

BlackCAP Thank You

Thank you Civil Air Patrol and Red Wing Squadron for the BlackCAP experience. I can't compare it to anything I've ever done and I can't get the faces, conversations, and activities out of my mind. I want to go to encampment now. I had to adjust when I went home on **Sunday** from 100+ cadets saying, "Yes, Sir." and complying to my two-year-old ignoring me while walking up the driveway and out of safety bounds. The experience also became humbling **Monday** when I was able to cross-reference names with positions, accomplishments, and time in service. Many of the people with whom I was jabbering, with whom I stood in flight, and with whom I worked to solve problems, were very accomplished in their fields and in CAP. However, they never really spent any time talking about those accomplishments. They were humble servant-leaders interested in doing their jobs and sharing the experience. This is probably obvious to those of you who have been in CAP for sometime, but I found it refreshingly remarkable, just like seeing the cadets break out into competitions to see how far they could push themselves in push-up contests when they had spare time. (Ok, yes I realize that doesn't always happen and therefore we need mass teacup songs in formation to make sure they don't get carried away with other independent activities.) Also, when I was asked to gather cadets during cleanup and task them with moving gear and sweeping the hangar, I spent too much time wondering how to do that tasking. I didn't jump into it. However, once I enlisted one cadet it started a chain reaction and soon everyone was helping. That was a simple little lesson in leadership ... the worst-case scenario doesn't always occur.

I was also impressed with Flight Staff. I don't know whether they were happy or disappointed to have a flight of Senior Members, though the Flight Commander did say at the end that we were the easiest and most fun flights he'd ever had. Anyway, they were very professional and it was obvious that they didn't like screwing around (as opposed to decent fun). They were also always very friendly and our Flight Sergeant was always trying to anticipate the needs of the next activity by researching, asking questions, and gathering equipment and information. This was my first experience with the Cadets of Minnesota Wing and it was a wonderful experience.

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Red Wing Composite Squadron