

# Showing up for training, in lime green boots

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By [PAO](#)



**Cadet B.F. Hammons, wearing his lime green cowboy boots, stands out in his platoon formation after arriving at the Leader's Training Course. The airline Hammons flew to Kentucky lost his bags. Photo by Bobby Ellis/LTC PAO**

**By Thomas Gounley**  
**Staff writer**

It was Sunday, the first day of Leader's Training Course for Alpha Company, and Cadet B.F. Hammons stood out for all the wrong reasons.

As drill sergeants gathered Cadets outside their barracks, while everyone else wore the required gray Army-branded T-shirts and shorts, along with non-descript tennis shoes, Hammons wore a solid blue shirt and non-standard black shorts.

But what really stood out was his footwear.

On his feet, Hammons wore a pair of brown and lime green cowboy boots, complete with blue and orange accents. They rose halfway up his calves. And with every drill sergeant he encountered, he went through the same ritual.

"They yelled at me," said Hammons, who attends the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, which is in Belton, Texas. "What are you wearing? Where is your uniform?"

The reason for Hammons' delinquency was simple, and entirely out of his hands. Sunday morning, he caught a flight out of San Antonio en route to Fort Knox. He transferred in Chicago, but lost something along the way.

"The baggage handlers did not take one of my bags off the flight," Hammons said.

As a result, when Hammons, who is part of the Army ROTC program

at Tarleton State University in Texas, caught his flight to Louisville, his bag made an unscheduled trip to Detroit. Arriving at Fort Knox, Hammons was forced to make due with only those clothes he had with him. The boots, which he wore during the flights, were the only piece of footwear he had, and thus were what he wore while standing at attention outside.

“The boots were a gift from my girlfriend,” he said. “It’s her favorite color.”



A close-up of Hammons' boots. Photo by Bobby Ellis/LTC PAO

In addition to temporarily raising the ire of every cadre member he encountered, Hammons’ colorful boots also earned him the nickname “Tex” among his fellow Cadets. And one drill sergeant now calls him “Woody” in honor of Disney’s well-known cowboy.

When he got a chance to call home Sunday night, Hammons relayed the story of his first day to his girlfriend.

“She laughed at me,” he said. “She had no sympathy.”

Hammons eventually received his missing bag Sunday night, and fit in when Cadets met Monday morning. The Harper, Texas, native looked into Army ROTC as a way to help pay for college.

“This seemed like a great way to get scholarships,” he said Thursday as he and fellow Cadets did squad tactics training.

To his credit, Hammons’ battle buddy, Cadet Antonio Lopez, said he is “very friendly.” The two first talked Sunday evening, and Hammons is helping to ease Lopez’s transition to training.

“He’s helping me with my English,” said Lopez, who attends the University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez.

Although he called the first couple days of training “informative,” Hammons is looking forward to less classroom instruction and more field exercises, particularly rappelling.

For the entirety of those exercises, Hammons’ feet will be clad in the standard light-brown combat boots issued by the Army. But his personal lime-green counterparts will be making a comeback.

He plans to wear them on his days off.

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