

Care and Feeding of a CAP Member

Lesson Objective: Demonstrate knowledge of the typical needs and resources required in order to assist and guide their squadron members to enjoy the most fulfilling and professional CAP career that each individual member desires.

Desired Learning Outcomes (DLO):

1. Discuss how to orient a new member
2. Describe ways to keep the mid-career member engaged
3. Evaluate the concept of career transitions, including the potential reasons for retirement or for leaving the organization.

Scheduled Lesson Time: 45 minutes

Introduction

New members typically come in full of energy and are ready to take off with afterburners. They need a lot of basic information and frequently they need it quickly to maintain their interest. When the novelty is replaced with a basic understanding of all that CAP has to offer, the member may want to explore other facets of CAP, thus ensuring that the excitement of novelty remains. Another member may want to stay focused on the one thing that brought him/her to CAP. Some members may find CAP's opportunities to lead in some areas and follow in others the best mix for them. After many years of the career path that they enjoyed, some CAP members may choose to retire completely. Others may want a little less engagement, but they still want to remain connected. As the commander, you are in a unique position to serve each of these members and help them enjoy each phase of their CAP career/journey.

Because people are different, have different needs, and have different issues that arise during their lifetimes, it is impossible for you to know everything that goes on in everyone's lives. What you can know however, is how you can serve their CAP needs which will in turn empower them to continue to help you meet the mission needs. How do you know what you don't know if you don't know that you don't know it? Ask. If you are only using the CAPF 40 as the annual report card, you are missing a golden opportunity to serve both as a career mentor and possibly even a career extender. When you interview prospective members you are already asking why they want to join and what they want to get out of their time with CAP. Asking your members during the annual review what they want now will help you identify the resources you need to put in place in order to keep them actively engaged in your program.

The care we as commanders must have for our members should be our #1 task. Without members, CAP cannot complete missions. Our members execute the mission. The commander's job is to ensure members have the resources required and the proper motivation to want to do the job.

While CAP does not compensate members with a paycheck, it does compensate members with a sense of worth and a sense of belonging to an organization that they can believe in.

Commanders must take care of their members and they must do so in a timely manner. That means knowing the processes and procedures to get things done. Members can become frustrated when promotions, awards, and other processes are not completed in a timely, professional manner.

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The unit Personnel Officer normally completes many of these tasks, but some units may not have a personnel officer or the officer may be still learning the job. A good squadron commander knows these processes so the promotions and awards earned by members are completed in a timely fashion. Even if a commander has a great Personnel Officer in the unit, there are many personnel actions that require commander approval. As the commander, it is important to know how to accomplish tasks like promotions and awards. Commanders take care of their people. A good commander ensures promotions and awards are processed in a timely manner.

1. Orienting the New Member

A new person walks through the door of the squadron meeting place and is looking around. What do you do? How did they get there? Who slipped them the secret code about CAP and where and when you meet? What do we do now? Maybe if we ignore them they will just go away.....

While this lesson objective is not about recruiting, per se, how we act and treat this new person is extremely important. You have no idea who they are or what their background is. They could be a pilot, emergency responder, parent, school teacher, student, current or former military member, a disabled person who was unable to join the military but has always wanted to serve, or maybe even a former member with both the Spaatz and Wilson awards looking to rejoin after being away for a bit (it has happened, I can assure you). Almost everyone who walks through that door has something to bring to your squadron. They made the move by walking through the door to your squadron. Now it is your turn. Make it a good one.

The Membership Process

Most units assign a mentor to new members/prospects and then require them to attend a few meetings before actually joining. The member should be approved by the membership committee and welcomed in before any paperwork is done. That process is covered in a different lesson. Once that process is done, however, it is time to start the actual process of joining.

There are currently several different categories of membership. Review CAPR 39-2 *Civil Air Patrol Membership* to explore all categories. We will focus on the three most common at the squadron level, that being active senior and cadet members and cadet sponsor members.

ACTIVE SENIOR MEMBERS

The membership process for active senior members is still a paper-based process due to the fingerprint requirement. Prospective senior members must meet the requirements for membership outlined in CAPR 39-2, Chapter 3. Each unit must have a Membership Committee which will review every application to ensure prospective members meet these requirements. Every suitable applicant will complete a CAPF 12 and a CAP Fingerprint card.

The CAPF 12 must be signed in two places by the unit commander. The first signature by the commander is certifying that the commander has seen one of the valid forms of proof of citizenship or lawfully admitted alien status and is located about mid-page on the front side. The second commander's signature certifies that the "the applicant has been introduced to the Core Values, Ethics Policies, and Safety Policies, and that I have fully reviewed the OATH OF MEMBERSHIP (on reverse) with the potential new member. I further certify that a mentor has

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been assigned to assist this member in their orientation and training.” Please understand the responsibility behind these signatures. Do not sign until all of these requirements have been met. The prospective member should say the oath in front of the unit during an appropriate ceremony.

CADET MEMBERS

CAP’s unique youth experience is known as the Cadet Program. Cadets are students of leadership, in our case leadership in aerospace-related endeavors. Cadet Membership is open to applicants aged 12 through 18. Applicants aged 19 and above must join as senior members. Applicants who are 18 years of age may choose to join either program. Cadets may remain in the cadet program until their 21st birthday, at which time they must become senior members. The process for transferring cadets to senior status is the same as a new senior member, however the CAPF 12 will have “Cadet to Senior” written in the top margin and no membership dues are required. A fingerprint card is still required.

Cadet membership applications may be completed either with a CAPF 15, Application for Cadet Membership in Civil Air Patrol or through an online application. The preferred method is the online method, where a parent and the prospective cadet complete the application together, enter payment information and submit for approval. The application then goes to the unit commander for approval in the Approvals section of eServices. Please ensure the cadet has the appropriate unit charter number to input as a wrong number will send the application to the wrong commander who should disapprove it as they will not recognize the name.

The approval of an online application has similar responsibilities as the signatures on the paper forms. You are vouching for several things, to include that you have met and spoken with the parents, the prospective cadet has attended at least 3 meetings, and that the cadet meets the membership requirements. Do not just blindly approve membership applications. What your approval means is on the approval page in eServices. Read it every time and only approve if all of the requirements have been satisfied. If they have not, wait to approve it until all requirements are met.

The paper application is to be used for prospective members who do not have internet access or would prefer to mail a check to NHQ for the dues. The CAPF 15 is four pages long and includes the identical questions found on the online application. Please ensure it is legible to minimize any transcription errors that might occur. The website and instructions for the online application are included on page 4 of the CAPF 15.

CADET SPONSOR MEMBERS

The Cadet Sponsor Member category is available to parents and grandparents of a cadet who wish to help but do not wish to participate fully as active senior members. Cadet Sponsor Members may chaperone cadets during activities and drive cadets to and from activities. They may drive or operate COVs, and may ride in CAP aircraft as passengers only. They are not eligible for promotions or awards, nor may they wear AF-style uniforms. They may wear any of the CAP-distinctive uniforms at the discretion of the commander. CSMs only pay national dues.

Application for Cadet Sponsor Member status is done exactly the same as for a normal active senior member, with the CAPF 12 annotated “Cadet Sponsor” in the top margin. The FD Form 258, *FBI Applicant Fingerprint Card*, must also be completed and submitted with the CAPF 12. There is no online application process for CSMs at this time due to the fingerprint requirement.

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New Member Training

Once a member has officially been accepted into CAP (i.e. they have been assigned a CAPID number and show on your roster in eServices), they are able to complete their initial training. This training is called Level I for senior members and Cadet Sponsor Members. They should be assisted through this process by their assigned mentor and the unit Professional Development Officer. This training is specified in CAPR 50-17, *CAP Senior Member Professional Development Program*.

The first action any new member needs to take is to register in eServices. As part of this registration, they will be required to agree and abide by CAP's policies on personally identifiable information. The paths split at that point depending on senior or cadet programs. Cadets begin their achievements while senior members and CSMs go on to complete Level I. Encourage this to happen as quickly as possible as members cannot participate in most activities until this training is completed.

Level I is a combination of an online course, followed by an in-person course. It covers everything from organizational knowledge, cadet protection, safety, and how we value all members. The unit's Professional Development Officer is responsible for running the course. Like everything else, if you don't have one, you're it. Do not fail to complete the in-person portion of Level I. It is extremely important and will show your new member how seriously you take the program and the professional development of our members. Completion of the course is normally done in the Learning Management System of eServices using the "Mentor Input/Skills Eval" Module.

Cadet officers transitioning to senior status may be exempt from Level I requirements. In those cases, a CAP Form 11 must be completed and submitted to NHQ (may be via email) in order to grant that member credit. Former cadet officers are also eligible for credit for several other senior training requirements, based upon the highest milestone completed as a cadet. This is not an automatic event. The member must apply to NHQ via a memo through the unit commander.

Initial Grade Appointments

Many new members of CAP are authorized advanced starting grades within the CAP program after completing Level I (where required). Military members (both former and current), former cadet officers, medical personnel, lawyers, pilots and others are eligible. These appointments (not promotions) are applied for using a CAPF 2 requesting the appropriate grade and attaching the supporting documentation showing the member's applicable qualification (i.e. DD Form 214, military promotion orders, FAA Pilot Certificate, medical or legal diploma, etc). The packet is then forwarded up the chain of command to the appropriate approving authority for that grade. For professional appointments (pilots, doctors, lawyers, etc) and commander appointments, the Wing Commander is the promoting authority, regardless of the grade. This same process applies to both Officer and NCO appointments.

The Early Career Member

Once a member has completed Level I, they are given a duty assignment and enrolled in a Specialty Track as they begin training in their chosen specialty track(s) and ES qualifications. As the commander, you need to take an active interest in the professional development of your members. Track their progress and work hard to provide them with the training opportunities

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they both need and want. Along the way, recognize your members with earned promotions, awards and ribbons. Lastly, life often gets in the way of our CAP careers and moves us to a new location. Members may come and go, and we need to assist them in their transition to their new squadron, either into your or out of your unit into another by working with the other unit commander to reduce the stress of the transfer.

SPECIALTY TRACK TRAINING

All senior members are required to be entered into the specialty track that coincides with their CAP duty assignment. The higher-trained member will be much more useful to the unit. Each specialty track has its own training guide, published as CAP Pamphlets. The tracks are broken down into 3 skill levels (Technician, Senior and Master). Members follow the appropriate training guide requirements for the skill level they are working towards. When members are first enrolled in a specialty track, they are working towards the Technician level and they are listed as "None" for their current skill level. Keeping track of all of this information is the job of the Professional Development Officer, but...

Ensure every member has an on-the-job trainer who has worked their way through that specialty track, at least to the next level. If you don't have anyone in your unit that is qualified in a certain specialty track, link them up with someone at the next higher headquarters (group or wing) or in another unit. Either way, no member should be working on a specialty track alone. Find them someone to guide them through the process and teach them what they need to know.

When a member completes all of the requirements, the OJT trainer and PDO should complete the Specialty Track checklist and submit to the member's unit commander for approval. Once you have approved the completion of the specialty track training, either you or your PDO can go into the Professional Development/Specialty Track module of eServices and input the member for upgrade to the next skill level. The commander will still need to go into the Approvals module.

PROMOTIONS

While awards in CAP recognize a member for the performance of their duties over a period of time, promotions for duty performance recognize the member's potential for success at a higher level: with more authority and more responsibility. Both cadet and senior members have specific requirements to complete before they are eligible for promotion. Those requirements are set forth in CAPR 60-1 for cadets and CAPR 35-5 for senior members. Both of these sets of requirements are tracked in eServices, provided the appropriate information is entered.

When should you promote, and how public should you make the ceremony? This falls into another of the "How do you know what you don't know if you don't know that you don't know it?" categories. On the surface it would seem to be a very simple procedure to write:

1) If a member is present and approved for promotion during a meeting, the promotion ceremony will be held during that meeting.

2) If the member is approved for promotion, but is absent from that meeting, the promotion ceremony will be held at the next meeting the member attends.

3) If the member is approved for promotion at a time that is in between meetings, the promotion ceremony will be held at the next meeting that the member attends.

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If you command a large squadron (especially if there is a large number of cadets in your squadron), you may choose to hold all promotion ceremonies during the first meeting of the month in order to achieve some efficiency of time.

This all sounds simple. What about the member who wants to wait for a spouse or parent to return from a trip (deployment) so that the parent or spouse can “pin” them? What about the member who is very shy, and prefers to not have a big ceremony, but would rather keep it small with only the commander administering the oath and then shaking his/her hand? There is only one way to know what you don’t know: ask. The meaningful reward is the one the member will treasure. Who decides how meaningful the reward is? The recipient.

All of the above presumes you have the permission of the member to promote him/her. As surprising as it may sound, some members do not want to be promoted, and may decide to quit if you promote them against their wishes. Yes, they have truly earned the new grade, and they have exceeded all of the requirements for the promotion, but they insist that the grade they have is the one they want, and do not wish to be promoted. Their reasoning may not make sense to you, but the reward that means something to you is not what motivates them. Your job is to support them and reward them in a way that is motivating to them. How do you find this information out? The simple answer is. . . ask! Then, give them a reward that is meaningful to them if it is within your power to do so.

2. Keeping the Mid-Career Member Engaged

When someone asks you, “What’s up?” and you respond, “same old, same-o,” what does that tell them about your excitement level? If everything is the same and you enjoy it, you would probably say something like, “I got to teach the new guy how to run the Elp-er, and he was really quick to pick it up.” To remain fully engaged in what you do, it has to be fun for you, and you have to find it rewarding in some manner that means something to you. Your members are the same in this regard. How they differ is what excites them, and how they want to be rewarded. “I’ll quit if I have to go to the field one more time to find that stupid beacon” is a clear indication that you need to find something new for this member. “Hey boss, I need to get back in the field: the admin side of things just isn’t cutting it for me” is another clear indication. Work that is good, but not quite as good as in the past may be an early sign of boredom, or it may be a sign of personal issues at home. Repeatedly showing up late, or being irritable may also be subtle signs that your member is not enjoying their CAP experience enough. This may also be considered a sign of asking for help.

The simplest way to know what’s going on is to ask-and then LISTEN to the answer. Listen with your ears and with your eyes. The majority of communication is non-verbal. Estimates vary in range that up to 93% of communication is non-verbal. The members need to know they are valued as people, and that you appreciate their efforts & contributions as well. Don’t assume they know: make sure they know, and do it in a way that suits their individual needs.

Once you have figured out who needs to do what so that everyone stays happily engaged in their CAP career, and you are accomplishing the missions that are given to you from the wing commander, you need to figure out how to recognize their hard work in a manner consistent with what will be meaningful to them. Some people want “bling” (awards, decorations, badges, etc). The more bling on their uniform, and the more publicly it is given, the more motivated they become. Other people would prefer a quiet handshake, and maybe go out for a burger at your local greasy spoon. Their reasoning may not make sense to you, but the reward that means

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something to you is not what motivates them. Again, your job is to support them and reward them in a way that is motivating to them.

To find information on the formal awards that you can submit your members, begin your search in CAPR 39-3 (Award Of CAP Medals, Ribbons and Certificates) and CAPP 39-3. There are awards you can submit on behalf of your members for activities in the cadet program, the PD program, aerospace education, activity, and even length of service. You can give certificates for things your members have done. Certificates can be given out for passing the Yeager test, taking an orientation flight, some of the various courses that CAP has to offer, earning the Wright Brothers, various time of membership in CAP (20 years and up), etc. These are found in eServices under the admin section (the CAP Certificates tab). AND...there is nothing to say that you can't make your own certificate. Naturally, the certificate should be professional in appearance and phrasing. If you call it "The Extra Miler" or "The Above and Beyond" certificate, and give it to those who clearly do more than others, you are giving instant recognition and praise. This is something that can be done locally and immediately. Sometimes you may use this while you are waiting for the official CAP commendation to be approved by the wing (or higher) commander.

The awards recommendation process has become much easier with the eServices Recommendation For Decoration section. You can find this module in the Personnel tab under "Award Recommendation." To ensure your recommendation for an award stands a chance of being approved, you want to look over the requirements in CAPR 39-3. Phrasing is important. Be sure you capture the essence of what your member did correctly, and in the format needed for the award.

Some awards are mentioned in CAPR 39-3, but the details for the awards are found elsewhere. There is a listing toward the end of CAPR 39-3 of these awards and the CAPR or CAPP you need to reference for the awards. Most of these awards are "Of the Year" awards.

There are many awards which are given to the members and some are specific to seniors or to cadets. Be sure you look for and then meet the deadline if it exists. Deadlines exist for all of the "Of the Year" awards, and sometimes the deadlines change. The best advice for you is to keep track of all regulation and pamphlet changes no matter what the topic. The good news is that this information is available to you every time you log into eServices in the News section.

Other awards are geared toward the unit. The requirements to earn the Quality Cadet Unit Award are found in CAPR 60-1. Nomination for Unit Citation, National Commander's Unit Citation, and Squadron of Merit awards are submitted by your wing commander. Members who were active in the unit during the time these unit awards are given are eligible to wear a ribbon commensurate with the award. Some unit awards will be recognized at the annual wing banquet with a banner for your guidon. Specific mention of these is done here because the requirements for the award may change, and your measured percentages will fluctuate with membership changes. These fluctuations can be problematic if you get an influx of members right at the cutoff time of the award. Bottom line here: don't meet the minimum requirements for an award - have room to spare. Go the extra mile in getting your cadets O-Rides, or whatever you need to do to be in the running for these awards.

3. Career Transitions: Retirement, Resignation or Termination

The end of a member's career in CAP can occur based on the decision of the member or a decision made by the organization.

Resignations and Failure to Renew

As a volunteer, a member can choose to end his CAP career at any time and for many reasons. Sometimes members leave CAP for personal reasons. A change in family circumstances or work can impact the ability of a member to volunteer. A member may decide that CAP is not the organization he or she wished to join or another organization may interest them more.

Ensuring the unit has an engaging, vibrant program will help retain members for as long as possible. Members volunteer because they want to be engaged and gain fulfillment from their membership. Unit commanders are in a position to ensure members have a quality program to retain their interest.

Retirement

Members who have served CAP for many years may choose to retire from the organization. Retirement is explained *in detail in CAPR 39-2, Civil Air Patrol Membership, and CAPR 35-1, Assignment and Duty Status*. Generally, a member must be in good standing and have 20 years of service as a senior member in CAP to be eligible for retirement. Members who are being considered for demotion or termination may not retire. Commanders request retirement for members in eServices or by CAPF 2a.

A retired member receives a card and certificate that should be presented publicly to value the member's service to CAP. Once retired, members may not actively participate. Retired members may attend conferences the general public is allowed to attend and other events when invited by the wing or region commander of the unit hosting the event. Retired members wear the CAP blazer uniform or appropriate civilian attire when attending social functions as a guest. Retired members may request a return to active duty but this must be approved by the National Commander.

Termination

A member can also leave CAP based on a decision made by the organization; in other words, termination. This is a class of actions called adverse action. Termination is one of many adverse actions that can be taken. Let's define adverse action. An adverse action is a measure that encompasses disciplinary actions to members for improper conduct and include counseling, suspensions, demotions, and membership termination. Adverse membership actions are designed to be progressive tools and resources for commanders in handling problem CAP members. Adverse membership actions provide a corrective framework for commanders to correct or eliminate disruptive behavior, to uphold standards, to prevent the spread of detrimental behavior, and to maintain order/discipline.

Commanders may face a variety of challenges in their units. Members may have repeated uniform violations, consistently miss deadlines, submit substandard work, provide fraudulent information on their application, fail to follow the chain of command, write a bad check, cause a safety hazard, be insubordinate, be disruptive, be argumentative, or violate the Cadet Protection Policy. Members sometimes even undertake illegal behavior. Just as this list runs the gamut from minor to serious, the action the commander takes can be lighter or more harsh.

Regardless of the action taken, the commander must follow the processes outlined in CAP regulations. Key regulations for adverse membership actions include:

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- CAPR 35-1 *Assignment and Duty Status*
- CAPR 35-3 *Membership Termination*
- CAPR 35-5 *CAP Officer and NCO Appointments and Promotions*
- CAPR 1-1 *Ethics Policy*
- CAPR 39-2 *CAP Membership*
- CAPR 60-2 *Cadet Protection Program*
- CAPR 70-1 *Flight Management*
- CAPR 60-3 *CAP ES Training and Operational Missions*

Rules must be enforced fairly and consistently. The commander must not discriminate in his or her application of the rules and it is important to show respect for members. Commanders should listen to the members and provide corrective action in a progressive manner to allow the member the opportunity to change his or her behavior. It is important to be encouraging and accentuate the positive while correcting the negative.

Sadly, in some instances members will not improve and the commander must be able to identify when to escalate from counseling to letters of reprimand to suspension or suspension of privileges to demotion to termination.

Commanders must be sure to follow all processes carefully when taking adverse action and to document all actions. Commanders can rely on chaplains, the wing legal officer, the wing director of personnel, and the wing commander when dealing with adverse actions. Members who have their membership terminated may appeal. Actions are most often overturned when commanders fail to follow procedure.

Lesson Summary and Closure

Civil Air Patrol has many meaningful and rewarding career paths. Assisting your members in ensuring they have the career path that is right for them at whatever stage of life they are in will reap rewards all around. You get the missions accomplished, and their increased motivation will be contagious both for other members, and for new prospects.