


# HIGHTY-TIGHTY

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## NOTES



Homecoming  
2019

*The official newsletter of the Highty-Tighty Alumni, Inc.*  
Volume 44 Number 1  
Winter 2020



# HIGHTY-TIGHTY ALUMNI, INC.

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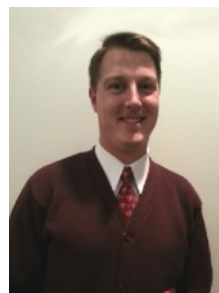
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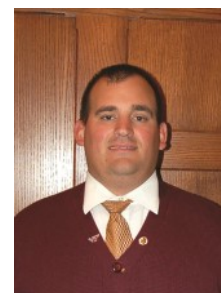
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# PRESIDENT'S PAGE

## Marching Into a New Decade

Hello Highty-Tighty Alumni and friends. I hope you had a wonderful 2019 Holiday season and have begun a Happy 2020 New Year. Starting a new year or decade or even century always provides a great opportunity to reflect on what has been as well as what may soon be. As I read our President Emeritus Bert Kinzey's superb history article in this issue describing how World War II impacted the Corps and the Band, I was amazed to see how the Corps went from 2650 cadets to a low of about 300 as our men left to serve on active duty. In 2020 we aren't nearly as large as the 1941 corps but we are going in the right direction growing from the current almost 1,100 status to nearly 1,400 cadets in the next few years necessitating the addition of a 4th Battalion.

Another important item coming up early in the new decade will be a new home for the Highty-Tighties on the upper quad. A third residence hall will be built on the site of the current Femoyer Hall. Along with these exciting additions there will also be some losses as our Corps Alumni Director Col. Patience Larkin and our representative on the Corps Admissions staff, Gary Jackson, retire after many years of faithful service. We wish Patience and Gary well and offer them many thanks for all that they have done for the Highty-Tighties.

As we move ahead we will be continuing our efforts to preserve traditions, like our alumni band sweaters and others, while doing all we can to raise funds to support the band with the freshman stipend and the ELS scholarships. I am so grateful to all of you who have been so loyal and generous with your support of the current and past Highty-Tighties. You have been generous with your attendance at Corps and/or Highty-Tighty reunions as well as with your financial gifts.

Turning attention to the more immediate future, we have had quite a few requests for the current Highty-Tighty calendar. Go to [vtcc.vt.edu](http://vtcc.vt.edu), scroll all the way to the bottom left and you will find the calendar. I had initially mentioned several events listed there including: The Hilton Head St. Patrick's Day parade in March, VTCC Change of Command cere-

mony on May 2 and the Highty-Tighty Concert Band and Southern Colonels Spring Concert on May 3. Unfortunately, all of these events have been cancelled due to the coronavirus situation. Note the web address for future reference. It is a great way to keep up with upcoming Highty-Tighty and VTCC events.

Another item of interest will take place September 9th and 10th. This is Virginia Tech's 3rd Annual Giving Day. You will probably receive emails inviting you to contribute \$5 or more to one or more groups. Please consider a donation to the Highty-Tighty Annual Giving Fund (#877055). We may have one or more matching challenges for the Band for you to consider helping that day.

Finally, the best way to support the Highty-Tighties and have a great time doing it is by attending our reunion (homecoming). Reunion 2019 was a big success. We hope you will consider joining us in Blacksburg this fall the weekend of Oct 3rd. (Details on page 10) Join us as we celebrate with the HT Class of 1970 at our Highty-Tighty luncheon in Dietrick Hall where they will be recognized as the newest members of the Old Guard. Don't miss it!

Thank you for all that you do to support the Highty-Tighties.

Best wishes,

Chuck Rowell HT '71  
President, HTA





# DIRECTOR'S DOWNBEAT

## Keeping it Simple and Sticking to Basics

The eternal pursuit of perfection is alive and well in this year's Highly-Tighties. Although we were far from perfect, mistakes

were recognized and worked on in a positive, successful manner. This year's leadership, headed by CO Mariah Zwirb and DM Wyatt McCranie, were committed to excellence and led with a vision for each rehearsal, aiding our unit to have one of the most gratifying and constructive seasons.

Keeping it simple and sticking to basics were the objectives of the fall marching season. Our goal was to put on shows that, though not complicated, were executed with military precision. Building on each performance, our season culminated with a halftime show to be proud of at the Pitt game in November. Please take a moment to view our work at the following URL: <https://www.facebook.com/TheHighlyTighties/videos/2330123230612259/>

Additionally, using current technology such as cell phone lyres and an online database of our pep music, our repertoire stayed interesting and aided in our sound production.

I recently learned of a faux pas from the St. Patrick's Day parade committee in NYC. We marched there in 2018 and earned the first place prize. However, in the transition from one grand marshal to the current grand marshal our award was misplaced. After recently finding it, I received a call from COL (Ret.) Robert J. Bateman, NYARG, chairman NYC St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee, who extolled our virtues and mentioned not only the competitiveness of this event but the honor to receive first place. We are working on a possible presentation of the award in New York.

In recruiting news, Colonel Jackson has helped us identify a list of potential HTs. Cadets and I will start to reach out to those students who have checked interest in regimental band or have music experience.

The goal is to sign up wind players, particularly low brass, and snare drummers!!



As always, I am impressed with the ability of our band cadets to pull together and rise above any challenge. Their can-do spirit and willingness to work together makes me proud to be their band leader. I thank the students and the alumni alike for allowing me to be the director of this historic ensemble.

James M. Bean, Senior Chief, USN (ret.)







## Editor's Note

### Recognizing the Guys You Seldom See in the Pictures

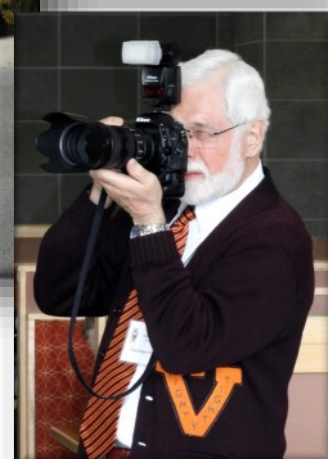
Old Guard festivities usually bring some folks back to campus who we don't see on a regular basis and reunion 2019 was no exception. My "Ole Lady" from a semester back in 1969 or 1970 rolled into town with a couple of Nikons hanging around his neck just like the last time I saw him. Chuck Kneyse HT '69 ran the Band photo staff the whole time I knew him at Tech and he was really good at it. We had a fully equipped dark room in Brodie Hall back then. I am sure thousands of feet of Tri-X and Plus-X black and white film were processed there documenting every move the Highty-Tighties made in the late-sixties.

It seems to me that the usual procedure for long absent alumni returning for a football weekend is to party and reminisce with classmates (buds), but Chuck apparently didn't get the memo on that. He worked the whole weekend doing what he has always done: take pictures. Shortly after reunion weekend, I received a thumb drive from him with pictures from band practice, the parade, pregame, the luncheon and meeting and some great shots of the game with UNC. This issue is packed with those shots because it has been a long time since Chuck has documented Highty-Tighty activities, not to mention that they are incredibly good photos.

HT



**Chuck graduated with '70 so it's actually HT '69 - '70**



**All photos in Cover Collage by Chuck Kneyse HT '69**

Two of the photos above are of Chuck (no one knows what the right side of his face looks like because what you see here is the only pose he knows.) The other guy is another great friend of the band, Mike Diersing, who you will likely see anytime you see the band. If you doubt what I am saying, take a look at the many THOUSANDS of pictures on his Flickr site (actually 147,665 - I just checked). Here is the URL: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/42316262@N08/albums/72157711418402062>. Mike's pictures have been prominent in ALL Highty-Tighty Notes issues for at least the last couple of years and it would be very difficult to do this newsletter without him.

Many, many, many thanks to both Chuck and Mike for helping the rest of us see what you obviously care so much about—The Highty-Tighties!



# Development Update



## Support The Highty-Tighties

The band continues to represent the Corps of Cadets, the university, and the state very well year in and year out. The Schaeffer Endowment Fund continues to need funds in order to maintain the \$1,000 stipend that each band freshmen receives. The band is continuing to grow, and needs our financial support to be able to provide the benefits we as alumni have afforded to so many incoming freshmen over the years, and hope to do so for many years to come.

The Highty-Tighty Annual Giving Fund (Fund # 877055) is doing very well, but it needs the financial contributions of alumni to continue to support the band in all of its endeavors. Please contact Ms. Sandi Bliss at [srbliss@vt.edu](mailto:srbliss@vt.edu) if you are interested in contributing or pledging a commitment to any of our available scholarships, whether they are the operating fund, or one of the many ELS scholarships. Also, please consider participating on Giving Day, Sept 9th-10th, 2020.

We would like to call to the attention of all alumni from the George McNeill years, the ELS scholarship named in his honor. That fund currently stands at \$75,000 and needs an additional \$25,000 to be fully endowed. Please mention account number 876330 if you wish to help with that effort.

This year's Highty-Tighty 2020 Reunion has been scheduled for October 2nd and 3rd. Gunnyfest will again be held at the Hilton Garden Inn (900 Plantation Road) on Friday, October 2nd, after band practice from approximately 9pm to midnight. The past three years have been very

well attended, and we hope that as many alumni as possible can join us.

We look forward to seeing the band continue to demonstrate the musicality, precision, professionalism and excellence that we all know are key elements of the Highty-Tighties.

Deeds Not Words

Scott D. Beman HT '01  
Vice President for Development

## Leave Your Legacy on Upper Quad

Throughout history, VTCC graduates have left their names and class years in pencil on the bricks of Lane Hall. Now, you can leave your mark on a brick plaque in the new Corps Leadership and Military Science Building. We've actually used images of the Lane Hall bricks to make these one-of-a-kind plaques. The brick plaques will be featured in a special place in the new building, located behind Lane Hall/Shanks Plain and expected to open in 2022. Please go to the link below to see a replica of what one of the bricks will look like, and the criteria for acquiring one!!

<https://vtcc.vt.edu/give/brick-plaques.html>



# FROM THE COMMANDER

## Cadet Major Isaac J. Patterson

I am honored and privileged to represent the Highty-Tighties as company commander this Spring. As a freshman three years ago, I never would have imagined having this incredible opportunity. I came to the Highty-Tighties as a trumpet player and felt a sense of belonging right away. I am in the Platoon Leaders Class program based out of Roanoke, Virginia. Upon graduation this Spring I will commission into the Marine Corps and attend The Basic School in Quantico, Virginia.

Last semester was incredibly successful for the Highty-Tighties. While I served as battalion commander in the Fall of 2019, I watched admiringly as the band showed tenacity and perseverance through a rigorous football schedule. The Highty-Tighties never failed to meet the incredibly high standard we set for ourselves. Successful events from last semester included football games, Hokie walk performances, the Virginia Tech Homecoming parade, and the alumni pre-game show. When the Corps was dis-

ence, hard work, and loyalty to the Corps and University this past semester.

I have two personal goals for the Highty-Tighties in the Spring 2020 semester. The first is to adequately establish trust and confidence in the chain of command and in each other. The band is a community unlike any other in the Corps of Cadets, and I'd like to ensure that special community is protected and cherished. The second goal is to adequately represent the VTCC and the University in all Highty-Tighty performances. We will be working throughout the semester to ensure the Highty-Tighties retain their excellence in music and marching performance. I am excited to step into this role as band commander, and even more excited to see the growth in members of the Highty-Tighties in leadership and in musical performance.



Isaac J. Patterson  
Band Commander  
Spring 2020



Senior Chief Bean, Drum Major Cadet Captain Wyatt McCranie, and Band Commander Cadet Major Mariah Zwirb, beaming at a soggy November game against the University of Pittsburgh.

missed for Thanksgiving break, the Highty-Tighties stayed to support the football team against the University of Pittsburgh. The band has showed its resili-



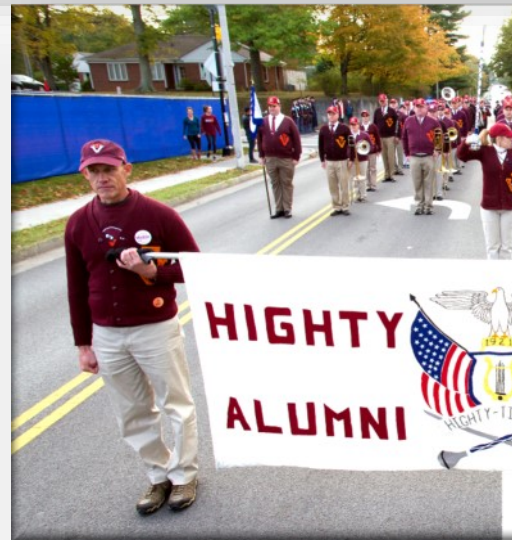




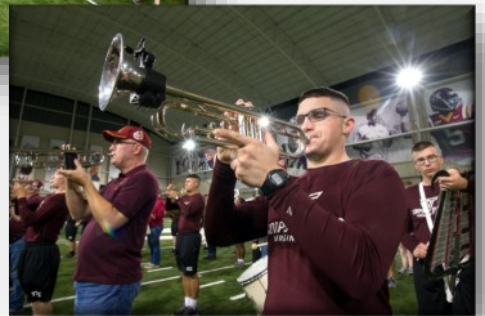
# HOME COM



*Pass in Review*



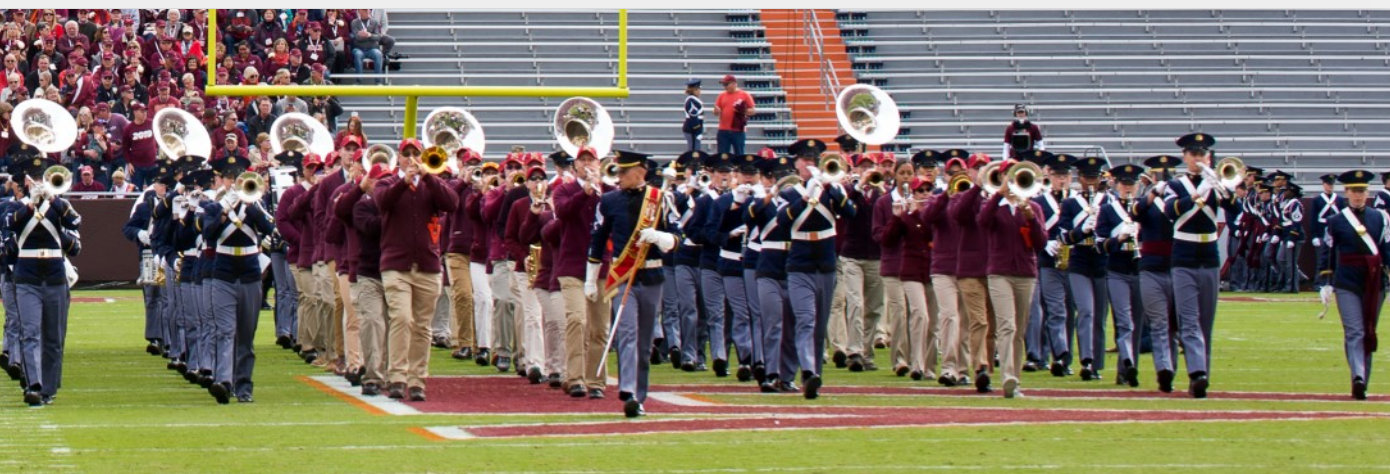
*Band Practice*







# WINTER 2019



*Parade and Pregame*



*Photos by Chuck Kneyse HT '69*



*Six Overtimes!*





# Be A Mentor!

## New Highty-Tighty Mentor Initiative Dirk McComsey HT '92

The new Highty-Tighty Mentor Initiative continued into the new year with a doughnut social on January 25th. Several of our local alumni met with the Highty-Tighty freshmen in Pearson Hall for a couple hours of socialization and sharing. Many doughnuts were eaten, stories were shared, and experiences gained.



The new mentor program is comprised of Highty-Tighty Alumni who live within driving range of Blacksburg and can visit with the cadets at planned events throughout the school year. We had a couple of events in the fall which went quite well. Just letting the freshman class know that we are here and we care about the band and their class is a big accomplishment and goes a long way toward continuing the tradition of excellence that is so important to us. If you would like to participate in this program and do not receive notifications about when the events occur, please contact Dirk McComsey, class of 1992, at [dirk@mccomsey.com](mailto:dirk@mccomsey.com).

Thanks,  
Dirk

## Reunion 2020

### Highty-Tighty Reunion 2020 Has Been Scheduled for October 2-3, 2020

So far, we only have confirmation of the dates for our Reunion festivities for 2020. We anticipate that the schedule will be much the same as recent years with practice Friday at 7:30, parade Saturday at 9:00 am and lunch, annual meeting and game at times to be determined. So mark your calendars for October 2-3 and keep an eye on the HTA website, [hightytightyalumni.org](http://hightytightyalumni.org), and email for updates and details. Registration usually opens up in May.

### Attention Highty-Tighty (Soon to be) Old Guard Class of 70

You see the Old Guard class of '69 on the opposite page — I count nine on the platform. We can beat that! Get in touch with George McMichael at [gmname@aol.com](mailto:gmname@aol.com) and keep an eye on the [hightytightyalumni.org](http://hightytightyalumni.org) website for updates, who is attending, accommodations, etc. Don't miss it!





# Annual Meeting

## Class of 69 Inducted Into the Old Guard



*Old Guard Liaison, Mike Francisco HT '74 (left) introduces the class of '69 Old Guard: Steve Wickham, Ron Clower, Frank Smith, Sam Skillman, Jerry Goodson, Jeff Old, John Flahive, Doug Phillips, and Don Delbalzo*

**First Row:** Wickham, Leonard, Dupuy, Skillman, Savage, Smith, Hanak.

**Row Two:** Lawrence, McNeil, Boyd, Delbalzo, Old, Wyks, Allen, Smith, White, Gough, Dunford, Goodson.

**Row Three:** Kneyse, Phillips, Dudley, Wilson, Leatherman, Flahive, Grogg

**Row Four:** Dunn, Frazier, Drescher, Eck

*Photo from The Highty-Tighty '67*



*Band Commander Mariah Zwirb '20 and HTA President, Chuck Rowell '71 honor Skyler Powell '22, center, with the Jim Schaeffer Memorial Scholarship, recognizing her as the outstanding band sophomore for 2019.*



*Photos by Chuck Kneyse*



# History Notes

## The World War II Years

**Author's Note:** This is the nineteenth in a continuing series of articles about the history of the Virginia Tech Regimental Band, the Highty-Tighties. The purpose of this series is to provide an accurate record of the Band's proud and amazing history that dates back, unbroken, to 1893. Some recent issues of the **Highty-Tighty Notes** did not have one of these continuing history articles. Articles covering several specific historical events were published instead. The last article in the series took the history of the Regimental Band up to the 1940-1941 school year. This latest article in the series begins at that point.

The 1941-1942 school year began for the Highty-Tighties as many others had before it with a fall full of football games and Corps reviews. But there were war clouds on the horizon. Fighting had been going on in Europe for more than two years, and the Japanese were at war in China

Asia, and tensions between the United States and Japan were about to reach the boiling point. The American Pacific Fleet had been moved to Pearl Harbor, and as tensions grew, America's entry into the war seemed to become more inevitable with every passing day.



*The Highty-Tighties numbered 140 cadets at the beginning of the 1941-1942 school year. This photo of the band was taken on the steps of Squires Hall in the fall, and it appeared in the Bugle for that year. (Bugle Archives Photo)*

and Indo-China. America was sending aid and lend-lease military equipment to the British, as they now stood alone against the Nazis in Europe, and to the Russians who were fighting the Germans on the eastern front. Continuing sanctions against the Japanese had done nothing to stop their aggression in

The Highty-Tighties began the school year with 140 cadets. Band Company marked the year as their golden anniversary since their establishment as part of the Corps in 1891. A special dress review was held to celebrate the event, and the German Club, who was also celebrating their 50th year on





# Bert Kinzey HT '68

## VTCC 2,650 Strong!

campus, presented the band with a much needed set of bells lyre. Band Company commander, Cadet Captain E. E. Jones, Jr., accepted the gift from Cadet Major Charles O. Gordon, president of the German Club. The bells lyre was then handed to Cadet Arthur Klages who played them during the remainder of the review. The school year also marked the silver anniversary of Jim Schaeffer as a director of the band. He had served as director, then assistant bandmaster, and then again as director since the 1916-1917 school year.

The Highty-Tighties supported the football team at all home games and traveled to Richmond, Winston Salem, Lynchburg twice, and, of course, to Roanoke for the VPI-VMI game to conclude the season. But less than three weeks later, on December 7, everything changed when the Japanese attacked the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor and other U. S. military installations on Oahu. The following day, America was officially at war.

Changes began on campus as the cadets returned from the Christmas break, but the changes were not all that significant for the remainder of the school year as the Army began to ramp up the training to prepare men to go to war. The band played its normal series of concerts on campus throughout the spring. But by the time the 1942-1943 school year began, things were very different. The Corps went on a twelve-month cycle. Because of its size, the Corps had changed from a regiment to a brigade, and the Highty-Tighties became the brigade band. The Corps had increased in size to 2,650 cadets, and in addition to the band, it com-

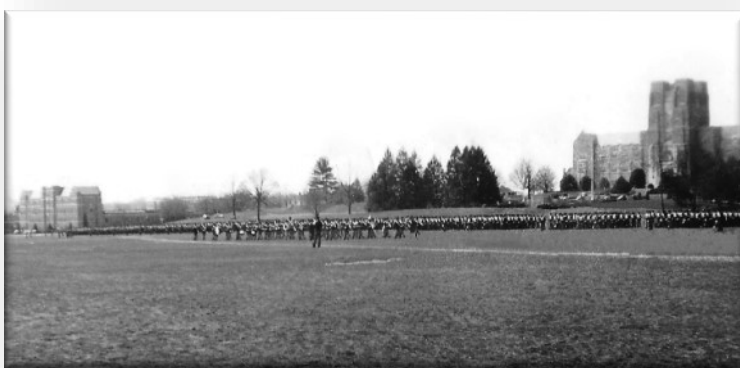
prised two regiments with a total of five battalions. First Battalion was primarily infantry ROTC, Second Battalion was engineers, and the other three battalions were cadet batteries training for assignment in the artillery. But such were the needs of the Army that seniors were commissioned and graduated early, and juniors were placed on an accelerated schedule to be brought to active duty. Sophomores and freshmen who were over the age of eighteen were largely inducted into military service. All of this reduced the Corps in numbers down to less than 300 cadets, and they were reorganized into a single battalion.

In addition to the cadets, the Army established a supervised unit under the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) and Army Specialized Training Reserve Program (ASTRP) that consisted of

soldiers under the age of eighteen. The commandant was given the responsibility of overseeing both the Corps and the ASTP/ASTRP unit, and those assigned to the ASTP/ASTRP unit also wore the cadet uniform. Additionally, a Navy pre-flight training unit was formed, also under the supervision of the commandant. Both the ASTP/ASTRP unit and the Navy pre-flight training unit had a lot of former cadets in their ranks, and all adopted the Corps traditions

including the Honor Code and saluting "The Rock."

All of this meant that VPI essentially became an active-duty military installation, but this was not the only factor that affected the Highty-Tighties. Gas rationing restricted their traveling for football games in the fall. They only made two trips to Ro-



*This photograph was scanned from a very small print that is less than 2.5 inches in width, so it is not of high quality. However it reveals the size of the Corps in 1941, with the Highty-Tighties marching in front of the line of companies and batteries that stretches most of the length of the Drillfield. The size of the Corps had reached 2,650 cadets. It became a brigade with two regiments consisting of five battalions. (Photo by B. Y. Kinzey, Jr.)*



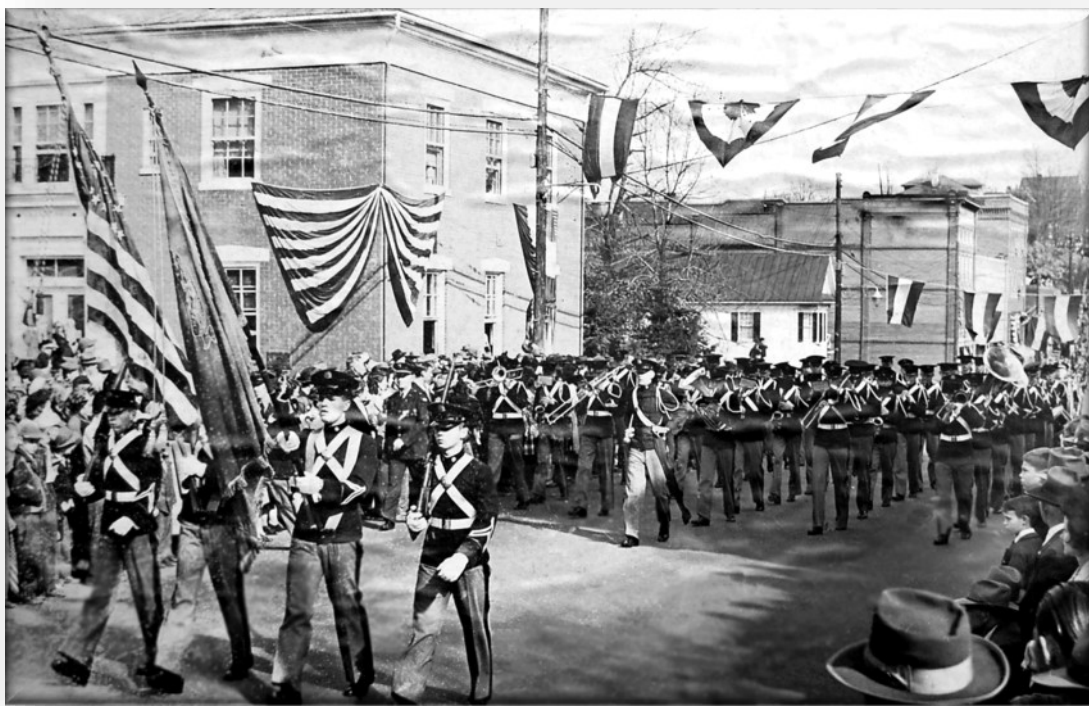
# History Notes Continued

## Accelerated military training emphasized in the War Years

anoke to support the team, one for a game against the University of Kentucky, which resulted in a 21-21 tie, and the other for the VPI-VMI game, which the Gobblers won. The Drum and Bugle Corps did travel to Lexington to support the team in their game against Washington & Lee, which VPI also won. But the games played in the fall of 1942 would be the last until after the war. No football games would be played again until the fall of 1945.

1944-1945 school years until the end of the war. There was not even time to create the Bugle year-books, and none were published again until 1947. Very little was recorded about the events of those years with respect to the band which had time to do little more than perform at brigade functions where music was required.

Among the things that did continue were the band's campus concerts in the spring. These took



*The Highty-Tighties march in the Christiansburg 150th Anniversary Parade on November 12, 1945. Director Jim Schaeffer can be seen in his black uniform at the right front corner of the band. At this time the band was still carrying music rather than having it memorized, due to the demanding schedule of the World War II years that had ended just two months earlier. (Photo courtesy of Bert Kinzey)*

The Highty-Tighties added a lot of Army songs to their repertoire, but there was little time to dedicate to memorizing music or perfecting precision marching. Music was carried, and Jim Schaeffer did not insist on the marching perfection the band was known for. Emphasis was placed on the accelerated military training that continued every month of the year and the academic requirements of the cadets. This environment would continue through the 1943-1944 and

place on Sunday afternoons, usually around three or four o'clock and lasted about an hour. One of these concerts took place on May 24, 1942. Prior to the concert, Major Jim Schaeffer announced that the band would play Dixie as its opening number and that it would be dedicated to a Highty-Tighty alumnus, Charles L. Pedigo. Pedigo was a Spanish-American war veteran and was present for the concert. There was also a little time for some non-military and non-academic activities.



# Bert Kinzey HT '68



## Highty-Tighties Help Celebrate VJ Day

On November 7, 1942, Band Company won the Corps talent contest, and the cash prize was added to the band's allowance fund by the members that participated in the event.

On August 14, 1945, the Japanese announced that they would sign the articles of surrender to end World War II. To celebrate the end of the war, the Highty-Tighties performed three off-campus concerts within less than twenty-four hours. The city of Roanoke invited the Highty-Tighties to perform a concert in Victory Stadium, and an announcement was published in the Roanoke Times on August 31. The concert was scheduled to take place in the stadium at 4:00pm on Sunday, September 2. This was the same day that the Japanese actually signed the articles of surrender aboard the battleship USS MISSOURI in Tokyo Harbor. A large platform was built and centered on the fifty yard line. It was draped in patriotic colors with flags of several allied countries serving as the backdrop.

The night before the concert in Roanoke, the Highty-Tighties performed a concert in Christiansburg at 8:00pm. The band arrived in Salem the next morning and had lunch at the Veterans Facility. They presented a concert for the patients at 1:00pm, then headed to Victory Stadium where they played the Roanoke concert in front of a large crowd that celebrated the end of World

War II.

The next off-campus appearance by the Highty-Tighties after VJ Day was at Christiansburg's 150th anniversary parade on November 12 of that year. While the parade was forming, the band played a brief concert of three Army songs including Under Arms, The Booster, and American Soldier. During the parade, they played a series of marches including U. S. Naval Academy, E-Pluribus Unum, Washington Post, The Thunderer, Signal Corps, Hedway, Invercargil, and Military Escort. Following the parade, they played a concert for the citizens of Christiansburg. The numbers included, Our Defenders, Dixie, Beer Barrel Polka, Banner of Democracy, King Cotton, Army Air Corps, Tech Triumph, the National Anthem, and several other selections.

During the parade, the Highty-Tighties were still carrying music rather than having it memorized, and the precision marching and sharp carriage of instruments had not yet returned to the unit, but with the war over, things were beginning to change back to normal, and the band would soon return to a level of excellence that would exceed anything that had come before.

Bert Kinzey HT '68

President Emeritus



### More History Just For Fun!

*I was going through some old files and ran across an old eight by ten print from Homecoming 19???. See anybody you recognize? I see Ed Miller, Charlie Cornelison, Chris Bise, Mark Levin, Paul Gebhardt, Rick Rightmeyer and yours truly, George McMichael. Anybody know what year this was? I know it was prior to 1987 because that was the year I quit smoking. :)*

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## REQUESTS TO ALUMNI

### *Very Important!*

There are three things all Highty-Tighty Alumni need to do to help ensure you get the newsletter and stay connected with Virginia Tech and the Highty-Tighty Alumni, Inc.

1. Be sure that your address and other contact information are up to date with Virginia Tech. You can update your information by sending an email to [alumnidata@vt.edu](mailto:alumnidata@vt.edu). Use this address if you have a change to your email or mailing address. **Please do not provide your contact information or changes of address to the newsletter editor.**
2. Everyone needs to go to the Highty-Tighty Alumni website and check their contact information in the database. Go to [www.hightytightyalumni.org](http://www.hightytightyalumni.org) and click on Database. The site provides a way for you to provide and request and update of your address, phone number, and email address.
3. If you know of any Highty-Tighty Alumni who are not receiving the *Highty-Tighty Notes* newsletter or the *Highty-Tighty Half-Notes* email updates, please pass this information on to them.

## HIGHTY-TIGHTY HALF-NOTES

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The *Highty-Tighty Half-Notes* are periodic emails sent to Highty-Tighty alumni and friends of the Regimental Band. They are intended to supplement the news included in the *Highty-Tighty Notes* newsletter, which only comes out twice a year. These email updates include both photographs and information about the present Band and Alumni. Early information about the reunion and other items of interest to alumni are often subjects of *Half-Notes*. If you would like to receive these occasional emails with photographs and updates about the Band's activities, as well as information about alumni, please send your email address and your request to receive the *Half-Notes* to: [bertkinzey@gmail.com](mailto:bertkinzey@gmail.com)

You may have your name removed at any time.

Please forward any Alumni notes, articles, or other materials for the *Highty-Tighty Notes* to:

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For more information on the Highty-Tighty Alumni, Inc  
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