



PHOTO BY GABRIEL CHMIELEWSKI '06/TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY



STAR QUALITY

Reveille IX already a crowd-pleaser

BY SUE OWEN '94



exas A&M University's new first lady and highest-ranking Corps of Cadets member showed her outgoing nature and eagerness to engage people early on.

"She wanted the whole world to watch her," said Marcy Fine, who with husband Mark bred and raised the future Reveille IX at Overland Collies in Chagrin Falls, Ohio.

"She was so focused on getting them to pay attention to her and being photogenic. She knew when people were taking her picture and she loved it."

Born Nov. 22, 2013, the sable-and-white puppy then called Twix competed in a few shows last August and September, winning reserve and "best of variety" titles at shows in Ohio and Michigan, Fine said.

Twix displayed a tendency to appeal directly to her judges—she would "jump up and give them kisses," even though she wasn't supposed to, Fine said.

The same characteristic helped land her new job, though.

On her first visit to Aggieland, as a candidate to become the next Reveille, Twix encountered "probably 50 to 60 people at a time that were all meeting her, and all by herself she went up to every single one of them," Fine said.

She also exhibited her distinctive knack for focusing on people who are focused on her. "If somebody points a camera at her, she'll turn her head and pose until they're done," Fine said.

Twix's selection was the culmination of a search process in which a 12-member committee including students, faculty and staff reviewed dog owners' submissions of photos, videos and other information.

The committee first settled on essential characteristics that would help them make their decision and accepted applications for a mature female dog of "collie-like appearance," aged about a year and a half or older. Among the criteria: outgoing personality, good health, comfortable with crowds and loud noises, not highly reactive (i.e. responding in defensive or aggressive ways).

From a pool of 15 nationwide prospects, including some from collie breeders and collie rescue shelters, the committee narrowed the list to four finalists. Then, two veterinarians from the committee and two cadets from Company E-2, the Corps outfit that cares for Reveille, took a trip in February to visit and assess those four dogs—two in Houston, one in Minnesota and Twix in Ohio.

Then one dog was invited to A&M. On Twix's two-

day visit in March, the full committee was able to evaluate her, and she underwent veterinary screenings.

With her playful and engaging demeanor, she pretty much "made herself the sole finalist" on that A&M visit, said Marty Holmes '87, vice president of marketing and programs for The Association of Former Students and a member of the committee.

Tom Reber, A&M's interim vice president for student affairs and chair of the committee, expressed gratitude to the Fines for donating to A&M "a special dog they describe as 'very

outgoing and has a positive attitude in every new situation.'"

Fine said, "When I brought her down to Texas A&M, she was just determined that she was going to make friends with everybody she could. And situations she'd never been in, she just relished the new experience."

That's a good starting point for Reveille IX's Aggieland career, which will demand much of her. In recent decades, A&M mascots have met increasing requests for hundreds of appearances. Ryan Kreider '17, the 2014-15 mascot corporal, estimates Reveille VIII averaged three to four appearances



PHOTO 1 BY GABRIEL CHMIELEWSKI '06/TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY; PHOTOS 2, 3, 4 COURTESY OF OVERLAND COLLIES

per week.

Though some events can get action-packed, as when Kreider blocked an SMU football player careening towards Rev on the sidelines and made national highlight reels, others involve hours of posing for photos and being petted by hundreds of fans—“Once somebody sees Reveille, their day’s made. They love it,” Kreider said. So there’s a lot riding on her slim sable shoulders.

Even Reveille’s ordinary days involve lots of interaction. Kreider says he routinely headed to classes 20 minutes early so fellow students could stop them: “I want to let them say ‘howdy’ to Rev, and take pictures and interact with her. That is a really important thing for me, because that makes the most lasting impressions for students,” he said.

“There’s no other university that does that. We’re the only university in the nation that has their mascot going to class, walking around campus and where you’re able to interact with her in a way that she represents the dog that you left at home.”

Kreider said he was glad to be able to finish out the year with Reveille VIII, who was set to officially hand off duties at the Corps of Cadets’ Final Review on May 9, making the first pass in review with senior cadets and letting Reveille IX take over for the second pass, as was done in 1966 with Reveilles II and III.

Reveille VIII is not retiring for medical reasons. Kreider said. “We usually retire the Reveilles around 8 to 10 years of age, and she’s fixing to turn 9 this summer. So it’s really the best time for her to retire and actually be able to be a dog and not have to go to events and just relax.”

COMFORTABLE NEW HOME FOR REVEILLE VIII

Beginning with Rev IV, A&M’s mascots have “retired” after about seven to nine years of service, going to live with

their veterinarian or in other private Aggie homes. Reveille VIII will get a unique chance to live with a combined Aggie and animal family at A&M’s Stevenson Companion Animal Life-Care Center.

The center is not a veterinary facility but a home-like environment with a small staff that is there solely to care for a small group of similarly “retired” pets. It was founded in 1993 to provide a place for animals to stay once their owners can no longer care for them (enrollment requires an endowed gift that pays for the pet’s lifelong care).

Resembling a house inside and out, it includes apartments where four veterinary students live full-time and help staffers care for the pets: currently, 14 dogs, 18 cats and a llama named Rusty.

Living areas include pet blankets on comfy sofas and chairs. Dog beds, cat condos and toys are tucked into corners. A staff of five, plus eight students, help with care that includes exercise and activity both indoors and out, guiding the animals’ interactions with each other, and a level of love and attention that is immediately obvious.

Reveille VIII will actually have some freedom to choose, like the other pets living there, how much activity and socialization she

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A&M announced the future Reveille IX on March 10.

2

Contemplating her future: Twix inspects a plush Reveille during her March 4-5 visit to Aggieland that sealed the committee’s choice.

3

At 5 months old, Twix was preparing to embark on her show career.

4

Standing proud: Twix at 5 months.



Which one is 'your' Reveille?

Here's how the first eight Reveilles became first in Aggies' hearts.

(Drawn in part from Bryan-College Station Eagle history at tx.ag/EagleRevHistory and Rusty and Vanessa Burson's book *Reveille: First Lady of Texas A&M*. Photos courtesy of Texas A&M and A&M's Cushing Memorial Library and Archives.)



REVEILLE I: 1931-44 ►

REVEILLE IV: 1975-84

Given to A&M by a Class of '67 veterinarian, Rev IV debuted as a 5-month-old pup at her predecessor's funeral Sept. 9, 1975, and served nine years, becoming the first Reveille to "retire" after she presided over the Aggies' Dec. 1, 1984, football win against Texas. E-2 cadets asked a Class of '53 Aggie and his wife to care for Rev and built her carpeted 10-by-17-foot "canine quarters" at the couple's Bryan home.

The first Reveille to retire



The first American collie in her line, Reveille III served as mascot for nine years.



◀ REVEILLE IV: 1975-84



REVEILLE V: 1984-93

With 2,000 potential puppy candidates, E-2 cadets evaluated 15 collies and several from other breeds, also considering the possibility of selecting a dog from a shelter, before choosing one offered by an A&M fan and collie breeder from Del Rio in November 1984. She debuted at a Jan. 11, 1985, basketball game and served as mascot for nine years. Officially retiring Nov. 25, 1993, she went to live with the family of a Class of '54 yell leader and retired veterinarian.

REVEILLE VI: 1993-2001

Chosen by a selection committee, this 10-week-old puppy from Plano debuted at a Nov. 13, 1993, football game alongside Rev V. She was stolen by pranksters before the Jan. 1, 1994, Cotton Bowl, but was returned in time to reign at the game; resulting statewide fame led to more requests for her to appear at events. Diagnosed with epilepsy during her seven and a half years as mascot, she retired in spring 2001 with her Class of '64 A&M veterinarian and his wife.

Stolen by pranksters before the Jan. 1, 1994, Cotton Bowl



REVEILLE VI: 1993-2001 ►

REVEILLE V: 1984-93 ►



REVEILLE I: 1931-44

A fox terrier/Spitz mutt who took up residence with the cadets, the first Reveille reigned 12 years. There are several versions of how she came to campus, but all end with her earning the right to roam all campus buildings, napping on students' beds, turning out for formation in the mornings when the bugler played "Reveille," marching with the band and going on Corps trips. A 1943 portrait that students commissioned of her was returned to A&M in December 2014.



REVEILLE III: 1966-75

With Reveille II in failing health, two Class of '67 students asked their parents to provide a collie puppy, which arrived on campus from Fairbanks, Alaska, aged 8 weeks, for Final Review in 1966. As Reveilles VIII and IX will do, the retiring mascot went through the first pass in review with the seniors, and the new mascot made the second pass--though Rev III was so small that she was carried. The first American collie in her line, Reveille III served as mascot for nine years.

Only Rev
who had
puppies



REVEILLE II: 1952-66

When students fell short raising funds to buy a new Reveille, a Class of 1900 Ag donated a Shetland sheepdog, or "Sheltie," a type of miniature collie, on Jan. 12, 1952. She's the only Rev who had puppies; the Aggie Band paid her vet bills (and probably got the pups). Later, cadets in the A Quartermaster company took over her care, starting the mascot corporal tradition; that outfit became E-2 in the Corps' 1959 reorganization. She served as mascot for 14 years.

◀ REVEILLE III: 1966-75

REVEILLE II: 1952-66 ▶

REVEILLE VII: 2001-08

"Rev Sev," Argent Barksdale Reveille VII, was bred from selected parents to be A&M's mascot and first met her public as a 4-month-old puppy at a Feb. 17, 2001, basketball game. Though she infamously bit her handler once, when her tail was stepped on during a run, she handled more duties and appearances than any previous Rev. Veterinarians recommended she retire after seven years; after Final Review in 2008 she lived with a Class of '66 Aggie and his wife.



REVEILLE VII: 2001-08 ▶

REVEILLE VIII: 2008-15

A national search that included non-collies resulted in the selection of 2-year-old sable and white Tapestry Tenacious Juell, bred in Topeka, Kansas. She debuted at the football home opener Aug. 30, 2008, and her last official event will be Final Review 2015. Rev VIII "has participated in hundreds of athletic events, student programs and other activities," said A&M's interim president, Dr. Mark Hussey '79, "and is most deserving of this time of rest and relaxation."



REVEILLE VIII: 2008-15 ▶





wants to have. There are quiet areas and large kennels to retreat to, but also plenty of stimulation and interest.

“What we’re going to do is let her kind of tell us,” said director Dr. Henry “Sonny” Presnal ’57. “That’s something we’re very experienced at figuring out. We’ll figure out real quick what’s the most comfortable thing that she’s the happiest doing.”

She’s already checked out the facility, taking a one-hour tour with E-2 cadets. “Their biggest concern was that she would not be fully retired, that people would be coming by wanting to take pictures,” Presnal said. But they were reassured: Access is controlled, and Presnal said he doesn’t anticipate any problems.

And he feels certain Reveille VIII will be able to relax. Already, she’s well aware when she’s in the spotlight and when she is not, he said. “She knows when to show off when she’s got that blanket on, kind of like a service dog. She knows when the cameras are

OPPOSITE PAGE:

Texas A&M tweeted this photo March 12, soon after Reveille IX (on the left) was chosen, saying, “Just Reveille VIII and @Reveille IX, taking a walk around campus this evening! Gig ‘em, Miss Revs!”

ABOVE: A&M’s Stevenson Center, where Reveille VIII is moving, is not a veterinary facility but more like a home for retired family pets. It’s part of campus, but access is controlled. Four veterinary students live in the center full-time and help with the animals’ daily care. A lot of petting and hugging is involved.

rolling.” But her ordinary nature is laid-back and social, he said. When she toured the center with E-2, she sniffed around the rooms, then settled down and took a nap.

Kreider said he’s glad she’s going to be nearby. “I’ll be able to go see her still, go pick her up and take her out on some dates,” he laughed. “And I definitely will. Because I’m quickly going to miss her.”

CARRYING THE TRADITION FORWARD

Along with Reveille IX’s announcement came her own website, reveille.tamu.edu, where you can watch video of the energetic pup, and even an official Twitter account at twitter.com/reveille.

Fine said she thinks Twix was destined for a big job like this. Every dog exhibits its own personality, and she said, “As a breeder, I want the dog to be engaged and happy with whatever career they have. If they want to be a show dog, they’re a show dog. If they want to work in agility, I try to find them an agility home. You can tell what really captivates a dog’s interest, and I try and get that dog into that way of life.”

That’s why she worked to get Twix to A&M, she said, because her special aptitudes and extroverted attitude seemed like a perfect match.

“She just thinks that the whole world is here just for her,” Fine said.

At Texas A&M, it definitely is.