

Veterans Loan Backlog Gone

Starting with the New Year, the 17 district offices of the "Cal-Vet" loan program will be current in their handling of veterans' applications, Director of Veterans Affairs Joseph M. Farber announced.

Farber said the "loan commitment" plan introduced last summer had enabled the Department of Veterans Affairs to eliminate the backlog of some 12,000 applications on file one year ago. The commitment plan offers the applicant an opportunity to determine almost immediately if he and his selected property will qualify for a loan as soon as funds are available, and at the same time eliminates those applicants who are not yet ready to buy a home or farm under the program. The latter may re-apply at any time.

Under the old procedure, applicants usually had to wait for many months until their priority cards were reached in the files, and meanwhile lost out on opportunities to acquire homes or farms they wanted. The new system enables veterans to acquire properties on an interim arrangement, with a commitment letter assuring their receipt of a Cal-Vet loan as soon as the funds are available. The department loans out approximately \$60 million every 90 days, from the sale of bonds.

Farber pointed out that the success of the commitment plan has come about "despite the charges made just one year ago that our reorganization of the Farm and Home Purchases Division would cripple the program.

"We streamlined the operation at that time," the director observed, "and managed to eliminate 57 positions at a saving to the program of about \$400,000 annually. Yet we have in the meantime virtually eliminated the backlog of applications which had piled up, by developing a practical method of handling them so that the veteran who really wants to buy a property is given current service."

Farber added that the current situation on applications should demonstrate that "our program for veterans is stronger than ever."

HURRY IN HARRY

SAN ANTONIO, Tex. — Harry Harris, whoever you are, there's a public weigher's job awaiting you in San Antonio. The county clerk's office found that Harris was elected to the post by write-in votes in the general election. Trouble is the office can find no Harry Harris in the city directory.



VIGILANT AGAINST SURPRISE — U.S. Air Force officers are vigilant 24 hours a day in North American Air Defense headquarters, linked directly to radar nets guarding the entire continent—including sea borders and the vast while emptiness across the arctic area—to an emergency broadcasting system comprising nearly 2000 radio stations. These can alert the nation in minutes to anything from missiles from Cuba to parachute-ski troop-missile attacks from the north. Warning time is actually reduced to 90 seconds or less to every state. Comparatively, the air attack warning system guarding Pearl Harbor in 1941 consisted of five mobile radar sets with limit of detection 130 miles. There was no Civil Defense liaison.

Tragedy Lake Gets a Name

On July 26 of last year, U. S. Forest Ranger Leroy Brock, on a mapping expedition of the unexplored mountains above Le Conte Canyon in Kings Canyon National Park, swung himself up over a ledge at the 12,000 foot level, and discovered a tiny lake that probably had never been seen before by man. As Brock descended to the lake, he found dozens of aircraft parts strewn across the cliffside and in the lake. According to stenciling on one of the parts, it was a World War II plane.

At Hamilton Air Force Base, it was established that it was probably one of two B-24 bombers which disappeared in December, 1943, in a blinding snowstorm while returning to Hammer Field, Fresno, from a training mission to Tucson, Arizona.

KCBS staff reporter, Fred Goerner, an original member of The Times-KCBS "Truth Team," was sent to the scene to see if evidence could be uncovered to determine the cause of the crash and the fate of the six flyers who manned the ill-fated plane. Close to the point of initial impact, Goerner found the identification plate from the aircraft which listed "B-24 Type E" with the serial number, and date of acceptance June 23, 1943. A series of dives in the lake recovered many articles,

including a fully packed parachute, landing lights, gloves, boots, parts of the aircraft seat, and a portion of the bodies miraculously preserved 17 years in the icy water.

Several days after the expedition returned, KCBS received a telephone call from a Mrs. Robert Hester in West Los Angeles. Her son, Robert M. Hester, had been the co-pilot of the Liberator, Mrs. Hester told KCBS that her husband had searched the High Sierras for the plane for many years after the war. It had been a heartbreak that he never located it. Mr. Hester died just last year. With the cooperation of KCBS, Time Magazine printed the Hester story in detail.

Mr. Maurice Webster, general manager and vice president of KCBS radio, suggested to Secretary Fred Seaton of the Department of Interior that the recently discovered lake be named "Hester Lake" in honor of Robert and his father. KCBS asked its listeners for their support, and the response was overwhelming.

This communication has been received from Senator Engle's office. Board of Geographic Names has approved the name Hester Lake for an unnamed lake in Kings Canyon National Park, California. As originally proposed, the name would commemorate Lieut.

Robert M. Hester, Co-Pilot of the B-24 Bomber which crashed in the lake in December, 1943. The board considers that the late Clinton Hester should also be honored in this connection because of the great devotion shown by him over a period of many years searching for his only son who had been his companion on outings in the Sierra Nevada.

Policy Talk Slated in S.F.

Paul M. Sweezy, visiting professor in economics at Stanford university this winter, will give a major address on the domestic and foreign policy of the new administration at California hall, corner of Polk and Turk streets, San Francisco, at 8 p.m. Friday, January 27.

Prof. Sweezy, formerly on the staff at Harvard, is co-editor of The Monthly Review, and author of several books on economics and the recent "Cuba, Anatomy of a Revolution" (with Leo Huberman).

Sharing the platform will be James Aronson, editor of The National Guardian, a progressive news-weekly, speaking on the subject: "Hot News and the Cold War," a discussion of the American press and the world crisis. Aronson is a former editor of the New York Times Sunday edition.

San Francisco representative of the National Guardian is Margaret Driggs, 333A Seventh avenue.

The Top Ten Stories of '60

1. Kennedy beats Nixon.
2. The U-2 incident; trial of pilot Powers.
3. Collapse of the Summit Conference.
4. Congo independence, chaos and UN intervention; peaceful transition to independence of former French and British colonies in Africa.
5. Castro's turn toward Soviet orbit; worsening U.S.-Cuban relations.
6. Khrushchev's visit to the UN.

7. Space and nuclear affairs.
8. Cancellation of Eisenhower's visit to Japan in wake of riots.
9. Sit-in demonstrations; New Orleans school integration.
10. Execution of Caryl Chessman.

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