

Navy Excellence Shines in the Gulf!

NJROTC National Academic, Athletic & Drill Championships

NAS Pensacola, Florida ★ April 2nd-3rd, 2004

With 85-degree days and blue skies, the backdrop was set for another amazing two-day display of all-around Naval excellence at the **2004 NJROTC National Academic, Athletic & Drill Championships**.

Twenty-four of the finest NJROTC units from across the Nation converged on the home of the Blue Angels, NAS Pensacola, Florida in April and smoked the scoring computers!

In all facets of the competition, Navy pride was on the line as wrestling the Overall Title away from seven-year champion **Flour Bluff HS** from **Corpus Christi, Texas** has become the singular mission and stated goal of every school worth their salt at the "Navy Nationals."

Early school registration on Friday morning leads teams directly into the teeth of the lion - with Navy Chiefs giving every competing cadet the once-over in Unit Personnel Inspection (UPI). Freshly pressed Summer Blues, mirror-like shoe shines and esprit-de-corps was everywhere as one-by-one, units stood tall and proud representing themselves and their school. **Flour Bluff HS** set the tone early by capturing the U.P.I. event in convincing fashion. This put the rabbit out front and left the field to chase throughout the weekend.

Trading Summer Blues for shorts and t-shirts, schools then moved outside for the hard-fought athletic events. Sixteen-member squads are put to the test to see how many correctly done, cadenced push-ups and then curl-ups their team can perform. Crowds of on-lookers go wild as the rare cadet finds the physical strength and determination to pound out 250 curl-ups in just five minutes! The well-conditioned cadets of **Pearl River Central HS** from Carriere, Mississippi turned heads with their very strong 1st place curl-up AND 1st place push-up team finishes.

Cadets then moved to the athletic track to compete in the 8x220 relay. With a beating afternoon sun overhead, each school worked to move the baton one mile around the oval track with eight different runners. Always strong **Lake Howell HS** from **Winter Park, Florida** powered home a 1st place finish with a blazing 3:44.96 time.

The final athletic event of the day occurs just before sunset with the 16 x 100yd relay. With pent-up emotions ready for release after a long day of sweat, this event always makes for a cathartic end to the athletic events. Over one thousand parents, instructors, and other team followers line the track and cheer on the competitors. And like lightning in a bottle, **Baldwin HS** from **Milledgeville, Georgia** showed the overall team strength that makes them the favorite anytime they step on the track in the 16-person relay event, bringing home 1st place with an awesome 3:29:36 time.

Many teams then hustled to the chow hall to grab dinner before returning to the pressure-packed Academic Exam. Schools formed 10-cadet academic teams, taking the 100-question test on relevant NJROTC material. When the Scantron had completed the tally, **Flour Bluff HS** eaked out a hard-fought victory, answering 897 questions correct out of the 1,000 possible.

Cadets grabbed a few hours of sleep before jumping into the crowd-favorite drill competitions. With five team events worth over one-third of the total national championship points, solid drill performance remains the key to maintaining a quality unit.

Again, **Flour Bluff HS** dominated the drill competition portion of the NJROTC Nationals by capturing two 1st place finishes, as well as two 2nd place finishes in the five team events.

The red carpet was rolled out for the NJROTC awards ceremony at the awe-inspiring **National Museum of Naval Aviation** (www.naval-air.org). The closing ceremony began with a brief welcome message by Museum President, **Vice Admiral John H. Fetterman (ret.)**. The ceremony was then highlighted by a keynote speech from distinguished

guest speaker Capt. John Nawrocki, Commanding Officer of Officer Training Command-Pensacola. His speech and standing ovation afterwards laid a great foundation for a memorable evening for the cadets.

As the evening wore on and the presentation of trophies continued, it appeared the tide was unstoppable. Despite a strong Overall Athletic Championship by **Lake Howell HS**, **Flour Bluff's** capture of the Overall Drill, Unit Personnel Inspection, and Academic competitions were too much to overcome as the Texas dynasty powered their way to an 8th straight Overall NJROTC Nationals Championship.

Grabbing the National Runner-up title was **Nease HS** from **St. Augustine, Florida** with a balanced, overall solid finish that just edged very strong overall efforts by **Pace HS** (3rd Place Overall), **Princess Anne HS** (4th Place Overall), and **Lake Howell HS** (5th Place Overall). Schools looking for complete, top-to-bottom scoring in all events should go to the official home of the Navy Nationals on their web at: <http://navy.thenationals.net>.

NAS Pensacola is an exceptional host, providing unparalleled logistical and personnel support. We thank them for their generous work and we look forward returning to the Home of Naval Aviation next year. The upcoming 2005 Navy Nationals event will have a new look and feel with new drill cards, athletic tables and many rule clarifications. Without question, the 2005 event will be the finest Navy Nationals competition yet. We at SNI hope to see your unit at the Navy Nationals on **April 1st-2nd, 2005!**



The final trophies of the night are presented to the Overall Event top finishers by Capt. John Nawrocki, Commanding Officer of Officer Training Command-Pensacola