



MSIV (FY21 Cohort) Cadets receiving their branches.

Bearkat BATTALION

End of Semester | 2020 | Sam Houston State University

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Achieving Success, Strength and Honor!

As the semester ends, we are in awe and proud of the extraordinary accomplishments Bearkat Battalion cadets achieved. Throughout this article you will receive firsthand experiences of these such accomplishments. On page 6, MSI CDT Monroig, highlights the “best decision of [his] college career” and why he joined our program. Cadets also demonstrated exceptional effort, this November, in participating in the Battalion’s Ranger Challenge Competition – page 8. In addition to these highlights, cadets in the battalion have put in countless hours of work in Rifle Range Training, Physical Training, and ACFT. We are looking forward to next semester!

Eat’em Up Kats!

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

“We are extremely proud of the grit your cadets displayed this semester under the current environment! The articles authored by the Cadets in this newsletter are inspiring and truly embody the resiliency, humility, and potential of the young men and women who will lead our sons and daughters in the near future. I encourage everyone to read the newsletter in its entirety over some coffee—you will not be disappointed.

We reached some significant milestones this past month. First, our seniors, received their branches (listed below)—congratulations! Second, two more Cadets made the commitment to join our profession of selfless service, by contracting. Jordan Castillo, a freshman, from Pflugerville, Texas, earned a 4-year Army Minuteman Scholarship and contracted on November 8, 2020. Shelby Teal, a junior, contracted on November 24, 2020, after losing over 80 pounds! Finally, Gianni Nunez, commissioned on December 9, 2020 as a second lieutenant. Gianni is a distinguished military graduate (top 10% in the nation) and will serve as an engineer officer. We look forward to him leading and taking care of Soldiers.

In closing this newsletter signifies the end of the semester for our program. We already have 14 new Cadets registered for the Spring 2021 semester and are in contact with other prospects, who have not registered, but have informed us that they will join our team. We look forward to meeting our new teammates. In closing, our continued growth in the program and accomplishments would not be possible without your support—thank you and happy holidays!”

Strength and Honor!

Lieutenant Colonel Joe Contreras

| Fall 2020 Branch Results | |
|--------------------------|---------|
| CDT Chudej, Tristian | MI |
| CDT Gonzales, Oscar | MP |
| CDT Massey, Jarrod | MI / FA |
| CDT Oscar, Edo-Terradas | IN |
| CDT Rocha, Alejandro | SC |
| CDT Steele, Lynnsey | AR |
| CDT Stone, Nicole | AV |
| CDT Tran, Nancy | QM |
| CDT Way, Michael | SC |
| CDT Webster, Eric | AV |



CDT Teal officially contracting at the MSIII Range.

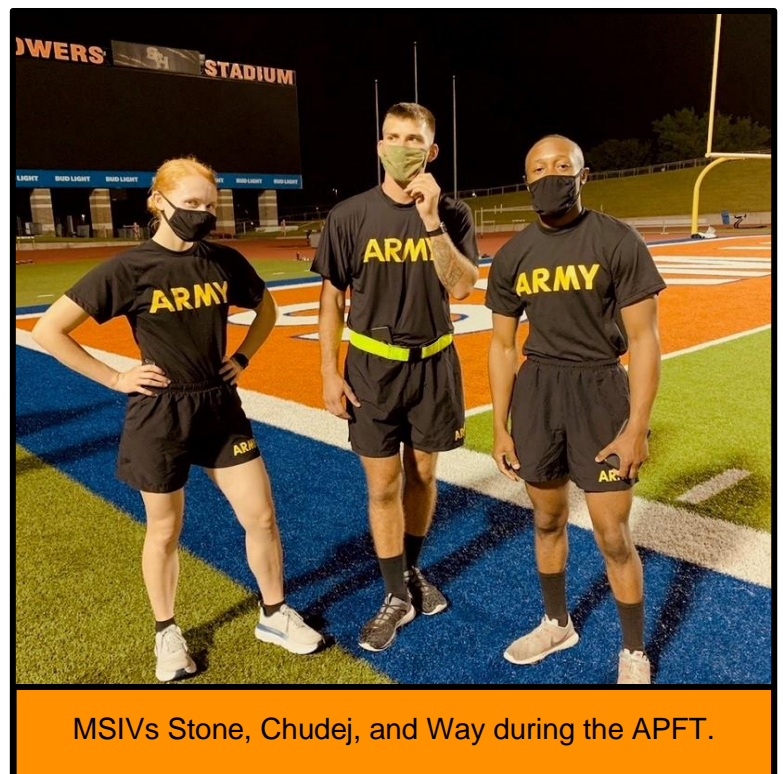


CDT Battalion Commander Comments – MSIV CDT Stone, Nicole

“Over the course of this semester, our program faced many challenges. Our class, the MSIVs, prepared well for the obstacles that we would come to face throughout the semester. I could not be prouder of the cadets in our program that have continued to adapt and overcome everything that has come their way. I am so grateful to have been in this position, this semester, to help our cadets grow into responsible leaders. Each class is leaps and bounds ahead of where I was when I was transitioning through ROTC. It is very inspiring to see the dedication each class has for this program, despite all the changes that are happening. Having the opportunity to work directly with cadre and learn from all of them has been an eye-opening introduction to what will be expected of us once we commission. I am thankful for the high standards our cadre hold us to, leading us to improve weekly and become more versatile as a class. It has been a privilege to work with my class and watch them lead well in the positions they have held. I appreciate the efforts my fellow classmates that have continued to develop new ideas to better our program, and I am grateful for the support they have given me.

It can be difficult at times balancing ROTC, academics, and work, however, the MSIVs have seen the full scope of their responsibilities and how it impacts the entire battalion. With this outlook, they have prioritized their time to better serve the cadets in our program. Coming in as an MSI, you do not realize all the work your leadership does for you behind the scenes and as you move up, you frequently question it and think you can do better. The position of Battalion Commander has shown me the complexities and intensive effort that is required to accomplish the mission of developing cadets into leaders. I am thankful for all the sacrifices our cadre and cadets have made to participate and train this semester. Our demonstrated ability to change is great preparation for our chosen profession, as Army Officers.”

CDT Battalion Commander



MSIVs Stone, Chudej, and Way during the APFT.



Cadet of The Month – MSIII CDT Rodgers, Christian

“Because of my personal faith, I have oriented everything in my life to the pursuit of serving others. I joined the United States Army National Guard to serve my community, and I am pursuing a commission through the Sam Houston State University ROTC program to serve my fellow soldiers as an officer in the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps. There is no higher duty that I can fulfill than to surrender the achievements of prestigious occupations and devote myself to the well being of my fellow man. For there is nothing on Earth of greater value than people’s hearts and minds. I want to be equipped in every way possible to provide support to any soldier in any capacity that is necessary for the betterment of their livelihood. Therefore, I have chosen my occupation as a soldier and furthermore to become an officer in the United States Army.

An officer sets the standard in all aspects of soldiering and leadership. In leadership, an Army officer must take every opportunity to develop themselves and their teammates into members that can be trusted to uphold the Army Values with unwavering commitment. Leadership is not a right; it is a privilege given to those who are willing and able to bear the burden of the highest order of responsibility and the consequences that follow. I have chosen the ROTC program because I am prepared to bare that burden, for better or worse. I am confident that, through teamwork, with a perseverant heart and resilient mind, this program will develop me on my path to leadership and excellence.”



CDT Rodgers being awarded a \$1,500 scholarship in recognition of his dedication to the Battalion.



CDT Rodgers during tactical training.



New Experiences – MSI CDT Mitchell, Bethany

“Deciding to join the ROTC program was an easy decision. After completing Basic Combat Training (BCT), and not having any platoon leaders that resembled myself, I was eager to enroll. I am an advocate for inclusion, and being a minority and a female has driven me to be apart of the future of the Army.

Prior to joining the program, I had essentially no one to motivate me. Not to mention, after watching *Major Payne*, I humorously thought all ROTC programs were extremely intense. My best friend goes to school here, but we have different majors and rarely see one another. I dealt with a lot on my own and it was very difficult, my grades also began to reflect it. I have only been involved with the program a few months now, however, I now have a team that holds me accountable. It has helped tremendously, and the transition was rather simple for me. Joining the program has been very smooth, relaxed, and encouraging. After being forced to instantly adjust in BCT, I enjoyed how the cadre and my peers were understanding and made it fun rather than frightening. It was also very helpful having a mentor, CDT Melissa Mize. I learned early on to not ask stupid questions, not that there are any, but if I had one of them, my mentor would definitely have had the answer. After the “*Coronapocalypse*”, knowing she was there for me was very reassuring.

The benefits of having a group of people that you are learning with and bonding with are incalculable. It is essentially a family here, and the program does very well at creating a positive home away from home. This semester, overall, has been challenging, informative, and fun. It has been challenging having to adjust to COVID-19 restrictions, but informative in the same way. I have learned in the Army and in life we will have to adjust and adapt to our ever-changing surroundings. This whole pandemic is just a little practice. The fun part is the competition and joking with my battle buddies. I am looking forward to GRADUATION! Along the way, you learn, live, and make friends. That is what I will continue to enjoy doing, until I cross the stage!”



CDT Mitchell at the SHSU High-Ropes Course.



CDT Mitchell during learning Individual Movement Techniques (IMTs) during lab.



The Next Step – MSI CDT Monroig, Julian

“Prior to joining the ROTC program, here at Sam Houston State University, my college experience was great. I was having a great time on campus making new friends, trying new things, and having an overall blast. Coming into my sophomore year, I did not think it could get much better, but I was very wrong. Joining ROTC was easily the best decision of my college career, so far, and it will likely hold that title until I graduate. When I first joined the program, I was in the mind-set that I would use my years in the Army as a stepping-stone to achieving a career in federal law enforcement. However, throughout the semester, the more I experienced in the program the more I began to see myself being more interested in potentially making the Army a career. The comradery and sense of family in the program is something I have never experienced before and could not have even imagined before joining.

Throughout the semester, multiple aspects of my life have seen incredible growths and benefits. My time spent on the classroom with MSG Mitchell, with my mentor CDT Edo-Terradas, with my squad at physical training (PT), and training with my Ranger Challenge team has made me physically, mentally, and emotionally sharper. All helping aid me in becoming an outstanding leader in the U.S. Army. One thing I absolutely love about this program is the nonstop motivation you receive with everything you do. It does not matter what the task at hand is, if you have fellow cadet around you, you will have them barking in your ear with all the motivation you need to get it done. This really shows that all the cadets in this program believe in each other and want to make everyone around them the best they can be, which is something that I personally love. This semester has been so much fun for me and I would not trade it for anything, even having to wake up at 0600 for PT. I cannot wait to see what the future holds, as my fellow cadets and I continue to grow better and better. each day.”



CDT Monroig and fellow MSIs preparing for the Rappelling lab.



CDT Monroig's sand volleyball team, the Dirty Sets, vs. team F.U.B.A.R.



CSM Prominence Award

CDT Monroig beign awarded the \$500 CSM Prominence Award.



FTX Experience – MSIII CDT Garrett, Brent

“In a short period of time, I had to quickly adapt and catch up on tactics and skills, in the field, with my peers. At this semester’s Field Training Exercise (FTX) I had the opportunity to demonstrate my skills and utilizing what I have learned so far. This experience strengthened the bond I have with my fellow cadets and taught me that sometimes it is okay to lean on them for help. My peers and the MSIVs have helped to develop necessary skills I will be utilizing in the near future at Cadet Summer Training (CST). I feel confident in the skills I have obtained during the FTX and I am similarly confident in how they will aid me in my future.

Training throughout this semester has been fast paced and intensive, but has ensured I have the necessary skill at my disposal going into next semester. Within these past five months, I went from knowing nothing in tactics, leadership, and self-confidence to feeling self-assured and ready for future endeavors. This FTX has showed me the exceptional capacity, I did not know I had, for grit and character. Leaving the FTX I feel I have more confidence in taking on future challenges I will face. Overall, I am extremely proud to be in the Sam Houston State University ROTC program. They have given me the necessary tools and skills to excel as a future Army Officer. I could not have made it to this point without the assistance of my mentor, Alex Rocha, who has given me the essential tools to strive for me goals. I am also thankful for the opportunity to participate in this program and for the chance to serve my country in the future.”



CDT Rodgers (left) and CDT Garrett (right) after completion of a morning ruck march.



CDT Garrett (left) being awarded "Hero of the FTX", by CDT Chudej (right).



CDT Garrett officially contracting.



Ranger Challenge – MSI CDT Weingart, Eric



CDT Weingart during the Hand Grenade Assault Course (HGAC).



CDT Weingart during the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT).



CDT Weingart earning his Ranger Challenge Tab.

“Amidst the pandemic, meeting and bonding with my peers has been challenging. However, Ranger Challenge provided the means to make new friends and experiences.

Considering we were very limited on events this semester, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to participate in the Ranger Challenge Competition host by the program. It was wonderful to see many other MSI cadets trying out for the competition as well. There were two teams created from all the cadets who tried out. Competing against other cadets from the program caused more than just myself to push our limits and work harder. Training was every day of the week, including Wednesdays and Fridays that the rest of the battalion typically had off. My team spent mornings training for the various Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT) events or ruck marching a few miles. Overall, this helped to develop us physically, and prepared us for more than just Ranger Challenge. We honed our discipline in Land Navigation, Tactical Casualty Combat Care (TCCC), Weapon’s Assembly and Disassembly, and One-Rope Bridge.

The actual Ranger Challenge Competition was incredibly rigorous, especially for those of us who are MSIs. It was physically and mentally straining to ruck from one event to another and then end with a 6-mile ruck march. However, having endured it all, I am certain that every single cadet out there is now more confident and able to push themselves further. Undergoing tough tasks with my team caused us all to become closer, relying on one another and forming an effective team dynamic. Seeing the fortitude from each of them was motivating and caused me to remain steady in my own desire to finish strong. Ranger Challenge was tough, but I would do it all again just for the valuable skills and relationships that came from it.”



Preparing for The ACFT – MSIV CDT Edo-Terradas, Oscar

“As the Army transitions to its new fitness assessment, the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT), the Bearkat Battalion continues to adapt its PT plan to set-up our cadets for success. We have already acquired 5 full lanes of gear, including pull-up bars, hex bars, medicine balls, kettlebells, and more. We have been using them on a weekly basis to increase the quality and effectiveness of our training.

In order to promote safety, above everything, whilst using weights, we started our transition into the ACFT with a familiarization week. During this week, we taught our cadets what the new events consisted of, how to train for them, and the proper form to use when lifting the equipment. The pictures to the right depict our introduction week, showing some MSIII and IV cadets teaching their peers some tips and best practices that will be vital to their success.

Since the introduction week, cadets have had access to our equipment at a minimum one PT day per week. While also being given the necessary resources and information for them to properly train on their own time. This was all done in preparation for the diagnostic ACFT, that cadets took this week. Where they were able to exhibit all their training into practice. The images to the right show our cadets during their first of many times taking the new ACFT within their Army careers.

Overall, as the Army transitions into this new and improved fitness assessment, the Bearkat Battalion is striving to provide the most effective training plan for all our cadets. Our cadets deserve nothing less than the best training we can provide them. We have already seen great progress from everyone this semester, and we are excited to see how far we can go!”



CDT MSIII Dilworth instructs proper execution of the Maximum Deadlift (MDL).



Cadets practicing the Sprint-Drag-Carry (SDC).



Cadets while executing the Drag portion of the SDC.



November and December In Photos



CDT Hulse during the MSIII Rifle Range.



CDT Castillo officially contracting at the MSI lab.



Bearkat Battalion's Ranger Challenge teams during competition, performing One-Rope Bridge.



Bearkat Cadets during preparation and execution of the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT).



Bearkat Battalion's Ranger Challenge teams during competition, performing the ACFT.



November and December In Photos Cont.



LTC Contreras presenting an award, in dedication of his service to the Battalion, to MSG(R) Payne.



Bearkat Battalion Color Guard hosted its "New Tabs Dinner", for cadets who have recently become CG Tabs.



CDTs Oscar Edo-Terradas and Jarrod Massey stand guard over the SHSU rings, along side University President Dr. White.



C.I.L. Team "Dirty Sets" defeats the "Setting Ducks" as this semester's champions.



The winning gingerbread house team during the Bearkat Battalion's "Friendsgiving".



2LT Gianni Nunez commissioning as a US Army Engineer officer.



Alumni Spotlight – CPT Morgan, Hailey



CPT Morgan, and family, in front of an AH-64 Apache when assuming command (OCT 2020)



CPT Morgan and husband, Colby, who called her into a Landing Zone at Ft. Bliss, TX (July 2017)



The Schuder's Rangers with Mrs. Schuder at the Spring 2013 Award Ceremony (CPT Morgan on the right)

Captain Hailey Morgan attended Sam Houston State University from 2010 to 2014, graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice. She entered the Bearkat Battalion as a 4-year scholarship recipient, where she participated in Color Guard, Rifle Team, and Ranger Challenge. During her time in the program, CPT Morgan served as the Cadet Battalion Commander. She met her husband, Colby Morgan, her first semester at Sam Houston and they were married in December 2013.

Upon graduation, CPT Morgan attended Flight School in Fort Rucker, AL, where she certified on the UH-60M Black Hawk. Her first duty station was Fort Campbell, KY, where she was assigned to Ops CO, HHC BDE Bn, 101st Airborne Division and served as an assistant to the G3 Air. She was later moved to Delta Company, 5-101, where she worked as the Shops Platoon Leader for 11 months. Her last assignment at Fort Campbell was Alpha Company, 5-101, where she served as a Flight Platoon Leader for a year.

She attended the Maneuver Captain's Career Course at Fort Benning GA, before being assigned to Fort Hood, TX. Upon arrival, she was assigned to HHC BDE, 2ABCT, 1CD, where she was the Brigade Aviation Officer and then Home Station Mission Command Brigade Executive Officer, following the birth of her and Colby's first son, Cuyler. She is now serving in command for the Headquarters and the Headquarters Company of 1-227 Attack Battalion "NIGHTRIDERS".

CPT Morgan's military education includes Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE-C) School, UH-60M Aviator Qualification, The Sabalauski Air Assault School, Joint Firepower Course, and Maneuver Captain's Career Course at Fort Benning, GA.

The SHSU motto, "the measure of a life is it's service" is something that CPT Morgan continues to strive toward daily in her service to God, her family and friends, and her nation. Even during her busy life as an officer, she has found time to reach out and mentor SHSU cadets. Going so far as to even participate in last years Branch Day.

"EAT 'EM UP KATS!"

Embodying the Bearkat Battalion Spirit...

CPT Hailey Morgan embodies what it means to be a member of the SHSU and Bearkat Battalion community. Her dedication to ensuring the success of future generations of Army Officers is evident in the tremendous work she does.

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

