

After Action Report

Dates: DD-DD Month YYYY

Cadets were from multiple squadrons all over "X" Wing. Two vans and an explorer were driven.

Goals of this activity:

- To have a safe trip to Canada, participate in the ceremony, and represent the United States well.
- Organize a cadet color guard for the ceremony.
- Assign cadets to key positions for the ceremony.
- Have a successful practice run with the Canadians.
- Foster goodwill between the US and Canada.
- Give the American Cadets a chance to see and explore the city if there is time.
- Have friendly competitions in volleyball and drill with the Canadians

These goals were met in addition to the American Cadets performing well in both competitions. Had we been better organized however, we could have done a better job.

Summary

Although nothing went horribly wrong during this event and the major goals were met, there was much that could have been improved about our operations, communication, leadership, and coordination with the Canadians. The biggest area to improve next year is a command structure wherein both cadet and senior leaders are put in place from the beginning. The main cadet that is put in charge needs to have excellent command presence and work very closely with the seniors. Transportation also needs to be better coordinated from the beginning.

Problems and Shortfalls by Section:

Transportation:

- Cadets were not assigned a van to the best of my knowledge. They were allowed to switch freely.
- There were only 4 full drivers when there was supposed to be 6.
- The "X" convoy did not have radio communications; or other effective forms of communication, with "X2" wing. Since they "independently" organized their wing, it was difficult to effectively transfer information and plans.
- There was not a cadet in each van that was in charge of accountability.
- The integrity of the caravan was not maintained several times.
- The coordination between the vans about when we were leaving different locations in Canada was poor.

Schedule:

- There was confusion about which orders were for the Canadians or for CAP.

- Lights out was not lights out. Cadets were still up and about and talking after lights out.
- The schedule, if there was one, was not adhered to nor communicated. Thus we ended up wasting a lot of time because we did not know what we were supposed to do or what was next.

Physical Resources:

- There was no cadet command structure. All the cadets were doing their own thing. Coordination was difficult because there a wide variety of inconsistent messages coming from senior members.
- In Town, everything worked great, except that no one bothered to decide on lights out and wake up times until they rolled around. The checklists for cleaning also were not followed which caused the convoy to be delayed for a large amount of time. To the best of my knowledge, no one person was explicitly told that they were in charge of the cleaning checklist for Fort "X" barracks - the consequences caused serious delays.
- Lodging in Canada was adequate in a senior center gym. It was tight however, and there were only draped curtains separating the males and females. One cadet also mistakenly pulled the fire alarm.
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- The cadets did not know whether or not to bring their stuff on the day of the ceremony, and the order was switched around 4 times. This severe indecision and lack of communication caused chaos and general frustration among both cadets and senior members.
- The color guard commander was supposed to be in charge of the cadets and our operations as he was the ranking cadet. This arrangement did not work out because a lot of his time was taken up by color guard.
- Meals were not consistent on the way up and at the event itself. Cadets were not given the opportunity to eat for several hours on a couple of different occasions.

Communication:

- The signup was on a ticket basis, not a selection basis.
- The most prominent problem was the coordination with all CAP cadets and seniors about what our next move was. Everything was, or seemed, to be decided on the fly.
- As mentioned earlier, we were not able to coordinate with "X2" over the CAP radios
- There was very little talk, or briefing, about how we, as both people and CAP members, were representing the US.

Safety:

- The primary safety issue was high winds and snow on the way there and back, and slightly higher than safe speeds in these conditions were the primary risks of this activity.
- Wingmen were not established.
- Safety briefing for the cadets was minimal.

- Cadets were often made to go several hours without meals.
- Cadets were very sleep deprived at the end of the activity.
- Cadets were not given proper instructions for standing in formation for long periods of time.

Recommendations for Next Year by Section:

Transportation:

- If still driving:
 - The cadets should be assigned a van from the beginning and made into groups or flights based on them.
 - One cadet should be in charge of accountability and keeping track of switches.
 - Have an adequate numbers of drivers.
 - Maintain the integrity of the caravan at all times.
 - Coordinate with the other wings and vans with a communication plan.
 - Assign cadets to vans for the majority of the trip and have a cadet in charge of van accountability and keeping track of switches.
- We have the potential to fly up with the ANG.
 - Take a C-130 from "Location 1" or "Location 2."
It would be a 2-2 1/2hour trip instead of 2 to 2 1/2 day trip. The attached map is from "Location 1" or "Airport name" to is the "Location 2", at the same location the ceremony is held.

Schedule:

- Cadets should be instructed as to what is happening in the near future, and where they need to be at specific times.
- Giving a departure time to the cadets at each stop would be very helpful.

Physical Resources:

- Cadets should be housed at the armory as in previous years. There is more space and eliminates the need for extra transportation every day.
- There should be a limited cadet staff with one or two main cadets in charge.
- Have a morning briefing by a cadet or senior member outlining what the day is going to look like.
- Someone needs to be put in charge to see to it that the barracks checklist is followed.
- The cadets need to be held to a much higher level of conduct.
- Meals need to be planned better on the way up, but we don't have a lot of say in meals at the event.

Communication:

- Have a committee plan the trip with a couple of 2 or 3 hour meetings. Cadets need to be involved because they are the ones on the front lines that the planning directly affects. They will be able to bring some valuable insight into how to best plan it.
- There should be an application for attending. That way we could see who wanted to do color guard or drill team, or be part of the cadet staff then make selections. We also could have people ask for certain positions in the ceremony. This way we make people's voices heard.

Safety:

- It needs to be decided beforehand how fast the caravan will be going in given wind conditions.
- A morning formation of sorts should be considered depending on travel arrangements. That would be the best time to conduct the daily briefing including safety
- We actually could make cadets get all the sleep they need - over eight hours each night with proper discipline and coordination. Once set, enforcement of these policies will be necessary.
- Proper instruction needs to be given about standing in attention for long periods of time. Not just "don't lock your knees." I recommend that proper hydration is part of a more comprehensive instruction for the ceremony.

This is an excellent activity that could be run much smoother with a little bit of planning, and leadership from both Seniors and Cadets.

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