

125 Years Tradition Bound by Spirit

T H E C O R P S



By COURTNEY STELZEL
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M has a rich military tradition that defined the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas in 1871 and continues today to play a role within the University.

A&M hosts more military cadets than any other school in the nation, with the exception of the U.S. military academies.

"The Corps are the keepers of tradition," said Corps Commandant Maj. Gen. Ted Hopgood. "And that is what I believe defines Texas A&M."

Since its inception, the Corps has played an important role in the military by supplying more than 44,000 commissioned officers, said Dr. John Adams, a Corps historian and author of three books profiling the history of A&M.

Fifty percent of living graduates joined the military in World War II alone, Adams said.

In his most recent book, *Keepers of the Spirit: The Corps of Cadets at Texas A&M University, 1876-2001*, Adams said that Texas A&M had 20,229 cadets and graduates fight in World War II. This was twice as many participants as

the Citadel and Virginia Military Institute (VMI) combined. A&M lost 953 men in battle — two to three times the number from other military institutions.

Among the A&M men who served in the armed forces, seven were Medal of Honor recipients and 10 fighter aces, a large percentage compared to other schools.

A&M sent 2,217 enlisted men into battle during World War I. The school held the record for the second-highest number of men sent to World War I, falling short only to VMI, that sent 2,292 enlisted men.

"By 1937, President

Roosevelt came to campus to recruit cadets because he knew, even then, that we would probably be going to war, and he realized the caliber of men that were graduating from this school," Adams said. "He wanted them on the battlefields fighting for our country's freedom."

Cadets also were active participants in the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

"There were 50 general officers in Vietnam, more than A&M sent for service in World War I or World War II combined," Adams said.

In *Keepers of the Spirit*, Adams writes that during the 1960s, A&M commissioned more than 1,700 officers in the armed forces, and by the end of the century, 50 of those had reached the rank of general or flag officer.

Today, the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs at A&M are growing. The Army ROTC office reports 217 cadets with military contracts, 35 soon will graduate and become military officers in the Army.

The Air Force program leads ROTC programs on campus, with 471 cadets currently with contracts. The Navy ROTC program hosts 122 cadets with midshipmen contracts and 45 cadets commissioned to become officers through the platoon leaders program.

The Corps will continue this degree of commitment to the armed forces for years to come, especially if the United States goes to war, Adams said.

"The Corps of Cadets is constantly challenged to maintain high-level leadership training, retention within the ranks and an atmosphere conducive to academic excellence," Adams said.



Ol' Army Lou had only one regret in life....
not being there to serve you on day one.

**Congratulations
Texas A&M
on your first
125 years.**

*You can count on us to be here
for you for the next 125 years.*

**LOUPOT'S
BOOKSTORES**

Celebrating 70 years of serving Aggies.

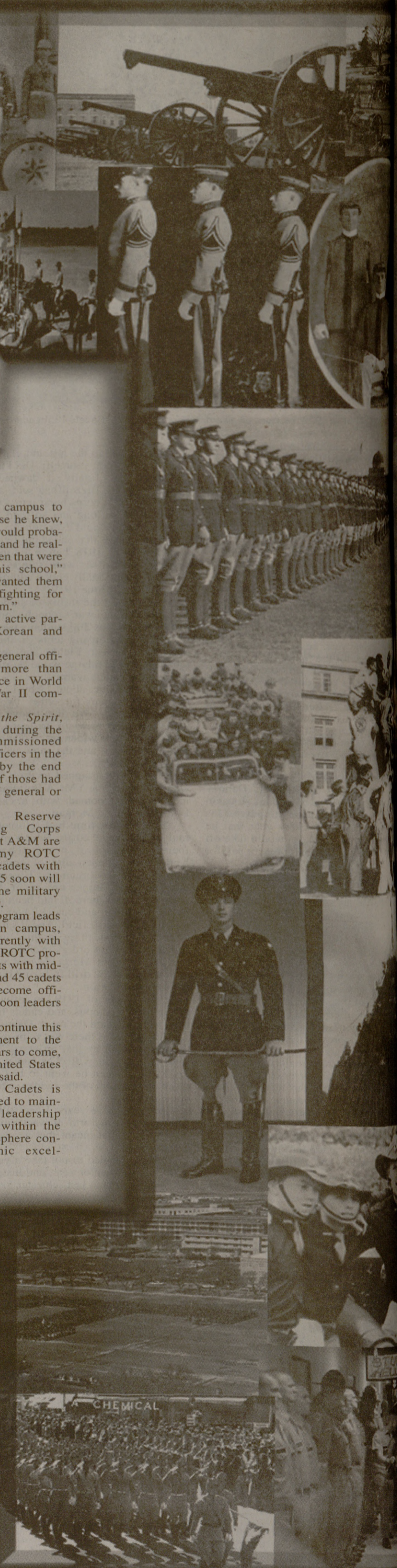


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CODY WAGE