

Let Marines fight or come home

Monday another unidentified Marine was killed in Lebanon. He was the 259th American to die on Lebanese soil.

What are the Marines doing in Lebanon?

Are they fighting for democracy? No.

Are they fighting for peace? No.

Are they fighting at all?

That seems to be the question. The United States government has sent the Marines to Lebanon as a "peace-keeping force." But there is no peace in Lebanon.

So what are they fighting for? Only their own survival.

What's going on in Lebanon? A civil war. A religious dispute over doctrine. A fight for a homeland for the Palestinians.

If the United States wishes to get involved in someone else's dispute, then they should declare which side they stand for and fight to the end for it.

We cannot afford to get involved in a conflict where winning isn't the goal. Vietnam proved that.

The United States has the capability and the power to end any military dispute in a matter of days. The American bloodshed in Lebanon would be over once and for all.

But because the entire situation in the Middle East is unstable, it is nearly impossible to tell the good guys from the bad. Near the Persian Gulf the Iraqis are fighting the Iraqis with the Russians selling arms and giving aid to both sides.

The Marines may be doing a service for the citizens of Beirut. But they are doing nothing to alleviate the Lebanese situation. Which leads to yet another question "Who will be No. 260?"

Let the Marines fight or bring them home.

— The Battalion Editorial Board

Shuttle takeoff taken too lightly

The United States will launch another space shuttle Friday, the 10th such launch in less than three years. Americans, unfortunately, will greet the event with a collective yawn — if that much. Space travel has become so common that we don't think twice about launches, or shuttles or satellites.

But this mission includes a special twist that will ultimately lead to an orbiting space station. Astronauts Bruce McCandless and Robert Stewart will use new jet-propelled backpacks to fly up to 300 feet away from the shuttle — without safety lines. Never before have astronauts set off in orbit without ties to the mothership.

The spacewalks are critical to the next shuttle mission, when an astronaut will use one of the jet backpacks to fly over to a crippled sun-watching satellite, grab it and allow the shuttle's mechanical arm to bring it into the ship's cargo bay for repairs. And all

accomplished while floating freely in space.

These free-flying spacewalks will lay the foundation for future satellite refueling missions and for construction of the space station President Reagan wants NASA to build.

Though shuttle flights and space walks aren't as unique as they once were, Americans need to realize that the progress we are making in space will no doubt change our lifestyles. Reagan's challenge to NASA should result in renewed interest in space travel, and that interest could bring about a new era in the history of man's exploration of the unknown.

Think about that today.

— The Battalion Editorial Board

Letters:

Scriptures condemn homosexuality

Editor:
In "Reader's Forum," Feb. 1, 1984, Lenny DePalma stated that those who say the Bible condemns homosexuality "twist and bend the scriptures." I would like to submit a couple of verses which deal with homosexuality.

"You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination," (Leviticus 18:22).

"...for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in the own persons the due penalty of their error," (Romans 1:26-27).

Randy McDougal
Class of '85

Humor a matter of opinion

Editor:
In response to Mr. Lueckemeyer's letter in Wednesday's Battalion, "funny" is a matter of opinion. Mr. Lueckemeyer is entitled to express his views, but his letter went beyond opinion. It stated blatantly that the strips printed in the paper are not funny and the artists responsible are not doing a good job, period. He offered no intelligent reasons for his assessment, but merely his decision as fact. The world is not flat and the cartoons are not funny. It's simple.

Letters written in this tone are fairly common. But no matter what the subject is, be it the Aggie Code of Honor, senior finals or the proper pronunciation of the words "clam chowder," it seems to be more effective to explain your views to somebody than it does to thrust an opinion on them. At least that's my opinion.

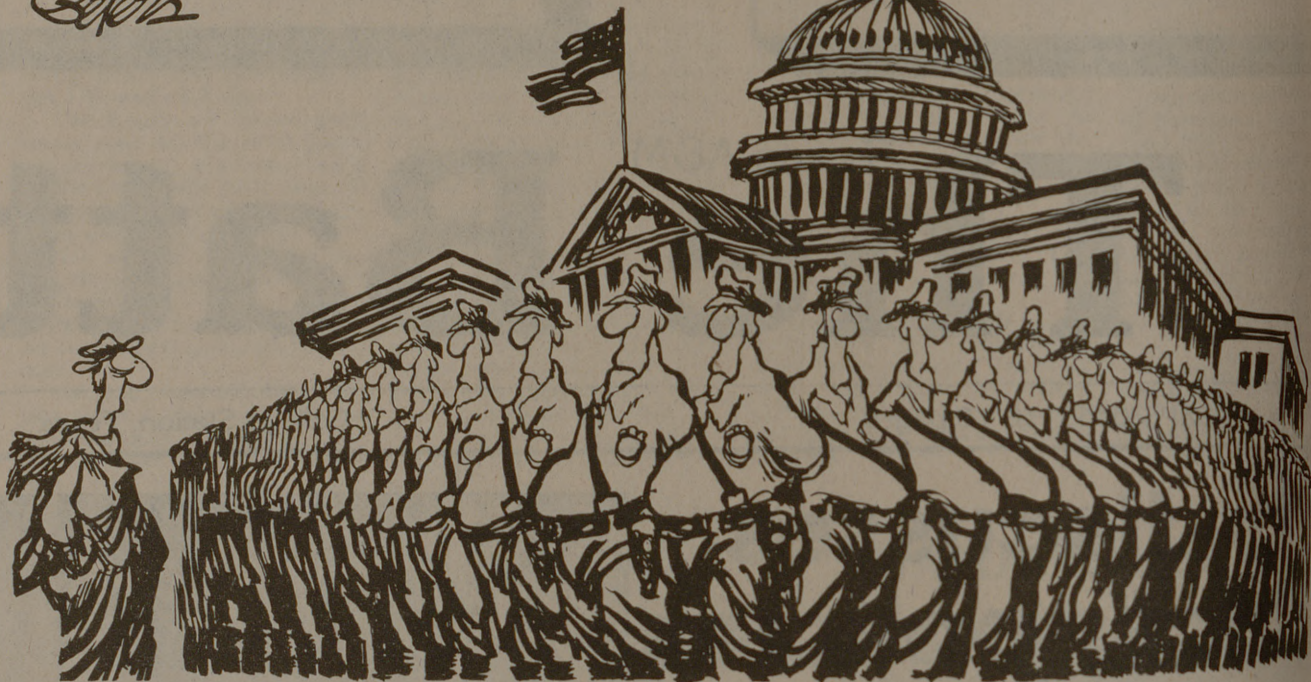
Brian Massey
Class of '87

Slouch

by Jim Earle



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THE STATE OF THE UNION

Learn to take it easy

Since this week has been designated "business week" by the Business Student Council, I thought I'd take some time and talk about a less stressful, but no less important topic — leisure.

Consider this: The average work week is 40 hours, but full-time workers, on the average, put in 46 to 47 hours during the week.

That in itself doesn't seem too astounding, but a recent study showed that when given the chance to choose between free time and work, most people said they would choose work.

The easy answer is they need money, but I think the meaning goes deeper.

Doing nothing is not considered to be a proper use of leisure time for Americans. They are uneasy with free time, don't know how to handle it, and, underneath it all, it seems to make them feel they are lacking purpose to their lives.

We live in a society where work seems to tower above all else. Do we work in order to have leisure time?

Too many people believe they work in order to buy the paraphernalia that will enable them to enjoy leisure time.

brigid
brockman

But leisure has nothing to do with time and work or money and gadgets. It is a freedom — freedom to do what one wants.

Freedom from the necessity of work. It is especially important to realize that rest, recreation and diversion are justifiable because they restore us mentally and physically for work.

Our society's concepts of production and efficiency are too easily carried over into our own free time, making us feel guilty because we are wasting "valuable time."

So, if you're going to consider this week what types of jobs interest you might also think about how you spend your free time, and how it affects your life.

Leisure can take many forms, but the most interesting and fun is high-risk adventure recreation — mountain climbing, skydiving, gliding.

Being exposed to environmental forces we must battle the forces of nature as the weather or the power of water gain a new understanding of the world that exists beyond human control.

Our technological environment is so predictable and structured that it can deceive us into believing we are completely in control of everything.

But by getting outside and experiencing nature, we can gain a new perspective on what it means to be human in the twentieth century.

Vietnam: Learning our lessons

By JIM ANDERSON
United Press International

As one of the last acts of his life, Martin Herz, a diplomat, teacher and writer who died last year of cancer, gave a series of four lectures at Georgetown University called "The Vietnam War in Retrospect."

The talks, which have now been published by the university, raised some troubling questions for democracies in general, and for journalists, in particular.

Some of Herz's conclusions:
—The United States is not capable of waging a protracted war, especially one that is complex and difficult to understand.

He was talking about Vietnam, but his point could just as easily be applied to Lebanon.

If Herz was right, then so is Syrian Foreign Minister Abdul Khalim Khaddam when he says, "The Americans are short of breath," and will eventually drop Lebanon because it is inconvenient, unpopular and unsuited to quick fixes.

—The lack of American staying power, Herz said, is partly the result of the shortcomings of the American press, which tends to report all wars in terms of good guys versus bad guys.

American reporters in Vietnam continually told us the South Vietnamese government was corrupt, repressive and unpopular. But Herz said in retrospect (and he was there) it was clear that the South Vietnamese government was making military progress in fighting the war and generating popular support. The Viet Cong were increasingly dependent on forced inductees from the North.

He said he never found a single instance in the American press where the South Vietnamese military was favorably portrayed, although the South Vietnamese soldiers frequently fought well and suffered many times the casualties of the U.S. forces.

The Viet Cong, who were portrayed as gallant little native guys in black pajamas (think of Phred, the character in "Doonesbury"), were North Vietnamese draftees, sent to the South in about the same way they are now sent to fight and die in Cambodia.

But, Herz said, the American press — and particularly television, with its enormous political impact — has a built-in bias for reporting news that is bad for the home team.

He recalled the example of a wire service pool reporter in World War II, covering the allied landings in North Africa. He sent back a report that accurately described ships running aground on landing barriers and allied ships shelling the positions of their own troops amid general confusion.

But the reporter, who had been trained to look for the unusual and the unpredictable, missed the central point. The allied landing succeeded in its goal of putting ashore 5,000 men with a minimum of casualties.

So it was, Herz said, in Vietnam, and so it will be with all military operations.

The lasting impressions of the Vietnam War are photographic: South Vietnamese soldiers clinging desperately to helicopter skids, Gen. Loan summarily executing a Viet Cong captive in the streets of Saigon, bodies laid out in the U.S. embassy compound after the 1968 Tet offensive.

He said these vivid impressions, their immense political impact on U.S. public and Congress, obscured more subtle and more difficult truths: The South Vietnamese generally fought well and they were proving toward the end of the war Viet Cong, which was essentially an organization for the North Vietnamese government, had a brutal but supported policy of executing all local government officials; the Tet offensive was a military disaster for the Communist forces that decimated the Viet Cong and forced the North Vietnamese to take the fighting in the South.

Herz offered no solution to the problems he posed. But he predicted that the American ability to back up its worldwide commitments would lead to Vietnam (and Lebanon).

"All I can do is point out to you what happened in Vietnam has had repercussions almost everywhere," he said, "because it affected what we think we can and cannot do, just as it affected what others think they can do with it." "This is not a good situation and cannot last."

The Battalion

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