

L.T.-OLDS . MONDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1962

(L.T. on South Sea Islands, Antarctica, Asia, Europe trip. Bc. given by Doug Edwards of CBS.)

GOOD EVENING :

Cuban Premier Fidel Castro today tacked, what he called, "a Christmas bonus" onto his agreement to free the invasion prisoners. He said that one thousand of the prisoners' relatives could leave Cuba for the United States aboard the freighter, "African Pilot", which brought part of the fifty-three million dollars in ransom supplies to Havana. They were given permission to leave within forty-eight hours.

Castro, however, made no mention of a possible Christmas gift of freedom for twenty-three United States citizens who were captured during the unsuccessful Bay of Pigs invasion.

Meanwhile, the seventh plane-load of ransomed prisoners landed today at Homestead Air Force Base near Miami. Earlier, there had been an unexplained lapse of more than five

hours before the plane departed Cuba with the biggest load of captives yet - one hundred and seventy-five. This brings to eight hundred and nineteen the total number of prisoners who have been flown out, and about two hundred and ninety-six are still awaiting the next planes.

In another robbery, this one in Chicago, two gunmen seized a bank employee at a street corner and grabbed a bag of registered mail containing deposits. The amount of money in the bag was not immediately disclosed.

ROBBERY

Three bandits, carrying sawed-off shotguns, staged a Christmas Eve robbery in San Diego, California, today and fled with nearly sixty-one thousand dollars in cash, taking along the bank manager as a hostage. But the manager later was released unharmed three miles outside San Diego, where the getaway car was abandoned.

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LONGSHOREMEN

Seventy-five thousand Longshoremen, on strike at seaports from Maine to Texas, today claimed the walkout is proving one hundred per cent effective. But the ship owners termed it a "needless and paralyzing strike", which could have been avoided. Some fifty thousand members of the Seamen's Union also announced that they will honor the picket lines of the Longshoremen, and the nation's railroads have placed a total embargo on the flow of thousands of tons of cargo into the seaport cities.

NEGRO STUDENT

Negro Student James Meredith held a news conference in Chicago today and said he will return to the University of Mississippi after the holidays, despite an act of violence against his father's home in Mississippi over the weekend. Meredith cut short his holiday visit to Chicago to take the first available flight back to his home-town of Kosciusko. The Meredith home there was pierced by three shotgun blasts yesterday while the student's parents and sister were inside. However, all escaped injury. Police, investigating the incident, said the information so far is that a car full of people drove up to the house, and then fled after the shots were fired.

INTRO. TO L.T.

The South Pole seems an appropriate place for a Christmas message -- from Lowell Thomas. Lowell, have you any messages, or ideas, for us on this Christmas Eve?

CHRISTMAS

I have an idea Doug. Wonder if you and Dick and our listeners will agree.

Since World War Two mankind as we all know, has been in motion as never before. Hundreds of thousands fleeing from behind the Iron Curtain. Why don't we talk Santa Claus into moving from the North Pole to the South Pole. With his reindeer of course. All around the North Pole, as you know, there's nothing but empty ocean - a lot of moving ice and open water. No proper place for Santa and his workshop. Lowell Jr. and the eleven American scientists and six polar bear who were marooned on that Ice Island, adrift in the Arctic Ocean north of Siberia last April, they might disagree. But whenever I enter one of these tunnels in the ice down here at the South Pole I expect at any moment to come upon Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, Donner and Blitzen, and all the others -

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there in their stalls, happily munching away on lichens flown down by our Antarctic Navy Airlift and the Air Force too, the way that I came in a huge Hercules C -- 130 on skis. And when I turn a corner in one of these ice tunnels I expect to come upon Santa and his workers, turning out toys and singing a Walt Disney song. There's plenty of room for Santa and his reindeer and his sleighs to drive in and out of these tunnels where our scientists live deep in the ice right at the South Pole. Or in another under ice village that we have. A new one that is eight hundred miles northeast of here. It's called The New Byrd Station. Come to think of it with all the layers of extra warm padded clothing that everybody wears here in the Antarctic, Admiral Tyree looks like Santa Claus. So maybe Santa already is here. Maybe Admiral Tyree with his laughing

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eyes and his Antarctic squint, maybe he's Santa Claus.

As Ed Murrow used to say - "that's my thought for the day".

So long.

FOLLOW L.T.

That's a good thought, Lowell, the idea of transferring Santa's headquarters from the North to the South Pole. And it's something likely to fire the imagination of the youngsters back here at home as they prepare for Santa's arrival tonight.

Merry Christmas to you, Lowell, and to everybody at the South Pole.

SOVIET

Soviet rocket maneuvers in the Arctic neared their scheduled Christmas Day end today, along with speculation that Premier Khrushchev may call a unilateral halt to Soviet nuclear tests.

Western observers believe he may make such an announcement. Hoping to get a similar declaration from the Western powers. The Allies have said, however, they will consider no such verbal agreement as binding.

The U.S. Atomic Energy Commission in Washington has announced at least four Soviet nuclear blasts in the Arctic since the maneuvers began, December Fifteenth.

POPE

Pope John celebrated Christmas Eve Mass tonight -- the fifth of his reign -- and he dedicated it to the persecuted, the old, the sick and the lonely. He gave a blessing to all the "human family", and he said the birth of Christ was for "us and our salvation." His message was broadcast by Vatican Radio, as usual.

New York's Francis Cardinal Spellman has arrived in Saigon, Viet Nam to spend Christmas touring the jungles by helicopter despite a rising toll of American dead and wounded in the war against the Communist guerrillas.

Today, the latest incident occurred when an American army captain flying in a South Vietnamese observation plane suffered two bullet wounds and a broken arm when Communist ground-fire downed the plane.

CONGO

In the Congo, Katanga gendarmes forced down a U.N. helicopter with ground fire during a clash with U.N. Ethiopian troops today. And in New York, U.N. headquarters warned that it will not again tolerate such outrages.

HOFFA

Here at home, the Justice Department is waiting for the outcome of a jury-tampering investigation in Nashville, Tennessee, before deciding the next step in the move against Teamster President James Hoffa. A federal judge has ordered a probe of alleged attempts by Hoffa associates to try to influence two members of the jury that tried the Union leader on charges of violation of the Taft-Hartley Act.

Here's Dick Noel with a Noel message.

CIVIL WAR

Here's a historic note in the Christmas Eve news.

A check of Veterans Administration records in Washington showed today that Civil War pensions have cost the government more than eight billion, two hundred million dollars, and the end is not in sight.

The last veteran of the Union Army died in Nineteen Fifty-Six, and the last Confederate veteran died three years ago this month. But at the start of the current fiscal year last July, more than twenty-eight hundred Civil War widows and other dependents were still receiving government aid ranging from sixty five to seventy-three dollars a month.

If records of earlier wars can be taken as reliable indicators, it will be close to the year Two Thousand before the last Civil War pension payment is made. A spokesman for the Veterans Administration offered an explanation for the long survival periods of Civil War widows. He said many veterans drifted West after the Civil War and, when they came back East with a good supply of gold, they weren't interested in women

their own age -- they were looking for young girls. And, times being anything but prosperous at the turn of the century, the young girls were looking for them.

Good night, and Merry Christmas everybody -- I'll be back tomorrow.