

# DeWitt MacKenzie Recalls Tragedy Of U-Boat Warfare In World War I

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Today's reminiscence has to do with a tragedy which has haunted me these many years—a nightmare of mass-death and calls for help which had to be ignored.

The German submarine campaign of early 1917 was at the awful peak which all but brought the allies to their knees. Our ship from the Far East, filled with Australian and New Zealand soldiers enroute to the western front, came steaming into a wintry Mediterranean which was boiling with U-boats.

Everything was game for the submarines, and they were taking a terrible toll of shipping and human life. Under stern orders of the British admiralty all transport and cargo vessels were forbidden to attempt any rescue work for sinking ships. Instructions were to turn tail and run like the devil, lest the submarine also get you.

This was the period which produced one of the strange tales of the war—not the one I set out to tell you, but one which fits into our picture. Australian transports, loaded with troops and nurses, were heading for the western front under Japanese naval convoy. A submarine struck a torpedo into one of the transports which carried both soldiers and women nurses, and the stricken steamer was sinking fast. The order:

"Save the men first, and then the women."

A young Japanese officer, thinking his superior had confused the order, said to him: "Pardon, sir, but you mean save the women first and then the men, didn't you?"

"No," replied the admiral. "The

allies have plenty of women but they need men. Save the men first."

Well, they saved both women and men. However, under the Japanese code the admiral had dishonored his emperor in losing a ship. There was only one way in which he could wipe out the stain. He turned the convoy over to his second in command—and shot himself.

But to get back to my ship: Our skipper almost never left the bridge. I recall one stretch of 48 hours of duty which he did without rest. All the passengers were assigned to the submarine watch in pairs. It was no time for slackness, for thirteen ships were sunk near us as we plowed on towards England.

It was on a black midnight, as I was standing watch on deck with a ship's officer, that we encountered the tragedy with which this account is concerned. We were, of course, running without lights. Not even the glow of a cigarette was permitted. It was an eerie business, for we couldn't see much as we leaned against the rail.

Suddenly a steamer loomed up only a comparatively short distance from us—and she had all her lights blazing. I don't know why we hadn't spotted them before. Perhaps they had just been turned on, or a bit of fog may have been between us. Anyway, there they were, turning her into a suicide ship.

"The damned, crazy fools," exclaimed my officer. "They're asking for it! They're sure to get it!" He had hardly got the words out of his mouth when a torpedo hit them. It was a mortal blow, and their wireless began to beg for help. Word spread through our ship. Men gathered by the rail and there wasn't a mother's son who didn't want to go to the rescue. And the stricken ship was so near!

Still, that iron-clad admiralty order hung over us. And we knew that there wasn't a chance in the world of our escaping a torpedo ourselves if we didn't clear out. So we steamed away as fast as we could go. The pity of having to do it! No wonder that call for help still haunts a fellow after all these years.

## Kills Three Relatives Then Dies Under Truck

TAMPA, Fla., Feb. 6.—(AP)—Police have closed their books on the case of Anthony Slechta and the three relatives he killed before dying under the wheels of a heavy truck.

Detective Sgt. B. J. Roberts said the friendly New York bank clerk "just broke under the strain" of worrying for months about the health of his wife and her father. Slechta was 53.

The wife, Ann, 47, was found stabbed to death Saturday in her parents' home here. Also dead, and battered terribly, were her mother, Mrs. Peter Ruziak, about 70, and sister, Ellen Ruziak, 45.

Peace Justice J. G. Spicola, acting coroner, said "there is no question" Slechta killed the women and then jumped in front of the truck a block away.



**ELECTRIC CO-OP BOARD**—This group will head the Douglas Electric Cooperative, Inc., during the coming year, following their election to the board of directors Monday at the tenth annual meeting of the association. Headed by President Arnold Cheever, seated, they are, from left, Jack Parrott, D. C. Wilson, J. E. Young, vice-president; Neal Meyer, secretary; Harry Norton, treasurer; Art Rychard, and Harold Backen Jr., managers. (Staff photo).

## Gov. Langlie Calls For GOP Statement On Foreign Policy

WASHINGTON.—(AP)—A Western governor said Monday Republicans should include in their 1950 policy statement a declaration that the GOP will be forced to take its own foreign policy stand unless the administration changes course.

The views of Gov. Arthur B. Langlie of Washington were dropped into the party pool of ideas for a statement of Republican principles for use in the coming congressional elections.

House Republicans approved with minor changes the declaration of party policy drafted by the 21-man policy committee. Republican leader Martin of Massachusetts told newsmen the changes were "minor."

Approved At Conference. He said the statement was approved at a party conference with "three or four dissenting votes."

Senate Republicans met to discuss the same statement but failed to reach final agreement in a two-hour closed session.

Senator Taft (R-Ohio) said there was disagreement only over "matters of secondary importance."

Senator Lodge (R-Mass) indicated that he was far from satisfied with the draft as it stood when the meeting broke up.

Lodge told reporters he would "have to weigh the good against the bad" in the declaration before he decides whether to support it or not.

Langlie's views became known

## Columbia Basin Plans Opposed By CVA Backers

SEATTLE, Feb. 7.—(AP)—The army engineers' bureau of reclamation plan for Columbia basin development was branded here as an "illegitimate" CVA, which doesn't have the backing of the northwest's "great farm and labor organizations."

A letter stating that view was sent to President Truman over the signatures of E. M. Weston, State Federation of Labor president; Henry P. Carstensen, State Grange master, and Roy W. Atkinson, regional CIO director. All are officers in the league for CVA.

The trio contended that the reclamation bureau engineers' plan contains no provisions for an integrated flood control system, forest and soil management or fish propagation.

"We want you to know," the letter said, "that the great farm and labor organizations of the northwest, representing the majority of our region's population, are determined not to take any substitute for CVA."

ST. LOUIS, Feb. 7.—(AP)—A call for an all-out fight against proposed river basin authorities such as the existing Tennessee valley authority was made today at the Mississippi Valley association convention.

Lachlan MacLeay, president of the association, said in a speech at the opening session of a two-day meeting:

The association's fight against regional authorities "is in the ultimate analysis a fight against socialism and totalitarianism in this country."

MacLeay expressed the belief that his organization's efforts to defeat proposed regional authorities can be won.

## Machinists Try Again To Enter Fold Of AF Of L

MIAMI BEACH, Fla., Feb. 7.—(AP)—Leaders of the now independent machinists' union are trying anew to get back into the American Federation of Labor.

A delegation representing the 800,000 members of the International Association of Machinists arrived for peace meetings with the AFL's executive council.

The council, opening the second week of its winter meeting, had high hopes for a settlement in the long-standing controversy between the IAM and the AFL's Carpenters union.

A fight over the right to represent machinery installation workers—claimed by each of the two—prompted the IAM to quit the AFL five years ago.

Some council members were hoping that Al Hayes, new IAM president, and William Hutcheson, veteran head of the carpenters' union, could work out an agreement. But others, remembering how many other such peace meetings have failed, had their fingers crossed.

Even though outside the AFL fold, the machinists have continued for some time to cooperate closely with the federation politically and in many other fields.

It has always been understood that the IAM would rejoin the AFL in a matter of time—as soon as the jurisdictional scrap was settled.

Over the weekend the AFL council accused Russia of trying to do away with Jews in the Soviet Union and her satellites.

Urging quick Senate approval of the pending treaty to outlaw genocide—or destruction of national, racial or religious groups—the council's statement said Stalin is treating Jews as outcasts.

"Such cultural programs against intellectuals and their followers mean virtually the sentencing of these human beings to death—by ostracizing them and depriving them of all means of livelihood," the council said.

Another council statement strongly opposed extending full diplomatic recognition to Franco Spain. It said Franco is a dictator put in power by Hitler and the world reputation of this country as a defender of democracy would only suffer from any help we gave Franco.

The state department indicated recently that if the United States changes its policy toward Spain, this country will again send an ambassador to Madrid. The United States has had no ambassador there since the U. N. in 1946 urged diplomatic isolation of Franco.

who are physically impaired. He said the problem calls for "sound employment procedures, which match the skills of the handicapped with the demands of the job."

**NAM Cited For Helping Physically Handicapped**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 6.—(AP)—The National Association of Manufacturers was cited by a presidential committee today for helping to find jobs for the physically handicapped.

NAM President Claude A. Pitnam accepted a distinguished service certificate from Adm. Ross McIntire, chairman of the president's committee on national employ the handicapped week.

Pitnam said the NAM is continuing its six-year-old campaign to insure employment for those

## GI Insurance Benefits Outside Community Act

WASHINGTON, Feb. 7.—(AP)—The supreme court decided Monday that state community property laws do not apply to GI insurance benefits.

Under community property laws husband and wife are equal owners of all property they acquire. The Justice department said 12 states and Hawaii have such laws.

The high court overturned a decision by California courts that community property laws there entitle the widow of an army major to half the proceeds of his national service life insurance. The major had named his mother as the beneficiary of a \$10,000 policy.

Justice Clark delivered the 5-3 decision. Justice Minton wrote a dissent, joined by Justices Frankfurter and Jackson. Justice Douglas did not take part.

Clark's majority opinion said the decision of the California courts "nullifies the soldier's choice of beneficiary and frustrates the deliberate purpose of Congress" in specifying that insurance benefits may not be affected by any legal process.

No matter what the rights of the widow to the proceeds of non-governmental insurance may be under California law, "that rule, (or right) cannot apply to this insurance," Clark said.

**Dirty Records Taboo**  
In another decision, the court decided that shipment of "dirty" phonograph records across state lines is against the law.

The tribunal split 5-3 in ruling that the U.S. circuit court of San Francisco was wrong in throwing out the conviction of Alexander Lawrence Alpers. Alpers had been fined \$200 for shipping obscene records by express.

Justice Minton wrote today's majority opinion. Justice Black wrote a dissent in which Justices Frankfurter and Jackson concurred. Justice Douglas took no part.

The GI insurance case decided specifically applied to insurance taken by Dr. Leonard O. Wissner, who died in India in 1945 while in Army service. His mother, Mrs. Louise N. Wissner, has been receiving monthly insurance benefits of \$76.70.

Dr. Wissner's widow, Mrs. Margaret Wissner, sued in California courts and won a ruling that she is entitled to half the monthly payments. She and Dr. Wissner were married in Glendale, Calif., in 1930.

The mother appealed to the supreme court to set aside the ruling. The Justice department supported the mother's position.

In addition to California and Hawaii, other states having community property laws are Alaska, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington. Justice Minton wrote today's majority opinion.

**MANAGER PLAN GROWS**

NEW YORK.—(AP)—Seventy-nine American municipalities adopted the council-manager form of government during 1949. It is reported by the National Municipal League, clearing house of information for local civic groups.

This brings the total number of places in which the city manager plan is in effect to 958.

The league predicted that, at the present rate, the council-manager plan will become the prevailing form of local government within the next decade.

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## Oregon Traffic Deaths For 1949 At New Low

Oregon's 1949 traffic death rate was the lowest since accurate statistics have been kept, Secretary of State Newby announced. It was the third consecutive year a new record has been established.

The traffic death rate represents the number of persons killed per hundred million miles of travel, and is used nationally as a standard comparison, the secretary explained. Oregon's rate dropped to 6.4 from 1948's rate of 7.5. It is computed from fatalities totaling 357 and travel estimated at just over five and a half billion miles.

**Teacher Loses At Russian Roulette**

PRINCETON, N. J., Feb. 6.—(AP)—A young Princeton professor bet his life against lady luck at Russian Roulette—and lost.

Dr. Allison Williams Bunkley, his friends told police, demonstrated the deadly "game" last Saturday night at his 25th birthday celebration.

They said he put one cartridge into a .32 caliber revolver, spun the cylinder, and placed it to his temple. The first two times he won—the hammer fell by chance on an empty chamber.

"Just once more," he told his protesting friends, five men and a girl who had gathered in his apartment.

When he spun the cylinder this

time, the bullet came opposite the hammer. When he pulled the trigger the bullet crashed through his temple.

Dr. Bunkley, an assistant professor in the Woodrow Wilson school of public and international affairs at Princeton, had already made a name for himself as an expert on Argentine affairs.

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