



HEADQUARTERS CIVIL AIR PATROL
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AUXILIARY
105 South Hansell Street
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112

13 May 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICERS

FROM: CAP/PA (MAC)/National PAO

SUBJECT: 2024 Balsem Award Details

1. 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.

2. **Entry submissions.** Entries will be submitted through the CAP/MC online submission portal below on the Civil Air Patrol [Public Affairs Resources](#) page.

3. **Contest dates.** All work submitted for consideration for an award must have been completed between Jan. 1, 2023, and Dec. 31, 2023. The entry deadline is June 30, 2024. All entries must be received by this date. Please plan accordingly.

4. **Submission guidelines.** All entries must be the work of an eServices duty-assigned public affairs officer below the national level during the contest period. Entrants must have held a PAO position at a wing, group, or squadron level. Individuals who serve on national volunteer staff may NOT enter the competition.

- 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.
- One entry per category per entrant. A project may only be entered once.
- Individuals may not submit an entry on behalf of another.
- 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.

5. **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 awards are digital only, there are no physical certificates.

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.)

6. Award Categories.

- Creative Services.
 - 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.
 - Required for submission:
 - The entry must be compliant with the brand guidelines of the Civil Air Patrol Brand Portal. If not, the entry is disqualified.
 - Entrant must be enrolled in the Public Affairs specialty track and is assigned to a PAO duty position.
 - Entrant must describe in detail the need for the project including messaging strategy and design considerations.
 - Entrant must describe the project goal, how the finished project was used, and how it met the goal.
 - The written aspects of the project must follow Associated Press and CAP style guidelines.
 - How did the project advance the brand of Civil Air Patrol?
 - Attach the finished design files.
- Digital Engagement.
 - Criteria:
 - This Balsem Award category includes: appropriate, effective, properly formatted content posted on official social media channels.
 - Required for submission:
 - The entry must be compliant with the brand guidelines of the Civil Air Patrol Brand Portal. If not, the entry is disqualified.
 - Entrant must be enrolled in the Public Affairs specialty track and is assigned to a PAO duty position.
 - Entrant must describe the need for social media content and how it was disseminated. If different channels were used to reach different audiences, please specify how that was approached.
 - Entrant must 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. The post should show a greater-than-normal impact on public impression.
 - Describe how the social media content advanced the brand of Civil Air Patrol.
 - The post must be properly formatted including the use of approved graphics, hashtags, handles, and links. The written aspects of the project must follow Associated Press and CAP style guidelines.
 - Attach a copy of social media posts on approved channels related to a single topic.
 - Attach analytical reports from the channels showing the result metrics of the posts.

- Photography.
 - Criteria:
 - This Balsem Award category includes: photographs not used in other categories.
 - Required for submission:
 - The entry must be compliant with the brand guidelines of the Civil Air Patrol Brand Portal. If not, the entry is disqualified.
 - Entrant is enrolled in the Public Affairs specialty track and is assigned to a PAO duty position.
 - Entrant must describe the purpose of the photo including the identified need, messaging strategy, and design considerations.
 - Entrant must describe the project goal, how the finished photo was used, and how it met the goal.
 - How did the photo advance the brand of Civil Air Patrol and does the photo include proper embedded metadata, including the primary subject's name, wing, event, and location data? Photos without embedded metadata will be disqualified.
 - Attach a single photo entry that is not a part of any other Balsem entry.
- External Media Coverage.
 - 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.
 - Required for submission:
 - The entry must be compliant with the brand guidelines of the Civil Air Patrol Brand Portal. If not, the entry is disqualified.
 - Entrant is enrolled in the Public Affairs specialty track and is assigned to a PAO duty position.
 - Entrant must describe the need for the media coverage and how it was disseminated.
 - Entrant must describe the project goal, metrics for success established, and whether the project achieved the stated metrics.
 - Entrant must describe how the project advanced the brand of Civil Air Patrol.
 - Attach copies of external media relations work. The written aspects of the project must follow Associated Press and CAP style guidelines.
 - Must include active links to the printed, posted or broadcast article(s) or story(ies).

- Event Promotion.
 - 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.
 - Required for submission:
 - The entry must be compliant with the brand guidelines of the Civil Air Patrol Brand Portal. If not, the entry is disqualified.
 - Entrant is enrolled in the Public Affairs specialty track and is assigned to a PAO duty position.
 - The written aspects of the project must follow Associated Press and CAP style guidelines.
 - Entrant must 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.
 - Entrant must describe the project goal, metrics for success established, and whether the project achieved the stated metrics.
 - Entrant must describe how the project advanced the brand of Civil Air Patrol.
 - Attach copies of internal or external communications or media relations work.
 - Must include active links to the printed, posted, or broadcast article(s) or story(ies) that support the event.

BRANDON LUNSFORD, Major, CAP
National Public Affairs Officer

cc:
Region CCs
Wing CCs
Squadron CCs