

A&M Recon Unit gains experience

Cadets destroy missile base in raid

By Kent Hawes
Reporter

The sound of machine guns echoed through the woods of the Texas A&M Range Center Saturday as a group of cadets blew up a missile base located on the outskirts of Easterwood Airport.

These cadets are part of Recon Unit, a voluntary military task force training unit in the Marine division.

Even though the raid was for military practice, the men involved in Recon Unit carry out the task as if it were a real situation.

Dressed in camouflage-colored clothing and with faces painted green, the task force members assembled at 6 a.m. to check artillery and receive instructions for the mission.

The group arrived at the range site by 7 a.m. for briefing from the commanding officers.

Tom Marble, commanding officer of Recon Unit and a junior in the Marine division of the Corps of Cadets, instructed the troops on how to carry out the maneuver.

"We will take no prisoners," he said. "Blow up the base and get out."

Maj. John McGuire, active marine and instructor at A&M, stressed safety above all to the soldiers.

"Even though we are using blanks, a person could get hurt if every precaution is not taken," he said.

Forty members of the unit participated in this weekend's mock raid of an enemy missile base.

The unit was divided into four elements: two assault groups, one security group and one demolition group.

The primary function of the assault groups is to fire upon the enemy after the security team has cleared the area.

The first assault team began behind a line of trees and slowly worked its way through mud, brush, grass and ants to the area designated as the missile base.



Photo by Tracy Staton

A reconnaissance team member searches the pockets of a "dead" enemy during a simulation Saturday.

The cadets involved in the maneuver blew up a missile base near Easterwood Airport.

Once the team reached the front line, a signal was given and the sound of machine-gun fire laced through the area.

The second assault team moved in from the side to check the area for survivors as the demolition team set charges around the missile base and blew up the target.

When the mission was completed, the teams regrouped at two nearby

sites to imitate pickup by helicopters. The mission was successful and no casualties were reported, though the ants claimed a few victims in the process.

As easy as the procedure sounds, it was a well-coordinated and thought-out mission.

Before the attack, the unit had two rehearsals and also held meetings to review procedural tactics.

McGuire said that the Recon Unit,

which began in the mid-1970s, gives members the chance to participate in military procedures and learn the different tactics used.

"The practical experience is a fun opportunity for students, as well as (being) useful," he said.

The unit is only offered to members of the Corps and costs \$5 a semester. Proceeds go toward a year-end trip.

Symphony finishes season with powerful performance

By Karl Pallmeyer
Music Critic

It wasn't until after intermission that the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra began playing to its full potential. But once that happened, the orchestra ended its last concert of the season with a powerful and well-received performance.

About 700 people attended the concert held Saturday night in Rudder Auditorium. Pianist Lin Wang, Gold Medal winner at last month's Brazos Valley Young Artist Competition, joined the orchestra, under the direction of conductor Franz Anton Krager, for Frederic Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 1 in E Minor.

The evening's performance began with Franz Schubert's "Overture to Rosamunde." Although the orchestra played with precision and expertise, there was not much fire or emotion in the piece, except for the brass introduction and the finale.

Wang took her place at the piano

for the Chopin concerto. Despite her small and seemingly delicate presence, Wang attacked the piano with speed and vigor. Her playing was fast and hard, or slow and lyrical — just what the piece required. After each movement, Krager turned to Wang and gave her a reassuring smile.

As on the Schubert overture, the orchestra did not seem to be putting its all into the performance. Wang's playing slightly overpowered the orchestra during the concerto.

After intermission, the orchestra was in much better form and performed Maurice Ravel's orchestral transcription of Modest Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition." Mussorgsky wrote the piece in memory of his friend, Russian architect and painter Victor Alexandrovich Hartmann.

"Pictures at an Exhibition" consists of 10 sections, and an introductory theme titled "Promenade" that is used to connect the sections. The

piece is set up to suggest a person walking through a museum, stopping to look at Hartmann's paintings.

The majestic "Promenade," introduced by the brass, gives way to the broken rhythms of "The Gnome." The interplay of percussion and brass was marvelous throughout the piece.

Each section of the orchestra got a chance to shine during the various sections of the Mussorgsky piece — the woodwinds during "The Old Castle" and "Tuleries," the brass during "Bydio" and "Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle," and the strings during "The Hut on Fowl's Legs." The orchestra unleashed its full power for the last section, "The Great Gate at Kiev."

After the impressive performance of "Pictures at an Exhibition," the orchestra performed Georges Bizet's "Farandole," ending the concert on a high note.

Record lows follow on heels of mild winter

Snow and the coldest spring temperatures in almost half a century were recorded across Texas on Sunday, and the National Weather Service said sub-freezing readings were likely for much of the state early Monday.

In Austin, the temperature hit 34 on Sunday, tying a record for March 29 set in 1944, and weather officials said the March 30 record of 33 was also in jeopardy.

In records dating back as far as 1927, the weather service has never had a reported reading of freezing or below in Central Texas in the first part of the year, after March 28, officials said.

The frigid weather comes on the heels of an unusually mild winter in Texas. Only six days of temperatures 32 or less were reported in Central Texas over the three months, with less than 24 hours total under the freezing mark.

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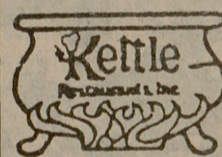
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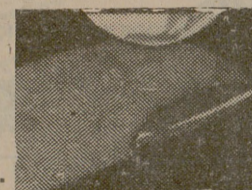
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