Mercenaries Regarded As Katanga Mob

ELISABETHVILLE, Katanga (AP)—"They get bigger, tougher—and uglier—every day."

The security officer at Elisabethville Airport looked distastefully at a group of young men clambering out of the plane that had just come in from Europe.

They were the latest additions to the Katanga gendarmerie, now recruiting men from all parts of the world to defend Katanga's independence.

These mercenaries are joined every day by new soldier-adventurers. Lured by high pay, they have come from the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Poland, Israel, South Africa, Rhodesia—and, of course, Belgium. Some of the better types become officers but the others, undisciplined, untidy, rowdy and ruthless, have joined a group known as "Les Affreux" (The Frightfuls).

The Frightfuls swagger—sometimes stagger—around town with revolvers slung low from the webbing of their camouflaged paratrooper smocks. They are usually unshaven, have cropped heads or long oily hair, and sport bushy moustaches. You can find them in any bar—usually drunk.

When the Belgian army stationed in Katanga withdrew following independence, President Moise Tshombe's government had little left in the way of a defense force. A few Belgian officers and men volunteered to join the new Katanga gendarmerie and, after sifting carefully through the African remnants of the old mutinous Force Publique, began forming a new army.

Their work was speeded, first by the threat of invasion by the pro-Lumumba Congo national army, and then by a Baluba rebellion.

As an experiment, a combat group was organized without any definite mission except to keep order and "make an impression" on rebels and invaders. It consisted of a few Belgian officers, warrant officers, a handful of African soldiers and European "other ranks."

Then it was decided to recruit as many whites as possible for similar groups and Defense Minister Joseph Yav went to Europe to find "technical advisers." Overnight Elisabethville seemed to be filled with a new foreign legion.

General Sees Better Turn

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (UPI) — Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Thomas D. White believes the change of administration may ease U.S.-Soviet tension and result in the release from prison of U2 pilot Francis G. Powers.

"There is a possibility Powers will be freed," White said Sunday on arrival at Maxwell AFB here. "We all certainly hope so. A change of administration leads to a climate where this sort of thing can happen."

White, here to address the annual Montgomery Chamber of Commerce banquet at the State Coliseum Monday, said he was very optimistic about the Powers situation.

Dial Error Saves Life

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — William Horowitz dialed a wrong number Sunday and may have saved a man's life.

"Please help me," cried a man at the other end of the line. "I'm dying."

Horowitz asked the man's name and phone number. When he dialed back and got the same plea for help, he called police.

Patrolmen checked the address listed for the number and found Anthony J. Lancor, 74, suffering from a heart attack.

Taken by ambulance to a hospital, he was reported in satisfactory condition.

Society Seeks Festival Miss

PORTLAND (AP) — The Oregon State Society in Washington, D.C., has sent word that it is looking for an Oregon girl to participate as Miss Oregon in the annual Cherry Blossom Festival.

Names, photographs and information about nominees should be sent to Charles Garland at the National Press Club in Washington.

The selection, to be made Feb. 16, usually falls to an Oregon girl living temporarily or attending school in the Washington area.