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Aggie Muster 2003

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Gerald Easterly has spent the best parts of his life taking experiences away from Texas A&M and giving them back in return, sending his descendants to the school whose traditions he embraces and reflecting on what A&M has taught him about life.

At 82, Easterly, Class of 1942, considers himself the most “bragginest” and blessed grandpa in Texas. Not only did he and his two sons graduate from A&M, but all four of his grandchildren currently attend.

But Easterly has more to be proud of, such as serving in World War II starting as a private and working his way up to the rank of first lieutenant.

Following his graduation, Easterly joined a National Guard unit in Connecticut. Because the outfit had its own structure and the commander did not like Texas, Easterly said there was not an opportunity for him to be promoted.

“It was all political,” Easterly said. “(There) was no way a person like me would be promoted, but I wasn’t trying to be promoted as much as I was trying to survive.”

When he first joined the Connecticut outfit, the sergeant he was working under was jealous of his college and prior military training, so he attempted to put him on the spot, Easterly said. The sergeant told Easterly to drill the other soldiers and Easterly said he put them all in their places.

“From then on I had the respect of the guys, I don’t know about the officers, but the guys that I bunked with from then on was good fellowship,” Easterly said. “So that old boy did me a favor and didn’t know it.”

All that changed when the outfit got a new commander who singled Easterly out one day. The commander had reviewed his record and had seen his college background at Texas A&M.

“He asked me what the heck I was doing in the back row,” Easterly said. “I told him I didn’t know how to explain it, so he made me a buck sergeant.”

After the promotion, Easterly was involved in jungle training on an island near the Philippines in the South Pacific, where he was eligible to apply for officer training school.

Along with 17,000 other troops on the island, Easterly went through weeks of vigorous training, demonstrating his talents and skills before a group of officers.

“At the end of the week, they selected five people out of 17,000 troops,” Easterly said. “I was No. 2 out of the five.”

He was then flown back to a base in Georgia to begin training soldiers for the front lines of war.

Easterly said when he first began his military career,

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