

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

NATIONAL INVITATIONAL

DRILL MEET

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

11 April 2026

This SOP is dedicated to all graduates and cadets of the USAFA Cadet Honor Guard, whose hard work and devotion have made this team all that it is. Their spirit continues to inspire us all. And to Scott J. Geissman, your memory will live on, always...



No man can stand alone.
He must eventually realize
that there is something
greater than himself...

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LETTER OF INVITATION

The United States Air Force Academy Cadet Honor Guard is pleased to invite you to the 49th Annual United States Air Force Academy National Invitational Drill Meet (NIDM). This year's drill meet will be held on 11 April 2026. We expect to have teams from around the nation to participate, including teams from various high schools, colleges, and service academies. With this number and caliber of teams, I am confident that you will find NIDM a challenging and rewarding experience.

You will find the Academy located on 18,000 acres of land, 10 miles north of Colorado Springs and at an altitude of 7,258 feet above sea level (far, far above that of West Point or Annapolis). Teams should prepare for the higher altitude by drinking plenty of water. The weather might be cold, snowy, rainy, or very windy even at this time of year, so please plan accordingly.

This year's NIDM will be held on the Terrazo. There are seven events at this year's meet. The three primary events are Inspection, Regulation Drill, and Exhibition Drill. In addition, there are three secondary events: Color Guard, Special Exhibition Drill, and Individual Exhibition Drill.

The registration deadline for this year's meet is 27 February 2026. If necessary, late registration will be no later than 13 March 2026, will an additional late fee of \$25. When mailing in your registration packets please send them to:

C2C Chloey R Rudy
Attn: USAFA CHG NIDM
P.O. Box 4459
USAF Academy, CO 80841

We look forward to welcoming you to this year's drill meet. If you have any questions about the meet please e-mail usafa.nidm@afacademy.af.edu



PURPOSE OF SOP

The purpose of this SOP is to standardize the rules for the United States Air Force Academy National Invitational Drill Meet (USAFA NIDM). The information and procedures in this SOP take precedence over all previous Drill Meet literature and supersedes all previous USAFA NIDM SOP.

APPLICABLE SERVICE MANUALS

The following drill manuals will be used during the competition:

- 1) Army: TC 3-21.5 (May 2021)
- 2) Navy and Marine Corps: MCO 5060.20 (May 2019)
- 3) Air Force: AF Drill and Ceremonies Manual: DAFPAM 34-1203 (September 2022)

EVENTS

Primary Events:

- 1) Inspection (Armed and Unarmed)
- 2) Regulation Drill (Armed and Unarmed)
- 3) Exhibition Drill (Armed and Unarmed)

Secondary Events:

- 1) Special Exhibition Drill (Armed and Unarmed, Teams of 2-6 Competitors)
- 2) Color Guard (Armed)
- 3) Individual Exhibition Drill (Armed)

Additional Competition Events:

- 1) Sweepstakes (Armed and Unarmed)
- 2) Outstanding Commander (Armed and Unarmed)
- 3) Regulation Drill Down

TRAVEL/LODGING ARRANGEMENTS

Teams requesting tours and checking in for registration should not arrive earlier than 1200 on 10 April 2026. Escorts for prearranged tours will be arranged prior to the drill meet to accommodate the visiting teams.

All teams should sign in at the Air Force Academy Arnold Hall (see Appendix 1) **NO LATER THAN 1900, 10 April 2026. Please let us know prior to 1 April if you will arrive later than 1900 hours so accommodations can be made.**

- a. Commander's Call will be from 0715-0730 on the day of the competition. (Subject to change) The location will be at the Head Judge table. Unit commanders will be given updated information about the meet. Each team will be held responsible for any changes made at the Commander's Call. **The Commander's Call is limited to two people per competing unit including the cadet team commander and the team's head chaperon.** The purpose of the Commander's Call is to answer questions about the meet in general. Changes to the rules listed in the SOP will not be considered at the Commander's Call. If there is a conflict with rules teams may call to discuss this and under certain circumstances, we may consider changes. **If a change to the rules or clarification is needed, it should be requested no later than (NLT) 4 weeks prior to the competition.**

Transportation:

1. Personal transportation will be the responsibility of each team.
2. Since USAFA will not provide personal transportation, we recommend that the team advisers rent a car for the weekend of the drill meet. A list of rental car agencies can be found in Appendix 11.

Billeting:

1. Billeting accommodations will be the responsibility of each team. Teams which are composed of college-age competitors may have the option of staying in the dorms with USAFA cadets. Please contact the NIDM CIC for more information.
2. Many hotels near the Academy will be able to accommodate competing teams (see Appendix 10).

3. Officers (active, retired, and re\serve) and enlisted members may stay at the VOQ/VAQ if space is available or downtown. Due to the information required by billeting, VOQ/VAQ reservations must be made individually with the billeting office. It is suggested that these reservations be made at least one month in advance.

RESPONSIBILITIES/DUTIES

Teams are required to follow Academy regulations and all rules in this SOP. The entire team will be held responsible for the actions of any of its team members. All team members should be briefed on this SOP.

Team members are not authorized in the following areas unless escorted by an official USAFA cadet escort (See Appendix 1):

Fairchild Hall	Aeronautics Lab	Cadet Gym	Vandenberg Hall
Terrazzo	Mitchell Hall	Harmon Hall	Sijan Hall

3. No alcoholic beverages may be possessed or consumed by team members in the areas listed above. Alcohol is prohibited on the Academy reservation, except at the sports bar in Arnold Hall. Security Forces will handle any alcohol-related violations.
4. It is essential that each drill team member always has his/her own picture identification for the duration of their stay for security purposes. Anyone without identification may experience difficulties traveling to and staying at the competition.
5. Due to the military standards and visibility of the United States Air Force Academy, we require that all drill team members and their advisers be in professional, team/school-orientated uniforms or clothing for the duration of NIDM. All competitors MUST wear a military-style uniform while competing and at meals served by Mitchell Hall. Advisors MUST wear professional clothing (civilian or military) while on the Holaday Athletic Center floor (Drill Pad areas), on tours of the Cadet Area, and at meals served by Mitchell Hall. Examples of professional clothing include, but are not limited to military uniforms, school polo shirts/khakis, and business suits.
6. Drill area sizes are given in Appendix 3. Directions for entering the different fields and theplacement of head judges are also given in Appendix 3. Violations of the field area will result in a point deduction, so it is recommended that you read over this appendix thoroughly.
7. The competition is expected to be held on the Terrazzo. In the event of inclement weather, the competition will be moved indoors. Inclement weather location is TBD.

PENALTIES

1. Any act which is in violation of this SOP's regulations, or the Responsibilities/Duties section will be punished by a loss of points and/or disqualification from the competition as decided by the NIDM CIC.
2. Teams not at the prescribed area of competition at the time they are scheduled to compete will be subject to point deductions. After ten minutes, the team will be disqualified from that event. This is **only applicable if the team was at fault for the delay.**
3. Point penalties will be assessed for: boundary violations, time violations, procedural violations, added/omitted/Out-of-Sequence commands in Regulation/Color Guard, weapon drops, and uniform item drops.
4. A weapon drop is defined as complete loss of control of the weapon to a point where the weapon has two points of contact with the ground. If the competitor manages to regain some control of the weapon before two points of contact with the ground are made, it will not be a drop but will be considered in other point deduction areas. E.g.: A movement in which the weapon does not land in the competitor's hands but rather hits the ground in its entirety is a drop. A movement in which the weapon is caught by the competitor but still hits the ground unintentionally is not a drop.
5. Disqualification in an event will result if a team competes with fewer people than the minimum required for that event unless a waiver is granted by the Drill Meet CIC due to injury or other previous agreement.
6. All other point deductions are discussed in the event descriptions.

THE COMPETITION

General:

1. Military Service Academies, Reserve Officer Training Corps, and all post-high school graduates in any category will compete at the collegiate level. Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps, Civil Air Patrol, and all current high school students will compete at the high school level. If there are not enough teams in each category, the competition will be integrated, and all teams will compete against each other. This decision will be made NLT 4 weeks before the competition.
2. The Sweepstakes competition will determine the best overall team competing in the Armed and Unarmed categories. Both collegiate level and high school level will compete against each other in the Sweepstakes competition. Teams must compete in all three of the primary events in each category to be eligible (ie. must compete in three Armed categories to qualify for Armed Sweepstakes). 40% of the score for sweepstakes will be from Regulation, 30% from Exhibition, and 30% from Inspection.
3. Teams not competing for the Sweepstakes award may enter any combination of events. Additionally, individuals not attached to a specific program may enter solo and special exhibition events.
4. Units are authorized to have more than one team in each category (A and B Teams), however each team must consist of different cadets. The exception to this policy is if there is a need for a lastminute emergency fill-in. Each team will be scored and treated as a separate team, so their scores will not affect each other. If there are any questions or clarifications needed, let the NIDM CIC know NLT than 4 weeks out from the competition.
5. Teams with less than the minimum number will be disqualified from that event unless previously waived. If a last-minute injury or accident occurs and a team is unable to field the minimum size required, the Drill Meet CIC may authorize that team to march with a missing person.
6. Different commanders and marchers may be utilized in any category and event, and still be eligible for Sweepstakes.
7. Commanders should ensure they are loud enough to be heard by their team. All spectators should practice noise discipline at all times to avoid impairing other competitors. If a serious infraction of noise discipline occurs, the NIDM CIC will have the authority to penalize the teams responsible and allow second attempts by the teams affected.
8. Team/Flight Sgt, Guides, and/or Guidon Bearers are optional. For Regulation Drill and Inspection, these members must be incorporated into the team according to the proper drill manual if utilized. These members are considered part of the team for meeting the minimum number of marching members, grading by the judges, boundary violations, and timing.
9. The Cadet Honor Guard will determine the order of competition NLT two weeks prior to the competition and will be sent out to each participating team. Teams may request general drill times if it is to facilitate long-distance travel or any other hardship. Requests for times must be made to the Drill Meet CIC NLT three weeks prior to the competition.

10. The NIDM CIC will have the official time schedule with all updated times at the Commander's Call on the day of the competition. Schedules will also be handed out at the Commander's Call.

11. Disclaimer: This document maintains copyrighted materials in use for the National High School Drill Team Championships. Permission has been granted for this use by NHSDTC Event Manager, Sports Network International For event details, training materials, or other drill information, please contact SNI Competition Director Justin Gates at 800-327-9311 /drill@thenationals.net / <http://drill.thenationals.net>.

Categories of Competition:

1. Armed: Teams With Arms (M-1, M1903, M-14, or equivalent). This includes teams drilling with mock weapons.
2. Unarmed: Teams Without Arms

Trophies:

- 1) Sweepstakes Trophy - Teams With Arms (**Traveling trophy**). This trophy is approximately 24"x44" and consists of a walnut frame with a chromed M-1 rifle and nameplates on a blue velvet background. It is furnished by the Academy Association of Graduates. (SHIPPING CASE PROVIDED)
- 2) Sweepstakes Trophy - Teams Without Arms, (**Traveling trophy**). This trophy is approximately 40" tall with a 14" square walnut base. It is sponsored by the Academy Association of Graduates.

Individual Trophy/Medal Breakdown for each Category:

- 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place Inspection (Armed and Unarmed) = 6 Trophies
- 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place Regulation (Armed and Unarmed) = 6 Trophies
 - 1st place Outstanding Commander (Armed and Unarmed) = 2 Trophies
- 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place Exhibition (Armed and Unarmed) = 6 Trophies
- 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place Color Guard (Armed) = 3 Trophies
- 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place Special Exhibition (Armed and Unarmed) = 6 Trophies
- 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place Individual Exhibition Drill (Armed) = 3 Medals
- 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place Regulation Drill Down = 3 Medals

Weapons:

1. Weapons to be used in the Team with Arms competition will be rifles comparable in size and weight to the M-1, M-14, or Springfield M1903.
2. No penalty points will be assessed for demilitarized weapons. If the bolts are inoperable, the team will execute a modified "Inspection Arms." The command of recovery will be either "PORT ARMS" or "READY, PORT ARMS" before proceeding. This procedure will be followed during both Inspection and Regulation Drill.
3. The commander may use a saber, sword, or rifle. The use of a saber, sword, or rifle by the commander adds the responsibility of using the item correctly in accordance with the proper drill manual. Any failure to use one of these items correctly will result in a point deduction. If the commander carries a saber or sword, the use of a scabbard and any associated equipment is required.

Safety:

1. Weapons used by teams will be under the control of the team commanders. Any compromise of security will result in disqualification from all competition phases of the drill meet.
2. In case a weapon or prop breaks during any exhibition event, a designated person may bring a replacement onto the drill area and exchange it. However, there cannot be any delay in the flow of the drill, and the timekeepers will not stop the clocks.
3. Fixed bayonets as a special effect during the competition must be approved by NIDM staff on the day of the competition. This is only approved for post-high school competitors.
4. Props need to be approved by NIDM staff on or before the day of the competition before the event.
5. **Neither blank nor live ammunition will be used.** The use of ammunition or other pyrotechnic devices will result in disqualification of the unit from all events.

JUDGING

1. All judges will be officers or noncommissioned officers of the United States Armed Forces or members of the USAFA Cadet Honor Guard.
2. The number of judges for each event is as follows:
 - a. Inspection
 - 4 judges (1 Head Judge, 3 Inspection Judges)
 - b. Regulation Drill
 - 3 judges (1 Head Judge, 2 Field Judge)
 - c. Exhibition Drill
 - 3 judges (1 Head Judge, 2 Field Judge)
 - d. Individual Exhibition Drill-3 judges (1 Head Judge, 2 Field Judge)
 - e. Special Exhibition Drill
 - 2-3 judges (1 Head Judge, 1-2 Field Judge)
 - f. Color Guard
 - judges (1 Head Judge, 2 Field Judge)
 - g. Drill Down
 - All available judges (1 Head Judge, Minimum 8 Field Judge)
3. Head judges, inspecting judges, and the NIDM CIC are authorized to deduct points for uniform discrepancies.
4. Official time and scorekeepers will be members of the USAFA Cadet Honor Guard.
5. A specific judging criterion is located in each event description.
6. **The decisions of the Head Judges are final.**

Ties:

1. A tie is defined as two or more teams ending with the same point values in any particular event, up to, and including the second decimal place. (E.g., 123.45)
2. Single-Event Ties will be settled first
3. Sweepstakes Ties will be settled second 4. Outstanding Commander Ties will be settled last.

Protest Procedures:

In the event of a protest, all available instructors at the time of the protest will discuss the protest together with the judge and NIDM staff. All protests will be handled professionally and appropriately.

Noise:

Teams on the drill pad will remain quiet until they have exited the drill area, unless otherwise vital to drill execution. Supporters are allowed to cheer as loud as they want, and it is the duty of the commander to project his/her voice so that his/her team can hear the commands.

SWEEPSTAKES

1. A team must compete in the following events to be eligible for the Sweepstakes Award: Inspection, Team Regulation Drill, and Team Exhibition Drill.
2. The winners of the Sweepstakes Award will be determined by the weighted totals from Inspection, Team Regulation Drill, and Team Exhibition Drill. All collegiate and high school teams are eligible for the Sweepstakes award.
3. All secondary and additional events will not be included in the Sweepstakes Award total.
4. Teams that do not compete in all three primary events, or those that are disqualified from any of these four events, will not be eligible for the Sweepstakes award.
5. Minimum marching team size is 9 members plus a commander. The judges will consider the commander as well as the other team members in determining violations of time limits and boundaries.

6. All competing teams must have a commander to be eligible for the Sweepstakes award. The commander will be able to affect the beginning time, ending time, and boundary violations.
7. There is no limit on the number of teams a school can enter into each of the Sweepstakes competitions (Armed and Unarmed). Each team will compete individually for the Sweepstakes award. However, due to scheduling constraints, USAFA NIDM Staff reserves the right to limit schools to 2 teams per Sweepstakes competition, in order to accommodate more diverse competition. Units will be notified NLT 4 weeks prior if they are affected.

Sweepstakes Agreement:

Participation in the National Invitational Drill Meet means compliance with the following terms in regard to the Sweepstakes competition:

1. If a school wins a Sweepstakes trophy, that school is responsible for ensuring that trophy returns IN TIME for the next NIDM. This can be done either by:
 - a. Bringing the trophy with the team for the next competition
 - b. Shipping the trophy
 - c. Any other way specified by NIDM staff in order to meet NIDM needs
2. Any damage done to a Sweepstakes trophy while in the school's care, to include while shipping, will be taken care of at the expense of that school. NIDM staff MUST be notified of damage done BEFORE any action is taken. Schools are not to make any adjustments or alterations to the trophies.

Outstanding Commander Award:

1. The Outstanding Commander Award is awarded to the best commanders in both the Team With Arms and Team Without Arms categories.
2. The outstanding commander only must command the regulation drill phase, however, the tie breaker for this category will be determined by the performance of the inspection commander.
3. Judging criteria will be explained in the following event descriptions.

INSPECTION

1. Inspection will be held in the designated inspection area and will last for approximately 10 minutes.
2. Teams will be inspected with the same weapons or props that they will use for all four primary events in order to be eligible for the Sweepstakes competition.
3. All teams must enter the drill field as prescribed in Appendix 3. To allow fairness to all teams, **spectators will not be allowed in the inspection area**.
4. All team members **must wear a name tag, rank, and any ribbons earned**. Cadets not wearing anything on their uniform will **receive 2 demerits** during inspection. Cadets may take them off in between inspection and regulation if it disrupts their drill. Marine Corp JROTC units are not required to wear nametags.
5. The team commander will report to the event judging table 5 minutes prior to the scheduled performance time to inform the head judge his/her team is ready to perform, and to receive any instruction. After reporting in to the head judge, the commander will return to their team. The commander will form the team up just outside the inspection area and await the prescribed time to enter the pad (Head Judge Instructions on when to enter supersede previously scheduled times.) At the assigned time, the team commander will march the formation onto the pad. The formation will be centered on the commander. The commander will halt the formation centered on the head judge. The commander will be centered and six paces from the head judge. The commander will then prepare his/her team for inspection according to the proper drill manual. After the team is formed and aligned, the commander will center him/herself on the head judge, salute, and formally report in using the following format:

“Sir/Ma’am, ‘team name’ is prepared for the inspection phase of competition.”

Any variation from the reporting procedures to include (but not limited to) incorrect (non-verbatim) reporting statements, misalignment of the formation, or tardiness will result in point deductions.

6. When the head judge has returned the salute, the commander will drop their own and the inspection will begin. The head judge will first inspect the team commander. Once that has been completed the head judge will inspect the first rank while the other field judges will inspect subsequent ranks. The commander will NOT follow the head judge during the inspection unless told otherwise by the head judge.
7. If a member of the drill team is armed, as soon as the judge arrives in front of each individual member, that member will independently execute an “inspection arms” or modified inspection arms if the weapon’s bolt is demilitarized and will not open. As soon as the judge moves on from inspecting that individual, they will immediately, return to the position of “order arms.”

8. The commander will re-form the team at the end of the inspection according to the proper drill manual and then a formal report-out is required as follows: the commander will center his/herself on the head judge in front of the team, salute, and say the following:

“Sir/Ma’am, ‘team name’ has completed the inspection phase of competition and requests permission to exit the inspection pad.”

After the head judge has returned the salute, the commander will drop their own and march the team off the inspection pad using the proper drill manual. Any variation from these reporting procedures to include (but not limited to) incorrect (non-verbatim) reporting statement, misalignment of the formation, or tardiness will result in point deductions.

Area of Drill:

1. The field for Inspection will be 36x36 feet. The boundaries will be visibly marked. Point deductions will be assessed for any boundary violations. A boundary violation is defined as any team member stepping on or over the pad boundaries.
2. The team will wait outside of the boundaries prior to the inspection as indicated in Appendix 3.
3. The team will be moved entirely off of the field after the head judge dismisses the team.

Judging:

1. The head judge will evaluate the commander as well as the team as a whole. There will be an inspecting judge for each rank. Inspecting judges are not authorized to touch team members. However, the judges are authorized to take and inspect weapons.
2. The team will be judged from the time the team marches onto the field until the team is completely off the field.
3. Questions asked by the judges will cover (but are not limited to) uniforms, drill, pertinent weapon information, national leadership with an emphasis on the chain of command, current events, military knowledge, and information about each team’s respective school. The purpose of the questioning is to evaluate awareness and military bearing of the individual team members. Answers should be given in a military manner representative of each team’s particular service. “Sounding off” is highly suggested; however, this does not equate to disrespectful screaming.
4. Judging criteria will also include, but are not limited to, the condition of the weapons used (i.e. free of rust/corrosion, clean slings, and polished wood), the condition and appearance of each uniform (i.e. shined chrome/brass, ironed shirts and pants, shined shoes, and serviceability of overall uniform), personal appearance (to include haircut and shave).

TEAM REGULATION DRILL

General:

1. Regulation Drill will be performed on the Regulation Drill Field.
2. Each team will execute the sequence of movements specified in Appendix 5 or Appendix 6 for their category. These are the only movements allowed. Teams must use the equivalent commands specified in their respective manuals. There will be 10 penalty points assessed for each movement added, omitted, or out of sequence. Skipping a command will not result in the rest of the sequence being void. For example, if a commander misses a sequence of “dress right, dress” and “ready, front” but then continues on correctly, only 20 points will be deducted.
3. The team commander may not use notes or receive coaching while his/her team is on the field, to include cadence called from off of the field. Any team found in violation will be disqualified from Regulation Drill.
4. All teams must enter the drill field from the head judge's right as prescribed in Appendix 3.
5. The team commander will halt the team just outside the drill pad and will walk up to the event judging table to inform the head judge his/her team is ready to perform, and to receive any instruction. After reporting to the head judge area, the commander will return to their team. Head judge instructions on when to enter the drill pad supersede previously scheduled times. At the assigned time, the team commander will march the formation onto the pad. The formation will be centered on the commander. The commander will halt the formation centered and five paces from the head judge. The commander will present arms and report in using the following reporting statement:

“Sir/Ma’am, ‘team name’ is prepared for the regulation phase of competition.”

After the head judge returns the salute, the commander will execute an “order arms”, about face, and proceed with the regulation drill card. To report out the commander will halt the formation, centered and five paces from the head judge, execute a present arms and say the following:

“Sir/Ma’am, ‘team name’ has completed the regulation phase of competition and requests permission to exit the drill pad.”

Any variation from the reporting procedures to include (but not limited to) incorrect (non-verbatim) reporting statement, misalignment of the formation, or tardiness will result in point deductions.

6. Regulation Drill Teams (9 - 16 members plus a commander) may be entered from each unit in both With and Without Arms categories. There is a maximum team size of 16 members due to boundary restrictions and the Regulation Drill sequence.

Timing:

1. Team With Arms: 5 to 10 minutes.
2. Team Without Arms: 5 to 10 minutes.
3. Penalties will be assessed for failure to meet specified time requirements.
4. The timing will begin when the first team member crosses the Regulation Drill boundary line.
5. Timing will end when the last member of the team crosses the Regulation Drill boundary line.

Area of Drill:

1. The field for Regulation Drill will be 110x110 feet. The boundaries will be visibly marked. Point deductions will be assessed for any boundary violations. A boundary violation is defined as: any team member stepping on or over the pad boundaries.

Judging:

1. Judging will be done by three judges. One judge will be designated as the head judge and will be in the front at drill center. One timekeeper will keep time and act as an aid to the head judge. Two judges will be stationed along the boundaries and will circulate about the field to ensure a clear view of the team.
2. The judges will consider overall military bearing, precision of movements, dress, cover, intervals, and hesitation/anticipation of commands.
3. The commander will be judged on discipline, report-in/out, distinctness of commands, correct position relative to the team, control of the team and precision of movements.
4. Penalties will be assessed for dropped weapons and uniform articles.

TEAM EXHIBITION DRILL**General:**

1. Exhibition Drill will be performed on the Exhibition Drill Field.
2. This event will be limited only by the ingenuity of the participating teams.
3. The team commander may not use notes or receive coaching while his/her team is on the field, to include cadence called from off of the field. Any team found in violation will be disqualified from this event.

4. Teams are permitted to enter the field from any direction they choose; however, they must be facing the head judge when they report-in/out. Should the team choose to enter the drill pad from a location which requires the team to stand inside another drill pad, the team commander must request permission from the head judge of the affected drill pad to temporarily use the space. In this scenario, the team's position cannot conflict with operations of the affected drill pad.
5. The team commander will bring the team onto the Exhibition Drill Field when signaled by the head judge.
6. Lights, fireworks, or pyrotechnics are expressly prohibited. Music or other means of keeping cadence are not allowed.
7. Dancing is prohibited. Dancing during Exhibition Drill is seen as highly unprofessional and a total loss of military bearing. It will receive the markings deemed appropriate.
8. Exhibition Drill Teams (9 members minimum plus a commander) may be entered from each unit in both With and Without Arms categories. There is no maximum team size.

Timing:

1. Team With Arms: 5 to 10 minutes.
2. Team Without Arms: 5 to 10 minutes.
3. Penalties will be assessed for failure to meet specified time requirements
4. The timing will begin when the first team member crosses the Exhibition Drill boundary line.
5. Timing will end when the last member of the team crosses the Exhibition Drill boundary line.

Area of Drill:

1. The exhibition field will be 120x120 feet. The boundaries will be visibly marked. Point deductions will be assessed for any boundary violations. A boundary violation is defined as: any team member stepping on or over the pad boundaries.
2. Teams may not cross boundaries unless entering or leaving the field. However, individuals may enter the field to replace weapons broken during the drill as needed.

Judging:

1. Judging will be done by 3 judges. One judge will be designated as the head judge and will be in the front at drill center. Two judges will be stationed along the boundaries and will circulate about the field to ensure a clear view of the team.
2. The judges will consider use of the field, originality of the exhibition sequence, and the variety of movements. In addition, the judges will consider the degree of difficulty of both movement and arrangement of formation used, dress and cover, overall precision, timing, and military bearing.
3. Penalties will be assessed for dropped weapons and uniform articles

COLOR GUARD

General:

1. Color Guard competition will NOT count towards competition for Sweepstakes. Color Guard will be done in the Color Guard Drill Area.
2. Each team will execute the sequence of movements specified in Appendix 4. These are the only movements allowed. Teams must use the equivalent commands specified in their respective drill manuals. There will be 10 penalty points assessed for each movement added, omitted, or out of sequence. There will be a member of the USAFA Cadet Honor Guard assigned with Appendix 4 whose sole purpose is to identify any commands given incorrectly or out of sequence.
3. The Color Guard commander may not use notes or receive coaching while their team is on the field. Any team found in violation will be disqualified from this event.
4. The Color Guard commander will bring the team onto the Color Guard Drill Area when signaled by the Head Judge. Uncasing the colors WILL be graded and must be executed 6 paces away and centered from the head judge.
 - CASING AND UPCASING THE COLORS: To case and uncase the Colors, the Color guard forms in a line formation with the cased Colors at the Carry Position. The National Color bearer (NCB) commands “Sling, ARMS”. The Color guards immediately adjust their slings and assume Sling Arms. The NCB commands “POST”. The Color guards face to the Half Left (Right) in marching, take four steps, halt, and execute About Face. The NCB then directs “UNCASE THE COLORS”. The Color bearers lower the Colors. The two guards then move forward and uncase the Colors. The Color bearers unfurl and immediately return the Colors to

the Carry (Order) Position. While the Colors are being unfurled, the guards fold the cases and secure them in their left hand. When the Colors are in the Carry Position, the NCB commands “Present, ARMS”. The Color guards and the organizational Color Salute. The NCB then commands “Order, ARMS”, and then commands “POST”. On the command of execution POST, the Color guards move to the rear of the formation and place the folded canvas cases inside the cartridge belts (center rear of the back) of the Color bearers. The Color guards then move back to assume their original positions, adjust their slings, and return to Right Shoulder Arms.

5. For the report in the commander will say the following with the following format:
“Sir/Ma’am, ‘team name’ is prepared for the color guard phase of competition.”

The head judge will be positioned according to Appendix 3.

6. Failure to report-in/out will result in a penalty of 20 points.
7. Two Color Guards (4 - 8 members) from each unit are allowed to enter this competition. If there is space available, more teams can be added.

Timing:

1. Maximum time limit of 10 minutes, including the inspection.
2. A 1-point penalty for each second over the time limit will be assessed. (Maximum of 50 points)
3. Timing will begin when the first team member crosses the Color Guard Drill Area boundary line.
4. Timing will end when the team exits the drill pad and dismisses.

Area of Drill:

1. The Color Guard Drill Area will measure 60x60 feet, visibly marked. There is a 10- point penalty for each command that takes a member of the team out of bounds. Boundary violations include stepping on or over the lines.
2. The “Colors Reverse” (and subsequent “Forward March”) are the movements teams will use to exit the drill area.

Judging:

1. Judging will be done by three judges. One judge will be designated as the head judge and will be in the front at drill center. Two judges will be stationed along the boundaries and will circulate about the field to ensure a clear view of the team.
2. The judges will consider overall military bearing, precision of movements, dress, cover, interval, and hesitation/anticipation of commands.
3. Penalties for dropped objects include 10 points for each weapon, 10 points for dropped unit colors, and 5 points for each uniform item. See penalty section for further details.
4. If the U.S. Colors are dropped, touch the ground at any point during the competition, or are carried lower than the Unit Colors, the Color Guard team **WILL** be disqualified.

INDIVIDUAL ARMED EXHIBITION DRILL

General:

1. Individual Exhibition Drill will not count towards competition for Sweepstakes. Individual Exhibition Drill will be done on the Individual Exhibition Drill Area.
2. This event will be limited only by the ingenuity of the participating individual.
3. The individuals may not receive coaching while on the field. Any team found in violation will be disqualified from this event.
4. Individuals are permitted to enter the field from any direction they choose; however, they must be facing front when they report-in/out.
5. The individual will enter the Individual Exhibition Drill Area when signaled by the head judge.
6. Lights, fireworks, and pyrotechnics are expressly prohibited. Music or other means of keeping cadence will not be allowed.
7. Five members from each unit are allowed to enter this competition. If there is space available, more team members can be added.
8. To be eligible for this competition, the Individual Exhibition Driller must use a weapon accepted for use in a Team With Arms. Members from a Team Without Arms may compete if they use a weapon accepted for use in a Team With Arms category.

Timing:

1. 2 to 4 minutes.
2. Penalties will be assessed for failure to meet specified time requirements.

3. Timing will begin when the individual crosses the Individual Exhibition Drill boundary line.
4. Timing will end when the individual crosses the Individual Exhibition Drill boundary line after report-out.

Area of Drill:

1. The Individual Exhibition Drill Area will measure 30x30 feet, visibly marked. Point deductions will be assessed for any boundary violations. A boundary violation is defined as: the individual driller stepping on or over the pad boundaries.
2. Individuals may not cross boundaries unless entering or leaving the field. However, individuals may enter the field to replace weapons broken during the drill.

Judging:

1. Judging will be done by at least one head judge and one assistant judge
2. The judge will consider originality of the exhibition sequence, variety of movements, degree of difficulty of movements, overall precision, and military bearing.
3. Penalties will be assessed for dropped weapons and uniform articles.
4. The judge may award the full amount of points possible only if a performance is free of obvious errors.

SPECIAL EXHIBITION DRILL

General:

1. In order to participate in Special unarmed and armed exhibition drill there must be between 2-6 team members, to include the commander (Ex: tandem, quads, etc. are in this category).
2. Special Exhibition Drill will not count towards competition for Sweepstakes. Special Exhibition Drill will be done on the Special Exhibition Drill Area.
3. This event will be limited only by the ingenuity of the participating teams.
4. The team may not use notes or receive coaching while it is on the field. Any team found in violation will be disqualified from this event.
5. Teams are permitted to enter the field from any direction they choose; however, they must be facing front when they report-in and report-out.
6. The team will enter the Special Exhibition Drill Area when signaled by the head judge.

7. During the initial phase of the sequence, the team must report-in with a proper salute and an appropriate reporting statement. To report out the commander will present arms and request permission to leave the drill pad.
8. Failure to report-in or report-out will result in a penalty.
9. Lights, fireworks, or pyrotechnics are expressly prohibited. Music or other means of keeping cadence, other than the commander will not be allowed.
10. To be eligible for this competition, the Armed Special Exhibition team must use a weapon accepted for use in a Team with Arms category or a saber.
 - a. Unarmed Special Exhibition teams **do not need** to use a weapon.

Timing:

1. 2 to 6 minutes.
2. Penalties will be assessed for failure to meet specified time requirements
3. Timing will begin when the first team member crosses the Special Exhibition Drill Area boundary line. Timing will end when the last member of the team crosses the Special Exhibition Drill Area boundary line.

Area of Drill:

1. The Special Exhibition Drill Area will measure 30x30 feet, visibly marked. Point deductions will be assessed for any boundary violations. A boundary violation is defined as: any team member stepping on or over the pad boundaries.
2. Teams may not cross boundaries unless entering or leaving the field. However, individuals may enter the field to replace weapons broken during the drill.

Judging:

1. Judging will be done by at least one judge and one assistant judge.
2. The judge will consider the use of the field, originality of the exhibition sequence, and the variety of movements. In addition, the judge will consider the degree of difficulty of movements and arrangement of formations used, dress and cover, overall precision, timing, and military bearing.
3. Penalties will be assessed for dropped weapons and uniform articles.

4. The judge may award the full amount of points possible only if a performance is free of obvious errors.

REGULATION DRILL DOWN

General:

1. A final Armed/Unarmed Drill Down competition will be held at the conclusion of the general competition.
2. There will **NOT** be small pools of Drill Down competitions throughout the Drill Meet like previous years. There is no limit to the number of times individuals may participate in the drill down, every competitor is encouraged to compete.
3. Competitors will meet on the Exhibition Drill Field to compete. Commands for drill will be given by the Head Judge.

Judging:

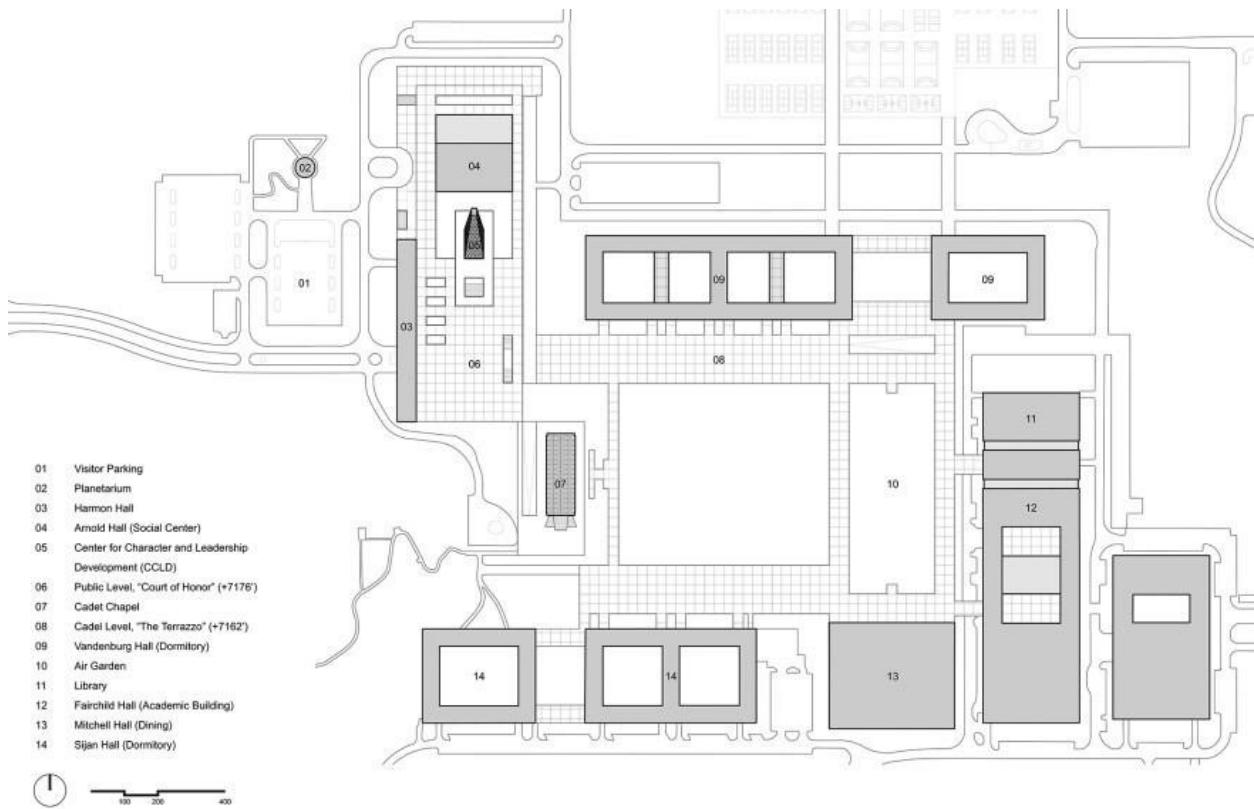
1. Minimum Eight judges (1 Head Judge, 7 Field Judges) will eliminate competitors until a winner is determined.
2. Judges will consider military bearing, precision of movements, timing or delay in movements, and heel placement.
3. Once an individual makes a movement they must remain at that position. Any individual who moves without a command from the head judge will be automatically eliminated.
4. If a team member is tapped by a judge, then he/she is eliminated. The eliminated person will not argue with the judges and will exit the field to the rear of the formation in a military manner.

AWARDS CEREMONY

After the Drill Down, members from the USAFA Cadet Honor Guard will perform then set up for the Awards Ceremony. This awards ceremony will be their formal/ informal school uniforms.

It is encouraged that, when receiving an award, the recipient will take the award, shake the presenter's hand, and then salute the presenter. When a recipient receives an award, their unit will call present arms and then go to order after the recipient is done receiving the award.

Appendix 1: Map of the Cadet Area



Appendix 2: Individual Price List

(Prices are estimated only, final prices will be on the registration form)

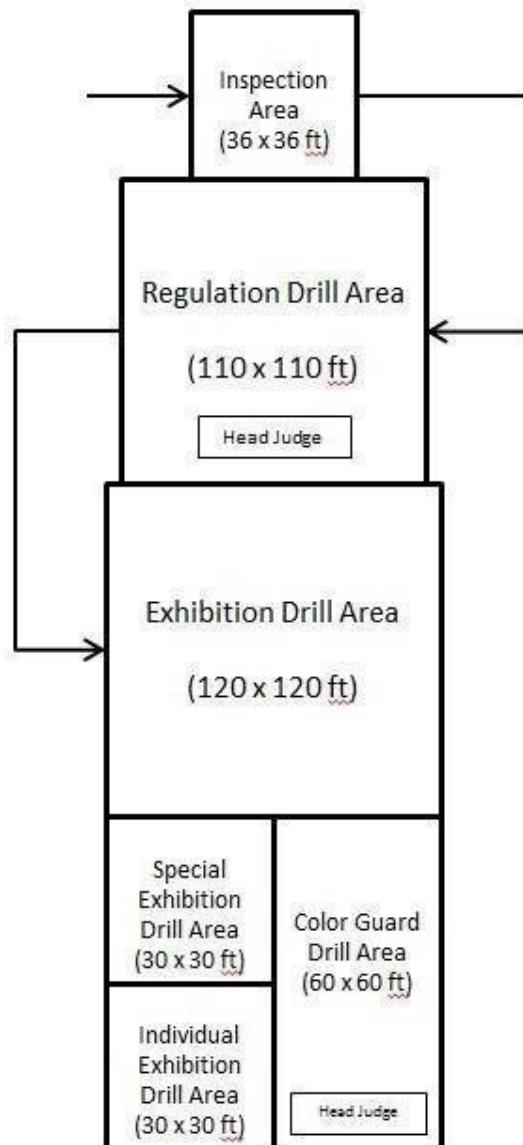
Primary Events:

Inspection Unarmed Regulation Drill	<u>\$35</u>
Inspection Armed Regulation Drill.	<u>\$35</u>
Unarmed Team Regulation Drill.	<u>\$35</u>
Armed Team Regulation Drill.	<u>\$35</u>
Unarmed Team Exhibition Drill.	<u>\$35</u>
Armed Team Exhibition Drill.	<u>\$35</u>
<u>Secondary Events:</u>	
Special Armed Exhibition Drill (2-6 competitors)	<u>\$10</u>
Special Unarmed Exhibition Drill (2-6 competitors)	<u>\$10</u>
Color Guard.	<u>\$10</u>
Individual Armed Exhibition Drill.	<u>\$10</u>

Other Expenses:

On-Base Meals (Day of Competition) Refer to team registration form. THESE ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Appendix 3: Tentative Map of Drill Field and Alternate Weather Course of Action



Alternate Weather Course of Action:

While we plan to have the competition on USAFA's Terazzo, Colorado's weather may not be accommodating to a competitive environment. In case of harsh weather conditions, to include snow, rain, or potentially extreme wind, we will instead move the competition to the Holiday Athletic Center. The Holiday Athletic Center is a large indoor building normally used for athletics and does contain turf. There will be a weather call no later than 2 weeks from the competition, and all teams will be notified of any changes.

Appendix 4: COLOR GUARD DRILL SEQUENCE

Total Points-300

Head Judge - #1

A 5-second pause must be maintained after executing BOLD UPPERCASE HIGHLIGHTED COMMANDS

Color Guard Sequence	Point Range	Judge's Score	
March onto drill floor CENTER on HJ judge 6 paces away			
1. Uncase Colors 1	0-50		
2. Report In (VERBAL)	0-20		
3. Colors Reverse March (MC/Counter March)	0-10		
4. Left Wheel March (MC/Left Turn)	0-10		
5. Colors Reverse March (MC/Counter March)	0-10		
5a. Color Guard Halt			
6. Mark Time, March (5 seconds)	0-10		
7. COLOR GUARD, HALT			
8. Order Colors	0-10		
9. Parade Rest	0-10		
10. Colors Guard, Attention	0-10		
11. CARRY COLORS	0-10		
11a. Forward March			
12. Right Wheel March (MC/Right Turn)	0-10		
13. Right Wheel March (MC/Right Turn)	0-10		
14. Colors Reverse March (MC/Counter March)	0-10		
15. Eyes Right	0-10		
16. Ready Front	0-10		
17. Left Wheel March (MC/Left Turn)	0-10		
18. Left Wheel March (MC/Left Turn)	0-10		
19. Left Wheel March (MC/Left Turn)	0-10		
20. Color Guard, Halt	0-10		
21. Report Out (VERBAL)	0-20		
OVERALL TECHNICAL SCORE	0-20		
OVERALL PRECISION SCORE	0-20		

1 Uncase Colors - scoring for all of the movements required to correctly uncase the colors - specific items are listed within the SOP.

NOTE: Marching to move the CG to the judge for verbal **Report In** AND to leave the drill floor after verbal **Report Out** are not scored individually, however may be included in the judges overall precision and technical score. **LOOK SHARP at ALL TIMES!**

PENALTIES

1. Boundary Violations:

Occurrences @ 10 points per = _____

2. Incorrect Commands:

Occurrences @ 5 points per = _____

3. Pause Violations:

Occurrences @ 5 points per = _____

4. Uneven/Improper Cadence:
Minor (-20 pts.) OR Major (-50 pts.)

SPECIFY DEDUCTION BELOW = _____

5. Uniform Violations:
Minor (-20 pts.) OR Major (-50 pts.)

SPECIFY DEDUCTION BELOW

PENALTY TOTAL = _____

Page Total

Teams MUST add "Forward March" Command after all wheels / reverses.

Note: Timing stops when the last member of the team crosses the boundary line.

THIS IS THE LIST OF COMMANDS. Commands will be given as required by respective service manuals. HOWEVER, COMMANDS WILL NOT BE ADDED IN BETWEEN. THERE IS ENOUGH ROOM GIVEN IN THE DRILL AREA TO PERFORM THESE MANEUVERS WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMMANDS.

Appendix 5: TEAMS WITHOUT ARMS-REGULATION DRILL SEQUENCE

(Start at Parade Rest off the Drill Pad)

BOLD UPPERCASE GREYED COMMANDS require a 5-second pause

Total points = 359	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	POOR	Avg	EXCEL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	POOR	Avg	EXCEL	
1. Forward March (ENTER)*											27. Normal Intvl. March (Extend March)										
2. Report In (VERBAL)											27a. Forward March (if req.)										
3. Parade Rest											28. Column Left March (AF-Fwd Mch)										
4. Attention											29. Mark Time March	Army & Air Force: 29. Change Step 30. Mark Time									
5. PRESENT ARMS											30a. PLATOON/FLIGHT HALT										
6. Order Arms											30b. Forward March										
7. COUNT OFF	Army Executes:										31. Column Left March (AF-Fwd Mch)										
8. Right Face											32. Change Step March										
9. Close March											32a. PLATOON/FLIGHT HALT										
10. Extend March											33. Column Left March (AF-Fwd Mch)										
11. Left Face											34. Column 1/2 Left March										
12. Open Ranks March (AF-Ready Fit)											35. Column 1/2 Left March										
13. CLOSE RANKS MARCH											36. To the Rear March (or Rear March)										
14. Left Step March / PLT/FGT HALT											37. To the Rear March (or Rear March)										
15. Left Face											37a. PLATOON/FLIGHT HALT										
16. Right Step March, (Plt/Flgt Halt)											37b. Forward March										
17. About Face											38. Eyes Right										
17a. Forward March											39. Ready Front										
18. Column Right March (AF-Fwd Mch)											40. Column Left March (AF-Fwd Mch)										
19. Column Right March (AF-Fwd Mch)											41. Half Step										
20. Column Right March (AF-Fwd Mch)											42. Forward March										
21. Left Flank March											43. Column Left March (AF-Fwd Mch)										
22. Right Flank March											44. Left Flank March										
22a. PLATOON/FLIGHT HALT											45. Right Flank March										
23. Column Left March (AF-Fwd Mch)											45a. PLATOON/FLIGHT HALT										
24. To the Rear, March (or Rear March)											46. Left Face										
25. To the Rear, March (or Rear March)											47. Report Out (VERBAL)										
26. Close Intvl. March (Close March)											47a. Depart the Drill Floor **										
26a. Forward March (if req.)																					

* Forward March (Enter): Enter the drill floor together in a military fashion, front/center the unit, 3 paces from HJ to C/CMDR, 3 paces from c/CDR to the unit.

**Cadet Commander will VERBALLY report out and then command the unit to depart the drill floor in a precision military fashion (floor departure is unscored).

Note: Timing stops when the last member of the team crosses the Regulation boundary line.
THIS IS THE LIST OF COMMANDS. Commands will be given as required by respective service manuals. **HOWEVER, COMMANDS WILL NOT BE ADDED IN BETWEEN.** THERE IS ENOUGH ROOM GIVEN IN THE DRILL AREA TO PERFORM THESE MANEUVERS WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMMANDS.

Appendix 6: TEAMS WITH ARMS-REGULATION DRILL SEQUENCE

(Start at Parade Rest off the Drill Pad)

BOLD UPPERCASE GREYED COMMANDS require a 5-second pause

Total points = 373	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	POOR	Avg	EXCEL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	POOR	Avg	EXCEL
1. Forward March (ENTER)																				
2. Inspection, Port, Order Arms																				
3. Report In (VERBAL)																				
4. Parade Rest																				
5. Attention																				
6.15-COUNT MANUAL ARMS**	4	8	12	16	20	24	28													
7. Count Off																				
8. Open Ranks																				
9. Close Ranks																				
10. Left Step, March/Platoon Halt																				
11. Left Face																				
12. Right Step March/ PLATOON HALT																				
13. About Face																				
14. Right Shoulder Arms																				
14a. Forward March																				
15. Column Right March (AF-Fwd Mch)																				
16. Column Right March (AF-Fwd Mch)																				
17. Column Right March (AF-Fwd Mch)																				
18. Left Flank March																				
19. Right Flank March																				
19a. PLATOON/FLIGHT HALT																				
20. Column Left March (AF-Fwd Mch)																				
21. To the Rear, March																				
22. To the Rear, March																				
23. Close Int. Mch (Close Mch) / Fwd Mch																				
24. Normal Int Mch (Close Mch) / Fwd Mch																				
24a. PLATOON/FLIGHT HALT																				
25. Port Arms																				
26. Column Left March (AF-Fwd)																				
27. Mark Time, March	Army & Air Force:																			
28. Change Step, March																				
28a. Forward March																				
29. Column Left March (AF-Fwd March)																				
30. Right Shoulder Arms																				
30a. PLATOON/FLIGHT HALT																				
31. Forward March																				
32. Column Left March (AF-Fwd March)																				
33. Column 1/2 Left March																				
34. Column 1/2 Left March																				
35. Rear March (or to the Rear March)																				
36. Rear March (or to the Rear March)																				
36a. PLATOON/FLIGHT HALT																				
37. Forward March																				
38. Eyes Right																				
39. Ready Front																				
40. Column Left March (AF-Fwd March)																				
41. Left Shoulder Arms																				
42. Column Left March (AF-Fwd March)																				
43. Left Flank March																				
44. Right Flank March																				
44a. PTN/FLGT HALT / Order Arms																				
45. Left Face																				
46. Report Out (VERBAL)																				
46a. Depart the Drill Floor ***																				

*Forward March (ENTER): Enter the drill floor together in a military fashion, front/center the unit 3 paces from HJ to C/CMRD & 3 paces from c/CMRD to the unit.

**15-Count Manual of Arms: consists of: *right shoulder, left shoulder, (port), present, order arms*. *Movements are executed at the standard military cadence.*

***Cadet Commander will VERBALLY report out and then command the unit to depart the drill floor in a precision military fashion (floor departure is unscored).

Note: Timing stops when the last member of the team crosses the Regulation boundary line.
 THIS IS THE LIST OF COMMANDS. Commands will be given as required by the respective service manuals. HOWEVER, COMMANDS WILL NOT BE ADDED IN BETWEEN. THERE IS ENOUGH ROOM GIVEN IN THE DRILL AREA TO PERFORM THESE MANEUVERS WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMMANDS.

Appendix 7: TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CALLS

TBD 10 April 2026

1600-1900: Team sign-in (Arnold Hall).

Saturday, 11 April 2026

0715-0745: Commander's Call

0745-0800: Opening Ceremony

0800: USAFA National Invitational Drill Meet begins.

1200-1300: Noon Break.

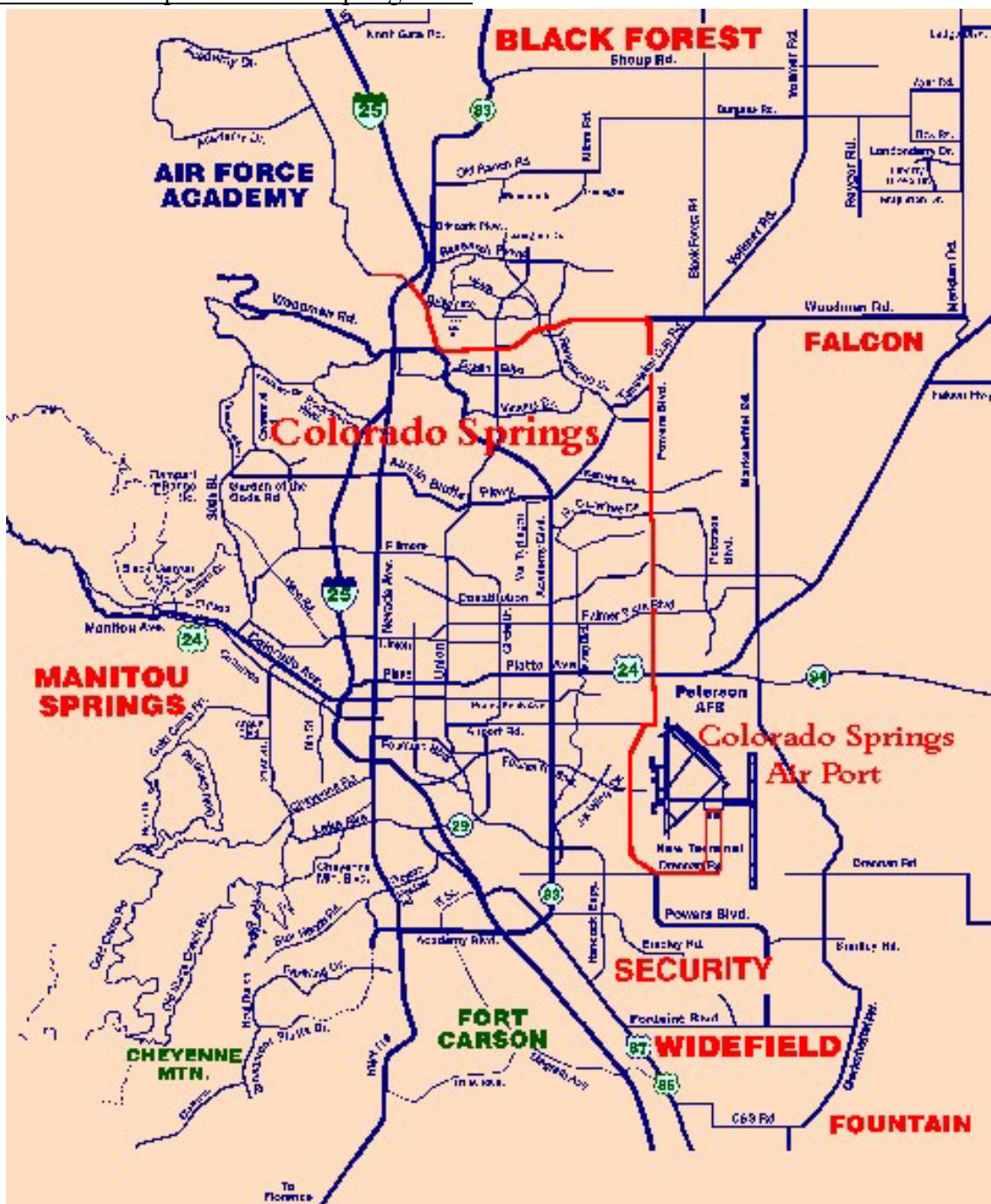
1430: USAFA National Invitational Drill Meet ends.

1500: USAFA Cadet Honor Guard Performs

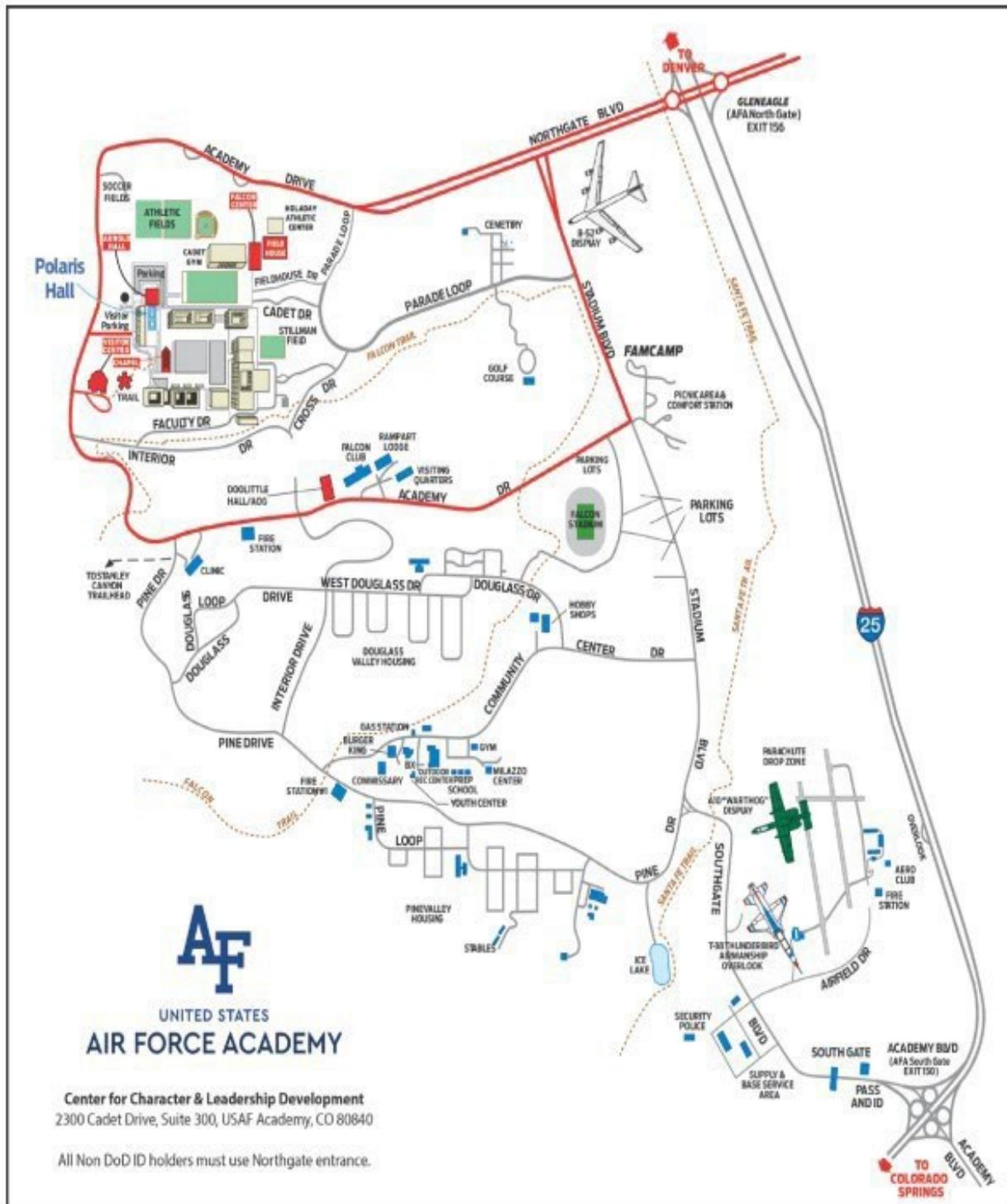
1530: Awards Ceremony and Trophy presentation.

****THESE TIMES ARE TENTATIVE AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE****

Appendix 8: Map of Colorado Springs Area



Appendix 9: Map of USAF Academy



Appendix 10: Local Hotels*

Residence Inn

9805 Federal Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80921

Reservations: (719) 388-9300

The Academy Hotel

8110 N Academy Blvd, Colorado Springs, CO 80920

Reservations: (719) 598-5770

Colorado Springs Marriott

5580 Tech Center Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80919

Reservations: (719) 260-1800

Hampton Inn

1307 Republic Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80921

Reservations: (719) 598-6911

Staybridge Suites

7130 Commerce Center Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80919

Reservations: (719) 590-7829

Comfort Suites

6450 Corporate Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80919

Reservations: (719) 262-9000

Drury Inn & Suites

1170 Interquest Pkwy, Colorado Springs, CO 80921 Reservations: (719) 598-2500

Great Wolf Lodge

9494 Federal Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80921

Reservations: (844) 553-9653

La Quinta

8155 N Academy Blvd, Colorado Springs, CO 80920

Reservations: (719) 888-6167

Motel 6

8280 Voyager Pkwy, Colorado Springs, CO 80920

Reservations: (719) 598-6700

* This is not a complete list of Hotels surrounding the academy.

Appendix 11: Vehicle Rental Agencies:

Denver International Airport:

Alamo 1-303-342-5500

Budget: 1-303-342-9001

Enterprise: 1-303-342-7350

Hertz: 1-800-277-5171

Colorado Springs Municipal Airport

Hertz: 1-719-596-1863

Budget: 1-719-597-1271

Alamo: 1-833-336-0429