

Cadets say racial hazing uncommon

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — Like a scene from "The Lords of Discipline," five white Citadel cadets dressed in sheets and towels entered the room of a black cadet, shouted obscenities and left a burned paper cross behind.

While last week's incident sent shock waves through the campus, both black and white cadets agree the hazing doesn't reflect the racial atmosphere at the state military college.

"I don't think there are any tensions," said Craig Burgess, a 21-year-old senior from Lake City,

S.C., and one of 126 blacks in the college's 1,960-member corps of cadets.

"A lot of the corps is hostile to the press because they think everything is being overdrawn," he said.

The five unidentified white cadets, charged with "conduct discreditable," have been brought before a disciplinary board and could be expelled. College president Maj. Gen. James Grimsley Jr. is expected to announce a punishment today. He also has called for a general study of campus race relations.

The incident occurred in a bar-

racks similar to that in which novelist Pat Conroy spent his years at the school in the 1960s, about the time the first blacks enrolled.

Conroy drew heavily on his experience for "The Lords of Discipline," an unflattering novel about life in a Southern military school which centers around the hazing of a black cadet. The novel later was made into a movie.

"You can't compare then to now," said Terry Adams, a 19-year-old black junior from Washington, D.C. "The times aren't even comparable. The '60s were a turbulent

time as far as civil rights. This is 1986."

Since Conroy's time, hazing and physical abuse that were once part of life for all first-year cadets at The Citadel have been outlawed.

Last week's incident occurred in the room of black cadet Kevin Nesmith, who slept through the incident.

The Afro-American Society, which claims 75 black cadets as members, believes the five whites should be expelled, says group president Kenny Gordon, 20, of Willingboro, N.J.

But he said the incident was a related event and race relations are no different on campus from elsewhere. He said he has seen some instances of racial intolerance on campus but he said none of them were major.

There have been two other incidents on campus this year. In one, a white cadet told a black cadet in front of a black. In the other, a black cadet became nervous when another cadet remarked that he resembled the black in "The Lords of Discipline."

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