



THE BLACK KNIGHTS' SWORD

APRIL 2024

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The Black Knights won overall first place in the annual HISD's "Bluebonnet Drill Competition," winning for a third consecutive year (2022, 2023, 2024).

"TO MOTIVATE YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE BETTER CITIZENS"



FOR THE RECORD

Here are the stats for the competition from March 2nd:

1st Place Armed Drill (1st in inspection, regulation, and exhibition)
1st Place Unarmed Drill (1st in inspection, 2nd in regulation, and 3rd in exhibition)
1st Place Primary Color Guard
7th Place Secondary Color Guard
1st Place Female Fitness (Ranked #1 Yamileth Aviles, Ranked #2 Angelita Brown)
1st Place Male Fitness (Ranked #1 Luis ChavezHerrera, Ranked #2 Diego Roldan, Ranked #3 Steven Silva)
4th Place Archery
15th Place Marksmanship
8th Place Female Swim
9th Place Male Swim

34 schools signed up to compete in the largest drill meet of the year for HISD with schools coming from Pearland, Waller, Clear Falls, LaPorte, and Stafford. The key to winning a large drill meet of this caliber is competing in every event. HISD JROTC instructors were primary graders, but Texas A&M cadets were assistant judges giving guidance to young people through tough grading.



The Sam Houston MSTC 1st Battalion Black Knights dominated this competition. Here are the scores for the top ten programs:

- **1st: Sam Houston MSTC** 1,450 points **2nd Place: Pearland** 690 points **3rd Place: Scarborough** 630 points
- **4th Place: Waller HS** 600 points **5th Place: Northside HS** 460 points **6th Place: Windmill Lakes-Orem** 390 points
- **7th Place: Bellaire HS** 385 points **8th Place: Waltrip HS** 380 points **9th Place: Westbury HS** 335 points
- **10th Place: Westside HS** 335 points

The competition took place at Westside High School on March 2nd, 2024.

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I DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR!

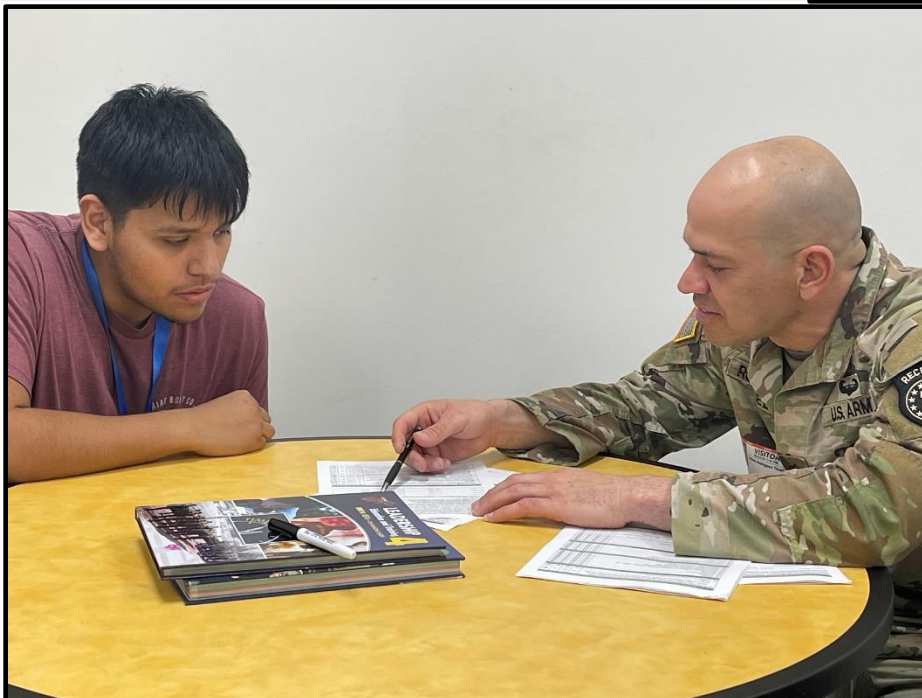
Senior Santiago Rivera enlisted into the United States Army in March of 2024 as an infantryman earning a **\$44,000 cash bonus** along with the **G.I. Bill** and **Tuition Assistance that fully pays for his college education**.

Santiago joined JROTC at Sam Houston MSTC at the start of his second semester of his senior year. He stated he joined JROTC because he knew he was soon graduating and needed something to do after high school.

Since joining in January, he trained to compete on the marksmanship team learning very quickly how to handle an air rifle. **JROTC does not recruit young people to join the military**, but the program does help those who want to join the military either as an officer or enlisted person learn more about the profession of arms.

The program gives young people another view of what life could look like after high school along with teaching them leadership skills, history, tradition, public service, and communication skills.

There is no requirement to join the military in this program, but some do choose to raise their right hand and take the oath of enlistment.



Above: Santiago competing in a district marksmanship match in March.

Left: Staff Sergeant Rodriguez is Houston MSTC's Army recruiter.

Staff Sergeant Rodriguez is the Army recruiter who helps students at Sam Houston enlist into the United States Army. To be qualified, a young person needs to be on track to graduate on time, pass a basic minimum academic test (ASVAB), not have legal issues, be drug free, and meet height and weight standards. This school year to date, five Black Knights have elected to enlist in the U.S. Army or Army Reserve. Benefits young people must consider: **Hazelwood Act (Texas money for college)**, **on the job training**, **health insurance**, **G.I. Bill for college**, **\$4,000 annually for Tuition Assistance**, **earn Veteran's Housing Voucher to purchase a home**, **Veteran's preference for civilian employment**, **retirement pension**.

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BLACK KNIGHTS AT BARBARA JORDAN



Cadet Sergeant Ethan Erazo



Cadet 2nd Lieutenant Luis Castellanos

CAREER FOCUSED

Ethan and Luis are two of many Black Knights who attend the **Barbara Jordan Career Center** to learn a special skill that will make them more marketable in the work force. Both are 11th grade drill team members with ambitions of military service, but they are also learning valuable skills that will make them employable in a high demand career path. Army instructors encourage cadets to diversify their educational opportunities by seeking enrollment into a program at BJCC. The way to apply is during the 10th grade year. To qualify, a student must have good attendance and good conduct, so it is imperative that underclassmen begin to think about their futures and how they can succeed.

- Have 12.0 credits by August 2024 (We do not count NGs for credit unless they are cleared);
- Have good attendance;
- Be starting your third year of high school in August 2024;
- Be on track to graduate with your classmates in the spring of 2026.



11th grader Luis is considering enlisting in the U.S. Army or a life in welding. He is keeping his options open.



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BUILD THE FUTURE

Annually, the Black Knights visit the feeder middle schools in the spring to recruit for new team members. In March, 80 eighth graders asked to sign up for Army JROTC. 10 students participated in the push up contest, five males and five females, and the 8th grade class cheered on their fellow Eagles.

The Black Knights will keep in contact with the 80 students who signed up to keep them interested and provide mentorship about what is to come in high school.



Burbank Middle

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Big Burbank shoutout to Sam Houston's JROTC for the 8th grade presentation today! Your team always leaves a great impression on our students! ⭐
@shmstc



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Like



Comment



THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS



In March, Ms. Agu brought her class to the JROTC hall to reinforce the lesson she taught concerning military and veterans. She had her students thank the Army instructors for their service and shake their hands. It was a moving gesture and the JROTC instructors are thankful for our friends.

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MARIACHI CONNECTION

On March 18, the Black Knights' Honor Guard team presented the colors at the annual National Women's Day Celebration Luncheon, but this time, they had support from the Mariachi band. Ms. Zambrano, Mariachi band leader, trained two young ladies to sing the national anthem during the presentation.

The CMAA is a group focused on civil engineering, and annually they highlight women in the Houston area who are accomplished in the field of engineering. The Black Knights have supported this event now three years in a row.

Working with the Mariachi band was a special treat for all involved. **Thank you to Ms. Zambrano and the lovely singers who represented Sam Houston MSTC with Pride!**



Left to Right: Rosemary, Katherine Alamia, SFC Page, Alessandra Rodriguez, Jai Nava, Yamileth Aviles, MAJ Ray, Nayeli Davila, Julianna Aleman.



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BATTALION COMMANDER

GREETINGS, the Black Knights look beyond the present and into how we can pave the path for the future. "Leave it BETTER than you found it". Our Battalion works hard to achieve the most out of what they are given. Either to be top in the district, earn certificates in welding, or to find their calling after high school. Grinding our way to victory was only the start. Now we are looking for our future leaders to continue our legacy. They will be our legacy. We will continue to strive for EXCELLENCE!!! GO BLACK KNIGHTS

COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR The Black Knights continue to soar as they win the yearly HISD Bluebonnet Drill competition which now puts them as the Bluebonnet Drill champions for the 3rd year in a row. Our cadets continue to handle business inside and outside of the classroom as we had a cadet enlist into the U.S Army. The Black Knights continue to dominate as they prepare for Nationals in Daytona Florida. GO BLACK KNIGHTS!!!!

EXECUTIVE OFFICER:

The military ball is April 13th starting at 5:30pm at the VFW, 27 Farrel Street west of Houston MSTC. Also, please support our carwash on April 6th at the VFW starting 11am. We want to thank in advance those who are supporting our military ball from Barbara Jordan's Culinary department, Ms. Candace Watson-Mack with decorations, and all teachers and faculty who purchased a ticket. See you at the ball.



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