

State and Local

Top Gun' sparks increased interest

Freshman enrollment up for Corps

By Craig Renfro
Staff Writer

Freshman enrollment in the Texas A&M University Corps of Cadets is at its highest since 1982, and the movie "Top Gun" may have played a role in the increase, a Corps official said Wednesday.

Lt. Col. Donald Johnson, assistant commandant, said 767 freshmen are enrolled in the Corps this year compared to 632 last year, a 21 percent increase. Rising international turmoil and the patriotic impact of "Top Gun" has spurred the growth, Johnson said.

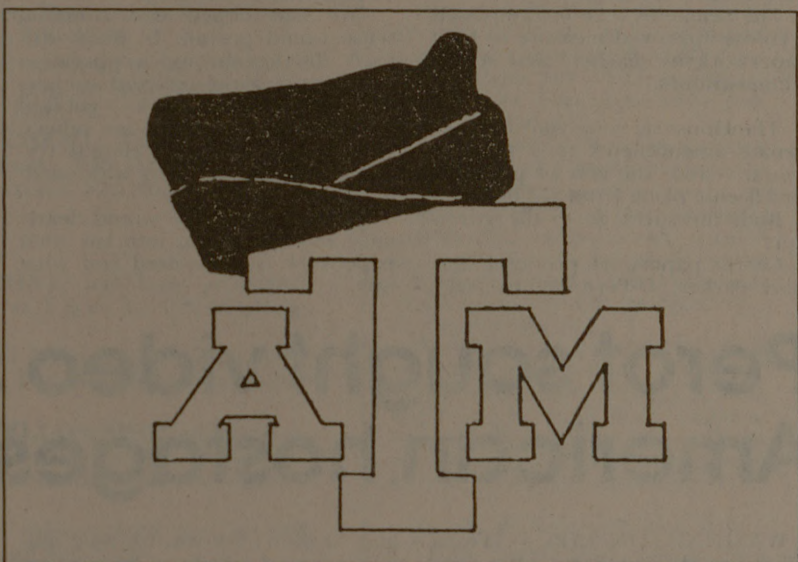
"Historically Texans have risen to the occasion," he said. "Now with the Libyan situation and a movie like 'Top Gun' you will have a surge in military growth and patriotism."

Johnson said interest in joining the Corps is higher than it has been in many years.

"This is the most interest students have shown in my 15 years here," he said. "Several would come by each day."

However, not everyone who joins the Corps stays in it. Last year 632 freshmen entered the Corps, but only 418 came back for their sophomore year, Johnson said.

"We've already had some



asking out because the Corps lifestyle is not like the movies," he said.

Although some drop out, Johnson said many of them stay because of the positive aspects the Corps stresses.

"The positive things they find are togetherness and a chance to make some immediate friends," he said. "Most of them are highly motivated about being in the

Corps and about being at Texas A&M. Every outfit wants to believe they are the best one."

Johnson said academics is the first thing that the Corps stresses. Academic counseling and meetings are provided to ensure the freshmen start off in the right direction, he said.

"We want them to understand the large part academics will have in their life," he said.

And for some freshmen the Corps' emphasis on academics was one reason for joining.

Carl McKnight, 17, a biology major from Miami, Fla., said the study attitude, tradition and discipline of the Corps are the reasons he decided to join.

"It's the all or none of it," McKnight said.

Ryan Bolling, 18, a biology major from San Antonio, said he joined to develop good study habits. Bolling said the Corps is required to study three hours each evening.

"I thought my grades wouldn't be good enough if I didn't have some discipline to my studying," Bolling said.

He said life in the Corps is about what he expected it to be — a mind game.

"It's similar to the 'Lords of Discipline,' but it hasn't been as dramatic as they say it is," Bolling said. "It's a mind game. If you can get away without showing any emotion you'll make it."

Andy Jones, 18, a business major from Houston, said Corps life is nothing like the movies.

"In 'Top Gun' everything was real lax, real individual," Jones said. "But we're not. Unity is the major thing."

Pari-mutuel bill likely to receive veto from White

AUSTIN (AP) — Gov. Mark White, upset by legislative inaction on budget-balancing plans, probably will veto the horse- and dog-racing bill, the measure's sponsor said Wednesday after meeting with White.

Rep. Hugo Berlanga, D-Corpus Christi, said, "I think right now there's a good possibility it's dead and we're just going to have to come back in January and deal with it."

Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby and Speaker Gib Lewis also said Wednesday that White indicated to them the bill was headed for a veto if there was no major progress on the budget problem.

But Ann Arnold, White's press aide, said no veto decision has been made.

"The governor has serious reservations about the pari-mutuel bill itself and about the Legislature passing that measure without dealing with the budget shortfall," Arnold said.

The special session called by White will end today, and, short of a miracle, will end with no major action on the budget cuts or tax hike pushed by White. The governor has said he will call another special ses-

sion soon to deal with the projected \$3.5 billion budget deficit.

Berlanga said he would not introduce a betting bill in the next special session.

The House and Senate acted on the pari-mutuel bill although White said it was not in the agenda he set for the special session. Under the bill, Texans would vote in November 1987 on whether to allow local option elections for legalized betting on dog and horse races.

Pari-mutuel gambling would produce significant state revenue, but not for several years.

Berlanga said White was "obviously more concerned about... the fact that come Dec. 1, if we don't come to grips with some budget cuts and some cash flow management and/or additional revenues, this state's got serious problems."

The House has blocked consideration of any tax bill, but Berlanga said White did not seem to be trying to hold the betting bill hostage in an effort to get a tax hike.

"I don't think it's a punishment," Berlanga said of the possible veto. "If I was in his position, I'd probably be doing the same thing."

Arnold said White had several concerns about the bill, including the structure of the statewide referendum provision. The way the bill is drawn, pari-mutuel gambling could become legal without a statewide vote if a court rules the referendum is illegal.

Berlanga said he asked White to delay vetoing the bill until it is clear that lawmakers cannot agree on major progress on the budget front.

And the Democratic legislator said he would not want White to approve the bill if it became a political albatross for the Democratic governor in this election year.

"What's more important for me is first of all that Mark White gets re-elected," he said.

Mattox could run office 'without state funding'

AUSTIN (AP) — Attorney General Jim Mattox says he would not need to ask the Legislature for money if he could run his department like a private law office, on a contingency fee basis.

"I'd be glad to do it and make a lot of money for the state," Mattox said at a news conference. "But I don't much think they will do that."

Mattox announced that his office saved \$1.7 billion for Texas taxpayers

and the state treasury during the 1986 fiscal year.

"Despite our state's current economic difficulties in both the private and public sectors, the attorney general's office had a record year of success," he said.

Mattox said that when he took office four years ago, succeeding now Gov. Mark White, "it was an office that had seen crisis after crisis."

"That is not the case now in this

office," Mattox said. "It is running smoothly, doing a good job for the state of Texas."

Mattox said if the Legislature would let him work on a contingency fee basis as he did in private practice he would not even ask legislators for an appropriation for his office.

"Next year I would anticipate paying for the entire attorney general's office totally and completely through the collections division

without costing the state of Texas any money at all," he said.

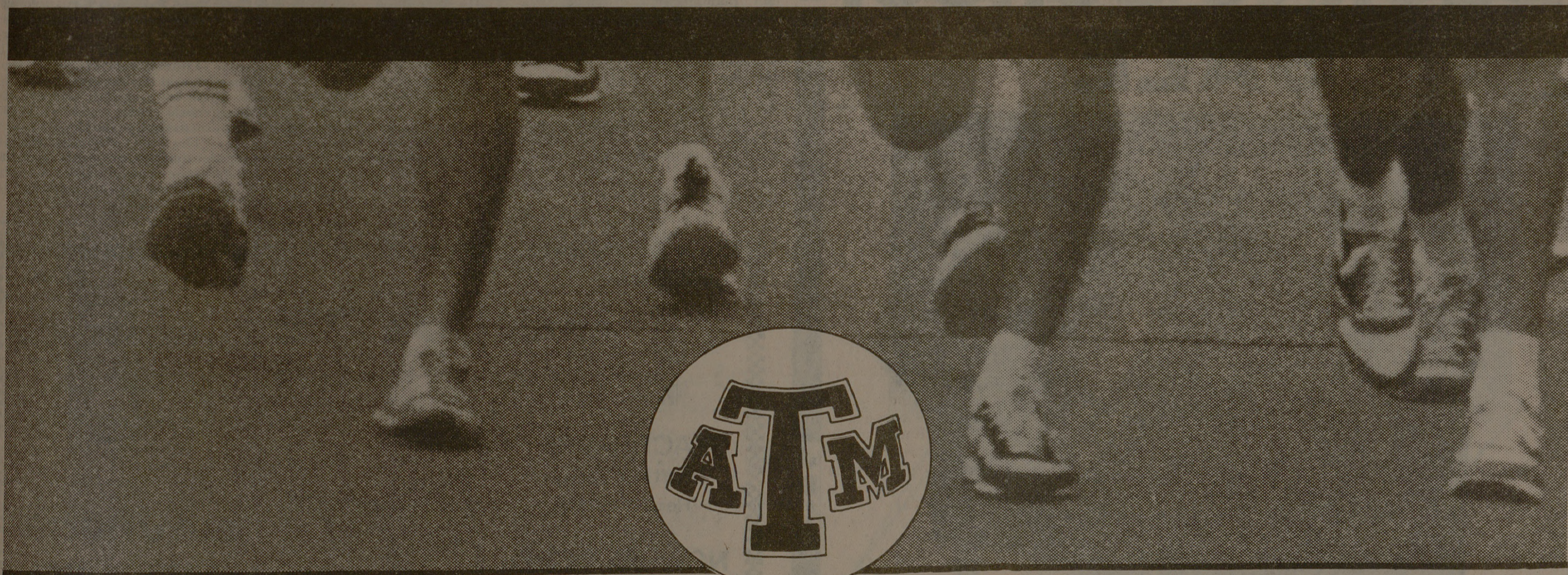
He estimated the division would collect about \$20 million next year.

Mattox said \$59.9 million had gone straight to citizens through successful prosecution of antitrust, consumer protection, housing, crime victims compensation and child support cases.

He said the department saved \$866 million through prosecution of

insurance, banking and securities cases and by fighting for lower utility rates.

Mattox said \$722.7 million was paid to the state treasury through cases involving antitrust, bond examination fees, taxation, consumer protection, housing, Medicaid fraud, environmental protection, energy, state and county, highway, workers' compensation and collections.



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