

**BY ORDER OF THE COMMANDER
AIR COMBAT COMMAND**

**AIR COMBAT COMMAND
INSTRUCTION 36-211**

28 MAY 2025

Personnel

**SQUADRON COMMANDER HIRING
AND TENURE**



COMPLIANCE WITH THIS PUBLICATION IS MANDATORY

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This instruction implements Department of the Air Force Policy Directive (DAFPD) 36-21, *Utilization and Classification of Military Personnel*. It establishes Air Combat Command hiring requirements for squadron commander billets and delineates tenure policy for all squadron commanders. This publication may be supplemented at the Numbered Air Force (NAF) level, but all supplements that directly implement this publication must be routed to the ACC Career Development Branch (HQ ACC/A1KB) for coordination prior to certification and approval. This publication does not apply to Air Force Reserve Command or Air National Guard units. This publication does not apply to the US Space Force. Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) using the Department of the Air Force (DAF) Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*. Send DAF Forms 847 to ACC/A1KB, accal.a1kb.devandtraining@us.af.mil. The authorities to waive wing/unit level requirements in this publication are identified with a Tier (e.g. T-0, T-1, T-2, T-3) number following the compliance statement. See DAF Manual (DAFMAN) 90-161, *Publishing Processes and Procedures*, for a description of the authorities associated with the tier numbers. Submit requests for waivers through the chain of command to the appropriate Tier waiver approval authority, or alternately, to the publication OPR for non-tiered compliance items. Ensure that all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained IAW Air Force Instruction (AFI) 33-322, *Records Management and Information Governance Program*, and disposed of IAW the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule, which is located in the Air Force Records Information Management System.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This document has been substantially revised and should be reviewed in its entirety. All chapters and appendices have been changed. **Chapter 6** and **Chapter 7** have been rewritten to modify previous guidance. Summary of substantive changes include: (1) Clarified origin of Maintenance Orientation requirement and desired timeline for attendance (**4.1.3.**). (2) Added verbiage directing members to servicing HARM office for operational qualification / re-qualification concerns (**4.1.4.**). (3) Added verbiage throughout publication directing reader to **Chapter 7** for relevant waiver provisions. Added Tier-level indicator for waivable items (e.g. T-2) where applicable. (4) Added templates for waivers (Tables **A2.1.**, **A3.1.**, and **A4.1.**).

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Chapter 1

GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1. Overview.

1.1.1. Introduction: The squadron commander hiring and tenure process outlined in this instruction is designed to provide maximum latitude to all Numbered Air Forces (NAFs), Centers, and wing commanders (hereinafter referred to as "Hiring Authorities" or "Senior Raters") subordinate to Air Combat Command (ACC) for filling critical leadership positions.

1.1.2. Scope: This instruction applies to the appointment of squadron commanders. For the purposes of this instruction, a squadron is defined as a subordinate unit that exists within a group and/or wing structure, or a subordinate unit within the MAJCOM or NAF/NAF-equivalent headquarters that provides a specific operational or support capability. Except for detachments scheduled to become Associate Fighter Squadrons (AFS), this instruction does not apply to detachments, flights, or staff.

1.2. Application.

1.2.1. Applicability: All directions in this instruction apply to the hiring and tenure of the following:

1.2.1.1. Flying Squadrons: This includes operational flying squadrons, flying training units, flying test squadrons, and squadrons with permanently or temporarily assigned combat-coded aircraft (excluding transient aircraft).

1.2.1.2. Non-Flying Operations Squadrons (Lieutenant Colonel authorized): This includes squadrons such as, but not limited to, Operations Support Squadrons (OSS), Guardian Angel Rescue Squadrons, Air Control Squadrons (ACS), and Air Support Operations Squadrons (ASOS).

1.2.1.3. Support Squadrons.

1.2.1.4. Associate Fighter Squadrons.

Chapter 2

CANDIDATE REQUIREMENTS

2.1. Command Lists:

2.1.1. Eligibility: Candidates for command of a flying, non-flying operations, or associate fighter squadron must be listed on the current Combat Air Forces (CAF) squadron commander list or another vetted squadron commander list (e.g., the AETC HAWK board). See [Chapter 7](#) for waiver requirements. The CAF-rated squadron commander list remains valid until superseded by the following year's command list. Hiring requests for officers not listed on the most current squadron commander list do not align with the intent of the CAF Development Team (DT).

2.1.2. Operations Support Squadron (OSS) Commanders: OSS commanders may be selected from the commanders' list for Rated Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSCs), as well as the following AFSCs: 14N (Intelligence), 15W (Weather and Environmental Sciences), 17D (Warfighter Communications Operations), 13H (Aerospace Physiology), and 13M (Airfield Operations). These candidates are eligible for OSS command and must be approved by their respective DT.

2.1.3. Support Squadron Commanders: Commander candidates for support squadrons must be listed on an Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC)-approved squadron commander candidate list. These candidates will be hired in accordance with the timeline established by their respective DTs, with the concurrence of their Career Field Manager.

2.1.4. Expeditionary Squadron Commanders: Commander candidates for expeditionary squadrons must either be a sitting or graduated squadron commander or be listed on a current squadron commander candidate list, as per AFI 10-401 _ACCSUP, *Air Force Operations Planning and Execution*.

2.2. Exceptions:

2.2.1. Temporary Assignments: Officers temporarily assigned to squadron command (e.g., filling an interim command position for a deployed commander) are not required to be listed on any squadron commander list.

2.2.2. Colonel Assignments: Colonels or colonel-selects hired into authorized O-6 squadron command positions are not required to be listed on a squadron commander candidate list. These positions will be filled through the AF/A1L colonel assignment game-plan process, with ACC/A1L serving as the point of contact for this process.

2.2.3. Nuclear Mission Experience: Commanders of squadrons with a nuclear mission require nuclear mission experience. To be eligible, commanders must have either (1) at least 24 cumulative months of experience performing a nuclear mission or performing nuclear mission duties within the gaining squadron's respective functional area, or (2) 12 consecutive months as an Operations Officer or Deputy Commander of a unit performing a nuclear mission or performing nuclear mission duties within the past 18 months. The 24 months of nuclear experience must have been accumulated within the past ten years prior to assuming command.

Chapter 3

SQUADRON COMMANDER HIRING PROCEDURES

3.1. Hiring Authority: Hiring Authorities or Senior Raters must initiate the hiring process for squadron commanders in all cases.

3.2. Operational (O-5 and below) Direct Hiring: For both internal wing and external wing direct hires, Hiring Authorities or Senior Raters must obtain approval from their respective NAF/Center commanders, or from ACC/CD for squadrons directly subordinate to HQ ACC Directorates (See [Attachment 2](#) for sample approval request). Hiring requests must include the following information:

- 3.2.1. The name and rank of the officer being hired.
- 3.2.2. The position number to which the officer will be assigned.
- 3.2.3. The effective date of command.
- 3.2.4. The desired report-no-later-than date (if required).
- 3.2.5. The incumbent status.
- 3.2.6. Any required waivers.

3.3. Support (O-5 and below) Positions: The Senior ACC functional manager will coordinate with hiring authorities through a bid process to hire support commanders. Hiring Authorities or Senior Raters must comply with the procedures outlined in paragraph [7.1.1](#) when hiring support commanders outside of the annual DT selection process.

Chapter 4

MANDATORY ACTIONS PRIOR TO ASSUMING COMMAND

4.1. Squadron Command Prerequisites: Hiring Authorities or Senior Raters must ensure first-time squadron commanders accomplish the following items prior to change or assumption of command:

4.1.1. Pre-Command Training: First-time squadron commanders will make every effort to attend the ACC Squadron Commanders Course prior to assuming command and must attend within 90 days of assuming command. (T-2) See paragraph 7.3 for Pre-Command Training waiver requirements. The gaining unit funds attendance. Total Force Association (TFA) commanders may receive Total Force Integrated (TFI)-centric training from HQ ACC/A8BT as part of the course.

4.1.1.1. Officers who have previously served as a squadron commander or completed a similar course in another MAJCOM are exempt but must notify HQ ACC/A1KB.

4.1.1.2. Priority attendance is given to ACC squadron commanders, with expeditionary commanders attending as time permits.

4.1.1.3. Other officers, including detachment commanders and non-designated wing-level chaplains, may attend on a space-available basis.

4.1.2. Spouse Attendance: Spouses are encouraged to attend the ACC Squadron Commander Spouse Course but are not required to do so. Spouse travel is gaining unit funded. Civilian spouses may be placed on Invitational Travel Authorization (ITA) orders per the Defense Travel System ITA Guide; invitational orders do not authorize per diem or other expense allowances unless certified as required (see table 3-2.1 of the Joint Travel Regulations [JTR], *Uniformed Service Members and DOD Civilian Employees*). Active-Duty spouses may travel on TDY orders.

4.1.3. Maintenance Orientation: **Flying** squadron commanders and AFS commanders must complete a maintenance orientation within six (6) months of taking command, if the squadron commander did not previously attend as a director of operations. The Maintenance Course for Operational Commanders (MCO) is a CSAF-directed formal training course for aeronautically rated officers who have been selected for assignment as an operations squadron commander or director of operations in an operational wing (to include OSS). The scheduling point of contact is HQ ACC/A3TO, Formal Training and Awards. Waiver requests should be directed to the members' MAJCOM Functional Manager (MFM) for approval by the Career Field Functional Manager (CFM).

4.1.4. Operational Qualifications: New operations squadron commanders must be fully current and qualified in their respective major weapon system prior to assuming command. This requirement also applies to officers temporarily assigned to squadron command. Officers requiring requalification should coordinate with the servicing Host Aviation Resource Management (HARM) office.

4.1.5. Nuclear Mission Training: Squadron commanders whose organizations have a nuclear mission must attend a Nuclear Professional Development Course, as recommended by HQ ACC/A10. The scheduling point of contact is the ACC Readiness, Plans and Policy Division (HQ ACC/A10R).

Chapter 5

COMMANDER TENURE

5.1. Time in Command: An officer's time in command is crucial for their professional development as a commander and for the stability of the squadron. The Commander, Air Combat Command (COMACC), expects ACC squadron commanders to serve a minimum of 24 months in command. **(T-2)** See [Chapter 7](#) for waiver provisions. However, some contracting squadron commanders hold critical acquisition positions that require a minimum TIC of three years, as specified in Title 10 United States Code Section 1734, *Career Development*. The office of primary responsibility for these positions is the HQ ACC Acquisition Management and Integration Center (HQ ACC/AMIC).

5.2. Subsequent Squadron Command Tours: Officers are eligible to serve a second (or subsequent) squadron command tour, provided their first tour did not end in removal. CAF officers who have previously served as O-5 squadron commanders do not need to re-compete but must apply to the CAF Squadron Commander board to be included on the CAF Squadron Commander list. While not required, attendance at pre-command training is encouraged for commanders who attend the training in a different command. The approval authority for a second squadron command tour is the losing NAF/Center Commander.

Chapter 6

RELIEF OF COMMAND

6.1. Procedures: Follow procedures in Department of the Air Force Instruction (DAFI) 51-509, *Appointment to and Assumption of Command*, for relief of command.

6.2. Notice Requirements: In accordance with DAFI 51-509, paragraph 14.4.1., prior to taking final action to relieve an officer from any command position, with or without cause, a superior competent authority must notify the next higher superior competent authority of the officer being relieved of command. Notice to MAJCOM is not required unless the next higher superior authority falls at the MAJCOM level.

Chapter 7

WAIVER PROVISIONS

7.1. Command List Waiver: A command list waiver is required to hire an officer for command if they are not on a current squadron commander list or lack applicable nuclear mission experience. Officers will not be appointed to command until a waiver is approved. See [Attachment 3](#) for a sample waiver request.

7.1.1. Hiring Authorities or Senior Raters will forward a waiver request for approval by the NAF/Center Commander (or by the ACC/CD for squadrons directly subordinate to HQ ACC). The request must explain why the selection is in the best interest of ACC and the USAF, and why other eligible candidates were not chosen from the current squadron commander lists. The completed waiver will be forwarded to HQ ACC/A1KB for records keeping and coordination with the CAF DT Advisor, Functional Area Manager, or AFPC as required.

7.1.2. A waiver is required if a squadron commander with a nuclear mission lacks 24 cumulative months of experience or 12 consecutive months as an Operations Officer or Deputy Commander. Hiring Authorities or Senior Raters will forward a waiver request for approval by the NAF/Center Commander (or by the ACC/CD for squadrons directly subordinate to HQ ACC). The completed waiver will be forwarded to HQ ACC/A1KB for records keeping and coordination with the CAF DT Advisor, Functional Area Manager, or AFPC as required.

7.2. Time in Command Waiver:

7.2.1. Deviations from the 24-month expectation should be rare. Selection for developmental education, voluntary assignment action, or internal movement (e.g., Deputy Group Commander) alone is not sufficient justification for a waiver.

7.2.2. Hiring Authorities or Senior Raters will forward a waiver request for approval by the NAF/Center Commander (or by the ACC/CD for squadrons directly subordinate to HQ ACC). See [Attachment 3](#) for sample waiver request. The completed waiver will be forwarded to HQ ACC/A1KB for records keeping and coordination with the CAF DT Advisor, Functional Area Manager, or AFPC as required. Exceptions to this requirement are commanders with an approved retirement date, separation date, promotion to colonel, or those in one-year command positions or inactivating units.

7.3. Pre-Command Training Waiver:

7.3.1. A waiver is required if an officer cannot attend pre-command training prior to taking command or within 90 days of taking command (See [Attachment 4](#) for sample waiver request). The wing commander will staff the waiver request for approval by the NAF/Center Commander or ACC/CD for squadrons directly subordinate to HQ ACC. The completed waiver will be forwarded to HQ ACC/A1KB for records.

7.3.2. Hiring Authorities or Senior Raters will forward a waiver request for approval by the NAF/Center Commander or by the ACC/CD for squadrons directly subordinate to HQ ACC. The completed waiver will be forwarded to HQ ACC/A1KB for records keeping and coordination with the CAF DT Advisor, Functional Area Manager, or AFPC as required.

KENNETH S. WILSBACH
General, USAF
Commander

Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

10 USC § 1734, *Career Development*

AFI 10-401_ACCSUP, *Air Force Operations Planning and Execution*, 13 February 2012

AFI 33-322, *Records Management and Information Governance Program*, 23 March 2020

DAFI 51-509, *Appointment to and Assumption of Command*, 28 December 2023

DAFPD 36-21, *Utilization and Classification of Military Personnel*, 25 August 2023

JTR, *Uniformed Service Members and DOD Civilian Employees*, Current Edition

Prescribed Forms

None

Adopted Forms

DAF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACC—Air Combat Command

ACS—Air Control Squadron

AFPC—Air Force Personnel Center

AFS—Associate Fighter Squadron

AFSC—Air Force Specialty Code

ASOS—Air Support Operations Squadron

CAF DT ADVISOR—Combat Air Forces Developmental Team Advisor

CAF—Combat Air Forces

COMACC—Commander, Air Combat Command

DAFPD—Department of the Air Force Policy Directive

DCOM—Deputy Commander, Air Combat Command

DT—Development Team

HARM—Host Aviation Resource Management

MAJCOM—Major Command

MCOC—Maintenance Course for Operational Commanders

NAF—Numbered Air Force

OSS—Operations Support Squadron

TFI—Total Force Integration

TIC—Time in command

Office Symbols

HQ ACC/A1—ACC Director of Manpower, Personnel, and Services

HQ ACC/A1KB—ACC Career Development Branch

HQ ACC/A1L—ACC Senior Leader Management Office

HQ ACC/A10R—ACC Readiness, Plans and Policy Division

HQ ACC/A3TO—ACC Flight Operations and Training Branch

HQ ACC/A8BT—ACC Total Force Integration

HQ ACC/AMIC—Acquisition Management and Integration Center

Terms

Acting Squadron Commander—filling an interim command position for a deploying commander.

Appointments of Squadron Command—when a senior commander selects and appoints an officer to command a subordinate unit.

Associate Fighter Squadron—A personnel-only ACC unit integrated and training with an equipped reserve component fighter unit in an Active Association.

Expeditionary Commanders—individuals serving in a C-prefix commander position for an expeditionary unit.

Operational Squadron—a unit with a rated squadron commander C-prefix position, typically units under the operations group (includes Strategic Operations Squadrons).

Squadron—a subordinate unit that exists within a group and/or wing structure, or a subordinate unit within the MAJCOM or NAF/NAF-equivalent headquarters that provides a specific operational or support capability.

Staff—as defined in the Rated Staff Allocation Plan, a non-flying group, squadron, or flight that directly reports to a MAJCOM, NAF, or Center (N/A Strategic Operations Squadrons).

Support Squadron—a unit with a non-rated squadron commander C-prefix position, typically units under the mission support group, maintenance support group and the medical group.

Attachment 2

SAMPLE DIRECT HIRE APPROVAL REQUEST

Table A2.1. Sample Direct Hire Approval Request.

DD MMM YY
<p>MEMORANDUM FOR NAF/CC</p> <p>FROM: WING/CC or Hiring Authority Unit Street Address City State Zip Code</p> <p>SUBJECT: Squadron Commander Direct Hire – (Rank First M. Last Name)</p> <p>1. The (Wing) requests approval for the direct hire of the below officer to squadron command, in accordance with the requirements in ACCI36-211, <i>Squadron Commander Hiring and Tenure</i>. The NAF NAF (or Center or ACC/CD if directly subordinate to ACC) Commander is the approval authority for direct hiring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Rank and Name: b. Position Number: c. Command Effective Date: d. Desired Report-No-Later-Than Date: e. Incumbent Status: <p>3. Any questions concerning this recommendation can be directed to (Rank Name), (emailaddress@mail.mil) or at (DSN).</p> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 40px;">Hiring Authority Signature Block</div> <p>1st Ind, NAF/CC</p> <p>MEMORANDUM FOR Hiring Authority</p> <p>Approve / Disapprove</p> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 40px;">NAF CC Signature Block</div>

Attachment 3

SAMPLE COMMAND LIST WAIVER/TIME IN COMMAND WAIVER

Table A3.1. Sample Command List Waiver / Time in Command Waiver.

DD MMM YY	
MEMORANDUM FOR NAF/CC	
FROM: WING/CC or Hiring Authority Unit Street Address City State Zip Code	
SUBJECT: ACC Command List Waiver OR Time in Command (TIC) Waiver – (Rank First M. Last Name)	
<p>1. (Hiring Authority) requests a waiver in order to hire an officer who is not on a current squadron command list, as required by ACCI36-211, <i>Squadron Commander Hiring and Tenure</i>. The NAF NAF (or Center or ACC/CD if directly subordinate to ACC) Commander is the waiver authority.</p> <p>2. (Explain why the selection is in the best interest of ACC and the USAF, and why other eligible candidates were not chosen from the current squadron commander lists. OR Explain why a deviation from 24 months TIC is necessary.)</p> <p>3. Any questions concerning this recommendation can be directed to (Rank Name), (emailaddress@mail.mil) or at (DSN).</p>	
Hiring Authority Signature Block	
1st Ind, NAF/CC	
MEMORANDUM FOR Hiring Authority	
Approve / Disapprove	
NAF CC Signature Block	

Attachment 4

SAMPLE PRE-COMMAND TRAINING WAIVER

Table A4.1. Sample Pre-Command Training Waiver.

DD MMM YY	
MEMORANDUM FOR NAF/CC	
FROM: WING/CC or Hiring Authority Unit Street Address City State Zip Code	
SUBJECT: ACC Squadron Pre-Command Training Waiver – (Rank First M. Last Name)	
<p>1. The (Insert Wing) requests a waiver to the ACCI 36-211, <i>Squadron Commander Hiring and Tenure</i> requirement for (Rank First M. Last Name) to attend the ACC Squadron Commander and Spouse Pre-Command course prior to taking command of the (Unit) on DD MMM YY. The NAF (or Center or ACC/CD if directly subordinate to ACC) Commander is the approval authority for commanders unable to attend prior to taking command or unable to attend within 90 days of assuming command.</p> <p>2. Please provide additional details regarding the members' circumstances, including dates, specific reasons for their inability to attend training, and their anticipated attendance at a future session.</p> <p>3. Any questions concerning this recommendation can be directed to (Rank Name), (emailaddress@mail.mil) or at (DSN).</p>	
Hiring Authority Signature Block	
1st Ind, NAF/CC	
MEMORANDUM FOR Hiring Authority	
Approve / Disapprove	
NAF CC Signature Block	