

CADET OF THE YEAR – WING SELECTION BOARDS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ's)

Q: What is the New Jersey Wing Cadet of the Year?

The New Jersey Wing Cadet of the Year is the title given to the Phase 1,2,3,4 cadet chosen as the Cadet of the Year for their respective phase. The Phase 4 Cadet of the Year will represent NJ Wing at the Region, and hopefully National levels. The cadet chosen is usually the most well rounded individual who has balanced CAP, with schoolwork, and other extra-curricular activities. The distinction needs to be made that the cadet selected is not always the “best” cadet in leadership or command abilities. However, the cadet chosen is the best cadet qualified to represent the Wing. New Jersey Wing will send the representative who is most likely to succeed at Region, and National. The last four National Cadet of the Year winners all obtained nominations to the United States Air Force Academy. That is the caliber of those you would compete with.

Q: Who should apply for Cadet of the Year?

Any New Jersey Wing Cadet who believes that they have the stuff to represent New Jersey Wing should be nominated by their squadron commander. Cadet of the Year nominees should be active members whose contributions and accomplishments demand to be noted by the board. If you are, or know a cadet who fits this description you are encouraged to apply.

Q: Where do I get “official” information regarding Cadet of the Year?

CAPR 39-3 page 9, section G, paragraph 24 details the requirements for the Cadet of the Year award. Additional information from the Wing is provided in the cadet preparation guide and the operations order.

Q: What is the “paperwork” involved for Cadet of the Year?

See CAP Form 58 and the cadet preparation guide for additional information.

Q: Any helpful suggestions for completing the paperwork?

- a. **CAPF 58 and CAPE Form** - Word process this form, do not hand write it. You will lose neatness points. (Yes there are points for neatness) On the CAP Form 58 list events from the entire CAP career. On the CAPE Form, only list events completed in the last calendar year. Be sure to list significant and major events that happened throughout your CAP Career and those that were important or difficult. These forms should be considered your resume, make sure it flows in a logical order.
- b. **PHOTO** - NO hat! (not even on your belt) This picture is not supposed to be a mug shot. Look personable and comfortable in your uniform. Smile! Higher echelons in the selection process really do look at these pictures; they should be as professional as possible. The picture should be of you and only you; you should not be holding anything or shaking hands with someone else. Look like you took the time to complete this paperwork as required.
- c. **TRANSCRIPTS** - If you are in high school or college, provide the entire transcript from the day you started. I.e. 9-12th grade. If you bring in the transcript for just the year you are currently in, you will not score well. Bring the entire transcript.
- d. **SAT/ACT scores** - If you took them both, provide both. If you only took one, provide only one. Strength of the scores is what is evaluated.
- e. **RECOMMENDATION LETTERS** – MUST have 3 recommendations. **Do not** get more than one CAP member to write you a letter. Your squadron commander has already written a recommendation on the CAPF-58. Remember the board is looking for a well-rounded cadet. Talk to a teacher, youth leader etc. about additional letters.
- f. Follow all paperwork instructions down to the letter. If your paperwork is not exactly right, you will have points deducted.

Q: How are all the “paperwork” scored and how much of that goes towards selecting Cadet of the Year?

Your school grades play an important part. The completeness of your paperwork is also a substantial factor. Typically, the paperwork portion will be about 50% of your total score for selection board portion of the wing board. One fact remains constant; Region and National only view your paperwork. Your paperwork represents you at the higher levels; it is your *resume for the job*. Its completeness and appearance are critical to your success at the board. If you are to be a serious applicant for Cadet of the Year your paperwork must be outstanding. If you are not willing to put in the time to do this portion properly, don't waste yours or the boards' time. ***You cannot win without properly completed paperwork.***

Q: What happens if I can't get all my paperwork to the board?

You lose. As a cadet trying to prove you are the best in your phase of the cadet program, you will find no sympathy from the board if your paperwork is not complete. Be mindful of the deadlines. Make sure you send the paperwork directly to Wing per the Operations Order. If you are also competing for your Group Cadet of the Year that is great, but only cadets whose paperwork arrives at Wing will be considered for Wing level. Make at least two copies of anything you have. Send one to wing and keep a copy until you get to the Wing board. If there is a problem with missing paperwork you can solve it yourself, just as a prospective cadet of the year is expected to. No excuses, if you want this honor, you do what it takes to get it.

Q: Who is this “board” you keep referring to?

The Cadet of the Year board usually is comprised of 7 members. One Officer (senior member) must be a former cadet officer under the age of 28, and one member is an officer of the USAF. New Jersey Wing Cadet Programs selects officers who were former cadets, and officers with other appropriate experiences to sit on this board. The members of the board should be fairly familiar faces to cadets who are active through out the Wing. Many of the members have stood as cadets before the Special Activities Selection and Cadet of the Year boards.

Q: What happens when I go before the board?

After reporting properly to the board (-yes that's graded), you will be asked to sit at ease. Each board member will ask you at least one question. The question directed to you is the same question asked of those you are competing against. You will receive a score based on your answer to the question. Each board member will score for the question they ask of you. All board members will give you a score based on your demeanor, posture, uniform appearance, and following board procedures. Board members may ask a follow-up question if your answer warrants it. Feel free to ask a question to be repeated if you do not understand the wording of a question. The board is not testing you on your vocabulary skills, only on how you present yourself and the quality of the answer given. Answering the wrong question will gain you no points.

Q: What types of questions will the board ask?

Any type of question is fair game. Textbook knowledge only is not going to suffice for you. The board recognizes that written tests already rates your textbook knowledge. The board will ask questions about Civil Air Patrol, current events (political and aerospace), and questions of “What would you do in this situation” nature. One of the most devious questions asked at boards is “What makes an aircraft fly?” While a simple enough question, it required the cadet's mastery of many aerospace concepts found in the text, combined with the ability to convey those concepts to the board in a logical, coherent order. Questions such as “Why should you be Chosen Cadet of the Year?” or, “What would you do to improve CAP?” are almost always asked. A cadet should have some idea as to how they would address these prior to entering the room. Thoughtful preparation will make many questions easier.

Q: Any helpful hints for appearing before the board?

- a. When told to sit “at ease,” sit at ease. Outward nervousness will not help your cause. Keep composed and focus on the task at hand.
- b. When you enter the room, glance towards the board and make sure you know who the chairman is. Reporting to the wrong person is not good for your cause.
- c. The person asking the question is the one scoring you on that question. Direct your answer to that board member but make eye contact with the others as you speak.
- d. Double-check your uniform before you enter. Walking in looking sloppy will do nothing to help you. Don't wear any uniform items that a board member may call into question; i.e. if you weren't on the Wing drill team or color guard, don't wear a white shoulder cord. Make sure you are wearing the designated Uniform of the Day properly.
- e. Keep your answers to a moderate length. The board wants direct answers to direct questions; don't run on too long. You will lose the attention of the board members who have most likely asked this same question of several cadets already. Lack of interest on the part of the board members means lower scores for you.
- f. If you don't know an answer, state that in so many words. Many have tried but none succeed in fooling the board about their CAP knowledge. Remember, some of the board members are former cadets. Don't show your ignorance or insult their intelligence by trying to fudge your way through an answer. The board members may nod in a reassuring manner to you, but your score will be zero. There are better ways to say, “I don't know,” that enterprising cadets will discover. You may still receive partial credit if you present yourself well.
- g. Prepare your answers ahead of time. Most questions the board will ask of you are easy to prepare. Know something about CAP, and be prepared to give your opinion about the Cadet Program.

Q: What bearing does my Special Activities Selection Board have on Cadet of the Year?

None. The Cadet of the Year board evaluates a combination of your paperwork, and your appearance before the board. Your Special Activities board counts only toward activity selections. This is done out of fairness to all cadets involved in the selection process. Every cadet goes through exactly the same criteria as their peers.

Q: Why are you publishing this information?

Knowledge of what is expected for the Cadet of the Year selection process will help you in deciding whether you should attend the summer encampment, cadet competition, and other major CAP events. This will give you an idea of what's expected and evaluated so you can improve your resumes and help future cadet of the year nominees improve their resumes. Also, to properly complete the paperwork, take the pictures, gather the recommendations, and so on takes time. Use that time wisely. You now have fair notice of what is expected of you. Those who take the time to prepare will succeed at the Wing Selection Boards.

Even those who are the busiest will find the time to get the paperwork and nomination completed professionally. Prior planning prevents poor performance!!