

## The Ross Volunteers



Stew Milne, THE BATTALION

The Ross Volunteers firing squad performs 21-gun salutes at Silver Taps and Muster. Only 24 cadets out of the 144 RVs are selected to perform on the basis of responsibility, chivalry and discipline.

Cadets  
preserve the  
values of  
Sullivan Ross  
by performing  
at Silver Taps  
and Muster

By Amy Protas  
THE BATTALION

Soldier, Statesman, Knightly Gentleman. These are the characteristics former A&M President Lawrence Sullivan Ross attributed to the perfect cadet. They are also the qualities Ross Volunteers strive to obtain. Founded in 1887, the RVs are the oldest student organization at A&M. They were called the Scott Volunteers until 1891 when they took on the name of the man they revere. To freshmen in the Corps, the RVs are a mysterious group that they are not allowed to inquire about. Matt Carter, an RV and senior history major, said the secrecy is one of the reasons he joined the organization. "When we start as freshmen, we see the yellow and white cords and wonder," Carter said. "We're not allowed to know what they are. I went to Silver Taps and realized what the RVs were about. They were sharp and I

wanted to be one." Carter said as he matured, he realized the RVs were service-oriented and weren't just for show. The group's service is Silver Taps, which is held on the first Tuesday of every month. Dan Mallory, an RV executive officer and senior biomedical science major, said Silver Taps honors those who have died. "The first Silver Taps was held for Sullivan Ross in 1898," Mallory said. "It has now been molded into a ceremony for students to show willingness to care — even if they don't know the student who died. The firing squad is out there for the parents, not to show off." No one knows which 24 cadets are selected from the 144 RVs to be on the firing squad, except for the cadets themselves. The selection is based on characteristics that represent the spirit of Sullivan Ross. The squad performs a 21-gun salute at Muster as well as Silver Taps. Cisco Sanchez, RV historian and a senior psychology major, said he attended a Silver Taps his freshman year he will never forget

— it was for his brother who had been killed in an automobile accident. "My brother was a RV, and the support we saw was wonderful," Sanchez said. "We live six hours away, but the RVs still came to his funeral. They played Silver Taps for him." "I went to Silver Taps and realized what the RVs were about. They were sharp, and I wanted to be one" — Matt Carter  
Ross Volunteer and senior history major

In addition to Silver Taps, the RVs serve as the honor guard for the governor of Texas. At ceremonies involving the governor, the RVs represent A&M. This can sometimes come at an inopportune time. Rick Harver, the RVs public relations officer and a senior poultry science major, said the honor of being an RV makes up for the inconveniences.

"We had to go to Austin during finals," Harvey said. "It didn't matter, though. I'm here for academics, but I hold the RVs close to my heart over everything. I was willing to make the sacrifice." At Mardi Gras, the RVs are the lead element in the King Rex parade, which is the biggest Mardi Gras parade on Fat Tuesday. Harvey said the parade has been one of the most exciting parts of being a RV. "There were millions of people watching us in that parade," Harvey said. "It was really exhilarating. Once we were there, people saw us in our whites, and they knew who we were." The RVs stress discipline, responsibility and chivalry. Mallory said these are the values he lives by and hopes to give to others. "The RVs have impeccable values and character," Mallory said. "Being an RV has been beneficial because I hope I can influence someone to live up to the standards I believe in and hold dear to my heart."

## Students find good conversation and relaxing atmosphere at local coffee houses



Amy Browning, THE BATTALION

Shane Seay, Rachel Reckner and George Hesketh, three graduate business students, enjoy coffee while studying at Sweet Eugene's House of Java.

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"In books, truth. In coffee, life."  
— Latin proverb

The scene is a familiar one — bohemian college students sitting in a smoky coffeehouse sipping java and discussing the finer points of existence. Even though this isn't a typical scene at A&M, the Bryan-College Station area does have its share of coffeehouses and dedicated drinkers. Coffeehouses try to offer something different in a town filled with pool halls and bars. Jed Holdredge, a Sweet Eugene's House of Java regular and senior Spanish major, said he drinks coffee because he enjoys the atmosphere that accompanies it. "I come for the intellectual conversation," Holdredge said. "When I think of a university, in the classical sense, I think of openness. I think a coffeehouse embodies that more than anything in town." Holdredge said Sweet Eugene's has surroundings that make patrons feel like they could be in their own living room. There are couches throughout the coffeehouse and books and magazines. Although bands usually pack the coffeehouse on weekends, many die-hard coffee drinkers desire to sip their coffee in peace. Suzanne Stocking, a junior anthropology major, said she drinks coffee quietly with her friends. "I drink coffee because it's a relaxing way to have intelligent discussions with friends," Stocking said. "It annoys me that some coffee shops in town have bands because I go for quiet time. It's nice to be able to hear your companions speak." Dead Lazlo's on Northgate offers a quiet and laid-back environment for coffee connoisseurs. Sean Merrell, a Lazlo's regular and freshman general studies major, said the name reflects the nature of the coffeehouse.

"The owners based the name on a Laverne and Shirley episode where Squiggly inherits his dead uncle's restaurant, Lazlo's," Merrell said. "Dead Lazlo's is eclectic, and the owners wanted to reflect that in the name." Smoking is allowed in Lazlo's, but not in Eugene's. This is not the only difference between the two coffeehouses. Merrell said the attitudes of the two coffee houses differ. Neemisha Martin, a Lazlo's regular and a sophomore math major, said she won't drink coffee at any other place in town. "I started going to Lazlo's out of curiosity," Martin said. "I feel like it is the only place here where I can walk in and not get stares. It's a lot less conservative than Sweet Eugene's." Not every coffee hot spot is primarily a coffeehouse. Students burning the midnight oil frequent the International House of Pancakes where they can drink coffee 24 hours a day. Nathan Lytle, a senior psychology major, said he drinks coffee at IHOP when he has to study. "I always come to IHOP when I have to stay up late," Lytle said. "There is never an empty cup of coffee, and it's cheap compared to other places." Mae Eyre, an IHOP employee for the last seven years, said the restaurant stays in business because of the students. "If it weren't for the students, we'd just shut the door and leave," Eyre said. "The students are wonderful. They can study or come with a friend and just hang out." For whatever reason, coffee can be an integral part of many students' college careers. Matt Beaton, a habitual coffee drinker and a junior environmental design major, said he loves coffee but hasn't been able to solve the mystery behind it. "I don't know what it is about coffee and cigarettes," Beaton said. "It always starts good conversation. It's also a cheap way for students to enjoy themselves."