

Capstone Discussion

Lesson Objective:

Lesson Objective: Comprehend common issues faced by unit commanders.

Desired Learning Outcomes:

1. Using course information, develop solutions to the short discussion questions listed.
2. Develop a plan of action for your unit when faced with problems similar to the ones listed.

Lesson:

Introduction:

In this final segment we'll discuss some of the common problems of the unit commander which cover many aspects of CAP command.

There are no simple answers to these questions, and the point is not to give you a cookie-cutter answer. You will succeed here if you can use CAP directives, what you've learned in this class, and your experience to develop your own solutions.

Recruiting and Working with Families:

- A. You are a squadron commander. You have been trying to get new cadets into your squadron and finally have a potential cadet. He is 16 and drives himself to the meeting. You have not met his parents, but he is eager to join.
 1. Do you allow him to join without meeting the parents?
 2. What are other considerations when evaluating this potential cadet's fitness for CAP?
 - a. School performance.
 - b. Parental relationship.

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- B. He has completed the application and the parent's signature is on the application. He is doing well in the program and after one month invites two of his friends to come to a meeting and join. These three do well and each invites a new friend to join. You now have six new cadets; but, you also notice that they stick together and are not integrating well with your older cadets.
 - 1. How do you integrate them into the unit?
 - 2. Why are they not melding into the unit?
- C. Your best efforts do not work and these six cadets further separate themselves from the rest of the unit. Then, one of the older cadets says that he recognizes one of the new cadets as a student in his school who also belongs to a gang.
 - 1. What do you do?
 - 2. What can "gang" mean in this question?
 - 3. If the "gang" is a street gang, what are some considerations?
 - a. Is the cadet trying to get out of the gang, or trying to get other kids into it?
 - b. Is there criminal activity?
 - c. What do the parents know?
 - d. How deeply should you delve into the problem?
- D. You are a new squadron commander and a young person wants to join. Her family is very poor and she has no money for membership.
 - 1. What can be done to help?
 - 2. What other organizations can provide scholarships for encampment and other activities for needy cadets?

Safety:

- A. You are a squadron commander and you are having color guard practice on a Saturday at a local VFW hall. This is not a standard meeting place or day. En route to the practice a cadet has an accident and is seriously injured.
 - 1. To what extent is CAP liable?
 - a. Did the unit commander arrange for transportation?
 - b. Were parents aware of the activity?
 - c. Did the unit commander sanction the transportation?
 - 2. How can risk to CAP be avoided or reduced in this case?
- B. You are a squadron commander when one of the cadets falls and scrapes her knee during the unit physical fitness activity (volleyball). The Leadership Officer (who also happens to be an EMT) cleans and dresses the wound, and she seems okay.
 - 1. What action should you take?
 - 2. What forms (if any) should you fill out?
 - 3. Who should you contact?

- C. This same cadet develops an infection after several days and requires medical treatment.
 - 1. What steps could have been taken to assure minimal liability risk to CAP?

Cadet Protection:

You are a squadron commander and one of your cadets advises you at a squadron meeting that she is being abused by her father. What do you do?

- A. What are your obligations if her father is a CAP member?
- B. What if her father is not a CAP member?
- C. What are your moral obligations?

Commander Responsibility and Working with Group & Wing:

You are the group commander and you are having a problem with a unit chartered only three months ago. They are at minimum composite squadron manning levels and are down from their initial charter manpower.

- A. How can you help?
- B. Is the new squadron commander ready for command?
- C. Are the cadets working in the program?
- D. What resources can you bring in to help?

Take Command!

Part of the reason why the job of unit commander is so important is because that job, perhaps more than any other in CAP, is so critical to mission accomplishment; and more importantly, to the members of the unit. CAP members will look to you for guidance and leadership. They will come to you when things go wrong, and they will expect you to make things right.

Books and classes like this won't make you an effective squadron or group commander, these are merely tools. Experience helps, but in the final analysis the person who uses the tools, is armed with knowledge, and has the drive to succeed, has the best chance to be a good commander.

Think about what you've learned here this weekend. Don't throw away your books and notes. Keep in touch with the people you've met here this weekend, and don't be afraid to ask questions at anytime. We hope you've gotten a lot out of this course and that you'll go back to your unit and apply what you've learned here. These are proven ways to be more effective: to give yourself and your members more time and more freedom to do the activities you like to do, and ultimately, to have more fun.