Public Affairs (PA) operations begin at home, before the first Airman deploys, and continue long after the last Airman is redeployed. PA operations focus on 10 synergistic activities to achieve the desired effects of its core competencies:

- Public Affairs Functional Management.
- Communication Planning.
- Security and Policy Review.
- Media Operations.
- Community Engagement.
- Environmental.
- Visual Information.
- Band Operations.
- Contingency Operations and Wartime Readiness.
- Command Information.

**PA functional management**

PA functional management ensures the PA office and assigned personnel are resourced, trained, equipped, and ready to accomplish the mission in garrison or deployed.

**Communication planning**

Communication planning is important to the creation of strategic, operational, and tactical effects in PA operations. PA operators must gain awareness of the aspects of the total information environment (IE) affecting their location or operation, and should have the means to evaluate and analyze aspects of the IE. PA operators rely on portions of operation plans, lessons learned and an understanding of the IE to build plans that help to achieve a commander’s desired effects. It is essential to overall mission success that PA is a part of the strategy development and planning phases of an operation to ensure its capabilities are employed to their full effectiveness.

**Security and policy review**
While adhering to the policy of “maximum disclosure, minimum delay,” PA ensures information intended for public release neither adversely affects national security nor threatens the safety, security, or privacy of Air Force personnel. In accordance with Department of Defense (DOD) and Air Force policies, information is not withheld from release merely to protect the Air Force from criticism or embarrassment.

**Media operations**

Working proactively with the media increases trust and two-way communication, and is often one of the most rapid and credible means of delivering the commander’s message. Remaining open, honest, and accessible to the maximum extent possible normally results in greater accuracy, context, and timeliness in communicating with internal and external audiences.

Commanders who aggressively use PA operations to gain predictive awareness of the IE can often successfully preempt media issues and set the tone and message in the IE. Conversely, failure to employ effective media operations can place commanders in a reactive stance, responding to the public debate established by an adversary or questions driving the news media agenda. A reactive posture allows for messages and tones in the national or international media to be set by others, and can potentially degrade operations by eroding Airman morale and public and international support.

**Community engagement**

Community engagement encompasses activities of interest to the general public, businesses, academia, veterans, service organizations, military-related associations, think tanks, and other community entities. Working collaboratively with and through these various groups enhances mutual understanding, cooperation, and support necessary for effective Air Force operations.

In many deployed environments, effective community engagement is vital to the success of Air Force operations. Forward-area community engagement and key leader engagement in a contingency will usually fall within the scope of a civil affairs plan. PA operators must be aware of the civil affairs efforts and, when possible, complement them in PA products and operations.

In peacetime, active community engagement programs help to build greater acceptance for Air Force operations within US and international audiences. Greater public acceptance of the Air Force can be a key to future operational success since it may lead to basing or overflight rights, shortened community “no-fly” or quiet hours, and other operationally important community support efforts.

**Environmental**

PA supports environmental program objectives and requirements by facilitating public notification and involvement and communicating the Air Force’s commitment to
environmental excellence.

**Visual information**

Visual products, such as photo, video, and graphics, are essential to effective communication and document the Air Force’s visual history, through the accessioning process, for future generations. Visual products communicate strategic, operational, and tactical mission requirements, goals, and objectives.

Commanders at all levels may use visual information (VI) capabilities for their communication needs as well as a tool for operational planning and decision making. Other mission-related imagery uses include support to training, battle damage assessment, and public information. The Air Force is required to transfer VI products to the National Archives and Records Administration as described in DAA-0330-2013-0014, DoD Visual Information Records Schedule; for this reason, commanders must prioritize the use of VI assets to support mission-related activities.

Combat Camera (COMCAM) is a specialized VI capability that provides “the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Military Departments, the Combatant Commands, and the joint task forces with a directed imagery capability in support of operational and planning requirements during wartime operations, worldwide crises, contingencies, humanitarian operations, and joint exercises”. Air Force COMCAM teams are uniquely trained, equipped, and organized for rapid global deployment to provide documentation of operations. Equipped for day and night operations, COMCAM units also possess fully qualified and certified aircrew members for missions requiring aerial documentation.

**Band operations**

Air Force bands provide a wide spectrum of musical support for events that enhance the morale, motivation, and esprit de corps of our Airmen, foster public trust and support, aid recruiting initiatives, and promote our national interests at home and abroad.

> Band missions will be tied directly to combined force air component commander (CFACC) focus areas and integrated into major exercises in order to enhance troop morale and partner relationship building. The band is a strategic asset for the CFACC and U.S. Central Command. Air expeditionary wing leadership should leverage the Air Forces Central band to build partnerships and enhance relationships. Additionally, the band will seek to support Embassy mission and relationship building objectives while in a particular country.

—Air Forces Central Command
Public Affairs Strategy, 2016

Musical operations provide unique delivery methods to inform and entertain audiences
worldwide. These operations can influence foreign decision makers and public audiences as they provide information that demonstrates Air Force readiness, operational capabilities, and resolve to use airpower to achieve operational objectives.

**Contingency operations and wartime readiness**

PA forces are foremost a deployable combat capability, fully trained and prepared to meet the needs of the joint warfighter inside and outside the wire. The mission of PA is to plan, coordinate, and integrate U.S. military public information activities and resources in support of the commander’s intent and concept of operations. PA enhances Airman morale and readiness to accomplish the mission; gains and maintains public trust and support for military operations; provides trusted counsel to leaders; communicates U.S. resolve in a manner that directly affects the operational environment through global influence and deterrence; and ensures visual documentation of joint and Air Force operations on the ground and in the air information.

**Command information**

PA provides effective and efficient communication tools to link Airmen with their leaders. Command information helps Airmen and their families understand their purpose, role, and value to the Air Force. A free flow of information to Airmen and families creates awareness of and support for the mission, increases their effectiveness as Air Force ambassadors, reduces the spread of rumors and misinformation, and provides avenues for feedback.

These operations also enhance Airman morale and can influence foreign decision makers and public audiences as they provide information that demonstrates Air Force readiness, operational capabilities, and resolve to use airpower to achieve operational objectives.