

Taking Command

DURATION: 50 Minutes

TEACHING METHOD: Panel Discussion

REFERENCES: Student Reading

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Comprehend the role and requirements of unit command.

DESIRED LEARNING OUTCOMES (DLO):

1. Explain unit commander roles, responsibilities, and accountability.
2. Explain the Cadet Protection Policy and how to implement it.
3. Explain how to develop/share a vision.
4. Explain the importance of succession planning.

LESSON STRATEGY: This lesson is designed to familiarize students with the issues centered on taking command of a CAP unit.

This lesson is best accomplished when a robust discussion begins between the students and a panel of experienced squadron commanders.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: This is a critical lesson. In order for the students to fully benefit and ask meaningful questions of the commander's panel, students should have completed the assigned reading in the pre-course before coming to the class. This allows you to spend most of your time on discussion questions and any exercises or case studies offered. Survey the students to see how well they've absorbed the materials and adjust your plan as necessary.

REVIEW: Ask the students if they have any questions about the reading. If they have questions, answer them. If not, proceed with a short review. Ask the students to share the most important points from the reading. First, ask students what they believe are the roles and responsibilities of a squadron commander. Ask them about the main issues for which they are directly accountable and ask them to summarize their role with Cadet Protection. Next, ask them to explain SMART goals and its role in developing a vision (bonus points to anyone who ties this to commander's intent). Reserve 10-15 minutes for the review, 35-40 minutes for the panel; and the remaining time to tie together loose ends.

BRIDGE: Command can be the most rewarding experience in a professional or volunteer career. How steep the curve depends on how well you are prepared for the role. Understanding the responsibilities of command and the programs you'll be responsible for are the keys to a successful tenure. Now, let's discuss these concepts with a panel of experienced current and/or former squadron commanders. Ensure your panel questions include references to each DLO.

PANEL DISCUSSION: If the panel discussion isn't being moderated by the instructor, ensure that the moderator has developed questions that support the DLOs. Ask the moderator and the panelists to view the beginning of the class where the review takes place. Encourage open-ended questions that stimulate discussion and further questions by the students.

CLOSURE: Command is a continuous combination of task/mission completion and staff development. Actively engaging your members in SMART goals and communicating regularly

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up and down the chain of command gives your staff ownership of projects that move the unit forward while ensuring group/wing is aware of problems as they arise.

Knowing what you're responsible for when you sign on as commander does not guarantee an easy pathway to accomplishing those things. However, it is essential in forming and communicating plans. Finally, working closely with your staff and the wing positions the unit for success.

CLOSELEY RELATED LESSONS: Commander's Intent, Leadership Fundamentals, Developing our Members