



OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL COMMANDER
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CIVIL AIR PATROL
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AUXILIARY
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA 36112-6332

16 April 2020

Dear Civil Air Patrol Volunteers and Staff –

While I was reflecting on how Civil Air Patrol is navigating the stormy waters of COVID-19 I thought of this quote from John Maxwell, leadership guru: “Leadership is not about titles, positions or flowcharts. It is about one life influencing another.” How true. The COVID-19 seems so massive, so overwhelming, that by comparison what can you or I do about it? As Maxwell would tell us, what we do is reach out and influence just one person. And then another. And another. When we’re talking about an organization of some 66,000 members, that is a lot of positive influence!

How would this positive Civil Air Patrol influence manifest itself? Internally and externally. By internally, I think of the positive influence that each can have on one another. I’ve previously written about “engagement,” reaching out to one another to ensure that each of our members is doing okay. My engagement with you has inspired me, helping me, positively influencing me to be able to carry on and do what I need to do in CAP. I am hopeful that you, each of you, receive that same type of inspiration, positive influence, and encouragement from others in CAP. Together, one at a time, we can help, influence, inspire one another so that we can continue to not only persevere, but to excel despite the challenges we face.

In contrast, how would Civil Air Patrol exert positive influence externally, one person at a time? I can think of two ways. First, we positively influence others through the missions we are performing in our communities, states, and nation. One at a time, we are helping someone to receive needed food supplies, personal protection equipment, the transporting of test kits, or even just a friendly hello spoken through our mask. Second, for all of us, including those of us who are not supporting Civil Air Patrol missions, we are role models for others – whether family members, friends, or strangers in our communities – for being calm, compassionate, kind, and proactive in offering a helping hand (virtual, of course!).

As individuals, it seems impossible for us to make a meaningful difference. Yet together, positively influencing others one person at a time, we as Civil Air Patrol are mighty. We can, and we are, making a difference every day. Let us continue doing what we do best, but perhaps with a slight twist. We need to protect ourselves first so we can stay healthy and strong to serve others. May we remain positive, smile brightly, serve cheerfully, train always, and we’ll get through this together. And if you need a little inspiration yourself, your CAP family is only a call, video chat, or text away.

May we in Civil Air Patrol be known for being caring of others and proactive in our seeking to serve. As the graphic illustrates, may we “Keep Calm and CAP.” That is, Caring And Proactive.

Sincerely,

MARK E. SMITH
Major General, CAP



KEEP CALM AND CAP

(CARING & PROACTIVE)



GoCivilAirPatrol.com

