

SHIPWRECK

L.T. - P. G. Jones, Dec 22, 1952

The Christmas disaster of shipwreck off the coast of Lebanon ended today - with glorious exploits of courage and seamanship by a hero of the eastern mediterranean. The story was one of mounting terror, heartbreak, ^{and} despair. Then - the appearance of Captain Radwan Balpajy, a sailor of the Lebanese coast.

The French liner, with three hundred and eighteen aboard, ran aground on the reef in a storm. Only two hundred yards from shore; - but those two hundred yards were a boiling swirl of surf and vicious currents. The passengers included a large number of pilgrims bound for ^{The} Holy Land for Christmas.


They were on the wreck all day yesterday and last night - with no sign of rescue. No craft could venture into the raging seas that were battering the liner on the reef. The vessel was breaking up, cracking in two.

On the deck, a Catholic priest said mass,

and all gathered around him -- Catholics, protestants,
moslems. They united in prayer.

This morning, rescue attempts were made - but no craft could get through the lashing waves. Panic broke out aboard the wreck, and seventy people jumped over the side - in a desperate effort to swim ashore. Fifty-five made it. The other fifteen perished. In all twenty-six lives were lost in the shipwreck. Aboard, more than two hundred remained - including women and children.

That was the state of affairs at one o'clock this afternoon, when - Captain Radwan Balpajy appeared.

The Lebanese sailor had a motor launch, and there he was - navigating his craft through the breakers. It seemed impossible that he could make it - but he did. He got his tossing board ⁺ alongside the wreck, and moored it there. A rope ladder was lowered, and fifty people climbed down - all the boat could carry. Several were women carrying small children - and that made it doubly 

difficult. The Lebanese took his boatload of survivors to safety, navigating with all the skill of a coastal mariner who knows every shoal and current.

A couple of hours later, with several volunteers to aid him, he was back again, and took off another boatload. Then he returned, once more, for life-saving trip number three.

His brother came with a smaller boat, and rescued a dozen. But, trying to make a second trip, his boat capsized - and he was just able to get out alive.

By now, darkness was at hand - and the rescue work seemed ~~in~~ at an end ~~is~~ for the day. There were still forty aboard ~~the wreck~~. Forty French sailors - and it looked bad for them. They could hardly survive aboard the wreck for another night.

A British airplane flew over, and dropped a cable - which was secured from the vessel to the shore. The remaining survivors were prepared to jump into the sea, and try to make their way along

the cable, hand over hand. Desperate business, in the still boiling surf - and the prospect was that many would be lost.

But there he was again - that Lebanese sailor. The forty aboard the wreck let out a tremendous yell of joy, as they saw Balpajy in his launch. Coming -for still another trip. He maneuvered his motor launch, once again, to the side of the wreck - and all forty sailors climbed down, which brought the rescue to an end.

All the while, crowds ashore were cheering Captain Radwan Balpajy. Four ^{wild outbursts} ~~great outbreaks~~ of cheering - as he made those four trips to save some two hundred lives.

FRANCE

From Paris - a headline we haven't had ~~in~~ since last spring. France ~~is~~ without a government again. Time was when we expected that, every month or so, France has had seventeen different governments since the end of World War Two. But Premier Antoine Pinay was able to keep a cabinet going for nearly ten months. He resigned last night, after the national assembly voted against him on a question of controls to check inflation.

in Paris,
Today, President Auriol called in prospects to form a new cabinet. He began- with Pinay. Asking him, to try it again, *But* the business man, who runs a tannery, refused to have anything more to do with wrangling ~~politicians~~ politicians in the national assembly. He put it in these words: ~~He put it in these words~~

"On no pretext will I descend again into that lion's den."

(So the President of the Republic had to try elsewhere. *He* called in former Premier Bidault, whose popular Republican party helped in the overthrow

YUGOSLAV

The government at Rome is expected to send a strong protest to Yugoslavia - after the seizure of the twenty-five Italian fishing boats. These - rounded up by Yugoslav gunboats, and taken to the port of Pola. The latest - in a mounting dispute over fishing grounds.

In the Adriatic Sea, the waters off the Italian coast have been ~~xx~~ fished out. So the fishermen move across toward the Yugoslav side. The two countries had a fishing agreement - which, however, expired last spring. Since then, the Yugoslavs have ~~xxxx~~ established a ten mile limit, ^{inside} ~~beyond~~ which Italian fishermen are forbidden to cast their nets. So they work as close to the ten mile limit as they can. The result, a seizure of fishing boats, from time to time. The largest fleet works out of a port to the south of Venice, and the twenty-five boats now grabbed by the Yugoslavs are of that Venetian fishing fleet.

The protest from Rome will be the latest

of a series of on that same subject. Which adds to international tension - between Italy and Yugoslavia.

BRITAIN

On the news wire tonight, we have a reversal of the usual thing in international finance. We have - money coming this way. London announces a payment, to the United States government, ²/₁ one-hundred-and-eighty-one million dollars. Which includes interest on a loan, and cash due under the Marshall Plan. John Bull creates an international innovation - paying back money to Uncle Sam.

KOREA

Late news from Korea tells of a sharp attack on the road leading to Seoul -- a thousand Reds in a screaming fanatical assault. But they were beaten off - no gain. This was the first Communist assault of any consequence in days -- along the winter-bound war front.

TRUMAN

We have some advance information about events on January Twentieth. We hear, for example, that the Trumans will say their final farewell to the White House - when they step into automobiles for the inauguration^l parade. That is, they won't go back to the Presidential mansion after attending the inauguration. Instead, they'll proceed immediately to the railroad station, and take a train for Independence, Missouri, the Truman home town. So stated by Mrs. James Helm, Secretary to Mrs. Truman.

In the inaugural parade, the retiring First Lady, together with daughter Margaret, will ride with the First Lady-Elect, Mrs. Eisenhower. They'll follow the President-elect. H.S.T. makes a smiling point of ~~PKM~~ punctilio. Saying - that he won't ride with General Eisenhower, the General will ride with him. Meaning, of course, that Harry Truman will be President of the United States until the hour of noon, on January Twentieth.

Along with all this, we have a denial of reports that the Trumans have reserved a suite in a downtown Washington Hotel. Another - that they've purchased a home in the Georgetown section. Signifying an intention to stay on in Washington during the new administration. Mrs. Truman's secretary stated today -- these rumors, definitely, ~~are~~ not true.

FOLLOW TRUMAN

A late dispatch from Washington states that the inaugural ball will be held in two installments -- in two places. The demand for boxes and tickets has been so great that plans have to be changed.

The program had been to have the inaugural ball at the armory in Washington. But that isn't big enough, no one place is big enough. So a second edition of the festivities will be held simultaneously at the Uline arena.

CUDDIHY

Tonight, I want to pay my respects - to my first sponsor on the radio. R. J. Cuddihy -- head of Funk and Wagnalls, which published the old Literary Digest. He has died at the great age of ninety - after a career of curious drama in the world of publishing.

Back in the 'Seventies, a New York Irish

Catholic

lad went to work as a general utility boy in the

publishing firm established by the Reverend I. K.

his associate
Funk and A. W. Wagnalls. They got out Protestant

religious books and magazines. The boy grew up in the

firm - and, in time, became the head of Funk and

Wagnalls. All his life, a devout Roman Catholic -

but he devoted himself to Protestant publications,

and created the largest library of theological works

ever assembled for the Protestant clergy.

The singular story goes on to the Literary Digest - an old, respected periodical - which in the 'thirties, rose to a new, sudden fame. This - through the medium of public opinion polls. The Literary Digest was, I believe, the first one to make a national

reputation - with ~~xxxx~~ straw votes. My own radio debut was with a news program that featured ~~xxxx~~ those Literary Digest polls.

-When I was there-

The climax [^] was - the prohibition poll, back in the early 'thirties. Which forecast the end of the dry era.

The Literary Digest rose with its public opinion polls - and fell the same way. ^{*Some years after I had changed sponsors,*} In the

Presidential campaign of Nineteen Thirty-Six - ^{*the*} ~~when~~ ^{*Digest*} ~~the~~ straw vote went haywire. Fantastically wrong - predicting a landslide for Landon. The election producing - a stunning landslide for Franklin D. Roosevelt. That bloomer sank ^{*The*} Digest poll - and, soon after, the magazine itself *succumbed,*

But the publishing firm of Funk and ^{*that striking personality,*} Wagnalls continued on, still directed by [^] that veteran of veterans, R. J. Cuddihy.

PIZZA

Over at Naples, they had a contest about as unfair as anything you could imagine - the game rigged from start to finish. They called it - a competition between Italy and the United States, but Uncle Sam didn't have a chance - and was counted out in advance.

It all concerned - the pizza. That species of neopolitan pie made of tomatoes, cheese, anchovies and what-not -- which has been spreading, surprisingly, in these United States. The instigator of the nefarious event? - nobody else than General Dwight Eisenhower, President-elect of the United States.

It seems that General Ike made the statement that he had eaten a pizza in New York's Mulberry Street, that little Italy of old - and it was better than the Pizza he had in Naples. *He must have said that* ~~That must have been~~ during the election campaign, *making* with a bid for the Mulberry Street vote. *(Ryghow,)*

It aroused indignation in Naples, home of the Pizza-where a mighty ~~champion~~ champion appeared, hailing

the supremacy of Naples. Some people say Americans don't understand diplomacy. But who was the ^{gallant} defender of Naples? ^{Why} Admiral Carney, Commander of the American Sixth fleet, ^{now} stationed at Naples.

General Ike, until election time, was commander for Nato, over in Europe - and was, therefore, Admiral Carney's superior officer. Then. Come January Twentieth, he will be President of the United States - which will make him the Admiral's superior officer doubled in spades. ^{has} Yet Admiral Carney ^{has} defied the President-elect, and proclaimed the neopolitan to be better than the New York pizza.

So a contest was held. The most famous restaurants in Naples produced masterpieces - in competition against New York. ^{Of course} But New York was not represented - didn't even know about it, ^{hence} a sure loser!

To complete the skullduggery, we have the question - who ~~ate~~ ate the pizzas? Take a guess. Admiral Carney, and his ~~own~~ staff officers, [!] They feasted on those masterpieces of the art of pizza-making.

But you've got to give them credit for one thing.

They did invite President-elect Eisenhower to the fiesta.

P.S. He couldn't make it, Nelson - tied up doing something or other over here.

L.T. - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS BROADCAST for CBS

*Christmas
found with her* Dec. 23, 1952. (Recording time 12 min., 40 secs.)

When CBS asked me to tell a favorite yuletide story, I couldn't help thinking how, every year, I've been looking for Christmas stories. The joyful holiday has its difficulties for a newsmen on the radio - no news. That's the way it often is - Christmas the quietest news day of the year, along with Easter. The wires fill in with Yuletide items, pretty much the same one-year-after-another -- like dispatches from towns called Christmas or Santa Claus - or that new one in the Adirondacks - North Pole. Not to forget the same old stories of Christmas in the Holy Land, and so on. The difficulty is to get something different.

Today, I went back over my files, and I was surprised at what I found. There was the Christmas I had Sir Hubert Wilkins on the air - the famous Arctic and Antarctic explorer. Did he tell a heroic thriller? Not at all.

Sir Hubert Wilkins' memory went back - to an absurdity,
~~His renown is based partly on aerial exploration -~~
~~over the polar ice by plane. But one of his first~~
~~missions in the sky was a comic affair on Christmas.~~
This veteran of adventure says ^{but} there was more adventure
~~in that~~ than on any other day in his life.

With two other aeronauts, he was engaged to represent Santa Claus, ~~not on the ground, but~~ in a balloon, over London. They inflated the balloon beside a gas tank, Then ~~he~~ ^{they} climbed into the basket, and up they went. A cold, strong wind was blowing, and as they swung upward the wind ~~was blowing, and~~ ~~as they swung upward the wind~~ bumped the basket of the balloon against a high steel tower. And almost spilled them out.

"The plot of the piece" Sir Hubert Wilkins related, "was that one of us, one of the other chaps, representing Santa Claus, with his heavy load of candies and toys, was to jump - come down with a

parachute, from the clouds. The idea was to land in
- *in the heart of London,*
Hyde Park, Well, our balloon went up and up to an
altitude of five thousand feet, ^{said Sir Hubert,} We rose right through
the clouds. But the clouds were broken and we could not
tell where the park was. So suddenly, over the park -
Santa, with his pack and his parachute, jumped.

Our balloon, relieved of all that weight,
shot up ^{ward,} and the basket swung ~~to~~ violently,
Sir Hubert went on. "We grabbed the cord to release
some gas so we could come down. But the cord pulled
on a lanyard, and we were unable to let out any gas.
So up and up we shot - to an altitude of sixteen
thousand feet. On Christmas Day it is mighty cold at
sixteen thousand feet. We were ~~stuck~~ almost frozen
to death."

At that altitude the two men in the balloon
drifted across England to the sea, then back to land
again. All they could do was wait for the gas to
escape slowly. ~~There was no other way for them to get~~
down.

"We stayed up all day", the famous explorer continued "and finally, during the night, we came down and hit the ground with a bump. Over fields and across hedges that gas bag dragged us. Our basket caught in trees and ditches. Finally, our clothes torn to ribbons, our bodies scratched and bleeding from head to foot, we managed to anchor the balloon."

But what had happened to Santa Claus? What had happened to the chap who had jumped out a mile in the air, over London, with candy and toys on his back? He came down in Hyde Park all right. But because of the high wind and his awkward load, he landed -- on his head - ^{and} ~~he~~ was carried to a hospital. But the children of London got their presents.

So that was the best remembered Christmas for a world renowned ^w explorer. The North Pole and the South Pole were never anything like that.

And.....by the way.....another Christmas, on ^{my} ~~our~~ news program, ^{we} ~~we~~ had a story from a top-ranking British author - Valentine Williams. He

told of a yuletide event, famous in its time, now forgotten by all but a few. It was in the first World War, when there were still some amenities - some chivalry left from the past. Valentine Williams who had served in the British Army, described the feast of the Nativity in Nineteen Fourteen, the first Christmas in the trenches, Relating the story - in the style of a British literary man, as follows:

"December twenty-five, Nineteen Thirty four.

^ "It seemed in every way a special Christmas. The weather had been wretched, raining and snowing, with all the misery of icy mud and slush. But the night before Christmas the weather changed, and midnight was cold and dry. The French, amid General rejoicings, celebrated Midnight mass at an improvised altar in a communication trench. The celebrant in every case was one of the soldier priests in the trenches. In the British trenches there was no holly or mistletoe. The Tommies strung gay ^fgestoons of paper for decorations.

"On the enemy side" said Valentine Williams, "the Germans had brought regimental bands up to the front lines -- and, through the ^{hours}~~hours~~ of darkness, the strains of "Stille Nacht" and other German Christmas hymns drifted to us from No Man's Land, played ~~by~~ by the bands ^d and sung in chorus.

"The artillery was silent. At daybreak the German guns refrained from their customary "morning hate." It was so quiet," the author related, "that we could hear the twittering of ~~the~~ birds, as flocks of sparrows, made bold by the unaccustomed quiet, flocked to the trenches to be ~~xxxx~~ fed.

"And then" he stated, "took place a series of events, which I have always held to be the greatest tribute to the Christmas spirit ~~in~~ our age has known. The sun was up, when suddenly we saw ~~in~~ two or three gray figures amid the barbed wire entanglements. They waved friendly hands, and cried in broken English: "Merry Christmas, Tommy! Merry Christmas, Jack"!

"Before anybody realized what was happening, men from both opposing lines of trenches were scrambling into No Man's Land, laughing, cheering, singing. All along the lines figures in British khaki and German field gray kept appearing. They came to a halt midway between the trenches and faced each other, at first with suspicion, then with wonderment. Then rifles were laid aside and hands were grasped in Christmas friendship. Cigars and cigarettes were handed about, souvenirs exchanged. Clouds of tobacco smoke took the place of the smell of gun powder. English speaking Germans acted as interpreters, or the two sides made themselves understood in soldier French.


"There were jokes about the war. "The first seven years are the hardest", grinned Tommy. "England kaput", chortled Fritz. And Tommy grew gently sarcastic about the failure of the German fleet to come out and give battle.

"There was much singing. The Germans obliged again with "Stille Nacht and Tannenbaum. By special British

request they sang "Die Wacht Am Rhein" to which the Tommies responded with Tipperary.

"A battalion of Scots serenaded an outfit from Saxony with an old Scottish song beginning: "The ^{Banks and Braes} ~~Boys~~ o' Bonnie Scotland," ~~where the heather and the bluebells grew.~~" And then the Scots taught the Saxons how to sing "Auld Lang Syne."

"In one sector the British officer in command asked permission to bury a score of British dead. The German commander readily agreed, and ordered his own men to help. Britains and Germans, working side by side, ^{digging} ~~dug~~ the graves.



Then the German commander, with tears in his eyes, shook hands with the British sergeant in charge of the detachment.

"The truce continued all of Christmas Day.

The next day there was still no shooting, but neither side left the trenches. The ^{added Valentine Williams, the} morning after ~~that~~, the guns roared out again, and the work of death was resumed."

That bit of prose, by a distinguished British author, was about the finest bit of writing I ever had on my radio program.

But, now, let's go on from the sublime to the ridiculous. The ^{of the day of course is} cheery salutation ^{is} - Merry Christmas. But, one year, the news wire brought something by way of contrast - the story of the most un-Merry Christmas.

This was celebrated by two New York doctors, two brothers, Dr. Herman Zurrow and Dr. Milton Zurrow. To them, the name of Santa Claus ^S was - a pain in the ear.

The most "un-Merry Christmas" went back to the fact that, a year previously, a New York Department store had the bright idea of installing a Santa Claus telephone number for little kiddies to call. They got from four to five thousand calls a day - that year before. All the kiddies phoning Santa Claus. Which was too many, too much of a good thing. So the Department store dropped the idea for the following year.

During the intervening months, the telephone company assigned the number to somebody else. The unfortunate party was the medical office of Doctors Herman and Milton Zurrow -- they inherited the Santa Claus number.

The telephone company never suspected the kiddies would have such a good memory. But thousands of them recalled the phone number that Santa Claus had ^{the previous} ~~last~~ year. So, as the ~~25th~~ feast day approached, you can imagine what happened to the two doctors -- as Christmas time approached. Dr. Herman Zurrow said:

"Little voices at all hours of the day and night. Little voices asking for Santa Claus^S, Santa Claus^S. I thought we'd go crazy."

The two doctors put in a complaint - and the telephone company assigned them a temporary number until ~~the~~ after the holidays. But that didn't work. A lot of people, patients and would-be patients had that unlucky number, they called it, and something had to be done to distinguish between them and the little ones calling Santa Claus.

So the telephone company assigned an operator to screen the calls and let only the calls for the doctors get through. But that meant asking the question, the ~~operator~~ operator inquiring: "Do you want Dr. Zurrow -- or do you want Santa Claus?"

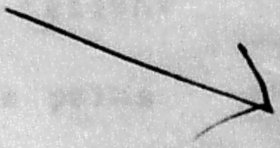
~~Which astonished a lot of patients and would be patients. Dr. Milton Zurrow said: "Patients call and wonder at being asked whether they are calling me or Santa Claus. They demand explanations, naturally. Other people are ~~is~~ curious about the Santa~~

~~Claus business, and call^{ed} the doctors asking them about
it.~~

Both of the doctors exclaimed in a duet:

"Voe the day we got that unlucky number."

~~Well, I can only wish you all the kind of
Christmas that Dr. Herman Zarrow and Dr. Milton
Zarrow did not enjoy -- a Merry Christmas.~~



CHRISTMAS - A

But all this leads me to my favorite Christmas story. It was the second year I was on the radio, and the yuletide news was especially light. I really needed a good Christmas story to tell, was lucky enough to find one. An old sentimental tale, ^{brief, but} entirely in the spirit of the feast of the Nativity. ~~So here is~~ it is!—

No yuletide is complete, without "silent night". That lovely old song is one of the prime favorites of the great day when Christmas trees shed ~~is~~ their mellow glow, and millions of children all over the world laugh their loudest. And so let's give thanks to the mice. I mean, the mice that ate through the bellows of the church organ, which Franz Bruber used to play.

One hundred and twenty four years ago Franz was the organist and choir master of a quaint church in a sleepy old town among the hills of Austria. Franz was proud of that musical instrument, although it wasn't new. No, it was a venerable and

perhaps somewhat decrepit pipe organ.

Anyway, the mice were in it. They ate through the bellows and not a peep of music could Franz extract from the instrument. This was somewhat distressing at Christmas time. It was all the more distressing because Franz Gruber's good friend, the assistant priest, came to him in a great hurry.

"Franz" cried the assistant priest, you must compose a melody at once. Christmas is here. I have just written verses for a Christmas carol. You must set them to music."

Franz read the verses that his friend had composed. They were those familiar words of "Silent Night".

Franz Gruber was impressed. He felt an immediate ~~imp~~ impulse to hurry to the old church organ, and play music for those verses his friend had written. But what good would that do? Those accursed mice had eaten the bellows, and the pipe organ would not play.

CHRISTMAS-C

You can picture Franz tearing his musician's hair. What a misfortune! And yet, we perhaps can thank those mice for the fact that we have that lovely Christmas carol "silent night". Frans couldn't compose the music for the solem pipe organ. All he could do was to sit down and write the song for two voices and a chorus, accompanied by a guitar. And that may be why the great old song is so tender and lyric. If Franz had composed it for the organ, it would probably have turned into something more majestic and stately. As it was, he had only voices and a guitar, and that means something sentimental and sweet.

There was an article in a church publication, the Homiletic Review, which related that the Christmas carol composed under such curious circumstances, had almost instantly spread far and wide.

A world ~~xxx~~ travelled German missionary told how it ~~xxx~~ was sung to him in Hindustanee, at the

CHRISTMAS-D

foot of the Himalayas. He heard negroes sing it in
on the Zambesi. In the Sudan, the Arab boys
serenaded him with the familiar homeland strains
of "Stille Nacht." Today, there is no other melody
heard half so widely over the vast ~~xxxxx~~ spaces of
continents and oceans - as "Silent night, holy night",
at Christmas time.

So let's be thankful to the mice that ate
through the bellows of an old church organ in a sleepy
Austrian village.

So, that's my favorite Christmas story!-

solong, ~~until tomorrow.~~ good night - and may
this be a happy holiday for you -
whether you are at home, or in
Korea - or wherever you are.