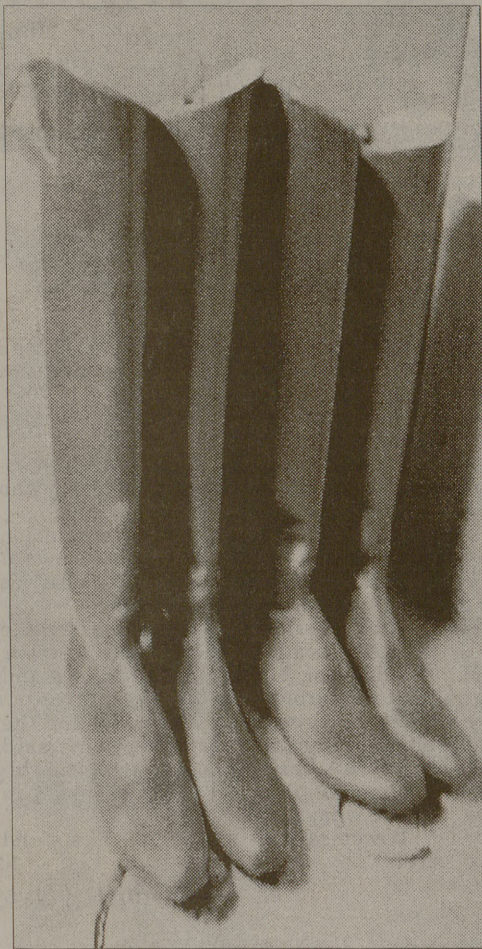


Holick's part of history with Corps' boots



By Jeremy Keddie
THE BATTALION

R.O. Smith, a junior in Squadron One of the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets, walked into Holick's Boots and Insignia Mfs., stepped up to the boot chair and sat down. His eyes glanced across the front foyer of the store, which smelled of leatherwork.

"I'm finally getting measured for my (senior) boots," he said.

Cobbler Johnnie Holick then emerged from the small workshop in the back and told Smith to place his feet on a notebook, and began tracing. Afterward, Holick took measurements of the feet, calfs and ankles, and Smith's senior boots were three weeks away from being finished.

"So when can I pick them up," Smith asked.

Although Smith has made several payments to Holick's for his boots, he and many of the cadets will perhaps never see the process, nor learn much of the history behind the craftsmanship.

Holick's began as a mishap when Joseph Holick, Johnnie's father, came to the United States from Austria in 1885 and boarded a locomotive from Taylor, Texas to look for work at a sawmill. Destined for Orange, Texas, the locomotive passed through Bryan where Joseph Holick decided to visit his sister.

Joseph Holick then began working at Blatherwick's shoe shop in Bryan and remained there for five years.

And in 1891, at the request of Texas A&M president Lawrence Sullivan Ross,

Holick's Boots and Insignia Mfs. opened for shoe and boot repairs.

"It was an example of how a seemingly insignificant happening can change the courses of many, many lives," Holick said.

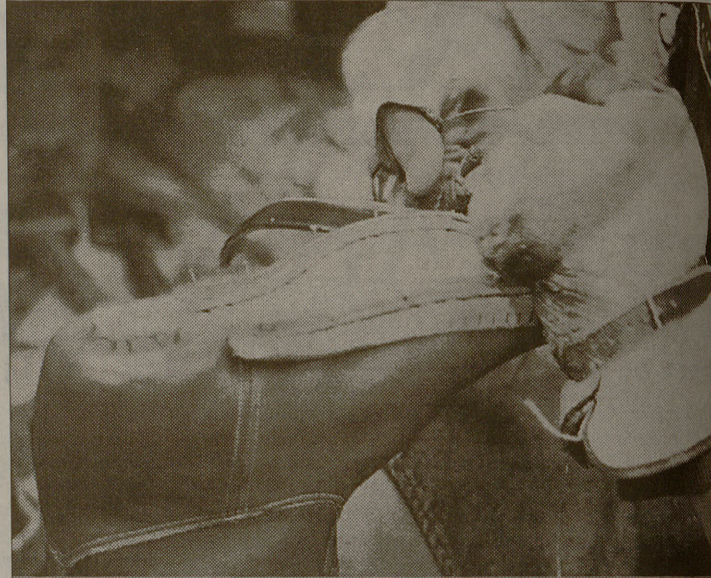
Since then, this insignificant happening has led to manufacturing of boots for thousands of senior Corps members, and the current style has existed since 1931.

Becoming part of the Corps of Cadets uniform in 1915, senior boots are valued as more than just part of the uniform. The riding boots symbolize the rank of cadet officer achieved after three years of dedication to the Corps and to A&M. The cavalry boot style became part of the senior uniform in 1925.

Although Holick's is not the only manufacturer of senior boots, they produce 250 pairs per year and also place orders for boots that they do not have the resources produce themselves. Holick's takes measurements and then readjusts the boots received according to style.

After taking measurements, the process is broken into a production-line process which includes trimming the leather and shaping the sole. The most distinctive characteristic of the boot is the barrel, the upper part of the boot which fits the calf, which are made of stiff leather, allowing them to be shined easily.

To make the boots, several varieties of leather are used. The most predominant is the tan imported French calf, which is used for the exterior leather of the boot.



Stacy Cameron

Leo Belovoskey shapes the lower part of the Corps boot to fit the customer's foot.

Carolyn Matheson, daughter of Johnnie Holick, said the leather is imported from France because of the ideal conditions for raising cattle.

"When working with leather you have to take into account things like insect bites, diseases, and barbed wire fences," Carolyn Matheson said.

And the line of men who have worked this French leather into an A&M tradi-

tion started with Joseph Holick have been passed down to his son Johnnie Holick.

Johnnie Holick has trained men to carry on the family tradition. One of these men is Margarito Garcia found his way into A&M and the Holick's tradition at the unemployment office. With

Please see Holick's

Correction

In Monday's issue of The Battalion, the headline and story on page 2B of the Campus section incorrectly spelled Corps Cmdr. Matt Segrest's name. Segrest is the correct spelling.

In Wednesday's issue of The Battalion, the information box on page two incorrectly identified StarTel's rates. StarTel's rates are 21¢ for weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., 16.5¢ for evenings, and 13.5¢ for nights and weekends.

Success comes out in the wash for student

By Jeremy Keddie
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M student Amir Omar said as a child he always dreamed of owning a huge business.

Little did Omar know he would eventually spend 90 hours a week as owner of the Westgate Washaus, one of Bryan-College Station's most successful laundromats.

The 22-year-old industrial distribution major opened the business after previously running a pickup and delivery laundry service that provided the \$50,000 needed to open his business.

"With a wife and a three-year-old son, the business pretty much grew out of necessity," Omar said.

The stylish laundromat features an automatic door, two fish aquariums, a leather couch, a



Stacy Cameron/THE BATTALION

Amir Omar, owner of the Westgate Washaus, is a senior industrial distribution major at A&M.

game room and red bar stools arranged on a black-and-white checkered floor.

With every customer at Westgate Washaus there is a sense of urgency to help, Omar said,

which is a trait he claims to have acquired through discipline as a member of the Corp of Cadets. He can frequently be seen rushing to help customers unload their laundry from cars, wiping off equipment and offering customers change.

"He seems to be a hands-on type of guy who is interested in how things are running," said Grant Tabor, a senior accounting major.

"It is important to be at your business and find out what people are happy with and what they aren't," Omar said.

This relationship with the customers has led to Omar's earning over \$13,000 per month, he said.

But things didn't always go so well. Although Omar's business is prosperous and growing steadily, he admits that there were several problems when first starting

out.

"Everyone will stick with you when you are weak," Omar said. One of his early problems had been made with rent finance and advertising made things more frustrating.

But Omar said most can be prevented by which can only be obtained studying for a degree.

"Students have the aptitude, but not necessarily the motivation. Professors give their own businesses information you can tap."

Omar said he began to gain interest by sharing ideas with professors within the College. The information was

Please see Wash Haus

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FRATERNITY RUSH

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Where: Rudder Fountain
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 AggieLife
 Tuesday • August 30, 1995
 The Jesus and M
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 By Drew Diener
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