



1945 -

The Battalion is forced to publish only weekly because of war restrictions on materials.

Spring, 1947 -

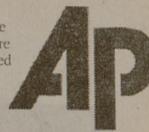
The only known extra edition of The Battalion is run off on a mimeograph one Saturday afternoon. The paper ran to cover the excess stories happening that particular weekend.

Fall, 1947 -

The Battalion begins publishing daily again.



The Battalion becomes an associate member of the Associated Press wire service. In 1986, the paper is elected to Regular membership, and becomes one of only a handful of college newspapers in the nation that are Regular members.



1941 — Aggies battle global tyranny on land, in air, at sea as World War II rages

A&M cranks into gear contributing to war effort

"Give me an army of West Point graduates, and I'll win a battle. Give me a handful of Texas Aggies, and I'll win a war."

— Gen. George S. Patton

By Carrie Miura and Mark Smith
THE BATTALION

Gen. George S. Patton's words symbolized the spirit of the young men from Texas A&M that left home to serve their country during World War II.

Almost 20,000 Aggies served in the armed services during the war, 14,000 as officers. Not even the U.S. Military Academy at West Point could boast more officers fighting the Axis than Texas A&M.

Japan sparked America's entry in the hostilities with its surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. In its Dec. 9 issue, The Battalion polled students on their reaction to America's involvement in the war.

'Beat the hell outta Japan!'

"We've been fooling around so long I'm glad things finally came to a head," said Chuck Chalmers, Class of '42. "Now the only thing to do is to 'beat the hell out of Japan.'"

This statement typified the way many students felt about the war.



Cadets showed their support for America's war effort by displaying spirit signs outside their dormitories.

"I feel that the war was inevitable, and now that it has come, we can only hope for the best," said Bill Delaney, Class of '43. "Above all, cooperate with those men who are capable of leading our country to our ultimate victory, which we all pray will come."

Col. M. D. Welty, infantry commandant, wrote a message in the Dec. 9 issue to the cadets at A&M.

"I urge each of you to remain in college at the present time," Welty said. "Every American will have a place in this nation's defense efforts. At the present, your place in national defense is here at college where you can better prepare yourself for the task ahead. You can rest assured that when your country needs you, it will call."

Soon after the declaration of war, the United States called many A&M students to active duty. Although many Aggies were

stationed overseas, the College remained open during the war and Aggie spirit and camaraderie stayed alive.

Throughout 1942, The Battalion was published three times a week. During the war, The Battalion focused mainly on campus news and contained a limited amount of information on events that occurred on the front.

Streamlined school year

The war forced many changes in the operation of the College. On January 8, 1942, The Battalion reported the Academic Council's proposal to the Board of Directors of a new, streamlined plan to begin a tri-semester year, in which students would attend classes year-round.

"The plan would prevent the \$15 million college plant facilities from lying idle during the summer months but would use them continuously in the production of trained men and Army officers," A&M President T. O. Walton said.

The Academic Council, which was comprised of the deans and heads of departments of the college, met on Jan. 7 to consider the recommendation.

"The total war in which our nation is now engaged has created an urgent demand that young men be trained both for certain essential industries and as reserve officers as rapidly as possible," the recommendation read. "Both industry and the Army have requested the college to graduate the students as rapidly as possible."

The Board of Directors adopted the plan Jan. 22, 1942. Four days later, classes began under the new system. Because of the change in the structure of the academic year, drills increased and there were more reserve officers in training. The average age of entering freshmen was 17 years and three months.

Changes on the home front

The war caused many changes in day-to-day procedures of the College. On Jan. 30, 1943, The Battalion reported several changes in the students' work week. Classes would be held six days a week, and a supervised study and compulsory physical education was added to the school's operation.

"These measures are necessary to satisfy War Department requirements on essentially MC Colleges (Military College) of which Texas A&M is one, and the success of the new program here will be a deciding factor in the future of A&M and of its students in the war effort," Walton said.

The government restricted travel during the war years because of the its use of railroad, tires and gasoline for the war effort.

On Oct. 22, 1942, The Battalion reported the cancellation of Corps trips during the year because of the inability of the railroad companies to provide the college with transportation. Federal regulations prevented special trains from running.

"Under the new cut system, if the student feels that he is up in his work and will miss no quizzes, it is up to him to decide whether or not he can make the out of town games," Dean Bolton said in the October 22, 1942 issue of The Battalion. "But the question of special transportation is definitely out."

An article in the June 19, 1943 issue described the recent troubles with Aggies in their attempts to hitchhike. The article, written by Ben Fortson, said that as a result of tire and gas rationing, motorists were in scarce numbers.

"With Schickelgruber, Tojo, and Il Duce raising all the ruckus around the drink, tire and gas rationing, and what have you, this highwaying situation has become pretty serious at times," Fortson said.

Bolton initiated sugar rationing on April 25, 1942 under the direction of the registration board to help supply sugar to the men stationed overseas. Those 18 years or older applied for their own rationing books. Students under the age of 18 filed an application under their guardian's names.

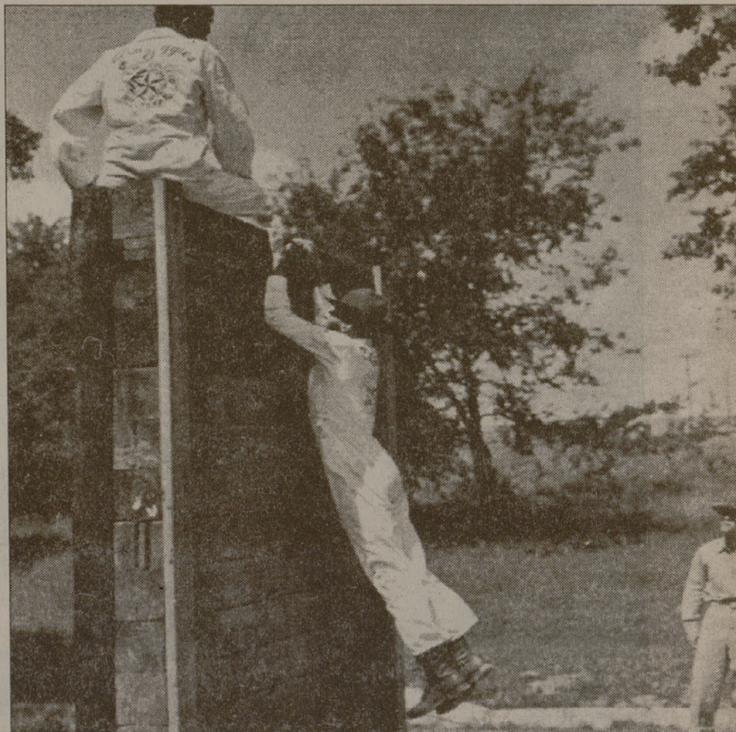
The College even restricted the wearing of senior boots because of the clothing and textiles shortage in the United States during the war. There was also a nationwide steel shortage, which delayed the plans for an outdoor dance area. The structure — now called the Grove — was re-designed to make do without the steel.

Because of its all-male student body, dances were a large part of life at A&M. These socials were held on campus in Sbis, Walton and Guion Hall — A&M's theater at the time. The students' dates came from women's colleges around the state, particularly Texas State College for Women (now Texas Women's University) in Denton, A&M's sister school.

The war even affected the dances. For one dance, the tickets were printed before the College was placed on Central War Time — the time on the tickets was off by half an hour.

Thirty seconds over Tokyo

Victories for the Allies were slow coming in the early years of the war. However, former student Maj. John Hilger, Class of '32, was one of the first Americans to strike back at the enemy. Hilger was second in command to Brig. Gen. James H. Doolittle, who led the April 18 bombing of Tokyo.



As the war dragged on, Texas A&M prepared cadets for military duty in many ways, both in the classroom and with activities such as Commando training.

A U.S. aircraft carrier launched B-24 bombers — originally designed for land-based runways — to bomb the Japanese capital, after which they would fly to China. The planes, however, were forced to launch early and many of the crews did not make it safely to China.

Hilger made it to the Chinese coast and later returned to A&M to tell of his exploits. Although the raid did not cause much physical damage to Tokyo, the United States used it as a propaganda tool to raise morale.

Another former student, Ensign George H. Gay, Class of '40, became famous after his plane was shot down after a failed attempt to sink a Japanese aircraft carrier during the Battle of Midway on June 4. Gay witnessed the battle from the water, using his plane's seat to stay afloat, although occasionally he had to dive beneath the surface to avoid shots from Japanese fighter planes.

Because U.S. Navy planes sank three of Japan's top-class aircraft carriers, the battle was one of the major turning points in the

war in the Pacific.

Many other Aggies received decorations for their courage and resourcefulness during the war.

'Above and beyond ...'

The headline for the March 9, 1944 issue of The Battalion read, "First Aggie to Receive Medal of Honor comes from Class of 1943." Second Lt. Lloyd H. Hughes was posthumously rewarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Hughes lost his life when he flew his B-24 bomber in a raid on the oilfield at Ploesti, Rumania on Aug. 1, 1943.

"Approaching the target through intense and accurate anti-aircraft and dense balloon barrages at dangerously low altitude, his plane received several direct hits from both large and small caliber anti-aircraft guns which seriously damaged his aircraft causing sheets of escaping gasoline to stream from the bomb bay and the left wing," read the citation to Lt. Hughes.

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