

Miyamura JROTC cadets travel to Texas for first competition

Written by By Molly Ann Howell Sun Correspondent
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According to their website, the U.S. Army Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps is one of the "largest character development and citizenship program for youth in the world." JROTC'S mission is "to motivate young people to be better citizens."

The program "instills in students in United States secondary educational institutions the value of citizenship, service to the United States, and personal responsibility and a sense of accomplishment."

The program teaches high school students first aid, how to study better, and other life skills.

Miyamura High School recently opened their own chapter of the program in August, and over the weekend of Jan. 20 the cadets attended their first drill competition in San Antonio, Texas.

Instructor Major Royal Atwood and the team of 14 cadets drove 15 hours to the competition, but Atwood said it was all worth it once they got to the convention center where the 2023 Brigade Drill Team Championship was held.

"My favorite part was the look on the cadets' faces when they arrived at the convention center," Atwood said. "It was almost hard to grab their attention because it was very overwhelming [for them]. For most of them it was the first time they'd been out of the [Gallup] area."

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The results of the competition were not available at press time, but Atwood said this first competition wasn't about winning or losing.

"This is the first competition for these kids. The intent was to initiate them into the JROTC drill culture, ... to indoctrinate them [into the culture], and then get them excited about future drill meets [and] how to improve their performance," Atwood said.

One of the cadets, Dominique Nez, said that the competition was a great learning experience for her.

"I liked meeting new people and seeing how they did their drill," she said.

Faith Lujan is the Cadet Captain for the team. She also said she appreciated the learning experience.

"The judges were kind enough to tell me what to do," Lujan said.

Besides competing, the cadets also went shopping and saw the San Antonio Riverwalk.

Atwood said that this competition was a major learning curve for the cadets, but that he's very proud of what they accomplished regardless of the results.

"I'm just really proud of the kids. They really came out of their comfort zones to do this," Atwood said.

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