



Kyle Knox, a junior cadet, does pushups on the quad by the Corps of Cadets living area. He and 71 other juniors partici-

pated in "black belt day" initiation drill for the Ross Volunteers last Thursday.

Battalion photo by Michelle Scudder

Oldest student organization

Volunteers' duties varied

By Candice Hill
Battalion Reporter

Most students at Texas A&M University know that the men who fire the guns at Silver Taps are members of the Ross Volunteer Company. But many do not know that this the oldest student organization on campus; nor do they know the functions of the company.

The year 1887 marked the beginning of the Ross Volunteers. They were first called the Scott Volunteers in honor of Col. T.M. Scott, then the business manager of the College and an agent of the board of directors. This name was used until the administration of Lawrence Sullivan Ross which began in 1890. The name was changed to the Ross Volunteers in 1891.

The name of the company changed twice more to honor each

current president. Finally, in 1905, President M.T. Harrington, Ross' son-in-law, requested that the company be given the permanent name of Ross Volunteers.

The Ross Volunteers serve as the honor guard for the governor of Texas. They are present at all inauguration ceremonies with their color guard and a saber arch for the governor. Similar duties are performed at the Governor for the Day services.

The company also participates in the annual Mardi Gras parade in New Orleans.

Each spring, prior to Aggie Muster, a firing squad composed of 21 juniors is named. It is commanded by the company executive officer. This squad serves as the firing squad for Muster and Silver Taps services.

Many students at Texas A&M re-

spect the Ross Volunteers and believe it is an honor to be in the company. But others believe it is more like a fraternity.

This attitude may stem from statements such as the one made recently by a Ross Volunteer, "We are the elite of the elite."

Bryan Couch, another member of the company, commenting on that statement, said he believes that those who have completed two years in the corps are elite in their own way and when the Ross Volunteers choose only 72 from a large junior class it comes down to choosing the "elite of the elite."

Executive Officer John Bonn said the company is elite because it is a military organization but that does not mean those who belong are the best in the University.

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**Woman gets self off death row,
apparently by 'cooperation,' plea**

United Press International
WHARTON, Texas — The only woman on Texas's death row saved herself Tuesday, first winning a new trial on capital murder charges and then entering a bargained guilty plea to a lesser charge in the insurance murder of her father.

State District Judge Neil Caldwell sentenced Mary Lou Anderson, 35, of Lake Charles, La., to 50 years in prison for ordinary murder in the shooting of Steve Anderson of Sugar Land.

It was an apparent reward for her testimony — after her capital murder conviction Aug. 29 and subsequent death sentence — against triggerman Feryl Granger, 29, of Lafayette, La.

Acting on prosecutors' recommendations, Caldwell granted a motion for new trial, accepted her plea of guilty to ordinary murder and sentenced her in one brief hearing.

Caldwell also dropped a pending charge against her in the death of her step-mother, Margie Anderson, in the same execution-style shooting at the couple's home Jan. 3.

Granger, whom Anderson allegedly promised a share of life insurance money she planned to use

for restitution on Louisiana bad check charges, was convicted of capital murder and sentenced to death Oct. 22.

Defense lawyer Charles Cate said he opposed Anderson's guilty plea.

"She did this over my objection," Cate said. "I felt there was reversible error in the case. They had convicted her already. They used that to persuade her."

State District Judge Neil Caldwell said "it was and it wasn't" a

deal. Lawyers did not "flat out say so" but appearances indicated a deal for her testimony against Granger.

"They could not have convicted Granger without her testimony," Caldwell said. "If you have a woman on death row and a triggerman walking free, it wasn't a bad bargain just from the standpoint of the citizen."

Caldwell said Anderson would be returned to the Texas Department of Corrections where she would be removed from death row immediately.

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