



Air Force Installation & Mission Support Center



Security Forces Defender Challenge

The Defender Challenge is a legacy competition, hosted by the Air Force Security Forces career field, that tests physical endurance, teamwork and core operational skills between Air Force major commands to crown a winning team and several individual award winners. The Air Force Security Forces Center, a primary subordinate unit of the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center, plans, programs and conducts the competition with the support of major commands and security forces training units.



Rich History

The 42-year-old competition traces its origins to [Warrior Challenge](#) and Peacekeeper Challenge that tested the skill sets of Defenders. The competitions focused on marksmanship, teamwork, nighttime tactical events and physical endurance through obstacle courses, some dressed in Mission Oriented Protective Posture gear.

The Competition Returns

Following a 14-year hiatus because of the Air Force's operational environment, the competition returned Sept. 10-13, 2018, at Joint Base San Antonio-Camp Bullis, Texas. Going in to the competition, the team trophy, the Sadler Cup, was held by a team from Great Britain who had won the last competition in 2004. The Sadler Cup is named after Maj. Gen. Thomas Sadler who served as Air Force Chief of Security Police from 1975-1977.

Before the competition, then Air Force Director of Security Forces Brig. Gen. Andrea Tullos said it was designed to develop more lethal and capable security forces Airmen. "We need to stimulate competition in every squadron so that every new Defender wants to be a more proficient shooter, wants to master our tactics, techniques, and procedures, and wants to represent their squadron and their major command at Defender Challenge," the general said.

The 2018's Defender Challenge pitted 13 teams from U.S. Air Force major commands and Germany against each other to test their skills in realistic weapons scenarios, simulated dismounted operations and combat endurance events. The [2018 Defender Challenge crowned](#) Pacific Air Forces as the winning team followed by Air Combat Command and Air Force Materiel Command.



The competition, planned as a biennial event, was then postponed in 2020 due to the 2019 Coronavirus pandemic.

2023 Defender Challenge

With safety precautions still in place, Defender Challenge is set to return Oct. 23-27, 2023, at Fort Bliss, Texas, home to the AFSFC's Desert Defender Ground Combat Readiness Training Center.

Your Success is Our Mission

"The fight of yesterday looks different than what is needed for the fight of tomorrow," said current Air Force Director of Security Forces Brig. Gen. Thomas Sherman. "Strategic competition is our primary national security challenge. Events like Defender Challenge are paramount to our career field's success.

"Ultimately, competition makes us better, competition brings us together and competition fosters warfighting trust amongst all members of the team."

FAQs

How does the competition benefit the Security Forces career field and the Department of the Air Force?

It tests the physical endurance and core operational skills of Security Forces Defenders. Moreover, the competition bolsters Defender ethos, strengthens esprit-de-corps and reinforces the competitive nature within the forces of all participants.

How do you determine who competes?

Major commands are provided with a warning order months before the competition to allow them time to determine their best-of-the-best competitors to represent them.

What are some of the events that take place?

Competitors will participate in a wide range of physical agility events. Events consist of basic tactical movements, live -fire weapons firing (pistol, rifle and machine gun) and response to imminent threat scenarios that are timed and scored for accuracy.

What awards are given at the end of the competition?

Individual and team awards will be presented for Weapons Proficiency, Tactical Proficiency, Fitness Prowess, Rucking Stamina and the Sadler Trophy, presented to the winning team, based on the cumulation of points from all events.

Where can I go to find out more information about the Air Force Security Forces Center?

Visit the AFSFC's web site at www.afsfc.af.mil for more information on these events as well as other AFSFC news and information. For career-field wide Defender information, follow the Office of Air Force Security Forces Facebook page at www.facebook.com/AFDefenders.



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