

Copter Pilots Sink 122 Cong Sampan

SAIGON (AP) — The U.S. Command today reported 122 Viet Cong sampans sunk in two helicopter attacks, at least 143 Communist soldiers killed in small firefights across South Vietnam in the past 24 hours, and Red mortar and rocket attacks on five South Vietnamese and American camps near Saigon.

The command said one flight of Firefly helicopters using searchlights and flares surprised a convoy of supply sampans at the mouth of the Truong Giang River 350 miles northeast of Saigon before dawn Monday.

HEAVY FIRE

Coming under heavy fire from the edge of the river, the helicopters silenced the gun bunker with rockets, then destroyed 71 of the 40-foot junks and sampans, the leader of the flight reported.

A similar helicopter strike two weeks ago surprised another convoy on the same river and sank 148 sampans.

Another U.S. Army helicopter gunship team reported it sank 51 sampans and destroyed 11 fortified positions in day-long operations about 30 miles west of Saigon Monday.

REDS ATTACK

Communist gunners fired about 200 mortar and rocket rounds into five South Vietnamese and American posts between midnight and dawn today in an arc about 25 miles northwest of Saigon on a road leading to Cambodia. Simultaneously, the Viet Cong hit one of the posts at Phuoc Hiep with a 500-man infantry attack.

Military spokesmen said one American was killed and 15 wounded and South Vietnamese units suffered light casualties. The Viet Cong lost 11 dead in the infantry attack on the post at Phuoc Hiep, which was defended by a battalion of South

Vietnamese troops supported by artillery and flareships spewing quick-firing Gatling gun shells.

PILOT MISSING

The air war over North Vietnam continued unabated, and the U.S. Command reported the loss of the 611th U.S. combat plane to gunners in North Vietnam, an Air Force F105 Thunderchief which went down Monday on a raid against the rail yard at Kep, 38 miles northeast of Hanoi.

The Air Force said the pilot was missing. Radio Hanoi claimed two U.S. planes were downed Monday and one pilot taken prisoner. The U.S. Command reported 134 missions were flown over North Vietnam despite spotty weather that covered many target areas.

MIGs BUSY

The frequently hit rail line northeast of Hanoi to Red China was hit at Kep and at Bac Le. Pilots reported many cuts in the rails but were unable to give further damage assessment because of smoke and dust.

Navy pilots from the carriers Oriskany, Constellation and Bon Homme Richard also concentrated on North Vietnam's rail

lines. One flight from the Oriskany sent up a billow of flames and smoke from a fuel dump at Don Son only 13 miles northwest of Haiphong.

Four Communist MIG21s were sighted in their busiest day in more than six weeks.

SECOND RESCUE

Three of them attempted to disrupt the rescue of a Navy flier south of Hanoi but turned back when Crusader jets tried to tangle with them. A fourth MIG was jumped near Thanh Hoa and fled when a Skyhawk jet unleashed a long-range barrage of rockets and 20mm cannon fire.

The Navy pilot, Lt. Cmdr. D. A. Verich, 35, of Laona, Wis., had hidden overnight in mountainous country below Haiphong after being shot down Sunday. His rescue by a helicopter crew from the carrier Constellation was his second after being shot down over North Vietnam in a year.

News Merger Battle Rages

WASHINGTON (AP) — Jack R. Howard, president of Scripps-Howard Newspapers, said today an antitrust exemption for merger or joint operation of financially failing papers "is vital to the health of the newspaper business."

A publisher from Chattanooga, Tenn., and a professor from Southern Illinois University challenged that view.

They spoke in testimony prepared for the Senate antitrust and monopoly subcommittee.

It is considering legislation to permit the merger or joint commercial operation of newspapers when one of the publications is classified as failing.

Roy McDonald, president and publisher of the Chattanooga News-Free Press, said no matter what name is applied to a joint newspaper operating arrangement, "it is still a monopoly and at this time, no competing media can replace it."

Bryce W. Rucker, a professor of journalism, said, "I fervently hope you will not arm powerful, wealthy men with this weapon with which they may drive the remaining independent publishers to the wall and take over their newspapers. Those giant publishers do not need your help. The small ones do."

Cons Testify Cellmates Set Deadly Blaze

MILTON, Fla. (AP) — Convicts under shotgun guard have testified that three cellmates deliberately set the prison fire that burned 37 inmates to death.

Among those who died were the three accused of setting the blaze.

As the formal inquest into the Sunday night fire at State Prison Road Camp 12 at Jay, Fla., started in Santa Rosa County Courthouse, 22 bodies sacked in olive drab body bags lay outside the old county jail awaiting positive identification.

DOOR UNLOCKED

The coroner's inquest will decide if criminal negligence or homicide was involved in the tragedy.

On the table before County Judge Mahlon McCall Monday were the prison files of all 51 men who had been in the locked and barred barracks at Camp 12. Of the 51, eight were in the county jail unharmed, six were in hospitals with burns and 37 had perished.

The convicts testified that it was about six minutes after the fire started before guard A.O. Lovett unlocked the barred "cage door" and a solid wooden door to let them flee.

SCREAMING

Lovett took the stand and testified that a smashing, shouting disturbance broke out first and he ran to toss the keys over a high barbed-wire fence to guard Richard E. Cobb, who used them to unlock the prison arsenal.

"We had to get longer guns," Lovett said.

When he saw the fire and returned, Lovett said, "I made four passes before I could open the door. It was so hot I had trouble seeing."

Convict Roy G. Regan, 26, said, "I heard the screaming. That's when I looked up and saw the whole wall was afire and it started to roll down the ceiling at me."

TRIO NAMED

Regan and the other prisoner witnesses, some of whom came to court shirtless, others with T-shirts marked by ash and smoke, called the names of the three men who they said turned the 40-by 90-foot wooden barracks into a funeral pyre.

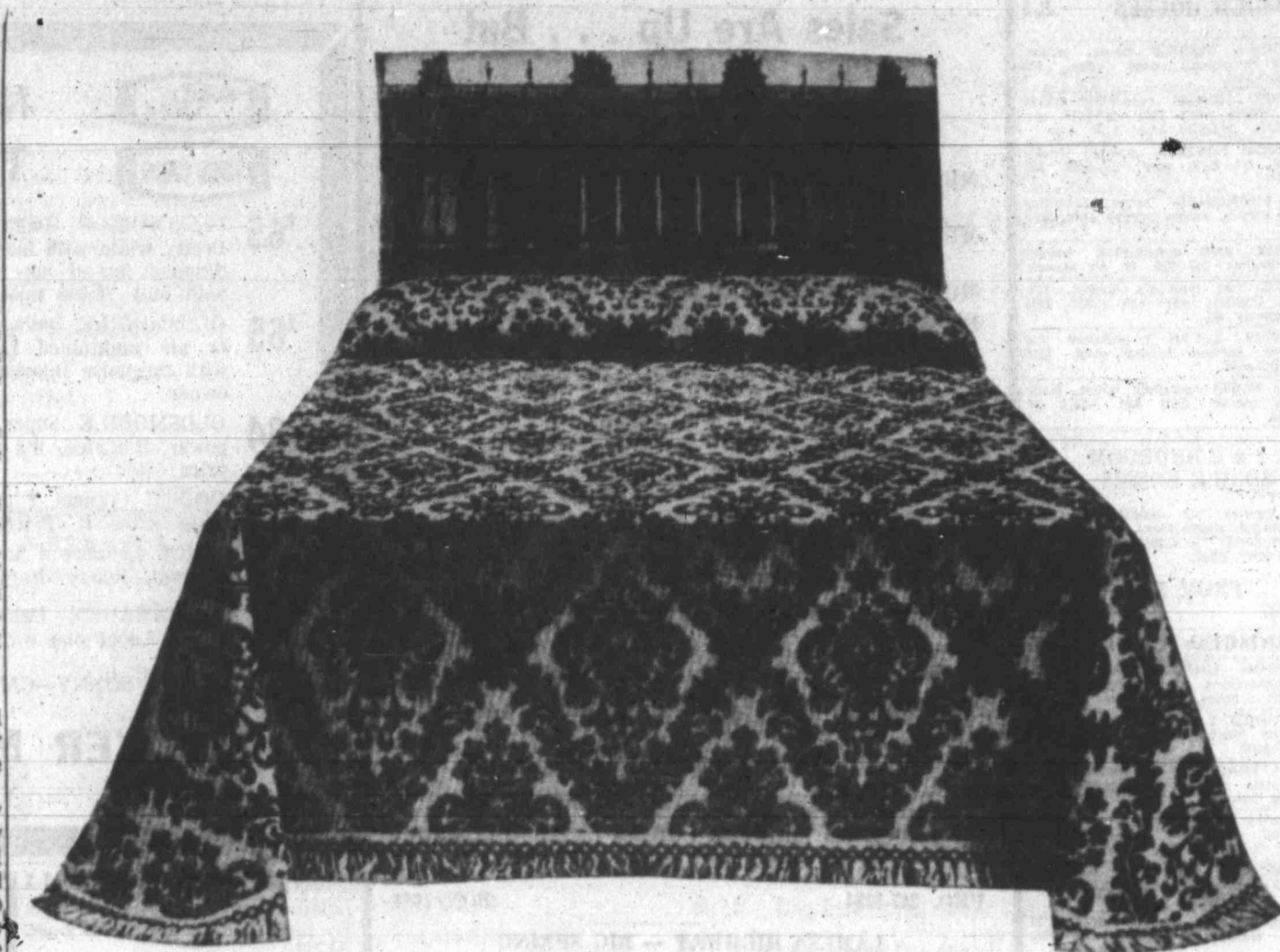
The trio who allegedly set the tragic blaze was identified to the coroner's jury as Joseph Earl Wynder, a Negro, and Thomas E. Ard and Earl Evans, both white men. All were from the Pensacola area.

Wynder was sentenced to prison from Calhoun County for grand larceny and burglary. Information on convictions of Ard and Evans was not immediately available.

BOOK SEIZED

The convict witnesses said Wynder, Ard and Evans used newspapers and toilet tissue to start their fires after a television set and fluorescent lights were smashed.

But Lovett said the resentment began when a pornographic book was confiscated from Ard.



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Chute Cut, Diver Dies

HOUSTON (AP) — William R. Nicholson, 27, of Houston, a sky diver with more than 500 jumps to his credit, was killed Monday when his parachutes failed on a 7,000-foot free-fall jump.

Gary Ward, who jumped at the same time, said Nicholson's main chute failed to open and he cut it away, the usual procedure.

Nicholson then tried to open his reserve chute, Ward said, but found the ripcord blocked by a safety cord designed to prevent its opening while the diver was on the ground.

"He just forgot to unhook the cord," Ward said.

The accident happened near suburban Braoria. Justice of the Peace R. O. Thomas of Clute ruled accidental death.

Office Closes For Funeral

The office of the Howard County tax assessor - collector was closed at 3 p.m. today to enable deputies to attend the funeral of Mrs. Viola Robinson, 61, former county tax assessor.

Mrs. Zilah LeFevre, current tax assessor - collector, pointed out that Mrs. Robinson had been a deputy for many years in the tax office and that later she served as head of the department. Many of the veteran employees of the office and of the courthouse are long-time friends of Mrs. Robinson.

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Science And You

The Pygmy Stars

—By DR. LEONARD REIFFEL

When a teacher wants to give her young charges their first lesson about stars she is very likely to start by saying something about our own sun, that huge, glowing ball to which we owe our very existence. She would probably note that the sun is a very average star, but still is incredibly large . . . so big that millions upon millions of Earths could be made of it.

Such awesome descriptions are indeed reasonable for most of the stars we know of, but the teacher could really make her students gasp if she told them about some of the stranger and rarer objects astronomers have begun to find sprinkled around the universe.

Take the so-called pygmy stars. Discovered only recently, these objects, if we're interpreting them correctly, are really quite remarkable. A recent announcement describes a pair of such stars. Each member of this pair is thought to be about the size of our moon. This may not strike you as astonishing, but remember that this is a real, live, burning star. For a

star to work, it must contain a great deal of mass, and the pygmy star I'm describing weighs as much as our sun, even though it is so small.

The evidence for this comes from a peculiar red shift of the light coming from the star. It is thought that this light is shifted to the red because of the extraordinary effects of the intense gravitational field around it. This is a phenomenon predicted by Albert Einstein in his general theory of relativity. If it is indeed the explanation for the spectacular red shift of the light from the pygmy, then it would follow that this particular star would have a density of about 16,000 tons per cubic inch. Just imagine—16,000 tons of mass crowded into a tiny little cubic inch of matter!

Pygmy stars are not the end of the line. In fact, they are rather middle-of-the-road. Another type—referred to as neutron stars—has not yet been found for sure, but many astronomers feel they will be. The density of a neutron star would be about a hundred thousand times greater than that of a pygmy star. Thus, one cubic inch of matter in the interior of a neutron star would weigh about two billion tons! Such an enormous mass crammed into such a small space becomes almost totally incomprehensible.

This density of matter approaches that found inside the sub-microscopic atomic nucleus. Just what the properties of large quantities of matter would be at these tremendous densities is something scientists are very interested in knowing.

And yet man will never be able to touch or work with samples of this stuff. All we will ever know we must learn from theoretical calculations, and observations on dim starlight and radiation which reaches us only after traveling billions upon billions of miles across the void.

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