

Former Sea Captain, Now Monk, Cited For Wartime Heroism By Korea

Washington (NC)—A U.S. Merchant Marine captain who rescued some 14,000 refugees from the burning, Communist-surrounded city of Hungnam five years ago received the thanks of the Republic of Korea for a mission "remembered by the people of Korea as an inspiring example of Christian faith in action."

CAPT. LEONARD P. LaRue of the Moore-McCormick Lines, was presented Korea's second highest decoration by Ambassador Yoo Chan Yang.

Technically, however, Captain LaRue was not honored at all; there no longer is a Captain LaRue. The man who bore that name is now Brother Marinus, O.S.B. Brother Marinus had to obtain special permission to leave St. Paul's Abbey, Newton, N.J., during his Advent Retreat to attend the ceremonies at the Korean Embassy here.

It was December 22, 1950, that the cargo ship Meredith Victory, with the then 36-year-old Captain LaRue in command, entered Hungnam harbor with 3,000 barrels of jet airplane fuel for the forces that had been holding off the Reds. The vessel had accommodations for a crew of about 46 and for 12 passengers.

In accepting the gold medal from Ambassador Yang in behalf of "all who participated in this incident—both officers and men alike," Brother Marinus recalled that the once-lively city of Hungnam was a burning mass of debris and wreckage. "It was like a scene out of Dante's Inferno," he said.

AT THE TIME of docking no body on board the Meredith Victory had any idea what the ship's next cargo was to be, Brother Marinus explained. Then five "tired, unshaven, disheveled, battle-weary" army colonels came aboard.

"Captain," one of them said, "we need your assistance. . . . There are thousands of men, women and children here—and we've got to get them out! Will you help us?"

"Will you help us?" Brother Marinus continued. "A heartrending plea that was being voiced for all the poor refugees who were willing to sacrifice everything rather than to submit to the cruel, the inhuman evil that is Communism."



Washington, D.C.—Brother Marinus, a former ship captain who became a monk during the Korean War in 1950, is awarded the medal of the Military Order of the Holy Cross by Korean Ambassador Y. C. Yang at a ceremony here. He received Korea's highest military decoration for rescuing 14,000 Koreans from the Communists just before Christmas. At the time he was Capt. Leonard P. LaRue commander of the freighter, Meredith Victory. (RNS Photo)

"Will you help us?" It wasn't necessary to answer that question. It had been answered 20 centuries ago by One Who said, "Whatever you do to the least of these . . . you do unto me."

"And so it was—we were credited with taking 14,000 persons from that beleaguered beachhead, on a single lift."

BROTHER MARINUS' version of the rescue left out some details. The citation accompanying his decoration, signed by President Syngman Rhee, said:

"Fourteen thousand Korean refugees from Communism owe their liberty to Captain LaRue's instantaneous decision to help them escape, and the skillful completion of this historic evacuation."

India Cardinal Lauds U. S. In Radio Talk

Bombay, India (NC)—His Eminence Valerian Cardinal Gracias, Archbishop of Bombay, lauded America's spiritual faith during his Christmas broadcast to the people of India.

"Welding all nations in one vast fellowship with God is possible only on the basis of international peace," he said in his talk over the All India Radio network. "Take away the super-natural foundation for unity among nations and peoples, then no other standard remains except expediency."

He pointed to "two great opposing principles at work in the world—one which ignores God and another which sees all men as brethren and sons of the Father in Heaven."

"The Christmas message of love has universal significance and is a challenge to man's self-sufficiency and vaunted progress," the Cardinal declared.

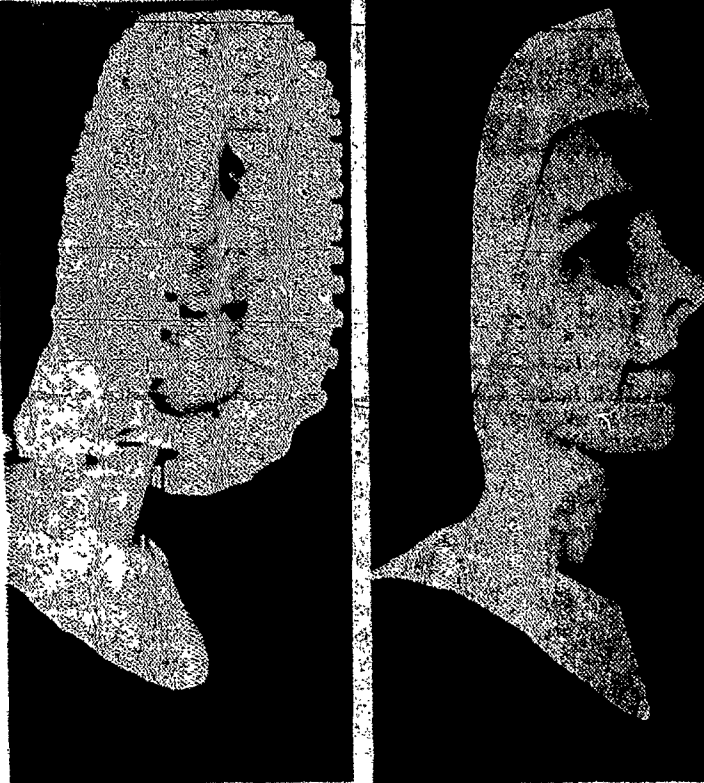
In a reference to the United States, he spoke of "this land blessed with wealth and material resources, but with a greater asset in spiritual values which not merely count but take priority in the individual and corporate life of the people."

Recalling his recent visit to the United States, Cardinal Gracias said he had been impressed by the American people's manifestation of deep faith, warm piety and extraordinary generosity.

Churches Get Nehru Greetings

Cochin, India (NC)—Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru extended Christmas greetings to members of all religions in India.

Addressing a public meeting here on Christmas Day, Mr. Nehru said that December 25 is a day of rejoicing for all, not merely Christians. In India, he added, the festival is observed by all communities.



Marist Nuns Change Garb

Framingham Centre, Mass.—A new look in religious attire for the Marist Missionary Sisters was announced by the order's American Provincial House here. The most drastic change was the elimination of the large pleated cap which distinguished the congregation for nearly a century (left photo). This was replaced by a simplified headress with black circular veil and peaked white brim (right photo). Other changes include ankle-length dress of orlon with incorporated scapular, cross, blue cord and cincture, shortened plastic Rosary and a detachable collar. The nuns will wear a light weight habit during the summer. When serving as missionaries in the hot tropics, their habit will be white with nylon veiling. A strictly missionary order, the Marist Sisters' first American community was established in Boston in 1922. Today the order sends abroad the second largest group of nun missionaries from America. (RNS Photo)

Convert Gets 'Deepfreeze' Baptism

Washington (NC)—Chief Machinist Mate Charles M. Slaton was baptized a Catholic aboard the cargo vessel Wyandot on Christmas eve, the Navy reported here.

The vessel, part of "Operation Deepfreeze," on a scientific expedition to the Antarctic, was making its way through ice packs to keep a rendezvous in the Ross Sea. Belief was expressed that this was the first baptism ever performed below the Antarctic Circle.

Three Nuns Perish In Convent Fire

North Guilford, Conn. (NC)—Within hours after fire leveled the monastery of Our Lady of Grace, here, taking the lives of three nuns, a spontaneous fund drive was shaping up to help the Sisters rebuild.

A Requiem Mass was offered at Albertus Magnus College in New Haven Monday, Dec. 26, for the three Dominican Nuns of Perpetual Adoration who died in the December 23 conflagration.

It is believed the fire was caused by a short circuit in a Christmas crib. It swept through the main building, the novitiate, chapel and the chaplain's quarters.

THE THREE NUNS who died were identified as Sister Mary Dolores (Maguire) of New York City, Sister Mary Regina (Roach) of Zanesville, O., and Sister Mary Constance (Sauve) of Pawtucket, R.I.

Two of the nuns died trying to save the life of the third. Sister Mary Regina was trapped in a room near the chapel where a perpetual vigil was kept before the Blessed Sacrament. Sister Mary Dolores, who had already rescued one nun, and Sister Mary Constance were attempting to save Sister Regina when falling ceiling and walls trapped all three.

Thirty-eight other nuns of the monastery survived the disaster. Sister Marie Pierre is in St. Raphael Hospital, New Haven, with a fractured leg.

When advised that Archbishop Boris, representative in North America of the Moscow Orthodox Patriarchate, had announced that the first edition of the Bible to be printed since the Revolution would be published in January, 1956, Father Fedor Wilcock, S.J., director of the Russian (Catholic) Center, said that it would be "a very good thing if it is true."

To date the only religious publication allowed in the Soviet Union is the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate. The Soviet government censors religious publications by controlling the distribution of paper for their publication. The Journal is the exception and that, according to Father Wilcock, is "filled with 'peace propaganda.'"

"They may feel," the Russian priest surmised, "that its publication would have great propaganda value outside Russia and still pose no danger to the Soviet regime."

It would also be a reward to the patriarchal church for its "obedience and collaboration," he said.

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