

seemed hard-pressed for new moves against the government. Two monks, who took com-

godas will be empty," Thich Phap Tri told newsmen. "Others will direct the struggle

an 18-year-old nun, Hue Tri, had died of wounds inflicted by government troops in Saigon.

*Boats + Boats*

*6/16/66*

# Former Raft Crewman Explains Abandonment

By Ron Reeves  
Sentinel Staff Writer

The Triton raft was abandoned, not because it sank, but because running aground had demolished its five wooden keels and the rudder, Larry White of Santa Cruz said today.

White, one of the crew members, said Mexican villagers boarded the beached craft while the crew was ashore and made off with the supplies and equipment.

White's explanation came after Bert Snyder Jr., a Santa Cruz attorney, told of finding the raft floating quietly in Tur-

tle bay off the Baja California coast. Snyder declared the craft showed no signs of damage.

Last December White released a story that the raft had crashed on the rocks and sunk. Today he said the information he had released at that time was third-hand and he had learned later that the raft still floated, but could not be sailed.

"When a raft goes on the rocks like that, the bottom would be damaged, not the top. He (Snyder) couldn't see this unless he went under it," White declared today.

White said a storm forced the raft onto the rocks. A check of

the damage showed the wooden keels were gone and the metal holding bars were badly bent. The rudder also was gone. He said the nearest dry-docking facilities where repairs could be made, were hundreds of miles away in San Diego and there was no way to get the raft there.

"They didn't have any choice but to sit there the rest of their lives or come home," White said.

The craft went ashore after White and two other crewmen, Mel Higley and Al Parvin, had left. White and Higley had returned to the Santa Cruz area to get supplies and Parvin had gone to Colorado to be with his pregnant wife. Doug Otis, Fred Hametner and Dan McGee had remained on the craft.

"Doug went all over the raft to see if it could be salvaged to continue the trip," White said.

White said the three men got off with their own gear and hiked about three miles to a Mexican village where they spent the night. They returned the next morning to find the Mexicans had removed everything which could be salvaged. The three crewmen then headed home.

White said Otis is now in Fresno, Hametner is back in San Jose and McGee is in Australia.

White was asked if the crew had gotten into some type of argument that would have halted the venture.

"We all had arguments, out there alone and not seeing land for 34 days and six guys in a little cabin. If there hadn't been some personality conflicts, we wouldn't have been normal," White said.

He said that the emotional climate had calmed by the time they reached Cedrus island.

"It's inconceivable they'd have run it aground to get off, they had everything to look forward to," White said.

## Assessor Fires

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