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SO THAT A BRAVE MAN'S STORY CAN BE TOLD

"The day was D-plus-two, the drink was a Norman applejack called Calvados, and the party was a French wake in my honor. I had been reported dead by a sergeant who had seen my body floating on the water with my cameras around my neck. . . . My death had become official and my obituaries had just been released by the censor. The sudden materialization of my thirsty ghost filled my friends with disgust at their wasted sentiment. . . ."

Robert Capa's friends all over the world wish that he would turn up again with an equally convincing denial of the report of his death in the rice fields of northern Indochina last week. But he couldn't because the report was true.

The swashbuckling legend which—with reason—enveloped Capa endeared him to his many friends in journalism. But they also thoroughly respected him as a professional. They understood his motives when he left LIFE to found in 1947 a cooperative photo agency called Magnum. They were glad that he never got the cable waiting for him in Hanoi which told that one of his Magnum colleagues, Werner Bischof, had died in an accident in Peru. Like Capa, Bischof hated war—as his photographs showing the plight of Korean children (starting on p. 178) amply demonstrate.

Along with his colleagues, the brass, headed by the Commander-in-Chief (see picture), has always appreciated Capa. There isn't much



AWARD FROM A FELLOW PROFESSIONAL IN 1947

that LIFE can add to the tributes he has received. He was not a photographer for photography's sake. One thing always important to him was to communicate what he had found out. He was in Indochina on a LIFE assignment and last week his pictures of Laos told how war was coming to that sleepy kingdom. Then he moved on to the fighting in the Delta to take his last pictures.

To get these pictures to the U.S. in time for this issue of LIFE seemed almost impossible, but we have resorted to every production device we know to get his account to a nation which must soon make up its mind about Indochina. LIFE bureaus east and west en route from hard-to-reach Saigon were alerted to expedite the film. In Paris correspondents and photographers rushed the last of three Capa shipments out of customs, through a laboratory and into the hands of a passenger flying to New York.

What struck everyone was the cooperation of French customs, airline officials and the passenger when they heard the pictures were Capa's last take. As this is written on May 30 we're doing, rather than saying, what we think are the right things. For words we give you Ernest Hemingway in a cable from Madrid: "He was a good friend and a great and very brave photographer. It is bad luck for everybody that the percentages caught up with him. . . . He was so much alive that it is a hard long day to think of him as dead."

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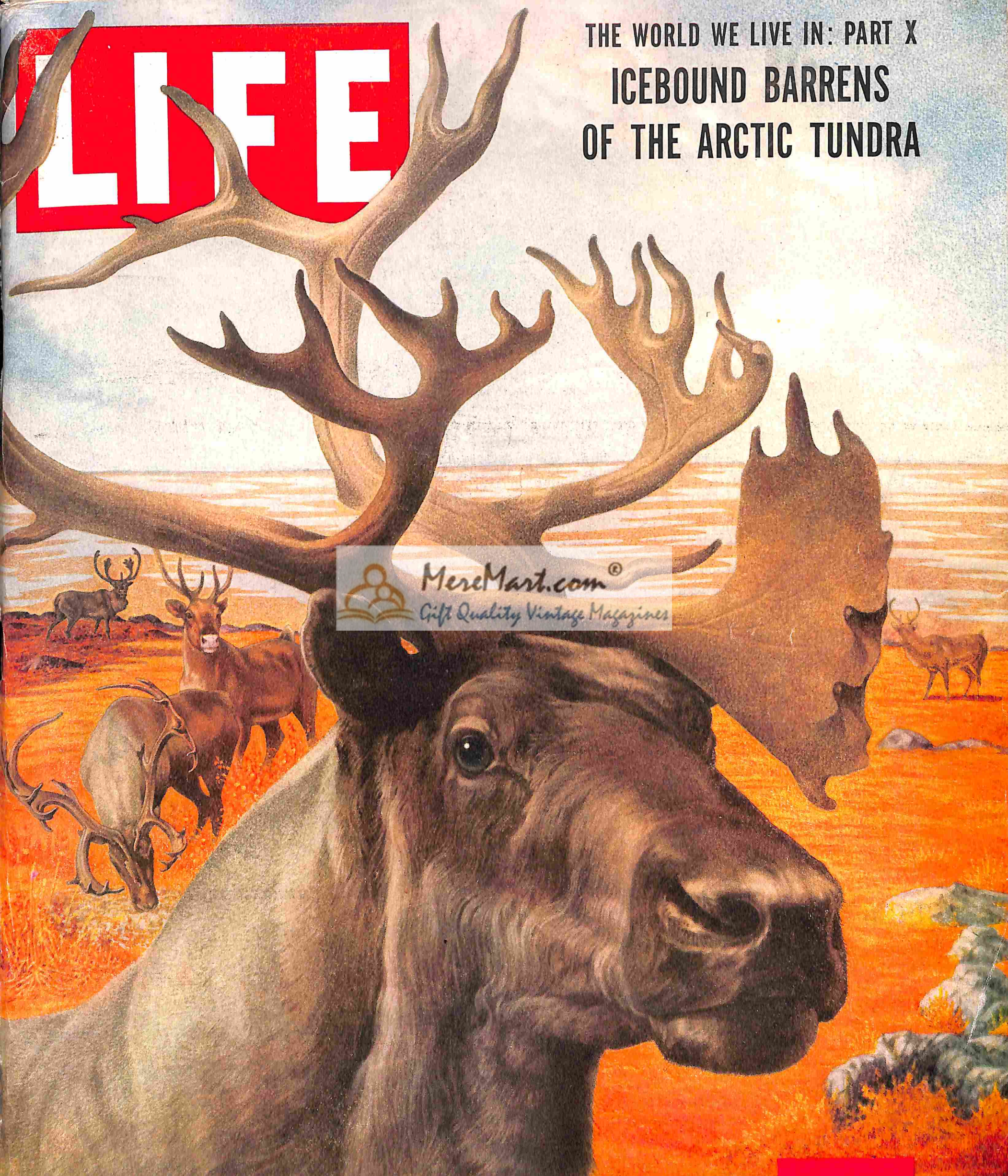
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LIFE

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN: PART X
ICEBOUND BARRENS
OF THE ARCTIC TUNDRA



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