

Reporter Makes First Jump

By STEVE BROWN
Battalion Staff Writer

How does it feel to fall 3,000 feet?

"It's like being suspended above a water painting with a fan blowing in your face," Bill Oncken, an air-borne sophomore political science major told me.

This question kept gnawing at the back of my mind after I was assigned to do a story on the Parachute Club.

Two weeks ago I would have told anyone that told me to jump out of an airplane that he was crazy, but now I have done it and, as parachutists say, "the bug has bitten."

I started Friday afternoon by talking to Tom Glasor, president of the club and a senior wildlife science major. Glasor has made 300 sport jumps and as a sergeant in the 101st Airborne made 35 jumps. He filled me in on just about everything I would need to know.

THE CLUB consists of about 40 members. The initial cost to start jumping is \$40, which covers training, equipment costs and the first five jumps. After that it costs \$3 a jump.

"The club doesn't make a profit on that \$40 fee," Glasor said.

"When we figure in equipment costs, fuel consumption by the airplane, etc., \$40 is just enough," he noted.

Now the only thing left to do was to jump.

I had gotten little sleep the night before. Every time I dropped off to sleep, my eyelids would come to a screaming halt about three-quarters of the way down and my brain would ask—

"WHY ME?"

Saturday morning I drove to Hearne Airfield and waited for the jumpers to show up. I put that brave smile on my face just like a little kid does when the class bully is going to hit him in the mouth but when the kid isn't going to let him know he's chicken.

I had always wondered what kind of training the club was giving to new students. These guys, especially Tom Glasor, go through every aspect of the sport.

They started by teaching me how to put on the chute correctly. Next they drilled me in getting away from the plane successfully.

Then I learned how to guide the chute, pack it and how to land properly.

Everything you have to know to be safe is taught to you. This is why major accidents in this sport are extremely rare.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON my turn came.

I climbed into the plane and we started up. Glasor, the jump master, asked me if I wanted to jump first or second.

Of course, I wanted to be the second to die. I was in no mood to be labeled a martyr.

My biggest problem was getting out on that wheel. You have to stand outside the door on the wheel and dive when the jump-master slaps your leg.

I stood out on that wheel for what seemed an eternity, looking down at the ground 2,800 feet below, with nothing between me and it but air. Then I felt a slap on my leg.

Fear completely blocked all thought from my mind and I kicked up and pushed away.

THE NEXT FIVE seconds are the hardest to explain. In this time the line plays out automatically to open your chute.

I felt as if I were just lying there, suspended between heaven and earth. I wanted to lie there and soak up the free feeling enveloping me.

I thought, "Hey, this is my own experience." No people to interfere, I was on my own.

The chute opened and I looked up and breathed a sigh of relief because this worried me most. The view from this position is enough to take your breath away.

Again the feeling of complete solitude struck me. I could sing, scream, whistle, cry or anything else I wanted. I stood on a platform 2,000 feet up with someone spreading various views out in front of me for my approval.

BY THE TIME I came back to reality, I had drifted to only about 200 feet off the ground and way to the left of the target area.

I tugged hard on the left riser, the ropes that help guide the chute to the right or left, and

started gliding over. But I had waited too long.

I returned to earth about 300 yards off target.

I hit the ground, twisted my knees in the direction of the fall, threw my upper body away from the fall and rolled. I didn't even feel it! The landing felt like I had hopped off a platform only four feet high.

When I got back to the jump area, everyone patted me on the back and congratulated me and the president of the club came up and shook my hand. I was king for a day.

I felt as though I had more guts than anyone in the world.

WHEN PARACHUTISTS talk on why they jump, they give a variety of answers. The best I heard was, "so if anything goes wrong with the airplane, I'll be ready." But this only scrapes the surface.

Adventure, in its purest form, breathes through the sport. It is one of the few ways to find real adventure today.

For anyone with an adventure-some spirit, this is it. The challenge beckons.

Visitors To Mexico Tell Of 'Carnival' Atmosphere

It could have been a typical American park at the turn of the century.

"It was almost a carnival atmosphere," said senior Ray Armour of Houston, describing city parks he discovered in Mexico City on a tour with other Parks and Recreation Department students from here.

"There were popcorn and ice cream vendors, too," he continued, recalling shoeshine boys abounded everywhere.

Graduate student George Harker of Cleveland, Ohio, hailed the experience as "an exposure to a new culture . . . a different way of life with new dimensions."

He added he was "most impressed, especially with their museums."

ARMOUR AND Harker were among several A&M students who visited Mexico City to compare cultures and found the tour "fascinating."

"I'm only sorry we didn't see it before the Olympics," added Armour. "Still, Mexico City is a showplace."

The students' trip started somewhat less than glamorous, however, when they boarded the fabled Eagle train in Nuevo Laredo for their 26 hour ride to Mexico's capitol.

Among other things they encountered traveling with them were turkeys and fleas on what one jokingly described as a "post Civil War train."

"It was a milk run," chorused

another student. "It stopped everywhere."

Women came on board at each stop selling wares, Armour noted.

THE STUDENTS gained "experiences as a tourist" not available in the classroom, he said.

Among the principal parks visited were Chapultepec and Alameda.

North of Mexico City, the Aggies turned their attention to the town of Teotihuacan which dates to 200 B.C. and predates the famous Aztec culture.

While there, they studied the early pyramids built to the sun and moon.

Armour and Harker felt goals differ between city and national park operations, with city parks aimed at the local populace and national parks catering to tourists.

IN ADDITION to train rides and touring the parks, the Aggies had occasion for one more experience—riding in a Mexican taxi.

Armour related it as "a rare

experience" with 10 or 12 Aggies riding in one cab.

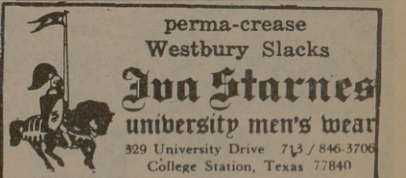
"Everybody pays one peso to ride up and down the main street," he said, noting the driver "really packed them in."

"Everybody has the right of way," added Harker, who saw a "70-year-old woman scrambling for her life."


The Aggies felt the trip was worth every cent. They paid their own fare.

More than a million kangaroos are slaughtered every year. The meat, most of it gamy and coarse, is eaten by people in some countries and by pets in others. The hides make fine glove and boot leather.

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GOING FOR TARGET
Bill Oncken lands near target while jumping in Hearne Airport last weekend. Oncken was jumping with the A&M parachute club. (Photo by Steve Brown)

March Boardmanship Workshop Planned By Area School Heads

School board members of an 11-county area will conduct a March 26 workshop here.

Speakers and discussion of 100 participants will center on keys to constructive boardmanship in the one-day workshop sponsored by the Education Department.

E. L. Galyean, Texas State Teachers Association official, will be the dinner speaker announced Dr. Frank Hubert, department head. Galyean directs TSTA's membership and member services division.

Discussion sessions will feature Cecil E. Rush, Texas Association of School Boards executive director, and Richard L. Hooker, assistant director. Afternoon sessions and dinner will be in the Memorial Student Center.

School board members of Area 10 will chair sessions. Calvin Guest, Bryan board president and TASB vice president, will preside over the opening general assembly. Four discussion sessions will be conducted by James B. Herve, Region 6 Service

Center board; Horace R. Willard of Giddings, TASB executive committee member; Bill Terrell, Navasota, and Hilliard S. Thomas, Cameron.

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Chemist Institute Cites Whitehouse

Dr. U. Grant Whitehouse, director of A&M's Electron Microscopy Center, will be formally recognized as a Fellow in The American Institute of Chemists March 24.

Emerson Venable, AIC nominating committee chairman, said Whitehouse will be officially received at a banquet when the Institute meets in Pittsburgh, Pa.

Venable said the Institute restricts Fellowship awards to scientists who have adhered to high standards of professional integrity throughout their careers while making "original and distinguished contributions" to the advancement of chemistry.

The committee cited the biochemistry professor's early contributions to molecular spectra and isotope separation investigations and recent achievements in alumino-silicate chemistry, marine sedimentation and electron optics.

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