

L.T. - P&G. - FRIDAY, December 28, 1951

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

There's a tiny place on the Austro-Hungarian frontier called - - Nickelsdorf, a check point, where American GI's on one side, and Hungarian Red soldiers, on the other, check traffic passing along the road. Today, over on the Hungarian side, appeared four men in uniform of the United States Air Force. Red Hungarian soldiers escorted them to the line and the four walked across: Captain David Henderson, of Shawnee, Oklahoma - Captain John Swift, of Glens Falls, New York - Sgt. Jess Duff, of Spokane, Washington - Sgt. James Elan, of Kingsland, Arkansas.

Awaiting them was a party of welcome headed by the U. S. Ambassador to Austria. The greetings were warm indeed as they were taken by automobile to Vienna - where, weary but elated, they were besieged by newsmen and photographers. Captain

Henderson acted as spokesman and said "this is the happiest day of our lives."

They were pressed for a description of how they had been treated - - during forty days of Red captivity. Captain Henderson replied: "I can make no statement until I have reported to my Commanding Officer."

The newsmen noted that Captain Henderson seemed exceedingly nervous, and so did Sgt. Elam. But Captain Swift and Sgt. Duff gave no outward sign. The four appeared to be in good health, their uniforms and top-coats were clean and well-pressed.

From Vienna they were flown this evening to the base of the Twelfth Air Force in Germany, where they are scheduled to make a public statement tomorrow. Then - - to Washington to report there on what happened to them.

Shortly afterward, Washington announced - retaliation. Secretary of State Acheson ordered

that all American travel to Hungary be banned, and that the Hungarian Consulates in Cleveland and New York be closed. These are the only two the Hungarian Reds have been maintaining in this country. All an expression of American public indignation in the case of the four fliers - whose plane strayed into Red territory and who were tried and convicted of espionage, their Government forced to pay for their release.

ATOMIC

Here's a late story from London stating that the former director of the Soviet Atomic Energy Project of East Germany - - has fled to the West. The London Daily Express says he is believed to be in Washington. Earlier in the month a West Berlin newspaper reported that atomic director Colonel Astrachov had left the Soviet zone, and taken refuge in West Berlin. There was no official confirmation then, nor is there now - - of the London statement that the Soviet Atomic Expert is now in Washington.

KOREA - TRUCE

In Korea today, a spokesman for the U.N. Truce Team said: "I don't know where we go from here."

That expresses the state of affairs in the armistice negotiations, which have now come to the most critical stage since the cease-fire line was drawn thirty-two days ago. The deadlock has reached what might well be - - the breaking point.

The spokesman says (the Reds intimate that they will break off the talks, rather than yield on a question of - - rebuilding air bases.

Which would, in effect, permit them to use a truce as a means of providing bases for their jet planes - - which are notoriously short-range. With advance bases, their jet air-power would be redoubled.)

Said the American Truce Team Spokesman today: "If we were to give the Communists the right to build up their airfields, we would be in peril of losing the Korean war."

So that's the practical issue, although the

question of prisoners of war dominates emotions.

Today (the U.N. Command charged that four hundred and fifty American prisoners are known to have reached Communist camps - and are now missing.

The implication is - - atrocity.)

STARS

Today the American Astronomical Society, at Cleveland, heard about the small and the large.

Dr. Willem Luyten, Professor of Astronomy at the University of Minnesota announced the discovery of the - - smallest known star. A tiny celestial object - - a midget star, with a diameter of only thirty-one hundred miles.

It is exceedingly faint, that midget star, as might be expected. So tiny, you wonder they can see it at all - - because, like all stars, it is many millions of miles away. The answer is that the puny star is what astronomers call a - - "white dwarf." Immensely heavy, hot and bright - - a pygmy that emits a stupendous amount of light.

At the other extreme, Dr. Alfred Joy, of the Mt. Wilson Observatory in California, today told of - - a "red giant!" Enormous, but very thin in substance. Its glow a faint red - - a star that is visible only because it is so immensely large. Dr. Joy said that the "red giant", Mira is its name,

has a diameter of five hundred million miles! But it is made up entirely of gases, which are thinner than the atmosphere of the earth.

So there you have the opposite astronomical extremes of the small and the large - white dwarf and red giant.

EXPLORATION

Probably because for many long years - - most of my life - - I have been interested in exploration, and associated with it to some extent, I get large numbers of letters from young men - - and young women - - asking me whether there is any more exploring to be done.

Up here in the snowy Laurentians, on what you might call the edge of the unknown, with the FAR NORTH just beyond us, seems like an appropriate place to talk about.

I have been discussing this with one of the leading authorities on the subject, Dr. Serge Korff, one of the Directors of the world famous Explorers Club. And here are a few of our mutual thoughts on it:

During the past half century there has been a gradual shift of emphasis in exploration.

The major expeditions of today, and most of the minor ones as well go to remote places for scientific purposes. All recent Antarctic

expeditions have included meteorologists, geologists, glaciologists and oceanographers, as well as persons interested in the birds and animal life, the plants, the effects of low temperature on physiology, students of the aurora, of radio transmission conditions, of meteors and of cosmic rays. The Roncador-Zingu expedition, sponsored by the Brazilian Government to cut through the central Amazon jungle, is in the field now with a dozen different scientists at work. The Juneau Icefield Research Project of the American Geographical Society, with which I spent a little time, is another illustration of an expedition to a seldom before visited area, that included a large number of scientists.

Even when single explorers go out, they now usually do so in order to study one or more particular problems. Here again we may expect much more activity of this type in the near future.

There is no time to go any further into this at the moment. But, I may have a chance to say a

little more about it within a few days. At any rate, we have not yet reached any of the real frontiers. And, only a pessimist can maintain that there are no new fields left to conquer.

RIVER

To illustrate this, in a striking way, here is a summary of a dispatch that has just come in. It's about an expedition seeking the sources of the Orinoco River, that giant stream of northern South America. Not that the origin of the Orinoco had never been discovered before - - it had been discovered too much. Two different beginnings were assigned to the river, and that was as bad as no knowledge at all. Today we hear that eight members of this latest expedition returning to Venezuela, announced that the "true" sources were found.

The region - - one of the wildest and most remote on earth. Far in the depths of stupendous jungle, where the Green Hell of the Tropics rises high into mountains along the border of Venezuela and Brazil. That's the point! - - The source of the Orinoco has an importance political as well as geographical.

According to an old agreement on boundaries, Venezuela has title to the watershed of the Orinoco,

all the territory drained by the river. So the previous contradiction, placing the source in different localities meant also - - a boundary question. But that has now been settled, apparently, and a formal announcement will soon be made, stating just where the Orinoco begins. And - - what is Venezuela and what is Brazil?

MINE

The statement in Washington is that the coal mine horror at Frankfort, Illinois, last week was caused by electrical equipment operating in air containing explosive gas. This is given as the probable cause of the disaster that took one hundred and nineteen lives. The report is made after a two-day study by Inspectors of the Federal Bureau of Mines.

The latest - - John L. Lewis declares that the explosion was - - preventable. The president of the Coal Mine Union declares that the company knew in advance that an "abnormal" gas situation existed. That is, there was more methane gas than usual. So states John L. Lewis.

BANKHEAD

In the Tallulah Bankhead case, the jury this afternoon returned a verdict of - - guilty. They convicted Mrs. Evelyen Cronin, former maid of the actress and television star - - found her guilty of stealing more than four thousand dollars by raising Tallulah Bankhead checks. Sentence will be pronounced later.

BOY

A dispatch from Fort Meyer, Florida, states that Franklin Manar is on his way home - - back to Minneapolis. Which ends the bitter mockery of fate for a sixteen-year-old boy. Culminating - - with a final blow of the sardonic.

Frank Manar is the lad who ran away from home three weeks ago, because he tried to do a good deed, as a boy scout should. But the good deed misfired. He was driving the family car, when he saw an elderly man crumple and fall to the sidewalk. Frank was a Sea Scout - - and, only recently, he had taken a course in first aid. So he turned his car to the sidewalk - - and, in his eagerness, swung over a little too far. One wheel went up on the curb - - with Frank jumping out to do the good deed.

But passersby, who happened to take a look at this moment thought he had run down the old man. One indignant citizen took the license number of Frank's car. Another went to call the police. The boy was scared out of his wits. He broke and ran,

disappearing down the street.

The elderly man on the sidewalk recovered and said - - no, he had not been knocked down by the boy's car. He had simply fallen into a faint.

But Frank was gone - - missing from home, missing from Minneapolis. Afraid of being charged with running down a pedestrian, the boy was a fugitive. Press and radio told the story, calling on him to come home - - explaining what had happened. But Frank never heard anything of this, as he kept on traveling - - a fugitive from a good deed that had backfired.

He made his way to Florida - - where, at Fort Meyer today, the final blow descended. The police picked him up, thinking that Frank Manar was 18-year-old Kenneth Maurer, wanted in Detroit for an evil crime - - the suspected murders of his mother and sister. So poor Frank was accused of that - scared out of his wits all over again.

He told the police, pleading - - no, that

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wasn't what he was wanted for, not any double murder. All the cops had against him was running down a pedestrian in Minneapolis - - and he didn't do that either.

The police checked and found - - yes, he was the boy who had run away from that unlucky good deed. And now, Nelson, he's on his way home, everything okay.