

# Black cadet is officer in Corps

By DALLAS MORRIS  
Reporter

"I never heard of Texas A&M until about four months before I came here," said Thomas Farmer, an executive officer in the Corps of Cadets.

"I was a freshman going to the University of Texas at El Paso, and I was in a frat and I found the life to be too unimpressive, so I decided to come to A&M."

What makes Farmer different from most cadets here is that he is one of the few black cadets in the Corps.

"I won't say I'm treated unfairly because I'm black or anything like that," Farmer says, "but I definitely have to say that race makes a difference and I'm treated differently because I'm black."

Farmer transferred to A&M with 40 hours, but joined the Corps as a freshman.

He is executive officer of the Fifth Battalion in the First Regiment.

"My job is to support the commanding officer and the decisions that he makes," Farmer said.

Farmer is responsible for all financial transactions, social events and the physical well being of the Fifth Battalion.

Since his father was in the U.S. Army for 20 years, Farmer has traveled extensively. He has born in Stuttgart, Germany, and has lived in Korea, Okinawa, Tehran and Japan.

"I went to nine high schools, five of them in my senior year," he said.

While living overseas, Farmer said he did not have a language problem.

"I've found that all the foreigners that I had to deal with spoke very good English, so I didn't have to worry about speaking any foreign language," he said.

At A&M, Farmer has served in

many organizations. He has been president of the El Paso Hometown Club, and a committee member on the Traditions Council and MSC Political Forum. Last year, he was the supply sergeant for the Fifth Battalion.

He is a member of the Reconnaissance Company in the Corps and is platoon sergeant for the second platoon of the Ross Volunteers.

"I don't have a single person that inspires me or that I look up to, but I look up to the ideas that several people have instilled in the ideas of the Marine Corps," Farmer said. "I don't look up to any one great Marine Corps general, but just in reading Marine Corps history and learning about former Marine Corps generals, I've decided that they are the people that I'd like to emulate."

Farmer said the Corps has prepared him well for a military life.

"It's a perfect learning tool because you can go out of here and find all kinds of people in the Corps," he said. "There are jerks and there are sharp guys in the Corps and you have to learn to deal with these people the same way you will in the real service. Only in the real service it's for real, and here, when you make a mistake, it's just part of the learning process."

Farmer said he likes his position as executive officer of the Fifth Battalion. "It gives me a chance to deal with people in a strange way," he said. "I hold the same rank as all the commanding officers in my battalion, but I outrank them in a way that I have to enforce policies and come up with new ones and occasionally 'ram' (a type of demerit) them for the things that they do wrong," he said.

Farmer, who has changed his major five times, said, "indecisions are

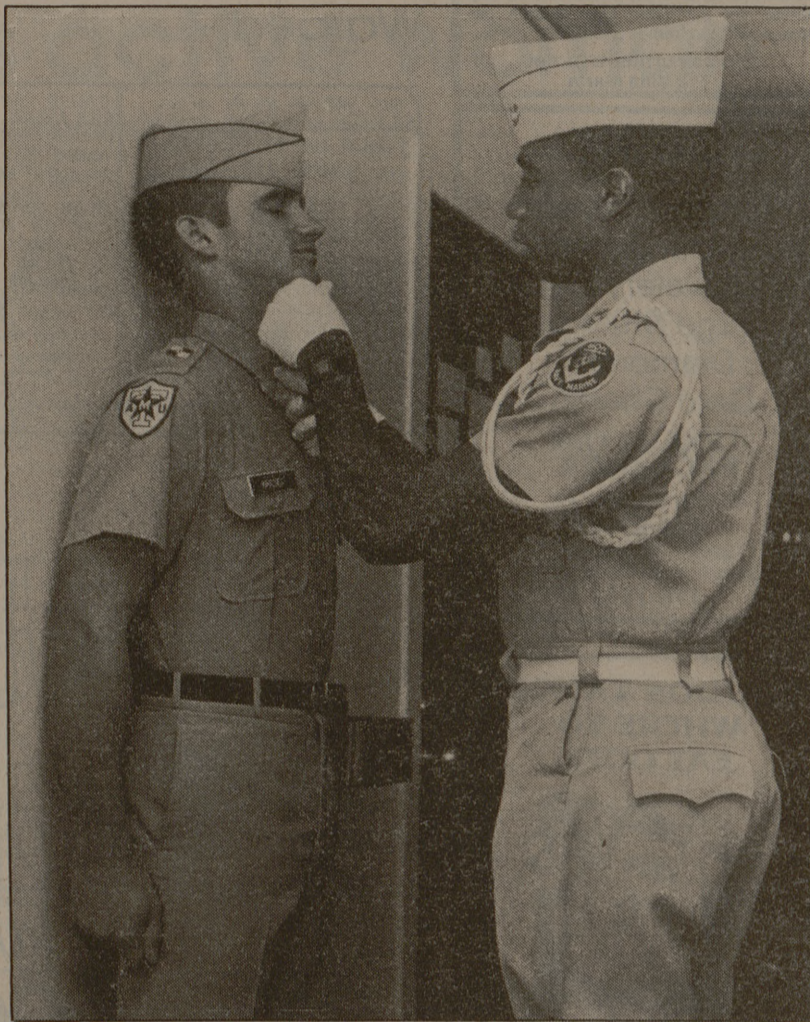


Photo by DALLAS MORRIS

Thomas Farmer, executive officer of the Fifth Battalion, inspects Todd Kriegel of Company H-2.

the spice of life." He is currently majoring in geosciences.

In June of this year, Farmer graduated from Officer Candidates School. When he graduates from A&M in May he will be commis-

sioned as a second lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps.

After he attends basic school in Quantico, Va., for 21 weeks, he will go to a military occupational specialty school.

# Not even a fire can stop U.S. Postal Service

United Press International

WASHINGTON — An inferno causing \$100 million damage to U.S. Postal Service headquarters closed the gleaming office tower Tuesday, but true to the agency's motto, "neither snow, nor rain, nor heat" halted America's mail.

"No mail processing nor delivery is handled out of that building," postal service spokesman Ralph Stewart said. "There should be no effect on mail delivery at all."

The building, erected in 1970, has

no sprinkler system, except in the underground parking garage, said Postal Service spokesman Jim Van Loozen.

The building is "in compliance with the strictest (city fire) codes that were in effect at the time it was built," which also is the current legal requirement, he said. Those codes did not require sprinklers.

The building does have an internal alarm system, which is connected to the city fire department and "it did work," Van Loozen said. "We

also have 24-hour security in the building."

At least 25 of the 200 firefighters battling the blaze, which erupted Monday night, suffered smoke inhalation. "All were taken to the hospital," a fire dispatcher said. "Some were treated and released and others are staying."

There were no serious injuries, and the few custodians and guards in the administrative offices escaped. So did personnel manning Public Broadcasting Service facilities in the

basement, which was flooded.

PBS employee Cynthia Martell said: "We're off the air until 9 a.m. tomorrow. But most of the shows have been pre-fed or pre-recorded. Viewers will have to check with their local stations."

The glass-and-marble building was closed to its 2,800 employees while fire marshals searched for the cause of the four-alarm blaze. A fire department spokeswoman said damage "is estimated at \$100 million."

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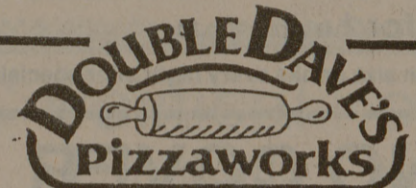
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