

The Battalion

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Thursday, September 23, 1971

Cloudy
and
mild

Friday — Cloudy to partly cloudy. Northerly winds 5-10 mph. High 73, low 64.
Saturday — Partly cloudy. Easterly winds 10-15 mph. High 77, low 61.
Saturday — Lincoln, Nebraska, kickoff time—Partly cloudy to cloudy. Northerly winds 10-12 mph. 66%. 40% relative humidity.

845-2226

Medina is acquitted of My Lai charges

FT. McPHERSON, Ga. (AP)—Capt. Ernest Medina, the career officer who commanded U. S. troops at My Lai in 1968, was acquitted Wednesday of all charges arising from the operation.

The jury of five Vietnam veteran officers deliberated for about an hour before acquitting the captain of murder, involuntary manslaughter and assault. The verdict was read by the jury president, Col. William D. Proctor of Atlanta, as Medina stood at stiff attention before the jury with his lawyers.

"It is my duty as president of this court to advise you that the court in closed session and upon secret written ballot, has found you not guilty of all specifications and charges," Proctor said.

Medina, 35, a slight smile on his face, snapped a smart salute to the jury, made an about-face, and resumed his seat at the defense table.

At the reading of the verdict, there were several loud gasps among the spectators.

Medina's attractive blonde wife, dressed in a bright orange dress, burst into tears and rested her head on the shoulder of a man sitting beside her. She raised her hands to her face and wiped at the tears.

Col. Kenneth Howard, the military judge, in an attempt to restore quiet to the courtroom looked toward the spectators and said, "There will be no outbursts in this courtroom."

Medina sat without expression as Howard dismissed the jury and the spectators filed out of the cramped, paneled courtroom where the trial has been in progress since last month.

When the courtroom was empty, Medina walked into an adjoining room, and drank a glass of water, and with his wife beside him then moved outside into the bright sunshine to face a throng of newsmen.

The captain, speaking into a battery of microphones, said, "I am extremely happy—I just don't know what other words can express my feelings at this point."

The trim Mexican-American officer's voice shook as he talked to the reporters and was asked whether he thought at any time he would be convicted.

Taking a deep breath, and then exhaling, Medina said:

"No, I never had the actual feeling that I would be convicted. I never felt that.

"Men, three years is a long time—I'm glad it is over," Medina said, referring to the interval between the My Lai massacre and his trial at this grassy, tree-shaded Army post.

Medina was accused of premeditatedly murdering a woman by shooting her as she lay wounded in a rice paddy outside My Lai. He also was accused of involuntary manslaughter in the death of 100 civilians during the operation, and was charged with assaulting a Viet Cong suspect by twice firing a rifle over his head.

After the verdict Medina's wife was asked to describe her feelings, and she replied, "My husband has said it all."

Medina told newsmen that he had previously indicated that he would resign from the Army, whatever the outcome of the trial—and he said he would request an immediate discharge.

Medina's lawyer, F. Lee Bailey, then stepped forward.

Bailey, asked if he ever expected conviction said:

"I had some concern about the assault charge, because they seemed to be hammering away at that one. But as to the other charges, no deep concern."

"There wasn't much evidence against Capt. Medina," Bailey said. "In the Calley case, you couldn't escape the evidence—that he had murdered children and, in my opinion, that's why they got him."

"I've never got an acquittal for a nicer guy," grinned Bailey.

Medina was the fourth soldier acquitted of charges arising from the My Lai operation and was one of six court-martialed.

Acquitted earlier were Sgt. Charles Hutto, Sgt. David Mitchell and Capt. Eugene Kotouc.

Only one soldier, Lt. William L. Calley Jr., who served under Medina as a platoon leader at My Lai, has been convicted of wrongdoing in the operation. Calley was convicted earlier this year of murdering at least 22 civilians and a reviewing authority recently cut his life sentence

to 20 years imprisonment.

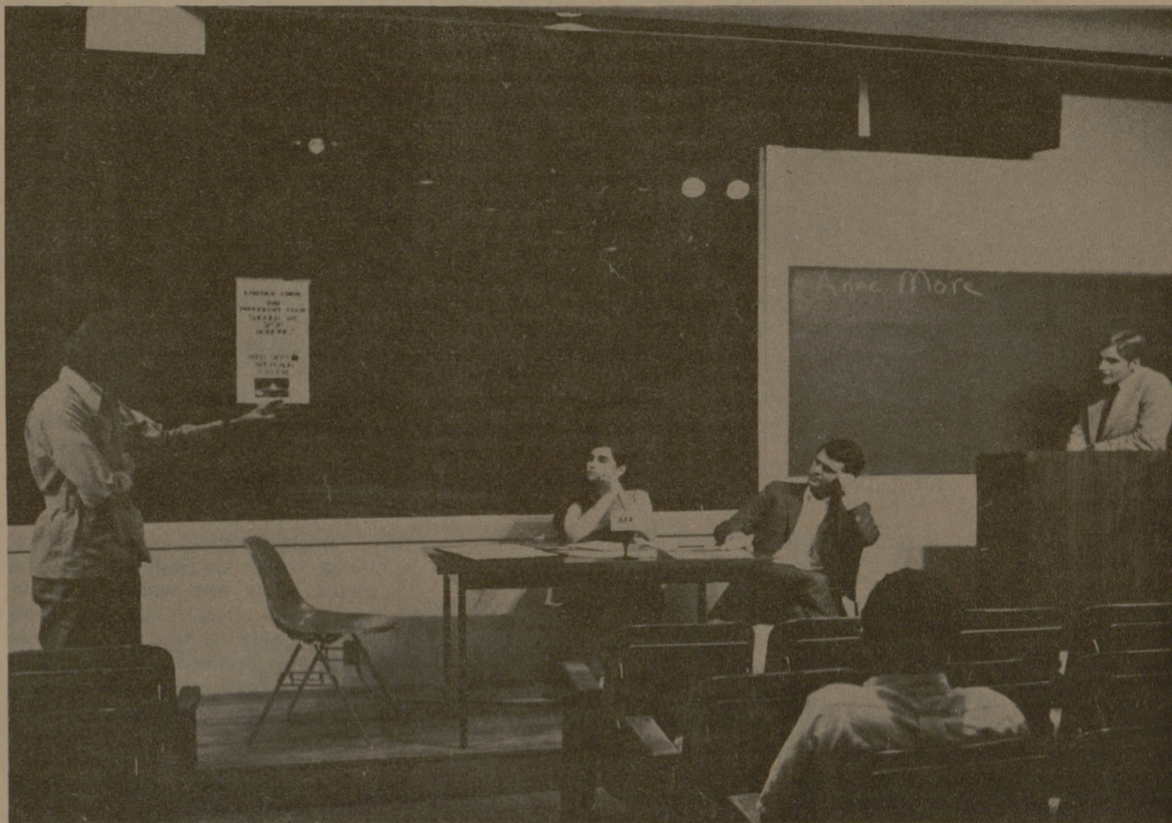
Medina's acquittal leaves only one case undecided—that of Col. Oran Henderson, who is being court-martialed at Ft. Meade, Md., on charges of covering up the massacre.

Twenty-five men were charged initially with either wrongdoing in the operation, or attempting to cover it up.

In his closing arguments, Maj. William Eckhardt, the prosecutor, charged that Medina was guilty of criminal negligence at My Lai because he knew his men were murdering civilians, but chose not to restrain them.

Bailey described My Lai as a "tragedy of connected errors." He told the jurors that if they convicted Medina of homicide, "I suggest you put every soldier with a lawyer at his side to ad-

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PARTICIPANTS in the "action" at the first Lincoln Union debate Wednesday night included, from left, Russ Usnick, Shannon McKinney, Mike Murphy and Emil Pela. (Photo by Joe Matthews)

Bonfire causes heated oratory at Lincoln Union debate series

By BILL GOULD
Staff Writer

Wednesday night's rain may have discouraged some people from attending the first Lincoln Union debate, but it failed to dampen the enthusiasm of the participants and the audience.

Using a style of debate first introduced at Cambridge University in England, the club's first topic was the Aggie bonfire issue.

Supporting the bonfire in its present form were Russ Usnick, member of the English faculty; Gary Reger, junior marketing major and president of the club; and Harry Schroeder, sophomore chemistry major.

Presenting the argument against the bonfire were Mike Murphy, member of the landscape architecture faculty; Shannon McKinney, junior history major; and Emil Pela, senior marketing major.

The debaters used an entertaining, though inconclusive, mixture of invective, humor, insult and occasional argument while "discussing" the relative merits and shortcomings of the bonfire.

"There is a conflict of purpose between the destructive effects of the bonfire and the constructive

goals of this university," Murphy maintained.

"Regardless of its symbolic purpose, the burning of the bonfire says to the rest of the world that Texas A&M is living in the past, as if our resources were without end," he added.

While Schroeder pointed to the bonfire as the "focus of an Aggie's pride in his school and a symbol of unity," Miss McKinney insisted that the tradition was "a

negative symbol, bringing about unity that only lasts about half an hour."

Usnick, who admitted that he had never seen the bonfire, maintained that "no real ecological harm was done if the trees used are taken from land to be cleared anyway." He added that the bonfire could become a divisive issue within the university community if something were not done to resolve the situation in the near fu-

ture. Pela, as the last speaker, found his opposition's presentation to be "largely an apology rather than a justification for the bonfire."

In suggesting alternate projects to the bonfire in its present form, Pela argued that Aggies could derive more spirit, pride and unity from constructive activities than from the burning of one of our most important and valuable resources."

Bombers keep pressure up on North Viet troops

SAIGON (AP)—American bombers and warships pounded the southern half of the demilitarized zone Wednesday keeping up pressure on North Vietnamese troops and supplies.

Thailand-based B52 bombers and smaller tactical bombers joined planes from a U. S. carrier in the Tonkin Gulf in striking at rocket sites and storage depots in the DMZ and targets along the Ho Chi Minh supply trail in Laos.

The U. S. Command said it still had no assessment of the damage inflicted by 200 bombing strikes Tuesday that ranged 35 miles above the DMZ.

Hanoi called the air strikes a "serious menace" to the peace talks carried on weekly in Paris. The North Vietnamese and Viet Cong delegations in Paris, as a way of protesting the attacks, called off Thursday's scheduled session of the talks.

A communique issued by the U. S. Command said the number of anti-aircraft guns within the 35-mile area north of the DMZ had increased almost 40 per cent during the past 1½ months.

A threat of increased enemy sapper attacks appeared to be developing around Saigon.

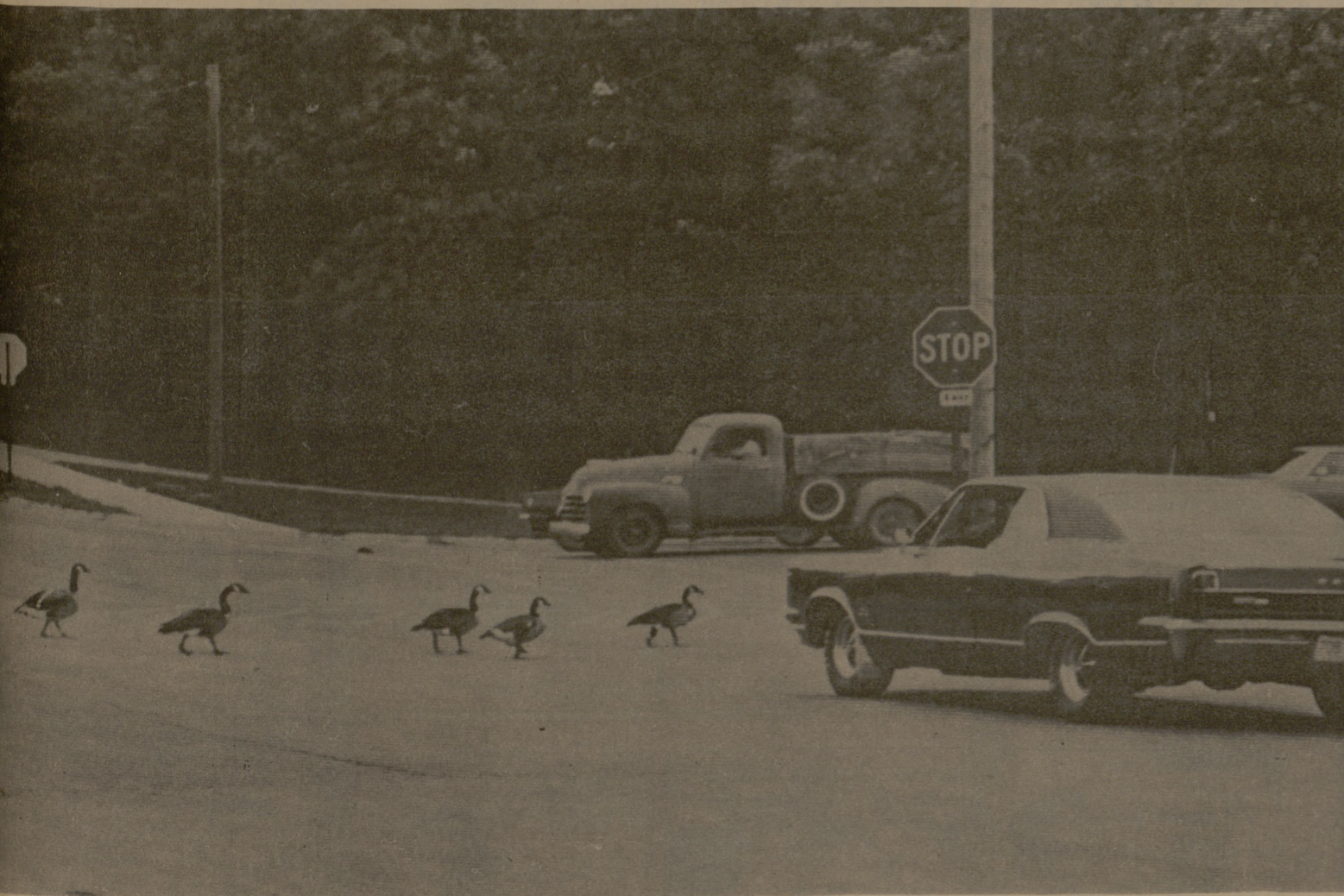
About 30 sappers slipped into the base at Quang Loi, 62 miles north of Saigon, and hurled

satchel charges into the installation manned by 300 South Vietnamese troops.

Official reports said two soldiers and two dependents were killed and one soldier and one dependent were wounded. One U. S. adviser was wounded. Enemy losses were unknown.

The raid was the second in as many days in the region, guarding the north and west approaches to Saigon.

South Vietnamese field commanders, with strong urging from U. S. advisers, have streamlined their intelligence system and are launching secret operations in an attempt to counter the sapper campaign.



CANADIAN HONKERS MAKE USE of the pedestrian right-of-way in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. From the looks of campus drivers this year, a crossing like that wouldn't

be quite as easy here. Motorists and cyclists seem to think anything on foot is fair game. (AP Wirephoto)

Ed Cooper, problem solver, students' voice to Williams

By LARRY MARSHALL
Staff Writer

Sifting through the load of student problems and solving as many as he can is the task of Edwin H. Cooper, assistant to A&M President Jack K. Williams.

Cooper has become known as the man to see when you have a problem. His job is to intercept and digest all problems concerning students and report to President Williams. He is a straightforward man who devotes full-time to this and likes it.

"I enjoy this job because of the different special activities, I usually don't know what I'll be doing the next day," said Cooper.

Campus student leaders and students themselves come to him with their ideas.

"I have had close contact with the students since I've been at A&M," said Cooper, and "I think it keeps me young." He thinks this communication is the way to solve problems, and it works. Serious matters receive immediate attention.

"If it's urgent I can open his (Dr. Williams') door and walk right in," Cooper noted. "It's a way of having an open door policy."

Cooper is an Aggie of long standing, and he enjoys working here with the students.

"We have the best student body in the United States here," he said, "and there are not many people who get a chance to work with a group like this. I look for opportunities to be with the students and visit informally."

Cooper works with the President's Advisory Council, which is proving to be a major communications link between the student body and the administration. This council is made up of the main student leaders on campus and it meets once a month. This is a chance for the leaders to pass on their ideas directly to President Williams, and to sound him out on them.

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a university campus at this day and time, whereby students have a periodic opportunity to sit down and pick the president's brain," commented Cooper.

Another major development has been the addition of student representatives on many of the 44 standing committees of the university. The Student Senate played a major role in this project.

Recently with the problem of rent increases on the university owned apartments, Cooper worked with the presidents of the Student Senate and Graduate Student Council and the chairman of the Apartment Council to affect a workable solution.

He is aware of the administration's side of the coin and explained the reasons for the increases. Rising costs, addition of maintenance men, and the bond indebtedness of the university are some of these. Out of the meetings grew a plan to establish an 'interest free' student loan fund

to help the residents meet the additional costs. This program is now in operation.

Other situations in which he has been involved include campus housing. He has worked to solve the overcrowding of some dormitories in the Corps area by discussing it with the Commandant and Cadet Colonel.

Parking problems have been an issue on campus lately.

"A&M is a pedestrian campus," he said, "and I see fewer and fewer cars on the mid campus with time." The trend will be to perimeter parking lots, which has already begun."

Cooper is a Texas A&M graduate of the Class of 1953. He began working at A&M with the Agricultural Extension Service and has risen through the ranks. He has served as assistant to the late Earl Rudder, as the first director of Civilian Student Activities, served a stint as director of admissions, and then was appointed to his present post.

German negotiators break off talks on the Berlin agreement

BERLIN (AP)—East and West German negotiators broke off Wednesday their talks aimed at carrying out the four-power agreement on Berlin.

Egon Bahr, West German state secretary and chief negotiator, said the talks were deadlocked over the issue of translating into German the text of the agreement signed by the United States, Britain, France and the Soviet Union.

Bahr told newsmen that the two Germans had come to an understanding on how the German translation of the Berlin pact should be stated and implied the East Germans had gone back on what was agreed upon.

The two sides are to work out details of such things as Berlin access and wall passes agreed on by the four powers.

The four powers signed their Berlin pact Sept. 3. The issue, it appeared, was East German insistence on separate pacts with West Germany and West Berlin on Berlin access traffic. The West Germans want the West Berliners to take up inner Berlin matters only. These would include visits past the wall by the West Berliners.

Bahr's sudden return from his 20th meeting with Kohl, the fourth since Sept. 3, and the postponement of the parallel West Berlin dialogue with East Berlin this week represented a get-tough response by the West Germans in the face of East Germany's adamant stand.

University National Bank
"On the side of Texas A&M."
—Adv.