



# HQS - AIR FORCE EXPLORERS

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## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### ***Q. What are the Explorers? Are they the same as CAP, or JROTC?***

A. The U.S. Air Force Explorers (USAFX), like the Police Explorers, Fireman Explorers, Aviation Explorers, and Medical Explorers fall under the Exploring Program within the auspices of the Boy Scouts of America. However it is an entirely separate organization from all the traditional Scouting Programs. Exploring units started back in the early 1900's. They were set up to help young adults learn and experience what a certain career or profession is like. Unlike most youth groups that have more of a club atmosphere, the Explorers are *more detailed and academic oriented* in their training curriculums.

### ***Q. What will my Son or Daughter get from this program that they won't get as a Cadet from the CAP or JR ROTC?***

A. The cadet will be immersed in a military environment that they commonly don't experience in JROTC or CAP. Our curriculum more closely parallels the curriculum offered in the Military Service Academies or Flying Squadrons. They excel at a greater speed due to our mirroring actual U.S. Professional Military Education Courses than what is offered in the other programs.

### ***Q. If my Son or Daughter joins the unit, does that automatically mean they will go in the Air Force or join some other branch of Military?***

A. No not at all. In fact we find that after a year there is sometimes a tremendous drop-off rate due to our military oriented high academic workload and training schedule. Many believe they absolutely want to join at this age, but we find out that some after awhile do not want to join the military, for a variety of reasons. For you and your Son or Daughter, as well for us, it is much better to find out now than later. Not everyone is cut out for the military, and that is OK. In the meantime there is a high level of character, values, discipline and patriotism building that they receive while in the program.

### ***Q. What if my Son or Daughter prefers to go into another branch of Service like the Army or Navy?***

A. Our program will still afford them a comprehensive Aviation Military Training program no matter what branch of service they may wind up going into. Our actual organization structure is similar to an Air Force Fighter Squadron. Since at present, we are the only organization of its kind in the Continental United States (CONUS), they will grow and benefit tremendously regardless. In fact we are very proud to state that numerous Explorers from the 396<sup>th</sup> Aircrew Training Squadron (ATRS) have gone on directly into the Air Force Academy, Annapolis, and West Point, as well as various ROTC programs.

### ***Q. What happens to them after the first 17 weeks of training are over? Are they done training? What happens next?***

A. The Air Force Explorers is a full time year round after school program. Our training curriculum was patterned over the Air Force and other Military Service Academies. After their 15 weeks in an Officer Training Flight and upon passing, they are commissioned Cadet 2LT. The next block of training starts immediately after. They may stay in the program, and advance through the ranks and progress through the two separate areas of curriculums. They choose to continue training through either, the Airmanship, Special Tactics, or the Air Intelligence Course. After the age of 21, they can stay on as an Advisor.

**Q. What happens if they have to skip a class due to a sports program they're in or band?**

A. During the 1<sup>st</sup> 15 weeks (their basic military training), there is not much room to miss any meetings. It has to be that way due to the nature of the indoctrination to military standards, etc. However, they *may* have up to three excused absences during the 1<sup>st</sup> 15 weeks. However, it is *highly* recommended they *not miss any* OCS classes. After that period, they may request leave or go on temporary reserve status for Seasonal Sports Programs (Football, Baseball, etc), field trips, or other out of town trips.

**Q. What happens if their grades go down, or academics slip?**

A. We place the highest priority of a young adult's life on school and academics. School always comes first. We do verify grades with you quarterly or each reporting period. If there are any D's, a cadet is placed on probation. Should there be any F's, a cadet is temporarily suspended until grades come back up to C or Better. There is NO DEVIATION from this policy.

**Q. What are the typical age ranges for cadets in the program?**

A. The age range for cadets is between 14 and 21 years of age, though there can be waivers for 13 year olds. The typical starting point for our Cadets is a Freshman or Sophomore or between 15-16 years old, however there are quite a few that start in their Junior or Senior year of High School.

**Q. What is the time commitment involved with the Explorers?**

A. Squadrons, generally meet one night weekly, (the 396<sup>th</sup> ATRS meets every Thursday night) and at least two Saturdays a month. Sometimes, due to training schedules, exercises, and Community Service Projects, additional Saturdays are scheduled. The potential cadet should plan on spending *at least* an hour a day studying USAFX academic materials.

**Q. What is the cost of the program?**

A. The cost of the program is broken up into scheduled payments. The initial fee for joining the squadron is a non-refundable \$175.00, which covers our initial administrative and insurance fees. An additional fee of is due on the first day, and covers the physical fitness uniform and the classroom materials covered during the first few weeks.

Payments for equipment and classroom materials are scheduled approximately every three to four weeks. All equipment and materials and their costs are identified on the schedule, so that the candidate may obtain his own materials from the military exchange stores or surplus stores.

A sample worksheet will be reviewed during the Adults Only portion of our meeting. During the 1<sup>st</sup> Day, the cadet will be given the worksheet for his flight, with payments, costs, dates, etc. It covers approximately 30+ weeks.

We are a complete *self-funded organization* with no public donations, so to help defray administrative, academic, copying expenses; we collect \$20 of monthly dues during the 1<sup>st</sup> two weeks of every month.

**What is the parent's involvement with the Explorers?**

A. Parents are invited to watch their cadet take the cadet oath at the end of induction day (1st Day), and are invited to their Commissioning Ceremony (Graduation). Parents who wish to be involved more (Advisors, Instructors, Fund-Raisers Support personnel, etc) should speak with the Squadron or Group Commander to determine where the best training or support function that they may assist with. Parents are also invited to participate in the Parent's Committee, which meets regularly and provides a support function to the Squadron. For those of you who may be Retired-Military, or former Military members, please give extra consideration of becoming an Advisor or an Instructor. Your help and expertise is especially needed to continue to keep our program more realistic for our future Air Warriors.