



MSI Cadets completing obstacles at the Field Leaders Reaction Course (FLRC).

# Bearkat BATTALION

October | 2020 | Sam Houston State University

Follow us!



Twitter: @shsuArmyRotc



Instagram: @shsu.rotc



Facebook: Sam Houston State University Army ROTC

## Striving for Excellence, Strength and Honor!

The month of September saw several new journeys begin for the Bearkat Battalion. Cadets from diverse backgrounds began the next chapters of their lives – as you will see throughout this newsletter. During this month, cadets have been training hard and better honing their skills. They completed Land Navigation, Combat Water Survival Training (CWST), and tactical labs. Through all of it they have displayed remarkable perseverance and determination.

### Eat'em Up Kats!

## Inside This Issue

- **Page 2:** PMS Comments
- **Page 3:** Cadet of The Month – CDT MSI Watson, Nicholas
- **Page 4:** Starting A New Chapter – CDT MSI Johnson, Jamahl
- **Page 5:** My Reason Why – CDT MSII Dieck, Alex
- **Page 6:** Transitioning to Army Life – 2nd LT Morrow, Kaitlyn
- **Page 7:** September In Pictures
- **Page 9:** Alumni Highlight – Judge McCaig, Albert (“Buddy”)

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

Greetings! It is astounding to believe we are quickly approaching the halfway mark of the fall semester – time flies, when you are having fun! While COVID-19 has presented challenges to the current training environment, observing your sons and daughters adapt and grow as leaders makes our days gratifying. We consider ourselves privileged to spend time with tomorrow’s future leaders. I continue to be in awe of the dedication that our Cadets are making for our country.

This past month, we were fortunate to have four more great Americans raise their right hand and officially begin their quest to join our profession of selfless service. Our first newly contracted Cadet is Cinnamon Wright-Burwinkel, a freshman, who earned a 4-year National Scholarship. Earning a 4-year National Scholarship is very challenging, as the Army only selects, on average, 1,000 winners, each year, nationwide of the 12-15,000 applicants. Cinnamon has already shown outstanding leadership potential during her short time at SHSU and we look forward to seeing her grow as a leader. Next, we have Camille Dang-Fouty, a sophomore, who earned a 3-year National Scholarship. Camille embodies selfless service as she consistently volunteers to lead and support R.O.T.C. and SHSU programs and activities. Matthew Pilgrim is another sophomore who earned a 3-year scholarship during his freshmen year at SHSU. Matthew made an instant impression on cadre last school year with his infectious levels of motivation. This motivation drove Matthew to lose over 40 pounds and pass the APFT, increasing his score by 132 points! Finally, Brent Garrett, a junior in his first semester of R.O.T.C., joined our program as a lateral entry Cadet. Brent has already made significant strides in his fitness and is eager to learn, as he prepares to attend Cadet Summer Training in 2021. A special thank you goes out to the parents of these outstanding young men and women for the tremendous job they have done in shaping and providing support to the Cadets, as they begin their journey towards leading America’s sons and daughters in the future.

Selfless Service is an Army Value that is essential to the success of our program, in part due to the selfless service exhibited by our alumni. This past month, the class of 2018-19, informed us that it would once again award the “*Trust the Process Scholarship*” to a deserving underclassman. This year’s scholarship was graciously increased to \$1,500. We appreciate the selfless service exhibited by 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants Khalil Allen, Jose Arriaga, Caitlin Arrigali, Aaron Calderon, Mario Canchola, Jacob Gerlach, Jazzmine Pender, Jordan Pham, Symone Powell, and Erick Rodas! Another depiction of selfless service is on full display in the article on page 6 of this newsletter, where 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Kaitlyn Morrow discusses her volunteer support of our current Senior Cadets during Operation Agile Leader (OAL). What she fails to mention; however, is that she volunteered on her own, with her Basic Officer Leaders Course quickly approaching, and without being asked. When Kaitlyn called me about supporting OAL, I informed her of our appreciation, but that it would be as an unpaid volunteer, as her official active duty date had not yet begun. Without hesitation, Kaitlyn volunteered. Fortunately, when we provided Kaitlyn’s name to support OAL, the Army shifted Kaitlyn’s active duty start date a few weeks to the left. Another prime example of a SHSU R.O.T.C. alumnus, willing to exhibit selfless service for our Cadets. Finally, this month’s Alumni Spotlight, features Judge Albert (Buddy) McCaig, who took time out of his busy schedule to serve as an ethics guest speaker for our Senior Cadets. We truly appreciate the continued support of our Military Science Alumni Club. In closing, we hope you enjoy this month’s newsletter and welcome your feedback.

**Strength and Honor!**

Lieutenant Colonel Joe Contreras



## Cadet of The Month – CDT MSI Watson, Nicholas

“Hello! I am Cadet MSI Nicholas Watson and I am a freshman majoring in Criminal Justice. I joined the Bearkat Battalion to become a part of a program that always has the care of its cadets as its top priority. Due to its culture, it has been easy to meet and get to know everyone. In my short time here, I have grown to find support and trust with each of my classmates. Upon joining the Bearkat Battalion, I was assigned Cadet Brendan Smith as my mentor. He has been nothing but supportive and helpful along the way. Straight from the start he was very engaging, made every attempt to get to know me, and even invited me to participate in Zoom calls to gain a better understanding of the program. He always makes time to answer my questions or to even give me personal advice when I need it. I am thankful to have received Cadet Smith as a mentor. The MS4 leadership has been incredible as well, every cadet, I have met in the upper classes has shown me immense respect and guidance. They have always been willing to provide information at a moment’s notice and display motivation in any activity. I am excited to have our MS4 class guide us, through, what I am sure will be a very successful year.



CDT Nicholas Watson beside the Bearkat Battalions cannons.

The Cadre have had an incredible influence on me. It was through the cadre I learned about the scholarship opportunities available to me and was fortunate enough to be awarded a 3- year national scholarship. Leadership has been assisting me in getting ready for this year physically, academically, and mentally. Recently we have begun to examine the valuable leadership skills need to be an Army Officer and leader. Even with the current COVID-19 restrictions – which the program has put significant emphasis on – I am looking forward to a lot of activities coming this year. To include PT, Lab, Color Guard, Ranger Company, volunteering, and eventually contracting. Waking up early in the morning and being able to improve my health and fitness, with my fellow squad-mates, is highly motivating. Labs conducted by the MS4 class develop my critical thinking skills and guide me to become a better leader, all while being fun and interactive.

In closing, I am excited to contract and make the commitment to becoming an Army Officer. Contracting has been a dream of mine since I was young. I am very thankful to be a cadet in this program and I appreciate all the help, I have received thus far. Even though it may be different and challenging with COVID-19, I am determined to prove myself as a hardworking and dedicated Cadet and student. I am confident that this will be a great year for the Bearkat Battalion.”



## Starting A New Chapter – CDT MSI Johnson, Jamahl

“I joined the Marine Corps 15 August 2015 and was blessed to serve my Country for four-years as an active duty enlisted Marine with the assigned MOS (3043) – supply specialist. I was privileged to travel internationally and to be stationed in Okinawa, Japan, at camp Futenma for two-years. While I was there, I learned how to create orders, request supplies internationally, maintain a mechanized allowance list, assist supply warehouse Marines with warehouse functions, and organize archive files. Stationed in Japan, I was given the opportunity to deploy to mainland Japan and be stationed by Mt. Fuji. After this two-year term ended, I was reassigned to Quantico Virginia with duty at an Officer Candidate School. This is where my motivation to become an officer in the military began. Initially I wanted to become an Officer in the Marine Corps. However, when I began researching information to become a Medical Officer in the military, I discovered the Army was more suited for my goals. Following my time in the military, I went to Lone Star Community College to earn transferable credits to the university of my choice - Sam Houston State University. I joined the Army ROTC program at Sam Houston to pursue my dream and become an Army Medical Officer. I have since surround myself with other great leaders in pursuit to become Army Officers, began learning Army concepts/ideals and continue to be a positive influence amongst my peers, family, and the voiceless. Some things that keep me motivated and help me focus to accomplish my goals are staying organized by writing down my daily and monthly reminders, which help me complete my short and long-term goals. Also maintaining thorough communication with squad leaders and mentors, and focusing on completing school assignments. As a leader in the Army ROTC program at Sam Houston, I will go above and beyond in my academic achievements, set a high standard for myself, maintain the standard set to be a positive influence amongst my peers, and continue to improve physically in order to uphold all rules, regulations and values set by the United States Army.”



CDT Jamahl Johnson being promoted to Cpl., August 2019



CDT Jamahl Johnson outside the Sam Houston State University Clock Tower.



## My Reason Why – CDT MSII Dieck, Alex

“Leadership has a lot of different definitions based on who you ask, for me leadership means to serve others through your actions. If you had told me 4 years ago that I would eventually go through ROTC in college, I would have told you that you were crazy! My oldest brother, Chris, was the first one to introduce me to the thought of serving in the military. He joined the Marines in 2017, and when he went to Basic Training he left me with the question, “What does it mean to serve?”. I have always admired him for joining, but I never really gave it too much thought myself until I got to the summer orientation at Sam Houston State University, when I approached LTC Contreras. Now I have been given the opportunity to answer that question. Of course, my mom was not thrilled to hear another one of her sons was going to join the military, but I knew that it was the right choice. Just over a month ago, I was fortunate to be able to contract along with my brothers and sisters in the program to officially be in the United States Army. I was, and still am, extremely thankful that I could finally begin my journey of serving my country.

My journey through ROTC has been nothing less than amazing. The friends that I have made along the way as well as my mentors, who have pushed me to strive for greatness are the reason for who I am today. Nowhere else could you ask for better people to be surrounded by, my peers are some of the highest quality people there are and it is because of their commitment to the program that I owe my physical and mental success. I enjoy every moment I get to spend in ROTC, even PT in the mornings as I like working out especially with my friends. Teams in ROTC, like Ranger Challenge and Color Guard, have allowed me to be more involved and push me to improve myself. Which in return will help me with my military career later down the line.

I hope to do as much as I can in ROTC, that way I can compete for my top branches in the Army. My current plan is to branch Infantry in the National Guard. The reason why I want to branch infantry is that it is one of the more physically demanding jobs for officers, while also being challenging. I believe everyone I have met and everything that I have learned through ROTC will push me to be a better leader and be successful in the future.”



CDT Alex Dieck speaking after his contracting ceremony.



## Transitioning to Army Life – 2<sup>nd</sup> LT Morrow, Kaitlyn

“This year has been a whirlwind of emotions, celebrations, and learning. It has been unique...from being around my MSIV classmates every day for the past two years, to COVID-19 hitting us during spring break and not even getting to say farewell to them. However, I am confident that our paths will cross again in our military careers. After commissioning in May, I was honored to receive the opportunity to serve alongside some of the best leaders in 5th Brigade at Operation Agile Leader (OAL). At this training, I learned a vast amount of information, leadership skills, and mentorship. LTC Contreras always advised us to volunteer when available and to never turn down an opportunity. In doing so, I also continued my efforts after OAL and served as Gold Bar Recruiter on campus.

During this time, I had many opportunities to utilize the abilities, I acquired as a cadet in the program. I am now seeing the valuable skills the Cadre taught me as a cadet come into fruition. Some of the most predominant competencies I was taught, that I am now using as a 2LT at Adjutant General BOLC, are confidence, treating others how you want to be treated, and communication throughout all levels. I want to touch on just one of those topics... treating others how you want to be treated is as simple as that sounds. As the Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. James McConville, says “people” are the Army’s “strongest weapon”. If we take care of each other, the Army will be stronger and more proficient in every aspect. This simple task can easily be initiated in ROTC and I want to challenge each of you to improve this task the rest of your time in the program. If you were to go and ask someone to help you with Land Navigation, you would be grateful for their time helping teach you. Now mirror that statement, if someone asks you for help and you have the tools to assist, take a little time out and help others. Doing this simple duty will make your class, unit, etc... a more enjoyable and robust community. With all of that being said, I might be a little biased, but I truly do believe that Sam Houston University R.O.T.C. and the people within the program are some of the best and most caring that you will meet in the military. I hope you all are having an exceptional semester and continue to do your best.”



LT Kaitlyn Morrow and fellow LTs at Officer Basic Course (OBC).



2<sup>nd</sup> LT Kaitlyn Morrow performing COVID-19 tasks at OAL.



# September In Pictures



Cadets practicing for the Color Guard Team.



Cadets participating in the "Cadet Intermural League".



MSI Cadets during the "treading water" event of the CWST.



MSII and III Cadets during tactics lab.



Underwater photographs taken during CWST.



# September In Pictures Cont...

## Cadets who have contracted this month



CDT MSI Wright-Burwinkel, Cinnamon



CDT MSII Dang-Fouty, Camille



CDT MSII Pilgrim, Matthew



CDT MSIII Garrett, Brent



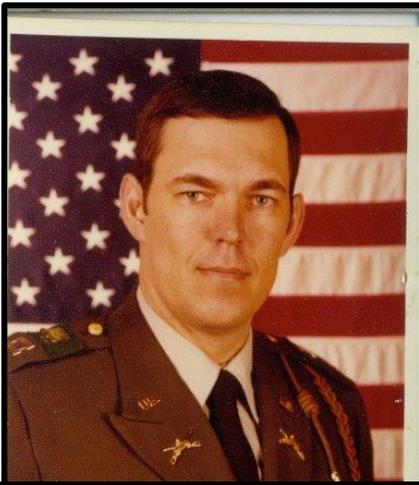
Bearkat Battalion Cadet participating in Land Navigation training.



Bearkat Battalion Alumni, LTs Arrigali, Rodas, and Arriaga, instruct the MSIV lecture.



## Alumni Spotlight – Judge McCaig, Albert (“Buddy”)



Judge McCaig serving as a Captain.



Judge McCaig as a Cadet in the ROTC program, 1972.



Judge McCaig and crew for C-66, 3rd BN, 34th Armor, 1st Armored Division, located in Germany

### About Judge McCaig...

Judge McCaig is a graduate of the Sam Houston State University ROTC program, class of '72. He went on to serve over 10-years on active duty and another additional 14-years with the Army Reserves and Texas Army National Guard. During his time in the military, he commanded a tank company in Europe in the mid-1980s. Following several other command and staff positions, he retired as a Major in 1995.

Prior to assuming the bench, Judge McCaig was an active civic leader in the Chamber of Commerce, Lions Club, Rotary Club, County Fair Association, FFA, Waller ISD Education Foundation and a 4-year member of the Waller ISD School Board.

In 2016, Judge McCaig was inducted into the inaugural class of the US Army ROTC Hall of Fame. One of just 326 inductees out of over 650,000 commissioned officers. He was also awarded the 2017 Distinguished Alumni Service Award by Sam Houston University.

Wherein he was recognized as having provided outstanding service to the larger community, exemplifying the University's motto – *“The Measure of a Life is its Service.”*

Appointed as Judge of the 506<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court, Judge McCaig took office in October, 2007. He now serves both Waller County and Grimes County within his district.

### Heralding the Next Generation...

Judge McCaig embodies what it means to be a mentor and a leader. Continuously returning to his alma mater to provide guidance to the Army's future generation of leaders. In his civic duties he has become a symbol for morals and ethics. Making it his goal to provide for a brighter tomorrow.

From the Bearkat Battalion and our community,  
**Thank you for your dedication and support!**

