

Dieruff AFJROTC PA-011 – Reaching New Heights

The Dieruff AFJROTC PA-011 Cadet Corps drill teams have been busy this school year attending two drill competitions and collecting four trophies and an Individual Drill Medal. In December of 2012 the Corps traveled for the first time to Delsea New Jersey for a drill competition against thirteen other Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force JROTC units from the local area. The competition was fierce, however, the PA-011



Unarmed Exhibition Drill Team was able to earn a first place trophy under the command of Cadet Senior Master Sergeant Liz Ramirez and the First Year Regulation Drill Team earned a Third Place Trophy in a great display under the command of Cadet Airman First Class Jose Soto. During the second drill competition, the Corps traveled, again for the first time, to Passaic New Jersey and competed against twenty-two other Army, Navy, Marine, Coast Guard, and

Air Force JROTC units. Again the competition was fierce, however the Unarmed Exhibition Drill Team earned a 2nd Place Trophy under the command of Cadet Senior Master Sergeant Sianilee Vazquez and the Armed Color Guard also earned a 2nd Place Trophy under the command of Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Ian Martinez. In addition, a 3rd Place was earned in Individual Drill (Knockout) by Cadet Chief Master Sergeant DeSean Baker. Both of these drill meets were extremely difficult because of the difference in standards used and it was also the first time the PA-011 Corps was on these two school's "turf".



The PA-011 Cadet Corps has been very busy performing escort, color guard, and community service details. The unit color guard presented colors at the Annual Iron Hill Charity Golf Open which benefits the Lehigh Valley Military Affairs Council, the Lehigh Valley Scholar Athlete Dinner, and at the Battle of the Bands event hosted by Louis E. Dieruff High School to name just a few. The Corps color guard is scheduled to open all of the Steel Hawk's Football Games this year. Other community service details include placing flags on veteran's graves at both Cedar Hill and Woodlawn Cemeteries. The school and community service activities keep the Corps extremely busy while all the same time it is getting ready for the Air Force National Drill Competition scheduled for the 15th and 16th of March 2013.

Most recently the unit was involved with the "Women Fly!" event held at the Queen City Airport and hosted by the Lehigh Valley General Aviation Association. The event was designed to introduce young women to aviation related career options. In conjunction, members of the local "Young Eagles Program" and the





Experimental Aircraft Association of the Chapter 70 group from Braden Air Park volunteered to give the young women at the event “discovery flights” in their own personal aircraft. The PA-011’s participation was two-fold in that during the event cadets worked as parking attendants, guards of static display aircraft, flight-line entry guard, and group escorts; while corps members also participated in the event by visiting exhibits, seminars, and displays. Also, of course, the majority of the cadets at the event were cleared to fly and had an exhilarating experience, most of them flying for the first time. All participants who flew were

enrolled in the Young Eagles program and can continue with that program locally.

Early in the year the drill teams set their focus on the University of Maryland in College Park Maryland, the site of the Air Force National Drill Competition in 2013. Drill teams begin their practice at 0600 (6 AM) daily and stay after school until 1600 (4 PM) to get ready and fine tune their routines. Forty-six Cadets boarded a bus at 0500 (5 AM) on Friday, 15 March for the trip to Andrews Air Force Base AFB located in Prince George County, Maryland. The cadets spent the morning touring the working dog area at Andrews AFB, the home of Air Force One. After having lunch at the base dining facility, they were treated to a tour of the Aerospace Physiology Lab where pilots are tested to see if they can withstand the effects of flying at high altitudes. The next stop was the Lincoln Monument in Washington D.C.



where they witnessed an oversized version of one of our best presidents. The cadets walked the entire Mall area stopping at all of the war memorials and at the Aerospace Science Museum before returning to Andrews AFB for check in at the Presidential Inn for the night. With the fun activities complete, the cadets began checking and rechecking their uniforms until exhaustion put them to sleep for the night. Hundreds of hours of preparation go into every competition; all of this is amplified when getting ready

for a national level competition. After a big breakfast at the chow hall, the next stop was Cole Field House on the campus of the University of Maryland. As we approached the venue we could see the lines of luxury coaches dropping off hundreds of cadets. Support teams for the other schools were wheeling in racks of garment bags containing perfectly pressed uniforms. When the bus stopped the cadets exited and retrieved their garment bags from below the bus and lined up to march into the arena. All of the teams began to prepare for their competition and cadets not involved helped to inspect uniforms, video tape, or snap pictures. The day was exhausting as cadets marched to and from each drill pad putting everything they had into their performance. The trophy ceremony was a tense one and all cadets in the arena were focused on the announcers every syllable. Each category was exhilarating for the winners and a disappointment for those not called. The PA-011 teams tried their best but hope was fading.



Then the announcer called “Raptors”, and then “Louis E. Dieruff High School”, which was PA-011’s

armed team “and the Commanders Trophy, Third Place winner was Cadet Major Nguyen.” It was official; we won’t be going home empty handed.



Then, as they were calling the winners for the Armed Regulation Drill, again the words “Raptors, Louis E. Dieruff High School”, Second Place. Amazing, PA-011 received a great achievement, beating teams four and five times their size. A true David and Goliath victory, and while it was a second place trophy, that was against 23 of the best Air Force JROTC drill programs in the nation; making it a victory for PA-011 and they all felt like champions. It was a moment in time that will forever be burned into the memories for those cadets. It is certainly a memory that the PA-011 Instructors, Major Timothy Page and MSgt Willard Jones, will not soon forget because it is their mission to build young leaders and on that day those cadets displayed the discipline, character, and precision of a leader; and they truly are Champions.