



Anniversary Planning Guide

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National PA Team

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Introduction

Civil Air Patrol annually celebrates its anniversary on Dec. 1. All CAP units are encouraged to recognize this date, as the organization was founded on Dec. 1, 1941, six days before Pearl Harbor and the start of World War II.

Before You Start Planning

Enlist the help of other local CAP units

If other CAP squadrons are nearby, [plan a combined observance](#) so all squadrons can share in the responsibility and benefit from the visibility. A duplication of efforts by neighboring squadrons may make CAP appear disorganized and lessen the impact of events. A squadron in another county may not seem local, but it is when you are part of the same media market.

[Enlist the help of the Wing Government Relations Advisor who can help gain support from the governor, state legislature and other local governmental units for proclamations and other events/activities.](#)

Share responsibility

Even if your squadron is the only one in your area, [an anniversary celebration should not be a one-person affair](#). If you attempt to perform too many jobs, details will be overlooked and tasks may not be performed as well as they could be. [Form a committee of active, enthusiastic members to plan and implement the events](#) to ensure the observance is a success. If possible, appoint some cadets to the committee. CAP cadets can make a strong, positive impression at public events and will help make them more memorable.

Don't overdo it

There are many things you can do to gain publicity for CAP; however, it is not practical to attempt all of them. [Decide what ideas or venues will gain the most positive results for your wing or squadron](#). It is preferable to plan a few meaningful events rather than attempt too many and risk failure.

Plan early

[The best time to start planning your anniversary observances is now](#). Form your committee early, make your plans early and assign tasks to committee members early. Ensure everyone has time to complete their tasks in order to produce the best possible results. Contact targeted VIPs early because the schedules of people in demand are usually quick to fill. Have regular meetings to discuss progress and possible issues.

Involve cadets

[When visiting civic officials, business leaders or members of the media, take along a couple of cadets](#). Remember to wear your uniform when participating in anniversary activities and photo opportunities. Ensure uniforms are in compliance with CAPAM 39-1.

Enlist help from the Air Force

[Ask nearby U.S. Air Force units to run a congratulatory notice on their website, in their newsletter, etc.](#)

Use Social Media

Units with proactive social media accounts can be a force multiplier in informing their internal and external audiences of CAP activities. [Social media is covered in detail in the CAP social media guide.](#) http://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/SocialMediaGuidelines_CA169A56801E.pdf.

Ideas for Celebrations

Plan events throughout the year to acquaint your community with Civil Air Patrol prior to the actual anniversary. Consider including CAP Congressional Gold Medal recipients in your events.

Birthday celebration/open house

Hosting an anniversary birthday celebration is an excellent way to make people in the community aware of CAP, its missions and your squadron's support of the community. Here are some ideas:

- Provide state/local legislators with a save-the-date notice; follow up with an invitation to the event.
- Attendees could dress up in 1940s attire and the reception area could carry out the theme. You could also have a live band or a CD playing big band music.
- Play a recruiting video on a continuous loop, set up a display with literature and/or put a CAP airplane on display.
- Serve a cake decorated with CAP heraldry or scenes from CAP's past and have the newest and longest-serving CAP members cut the cake.
- Hold a banquet and present awards to commemorate the anniversary.

A sample press release prepared for CAP's anniversary open house is available at:

https://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/Template_Sample_News_Release_CAP_O_B2617223D2E6F.pdf

Proclamations

Sample proclamations are provided in this guide. (*Sample proclamations written for CAP's recent 75th anniversary, which can be modified for your use.*) PAOs should work with their Government Relations Advisor to get a proclamation from either the governor or state legislature. Since many state legislatures meet in the first half of the year, now is the best time to make a request.

If the proclamation is presented during a meeting of the governing body, arrange for CAP seniors and cadets to attend. If given an opportunity for comments, prepare brief remarks for the commander.

Long proclamation

https://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/Template_Long_Proclamation_D049577CECDBF.pdf

Short proclamation

https://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/Template_Short_Proclamation_B3AB2A04C8E2A.pdf

If media is covering the event, introduce yourself and give them a business card.

Take pictures and promote the event on social media.

Weekend religious services

The first Sunday in December is CAP Sunday/Sabbath; the Saturday before is celebrated for those whose day of worship is Saturday. Ask members to attend church in uniform and the CAP chaplain to encourage local clergy to recognize the members present and CAP's anniversary celebration. Pursue mention in the church bulletin.

https://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/Template_Sample_News_Release_CAP_S_4AAD835D5C7E2.pdf

Lunches/dinner with elected officials

Acquaint local officials with Civil Air Patrol and the squadron by [hosting a luncheon/dinner and/or inviting them as honored guests/speakers](#) for your annual banquet/awards program.

https://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/Template_Sample_News_Release_VIP_L_B75667A888E42.pdf

Exhibits

Consider the following venues for displays:

- [Malls, community centers, state or regional fairs, large sporting events, school or career fairs](#)
- [Local library, historic society and/or museum.](#)
- [Airports could feature current or vintage CAP planes and search and rescue equipment.](#)
- [State's emergency managers training conference.](#)

Ask the wing or squadron historian to help. Consult history.cap.gov for information related to your unit.

The exhibit booth or display should be staffed by senior members and cadets who should hand out literature and answer questions about CAP. A video loop about CAP may be included. Displays should be professional, educational and of interest to all age groups. If time and space permit, conduct a demonstration such as a cadet drill exercise, first aid, mission planning or an aerospace activity such as the construction of a rocket.

Guest speaker at civic club meetings

Most local civic clubs are in the market for someone to conduct a 20-minute program for their meetings. Well known civic clubs include Kiwanis International, Lions Club International, Optimist International, Rotary International and Civitan International. Contact the chamber of commerce for a list of local civic clubs and their point of contact.

https://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/Template_Sample_News_Release_CAP_V_8A73EA92C45FF.pdf

[These events can help you recruit new members and in some cases assist in generating financial support for your squadron.](#) PowerPoint presentations are available on the CAP retention and recruitment link:

http://www.capmembers.com/cap_national_hq/recruiting_and_retention/recruiting-material

Electronic signs

[Many motels, banks and car dealerships will be receptive to posting a message congratulating CAP for its service](#) to the nation. Make your request several weeks in advance, so the business can place you on the schedule.

If your community has electronic billboards, check with the advertising company. It may have a program for posting public service announcements for community organizations.

Holiday parades/events

[Include a CAP honor guard or color guard in a holiday parade](#) and participate in festivals and carnivals whenever possible.

Sporting events

Arrange for [your unit's color guard to present the colors](#) before the start of the game and if the event features an electronic scoreboard, arrange for a "Happy Anniversary, Civil Air Patrol" message during a timeout or lull in the game.

Get an [ad or announcement placed in the printed program](#).

Check with [local college or university athletic departments to see if they honor individuals or organizations during the game](#). You may have a CAP member who could be recognized for years of service to the nation.

Community service events

You may want to publicize your involvement in a cleanup initiative, recycling day and/or drive to send packages to American service members.

Veterans affairs

Obtain permission to deliver a CAP birthday cake to the foyer or patient lounge at a local VA hospital. Or arrange to have your color guard or drill team at the VA hospital at certain times during the CAP anniversary year. Consider events on Memorial Day, July 4th, Sept. 11th and Nov 11th.

Sponsor a contest

Hold a contest for elementary and/or middle school students to [design a CAP birthday card](#). Offer the winner(s) a free membership and an orientation ride. Publicize the winner(s). Use information on history.cap.gov to have middle school or high school students write essays about some aspect of CAP history. Publicize the winner(s) and publish the essays online and submit to the *CAP National Historical Journal*.

News pegs

Promote CAP by tying into prevailing themes, making a “news peg” out of the occasion. For example, you can tie CAP’s cadet physical fitness program into summer activities – using the concern about children’s learning loss and a lack of physical activity during the summer. As children are going back to school, you can promote CAP’s educational opportunities, including flight scholarships and other educational advancement opportunities.

Publicity

News is not just limited to newspapers, radio and TV anymore. Today there is a host of social media channels, such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

You might email a news release to a reporter but imbed a photo or two, include a link to your unit’s website and attach a CAP fact sheet. You could then take the same news release and post it to your unit’s website and/or Facebook page and link to it on your Twitter page.

Anniversary ad

Ask your newspaper editor to run an ad congratulating your squadron on CAP’s anniversary as a [public service announcement](#). Or [sell small ads](#) consisting of a congratulatory message or a listing of the names of sponsors. Or approach a larger business or corporation and [request a donation](#) to cover the cost of the ad. The contributor would benefit by receiving recognition in the newspaper, i.e., “ABC Corporation congratulates Civil Air Patrol on [insert correct number] years of humanitarian service to [name of your community or city].” The remainder of the ad would contain information about CAP. Also, seek publication of anniversary information and/or ads for inclusion in airshow programs.

Publications/websites

[Promote the anniversary in region, wing and squadron publications, websites and newsletters](#). Include a brief history of CAP and publicize anniversary-related events here.

News releases

Try to schedule your anniversary news to appear in the local newspaper a week or two before the actual events, on the anniversary date and/or at the beginning of Civil Air Patrol Week. Sample news releases are here: http://www.capmembers.com/cap_national_hq/public_affairs/cap_pao_toolkit/

[Seek feature story coverage of all anniversary activities](#). All releases should explain what CAP is as well as upcoming plans to celebrate the anniversary. Include a very brief overview on how CAP began. Refer to the sample news releases and the CAP Fact Sheet.

If you live in a large, metropolitan area, partner with other CAP squadrons to provide a single release to the media.

Get to know your newspaper editor and his/her staff in advance of CAP anniversary initiatives, so they are familiar with you when the event occurs. When your squadron receives favorable press, send a personal thank you note to the editor and/or reporter responsible.

News release format

[Refer to the examples in this guide for proper news release format.](#) Photos should always be included whenever possible. Make sure the photos are saved as a JPEG file (.jpg extension) and were taken and saved as a high-resolution file, with little or no compression.

Newspaper editorials

[Visit the editorial editor](#), explain the history and mission of CAP and request that a brief editorial be written on CAP's anniversary. Provide background information, such as CAP anniversary history pamphlets and a link to the digital media kit. Some small papers will publish submitted editorials.

http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/cap_national_hq/public_affairs/cap_pao_toolkit/media-relations-instructional-videos/

PSAs

Radio stations are required by law to deliver public service. They put free commercials on the air in the public service category to fulfill this obligation. Hundreds of other worthy institutions are also seeking free airtime. [A visit with the station's program or public service director to inform them of CAP's volunteer role and how it ties to the community may be the key to getting CAP's message on the air.](#)

https://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/Template_Sample_Radio_PSAs_6E8E08F008B7D.pdf

Television

[Television stations and cable TV with community talk shows are always looking for guests. What unique story do you have to sell?](#) CAP units that border the ocean, for example, may generate interest in hurricane season to talk about CAP's role in documenting damage after a hurricane makes landfall. See Wing/Squadron Events in this document for more ideas. Noteworthy anniversary celebrations may interest local media. They may also be interested in a practice mission, ground search and/or a communications, first aid or cadet drill team demonstration.

Social media

Social media is the generic term for nontraditional forms of communication that typically use email or websites. Perhaps its best feature is how interactive it can be. For instance, you might use one type of social media to send someone to a website loaded with more information. Social media also often combines a variety of types of information — text, audio, video, animation, still photographs, etc.

[Detailed information on social media is available in the CAP social media guide.](#)

http://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/SocialMediaGuidelines_CA169A56801E.pdf

Samples and Templates

This section includes samples of news releases and proclamations. These can be modified to suit the needs of your unit. Ensure that you substitute your unit's full name.

For news releases, include the following at the top of the sheet:

- CAP logo
- Unit name
- Words: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
- Point of contact (PAO or commander)
- Contact information (phone and email)

End your news release with a stock boilerplate paragraph. This is the sentence or paragraph at the end of the news release that explains to the reader what the organization is and what it does. The following is a good example of a boilerplate paragraph that could be used for any news release. This boilerplate paragraph is updated as needed. Before use, check that you are using the current version by going to https://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/Civil_Air_Patrol_Boilerplate_CE6E1C_4FC9FF143B6AA.pdf

Civil Air Patrol, the longtime all-volunteer U.S. Air Force auxiliary, is the newest member of the Air Force's Total Force. In this role, CAP operates a fleet of 560 aircraft, performs about 90 percent of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center and is credited by the AFRCC with saving an average of 80 lives annually. CAP's 57,000 members also perform homeland security, disaster relief and drug interdiction missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. CAP also plays a leading role in aerospace/STEM education, and its members serve as mentors to 24,000 young people participating in CAP's Cadet Programs. Visit www.GoCivilAirPatrol.com for more information.

If the media receiving your releases will be posting them on their own websites, provide them with your unit's web address and request they provide a link to it.

Use Common CAP Hashtags to Strengthen the Brand.

CAP units or members will not create a separate or distinct hashtag to mark the CAP anniversary. Instead, everyone is encouraged to use the common hashtags as outlined in *Social Media Guidelines: Official How-To Guide for CAP Units* in order to create a consistent image of Civil Air Patrol and solidify awareness beyond anniversary events.

The primary hashtag #CivilAirPatrol should be used on Instagram, and the national CAP Twitter channel @CivilAirPatrol should be tagged on Twitter at a minimum. Other secondary hashtags include #GoFlyCAP when talking about aerospace and flight activities, #CAPCadet when talking about cadet-specific activities, #CAPMission when talking about or sharing content from real-world CAP missions, #CAPEXercise when conducting practice ES missions and training, and #TotalForce when talking about acting as the Air Force Auxiliary in support of Air Force missions.

Anniversary Links

CAP PAO Tool Kit:

http://www.capmembers.com/cap_national_hq/public_affairs/cap_pao_toolkit/

Long proclamation

https://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/Template_Long_Proclamation_D049577CECDBF.pdf

Short proclamation

https://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/Template_Short_Proclamation_B3AB2A04C8E2A.pdf

Sample news release (CAP open house)

https://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/Template_Sample_News_Release_CAP_O_B2617223D2E6F.pdf

Sample news release (CAP Sunday schedule)

https://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/Template_Sample_News_Release_CAP_S_4AAD835D5C7E2.pdf

Sample news release (CAP visit to local civic club)

https://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/Template_Sample_News_Release_CAP_V_8A73EA92C45FF.pdf

Sample news release (upcoming event)

https://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/Template_Sample_News_Release_Upcom_13F3116ACF37B.pdf

Sample news release (VIP luncheon or banquet)

https://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/Template_Sample_News_Release_VIP_L_B75667A888E42.pdf

Sample radio PSAs

https://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/Template_Sample_Radio_PSAs_6E8E08F008B7D.pdf