

ACTIVITY 2.4

LEADERSHIP FOUNDATIONS 4: THE CADET UNIFORM

During this activity, cadets learn not just how to wear the uniform, but discuss why the uniform is an essential part of the cadet experience. They review the main policies regarding uniform wear, and also consider how their appearance will affect CAP's image. Through a "show and tell" exercise involving an NCO model, cadets acquire practical tips on how to look sharp in uniform. Following this activity, cadets will apply their learning during a lab and an inspection tutorial.

Suggested Instructor

A cadet officer or NCO should lead this activity

A cadet NCO, whose uniform is impeccable, should serve as the model for the "show and tell"

Duration

30 min

Objectives

1. Describe the purpose of the uniform and defend the idea that there is only one way to wear it
2. Describe the basic grooming standards
3. Identify where the rules governing wear of the uniform can be found
4. Identify the standards for wearing the blues uniform, to include placement of insignia, press, alignment of the gig line, etc.

Visual Aids

CAPM 39-1, Attachment 2

Uniform Mini-Posters from the Cadet Member Kit

LESSON OUTLINE

PART 1: ACADEMIC FOUNDATION

15 min

Discussion Questions

1. What is a uniform? Why do organizations like the military, the police, and even McDonalds employees wear a uniform?

Anticipated Response

A uniform is the distinctive clothing that all members of an organization wear. Uniforms are visible symbols of the group – they help individuals identify with the team, and therefore promote unity. Uniforms let the general public readily identify members of a group – to find a police officer, look for someone in a police uniform.

2. Specifically, why do CAP cadets wear the uniform?

Anticipated Response

Cadets wear the uniform as part of their leadership training; it promotes self-discipline, teamwork, camaraderie, and is a visible sign of our affiliation with the Air Force.

3. Does an individual's appearance affect their organization's image? How? Why?

Anticipated Response

Yes. For good or bad, each individual represents their entire organization. If a cadet looks sharp in uniform, people will get the impression that all CAP cadets look sharp and that CAP is a good organization. Likewise, if one cadet is a total mess, people will think that cadet is the norm, and CAP's reputation will suffer.

4. Therefore, how many ways are there to wear the uniform?

Anticipated Response

One: The right way. Wearing the uniform is a privilege, not a right. Wear it proudly or not at all.

Lecture Items

1. Grooming Standards

The first requirement in wearing the uniform is that you meet the grooming standards. For cadets, this basically means:

- Haircut (show visual aid from CAPM 39-1, Attachment 2, on haircut standards)
- Clean face, clean hands, clean fingernails, good personal hygiene overall
- Uniform items themselves are clean and smell fresh

2. Wear Policy

Wearing the uniform is a privilege, not a right. You are not permitted to wear the uniform whenever you want, only during CAP activities. For example, you wear the

uniform to squadron meetings, weekend cadet activities, encampments, etc., but not to family cookouts, while working at a part-time job, while attending political rallies, etc.

3. Uniform Combinations

The only required uniform for cadets is known as the “blues uniform.” This is the Air Force-style blues shirt, blue trousers or skirt, black shoes or boots, and a flight cap (etc.). The blues is a dress uniform.

Many cadets go above and beyond by obtaining BDUs – the camouflage uniform. BDU stands for “battle dress utility.” If you have BDUs, you’d use them as your field uniform or everyday uniform – it is not a dress uniform.

Explain what avenues are available to cadets who want to obtain BDUs (ie: unit supplies, DRMO, purchase, etc.)

4. How the Uniform Is Worn

In a moment, we’ll have a “show and tell” exercise so you can learn exactly how to wear the uniform. But first, you should know that the “rules” for wearing the uniform are found in the CAPM 39-1, *The CAP Uniform Manual*. In your Cadet Member Kit, you will find full color mini-posters that also show you how to wear the uniform [*show mini-posters*]. You should tack those mini-posters to your bedroom wall and refer to them every time you get your uniform ready for CAP. And again, how many ways are there to wear the uniform? (One: The right way.)

PART 2: BASIC STANDARDS FOR THE PROPER WEAR OF THE UNIFORM

15 min

Conduct a “show and tell” for the topics below, using a live model

Haircut:

Males: Over the ears and off the collar; tapered appearance; no “trendy” styles; neat appearance

Females: Conservative style; plain-colored barrettes, etc; may touch but not fall below back collar

Shave, Cosmetics, Earrings:

Males: clean-shaven; mustaches are allowed if trimmed neatly; sideburns to bottom of ear

Females: may wear a small amount of cosmetics in good taste; may wear 1 simple ball earring

T-Shirts:

Wear a plain white V-neck or U-neck tee-shirt

Press:

Uniform should be well-pressed, crisp-looking, and wrinkle-free

Cords / Loose Threads:

Watch for cords around buttons, belt loops, edges of collar, etc.

Pockets & Buttons:

Keep all buttons buttoned. Watch for back pocket buttons

Keep nothing in shirt pockets; limit what you store in pants pockets

Socks / Hose:

Males: Black socks

Females: Black socks or hose

Brass:

Belt buckle and insignia should be clean, free of fingerprints, and as shiny as possible

Gig Line:

Males: Forms a continuous line from shirt fly, buckle, and trouser fly

Females: Same as males, except belt direction is reversed; some combinations do not have a belt

Shoe Shine:

Free of dirt, nicely polished

CONCLUSION

Keep your uniform mini-posters someplace where you will see them. Refer to them every time you get ready for CAP. Take pride in the great privilege you have in wearing the Air Force-style uniform!