



PURSUIT OF PERFECTION. After weeks of preparing for NJROTC's Annual Military Inspection, senior Cadet Petty Officer 2nd class, Franklin Turza left no room for error. After the completion of the inspection, they attended a luncheon and exchanged a few words with Commander Merv Dial. "Being able to speak to him personally was very entertaining," Turza said. "He had a lot of stories to tell and advice for our futures." *Photo by Dominic Hernandez.*

THE BOND THAT LASTS

// NJROTC students create an inseparable bond as they work together to improve community

The morning sun hangs bright in the sky as the entire ranks of the Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps belt out a traditional and legendary tune. On the day of the Annual Military Inspection, one of the most important days of the year for NJROTC, the students and instructors decided to breakaway from the status quo.

"For AMI this year, we had the staff sing 'Anchors Away', the United States Navy Academy's fight song," senior Cadet Ensign Asia Johnson said. "It went extremely well for the first time, the whole crowd was amazed that the staff sang it."

During the holiday, NJROTC students participated in several selfless community service events, even trekking out to Tornillo to clean an

orphanage and spend quality time with children who have very little in life.

"We help clean up the yard and do anything that needs to get done," senior Cadet Commander Dustin Bullard said. "Around Christmas they also send us a list of the kids and we get them gifts to open."

Students also participated in National Wreaths Across America Day, an event that asks volunteers to honor fallen soldiers by laying holiday wreaths at each tombstone at military cemeteries. The members of NJROTC rose early Dec. 12 to volunteer at Fort Bliss National Cemetery.

Senior Cadet Ensign Adrian Rivas found that their community service projects didn't just benefit the community, but also made him a better person and proud to be in NJROTC.

"It makes me feel good doing these things to help out people in need," Rivas said. "These events changed me by making me grateful for the

things I have and don't have to struggle for."

Volunteering, training and working together every day, the students quickly create close ties with each other.

"Over the past four years, I have made bonds and friendships that I wouldn't trade for anything," senior Cadet Lieutenant Rene Castillo said. "We have all grown into young men and women that share a passion and love for our unit."

Having this bond lets the students know they will always be united as one no matter the distance or length of time apart.

"The bond in NJROTC is like one huge family," junior Petty Officer 3rd Class Ashleigh Vega said. "We look after each other and we have each other's back."

//Arabella Villalobos

MORE THAN A SERVICE



With tears of pride, junior Cadet Petty Officer 3rd class Elijah Muñoz leaves a wreath at his grandfather's grave during the Wreaths Across America event Dec. 12 at Fort Bliss National Cemetery, which NJROTC attended. Muñoz was emotional as he knelt at the white tombstone. "I stayed at his grave for a little and prayed for him and thanked him for being the person he was and making my dad the person he was to be able to make me the person I am," he said. "I had never felt anything like that before and I felt good that I could help out with something that actually meant something."

PHOTO BY DANIEL NUÑEZ



PRIDE TIME. At the football game against Eastwood High, senior Cadet Ensign Adrian Rivas, along with fellow cadets, presents the colors. After the presentation, the cadets returned to the stands and enjoyed the game. "I feel honored to be carrying the nation's colors in front of a large crowd," Rivas said. "I get a sense of pride doing this and being able to do it for the past four years." *Photo by Princesleah Aguilera.*



STAND AT ATTENTION. After being inspected by Commander Merv Dial, senior Cadet Ensign Jose Carpio stands at attention as the rest of the battalion is reviewed during Annual Military Inspection. Once they completed the inspection, Carpio escorted his staff to lunch. "I felt really good that the battalion went well," Carpio said. "I was honored to be able to help". *Photo by Dominic Hernandez.*



ALLEVIATION. After the long preparation for NJROTC's Annual Military Inspection, senior Cadet Lieutenant Rene Castillo leads his cadets with pure confidence and thoughts of accomplishment. After a sigh of relief, Castillo commanded attention from his company with pride. "I felt honored and privileged to lead such a great group of cadets," he said. "I thought to myself, 'we did it guys.'" *Photo by Dominic Hernandez.*