

First In A Series

What Are Basic Division Purposes, Accomplishments, Faults

TODAY The Battalion presents the first in a series of articles designed to give its readers an insight into the purposes, activities, problems and accomplishments of the Basic Division during its initial year of operation at A&M.

Today's installment, written at the request of The Battalion by John R. Bertrand, dean of the Basic Division, presents some of his views as to what has and will be done, and explains the objective of his Division.

Later installments will present and discuss results of a questionnaire distributed to Basic Division students and cadet officers. Comments and suggestions made by various members of the college staff will also be presented.

Research, writing, and presentation of this series was accomplished with a twofold purpose in mind:

To provide Battalion readers, particularly A&M students, with a report on Basic Division progress.

And to benefit A&M College through an objective "look" at the work of one of its major departments by presenting both the accomplishments and the shortcomings of all phases of the program, as we have been able to determine them.

Battalion staffmen working on this survey series have received excellent co-operation from all members of the Basic Division staff. Particularly do we appreciate the efforts of Dean Bertrand to provide us with any and all information we desired and for devoting valuable time to the preparation of this first article.—The Editor.

By JOHN R. BERTRAND Dean of the Basic Division

IN LESS than two weeks the first academic year of operation for the Basic Division will be over. During this year freshman students and upperclass cadet officers assigned to work with them, the student body as a whole, the college faculty and staff, the military counselors, the Basic Division counselors and others have contributed to the progress that has been made.

On many counts, the Basic Division has fallen short of its goals. On others, it has found that changed objectives have been desirable. On still other counts, strides have been made toward better meeting the needs of entering students.

At the present time the Basic Division is engaged in an intensive self-evaluation of its program and of its professional personnel. By looking back at some of its failures and accomplishments this year, by an analysis of the work of the members of its staff, by seeking critical analyses from various persons who have closely observed the program of the Basic Division, we feel that it will be possible to improve its program during the coming years.

Evaluation Program Begun

This program of self-evaluation began at the end of the Fall semester when all freshmen were asked to fill out a schedule that was designed to point out the strong points and the weaknesses of Freshman Orientation 101. Students were instructed not to sign their names to the schedules with the hope that they would be completely frank in their appraisal. (They were!)

On April 25th, the second step was taken in the evaluation process when all junior and senior cadet officers assigned to work with freshman students this year met for over an hour to make contributions to this overall evaluation program. Again an unsigned schedule was used in order that similar points could be given consideration by all cadet officers, but in addition, a general question asking for suggestions about the Basic Division program made it possible for the person filling out the schedule to emphasize the points which he considered to be most important.

On May 3, all Basic Division students who had Basic classes that day, were asked to give their reactions to various aspects of the Basic Division program and to the professional counseling staff, to the military counselors assigned to the Basic Division and to the cadet officers assigned to the Eighth Regiment. Each of the approximate 380 Basic Division students who were contacted also was asked to give his suggestion for the overall improvement of the Basic Division program.

Counselors, Courses Rated

During the week following May 7, students who had had two or more conferences with a Basic Division counselor,

The Battalion

Lawrence Sullivan Ross, Founder of Aggie Traditions "Soldier, Statesman, Knighly Gentleman"

The Battalion, official newspaper of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, is published by students five times a week during the regular school year. During the summer terms, The Battalion is published four times a week, and during examination and vacation periods, twice a week. Days of publication are Monday through Friday for the regular school year, Tuesday through Friday during the summer terms, and Tuesday and Thursday during vacation and examination periods. Subscription rates \$5.00 per year or \$5.00 per month. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Entered as second-class matter at Post Office at College Station, Texas, under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.

Member of The Associated Press

Represented nationally by National Advertising Service Inc., at New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.

The Associated Press is entitled exclusively to the use for republication of all news dispatches credited to it or not otherwise credited in the paper and local news of spontaneous origin published herein. Rights of republication of all other matter herein are also reserved.

News contributions may be made by telephone (4-5444) or at the editorial office, Room 201, Goodwin Hall. Classified ads may be placed by telephone (4-5324) or at the Student Activities Office, Room 209, Goodwin Hall.

CLAYTON L. SELPH, DAVE COSLETT... Co-Editors John Whitmore, Dean Reed... Managing Editors Andy Anderson, Bob Hughtson... Campus Editors Fred Walker... Sports Editor Joel Austin... City Editor Vivian Castleberry... Women's Editor

Today's Issue

Dean Reed... Managing Editor Fred Walker... Sports News Editor Allen Pengelly... City News Editor

T. M. Fontaine, Carter Phillips... Editor-in-Chief Allen Pengelly... Assistant City Editor Leon McClellan, Jack Fontaine, Ed Holder, Bryan Spencer, Bob Venable, Dale Wainston, See Landrum, Frank Davis, Phil Snyder, Art Giese, Crispy Orth, James Fuller, Leo Wallace, W. H. Dickens, Fig Newton, Joe Price, Pete Hermann, Wesley Mason, B. F. Roland, Ivan Yantis, Sid Ragsdale, Bill Aaberg, Ide Trotter, John Hildebrand, Chuck Neighbors, Bob Seleck, Bill Strich, Curtis Edwards, Howard Heard... Staff Writers Jimmy Ashlock, Joe Blanchette, Ray Holbrook, Joe Hollis, Pat LeBlanc... Sports Staff Writers Sam Molinary, Bob Alderdice... Staff Photographers Sid Abernathy... Page Make-up Dick Kelly... Club Publicity Co-ordinator Joe Gray... Photo Engraving Shop Manager Tom Fontaine, Johnny Lancaster, Charles McCullough, R. R. Peoples, R. D. Witter... Photo Engravers Arthur Fesderick... Advertising Manager Russell Hagena, Bob Haynie... Advertising Representatives

during the year were asked to rate him and make suggestions to him about the way that he could improve his work with students. Schedule forms were used on May 3 and during the week of May 7 to guide the students sufficiently to permit each student to consider comparable points in addition to a general question designed to obtain suggestions for improvement. These schedules were again not signed by the students who furnished the information.

Each student taking one of the various Basic Division second semester courses has either already had or will have this week the opportunity to evaluate the course he has been taking and to make suggestions about improving it.

At the request of and in cooperation with the head of one of the departments which comes in contact with a sizeable number of freshman students, both cadet officers and freshman students were given the opportunity to make suggestions about specific academic courses at the same time that they evaluated the Basic Division program and personnel. These evaluation sheets have been passed on to the heads of the respective subject matter departments and will undoubtedly be of much assistance to the teachers concerned.

Battalion Given Information

After the Basic Division staff had started its self-evaluation, it was learned that The Battalion staff was also interested in an objective evaluation of and report on the Basic Division. In order to assist The Battalion in getting a cross-section view of the reactions to the entire Basic Division program, all completed schedules other than those on specific academic courses have been made available to the Battalion staff. In addition, a numerical tabulation of totals for each of the evaluation efforts has been furnished to The Battalion.

The Basic Division professional staff is now engaged in an interpretation of the results of each approach to an objective evaluation. This interpretation has not been available to The Battalion since it is not finished at the present time. It is also better in an objective evaluation that impartial persons make interpretations to others who are interested. It is in this connection that members of the Basic Division staff are extremely pleased that The Battalion has made additional investigations both with cadet officers and with freshmen students.

No member of the Basic Division staff has seen the series of articles on the Basic Division which has been prepared by The Battalion and from others, because in this way it will be able to improve this new program that has every right, as well as a great need, to be successful. While congratulations will make all the staff feel good, the real contribution to the building of a sound program will be from constructive criticisms.

Program Valuable Here

In order that there can be a common departure point for all readers of this series of articles, The Battalion has asked that frame of reference be stated for the program that has been carried on in the Basic Division. A&M is the first higher institution in Texas to establish the plan which we know as the Basic Division.

A plan such as that embodied by the Basic Division would have little reason for existence in an institution which was concerned solely with the students' intellectual development. It has much reason and justification in a school such as A&M where we regard the student as a complete individual and not merely as an intellect.

We are very much concerned with his scholastic progress, but we are also concerned with his total development. The testing movement has made possible quantitative evidence of individual differences in scholastic ability achievements, vocational interests and personality traits.

It has pointed out the existence of many types of aptitudes and abilities, only one of which is scholastic ability. In the light of known individual differences, it is necessary that the student be studied individually and as completely as is possible. Such a study involves an accumulation of information covering a student's background, abilities, interests, achievements, personal characteristics, physical condition, study habits, living and study conditions, social development, and other numerous points.

Planned Program of Guidance

In the Basic Division our objective is to give the first year college student sufficient supervision to aid him in the transition from high school to college study and to help him adjust to college life.

We want to make available to every student assigned to the Basic Division the benefits of a planned program of educational and vocational guidance, administered by professionally trained personnel, so that he may make an intelligent choice of course of study and related school activities.

We want to furnish the student who has not decided upon a course of study an opportunity to gain some insight into the educational requirements of the various curricula. We are striving to furnish aid to the student who is in need of assistance in the development of general study skills or in specific subject areas.

Our goal, insofar as the degree granting schools are concerned, is to supply the various schools of the college with a selected group of students qualified to pursue the training necessary for professional competency and mature citizenship.

Division Is 'Means to End'

It should be kept in mind by everyone that the Basic Division is a service division—a means to an end, and not an end in itself. It is a means to end of better serving the needs of students and society. It is a means to the end of better prepared students for the various schools and the departments within those schools. It is a means for aiding the students to decide upon the fields for which they are best fitted—best fitted by aptitude, by preparation, by opportunity, and by interest.

Constantly in the forefront of all must be the thought that the Basic Division cannot separate itself from the interests and the staffs of the subject matter departments of the college and that it cannot and should not supplant the work of the real core of any college—the classroom teacher.

Changes of Emphasis

It is my feeling that much progress has been made this

year, but I do not wish to dwell on that point. It does seem desirable, however, to mention seven areas which those of us on the Basic Division staff now know will receive different emphasis next year.

Less leniency will be shown to the student who makes poor grades because of poor attitude in class and poor attitude toward regular attendance of class.

A more concentrated effort will be made to get qualitative reports from class room teachers and in soliciting their aid in an early identification of students who are in need of personal or academic assistance.

An in-service training program for academic advisers, originally planned for his first year of operation, will get underway.

A Basic curriculum will be available to students who have not decided upon their degree objective. (This has been publicized to prospective students and an estimated twenty per cent of the accepted applicants for September have indicated their desire for this curriculum during their first semester here.)

There will be a shift in emphasis from the group guidance program of the various Basic courses toward more individual conferences and counseling. This quite likely may mean making these Basic courses optional for the student during his second semester. This will mean more individual testing for students who have not been helped with the new group tests.

The battery of tests given at the beginning of New Students' Week will be changed in order that the needs of entering students can be more nearly met.

Systematic and regular conferences will be held with the junior and senior cadet officers in order that the Basic Division staff and the cadet officers may have a common understanding of their mutual problems.

New Educational Achievement

I want to close this report by quoting the ending statement of a talk which was made on September 7, 1950 to cadet officers assigned to work with freshman students this year. "Many decisions are yet to be made. Many mistakes have been made and are yet to be made by the Basic Division staff. The thought which I hope all of us will keep in mind is that this is a challenging educational experiment which has every right to succeed. All of us must... continue... this experiment with an open mind, ready to make changes in the program when experience justifies the soundness of these changes. The Basic Division staff expects, and knows that it

already has, the complete cooperation of the staff, students, former students, and other friends of the A&M College of Texas. All of us working together are pushing boldly toward a new educational achievement here at A&M."

ATTENTION

ARMY and AIR FORCE GRADUATES!

We now have in stock the NEW OFFICER'S GUIDE. This new volume brings up to date the valuable features of its predecessors, and constitutes a treasure chest of helpful information and guidance.

Officers of all grades and length of service, on active or inactive duty, recognize the value of having THE OFFICER'S GUIDE available for ready reference and wise counsel. Half a million officers have used this book in its many editions. THE OFFICER'S GUIDE is not, as supposed by many individuals, a guide designed solely for junior officers. True, most junior officers do acquire copies early in their career as there is no substitute for this reliable and ever ready source of helpful information. However, many experienced officers of senior grade with many years of service find THE OFFICER'S GUIDE a highly useful and time saving reference.

The officer's family will also benefit by reading this comprehensive volume. Selected sections such as Army Posts and Stations, Foreign Service and Life in Oversea Commands, Customs of the Service, The Code of the Army, and Leadership help to orient your family on the military way of life. To a surprising degree the career of an officer is influenced by his wife. She can contribute most to his success if she is fully informed as to the Army's codes, requirements, customs, and opportunities.

This new edition is in tune with the situation of today and tomorrow. Considerable revision has been accomplished to incorporate important changes in regulations.

Don't get left out, come in today and get your copy today, we have only a limited stock.

The Exchange Store

"Serving Texas Aggies"

IBALIFER SOCIETY INDUCTS NEW MEMBERS



THESE MEN are all recent additions to the progressive and expanding Ibalifer Society. The Society is neither civic nor social but was organized for the exclusive benefit of its own membership. Qualification rules are simple and dues are nominal, but the reward for participation is great. Membership in the Society is limited—and exclusive!—but the limit has not yet been reached. Those

interested in trying for membership are urged to present their qualifications in person at the Society's business office at the North Gate or request one of the above members to sponsor him for membership. The slogan adopted for the current membership drive is: "I'm - a - lifer in the Ibalifer"

LFL ABNER

What's Buzzin' Cuzzin'?

By Al Capp

