

JROTC Raider Team competes at Mountain Raider Rendezvous

By: SGM Keith Taylor
Rockcastle County High School's JROTC Raider Team traveled to McCreary County for their Annual Mountain Raider Rendezvous on Friday, October 4th through Sunday, October 6th. Those competing were A-Team's: Adam Stallworth, Justin Cornelius, Joe Husband, Ross McClure, Cory Canterbury, Josh Hayes, Andy Coffey and Jesse McCollum. B-Team consisted of: Sarah Steele, Jessica Toothman, Jeffrey Parker, Erika Toothman, Larry Mink, Michael Taylor, Chris Miller, Sam Isaacs, David French, Shane Foster and Josh Bell. Also competing were: Crystal Valerio, James Adams, Jason Daniels and Dustin Emerson. Also attending were: Mrs. Jenny Taylor, Major Jim McGuire and Sergeant Major Keith Taylor.

We left out of school Friday, the 4th after a morning of practice and the threat of strong winds and soaking rain for the weekend. The Raider team seemed excited about the bad weather. Although Friday's weather was terrible, the rest of the weekend was beautiful. We considered taking

the big cook tent, but decided to rough it in the open with only a tarp. The cadets managed to gather plenty of firewood even though it was raining. We had a big pot of chili and hotdogs for supper.

The next morning began at 5:30 a.m., with a quick breakfast in the dark. The team was out in the woods till after midnight last night, waiting to compete in the night compass course, an event that was delayed and rescheduled for later tonight. Most of the team is wet, from the sudden downpour that caught everyone by surprise at around two this morning. Right after chow the team leaders check all their members to ensure everyone has the required gear, to include a full canteen. The team then marches off at 7 a.m. to the first event of the day, the Expert Ranger Course.

The course calls for an eight-man team to carry a 120-pound log over a two-mile course, half down hill and half up hill. Halfway through the course, the team must low crawl through a deep and long mud hole. Most end up completely covered from head to feet in a thick coat of

nasty, stagnant mud. The team has put everything they have into the run and are exhausted. There's no time to rest though, they're already late for the next event. Their time was 22 minutes and 55 seconds, which placed them fourth out of 33 teams.

The next event is the One-Rope Bridge. Most of the teams' training time have gone into perfecting the knots and teamwork necessary to be competitive in this event. There's a new wrinkle added this year to the event. The team must first negotiate a one-rope bridge that is already in place prior to moving to the location where they emplace, cross, then dismantle their own bridge. The first crossing goes well, with six members crossing the bridge in well under a minute. The team moves to the next location and quickly lays out the equipment for their own bridge. On the signal from the judge, the team bursts into frantic activity. Everyone has a job to do. One member ties an end-of-line bowline in less than ten seconds then slams it into the waiting snap link of the far-side man, who immediately takes off in a wild sprint across a steep draw to the large tree that will be used for the far-side anchor. Meanwhile, two team members quickly tie a wireman's knot, inserting two snaplinks into the knot which will make it easier to untie later. Another team member attaches a third snaplink into the rope and runs around the nearside anchor, snapping into the loop of the wireman's knot. As soon as this is done (about 15 seconds), the knot is fed out over the draw as the far-side man pulls the rope tight. Once the team commander determines the knot is the proper distance from the near-side tree he shouts "WRAP" to the far-side man, who again bursts into frantic activity, wrapping the rope twice around the tree and securing it with two half hitches and a quick release. Even before the rope is completely secure he yells "PULL" as loud as he can, signaling the other seven members to

tighten the rope. They scramble up the other side, pulling the rope as tight as they can. The team commander yells, "PULL" three times before giving the command "WRAP." Again, everyone has a task to perform. One man runs forward and clamps both hands as hard as he can on the two sections of rope running back from the snap link, two others delay the rope against the tree as they run the rope twice around it. As soon as two turns have been made, one of the men forms a large bight in the rope and throws it over the tight portion of the rope then scrambles out of the way, as the near-side man secures the rope with two half hitches and a quick release. The other team members are lining up in order that they will cross. Again, before the knot is quite finished the near-side man yells "GO," as he pulls the quick release tight. The first man to cross is standing on the thigh of another team member with the rope ready to enter the snaplink gate. As soon as he hears GO, he slams the rope into the gate and immediately rotates under the rope, wraps his feet over the rope and pulls with everything he's got towards the far side. Before he's halfway across, another man is fastened on the rope and pulling hard to catch him. They're both dangling upside down, 20 feet over a rocky streambed. On reaching the other side, the first man is helped off the rope by the far-side man. When his feet hit the ground, he yells "OFF" signaling that another man can be attached to the rope on the other side. There are never more than two men on the bridge at any time. When the last man is across and his feet hit the ground, the far-side man yells "POP" signaling both himself and the near-side man to pull their quick release and untie their half hitches. The near-side man releases the snaplink on the wireman's knot and secures it to his quick seat, which is wrapped around his waist, and sprints to the far-side. As soon as he gets there, another team member attaches a snaplink onto the rope and scrambles straight up hill. Pulling the rope with him out of the stream bed. Two other team members snap into the two snaplinks which were tied into the wireman's knot and shove each other straight back, causing the wireman's knot to fall completely apart. The team commander has been monitoring everything. When he sees the rope is out of the "deadzone" and all knots have been untied he calls "TIME," signaling the judges to stop the time clock. After the judges have checked the rope and decided there are no penalties the time of two minutes and 21 seconds is announced. This is good enough for sixth place out of 33 teams.

We grab lunch back at camp before moving on to the next event "Cross Country Rescue." There is a line backed up at the next event, so we get a little bit of a break. The next event is a real winner. Across a steep up and down hill course, the eight-man team must carry the following items: A litter, with a 130-pound log,

two five-gallon water cans (40 pounds a piece), two 50-pound rucksacks and two 30-pound sand bags. At no time can any item touch the ground, except while the team negotiates a 30-foot low crawl under wire. The team must also negotiate a five-foot log wall. This event really pushes the teams' endurance. The final time for the event after a thirty second penalty is added, for touching the wire during the low crawl is 10 minutes and 12 seconds. This places the team eighth out of 33 teams.

Next event is the Army Physical Fitness Test. We hurry to the tents to change into shorts and running shoes before moving across the road.

The Army Physical Fitness Test measures strength, endurance and speed. Members perform the maximum amount of push-ups they possibly can in two minutes, followed by the maximum number of sit-ups in two minutes. These are followed by a two-mile run. The team puts everything they have into the event, but the days pace is starting to wear

(Cont. to A-9)



The "B" Team in action during the Rope Bridge Competition.



The RCHS JROTC Raider Team at Mountain Rendezvous.



Members of the "A" Team navigate the rope bridge.



The "A" Team during the Cross Country Rescue.



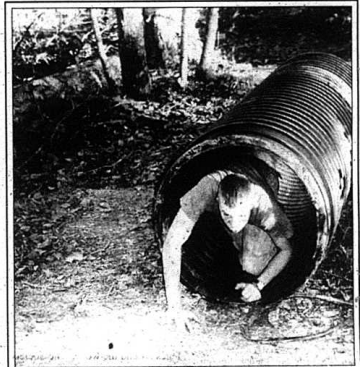
Adam Stallworth takes on the balance beam during the Obstacle Course.



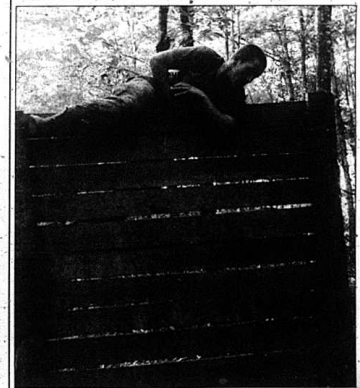
Sarah Steele, Jessica Toothman and James Adams participate in the Cross Country Rescue.



Cory Canterbury, Josh Hayes, Jesse McCollum and Andy Coffey participated in the Expert Ranger Course for the "A" Team.



Jesse McCollum in action during the Obstacle Course.



Andy Coffey goes over the wall during the Obstacle Course.



Joe Husband on the log roll during the Obstacle Course.