The Battalion

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ROLL CALL FOR THE ABSENT

FILE PHOTO • GRAPHIC BY JP BEATO AND ROBERT HYNECEK/THE BATTALION

Former yell leader to speak at event

BY MEREDITH HIGHT
The Battalion

Mike Baggett, Class of 1968, is a hard man to get a hold of. He is chair and CEO of Winstead Sechrest and Minick, a law firm he joined in 1972 that has grown from seven to 240 lawyers since then, and he is director of the Dallas 2012 Olympic Committee and immediate past chair of the Cotton Bowl Athletic Association. That just scratches the surface of his community involvement.

His resume might as well say "I Bleed Maroon." He is a former yell leader, former class agent, former president of the Association of Former Students, former president of the Texas Aggie Bar Association, a director of the 12th Man Foundation, Outstanding Alumnus of the College of Business Administration and Distinguished Alumnus of Texas A&M.

Baggett, born and raised in Waco, won a Bronze Star Award for his service in Vietnam and is an attorney who graduated cum laude from Baylor Law School in 1973. He is married and has two children, who also became part of the Aggie family.

But home is where the 1999 Muster Committee was able to contact Mike Baggett one Sunday night to inform him of the honor to be bestowed upon him — that of Muster speaker.

Caroline Kohler, chair of the Muster speaker selection committee and a junior environmental design major, said Baggett was chosen from a list that was narrowed from 100 speaker nominees. The speaker nominees are unaware of the selection process.

Kohler said Baggett fit the bill for Muster speaker.

"Every time we talked about him, he just really fit the character of what we were looking for," she said. "He's just a wonderful man. He stood out above and beyond everyone else."

Baggett said it took time for him to appreciate Muster, but the longer he was a student, the more he realized the significance of it.

Baggett said he will emphasize Aggie pride at the ceremony.

"Aggies are proud of who they are and what they do," he said. "It goes beyond education. Aggie spirit reflects char-

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Aggies worlds apart to unite for Muster

BY AMANDA STIRPE
The Battalion

Four hundred Muster ceremonies will unite Aggies worldwide to honor former students who have passed away; Reed Arena will host the largest of the ceremonies tonight at 7.

April 21 has been the official date of Muster since 1923 to celebrate the Battle of San Jacinto, which gave Texas its independence. Muster also recognizes former students who graduated 50 years before it; this year honors the Class of 1949.

"Aggie Muster is one of the most revered traditions associated with Texas A&M," a University Relations press release said. "From its beginnings more than a century ago, Muster has been a time for Aggies to remember friends and family members who have died."

Lee Stanley, committee chair for Muster and a senior management major, said Muster produces a feeling of reverence.

"We will all be on the roll call someday, so it hits home," Stanley said. "That moment is when you feel the Aggie spirit most. We are all part of the Aggie family."

Stanley said roll call is the essence of Muster. Certain criteria exists for names to be honored at the A&M campus roll call. The criteria was established by the Muster Committee, the vice president of Student Affairs, the president's office, the Association of Former Students and the Brazos County A&M Club. The criteria states:

- the individual is currently enrolled at A&M
- the individual was a former student who resided in Brazos County
- the individual is a member of the 50 year reunion class
- the individual is a former student whose immediate family resides in the Bryan-College Station area
- the individual is a Former Student whose immediate family members are currently enrolled at A&M

Mike Vandaveer, media representative for the Muster Committee and a junior speech communication major, said the feeling associated with Muster is hard to put into words.

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Solemn tradition began with war

BY MARIANO CASTILLO
The Battalion

Beyond the arches, the freshman Corps of Cadets can be heard, "Sir, on April 21 each year, on the anniversary of the Battle of San Jacinto, Aggies gather together, wherever they are, to commemorate fellow Aggies who have died during the year. The tradition was begun 21 April 1903, sir!" This summarizes what Muster is and opens the door to one of Texas A&M's most revered traditions.

Aggie Muster has a long, rich tradition with roots reaching back to June 26, 1883. That day, students gathered, as one student wrote, to " ... live over again our college days, the victory and defeats won and lost upon drill ground and classroom."

In the late 1890s, Aggies made a yearly trip to the San Jacinto battle ground to help recreate the famous battle.

According to the Muster Handbook, during World War I, several groups of Aggies gathered together on that day, keeping the tradition alive, as it was not celebrated on campus.

After the war, Muster returned to A&M campus, and in 1923, the magazine Texas Aggie urged all Aggies, on April 21, to get together even if they were no longer students.

Over the years, this tradition solidified and became known worldwide.

One of the most famous Musters was held on Corregidor Island in the Philippines in 1942 in the midst of World War II. General George F. Moore, Class of 1908, and 25 Aggies came together under the fire of the Japanese, and held Muster. A few weeks later, on May 6, the island was taken by the Japanese and all Aggies on the island were either taken prisoner or killed.

This story is often retold as the epitome of the Aggie Spirit.

Lee Stanley, chair of the Muster committee and a senior management major, said that while the heroic Muster at Corregidor is seen as the most famous and brought international attention to the ceremony, it is necessary to remember that all Musters are equally important.

"Campus Muster happens to be the largest, but it is no more important than a Muster in a small town with a small

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