

## **Military March at Carnival**

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The Reilly Student Recreation Center at Tulane University buzzed with military activity on Friday (Feb. 12) as dozens of ROTC units gathered for a national event that commands attention in ROTC circles ? the annual Mardi Gras Drill Meet.



Lined up and ready for their drill event, the University of Southern California ROTC unit participates in the Tulane Mardi Gras Drill Meet. (Photos by Ryan Rivet).

At stake are "trophies and a lot of personal pride that goes along with the trophies, bragging rights and such," says Terence Sanders, a Tulane sophomore and member of the university's Navy ROTC unit.

Sanders is officer-in-charge of the annual [Tulane meet](#), which usually draws more than 50 ROTC units from colleges and universities, coast to coast.

The blizzard in the Northeast is keeping some at home, he says, but planners still welcomed more than 40 competitors.

Normally held outdoors on the football fields behind the Reilly Center, the

competition had to move indoors because of New Orleans' own weather problems, including rain and sleet from a frigid winter storm.



Synchronized steps matter as the University of Nebraska ROTC unit competes at Tulane.

Schools with intensive drill team traditions, such as Texas A&M University, bring their top ROTC units to the meet, but that's only part of the draw to New Orleans. Many of the ROTC groups who compete at the drill meet also march in Mardi Gras parades during their visit at the height of the Carnival season.

Judged by top marine drill sergeants from across the nation, the competition began at 7 a.m. and ended at 4 p.m., with each ROTC unit taking 15 minutes each in six categories.

They take part in platoon inspection; platoon drill ("precise walk down with coordinated official movements," Sanders says); platoon exhibition drill ("fancy spinning rifles ? the more colorful side"); color guard; squad drill; and individual exhibition drill ("one person in his own routine").

"A lot of universities care about this drill meet and gauge their progress off the drill meet," Sanders says.

The Tulane Navy ROTC unit always competes as well, last year earning third place overall.

