

Aboard the U.S.S. Houston At Sea

Now that we're plowing through the wild waves towards the sun blessed islands of the blue Pacific, and all hands are caged together for a period of two weeks or more, it behooves us to take stock of ourselves and our shipmates. What are the rest of the people on the Good Ship Houston doing?

Let's just have a look in on the Gun-nery Department and their drills and goins-on. General Quarters are a lead-ing item in the orders of the day, with the incidental condition watches and so on. It also comes to mind that Pap-pyAsher has put away the rubber mal-let that he always keeps handy when turret two is about to send out her salvos, just in case someone might get a crazy notion to open a plug at the wrong time. They tell me that Pappy is not only capable of using it but is also quite proficient at it.

Next we will take a look at the Engin-eering Department, with firerooms that have a temperature at full steam of some hundred and ten degrees and in the tropics it runs up to one hun-dred thirty-five and forty. No wonder that some of the boys come up out of the holes looking like they had just come out of a turkish bath. They, too, have their difficulties at times at sea, such things as a sudden change from twelve knots to twenty-seven or so in less time than it takes to tell about it, or a sudden change of orders the other way, or maybe a fellow forgets some minor thing and all hands will be wondering how something happen-ed, though with our modern Navy that is a practically an unheard-of-thing.

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Assignment To New Construction

In general, the Bureau will assign en-listed personnel to new construction surface vessels by detail and not as the result of written requests. Individ-ual requests for this type of duty are not desired, except from men in the following categories:

- (a) Men whose enlistments will ex-pire approximately within three months and who desire to reen-list for new construction.
- (b) Men completing tours of duty on shore recruiting, East Coast dis-trict craft or Transportation Ser-vice.
- (c) Men destined or available for general detail.

All such requests will be acted upon by the Bureau at time of receipt in accordance with the requirements for the rating concerned. No waiting list will be maintained.

Assignment to New Construction Sub-marines is made by Commander, Sub-marine Force, from qualified submar-ine personnel. Former submarine men completing tours of shore duty or a-vailable for general detail will norm-ally be ordered to a Submarine Unit

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Athletic Interests

The Tug-O'-War on the Main Deck Aft was a howling success in more ways than one, beginning on Wednes-day afternoon, with Hank Cromwell of the 'M' Division holding down the anchor end for his gang and Big Hen-ry of the Boat Deck Gun Crew keeping his gang out of the water. Henry fell down just in time and saved the day for the fourth in one pull but the 'F' Division made them bow down in de-feat in the next. Chmura of the fourth was prominently noisy as usual and expected. Charlie Putnam, Engineer's Force Jimmy Legs, was busy getting the heavyweights of the bilgedivers on topside to partake in the affair. It seems that the lads are afraid of the afternoon sun. Come up again some day boys. The spirit of competition that is aroused in a sport of this kind is just what is needed to make a hap-py and contented ship's company more that way. We have a mighty good ship here fellows, and a mighty good crew, and some happy, carefree rival-ry and bantering back and forth is a fine thing.

DIVISIONAL ATHLETIC COMPETITION

*Boxing-Each weight	150 100 - -
*Wrestling-Each weight	150 100 - -
†Basketball-Free throw	100 70 40 20
†Tug-o-War	100 70 40 20
†Horse-and-Rider	80 60 30 10
†Pie Race	80 60 30 10
†Rope Climb	60 40 20 10
†Spar Bouts	60 40 20 10
[Shuffle Board	40 30 15 5
[Acey-Ducey	40 30 15 5

*Smoker Finals-Honolulu.

†Afternoon Events.

†Happy Hour-Lahaina.

[Individual Eliminations.

—: 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.

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19 March, 1938

More Service From Ship's Service

The Ship's Service has purchased a supply of assorted spare parts for radios at wholesale prices for the convenience of radio-minded personnel. These parts will cost about one-half their retail value ashore. Walters, RM1c, of the Ship's radio gang has offered his services in repairing radios for you. If your old radio groans and squeaks now is the time to get it in first class condition at very low cost.

Due to numerous requests for coffee, the Soda Fountain has been provided with a new Silex Coffee Maker. This coffee maker is supposed to make the best coffee obtainable (providing the best grade coffee is used) and it is apparent that it is being well received judging from the line-up. It will take a few days for our soda jerkers to get up their speed in coffee making so don't give up hope - we expect to be serving coffee just as fast as you can drink it before the week is up.

During the past few months the Ship's Service has been receiving more and more patronage from the crew. This increased patronage has allowed purchase of the chairs and tables for the compartments, athletic gear, sweaters for our athletic teams, prizes for sports, etc. It is proposed to extend the antennaplex radio system aft upon return to San Pedro. Other proceeds will be spent in such a way as will benefit the ship and the crew.

Sivak: "Boy, she certainly gave you a dirty look!"

G.E. Lewis: "Who?"

Sivak: "Why, Mother Nature, of course."

Aboard The Houston At Sea

(From Page 1.)

Let us take a walk up on the signal bridge and see the boys there hoisting signals and sending a few messages via blinker and semaphore. And down below that is the radio shack, and the people sitting around with earphones on and a lot of funny looking gadgets that mean nothing at all to you and I, but are the heart and soul of the Radioman. In through these earphones and other gadgets come the communications that cause us to do so many different things that we see no immediate reason for; and also that stuff which goes to make the "Morning Press" for which we are so thankful in the morning watch as we drink our coffee. We also think of how the people on the bridge are accused of raiding sundry places aboard ship with malice aforethought and finding various edibles for use during the mid-watch. They tell me that Lloyd, SM3c, had quite a time keeping some sandwiches he had hidden at one time not long ago, and we wonder how it is that some folks are always trying to reap the profits from someone else's efforts.

And now the C&R Department comes in for its share. Most recent general repair job that comes to mind is the new broom hanger that one sees in every compartment aboard, and must say that it's a lot nicer than having those brooms all over the deck and one day it is here and the next day it's where you happen to find it. Nice going I say. Besides that they have been repairing the gangways and the windows in the Pilot House. The paravane gear has also felt the hand of the boys that work under the direction of that erstwhile pair, Shaw, CM1c, and Godaire, SF1c. And then we think of that new radio that Joe Oberg brought aboard last Thursday and the pains that everyone went to to rig an aerial, and also that Joe is wondering if it will last out the cruise, as it has seldom been quiet since its arrival.

Now we are about to look over the Supply Department and their running mates of the Commissary, where we see that they have filled the vegetable locker to overflowing with fresh vegetables and spuds, and the ice box is also full. That can only mean one thing, we are about to have some

mighty tender chow on the trip to the Emerald Isles of the broad Pacific. As we are out to sea, Webb, Bkr2c, will be aboard and we can look forward to a long and tasty line of baked goods. The pay office is running as smoothly as ever with Pappy (General) Grant, CSK, going ashore early last Saturday forenoon and leaving Ol' Man Yates at home singing the blues. Well, Sivak, the man of accounts of the Supply Office is having a big time with the Aviation crew, as the arrival of 2 new planes put the lad to work and he is really singing the song of the Navy man from time immemorial.

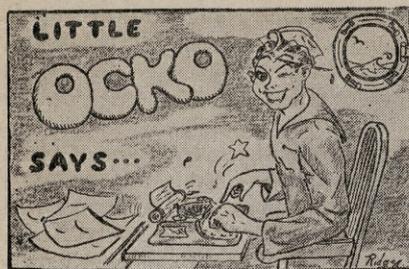
The Aviation gang have two new sea-planes aboard and they are busily at work keeping them in top-notch shape for the strenuous duty that is coming to them. They also have a spare folded and tucked away in the port hanger space that is giving them things to do in their spare moments. Pat Readette proudly showed me a picture of as lovely a youngster as I have ever seen and she is just about to commence walking. You've a right to be proud Pat, old timer, and I'm not so sure that I don't envy you quite a bit.

Modern Warfare

MILITARY FIREWORKS: Modern science finds practical use for fireworks and firecrackers. The aviator carries, as a part of his equipment, parachute flares, smoke candles, and a "Very" pistol. The parachute flares, which burn about four minutes, dropping 300 to 400 feet a minute, are used to light the way in case of a forced landing. The smoke candles, which burn with a peculiar dense grey smoke unlike ordinary smoke, are burned to attract attention in case an aviator lands in an isolated region, or is injured in landing and needs assistance. The "Very" pistol shoots stars which give a brilliant white light; both these and rockets are used in signaling. Star shells are found very useful in wartime, for they light up a large area as brightly as a searchlight, without betraying their point of origin.

It is not known whether fireworks originated as a means of warfare or for a celebration. The Chinese knew them probably fifty centuries ago.

SEND THE BLUE BONNET HOME.



Right at the first this week I want to extend the welcome of the Blue Bonnet and the ship's company to A.J. Dutton, who came aboard and received his appointment to Chief Boatswain's Mate (AA), on the sixteenth. His last duty was on the Reina Mercedes, Annapolis, Md., and he told me that he hopes to enjoy his tour of duty on the Rambler ship. We do too, and may he have a long tour at that!!

We heard also that Dingle, G.R., was appointed to CWT (AA) at about the same time, only a few days earlier. Nice going, and congratulations. We hope that all the other men on the second pay grade who took the exams meet with good luck and receive their appointments before long.

Poor Knowlden, Y3c, of the Gunnery Dep't., the first night out the lad was really wishing that we were back in the near vicinity of Long Beach. Don't tell me the Golden Grainers are all on the Argonne.

This is the week of the Irish and last Thursday was a day of rejoicing in the heart of every true Irishman in the world. Saw quite a few of the men of the Rambler Ship wearing the famous green about the decks that day and so I guess there still is a chance for St. Patrick after all. He'll be quickly enough forgotten when we reach Honolulu, you can bet on that

Through the mails the last Thursday we were in Long Beach there came a letter to Tom Mallette, galley striker, from Dorothy Lamour, star of the picture "Hurricane". . . . Mallette has taken a lot of good natured kidding from the gang back there and earned for himself the name of the Blushing Beauty of the S Division. He said something about a picture and all the lads are dying to see it.

"Andy" Mellon of the Zoom-gang has returned to the ship after a thirty day shipping over leave, and tells us that it is plenty cold back there in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Andy's pre-navy home was in Northern Wisconsin and since the writer has spent a couple of winters in that territory he can easily see where Andy is quite right.

Tennant, WT1c, B Div., returned to the ship to make the cruise and we hope that he too enjoyed his leave at his home. Be sorta nice to drop down in the fireroom and have a cup of coffee and talk over old times with him.

Westerfield, EM2c, our movie operator tells me that we have some thirty new records aboard for use with the vitaphone system and they sure are honeys. They were purchased through Ship's Service facilities and will be nice to listen to when we get far enough south when it will be warm enough to sit on the quarter-deck and listen to them. We also have a few chairs and card tables on the mess decks, and they seem to be getting a real welcome from all hands for a fellow can seldom find a place on one after working hours. Lets take care of these luxuries and it will not be long till we have more of the same.

Dell Hunter Smith and Felix, our two mail orderlies, have been doing a nice run of business on the sale of the nicely displayed envelopes and stamps in the P.O. bulletin board. It is nice that all the fellows seem about to remember the home folks with Clipper Air Mail when we get to the islands. While Speaking of it, a Chief Petty Officer on the ship was remarking the other day on the courteous and pleasant service a fellow receives at the Post Office these days. We are fortunate in having a couple of fine tempered lads who can do business with a smile and take a joke when it comes their way.

You'll have to admit it fellers, that lad Cochrane of GSK is quite a business man too. He sent a book of the Houston matches to every one of the Canteen Yoeman in the Fleet and did right well by himself. Most of the boys sent back two and three for his collection and the fellow on the Vincennes sent a whole box of forty. Well, its a cinch bet he'll not run out of matches for a while anyway.

Henry, GM1c, has a new way of holding reveille in the armory. He comes in and gives 'Rosebud' (so his girl calls him) Freeman a call by pulling the boy's nose and it seems that our Herkie doesn't enjoy it a little bit.

Congratulations and cigars are in order at this time for Pappy Asher, of turret two, who received his acting appointment to Chief Turret Captain, and to Abbot, of the Boat Shop, who recieved his acting appointment to Chief Machinist's Mate on the 16th as well as Dutton, CBM, and Dingle, CWT.

One day last week we received some recruits aboard, thirteen in number and they were assigned to their different divisions and we welcome them aboard, for more reasons than one; that is, we are not only glad to have new shipmates but also glad to have more men aboard during the cruise, as after all we lost a few in the days just before we left berth Dog Six.

Miller and Rice, two dashing "V" Div. Seamen, have quite a time telling the same story on each other. It seems Miller took up a blind date with a young femme of the Apache nationality, and blushes beautifully when it is referred to. To counteract it he now claims that Rice was the heart-breaker and not himself. I'm also told that Nelson of the same group is quite a gigolo. How about it, Nellie?

Jokes ?

The C.P.O. was giving the new colored ship's cook, fresh from the country, some advice

"We shall have a new griller for the galley, too—you know what a griller is?"

"I sho do," replied Amos, significantly. "It's a big, hairy monkey the size of a man. And if you want one of those in the galley ah'm leavin' this ship NOW!"

Got the usual bunch of letters in this week. The best letter was one I got from a Dumb Dora who wanted to know who won the diaper derby staged by three fathers in Hollywood recently. Of all the dumb questions. Nobody won, of course. Each father wound up a little behind.

Assignment To New Construction

(From Page 1.)

and not to New Construction Submarines. Former submarine men serving in surface vessels who desire consideration for New Construction Submarines submit requests to Commander, Base Force (West Coast vessels) or the Bureau (East Coast vessels).

This change in the Bureau's practice is made in consideration of:

- (a) The equalization of demands for personnel upon the forces afloat.
- (b) The appreciable reduction in clerical work, both on board ship and in the Bureau.
- (c) The belief that desirable volunteers will have the same opportunity for assignment to this duty as under the present method.

The procurement of enlisted personnel for new construction will be as follows in the order named:

- (a) Reenlistments.
- (b) Men completing recruiting duty and shore duty.
- (c) General detail from receiving ships or stations.
- (d) Men completing duty in East Coast district craft or the Transportation Service.
- (e) Balance of personnel by rate by "blanket order" from the Forces Afloat after considering excesses, availability, transportation, and time involved.

The qualifications for new construction are:

- (a) Record must be good (well above average).
- (b) Two years' obligated service (agreements to extend enlistment, to reenlist, and not to apply for Fleet Naval Reserve are acceptable).

Where choice exists, the following should be carried out:

- (a) Preference given to men with previous experience in type.
- (b) Preference given to the man who has longer obligated service.
- (c) Preference given to volunteers.
- (d) Preference given to men who are not liable to be ordered to shore duty whether such duty has been requested or not.

The Bureau desires that the personnel assigned to new construction vessels be as permanent as possible throughout the first year that such vessels are operating with the Fleet, and that

all ratings be required to serve eighteen months in new ships from date of commissioning before becoming eligible for assignment to other duty. The service of men who have been through the building and fitting out period are most vital during the first eighteen months of commissioned service. Duty on vessels newly commissioned, or duty in connection with fitting out new construction while building, is just as obligatory and exacting as duty elsewhere in the Navy, whether requested or not.

The desirability and necessity of detailing only men who will become assets to the new ship cannot be stressed too strongly. Commanding Officers will not use the assignment of men to new construction as a means of transferring an undesirable. The new ship must be given a good start. The benefits to the service as a whole must be considered. Those men selected for new construction should be men whom the Commanding Officer would like to have if he were to be ordered to command the new ship.

YOU'VE GOT THE NEXT WATCH

A Play in Two Acts

Act I

Time - 0330.

Place - Aboard the HOUSTON in a stateroom.

O.O.D. Messenger - "Three thirty, sir. You have the next watch. It's raining on the top side."

(04 - 08) O.O.D. - "M-m-m-m all right." Turns over.
(Elapse of 15 minutes).

Messenger - "Sir, you have the next watch. It's three forty-five."

(04 - 08) O.O.D. - "M-m-m-m what's that?" Warily sits up and rubs his eyes. "Three forty-five? Why didn't you call me at three-thirty?"

Messenger - "I did but you must've gone back to sleep."

(04 - 08) O.O.D. - "All right. Go up and tell the officer of the deck I'll be right up. I can dress in a minute."

(Fights his way to switch and floods room with light. This causes roommate to mutter in sleep and turn over in bunk. Turns out light, and then stumbles over a chair in fumbling for desk light. Roommate stirs and curses. Dresses hurriedly, putting on roommate's shoes by mistake.)

Act II

Time - 0349½

Place - Pilot House

Atmospheric Conditions - Heavy Rain Squalls.

(04 - 08) O.O.D. - (After barking his shins against the ladder and bumping into several persons (one of whom turns out to be the Captain) finally stays put in one place until his eyes begin to focus.)

Messenger - "The officer of the deck is out taking bearings on the starboard side, sir."

(04 - 08) O.O.D. - "Are you the messenger?"

Messenger - "Yes, sir."

(04 - 08) O.O.D. - "Don't you know that you're supposed to call me at three thirty! Besides, why didn't you tell me it was raining! What's the matter with you, et cetera, et cetera - - ."

Messenger - "But - - -, sir."

(04 - 08) O.O.D. - "There's no excuse for it."

Messenger - "But - - -, sir. That must've been the other messenger. I've just relieved."

(04 - 08) O.O.D. - (Groans, and makes way out into the darkness and wet to relieve, thoroughly disgruntled with all forms of Navy life.)

—: Curtain :—