

OSU Air Force ROTC Alumni Drill Team History: 1949 to 2017



Cadet Leslie Curry Accepts 1st Place Sweepstakes Trophy for the Silver Talon Full Armed Team at SCIDM 2005, edging out the Air Force Academy, which placed second.

**"All for one and one for all, united we stand, divided we fall!"
-Alexandre Dumas, The Three Musketeers**

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Introduction

The OSU Air Force ROTC drill team was first stood up in 1953-1954 as The Order of the Silver Wings. The Academic year, 2016-2017, marks the 63rd anniversary of the team. The Wingspan has been running articles which have focused on recollections from over 30 alumni of drill teams from years past. These recollections go back to 1949, four years prior to the formation of the Order of the Silver Wings. The recollections make up the following unofficial history.

This history is a living document and will be updated as future teams are formed. No matter what year they graduated, former drill team members are encouraged to send in their recollections to the editor at pjonesjr2000@sbcglobal.net

The drill team has played an important role in keeping the Air Force ROTC program alive and well at Oregon State.

As you know, Air University Headquarters, which oversees all of the AFROTC Detachments across the U.S., checks the number of cadets commissioned annually by each Detachment. If a Det's commissioning rate falls below an average of 15/year (the "viable commissioning rate") for several years, that Detachment will be considered for closure. This is exactly the fate that befell the AFROTC Detachments at Willmatte University in 1975 and the University of Oregon in 1990.

In 1997, alumni from the Class of 65 observed that since the mid-90's, Detachment 685 had been commissioning 6-8 officers per year. This was significantly below the 15 officer per year viable commissioning rate expected by Air University Hq. The possibility of the Detachment being closed became a matter of serious concern for alumni.

Alumni from the Class of 65 felt that a drill team performing armed, exhibition drill with rifles in communities in Oregon would create a strong presence that would go a long way in supporting recruitment of the "best and brightest" into Air Force ROTC at OSU. This would involve a renewed emphasis by the drill team in performing Long Term Recruiting in Oregon. By "Long Term Recruiting" we mean performances at local Cub/Boy Scout Troop meetings and Brownie/Cadette/Senior Girl Scout Troop meetings, Boys and Girls Clubs and other youth organizations. The intent here is to support patriotism in these organizations and to increase interest of the attendees in AFROTC at OSU.

The challenge in the late 1990's was that the team had not performed exhibition drill with rifles in over 30 years and was performing "Unarmed Drill," which is generally not impressive to young people. The Class of 65 reached an agreement with the Detachment and the drill team. The Detachment would provide a drill team advisor, a place to store rifles and as much financial support as they could, within their budget. The drill team would gradually increase the number of drill team exhibitions per Academic Year (AY),

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to attract highly motivated young people into AFROTC at OSU. The alumni would kick off a fund drive to raise enough money to purchase rifles for the team.

An account for the Silver Talons was established with the OSU Foundation in 1998 and fund raising among class members began in earnest. In the first year they managed to raise \$4,000. At this point Col. Snider, the Professor of Aerospace Studies (PAS), discovered a new AFROTC program which enabled Detachments to order demilitarized Army M-1 rifles, at no cost, for their drill teams. The rifles were put on order and the Class of 65 decided to continue the fund raising effort to create an endowed account, in which the principal would not be touched and the interest/dividends would be available to the team to help meet expenses. This was becoming more important, due to Air Force ROTC funding cuts by Air University Headquarters. After the first year, alumni suggested that the cadets support the fund raising effort and expand it to all OSU AFROTC alumni. At this time, the minimum amount required by the OSU Foundation in 1999 to establish an endowed account was \$5,000.

Starting in 1999, for the next four years, the Silver Talons conducted an annual alumni endowment fund raising drive by mailing out a flyer to all OSU AFROTC alumni.

During AY 2002-2003, alumni were successful in obtaining the support of the OSU Foundation to annually canvas OSU AFROTC alumni to raise funds for the Silver Talon account, which precluded the need for the cadets to continue this effort. The fund-raising was strongly supported by alumni from all year groups, as evidenced by steadily increasing contributions over the years. In 2004, the OSU Foundation reached the minimum amount required to establish an endowed account of \$10,000. At this point, the team began drawing annual earnings from the fund to help meet team expenses.

The goal is to fund about two thirds of the team's annual budget, with the team responsible for making up the difference between endowment funding and costs through fund raising activities, such as working as parking attendants at OSU home football and baseball games. In 2017, the teams annual budget was about \$4,000. Two thirds of this is approximately \$2,600. This would require a total endowment of about \$58,000. The endowment today stands at approximately \$34,000.

The budget covers equipment and transportation/motel costs associated with the annual Southern California Invitational Drill Meet (SCIDM) competition at Huntington Beach, CA. The SCIDM competition is the largest drill meet competition West of the Mississippi with over 700 Junior/Senior ROTC and academy cadets participating. This drill meet enables the team to perform in front of a large number of Junior ROTC teams which helps support recruiting for AFROTC at OSU.

As the endowment grows in size towards the \$58,000 goal, the team will be able to gradually spend more time performing exhibition drill throughout Western Oregon in support of Det 685 recruiting and less time working on fundraising. Funds provided by

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the Endowment will enable the team to build their capabilities and provide a strong OSU AFROTC recruiting presence in Oregon.

Success for the Silver Talon Drill Team rests on a triad composed of the team itself, Cadre and Alumni. All three need to work closely together to ensure drill team success. This is highlighted in the following quote from Alexandre Dumas in *The Three Musketeers*, which can be found at the bottom of each and every page in this history:

“All for one and one for all, united we stand, divided we fall”

Last, but not least, is the quote below from the famous historian, George Santayana. It is important to learn from the past so successes can be replicated and missteps avoided. That is the purpose for which this drill team history is written.

**“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”
George Santayana, “The Life of Reason” 1905-06**

Paul “JP” Jones ‘65
Lt. Col. USAF (Ret.)
Editor
1 June 2017

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-Alexandre Dumas, *The Three Musketeers***

The Genesis of Det 685 and the Drill Team in 1949

Editors Note: As you know, the Air Force was formed 18 Sept 1947. However, Air Force ROTC Dets across the country took awhile to get ramped up. This article provides recollections of Col. Richard Horne '52 on his experiences as a cadet at the very beginning of Det 685. Col. Horne enrolled as a freshman at Oregon State College in Sept 1948.

By Col. Richard Horn '52

During September 1948, all physically fit males were ordered to the Armory on campus to enroll in the then two year ROTC mandatory course. ROTC didn't become a voluntary program until 1962. Since Naval ROTC was optional, not mandatory, NROTC midshipmen were not included in this mandatory sign-up. There was a long line of freshmen signing up for Army ROTC. There was also a smaller line of freshmen signing up for Air Force ROTC. I was in the line for Air Force ROTC.

As for academics, I had both Army and Air Force instructors during my first year at Oregon State. We drilled once each week and took three hours of classes, all for one credit hour each term. In July 1949, prior to the start of my sophomore year, Det 685 was formed as a separate Air Force ROTC Detachment. Naturally, I transferred to the Air Force ROTC Detachment. After successfully completing the first two years of ROTC, I was selected for the advanced course (last two years). Advanced Air Force ROTC cadets were paid a "drill pay" of \$30.00 per month. No ROTC scholarship assistance was available for cadets. There were no female members in ROTC during my time at Oregon State (women were allowed to enroll as cadets in ROTC starting in 1970) and no Angel Flight. (Angel Flight was an unarmed women's drill team associated with Arnold Air Society in the mid 1960s.)

Near the end of the 1949 school year, tryouts were held for Army and Air Force cadets who wanted to join the newly formed Company E-6, Pershing Rifles, an Army ROTC drill team. Due to the close association between the Army and Air Force Dets, Air Force cadets were encouraged to try out. I was fortunate enough to be selected for the team. We trained with Springfield rifles. There were four cadet officers on the team who were voted into position by drill team members. I became a cadet 1st Lieutenant when I entered Advanced AFROTC. Later, on 1 Sept 1951, I was promoted to cadet Major in Pershing Rifles. Pershing Rifle cadet officers received saber drill as a regular part of their responsibilities.

Since the country was then at war in Korea, membership in all branches of ROTC on campus took on additional meaning. In June of 1952, we attended the graduation ceremony at Gill Coliseum in our Caps and Gowns. Following graduation, all ROTC graduates removed their caps & gowns and re-entered Gill Coliseum in their new active duty service uniforms. We were then sworn in and called back up to the stage to receive

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our reserve commissions. Rolled up inside the commission was a set of orders for each of us. I was processed at Lackland AFB and entered pilot training in February of 1953.

I continue to believe that my education and training in AFROTC was the key to my 30 year, highly challenging and satisfying career in the United States Air Force.

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First Air Force ROTC Det 685 Drill Team Formed in 1953-1954

By Lt. Col. Dana Murton '56

According to Dana Murton '56, the first AFROTC Det 685 drill team, of which he was a member, was formed at the beginning of the 1953-54 school year. Up until that time, AFROTC cadets were encouraged to participate in the Pershing Rifles, the Army ROTC drill team. Det 685 cadets were issued their new, Air Force blue uniforms in Sept 1952. This caused the Pershing Rifles during the 1952-1953 academic year to become a "mixed" team, with one squad in Air Force blue, the next squad in Army kaki. During the 1953-54 academic year, the Air Force ROTC cadet members of the Pershing Rifles decided to form their own drill team. They called it The Order of Silver Wings. Dana Murton, C. Ray Gould and Daryl Allman were the founding members. Exhibition drill was performed with Springfield rifles. The team performed at half time at OSU basketball games, did exhibition drill while marching in the Portland Rose Parade and competed in drill meet competitions at other schools.

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Silver Wings and Governor Rockefeller's Run for President, 1957-60

By Col. Dale Johnson '60

I enrolled in AFROTC as a freshman in the fall of 1956 because I was interested in aviation. I joined the OSC Rowing Club and became the Coxswain for the freshman crew where I met Dana Murton who had just graduated from OSC.

Dana Murton was our rook crew coach and we consistently beat the varsity crew in races. I wasn't even aware of the drill team until winter term. I thought the drill team looked like a lot of fun, but I didn't really pursue it until spring term. Bob Elmer was commanding the drill team that year and I was impressed with the work he was doing. I joined the drill team spring term in 1957 and soon passed muster to join the first drill team.

During my sophomore year I got real excited about the Air Force and working with the drill team, so I joined Silver Wings at the beginning of winter term. Cadet Lt. Col Jim Diehl was the Silver Wings Commander and 1/Lt Parkin (Ken) Hayes was the Silver Wings Advisor. I was real "gung-ho" about Silver Wings and the Air Force; I still remember my Springfield rifle serial number was 4058744. It was exciting to be a part of the drill team and I enjoyed working with people who were committed to doing an excellent job. Soon after that I joined the Arnold Air Society and The National Society of Scabbard and Blade. After a couple of Air Force base visits and drill exhibitions I was beginning to think the Air Force is for me. I decided to apply for Category I (pilot training) and I passed the physical, so I was on my way.

I was selected to command the Silver Wings drill team during my junior year ('58-'59). I did everything I could to make the team stand out. We practiced three days a week and everyone worked hard.

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1958-59 Drill Team in Parade, with Cadet Dale Johnson in Command

I asked our supply sergeant if he could get us helmet liners for the drill team and Cadet Major Bill Reiersgaard helped me with the details of getting the helmets ready for use. We painted them with a baked-enamel Air Force Blue and

used a modification of the Arnold Air Society wings to make a Silver Wings decal to put on the helmets. I painted the commander's helmet white and carried a side arm in a Sam Brown belt. On occasion I fired a blank during a special exhibition at local high school basketball game half times. It was amazing how quickly the crowd quieted down after the blank was fired. At that time, we had their undivided attention.



1958-59 Drill Team and Color Guard

I was able to convince Col Ralph Oliver, our PAS, to let the drill team wear silver tan uniforms during spring term, so we looked like a very distinctive drill team. All of this gave the team a very high morale and our goal was to beat the Navy ROTC Drill team, commanded by Midshipman Keifer Tobin.

When the day came for the spring term drill competition we were ready. We beat the NROTC team in points awarded, but unfortunately I made a mistake, which cost us the competition. I thought I had left a maneuver out of our routine so I added it in at the end

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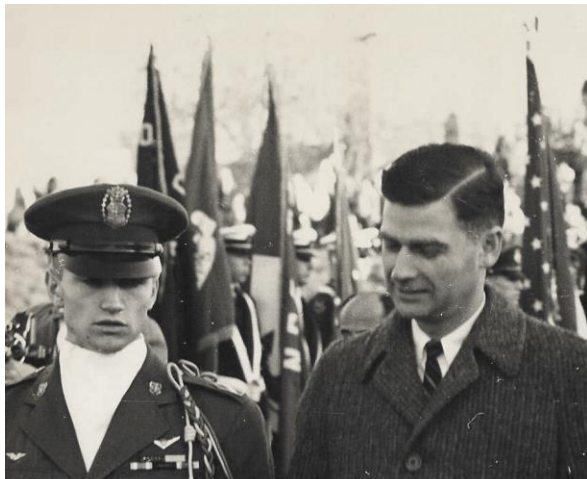
of our performance. In fact, I had not left the maneuver out, so the extra maneuver put us over the time limit. We were penalized for overtime, which put us 2 points below the Navy team's score. Words will not describe how disappointed I was, but the team didn't beat up on me. I guess they figured I was doing enough of that myself.

I attended summer camp at Hamilton Air Force Base in the summer of 1959. An F-104 squadron was based there at that time and that certainly added to my excitement. My drill experience and enthusiasm served me well during summer camp and I received the Outstanding Cadet Award at the end of summer camp.

The award included a flight in an F-104 with a chance to bust the mach. We went to mach 1.3 and what a thrill that was for an aspiring cadet pilot. I will never forget that day.

I served on the cadet senior staff during my senior year and was given command of the Cadet Wing during spring term, because that was when the drill competitions were held. Serving on the senior staff gave us some good hands-on planning, management, and staff experience, which served us well when we got on active duty.

I had the pleasure of commanding the Honor Guard during half time at the Stanford football game in Parker Stadium when Governor Mark Hatfield was hosting Nelson Rockefeller during his run for President.



**Cadet Dale Johnson,
Gov. Mark Hatfield
and Gov. Nelson
Rockefeller at OSU-
Stanford Football Half
Time at Parker Stadium**

Awards day marked the end of an exciting time in Air Force ROTC with the Silver Wings and the beginning of a rewarding six and a half years as an Air Force pilot flying the Pacific during the Viet Nam conflict. I have enjoyed a 45-year career in aviation with 11,000

hours of fond flying memories all as a result of the foundation that was laid at OSU in Air Force ROTC and Silver Wings.

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Silent Drill Sequence and 16 Inch Bayonets: 1963-1964

Alumni contributors include: Pete Lossner '65, Maj. Phil Martin '65, Lt. Col. John Miller '65, Barry Scott '65 Lt. Col. Paul Jones '65 and Col. Jim Williamson '65



1964 Silver Wings Championship Team. Team members 1st row, John Miller, Dan Johnson, David Brown, Phil Martin, Bill Kinkaid and Charlie Loveland. 2nd row, James Kahl, Terry Millard, Al Struthers, William Rush, Claude Hough, Peter Lossner, Thomas Newman, Edward Wortman, James Folz, Vaughn Abott, John Glaisyer and Frank Rudolph.

Barry Scott commanded the Silver Wings drill team from 1963-1964. The team performed armed, exhibition drill at university/college level competitions, high school basketball game half times and in parades.

Team members drilled with fully functional, bolt action Springfield rifles equipped with 16-inch bayonets and wore blue helmet liners (the team commander's helmet liner was white).

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In the 1963-64 academic year the team was undefeated. They upset the University of Portland's "Mitchell Rifles," the nine-year defending champions at the Air Force ROTC Regional Drill Meet held in Portland, OR. The Silver Wings then faced off against the Central Washington State College team, the winner of the Air Force ROTC District Two Competition, to become the Western Area Champions. In addition, the Silver Wings won the OSU annual drill team competition between Air Force, Navy and Army ROTC units held during Mother's Day weekend in the spring of 1964. In winning the Mothers Day Weekend competition, the Silver Wings defeated the OSU Army and Navy ROTC units, each of which was Northwest ROTC champions for their respective branch of service.

The exhibitions the team put on during half time at local area high school basketball games were influenced by two events, both of which related to noise disrupting the drill routine. The first was the sound of jet aircraft taking off during an exhibition performed at Davis Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona, which drowned out the team commander's orders. Unfortunately, this happened as the CC, Cadet Barry Scott, walked down the middle of a two-sided formation, which was rippling rifles across in front and behind him. Because of the noise created by the F-4s, some members didn't hear the command. The result was a somewhat uncoordinated routine and a bayoneted shirt for the good Mr. Scott. The second was crowd noise during basketball game half time exhibitions, which made the voiced commands hard to hear.

Both of these challenges resulted in creation of a new drill routine for use during exhibition drill. Jim Williamson, who commanded the Back-Up Drill Team, usually introduced the team over the PA system during exhibitions at high school basketball games during half time. Prior to march-on, the exhibition was kicked off with the discharge of a chambered, blank round, which immediately obtained the crowd's undivided attention and eliminated all half time noise. The first portion of the exhibition was executed with voiced commands, without bayonets, which enabled team members to spin the rifles. Part way through the routine, the team was stopped, faced toward the home crowd and the 16" chromed bayonets, which team members carried in scabbards on their belts, were affixed to the rifles in unison. The routine was then continued with voiced commands. Shortly thereafter, the command, "Blackout" was given, which resulted in the next portion of the exhibition (the most complicated) being completed without commands (silent), after which voiced commands were resumed for the closing portion. Considering that this was performed with 16-inch bayonets and thrown rifles, it was rather impressive. In the words of Lt. Col. Fross, the Professor of Aerospace Studies, it was, "Pure showmanship."

Members of the 1963-64 team included: Allan McGlasson, Hugh Holt, John Miller, Pete Lossner, James Williamson, David Conley, Steve Wilson, James Kahl, Gary Confer, Barry Scott, James Miller, Daniel Schwarzer, Carl Hellis, John Glaisyer, Dan Johnson, John Pfanner, Vaughn Abbott, William Kinkade, Charles Loveland, Billy Graham, Terry Millard, Paul Hogle, Frank Rudolph, Michael Nolan, David Brown, Thomas Newman, Randall Bradbury, Allen Struthers, William Rush, James Folz, Brent Forsberg, Dave

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Clark, Doug Lack, Clarence Bergman, Edward Wortman, Sherwood Lawrence, Frank Krik, Phil Martin, Claude Hough and John Marshall.

Angel Flight, a woman's honorary, was sponsored by the Arnold Air Society. By 1965, women had been allowed to take AFROTC courses for credit for several years; however, they were not able to enroll as cadets until 1970. Phil Martin, a Silver Wings team member, was the advisor to Angel Flight in 1964-65. Angel Flight, the honorary, consisted of 30 women. Angel Flight formed a women's drill team, which put on silent, unarmed drill exhibitions both on and off campus in support of Det 685 Air Force ROTC recruiting. They also competed against Angel Flight drill teams from other college/university in local and regional competitions.

The name of the Angel Flight drill team later changed to the White Falcons. In the words of former White Falcon drill team member, Lt. Col. Kathie Sheperd '77, "You haven't done exhibition drill until you have done it in two inch high heels and a skirt!"

Both the Silver Wings and Angel Flight supported AFROTC recruiting at OSU extremely well over the years. Det 685 commissioned over 40 Second Lieutenants in 1965. This was the largest Air Force ROTC commissioning of 2nd Lieutenants in the history of the Detachment.

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Angel Flight and the Angel Flight Drill Team: 1967-1968

Lt. Col. Kathie Sheperd '77

Angel Flight was founded at the University of Omaha in 1952. Starting out as an all-female organization, Angel Flight was more of a national idea with various names. While these organizations across the country had different names, they were all focused on helping out their local AFROTC unit. In April 1957, representatives from 16 different groups came together at the 8th National Conclave of Arnold Air Society to join their purposes under a National Coordination Headquarters. From that point on, Angel Flight became an organization on a national, regional, and local level.



New Angel Flight members being inducted into the Flight, 1967.

The OSU Angel Flight consisted of about 40 co-eds in 1967. To become a member, one had to be invited. An Angel Flight Unarmed Drill Team of about 12 co-eds was formed from Angel Flight. They competed wearing a blouse, scarf, skirt and heels about two inches high.

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OSU Angel Flight Drill Team practices barefoot in 1967 in Gill Coliseum so their two inch high heels won't damage the basketball court.

An important position in the Angel Flight was the "Little Colonel."



Carol Mauratt, OSU Angel Flight Little Colonel, 1967

Little Colonel Selection Process

The Little Colonel Committee was composed of:

- a. Two Air Force Officers from the AFROTC Det.
- b. One female from Civilian Organization

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The Committee observed and judged the contestant on the following criteria:

- a. Angel Flight Participation – 20%
- b. Academic Standing – 20%
- c. One page essay on “Why I would like to be the Little Colonel” – 20%
- d. Personality and poise – 20%
- e. Beauty of face and figure – 20%

On Sunday the contestants meet to be interviewed by the Selection Committee. For this interview, they were required to wear Sunday dresses. Each interview lasted for 5-10 minutes. Each girl was required to have a member of her respective Arnold Air Society as an escort and to introduce her to the committee. Three finalists were selected by the Committee using the above criteria.

One poster to advocate each Angel Flights Little Colonel could be displayed at the Area H-2 Conclave. A great deal of consideration was given to the attractiveness and effectiveness of the poster. No other material could be circulated or displayed.

The final selection of the Area H-2 (the Area in which the OSU Angel Flight was located). Little Colonel was made at the last joint business meeting by a vote of the delegates (one vote per AAS Squadron, and vote per Angel Flight). Each contestant was required to wear her respective Angel Flight uniform and to be escorted by her Arnold Air Society escort.



Carol Mauratt receiving her bouquet after being selected as the Area H-2 Little Colonel

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There was a executive board of Arnold Air Society AFROTC cadets at the Area level. The Little Colonel would be included in the executive board (Commander, Executive Officer, etc.).

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Silver Wings Transition to Unarmed Drill, then Sabers: 1970-1975

By Maj Gen Roger Binder '75

I got asked to fill in on the team late in the season in 1972. Don't remember whether one of the team members quit or fell out, but they asked me to join, said I would get a ribbon and trips to both Reno and Fairchild AFB. Sounded like a smoking deal, so I did. We trained early in the morning in Gill Coliseum.

No rifles back then. Those were the late Viet Nam era days and the military wasn't exactly fashionable everywhere in the U.S. So, we had a silent, unarmed drill team – didn't want to look too military like or threatening! Go figure. We had memorized patterns and steps and marched to a silent cadence. I think we went from a 16-man formation to singletons and then reformed again. All silently. We competed, had some good times and I can't remember whether we won anything. It was a great lead-in to discipline and teamwork that laid the groundwork, which is essential to fighter aviation.

By Lt. Col. Dave McGraw '75

I was a member of the Silver Wings for four years and was the commander for the last two. We had problems maintaining the Springfield's (they were dropped a lot in practice, of course) and, when I took over the team; we had a fundraiser to purchase sabers. I believe we first used the sabers in competition in the 1973 season when we traveled to Reno for a large gathering of drill teams. The team generally was comprised of 16 individuals which, at times, dwindled to 12 marching members. Generally, our performances consisted of flank maneuvers, column maneuvers, column crosses and precision cadence maneuvers. We performed regularly at the Veterans Day Parade in Albany and twice that I remember at the OSU Basketball halftime break.

After developing a feel for the sabers, we decided that we needed to elevate the "risk" factor in brandishing the sabers to impress judges and audience members. With that in mind, we developed our signature maneuver where the entire team ended up in single line marching in cadence with the commander at the front. With the Team in forward movement, a saber was thrown from front to rear (hilt first) and caught by the trailing drill team member. This throw was "blind" in that the commander threw the saber to the rear catcher while looking/marching forward. It took a lot of practice to develop the feel for the distance the saber had to "fly." It also required a great deal of confidence in the throw by the rear catcher. While I cannot say that all tosses were caught, I can tell you no member was seriously wounded (a small victory in and of itself)

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My best recollections about Drill Team participation was the sense of teamwork and precision that each member developed through involvement in the program. It gave each member a sense of being part of something bigger than oneself. This was excellent preparation for entry into the United States Air Force where that concept was integral to mission success in many career fields. As a pilot lucky enough to fly three fighter aircraft over a 20 year career, the discipline and precision we learned as Silver Wings Drill Team members laid the foundation for the same precision, discipline and teamwork I saw everyday in the fighter community.

By Lt. Col. Kathie Sheperd (Patterson) '77

I was a member of the 12 women White Falcon drill team, which was part of Angel Flight. In those days there was no co-ed ROTC drill team. The White Falcons competed in the same meets as the Silver Wings, but in the women's team category.

Dave McGraw was our advisor, choreographed our routines, and was present during many of our 0600-0800 practice sessions. I recall Dave McGraw, Dave Wilson, Bill Sener, Greg Michael, Steve Newbold, David Pengelly and Larry Wolfe being on the Silver Wings during the 1973 to 1974 academic year. The Silver Wings looked just great and their sabers were unusual in a drill team performance. The name "Silver Wings" was particularly distinctive; I like the sound of it even today.

By Colonel Richard "Chief" Conaway '75

I had the honor to march on the Silver Wings Drill Team my freshman and sophomore years and was the Commander my Junior year at OSU. The first two years we used the M1903 rifle, but the Air Force felt the risk of having "real" guns on campus forced us to lose the rifles for my Junior year (1971-1972) so I had to misfortune to be the first Commander to work without rifles. We made the best of it and came up with some great marching routines, but it was still not the same. For my years on the drill team we marched in Gill Collisium early each morning. Major John Holm was our faculty advisor during these years.

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Angel Flight and the White Falcon Drill Team: 1973-1976

By Lt. Col. Kathie Sheperd (Patterson) '77

Angel Flight (now known as “Silver Wings”) is a national organization since it was founded in 1957. According to information from an Area H-2 Angel Flight brochure from 1974 and this website (<https://www.aas-sw.org>):

“The Angel Flight is a service auxiliary of the Arnold Air Society. It was first established at the University of Omaha in 1952, and became a national organization in 1957. The objectives of Angel Flight are: to aid the progress of, and to promote interest in, the Arnold Air Society and AFROTC; to support the purposes of the United States Air Force, aerospace power, and their respective roles in the national security; to provide an opportunity for members to become better informed about vital defense institutions and the aerospace world; and to create a fellowship among members through service to the community. Membership in the Angel Flight is open by invitation to qualified undergraduate college students.”

Angel Flight was very popular in the 1950s and 1960s. By the time I went to college (1973-1977), our AFROTC Det 685 Angel Flight consisted of 15-16 members, less than it was during the previous decades. According to my Angel Flight literature, Angel Flight was listed as "an honorary service organization sponsored by the Arnold Air Society and Air Force ROTC." As a group, Angel Flight acted as hostesses and helped sponsor Air Force ROTC, Arnold Air Society and University functions. Angel Flight also sponsored many social and fund raising projects.

You will be interested to know that in 1975-1976, we had one male member (Jim Bartlett) in Angel Flight. That same year, my roommate was the Det 685 Angel Flight commander, Elizabeth (Beth) Cline, from San Jose, CA. Beth was a "civilian" and talked me into joining Angel Flight, largely to help get their membership numbers up. (I had already joined AAS early my sophomore year).

We had a great Angel Flight group and were the Area H-2 leadership team in 1976. Jim Bartlett was a member of that leadership team. Jim was the funniest fellow with a great sense of humor that made us all laugh. I am not sure why he was in Angel Flight, but it may have had something to do with the proximity of women!

In 1976 I was one of 7 AFROTC cadets permitted to travel to the 28th Arnold Air Society and 21st Angel Flight National Conclave which was held 11-15 April in Philadelphia. I had a blast and got to meet General Daniel “Chappie” James, Jr. There must have been over 800 people in attendance! General David C. Jones was the guest speaker for the luncheon, General James was the speaker at the banquet (he sang a African-American spiritual!) and LtGen Raymond Furlong was the speaker for the Opening Ceremonies. Maj Gen James Brickel was the speaker for the opening ceremonies and Mr Martin Ostrow, director of the Air Force Association, and Major

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General Jeanne Holm was there! General Holm was the first woman to be selected as a general officer in the USAF and the first woman two-star of any service. If I remember correctly, she told me she started her military career by driving trucks! I was pretty naïve in those days and in awe of General James and General Holm. I wish I had asked them something more profound, like: “Did you ever get spanked as a kid?” or “Did the male officers like General Curtis LeMay make you mad enough to want to spit?”

My National Conclave book lists the national staffs for AAS and AnF as well as the national level Little General (and Little Colonels at 12 Areas). Attending the National Conclave was a pretty big deal back in the day.

The other 6 AFROTC cadets with me were Mark Anderson, Tammie Carlin, Bob Cosand, Steve Hildenbrandt, Bob Lewis, & Ted Meyer. I still have a copy of the orders that allowed us space available travel from 10 April –20 April 1976.



Cadet Roberta M.L. Chappell, White Falcons Drill Team Commander, 1973-74

During my tenure at Det 685, I was on the 12-women White Falcons Unarmed drill team, which was the Angel Flight drill team. This was in 1973-1974. The drill team commander was Cadet Roberta M.L. Chappell (Robbie was an AS400 cadet and received her commission in the spring). Of the 12 White Falcon team members, four were AFROTC female cadets (Roberta Chappell, Tammie Carlin, Miriam (Jean) Lamb, and myself). The remaining members were Angel Flight. There were no co-ed drill teams on the west coast in the early 1970's. The men's team was called Silver Wings, and they drilled with sabers, not the rifles that they do today. The women's team at Det 685 did not use sabers, they drilled unarmed. There were no women in the men's drill teams, and vice versa back then, so if women wanted to be on a competition team, an Angel Flight team was the only option. As a side note, there were not as many competitions in the

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“old days.” Funding was scarce and there were no alumni resources in place. However, we competed in California, Nevada, Idaho, Oregon, and Montana as well as local exhibitions.

The White Falcons’ first public performance that academic year (AY) was at the AAS Area H-2 Conclave for Arnold Air Society and Angel Flight. The conclave was held on 2 Feb-5 Feb 1974 at the Sheraton Motor Inn, Portland, OR, and the Drill competition was held on Sunday 3 Feb in the East-West Ballroom. The schedule of events said AnF (Angel Flight) Drill Competition was from 1045 to 1115, so there were probably just a few Angel Flight teams doing exhibition performances. If I recall, the University of Portland had an Angel Flight Team, but not the University of Oregon. One of the Montana schools had an outstanding AnF drill team and were big competitors for us.

In 1974, Roberta Chappell was also the Area Commander for all of the Angel Flights in the Northwest area. In those days, the following schools had AFROTC and Angel Flight (both) programs: University of Portland, University of Oregon, Oregon State University, University of Puget Sound, University of Washington, Washington State University, University of Idaho, Montana State University and University of Montana.



White Falcons inspection phase at the Lilac Festival drill team competition

Our exhibition drill routine was all silent except for the first command, given by the drill team commander. The exhibition performance was complex - quite a bit to memorize and we did very well (scoring against other teams). In fact, we consistently scored in the top three in all our drill meets.

Drill Meets (competitions) lasted all day and consisted of 3 judging elements: "Exhibition" (the individual team's drill composition) lasting up to 8 minutes, "Regulation" (all teams performed a specific, pre-identified drill), and the "Individual Drill Down". We competed here in the "men and women without arms"

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category. Individual Drill Downs would consist of 2 - 3 people from each competing team, lined up in a long line and given a series of commands given for facing movements, etc. (Judges would eliminate people for anything less than perfection.)

Since we were at a college with other ROTCs, we also had the Army and Marine drill instructors inspect us. The Marines were especially tough. Inspection was in formation with a guy right in front of you trying to break your composure by either peering into your face or asking questions. I can remember one Marine drill instructor getting in my neighbor's face and asking: "What did your last kiss taste like, Cay-det?" (They would ask a question about 12 inches from your face, looking directly into your eyes.) My neighbor was Tammie Carlin, and she replied with a straight face, "bear fat, sir!" I wanted to laugh so hard! To this day, I don't remember how I managed not to grin. I have never forgotten that incident.

Some of the Drill Competitions that the White Falcons participated in during the 1973-73 Academic Year (AY) were:

1. Fairchild AFB in the spring (May 1974 as part of the Lilac Festival): The White Falcons team placed First in the Inspection category. In the Individual Drill Down event, we placed First and Second (I was the recipient of the 2nd place trophy). All the trophies were displayed at Det 685 after the competition – back in the day where we had offices/rooms in Gill Coliseum) The photo above shows me getting inspected during the inspection phase of the competition.
2. Reno (NV) Invitational: White Falcons took Second place in the Exhibition category. The OSU Barometer newspaper article I had said this was the first competition for the White Falcons. White Falcons also placed Third in Regulation, Fifth in Inspection and the commander placed First or Second (my notes stated that I forgot which).
3. Oregon State University : At Mom's Weekend, spring of 1974, we competed against the Army ROTC women's drill team (MacAlexander Guard, a.k.a. MacGuard). I don't recall who else was there, but it must have been a small group because I wrote that White Falcons took 1st Place in Regulation, 1st Place in Inspection, and 1st Place Overall. The drill team competition was 8 am until noon in Gill Coliseum, and it would have included men's teams and women's drill teams. My mom came up from California for the weekend and watched the competition.

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White Falcons, Exhibition Phase, drill team competition

Although I joined the Angel Flight drill team my freshman ROTC year (1973), and then formally joined Angel Flight 2 years later as a favor to a friend, being a member of the drill team gave me more "courage" than anything I had ever accomplished in my life (up to that point). I learned poise, military bearing, and how to overcome obstacles. Being on that drill team also helped me get through 4 weeks of summer camp with ease, and to adjust and do well in the Air Force.

In conclusion, you can see the expectations for women were different in the 1970s. In many ways, the results of those expectations forged the way for changes in the 1980s and '90s. I have always been proud to see an integrated drill team at Det 685! Lucky for them – they don't have to march in skirts and high heel shoes.

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Saber Team From 1978-1980

By Lt. Col. Marc Owens '83

I was on the Silver Wings Drill team for only one year '78-79. I joined the team right at the start of my freshman year because I wanted to be a part of that elite group. We had practice early each weekday on the court of Gill Coliseum. I remember accidentally sticking my saber in the court. Seeing that saber sticking out of the floor, swaying slowly back and forth, I was convinced Ralph Miller (OSU Basketball Coach at the time) was going to instantly appear and kill me.

I also vividly remember Brian Wilmott grilling me mercilessly during one of our drill-downs. I was very proud of the fact that I was able to withstand his onslaught without breaking - although I did break out laughing when he later asked Cristine Bonnicksen if her zipper was undone - this got me eliminated from the drill-down.

During my sophomore year I had to quit the team in order to concentrate on academics (I couldn't handle the daily, early-morning practices). All that year during leadership lab I remember looking longingly at how well the Silver Wings flight marched and I missed being a part of that elite group. I think being a part of the Silver Wings helped give me the confidence to do well in the other cadet positions I held while at Det 685 and I think that translated into improved performance once I was commissioned and went on active duty.

By Neal Smith '84

My first introduction to the Drill team was sometime between the fall of 77 and the spring of 78. I was a high school senior, and was serious about the Air Force ROTC but I did not have a scholarship. A friend of mine was an AS 200 cadet and a member of the drill team. He invited me to the Det 685 Dining Out. I remember a few things about the Dining Out:

- My friend had neglected to tell the protocol staff that his father had been promoted to Brigadier General.
- That resulted in a shuffling of the head table, including moving one of the two guest speakers to one of the tables on the floor.
- That was really cool because it was the same table I was seated at.
- The guest speakers discussed their experience as Blackbird SR-71 pilots,
and

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- The sharpest, most impressive cadets were the ones wearing the Silver Wing silver/gray fourragere. If I was going to make it into AF ROTC, I had to be a part of that team. So clearly, there was an armed team – Saber, during the 77-78 school year.

I did well enough my fall quarter to be accepted on the drill team. It was called Silver Wings at the time. We were armed with sabers. I think our cadet commander was Mark Weaver Class of 80. The detachment was located in Gill Coliseum and we practiced on the basketball court.

By the time the Arnold Air Society Northwest Conclave held at the Red Lion at SeaTac airport that spring, we were an awesome unit. The silent drill exhibition (which, according to Gary Lorimor '80, included spinning the sabers and tossing them over the heads of two other team members) overwhelmed the judges and spectators and the team marched away with 1st prize.

The competition at Fairchild AFB later that year wasn't as successful - pretty much because of a few missed commands on the mandatory 21-command sequence. (there were two column left commands that occurred in the sequence, and we effectively skipped everything that fell between those two commands...ouch!).

Over the course of the academic year '78-'79, between the Navy's team dropping their rifles (with bayonets), and our swords poking holes in the coliseum floor, Ralph Miller (the OSU Basketball Coach) had us evicted from practicing there. Considering how well OSU played basketball in those days, it was the right thing to do.

Unfortunately, practice in parking lots and eventually in Mc Alexander Field house took the toll on the sabers and my father and I had a tough time keeping up with repairs.

I believe the commander of the Drill Team for fall of 79 was Ernie Staley '81. However like me, he spent too much time on the Drill Team and not enough time on studies, eventually having to quit the team. My grades got even worse and I disenrolled in ROTC before the end of my sophomore year (I was commissioned through OTS).

The commander for winter and Spring Terms for the Silver Wings drill team was Anne Yeoman Class of 81. During their competition at Fairchild AFB, Mount St Helens erupted, stranding the team there for several days.

The AY 78-79 drill team consisted of Bryce Brough, Christine Bonnicksen '82, Kevin Childers, Rex Englehardt '82, Brad Gentry '82, Bob Hart, Dwayne Olsen, Mark Owens '83, James Roberts, Kevin Smith, Neal Smith '84, Ernie Staley '81, Brian Thompson, Mark Weaver '80 cadet commander, Matt Wengler '81, Brian Wilmott '81, and Anne Yeoman '81. Capt Lynn Guenther was our cadre advisor - a former Vietnam POW and KC-135 pilot after ROTC.

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The AY 79-80 drill team consisted of Karen Black, Raeann Baise, Christine Bonniksen '82, Jesse Davis, Cecilia Dodd '83, Rex Englehardt '83, Brad Gentry '82, Greg Heesacker, Lisa Lanman '83, Markus Rostig '84 Lynda Sabin '83, Neal Smith '84 - until winter 80, Ernie Staley '81 - cadet commander until winter 80, Brian Thompson and Anne Yoeman '81 - cadet commander from winter 80 till end of AY.

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Mount St. Helen's Eruption and the Silver Wings: 1979-1980

By Maj. Anne Kaplan (Yeoman) '81

I was the commander of the Silver Wings Drill Team in 1979-80. I believe I was the first woman to command the team. At that time, the team was performing silent exhibition carrying sabers.

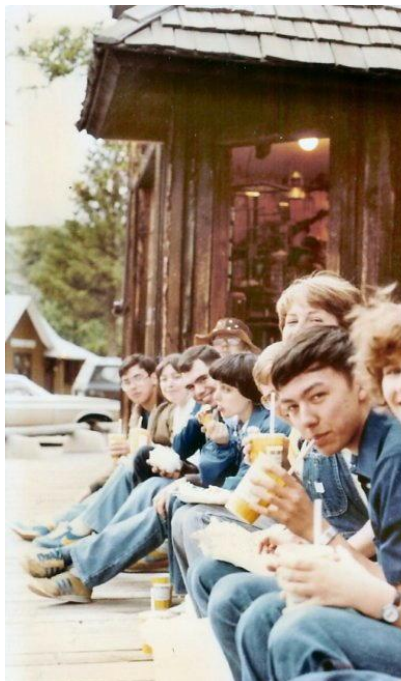
After months of practice, our team traveled to Fairchild AFB, WA to participate in their competition during the base open house. After we finished our routine and were presented with our trophy (I think for 2nd place), the base air show was suspended and the base closed due to Mount St Helen's eruption.

We decided to have lunch and weigh our options, as the skies got darker, the streetlights came on, and "snow" like ash started falling. We drove back to Gonzaga University where we were staying and found that travel would be impossible. Gonzaga U allowed us to stay in their residence hall and fed us in their cafeteria for two more days. We did manage a trip to a store for some essentials food items.

Finally, two days after the eruption, we planned on heading due North and then West, figuring we would get out of the ash quicker than if we headed southwest back towards Corvallis.

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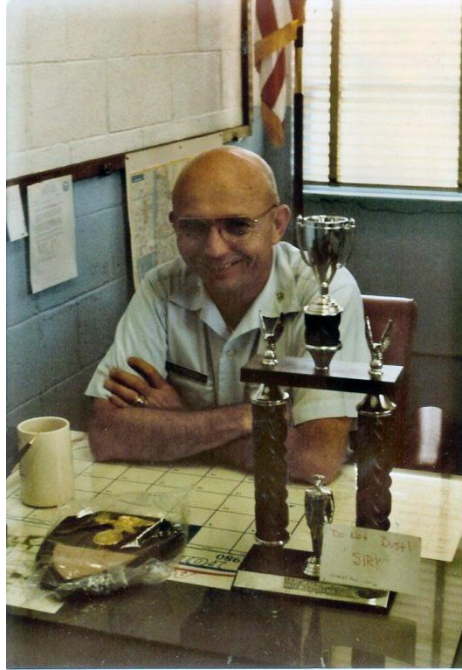
The team was traveling in personal vehicles belonging to the Drill Team Advisor, Capt Rider and one of the team members. Driving most of the day, Capt Rider called his grandparents in Northern Washington, and the entire team of ten college students descended on their home for dinner and a solid night of sleeping.



Silver Wings Ice Cream Stop in Washington

We left the following morning, drove to Bellingham, then south thru Seattle and down I-5 to Corvallis. Along the way, we also witnessed the flooding that occurred following the eruption. We arrived back in Corvallis, 4 days late, tired, full of ash, but glad to be back at school.

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Col. McPherson & Trophy, Complete with Mt. St. Helens Volcanic Dust

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Silver Wings Invited to Represent Oregon in President Reagan's 1985 Inaugural Parade

By Col. Sherman Wallen, Col. Doug Reynolds and excerpts from The Daily Barometer, 16 Jan 1985



Capt Sullivan and Silver Wings CC Doug Reynolds Inspect Team in Preparation for Inaugural Parade

Hard work and dedication paid off for the Silver Wings when they were invited to represent Oregon in the Inaugural Parade for President Reagan in January 1985.

Twenty-eight cadets departed Portland Airport on January 17th with Capt. Sherman Wallen, the Drill Team Advisor, Sgt. Bill Kivett, Det 685 NCOIC, and Alan Mathany, from the OSU President's office.

Douglas Reynolds, a junior in radiation health, was the drill team's cadet commander.

Sen. Mark Hatfield and Rep Denny Smith were instrumental in receiving the invitation according to Wallen.

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Silver Wings Drill Team and Color Guard with Congressman Danny Smith

“We prepared a good case for ourselves and we had proper support in the right places,” Wallen said.

The OSU Air Force Detachment was chosen as one of the ten outstanding units in the country in 1984 from a field of 152 units. The Silver Wings were also

the Pacific Northwest Champions.

Students and other sources, including the OSU Foundation, paid expenses. Cadets paid up to \$125 for personal expenses and part of the commercial flight cost to Washington. They stayed at Vint Hill Farms Station, a U.S. Army base in Northern Virginia just outside the capital. The return trip was space available on a USAF C-141.

Since the team only had four sabers, they planned to participate as a Color Guard and a separate unarmed marching unit. The commander and each of three squad leaders in the unarmed marching unit each carried a saber. Unfortunately, the parade was cancelled at the last minute, due to extreme cold - 10 degrees below zero. Team members watched the inauguration with Senator Mark Hatfield in his office. They also visited with Rep. Denny Smith, a former F-4 pilot. In addition, they toured the White House, the Pentagon and other attractions in the capital city.

By Col. Doug Reynolds '85

I was reminded of this trip when I had the good fortune of paying a final tribute to President Reagan. On June 9th, 2004, I led a four-ship of F-15Es from my squadron, the 334th Fightin' Eagles, in a flyby of President Reagan's funeral procession. Our route would take us over the horse-drawn caisson carrying the president's body as it entered the intersection of Constitution and Pennsylvania Avenues. As we were holding south of the capital, I thought to myself that we were about to fly over the same route that the Silver Wings Drill Team had tried to march in 1985 for the same president.

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**Nose Art on Aircraft
1703 in Honor of
President Reagan for
334th Flyover**

The maintenance professionals in the 4th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron deserve great credit for making our flyby happen. They risked their own safety to get our jets ready during a violent North Carolina thunderstorm. Bad

weather may have cancelled President Reagan's 1985 inaugural parade, but God smiled on him on this day. The clouds over our base parted just as the jets were ready and we launched on time. As their special tribute to President Reagan, our maintainers added nose art to each of our jets with the caption "One more for the Gipper". Being on the Silver Wings Drill team gave me an early glimpse of what it would be like to work with such hard-charging, dedicated Airmen.



Aircraft 1703 of 334th Fightin' Eagles Flyover in Honor of President Reagan

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Drill Team Activity Level Grows Significantly: 1989-1992

By Philip Bell '94

I started ROTC in the fall of 1989, and was active with the Silver Wings Drill Team and Color Guard through 1992, when I became commander. During the early years we had very large numbers of participants, so we fielded both a silent drill team and a separate color guard of about 6 folks. The team was very active during this time, traveling to Southern California Invitational Drill Meet (SCIDM), the Northwest Invitational Drill Meet (hosted by the UW ROTC detachment), the Albany Veteran's Day Parades - every year, exhibitions for basketball games - including not only the OSU team led by Ralph Miller and Gary Payton, but also a trip to Portland for a Blazers halftime show, football games, gymnastics meets, an Albany Military Tattoo, and many others that I can't recall.

Darrell Seale was the commander in the 1989-90 school year, I was the commander in 1991-92, and my memory is sketchy for the times in-between. In hindsight I believe 1990 was the high-water mark for the team during those years, in part, I believe, because overall AFROTC enrollment suffered a precipitous decline between 1989 and 1992 ... to the tune of a couple hundred cadets.

With a lower volunteer pool to draw from, the activities of the team decreased, but never completely went dormant during those years. We usually took at least 2 or 3 trips per year to march in parades or perform exhibitions. I recall in 1989 our uniforms featured long sleeve blue shirts with silver ascots, and by 1992 we were drilling in blue service dress uniforms with white ascots and white gloves. The name of the team was changed in 1992 to the "Silver Wings Honor Guard" to reflect the consolidation of exhibition and color guard duties into a single team, and to mimic the format of the USAF Honor Guard in Washington DC.

I have many good memories from Silver Wings. One in particular that stands out comes from our silent exhibition in Seattle, probably in early 1990. Darrell Seale was the commander, and we had a very intricate silent routine that included counter-rotating wheels around the commander, pinwheels, 270-degree flanking maneuvers, and so on. We were practiced enough to understand that military composure was paramount, even when mistakes were made. At one point in the routine I remember Ed Rhone flanking one direction while the entire team went the other, which should have been a recipe for disaster. However, Ed held his bearing, as did the rest of the team, and we simply left an open spot where Ed was supposed to be marching.

Ed silently marched over near the USMC judge, stopped, executed an about face, and watched the rest of the team, looking for an opportunity to rejoin the exhibition. I remember now that Ed's spot was immediately in front of me during one of the wheel maneuvers, and clearly remember when he crisply marched back into his open spot during an opportune moment and finished the routine. After all was said and done, our

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team placed well (I think it was first place), but can't recall exactly, partly because of our outstanding "missing man" routine. From our unbroken military bearing we made the mistake look designed, and the Marine Corps judge ate it up.

There are many other good memories from that time, including driving through a blizzard in Northern California returning from SCIDM. I enjoyed the Albany Veteran's Day Parade every year, and was proud to wear my silver fourragere until the day I was commissioned in 1994. Using the skills learned from Silver Wings, I eventually went on to command the Malmstrom AFB Honor Guard, where we performed ceremonial duties ranging from military honors at funerals to greeting visiting dignitaries, including several pop inspections from the Russians as part of the SALT II Treaty.

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Drill Team Comes Back: 1994-1996

Cassie Fletcher (Rytting) '96

I joined Det. 685 at the start of my sophomore year 1993-94. At that time, the Corps only had a Color Guard. Several POC cadets told me it was the best way to learn Drill and Ceremonies and, furthermore, it demonstrated to the Cadre one's commitment to the Corps.

By the beginning of my junior year 1994-95, my good friend and Color Guard buddy, Meghan Phelps, had transferred to NROTC - Marine Corps option and was boasting about her drill team. My competitive nature kicked in and I asked the Cadre if I could bring back the Silver Wings Drill Team. Of course they said yes - no one else had stepped forward and the adventure began.

Since we had no weapons - excluding some beat up sabers and could not afford to buy any; I proposed the idea of a silent, unarmed Drill Team. I aggressively recruited cadets at New Student Orientation and was quite successful. Several sophomores joined too! With the help of Mr. Bob Griffin, a retired Marine gunnery sergeant, we started the academic year with 0530 practices on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. I told the members I wasn't joking around. I wanted the Drill Team to succeed! In addition to the Drill Team, the members also performed the traditional Color Guard duties.

The Silver Wings marched in the Albany Veteran's Day Parade in November 1994 and the Tacoma Daffodil Festival Parade in April 1995. In addition, they performed their exhibition routine during half time at an OSU PAC-10 basketball game. Their first performance in front of the Cadet corps was on 9 March 1995. Team members were Ryan Sherman, David Rogers, Robert Harder, Mathieu LaCross, Jeremy Nygren, Josh Ciccotti, John Martin, Tony Deguchi, Katherine Wolfe, Alicia Cronk, Anh Hinshaw, Majorie Wilson and Cassie Rytting.

The 1995-96 team was somewhat smaller. Team members included Katherine Wolfe Commander, Josh Cirrotti, John Martin, Nathan Campbell, William Bal and Mark Donahue. They performed a missing man formation on 10 Nov 1995 for the Arnold Air Society, a 24-hour candlelight vigil honoring POW/MIAs, the Albany Veteran's Day Parade, and the Tacoma Daffodil Festival Parade. They also presented the colors at numerous OSU PAC-10 home basketball games and at Lebanon Elementary schools in support of the DARE program.

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Silver Wings Become Silver Talons: 1996-1998

By Erin Kingsley-Smith (Sundermier) '00

I was part of the Silver Talons Drill Team from 1996-1998. Of course, when I joined, the team was still named "Silver Wings." Being that this name was already used by another AF organization on campus (Angel Flight, an auxiliary of Arnold Air Society, became co-ed and changed their name to Silver Wings), our drill commander decided that we needed a name change.

Our new team submitted a number of different suggestions to put to vote including the Thunder Chickens and Beaver Beat but the one that we decided would best reflect our dedication to precision while maintaining a part of our history was "Silver Talons." And so, the cadre blessed the change, T-shirts were made and we started fresh that fall as the Silver Talons.

I have a number of memories from those two years, but I'll share the one of our first drill meet.

The team in years past had traditionally not been a competitive team, so we were starting off on a new venture. We were not armed at that time - hadn't raised the funds for enough weapons for the entire team but we went down to SCIDM for our first competition in the un-armed category. We were thrilled to be on the sands at Huntington Beach with hundreds of other cadets.

We didn't compete against too many other teams, as most were armed, but we certainly learned a lot from watching the competition. When it was our turn to compete, we did wonderfully: our silent counts were right on and we felt very proud of how we performed.

I don't even recall exactly what position we came in as, but we did win something. And I remember that now Capt Brian Sandidge showed us off proudly by winning 2nd in the Drill Down. But more than that, we truly bonded as a team. Whether it was the thrill of performing so well together in our first meet, the 6-hour sessions of "Spades" in the back of the vans we were driving in, or the matching V-shaped sunburns we all had from our flight caps, we came back as a solid team. I'm very glad I decided to be a part of that experience and know that I'm closer to all my teammates from the Silver Talons because of it.

I attended two SCIDMs in 97 and 98. The first one we were able to secure two large passenger vans and all crammed in them for the trip down. We weren't an armed team at the time so that at least helped reduce the luggage amount. We drove straight through to Travis AFB where we were treated to staying in the Distinguished Officer quarters, as the normal BOQs were full. The next day we visited the little gift shop and several other cadets and I bought ourselves those nifty aviator sunglasses to wear (we thought we

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looked pretty snazzy).

The second day of our drive predicted more tedium. But we tried to make things a little more interesting as one of my fellow female cadets had brought along a Cosmo magazine. We treated everyone to the ridiculous quizzes. We were also able to communicate with the other van via CB radios and they decided that they wanted to see the Cosmo too. Well not wanting to slow down our progress at all, we maneuvered a 60-mile-per-hour handoff of this Cosmo magazine from our van window to the neighbors. I guess our drivers were acting out their fantasy of being in the Thunderbirds :-). It must have been something for the people trailing us to witness. But we did arrive in California unscathed and in good spirits.

In 98, we rented a bus with the Portland team in order to cut costs. It was so much fun we vowed to do more inter-university events together. I don't think those ambitions ever came too much, but it was an excellent esprit de corps activity and I would certainly urge the current team to pursue something like that in the future.

The drill meet at the Academy in '97 was memorable because of what a disaster it was. I believe we actually flew down there but most of my memories are of the event itself. I was a writer for the Flying Beaver at the time and was supposed to write an article about the Academy trip. My original version and edited version were both red-penned and the actual article that ran made the trip smell like roses and sunshine. (Something to do with the politics of saying how crappy our experience was at the Academy).

When we arrived, the women and men were split up into two separate rooms -- the guys in one quadrant and the girls in another along with many other girls from different universities. This seemed perfectly fine, except we were not allowed to wander unescorted from place to place. So whenever we wanted to see our teammates, we had to arrange for an escort. Well we did finally gather to rehearse that evening and went to sleep completely exhausted. The next morning we had our escort bring us to breakfast only to discover that they had pretty much run out of hot breakfast. We enjoyed packaged cereal and fruit. Not too terrible on my tastes, but many of the guys were pretty upset.

After rehearsing some more, the women and I headed back to our quarters to rest for a bit. Approaching our room we heard very loud music being played. Well, apparently the room we were using was also the room where some Academy cadets like to conduct their band practice. The room being filled with cots did nothing to detract these eager music makers from "serenading" us with guitars, drums, bass and a microphone turned up too loud for the singer's ability. After a set, we asked if they could perhaps take a break and practice later, which drew sour looks from some of the other women in the room who I guess were enjoying the front-seat views of these singer-hotties. Perhaps that's why one of them left their curling iron on later in the day and started the fire in our room.

Yes, after the fire notification our good Capt Tschol, our OSU drill team advisor, decided that maybe enough was enough and we packed up from the Academy and went to stay at

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-Alexandre Dumas, The Three Musketeers**

a fellow captain's house who had recently moved from Det 685 to Colorado Springs. We were there long enough to compete but I can't even recall how we did.

Now the editor of the Flying Beaver at the time I wrote this article was cadet Kerry Kingsley-Smith, my future husband. Having to write and rewrite this article and communicate back and forth with him was our initial interaction. Had the trip gone smoothly, perhaps he wouldn't have been so entertained by my original article or I would not have had to meet with him so frequently. Whatever started it, we're going on 8 years married with 2 kids. "Thank You" USAFA, I guess.

By Capt. Brian Sandidge '99

I took over as Silver Talon Commander in fall of 97. My number one goal was to not let all the great work done by the previous commander, John Martin, fall by the wayside. Many of the challenges included:

1. Lower turnout from the previous year.
2. Limited funding.
3. Only two rifles.
4. Logistics - The Det did not fund vans for SCIDM

Getting to SCIDM was a real accomplishment that year. Working as parking attendants for Oregon Ducks football games and putting on raffles were just a few of the sacrifices that year's team made in our return to Huntington Beach. When the Det was unable to support transportation, we were able to work a deal with University of Portland to go in with their drill team on a Greyhound charter for the 19-hour trip to Southern California.

We took second in the unarmed category. Toward the end of the year, I had a line on some Enfield rifles through Big 5 Sporting Goods, but limited funding and the red tape required to acquire working rifles proved insurmountable that year. Charles Woods took over as commander for the following year and took the team to the next level.

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-Alexandre Dumas, The Three Musketeers**

First Armed Exhibition Drill With Rifles in 30 Years!: 1999-2000

Contributor: Maj. Anselmo Nunez '00

The Silver Talons started out the Academic Year 1999 – 2000 as an unarmed team under the command of Cadet. Barela. In May 1999, Col. Snider, the PAS, learned of a new AFROTC program that enabled AFROTC Detachments to procure demilitarized rifles for drill teams at no cost to the requesting organization. Det 685 applied for the rifles and the team would await their delivery – which took almost a year.



1999-2000 Drill Team Under the Command of Cadet Anselmo Nunez (center). First Armed Drill with Rifles in 30 Years.

Determined to get things moving, Cadet Anselmo Nunez took over as drill team commander in January 2000 and arrangements

were made to borrow 60-year-old bolt action Springfield rifles from the Army ROTC unit. The rifles remained in the Army ROTC armory and were checked out/in for practice on a daily basis. The team, working from an old Army drill manual, began practicing armed regulation drill, followed by development of a silent, armed exhibition drill sequence. In April 2000, the team put on their silent exhibition drill sequence for Cadre and AFROTC alumni from the Class of 65. This was the first armed rifle exhibition drill by the Silver Talons in 30 years – a major step forward in drill team history.

The historic 1999 – 2000 Silver Talon team was composed of 16 members. They were: Anselmo Nunez, Brandon Thaler, Brent Freeman, Brian Clune, Casey McCoy, Trent Simshauser, Joel Quintana, Jodi Wilson, Jody Wynans, Cary Johnson, Rebecca Holcomb, Jeff Wuethrich, Matthew Sims, Seth Scott, Aaron Morris, Travis Tubbs and Casey MacPherson.

**“All for one and one for all, united we stand, divided we fall”
-Alexandre Dumas, The Three Musketeers**



**1999-2000 Silver
Talons Drill Team
Outside McArthur
Field House**

**“All for one and one for all, united we stand, divided we fall!”
-Alexandre Dumas, *The Three Musketeers***

Team Wins at Southern California Drill Meet Competition: 2001-2002

Contributor: 1st Lt. Mathew Sims

The Silver Talon Drill Team in 2001-2002 was commanded by Cadet Mathew Sims and consisted of a Full Armed Team of 12 members.

The team competed in the armed (with rifles) category of the Southern California Invitational Drill Meet competition 2 Mar 2002 for the first time in the history of the Silver Talons.

Funding for SCIDM was quite a challenge. Team members raised money to cover the motel bill by working as parking attendants at OSU home football and basketball games. The Det managed to scrape up enough money to cover two rental vans for the 1800 mile round trip from Corvallis to Huntington Beach, CA and back. Major Wenschlag and Capt Welborn accompanied the team and, due to Det 685 funds limitations, paid for their own lodging and meals. Alumni fund-raising paid for rifle slings for the demilitarized, M-1 rifles that the Det had ordered, at no cost, for the team. Drill team members were responsible for their own food and incidental expenses. It was a true team effort, which took a lot of heavy lifting on everyone's part.

Over 700 students representing about 35 high schools, colleges and universities participated in SCIDM 2002. The competition was broken into two divisions, Junior level for high school teams and Senior level for college/university teams. The Full Armed Teams in each division participated in three phases of competition: inspection, regulation drill and exhibition drill. The Silver Talons placed third in inspection and fourth in sweepstakes - overall. The team did a great job representing the Det, the Cadet Corps and OSU.

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**Silver Talon Full
Armed Team
Competing in Armed
Exhibition Drill in
SCIDM**

In addition, the Silver Talons marched in the Iris Parade on Saturday, 18 May 2002. This was the first time in over 30 years that the team performed armed, exhibition drill, with rifles in a parade. The

parade has been an annual event in Keizer, on the outskirts of Salem, for the last 53 years. It is the second largest parade in Oregon. In 2002 it consisted of about 130 floats, in addition to Rodeo princesses, marching bands, Cub Scouts, Ronald McDonald, a giant bowling pin, a smoking volcano and many other entries. Over 25,000 spectators viewed the parade. The drill team was well received by the crowd and did a great job representing the Det and AFROTC at OSU.



**Silver Talons
Commanded by Cadet
Mathew Sims in
Iris Parade**

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-Alexandre Dumas, The Three Musketeers**

Silver Talons Major Winners at SCIDM: 2002-2003

Contributor: Kevin Hummert

Thirty-two new cadets showed up on Friday, 2 Oct 2002 for the Silver Talons orientation. Of these, approximately 17 signed up for the team. The ST were hoping they could recruit more, but not all of those present were willing to make the commitment to attend the practice session three times a week from 0600 – 0800. The 17 new cadets were in addition to approximately 10 returning members for a total of roughly 27 Silver Talons. This was a significant increase from the 10 members they had at the end of last school year.

Due to the good recruiting results, the Silver Talons expanded to three separate teams: a four cadet Special Operations Team (SOT), a 12-15 cadet Full Armed Team (FAT) and a four cadet Saber team. All three teams performed armed, exhibition drill. In addition, the Special Operations Team and Saber Team performed additional duties as Color Guard. Cadet Burmeister commanded the Silver Talons while Cadet Hummert headed up the Full Armed Team; Cadet Long commanded the Saber Team and Cadet Sims lead the Special Operations Team.

Veterans Day was busy for the Silver Talons. Marching behind the OSU AFROTC banner, the Silver Talon Full Armed Team and Color Guard represented Det 685 in the Albany Veterans Day parade on 11 November 2002. The Color Guard was awarded second place in the Military Color Guard division. Cheers greeted both the Team and Color Guard as they marched down the parade route.

Safety during practice sessions became an issue when Ms. Robyn McClain knocked out her front teeth spinning a rifle during practice. It took 15 stitches to put her lip back together. As a result, the team started wearing mouth protectors during practice sessions.



Cadet Hummert took over as Silver Talon CC from Cadet Burmeister Winter Term.

Silver Talons and SCIDM Trophies

Over 700 students from all over the United States competed in SCIDM 2003. Competition was held in Junior (high school) and Senior (college, university, academy) divisions.

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Marine, Army, Air Force and Navy Drill Instructors did judging from their respective service basic training bases.

The Silver Talons made tremendous strides during the 2002-2003 year in preparing for SCIDM. In addition to drilling three days a week, from 0600-0800 hrs, they served in drill team leadership/staff positions and worked as parking attendants at home OSU basketball games to raise funds for the trip. In this respect, they were all winners.

Major Welborn, the Silver Talon Advisor, was successful in arranging airlift to SCIDM 2003 via C-23s with the Army National Guard unit at Salem, OR. It took two C-23s to airlift the team and all their equipment to Los Alamitos Army Airfield in Southern California, with a refueling stop at McClelland, CA. The C-23 cruised at 10,000 feet at 190 knots – not exactly a speed demon, but it certainly was an improvement over driving the 1800 mile round trip by van to SCIDM in 2002. The total flight time from Corvallis to Los Alamitos was about 5 hours.



Cadet Sims and 1st place trophy on flight back to Corvallis.

The Silver Talons were awarded four trophies at SCIDM competition in Huntington Beach, CA, 1 March 2003. The Special Ops 4 Cadet team, commanded by Cadet Sims, nailed down first place in 4 Person Exhibition Drill and third place in Color Guard. The Full Armed Team, commanded by Cadet Hummert, was awarded second place in Inspection and third place in Sweepstakes – an overall category which combines the team results in Inspection, Regulation and Exhibition categories. Quite a commendable achievement for a team that first drilled armed in April 2000.

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Silver Talons Disembarking from U.S. Army C-23 at Corvallis, OR, on return from SCIDM

In addition, the team participated in the Iris Parade for the second year in a row.



Silver Talons in Iris Parade

Silver Talons who participated in SCIDM 2003 were: Kevin Hummert, Kelly Mahar, George Long, Matthew Sims, Leslie Curry, Joe Franzen, Carl Hanauer, Scott Johnson, Robyn McClain, Kristen Oelkers, Isaiah Thomason, Jordan

Truitt, Kenneth Ise, Kazumi Udgawa, Amanda Wilson, Gabriel Wood, Nathan Jenkins, Jason Jones, Marcus Landrum, J Meinhard, Jennifer Johnson, Justin van Patten, Jenna Quintana and Bernardo Gonzaga.

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Silver Talons Significantly Increase Support of Det 685 Recruiting Efforts in 2003-2004

Contributor: Sean Haskell

The Silver Talons made a significant increase in exhibitions in support of OSU Air Force ROTC recruiting during the 2003 – 2004 school year.

Led by Cadet Meinhard, the Silver Talons performed the following:

1. The Full Armed Team and Color Guard marched in the Albany Veterans Day parade and were awarded first place in Military Marching Unit and Military Color Guard.
2. The Full Armed Team performed two exhibition drill during basketball game half times at area high schools
3. The Silver Talons entered five teams in the SCIDM competition at Huntington Beach, CA. These were the Full Armed Team, two Color Guards and two 4 Cadet Teams,
4. Performed parade exhibition drill in the Iris Day Parade in Keizer, OR behind the OSU Air Force ROTC Banner to ensure all spectators knew that the team and Color Guard represented Air Force ROTC at OSU.
5. Provided a Color Guard for a Mariner's baseball game in Seattle, WA.

The Silver Talons in 2003-2004 were organized into a Full Armed Team commanded by Cadet Meinhard, a Special Ops Team commanded by Cadet Jenkins and a Saber Team, led by Cadet Kazumi Udagawa. Later in the year, the Saber Team was taken over by Cadet Jonathan Lunasin so Ms. Udagawa could devote more time more time to the Cadet Staff.

If you were a season ticket holder for the home OSU football games, you probably noticed a change in the ROTC Color Guard that presented the colors on the field when the National Anthem was played prior to the start of the game. In years past, this honor has normally been performed by a Joint Service ROTC color guard composed of representatives from all of the OSU ROTC units. This year, the Silver Talons, due to their stellar performance at SCIDM in Southern California in March, 2003, were selected to perform this honor for the home OSU football games from October - December 2003. Presentation of the colors was divided between the Special Ops Team, commanded by Cadet Nathan Jenkins, and the Saber Team, commanded by Cadet Zumi Udagawa.

The drill team moved back into Oregon high schools, putting on half time exhibitions in support of OSU Air Force ROTC recruiting. The Full Armed Team, commanded by

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Cadet Meinhard, performed their silent exhibition drill routine at Crescent Valley High School on 20 February and at Corvallis High School on 24 February 2004. The routine was well received by the crowds at both high schools. This was a major step forward in Silver Talon support of Det 685 recruiting efforts and is an achievement in which each and every one of the Silver Talons can take a great deal of pride.

The team participated at the 39th annual SCIDM competition at Huntington Beach, CA on 6 March 2004. Almost 700 cadets and midshipmen representing over 30 high schools, colleges, universities and the Air Force Academy participated in SCIDM in 2004.



Silver Talon Full Armed Team in SCIDM Inspection Phase

The trip was not without its challenges. On 4 March, the day prior to team departure, the Army National Guard unit providing team airlift advised the Det that one of the two C-23s scheduled to airlift the team broke down and wouldn't be

available. The Det stepped up to the plate and funded a rental van to transport those cadets who couldn't fit on the remaining C-23. Col. Overholtzer, the PAS, flew down with the cadets on the C-23 while Lt. Col. Keith, the Silver Talon Advisor, drove down with the remainder of the team in the van. The entire team arrived Friday and was ready for competition Saturday morning.

The Silver Talons entered a Full Armed Team, a four-cadet exhibition rifle team, a four-cadet exhibition saber team and two color guards. The Special Ops Team did double duty as a four cadet exhibition rifle team and a color guard while four cadets from the Full Armed Team did triple duty as a saber team and color guard, in addition to performing with the Full Armed Team. All teams gave it their best shot but, unfortunately, none of them placed.

The Drill Team entered a Color Guard and Full Armed Team in the Iris Parade in Keizer, OR for the third year in a row.

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In June 2004 the Silver Talons Provided a Color Guard at the Mariner's Game in Seattle, Washington

The Full Armed Team consisted of Tyler Awakuni, Danielle Dayton, Elizabeth Spencer, Brian Jorgenson, Jonathon Lunasin, Amanda Wilson, Corey Brown, Ben Rotz, Sean Haskell and Heather Keller.

The Special Ops Team was composed of Junstin Van Patten, Corey Brown, Ben Rotz and Leslie Curry while the Saber Team was made up of Jonathon Lunasin, Brian Jorgenson, Elizabeth Spencer and Sean Haskell.

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Sweepstake Champions at SCIDM: 2004-2005!

Contributor: Chance Hansen

Under the command of Cadet Leslie Curry, the Silver Talons participated in the Albany Veterans Day parade on 11 November 2004.

The parade is the largest Veterans Day parade west of the Mississippi. This year over 200 military and civilian units participated and were viewed by about 40,000 spectators.

The Saber Team, commanded by Cadet Jorgenson, placed second in the Color Guard division while the Full Armed Team, commanded by Cadet Curry, placed second in the Military Marching Unit category.



Silver Talons on Albany Courthouse Steps for Award Ceremony Following the Veterans Day Parade

The parade was an excellent experience for the team. According to Cadet Hansen, “While marching in the parade, you could hear many people saying “Thank you” for serving our country, which resulted

in a very proud feeling in the cadets who marched in the parade.”

The Veterans Day Parade in Albany was followed by preparation for SCIDM 2005 in Southern California. As part of this effort, the Full Armed Team performed their exhibition drill routine at Crescent High School during a basketball game half time 18 Feb 2005. This gave the team experience performing in front of a large crowd.

The Full Armed Team ramped up their practice sessions Winter Term in preparation for the Southern California Invitational Drill Meet (SCIDM) competition in March 2005. The Full Armed Team outscored the Air Force Academy Drill Team in a hard fought contest for 1st place “Sweepstakes Championships” in the 40th Annual SCIDM competition, 6 March 2005, in Huntington Beach, CA. They also took home 2nd in Exhibition and 3rd place in Inspection. In addition, Ms. Danielle Dayton finished 1st in the Individual Drill Down competition.

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**Cadet Leslie Curry
Accepts 1st Place
Sweepstakes Trophy for
the Silver Talon Full
Armed Team at SCIDM
2005 edging out the Air
Force Academy which
placed second.**

The first place win over the Air Force Academy involved the Silver Talons edging out the highly experienced Upper Class Team as opposed to the 4th Class (freshmen)

Team that usually competes in SCIDM. This year, due to a reorganization, the Air Force Academy 4th Class Team was unable to attend and the more experienced Upper Class Drill Team represented the Air Force Academy in their place.

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Silver Talons 2005 SCIDM Sweepstakes Championship Team. Silver Talons in the team picture are, left to right, first row: Elizabeth Spencer, Lindsey Hughes, Amanda Wilson, Leslie Curry, David Eggleston, Benjamin Rotz and Noah Hoiland. Second Row, left to right: Brad Christensen, Seth Jefferson, Marques Alexander, Adam Friedrichsen, Michale Willis, Danielle Dayton, Chance Hansen, Nicholas Cowan, Adam Miles, Corey Brown and Derek Han.

SCIDM is the second largest drill competition in the nation, involving over 800 cadets. The competition is organized into Junior (High School) and Senior (College, University and Academy) Divisions. Over 18 colleges, universities and the Air Force Academy were represented in the Senior Division this year. Judges were drill instructors from Lackland AFB, Texas.

The Army Guard C-23 unit in Salem, OR, which provided airlift for the team last year, was unable to support the Silver Talons at SCIDM 2005 due to their deployment schedule. The Det was able to borrow a van from the USN ROTC Det at OSU and one of the cadets borrowed his parents SUV. Between both vehicles, the Full Armed and Special Ops Teams were able to travel to Southern California, with an overnight at Willow on the way down and at Redding on the return trip. Due to the increased cost resulting from the overnights on the drive down and back, each cadet was assessed \$30.00 to help defray motel costs. Income from the Silver Talon Endowment Account

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made up the difference between what the cadets were able to raise through the parking program, what they were assessed and total expenses.

Col. Cochran, the Professor of Air Science (PAS) and Lt. Ball, the Silver Talon Advisor, accompanied the team. This is the first time that the PAS has traveled with the team to SCIDM during his first year on the job. It shows a high level of interest and tremendous support for the Silver Talons by the cadre. Again, due to Det 685 funds limitations, both officers had to pay for their own lodging and meals.

According to Col. Cochran, “We are very proud of our Silver Talon cadets. They worked very hard and practiced for months in preparation for this competition. They did their best...and it paid off!”

The trip was quite expensive for Col. Cochran. When the team beat out the Air Force Academy for 1st place, Sweepstakes, Col. Cochran volunteered to take the entire team out to dinner at one of the better steak houses in Huntington Beach. According to the Colonel, “It was worth every penny to edge out the Air Force Academy!”

For the second year in a row, the Silver Talons participated in the Iris Parade in Keizer, OR, in front of over 25,000 spectators.

Team members participating in SCIDM 2005 were: Leslie Curry, David Eggleston, Chance Hansen, Nicholas Cowan, Elizabeth Spencer, Danielle Dayton, Adam Mills, Lindsey Hughes, Brad Christensen, Seth Jefferson, Marques Alexander, Michael Willis, Adam Friedrichsen, Derek Han, Moah Hoiland, Corey Brown and Benjamin Rotz.

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Silver Talons Focus on Teambuilding: 2005-2006

Contributor: Cara Miller

The Special Ops Team got off to an early start a full three weeks prior to classes by organizing and participating in the Joint Service Color Guard (JSCG) for OSU home football games.

Following up on this, the Silver Talon Full Armed Team nailed down 1st place in the Military Marching Unit while the Color Guard was awarded 2nd place in the Albany Veterans Day Parade, 11 Nov 2005.

The Veterans Day Parade is held in Albany, Oregon, every year. This year, with over 190 entries, it was one of the largest Veterans Day Parades held West of the Mississippi. Normally about 40,000 spectators watch the parade.

According to Cadet Dayton, the Silver Talon Commander, “Both the Color Guard and the flight looked sharp. The flight executed their short choreographed routine beautifully. The Color Guard demonstrated their amazing stamina considering the substantial wind and biting cold. C/Spencer and C/Rotz have both done an amazing job with their teams. I am very proud of all of the Silver Talons.”



Color Guard and Full Armed Team in Albany Veterans Day Parade

This year the Full Armed Team developed a parade exhibition drill routine called “Confusion.” There was a lot of support from the spectators during the parade, especially during the performance of Confusion, with calls of “Go Air Force!” clapping and cheers. According to Cadet Cara Miller, “There was one time when we were doing Confusion and when I turned to face the crowd, I was looking

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straight into the eyes of a Veteran. He looked straight at us and simply nodded – it was a silent, but powerful statement”



Drill Team Performing “Confusion” Sequence, Albany Veterans Day Parade

Preparation for the SCIDM 2006 was almost derailed by the loss of about 50% of the Silver Talons due to grades and physical

fitness testing at the end of Fall Term. The team quickly consolidated the Special Operations Team with the remaining Full Armed Team, recruited three new members for a total of nine Full Armed Team members plus a commander and focused on SCIDM preparation.

Even though the team did not bring home any trophies, they accomplished much of what they set out to do. According to Cadet Dayton, Silver Talon CC, “SCIDM was a team building event. The cadets spend hours polishing their shoes, cleaning their rifles, brushing up on warrior knowledge and ironing their uniforms. The team lived, thought

and breathed drill team all throughout winter term. Their determination and focus was tested.”



Silver Talon Color Guard Competing in SCIDM

Getting to SCIDM this year was a challenge. Unfortunately, the Det was unable to provide rental vans, as they have in the past, due to budget limitations.

The attempt to obtain airlift support from the C-23 Army National Guard unit at Salem, OR, drew a blank because the unit was on 90 day stand down following a deployment. The Silver Talons funded the rental of a van from the State of Oregon motor pool which, together with

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Capt. Ball's (the drill team advisor) POV, provided transportation to/from SCIDM in Huntington Beach, CA. The Silver Talons paid for gas for both vehicles, in addition to BOQ expenses for two nights at Los Alamitos Joint Forces Training Base in Southern California. The good thing about the BOQ was that each cadet had their own bed, nobody had to sleep on the floor and the cost to the team was much less than the Huntington Beach motels they have stayed at in the past.

As happened in prior years, Hq ROTC declined to provide TDY funds for cadre accompanying the team. Thus, Capt Ball had to pay his own way, just like he and Col. Cochran did last year at SCIDM 2005. The team was able to drive straight through in one day, from Corvallis to Huntington Beach, switching drivers and thus avoided an additional night of motel expenses. However, on the way back, I-5 was closed due to snow and they were forced to RON in Redding, CA.

Cadets making the trip to SCIDM 2006 included Elizabeth Spencer, Nick Cowan, Nicole Baker, Nicole Jones, Adam Miles, Sean Peters, Chance Hansen, Danielle Dayton, Ryan Whitmore, Joe Green, and Adam Friedrichsen.



For the 3rd year in a row, the Silver Talon Color Guard participated in the Iris Parade.

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-Alexandre Dumas, *The Three Musketeers***

A Year of Accomplishments: 2006-2007

Contributor: Ben Gerling

The Silver Talons were awarded first place in the military marching unit and third place in color guard categories in the Veterans Day Parade in Albany, Oregon.



Silver Talons Color Guard and Full Armed Team Participate in Albany Veterans Day Parade.

According to Ben Gerling, Silver Talon CC, “The entire team did an excellent job of

conducting themselves in a way that bespeaks the tradition of excellence that the

Silver Talons Drill Team is known for. They stayed locked on and professional throughout more than an hour of waiting in the pouring rain for the parade to begin, and were so proud to be

recognizing the veterans of our great country that I never heard one word of complaint from any of them. It is truly a pleasure to command them.”

The three hour parade included leather clad motor cycle clubs, military re-enactors, eleven marching bands, Oregon National Guardsmen, ROTC units, helicopter and fighter jet flyovers.

“Thank you for your service!” was a common refrain among the crowds lining the parade route, in addition to a few, “Wow’s” as the flight performed the “spiral” (left flank, right flank, double to the rear, change step, change step). About 40,000 spectators viewed the parade.

The Silver Talons instituted a new program Winter Term that resulted in a significant increase in retention. Last academic year, over 50% of the team was lost at the end of

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Winter Term due to academics, physical fitness and leaving the Air Force ROTC program. This severely impacted the team and it was only through a tremendous effort on the part of the team leadership that new members were recruited and the team was held together. This year, only 16% were lost, quite an improvement in only one year.

According to Mr. Ben Gerling, the Silver Talon CC, the following steps were taken (the nickname for this program was “The Three Musketeers” as in, “All for one and one for all., united we stand, divided we fall”

- “From the beginning of recruiting for the team, we emphasized the importance of grades above all else and the importance of physical fitness.”
- “At every practice, cadets were reminded to study and work out, as well as encouraged to ask for help from the commanders in either area.”
- “The team commanders held multiple conversations with the cadets about grades and study habits, and team members were encouraged to speak up if they were having troubles, so they could get academic help from other team members or have the assistance of other team members in locating tutoring support for them.”
- “We instituted a mandatory physical training session each week during which the cadets went through a rigorous workout as well as team bonding.”
- “Perhaps our most successful approach was the way we presented membership on the Silver Talon Team as being something special, something that they had to work hard to keep; this helped inspire each cadet to push themselves and the rest of the team to do their best.”

The Silver Talons won third place in Regulation Drill at the Southern California Invitational Drill Meet (SCIDM) competition, 3 March at Huntington Beach, CA.

Getting to SCIDM this year, as usual, was a challenge. The attempt to obtain airlift support from the C-23 Army National Guard unit at Salem, OR, was not successful because the unit didn’t have the required number of flying hours left this quarter to support the flight. Det 685 was unable to provide vans, as they have in the past, due to budget limitations. The Silver Talons funded the rental of two vans from the State of Oregon motor pool in Salem to cover the 1800 mile round trip to/from SCIDM in Huntington Beach, CA. The team drove straight through covering 900 miles in one day, switching drivers, and thus avoided an additional night of motel expenses. The same approach was used on the return trip

The team also paid for hotel expenses for three nights in Huntington Beach. They were originally scheduled to stay at the Los Alamitos Joint Forces Training Base BOQ, which is less expensive than motels downtown, but lost the rooms at the last minute due to higher priority Army unit training requirements.

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The Special Operations Team, commanded by Cadet Adam Miles, entered the 4 Person Exhibition Drill and Color Guard events. The Full Armed Team, lead by Cadet Chance Hansen, competed in the Inspection, Regulation Drill and Exhibition Drill events. The Full Armed Team brought home the 3rd place trophy in Regulation Drill.



**Cadet Chance Hansen,
Full Armed Team/CC,
Accepting 3rd Place
Trophy for Regulation
Drill**

Spring term shaped up as a busy period for the Silver Talons.

The Silver Talons performed Color Guard ceremonies for Saturday home baseball games for the OSU baseball team. They plan on making

this a tradition. Doing an Air Force only, as opposed to a Joint Service, Color Guard at these games gets Air Force ROTC out in front of the public and is a very effective recruiting tool.



**Special Operations
Team Color Guard
Opening OSU Ball
Game**

In addition, on 17 April the team performed Color Guard ceremonies to open the session for both the Oregon State Senate and House of Representatives in honor of OSU Day at the State Capital.

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-Alexandre Dumas, The Three Musketeers**

On 21 & 22 April, the Special Operations Team performed Color Guard ceremonies in front of over 2,000 spectators at the Columbia Empire Volleyball Association Regional Club Tournament hosted at Oregon State.

For Mom's Weekend on 4-6 May, the Special Operations Team performed in the Memorial Union Quad and the remainder of the Silver Talons performed in small groups around campus for different AFROTC recruiting events.



The Special Ops Team lead the Iris Day parade in Keizer, OR on 19 May as the official color guard for the second year in a row.

More than 30,000 spectators watched the Silver Talons lead the parade this year. The Iris parade is the second largest parade in Oregon, both in terms of parade entries and total spectators, according to the Keizer Chamber of Commerce. This was the 4th year in a row that the Silver Talons participated in the parade.

According to Mr. Ben Gerling, Silver Talon/CC, "We got a minute long introduction by the reviewing stand that was also being broadcast live over a radio station that broadcasts to the entire mid Willamette Valley area."

This was the 5th year in a row that the

team has participated in the parade.

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Silver Talons Bring Home the Gold from SCIDM: 2012-2013

Cadet Haley Olsen “Southern California Invitational Drill Meet (SCIDM),” Det 685

In 2013, the Oregon State University’s Silver Talons Drill Team overcame countless obstacles throughout their competition season, with losing members and constantly struggling to find practice space. However, they successfully put on several excellent performances to establish a national presence in their effort to recruit the “best and the brightest” into Air Force ROTC at OSU.

The Silver Talons participated in the annual Veterans Day parade in Albany, OR. The parade is the largest Veterans Day parade west of the Mississippi. This year over 200 military and civilian units participated and were viewed by about 40,000 spectators. The OSU Navy ROTC unit took home 1st place in Regulation marching, while the Silver Talons brought home 2nd place.



Silver Talon drill team at SCIDM 2013 with 1st place trophies in Regulation Drill, Inspection and Sweepstakes. Silver Talon Drill Team Members, L to R, Rows 1, and 2. Back Row: Rachel Nelke, Jeremy Tornbom, Kevin Dunlap, Richard Martin, Graham Anderson, Matthew Long, Caleb Holt, Tyler Koistinen, Nick Abdou, Mike McNicholas, Nick Miller. Front Row: Lindsay Locke, Tora Cobb, Sam Collier, Abigail Merkel, Arron Bellini, Aaron Koon, Robert Magill, Alex Suttle.

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-Alexandre Dumas, The Three Musketeers**

The Full Armed Team ramped up their practice sessions Winter Term in preparation for the Southern California Invitational Drill Meet (SCIDM) competition in March 2012.

The Full Armed Team was looking forward repeating their hard fought contest for “Sweepstakes Championship” (First place overall) when they edged out the Air Force Academy Drill Team in the 40th Annual SCIDM competition, 6 March 2005, in Huntington Beach, CA. In that competition they also took home 2nd in Exhibition and 3rd place in Inspection.

This year they managed to come back with not one, but three 1st place trophies. The team fought their way to the top getting first place in the Regulation, and Inspection events, which helped them also bring home 1st place, Sweepstakes (overall team award).



The Silver Talons Full Armed Flight celebrates their 3 trophy win with their Team Commander, Cadet Arron Bellini.

The competition was very challenging, with USMC Drill Instructors from the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, judging the tea



Typical example of SCIDM Inspection Phase judging by Drill Instructors from the USMC Recruit Depot, San Diego, CA, (Cadet Alyson Dunlap, SCIDM 2011)

“Looking back, the Southern California Invitational Drill Meet was undoubtedly the most fun I’ve had this past year. Between the 17-hour car rides, the sunny day at the beach, and the competition,

this will definitely be an experience that I will remember for the rest of my life. Even the

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parts of the trip that seem like they would be the most boring were fun. As a team, we made the most of every moment, and I feel that we have bonded in a way that would have not been possible with our trip to SCIDM. The only negative thing I can about our trip was that it wasn't long enough."

-Jeremy Tornbom, STDT Full Armed Flight

"I had heard from older cadets that SCIDM would be one of the best weekends of my year. I had a hard time believing that a 17-hour van ride to Los Angeles would qualify, but I was proven wrong. All of the jokes that were made, the songs that were sung, and the beautiful views made SCIDM 2013 a memorable experience. The adversity our team was able to overcome over the course of one week was incredible so when we received that first place trophy, it was more than just a sign of the execution of our performance but also a symbol of the strength of our team. All of our hard work had paid off. I will always remember this season for its extreme ups and extreme downs and how we powered through and became the champions of SCIDM 2013."

-Rachel Nelke, STDT Full Armed Flight

"This year was my second time attending the Southern California Invitational Drill Meet to compete. I knew what to expect as far as how the meet was ran and the location, but it is always a different experience each year because of the new cadets around you. The part I most enjoyed about my SCIDM experience this year as well as the honor guard year as a whole was how close we all came together and how much we bonded as a team. At the beginning of the year, I didn't know very much about my teammates Nick Miller and Kevin Dunlap, but after all we have been through we are definitely very good friends"

-Matthew Long, STDT Honor Guard

Other Silver Talon events during the 2012-2013 School Year:

- 2013 June Color Guard – Commencement
- 2013 May MU Quad Performance
- 2013 April Color Guard – Track Meet
- 2013 March Wing Performance
- 2013 February SCIDM – Los Angeles, CA (First Place)
- 2012 November Albany Veteran's Day Parade (2nd Place)
- 2012 November Albany Color Guard Performance (2nd Place)
- 2012 November Color Guard – Volleyball Game
- 2012 November Joint Color Guard – Football Game
- 2012 November Lebanon JROTC Competition Judging
- 2012 October / November (6) Weekends of Parking Duty Fundraiser
- 2012 October Joint Color Guard – Football Game
- 2012 October Drill Team ETE
- 2012 September Joint Color Guard – Football Game
- 2012 June Wedding Performance – LT Durbin

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Silver Talon Drill Team has a Tremendous 2015-2016 Season

Cadet Capt. Gager, STDT/CC



Cadet Bransfield holding the Air Force Flag in a Joint Color Guard Unit Composed of OSU Cadets and Midshipmen from all four military branches

The Silver Talons Drill Team (STDT) had one motto at the beginning of the fall that carried it throughout the entire year: “The juice is worth the squeeze”! Under the supervision of the Silver Talons Drill Team Commander, Cadet Gager, and Vice Silver Talons Drill Team Commander Cadet Derek LaFave, the Drill Team grew dramatically in size from the past year and went on to do some amazing things through the concept of working hard to achieve the end goal.

The STDT grew from 12 cadets in 2014-2015 to 20 cadets in 2015-2016. Having the additional cadets allowed the Drill Team to incorporate and train a special 4-Man team and a Full Arm Flight for our biggest annual event, the Southern Invitational California Drill Meet, also known as SCIDM. As they prepared for SCIDM, the Drill Team had many opportunities to reach out to the community and perform.

The very first event performed by the Team was presenting the colors before the French Legion of Honour Award was presented to Carl Gustafson, an OSU alumni who served in WWII. The cadets were honored to meet such a distinguished veteran and assist on his special day. (Note: per Wikipedia, The Legion of Honour, full name National Order of the Legion of Honour (French: Ordre national de la Légion d'honneur), is the highest French order for military and civil merits, established 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte.)

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Commented [J1]: How do you get “around” is it 19, 20, 21? Was there a final number? (Kathie)

The entire Drill Team had the opportunity to march in the Albany Veterans Day Parade. As the Drill Team members marched through the streets of Albany, people on both sides of the street rose to their feet to respect the Color Guard Unit as it passed. It was truly a humbling experience considering that many of these parade viewers were veterans themselves. The Drill Team placed 1st overall for the best military marching unit in the parade.

The Drill Team also had the opportunity to present the Colors at multiple basketball games and even provided a Saber Arch at the wedding of a 2nd Lt. from the Air Force Academy.

One of the really fun and helpful events this year was the performance for former Oregon State AFROTC alumni. Organized by Lt. Col Paul Jones, USAF (Ret), this was the first OSU Air Force ROTC alumni reunion since the AFROTC unit was established in 1948. The performance became a critical tool in preparing the Full Arm Flight and 4-Man team for their performance at SCIDM. It was the first time both teams performed their routines and felt the pressure from a large audience.



Full Armed and 4-Cadet Teams, Santiam Christian School gym. Back row, L to R: Cadets Wood, Ferguson, Giles, Hernandez, Letz, Dysle, Neuman, Bransfield, Farley and Ross. Front row, L to R: Cadets Gager (STDT/CC) Houdshell, Blue, Weiss, Soloff, Fraga, Mollohan, Younk, Davis and LaFave (STDT/CV)

The trip to SCIDM was a long 14-hour drive via vans. These vans were full of gear; packed and loaded by the Team prior to departure. When they finally arrived in Los Angeles, it was time to bond as a team and preform as a unit. And most importantly, it was time to have fun. The SDTC members spent the day practicing warrior knowledge and spinning rifles, and the night was equally busy preparing uniforms for inspection the

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Commented [J2]: Repetitive from previous statement. Kathie

next day. As the competition day was underway, the Drill Team worked hard to build confidence and morale before both the Full Arm Flight and the 4-Man team went to compete. At the end of the day, the 4-Man team did not win any hardware, but the Full Arm Flight was awarded 3rd place overall for a Senior ROTC Full-Team! The team had a great trip and a great experience that brought everyone closer together.

Commented [J3]: Not sure what the regardless of hardware" issue was about, and therefore I deleted this as unnecessary. Kathie



Silver Talon 4-Cadet and Full Armed Flight drill teams at SCIDM. 2nd Row, L to R: Cadets Jason Ross, Maxwell Dysle, Robert Ferguson, Tyler Bransfield, Brennan Giles, Joshua Blue, Dylan Farley, Cody Wood, Chris Neuman. 1st Row, L to R: Cadets Kyle Gager (STDT/CC), Elijah Weiss, Katelyn Mollohan, Davis Andrew, Caleb Younk, Joseph Houdshell, Tristin Fraga, Jacob Soloff, Alexander Hernandez, Trent Letz, and Derek LaFave (STDT/CV).

According to Mr. Gager, Silver Talon Commander, "Being the Silver Talons Drill Team Commander was one of the most amazing experiences that I have had in college. It showed me how much can be accomplished in such a short amount of time. The position tested me a lot, but gave me one of the greatest teams that a commander could have asked for. I look forward to handing off the Drill Team to the next commander and seeing the legacy of the Silver Talons Drill Team continue."

Commented [J4]: He used the word "amazing " three times in the article. One of those words was changed to something similar. Kathie

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