

A&M cadets earn honors at Ranger, airborne schools

Seven Texas A&M cadets heaped more laurels on the Aggie legends this summer. The group headed by 1971-72 Corps of Cadets Commander Thomas M. Stanley of Mount Pleasant successfully completed the Ranger School at Fort Benning and Dalongia, Ga., and Eglin AFB, Fla. Two of the cadets—Jan C. Bertholf of Annandale, Va., and Stephen O. Swanner of Pasadena—

were named honor graduates of the 140-member Reserve Officer Training Corps class going through the Ranger course for the first time. Swanner was also the outstanding leader in his platoon. Also earning the yellow and black tab of the U.S. Army Ranger was Richard D. Curb of Houston; John R. Dye, Fort Sam Houston; 1971-72 head yell leader Jimmy D. Ferguson, Garland,

and Duane H. Spain, Houston. Six of the seven Aggies earlier this summer qualified for Airborne by completing jump school at Fort Benning. Dye injured his foot in early summer jump school, lost a week and planned to go back for the Airborne patch after the 10-weeks Ranger training. Col. Thomas R. Parsons, commandant at Texas A&M, said Ranger School substituted for


summer camp at Fort Riley, Kan. Rigid qualifications established for the Ranger tab were not lightened for the ROTC cadets, though additional training such as weapons qualification was required. Requirements of the course included long runs over Fort Benning's red clay that turns into sticky mud. The cadets climbed across the face of Mt. Ono, looking 3,000 feet down into the val-

leys of North Georgia. They slogged through the coastal swamps of Florida, where jungle survival training is conducted. "If you've got more like them, send them to us," a Ranger school officer told Sgt. Maj. John R. McDonald of the A&M Military Science Department. He attended the Ranger class graduation. "One of the cadre didn't know anything about Texas A&M," the

sergeant major commented, "but he does now. He was very impressed with our guys." The first Army ROTC group to start Ranger School numbered 240 on June 10, beginning of the 10-week course. The 140 who pinned on the Ranger tab "are Rangers in every sense of the word," said Col. John P. Geraci, Ranger Department director when the course started.

Texas A&M started seven graduated seven, more than other college or university. Institutions had two graduates but most had one. Thirty-three Texas A&M cadets also successfully finished airborne training at Benning, of 35 who started. Two received minor injuries and expected return for a later jump school after the Fort Riley camp.





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