

From the Shorthorn, Thursday, 18 October 2007, 06:40 PM

Pin awarded to cadet for performance

Written by Emily Toman



Col. Ray Andrae, Cadet Corps Alumni President, awards history senior Ryan Kelly the crossed rifles pin. Kelly is the first recipient of the pin. (The Shorthorn: Laura Sliva)

Ryan Kelly, Army Reserve Officer Training Corps cadet, was awarded the historical crossed-rifles pin Thursday for his performance as the special programs' leader.

The history senior joined ROTC as a freshman, working his way up through the ranks.

Lt. Col. Kevin Smith said everything in the program is based on merit and measured by performance.

Kelly commands the oldest cadet team, the Sam Houston Rifles, which started in 1917, and he trains cadets with the Springfield Rifle used in both world wars, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. He said he leads his cadets in drill team maneuvers, ensuring their safety and training them properly.

“I did what I had to do,” Kelly said. “I took care of my men.”

Retired Maj. Ricardo Diaz said the pin dates back to 1913 and reflects the history of military programs, the oldest student organizations on campus.

“This is specifically an award for the keeper of traditions,” he said.

Lloyd Clark, a 1942 ROTC graduate, found the pin in his mother’s belongings. His grandfather directed the military program from 1913 to 1916 when it was its own institution, the Arlington Training School.

Clark asked the program to choose a cadet to receive the pin and wear it as a symbol of the program’s tradition, and to continue awarding it to one cadet each year, Diaz said.

Col. Ray Andrae, Cadet Corps Alumni Council president, said Kelly exhibited exceptional qualities, leading programs like the Sam Houston Rifles, the Color Guard and the Carlisle Cannons.

Diaz said no one in the program has found a military artifact that dates back as far as this one.

“It’s the oldest insignia from the heritage of the battalion,” he said.

Each cadet awarded the pin will wear a replica, while the original will rest behind glass in College Hall, Diaz said. Kelly will wear the pin on his uniform at the program’s Distinguished Alumni Gala on Oct. 30.