

# 2023 Balsem Awards Details

## Marketing & Communications



Date: March 28th, 2023

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### INTRODUCTION

The Maj. Howell Balsem Exceptional Achievement Awards recognize excellence in five major categories that follow Civil Air Patrol's Marketing and Communications roles and responsibilities.

### ENTRY SUBMISSIONS

Entries will be submitted through the CAP/MC online submission portal below.

Submission Portal: [Link](#) (form will open on May 1st)

### CONTEST DATES

All work submitted for consideration for an award must have been completed between Jan. 1, 2022, and Dec. 31, 2022.

The entry deadline is May 31, 2023.

All entries must be received by this date. Please plan accordingly.

### SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

1. All entries must be the work of a public affairs officer below the national level. Entrants must have held a PAO position at a wing, group, or squadron level within the award period. Individuals who serve on national volunteer staff may NOT enter the competition.
2. No entry will be considered unless it completely conforms to the Civil Air Patrol brand standards outlined on the Brand Portal (<https://brand.gocivilairpatrol.com/>), which is the primary resource to consult when implementing the CAP brand across digital and printed collateral, and brings together information from a variety of regulations and manuals.
3. One entry per category per entrant. A project may only be entered once.
4. All entries must be reviewed and approved by the wing PAO to ensure the entry is cogent, well-written, and meets the entry criteria before submission to the MAC Balsem portal. No other form of submission will be allowed.

## AWARD DETAILS

The judges will award one first-place Balsem Award per category, unless there is a scoring tie. Multiple second-place Awards of Excellence and third-place Certificates of Merit may be awarded for each category. The judges may opt to not present one or more of the award types in any category.

The **Lt. Col. Al Pabon Best in Show** will be awarded at the judges' discretion. (This award, as its name implies, represents the very best of the year's competition.)

## GRADING RUBRIC

Three judges will be assigned per category.  
Judges will use the following grading rubric.

- 2 points – Judge determines entry fully meets category criteria.
- 1 point – Judge determines entry partially meets category criteria.
- 0 points - Judge determines entry does not meet category criteria.

Balsem Award = Highest accumulated point entry (23-24 points)

Award of Excellence = 20-22 accumulated points

Certificate of Merit = 16-19 accumulated points

## CATEGORIES

### 1. Creative Services

- a. Criteria: This Balsem Award category includes: external marketing materials developed for external PR, marketing and/or promotional purposes, such as brochures, posters, flyers, non-vendor-produced magazines, and presentations.
- b. Required for submission:
  - i. Entrant is enrolled in the Public Affairs specialty track and is assigned to a PAO duty position.
  - ii. Describe the identified need for the project including messaging strategy and design considerations.
  - iii. Describe the project goal, how the finished project was used, and how it met the goal.
  - iv. How did the project advance the brand of Civil Air Patrol?
  - v. Attach the finished design files.
- c. Grading Questions:
  - i. Is the entry compliant with the brand guidelines of the Civil Air Patrol Brand Portal? If not, the entry is disqualified and further grading is not done. This question is not assigned points.
  - ii. 0-2 pts – Did the entry advance the brand of Civil Air Patrol?
  - iii. 0-2 pts – Is the design well-executed and consistent with current design principles?
  - iv. 0-2 pts – Do the written aspects of the project follow Associated Press and CAP style guidelines?
  - v. 0-2 pts – Did the finished product meet the identified need?

## 2. Photography

- a. Criteria: This Balsem Award category includes: photographs not used in other categories.
- b. Required for submission:
  - i. Entrant is enrolled in the Public Affairs specialty track and is assigned to a PAO duty position.
  - ii. Describe the purpose of the photo including the identified need, messaging strategy, and design considerations.
  - iii. Describe the project goal, how the finished photo was used, and how it met the goal.
  - iv. How did the photo advance the brand of Civil Air Patrol and does the photo include proper metadata, including the primary subject's name, wing, event, and location data?
  - v. Attach a single photo entry that is not a part of any other Balsem entry.
- c. Grading Questions:
  - i. Is the entry compliant with brand guidelines of the Civil Air Patrol Brand Portal? If not, the entry is disqualified and further grading is not done. This question is not assigned points.
  - ii. 0-2 pts – Did the entry advance the brand of Civil Air Patrol?
  - iii. 0-2 pts – Is the photo well-executed and consistent with photography composition principles?
  - iv. 0-2 pts – Does the photo include proper metadata, including the primary subject's name, wing, event, and location data?
  - v. 0-2 pts – Does the photo effectively tell the story it was designed to support?

### 3. External Media Coverage

- a. Criteria: This Balsem Award category includes: news articles and feature articles used by external print or broadcast media or posted online by an external media outlet; or news media coverage resulting from a CAP-issued news release, media advisory, or social media post. Submissions to Volunteer, CAP.news, PROPS, or any other HQ-managed publication do not qualify for this category.
- b. Required for submission:
  - i. Entrant is enrolled in the Public Affairs specialty track and is assigned to a PAO duty position.
  - ii. Describe the need for the media coverage and how it was disseminated.
  - iii. Describe the project goal, metrics for success established, and whether the project achieved the stated metrics.
  - iv. Describe how the project advanced the brand of Civil Air Patrol.
  - v. Attach copies of external media relations work.
  - vi. Include active links to the printed, posted or broadcast article(s) or story(ies).
- c. Grading Questions:
  - i. Is the entry compliant with brand guidelines of the Civil Air Patrol Brand Portal? If not, the entry is disqualified and further grading is not done. This question is not assigned points.
  - ii. 0-2 pts – Did the entry advance the brand of Civil Air Patrol?
  - iii. 0-2 pts – Did the prepared article, media advisory, news release, etc. result in media coverage?
  - iv. 0-2 pts – Did the media coverage accurately portray CAP efforts and cover key messages?
  - v. 0-2 pts – Was the article or news release properly formatted, using the correct template (if applicable) and branding, and following AP and CAP style?

#### 4. Event Promotion

- a. Criteria: This Balsem Award category includes: special events used to market/promote CAP such as open houses, award or recognition events, or collaborative events with community partners. Materials used for submission for other Balsem categories may not be used to support event planning. If flyers, photography, social media, external coverage, etc., were all a part of an event promotion, all materials should be combined as one submission under this category.
- b. Required for submission:
  - i. Entrant is enrolled in the Public Affairs specialty track and is assigned to a PAO duty position.
  - ii. Describe the need for the event promotion, its written and creative content and how they were disseminated. Describe the event and how it was planned and executed.
  - iii. Describe the project goal, metrics for success established, and whether the project achieved the stated metrics.
  - iv. Describe how the project advanced the brand of Civil Air Patrol.
  - v. Attach copies of internal or external communications or media relations work.
  - vi. Include active links to the printed, posted or broadcast article(s) or story(ies) that support the event.
- c. Grading Questions:
  - i. Is the entry compliant with brand guidelines of the Civil Air Patrol Brand Portal? If not, the entry is disqualified and further grading is not done. This question is not assigned points.
  - ii. 0-2 pts – Did the entry advance the brand of Civil Air Patrol?
  - iii. 0-2 pts – Was the event well-executed and were materials developed to support the event consistent with current design principles?
  - iv. 0-2 pts – Do the written aspects of the project follow Associated Press and CAP style guidelines?
  - v. 0-2 pts – Describe the event results and performance against established metrics for success.

## 5. Digital Engagement

- a. Criteria: This Balsem Award category includes: appropriate, effective, properly formatted content posted on official social media channels.
- b. Required for submission:
  - i. Entrant is enrolled in the Public Affairs specialty track and is assigned to a PAO duty position.
  - ii. Describe the need for the social media content and how it was disseminated. If different channels were used to reach different audiences, please specify how that was approached.
  - iii. Describe the social media project goal, the metrics for success established, whether the project achieved the stated metrics, and why these posts were particularly effective.
  - iv. Describe how the social media content advanced the brand of Civil Air Patrol.
  - v. Attach a copy of social media posts on approved channels related to a single topic.
  - vi. Attach analytical reports from the channels showing the result metrics of the posts.
- c. Grading Questions:
  - i. Is the entry compliant with brand guidelines of the Civil Air Patrol Brand Portal? If not, the entry is disqualified and further grading is not done. This question is not assigned points.
  - ii. 0-2 pts – Did the entry advance the brand of Civil Air Patrol?
  - iii. 0-2 pts – Did the posts' metrics show a greater-than-normal impact on public impression?
  - iv. 0-2 pts – Was there any differentiation between how targeted audiences were addressed via specific channels and content design?
  - v. 0-2 pts – Were the posts properly formatted including use of approved graphics, hashtags, handles, and links?