

He's Seen Lots of Water



WILLIAM LOCKYEAR
Bridges Are His Business

Bridge Crew Foreman Reaches 40-Year Mark

By DON ROBINSON
Of the Register-Guard

Writing out some personal notes on his 40 years with the Oregon Highway Dept., William Lockyear of Eugene started off with this: "There has been lots of water run under these bridges."

It is an absolutely factual statement. He was talking not in literary but in literal terms. In his years with the department he has worked on highway bridges in an area from Hood River to Seaside and south to the California border.

In recognition of his time with the department Lockyear was recently given a 40-year pin at awards ceremonies for department employees.

In spite of his long term of service Lockyear, who resides with his wife at 1914 E. 17th Ave., has three years to go before reaching retirement age.

He moved his family to Eugene about 1931, lived here 18 years, then was moved to Roseburg for 11 years, and has been back in Eugene the past two years.

The Lockyears have three sons, all married now. One is a state policeman in Eugene, one a pharmaceutical company employee in Detroit, and one an auto parts salesman in Portland.

Lockyear himself was born in Indiana but his family came to Portland before he was old enough to spell Hoosier. His father worked in real estate while managing to bring up, besides William, five sons and five daughters.

Young Lockyear went to work for the highway department on Sept. 21, 1921, at the Old Bee ranch on the McMinnville-Tillamook Highway near the community of Dolph.

Beginning as a laborer he worked his way up and since 1940 has been an assistant foreman or foreman.

He has worked on all kinds of bridges from modern concrete structures to the old wooden covered spans. He doesn't have what he'd call a favorite, but he admits that nowadays the engineers pay more attention to simplicity and utility than to beauty, so these seeking aesthetic value are more likely to find it in the older bridges.

His personal recollections cover a span from the time when "we were still using horses for a lot of work" to the present when power equipment does the job. It's a far cry now from the times when Lockyear used to put in his day boring holes through thick timbers with brace and bit.

At the moment the 40-year department veteran is foreman of one of five bridge maintenance crews that cover this highway department division of the state.

He and his eight men are on call during and often after regular hours for both ordinary maintenance and emergency jobs. They are responsible for keeping up some 435 bridges and culverts on 500 miles of highway. Their responsibility extends also to 37 state buildings in the area.

Lockyear notes that on his beat are the only two covered bridges remaining on state highways—those at Noti and at Mapleton.

A large number of the new structures are concrete highway overpasses such as those going up on the Pacific Freeway just south of Eugene. Even so, Lockyear says, about 75 per cent of the more than 400 bridges in his area are over rivers or other waterways.

In Lockyear's view his years with the highway department have been enjoyable. The department treats its employees all right, he says, and his job has been one in which "there are so many different things to do it's not monotonous."

The only real irony of his situation is that, having so great an opportunity to be near and around Oregon's rivers and streams, Lockyear doesn't fish.

Strategic Hamlets Constructed by Reds

SAIGON, South Viet Nam (AP)—Communist guerrillas in the wilds of South Viet Nam's delta region have constructed fortified villages similar to the government's strategic hamlets.

Vietnamese troops stumbled on three such villages during a recent four-day operation in the southeastern province of Kien Hoa and found a Communist field hospital, well-tilled fields and the wives and children of guerrilla fighters.

Well camouflaged, the villages appear at a glance from the air to be just another of the thousands of cluster of thatched roof huts that dot South Viet Nam's countryside.

Even the government troops, who penetrated into the coastal jungle and swamps of Kien Hoa, did not realize at first what they had found. From a distance of 100 yards, the Communist villages appeared serene and peaceful.

Then lead elements ran into complicated trench systems, breastworks and elaborate ambush sites surrounded by "man traps"—deep pits filled with sharpened bamboo stakes.

Faced with overwhelming odds, the guerrillas made no serious attempt to defend their villages and fled after firing a few shots.

Government troops, who must forage for most of their food, then had their pick of the chickens and geese fluttering about the huts. They also picked onions from the lush fields surrounding the village and ate bananas and mangoes, which grow in abundance in the jungle.

A prime target on all government raids now is medical supplies. None was found in the three fortified villages, although one contained a hospital with a crude operating table and several beds.

Several villages had propaganda bulletin boards bedecked with banners and slogans condemning "U.S. imperialism" and the pro-Western South Viet Nam government. A guerrilla payroll—in Communist North Viet Nam currency—was confiscated.

Suspects Freed In Jewel Theft

MONTEREY, Calif. (AP)—Three persons charged in a \$45,000 jewel theft at Pebble Beach last January have been freed because the victim, Mrs. Igor Cassini of New York City, refused to return here for their trial.

Deputy Dist. Atty. Tom Moore said Mrs. Cassini declined to come here because she was preparing for a trip to Europe on July 28.

Mrs. Cassini is the wife of a New York society columnist who writes under the name of Cholly Knickerbocker.

Guitar for Kennedy

MEXICO CITY (AP)—President Kennedy is getting a guitar from the Mariachi Union of Mexico—the wandering minstrels who serenaded him during his visit here last weekend. Mario Oliva Lara, secretary-general of the union, turned the guitar over to President Adolfo Lopez Mateos to be forwarded to the White House.

No men of military age were found in the villages—only women and children. Unable to spare enough men to hold the villages, the government column moved through quickly. The last troops to pass burned every building.

But with building supplies aplenty in the surrounding jungle, the guerrillas could have their villages back in business within a few weeks.

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