

ORIENTATION & MEMBERSHIP: “Cadet Great Start”

Seminar M1 Lesson Plan

Scope: Prospective and new cadets need lots of support if they are to succeed in CAP. Specifically, what do they need? And what is the best way to meet those needs? This seminar discusses cadet orientation and membership by using the Cadet Great Start program as a model.

Format: Guided Discussion (with a few lecture items)

Duration: 50 minutes

- Objectives:**
1. Explain why CAP favors the “pipeline” approach for cadet orientation
 2. Identify several needs squadrons must meet to help their new cadets succeed
 3. Describe some hallmarks of the Cadet Great Start program
 4. Identify key facts about the cadet application process, Cadet Uniform Program, and New Cadet Kit

Resources: CAPP 52-9, *Cadet Great Start* (Have the pamphlet available for “show and tell,” and refer to the Preface especially.)



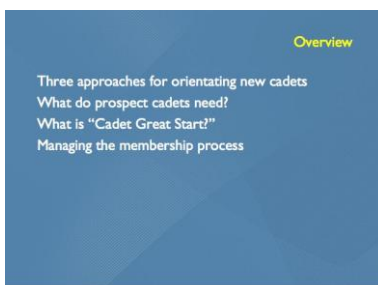
STARTING POINT

Introduce yourself and state the seminar’s topic.

ATTENTION & MOTIVATION

For each of the past 30 years or more, CAP has been recruiting 10 to 12 thousand cadets each year, on average. But at year’s end, only one-third of those newcomers have elected to renew their membership.

What can CAP do to improve? Think of how much more vibrant your squadron could be if you retained more cadets. This seminar looks at the issue of cadet retention by focusing on how squadrons orientate and train new cadets.

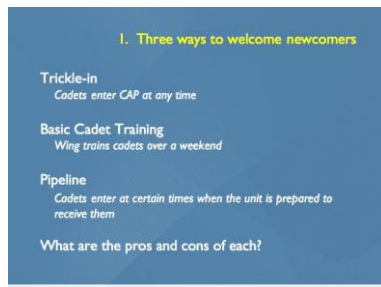


OVERVIEW

See slide

MAIN POINT #1

THREE APPROACHES FOR ORIENTATING A NEW CADET



[Lecture Item]

Most squadrons use one of three main approaches in motivating a prospective cadet to join CAP and getting them promoted to C/Amn:

“Trickle In”: The squadron has an open enrollment policy, allowing cadets to join at any time during the year.

Basic Cadet Training: The squadron uses “trickle in,” but the group or wing helps the newcomers by offering a weekend-long basic cadet training program.

Pipeline: The squadron holds recruiting drives at certain times during the year, and newcomers enter the squadron only at those times.

[Guided Discussion]

What are some of the pros and cons of each system?

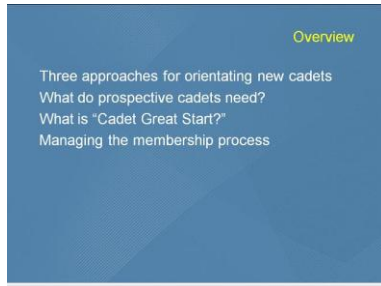
Anticipated Responses: Record the students’ replies on the whiteboard, in grid form as shown in the table below. Students’ replies should be similar to the entries on that table.

	TRICKLE IN	BASIC CADET TRAINING	PIPELINE
PROS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cadets can join anytime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cadets can join anytime ● Cadets may receive the training needed to earn C/Amn, if, by chance, the BCT activity is being held around the same time they join ● Frees squadrons from some (but not all) of their obligations to train the newcomers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unit provides each newcomer with a comprehensive, in-depth introduction to CAP ● Unit schedules orientations and responds to them systematically, vs. continually having to address needs of newcomers 1 and 2 at a time ● With several newcomers entering at once, they form a “class,” promoting teamwork and creating their own support network, thereby avoiding any newcomer feeling like the odd man out ● Having thoughtful, structured activities for the newcomer means that squadron meetings – the only activities that matter at this early stage of CAP membership – will be productive and fun ● Time is budgeted for addressing important (but often overlooked) support factors such as briefing parents, sizing for uniforms, and reviewing membership applications
CONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unit is always having to react to newcomers’ needs ● Unit is usually unable to provide the new cadet with a comprehensive, in-depth introduction to cadet life ● New cadet is the “odd cadet out,” as the only newcomer ● No specific goal for when the cadet will earn C/Amn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unit is always having to react to newcomers’ needs ● Cannot guarantee the BCT activity will arrive just-in-time to meet newcomers’ needs ● New cadets might bond with their BCT mates, but not with their home squadron ● Requires newcomers, who are the least invested in CAP, to travel to a group or wing event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cadets cannot join anytime and may need to wait until the next enrollment period comes around

MAIN POINT #2

WHAT DO PROSPECTIVE CADETS REQUIRE?

[Guided Discussion]



What do prospective cadets require? What is needed if you want to take a young person who is thinking about joining CAP and transform them into a Cadet Airman?

Anticipated Responses:

- Compelling reasons to join. What will I get to do? Is CAP fun? Is it a worthwhile activity?
- How much does it cost? What are the membership requirements?
- Partner with parents, answer their questions, etc.
- A full introduction to all 5 elements of the Cadet Program
- Detailed instruction in the basics of cadet life (drill, uniforms, saluting, etc.)
- Help getting into a uniform
- Help processing their membership application
- Help studying for the Curry exam
- Help preparing for the Curry drill test
- Help preparing for the Curry fitness test
- An opportunity to complete the foundation activity in the character program
- Help understanding and memorizing the Cadet Oath
- An understanding of how promotions work
- Lots of coaching and encouragement along the way
- An opportunity to take the Curry test
- A chance to succeed quickly
- A chance to fly soon after joining
- Etc.

INTERIM SUMMARY

Turning an ordinary kid into a Cadet Airman requires a lot of work, perhaps ten times as much work as it takes to transform a C/Amn into a C/A1C.

Because so many cadets drop out of CAP shortly after joining, it makes sense for squadrons to put a lot of thought and effort into how they orientate and train newcomers.

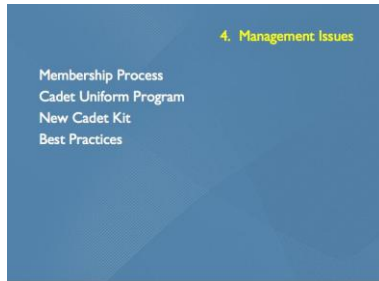
TRANSITION

In short, cadets need a “great start” in CAP if they are to succeed. To meet that need, we have the “Cadet Great Start” program (CAPP 52-9).

MAIN POINT #4

WHAT ROLE DO LOCAL LEADERS PLAY IN HELPING MEET NEW CADETS' OTHER MEMBERSHIP-RELATED NEEDS?

[Alternates between lecture and discussion]



1. The Membership Process: Basic Facts

- Prospective cadets must be at least 12 but not yet 19 to join
- Cadets must be single, attend school regularly, and willing to follow CAP rules
- Cadets apply for membership using CAPF 15
- Cadets officially become a CAP member only when their name appears in eServices

What are some best practices you recommend for managing the membership process?

Anticipated Responses:

- Have cadets attend a couple meetings before joining CAP (Cadet Great Start follows this approach)
- Require a parent to meet the unit commander before approving the application
- Have a senior member spot-check the application for completeness

2. Cadet Uniform Program: Basic Facts

- CAP provides an Air Force-style blues uniform to each cadet (if funds are available)
- Cadets or their commander can request the uniform online through eServices
- Unit commanders (or designee) needs to approve the request
- AAFES ships the uniform to the cadet's home
- The uniform is property of CAP, so if the cadet quits or outgrows it, the family is expected to return it
- Cadets still need to obtain shoes and insignia on their own
- Uniforms take about a month to arrive after placing the order (but this can vary)

What are some best practices you recommend for this program?

Anticipated Responses:

- Help the cadets measure their sizes
- Provide all the insignia needed for a small fee, or have Vanguard order forms prepared in advance
- Try to equip cadets with BDUs at the same time you're assisting with their CUP order

3. New Cadet Kit: Basic Facts

- Upon joining CAP, each cadet receives a "New Cadet Kit," at no cost to them
- The kit is basically a zip-up binder containing their textbooks, a CD, mini-posters, and other tools
- The kit should arrive at the cadet's home within 2 weeks of joining CAP

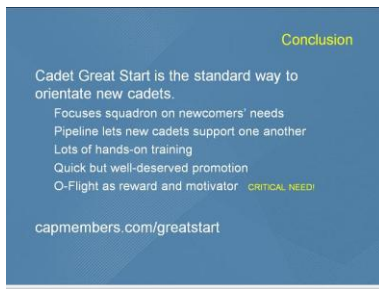
What are some best practices you recommend for this program?

Anticipated Responses:

- Keep a sample kit at the unit to use for "show and tell," and to lend to new cadets
- Use the mini-posters as you teach cadets how to wear their uniform properly
- Tell cadets to use their "Next Step CD," as it includes a section explaining what they can do to help themselves get started in CAP

CONCLUSION

CADET GREAT START IS THE STANDARD FOR ORIENTATING NEW CADETS



Think back to when you first joined CAP. You were entering a new and somewhat unique and strange organization. If we want young people to not only join CAP but succeed as cadets, we need to give them a great start.

A great start includes a thorough orientation to CAP, an in-depth introduction to cadet life, the opportunity to earn Cadet Airman quickly, and a chance to fly right away.

A pipeline-based approach, using the Cadet Great Start materials, is CAP's standard method for orientating and training new cadets.