Howdy!

239 years ago, a delegation of 56 men drafted, signed and submitted a document that was adopted by the United States Congress on July 4, 1776. That document contained one sentence, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”, and has served as the guiding principles and foundation of law for the greatest nation in the history of the world, a nation that has epitomized hope, freedom and opportunity.

Blood was shed to allow it and the Nation it guided to come into existence when it was adopted and again in 1812. Beginning in 1861 a war was fought to preserve the young nation. 600,000 Americans died in a war that began over state’s rights known as the War of Brothers, The War of Northern Aggression or the American Civil War. While state’s rights were the impetuous of hostilities, another issue that stood in stark contrast to the core values expressed in that sentence, was integrally entwined, the issue of slavery. By 1865, the war ended, the nation had been preserved and slavery was rightfully abolished.

Someone far smarter than I once said, “Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it”. Ags, it bothers me that ignoring or twisting history for personal interest or political gain seems to be accepted as normal in the modern era. I despise the fact that political correctness has replaced common courtesy and social graces as the theme of the day. Our heritage and our history is what it is. We as a nation have made great strides in upholding the values expressed in that one, brilliant sentence. Yes, there were issues that have evolved and been corrected and there is still room for improvement. But, becoming a divided nation, comprised of groups that simply want to ignore the wisdom of the 56 men who drafted the founding principles of this nation, and erase the elements of history they find objectionable is simply unacceptable. As Americans we should embrace our heritage, keep in mind everyone’s heritage is equally important and strive to emulate generations of immigrants who came to America to be Americans first and foremost, while enjoying the freedoms and opportunities with which we are so blessed, and do not exist anywhere else in the world. Thankfully, there is a place that embraces freedom, honors its heritage and stands ready to defend American values. I’m proud to be an American, a Texan and a former student of that place. It is a little College on the Brazos, a College named Texas A&M.

Gig ’em
J. Clay Deatherage ‘84
2015 Abilene A&M Club Calendar

July, 2015

July 1 - Regular Club Meeting
July 4 - Independence Day!
July 16 - Board of Directors Meeting
July 16 - Aggie Happy Hour - Agave Bar

August, 2015

August 5 - Regular Club Meeting
August 20 - Board of Directors Meeting
August 20 - Aggie Happy Hour
August 31 - Counselor's Admissions Seminar

September, 2015

September 2 - Regular Club Meeting
September 10 - 19 - West Texas Fair & Rodeo
September 17 - Board of Directors Meeting
September 17 - Aggie Happy Hour

Sell The Hell Outta French Fries!
West Texas Fair Is A Commin’
Capt. Jordan Thomas ‘10

- Graduated Bethesda Christian School 2006
- Corps of Cadets (A-Battery)
- Torch Corporal
- Graduated Texas A&M University 2010
- Commissioned as 2nd Lt in the USAF
- Graduated pilot training at Laughlin AFB IN 2012
- Joined the 40th Airlift Squadron in May 2013
- 2 month deployment to Ramstein AB, Germany

Air Force Captain Franchot M. "Jordan" Thomas III graduated from Texas A&M University in December 2010 with a degree in University Studies--Business. A proud A-Battery Corpsman, he enjoyed 4 years as a drummer in the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band and a year as Torch Corporal. Jordan commissioned as a 2nd Lt upon graduation at which time he attended Air Space Basic Course at Maxwell AFB, AL where he received Outstanding Performer before completing pilot training at Laughlin AFB in 2012 in Del Rio, TX.

After 6 months of C-130J training in Little Rock, AR, Jordan and his wife, Rachel ('11), settled down in Abilene as part of the 40th Airlift Squadron, Dyess AFB. They welcomed their first daughter, Emma, in 2014 just a few months before a 3 month deployment to Ramstein AB, Germany, and they are expecting their second daughter this October. It has been a joy and honor for Jordan to serve his country as a Christian, Aggie, and military officer, and he is looking forward to many more adventures with the USAF.

Welcome Jordan!
All good Aggies will immediately recognize the following sentence. “Aggies gathered together on June 26, 1883, to live over again their college days, the victories and defeats won and lost upon the drill field and in the classroom.”

It is hard to know where you are going, if you don’t know from where you came. The My Aggie Nation Website has an article entitled, “The Corps of Cadets: A historical look at the 'Keepers of the Spirit'. It provides an outstanding history of Texas A&M. As you read the following excerpts, take time to consider which ones you consider victories or defeats. Regardless of your view, they provide an outstanding insight to from where we came.

If not for the Corps of Cadets, Texas A&M would not exist. Military training was the reason for the campus' creation and symbolizes the university's foundation for traditions and pride.

Texas' first institution in higher education officially opened its doors Oct. 4, 1876, as the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas. With few exceptions, if one was a student during the first 87 years of the school's history, he was a cadet.

Maj. Robert P.W. Morris, professor of applied mathematics and member of the original faculty, was in charge of military discipline. The Corps of Cadets credits Morris as the first commandant and "creating the esprit de corps within the student body."

Gov. Richard Coke, who was the president of the board of directors, spoke at the college's opening ceremony in front of Bryan residents, college staff and six students. The campus housed 106 students by the end of the next semester in the spring. Coke said at the opening ceremony: "Grave responsibilities rest upon you as upon all others connected with this college. The tree will be judged by its fruits. The excellence of the college as an education institution will be determined by your progress, your proficiency, your submission to discipline, and by your general deportment. And [your] future welfare and success in life will also depend upon the same considerations.” "Let your watchword be duty, and know no other talisman of success than labor. Let honor be your guiding star with your superiors, your fellows, with all. Be as true to a trust reposed as the needle to the pole, stand by the right even to the sacrifice of life itself, and learn that death is preferable to dishonor."

The beginning years of A&M's academic history departed from Morrill Act's intentions. The curriculum focused more on liberal arts and languages rather than "practical" vocational studies. Following a period of faculty feuds and an investigation by the board of directors, the original faculty, including A&M president Thomas Gathwright, was fired in December 1879. The directors chose John James, a Virginia Military Institute graduate and head of the Texas Military Institute, to turn things around. Only the campus physician and Capt. George T. Olstead Jr., commandant of cadets, remained on staff.

There was talk of closing the school because of low funding and lack of strong leadership, until Gov. Lawrence Sullivan Ross was appointed A&M president in 1890. Ross was a Civil War veteran and brought A&M into a period of growth and prestige, including expanding academics, enforcing discipline, new buildings and more administration. He even tried to lobby for women's admission, reasoning that the cadets would benefit by the "elevating influence of the good girls," according to university archives.
The Scott Guards, an elite drill team organized in 1887, was renamed the Ross Volunteers in 1890. Today, the "RVs" are an honor guard, a unit with ceremonial duties. Members are expected "to exemplify the traits of Sul Ross, 'Soldier, Statesman, and Knightly Gentleman," according to The Standard, the Corps' policy book.

When Ross died in 1898, the first Silver Taps was conducted. The Ross Volunteers fired a 21-gun salute and performed Taps. The tradition continues today to pay tribute to any student who dies while enrolled at the university.

By the end of the century, the land grant colleges were training students for the United States military. These citizen soldiers were taught how to handle rifles and swords provided by the government. The Corps' record of military service began with the Spanish-American War in 1898. Before the war, cadets petitioned A&M President David F. Houston to organize a volunteer regiment. The petition was never fulfilled. Records estimate 89 men from A&M — including the commandant, Major George Bartlett, and former students — volunteered or served in the Army, according to Texas Aggies Go to War: In the Service of Their Country by Dethloff.

Sixty-three of the men from A&M were officers. The role of the Corps was further cemented when Congress passed the National Defense Act of 1916, creating the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) in colleges and universities. The Corps traded in its West Point-style uniform for one that resembled the Army's. The United States entered World War I in 1917 and World War II in 1941. According to Texas A&M University: A Pictorial History 1876–1996 by Dethloff, the entire classes of 1917, 1941 and 1942 entered the service. Cadets also contributed to the effort through agriculture developments and engineering in both wars.

In each world war, A&M provided more officers than any other college or service academy. A&M was nicknamed the "West Point of the Southwest." Seven Aggies were awarded the Medal of Honor for their service in WWII. Cadets made their Hollywood debut in the 1942 propaganda film We've Never Been Licked. Approximately 55 Aggies died in WWI and 950 in WWII.

Students who die in war are memorialized with statues and plaques on campus. The Memorial Student Center is dedicated to all Aggies who gave their lives in wars. The John 15:13 scripture is inscribed on the building: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

To be continued in the August newsletter. The full article may be found at: http://www.myaggienation.com/history_traditions/corps_of_cadets/the-corps-of-cadets-a-historical-look-at-the-keepers/article_cceffbec-e329-11e2-b6f5-0019bb2963f4.html
Did You Know

As one of the largest dining halls in the country—and the largest dining facility at Texas A&M—Sbisa Dining Hall feeds thousands of Aggies and campus visitors every day. The building sits at one end of Texas A&M's landmark Military Walk.

An early morning kitchen fire on Nov. 11, 1911, destroyed the original campus mess hall. Construction on Sbisa Dining Hall started in 1912 and it was completed in 1926.

The new mess hall was constructed in the same location as the original mess hall. Fredrich E. Giesecke designed the building with details that include columns, pediments and arched windows and doors. It was named in honor of Bernard Sbisa, the Austrian-born New Orleans chef and college steward who prepared hearty and timely meals for Aggies for more than 50 years - the only day that Bernard was late in serving a meal was breakfast the day of the 1911 fire.

Roxanne Schoen

GOOD BULL

Coach’s Night was a great success. Special thanks to all of our sponsors:
Epic Construction, Bunkley Electric Company, Bug Blasters Pest Control, West Texas Rehabilitation Center, Shahan Guevara Decker & Arrott, Attorneys at Law, Colonel Billy W. Libby ’58, First Financial Bank, N.A.

And to Committee Members:
Bobby Shoem, Marshall Morris, Trey Todd, Allison Cowling, Roxanne Schoen, Clay & Mel Deatherage, Maci Cline, and Nick Arrott

Got any Good Bull? Send it to us!
Abilene A&M Club Silver Taps

Capt. Wallar Overton ‘61
Holly Nash Spencer ‘82
Mr. Raymond A McDaniel, Jr. ‘55
Mr. Robert Adams ‘75

Prayers and Concerns
Raymond McDaniel Family
David, Sarah & Grant Spencer
Jason Jessica Adams & Family
Mel Deatherage’s Family

Please keep these Aggies in your prayers.

Memorial Contributions

There are many ways to honor departed family members and friends. Should you select a memorial contribution that embodies the Aggie Spirit as a method to celebrate the life of a loved one, the Abilene A&M Club will consider it an honor to help ensure your wishes are met.

Local Club options include the Senior Ring & Boot Fund, the Freshman Scholarship Fund and the Class of ‘43 White Belt Scholarship Fund. If your preference is one of the numerous organizations on campus or an affiliate of the Aggie network, please do not hesitate to contact us for assistance.
Mail Newsletter to
☐ Home
☐ Work

Name (please print)

Spouse’s Full Name (If Applicable)

Spouse’s Class

HOME Address

City & State

ZIP

Home Phone

Home Fax

Home E-mail

WORK Address

City & State

ZIP

Work Phone

Cell

Work E-mail

☐ Membership
☐ Change of Address

Annual Dues:
☐ $35/yr Individual ☐ $35/yr Aggie couple

I want to help with:
☐ Scholarship Selections ☐ Muster ☐ French Fry Booth ☐ Golf Tournament ☐ Board of Directors

Optional Reveille Donations:
(above & beyond dues)
☐ $25 ☐ $50 ☐ $100

Golden Reveille Donations:
☐ $250 ☐ $500

I wish to be acknowledged:
☐ in the Newsletter $75.00/yr ☐ on Aggie Football Radio $400.00/yr ☐ at the Golf Tournament

Total Paid: $________

Statement of Purpose: Primary functions of the Abilene A&M Club are serving as the focus of all organized alumni activity in the Abilene area, and providing scholarship funds for deserving area students who are attending Texas A&M. The Club currently offers scholarships funded by your Membership Dues, Reveille Donations, Newsletter Sponsorships, the Aggie French Fry Booth at the West Texas Fair, A&M Football on radio and the annual Golf Tournament. Donations may also be made directly to the Abilene Community Foundation Texas A&M University Scholarship Fund (tax-deductible) which is a perpetual fund using only the income generated for scholarships.