

CAP Core Values

CAP Officer Basic Course

Introduction

According to the John Templeton Foundation, "the vast majority of Americans share a common set of core values: honesty, self-control, perseverance, respect, compassion, and service to those less fortunate." CAP believes that most would agree that people should be honest, help one another and strive for excellence in all that they do.

"Core values establishes a common set of expectations of conduct for all members. The meaning and power of the values CAP has chosen: INTEGRITY, VOLUNTEER SERVICE, EXCELLENCE, and RESPECT are easily inferred by all who read them. These words effectively replace dozens of pages of directives, and simply articulate what's right and what's wrong, and form a tool by which conduct is measured. They are the embodiment of how CAP members are expected to treat each other and the people they come in contact with -- of man's expectations of fellow man. " (Making Core Values Make Sense, [Bobbie Tourville](#)).

1. State the History/Origin of the CAP Core Values

The concept of "Core Values" has permeated the military culture for centuries. Essentially, the challenge has been a continual one of striving to develop an ethical framework to govern personal and professional conduct of military members.

Since its creation in 1947, the Air Force has always had a basic set of "beliefs," or as referred to today, a set of core values. The most recent set of core values for the United States Air Force was published in 1997. These values: "Integrity First", "Service Before Self", and "Excellence in all We Do" were designed to be more than just a slogan. The Air Force described them as the common bond among all comrades in arms--- "the glue that unifies the force and ties it to the great warriors and public servants of the past" (Gen. Ronald Fogleman, Former USAF Chief of Staff). The Air Force took great strides to infuse its culture with these values, in spirit and in application, at all levels. All Air Force members, officers and enlisted personnel, were asked to incorporate core values into their daily lives.

As the auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, Civil Air Patrol embraced the concept of core values and began work on defining those values believed to be of greatest importance to the organization. CAP's core values essentially mirror the U.S. Air Force core values of integrity, excellence in all we do and service before self. CAP and the Air Force share the core values of integrity and excellence but because of the volunteer nature of CAP's humanitarian missions, the Air Force core value of "service before self" was inherently included in CAP's core value of "volunteer service." The national board, recognizing the need for our diverse membership to treat each other with fairness and dignity, added the core value of respect. In February 1999, the following core values were formally approved by the National Board: Integrity, Volunteer Service, Excellence, and Respect.

The Civil Air Patrol has developed a three-pronged strategy for implementing core values. The first step is to educate all members so they understand core values and how these values support the mission (known as "The Schoolhouse Weave"). Over time, CAP has integrated these core values into all professional development programs for senior members and cadets. This process is a continuous one that never ends. Secondly, commanders and supervisors must serve as the primary advocates in encouraging the implementation of core values as a part of daily routines. Lastly, the members must accept and internalize core values. (Ref: CAPP 50-2)

2. Define the CAP Core Values

THE FOUR CORE VALUES OF CAP

The core values of Civil Air Patrol establish a common set of behavioral expectations as well as a set of standards to assess member conduct. The values of Integrity, Volunteer Service, Excellence, and Respect, serve as the ethical framework for CAP's service to America.

1. **INTEGRITY:** Integrity is the very fiber of all core values, without it all other core values cannot prevail. It is the cornerstone for all that is moral and just in our society. Integrity is a character trait. It is the willingness to do what is right even when no one is looking. It is the "moral compass"-the inner voice; the voice of self-control; the basis for the trust imperative in today's military. Integrity has also been described as "the ability to hold together and properly regulate all of the elements of a personality." A person of integrity, for example, is capable of acting on conviction. A person of integrity can control impulses and appetites. Integrity also involves accepting responsibility for one's actions, and being a morally upright person. Former Air Force Chief of Staff, General Charles A. Gabriel said, "Integrity is the fundamental premise of service in a free society. Without integrity, the moral pillars of our military strength--public trust and self-respect--are lost."

2. **VOLUNTEER SERVICE:** This core value speaks of "voluntarily giving of oneself, over personal desires, to provide for the welfare of others". We embrace this core value and reflect it in our spirit of volunteerism. To serve is to satisfy the needs or requirements of an organization and, in the case of the CAP, it is to render service to one's nation. A fundamental part of serving involves following rules, showing respect for others, and enforcing discipline and self-control. As a volunteer force, it is especially important that each member internalize these character traits in order to ensure success.

On a more practical level, one traditional aspect of the CAP drives home the concept of service: wearing the CAP uniform and modeling what it represents. One might say that in a war, uniforms help separate friend from foe and help me focus on who is a legitimate target for my weapons. Uniform wear in a war also helps to separate soldiers from civilians and again, helps soldiers to focus on legitimate targets. Identification with fellow soldiers (or in our case CAP volunteer professionals) may help all members feel like a legitimate part of the team and the uniform is the obvious visible evidence of this. But most importantly the uniform signifies that the wearer is a member of a professional organization and reinforces the notion that here is a person dedicated to service before self.

3. **EXCELLENCE:** Excellence ordinarily means accomplishing the mission well and that's a good place to start breaking down this concept. In the CAP, the nature of our mission demands we must focus on the results and get the job done right the first time and on time. Mission failure can have disastrous consequences and must not be tolerated.

As a moral ideal, however, excellence demands more than mission accomplishment. To excel is to surpass, to go beyond what is expected and we must constantly strive for such results. Brigadier General (Ret.) Malham M Wakin, wrote in an article on AF Core Values, "*Why strive for excellence, anyway?*" One answer to that question may seem wonderfully simple, perhaps some would rather I said 'simple minded,' "If I settle for less than my best effort, then I must live with less than my best self, and I won't then like myself very much. I shall fall short of the kind of being I could have become; I may even be what modern psychiatrists suggest is very unhealthy--I may be ashamed of what I become."

We should always be in continual pursuit of excellence; there is no room for the "good enough" mentality in the CAP. Good enough is never good enough and anything less violates the sacred trust the American public has placed in us.

4. **RESPECT:** The effectiveness of any organization is greatly dependent upon the environment in which people work. We must create an atmosphere in the CAP where mutual respect abounds, making way for prosperity, innovation and excellence in serving this great

nation. Respect means we value our diverse membership. We treat each other with fairness, dignity, and compassion. We work as a team.

Genuine respect involves viewing another person as an individual of fundamental worth. Obviously, this means that a person is never judged on the basis of his/her possession of an attribute that places him or her in some racial, ethnic, economic, or gender-based category.

Working hand in glove with respect is that attitude which says that all co-workers are "innocent until proven guilty." Before rushing to judgment about a person or his/her behavior, it is important to have the whole story.

WHY CAP RECOGNIZES THESE FOUR CORE VALUES

The core values outlined above serve as the foundation for how CAP members treat one another; how they treat the recipients of CAP's humanitarian service; and how they care for the corporate assets under their control. These basic commandments form CAP's ethical centerline - a moral compass for the organization. If one member fails to uphold these values, then, the entire organization suffers. There are four reasons why we recognize the Core Values and have developed a strategy to implement them.

The first reason is that the Core Values tell us the price of admission to the Civil Air Patrol. Core values make the organization what it is; without them, we cannot succeed. They are the values that instill confidence, earn lasting respect, and create willing followers. They are the values that anchor resolve in the most difficult situations. They are the values that buttress mental and physical courage when we face our missions. In essence, they are the four pillars of professionalism that provide the foundation for leadership at every level within the CAP.

The second reason for recognizing the Core Values is that they point to what is universal and unchanging in the CAP service. The values are road signs inviting us to consider key features of the requirements of professional service, but they cannot hope to point to or pick out everything. By examining integrity, volunteer service, excellence, and respect we also eventually discover the importance of duty, honor, country, dedication, fidelity, competence, and a host of other professional requirements and attributes. The important thing is not the four road signs our leaders choose, the important thing is that they have selected road signs, and it is our obligation to understand the ethical demands these road signs pick out.

The third reason for recognizing the Core Values is that they help us get a fix on the ethical climate of the organization. How successful are we in trying to live by the Core Values? Our answer to this question may not be the one we'd like to give. All of us have heard about the sensational scandals within government, branches of the service, or in the community. We all have read about these incidents and experienced the shame associated with them. But these big ticket scandals don't just happen in a vacuum, and they aren't always caused by evil people acting on impulse. The people involved knew the difference between right and wrong, and they knew what professionalism demands in these situations. These big ticket scandals grew out of a climate of ethical corrosion. If we believe our operating procedures or the requirements levied upon us from above are absurd, we tend to 'cut corners', 'skate by', and 'get over'. As time goes by, these actions become easier and they become habitual until one morning we wake up and can no longer distinguish between the 'important' taskings or rules and the 'stupid' ones. Lying on official forms becomes second nature. Placing personal interests ahead of the mission seems sensible. And we develop a 'good enough for government work' mentality. In such a climate of corrosion the Core Values are like a slap in the face.

Fortunately, there is a fourth reason for recognizing the Core Values: just as they help us to evaluate the climate of our organization, they also serve as beacons vectoring us back to the

path of professional conduct; the Core Values allow us to transform a climate of corrosion into a climate of ethical commitment.

(This section was adapted from the USAF "Little Blue Book")

3. Discuss the Importance and Relevance of CAP Core Values to its Members

The Core Values of CAP are those values we hold which form the foundation on which we perform work and conduct ourselves. The Core Values are not descriptions of the work we do or the strategies we employ to accomplish our mission. The values underlie our work and how we interact with each other as we fulfill our mission. The Core Values are the basic elements of how we go about our work. They are the practices we use (or should be using) every day in everything we do. It is not enough to articulate values and to publish them into our publications. Every cadet and senior member should be able to recite them, and to live them. For the Core Values to work they need to be "living values" that show up in the day to day operations.

The Core Values should provide a common vision for each and every member of CAP, and should be equally applied and followed at all times. Consistency in Core Values proves to the membership and those we serve that the CAP is committed to its vision of providing outstanding volunteer service to America.

Case Study: The following case study is designed to see if you correctly understand CAP's Core Values and test to see if apply them. The discussion questions may be done by yourself or in a group.

If you decide you will do them on your own you should read the case study. In the "answer" section of this lesson are some items that should have been considered. (Don't skip ahead to the answer paragraph now. Wait until after you have formulated your response.)

If you decide to discuss them in a group of CAPOBC students or with members of your unit, you should read the cases and prepare your point of view. Do not read the "answer" paragraph yet. Hold the discussion. After reaching a group decision, compare your observations in the "answer" section. A group discussion will cause you to think of things you had not previously thought of and tell you a good deal about the core values of the group members and the culture of the group.

Cadet 2Lt Martin is summoned to the unit commander's office and informed of the Commander's decision to nominate her for a local volunteer award at the end of the next quarter. "This should give you enough time to study the awards packages of past winners to figure out what the board wants," says the Commander. "Think seriously about volunteering a few extra hours in the community to beef that package up."

Cadet Martin does as the Commander suggests and, at the appropriate time, provides to the Commander a list of accomplishments for the quarter. A week later, she is again summoned to the Commander's office and given the awards package to read. "Piece of cake," says the Commander. "I think you have more than a fighting chance to bring home the bacon!" At first the Commander's enthusiasm is unavoidably infectious, but then Cadet Martin begins to look closely at the specific points made in the awards package. There is no doubt the Commander has "massaged" the truth on some of the bullet statements and, in one or two cases, the truth has been stretched to the ripping point. She points out these problems to the Commander, and he assures her "everything will be taken care of."

Cadet Martin goes into the interview for the local volunteer award believing the Commander cleaned up the problems in the nomination package, but that belief is quickly destroyed when one of the board members asks her a question based on one of the problematic bullet statements.

After the interview, Cadet Martin reports this persistent problem to the Commander, who again promises to "take care of it." Two days later, the Commander relays the information that Cadet Martin won at the local level and will compete, the following week, at the state level. "Good luck," he says to Cadet Martin, "it's all up to you now."

The next week, Cadet Martin wins at the state level, but this time it is impossible to tell from the questions whether or not the package still contains the problematic bullet statements.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- #1) What was the primary CAP Core Value not being adhered to in this case?
- #2) Who was not adhering to this CAP Core Value and why?
- #3) Did this case bring the other CAP Core Values into question? How?
- #4) What will happen in the squadron if others find out about the lack of Integrity and Excellence demonstrated?
- #5) What should Cadet Martin do if she wins the state-level award and realizes her package may still have contained problematic bullet statements?

ANTICIPATED RESPONSES:

- #1) Integrity
- #2) Neither the Commander nor Cadet Martin was adhering to this CAP Core Value. The Commander demonstrated a lack of Integrity by trying to give Cadet Martin an unfair advantage through asking her to study the packages of past award winners and massaging (pencil-whipping) the truth on some of the bullet statements. Cadet Martin also demonstrated a lack of Integrity by not saying anything in the beginning about her Commander's suggestion to study the packages of past award winners. Also, she didn't try and take herself out of the running for the state level award, knowing the problems that were occurring.
- #3) Yes, Excellence in all We Do. There is a distinct lack of Excellence in the way events were handled. Interestingly, the Commander sacrificed Excellence by the unprofessional and dishonest attempt to recognize the Excellence of one of his people.
- #4) Drop in morale, loss of respect and trust for the Commander and Cadet Martin, more situations disregarding CAP Core Values, degraded mission effectiveness.
- #5) Pursue the truth since there is a question as to the Integrity of the situation. Ignoring the situation makes Martin just as guilty if the package still contained problematic bullets.

Lesson Summary and Closure

The Core Values are timeless. Throughout history, no matter what the country or culture, they have been identified as self-evident guides to right behavior. Core values act as a compass. Just as a compass needle always points north from our location, core values point in the right direction and help us make right decisions no matter what the circumstances. They are "true north" principles.

The Core Values represent the baseline of moral character expected of all Air Force and Civil Air Patrol personnel. They are not a list of lofty ideals you are supposed to shoot for some day in the future. Rather, they are the standards of behavior you need to embrace and live by on a day-to-day basis. Core Values require that you do the best you can to embody its principles, even, as former Air Force Chief of Staff General Ronald Fogleman said, "when no one else is watching." (*Making Core Values Make Sense*, [Bobbie Tourville](#)). _

Works Cited

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The USAF Little Blue Book on Values: <http://www.usafa.af.mil/core-value/cv-mastr.html>

Civil Air Patrol Core Values - CAPP 50-2 (E)

CAP Senior Member Professional Development Course - Lessons 5 and 6
http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/Prof_Dev_Modules/cap_lesson_05/Lesson5_html/Lesson5.htm

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