

Fightin' Texas Aggie bonfire

It stands as a symbol of the spirit that can ne'er be told

Story and photos by John Makely

Texas A&M bonfire is scheduled to go up in flames tonight, warming not only the cold night air but also the Aggie desire to "Beat the hell outta t.u." in the annual Thanksgiving day football game against the University of Texas.

Thousands of Aggies have worked for nearly eight weeks, cutting the oak trees and building the bonfire, which sits on Duncan Field.

During the last week before the fire's lit, students work one of two shifts from either 6 p.m. to midnight or midnight to 6 a.m. hauling, stacking and wiring the logs to the centerpole.

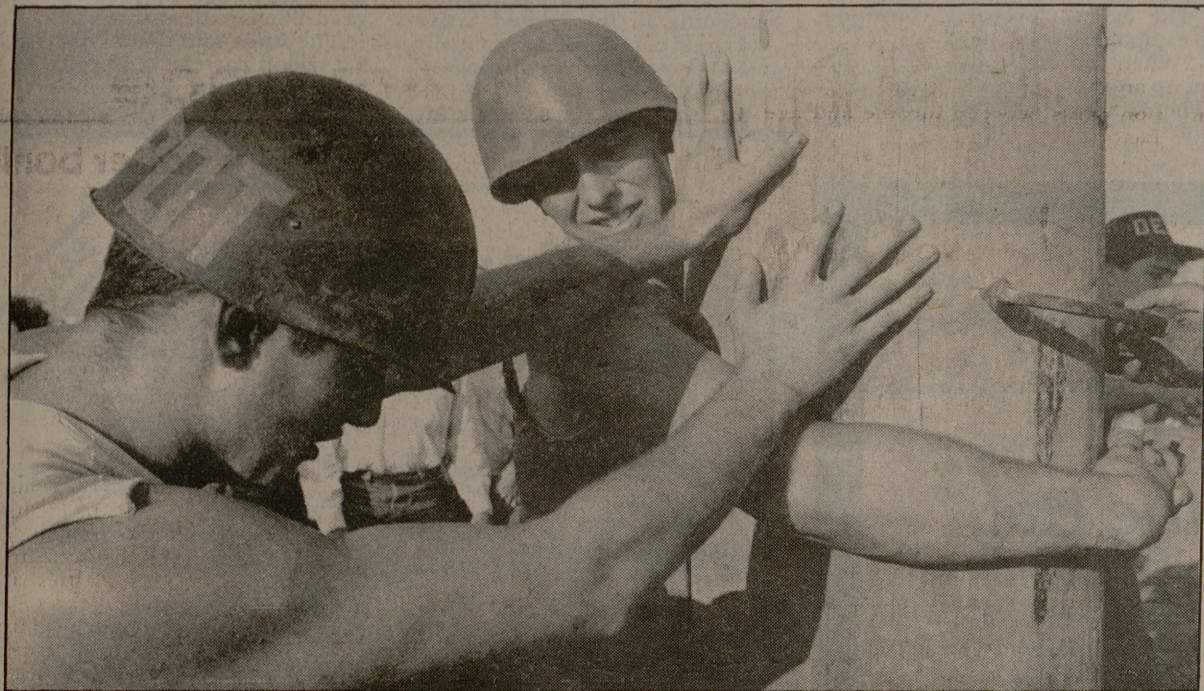
Bonfire cut started Oct. 5 just outside of Roan's Prairie and netted about 9,000 trees. On Oct. 30, the centerpole was raised, and crews began the process of wiring the logs to it.

The stack stands 55 feet above the ground when finished. This height limit was set by the City of College Station to prevent students from attempting another 109-foot bonfire such as the one built in 1961.

The 45-foot diameter stack will be topped off Tuesday afternoon with the burnt orange outhouse, which has been called a t.u. frathouse, complete with an Austin city limits sign donated by an Austin sign company.

Later, just before the redpots lead the band around stack, a crew from the Texas A&M Fireman's Training School will spray 500 gallons of diesel fuel on the stack. They try to ensure an even burn.

Unfortunately after all this action and a little rain, Duncan Field is usually on the muddy side, so you may want to wear your rubber boots.



Clockwise from top:
 • Senior redpot Brian Lehne (left) and junior redpot Steve Lawton go over stack procedures during a break.
 • Tightening the line on the perimeter poles is a greasy job.
 • Cadets in Squadron 16 carry a log to the trucks at the cutting site.
 • Freshmen from company B-1 crowd into the centerpole hole.
 • Junior redpots Ned Murphy (left) and J.D. Steward help position the centerpole.

