

Did You Have A Nice Peace?



Arthur Hoppe

LET IT NEVER be said of my generation that we were unable to achieve peace in our time. For 16 entire days in May (a grand total of 384 hours or 23,040 minutes) there wasn't one single war being fought anywhere in the world!

Seeing this was the first time the world had been at peace since 1939, we naturally had a difficult time adjusting.

College students were hard-pressed to come up with anything to protest about. And most just moped around reading dull old textbooks.

Hostesses canceled dinner parties, their guests having nothing to talk about but strip mining, urban sprawl and Vietnamese refugees, who were fast becoming a bore.

A pall settled over Washington. Dr. Kissinger was reportedly threatening again to resign. If this kept up, how could he win another peace prize? And the poor President was reduced to assuring allies that another war would certainly come along some day and they could really count on us.

★ ★ ★

WORSE YET, national prestige was at its lowest ebb. America hadn't won a war for 29 years. And unless someone started a war somewhere, how could we ever break our losing streak?

The country was about ready to fold up shop. Then, just in the nick of time, the unscrupulous Cambodians, flushed with victory, launched a naval attack. Talk about kicking a guy when he's down!

They obviously took us for a nation of losers. But they vastly underestimated

our will to resist no matter what the odds.

First, of course, the President cautiously checked "Jane's Fighting Ships."

"Good grief!" he cried, blanching. "Do you realize Cambodia has a vast armada of 16 warships, including a launch, a tug boat and a 40-year-old French landing craft? Do you think they plan to invade us?"

"You can't be too sure either way," said the CIA director nervously.

"Don't forget the Domino Theory," warned the Secretary of State. "As America goes, so goes Monaco."

"I can't promise victory, sir," said the chief of naval operations, thrusting forth his jaw, "but we'll put up one whale of a fight."

"We have no choice," said the President grimly. "It's them or us."

★ ★ ★

THE RESULT, of course, was the historic American victory in The Battle of Koh Tang Island, which will be memorized by schoolchildren in generations to come. In one bold blow, we sank or crippled almost half the Cambodian naval forces!

Students have been aroused from apathy. Hostesses are sending out invitations. And America can once again hold high its head, knowing it is feared and respected around the world as the country that single-handedly licked the Cambodian Navy.

As for peace, it was, in the words of General Sherman (retired), hell.