



The Dispatch is for informational purposes. Unit Safety Officers are encouraged to use the articles in The Dispatch as topics for their monthly safety briefings and discussions. Members may go [eServices - Learning Management System](#), click on "Go to AXIS," search for this month's The Dispatch, take the quiz, and receive safety education credit.

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The Theme for This Month's Dispatch is Being a Good Wingman. These articles from Health Services, Safety and Chaplain Corps provide awareness of the importance of being a reliable wingman.

Primary Articles on Being a Good Wingman

Everyone Needs a Wingman

By: Ch Maj. Michael Morison, USAF Master Resilience Trainer, PCR-001

Everyone in CAP is probably familiar with Pardo's Push. This heroic effort to save another crew was motivated by the integrity of Pardo. He embodied the values of caring and helping that he acquired growing up. His action, risking his own life and that of his crewman, to save another crew demonstrated that a wingmanship's action must be based on the person's values – who you are.

There are two definitions in the Oxford Dictionary of wingmanship.

1. A pilot whose aircraft is positioned behind and outside the leading aircraft in a formation.
2. A person who helps or supports another man, a friend or close associate.

In an interview, Lt Col Pardo noted that his aircraft was damaged but salvable, he did not want his wingmen in the other damaged aircraft to eject over North Vietnam. Looking up, he saw the

tailhook, instructed the other aircraft to drop it, and placed the tail hook in the middle of his windscreen. It was a *semper gumbly* (always flexible) moment of creative inspiration. Many have asked him how he gained the courage to help his wingman. Pardo noted that his father had taught him that when a friend needs help, you help. And he knew that his father would ask him, "Did you try?" At the end of the interview Pardo noted that being a wingman "makes me feel better about who I am."

Wingmanship is characterized by emotional intelligence, compassion, and a caring attitude toward the other. When one holds and personifies these characteristics, then one becomes a wingman to everyone! One is a wingman not only to CAP, but also to family, friends, and the community.

Pardo remained in touch with the pilot he saved that day. One day he learned that Lt Col Aman, the pilot he saved, was suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease. He had lost his voice and mobility. Pardo took the initiative once again to be a good wingman and founded the Earl Aman Foundation which provided a voice synthesizer, motorized wheelchair, computer and more for him. While we may see this as extraordinary, Pardo simply saw it as what one simply does. The legacy of Lt Col Pardo, per Maj Gen Clark Quin, lives on as a call to keep moving forward, to fly through adversity and to navigate life's challenges head-on" Again, "You don't leave a wingman."

Wingmanship represents CAP's core values, a genuine respect for everyone. Respect requires us to treat each other with fairness, dignity, and compassion. It is personal integrity that naturally moves one to simply do the right thing - anywhere and at any time. These are exhibited in the desire to serve voluntarily, giving of oneself over personal desires, to provide for the welfare of others and to do so with excellence. Wingmanship is not what we are expected to do but an opportunity to take supportive action in helping others. It is an action that comes from a caring heart.

In recent years, the Air Force has been focusing on the importance of being a wingman, the words of CMSAF Joann S. Bass also apply to CAP as a USAF Auxiliary.

"We have got to take care of each other, mentally, physically, socially, spiritually. When you are resilient, ready, trained, and developed to perform and execute the things that our Air Force [CAP] asks of you, our readiness as an Air Force [CAP] is optimized. Readiness, resiliency is readiness, and readiness breeds culture."

What we do will allow us as individuals and as an organization to meet and exceed all expectations. Be a wingman not just during meetings, special activities, and missions, but everywhere and every day! Get to know your fellow airmen and build a relationship with them that fosters our culture of taking care of each other. Carry that culture into a world helping to create a better world today and for tomorrow.

In memory of:

Lt Col Bob Pardo, a consummate model of wingmanship, March 10, 1934 - December 5, 2023.

His legacy lives in us.

"Two Heads Are Better Than One"

By: Capt William "Bill" Trussell, CFI, IA, MEI, DE-019

There are many examples of the old saying that "two heads are better than one" being true. In aviation, look at the airlines, where a two-person flight crew and a dispatcher overseeing the operation is largely the norm. Business aircraft operations are similar to the airlines, they also use a two-person crew. The FAA gets in the game a bit by allowing student solo operations only under the supervision of a qualified flight instructor. In CAP, we have the flight release officer, and their role is being a second resource in the Risk Management process for flight operations. In our non-flight operations, we are connected to a mentor in CAP to assist us in on-boarding into new roles or advancing in specialty track training. In each of these cases, the role of being a mentor or "wingman" is essential to the safe and efficient operation of the organization.

One opportunity to act as a Wingman is to offer yourself as a resource to evaluate weather conditions for operations, both flight and ground. There are many flight instructors that offer their students the opportunity to call them, after their student/teacher relationship is concluded, to ask for a second opinion on weather conditions for a particular flight or to validate a decision. The instructor often has a lot more experience in evaluating local weather conditions and forecasts for the area of operations, even extending to other geographic areas they are familiar with. Weather conditions often vary in different parts of the country, including severity, speed, and extent one can expect in the near and long terms. Being able to consult with someone who could evaluate the weather information available, and the accuracy of what is being provided against the forecast trends and typical weather patterns can be invaluable to a pilot who may be uncertain when presented with too much information. Instructors should consider offering their students the opportunity to call them for a "two head" check on weather conditions.

Two great examples of how the wingman can play a critical role for both pilots and non-pilots.

The first example is a pilot facing the need to fly to an initial destination to ferry another plane for maintenance. The weather for the first of two legs is acceptable for a VFR flight. The pilot in this scenario is not instrument current, much less proficient. Complicating this flight is airspace restrictions, requiring a decision on a northerly route to the initial destination or one going on a southerly path. Planning for the second leg of the flight is more of a concern as mountainous terrain and a weather system playing off the terrain is creating possible lower clouds and visibilities for the later flight. Unsure of what to expect, the pilot called his instructor for a second opinion. After reviewing the information available together, they agreed to change the pilot's plan. The suggestion was to fly the southerly route to get a better understanding of the weather conditions for the second leg as the route would provide a good opportunity for local observations to be made against the forecast. The timing of the flight was also discussed, as "the earlier, the better" was a concern. The flight went well, and the pilot debriefed the conditions encountered with his instructor, with both agreeing that changing the route was the best decisions.

A recent CAP ground activity is another good example of how a wingman can assist across more operations than just flying. In this scenario a ground training meeting was planned with personnel needing to travel across a wide range of distances and routes. The forecast indicated winter weather conditions across a swath of the region, including the destination. These conditions were predicted to get worse as the day progressed. The activity director contacted the safety officer for the activity to discuss the conditions and the decision-making process. They decided the conditions created an unnecessary risk for the training activity, a risk that was easily mitigated by changing the format of the meeting to a virtual one. The safety officer noted to the

activity commander that the process and the information used was similar to a go/no go decision for flight activities. Store that one away for next time!

We are fortunate to have a wide range of experienced members in CAP that can serve as a wingman to others. It takes time to develop trust in these resources. These members also volunteer their expertise at no cost to the recipient. There is no better scenario for those who could use a second opinion, or those who can receive the satisfaction of having helped someone else.

Capt Bill Trussell's Accomplishments:

Squadron Commander

FAA Safety Team Representative

Assistant Stan/ Eval Officer

CAP Instructor Pilot, Check Pilot

Wingman

By: Lt. Col. Gordon Helm, CAP HSAT PIO, AZ- 013

Before you saw the movie "Top Gun" did you know what a wingman was or what they did? Fortunately, Iceman taught us all, along with Maverick, that "you never leave your wingman!" The result can be catastrophic and leaves you without support if needed. The term was little known before the movie but has become almost ubiquitous in use today.

For those of us former military aviators, we were exposed to the wingman culture about the time of fighter jets. Pilots flying in formation refer to the pilot immediately next to them (traditionally on their right) as their "wingman." In the larger military aircraft, your wingman was usually working right next to you as part of a larger team. Everyone working together ensured the mission was successful and everyone returned home safe.



Over time, the Air Force expanded the wingman program, using it as a sort of buddy system supporting the overall well-being of airmen. Recently, airmen have struggled with suicide and sexual assault, and the Air Force has responded partly by placing even more emphasis on the wingman concept.

"Never leave your wingman" is now a slogan taught to employees about behavior-based expectations. Just as Navy pilots don't abandon their crew, employees are supposed to back up each other, and coach or counsel them when necessary." An article from *Relias Media* uses the wingman reference to remind their staff: "So a unit secretary can remind a physician about washing his hands before seeing a patient by lightly adding, "I'm supposed to be your wingman."

In Civil Air Patrol, we have adopted the term as part of our Cadet Protection Program. One reason the wingman is so valuable is that they see the world from a slightly different perspective. The cadet wingman concept consists of three components – physical, mental, and social. It's totally separate from their chain of command. Wingmen are peers, equals, and friends. They simply help one another out and one isn't the boss of the other.

On the physical aspect, a wingman encourages you to eat healthy meals, stay hydrated, get plenty of rest and increase your physical activities etc. In the field, a cadet is responsible for knowing where their wingman is 24/7.

The second wingman concept involves looking out for your wingman's mental wellbeing. This includes helping your wingman stay positive and optimistic. It is particularly important when a new cadet joins a squadron and is learning their place in the larger picture.

And finally, there's the wingman concept of social wellbeing. This means wingmen check on each other to ensure they are learning or improving on their social skills, maybe including them in social situations both inside and outside of CAP. Being a wingman many times is just being a good listener, a voice of reason, a cheerleader and partner with the other person.

Senior members often do not follow the cadet wingman code, at least not very well. But the concepts are just as important to seniors as they are to cadets. What is a mentor, isn't it a wingman who helps another through training or teaches another through experience? The IMSAFE checklist is really an example of the wingman concept. While it pertains to individuals, the ground team or aircrew member is each responsible for the factors that make up IMSAFE and reporting any issues to the other members of their teams.

Another example of encouraging the wingman concept in CAP is the Aircrew Professionalism Model. Our aircrews are aviation professionals – volunteers who safely and competently perform a wide variety of complex missions for a diverse set of customers. A part of this training program is the Aircrew Code of Conduct. Do these aircrew responsibilities sound similar to the cadet wingman program?

CAP Pamphlet 70-11 (31 March 2020)

Aircrew should:

- Recognize and manage risks effectively.
- Develop and exercise good judgment and sound principles of technical decision-making.
- Adhere to prudent operating practices and support team situational awareness.
- Seek operational excellence.
- Aspire to professionalism.
- Act with responsibility and courtesy.
- Adhere to applicable laws and regulations.

A good wingman is an important person in our CAP culture, whether a cadet, senior member, or patron or parent. We all have a responsibility to be attuned to the actions and needs of our colleagues, we all would benefit greatly.

Secondary Articles/Information of Special Interest

Recognition

** Master Rating in the Safety Officer Specialty Track**



Congratulations Capt. Jeff Young on Achieving your Master Rating in the Safety Officer Specialty Track!!

Wingman Safety for Senior Members

By: Capt. Oliva Higgins, MD-008

Frequently, Senior Members forget to take care of one another because they are tasked with taking care of cadets. The primary focus is cadet safety, leaving senior members to lose sight of the fact that they also need to take care of themselves, and they also need a wingman. Senior members should set a good example for cadet members, so everyone remains safe.

Please read the entire article here: [Wingman Safety for Senior Members- PDF](#)

Wingmanship and Psychological Safety

By: Ch Maj. Michael Morison, USAF Master Resilience Trainer, PCR-001
(A repost of an earlier article published in The Dispatch - June 2023)

How does *Wingmanship* contribute to personal and physical safety?

The Oxford Dictionary provides an example of what a wingman is:

"I thought he might need a wingman – he was quite tired and emotional."

Being a wingman promotes safety and resilience for the individual and the team. Therefore, wingmanship is the art of caring for myself and others. There are two characteristics of a wingman. First, you are there for your wingman and, second, your wingman is there for you. The strength of a wingman is knowing when to let your wingman be there for you. Being a wingman is my commitment to having your "six" and knowing that you have mine.

A wingman is not only there to protect you from physical danger, but they are also there to support you when the turbulence of life is buffeting you around. The wingman can bolster resilience through a caring and supportive presence. I may not agree with you, but I will stand by you.

Wingmanship promotes teamwork and *Esprit de Corps*. Respect for self and for others. It is the recognition that everyone is mission ready. Only when we authentically care for each other's physical, emotional, and spiritual safety can we function safely and resiliently in our mission. A sense of psychological safety, one's sense of belonging to the team, promotes deeper interdependence, within the team. It contributes to enhance individual and team performance allowing for more creative problem solving, more effective communication, consensus building, and flexibility in mission accomplishment.

Wingmanship is not about uniformity (looking the same and doing things together), wingmanship is about unity (being one). This can only happen in a physically and psychologically safe environment. In a team, everyone is a wingman, and everyone needs a wingman to grow and thrive.

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[*Safety Beacon / The Dispatch*](#)