

Khe Sanh "Must" Battle For Reds

The big wait is on. Six thousand Marines are preparing for what may be the biggest battle of the Vietnam War. It's at the South Vietnamese position at Khe Sanh that more than 20,000 North Vietnamese troops are preparing to attack those American troops.

The imminent battle comes 14 years after the French took a bloody pounding at Dien Bien Phu. It was shortly after that 55-day siege that France pulled out of Indo-China.

And the same general who successfully defeated the French has been given a similar assignment at Khe Sanh, that of delivering a large-scale military defeat to the United States, forcing this nation to negotiate and withdraw.

The President and the Chiefs of Staff have been non-committal when appraising our ability to hold the position successfully.

But the Khe Sanh's Marine commander, Col. David Lownds says the base can be defended. He believes his men "are spoiling for a fight," and not as ill-prepared as were his French predecessors at Dien Bien Phu.

U. S. military officials, unlike the French, say they will be able to provide the Marines with firepower, material, and unlimited air support.

It is the absence of these factors that are considered the decisive factors in the French defeat against the Viet Minh in 1954.

It is difficult to understand the delay in the North Vietnamese to make the assault, in light of the recent heavy attacks on Saigon and guerrilla activities in other South Vietnamese provincial capitals.

The loss of almost 30,000 men in the past two weeks has slowed down the North Vietnamese plan.

They realize that the assault on Khe Sanh must be successful. A victory could cause enough second thought in the United States that negotiations under favorable conditions to the Communists might begin soon thereafter.

A defeat, with loss of substantial men and materials, might do just the opposite.

Both sides are preparing. The Communists have brought in heavy artillery, tanks, mortars, and their finest division regulars.

The Americans have dug in, and have used the extra time to better coordinate supply, air support, and military aid from the other 40,000 U. S. infantrymen within striking distance.

The Marines also have two intangibles, high morale and superb leadership. The battle is a must for both sides.

Both are prepared for a bloody turning point to a long and stalemated war.

The heavy shelling which will probably precede an enemy assault, may herald a "Custer's Last Stand" for the Americans.

On the other hand, Marines may emerge from bunkers more than prepared to meet the challenge, and with enough firepower and air support to decimate the opposition. We'll wait patiently for the latter.

10,789 Enrollment Announced Here

A record spring enrollment of 10,789 at Texas A&M has been reported by Registrar H. L. Heaton.

Heaton said A&M registration is up 10.5 per cent, or 1,053 students over the same period last year.

Although registration officially closed Saturday, the registrar noted this semester's total should increase slightly when final tabu-

lations are made on various special categories of students.

The spring enrollment is the second largest in the school's history, exceeded only by the 12,029 registration last fall.

Heaton pointed out the number of students is traditionally lower in the spring because of mid-term graduation. This year's January graduating class totaled 673, an all-time high.

Sound Off CADET SLOUCH

by Jim Earle

Editor, The Battalion

The purpose of this letter is not to antagonize the already uneasy Corps-Civilian affinity, but why does it seem like most of the articles written about the Corps or by a Corps member include a dig directed toward the civilian student body? I am citing Mr. Bob Palmer's contribution in Thursday's Battalion. Was it necessary to include a statement as, "The D&C fee should be low enough to afford cadets unqualified for contracts a fair chance to stay in the only good part of this school." Of course, this statement could be interpreted in many ways, but I think the obvious meaning was a caustic criticism directed toward the civilian student body.

It's about time this child-like behavior on the part of the persons responsible for such ungrounded animosities ceases. The Corps is here now and will be here for many years to come. The civilian student body is, also, here and will continue to exist and grow.

I realize that the Corps is losing ground in the battle to maintain its earlier proportion with respect to civilian population, but why must such needless dislike exist from the Corps toward the civilians? If one were to use *The Battalion* as a sole reference in determining the Corps-Civilian relationship he would be forced to logically conclude the existence of a great deal of hostility directed toward the civilians by the Cadets. If this same reader were to reread the same article with a foreknowledge of the actual on-campus situation, he would conclude that *The Battalion's* articles pertaining to or by Corps members display a narrow-minded, pessimistic effort by the Corps to retain the romantic tradition of Ol' Army. Although many Corps members may be blind to the fact, the majority of the civilian students are as devout Aggies as they. Due to this fact, I feel certain that the majority of civilian students would be pleased in being relieved from the bigoted, one-sided, hypocritical anti-civilian remarks which often-times appear in *The Battalion*.

Stephen Smith '69
David Garrison '69
Dwight J. Dunlap '69
Ernest H. Fries '70
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The Battalion, a student newspaper at Texas A&M is published in College Station, Texas daily except Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, and holiday periods, September through May, and once a week during summer school.

Represented nationally by National Educational Advertising Services, Inc., New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

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The Associated Press, Texas Press Association

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Second-Class postage paid at College Station, Texas.
News contributions may be made by telephoning 846-6618 or 846-4910 or at the editorial office, Room 4, YMCA Building. For advertising or delivery call 846-6415.

Mail subscriptions are \$3.50 per semester; \$6 per school year; \$6.50 per full year. All subscriptions subject to 2% sales tax. Advertising rate furnished on request. Address: The Battalion, Room 4, YMCA Building, College Station, Texas 77843.

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