

PUBLIC RELATIONS HANDBOOK



No area of activity is more vital to the success of the Air Cadet organization than the public information function. For this reason, every League member should assume responsibility for the continuing task of informing the Canadian public about the Air Cadet Movement – what it is and what it does.

The Air Cadet League PR Handbook is not designed as a course in journalism, public relations or radio and TV programming. Rather, it is intended as a “how-to-do-it” reference book, written in plain language, with emphasis on the “how” for Squadron Sponsoring Committees. However, by following the guidelines provided in this publication, an effective information program can be conducted, by League members.

This publication is produced by the Headquarters of the Air Cadet League of Canada.

Air Cadet League of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
KFZÄ VF
Tel: (613) 91 1-1111
Toll Free: 1-877-1-CAN-FLY
Fax: (613) 91 1-1111
E-Mail: info@aircadetleague.com
<http://www.aircadetleague.com>

INDEX

THE PRO	4
Know Your Product	4
Get to Know Your Contacts	4
Trust	4
What to Publicize.....	5
Be a Booster	5
THE MEDIA	5
NEWSPAPERS	6
The News Release	6
Writing the Release.....	7
Sample Release	7
News Release	8
Getting it Distributed	8
Beware of Don'ts	9
PHOTO JOURNALISM	9
Cropping	10
The Caption	11
Four Steps to Caption Writing.....	11
RADIO AND TELEVISION.....	12
News vs Public Service.....	12
Radio and TV News Style.....	13
The Radio and TV News Item	13
Spot Announcements.....	14
Sample Spot Announcements.....	14
YOUR NEWSMAN COMES TO YOU	15
How Does it Happen?	15
What is Newsworthy?.....	15
Check List for Visiting Media.....	15
DISPLAYS	16
Assembling your Display	16
Where to Put It	16
Display Check List.....	17
SPEECHES	17
THE INSIDE JOB	17
Bulletin Boards	17
Squadron Publications	18

THE PRO

The term PRO as used in this text means a Public Relations Official, whose responsibility is to keep the public fully informed on the activities of the Air Cadet League, Squadron or Sponsoring Committee, and to continuously impress upon the public conscience the fact that Air Cadet training is beneficial to the community.

It would, of course, be helpful if an individual could be found who had some experience in this field. The right person may be found on the local newspaper, radio or TV station, or perhaps in the public relations department of a local firm. However, in many of the most successful squadrons, an effective job has been done by people who are relatively inexperienced but interested and willing. And in a number of instances, a first-rate job is being done by the Air Cadets themselves.

KNOW YOUR PRODUCT

If you are to be successful in “selling” the Air Cadet program, you must become reasonably well informed about your product. It will help to know something of the history and accomplishments of the organization and you should have a clear idea of how the League-Service partnership works. You should be able to answer questions relating to the Air Cadet training program, special activities and qualifications for membership. In short, you should make yourself a reliable source of information – an expert on the Air Cadet League and Air Cadets. In this regard, we would recommend a careful reading of the Air Cadet League Policy and Procedures Manual.

GET TO KNOW YOUR CONTACTS

You know what stories you want to see and hear in the local media, so get to know the people in the media who are important to you.

First, know the person who is responsible for handling news in each medium in your area. In all probability they will be known as the News Editor. Check and find a time when they are not too busy and go and meet them. Ask for an introduction to the people on their staff who is directly responsible for collecting news or doing youth features. Invite them to pay an informal visit to the squadron and meet the squadron staff and committee members. After doing this, you will be more than just a name on a piece of paper, or a voice on the other end of the telephone. You are a person whom they know and recognize, and your stories or submissions will have more meaning for them.

The more media people you know, the better your chances are of having your squadron well publicized. While it is always desirable to know the publisher and station managers or the city editors and news directors, do not ignore the ordinary newspaperman – he or she is the one you will most often be in contact with and the one who will be coming to you for information.

TRUST

The people you have now met are the people who decide what is news so far as their medium is concerned. If they don't print or air your story, then it just wasn't news to them – on that day anyway. Don't argue with them or pressure them to get your material used; you will be wasting their time and yours. And don't be disappointed if your story ends up in the wastebasket – maybe the next one will click.

Remember too that news people, like yourself, are busy people. They have busy hours and sometimes busy weeks. Don't drop in for a chat just before newstime, or expect too much attention when a public event of major importance is being held in the area.

WHAT TO PUBLICIZE

Stories for the news media can cover a multitude of items. The following (incomplete) list will give you some ideas:

- Cadet community activities and projects
- Presentation of awards
- Wings presentations
- Safe Driving Clinics for Air Cadets
- Promotions of Officers or Air Cadets
- Retirements, with or without ceremonies
- Annual Reviews
- Squadron social events
- Results of contests or sports events

The foregoing are "timed" or new stories with a "right now" element. But there is another kind of story that has no time element – in other words it is an item or incident involving people that will make interesting reading at any time. For example:

- A widely traveled or interesting personality who was a member of the squadron;
- A special feature on one of the training subjects – first aid, gliding, swimming, photography;
- Any type of human-interest story.

There are hundreds of story ideas – it's merely a matter of making sure that your story is worth publicizing, then taking whatever steps may be needed to get the story out to the news media.

BE A BOOSTER

Working on the "drop of water" principle, each of us, as individuals, can do much in the way of creating a public relation favorable to the Air Cadet Movement. Proudly wear the 50th Anniversary Air Cadet lapel badge or an Air Cadet League blazer crest. Tell your friends about your work with Air Cadets; get them involved if at all possible. Be a booster for the local squadron and the Air Cadet Movement as a whole. You may be delighted with the results.

THE MEDIA

The term "media" means the avenues through which public relations messages are transmitted: Newspapers, Radio and Television. It is important to understand how each compliments the other in providing news coverage.

NEWSPAPERS

Newspapers provide in-depth reporting with considerably more detail than can be expected from radio or television. As a written communication, newspapers have the advantage of being visual and permanent. Some of the larger newspapers have more than one edition each day and as a result, each edition sets a deadline or time limit which must be met by reporters and editors.

RADIO

Radio is probably the more demanding news medium in terms of deadline. Most radio stations carry news reports every half-hour, each of which is usually updated or varied from the previous report. Reports are very brief, sometimes no more than a sentence. You should remember that radio stations require the news NOW, even though only the most important facts are needed. The telephone is understandably important in aiding radio stations to meet their deadlines.

TELEVISION

Television incorporates the visual and audio advantages of radio and newspaper reporting but lacks the permanency of a newspaper. Television reporters gather news much like a newspaper reporter for an "edition", and considerable use is made of film and still photographs to support the report. Most television stations have two newscasts each weekday.

NEWSPAPERS

Local newspapers, especially smaller community papers, do not have enough personnel on their staffs to cover every likely story. Consequently, they will welcome well-presented material from the Air Cadet PRO. After all, it is the cadet's mother, father, sister and brother, who make up the paper's readership.

It must be remembered, however, that not all the stories put out will be genuine news items. Many will be items whose publication makes little or no difference to the newsmen. But if you are conscientious, if you prepare your stories carefully, you'll succeed in getting the majority of the latter into print. Thus, you will earn for your squadron additional goodwill, much of which can be chalked up to your own skill and initiative.

THE NEWS RELEASE

As the term implies, a news release is a release of prepared information to the news media – in this instance, to newspapers.

A newspaper release must be prepared carefully, not only because it must be understandable to the public but because it must first sell itself to the person at the paper who decides if it shall be used. The less rewriting or revising the release needs, the better chance it has of being printed.

Prepare your release as follows:

- Use typewritten or mimeographed copy on standard size letter paper, either 8 ½ x 11", or 8 ½ x 14" (sample attached)
- At the top of the page, identify the committee or squadron, and show the name and telephone number of the person to contact for further information;
- "Slug" the story – that is, add a short title, not a headline, that will tell the editor what is it about;
- Leave about 2 ½ to 3" below this heading and begin the story;
- Leave about a two-inch margin on the left side of the page and use one side of the paper only;
- Always double or triple-space – never single-space.

WRITING THE RELEASE

Unlike story writing or speech writing, a news story's main points – the climax – are presented first and the other events are presented in order of importance. This allows the editor to chop off paragraphs of the story from the bottom up (depending upon space available in the paper) without spoiling the news readability of the story.

The lead paragraph of a good news story should contain information as to WHO is involved, WHAT is happening, WHERE, WHEN it is happening and WHY. These, in Journalism, are called the five W's... WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN and WHY, sometimes adding HOW, if applicable.

Try and use as many of these five W's as you can in the first paragraph or "lead". In the newspaper business, it is a common axiom that "a good lead (a good first paragraph) means a good story".

Where possible, a story should be "dressed up" with a direct quotation. And if not a direct quote, the next best thing is an indirect one.

Remember that every positive and constructive statement – anything that the newspaper does not have the authority to say itself – must be attributed to some individual. (For example: "The Air Cadets contemplate no change in their training program in the foreseeable future", Captain I.M. Proud, Commanding Officer of 46 Squadron said today.) Never leave the authorship of a "who says so" kind of statement in doubt. Always identify the person who says so with his or her proper title. Always give first and last names, or at least one initial plus last name.

SAMPLE RELEASE

Let us say that the Commanding Officer of your squadron is notified that General Visitorious is going to carry out the Annual Ceremonial Review of the squadron on the evening of May 2, 1998. This story is worth a news release. Following is one way it could be handled. A one-column photo of General Visitorious should accompany the release, if available.

NEWS RELEASE

46 (Centennial) Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Cadets
B.E. Ready, Information Officer
Telephone: 235-1409

AIR FORCE GENERAL TO 50TH ANNUAL CEREMONIAL REVIEW OF LOCAL AIR CADET SQUADRON

Anytown, April 29, 1998 – General R.J. Visitorious, Commander, 1 Canadian Air Division, will visit Anytown on Saturday, May 2, in order to carry out the Annual Ceremonial Review of No. 46 (Centennial) Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Cadets. The Squadron Commanding Officer, Captain I.M. Proud, announced today that the inspection will be on Saturday evening at the James Street Armoury and will mark the high point of the squadron's 50th training year.

The inspection will commence at 7:30 p.m. with a ceremonial parade and march past in the Armoury; General Visitorious will be accompanied on the reviewing stand by Mr. Percival Jones, President of the Citizen's Club of Boysville, which sponsors No. 46 Squadron.

Following the formal inspection, awards will be presented to outstanding cadets in the squadron and there will be displays covering such squadron activities as first aid, physical training and precision drill.

Immediately after the parade, which is expected to last for approximately one-and-a-half hours, refreshments will be served by the Mothers' Auxiliary of No. 46 Squadron and on opportunity will be provided for parents to meet the Reviewing Officer as well as the adult personnel serving with the local squadron.

Release No. 72

-30-

GETTING IT DISTRIBUTED

Your release has been prepared, checked and it is ready for distribution to the media in your area. It can be faxed, delivered by hand or mailed – address it to the city editor, news editor or news director by title and name (if you have it).

If your release is delivered personally, leave it with the receptionist, or if there isn't one, on the city editor's desk. Don't waste his or her time talking about your release. The piece of paper should tell your story and answer all questions. If there are other questions, you have given them a name and telephone number where additional information may be obtained.

CHECK LIST FOR NEWSPAPER RELEASE

- Heading in order?
- Slug?
- Lead paragraph interesting?
- Who, What, Where, When, Why (Maybe How)?
- Is typed (or mimeographed) neatly?
- All names spelled correctly, titles and ranks correct, facts and figures exact?
- Checked and cleared by CO or Chairman, if necessary?
- Read it once more for possible errors.

There may, of course, be occasions when the news release should not be used. When something of immediate concern is involved, telephone the facts to the newspaper. Or, if the Prime Minister has just agreed to come and pin a medal on an Air Cadet at your squadron tomorrow, don't just stick that sort of information in the afternoon mail – get on the phone right away.

BEWARE THE DON'TS

Here is a quick guide to the right road in handling news releases and in dealing with the press:

- Don't lie and quibble with half-truths.
- Don't evade.
- Don't let stories based on rumor get by.
- Don't insist on corrections or retractions if a mistake has been printed.
- Don't complain to his superior if a reporter makes a mistake.
- Don't expect free "plugs".
- Don't ask for clippings.
- Don't show partiality in dealing with reporters.
- Don't reveal to other newsmen information given to you by one of them (after all they are competitors).
- Don't submit a story lacking in news or feature interest to the newspaper. If you have any doubt about a story, query the paper first.
- Don't deliver news releases or visit an editorial room at deadline time.
- Know your newspaper's deadlines and go when the pressure is least.
- Don't send more than one copy of the same release to a newspaper or to more than one individual on the same newspaper.

PHOTO JOURNALISM

There is a saying that one picture is worth a thousand words. This can be true. However, there is the other extreme – the photograph that takes a thousand words to explain what it is all about.

A photograph is really a release in pictorial form. It can be about the same subject as one of your news stories and it should be able to "stand alone" as a picture story, or be used with the more complete written story. The secret of its standing alone is how good the picture is and how well the accompanying caption or cutlines are written.

For newspapers printed by photo-offset, the actual photograph is pasted on a page to be photographed. Find out what size photos the newspapers in your area require and their method of reproduction.

Here is a simple checklist for getting photographs that are suitable for newspaper reproduction:

Move in close and focus on the subject, composing your photo in the smallest possible space. Do not take a group shot of ten people when two of them will tell the story. Avoid groups of more than four people as much as possible. Keep the subjects close together so the picture can be reproduced in one or two newspaper columns; space in a newspaper is always at a premium.

The best news picture is one that portrays actions (something happening – people doing things) and does not appear to be posed. Where possible, get some sort of Air Cadet or squadron identification in the background but do not let it intrude or appear incongruous.

Shoot the picture with clarity and composition in mind. Do not aim for artistic effect and trick shots. Put light subjects against dark backgrounds and vice versa. A blue or green uniform with a blackboard as a background may be lost.

Film is relatively cheap. Shoot as many pictures as you can at the time. Pick the best negatives for printing.

Daily newspapers prefer single-weight glossy prints, either 5 x 7 or 8 x 10 inches. Weekly newspapers prefer a two-column glossy print. As each column in a paper is roughly 2 inches wide, width of the prints should always be in multiples of 2 inches.

Give the prints to the newspaper and keep the negative. Do not ask for the return of your print.

Submit exclusive photos only if the editor asks for them or if you have queried him first about a photo-feature. By all means, refrain from submitting duplicate photo-features to competitive publications at the same time. For routine "mug" shots of squadron visitors, this is permissible. Routine award photographs are all right to duplicate also; these are more news than photo-features.

Don't forget, photographs can be sent to television stations. They frequently use still-pictures as a back up for a routine item of Air Cadet news. However, TV stations prefer a double-weight matte or semi-matte finish to eliminate glare and reflections. The print should be horizontal in shape in a ratio of 3 to 5; the preferred size is 6 x 10, mounted.

The following "don'ts" will help to ensure professional quality photographs:

- Don't shoot until you have clearly in mind what you want to get.
- Don't try to fake a picture; it will catch up with you.
- Don't resort to "cheesecake" or cheap, sentimental approaches.
- Don't take pictures of Air Cadets or Service personnel in untidy, improper or unauthorized uniforms.

CROPPING

Pictures selected to appear in print can be improved by cropping – accentuating the centre of interest by eliminating those portions of a picture which do not contribute to the desired effect. Normally, photos will be cropped by the photo editor of the newspaper or TV station. However, the amount of print cropping required can be reduced if the photographer:

- Decides whether the picture is best made to a horizontal or vertical format;
- Moves in close to the subject and fills the viewfinder;
- Runs his or her eyes around the outside edge of the viewfinder to ensure that extraneous subjects (light switches, etc.) do not show.

When cropping your own photo, keep the following points in mind:

- Never cut people off at the knees. If people in the picture must be cropped, then cut them at the waist.
- Never cut off the tops of people's heads. Photo editors will sometimes do this in exceptional circumstances but the prints they receive should have full heads.
- If it is necessary to crop a person closely, avoid cutting at a joint, such as a wrist or ankle, because this creates an awkward, disturbing effect.
- Always leave the photo editor something to crop off. This is good psychology even if he or she is only left 1/4 inch around the edges.

THE CAPTION

The caption informs – gives the reader additional information about the story told by the picture. The caption directs – takes the reader's eye back into the picture as often as possible. The caption connects – links the picture content with some previous experience of the reader.

Remember that, generally, a good photo only requires a small caption; a poor photo requires a long caption. Writing the caption means making up the differences between the amount of information the photo conveys and the total amount desired by the reader.

FOUR STEPS TO CAPTION WRITING

Step One – Study the photograph. Study it in detail – the people, the expressions on their faces, their hands and the background. Only after you know the photograph intimately will you be able to write about it.

Step Two – Prepare an outline. On a separate sheet of paper, list individually all the information needed to produce a complete story. Ask yourself the questions a reader might ask himself when he sees the photo. When this outline is complete, number the individual items according to their importance.

Step Three – Describe the action in the first sentence of the caption, and use the present tense.

Step Four – Finish the caption from the outline, trying to place the important points in prominent positions and using a choice of words understood by everyone. Edit and tighten.

Caption Pointers

- Identify all persons and all subjects who are clearly identifiable and pertinent to the picture.
- Identify all persons from left to right, seated and standing.
- Ensure that individuals can be identified by the reader, i.e. Captain R.E. Brown, son of Mr. and Mrs. R.R. Brown, 123 Carling Avenue, Ottawa.
- Always write out the rank in full at the first mention.
- Don't assume the reader knows as much about the event as you do.
- Don't write a caption that disagrees with the picture.
- Don't rely on details to identify the subject (details may be lost in the reproduction process).
- Remember What, Where, How, When, Why and Who.
- Be factual, brief, and write in short, tight punchy style.

Avoid These Cliches:

Pictured here is...	Posing for... or Posing here is...
This photo shows...	Smiling happily at...
Shown above is...	Standing by is...
Here is...	Snapped in a candid mood is...
Looking on is...	While Mr...looks on...
The action here depicts...	

The finished caption should be typed up double or triple-spaced, on a single sheet of paper (similar to a brief news release).

Fasten the caption below the print, with cellulose tape on the back, and fold it over the face of the photo. Do not use paper clips or staples. Place the print with a piece of stiffening cardboard in an envelope marked "DO NOT BEND". The photo is now ready for mailing or delivery.

Picture not printed? If the picture you sent in isn't printed, think about it. Did it possess the photographic quality of contrast to make a good cut? Did it tell a story of news or feature interest that the public would want? You must learn to be objective; place yourself in the photo editor's chair. Would you use the picture you sent? A photograph may be submitted with a news release to give the editor the choice of using either or both. In any event, your story should contain all necessary details and the photo captions must have sufficient detail to stand-alone.

RADIO AND TELEVISION

Radio has no equal as a means of reaching the greatest number of people quickly, simultaneously and dramatically. Television, equally appealing to mass audiences, adds pictures to the sound and gives its audiences a sense of seeing and hearing things happen. As a PRO, you should make use of the media to tell the story of Air Cadets to the vast listening and viewing audience reached by radio and television.

NEWS VS PUBLIC SERVICE

Radio and television newscasts are intended to provide a spot description of the event as soon as possible after it happens. This means the station wants the news story now – not three days or a week later than the event. If you think you have a good Air Cadet news story, call the station News Director. He will let you know if they are interested. Make sure you have all the facts written down before you call. Your news story should include the answers to "Who, What, Why, When, Where and How". If you have an Air Cadet event coming up that you feel would make a good news story, inform the News Director. They may send a reporter or a cameraman to cover the event.

What is it meant by public service? This is non-sponsored radio or TV time devoted to public service announcements and programs. Recruiting, announcements of Air Cadet meetings and spot announcements promoting Air Cadet activities are normally carried as public service time. Some units may be fortunate enough to get anywhere from five minutes to 30 minutes of public service time for special programming such as panel discussions, occasional Air Cadet presentations and special features – all donated by the local station.

The Canadian Radio and Television Commission (CRTC) encourages radio and television stations to schedule a certain amount of public service announcements and programs. However, keep in mind that the broadcasting media is under no obligation to grant time to any specific group. The Air Cadets are competing for valuable public service time with many other organizations. You must make yourself known to the radio and television Program

Directors and News Directors if you are to be successful in getting public service time for Air Cadets. Try to meet these individuals and brief them about the Air Cadet League and its program. It may help to get your news items, public service spots, tapes, slides and film clips on the air.

Before approaching the radio or TV station, determine whether your subject matter is a news story or a public service announcement. If it is an item of public service, hand it to the Program Director. If it is news, hand it to the News Director.

RADIO AND TV NEWS STYLE

By style, we mean the way we use words to tell a story. Radio and TV news style is dictated by the need for getting and holding attention. Factual clarity is the quality most desirable in radio and TV writing of any kind. This is given added emphasis when we consider that even the clearest story on the air may be misunderstood when only heard once and at a time when the listener's attention may be diverted by other noises. Once announced, the news story is gone. The story, therefore, must be perfectly clear if it is to avoid the possibility of being misunderstood or misinterpreted.

Since radio and TV news is spoken and not read, long sentences with a great number of details and modifying clauses tend to confuse both listeners and announcers. Experience has shown that normal radio-TV speech sounds best when sentences average 17 words in length. This is not an inflexible rule. Vary the length in order to avoid monotony. On the whole, sentences should be short and in detail. The thought in the sentences – concise, complete and clearly expressed – is the governing factor.

The words you use must be carefully chosen for their descriptive color and clear meaning. Don't use long words when short one will do. The ordinary words or everyday language are always preferable to the long fancy ones that you have to look up in the dictionary.

The sum total of these points on radio and TV news style is – simplicity. The whole idea of style is to make the news so clear, easy to say, brief and to the point that it will be immediately understood when the words are heard over the receiver.

THE RADIO AND TV NEWS ITEM

As with newspapers, the first or lead sentence of a radio-TV news item describes the central news facts of the story. There is no time for non-essential details. The average length of a radio news item is 30 seconds air time or 75-80 words. Radio and TV news is written concisely, giving only those facts that are necessary to understand the news value of the story.

The following checklist will help you to prepare a news release for radio or TV use:

- Try to gain the attention of the listener in the opening or lead sentence – but don't start a radio or TV news item with a question or it will sound like a commercial.
- Tell the rest of your story in short sentences containing an average of 17 words. However, for the sake of variety, occasional longer sentences are necessary.
- Use connectives like "however", "therefore", "moreover", "yet", "nevertheless", etc., when necessary to provide easy flow between thoughts or facts.
- Be sure that all quotations are clearly identified as such.
- Use colorful descriptive words and phrases. Don't mention ages unless they have news value in themselves.
- Don't exaggerate the facts or get sensational.
- Eliminate all unnecessary details and stick to the essential facts.
- If the omission of a phrase or sentence does not affect the clarity of the news item, keep it out.
- When your copy is completed, read it aloud. The ultimate test is how it sounds, not how it looks on paper.

All news items are rewritten by the news departments of broadcast stations, so stick to the facts and do not try to complicate their job. A simple, concise statement of fact will stand a greater chance of being aired than the three-page masterpiece of literary prose.

SPOT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Most spot announcements are 10, 20, 30 or 60 seconds in length. Spots of up to 30 seconds are the most likely to be used.

For radio, the copy should be timed to run 10 seconds (approximately 25 words), 20 seconds (50 words), 30 seconds (75 words), or 60 seconds (150 words).

For television, the copy should complement the visual presentation, not compete with it. Write fewer words for a TV spot of 10, 20, or 30 seconds that you would for a radio spot of the same length. Make sure the copy “fits” the slide, photograph or film clip. A good rule to follow is to provide one slide or photograph for each 10-second TV spot, two slides for a 20-second TV spot, etc.

The following suggestions will be helpful guides to writing spot announcements.

- When you have chosen an idea, introduce it with an effective first sentence, then fill in the details you want the listener to act upon. Try to include the subject matter and a reference to your squadron in the first sentence.
- The middle portion of the spot is an explanation or continuation of the idea mentioned in the opening sentence. In the closing sentence, mention your squadron again. (This applies to spots 20 seconds and over.) In 10-second spots, you have time only for your squadron name and the subject matter.
- Keep sentences short. Use familiar words and expressions. Choose words that express the exact meaning desired. Do not be in a hurry to write your spot.
- Give it some thought. Do not hyphenate words at the end of lines. Use punctuation marks as “breather” points for the announcer. Time your spots.
- If you can read your spot smoothly, without stumbling or gasping for breath, you may expect the same of the announcer who puts it on the air. If your friends understand your reading of the announcement, then you may expect the listening audience to understand the announcer’s rendition of it.
- Copy should always be typewritten, double or tripled spaced, using one side of the paper only. If possible, try to see that each station receives an original copy.

SAMPLE SPOT ANNOUNCEMENTS

30 seconds

Announcer: Here is a message for all of you young people who are thinking about the future. Since 1941, the Air Cadet League of Canada has been offering young people a chance to prepare for future careers in aviation – and in many other walks of life. Air Cadets can qualify for flying, gliding and technical courses, along with mind-broadening trips to Britain, the Continent, the United States and elsewhere. These great opportunities are available at the Air Cadet Squadron in anytown.

30 seconds

Sound: In-Flight chatter with aircraft tower

Announcer: What you are hearing is pilot talk...the exciting language of aviation...

Announcer: If you are between the ages of twelve and eighteen, you can learn this language – and even earn your pilot’s wings – by joining Canada’s Air Cadets. It might just be the smartest move you ever made.

YOUR NEWSMAN COMES TO YOU

So far we have talked about getting news out to the media. But there is another side to it – sometimes the media will come to you. If your story is of sufficient interest and you have approached the media in the proper way, a newspaper may send out a reporter, a photographer or both. A radio station may send a radio reporter; a TV station could send a reporter, a motion picture cameraman or both. It is even possible that radio and TV stations will broadcast direct from your unit but more often they will record on tape or film and broadcast later.

HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

When the press has something they want to see you about, you will hear from them and you must handle them as they come, even if they pick an hour that is not convenient for you. But in Air Cadet work, that will not happen very often, if at all. More often, you have something you want them to see or someone you want them to hear... so, to get them out to your unit, you have to call in advance and explain what is going to happen that will make it worthwhile for them. You have your list of contacts and they are the people to notify. If you can give them a week's notice, fine. If you can give them 48 or 24 hours, do so. But do not just pick up the telephone and expect them to appear magically.

WHAT IS NEWSWORTHY?

Each newspaper, radio and TV station judges news differently. Ordinarily, they will not all turn out for any one thing you could offer. But make sure that when you ask them it is something newsworthy. For instance:

- A very important visitor who has something newsworthy to say.
- The arrival of a group of Exchange Cadets from other countries.
- Dedication of a new Banner or Ensign that might involve a prominent local personality, such as the Mayor.
- An Open House, air show or public demonstration.

In addition to straight news coverage, do not overlook the possibilities of developing a feature story for newspaper, radio and TV. Many times the professional reporter, the sound specialist, and the motion picture expert will come out and develop an excellent feature story for their media. And more often than not, they will do a much better job of it than you could ever do – simply because they are in the business professionally and can come up with ideas that never would have occurred to you. Their treatment of the story will be directed to the needs of their newspaper or station and will almost invariably be used.

CHECK LIST FOR VISITING MEDIA

Is the event newsworthy?

Have you given them as much notice as possible?

Have you prepared a short, factual statement about the event, including the proper names, initials and titles of the people involved?

Is the squadron staff prepared to meet them and answer questions?

Is there someone on hand who knows about electrical outlets for radio and TV people?

DISPLAYS

A display is a piece of literature, sign, poster or number of objects set up so that people can look at them and get the “message” they are attempting to convey. Ordinarily, displays are most effective when planned around a single idea. Don’t try to get too much across to the public at one time. The idea must be simple and easily understood.

Next time you’re at the supermarket, look around at the food displays and the advertising signs. Or take a good look at highway billboards. You’ll find the best of them use no tricks or strange words or designs to detract from the primary message. You’ll note that the most striking ones have few words and simple illustrations.

ASSEMBLING YOUR DISPLAY

There will be occasions when you will want to put together a display for Open House, exhibitions in local areas, etc. The first step is to muster all the talent you can find in your squadron – talent with paint brush and a lettering pen – and if you’re lacking such talent around you, get busy and recruit some.

Bear in mind these three methods:

Borrowing – Frequently, Service Bases, merchants and other individuals will loan appropriate materials and interesting objects for displays.

Tying – In – Sometimes business firms will provide materials for displays or actual displays themselves if they have some way of associating their product with what you are trying to accomplish.

Scrounging – If you’ve done something for somebody or some business house in the past, they might be willing to help you this time. And don’t forget that grocery stores, banks, and other businesses frequently discard ad displays; if the basic design is appropriate, they can often be reused, providing scissors, paste and a little imagination are available.

Most important, make your display appear as crisp and workmanlike and (or professional) as you possibly can. Sloppy or careless work implies carelessness or inefficiency on the part of the Air Cadet Organization as a whole and your squadron in particular.

WHERE TO PUT IT

Place the display where as many people as possible will see it. Merchants will often donate space in windows, on counters and walls, but don’t expect them to offer the space to you – go out and ask for it. Local fairs, airshows and exhibitions are ideal places for Air Cadet displays of all kinds.

If a merchant has donated space on a continuing basis for an Air Cadet display see that you don’t leave it around so long that people take it for granted. Find other ways of expressing your ideas and keep something new in front of the public.

Remember that you are advertising the Air Cadet Organization, so give your display the prestige it deserves. The person who is loaning you the space will appreciate it too. They’ll get the feeling that they are contributing something worthwhile to the welfare of the community if the display is a good one.

DISPLAY CHECK LIST

- Do you have one single idea to put across?
- Is your message simple, direct and easy to understand?
- Is it an attention-getter?
- Is it neat?
- Is it in a tidy location?
- Is it placed where people can see it easily?
- Are all facts, names and phone numbers quite legible?
- Does it tie in with other publicity on same subject?
- Are you changing it often enough?

SPEECHES

This is one of the most widely used means of publicizing the aims and objectives of the Air Cadet program. Service Clubs, Home and School associations, cadet and parent banquets, and similar gatherings provide almost unlimited opportunities to speak about Air Cadets.

For the guidance of speakers, League Headquarters has prepared extensive background material which can be obtained for the asking.

You may find that senior cadets will prove to be your most effective speakers, and this applies particularly to those who have completed Exchange Visits trips, or Flying Scholarships, etc. Offer your speaker's services early, for many program chairmen make up a whole year's schedule before the season starts – and keep in mind the Ten Commandments of Public Speaking:

- I Do not commence your speech with apologies.
- II Do not fill your speech with statistics.
- III Do not be overly sentimental.
- IV Do not exaggerate.
- V Do not be sarcastic or unfair.
- VI Do not be dull.
- VII Do not murder the English language.
- VIII Do not wander from your subject.
- IX Do not steal the time of your audience.
- X Do not be long-winded.

THE INSIDE JOB

BULLETIN BOARDS

People work better when they know what the score is and why it is so.

Use the bulletin boards available to your squadron. They are useful to put across messages and information to everyone connected with the squadron. But remember not to leave the same notice on display too long. If you do, everyone will get out of the habit of looking at the bulleting board for news.

SQUADRON PUBLICATIONS

The surest and most interesting way to present squadron activities to cadets, officers and instructors is by means of a squadron publication which can be mailed to their homes or distributed on training nights. The PRO may wish to assume the job of editor himself, or there may be an aspiring cadet journalist who would like the job, with the PRO as advisor.

A squadron newspaper or magazine can be published whether you are financially solvent or not. It depends on your determination to publish, your initiative and ingenuity.

It must first be realized that a squadron newspaper or bulletin is one of the basic tools of internal information. Many squadrons today have monthly or bimonthly papers. Some are commercially printed on high-quality stock. Others are simple, mimeographed papers which serve the same purpose. It is not uncommon for a local business firm interested in the Air Cadet program to back you financially in publishing a squadron newspaper.

Some industrious squadrons set up a editorial and advertising staff, like that of a commercial newspaper, and solicit ads which help pay for production of the publication. This is a field in which you must use caution, because it is easy to get in over your head financially.

Every effort must be made to maintain the squadron newspaper as a primary source of information to members of the squadron. It must continue to give emphasis to local news. Amusements, non-Air Cadet activities, pin-up artwork and other entertaining features should be avoided. You should use every inch of your publication (with the exception of ad space) to publicize Air Cadet activities, particularly those of squadron interest.

You must use discretion in the use of material in your paper and be careful not to reprint from other publications without written permission. Material already printed in other publications is protected by copyright laws. Permission to reprint from a commercial publication is usually easily obtained by writing to the publisher. Any material appearing in League bulletins and publications may be reprinted at any time without written permission. This also applies to Service release materials. No permission is needed.

Although a squadron newspaper is intended primarily for internal use, some additional copies should always be printed for outside distribution to the news media, squadron supporters, civic and school officials, etc. Used in this manner, the squadron newspaper can be one of your most effective public information aids.