



How-to Guide for Civil Air Patrol Public Affairs

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

1. MISSION.	4
CAP Regulation (CAPR) 190-1	4
2. PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER OBJECTIVES.	5
CAP Public Awareness Plan	5
Crisis Communications	6
PAO Toolkit	6
<i>anniversary planning, annual report, biographies, CAP NHQ/PA staff contact sheet,</i>	
<i>Civil Air Patrol Volunteer, fact sheets, grant writing, fundraising guides, graphics,</i>	
<i>instructional videos, media relations, news writing tips, PA planning guidelines, PAO</i>	
<i>checklist, press releases, regulations, submission guidelines</i>	
3. ASSIGNMENT OF THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER (PAO).	7
Absence of an Assigned PAO	7
4. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.	9
Squadron and Flight PAOs	9
Group PAOs	9
Wing PAO	10
Region PAO	11
Military Base PAOs	12
5. PUBLIC AFFAIRS SUPPORT.	13
National Headquarters/PA	13
6. TRAINING.	14
Unit/wing/region/national training courses, workshops, seminars and field training	14
Other seminars and workshops	14
PIO training	15
7. FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICERS.	16
Public Relations Plan	16
<i>four-step planning process</i>	
Crisis Communications Plan	17
New PAO Checklist	17
Media Relations	17
<i>CAP media policy, national news releases, hometown news releases, online media kit,</i>	
<i>media relations instructional videos, Air Force Media Guidelines, Meeting the Media,</i>	
<i>New Media and the Air Force, U.S. Air Force Dashboard</i>	

Newsletters	18
Public Awareness	18
<i>marketing, social networking, Volunteer magazine, multimedia products, photography, video, Annual Report to Congress, VolunteerNow</i>	
PA Crisis Communications Plan.....	19
<i>writing a crisis communications plan</i>	
Community Relations	20
<i>marketing guidebook, sample legislative squadron website, media lists</i>	
Media Kits	21
Writing Your PA Plan	21
Websites	22
<i>sample cadet-oriented website, sample composite squadron website, sample group.wing website, VolunteerNow</i>	
Marketing Guidebook	22
Seals, Emblems and Patches	22
Posters	22
Writing	22
<i>feature stories, human interest stories, interviewing, news features, personality features, interviewing tips, Associated Press Style</i>	
8. NEWSLETTERS.	27
<i>content, length, writing, editing, style, design, artwork, publishing, distribution, sample newsletter links</i>	
9. NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS PUBLICATIONS.	39
Civil Air Patrol Volunteer	39
VolunteerNow	39
10. MULTIMEDIA & EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES.	40
Photography	40
<i>lighting, techniques, size and formatting, submission guidelines, cutlines, editing</i>	
Videography	45
Photo and Video Releases	48
11. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS.	49
Websites	49
Electronic Mailing List	51
E-Mail Broadcasting	51
Social Networking	52
Video and Audio Sharing	53
Bookmarking	53
Blogging	53
Microblogging	53
PA Essentials	53
Text Messaging	53
Automated Internet Searches.....	54
New Media Addresses	54
12. PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER (PIO)	57
Training	57
Qualifications	58

Appointment	58
Types of Missions	59
<i>local level in a single jurisdiction, high-profile missions</i>	
13. REPORTING.	61
Continuity Book	62
14. AWARDS.	65
Payton National PAO of the Year	65
Region PAO of the Year	65
Wing PAO of the Year	65
Balsem Awards	65
Certificates	67
Submission Guidelines	67
15. LINKS.....	70

1. MISSION.

The mission of the Civil Air Patrol Public Affairs (PA) program is to inform internal and external audiences of Civil Air Patrol's national importance, safeguard the image and assets of the corporation, and strengthen relations with key audiences and customers, which enables the organization to grow.

Congratulations. You have just been appointed to (and accepted) the position of public affairs officer or deputy at the flight, squadron, group, wing or region level. Some of you might wonder, "What do I do now?"

The answers are available, if you take the time to do some reading and talk with others. But first, meet your best friend: CAP Regulation (CAPR) 190-1.⁽¹⁾

Since this document is your lifeline to PA work, it is in your own best interest to get to know it intimately. It is the *CAP Public Affairs Program*.

This CAP regulation governs a little of the "how" and all of the "what" and "who" of public affairs – what you should be doing, who does what and, how you are going to do it – with very skimpy detail on the latter, but that is understandable. This regulation makes the assumption that you already know how to do what you will need to do, so it is very thin on the "how." The advantage of this assumption is that since the regulation is not cluttered with detail, its directives are extremely clear.

You are probably familiar with Civil Air Patrol's three core missions, and that's a good thing. Now, in this how-to manual, you will learn more about the three PA missions, namely:

- To inform internal and external audiences of CAP's national importance;
- To safeguard the image and assets of the corporation; and
- To strengthen relations with key audiences and customers, helping the organization to grow.

Although all three are necessary and important, notice that "to inform internal and external audiences" is listed first. That is not accidental, because it is the essence of the job, while the other two missions are adjuncts to the main directive. You will get to know these three as you learn the job, and the document you are now reading will make the "how" much clearer to you.

2. PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER OBJECTIVES.

a. Increase public awareness of CAP, its local, state, and national missions, and its contributions to the nation.

Your first objective will be getting to know the **CAP Public Awareness Plan**.⁽²⁾

This is a “big picture” view of what the public affairs program does for CAP. It should give you some idea about what you can do at your level, whether you are assigned to a squadron/flight, group, wing or region. However, if you are at region, you probably know a great deal already.

Civil Air Patrol gets a lot of publicity when disaster strikes and we are called upon to work on damage assessment and recovery. But when that limelight goes away, it is up to us, at all levels, to keep telling the CAP story.

To be effective, you must know the three CAP missions — Emergency Services, Aerospace Education and Cadet Programs — how they work, what it takes to do the job, and what it feels like when you do it.

b. Develop and conduct a comprehensive internal and external public relations plan.

For this objective, you will need to establish dialog with your commander, who is responsible for everything that happens in your unit.

No matter what you would like to do for CAP as a PAO, you always need to do it with your commander’s consent and direction. Your commander will set the priorities, and you will need to do your best to make them happen. After you have done your homework and are familiar with both CAPR 190-1 and the CAP Public Awareness Plan, ask your commander for a chance to sit down and talk about it. Mind you, this might take some time, because all commanders are busy.

Setting priorities with your commander, no matter what level of command you might be assigned to, will likely revolve around the three PA missions.

If your commander decides that your squadron/flight, group or wing needs to reach out to the media, that goal will probably be your first priority. Whether you are new or an old hand at the business, you will soon understand that the nature of the media is changing rapidly. It now includes a variety of methodologies and strategies that go from the traditional print and broadcast media to social and electronic media. It even stretches to other options accessed via the Internet.

NOTE: After setting a roadmap for yourself, you will need to keep your commander informed about your progress, so you must find out if your performance matches what your commander expects. For best results, you should discuss PA with your commander at least monthly to inform him of progress, or more often if a hot PA decision needs to be made.

CAP encourages good communications with “internal audiences” – our own members – using a variety of means that you and your commander will probably want to consider. Good communications with our own members is vital in keeping them:

- Well-informed; and
- Feeling that they are an important part of the organization.

As you will learn from CAPR 190-1, you will need to write a Public Affairs Plan for your squadron/flight, group, wing or region. If one is already in place, you and your commander should review it and adjust it at least annually. If a PA Plan does not exist, check with your next higher command and get a copy of theirs. Most likely, that document will help guide you and your commander in preparing your own plan.

Your commander might also feel that the “safeguard” function is a priority. As defined by CAPR 190-1, this means planning for crisis communications when there is a disaster or emergency. If your unit has a **Crisis Communications Plan**, review it with your commander and make any necessary adjustments, keeping good notes on what changes you made. You should also check with the next higher command level for a copy of their Crisis Communications Plan, which you might want to use as a guideline for updating your own plan.

Keep in mind that you need to prepare for all possibilities, from being the only unit able to conduct operations in your general area to functioning as part of a larger group. In some cases, because of your unit’s location, you might end up working with one or more units across state lines. Because of this, you should get to know them now, when things are quiet.

- Both the **PA Plan** and the **Crisis Communications Plan** must be updated at least annually.

c. Promote cooperation between CAP and other aviation organizations, the military, business, industry and civic groups.

The last objective of CAP Public Affairs involves reaching out, usually physically — meeting face-to-face and shaking hands with specific people outside the organization. It might mean establishing communications with media organizations, civic groups and elected officials in your area, inviting them to become familiar with CAP or offering yourself as a speaker at their meetings. It could also mean making use of the brochures and posters available from NHQ to help the unit attract new members.

For this, you will find some excellent material in the **PAO Toolkit**.⁽³⁾

No matter how you decide to approach your job, remember that you are not alone in working on your three PA objectives. You will have fellow PAOs at your level, and also those above whose job is to mentor, lead and guide you. They can answer the many questions you probably have, if you just ask for their help.

In some cases, highly experienced PAOs might have sought assignment to a unit at your level because of job pressures or personal reasons. Get to know your counterparts near you, as they might be able to help you get started or even mentor you.

Eventually, once you have learned what it is all about, and done it, you will become a productive PA practitioner. When you do – and you are ready –, return the favor and offer yourself as an asset to other PAOs.

3. ASSIGNMENT OF THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER (PAO).

a. Each unit commander will appoint a qualified individual to be the PAO. Appointed PAOs that are not fully qualified will complete appropriate training within the first 12 months of their assignment (see paragraph 6, below).

CAP National Headquarters recognizes the position of Public Affairs Officer as an important one. This is because without a PAO, it would be very difficult for a unit to establish a good PA program.

Also, without an effective PA program, many of the good things we want for the organization will not happen – we will not attract new members or be known to those outside the organization, and our current members might get bored and leave. Good PA work has been known to create a climate of excellence in the unit, contributing to good morale and *esprit de corps*. On the other hand, bad or non-existent PA has the opposite effect. In most cases, CAP units that fail and are deactivated had little or no effective PA activities.

For these reasons, CAP requires each unit commander to appoint a qualified individual to be the PAO.

If the appointee is not a qualified PAO, within a calendar year of the date of appointment, that person must:

1. Upon appointment, enroll on Specialty Track 201, Public Affairs Officer.
2. Follow and complete the training procedures outlined in Sec. 6. Training (below) for the Technician level.

b. The PAO will be appointed in accordance with current personnel procedures in CAPR 35-1, *Assignment and Duty Status*. The next higher headquarters will also be notified of all PAO appointments.

Do not worry if you feel that you might not be up to the task. At one time or another, every new PAO has taken a hard look at the daunting CAPR 190-1 and felt some misgivings. The regulation is very short, compared to others, but it is packed with useful information that is often demanding. So, do not be deceived by its brevity: every paragraph counts.

However, do not worry too much, because you are not alone. As soon as a new PAO is appointed, the unit will report that appointment to its next higher headquarters. This means that squadrons/flights will report your appointment to their group, groups to their wing, wings to their region, and regions to NHQ/PA.

Sometimes, this notification fails to happen, so do not wait for the PAO at your next higher headquarters to contact you. If you contact your counterpart up the chain of command right away, you will be ahead of the curve and will start getting help that much sooner.

c. In the absence of an assigned PAO, the unit commander is responsible for the duties of the PAO. If the unit commander acts as the unit's PAO for 6 months, he/she will be assigned as the PAO according to current personnel procedures in CAPR 35-1 and is encouraged to enroll in the Public Affairs Officer specialty track.

Reporting your appointment is very important, because the PAO at your next higher headquarters has a responsibility toward PAOs at your level, and that includes you. Your higher-headquarters counterpart is there to mentor, lead and guide you, helping you find the resources you will need and generally making it easier for you to learn the trade as quickly and as well as it is possible.

Every unit is required to report the appointment of a PAO to the next higher headquarters, even if the person has been assigned to multiple positions within a squadron/flight, group or wing.

To make sure this happens and an appointment is made, the position of PAO *cannot be vacant*. Therefore, if no one can be found to be the unit's PAO — something that can happen in smaller or newer squadrons/flights — CAP makes the unit commander responsible for discharging the duties of that PAO.

Should this be the case, the commander will need to report his or her own appointment as unit PAO to his or her next higher headquarters, so the higher headquarters PAO can assist the unit commander in performing the duties of a PAO.

The commander acting as the PAO has important issues to consider. Since the commander and the PAO are the official spokespersons for the unit, if the commander is discharging the duties of the PAO, the unit will have only one spokesperson. Therefore, it would be to the unit commander's own advantage to appoint a PAO as soon as practicable, as being both the commander and the PAO can be too heavy a burden.

Furthermore, the commander who is also the unit PAO must be willing and able to fully discharge the duties of a PAO, rather than merely take on the job title without making any effort to perform the duties specified in Sec. 4., below.

4. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

The PAO is supervised by the commander. The commander and the PAO, as the commander's delegate, are the official spokespersons for their unit. The higher headquarters' PAOs serve as advisors, mentors and resources for the development and implementation of an effective public affairs program.

A public affairs officer is supervised by his or her commander, who is like a boss in any commercial organization. Together, the unit commander and the PAO are the official spokespersons for their unit. PAOs at the next higher headquarters (group, wing and region levels) are there to mentor, lead, guide and be resources for PAOs at each level below them. Wing PAOs are responsible for group PAOs, and these, in turn, are responsible for squadron/flight PAOs.

Region PAOs (who go by the title of Directors of Public Affairs) are in a special category. They are the field representatives of NHQ/PA and, besides supporting the wing PAOs in their region, they are also authorized and directed to support others within the region whenever they ask for help.

a. Squadron and flight PAOs are the backbone of the national public affairs program and are primarily responsible for implementation of the program at that level.

When you have become familiar with how Civil Air Patrol is organized, you will realize that most of the action happens at the squadron/flight level. Since these units have the equipment and most of the members, they get the missions.

Because of this, the squadrons and flights are the backbone of the PA program and are first in line in reporting what they do — and getting it publicized. Theirs is the primary responsibility for implementing the PA program.

CAP's table of organization (see CAPR 20-1) places the senior and composite squadron PAO under the commander, but cadet squadrons show the PAO under the deputy commander (an arrangement intended for reporting and administrative purposes). The wise commander will establish direct operational supervision and dialog with the PAO on a regular and frequent basis, since CAPR 190-1 charges the commander with supervising the PAO, and the commander's guidance and consent are needed for all PA initiatives.

Ideally, squadron PAOs will also be PIO rated, as PA is an important part of missions, and squadrons get the missions (see Sec. 10. Public Information Officer). Also, PIO training is a requirement for progression to the Senior and Master levels in the PAO specialty track (see CAPP 201).

b. Group PAOs will advise, mentor and support subordinate PAOs in their group on public affairs matters and will conduct an active PA program in support of the unit.

When groups are fully staffed as functioning support units (rather than being bare administrative elements), just as is the case with squadron/flight PAOs, the group PAO develops a PA Plan and a Crisis Communications Plan for the group. Also, fully staffed groups function as mini-wings, supporting and working with the squadrons and flights under their oversight.

In larger wings that have functional groups, group PAOs play an important role supervising, advising, supporting and mentoring their counterparts at the squadron/flight level. In smaller wings, when often there is no group-level organization, unit PAOs rely directly on their wing PAO for support.

Group PAOs can sometimes act as “tag team” helpers and support squadrons/flights that temporarily lack available PAOs or when no PAO has yet been appointed. The latter is a definite possibility when unit staffing is short.

CAP’s table of organization (see CAPR 20-1) places the group PAO under the chief of staff, but this arrangement is intended for reporting and administrative purposes. The wise commander will establish direct operational supervision and dialog with the PAO on a regular and frequent basis, since CAPR 190-1 charges the commander with supervising the PAO, and the commander’s guidance and consent are needed for all PA initiatives.

To be fully effective, the group PAO must also be PIO rated, as PA is an important part of missions (see Sec. 10. Public Information Officer).

c. The wing PAO is the primary resource in conducting a wing-wide public affairs program. Together with the wing commander, the wing PAO will develop goals and objectives for the wing Public Affairs program as part of a PA plan and will advise, mentor and ensures the national, region, and wing objectives are implemented.

If you are a PAO assigned to a group or squadron/flight, whenever you think you are too busy with CAP public affairs, ask your wing PAO how he or she is doing. Most of the time, you will learn that wing PAOs are the busiest people ever.

Just as squadron/flight and group PAOs must work under the direction of their respective commander, the wing PAO determines, with the guidance and consent of the wing commander, the goals and objectives of the wing’s public affairs program. To accomplish this, the commander and the PAO must establish and maintain dialog, as the PAO will need the commander’s support to get the job done; in return, the commander will enjoy the benefits of an active and productive PA program.

CAP’s table of organization (see CAPR 20-1) places the wing PAO under the chief of staff, but this arrangement is intended for reporting and administrative purposes. The wise commander will establish direct operational supervision and dialog with the PAO on a regular and frequent basis, since CAPR 190-1 charges the commander with supervising the PAO, and the commander’s guidance and consent are needed for all PA initiatives.

The wing PAO also mentors and advises the group PAOs (and squadron/flight PAOs when necessary), who often rely on the wing PAO’s expertise to organize and maintain effective PA programs.

In addition, wing PAOs are expected to ensure that national, region and wing public affairs objectives are implemented within the wing.

To be fully effective, the wing PAO must also be PIO rated, as PA is an important part of missions (see Sec. 10. Public Information Officer).

d. The region PAO serves as a field representative for NHQ/PA and as a liaison among the wing/group/squadron/flight PAOs. He/she will demonstrate leadership in guiding the work of the wing PAOs by developing an annual region PA plan the wing PAOs can follow in implementing their goals and objectives. Region PAOs serve as advisors and supervisors and consult frequently with subordinate wing PAOs and group/squadron/flight PAOs when needed or requested.

Region Directors of Public Affairs – one for each of CAP’s eight regions – serve as field representatives of NHQ/PA and as liaisons with the wing, group, squadron and other PAOs at levels below them. Since they are the PAOs at “the next higher headquarters,” they are also expected to be resources for PAOs at the wing, group and squadron levels, when needed.

The region PA Plan must take into account the training, operational and organizational needs of the region’s wings, making sure that each wing will find it possible to accomplish the desired goals and objectives. For this purpose, the DPA must establish dialog with the wing PAOs, follow closely each wing’s needs, training and capabilities, and encourage the wing PAOs to seek support from region when needed.

CAP’s table of organization (see CAPR 20-1) places the region DPA under the chief of staff, but this arrangement is intended for reporting and administrative purposes. The wise commander will establish direct operational supervision and dialog with the DPA on a regular and frequent basis, since CAPR 190-1 charges the commander with supervising the DPA, and the commander’s guidance and consent are needed for all PA initiatives.

To be fully effective, the DPA must also be PIO rated, as PA is an important part of missions (see Sec. 10. Public Information Officer).

e. The National PAO is a national staff volunteer who reports to the Marketing and Public Affairs Officer. He/she assists the national leadership with media relations, internal information dissemination and community relations for the CAP Public Affairs program. He/she serves as a liaison between the National Headquarters, Public Affairs (NHQ/PA) staff and membership in regards to CAP Public Affairs matters. He/she works in coordination with the NHQ staff to implement, develop and upgrade CAP’s Public Affairs program.

The National Public Affairs Officer is the senior volunteer PAO in the Civil Air Patrol and is the liaison among the region directors; wing, group and squadron PAOs; and the National Headquarters Marketing and Public Awareness Directorate. The National PAO advises and supervises volunteer PAOs at all levels of the organization and organizes a volunteer team of PAOs to support the organization and accomplish objectives as laid out in the National Public Affairs Officer’s Plan.

f. PAOs at all levels will advise and assist their unit commander. PAOs are authorized to advise other commanders, if requested, on issues that have the potential to affect CAP’s professional image, or on other such matters relating to CAP and the public.

As a PAO, the key point to remember is that PAOs do not function on their own, nor by their own authority. Every PAO receives authority to act from his or her commander, and every PAO answers to that commander, whatever his or her level of assignment.

CAPR 190-1 does, however, authorize PAOs to advise and work with other commanders — if requested — on issues that have the potential to affect CAP's image, reputation and good name in any way, or when the issues involved could damage CAP's relations with the public.

Should you be asked to work with another commander on any issue, do not accept the request unless first you have obtained your commander's permission to do so.

g. CAP PAOs and commanders are authorized to work directly with military installation PAOs in support of CAP activities.

PAOs and commanders share an unusual authority within CAP in that they can work directly with military public affairs officers in support of CAP activities. This covers all uniformed services, such as the U.S. Air Force, Navy, Marines, Army, National Guard, Coast Guard, and so on.

This kind of contact often includes helping set up military orientation flights for AFROTC or JAFROTC cadets, joint planning to support a military installation's public affairs objectives (such as working in an air show), recruitment of active duty personnel for CAP, and other issues that might arise.

When CAP PAOs work with military PAOs, they must remember that they represent the Civil Air Patrol to military personnel, and therefore must be aware of the professional image they need to present at all times. PAOs are seldom authorized to act on their own on behalf of CAP or any unit, and must seek the approval of the appropriate CAP commander before doing so.

5. PUBLIC AFFAIRS SUPPORT.

a. PAOs are authorized and encouraged to contact higher echelons to request assistance.

PAOs must have their appointment reported to the next higher headquarters and are also strongly urged to contact their next higher headquarters PAO to introduce themselves, offer contact information and make arrangements to keep in contact on a regular basis.

Region Directors of Public Affairs are authorized to work with PAOs at all levels, when requested or directed. Lower-echelon PAOs are encouraged to contact region for help whenever they cannot obtain appropriate mentoring and support or are faced with an emergency and cannot get immediate local support.

In practice, region will mentor and support PA activities at all levels when requested, even if the person who requests assistance is not assigned to a PA position.

b. PAOs are authorized and encouraged to contact and develop a working relationship with the NHQ/PA office.

Every PAO should, at a minimum, ensure that his or her contact information is listed correctly on eServices, because NHQ/PA will use the e-mail address listed there to send important updates about CAP public affairs activities. All PAOs are also strongly urged to make contact with NHQ/PA, at least when they are first appointed to their duty assignment, so that they can personally introduce themselves. NHQ/PA is usually able to offer immediate helpful suggestions to the new PAO.

6. TRAINING.

PAOs will provide training for subordinate unit PAOs at least annually. In addition, to ensure the success of the public affairs program, all PAOs will enroll and participate in available training and resources, including:

a. Public Affairs specialty track training CAPP 201, *Specialty Track Study Guide-Public Affairs*, an in-depth public affairs training program leading to the Technician, Senior and Master level of proficiency.

CAPP 201, *Specialty Track Study Guide-Public Affairs* lists all the requirements needed to earn the technician, senior, and master ratings in the Public Affairs Specialty. In most cases, the PAO in training needs to work under a mentor's guidance.

b. How-To Guide for Civil Air Patrol Public Affairs (CAPP 190).

This document (which you are now reading) is everyone's guide to CAPR 190-1, as it explains how PA gets the job done at all levels. It summarizes the practical knowledge gathered by successful PAOs, offering the reader timely, hands-on, tested solutions.

It is also a very important document in a different way. Since there is no formal course for CAP PAOs, the How-To Guide has the potential for filling this need. If you know it well, and follow its guidance and suggestions, you will be better prepared to earn your specialty rating.

The best practices offered in the How-To Guide have been submitted by award-winning, working CAP PAOs who have made them work for their unit. Taking a page from the notebook of successful PAOs is an excellent way for new PAOs to learn how to do the job – but it is also an opportunity for seasoned PAOs to find out what other successful PAOs are doing (that they might not be doing themselves). In other words, the How-To Guide could be considered an online “pen-pal mentor” that is timely, available to, and useful for all PAOs.

c. Group/wing/region/national public affairs training courses, workshops, seminars and field training.

Group and wing workshops and seminars are usually small, but they have the advantage of being put together by people who “know the market,” as they have done the job in the participants' own territory. Knowing the area – and its needs – makes these speakers and mentors especially valuable for attendees, as they can share their successes and tell in some detail how they accomplished them. The take-home lessons that attendees gather at these sessions can be a recipe for success.

d. Seminars and workshops offered by the military and local, state or national organizations as deemed appropriate by the PAO and commander.

The operative word here is “appropriate,” meaning that the knowledge and techniques learned can be adapted to the way in which CAP works. If neither the commander nor the PAO are sure that it would be useful training, a review of the syllabus and/or a phone call to the offering organization will provide more details about what is going to be taught, making it easier to decide.

e. Public Information Officer training as part of the emergency services missions of CAP.

Since CAP signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), whereby CAP undertook to adopt FEMA training as a prerequisite for CAP's participation in inter-agency Emergency Services missions, CAP PAOs need to learn how to become Public Information Officers (PIOs) – the FEMA way.

A PIO rating is an indispensable qualification for which there is no substitute. In addition to the online FEMA written courses (IS 100, 200, 700 and 800), the PAO needs to take the online FEMA IS 702 that is the PIO-specific course detailing how to work in a National Incident Management System (NIMS) environment. Add to this the ICS 300 (a resident weekend course), and the optional (but recommended) ICS 400. These two are essential to understanding and learning how the larger missions function in a NIMS environment.

Additionally, prospective PIOs will need to take the resident G290 and G291 (16 hours each) that will get them started with the PIO skill – as known and practiced by others who have trained according to FEMA requirements. When CAP works with other agencies in a NIMS environment, CAP PIOs need to know how to work in harmony with other FEMA-trained PIOs.

See: **Sec. 10. Public Information Officer**

7. FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICERS.

a. **Planning.** PAOs at the flight/squadron, group, wing and region levels will develop an annual Public Relations plan to promote CAP, its goals and missions for internal and external audiences, and a crisis communications plan to deal rapidly and effectively with emergencies. Step-by-step instructions on how to write each plan are provided on the National Public Affairs website. The public relations plan will follow the four-step planning process for public affairs: Step 1 — Determine PA needs and opportunities; Step 2 — Establish objectives designed to fulfill needs and opportunities identified in Step 1; Step 3 — Establish goals and action strategies for each objective; and Step 4 — State the desired impact envisioned for each goal provided in Step 3. The unit PAO will submit a PA plan annually, including an evaluation of the effectiveness of the previous year's goals, to the wing PAO for review and input. The wing PAO will submit a PA plan annually, including an evaluation of the effectiveness of the previous year's goals, to the region PAO and to NHQ/PA for review and input. The region PAO will submit a PA plan annually, including an evaluation of the previous year's goals, to NHQ/PA and to the National PAO, including an evaluation of the previous year's goals, for review and input. All successive PA plans and corresponding evaluations will be retained in accordance with CAPR 10-2, *Files Maintenance and Records Disposition*.

Writing Your PA Plan

[Sample Squadron PA Plan Final 15072_156B3D68D85A3.docx](#) is a fill-in-the-blanks template that uses the Four-Step Planning Process. This is a best practices solution that will help you identify how you intend to direct your PA routine and emergency efforts in your unit, as well as measure your success.

Although this document must be updated yearly, you can change it more often if needed. If before the year is out you have met some or all of your goals, or if your plan needs revision, you can rewrite it in part or in its entirety.

You must, however, keep all your PA Plans on file, covering the entire period between inspections, following the guidelines of CAPR 10-2, *Files Maintenance and Records Disposition*. At the commander's discretion, PA Plans might need to be kept longer as a long-range planning tool, since doing so could help you establish where you have been and where you are going with your PA Program.

CAPR 190-1 requires that the PAO prepare a periodic evaluation of the PA plan (at least annually, but could be more often if needed), on the basis of which the PA plan will be updated and submitted for approval. Keeping these evaluations on file for the same period as current and past PA plans is a must, as required by CAPR 190-1. For continuity purposes, upon closing a PA Plan, it is recommended that a list be prepared showing which goals were met (and how well) and which were transferred to the new PA Plan or dropped (in the latter case indicating why each one was dropped).

See: **Writing Your PA Plan.**⁽⁴⁾

See: **CAP Public Awareness Plan.**⁽²⁾

The link below leads to a clear explanation of how you need to approach the task of writing a Crisis Communications Plan. Prepare your plan keeping in mind your local needs, the types of

crises you have faced in the past, the possible crises the future might bring, and the physical and human assets available at your level.

You will be best equipped to prepare your plan if you know how your neighboring units plan to resolve their own emergencies. Depending on your geographic location, you might need to coordinate with units near you that are in a different wing, as an emergency could bring you together in a joint mission.

See: **Writing a Crisis Communications Plan.**⁽³¹⁾

The new PAO may have learned many easily-transferrable skills but will seldom have the right hands-on experience. The list referenced below, compiled by experienced PAOs/PIOs from across the United States, has been very useful in preparing for an emergency, working through it, and orderly closing the event.

See: **New PAO Checklist.**⁽⁷⁾

(1) External. PAOs will develop goals and initiatives that help build relationships with external constituencies of Civil Air Patrol and emphasize its importance in the performance of its three congressionally chartered missions of Emergency Services, Aerospace Education and Cadet Programs.

CAP's Media Policy (see link below) governs how PAOs, commanders and designated persons interact for best results, enhancing the image of Civil Air Patrol. The media include print, video and audio means of communications, as well as CAP's own efforts through public speaking engagements, newsletters, e-communications and websites.

See: **CAP Media Policy.**⁽⁸⁾

See: **National News Releases.**⁽⁹⁾

See: **Hometown News Releases.**⁽¹⁰⁾

See: **Online Media Kit.**⁽¹¹⁾

See: **Media Relations Instructional Videos.**⁽¹²⁾

See: **Air Force Media Guidelines** (itemized below).

Meeting the Media.⁽¹³⁾

New Media and the Air Force.⁽¹⁴⁾

U.S. Air Force Dashboard.⁽¹⁵⁾

U.S. Air Force Live.⁽¹⁶⁾

Almost invariably, external communications are successful and effective in proportion to the degree in which adequate planning exists.

PA Plans at all levels should include provisions for contacting and working with the media. Doing so can lay the groundwork for optimal results.

Newsletters must be considered both internal and external communications, because once they have been distributed or published (whether in hard copy or electronically), the unit has no effective way of controlling where they will go.

Therefore, newsletters ought to present CAP units, activities and members in their best possible light, always emphasizing the positive. The negatives are best left to unit after-action reviews, rather than posted where the public can read them. Furthermore, newsletters must be written in Associated Press Style (see Sec. 7.b.(7) below), which is the national standard that all media use since 1977 and that CAP has adopted for all external communications.

See: **Sample Newsletter.**⁽¹⁸⁾

Creating the conditions for best public awareness of the CAP unit, its activities and its impact on the community is essential to good marketing. Rather than the trading of goods in exchange for money, marketing an organization involves the creation of that organization's image and generating goodwill towards it in local government, the business world, and the society at large. Where commerce relies on value for products or services provided, CAP marketing relies on image and reputation for activities or services rendered.

The links below show how CAP proposes that this be done, as well as a rundown of other means of electronic communications.

See: **Marketing Guidebook.**⁽¹⁹⁾

See: **Explore Social Networking.**⁽²⁰⁾⁽²¹⁾⁽²²⁾⁽²³⁾

How is marketing accomplished? The links below cover print media, multimedia and visual media.

Also included is a link to CAP's recent Annual Report to Congress. This annual presentation is essential to assuring congressional backing for Civil Air Patrol and the funding of essential functions and equipment.

The newest and potentially most far-reaching tool is social networking. Taken as a whole, good marketing is vital to Civil Air Patrol's very survival.

See: *Volunteer Magazine.*⁽²⁴⁾

See: *Volunteer Magazine Inventory.*⁽²⁵⁾

See: **Multimedia Products.**⁽²⁶⁾

See: **What Makes a Good Article.**⁽²⁷⁾

See: *VolunteerNow.*⁽²⁹⁾

(2) Internal. PAOs will develop strategies that emphasize CAP's importance, member recognition, retention and encouragement of member participation in unit/wing/region/ national activities and training.

In order to develop public affairs strategies, the unit needs a plan. The top links below detail how to write a Public Affairs Plan.

Once the PA Plan has been written and approved, it can be useful in planning for, preparing and publishing favorable print, such as can be accomplished with a newsletter. Individual articles submitted to CAP NHQ/PA might be used online on *VolunteerNow* or in CAP's flagship *Volunteer* magazine. The unit's own website ought to have a news section, and many higher headquarters often have a news section of their own where lower echelon articles can be posted.

PAOs at all levels need to keep in mind that they are at the service of the unit and its members. The PAO – through training, observational skills and experience – is the primary architect of the unit's morale and *esprit de corps*, which in turn directly affect the unit's recruiting and retention effort, without which the unit could dwindle and risk deactivation.

The PAO will need to coordinate with the Recruiting and Retention Officer, but the PAO is not required to serve as the Recruiting and Retention Officer unless he or she has accepted that position as an additional duty. The PAO's contribution towards Recruiting and Retention will be the result of having fulfilled the PA mission of informing internal and external audiences through articles, images and marketing products submitted to traditional media, as well as items posted on CAP websites, published on newsletters, and news contributed to social media. It will be up to the Recruiting and Retention Officer to work with the PAO in order to generate favorable material that the Recruiting and Retention Officer can use for R&R purposes.

(3) PA Crisis Communications Plan. In consultation with unit commanders, PAOs at all levels will develop a crisis communications plan to ensure a rapid and effective response during an emergency that may damage the organization's reputation if mishandled. Unit crisis public affairs plans will reflect guidance outlined in the CAP National Headquarters Writing a Crisis Communications Plan, listed at, http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/cap_national_hq/pubic_affairs/. All crisis communications plans will be approved by the wing commander or designated representative. Subordinate unit crisis plans will be submitted annually to wing PAOs for review and input. Wing and region crisis plans will be submitted annually to NHQ/PA and to the National PAO for review and input.

Emergency Services (ES) is one of the three congressionally-mandated missions of Civil Air Patrol. ES would not exist unless an emergency came about, but an ES mission does not necessarily constitute a crisis unless something occurs that can specifically affect CAP's reputation, such as, for example, a missing CAP aircraft or a CAP vehicle accident.

In the event of a crisis, there is little time for planning and the PAO is likely to react, rather than act. This is why CAP requires every unit to prepare a Crisis Communications Plan, which must adhere to the CAP Public Affairs Crisis Policy.

The links below provide additional information.

See: **PA Crisis Policy.**⁽³⁰⁾

See: **Writing a Crisis Communications Plan.**⁽³¹⁾

b. External Information.

(1) Target audiences include local military installations, government agencies, schools, business, industry, civic organizations and the media. Community and governmental relations shall not be the exclusive responsibility of the PAO, unless accepted as an additional duty. PAOs should use community service projects as a source for promotional opportunities and publicity.

External information is best planned for by focusing on specific target audiences. The *CAP Marketing Guidebook* covers this subject comprehensively.

See: ***Marketing Guidebook.***⁽¹⁹⁾

Most CAP wings have created and maintain a Legislative Squadron (that is always directly subordinate to the wing). This is a very important part of CAP's marketing plan and serves a grassroots purpose. For best results, the Legislative Squadron ought to have its own website, or be represented in an easily-found section of the wing website.

The wing PAO ought to work with the Legislative Squadron's PAO in order to ensure that news items about Legislative Squadron members' activities in connection with CAP are properly prepared, submitted and publicized.

When state legislators become members of Civil Air Patrol and CAP helps them better serve their constituencies, they can easily become staunch advocates of the CAP program and take this message to Washington, greatly benefiting CAP, its funding and its missions.

See: **Sample Legislative Squadron Website.**⁽³²⁾

(2) PAOs below the region level will assemble current media contact information to foster working relationships. PAOs will meet periodically with representatives of key media to improve media awareness of CAP and to establish an understanding on the part of the PAO of the information needs and preferences of each media outlet.

The compiled media lists available from CAP NHQ/PA are not perfect. Use them as a primary document to contact local media, and update them with the most current information as you go.

Having the major part of the legwork done for you will make the task easier. If you are not at the wing level or above, ask your wing PAO to send you the media list for your wing. Often, these lists will be posted on the wing website.

Upon request, NHQ/PA provides comprehensive state media lists to PAOs at wing level and above.

(3) PAOs will develop standard plans and procedures for external promotion of key events in the unit, such as participation in training and actual missions, awards and promotions, and special unit activities.

Favorable publicity for squadron and individual member activities and achievements lies at the heart of the PAO's duties and responsibilities.

When submitting articles and news items, make sure that:

- Images show unit members wearing the uniform correctly,
- Cutlines (photo captions) identify all participants by grade, name, and unit of assignment,
- Photos are submitted as attachment and not embedded in a text document,
- All facts are correctly reported, and
- The item is written in Associated Press Style that, in common with all U.S. media, is CAP's standard for external publications (see Sec. 7.b.(7) below).

(4) PAOs will assemble standard materials presenting the background of CAP suitable for distribution to the media, prospective members, partner agency officials and others as needed, including materials developed locally and/or at higher headquarters. The PAO is encouraged to check the NHQ/PA website and PAO Toolkit contents regularly for updated materials.

Training in meeting the media, being looked upon by the media as a good resource for CAP news, and engaging the media's help in telling the CAP story accurately and favorably are of primary importance to PAOs at all levels.

The PAO who can work with the media is of considerable value to CAP and most often will be able to do the job well. The opposite is true on all counts. The links below provide timely information and training for the PAO who wants to succeed at the job.

See: **Online Media Kit.**⁽¹¹⁾

See: **Media Relations Instructional Videos.**⁽¹²⁾

See: **Air Force Media Guidelines** (itemized in the list below).

Meeting the Media.⁽¹³⁾

New Media and the Air Force.⁽¹⁴⁾

U.S. Air Force Dashboard.⁽¹⁵⁾

U.S. Air Force Live.⁽¹⁶⁾

(5) PAOs will use available unit, wing and region websites to inform the public about Civil Air Patrol.

Over the last few years, there has been a communications revolution. Cell phones, smart phones, tablets, notebooks, instant messaging, texting, social networking, websites and e-mailing have become the PAO's bread and butter. Of these, a website is of lasting value. It needs to be informative, well maintained, kept up to date at all times, easy to navigate and accurate. Here are some examples.

See: **Sample Cadet-Oriented Web Site.**⁽³³⁾

See: **Sample Composite Squadron Web Site.**⁽³⁴⁾

See: **Sample Group/Wing Web Site.**⁽³⁵⁾

See: *VolunteerNow.*⁽²⁹⁾

(6) As National Headquarters adopts or updates positioning statements, slogans, logos and other components of a brand communications program, PAOs will incorporate these elements into their communications with external constituencies, whenever practical.

The primary document to accomplish the above is CAP's *Marketing Guidebook*. Do not underestimate the value of marketing or let a good chance for favorable publicity go by without taking advantage of it.

Below are some useful tools. Be mindful of authorized seals, emblems and patches, as these change over time, some become obsolete (and therefore should not be used on new documents), and new ones are created.

See: *Marketing Guidebook.*⁽¹⁹⁾

See: **Seals, Emblems and Patches.**⁽³⁶⁾

See: **Posters.**⁽³⁷⁾

See: **PAO Toolkit.**⁽³⁾

(7) All PA communications (news releases, public websites, articles, newsletters, photos and the like) will be approved by the commander and written in AP Style (as detailed in *The Associated Press Stylebook*). Official CAP correspondence will be written in accordance with the guidelines in CAPR 10-1.

The Associated Press Stylebook – that as of 2013 is in its 48th edition – contains the standard adopted by media across the United States since 1977. CAP PAOs need to

become familiar with this standard, as it is also CAP's standard for all external communications. Now published annually, the *AP Stylebook* is a specialized "dictionary of style" that – for instance – clearly shows when to capitalize some words, and when not to, as well as other media publishing standards and conventions.

AP Style requires articles to be written in the third person singular, the author must express no opinion, and any opinion presented in the text must appear in the form of quotes accompanied by attribution.

CAUTION: The author cannot self-quote.

A good way to summarize AP Style is, "Just the facts" or "What the AV camera recorded." AV recordings offer no opinion, no feeling, and no explanation beyond what is apparent to the listener and viewer. In every respect, recordings are factual and impersonal. As the AV camera does not add anything to the recording, the article's author cannot overlay his or her own thoughts or opinions on the story, but must leave it up to the viewer and listener to decide how to interpret it.

For examples of AP Style, visit NHQ/PA *VolunteerNow*,⁽²⁹⁾ and read *Volunteer*.⁽²⁵⁾

For a living example of AP Style, notice how the TV and radio networks report the news: just the facts, no opinion. Points of view are introduced through live interviews of people connected to, involved in, or witnessing the event.

Best Practice – Associated Press Style in a Nutshell

Below are the most important rules to keep in mind when writing in AP Style

- Write the title in normal English-language capitalization. Never all in caps.
- Add your byline below the article title
- Do not format the text in the article (only exceptions are: bullet comments and numbered paragraphs in a section that details a process or sequence).
- Do not indent the first line of a paragraph.
- Use AP Style rules for punctuation.
- Single space the article. At the end of each paragraph, execute two end-of lines (Enter key).
- Do not introduce artificial paragraphing by hitting the Enter key at the end of each line in your article. Instead, let the text wrap naturally and insert two Enter keys at the end of the paragraph.
- Use only a single space after a period.
- Insert a dateline at the beginning of the article, following AP Style rules
- Answer the 5Ws: Who, What, Where, When, Why + the honorary W: How. In writing a CAP article, you will always know the Ws.
- Write all dates in AP style.
- Do not use postal codes instead of state abbreviations (not OK but Okla., not NM but N.M.) but some states have no abbreviation, such as Texas.
- Write all military grades in AP Style.
- Write the article in the third person singular.
- Express no opinion.

- To express opinion, use one or more quotes of qualified sources – always get the quoted person’s permission to include the quote, unless it is a matter of record (printed article or recorded audio-visual).
- Never self-quote.
- Identify all persons by grade or title, name, job title if material, and organization.
- Never refer to a young person as “kid.”
- When a young person is a CAP cadet, never use “boy,” “girl” or “child” but identify each one by grade, full name (or last name only – never first name only), and unit of assignment.
- Never use “their” for the possessive of a singular subject, such as, “the cadet took their meal.”
- Avoid the abbreviations i.e. and e.g. You may know the meaning of each, and the Latin words they represent, but most people confuse the two. Be clear. Write in English and leave Latin and non-English to scholars.
- Refer to CAP members by grade, name, duty position and unit of assignment. Never by first name.
- On second or subsequent references, use only the last name, except when there are two persons with the same last name, in which case the use of both first and last name is preferred (never just the first names).
- In the case of CAP or military commanders or higher ranking senior members, on second reference use the grade and last name.
- Do not use Lt. as a grade. Lt. is a mode of address. The correct grade may be 2nd Lt. or 1st Lt., but never Lt. The only service that has a Lt. grade is the Navy.
- Do not use exclamation marks, as doing so expresses opinion.
- Use simple declarative sentences.
- Avoid the passive voice.
- Remember the good rules of English grammar and syntax, and follow them.
- ***For best results***, buy the latest copy of the Associated Press Stylebook, available at a modest cost at www.ap.org – read it, study it, know it, and use it.

c. Internal Public Relations.

(1) PAOs will advise the commander on internal public relations strategies and methods in order to conduct an effective program.

Obtaining the commander’s consent and direction should be the first step in planning and carrying out any PA effort. The PAO needs to establish dialog with the commander and develop a good working relationship with him or her, informing the commander of the state of PA in the unit. and seeking the commander’s comments about and approval of proposed PA initiatives.

(2) PAOs will regularly submit news advisories and releases, with photographs whenever possible, to the next higher headquarters. This directive includes PAOs at all levels. While primarily intended for internal “newsletter” purposes, PAOs shall be aware that selected submissions may become part of higher headquarters’ external public relations activities.

PAOs *at all levels* must submit news advisories and releases. *At all levels* means that whether the PAO is assigned to a flight, squadron, group, wing or region, that PAO is directed to be “a working PAO” in every respect. The higher the level, the greater the responsibility, the more the PAO will need to know, and the wider the PAO’s training and mentoring efforts will need to be.

Articles and news advisories are at the heart of the PAO’s craft. In this regard, linguists agree that civilized people around the world use two languages:

- Normal speech, using elastic grammar as well as fleetingly fashionable words and phrases, largely relying on facial expression, body language and give-and-take for clarity; and
- Formal written communications that follow the rules of grammar and syntax, a skill normal acquired through a formal education.

Most people believe that good writing is simply normal speech set down as written words. However, as explained above, normal speech and formal writing differ. Articles need to be written in a clearer language than the one we use in everyday conversation.

Writing is similar to speaking, except that with writing you will not be there to explain what you meant to convey when you wrote it. Therefore, if clarity matters and you have an important message to pass along, writing differs in that it needs to stand alone, unprotected, and as a full and complete statement that will be understood by all – in the way that you intended.

The best writing uses fairly short sentences and uncomplicated words, striving for both completeness and simplicity, which are the essence of clarity. The competent writer lets the ideas behind the words cast light on what the writing is about, inviting the reader to enter into that thread of thought and, as a result, experience the power of the story. The links below cover the essential elements of writing:

Feature stories;

Human interest articles;

Interviewing;

News features; and

Personality features.

Master these, and you will be a competent writer. Add to your efforts something memorable and useful, and you will be a great writer.

Always keep in mind that good images add immediacy to any article, making it easier for the reader to visualize what happened. A conscientious PAO will develop good photographic skills and will always have a camera available to capture the images that can go with the narrative. These must be submitted as attachments, rather than embedded in a text document. Images should be the originals, not cropped, resized or edited.

For submission to any publication, find out what that editor requires (generally, JPG format with a resolution of 200-400 dots per inch). Always provide cutlines (photo captions). Submit the article, cutlines and photos attached to the same e-mail, or include them in the same mailing.

See: **Feature Writing Tips.**⁽³⁸⁾

See: **Human Interest Story Writing Tips.**⁽³⁹⁾

See: **Interviewing Tips.**⁽⁴⁰⁾

See: **News Feature Writing Tips.**⁽⁴¹⁾

See: **Personality Feature Writing Tips.**⁽⁴²⁾

8. NEWSLETTERS.

a. PAOs should publish information that tells success stories, encourages participation in meetings and activities, and presents other information about the unit of interest to internal and external audiences. This information may be published as a hard copy or electronic newsletter/magazine, or by whatever method/format works best for the unit (i.e.: website, social media, etc.).

With the current revision (see Sec. 8.b. below), this regulation no longer requires PAOs to publish a unit newsletter, but neither does it forbid it. Let us see some of the reasoning behind this decision.

In Sec. 2. Public Affairs Officer Objectives, the regulation clearly states three mandated objectives. If you have read them carefully, you saw that they involve reaching outside the unit to inform the general public and CAP's partners and benefactors, as well as going inside the unit to inform your own unit members. External communications may be accomplished by publishing articles in local, regional, state and national media, through radio messages and interviews, news releases and media advisories, postings on your unit website, active participation in social media, and a variety of public relations products. Having a regularly updated unit website is a plus, provided it has a substantial and appropriate news section. Depending on the postings, having a social media presence may work reasonably well for internal communications, but normally it will be of questionable value for external audiences.

Given the above, how many PAOs actually produce such material on a monthly basis? How many PAOs write *and publish* at least one article a month, letting people know what the unit does in order to serve the community, state and nation? How many of these articles are posted on the unit website? How many PAOs visit frequently their counterparts at local military installations, as well as local editors and news directors?

Sec. 8.b. below abolishes the requirement for publishing a newsletter in an effort to lessen the workload of those PAOs who are actively involved in missions, issue news releases on a regular basis (at least monthly, and unless they are published they do not count), post them on the unit's own website, and are in touch with the media covering their area. However, there are PAOs who do not publish articles or news items at least monthly, nor take the time to at least phone local media editors and directors, seldom post articles on the unit website and in general pay little attention to Sec. 2., above.

Although some PAOs regularly issue news releases and submit articles for publication, these are neither published nor posted on a unit website. Therefore, when reading Sec. 8.b. below, ask yourself, "Am I doing what a PAO needs to be doing, and accomplishing my external and internal information missions?" Remember that it is not enough to submit items for publication: the name of the game is achieving publication. If you are not published (and therefore not read), how are you satisfying the requirement of Sec. 2.?

For those PAOs who are not doing the job as described above, the newsletter may be the best (and often the only) option left. This is why Sec. 8.b. does not forbid the publication of a newsletter, but allows for the possibility that some PAOs will opt for producing one.

Consider also timing. Daily newspapers seldom publish articles covering an event that happened several days in the past, because they want (and need) fresh news. CAP PAOs are volunteers that

normally have a paying job, and are rarely able to meet daily media deadlines. If you have a weekly newspaper in your area, that could make it easier for you because the deadline will be weekly, rather than daily. Also, in the larger metropolitan areas, some newspapers publish a weekly regional supplement that might carry your story – provided it is less than a week old. Therefore, considering the above and how well you can satisfy your local media, all you might have left is posting articles on the unit website, use them in a newsletter, or (for better results) both.

b. A newsletter and/or magazine are not required. If a unit PAO produces a newsletter and/or magazine, at least one copy will be filed in printed form or as a PDF document for later reference, and kept as a permanent historical unit record.

See: **CAP Unit Newsletters.**⁽⁴³⁾

Every unit in Civil Air Patrol, large or small, can publish a newsletter (on a minimum quarterly basis) to keep its current and prospective members:

- Informed about what is going on in that unit (region, wing, group, squadron or flight);
- Educated about CAP’s history, purpose, objectives, operations, plans and current events;
- Inspired to take greater interest in CAP; and
- Motivated for wider, in-depth participation in unit activities.

Unit newsletters must be distributed or made available to every member of your unit. Wing or group hard-copy newsletters may be distributed to only lower-echelon commanders if production and postage cost is an issue. However, in this digital age, it is quite common to see newsletters written in Microsoft Word (or better yet “printed” in PDF format) that are posted on the region, wing, group or squadron website. Doing so will let all members and the public read and/or download the publication with ease. Alternatively, it can be distributed via e-mail. However, remember that even if you e-mail it only to members, you must consider this an external distribution, because once you have sent it out, you will have lost control over where the e-mail can go.

For greater impact, a unit could publish an HTML newsletter as a Web page, gaining the advantage of multimedia content (linked larger photos, video clips, sound bites and so on) as well as hotlinks to other sites or items of interest. This kind of newsletter is published on a website and announced via e-mail, at unit meetings, or via other suitable means.

Any newsletter – whether hard-copy, HTML or in PDF format –, if it is (or can be) accessible to the public, must be written in Associated Press Style, as directed in Sec. 7.b.(7) above.

Check out these examples.⁽³³⁾⁽³⁵⁾

Every unit should include the higher headquarters’ public affairs officer on the distribution list, as well as CAP National Headquarters, the mayor, city officials, civic leaders and business principals with whom the unit has established a relationship.

The unit’s mailing list must be updated and accurate. Nothing turns a recipient off faster than seeing mail addressed to a person who has been gone for several years.

Some Newsletter Specifics:

The purpose of the unit newsletter is to tell the success stories of the unit, encourage regular participation in unit meetings and activities, and present other important information about the unit to internal and external audiences.

Content

Your newsletter must contain news. Tell readers what your unit has done recently, what you plan to do, who got promoted, and who won an award. Show the external audiences how your unit has served the community, state and nation, or trained for these activities. Your newsletter can also introduce new members, and you could write about current members as well. Keep it informative and well-focused, and make sure your members find it useful as well as entertaining (but *do not* publish jokes, recipes, puzzles or other fillers).

Keep the big picture in mind when you are deciding what to include in your next newsletter. Whenever possible, include cadet-oriented news or articles that mention cadet participation in exercises or missions.

Since the newsletter will be accessible to people outside your CAP unit, be specific about names, ranks, places and events, and always use complete and proper names. Spell out acronyms on first reference—for example: *search and rescue exercise (SAREX)*.

NOTE: Check *The Associated Press Stylebook* for rules and exceptions. This indispensable reference book is also known as *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual* or *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*.

Newsletter Length

Don't worry about your newsletter's length: Let it grow as your needs grow.

Start out with a one-page newsletter and pack in as much news as you can, without making it look crowded; when you run out of space, add another page.

Take care to keep the length of your newsletter manageable. Avoid committing yourself to a newsletter that you might not be able to produce on a consistent basis (weekly, monthly, or quarterly).

Writing

As the PAO and/or newsletter editor, do not assume that you have to author all the publication's articles. Encourage the senior members and cadets to write about their CAP experiences, explain the responsibilities of the positions they hold, and what motivates them as members of an organization that emphasizes Emergency Services, Aerospace Education and Cadet Programs. Enlist the help of others, but do not expect them to bring the news to you. Recommend story ideas, ask for suggestions and follow up on your requests in order to meet the newsletter's deadline. Keep informed about planned unit activities, so you can plan coverage of newsworthy events.

Writing should focus on your reader. Continually ask yourself these key questions:

- Is the topic relevant to the organization and its missions?
- Will it grab and hold the reader's attention?
- Does it provide enough information for the reader to see what the story is about?

- Does it encourage the reader to inquire further about your unit and Civil Air Patrol?

These elements give your readers the opportunity to understand the requirements and achievements experienced by CAP members and might intrigue potential members enough to make them visit a squadron; if they enjoy the experience and like the members, they might decide to join. Remember that every new member could contribute special skills for the benefit of the community, the Civil Air Patrol missions, and unit members themselves.

Consistently adhere to the “who, what, when, where, why and how” system of writing. Answering these six questions with complete, narrative sentences is sure to improve the coherence of your newsletter articles as well as help your readers grasp and retain your message.

To write your article, use the top-down method with the most important information at top and the least important at the bottom (the editor’s scissors normally cut from the bottom up). Start the article with an irresistibly interesting sentence (called “the hook”) that will make the reader go through the whole article.

Be competent in – and comfortable with – interviewing techniques. You want to capture the unique angle to every article. Strive to grasp the essence of a story, write succinctly, and complete the story on deadline.

Avoid writing one-sentence items for your publication. Instead of saying, “Congratulations to Cadet Jones on his recent promotion,” give your readers the full story by including his or her full rank and name, explaining the cadet’s position in the squadron and giving an overview of how the cadet achieved the promotion (by participating in CAP activities, passing exams, chairing special projects, and so on). Additional information – such as what the cadet plans for the future and why CAP plays an important part in those plans – would provide the human interest angle that could induce people to read your newsletter rather than just skim it.

Print only the facts. If you can’t substantiate your story, don’t print it. Rumor and gossip have no place in your publication, as these can discredit it to the point that no one will want to read it. Never print derogatory remarks about anyone or anything. In short, offend no one – you want to win more readers, not shove them aside.

Omit irrelevant information about other organizations, but do use it if it has a direct bearing on your unit and its mission or activity.

Be fair. Include news about everyone and everything in the unit, not just the most popular people or pet projects.

Avoid wordiness. Do not waste your readers’ time with long filler statements that could be said in a word or two, such as “due to the fact that” when “because” says it.

Avoid trite expressions, such as:

- *A good time was had by all* (this is shopworn, it is best to avoid the passive voice, and since it expresses opinion, AP Style requires it to be in a quote);
- *It goes without saying* (if it does, why say it? “Fillers” will kill your story); or
- *Needless to say* (take the advice and leave it unsaid).

Editing

Once stories are written, they should be edited or at least reviewed. Use the computer for the edits so you can track the changes. If authors edit their own stories, there might be less to do in the editing stage, except that the author's writing style might be wordy, trite, obscure, or otherwise less than optimal. Also, not everyone will be able to edit one's own work competently, as this is a fairly advanced writing skill.

Editing your contributors' work can be a touchy business, as some people object to their words being changed at all. For best results, the PAO needs to explain to unit members in general and contributors in particular that PA work is (and needs to be) a team effort. The biggest stumbling block is that CAP has adopted Associated Press Style, and makes it a requirement for external communications because it is a standard recognized by all U.S. media.

See: **Sec. 7.b.(7) "Best Practice – Associated Press Style in a Nutshell"** (above)

PAOs should consider giving potential authors some instruction on how these rules apply to article writing. The time and effort spent doing this will pay off in the end. At the very least, your contributors will have a better idea of the work involved, and the role you play in editing their work.

Review your own writing for spelling, grammar and consistent style. Go over your writing with a fine-tooth comb, and have another skilled writer read it too. If you have the time, put it away for a day or so, then re-read it carefully, as if it were someone else's work. It will be easier to catch errors if you remove yourself from the writing for a short time.

Difficult as it is, competent editors do not "marry" their words; it is the meaning that counts.

Use a stylebook

The Associated Press Stylebook is a must. *The Elements of Style*, by William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White, is excellent. Regardless of how accurate and flawless you might think your writing is, have someone you trust double-check your article for grammar, spelling, punctuation, syntax and clarity.

Use a good spell-checker

But do not rely on your spell-checker completely — often it will not catch homonyms and other errors. Worse yet, if it has a limited vocabulary, it can challenge a correctly spelled word and suggest that you substitute it for another that in many cases will be wrong, such as flagging "poster" and offering "posture" instead, when "poster" is what you meant.

Single-space after all text punctuation

In office typing, two spaces are used after periods and colons. When typesetting or publishing online, however, only one space is used. This does not apply to numbers, such as 2.25 or 5:30.

Uppercase letters

Acronyms, initials and other capitalized words in text such as IBM, RAM, CD-ROM, SAREX and so forth may be set slightly smaller than normal text size to keep them from standing out and drawing unwanted attention — unless attention is what you are seeking. You could use small caps for this purpose, which is easily done with the computer. Alternatively, manually reduce text-size capital letters (strings of three or more characters) a point or two, from say, 11 pt. to 10 pt. or 18 pt. to 16 pt., depending on the

font. (The examples at the beginning of this paragraph have been reduced by one point.) Conventional wisdom recommends checking your work by turning the page upside down; the string of caps should blend in (you can print the page to test this). If they still stand out, make them smaller.

Example: The Wing-wide SAREX was held on July 21, 2008. SAREX (that here matches the sentence's 11 pt.) in the previous sentence was set one point smaller than the rest.

Ellipsis

An ellipsis is a three-dot pause that, properly set, maintains the pace of the text. It is also used in quotations to indicate that part of the quote has been left out. But the ellipses that the computer makes can be too compressed, and reading over them can make one feel like...tripping...over one's own feet. Dot-space-dot-space-dot may be preferable, since the extra distance ensures a more natural rhythm.

Some word processors do this automatically for you. Try it in yours and see what it does. The rule here is, "Do what looks best."

Punctuation with Quotes

It is a typographical convention to scoot a period (.) or comma (,) under a single or double quote. Thus, instead of "quote", one ought to write "quote," simply because it looks better. The esthetic reason behind this is that having the period or comma outside the quote leaves an ugly stretch of white space after the ending letter. It really is that simple, and it is a universally-accepted convention even though it is grammatically incorrect. You may have never noticed, but if you look critically at any book, you will see many ending single and double quotes that embrace a comma or period.

Punctuation and Capitalization with Quotes

It is also a convention to place a comma and a space before writing a quote, then start the quote with a capital letter such as in the following example. *The expert typographer explained, "We have always done it that way."*

Bold, Italics and Underlines

In office typing, it is customary to use underlined or bold-faced type to emphasize a word or denote a name or the title of a book or paper. When typeset, however, these do not look very good, and either one can make a word stand out too much. Typesetters, therefore, tend to use italics instead, which were designed for this purpose and which — in many fonts — are quite attractive.

Be mindful that, online, underlining is associated with a "hot link." If you underline a word, the casual visitor might assume that it is linked to another Web page or document and might click on it to no avail (and possibly get frustrated). Especially online, underlining is best avoided.

Hyphens and Dashes

In office typing, two hyphens -- like these -- are used to make a dash. When typesetting, a long dash – called an *em* dash – is used instead. How long is an *em*? Basically, an *em* is as wide as the letter *m* in the font you are using. Whatever the point size is: 12 pt. type = 12-pt. long *em*, more or less. Another dash, called an *en*, is about half the length of an *em* but longer than a hyphen. The *en*, as you would expect, is related to the letter *n* in that

font. It is properly used with dates and times, such as 4:00–5:00, or April 26–May 9, instead of a hyphen.

Fussy editors will not interchange an *en dash* and a hyphen. *Em* and *en* dashes are made using a combination keystroke. When using a recent version of Microsoft Word, writing a double hyphen — followed by another word will automatically turn the double dash into an *em*. Also, writing a single hyphen – followed by a word will automatically change the hyphen into an *en*. It pays to learn your word processor’s built-in shortcuts.

This—*em dash* was created as described above. To create an *en dash* with this version of the software, you need to put a space before and after the hyphen; when you add a word, the hyphen will turn into an *en dash* (afterwards, you can remove the spaces).

Newsletter Design

Choose a newsletter design that is attractive and easy to read. The best writing might be wasted if it is presented using a poor design. In fact, no design at all is better than a poor design. Provide a good mix of articles and images. Include photographs and artwork as they relate to the text in your newsletter.

Leave out jokes, cartoons, recipes, puzzles and other fillers that simply take up space. What is humorous to you might well be silly or offensive to others. Your readers deserve useful news about Civil Air Patrol and the community benefits that your unit provides. Besides, keep in mind that your mission is to produce a newsletter about the unit’s successes, not a collection of fillers or time-wasters.

Don’t reprint copyrighted cartoons, drawings or articles. It is a violation of federal law to reprint such material without the copyright owner’s permission.

If it is published online as HTML, beware of fancy background images that can obscure the text and turn your work unreadable. For ease of reading, you cannot beat black text on a white background.

The Masthead

Do not leave your recipients — especially those outside your unit such as the mayor and city officials — wondering what it is that they are receiving in their inbox or the mail, who sent it, or why.

Create a distinctive (but discreet – smaller is better) masthead and list those responsible for the newsletter, from the unit commander first to the newsletter editor last.

At a minimum, a squadron newsletter logo (or masthead) should contain:

- The newsletter’s name;
- The official unit name (do not use the unit’s nickname unless you have already announced who you are and used the nickname in conjunction with the unit’s name);
- Always use the charter name. Never use the charter number.
- Use only NHQ emblems currently posted on the NHQ/PA website, and add your wing and unit emblems if desired;
- For a monthly, include the month and year in which the issue is being published;

- Print address and contact information. Identify whoever is responsible for the publication (the editor, PAO or squadron commander) by rank, name, phone number and e-mail address; and
- For units below wing, include at least the wing to which your unit belongs.

Artwork

Make sure you have artwork (photos, charts, logos and such) on hand before designing or laying out your newsletter. Steer clear of poor photos, and never run a lot of small photos on a page. Artwork should be digitized; the JPG format is preferred, especially for photographs. For detailed information on photography,

See: **Sec. 10. Multimedia & Emerging Technologies.**

Type Fonts

Too many fonts used on the text call attention to the medium rather than the content. A page should contain no more than three different fonts. (Style-conscious editors allow for only two; purists say, “One will do.”) Beware of using three fonts on a page followed by different sets of three fonts for each one of succeeding pages. If you do this, your newsletter will look like a font catalog – achieving a cluttered look (that you do not want).

When it comes to design, remember that “less is more.”

For a computer screen, sans-serif fonts are preferred, as they are more readable. Arial is a preferred sans-serif font, because it will convert to Helvetica on any computer that lacks the Arial font. Since Arial and Helvetica are practically identical in size, shape and proportions, your layout will look essentially the same from one computer to another.

Keep your type simple and large enough to get your message read (10- to 12-point sans-serif type is recommended). If it is too small, the page will be hard to read and some people might skip it. If it is too large, it might annoy people who dislike the “visual shouting” of oversized fonts.

Typesetting Pointers

It is ironic that the better the typesetting, the less it is noticed. (The reason is simple: people will be busy reading the text instead.)

Well-set type is even, harmonious and rhythmic. Note your word and letter spacing, and strive for a smooth, gray tone to the text. Eliminate whatever disrupts it, such as large or irregular gaps (the most common problem), uppercase or bold characters and so on.

Avoid starting columns of text at different distances from the top of the page or setting headlines and subheads at the bottom of a column (or page). Also avoid the graphic overkill of too many boxes, rules and screens. Strive to heighten the contrast between text and background so they do not seem to run together. Fill the page (front and back) with news using single-spaced copy, but do not clutter the page.

Set paragraph indents with your software’s “Paragraph” dialog box rather than with the space bar or tab key. How far? Usually, from whatever the point size is: 12-pt. type = 12-pt. indent to no more than double the amount. Paragraph indents are often used when

space is at a premium. This document is typeset without paragraph indents. Rather, it shows paragraphing by using extra space between paragraphs.

Avoid justifying text, as this can result in ugly gaps between words, especially when you have a very long word or URL that will not fit on the remainder of the line and cannot be hyphenated. For harmonious word spacing, it is best to left-align (also called “ragged right”), as here.

Avoid widows—that is, one word, part of a word, or a short line that takes up an entire line at the end of a paragraph ending a column, since this leaves an unsightly white gap. A widow is acceptable but (especially at the end of a page) undesirable typography and best eliminated by editing the text. However, if the edit changes the sense of the sentence, it is best to leave the widow alone.

Worse is an orphan — the last word or short line wrapping over from the previous paragraph, now appearing alone at the top of a column or page. The top line of text should take the whole width of the available column. Ideally, there will be at least two lines of text at the top of the page. It is possible to eliminate this flaw by resizing an image (always the preferred solution).

Quotation marks and apostrophes that you make on a word processor with your right pinky often create inch (` `) and foot (‘ ’) marks when typeset. Typographer’s quotation marks should look like this: (`` ’ ’). To ensure you get typographer’s quote marks instead of inch marks, set the formatting preferences in your word-processing program to automatically insert typographer’s quotes. If you create your document in a modern word processor, and the document will be processed electronically, the word processor will automatically create the “left” and “right” double quotes (“ ”) or single quotes (‘ ’), and these will transfer to the printed product as expected. The examples on the previous sentence were made with the right pinkie on a current version of MS Word.

When a page has an all-gray appearance, it is fashionable to insert a comment taken from the text that is presented in much larger text and often in color. Avoid this. What you consider smart or witty may well be viewed as an annoyance (or worse) by your readers. A better choice would be to insert subheadings or – better yet – an appropriate image.

Page Design Software

You may want to use computer software to lay out or design your newsletter. Inexpensive (and even free) software programs and templates are available to assist you with page design.

The simplest newsletter can be composed using a basic word processor— a good starting point for the beginner. Using Microsoft Word (or the free Open Office Suite that is MS Office-compatible), it is possible to create an attractive newsletter, but be sure not to overuse colored fonts, boxes, lines and other effects. Unless you know your word processor very well, adding photos can be daunting, as you might find it difficult to resize, crop and place them exactly where you want them. At times, to keep the page neat, you will need to insert tables inside which you can place one or more images with their captions.

The newsletters you will find at [this link\(15\)](#) have been created using Microsoft Word, then “printed” to PDF format. This works for a short newsletter but could become unmanageable when you need to assemble a longer document.

Best Practice – *Paginating a Long Document in Word*

For a long document, lay out each article with photos as a separate document that has the same margin settings as your main document. When you are ready to assemble the final newsletter, just copy each article you have laid out separately and paste it into the main newsletter, one article at a time. This works best when each article fills a whole page or multiple pages.

Several simple-to-use Desktop Publishing Software (DPS) programs give more latitude in composition. PrintShop was created in the 1980s and is still an economical means of handling graphic and publishing assignments. Microsoft Publisher is included in the MS Office software suite and is also available as a stand-alone software package. The free Open Office Suite is MS Office-compatible.

Many graphic designers prefer the more complex composing platforms, such as Adobe InDesign and QuarkXpress, but their cost is much higher than the basic programs listed above. Also, they will probably be overkill for a unit newsletter.

The DPS experience, however, need not cost you anything. Visit [this link\(44\)](#) for free DPS packages. If none suits you, you might want to Google “free desktop publishing software” and see what you can find on your own.

Ink and Paper Considerations

Avoid colored ink for the body of your articles. Newsletter articles look best in black text (or, used sparingly, extremely dark blue). Use a second or third color very sparingly, and just for screen tints (make them extremely pale – almost unnoticeable). Be careful and stingy with large drop-caps at the beginning of an article. Be aware that page numbers, and any other graphic element that is repeated throughout the newsletter, might become boring or intrusive. Remember that good page design does not call attention to itself, as its purpose is to showcase the content.

For a printed newsletter, use white stock. Less preferred are off-white, light gray, beige, or some other very light pastel color – but be advised that page after page of this can be quite boring. If you keep changing the background color, your pages will start to look like a painter’s color chart. To improve readability, never use bold-colored paper (red, green, blue, yellow, orange and such).

For a hard copy, you can’t beat black lettering on white stock. The same goes for a Web page.

Publishing Your Newsletter

Once you decide to publish a regular squadron, group or wing newsletter, commit to having it appear on a fixed schedule, and stick to it.

Announce submission deadlines and publishing dates on your newsletter. Send deadline e-mail reminders to your known contributors. Send a final notice on your deadline, asking for last-minute submissions, perhaps giving a day’s grace.

If you don't receive a story submission by the day after the deadline, save it for the next issue, or if it is time-sensitive and past its prime don't use it at all. Hopefully, whoever submitted it too late will learn the value of making submissions on time. Don't delay your newsletter for the tardiness of others.

The key to success, of course, is input from the field, so you will have to do some legwork mentoring and helping your unit members write their portions of the content. You will need to be aware of what's on the calendar, as you look for writing opportunities. Staff members, too, can use the newsletter to relay important information to the members. Be creative, as it can pay off handsomely.

For continuity purposes, train someone to succeed you as the newsletter editor.

Be consistent with your publication schedule and graphic look. Develop a pleasant and attractive (rather than shocking) style. This level of commitment will show your readers, your commander and your unit members that you, the public affairs officer, devote the same level of attention to everything you do.

Keep your newsletter manageable for the size of your staff (especially when you are the entire staff). Producing a newsletter should not be a tiresome task. Rather, you should enjoy the opportunity to communicate your unit's accomplishments through your publication.

Capitalize on your strengths (such as talking with people and wishing to make your unit known) and learn how to improve on your weaknesses (whether computer phobia, software learning curve, administrative skills, mentoring or any other shortcoming).

Your determination and willingness to create a professional-looking newsletter will be reflected in your final product.

See: **CAP Unit Newsletters.**⁽⁴³⁾

Sample Little News.⁽⁴⁵⁾

Sample Big News.⁽⁴⁶⁾

Sample PDF Newsletters.⁽⁴⁷⁾

Website Distribution

Today, few if any newsletter editors distribute their product via U.S. Mail. It takes too much time to sort, collate, bind or staple the newsletter as well as address the envelopes. Besides, the cost of supplies (paper, ink and envelopes) and postage can add up quickly. A nearly-free solution is to distribute the finished newsletter embedded in the body of an e-mail, as an attachment to your message, a link to the page where you have posted it online, or a link to the online issue itself.

Embedding your newsletter in a message has drawbacks, since some e-mail programs can reformat the copy and shift the photos around, destroying your careful design. Alternatively, a PDF of your newsletter can be attached to your e-mail, but some firewall or "watchdog" security software packages can strip it off if they consider it a "security risk." Another consideration when sending attachments is that, to be sure of delivery, they should not be larger than 5 MB for the whole message. Many Internet service providers (ISPs) allow 10 MB; some will let even 20 MB come through. However, the more generous size allowance will be the exception for those lacking

a broadband connection. If your newsletter is very large, a better choice is to post it on your website or that of a cooperating higher headquarters.

Experience shows that the best distribution method by far is to use a website to post the issue. Once it is posted, distribute the link so readers can either read it online or download it for viewing and keeping.

The newsletter may be displayed on the Web in three different formats:

- **As a Word document** — As mentioned previously, this format has its limitations. Another disadvantage is that anyone could download the file and make changes to your copy.
- **As an HTML document** — For this, your unit will need someone with the required skills, or your website might not be friendly enough for visitors. Straight text without photos and complicated graphics will work well with this format, but you might lose a chance to do good PA if you settle for this minimalist approach. These links(41)(42) will show you how you can publish little and big news.
- **As a PDF** — The ideal format to preserve your graphic design elements is the Portable Document Format (PDF) created by Adobe. Once the newsletter is composed in a word processor or DPS package, you can print it to a .pdf file using a PDF writer (Adobe Acrobat is the best known commercial product, but free PDF writers are available). The PDF file can be uploaded to a website or sent as an attachment, with all fonts, graphic elements and photographs in place, preserving your design in every way. Go to **this link(47)** for sample newsletters created with Microsoft Word and printed in PDF format.

NOTE: If you publish your newsletter on a website, you will be able to post appropriate video clips, should they be available.

For a free, easy-to-use PDF Writer, go to **this link.**⁽⁴⁸⁾

9. NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS PUBLICATIONS

a. How-To Guide for Civil Air Patrol Public Affairs, the CAP PAO’s detailed manual for accomplishing CAP’s PA mission.

The document you are now reading is the publication referenced above.

b. Civil Air Patrol Volunteer magazine, CAP’s internal and external publication.

c. VolunteerNow, a CAP-wide collection of news online.

CAP/NHQ maintains two outlets for publicizing Civil Air Patrol, its missions, its units and its members — the *Civil Air Patrol Volunteer* (an awarding-winning quarterly print magazine) and *VolunteerNow* (a dynamic website that is updated daily).

Civil Air Patrol Volunteer and the online *VolunteerNow* are aimed at both members and external audiences. Accordingly, their content reflects *Associated Press Stylebook* guidelines, and submissions should comply with those requirements.

As the official publication of Civil Air Patrol, the *Civil Air Patrol Volunteer* ensures the organization’s missions, goals and programs are understood. It also fosters support among members and key constituents by providing a medium that communicates major issues, including significant CAP national, region, wing, group, squadron, flight, and member accomplishments.

NHQ/PA’s news website, *VolunteerNow*, features state-of-the-art design with multimedia capabilities. It also includes links to Headline News regarding CAP that have been gathered from print and broadcast media outlets across America.

See: *Volunteer Magazine*.⁽²⁴⁾

See: *VolunteerNow*.⁽²⁹⁾

10. MULTIMEDIA & EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES.

a. Quality still photography, videography and audio materials are essential to telling the CAP story to internal and external constituencies. The PAO shall ensure that all distributed multimedia materials, including those distributed by emerging technologies, shall be in good taste, with members shown in proper uniform, depicting the diverse and multifaceted missions and opportunities of CAP membership. Whenever possible, multimedia materials will also depict the diversity of CAP's membership with regard to race, sex (gender), age, religion, national origin and/or disability.

b. Photographs meeting stipulations in paragraph 10a, above, will be submitted to internal and external publications, along with information to be used in preparing captions. These submissions will include photo credits.

Photography

The public affairs officer has many duties to perform, but some PAOs do not have a clear understanding of what makes a "good" photograph. The camera, no matter which brand, is only as good as the person behind the lens. Many inexperienced photographers seldom read the owner's manual provided by the manufacturer. If you spend a few minutes reading the directions on how your camera works, follow the manufacturer's advice, and practice until you can reliably take good shots, you will be able to take impressive images. Here are some hints for optimal photography:

Ensure Proper Lighting

Make sure the subjects of your photograph are well lit so as to avoid dark shadows. Also, be sure that your subjects do not fade into the background. For example, dark clothes or skin require a light background. Digital cameras make it much easier to preview a photo before you take it. Check the image on the camera before snapping the shot to ensure lighting is sufficient and shadows are not obscuring parts of the photo. Many digital cameras, especially the less expensive ones, may produce photos that do not accurately reflect the image you saw on the viewing screen. If you practice and become familiar with the camera's functionality, you will understand the photographic principles involved and be able to compensate for the camera's limitations.

Best Practice – Low-light Photography

Even expensive SLR cameras will produce degraded images if the light is not enough for them to capture the digital image in full detail. Take many photos under increasingly-challenging low light, re-take the same photos using a flash, then compare the results when you download the photos to your PC.

Exercise Authority

You are the photographer; you are in charge of posing the subjects of your shot for the best possible outcome. No matter what rank or grade the person being photographed has, he or she expects you to know your job and to politely tell him or her where and how to stand. Take the shot and view your photo. If it didn't come out well and you are not photographing a formal ceremony, ask participants to re-enact the scene. Since people want to look good in a photograph, they will follow your instructions.

Remove Distractions that Interfere with the Picture

Distractions can be anything: from ill-placed furniture to a messy desk and from a subject's crossed arms to unauthorized uniform(s). PAOs must familiarize themselves with CAPM 39-1 *CAP Uniform Manual* to ensure that they and their subjects are always in proper uniform and, therefore, photo-ready.

Common infractions that can ruin a photo include wearing no or improper headgear outdoors, wearing headgear on the flight-line, having non-regulation hair length or beard while wearing Air Force-style uniforms, and incorrect earrings for women.

Any trademarked items, such as soda cans or water bottles, should never be visible in a photo. If you are using a digital camera and trust you can edit out the distraction, take the shot – but it is always better, neater and quicker to remove the distraction before you take the photo. Sometimes, just taking the shot from a different angle or zooming in will clean up the photo.

Avoid the “Fig-Leaf” Pose

A candid action photo is always preferred, but if you miss the moment or cannot get a good shot in the original location, pose your subjects. Do not allow your subjects to stand with their hands clasped or folded below the waist. Have them let their arms hang naturally by the side of the body. If that doesn't work, give them something to hold, or try to come up with an action shot instead. Along the same lines, have your subjects remove their hands from their pockets for the photo. At all times, try to put your subject at ease.

Dark Glasses

CAPM 39-1 forbids dark glasses in formation. No dark glasses are to be worn indoors, either. Also, *lightly tinted* dark glasses are permitted outdoors, as are “transition” glasses that darken or lighten depending on ambient light (the latter are allowed both indoors and outdoors). What is too dark? Generally, if you cannot see the person's eyes because of the dark glasses, they are too dark and should be removed for the photo.

Remember that “mirror glasses” are forbidden at all times. And, when they do remove their dark glasses, these must be kept out of sight, not hanging from the BDU's breast pocket's buttonhole.

Wear of Electronic Devices with BDUs

While in BDUs, openly wearing *only one* electronic device is permitted (cell phone, GPS, hand-held radio or the like). Any additional electronic device(s) must be out of sight.

When a Group Wears Air Force-Style Uniforms

When a group is wearing BDUs, either all sleeves must be down, or all must be rolled up; some up and some down is not an option. Either all wear headgear, or no one does. Make sure the headgear is authorized; to be safe, the BDU cap will always be right for BDUs. Pay close attention to grooming standards. And, for best results, have the few wearing dark glasses take them off for the photo.

In the case of cadets wearing the Air Force-style blue uniform, not all will have a service coat to go with it. In that case, it is all right for some to be wearing the blue shirt and trousers and the others the full uniform. But, if possible, improve the photo by grouping them by the uniform they wear and take two photos. The operative word here is “uniform” – meaning that they must all be dressed alike.

Pay attention to grooming standards, shoe polish, grade insignia, positioning of the CAP disk on the flight cap (1.5” from the front edge for all cap devices, cadets or senior members), and condition of the uniform (wrinkled and disheveled is not good; move that person to the rear).

If someone declines to remove his/her sunglasses, or has unacceptable grooming, try moving that person to the left- or right-end of the group. (You might have to crop out that person.)

Taking Photos During a Ceremony

The action happens too fast, the subjects are not facing you, the lighting is all wrong, the background is not conducive to pictures... There are plenty of reasons for you to wait until the ceremony is finished, then take pictures of its participants. For such an occasion, plan ahead by designating an area for photography and announcing that photos will be taken at that location at a specific time.

Photographers should not interrupt formal ceremonies, but may discreetly get action shots while it is in progress.

Don't Take Only One Photo

If you take many photos you will be more likely to capture the essence of the moment. If possible, alternate between flash and no-flash photos to take advantage of available lighting. With digital cameras, the number of photos that can be taken is limited only by the amount of memory and battery charge available. Therefore, since unusable photos can easily be discarded, take as many as you can. If you have enough storage space available, you are shooting with favorable light, and your flash is not needed, turn off your flash and set the camera to take multiple shots as an additional insurance.

Do Not Stand Too Far Away

Standing too far away from your subject(s) is very high on the list of “most common mistakes.” Fill your camera’s frame with people. If you want a picture of the background, take it separately. But if the photographer cannot get close enough, digital cameras make it easy to crop excess background, and the remaining photo quality is often acceptable. However, photos will be much better if they are taken up close.

Even if you have a SLR camera, your flash will reach only so far away from you. If ambient light is not enough for good photography, you will need to move closer to the subject(s) for your flash to be of any use to you.

Best Practice – *The Problem With Digital Zoom*

A hidden enemy is digital zoom. If your camera is a single-lens reflex (SLR), you will be all set, because SLRs have no digital zoom at all – only optical. But other digital cameras offer a combination of optical plus digital zoom. Most of these will show you when you are going into digital zoom (that kicks in when you push past the optical range for a telephoto shot). Learn to recognize when this happens, and avoid digital zoom at all costs.

Instead of using digital zoom, walk up to your target so you can stick to optical zoom. If you cannot walk up any closer, take the shot from the closest position you can manage. Be aware that if you use digital zoom, your photo will be

useless. But if you stay within the optical zoom range, often you will be able to crop the photo to the right size and might still have a very usable image left.

Do Not Fail To Tell the Story

“A picture is worth a thousand words.” You hear this all the time, but how often is it true with your photos? It is all right to ask the subjects to do something or instruct them to “carry on” with what they were doing. You want to capture them in an activity that will reflect what the story is all about. Above all, you want to catch them in a natural scene that does not look posed. For best results, avoid having your subjects look stiff.

Ensure Correct Size and Format of Photos

Cameras and editing software let the photographer change a photo’s properties. Photos should be taken at the largest file size allowed by your memory limitations. File size is measured in KB (kilobytes) or MB (megabytes). Most modern digital cameras take photos in the multiple-megabyte range but also let you determine the photo size before you start shooting. Large memory cards can store hundreds or even thousands of high-resolution photos – far more than most people need for a single photo session. Larger photos have more pixels and, when properly focused, better detail, so you can resize them as needed with your photo editing software. Also, you can save them in different image formats, though in some cases this might degrade image quality. To make sure, practice to learn if the conversion has limitations.

NOTE: Resizing a JPG photo works well only from larger to smaller. The reverse is not always true, as trying to enlarge a photo saved in some formats will introduce blur, color degradation, fuzziness, and other undesirable effects. This is because JPG and other “lossy” formats cannot “recall” a larger size, because they only save current file information and discards previous image data. Therefore, if you have a camera that can take 16-megapixel photos but you have set it to take 20-kilobyte images (for speed and to save storage space), the JPG format will throw away all information not needed to create the much-smaller size.

For best results, get as large a memory card as you can, and take full-resolution photos every time.

Best Practice: *Supplement Your Camera’s Memory Storage*

If taking very high resolution photos easily exceeds your camera’s available storage capacity, take a laptop along and have it running while you take photos. At an opportune moment, download the camera’s photos to the laptop, make sure the photos are all there, and then erase them from the camera to free storage space – and then you can start all over again.

Common digital formats include Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPG) file interchange format (.jpg), Windows bitmap (.bmp), portable network graphics format (.png), TIFF Tag Image File Format (.tif), graphic interchange format (.gif), and others. Generally, avoid BMP and GIF. For best results, contact media outlets before submitting photos to determine which format(s) they accept and their preferred file size. Print publications typically require better quality and, therefore, larger file size photos, while photos for Internet posting usually have smaller size requirements.

As a rule, most newspapers want a minimum of 200 dots per inch (dpi) for black-and-white (b/w) photos, while standard Internet resolution is 72 dpi. Thus, in round numbers,

a 6 inch-wide photo on your computer screen will become less than 2 inches wide on a b/w newspaper photo, so plan accordingly. For glossy printed color media, 400 dpi and higher are generally preferred.

Photo information can be embedded in the digital file (as metadata associated with the file name) and then easily accessed, ensuring permanency and accuracy. In Windows Explorer, right-click on the photo's file name. Select "rename" to change the file name. Using right-click again, select "properties," "details" to add or edit numerous details about the photos, including subject, title, comments, photographer, copyright, and so on. The more detail you provide, the better. Once this information is embedded in the file, the end user will have all the pertinent details, and the information will be less likely to be misplaced or misquoted.

CAUTION: Some photo editing software will discard the metadata when you edit and save the photo, so always check to see if the metadata is properly recorded before you submit the photo to the media. You might need to re-create the metadata through the file's "Properties" dialog box.

CAP National HQ photo submission guidelines

CAP NHQ/PA uses the following guidelines for submission to *VolunteerNow* and *Volunteer* magazine:

Digital Images/Photos

- The story and outline(s) should be submitted as a single file. Do not piecemeal submission of the information by sending pictures, cutlines and/or text under separate cover;
- Submit as JPG attachment to e-mail (no BMPS, TIFS, GIFs or other formats), rather than in the body of the e-mail or embedded in an attached text file;
- Minimum scan resolution of 300 dpi and 500 KB file size;
- Minimum pixel resolution of 1280 x 960;
- Send attachments rather than links to photo-hosting websites;
- If no e-mail, send via USPS with photos and copy of story;
- Photos must be color;
- Provide detailed outline information, written in full sentences, including description of action; complete ranks and names of those shown, listed from left to right; and photo credits for every photo;
- Each outline should correlate to the file name. This will make easier to match image files with cutlines. Be sure to save your photos by using the same file name you used for the outline;
- Submit only the best photos;
- Submit at least one photo with every submission, preferably an action shot. If unable to provide an action shot, a head-and-shoulders shot of the senior

member(s) or cadet(s) featured in the article is highly desirable;

- NHQ/PA will carefully review all photos for uniform compliance. Since this is a requirement in order for a photo to be used, writers are encouraged to provide several photos from which to pick. Better yet, make sure that everyone is in correct uniform before you take the shot.

Editing Photos

Never edit the original photo. Instead, make a copy of it, place the copy in a different directory, then edit the copy all you want. Should you make an irreparable mistake, you will still have the original to make a new copy and start editing all over again. If you work directly on the original, you risk losing it all.

Many cameras come with software to edit photos after they have been taken. Some include editing options on the camera itself, while most work on your computer once you have downloaded the photos to your hard disk. Be aware that if you work on the original stored at the camera, you will change your original photo (unless the software lets you save the changed image with a different name – and you remember to do so). Should your original shot in the camera become unusable, and you have not stored a copy of the original on your computer, you will lose the photo altogether. If your camera did not come with editing software, a wide array of products is available – for free or to purchase.

Using image editing software, the photographer can improve or eliminate many flaws in a photo. For example, a dark photo can be lightened, and colors and edges can be sharpened – to a degree. Advanced software users may even be able to correct uniform mistakes and eliminate unwanted background items from a photo. You can crop, resize and rotate photos. If you know what you are doing, a few minutes of editing can greatly improve photo quality.

Photos can be used in many ways. PAOs may submit them to media outlets or post them on unit websites and in photo albums on social networking sites (Facebook, MySpace, Flickr, and many others) as well as personal or unit blogs.

All unit-related content must be reviewed by the PAO and the unit commander for appropriateness before posting. If the photos involve an event that can affect higher headquarters, it is best to obtain approval from that headquarters too. Whenever in doubt, ask your higher headquarters.

Videography

The same guidelines for still photography apply to videography. Additionally, the videographer must be conscious of:

- Background audio noise — be aware of noise that can drown out or obscure desired audio content, and be especially alert to inappropriate comments or conversations;
- Speed of movement — moving too quickly can cause blurring and/or confuse the viewer about the subject matter; moving too slowly can make the video boring to watch.

The continuous nature of video makes it more difficult to capture only what the videographer wants. Videos are not as easily edited as photos, but experienced users can “clean up” undesired content.

Videos can also be posted on unit websites, social media sites and other sites such as YouTube.

The same as with static media, all video content must be reviewed for appropriateness before posting.

Audio

Audio recordings are a great way to reach radio and online audiences. Audio clips can be prepared for distribution to media outlets or posting on the Internet. During a crisis, a prepared audio (or video) release can be posted where media representatives can easily download it.

The same as with other media, preparation is the key to creating good audio clips. Whenever practical, work from a prepared script or a list of interview questions. Be conscious of “ums,” “ahs,” “ers,” “you knows” and other trite verbal crutches that will detract from your message. If you must make a pause, it is best to keep silent.

Two commonly used methods of posting audio on the Internet are podcasts and RSS feeds. Podcasts are a series of digital media files, usually digital audio or video, made available for download via Web syndication. RSS (an abbreviation for Really Simple Syndication) is a family of Web feed formats used to publish frequently updated works — such as blog entries, news headlines, audio and video — in a standardized format. An RSS document (called a “feed,” “Web feed” or “channel”) includes full or summarized text, plus metadata such as publishing dates and authorship. Web feeds benefit publishers by automatically allowing content syndication .

At least one CAP wing has produced a weekly audio program for distribution to local radio stations and posted the broadcasts as podcasts through its website and Apple iTunes. This can be a great, inexpensive way to get the word out about all the services you provide and the good deeds you do. It may also help your recruiting and retention efforts.

Best practice – Feed the Local Radio Station

The easiest way to get air time is to record a program that one or more radio stations can audition for content and quality. If it fits the station’s programming, one or more may agree to broadcast them. Normally, 15-minute or 30-minute programs might find one or more stations willing to host them. Then it will be up to you to make them interesting, professional, and available. In some cases, the station might agree to broadcast your efforts provided you make them available in other segments, such as 5-minute or 12-minute spots.

Do not make this offer unless you can be sure of sustaining a steady flow on a weekly basis, or whichever interval the radio station is prepared to offer you. Especially in a rural or exurban community, radio stations are willing to air “good news” programs.

If you have a college or university near you, and the institution runs a radio station, you might make a deal with them for air time. This might work well if some of your members take classes at that school, especially communications courses, and are able to establish a good relationship with the faculty member(s) and student(s) responsible for creating and managing the station’s broadcasts.

The bottom line is that the program, its content, and its professional-quality presentation must come first. The rest is marketing.

Best Practice – *How to Start Your Own Radio Program*

Equipment needed:

- Personal Computer
- Headset with integrated microphone suitable for personal computer use
- Set up a free or nearly-free radio streaming account
- High speed Internet connection (fiber optic cable is best)
- Cell phone and/or standard phone
- Multiline router to allow for a co-located co-host (optional)
- Pre-planned script for the broadcast

Internet radio and TV stations have been around for several years, and podcasting is also a possibility. The key to making this work is to have a clear idea of what you need to do, and use the technology to promote Civil Air Patrol. A precursor in this area was Live365 music streaming radio broadcasts; this site started letting users create their own Internet radio broadcast, although its emphasis has always been music. More recently, Pandora and iHeart Radio created similar formats.

To start a radio setup that you can use to broadcast your message whenever you want, visit the link at the end of this paragraph, read the carefully, weigh the pros and cons, establish your goals, then decide if one of the choices might suit your needs.

http://www.peworld.com/article/190705/start_your_own_internet_radio_station_for_free.html

Generally, you should go for a low-cost start and, if it is getting the job done, your traffic rises, and you can afford the higher price, you might want to sign up for a higher-level option. The cost kicks in when you cannot host the radio program yourself but need to go to a dedicated radio server (that will have far greater bandwidth than you can get from your home even with cable or DSL). The article above identifies most of the issues and some of the solutions. For other possibilities, you can try searching for low-cost or even free options, as sometimes this is a possibility with civic-minded hosting and broadcast companies that give free or very low-cost service to non-profit organizations such as CAP.

The idea is to create an online radio station, prepare and broadcast good programs, and increase the level of favorable awareness for CAP, with members able to call into the show and discuss CAP issues. Adherence to all the “rules of the road” outlined in CAP directives, such as CAPR 190-1 and CAPR 110-1, and unit commander’s approval of each broadcast are essential.

c. The Public Affairs Officer will have access, on a non-conflicting basis, to CAP-owned equipment, including camera and computer technology. The PAO will coordinate with other unit staff to ensure this equipment is available to other members as appropriate.

Conducting effective PA for your unit will require some equipment: a good Internet-ready laptop, preferably with wireless broadband access so you can communicate with the media, the incident commander and others from any location that has WiFi access; a good-quality digital camera (preferably a SLR) with sufficient storage memory and spare batteries; word-processing and photo-editing software; an e-mail account capable of handling large attachments; and a cell phone (a smart phone with e-mail and Internet capabilities is optimal). PAOs who do not already own these items might be able to get some of them from their logistics command, or from higher headquarters, citing CAPR 190-1 to justify the items' importance to the job.

d. Photo Releases. Photos and video taken in public circumstances may be published or distributed (including images posted on the World Wide Web) without specific written or verbal permission, unless local law requires more specific permission.

See: **CAPR 190-1, 16 APRIL 2012.** When in doubt, get releases.

(1) CAP will not publish identifying information other than name, grade and general locale of the individual's unit of assignment, limited to city, state and flight/squadron/group/wing/region name.

(2) CAP will obtain written permission from identifiable individuals appearing on photographs that are used for commercial purposes, including paid advertising purchased by CAP, but not including official publications and websites produced by CAP staff.

(3) When individual circumstances cause members to request that they not appear in photographs distributed by CAP, Public Affairs staff and any member serving as a CAP photographer shall make a good-faith effort to comply with the request.

(4) None of the provisions in this section will be interpreted as applying to legitimate news organizations or to members conducting photography for personal rather than corporate purposes, unless such photos and video are later adopted for corporate use.

11. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS.

In recent years, the availability and scope of electronic communications has exploded. In addition to websites and e-mail lists (such as ListServ), sites like YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Flickr, Picasa, Blogger and many others allow instant access and information sharing. Encampments, wing conferences and exercises are just a few examples of events during which information can be posted quickly and frequently from the site of the action. National Headquarters has used the Internet to broadcast streaming video during National Boards.

The PAO will need to work closely with the unit's commander, webmaster, e-mail list manager and/or information technology officer to determine which outlets to use, and to provide content to the approved outlets.

What makes these sites easy for you to use also makes it easy for misinformed or malicious users to post misinformation, intentionally erroneous items, or derogatory content. If you start such a page, be sure to monitor postings for undesirable content. Each site has a policy for use. Content can be contested and removal requested. If the site administrator will not remove the objectionable posting, prepare a post to contradict the incorrect assertion(s). Simply state the facts and do not argue with those doing the posting. If your monitoring identifies questionable information about a unit other than your own, inform the appropriate person.

When linking to or joining a group, be cautious and make sure that the group is legitimate. There are many impostors on the Web. Some sites, though legitimate, might carry content that could embarrass you or damage your image by association; your best bet is to check the site for some time before you join it. Sometimes, doing an Internet search on the group might yield surprising results. Always remember that repairing a damaged image or reputation is a lot harder than keeping it clean. Although the Internet can be your friend, it can also hurt you.

The examples cited below are a partial representation of what is available on the Internet. You are encouraged to do your own research that may yield additional results that better suit your purpose.

a. Website. PAOs at the wing and region levels, in conjunction with the information technology officer and/or commander designee, will create and maintain their unit website in accordance with CAPR 110-1. The PAO will have authority over the content of all web pages visible to the public and will keep the website accurate and current with assistance from other officers as is necessary. Information posted, unless timeless in content, will not be older than 6 months.

Websites

Many units have established their own home page or website on the Internet to help keep members and the public informed about unit activities. These Internet sites should contain links to CAP home pages for National Headquarters (www.gocivilairpatrol.com), group (if appropriate), wing and region headquarters home pages and other units around your wing, especially subordinate units. Many local webmasters also include links to local and state emergency services agencies and partner organizations. Be mindful that not all unit members have access to the Internet, so information posted on the website should be available also in a format they can use. Not to leave out any unit members, it might help to keep at the unit a PC or laptop with Internet access that all members are allowed to use. See CAPR 110-1 and any local directives for guidelines regarding Web pages.

NOTE: Be aware that you, as the PAO, have authority over the content of all web pages visible to the public, so you must work closely with the webmaster, under your commander's direction, to make sure that the unit website will do the job. The PAO is also responsible for keeping the information current (unless it is "timeless"), so as not to have outdated information that is no longer relevant. To generate and update the information, you can ask assistance from those responsible for any reported activity.

Websites can be set up with sections that have separate content: an unrestricted one for casual viewers and visitors other than unit members, and a protected section for members only.

- The unrestricted area of the site is where you conduct external communications. This is where you want to post information tailored for the general public, such as news, unit meeting schedules, advantages of and requirements for membership, and unit contact phone and e-mail address.
- For effective internal communications, you need to protect the information. With a log-on and password, unit members can access protected areas of the site designed for their use. These restricted areas can be put to multiple uses, from sharing documents to social networking to unit-specific communications. With appropriate access restrictions, this would be a good place to make available unit information such as continuity books, administrative logs and documents, and other official records. Doing so could make document retrieval very efficient during inspections or when training new members.

It is up to individual unit commanders to determine whether they want a unit website, taking into account the time required and the desired benefit. The benefit, though, is great, and time and money spent can be minimal. Therefore, each unit is highly encouraged to create a site and keep it up to date. If you are not prepared to maintain the site updated, the effort will not yield the expected good results. Sites with stale information are likely to give visitors a bad impression and not encourage them to return. On the other hand, sites that are constantly refreshed can bring visitors back frequently.

Individual units that do not wish to create their own websites are encouraged to provide information such as unit contacts, accomplishments and activities for inclusion on their higher level unit's site. Websites should be designed to work with Microsoft Internet Explorer, Safari, Mozilla Firefox, Opera, AOL, Explorer and other popular browsers. In general, it is best to avoid non-standard bells and whistles specific to a particular browser, sticking to standard Hyper Text Mark-up Language (HTML) code instead. If the website is designed with a commercial Web-design package, that program will create standard HTML code; it will be up to each browser to read it correctly.

There are many Web hosting and domain registration services. Costs are relatively low but vary; research the best level of service for your needs and your budget. Once you have registered your domain name (without one, you cannot post the site on the Internet), ensure that you do not let the registration expire or you will risk losing the name permanently. You may choose to create different third-level domain names (called subdomains), so if you own the "yourunitCAP.org" domain, you can create subdomains such as "cadet.yourunitCAP.org" or "recruiting.yourunitCAP.org." This will let you track the traffic coming into your site. Using the different subdomains with targeted groups will help you determine which means of getting your website information out to the public is bringing in the most traffic. You can also use this method to draw members to specific information, such as publishing in your newsletter a link to a specific article.

Your home page should include a way for the visitor to contact you, preferably an information request that will be e-mailed automatically. The visitor fills out a brief form that is then sent to the relevant person in your unit. That person should ensure a prompt response with the information the visitor requested. You may choose to give the visitor an option for an e-mail, standard mail or telephone reply. Your Internet service provider (ISP) may also offer an auto-responder option for your e-mail account. This can let you set up an automatic e-mail response to incoming e-mails with a message such as, “We received your request for information and you will be contacted within 24 hours,” or, “You will hear from us within one business day.”

Since Web-hosting services have become highly competitive (with considerably lower costs), most full-service ISPs offer e-mail as part of the package. Having unit e-mail addresses can make it easy to communicate with members and adds a professional component when dealing with the public. E-mail accounts can be set up using the person’s duty position, such as commander@yourunitCAP.org or name, john.doe@yourunitCAP.org, or in any other professional-looking way you choose.

Unit e-mail addresses can be set up for Web retrieval and/or forwarding. The latter is popular, since most people have a personal account already and prefer to have all their e-mails sent to one account. Avoid using personal e-mail addresses with unprofessional names for CAP business, and chose names that make you easily identifiable. For example, a good personal e-mail address suitable for CAP business might be john.doe.capunit@gmail.com, or MajJohnDoe@gmail.com.

Google offers a low-cost service to nonprofits that lets the user create a website that functions as an Intranet with secure access requiring a user name and password. The site is created with your chosen and unique URL (Uniform Resource Locator, such as www.yourunitCAP.org) and offers e-mail accounts for your members with the same URL (such as commander@yourunitCAP.org). As a nonprofit organization, CAP units typically use .org URLs.

The layman can easily create website pages with programs like Microsoft Office SharePoint Designer, Microsoft Expression Web, and Adobe Dreamweaver , though they do have a learning curve that could be steep. Users of these programs are not required to understand HTML coding in order to design a simple website, since the program generates the underlying standard code automatically. These tools will help the unit webmaster design a site visually (drag and drop), can automate the updating process, and also offer design templates.

Your Web-hosting service should be able to provide you with statistical data on the number of page hits, number of unique visitors, what pages brought visitors to your site, and so on. This can be very useful in determining what works and what does not.

Electronic Mailing List, eList or E-mail List

Electronic mailing lists provide blast e-mails by individual users to all subscribed users. Mailing lists include persons with common interests, such as Public Affairs Officers, squadron members and other groups. Subscribers can typically opt for receiving each e-mail as available or in periodic consolidated updates. The best-known electronic mailing list software is ListServ.

E-mail Broadcasting

E-mail broadcasting software lets users send individual e-mails to large groups of recipients. Groups can be created for any purpose. Broadcasting software should include anti-spam assistance to prevent Internet Service Providers from blocking messages. ISPs generally view e-

mails with numerous destinations as spam. The e-mail broadcasting software you use should be able to get around this.

NOTE: You can use the existing cap-pao@lists.sempervigilans.org group to contact other CAP PAOs. To subscribe, visit <http://www.themareks.com/pao/>.

b. Social Media. All levels of CAP, from flights and squadrons to National Headquarters, are encouraged to create and use social media to help reach out to their membership, potential members, friends of CAP and the general public by telling CAP stories on social networking sites. Units are not required to use social media, but are encouraged to do so as resources allow. The responsibility for use of social media by CAP units rests with the unit commander and will be overseen by the unit PAO or a member designated by the commander under the direction of the unit PAO. The unit PAO will ensure that CAP social media operations will:

- (1) Be conducted in accordance with existing CAP regulations and will not violate Operational Security (OPSEC) requirements.
- (2) Respect copyrights and trademarks in content.
- (3) Be maintained and kept fresh, interesting and relevant.
- (4) Use links to nationally produced multimedia, CAP news releases, articles and images, as deemed appropriate.

Technically, “on a regular basis” could mean any time period ranging from hourly to yearly, provided you do so consistently. However, common sense would advise that, for a yearly activity, such as a National Cadet Special Activity, yearly updates during the period the activity takes place is appropriate. However, for a CAP unit that meets weekly or semi-monthly, a minimum of weekly or semi-monthly updates ought to be the norm, with daily updates being ideal.

c. Social Engagement. PAOs at every level will encourage members of their units to talk about their positive CAP experience and accomplishments on their personal social media accounts, as well as address questions, acknowledge comments and contribute to conversations about CAP. CAP members are not required to advocate for CAP on their personal social media accounts, but are encouraged to do so. The unit PAO will counsel their unit members that when representing CAP online they should:

- (1) Identify themselves as a CAP member.
- (2) Be polite and respectful.
- (3) Respond with a thank you when receiving praise.
- (4) Provide accurate information.
- (5) Refer a question that can't be answered by them to someone in the chain of command who can

Social Networking

Facebook, LinkedIn and MySpace are all popular social networking sites available for free. Units can create a page for their unit and/or create a group. If permissions are set to “public,” unit members (or others) can generally view the page or group without a membership. However, to become a friend or join the group, each unit member will need to create his or her own page and link it to the unit page. These sites offer features that will help you disseminate information such as photo albums, link to other sites, do postings, and so on. You might find that many of your members are already using these sites. Ning is a social networking provider that lets units create their own sites, with users creating log-on IDs and selecting the layout of their pages.

Video and Audio Sharing

YouTube, Yahoo! Video, Google Video, Flickr, Picasa and similar sites let users post their own videos or pictures. You can have photos posted to your unit website as well.

Bookmarking

Delicious, Diggs and other bookmarking sites give users the ability to create lists of favorite websites. These lists can be shared. Units could use bookmarking to give members a list of sites that provide useful resources.

Blogging

The www.reference.com site defines a blog (short for Web log) as an online, regularly updated journal or newsletter that is easily accessible to the general public because it is posted on a website. Blogs can be one-sided (like a diary), or multisided (like a conversation). Readers can post comments. When a comment is submitted for posting, an e-mail notifies the blogger. The blogger may set up the blog to require approval before comments are actually posted. This is a good idea, as it will let you prevent inappropriate content from being posted. The author can either respond to the comment on the blog or take the discussion with the comment poster off-line via e-mail. Some sites exist strictly for blogging, such as Google’s www.blogger.com, and many social networking sites provide blogging too. Search engines to locate blogs of interest include Technorati, BlogLines and BlogScope.

FEMA and the Red Cross have found blogging to be an easy and convenient way to communicate, especially during a crisis. Blogs can be posted for other agency and media access. The poster makes the statement once, rather than repeating it for each recipient, and recipients retrieve the message at their convenience. In a fast-paced scenario, brief updates can be posted frequently and immediately.

WARNING: When using blogs to convey important messages, remember that operational security must be maintained.

Microblogging is the term given to sites such as Twitter that limit the amount of space per blog post. These sites allow for concise comments, with optional links to the more detailed story. Programs like Twhirl (www.twhirl.org) and TweetDeck (available on Google Chrome) track and notify users of new posts.

See: **PA Essentials**.⁽⁴⁹⁾

Text Messaging

Since text messaging is instantaneous, it can be helpful during a crisis because brief messages can be sent to one or more recipients simultaneously. A good text message can replace multiple, time-consuming phone calls.

WARNING: Before texting, make sure the user is willing to accept the messages and that you and the recipient have cell phone calling plans that include enough messaging to avoid costly phone bills.

NOTE: Messaging is successful only if the user's cell phone is on and receiving service. A major hurricane, multiple tornadoes or a devastating flood could disable cell towers without which there will be no service to cell phones.

Automated Internet Searches

Google and Yahoo! offer alert services that will search the Internet at your request for specific words or terms, alerting you of any hits. You can set up as many alerts as you wish, and receive periodic notifications if your search finds Internet content. Remember to be specific in your search parameters and use quotes when looking for phrases. *Civil Air Patrol* as a search parameter will locate any Web posting with any of the three words. By using "*Civil Air Patrol*" (enclosed in double quotes as shown), you ensure that the search finds only those places where Civil Air Patrol is mentioned (for hits on CAP, you need to create another search for that acronym).

You can set up a search with your unit's name to learn when and where you are mentioned. You may also search key personnel by name. This can be a very effective way to find out if your news releases are being published or posted.

NEW MEDIA ADDRESSES

Social Networking Sites

Blogger	www.blogger.com
Bloglines	www.bloglines.com
Facebook	www.facebook.com
Google	www.google.com
LinkedIn	www.linkedin.com
ListServ	www.lsoft.com
MySpace	www.myspace.com
Picasa	www.picasa.google.com
Technorati	technorati.com
Tweetdeck	www.tweetdeck.com
Twhirl	www.twhirl.org
Twitter	www.twitter.com
YouTube	www.youtube.com

Unit Social Networking Pages

Blogs

CAPBlog
<http://capblog.typepad.com/>

FEMA
<http://www.fema.gov>

National Capital Wing

<http://www.natcapwg.cap.gov/abovethecapital/>

Red Cross

<http://newsroom.redcross.org/>

Facebook

Civil Air Patrol / Public Affairs (unofficial)

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/4305419935/>

Wyoming Wing

<http://www.facebook.com/WYWGCAP>

LinkedIn

Civil Air Patrol Network

<http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=77579>

Civil Air Patrol Volunteers and Employees

http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=126127&goback=.psr_1_civil+air+patrol_*1_*1_*1_*1_*1_*1_*1_*1_*1_Y_us_82001_*1_*1_*2_*2_*2_Y_Y_*1_Relevance

MySpace

Sioux Falls Composite Squadron

<http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewProfile&friendID=108108451>

Cadet Squadron 1008 (Coatesville, PA)

<http://www.myspace.com/capsquadron10080>

Oregon Wing

<http://www.myspace.com/orwg>

Podcasts

Maryland Wing, CAP Podcasts

<http://mdcap.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=radio.podcast>

Twitter

Maryland Wing

<http://twitter.com/MDWGCAP>

Michigan Wing

<http://twitter.com/MIWGCAP>

New Jersey Wing

<http://twitter.com/NJWGCAP>

Southeast Region

<http://twitter.com/SERCAP>

Washington Wing

<http://twitter.com/WAWGCAP>

Wyoming Wing
<http://twitter.com/wywgcap>

To check the availability of a name on 120 popular Social Media websites
<http://knowem.com/>

CAP Photo Release Information and Sample Release

CAP National HQ Photo Release Form - http://capnhq.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/capnhq.cfg/php/enduser/fattach_get.php?p_sid=nNIR69wj&p_li=&p_accessibility=0&p_redirect=&p_tbl=9&p_id=1267&p_created=1083869738&p_olh=0

12. PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER (PIO).

One of the best opportunities for CAP to get its message out to the public is when the organization is supporting emergency services missions for state and local communities. Public affairs and media relations issues are handled by specially qualified personnel called PIOs or their supervisors or by incident commanders (IC) if a PIO has not been appointed. In accordance with CAPR 60-3, *CAP Emergency Services Training and Operational Missions*, information that is releasable to the public on CAP missions should be given promptly to news media representatives. In addition, public awareness and understanding of CAP resulting from the efforts of the PIO can play a vital role in recruitment and retention, as well as government and community relations. The PIO provides and receives critical information, advises the incident commander, protects the image of CAP and provides timely information to the public affairs staff of each higher headquarters.

a. Training. In order to serve as a PIO, the individual will complete the required training and certification in accordance with CAPR 60-3 and CAPP 201.

The PIO track was designed for easy learning by using online resources and training at the state and local levels. A member who is qualified as a General Emergency Services and Mission Staff Assistant and is at least 18 years of age can now qualify as a PIO by completing the following:

- Task C-3000 – Demonstrate the ability to prepare an initial and follow-up news release;
- Task C-3001 – Demonstrate the ability to maintain a complete media contact list;
- Task C-3002 – Demonstrate the ability to coordinate visits of news media to mission sites;
- Task P-0101 – Demonstrate the ability to keep a log;
- Task L-0001 – Basic Communications Procedures for ES Operations;
- BCUT – Basic Communications User Training;
- CAPT 117 – ES Continuing Education Exam;
- IS100 – Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS);
- IS200 – ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents;
- IS700 – National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction;
- IS702 – NIMS Public Information;
- IS800 – National Response Framework, An Introduction;
- ICS 300 – Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents, and;
- (Recommended) ICS 400 – Advanced ICS: Command and General Staff – Complex Incidents;
- Successfully serve as a supervised trainee on two training exercises or actual missions as a PIO.

Ideally, instruction for the CAP-specific five tasks listed at the top of the list above (from the CAP Mission Base Staff Task Guide) should be provided by a PIO or an Incident Commander (IC) with PIO experience. Though ICs receive media training and are ultimately responsible for successful mission accomplishment – including the public image of CAP in relation to the mission –, they often do not have as much practical knowledge as experienced PIOs, especially in the preparation of news releases and for proper interaction with various media types.

Since CAP missions are changing, PIO responsibilities are changing too. As the scope and responsibilities for CAP missions evolve, so will the training requirements for PIOs. Changes are under way to establish additional levels in PIO training appropriate for the expanded missions

CAP is undertaking, as well as to update the current PIO training in order to meet CAP's basic public relations needs.

The **Basic PIO** qualification will soon require the resident G-289, *PIO Awareness* course and Operational Risk Management training, as well as requiring basic PIOs to earn a technician rating in the CAP Public Affairs Officer senior member specialty track, if they have not done so already. It will also require practical writing demonstration as a means to ensure that all PIOs can write a basic news release in Associated Press Style, using readily-available word-processing software to prepare it and online resources to distribute it, including one or more attached images if appropriate.

The new **Intermediate PIO** qualification will require those who are already qualified PIOs to complete the FEMA G-290, *Advanced PIO* and G-291, *Joint Information System/Joint Information Center Planning for Tribal, State and Local PIOs* courses (or equivalent) to further develop their skills, thus providing these PIOs with the education and training they need in order to work in harmony with Joint Information System rules in a Joint Information Center. They will also be expected to demonstrate additional proficiency in writing, photography and presentation preparation, and to complete the senior level in the CAP Public Affairs Officer senior member specialty track.

The new **Advanced PIO** qualification will require those who are qualified intermediate PIOs to complete ICS 400, *Advanced ICS*, as well as the FEMA E-388, *Advanced PIO* course, or equivalent. These courses prepare PIOs to work in complex incidents while also addressing critical skill and issues for PIOs, such as legal issues in public information, risk communication, conflict resolution, and stress management for PIOs. Personnel seeking to qualify as advanced PIOs will also have to earn a master rating in the CAP PAO senior member specialty track and be approved by their region commander or the commander's designee.

For new qualifications, personnel that meet the requirements noted above will be able to receive immediate approval for these qualifications by the appropriate commander or designee. Hopefully, these changes and new specialty qualifications will be in place soon.

b. Appointment. A PIO, fully qualified in accordance with current PIO training requirements or a trainee under supervision as outlined in CAPR 60-3, may be appointed at the discretion of the incident commander (IC) for any training or actual mission. ICs will fulfill the responsibilities of the PIO if one is not appointed. Assignment of a PIO is mandatory for all actual emergency services missions (not training) lasting or expected to last more than 48 hours, including, but not limited to, missing aircraft, missing persons, disaster relief or other humanitarian aid operations. Some missions, like counterdrug or homeland security operations, may require additional discretion and/or little to no dissemination of public information; the CAP National Operations Center or National Headquarters Public Affairs may limit or edit what CAP ICs and/or PIOs release.

The face that Civil Air Patrol shows to the public is of the utmost importance. The Public Information Officer position is vital to ensure the timely release of information to the public while also representing the organization with a professional image. Proper training and experience are needed for this position as increasingly more regions, wings and groups are called upon to work on various emergencies, increasing CAP's interaction with other emergency services agencies. The expanded media focus on CAP during tragedies only increases the need for properly trained CAP Public Information Officers.

While the PAO and PIO positions might appear to be the same with different labels, they follow a different but parallel path. One must have some experience as a PAO before starting on the road towards a PIO rating. That is why the PAO must complete the technician rating in the PAO specialty track first before reaching for a PIO rating. While the PAO is a “strategic” position, the PIO is “tactical” in nature. The definition of strategic is “overall planning and conduct of a large-scale operation.” Tactical, on the other hand, is “the technique of securing the objectives identified by strategy.” During World War II, the Army Air Corps’ strategic plan targeted various industries for destruction; the tactical plans required to fulfill the strategy involved many aircraft and bomb types, fighter cover and the type of flight plan best suited to reach and destroy each individual target associated with those industries. For Civil Air Patrol, the PAO strategic plan is how to get CAP’s message out, while the PIO turns it into action during a mission.

There are **two types of Emergency Services missions** to which a CAP PIO would be called upon to respond.

- One is at the local level in a single jurisdiction, with CAP working alone or with minimal interaction with local law enforcement or emergency services management agencies. An example would be a search and rescue mission to find a missing aircraft.
- The other would involve coordination with multiple agencies on a single or multijurisdictional, statewide or even a multistate incident, where a Joint Information Center (JIC) is established along with an Emergency Operations Center (EOC). An example would be a disaster relief mission following a hurricane, major flooding, or any other large-scale disaster, such as the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010.

While the CAP NHQ/PA staff supports the PAO and supplies seminars and courses, the PIO will need basic, intermediate and advanced PIO training offered outside of CAP – but required by FEMA, with whom CAP has signed a binding memorandum of understanding. These courses will better prepare the PIO for interaction with the media, and will teach PIOs how to conduct news conferences and interviews as well as work in a Joint Information Center and other complex mission environments. With this training, the CAP PIO will meet the qualifications of other public information officers from FEMA-compliant agencies, since all will be working as required by the National Incident Management System, and therefore will be trained the FEMA way.

When dealing with the media, especially in an emergency, knowing what not to say is just as important as knowing what to say. When tragedy strikes, a good PIO has already prepared a template press release that can be completed with essential details and (with the IC’s approval) sent out at a moment’s notice to the appropriate media. At an incident that uses the ICS structure, there is only one PIO (though that PIO may have assistants).

The PIO’s is a Command Staff position. The PIO reports directly to the IC, and advises the IC about news releases, news conferences, setting up a media area, and problems that might arise concerning mission information or the organization’s image. The PIO and IC are the only positions authorized to release mission information to the media. Normally the IC will rely on an experienced PIO to do so, but the IC is the only one who can approve any mission information that is to be released. In some cases, the IC will not be authorized to release some information because of guidelines from NHQ, and thus the PIO will need to know what not to release (see *High-Profile Missions*, below).

CAP will not announce deaths or casualties during the course of a mission. This will be done by the tasking agency. Once the tasking agency announces any deaths, it is acceptable to reference the casualties in a closing news release. CAP casualties will not be announced without the express authorization of CAP National Headquarters. All mishap and casualty notification procedures will be followed before the information is released to the public.

Accidents involving CAP aircraft *will not* be announced without the express authorization of CAP National Headquarters. All mishap and casualty notification procedures will be followed before information is released to the public.

This training will ensure that CAP personnel who address the media during a crisis are trained to work within the Incident Command System, so that the PIO and the Incident Commander project a professional image while they are representing CAP. Once a mission is closed, all media inquiries must be directed to NHQ/PA and not to the previously assigned PIO or IC.

High-Profile Missions

News releases for high-profile Air Force Assigned Missions (AFAM) must be approved by NHQ/PA and the National Operations Center (NOC). This clearance is not required for routine or training missions.

A high-profile AFAM is defined as a mission that could potentially trigger significant media interest at the regional or national level. A mission may be treated as high-profile whenever deemed appropriate by the NOC, NHQ/PA, wing commander, or the mission approval authority (1st, 11th or 13th Air Force, CAP-USAF7 or similar authority).

If an IC or PIO is not sure whether a mission would be considered high-profile, or simply needs help, the IC or PIO should contact the NOC or NHQ/PA for assistance.

For high-profile events, NHQ/PA will contact the region and wing commanders to establish a plan for partnering with the IC and PIO. NHQ/PA will provide assistance to the wing in developing a public awareness plan, developing talking points, identifying whether and when to hold press conferences, scheduling one-on-one interviews with selected spokespersons, and developing and disseminating news releases and media kits. NHQ/PA will provide approvals (as they are received from 1st Air Force and the NOC) to the IC and PIO, and only then will the IC and PIO be free to proceed with the release of information. Wing and region PAOs will be included in the distribution of news releases for further dissemination to other media as well as to internal CAP audiences.

NHQ/PA will establish and maintain, as deemed appropriate, a Web page on the www.gocivilairpatrol.com website, where photos and news releases of high-profile missions will be posted on an ongoing basis.

See: **Online Media Kit.**⁽¹¹⁾

Guidelines for Partnering with NHQ/PA.⁽⁵⁰⁾

13. REPORTING.

Higher CAP echelons below NHQ may establish quarterly reporting requirements for their subordinate unit public affairs activities. In such cases, reporting requirements will avoid an unreasonable administrative burden. These reports may be issued electronically.

Reasons for Reporting

- Share Ideas — If something in your unit is working, share it so other units in the wing (or CAP) might learn from your success. (An easy way to do this is to have a wing or group online newsletter accessible to all.)
- Fill in the Gaps — At the wing level, it may be necessary to determine if all areas within the state are receiving media coverage. Identifying which areas need assistance will help the wing PAO focus on and assist units that are short-staffed, inexperienced, or untrained in media relations. (Similar findings could be used at the region level with respect to wings.)
- Track Progress — Progress may be measured in many ways:
 - Are our methods working?
 - Are events more successful and do we have better participation than before?
 - Are we better-known and -recognized in our community than in the past?
 - Do media representatives call us when a natural disaster occurs or an aircraft is missing?

What to Report and How to Report It

- News Release — When submitting a news release for publication, blind-copy the next higher CAP echelon/PA on the message. When copying the wing PAO, including the media distribution list might help.
- Event — This could be an open house, an air show, a training event, an outreach involvement, a community participation, an exercise, an actual mission, or any other newsworthy unit activity.
 - In the case of an actual mission, where an Incident Command Post has been set up and information is controlled by a Public Information Officer, the article must be approved by the PIO or the Incident Commander (and the PIO must always get the IC's approval before releasing it).
 - The most valuable information to include would be a general description, place and date of the event, and number of CAP members participating. If other agencies are involved, number of personnel from the other agencies would be appropriate too.

- If dignitaries were involved (public officials, military officers, political figures, or persons of similar stature and importance), full information and position for each individual is also a must.
- If the event generated media coverage, that information should be included as well.
- All of the above can be done most efficiently via a short e-mail.
- **Published Story (External)** — If a media article (newspaper, magazine, TV, or radio) was published on a media website, e-mail the link. If it is a smaller newspaper that does not maintain a website, just an e-mail with the name of the publication, title of the story and date it was published would suffice. When reporting electronically an in-depth story that was published by a small newspaper that has not posted it online, it is best to scan the article and attach the resulting file to the report.
- **Published Story (Internal)** — If it was published on a unit website, send a message with the link to that page. Otherwise, forward the e-mail distributing the story internally, including all attachments.
- **Newsletters** — Always copy higher HQ on unit newsletters. If published in PDF format, send the PDF as an e-mail attachment. If published online, send the link to that page or to the document itself.
- **Special Interest (report in advance)** — Some examples in this category might be:
 - **Media flight.** This requires a minimum of two weeks to process. Approval must go through the chain of command; final approval from CAP-USAF commander is required.
 - Elected official will be in attendance at your event.
 - Your event will be large and you would like help with it.
 - Newsworthy item, such as, “A planned Teacher Orientation Program event will be held in conjunction with a multi-squadron O-Flight weekend.”

In all cases, submit a short e-mail with a general description, place, time and date of the event, and any specific need(s) the unit might have.

- **Continuity book** — As a recommended best practice, this is a PAO’s compilation of news releases, news clips, CDs or DVDs of newscasts, hard copies of website pages, copies of Public Affairs and Crisis Communications Plans, copies of PA reports and the like. It is a useful tool for:
 - **Wing Compliance Inspection and SAV** — It can be presented to the visiting CAP-USAF inspector as proof that all PA requirements have been fulfilled.
 - **PAO awards** — It can be used as a reference to determine what PA materials produced during the previous year might be significant enough to submit.

- Mentoring — Someone coming aboard in a new PAO duty assignment will find this to be an invaluable resource.

It has been suggested that the PAO maintain two identical continuity books, one for the unit and another one for the PAO. Having duplicate continuity books would help ensure that a PAO continuity book stays with the unit as part of its permanent files and the PAO can still have a personal copy for his or her files when leaving the unit. An elegant (and less prone to error) alternative would be to keep the continuity books in electronic format — one copy for the unit and the other for the PAO.

Best Practice – *Continuity Book*

Ideally, the continuity book should be posted on a password-protected Web page, so that any update will be accessible to all who need it, while keeping it out of the general public's eye.

The PAO's continuity book should include:

- Master file plan
- Suspense control
- General correspondence
 - Transitory material
 - Policy/precedent files
 - Letters of appreciation
 - E-mails
- Public Affairs records
 - Current file projects
 - Community/media speeches
 - Video clips of presentations
 - Press releases
 - Periodicals
 - Unit newsletters
 - Unit website
 - Customer websites
 - PAO training/workshops
 - Strategic planning
 - Archived project files
- PAO reports
 - Unit reports to wing (organized by year/quarter) for those wings that have chosen not to abolish reports
- PA plan
- Crisis communications plan
- Media contact list

- Listing of other useful websites
- Copies of forms, such as a promotional flight request form

Reporting as a Tool for Mentoring and Assistance

Every PAO has a supervisory and mentoring obligation towards PAOs at a lower echelon. Ideally, this relationship should exist as a flexible and regular two-way communication. In this arrangement,

- The lower echelon PAO would ask for assistance when needed;
- The higher echelon PAO would respond with the needed assistance, mentoring and training; and
- To discharge his or her supervisory duties, the higher echelon PAO would observe the subordinate PAO's performance and make periodic checks, mentoring, training and rendering assistance as needed.

The above relationship and actions are implied in the PAO's job description as included in CAPR 20-1, where PAOs are directed to

- Plan, direct and implement a Public Affairs program, and
- Supervise all public affairs activities of subordinate units.

Having a visible measure of how things are going at any given unit, with the lower echelon informing the higher echelon of any PA activities at the unit would be of considerable help to the higher echelon PAO for supervisory and mentoring purposes, thus helping the lower echelon fulfill the National PA mission that, for the most part, is dependent on its implementation at the lowest echelon.

CAPR 190-1 cautions against having a reporting requirement that creates an unreasonable administrative burden on the lower echelon unit, and rightly so. The simplest solution is for the lower echelon PAO to provide the higher echelon PAO(s) with sufficient information with which unit activities can be measured, to include:

- Any PA activity, such as each article submission – include the article;
- Every newsletter publication – send URL or scanned article;
- Every publication in local, state or national media – send URL or scanned article;
- Every other unit PA activities – provide sufficient material for evaluation.

In other words, the higher echelon PAO(s) should be blind-copied on all submissions and publications, as well as informed of all PA activities as they are implemented, via a simple copy or forward of the pertinent message, article, image(s), or any other appropriate message associated with the event.

Should this simple and straightforward method of informing the higher echelon PAO(s) not be followed, the commander might find it necessary to require a periodic report to include attachment of whatever material is pertinent, or giving links to where it may be found.

14. AWARDS.

Each year, Civil Air Patrol recognizes the Public Affairs Officer at any level (unit, group, wing and region) who excels in conducting and managing an exceptional public affairs program.

a. The Colonel Robert (Bud) V. Payton Public Affairs Officer of the Year award recognizes the PAO who epitomizes the Public Affairs program of CAP. The award is presented to the PAO at any level of the organization who provides outstanding and exemplary support for the CAP Cadet Program, Aerospace Education Program and Emergency Services Program and has a Public Affairs plan that greatly enhances the perceived value of Civil Air Patrol to the community.

(1) By 15 January. Unit commanders should submit nominations to the wing commander for consideration.

(2) By 15 February. Wing commanders will review the nominations from unit commanders within their wings should and forward the best nominee to the region commander for consideration.

(3) By 15 March. Region commanders will select the best of the wing nominees and forward one nomination to NHQ/PA for consideration.

(4) By 15 April. The National PAO and the NHQ Deputy Director, Public Affairs, will co-chair a committee consisting of the Deputy National Chief of Staff – Support, National Marketing and Public Affairs Officer and the NHQ Deputy Director of Creative Services to rank order the region nominations received. The recommendation will be forwarded to the Personnel Officer to present to the National Commander, who will make the final decision.

(5) The award will be presented during the summer National Board and Annual Conference.

b. The Maj Howell Balsem Exceptional Achievement Awards recognize excellence in nine major categories (to include the 34 subcategories) of the CAP Public Affairs program, as listed below. All entries must be the work of a PAO or PIO or any member whose work product was generated while acting as a PAO/PIO. All entries must be the work of the person submitting the entry. Competition is limited to five entries per member. A project may only be entered once. All entries must have been generated during the previous calendar year and must be items that were approved by the PAO's commander. All entries must be submitted electronically. The online template for submissions will be open through midnight on 15 May; the system will automatically shut down 16 May and no other entries will be accepted. Awards are presented by the PAO's wing commander at an event deemed appropriate for the award.

Major Category	Sub Categories

Brochure/Poster/Flyer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black and white brochure • Black and white poster • Black and white flyer • Color brochure • Color poster • Color flyer
Magazine	
Slide/PowerPoint Presentations	
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External • Internal
Photography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image used by newspaper/wire service/magazine (more than 100,000 circulation) • Image used by newspaper/magazine (less than 100,000 circulation) • Image used by weekly newspaper • Image used in any CAP publication or on any CAP website • Image published on an external website
External Media Coverage of CAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article used by newspaper/wire service/magazine (more than 100,000 circulation) • Article used by newspaper/magazine (less than 100,000 circulation) • Article used by weekly newspaper • Podcast used by news media organization • Video used by news media organization
Event Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special program in which PAO played a leadership role
Crisis Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance provided to commander in addressing an issue or crisis • Preparation of a PR plan/program that addresses a crisis
Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook • Twitter • YouTube • Other

Lt Col Al Pabon Best in Show	An entry presented at the discretion of the judges that in the opinion of the judges clearly exemplifies an outstanding Public Affairs effort and should be considered by CAP's PAOs as a best practice.
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The Balsem Awards program is administered by the National PAO and the NHQ Deputy Director, Public Affairs. Winners are selected based solely on the judges' view of each entry's creativity and overall effectiveness, with emphasis on following the four-step planning process.

The judges may award a first-place Balsem Award, second-place Award of Excellence, and third-place Certificate of Merit for each of each subcategory, OR the judges may opt to not present an award in any category. More than one first-, second- or third-place award may be selected, as the judges deem appropriate. The Lt Col Al Pabon Best in Show will be awarded at judges' discretion.

Specific Award Procedures

Suggested Submission Guidelines for Awards:

Applications received with incomplete information or past the submission deadline cannot be considered; therefore, care in completing applications correctly and on time is recommended.

Some criteria to consider in submitting applications would be length of time assigned as a PAO, specialty track rating in public affairs or related tracks, public affairs plan submitted to wing or region, crisis communications plan submitted to wing or region, participation as PIO, number and quality of publications, mentoring, leadership and any other activity material and related to the specialty.

Suggested Application Packet Contents for Wing HQ:

- Form 120.
- One-page overview describing why the individual deserves this award, to include the following information on professional development:
 - PA specialty track rating;
 - PIO qualification status;
 - Level of PD Program completed (1-5);
 - Major accomplishment(s) for previous year.
- One-page letter of recommendation by the person nominating the individual with the nominee's commander's comments.
- Up to four pages of attachments listing accomplishments or showing examples of news releases to local and CAP media, website use, unit newsletter or community outreach:
 - Any PIO participation during the year with mission number(s);
 - URLs for articles published online;
 - PDFs of scanned hard-copy publications (magazines, newsletters, newspapers);

- URL to unit website;
- Examples of photography and/or videography;
- Any other material published by any means;
- Mentoring CAP members in PA and PA-related subjects is also a consideration.

Additional Suggested Submission Packet Contents for Region HQ:

In addition to the packet described above for Wing HQ submission, the packet to Region HQ will also contain:

- A letter from the Wing PAO, assessing the applicant in terms of service performed and future potential in terms of benefit to the unit, wing and CAP.
- A letter from the wing commander, assessing the selected individual in terms of benefit to the wing.

Assessing Candidates:

Following is a suggested point system that can be used to assess candidates objectively. The candidate with the highest point total, with concurrence of the selection committee, the wing commander, and the wing PAO, is named Wing PAO of the Year.

Activity	Points
News release without photo published externally (provide copy)	3
News release without photo in CAP magazine (provide copy)	2
News release without photo in CAP online (provide copy/URL)	1
News release with photo published externally (provide copy)	6
News release with photo in CAP magazine (provide copy)	4
News release with photo in CAP online (provide copy/URL)	2
Attendance at Wing PAO Seminar (each)	3
Attendance at other conference, workshop (each day)	5
Serve as PIO (each day and mission #)	5
Serve as PIO trainee (each day and mission #)	3
Instructor on PA subject at a PD school (each)	5
Presentation to non-CAP group (each)	3
Work booth at CAP activity (each day)	5
TV/radio interview (provide specifics and copy if possible)	3
Published article in non-CAP publication (provide copy) (each)	5
Published article in CAP publication (provide copy) (each)	3
Prepare Unit Continuity Book IAW Tab D-6 SUI Guide	5
Prepare Unit PA Plan	5
Prepare Unit Crisis Communications Plan	5
Create website	5
Maintain website on weekly basis	3
Publish online newsletter (per article, per month)	1
Publish weekly newsletter, PDF or hard copy	3
Publish monthly newsletter, PDF or hard copy	2
Publish quarterly newsletter, PDF or hard copy	1
Mentor senior member/cadet PAOs (each)	3
Mentor cadet PAOs (each)	3

Other Certificates

A PAO Certificate of Appreciation honoring region/wing PAOs and unit PAOs is available from NHQ/PA. PAOs may also obtain an Outstanding PAO certificate. Requests for certificates must be at the recommendation of higher headquarters PAOs.

15. LINKS.

(1) CAPR 190-1

http://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/R190_001_70FAF7B447A02.pdf

(2) CAP Public Awareness Plan

http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/cap_national_hq/public_affairs/cap_public_awareness_plan

(3) PAO Toolkit

http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/cap_national_hq/public_affairs/cap_pao_toolkit/

(4) Writing Your PA Plan

http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/media/cms/Writing_Your_PA_Plan_9CB1FEA0955AF.pdf

(5) CAP Public Awareness Plan

http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/cap_national_hq/public_affairs/cap_public_awareness_plan/

(6) Crisis Communications Plans

http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/media/cms/Crisis_Communications_Plans_D201F1E80E595.pdf

(7) New PAO Checklist

http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/media/cms/PAO_Checklist_385C38B15E910.doc

(8) CAP Media Policy

http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/cap_national_hq/public_affairs/cap_media_policy/

(9) National News Releases

http://www.capvolunteernow.com/media_center/news-releases/

(10) News Release Prototypes

http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/cap_national_hq/public_affairs/cap_pao_toolkit/news-release-prototypes/

(11) Online Media Kit

http://www.capvolunteernow.com/media_center/online-media-kit/

(12) Media Relations Instructional Videos

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

(13) Meeting the Media

http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/media/cms/Meet_the_Media_Booklet_2008_437B5E8552E5F.pdf

(14) New Media and the Air Force

<http://www.af.mil/Portals/1/documents/socialmedia/social-media-and-the-air-force.pdf>

(15) U.S. Air Force Dashboard

<http://www.netvibes.com/usafpublicaffairs>

(16) New Media and the Air Force

<http://www.af.mil/Portals/1/documents/socialmedia/social-media-and-the-air-force.pdf>

- (17) Sample Newsletters
http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/cap_national_hq/public_affairs/cap_unit_web_sites/
- (18) Sample Newsletter
<http://swr.cap.gov/PAO/index.htm>
- (19) Marketing Guidebook
http://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/CAP_Marketing_Guidebook_REVpdf_E3CDBEF62F27D.pdf
- (20) Explore Social Networking
<http://www.myspace.com/>
- (21) Explore Social Networking
<http://www.facebook.com/>
- (22) Explore Social Networking
<http://twitter.com/>
- (23) Explore Social Networking
<http://www.linkedin.com/>
- (24) Volunteer Magazine
http://www.capvolunteernow.com/cap_volunteer/
- (25) Volunteer Magazine Inventory
http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/media/cms/Volunteer_inventory_3F0ADE3908E22.pdf
- (26) Multimedia Products
<http://www.capchannel.com/>
- (27) What Makes a Good Article
http://www.capvolunteernow.com/cap_volunteer/cap-volunteer-submission-guidelines/
- (28) Annual Report to Congress
http://www.capmembers.com/cap_national_hq/cap_reports/
- (29) VolunteerNow
<http://www.capvolunteernow.com/>
- (30) PA Crisis Policy
http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/cap_national_hq/public_affairs/public_affairs_crisis_policy/
- (31) Writing a Crisis Communications Plan
http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/media/cms/Crisis_Communications_Plans_D201F1E80E595.pdf
- (32) Sample Legislative Squadron Web Site
<http://www.nebraskacivilairpatrol.org/contact/legislative-composite.htm>
- (33) Sample Cadet-Oriented Web Site
<http://www.afspc.org/>

- (34) Sample Composite Squadron Web Site
<http://www.capdallas.org/>
- (35) Sample Group/Wing website
<http://www.group3txwing.org/>
- (36) Triangles, Seals and Emblems
http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/cap_national_hq/public_affairs/cap_pao_toolkit/seals-emblems-and-patches
- (37) Posters
http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/cap_national_hq/public_affairs/cap_pao_toolkit/posters.cfm
- (38) Feature Writing Tips
http://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/Feature_writing_tips_90338328C01BE.pdf
- (39) Human Interest Story Writing Tips
http://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/Human_Interest_Story_Writing_Tips_804332EE382D1.pdf
- (40) Interviewing Tips
http://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/Interviewing_Tips_3593152A7F5AD.pdf
- (41) News Feature Writing Tips
http://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/News_Feature_Writing_Tips_53695BE579BC4.pdf
- (42) Personality Feature Writing Tips
http://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/Personality_Feature_Writing_Tips_E70A30F5B1D74.pdf
- (43) CAP Unit Newsletters & Social Media
http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/cap_national_hq/public_affairs/cap_unit_web_sites/
- (44) Desktop Publishing Software
<http://desktoppub.about.com/od/findsoftware1/tp/freedtpsoftware.htm>
- (45) Sample Little News
<http://www.afspc.org/content/news.htm>
- (46) Sample Big News
<http://mdcap.org/>
- (47) Sample PDF Newsletters
<http://swr.cap.gov/PAO/index.htm>
- (48) Free PDF Writer
<http://www.bullzip.com/>
- (49) PA Essentials
http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/cap_national_hq/public_affairs/pa_essentials.cfm
- (50) Guidelines for Partnering with NHQ/OA
http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/cap_national_hq/public_affairs/cap_media_policy/