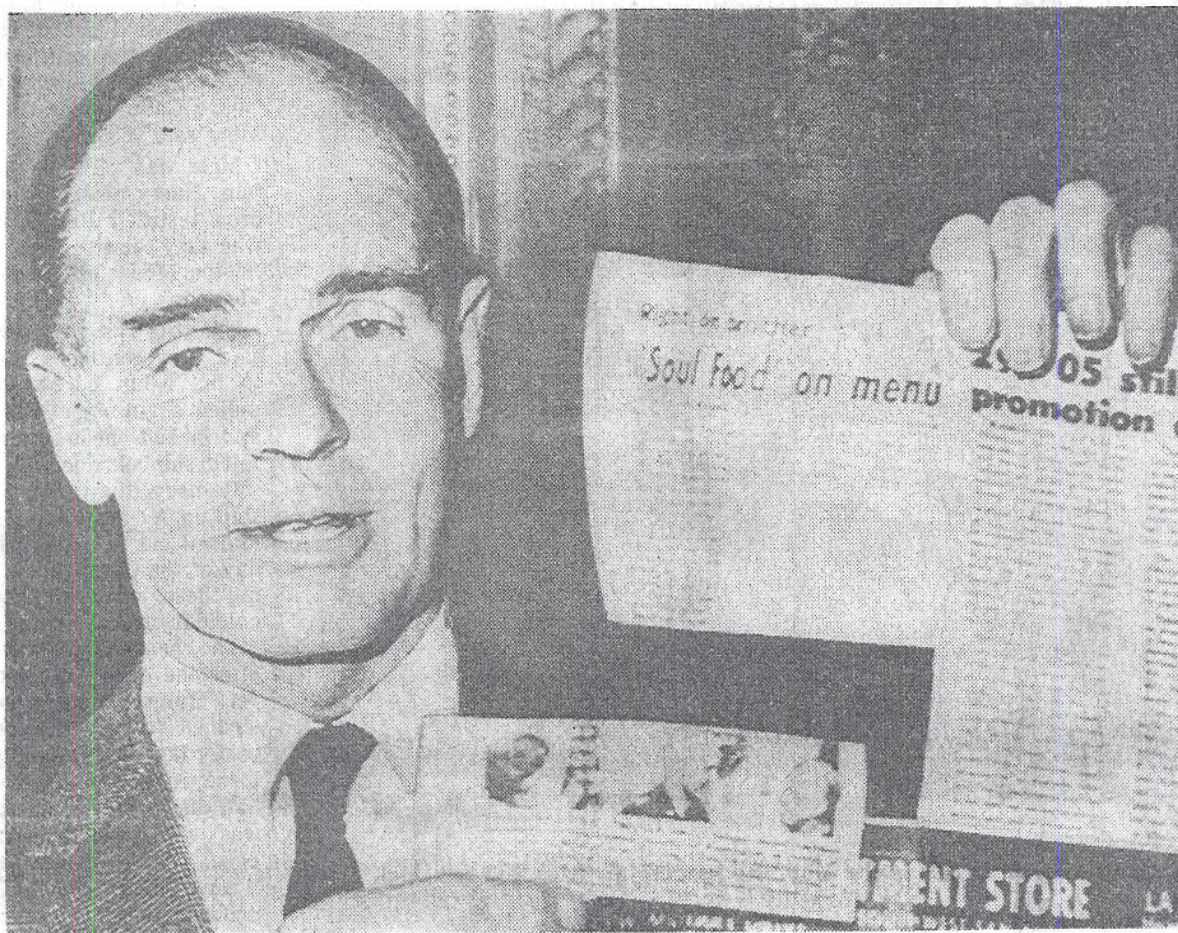


Editing by Razor



AP Wirephoto

Senator William Proxmire held up the general's photo eliminated from 10,000 copies

10,000 Newspapers Snipped

Associated Press

Washington

A Senator has demanded an official explanation of why 15 airmen with 15 razor blades spent a full day cutting 10,000 holes in 10,000 newspapers because "someone didn't like" the way a general's picture was displayed.

When the August 7 edition of the Talespinner, the base newspaper at Lackland Air Force Base, Tex., was distributed there was an unexplained hole, three columns wide and 1½ inches deep,

neatly carved in the center of Page 5.

An official spokesman for the base public information office was quoted in a Texas newspaper as saying the space had been occupied by a badly cropped photograph of Major General John S. Samuel, Lackland's commander, which was "very inappropriate for a general."

The photograph showed Samuel receiving the Legion of Merit from Lieutenant General Arthur W. Oberbeck, director of the Air Force's Weap-

See Back Page

From Page 1

ons Systems Evaluation Group. It was cropped narrowly, displaying views of the heads of the two generals and that of Samuel's wife.

Oberbeck's three stars could not be seen.

The spokesman said it was impossible to reprint the page and, "The only avenue open to us was to cut out the picture."

GENERAL

He said the general "in no way" influenced the decision and wasn't told about it until after Operation Razor Blade had begun.

The objectionable photograph and its caption were placed between a bottom-of-the-page advertisement for blue jeans and an article telling of the introduction of "soul food" in the base's mess halls.

Senator William Proxmire, complaining of the incident in a letter to Secretary of the Air Force Robert C. Seamans Jr., said, "If these facts are accurate, I think this was a violation of freedom of the press and a waste of the taxpayer's money."

LETTER

In a letter to Proxmire, a Lackland airman told of the incident and said, "The effect, in addition to the deprecation of the base through the distribution of a newspaper containing an unexplained hole, has been the personal embarrassment of the commanding general, the illegal mutilation of 10,000 copies of the base newspaper which is the property of a civilian publisher, and the disillusionment of the information office staff.

"The irrationality which led to this exercise in inanity is extremely difficult to explain . . ." Proxmire's correspondent said.

"The bizarre day," he said, "began when a senior noncommissioned officer judged a photograph of a general to be 'inappropriately' cropped.

"In a rage, the NCO publicly dismissed the assistant editor and ordered all office personnel to participate in the razor blade operation to the exclusion of all productive activity," he added.