

Former commander leads his men

Marching veterans reach capitol

Associated Press

AUSTIN — They donned faded uniforms. Many wore their medals, some carried flags. A few came in wheelchairs. All heard their former commander, Gen. William Westmoreland, tell them to stand proudly.

"You men are stouthearted men. I'm glad to be among you," Westmoreland told Texas Vietnam veterans Thursday as their march from Dallas to San Antonio reached the state Capitol.

Westmoreland joined the marchers Wednesday night and walked several miles in what organizers called "A Journey to Remember — The Last Patrol."

Standing on the Capitol steps with former first lady Lady Bird Johnson, Westmoreland won cheers from a

crowd of about 200, some 60 wearing uniforms, when he said it wasn't the veterans' fault the war was lost.

"You men did a magnificent job on the battlefield in Vietnam," he said. "You did what the country asked you to do, and you did it well."

"That's right," they replied.

"The war was not lost on the battlefield by the military," he said. "It was lost by virtue of public opinion here in the United States."

"All right," they said.

"And as you realize — but I must say many Americans do not realize — when the North Vietnamese militarily took over South Vietnam, there were no American fighting troops on the battlefield," he said.

"You tell 'em, General," they shouted.

The march, which began Oct. 19, was organized by Michael Martin of

Dallas and Tim Holiday of Hawkins, veterans and songwriters who said they wanted to call attention to both veterans and the plight of the missing.

They also hope the 300-mile walk will raise money for a Texas Vietnam veterans' memorial.

A total of 3,244 Texans died in the war, and 161 still are listed as missing.

Westmoreland noted that the veterans "were not well-treated" when they returned home from Vietnam.

But he said that attitudes toward them started to change after the veterans organized their own parade in 1982 to mark the dedication of the national Vietnam memorial in Washington.

"We Vietnam veterans converged on Washington and we had a wel-

come home for ourselves," Westmoreland said. "We staged a parade in honor of ourselves. Nobody else would do it."

"And I led that parade. It was one of the most emotional, proudest moments of my life to lead you guys in Washington, D.C., as was the case on the battlefield."

Also honoring the veterans Thursday were Gov. Mark White and Attorney General Jim Mattox, who noted that those who didn't serve in the war got a head-start in their careers over the veterans who did serve.

"Had we gone and had to give two, three or four years out of our lives ... we would not be in the same positions that we are in today," Mattox said. "I feel a real responsibility to raise my voice ... to say thank you. We appreciate you."

Board approves auto insurance decrease

Associated Press

AUSTIN — The State Board of Insurance agreed Thursday to give Texas motorists a \$137.7 million bonus in hopes they will "buckle up" in 1986.

Gov. Mark White was an approving front-row spectator Thursday when the board voted 3-0 to cut auto insurance rates 5.1 percent in expectation of 65 percent compliance with the new seat belt law.

"This is exactly what we planned," White told reporters. "If we gain a reduction in traffic deaths and injury due to buckling up we intend to pass the savings on to consumers."

White said he really wanted a larger reduction in rates and "if the 1986 reduction proves successful we will consider further reductions from the impact of this legislation."

Insurance Board Chairman Lyn-

"This is exactly what we planned. If we gain a reduction in traffic deaths and injury due to buckling up we intend to pass the savings on to consumers. If the 1986 reduction proves successful we will consider further reductions from the impact of this legislation."

— Gov. Mark White.

don Olson made the motion for a 5.1 percent reduction, saying it was obvious to the three-member board that the estimate of 50 percent compliance with the seat belt law by the board's staff and 40 percent by the industry were too low.

The staff had recommended on Sept. 19 a 1.3 percent premium decrease while the industry wanted a 10.6 percent increase.

"This decrease in premiums will

be a real incentive for compliance with the law," Olson said.

Board members David Thornton and Carole Rylander voted with Olson.

Earlier, a motion by Rylander for an 8.4 percent decrease was defeated 2-1. She said testimony at previous hearings convinced her there would be at least 70 percent compliance.

"We will sell Texans short if we

adopt anything less than an 8.4 percent decrease," she said.

Attorney General Jim Mattox, who earlier recommended a 5.6 percent decrease, said the adopted decrease was a "good common-sense approach to the anticipated effects of Texas' new seat belt law."

Mattox said if 60 percent of Texas motorists use their seat belts it likely will reduce the number of yearly deaths by 460, injuries by 13,900 and insurance company costs by \$282 million a year.

Carol Barger, regional director for the Consumers Union said, "I think they sent a real strong signal to consumers that safety really does save, not just lives and injuries but it actually saves dollars."

"We respectfully disagree," said Rick Gentry, a spokesman for the insurance industry.

Texas city home to 3 killed in Navy helicopter crash

Associated Press

CORPUS CHRISTI — The three Navy men killed when their helicopter crashed into a marsh are: Lt. Cmdr. David Lee Wright, 44, Lt. Sam Michael Savas III, 27, and aviation machinist David Selton, 32, died when their UH-1N helicopter crashed Wednesday, said Stella Jimenez, a spokeswoman for the Corpus Christi Naval Air Station.

Three other Navy men from Corpus Christi were injured in the crash, she said. They are: mechanic William Daniel Sweeney, 21, electrician Leo Richard Kovalski, 29, and hospital corpsman Edward Francis Starceski, 26.

Kovalski was in serious but stable condition, Starceski was in critical but stable condition and Sweeney was in good condition, she said. All were at a base hospital.

Jimenez said an investigation is continuing and that no cause for the

incident had been determined. The helicopter, which is used for search and rescue missions, crashed on a routine training mission on Mustang Island and appeared to be making practice dives along with another chopper when it hit a marsh, witnesses said.

Rick Andrews and his wife, Linda, were on their way home about 2:30 p.m. Wednesday when they saw two helicopters practicing diving maneuvers about one-half mile off Texas Highway 53.

Moments later, Andrews said, his wife yelled, "Oh my God. He crashed!"

Mrs. Andrews said it appeared that, just before the crash, the rotor of one of the helicopters had stopped. The other helicopter circled the fallen one briefly, then landed and two crew members began helping the survivors, Andrews said.

Pieces of the helicopter were scattered about 60 feet from the crash, he said.

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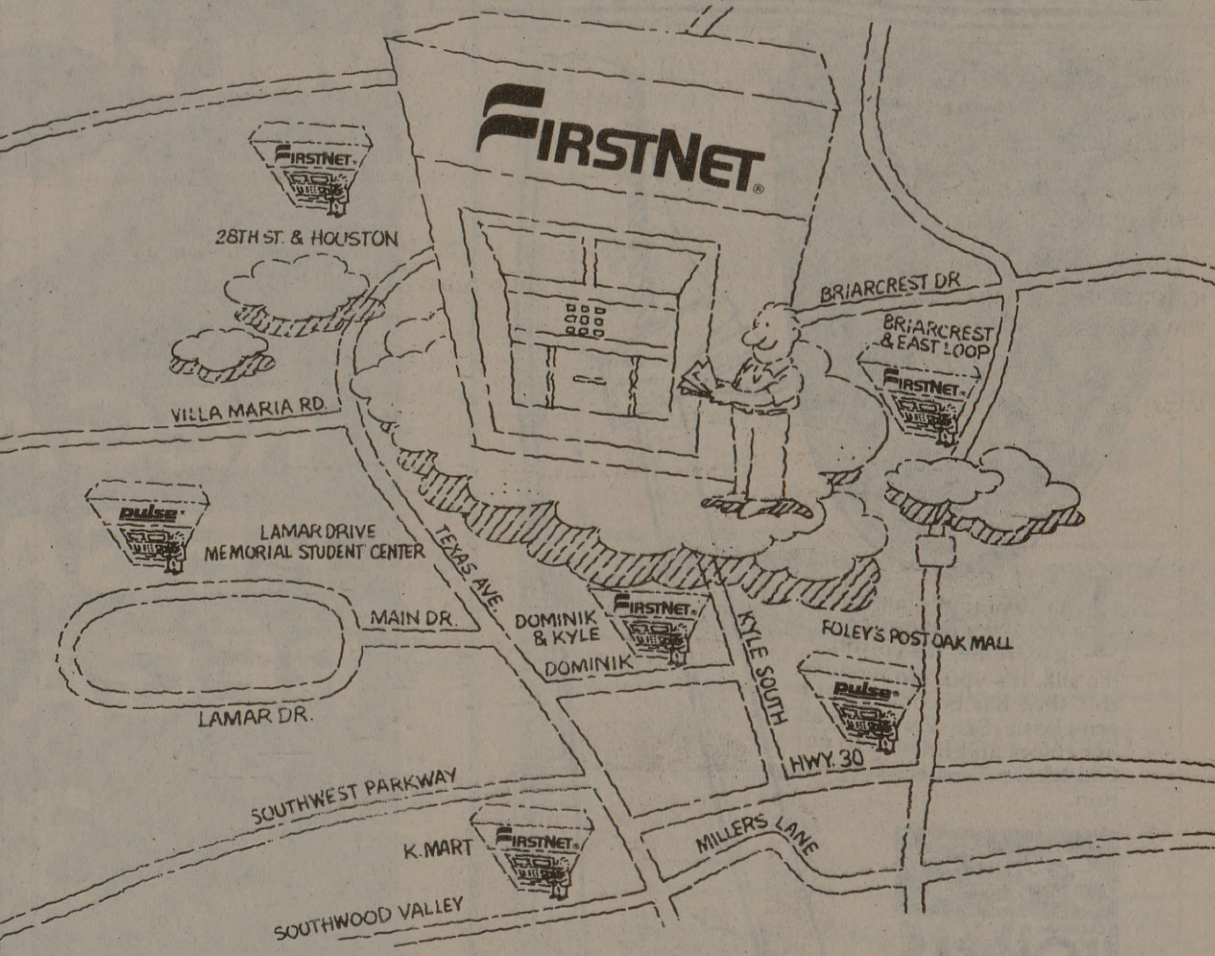
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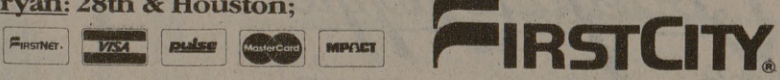
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