Christmas cheer from Vietnam

That's not Christmas turkey he's carving. LNS

CHICAGO, Ill. (LNS) — The Chicago Sun Times has printed photographs which show a Vietnamese war prisoner plummeting to his death after being pushed from a U.S. Army helicopter. The newspaper also printed the letter and the photo captions written by the pilot-photographer who took the pictures.

"Enclosed are two prize pictures, by far the best I've shot in a long time. I was on flying escort for that C.C. (Command and Control) ship.

"Anyway, the guy was picked up along with two others in a tunnel complex under a rice paddy. They called us in to destroy it with rockets and miniguns.

"They took these three jokers up in our C.C. ship for interrogation. This guy wouldn't talk, so out he went. Funny, the other two didn't stop talking after that, and a lot of valuable information was gained."

The first photo shows the prisoner dangling head down from the open hatch of the helicopter. The photographer's caption reads:

" 'Uncle Nguyen' takes a look at the world from 5000 feet -- upside down. I would imagine he's a little upset about now -- but not as upset as he'll be in a few minutes. I was in radio contact with the C and C (command and control) ship, and John the pilot was keeping me informed. I could hear that guy screaming in my earphones when John keyed his mike."

The second photo, showing the prisoner falling to his death, bears the caption by the photographer: "And here he takes a sky dive without the aid of a parachute. Instant paratrooper. My ship followed him down and we found him. The picture isn't too pretty -- but the whole episode had good results as the other two "Charlies" told us everything we wanted to know. I bet they were nervous. The next day four arms caches were found as a result of this incident."

★★★

NEW YORK (LNS) — GIs are saying no to the Army in increasing numbers -- up to 500 a day, as a matter of fact. Some 23,000 ex-soldiers have been missing from their bases for over 30 days and are therefore classified as deserters: that's about 10 per cent of the entire Army.

Last year it was worse: in the fiscal year (yes, that's really how they measure their years in the Army) ended June 30, 56,000 men deserted and 10 per cent of the 1,500,000 soldiers were AWOL at one time or another.

Even these figures are low. Clerks at various Army posts admit they routinely reduce reported AWOL figures by as much as 25 per cent because their superiors feel high AWOL figures will look bad on their own records.

But how can the Army deal with all this flagrant disregard of authority? If it comes down hard on deserters, "morale" will sink even lower, and except in extremely political desertions, the Army has been handing out light punishment.

The stockades are no answer, either -- they are already full to overflowing with political prisoners and other military discipline-breakers. Besides the point is to get the boys out in the rice paddies killing Gooks, right?

★★★

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (LNS) — Despite heavy rains and threats of repression from the government, some 40,000 Puerto Ricans massed in the streets here Nov. 23 as part of a continuing campaign against compulsory service in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Puerto Rico has been a U.S. colony since 1898 and has been subject to the draft since 1917 when U.S. citizenship was conveniently bestowed upon all Puerto Ricans just one month before the U.S. entered World War I. Ironically, their citizenship hasn't given them the right to vote - just the right to get out and kill for the good ol' USA.

The march was organized jointly by seven different groups which are committed to Puerto Rican independence. Juan Mari Bras, secretary general of the Pro Independence Movement, has promised more militant anti-draft actions next February, including workers' and students' strikes and mass induction refusals.

★★★

FOND DU LAC, Wisc. (LNS) — A war veteran here, discharged 15 months ago, says the slaughter of Vietnamese women and children was commonplace in his outfit. Terry Reid, 22, served in an area just northwest of Somgmy and "it turned my stomach." "I have seen at least 100 Vietnamese women lying in rice paddies shot -- women taken for intercourse and then shot. . .I witnessed many civilians being shot down like clay pigeons. . .to me the war was being ambushed by the Vietcong every three to five days, being left with scores of wounded GIs, then coming right back at the enemy by going into an innocent village, destroying and killing people."

★★★

SAIGON (LNS) — The 10,000-member Saigon Student Union denounced the Nixon administration Dec. 1. "We do not want anyone to teach us the way to kill," said the union. "Millions of Vietnamese have died in vain, so we hate war and we do not want our people destroyed or sacrificed for any inhuman policy."

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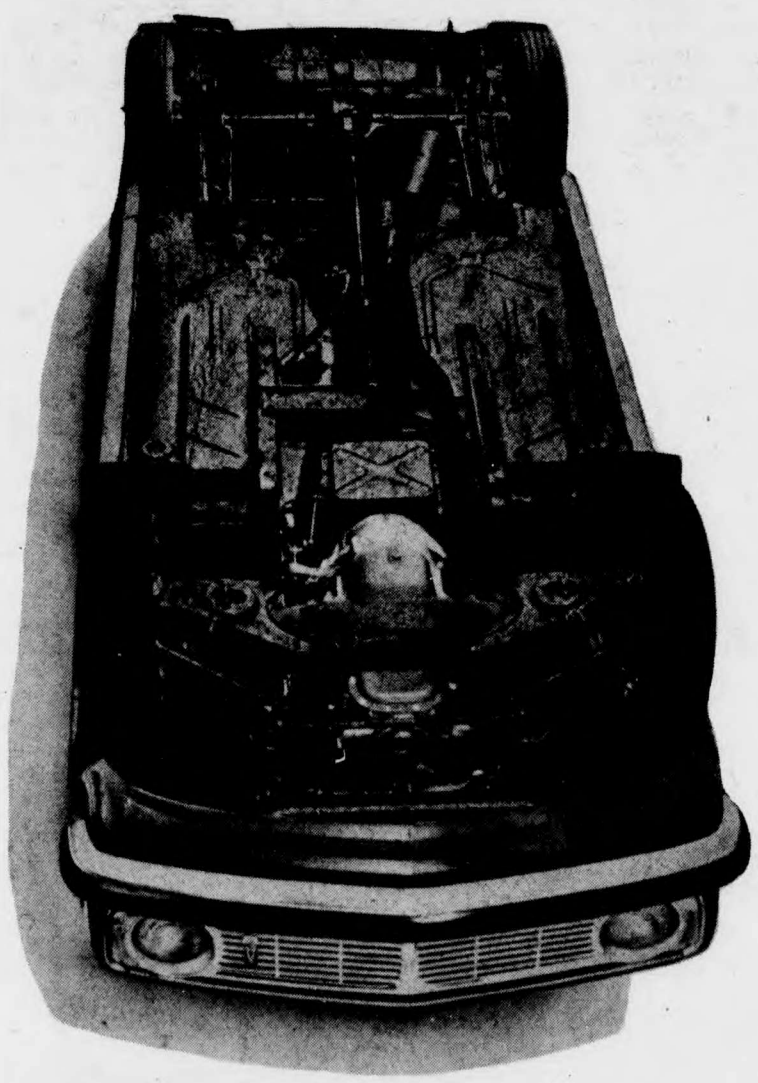

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