

# West Point Graduate Endures Silence

FT. BENNING, Ga. (AP) — Lt. James J. Pelosi, graduated from West Point in June after enduring 19 months of a now-outlawed punishment called silence, says he is still shunned by some of his comrades-in-arms.

"I thought I would leave the nonsense that went on at West Point back at West Point. But other people apparently didn't feel that way," said the second lieutenant who is undergoing basic officer training here with 150 U.S. Military Academy classmates.

In a rambling, often guarded interview during a break in training this week, the boyish-looking 22-year-old said the silence treatment is being used only by West Point graduates, and not by non-academy officers.

"The flak is not on a frequent basis. There's no concerted effort on the part of everybody here to enforce silence," he said. "A small number of West Point classmates just totally ignore me."

"It's something I have to live with. It really doesn't upset me." At another point in the interview, the slim, bespectacled, officer said, "My car was slashed, and there was glass under them." As soon as he made the statement, he turned to another subject.

Pelosi, a West Hempstead, N.Y., native, made national head-

lines this summer when he revealed that he had been a victim of silence, a rarely used punishment exacted by cadets who believe a classmate has escaped a just punishment on a legal technicality.

In 1971, Pelosi was convicted of cheating under the academy's honor code, but the charge was dismissed by the West Point superintendent on grounds that a staff officer had prejudiced the case. Unsatisfied, his classmates voted to invoke the silence.

Pelosi became a nonentity to his classmates. They did not talk to him or associate with him. He was forced to live and dine alone. He could not take part in class activities.

For 19 months, Pelosi lived alone with his punishment, refusing even to tell his parents the full story. When his ordeal became public, Pelosi said he intended to remain in the military, despite West Point tradition that silence lasts forever. He was

hopeful it would disappear once he began regular Army work.

Last week West Point's cadet honor committee, a target of criticism over the Pelosi incident, abolished the tradition of silence. At the time, one cadet was enduring the punishment. Pelosi regards the action as vindication, but he doesn't think it will change his life.

"I'd be foolish if I thought the silence was over," he said. "You can't legislate social conduct. You can't compel someone to associate with someone else. You can't tell someone to talk when they don't want to."

From the beginning, Pelosi has had two lawyers. One of them, Edwin Cooperman, said a lawsuit will be considered if the silence does not cease.

Pelosi was extremely hesitant to be interviewed before agreeing to meet at a motel off the base. He said his reluctance mainly stemmed from fear that more publicity would further anger West Point graduates.

"The cadets who imposed the silence were upset with me because of the publicity. They thought I was out for attention," he said in a steady, unemotional tone that characterized the interview. "If I hurt the image of the military in any way, that's unfortunate. But there was no other way to right the wrong that was there . . . I wasn't out to prove myself a hero. I just wanted to see the changes made."

A Ft. Benning spokesman declared, "We're not aware of it," and said there would be no further statement. At West Point, an officer familiar with the Pelosi case said the Army was powerless to halt the silence.

But it is obvious that Pelosi is living his own store of purgatory.

Pelosi said he spends most of his free time alone. "I like to drive a lot — to places where I can rent a boat. When I have a

free day I might pick up a good book and read in the sunshine."

His major concern, he said, are rumors that instructors at Ft. Benning have expressed hostility toward him and doubt they can properly evaluate him because of the silence.

"That's implying that I won't be evaluated on merit but on reputation," he said. "I'm going to do the best I can as an officer."

In October, Pelosi starts Ranger school at Ft. Benning and two months later is scheduled to begin a three-year stint as an Army officer in Germany.

He said he expects to leave the military when the tour ends, stressing that he has no bitterness, no negative attitudes toward the Army.

"I'm a misfit," he said. "I don't belong in the military. I'm an individual. I don't think I can be myself here."

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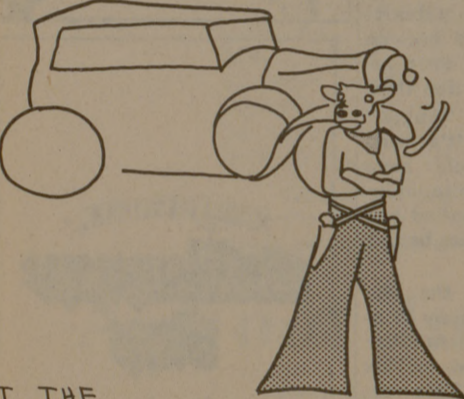
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Also on the list of aids are Richard King, Larry Kruse, Barbara Palmer, Troie Ann Pruett, Mark Sherill, Duane Thompson, Shannon Walker, Jerri Ward, Bruce Wayne, Tom West and Scot Winter.

## Stanek Sextuplets Suffer Lung Illness

DENVER, Colo. (AP)—A cadre of doctors and nurses worked Wednesday to combat a lung disease in three of the remaining five Stanek sextuplets. The smallest of the six babies died Tuesday night of the same illness.

Doctors said Catherine, the only surviving girl, Nathan and Steven Stanek showed symptoms of the hyaline membrane disease that claimed the life of Julia after 44 hours of blood and breathing difficulties.

Catherine and Nathan were given blood transfusions overnight in an attempt to alleviate the disease which is common in premature infants.

Doctors at Colorado General Hospital said Catherine was in poor but improving condition after a complete blood exchange transfusion. Nathan also was in poor condition. He was given a transfusion, but not a complete blood exchange.

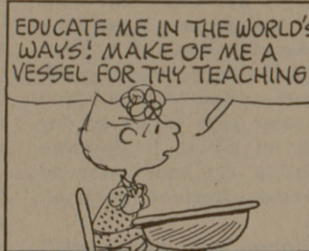
Steven was reported in fair condition, but improving.

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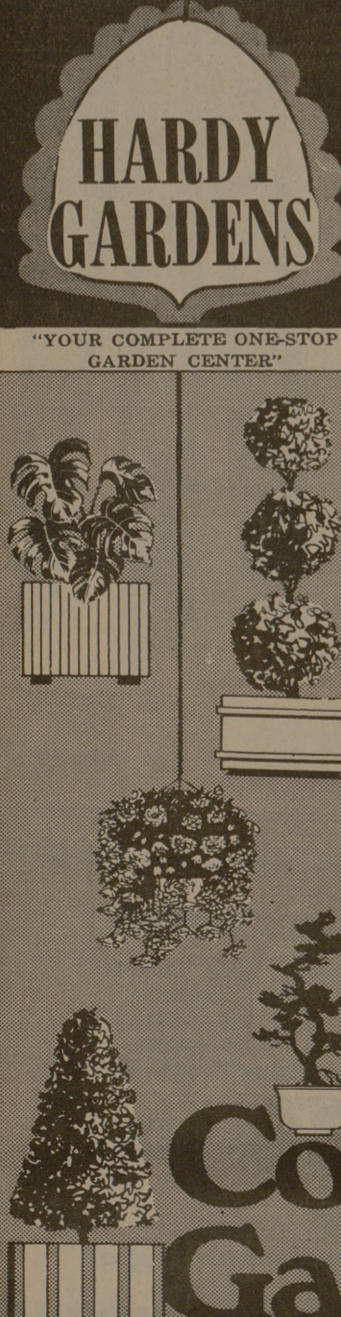
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