

Jax State ROTC Alumni Newsletter
Spring 2024



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear Gamecock Battalion Alumni,

Jax State ROTC is strong and ready to reach new heights in Leadership Excellence and the ROTC Alumni Network is ready to achieve new heights in Alumni excellence!



MILITARY ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

We are seeking additional nominations for our 2024 Military Alumni of the Year. The criteria for consideration as the Military Alumni of the Year are:

Criteria:

- Must be a graduate of Jax State
- Must be an officer on active duty or an active Guardsman or Reservist
- Must join or be a member of the Jax State Alumni Association
- Must play an active role in promoting the university
- Must have shown outstanding military achievement
- Must be able to attend Homecoming to receive the award

Selection Process:

- Nominations may be submitted from any source to eric.j.benefield@gmail.com.
- Due by end of June accompanied by a written biographical sketch and photo.
- Individual is selected by consensus of the Chapter's Board.
- President notifies the individual telephonically and in writing.
- President also notifies Jax State National Alumni Association.

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FALL COMMISSIONING

December 14, Jax State ROTC commissioned three new lieutenants. The three new lieutenants and newest members of our Alumni Network are 2LT Jeanesia Pierre, 2LT Sereanna Smoot, and 2LT Carlie Benefield. Congratulations to these outstanding young ladies as they begin their military careers and welcome to the Jax State ROTC Alumni Family! We are proud of you!

ALUMNI BANQUET & HOMECOMING

As usual, this year's ROTC Alumni Banquet will be the Friday night of Homecoming weekend, **September 20**. We hope everybody can make it and we look forward to seeing you then. We will recognize our Military Alumnus of the Year at the Banquet and at the Homecoming football game the next day.



We will be honoring the memory of former Kaydette Elizabeth Noles Renfroe by inducting her into our alumni network as an honorary member. To properly honor her, we are inviting all former Kaydettes (also once known as Sponsors) to attend this year's banquet and participate in honoring Elizabeth's memory.



SPRING ALUMNI GET TOGETHER

On **23 March 2024**, Jax State ROTC will host the Alabama JROTC Drill Meet at Jax State Stadium on Burgess-Snow Field. All alumni are invited to come to the Drill Meet and socialize with each other while enjoying the meet. I know it is sometimes difficult to get to homecoming because of job conflicts, so I thought creating an (informal) opportunity in the spring to get together would be welcome by many. I plan to be working a grill and helping LTC Easterling host the meet, so feel free to come visit with me by the grill and help me burn a few burgers. As LTC Easterling mentions below, we expect a crowd of up to 1500 for the Drill Meet and would love to have a bunch of ROTC Alumni there in Jax State gear helping to recruit for the program and the university. After the drill meet, we will move to a no-host dinner at Strut's or Cooter Browns (or wherever we decide to go) for a little more fellowship and socializing. If planning on attending the meet or helping host, please shoot me an email at eric.j.benefield@gmail.com. Hope to see you there.



Update from LTC Travis Easterling, Gamecock Battalion Professor of Military Science

Enrollment

The JAX SATE ROTC is continuing to grow. We had one of the largest recruiting classes in the Brigade, and we are on track to surpass that number for the Fall 2024 semester. We are on track to commission

over twenty 2LTs this year. JAX hasn't commissioned that 2LTs in well over a decade and we are forecasted to exceed our commissioning mission for the next several years. It's amazing to see the progress the program has made in a few short years. We were once considered to be a non-viable program, but now we are postured to be viable for the foreseeable future.

Camps and Schools

Continuing the JAX SATE tradition of strong performance at camp, our Cadets performed in the Top 30% of Cadets at Advanced Camp last year.

CDT Carlie Benefield excelled at Air Assault School. She was the first female to finish the 12-mile Ruck March. JAX ROTC had three Cadets attend CTLT. Kendejah Traylor traveled to Joint Base Lewis McChord Washington, Tion Wright traveled to Schofield Barracks Hawaii, and Toni Wright traveled to Vincenza, Italy. All three enjoyed their CTLT experience.

Scholarships and Academic Awards

Two of our MSIV's earned the title of Distinguished Military Graduates. This honor recognizes them for being in the top 10% of Cadets nationwide. CDT Sturges was ranked in the Top 2% in the nation and CDT Mccord was ranked in the Top 7% in the nation. CDT Sturges also earned the RECONDO Badge.

Our freshmen Cadets received a total of 9 three and four-year scholarships valued in excess of \$500,000.

One of our Cadets received a four-year Army Reserve Minuteman scholarship from the Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army valued in excess of \$58,000.

CDT Addison Parton was selected to participate in the Project Global Officer campaign. She spent 58 days living with a family in Taiwan where she learned Mandarin Chinese.

Recruiting

JAX State was selected, for the third straight year, to host the Alabama JROTC drill competition. The competition will be held on 23 March, and over 30 High Schools have RSVP'd to the competition. To put that in perspective. Last year, 8 schools and between 300-500 Cadets participating in the competition. With 30 schools competing, we are expecting up to 1,500 students to be on campus for the competition. That is not including parents, Cadre, or relatives. The competition could easily be the largest recruiting event not only for the ROTC program but the University. Both Dr. Killingsworth and Dr. Shelton are excited that JAX was selected to host the competition.

JAX's ROTC program had another great year with branching. All but one Cadet received the component they requested, and all Cadets got one of their top three branch choices.

LTC Easterling has already made contact with his replacement, LTC Walker, who will be coming to us from Germany. LTC Walker is a Troy graduate, but his wife is from Pleasant Valley. He will sign into JAX at the end of June.



CHAPTER COMMUNICATIONS

Remember to update your email address and phone number with the Alumni office. We don't want to lose contact with you! Also, check out our Jacksonville State University ROTC Alumni Facebook page and on Instagram at #JaxStaterotcalumni. "Like" our Facebook and Instagram pages and post a picture of your ROTC days there. You can also follow the adventures of LT Cocky there as he visits different members of our Alumni Chapter and heads off on different adventures.

Wherever this letter finds you, whether at the Pentagon, forward deployed, training to be forward deployed, or working hard in your community, I pray all the best for each of you. Know that we will always be glad to see you back home at Jacksonville State!

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