

How an AF Brat Made

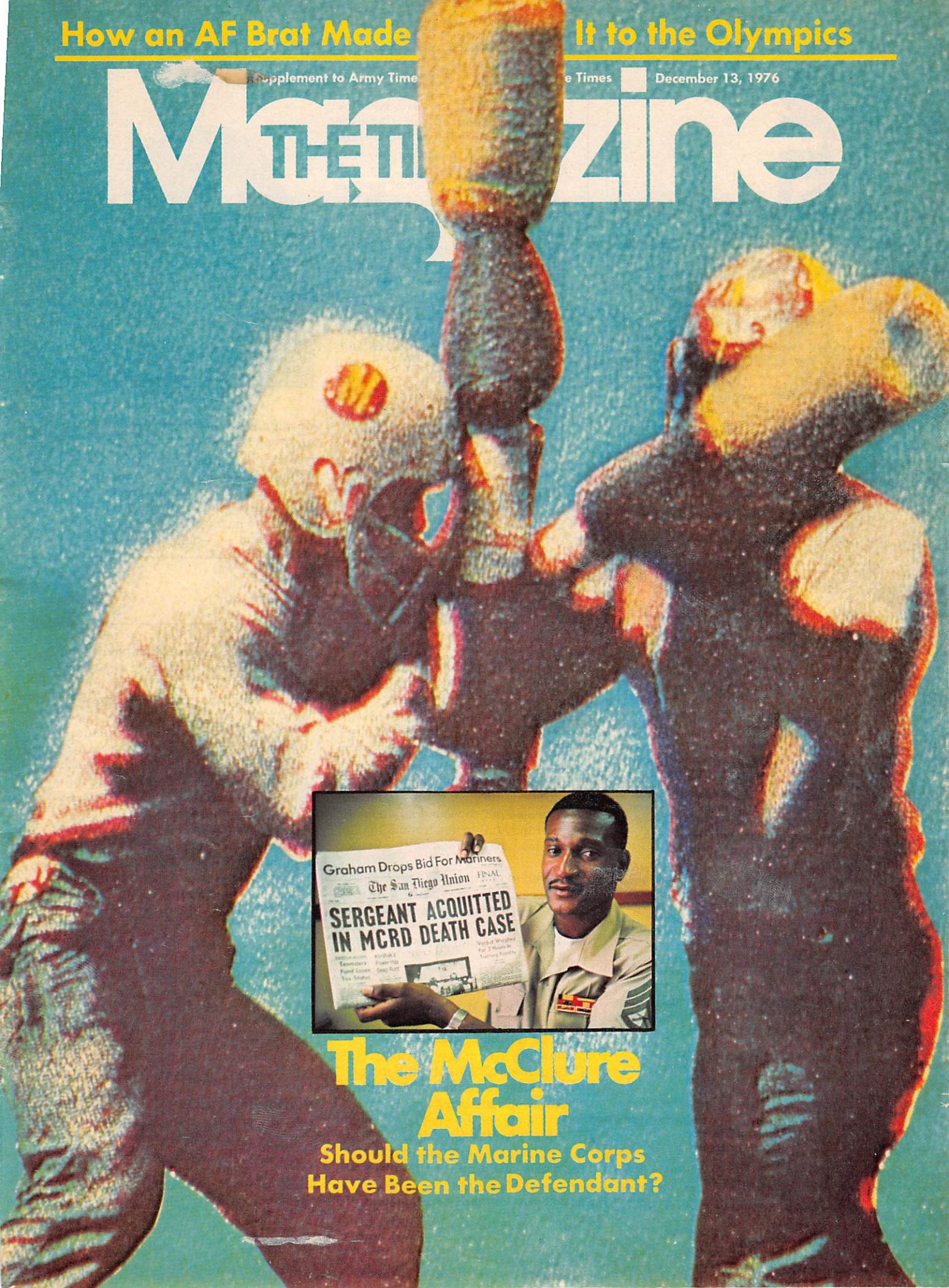
It to the Olympics

Supplement to Army Times

e Times

December 13, 1976

Magazine



The McClure Affair

Should the Marine Corps
Have Been the Defendant?

McClure's Magazine

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About the cover:

When Marine SSgt. Harold Bronson was tried for his role in the pugil stick bouts which led to Pvt. Lynn McClure's death, he was found innocent. But was the Marine Corps guilty? See story on page 6. (Inset photo of SSgt. Harold Bronson by Joseph E. Revell; color posterization of pugil stick bout by Filipe Martinez/Silver Image)

Coming in one week:

Whatever happened to the toughest guy in the unit, the first sergeant? Plus the 1977 calendar.

Holiday schedule of issues:

Due to the holidays, The Times Magazine is altering its usual every-other-week schedule. Our next issue will appear next week in your Times newspaper dated December 20, instead of two weeks from now. The following issue will appear Jan. 10, 1977.

Army Times
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Editorial Director
Robert Schweitz

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Our new food editor

With this issue, THE TIMES MAGAZINE has a new food editor, Caroline MacNair. She replaces Diane Hand who has moved to Minneapolis with her husband.

Hand was food editor of THE TIMES MAGAZINE for 3½ years. During this time, she supervised a food section which almost doubled in size. She broadened our food coverage to include more consumer-oriented information and "back to basics" material for new and inexperienced cooks.

Hand's efforts to make the magazine's food articles interesting, exciting and — above all — helpful made her, I believe, a valuable friend to military readers throughout the world. We wish her good luck for the future.

Our new food editor, Caroline MacNair, comes from New York, where she spent 10 years working as an editor and writer on magazines and in advertising. For two years she was an assistant food editor at *The Ladies Home Journal*,



Caroline MacNair

working with their famed food editor, Poppy Cannon.

MacNair brings to the magazine a special blend of energy and enthusiasm plus a wide knowledge of food and cooking. I think you will find her to be a worthy successor to Diane Hand. —John Greenwald □

Letters

Smiles for stars

Rota, Spain: In reply to TSgt. Richard L. Anderson ["Letters," October 18]: Anderson stated that the article, "How Astrology Can Help You Get Along with Your Boss" [September 6], was "ridiculous" and "a gross disservice to the United States of America."

I think his letter should be classified as a gross disservice. It's a shame that some people get so wound up and serious that they fail to understand that an article may be written on the lighter side.

I'd like to change Sergeant Anderson's second paragraph just a little to read: "If a man or a woman has to be so strict and serious to get ahead, it is my opinion that that person should be removed."

Congratulations on a good article. It brightened up my day.

HM2 R.H. Nicholson Jr., USN

Schools: terrible, typical

Mannheim, Germany: Your article ["Dependents Schools in Europe," October 18, November 1] is truthful. These schools are terrible.

During my second year here I taught a fifth grade class on one of our bases in England. The children were wonderful; the school and its administration were appalling. The roof leaked, rat poison was regularly sprinkled on the floors.

There were so many things wrong with the school I naturally asked my principal, "Why?" The answer I got was a sneering "You should know by now what the military is like. If you don't like it here you should go home!"

I have been in the DoD school system for over 12 years. The only good things I see in it are the occasional good administrators, many fine pupils and many truly dedicated teachers.

The words in your article, "... that many teachers and students are left 'to do their own thing' in the classrooms" points to the best thing about this system and allows learning to take place. The system itself certainly doesn't do much to help anyone along toward meaningful and useful goals.

Until your special article all that was in print about these schools was pure propaganda. How good it is to know that there are informed and interested people outside the system who can help change a monster into something that can help teachers and pupils instead of obstructing the cause of Education!

Without outside help, any beneficial change is impossible, despite the fact that many teachers desire it. I only hope that your series doesn't provoke any unreasoned attacks on teachers by uninformed oafs. Teachers aren't paid enough to take much more irrational

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Letters

From page 2

guff from any direction. At least this one isn't.

Oliver H. Tracy

Fort Bragg, N.C.: I felt you came on a little strong. I know problems do exist, as I experienced many myself as a teacher in the system for four years. I must say, however, that those problems are not isolated to schools in Europe. As a mother I now am finding that the problems are just as prevalent here in the U.S.

So please — don't put all the blame on DoD schools.

Lois Merritt

The OWC responds

Newport News, Va.: We would like to take exception to Ms. Marianne Lester's article ["Behind the Lines," October 4, domestic edition; November 29, overseas edition]. We debated for some time whether or not to respond but the inaccuracies in the article are such that we cannot let it pass without comment.

The Officers Wives Club at Fort Eustis is a nonprofit private association and is not incorporated. Therefore, we are not an employer within the definition of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act which was used by Ms. Lester as the basis for her article. There was no discrimination. Only members of the OWC were eligible to apply. Therefore, since there are no male wives in the membership, none were considered.

As for the selection process itself, availability and personality of the individual were the two primary considerations. The custodian is on call all day and at night, as necessary. She has to open and secure the building for users, repairmen, cleaning and vendors. She has to be able to respond when these people need access to the building and in many cases she must stay there until they have completed their work before she can leave. Thus, the questions about pre-school children and transportation.

She did not need a second car, as implied by Ms. Lester, since a bicycle or a taxi would have been sufficient. She did need to be aware of the requirement for her to be able to get to the building at odd hours. It was also possible that she would need someone to care for her children when she was required to go to the building. When these questions were asked, they were discussed with each applicant so that she would understand fully the requirements of the job.

Yet, one individual apparently chose to see our desire to inform applicants of all aspects of the custodian position as discrimination. Obviously, the existence of pre-school children was

not a disqualifying factor, had Ms. Lester checked a little further, since two of the three previous custodians had pre-school children. They both did an excellent job.

The other basic requirement, personality, is obvious. The custodian represents the OWC to the users and has to be tactful, pleasant, cooperative and accommodating to these people who have access to the facility.

Ms. Lester's statement that the OWC was "embarrassed" and that Beth-Ane Dorst won a victory was certainly a false assumption on her part. Where did you ever discover any facts to justify such conclusions? How can Ms. Lester make such allegations? How can she be allowed to misquote people, especially since they were never interviewed. This puts THE TIMES MAGAZINE in the same category as the sensation papers found at the checkout stands in the local supermarkets. Ms. Lester seems to be qualified at portraying fiction as fact.

If Ms. Dorst and Ms. Lester choose to believe that there was a victory, it was a hollow one indeed. Ms. Dorst did not get the job, there has been no admission or proof of discrimination, the OWC board was not and is not "embarrassed," we will continue to make sure all applicants understand the requirements of the position, and availability along with personality will still be considered in selecting the next custodian.

Individually and collectively, the membership of the Fort Eustis Officers Wives Club takes pride in the knowledge that our organization is dedicated to making a positive contribution to the military community. These strengths can never be curtailed by such a tawdry journalistic endeavor as your article.

P.S.: Ms. Lester even spelled Ms. Dorst's name, Beth-Ane, wrong throughout the article. We would recommend she do a little more thorough research before she writes her next article.

Karen A. Hornstein
Chairwoman, Hiring Committee
Jane Lawson
OWC President

Marianne Lester replies: Hornstein and Lawson are correct about one thing: I misspelled Dorst's first name in our domestic edition. The mistake resulted from my misreading of her handwritten signature and I apologize to Dorst for it.

Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act was not "used as the basis of my article." Nowhere does the article state that the OWC was guilty of sex discrimination. I simply reported that the post legal office and Dorst's civilian lawyer had told her about the law and explained that it could be the basis for

a sex discrimination suit.

Whether the OWC is exempt from that law would have been a decision of the courts, had Dorst chosen to pursue her legal action. However, Dorst agreed not to sue in exchange for the OWC's promise to submit its hiring criteria to post officials. Therefore, the application of Title VII to the OWC is still unresolved, because the matter never was taken to court.

But legal arguments formed only a small part of my article. As it stated, "Legality aside, Dorst was morally indignant." My article focused on the reasons for her indignation and the small furor it caused at Fort Eustis. The true purpose of Hornstein and Lawson's letter seems to be to defend the OWC selection process. I interviewed OWC President Lawson for the article to obtain her explanation of that process. Her defense of the hiring criteria appears in the original article.

Hornstein and Lawson now deny they were "embarrassed" by the Dorst affair. When I interviewed Lawson, she certainly sounded embarrassed. She kept saying that she wasn't familiar with the pertinent laws and hoped "the whole matter would be forgotten." Other officers' wives at Fort Eustis also told me the OWC was chagrined about the incident. It would be only natural for the OWC board to be "embarrassed" by a threatened law suit from one of its members.

To the best of my knowledge, the article contains no inaccurate quotations. Hornstein and Lawson say I have quoted people who "were never interviewed." That is untrue.

Whether or not Dorst achieved a "victory" is a matter of interpretation. I concluded she did, since the legal office told me the OWC would be asked to change its hiring criteria. Also, Dorst's view, as I wrote, was that "the victory was less important than the battle itself. 'I wanted people to think about this,' she says." People are thinking about it, and perhaps that is a victory for everyone.

Lucky wife

Pocahontas, Ill.: I can understand why "The Military Husband" [Nov. 1] would seek employment and friends in the civilian community. What's with these military people? Why is the author, Mr. Nicholas DuPont, any different than husbands of teachers, doctors or office workers? Perhaps they envy him? I think Paula DuPont is one very lucky ensign!

Gracie M. McCoy

Send your letters to: Editor, THE TIMES MAGAZINE 475 School St. SW, Washington, D.C. 20024. Letters may be edited. Unsigned letters will not be printed although names will be omitted on request.

Reporters waited in the hall outside the court deliberation room, late into the afternoon of June 28, 1976. They paced and smoked, fretted over deadlines sweeping West with the night, and schemed to beat their rivals to the single nearby phone. TV crews adjusted lights and cameras, checking settings already checked.

A court member pushed open the door, spoke to a corporal orderly and strode off toward the judge's chamber. A verdict? The rumor stirred in the hall, then died. The corporal passed the judge's door to drop a juror's nickels in the Coke machine.

The word finally came, just before 7. The orderlies were dispatched to tell the judge, prosecution and defense "The court has reached a verdict!" For the accused, Marine Corps drill instructor SSgt. Harold Bronson, the decision came at the end of the 11th day of his trial by general court-martial, and well into the seventh month of his personal ordeal that began there, at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, on Dec. 6, 1975.

In the middle of that bright December Saturday afternoon, Pvt. Lynn E. McClure, a 20-year-old recruit from Lufkin, Tex., assigned to the Motivation Platoon in the Recruit Depot's Special Training Branch, suffered massive brain damage from a blow struck by another recruit in a bayonet-simulating pugil stick bout. McClure died 14 weeks later without regaining consciousness. Staff Sergeant Bronson was the DI supervising that training.

The eight court members (the jury) filed into the courtroom and Lt. Col. William Draper, presiding military judge, called the court to order. Marine Maj. John Fretwell, the prosecutor sent on temporary duty from Camp Lejeune, N.C., specifically for this trial, announced for the record that "All parties to the trial who were present when the court closed are again present in the court."

Judge Draper ordered Bronson to rise and face the court. All whispering stopped among the journalists and other spectators, perhaps 30 in all, many of whom, like me, had sat through the entire trial. In the curious closeness that had grown in the courtroom over the preceding two weeks, even we strictly unofficial parties to this trial felt knitted in common fate with the stoic man we first had come to damn. Some of us now, instead, were damning his accuser, the U.S. Marine Corps. We held our collective breaths.

Bronson and his counsels rose and faced the court president (senior member of the jury), Marine Capt. John Sparks. The muscles at the hinges of Bronson's jaws, the one barometer of tension he had shown throughout the trial, knotted and unknotted steadily.

"Staff Sergeant Harold L. Bronson," Sparks read flatly from the paper in his hand, "it is my duty as president of this court to advise you that the court, in closed session and upon secret written ballot, has found you, of all charges and specifications, not guilty." Jubilation!

Joseph E. Revell is a freelance writer. He served in the Korean War as a Marine rifleman, was commissioned in 1957 as an infantry officer, served in Vietnam and retired as a major in 1972.

Prosecutors Fretwell and Capt. Ronald Stout disappeared quickly into their office. Bronson and his lawyers, San Diego attorney Daniel Hunter and Marine Capt. William Cunningham, held a short press conference. Then Bronson hurried off to call his mother in Freeport, Fla.

Next morning, in a quiet interview with THE TIMES MAGAZINE, Bronson groped to describe his emotions when he'd stood to hear the verdict. "I was thinking about it all day yesterday," he said. "I knew I was innocent of the charges. I knew that I'd worked hard, doing my job training recruits, and there was a possibility that I'd go to jail for it — be reduced in rank and fined. I was waiting for them to say, 'Ten years in Leavenworth.'"

Bronson looked as his hands clasped tightly on the desk in front of him and lowered his voice. "I was scared. There was only one other time when I've been that scared . . . in Vietnam when the helicopter carrying me back to the rotation center got shot down. . . ."

The Case Against SSgt. Harold L. Bronson

Bronson had been acquitted of four counts of disobeying orders (Article 92, Uniform Code of Military Justice), and one count each of maltreatment (Article 93), involuntary manslaughter (Article 119), and assault (Article 128).

The government argued that Bronson had wrongfully disobeyed the Marine Corps Recruit Depot standing operating procedure (SOP) for training recruits by failing to conduct light warm-up exercises for McClure before sending him into a pugil stick bout, by failing to halt a bout when McClure had dropped his pugil stick and again when he'd been knocked to the ground by a forceful blow, and by failing to refer McClure to medical personnel when Bronson had reason to believe McClure had been injured in a bout.

On the remaining charges, the government contended that Bronson had wrongfully caused McClure to be beaten with a pugil stick (maltreatment), that the beating constituted an assault on McClure, and that McClure's subsequent death was the result of Bronson's culpable negligence.

Bronson and his lawyers argued that he was merely carrying out his duties in good faith, as best he understood them. The defense contended that the Motivation Platoon was a unique unit, where, as Bronson had been instructed since his recent assignment there, many provisions of the normal training SOP did not apply. McClure's injury, according to the defense, was the result of an unfortunate, "one-in-a-million" training accident.

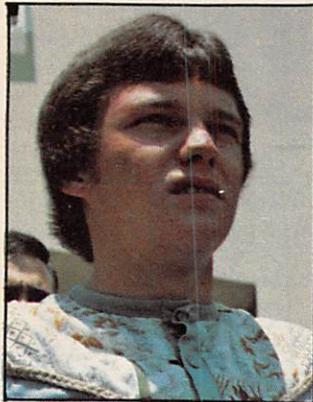
The jury included five officers and three senior NCOs. Among them were two DIs, two former DIs and a recruit training company commander. "We all felt that we weren't for Bronson or for the government but for a just verdict," court president Sparks said after the trial. "The facts were such that on every charge and specification there was not enough there to convict."

I had arrived in San Diego for this trial with an honestly-acquired prejudice against drill instructors who abuse recruits, believing that Bronson would not have been referred to a general court unless the government had a near-airtight



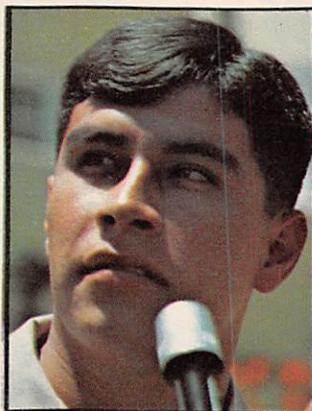
SSgt. Harold L. Bronson

“ ‘I . . . hit [McClure] on the right side of the head. He went down and lay there, looking like he was having some seizure.’ ”



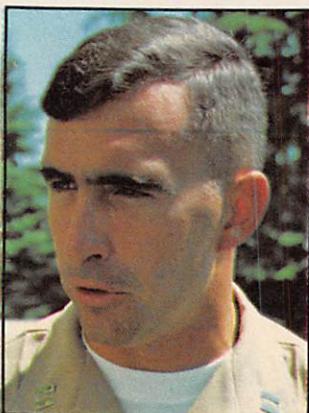
Robert Evans
He was McClure's last opponent in the pugil stick bouts, and struck the blow that led to McClure's death.

“Aguilar . . . assured [Bronson] that it was 'routine' to hold bouts on Saturdays without other supervisors present.”



Sgt. Henry Aguilar
The other DI in Moto on December 6, he also faced a court-martial in McClure's case, but all charges were dropped.

“ ‘The [MCRD] SOP is in force; however, there are some things here [in STB] that are different.’ ”



Capt. John B. Ullman
Assistant director of the Special Training Branch, he was given a letter of reprimand for dereliction of duty and violation of a general order.

case against him. And even now, I believe McClure would be alive today if he had not encountered a whole string of system failures that began in his home, extended to his home town, county and state, and included serious failures in the Marine Corps recruiting system and at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD), San Diego.

But after I heard the testimony and arguments presented to the jury, heard the court sessions that excluded the jury, and interviewed witnesses and others, from recruits to generals, about the McClure case, I agree with the court's decision. I think the only thing Harold Bronson was “guilty” of was some poor judgment in carrying out his duties on Dec. 6, 1975.

Moreover, as I will try to explain, I believe it was wrong for the Marine Corps to have charged Bronson with any offense under the UCMJ. If there is any “guilty” party, the trial convinced me it was the Corps. Not for the death of McClure but for the way it dealt with McClure in recruiting and recruit training. And for the way it dealt with Bronson.

I think Bronson is the real victim of the McClure affair, as much as McClure himself, regrettable as his death was. It's part of the nature of this case that Harold Bronson may never be considered innocent of the charges against him. For instance, while driving back to my San Diego motel just after the verdict was announced, I heard a woman caller on a radio talk show say, “The Marine Corps is covering up — just what I expected out of that court-martial.” The Corps, as well as Bronson, had long since been convicted in the press, mainly on the taped word of two teenagers who had measured themselves against the Corps' legendary boot camp challenge and, in their own eyes, had failed.

Their story was released after Lynn McClure's death in March, on tapes held by a California attorney, John Gyorkos. On Apr. 5, 1976, Gyorkos filed a \$3.5 million “wrongful death” claim against the Marine Corps on behalf of Lynn McClure's mother and stepfather, Betty and Joseph H. Calhoun.

The recruits had been interviewed by investigators working with Gyorkos on the case. Although he didn't release the names, it is now apparent from the trial that the tapes were of former Marine recruits Robert Evans, 17, of Coquille, Ore., and Robert Lytle, 18, of Bothell, Wash. Evans struck the blow that rendered McClure unconscious on December 6. Lytle said he was McClure's “best friend” in boot camp.

Theirs was not a pretty story. “We were like animals,” said one of the Marines, adding that he was unable to sleep because of the memory of McClure “screaming for us to stop and asking for the mercy of God.”

Their version of the incident was high drama. There was the pathetic, “mentally retarded” victim from smalltown America. There was the archetypical villain, the sadistic Marine DI. It had race, violence and embarrassed Marine Corps brass appearing before a chastising congressional committee, with the victim's congressman posturing for the folks back home.

The press had a field day. “. . . Although McClure was wearing a football helmet and full face guard his skull was fractured severely and his stepfather said that the youth's head was caved in on one side . . .” (editorial in *The Beaumont Enterprise*, March 20). “. . . They were allowed to continue hitting him even if, like McClure, he lay bleeding on the ground . . .” (*Palm Beach Post*, April 16). “. . . And [McClure] continued to be beaten about the head and body while he lay on the ground bleeding and battered . . .” (*The New York Times*, April 11).

There were then, and still are, a lot of what I believe are plain wrong tellings and retellings of what happened December 6. The reasons range from simple human confusion over the events of that day to the eagerness of the press to “run” with a story. One of my purposes here is to describe as accurately as I can what became known as the McClure Affair.

By last April that affair was on its way to becoming a full-blown media event. And on top of the McClure incident, another Marine Corps scandal hit the front page of *The*

Washington Post at about the same time. It may have been one of the worst recruit-abuse tales in Marine Corps history: the shooting of Pvt. Harry Hiscock by his DI at Parris Island, S.C., on Jan. 3, 1976.

As a finale to two days of cruel hazing of Hiscock by several DIs, Sgt. Robert Henson twice held mock executions of the recruit. The DI used what he thought were dud cartridges in an M-16 rifle. In the second such "execution," after Hiscock had been forced to say good-bye to his platoon mates, Henson's rifle fired, the bullet striking Hiscock's left hand. Henson and five other DIs compounded the offenses by trying to conceal them.

At his general court-martial held February 19 and 20, Henson was convicted and sentenced to a bad conduct discharge, loss of all pay, a reduction to private, and 15 months confinement. Incredibly, the military judge who tried the case recommended that the BCD be suspended to allow Henson to remain in the service.

But that was only half of it. After the trial, it was revealed that the commanding general at Parris Island, Maj. Gen. Arthur J. Poillon, had made a pre-trial agreement (plea bargained) with Henson. The general did allow the BCD to stand, but in exchange for guilty pleas on the charges, he cut Henson's confinement to only two months. *The New York Times*, in a page one article, quoted Poillon as saying he made the pre-trial agreement "because of the expense involved in a government trial."

The *Post* also had an article about another recruit who had collapsed on a training run at Parris Island and died two days later, in 1971. The *Marines* said it was heat stroke. His father claimed the *Marines* had sent his son into boot training while he suffered from rhabdomyolysis, a muscle-weakening disease. Medical experts support his claim. The *Post* article detailed the father's 4½-year fight to force the *Marines* to admit fault.

By late April, nationally syndicated columnist Mary McGrory was asking if the Marine Corps needed a new commandant who could stop these kinds of abuses.

For Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Louis H. Wilson, the spring of 1976 must have been a time of extreme personal anguish and of official frustration. He didn't need these incidents to show there were troubles in both the recruiting and recruit training systems. Overhauling both, to reduce mistakes in recruiting and to produce basically trained *Marines* instead of professional recruits, was one of the first projects the new commandant had begun on taking office the year before.

Maj. Gen. Kenneth J. Houghton took command of MCRD San Diego in April 1975. According to one of his officers, the new general spent 10 days looking over recruit training, called in his officers, and pronounced their recruit training system and methods "bull—!" Houghton had been sent to San Diego to make changes; it's a good assumption that his salty opinion of recruit training directly reflected a judgment already rendered by Commandant Wilson.

By mid-1975, the commanders and staffs of the recruit depots at Parris Island and San Diego were studying recruit training, considering just what a recruit should be taught, how best to teach it, how to reduce the contrived stress that permeated the system, how best to turn out a "good basic *Marine*."

A conference was planned for early 1976 to launch the revised recruit training system. After all the bad publicity, there was some disagreement about whether to go ahead with the conference. Wilson decided to meet on schedule, and the training experts met at Parris Island March 26, 10 days after McClure's death.

It was in this atmosphere that Bronson's commanding general decided the DI would be charged and tried.

On April 26, Major General Houghton began handing down charges against three officers and three NCOs involved in the McClure affair. He referred Bronson, one other NCO, and one officer to general courts-martial, referred the other NCO to a



Robert L. Lytle

Perhaps McClure's closest friend in the Marines, he went AWOL with McClure and later washed out of MCRD.

"Lytle told me outside the courtroom at Bronson's trial that McClure 'said he'd cheated on the test' to get in [the Marines]."



John Gyorkos

His investigators taped interviews with two Moto recruits which helped convict Bronson in the press before the trial.

"A California attorney filed a \$3.5 million 'wrongful death' claim . . . on behalf of McClure's mother and stepfather."



Maj. Gen. Kenneth J. Houghton

The commanding general of MCRD San Diego, he is the convening authority who ordered Bronson to trial.

"I asked [Houghton] why he had ordered Bronson to trial. He replied: 'What would you have done?' "

special court-martial, and imposed nonjudicial punishment on the remaining two officers.

Bronson "couldn't believe it. It was kind of like a nightmare," he said after his trial. "I think what made my court-martial and the others was all the publicity, and the fact that the lawyer from Oceanside [Calif.] tried to sue the government for \$3.5 million."

I interviewed Houghton during the trial (when, it must be said in fairness, as the convening authority in the case he was constrained by both military law and common sense about what he should say). I asked him why he had ordered Bronson to trial.

He replied: "What would you have done?"

What indeed? There's no way I can write about the McClure affair without prejudice, and this is a fair place to admit it. In trying to make sense of events I believe were mishandled by the Marine Corps, misreported by the press, and misunderstood by the public, I can't be impartial.

The Marine Corps was my life from Korea through Vietnam. Although now on the retired list, I still feel very much a part of the Corps. I have friends on active duty and even served with some of the Marines involved in the incidents leading up to and surrounding McClure's injury. Rather than a coolly detached observer-reporter at Bronson's trial, I found myself first agreeing with the prosecution and later with the defense.

What follows is some background on the places, the people and the events in the McClure affair, as revealed in the trial and from interviews and research outside the court.

Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD)

MCRD, San Diego, is the less known of the Corps' two recruit training bases. The other is Parris Island, S.C. Both function under the same training directive laid down by the commandant of the Marine Corps, with the few differences in their training programs dictated by local geography.

MCRD is commanded by a major general, responsible for running the base and for overseeing training. One major additional job he picked up in the spring of 1976 (three months after McClure's death, but planned before anyone heard of McClure) is supervising all recruiting west of the Mississippi. His counterpart at Parris Island has the same job in the East.

It's perhaps the most important change in Marine recruiting and recruit training of this century. It makes the teachers responsible for recruiting their students. It should have been done long ago. Had recruiting and recruit training been under the same generals a year ago, odds are McClure still would be alive and ignored in Lufkin, Tex.

Day-to-day recruit training in MCRD occurs in Recruit Training Regiment which is commanded by a colonel (Col. Rufus Seymour on Dec. 6, 1975). The regiment is divided further into three identical recruit training battalions with lieutenant colonels as COs; the battalions into companies (captains); the companies into series (lieutenants); and the series into platoons of 50 to 80 recruits each. The regiment trains about 25,000 young men each year.

The platoons are where all the action is in the normal life of a recruit. They're run by a senior DI, usually a staff sergeant (E-6), with two assistant DIs. For recruits, the DIs are powerful and visible, though more officer supervision has been added this year.

Among the miscellaneous regimental organizations that provide the cooks, clerks and so on to support recruit training are two sub-units important to the McClure affair: a receiving/processing barracks and Special Training Branch. The last unit is known at the recruit depot as STB.

Lynn McClure spent 15 days of his 23-day Marine Corps career in the Special Training Branch. In two completely separate instances at MCRD I was told precisely this: "Let's face it; STB was a —can." If that was overstatement, it is accurate to say that STB was the last stop on the way out for many failing recruits.

There have been some changes since the McClure affair, but until then, Special Training Branch was the place the regular training units of the regiment sent recruits who were physically, mentally or emotionally unable to go on with regular training.

There were five platoons in STB:

Physical Conditioning Platoon, for overweight/under-strength recruits;

Academic Proficiency Platoon, for those unable to read at fourth grade level;

Medical Rehabilitation Platoon, for those recruits recovering from temporary illnesses or injuries;

Correctional Custody Platoon (CCP), for recalcitrant, rule-breaking recruits ordered to confinement through the non-judicial punishment process;

And Motivation Platoon (known simply as Moto), for those recruits with attitudinal problems, including resistance to authority.

On Dec. 6, 1975, this special training conglomeration was headed by Capt. Cecil Taylor, the director, with Capt. John Ullman assigned as assistant director. Although administratively under the regiment's support battalion, Captain Taylor went directly to the regimental commander (Colonel Seymour) on operational and policy matters. All three of these officers were casualties of McClure's brief service.

Motivation Platoon (Moto) was further divided into an Incentive section and an Achiever's section, the latter normally called "regular Moto" or simply "the Moto section" by witnesses at the Bronson trial. Normally (not really a good word to use in connection with Moto), recruits sent to Moto spent the first week in the Incentive section. Training there, according to the regimental SOP, would "be characterized by high stress, reduced privileges, increased emphasis on physical fitness and detailed instruction in personal hygiene and grooming."

Recruits who showed some promise in their first Moto week then graduated to the Achiever's section for a second week of special training. Achiever's trainees would have "slightly less stress, added privileges" and generally more of the same physical training.

A recruit could shorten his time in Moto by "showing good motivation" according to trial witnesses — as in "I wanted to show a lot of good motivation so I'd get out of Moto." For many recruits, however, Moto was simply an unpleasant way station en route to being canned from the Corps. Of eight Moto alumni who testified at Bronson's trial, only three still were in the service.

SSgt. (E-6) Harold Bronson was the DI on duty in the Incentive section on December 6. Sgt. (E-5) Henry Aguilar was on duty in the Achiever's section. SSgt. (E-6) Henry Wallraff, the Motivation Platoon commander, was on duty, but with his attention taken primarily by the Special Training Branch where he was the supervisory NCO for the day. All three of these NCOs also were casualties of McClure's visit to MCRD — all were either prosecuted or threatened with prosecution for their part in the affair.

Moto was the final casualty. The platoon was disbanded on Apr. 19, 1976. Recruits with attitudinal problems now are dealt with in the regular recruit platoons, a return to a tradition that started in 1775.

Staff Sergeant Bronson

Thirty-year-old Harold L. Bronson was born in the Florida Panhandle, in Freeport, near DeFuniak Springs. He was the youngest of 11 children. His father, an unskilled laborer, died in 1960 when Bronson was 14. The family was close, its unity an obvious anchor in Harold Bronson's life.

"We were poor," he said, "but my father always provided for us. I never went without food." Bronson's mother still maintains the Freeport household. One of her daughters lives with her and another lives nearby. The rest of the family is scattered from the East to the West Coasts. Two of the sons in the family are senior NCOs in the Army.

Bronson is single. His brief, childless marriage ended in divorce.

Bronson graduated from Tivoli High School in DeFuniak Springs. He joined the Marines in March 1966 and became a field wireman. After boot camp and specialty training, he first served with the 2d Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, N.C. While with the 2d Marine Division, he deployed to the Caribbean with his battalion, pursuing his hobby as an amateur photographer while afloat.

In February 1969, he joined the 1st Marine Division in Vietnam to serve a year as the field wire chief of 2d Battalion, 7th Marines.

The Rock Pile, in the hotly contested Que Son Valley, was one of the places Bronson knew there. His combat service left a deep impression on him.

He talked about it in our post-trial interview. It was a time when he was struggling, amazingly free of bitterness, to understand why his Corps had put him through that seven-month wringer of, among other things, hate mail ("You're a sadistic killer who should be kicked out of the Marine Corps") and hate phone calls ("Are you the Bronson that's responsible for killing that private?").

He had "been through a lot, emotionally and financially," he said. "But I know how people are about their kids — mothers and fathers about their sons. Yet the public — they have to understand that this is a military organization. I saw a lot of people die in Vietnam who weren't physically and mentally prepared for war. That's my job around here, to get them ready for combat."

There's nothing special about being a field wireman that prepares a Marine to serve as a drill instructor. But Bronson had been learning about leadership during his years of service, and had shown that it was a natural part of his personality. He went on the MCRD drill field in August 1974, assigned to Company F, 2d Recruit Training Battalion. He served there for 15 months.

Bronson was a DI success story, demonstrating the temperament and patience to train "problem," "marginal," "maltreatment-risk" recruits. First Lt. Thomas Rees, Bronson's series commander in Company F, testified that Bronson was "always trying to change the minds of recruits not initially motivated to staying in the Marine Corps. He's a pro."

It was that reputation, and his spotless 10-year record, that earned Bronson a transfer from the regular recruit training unit to Moto. He reported there on November 19, five days after McClure first arrived at MCRD. That same day, November 19, McClure went to the Correctional Custody Platoon because he had attempted to run away from boot camp the day before. Bronson and McClure didn't meet one another until December 6, 17 days later.

Private Lynn E. McClure

The short unhappy life of Lynn McClure began in the east Texas town of Tyler on May 26, 1955. He grew up in nearby Lufkin. He was a perpetual failure, the product of a broken home, neglected, rejected, unloved, a 1971 high school dropout who was failing all his subjects when he left school in the 10th grade. McClure never learned to cope with even the simplest problems of day-to-day living.

After he left school, according to press reports, McClure did odd jobs around Lufkin, bickered with his employers, had half a dozen brushes with local police — a "poor little half-wit" one policeman said — over misdemeanors involving vandalism and petty thefts. Forced by his mother and stepfather to leave their home, he lived in a local motel for a time, was ejected for suspected theft, and took to sleeping outdoors and in abandoned buildings.

In the summer of 1974 he voluntarily turned himself in to the state mental hospital in Rusk, Tex., for investigation of sanity. He ran away two weeks after being accepted.

A year later, after being rejected by both the Air Force and

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Is this any way to run a Marine Corps?

The heart of the Marine Corps' case against SSgt. Harold L. Bronson was that Lynn E. McClure died because Bronson failed to follow the rules that spelled out how pugil stick bouts should be conducted and supervised at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) in San Diego.

Marine prosecutors contended, among other things, that Bronson failed to stop a pugil stick bout as required by the rules. McClure was fatally injured during that bout. Therefore, according to the prosecution, Bronson himself was guilty of assault and manslaughter.

But exactly what rules did Bronson fail to follow? When McClure was fatally injured there were *two* sets of rules in force in Bronson's unit, the Motivation (Moto) Platoon of the Special Training Branch (STB), according to the testimony at Bronson's trial.

One set of rules, published in the MCRD Standing Operating Procedure for Recruit Training (the base SOP), applied to recruits in the regular platoons. The other set of rules was developed by an STB director specifically to deal with recruits such as McClure who refused to fight.

McClure could have been fatally injured regardless of which set of rules Bronson had followed. But the confusion that existed at MCRD over which set of rules the officers and NCOs in STB were supposed to follow became a major issue at Bronson's trial.

The base SOP in force the day McClure was fatally injured, Dec. 6, 1975, noted that "pugil stick matches are extremely strenuous" and that recruits could be injured if the bouts were not properly supervised. Then, with obvious reference to training regular recruits in regular platoons, the SOP listed the commanding general's supervisory and procedural requirements:

- One officer and two DIs present at all bouts, in addition to the close-combat instructor conducting the bouts.
- Light warm-up exercises for recruits before bouts.
- Inspection of the sticks and protective equipment by recruits and DIs before each bout, with the DIs specifically charged with checking each recruit for a "snug-fitting helmet."
- Halting bouts whenever a recruit's helmet came off, when a recruit dropped his stick, when equipment became faulty, or when a recruit was knocked to the ground by a forceful blow.

The SOP also stated: "Bouts may be continued whenever the Close Combat Instructor has determined that the recruit is not injured and his equipment is in proper order. When a recruit is knocked to the ground by a *forceful blow*, the bout will stop and the recruit will be sent to the rear of the line to wait for another bout. Recruits suspected of being injured will be referred to medical personnel and will not be allowed to participate in any further pugil stick bouts for the period of instruction."

However, Capt. Wayman Bishop, director of STB during

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Army, McClure tried to enlist in the Marines at the recruiting station in Lufkin. He failed the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery entrance exam on Sept. 24, 1975. He had been rejected again.

Two months later, McClure turned up at the Marine recruiting station in Austin, nearly 200 miles to the southwest. The recruiter there, according to a later Marine Corps investigation, followed all the required checks on McClure's background, including calls to the police and courts in Lufkin, and found no disqualifying information. Texas law forbids release of juvenile arrest records, but there is still some question about the calls. Phone company records show the calls were made but the names of the officials supposedly contacted and noted on the enlistment interview forms are of nonexistent persons.

McClure denied — in at least three interviews during his enlistment processing and in writing on the entry forms — that he ever had attempted to enter the service, that he ever had been arrested, or that he had any history of mental illness. The recruiter sent him to San Antonio for testing.

In San Antonio, on Nov. 12, 1975, McClure took the same armed services entrance test again. He passed, with scores dramatically above his first attempt and above the entry requirement. He was enlisted the next day and sent to San Diego.

The Marine Corps' later investigation could not uncover any recruiting irregularity. The person closest to McClure at MCRD San Diego, however, washed-out recruit Robert Lytle, told me outside the courtroom at Bronson's trial that McClure "said he'd cheated on the test" to get in. Recruiting irregularities weren't an issue inside the courtroom.

McClure's Life at MCRD San Diego

McClure reached MCRD either late Thursday, Nov. 13, 1975, or early the next morning. He was placed in the processing system on Sunday and assigned to a platoon forming in the 2d Battalion. Processing generally takes three to five days.

McClure hadn't finished processing when his career ended on December 6. Boot camp had so overwhelmed him by Tuesday, November 18, that he decided to leave. He went over the hill by simply walking out the main gate, in broad daylight. He was apprehended at once and sent to the Correctional Custody Platoon, the regiment's junior jail for minor offenders.

When released a week later, he was out of trouble for only two days. Then, aided by his friend Lytle and one other recruit, McClure went AWOL again. They were all caught, still in San Diego, within hours of their escape.

McClure's company commander gave him another seven days in correctional custody. At the end of that confinement, on the morning of December 6, McClure was reassigned, within the Special Training Branch, from Correctional Custody Platoon to Moto. He met his new DI, Staff Sergeant Bronson, at a check-in procedure, right after lunch.

Lt. Col. Patrick Collins, commanding officer of 2d Recruit Training Battalion (where McClure would have been trained had he reacted to boot camp as about 90 percent of all recruits do), explained later that there were repeated malfunctions in the recruit-processing system in McClure's case:

First, he never was examined physically, mentally, or academically at MCRD. Any one of the examinations might have identified McClure as unsuited for service and gotten him out.

Reason: McClure was caught up in offenses so quickly that it wasn't done. No one noted the omissions.

Second, McClure should not have been summarily reassigned to correctional custody after he had committed a second offense. In cases of repeat offenders, the policy was for the recruit training battalion commander to consider the recruit a likely candidate for discharge, as one who might

never be able to accept the discipline of soldiering.

Reason: The battalion commander was away on temporary duty. Someone in the Special Training Branch should have noted the lack of the battalion CO's approval. It was a Saturday, November 29, and no one did notice.

Third, McClure shouldn't have been transferred within the Special Training Branch, from correctional custody to Moto, without the battalion CO's approval.

Reason: An error on the part of the STB director or a member of his staff. That happened on December 6, the following Saturday.

Fourth, McClure shouldn't have been given pugil stick training — according to the recruit depot SOP for training — without another DI and an officer present.

Reason: That's part of what Bronson's trial and the other Marines' charges were all about. The pugil stick training was held that same Saturday, December 6.

Moto, Dec. 6, 1975

What did happen in Moto that Saturday afternoon? From some of the newspaper accounts that spring, it sounded as if a mob of frenzied Marines, egged on by a DI shouting "Kill! Kill!," had beaten a defenseless McClure to a senseless pulp. I walked into the courtroom for Bronson's trial expecting to see a sadistic killer about to get his just deserts.

In the next two weeks I learned that the only truth in many accounts was the date and place, and the fact that McClure had died of injuries suffered in a pugil stick bout. Even that was brought into question by defense attorney Dan Hunter when he introduced two doctors who believed the cause of death may have been an overdose of antibiotics given to McClure an hour before his death.

It's a moot question really. McClure was "vegetablized," according to Navy neurosurgeon Robert Meredith, who operated on him late on the day he was injured. There was no quibbling at the trial over one fact: Lynn McClure was so severely injured at MCRD that afternoon that he was only clinically alive thereafter, with no chance of recovery.

The real question is more direct: How did McClure get injured, and who, if anyone, was responsible?

On Saturday morning, December 6, Bronson's Moto Incentive section included about 15 recruits, drawn from throughout the training regiment. Their boot camp experiences ranged from several weeks to several months. Sometime just before the recruits went to the mess hall for noon chow, the Correctional Custody Platoon delivered three men to Bronson, including McClure and his friend Robert Lytle.

Afternoon training began when Bronson and Aguilar, duty DI of the Achiever's section, combined the entire Moto for about half an hour of physical exercise, inside the barracks. During the exercise period, Bronson checked in his three new recruits. This probably was the first time Bronson and McClure had a face-to-face meeting.

After PT, Bronson ordered his section into the uniform for pugil stick training: sweat shirts, trousers, jock straps, and boots. The training session called for pugil stick training in the Incentive section beginning at 1:30. While his recruits were still inside the barracks, Bronson held a 10 to 15-minute class on use of the pugil sticks.

He covered the actual handling of the sticks — "just about the same class we got in regular boot camp," according to one government witness. Bronson recalls also that he told the privates, "Don't hit in the groin or behind the head," and reiterated the Moto reason for being, "Show a lot of motivation!"

Then Bronson ordered his recruits outside to the "dirt area," a grassless plot, about 40 by 100 feet, lying between two barracks. As they fell out, he went looking for his platoon commander, SSgt. Henry Wallraff, to ask about the training. As Bronson later told the court, "The [MCRD] SOP called for two DIs, an officer, and a corpsman at pugil stick bouts." (The SOP didn't order a corpsman, but it was the practice for

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one to be present at bouts held for regular recruits.)

Wallraff, who had an STB-wide supervisory watch that day, wasn't in his office. Bronson came back to the barracks, found Sergeant Aguilar, and questioned him about the SOP discrepancies. Bronson was "uneasy about running the bouts alone," Aguilar testified.

Aguilar had asked the same question of Wallraff several months earlier, and had been told, as Aguilar said from the stand, "Wasn't I capable of running a bout myself?" Aguilar passed that helpful information along to Bronson, then assured him that it was "routine" to hold bouts on Saturdays without other supervisors being present. And, oh yes, there were some other special rules for pugil stick bouts in Moto.

That didn't come as a surprise to Bronson. As the assistant director of STB at that time, Capt. John Ullman, told the jury, the "general thrust" of briefings for new DIs included this: "The [MCRD] SOP is in force; however, there are some things here that are different. If you have questions, ask. If you can't find the answer, come and see me."

Bronson had been asking, after noting numerous things "that would have been hazing back in F Company [regular boot camp]." The answer had been, when he questioned other DIs, "That's the way things was run in Moto," as he told the court.

And he recalled what Aguilar told him that Saturday afternoon (on which no officer was present in the Special Training Branch and the Moto Platoon commander couldn't be found). There were special rules for Moto pugil stick bouts: "When a private dropped his stick, the bout would be allowed to continue until a killing blow was struck. Also, if a private was knocked to the ground and it wasn't a forceful blow, the bout would continue." Aguilar corroborated Bronson's testimony, using the term "simulated killing blow."

Moto's special rules for pugil training are a key to understanding the McClure affair, how the injury occurred in the first place, and how embarrassing the affair must have become for the commanding general of the recruit depot. An explanation of these rules, and the complicated and irregular way they came about, is detailed in a separate article, "The 'Special' SOP," page 11.

Bronson accepted Aguilar's explanation of how pugil stick bouts were run in Moto and went outside to run the bouts.

What Happened During the Bouts?

It's impossible for me to say precisely what happened in the bouts. The court heard from nine eyewitnesses and got nine different accounts. Perhaps it's best to begin with a couple of things *all agreed did not happen*:

- First: Reports of a "mob" armed with pugil sticks surrounding McClure were patently false. There were only two pugil sticks in the arena that afternoon, all the sticks the Motivation Platoon had available. Whenever McClure was in the arena, one was made available to him. That leaves one pugil stick for one other recruit.

- Second: McClure was never hit without the protection of a helmet. There were about five football helmets with face guards at the arena. McClure wore one, checked for fit and proper attachment by Bronson, in each match. McClure did remove his helmet on occasion — threw it on the ground — but was not struck while it was off. When the real killing blow was struck, the last blow of the last match of the day, all eyewitnesses agree that he was wearing a helmet.

- Third: No witness testified that Bronson yelled "Kill! Kill! Kill!" The witnesses agreed that the recruits were yelling that, before McClure appeared in the arena, while he was in the arena, and just as recruits commonly yelled in pugil stick training throughout Marine Corps Recruit Depot.

- Fourth: Contrary to some press reports, which persisted even after the trial, there was no blood and no crushed or even hairline-fractured skull.

The neurosurgeon, Capt. Robert Meredith (Medical Corps, USN), who operated on McClure later that same day, testified that there were no marks or bruises on McClure.

McClure's only injury was a bruised brain, a massive bruise on the right side and a lesser bruise on the left. Meredith believed it came from a single blow on the head that caused the brain to ricochet inside the skull, striking first the right side of the skull cavity, then the left.

The court did hear differing testimony from two other doctors, one speaking theoretically, the other (Dr. Ethel Erickson, Harris County, Tex., pathologist) speaking after post-mortem examination of McClure's brain. They testified that an injury such as McClure's probably would come from multiple blows. With the excellent motor functions McClure was showing until he was struck the last time, however, Meredith's one-blow opinion seems sound.

Now we turn to that other, much-less-certain matter of what did happen.

Bronson began the bouts after giving more brief instructions. He reviewed legal and illegal blows. He did not explain the concept of special rules. He did tell the recruits to *start fighting* on the sound of the whistle, and to *continue fighting* until the whistle sounded again.

After several bouts between other recruits, McClure appeared at the head of one of the two lines of recruits being paired in the matches. When he came into the center of the ring, he told Bronson that he "didn't know how to fight."

Bronson spent several minutes explaining how to use the stick, as he did for McClure several more times that afternoon. Bronson then blew the whistle for McClure's first bout.

McClure was paired first with Pvt. Richard Vanoven. Vanoven testified that toward the end of the bout, McClure "started backing off." He spent much of the rest of his conscious life doing just that — running, throwing away his stick, falling to the ground, saying "I don't want to fight!" He was a frightened kid without spirit in a drill designed specifically to instill the spirit of attack.

Several recruit witnesses testified McClure cried and said such things as "God, make 'em stop! What have I done?" Other recruit witnesses and Bronson testified that McClure was not crying and that they heard no pleas to God.

McClure complained several times that he hurt, saying, "My side hurts!" or "My neck hurts!" After one such complaint, Bronson sent him to the sidelines to rest on a log. According to Bronson, when McClure returned for another bout, he said he was "ready to fight."

Was McClure ever struck while he was on the ground? Some witnesses said he was; others that he was not. One witness changed his mind on this point between the investigation and the court. Those witnesses who said McClure had been struck while down — he kept dropping to the ground — couldn't agree as to which recruit had struck him. Odds are, considering the rules Bronson was following, McClure was struck *while on the ground*.

There was the same disagreement, witness to witness, about whether the bout-ending whistle blew immediately after McClure had discarded his pugil stick, had dropped to the ground, or had been knocked to the ground.

There was disagreement on the number (four to seven), duration (a few seconds to 45 minutes), or sequence of McClure's times in the arena. Probably he was paired in five matches.

McClure's second match ended when McClure, whose stick was resting with one end on the ground, shoved the top of his stick into Bronson's side, saying that he wasn't going to fight, punctuating his refusal with obscenities directed at the DI. Bronson sent McClure inside to see Moto commander Wallraff, now back in his office.

Aguilar testified that Wallraff talked with McClure, and that McClure "gave a good Moto growl," and agreed to go on with the training. Wallraff then told Aguilar to "take McClure back outside and make sure he fights." Outside,

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Aguilar told Bronson that Wallraff had said the "private was to stay out here until he fights."

One recruit eyewitness, PFC Joseph Gelinis, testified for the defense. Gelinis is a noteworthy witness because he was slightly older than most of the others, had a year of college, should have felt no personal guilt in McClure's death because he was not paired that afternoon with McClure, and didn't have to rationalize boot camp failure.

Gelinis described McClure's bouts as "about 30 seconds per bout, including fighting and running, with two or three such bouts with each opponent." Gelinis said he felt that Bronson "shifted McClure to other opponents trying to find a private he would fight."

All the recruit eyewitnesses agreed that Bronson was not trying to inflict any pain or punishment on McClure and that he was merely trying to get McClure to fight. The recruits also said they were trying to get McClure to fight: "Don't throw it away, man! Use that stick!"

Outside the courtroom, several of the recruit eyewitnesses added, "But I think Sergeant Bronson went too far."

Obviously! And that is where I think Bronson showed poor judgment. Filtering the nine versions of the afternoon's bouts through my 18 months as a troop and 18½ years as a troop leader, I think I'd have given up on McClure after the first couple of unsuccessful attempts. I believe I'd have concluded that McClure didn't have the spirit to serve in the Corps, and delivered him to the discharge people.

But, as the court president remarked after the trial, "There were judgment calls where it's hard to second-guess." In light of the information about Harold Bronson I gathered in and out of the courtroom, I believe his patience, a virtue in the normal world, undid him in the upside-down world that surrounded Moto and Lynn McClure.

The end came for McClure in a bout with 17-year-old, 5-foot-11, 155-pound Robert Evans. Evans volunteered for the bout, he said, because he "wanted to show motivation and get out of Moto."

"He hit me," Evans testified, "and that started the adrenaline pumping! Then he took off running. I ran around in front of him and hit him on the right side of the head. He went down and lay there, looking like he was having some seizure."

The testimony describing that afternoon took nearly three trial days. Picking through my notes of recruit eyewitness testimony, I could amass enough evidence to prove it was anything from "just like regular pugil stick matches" to "a frenzy."

In the end, like the jury, all I could do was draw my own conclusions. And having heard it all, in the context of pugil stick fighting, of Motivation Platoon, and of Lynn McClure, it became obvious to me that Harold Bronson was doing just what he understood his Marine Corps expected of him.

There is a final irony McClure left hanging in the air over Marine Corps Recruit Depot that afternoon. Amid all the brouhaha over Moto's special rules and lack of proper supervision, I believe McClure's injury could have occurred in any one of the 104,000 pugil stick bouts fought there during the year that ended with his death. It was an accident.

The Marines Decide to Prosecute

At 7:45 on the evening of December 6, Bronson signed a three-page, handwritten statement describing the afternoon's bouts. He admitted being "fully aware of what the SOP states" on pugil stick bouts. He also explained that Aguilar told him that when a recruit refused to fight or just dropped his stick, to have his opponent "hit him one or two times" to make him fight. The spelling was poor, and the paper wasn't well organized, but it got the message across pretty much as the court heard it seven months later.

"Nobody got really excited about it for weeks," Bronson said later. "No one was wringing hands." There was a

preliminary investigation, forwarded to the commanding general, concluding that Bronson had shown poor judgment. He continued his Moto DI duties.

The hand-wringing started two months later. Six Marines became subject to a formal investigation. They were the three NCOs in Moto (Bronson, Aguilar, and Wallraff), the two captains in STB (Taylor and Ullman), and the regimental commander (Seymour). All were relieved of their recruit training duties on February 4.

Legal actions dragged on for nearly 10 months. The last action occurred on Sept. 1, 1976, when the commanding general punished Capt. Cecil Taylor, the relieved director of Special Training Branch, with a letter of reprimand. Taylor's case had been referred to a general court in April but was later withdrawn.

Other dispositions of the "San Diego Six":

Col. Rufus Seymour, regimental CO, and Capt. John Ullman, assistant director of STB, also got letters of reprimand as nonjudicial punishment.

SSgt. Henry Wallraff, Moto commander, was convicted by a special court-martial and sentenced to be officially reprimanded.

Sgt. Henry Aguilar, Moto Achiever's section DI, lived under threat of general court-martial for eight months; his charges then were dropped. All the punishments imposed were for dereliction of duty. Ullman also was charged with disobeying orders.

How the Marines Should Handle Future Training Accidents

If the Marines could turn back time to Nov. 11, 1975, they obviously wouldn't let Lynn McClure into the recruiting station. Just as obviously, on virtually every day thereafter through December 6, some Marine officer or NCO would make a different decision in dealing with McClure. It seems pointless to rehash that phase of this affair.

But after McClure was injured, things got a lot less obvious. Faced with Major General Houghton's "What would you have done?" and the decisions he had to make, at the time and in the atmosphere he had to make them, I might have found myself repeating, "I don't know."

Now, with 20-20 hindsight and the advantage of having talked with a lot of people who were close to the problem, I think these are some of the things the Marines should do in getting ready for and reacting to the next training accident:

- First, stop tolerating abuses of recruits. Every Marine general I met while working on this story told me, "The Commandant's not winking at abuses." I believe it. But when the Corps has a maltreatment case like the Hiscock shooting, with six DIs punished, someone is winking.

Marines on the inside know that most DIs don't mistreat their recruits. But those same insiders also know that the abusers have the acquiescence of too many others concerned with recruit training. It's a short-sighted attitude, and can lead to what I believe happened in this case: Bronson went to trial for Henson's offenses against Private Hiscock.

There's an arrogance of power that takes hold of some DIs. Lt. Col. Pat Collins, CO of 2d Recruit Training Battalion, said, "A Marine NCO may be a perfectly reasonable man, but when he puts on that campaign hat he thinks he has to live up to an image — to play the DI role." Collins would like to see his battalion organized as an infantry battalion, with DIs as platoon sergeants and an officer in each platoon. And he added, "I'd take those goddamned hats and burn 'em!"

- Second, stop concealing the reality that combat training is arduous, hazardous and tough, and it has to be that way. It shouldn't come as a shock to a nation that was born in war and has practiced war about once a generation since.

The example in this accident was the pugil stick. People don't even know how to pronounce it, much less know what it is. To explain how one young man might accidentally kill another in the pugil stick arena, you must start by explaining the stick, what it is, how it's used, and that you teach the

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the year ending Aug. 1, 1976, proposed his own tougher rules for pugil stick bouts and got them approved by the executive officer of his battalion, Lt. Col. T.C. Dolson, who had served in the Recruit Training Regiment for three years.

At the trial, Bishop testified that he needed new rules because "pugil stick training was ineffective in Moto." Recruits in Moto used the regular pugil stick bout rules to avoid fighting by "dropping their sticks or falling to the ground," Bishop said.

Bishop wanted to change the rules to make it tougher for recruits to quit fighting. His request to institute new rules went up the chain of command to Col. David Twomey (since promoted to brigadier general), commander of the Recruit Training Regiment.

Shortly thereafter, Twomey's executive officer, Dolson, met with Bishop to hear his proposals. Bishop testified that he told Dolson that he wanted to "amplify" the pugil stick bout rules in Moto. Bishop testified, "If a recruit was knocked down by a forcible blow, the bout would end. But if a recruit fell to the ground without a forcible or simulated killing blow having been struck, the match would continue until one of those blows had been struck. If the stick was knocked out of a recruit's hands, the match would end. But if a recruit threw down his stick, the bout would continue until either a forcible or a simulated killing blow had been struck."

Bishop also wanted to give the chief drill instructor of STB authority to supervise pugil stick bouts in Moto without an officer present. The base SOP required that all bouts be supervised by an officer.

Dolson approved the changes verbally. Bishop testified that he thought Dolson, the executive officer, was speaking for the regimental commander, a logical assumption in any regiment in the Corps.

Bishop told his chief DI to prepare a lesson plan explaining the new rules. Bishop kept two copies of the lesson plan himself and gave one to each DI in Moto. Mysteriously, the MCRD investigating officer could not find a copy of that lesson plan after McClure's injury.

Bishop testified that Dolson okayed the new rules in early April 1975. However, those changes were not incorporated into the updated version of the regimental SOP for training in the Special Training Branch published June 24, 1975.

A command shuffle occurred in STB during the summer of 1975. Capt. John Ullman joined as assistant director in early July. Bishop was transferred Aug. 1, and Ullman became the acting director. One month later, Capt. Cecil Taylor was assigned to STB as director. Ullman remained as assistant director.

At the trial, Ullman — who testified for the prosecution under a grant of immunity — gave an amazing account of the confusion that existed in STB about the rules that governed the conduct and supervision of Moto's pugil stick bouts. Ullman said that:

- Bishop told him that the chief DI could supervise pugil stick bouts without an officer present, but never said anything about any special rules on the conduct of bouts in Moto.

- During his month as acting director, Ullman further modified the supervisory requirements for the bouts. Without clearing the change with his seniors, he cancelled the requirement that the chief DI supervise the pugil stick bouts. This meant that the DIs could supervise the bouts themselves without the chief DI or an officer present.

Ullman testified that "the system was working well" when Taylor took over STB. So Ullman didn't think to tell his new boss about Moto's special rule on supervision of pugil stick bouts.

And, of course, Ullman didn't tell Taylor about the Moto's special rules on conduct of the bouts because Bishop had not told Ullman about them.

Meanwhile, however, Moto's special rules on supervision

and conduct of the bouts were passed among the DIs in Moto by word of mouth.

Taylor was under threat of general court-martial himself during Bronson's trial and did not testify.

Therefore, the court never found out why Taylor never noticed the wholesale violations of the base SOP governing pugil stick bouts that regularly occurred in Moto while he was director. It was Taylor's responsibility to see that the officers and men in STB followed the base SOP.

That was also the responsibility of Taylor's boss, Col. Rufus Seymour, who relieved Twomey as commander of the training regiment in July 1975.

The jury never learned what, if anything, Seymour and Twomey discussed about Moto. Neither man was called to testify. Seymour himself was involved in legal actions during Bronson's trial and Twomey was overseas.

Maj. Gen. Kenneth Houghton, commander of MCRD, directed the inquiry into McClure's death and ordered Bronson to trial. Yet, in my opinion, his own conduct should have been subject to inquiry because he failed to keep track of what was going on in his Motivation Platoon.

When Bishop testified at Bronson's trial, he made clear that the special pugil stick bout rules he developed for Moto amounted to a standing order for Bronson and the other DIs.

Judge Draper: "Were the DIs required to follow these rules, or were the new rules permissive?"

Bishop: "I established the new procedures as limits. If they felt the match should not continue, it should end. The DI conducting the match was to use his own judgment."

Draper: (carefully choosing each word) "Were these new rules and were the DIs required to follow them?"

Bishop: "Yes."

— J.E.R. □

The McClure affair

From page 16

young men using it the spirit of the stick is "Attack!"

You must explain that to develop the aggressiveness your professional experience tells you is necessary in preparing young men for war, you have instructed your NCOs to teach "kill or be killed," and that your instructors promote aggression in the pugil stick arena by requiring the recruits to yell and growl. And yes, that the recruits learn to yell "Kill! Kill! Kill!"

- Third, inform the press. If they ball it up, say so and set them straight. The Marine Corps public information system failed miserably in the McClure affair. It's true that pending litigation may dictate some restraint. But had Commandant Wilson called a press conference and announced simply that there were only two sticks on the field that day, and that there was no blood and no fractured bone, much of the whole nonsensical furor would have died at birth.

- Fourth, if SOPs are going to be used as legal clubs, keep them up to date. As one young MCRD officer said, "The SOP is the Bible, but it's a guide. There has to be room for individual initiative. Besides, the changes are not made fast enough." Perhaps the most unseemly aspect of Bronson's trial was the attempt by the prosecutors to keep the explanation of the command-instituted, pugil-stick rule changes from the court members. It was legal, but not justice.

- Fifth, give the loyalty and protection of the Corps to the officers and NCOs who are doing the Corps' work in good faith. They should be protected as strenuously as those who abuse subordinates are exposed. Many DIs at MCRD San Diego knew they could just as well have been in Bronson's place. They felt the Marine Corps had betrayed him. I agree.

Finally, there is Sergeant Bronson's post-trial advice for his fellow drill instructors: "What happened to me could happen to any DI. The job is hard. It's a real challenging job. There are always going to be recruits like Private McClure, and DIs just have to realize that they're going to have to put up with that kind of person." □

Wheels

Incorrect tire pressures can cause low gas mileage.

By Eugene B. Milmo

Is there a tire gauge in your glove compartment? There certainly should be and it should be used at least every two weeks to guard against the many types of trouble which can be brought on by incorrect inflation.

Excessive tread wear and early tire failure only begin to spell out the penalties. There is also a probability of reduced gas mileage, which definitely is a budget burden at today's prices.

But most important are the effects which too little, too much or unequal tire pressure can have on traction, car control and, therefore, road safety. Hard steering, car wander or pull to one side could be among the symptoms.

Or the driver might notice that his car steers erratically when braked, the steering wheel recovers poorly after a turn, power steering is oversensitive, the front wheels shimmy or the suspension seems to be reacting to every rough wrinkle in the road. All of these problems can stem from incorrect or uneven tire inflation.

You can't be sure your tires are safe if you don't check them regularly with a reliable gauge. And, if your car has radials, a gauge is absolutely needed to determine when they are going soft.

Q: In winter if the car is driven only for shopping, church and so forth, engine oil will congeal unless a very lightweight grade is used. Is this a true statement? — J.L.

False. In such cases, the engine rarely heats up enough to burn off water, acids, residues and other combustion by-products. These contaminants mix with oil to form harmful sludge. Changing oil every 30 days in winter — regardless of the weight or viscosity used — combats this.

Q: Twice this month, the hood of my car flew open while I was driving over a bad stretch of road. Could heavy

vibration cause the lock to release if the hood isn't slammed tightly enough, or is the lock itself slipping? — T.N.

Even if the lock isn't properly engaged or doesn't hold, the safety catch should keep the hood from flying open. Better have the hood latch, catch and alignment checked out.

Q: Could automatic transmission binding or slipping cause the entire car to shudder when accelerated from a standstill? It's a big '68 with 73,000 miles and no major repairs or replacements needed as yet. — S.L.

A faulty universal joint condition — probably looseness — is much more likely than any kind of transmission trouble.

Q: How often should the PCV valve be oiled or greased? — N.E.

Like the carburetor and choke, the PCV valve requires cleaning rather than lubrication. This should be done at least once a year, using a carburetor/choke cleaner or a special PCV solvent.

Q: I've read that a C.D. electronic

ignition unit on cars such as my '73 will improve gas mileage and engine power. — F.D.

With a capacitive discharge electronic ignition system, higher voltages can be delivered to the spark plugs. The resulting "fatter spark" will improve engine firing and efficiency in terms of better performance and gas mileage.

Q: My '72 engine has never overheated, but lately the 'HOT' temperature warning light begins to glow shortly after the engine is started. Could this mean a cooling system problem or just a haywire gauge? — F.J.

If there are no other symptoms, the temperature gauge sending unit must be defective.

Tips

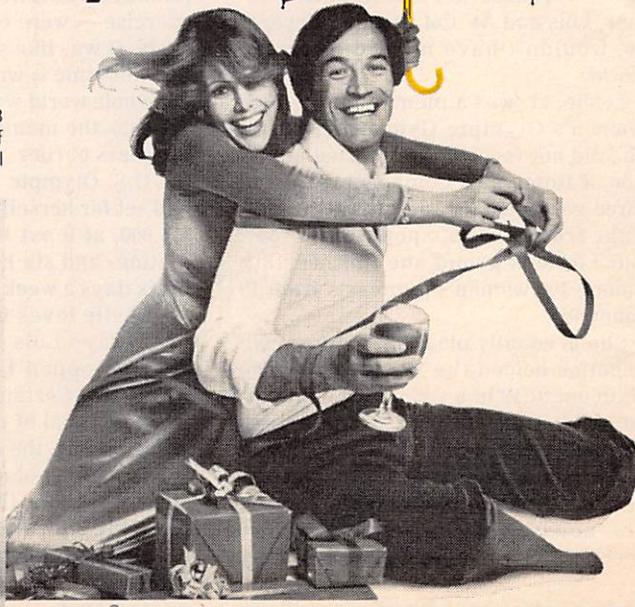
Dirty oil and air filters can double normal engine wear . . . Always press down the brake pedal when applying the hand brake . . . Ampere-hour rating of a replacement battery should be no less than the original battery's rating. □

How the English keep dry.



Gin Bloody Mary:

1½ ozs. Gordon's Gin, 3 ozs. tomato juice, juice of 1/3 lime wedge. Stir well over ice.



Gordon's® Gin. Largest seller in England, America, the world.

PRODUCT OF U.S.A. 100% NEUTRAL SPIRITS DISTILLED FROM GRAIN. 86 PROOF. GORDON'S DRY GIN CO., LTD., LINDEN, N. J.

Boarding School Directory

boys

GEORGETOWN

Grades 9-12 Established 1789

Catholic boarding and day, college preparatory school for boys of all denominations. 93 acre campus in suburban Washington, D.C. Full activities program. Room 203, Georgetown Preparatory School 10900 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852

HOW AIR FORCE BRAT LESLIE WOLFSBERGER MADE IT TO THE OLYMPICS

By Pattee Schlatter

Photos by Joseph Revell



Neither Nadia Comaneci nor Olga Korbut's parents attended the 21st Olympic Games in Montreal this year. Leslie Wolfsberger's mother and father, Lois and AF Col. Dick Wolfsberger, wouldn't have missed it for the world.

Leslie, 17, was a member of the U.S. Women's Olympic Gymnastic Team. She did not receive the frenzied adulation of Romania's Comaneci, who won three gold medals and stole the spotlight from Russia's popular Korbut. But Leslie is proud she finished 18th among 100 women's gymnasts from 19 countries.

She is equally pleased that her contribution helped the U.S. team place sixth out of 12 in a sport long dominated by Russia and the eastern European nations.

For Leslie and her parents, the competition in the Forum was familiar and yet newly exciting. About 18,000 spectators jammed the Forum nightly

Pattee Schlatter, a friend of the Wolfsberger family, is a California freelance writer and wife of an AF retiree.

to watch the gymnasts; even the rehearsals were sellouts. The atmosphere was that of a four-ring circus as the four events — vault, uneven parallel bars, balance beam and floor exercise — were conducted simultaneously. It was like so many other meets. But this time it was the Olympics, and the whole world was watching.

It was the moment Leslie had aimed for years earlier. Achieving a place on the U.S. Olympic team was a goal she had set for herself at age seven. It took \$15,000, at least 100,000 miles of commuting, and six hours of practice five to six days a week to realize her goal.

"Leslie loves the sport of gymnastics," says Lois Wolfsberger. "Long ago it stopped being fun. It's hard work now. Certainly, there were days when her goal of making the Olympics seemed to be 'the impossible dream'."

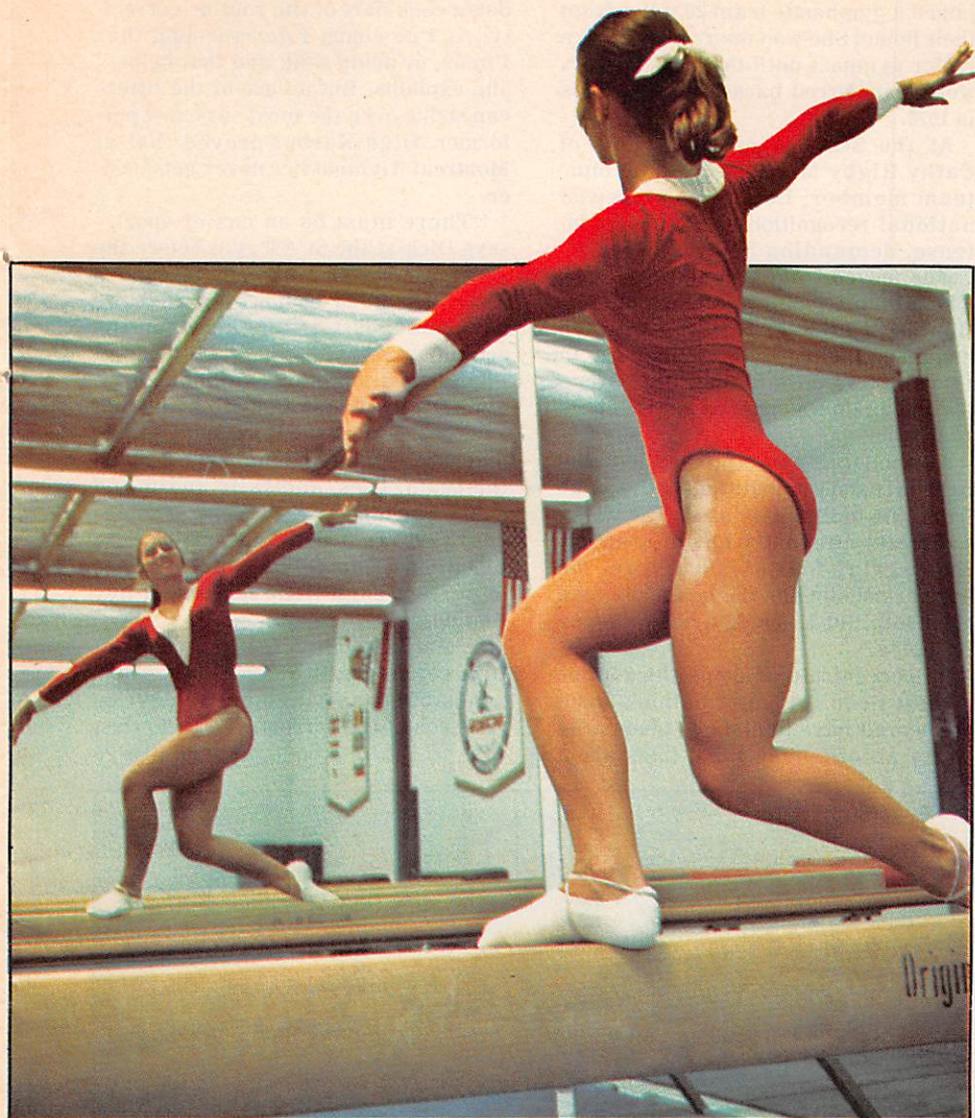
The making of an athlete of Olympic stature is more than a matter of fate. Nor is it guaranteed by huge investments of time, money and practice. Many gymnasts have the basic requirements: talent, raw physical strength, strong nerves, concentration, and the courage to compete under

pressure. But not all have an overriding will to succeed, to make it to the Olympics. Leslie did.

Even so, it wasn't easy. "Practice often didn't go well," says Lois. "She would sustain an injury, the dynamics between Leslie and her coach would go awry, she might return home in tears, dejected and depressed.

"But never, never did she say that she didn't want to do gymnastics or that she wanted to give up. Dick and I agreed years ago that if she ever wanted to give up, we would go along with her decision. After all, she's the one who's out there, not us."

Unlike Nadia Comaneci, who was sent away from home at age six to be trained at state expense, Leslie remains very much a part of her family. Her parents take a keen interest and play a strong supportive role in Leslie's gymnastic ambitions. But they never have assumed the sometimes arrogant behavior other parents of athletic superstars have exhibited. (Who could forget the remarks of Mark Spitz' father after the 1972 Olympics: "You mean the gold medals we won!" and "Swimming isn't impor-



Far left: Leslie Wolfsberger practices on the balance beam before the Olympics.

Center: With the Olympics only days away, Leslie takes a break in the California gym near her home.

Left: Leslie set her sights on the Olympics when she was seven, and after a decade of practice and competition, made it.

tant, winning is!")

The naturalness and closeness of the Wolfsberger family is rather disarming. Joe Revell, who photographed them for this article, expected to walk into a hotbed of hypertensive parents and smoldering sibling rivalries. The relaxed home atmosphere left Revell shaking his head: "Well, they're not at all what I thought they'd be. I really liked them!"

On first meeting Leslie, it's hard to believe the 5-foot-3, 112-pound teenager is the same girl who's just finished a fearless practice session of leaping, flying, bounding and vaulting. A low-key, quiet and unassuming girl, her posture and carriage never collapse into a teenage slump. She moves smoothly and with an almost cat-like poise and precision.

When she performs, though, her normal ingenuous expression can switch to the haughty demeanor of a prima ballerina as she executes a ballet routine, or lock into a pained grimace as she struggles through a difficult maneuver on the uneven parallel bars. But away from the mats and equipment, she is shy. "This is the hard part," she

says, as a reporter approaches her.

Gymnastics is her life. There are few friends outside of it. Her days at school are abbreviated so she can leave for practice at noon. And she says, wistfully, "I guess I don't really have any hobbies. There just isn't time for them."

When asked if gymnastics interferes with her friendships with boys, Leslie wryly shoots back her question/answer: "What boys?" (A UCLA student faithfully attended her performances at the Olympic trials in Los Angeles. He even called her to say how much he admired her. But, she adds ruefully, "that's all there was to it.")

The most important man in Leslie's life is her father, Dick. A bear-like 6-footer, he maintains a steadfastness amidst the turmoil of competition and pressure that makes the Rock of Gibraltar look like a rolling stone. Always encouraging, he offsets the tension with his calm attitude and perceptive understanding of the people and the politics of gymnastics. (One year, he even coached her himself. Another time, he hastily sewed braid on a leotard he thought too plain just

before a performance.)

The Wolfsbergers say they've always tried to get Leslie the best coaching available. That, along with extra expenses for cars, gasoline, leotards and travel, has resulted in their spending about \$15,000 for Leslie's gymnastics in the last 10 years.

Lois drove 100 miles a day five to six days a week for 3½ years before Leslie got a driver's license. A bright and enthusiastic mother, she explains that all this driving was to take Leslie from their Torrance, Calif., home to the SCAT (Southern California Acrobatic Team) gymnasium in Westminster 25 miles away. It was over and back at noon, over and back at 8 or 9 p.m.

The driving sessions might be followed by a massage of Leslie's aching muscles or a hotpack application — skills Louis developed as a registered nurse — or simply by conversation. Anything but a pushy stage mother, Lois gives the impression that chauffeuring her children is a privilege, not a penance.

Lois' commitment to motherhood as a full-time career probably would leave Gloria Steinem gasping: "I feel

fortunate that I have not had to work, that I have a husband who can support us comfortably and that I can participate in our children's activities."

As director of the Air Force's Titan III program at the AF Space and Missile Systems Organization in Los Angeles, Colonel Wolfsberger travels frequently. Yet he tries to watch Leslie compete whenever possible. He chose their house in Torrance because it was midway between his office and the SCAT gym at the time. (Later, SCAT moved 15 miles further away.)

Though Leslie has gotten a lot of time and attention from her parents, her sisters, Sandy, 21, and Cory, 13, don't feel left out or slighted.

Sandy, a senior at UCLA, once was Washington, D.C.'s first runner-up in a Miss Teenage America pageant. She hopes to obtain a master's degree and a career in public health when she graduates from college. "I'd never be able to take the pressure of competition that Leslie has to," says Sandy. "I don't know how she stands it."

Cory, an amiable and bouncy seventh-grader, takes gymnastic classes at SCAT and cheerily states that she's not in Leslie's class as a gymnast.

Both sisters are proud of Leslie, though they occasionally exchange the usual sisterly barbs ("Who's the prima donna around here?" "Why do I have to do everything?"). Leslie and Cory share a medal-and-souvenir-jammed room in the Wolfsberger's sunny yellow "California custom" home. Leslie sleeps on the top bunk. "If I fall out, I have a better chance of landing correctly," she laughs.

Like most military families, the Wolfsbergers find a source of strength in their special status. They rely a great deal on each other and have learned to live from day to day, since they never know what tomorrow will bring. Fortunately, Dick's career has been relatively stable, and the moves have not been too numerous.

The family was stationed in Los Angeles in the early Sixties when Leslie, then a rambunctious four-year-old, announced she wanted to be in the circus. "She spent three-quarters of her day standing on her head or doing flips. I saw more of her panties than I did of her face. I knew she was unusually limber," says Lois.

Fearful that Leslie might injure herself, the Wolfsbergers enrolled her in an acrobatic dancing class. Soon she was performing in local shows, and then she trained in the Los Angeles Athletic Club.

While Dick was in the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Va., Leslie continued her lessons, appearing in a show with the men's team at Old Dominion College. A few years later, Dick moved on to the Pentagon. Leslie

joined a gymnastic team 20 miles from their home. She won many awards as a junior gymnast until the Wolfsbergers were transferred back to Los Angeles in 1972.

At the SCAT academy, home of Cathy Rigby Mason, a 1972 Olympic team member, Leslie soon received national recognition. Coached by intense, demanding Scott Crouse, 26, Leslie moved from 13th place in Class I in 1973 to seventh place in Elite Nationals in 1975. In 1975 she won top honors on the uneven parallel bars. In 1976 she was third in the Elite Nationals and again was uneven parallel bars champion.

As the Olympics approached, the pressures of competition in the year from 1975 to 1976 increased. The physical rigors, the long hours of practice, the nagging fear of falling from the bars or bobbling on the beam can take their toll. But Leslie has her own way of coping.

"I concentrate on doing the routine as best I can. I try not to think about the score I have to make to place or to worry about falling. I just think about

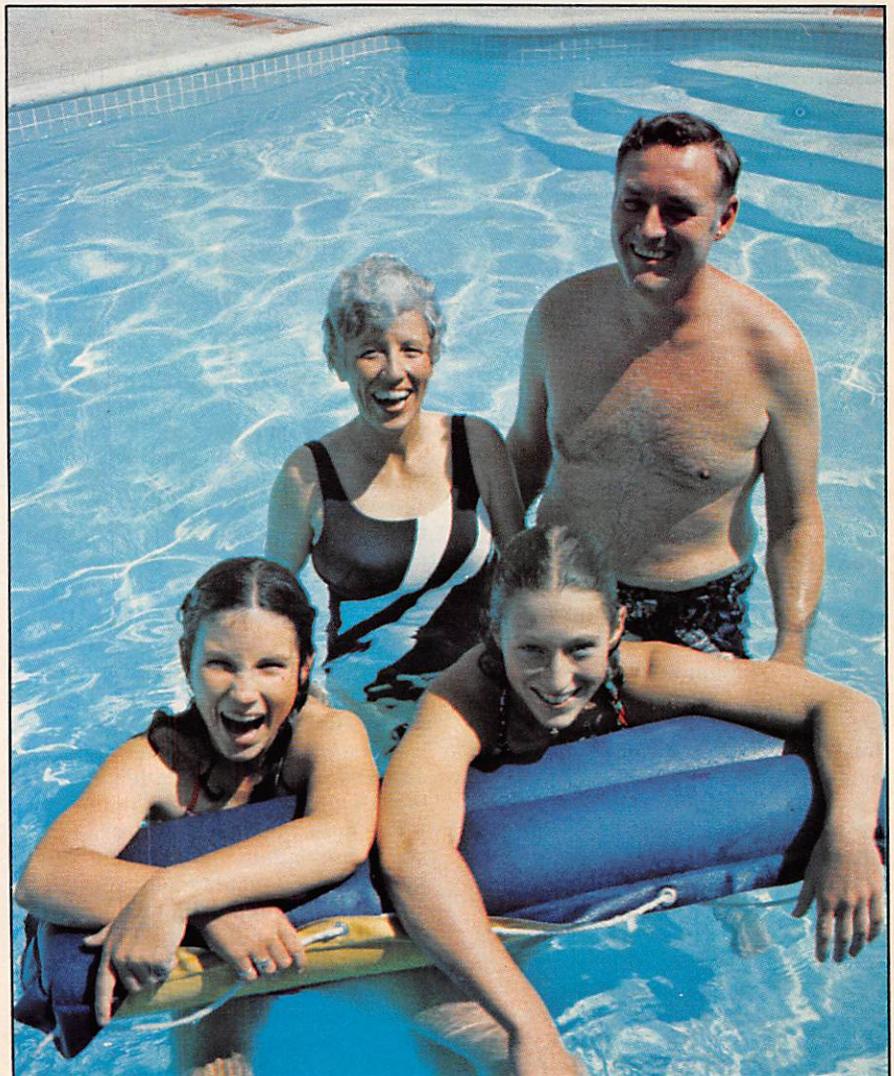
doing each part of the routine correctly. As I go along, I get a feeling that I'm on, or doing well, and that helps," she explains. But a case of the jitters can strike even the most seasoned performer. Olga Korbut proved that at Montreal. Gymnastics never gets easier.

"There must be an easier sport," says Dick at the SCAT gym before the Olympics. Thuds and slaps resounded as Leslie's body bounced against the bars, chalk dust drifting down on the equipment.

Leslie is attempting a difficult aerial dismount with rotation from the balance beam when she falls, splat, on the mat. She resolutely climbs back up on the beam, tries, and falls again and again. She ignores the jarring landings until she has mastered the trick. The repetition seems endless as she strives to perfect each little nuance of her routine.

"Point your damn feet!" yells Scott Crouse, his equilibrium lost. "Thousands of dollars have been spent on research of the correct way to do this,

See page 24



Leslie Wolfsberger's father and mother, Dick and Lois, join her and sister Cory, 13, for a dip in the family pool in Torrance, Calif.

Leslie Wolfsberger

From page 22

and your goddamn arms are bent!"

Scott's own gymnastic participation at California State University, Fullerton, was terminated abruptly when he broke his neck. Though a perfectionist about technique, he believes the role of a coach supersedes that of a technical instructor.

"The coach," he says, "must deal in the intangibles such as psychology, tension, pain thresholds, and pressure. He must develop self-reliance in the athlete — who must try for ultimacy — for all limitation is self-imposed." Leslie puts it more succinctly: "Some days I feel like a robot, or maybe a prize race horse in training."

Leslie also is coached on the beam and in her floor exercise by Zulema Diaz, a competitor in the 1968 Olympic games and several times Cuban national champion who trained in Russia. However, Scott believes he effected Leslie's move up the gymnastic scale.

He says that any mistakes Leslie makes are her own, such as when she fell off the balance beam in the qualifying trials for the 1975 Pan-American Games, thus just missing a place on the U.S. team last October. But Leslie did compete in another of the key pre-Olympic competitions, a meet early last May in Hamburg, Germany.

The meet was important because it qualified the U.S. for the Olympics. Substituting for an injured team member after a hasty "first flight out" to Germany from Los Angeles, she competed without a warm-up. Leslie placed 11th out of 75 and aided the U.S. team to a first-place finish.

But a few days later came the most crucial test of all, the Olympic trials in Los Angeles in mid-May. The 26 top women gymnasts in the U.S. competed for the six berths, plus one alternate slot, on the Olympic team. Leslie's chances looked bad when a spill off the balance beam put her in 26th place after two events.

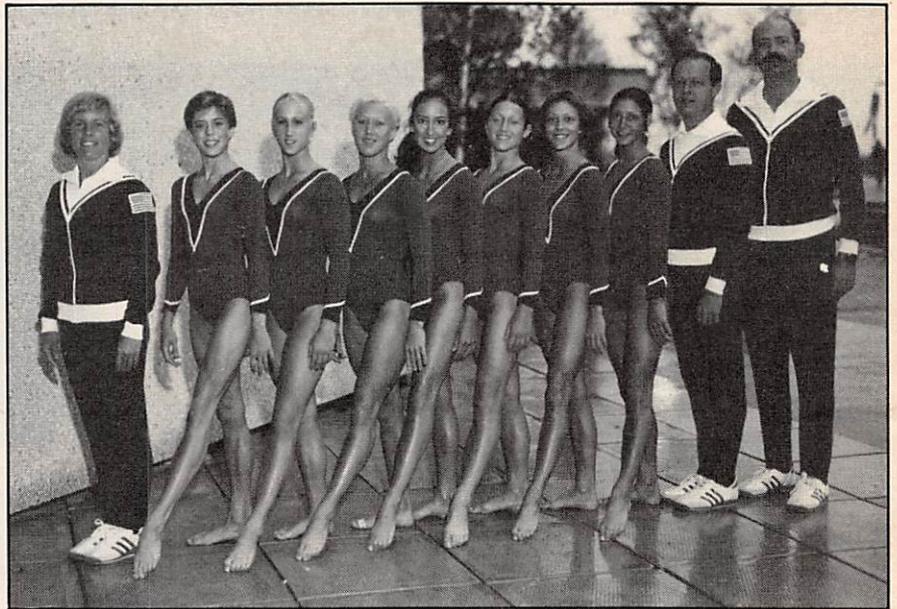
"My heart was in my mouth," Lois says. "Leslie later told me she felt her whole life was going down the tubes." But Leslie recovered and was tied for eighth after eight events. Moving steadily ahead each day, Leslie kept her confidence, and seemed to almost relax under the mounting pressure.

Then she received a 9.6 on her floor exercise and catapulted into a fifth-place tie. "I cried right there!" says Leslie. "I'm not sure anything can match that pressure — not even the Olympics." The final scores of the 26 competitors in the Olympic trials after three days and four repetitions of the four events ranged from 150.05 to 149.35 — a spread of less than one point.

The day after the trials were over,

ABC-TV aired a special on Leslie's perseverance in gaining a place on the team. Then came a brief break when Leslie had a few days to relax in her bikini by the family pool. But in the midst of visiting with her sisters and acknowledging congratulatory telegrams from family friends, ABC-TV filmed more interviews. And Torrance High School, proud of its celebrity, staged an all-school celebration in Leslie's honor.

"I used to see Leslie in the halls," recalls Shari Baker, 1976 valedictorian and another military brat who helped organize the event. "But we never really talked. She was always alone, never able to participate in any school activities. I realize now why she had to



Members of the sixth-place U.S. Women's Gymnastic Team at the 1976 Olympics in Montreal were (from left) Dale E. Flansaa, coach, Colleen Casey, Jodi Yocum, Kim Chace, Carrie Englert, Leslie Wolfsberger, Kathy Howard, Debra Willcox, Rodney C. Hill, manager, and Arthur L. Maddox, pianist. (U.S. Olympic Committee photo)

make these sacrifices."

On June 19, Leslie left Torrance for three weeks at the Olympic training camp in Plattsburgh, N. Y. She honed her routines in 9-2 practice sessions, and enjoyed outings on a yacht, dinner parties and hairstyling demonstrations.

At Plattsburgh the women forged a sense of team unity. They learned to compete with, not against, each other. Whether this "nationalization" of the competition is desirable can be debated. This is especially true in view of the international politics that marred the 1976 Olympics.

But the emphasis on politics didn't bother Leslie and the other U.S. women gymnasts. Contrary to press reports, they were not intimidated by the success of the Russian and Romanian gymnasts. "They are gymnasts, just as I am," says Leslie. "We had expected them to lead the competition,

and of course they did. The papers stated that most of the U.S. team took a fall off the balance beam because we were nervous about their scores. Actually, it happened because we didn't settle down after our own high scores on the bars."

The world may have seen the contest as the Nadia-Olga show, but the other competitors did not. Leslie, who would be 21 if she competes in the 1980 Olympics, was particularly impressed by Ludmilla Tourischeva, who at 23 was dubbed "Grandma" by one reporter.

After the Olympics, Leslie and her teammates got together again for a two-week tour of mainland China. The trip was sponsored by the International Gymnastics Federation, as was

another trip to South Africa.

What is in the future for Leslie? After her long years of preparation for the 1976 Olympics, Leslie says many people are interested only in whether or not she will be going to the 1980 Olympics in Moscow. Her answer now is that she plans to continue her punishing schedule of practice through her senior year in high school.

She probably will participate in the World Games in France in 1978. And soon she must decide whether she should commit herself to more international competition or go to college. "I'm going to put off that decision as long as I can," says Leslie. "In the meantime, I just want to enjoy my memories of Montreal."

Was it all worth it? Leslie's reply was unequivocal. "Oh, yes! I'll never forget the Olympics!" For Leslie Wolfsberger, a 10-year dream had come true. □

EASY DOES IT

Make up a batch of Play Clay and turn artistic for Christmas.

By Ev Sprowl

This is a simple and inexpensive recipe for making presents for other people or goodies to keep yourself. It's as easy to stir up as a potful of mashed potatoes, but you get bracelets, rings, flowerpots, candlesticks, picture frames and even dolly tea sets instead.

BASIC MODELING CLAY RECIPE

- 2 cups baking soda
- 1 cup corn starch
- 1 1/4 cups cold water
- assorted food coloring

In a medium saucepan stir the dry baking soda and corn starch. Add the cold water and mix into a smooth paste. Add the food color of your choice.

Now cook slowly over medium heat, stirring constantly. When it is the consistency of mashed potatoes, spoon out onto a big plate. Cover it all with a damp cloth and leave it alone until it's cool enough to handle. Now form the dough into objects you and your children fancy. Use your fingers, cookie cutters, dull knives, forks and spoons.

Let your creations dry overnight, then make them waterproof with two coats of clear nail polish. Or dip them in clear shellac or varnish, and let dry on newspapers.

If you don't want to use all the clay at one sitting, store the leftover in the refrigerator. Put it in a plastic bag or glass jar and label it so you know it isn't cookie dough. If the children think it is and eat it, it won't hurt them, but it isn't likely they'll want much. The taste isn't exactly gourmet.

More ideas of things to make are: Christmas tree decorations, a Nativity scene, pencil holders, paperweights, shade pulls and book ends. Still more suggestions can be had by sending for a free pamphlet, "Move Over, Michelangelo," from Church & Dwight Co., Inc., Dept. ATPC, Two Pennsylvania Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10001.

Too permanent press — If you left the laundry in the dryer too long and now it's a nest of wrinkles, just toss a damp bath towel in with it. Let the dryer run for five minutes, then quickly hang the clothes up. The wrinkles will have disappeared.

Undo a dirty iron — Some waters leave a dark crusty residue on the underside of the iron. To budge it, make a damp paste with baking soda and water and rub it on the iron with a

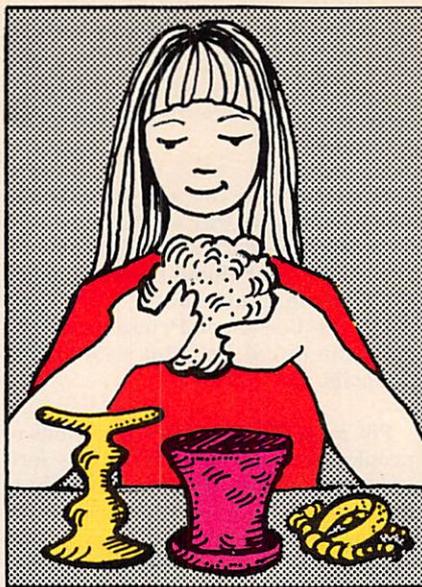


Illustration by Marlena Keenan

cloth. It will act like a special scouring powder.

Packing it in — Two pieces of luggage are all anyone needs for a two-day or a two-month trip. Experienced travelers find they can get more in a Pullman-style bag than in the fold-over sort of suitcase. For your second bag, choose a small one-nighter, a large makeup case or, for the boys, a roomy duffel bag.

Transfer cosmetics and shaving gear from heavy containers to lightweight plastic ones. Be sure the tops of spillables are screwed on tightly or you'll find your socks smelling like shaving lotion.

Put your identification in two places on each bag. That is, attach a tag outside, and put your name and address somewhere inside.

Safer safety matches — The Consumer Product Safety Commission wants manufacturers to improve the common match. For instance, burn-out time. It seems the average safety match stays lit for 25 seconds. One new match being developed is coated with a fire-retardant chemical that automatically tapers heat output after 8 seconds and extinguishes it altogether after 15 seconds.

Another company is working on a new style cover that's hard to open, like those child-proof medicine bottles. The day of the gentleman who gracefully produces a light for a lady is fast disappearing.

My little pinafore — Aprons are high fashion news and the party doesn't have to be in the kitchen for you to wear one. Butcher aprons date back to

the country store meat market but designers give them femininity by wrapping them from the back, with a sash in front. Artists' smocks and auto mechanics' frocks made of khaki and olive drab get dressy with a fancy wide belt around the middle. Worn with a turtleneck sweater or tiny tee-shirt, plus pants or a long skirt, the butcher apron becomes a gala evening costume.

Candle tips and drips — there's an old belief that the candle symbolizes life. Thus the warning not to "burn the candle at both ends." We tried it and found it doesn't work. One end goes out and both ends drip all over the tablecloth.

To get wax out in a case like this, put a paper towel on your ironing board, then put the cloth, wax side down, on the paper and run a warm iron over the top. The wax should melt off onto the paper.

Avoid warped candles by storing them flat and out of window light. The day you plan to burn them, place candles in the refrigerator or freezer. This makes them burn more evenly and more slowly.

Scented candles lose all their fragrance after sitting in the air for any length of time. To find out if your candles will still smell sweetly when you burn them, scratch first with a pin or fingernail and sniff closely. If there's no hint of scent, the fragrance has flown.

No-stick snow shovel — Coat your snow shovel with household liquid floor wax before you start the hated task of cleaning the walk. The snow won't stick to the shovel or the wax.

Did you know?

... that raisins in America were invented by accident? And every raisin grown here comes from just one place? It's the San Joaquin Valley, California. There, in 1873, they had a long hot spell. Nobody felt like picking grapes so some were left too long on the vine. They withered and shriveled and turned brown. But one day someone tasted the abandoned little things and found they were made sweet and chewy. From then on they made raisins on purpose, by drying them in the sun or inside in hot ovens.

Raisins can be elusive when under the knife, so if a recipe calls for chopped raisins, here's a shortcut: freeze the amount you need, oil the blades and jar of your blender and add the raisins, a few at a time, until they're all chopped to bits