

TEEX to begin terrorist attack training

Ceremony held in conjunction with Municipal Fire School

By ROBERT SMITH
 THE BATTALION

The Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) signed agreements with two corporations at Brayton Fire Field yesterday that will give emergency response personnel access to technology for handling nuclear, chemical and biological terrorism.

Betchem Nevada, Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) and TEEX will work to create a training program for emergency response teams. Firefighters and other emergency responders from across the country will use virtual reality simulators at the fire field to train for the effects of chemical and biological weapons.

The signing ceremony was held in conjunction with this week's 68th annual Texas Municipal Fire Training School, conducted at the field's facilities.

Tom Mack of Betchem Nevada said Texas A&M will play a major role in training with the technology provided by Betchem.

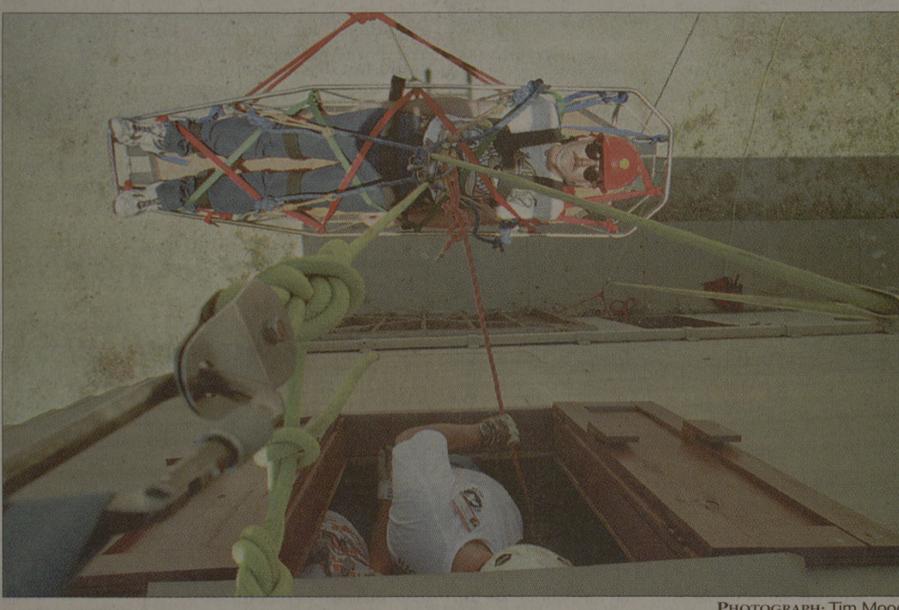
"Texas A&M has been a leader in fire training and hopefully as technology comes down we will be better prepared," Mack said.

Dr. G. Kemble Bennett, director of TEEX, said the training program will prepare fire fighters for responding to terrorist attacks on the United States.

"The U.S. has been fortunate in that it has not had a successful terrorist attack perpetrated against it using biological or chemical agents," Bennett said. "However, experts agree that it is only a matter of time."

Bennett said the gassing of a Tokyo subway served as a "wake-up call" that fire fighters and other response personnel must be trained in counter-terrorism technologies.

"When Tokyo was hit by the sarin gas attack, all of the emergency personnel who responded — some 135 individuals — became victims too," Bennett said. "In the future, that might not be the case if our first responders are not thoroughly trained in this area."



Robert McDonald of McLean volunteer fire department is lowered on a jib arm from a second story window as part of a drill at the fire training site following the ceremony.

Mack said U.S. Rep. Curt Weldon of Pennsylvania will introduce a bill in Congress in August proposing the Brayton Fire Field and its facilities be named "The National Training Center for Urban Search and Rescue."

Bennett said Weldon has been instrumental in working on forming a counter-terrorism training center.

"With the new threat we have, he (Weldon) has been adamant that we need to get the technology to reign our first line of defense," Bennett said.

Weldon has been head of the National Front Fire Service for 11 years and formed the Congress Fire Institute.

Bennett said the training program will help save future lost lives.

"The potential for mass casualties, both civilian and emergency personnel, is great," Bennett said.

"We must continue to develop counter-terrorism technologies and train our emergency response community in these technologies. Many lives could depend on it."

Body resembling Cunanan's found in houseboat

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. (AP) — A body resembling suspected serial killer Andrew Cunanan was found with a self-inflicted gunshot wound Wednesday night after SWAT teams stormed a houseboat just 2 1/2 miles from the spot where Gianni Versace was gunned down.

"There is a similarity in the description of the victim that was found," Miami Beach Police Chief Richard Barreto said at a hastily called news conference. "Beyond that, there is nothing else to indicate at this time it is him."

CNN reported early Thursday that it had confirmed through two law enforcement sources that the body was Cunanan's.

Barreto said late Wednesday night that officials were awaiting forensic tests to confirm the body was that of Cunanan, whom residents had reported seeing in the area since Versace was slain July 15.

Barreto came out again at 1 a.m. Thursday to say investigators in the houseboat were still processing the scene with the body inside.

"The general feeling is that this very well may be Cunanan, but the official word hasn't come down yet," said Miami Beach Mayor Seymour Gelber.

FBI spokeswoman Coleen Rowley said agents were still awaiting confirmation but added, "I think everyone is breathing a collective sigh of relief, and I think probably the public is as well."

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Seymour Gelber
 Miami Beach mayor

Police try to arrest robbery suspect during standoff at Kensington Place

By JOHN LEBAS
 THE BATTALION

College Station Police were trying last night to coax an armed robbery suspect from a College Station apartment unit in which they thought he was hiding.

Lt. Larry Johnson said police believed Jeremiah Sims, 22, of College Station was hiding in Kensington Place No. 107 last night. They were seeking him in connection with an armed robbery Sunday at Viking Apartments in College Station.

Officials at the scene reported that an officer had seen Sims in the unit earlier last night, but received no response when they knocked at the door.

SWAT officers were dispatched to the scene and a search warrant for the premises was obtained.

Police tried to communicate with Sims through a bullhorn before breaking a window of the unit and throwing

in a negotiation telephone.

As of about midnight, Sims had not emerged from the apartment. Police said that it was a "wait and see" situation.

Sims, who police say lives in the apartment but whose name is not on the lease, was possibly armed. Police said he lived there with his girlfriend, and neighbors reported that two women and one man lived in the apartment. Police said Sims previously has been arrested by CSPD.

Police could not verify whether Sims or the tenants were Texas A&M students. Sims' name is not listed in the University directory.

Michael Barksdale, a resident of Kensington No. 106 and a senior architecture major, said he does not know the tenants of No. 107 but that they never bothered him.

"They seem like real nice people," he said.

Students catch glimpse of med school

By JENARA KOCKS
 THE BATTALION

Eighty-eight high school students from the United States, Mexico and Canada got a behind-the-scenes look at the Texas A&M College of Medicine yesterday.

The students visited the University as a part of the National Youth Leadership Forum on Medicine.

Celia Olson, Houston coordinator of the National Youth Leadership Forum, said the program gives high school students a chance to meet others interested in the medical field.

"Students who have the same desires, same ambitions and who face the same challenges are all put together," Olson said.

Students toured the College of Medicine's facilities and talked to a medical student panel. Chris Saenz, student coordinator for the event and a second-year medical student, said the students asked the panel how to prepare for medical school.

The students also attended a medical ethics lecture, an anatomy lab presentation and a physical exam demonstration. Students learned how to take a person's blood pressure,

examine ears and eyes and check reflex points with a reflex hammer.

Juniors and seniors in high school who have a 3.3 grade point average or higher and have an interest in medical careers are selected for the Forum. The students choose a session in Boston, the Houston-Galveston area, San Francisco or Washington D.C., and pay a fee to attend.

"Some of the things we did were hands on, and that's what I like."

Brad Strom
 Foothill High School senior

Brad Strom, a senior at Foothill High School in Santa Anna, Ca., said he enjoyed the A&M tour, but he wishes they could have spent more time at the College of Medicine.

"They covered topics I'm interested in," Strom said. "Some of the things we did were hands on, and that's what I like."

Saenz said the Forum is an opportunity to recruit top high school students for the A&M medical school.

Saenz said that during the 11-day Forum, the students could choose to visit one of the four medical schools in Texas: the A&M College of Medicine, the University of Texas at Houston Medical School, the Baylor College of Medicine or the University of Texas Medical School at Galveston.

"My goal was to make students go home and say they had the time of their lives at A&M," Saenz said. "I want them to make the other students who did not choose to visit A&M jealous."

Students write an evaluation of the tour after visiting A&M. Saenz said students who visited A&M in June had great things to say about their tour of A&M medical facilities.

Shannon Sterner, a senior at Dan River High School in Ringgold, Va., said she was interested in the A&M biochemistry program.

"I'm thinking about applying [to Texas A&M] because of the Forum," she said.

TODAY IN BATTALION

LIFESTYLES

Temp - not just for hippies anymore? Marijuana plant makes move to mainstream. See Page 3.

OPINION

Franklin: New hotel-convention center should not inflict unnecessary taxes. See Page 5.

ONLINE

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Aggies set sights on lieutenant governor's seat

Excellence, personal beliefs guide Perry

By ROBERT SMITH
 THE BATTALION

Agriculture Commissioner and former Texas A&M student Rick Perry has become a key figure in Texas government in recent years and says his personal beliefs are a part of his success.

"My philosophy is I believe in empowering individuals," Perry said. "I believe in excellence. I believe that it is very important that people have personal freedoms."

Perry, a Republican, said an educated mind may be his most important value.

"I highly admire and respect an educated mind," Perry said.

Perry said he knew he wanted to be an Aggie when he attended his first A&M football game.

"My Scout Master took us to an A&M-Southern Methodist University football game in the fall of 1958," Perry said.

"We spent the night that Friday night in the old Animal Science Pavilion. We went to the ball game, and the whole Aggie experience — I was sold."

Having grown up on a ranch, Perry decided he wanted to be a veterinarian.

Perry came to A&M in the summer of 1968. "In the fall, I was put in Squadron 6 because I wanted to be in the Air Force ROTC," Perry said. "We had 1 think 58 freshman in Squadron 6 and one, interestingly, by the name of John Sharp."

An Aggie will fill Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock's shoes if no other primary opponents announce a bid for the lieutenant governor's seat. Comptroller John Sharp and Agriculture Commissioner Rick Perry have said they will pursue the lieutenant governor's seat in 1998.

The lieutenant governor is the presiding officer of the Texas Senate and is traditionally one of the most powerful positions in state government.

Both Sharp and Perry graduated from Texas A&M, where they first met 25 years ago.

Perry, a former yell leader and Class of '72, graduated with a bachelor of science and became a pilot in the Air Force.

Sharp, a former student body president and Class of '72, graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in political science and served as a second lieutenant in the Army Reserve.



Rick Perry



John Sharp

Sharp traces success to time at University

By JOEY JEANETTE SCHLUETER
 THE BATTALION

If Texas Comptroller John Sharp is elected to the lieutenant governor's seat in the 1998 election, supporters may hear a "Whoop!" in his acceptance speech.

Sharp, a Democrat, has ties with Texas A&M dating back to his days in the Corps of Cadets in the early '70s. He served as student body president his senior year in 1972, and graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in political science.

Sharp said his experiences at A&M have benefited his political career and life.

"I look back at any amount of success in my life," Sharp said, "and I can find a lesson I learned from A&M. I owe everything to this school."

Sharp said leadership is the most valuable skill he learned at A&M.

"I advise all Aggies to participate in extracurricular activities because of the leadership you learn," he said.

"I'm a firm believer of putting academics first, but you should also get that second degree at A&M — leadership training."

His campaign against friend and former A&M student Rick Perry will be eventful, he said, but not as difficult as his campaign at A&M for student body president.

Please see PERRY on Page 6.

GRAPHIC: Ed Goodwin

Please see SHARP on Page 6.