



Rising Senior Cadets after completion of their summer training during Operation Agile Leader.

Bearkat BATTALION

Fall Introduction | 2020 | Sam Houston State University

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Adapting and Overcoming, Strength and Honor!

This is our first newsletter of the semester! The Bearkat Battalion has been busy throughout this summer. With accomplishments ranging from completion of Operation Agile Leader (OAL) to establishing the new Battalion Chain of Command. Through the hard work and dedication of our cadets and cadre we are beginning this semester off better and stronger than ever before!

Eat'em Up Kats!

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SHSU Faculty, ROTC Alumni, Local Community Supporters, and Families.

Greetings from the Bearkat Battalion and welcome to the start of the Fall 2020 Semester! We are off to a great start to the semester, as indicated by the release of this newsletter, a month earlier than previous years. Cadet Jarrod Massey, our newsletter cadet officer-in-charge deserves the credit for the initiative to publish this newsletter to “kick off the semester”. Jarrod along with our senior cohort, are eager to lead our program this year – this cohort is featured in this newsletter, along with this year’s Cadet Battalion Commander (Nikki Stone) and her eloquent introduction.

Before I discuss this upcoming year, I want to personally thank last year’s senior cohort for its outstanding leadership during COVID-19. These 20 Second Lieutenants left their mark on our program in many ways. These leaders placed additional emphasis on our mentoring program and this contributed to the 75% retention rate of our current sophomore cohort. This cohort also exhibited selflessness, by developing an \$800 scholarship “Once an Eagle” that a cadet will be awarded during the current academic year. Finally, the epitome of selfless service was exhibited by last year’s Cadet Battalion Commander and now Second Lieutenant Prescott King. I informed Prescott that he was going to be awarded the Superior MSIV – LTC Etheredge Award that included a \$1000 check. Prescott declined to accept the check and requested that we provide this money to two of our underclassmen cadets during the Fall 2020 Semester. Well done team – proud to have served with each one of you!

As previously stated, our current senior cohort is eager to lead this year’s cadets. We are elated to currently have exactly 100 cadets in our program. This is especially impressive, considering the current environment. I have extreme confidence in our senior cohort as they have always displayed outstanding teamwork as underclassmen. This cohort performed remarkably during our summer Operation Agile Leader Field Training Exercise, along with 6 sister universities. I was personally sought out by cadre from other universities as they lauded the efforts of our cadets. Our seniors are already developing initiatives to lead in the current environment, to include a modified engaged training plan for our freshmen cohort. Let’s go!!

In closing, I want to personally thank the SHSU administration and faculty for the continued support of our cadets. SHSU has been extremely understanding and flexible to our cadets and their training requirements. I also want to thank our community partners who have been very accepting that our cadets are unable to support some of our community events, as we must adhere to SHSU and Department of Defense social distance measures. We are looking forward to a great year and continuing to develop tomorrow’s future leaders. Go Bearkats!



Strength and Honor!
Lieutenant Colonel Joe Contreras

Letter from The Cadet Battalion Commander

“My name is Nicole Stone, and I am your Bearkat Battalion Commander this coming year. I am excited and humbled to be in this position. Since my time as an MS1 in 2017, I have seen great examples of leadership in the cadre and from my fellow cadets. As I developed myself as a young leader, I acquired a passion to enact positive change to the program. Three years later, I was selected as Battalion Commander to lead my senior cohort as well as the ROTC program.



Cadet Battalion
Commander, CDT Nikki

Today, we find ourselves in unprecedented times with emergence of COVID-19. It has reshaped the landscape of how we function in society as well as how we continue to train physically and mentally. However, we must remain resilient and flexible in order to maintain the standards of developing ourselves and upholding the traditions of honor and integrity of those that have gone before us. This means that modifications to our normal classroom and training environment will take place in accordance with university coronavirus safety guidelines. Regardless of this historic pandemic it remains our duty to create and continue to mold the leaders of the United States Army of tomorrow.

As we prepare to embark on this journey together it is important to remember that without change there is no innovation. In order to operate successfully in today’s world and the military environment, we must expect change and remain flexible and resilient in order to accomplish our goals. As we look ahead, I encourage all returning and incoming cadets to lead by example and treat others the way you would want your loved ones to be treated. By doing this we can create a productive and positive atmosphere in the battalion.”

Cadet Battalion Commander

MSIV CDT LTC Nicole Stone



Fall 2020 MS IV Chain of Command



Battalion Commander
CDT LTC Stone, Nikki

- Psychology
- Brookshire, TX



Battalion Executive Officer
CDT MAJ Way, Michael

- Management Information Systems
- Fort Hood, TX



Command Sergeant Major
CDT CSM Webster, Eric

- Sociology
- San Antonio, TX



Battalion S3 (Operations & Training Officer)
CDT MAJ Chudej, Tristin

- Political Science
- Little River Academy, TX



Fall 2020 MS IV Chain of Comman Continued...



BN S1 / PAO
CDT CPT Zepeda, Hannah
 - Criminal Justice
 - Alvin, TX



BN S2 / OPFOR OIC
CDT CPT Steele, Lynnsey
 - Criminal Justice
 - Fort Worth, TX



BN AS3 / Land Navigation OIC
CDT CPT Woodburn, Bill
 - Criminal Justice
 - Georgetown, TX



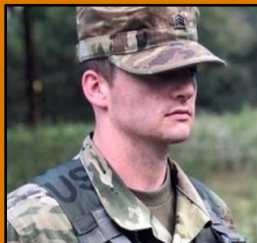
BN AS3 / BRM & ACE OIC
CDT CPT Burden, Dakota
 - Criminal Justice
 - Gatesville, TX



BN AS3 / PT OIC
CDT CPT Gonzales (III), Oscar
 - Criminal Justice
 - Victoria, TX



BN S4
CDT CPT Rocha, Alejandro
 - Criminal Justice
 - Copperas Cove, TX



BN Recruiting OIC / Newsletter OIC
CDT CPT Massey, Jarrod
 - Political Science
 - Magnolia, TX



BN S6 / Safety Officer
CDT CPT Chamberlain, Quinton
 - Criminal Justice
 - Harker Heights, TX



BN S8 / Tutoring OIC
CDT CPT Tran, Nancy
 - Criminal Justice
 - Houston, TX



Company Commander
CDT CPT Cardenas, Steven
 - Kinesiology
 - Humble, TX



BN Rowdy Inman 5K OIC / Color Guard OIC
CDT CPT Tierney, David
 - Art
 - Killeen, TX



BN Mentoring OIC / PLT Mentor
CDT CPT Cissna, Kyle
 - Animal Science
 - Brazoria, TX



BN Ranger Challenge CDR / Ranger Company OIC
CDT CPT Edo-Terradas, Oscar
 - Criminal Justice
 - Barcelona, ESP



CDT Steele, Lynnsey – OAL Experience

“Though Operation Agile Leader (OAL) may not have been ideal with everything going on in the world right now if I were asked to do it again, I would. OAL was a great experience and it helped me grow as a person and a leader. I was extremely nervous going into this training to the point where my hands were shaking when we got off the bus. However, by the end, I felt significantly more confident. Working with other cadets from different schools helped give us new perspectives on problems that may arise. If I were unsure of something, I would go through it with another cadet and we would find a solution.

This experience pushed me out of my comfort zone and challenged me in ways foreign to me. I made it my goal to interact with my squad and platoon as much as possible, to enable myself to build on new skills I felt previously lacking on. This ended up working in my favor because not only did it make working with them easier for the week but, I ended up making some really good friends.

Working with cadre from different schools allowed for new insight and perspectives on our leadership style. Throughout I trusted and built upon the knowledge I had gathered over my years in ROTC. My cadre asked me how I felt I did on my missions before giving their feedback, and they commented on my strong points. Not only did they talk with cadets in leadership, they also requested feedback from the entire platoon on the mission. This allowed everyone to see what went well and helped us all learn from the things that did not go as well.

Though it was only a week, I learned and grew tremendously as a leader. I feel more confident now moving forward into my MSIV year and as a future second lieutenant in the United States Army.”



CDT Steele at OAL, handling the platoon's M249.



CDT Steele's Platoon – A-CO, 2nd PLT.



Our New Cadre Member – CPT Cooley



CPT Cooley, a native of Texarkana, entered military service on 25 October 2011 attending Initial Entry Training at Fort Sill, OK and Advanced Individual training at Fort Jackson, SC as a Paralegal with the U.S Army's Judge Advocate General Corps. Upon completing IET and AIT, CPT Cooley was assigned to HHC 30th MEDCOM in Kasierslautern, Germany where he served as the acting Garrison Military Justice shop NCOIC for 21st TSC. After completing his initial service obligation, CPT Cooley was selected to attend Officer Candidate School where he was commissioned as a chemical Officer with a branch detail of Adjutant General Corps and completed his Officer Basic Course at Ft. Leonardwood, MO. Upon completion of his Officer Basic Course, CPT Cooley was assigned to 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment based out of FT. Hood, TX. During his time at Ft. Hood, CPT Cooley took on various positions having served as the BN Chemical Officer with 1-277th ARB, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, and as the Brigade S-1 for the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade. During his time at FT. Hood, CPT Cooley served as the BN S1 OIC for 3-277th AHB in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve. Once returned, CPT Cooley attended the Adjutant General Captains Career Course at Ft. Jackson, SC and upon completion was assigned to 7th SROTC Brigade as the S1 OIC at Ft. Knox, KY. CPT Cooley is married to Lori Cooley and have 6 children, Nadia, Ariana, Jared, Brodie, Zander, and Jayce.

CPT Cooley's education includes two Associates degrees from Texarkana College, a Bachelors of Science in Finance from Texas A&M-Texarkana, the Chemical Corps Basic officer leader's course and the Adjutant General Corps Captains Career Course.

CPT Cooley's Awards include Army Achievement Medal (1OLC), The Good Conduct Medal, The National Defense Medal, The Global war on Terrorism Service Medal, The NCO Professional Development Ribbon, The Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the Air Assault Badge, and the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge (GOLD).



Summer Highlights



CDT Austin Zirkel caught in a hailstorm, while hiking the Osha trail in Cloudcroft, New Mexico.



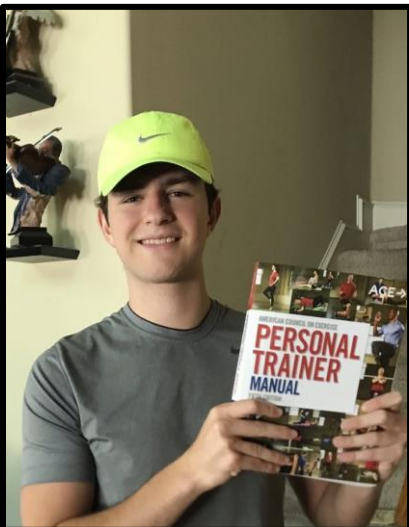
CDTs Sebastian Maldonado, Colton Smith, and Shawn Amiry assisting with COVID-19 testing sites.



CDT Samuel Brink working as a wrangler and "horse doctor" at a summer camp.



CDT Cody Weeks graduating the TDCJ Training Academy.



CDT Alexander Dieck getting ACE certified as a personal trainer.



CDT Zoe Bourdumis hiking Palo Duro Canyon.

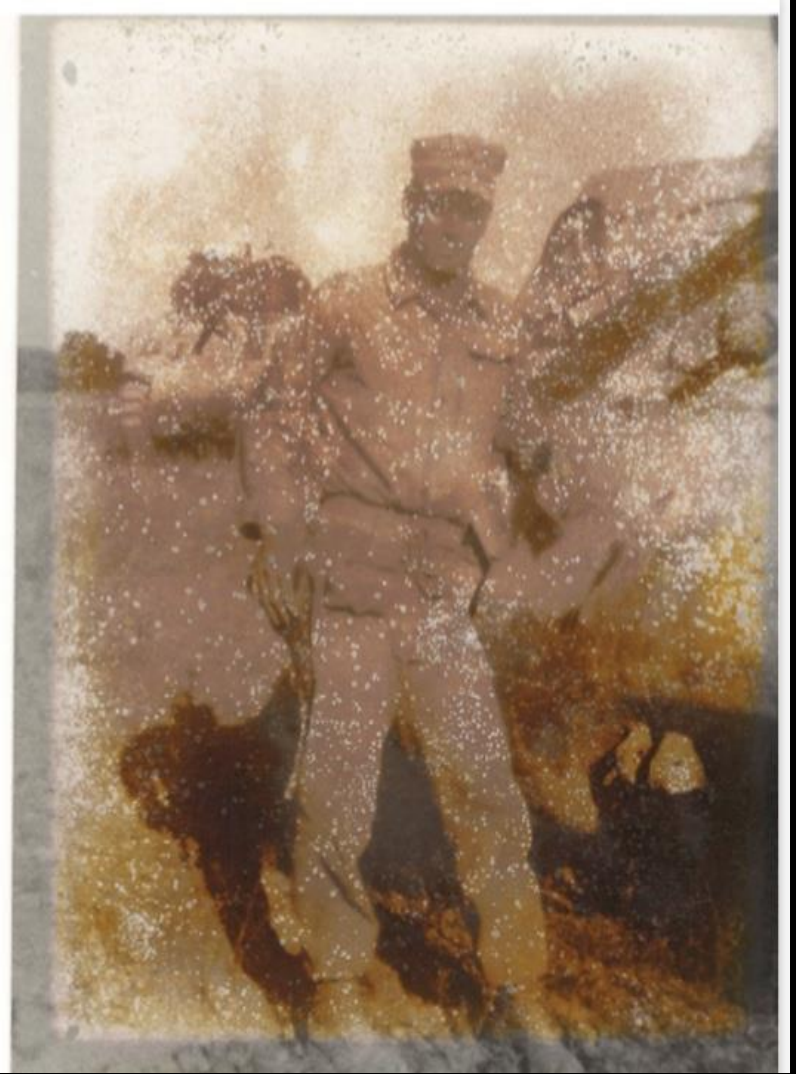
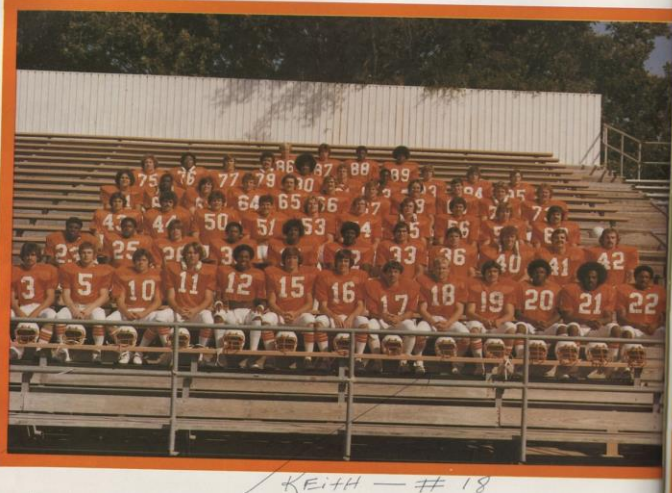


CDT Kaleb Rios accomplishing a 5.10D graded route in Austin.



Blast from the Past

THE 1978-1979 BEARKAT FOOTBALL TEAM



Brigadier General USA Ret. Thomas G. Stone, Tank Commander M4 Sherman - 1954



Cadet Battalion Commander Keith Stone - 1980

“SHSU Corps Commander Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Keith Stone clocks the final event of the PT test. The 2-mile run. Cadet Staff Sergeant Tom Hinkle gets his lap time with just 6 laps to go.”

[A Legacy Continued](#)

The Stone legacy continues at Sam Houston State University and within the Bearkat Battalion. Nicole Stone, our Fall 2020 Cadet Battalion Commander, is the daughter of Keith W. Stone (left) and granddaughter of Brigadier General USA Retired Thomas G. Stone (Right), who were both members of the SHSU football team. Keith, a Retired Lieutenant Colonel also served as the Cadet Battalion Commander during his time in the Bearkat Battalion.

