

Merit Academy and Civil Air Patrol Hosted 2026 Cadet Competition in Woodland Park, CO

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WOODLAND PARK, CO, UNITED STATES, March 25, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Merit Academy](#) and [Colorado Wing](#), Civil Air Patrol, hosted the 2026 Cadet Competition on Saturday, March 14, 2026, at Merit Academy in [Woodland Park](#). The event brought together cadets, school leaders, Civil Air Patrol members, and community stakeholders for a full day of competition focused on leadership, discipline, teamwork, and service.



We were proud to host this event at Merit Academy and to stand alongside Civil Air Patrol in creating opportunities that challenge and inspire young people.”

*1st Lt. Jason Ledlie,
Commander of the Merit
Academy Cadet Squadron*

The Cadet Competition is designed to challenge participants across a broad range of skill areas that reflect the values and training of both organizations. Throughout the day, cadets competed in drill and ceremonies, leadership, physical fitness, written testing, uniform

inspection, team problem-solving, and emergency services-related tasks. These events are intended to evaluate not only individual performance, but also communication, professionalism, resilience, and the ability to work effectively as a team.

Hosted at Merit Academy, the event reflected the school’s commitment to developing students of character who are prepared to lead, serve, and excel in demanding environments. It also highlighted the shared mission between Merit Academy and Civil Air Patrol to provide young people with meaningful opportunities to build confidence, strengthen discipline, and grow through challenge.

“This event is a tremendous opportunity to showcase cadet leadership, discipline, and excellence,” said Maj. Daniel Cochran, Colorado Wing Cadet Competition Director, Civil Air Patrol, U.S. Air Force Auxiliary. “Cadet Competition pushes young leaders to master standards, perform as a team, and apply what they have learned in a demanding and rewarding environment.”

Merit Academy leaders say the event represents an important opportunity not only for competition, but for student development. “We were proud to host this event at Merit Academy and to stand alongside Civil Air Patrol in creating opportunities that challenge and inspire young people,” said 1st Lt. Jason Ledlie, Commander of the Merit Academy Cadet Squadron. “This competition reflects what both of our organizations value most: leadership, discipline, service, and the pursuit of excellence.”

Civil Air Patrol’s cadet program helps young people develop through leadership education, aerospace education, fitness, character development, and hands-on opportunities to serve their communities. At the same time, Merit Academy provided a learning environment centered on academic growth, personal responsibility, and leadership formation. Together, the two organizations created an experience that was both rigorous and deeply formative for participating cadets.

In addition to the competition itself, the event drew interest from military representatives, cadet parents and families, and Civil Air Patrol leadership. Their presence underscores the importance of youth leadership development and the strong partnership between education and community-based service organizations.

For cadets, the Cadet Competition was about more than rankings or awards. It was about preparation, trust, and the experience of working toward a common goal. “The most memorable moments are often those built on training, discipline, and shared effort, as teams prepared together and learned what it means to succeed as a unit,” said Colonel Michael B. Perini, USAF-Ret. And a long-time Woodland Park resident.

“All teams performed exceptionally well and brought great credit to their squadrons,” said Cochran.

Top three teams:

1st Place: Valkyrie Cadet Squadron



2nd Place: Air Academy Cadet Squadron

3rd Place: Mustang Cadet Squadron

The March 14 event at Merit Academy showcases what students and cadets can achieve when high standards, mentorship, and opportunity come together in one place.

ABOUT MERIT ACADEMY

Merit Academy is a public charter school in Woodland Park, Colorado, focused on academic excellence, character development, leadership, and service. Through a structured and values-driven environment, Merit Academy equips students with the knowledge, discipline, and confidence to succeed in school, in service, and in life.

<https://www.merit.academy/>

<https://wpdsk12.org>

ABOUT CIVIL AIR PATROL

Civil Air Patrol is the official civilian auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force and a nonprofit organization dedicated to emergency services, cadet programs, and aerospace education. Founded in 1941, CAP develops youth into dynamic Americans and serves communities across the nation through search and rescue, disaster relief, leadership training, and aviation-based education.

<https://www.gocivilairpatrol.com/>

<https://cowg.cap.gov/>

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