



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

23 April 2020

"Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today." Thích Nhất Hạnh

Dear Civil Air Patrol Volunteers and Staff –

"Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today." Thích Nhất Hạnh

Hope. That small glimmer of light on the horizon that perhaps the COVID-19 pandemic is peaking and even diminishing in some areas of our nation. It gives me hope that perhaps sometime soon we can begin slowly, carefully, lifting the restrictions we are currently operating under. At the senior leader level, we are engaging subject matter experts to help us shape what our actions should be going forward. Most likely, what we craft will be a set of organization-wide directives that are important for all of us to follow, along with criteria that wing commanders can follow for establishing an appropriate level of participation at the wing level. I believe this approach will be wise because the COVID-19 pandemic is playing out in different scenarios on different timelines across the country, defeating the effectiveness of a "one size fits all" set of directives for all of Civil Air Patrol. I, ahem, hope to have our new set of directives to you within two weeks. Rest assured that our directives will be tightly focused on the safety of our people.

I can't help but to touch on the subject of hope again, given the quote I led off with. I know that this gets philosophical, but I am a big believer in the power of hope. Hope is a condition of the heart and of the spirit. Having hope that things will get better is a powerful thing. Hope allows us to deal with today's hardships when we have even a glimmer of hope that tomorrow will be better. And, when that better tomorrow arrives, our hope is validated and strengthened, as is our ability to deal with the hardships we face during our next storm.

Have hope. We will not just endure the present storm, but we will emerge stronger, more resilient. We as individuals. We as Civil Air Patrol.

Thank you for being part of this amazing organization, and for doing your part to make a difference. And thank you for your hope. You inspire me as you inspire those around you.

Be well. Be safe. Be strong.

Sincerely,

MARK E. SMITH
Major General, CAP