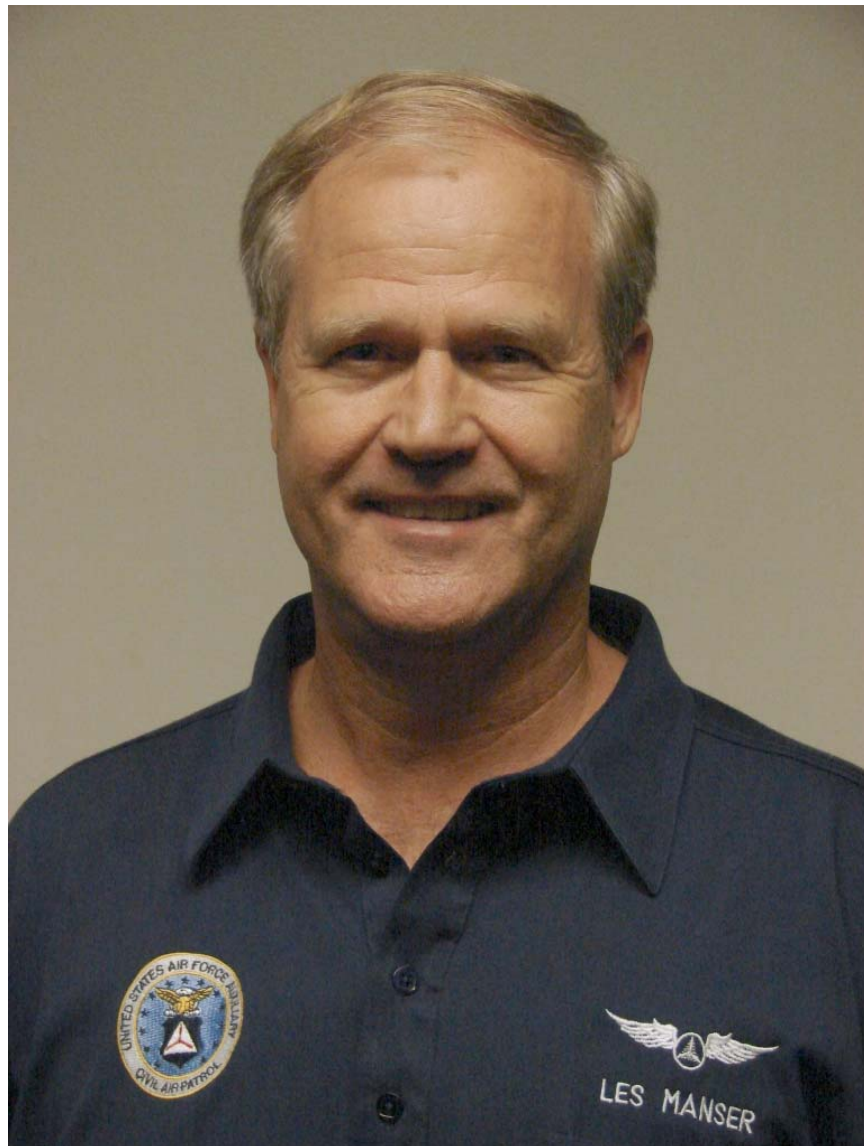




Civil Air Patrol
Deer Valley Composite Squadron 302
United States Air Force Auxiliary
932 W. Deer Valley Road
Phoenix AZ 85027

Capt. Les Manser Appointed Commander of Squadron 302

14-Jun-2009





Photos courtesy of Capt. Jerry Porter



Civil Air Patrol

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RE: Capt. Les Manser appointed commander
of Deer Valley Composite Squadron 302

CONTACT: Capt. Jerry Porter (602/992-1613)

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PHOENIX, Ariz. (June 14, 2009) – Capt. Les Manser has been installed as commander of Deer Valley Composite Squadron 302 of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), succeeding fellow Glendale resident Lt. Col. Chas Buchanan, who was appointed chief of staff of CAP's Arizona Wing. The 96-member squadron is one of the wing's largest units.

CAP is the official civilian volunteer auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force and open to cadets 12 to 21 as well as adults, known as CAP officers, 18 and older. CAP performs up to 95 percent of the inland search-and-rescue missions in the United States and provides numerous other support services to communities, states and the nation including homeland security, counter-narcotic flights and humanitarian missions as well as cadet training.

Presiding over the change of command, which occurred earlier this month at the close of the weekly cadet meeting, was Maj. Rita Bivens-Scherer, commander of Arizona Wing Group IV, of which the squadron is part. Maj. Atilla Szokol, the squadron's deputy commander for adults, had served as interim squadron commander since Lt. Col. Buchanan's wing appointment. Maj. Szokol relinquished command to Maj. Bivens-Scherer, who then installed Capt. Manser as commander while more than 30 cadets stood in formation behind the officers. Majs. Bivens-Scherer and Szokol likewise are Glendale residents.

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Since joining Deer Valley Composite Squadron 302 in May 2007, the new commander has served the squadron as operations officer, aerospace education officer for seniors, aircraft maintenance officer, test-control officer, inspector general (IG) complaint officer and web security administrator. In addition, he serves at the Wing level as an IG inspector, cadet flight-orientation administrator and was the Wing project officer for the U.S. Air Force-CAP Compliance Inspection earlier this year.

Capt Manser's CAP honors include a Commander's Commendation Award, Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., Award, A. Scott Crossfield Award, Gen. Chuck E. Yeager Aerospace Education Award, and leadership and member ribbon

He brings to his post 12 years of Air Force experience in the enlisted and officer ranks. Capt. Manser was an avionics maintenance specialist and attained the grade of staff sergeant during four years as an enlistee. He served as an officer for eight years after being commissioned in 1978 through Officer Training School and rose to the rank of captain.

As an officer, he served as an F-4E/G instructor, weapons-system officer, wing standardization and evaluation officer, wing weapons and tactics officer, wing electronic warfare officer, supervisor of flying and air-operations officer. He has 1,800 flight hours as an Air Force-rated navigator in fighter aircraft.

Among his Air Force decorations are a Commendation Medal, Achievement Medal, Outstanding Unit Award with one Oak Leaf Cluster (OLC), Overseas Service Ribbon Short Tour with two OLCs, Longevity Service Award with two OLCs, Combat Readiness Medal, Small Arms Expert marksmanship ribbon, U.S. nonmilitary decorations and National Defense Service Medal.

Capt. Manser separated from the Air Force in 1986 and earned his master of science degree in aeronautical science with a 4.0 grade-point average from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. He earlier had completed his bachelor of science degree in electronics technology from Troy State University in Alabama.

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After completing his graduate degree, Capt. Manser had supplemental Air Force experience from 1988 to 1992 as an F-15E academic and simulator instructor at Luke Air Force Base through McDonnell-Douglas Training Systems, Inc. He trained all F-15E aircrews who participated in the 1990 Gulf War. Notably, no aircraft crewed by his students was lost during Desert Storm combat operations.

Capt. Manser served for six years as an adjunct instructor for Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University at its Luke Air Force Base campus. His other qualifications include being a Federal Aviation Administration-rated private pilot and aircraft dispatcher. He has a single-engine land (SEL) private-pilot instrument rating, multiple-engine-land (MEL) commercial-pilot instrument rating, and a total of 300 hours of SEL and MEL flight time including almost 200 hours as a pilot in command. He is a qualified CAP mission scanner and observer, transport pilot, instrument pilot and flight-release officer.

A quality manager since 1993, Capt. Manser has been employed for the past eight years by Ditron Manufacturing, Inc. He is a certified quality auditor.

At Deer Valley Composite Squadron 302, located at 932 W. Deer Valley Road on the grounds of Deer Valley Airport in north Phoenix, meetings for officers are conducted at 7:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month while cadets meet at 7 p.m. each Monday except holidays. Many officers are pilots or former members of the military although such experience is not required for membership. A composite squadron has both officers and cadets.

Additional information about CAP, its missions and membership opportunities for officers and cadets is available by visiting the national CAP website at www.cap.gov, or the Arizona Wing website at <http://azwg.us> or Deer Valley Composite Squadron 302's website at 222.squadron302.org

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Information requests about the cadet program also can be directed to the squadron's deputy commander for cadets, 2nd Lt. Richard Shortridge at shortridge@cox.net. Other information requests can be directed to Capt. Jerry Porter, the squadron's public-affairs officer, at civilairpatrolsq302pao@cox.net.

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Photo captions:

(Head shot): Capt. Les Manser

(Change of command): Capt Les Manser accepts command of 96-member Deer Valley Composite Squadron 302 of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) from Maj. Rita Bivens-Scherer, commander of Group IV of CAP's Arizona Wing. CAP, the official volunteer auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, conducts search and rescue, humanitarian and homeland-security missions plus provides aerospace education and cadet programs.