

# THE BATT

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## TRAINED FOR TRAGEDY



A responder with Texas Task Force I locates volunteer victims buried under debris with help of search and rescue dogs.

Tanner Garza — THE BATTALION

Disaster City simulated a hurricane-induced decontamination scenario

By Wade Feielin

**O**n a cloudless 86-degree Saturday afternoon, screams could be heard echoing from the basement of a collapsed single family home as search-and-rescue teams got their bearings with time working against them.

The screams (from volunteers in makeup) and the home (staged as part of a simulation) are central to the notion tying the training exercise together — to best equip first responders, they must have the most realistic training possible.

Unstable walls, collapsed ceilings and roofs, mangled vehicles and various household items were the only remnants of the home, constructed to model damage from a tornado spawned from a hurricane.

Emergency personnel ranging from Hazmat teams to medical teams and military perused the pe-

rimeter, clad in white contamination suits and respirators with Rottweilers and Geiger counters by their side — their goal being to rescue as many people as possible in as little time as possible.

This is Disaster City. Built in 1998 in response to the Oklahoma City bombings, Disaster City serves to train responders using near-lifelike conditions. Texas Task Force One manager Jeff Saunders said this year's demonstration, performed Saturday, is based on a scenario that is trying to exercise urban search and rescue in a contaminated environment.

"We've got a little bit of chemical contamination that we would see from storm surge or heavy flooding," Saunders said. "And we also have a small radioactive source that's in that box sitting on the pile right there — that yellow tool box. There's a radiological source from Dr. Mariano's program over in nuclear science."

Emphasizing the importance of an orchestrated and timely response, Texas A&M Engineering

DISASTER CITY ON PG. 2



Lindsey Gawlik — THE BATTALION

Assistant news editor Jennifer Reiley has makeup applied to her forearm as a Disaster Day volunteer victim. As volunteers, Reiley and news editor Lindsey Gawlik, were "trapped" in a pile of rubble.

### VIEWS

## Disaster City from the 'victim' point of view

The Battalion editors recount their experiences volunteering

**T**o give a sense of the importance of Disaster City exercises, consider the fact that a group of first responders set to train at Disaster City Saturday were sent with their training exercise equipment to help out with the earthquake in Nepal.

Responders like Texas Task Force I and Utah Task Force I who train 10 minutes down the road from campus are the same men and women who save lives in real disasters like the one in Nepal that has killed more than 1,300 as of Sunday evening. Likewise, they are the people that citizens will look to when disaster strikes the United States.

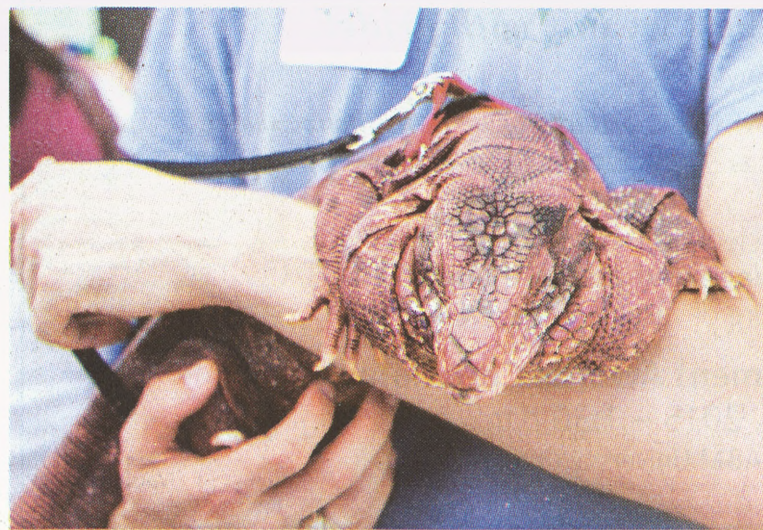
Brian Smith, training manager

at the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service, said representatives from the United Nations and Federal Emergency Management Agency attended the event. Smith also said there was talk of holding the exercises four to five times a year. When asked how Disaster City was able to recruit more than 100 volunteers to play victim for this exercise, Smith said, "This is Aggieland."

Among the crowd of volunteers, a number of whom were clad in A&M shirts, were *The Battalion's* assistant managing editor, Jennifer Reiley; news editor, Lindsey Gawlik; and managing editor, Aimée Breaux. Here's their take.

OPINION ON PG. 3

### VET SCHOOL



Tim Lai — THE BATTALION

The Vet School Open House included a petting zoo Saturday where visitors met various animals like Scarlet, the iguana seen above.

## Open house draws crowds of humans, animals alike

By Connor Smith

**▶** An open house showcased the College of Veterinary Medicine Saturday.

Texas A&M's veterinary school has been a university pillar for nearly a century, and its clinical impact throughout the industry is seen in its status as a top-eight vet school in the nation.

The school was established in 1916 by Dr. Mark Francis, who served as its first dean until he died in 1936. Dr. Francis was brought on with A&M by the Bureau of Animal Industry to study livestock diseases. At the time there was a major problem in the cattle and beef industry with tick fever. After researching the disease, Dr. Francis was able to diagnose and solve the tick fever problem.

Now, the school's veterinary program is best known for its clinical

impact, said director of student affairs Dr. Dan Posey.

"Eighty percent of our graduates go into clinical practice," Posey said. "When you look at ratings, we are in the top eight [veterinary schools] of the 34 that are in America — that's based on research and a lot of other things. Actually if they looked at our clinical program we would probably be in the top five."

Saturday the school opened its doors to allow the public a first-hand experience of its clinical program with the annual open house. The halls looked like something from Noah's Ark with dogs, snakes, tortoises and humans all crowded together.

The open house included tours of both the large and small animal clinics, presentations put on by

VET SCHOOL ON PG. 4

### SOFTBALL

## No. 1 Florida completes sweep of A&M

Aggies run-ruled in fifth inning as they drop their third game of the weekend

By Milkyas Gashaw

**▶** The No. 1 Florida Gators completed a three-game sweep Sunday of the Texas A&M softball team with a 9-1 victory in a five-inning run rule.

The No. 25 Aggies (34-17, 9-12 SEC) got on the board quickly Sunday with a solo home run from freshman Tori Vidales. The Aggies started freshman Kayla Ober on Sunday looking for a solid pitching performance against a Gator lineup that showed explosiveness in the first two games in the series. Head coach Jo Evans only received two innings out of Ober because the Gator bats got going early in the game, getting three early runs in the bottom half of the first and two more in the second.

Evans sent senior Rachel Fox and junior Katie Marks to the circle to stop the bleeding and slow down the Gator attack, but by that time the deficit was too great to overcome. The Gators (47-4, 16-4 SEC) strengthened their grip on the top spot in the country with a convincing sweep of the Aggies. The Aggies scored some runs off of a very talented pitching staff, but the Gator bats stepped up and helped their staff out, showing the balance of a top team. One bright spot for the Aggies was sophomore Celena Massey, who hit two home runs Saturday.

"I'm so proud of that kid, for how hard she's worked, for getting in the lineup and being a great



PROVIDED

Tori Vidales hit a home run during the Friday opener against the Florida Gators.

team player," Evans said. "She just works hard to help us win. She has just performed recently."

The Aggies come back home to play a midweek game against Texas State. First pitch is at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday.

### LAYNE'S CHALLENGE

## Run, bike, eat fried chicken



Tim Lai — THE BATTALION

Participating Aggies eat the first meal of the Layne's Challenge Saturday, which consists of running, eating chicken, biking and eating more chicken.