



# CSSD Chronicle



A regular publication of information and news about Court Support Services  
Division

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## *Drilling Never Looked So Good! Hartford Detention Has Special Show*

On August 6<sup>th</sup>, 52 children at the Hartford Juvenile Detention Center were able to witness something that they may never have an opportunity to see again. The Angel Drill Team, a world renowned girls' step and drill team from North Chicago, Illinois put on a special performance in the Center's gymnasium under the direction of their founder, SMC Nathaniel Hamilton, USN (retired). The team performs synchronized rifle-toss and twirl maneuvers while marching in precision military fashion and is comprised of ten girls, ages 9-16. CSSD Juvenile Detention Officer Roderick Maxwell, himself a Navy veteran, knew about the team. With the support of Deputy Superintendent David Chapman, Maxwell contacted Drill Team Coordinator, Patrick Butler and the Team agreed to visit the facility for a demonstration during their travels in this area.

**BACKGROUND:** The Angel Drill Team was established in 1967 by Chief Hamilton, who believes for children to be the best they can be and get the most out of life, they need to be taught discipline, self confidence, pride, motivation and consideration of others, all skills that he imparts in teaching and coaching the step and drill maneuvers and team dynamics. The original tryouts included boys and girls but when the group had to change practice sites, only four girls followed the Chief to the new site and so began the tradition of the "Angels" being an all girl team. Interest grew and the team increased in size. Broomsticks were initially used as rifles but over the years, financial support and sponsorship from local businesses has provided for the proper equipment, including uniforms. Ethnic diversity is encouraged and membership is open to all girls ages 9-17 from local schools and cities in the North Chicago area.

**NATIONAL RECOGNITION OVER A 40 YEAR HISTORY:** Since 1967, The Angels have traveled, performed and participated in parades and national competitions all over the country. There was a brief lull in their activities in 1969, when Chief Hamilton was deployed to Vietnam. Most of the team members remained together during his absence and in 1971 Chief Hamilton returned and the Angel Drill Team was reactivated. The Team has won over 600 trophies and citations and performed at places including the Apollo Theatre in New York City, at NAACP conventions, at naval bases in California, Illinois and CT, and for several national television networks.

**A GREAT TEACHING OPPORTUNITY:** CSSD Executive Director Bill Carbone was pleased to hear of the performance. "Positive role models, especially peer models, are very powerful examples to children. Bringing this kind of outside performance in to the Center was a very intentional programming effort that can pay big dividends." Deputy Superintendent David Chapman agrees that the team is a great structured activity for children because it teaches them discipline, self-confidence, pride, motivation and consideration of others. "Kids need to see similar kids doing positive things, things that they might do," he noted. "The team modeled positive ways to control behavior, something that our kids are struggling to do." The children gave them several standing ovations during the performance and were totally impressed. Some of their comments included "I was amazed at how well organized the Angel Drill Team was" and "I was thinking while watching the show....If I had that type of discipline, I would not be in detention." One young woman summed it up by saying "They showed a lot of courage and they didn't give up. They stuck with the drill and marched like proud young girls with their heads high!" **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**, contact David Chapman, Deputy Superintendent, Hartford Detention Center at 860-244-7962 or [David.Chapman@jud.ct.gov](mailto:David.Chapman@jud.ct.gov).



The Angel Drill team at the Hartford Juvenile Probation Center.

At left (in the rear) are CPO Roderick Maxwell and SMC Nathaniel Hamilton, USN (retired).

**Suggestions? Questions? Comments? Concerns? Contact us!**     [Rena.Goldwasser@jud.ct.gov](mailto:Rena.Goldwasser@jud.ct.gov)