



GASTONIA COMPOSITE SQUADRON
CIVIL AIR PATROL
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AUXILIARY
PO Box 254, Cramerton NC 28032

Visiting Cadets and Parents:

Welcome to the Gastonia Composite Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol!

We are excited that your son or daughter is showing interest in joining. The Civil Air Patrol has been offering its unique leadership program to America's youth since 1941.

We know that you and your child have many questions and concerns. In this package are answers to the most common question and concerns most parents initially have. If you need more information or have any questions at all, please feel to ask me or any of the senior members at any time.

1st Lt. Derk Beutler, Squadron Commander

1. What is the time commitment? Will my cadet need to attend every meeting?

The squadron meets weekly and we try to have at least one weekend activity per month (usually one day, sometimes two). We encourage cadets to attend as many meetings and activities as their schedule will allow. Our meetings and activities include various aspects of training, some of which are required for promotions. However, the primary responsibility of cadets is to do their best at school. Academic assignments must be given priority over attendance at squadron meetings. If a cadet has a test the next day and is not prepared, then he or she should stay home and study.

For new cadets, there is a week-long, overnight "encampment" in the summer. Like a boot camp, encampment is an immersion into a regimented environment and is the highlight of a cadet's first year. At encampment, cadets learn and develop leadership skills, explore STEM and military careers, challenge themselves on obstacle courses, and have a lot of fun in the process. Encampment is usually at an Air Force or other military base. North Carolina's encampment is at the Stanly County Air National Guard base near Albermarle, but cadets can apply to encampments held in other states as well. Cadets from our squadron often attend the West Virginia encampment. Tuition averages \$150-\$300, and an assistance program is available.

2. What Goes On at the Weekly Meetings?

First Tuesday of the Month: Aerospace training
Second Tuesday of the Month: Leadership training and promotions
Third Tuesday of the Month: Physical training (PT)
Fourth Tuesday of the Month: Emergency Services training
If there is a fifth Tuesday a the month, it is “fun” night

Here’s a general outline of what goes on each week:

6:30 p.m. - Opening Formation/Inspection - Cadets gather outside for a squadron formation and usually a uniform inspection. After opening formation, cadets usually stay outside and practice marching and doing stationary drill movements.

Between 7:00-7:15 p.m.: Cadets come inside and sign in.

Safety Briefing: There will be a short safety briefing, either on a random topic or specific to the night’s activities.

Main Activity: Each week we have a main activity such as a training class, physical training, or a promotion ceremony.

Secondary Activity: There might also be a second activity after the main activity, such testing, another class, or a teambuilding activity.

8:45 p.m. - Announcements such as upcoming events or national activities.

8:55 p.m. - Closing Formation: Cadets reform outside, executive staff closes meeting, cadets are dismissed.

3. Can I stay at the meetings with my child?

Yes, absolutely. Parents and visitors are always welcome to attend meetings and stay and watch what the cadets do. There are no secret meetings.

4. What if I want to help or get more involved?

There are a few options.

If you want to participate in CAP activities with your cadet, consider joining as a Cadet Sponsor Member. You can chaperone, provide transportation, or supervise cadets during squadron activities, and can wear a CAP uniform if you want. You will have no official duties and won't earn rank. Some online training is required before you can participate in activities with cadets.

If you are interested in participating more fully, consider joining as a Senior Member. Senior members perform official CAP duties, participate in the activities of the unit, wear CAP uniforms, and earn rank.

A third choice is to become a Patron member. Patron members support CAP by paying annual dues, but they don't wear a CAP uniform or participate in CAP activities. They can attend meetings, CAP conferences, and squadron social functions.

4. How much is participating in CAP going to cost?

Annual dues are \$40, and the two basic uniforms (camouflage and dress blues) will cost about \$275-300 altogether. The costs for weekend activities vary, depending on what we are doing. Many are no cost. If we are going more than a couple of hours away or staying overnight, there will be costs for transportation and/or lodging, and your cadet will need money for food when we stop to eat. Eventually your cadet will need a 24-hour emergency services pack of gear, which will cost about \$100. We also encourage all cadets to attend a week-long summer encampment, which costs about \$200.

5. How do cadets earn rank and get promoted?

Shortly after joining, cadets receive a Welcome Kit in the mail. The Welcome Kit includes a guide for new cadets, textbooks, and other resources to help cadets get started in CAP. The following is a simplified list, but basically, for each rank/promotion, cadets must:

- Pass 1 or 2 online, open-book tests
- Pass a drill (marching) test
- Participate in a physical fitness “test” (there is no pass or fail)
- Participate actively in unit activities
- 8 weeks (56 days) elapsed since previous promotion

If the above are met, the cadet gets promoted.

6. Safety and Supervision

We take the safety of your son or daughter very seriously and do not tolerate any form of abusive behavior or hazing. We have very detailed cadet supervision, safety, and risk management regulations. All of our adult members undergo FBI fingerprinting and background screenings and complete training in cadet protection and safety. All cadets complete a safety training course before they can earn their first stripe, and our squadron is regularly inspected for regulatory compliance by HQ.

7. Who should I contact with questions?

Parents with questions or concerns should contact one of the senior members listed below. At a weekly squadron meeting, feel free to ask questions of any senior member.

| Name & Title | Phone | Email |
|--|----------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 st Lt. Derk Beutler Squadron Commander | (864) 513-2296 | dbeutler@devitainc.com |
| 2 ^d Lt. Alison Caudle Deputy Commander of Cadets | (704) 305-8979 | baseballelmo9@yahoo.com |
| 1 st Lt. Sue Beutler Activities and Public Affairs Officer | (704) 747-9999 | sbeutler@jahlaw.com |
| 2 ^d Lt. Mike Hadrick Recruiting & Retention Officer | (571) 405-7575 | michael.hadrick@GastoniaCap.us |

If your cadet has questions, like what time do I have to be at training, what is the uniform of the day, what am I missing for a promotion, etc., we encourage cadets to direct those questions to his or her flight sergeant. The Cadet Program instills a sense of personal responsibility and self-discipline. When cadets use their chain of command to ask questions about cadet life or to get help with a problem, they learn self-reliance. Of course, cadets can always ask a senior member.

8. Additional Resources for Parents

Parents' Guide to the CAP Cadet Program is available at <https://www.gocivilairpatrol.com/programs/cadets/parents>

Help for new cadets is available at www.gocivilairpatrol.com/programs/cadets/newcadet/, or talk to someone in the squadron

The squadron website is at www.gastoniacap.us

The squadron Facebook page is at www.facebook.com/Gastoniacap/

9. How to join

Eligibility

To be eligible for membership in the Civil Air Patrol Cadet Program, the cadet must:

1. be at least 12 years old and not yet 19 years old, and
2. be a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence to the United States, and
3. have a Social Security Number.

Process

1. Attend three weekly meetings.
2. The prospective cadet is “interviewed” by the membership board.
3. The cadet parent meets with/has a discussion the squadron commander or the membership board.
4. If the prospective cadet is found to meet the eligibility criteria, continue as per below.
5. Read the Cadet Application so you will know what information you need to provide.
6. Complete and submit the application along with \$40 membership dues.
 - a. A parent or guardian can complete the application at the third meeting on our laptop computer, or you can do it at home (google “CAP cadet online application”). You will have to enter credit card information to pay the dues.
 - b. You can download a hard copy application from the CAP website and mail it in along with a check or money order.

7. A parent or guardian must sign the application and present proof of identity for the cadet, as follows.

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| <p>One of the below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Passport or Passport Card • Permanent Resident Card (I-551) • Unexpired foreign passport with I-551 stamp | OR | <p><u>Two</u> of the below:</p> <p>A photo ID such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • driver's license or state-issued ID card • school ID with photo • US military dependent ID card <p style="text-align: center;">A N D</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • certified copy of birth certificate; or • Social Security Card; or • US Citizen ID card; or • other I-9 approved item. |
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10. Uniforms

There are 3 basic uniforms—the Airman Battle Uniform (ABUs), the Blue Service Uniform (dress blues), and the PT (physical training) uniform. The Battle Dress Utility (BDUs) uniform is being phased out but can be worn until June 2021.



The ABU uniform should be purchased first, as it is the uniform most often worn, and will permit your cadet to fully participate in most CAP activities. We have a very small supply of used uniform pieces, but sizes and availability vary considerably.

As of January 2019, a complete brand new ABU uniform with boots was about \$190 at Vanguard after their 10% discount, free shipping, and no sales tax. You can save \$30 or more off of that by getting boots elsewhere.

You won't need the Blue Service Uniform until after your cadet earns their first promotion. At that time you will receive a \$100 voucher from CAP to purchase uniform pieces from Vanguard. A complete Blue Service uniform with shoes was about \$205, but after the \$100 voucher and the 10% discount, your out-of-pocket cost is about \$100.

The PT uniform is a black t-shirt, black or dark blue running shorts, socks, and running shoes/sneakers. Black or dark blue sweatpants shirt or hoodie will be needed in cooler weather.

We have a separate, detailed document about the uniforms and suggested sources.

11. How soon will my cadet need a uniform?

Cadets must have a uniform to be eligible for their first promotion (could be as soon as 30 days after joining).

12. What if my cadet doesn't have a uniform or a complete uniform?

In lieu of ABUs/BDUs, your cadet can wear regular casual clothes like what they would wear to school. In lieu of the Blue Service Uniform, you cadet can wear dress clothes—a collared shirt and tie for boys, and a dress or blouse and skirt or slacks for girls. For PT night, wear gym shorts, t-shirt, and tennis shoes.

13. How will we know what uniform my cadet should wear?

Before each Tuesday meeting, the Cadet Commander will send an email to the squadron with the details of the upcoming meeting, what to bring, and what uniform to wear.

14. Will my cadet need any other supplies or equipment?

Yes, each cadet will eventually need a “24-hour pack.” The 24-hour pack is a backpack with gear needed to survive in the wilderness for 24 hours. Even though a cadet might never go on a search and rescue mission, cadets undergo a lot of emergency services and search and rescue training, and the 24-hour pack is a key element of that. The squadron has a small supply of backpacks and some pieces of gear.