

POINT AFTER POINT

Unpleasant feelings go through junior Samantha Sliva when she tallies points on the map she was given for orienteering. "Most people get lost and spend over two hours in the Franklin Mountains trying to find their way," Sliva said. "I felt like I was taking a long time, so I was shocked when I found out I took one hour to do the whole thing."



genesis barraza



mikey provenghi

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Deputy brigade commander Mayra Villalobos hands a coin to her team members as a reward for winning the unarmed drill meet. "I felt confident going into this meet," she said. "Even though we had about seven new members, this was the first time we placed first in my four years in JROTC."



rudée valenciana

ON THE MARCH

Stern expressions, sophomore Melanie Orona marches down Edgemere Boulevard with junior Carlos Borjas and freshmen Mckayla Rayburn and Haley Banda. "I was terrified I was going to mess up," Orona said. "After a while, all the bad thoughts went away, and I started to enjoy the moment. It felt so cool leading the entire homecoming parade."

ARMED AND READY

Deep in concentration, senior Alicia Salcido begins a ripple in an armed drill team routine called the "Flying V." "What makes us different from other schools is that we don't focus on spins that much," Salcido said. "We prioritize on the technique, so it can look sharp and uniformed instead of trying to impress everyone with spins." (photo by mikey provenghi)



"The JROTC program continues to be another place I can call home. It teaches me principles that I will use for the rest of my life."

-leonor jimenez-11

drilled to perfection

by lizbeth perez

The steam felt suffocating. Senior Mayra Villalobos heard water hitting the floor as she helped her teammates drench their hair in the shower and apply mountains of gel.

Three hours later, they had created the perfect "slick 50" bun, all 13 of them. She carefully put on her wrinkle free uniform and shiny, new black shoes. After checking that everyone was impeccable from head to toe, she scrutinized herself one last time and walked out of her hotel room. The unarmed drill team boarded the bus and headed to the Bluebonnet Invitational Skills Meet held at Barbra Jordan High School in Houston.

"I didn't have time to worry too much about myself," Villalobos said. "Everything had to be flawless. I remember seeing a few girls with tiny strands of hair sticking out. I grabbed some scissors and cut them off. They were okay with it though because they know how strict inspection can be."

With the rigorous preparation out of the way, now came the actual meet. Inspection, regulation and exhibition were the three phases sophomore Jonathan Nava and his team had to complete. Competing against 150 schools, they placed first in regulation.

"After regulation, the master sergeant looked surprised," Nava said. "He said he had never seen a group as well disciplined as we were and gave us his own personal thought on how we might actually earn a good score. Normally, judges won't tell you their comments which means we stuck out to him."

The trip also provided opportunities for three new freshmen, including Jayden Payan, who was born with part of her arm missing.

"I joined [unarmed drill team] because I wanted to show others that even though I have Amniotic Band Syndrome, I can still do what I want to do," she said. "When I'm out doing drills, I am so proud of my team. I proved to everyone and myself that I can do anything."



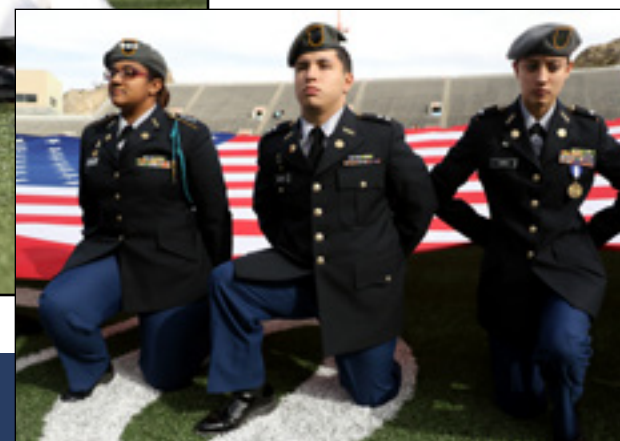
erika masse -10



carlos borjas -11 hayley banda -9 victoria lee-11



alicia salcido (senior princess)-12
mayra villalobos (mil. ball queen)-12
cynthia flores (lady-in-waiting)-12



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ONE LAST LOOK

Junior Armando Gutierrez waits for Sgt. Jose Hernandez to make final adjustments before he performs. "For me, every performance is frightening," Gutierrez said. "There's always a chance you can mess up. Tension always builds up, especially when Sergeant says, 'Need any advice? Don't screw it up.'"

HONORABLE MOMENT

As part of the Greater El Paso Football Showcase, senior Mario Rodriguez holds the Garrison flag during the National Anthem. "It was special to me because I got to represent my country," he said. "Not everyone got selected to do this."