

Hot Spot For Army Engineers Runs From Pole To Africa

Face Charges Of Laxity at AF Bases

By RICHARD STARNES
Specials-Herald Staff Writer

WASHINGTON, Mar. 31—The Army's Corps of Engineers is in trouble from Greenland to Tripoli.

Charges of multi-million dollar waste and graft at air bases under construction in North Africa and Greenland are being investigated by the Senate Preparedness Committee. The Army Engineers are in charge of both projects.

The Greenland base is classified as secret and goes by the code name "Bluejay."

How well the secret has been kept can be judged from the fact that, shortly after construction began, radio programs were beamed at the workers from a Russian transmitter.

The broadcasts, conducted by a female disc jockey who was promptly dubbed "Moscow Mollie," aimed to wreck morale.

One of Moscow Mollie's favorite gambits was to tell the workers that their wives back home were being forced into prostitution because their allotment checks were not being delivered.

But it is doubtful that anything could damage the morale of a laborer being paid at the rate of \$13,000 a year, or a carpenter earning at the rate of \$18,000.

3 Million in Wages

Committee hearings disclosed that more than \$3 million was paid in wages before construction crews ever got to the job site. Moreover, the workers were paid some \$300,000 in standby pay before they ever left this country.

"Bluejay" is close to the North Pole and the construction season is limited to only a few months. Army engineers testified that part of the huge pre-job payroll was caused when a ship load of workers was held fast in the ice pack for 42 days on a voyage which normally takes only 15 days.

The total cost of "Bluejay" is secret, although it has been conceded it will be nearly as much as the estimated cost of all five North African bases—roughly \$300 million.

Chairman Lyndon Johnson (D. Tex.) of the Preparedness Committee hopes to hold additional hearings on the Greenland project before the construction season opens in a few weeks.

The North African bases, in French Morocco, have been under fire from Sen. Johnson's committee and from a House expenditures subcommittee.

An Army auditor told the House committee that waste, kickbacks and "conspiracy" to boost prices had cost \$50 million on the Moroccan bases. William J. Cassidy, the Army Audit Agency's resident auditor in North Africa, testified that:

Lack of competitive bidding on



United Press Telephoto.

KISS FROM THE BRIDE—Werner W. Reininger, 22, Marine quadruple amputee, receives a kiss from his bride, the former Jeanette Stretton, 21, after their marriage in Oakland, Calif., Naval Hospital. The San Antonio sergeant and his bride will make their home in Texas.

material purchases resulted in vastly increased cost to the government.

"Kickbacks" on purchases occurred.

Collusion between sellers and contractors caused overcharges ranging from 25 to 110 per cent.

Excessive drinking, loafing and sleeping by employees.

Gifts for Idle Hours

Gifts went to contractors from employees who received pay for time not worked.

Some purchasing personnel earned commissions on their purchases.

The government was being "cheated out of discounts" it should have had.

Senate investigators also heard reports that the work being done on the bases was sub-standard and "mediocre."

The Army reacted swiftly to the disclosures of waste and inefficiency in North Africa. Army Secretary Frank Pace removed the two top Army engineers in charge of the projects and a physician administered adrenalin.

Death apparently was caused by strangulation. An autopsy was to be performed today.

Efforts Fail To Save Boy

Services for a 4-year-old boy who died last night despite efforts of police, firemen and physicians to save him will be at 10 a.m. Wednesday in Farley Mortuary. Burial will be in Plainfield Cemetery.

Asked later why the Communists proposed that subdelegates, who have not met for more than two months, tackle once more the question of Russia's eligibility to help police a Korean truce. Col. Darrow protested that the staff officers had not completed their work on other administrative and technical matters.

Asked later why the Communists made their proposal, Col. Darrow said:

"It's hard to tell why they proposed it. They can stall fully as well in either staff officer or sub-delegation meetings, if they want to stall."

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His father, an electrician at Stewart-Warner Corp., called police who gave artificial respiration until the fire department arrived with an inhalator.

While en route to the hospital the General Hospital ambulance physician administered adrenalin.

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SEOUL, Korea, Mar. 31 (UP)—Communist artillery battered

Allied lines in two places across the front today while Red infantrymen threw four light attacks into United Nations positions.

United Nations infantry commanders, appealing for air support from Fifth Air Force planes, were out of luck. Foul weather grounded all air missions.

Bess Urged Harry to Step Down

By MERRIMAN SMITH
United Press White House Reporter

WASHINGTON, Mar. 31—Politicians from Congress to the Kremlin found it hard to believe, but the key to President Truman's decision not to run again was his wife.

His "beautiful little girl with golden curls," with whom he was first "smitten" at the age of six, had more to do with his bowing out of the White House than all the machine politicians put together. She was not the sole factor, but a highly important one.

Mrs. Truman knows better than any other person outside of the President, himself, the physical and emotional toll 17 years of official life in Washington have taken from her husband.

Seven of those years have been in the White House. She shares with him a deep yearning for life without pressure, and in comparative privacy.

Consequently, she has for some time encouraged the idea of his not running again. Mrs. Truman has too much respect for her husband's own judgment to use tactics more forceful. But she has made no secret of her desire to leave the fishbowl life of the White House.

Her desire to leave the White House reached an all-time high on Nov. 1, 1950, when two Puerto Ricans tried to shoot their way into Blair House and kill the President. Mrs. Truman was alarmed and frightened.

Since the President made his announcement, Mrs. Truman has been jubilant. At the big Democratic Party reception yesterday afternoon she was noticeably relaxed and glowing. She even smiled while the flashbulbs were flaring. More often she squints.

Aside from Mrs. Truman's feelings, one political school of thought here believes that Mr.

Truman was deeply impressed by the strong showing Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower made in the Minnesota and New Hampshire primaries. This school thinks that Mr. Truman believes Gen. Eisenhower will get the GOP nomination.

Another factor is best described as occupational fatigue. In recent months he has spoken repeatedly of the "imprisonment" of the presidency. He feels as Thomas Jefferson did that a President lives in "splendid misery."

Mr. Truman has chafed increasingly at being trailed day and night by growing pack of reporters and photographers. He wants to be able to go to church without cops. He'd like to read a newspaper and hear a broadcast without finding himself as a target for criticism. He'd like to play a little sinless poker.

Reds Suggest Kefauver-Kerr Battle Top Levels Discuss Russ

By United Press

PANMUNJOM, Mar. 31—Democratic staff officers proposed today that a higher-level truce team take over the unsolved issue of Russia as a "neutral" inspector of a Korean armistice. The Allies reluctantly agreed to consider the suggestion.

United Nations Staff Officer Col. Don O. Darrow said he will relay the proposal to Vice Admiral G. Turner Joy, Allied chief negotiator, and give the Reds his decision tomorrow.

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Asked later why the Communists made their proposal, Col. Darrow said:

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