



Boxing and Wrestling Finals Near

WHEN Cruiser Division 4 lines up its champions against those of Cruiser Division 7 on 29 January the Houston will have the greatest number of representatives from any ship. Chick, Arthur, Buttler and Fordemwalt will wrestle in the 118 lb, 145 lb, 155 lb, and 165 lb class weights respectively whereas Hodge, Harris, and Lewdanski will don the gloves in the 147 lb, 160 lb, and heavyweight classes. This is the greatest array of boxers and wrestlers that ever represented the Rambler ship in the cruiser eliminations. Every man aboard should be behind these boys. They ought to go far. Let's give them the backing and praise they deserve. A friendly pat on the back or a well meant "good luck" will show them your appreciation.

Cruiser Divisions 5 and 6 hold their eliminations on 5 February. The winners then clash for the cruiser championships and the right to proceed against the battleships on 25-26 Mar. Fleet finals are on 1st and 2nd of April.

When our ship leaves for Norfolk on 2nd of February it is contemplated to transfer our boxers and wrestlers to another ship within the division, probably the Pensacola. It will be no picnic for these men to know that they are being left behind while their ship is returning to the states for a short while, and due credit should be given them for representing our ship then. Fighters, every last one of them, they show their true sporting
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Slaughter Among the Icebergs An Historical Voyage of Mercy By Gus

(For all you unlucky readers who happened to miss the last edition of the Blue Bonnet and hence the gripping tale of "Slaughter Among The Icebergs" a brief resume is hereby given: The Houston while lying at anchor during the holiday season receives mystifying orders from the Navy Department to get underway and proceed to the Polar regions to secure Polar bear meat. This meat is the only cure known for the strange disease sweeping the country. The crew and officers are finally mustered and the ship is made ready for getting underway.)

The Story Continues

Every last man aboard down to the lowest seaman turned to at double quick cadence in order to prepare the ship for getting underway. Especially was this true of the Aviation Cadets. They were head and shoulders above the others with their speed and vigor. Through it all nothing was left to chance. Men went to work quietly, efficiently, and quickly, seeming to know full well the terrible hazards of the weather in the Polar regions. Probably this was due to a large extent on their training but no one can say that the noble purpose of the trip did not act as an additional stimulus in wringing from their bodies many ergs of work.

Had not a particular boat cox'n shown remarkable forethoughtfulness probably a good share of the crew would have suffered most horribly
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Panama Canal Cost \$510,901,364 Yearly Capacity of 17,000

THE Panama Canal connects the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans through the narrow isthmus where the long Continental Divide, extending from Alaska to the Straits of Magellan, dips to one of its lowest points. In ancient geological periods there was a natural channel here but later the land rose and left the Isthmus as a natural barrier between the oceans.

The line of the Canal goes up the valley of the Chagres River on the Atlantic slope passes through the Continental Divide at Gaillard Cut, and descends to the Pacific Ocean down the Valley of the Rio Grande.

Following this route the Canal is 40.27 statute miles in length from shore line to shore line, and 50.72 miles from deep water to deep water. Passage of a ship through the Canal requires about eight hours.

Since the Atlantic entrance is 33.52 statute miles north and 27.02 west of the Pacific entrance, ships passing from the Pacific to the Atlantic side travel from East to West instead of the opposite direction as would naturally be the course.

Gatun Lake which was formed as a result of the damming of the Chagres River at Gatun Dam, has an area of 163.38 square miles with a shore line of 1,100 miles when the surface is at its elevation of 85' above sea level. It is second largest artificially formed lake in the world, exceeded only by the lake formed by Boulder Dam.

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—: THE BLUE BONNET :—

A weekly publication of the ship's company of the U.S.S. Houston, Captain G. N. Barker, U.S.N., Commanding and Commander C. A. Bailey, U.S.N., Executive Officer.

Editor: Lieut. (jg) E. A. McDonald

Assistant Editor: Ensign J. P. M. Johnston

Cartoonist: W. C. Ridge

Circulation: M. A. Pipp, Sealc

Printers: R. L. Beckwith, Sealc

E. Essy Sea2c

EDITORIAL

With the return of our printer, Beckwith, who was so unfortunate as to be knocked down by an automobile in Long Beach during the Holiday season, the Blue Bonnet returns to its regular printed form. The ship's paper will come out weekly, as originally scheduled.

The Houston finds itself in the rare position of embarking upon many interesting cruises which are highly historical as well as interesting. On these cruises different ports are visited and likewise many interesting incidents develop. The Blue Bonnet is not intended to be the organ of the few. On the contrary it should be the spokesman and messenger of all the officers and crew aboard the Houston.

The editorial staff (very few in numbers) solicit your contributions and ideas. If they are good ideas we shall be glad to use them. This does not apply only to the crew. Write-ups and suggestions from officers are also desired. If you think you have something good do not hesitate in bringing it to the attention of the editor.

Cotton Curio

The erection of the Leasowe Lighthouse on sandy Wirral Shore, England, presented what appeared to be an unsurmountable difficulty because of the instability of the sandy shore and the lack of a suitable foundation for the masonry tower. The difficulty was solved in a very strange manner. An incoming American ship, laden with cotton, had gone ashore and was wrecked nearby. The cotton bales were salvaged and dumped into the sand at the point where the lighthouse was to be erected. The fleecy mass settled into the sand and became as solid as the hardest rock. On this curious foundation was erected the lighthouse which has endured for one hundred and seventy-five years.

Slaughter Among the Icebergs

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during the coming voyage. Spying a dozen barrels on the dock, he elected to load them into his boat and return the cargo to the ship. When a barrel was experimentally opened on board a rousing cheer went up from all stations—for there nestling snugly in their vinegar brine were thousands of well proportioned pickles, a quick cure for any sea harrassed stomach.

Soon all boiler safeties were popping off like a steam caliope at a home town carnival and it was high time to take our last landfall for many days. A very touching scene now occurred which was amazing for its ingenuity. While the anchor chain rattled up the hawse pipes a large yacht crept up to the Houston to lay broadside. It was loaded with the sweathearts, wives, and families of all the officers and crew of the ship. A band from somewhere struck up "I didn't raise my boy to be a sailor", the ones we were leaving behind waved their handkerchiefs in a fond gesture of farewell, and the officers and crew alike wept openly. Never before had such a heart rending departure been taken. But duty was duty and although many aboard turned to their details with leaden hearts the ship slowly gathered speed and soon land and family faded in the distance.

When minutes meant lives, speed of course was of tremendous importance. Acceleration tables were tossed overboard when the chief engineer said, "to Hell with the score, there'll be no nursing of the engines." Nevertheless he opportunely kept an eye on the turbines and computed hourly scores. He was overjoyed by the results. "At this rate," he said, "we'll win the engineering competition in a walk."

As soon as it was deemed feasible by the Navigator the course was set at 000° True. Cognizance was taken of the fact that the ship had to be well to seaward of Coastwise steamer lanes and any islands as the large bow waves thrown up by the searing speed would have wreaked havoc with shipping or any Coastal community. Any ship would have floundered in the high swells. As it was the sensitive seismograph at the California Institute of Technology recorded an earthquake disturbance somewhere in the Pacific.

But all was not to be calm sailing. Little did we all realize the dangers and mishaps that were in store for us. The first near calamity struck without any premonition of coming evil. It struck from a clear sky. It happened on the second day out.

Peculiar black clouds were reported by the lookouts on the morning of this eventful day. The cloud formation was mystifying although much study with reference books brought out the fact that sometimes huge anvil shaped clouds, dark in appearance, are the forerunners of a major electrical disturbance. The stacks were carefully checked for undue amount of smoking. The last resort, that the firerooms were blowing tubes and thus causing the clouds, was finally discarded. The ship was distinctly in for it.

With a rush like the flurry of bats black fog enveloped the ship. It was impossible to distinguish one's hand before his face. The steersman was frantic trying to keep the vessel on a steady course. Wild waves and wind made steering well nigh impossible, and what was worse yet was the fact that the compass' face was blotted out by the fog. However, one enterprising electrician, with the help of a few hardy volunteers succeeded in rigging a large searchlight to help illuminate the steering compass. This proved a lifesaver as the steersman could, by straining his eyes, see the compass. Steering watches were relieved every ten minutes, lookouts were done away with. Most of the others stuck to their assignments like true sons of the sea. They would fight to the end.

Suddenly stark fear gripped the ship when a terrifying scream from No. 2 messing compartment rent the air. Insane laughter followed. Some messcook had cracked under the terrific strain.

(to be continued)

Don't fail to read the next episode. Will the elements bring disaster to the ship?

Boxing and Wrestling

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blood and fighting spirit by accepting what some believe is a bad break. The Blue Bonnet, in the interests of the entire ship's company wishes to extend to them a hearty handclasp and "good luck".

The Panama Canal

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Under continuous operation the capacity of the present canal is approximately 48 ships of usual size per day, or about 17,000 a year.

The Panama Canal has been built because of the distances it saves ocean commerce. Between New York and San Francisco the distance of 13,135 nautical miles by the way of the straits of Magellan has been reduced to 5,262 by the Canal, a saving of 7,873, or three-fifths.

If the cost of operating a ship be taken at 20 cents per net ton a day, the cost of the tolls on laden ships is about equivalent to six days of operation at sea.

During the three year period ending 30 June 1937 the total of ocean going vessels measuring 300 or more net tons which passed through the Canal was 15,949. Tolls paid on them amounted to \$69,888,314.26. During this period the traffic averaged, per month, 443 vessels. The vessels were of 34 nationalities, U. S. ships forming about 24 percent. The average commercial ship pays approximately \$4,400 in tolls for transit.

While the Panama Canal was opened for traffic in August 1914 the early years of operation were hampered by slides and commercial traffic did not reach normal development until after the close of the World War era. For this reason the Canal is not considered to have been completed until the year of its official opening in 1920, and on that basis the cost of constructing the Canal has been calculated at \$510,901,364.

Weather on the Isthmus is continuous summer. January to April, inclusive, are the normal dry season months, during which there is comparatively little rainfall. May to December is the normal rainy season period with about 63 inches of rain on the Pacific side, and 117 inches on the Atlantic. One of the oldest known jokes in captivity is that in Panama in the wet season it rains all the time and in the dry season it rains only eight or ten times a day.

In 1879, the French came to build a Canal, headed by Count Ferdinand

de Lesseps, builder of the Suez Canal. But a lack of knowledge of tropical diseases and other causes, imperfect sanitation methods and other factors contributed towards the failure of this effort by the French.

Meanwhile, discontent in Panama toward the Columbian government of Isthmus had reached the breaking point. The beginning of the 20th Century found Columbia negotiating with the United States for a treaty where under the latter would be empowered to buy the French Canal Company's properties and rights on the Isthmus. This treaty drawn up and signed by the plenipotentiaries of the United States and Columbia, was found satisfactory by the Panamanian people who saw in it a new hope for the future. But when submitted to the Columbian Congress for ratification, it was rejected, in spite of the protests of Panama's representatives.

The rejection of the treaty spurred the Panamanians to decisive action, and on November 3, 1903, the independence or separation of the Isthmus from Columbia was proclaimed. Negotiations were immediately started with the United States, resulting in the present Panama Canal Treaty which grants to the United States authority over a strip of Isthmian territory ten miles wide by fifty miles long wherein to build, maintain and operate a canal.

The Man Who Wins

The man who wins is an average man,
Not built on any particular plan,
Not blessed with any particular luck,
Just steady and earnest and full of pluck.

When asked a question he does't guess
He knows the answers 'No' and 'Yes'.
When set to the task the rest can't do,
He buckles right down till he puts it through.

So he works and waits till one fine day
There is a better job with bigger pay.
And the man who shirked whenever he could
Is bossed by the man who's work made good.

For the man who wins is the man who works,
Who neither labor nor trouble shirks,
Who uses his hands, his head, his eyes
The man who wins is the man who TRIES.

Fort San Lorenzo Visited by Houston Party

A party composed of camera fans, would-be fishermen, and sightseers had the very good fortune to set out from the Houston last Sunday morning and journey to the oldest fort erected in either of the Americas. Its history intertwined with intrigue and bloodshed is a revelation in suffering and the fight of man against tropical jungles and fever ridden waters.

A few following facts from history is traced here to give an idea of its early origin. In the year of 1509 La Cosa and Nicuesa, two Spanish favorites of King Ferdinand, prepared for a joint expedition to Hispaniola and thence to ultimately capture Peru. Jamaica was placed at their disposal to serve as a supply base. But Columbus, a bitter enemy of Nicuesa because of the latter's popularity with the King, would not grant permission to the use of Jamaica as a supply base so part of the expedition established a base at the mouth of the Chagres River. The party, numbering over 700 men at the outset, dwindled down through famine and disease to a mere 70 in the December of 1510. A blockhouse was then constructed. This was the beginning of the Fort. Although named "Nombre De Dios" by the builders it eventually lost this name through successive constructions, and the name "Fort San Lorenzo" was finally applied to it.

It is interesting to note the ruthlessness of the Spaniards in applying their will to the Indian inhabitants of the country. Indians were forced to work at the points of guns. The fort therefore was constructed entirely by Indian labor under the guidance of the Spanish conquerors. Balboa, who came a few years later to discover the Pacific Ocean by traversing the Isthmus, also wreaked great hardships on the native population by having them carry his ships piece by piece to the Pacific side. In a few years, historians relate, the Indian population was reduced from three million down to a bare two hundred.

The Fort was captured and burned once by the notorious Pirate Morgan, then reconstructed no less than four times. The Fort as it stands during

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NOVEMBER 21, 1918

SURRENDER OF THE GERMAN HIGH SEAS FLEET

Admiral von Reuter, commanding German officer, went aboard the Queen Elizabeth, and there arranged with Admiral Beatty and his flag officers for the surrender of the German High Seas fleet. At dinner the German officers dined at one table, the British at another. After more discussion, Admiral von Reuter departed on the Koenigsberg for Kiel about ten that night. The Commander-in-Chief then issued orders to all his ships, prescribing the entire details of the surrender. The Sixth Battle Squadron, composed of the American ships New York, flagship, Admiral Rodman, the Texas, Wyoming, Arkansas, and Florida, the Delaware having returned home, got under way at 4 a. m. on November 21, 1918, and steamed from the Forth Bridge out of the Firth into the North Sea. The entire British Grand Fleet was here concentrated, formed in two parallel lines, steaming due east six miles apart, the American squadron being the second one in the Northern line. About 9 a. m. the men crowding the decks sighted some smoke coming dead ahead out of the mist and in a short time the German battle cruisers were plainly seen leading the other German ships in their last trip at sea under their own flag. The German fleet was not flying battle flags. At this time every one of the Anglo-American ships was at her battle stations, turrets and secondary batteries were fully manned, and all preparations made for treachery at the last minute.

The German line, led by the Seydlitz, steamed slowly between the Allied lines, keeping perfect station, and when their flagship came abreast of the Queen Elizabeth the signal was given for the whole Grand Fleet to make a turn of 180 degrees, and return into port with the surrendered enemy. The appearance of the enemy ships was very good. The fleets proceeded into port in this formation, the lines gradually converged as the ships approached the entrance of the Firth of Forth. After reaching a point a short distance in the Firth the German ships dropped anchor, and Admiral Beatty on his flagship stood by

to inspect them. About three o'clock that afternoon Admiral Beatty sent his famous message, "The German flag will be hauled down at sunset today, and will not be flown again until further orders." The German ships a few days later, after more inspection, were convoyed to their port of internment at Scapa Flow.

German ships at surrender at Scapa Flow:

Battle Cruisers: von Der Tann, Molke, Kaiser Fridrich, Der Grosse, Kaiserin, Koenig Albert, Prinz Regent Luitpold, Seidnitz, Koenig, Grosser Kurfurst, Markgraf, Kronprinz Wilhelm, Derflinger, Hindenburg, Baden, Bayern.

Cruisers: Strassburg, Dresden, Frankfurt, Kolm, Nurnberg, Brummer, Bremser.

On June 21, 1919, German crews sunk most of the German ships at Scapa Flow.

Fort San Lorenzo

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the present day still guards the mouth of the Chagres which was formerly the only opening to interior Panama. Although its crumbled walls, a good eight feet in thickness, show the ravages of time it houses many historical souvenirs. Old canons and countless rounds of round shot lie rusting and eroding in the tropical atmosphere. A moat, 15 feet across and twenty five feet deep, still prevents ingress from any angle except over the ancient drawbridge.

To have seen this evidence of by-gones days will give all the sightseers an interesting subject of talk when they return to the States. They were lucky to have seen it.

I Don't Get It

"Oi, Oi. . . Look at dot pretty pigeon."

"That's a gull."

"So vat? . gull or boy . its still a pretty pigeon"

There are no marriage ties, the wife always wins.

Another difference between a married man and a bachelor is that when a bachelor walks the floor with a baby he is dancing.



The sails of the U.S.S. Constitution, one of our Navy's historic ships which saw service in the War of 1812, developed 600 horse power from a full spread of canvas with a wind that is said to have driven the ship at a maximum speed of 13 knots. The effectiveness of this type of ship was so noted that the British Admiralty ordered British frigates to cruise in pairs and under no circumstances, where avoidable, to accept single ship action with an American frigate.

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Klim is the word 'milk' in reverse. Powdered milk is not a 20th century concoction for Navy men, but according to historians, was used by Greek sea captains 2,600 years ago. Much of it was made from goats' milk.

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A bamboo shoot about a foot in length, carried the news of a sinking ship that did not sink. A Spanish Captain saw his vessel "Elizabeth" sinking fast 2,300 miles from home during a storm in the year 1512. He sealed important records in the bamboo shoot, stopping both ends with rags and hot wax. After the container was tossed overboard, the storm abated and the ship and men were saved. The bamboo shoot was retrieved off the coast of Italy 5 years later.

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The first sausage mill was said to have been used aboard early French ships and invented for the purpose of making meat more easily cooked. Stomach trouble, it is said, was reduced 96 per cent by the adoption of the meat grinder.

Modern umbrellas are made of transparent material. This enables a person to see where he is going — or if the owner is coming.

Do right and fear no man — Do not write and fear no woman.