



GOALS

Understand the Air Force's basic "wingman" concept.

Commit to serving as a wingman and turning to a wingman for help at encampment.



How many of you have heard the term “wingman” before? What does it mean?

— in aerial combat, the wingman protects your “six”

— in a larger sense, the wingman is a mate who looks out for you, especially in tough



Two F-4 pilots, Bob Pardo and Earl Aman, had completed a tough air battle over North Vietnam.

Aman's Phantom was badly injured and was unlikely to make it home. Aman didn't want to bail-out because he'd be captured by the enemy.

Bob Pardo knew he couldn't just leave his wingman to fend for himself. But how do you help someone in mid-air?

Today we call it the "Pardo Push." Bob Pardo told the other plane to lower its tailhook. He then maneuvered his F-4 so that his windscreen touched the tailhook, thereby "pushing" the other plane.

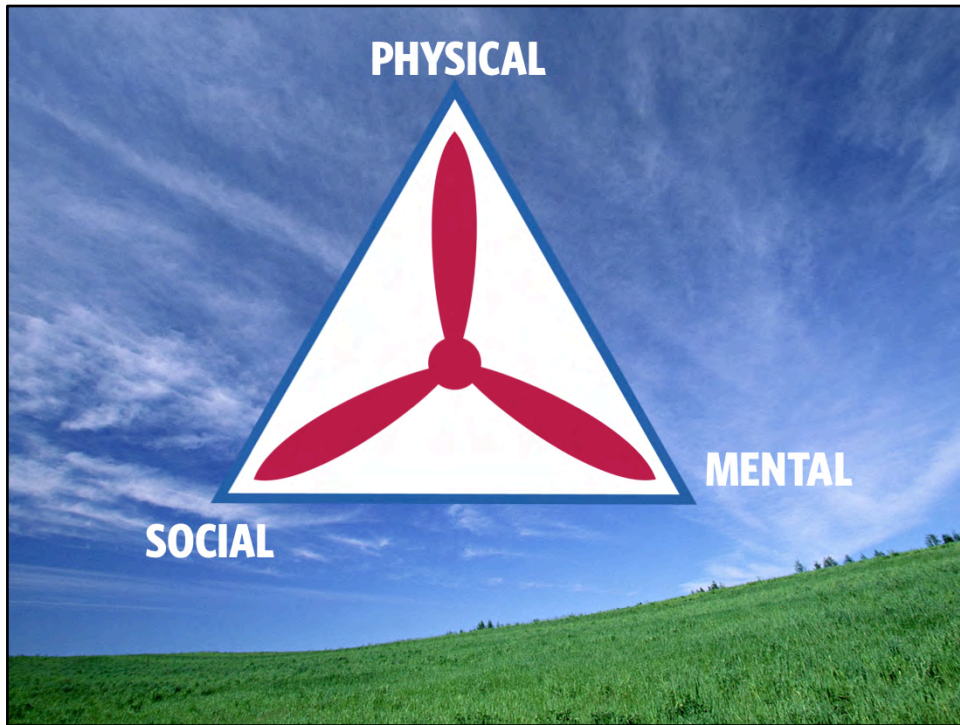
The maneuver slowed the other plane's rate of descent and enabled that crew to make it back to friendly territory.

The Pardo Push is an extraordinary, heroic example of one wingman helping another.



One reason wingmen are so valuable is that they see the world from a slightly different perspective.

The lead pilot / other individual looks around and from his perspective, he thinks he's safe. But the wingman, from a different perspective, is able to spot the danger and therefore can help his friend.

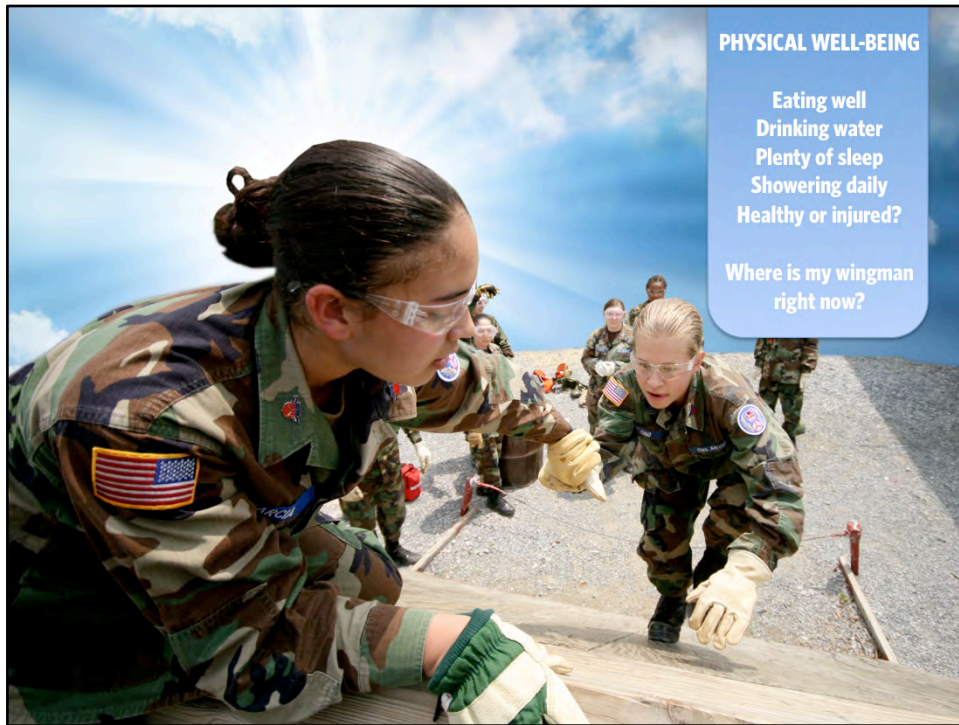


The CAP Cadet Wingman Concept is based on the Air Force concept and consists of three components.

Physical
Mental
And Social

Cadets have a formal chain of command. Officers and NCOs give directions to cadets, discipline them, motivate them, and point them in the right direction.

The wingman concept though is totally separate from the chain of command. Wingmen are peers. Another way of saying that is that they're equals or friends. They simply help one another out. One is not the boss of the other.



The Physical “prop” in the wingman concept involves making sure your wingman is:

- Eating well
- Drinking water
- Getting plenty of sleep
- Showering daily
- And getting any injuries treated

Also, in a cadet setting each cadet is responsible for knowing where his or her wingman is 24/7.

Can anyone think of examples from encampments or other cadet activities where your or a friend’s physical well-being was tested?
(answers can vary)

Instructors: you should have a couple personal examples ready in case the students don’t.



The second “prop” in the wingman concept involves looking out for your wingman’s mental well-being. This includes:

- helping your wingman stay positive and optimistic
- making sure that momentary setbacks don’t make your wingman hate himself or devalue his potential to succeed
- helping your wingman overcome feelings of homesickness
- and making sure your wingman keeps his or her “mind in the game,” or staying mentally alert and focused on the immediate challenges and tasks you’re working on.

Can anyone think of examples from encampments or other cadet activities where your or a friend’s mental well-being was tested?
(answers can vary)

Instructors: you should have a couple personal examples ready in case the students don’t.



The third “prop” in the wingman concept is social well-being. This means that wingmen check on one another in a number of ways, including:

- is your wingman making friends? Does he or she need help in that regard?
- is your wingman being included in the group or is the flight pushing him or her to the side?
- is your wingman giving and accepting compliments, or does he or she need help learning how to relate to other people?
- is your wingman picking on other people and needs to be reminded not to be a bully, or is he or she the target and needs support?

Can anyone think of examples from encampments or other cadet activities where your or a friend’s social well-being was tested?
(answers can vary)

Instructors: you should have a couple personal examples ready in case the students don’t.



99% of the time, in a cadet setting a wingman's assistance is enough to help a cadet overcome his or her personal challenges.

Being a wingman really means being a good listener, being a voice of reason, being a cheerleader and partner with the other person.

But in those rare situations when your wingman's personal challenges seem really serious, the wingman's role is to go for help.

Sometimes people are reluctant to seek help on their own, out of fear of embarrassment, or a mistaken belief that they have the strength to go it alone.

If your wingman is really struggling with something serious that your conscience tells you requires adult leadership, go for help.

Call upon your training officer, chaplain, medic, or in a life or death situation, call 9-1-1.

Who can name some situations where the adult leadership must be alerted?

Answers can vary.... Injury, fighting, fire, serious feelings of depression or suicidal thoughts, cadets going AWOL, fraternization, etc.



You might think this talk of wingmen is too “touchy-feely” for our military-style training environment. It’s not.

Actually, it is because cadets aspire to live in a military-style training environment that they need the extra support of a wingman.

The Air Force challenges all cadets to live according to “the warrior spirit.” That means cadets are challenged to be tough-minded, to be ultra-motivated, and to keep that fighting spirit alive in their hearts.

The Air Force of course is not sending cadets into a real battle in Afghanistan. Rather, the warrior spirit, for cadets, means that cadets must defend their sacred honor. They are warriors for the Core Values.

What does this quote from Seneca mean to you?

-- you can defeat an army on the ground and maybe capture their land and treasure, but it’s a lot harder to totally conquer an individual person’s values, thoughts, hearts, and minds.



FINAL THOUGHT

Faced with so many awesome challenges at encampment, you have a responsibility to be a warrior, to heed the advice of your wingman, and to be a trustorthy wingman for your mate.