

The Battalion

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Religious cult standoff continues

Leader negotiates with authorities as convoy moves in; tells mother he's dying

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WACO — The leader of a heavily armed religious cult told his mother "I'm dying, all right" after two lethal gun battles with an army of police and federal agents, who ringed the group's fortified compound Monday.

The cult Branch Davidians allowed 10 children to leave, but more children remained in the bullet-scarred compound. A man who identified himself as a cult member said others would be released later.

Shortly after 7 p.m., authorities moved the command post further from the compound and then about 8 p.m., reporters were ordered to clear the road into the compound.

Moments later a convoy of 25 trucks, cars and vans carrying Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents in riot gear headed toward the compound. The convoy stopped, although the vehicle lights could be seen staking down the road.

Authorities kept up negotiations a day after a rain of gunfire killed four federal agents and two members of the sect, one reportedly a

daughter of cult leader David Koresh.

The negotiations were continuing in the late afternoon Monday, said Francesca Perot, a spokeswoman for the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

At least 75 people remained in the compound about 10 miles east of Waco, about a third of them children, authorities said. Koresh, who says he is Jesus Christ, said many of the children were his.

One of the three people in the shootout was charged Monday with attempted murder of a federal law enforcement officer and use of a firearm during commission of a violent crime, said Jim Deatley, a spokesman in the U.S. Attorney's office.

The FBI sent its elite Hostage Rescue Team to the scene Monday, said a federal law enforcement official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The standoff began Sunday after a 45-minute gun battle with about 100 ATF agents who were trying to serve arrest and search warrants on Koresh for federal firearms charges. Later Sunday, three people tried to

shoot their way out of the one-square-block compound, ATF agents said.

Sixteen agents were wounded, and all were out of intensive care and stable, hospital officials said.

Questions arose about why the assault failed. ATF spokesman Jack Killorin in Washington said authorities believe the cult got a phone tip of the raid. He also said the agency had people working undercover within the cult.

Koresh claimed agents shot first. "They were scared. You can't blame them," he said.

But the ATF and media witnesses said cult members started the shooting.

Koresh spent early Monday talking to KRLD radio in Dallas, discussing his interpretation of Revelation and its predictions for the end of the world.

After radio stations broadcast his religious message, the cult allowed six children to leave the compound in groups of two, eyewitnesses and sheriff's deputies said. Four more, including an infant, were released Monday afternoon.

Speculation about cult raid pointless, UPD director says

By GINA HOWARD

The Battalion

Speculation about whether Sunday's deadly raid of a Waco area cult could have been handled better is irrelevant, said a former FBI special agent and director of the Texas A&M University police.

"As a Monday morning quarterback it is easy to look back and see how things could have been done differently," said UPD Director Bob Wiatt. "But at the time, they felt the assault they had planned would be adequate."

Agents with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) tried to serve warrants to search for explosives and fire

arms at the Branch Davidians sect compound and arrest the sect's religious leader, Vernon Howell. A 45-minute shootout followed which left four agents dead and fifteen wounded.

Reflecting on Sunday's events, Wiatt said the assault did not work out as planned, but he doubts anything should have been altered at the time.

"I would never try and second guess their actions," he said.

Cult members had the upper-hand in the shootout because firing restrictions are placed on federal officers, Wiatt said.

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International Week kicks off



BILLY MORAN/The Battalion

Jun Lu plays an ar-huu, a two-stringed Chinese violin, at the People's Republic of China booth in the MSC Monday afternoon. The exhibit was part of the International Week celebration.

Bill proposes tuition increase for students with 158+ hours

By JULI PHILLIPS

The Battalion

A Texas House bill, which would raise tuition rates for undergraduate students with 158 credit hours or more, will have minimal effects on Texas A&M students if it passes, A&M officials and student advisers said.

"We don't have that many students with an extraordinary amount of hours anymore," liberal arts student adviser Georgia Fox said. "It shouldn't affect too many students."

Students with high numbers of credit hours are usually probational students under provisional guidelines, Fox said.

According to Texas A&M's Office of University Relations, if this bill became law today, almost 1,000 students out of 10,959 seniors would be affected.

Associate Dean of Architecture Rodney Hill said he thinks the bill is an attempt to cut down on ca-

reer students.

"What they are trying to do is cut down on the perpetual students who are taking too much advantage of the bargain they get in Texas," he said.

Texas has one of the lowest tuition rates in the country, Hill said. In order to keep the rates low, legislators have to cut down on the number of students.

Fox said advisers are trying to keep students in the college in which they started and help them graduate on time.

"We don't want students floundering around," she said. "The University is trying to make sure that students are here for only as long as they need to be here."

According to the office of Measurement and Research, 60 percent of the student body will change majors at least once during their college career. Twenty percent will change majors within their first year.

If students change majors after

their freshman year, they can amass between 152 and 158 hours if they graduate at the minimum university requirement of 128 hours in their new college - most colleges require between 132 and 135 hours.

Double degree students and double major students take a minimum of 144 hours for double degrees and 162 hours for double majors.

Executive Associate Provost Jerry Gaston said, "It is not difficult for some students to exceed the 158 margin, and exemptions will be made for students who are not career students."

Gaston said the Legislature is looking at the bill in committee with the purpose of devising these exemptions.

"There are those of us that believe that you can never get enough education," Gaston said. "But the other viewpoint is: you can't have too much education, but at what point does the state stop paying for it?"

DEC seeks to diversify campus

Unofficial organization proposes 10-point plan for equality

By REAGON CLAMON

The Battalion

A newly-formed, unofficial student organization called Diversity & Equality Coalition (DEC) '92 seeks to centralize Texas A&M University efforts to increase diversity on campus.

The group, which was formed in December, is made up of students from other campus organizations who are concerned about the University's commitment to diversity.

Joseph Gourrier, senior psychology major and a member of DEC '92, said the group sees a problem in the separated nature of A&M's diversity programs.

"Each of the different organizations is doing their own thing," he said. "They might be working toward separate goals because people have different ideas of what diversity is. We just want them to come up with a central plan that will make the process more efficient."

Kevin Carreathers, director of multicultural services, said the enterprise is a noble one.

"There is strength in numbers," he said. "Working collectively may give them a better chance of getting what they want."

Carreathers agreed the disjointed nature of some campus programs sometimes blunts their effectiveness.

"If there are six, seven, or 10 organizations with the same agenda, and they are not working together,

that might be a problem," he said.

To meet their goals, DEC '92 members developed a list of 10 recommendations they want added to A&M's legislative agenda.

DEC '92 members said they hope to get the recommendations on the University's legislative agenda before this week's filing deadline.

"We feel if these recommendations were passed into law, it wouldn't just help Texas A&M, but all other schools in the state," Gourrier said. "Texas would take a step forward and A&M would be taking a leadership position."

Some of DEC '92's recommendations have come from student concerns; however, others are the same recommendations made by the Faculty Senate Committee on Minority Conditions in its report that was completed last April.

"The vast majority of those recommendations were not implemented," Gourrier said.

DEC '92's 10 recommendations are:

- Funding for the recommendations made in the Faculty Senate committee on minority conditions report.
- State funding for the center for race and ethnic studies.
- Funding for minorities and women who are hired into faculty positions.
- Expanding the office of school relations and

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No Silver Taps tonight

Silver Taps will not be held tonight because no Texas A&M students have died within the past month.

The ceremony is held on the first Tuesday of the month during the normal school year to honor those students who have died within the past month.

The Ross Volunteer Firing Squad fires a 21-gun salute and buglers play "Silver Taps" three times to honor the deceased. The bells of the Albritton Bell Tower also play as part of the ceremony.

Bryan Council debates funding airport upgrades

By JEFF GOSMANO

The Battalion

The Bryan City Council is debating whether to give Texas A&M University \$100,000 to renovate the old Easterwood Airport Terminal and upgrade non-commercial aviation facilities.

Dr. Richard Floyd, Texas A&M University associate vice president for finance and administration, said because small airports do not make big profits, the University is looking for ways to fund buildings and projects at Easterwood Airport.

"We are asking Bryan to help

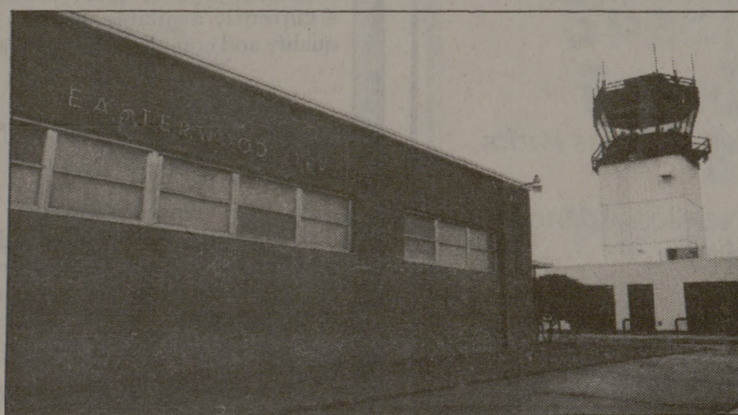
us support the operations so we can continue with the level of service everyone is used to having," he said.

On Feb. 23, the council voted 3-3 to consider a contribution to the old Easterwood Terminal, located in College Station.

Bryan City Councilman Larry Catlin said he anticipates the item will be placed on the agenda at the next meeting when all seven council members are present.

The City of College Station has already agreed to give \$100,000 for airport improvements. However, Bryan City Councilman

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JOHN BARTRAM/The Battalion

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