

Viewpoint

The Battalion
Texas A&M University

May 30, 1977
Monday

What's memorable about today

By LEE ROY LESCHPER JR.
Battalion Editor

The two American soldiers move slowly, quietly into the clearing around the abandoned farmhouse.

It's more shack than house, but they approach stealthily, draw close, then one kicks down the crumbling door and they rush inside. To find pleasant emptiness.

After a quick glance around, Tom, the bigger of the two, motions his companion back into the wavering sunlight. Relaxed now, they walk to a knee-high fence of loose stone and settle down against it, then draw out pocket-worn and over-preserved rations.

"You suppose we're near where we're supposed to be?" Jon asks the burly soldier next to him.

"Hope not," comes the reply. "The Lieutenant said there'd be resistance where he was taking us and I don't much feel like being resisted right now."

"How'da ya suppose we got separated from the others so easy?" the small man asks between chews of what was once beef.

"Why ask me? You're the one that had to stop and soak his precious little toes."

They laugh together, the first time in many weeks.

"Do you suppose these devils we're hunting feel much like laughing?"

"They're probably feeling as sorry as we are right now," Tom answers through a lingering smile.

The neglected farm reminds him of his family's and he looks at it more closely. The clearing is larger than it seemed at first and behind the shack is an open patch that was once a garden. An open shed leaning against the shack catches his eye and he rises, reluctantly, and walks over to it.

Jon watches him walk across to the shed.

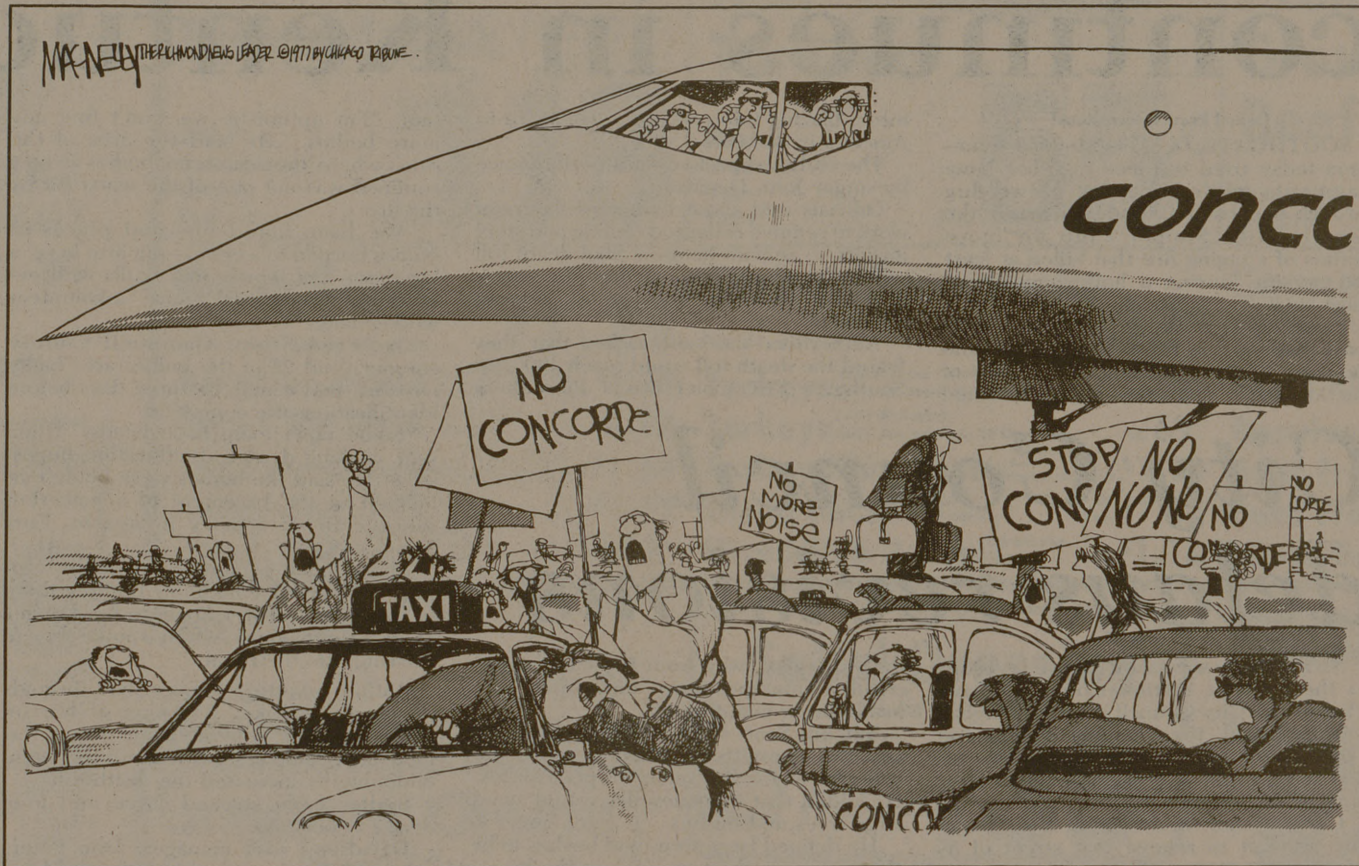
I wondered how long it would take him to start poking around this other farmer's tools, he thinks.

He's content to stay propped against the stone fence, enjoying sunshine for the first time since he couldn't remember when. First it was rain and cold, then that feverish sickness that burned under the sun and chilled at night. He felt almost good enough to doze off.

Rattling sounds boomed across from the shed. Tom is enjoying his poking around.

Jon is so nearly relaxed he doesn't see the first beam of sunlight that bounces off bright metal back among the trees.

The second flash he doesn't miss. Even as his hands drop to his rifle and his eyes bulge to find that flash, he realizes Tom is coming out of the shed. A warning screams up his throat.



The first bullet screams out of the woods faster.

Tom is striding across the open, carrying some ancient tool only a farmer could appreciate, still grinning. The slug tears into his chest and bowls him over into a heap beside the shed.

Jon sees him die even as Jon himself is still rising, diving for cover behind the wall. He knows he'll never make it.

He feels the spot on his ribs where the bullet is coming, knows where it will hit, long before it rips through him.

He awakens behind the wall, twisted between rocks. His chest is at once on fire and deadly cold and numb. He realizes it had only been seconds since he's fallen. His jacket is already soaked with his blood.

Through a hole between two rocks he sees the enemy soldier step confidently into the clearing, bayonet-tipped rifle swinging easily in his hands.

He's sure he's got us, Jon thinks. Then, as he watches the soldier roll Tom over with his boot, he realizes. He has got us.

Now the oh-so-dirty soldier turns towards the fence, starts walking casually toward it.

Each step like a heart beat, each becoming louder. He is almost to it, then jerks to a stop as he sees Jon. He jumps back, bringing up his rifle at the same time.

Jon tries to lift himself up, rises only a little and realizes the sloshing sound he hears is blood inside his own body.

But the soldier was so sure of himself he neglected to reload his rifle. They stare at each other as if dumbfounded for a moment, then in unison their eyes shift to the bayonet.

The standing soldier looks at the one lying before him. His face begins to twist in anger, whether from painful memories or indoctrinated hate.

He walks slowly, methodically forward, then rushes the last step and drives the shining blade deep.

That enemy soldier could have been a Viet Cong ten years ago or a British regular 200 years ago. They could have been fighting the Spanish-American or the Korean War and that deserted farm could have been in Germany or France or the Philippines. Jon might have been from Texas or New York

or California and Tom from Alabama or Iowa.

Because under all those conditions American men have fought and died.

They have come from everywhere, for every reason. Some came boldly to enlist and some came backwards — mule reluctant and when drafted.

They had as many reasons for being there as they had bodies and at least twice as many reasons why they'd be better off somewhere else.

But they all sacrificed, they all died, they all surrendered that most valuable of gifts a man may lay down.

Too often when we think of these men we think of the noble cause for which we want to believe they died. Or we try to use their deaths as proof in some moral debate.

But today, sound no trumpets over them. Weep no tears for them and wave no flags over their graves.

Today, when you pass a cemetery or some other quiet, peaceful place, pause just a moment. Think of them, maybe say a little prayer. That's enough. That's the kind of memorial day they'd like.

New chief takes over commission

Civil Service due for controversy

By DAVID S. BRODER

WASHINGTON — As the new head of the Civil Service Commission, Alan K. Campbell has one asset few of his predecessors enjoyed. More than 250 of his own former students are scattered through the federal government, and they have not altogether forgotten their old habit of answering their professor's questions.

"Scotty" Campbell, as he is known to a legion of friends and admirers, was for many years the dean of the Maxwell School of Public Administration at Syracuse University, one of the country's most prestigious graduate schools. He had just taken over the reins of the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas when President Carter tapped him for the job of supervising the recruitment, assignment, utilization and promotion of the 2.8 million career civilian employees who comprise the federal bureaucracy.

Given his character and the times, Campbell is a man you are certainly going

to hear about, in part because he figures to be in the middle of a lot of fights.

In fact, the first of the fights has already happened. While Campbell will not discuss the details, he will confirm that at his first meeting with the members of the Carter Cabinet, the discussion became more than spirited.

The new Civil Service Commission head was bombarded with complaints from the cabinet members that the 2,200 non-career or exempt jobs in the government were simply not enough to give them effective policy control of their departments. He was told that his commission was painfully slow in clearing senior appointments. And, from some Cabinet members, came the complaint that the civil service employees they inherited were slothful, incompetent and uninspired.

Campbell, according to several reports, said that he was sympathetic to the need for more "Schedule C" or political appointees. His own agency has only three such

non-career jobs—Campbell's and those of his two fellow-commissioners. He's trying to get six more Schedule C's himself.

He also said the Cabinet critics had a point in their complaint about delays in clearing people for senior posts. According to Joel Havemann of the National Journal, it has been taking about three months from the time an agency requested a job be filled until a new employee was at work. For senior positions, the wait was more like six months to a year.

Campbell agrees that's absurd, and says he'd like to get the Civil Service Commission entirely out of the business of reviewing the qualifications of non-career appointees—if Congress would permit.

But as for the complaints about the bulk of the bureaucrats, the new CSC head was not buying. Relying in part on the informal reports he'd heard from his own former students, he bluntly told the Cabinet members that most of their problems with the career employees stemmed from their own deficiencies as managers.

Give them leadership, he argued, and they will respond.

That message was not terribly popular in the Cabinet room. But it did something for Campbell's status among the career people, who fear this administration, like any new administration, is going to "politicize" the civil service.

But if Campbell surprised the Carter Cabinet by the ferocity of his defense of the career employees, he is likely to shake up the career people with some of his other views.

He thinks, for example, the rigid and repeated use of "veterans' preference points" in the hiring and promotion system has damaged the quality of the senior civil service, to say nothing of discriminating against women in the federal government. He'd like to see veterans' preference sharply curtailed—again, if Congress would permit.

He also thinks that the commission he heads should relax its direct grip on federal personnel decisions and let the department and agency administrators manage their personnel as they do their other resources. In response to the plain abuses of the bureaucracy in the Nixon years, the Civil Service Commission centralized personnel policies under its own control. Now, says Campbell, it is time for a little deliberate decentralization.

His views are of particular importance at this moment, because civil service regulations loom as one of the major barriers to the reorganization of the federal government which Carter is now beginning.

Campbell will be a member of the small executive committee of administration officials, overseeing the reorganization effort. By the time that job is finished, even his own former students may not be speaking to him.

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Readers' forum

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- Typed triple space
- Limited to 60 characters per line
- Limited to 100 lines

Submit articles to Reed McDonald 217, College Station, Texas, 77843. Author's name and phone number must accompany all submissions.

Top of the News

Campus

Registration starts tomorrow

Registration for the first summer session will be held in DeWare Field House tomorrow. Students will pick up registration packets on the following schedule:

A-D	7-8:15 a.m.
E-K	8:15-9:30 a.m.
L-R	9:30-10:45 a.m.
S-Z	10:45-12 noon

A late registration fee will be charged students registering after noon.

State

Briscoe may call special session

Gov. Dolph Briscoe delayed signing a \$170 million teacher retirement bill yesterday. His decision to sign or veto the bill may hinge on what the Legislature does with a school finance proposal that includes sizable teacher salary increase. But House Speaker Bill Clayton said that, if Briscoe calls a special session of the House and Senate to finish the proposal, the salary increase may never come up. Clayton, as Speaker of the House, can limit the topics discussed in the session.

Sen. John Tower marries

Senator John Tower of Texas has married a Washington attorney his office announced yesterday. Tower, 51, married Lilla Burt Cummings, 48, in a private ceremony in a chapel at Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

Bryant blasts gays

Singer Anita Bryant drew a crowd of 1,000 persons in front of the Alamo in San Antonio yesterday to listen to her views on suspending Miami's homosexual rights ordinance. "It's not our battle, it's God's battle," the singer told the crowd by long distance telephone from Jacksonville, Fla. But Gene Leggett, a defrocked Methodist minister and a gay leader who attended the rally, disagreed. "It's not a Christian issue; it's a political issue," he said.

Turning a town into a souvenir

Waylon Jennings may have put Luckenbach, Texas on the national map with his hit country single, but vandals are trying to remove it—literally. The town's co-owner Kathy Morgan said that, since the song became popular, people have begun carting off pieces of it for souvenirs. "They are carrying off everything that isn't nailed down," she said. "They are also stealing things that are nailed down, such as our beloved post office sign." The town claimed a population of three before Mayor Hondo Crouch died earlier this year. Someone has since stolen his guitar from the local beer hall.

Director expects island disaster

Population increases on Padre Island could turn it into a death trap for 10,000 persons should a hurricane strike the Texas Coast. "You get 200,000 people on Padre Island and not all of them are going to get off in a hurricane," said Joe Mosely, director of the Texas Coastal and Marine Council. The island's population has been projected to reach 200,000 within 20 years. The Texas Coast, Mosely said, is five years overdue for a major hurricane.

Nation

Sex and the Octogenarian

Just because persons live in nursing homes doesn't mean all they think about is television, knitting and playing checkers. Usually a hush-hush subject, sex in nursing homes popped into discussion at a recent meeting in Little Rock sponsored by the National Association of Social Workers. One idea proposed was a "sex room" in which patients could use for private liaisons. Many nursing home administrators were upset with this idea and claimed sex was not a problem because most of those in the homes had mental or physical impairments which made sex a moot point at that time of their lives.

Of moose and men

Rep. A. "Mick" Spano, R. — Arvada, is one of the major opponents of a proposal to import a dozen moose into Colorado and temporarily keep them in a large corral. The Colorado Division of Wildlife has proposed to transport a dozen mooses from the Uintah Wilderness Area in Utah to Colorado and put them in a two-acre area enclosed by a net fence. After two weeks, the animals would be allowed to roam free. "I've heard of stupid ideas, but this is the stupidest," said Spano. "They'll probably leave anyway. There's no way to keep moose in Colorado if they don't want to be here." Rep. James Lillpop, R-Alamosa said some ranchers fear the animals will tear down their fences. "They're big and strong, and they've got that bunch of horns," he said.

Foyt takes fourth Indy 500

A.J. Foyt made Indianapolis Speedway history by winning the million-dollar, 500 mile classic for a record fourth time—minutes after front-running Gordon Johncock's machine conked out. It was the Houston driver's first triumph in this auto racing mecca in 10 years, and the 58th major victory of his 24-year career. Tom Sneva, who won the pole position with a record performance in time trials, was second and two-time Indy champ Al Unser was third. Janet Guthrie, the first woman to drive in the 500 managed only 27 laps when her car started sputtering 50 miles into the race.

The Battalion

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