

The first 100 years

Silver Taps: Old Main, 1898

By DON MIDDLETON
and
JOHN ADAMS

In the stillness of the night the steady approach of the Ross Volunteers is heard by all who stand in respect for their fallen comrades. The quiet is shattered by a twenty-one gun salute and the mellow notes of taps — Silver Taps.

This most sacred of Aggie traditions is the one we hope we do not have to observe with any frequency. The unique ceremony, relatively unchanged through the years, has remained dear to all Aggies. Among the masses of students and the bustle of university life, the individual as a comrade in spirit is not forgotten.

The Silver Taps ceremony was first held in 1898 in front of Old Main, where the Academic Building stands today. Until 1912 when this massive building burned, the "Farmers", as the students were known then, would pause a few moments in memory of deceased cadets. With the playing of taps all was quiet campus-wide in honor of the student.

After 1912, Silver Taps was held in front of Goodwin Hall and at other locations on campus. The Academic Building was completed in 1914, and with the formal dedication of the Ross Statue in 1919, Silver Taps was moved back to the vicinity of the main flag pole.

Students, on the night after word was received of a cadet's death, would gather silently in the dark of the evening. The Corps bugler then blew the notes of taps.

Before long, notices were posted at the base of the flagpole giving the name, hometown and date of death of the Aggie, as the students became known in the mid 1920's. The flag was lowered to half-mast throughout the day.

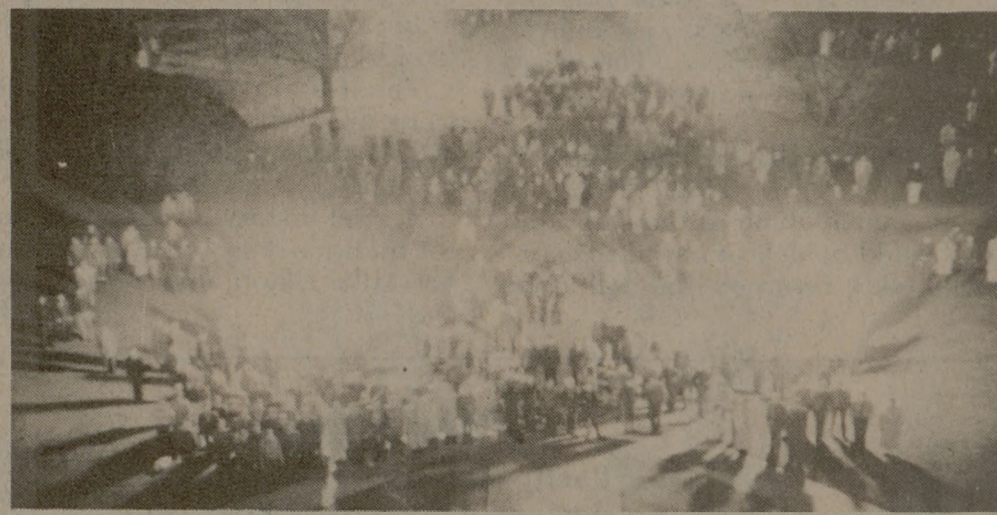
In 1930 Colonel R. J. Dunn, the director of the Aggie Band, composed a special arrangement of taps to be played by two buglers. At this time the buglers mounted the rotunda of the Academic Building to play.

Soon, the notes of Silver Taps were followed by the now-familiar

21 gun salute. In the still night air the crack of the rifle volleys echo throughout the campus followed by the rush of wind as birds around the Academic Building fly from their tree-top perches. Their flight and the silence that ensues leaves those who stand with a feeling that the departed Aggie is not alone.

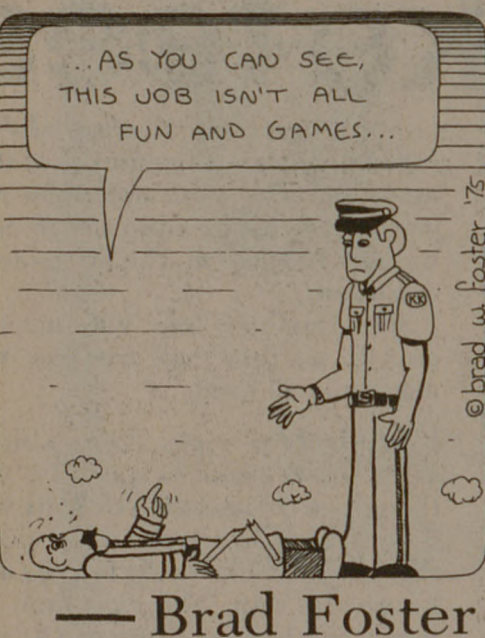
As the years passed, the number of buglers was increased to six. Three times, soft and sad, they play the solemn notes of taps. With the last note, the students quietly go their separate ways.

Silver Taps will be held tonight for Steven Ray, Steven McGuire and Toby Gote.



Silver Taps in 1935, with lights on to take the photograph. Courtesy of University Archives.

Aggiemoons



American Cancer Society
This space contributed by the publisher.



Listen Up

Equal rights for bikers!

Editor:

I would like to defend myself as one of those hated bicyclists mentioned in your article "Dodge Those Bikes!" (Sept. 5) That "two-wheeled terror" is the only means of transportation for off-campus students, since there are no parking spaces for cars.

The bicyclist's biggest problem is pedestrians: those who do not look ahead anywhere but the ground in front of them; those that walk four abreast; those that stop dead in their tracks to form a chit-chatting roadblock. I can't begin to count the number of times I have been hit by a pedestrian and thrown in a heap.

Bicyclists receive little more respect from cars. We are expected to follow traffic rules, yet we are not given equal rights on the streets. There is no such thing as a left turn for a biker.

Bicycles, especially 10-speeds, are hard to maneuver through erratic walkers and around sharp curves. Hand brakes do not work as well as human feet or power brakes. Often the ground is out of reach from the seat of a 10-speed, making sudden stops difficult. On wet or muddy pavement, bikes easily skid out from under the rider, and brakes become useless.

Curbs are a major problem: few bikers bang their expensive 10-

speeds over them, but must dismount at every curb. There are not enough bike racks for this most logical form of transportation, and no place to hide, for the sidewalks belong to walkers, and the streets belong to the cars.

My bicycle is my only mode of transportation here at A&M, my most valued possession. It is all I've got to get to 8 o'clock classes on those freezing, rainy mornings. My bike and I demand equal rights with pedestrians and motorists.

Laura Holmes

Surprise help

Editor:

This week I was a victim of the

confusion and misunderstanding surrounding the distribution of student football tickets. To make a long story short, I didn't get my tickets when I was entitled to.

I called the ticket office expecting to get a "sorry-there's-nothing-we-can-do" answer. However, much to my surprise, the ticket office manager, Mrs. Euleta Miller, apologized for the mistake and offered to take care of it. She took time to find me tickets for the game and insure that I was satisfied.

I'm glad there are people like Mrs. Miller here. She restored my faith that students still count at TAMU.

Bob Kingsbery

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