

OCTOBER 2024

BEARKAT BATTALION

NEWSLETTER



**FOLLOW US
ON SOCIAL
MEDIA!**



EAT 'EM UP KATS!

We're thrilled to bring you this month's SHSU Bearkat Battalion newsletter, filled with updates, achievements, and the exceptional efforts of our cadets. This edition spotlights our upcoming annual 5k event, highlights from recent Ranger competitions, and our team's performance at the Army Ten-Miler in Washington, D.C. You'll also find inspiring firsthand accounts of cadet experiences, a special focus on our October Cadet of the Month, new contractings, and an alumni spotlight celebrating our enduring Bearkat legacy.

Thank you for your continued support, which enables us to share these incredible stories of dedication, growth, and accomplishment. We hope you enjoy reading as much as we've enjoyed putting together this issue for you.

*CDT Katelyn Nitsche
Bearkat Battalion Newsletter NCOIC*



**Bearkat Battalion's Ranger
Challenge Team competes in
annual competition.
Read More - Page 4**



**CDT Elizabeth Werts
honored as October
Cadet of the Month.
Read More - Page 9**

Hispanic Heritage Month

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY



As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, Bearkat Battalion proudly honors the invaluable contributions and rich cultural heritage of Hispanic Americans in our ranks and throughout the U.S. Army. This month is dedicated to recognizing the heritage, history, and achievements of Hispanic Americans, and we're grateful for the diversity that strengthens our battalion.



At Sam Houston State University ROTC, we know our strength lies in the unique perspectives and experiences of each Cadet. Hispanic service members and leaders have left a lasting legacy in the U.S. Army, demonstrating courage, resilience, and dedication. From pioneers like General Richard E. Cavazos, the Army's first Hispanic four-star general, to the countless contributions of Soldiers across all ranks, Hispanic Americans have helped shape the Army into a powerful and inclusive force.

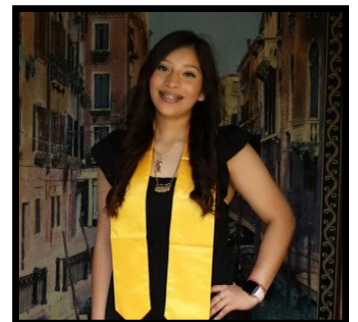


The Bearkat Battalion is honored to continue this legacy of unity and excellence. We deeply value our Hispanic Cadets, whose dedication, leadership, and pride in their heritage enrich our program every day. Together, we embody the Army Values, embracing the strength of diversity as we prepare to serve with integrity, honor, and respect.



In the photos surrounding this article, you'll see some of the outstanding Cadets who represent the Hispanic community in our ROTC. Each Cadet brings a unique background, strength, and commitment to service, reflecting the values that make our battalion thrive. We celebrate and thank each of you for the legacy you're building here at SHSU.

*Cadet Katelyn Nitsche
Bearkat Battalion Newsletter NCOIC*



Rowdy Inman 5k

HONORING A LEGACY



Each year, SHSU's Army ROTC program proudly hosts the Annual CPT Rowdy Inman 5K during Veterans Day weekend. This special event is dedicated to honoring the Inman family and commemorating CPT Rowdy J. Inman's ultimate sacrifice. An esteemed alumnus of our program, Captain Inman was the first SHSU ROTC graduate to fall in the War on Terror. Serving with the U.S. 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment during Operation Iraqi Freedom, he gave his life on December 26, 2007. His distinguished military service included tours in Operation Desert Storm and Operation Just Cause, earning him numerous commendations, including the Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Purple Heart, and the Meritorious Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster. While at SHSU, Captain Inman graduated in 2000 with a Bachelor of Science in Military Science and commissioned as a Second Lieutenant.

This year, we are honored to host the 7th Annual CPT Rowdy Inman 5K on November 9, 2024. The event begins at 8:00 AM from the iconic Blatchley Bell Tower and will bring together runners of all levels to celebrate community and remembrance.

We're deeply grateful to our generous donors, SHSU supporters, and dedicated Cadets who volunteer their time to make this event possible. The CPT Rowdy Inman 5K serves as a powerful reminder of sacrifice and service, and we invite you to join us in honoring CPT Inman's legacy at this year's run.

*Cadet Michael Huff
Bearkat Battalion Rowdy Inman 5k OIC*

Ranger Challenge Competition

BUILDING STRENGTH AND CAMARADERIE

I've had the privilege of competing with SHSU's Ranger Challenge team since my sophomore year, and over that time, I've witnessed nothing but success, driven by the team's discipline, pursuit of excellence, and camaraderie. Now, in my final season as a senior, the experience has been everything I hoped for. Training with my teammates since before the school year began, I've watched us grow and develop together.

Recently, we competed in the Task Force Tomahawk Ranger Challenge Competition, where we earned 2nd place out of 10 teams. This was the toughest competition I've faced during my time at SHSU—and the most rewarding. Watching my team step up, perform at their best, and give everything for each other is an experience I'll carry with me into our shared profession.

Under the purposeful leadership of our Captain, William Ratliff, we united, prepared, and executed as a team, and now we're focused on winning the Brigade Competition. Keep an eye on this team; we're just getting started.

*Cadet Tanner Stone
MSIV Cadet*

Start Unknown, Finish Unforgettable!



CDT Clement navigates the one rope bridge event.



CDT Huff competing in the fitness event.

WHINSEC

INTERNATIONAL TRAINING AT WHINSEC

On June 23, 2024, I had the honor of representing the United States Army in a joint exercise at Fort Moore, participating in the Cadet Troop Leader Training (CTLT) at Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC). This month-long course included approximately 120 multinational students, including two Second Lieutenants from Uruguay, several Cadets from Panama and the Dominican Republic, and 13 U.S. Cadets, including seven from Puerto Rico. We also trained alongside Colombian “alfere” Cadets, equivalent to MS4s preparing for commissioning. Modeled after the Advanced Camp curriculum and taught in Spanish, the course allowed international Cadets to experience the rigor of U.S. Army training. Upon completion, each received a patch for their uniform and a medal for formal attire.

Our instructors included officers, NCOs, and special forces personnel from countries like Brazil, Guatemala, Paraguay, Colombia, and the United States. My instructor, a Teson from Honduras and member of their elite special forces, exemplified the highest standards of excellence, reflected in his rigorous training methods.

The course was both physically and mentally demanding, especially as it introduced our international peers to the discipline expected in the U.S. Army. While some Cadets initially found certain norms—such as maintaining silence during instruction and respect for formations—unfamiliar, they adapted quickly through corrective exercises. This discipline fostered a strong bond among us, uniting us as a cohesive team.

During the month, I grew significantly, both in skill and resilience. The challenging training helped me lose around 10 pounds, and I gained invaluable military experience. The friendships I formed were equally rewarding. One Colombian Cadet honored me with his combatics coin, a respected symbol in the Colombian Army, engraved with his name. Receiving this unique token—a lifetime honor given only once—was profoundly meaningful to me.

The course covered tactics, M4 training, land navigation, water survival, and international law. I also participated in an advanced simulation of a vehicle mission in the Middle East. As the only MS1 in the course, this experience was transformative, affirming my dedication to the U.S. Army’s values and strengthening my commitment to service.

Jesus Ortega Alvarez
MSII Cadet



CDT Ortega receiving a challenge coin.



CDT Ortega during training with his classmates.



CDT Ortega posing with foreign military troops.

JROTC Experience

ENGAGING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

On Saturday, September 14, 2024 the Bearkat Battalion hosted a successful recruiting event for local JROTC programs, welcoming over 350 JROTC Cadets from eight nearby schools. During the event, the visiting Cadets attended an informational brief about the Bearkat Battalion, gaining insights into the experiences of our current Cadets. Additionally, a representative from the admissions office provided an overview of the application process for Sam Houston State University.

In recognition of their attendance, our Professor of Military Science, LTC Hafford, presented a Bearkat Battalion challenge coin to one deserving Cadet from each JROTC program. Following the brief, Bearkat Battalion Cadets led campus tours that culminated at the SHSU Bearkat Alley tailgate. Our battalion tailgate team prepared food for all JROTC guests and hosted a pull-up competition. The event concluded with an exciting Bearkat win over the University of Hawaii, with pull-up competition winners given the unique opportunity to shoot "Boomer" during the game.

As the Bearkat Battalion Recruiting Officer in Charge (OIC), I received tremendous support from Mr. Burkhart, our Recruiting Operations Officer (ROO), our cadre, and dedicated Cadet volunteers. The teamwork displayed by the Bearkat Battalion—both for this event and throughout our gameday operations during Bearkat Family Weekend—was outstanding. Many JROTC Cadets and cadre expressed their gratitude and excitement for the experience.

To future Bearkat Battalion Cadets, keep asking questions and explore the many opportunities ahead. We look forward to welcoming everyone back for upcoming events this year—and perhaps even as a Cadet one day. Our next major public event will be the CPT Rowdy Inman Memorial 5K on Saturday, November 9, 2024.

*Cadet Samantha Gaus-Schmidt
MSIII Cadet*



One representative from each visiting JROTC program conducting a Q&A.



The JROTCs' experiencing SHSU Tailgate.

“...All amazing and a bright and shining hope for the next generation.”

SHSU Homecoming

HOMEcomings 2024: PRIDE AND TRADITION

This year's SHSU Homecoming parade and tailgate were truly unforgettable, highlighted by the enthusiastic participation of the ROTC program. As a student, I felt immense pride watching the Cadets march confidently in their uniforms, bringing tradition and energy to the event. Their precise formations were impressive, and it was clear they were genuinely honored to represent SHSU.

At the tailgate, the ROTC set up a dynamic booth that drew considerable attention. With engaging games and activities, it offered a fantastic opportunity for everyone to connect with the Cadets. I appreciated how they took the time to share the benefits of joining the program, creating a welcoming environment for those of us considering our future paths.

The atmosphere was one of camaraderie, with students, alumni, and families mingling and enjoying the day together. The ROTC's presence made Homecoming even more vibrant, showcasing not only their leadership but also fostering a sense of community that defines SHSU. Their active participation in the festivities served as an inspiring reminder of the values we share as Bearkats.

*Cadet Catherine Benton
MSIV Cadet*



CDT Renee Hess, Samantha Gaus-Schmidt, and Aidan Fedor pose for a picture with the Battalion banner.



Cadets pose with the SHSU Homecoming parade banner.

Army Ten Miler

BEARKAT CADETS AT THE ARMY TEN-MILER

The Army Ten-Miler is an exhilarating annual event held in the heart of Washington, D.C. As one of the largest 10-mile races in the United States, it draws a diverse group of participants—from elite athletes to enthusiastic beginners—all united by a shared goal: to challenge themselves and support the military community. Runners pass iconic landmarks, including the Lincoln Memorial, Jefferson Memorial, and the Potomac River, as they make their way through the capital's historic streets. The atmosphere is electric, filled with the cheers of motivated spectators lining the course, creating an inspiring environment that pushes runners forward.

This race tests physical endurance while embodying a spirit of camaraderie and patriotism, serving as a powerful reminder of the dedication and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform. Participants train for months, showcasing their commitment to both personal fitness goals and the values represented by the Army. The Army Ten-Miler brings thousands together, fostering a deep sense of community and support, and creating an unforgettable experience for all involved. Whether crossing the finish line for the first time or achieving a personal best, each participant leaves with a sense of pride and accomplishment.

This year, our Cadets excelled, completing the race in under an hour and a half, weaving through a sea of fellow competitors. Each Cadet approached the challenge with confidence and determination, and their impressive performances reflect the months of hard work and dedication leading up to the event.

*Cadet Michael Huff
MSIV Cadet*



SHSU Cadets posing at the WW2 Memorial.



SHSU Alumni 1LT Zirkel working the Army Ten Miler.

Cadet of The Month

BUILDING BONDS AND BREAKING LIMITS

As the September Cadet of the Month, I want to express my gratitude to my incredible squad leader and mentor. I entered ROTC feeling quite nervous, but I always knew I could count on Evans and Knight for support. They helped me discover the full range of opportunities within ROTC, which extends far beyond just morning PT and lectures. Building connections has been a vital part of my early experience, and it has truly made a difference.

A bit about me: I moved to Sugar Land, Texas, in 2014 from Waupun, Wisconsin. I'm currently majoring in Criminal Justice, with a minor in Legal Studies and Military Science.

My aspiration within ROTC is to attend law school and become a JAG officer, while also pursuing a career as a criminal defense lawyer. Initially, I didn't see a military path as compatible with a law career. However, during my senior year of high school, I learned about the officer pathway through college and decided to apply. My family has a military background, with my father and great-grandfather having served in the Navy. After speaking with recruiters from various branches, I found that the Army National Guard was the best fit for me. I've been in the National Guard for almost a year now and contracted with ROTC just last week. While my initial motivation was straightforward, I've quickly discovered the myriad programs available for new cadets.

This year, I'm excited to begin training for the Bataan Death March tryouts and participating in tailgates. Experiencing all facets of the program has shown me the depth of opportunities available to cadets who invest their time.

In high school, I ran cross-country and track, and I've found a similar camaraderie among my fellow cadets in the Sam ROTC. While my squad leaders played a significant role in my welcome, my fellow MSIs have also formed a tight-knit group. From the laughter-filled van rides to Gibbs—despite the lack of AC—to the support we provided each other on the high ropes course, these moments have strengthened our bonds. I must say, my favorite PT day has been rucking. Despite the early morning alarms, rucking fosters both individual and team physical and mental resilience. Pushing our limits in distance and pace while setting new goals has enhanced our battalion's camaraderie over the past few weeks.

*Cadet Elizabeth Werts
MSI Cadet*



CDT Elizabeth Werts taking a selfie with her MSI peers



CDT Werts prepping for Ranger Challenge on the M17



CDT Werts posing with her MSI Urban Orienteering group

Army Civilian Career Fair

EXPLORING CAREERS BEYOND THE UNIFORM

In September, I had the privilege of attending the Army Civilian Career Fair at NRG Stadium, a two-day event that brought together professionals from various Army branches and government agencies. This event opened doors to a wealth of career opportunities, allowing me to connect with representatives from Army intelligence, logistics, and civilian roles, as well as agencies like the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI.

As a Homeland Security major and aspiring Military Intelligence Officer, this experience was invaluable. The fair provided insight into potential career paths, not only within the Army but across the broader national security landscape. Conversations with seasoned professionals offered guidance on navigating specialized fields and emphasized the importance of interagency collaboration, which is crucial for anyone pursuing a career in defense.

What stood out most was the Army's commitment to mentorship and professional development. Through programs like internships and leadership training, the Army invests in the next generation, ensuring we're well-prepared to tackle future challenges.

For cadets like myself, these opportunities are transformative. The connections I made at the fair have already led to follow-up conversations about internships and potential job opportunities after graduation. Experiences like this, supported by the ROTC program and generous donors, equip us with the tools to pursue ambitious careers while making a meaningful impact on national security.

I'm incredibly grateful for this experience, which has strengthened my resolve to serve my country and broadened my horizons for what's possible in my future career.

*Cadet Katelyn Nitsche
MSIV Cadet*



CDT Katelyn Nitsche posing with one of the Engineer Corps Civilian representatives.



CDT Nitsche was able to speak with the 160th Theater Signal Brigade.



CDT Nitsche was able to speak with ILT Fasuyi about his experience as a Cyber Officer.

Post-Cadet Troop Leader Training

REAL-WORLD LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

The Cadet Troop Leader Training (CTLT) program offers ROTC cadets a unique opportunity to step into the role of a platoon leader, gaining firsthand experience leading Soldiers in active-duty units. This experience is invaluable for cadets as they develop leadership skills, learn the dynamics of Army operations, and build lasting relationships with the Soldiers and leaders they work alongside.

My own experience with CTLT took place with the 11th Signal Brigade, 57th Expeditionary Signal Battalion-Enhanced (ESB-E), Charlie Company, 2nd Platoon. During my time there, I had the opportunity to lead Soldiers in a real-world setting, putting into practice the skills and knowledge I developed through ROTC. It was an incredible experience that pushed me to grow as a leader, and I was honored to make such a positive impact that the unit invited me back for their signal ball and even their holiday party. These invitations were a clear sign that I had built strong connections and gained the trust of the Soldiers I served with.

CTLT assignments give cadets the chance to make a real impact. In some cases, cadets perform so well that the unit they serve with invites them back for major events, showcasing the strong bonds and trust they have built in a short amount of time. This is a testament to the influence cadets can have when they approach their role with dedication and a desire to excel.

For cadets considering CTLT, these opportunities are more than just training—they are gateways to building leadership experience, forging lasting connections, and leaving a meaningful mark on the units they serve.

*Cadet Katelyn Nitsche
MSIV Cadet*



CDT Katelyn Nitsche posing with the NCOs' that guided her through CTLT.



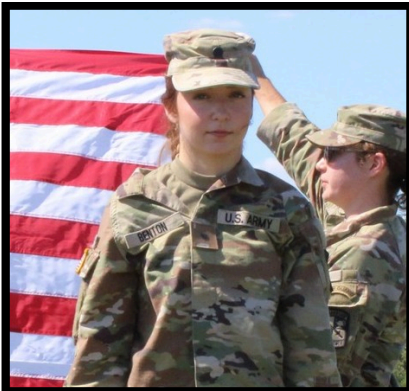
CDT Nitsche posing with Charlie Company at the FT Cavazos Signal Ball.

Contracted Cadets

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEWEST CONTRACTED CADETS!!

The SHSU Bearkat Battalion is proud to announce and celebrate our newest contracted Cadets. Each of these Cadets has shown unwavering commitment, resilience, and excellence, fully embodying the Army Values and our Battalion's high standards. This milestone signifies not only their dedication to the ROTC program but also their commitment to serving as future leaders in the U.S. Army. We are immensely proud of these Cadets as they take this pivotal step, and we look forward to seeing their growth and contributions in the semesters to come.

Let us continue to support and encourage all Bearkat Cadets on their ROTC journeys, helping them reach new heights and uphold the Bearkat spirit. Congratulations to our newly contracted Cadets—you inspire us all!



CDT Catherine Benton (MS4)



CDT Boris Anderson (MS3)



CDT Makade McGinley (MS2)



CDT Joseph Piro (MS2)



CDT Cailyn Whitner (MS2)



CDT Elizabeth Werts (MS1)

Alumni Spotlight

1LT MORGAN WEBB'S JOURNEY: FROM SHSU ROTC TO LAW

My military journey began at 17 when I enlisted in the Texas Army National Guard during my senior year of high school. Realizing the need for more African American female commissioned officers, I set a goal to become one and joined the ROTC program at Sam Houston State University. There, I earned the ROTC Medal from the Military Officers Association of America, served as a legal intern for the Army JAG Corps, and received multiple GPA awards. I was also honored with the Outstanding Academic Achievement Award from the Elliot T. Bowers Honors College, selected as a Raven Scholar, and graduated magna cum laude.

Throughout ROTC, I learned the value of discipline and determination, and the importance of using my voice and advocating for myself and others. After commissioning as an Adjutant General Corps Officer in 2020, I balanced my service with my ambition to become a lawyer.

I graduated from the Texas Tech University School of Law in May 2024. During law school, I served in various National Guard roles, including Brigade Strength Manager, Battalion S-1, and HHC Company Commander for the Rear Detachment. My ROTC foundation of discipline and dedication greatly contributed to my success in these roles. I also engaged as a student ambassador, research assistant, clinic member, and Board of Directors member for the National Black Law Students Association. My military experience also facilitated an attorney internship with USAA, leading to my current role as an Associate Attorney at the largest insurance defense firm in Texas.

My advice to current cadets is to relentlessly advocate for yourself and pursue your dreams, regardless of the challenges. For those considering the National Guard or Reserves, your path is still full of potential. Seek mentorship and stay committed to your goals. Mentorship has been invaluable in my journey, and I am deeply appreciative of my experiences with the Bearkat Battalion. Keep up the great work!



Eat 'em up Kats! & Wreck 'em!

