

# Command performances await Queens Guard

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NEW BRUNSWICK — Excitement is running high for members of the Rutgers University Queens Guard drill squad who will be performing for not one, but two European queens this summer.

The guard, a military-style drill team complete with bayonet tipped rifles, will be performing for Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands and her husband, Prince Claus, on Monday at the university.

They will leave a few days later for Great Britain where they will parade before Queen Elizabeth.

According to John Young, the guard executive officer, the squad members are "really excited" about the two royal appearances.

Monday's performance will be held on the Voorhees Mall for the members of the Dutch royal family as part of Rutgers celebration of its Dutch heritage.

During the trip to England, the team will participate in the prestigious Royal Tournament at Earl's Court in London and at the Royal Agricultural Show at Stoneleigh, Warwickshire.

Young, a senior political science and history major from Shrewsbury, described the nine-minute silent drill as filled with "tricky maneuvers." The students are equipped with 1903 A3 Springfield rifles with 16-inch bayonets.

According to the student, the Queens Guard, which was named after Queens College, Rutgers original name, is fairly unique among its peers because it is not associated with a Reserve Officer's Training Corp (ROTC) unit or other military organization.

The 25-year-old unit began as a part of the university's ROTC program but broke off in 1970 at the height of the Vietnam War when disenchantment with the military was at an all time high.

It is now an independent, student-run operation.

Students interested in joining the guard sign up during the fall activities fair which showcases extra-curricular activities offered by the university.

Those who want to join drill for two months before participating in a 'drill down' where they perform their practiced routine before the team commander and freshmen training officer. Out of the usual 30 students who signed up each September, about six make the final cut to become a Queens Guard member,



TNT staff photo by George Molnar

## On guard

John Young, a Rutgers University student and executive officer of the Queens Guard drill squad, gets in some last minute practice before Monday's exercise before Queen Beatrix and Prince Claus of the Netherlands, who will be visiting the university. The squad also expects to perform before England's Queen Elizabeth next month.

"We have engineers, physics, history, geology majors; one's going to go to med school," Young said, adding that only four of the 17 members are ROTC students.

"We look for someone who seems to be interested in what we are doing and not just going on the trips," Young said.

During the Christmas break, members of the drill squad practice their routines eight to 10 hours a day until they know them perfectly.

Although the precision drills look dangerous and cause audiences to gasp, they have become so automatic to the guardsmen that the peril has been diminished. During the past few years only a few cuts and bruises have been received after hundreds of hours of practice and performance.

The guard executive officer has been able to travel to Australia, Scotland, California and England as a Queens Guard member.

Last summer he spent time in London

arranging this summer's trip as part of his official duties.

The royal wedding of Lady Diana Spencer and Prince Charles took place while he was there so he is eagerly looking forward to the pageantry of the Royal Tournament and agricultural shows.

Queen Elizabeth is expected to attend the military tournament — which runs from July 14 to 31 — on July 27. The U.S. ambassador to the Court of St. James, Rutgers President Edward Bloustein and Provost Kenneth Wheeler, are also expected to attend, Young said.

The guardsmen will have the added treat of being able to step inside the gates of Buckingham Palace to watch the famed Changing of the Guard rather than stand on the crowded sidewalks like regular tourists.

A reception at the U.S. ambassador's residence is also planned.