



80th Anniversary Planning Guide

Revised 2021
by 80th Anniversary Working Group

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Introduction

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

Before You Start Planning

Become Familiar with the 80th Anniversary Resource Pages

The 80th Anniversary Working Group has produced numerous resources and compiled them in one location. Becoming familiar with what has already been produced will help you save time and resources.

[80th Anniversary Resource](#) page

Know Your Unit and Wing's History

When was your unit founded? Your wing? Don't overlook an important milestone in your wing or unit history as you are celebrating the national anniversary. Use these together to your publicity advantage!

Enlist the help of other local CAP units

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

PAOs and commanders **must** enlist the help of the Wing Government Relations Adviser to contact federal officials for proclamations and events. PAOs and commanders are welcome to contact state and local officials.

Share responsibility

Even if your squadron is the only one in your area, an anniversary celebration should not be a one- person affair. If you attempt to perform too many jobs, details will be overlooked and tasks may not be performed with excellence. Form a committee of active, enthusiastic members to plan and implement the events to ensure the observance is a success. Include cadets on the committee.

Don't overdo it

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

Plan early

The best time to start planning your anniversary observances is now. Form your committee early, make your plans early and assign tasks to committee members early. Ensure everyone has time to complete their tasks in order to produce the best possible results. Contact targeted VIPs early. Have regular meetings to discuss progress and possible issues. Use the calendar in this planning guide to assist as you look forward from now until the end of the year. Planning ahead means feeling less overwhelmed at the end of the year.

Involve cadets

When visiting civic officials, business leaders or members of the media, take along cadets in uniform. Ensure the wear of the uniform is in compliance with CAPR 39-1 at all anniversary activities.

Enlist help from the Air Force

Ask nearby U.S. Air Force units to run a congratulatory notice on their web pages, in their newsletter, etc.

Use Social Media

Units with proactive social media accounts can be a force multiplier in informing their internal and external audiences of CAP activities. Social media is covered in detail in the CAP social media guide CAPP152. Share the content from National Headquarters and your Wing PAO to extend the message without having to develop new thoughts and posts.

Ideas for Celebrations

Plan events throughout the year to acquaint your community with Civil Air Patrol prior to the actual anniversary. Consider including former cadets, former senior members, and other partners with whom your squadron (or wing) has served over the last 80 years.

Awards

Hosting an event where people receive awards draws a crowd, and a well-written news release can catch the attention of members of the community. Recognizing community members for their contributions (even if not your own members) can expose an expanding audience to our brand and message. Order 80th Anniversary coins available from Vanguard and use as awards for those you recognize throughout the year. As you meet with community representatives and government officials, thank them for their service to your community and present them with a coin.

Birthday celebration/open house

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

- Provide state/local legislators with a save-the-date notice; follow up with an invitation to the event.
- Use the news release found on the [80th Anniversary Resource](#) page to announce the open house.
- Attendees could dress up in 1940s attire and the reception area carry out the theme. You could also have a live band or a CD playing big band music.
- Play a recruiting video on a continuous loop, set up a display with literature and/or put a CAP airplane on display.
- Serve a cake decorated with CAP heraldry or scenes from CAP's past and have the newest and longest-serving CAP members cut the cake.
- Hold a banquet and present awards to commemorate the anniversary.

Proclamations

A sample proclamation is provided on the [80th Anniversary Resource](#) page. Wing PAOs should work to get a proclamation from either the governor or state legislature. Squadron PAOs or commanders should work to get a proclamation from local officials. Since many state legislatures meet in the first half of the year, now is the best time to make a request.

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

If media is covering the event, introduce yourself and provide a business card. Take pictures and promote the event on social media. Follow up with an article to all local media sources.

Weekend religious services

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

Lunches/dinner with elected officials

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

Exhibits

Consider the following venues for displays:

- Malls, community centers, state or regional fairs, large sporting events, school or career fairs
- Local library, historic society and/or museum
- Airports
- State's emergency managers training conference

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

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

Guest speaker at civic club meetings

Most local civic clubs are in the market for someone to conduct a 20-minute program for their meetings. Well-known civic clubs include Kiwanis International, Lions Club International, Optimist International, Rotary International and Civitan International. Contact the Chamber of Commerce for a list of local civic clubs and their point of contact. As you contact the Chamber of Commerce—ask that any special events planned for the 80th anniversary celebrations be added to their online calendar and member newsletter.

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

Electronic signs

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

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

Holiday parades/events

Include a CAP honor guard or color guard in a holiday parade and participate in festivals and carnivals whenever possible. Consider both Veterans Day parades in November leading up to the 80th as well as holiday/winter Parades and Festivals at the time of the 80th Anniversary.

Sporting events

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

Get an ad or announcement placed in the printed program, this should be donated and should NOT be paid for with squadron funds.

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

Community service events

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

Veterans Affairs

Obtain permission to deliver a CAP birthday cake to the foyer or patient lounge at a local VA hospital or arrange to have your color guard or drill team at the VA hospital at certain times during the CAP anniversary year. Consider events on Memorial Day, July 4th, Sept. 11th Remembrance Day and Veterans Day (Nov. 11th). To connect the 80th Anniversary to this birthday donation, check with squadron members to see if former members now live at that particular facility OR if they personally know a veteran at that particular hospital/facility.

Sponsor a contest

Hold a contest for elementary and/or middle school students to design a CAP birthday card. Offer the winner(s) a free membership and an orientation ride. Publicize the winner(s). Use information on history.cap.gov to have middle school or high school students write essays about some aspect of CAP history. Publicize the winner(s) and publish the essays online and submit to the [*CAP National Historical Journal*](#). Be sure to tag the school, the school's parent-teacher organization, etc., in your social media promotion so that your reach goes even farther.

Connect with a local elementary and/or middle school's math, history, or science department. Use the 80th Anniversary as a springboard to explain Civil Air Patrol STEM Kits and curricula, including textbooks that are available to Aerospace Education Members (AEM). If conditions do not allow face-to-face interaction, leave a STEM Kit and a "door prize entry" box to be placed in the teacher's lounge. Give away an Aerospace Education membership or a STEM Kit to those who enter. Provide the contact information to your squadron's Aerospace Education Officer for follow up with these potential AEMs.

News pegs

Promote CAP by tying into prevailing themes, making a "news peg" out of the occasion. For example, you can tie CAP's cadet physical fitness program into summer activities – using the concern about children's learning loss and a lack of physical activity during the summer. As children are going back to school, you can promote CAP's educational opportunities, including flight scholarships and other educational advancement opportunities. (Be sure to check the month-by-month celebration calendar toward the end of this guide and on the [80th Anniversary Resources](#) page for more 'news pegs'.)

Publicity

News is not just limited to newspapers, radio and TV anymore. Today there is a host of social media channels.

You might email a news release to a reporter but imbed a photo or two, include a link to your unit's web page and attach a [CAP Fact Sheet](#). Modify the same news release and post it to your unit's web page and/or Facebook page and link to it on your Twitter page.

News releases

Try to schedule your anniversary news to appear in the local newspaper a week or two before the actual events, on the anniversary date and/or at the beginning of Civil Air Patrol Week. A sample news release for an open house or Anniversary celebration is found at the [80th Anniversary Resources](#) page.

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

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

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

News release format

Refer to the pre-written examples at the [80th Anniversary Resources](#) page for proper news release format. Photos should be included whenever possible. Photos should be saved as a JPEG file (.jpg extension), taken and saved as a high-resolution file, with little or no compression. Include the latest edition of the Civil Air Patrol boilerplate found on the [Public Affairs Toolkit](#) page.

Newspaper editorials

Visit the editorial editor, explain the history and mission of CAP and request that a brief editorial be written on CAP's anniversary. Provide background information, such as CAP anniversary history pamphlets located on the [CAP National History Program Resources](#) page.

Some small papers will publish submitted editorials called op-eds as well. Encourage your own long-term members to write about their Civil Air Patrol perspective over the past 5, 10, or 20 or more years. Assist them in crafting their letter to the editor, and submit the throughout the year leading to the 80th Anniversary.

PSAs

Some radio stations put free commercials on the air in the public service category. Hundreds of other worthy institutions are also seeking free airtime. A visit with the station's program or public service director to inform them of CAP's volunteer role and how it ties to the community may be the key to getting CAP's message on the air. Public Service Announcements suited to telling the Civil Air Patrol story have been written, recorded, and are found on the [80th Anniversary Resources](#) page.

Television

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

Social media

Social media is the generic term for nontraditional forms of communication that typically use email or web pages. Perhaps its best feature is its interactive capability. Social media often combines a variety of types of information — text, audio, video, animation, still photographs, etc. Detailed information on social media is available in the CAP social media guide.

http://www.capmembers.com/media/cms/SocialMediaGuidelines_CAE169A56801E.pdf

Hashtags Strengthen the Brand

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

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

Publications/web pages

Promote the anniversary in region, wing and squadron publications, web pages and newsletters—don't assume our members understand the significance of this anniversary. Include a brief history of CAP and publicize anniversary-related events here.

National Celebrations: “Day Of/Week Of/Month Of” Celebrations

Piggyback on other “National Day Of/National Week Of/Month Of” celebrations, following the guidelines below OR using the online calendar found here: <https://nationaldaycalendar.com/what-day-is-it/> These ideas, arranged chronologically through the year, are designed to jog the thought processes. There is a clear reason to celebrate and get the attention of the local media or other entities mentioned previously, and a link to the mission (Emergency Services, Aerospace Education and Cadet Programs) can be made as we recruit and retain members during our 80th anniversary year. During the “National Day of...” or “National Week of...” use common hashtags to link your CAP content to the national celebration. For best practices, tie these “National Day Of” celebrations to your own unit’s activities or members.

April 2021:

ES: 5th National ‘Read a Road Map’ Day

CP: 22nd National Earth Day

National Volunteer Month

Keep America Beautiful Month

May 2021:

CP: 1st National Physical Fitness Day

AEM: 4th National Teacher Appreciation Day

AE: 5th National Astronaut Day

AE: 7th National Space Day

ES: Hurricane Season Begins 5/15

AE: 24th National Aviation Maintenance

Technician Day

ES: National Water Safety Month

ES: National Emergency Medical Services Week

CP: National Memorial Day

June 2021:

CP: 14th Flag Day

ES: National Great Outdoors Month

July 2021:

CP: 4th Independence Day

ES: 14th National Tape Measure Day

AE: 24th National Amelia Earhart Day

August 2021:

AE: National Aviation Week, 15-21 Aug

CP: 19th National Aviation Day

September 2021:

CP: Labor Day

CP: 11th Patriot Day and National Day of Service

CP: 17th National POW/MIA Recognition Day

ES: 26th Situational Awareness Day

ES: National Preparedness Month

October 2021:

AE: 4-10: World Space Week

ES: 8-14: National Fire Prevention Week

AE: 16-22: Astronomy Week

November 2021:

AE: 8th: National STEM/STEAM Day

CP: 11th: Veterans Day

AE: Aviation History Month

December 2021:

1st: Civil Air Patrol Turns 80!!

7th: Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

18th: Wreaths Across America Day

Samples and Templates

The [80th Anniversary Resources](#) page includes links to templates for news releases and the sample proclamation. These can be modified to suit the needs of your unit. Ensure that you substitute your unit's full name.

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

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

End your news release with the stock boilerplate paragraph found on the [Public Affairs Toolkit](#) page. This is the sentence or paragraph at the end of the news release that explains to the reader what the organization is and what it does. The following is a good example of a boilerplate paragraph that could be used for any news release. This boilerplate paragraph is updated as needed. Before use, check that you are using the current version by going to:

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

There are coordinated and basic news releases available at the [80th Anniversary Resources](#) page for celebrating the Civil Air Patrol story without requiring as much work for the PAO. They include:

National Physical Fitness Day 5/1/2021	National Aerospace Week #2 9/17/2021
National Space Day 5/7/2021	National STEM/STEAM Day 11/8/2021
National Search and Rescue Week 5/16/2021	Open House
National Search and Rescue Week #2 5/22/2021	Virtual Open House
National Aviation Day 8/19/2021	CAP Sunday
National Leadership Day 9/4/2021	Visit to Local Civic Club
National Aerospace Week 9/12/2021	CAP Upcoming Event