

March to the Brazos

The 36th Annual March to the Brazos in support of the March of Dimes was held on Saturday, April 28. Cadets raised \$86,000 for the local chapter of March of Dimes during their annual campaign. The fundraising takes the form of anything from "Fill the Boot" collections to auctions and soliciting donations. The top twelve outfits that raise the most money will receive the privilege of being the Officers of the Day for Texas Aggie football games for the upcoming football season.

The tradition of the march goes back a century. On April 1, 1908, the cadets of the A. & M. College went on strike and did not attend classes on that day. This action, along with other April Fool's Day pranks, were becoming a little too regular of an occurrence for the Commandant. The next year, the Commandant issued General Order No. 27 and began what became known as the "Hike to the Brazos" and eventually the "March to the Brazos." The hike originated in 1909 and was held March 31 through April 1 to keep the cadets from playing April Fool's jokes on each other and their instructors. The hike was held annually until 1912 at which point it was discontinued.

In 1977, the March to the Brazos was revived as a worthwhile way to benefit a very important nationally based charity. The March to the Brazos fundraising campaign by the Corps is the largest student-led fundraiser for the March of Dimes in the country. Through its efforts, the Corps of Cadets has collected over \$2.1 million from 1977 to 2012. Since 1977, March to the Brazos has provided the venue for the cadets to "hand down" or "pass down" rank to the rising class. This serves as a rite of passage for cadets. For many, this march will be one of the toughest physical challenges due to the 18 mile round-trip march in high temperatures and humidity. Today, the units march off road across pastures, creeks, and ravines to the Beef Center in staggered waves by major unit.

Upon arrival at the Beef Center, cadets participate in an unofficial change of rank and command, BBQ lunch, and the traditional announcements of the top fundraising outfit within the Corps. Upon completion of the activities, the senior class boards busses for a ride back to the Quad while the underclassmen march the nine miles back to campus. The BBQ lunch and bottled water consumed by cadets during the march is sponsored by BMI Defense Systems.

