

Low injury rate

Parachutists learn to jump safely

It takes about two and a half minutes to reach the ground when a parachutist jumps from an aircraft at 2,500 feet, falling at a rate of approximately 13 to 15 feet per second. This is the dangerous aspect of parachuting because the jumper has little time to think before landing. The American Parachute Center in Gatesville makes it possible for Texas A&M University students to learn the art of parachuting. The center, 120 miles from College Station, holds classes for beginners as well as advanced students, and is the jumping site of the A&M Sport Parachute Club. The 25-member A&M club, which is affiliated with the U.S. Parachute Association, has been es-

examples of emergency maneuvers. Anderson, of the A&M parachute club, felt that this was very helpful because it gave him a preview of what the jump would be like.

Students are taught to recognize two types of malfunctions, the high speed and low speed. At either of these speeds, a total malfunction may occur. This means the parachute does not come out of its pack closure.

The partial malfunction causes the parachute not to open completely. The horseshoe is a partial malfunction in which the parachute does not unfold completely because the jumper's hand or foot becomes tangled in some part of it.

The total serious injury rate was about 3 percent. Half of these were experienced jumpers that exceeded

parachuting. The five hour class is set up to make sure that everyone gets the same routine and sufficient

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their personal limitations.

Regenthal said he believed that if these persons had followed instructions more carefully, there would have been no problem. "Most newcomers want to learn and since they are apprehensive about jumping tend to be more careful," said Regenthal.

Students are taught to turn the parachute into the wind at 200 feet and hold that position until landing. An exception to this rule is when the jumper is in danger of striking an obstacle, in which case the canopy should be turned in a 90 degree angle away from the danger area. "Students are taught to avoid these situations ahead of time by maneuvering the canopy away from any danger areas," said Moyer. For example, the jumper should keep his feet and knees together with legs bent and his hands folded under his arms to pass through obstacles such as trees. The five points of contact upon landing are the balls of the feet, calves, thigh, buttocks and shoulder, in that order.

Once jump school classes are completed, students are required to take a written test over the material. They can then begin working toward a variety of parachute licenses.

There are four types of licenses in parachuting which are given out by the USPA. These are A, B, C, and D, where D is the most qualified and A is the least. To achieve an A license the jumper must go up in the aircraft without a jumpmaster, pack his own parachute, and have at least 25 free falls. For a B license the requirement is 50 free falls. The C license requires 100 and the D license requires 200. A jumpmaster must have at least a C license and have passed a jumpmaster course.

"I feel that we are one of the safest operations going," said Regenthal. "We have taken steps to make people aware of the dangers of

time to learn the essential steps of parachuting."

The instructors warn the students during training that 90 percent of the injuries occur upon landing. About 80 percent of these usually involve damage to the lower limbs.

The philosophy of the Gatesville school is to give more time to actual procedure than to packing rigs. This gives the newcomer less additional worry of packing the parachute himself. When the instructors see that a student has a problem, they give him increased attention and retrain those that are weak in certain areas. When bad weather occurs, the students are given a refresher course over previous lessons before going on to others.

The A&M Sport Parachute Club, which eventually hopes to put together a team for competition, holds its meetings every other Thursday in the MSC. Membership fees for the club are \$10 for 12 months.

Some CIA working areas have 'hazardous conditions'

United Press International  
WASHINGTON — Spy work can be dangerous, but not in the way you might think.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration, in a report released Wednesday, has chided the CIA for allowing "unsafe and unhealthful conditions"

in its working areas.

The report said CIA safety personnel are being trained in such things as bomb disposal and opening letter bombs rather than in making sure employees do not trip over things or are not exposed to hazardous fumes.

OSHA inspectors visited CIA

headquarters in Langley, Va., as well as secret locations, and found hazardous conditions such as improper storage of flammable liquids, excessive noise, lack of exit signs and use of carbon tetrachloride, a known cancer-causing agent, without regard to employee exposure levels.

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established for two years.

Beginning parachutists often feel uneasy before taking the first jump. "As the time draws near, a quiet nervousness comes over you. You ask yourself why you have decided to jump out of an airplane with only a parachute on your back," said David Anderson, a member of the A&M Sport Parachute Club.

"But once you jump, the adrenaline takes over and you lose the fright. Landing is an indescribable feeling because you realize that you have actually accomplished parachuting," said Anderson.

The American Parachute Center's classes consist of four major divisions. The first, canopy control, familiarizes students with the actual parachute rigging.

The second division includes aircraft procedures. Students are taught to exit from the aircraft and to spot, which means dropping at a certain time and landing on target.

"By the U.S. Parachute Association's doctrine, parachuting should not be done in winds exceeding 10 mph," said John Moyer, jumpmaster at the Gatesville school. "The students are taught to check their canopy, orientate themselves with the surroundings, and make sure that the target is in front of them once outside the aircraft."

There are three types of maneuvers which the beginning parachutist must learn. In the holding maneuver, the jumper turns into the wind to decrease his forward movement. The running maneuver teaches the jumper to face the target and "run with the wind." "Crabbing" refers to a maneuver combining both running and holding which causes the jumper to move back and forth across the windline.

A third section of the class deals with malfunctions and reserve activations. A malfunction means that something is wrong with the parachute, making it unsafe for the jumper to descend. In the classroom each student is suspended in the air in an actual harness. This method allows the instructor to explain the functions of the harness and to give

Some types of low speed malfunctions are the line over, in which the line attached to the parachute becomes caught over the top of the canopy. Another such malfunction is the blown panel, in which the material in the parachute is faulty and the pressure causes it to fall apart. Malfunctions should be determined by the time the jumper reaches 1800 feet so that emergency procedures can be taken immediately.

The Gatesville Center instructors have begun using radios which are attached to the beginner's gear to instruct him in emergency and approach procedures. Another alternative is the ground arrow, which tells the jumper which direction to point his canopy.

The last division of the class deals with landing falls and emergency procedures, one of the most important aspects. "Our accident rate is probably lower here than anywhere else," said David Regenthal, jumpmaster and part owner of the Gatesville school. In the past two years only eight jumps have resulted in injuries. Last year out of 125 students jumping for the first time, there were only four injuries.

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Saturday Review

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