



CIVIL AIR PATROL United States Air Force Auxiliary

CADET ENCAMPMENT PROGRAM

C7 Flight Advisory &

C9 Graduation Ceremony: Cadet Commander's Charge

Guidance for Flight Staff / Cadet Commander

Note: This document focuses on activity C7 – Flight Advisory. Activity C9 – Cadet Commander's Charge is closely related. The cadet commander may prepare for his or her charge using this document as a reference.

Lesson in Context. The advisory program motivates cadets to value personal reflection as an important component in their development in the areas of leadership and character. Advisories are structured mentoring sessions or feedback meetings where the flight staff, supported by the training officer, helps the students take stock in their overall encampment experience just prior to their graduation. Advisories are conducted on an individual basis (activity C5) and on a team basis (*this* activity, C7).

Overall Goal. The goal of the flight advisory is to connect in the students' minds their positive feelings of camaraderie and self-esteem to the accomplishments they achieved and the lessons they learned together as a flight. The flight advisory is akin to a conclusion at the end of a huge lesson; the flight staff helps the students summarize their learning as they look back over the encampment's goals and the promises the students made in their Honor Agreement.

Presentation Format. A flight advisory is an *extemporaneous* presentation. That is, the flight staff carefully plans their remarks in advance, but they do not read from a script as in a formal speech. In preparing for an extemporaneous presentation, focus on developing a comprehensive outline with three or four levels of detail. Ensure the outline includes carefully selected examples to illustrate your points. Also, record in the outline the transitions you'll use when switching from one main idea to the next, and identify who (flight commander, flight sergeant, training officer) will lead on each subtopic in your outline. Draft and refine the outline, and refine it yet again. Consider using a series of index cards as memory joggers; transfer the finished outline to the index cards, one subtopic per card. Finally, rehearse the actual oral presentation two or three times before delivering it.

Setting. Any quiet, comfortable location is appropriate as a setting for the flight advisory. Sitting on the floor in a day room . . . under a shady tree . . . in a classroom – almost any setting can work.

Preparing for a Flight Advisory. A flight advisory is a teachable moment, and therefore the flight staff should prepare for it carefully as they would if teaching a formal class. Some guidelines to consider when preparing to lead a flight advisory include:

- Tell the story of the flight. Every good story has a beginning, a middle, and an end, with conflicts and surprises and setbacks and successes and even some humor along the way. So too should a flight advisory.
- The story needs to present the flight's numerous activities in the context of the encampment's goals and the commitments students made in their Honor Agreement.

- Good stories are rich in detail. Be specific. Cite particular individuals by name and describe what challenges they overcame and how, and/or describe how they contributed to the success of the flight. Be careful not to dwell on one individual's contributions too much, and make an effort to include everyone by name in your narrative.
- To add meaningful details, mention any daily honor flight awards, records of inspection scores improving, victories in team sports, the progress made on the drill field and in uniform wear and customs and courtesies.
- Consider the "team life cycle" (*Cadet Encampment Handbook*, p. 25) and use that model as a vehicle for talking about how a group of individual cadets developed into a cohesive team.
- Summarize some of the tours and activities cadets participated in, and use those events as examples of learning in leadership, aerospace, fitness, or character.
- Bravely and honestly admit some mistakes you made as a leader and the lessons you personally learned.
- Acknowledge that friendships were made during encampment, but focus on the story of the group becoming a team, not on individual cadets' inside jokes and free time.
- Avoid making comparisons with other flights. The flight's story is about their becoming a team and their fulfilling the encampment's goals, not in out-doing any other team.
- Finish with a challenge. Cadets have just completed an incredible encampment experience, but what should happen next? What challenge can they pursue in their squadrons? In their own development as aerospace leaders? As students at school? As citizens in a community?

Instructional Team. The flight commander and flight sergeant should tag-team their presentation, with the flight commander assuming the lead role, of course.

Role of the Training Officer. The training officer should review the flight staff's outline in advance and provide constructive feedback. Time permitting, the training officer should sit for a dry-run of the flight staff's presentation. Toward the end of the flight advisory, it would be appropriate for the flight commander to invite the training officer to share observations, too, but the advisory ought to end with the flight commander having the final word as he or she issues a challenge to the students, as mentioned above.

Quality Checklist. Simplified, the marks of a good flight advisory presentation are:

1. References the goals and commitments that the students accepted at the start of encampment
2. Mentions in rich detail several challenges you faced in becoming a successful team
3. Includes a lot of specificity – who specifically did what, when, how, and why – like what you'd find in a good story
4. Connects particular events to the larger story of how the group became a team; connects what was done with what was learned
5. Finishes with a final challenge