

While the Air Force as a whole is not known for their prowess in drill, quality teams are growing every year and the top Air Force drill programs can compete with anyone, anywhere. As scores of blue-coated drillers spread across the Nation and the talent pool continues to rise, both an Eastern & Western Air Force Nationals were begun to give every AF program a chance to compete among their peers in a first-class event. This undeniable show of strength is something attending cadets never forget, win or lose!

The Western Air Force Nationals yielded a sea of blue dominating the drill floor at the spectacular Alamodome. With San Antonio being the hometown of the majority of the best AFJROTC drill schools in the nation, judges were brought in and trained for impartiality, but it was going to be a tough competition for those looking to unseat the Texas big dogs.

ARMED DIVISION

With no intention of giving up their title as Armed Western National Champions, **John Jay HS** (San Antonio, Texas) stood their ground and held onto their title. Loaded with Senior Leadership, a dominating performance by the **Silver Eagles** (1st place Regulation, Color Guard, and Exhibition and a 2nd place Inspection) was made even more impressive with several judges deducting points for use

AFJROTC cadets were out in force at both the Eastern & Western Air Force Nationals.



2009 Air Force Nationals The Wild Blue Yonder!

A7 Western Championships - San Antonio, Texas

of shoe taps! The Silver Eagles were disappointed to miss a complete event sweep with a 2nd place in Inspection by 1 single point! But despite the domination, the **Centurion Guard** from **Thomas C. Clark HS** (San Antonio, Texas) stayed tight in the Runner-up position with only 2 placement points between the schools in the end.

UNARMED DIVISION

Snap II from **John Jay HS** didn't dominate the field like their Armed counterparts, but they certainly were impressive. Competition was again extremely close as **Thomas C. Clark HS's Silver Valor** came extremely close to claiming the overall title. With only a single placement point between the two, Snap II re-claimed the Unarmed Division Western Championship. John Jay took home two 1st place (Inspection, Color Guard) and two 2nd place (Regulation, Exhibition) trophies. Silver Valor fell right behind them taking the other



AF Nationals Western Division Overall Champion and Runner-up team reps pictured with event sponsor Mr. Ed Garland, AFA Board Member (center left), Mr. Greg Winn, Deputy Director, AFJROTC (center) and Event Head Judge, MSgt. Jonathan Suthard presenting the event awards (center right).

two 1st (Regulation, Exhibition) but a 2nd place in Color Guard and a 3rd place in Inspection kept them just inches away from the overall title.

Though overall talent was concentrated at the top, awesome performance were also displayed by **Brandeis HS & Bellevue East HS** capturing 3rd & 4th place in both the Armed & Unarmed Divisions, respectively.

Next year, the Western AF Nationals will return to the Alamodome on March 12th, 2010. Hope you can be a part of the fun!

A7 Eastern Championships - Upper Marlboro, Maryland



AF Nationals Eastern Division Overall Champion and Runner-up team reps pictured with event sponsors Mr. Joseph E. Sutter, Chairman of the Board, AFA (center left) and Colonel Richard J. Ragaller Director, AFJROTC (center right)

The Air Force Nationals Eastern Division Championships were held in the Washington, DC area at the Showplace Arena Equestrian Center. This year many schools were looking to de-throne the reigning champions in both divisions, but found that a harder task than they imagined.

ARMED DIVISION

Every school in the Armed Division had the **Falcons** from **Coventry HS** (Coventry, Rhode Island) in their sights but the Falcons were not ready to give up their title. They captured two 1st place (Inspection, Color Guard), one 2nd

place (Regulation), and one 4th place trophy (Exhibition) which gave them the standing they needed to take home the Armed Division Championship trophy.

The **Ruff Ryders** from **Lackey HS** (Indian Head, Maryland) almost knocked the Falcons off their perch falling short by only one placement point. The Ruff

Ryders also placed in all four team events (2nd in Inspection, Color Guard, Exhibition; 3rd in Regulation) and took home the Armed Division Runner Up trophy that they missed by one point last year. The 2008 runner up the **Black Knights** from **Franklin K. Lane HS** (Brooklyn, New York) tumbled hard with a 9th place finish in Inspection this year although they placed 1st in Exhibition and 4th in Regulation and Color Guard. **Spring Valley HS** (Columbia, SC) also fought hard with a 1st in Regulation and 3rd in Inspection and Exhibition but a disappointing 8th in Color Guard shattered their dreams of taking home a title.

UNARMED DIVISION

Although the names of the winners stayed the same from 2008, it was far from a foregone conclusion. The **Devils Honor Guard** from **Tift County HS** (Tifton, Georgia) placed 2nd in Regulation & Exhibition but struggled with 8th place both in Inspection & Color Guard leaving the door wide open for last year's runner up. The **Ladies of Destruction** from **Lackey HS** were on their way to the Unarmed Championship with 1st place in Inspection & Regulation but a tough 6th in Color Guard and a disastrous and uncharacteristic 14th place in Exhibition threw them behind Tift County. The 1st through 5th place event trophies were spread out among 13 different schools this year, so no one school truly dominated the Unarmed Division. Good news for schools hoping to make a run for the title in 2010!

Next year, the Eastern Air Force Nationals are slated to be held at the expansive Macon Centreplex in Macon, Georgia on March 19th, 2010. Hope to see you all there!

For scoring results, photos & info:
<http://af.thenationals.net>