

The Battalion

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"Serving Texas A&M Since 1893"

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Perot launches first television ad



Perot

By GARY P. CARROLL

City Editor of THE BATTALION

Ross Perot brought his independent bid for the presidency to the network airwaves Tuesday night with a 30-minute commercial to inform Americans of issues, he said, they should know about.

Perot blamed Republicans and Democrats for dodging issues and blaming each other for the lackluster economic performance, and said that neither side will stand up and take responsibility for the country's \$4.1 trillion debt. "We got into trickle-down economics, but it didn't trickle down," Perot said.

There's been an enormous growth in the national debt over the past 12 years with a steady de-

cline in the gross national product and if this continues, Perot said, America will be in "deep voodoo." Perot said the government does not know the country is in a recession.

"It's like when Marie Antoinette said 'Let them eat cake,' — she probably didn't know they didn't have any cake," Perot said.

Perot showed charts that tracked a steady decline of employees' payroll, corporate production and consumer spending in America.

Foreign countries are capitalizing on a weak American dollar by flooding the American market with their products, Perot said. Americans, he said, buy foreign products that quickly devalue, and the American dollar increases

in value in foreign banks.

"A Japanese businessman told me that in Japan, they look ten years into the future and in America we look ten minutes into the future. Tomorrow belongs to those who invest in the future," Perot said, explaining that numerous European countries use, among other things, a gasoline tax to invest in their futures.

Lou Zaeske, a local Perot volunteer, said Perot's message came across well, and the commercial was well-researched and sounded presidential.

"It was frank and factual — the kind of sobering message our leaders should be telling us," Zaeske said.

And more importantly, he said, Perot talked to the citizens in their

language.

Perot said he holds the solution for many of America's problems — which he will be addressing in future telecasts, but those solutions would not come without some sacrifices that most Americans would be willing to make.

"Maybe a short-term tax increase with an adjustment in the future . . . or maybe unions need to stop pushing for higher pay," Zaeske said. "Corporate management can't pull down these astronomical salaries and perks."

Zaeske also commented on Perot's charge that there is too much government in America.

Perot's charts showed that there are more government workers in America than there are manufacturers.

"We must be a manufacturing superpower," Perot said.

Zaeske reiterated that point and said that there is too much governmental control in America, and both of the other candidates (George Bush and Bill Clinton) are career politicians.

"Both of them made government service a career," Zaeske said. "We don't need this many federal employees."

Perot ended his presentation by telling viewers they should "pick a president (they) believe can get the job done . . ."

"I was impressed with his frankness, clarity and sincerity," Zaeske said. "Americans are going to have to wake up if they want a future for their children."

First-Time Aggie Contact Team

Organization helps students adjust to college experiences

By TANYA WILLIAMS

Reporter of THE BATTALION

In an attempt to further welcome new students to the University, the Department of Student Services and the Aggie Orientation Leader Program began their annual F.A.C.T. calling drive this week.

F.A.C.T., which stands for First-Time Aggie Contact Team, is a three-week calling program where student leaders, faculty and other volunteers call new students to see how they are adjusting to college life. The callers will be based in the Student Services Building from Oct. 5 to Oct. 22, Monday through Thursday.

The calls are strategically timed at this time, after the first round of tests, so that students can get help if needed. Callers will be giving referrals for academic and general counseling, as well as listings for colleges and majors.

The program began in 1987 when Dr. John Koldus, vice president for student services, requested a program be developed to help the campus retain its friendliness.

"He was concerned that as the campus started to get larger, and enrollment went up, that we would start to lose some of that 'howdiness' that gave us the reputation of the friendliest campus in the U.S.," Bonne Bejarano-Sandars, coordinator for student life orientation, said.

The committee reached 1,400 students during

1988, the year the program was implemented. Since then, the calling drive has grown and last year the contact team called 4,000 new students, 80 percent of incoming students.

This year the program hopes to reach about 6,000 students, which would equal 100 percent of the entering students, both transfer and freshmen.

With the added help of faculty and staff calling in their offices, the program will be able to reach their goal.

"Staff and faculty members have the option of calling from their offices or homes," Bejarano-Sandars said. "We realize that they may not be able to get away for a couple of hours or want to spend time with their family."

For those students that are not reached on the first call, the contact team will call again.

"If we reach an answering machine, we leave a message and will attempt to call the student at least four times," Bejarano-Sandars said. "If we do not reach the student, we still hope they feel they are loved because we've called them four times."

Bejarano-Sandars said that radio station, Aggie 96 has been promoting the program to let students know they will be receiving calls. She said that in the past President Mobley has called students who have hung up because they didn't believe it was him.

"This is a very unique program," Bejarano-Sandars said. "I can't think of any other school that does it on the level that we do."



RICARDO GARCIA/The Battalion

Charles F. Dibrell, senior civil engineering student from San Antonio, practices techniques needed for the success of his plane surveying class and his future career.

Former Vietnam POW tells torture tale

By JULIE CHELKOWSKI

Reporter of THE BATTALION

Vietnam War movies such as "Apocalypse Now," "Full-Metal Jacket" and "Platoon" have tried to capture the painful and agonizing experiences of victims of the war fought in jungles of Southeast Asia. But no story is as real as that of a man who lived the nightmare as a prisoner of war.

Col. James Ray, Ret., development director in Texas A&M's College of Architecture, spent nearly seven years as a prisoner of war and lives to tell about the torture, attempted brain washing and less than humane living conditions.

Ray was captured in May 1966 after his F-105 fighter-bomber was shot down over northeastern Vietnam.

He was constantly moved around to avoid rescue missions by U.S. soldiers. One of his more frequented stops was a place he called the "Hanoi Hilton."

Cells were small, hard and dirty. On the average, they were four-feet wide and about seven-feet long. Some cells would have a concrete bunk on the side of the wall. At the foot of the bunk was a concrete ridge made for a foothold and an iron bar that came across the top that could be locked from the outside of the cell.

Ray was kept in solitary confinement for his first two months and had no contact with anyone except North Vietnamese guards who tortured him.

The thin horizontal scars on Ray's upper arms serve as a reminder of the pain that accompanied one of the POW's most feared forms of punishment — rope torture.

A small diameter of frayed hemp rope was used to wrap the arms and elbows together until it cut off circulation.

"They pulled the elbows until they touched, if they could touch," Ray said. "Well, I'm not

that limber and the pressure caused shoulder separation. I even had my collar-bone separate. It feels like a knuckle popping with a real sharp electric-type pain.

"After about five to 10 minutes, a certain amount of numbness would set in. Then after about an hour, two hours, you lose track of time, you're wrestling with whether you should give in or not."

The purpose of the rope torture was to get the soldiers to sign a war crimes document and give up U.S. military information and secrets, Ray said.

"They say things like 'you talk, you write, you be polite,'" he said. "If you say 'yes' they'll untie you and get you to write. But by then your surface nerves are dead and you don't feel anything."

Even if Ray wanted to write, he said it would have been almost impossible after hours of rope torture.

"All the skin on my elbows and knuckles and hands was gone," he said. "But I couldn't feel it, all I could feel was the deeper nerves along the bones. It was like your bones were in scalding water — real intense. Your arms would swell up, turn a reddish color, then a reddish-purple and then a blue-black. In one arm, there were drops of blood coming out because of the pressure that built up."

"I wondered if it was really worth it to hold out to the point where I could be permanently crippled," he said.

The pain made Ray delirious. Once, he slammed his head on the wall in an attempt to knock himself out because the pain was too extreme.

When he could take no more, Ray said he would pretend to give in and divulge unimportant information.

He said he used the excuse that it was only his first mission, therefore he did not know much. But



Photo courtesy of Col. James Ray

Col. James Ray, Ret. prepares to embark on a bombing mission over northeastern Vietnam in May 1966. While on this mission, Ray's plane was shot down and he spent seven years as a prisoner of war.

in reality, it was his 13th mission. "I tried to be as evasive as I could," he said.

Besides the tortures, Ray said the most frightening time he experienced was in August 1967 when he and other prisoners were moved to a power plant to try to prevent it from being bombed. The site was bombed, but no one was killed or seriously injured.

"We were at ground zero," he said. "It was luck and the grace of God that we survived that."

Fortunately, we were in a reinforced, single-story building. We were fortunate that no one was killed or seriously injured, but the potential was there. Other than the times of torture, that was about the scariest time that I had."

Ray and the others were moved back to the "Hanoi Hilton" and then to a camp in the outskirts of Hanoi where their hope for freedom was temporary.

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Families seek answers to fates of U.S. soldiers

By JULIE CHELKOWSKI

Reporter of THE BATTALION

Almost 20 years have past since the last American troops were pulled out of Vietnam.

Since then, family members of soldiers that are still missing have demanded that they be accounted for and are holding the government responsible.

The Senate Select Committee on POW-MIA Affairs has tried to answer some of the families' calls by probing for a final accounting of U.S. servicemen left behind in 1973 who may still be there.

Some people, such as retired Col. James Ray, development director in A&M's College of Architecture and former prisoner of war have said the issue is politically motivated because it has come out so close to the elections.

"It seems to me it's a big political thing to try to discredit the Republican administration just before an election," Ray said. "I think (Nixon) did as much as he could. Congress tied his hands."

However, Dr. Ronald Hatchett, director of the Texas A&M Mosher Institute for International Policy Studies, does not agree.

"It's not politically motivated," Hatchett said. "It's a genuine concern of the families of POWs who believe the government needs to do something to find out

what happened to their family members.

"If they're not alive, they at least want an accounting of them."

Hatchett said there is information on at least 300 people who "survived hostile actions."

However, Ray said the information is incomplete.

"There was speculation that we didn't have a full accounting, but no positive proof," he said. "Up to this day there has never been a positive confirmation of a single live American left over there."

"There was a lot of speculation, fabricated evidence and photographs," he said. "Even with all of the controversy, there has been not demonstrable proof."

Ray agreed with Dr. Henry Kissinger, former secretary of state under Nixon, in his defense of the Nixon administration's decision to negotiate a withdrawal from the war even though the administration knew the list of prisoners was incomplete.

"If people were left behind, I agree with Dr. Kissinger that the responsibility was with the North Vietnamese for not living up to the terms of the agreement," Ray said.

Although the government could have done more, Nixon was

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