



HEADQUARTERS
NEW JERSEY WING - CIVIL AIR PATROL
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New Jersey Wing Marketing Plan

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Approved
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I. Introduction

This annual plan, required to be prepared annually by CAPR 190-1, represents the plans of New Jersey Wing for its Public Affairs Program. It was prepared by 1st Lt Mark Swanson, NJ Wing director of public affairs, and should be reviewed annually in January after consultation with the commander and wing staff.

II. Situation Analysis

The New Jersey Wing of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) encompasses the state of New Jersey. The state is geographically diverse, ranging from the Atlantic Highlands area in the northern part of the state to the coastal flatlands in the south and east. New Jersey Wing is proud to consider itself the historical home of the Civil Air Patrol and was the location of its first World War II base.

The wing consists of about 1,200 members in 25 squadrons and four groups. Although most of the squadrons have assigned a public affairs officer, not all are active. The wing public affairs program has been in a rebuilding mode since the appointment of the new PAO in May 2008. The program before that time was declining due to lack of involvement and ill health of the PAO.

CAP units in the wing vary in their health, from active dynamic teams to small units that struggle to survive. Many local unit PAO's are relatively new members who are inexperienced at the functions of the program. There has little training for public affairs officers or mission information officers before this year and creating that kind of training needs to be a priority.

Government agencies and the public at large seem relatively unaware of CAP's presence and capabilities in New Jersey.

III. Philosophies and Objectives: It Has to Start Somewhere

A. The current CAP National Marketing Plan (2007) calls up on CAP PAOs to promote the 'brand' of CAP and take a leading role in recruitment and retention of members. CAP and NJ Wing are facing many challenges, including a diminishing membership base and changes to technology that are swiftly reducing the number traditional Air Force-tasked missions. The national marketing plan acknowledges that CAP's survival and evolution into a 21st century organization must start with a strong public affairs program that provides for recruitment and retention of more members, support for the development of new missions and community outreach.

Within CAPR 190-1, a new version of which was promulgated by CAP NHQ in 2007, public affairs officers are encouraged to develop plans to promote CAP, its goals and missions for internal and external audiences, as well as a crisis plan communications plan to deal rapidly and effectively with crisis situations (a separate document).

The wing commander has made clear, targeted and more frequent public affairs efforts a priority for New Jersey Wing as (1) an important part of recruitment/retention, (2) a key component of developing new missions, and (3) a necessary part of fundraising.

B. To achieve these goals at the wing level, public affairs must do much more than simply be the traditional voice of CAP to the outside world via the print media. Acting as the leading agency for the promotion of CAP within and without the wing, public affairs must pursue the following goals:

1. Advise the commander on the place of public affairs within the wing and what part it can play in furthering goals he sets for the wing as a whole;
2. One of the biggest complaints among NJ Wing members has been that they do not feel "they know what is going on." It is essential, then, that members receive regular communication from the wing about upcoming activities, training events and other items – as well as what various units within the wing are doing, promoting an *esprit de corps*.
3. Integrate efforts to tell the story of CAP to the outside world in a multitude of media – electronic (the Internet), broadcast and print;
4. Take a leadership role in the recruitment and retention function;
5. Act as liaison to Air Force public affairs officers at McGuire AFB, Ft. Dix and elsewhere;
6. Mentor and train subordinate unit public affairs officers and mission information officers;
7. Provide graphics design, writing and other media services in support of wing and unit objectives and activities;
8. Develop personnel, hardware and software resources in support of the use of the Internet as part of public affairs work at the unit, group and wing levels.
9. Take a leading role in the civic outreach function in the development of new missions for the wing.

C. With a declining membership base eroding CAP's ability to address new challenges and missions, both the national leadership and wing command have named recruitment and retention as one of our highest priorities. At New Jersey Wing, the model for public affairs will be that of a newspaper that needs to build subscribers (members) and attract advertising revenue (grants, aid, new missions). The principal means of attracting new members will be through various media, both internal and external (stories, photographs and video, also known as 'editorial'). Public affairs can provide the first push, the initial momentum, to start the upward spiral to success and ensure its continued success in the future, because *we have to start somewhere*.

Goals and Strategies for Success

Goal 1. Advise the commander on the place of public affairs within the wing and what part it can play in furthering goals he sets for the wing as a whole.

Strategy: The NJ Wing commander looks to the public affairs officer for recommendations about how this directorate should best meet the needs of the wing objectives. He provides broad direction and expects the PAO to provide professional, detailed direction about how that should be done, as well as carrying it out.

The wing public affairs officer provides the commander periodically with lists of units that do not have PAOs assigned or do not have active, effective PAOs. The commander, not the wing public affairs officer, has the authority to direct units to fill this important role.

Goal 2: Promote communication among CAP members, encouraging participation in CAP events and activities.

Strategy: The core of the NJ Wing public affairs plan is the wing news website, NJ Wing News Online, at njwgcap.org. NJ Wing News Online is a standalone website powered by Internet-based forms software from Bulletlink.com, a Texas firm that specializes in websites for newspapers and non-profit organizations. As CAPR 190-1 encourages PAOs to become involved in web design and development, we at NJ Wing have taken that to heart so that the wing PAO is put in the driver's seat of this core component *which does not rely on a strong knowledge of website design*. In general, the wing PAO posts items from:

- a. Announcements to wing members that have already been distributed via email. Posting them to the website make it easy for members (and interested non-members) to find and retrieve them.
 - b. PAOs, who are encouraged to email any item to the wing PAO that they have already sent out to the local media. Contributing to the wing website does not take place of sending items out to the media in their vicinity. Contributions take the form of news releases (events, activities, promotions), photos and video (mostly from the wing public affairs officer and assistant).
 - c. Commanders, special announcements from CAP NHQ.
 - d. Occasionally, cadets who are encouraged to get involved in public affairs because they have distinguished themselves with work in this area at basic encampment, at airshows or other activities.
- Announcements from the Air Force public affairs office at the McGuire AFB 305th AMW.

Goal 3: Promote CAP to the outside world in a multitude of media – electronic (the Internet), broadcast and print.

Strategy: The evidence is now overwhelming that the traditional target of most CAP media efforts, large-circulation daily newspapers, are facing tough times if not their impending demise. It is important, then, that we develop our own independent media efforts via the Internet, which must include “rich content,” which is attractive to site visitors.

- a. Support and encouragement of unit PAO participation in traditional external print media in their geographic markets because they are best positioned to get to know them. The Wing PAO has significant resources and experience with contacting and working with external media, but local unit PAOs are best positioned to get to know them.
- b. Posting items sent out to the local media onto the wing news website at njwgcap.org, as some of them are never published. The website software is also set up to “recycle” these stories through an electronic newsletter, which also goes out to the media and others. Members of the media are encouraged to re-use items posted to the website and original digital photo files are made available to them on request.
- c. Development of new media equipment, staff and other resources, without detracting from staff at the local level.
- d. Articles, photos, and video distributed to media outlets at McGuire AFB and Fort Dix, as current military personnel represent the richest opportunities for future CAP membership.
- e. Menus with information for the media about CAP – about NJ Wing, about CAP history and about the organization in general – have been posted to njwjgcap.org. The menus include specific information about how to reach NJ Wing and the public affairs officer.
- f. Video and slideshow “rich content” is frequently produced by both the wing public affairs officer and his assistant. This includes video and photographic “coverage” of wing special events or activities, helping to better tell the story of CAP in New Jersey. There is also a “NJ Wing Spotlight: video program in development, designed to highlight the successes of CAP individuals; one episode has been produced at the time of this plan. This material is posted to njwgcap.org.

Goal 4: Take a leadership role in the wing recruitment and retention function.

Strategy: While the recruitment and retention function has been split out of the public affairs program, both functions must work hand in hand to ensure success.

On the public affairs side, the following have been undertaken:

- a. From the outset, njwgcap.org (NJ Wing News Online) has featured recruitment-oriented menus for prospective cadets, cadet parents and adult officers. This includes not only about opportunities for prospective members within NJ Wing, but also links to brochures and written materials about membership.
- b. An online membership interest application on the website collects contact information from prospective members (4-5 a month) and forwards it via email to the wing recruitment and retention officer.
- c. Replacing the traditional CAP NHQ unit finder, a graphic map with marker links for each squadron has been posted to the njwgcap.org. The links show users information about where the squadrons are located, their meeting nights and directions.
- d. Spreadsheet files of prospective members from CAP NHQ are forwarded to the recruitment and retention officer.
- e. Plans are being developed for wing-oriented recruitment materials – printed, photographic and video – as personnel and resources are available.
- f. PAOs are regularly briefed on the availability of printed recruitment materials from CAP NHQ as well as their ability to borrow a wing display unit for fairs and indoor events.

Goal 5: Act as liaison to military public affairs officers at McGuire AFB, Fort Dix and elsewhere.

Strategy:

Working hand-in-hand with public affairs officers at McGuire AFB and Fort Dix before the 2006 McGuire Air Expo produced an opening opportunity, a new relationship based on mutual respect between USAF and CAP. The public affairs officer has worked, and continues to work, to maintain constant contact with public affairs officers at the 305th AMW and 514th AMW at McGuire as well as the public affairs office at Fort Dix. This often takes the form of sharing news of media changes in New Jersey, taken from New Jersey Press Association newsletters that the public affairs officer receives professionally. Three goals have the highest priority in this relationship:

- a. Working with the USAF and Army PAOs to identify appropriate on-base venues for CAP recruitment materials.
- b. Working with the USAF and Army PAOs to place CAP articles, releases and photos in their base newspapers.
- c. Working with the USAF and Army PAOs to identify instances where CAP cadets and officers can better serve their needs, like working at charitable events (the April 2007 Ruck March at McGuire is a good example) and "send-offs" for troops.

Goal 6: Mentor and train subordinate unit public affairs officers and mission information officers.

Strategy: Most unit PAOs take the position after being asked by their commanders to fill this important role, although the public affairs job is usually not their first choice. Most PAOs also have other roles to perform in CAP and do not come to the position with any background in writing, photography or working with the media. It is important, then, that they be supported, trained and recognized for doing this work for the Civil Air Patrol. In New Jersey Wing, the following support is provided for public affairs officers:

- a. The wing public affairs officer provides basic skills training at least two times a year to help unit PAOs overcome the initial hesitancy they often have about writing, photography and working with the media. With his professional experience in mind, the wing PAO orients this training toward what print editors want and need as they are likely to take the path of least resistance.
- b. The wing public affairs officer is not a certified mission information officer but he has taken the lead in pursuing training toward this important role (the standards for which have been raised in 2008). He also keeps the unit PAOs informed about opportunities for training in the MIO role and they are encouraged to pursue them. Several PAOs have completed field/SAREX training as MIOs in 2008 where there were none before.
- c. As many PAOs are hesitant and often complain that they are not comfortable with writing, the wing PAO often offers model releases to the units, much like those provided in the CAP NHQ Hometown Release program. These literally provide PAOs with a "fill-in-the-blank" ability to produce releases and make them feel they are more capable of performing this task.
- d. Under a regulation from CAP NER in 2007, the wing public affairs officer instituted (with the authority of the wing commander) press release review in late 2007. This gives the wing PAO a chance to edit and review outgoing releases for appropriateness and grammar before they are seen by those who might judge CAP and NJ Wing by their content. It also provides an opportunity for the wing PAO to teach the subordinates about grammar, style and other important elements, where necessary.
- e. The wing public affairs officer provides the unit PAOs with email updates about training opportunities, media news and other items. As available, the wing PAO also hosts telephone conference calls with the unit PAOs; these calls were discontinued by CAP NHQ in early 2008 but were returned in summer.
- f. The wing public affairs officer strives to make helpful written materials available to the unit PAOs online. This includes links to guides, like the Air University Style Guide, as well as local information, like how to borrow the wing display unit. These materials are available at njwg.cap.gov and njwgcap.org.
- g. The PAOs' writing and photographic work is posted to the wing news site, njwgcap.org, better informing their squadrons, groups, other wing members and those outside the organization about CAP. Online credit or bylines also

give the PAOs a well-deserved source of recognition for their hard work, even if it is never published by external media. Additionally, they are also credited online (with links) when their work is published by external media.

h. The wing public affairs officer does not publish a printed newsletter and is not highly skilled in using the basic software (MS Publisher, MS Word) available to most unit PAOs. It is the goal of this directorate to find personnel who can better train unit PAOs in newsletter design, layout and production.

i. Unit PAOs are encouraged to submit their work to CAP News as appropriate, but the emphasis is on NJ Wing and the local media.

Goal 7: Provide graphics design, writing and media services in support of wing and unit objectives or activities.

Strategy: As a member of the media, the wing public affairs officer has extraordinary access to professional assistance, equipment and personnel. He has been able to provide graphic design, writing and media services in support of wing and unit objectives. In 2007, he was able to use professional equipment and software for the layout of a basic encampment journal. In 2008, he used that software and equipment to create a NJ Wing Fact Sheet, which has been helpful in presentations to civil emergency management directors (OEMs) and military emergency preparedness liaison officers (EPLOs) The wing PAO makes these services available to the unit PAOs, as well (like letterhead and release header design). Should the wing PAO no longer be able to provide these services, it should be a goal of the wing to develop personnel, software and hardware to do it internally.

Goal 8: Support the use of the Internet for public affairs work at the unit, group and wing levels.

Strategy: CAP NHQ policy calls on wing PAOs to train subordinate units in Internet website design. As the wing public affairs officer is not skilled in this area, he has worked with wing information technology (IT) staff to make a template of a squadron website available to unit commanders and PAOs. Wing IT staffers have been able to work with a number of squadrons in 2008 to develop their websites using this template and this effort will continue.

Goal 9: Take a leading role in civic outreach to further development of new missions for the wing.

Strategy: As the tradition Air Force-assigned emergency location transmitter (ELT) missions decline due to changes in technology, it is essential that new missions be developed through outreach to civil authorities in New Jersey. While the emergency services directorate has begun its own limited outreach with civil authorities, public affairs must organize a series of meetings with emergency management directors, sheriffs, police chiefs and others in the various counties of New Jersey to present our CAPabilities to the public. Plans for the first of these are in the works at the time of this plan's creation.

IV Evaluation

This plan will be reviewed each year by wing command and the wing PAO in the month of January. This review will consist of a comprehensive review of the PA program as outlined in this plan. This review will go over successes, failures, areas for improvement and update goals/objectives for the next year.

Movement toward success for each goal will be measured via:

Goal 1. Advise the commander on the place of public affairs within the wing and what part it can play in furthering goals he sets for the wing as a whole.

It is expected that direct feedback from the wing commander and other wing staff on the progress and effectiveness will be provided throughout the year. The wing commander generally presents a "wing report card" or "state of the wing" speech at the NJ Wing Conference each spring. The wing commander's positive comments about this directorate's progress so far are available for review.

Goal 2: Promote communication among CAP members, encouraging participation in CAP events and activities.

While it is impossible to know and probably irresponsible to guess at how many people read or hear about CAP through traditional external media, we can derive some data via the news website, njwgcap.org. Data is collected via Google Analytics (www.google.com/analytics) and regularly shared with the commander and wing staff which shows the location and network source of website users. It does not differentiate between CAP and non-CAP users, however.

Goal 3: Promote CAP to the outside world in a multitude of media – electronic (the Internet), broadcast and print.

Data collected via the news site and Google Analytics shows how many users are visiting which pages, including video, stories, releases and photos posted to the site.

Goal 4: Take a leadership role in the wing recruitment and retention function.

The public affairs directorate, on its own, is not entirely responsible for recruitment and retention of members, but plays a supporting role. It is expected that NJ Wing will continue the 9.2% membership rise achieved in 2007.

Goal 5: Act as liaison to military public affairs officers at McGuire AFB, Fort Dix and elsewhere.

The success of this area is difficult to monitor, but it is expected that the wing public affairs officer will be able to expand publication of CAP news into base papers at McGuire AFB and Fort Dix, which might be indicative of positive relationships. It is also expected that the wing public affairs officer will be able to encourage military bases to allow the posting and placement of CAP recruitment materials.

Goal 6: Mentor and train subordinate unit public affairs officers and mission information officers.

The wing public affairs officer will provide regular reports to the wing commander on unit PAO staffing or the lack thereof as well as

mentoring/training activities provided to the units in support of the wing public affairs program. The wing public affairs officer will complete mission information officer training and encourage unit PAOs to do the same, providing growth data for that area, as well.

Goal 7: Provide graphics design, writing and media services in support of wing and unit objectives or activities.

The wing public affairs officer will provide regular reports to the wing commander on design, writing and media services provided in support of wing and unit objectives or activities.

Goal 8: Support the use of the Internet for public affairs work at the unit, group and wing levels.

The wing public affairs officer will provide yearly data showing the number of squadron websites that have been established with help of wing information technology personnel.