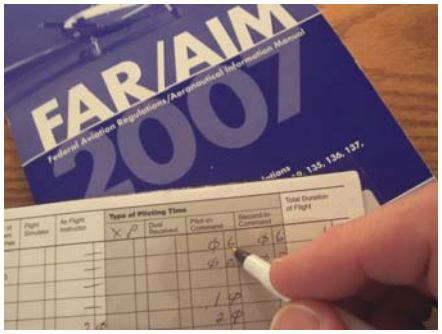

Clearing the Air on

PIC Roles and Responsibilities

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February 2007

For anyone who has ever muddled through the myriad of rules contained in the FAA and CAP regulations, you'd probably agree that they were not written by pilots for pilots, but instead were carefully crafted by aviation lawyers to regulate the aviation industry and, in particular, the pilot force. You almost need a law degree or Ph.D. in hermeneutics to decipher the rhetoric.

In the next couple of minutes, I hope to help "clear the air" on exactly what is required to fly as pilot-in-command (PIC) in a CAP aircraft while conducting an Air Force assigned mission (AFAM). But before I begin, I'd like to encourage you to not just take my word for it, but try researching the regulations yourself and discover the logic behind the logos.

In order for a CAP pilot to operate a Cessna 182 as pilot-in-command on an Air Force assigned mission, he/she must possess a minimum level of qualification and experience. There are additional requirements for operating as PIC on the Gippsland GA-8 Airvan, Cessna 182T/Nav III (G1000), complex and multi-engine aircraft. See CAPR 60-1, *CAP Flight Management*, for details.

FAR §91.3, *Responsibility and Authority of the Pilot-in-Command*, states that the PIC is "directly responsible for, and the final authority as to, the operation of that aircraft." This section of the FARs deals directly with the legal designation and responsibility of a PIC.

CAPR 60-1, *CAP Flight Management*, further delineates PIC requirements. CAPR 60-1 closely aligns the PIC definition to that of the Air Force, wherein the designated PIC functions like an "aircraft commander" with overall responsibility to safely conduct the Air Force assigned mission. Para 3-4 lists several conditions that must be met in order to be designated as the PIC on an Air Force assigned mission. According to CAPR 60-1, the PIC must:

1. Be an active CAP pilot (i.e. current CAPF 5 with completed aircraft questionnaire and CAPR 60-1 exam).
2. Meet all applicable FAR requirements (i.e. FAA certification, medical, flight review, etc).
3. Have a copy of the signed CAP Statement of Understanding on file.
4. In order to carry passengers, be at least 18 years old and possess a private, commercial, or ATP certificate.
5. Be a current and qualified mission pilot (SAR/DR, CD or transport) or be in formal training as a mission pilot trainee. SAR/DR/CD mission pilots need 200 hours PIC (50 hours cross-country) while transport mission pilots need 100 hours PIC with 50 hours cross-country (ref CAPR 60-3, *CAP Emergency Services, para 2-3.n thru o*).

Just to throw you another curve ball, both the FAA and the CAP separate the legal definition of PIC from the rules under which you can operate the aircraft as the PIC.

FAR §61.51.e, *Logging Pilot-in-Command Time*, lists the conditions required to operate the aircraft and log PIC time for various FAA certifications (private pilot, commercial pilot, ATP, CFI, etc.). Although you may not be designated as the overall PIC for a particular sortie, according to the FAA pilots can still legally log PIC time providing "you hold the appropriate certification and are the sole manipulator of the controls of an aircraft for which the pilot is rated or has privilege".

The Civil Air Patrol, like the Air Force, is more restrictive than the FARs and adds additional conditions required to function as a PIC and log PIC time. A recent change to CAPR 60-1, para 3-3a, identifies the following additional requisites to fly as PIC in a Cessna 182:

1. Complete a transition flight training program designed for CAP pilots who do not have a high performance aircraft endorsement *or* previous CAP qualification in high performance aircraft. The transition flight training will include:
    - 25 takeoffs and landings including 10 in a 5+ knot crosswind
    - 5 no-flap landings
    - 5 short field/soft field takeoffs and landings
    - 5 simulated engine failures to a full stop landing
2. Complete a CAPF 5 check ride administered by a CAP check pilot who did not conduct the transition flight training
3. Meet all FAA high performance requirements (i.e. >200 hp) and have a logbook endorsement for high performance aircraft privileges

Well, we're not quite done yet. You might *(or might not)* be wondering, *"What is an Air Force assigned mission?"* Well, very simply, it's a legal reference to non-combat programs and missions, when authorized and assigned to CAP by the Secretary of the Air Force or designee. Prior to assigning any mission to CAP, the approval authority must be satisfied that the mission involves strictly non-combat activities. At no time may CAP personnel be placed in risky situations analogous to combat operations.

CAP-USAF State Directors are required to produce monthly PIC rosters identifying which CAP pilots are authorized to perform AFAMs as the pilot-in-command. AFAMs may include services to federal, state, local and private agencies on a case-by-case basis. The following are some of the non-combat missions typically assigned to CAP (ref AFI 10-2701, *Organization and Function of the Civil Air Patrol*):

- Homeland Security
- Search and Rescue
- Disaster Relief
- Support to Law Enforcement
- Counter Drug
- Combat Training Support
- Range and Airspace Surveys
- Orientation Flights
- Transportation
- Public Affairs Support
- Communications Support
- Training Missions
- Civil Support

So, the bottom line is a CAP PIC flying a Cessna 182 on an AFAM needs to be a current/qualified MP/TMP or MP trainee IAW CAPRs 60-1 and 60-3, complete the transition flight training program (if required) and meet applicable FAA requirements. And most importantly, the pilot must be listed on the monthly PIC roster from the CAP-USAF State Director.

I hope this short discussion has broadened your understanding and appreciation for the roles and responsibilities of the Civil Air Patrol pilot-in-command. By performing PIC duties on Air Force assigned missions, you directly represent the Air Force as a cost effective force multiplier. And as an Air Force State Director and professional aviator, I am proud to serve alongside my CAP brothers and sisters as you professionally execute missions for America.

I salute you, members of the Civil Air Patrol.

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