

The year 2008 ushered in a major change for Air Force cadets across the nation. The Air Force JROTC HQ joined forces with SNI as an official supporter of this legendary blue shirt drill event to produce the expanded U.S. Air Force National JROTC Drill Championships. With so much drill talent nationally within AFJROTC, the "Air Force Nationals" was split between two cities, with the Western Championships being held in historic College Station, Texas.

ARMED DIVISION

One team stormed the doors and proved "large and in charge" the entire day. The **Silver Eagles** from **John Jay HS** (San Antonio, Texas) showed no mercy as they captured first place in all four team events. Their unprecedented sweep of the entire division left the competition shooting for a Runner-Up trophy early and gave departing drill icon MSgt. Ken Madden a wonderful send-off!

The Runner Up fight was very close between the **Centurion Guard** from **Thomas C. Clark HS** (San Antonio, Texas) and the **Flying Tigers** from **Klein Collins HS** (Spring, Texas). Both teams were exceptionally strong, trophying in all four team events. When the scores were in, it was a tie! However, raw point totals gave the tie-breaker nod to the dedicated cadets from Clark HS as they carried home the Runner-Up title of the first ever Air Force Nationals Western Championships.

Eastern Championships - Macon Centreplex - Macon, Georgia

The Eastern Air Force Championships were held in Macon, Georgia at the expansive Macon Centreplex. This venue is centrally located to numerous strong Air Force drill units and they came out in force. Unfortunately for them, most of the hardware seemed to migrate north! Over 850 cadets came with hopes of taking trophies and bragging rights back to their hometown.

ARMED DIVISION

The Armed Division had many talented teams but only one contender rocketed to the front early to capture the championship. The **Falcons** from **Coventry HS** (Coventry, Rhode Island) came ready to leave their mark on history as they were the only team to trophy in all four team events. They placed first in Inspection and Color Guard, second in Regulation, and fourth in Exhibition leaving their competitors wondering what energy drink they found and where to get some!

The race for the Runner-Up title was very tight between two very familiar teams, the **Black Knights** from **Franklin K. Lane HS** (Brooklyn, NY) and the **Ruff Ryders** from **Lackey HS** (Indian Head, MD). The Black Knights came out fighting with two first places in Regulation and Exhibition but fell

2008 Air Force Nationals The Best of the Best in Blue

With the added support of AFJROTC HQ, the Air Force Nationals hosted both an Eastern & Western Championship for Air Force JROTC cadets to shine.



Western Championships - Texas A&M University - College Station, Texas

UNARMED DIVISION

John Jay HS was not going to take no for an answer as their **Snap II** unarmed team took two first place trophies (Regulation & Color Guard), one second place (Inspection), and one third place trophy (Exhibition). They completely dominated the drill floor and walked away with the Unarmed Division Western Championship title.

As in the Armed Division, the race for the Runner-Up title came down to the same two schools, the **Lady Flying Tigers** from **Klein Collins HS** and **Silver Valor** from **Thomas C. Clark HS**. Both teams showed strength in all four events but a disappointing seventh place in Inspection for Clark HS allowed the Lady Flying Tigers to inch ahead by one quality point to take home the Unarmed Division Runner-Up trophy.



AFJROTC Deputy Director Mr. Greg Winn (L) and Event Keynote Speaker Buster Horlen, National Director of the AFA (R) stand proudly with (L to R) Armed Division Runner-up Thomas C. Clark HS, Armed Champion John Jay HS, Unarmed Champion John Jay HS, and Unarmed Runner-up Klein Collins HS.

The Air Force Nationals will experience a dramatic change in 2009 when the event moves to **San Antonio, Texas** where a sea of blue will fill the magnificent **Alamodome** on Friday, March 27th. Many teams have already expressed an interest in competing in this impressive drill facility to give these 2008 top finishers a run for their money!

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

just short of trophying in Inspection and Color Guard. The **Ruff Ryders** trophyed in three team events (2nd in Inspection and Color Guard, and 3rd in Exhibition) but left the door wide open with their 11th place finish in Regulation. But it was the **Black Knights** who earned the Runner-Up trophy by only one quality point.

UNARMED DIVISION

Packed full of talented teams, **Tift County HS** rose victorious from the Unarmed field as they trophyed in all four team events (1st Exhibition, 2nd Inspection, 3rd Color Guard and 5th Regulation). The **Blue Devil Honor Guard** carried the Georgia flag to victory in front of their many supporters.

Although trophies were spread among 13 different teams in the Unarmed Division, the **Ladies of Destruction** from **Lackey HS** dominated with a 1st in Regulation, a 3rd in Inspection and a 4th in Color Guard. Even their 11th place finish in Exhibition couldn't put them in reach of their nearest competitor as they comfortably claimed the Unarmed Runner-Up title.



Eastern drill powerhouse Tift County HS from nearby Tifton, Georgia had much to celebrate at the Air Force Eastern JROTC Drill Championships, trophying in every event en route to the Unarmed Division Championship.

Change is in the air across the SNI drill landscape as the 2009 Eastern Championships also moves to a brand new facility in the historic shadows of the nation's capital. The **Show Place Arena** in **Upper Marlboro, Maryland** will be host to the best the east coast Air Force JROTC drill has to offer. We look forward to this new day in Air Force drill excellence!