

Talon

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NOW----- A DRUM AND BUGLE CORPS

BY
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During half-time at Air Force's football victory over Army on October 16th, a new sight greeted the cheering crowd of over 45,000 fans. No, not the first homecoming queen at USAFA (that was at the SMU game, a week earlier) but the premiere performance of the Cadet Drum and Bugle Corps. Following the opening fanfare of *Bring Me Men*, the unit rolled to the center of the playing field to the swinging strains of *Put on a Happy Face*. Then intricate precision marching formations were executed to the refrain, *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. After a concert the exit maneuvers were performed to the appropriate chords of *Climb Every Mountain*.

he Corps is the culmination of musical efforts of cadets which date back to the earlier years of the Academy but which are chiefly derived from the suggestions and efforts by cadets and Academy personnel during the past year. Members are from the Cadet Stage Band which has performed at Mitchell Hall (cadet dining hall), pep rallies, hockey games and June Week Awards Ceremonies in addition to others selected from the 320 try-outs. To give initial impetus to the idea, Major R. E. Thurston, Director of the U.S. Air Force Academy Band, was approached and through his efforts a meeting with General Clark was arranged. The Superintendent was pleased with the idea and gave the cadets the go-ahead for a one year period during which the program could be observed in operation. To provide a better foundation for the corps, Major Thurston traveled to the U.S. Naval Academy to study the Midshipmen Drum and Bugle Corps there. Definite plans were made and practice began last August.

What kind of listening quality will be possible with the cadet corps whose members are busy with the daily routine of classes and formations is a question which pops to the front when the idea is discussed. Cadet 2nd Class Allan W. Howey, Corps operations officer, felt with the daily practice the eighty man group was conducting, the Cadet Corps would eventually develop into an excellent group of musicians. The introduction of the program into the Academy curriculum in which the participating cadets will receive one hour of academic credit per semester also will make practice the name of the game. The cadets also are excused from fall intramurals during the time they are working towards their musical goals. Officially the print reads in part:

FINE ART105. DRUM AND BUGLE CORPS I

Introduction to military music traditions and procedures. Instruction in performance techniques of various types of bugles and drums. Extensive rehearsal and drill in techniques of precision marching while playing. Participation in exhibition performances.

Unofficially, the new musical organization will continue to perfect its drill, unison and sounds while providing martial music at Cadet Wing noon meal formations as schedules permit. In the future, it is possible they will participate in local community parades and civic functions upon request. At the Academy itself, of course, they will play on special occasions for the Association of Graduates and at special functions of the Cadet Wing.

Organizationally, the Corps might be considered to be divided into three areas of concentration — drill, brass and drums. Leading the musical sec-

tion is MSgt G. P. Lykens who has ten years experience with the drum and bugle corps at Lackland AFB, where his unit performed at the Hemisfair in San Antonio. MSgt Lykens works with and has a high regard for the cadet who leads the Corps, C3C Wes Hester. Guiding the drum section is TSgt. Robert Houlter, an Academy Band member with long experience in drums. Included in the drum section are five different kinds of drums, among which is a triple tom-tom. Although perhaps not quite performing the same job as "Black Hat" training sergeants at the Airborne School in Ft. Benning, Ga., TSgt. Robert Long is the corps's drill instructor.

Next fall, if the Cadet Drum and Bugle Corps receives approval to continue — there is no doubt of this in the minds of the musicians themselves — the Corps will be back. The cadets will have new marches, dazzling formations and magnificent big band sounds!

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