



CIVIL AIR PATROL United States Air Force Auxiliary

CADET ENCAMPMENT PROGRAM

L10 Wingmen & The Warrior Spirit

Briefing for Cadet Instructor

This Lesson in Context: Everyone airman has a wingman. The Air Force uses its wingman program as a sort of buddy system supporting support the overall well-being of airmen. Recently, airmen have struggled with suicide and sexual assault, and the Air Force has responded partly by placing even more emphasis on the wingman concept. We hope none of our cadets experience problems of that magnitude, but the underlying principle still holds: In a high stress encampment environment it is especially important that each cadet know he or she can turn to a wingman for advice and moral support. Even more, if the wingman program is running properly, each cadet wingman would be proactively watching his or her mate and stepping forward to help when that cadet seems down, ill, or not getting along with others.

Overall Goal: Two outcomes are envisioned for this activity. First, cadets will gain an understanding of and appreciation for the Air Force wingman concept. Second, by the end of the activity, each cadet will commit to serving as a wingman and to turn to a wingman when he or she needs help at encampment.

Objectives: This suggested lesson plan pursues five objectives. By the end of the class, cadets will:

- (1) Describe the wingman concept in their own words
- (2) Identify the three components of the CAP cadet wingman model (physical, mental, and social)
- (3) Describe practical, specific behaviors a wingman could demonstrate in each component of the wingman model
- (4) Discuss possible sources of adult assistance for when cadets encounter a serious problem affecting their own or their wingman's physical or mental well-being (training officers, chaplain, medical officer, 9-1-1)
- (5) Give the Air Force / CAP definition of "warrior spirit" and describe how and why wingmen are helpful in promoting a warrior spirit.

Suggested Duration: 30 min

Suggested Instructor: Cadet squadron commander or cadet first sergeant, perhaps in a tag-team approach.

Suggested Format: Cadets relate best to specific examples, not abstract concepts. Speak anecdotally. Use your life experiences to convey a personal perspective about leadership. Have some questions prepared to direct to the audience and/or allow time for the cadets to pose questions to you. A back-and-forth discussion is better than a lecture. As cadre, you're an encampment veteran, so try to impart your practical wisdom upon the first-year students who are likely to be stressed and confused at their early point in encampment.

Suggested Venue: This activity works well in either a classroom / auditorium setting, or in a casual setting where cadets perhaps sit on the ground in a shady spot as the instructor stands and moves about the group.

Audio Visual Support. Your CAP point of contact will tell you what A/V support is available. Slides and script-like notes are available, but instructors are not required to use those resources.

Content Outline

I. Openers

- A. In aerial combat, what is a wingman and what does he or she do?
- B. Why are wingman so important in aerial combat?

II. Classic examples of wingmen in action

- A. Col. Gabby Gabreski, WWII ace (see notes document)
- B. Bob Pardo and the "Pardo Push" (see notes document)
- C. Key takeaway: wingmen are valuable because they are committed to their mates and they see the world from a different vantage point so can spot trouble / solutions unseen by their wingman.

III. CAP Cadet Wingman Concept

- A. Physical, mental, and social components (each is discussed in depth momentarily)
- B. Wingmen are not part of the chain. A wingman is a roommate, a partner on the job, a friend, etc., but not a boss. Wingmen are equals, even if one technically has a stripe or two over the other.
- C. Physical well-being
Examples: eating well, drinking water, sleeping well, showering daily, getting injuries treated
- D. Mental well-being
Examples: staying optimistic, overcoming momentary setbacks, coping with homesickness, staying focused
- E. Social well-being
Examples: making friends, being included in the group, giving and accepting compliments, not picking on others, not being picked on
- F. Serious problems & adult assistance: See the training officer, chaplain, medic, or in life-or-death matters call 9-1-1.

IV. Warrior Spirit

- A. Encampment is supposed to be a challenge, so cadets need a warrior spirit to succeed.
- B. A warrior spirit is tough-mindedness, tireless motivation, and a condition of the heart.
- C. Because we want the encampment environment to be so challenging physically, mentally, and academically as a leadership laboratory, wingmen are essential.

V. Final Thought:

Faced with so many awesome challenges at encampment, you have a responsibility to be a warrior, to heed the advice of your wingman, and to be a trusty wingman for your mate.

VI. **Follow-Up Task:** Flight staff is to ensure each cadet is matched with a wingman.

- A. If cadets are lodged two to a room, then roommates should be natural wingmen.
- B. Wingmen need to be the same gender.
- C. Try to match cadets of roughly the same age and CAP grade.
- D. In the case of an odd number of cadets, it's okay to have a trio matched as wingmen.