



Pennsylvania Wing Cadet Training Schools Commander's Guidance 2013

Introduction

For over seventy years, Civil Air Patrol has been performing services for America through immense patriotism, dedication, and volunteer service. For much of this time that service has been the development of America's youth through embodying and teaching the organizations core values of Integrity, Respect, Excellent, and that same Volunteer Service that makes CAP unique and successful. Through the Cadet Program, students age 12-21 are empowered to grow personally and professionally through their service. The one constant among all cadets who achieve success in the Cadet Program is their participation in Civil Air Patrol Encampments. From the leadership of their peers, cadet leaders, and selfless senior members, cadets learn in a single week what it means to live their lives with these values in mind.

The Encampment program, to include in Pennsylvania Wing three schools: Basic Encampment, Leadership Development Course, and Region Cadet Leadership School, is designed to teach cadets valuable lessons in teamwork, followership, and leadership. These lessons are all taught in a controlled military-style environment adhering to curriculum guidelines laid out by National Headquarters policy. This year, we have added three additional schools: Cadet Commander's Course, Honor Guard Academy, and Music Academy, all meant to diversify the experiences and educational opportunities in which our cadets can participate. It is our responsibility as the leaders and facilitators of these programs to make every effort to ensure the safety and well-being of our students is maintained while we strive to achieve the highest level of education in order to prepare the future of Civil Air Patrol and our communities to tackle the challenges and leadership opportunities ahead. Safety and well-being expands beyond the physical safety to which we are always vigilant and to mental well-being as well to foster an environment that is fit for learning. External and internal stressors are essential components to leadership education to teach critical thinking under pressure but these stressors need to be applied appropriately, under careful supervision, and with designed purpose. With these safety considerations adequately addressed we can achieve our following mission and vision with unparalleled excellence:

Mission

Provide expert level education and professional development opportunities to Civil Air Patrol cadets within and outside the Pennsylvania Wing capitalizing on the collective experiences and expertise of wing membership to facilitate the growth of America's youth

Vision

To be the premier cadet educational program in the nation enabling quality education and setting the standard for Civil Air Patrol cadet programs

Six schools, one mission... to shape tomorrow's leaders, today.

Commander's Intent

Entrusted in us is the development of the future leaders of the Cadet Program. As such, after safety, our focus should always be on improving the educational experience for student's first, cadet leadership second, and finally for our seniors as well. We must all do our part to create an environment for both seniors and cadets that is both challenging and rewarding fostering teamwork and leadership excellence aimed at operating a training school that students and staff will reflect on with pride for the rest of their lives. With this achieved, it should be our hope that all involved will be eager to return to serve the next generation in successive years. While the burden of this responsibility is great and the challenges that face us never cease, it is in overcoming these challenges that we feel the greatest of pride and earn the highest of respect from among our peers in the Wing and across CAP. These challenges routinely manifest themselves in both those overcome by the students in their week of training and by seniors in their year of planning and in the execution of a top-notch school. It should be our goal as the leaders of this program to always strive to build upon the successes and failures of each year to continue to construct the greatest program possible and to maximize the opportunities of all involved.

Commander's Critical Information Requirements (CCIRs)

The following CCIRs are items of interest for elevation to the Commander as expeditiously as possible with a reporting timeline dependent on the severity of the incident. Situations listed do not necessarily require Commander intervention, but are important items that require notification and tracking by the Commander and delegated staff. It is essential this information is pass through the chain of command so leadership at all levels are aware of the information being elevated. Subordinate leaders are encouraged to develop guidance and procedures for communicating information through the chain as well as develop their own priorities based on specific departmental responsibilities.

In priority order, notify the commander through the appropriate chain of command of:

- 1) Any medical event causing hospitalization, dismissal, or removal from activities over routine, minor treatment;
- 2) Any incident involving potential violation of Cadet Protection Policy or hazing;
- 3) Physical and mental well-being of students (or staff) having difficulty in progressing through the week after attention rendered from first senior member supervisor does not improve performance;
- 4) Any damage to CAP or Fort Indiantown Gap assets to include (but not limited to) vehicles, buildings, or equipment;
- 5) Schedule changes impacting guest/distinguished presenters, multiple schools and/or requiring significant logistical changes;
- 6) Any negative interactions with Fort Indiantown Gap personnel, collocated Army or other units, or external organizations;
- 7) Any unwarranted contact either in person or by phone/e-mail from a parent or other member of CAP that causes concern or potential confrontation.

Priorities

In order to ensure we all execute on the same page we must outline our key priorities up front for the 2013 school. While these priorities may not address every nuance that goes into running an Encampment, it puts forth the top three focus areas for which our total efforts can be geared to allow us to concentrate our efforts. For 2012 our focus areas were: 1) Engage and challenge students and staff; 2) Maximize communication, marketing and outreach; and, 3) Improve planning and administrative processes. I am happy to report that our efforts in 2012 were extremely successful and I encourage everyone to continue to think of ways to improve in last year's focus areas as we establish the following new priorities for 2013:

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1. *Maximize communication, efficiency, and integration of logistics and transportation resources*

The last eight years have seen tremendous evolution and modernization of our training curriculum and exemplary performance of our cadet and senior staff in motivating those positive changes. Each year we continued to add standardization and rigor to the academics we provide to advance the future of the cadet programs. In order to continue to raise our training to the next level we must also ensure the behind-the-scenes logistics and transportation that are the pulse of the week's events are also elevated to the same standards. Lapses in effective transportation coordination are visible indications of poor communication and planning and negatively affect training by wasting valuable time and adding to individual frustration.

As our school continues to grow our requirements for effective supply, logistics, and transportation exponentially become more complex. In the last three years we have doubled the amount of courses offered all with unique requirements and schedules that send our students and staff to all corners of Fort Indiantown Gap and on off-site trips that often spread our transportation assets thin. With the support of the wing, we have increased the amount of vehicles available to aid in minimizing the impact of a growing school but with that expanse we need to now emphasize the management of those resources to ensure efficiency and seamless integration with the overall training requirements. In order to accomplish this we must ensure processes and contracts are in place to positively affect communication between the Director of Training and Chief of Transportation. Furthermore, management of transportation and logistics should be centralized and modernized increasing the ability to centrally track the status of resources as inevitable schedule changes arise through the course of the week. With a solid and transparent backbone of transportation we can ensure that our primary goal of providing expert level education and professional development is executed to its maximum extent possible.

2. *Develop and integrate opportunities to provide professional development for cadet and senior staff*

While our focus is, and should always be, on the growth of our students we must not forget the continued growth and professional development of our staff as well. The more prepared our staff is to execute their mission, the better education and training we can provide to the new generation joining our ranks. Our staff comes from a wide stretch of backgrounds and their experience on staff is equally varied in terms of length of service and positions held. In order to reconcile the variety of knowledge held by our staff members it is incumbent upon us to ensure that knowledge is being proliferated across the staff and standardized for presentation to our students.

Throughout the week there is a great deal of downtime when students are otherwise occupied in lectures that staff have seen dozens of times. Some of those lectures provide great refresher training for new staff but those who have seen or taught the material several times over often find it as time wasted. While many staff members use those opportunities to catch up on rest, we should look to balance that time with advanced educational opportunities aimed at providing continuation training for staff. These topics can either be remedial training on observed deficiencies throughout the week, or new advanced topics to give our staff better tools to train their students. This applies to both cadets and seniors who we can provide mini-lessons from senior member professional development to reinforce knowledge that can be used in their CAP careers both at Encampment and in the home squadron. Many of these events should be tailored to the specific background of the staff. Some may be staff wide seminars where topics of interest are discussed, others may be short, structured lessons as preplanned times targeted to first-year staff taught by more experienced staff members or even classes aimed specifically at a position such as Squadron Commanders taught by the Cadet Echelon Staff. Ultimately by focusing on these opportunities we continue to grow our cadet staff to be better leaders and instructors to better provide for our students.

3. *Establish effective processes for dynamic debriefing and lessons learned*

No matter how much planning and attention to detail is put into execution, there is no such thing as a flawless event. With that in mind, effort should always be made to continue to strive for perfection by identifying ways to improve both dynamically during the week as well as in subsequent years. While we continue to exercise

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moderately effective after action debriefing to capture lessons learned, our processes for dynamic debriefing during the course of the week to implement changes on the fly is absent.

In the last two years we have instituted a routine timeline of staff meetings to ensure information flows through the chain daily. The Command Staff meets during lunch to discuss the topics of the day who then meet with their subordinates during dinner. From there, information is briefed to the senior staff during closing formation while the cadet staff meets during Call to Quarters. While we have emphasized a solid plan for downward communication, our mechanisms for upward communication remain undefined. With each daily meeting at the various levels, feedback on the day's events should be captured by the ranking person holding that meeting and submitted up the chain by lights out each day. Providing constructive feedback at the end of each day using effective debriefing techniques will complete the circle to allow corrective action to be identified and disseminated early the following day for implementation. Having a process in place to facilitate this circular feedback will allow changes to be dynamically addressed during the week rather than relying on after action reports post school to be generated for incorporation the following year.

Conclusion

As our program continues to expand and set the standard for the Region and at times the nation, so also grow and evolve the hurdles and challenges for us to overcome. There is no finer group of officers and cadets in Pennsylvania Wing and without doubt your dedication and commitment to the development of our future is valued and appreciated throughout the Wing. With each year we take greater steps forward and I look forward to another successful year of working with such fine leaders.

With most appreciation and respect,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian J. Cuce". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "J".

BRIAN J. CUCE, Maj, CAP
Commander