



# *Civil Air Patrol Cadet Programs*



*"I pledge to serve faithfully in the Civil Air Patrol Cadet Program and that I will attend meetings regularly, participate actively in unit activities, obey my officers, wear my uniform properly and advance my education and training rapidly to prepare myself to be of service to my community, state and nation."*

While there are many youth oriented programs in America today, CAP's cadet program is unique in that it uses aviation as a cornerstone. Thousands of young people from 12 years through age 21 are introduced to aviation through CAP's cadet program. The program allows young people to progress at their own pace through a 16-step program including aerospace education, leadership training, physical fitness and moral leadership. Cadets compete for academic scholarships to further their studies in fields such as engineering, science, aircraft mechanics, aerospace medicine, meteorology, as well as many others. Those cadets who earn cadet officer status may enter the Air Force as an E3 (airman first class) rather than an E1 (airman basic).

Whatever your interests-survival training, flight training, photography, astronomy-there's a place for you in CAP's cadet program. Each year, cadets have the opportunity to participate in special activities at the local, state, regional or national level. Many cadets will have the opportunity to solo fly an airplane for the first time through a flight encampment or academy. Others will enjoy traveling abroad through the International Air Cadet Exchange Program. Still others assist at major air shows throughout the nation.

The Carroll County Composite Squadron conducts a variety of training and volunteer activities during the year. These include:

- Emergency Services Training Observation/Training Flights (O-Flights)
- MD Air National Guard Cook Detail
- Regular Uniform Inspections and Physical Training
- Color guard and Parades
- Squadron Fund-raising and Recruiting
- Parent Sponsored Activities (balloon flights, air shows, museum visits)

The Civil Air Patrol Cadet Program is a traditional military cadet program. CAP cadets wear modified versions of Air Force uniforms, hold rank and grade, and practice military customs and courtesies. They are also required to maintain physical fitness standards and are tested on their fitness and their knowledge of leadership and aerospace subjects for each promotion.

This program is not unlike that of the Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC); the reason for this is primarily that the Air Force JROTC program was 'cloned' from the CAP Cadet Program in the 1960s. It should be noted that there are several key distinctions between the two programs.

The current Cadet Program was designed by Jack Sorenson, who held the position of Civil Air Patrol's Director of Aerospace Education in the 1960s. This program is composed of four phases (learning; leadership; command; executive), each of which is divided into several achievements. Achievements generally correspond to a grade promotion while phases are tied to a level of responsibility. The Cadet Program is executed at the local unit (squadron) level with weekly meetings and weekend activities, along with national and wing sponsored week- and multi-week long summer activities, of which encampments are an example.

Cadets have a rank structure similar to the United States Air Force enlisted and officer ranks. A cadet starts as a Cadet Airman Basic and is promoted as he or she completes each achievement. To complete an achievement, a cadet must pass a physical fitness test as well as two written tests; one for leadership and one for aerospace education. The only exceptions to this rule are the promotion to C/Amn and C/SSgt (no aerospace test).