

L.T. -BUICK, FISHER. DECEMBER 31, 1964

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

In weather-racked Northern California, daring helicopter pilots played hide-and-seek today with another advancing snowstorm. The civilian and military airmen took off during a brief break in the Arctic storm front that has pounded Humboldt and Siskiyou Countries for nearly a week. About twelve of them headed for mountain communities on the Klamath and Salmon Rivers, where some five hundred persons have been isolated now for thirteen days -- first by flood, then by snow.

But the airmen had only a few hours before visibility dropped back to zero -- little time to do much good. And the weather forecast for that area tonight is continued snow -- possibly for five more days.

PLANE

Only a few days ago, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara announced plans for development of the world's largest airplane. Today, the Defense Department awarded forty-one million dollars' worth of initial contracts for the mammoth seven hundred passenger jet transport.

Five companies will share in the preliminary work. Boeing, Douglas and Lockheed will concentrate on the plane itself. General Electric and the Pratt and Whitney Division of United Aircraft will center on development of the necessary new jet engines.

However, the forty-one million is just the first drop in what will be a very large bucket. The whole project will cost nearly two billion dollars.

But when it's done, the U.S. will have a fleet of military transports - capable of flying a whole army/^{of men} to any trouble spot on the globe - in a matter of hours.

HALLECK

That contest for the House Republican leadership is beginning to shape up as a real horse race. Supporters of Congressman Gerald R. Ford, the challenger from Michigan, today claimed to have the backing of at least eighty-one of the one hundred forty House Republicans - more than enough to put him in.

But supporters of present minority leader Charles Halleck immediately replied that their man already has at least eighty-five votes - assuring him victory.

Who's right? We'll find out Monday - at the House GOP caucus.

VIET NAM

For the fourth consecutive day, fighting in Viet Nam swirled today around the town of ~~Binh~~^{BINH} Gia.

That's the Roman Catholic refugee center - some forty miles southeast of Saigon. The battle thus becomes one of the longest since the U.S. became militarily involved in the Vietnamese war - and one of the most costly.

At latest count, the toll of casualties among South Vietnamese forces was nearly forty dead - and more than a hundred wounded or missing. More than thirty of the Communist Viet Cong were also reported dead - along with scores of wounded.

American losses in the see-saw battle were said to be eleven wounded and six missing. And according to a U.S. military spokesman, that's the heaviest American casualty list of the war - so far.

FRANCE

President Charles DeGaulle's New Year's message is not exactly a happy one - at least not for Americans.

Speaking to French newsmen tonight at Elysee Palace, DeGaulle said that France refuses to accept U.S. domination. He even went so far as to hint that - if provoked - he might withdraw all French forces from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Later in a recorded television message, he told the French people virtually the same thing. He is determined, said DeGaulle, to keep France independent politically, economically, financially and - militarily.

LONDON

That British crime wave continues unabated - and here's the latest.

While London police scoured the West End for gunmen involved in six recent shootings, three armed bandits today held up a mail truck in London's East End. They escaped with nearly ten thousand dollars worth of registered mail.

Meanwhile, Scotland Yard mobilized its entire London force to cope with the sudden outbreak of violent crime. So concerned were the British that the Yard called a special news conference. Assistant Commissioner Robert M. Bacon told reporters that the Yard deplores - that's the word he used - deplores "the apparent reckless and purposeless use of firearms".

But as of tonight, the British police force remains - unarmed.

DRINKING

A new nationwide study of tipplers ~~shows~~ shows that seventy-nine per cent of all American men drink - and sixty-three per cent of all American women. That's a four per cent increase for men, and a seven per cent increase for women, since the last ~~study~~ study in nineteen forty-six.

This year's survey was conducted by Dr. Harold A. Mulford of the University of Iowa, in co-operation with the National Opinion Research Center. And it disclosed some interesting sidelights. For instance, the highest concentration of drinkers was found among those with the best education, the best jobs and the highest status. In fact, the drinking rate among doctors, lawyers, judges and dentists was found to be virtually one hundred per cent.

However, Dr. Mulford concludes that most Americans either consume no alcohol at all - or so

DRINKING - 2

President Johnson about eight o'clock on
New Year's Eve preparing his State of the
**little - that drinking hardly constitutes a national
calamity - except perhaps on New Year's Eve.**

But there's no hint as yet to my new program
President Johnson gave in office. That was on Sunday
Monday night at nine, when he delivered his message
to the combined houses of Congress.

PRESIDENT

President Johnson spent a good part of this New Year's Eve preparing his State of the Union message. But there's no hint as yet to any new proposals the President may have to offer. That will have to wait for Monday night at nine, when he delivers his annual message to the combined Houses of Congress.

GLENN

Colonel John H. Glenn Junior, first American to orbit the earth, is retiring from the Marine Corps - this time apparently for good. A Marine Corps announcement discloses today that Colonel Glenn will receive his formal retirement papers Monday in Washington. The occasion will be marked by special ceremonies in the office of General Wallace M. Greene, the Marine Commandant.

You'll recall - Colonel Glenn originally intended to retire from the Space Program earlier this year - to run for the Senate in Ohio. However, he was forced to abandon the race because of a fall in a bathtub - and subsequently ear trouble. Now he is expected to take a job - with a soft drink company.

LIARS

Philip Strandvold, of Pilot Rock, Oregon, has been named "World's Champion Liar" ~~in~~^{of} 1964. The Liar's Club of Burlington, Wisconsin, crowned him "King Liar" today on the basis of his story about a woman who was late for everything, until the day she died. "No" said Strandvold, "she wasn't late for her own funeral, but when she arrived at those pearly gates, St. Peter had put in his first overtime".

Honorable mention ~~went~~^{goes} to Dick Philleo of Washington D.C., who wrote that he~~had~~ been around Congress all year and, as yet, still hadn't heard "a good solid lie".

HAPPY

Throughout the land tonight, Americans will break out in paper hats, noisy horns and New Year's resolutions -- most of which they won't keep. And in a few hours this year of nineteen sixty-four will inch into eternity.

Millions of persons are already celebrating the New Year. Millions more are setting off on holiday travel. Combine the two, and you get that perennial grim warning from the National Safety Council.

That's why Lowell Thomas has asked me to pass this message on to you. Drive safely. And make sure that New Year's Day is as happy at your home -- as New Year's Eve.