

Volunteers benefit financially

Risks small in influenza study

By KEITH TAYLOR
Battalion Reporter

The second phase of a research project to find a vaccine effective against Russian flu is under way at Texas A&M University. The project is being conducted by the Influenza Research Center of Houston's Baylor College of Medicine, Texas A&M's Medical School and Texas A&M's Beutler Health Center. Dr. Tom Cate, associate director of microbiology and medicine at Baylor, said the purpose of the project is to find an effective method to combat many strains of flu. The study being done here involves the use of nosedrops containing live Russian flu virus. Cate said a small percentage of the vaccine is virus and that it should not cause any bad side effects. "About one out of every five get a runny nose and nasal obstruction," Cate said. "About one out of 20 may get muscle aches and low grade fever," he added. Participants in the study must be between the ages of 18 and 25, and free of any chronic ailments. Pregnant people and persons allergic to eggs cannot participate. The cultures for the vaccine were grown in eggs, so the vaccine

could cause a reaction. Also, anyone who will come in contact with people under 10-years-old or over 65 within 10 days cannot take the vaccine. People interested in taking part in the study should sign up before Friday at either the health center or the Commons Lounge. The health center is open between 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. and the Commons Lounge facility between 7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. People taking part in the study must give a sample of blood. Cate said some of the vaccines are placebos and would have no effect on preventing the flu. The placebos are given as a control. Two weeks after the vaccine is given, volunteers will be sent a postcard asking if they have been sick. Three to five weeks later another blood sample will be taken. The volunteers receive \$10 for each blood sample taken, \$3 for each postcard returned and \$5 for any illness evaluation or virus culture taken. The first phase of the experiment involved pairs of roommates, one was given the vaccine, the other a placebo. This was done to see if the vaccine could be transmitted, Cate said. There was no evidence of transmission, he said.

Flu study attracts all kinds

By MARY C. BECKER
Special to the Battalion

Flu Blues. An attractive woman in dark blue in a hallway of the Memorial Student Center, with a white coffee cup and a stack of \$10 bills beside her. She asked passersby if they wanted to earn \$10 by taking part in the study. Some shook their heads and walked on. The curious, the adventurous, and the greedy stopped. I was in the last category. I read through the handout explaining the study, taking careful note of who was responsible for this. Just in case. My eye was caught by the paragraph dealing with side effects. They included vomiting, headaches, muscle aches, nasal obstruction and discharge. I didn't have anything after planned for the evening. I panicked for a moment when I saw they wanted 20 cubic centimeters of blood — my blood. I set when I get a paper cut. By the end of the study, if I chose to stay in the program, the group will have 60 cubic centimeters of my blood or about 5 1-2 tablespoons. I decided I could spare that much. Two cadets, one male, one female, filled out their forms and handed them to Marta McMurray, the woman behind the table. They were finished with the immunization by the time I had finished the paperwork. After I checked off that I had no serious illness, was not pregnant and would be glad to hear that I was not allergic to chickens or eggs, Marta handed me a white label with a number on it. Henceforth I would be known as #366 — or 66 to my friends. Dropping my coat and purse on the floor, I was free to try for a last-minute escape break. Gary Casel, the physician's assistant, picked up the rubber strip and tied it above my elbow. I watched the vein swell up. He picked up a test tube with a needle attached to a rubber stopper and told me to relax. I practiced my deep breathing and waited for the pain. When the needle went in, the pain was not noticeable. I looked down at my arm to see if he had even put the needle in. I watched, fascinated as the tube rapidly filled up with dark red blood, and then decided to watch Gary's plaid shirt instead. My older brother used to work as a junior vampire at a blood bank back home, so I know when someone is a good needle sticker. I decided I had the best needle sticker in the bunch. Later at another study site, one of the helpers left the rubber strip on a burly Corps cadet after he began drawing blood. Gary walked by and mentioned, "You will notice the arm is starting to go to

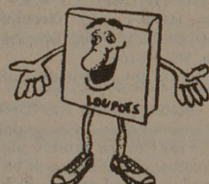
sleep." He explained that the strip can be taken off after the blood starts flowing in the tube. He pulled the needle out of my arm, took the needle out of the stopper and handed the test tube to me. I was surprised to find the test tube was still warm. Gary put a cotton ball over the puncture and told me to bend my arm. One of the men in white lab coats directed me to another chair. His name, John M. Zahradnik, was chain stitched in blue on the left side of his coat with Influenza Research Center written under his name. He told me to lean my head back as he filled up a medicine dropper with a clear liquid from a small vial. "Inhale," he said and the eight drops slid down the back of my throat leaving a slightly sweet taste. I had to sign a sheet saying I received my \$10. Momentarily disoriented from blood loss and snorting nose drops, I signed the part I was supposed to print and printed my signature. Two girls were filling out the forms. The dark-haired one wondered suspiciously why they wanted participants' home addresses when the experiment was supposedly safe. One of the doctors soothed her fears by explaining the study was federally funded and every dollar had to be accounted for. Her blond companion commented, "I probably have the wrong color of blood," as the rubber strip was tied around her arm. Asking students why they were "guinea pigs," they answered, "Why not?" Money or the lack of it at the end of a semester was another deciding factor in submitting their bodies to experimenters. The "bedside manner" of the attending physicians and helpers was

relaxed and informal. The "guinea pigs" joked among themselves and with the doctors about the possible results of the experiment. One cadet said he would not be surprised to find out that he had signed away his body to science and that they were now going to bump him off with the vaccine to collect. Dr. John Quarles from the microbiology department at Texas A&M University said this study is the largest of several university studies. But the one at Texas A&M will be the one referred to in later studies. It can be compared to the sort of commercials on television where a study compares high school students who use the fluoride toothpaste. "We are the Crest high school," Quarles joked. "Ten years from now

we'll look back and say we had fewer cavities because of the vaccine." Some people in this University might be praying for an influenza epidemic so they can collect additional bounties. It seems rather ghoulish waiting for flu season to come around to see if the immunization will work. And what happens if it doesn't? My first reaction to getting the shot was to head over to the legal adviser's office to make out my last will and testament because I was sure I was the one in a million who would have a bad reaction. I have a slight headache and my back feels miserable. It could be from the vaccine, more likely it is from hacking away at the typewriter and studying. My only real pain was peeling off the Band-Aid.

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Cake pays \$100 at bank

United Press International
KATY — It was the best \$100 check Francie Baltazar had ever eaten. Francie received a \$100 check for her 17th birthday, cashed it at a bank, then she and the teller ate it. Her mother, Candy Baltazar, who owns That Ice Cream Place, made the 2-foot-long lemon ice cream

cake using one of her own checks as a model. "I've done other unusual things for her birthday, but I guess this is probably the farthest out I've ever gone," Ms. Baltazar said. "She does something weird every year," Francie said. "I just took the cake and gave her the \$100 for it," Katy National Bank

teller Dorothy Herrington said. "I thought it was a very cute idea. We do get to eat some of it." Herrington said it will be backed up with a real check. "There's no way we can encode a cake and run it through our machines," she laughed. "We'd have to have something to back it up."

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Monday & Tuesday

Health Center, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

MSC - 141, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Corps Lounge D, 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

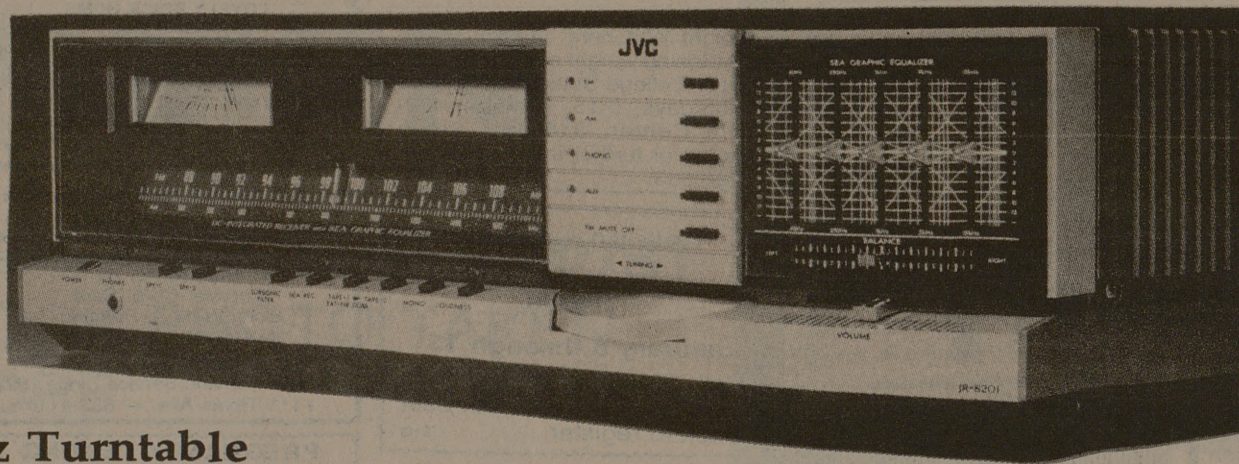
Thursday & Friday

Health Center, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Commons Lounge, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

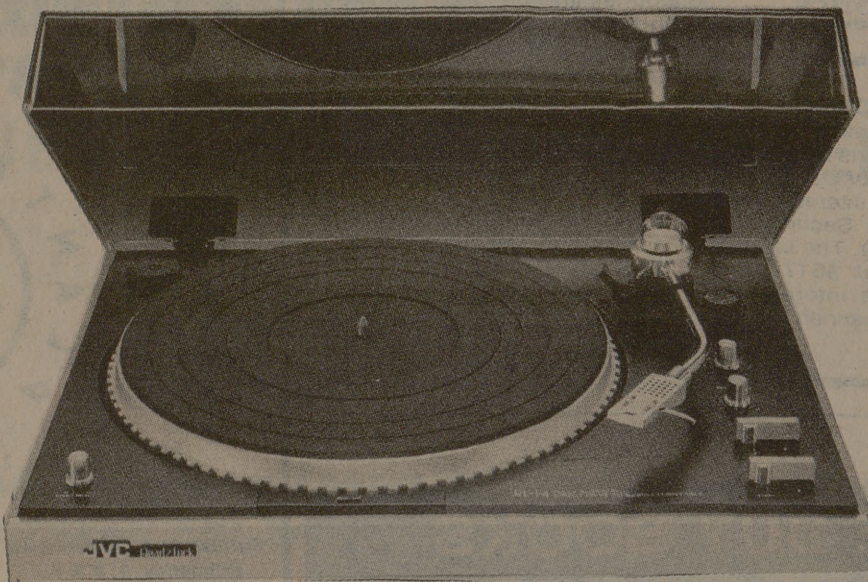
Common Lounge, 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

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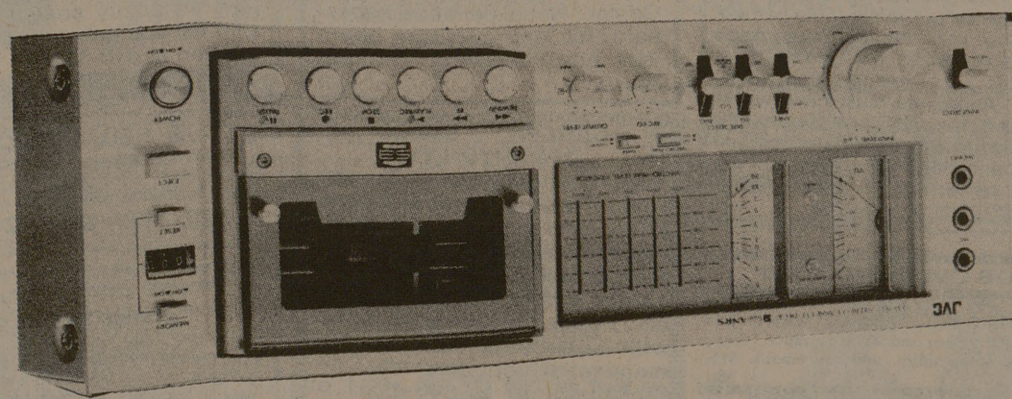
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Hsiao-ping wishes U.S. visit

United Press International
TOKYO — Chinese Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping said Wednesday he wants to visit the United States, but not while Taiwan has an embassy in Washington, Japan's Kyodo news agency reported from Peking. On Tuesday, 20,000 Chinese youths rallied in Peking's Tiananmen Square in support of Teng and Premier Hua Kuo-feng and to demand democracy and government law. It was the largest rally in the square in more than two years. An authoritative Chinese spokesman also told foreign visitors Tuesday that harsh criticism of the late chairman Mao Tse-tung, which began two weeks ago, is no longer acceptable. Teng, 74, an architect of China's industrial modernization program, expressed his wish to visit America. Yoshikatsu Takeiri, chairman of Japan's Komei political party. It was Teng's latest in a series of statements indicating China is groping toward a compromise with the United States over Taiwan, the last remaining obstacle to full Sino-American diplomatic relations.