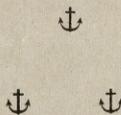


Gunnery, Aviation Edition



Early Naval Aviation

Almost from the very beginning of man's conquest of the air, the Navy has had enthusiastic supporters of aviation and a great deal of the progress made in aviation has been due to the efforts of these enthusiasts.

Captain Washington Irving Chambers has been rightfully called the "Father of Naval Aviation" and it was largely due to his foresight and interest in aviation that made possible the early developments made by the Navy in this field of endeavor.

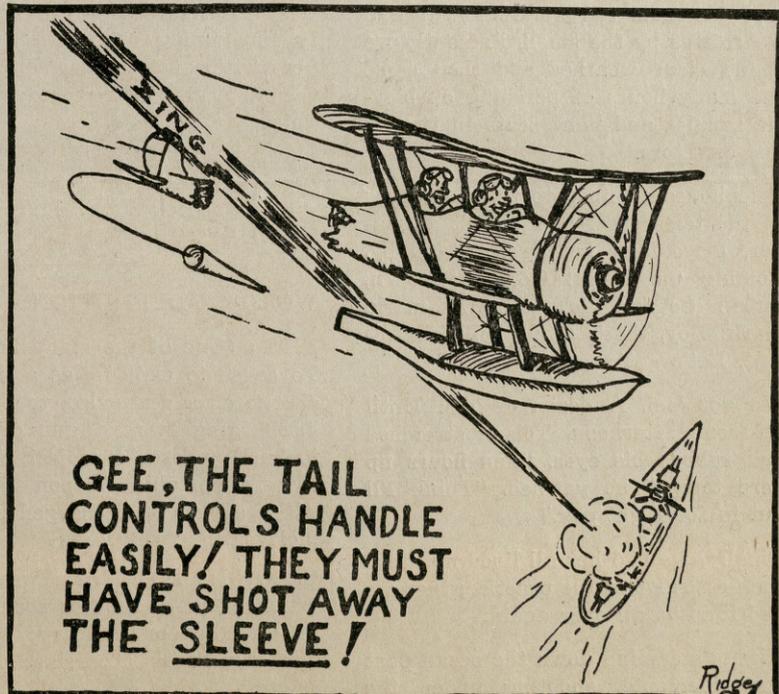
The following occurrences are high lights of early Naval Aviation.

- 14 Nov. 1910—Eugene Ely made the first flight from the deck of a Man-O-War, the U.S.S. Birmingham.
- 15 Dec. 1910—Lieut. Theodore G. Ellyson, U.S.N., was ordered to join with Glen Curtiss and establish a flying school.
- 18 Jan. 1911—Ely made the first landing on a platform (120' by 32') constructed on the decks of the U.S.S. Pennsylvania.
- 26 Jan. 1911—Glen Curtiss made first successful take off from water.
- 10 July 1911—Lieut. Ellyson designated as No. 1 Naval Aviator.
- 9 Oct. 1911—Navy established first Aviation base on Naval Reservation across Severn River from Annapolis. Three pilots and three planes made up the personnel and material on the base.
- 31 July 1912—Lieut. Ellyson made first catapult shot.
- 14 Jan. 1913—Naval Aviation went south with the Fleet and established a base at Guantanamo, Cuba.

The Big-Gunners

It takes a certain number of guns and breech plugs, powder hoists and scuttles, turrets and directors, and other mechanical essentials to make up the Main Battery equipment of a cruiser, but more important than any or all of these are the men behind the guns. From our very first drill after leaving the Yard, the officers knew that in the Houston gunners, the ship was so fortunate as to have the sort of men it takes to shoot the guns.

No one will forget the long days of arduous drills and training runs (and not a few nights, it might be mentioned in passing), the weeks of shooting off San Clemente, and a chosen few (Continued on page 2.)



— : 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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4 March 1938

I WISH TO THANK THE GUNNERY DEPARTMENT FOR THEIR SPLENDID WORK AND COOPERATION SHOWN THIS YEAR.

W. J. STROTHER, Jr., Lt. Comdr., U.S.N.

The Big-Gunners

(From Page 1.)

will recall, perhaps quite vividly, that there was such a thing as a director check; but all during the gunnery year the men of the Battery have been industriously working along towards becoming a finer and smoother organization.

We had pretty bad training conditions for our first practices - a bit too much of that nice soupy vapor which only the more unkindly critics of California call fog - but sometimes the only way we could tell we were near San Pedro was by the smell. Presently we found clear weather and then came the many hours of perching on bicycle saddles and plow seats in turrets and directors.

Telephones clamped to the ears, eyes to the telescopes. If I wasn't a gunner, I wouldn't be here. "Stand by. Coming up. Mark! Coming down, mark! Coming down, mark, mark, mark! Boy, that's swell, Billy. Excellent. Let's get a couple more."

We got 'em. A dozen of 'em. Until late one afternoon, Tolson stretched and rubbed his eyes. "Ten hours up here today," he yawned. "Think I'll put in for flight pay."

Finally, we had her all lined up, until the first salvo of the practice; then we had it to do all over again.

Nights steaming down the ocean past San Clemente, shooting under the

moon. And days "Whistling" our way through "light haze and variable"—variable up to a thick fog—looking for that elusive visibility again. Aviators flying around the ship "blinkng" at us and squatting at Pyramid Cove until long after dark.

Experienced gunners paid off and new men to be broken in. "We're going to have the same gun crews we had last practice," crowed one of our turret captains. And then we couldn't shoot one week and he had to break in a new gun captain over the week-end. Such is the life of a big-gunner.

The Admiral came over to inspect one Tuesday. We sure were some bush-fighters in the snappy coffee brown leggings and belts which the Gunner and Mr. Long cooked up for us down in the laundry. And did we really learn how to stow lockers and lay out bunks for inspection? We abandoned ship and rescued a man-overboard, and then we went back to our big guns.

It's been a pretty strenuous schedule. Sometimes, we woke ourselves up turning in. As one leading seaman asked, "What time tonight is reveille tomorrow?" Now we've fired our last practice of the current year. As during every gunnery year, some firings have been good, some have been bad, but from everyone of them we've learned something about this interesting business of shooting the big guns. The guns crews and the control parties have shaken down into a smoothly functioning organization. Next year, we'll show 'em something about the way to shoot these cruiser big guns.

FAMOUS LAST WORDS: "Now hear this . . . man your stations for a director check . . . MAIN BATTEREE!"

WORDS & DEFINITIONS

FIRE: (One of the many meanings.) To cause to explode, as a mine; discharge as a gun; also, to project by discharging from a gun or firearm, to hurl by force a project. A firearm is any portable weapon that from which a shot is discharged by an explosive.

CANNON: Is a Latin word *canna*, which means a tube or reed. A piece of ordnance or artillery; a firearm discharged from a carriage or mount, a gun.



Dear Sal:

If old Aunt Agatha'd been 'round these parts lately she'd shure felt tha ache in her bones a good twenty-four hours afore tha weather man's indicators had even started to twitch, and been able to tell there was a rough storm headed this way. This rain we been havin' here sorta reminds me o' tha way water use to poke down outa tha skies back on tha farm. It doesn't rain much out here but when it does it's shure more'n a pesky drizzle.

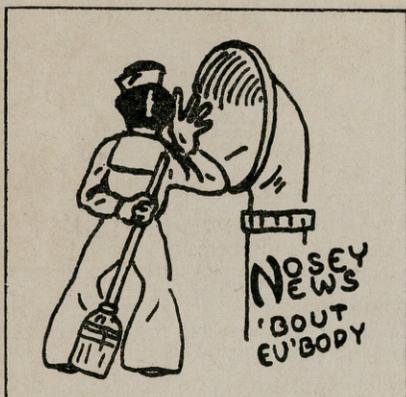
'Tis mighty funny to some ignorant souls what tha feathered fowl do when it's stormin'. Tha sea birds fly on tha double away from tha briny and a body can see them a sittin' down in fields a takin' it easy till there's better air for flyin'. They shure pack a heap o' reason.

Birds are smart but there's cases o' tha critters bein' fooled just like humans. Tha pelican, a sea fowl with a big beak and a stowage pantry a hangin' from its neck, looks smart'n old Nelly when she's agin bein' hitched to a plow, but they have their unlucky days too.

Once there was one o' these birds, a baby hatched from tha shell. His mother, a noticin' an aviator a learnin' to fly told tha little one to follow tha plane and do just exactly what it done. "When it turns, you turn. When it lands, you land. You'll be a smart pelican by tha time he has finished his course and you'll make your mother mighty proud o' tha likes o' you.

So tha little pelican took off with tha young aviator each day. He learned to "S" turn, fly in figure eights, a pointin' his wings at tha stumps just as tha plane done. It learned to chandelle, loop tha loop, fly formation, do barrel rolls, dive down outa tha skies in bombin' attacks, and do a thousand tricks no other bird afore had even thought of. And he was shure a sight to see, him bein' so

(Continued on page 4.)



Howdy, here we are again with bits of news and events once again. What with this unusual weather we are having it is almost impossible to get around on topside and find out how our deck force is getting along.

* * * *

As this issue consists mostly of Aviation, Gunnery and Marine articles it is most natural that they creep in this column. As the Aviation Unit is spending their time down in San Diego this week we haven't much dope in that respect but we do know that Pat Readette is one proud man now that he is the papa of a girl. Ask him to show you a picture of her, he is always carrying one with him and we can't blame him for wanting to show it to everyone.

* * * *

This rain is keeping the Gunner's Mates below decks these days and we know that they are one class of people who like rain. The Armory looks more like a coffee shop than "Bob's Place" on the landing.

* * * *

The Marine Unit has been preparing for their annual drill on the beach. This accounts for the sailors you see wearing leggings around the ship. The menu arranged for the Marines when they make their landing has them worried quite a bit. Seems they will be given only a ration while they are used to having seconds on board ship. Cheerup though as it will be only for one night.

* * * *

The following men are getting air-minded very much these days and are attempting to become Naval Aviators: Garcia, Martin, Whitehouse all radiomen; Ramella and Rice both seamen. Here's wishing them lots of luck in taking their examinations.

Red Meyers of the "E" Division recently acquired his ball and chain and is now stringing along with the G.G.'s Aint love grand, Red. It should be worth the cigars.

* * * *

Are you troubled with dandruff, hair falling out, or turning grey? If so, see Chandu Ridge, F2c. He guarantees a dome covered with curly red locks over night. What's the secret Chandu? Oddity in the news: Seen prior to the showing of the cinema, Sunday evening was "Sea Gull" Crego minus hat and coat indulging frantically in a gedunk. Looks like we have an Eskimo midst our three Rover Boys.

* * * *

An admirer contributed the following: Harry "Salty" Jones has found a relief for his ever ailing feet. Says the formula is H₂O and Soap.

* * * *

Sure feel sorry for those men on the anchor detail these days. All they seem to be doing is manning their stations and staying wet most of the day.

Sports

Whaleboat Race Scheduled

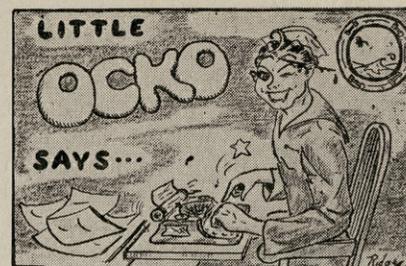
The final heavy cruiser whaleboat race of the year will take place between selected crews on Friday, 11 March, and all hands are asked to give their complete support to the HOUSTON oarsmen. Other athletics on the ship are being given a continual boost forward and we can make it a hundred percent by just a little more enthusiasm or encouragement for those who wield the oars.

A most intensive training schedule will be necessary during the next two weeks at anchor in order to get a FIRST!!! Don't forget what the CHICAGO did in the last race—and we can't let an old rival show us up twice in a row.

ComCruScoFor Sweater

A black sport sweater was presented to E. A. Chick, Sea.1c, by Commander Cruisers for Chick's excellent work in representing the cruisers in the All Navy Wrestling Contests.

Being All Navy Champion has its just rewards.



¶ The editor tells me that this is to be a Gunnery Issue and so, Gunner's Mates and others of your ilk, watch out for here it comes.

¶ Johnny Sharp, GM2c, has been making quite a splash in the Hollywood area lately in these fancy "civvies" of his. Take it easy kid, some of the storekeepers have a pretty big option on some of that country.

¶ A certain Turret Captain first asked for "Love boat" duty and that day it rained. He now claims that Jenkins, GM1c, knew it was gonna rain and put it over on him (Pappy).

¶ Gunner's rate sure must be going down hill! Saw a Watertender in the Armory one day recently and have noticed him around there a lot since; been wondering if he was thinking of changing his rate.

¶ When it comes to lady-killin', Hubbard, CTC of turret one, is right on the job. It seems he asked a girl friend of one of the other Gunner's Mates on the ship why she wasted time on a mere first class; why not come along with a chief who had some real dough?

¶ Witless Wimpy Wilkinson, "Gunner's Mate (if he's lucky) to be," of the "F" Division, was running around the other day with a hot water bottle in his grasp. Said it was for his stomach but we have our doubts.

¶ Is it true that Buck Weaver, CGM, is trying to lose weight? He was playing volleyball on the beach in uniform and says all that kept him from being in a bathing suit was there were none large enough to encircle his girth.

¶ What part does Henry, GM1c, play in causing all the compartment cleaners and so on back aft to keep their paint guarded so closely? Some folks say that he is painting the magazines and is too lazy to walk to the paint locker and draw his own paint.

(Continued on page 4.)

An Old Salt Tells One

Commander V. D. Herbster, U.S.N., (Ret.), Naval Aviator No. 4 tells of an interesting experience that happened to him during operations with the fleet off Guantanamo during the winter of 1913.

It seems that a woman newspaper reporter had obtained permission to take pictures of the planes in flight from the naval authorities and Commander Herbster (Ensign Herbster at that time) obliged by making a hop so that she could get the pictures. Before taking off he pointed out what he thought would be the most advantageous position on the sea wall for her purpose. This position happened to be directly in front of the tent used for a hangar.

As most persons know, that have spent much time around Guantanamo, the wind sometimes shifts very quickly. Ensign Herbster took off, circled, and came in to make a spot landing directly in front of the reporter. The wind however had shifted 180° and was now on his tail. The tail wind caused him to over-shoot his mark and he was heading directly for the photographer who was looking into her camera and was not aware of what was happening. A mechanic nearby realized the danger of the situation and knocked her clear of the path of the plane. Ensign Herbster cleared the sea-wall, flew into the tent and set his plane down neatly in the chocks provided for this purpose.

GUS'S WEEKLY LETTER

(From Page 2.)

much better at flyin' than any other bird in them parts. His mother praised him by tha hour.

But one day somethin' happened to tha poor critter. He was followin' tha plane as usual, a doin' stunts with it, and even puttin' a few twists of his own in. Tha aviator put tha plane in a spin. Tha pelican went into a spin. Finally tha plane come outa tha spin. But nobody had told tha unusual bird how to come outa tha maneuver so he went spinnin' on into his last crash. And that was tha end. It only goes to show a body what'll happen if he begins to put his thinkin' matter to somethin' he was never intended to do.

Love,
Gus.

Little Ocko Says . . .

(From page 3.)

¶ Pickins, GM3c, is now thinking of the day when, soon after we return from the ensuing cruise, he will middle-aisle it to the tune of "Here Comes the Bride." Wonder if they will play "Anchor's Aweigh," too.

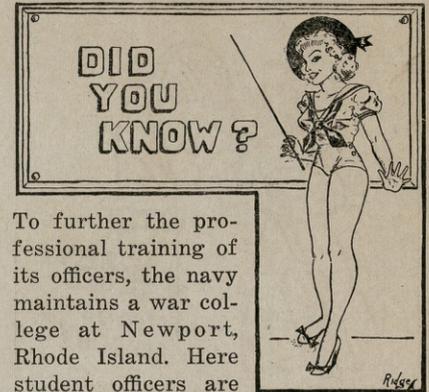
¶ Where is the presentage in Jim K. Wallace, GM1c, taking cigars from these newly rated fellows and passing them on to his No. 1 striker, Eli Budimlya?

¶ That is enough space for those people, let's see what the rest of the ship's company is doing.

¶ A few weeks ago Little Ocko was blamed for something that was really not his fault. The Slovak boys, one being a Ship's Cook second class and the other a third class, got mixed up by the printer (the printer blames the linotype) and the second class was named in place of the third. I'm very sorry this happened but here is news about Andy, newly rated to second class. It seems that his two playmates, Kunz, the butcher, and Haratyk, the spud cox'n, played a bit too roughly with our hero, and it ended with Andy having a fine pair of black eyes, one from bouncing off a swinging bucket and one from running into Haratyk's bony shoulder. Well, that is how it all came about and Andy Slovak, Jr., has been giving excuses on the subject all week.

Equilibrium

An old philosopher is said to have described the attitude of youth toward parents in the following terms: Age 8 years: "My parents are smart. They know everything." Age 14 years: "I don't think that my parents are quite so smart as that. I don't think that they know everything." Age 18 years: "My parents really know very little compared with what I know." Age 22 years: "My parents do not understand the new age. They cannot understand the new age because they do not live up to the notch." Age 30 years: "I often ask myself now, were not my parents right after all?" Age 50 years: My parents were of vision and conviction. They knew how to do things in just the right way at the right time."



To further the professional training of its officers, the navy maintains a war college at Newport, Rhode Island. Here student officers are sent at such periods in their career as will insure their progressive development. The war college officers three courses, each of 1 year's duration, and a correspondence course. The college is staffed by a group of carefully selected officers whose work is supplemented by lectures of leading educators and men of affairs. This year 61 officers completed the courses at the war college.

In Japan, musical show programs usually list the addresses and telephone numbers of each chorus girl. Simon Gomez, brewery worker in Central Brewery, Mexico City, Mexico, drowned in a tank of beer, June 27 1936.

THE POINTER'S HELL

Tho' sturdy years may do me in,
Surprise will long outlive chagrin.
As finger 'round the trigger gripped,
As hell about me wildly ripped.

Now moments twang, but stark despair
Played 'round my face and brushed my hair.
Thru' haze and mist came
"Ready Two"
Another hell I'd make I knew.

The buzzer, quick, the key I pressed,
And deep my heel bit in the rest.
The rumbling roar and yellow flare,
Was followed fast by swishing air.

The breach in yawning hunger woke.
"Bore Clear" came hurtling thru' the smoke.
A thud, a shell, with quick despatch,
The powder in. Clicked the
Salvo Latch.

Train right! Mark! It's a hit I know.
Steady on the white when I let it go.
The buzzer again, like a savage bee.
Three rounds are out, No Casualty.