



# CORE VALUES *for* CADET PROGRAMS OFFICERS

Training Leaders of Cadets  
Seminar L1  
Online / Self-Study Module

## Learning Goals:

*Appreciate the importance of leading cadets by moral example*

*Give examples of how the Core Values apply to Cadet Programs Officers*

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## Introduction

“If society doesn’t provide constructive role models for kids, they are going to find their own,” says Colin Powell. “One community at a time, we’ll save this generation.”

Young people are mindful of what adults do more than what they say. How well a Cadet Programs Officer exemplifies the Core Values will make an impression on the cadets, for good or bad.

You should already be familiar with CAP’s four Core Values: Integrity, Volunteer Service, Excellence, and Respect. But how do each of those values apply to you as a Cadet Programs Officer?



## Integrity

Integrity is built on basic honesty. Even more, it speaks to an idea of wholeness, where every part of your person is uncorrupted. How do Cadet Programs Officers model integrity? Some examples include:

- Valuing the right priorities; emphasizing that school takes precedence over CAP.
- Being honest and straight-talking with cadets.
- Not promising more than you can deliver, and following through on commitments such as driving cadets to an event or chaperoning an activity.
- Treating all cadets equally and not playing favorites. (Moms and Dads who have kids in the program need to be especially mindful of this.)
- Upholding basic leadership standards such as Cadet Protection Policy guidelines, and ensuring the squadron follows CAP rules in word and in spirit.

In the final analysis, CAP's health depends on integrity. Did that cadet really pass their test? Did the finance officer really turn-in all the money collected from the car wash? Did the pilot really pre-flight the airplane? There's no foolproof way to guarantee that people follow CAP rules; we have to rely upon one another's integrity.



## Volunteer Service

CAP values volunteer service. With over 50,000 members, volunteer service is part of our DNA. How does this Core Value relate to Cadet Programs Officers? Some examples include:

- Leaders of cadets give up nights and weekends to support cadet activities.
- Leaders freely give of themselves, lending cadets their life experience and serving as mentors.
- Simply taking an interest in cadets, being a good listener, and acting as a role model is a form of volunteer service.
- Having the squadron participate in service projects emphasizes volunteerism. Surveys have shown that young people who volunteer grow up to be civic-minded adults willing to take leadership roles in their communities.

Perhaps the common theme here is that Cadet Programs Officers should come to CAP willing to give of themselves and help youth, rather than to pursue selfish motives.

## Excellence

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Cadets may not be experts in the art of leadership, but they recognize quality when they see it. One of the quickest ways to make an impact upon a cadet is to demonstrate that you are willing to work hard and to help the squadron and its cadets become the best it can be. Some ways this Core Value applies to Cadet Programs Officers include:

- Participating in professional development courses like TLC, or reading about youth, education, and leadership issues.
- Completing the Self-Assessment for Cadet Units (discussed later during TLC) to see how the squadron can improve itself.
- Fostering an attitude of creativity and innovation — being open to new ideas and being hostile to the “we’ve always done it that way” mindset.
- Remembering the little things like making sure your uniform is pressed and insignia is placed correctly.

Cadets do not see themselves as children; they take their program seriously. Leaders who recognize this fact and show a similar commitment to the best ideals of the Cadet Program are more effective and have more fun in CAP.





## Respect

CAP believes that all persons possess dignity simply by their being human. That dignity is what makes all members, regardless of position, gender, race, and the like worthy of basic respect. Some ways that Cadet Programs Officers model the Core Value of Respect include:

- Observing basic customs and courtesies like the salute, and displaying simple politeness at all times.
- Maintaining professionalism around cadets, to include not discussing CAP politics or challenging the motives of other adults.
- Being mindful of the cadet chain of command and letting the ranking cadets relay messages and resolve leadership challenges appropriate for their grade and age.
- Fostering good behavior online — avoiding flame wars, anonymous accusations, and petty mean-spiritedness.
- Modeling the right behaviors and refraining from smoking, drinking, or swearing around youth.

Everything about Respect points back to the Golden Rule: do unto others as you would have them do unto you. The magic words “please” and “thank you” still go a long way.



**Core Values:**  
**A perspective from  
the cockpit of  
Thunderbird #3**

*Major Nicole Malachowski was the first woman to fly as a member of the famous U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds. She is also a former CAP cadet.*

WASHINGTON -- Women have served in the Air Force for years, making valuable contributions, but gender and race differences have never been an important factor in accomplishing the Air Force mission, the first woman pilot on the Air Force Thunderbirds said here today [Veterans' Day 2006].

"What we need to concentrate on is what we have in common, which is that warrior spirit that's in all of our hearts, that has created us the way we are — to choose to be a part of something so much bigger than ourselves," Maj. Nicole Malachowski said during a speech at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery.

Being the first woman Thunderbird pilot is an honor, Major Malachowski said, but the more important thing for her is the opportunity to serve with so many talented men and women and share the Air Force story with the public.

The Thunderbirds spend a majority of their time doing community outreach. As part of that, they speak to a lot of children, Major Malachowski said. Meeting with these children, especially those who are part of the Make-a-Wish Foundation, is a blessing for her, she said, and gives her a healthy dose of humility. She recalled meeting one young boy who had only a month to live and whose wish was to meet a Thunderbird pilot.

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"People talk about our military people being so courageous and heroic and they are, and I'm very proud to be a part of the Air Force, but you look at a kid like this and you think, 'What is courage? What is heroism? It's standing right in front of us,'" she said. "This is why we wear these uniforms and why we go out and defend our nation."

Major Malachowski first became interested in flying at the age of 5, when she saw an air show in her native Las Vegas. She set her sights on becoming an Air Force pilot and never looked back. She started flying with the **Civil Air Patrol** when she was 12, and by 16 was doing solo flights. After high school, she attended the Air Force Academy and has since seen various assignments as an F-15E Strike Eagle pilot, including a tour in Iraq. She said she hopes her service in the Thunderbirds is an example to young girls and to all children that they can achieve their dreams.

"The message to all young Americans is that it's great to have a dream; it's great to have goals," she said. "Pursue something that you are passionate about, and then pursue excellence in that. And surround yourself with a positive team. I hope that when they see the Air Force Thunderbirds, they realize they can achieve any dream, and that a great team to have is certainly the Air Force."

Women have served in the Thunderbirds since 1974, just not in a pilot capacity, Major Malachowski said. Of the 130 officers and enlisted personnel on the Thunderbird team, 15 are women. Besides the six demonstration pilots, the Thunderbirds are made up of support personnel from about 25 different career fields.

The Thunderbirds have a grueling schedule, as they are on the road about 220 days during their eight-month air show season, but every team member considers it a privilege to serve and share the Air Force story, Major Malachowski said. For her part, she said she is just glad to have been born into a time of opportunities for women in the military.

"Women love their country too, and there are a lot of us who choose to do that by wearing a military uniform," she said. "I have seen and traveled the world, and it is just a wonderful thing to be a woman living in a country that provides you so many wonderful opportunities and freedoms that are unmatched anywhere else in the world. And the Air Force simply takes that to another level."



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*Condensed from an Armed Forces Press  
Service article written by SGT Sara Wood, USA.*