

THE BLUE

BONNET

\*U.S.S. HOUSTON\*

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Enroute, Panama, C.Z.

9 January '39

# 1938 IN RETROSPECT

## THE PRESIDENTIAL CRUISE

On the 16th of July, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, with his entourage, boarded the HOUSTON at San Diego, California, for a fishing cruise off the coast of Mexico and Central America, and the East Pacific Equatorial Islands. The occasion marked the third time that Mr. Roosevelt had honored the HOUSTON, with his presence on a cruise.

With the Galapagos Islands as the ultimate objective, stops were made for fishing in succession at Cerros Island, Magdalen Bay, Cape San Lucas, the Socceros Island, Clipperton Island and Tower Island. A week was spent in cruising among the Galapagos Island Group. In addition to fishing, several recreation and exploring parties were put ashore. Contact was made with the self-exiled German Wittmer family on the Island of St. Charles. A bundle of recent magazines, first aid supplies and other items were left on shore.

A King Neptune Party was held at which time more than 200 officers and crew were transformed from lowly Pollywogs to highly respect-

ful Shellbacks. A gala affair, this, with the unfortunate Pollywogs squeaming in terror and anguish, throughout the procedure. The succession of devices of torture were almost unlimited; the Stocks, Royal Coffin, Royal Bloodoons, Royal Prongs, Royal Milk, Royal Medicine, Royal Operation, Royal Hair-cut, and Royal Dip, were sufficiently barbarous in nature to assure a whole-hearted respect for King Neptune's Royal Court forever after. The President viewed the ceremony with manifested pleasure and regal aplomb, he being the Senior Shellback aboard.

On the eve of the ship's departure for the North, and the return to the United States, the quarter-deck was rigged for a smucker and social hour. Boxing, wrestling, instrumental and vocal music comprised the evenings entertainment.

Two days at Cocos Island, famed Pirate hideout, provided an opportunity for trips ashore and search for pirate gold. To date no one has claimed success in this objective. (Page 4)

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

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

Ensign J.P.M. Johnston  
W. Kenneth Patton, PhM3c  
Cartoonist: W.C. Ridge, F lc  
Circulation: M.A. Pipp, S lc  
Printer: R.L. Beckwith, S lc

HOMER HOMESPUN HEARS:

J.M.(Skinny) Hodges, TC lc, who recently took command of Turret III, has gathered up coffee pots, and invites all his old friends to pay him a call in his new environment.

Doll Hunter Smith, erstwhile Postman, but now Master-of-Ceremonies of the F Division releases for the first time in any publication, we quote, "Double watches are hard on my men, but 'War is Hell' ".

EDITORIAL

During the Christmas holidays R.L. Beckwith, ship's printer, had the misfortune to walk in front of an automobile, driven by a Long Beach resident. The result was the making of a hit-and-run driver, while Beckwith suffered numerous bruises and a scalp wound which necessitated his removal to the USS RELIEF for treatment and further observation. It is reported that his condition is good and that he will be returned to the HOUSTON on the arrival of the fleet in Panama.

The Admiral has his aide; the Executive Officer has a yeoman; the dentist has an assistant; the boiler-maker has a helper and whiskey has a chaser. Apropos, it is fitting and proper that the BLUE BONNET be continued in Beckwith's absence, even though it of needs must be a mimeographed publication.

Therefore, we have endeavored to chronologize the adventures and malfesasances of the crew of the good ship HOUSTON for posterity. We offer for your approval and edification, a brief resume of "1938 in Retrospect", a short story by Gus, other various and sundry items of interest, and a few prognostications about the current year.

"Gramps" Worthington, self-appointed head of the local Chapter of Feather Merchants, has positively averred his intention of going out on l6 when we get to the East Coast. Rumors of his assuming a Second Vice-Presidency in the Chesapeake Bay Oyster Grovelers Association have reached the BLUE BONNET Office. With this new position many an opportunity should present itself for "Gramps" to study the scientific principles involved in cribbage, bridge, et al.

PRESIDENTIAL REVIEW  
IN SAN FRANCISCO BAY

Massed in San Francisco Bay for a Presidential review, the U.S. Fleet, presented a formidable force, July 14th. Arrayed in four lines, flanked by battleships and submarines, the Fleet lay at anchor while the HOUSTON with the President on Board steamed down the lanes between ships.

Saluting batteries on each ship boomed out 21 guns as the HOUSTON passed. The rails of every man-o-warsman were manned in honor of the Commander-in-Chief United States Navy, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

## SLAUGHTER AMONG THE ICEBERGS

A Touching Tale of Ocean  
Travel, by Gus

The saga that I have the good fortune here to relate, deals in its entirety upon human suffering, potent forces of the sea, and the travels of a mighty ship; I might even say a great ship, a ship which, although right down through its three coats of paint, namely the anti-corrosive and anti-fouling varieties, emerged triumphant over all manner of evil barriers. It has to do with that red white and blue "E", which now shows so eloquently on the good ship HOUSTON.

Many times in the past I have been approached concerning this remarkable three-limbed letter. I have been heckled almost to tears, verily, nigh unto death, itself, by such blunder-muddle queries as: "What's the meaning of that 'E'?" "Ain't it pretty?" "What's it for?" or "What a beautiful Plimsoll Mark!" I've always managed somehow, to adroitly steer the conversation along other lines. But here, at long last, I give to you (you lucky readers) the true, verified, strictly authentic explanation of how came that bespangled fifth letter of the alphabet to nestle so complacently on the HOUSTON's side.

Most of us were getting ready to take some well earned shore leave, over the holiday season in the December of 1938; some had already started their annual rest when a series of rumors swept over the ship like wild-fire. You know how such tittle-tattle begins aboard ship. A spud peeler, or maybe even a washroom keeper will start it off--- The result of a night-marish dream will assume gargantuan proportions, and soon every last man aboard will be spouting it for the gospel truth.

The throttlomen in the engine room and the yacmen are the best passengers; and ~~and~~ they will generally add a few flourishes of their own. The officers will have it last. Then the wives will pounce on any stray remarks that a luckless one lets slip and soon there is the very devil to pay. Some things got to happen or else. This particular time however, the scuttlebutt for once proved to be far short of future actual events.

It was the day before Christmas when an ominous order crackled over the ether waves like a presager of coming doom. The radioman, who happened to be happily married, ran screaming with the message, from one part of the ship to another. Finally the Marines managed to haul the man off to the sickbay, and were able only by superiority of numbers to force the message from the radioman's fear-racked fingers. The message was odd, all right. Terse and to the point it read: To the USS HOUSTON--EASTERN REGION OF THE UNITED STATES SWEEPED BY RAVAGES OF STRANGE DISEASE ONLY CURE POLAR BEAR MEAT PROCEED TO ARCTIC REGIONS UNDER FORCED DRAFT TO SECURE STORE OF THIS MEAT NAVY DEPARTMENT WISHES YOU GODSPEED ON THIS ERRAND OF MERCY.

Coming like a bolt of super-charged lightning from a blue sky, the order caught all hands a bit unprepared, but soon radio broadcasts and public announcements sent crew and officers alike scurrying back to their ship. A muster was taken within a few hours and only one absentee was reported. The ship's dental officer, thinking that it was a clever scheme to get him back aboard ship, thereby spoiling a few days of his precious leave, was missing.

Naturally, this produced much consternation in all quarters, especially in view of the fact that he sent word to the ship by

SLAUGHTER AMONG THE ICEBERGS  
(Continued)

special messenger that he would not think of returning under any circumstance. The crew felt of their jaws and began to imagine everything from aching gangs to trench mouth. A long sea cruise without a dental officer was wholly unthinkable, and so a hurried conference was held. The upshot of it all being that a black-jack squad was sent out to bring in the errant officer. Success came their way as it always does, when a well-thought-out plan is carried through to perfect timing. The squad returned with the culprit slightly the worse for wear.

(To be continued)

Don't fail to read the next issue of the BLUE BONNET. Thrill to the tale of the battle among the icebergs. Will the HOUSTON bring back polar bear meat?

MOVIN' PITCHER S

The magic lantern twins, Fish and Westerfield, have been trying a new method of cinematographic entertainment recently. The introduction of the double-feature idea, although obviously copied from Long Beach Strand-on-the-Pike, indicates the attempt of those genial gentlemen to bring to the HOUSTON, the best in flicker film-fare. Contacted in their private sanctum, neither would prophesy the date of their opening Bank Night. It is believed in some quarters, however, that the popular custom of giving away china and silver ware, would be the next step taken in their entertainment, profit sharing idea.

In the meantime, a forecast of

the movie menu for the coming week was released:

"Swiss Miss" with Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy.  
"You And Me", with Sylvia Sidney and George Raft.  
"Come On Leathernecks!" with Richard Cromwell and Marsha Hunt.  
"Safty in Numbers", with Jed Prouty and Shirley Dean.

PRESIDENTIAL CRUISE (Cont.)

At Balboa, C.Z., President Roosevelt and the President of Panama exchanged official calls while the crew made liberties in Panama City. After transit of the Canal, the President reviewed the Army Garrison in Christobal, from the deck of the HOUSTON.

A brief stop for exchange of official greetings at Old Providence Island, a Possession of Columbia, intervened before the last leg of the cruise. The President disembarked at Pensacola Florida, August 3d.

As an aftermath, of night-marish proportions, especially to the 'Golden-Grainers', the HOUSTON received orders to sail for Norfolk, Va., where she would probably be for several months, it was said. All gunnery drills and firing was to be conducted on the East Coast. The 'G-G's' were a sorry lot; some it was rumored even contemplated suicide. Then just as nearly everyone was becoming almost resolved to his fate orders came for the return to Long Beach. Faces Faces that hadn't smiled in days, lit up. Growling voices changed to soft spoken tranquility. The HOUSTON's Prow was pointed toward the land of the Setting-Sun, California.

THREE DIFFERENT FLAGS FLOWN  
FROM MAIN TRUCK IN YEAR 1938.

The President's and two admirals flags were flown from the main truck during the past year.

First was that of Admiral Tarrant, Commander, Scouting Force who used the HOUSTON as his flagship, while the INDIANAPOLIS was in the Navy Yard in mid-winter. President Roosevelt was aboard in July and August for a summer cruise. Admiral Bloch, Commander-in-chief, U.S. Fleet, was aboard in September, October, November, and December.

PORTS VISITED IN 1938

(U.S.) HOUSTON - Home Port - Long Beach, California)

Lahaina, Territory of Hawaii  
Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii.  
Vallejo, California  
San Francisco, California  
Oakland, California  
San Diego, California  
Balboa, Canal Zone  
Christobal, Canals Zone  
Pensacola, Florida  
Norfolk, Virginia

CHICK WINS ALL-NAVY CROWN

E. A. Chick, won the All-Navy Bantam-weight wrestling title last February, at an all-Fleet smoker held at Navy Field, Long Beach.

FLEET PROBLEM NO. XIX

The Hawaiian Cruise of March and April of last year was the first long cruise of the year for the HOUSTON. Maneuvers which extended to French Frigate Shoals, almost to the 180th meridian ended late in April after a two-week visit in Hawaii.

HOUSTON TRAVELS 32,375  
MILES DURING PAST YEAR

During the year, 1938 the HOUSTON lived up to its name of 'Rambler' ship by traveling a total of 32,375 miles. Below is the total mileage by months:

January	1045
February	2426
March	5547
April	4510
May	753
June	450
July	4253
August	6819
September	2732
October	1822
November	2031
December	107
Total	32375

BOXING-WRESTLING

In Scouting Force-Cruiser boxing and wrestling eliminations, eleven HOUSTON men earned the opportunity of competing for Fleet titles, in the championship finals, which it is rumored will be held in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in March.

Seven boxers and four wrestlers comprise this list of representatives. The boxers:

Lewdanski	heavyweight
Harris	Light Heavy
Adams	Middle-weight
Hodge	Welter-weight
Martin	Light-weight
Holton	Feather-weight
Colbert	Bantam-weight

The wrestlers:

Chick	Bantam-weight
Ferdenwalt	Light-heavy
Arthur	Middle-weight
Butler	Light-heavy

It is probable that these men under the direction of Archie Arsensault, Boxing coach, will be transferred to some Cruiser, possibly the PENSACOLA, for final trials before the Fleet Finals.