

Capital Insights



Civic Leadership Academy Inspires Cadets' Future

By Kimberly L. Wright

Twenty-four of Civil Air Patrol's brightest cadets explored the infinite possibilities of careers in public service while expanding their understanding of leadership, civics and American heritage as participants in Civic Leadership Academy, a top-notch educational adventure in Washington, D.C.

CLA cadets don't learn just by reading and listening to lectures. They take an active role in their civic education by interacting, researching and formulating persuasive arguments, with the nation's capital as fertile ground for their investigations. They tour,

Cadet Cols. Francesca Fogarty of the South Dakota Wing, left, and Heidi Klein of the Wisconsin Wing take in the D.C. sights during Civic Leadership Academy.

ask questions, draw conclusions and defend their arguments based on a solid foundation of evidence and logic.

The cadets visited a variety of prominent Washington agencies, offices, buildings and memorials and, in the process, solidified their understanding of the sacrifices necessary to preserve liberty and move society forward. Destinations included the U.S. Capitol, the Supreme Court, the Judiciary Building, the State Department, Arlington National Cemetery, the CIA, the FBI, the Pentagon, legislative offices and the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, as well as the World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War and Lincoln memorials.

Career Opportunities

This ripe intellectual environment inspired participants to envision a future in public service.

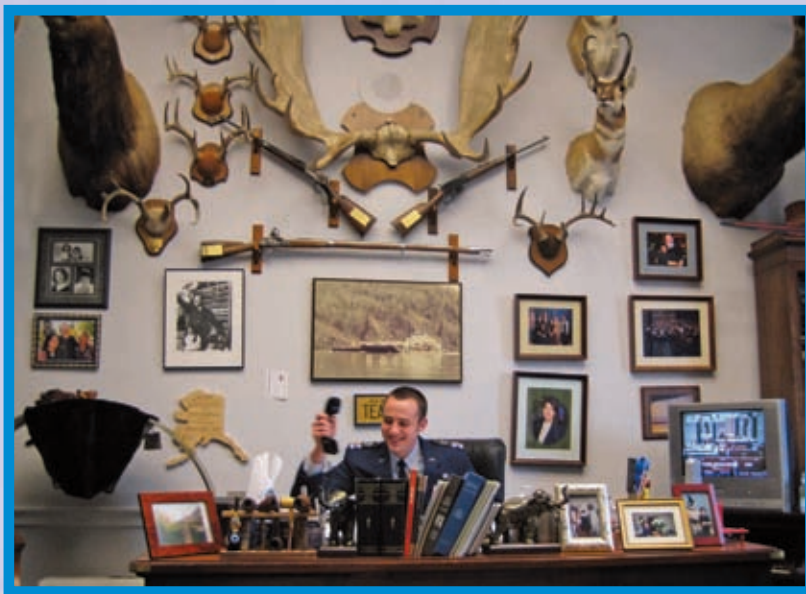
“Listening to many different anecdotes from people who have worked around the world, I determined the State Department may be where I want to make a career,” said Cadet Capt. Laura Beck of the Arizona Wing. “Creating diplomatic solutions to world problems and improving the political health of developing nations is extremely interesting to me and seems like a perfect outlet to my naturally creative leadership style.”

Cadet Capt. Emily Greiner remains firm on her career path — service with either the FBI or CIA. CLA not only sparked her interest in these careers but also introduced her to contacts who will be invaluable down the road. “It is definitely important to network with people,” the New Jersey Wing cadet said.

The activity turned one cadet’s career notions upside-down.

“I wanted to be a doctor,” said Cadet Lt. Col. Holly Bevagna of the Puerto Rico Wing. “Now, I don’t know what I want to do. It’s made it more difficult to decide.”

Attractive possibilities for Bevagna include a career in politics or as an FBI special agent. “I’ve established connections that may help me,” she said.



Pennsylvania Wing Cadet Capt. Steven Lazar, sitting behind the desk of U.S. Rep. Don Young of Alaska, takes in the atmosphere during the Civic Leadership Academy, a five-day CAP program that provides an in-depth look at citizenship and public service through real-world experiences in Washington, D.C.

Cadets also benefited from the experience of VIP speakers whose insights deepened their understanding of government in action.

Cadet Lt. Col. Zachary King of the New Jersey Wing, an Air Force ROTC cadet with an eye on public service, was impressed by the number of former CAP cadets and current CAP senior members working in Washington.

“It was very inspiring to see these professionals at every office we visited — the State Department, the FBI, the CIA, the U.S. Capitol,” said King. “All of these people are former CAP cadets, Spatz cadets, who are still involved in the program. It shows this organization has limitless opportunities cadets can take advantage of and that CAP has and can continue to serve as a great foundation for their careers. I want to continue in CAP and to give back to the program the way these individuals have.”

Insightful Interactions

The cadets’ CLA experience was complemented by reading assignments and a monitored discussion board on the CLA Web site. The discussion board allowed

instant communication among participants and the cadet program's National Headquarters staff, who seeded the site with such thought-provoking civic questions as:

You're pulled over for speeding. The police check your license and the computer tells them there's a warrant out for your arrest. This gives them cause to search your car, and they find drugs and a gun.

It turns out the warrant was repealed months ago, but a police employee forgot to remove it from the database.

Can the police use the illegal weapon and drugs as evidence against you on new charges, or should that evidence be tossed out under the 'exclusionary rule'? After all, they wouldn't have found the drugs or gun if their clerk had updated the database properly.

The challenge posed to the cadets was to think the issue through and to check out the U.S. Supreme Court's opinion in *Herring v. United States*.

Having the opportunity to share an advanced activity with an accelerated peer group generated a positive form of peer pressure for high-achieving young people. "It was amazing being with a group of cadets whose discussions were so stimulating and who asked such educated



CLA faculty advisers Brig. Gen. Richard Anderson, left, and Capt. Sharon Weeks, State Department public affairs officer Maj. David Staples, CLA faculty adviser Maj. Rebecca Sundhagen and CLA activity director Lt. Col. Bill Brockman gather at the podium during a visit to the State Department, one of several key stops.

questions," said Beck.

Bevagna also appreciated her CLA experience.

"During the entire CLA they treated us like officers," she said. "The friendly atmosphere was very conducive to learning."

The cadets' CLA tasks culminated with a final project — presenting their CLA experience to their peers in their home squadrons.



CLA provided 24 cadets from across the nation the educational experience of a lifetime.

Reading List for Civic Leadership Academy

Readings included:

- The Constitution of the United States of America
- “Albright on Communication, Information, and Negotiation” by Abbie Lundberg and Meridith Levinson
- “Gavel to Gavel: A Guide to the Televised Proceedings of Congress” by C-SPAN and the Brookings Institute
- “Day in the Life of a Special Agent” by the FBI
- “Quick Facts About the FBI” by the FBI
- “Truman” by David McCullough (pages 831-846, the decision to fire MacArthur)
- “Civil Control of the Military” by Richard H. Kohn
- “Transformational Diplomacy” by former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice
- “Diplomacy: The U.S. Department of State at Work” by the U.S. Department of State
- Rice’s interview with Al Arabiya, Oct. 18, 2008
- Secretary Hillary Clinton’s remarks at the State Department Town Hall Meeting
- “Assignment: Abroad” by the U.S. Department of State
- “The Central Intelligence Agency: Who We Are, What We Do” by the CIA
- “At the Los Angeles World Affairs Council” by retired Air Force Gen. Michael Hayden
- “CIA Destroys Two Tapes” by Mark Mazzetti, *New York Times*
- “White House Unbuttons Formal Dress Code” by Sheryl Gay Stolberg, *New York Times*
- “The Case That Made the Court” by Michael Glennon
- “Robert’s Rules” by Jeffrey Rosen
- “A Memorial to Forget” by Christopher Knight, *Los Angeles Times*
- “Only Woman Medal of Honor Holder Ahead of Her Time” by Rudi Williams

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— Cadet Lt. Col. Zachary King,
also an Air Force ROTC cadet

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