

2008 Plan of Action

Public Affairs Group III – Texas Wing

Introduction

An active public affairs effort is necessary for the survival of any organization that depends on public and governmental support. Group III, Texas Wing enjoys a diverse structure that adequately addresses the three missions of our charter. As is common, only a few squadrons excel in all three. Such diversity results in some units that are more geared toward emergency services at the expense of aerospace education. Others may have a top-notch cadet program, and direct AE and ES activities to accommodate advancement for cadets. But regardless of the activity, Public Affairs is the thread that ties them all together, and presents the Group III story.

Phase I

Identifying The Problem

Most of the 17 squadrons in Group III have a PAO, though not all PAOs are equally active.

1. Overall, some squadrons need to have trained PAOs willing to commit some time to the PAO function. The position of squadron PAO is one of the least demanding, in that much of the work can be accomplished during off-duty time. However, it does require forethought and planning.
2. Preparing media releases and submitting articles to the Group III Newsletter is a fairly light task, yet from the perspective of the Group III PAO, the demonstrated somewhat limited willingness to participate does not reflect the true potential of the Group as a whole. In some cases, there might be a lack of interest or understanding at the unit level.
3. Although most squadrons have an assigned PAO with a CAPF 2A on file, the goal ought to be 100% success – that is, participation in the PA program.
4. CAP policy states that if no unit PAO is assigned to this duty, the job falls upon the unit commander. When this happens, the commander's limited time often goes to "more pressing matters."
5. It is recommended that unit commanders make a concerted effort to recruit and retain officers willing to serve in the unit PAO function.

Therefore, Group III's Phase I will concentrate on strengthening and further building the PAO Corps, using the ideas and materials presented in the following phases.

Phase II

Educating The Membership

To achieve 100% participation in the PA arena, Group III will support the squadrons by providing tools and encouragement to unit PAOs. The tools we envision include:

1. Offering a continuation of the PAO Boot Camp that was presented for the first time this year. As soon as practicable, we envision a hands-on approach to understanding and learning the *tricks of the trade*. Emphasis will be placed on unit PAOs achieving (a) at least Technician rating in the Career Track, and (b) Mission Information Officer (MIO) status.
2. The PAO Tool Kit found on the National Website http://www.capchannel.com/pao_toolkit contains a wealth of information and the tools to make the PAO function more appealing to our unit members. But this Tool Kit emphasizes National CAP. It is expected that Texas Wing will create a Texas Wing PAO Tool Kit – with emphasis on the Texas Wing area. This might include some or all of the following:
 - a. A five- to six-minute long PowerPoint Presentation that pictorially covers the three missions of CAP. This presentation could be used in new member recruitment as well as for use at public/civic organizational functions.
 - b. A six- to eight-minute video that depicts Texas Wing members in action. Emphasis might be on Search and Rescue and Disaster Relief, featuring aircrews and ground teams,

- mission bases, communications, and so on. This video could be made available on DVD format for unit use and distribution.
- c. A five- to six-minute video that emphasizes cadet activities, and the importance of cadets in carrying out the CAP missions.
 - d. Group III will prepare PDF hand-outs covering how to prepare a press release and current contact information for all media outlets in the Group III area.
 - e. Group III will prepare a guide explaining, "How To Set up a PAO Function," applicable at the unit level.
 - f. Group III will publish guidelines on creating and maintaining a unit newsletter.
3. Continue to feature a PAO support section in the Group III website, meant to assist squadron PAOs in the conduct of their work.
 4. Continue to publish a Group III Newsletter as an avenue to highlight PAO activity at the unit level.
 5. Assist unit PAOs in attaining Technician level and higher as described in the CAP Specialty Training Track 201 (PAO).
 6. Maintain a Group-wide list of all PAOs working on the various levels of professional career progression.
 7. Offer local, one-day training programs for interested PAOs, on an area basis. For instance: Austin Area, Dallas Area, and so on.
 8. Continued enhancement of the Group III website's PAO support pages, with additional items, such as:
 - a. Newsletter construction guide,
 - b. Press release construction guide,
 - c. PAO Specialty Training Track Pamphlet 201, PAO
 - d. Continuity Book guide.
 9. Creation and distribution of a Recruiting/Marketing Brochure
 10. Develop standard, easy-to-update media contact information.
 11. Conduct PAO Staff Assist Visits (SAVs)
 12. PAO information to be posted on the Group III web page, under "Public Affairs "
 - a. When applicable, link to current TXWG Supplement to CAPR 190-1 (PAO)
 - b. CAPP 201(CAP Specialty Training Track Guide - PAO)
 - c. Links to Texas Law Enforcement Agencies
 - d. Links to all media outlets in the Group III Area
 - e. CAP 65th Anniversary Planning Guide
 - f. Group III PAO Quick Guide
 - g. Group III "Where to send PAO Materials" Guide
 - h. Group III online Newsletter.
 13. The Group III PAO's duty is to instruct, educate and motivate – not to take over the individual unit's duty of the PAO function.
 - a. Group III is responsible for a comprehensive PAO program that will be available to all units in Group III.
 - b. The Group III PAO will provide training and mentorship, evenly, to all units.
 - c. Group III will also do its best to motivate the unit PAOs to attend the training offered.
 - d. The final decision to participate is strictly up to the unit member assigned to the PAO function and that unit's commander.
 - e. Each unit's success in the PA arena will be measured by the timeliness, quality and volume of its PA effort.

Phase III Follow Up

Your Group III PAO recognizes that these plans, materials and training are useless unless the squadrons receive consistent **follow up** and **follow through** from the Group PAO.

1. Your group PAO will make frequent contact with unit PAOs to ask questions and offer encouragement and technical assistance.

2. Your group PAO has spoken with or communicated via e-mail with PAOs who are reluctant for one reason or another to submit a news release – be it the uncertainty of whether the piece is accurate, well-composed, or written with grammar and spelling flawlessly executed. These concerns should not stop any PAO from submitting articles.
3. Your Group III PAO will offer encouragement, guidance and assistance to handle such misgivings. Editing the subordinate PAO's work is part of the Group PAO's job description.
4. Your Group III PAO is your first stop when seeking assistance. As Texas Wing is charged with supporting the groups, Group III is charged with supporting the squadrons individually.
5. You are essential to the success of our collective PA mission. Group III **needs** to get the word out!

Conclusion

Group III spans an area that goes roughly from Austin to Dallas and all points East. This is a **very** large territory, and therein lies part of the problem. The PAO Boot Camp is the perfect tool to inspire, educate and motivate unit PAOs. But for many volunteers the travel time to Paris, TX – and the week devoted to the effort – has proved to be a limiting factor. For this reason, it may be prudent to enlist the aid of some squadrons to assist in setting up training programs closer to home – their home. In short – it takes commitment and dedication to fulfill the CAP missions. Your Group PAO will do his very best to make the PAO function an attractive one. But we need the help of each Squadron's Command Staff to accomplish this goal.

At present, it is questionable whether funding will be available to underwrite any part of the above. It might be possible to assign mission status to other CAP functions, such as:

1. Cadet encampments
2. AE special programs
3. IG Training
4. Ground team training.
5. MIO training

Several months ago, a few cadets in another Wing got airsick, and inadvertently caused a Public Affairs disaster. This has been the source of considerable concern CAP-wide. It can happen here too – that's why Group III urgently needs a fully-trained PAO team – from Austin to Dallas, and all points East to the Louisiana state line.

Unit commanders and PAOs are asked to think about this: What are the benefits of a viable PAO program? Consider the following –

1. Consistent media coverage can be your best recruiting tool.
2. If you plan to approach community groups and businesses for financial support, one of the best marketing tools is a notebook full of press releases, a website with many attractive and well illustrated articles, and a large footprint on the Group III Newsletter, showcased in the company of what all the other squadrons in Group III are doing.
3. Personal satisfaction.
 - a. The PAO function can serve as a positive morale booster.
 - b. Your membership will point out with pride that the unit made the 6 o'clock news, or was featured in an article in the local newspaper.
 - c. Your members will be equally pleased with timely news online on the unit website, or great stories contributed to the Group III Newsletter.
 - d. Whatever articles are published online constitute a perfect and usable recruiting tool. The unit members themselves will send that URL to all their friends.

Additional Group III PAO Projects:

1. Update this Group III PAO Plan on a regular basis. It will be posted on the Group III PAO Support Page. Copies will be distributed to the Group III Command Staff, TXWG PAO and Command Staff, SWR PAO, and CAP National HQ/PA.

2. Be prepared for any USAF Graded SAREX or Wide Area SAREX, and conduct MIO training throughout the year towards that end.
3. Update and add material to the Group III web page, including the "Public Affairs" support page.
4. Obtain Group III-wide participation, aiming for a steady flow of content submissions for the Group III online Newsletter.
5. Encourage more interagency participation in joint training opportunities.
6. Encourage group-wide participation in CAP National events as announced.
7. Update as needed a Group III Specific Recruiting/Marketing Brochure.
8. Promote increased participation of Cadet PAOs in the group PA effort.
9. Contribute to the CAP TXWG PAO Boot Camp Sessions.
10. Encourage construction and use of the Group III Unit PAO Continuity Book.
11. Maintain a continuous flow of information, ideas, and suggestions with TXWG PAO, SWR PAO and CAP National HQ/PA. Keeping TXWG PAO, SWR and CAP National HQ informed on progress and accomplishments of the Group III, TXWG PAO program.
12. Facilitate the submission of more squadron material to CAP National HQ/PA for use on CAP News Online and publication in the CAP National "Volunteer" magazine.
13. Facilitate the submission of material to Wings Over Texas.
14. Encourage the submission of more material to the Texas Cadet website.
15. Disseminate all material of interest received from TXWG PAO, SWR PA and CAP National HQ/PA to Group III subordinate units.
16. Encourage Group III members to work with their local American Red Cross Chapter Disaster Response Team.
17. Create a Power Point presentation that all units can use during public presentations and CAP Level I orientations.
18. Continue the Group III-wide participation in the CAP Wreaths Across America Program.

Update the Group III web page "Public Affairs" section with the following, as available:

1. CAPR 190-1 CAP Public Affairs Program dated June 2007
2. CAP National Media Policy
3. Group III Newsletter submission guidelines
4. Group III Public Affairs Procedures Supplement to CAPR 190-1
5. E-TXWG Promotional Brochure
6. CAP National PAO Toolkit
7. TXWG 2007 PAO Plan
8. Where to find PAO materials
9. CAP PAO Specialty Training Track-201
10. TX statewide law enforcement and media links
11. CAP National's Planning Guides as available
12. TXWG PAO Quick Guide
13. Where to send your PAO material

Your Group III PAO is ready for you, and looks forward to working with you.

Capt Arthur E. Woodgate, Group III PAO, TXWG