

Three American Prisoners Said Due for Release From Soviet Prison Camp Shortly

Vienna—(U.P.)—Three Americans held in a Soviet prison camp southeast of Moscow are in excellent health and may be released soon, a group of returning Austrian prisoners reported today.

The three Americans are William T. Marchuk, of Brackenridge, Pa., William A. Verdine of Starks, La., and John Hellmuth Noble of Detroit. The State Department has demanded several times that Russia free them.

Marchuk was reported absent without leave from the U. S. Army on Feb. 1, 1949, in Berlin.

He was born April 5, 1916, in Maynard, Mass.

Verdine was reported AWOL in Europe on Feb. 3, 1949. He had enlisted for three years' Army service on Aug. 21, 1947, at Ft. Sam Houston, Tex. He is 28.

Noble has been in Soviet custody for nearly eight years. He was taken to Germany by his parents in 1938 and was arrested in Dresden in 1945 with his father. His father later was released and returned to the United States with the rest of the family.

Johann Schick, one of the 55

Austrians who returned today, said the three Americans told him Soviet prison officials promised them they would be sent home very soon.

Schick said Verdine and Marchuk told him they both were soldiers when the Russians arrested them in East Berlin 1947 or 1948. Noble told him he was a civilian when the Russians seized him at Dresden, Germany, in 1946.

Noble was permitted to write to his father in Detroit last year "through a mistake of one of the Soviet prison guards," Schick said. Noble later received

a letter from his father. The three Americans arrived at the camp southeast of Moscow last summer from the Warkuta coal mine area in northern Russia, Schick said.

He described them as being "in good physical condition" when he saw them for the last time on Christmas Eve shortly before the Austrians boarded a Vienna bound train for freedom.

Schick said the prisoners at Potma went on strike last year to try to force the Russians to release them and "for many months we have done almost no work. Apparently the strike im-

pressed the Russians." "We refused to work because we thought it would be better to die than remain as prisoners indefinitely," he said.

London—(U.P.)—Two British brothers who returned recently from behind the Iron Curtain said they met "15 former GIs" among the members of a Russian-supervised Renegades' Club in Soviet Germany.

The Gold Brothers, Sydney, 30, and Alfred, 26, did not give the names of any of the renegade Americans in the account of their adventures published by the liberal News Chronicle.

The Golds said they left jobs in London in July, 1953, and entered Red Germany illegally. After 15 months, during which they worked in a locomotive factory for wages of \$14 a month, they decided they had had enough and headed for home.

The Communists caught them trying to escape and held them for 10 weeks. They finally regained their freedom last month, after agreeing to sign a paper saying they had been "well treated."

During their confinement, they said, they were held in a private house in Soviet-occupied

Dresden which was used as a prison by the Reds.

"There were several Americans and Germans there who were beaten up at intervals," Sydney Gold said. "Some of them we saw for a few days and never heard of again."

When they first entered Communist Germany, the brothers said, they were screened by the Reds and then sent to the Renegades' Club in Bautzen for indoctrination in the party line.

Their fellow students included 15 ex-GIs, five former British soldiers and one other British civilian, a Dutchman, a Spaniard,

a Mexican and a Nigerian Negro. "We were billeted in the town, but had to attend classes at the club every day," Sydney said. "Communist propaganda was at the top of the curriculum under the heading of social science."

After three months at the club, the Golds got their factory jobs. Each month, they had to pay \$5.06 of the \$14 pay for rent. The low pay didn't matter too much, though, the brothers said. There were so few consumer goods available in the Soviet zone it didn't make much difference.

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Weight-Mile Evasion Charges Declared Untrue

Salem—(U.P.)—Persistent charges of long haul truckers that there was widespread evasion of mileage payments due under the motor transportation code were found to be without foundation, the State Highway Interim Committee said today, and it will recommend that the weight mile tax on trucks, which originated in Oregon, be continued without change.

The committee, in its report to Gov. Paul L. Patterson, presented today, also recommended that taxes on motor vehicles and motor vehicle fuel should be the exclusive right of the state of Oregon and cities or other political subdivisions of Oregon should not be permitted to levy or impose such taxes.

The committee, headed by State Rep. Edward A. Geary of Klamath Falls, recommended that "legislation should be enacted to clearly establish and limit the levying and collecting of revenue taxes on motor vehicles and motor vehicle fuel to the state of Oregon, exclusively, excepting only the right of the federal government."

Oregon originated the gasoline tax, which now amounts to six cents a gallon. Uncle Sam adds another two cents tax. The committee, which was created by resolution of the 1953 Legislature, recommended "a further study should be made to bring under one head the activities relating to the regulatory and revenue field of motor vehicles."

Wants Separate Department
The Interim Committee on the Department of Revenue, headed by State Sen. Paul Geddes of Roseburg, recommended in its final report that a separate department of motor vehicles be established, under the appointive power of the governor. The motor vehicle department now is a branch of the secretary of state's office.

The Highway Interim Committee said it made no conclusive study on this subject of consolidating the presently dispersed activities because the matter was being studied by the interim committee on the department of revenue.

The committee said it recognizes that the control of advertising signs on highways—billboards—is essential and recommended that such legislation be considered.

Fourth Recommendation
And its fourth recommendation was: "The committee believes our present reciprocity status can be made to better meet the problems among the several states, with relatively minor changes, and recommends a definite reciprocity officer be designated with sufficient authority to meet the changing needs and carry out the legislative intent."

Noting that "Oregon has been the leader in the weight-mile tax," the committee said that because of the persistent charges of evasion of this tax, it engaged the Stanford Research Institute to conduct the study impartially and to report its findings. When that study was completed the institute found that evasion of the weight-mile tax amounted to about four per cent. And the interim committee noted that even this low percentage could be lessened as the public utilities commissioner completes the installation of its machine-records system which will enable even more efficient auditing of the books of motor transportation companies.

Other members of the high-

way interim committee are Sen. Warren A. McMinnee of Tillamook, vice chairman; Rep. Robert L. Elstrom of Salem, secretary; Sens. Jack Bain of Portland and Charles W. Bingner of La Grande, and Reps. Robert W. Root of Medford and Loran L. Stewart of Cottage Grove.

Asian Ministers Open Conference To Restore Peace

Bogor, Indonesia—(U.P.)—Five Asian prime ministers today opened a two-day conference of African and Asian nations on restoring peace to the world.

The group had been expected to discuss the subject of 11 American airmen jailed in Communist China, but Prime Minister Sir John Kotelawala of Ceylon said he would not bring it up for fear of "upsetting the United Nations apiece."

The U. N. has taken up the matter and Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld leaves for Peking early in the new year to discuss the case with the Communist regime.

The prime ministers attending the conference here at Kotelawala, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Ali Sastroamidjojo of Pakistan and U Nu of Burma. They met this afternoon behind the heavily guarded walls of the presidential palace in this West Java mountain town.

Sastroamidjojo proposed the conference of African and Asian nations to attempt to lessen the tension between East and West by creating an "area of peace" extending from Asia through Africa. The meeting would be held in Indonesia next February or March.

The five Colombo powers agreed at their last meeting in Colombo to let Sastroamidjojo work out plans for the conference. Today's meeting was to decide which nations will be invited and what subjects will be discussed.

Stevenson Stickers Permitted on Mail

Washington—(U.P.)—The Post Office Department said today that anyone who wishes may decorate envelopes and packages with stickers quoting Adlai Stevenson.

A department spokesman said a local postal employee made a mistake when he questioned the admissibility of such articles to the mails.

Leland Merrick, Bronx, N.Y., a Stevenson admirer, had asked for a department ruling whether the stickers legally could be put on mail following the incident in the post office here.

The stickers, like other quotations, slogans, and similar material, can be put anywhere on items to be mailed so long as they don't interfere with the address, return address, or postage, the spokesman said.

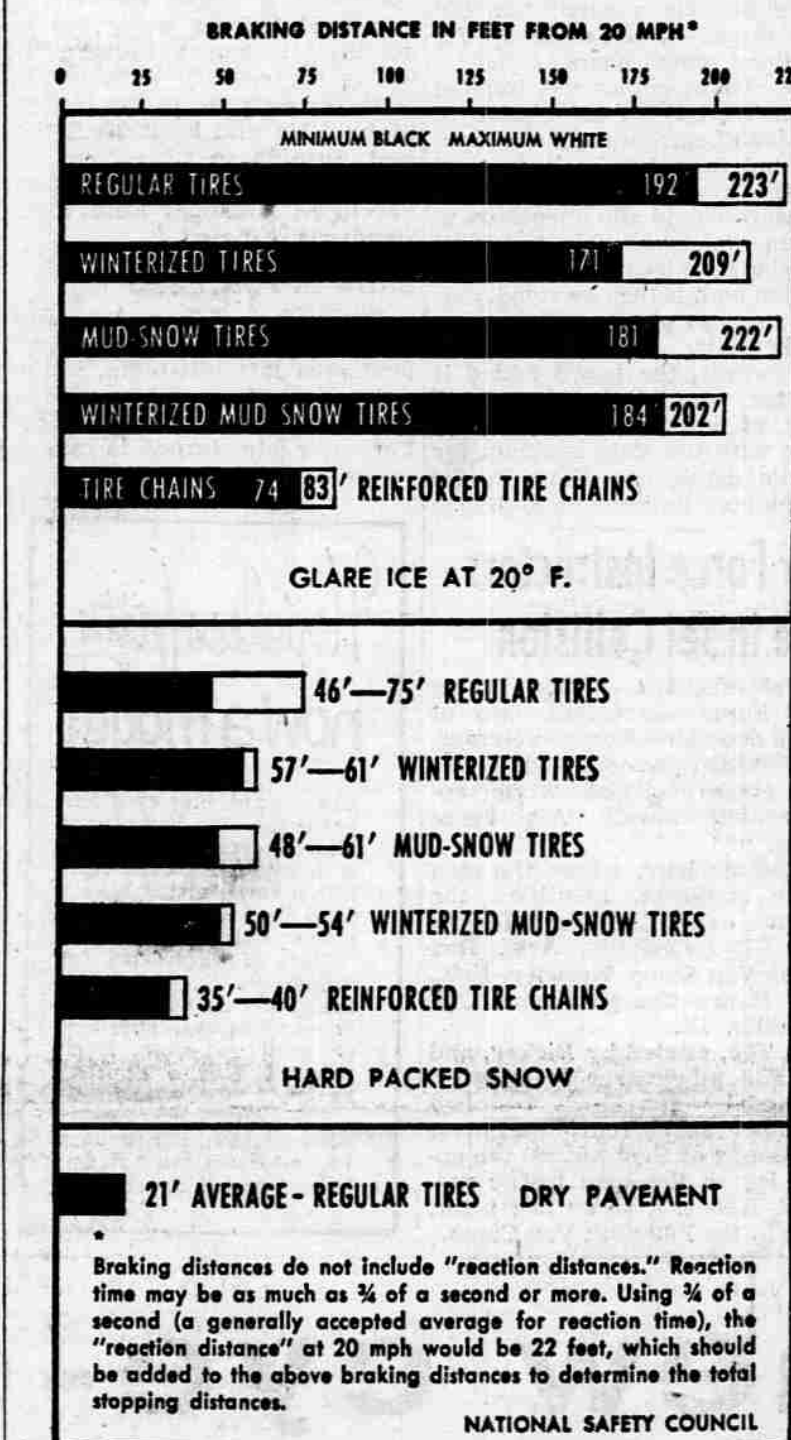
Dean of Portland Newspapermen Dies

Portland—(U.P.)—Rolla Gittings, 91, known as the dean of Portland newspapermen, died in a local hospital today.

Gittings, called "Git" by his friends and associates, retired on New Year's day of 1946 after more than 39 years on the staff of the Oregon Journal. He was Northwest editor, telegraph editor and finally exchange editor. He continued to write guest articles for the editorial page after his retirement.

Gittings had been ill for about three weeks.

BRAKING DISTANCE SHOWN BY TESTS



Snow Covers Valley; List Few Accidents As Drivers Cautious

Snow covered the Rogue valley this morning. Amounts ranged upward from the one inch measured at the Medford weather bureau at the airport.

The snow began in flurries about midnight, then resumed in a steady fall shortly before 6 a.m. By about 8 a.m. streets were covered and slushy where traffic was heavy.

Apparently drivers were using extra caution on the slippery surfaces, for accidents reported this morning were few, with no injuries listed. City crews were at work early, sanding the packed snow on hills to give motorists better traction.

Stops By 9 A.M.
The snowfall stopped by 9 a.m. and began to melt as temperatures rose above freezing, although there were a few later flurries. About .06 of an inch of moisture was contained in the inch of snow at the weather bureau.

At 8 a.m., about 1 1/2 inches were measured at Jacksonville, and on the Siskiyou and Greensprings passes amounts ranged up to three inches. Chains were required for travel over both routes, state police said.

Rain was reported from Grants Pass, and the highway over Sexton mountain was clear. About an inch of new snow was reported from Prospect, and at Klamath Falls only a trace was reported.

More snow at lower elevations was not predicted by the weather bureau, but more may fall in showers over the mountains, the forecast said. Rain showers this evening, and a chilly, foggy morning tomorrow was predicted.

Road Conditions

Chains were required for travel over both Siskiyou and Greensprings mountain passes this afternoon, after three inches of new snow fell during the night.

Highways to the north were clear of snow. Elsewhere in Oregon, chains were required over the Santiam pass and at Lapine, and were advised on most other mountain routes.

Roads closed for the winter include the east and west Diamond lake highways, the Mt. Hood loop from Warm Springs junction to Cooper spur, the rim road at Crater lake, and the McKenzie pass.

Gen. Peyton March Observes 90th Birthday

Washington—(U.P.)—Gen. Peyton C. March, Army chief of staff during World War I, celebrated his 90th birthday yesterday at Walter Reed Army hospital.

March has been at the hospital since he broke a hip a year ago. Attaches said he is coming along fine.

Weather
FORECAST: Rain showers in the valleys and snow showers in mountains tonight. Valley fog Wednesday morning; otherwise partly cloudy with widely scattered showers. Low tonight 32; high Wednesday 45.
Highest Yesterday 38
Lowest This Morning 31
To 10 a.m. Today 36
Temp. Prec.

Brother-in-Law of Portland Artist Admits Shooting

Parka-Clad Companion Mistaken for Deer

The Dalles—(U.P.)—Joseph Ferguson, 39-year-old Mosier, Ore., rancher, was booked in Wasco county jail here at 12:30 a.m. today on suspicion of manslaughter in connection with the death Sunday of the rancher's brother-in-law, Portland artist Charles Eaton, 29.

Ferguson, who had been Eaton's hunting companion in the mountains near Mosier on the day after Christmas, succumbed to police questioning and sobbed out a statement admitting he had shot the young advertising artist with a .30 calibre rifle, mistaking his parka-clad figure for a deer.

.30 Calibre Shells Found
State Police Sgt. Glenn Ray said a search of the death area yielded two .30 calibre shell cases after officers had retraced Ferguson's steps. Ferguson had at first told of hunting with a .22 calibre weapon.

Dr. Homer Harris of the state police crime detection laboratory reported that Eaton had not been killed by a .22 rifle like the one he carried and that the wound in Eaton's head was not compact, ruling out the possibilities of suicide or an accidental discharge of the artist's own gun.

Fatal Shot Admitted
Confronted with the laboratory findings, Ferguson produced his .30 calibre rifle and admitted that he had fired the fatal shot. He said the incident occurred at 9:30 a.m. Sunday. Eaton was shot through the head. The bullet entered the right side of the head at the ear and emerged at the left side. His own gun was found under his body.

Ferguson explained to officers that he had panicked after shooting his brother-in-law and had returned to his ranch home. He fled without stopping to examine Eaton's body.

Formal charges were not filed immediately but Ferguson was booked on suspicion of manslaughter in connection with the death.

United States Sending Wheat To Yugoslavia

Washington—(U.P.)—The United States has promised to give Yugoslavia enough wheat to tide the Balkan nation over a critical grain shortage, a State Department official said today.

The exact amount which the United States will supply will depend upon how much Yugoslavia needs until her next harvest comes in. Preliminary estimates run about 850,000 tons but the amount could go higher.

Svetozar Vukmanovic-Tempo, Yugoslav vice-president in charge of economic affairs, was in the United States two months ago seeking American aid to tide his country over one of its most critical wheat shortages.

Klamath Man Held For Embezzlement

Klamath Falls—(U.P.)—Kenneth Dean Snyder, former salesman for the Klamath Falls creamery, was held in the county jail today on a charge of larceny by embezzlement after he was alleged to have misappropriated \$900 of company funds.

Snyder waived preliminary hearing when arraigned this morning before Judge D. E. Van Vactor and was ordered held for the grand jury. Bail was set at \$2000.

District Attorney Frank Anderson said Snyder admitted taking the money to pay debts. He said Snyder had not been in previous trouble.

US-Canada Route Urged by Morse

Washington—(U.P.)—Sen. Wayne Morse today released copies of a letter sent to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and to Civil Aeronautics Board Chairman Chan Gurney urging favorable action on a proposal to establish air service between Portland and Calgary, Canada.

Morse indicated that the subject of air routes between the United States and Canada was under discussion between the State Department and the CAB earlier this year.

Morse told Gurney and Dulles that "air service on a permanent basis between Portland and Calgary will produce increased commerce and travel between our countries and this in turn will serve to strengthen our traditionally fine relations with Canada."

Roosting Place for Estimated 21,000 Robins Found; Birdwatchers Report on Annual Bird Census Monday

A roosting place for a mammoth group of robins was discovered here yesterday by three birdwatchers out to make an annual census of the birds in the Medford area.

The three, Mrs. Howard Bush and the Rev. and Mrs. Thomas McCamant, said this is the 55th year that such counts have been made throughout the country, and last year there were 521, including three in Oregon, at Portland, Eugene and Medford.

They counted 44 species of birds and an estimated 21,781 individuals.

The count was vastly larger than that recorded last year, Mr. McCamant said, because of

Fire, Wind Sweep South California; Damage in Millions

Forest Fire Burns Big Watershed Area

Los Angeles—(U.P.)—Fire and wind swept regions of Southern California again today, sending damage estimates soaring into millions of dollars.

A two-day brush and forest fire in the San Bernardino Mountains flared anew behind high winds and consumed 3,000 acres of watershed. Twelve families were forced to flee their homes during the night at Verdmont near Cajon Pass. The Forest Service reported no structures burned, however.

The fire was placed about 10 miles northwest of San Bernardino and burning on a three-mile front. About 500 fire fighters were on the line. They stood off the blaze as it threatened the community of Devore Heights, officials said.

Forest Service Supervisor Don Bauer said he did not expect the fire to be controlled before tomorrow. Continuing winds made the situation critical, he said.

Steady winds of hurricane force which swept in from desert areas subsided somewhat today but were expected to reach gusts ranging from 45 to 70 miles an hour. The Weather Bureau said small craft warnings were up from Point Conception to Ocean-side.

Trees, Wires Downed
Yesterday's winds knocked down trees and high voltage wires, sandblasted some autos, grounded boats, damaged property and fanned a fire at Fullerton which destroyed two large fruit plants, a storage plant, a dress factory and a water-softening plant. Damage from the fire was placed at \$2,000,000.

The windy weather, confined areas, was accompanied by cold temperatures last night which sent the thermometer down to 16 at Palmdale and below 32 in many citrus areas. It was 37 in Los Angeles.

BY UNITED PRESS
Winter landed its biggest punch of the season today. At Fraser, Colo., President Eisenhower's favorite summer fishing retreat, the mercury plunged to 36 degrees below zero. A similar reading was reported at West Yellowstone, Mont.

A New Mexico blizzard with winds up to 50 miles per hour stranded more than 1,000 motorists in the little town of Vaughn. Most of them resumed their travels today after spending the night in homes, motels, churches, the City Hall and the high school gymnasium.

Snow, sleet and freezing rain spread a treacherous glaze over Midwestern highways.

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Mendes Sees Success for WEU Ballot

Paris—(U.P.)—Opponents of German rearmament introduced new delaying tactics in the French National Assembly today but Premier Pierre Mendes-France remained confident he will win final approval of the fateful measure in two votes of confidence tomorrow.

A rightist Peasant party deputy, George Loutanau-Lacau, brought out a new amendment calling for talks with Russia in advance of ratification of West European Union.

But the same informed sources who reported Mendes-France's optimism also said the new delaying action is doomed in advance.

American and Allied embassy circles were cautiously optimistic over the Premier's chances for final victory but both they and the French Foreign Office knew it would not be a fact until the votes are counted.

The reluctant National Assembly approved German entry into NATO by a vote of 289 to 251 early today in an atmosphere of grim silence and then adjourned until Wednesday.

Mendes-France appeared to have saved the alliance with Britain and the United States.

But there was no wild rejoicing in Bonn, London, or Washington. President Eisenhower was reported "gratified" and West German officials expressed pleasure and relief. But a British Foreign Office spokesman said only that London was "keeping quiet and keeping its fingers crossed."

The big test Wednesday comes when Mendes-France seeks reversal of the assembly's Christmas Eve vote in which it turned down German entry into the Western European Union, the key part of the Paris accords to rearm a free Germany.

Must Approve Ratification
The other vote will be on the overall ratification bill on German entry into NATO and an amendment insisting that Germany approve the Saar accord before ratification is complete. That vote will largely be a repetition of Monday night's ballot.

But in each case Mendes-France has staked the life of his government in an effort to save the Atlantic alliance. If he receives an adverse vote he must resign and France must face the future outside the Western alliance.

Mendes-France wrestled the vote on NATO to a successful conclusion with a series of impassioned appeals to the assembly members.

Rejection Delays Rearmings
The assembly has approved almost all the articles of the Paris accords. Only rejection of German membership in the Western European Union is holding up the rearming of 500,000 West Germans on the side of the West.

The expected decision still could be upset and France's allies must take care in the next two days to avoid giving the reluctant deputies an excuse to turn and throw over the whole system again as they wrecked the European Defense Community.

The United States and Britain have made it clear they will rearm West Germany regardless of what France does. Mendes-France told the deputies this and warned of France's being isolated if they do not vote rearmament.

(See story on Page 2)

Americans Removed From Burning Vessel

Singapore—(U.P.)—Six American passengers removed from the burning Danish freighter Lexa Maersk shopped today for new wardrobes to replace belongings they lost in the ship's fire.

The Americans, together with two Australian passengers, left the ship after it caught fire Christmas Day while leaving Singapore with a cargo of foodstuffs, rubber, rosin, teak and textiles.

The cargo was valued at \$1,300,000. It was a total loss.

The 7520-ton freighter was beached today on the eastern coast of Singapore, two miles from her original position. Thick black smoke rose more than 500 feet from the hulk and could be seen for miles around.

The six Americans were lodged in a hotel awaiting the arrival of Maersk line officials.

flicker, 23; acorn woodpecker, 15; downy woodpecker, 4; steller's jay, 2; scrub jay, 8; mountain chickadee, 1; plain titmouse, 16; common bush tit, 12; white breasted nuthatch, 7.

Bewick's wren, 5; american robin, 21,000 (estimate); hermit thrush, 3; varied thrush, 3; western bluebird, 91; townsend's solitaire, 2; ruby crowned kinglet, 5; cedar waxwing, 108; audubon's warbler, 17; house sparrow, 18; meadowlark, 18; brewer's blackbird, 37; house finch, 1; american goldfinch, 6; lesser goldfinch, 26; spotted towhee, 17; brown towhee, 5; oregon junco, 130; white crowned sparrow, 13; golden crowned sparrow, 52; fox sparrow, 8; song sparrow, 8.

Other than the robins, the numbers of which they could only estimate, here is the count on other species listed by the birdwatchers:

Mallard, 2; pintail, 1; cooper's hawk, 1; red tailed hawk, 1; sparrow hawk, 2; californian quail, 120; mountain quail, 10; ring necked pheasant, 4; american coot, 11; killdeer, 6; wilson's snipe, 2; mourning dove, 20; belted kingfisher, 3; red shafted