



**Would You Believe It?  
(Not By Ripley.)**

All was calm as the three midshipmen cruise battleships (U.S.S. Arkansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming) steamed slowly by Fair Island, northward of the British Isles. In perfect column formation the three huge masses of steel plowed serenely along. Suddenly the gesticulations of two men in a small boat drew the attention of all hands on the Arkansas. The admiral was hurriedly called.

The two men shouted and waved, apparently insane with fear. Considerable apprehension was immediately felt on the part of the admiral as the nearest land was ten miles away. Consequently he flashed a message over to the captain of the trailing ship: INVESTIGATE MEN IN BOAT.

Engine telegraphs clanged full speed astern as the captain of the Wyoming brought the ship dead in the water. Abeam of the drifting boat, he called out to its bedraggled occupants.

The answer came back in a rich Scotch-Irish brogue, "Sor, wid ye be a wishin' some good fish?"

Nonplussed for a second by this pressure attempt at fish bartering on the high seas, he was at first at a loss for words. Finally, he managed an emphatic "no," and then sent the following message: MEN IN THE BOAT ARE SELLING FRESH FISH DO YOU WANT ANY—Captain H.

The reply was all too evident—12 speed.

Ed's Note: The above incident actually happened during passage of the three mentioned ships from Gothem-

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**Facilities For Entertainment At The  
Rodman Recreational Center, Mare Island Navy Yard**

**T**HE NAVY YARD is anxious to have the Rodman Recreational Center be of real benefit to enlisted men here, both ashore and afloat. Service is the object, not profit.

With this in view the following are provided free of any charge:

**The Ghost Battleship**

The German battleship, BAYERN, rose like a ghost recently from its grave at the bottom of Scapa Flow where the Kaiser's fleet was scuttled in 1919. Salvage workers were astonished to see the 28,000 ton hulk float mysteriously to the surface from its sandy bed over 120 feet below. Thickly coated with sea weed and barnacles, the BAYERN floated bottom upward for half an hour and then just as mysteriously as it had risen sank slowly and disappeared from view.

The BAYERN was one of the former High Seas Fleet which so capably stood off the British at Jutland. After the war, the fleet was interned at Scapa Flow on the northwest coast of Scotland and was guarded by a British detachment.

One day while most of the guards were at sea on maneuvers, onlookers were astonished to see the German crews rush to their boats as the great vessels begin to list and sink. Although the British were quick to try and close the sea valves which had been opened by the German crews, some 77 ships out of 131 went to the bottom and are but now beginning to see the sun again after an absence of nearly 20 years.

One library in Rodman Center with all the current magazines and free writing paper upon request. Open from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., seven days per week except national holidays.

One swimming pool in Rodman Center. Schedule is as follows:

Enlisted Personnel:

Daily . . . . . 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
Saturdays and  
Sundays . . . . . 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

See schedule for families posted in Rodman Naval Center.

Three tennis courts on California Avenue, just north of 14th Street. Always open. Tennis rackets may be drawn from Master-at-Arms, Yard Barracks, free of charge. Tennis shoes must be worn.

Ten pool tables in Rodman Center. Open until 10:00 p.m. and free of charge to all.

One billiard table in Rodman Center.

One badminton court in Rodman Center, which is available day and night except Tuesday afternoons from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., and except dance nights every other Wednesday. Badminton rackets may be drawn free of charge from Master-at-Arms at Rodman Center. Tennis shoes must be worn.

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## —: THE BLUE BONNET :—

A weekly publication, published by the ship's company of the U.S.S. HOUSTON, Captain G. E. Baker, U.S.N., Commanding and Commander C. A. Bailey, U.S.N., Executive Officer.

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## Facilities At Rodman Center

(From Page 1.)

Dances at Rodman Center every other Wednesday night, starting at 8:30 p.m. All enlisted personnel, Navy and Marines, with their wives and girl friends are welcome.

Free lunches at Rodman Center every night at 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Ship's Service tickets from the various ships are accepted at the Rodman Center Canteen in payment for tobaccos, beer and soft drinks.

No disciplinary reports of any kind are made from the Rodman Center and it is earnestly hoped that everyone will help maintain this policy.

Suggestions for better service and constructive criticisms are welcome from anyone.

## Origin Of The Expression Rope Yarn Sunday

The expression "Rope Yarn Sunday" came into use in the Navy from the old practice of devoting certain afternoons to the unraveling of ropes which had become so badly worn as to be unserviceable for their original purpose. These afternoons were welcome periods of easy work, much like Sunday holidays, hence the expression.

The "rope yarn" from raveling was used to make chafing wrapping for lines or spars subject to the rubbing action of other rigging, mixed with tar into marlin, or for the mousing of gear. The present day use of the term is for the afternoons devoted to the overhauling of personal effects, or early liberty periods.

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Co-ed: I'd like to see the captain of this ship.

Sailor: He's forward, Miss.

Co-ed: That's all right. I'll handle him.

## Early History Of Mare Island Navy Yard

MARE ISLAND Navy Yard which is situated on an island forming the eastern boundary of San Pablo Bay is twenty-five miles from the Golden Gate and San Francisco. The island is separated from the mainland of Solano County by Napa River and Mare Island Straight which opens into Carquinez Straight at its junction with San Pablo Bay. On Solano County mainland directly across the Straight from the Navy Yard lies the city of Valley-jo (Vallejo, if you insist), with a population of 14,476 persons by the 1930 census.

On November 6, 1850, only two months after California was admitted to the Union, President Fillmore reserved Mare Island for government purposes. The island was purchased three years later for the sum of \$83,491.00 upon recommendation of a board appointed by the then Secretary of the Navy, W. A. Graham. This board composed of Commodore John D. Sloat, Commander C. Ringold, Lieut. S. F. Blunt, and Civil Engineer W. P. Sanger, made a careful survey of San Francisco Bay waters and with a view of contract to purchase the board stated: "The island including the tule opposite Vallejo contains about nine hundred acres in addition to a large tract of tule extending toward Napa and Sonoma."

Admiral David Farragut, then a commander, became the first commandant of the navy yard on September 16, 1858. The floating drydock was completed and tested by the docking of the U.S. Frigate Independence. What is now building 46 was the first of the brick shops to be built and was used as a smithy.

Missing from the Plankowners list last week were two very important names: "Whitey" Harred, MM1c, who has served aboard the Houston since commissioning except for six months at the Optical Machinist's School, M.I., and "Snake" Goette, MM2c, who has enjoyed seven years of good cruising on the Rambler Ship less six months up the Yangtze on a gunboat.

o o o

Dentist (to patient): "I told you not to swallow—that's my last pair of pliers."



Dear Sal,

Folks are tha same tha world over, I says. 'Stead o' weavin' grass mats, climbin' coco palms, and a ridin' crests o' waves as they do around Hawaii way, at other stoppin' places they snatch finny denizens from tha wet, champ 'n dance, and chew on lip smackin' morsels at barbecues. But they allus stick out tha glad hand and show us lads they're a grinnin' from ear to ear at us Navy Blues bein' around. Maybe they're sorta glad to have tha war colored ship a hangin' to their dock, or maybe they're just happy to make other folks tha same. Anyway, us lads can take it and we sure swing in with tha idea.

Don't you be a gettin' jealous Sal. You wouldn't want me to be a pinin' in my bunk and a watchin' other bodies come back with tales o' copious splendor and all that, would you?

There's many a strange thing concernin' our ports o' call. Now, they gotta fish around tha parts o' Astoria they call a Salmon. O' course these finnies live mostly in tha water there, a bein' a true habitue o' somethin' o' tha deep 'n that respect. But what gets me most is about these poor fish, not a harmin' a soul and a goin' about their way just as peaceful as can be. Seems they dinna have nary a friend 'n tha locale because all tha bein's for miles around flock down and descend on 'em. Folks 'low they're mighty toothsome vittle eatin', and there's many a soul willin' to plunk down hard cash for tha chance to chew into 'em even if it's outa cans.

So tha poor things are netted, harpooned, hooked, and got. Even tha horses are hitched to nets and tug 'em ashore all full o' tha smitten creatures. From here they're sent to be iced for later eatin' or they're speeded to a cannery house where they're

(Continued on Page 4.)



**Greetings Friends and Shipmates!** Next week Adam Chatterbox will introduce two new skippers to the 'Bout Ev' thing and Ev'body program. If you will give these two able reporters, Storekeeper Steve Sivak and Canteen Yeoman Bob Thompson, the hand that you have Old Chatterbox, then this will continue to be your favorite gossip broadcast—most likely will be much better. . .

\* \* \* \*

**Machinist's Mate Makes Morning Mistake:** The "M" Division's A. A. Shaw, woke up about ten minutes of eight one morning after a night which among other unusual activities had included a bus ride that he remembered little about, but which nearly gave the driver hysterics. (It is reported that A.A. went back to baby days. . .) He thought he was in Seaside twenty-two miles from the ship and ten minutes to make it in. Falling into his blues he dashed down to the street to find that he was in Astoria, about three blocks from the dock. **ADAM ADDS:** How can these things happen?

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**Entertained Entertain Entertainees:** Not to be outdone in the business of providing fun, many from the big cruiser made the Entertainment Salon their rendezvous afternoons and evenings. There, several of the more talented gave the localites a sample of singing and dancing that won much applause. Frank Kelly of the mellow voice was called back again and again to sing the hit ballads that he does so well. "Put-Put" Putnam was heard singing one of the Irish songs he once "featured in radio." . . . If you heard him, the mystery as to his sticking in the Navy when he had a big chance on the air is cleared up.

**Shipmate Sighted:** Upon arrival at the yard, our good friend and shipmate, Ex-Jimmy Legs Tiny Rimmer, came aboard to say howdy. He is on leave from his new station at Goat Island, where he is doing shore duty for the next two years. There goes one of the finest; we'll miss his cheery grin and genial manner which had become so familiar to all of us as he made his way round the decks morning, noon and night. Tiny is an old China Hand and in the years that he served aboard the Rambler we came to know him as a "Big Man" not only in size but every other way. So long, fellow! Best of all that's good, is what we're wishing you.

\* \* \* \*

**Adam guessed right:** Now that they have completed the conquest of Astoria, the wide swath our incorrigible playboys cut through Ventura and environs was like the weak pfft of a sick firecracker compared with exploding TNT! As suggested before, our cut-ups were merely conserving energy when they played dead in Long Beach. With a few outstanding exceptions all hands played up to the little city's amiable hospitality and had a swell time. Many headaches resulted, but what are a few aching heads among friends. . .

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**Chitchat From the Chatterbox:** "Podner" Meadows, who was recently seen plucking his eyebrows late at night and in secret, holds the record for the number of visitors guided around the ship in Astoria. He has no explanation for his popularity with the local gals, unless it's his handsome profile. . . "Chubby" Wade and Johnny Boris (the Mad Russian) took the luxurious route to Seaside. During the hitchhike they acquired, in addition to a beautiful wobble, a pair of playful cats. One feline nearly spoiled a party when it dove into a swanky restaurant's fancy fish pond after some gold fish. . . Schemmerhorn, blonde Sparktrician, went ga-ga over one of the Northwest's famous liqueurs: Loganberry nectar. Can't blame him much, it's a grand drink if you stick to it! . . . Neil Cawthon held the lucky number in a \$50 anchor pool and is combining that with savings to foot the bill for a trip down Georgia way. Better not wear those shoes, Neil, they'll shoot you on sight. . .

**Royal Order of Cooties Acquire New Member:** When the night parade of the "Cooties" came blaring down the main drag it seemed as if all the maniacs in the Northwest had suddenly banded together for a celebration. Unit after unit, band after bugle corps, group after group, on they came in a howling whooping grotesquely costumed mob—not one man or woman in the long line had a sober expression or even pretended to march in a straight line. . . but wait! What's this? Who is this lone marcher that steps out so precisely; who holds his head so high, looking neither to right nor to left? Well, he's in a CPO uniform and. . . bless my soul! If isn't "Mac" McGoldrick! **Adam Adds:** Not even Mac knows how he got into that parade.

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**Grist From The Mill: Wee Johnny Allen** is a Scotchman. Someone once said that if Johnny paid you a compliment he would send it collect. That is putting it a bit too strong although it is well known that the lad is a bit on the tight side. In Astoria he ripped open the purse strings with a squeek that could be heard in Frisco and went on a binge that did credit even to a Scot. He dropped the bars completely and startled shipmates by buying a round of beers without having to be asked—no more than five times. Having acquired a load that a ten ton oil truck couldn't have hauled, he went infantile—bought firecrackers and almost scared himself and an old lady to death when they started chasing the ill assorted pair down the street. **Adam Adds:** The lad will deny all this to his last breath, but there are witnesses galore.

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**Golden Grainer Addition:** The good old club has a brand new member. "Bugeye" Berg skipped north to Bellingham, Washington, and there became a full-fledged husband and father all in one swoop. The tall blond lad seems happy and though we blame him for holding out—here are sincere congratulations and a wish for luck. From now on the First Lieutenant's Office man should be treated with the respect due his new position. Practical joking, such as feeding him quinine while asleep is definitely out.

(Continued on Page 4.)

## Houston Baseball Getting Underway

Quite a few of the lads were seen tossing the horsehide sphere around while the ship was moored to the dock in Astoria. If this is any indication of reviving interest in this national game and pastime we ought to witness some real battles while at the yard.

Already, the forecastle (fo'cas'le to you) hotshots and the well-deck terrorists have boasted, in no idle terms either, what they intend doing to the fantail brass rubbers and the galley spongers, namely the 3d and 4th divisions. There are rumblings from below decks, too, where the black gang sweat and slave. Are these dire threats, the holy stone pushers wonder, or are they quakings and screeches of fear.

As bean balling and mayhem is strictly prohibited we wonder just what forms these threats will take. Reckoning day is soon to come. May the best team finish at the top of the column.

Let's not forget about the ship's team. Chief Buck Weaver will take about forty hopefuls over to the diamond at Vallejo as soon as things are lined up. It's going to be hard work for the boys, but there ought to be a team come out of it that will take over any cruiser nine—we hope.

## Gus's Weekly Letter

(From Page 2.)

jammed into cans. Isn't that something'?

Poor souls! Not a friend in the world, but they dinna seem to mind. They go right on a hatchin' out more o' their kind to meet the same bitter, terrible end. 'Tis a good thing they dinna have a schoolin' for the Salmon or they'd soon discover the futility o' their ways.

Be a watchin' for me, Sal. Guess I'll traipse home one o' these days.

Love,

Gus.

Patient, recovering from operation: Why are all the blinds drawn?

Doc: There's a fire across the alley, and I didn't want you to wake up and think the operation was a failure.

## Houston Bowling Team

After dropping the first two games in a three game total pinfall match, the Houston squad put on the heat and overcame a 42 pin lead to beat a picked Astoria team 2665 to 2584.

The match was rolled on a handicap basis. The difference in averages of the two teams being 75 pins, the Houston had a handicap of 50 pins per game.

DeBri and Gilliam were high on the Houston squad; DeBri putting games of 157, 214, and 232 together for a 603 series and Gilliam's 179, 178, and 201 gave him a 558 series. Wilkinson led the Astoria team with games of 188, 185 and 205 for a 578 series. DeBri's 232 was high for the evening.

In the fourth game (with the beer at stake) the Houston won 867 to 835. "Wop" Acuto a newcomer to the team's ranks turned in a neat 195 to prove to all and sundry that the lad is a money bowler.

## Nosey News 'Bout Ev'body

(From Page 3.)

'Round and 'Bout: Bobby Whaley insists that the rompers he's been wearing lately are not a pair of old circus tents dyed blue... Gunner's Mate Yarbo and an unidentified Seaman took over the middle of Astoria's main street Sunday p.m., diverting traffic for fifteen minutes while they staged a two man parade. The seaman carried a broom in lieu of a rifle. Oil King "Panama" Sanders had bad luck when one of his tossed firecrackers landed on the overskirt of his girl friend's dress and started a blaze. It cost the boy plenty to square himself and prove that the Sanders are honorable gents... Despite the general hilarity over the "Fourth," several observant Astorians insisted that the good behavior of the Houston's crew was little short of remarkable and that no matter what happened they were gentleman. Nice work gang—that's the reputation we've always enjoyed.

\* \* \* \*

Shootin' the Breeze: Strange sight! While in Astoria Visky Viskovitch sitting on the dock in dress blues watching the movies on the ship. Ask him why? ... The sign "U.S.S. Houston" hanging at the gangway's foot was



Last summer for the first time in 16 years, men of the ships based at San Diego went ashore in white uniforms. The unusually high temperature of 84 degrees was responsible for the change in uniforms from blue to service white.

The German cruiser *Konigsberg*, of 6,000 tons, has three three-gun turrets located in a very unusual manner. Turret one is located forward, on the ship's center line in the usual manner but turrets two and three are located aft, one on each side of the center line. The designers claim this facilitates the construction of the magazines and clarifies communications between turrets and magazines.

The *REINA MERCEDES*, in use as a station ship at the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, is a Spanish cruiser captured by the U.S. in 1898.

## Would You Believe It?

(From Page 1.)

berg, Sweden, to Cherbourg, France. Strange, amusing, or interesting naval incidents will be welcomed for publication. Give us merely the facts, times, and places. We'll do the rest.

pilfered one night. It was done in this way: A certain "Ski" in the "3d" rolled up his trousers, borrowed the girl friend's coat, doffed his hat, calmly walked past the marine sentry and deftly snatched the placard which the lady had requested as a souvenir. A snail could run Fireman Gilmore a fast race, and yet Baker, also of the "M," swears he ran away from him at seaside... What condition were you in, Baker?

\* \* \* \*

So long Friends—Tha's all there is. Adam Chatterbox says sayonara.