



THE BLACK KNIGHTS' SWORD

JANUARY 2023

COLLEGE. CAREER.

MILITARY. READINESS

JROTC CADETS ENLIST



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Three Black Knights enlist into the United States Army in December of 2023. Seniors David Barajas, Frank Barajas, and Jade Rodriguez are securing a positive future through service to this great country.

"TO MOTIVATE YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE BETTER CITIZENS"

TAKE TWO

David and Frank Barajas are **twin brothers**. Each of them joined Army JROTC starting in their sophomore years. Almost immediately, both young men became impact players within the program. David started out on the Raider team and competed in several competitions. He then found his calling on the color guard team. Frank started out training to earn a spot on the newly formed unarmed drill team. Both later became indispensable to the unarmed team.

Both young men overcame obstacles to enlist in the U.S. Army. Frank is the highest-ranking enlisted member of the Black Knights being promoted to the rank of Command Sergeant Major. He advises the battalion commander and oversees development of the enlisted members within the battalion. David is serving as the unarmed drill commander and a company commander of Charlie Company. Frank will serve in the Army as a Personnel Management Specialist while David is waiting on his career appointment.



PLAN TO SUCCEED

Too often, young people are urged to go to college. While earning a college degree can help one become financially successful, college is not the only way. Some choose to learn a trade such as welding or construction. In JROTC, the instructors help cadets get into colleges, get accepted into Barbara Jordan's school to learn a trade for work, but they also help young people who are interested in a career in the military find their way into their branch of choice.

Jade Rodriguez joined Army JROTC as a senior. She stated she wanted to learn more about military culture. Instructors and the Army recruiter counseled her on her opportunities in the military: Career training, excellent pay, Montgomery G.I. Bill (pays for college after service), Tuition Assistance while on active duty (\$4,000 per year), Veteran's Administration Housing Voucher, and promotions.

Jade took the oath of enlistment in December, and she chose the career of Information Technology Specialist where she will have a security clearance and play a vital role in the Army's ability to communicate. She plans to do four years of service and return to civilian life. **CONGRATULATIONS!**



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LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

In December, Post 586 conducted the annual Oratorical competition at Sam Houston MSTC (High School). The contest consists of young students delivering an 8-to-10-minute speech over the U.S. Constitution. They can use no notes or reference material during the presentation. Competitors must write an essay over the constitution and submit the essay to the officials for review. Contestants are given the rules to the competition by the official, and then each enters onto the stage to deliver the speech. Following the initial speech, a random amendment is selected from a hat by the official. Each contestant has five minutes to formulate a speech to deliver for 3-5 minutes. Three judges score the speeches according to a published rubric and offer feedback before the winner is announced.

In the end, 2LT Rigney won the oratorical competition earning \$500 in scholarship funds. She advanced to the second round of the American Legion's Oratorical competition where she will compete with other students in the region. Cheer for the young people who continue to accept challenges. Our country is strong as a result.



REAL LIFE APPLICATION

JROTC curriculum is not just "Left Right Left." While Army drill and ceremony are important organizational structure, cadets are taught a wide range of curriculum from physical fitness to writing essays. One element of the curriculum is Delivering a Speech. Cadets are taught how to craft a thesis statement to organize a speech, and then each must stand in front of the class to deliver a less than two-minute speech. Cadets also learn to write structured essays and compete in a national competition.

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TOP FRESHMAN FOR FIRST SEMESTER



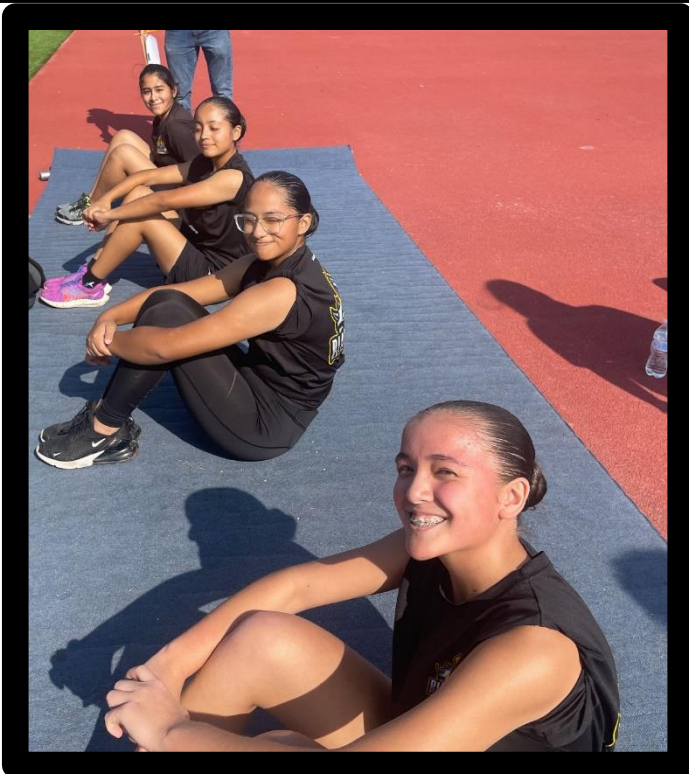
Cadet Nayeli Davila has earned the status of “Top Freshman” for the first semester. Not only has she distinguished herself through JROTC competitions such as marksmanship and Raider, but she is also a multi-sport varsity athlete in Volleyball and Soccer. Nayeli was quickly elevated to the squad leader position. She is earning a spot on the varsity unarmed drill team and hopes to compete at the annual HISD’s Bluebonnet Drill Meet on March 2, 2024.

The instructors selected her to attend the district’s annual Outstanding Cadet Board held in March of 2024 where she can earn a district level officer’s position with the JROTC program. She is *considering* the **United States Military Academy at West Point** post high school career.



LEFT: Raider Team (Black Knights Excalibur) competing at Sam Rayburn HS in November.

ABOVE: Cadet Davila competing in match #2 for marksmanship in December.



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SAM HOUSTON'S FINEST

2023 graduate, Erik Jimenez, paid a visit to his alma mater and to examine his battalion that he formerly led for two school years. He was back from the United States Military Academy at West Point during the Christmas/Holiday break. While on break, he decided to wear his cadet uniform to the campus to show students what is possible if a young person decides to apply him or herself.



THE ROLE MODEL

Erik Jimenez is a trail blazer. He is the first person in his family to attend college. He is the first Sam Houston MSTC student to ever be accepted into the United States Military Academy at West Point. He left high school ranked #5 in his senior class with an over 1,200 SAT score and a 4.5 grade point average. He was inducted into the National Honor Society and was a model citizen as a high school student.

HISD's College Career Military Readiness team conducted an interview with Erik to ask him about his experiences that led him to West Point. Erik shared what he knew so that those who choose to follow his path will have a successful blueprint to follow.



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CADET LIFE

Army JROTC is not just a class. It is a program that designed for young people find motivation and inspiration to become better citizens. In this program, young people find a community of like-minded individuals who like to succeed at any task given to them. They volunteer in the community at large. They are always competing to elevate each other. They enjoy challenging physical fitness and seek improvement in their own health status. They are leaders in their school and can often be found taking charge of a situation to improve the school.



4th period JROTC class preparing for final exams in December.



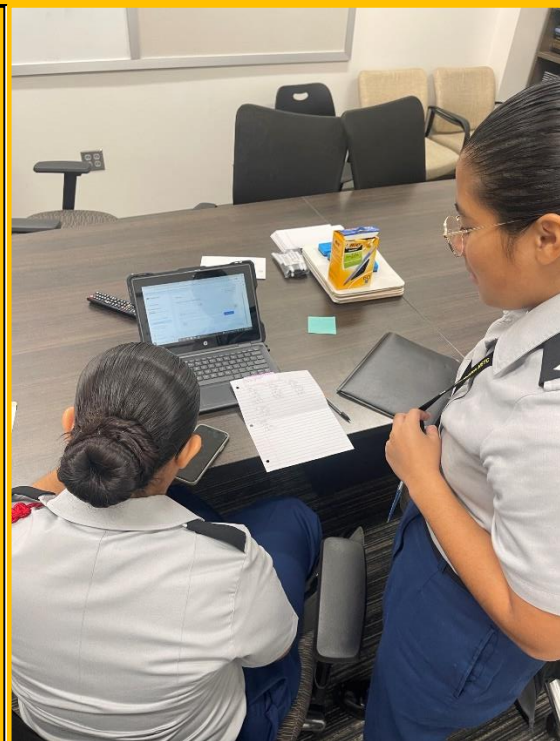
Cadets serving a local church by participating in their annual Christmas play.

Cadet 2LT Michael Espinosa getting a holiday workout in December.

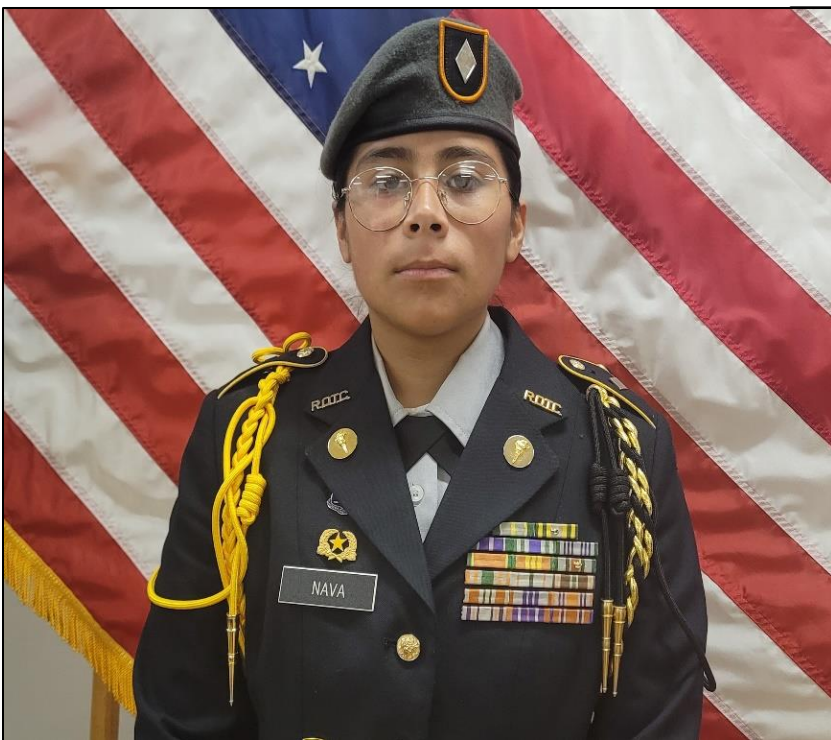


Cadet Command Sergeant Major Frank Barajas November 2022 vs November 2023. He lost over 40 pounds in one year.

Right: Cadet Lieutenant Jai Nava tutors Cadet Corporal Delgado in math helping her to strengthen an area where she struggles. Jai Nava is a senior and Delgado is a sophomore. JROTC prides itself on the skilled and more senior cadets helping those who aspire to be more skilled.



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BATTALION COMMANDER

Greetings to all, in our Battalion we not only focus on how we can build upon skills and abilities, but as well as, provide opportunities and guidance to apply these newly found competence. Many of our cadets have found the greatness in their journey by making connections, giving back, finding their path, and becoming a better vision of themselves. The Black Knights Battalion prioritizes motivating our young citizens to improve physically and academically. To assure they will be set off for the years ahead after their high school experience. The Black Knights will continue to strive for EXCELLENCE.



COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR

Greetings to all, as the Black Knights continue to lead the way and set the example at our school, our cadets not only want to define the meaning of hard work but also want to show the school the meaning of commitment and dedication which is a very important to develop and make our school much more successful. Always thankful for the Black Knights battalion as they continue to strive for greatness. Let's keep this going. GO BLACK KNIGHTS!!!!



EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Hello everyone, our cadets at the Black Knight Battalions embody a commitment to excellence both within and outside the school walls. Inspired by the exemplary individuals who have paved the way before us, we eagerly absorb the lessons of their successes. As we forge our path, we aspire not only to achieve greatness during our time here but also to carry the torch of excellence throughout our lives, leaving a lasting impact on the world. Together, we form a legacy of dedication, discipline, and determination, ensuring that the spirit of the Black Knight Battalions endures long after our cadets have moved on. Throughout this upcoming year, the staff and cadets of our Battalion will continue to push forward and help push our battalion become better and stronger. GO BLACK KNIGHTS!

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