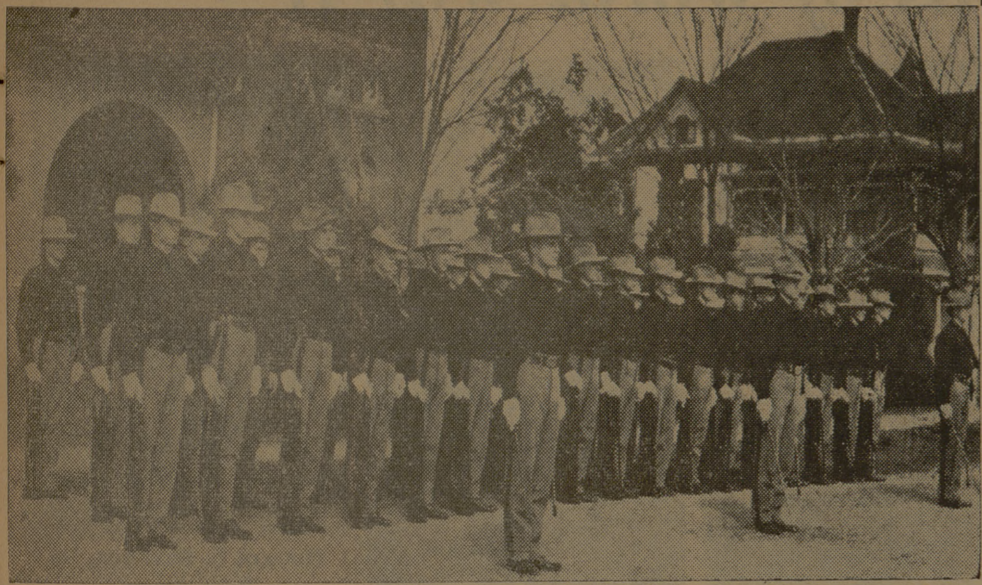


Ross Volunteers



These were the RV's of 1907—with the uniform of gray breeches, blue shirts, and big Stetson hats. According to contemporary observers, the apparel was "not too pleasing to the eye." For that reason, it was discarded for white duck later.

Ross Volunteers Organized As Crack Military Drill Team

By JIM KADEL

The occasion: the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the College last October 4th.

Over the loudspeaker came the announcement: "the Governor of the State of Texas." A 19-gun salute followed. And through the North facade of Kyle Field walked the state executive, flanked by a special guard, all members of the oldest organization on the campus—the Ross Volunteers.

This was the College's first chance to get a glimpse of its best drilled outfit dressed up in finery—white duck uniforms, gold and black epaulets—since last year. For some of the former students present, it had been a much longer time.

But they could remember, even the oldest of them, when the RV's and their famous weekend dances existed on the campus. They might have known the organization by another name—the Scott Volunteers, the Foster Guards, the Houston Rifles—because its name had been changed as many as four times.

But the basic purpose had remained the same: to band together the most military men in school into a crack drill team.

At the time of its organization in 1887, membership was limited to 40 cadets from the Senior and Junior classes. New members were accepted into the company by an election held early each year on the basis of military proficiency and popularity.

The RV Weekend, including three spectacularly decorated dances, quickly became one of the three big events of the Spring social season.

The most beautiful girls of Texas were reputed to attend each year, and the RV of those days prided himself more on his selection for the weekend than anything else. According to The Olio, the first annual ever to be published at A&M and forerunner of AggieLand '50, the RV Weekend was the most grandiose of the year:

"The features that go to brighten the existence of the Company are these: each session at the opening of Spring, when all is bright and gay, the Company gives its grand and delightful hop; where pleasant faces from different parts of the State are gathered and charmed by sweet music which lends perfection to the charm of the dances; where the decorations of sabers, swords, guns, flowers, and green shrubs glisten and sparkle in the brilliancy . . ."

The description even gets more flamboyant, "and the pleasant walks among the laughing trees that is wooed so softly by the gentle zephyrs inviting you for a quiet stroll in the streaming, gladdening moonlight."

The first night was the Queen's Ball; this was perhaps the most elaborate of all dances. Amidst the splendor of the ballroom the King and Queen were enthroned by a special court chosen from the ranks of the Company.

On the second day a banquet was held for both active and ex-members of the Volunteers and their guests. The second night was devoted to the RV Hop. And on the third evening a

Corps Dance was held for everyone. Sometimes even an afternoon dance was included making the total come to four such events in three days. The "white shoes," as they came to be called, probably wished they had not shoes at all after such a hectic weekend.

Each year's Company had a new sponsor, preferably one of the prettiest girls in Bryan. She would usually take it upon herself to oblige the compliment of her selection with a series of receptions honoring the Volunteers. One of the receptions is described in the Commencement Number of the 1897 Battalion:

"The president's mansion was tastefully decorated for the occasion with the choicest flowers of our balmy southland, bright lights gleamed and flashed like sparkling sands by a summer's sea, and the musical laughter and merry conversation of beautiful and accomplished ladies made the occasion . . ."

But the members weren't gaining fame merely for their socials. In the same issue of The Batt appeared the following notation concerning an RV drill:

"A drill of the Ross Volunteers followed later. It is needless to say that the Rosses maintained their fine reputation. They gave in addition to the usual exercises of the manual and bayonet a gun drill by music."

The Olio of 1895 described the organization as "the pick of the school, the best drilled of the Corps, the admiration of all." After World War I, some non-military students were elected, but in 1923 the company decided to make non-military students and those not making "B" in military science ineligible for membership. The number of members at the present time is limited to 125.

As stated before, membership in the company was limited to Juniors and Seniors, but an exception to this custom had to be made in 1918 on account of the small number of Juniors and Seniors enrolled. Several Freshmen and Sophomores became members.

Before 1891 the name of the organization was the Scott Volunteers in honor of Colonel T. M. Scott, who was at the time business manager of the College. In 1891 when ex-Governor Lawrence Sullivan Ross became president of the College, the name of the company was changed to Ross Volunteers.

Following the death of President Ross in 1898, the name of the organization was changed to Foster Guards, again honoring the new president of the College, L. L. Foster. Houston Rifles was the name selected during President Houston's administration.

In 1902, H. H. Harrington, son-in-law of Governor Ross, became president, and a movement was started to name the company the Harrington Rifles. However, at the request of Harrington, the Company again assumed the name of Ross Volunteers.

First uniform of the Company was of white duck with gold ornaments. The headgear was a tin helmet which closely resembled those worn by British soldiers of the '90's.

For the most part, the uniform has always been of white duck; however, in 1907 gray breeches, blue shirts, and big Stetson hats were worn. This type of dress was not so appealing to the eye, and therefore, the white duck uniform again became correct.

In the last 63 years, the Ross Volunteers have made many trips to many sections of the country to perform in drills and honor guards. Perhaps one of the most publicized was a particular trip to Houston under command of Captain E. J. Kyle.

There they competed in drill against the best drill teams in the country. They won first place in the contest by eliminating the Houston Light Guards, who at this time were considered the best-drilled team in the United States.

The initiation during the '30's had become famous with some and infamous with others. On the coldest Sunday morning the Senior members could pick, they got down their willows, lined up on Kyle Field, and ran the newly elected Junior members through. This sight, peculiar as it was, drew spectators from far and near since it was open to the public.

That afternoon a private initiation was held in the AH Pavilion, and that night the formal ceremonies took place followed by a banquet at which the King and sergeants were elected to be in the Queen's Court during RV holidays.

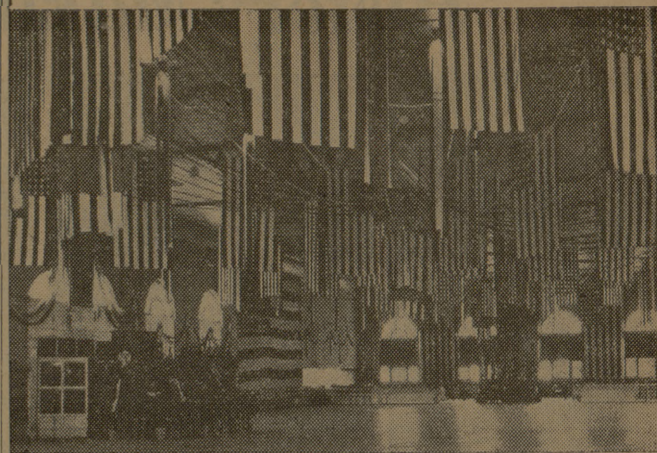
Commencement time, tending to end all student activities until a future date, furnishes the background for the finale of the RV Company. An exhibition or final drill is presented for the benefit of the many visitors. The organization was unable to present its annual show last year because of inclement weather.

Just like any regular outfit, at the end of the year, the captain is presented a gift from the Company in recognition of his services and leadership throughout the year. Commanding officer this year is C. C. Taylor of the Corps Staff.

After existing for more than 63 years, it is only natural that the organization has acquired numerous nicknames.

Called everything from "waiters" to "milkmen" because of their white uniforms, members of the Company laugh and say their fellow cadets are just jealous. They know they're the oldest organization on the campus and, besides, they like "being an RV."

RV BALL



Hundreds of American flags decorated the ballroom in this picture taken just before one of the notorious RV dances in Sbis. In an hour or so, white-coated cadets were to whirl their beautiful partners around the dance floor to the musical accompaniment of some waltz-time number.

1906 Cadets Offered Chance 'Live in Tents'

"President Harrington called the left in the rooms would do better corps to the chapel last week for the purpose of learning how many of the cadets would prefer living in tents to staying in the crowded rooms of the barracks."

Since very few of the boys showed preference for the tents the president decided to let the students continue as they are in the dormitories.

Perhaps if the boys had thought over the matter, more of them would have embraced Mr. Harrington's proposition.

We believe that if about fifty of the boys would move into the tents those boys who would be

Experience teaches us that three or more boys in one room cannot do any very good work; one of them is continually shuffling about and usually has some interesting experience of the day to relate.

Another point in favor of the tents is the influence that this news of the cadets living under canvas because of the congested condition of the barracks would have upon the State legislature.

This move, we think, would influence the trustees of the public funds to make an appropriation for a new A&M dormitory."

Congratulations to Texas A&M

On Its 75th Anniversary

FREESE AND NICHOLS

Consulting Engineers

Fort Worth, Texas

With all best wishes

from

W. B. Francis, '15

E. L. Jarrett, '16

Charles King, '32

E. L. Jarrett, Jr., '43

of

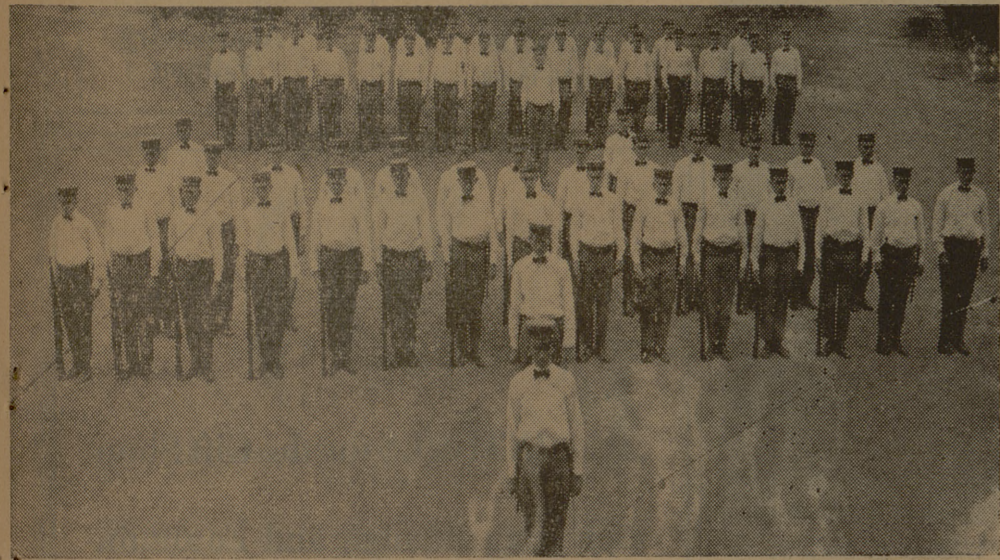
GEIGY COMPANY, INC.

Southwest Division

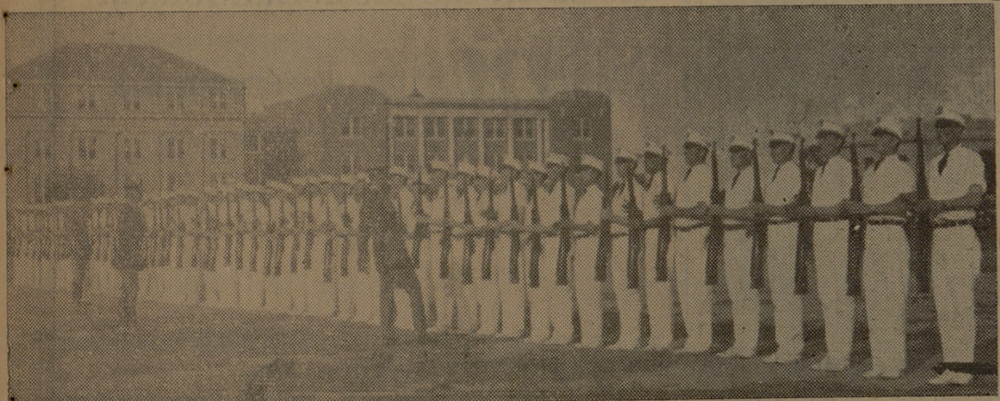
Complete Line of Cotton Insecticides
And Other Agricultural Chemicals



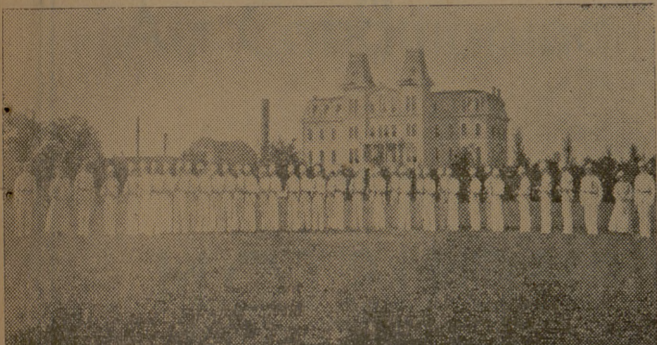
Geigy Company, Inc. McGregor, Texas



Out of their dark shirts now, the Ross Volunteers clad in white shirts and flat top caps look a little like a company of "mail carriers" about to be inspected.



In full whites with their rifles at "present arms" the Volunteers look much like they do today. The rolled ties and dark ties have been dropped for the present day "crips" white jacket.



The company in the '90s—this is one of the earliest pictures on file of the outfit. To the extreme right and extreme left of the picture can be seen two female sponsors. They were usually chosen from the prettiest girls in Bryan.

The
Battalion
75th Anniversary
Edition
MILITARY SECTION
PAGE THREE

Congratulations and Best Wishes To A&M College on its 75th Anniversary

We also Wish to Congratulate The College
on The Selection of Dr. M. T. Harrington as
Twelfth President of A&M College of Texas.

Conway & Co.

103 N. Main

Bryan

Boy AND TOYS Today!
MAN AND MACHINES
Tomorrow!

This little fellow says emphatically... "These are My Toys"... It's natural for him to say this, and he's the capitalist of tomorrow... He may decide to be tomorrow's farmer or business executive or almost anything he wants to be. But that's not the most important thought right now... This is... He can be the capitalist of tomorrow because our competitive enterprise system says he will be free to work where and when he will, to save, to invest, to spend. He may invest to his own advantage and that makes work for others. For there is now, and must continue to be, incentive! An incentive that is realistic... that creates... that helps produce more. We at Minneapolis-Moline hope to do business with this young American. We hope to help him grow... and in turn his growth will help our growth... and our growth will again create more and better opportunities for more people. The world has never known a better system or plan of progress for all mankind. Let's guard this way of life... our American Heritage. It's been mighty good to a lot of people. Our part in the American parade of progress is the manufacture of a complete line of Modern Farm Machines, Visionlined Tractors and Power Units for modern farming and industry. Sold and Serviced by MM Dealers and Distributors Everywhere

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