



Incoming Cadets during our New Cadet Orientation.

Bearkat BATTALION

September | 2020 | Sam Houston State University

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Looking to The Future, Strength and Honor!

August set the tone for the remainder of the semester! Cadets kicked-off the semester strong by completing the APFT. Even amidst COVID-19, the Battalion is hard at work preparing for the future. With a fresh class of MSIs, the Bearkat Battalion is excited to take on the challenges ahead. We look forward to the opportunities that will arise.

Eat'em Up Kats!

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

Welcome to September! The first three weeks of the fall semester have been challenging, given the current operational environment. However, we adjusted our training to adhere with state, local, and university Social Distancing measures. I am proud of our Cadets for successfully continuing to develop and grow as leaders during the current pandemic. Cadet Shawn Amiry does an outstanding job of communicating his personal insights on adjusting to COVID-19, on page 4. On the following page, our Cadet Operations Officer (Cadet Tristin Chudej), lays out how our program is preparing Cadets for the future with an updated training plan. The positive attitude and ability to adapt that Shawn and Tristin are displaying, represents why the Bearkat Battalion continues to excel despite less than ideal conditions. Well done!

Americans join the Army for plenty of reasons: for country, family, and honor. We were fortunate to contract nine Cadets during our first lab as they officially made the decision, after they graduate from Sam Houston State University to serve as an Army Officer. These nine Cadets come from various backgrounds and their personalities and leadership styles are unique to themselves; however, they all have one thing in common – they have chosen to put the welfare of the nation, the Army, and their Soldiers before their own. We are proud of each of these young men and women for electing to join our profession of selfless service. I know their parents are extremely proud of their Cadets and I want to personally thank these parents for raising outstanding young men and women of great character. Thank you!

During last month's newsletter, we welcomed Captain Josh Cooley to the team. Josh comes to us with a very good reputation, as some of my peers have personally reached out to me and spoken highly about Josh and his work ethic. Please welcome Josh, his wife Lori, and their kids to the team. Unfortunately, in this newsletter, we are saying farewell to Sergeant First Class (Promotable) Matthew Moates. Matthew has been part of the team for over three years and has been "the consistency and glue" that has kept our program marching along during cadre shortfalls. Matthew has made a tremendous impact on our future leaders and I personally view him as the hardest worker with whom I have served with during 20+ years of active federal service. Good luck to Matthew and Lyndsay at Fort Stewart, Georgia.

In closing, we want to once again thank each one of you for your continued support to our Cadets. After last month's newsletter, I received numerous correspondences from those of you interested in how you could provide scholarships and mentorship to our Cadets. I am in awe of your generosity and assure you that this support is both well-deserved and greatly appreciated. Enjoy your Labor Day weekend!

Strength and Honor!
Lieutenant Colonel Joe Contreras



LTC Joe Contreras with SHSU President Dr. Alisa White.



Cadet of The Month – CDT Gonzales, Issac

“As a senior in high school, it can be a struggle to find the right university that fits your needs and will help you to achieve your goal of graduating. Luckily, Sam Houston State was that university for me. During my tour of the campus I had the opportunity to visit the ROTC program. It was an older building with a lot of history. When I sat down with now 2LT Mario Canchola and LTC Joe Contreras, I was hooked on the program, and the traditions of this organization. I was offered a 3-year Army ROTC Scholarship soon after my visit, and I have not looked back since. My freshman year was unique to say the least. Balancing M-F 8AMs, as well as PT 3 days a week at 0615, took some getting use to. My GPA took a hit, but with incredible guidance from Cadre and Cadets within the program, I was never alone in the struggle and was pushed to do my best. The Bearkat Battalion Cadets are great, I have met some of my best friends here, and I continue to grow every day with my peers. As our spring semester was cut short due to a global pandemic, I was unsure of what was to come of the following fall semester. It was hectic, everyday life was changed, and you had to adapt to the ever-changing laws implemented. Staying in Huntsville for the summer, I had nothing to do, but run, eat, and sleep. It was knowing that when we did return to school, I would face a record PT test that would be the final obstacle that I would need to pass to contract. As the first week of school ended and the PT test has come and gone, I am proud to say I have contracted. I could not be more excited, and I am ready to work and ready to



CDT Isaac Gonzales during training, last year.



CDT Isaac Gonzales and fellow MSIs receiving their \$750 Scholarships at the beginning of the Spring 2020 semester.



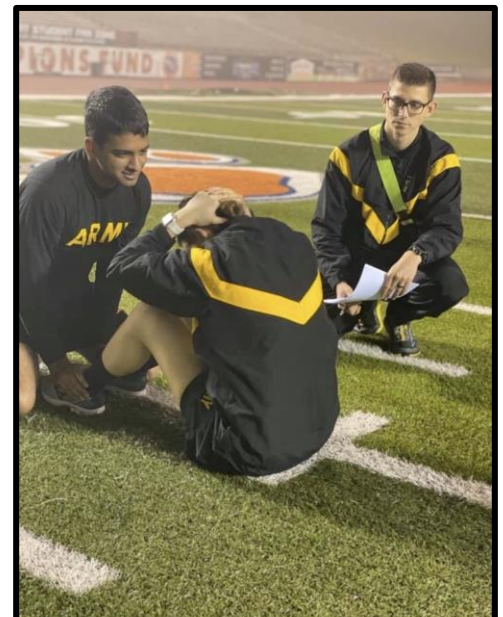
Returning and Adapting Amongst COVID – CDT Amiry, Shawn

“Despite the emergence of COVID-19, I am very excited to start the school year back on campus. I am thankful that Sam Houston State University (SHSU) was understanding and allowed us to have face-to-face classes during this pandemic. I have loved my college experience thus far and I am eager to grow myself and those around me in the years to come. I am certain that students on campus, especially ROTC Cadets, will abide by the state/school guidelines so that we can continue to hold classes in person. The university and Cadre have been supportive in letting us return to training, while still social distancing and keeping the group sizes smaller so that we can always put our safety first. Moreover, I am glad to finally see my fellow classmates and return to the ROTC program to prepare for CST 2021 and commission.

Furthermore, I am confident that the MSIVs have been planning a successful semester so that we, as MSIIIs, can exceed the standard. With our Battalion Commander Nikki Stone being a great leader, as well as the other leadership setting the example, I know that underclassman will enjoy their first year on campus. If you are a freshman reading this, I hope that you are flexible and adaptable to the everchanging environment. With PT and lab being separated due to COVID-19, we might not get to spend as much time together. Thus, it is more important now, than ever to reach out to your mentors or upperclassman in the program. This was the fast way I learned about the battalion as an MSII. At first, we might appear intimidating, but at the end of the day, we were in your shoes just a year or two before and are more than happy to assist you. I look forward to the next few months and I know that we will grow together as a family. Let us keep our 6-foot distance and keep smiling under our masks.”



CDT Shawn Amiry during COVID Support Operations



CDT Shawn Amiry and (now) 2LT Jordan Pham during the APFT, last year.



Preparing For The Future – CDT Chudej, Trisitan



CDT Trisitan Chudej operation the radio as RTO during training, last year.



CDT Trisitan Chudej and fellow MSIVs at SHSU's Gibbs Ranch

“As the Fall Semester begins, CST is on the horizon for the MSIVs. However, with a rigid training plan for the year the Sam Houston State Bearkat Battalion will produce competent, capable, and efficient Cadets for the class of 2022. The new training plan, created by Major Holmes and I, enables juniors to have more repetitions at platoon tactics, while also provides sophomores opportunities to conduct squad level training. This shift in training will give greater value to all the labs and throughout all class levels. The goals for the junior Cadets this year is to create active and reactive leaders, capable of controlling multiple pieces on an ever-moving battlefield. Keeping in line with the Cadet Battalion Commander’s vision, the juniors will become resilient and productive even in the face of a changing environment. In the military, adaptability is a necessary leadership skill and currently has become an even more advantageous talent. Under the leadership of a highly motivated senior class and the cadre, the program is optimally poised to teach, train, and coach the next generation of future 2nd Lieutenants. The Bearkat Battalion currently stands around one hundred cadets, and the training program for the year takes into consideration the appropriate training for each class level to amplify their knowledge across the board. As the Battalion S3, my vision is to enhance, ensure, and execute all levels of training. The staff will enhance the learning at the freshman and sophomore level, ensure that all tactical exercises are completed by exceeding the standard, and execute properly planned and organized training events. With all the goals and standards in place for the battalion this year, Juniors will be able to complete CST and transcend the performance of their peers. This year the Bearkat Battalion will generate 2nd Lieutenants coveted in their respective battalions and capable of achieving high-standing throughout their career.”



Transitioning to College Life – CDT Wright-Burwinkel, Cinnamon

“Hello, my name is CDT Cinnamon Wright-Burwinkel. I am a MS1. I am majoring in Forensic Chemistry, and I was fortunate to be awarded a 4-year National Scholarship. Sam Houston State has always been my first choice in schools, and I have been very excited to start my college career here. My transition to college has not been as seamless as I expected. Between COVID-19 and just being a new college student, I have been a little overwhelmed. It has been very jarring going from knowing the ins-and-outs of a program and school, back to being a new cadet in a new environment. However, I am very excited to be starting classes and living on my own, being an “adult”, but I was not expecting to feel this naive and unprepared.

One person who has been of great help, along with Cadre, has been CDT Battalion Commander Nikki Stone. She was put into contact with me as my mentor over the summer and has been there to answer my questions and help guide me into college and ROTC. CDT Stone has continued to check in on me throughout the summer and going into the fall semester. She kept encouraging me to keep up on my physical fitness throughout the break and was one of the reasons, I was able to pass my APFT, allowing me to contract sooner. CDT Stone has been a friendly face, when I have known no one in the room. She has always been there to answer my questions, reassure me away from my concerns, and encourage me to perform at my best. CDT Stone has made this transition into college, and the transition into ROTC so much easier. I would be lost without Cadre and CDT Stone’s mentorship.

I am excited to continue to be her mentee and I look forward to learning more from, not only her, but the other cadets as well. I am very appreciative of her patience with me and I am beyond excited to be in ROTC with the amazing leadership from the upperclassmen I have seen so far.”



CPT Wright-Burwinkel at SHSU Bearkat Camp



Parting Thoughts – SFC(P) Moates, Matthew

“Well, the time has come, and I have my marching orders. The Cadets of this program know that I am fond of saying “If you like your job in the military, don’t get too comfortable because it’s going to change. If you *don’t* like your current assignment, hang in there because it too will be over before you know it.” I am saddened to say that after three plus years serving the Bearkat Battalion it is time for my wife Lyndsay and I to move on the next chapter in our Army journey. We have been truly blessed to be a small part of the Bearkat, SHSU, and Huntsville community and have made dozens of friends who have become family.

Over my 17 years serving this great nation I have been personally and professionally rewarded with a couple of incredibly fulfilling assignments; this has absolutely been one of those. Watching young students grow from often timid and shy kids into strong, confident, and motivated leaders has been a humbling honor that I will always cherish. They have taught and given me more than I ever could them. Perhaps the biggest takeaway that I will share with senior leaders moving forward is that despite everything we see and hear, “the kids are alright.” The newest generation of Army officer is intelligent, adaptable, and dynamic. They respect the legacy of those who have carried the burden of freedom before them and embrace the challenges facing them in the increasingly complex world in front of them.”

“As a parting shot, I would like to impart a few things that I have said repeatedly to the Cadets and hope will resonate and stick with them as they continue to lead the next generation of warriors:

1. Remember that most of you do more before the sun comes up than 90% of your peers do all day. Be proud of that.
2. Physical training may not be the most important thing you do all day, but it’s the most important thing you do every day. Soldiers need to see you working hard and not just paying lip service (partially borrowed from former SMAA Dailey).
3. If you have to remind people constantly that you are in charge, then you probably aren’t. Be a humble leader. Your subordinates know who is in charge.
4. The greatest resource in America is its servicepeople. Take care of them and their families and they will move mountains, fight, and win for you.
5. There are good days and there are bad days in everything, but if you do not enjoy what you are doing its time to look for a new line of work. This is a time-honored profession that deserves your respect and the people to your left and right deserve your total commitment.
6. And lastly, but certainly not least, don’t fry bacon naked.



SFC(P) Matthew Moates
training MSIII Cadets, Spring
2020 prior to COVID-19.

I would personally like to thank the Bearkat cadre and staff, the invaluable Military Science Alumni Club (MSAC [special thanks to BG(Ret) Richard Mills, LTC(Ret) Hal Wuerline, and CPT(Ret) Gonzalo Correa]), SHSU administration and faculty, Tara and the H.E.A.R.T.S. museum, Leta Riner (ROTC mom), and the countless faces who have had a vital impact on these young people over the years. Moving on in my career, I will keep my thoughts and eyes on this program and its Cadets. Among my proudest achievements here is the fact that I can call myself an SHSU Bearkat alumnus for life, having completed my master’s degree here at Sam last spring. It has been an honor and a privilege to work and serve with each and every one of you.”

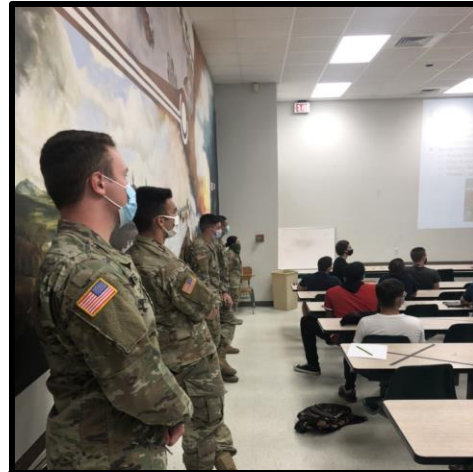
God Bless and Keep Leading the Way!
SFC (P) Moates, Signing Off the Net.



August in Pictures



The Bearkat Battalion's "Introduction Lab" for all Cadets.



MSIV Cadets providing guidance to the new MSI class.



LTC Joe Contreras contracting 9 Cadets during the Bearkat Battalion "Introduction Lab".



MSII Cadets prepare to take their Record APFT.



Blast from the Past - 1983

ROTC students receive awards

Several Sam Houston State University ROTC cadets were honored at Wednesday Cadet Appointment and Awards Day.

Military science head Harold B. Richards said there was a 100 percent increase this year in the number of SHSU cadets who placed in the top 10 percent of their advanced training camp class.

Brigadier Gen. Alvin Jones of College Station, the key note speaker, commended the cadets on their hard work, but reminded them to be humble in their new positions.

Those honored included the following: George Ray, who was appointed to corps commander and received the Distinguished Military Service award; Stephen Dirigo, appointed to executive officer, received the Distinguished Military Science Award and honors in recondo; Judy Rose was appointed personnel officer; and Steffon Arrington was appointed operations officer and received the Distinguished Military Service Award and honors in physical proficiency.

Kerry Burns who was appointed assistant operations officer, also won awards in recondo and physical proficiency; Edward Szeman, also appointed assistant operations officer, won honors in recondo and physical proficiency; Craig Proctor was appointed to logistics officer; and Tyron Guillory, appointed to assistant logistics officer, won Distinguished Military Service, recondo, physical proficiency and airborne honors.

Others honored included Scott Fulgham, who was appointed public information



BRIG. GEN. ALVIN JONES

...keynote speaker

officer, receive the Distinguished Military Service award; Shari Wilson was appointed assistant public information officer, and received honors in physical proficiency; John Shannon, appointed to senior platoon leader, received an award in air the airborne category; and Brian Vines, appointed Junior Platoon Leader, received Distinguished Military Service, recondo, physical proficiency and airborne honors.

Doug Burcham, appointed training officer, won awards in recond and physical proficiency. Others receiving training officer appointments were Glen Wharton, Lisa Harmon, Gus Neinast, Cherye Hunter and Thomas Rogers.

Five cadets received Army ROTC scholarships. Candy Lane, James Howe and David Hall won three year scholarships. Two-year scholarships were awarded to Roland Hewett and Mary Ann Holan.

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