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Civil Air Patrol Core Values

Professional Development Division
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INTRODUCTION

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. When the Air Force began work on core values development, Civil Air Patrol did likewise. The final version of CAP’s core values was formally approved in February 1999 at the Winter National Board. CAP developed these basic values to help guide its members in their performance of humanitarian service. As you read this pamphlet, consider how you can help CAP implement its core values during your voluntarily service to our great nation.

CAP's CORE VALUES HISTORY

In 1997, the United States Air Force published a set of core values for its members to live by. 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.”***

The Air Force took great strides to infuse its culture with these values, in spirit and in application, at all levels. All Air Force personnel in leadership positions were expected to incorporate core values doctrine into their personal and professional conduct and set an example for their subordinates. Within the realm of Air Force professional military education, the Air Force Education and Training Command was tasked with ensuring that core values education was woven into all educational institutions ranging from Officer Training School to Air War College and from Basic Military Training to the Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy. Finally, all Air Force members, officers and enlisted personnel, were asked to incorporate core values into their daily lives. This latter aspect of core values development, when accomplished, would transform core values from a strategic ethical concept to a personal credo.

In November 1996, 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. In February 1999, the following core values were formally approved: ***Integrity, Volunteer Service, Excellence, and Respect***. 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.

CAP'S CORE VALUES

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*: This 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. It is more than simple honesty. It embraces other attributes such as courage, responsibility, accountability, justice, openness, self-respect, and humility. Lastly, this core value means CAP members must practice the highest standards of self-discipline.

2. *Volunteer Service*: CAP adopted this core value because it reflects the very essence of the organization—service to humanity. All CAP volunteers willingly give of their time, energy, and personal resources. Moreover, many have made the ultimate sacrifice by losing their lives while serving the organization. As a minimum, this core value implies a commitment on the part of all CAP members to place the organization's purposes first and foremost. This process starts with the member's agreement to obey the rules and regulations of CAP and the Air Force. In this regard, self-discipline is an absolute must.

3. *Excellence*: This core value reflects CAP's continuous effort to be the very best, and to consistently improve its humanitarian service to America. From personal appearance to resource management, excellence must be the goal of all CAP members.

4. *Respect*: CAP members come from all walks of life. Therefore, it is extremely important that members treat each other with fairness and dignity, and work together as a team. To do otherwise would seriously impair CAP's capability to accomplish the mission.

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, in a way, the entire organization suffers. Consider the following example: When preflighting an aircraft, the CAP pilot notices what appears to be minor damage to the leading edge of the wing. It seems like a small problem at the moment, so he disregards it and flies a cadet orientation flight. After landing, he notices the damaged area has degraded severely. Which of CAP's core values did the pilot violate? Essentially, all of them were violated. Integrity was compromised, "self" was placed before "service," excellence was ignored, and there was no respect shown for the safety of the cadet passengers.

CAP's CORE VALUES STRATEGY

Civil Air Patrol has developed a comprehensive strategy for orienting and training its members on core values. This strategy pervades all facets of the organization and applies to all levels of command. It is based on assumptions similar to the ones used by the Air Force when they developed their core values. These assumptions are outlined below:

1. Core values exist independently of, and are not in competition with, Moral Leadership programs: Simply stated, the core values program is nonsectarian. It is not a religious program and does not intend to promote ANY religious belief or denomination.

2. One doesn't need to be a commander to be a leader: Commanders are appointed to their positions. A leader earns leadership status based on the respect given him or her by the people serving in the organization.

3. The leaders of an organization are the keys to its moral climate: Commanders, supervisors, and informal leaders are key players in implementing core values. Remember, a follower will do as the leader does.

4. Leaders must be keenly aware of their status as role models in the organization and they must avoid even the appearance of improper behavior: Perceptions of misconduct or inappropriate behavior can be just as damaging as actual instances of misconduct or inappropriate behavior. Leaders must always be sensitive to the implications inherent in their decisions and actions and they must maintain the utmost professionalism.

5. Leadership from below is as important as leadership from above when implementing core values: Peers constantly interact with one another. This interaction tends to influence their behavior as a group. Leaders must recognize this aspect of group dynamics and ensure core values are accepted by the membership. In doing so, the leader ensures that the core values culture of the organization perpetuates itself.

6. To understand, accept, and internalize core values, CAP members at all levels of Civil Air Patrol must be encouraged to discuss and explore the role of core values in the organization: Core values should be discussed frankly and openly by the membership. To facilitate this discussion, leaders must create a climate in the unit whereby all members know they will not be blamed for voicing their opinion. Also, members must feel free to use core values as tools to critique CAP's programs, policies, and procedures.

IMPLEMENTING CORE VALUES IN CAP

The Civil Air Patrol culture must be structured around core values. To this end, CAP 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. 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.

1. The “Schoolhouse Weave”: Civil Air Patrol’s approach to weaving core values into training programs mirrors the approach taken by the Air Force. This approach involves integrating core values training into existing courses and into new courses as they are being developed. Discussions concerning the best ways to accomplish this should not be limited solely to the senior membership of CAP, but should include all Civil Air Patrol members at all levels of the organization.

2. Commander/Supervisory Involvement: In implementing core values, the responsibilities of commanders and supervisors go beyond merely articulating policy or encouraging core values discussions. These leaders must also serve as role models in the organization and show how core values can be practically demonstrated on a daily basis. At the higher levels of CAP, the senior leadership should continually examine all policies, procedures, and programs to ensure that an ethical climate is being nurtured in the organization. Additionally, commanders and supervisors must support, and contribute to, core values education within the organization.

3. Member Involvement: The rank-and-file members of CAP have a basic responsibility to integrate core values into the organization’s culture. Members should willingly adhere to core values in their daily activities. For example, as a minimum, this involves strict compliance with all CAP directives. CAP members, CAP senior leadership, and education and training specialists must maintain a constant dialogue on possible ways to weave core values into all CAP programs. This feedback process provides for an exchange of ideas on new and innovative ways to instill core values at the grassroots level of CAP.

CONCLUSION

What really are core values? Well, they're actually quite simple. These values represent a cultural commitment within Civil Air Patrol: to practice basic honesty, to give of one's self for the betterment of humanity, to deliver top quality services, and to treat others fairly. In summary, core values require all CAP members to exemplify the highest standards of personal and professional conduct. As former Air Force Chief of Staff General Ronald Fogleman said, core values must guide our daily actions --- "even when no one else is watching."

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BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES

1. <http://www.usafa.af.mil/core-value/>
2. CAP Pamphlet 50-8, *Civil Air Patrol Level I Senior Member Orientation Course*, 1 July 1997
3. Civil Air Patrol *Unit Commanders Course* (Field Test Draft), August 1999
4. *United States Air Force Core Values*, 1 January 1997

CIVIL AIR PATROL

CORE VALUES

CIVIL AIR PATROL CORE VALUES ESTABLISH THE STANDARDS BY WHICH MEMBERS ARE EXPECTED TO CONDUCT THEMSELVES. THE VALUES OF **INTEGRITY, VOLUNTEER SERVICE, EXCELLENCE, AND RESPECT** SERVE AS THE ETHICAL FRAMEWORK FOR CAP'S SERVICE TO AMERICA.

INTEGRITY: THE VERY FIBER OF ALL CORE VALUES; WITHOUT IT ALL OTHER CORE VALUES CANNOT PREVAIL. INTEGRITY IS THE CORNERSTONE FOR ALL THAT IS MORAL AND JUST IN OUR SOCIETY, EMBRACING ATTRIBUTES SUCH AS COURAGE, RESPONSIBILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, JUSTICE, OPENNESS, SELF-RESPECT, AND HUMILITY. CAP MEMBERS MUST PRACTICE THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF SELF-DISCIPLINE.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE: THE VERY ESSENCE OF CIVIL AIR PATROL'S SERVICE TO HUMANITY. THIS CORE VALUE IMPLIES A COMMITMENT ON THE PART OF ALL CAP MEMBERS TO PLACE THE ORGANIZATION'S PURPOSES FIRST AND FOREMOST. THIS PROCESS BEGINS WITH THE MEMBER'S AGREEMENT TO OBEY THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF CAP AND THE U.S. AIR FORCE.

EXCELLENCE: STRIVING TO BE THE VERY BEST BY CONSTANTLY IMPROVING CAP'S HUMANITARIAN SERVICE TO AMERICA. FROM PERSONAL APPEARANCE TO RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, EXCELLENCE MUST BE THE GOAL OF ALL CAP MEMBERS.

RESPECT: TREATING EVERYONE WITH FAIRNESS AND DIGNITY AND WORKING TOGETHER AS A TEAM.

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