



Battalion photo by Ken Herrera
Band members practice marching to the sound of their own special music.

Playing not all play

By MARGIE SANTAMARIA
It was once said that the Texas Aggie Band has never lost a halftime performance. Agree or disagree but the fact remains that a lot of work goes on before they perform on that gridiron-sized stage.

"All the work you go through pays off on those Saturdays when the announcer says, 'Now forming at the north end of Kyle Field... the Fight'n Texas Aggie Band,'" Mark Rand, a sophomore drummer said. "The biggest thrill is if a freshman can stay past the first game and hear 40,000 people yell at the top of their voices and know that some of them are yelling for you," Rand said.

Being in the Aggie Band is like going through boot camp and trying to go to college at the same time, Rand said. In order to be successful in both areas (band and school) you've got to have discipline, he said.

"We really don't have as much time to goof around as some people think," Charles Fields, alto saxophonist, said. Bandsmen drill from 5-6 p.m. five days before the game and at 7:30 a.m. on the morning of the game, Fields said. Sometimes the band drills during an off week, he added.

Lt. Col. Joe T. Haney, director of the band, has written about 30 drills during his six years with the Aggie Band. A drill has never been used twice, Haney said.

"It is tradition for each of the three drum majors to write one half time drill," Bruce Hamilton, head drum major, said.

Once a drill is written the band tries it out, Hamilton said. First they march without their instruments, then add the drums, and fi-

nally drill with all the instruments.

"We usually learn the drill in one or two days," Hamilton said. The following day the associate band director, Major Joe K. McMullen, and the assistant band director, Jim Ramsey, help Haney polish the drill," Hamilton said.

When the band travels to other campuses it is usually well received, but there are some exceptions. Rodney Boehm, commanding officer of the artillery band said.

"For example, during our recent visit to Lubbock we were booed so loud we could hardly hear our own commands," he said.

"Every bandsman is here because he wants to be," Haney said. "There is no music school at A&M and I would assume this is why there has never been money appropriated for band scholarships."

Once a student enters the band he is placed by the three band directors according to musical ability, Haney said. Members must become members of the Corps of Cadets and have had some high school band experience, Haney said.

There are approximately 320 students in the band, including alternates.

Most Aggies are familiar with the term "B.Q." but probably don't know where it came from. Years ago the band was combined with the corps instead of having their own outfit like they do now, Rand said. He explained that conflicts evolved when band members couldn't participate in their outfits' functions due to band obligations. The term

"B.Q." or "band queer" came mostly from sarcasm because bandsmen got out of corps activities and replaced them with band activities.

They started calling us "B.Q.s" and we started calling them "corps turds" or "C.T.s," Rand said.

Upperclassmen in the band have privileges that are denied to freshmen and sophomores. For example, during a football game it is not an underclassman's privilege to watch the opposing team's cheerleaders. Also, about five minutes before the band leaves the stands for half time, freshmen and sophomores are required to concentrate on the drill with their heads down.

Upholding the Aggie tradition is generally not a problem for band members but there is one exception. Kissing your date after a touchdown is not always easy, Rodney Boehm, artillery band senior commanding officer, said. "Band dates have it hard," he said.

"If the Aggies score while we're at the end of the field before half time, our dates have to wait until after half time to be kissed.

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