

Bubble boy's life a medical miracle

David, the boy in the plastic bubble, is dead. Medical science has been blasted for its inhumanity. Blasted for its respirators and artificial hearts that keep people alive when their bodies are ready to give up and die and their minds are gone. But the criticism doesn't apply to David. He was very much alive.

His life in the germ-free bubble was a miracle — a triumph of modern science over life-threatening disease. We wept with joy when we read how

David emerged from his sheltered plastic bubble and was wrapped in his mother's arms for the first time, and we weep with sorrow now that he is gone. But medical technology allowed him to live 12 years, and that's more than he could have asked for before some anonymous scientist developed the germ-free plastic bubble. The Battalion Editorial Board salutes those researchers who allow people with medical problems like David's to live. And to David we bid farewell. — The Battalion Editorial Board

Protecting teachers from student violence

How can teachers in the classroom be protected from violent students? In Houston, as in the rest of the country, violence against teachers occurs quite often. And it doesn't happen only at inner-city schools. On Tuesday, a Houston Independent School District teacher was attacked by a student, who police said was apparently upset that he had failed the teacher's class last semester. The student, armed with a gun, confronted the history teacher in the hall of Southwest Houston High School. Does the Houston Independent School District need to place security

guards at each school and to screen students for guns and knives with metal detectors? Do all high schools need these precautions? And what could motivate a student to attack his teacher? Maybe the pressure is too great. Society now expects all students, even those who in the past would have been allowed to drop out and pursue a trade, to stick it out and graduate from high school. It is a sad comment on our society when people must fear for their safety in the halls of learning. — The Battalion Editorial Board

Phone rates still rising after Ma Bell's death

Phone bills are going up again. Be sure to look closely at your phone bill this month. A small card stating that General Telephone is going to the state Public Utilities Commission to request a rate hike will be enclosed. It may give you an idea of how much they are requesting overall, but it certainly won't give you the answer to the question that's most likely to concern you: "How much is it going to cost me?"

The Battalion Editorial Board doesn't know the answer, but don't say we didn't warn you. Your phone bills will be going up again soon. We thought the break-up of monopolies was supposed to benefit consumers. So why, after Ma Bell was shattered into small pieces, are phone bills still rising? — The Battalion Editorial Board

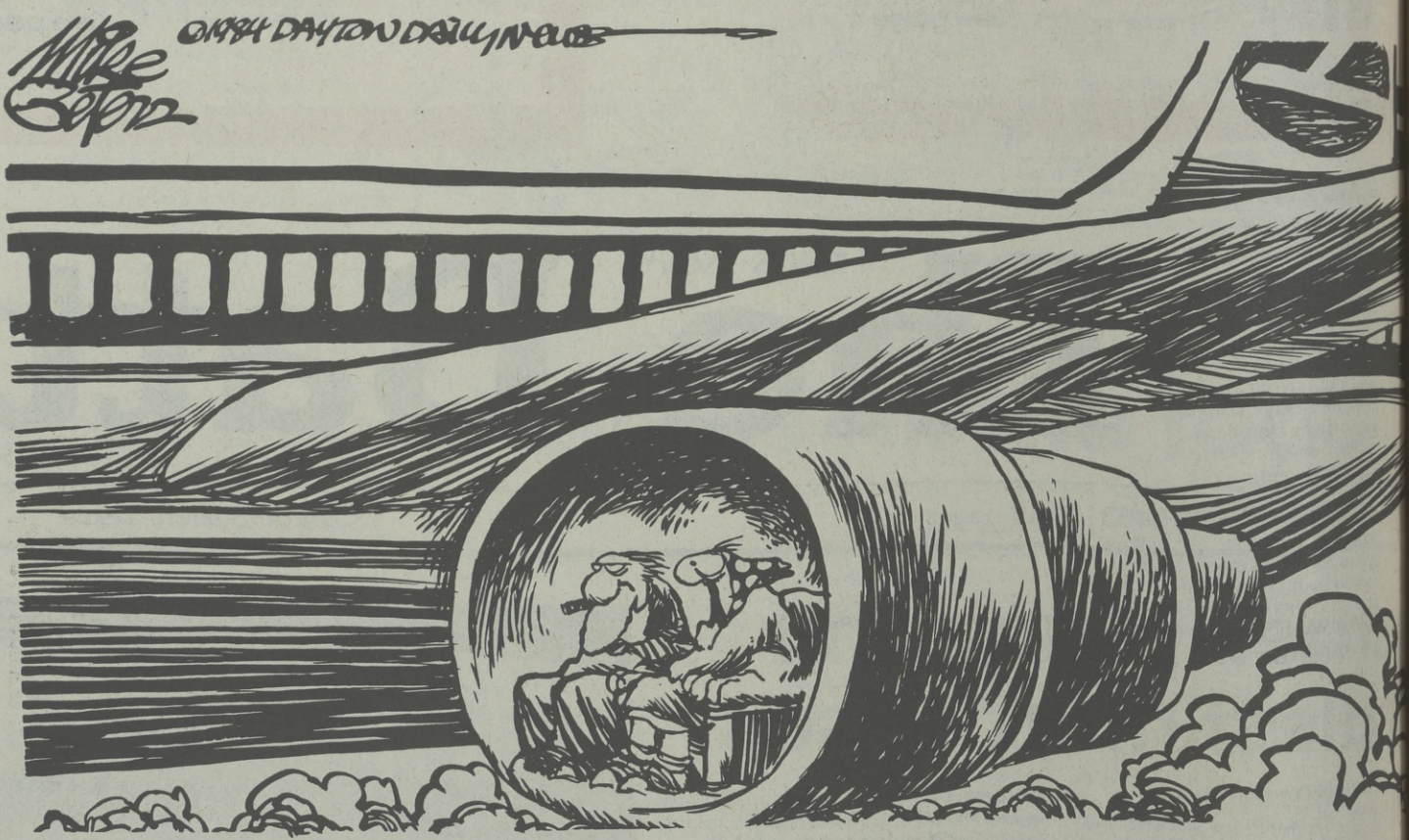
Military language not straight talk

By DICK WEST

Although "euphemism" may be a four-letter word to some students of the language, if you think of it as military terminology, it's OK. Like bombs, guns, missiles and other accoutrements of war, the nomenclature itself is ever-changing. What many of us assumed was an invasion of Grenada turned out to be a "rescue mission." The armed Marines who landed in Lebanon were part of a "peace-keeping" force, and their withdrawal is not a bug-out but a "redeployment." My own military career dates back to the days when U.S. rescue missions were being conducted in such places as North Africa, Sicily, Anzio and Southern France — all of which led up to the big cross-channel rescue mission on Omaha Beach and elsewhere in the European Theater. Meanwhile, according to what I read, similar rescue operations were being conducted on Guadacanal, Iwo Jima, Bougainville and elsewhere in the Pacific Theater. Even back then, you had to admire the handiwork of the military terminologists. Nobody who could label those areas as "theaters" could be accused of being unepithetous. The first major change in their vocabulary took place in Korea in fighting that President Truman, then the commander in chief, called a "police action." Considering that the hostilities in Korea included some of the bloodiest combat in history, it is understandable that the cops would eventually become peacekeepers. That development, however, was a long way in the future. Still to come was Vietnam, where members of the police units that fought in Korea were transformed into "military advisers."

than 540,000 advisers in Vietnam. That was enough to provide consultative service to all of Southeast Asia, give or take the Malayan Peninsula. It was perhaps in Vietnam that military glossology, or the glossing over of unpleasant events, reached its first full flowering. Who can ever forget the "escalation" that took place in that unhappy land, illuminated by the oft-sighted "light at the end of the tunnel." Against such a background, it was fairly simply to take up advising in force. But after the armistice was signed in 1973, nobody thought of referring to the withdrawal of the advisers as a redeployment. Thus, a neat bit of strategy was lost. At the rate euphemisms are escalating, we may indeed have to rewrite "The Marine Hymn," as humorist Bob Orben suggests, to include the line: "From the halls of Montezuma, to the ships off Tripoli."

Slouch by Jim Earle



Role of media examined

By Helen Thomas
Columnist for United Press International

In recent history, the role of the news media and its relentless probing has become a volatile issue. Because of their instant identity, television anchormen and many correspondents have become celebrities. The media also have been selected by some presidents for an all-out attack or for wooing, depending on the goals. The most prominent relationships between presidents and the press were manifested by Lyndon Johnson, where it was a case of love and hate, and by Richard Nixon, whose contempt for the press is well documented. A fascinating book, erudite and at the same time down to earth, explains the role of the media in a modern society, and its raison d'etre. "Straight Stuff," which has just hit the stands, was written by veteran White House correspondent James Deakin, whose insights and irreverence are based on covering presidents from Dwight D. Eisenhower to Jimmy Carter. He deals with the premise that reporters seek the truth. "There is much evidence that the American people deeply thirst for truth," he wrote. "They want their politicians, newspapers, television networks and Howard Cosell to tell it like it is. The truth is desired, but each person defines the truth. The journalists present a portrait of a world that is confused, untidy and dangerous. The journalist defines his profession as the pursuit of facts and explanations. If there is a pre-eminent reason for the endless controversy over

media bias, it is this unhappy insistence. "Because facts are uncomfortable things. They embarrass officials and institutions and organizations. They nag at ordinary people. They disturb the status quo. They challenge accepted practices. They affront complacency." He does not skirt the fallibility of the press and the limitations journalists work under: the pressures of time and space, often having to go with bare facts, and no explanations because the explanations are not available from the people who are paid to give them. A White House reporter inevitably must touch on the growth of the imperial presidency in modern times. The regality and lack of accountability of presidents, except when they write their memoirs on their own terms, is depicted. "Straight Stuff" also deals with the question of leaks and says "national security is what a president says it is." Deakin lists the so-called national security revelations doled out by presidents over the years for their own purposes. The Eisenhower administration, he says, leaked the Yalta papers to The New York Times, seeking to show that FDR's negotiations with Josef Stalin led to all the superpower problems since 1945. John F. Kennedy "leaked parts of a highly classified presidential memorandum" to Ben Bradlee of the Washington Post, who was then a reporter for Newsweek. Lyndon Johnson explained his formerly classified Vietnam peace effort,

an operation called "Marigold," in his memoirs. And aides of past presidents have disclosed so-called classified information in books they wrote after leaving the White House. Deakin stresses the point that in all the so-called national security leaks that have occurred over the years, and there have been many, the Republic did not fall. Reporters know there are "very few real secrets" but the government has an "obsession with secrecy," he says. "All this actually cloaks very little that is vital to the safety of the American people and the nation," Deakin says. He ranks press secretaries, and James Hagerty, Eisenhower's press secretary, comes out on top. Hagerty was in Eisenhower's inner circle and trusted by the president. But other press secretaries, he says, see their jobs as public relations experts for the president. Deakin also deals with the relentless attempts to manage the news by all recent administrations. He notes that on the desk of President Reagan's spokesman, Larry Speakes, is a sign: "You don't tell us how to stage the news and we don't tell you how to cover it." As for the irreverence of the press, Deakin writes that after the attempt on Reagan's life in March 1981, Speakes informed the press that the White House had received 7,500 telegrams during the first 48 hours after the shooting. "Pro or con," a reporter inquired blandly.

Letters

Capital punishment is not barbarism

Editor: In your Feb. 23 issue you assert once again your disgust over capital punishment. In the same issue we read about escaped convicts slaying an innocent man and about Henry Lucas, who was let out of prison after serving a term for murdering his mother, standing trial for yet another one of the hundreds of killings he committed after his release. The Bible commands governments to execute murderers. But you clearly believe that we should be smarter and more pious than such "barbarism." I am glad that the majority of Americans disagree with you. Danny England

Student seeks publicity

Editor: I am writing in response to Stephen Weiss' letter of Feb. 21, in which he attacks Dr. Walter Bradley for seeking free publicity for a book which he co-authored. Bradley mentioned his book to establish his authority on the subject matter, not to gain publicity. The crux of Weiss' letter was contained in the third sentence. The rest was a facade to camouflage his true intention: to attack Bradley because he

presents arguments with which Weiss disagrees, and which he cannot refute.

Because he disagrees with Bradley on the issue of evolution, he seems to think that this automatically makes him a writer "in a field he probably knows little about." In this instance, however, it seems to be a phrase most applicable to Weiss.

If Bradley is, as you so eloquently put it, "uneducated," with a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering, what does that

make Weiss, a relative neophyte in academia who has not yet received an undergraduate degree?

Mr. Weiss, it is you, who averages at least one letter to the editor a month who is actually seeking publicity. The next time you wish to air your opinion think about what you really want to say before you blurt it out.

Thomas Lee
Darren Williams
Eric Quintana
Tom Mosher
Mike Lee

The Battalion

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