

DOWN TO THE CORPS

Should band abandon military style to win?

Jeremy Patak
Staff Writer

The White Oak Band competed in San Antonio on November 2 in the biennial State Band Marching Contest. They placed 5th in 3A, and were beaten by four corps bands. In the 2013 contest they also placed 5th, as well as placing 4th in 2011. They won top military band all three of these competitions, but were still unable to place in the top three a single time. This raises the question: Should our band change from a military style band to a corps style band?

The last time a military style band has won first place in the State Marching Contest was Overton High School in 2001. Since 2001, only three military bands have cracked the top three: Hemphill High in 2003, New Boston High in 2007 and Carlisle High School in 2015. Every other year when our band comes back from state, they complain that the judges favor corps bands. The judges have made it clear that they don't like military bands as much as corps. Instead of complaining about it, let's do something that could help us win.

Currently 80 of the 1,400 Texas High School bands are military style. There has been a sharp decline in recent years in the amount of military style bands. This is because they understand that they are hurting their own chances by continuing to use a style the judges like less. The judges are the ones you are trying to impress, so why would you do something that they don't like as much? I think this situation is similar to the change from the running era to passing era in football. In the 1940s, the NFL was a run heavy league. Passing was reserved for long yardage situations and was rarely used besides that. In the 1980s, the San Francisco offense introduced the West Coast passing offense and it took the league by storm. Almost all teams started passing a lot more because it was so much more effective. Teams that still tried to use a run heavy offense were left in the dust and rarely won. This relates to the military vs corps style change. While military used to be preferred style of band, it is becoming outdated, and no longer wins. Corps bands have taken over, and everyone needs to adapt to that if they want to stay in



Two fingers in the air, band director Jason Steele talks to the his students about what they need to do to improve their drill. The band advanced to state and placed 5th in the competition.

contention for championships.

Military style bands and corps style bands don't have enormous differences. Military bands take longer strides (6 steps per 5 yards) than corps bands who don't have exact step sizes because it differs throughout the routine. Military marching bands only march forward in straight lines using extreme precision when performing routines. Corps bands aren't as exact, and they march in curved lines, backwards, and other untraditional methods. Besides these slight differences in step length and marching methods, military and corps band types don't have huge differences.

Many of the White Oak band members criticize corps bands because "all they do is dance" during their routines. Corps bands do not require dancing, and if they do choose to do that, they would be more of a show band than corps. Corps bands are based on marching in patterns that depict a picture on the field. Example of great corps bands include Ohio State and the University of Texas. These bands are some of the top corps bands in the nation, and utilize very little dancing. Another reason that many don't want to change to a corps style band is the deep tradition that we have as a military band. While I do think this is a good point, I think that instead of keeping the tradition of being a military band, let's start a tradition of being a winning band.

Tell us what you think using the hashtag, #Gaugerbandstory.



At attention, the band stands in their standard parade rest position. It was from this position that the band started their drill and could move into their variety of different formations. "I like military bands because corps bands look like a big mess all over the field," sophomore band member Morgan-Taylor Thomas said.

Eli Hernandez
Staff Writer

When the Drum Corps International was founded in 1972, the military marching style was challenged and changed into something that did not follow the inferred guidelines of straight diagonals and directional playing. As time went on, many schools adopted the "corps" style of marching. Little did the fad-following schools know that as they did so, they killed the tradition that had been upheld for years.

I stand in opposition of the grand movement from military to corps for the following reasons: precise alignment must be enforced, theatrical performances should be left in the theater, dancing and prancing must not be permitted on the field, and we must keep our tradition.

In corps bands, the notion of directional playing and diagonals is non-existent. This makes competition for corps bands easier because their alignment mishaps are not easily spotted. As for military bands, the slightest under-step can take away from alignment and cause trouble. In the 2015 White Oak band, alignment was one of the hardest parts of preparation and one of the most crucial parts in competing. Not only do they have altered lines, corps bands also disregard directional playing. Military

marching bands play in the direction in which they travel while corps bands constantly face the home stands and occasionally face away for theatrical effect.

If we wanted theatrical effect, we would call State Marching competition, "One Act." Since many high school corps bands have taken it upon themselves to create an emotional effect, the state marching competition has become a contest of who has the least errors and best actors. This does not mean that military bands cannot have the power to move people emotionally. This is evident in the 2013 and 2015 White Oak bands as they performed to send a message. Director Jason Steele inspires the band to play with enough emotion to flood the stadium, in hopes that the spectators feel moved by the performance. The underlying message is that a group of people can gather and practice for something that is much bigger than themselves.

Many of the corps bands have adopted a part of show band style as they put their horns down and dance while the drumline or front ensemble play. This also goes along with the theatrical performance part of the show. If you would rather have a dance competition, why not just make a new separate competition called, "Field Dance," competition? Rather than trying to make marching something that it is not, we should advocate to

keep this competition marching and not dancing. After all, the organization that started corps marching, Drum Corps International, does not dance on the field. Rather, the bands that compete in Drum Corps International always face the stands, march for 10 minutes, but never once do these bands put their instruments down to tango or mambo. If the corps band style advocated for a more musical style of marching, transition from military to corps would be easier for some schools.

In regards to the great movement from military to corps, we must keep steadfast in tradition. For example, the Regiment of Roughnecks was the only division 3A military marching band at the State Marching competition. If we gave into the change, we would be the average high school. That is not the way of White Oak. What sets the school apart is the tradition that ranges from military marching to the tradition of excellence. The band is not what holds the school together, it merely represents what the school stands for. The school stands for tradition: tradition of family, community, and the passing down of culture.

With all of this in mind, I encourage everyone to continue to support our military marching. We should try to persuade the corps band enthusiasts to uphold the tradition of military marching.

Student Survey: Favorite Christmas Song

Student vote on their all-time favorite Christmas tune

Avery Moore
Staff Writer

Jessica Patak
Staff Writer



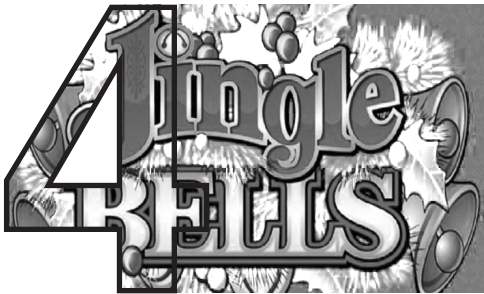
It's Beginning to Look a lot Like Christmas **18%**



Baby, It's Cold Outside **17%**



Santa Claus is Coming to Town **16%**



Jingle Bells **11%**



Santa Baby **10%**



Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer **10%**



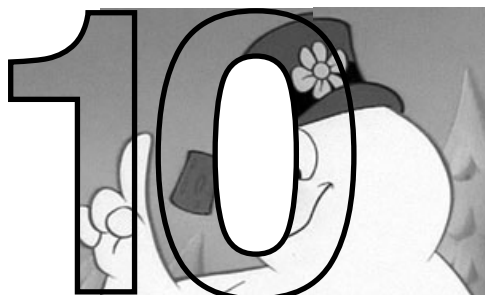
Silent Night **7%**



Holly Jolly Christmas **5%**



Winter Wonderland **5%**



Frosty the Snowman **1%**