

Douglas Finbar Graham is becoming what he feared most — an old Ag. Doug has been an editor, writer, and cartoonist with the Battalion for the last two

years. He graduated this semester, ending a 5-year career at Texas A&M.

Battalion photo by Lee Roy Leschper

# Douglas Finbar Graham: man, myth or cartoonist?

Doug Graham, The Batt's cartoonist, has graduated. He's now the property of the U.S. Army, and the historic characters of his *Thotz* City strip will depend on the Post Office that can bring them to The Batt from Fort Sill, Okla.

Brontosauri will no longer inhabit the Battalion office, though they will grace the paper's editorial page. With the exceptions of Jim Earle's touch and dp's cartoons on the sports pages, Doug has done most of the artwork in The Batt for two years.

Doug's duties were confined chiefly to illustrating stories for a time. His career in comic strips got off to what he admits was a feeble start in *Feem*. The roaches and rats who were *Feem*'s main figures infested The Batt during the summer of 1978.

*Thotz* began as an occasional occupant of the editorial page in the spring of 1979, moved next to a three-time-a-week strip and finally, against almost all the editors' better judgment, to a daily. Those who campaigned against increasing the frequency of the strip's appearance now cheerfully admit they were wrong.

The main character of *Thotz*, Cheesworth, had many things in common with his creator — up to and including fingerprints, it's rumored. Both struggled their ways through "Sadistics" and battled the temptations of keg parties and other diversions in their valiant attempts to triumph in the evil world of classes and grades.

Batt staffers will miss Doug's talent and versatility, of course. No one else could do so many things — design ads, draw an illustration (and make it funny) on a minute's notice, and write capably for any department of the paper.

But what will leave the biggest void is the loss of Doug's personality. Doug's wit has decimated entire newsrooms full of writers and editors with a single punch line. He can insult a victim's virtue, heredity, potency and sexual preference with one glib remark.

Doug's funniest cartoons aren't the ones he draws, they're the ones he lives. Tales of his eccentricities are almost endless.

Doug's background — his father was in the army — made him a natural for the Corps. This same background also gave him his peculiar taste in food. For example, his idea of a culinary taste treat was government issue C-rations.

Eating fruit cocktail out of a can is by no means the most legendary of

Doug's gastronomical transgressions. He has things in common with the trash can inhabitant, Ernie the Weremaggot, who is disgusting "every time there is a full sun."

Undergoing Army training one summer, Doug found himself in an exercise aimed to teach soldiers how to live off the land. The trainees were being shown the correct method for killing and eating chickens in the wilderness.

There were various military units there, all claiming to be the "best damn outfits" from their various campuses or regions. Doug was listening to them, holding an armload of field supplies.

Suddenly, he asked a female

trainee nearby to hold the supplies for a second. When she asked why, he smiled and grabbed a chicken. He looked into the chicken's eyes; the chicken looked into his. A moment of empathy passed between the two — then Doug bit through the bird's feathery neck.

On another occasion, an editor eased into the Doug's bedroom early one morning, hoping to return a book without waking him.

He found Doug asleep on the floor under two week's worth of dirty laundry.

"Well, it was cold," Doug said as he woke up.

As those of us close to him have learned, to know Doug is to know

chaos. He has been known to lose the keys to his house, a trait that has forced him to make the Batt office a true home away from home.

Doug's absent-mindedness is noticeable in his relationships with other people, too.

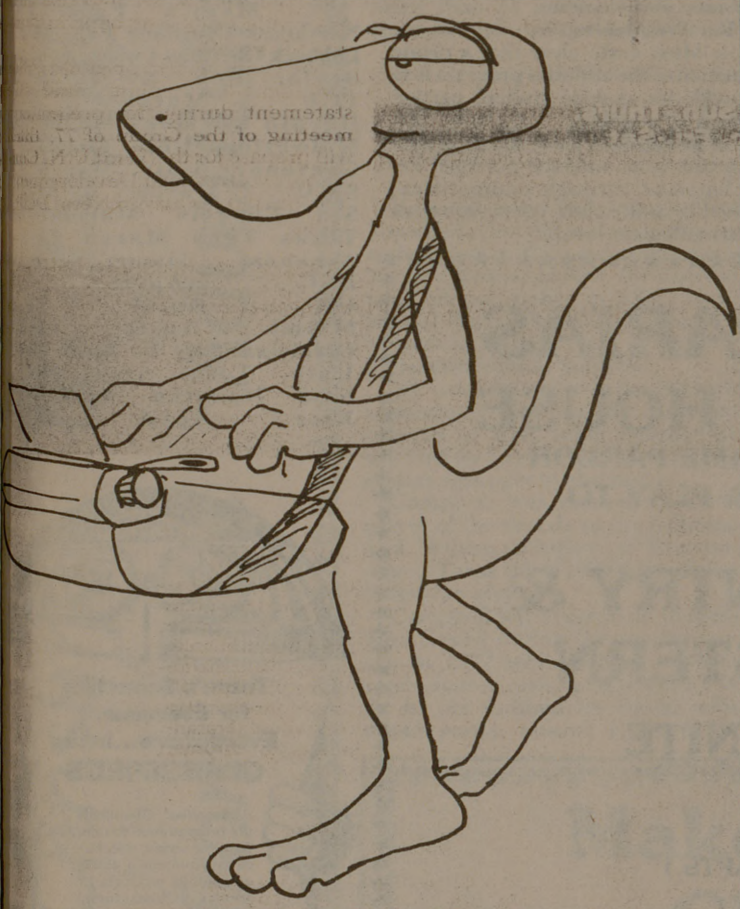
For example, Doug's perception of time is called "Graham-time". It works like this: five minutes = one hour; ten minutes = three hours; fifteen minutes = infinity. Yet, de-

spite his personal problems, he was always on time with stories and artwork for the Batt. His schoolwork is another story...

Despite his tardiness and questionable "cating" habits, we will miss Doug and we hope the Army will find a use for his unconventional talents.

To Doug, if you should read this: Love, peace, and be sure to write us from Iran.

— Battalion Staff



S. Cheesworth is the hero of Doug's semi-autobiographical comic strip "Thotz." The strip concerns a pair of dinosaurs — Cheesworth and his roommate Tork — going to a university similar to Texas A&M. Despite Doug's departure, the strip will continue on a daily basis since he'll be mailing it to the Batt from wherever he ends up.

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