

HATS OFF!

Good for you...

JSO Honor Guard Competition Team



l. to r. Ivan Pena (holding the cards), Joseph Collins, Charles Baerman, Matthew Bolan, Raniel "Ray" Ragasa, Geoffrey Dahlem and William Whitney.

... for winning 2nd place at a recent international contest in Washington, DC. Only the U.S. Capitol Police (comprised mostly of former members of the U.S. Army's "Old Guard" who post the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery) topped Jacksonville's finest who, clad in their immaculate navy and white uniforms, perfectly performed their drills.

The Sheriff's Office Honor Guard was in DC, participating in the annual observance of National Police Memorial Week, May 12-15. Of its 40 members, 37 went to the Capitol and participated in 15 separate events, rendering appropriate honors to our country's fallen law enforcement officers. Seven unit members – the competition team – distinguished themselves by winning

the 2nd place finisher's FOP Steve Young Award (named after a past National FOP President who died in 2003). The team competed against 18 other U.S. and Canadian teams in the International Honor Guard Competition held on May 14.

The competition, judged by active members of the President's "Old Guard" (U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Division) who guard the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, involved three phases:

Inspection – about 10 minutes, when each officer is scrutinized on every aspect of appearance – no lint, strings, creases, smudges on brass, scratches on belt.

Color presentation – four flags are presented, flanked by arms, and the officers march in unison, abreast, maintain a straight line (even with turning curve), post colors, salute colors of nation, then march out.

Choreographed performance – a patriotic rendering, flag-folding ritual (while team leader Ivan Pena recited the

reasons for each fold), taps blown by Officer William Whitney, team marched off in close order drill, up and down eight steps with silent orders, very difficult to do.

This outstanding accomplishment is a tribute to the expertise of Officer Pena, former Marine drill instructor at Parris Island, as well as the remarkable discipline of each team member. They practiced three hours a week, on and off duty, which did not include time spent preparing uniforms.

While this year's international ranking is the highest one achieved to date, last year the team placed fifth. In an Orlando regional competition a few years ago, the team came in first in all five categories.

Lt. Gene Dubberly is JSO Honor Guard Commanding Officer and Sgt. Matt Clements is Team Coordinator in command of the team. Team members are: Charles Baerman, Matthew J. Bolan, Joseph P. Collins, Geoffrey L. Dahlem, Ivan Pena, Rainiel J. Ragasa and William B. Whitney.



Note: Being a member of the JSO Honor Guard is considered a great honor. To be eligible to volunteer, officers must be on the force at least two years and have no prior or pending disciplinary action, submit an application and resume, and successfully complete an oral interview. In addition to their regular duties as officers, detectives, sergeants and lieutenants, they practice monthly and participate as needed in the community – for ceremonies, to pay honor to those who give their lives, to widows and retirees – a very important role. When a JSO member dies in the line of duty, a member of the Honor Guard is with the body from the time of death until it is buried, a tradition known as the Black Watch.

Meaning of Folding the American Flag

The flag-folding ceremony represents the same religious principles on which our great country was originally founded. The portion of the flag denoting honor is the canton of blue containing the stars representing states our veterans served in uniform. The canton field of blue dresses from left to right and is inverted only when draped as a pall on the casket of a veteran who has served our country honorably in uniform.

In the Armed Forces of the United States, at the ceremony of retreat the flag is lowered, folded in a triangle fold and kept under watch throughout the night as a tribute to our nation's honored dead. The next morning it is brought out and, at the ceremony of reveille, run aloft as a symbol of our belief in the resurrection of the body.

The first fold of our flag is a symbol of life.

The second fold is a symbol of our belief in the eternal life.

The third fold is made in honor and remembrance of the veteran departing our ranks and who gave a portion of life for the defense of our country to attain peace throughout the world.

The fourth fold represents our weaker nature; for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in times of war for His divine guidance.

The fifth fold is a tribute to our country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right, but it is still our country, right or wrong."

The sixth fold is for where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that we pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The seventh fold is a tribute to our Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that we

protect our country and our flag against all enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of our republic.

The eighth fold is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day, and to honor our mother for whom it flies on Mother's Day.

The ninth fold is a tribute to womanhood, for it has been through their faith, love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great has been molded.

The tenth fold is a tribute to father, for he, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since he or she was first born.

The eleventh fold, in the eyes of Hebrew citizens, represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon and glorifies, in their eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The twelfth fold, in the eyes of a Christian citizen, represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, God the Father, the Son and Holy Ghost.

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