

### The Shultz Letter . . .

Since the storm in Austin over the Shultz letter, many people have asked the Batt, "What is the Shultz letter?" That letter, which was circulated early in February and printed in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, was similar in many respects to the prepared statement read by Dr. Walton at the investigation recently.

The letter was sent to a number of newspapers in the state, but was considered libelous by most of them, (as it unquestionably was, under Texas or other state laws). The Star-Telegram, however, did print it. At the top of the letter, as read at the investigation last week, were the words, "verified and supported by the senior class" and at the bottom "written by Delbert V. Shultz, '46."

On the witness stand in Austin last week, Shultz testified that he wrote the letter after an interview with Dr. Walton, who gave him the information on which three of the seven charges were based. The letter was read to the senior class at a meeting before being mailed to the newspapers, according to Shultz, who was no longer a student but was on the campus at the time. (This was during the period when the cadet officers were holding out.)

Apparently, this letter was not circulated on the campus. Later, during the fuss over Brandt and Nelson, another letter was drawn up and published in the name of the senior class, similar only in one point to the Shultz letter.

Charges of suppression of news were made against some of the newspapers for not printing the letter, by students who apparently do not understand libel laws.

Charges of a criminal nature, or that tend to defame, are not publishable in a newspaper unless the charges are made in court or before an investigating committee, legislative body or church court. The fact that a letter or statement is signed by someone else does not relieve the newspaper of libel.

Sometimes newspapers take a chance, but it is a dangerous proceeding. The paper can be sued, the editor and publisher can be arrested. On the Battalion, for instance, Allen Self and Vick Lindley can be held personally responsible in court of law for any libel printed, whether attributed to someone else or not. If the person quoted denies that he was quoted correctly, the editors are left holding the bag. Which is one reason why editors get wrinkled so young.

### 'Something Called Fission'

In August, 1945, the press suddenly became very interested, indeed, in the atom. But it cannot be said that its interest has contributed very much to general enlightenment. With few exceptions, newspapers fumbled the atom badly. They were unprepared, for the most part, to satisfy the immense public curiosity aroused by the Bomb. A measure of the newspapers' failure is the fact that all over the country, clubs and groups of people, failing to find adequate explanations in the papers, besought scientists and even pseudo-experts to come and explain to them the elementary facts about atoms and the Bomb.

Nor can it be said that newspapers have been helpful in guidance on what to do about the Bomb. Most people clung to blind belief that the scientists would somehow find a defense against it, in spite of the scientists' attempts (ill-supported by the press) to assure them to the contrary. The press nudged false hope along by printing silly little stories, like the one that Bing Crosby's brother had discovered a way to stop the Bomb. And newspapers, particularly Hearst's, have done much to foster the illusion of safety in secrecy—"We must not give away the secret!" The press could have rendered the American people a great service by killing this idiotic notion, which has obsessed and be-deviled Congress' entire approach to the problem. It has been clear to scientists all along, and they said it again and again, that the Bomb could not long remain a secret; U.S. insistence on retaining exclusive possession of the secret (and continued manufacture of the bombs) could have only one result: to stimulate other countries to arm themselves with atomic weapons of their own.

Of matters scientific, the American people are appallingly ignorant. The press is not entirely to blame for this (incredible as it may seem, in view of all the press and radio attention to the Bikini bomb tests, a 1946 poll showed that 20% of the people had never heard of the events at Bikini).

If the Bikini bomb tests were intended to contribute to public enlightenment, the press certainly muffed the ball. Hundreds of reporters covered the event, but most of them seemed to have no idea of what happened, except that there was a big, beautiful explosion. The failure of their stories to agree, or to present an informative account, is understandable, since many of the reporters, to make sure of meeting deadlines, wrote their stories before the explosions actually took place. After the big flash, newspapers quickly lost interest; few bothered to follow up to find out what, if any, scientific findings developed from the test.

Like atomic energy, radar dazzled, mystified and then soon wearied the press. After the first dramatic descriptions of radar's accomplishments as a military weapon, the papers dropped it, and radar's application to improving the safety of commercial aviation, due to lack of public drive, was delayed.

Science, in the social as well as the physical realm, is important to a modern democracy, for democracy rests, at bottom, on scientific method. It functions best in a climate of public respect for facts and for expertness. Moreover, science is a universal, unifying language; like music, it makes the whole world kin. Its most momentous achievement, the atomic bomb, was the joint product of Austrian, German, Italian, Danish, British, French and American scientists. The world-wide fraternity of science gives us an international bond which the press is bound to develop and safeguard. Freedom of science and freedom of the press are two sides of the same coin.

—The Nieman Reports.

## The Battalion

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### In the Pacific . . .

## US Looks To 623 Former Jap Mandated Isles

By A. D. Bruce, Jr.

Saipan, Tinian, Kwajalein, and Truk, on which many A.&M. veterans fought, plus hundreds of other islands of wartime interest, constitute an inheritance of former Japanese-occupied areas which gives the U.S. a Pacific "empire."

The Marshalls, the Carolines and Marianas, which Japan had held under mandate of the League of Nations, comprise 623 islands and thousands of islets, and cover nearly 3,000,000 square miles of water just north of the equator, an area about as large as the continental U.S. itself. But their total land area is only 829 square miles, twice the size of Los Angeles. Their population of 85,000 is less than half that of Miami, Fla.

The island inheritance, however, is important for other reasons. PEOPLE added to U.S. responsibilities are largely a race of brown-skinned, friendly folk, who are skilled at wood carving and fishing, but little else. They need aid to improve their economic and health conditions. Teachers, doctors, and administrators should be sent to help rehabilitate the natives from effects of the war and prolonged Japanese rule.

RESOURCES of the islands are minor. They are limited largely to phosphorous ores in the form of guano, to coconuts and fish. Fish are plentiful and a fish-drying industry was developed there by the Japanese before the war, but officials doubt that it will be revived. Actually, in most of the island groups food is plentiful and the incentive for work is missing. Moreover, the soil on most of the islands is unsuited for anything except coconuts and a few shrubs.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE of the islands is limited now and the Navy's plan to invest \$1,000,000 in a network of bases there has been abandoned. Prospects are that Tinian, Saipan, and Kwajalein will be made into permanent bases, the first two as auxiliaries to a major naval base at Guam, and with Kwajalein primarily as an air base. Truk is likely to be kept solely as a service recreational center. From a military viewpoint the importance of U.S. possession of these islands is largely in keeping other nations from gaining a foothold within the Hawaii-Guam-Alaska defense triangle.

AIR-LINE SIGNIFICANCE of the vast island chains, however, is great. Here, U.S. possession means that a network of commercial airfields can cover the broadest expanse of ocean between this country and Asia. It means that the U.S. will be linked closely in peacetime with the Philippines, with China and Japan, and with Australia and the East Indies. This is likely to bring more trade and closer economic ties with those areas.

VACATION LANDS also are subject to development in the tropical island groups. However, it will take considerable time to convince many Pacific veterans that any of these islands might make a suitable resort spot. ADMINISTRATION presents a big question. The Navy is governing all the islands at present. The Interior Department, which runs Alaska, believes that it can do a more efficient job. A new agency to run all U.S. territory in the Pacific from headquarters in Hawaii has been suggested to Congress.

Island by island, the major real estate now coming under permanent U.S. control through this Pacific inheritance presents the following picture:

TRUK is a circular atoll that could safely berth all the world's navies at one time. It has a native population of 9,000 and now is being cleaned up by former Japanese soldiers who outnumber the 2,000 U. S. Marines stationed there. There are potentially good, though now bombed-out, airfields on three islands in the atoll, an excellent harbor, a few Quonset huts and large numbers of thatched-roof houses among the palm trees, and extensive fortifications on all the islands in the Truk group.

SAIPAN is a single island 13 miles long and 5 miles wide. It has a vast airfield, once used for B-29 attacks on Tokyo, a good harbor, and a population of 20,000 mostly Japanese. Sugar and fishing industries had been developed here before the war, but now are virtually stopped. Most of the natives have become either farmers or fishermen.

TINIAN, separated from Saipan by only three miles of water, is a slightly larger island and retains a small garrison of U. S. troops and a few bombers still used for training. YAP, in the western Carolines, was important as a cable station before the war and may return to that status. It is a group of four islands connected by bridges, the islands are covered with dense jungles and a network of paved roads. An American camp operates around an ancient Spanish citadel on the largest island.

KWAJALEIN, now a full-fledged U.S. air base, has no native population and its vegetation consists mostly of four imported palm trees. It is only six feet above sea level at its highest point. But its position makes it invaluable as a military and com-

## Texas City Rates Next to 1865 Blast in Major US Blow-Ups

by Richard Alterman

When the French freighter Grand Camp, loaded with a cargo of ammonium nitrate exploded at Texas City last week, a series of blasts that resounded throughout the nation was started. By the time the explosions had ended and the fires put out, over 575 had been killed, 3,000 had been injured, and a property damage of about \$50,000,000 had been recorded.

Never since August 24, 1865 had such a great loss of life in an explosion occurred. When the ship Sultana, carrying exchanged Union prisoners of war, was destroyed seven miles north of Memphis, 1,405 lives were lost. This explosion was the worst ever recorded in the history of the United States.

Until the Texas City disaster, the second worst explosion in this country occurred at Fort Chicago, California on July 17, 1944. A total of 322 lives were lost when the navy munitions depot there went up in smoke.

Following close behind this in number of lives lost is another Texas explosion—the New London school blast—of which most of us probably remember reading. When a boiler in the school's basement blew up on March 18, 1937, 294 children were killed.

On May 8, 1918, more than 200 persons were killed in a blast at the Aetna Chemical Company plant near Pittsburg. An explosion and fire on October 21, 1944, at the East Ohio Gas Company in Cleveland killed at least 135 persons.

Just this year on March 25, a mine explosion at Centralia, Illinois took the lives of 111 miners. And when the destroyer Turner exploded in New York Bay on January 3, 1944, more than 100 persons lost their lives. On May 15, 1929, 100 persons were killed in a Cleveland hospital clinic when an X-ray film exploded, filling the building with gas.

Lightning striking a naval ammunition depot at Lake Denmark, New Jersey on July 10, 1926, killed 21 men and inflicted a damage amounting to \$50,000,000. When a perchlorate bath at an electro-plating company in Los Angeles blew up on February 20 of this year, 15 persons were killed and \$1,500,000 worth of damage was done.

In the past 30 years, major explosion disasters have killed more than 2,100 persons. Of this number more than 700 have been killed in 1947.

Why ammonium nitrate explodes violently as it did in the Texas City ship, yet won't explode when hammered or penetrated with high-powered rifle bullets, still remains a chemical mystery, unsolved after decades of investigation.

The chemical villain in the Texas City disaster, a harmless-looking white salt, is not even classified as an explosive. Usually safe to handle, a hundred million pounds are manufactured each year for fertilizer or explosives use.

Only infrequently does ammonium nitrate go off with great violence, as it did at Texas City and as it did at Oppau, Germany in 1926.

As a leading explosives expert put it: "When ammonium nitrate explodes, it is always mysterious."

### 'Wholesale' Items Bring Up to \$500

The National Association of Wholesalers has announced a \$1,500 prize contest for outstanding articles on wholesaling generally, or any major aspect of wholesaling. A first prize of \$500 and twenty-three additional prizes will be awarded after the closing of the contest October 30.

Recently, President Kolodny, president of the association, stated, "We are especially interested in attracting the students in our colleges to the opportunities for a successful career in the wholesale trades. We hope many of them will enter this competition and that this study of distribution will develop a lasting interest in this field."

The contest is open to anyone except members of the Association, their families, and employees. Manuscripts should be about 5,000 words in length. Rules of the contest can be obtained from Chester C. Kelsey, Executive Vice-President, National Association of Wholesalers, 200 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, New York.

commercial airfield two hops west of Hawaii.

GUAM, which has been an American possession for 50 years, is located nearly in the center of these trusteeship islands and now serves as their capital. As a large, permanent naval base, it is probably the cleanest and one of the most beautiful of the islands in this area.

The islands, taken during the war at a cost of 6,267 U. S. lives, are to broaden the U. S. empire and complete the job of making the Pacific a U. S. lake. Their strategic value is limited, as is shown by Russian willingness to let the U.S. acquire them. But their importance as U.S. way stations in the Pacific, as future vacation spots, and as a new U.S. obligation abroad is to become more and more apparent in the period ahead.

LOWPOTS An Aggie Institution

### Kiwanians Sponsor 'Good Will Week' Between Us-Canada

"Friendship of the United States and Canada serves to strengthen the hope that all nations everywhere may come to enjoy the benefits of a similar understanding with one another", said Trygve Lie, secretary general of the United Nations, in connection with the U.S.-Canada Good Will Week sponsored annually by Kiwanis International and scheduled this year for April 27-May 3.

Close and cordial understanding between neighbors can lead to development of similar feeling around the globe, Lie said. The fact that the governments and the peoples of the two nations have found it possible and mutually advantageous to live side by side in harmony over a period of many generations, serves to strengthen the hope that all nations, everywhere, may come to enjoy the benefits of a similar understanding of each other, he added.

Kiwanis International, which embraces 2,600 clubs and more than 174,000 members in the U.S., Alaska and Canada, long has proclaimed the friendship of this country and its neighbor to the north as an outstanding example of international good will, according to Joe Sorrells, president of the College Station Kiwanis Club. During the week, April 27-May 3, many clubs in the two countries will interchange speakers.

### Ag Grads Can Meet Extension Service Agent for Work

The Agronomy Society extends an invitation for all seniors in the field of agriculture to attend a meeting in the Animal Industry Lecture Room April 29 at 7:30 p.m. Joe H. Matthews, extension personnel supervisor, has arranged for all of the district Extension Service agents to be present at this meeting to meet graduating seniors and discuss possibilities of employment in their districts.

This meeting is to be informal and refreshments will be served. Openings in the Extension Service will be discussed and students will be given an opportunity to meet men with whom they will be working if they intend to go into this type of work.

Department heads and club presidents in the School of Agriculture are urged to contact graduating seniors in their departments and arrange for a representative group to be present. The Extension Service is interested in all fields of study and men interested are urged to be present.

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## PENNY'S SERENADE

W. L. Penberthy



I got a kick out of "The Neighs Have It" which appears in the current issue of the Reader's Digest. This is a symposium on "Horse Sense - If Any" which appeared in the February edition. I did not read "Horse Sense - If Any" but it appears that the author did not give horse credit for having the amount of sense accredited to them.

The "Neighs Have It" is a collection of letters that were written in upholding the horse as an intelligent animal, and many letters stated specific instances to prove this point. The members of our family are particularly fond of pets, and we have quite a collection of pets which include two different species of ducks, a canary bird, any number of squirrels, an Irish Setter dog, and a horse. The horse is the latest pet to be acquired, and personally I have derived a different kind of pleasure from my association with him than with any of the other pets, so I naturally have a soft spot in my heart for horses.

When I was a student in college I remember one of my professors in discussing human behavior made it a point to emphasize the fact that we should have one purpose and that is to do the intelligent thing. My own definition of intelligent behavior would be to make the correct reaction after all contributing factors in a situation had been considered.

So many times we are guilty of jumping to hasty conclusions and acting before we have collected all the facts. Recently, I heard a minister in preaching a sermon make a very fine distinction between common sense and horse sense. The difference, he said, was that horse sense was not common.

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### First Full Course Under GI Bill To Be Finished in June

First man to complete a normal four-year course at A. & M. under the GI Bill of Rights will be Billy R. Blair of Fort Worth, who will receive a bachelor's degree in industrial education in June, it was announced today.

Blair, 22, entered school as a freshman in September, 1944, after receiving a disability discharge from the U. S. Marine Corps and by means of attendance at summer sessions, is receiving his degree after two years and nine months.

A large number of Aggies who left for the war lacking only a few semesters of graduation have returned and received their diplomas, but Blair is the first to go all the way under the GI Bill.

In editing the Year-book at Texas A.&M., Harry Saunders has the edge - That's why he is editor of the Longhorn.

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