

## Aggie war hero's past questioned



Photo by Jay Janner

This plaque honoring Daniel Edwards hangs in the north hall of the Memorial Student Center.

### Medal of Honor winner may not have attended A&M

By Katsy Pittman  
Of The Battalion Staff

Hanging in the north hall of the MSC is a plaque commemorating Daniel R. Edwards, the famed World War I war hero who died in 1967. Awarded the Presidential Medal of Honor and the Distinguished Service Cross, Edwards is hailed as one of the greatest war heroes ever to have attended A&M.

But some people think he might not be an Aggie after all. In the early 1920s, after he had received his awards, Edwards told several newspapers that he was a former student (and Aggie quarterback and third baseman).

His reputed attendance was furthered with the book, "This Side of Hell," which detailed his life experiences and was written by Lowell Thomas. In it, Edwards claimed he became an Aggie when he came across an A&M football game, jumped in and won it for the Ags (although he had never seen a football game before).

Or so the story goes. Eight years after he supposedly left A&M, Edwards, while fighting in France during World War I, made the mistake of crawling into a trench occupied by eight German soldiers.

According to the book, he had shot four of the Germans on sight when a shell exploded, trapping his arm in the trench wall. He cut off the arm with his machete while holding the other Germans prisoner. He then marched them off to the American camp (he made a German carry his arm back) and only was slightly delayed by another shell explosion, which shattered his leg.

Or so the story goes. The legend of Edwards didn't even surface around College Station until 1973, when John A. Adams Jr. wrote the book, "We Are the Aggies," which included the tale of Edwards.

Not wanting to neglect one of World War I's most decorated heroes (albeit 50 years late), the Association of Former Students soon put up the plaque in the MSC.

It seems no one questioned Edwards' story until 1986. It was well known that most of A&M's school records had burned in 1912, and there had been no reason to doubt Edwards.

However, in 1986, A&M's archivists Charles Schultz and David Chapman were asked by a school official to confirm Edwards' birthday. And that's when his scholastic past started looking pretty debatable.

Because there were many documents that had survived the fire, Schultz and Chapman had several sources to go to.

First, there is no mention of Edwards' name in the annual school catalog. (At that time, A&M was small enough to encompass all the students' names in just a few pages.)

His name also was absent from the alumni directory. And from the books of A&M sports figures. And from the school yearbook.

Incidentally, said Schultz, the absence of any pictures meant that a "likely" picture was chosen from a yearbook and the drawing for Edwards' plaque was made from that.

Richard "Buck" Weirus, Executive Director of the Association of Former Students from 1964 to 1979, was involved in creating the plaque that honored Edwards. In a telephone interview Tuesday, Weirus was asked about the origin of the picture from which the plaque was made. He responded brusquely.

"You're going to find out the truth and I don't want you to know it," Weirus said.

He then said there were no pictures or records available when the plaque was made. Weirus said he and Adams just relied on descriptions of Edwards given by former acquaintances.

Of course, it's possible that Edwards missed enrollment day and picture day, and that as quarterback and third baseman of the Aggie team, was too modest to be mentioned in the sports pages. And old records from 1909 and 1910 (the years Edwards claimed to be here) could be kind of shaky.

But Schultz and Chapman went one step further. They checked his birth records. And the 1910 U.S. Census records show Edwards was born in 1898 — 10 years later than he had claimed.

Which would make him 11 years old when he enrolled at A&M.

Granted, child prodigies abounded then. Edwards also was reputed to have been big for his age.

But quarterback of the football team and third

baseman on the baseball team? Edwards would have had to have been REAL big.

And the story continues. In a documented 1920 U.S. court hearing the Committee on Education, Edwards claimed he went to Baylor University, not Texas A&M.

Baylor officials wouldn't mind pronouncing him an alum, either.

"We would love to claim him as one of our own," said Thomas Turner, an official of Baylor's public relations office. "Unfortunately at this point we cannot."

Turner believed Edwards played a few years for the Baylor football team. It was then come to have unofficial players on the team.

"Unfortunately, that's why we lost our 1915 Southwest Conference Champions," Turner laughed. "They found out that our quarterbacks was married with kids in Arkansas."

So what do A&M officials have to say about Adams, who also is president of the A&M Center for International Studies Advisory Board? He doesn't believe Edwards should be bunked. He said that the burned records, transcripts and the theory that Edwards was school under an assumed name make it impossible to disclaim Edwards' attendance.

"I have never found that he didn't go here," Adams said.

But an official at the Association of Former Students, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, admitted there are doubts about Edwards' attendance at A&M.

"We never could iron-cladly prove that Edwards went here," the official said. "The whole thing was so far back — there's no way to tell for sure."

Edwards is listed in the Association of Former Students records as class of 1912. However, Dr. Crissy Simmons, a computer records assistant, said his name wasn't entered until 1984, and there is no other information about him.

"To tell you the truth," Simmons said, "I don't know why they entered his name in 1984, especially if he died in 1967."

Chapman said quite a few A&M officials had about Edwards' questionable academic past.

"It's like an old drinking game now," Chapman said. "You can go to functions and some..."

See Edwards/Page 10

## Friendship may be best love of all

I really had trouble writing this column — I couldn't decide on a topic to save my skinny neck. I played around with narratives about childhood Halloween memories, the barren Bryan-College Station radio market, the commercialization of Christmas and what the '90s music scene may turn out to be.

I was really surprised to have trouble writing — it seems to come naturally to me. I have never had such a tedious time trying to come up with something to write about — especially something that is just supposed to be my opinion.

In any case, the ideas wouldn't come — until Tuesday night. My topic, this topic, hit me directly in the face like the colors I see in the sunsets I love so much.

And to be honest, I am a little embarrassed that I didn't realize what this column had to be about: love and guardian angels.

You see, all my life I've wanted to know what true love feels like. Well, it didn't happen until this summer — I fell in love and I fell hard. I have never known such a feeling — a state



**Chuck Lovejoy**  
Assistant Lifestyles Editor

of mind that is ecstasy, pain, confusion and wonderment all at the same time. And I must say, it was worth the wait.

And I have my guardian angel to thank for letting me feel that way. He (she?) has always helped out just when I needed it most: the death of my grandfather, the stress and tension of my senior year of high school and the horrifying move to college.

My guardian angel has always been around, and I'm sure always will be. I am certain he/she is with

me now because: 1) I was able to write this column, 2) I was able to write this column without exploding into tears and 3) I was able to write this column with my heart — not my hand.

This summer was the most special time I've had thus far in my life: I had my first serious relationship (and fell in love), I made many new friends and I learned to like and accept myself and all my faults.

This summer was so special I still have trouble looking forward because sometimes I'm too busy looking backward: I had to Q-drop a class because I was too lazy to keep up, I am now failing Spanish and I've rather neglected my duties here at *The Batt*.

But now I know what the confusion was all about — a sweet little inspiration came to me Tuesday night (Wednesday morning, actually). All this time I have been confused about love. I thought the object of my reminiscing was romantic love. But I now see that this summer served an even greater purpose than I had originally thought: I found another very different and very beautiful type of love — the love shared between friends.

This summer started off with ole Chuck (that's me) pretty much buried in the dumps. Last spring I made a close group of friends, then was left alone to go to summer school. I have never felt so lonely and afraid as the first few weeks of summer.

And then, my guardian angel pushed my destiny across those of two very fine people who I am now proud to publicly declare, in this newspaper, are true friends.

I have never met two people like the two I speak of — loving, funny, caring and at the same time completely understanding and accepting of all my quirks.

They, too, are guardian angels in a way — always checking on my mood (which is known for some violent swinging); wanting to share their feelings, desires and dreams and asking about mine; and providing support and advice to help me realize those wishes.

And perhaps the greatest thing about my involvement with these two beautiful ladies is that they have helped me to find another kind of love: a love of myself.

These two kinds of love seem somehow deeper than romantic love and love of family. My family and first love will never lose their importance — I don't mean to imply any lessening of those in any sense (even though my first love is now just a good friend).

It's just that these two new kinds of love seem more special. I have never really loved myself much, but the two women I refer to have made me realize that I am a good person — not perfect, not anything more than anyone else — just good.

And the love of friends seems the most special of all — being able to feel so powerfully about people with whom you have no real ties — physical or biological — only bonds of common experiences and dreamings. Friends are friends because they want to be, and no other reason.

My finding of these two new kinds of love has proven to me that there is magic in the world — and it is shining like sunrays streaming through a pitch raincloud.

You see, I have my first two really close friends. Not that I consider my other friendships unequal to these newer ones. Those are equally important to me — I just didn't open my eyes and heart enough to see just how special they really are.

And for that, I apologize to those of you who fit in that latter category. I realize, now, how important friends are — I'm sorry I didn't before. And I promise to try my damndest to be a better friend to you.

And to Melissa and Ellen — my two earthly guardian angels — I have one more thing to say: I love you.

## Pylon returns to music scene as successful R.E.M. opener

By John Righter  
Of The Battalion Staff

In the age of dinosaur tours and futile reunions, it's nice to find one prehistoric animal who hasn't evolved into a gross mutation of its former self.

Five years after the band called it quits, Athen's Pylon has reformed and hit the road, frantically touring in hope of securing a second record deal. Of course, it has helped that R.E.M., Pylon's self-proclaimed biggest fans, has taken the group under its wings for an extensive tour. The tour's itinerary, which focuses on places R.E.M. missed during its first leg, has exposed Pylon to audiences it never played in front of during its five-year run from '79-'84.

"In this short tour we're going to be exposed to more people than we would have been in a whole year's worth of touring clubs by ourselves," explains Pylon drummer Curtis Crowe, during an interview before Sunday's performance with R.E.M. at G. Rollier White Coliseum. "Of course the trade off is we're playing for their crowd."

That trade off didn't seem to take place Sunday night as the still arriving audience immediately warmed to Pylon's tight rhythms and lead singer Vanessa Briscoe's stage antics.

Five years of Pylon inactivity are best documented in the form of

Briscoe's full-bodied expansion. The never-slim vocalist has ballooned into a hefty version of Mama Cass, miraculously still retaining the resilience and drive that had her shaking, hip-swaying and jumping for the entire 30-minute set.

With the first vocal part of "Crazy" (A song Crowe says Pylon is trying

**"R.E.M. just worked a hell of a lot harder than we did, and took (their music) a lot more seriously."**

— Curtis Crowe, Pylon drummer

ing to win back from R.E.M., who covered it on *Dead Letter Office*.) Briscoe screamed, shook, and pounced, exciting the unprepared audience out of their doldrums and into the spectacle of Briscoe's tremulant mass.

Unfortunately, to many it wasn't the energy and effort that received

the deserving applause, but the spectacle, turning Pylon's terrific set into a trivial freak show. But being that it came from a school known for its bleacher-bum mentality, it probably didn't offend anyone else.

"Crazy" began the eight-song set that tore through new as well as old originals, featuring the road-runnerish "Beep," fresh from video release, and ending with the thematic "Stop It."

Crowe, a real athlete, pummeled his drum set, combining with Michael Lachowski's hammering bass lines to provide a raw, yet tight platform for Briscoe's uneven vocals.

Returning after five years to good reviews and intrigued listeners, Pylon appears to have secured a second shot at the music world. From a band who was once considered the cream of Athen's amazing crop of underground acts, you would expect to find a feeling of regret for having quit in '84, but not so says Crowe.

"No, they're no regrets (for me.) I see all the stuff they've had to do, and the popularity that's resulted, and I realize that their success is not all great. It isn't something I would turn down, but there's a lot of responsibility that goes with it."

"R.E.M. just worked a hell of a lot harder than we did, and took (their music) a lot more seriously. They deserve where they're at... but this time we're also serious about what we're doing."

## Pianist Thomas performs diverse show in Rudder



Photo by Fredrick D. Jones

Michael Tilson Thomas

By Todd Stone  
Of The Battalion Staff

Pianist Michael Tilson Thomas deftly performed a thoughtful and diverse program of music last night in Rudder Auditorium as part of the 1989-90 MSC OPAS series.

A near-capacity audience enjoyed Thomas's interpretive performances of compositions by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Aaron Copland and Modest Mussorgsky.

In an unusual beginning to the show, Thomas informally spoke with the audience about Carl Bach, the second oldest son of Johann Sebastian Bach.

"Carl Bach established all the rules of grammar in musical language," Tilson Thomas said. "As Bach established the rules of grammar, Mozart established all the rules of context in music."

The four Carl Bach pieces Thomas recited (Fantasia in C-Minor, Rondo in C-Minor, Adagio in A-flat Major and Rondo in C-Major) were an alternating blend of choppy- and jagged-paced rhythms with soft melodic notes.

The Bach pieces were followed

by Piano Sonata in F-Major by Mozart. This piece was a three-part composition with a melodic first movement, a slower introspective movement and a fast and powerful ending.

Tilson Thomas then switched from the classical composers Bach and Mozart, to a 20th century composer, Copland. Tilson Thomas performed Copland's Piano Variations, which is a dramatic piece of music with hard and abrupt rhythms, alternating with softer melodies.

After an intermission, he performed the multi-movement piece, Pictures at an Exhibition by Mussorgsky. "Pictures" is an inspiration of Mussorgsky to compose a group of piano pieces that reflect the paintings of his friend, Victor Hartman.

The highlights to "Pictures" were "The Gnome," a movement with low-chopping notes that describe a grotesque creature, and "Promenade," a great melodic piece that reflects a person experiencing the pictures.

For an encore, Tilson Thomas played Short Story and Novels in G by George Gershwin. He ended his amazing performance with a rousing rendition of "Batman" theme, which drew laughs and cheers from the crowd.