Operations at a Strategic Level

Lesson Objective: This lesson seeks to help members understand CAP's operational missions at the region and national level.

Desired Learning Outcomes (DLO):

1. Understand the breadth and depth of missions accomplished across CAP.
2. Understand the role of the region in Operations.
3. Understand the reasoning behind the region operations evaluation model.
4. Understand current national Operations initiatives.
5. Understand the challenges faced by Operations today.

Reading: Student Guide, CAP National website

Scheduled Lesson Time: 60 minutes

Introduction

Operations is an important part of what Civil Air Patrol does. Operations encompasses many areas including communications, emergency services, and disaster relief. Missions vary dramatically across the country and are supported by NHQ personnel and programs. The region plays a key role in operations. When thinking strategically, it is important to understand the role of the region and national levels in operations and the challenges operations faces.

1. Understand the breadth and depth of missions accomplished across CAP.

CAP was created by innovative citizens who wanted to serve community, state, and nation on the even of World War II. These pioneers believed citizens had vital skills that could help America. That premise remains a part of CAP today. Volunteers across the country hone their skills to be prepared to be of service should the call come. The depth of missions across the US today includes tasks from airborne photography to use of the Waldo Air XCam sensor system for imagery. Missions include:

- Counterdrug
- Air defense intercept
- Low level route surveys
- Disaster relief
- Communication support
- Chaplain services
- Crowd control
- PPE transportation
- Shelter management
- Food distribution
- Search and Rescue

- Humanitarian assistance
- Surrogate RPA
- Homeland defense
- RPA escort
- Range support

Operations is an incredibly diverse, ever changing area.

To better understand the missions CAP can perform today, review the CAPabilities Briefing at https://www.gocivilairpatrol.com/programs/emergency-services/capabilities-handbooks-briefing .

2. Understand the role of the region in Operations.

The region performs several key functions in Operations. Generally, region commanders are tasked with monitoring each wing's training program and coordinating region-wide training activities. Region commanders also review the results of Air Force-required evaluations within the region and ensure action is taken to correct any deficiencies. Additionally, region commanders have a role in the approval of supplements and waivers to the regulations. Regions also have a role in the appeal of suspensions from flying.

The region ensures the wings develop annual training plans each year. These are due in July each year. The region reviews each plan. The region looks for:

- Commander's Intent. This area should have a narrative that makes sense and is appropriate. Training Goals numbers should also make sense.
- Requirements: The narrative should be clear and appropriate for the wing. The Training Goals should have both Short Term and Long-Term numbers that are realistic.
- Goals, Objectives, and Tasks: These should be appropriate for the wing and not duplicate the National and Region inputs but rather enhance them.
- SUI: This area is reviewed for reasonable costs.
- Proficiency Flights: This is a challenging area! Most wings will not have sufficient budget range that allows for enough sorties for every pilot to remain proficient. The region reviews the figures to make sure the cost for a flight make sense and that the overall budget is within the allowed budget range.
- Orientation Flights: The budget range in this area is generally insufficient to get all cadets flown. Region review ensures that the cost entered is within the allowable budget range and is appropriate.
- AFROTC Orientation Flights and AFJROTC Orientation Flights: Since there is no allotted budget, this area should have reasonable numbers of rides with an appropriate cost entered.
- Flight Evaluations: The target budget range is generally insufficient to get the required Form 5 and Form 91 check rides accomplished. The numbers should be reviewed to ensure they are appropriate.
- Training Budget Submitted: Again the target budget is generally insufficient to conduct

as many events as a wing may want to conduct. Planned activities are reviewed for appropriate numbers and cost within the target range.

Once regions approve these plans, they go to the appropriate Liaison Region for approval.

3. Understand the reasoning behind the region operations evaluation model.

CAPR 60-3 asks wing and region commanders, "to establish 'Joint Agreements of Cooperation' between their wings and bordering regions." The goal of this effort was to minimize duplication and enable CAP to perform its missions efficiently and effectively.

Operations Evaluation 3.0 is the current model for conducting evaluations. In this model, two regions will be reviewed together over two-week period. Each wing in the region may not be evaluated during the Ops eval but can be evaluated during regular missions. Ops Eval 3.0 focuses on SAR, DR. Communications, sUAS, and orientation flights at a level wings in the region are used to operating. Certain missions such as counterdrug, range support, low level route surveys, air defense, and green flag may be viewed during an evaluation and may be viewed otherwise. Ops Evals will occur between April to June each year.

- NER and MER will be evaluated together.
- PCR and RMR will be evaluated together.
- NCR and GLR will be evaluated together.
- SER and SWR will be evaluated together.

The team that evaluates these missions might include all LR personnel as well as CAP personnel. Training for this new model began in July 2019.

Why is this model helpful? This model allows more money and Reserve days to be available. CAP-USAF can travel to more events. It also allows CAP-USAF to visit real events. This is an effective use of personnel, time and funds. This method also allows for standardized grading and scenarios that can be used across the country. It is more realistic for those participating. National resources and the NOC can also be included. This also tests the ability fo the regions to work together as we have seen more operations require greater resources in recent years.

In years when regions are not evaluated, they will host RLEs or region led exercises. A small CAP-USAF team will attend and provide feedback. Other regions will provide personnel to evaluate for RLEs.

4. Understand current national Operations initiatives.

The Operations team at National Headquarters works on a variety of initiatives each year.

- Currently, the Operations Team is working on the standards con op. You can learn more about CAP standards here https://www.gocivilairpatrol.com/members/publications/standards .

- Another initiative Operations has worked on recently is the Virtual Incident Command Post.
- Geospatial Intelligence is another area Operations is working on growing.
- The sUAS and C-sUAS programs are still being developed.
- NESA Mobile Training Teams
- Radar and Cell Phone Forensics sustainability.
- ReadyOp communications initiative
- Waldo XCAM imaging
- Health Services program improvements

As our missions continue to evolve, Operations continues to evolve with them. The Operations Team posts their presentations from conference on the gocivilairpatrol.com website after conference each year. You can also find out more about these initiatives through their Lunch and Learn series. You can find both at https://www.gocivilairpatrol.com/programs/emergency-services/2019-operations-conference-presentations .

5. Understand the challenges faced by operations today.

Operations is an area that is constantly evolving. The missions that CAP performed in World War II such as target towing and mail delivery have been replaced with air intercept and personal protective equipment delivery. In order to maintain relevance, Operations must continue to evolve and see new missions. As we evolve and work to better meet the needs of our customers, we have to be careful that we do not over commit. Great damage could be done to our reputation and future missions if we fail to meet the needs of our customers. In addition, there is a delicate balance between growing our mission at a sustainable rate and growing our mission too quickly. Many Operations missions require technology and equipment from aircraft to Waldo sensor systems. We have to be able to budget for these tools and implement them in a sustainable way. We cannot accept, fund, and equip our personnel for every possible mission.

Lesson Summary and Closure

CAP operations across the United States vary greatly depending on local conditions, disasters, and needs. The role of the region in operations continues to evolve with our missions; however, the region provides a vital role in oversight and support for CAP wings. As the bridge between wings and national, regions are vital. As operations evolve, the multi-region exercise and disaster has become a reality. As a result, our evaluation model has shifted. As a directorate, Operations continually works to retain relevance by embracing new opportunities and new missions. Innovation is a key aspect of Operations at the national level. Maintaining relevance and a marketable skillset is an ongoing challenge.

EXERCISE:

1. Review the documents posted in the Operations area on the gocivilairpatrol.com website at https://www.gocivilairpatrol.com/programs/emergency-services/2019-operations-conference-presentations .

2. Review the CAP Strategic Plan. Note any Operations related goals mentioned in the plan.

3. Contact the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations for the region in which you serve or are physically located. Find out what kinds of mission the wings and the region conduct.