

THE BLOOD WAS VERY RED

# Newsman Just Along For The Ride Finds New Story At Old Scene

(Editor's Note: Battalion News Editor Dan Louis has written a story based on both fact and fiction. As a reporter on several daily papers in the state, Louis has dealt with the very thesis of this story many times. Read it and feel the way a reporter feels every time he covers raw death.)

Albert Davidson had just gotten back from a cup of coffee at Al's Grill and stepped into the news room just in time to hear the Department of Public Safety radio crackle. He didn't understand the entire message, but he did catch one word, "major."

After 27 years in the newspaper business that one word on the DPS squawk-box was enough to spell a

possible story to Davidson, or Al to his friends.

While he looked around the news room to find someone to cover this one, he thought about the first "major" he was sent out on. Surely his boss didn't know it was so bad when he made the assignment. Al could remember that he had to go home after he wrote the story and that he was still too sick to eat the next day. He had never known a human body had so much blood.

He spotted Paul Belton. Paul would be a good man to send on this one, and he knew how to use a camera. Al looked at the big clock on the wall, it showed 10:23 p.m. Paul would have plenty of time before 1 a.m., when he was due to get off.

HE CALLED Paul over. "Check out this 'major' with the DPS dis-

patcher and go on out," he told the 24-year-old general assignment reporter.

Paul wheeled around on his heel and went to his phone. Al knew Paul could handle the job, he had been with the paper about a year and a half and had done a fine job so far. Most important for this job, Paul had become familiar with death.

Paul was headed for the door. He's fast, too, Al thought. "Hey, Paul," the veteran called, "I think I'll go with you."

Al thought about his first "major." That was back when the cars didn't have all the power they do today. He remembered how he imagined the twisted and torn limbs on his way to the scene. There was a mother and child killed in that one.

It wasn't really a child, just a baby, three years old. As he went back over the years he remembered the little one's blood as being redder than that of the adults. He also knew that it takes less to crush the little one's body and spill its insides all over the road.

AL HAD NEVER been able to decide which was worse, to see a lifeless child spread out in a bloody mess or to hear an orphaned child cry for his mother and father as they are loaded up to be carried to the morgue.

The company car pulled out of the parking lot and headed for the accident, seven miles north of the city limits on Highway 31. Paul was driving. Al was along just for the ride this time. It had been a long time since he had run a "major."

Al wondered which killer it would be this time, speed, alcohol or just plain carelessness. It would probably be one of them, it usually was.

An ambulance screamed past the newsmen. The guys in the ambulance had the rough job. Al

had decided a long time ago that was the job he would least want. They are the ones who get to reassemble the bodies and wrestle with the torn, dirty, sticky chunks of flesh.

THE CAR began to slow down. Al could see the flashing red lights ahead. They came to a halt behind the white patrol car. Two bodies had already been covered by sheets—completely covered.

Al looked hard at the sheets. The blood on one was very red, as red as the blood of the little ones. There was something about this blood. It made him tighten in the pit of his stomach, he wanted to cry.

His agony was halted by a familiar voice. It was Don Jordan, a student at A&M who Al's daughter Alice dated. Don was going to swing by Alice's school and bring her home for the Christmas holidays. Al didn't realize they were to be in today. Alice must be at home.

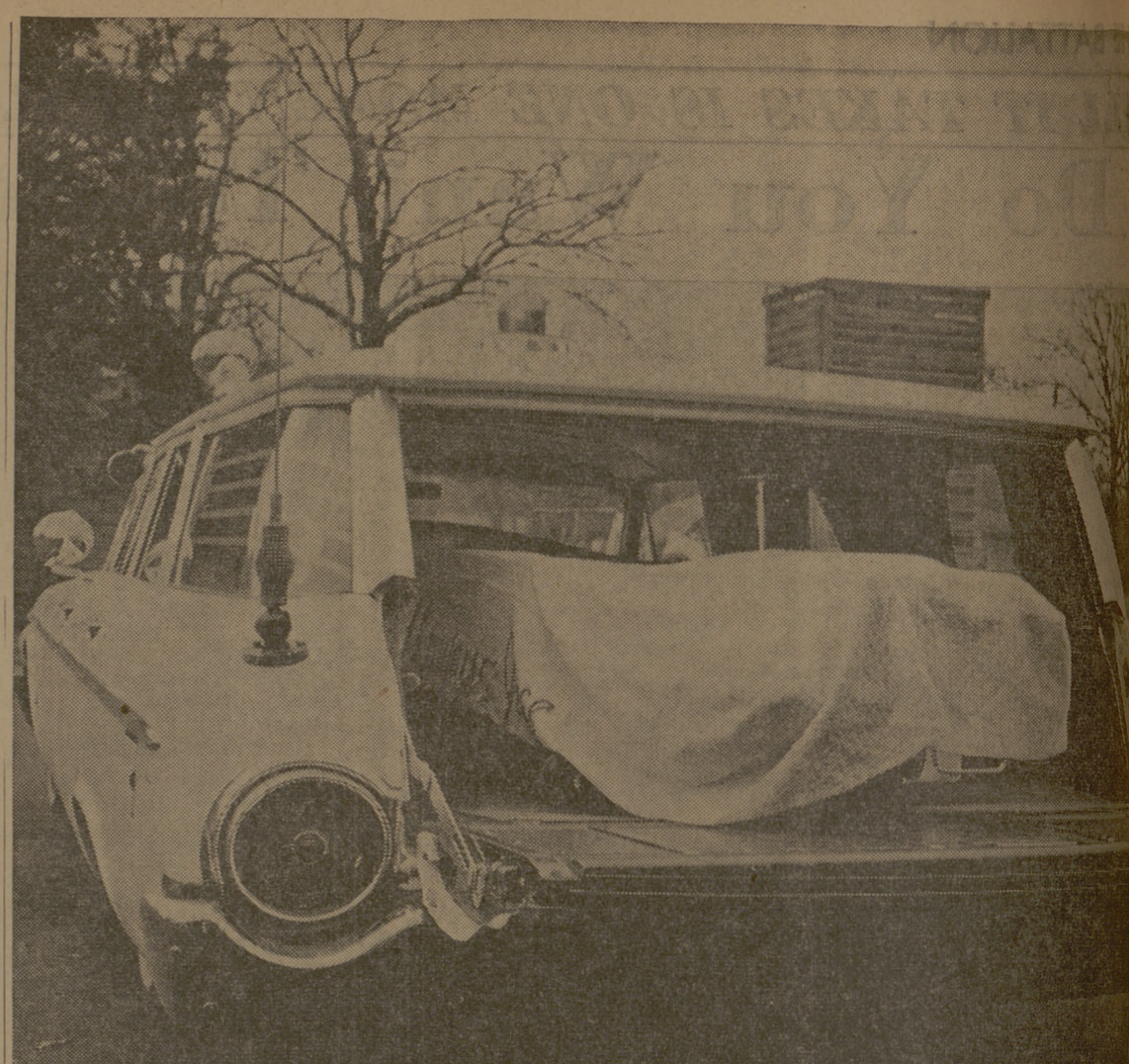
Don was talking again. No, not talking, he was screaming and crying. He was apologizing, "I'm sorry, Mr. Davidson, I didn't want to do it. I'd rather be dead."

Al's stomach tightened again. He had to work for each breath. He began to cry as he worked his way back to the sheet with the very red blood on it.

He knew now that that blood was the blood of a baby. His baby, his only baby, Alice.

He knelt by the quiet baby. He didn't look, he just knelt, cried and looked at Don, sobbing like a child.

Al knew that he had to explain to Don that he understood. But how could he. He didn't.



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**Pedestrians Face Holiday Hazards**

Motorists are not the only ones who are killed in holiday accidents. Studies have revealed one out of four Christmas accidents involves pedestrians.

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**Colorful Safety Slogans, Signs Add To Safe Driving Campaign**

Every year traffic safety committees and departments of public safety all over the United States launch campaigns to convince the American motorist that it isn't always the other fellow who gets killed in traffic accidents.

One of the more colorful aspects of these difficult campaigns is the safety slogans and signs that result.

Texas' own Governor's Highway Safety Commission has compiled a list of these slogans, from points all over the country. Such as: A sign at Hondo, Tex.: "This

**World's Deadliest Battlefield Lies Between You And Home**

By GERRY BROWN  
Battalion News Editor

At the West Gate entrance to the campus stands a monument dedicated in memory of Lt. Kyle N. Drake Jr., "who died for democracy on Iwo Jima."

On a metal plaque mounted into the wall of the Memorial Student Center are the names of Aggies who died in the World Wars.

In Spence Park a block of granite signifies a tribute to the students and faculty members who fought and died in the Spanish American War.

Yet, these represent but a few of the innumerable memorials which stand both on our campus and throughout our nation in memory of the American soldiers who have died in battles from Bunker Hill to Heartbreak Ridge.

THE MEMORY of these individuals is well preserved but where are the memorials for the Americans who have died in auto accidents since 1900?

Ironically, more people have died on the highways than the total of all the Americans killed in U. S. Wars from 1775 until today.

A new nation was forged by the 8,695 Americans who died in the Revolutionary War and War of 1812. The young nation's survival

was assured by the 13,283 U. S. soldiers who were killed in the War with Mexico.

When Civil War threatened to split our country in two, 529,302 soldiers gave their lives in the conflict and 33 years later 2,446 more died to free Spain's colonial empire.

DURING TWO World Wars and a Korean "police action" Americans gave their lives in the sum of 578,637 fathers and sons.

The total of all these American citizens who wrote their lives on the pages of history stands at 1,130,393.

In contrast to this, 1,378,854 men, women and children have died as a result of highway accidents since automobiles first appeared in this country slightly over 60 years ago.

In mockery to these figures, these same history books which tell of the bloody battlegrounds of war will list the automobile as one of the great inventions of our society.

Just remember, the highway is the deadliest battlefield on this earth.

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