

Local

A&M tops VMI in diversity

By CINDY GEE
Battalion Staff

Civilian students, Texas A&M University's scholastic program and the freedom to choose were appreciated more after cadets visited the Virginia Military Institute.

Last week Col. James Woodall, Ken Cross, Kelly Castleberry, Bruce Dunn, Kenneth LePori, David Moyer and Arthur Pregler flew with Texas National Guard officials on a military aircraft to Washington D.C. The group then drove to Lexington, Va. and spent two days exchanging ideas on Cadet Corps operations with people at VMI.

"I came back with a tremendous appreciation for the environment we're in because we're able to experience things outside of the military," Cross said.

VMI is one out of two military schools that are still all-male. The campus is older and more compact than Texas A&M and has about 1,300 cadets, he said.

"Non-regs and females are something we should be grateful for," Cross said. "It's a constant threat because we (Texas A&M cadets) could easily quit and be a non-reg. The leaders in the Corps have got to be constantly innovative to make sure the conditions are the best."

"If cadets at A&M don't like what we're doing, they can quit so

easily. That risk is the best thing we could have. At VMI if you quit the Corps, you quit the school, and you lose about \$5,000."

Cross said another reason he appreciates civilian students is because they make Texas A&M a much larger school, and larger schools can offer better degree programs.

Cross also noted that cadets at Texas A&M have more responsibilities than those at VMI. At VMI military officers run the school, and at Texas A&M the cadets supervise themselves, he said. At VMI only a small percentage of the seniors have a position, and it's possible for a sophomore there to have more authority than a senior, he said.

"They really were impressed by our uniform," he said. "The care, time and preparation of their uniforms takes about one-tenth of the time that ours does. They wear shoes that you can't shine."

Except for seniors, cadets at VMI can only go out on Saturday night, and must wear their uniforms to town. Cross said the cadets there keep their civilian clothes in a basement under the building, and never wear them on the campus.

But Moyer said, "They have a museum specifically for George C. Marshall. I'd like to see A&M have some kind of museum."

"I was surprised at the similar-

ities between the two Corps of Cadets," Woodall said. Their actions in the mess hall and the way they treat their "rats" (freshmen) were very similar, he said.

Woodall said the trip made the cadets appreciate the conditions they have at Texas A&M. VMI cadets share a room with three other men, and they have to roll their mattresses and stack their cots every morning, he said.

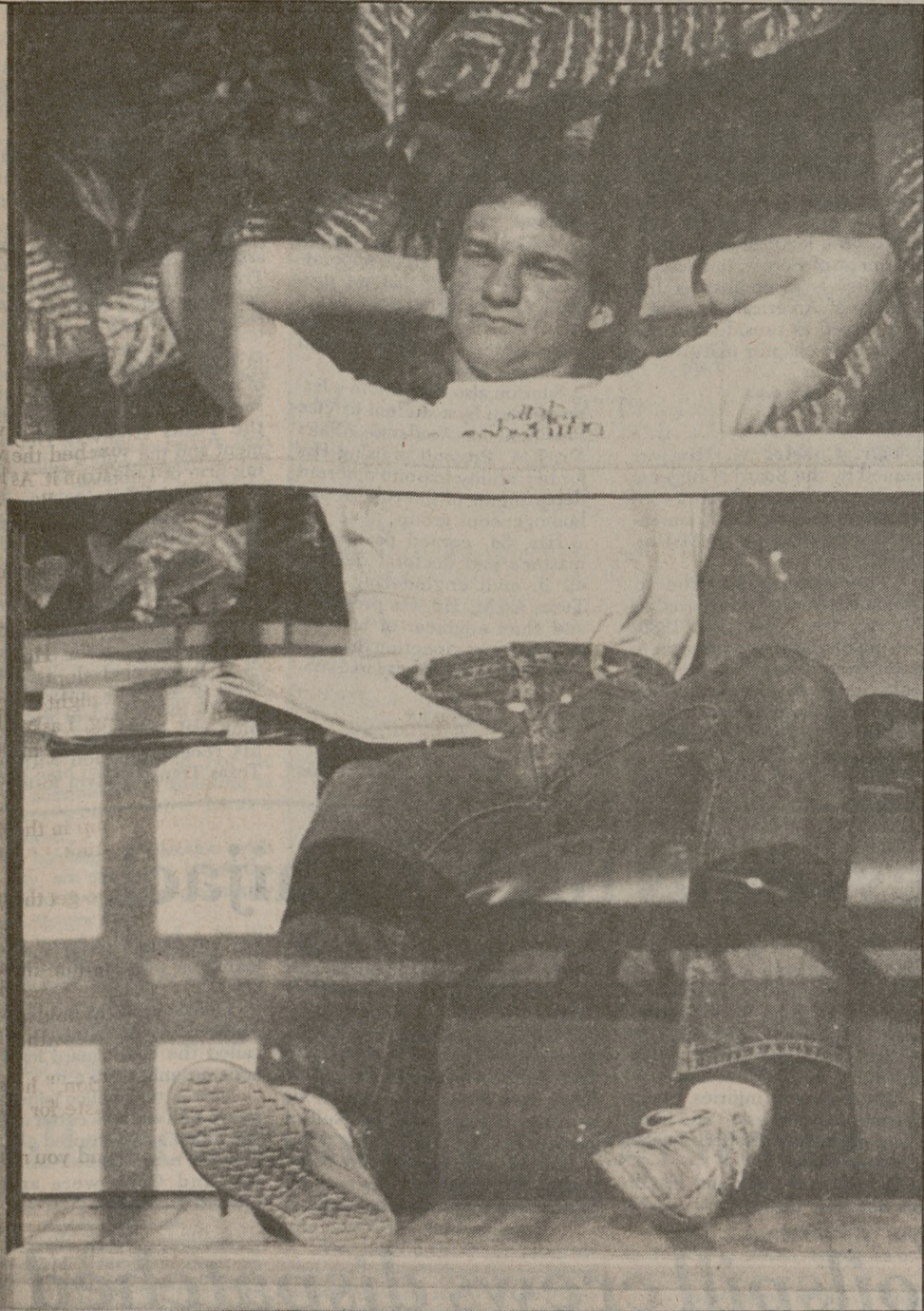
VMI is filled with Civil War heritage, and cadets there often discuss it, Cross said. The school was burned during the Civil War,

then rebuilt afterwards. Most of the buildings at VMI are the same ones that were built at that time.

Woodall said VMI had the advantage in parking, though. Only seniors are allowed to have cars.

Several of the first presidents and professors at Texas A&M were VMI graduates, he said, so there are a lot of ties between the two universities.

Woodall said as long as they are able to fly with Texas National Guard officers every year to Washington, they will try to make the trip.



Staff photo by Chuck Chapman

Indoor tan

Greg Mier, a bio-engineering freshman, enjoys the sun at Harrington Tower Monday afternoon. The weather continues to be unseasonably warm as the temperature rose to the high 60s.

Cannon restoration bills, questions, slow project

By CWEN HAM
Battalion Reporter

The marines may be looking for a few good men, but the Corps of Cadets is looking for a caisson, six trained horses, a skilled driver and answers to many questions.

A 1902 cannon recovered by some cadets a few years ago and believed to be part of Texas A&M University's history, was to be restored for the University of Texas March-in and parade in Austin.

But not all went as planned. The cannon restoration didn't meet the University of Texas game deadline, but that was just as well, Tom Wilson, Corps personnel officer said.

There are so many rules about Southern Conference games that instigators of the renovation project realized there was no way they could have used it as planned, even if it had been finished, Wilson said.

Those working on the cannon restoration initially hoped it could be used at football games, parades and march-ins.

A few cadets discovered the cannon in a gully while cutting wood for the bonfire in the early 70s. No one is sure how it got

there, but John Gunter, a former cadet from the Class of '78, and the Parsons' Mounted Cavalry began a restoration project.

"Back then money was short and not many people held interest in the project," Wilson said. The project died out.

Then, Wilson said, Pete Normand, a former cadet from the class of '71, wrote a letter to the Corps of Cadets and stirred up interest in restoring the cannon.

At that time it seemed the only thing holding back completion of the project were wheels with a metal hub machined specifically to fit its metal axle. But in October of this year a gunsmith in Oklahoma City agreed to take on the job, and former students said they would help cover the estimated \$3,000 cost.

Two thousand dollars had already been sunk into the project.

Yet, the cannon restoration still encountered complications.

"There was a lot more to the project than we thought," Wilson said. "We had good response to requests for donations but then we realized that the cannon would require a caisson to pull it, a team of

six horses specially trained to pull a caisson and someone experienced in driving a team of horses pulling a caisson.

"If we do happen to get a caisson and six horses, then there's the problem of finding someone who knows how to train the horses to pull a caisson, boarding, buying feed and finding someone to care for the horses," Wilson said.

Even though a few cadets claim to know how to drive a team of horses pulling a caisson, "What do we do when they graduate?" Wilson asked rhetorically. "These questions have to be answered before we can make anymore definite decisions."

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