

THE BATTALION

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'They are with us in spirit'

By Janet McLaren
THE BATTALION

Darkness covered Reed Arena as the names of Aggies who have passed away since April 21, 2002 were read aloud at Muster 2003 Monday night. After every name,

friends or family members shouted "here" from the crowd of more than 12,000 people gathered at the 81st ceremony to honor the memory of former Aggies and celebrate the Aggie Spirit.

Ed Cooper, the main speaker at Muster 2003, said Aggie Muster is "the defining moment in the long

maroon line of Aggie tradition."

Cooper, Class of 1953, said Texas A&M has changed in many ways since he and his classmates were students.

"We entered under strict requirements," Cooper said. "To get in, we had to be at least 16 years old, a graduate from high school and be free from infectious and contagious diseases."

Muster this year honored the class of 1953 whose time at A&M was marked by such landmark events as the building of the Memorial Student Center and the adoption of the first official Reveille mascot.

Cooper said his class had become part of Aggie mythology.

"When I was a student, we referred to something called Old Army," Cooper said. "Now I look around and we are Old Army."

Andrew Gomez, a senior environmental science major, read the first half of the Roll Call.

"The answer 'here' means the Aggie Spirit will continue," Gomez said. "It symbolizes that while he or she is no longer here in body, they

are with us in spirit."

The Roll Call for the Absent was followed by a rifle volley by the Ross Volunteers and a solemn rendition of Silver Taps.

Volunteers holding lit candles surrounded the members of the class of 1953 who attended the Muster as a tribute to the Aggie Spirit passed on by each class.

"(The class of 1953's) lives have created a legacy for those of us who have followed," said Cindy Abbott, a junior member of the Muster committee.

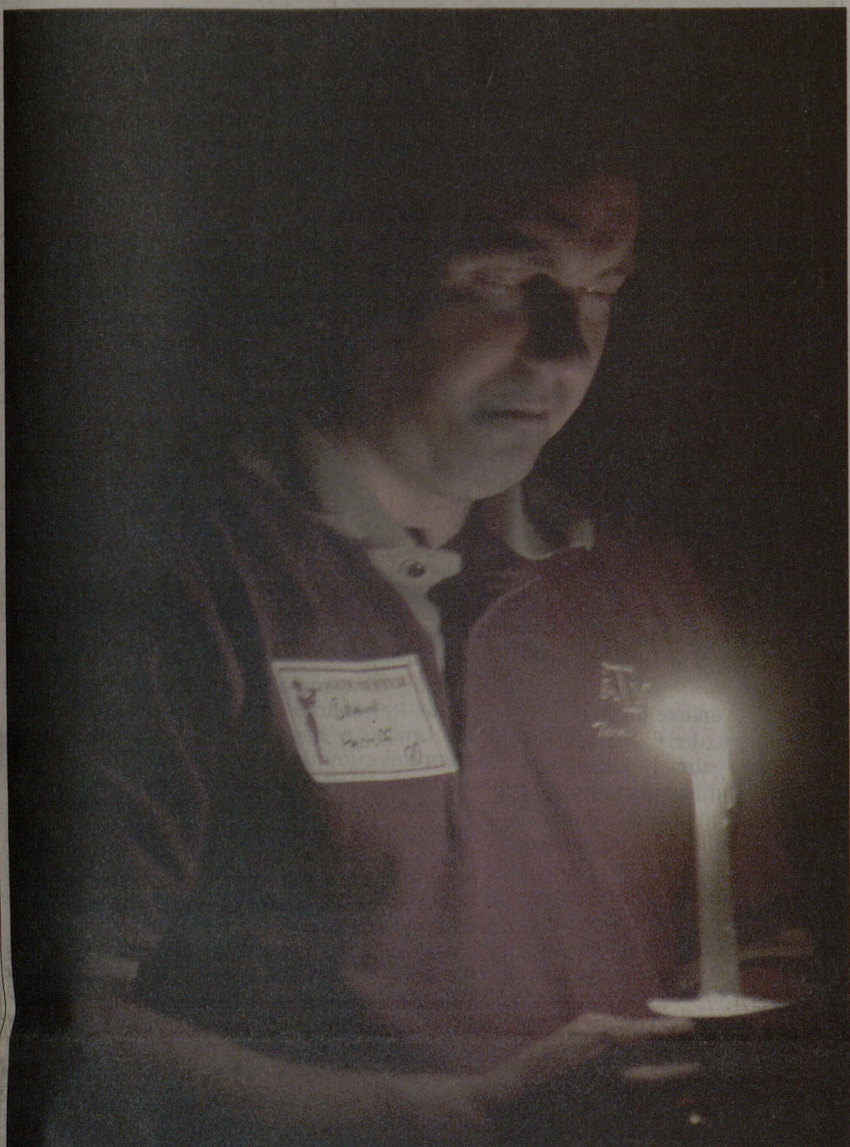
Muster, which A&M President Robert M. Gates called "the most hallowed" of A&M's traditions, is held every year on April 21.

The Singing Cadets, the Women's Chorus, the Century Singers and the Texas Aggie Band performed at Muster.

"This year, there are more than 350 Muster ceremonies around the world," said Student Body President Zac Coventry, a senior agricultural development major.

Aggies gather "to remember, to honor, and to celebrate," Coventry said, a tradition that officially began in 1923 at a nationwide rally of former students.

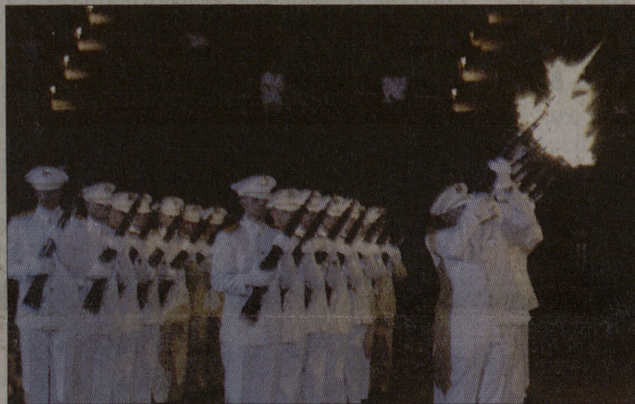
Aggies at the first Muster were encouraged to come together to "meet old friends again and live over the old days in College Station."



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Shawn Harroff, Class of 1988, holds a candle and answers "here" for his wife, Cindy, Class of 1990, during Roll Call for

the Absent, during the Texas Aggie Muster held at Reed Arena here in College Station on Monday.



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Ross Volunteers fire the first of three rifle volleys after the Roll Call for the Absent during the Texas Aggie Muster. Names of those who have died in the past year were read, as each name was called and family members and friends answered "here."

Search narrows for next VP for student affairs

By Rob Phillips
THE BATTALION

The advisory search committee for the new Texas A&M vice president for student affairs anticipates a final decision by the end of the spring semester, said committee co-chair Brandon Hill.

University President Robert M. Gates will select a new vice president from one of four finalists selected by the committee: Dr. William Kibler, current associate vice president for student affairs at A&M; Dr. Leelen Brigman of the University of Wyoming, current vice president for student affairs; Dr. Charles Fey of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, current vice president for student affairs and Dr. Juan Gonzalez of Georgetown University, current vice president for student affairs.

Dr. J. Malon Southerland will retire as vice president for student affairs at the end of the current academic year. Southerland held the position for nine years.

Gates requested that the 22-member search committee narrow down a lengthy national list to an unranked list of three to five candidates, Hill said.

The committee settled on four candidates during the first week in April and immediately began scheduling campus visits for each of them. Gonzalez visited A&M April 9 to 11, and Brigman and Fey will travel to College Station during the next two weeks, Hill said.

The committee now has purely an advisory role in sharing with Gates the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate, Hill said.

Gates selected Hill, a senior agribusiness major, to co-chair the committee with A&M Dean of Education and Human Development Jane Close Conoley.

Five students including Hill serve on the search committee. Hill said the committee's student representation shows that the administration places importance on student opinion.

Hill said he wants the new vice president to serve as a voice for students.

"Personally I'm looking for a very strong

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Progress reported despite new deaths

Hong Kong's leader said Monday that the territory is gaining ground in the fight against SARS despite reporting 22 new cases and 13 deaths—seven in mainland China and six in Hong Kong.

SARS cases worldwide: 3,861 Deaths: 217



International figures as of April 21, 5 p.m. GMT

SOURCES: Associated Press, World Health Organization

Reports progress in fight against SARS

By Dirk Beveridge
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HONG KONG — Hong Kong's leader said Monday that the territory is gaining ground in the fight against a deadly respiratory virus sweeping Asia, even though the death toll continued to rise and there was still no known cure.

Thirteen new SARS deaths were reported Monday — seven in mainland China and six in Hong Kong. Yet Hong Kong's deaths and 22 new cases Monday were fewer than the jumps of 40 and 50 cases a day that the World

Health Organization had reported recently.

Hong Kong Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa said quarantine measures and efforts to find people who came into contact with those infected seem to be working. Hong Kong and China have been hardest hit by SARS.

"On the whole, I think we are slowly but surely getting the figures stabilized," Tung told reporters. Still, he declined to take questions and would not predict how long it will be before SARS is brought under control.

About 3,900 people have now been infected by SARS around the world.

The 13 new deaths — reported by China's Health Ministry and in a Hong Kong government statement — brought the global death toll to at least 217, according to the World Health Organization.

World Health Organization spokeswoman Maria Cheng said the latest figures out of Hong Kong were encouraging because the territory hasn't seen the sharp spikes in cases. She also said that in Hong Kong new cases can be traced back to other reports of SARS and aren't appearing in unexpected places.

"Hong Kong has been taking the right infection containment meas-

ures," Cheng said. "Every new case we're still able to track to someone who is known to have had SARS."

There is no known cure for the illness, though people treated early enough usually recover, and most of those who have died in Hong Kong were elderly or were sick with something else as well. Symptoms include a fever of more than 100, a cough and difficulty breathing.

In China, where SARS appears to have originated, the government again sought to show it was taking the illness seriously enough after playing down the crisis — and apparently covering up the number of cases — for weeks.

Supreme Court agrees to hear death row inmate's appeal

By Anne Gearan
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court said Monday it will take a fresh look at the quality of lawyers assigned to represent murder defendants and what happens when overworked, lazy or incompetent attorneys fail to do all they can to keep a client off death row.

The court agreed to hear the case of one of Texas' longest-serving death row inmates. The court stepped in to temporarily spare Delma Banks' life minutes before his scheduled execution in March, and will now hear his full appeal.

Banks claims an inept defense lawyer and underhanded prosecutors denied

him a fair trial 23 years ago. He was convicted in 1980 of killing Richard Whitehead, a 16-year-old former co-worker at a fast-food restaurant. Banks maintains his innocence.

"He'd never been in trouble before. He was not violent."

— George Kendall
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund

"He'd never been in trouble before. He was not violent. This is not a death row inmate out of central casting," said one of

Banks' new lawyers, George Kendall of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

Banks claims his original lawyer failed to present evidence about Banks' family and background that might have persuaded a jury to spare Banks a death sentence, and that prosecutors improperly withheld evidence that could have undermined the testimony of a key witness for the state. The witness later recanted parts of his testimony.

Banks' new lawyers also claim that prosecutors hid the fact that another trial witness was a paid informant.

The court will hear Banks' case next fall. The justices could use the case

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Rebuilding effort begins in Baghdad

By Charles J. Hanley
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Glimmers of a new Iraq were evident Monday, as the American charged with rebuilding a ravaged country came to Baghdad, and Muslim multitudes converged on holy cities for a ritual long suppressed by Saddam Hussein's regime.

But the work of rooting out the old Iraq went on. Military officials announced the arrest of a key figure in the bloody suppression of the Shiite Muslim uprising of 1991 — Muhammad Hamza al-Zubaydi, the "Shiite Thug" they promised to try on charges of war crimes or crimes against humanity.

U.S. officials also revealed that American experts had discovered ingredients and equipment that could be used to make a chemical weapon.

Efforts to bring electricity to Baghdad progressed. Iraqi engineers started a turbine at the city's biggest power plant, and a few lights flickered in the capital for the first time since April 3. It was expected that Baghdad would have 90 percent of its prewar power in a day or two.

This, said retired Lt. Gen. Jay Garner, was his top priority as Iraq's postwar administrator — to restore power and water "as soon as we can."

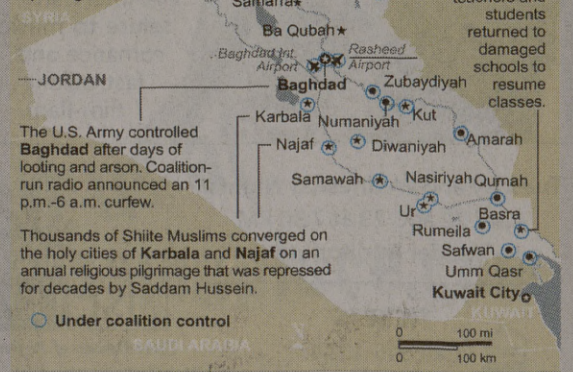
Garner's arrival in Baghdad was itself a historic

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THE AFTERMATH OF WAR

American administrator arrives in Baghdad

Retired Lt. Gen. Jay Garner, the American charged with overseeing the rebuilding of Iraq, arrived in Baghdad Monday. He visited a hospital that has been overrun by casualties and depleted by looters. Central Command reported the capture of Muhammad Hamza al-Zubaydi, who played a key role in the brutal suppression of the Shiite Muslim uprising of 1991.



Thousands of Shiite Muslims converged on the holy cities of Karbala and Najaf on an annual religious pilgrimage that was repressed for decades by Saddam Hussein.

SOURCE: CIA; UNITED NATIONS; ASSOCIATED PRESS; NATIONAL IMAGERY AND MAPPING AGENCY