

MARCH 2024

BEARKAT BATTALION

NEWSLETTER



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EAT 'EM UP KATS!

This month has been marked by many achievements and celebrations. The Cadets have showcased exceptional endurance by successfully completing multiple marathons. This is a true testament to their hard work, dedication, and the rigorous training that takes place in our program. The month of March also brought us the opportunity to honor Women's History Month, reflecting on the significant contributions of women in the military and beyond, and recognizing the vital roles they play in our armed forces today. Furthermore, as we embraced the refreshing onset of spring, our Cadets and staff enjoyed a well-deserved break. Spring Break offered a chance to recharge, reflect on our accomplishments, and prepare for the challenges ahead. We're excited to share these highlights and more in this issue. Join us as we celebrate the achievements of our cadets and the vibrant spirit of our community!



Learn more about Project GO and Cadet Taylor Knights future endeavors in Morocco.

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Check out where the Cadets went on Spring Break.

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Cadet of the Month

CADET JACOB RISINGER



Cadet Battalion Commander Avery Sitkowski and Cadet Command Sergeant Major Cinnamon Wright-Burwinkel handing Jacob Risinger the Cadet of the Month Award!



The Battalion is happy to award the hard work of Cadet Risinger and we are excited to see where he goes.

“Being Cadet of the month is an honor and definitely motivates me to keep working hard and strive to be like my fellow cadets. Coming into the program was definitely nerve racking, but my classmates made me feel welcomed and part of the family. I am thankful for the time they spent helping me prepare and learn and pushing me to get better. I will use this as further motivation to keep pushing and to do the best I can.”

Cadet Jacob Risinger



Cadet Risinger being rewarded for winning the 2022 National Cheerleaders Association contest

Contracting Cadets

HARDWORK PAYS OFF



Cadet Adrian Simonsen (L) Cadet Taylor Russell (R)



Cadet Karli Mcmillin



Cadet Madison Evans (L) Cadet Iris Tebungagi (R)

Project Global Officer

CADET TALYOR KNIGHT



Hi, I'm Cadet Knight, a sophomore here at SHSU. Our program received information about Project Global Officer, also known as Project GO, in November 2023. This opportunity is open to all cadets, MSI-MSIV (contracted and non-contracted). It is a study program that allows you to pursue critical language education either abroad or through domestic programs. Languages include Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, and many more.

For my application process, I chose Arabic because by summer 2024, I will have already completed both of my Elementary Arabic courses here at SHSU. While certain programs do not require prior knowledge of the language, many study abroad applications prefer to see at least one year of language study. The initial process involves providing basic information about yourself and your university. You will need to include an unofficial transcript and any class materials or textbooks you have used for your specific language.

Subsequently, you will be prompted to write at least three essays covering topics such as why you chose your program, how it will develop you as an officer, how you will utilize the program after completion, your goals, anticipated challenges in a different culture, and more. Then, you will proceed to apply for the programs you wish to attend. You can apply to three domestic and three international programs, but if accepted, you can only choose one. These applications will detail the host school, prerequisites, and program dates.

Once all applications for Project GO are submitted, they will send out emails announcing the results for study abroad and a separate date for domestic programs. In anticipation of acceptance, I had to complete applications for the host schools' study abroad programs and participate in virtual interviews. Personally, I had to apply for a new passport since mine had expired. On the day of notification, you will receive an email indicating acceptance, waitlist status, or non-acceptance. If accepted, you have three days to respond to the invitation.

My expectations for traveling to Morocco for Arabic are very high. Based on my interview, most schools will take a group of ROTC cadets and a group of regular study abroad students to facilitate involvement and utilize the learning environment effectively. My school has informed us that we will visit various places such as markets, cafes, and even attend a wedding. I am excited to enhance my language skills and immerse myself in the culture. I look forward to bringing this knowledge back to the program and utilizing it to advance my Army Officer career, hopefully in Active Duty.

George C. Marshall Seminar

CADET BATTALION COMMANDER AVERY SITKOWSKI



Future Leaders across the Nation



Two Star General Munera (L) and Cadet Sitkowski (R)



Cadets were able to ride in the CH 47 Chinook

During the last week of February, the Cadet BC Avery Sitkowski joined over 200 Cadets from ROTC programs nationwide in attending the esteemed George C. Marshall Seminar in Fort Knox, KY. Professionally representing Sam Houston State University's ROTC program, Cadet Sitkowski immersed himself in challenging physical activities, exceptional training exercises, and had the opportunity to engage with some of the Army's most distinguished senior leaders. We eagerly anticipate the promising future ahead for him.

Bataan Memorial Death March

ALWAYS REMEMBER



Both Alpha and Bravo teams



Cadet Nick Watson representing the Battalion during the march

As a program we took two 5-man heavy teams to White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico to participate in the Bataan Memorial Death March on March 16th. This event is a 26.2 Memorial Ruck in honor of the 75,000 United States and Filipino soldiers who were forced on a 65-mile foot-march through the scorching jungles of the Philippines, many of whom died on the route. Alpha Team completed the 26.2 miles in 7.5 hours earning 8th place out of 38 ROTC teams and Bravo came in at 9 hours earning 11th in their division. Both teams fought hard, enduring numerous changes in terrain, and worked as a team to get every member across the finish line. We came into this event prepared through multiple long train up rucks, but our bodies were still surprised at how difficult this march was.

It was an honor to participate in such an event and get the chance to remember those who endured a real struggle rather than a race. Upon completion of the race, our bodies were absolutely destroyed, making the successful completions of both teams that much satisfying. This was an amazing experience that was only possible through the hard work of all ten team members and the support from the two cadre who also participated in the Military Light division, LTC Limberg and SFC Calderon.

Alpha Team: Jacob Clement, Michael Huff, James Cooke, Jackson Hyams, and Diego Paez.

Bravo Team: Tanner Stone, William Ratliff, John Wisnewski, Nicholas Watson, and Alex Cannon.

Cadet Jacob Clement

Cadets on Spring Break

OH, THE PLACES WE HAVE GONE

"Traveling - It leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller."

This March, our ROTC Cadets stepped away from their studies and training to take time and enjoy Spring Break. This week-long hiatus served as an opportunity for relaxation, personal growth, and exploration. Away from the structured schedules and demands of the program, everyone found solace in various activities, be it unwinding at home, adventuring in nature, or traversing new cities.



Cadet Arly Cruz in Chicago



Cadet Mason Kizer at Machu Picchu, Peru



Cadet Emily Slott on her Jet Ski



Cadet Carson Shell and Jack Boucher



Cadet Faith Calma in Hawaii



Cadet Taylar Russell at Universal Studios in Florida

Women History Month

WOMEN OF THE BEARKAT BATTALION

Women's History Month shines brightly for the Sam Houston ROTC program, especially for our aspiring future Female Army Officers. This special month is a vibrant celebration of the remarkable achievements and contributions of women throughout history, illuminating the progress toward gender equality. It's a time that holds profound significance for women in the military, drawing inspiration from the pioneering women who have boldly broken through barriers in the armed forces. Their legacy fuels our passion and determination to excel as the next generation of leaders.

In the spirit of this celebratory month, we take immense pride in the strides we've made towards gender diversity within our battalion. With 28 out of 86 Cadets being women, our program boasts a commendable ratio of approximately 33%, surpassing the Army's average. This achievement not only reflects our dedication to advancing gender diversity but also underscores the vital role of inclusivity initiatives within our ranks. It's heartening to see our figures outshine the Army's current statistics, with 17.5% of Active Duty and 21.6% of Reservists being female.

By embracing Women's History Month, the Sam Houston ROTC program doesn't just pay tribute to the trailblazing women of yesteryears and today; we also solidify our unwavering commitment to creating an empowering environment. Here, every cadet, regardless of gender, is encouraged to flourish and make significant contributions to our collective future as esteemed Army officers.

Cadet Katelyn Nitsche
Newsletter NCOIC



The MS1s and MS2s.



The Battalion female representation.



The MS3s and MS4s.

March Marathons

READY, SET, GO

This past month, we had some Cadets show off their physical fitness by competing in different marathons around the state! Congratulations to these Cadets for their hard work and intense training to accomplish this milestone for them!

Cadet Carson Shell
POA OIC



Cadet Jacob Clement
Ascension Seton Austin Marathon
26.2 miles in 5 hours

Cadet Hunter Mills
Houston Methodist Woodlands Half Marathon
13.1 miles in 1 hour and 39 Minutes



Cadet Avery Sitkowski
Houston Methodist Woodlands Marathon
26.2 miles in 4 hours and 8 minutes

Cadet Bailey Pogue
Rocky Raccoon 100 Marathon
100 Kilometers in 16 hours and 32 Minutes



The Stories of the MS1 and MS2

THE NEXT GENERATION OF CADETS

I had heard of ROTC before, but nothing could have prepared me for the experience I was about to embark on. Arriving as a new junior at Sam Houston State University, 11 hours away from home, I initially felt that the opportunity to be part of something had passed me by. However, not long after, I began to form connections with a diverse range of people—individuals I wouldn't have otherwise spoken to if it weren't for ROTC.

Not only did ROTC help me break out of my social shell, but it also provided me with an escape from the expectations I had set for myself. Running has always been a challenge for me, and it still is. For as long as I can remember, I have avoided it. Yet now, I find myself striving to improve during my free time.

I would wholeheartedly recommend ROTC to any individual willing to put in the effort for a cause. From my perspective, my personal growth has ranged from breaking free from mental barriers I've set for myself to enhancing my integrity. While I acknowledge that I still have much to learn, I am extremely pleased with the results that this struggle, this team, and this opportunity have brought me.



Cadet Priscilla Hernandez
MS1



Cadet Karli Mcmillin
MS2

When I first joined ROTC, I was excited to learn more about how the army works, grow into a better leader, and build my skill base and as much as ROTC has helped me do that, it has also done so much more. ROTC has become my home away from home. It's become an organization that makes me feel supported and motivated to become the best army officer and citizen I can be. Throughout my MS1 year I was greeted with open arms on the Ranger Challenge Team where higher MS levels were devoted to helping me grow, it was a great feeling knowing that they wanted me to succeed as much as I wanted to. Not only did I have my fellow cadets cheering me on and helping me grow but I also had great Cadre mentoring me along the way and into my MS2 year with class staff positions and battalion event management and self-improvement.

I am a Private First Class in the Texas Army National Guard, and Between my MS1 and 2 year I had the opportunity to complete my AIT training. To do so I had to take off a semester from school and come back in the fall. I remember while at training that I had my family, people cheering me on while I was away. I loved the phone calls with my friends where they would update me with everything that was happening in the battalion, because besides my family and my dog I really missed the family that I had in ROTC. When I Graduated AIT, I was welcomed back as if I never left.

ROTC has given me the opportunity to grow into a better leader, develop my skills, and connect with people that I never thought I would.

Alumni Spotlight

CAPTAIN DARIAN HENDERSON

My military career began on February 24th, 2012, when I enlisted in the national guard after graduating high school. It did not take long before I realized that I wanted to live up to my true potential in the military, which led me to become a member of the SHSU ROTC Program.

The ROTC Program was extremely welcoming and provided many opportunities to excel. The program was centered around teamwork, unit cohesion, and professional growth. I took part in many of the activities such as the Schuder's Rangers, Ranger Challenge, and the Army Ten Miler Team to name a few.

Since commissioning as an Ordnance officer from the ROTC Program I have had the opportunity to serve in several duty stations, and lead in many different capacities. I currently serve as a Company Commander in H Co FSC, 2-502IN BN, 2BCT, 101st ABN DIV (AASLT).

I can truly say that if it had not been for the SHSU ROTC Program, I would not be the leader that I am today. Everyone from my subordinates, peers, and leaders all played a part in my development as an Army Officer. I wake up every morning thankful that I was a part of a program that gave so much to me, and now, I work every day to ensure that I am able to return the favor in any way possible.

Words of advice: Don't be afraid to fail. Bet on yourself and relentlessly pursue your goals and dreams. Someone is counting on you to win, so wake up every day ready to give 100% and then some.



Once a Bearkat, Always a Bearkat!