

1999

TEXAS A&M BONFIRE COLLAPSE

Disaster strikes TX-TF1's hometown

Deployment Statistics

Lasted a total of 2 days

22 Personnel activated supporting the following resources:

- US&R Team

Type - **STRUCTURAL COLLAPSE**



Aggie Bonfire was a long-standing annual tradition at Texas A&M University as part of the college rivalry with the University of Texas. As part of the tradition, Texas A&M students built and burned a bonfire on campus each autumn, prior to the big game, symbolizing the Aggie students' "burning desire to beat the hell outta T.U." On the early morning of November 18, 1999, the 40-foot Texas A&M Bonfire structure collapsed, trapping students who had been working on the stack, which consisted of nearly 5000 logs. At the time, TX-TF1 was based out of hangers at the College Station Airport and were on-scene within 2 hours. Under the direction of the incident commander, and working side by side with College Station Fire Department, Bryan Fire Department, and students from the Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) Fire Recruit Academy, TX-TF1 members began using their equipment, training, and experience to support the rescue efforts.

The stack was a jumble of ten inch thick logs and quarter inch steel cables. The stack resembled a matchstick pile, and moving one log could shift other logs, further injuring trapped students. Working as fast as they could, the rescue efforts on the stack were very deliberate and coordinated.

In total, 12 Aggies were killed and 27 were injured. TX-TF1 demobilized on November 19, after the last student was removed from the stack, nearly 24 hours after the collapse had occurred.



November 18-19