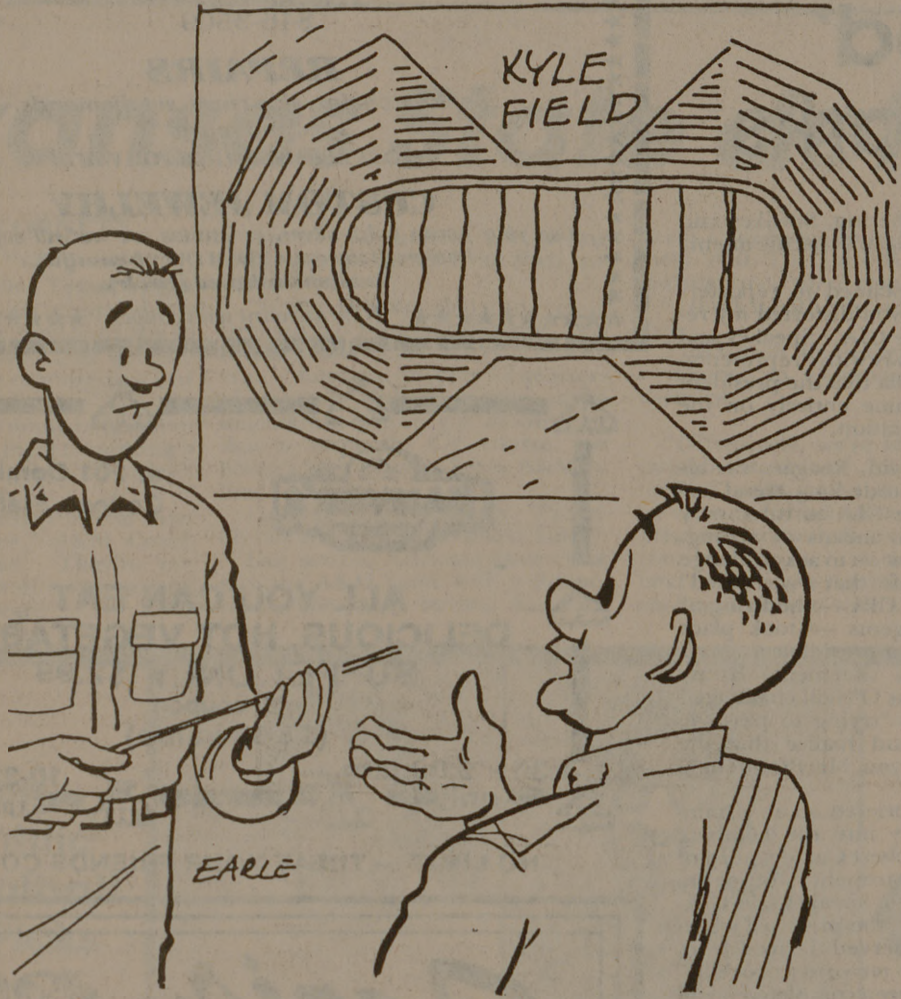


Slouch

By Jim Earle



"I agree that your plan would reduce the competition for fifty-yard line tickets, but somehow it doesn't strike me just right."

Elementary student shot in arm, prompts search

United Press International

HOUSTON — An 11-year-old student hoisting the U.S. flag in front of his elementary school was shot once in the arm Thursday, and a junior high student was fired at, prompting a massive search of the area and the cancellation of all after-school activities.

Principals at the 27 schools in the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District were ordered to keep students inside throughout the day and law enforcement officers were posted at all schools when classes ended.

Josh Littell was in stable condition in Cypress Fairbanks Medical Center Hospital following the shooting in front of Millsap Elementary School in far Northwest Houston.

"The bullet entered the back of his arm just above the elbow and ... resulted in a compound fracture," said George Drushel, school district spokesman. "It was painful, but from all reports we've received he's stable."

Littell was wounded about 8:33 a.m., shortly after a student at Bleyl Junior High School, located 4 miles away, was fired at, officials said.

"He and a friend of his went out to raise the flag," Harris County

Sheriff's Sgt. George Sturgis said of Littell. "While they were doing so they heard a pop and started running."

"As they were running back to the school they heard another pop. That's when (the boy) felt something, looked down and saw his arm bleeding."

The junior high student said he was shot at by a white man with brown hair in a blue car, principal Ben Ledbetter said.

"He was on the school grounds and within 10 or 15 paces of a doorway," Ledbetter said of the student, who was not injured.

He said most students at Bleyl were "not even aware that we had any type of incident today."

"There have been a tremendous number of calls (from parents) but there's been no panic sweeping the district," Drushel said. "We, of course, have canceled all after-school activities throughout the district."

The 900 students and faculty at Millsap Elementary were handling the stress "extremely well," principal Jane Little said.

"We've talked with the kids," she said. "Of course our staff knew immediately because we secured the building and grounds. None of the boys and girls have been allowed outside."

There was no panic at the school, but many parents came to take their children home, Little said.

"Some have come up very upset ... but many of them have said it sounds like everything's under control and left. We're encouraging parents to do that. It sends a message to their children that things are calm and secure."

The other fifth grader with Littell was interviewed by authorities and then spent the rest of the day at school, the principal said.

"He elected to stay at the school," she said. "He thought he might do better to stay here by his friends."

Officers at midday escorted morning kindergarten students to their buses and afternoon kindergarten students from buses to their buildings throughout the district, Drushel said.

Report alleges coverup

United Press International

AUSTIN — A confidential report by a federally-appointed prison monitor alleges top officials in the Texas Department of Corrections engaged in coverups in an attempt to impede a court-ordered investigation of brutality.

The 110-page report to the Texas attorney general's office, a copy of which was obtained Thursday by United Press International, said former acting TDC Director D.V. "Red" McKaskle and other high-ranking officials frequently tried to impede efforts by lower-level prison investigators to expose misconduct in the violence-plagued system.

Efforts were made "within the TDC Central Administration to influence the outcome of investigations and the integrity of the office," court-appointed monitor Paul Belazis said in the report.

"In addition, central administrators have attempted to minimize or avoid disciplinary action with respect to some employees and to prevent certain misconduct from coming to the attention (of a court-appointed special master)," he said.

In one instance, the report criticized McKaskle — now a candidate for Huntsville police chief — for failing to discipline a warden accused of harassing an inmate who was working with special investigators.

The inmate was punished when he voluntarily turned in a weapon he said was planted beneath his bunk, the report said.

"The conclusion reached by the investigator," the report said, "is that Mr. D.V. McKaskle, who was serving as assistant director for special services at the time the knife was planted ... was personally involved in the effort to discredit the complaining prisoner."

Ray Proconier, who was hired in May as TDC director, is not named in the report, which will be submitted to U.S. District Judge William Wayne Justice after the state and federal government submit written comments.

Justice ordered sweeping reforms in TDC following a lawsuit filed against the state in the early 1970s and has maintained jurisdiction over the implementation of the reforms.

In addition to the criticism, the report singled out for praise the prison system's special investigative unit.

"The staff as a whole have shown courage and determination in conducting investigations which identified misconduct in every level of the TDC chain of command," the report said.

The monitor also found that investigations into allegations of harassment of prisoners who have cooperated with investigators have implicated officials of the highest level of TDC.

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