

Fun in the summer sun

Across America this summer, Civil Air Patrol cadets are having the time of their lives — meeting, competing and (don't tell!) learning. Special summer activities offer cadets the ability to pick up special skills and realize special dreams, whether it's learning how to handle emergencies, how to fly a plane or how to work as a team. These activities deliver the basics of the CAP cadet program — leadership, fitness and aerospace knowledge — and are the building blocks that help turn today's youth into tomorrow's leaders.



Members of the Rocky Mountain Region Color Guard — Senior Airman 1st Class Shamron Willison, left; Staff Sgt. Jozef Szabo; Senior Airman Sunny Heart; and Chief Master Sgt. Garrett Wachtel, team captain — are evaluated by a member of the U.S. Air Force Honor Guard during National Cadet Competition in McMinnville, Ore.

Photo by Maj. Denise Thompson, Colorado Wing

A spectacle of pageantry and precision



Photos by Capt. James Kalemis, Great Lakes Region

The enthusiasm and good sportsmanship displayed by members of the Alaska Wing's Anchorage Polaris Composite Squadron, representing the Pacific Region in CAP's 2010 National Cadet Competition, were acknowledged with the Team Spirit Award.

By Kristi Carr

CAP cadets vie for top honors in National Cadet Competition

Cheers erupted from the banquet audience of fresh-faced, sharply uniformed Civil Air Patrol cadets as they saw themselves and their teammates in a video flashing on the big screen at the conclusion of the 2010 National Cadet Competition. The gaze of other banquet guests — senior members and top leaders of CAP and the U.S. Air Force — was directed back at the cadets, young men and women who already show such promise for America's future.

This summer, nearly 150 cadets ages 12-20 years old



Cadet Master Sgt. Jasmine Sands of the North Central Region, center, had a quick and correct answer for the panel quiz question: “What part of an aircraft engine supplies the power?” “Magneto, sir,” she said.

gathered in McMinnville, Ore., to see who would rise to the level deemed “the best of the best.” They arrived as representatives from each of CAP’s eight geographical regions to compete in two categories of competition — color guard and drill team.

After a week of intricate and synchronized drills as well as individual and team challenges in tests of intellect, discipline and athleticism, they all left as winners.

THE PURSUIT OF PERFECTION

Cadets know preparation is the key to succeeding at the NCC. One escort at the Linfield College dormitory, where cadets were housed during the competition, reported hearing them grilling one another on panel quiz questions even as they brushed their teeth.

Different teams took different approaches to preparing.

Beginning late last fall, Cadet Col. Matthew Bricker, captain of the Southwest Region drill team, set the practice schedule for seven hours every Saturday, along with as many overnight, weekend practices as the members could pull together each month. The team included many veteran

NCC participants, several of whom were on the 2008 championship team.

“We build upon our previous legacy, scouting out and recruiting new members in the fall to assemble a complete team roster,” said Cadet Lt. Col. Brian Simpson. The team included cadets from nine Arizona Wing squadrons.

That contrasts with the Ohio Wing drill team, most of whose members were new to the program. All are members of the Youngstown ARS Composite Squadron, and none had ever been on a winning NCC team before.

“We are one of the few teams from a single squadron, and we are very proud to know we compete on the same level as teams that search the wing for the best,” said Cadet Capt. Joseph Spletzer.

With so many fresh faces, Spletzer said the team’s focus had to be on drills. “We definitely broke in our drill shoes,” he said.

THE MANY DEFINITIONS OF WINNING

Though the NCC plaques and trophies were awarded to those with the highest scores or the best times, winners of a different sort were evident throughout the competition.

Take, for example, Cadet 2nd Lt. Hector Ramos of the Puerto Rico Wing, a member of the Southeast

Region’s drill team. When Ramos emerged from the written exam portion of the competition, he noted that he thought the questions on aerospace were the hardest.

What he didn’t say was that he took the exam in English, his second language.

The Middle East Region drill team received a verbal trophy of sorts. As its members came off the drill pad at Evergreen



Cadet Senior Master Sgt. Hannah Disraeli, representing the Southwest Region, respectfully pulls the cord to run the Stars and Stripes up a flagpole during the color guard’s outdoor practical drill.

Aviation & Space Museum after a standard drill exercise, a man clad in jeans and a T-shirt addressed them, saying he was so proud of each and every one of them and their exercise had brought him to tears.

He was choking back those tears when asked what relationship he had to the cadets. It turned out he had none; he was just visiting the museum at the time.

Cadet Staff Sgt. Wyatt Hartman, a member of the Great Lakes Region drill team from Ohio, arrived at NCC already a winner, because he was accompanied by his own personal cheering section — his parents and two sisters. The Hartman family was just one of many contingents of family and friends lending support to the participants.

THE DEEPER MEANING BEHIND NCC

Cadets attending NCC have a grasp on the real value behind the program, as evidenced by this insight from Spletzer: “NCC gives each team a chance to proudly represent its region, wing or, for some like our team, squadron. You may not be scored by a judge as you are for the local events, but you are examined by everyone on how you act and carry yourself outside those contests.”

“At this (national) level, there’s so little difference between first and eighth place,” said Col. Bryan Cooper, CAP’s national adviser for professional development and one of the 50 or more volunteers — senior members and cadets — who kept NCC activities on track and on time. Referring to elements such as leadership, aerospace history and education and physical fitness, he added, “The NCC covers every aspect of the CAP cadet program.”

NCC dates to 1947, when the competition was established as the National Drill Competition by CAP’s national commander at the time, Gen. Lucas V. Beau. Its early meets culminated in a face-off between cadets from



Members of the U.S. Air Force Honor Guard helped judge NCC and later showed off their own special drill, which used rifles outfitted with bayonets. Stationed at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, D.C., this is the same Air Force honor guard that performs for the president.

CAP and the Air Cadet League of Canada. Over time, the competition went through several name changes, lost its international connection and added tests of physical fitness and aerospace knowledge to its curriculum. Color guard competition wasn’t incorporated until 1996. NCC is the only special cadet activity with rules formally spelled out in a CAP regulation.



The 2010 NCC guest of honor, U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. David E. Price, encouraged CAP’s cadets to compete in life as they have in NCC.

The 2010 NCC guest of honor, U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. David E. Price, who is charged at the Pentagon with overseeing a budget in excess of \$56 billion annually for Air Force operations and maintenance as well as military personnel, nailed the relevance of NCC when he emphasized to the cadets the importance of teamwork in today’s society. “America thrives on competition,” he said. “It’s not important that you win but that you choose to participate. You won’t be perfect, but, in striving towards excellence, you will raise the bar.”

For more coverage of the 2010 NCC, go to: www.capvolunteernow.com. ▲

Saluting CAP's Best of the Best

"The sportsmanship displayed by each National Cadet Competition participant is a testament to the integrity of our youth volunteers and their commitment to CAP's core values," said CAP National Commander Maj. Gen. Amy S. Courter.

Lt. Col. Roger Middleton, Civil Air Patrol's NCC activity director, concedes it may be over-quoted but is nevertheless true, "Participation in the NCC — whether at the wing, regional or national level — is one case where everyone wins."

That said, here are the 2010 NCC results:

1st place:

Color Guard: Southeast Region

Drill Team: Rocky Mountain Region

2nd place:

Color Guard: Rocky Mountain Region

Drill Team: Middle East Region

3rd place:

Color Guard: North Central Region

Drill Team: Southwest Region

OTHER TEAM AWARDS

In-Ranks Inspection

Color Guard:

Middle East Region, **1st place**

Southwest Region, **2nd place**

Drill Team:

Southeast Region, **1st place**

Southwest Region, **2nd place**

Standard Drill

Color Guard:

Rocky Mountain Region, **1st place**

Pacific Region, **2nd place**

Drill Team:

Southeast Region, **1st place**

Rocky Mountain Region, **2nd place**

Written Exam

Color Guard:

Great Lakes Region, **1st place**

Southeast Region, **2nd place**

Drill Team:

Middle East Region and Southwest Region, **1st place tie**

Rocky Mountain Region, **2nd place**

Panel Quiz

Color Guard:

North Central Region, **1st place**

Pacific Region, **2nd place**

Drill Team:

Rocky Mountain Region, **1st place**

Middle East Region, **2nd place**

Mile Run

Color Guard:

Southeast Region, **1st place**

Rocky Mountain Region, **2nd place**

Drill Team:

Middle East Region, **1st place**

Great Lakes Region, **2nd place**

Innovative Drill

Drill Team:

Southeast Region, **1st place**

Rocky Mountain Region, **2nd place**

Volleyball

Drill Team:

Southeast Region, **1st place**

Southwest Region, **2nd place**

Indoor Practical Drill

Color Guard:

Southeast Region and Pacific Region, **1st place tie**

Rocky Mountain Region, **2nd place**

Outdoor Practical Drill

Color Guard:

North Central Region, **1st place**

Rocky Mountain Region, **2nd place**

Team Spirit

Color Guard: Pacific Region

Drill Team: Southeast Region

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

High Score Written Exam

Color Guard (tie):

Cadet Chief Master Sgt. Natalie Pieta,

Great Lakes Region,

and Cadet Tech. Sgt. Garrett Wachtell,

Rocky Mountain Region

Drill Team (tie):

Cadet Capt. Joshua Ein,

Middle East Region, and Cadet

2nd Lt. Zachary Hopkins,

Rocky Mountain Region

Fleet Foot

Color Guard:

Female: Cadet Master Sgt. Jasmine Sands, North Central Region

Male: Cadet Master Sgt. Anthony Willis, Southeast Region

Drill Team:

Female: Cadet 2nd Lt. Caroline Dengler, Middle East Region

Male: Cadet Staff Sgt. Wyatt Hartman, Great Lakes Region

Individual Spirit

Color Guard:

Cadet Master Sgt. Jasmine Sands, North Central Region

Drill Team:

Cadet Capt. Joseph Spletzer, Great Lakes Region

Outstanding Cadet Volunteer

Cadet 2nd Lt. Rachel Khattar, California Wing

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