

Monday, April 24, 1989

A&M student enjoys stint as volunteer in Israeli army

By Holly Beeson

REPORTER

Some people go home during the summer, some take classes and some work. One Texas A&M student decided to go to Israel to serve as a volunteer for the Israeli army.

"I was actually part of the army," Beth Morrison, a senior psychology major from Houston, said. "I wore the uniform and lived in the barracks. I ate with the Israeli soldiers and woke up when they did. It helped me understand their way of life."

Morrison said she heard about the Volunteers for Israel program

through two speakers, an Israeli and a Texas A&M student, at the Hillel Jewish Students Center.

The program allows people to become soldiers in Israel for three weeks.

Morrison she believes the purpose of the volunteer program is to bring people closer to the country.

"The country gives off a vibration," Morrison said. "When you land in Israel, you just feel alive. There's something about the country that gives you life."

Morrison said that when volunteers arrive in Israel, they are assigned to groups, and although people may request where they want to go and what they want to do, it de-

pends mostly on where volunteers are needed.

"What you're doing is little things to help out," she said. "I requested to work in an infirmary, but ended up doing computer work at a base in Haifa."

Some of Morrison's friends were painting ships, peeling potatoes, wedding and handing out uniforms to soldiers.

"In a way, the program is similar to the Peace Corps," she said. "You are giving of yourself — three weeks of your life to go and enrich yourself."

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Cosmonaut offers perspective on 211-day trip through space

By Kelly S. Brown

STAFF WRITER

Valentin Lebedev wrote his thoughts and feelings down almost daily during his 211 days in space because he wanted to correct a "distorted public perception" of a Soviet cosmonaut's work. Six years later he published these thoughts and is now on a nationwide book tour. He made his third stop on the tour Friday at Texas A&M.

Lebedev said he decided to write in his diary everything a cosmonaut experiences on a mission — how he lives in space, his frustrations and the source of his endurance.

Lebedev's second flight into space began May 13, 1982. His Soyuz-T spacecraft was launched toward the new space station, Salyut-7. The craft set a record by not touching down on earth for more than 30 weeks.

Lebedev, the flight engineer, accompanied Commander Anatoly Berezovoy. Orbiting the Earth at an altitude of 140 miles, they took about 20,000 pictures of the Earth's surface, walked in space and conducted hundreds of technological, medical and biological experiments.

Lebedev said he was excited about the job, because he awaited something like it for nine years.

But, as expected, the first few weeks inside Soyuz-T were confining and uncomfortable for the cosmonauts, he said.

Michael Cassutt, author of "Who's Who in Space" and writer of the foreword in Lebedev's book, "Diary of a Cosmonaut: 211 Days In Space," described the flight as an extraordinary mission.

"The passengers were caged in a cylinder somewhat smaller than a mobile home, crammed with scientific equipment and a cloud of cables, paper and even guests, for 211 weightless days and nights amid the dangers of space," Cassutt said.

In his book, Lebedev explains the complications with equipment and triumphs of discovery. But the reader can see beyond the technicalities and enter Lebedev's life when he

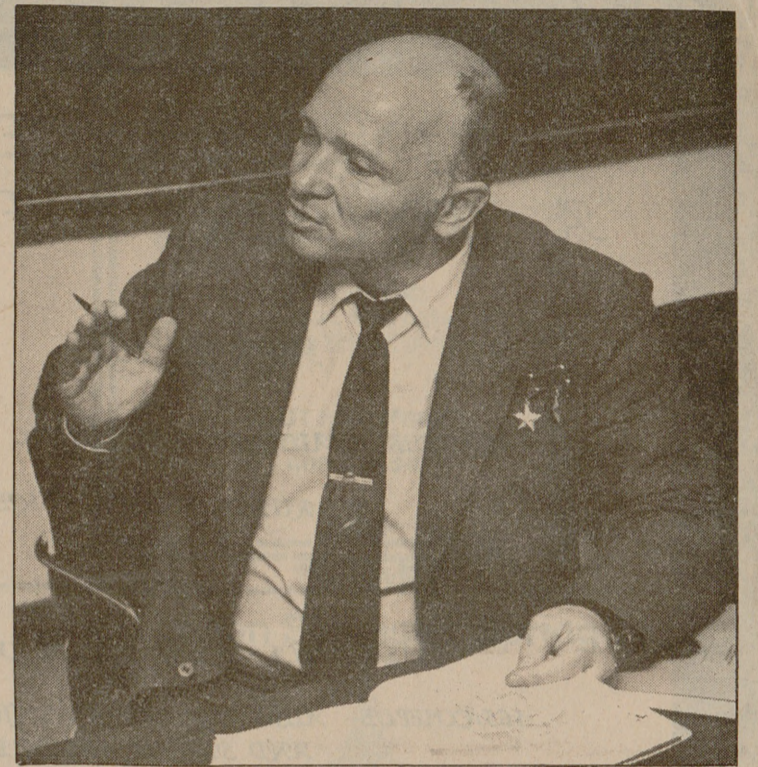


Photo by Ronnie Montgomery

Soviet cosmonaut Valentin Lebedev

writes about his friends, family and feelings and about a sunrise he viewed from above the earth.

"The sun was still behind the horizon when suddenly, a blue sword sliced into the Earth and a smooth blue arc spread before the dawn," he wrote. "Later, when the sun came up, it was as if melted copper ran on the clouds, its warmth licking the sleeping Earth."

Although he did experience some quiet moments, Lebedev's days were usually turbulent.

On the spacecraft's return to earth, the Soyuz T-7 flew through low clouds, and dense fog, then fell down a snowy hillside in Kazakhstan. Lebedev and Berezovoy were frozen and exhausted as they waited for rescue.

The first rescue helicopter crashed upon approach. Forty minutes later, all-terrain vehicle brought a rescue team to pull them out of the capsule.

Lebedev said he was glad not to have to face the media at the site.

"We didn't have to be heroes," he said. "We couldn't walk without assistance, and didn't have to worry about what that looked like."

Lebedev, who is helped with translation by Luba Diangar, one of the publishers of his book, said his first impressions of the United States are "good."

His visit to NASA impressed him, he said. "It was exciting to be able to see what my counterparts are doing," he said.

Injured cavalry member heals rapidly after fall

By Holly Becka

REPORTER

Scott Armstrong, the member of the Texas A&M Parsons Mounted Cavalry and Squadron 11 who was injured when he fell from his horse in a Parents' Weekend ceremony, is making a rapid recovery from his injuries.

Bill Peterson, commanding officer of Squadron 11, said Armstrong was moved to the Texas Institute of Rehabilitation and Research Center in Houston on April 17, where doctors originally thought he would have to stay for three months.

"Now they're saying that he'll only have to stay for two weeks," Peterson said.

Armstrong was semi-conscious the day after the accident and was speaking incoherently, but Peterson said he has since made a dramatic improvement.

"His dad thought Scott would

be back to move his stuff out of his dorm room at the end of school by himself, and from the way Scott was talking, I think he'll be back for Final Review," Peterson said. "I know he really wants to."

Armstrong, a senior animal science major from Baytown, was in intensive care at St. Joseph Hospital in Bryan for a week after his injury.

The accident occurred when Armstrong lost his balance while the cavalry was charging to the end of Simpson Drill Field to close the Parents' Weekend ceremony. Peterson said Armstrong lost his balance and landed on the ground feet-first, but because of the rate of speed at which he hit the ground, he rolled forward and hit his head.

Armstrong had remained in the hospital until April 17 when he was transferred to the rehabilitation and research center in Houston.

Friends rally in support of Wright's wife

WASHINGTON (AP) — Betty Wright's friends have rallied to her side as she fights allegations that she and her husband, House Speaker Jim Wright, violated House rules by accepting impermissible gifts.

"She is a strong individual and she's always been very nice to me," said Phyllis Coehlo, the wife of Rep. Tony Coehlo, D-Calif., the House majority whip.

Wright, an adoptive Texan who came to Washington as a secretary in her husband's congressional office 24 years ago, has tried to avoid the limelight since the House Ethics Committee concluded last week that the speaker violated 69 rules. Some of the allegations stem from her employment by Wright's friends.

"Neither Jim nor I ever intended to evade the law in any way, shape or form," she said to the Washington Post. "My God, he's been there for 30 years. Why all of a sudden would he do a shady thing like that?"

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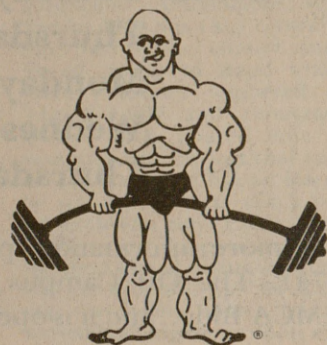
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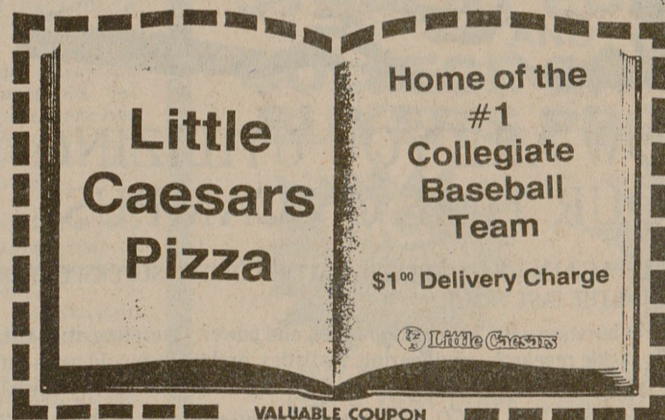
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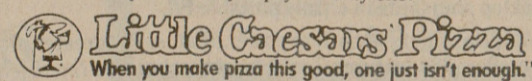


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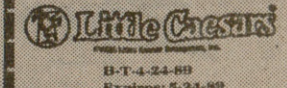


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