

SLOUCH by Jim Earle



"It may be only 6 wins in 40 years, but it's 3 wins out of the last 5 years, and next year will make 4 out of 6, and then it'll be 5 out of 7, and then...."

VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

MONDAY
DECEMBER 10, 1979

ANALYSIS

By HANS-ULRICH SPREE
International Writers Service

BONN — In contrast to the United States, where the revival of the draft is being debated, universal military conscription here in West Germany is an institution that nearly everyone accepts.

But a question that has come increasingly under discussion within the past year is whether women ought to be compelled to serve in the army along with their male counterparts.

Oddly enough, an influential association of professional soldiers favors national duty for women — on condition that they be trained only for logistical, communications, medical, staff and other non-combat roles.

Until now, West German politicians have been reluctant to get involved in the subject. But they are going to face growing pressure on the issue, if only for numerical reasons.

Under terms laid down by the Western powers at a conference in 1954, West Germany must make a defense contribution to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization by maintaining 12 divisions, a total of 500,000 troops.

That obligation has been met since then by combining some 270,000 regular and shorter-term volunteer soldiers with 230,000 draftees, who are called up at the age of 18 for 15 months of service.

A problem lies ahead, however, and it might be attributed in part at least to the birth-control pill, which first came into popular use here during the mid-1960s.

The West German population has been declining. And, as a result, there will not be enough young men available for conscription by the end of the 1980s. Thus the need to draft the Johannes and Wilhelms along with the Johanns and the Wilhelms.

As it now functions, the system of national service runs with relative smoothness. Among its other features, it permits objectors to military duty to perform 18 months in alternative jobs, such as orderlies in hospitals or nursing homes.

To the extent that women are welcome in the army as volunteers, they primarily operate as physicians and medics.

In fact, there is a surplus of manpower at the moment, as that the army lacks the facilities to accommodate all the 18-year-olds

Decline in population of Germany may necessitate women in the draft

of draft age. As a consequence, numbers are deferred to continue working or to attend universities, and this prompts those who are called up to complain.

One idea advanced recently has been for youths deferred from service to pay a special tax, presumably to compensate for their good fortune. The idea has gone nowhere. In any event, the manpower surplus will soon become a deficit, and that is troubling planners.

A proposal has been made to lengthen the present 15-month conscription period to two years. But this has met with resistance, for a couple of reasons.

In the first place, it is not politically popular. More significantly, it encounters the opposition of employers, who believe that a combination of longer service and a shrinking population will make it more and more difficult for them to find labor.

Another suggestion offered has been to strengthen the volunteer component in the army by making enlistment more attractive. The argument against this approach, however, is that a largely volunteer army would be composed heavily of men with the lowest qualifications.

Still another notion put forth has been to

make conscription mandatory for foreigners, thousands of whom live here as workers. But such a move drives them home. Moreover, it requires that they must be naturalized, and West Germany is not known about handing out citizenship.

By a process of elimination, there seems that drafting women may be the answer. This is the position of the association of professional soldiers known as "Deutsche Bundeswehrverband," endorses compulsory military service for both sexes.

According to the association, women would have the same responsibilities and privileges now accorded men, including the right to education, to military duties, and to civilian tasks if they are so desired. The difference is that women would be exempt from fighting.

For the present, however, the female conscript is still an abstract. But as West Germany's population declines, it may look more like a reality. Spree, a West German television commentator, writes on social issues in Germany.

DICK WEST

By DICK WEST

United Press International
WASHINGTON — During the past month, I have read approximately 708 background articles on Iran.

If the crisis lasts much longer, Iranian background production could easily reach the level of cottage industry, contributing almost as much to the Gross National Product as garage sales.

Most of the background up to now has been supplied by Arabic language professors. The field is wide open, however. Anyone with a matched set of Iranian insights can qualify for a backgrounding license.

There are a number of ways of processing and refining background material. One is the familiar question-and-answer format.

Q. and A. elucidation owes its popularity in part to the fact that the elucidator has control of both the interrogatives and the replies.

In all the years I have been reading Q. and A. backgrounders, I have never known an elucidator to pose a question he couldn't answer.

Q. Which came first, the question or the answer?
A. The answer. Traditionally, the elucidator starts out with a body of background information and then shapes the questions to fit it.

In the case of Iran, for example, the elucidator might be up on the word "chador." So one of the questions inevitably would be: "What do you call that long, black piece of cloth worn by Iranian women?"

Believing as I do in intellectual honesty, I have decided the most scrupulous way of backgrounding Iran is to reverse the usual order and elucidate A. and Q.

Following, then, are some of the answers I had squirreled away in my storehouse of knowledge. After a great deal of painstaking research, I now have the questions to

go with them.

A. Hue.

Q. We hear a lot about an Iranian minority group known as Kurds. Where do Kurds come from?

A. The name originally was spelled "Purrsia." It came about because there were so many cats in the region.

Q. The country now known as Iran previously was called Persia. How did it get

Reversing the Q. and A. format produces 'elucidating' questions

that name?

A. That term is deeply rooted in tradition. It refers to the nomadic custom of covering tent floors with rugs made from cat fur.

Q. Why are carpets made in Iran still called Persian rugs?

A. There was a great deal of prejudice against his poetry owing to his habit of composing his verses aboard a boat, which

he had painted dark red. The one detested by many Iranians, who were referred to the boat as the Ruby.

Besides that, anyone named Omar typically had two strikes against him. Q. Although Omar Khayyam is the famous Persian poet in the western world, a number of other Persian poets were highly regarded in Iran itself. What



OPINION

Kennedy remarks could set Iran afire

Edward Kennedy has become the first candidate of either party to bring the Iranian situation into the partisan political arena, saying the shah had run "one of the most violent regimes in the history of mankind" and stolen "umpteen billions of dollars from his country."

Kennedy says his pronouncement does not contradict his earlier pledge to keep Iran out of partisan politics. This rationalization certainly deserves some added explanation.

Acting Senate Republican leader Ted Stevens of Alaska believes Kennedy's statements give comfort to the gangsters holding American hostages in Iran. Stevens suggested that Kennedy's remarks may encourage the fanatics "to delay the release of the hostages long enough so that maybe Senator Kennedy would be president and maybe there would be a trial of the shah."

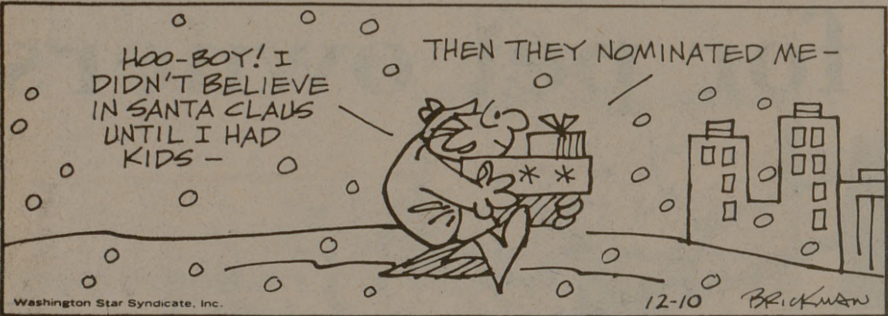
We hope Stevens is wrong. The real issue is the Americans kidnapped. This issue and the safe release of the Americans should be the primary concern of all Americans, including Senator Kennedy.

Kennedy's political smoke should not encourage other candidates to set fires which can only be harmful to the United States.

Las Vegas Sun

the small society

by Brickman



LETTERS

Freshman senator explains details of decision to make Taps monthly

Editor: As a freshman senator and as a cadet in the Corps (which thrives, in part, on traditions) I feel qualified to offer an explanation for the senate's actions Wednesday night in passing the Silver Taps Resolution which will make the service monthly.

First of all let me remind you of A&M's history. At one time A&M was a small college with an all male Corps. Through the years the college has become a large university and the Corps is no longer mandatory. Women have been admitted to both the University and the Corps. Despite these changes which were, I am sure unthinkable in its early years, Aggiehood still thrives. I dare say that no Aggie today, despite these modifications feels less spirit or pride than did the first graduating class.

A&M has been modified over the years and so must all that is associated with it, including cherished customs. The very fact that we have a memorial to our dead — Silver Taps — is unique and sets A&M apart from any other university in the country. Making the service monthly instead of the Tuesday following the death of a student would enable the University to reserve 10 to 11 p.m. once a month so that no other events are scheduled for the intramural field, MSC, OPAS, athletics, etc. This way no other campus activities will conflict with the memorial service.

A myriad of issues were dealt with concerning the Silver Taps Resolution. The first order was to determine who would benefit from the scheduling modifications of Silver Taps. Many families of deceased students said (contrary to popular opinion) that they preferred a service a few weeks after the death to reflect upon it at a time of stronger emotional stability. Furthermore, with the elimination of conflicting campus events, more students could arrange their studies in order to attend the memorial

service. So far this semester, there have been so many memorial services that some students have begun to equate Tuesday with "just another Silver Taps."

There were many facts and figures presented to the senate, but the most important were the results of the Student Government Survey held in the MSC last week. Of the 1,193 or so who responded about 900 were upperclassmen and graduate students. The upperclassmen and graduates voted in favor of the bill; the sophomores were tied in their opinion; and the freshmen opposed it.

While the majority of my freshmen constituency and those of other freshman senators were against the Silver Taps Resolution, I felt the situation was unique and deemed it necessary to let the voice of experience override the popular decision

of a majority. Five of the seven freshman senators voted "yea." The roll call vote of all the senators is available in the Student Government Office.

— Chris May, '83
Freshman Senator

In memory of Amer Sheikh

Amer Sheikh was to graduate on Dec. 14 with a bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering, magna cum laude.

He had been accepted for the doctor of engineering program at Texas A&M University. His sister Erum Sheikh is an economics major here; his father and uncle are both Aggies, class of '54 and '48.

Amer served as secretary (77-78) and president (78-79) of the Muslim Student Association and has always been one of our most active members. He was a member of Eta Sigma, Sigma Gamma Tau, Lambda Gamma, Tau Beta Pi and the AIAA.

He was a wonderful person. Amer died on Friday in a car accident on his way home from Houston.

We express our deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathies to Amer's family. He will remain with us always in memory. We pray that God bless his soul and grant his family the strength and courage to bear this tragic loss.

—The Pakistan Club
The Muslim Students Association

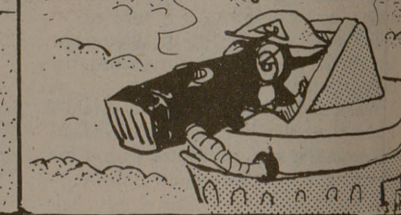
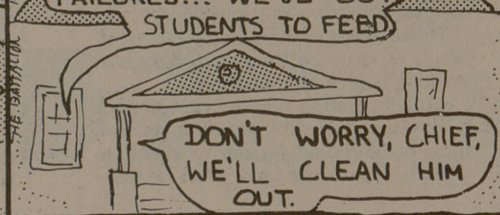
By Doug Graham

THOTZ

EARNIE THE WERE-MAGGOT IS PREPARING TO DEFEND HIMSELF AGAINST EVICTION BY SBISA DINING HALL FORCES. HIS HOME IS NEEDED FOR WASTE PRODUCTS.

WE NEED THAT WERE-MAGGOT'S GARBAGE CAN FOR WASTE RECYCLING, STASTY. I DON'T WANT ANY MORE FAILURES... WE'VE GOT STUDENTS TO FEED.

(GASP) Lysol! WILL SBISA STOP AT NOTHING?



THE BATTALION

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