



The History of AGGIE MUSTER

Spring 1883

"Roll Call for the Absent" was born

June 26, 1883

Aggies gathered to relive their college days—the victories and defeats won and lost upon the drill field and in the classroom

April 21, 1903

Annual gathering evolved into a celebration of Texas' Independence on San Jacinto Day

Fall 1916

Alumni Association urges former cadets to return to campus on April 21 as a type of homecoming. However, when WWI broke out, Aggies went to defend their nation and all campus activities from April to June of 1917 were canceled

1922

First major organized San Jacinto Celebration took place in Waco

1923

Student radio station, WTAW, carried a statewide program dedicated to San Jacinto Day. More than two dozen formal gatherings

April 22, 1922

April 21 became the official day for Muster

1924

San Jacinto Day was the first major organized observance held on the A&M Campus; A WWI Memorial was dedicated and given by classes of '23, '24, '25 and '26 in honor of the 55 men who gave their lives during the war

1929

Muster spreads worldwide

1942

Muster gains international recognition

February 1943

E.E. McQuillen was influenced by numerous calls and letters worldwide and decided to use the word "Muster" for the April 21 observance

1946

Homecoming Muster included three days of banquets and reunions. On Easter morning, General Eisenhower spoke to a crowd of more than 15,000

1998

Campus Muster was moved from G. Rollie White Coliseum to Reed Arena

Today

Muster is celebrated in more than 400 places worldwide

RUBEN DELUNA
TRAVIS SWENSON • THE BATTALION

SOURCE: MUSTER COMMITTEE

Muster

Continued from page 1A

it was hard, but he built long and lasting friendships.

Easterly said freshmen in the Corps of Cadets should understand why they work as hard as they do and should be grateful for the military training they receive while getting an education at A&M.

"The basic skills you learn in high school and college are extremely important in combat, like the skills you get in the Corps, but also survival skills," he said.

He said the preliminary training he received at A&M made him successful in the military.

"Combat is not easy," he said.

Easterly, however, did not see any combat against the Japanese because of his involvement in officer training, said his youngest son, Jerry, Class of 1973.

Jimmy Easterly, Class of 1971 and Gerald's oldest son, said A&M's training in the Corps is tougher than people may think.

"One of my first roommates at A&M flunked out freshman year and came back a year later after he had been in the Marine Corps. One time I asked him how did boot camp compare to his freshman year and he said without hesitation his freshman year was much harder than boot camp," he said.

That Corps training can be proven with the Aggies who are now fighting in the Gulf.

With A&M said to have produced more officers in World War I and World War II than West Point, Easterly said it is a great feeling to see his family members choosing a school that trains the leaders of tomorrow.

Gerald Easterly said he had no influence on his family deciding to attend A&M.

"I just brainwashed them," Jerry Easterly said. Jimmy Easterly, who lives in College Station, said he joked with his son Jason when he was 10 years old that they would move out of town if he did not attend A&M.

But, no matter why his three grandchildren decided to attend A&M, Gerald Easterly said he still beams at all their accomplishments.

"I tell the Lord how blessed he has made us," he said. "The other day some lady said I had a big head and I denied that, but when I got home I measured my head and it was an inch and a half bigger!"

While maroon runs thickly in his family's blood, Easterly said he could not think of any other college with traditions that compare to that of the Aggie Spirit.

Several traditions at A&M are important, but Muster is celebrated all over the world, he said.

"There is an old expression, 'you know them by the company you keep,'" he said. "So relate that to Muster, when you get together with a bunch of Aggies."

Regan Turner, chairman of the Muster committee this year, said the tradition of Muster is

timeless.

"It is the one tradition that we, as Aggies, can celebrate anywhere in the world. Regardless of where we may find ourselves on April 21, (we) always have a family with whom we can share a meal and stories about our days at Texas A&M," he said.

This year's featured speaker is Edwin Cooper. Cooper graduated from A&M in 1953. After service in the U.S. Army, he began a 37-year career at A&M, highlighted by working as presidential assistant to Presidents James Earl Rudder and Williams and later, with his position as dean of admissions, Turner said.

Aggies first gathered on June 26, 1883 to relive their college days, the victories and defeats won and lost the drill field and in the classroom. By April 21, 1903, this annual gathering evolved into a celebration of Texas Independence on San Jacinto Day. These early meetings included field games and banquets for Aggies to reflect and celebrate their memories of Aggieland. "Let every alumni answer a roll call," wrote the former students.

It was not until 1922, however, that April 21 became the official day of events for all Aggies; thus, the annual tradition of Muster was born. In 1923 Aggies urged, "If there is an A&M man in one-hundred miles of you, you are expected to get together, eat a little, and live over the days you spent at the A&M College of Texas."

Today, Muster is celebrated in more than 400 places worldwide, with the largest ceremony centered on the A&M campus in College Station. The ceremony brings together more Aggies worldwide on one occasion than any other event.

The day starts off with a flag raising ceremony in the Academic Plaza at 7:15 a.m. A Camaraderie Barbecue will take place from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Academic Plaza. Cost will be \$6.50 and meal plans, Aggiebucks, cash and credit cards are all accepted; Commons, Sbisa and Duncan will all be closed during the barbecue; in case of rain it will be moved to Sbisa.

Roll Call for the Absent will begin at 7 p.m. in Reed Arena. Doors open at 5 p.m.

"As Aggies it is our duty to muster. We pledged to always remember those who have died, promising that their memories will live forever in our hearts," Turner said. "Our commitment as the Muster Committee is to ensure that every Aggie on the Roll Call is more than just a name; it is a life that touched others."

Gerald Easterly said his time at A&M is cherished and the day his name is called and someone will answer 'here' makes him glad he chose to attend A&M.

But he doesn't count on that anytime soon. "You know what I tell waitresses? I say the younger you are the more napkins you need and they bring me more napkins," he said.

Muster speaker recalls Aggie spirit

By Nicole M. Jones
THE BATTALION

Ed Cooper, Class of 1953, learned this weekend that his class has lost 18 members in the past year. As this year's campus Muster speaker and a member of the 50-year anniversary class, Cooper said he would honor his classmates, explaining Sunday night that this Muster would be bittersweet.

"It's especially painful for me because of that," he said. "My message for all of the families and friends of the Aggies honored at Muster is that we will not forget the spirit of those who are gone, and their spirits will endure with us forever."

Cooper, who was a member of the Aggie Band and the Wildlife Management Club during his undergraduate years, served as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army upon his graduation from A&M. He then returned to A&M to serve as the dean of admissions and later worked under University Presidents James Earl Rudder and Jack K. Williams. In the past 50 years, Cooper has watched the University grow from an all-male school to the world-class institution it is today.

For the Muster ceremony, Cooper hopes to entertain the audience with humor, then tell them about the Aggie spirit that has remained constant through the years.

"My talk will be about the origin of Aggie spirit — it will go back to the early days of how spirit was built through hardship," Cooper said. "I will glorify some people and groups of people who exhibit Aggie spirit in the best possible way and how it has grown through the years."

Cooper said that spirit is special and can only be found at a place such as A&M.

"Aggie spirit is working together when times are rough and tough," said Cooper. "It's as strong or stronger now than it has ever been."

Cooper attended A&M when the enrollment was about 7,000 male students. He said he has noted a few changes in the Aggieland community since then.

"The band is one thing that I can point to that has improved with age," he said. "They are light years ahead of what we were capable of back in those days."

Cooper has seen others changes on campus, including the increasing strength of academic programs and the incorporation of air conditioning in the buildings.

"Back in those days, we had classes from 8 a.m. to 12 noon on Saturdays, which I imagine would not be too popular now," Cooper said. "It's just a totally different world."

For entertainment at the all-male school, the Corps of Cadets would host social events to entertain themselves and bring women into town.

"In my case, the girl I brought up here for two years was the one I married," Cooper said.

Cooper and his wife Peggy were high school sweethearts, and were married halfway through college. He is now retired and living in Franklin, Texas, with his wife. He is a professional motivational speaker and a columnist for small newspapers in surrounding counties.

In January 2003, he wrote "How Life Stacks Up," a book of short stories that focuses on his boyhood in San Marcos and his personal experiences at A&M.

Cooper has five children and 12 grandchildren.

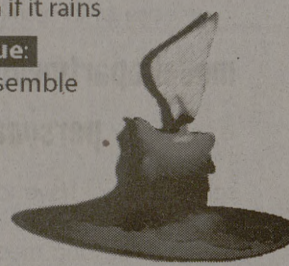
Muster Events

Flag Raising Ceremony - Academic Plaza, 7:15 a.m.

Camaraderie Barbecue - Academic Plaza, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. (\$6.50 - Aggiebucks, cash and credit card accepted; the Commons, Sbisa and Duncan Dining Hall will be closed) barbecue will be moved to Sbisa if it rains

Entertainment at the barbecue:

- Apotheosis, a student vocal ensemble
- Aggie Wranglers
- Kappa Pickers
- Yell Leaders
- Reveille
- Sidehill Gougers



Roll Call for the absent - Reed Arena, 7 p.m.

Doors open at 5 p.m. (those with large groups that want to sit together should arrive early)



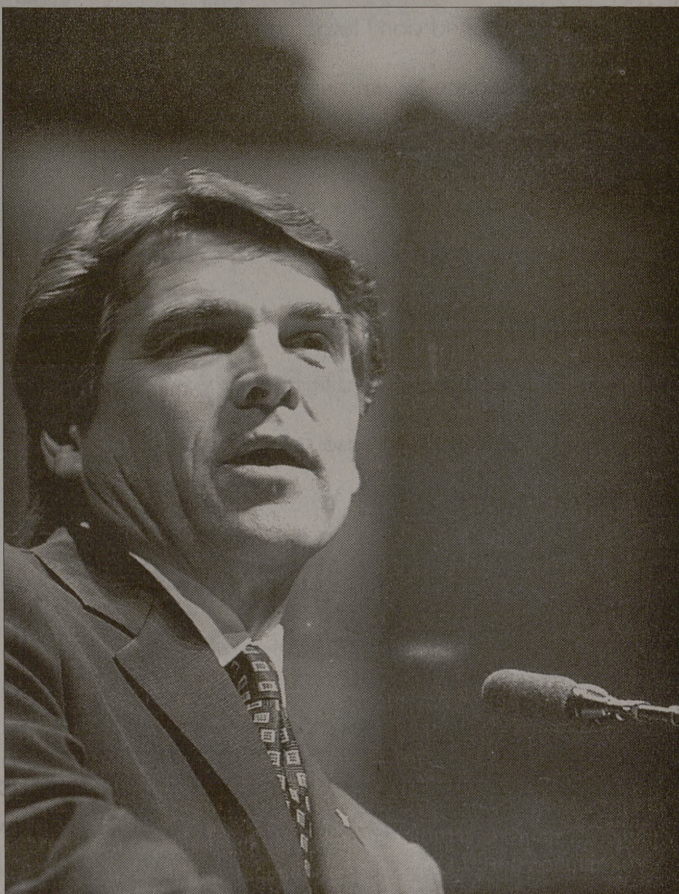
JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION

From left: Jerry, Jimmy and Gerald Easterly



FILE PHOTO • THE BATTALION

On April 21, 2002, there were more than 300 Aggie Muster ceremonies around the world. This year marks the 81st Aggie Muster remembrance ceremony.



FILE PHOTO • THE BATTALION

Gov. Rick Perry was the featured speaker at Aggie Muster 2003.