

# 'PRIVATEER' FINDS HE IS IN DEMAND

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Man Who Asked Congress  
for License Kept Awake  
by Offers of Aid

By CLAYTON KNOWLES

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The stuff of which privateering is made does not respect normal sleeping hours, Lyle H. Munson discovered yesterday.

His bid for a letter of marque and reprisal from Congress, produced a telephone call at 6:30 A. M. from Sydney, Australia. The caller offered the services of fifty trained fighting men for any authorized expedition to free Americans held captive abroad.

The communication was one of scores, arriving by mail, telegraph and telephone, that Mr. Munson has received since he filed his petition with Congress last week. All offered aid in either cash or services.

A century and more ago, nations commissioned privateers with letters of marque and reprisal in efforts to stamp out piracy on the high seas. Some viewed the practice as little more than licensed piracy and the Declaration of Paris in 1856 sought to outlaw it.

The United States agreed in principle to the declaration, but never signed it. Now Mr. Munson contends nations that have jailed Americans are nothing but pirates. He wants to be commissioned to liberate the captives.

He says that he or anyone else so licensed could use a plane or helicopter, or even a PT boat perhaps more effectively than a regular ship. He thinks the knowledge and contacts he made as an undercover agent for the United States Government qualify him to deal with underground movements that would have to help in any move to free the Americans.

Mr. Munson served in both the Office of Strategic Services and the Central Intelligence Agency.

Money offers that are coming in to him, chiefly from people too old to volunteer for service, have posed a problem, he says. He is listing all offers but advising that, "until Congress in its wisdom acts," he is not able to accept contributions.

Several of the offers have been of \$100, Mr. Munson said. He reported also that a large corporation—he declined to identify it directly—said it would be "prepared to assist in a rather substantial way." Mr. Munson quoted an official of the corporation as having said that, while it doubted he would get a commission, it felt it wanted to assist. Mr. Munson said the corporation would like to finance ocean-going ships.

"Clearly there is public concern here," he said. "I may not be commissioned, but if my effort serves to focus public concern on this subject, it may serve to awaken some Administration interest."

Letters of marque have long been out of bougue and privateers have a status between that of a merchant vessel and a warship and the commander must be in the service of the state and his crew is subject to military discipline.

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, detailing the powers of Congress, gives it specific authority in Paragraph 11 to "declare war, grant letters of marque and reprisal, and make rules concerning captures on land and water."

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