

opinion

Boot camp abuse demands reforms

by Maxwell Glen and Cody Shearer

WASHINGTON — From across the aisle, we could see that something was troubling the young man with the Adidas running shoes and the all-American appearance.

It turned out he'd lost one of his contact lenses and didn't have a spare.

But there was more. The blond-haired Amtrak passenger had just begun a 30-hour train trip to Anniston, Ala., and the Army training camp nearby.

It was his first time away from home, the 20-year-old Pennsylvanian said, and he was scared. Moreover, his parents hadn't said goodbye, which only made him feel worse.

We talked for a while with the green recruit, and near the end of the conversation suggested that he keep a diary of his boot camp experiences. He was enthusiastic about the idea, and he might have remained so. But a week later, we stupidly tried to call him, causing holy havoc.

"With so many recruits trying to enter the military... many drill sergeants are succumbing to some of their old ways."

"Why did you tell the sergeant who you were?" our would-be chronicler later demanded over the phone. He then told us how his superior, upon receiving our telephone message, had thrust him against a barracks wall, vowing that the young recruit "wouldn't talk again" if he associated with reporters.

As anyone (who's either been there or seen the movie "An Officer and a Gentleman") knows, military training camp is supposed to be tough. But this young man's run-in with authority made us wonder whether military regulations against physical and mental abuse were as effective as they should be.

From last October through March of this year, the Army alone received more than 200 complaints about physical and verbal abuse against recruits. Locally-based inspectors general verified only

half of the reports, but sources close to the Pentagon contended that official records significantly undercounted the actual number of incidents.

That often-abusive trainers still plague boot camps doesn't surprise Kathy Gilbert, director of the National Lawyers Guild's Military Task Force.

"With so many recruits trying to enter the military," Gilbert said, "... many drill sergeants are succumbing to some of their old ways."

Sheer volume, it seems, is overtaxing the system.

Added an aide to the House Investigations Subcommittee on Military Personnel: "It's a miracle that anyone but family (members) ever hears of these abuse charges. It takes a courageous recruit to file a complaint."

Several years ago, two deaths at Ft. Jackson, S.C., and beatings of 20 recruits at Ft. Dix, N.J., prompted the Military Personnel Subcommittee to look into trainee abuse. The subcommittee concluded that the Army hadn't taken allegations of abuse seriously, and had subjected culprits to light punishments.

The subcommittee suggested that the Army do more to determine each recruit's capacity for stress as well as the fitness of drill instructors themselves.

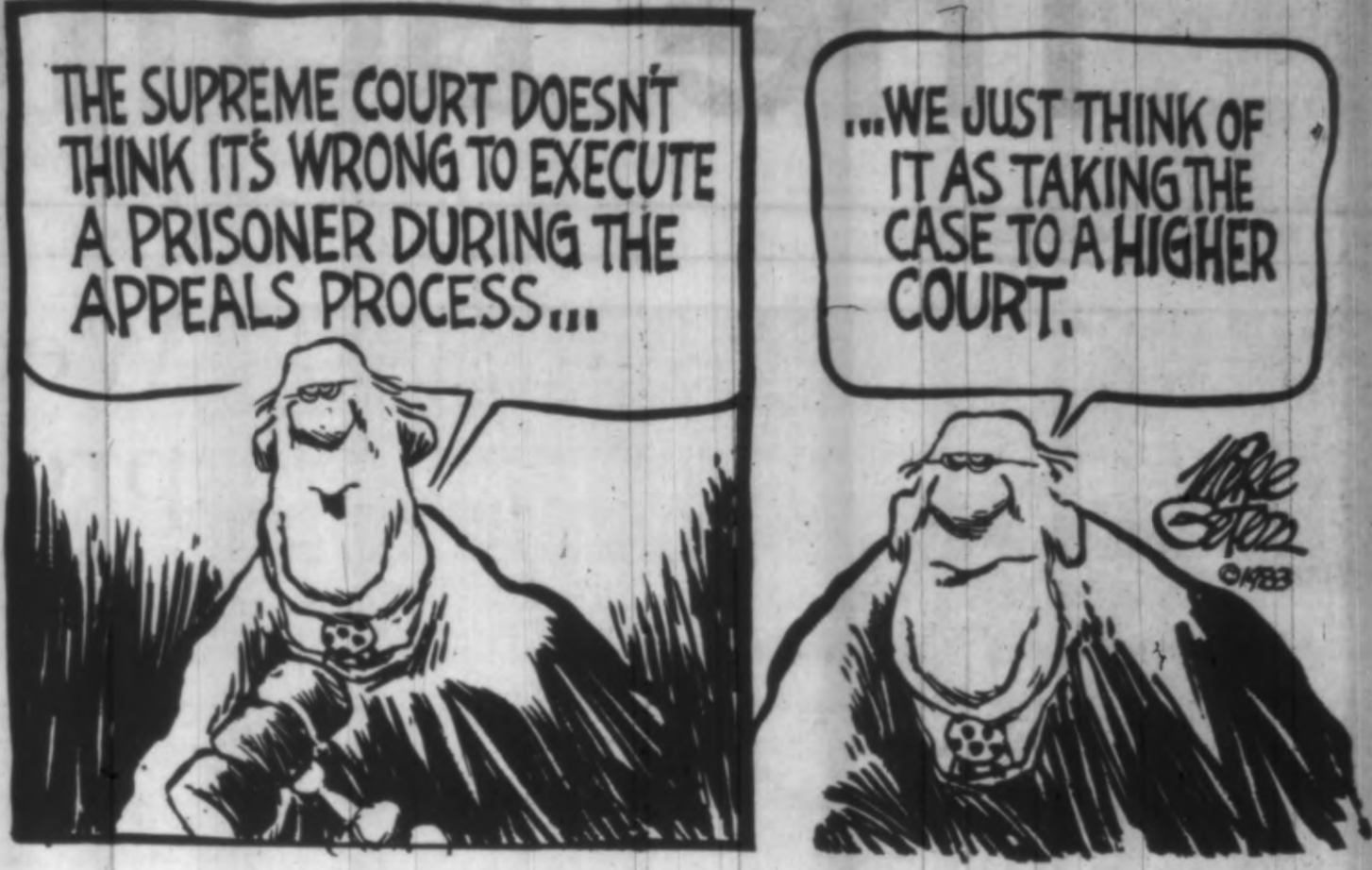
Since these recommendations were issued in 1980, the Army says it's strengthened training standards, requiring, for example, all drill instructors to attend an eight-week school.

Yet only the Marines, under the initiative of retired commandant (and former Joint Chiefs of Staff member) Robert C. Barrow have instituted psychological screenings for drill sergeants.

"I got hell from some of my associates" for pushing the reform, Barrow told us by phone from his residence in Louisiana, "but it had to be done. Drill instructors... keep long hours and work with provocative recruits. (Instructors) have to be checked out and trained carefully."

Such tough-minded reforms might disrupt order in the other armed services, but should be welcomed. They might prompt the Army to be more judicious when recruits and their parents raise questions about poor treatment.

In the long run, they would help to improve the military's image and guarantee it more willing recruits, too.



Save room for liberal arts

by Susan Hampton

"American education is lacking in the basics."

"Our schools are not preparing students for future occupations."

"What we need are tougher standards — not enough is expected of students today."

The state of education — it's a subject that has filled many newspaper columns and stirred countless debates since the National Commission on Excellence in Education issued its stinging report.

Some of the suggestions for combating the weaknesses of our educational system are frightening to this liberally educated journalist, for they could put me on the endangered species list.

Let me first say that all of the above statements about education today are true. No student should graduate from high school if they cannot read above a third grade level, or write complete sentences, or square seven and get 49. But sadly, many do.

Our increasingly technological society needs students trained to keep it working. Basic computer skills are prerequisite for more and more occupations; to help prepare children for making it in the "real world," schools need to teach technological skills.

Improvement in any endeavor requires higher expectations, asking more effort and raising the standards for acceptable. Toughening curriculums and pushing students to strive higher may go further toward improving our state of education than any other proposed changes.

But one area which seems to be forgotten is education for the sake of learning

— liberal education.

The liberally educated person may at first appear to be a dinosaur in the 20th century. Liberal learning generally does not lead to a traceable career or have any big vocational pay-off. "But what can you do?" is often asked of the liberally educated.

What the liberally educated can do is maintain the vitality and continuity of our culture. A liberal education requires an individual to understand the values of our culture, and breeds an appreciation for and desire to conserve the best of these.

At best, a liberally educated person can contribute to the quality of life, and help preserve a civilized and humane

sure can be reflective and creative, the society would cease to be supportive of those who do try to add to understanding and who do try to create."

Society needs the liberally educated just as much as it needs doctors, scientists, economists, computer specialists and service workers. When the expertise of the specialist is not enough, intuition comes into play. Liberal education develops intuition, an appreciation of science, literature, arts and philosophy, and the ability to bring all into play when making decisions.

Liberal education, especially at the college level, is not for everyone. However, it should be available for any student who wishes to pursue such a course, and not reserved only for a select few.

On the elementary and high school level, a healthy dash of liberal education might go a long way toward improving the overall state of education. A broad-based education helps open students' minds to a larger perspective of life and instill a thirst for learning.

Every student who graduates from the American education system should be equipped with the skills to attain a happy, productive life. Liberal education does not have all the answers, but neither does back-to-basics, vocational training, and tougher curriculums.

It's going to take a combination of philosophies and a willingness to change if our educational system is going to improve. But isn't the future of our children — our society's future — worth the effort?

(Editor's note: Susan Hampton is an editorial assistant with the Department of Communications.)

The Battalion

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Aides allot more time for sleeping

United Press International

WASHINGTON — Backstairs at the White House:

President Reagan's aides want to make sure he does not become overtired on a very grueling five-nation swing through the Far East in November.

Sources said the trip is now tentatively scheduled for Nov. 2-20 with rest stops in Hawaii and Guam; then on to Manila, the Philippines for one day; two days in Jakarta, Indonesia; one day in Bangkok, Thailand; two days in Tokyo and one day in Kyoto; two days in Seoul and one or two days more for rest in Hawaii.

Reagan's 10-day trip to Europe in June 1982 taught his top staff a lesson, particularly when he fell asleep during a televised conversation with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican.

Like most travelers he suffers from jet lag, even with a bedroom aboard Air Force One, and so time is being allotted for rest and relaxation, and especially for sleep.

First lady Nancy Reagan may not have particularly enjoyed the age references in the recent People Magazine article but she liked the photographs of herself and her parents taken when she was a baby.

The snapshots found in a trunk in New Jersey and sold to the magazine show her as a baby in the arms of her mother, Edith Lueket, and her natural father, Kenneth Robbins. The photo was described as circa 1921.

Sheila Tate, Mrs. Reagan's press secretary, said the first lady's birth date is July 6, 1923.

"Mrs. Reagan likes photographs," she said, and asked for copies of those printed.

As a result the magazine says it will send her prints of the family photographs.

Should police be camera shy?

by Art Buchwald

This is a true story which has more significance for Americans than whether Wayne Newton or the Beach Boys should have sung on the Mall on the Fourth of July.

It concerns a man whom we shall call John Doe, who attended an anti-war demonstration near the Vietnam Memorial on the July 4th weekend. He came with his camera to photograph whatever was going on.

While looking around he noticed quite a few photographers standing with the park police taking pictures of the people who were against war.

Suddenly he had his theme for a photographic essay. He would do a series of pictures on law enforcement officers taking photos of people lawfully demonstrating on public land.

As Doe was shooting away, he was approached by a senior officer from the Park Police demanding to know what the blank he was doing. Doe explained that there had been many photo exhibits of demonstrators held in America, but very few of police officers taking pictures of them. Doe told the officer he hoped to win a prize.

The officer demanded identification from Doe, which my friend refused to produce, citing the Supreme Court case, Brown vs. Texas, that a person did not have to identify himself to the police unless the officer can articulate he has committed a crime, or that he is about to, or that public safety is endangered.

Then the officer wanted to know if Doe was a member of the KGB. John denied it, claiming to be an ordinary American citizen who liked to take photographs of cops taking photo-

graphs. Later on, he thought to himself, had he admitted being a member of the KGB the Park Police would have probably left him alone. It was Americans they objected to taking pictures of them.

It was more than the Park Police official could deal with. Doe was bundled into a Park Police car and taken off to the station, where it was hoped he would break down and tell the real reason why he was taking photos of innocent police photographers taking pictures of people that didn't like war.

In true tradition, Doe was permitted to call a lawyer. He called an old friend from his ACLU days and said, "Barry, I've got a great case. I've been taken into custody for taking pictures of Park Police undercover photographers. We can make legal history."

Barry, who was at home, said he'd come down, but his relatives were in town and he was looking forward to spending the Fourth with his kids and he wasn't about to spend the weekend in court with John Doe arguing the merits of Brown vs. Texas.

"But Barry, if we don't fight for our rights who will?"

"Lawyers who don't have their relatives in town."

The police officer seemed to be losing his patience and said that if Doe did not identify himself he would be taken to St. Elizabeth's, Washington's mental hospital, for observation.

"But," protested Doe, "that's what the police do in the Soviet Union. Are you sure you people don't work for the KGB?"

By this time Barry the lawyer showed up and a deal was struck. Doe would not have to identify himself, keeping the Brown vs. Texas principle intact, but he would have to promise not to take any

more photos of police officers taking photos.

Unfortunately, the main legal question was never resolved. Is someone crazy for taking pictures of police taking pictures of people demonstrating, or are the Park Police crazy for thinking you shouldn't be allowed to do it?

It would be nice for us camera buffs to know.

