

NOVEMBER 2023

BEARKAT BATTALION

NEWSLETTER



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EAT 'EM UP KATS!

As we approach the end to another incredible semester, let's take a moment to reflect on the camaraderie, discipline, and downright spooktacular moments that illuminated our November. In this month's newsletter read about Cadets rocking eerie costumes in Halloween PT and turning our lab sessions into a hauntingly fantastic experience; meet our new cadre member, Sergeant First Class Calderon; and hear from a few of our Cadets on what they are thankful for during this holiday. A heartfelt thank you to our incredible sponsors and dedicated Cadets who organized and participated in the 6th Annual Captain Rowdy Inman 5K Run, turning it into a resounding success! Also look out for how our program preformed at the Brigade Ranger Challenge Competition and other events our Cadets participated in like the Ring Guard Ceremony, contracting ceremonies and tailgates. Be sure to check out how our alumni are doing and hear about our veterans day spotlight!



Check out the **Contacting Cadets** for the month of **November**

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Read about the **Class of 1969** and get a glimpse of **First Lieutenant Billy Joe Shotwell** on our **Veterans Day Spotlight**

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Sergeant First Class Carlos Calderon

FIRST IN, LAST OUT

Good afternoon Bearkats and ROTC

My name is Sergeant First Class Carlos Calderon and I am the programs new military science instructor. I originally hail from Los Angeles, California and joined the Army in April 2005. I completed my One-Station Unit Training at Fort Knox, Kentucky, graduated the same year, and was assigned to HHC, 1st Battalion 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, Fort Hood, Texas. During my stay at Fort Hood, I was deployed from October 2006 to January 2008 to the Mansour District of western Baghdad in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

I was then promoted to Sergeant at 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd ABCT, 1st Infantry Division, Fort Riley, Kansas where I was assigned as the Gunner/Team Leader for the CSM's Personal Security Detail and was deployed again from January 2009 to October 2009 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III. I was then reassigned to Apache Troop 5-4 CAV as a Dismount Team Leader and was promoted to Staff Sergeant and returned to Iraq from November 2010 to October 2011.

From May 2012 to May 2017, I was assigned to Bravo Troop, 3rd Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment, 4th IBCT, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, Colorado. I then served as the Senior Scout Leader and deployed to FOB Pasab, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom from March 2014 to September 2014. After returning from Afghanistan, I became the Squadron/Brigade Chief Financial NCO from December 2016 to May 2017. From there I then moved to Fort Benning, Georgia, where I served as an AIT instructor at Comanche Troop, 5th Squadron, 15th Cavalry Regiment, 194th Brigade.

I returned to Fort Carson, Colorado, and was assigned as the Platoon Sergeant in HHC, 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment. After completing my duty assignment as the Platoon Sergeant. I was transferred to become the First Sergeant for Bravo Troop, 3rd Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment, 2nd SBCT, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, Colorado. I am stationed at Sam Houston State University, TX, as a Military Science Instructor. I am married to Alondra Calderon and had four children: Matthew, Dahlia, Camila, and Carlos.

I served in several leadership positions, including Dismount, Gunner, Team Leader, Squad Leader, Chief Financial Advisor, Platoon Sergeant, AIT Instructor, and First Sergeant. My military education includes the Warrior Leaders Course, Advanced Leaders Course, Maneuver-Senior Leaders Course, Combat Life Savers Course, Unit Movement Officer Course, Javelin Training Course, Combative Level 1 and 2; Assist T4T Course; Cadre Training Course; Common Faculty Development- Instructor Course; Air Assault; Mobile Gun System Commanders Course; Advance Situational Awareness Course; Stryker Leaders Course and Heavy Weapons Leaders Course.

Overall, I enjoy the outdoors; and my hobbies are fishing, hiking, and working on cars in my off time. I look forward to teaching and sharing my experiences with the program and do not be afraid to stop by and say hi.

Strength and Honor!!



Contracting Cadets

CADET HAGUI CARDONA-SANCHEZ



I, Hagui Cardona-Sanchez, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies...



Newly Contracted Cadet Hagui Cardona-Sanchez



Cadet Cinnamon Wright-Burwinkel welcoming Cadet Hagui Cardona-Sanchez into the Bearkat Family

“In the pursuit of leadership, I found my path in the Army ROTC at Sam. It is not just a training ground but a crucible for character, forging resilience, and cultivating the indomitable spirit of service. Joining ROTC is not just about shaping a military career; it is a commitment to honing leadership skills, fostering camaraderie, and embracing the profound responsibility of defending the values that define our nation.”

Cadet Hagui Cardona-Sanchez

Contracting Cadets

CADET ANTHONY GUTIERREZ

“It is an honor to be apart of this amazing and growing family. The amount of appreciation I have for everyone, that I have met and trained with is limitless. I can not wait to see how my college career evolves with the ROTC family besides me.”

Cadet Anthony Gutierrez



Cadet Cinnamon Wright-Burwinkel welcoming Cadet Anthony Gutierrez into the Bearkat Battalion



Congratulations Cadet Anthony Gutierrez



Lieutenant Colonel Joshua Limberg and Cadet Anthony Gutierrez

Cadet of the Month

CADET TAYLOR KNIGHT

"Hi, my name is Taylor Knight, and I am this month's cadet of the month! I am a sophomore and MS2 in the program and am currently pursuing a major in Homeland Security with a minor in Military Science and Victim Studies. I enjoy participating in as many teams as I can within the program, including Ranger Challenge, Push-Up Crew, Cannon Crew, and next semester, I plan on joining our program's Ranger Company. Additionally, I am the NCOIC for recruiting efforts around campus and love participating in any sports the program plays, which in the past have been soccer, sand volleyball, softball, and most recently, basketball. Our program's intramural softball team is ready to go back and win the championship this year!

Before attending Sam Houston State, I was awarded a 3-year scholarship and was recently able to contract at the beginning of this semester. With my degree, I plan to utilize what I have learned in my Army career and after to chase my dreams of protecting and serving others. I am also a part of the Arabic club here on campus, which helps me learn the language and be able to utilize this skill in my future career. I also get to learn about the culture in the Middle East, which I find very interesting.

I graduated from high school at Katy High School, and in my last two years of high school, I was also enrolled in the Miller Technology and Career Center. I spent my time there learning the court systems, criminal investigations, and law enforcement. At this center, I was given the opportunity to compete in what I learned, and my team went all the way to State! While in high school, I played basketball for three years, which is where I got my competitive side and brought it to the program.

I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity and to represent the program this month. I would like to thank all those around me who have supported me and pushed me to be where I am today."

Cadet Taylor Knight



Cadet Taylor Knight and the Sam Houston ROTC Cadre



Cadet Taylor Knight during lab at the Intramural Fields



Cadet Taylor Knight and the ROTC Softball Team

Heritage Month

FAMILIE IST ALLES *

From the first of October to the first of November, Sam Houston State University's ROTC community celebrates a rich tapestry of cultural heritage, honoring the diversity within its ranks. This period marks German, Italian, and Filipino Heritage Month, a time when Cadets and Officers alike come together to recognize and appreciate the contributions of individuals with roots in these vibrant cultures. As we commemorate these heritage months, we also reflect on the shared values and principles that unite us in the United States Army. Embracing diversity is not only a reflection of our global community but an essential aspect of the strength and resilience of our armed forces. Through a blend of traditions, stories, and shared experiences, we strengthen our bonds, fostering a culture of inclusivity and understanding within the ROTC family. This celebration serves as a reminder that our unity is our strength, enhancing the camaraderie that defines the Sam Houston State University ROTC and the broader U.S. Army community.



Cadet Mason Kizer is a graduate student at Sam Houston State University, studying for a Master's in Homeland Security. He is currently an MS4 with the ROTC program and will be graduating in the Spring of 2024 while also serving in the Army Reserves. His family emigrated from Germany during the Revolutionary War, and he can trace his lineage to the specific region in Germany from which his family originated. Upon graduation, he plans to continue serving in the Reserves and hopes to branch into Military Intelligence. Cadet Kizer serves as the Cadet in charge for the ROTC Newspaper, collaborating with his team to create memorable editions each month.

Heritage Month

LOTTIAMO PER VINCERE *



Cadet Cory Morrison is a Sam Houston State University senior pursuing a degree in General/Business Administration. As an MS4, he is set to graduate in the Spring of 2024. Morrison can trace his lineage back to Italy, where his grandmother's parents emigrated from Sicily to the United States during the late 1890s. He hopes to branch into the National Guard Engineer Corps. He serves as the Assistant S3 and the Land Navigation NCOIC within the program.

* We fight to win in Italian

BAHAY NG MATAPANG TAO *



Cadet Kynnyth LeBlanc is a Sam Houston State University senior pursuing a degree in Criminal Justice. As an MS4, he is set to graduate in the Spring of 2024. Originally born in the Philippines, Cadet LeBlanc was adopted into the LeBlanc family in 2019. His career aspirations lie in branching into Active-Duty Military Police. He is in charge of tracking the accountability of the battalion at the various events we participate in as well as in charge of finding volunteer opportunities for our Cadets.

2023 Spooky Halloween

TRICK OR TREAT



1st Place Winner Cadet Joshua Vogt dressed up as the 2008 Housing Market Crash



2nd Place Winner Cadet Terrance Dandridge dressed up as a Zumba Instructor



Our runner ups for the Costume Contest



OPFOR pretending to be Zombies during lab



Cadet Emmet Gray and Cadet Rashaad Hammond playing OPFOR as Zombies



Cadet Diego Paez during the Halloween lab

Check out our Halloween Instagram Post to see how the SHSU Cadets fought against the MS4 Zombie invasion:



Thanksgiving with the Program

I AM THANKFUL FOR...



I am thankful for all of the support from girlfriend. She supports me in all my endeavors and helps me where I struggle.
Cadet Jacob Clement

I am thankful for my family. Without them I would not be the person I am today.
Cadet Wes Wisnewski



I am thankful for the Bearkat Battalion. Everyone in the program has each others' backs and we will continue to grow as a family.
Cadet Christian Santiago

I am thankful for my supportive family, friends, & our ROTC program.
Cadet Samantha Gaus-Schmidt



Captain Rowdy Inman 5k

CADETS RUNNING WITH THE COMMUNITY

"Every year the SHSU Army ROTC program has the honor of hosting the Annual CPT Rowdy Inman 5k during Veterans Day weekend. The 5k is to honor the Inman family for the ultimate sacrifice that CPT Rowdy Inman, an alumni of our program, made for this country during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2007.

I had the pleasure of planning this years 6th annual CPT Rowdy Inman 5k on November 11th where we had over a 100 runners! The race kicked off at 8:00 AM with the iconic Blatchley Bell Tower marking the starting point. The morning started off chilly but with the help of my team we were able to get everything set up and ready for a truly memorable event.

Without the generosity of our donors, the support from the University and Cadets that volunteered their time to help with this event, I would not have been able to create such a successful event. The event brought together both avid runners and casual joggers which created an amazing sense of unity. It was an honor to host and plan this year's CPT Rowdy Inman 5k and we hope to see all of you at next year's race. "

Cadet Emily Slott (Rowdy Inman OIC)



**Cadet Nicholas Watson
Rucking the 5k run**



**Cadet Avery Sitkowski
running with his fiancé**



**Sheppard High School
JROTC during the race**

Thank you for Your Support

2023 DONORS

The Sam Houston State University ROTC program extends our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of our donors for your generous contributions to the success of the 6th Annual Captain Rowdy Inman Race at Sam Houston State University. Your support has not only fueled the spirit of this event but has also made a positive impact on our ROTC program and has allowed us to continue honoring the legacy of Captain Rowdy Inman. We are deeply thankful for your kindness and would like to provide a shout-out to the donors for their contributions.

A special thank you to:

- **Mrs. Donna Slott**
- **The SHSU College of Biology**
- **2LT Cody Weeks**
- **LTC (R) Sharon Nitsche**
- **The SHSU College of Criminal Justice**
- **The Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas (LEMIT)**
- **COL (R) Dan Puhl**



A special shout-out to the Military Science and Alumni Club (MSAC) for their continued contributions and support efforts to the program. Thank you all for your contributions to making this event happen.

Stay tuned for next year's 7th Annual Captain Rowdy Inman Race which will take place on November 9th, 2024!



The start of the race!



Cadet Hunter Mills singing the National Anthem



Celebrating after completing the race

2023 Ring Guard Ceremony

CONGRAGULATIONS!!

"Every semester, the Bearkat Battalion upholds the tradition of safeguarding the Sam Houston State University Rings. Sam Houston students earn these rings upon completing 75 credit hours in their respective majors. Inscribed inside the ring is the word 'Honor,' echoing the inscription inside Sam Houston's original personal ring, a gift from his mother, Elizabeth Houston, when he joined the U.S. Army.

As a battalion, we collectively transport the rings from the Alumni Center to General Sam Houston's original home near campus. Here, Cadets volunteer their time to guard the rings throughout the night and into the following morning. Subsequently, Cadets transport the rings to the Johnson Coliseum where a ceremony for students, who have earned their rings, receive them later that evening. The ceremony commences with the posting of the Colors by the Bearkat Battalion.

It was a pleasure to help lead this event, and I appreciate the Bearkat Battalion for volunteering their time to support the university. Congratulations to everyone who earned their ring!"

Cadet Nicholas Watson (Ring Guard OIC)



Tailgate and Push Up Crew

GAME DAY FUN!



Cadets Arly Cruz and Cailyn Whitner hanging out at the Tailgate



Cadet Cailyn Whitner trying out the ROTC world famous Hamburgers



Cadet Emily Slott and Sammy the Bearkat preparing for Game Day



Color Guard From Left to Right: Cadets Katelyn Nitsche, Ryan Coker, Diego Paez, Samantha Gaus-Schmidt

Tailgate and Push Up Crew

UP, DOWN, ONE. UP, DOWN, TWO.



Major Angel Rodriguez and his son Angel being introduced to the school



Sam Houston's First Football Win!
Kennesaw State University: 21
Sam Houston State University: 24



The Push Up Crew pumping out the 24 push ups to celebrate our win against Kennesaw State



Sammy the Bearkat showing the Pushup Crew how it is done

Brigade Ranger Challenge

STRENGTH AND HONOR

"This month, the Ranger Challenge team had the honor of representing the Bearkat Battalion in the 5th Brigade Ranger Challenge Competition at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma. The competition spanned three days, during which each Cadet faced physical and mental challenges that pushed them to go further, move faster, and fight harder.

The events we participated in included:

- The Air Assault Obstacle Course.
- A 6-Mile Ruck March.
- A Stress Shoot with the M17 pistol and M4 rifle.
- A Call for Fire.
- Tactical Combat Casualty Care.
- A One-Rope Bridge.
- Hand Grenade Obstacle Course.
- An ACFT event.
- A Zodiac boat event.



For each event, Cadets had to ruck with 35-plus pounds from one challenge to the next.

I am grateful to have been a part of this team and honored to have led it this semester. The team consistently put in extra work and effort throughout the semester during PT, in class, in practice, and on the field. I am incredibly proud of their accomplishments and am excited to see how far the team will go next year."

Cadet Nicholas Watson (Ranger Challenge OIC)



Summer Training

CADET HUNTER MILLS

“On June 10th, I embarked on a transformative journey as I reported to Fort Knox, Kentucky, for Cadet Summer Training (CST) Advanced Camp. Assigned to 3rd Regiment for the initial half of the summer, I underwent rigorous training that laid the foundation for the challenges to come. Following my graduation on July 14th, I seamlessly transitioned into the role of an MS3 Trainer at CST Basic Camp. This experience, tailored for Cadets in their MS2 year seeking to advance in the program, demanded a different perspective as I moved from a leadership position to a training one. Witnessing the dedication of Cadets striving to prove themselves mentally and physically during this crucial phase of their MS3 year was both enlightening and inspiring.

Navigating Field Training Exercises amid Kentucky's Monsoon season presented unique challenges, with the rain proving to be the most relentless adversary. In the trenches with the Cadets, I shared my knowledge on staying dry and endeavored to uplift morale. The camaraderie and connections forged during this period were invaluable. Working with Cadets from diverse backgrounds nationwide, I gained insight into collaboration with those who held different perspectives, discovering the strength in our ability to either build or dismantle each other. Notably, my interactions with Cadet Olivia Sanchez, who was part of the Basic Camp platoon I mentored, transcended the training grounds, resulting in a lasting friendship.

Upon my return home, a brief respite of five days preceded the commencement of the Fall semester. Despite the taxing nature of this summer as a Cadet, the experiences and connections fostered have left an indelible mark, contributing to my personal and professional growth.”

Cadet Hunter Mills



HPD Range Day

LOCKED, COCKED, AND LOADED!

On November 17th, the Bearkat Battalions MSIII class conducted their end-of-semester weapons qualification at the Huntsville Police Department's range. With the sun shining and Texas's 70-degree fall weather, the MS3's performed with precision. Cadets zeroed their weapons before diving straight into the infamous M4/M16 Qualification. This qualification tests accuracy under a time constraint in four different positions: prone unsupported, prone supported, kneeling supported, and standing supported. The cadets shot 10 rounds at each position, totaling 40 rounds. This performance was the final determination of all the training throughout the semester, and the MS3's did not disappoint. Their continued hard work and commitment to bettering themselves and the program do not go unnoticed.

Top Shooters:

- 1) Joseph Locklin:
36/40
- 2) William Ratliff:
36/40
- 3) Matthew Bilke:
35/40
- 4) James Cooke:
33/40
- 5) Michael Huff:
33/40
- 6) Michael Kilgore:
31/40

Cadet William Ratliff (Range NCOIC)



Paintball Lab

SIMULATED FIRE



Cadets stalking the woods searching for the enemy flag. Using their knowledge in conducting a Raid and Land Navigation.



Fort Knox's Advance Training Camp will now include a graded Grenade Course, as such the Cadets are practicing throwing their grenades and going through an obstacle course.

Veterans Day Spotlight

FIRST LIEUTENANT BILLY JOE SHOTWELL

At Sam Houston State University, Bearkats live to serve others. First lieutenant Billy Joe Shotwell is a Huntsville native and a member of SHSU's class of 1969. Shotwell's parents grew up during the Great Depression and did not receive more than a seventh grade education. When the world fell into chaos in the 1940s, Shotwell's father rose to the occasion and his father's service influenced Billy Shotwell to begin his own career in the armed service later on. "I was inspired to join the Army due to my father, who was part of the Marine Corps during the Pacific Front of World War II," Shotwell said. "I grew up listening to stories about his time in the South Pacific, and I knew I wanted to be part of the most challenging profession in the world." He decided to start his journey at SHSU, where he studied business administration and joined the Army Reserve Officer's Training Corps (ROTC) on campus.

The program allows students to participate in classes and in-field training to become officers for the Army, Army Reserves and National Guard. "My initial impressions of the school and the program were that professionals with experience in spades ran SHSU and the ROTC program and would spread their knowledge to anyone who asked," Shotwell said. "Most of my professors were World War II veterans, and other than teaching from the book, my cadre would also teach us from their experience. For example, they taught us how to call for fire, lead a team, what it means to be in a leadership position and the difficulties that being a leader may entail." Shotwell was a member of the Counter Guerrilla program, now the Ranger Company, which teaches small arms tactics and leadership.



First Lieutenant Billy Joe Shotwell was kind enough to Provide the SHSU ROTC Program with Pictures of his time in the Counter Guerrilla's and his tour in Vietnam

Veterans Day Spotlight Cont.

FIRST LIEUTENANT BILLY JOE SHOTWELL

As a member of this cohort, he learned to lead and rally his peers during a time when spirits were low. “When I was in college, all the males at Sam Houston State were forced to participate in ROTC, and we would go out to Pritchett Field to practice our drills. However, the issue was that those who had to join the program were not enthusiastic,” Shotwell said while reflecting on the challenges he faced during the four years he led fellow students as a sergeant. “I remember Cadre Major “Mad” Jack Williamson, the advisor for the Counter Guerilla program, telling us that the things we learn now will help us during the war in Vietnam.” Driven by the Major’s words and a need to prepare for the war, Shotwell and the Cadets trained whenever given the opportunity and would go to the Sam Houston National Forest and practice platoon movements and drills. The Cadets were given equipment from World War II to practice with as they ran these drills. Shotwell worked hard to help his cadets navigate the simulated battles until he graduated in 1969 and went to Officer Flight School the following year.

“My time there was incredibly easy compared to my education at Sam Houston, it was a walk in the park,” Shotwell said. “I learned to inspire people and how to lead early in my career, and I knew I would be going to Vietnam after my training, but it hit me when I had a week’s leave before my flight was over. I was so nervous that I decided not to take that week off and instead head straight to Vietnam.” In Vietnam, Shotwell piloted a helicopter, bringing supplies and Soldiers to battlefields around the clock. While out on the field, he witnessed first-hand the discontentment and low morale among the troops during the war. Despite this, Shotwell was able to befriend his fellow Soldiers and some local residents. He made these connections through his flights and through his role as a leader. Shotwell said one of the greatest lessons he learned from his time in Vietnam is to be decisive and that even making the wrong choice is better than no decision at all. “Sam Houston and ROTC shaped me into the man who went to Vietnam, and the war forever left scars, physically and mentally,” Shotwell said. “I saw what war does to people, and there will always be a part of me still in Vietnam. My best advice to future Officers is not to be afraid to ask for help but to be decisive in your actions.”

Outside of the university, there is the HEARTS Veterans Museum, which provides a space for the local community to learn about the wars that their neighbors served in and allows those veterans to have a place to meet and share their experiences. Shotwell encourages all Bearkat community members to visit the museum and visit with a local veteran.



Alumni Spotlight

SECOND LIEUTENANT COURTNEY PAULSON

To the Sam Houston Family!

I have been pleased to write and share my journey over the last two years since earning my commission through the SHSU ROTC program. I was commissioned on December 14th 2021 as a Field Artillery Officer and started the Basic Officer Leaders Course (BOLC) one month later at Fort Sill, OK. The Field Artillery BOLC is approximately six months long and is known to be one of the most challenging courses in the Army, though what you don't hear about it is the support you get from your instructors and peers. During the course, you learn about the different aspects of planning fires and how you can support a maneuver commander with fires. You also learn about the gunline and how to provide those heavy fires effectively.

After graduating from Field Artillery BOLC, I reported to Fort Moore, GA, previously known as Fort Benning, to attend the Army's Airborne school. This is a 3-week course that consists of 3 phases: Ground week – which focuses on exiting a high-performance aircraft and prepares you on how to land. They call it "learning how to fall"; Tower week – during this phase, you learn how to maneuver while still in the air; and Jump week – here, you implement what you have known over the last couple weeks and successfully exit an aircraft whether it be a C-130 or C-17 aircraft. Airborne School is an experience I would encourage anyone to have.

Following Airborne school, I reported to my first duty station, Fort Bragg, NC, which recently changed to Fort Liberty. I was assigned to the 3-319TH Airborne Field Artillery Regiment in the 82nd Airborne Division. Within two weeks of reporting, I was appointed as a Company FSO supporting Bravo Company, 1-504th Parachute Infantry Regiment.



Alumni Spotlight Cont.

SECOND LIEUTENANT COURTNEY PAULSON

I deployed to Fort Johnson, LA's Joint Readiness Training Center, formally known as Fort Polk. JRTC was one experience that I will never forget, but it was also an experience that made me into the FSO that I am today. Since then, I have made over 20 Fire plans and have called up over 50 fire missions.

To all you future leaders, get ready. It's not easy, but it's also not hard. Be open to feedback, be an expert in your field, and stay fit, mentally and physically. Young soldiers will look to you for the correct answer, so have the right answer. Don't be afraid to call something out if you think it's wrong. Be strong-minded, but also have compassion, and lastly – you have heard this before – listen to your NCOs. They will have your back if you have theirs and learn from them because they take pride in what they do and are experts at it. I was fortunate to have a very knowledgeable Team Chief and three outstanding Forward Observers with me throughout this journey, and I promise you I would not have made it this far if it weren't for them.

STRIKE HOLD! MASS THE FIRES! AIRBORNE, ALL THEY WAY!

Second Lieutenant Courtney Paulson

