

Working with Group and Wing

Lesson Objective:

Lesson Objective: Comprehend the importance and benefits of working with Group and Wing level headquarters staffs

Desired Learning Outcomes:

1. State the reasons for Groups and Wing headquarters (HQ) staffs.
2. Describe the relationship between squadron personnel and higher headquarters (HHQ) staffs.
3. Review the functional authority of Group and Wing staff agencies.
4. Identify and overcome potential challenges in relationships between squadron and HHQ staffs.
5. Describe techniques squadron members can use to improve their relationship with HHQ staffs.

Lesson

Overview:

To ensure your unit's success you must work with others. While your squadron works autonomously in your local area, it is really part of a larger organization - the group or the wing. Your success - or failure - directly affects them, and your responsibility as a squadron commander is to support their efforts. They are what binds your squadron's efforts to the efforts of your fellow squadrons and can create what is known in military terms as a "force multiplier": a resource which makes an entity stronger when working together than simply the sum of its parts.

You have an obligation to keep the wing and group staff officers advised about the fitness of your unit. This may be done directly or through your staff. You report, to the HQ staff, the information they need to advise the group or wing commander about the fitness of their unit as a whole in accordance with CAP directives.

They, in turn, are obligated to keep you informed about the latest changes within their staff areas and to ensure that you get timely information and resources to allow your squadron to do its job properly. This lesson will teach you about the functions of the group or wing, the people who work for it, especially your boss and finally help you to see what you can do to work more effectively with them.

Reasons for Group and Wing headquarter staffs:

Wings provide five essential capabilities:

- A. A corporate officer
- B. A legislative liaison
- C. A focal point
- D. Information
- E. Resources

A wing's span of control varies depending on geography or population. Span of control may present continuous obstacles to providing reasonable supervision or rapid support to squadrons, thus in some cases wings will use groups to effectively accomplish the mission.

A. The Wing: Home of the Corporate Officer

The Wing is the home of the "local" corporate officer. As a corporate officer, the Wing Commander can bind the organization to contracts, take legal action for the corporation, speak for the corporation, and in turn has fiduciary responsibility to the corporation. Here's what it means to you:

1. The wing commander is the only one who can bind the corporation to contracts, sign your lease, and sign the contract for the squadron banquet (note: if you sign them, you may be personally liable).
2. They are the only ones who can take legal action against members, former members, or outsiders.
3. The Wing Commander is the only one who can receive and commit corporate assets and funds.
4. They have fiduciary responsibility - Legally obligated, pertaining to money & property, to act in the best interest of the cooperation. Legally responsible for actions of the cooperation (nationwide).

The Wing Commander is the only one who officially speaks for the corporation. This can be particularly important in a crisis such as a state-wide disaster or accident.

In those types of cases they are the spokesperson and have the training, support and authority to speak on behalf of the organization. A Wing Commander is the only one who can legally commit the wing's resources (although it is often practically delegated to others) and who bears the legal responsibility for what happens.

A. **The Wing: Your Legislative Liaison**

Wing Commanders are also the link to the State and Federal Legislature and to access the information and support provided by National HQ. Your wing commander can assist you by:

1. Committing the entire resources of the wing and call on other wings if required
2. Gaining access to corporate funding and insurance
3. Relieving you of legal responsibilities pertaining to decisions they've made

Wing Headquarters provides a unified voice for the organization. Can you imagine how embarrassing, confusing, and unprofessional it would be to have a state legislature get two (or more) conflicting source of information and requests? Only the wing is authorized to accept appropriations. Since the wing commander deals with state agencies, the advantage to you is that you do not have to deal with the politics; that's your wing HQ's job.

B. **The Wing: A Focal Point with an Eye on the Big Picture**

Wings have a direct link to NHQ and the National Staff and are the state's focal point. Wings have a much bigger picture of national and large scale operations and efforts than squadrons.

1. Wing HQ is the state's focal point for information and resources flowing in and out.
2. Wing HQ represents you and all the units in the wing to the outside world in an organized, coherent, and practical way.

C. **Groups and Wings Provide Information and Resources**

Wings provide many forms of assistance. Sometimes they provide it directly to squadrons and sometimes they provide it to groups that in turn provide it to squadrons. The existence and number of groups is usually based upon the geographic size of the state or the number of members.

Wing and Group HQs exist to provide assistance. That assistance is usually provided in the form of: training, equipment, expertise and personnel. Wing and Group will provide training that would not be practical or possible for a squadron to provide, like the Unit Commanders Course (UCC). Wing/Group maintain and make available equipment like repeaters and aircraft with orientation pilots. Some activities are just too big for squadrons. Wings in particular provide specialized expertise, such as legal advice and assistance, financial expertise through the Wing Banker Program, and expert advice on the major staff functions.

Your wing/group also provides you with the resources for those activities. What would be the point of running a Cadet Color Guard Competition or Drill Team Competition within the squadron? Many searches and disaster relief missions are too large in scope for one squadron to handle. Whether you're a senior member or a cadet, you learn a great deal about leadership and dealing with multiple units when you work at a wing encampment.

Even if you had access to a base, you would gain very little by running an encampment for one squadron. When you have big missions, like these, you often need to marshal more people and equipment than one squadron can offer. Wing and Group provide the resources of scale to accomplish broad missions.

D. Wing/Group HQ make sure the squadron receives timely information

They provide timely information pertaining to policies and guidance in order to ensure compliance, as well as, support the mission of CAP in a local or nation-wide coordinated effort.

The Relationship between Squadron Personnel and HHQ Staffs:

We are going to switch focus now from organizations to personnel, with emphasis on the Wing Commander, Group Commander, Wing Administrator and the State Director and their relationship to the squadron.

A. Wing Commander

The wing commander exercises command over all units and personnel in their wing.

Wing commanders are the senior corporate officers within the wing and are responsible to the corporation and to the region commander for ensuring that Corporation objectives, policies, and operational directives are effectively executed within their wing.

B. Group Commander

The group commander exercises command over all units and personnel in their group.

Group commanders represent the wing commander in their group. They are responsible to the Corporation and the wing commander for ensuring that corporation objectives, policies, and operational directives are effectively executed within their group.

C. Wing Administrator (WA)

- Employed by NHQ under the HR department
- Their first line supervisor is the wing commander
- Duties are in accordance with the wing's job description
- Has no wing decision-making authority
- Does not hold a vote on any wing committee
- Is limited in the duties they may perform as a volunteer
- May not duplicate any duties assigned in paid status

D. State Director (SD)

- USAF employee
- Works for the Liaison Region Commander
- Provides oversight, assistance, and advice at wing level
- Assistance and oversight through wing to squadrons
 - Liaison for activities on DOD facilities
 - Facilitates relationships with other agencies
 - Assists squadrons audited during the wing's annual LG audit
- Assistance and oversight directly to squadrons
 - Spaatz test
 - Unit visit once every 2 years (when manning permits)

E. Squadron commander

The squadron commander exercises command over all personnel in their squadron.

Squadron commanders are responsible to the corporation and to the wing commander (or group commander if applicable) for ensuring that the corporation objectives, policies, and operational directives are effectively executed within their squadron.

Functional Authority of Group and Wing staff agencies:

Functional Authority consists of *Line & Staff* authority:

- Line Authority** – Line Authority is the power to give orders to subordinates. It differs from staff authority, which is the authority to advise but not command others. Line personnel are responsible for attaining the organization's goals as efficiently as possible.
- Staff Authority** – Comes from knowledge, expertise, or persuasive abilities. It is the authority to provide assistance, counsel or service.

Organizational Chart

Wings are organized in specific ways to enhance command and control for mission accomplishment. Shown in CAPR 20-1, solid lines are line officers/authority and dotted lines are staff officers/authority which provides information and other support.

This structure is necessary to avoid problems occurring between squadrons and higher headquarters.

Overcoming Challenges in Relations between Squadron and HHQ Staffs:

Any smooth running relationship can become complicated with challenges that may arise. The challenges in the relationship between squadrons and higher headquarters (HHQ) staffs are usually associated with communication. Communications can become complicated when dealing with geographically separated staffs. Messages, ideas, and roles can become garbled. Before going on, note that lines of communications do go in both directions and generally, success and fault with communications lies at all levels of command. Here we are going to focus on how the squadron can make communications better.

Wing and Group commanders learn how to enhance communications from their side during the courses that they take. Open, clear, and concise two-way communication can generally minimize many of the challenges faced when working with wings and groups.

- A. **Role confusion** usually occurs in two ways. Staffs try to act like commanders or commanders try to exercise line authority outside their chain of command.
- B. **Breaking chain of command** occurs when squadron staff officers go to staff officers at the next level of command who are not their counterparts, or when people skip levels of command, or when squadron staff officers go to the commander at higher headquarters without consulting their own commander.

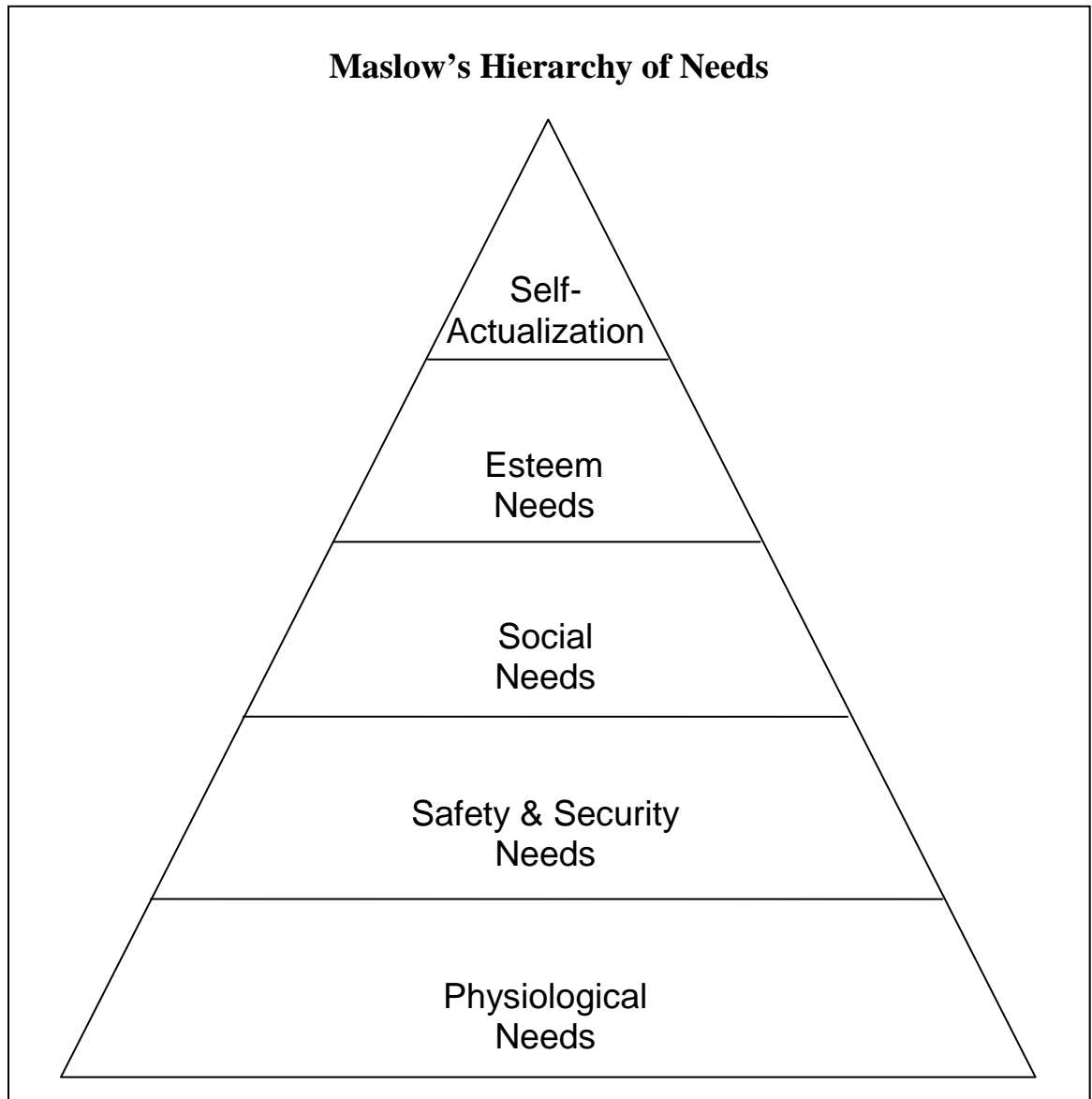
Simply by eliminating role confusion and chain of command violations, many communication problems will be minimized or eliminated. Effective and efficient communications will enable enhanced cooperation and collaboration between the varying levels of command.

Techniques for building a better relationship with HHQ staffs:

HHQ Staff members are Humans Too

Of course we know this, but how often do we really consider human factors when dealing with geographically separated staffs or even local staffs?

Use what you have learned from CAP OBC and other sections of this course about Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to improve the relationship with your HQ staff.



Review Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and apply it when dealing with HHQ.

- A. **Physiological needs** – When they visit consider providing them with a cookie or cup of coffee [also effects social needs]. This works as a good ice breaker and may put them more at ease and more receptive to your ideas. In general show concern for their well being.
- B. **Safety and Security** – Work with them not against them. Always try to resolve issues at the lowest level, showing respect for the individual, the rank, and the position of the person you are dealing with [also affects esteem needs].
- C. **Social needs** – Be sociable, invite them to do things with your squadron, ask their opinion. Basically make them feel a part of the group.
- D. **Esteem needs** – Show gratitude for their help, show respect for the individual the rank and the position, and ask their opinion. Basically make them feel valued.

Paperwork and Reports

Get your paperwork and reports in on time! Wings and Groups need required reports or forms or emails from you so they can do their jobs.

They also need information from you so they can provide reports to higher headquarters.

Now let's consider the last two ideas together. When HQ staff has to chase overdue reports or spend time redoing the paperwork, how does that affect them? What type of reaction might you expect from them?

- It wastes valuable and limited time, and support leaving less time available to perform their duties or to help you. It also frustrates them and reflects poorly on your squadron.

How often do you think squadrons walk up to the Wing personnel officer empty handed asking if they can get some award presented next week at the Wing Awards Ceremony? It happens much more often than you think. Always try to provide correct and complete documentation to HQ...it will make the staff happy and make the process work much more efficiently and faster.

When you meet or beat suspenses constantly, it reflects well on your unit's professionalism, provides the recipient with more time to work for you, and often results it a faster turnaround time for your unit.

To build a better relationship with Higher HQ:

- A. Be respectful, polite, and courteous (we should treat everyone that way)
- B. Ask nicely!
- C. Give them enough time to react, respond, and work the issue
- D. Provide clear & concise communications
- E. Provide solid justification for unusual requests
- F. Meet or beat deadlines
- G. Offer options or suggestions when presenting a concern or problem
- H. Support their efforts as much as possible
- I. Set a good example
- J. Get to know them and make sure they know you.

Techniques for Building a Better Relationship with HHQ

- Use the _____ of command.
- Review Maslow's _____ of _____ and use it to your unit's advantage.
- Get your _____ and _____ in on time!
- Ask _____!
- Give them ample _____ to react.
- Provide _____ and _____ communications.
- Provide _____ for unusual requests.
- _____ their efforts
- Get to _____ them.

Things to Remember:

- A. HQ staff members have lives outside of CAP and limits on time and resources.
- B. Lack of preparation on your part does not constitute an emergency on their part.
- C. Give HHQ enough time to work your request realizing they have other things to do.
- D. HQ suspense dates provide them with the time they need to time to do their job and meet their suspense dates from their higher HQ.
- E. If you think you can't comply with a suspense, let them know as early as possible and request an extension.
- F. One day you may be in their position on staff.