



CDT Tristin Chudej providing guidance to MSIII Cadets, during tactical training at Gibbs Ranch.

Bearkat BATTALION

February | 2021 | Sam Houston State University



3rd Annual CPT Rowdy Inman Memorial 5k




\$25
PER ENTRY

SCAN HERE!



March 13th, 2021*

Location: SHSU Clock Tower

Race Start: 8:00AM

* Date is subject to change and/or conducted virtually

*All COVID guidelines will be followed

Made with PosterMyWall.com

Inside This Issue

- **Page 2:** PMS Comments
- **Page 3:** CDT Newsletter / PAO – MSIV CDT Jarrod Massey
- **Page 4:** Cadet of the Month – MSIV CDT Webster, Eric
- **Page 5:** In the Beginning – MSI CDT Coker, Ryan
- **Page 6:** The Next Step – MSII CDT Santiago, Xiomara
- **Pages 7-8:** February in Photos
- **Pages 9-10:** Alumni Spotlight – CPT Akeroyd, Michael

You are able to REGISTER or DONATE for the event at
<https://fundly.com/3rd-annual-cpt-rowdy-inman-memorial-5k-1>

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

We are approximately half way done with the semester and our Cadets remain positive in their quest to join our profession of selfless service—not even the “Texas Freeze” could dampen their spirit and motivation. Instead, they took this opportunity to utilize our mentorship trees and take care of each other, as Cadet Jarrod Massey, mentions on page 3. Jarrod oversees our newsletters this year and due to his hard work, it will be the first year we will publish a newsletter every month, despite the challenges we faced and our high optempo. In past years, when this occurred, we would publish a newsletter once every two months. We appreciate Jarrod’s commitment and dedication to our newsletters and program.

Cadet Xiomara Santiago officially joined our profession by contracting this past month (page 6). We are extremely proud of her hard work, as she made huge strides in fitness, academics, and leadership, since her first semester as a freshman. Xiomara is part of our very talented sophomore cohort. This cohort holds each other accountable, exhibits outstanding teamwork, and brings out the best in each other. We currently have 33 sophomores in this cohort, whereas, in the past, our program had anywhere from the high teens to the low twenties. An example of this teamwork is exhibited by Cadet Austin Sumner. Austin successfully completed Air Assault (AA) School over the winter break, and is now assisting his peers (Ben Dene, Melissa Mize, and Matthew Pilgrim) as they prepare for AA School this upcoming summer. I am personally excited to see this cohort continue to grow as leaders and take our program to the “next level”!

The level that I am referring to is one the 2015 SHSU ROTC cohort displayed in our program, when they were Cadets and continue to display. The last time our program had over 100 Cadets in the program was in 2015, with 112 Cadets. We reached the century mark this past semester with 100 Cadets and while one of our goals is to reach 115 Cadets in the program, this is only one of things I am referring to, when I mention “next level”. This past week, Captain Mike Akeroyd (2015 Alumnus), hosted our Senior Cadets for a Leadership Professional Development Session at Fort Hood, Texas. In addition, 2014/2015 SHSU Alumni Captains Samuel Houston, Hailey Morgan, and Travis Watson took time out of their busy schedules to mentor our Cadets. Our Cadets could feel the energy, camaraderie, and passion these captains had as Cadets and continue to lead with – this is the level we strive to reach, as our program continues to grow.

Since we are on the topic of Alumni, a friendly reminder that our Cadets are hosting the 3rd Annual CPT Rowdy Inman 5K on March 13, 2021. We hope you can join us and the Inman family on this special day to honor a fellow American, who made the ultimate sacrifice for our great country! If you can not join in person, please contact Cadet Alex Rocha (details on page 1) to run the race virtually and/or make a generous donation. In closing, we thank each one of you, for the support you provide to our Cadets and program. We would not be able to develop second lieutenants without your support! Have a great weekend!

Strength and Honor!

Lieutenant Colonel Joe Contreras



CDT BC Nikki Stone being presented the CDT Micah Berry Remembrance award by SHSU Alumni.



LTC Contreras, CDT BC Stone, and Staff during the March to The Grave ceremony.



Newsletter / Public Affairs Officer – MSIV CDT Massey, Jarrod

Team,

As we continue to feel the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic, I know that I can speak for my fellow MSIV leadership when I say we are in awe of the dedication and growth we have seen from the Cadets within the Bearkat Battalion. This month's recent winter storm is one example of their dedication. Cadets' within the battalion, time and time again astonish us with their dedication to the community, but also to one another. There is no shortage of examples, such as MSIV and Firefighter Eric Webster (page 5) who worked over 102 hours continuously while the city was reporting approximately 150+ motor vehicle accidents. Immediately following the freeze, Cadets jumped in to assist as needed. Many travelling back home to help with numerous damaged pipes and homes. As the program returns to full operations, preparations are already underway for the upcoming 3rd Annual Rowdy Inman 5K (see pages 1 & 2) and the Joint Spring FTX.

Since joining the Sam Houston State University Army ROTC Program, in the Fall of 2017, I consider myself fortunate to witness the amazing things this Battalion and its Cadets are capable of. Throughout the years, I have had many opportunities to witness the unparalleled determination, growth, and discipline of Cadets in the Bearkat Battalion. When I was an MSI, I shared a similar mindset that we see often in our underclassmen... I was uncertain if the United States Army was for me. However, as time progressed, and I moved along through the program, I soon realized, I was surrounded by some of the most intelligent, dedicated, and inspirational individuals that I have had the pleasure of calling teammates.

Now that I am a senior, myself and fellow MS21 cohort, are beginning to start the next chapters of our lives. I cannot help but to feel a fair share of disbelief; not only are we preparing to leave behind the organization we strived, for 4 years to help develop, but we are also leaving behind our family. However, I know as we continue into this next chapter, that this family will follow with us. I do not hesitate when I say I have the upmost confidence the next generation of Cadets are poised and ready to take on any challenges that come their way. After all, we are not defined by our current impact, but rather the impact we have on the generation that follows us.

Finally, I would like to thank our Alumni, Community, University, United States Army, Cadet Command, Cadre, and each individual Cadet for their steadfast commitment. Nothing would be achievable without your dedication and support! You continually embody the motto... "The measure of a Life is its Service."

Keep Fighting!

MSIV CDT Jarrod Massey



CDT Massey and fellow MSIVs as MSIIIs during the Fall 2019 semester.



Cadet of the Month – MSIV CDT CSM Eric Webster

MSIV CDT Eric Webster enlisted as a private immediately following high school. His first job within the United States Army was as a 31B (Military Police Officer). Upon graduating basic training, CDT Webster deployed to a combat zone in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). During the conflict, he served the as an M-240 gunner with the 23rd Military Police Company (Airborne), 91st MP Battalion.

Upon returning stateside, he chose to focus on a goal of community service for the remaining duration of his contract; spending time volunteering his time at multiple “at risk” youth facilities. Eventually, he was recognized and awarded for his actions with the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal (MOVSM). CDT Webster completed his Active Duty service obligation and completed his contract as a Sergeant (E-5). He then transitioned to the Army Reserves, where he now serves within a Combat Support Hospital out of Fort Sam Houston, as a Staff Sergeant Military Police Liaison, providing a supervisory role toward security for the unit. Alongside his Army Reserve service, CDT Webster became a Firefighter for the Houston Fire Department (HFD). He works full time, providing the city with services toward rescue operations and emergency medical situations. Some examples include, serving during the natural disasters of Hurricane Harvey and the recent historic Texas Freeze. During the recent Texas Freeze, CDT Webster worked over 102 hours with the HFD. During this time, he assisted dozens of Houstonians in danger throughout the city.

Seeking to better himself, Eric Webster says he chose to “take a leap of faith” and interview with the Sam Houston State R.O.T.C. program to begin his journey to become an Army Officer. Eric Webster attends SHSU as a full-time student, continues to provide community service within his fraternity (Delta Tau Delta), and works full-time as a Houston Firefighter. Pushing himself to do better at every turn while enrolled at Sam Houston State University, his efforts have not gone unnoticed, as the Army selected him to become a UH-60 Black Hawk Helicopter Pilot and commission him as a 2LT upon graduation in May. Eric says “becoming a Pilot has been a lifelong dream of his” and the SHSU R.O.T.C program is extremely proud of him.



CDT Webster at summer OAL.



CDT Webster responding to a vehicle crash.



CDT Webster receiving his aviation branch.



In the Beginning – MSI CDT Coker, Ryan

My decision to join the Army ROTC program at SHSU, was based off two simple things. First, I knew I needed to involve myself in school, because I always have been involved and felt I was not doing enough. Second, from a young age I knew I did not want to be a banker, salesman, or doctor, rather I wanted to serve my country in the military. As I have grown, I feel that the only way I can give back to my country which has given me and my family so many opportunities, is to do my part and protect it. Just as my cousin, older brother, and both my grandfathers have done.

The opportunity to be the first in my family to attend a university motivated me to work as hard as my father does for my family. This approach resulted in an outcome of better grades each semester, along with great time management skills, that I did not have the desire to utilize in high school. Although, as a normal student, I was making good grades, I was never commended for my academic achievements until I joined ROTC. Within a month of being in the program, I was awarded a scholarship for my academic excellence and physical fitness. I would have never had this opportunity if I had not joined the program.

SHSU has helped me surround myself with people who push me in the right direction and keep fighting, when I begin to feel sorry for myself. CDT Julian Monroig, my mentor, is one of these people. Julian and I are both in Ranger Company this semester, and he motivates me individually during PT, and has shown me how to apply skills I have been learning. Such as, how to forget about my pain and look to my right and left to ensure the people around me are solid. Thus, teaching me to always put the team before myself.

I hope to gain from this program, brothers and sisters that are going to tell me, “get up and get after it today”, and keep me away from people who are going to tell me “it is okay to be lazy.” I want to wake up better than the day before and make each day a victory. Even though I commute, there is not a better reason in my mind to get up at the crack of dawn and drive to school, and I hope to continue creating new moments to be proud of, with this program being the foundation I started it on.

“Somewhere inside, we hear a voice. It leads us in the direction of the person we wish to become. But it is *up to us whether or not to follow*” – Pat Tillman



CDT Ryan Coker and fellow Freshmen Cadets were recognized and received an \$800 scholarship, for meeting academic and fitness requirements established by the PMS.



CDT Ryan Coker and his mother.



CDT Ryan Coker during tactical lab.



The Next Step – MSII CDT Santiago, Xiomara



CDT Santiago being recognized as Magna Cum Laide.

When I joined the Army ROTC program, I was unsure if the army was what I wanted, however, once I experienced it for myself, I knew this was for me. My family, both inside and outside of the Army, have always encouraged me to serve my country as an officer. ROTC provided me this opportunity!

The program has benefited me in so many ways, in just a few semesters. I have had a lot of team building and leadership experiences that inspired me to be a better leader. Daily, I am surrounded by so much potential in our program, that I am often inspired to strive for growth in order to achieve my full potential. Since committing myself to the program, I have a better support system and foundation which is pushing me to keep improving academically and physically. After a lot of thought and consideration, I chose to contract and take the first step into my Army career. It was important for me to think long term, and this was something I wanted to do during my sophomore (MSII) year.

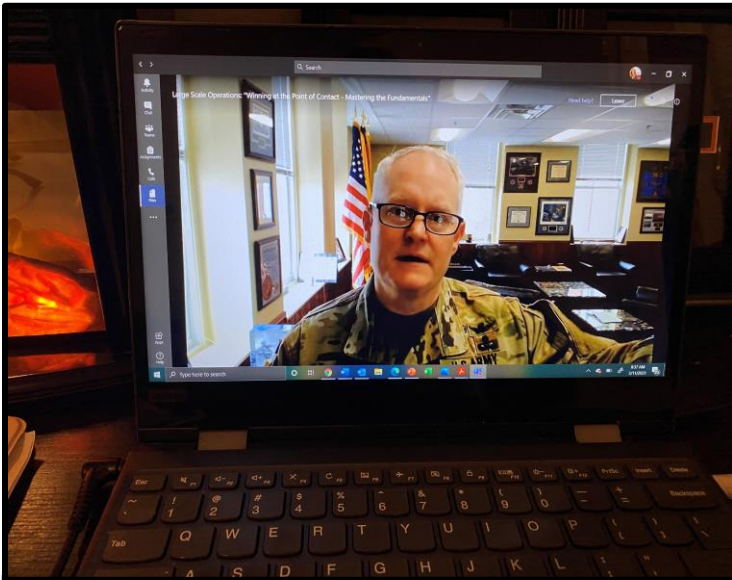
Seeing those who came before me do incredible and inspirational things, excites and motivates me to be the best version of myself. 2LT Samanta Lopez and MSIV CDT Hannah Zepeda have shown me what strong, intelligent women look like. Having them as mentors really inspires me to constantly strive to become an inspirational leader like they are. I hope that by the time I leave this program I will be a well-rounded leader that strives to do the best for her country. My experience in the program has been all around a motivational and a wholesome one, from the family feel I was welcomed to the motivation that pushes me every week at PT. I am thankful and proud to be a part of the Sam Houston State University Army ROTC program. This program is unique in the way that it supports each and every Cadet that joins it!



CDT Santiago during her contracting ceremony.



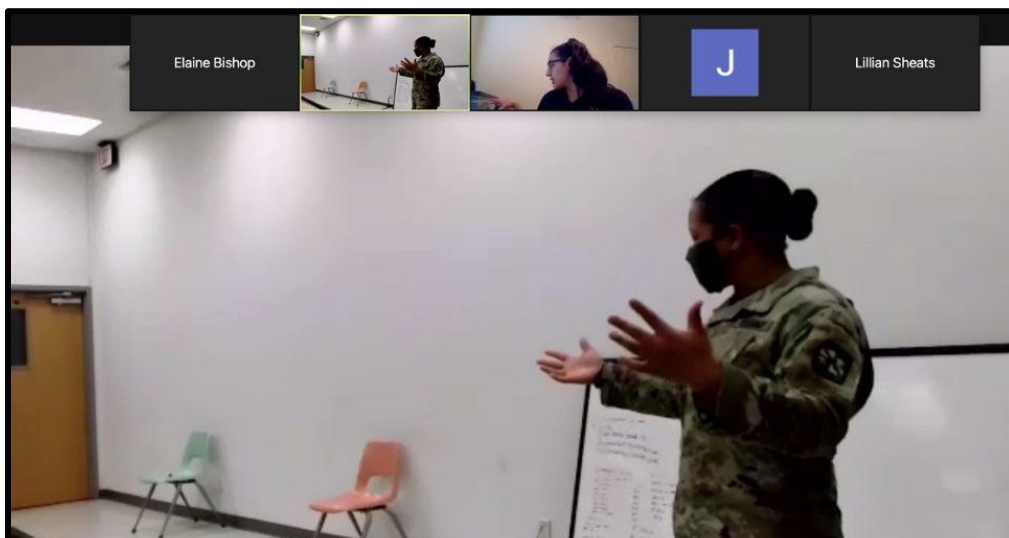
February in Photos



CDT Nikki Stone attending the 2021 George C. Marshall awards leadership seminar.



Bearkat Cadets performing a PT day, consisting of a ruck march and full body workout.



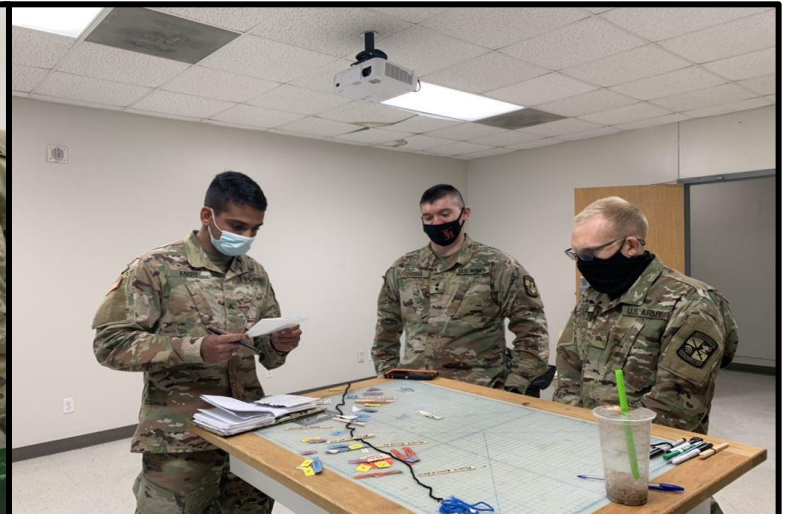
Female Bearkat Cadets attending the Nurse LPD, hosted by MAJ Karlene Wright (5th Brigade's Nurse Counselor (BNC)).



February In Photos



Bearkat Cadets execute a tactical defense lab, at Gibbs Ranch.



Bearkat Cadets, with guidance from MSIVs, prepare and practice OPORD briefing.



MSIII Cadets execute the Occupational Physical Assessment Test (OPAT).



Alumni Spotlight – CPT Akeroyd, Michael



CPT Akeroyd, as a Cadet, meeting with former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff LTG (R) Dempsey.

CPT Micheal Akeroyd exemplifies exceptional dedication to the Bearkat Battalion and our Cadets. Providing unique opportunities to our program, such as the MSIV classes Leadership Professional Development (LPD) at Ft. Hood, TX. CPT Akeroyd is continually dedicated to developing and providing for future leaders.

**On behalf of the Bearkat Battalion,
thank you for exemplary service
and support!**

CPT Micheal D. Akeroyd is a native of Houston, TX. He has two children Kaeli Akeroyd (15) and Kaeden Akeroyd (13) who reside in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Originally enlisted in the Army in July 2003, he began his career at Ft. Carson, CO, assigned to the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment as an M1A1 Abrams Tank Crewman. In 2011, he changed his military occupational specialty to become a Counter-intelligence Special Agent and was assigned to the Technical Surveillance Countermeasures Team, 205th Military Intelligence Battalion, 500th Military Intelligence Brigade until 2013.

CPT Akeroyd commissioned in 2015 through the Green-to-Gold ROTC program, as a Distinguished Military Graduate of Sam Houston State University. Upon graduation, he earned a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. His assignments include Distribution Platoon Leader, Company Executive Officer for Echo Forward Support Company, Battalion S4 in 1-3 Attack Reconnaissance Battalion (TF Viper, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, Ansbach Germany), Assistant S3 and Battalion S1 for the 262nd Quartermaster Battalion (23rd Quartermaster Brigade, Ft. Lee, VA). He also has three combat deployments to Iraq, while assigned to Apache Troop and Dragon Company (1st Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment) in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom I and III.

CPT Akeroyd's military education includes Logistics-Captains Career Course, Quartermaster Basic Officer Leader Course, Counterintelligence Special Agent Course, Advanced Counterintelligence Collections Course, Counterintelligence Support to Force Protection Course, M1A1/A2 SEP Tank Commanders Course, Basic Instructor Training Course, DLI-Arabic-Iraq special language course, CBRN Course, Primary Leadership Development Course, Advanced Leaders Course, and Equal Opportunity Leaders Course.

His awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal (8 OLC), Army Achievement Medal (3 OLC), Army Good Conduct Medal (3 Clasp), National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal (4 Combat Stars), Global War on Terrorism-Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism-Service Medal, Presidential Unit Citation Award, Combat Action Badge, German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge-Gold, Military Volunteer Service Medal, NCOPD Ribbon (2), Overseas Ribbon (Numeral 5), Order of St. George Medallion, Armor Draper Leadership Award, Drivers Badge (Wheel and Track), USAEUR G4-Logistics Hero Award, and the Superior Cadet Award from the Sam Houston State University ROTC program.



Alumni Spotlight – CPT Akeroyd, Michael



CPT Akeroyd, as a Cadet, at LDAC (now known as Advanced Camp).



CPT Akeroyd, as a Cadet, decorating a birthday cake.



CPT Akeroyd, as a Cadet, at the Pentagon where he met with the Sergeant Major of the Army.

