

RAIDER



THE BLACK KNIGHTS EXCALIBUR DEPLOY TO FORT KNOX, KENTUCKY

On October 24, 2024, 14 students from Sam Houston MSTC's JROTC program left the state of Texas to compete at a national physically challenging competition at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Cadets Luis Castellanos, Allan Echeverria, Steven Silva, PFC Angel Bustillo, Stephanie Barerra, Justin Garza, Michael Gupta-Espinosa, Ethan Erazo, Yamileth Aviles, Katherine Alamia, Alessandra Rodriguez, Destiny Cisneros, Nayeli Davila, and Christian Hernandez all took on the challenge against the nation's best young people. How did they do?

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WHAT IS RAIDER?

Raider is an Army JROTC physical fitness component of the program. It requires a high level of physical fitness and logical thinking. It requires cadets to challenge themselves both physically and mentally which helps create better leaders in classrooms and in society.

The annual Raider Competition is for all JROTC programs across the country funded by the military.



The competition consisted of five events: 1. Combat Life Savers Obstacle Course 2. Physical Fitness Obstacle Course 3. 5K Run 4. 1 mile Gauntlet with Obstacles 5. Manual Rope bridge over water.

The Black Knights Excalibur team is a newly formed team with not much experience in this kind of competition. They gave all they had to finish each competition as best they could. The goal was to get experience, recruit new members, and prepare for next year's competition.

There were scrapes and bruises, but each cadet found the fortitude to motivate each other through very difficult obstacles.

There is another Raider Competition in San Antonio on January 25, 2025. Look out!



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EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME

For many of the travelers, this was their first time ever on an airplane. Cadet Captain Christian Hernandez said he was nervous before the flight and had anxiety. After the flight, he said he conquered his fear of flying. For Cadet Sergeant Steven Silva, he was excited to experience an actual military Army base. He was given a shoulder fired rocket launcher to explore how it feels.



COFFEE/TOURS/FRIENDS

Cadets resided in "Open Bay" style barracks with students from all over the country. Wake up was 0400 daily and cadets needed a pick me up to get going. After competition, the cadets visited the General Patton Museum on Fort Knox, and they also experienced real military equipment such as tanks, trucks, and helicopters. It was a real-world experience. The Black Knights met up with fellow HISD programs Bellaire, Heights, and Waltrip high schools who also competed. It was such a great time for Houston to represent the H!



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PHYSICAL FITNESS IN JROTC

HOW DO YOU INVEST YOUR TIME?

Cadet Sergeant Mendoza is in his third year in Army JROTC. As a freshman, he was overweight. He didn't talk much in class unless called upon. He has never participated on any teams for the program. All he has done is arrive to class daily and do what is required.

Cadet Mendoza recently approached Major Ray in the weightroom and said, "I lost over 40lbs in this program over the last two years." Major Ray said he didn't remember him being as big as he was a freshman until Mendoza showed him two pictures from 9th grade to now. Mendoza credits the workouts in class and learning about eating better which is also taught in the class.

He is now considering a career in the United State Military. Stay tuned!



DIRECTION/PURPOSE/MOTIVATION

Many students sign up for Army JROTC strictly to get in better shape. The program is designed to challenge young people to self-improve over time guided by seasoned retired career military leaders. These instructors have trained people how to get themselves in fighting shape using free weights, body weight, running, and other forms of training. In JROTC, cadets are focused on self-improvement daily. Cadets want to be on time to class so they don't miss the accountability drill which is known as "First Formation." Cadets understand this program is volunteer and that they can be removed from the program if they fail to meet JROTC standards of conduct. Being able to get gym time is a superior benefit that cadets look forward to which keeps many of them in the program for multiple years. *Above, Kimberly Luna works on the military press and a group of male cadets work on weighted shoulder shrugs.*

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THE DECISION!



THE CHOICE IS YOURS...

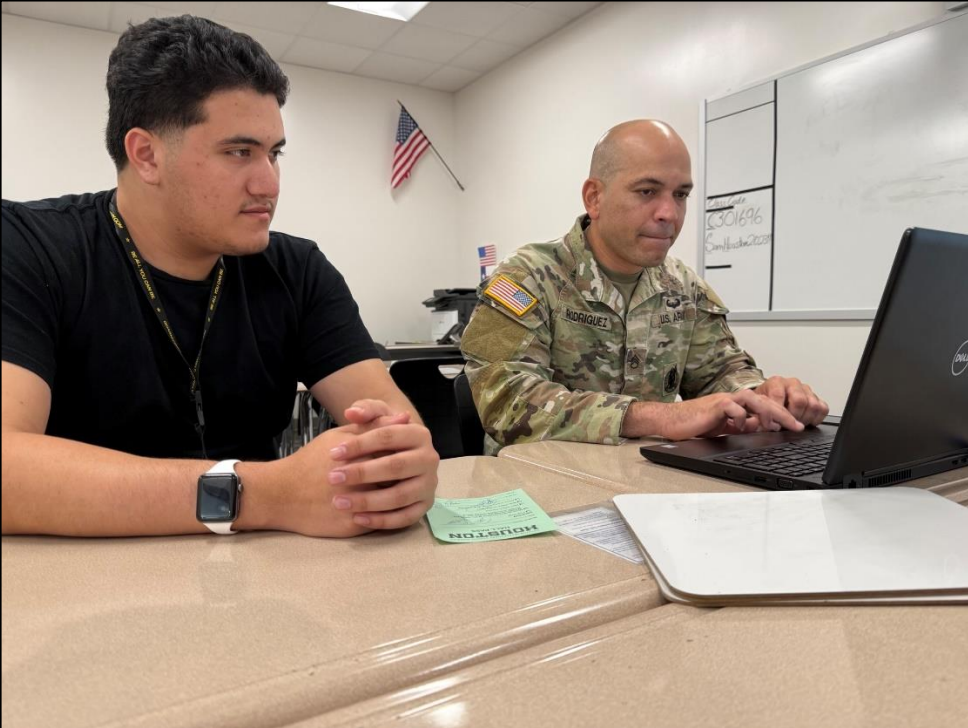
Cadet Trinity Rodriguez has always been close to JROTC, but didn't elect to join the program until her senior year. She has always stated she wanted to join the U.S. Marines Corps, but her parents were uneasy with signing her paperwork to start the process. In October, Trinity turned 18 and made her first adult decision. She is beginning the process to enlist in the United States Marine Corps. Wish her well on her journey.



THE CHOICE IS YOURS...

Cadet Jose Juarez is in his fourth year of Army JROTC. He currently serves as a platoon leader. For three years, he expressed no interest in serving the military. This past summer, he attended the JROTC Cadet Leadership Challenge at Texas A&M at Galveston, and he came back ready to take the next step.

Staff Sergeant Rodriguez is Sam Houston MSTC's Army recruiter, and he linked up with Jose to work with him to get a contract. Jose passed his written test, and he selected a job, Tank Crewman. He will enlist once he passes his physical. He will earn a cash bonus of \$18,000 along with all educational benefits.



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REACH BACK...

Alumnae Arianna Saenz, class of 2023, came back to her stomping grounds now as a sophomore at Texas A&M. Her mission these days is to inform cadets in her beloved battalion that there are multiple ways to success that do not include military service but explaining that JROTC helped her get a full scholarship to one of the most prestigious universities in the world.

Arianna reached the rank of Cadet Major while serving as the second highest ranking officer in the battalion. She was ranked #6 in her class academically. She has inspired several current seniors during her tenure at Sam Houston and she is always welcomed to come back.



COLLEGE FAIR SUPPORT

In October, Cadet Major, battalion commander, Rigney pulled her battalion in to support the Houston ISD's college fair at Sam Houston MSTC. They were tasked with setting up the gymnasium and restoring it to its natural state following the event. Also, they served as escorts for college recruiters to get them from the front door to the gym. The seniors among the cadets took time to speak with college recruiters which will pay off. They started set up at 7:15am. That shows a high level of dedication.



Cadets earn service hours when they assist the community in any activity. A good number of upper classmen are also member of the National Honor Society and JROTC community service hours count for NHS as well.



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BATTALION COMMANDER

Greetings to all! It has been an exciting month in JROTC as you can see the cadets here are progressing and accomplishing new heights. They are competing and becoming better to help shape their careers and lives. As we continue on, we are beginning our service-learning project with old and new leaders in JROTC giving upcoming cadets experience and a chance to grow in the battalion. In all, we hope for our cadets to continue to be fearless and accomplish new heights in JROTC and throughout school.



COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR

Greetings! Drill season is here and we are ready to compete. Our first drill meet is November 2nd at Waltrip High School which is a step along the path to getting San Antonio and Daytona Beach.



XO

The Black Knights have had a good month so far! We're working hard to continue as a good program for our school. The Black Knights will compete on November 1st at Waltrip High School, we're excited to get competition season started! We offer many skills like personnel management, security, operations and training, logistics, and public affairs. If you're interested, we have meetings every Tuesday at 7:30 AM. Go Black Knights!



OPERATIONS

Success has only just begun as we kick off this year with our very first National Raiders competition in Fort Knox, Kentucky. As we continue this year, we hope to bring more success to the Black Knights Battalion. This Saturday will be the first district competition for our drill teams. Let us all play our part in leading this battalion to more success. Let us all be leaders as we take on the year. After all, we are the Black Knights!!

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