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*Ten Tips From a Grizzled 18-
year-old Veteran of Two
Summer Sweats.*

**CADET COSMOS:
*Your Encampment
Survival Guide***

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Your Encampment Survival Guide

By Cadet 2nd Lt. Jordan Petree

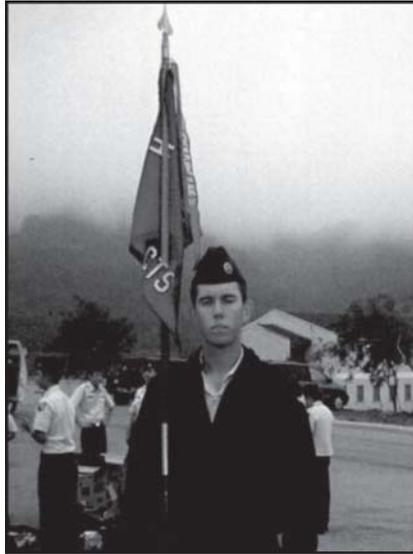
10 Tips from a Grizzled 18-year-old Veteran of Two Summer Sweats

FULLERTON—Do you suffer from Encampment Dread, anticipating the Cadet Training Group's eight days of fun lording it over you? Fear not, fellow cadet: With a little planning and following these handy-dandy pointers, you might even have as much fun as us.

By definition, we Cadet Training Group (CTG) cadets have been where you are. You can't lead until you've followed. Since 1975, we've been turning newbies like you into finely tuned, high-velocity cadets. So whether you've enrolled because you love drill (say it out loud), want free lessons in proper underpants-storage technique, or know you need Encampment to earn the Billy Mitchell award, Lt. Petree's going to give you a few tips that will make this summer a little easier for you. So, seats at-ease, and listen up:

1 Put...the candy bar...down.

Encampment is not military boot camp: We can't turn you into a lean, mean machine in eight days. That being duly noted, the physical standards at encampment are high. Morning PT has been known to ruin a few afternoons—and evenings. Your chances of having a good time increase in proportion to how easily you can keep up or stay ahead. Go outside and start running, now, while there's still time. Work on pushups, flutter kicks, and distance running.



Cadet 2nd Lt. Jordan Petree: A flagwaver for Encampment.

If you can't do many reps or go as far as you'd like at first, work up to it.

Start with one or two pushups and add another one every other day. Encampment will demand several sets of each exercise consisting of about ten to twenty repetitions done to a three-count cadence, so be ready! Run half a mile and walk the rest. Push yourself a little more each day until you can run the whole thing through. You need to be able to run a full mile for encampment; you should be able to run several in order to be comfortable. Watch what you eat and take your vitamins.

Sub-Tip: Change your socks every day during encampment. To quote Lt. Dan, "The Mekong will eat a grunt's feet

right off his legs." Seriously: Accumulated sweat on dirty socks can cause skin irritation and blisters, which do not make anything easier.

2 Leave your rank at the gate, Eisenhower.

The proper positive outlook is the key to making encampment enjoyable. Your attitude is everything, affecting how you eat, sleep, and interact with others. If you head to encampment full of yourself, you can bet your stripes (however many you have) you're in for a rough time. If you're on staff at your home squadron, get out of that mode before arriving. When you report, you are a "basic cadet" at the bottom of a very large and very hungry food chain. And don't worry. It's not as humbling as it sounds. You will have fun and make friends and memories that will last a lifetime.

Sub-Tip: To all you 1st Sergeants, get rid of your diamonds before arriving at encampment. They have their own and don't need any more.

3 SOP Does Not Mean

"Sporadically Obeyed Program."

Did you get Standard Operating Procedures with your acceptance package? Did you actually read the SOP? You will come to know this little book very well by the end of encampment. In it, you

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10 Tips

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will find everything from the Cadet Honor Code to the Encampment Chain of Command, and everything in between. Make sure you study it, along with the rest of your materials, well before you head out. You should already be familiar with some of the contents (Cadet Oath), but the other stuff may look foreign (Value of Drill And Ceremonies). Don't worry. You will learn it all by the end of encampment. If you're not motivated to do memory work, get with a friend and study.

Sub-Tip: Get your Chain of Command down first. CTG Flight Sergeants love to quiz you on this section.

4 Avoid Bag-Drag Blues:

Pack it Right or Pack It In.

Are you going to start off by not following instructions? (My fun meter is pegging already!) Stick to the Encampment packing list, for Pete's sake! Learn from movie clichés about chubby Privates suffering boot camp: Cream-filled snack cakes are not on that list! Neither are lighters, slingshots, jackknives or other contraband favored by Dennis the Menace. In a few days you'll be firing an M16 assault rifle—let that be your solace as you leave the Rambo Collection behind with your kid brother. And pack lightly for easy organization. You're not going to have extra time to do much of anything, so if you can pack and unpack quickly you can to devote that time to something more important.

Sub-Tip: If you have to wonder about whether or not it's authorized, the answer is probably "No!"

5 Water Yourself, Camelback!

Water is your friend. Dehydration is your enemy. It will be hot during encampment and you can lose water quickly. You need to drink water at every opportunity, and there will be plenty of opportunity. Nothing will get you into the medic's office faster than excessive water loss. Dehydration can turn into a real medical emergency if left untreated. Some signs of dehydration include fatigue and muscle weakness, painful muscle cramps, upset stomach or nausea, feeling lightheaded or dizzy, a darker than normal urine color (clear to pale yellow is good), and disorientation. But it is inexcusable for a cadet to let it go that far, because you've been warned. I just warned you.

Sub-Tip: Change out the water in your canteen every night during personal time to ward off that nasty canteen taste. Plus, the water will get nice and cool overnight and you'll be more likely to drink it.

6 Defend the Epidermis!

Sunscreen: Learn it, live it, love it. Nothing stinks more than being sunburned and squirming in your rack on a hot night at Camp SLO. Sunburned skin also causes you to become dehydrated more quickly (see previous tip) and increases the risk of developing melanoma (a malignant skin cancer) later on. A few quick

squirts from one of the spray-on varieties of sunscreen and you're good to go. I recommend a sunscreen with a SPF (sun protection factor) of 30 to ensure prolonged protection. Remember, you're not going to encampment for sunbathing and socializing—that comes later, when you're boasting of the day you made Cadet Captain.

Sub-Tip: I made time to apply sunscreen during the changing period after PT. Make sure to get your neck especially.

7 Make an Inspecting Officer Miserable.

Have your uniform ready to go before you get there. Spend some time ironing and prepping it before you leave home to make sure you look your best. Cut the bomb cords. ("Boom?") As I said, you won't have much extra time so anything you can do beforehand to make your uniform look sharp will pay off. Shining your shoes, polishing that brass, and getting some last minute tailoring are all things you can do to improve your appearance and help you avoid the bark of an angry inspecting officer.

Sub-Tip: Leave your ribbons, cords, and devices off your blues. You won't need them until near the end of encampment. Just remember to pack them. Then triple check to make sure you did.

8 Talk to Your TAC.

If you're having a problem, your Tactical Officer is the one to go to. Don't be afraid: They are there to help you. If you feel uncomfortable about something or need treatment for an injury,

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10 Tips

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Speak up. You will never be denied a request to speak to the TAC. Don't abuse it though: Encampment is supposed to be difficult and your TAC is your TAC, not your mom.

Sub-Tip: The chaplain is also a valuable resource if you need somebody to talk to. Try to sit with him in the mess hall to avoid the onslaught of the CTG's 1st shirts.

9 Think Through the Pain.

Pay attention. You may be tired or bored at times but keep your eyes and ears open. Encampment is hard but it only gets harder if you are perceived as lazy. If you are told to do something, make sure you do it to standards. If you see something needs doing, take the initiative and do it to standards. If you don't know what the standards are, find out—and quick.

Sub-Tip: Never cheat or take short cuts. You've heard stories about cadets putting pens in their rolled shirts to make them stiffer, or other inventive ways to cut corners. Don't do it. You have an honor code for a reason—to make you a better cadet.

10 This is No Time to

Emulate Dirty Harry.

"Teamwork!" This is what everyone was screaming at me before my first encampment. Believe me, you'd better learn it from day one. Encampment is not just about teaching you how to drill, how to make your rack, or even how to eat like a robot. Yes, those are important, but the true purpose of encampment is to teach you teamwork. You will learn

how to operate under pressure, using your teammates (your Flight) to overcome! You are going to rely on your team for almost everything. And the lessons you learn here will be invaluable now and throughout your entire life.

Sub-Tip: Remember T.E.A.M. — Together Everybody Accomplishes More!

C/2nd Lt. Jordan Petree is the Cadet Commander at Fullerton Composite Squadron 56 in Orange County. He is also a proud member of the 102nd CTS Hotel Hawkeyes.