

State and Local

Ranger Challenge team loses title by one point

A&M group settles for second with TCU win

By Stan Golaboff
Reporter

Texas A&M's Ranger Challenge team failed by one point to capture a second straight title win in the third ROTC Region's Ranger Challenge competition held from March 18-20 at Ft. Riley, Sgt. Maj. Larry Kirkland said.

The team, which consists of nine army ROTC cadets, scored 85 points out of a possible 100, while Texas Christian University came in first with 86, Kirkland said.

The team was tested on eight combat skills that they learned in ROTC. They were tested on building a rope bridge, a grenade assault course and a weapons-assembly test with the M-16 rifle and M-60 machine gun.

Also required on the test was qualifying with the M-16, an army physical fitness test, an orienteering course, a 10K run and conducting a reconnaissance patrol. The run and the patrol were worth 20 points and all the other events were worth 10, Kirkland said.

Clay Sumner, a sophomore political science major and team member, said, "It gives us a chance for some high-speed training dealing with military skills that we don't always have time for in military science. Plus it's fun."

Kirkland said, "The team gives the cadets a chance to showcase their skills and show the cadre in the military science department what they can do."

A&M was one of 10 teams that

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competed at Ft. Riley. Five brigades are in the Third ROTC Region and each brigade sent two teams. A&M and TCU are both from the second brigade. The Third ROTC Region consists of Texas, Alabama, Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Georgia, Florida and Puerto Rico, Kirkland said.

The team placed first in the weapons assembly, the orienteering course and the patrol events. Even though the standings are posted after each event, the team did not know how well it was doing because they weren't allowed to look at the scoreboard, Kirkland said.

"I don't let the team look at the board because I don't want them to relax," he said. "I want them to do their best on every event. Our goal was not to win every event, but to do our best and hopefully place in the top three at least."

The team has been practicing for this event since the beginning of the 1987 fall semester. The members practiced from 3:30 p.m. until 6 p.m. every day and did physical training, which consisted of push-ups, sit-ups and running, every morning for an hour.

The team also practiced every weekend except for two in the spring semester. The team was advised during practice by 2nd Lt. Dawn Simmons, a member of last year's championship team, Kirkland said.

"She really helped them learn their stuff and helped get them ready for Ft. Riley," he said. "She was out there every day helping them

and doing the same things they were, not just supervising. She is very motivated and was a team member last year, so she knows how to handle herself."

The team members are team captain Rob Harris, a junior recreations and parks major; Bryce Reeves, a junior industrial distribution major; Steve Peck, a senior speech communications major, and Brian Matthews, a senior physical education major.

Other members of the rigorous team are Clay Sumner, a sophomore political science major; Eric Layne, a sophomore industrial distribution major; Chad Keith, a sophomore general studies major; Christine Lyle, a sophomore elementary education major, and Johnny Hester, a freshman sociology major.

"Hester is the first freshman to ever compete in Ranger Challenge and he did very well," Kirkland said.

All the members are army ROTC cadets — one of the requirements for trying out for the team.

The sport is not recognized at this time by the National Collegiate Athletic Association. However, the cadet command in Ft. Monore, Va. is trying to influence the NCAA to recognize the event. There is not a national meet as of yet, but there are plans for a national meet next year, Kirkland said.

The team's main concerns now are maintaining their present status and getting new members involved, Kirkland said.



Photo by Lucinda Orr

Clay Sumner, a sophomore political science major, assembles an M-16 rifle and an M-60 machine gun simultaneously, while team captain Rob Harris, left, a junior recreation and parks major, and ad-

viser Sgt. Maj. Larry Kirkland watch and time him. This was one of the eight events in which the team competed. The team won the event and took second place overall.

Correction

In Wednesday's *Battalion*, artwork with a story about AggieCon incorrectly was attributed to Susan C. Akin. The artwork actually was done by Otto Cordray, one of the guests at AggieCon.

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