



Freshmen Cadets with CDT BN CDR Nathan Frye (far left) and Land Nav OIC CDT Sarah Brock (far right) after a leadership professional development session at Top Golf.

## BEARKAT BATTALION



@shsuarmyrotc



@shsu.rotc



@shsuArmyRotc

### Strength and Honor!

Our Cadets continue to train in preparation for Cadet Summer Camp, while supporting our university and community. Also, two more of our teammates, sophomore Cadets Arly Cruz and Kynnyth LeBlanc officially contracted to join our profession of selfless service (page 3) this semester and hit the “ground running”! They will both serve as Simultaneous Membership Program Cadets through the National Guard and Army Reserves respectively.

Arly and Kynnyth raising their right hand to defend the constitution of the United States means that 64% of our Cadet population is contracted! In addition, 11 freshmen Cadets are on a 3-year scholarship that begins in the Fall 2022 Semester; thus, they will add to our contracting numbers. It is an exciting time to be a part of the Bearkat Battalion. We hope you enjoy our Cadet articles in this newsletter.

Eat'em Up Kats!!

### Inside This Issue

- [Page 2:](#) CDT CSM Comments
- [Page 3:](#) Newly Contracted Cadets
- [Page 4:](#) Cadet of the Month
- [Page 5:](#) March to the Grave - Wes Wisnewski MSI
- [Page 6:](#) La Copa - Xiomara Santiago MSIII
- [Page 7:](#) Staff Ride and MSIV LPD - Christian Rodgers MSIV
- [Page 8:](#) Women's History Month - Lindsay Mitchell MSIII
- [Page 9:](#) This Month in Photos
- [Page 10:](#) Alumni Spotlight - Gonzalo Correa

# Cadet CSM Comments – MSIV CDT Noah Abramski

Bearkat Cadets! As the semester nears to an end, I would like to personally congratulate every one of you for your continued hard work and dedication to the Bearkat Battalion. Balancing schoolwork, ROTC obligations, personal commitments, and employment is not an easy task for a college student. The Battalion leadership and I are appreciative of your sacrifices.

My four years in ROTC are drawing to a bittersweet conclusion in May, when I graduate and commission as a Military Intelligence Officer. The Cadets and Cadre whom I have worked for and with during my time here at SHSU have been outstanding. Our program has had exciting accomplishments for the past four years. Most recently our Battalion earned the Cochise Award as the best Small-Sized Program in 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade ROTC. Our Mentorship program provides incoming Cadets a place and people to call home. Mentorship in our program begins when a high school senior, visits our program and this led to this program skyrocketing from 67 Cadets when I was a freshman, to over 100 Cadets today. Continuity between Cadet programs such as Schuder's Ranger Company, Ranger Challenge, Color Guard, and now, Scabbard & Blade, assisted my Senior cohort into achieving a 43% Distinguished Military Graduate (DMG) percentage, and we have met mission the previous two years.

As I prepare to conclude my time at SHSU, I leave my 10 principles to the Cadets of the Bearkat Battalion. Keep reaching for the stars and never be complacent. Eat'Em Up Kats!

*"The two most important days in your life is the day you were born and the day you found out why."*  
-Mark Twain

1. You are responsible for everything the unit does or fails to do.
2. Never let ego influence your decisions.
3. Always cultivate a positive environment in garrison and the field.
4. Set and enforce standards.
5. Be a team player.
6. What you do counts more than what you say.
7. Counsel and mentor your subordinates-invest in their future.
8. Do the routine tasks and standards correctly.
9. Keep Commander's Intent at the forefront of your decisions.
10. Always be honest about 1) What to fix, 2) How to fix it, and 3) Who is responsible.



MSIV CDT Noah Abramski (second from the left) with fellow MSIVs after their Branch Reveal Dinner.



# Newly Contracted Cadets

MSII CDT Arly Cruz-Flores



*"At the end of the day, prove to yourself that you can do it and not others. Let your work and effort show who you are."*

CDT Cruz-Flores

MSII CDT Kynnyth Leblanc



*"Each of us experiences defeats in life. We can transform defeat into victory if we learn from our mistakes and thrive to be the best version of ourselves."*

CDT Leblanc



MSII Cadet Arly Cruz-Flores (left), LTC Joe Contreras (middle) and Kynnyth LeBlanc (right) after the contracting ceremony before the MPFTX.



## Cadet of the Month

MSI Cadet Isaac Siekas during Lab Training and the Fall Awards Ceremony



CDT Isaac Siekas was selected as Cadet of the Month through an extensive selection process by his Cadet Leadership. His front-line supervisors specifically noticed his constant high level of motivation, his determination to work hard in everything he does, and his consistent commitment to bettering himself even when others were not watching (integrity).

Congratulations Isaac!



## March to the Grave by Wes Wisnewski - MSI

As an MSI on a 3-year national ROTC scholarship, I am currently a Ranger Company Candidate and was a part of the Ranger Challenge team last semester. March to the Grave is a special event for the City of Huntsville and Texans. In this event, we honor General Sam Houston by marching to his grave from the SHSU campus to Oakwood Cemetery. Our cadets had the privilege of leading the march with the colors of our nation and state and providing a ceremony at his grave site.

The leaders of our Huntsville community and Sam Houston State University honored General Houston through speeches, songs, and remembering what it means to be a Texan. Finally, we concluded the ceremony with an ROTC Twenty-One-Gun Salute. It was quite the experience to be a part of such an important memorial for the city and our great state of Texas.

### Eat'em Up Kats!



Bearkat Battalion Cadets performing the Twenty-One-Gun Salute to conclude the ceremony.



The Bearkat Battalion Color Guard posting the colors at Oakwood Cemetery. From left to right (CDT's Galindo, Watson, Mills, and Zirkel)



# La Copa Experience - Xiomara Santiago - MSIII

La Copa was our first spring semester training event located in Encino, Texas. I always go into a training event with a specific goal and try to stay focused in achieving this standard with help from the MSIV cohort and Cadre. The La Copa facility offers extensive and challenging training grounds used to prepare for Cadet Summer Training (CST). The facility provides us with a land navigation course, a firing range, obstacle courses, rappel towers, and a classroom. The different terrain and environment make La Copa a unique experience.

Land navigation in an alien location, such as La Cops is tough the first time you attempt it, however the second time around it does bring more confidence knowing the lay of the land. We all realized that bravery and a good red lens were vital keys of success for night land navigation. Basic Rifle Marksmanship is easily mastered once the basics are learned and used every time you get behind a weapon. We also cycled through the obstacle course simultaneously, so we were constantly improving on one activity with encouragement along the way.

We pay attention to each other when we perform the events and provide helpful advice when we can. We are often encouraged to ask questions when we need clarification on a task or need plotted points verified. The MSIV class is always willing to lend a hand and encourage us to “trust our gut”. La Copa is designed to build confidence along with the skills needed to succeed in each event and I am proud to say that I did just that with lots of hard work. I am grateful and truly blessed to earn a challenge coin for the recognized effort I put in every second of the training weekend. I fully intend on passing on a coin to the MSIII of the next class that excels in La Copa.



CDT Santiago (front) and CDT Barrera (rear) conducting team land navigation at La Copa.



CDT Santiago prepared for class and lab.



# Staff Ride and LPD Christian Rodgers - MSIV

On March 1<sup>st</sup> the Bearkat Battalion partnered with Stephen F. Austin (SFA) ROTC program, to participate in a historical staff ride on the Battle of Walker's Creek. Along the way, the senior class of the Bearkat Battalion visited Fort Hood to learn more about the leadership roles and responsibilities of a 2nd Lieutenant in the US Army.

While visiting Fort Hood, the senior class of the Bearkat Battalion interacted with Army officers of different ranks and enlisted personnel who are crucial to a unit's operation. They were also able to get a hands-on introduction to the Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services (PMCS) process and test new vehicles and equipment that they will likely use in their future careers as Army officers. We would like to offer our thanks to CPT Akeroyd and Blacksmith Troop for hosting us at the Muleskinner Motor Pool.

The staff ride provided the SHSU and SFA senior classes the opportunity to study and analyze the Battle of Walker's Creek in Boerne, Texas. Together, they presented their research along with a battle analysis of the leaders involved, the environment, and the cultural context of the battle. In the process of analyzing and presenting their research material, we all gained valuable insight into what it means to lead Soldiers and decisions faced as officers.



MSIV Cadets at the Muleskinner Motor Pool in Fort Hood conducting PMCS.



MSIV Cadets from SHSU (back row) and SFA (front row) at the conclusion of the Walker's Creek Staff Ride in Boerne, Texas.



MSIV Cadets in front of Lupe Tortilla in San Antonio, Texas after the conclusion of the Fort Hood LPD.



## Women's History Month-Lindsay Mitchell - MSIII

Coming into the program in the fall of 2019, I was paired up with Samantha Lopez as my mentor who was currently an MSIV during that time. She was such an inspiration and great motivator for not only me, but for the rest of the Battalion. Samantha Lopez attended SHSU her freshman year of 2013 and was a part of the ROTC program but decided to enlist in the Texas National Guard as an Intelligence Analyst March 30, 2015.

After graduating Advanced Individual Training (AIT) she was sent to her unit, I&S Co, 36ID Austin, Texas. In 2016 she was activated to be part of an IROC mission for 18 months. When her mission was over, she decided to return to SHSU in Fall 2018 and was an MSIII, contracting February 14, 2019. She excelled in the program and came back from Cadet Summer Training (CST) ranked in the top ten of her platoon.

As an MSIV she was appointed as Cadet Command Sergeant Major (CSM) and the S2/Mentor OIC where she helped so many of the MSI cohort adjust to SHSU and the surrounding Huntsville community. Samantha Lopez is now a 2nd Lieutenant stationed with the B Co, 303d MI BN, 504th EMIB, Fort Hood, Texas. Even as a busy 2nd Lieutenant, she still finds time to talk to multiple Cadets providing advice and encouraging words. She is a great representation of an excellent officer and hardworking woman who I strive to emulate.



2LT Lopez (bottom middle) celebrating her birthday with her platoon in Germany.



2LT Lopez (bottom right) at the conclusion of MIBOLC at Fort Huachuca, AZ.





## This Month in Photos



CDT CSM Noah Abramski and his wife Emily at Cozumel Beach during their honeymoon.



CDT Kaleb Rios during the MPFTX as a Squad Leader giving guidance to the Platoon Leader while conducting a Defense.



MSI CDT Erin Juarez at a LEAP (Law, Engagement and Politics) conference over Spring Break.



MSIII Cadets Ben Dene and Xiomara Santiago at the Washington monument in D.C. during Spring Break.



MSII CDT Cinnamon Wright-Burwinkel (left) with MSIII CDT Scabbard and Blade Commander Alex Dieck, presenting an official nomination into the Honor Society.



## Alumni Spotlight – CPT Gonzalo Correa, USA, Ret.

I was Commissioned/Graduated in December 2006 from Sam Houston State University with a Bachelor of Business Administration. During my time at SHSU, I absolutely loved my experience in the ROTC program. I made longtime friends and learned the fundamentals of leadership, and I remained involved through activities such as Cannon Crew, Ranger Company, attending training, and non-mandatory events. My advice to cadets is to stay active in the Bearkat Battalion and the many groups offered, as it will keep you connected and make the ROTC program a priority. Also, never stop learning, and continue to grow both professionally and personally.

I had the opportunity to serve in all three of the Army components: Active Duty, National Guard, and Army Reserve. I was fortunate to have had some exciting assignments, such as Executive Officer, Assistant Battalion S3, Battalion S4, Company Commander, Assistant Brigade S3, and Observer/Controller/Trainer (OCT). I served with many talented soldiers, NCOs, and Officers in the various units, including 1/149th AV, 1/19th IN, 4th IBCT 1ID, 1/143rd, and the 75th Southern Training Command. Each soldier with whom I served taught me something different, widening my horizons. I often think of all the lessons learned from my military experience and apply them to my current role.

After leaving the Army, I immediately completed my Master's in Business Administration degree. I continued to serve in different ways such as co-sponsoring/establishing two ROTC scholarships for the Bearkat Battalion: SHSU Best Ranger, which is awarded in the fall semester to the top performer in the Ranger Challenge competition, and the Schuder's Best Ranger, which is awarded in the spring semester to the top performer in the Battalion's Ranger Company. Additionally, I became involved in the Military Science Alumni Club (MSAC) and currently serve on the Board of Directors. Some of the work I have done in the MSAC includes the development and creation of its website, which quickly became one of the most viewed websites of the University's Alumni clubs. In my "spare time," I also assist the Bearkat Battalion by maintaining and updating its page on the University's website.

I currently work as an Information Technology Project Manager at SHSU, a job that is always full of surprises and challenges that I welcome and enjoy. I also serve as the Campus Advisor for the university's "Kats for Christ" club. Finally, as busy as I am in the multiple areas mentioned above, my priority is always my family. I LOVE spending time with my wife and two kids. No other experience is as exciting and rewarding as being a husband and father.

Thank you, CPT (R) Correa, for your service to our country and to the Sam Houston State University Bearkat Battalion by contributing your time to uploading our Newsletters to the ROTC website and your generous contributions to our Cadets.



Then CDT Correa at Gibbs Ranch.



Then CPT Correa in Iraq

