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## Backstage

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# national

Battalion/Page 10  
January 28, 1982

## Deaths plague boot camp

# Marine probe continues

**United Press International**  
 WASHINGTON — The Marine Corps has launched an investigation into the conduct of a drill instructor just prior to the drowning of a recruit at a Marine boot camp, a spokesman for Rep. Jim Mattox, D-Texas, said Wednesday.

Spokesman John Jackley said the investigation stems from the Aug. 27 death of Randall Christian of Dallas at the Marine Recruit Depot at Camp Pendleton near San Diego.

Don Buford, administrative assistant to Mattox, said Tuesday night the congressman was informed by the Pentagon of the investigation.

He said Mattox sought the probe when two internal investigations concluded Christian's death was accidental — despite what Mattox believes is convincing evidence that a drill instructor kicked Christian into a swimming pool as the recruit tried to grasp the side.

Christian, a former lifeguard who swam on his high school swim team, was in full combat gear, and regulations say that drill instructors are prohibited from pushing recruits back into the water during such training exercises, Buford said.

Buford said about eight recruit witnesses have said Sgt. Rudy Rodriguez "pushed

Christian away from the side of the pool when he was attempting to save himself when he could no longer make it."

Mattox is concerned about evidence that it was not done only in this case, but was common practice at the facility, Buford said. He said there have been five other recruit deaths at Pendleton in the last year.

Jackley said in the new investigation, Rodriguez is accused of preventing another recruit from reaching the side of the pool about a minute before Christian died.

He said the Christian case has

not been closed and that the reports of the earlier investigations are being reviewed by Naval Judge Advocate General.

He said the new charges against Rodriguez vindicate earlier testimony of recruits who cast doubt on the integrity of the report.

"We are seeing a whole new pattern in the way the Navy investigates suspicious deaths," Jackley said. "There is a reluctance to conduct investigations into charges against their officers. We are preparing groundwork for looking at the whole picture."

# 1978 law increases number of personal bankruptcies filed

**United Press International**  
 NEW YORK — Roughly one million people have declared personal bankruptcy in the two years since the 1978 Bankruptcy Act went into effect. Some 40 percent could have paid their bills. Instead they stuck consumers with a \$1.6 billion annual tab.

"A new class of bankruptcy debtor has emerged who uses bankruptcy as a form of financial planning," said Christine Edwards, government affairs representative for Sears Roebuck & Co. "Some run up credit knowing they are going to file for bankruptcy."

Since the act went into effect Oct. 1, 1979, "creditors are seeing bankruptcy petitions from persons who have continued high income, no history of credit problems, and who have no decrease in spending," Edwards said.

The National Coalition for Bankruptcy Reform, a group of 285 banks and other lenders, along with the American Retail Federation and the National Retail Merchants Association have mounted an intense campaign for enactment of two bills cur-

rently in Congress to reform the act.

These would not affect debtors filing for bankruptcy who are in genuine financial distress, but would curb abuses that all consumers pay for, either in higher costs or tighter credit.

Clifford W. Snyder, senior vice president at Beneficial Management Corp., said as a result of these abuses the country's largest consumer finance firm is moving away from small personal loans toward secured mortgage loans.

"We estimate there are 24 million Americans who don't have homes to borrow against who no

longer qualify for a loan from Beneficial," Snyder said. "Many are people who need credit most, who might have to borrow for a medical or other emergency," he said.

A Purdue University study shows that in the past two years \$1.6 billion annually in defaulted debt could be paid if reforms being sought are enacted. The study found that 72 percent of males filing for bankruptcy are employed and roughly 40 percent of them could afford to pay their obligations.

Sears, which lost \$51.9 million to bankruptcy debt in 1981, conducted its own study of 9,000

Sears charge card holders who filed for bankruptcy and came up with some surprising results.

"We have targeted problems such as the pre-bankruptcy buying spree, a particular source of distress for retailers because the purchases often include clothing and other soft goods that cannot be claimed," Edwards said.

Sears also found some individuals made credit purchases after filing for bankruptcy, before Sears received notification. In this case, the debtor is liable, but the lender must pay the expense of proving it.



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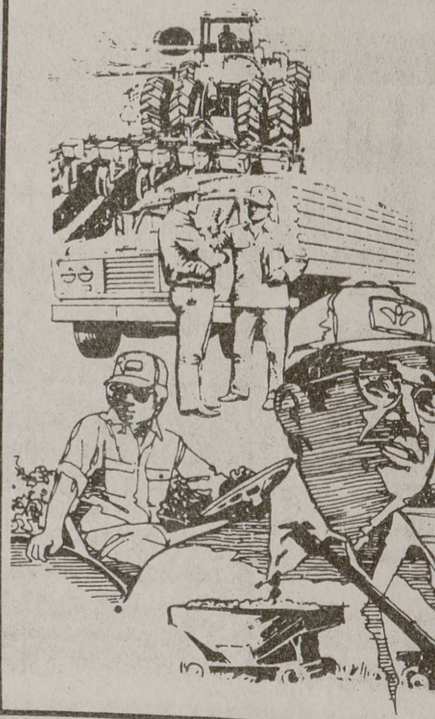
## AGRICULTURAL AND BIOLOGY STUDENTS

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We are interested in all graduating students with a Bachelor or Masters in Entomology, Plant Soil Science and Weed Science.

Summer part-time employment involves a chance to be a technician to crop consultants, advising farmers on insect, irrigation, and fertility management. Students will be able to obtain 12 semester hrs. credit.

Interviews Monday, Feb. 1 sign up for interviews at Rudder Tower, 10th Floor Placement Center or send Resume and photo to



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