

### President Takes Leave Of Ship

The departure of the President and his party brings to a close one of the most enjoyable fleet problems and cruises it has been our privilege to enjoy aboard the Houston. All good things must end inevitably, however, so in bidding a goodbye our sincerest wish is that they experienced a modicum of our pleasure.

Those who leave us are: President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Admiral W. D. Leahy, Rear Admiral Ross T. McIntire, Colonel E. M. Watson, Cap-  
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This is a story of a stern man's pride and the malleability of young men's minds. In order for one to fully appreciate the resultant subtleties of the theme it is first necessary to properly visualize the setting in which the chief character operates. In none other could this story ever have been written.

Some years ago in one of the Naval Training Stations which remained as such even after the hectic days of the war, and the Navy had

## The Ramrod

A Short Story

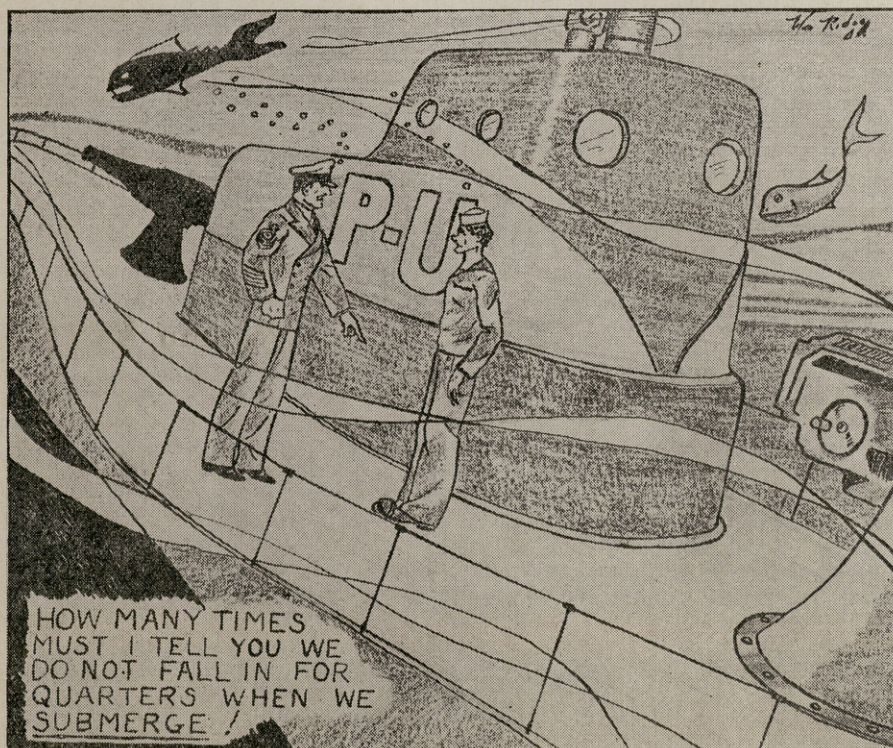
By GUS

commenced once again to feel twinges of growing pains there existed a very remarkable man. Few people realized his greatness but to the small bands of recruits and to the few officers who were fortunate in having du-

ty at the station during the period it is sufficient to say to them his especial characteristics placed him far above any other man. The depth in his singularity of purpose and desire for those under him to accomplish the seemingly impossible were little short of miraculous.

In his make-up, too, there must have existed some trenchant wish for prompt action because when Clyde C. Eickes, CBM, USN, reported for duty at the station he made his wants known immediately. In precise fashion he demanded an assignment at once. To the yeoman who accepted his reporting orders this produced a near calamitous upheaval of mind as it occasioned calling a superior officer who had previously intimated a strong disapproval of telephone calls for anything short of life or death. Yet the imperious demeanor of Eickes brooked of no hesitancy and as a result, partly as a vengeful thrust of the superior officer called, he was assigned to the drilling of recruits. Characteristically, he took charge of his recruit company and had them drilling within the hour.

To Company 4C, that being the recruit outfit to which Eickes had been assigned, the appearance of the devil from a cloud of fire would have  
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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, Yeo3c

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## Learning To Work

Not the least of what the Navy training does is to teach one to work. Lads nowadays tend to grow up late. While our fathers began doing their bit when still in short pants, lads today may graduate from high school without having slaved at all to earn their keep. To undertake labor becomes increasingly difficult as the day of its beginning is delayed. The earlier, however, one learns the lesson that work brings immense satisfaction in its wake, the better off he will be.

"Work," as Dr. Cabot says, "is doing what you do not now enjoy for the sake of a future which you clearly see and desire." Once one learns to anticipate the joy that comes from a difficult task completed, the memory of that thrill is there to entice him to seek further such rewards.

Work is easiest when one is able to feel a stimulus not alone from the immediate result but from distant futures. There is uncovered the source of interest that nerves one to face distasteful labor to achieve a noble and satisfying end. Work is an acquired taste. Some knowledge, personal and intimate, of the glow to follow must precede dogged effort. The future swells within us only when we realize that we make the future out of the perspiration, and aches, and pains of the stout laborer.

Exertion must be made despite present pain. The outlook may be barren. What is to start one? There is a dead spot just before one begins. This spot is the harder to cross as one is the older unless he has already experienced rewards of sheer labor. "In the beginning," says Dr. Cabot, "something or someone must magically entice us into doing a bit

of work; we, then, see the treasure of its results, and are spurred on to redouble our efforts and increase our rewards."

In the ordinary course, either the contagion of example reaches us or we are urged on by the desire to win someone's approval. If such spurs fail, there is grave danger that we will hang back till our natural energies sour within us. Those energies seek to explode in some direction. If no channel is provided, they turn into some kind of discomfort, physical or mental.

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astonished them far less than the sudden bolt of energy which now confronted them and barked out short explosive commands. To say they were amazed would be putting it rather mildly. They never quite knew, at first, whether they liked the continual drilling, the siege of knot tying, the boat drills, the lessons in Naval tradition and etiquette, and the thousand and one little things that usually make the life of the new recruit a nightmare of unlearned knowledge. There was no time for that. When taps sounded at night they barely had strength enough to unlash their hammocks and hoist their tired, bruised bodies into place for the night let alone talk and formulate opinions. Nor did the honors and the pennants won from the very first in every kind of competitive drill astonish them. Nothing short of an earthquake could have changed the course of their little universe.

Naturally, however, this astounding record by a bunch of the rawest recruits on the station save those actually in quarantine brought the attention of the entire station on Eickes. He was subjected to the most critical study

It was a funny thing about his aloofness and the way he leveled those challengeable cold blue eyes upon any recruit who presumed in approaching anywhere closer than ten feet. Nobody ever came closer to him. He gave sharp brittle precise commands which carried well so there was no need really for any questioning or lessening of the distance. Prob-

ably too, his aloofness lent a certain dignity and authority to his person. At any rate every last man in his company would have followed him through any kind of hell and high water.

This erect bearing and curt military manner as he stood before his company soon earned him an appropriate sobriquet from those outside 4C. Among themselves they would never have thought of calling him anything else but Mr. Eickes. They admired and respected him above all else. Yet in spite of them the nickname persisted. To look at him in action one could never question the aptness of his appellation. "Ramrod" Eickes was the very paragon of all that his newly coined name implied.

One day, shortly before graduation of the company, "Ramrod" summoned the recruits together for the last bit of advice before they would embark upon their separate careers in the Naval Service. It was customary for him to heretofore address them on various topics of Naval interest but they were totally unprepared this time for the vehemence and bitterness with which he attacked his subject. They listened raptly as he commenced his eloquent plea.

"Recruits", he said, "now that you will soon be leaving the station and will join other units of the Navy, you stand in need of certain advice. Many times you will be called upon to make decisions requiring the utmost nicety in judgement and tact. There will be times when you will be prevailed upon and urged to accept invitations which will demand your greatest will-power to reject. But you must not yield as you value your life and the furthering of your Naval career. I speak of alcoholic beverages."

So savage had been his attack that he was forced to pause a bit for breath. After the brief rest he again plunged into the talk with renewed vigor.

"Whiskey, beer, wine, or any of the other types of so called bottled pleasures are merely the temporary releasers of fancied everyday problems. At first the pleasant glow and warmth produced by them act as an

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## Italy Offers Prize For Ornithopter Job

World-wide interest in a neglected phase of aeronautics has been stimulated by the announcement that Italy's Royal National Aeronautical Union is offering 1,200,000 lire (about \$60,000.) for construction of the most successful airplane using the muscular strength of man as its sole motive power.

To qualify for the prize such a plane must take off unassisted from the ground, climb for several hundred feet and pass other tests. The competition, which in reality is an extension of a previous one in which only 100,000 lire (about \$5,000) was offered as an inducement, closes on June 30, 1939. It is under the patronage of the Count of Turin, a supporter of many experimental projects in aviation.

The idea of muscular flight is, of course, not new. The first recorded attempt at its achievement outside of mythology occurred at about the time of the Norman conquest of England when Elmerus, a learned Benedictine monk, leaped from the high tower of his monastery supported by wings of his own contriving. It is chronicled that he flapped and glided for 125 paces before making a forced landing and breaking both legs. Almost five hundred years ago Leonardo da Vinci dreamed of constructing a man-carrying flying machine patterned after the birds and drew detailed plans for its construction.

Until recently, however, most aeronautical scientists regarded muscular flights of any duration as impossible. Several inventors during the last fifteen years built planes with propellers operated by pedal arrangements, but the scientists were unimpressed. They pointed out that for hops of a few dozen feet it was necessary for a pilot to have almost the endurance of a six-day bicycle rider and that, unlike engines, the human body was subject to little improvement in horsepower output.

"Can you type?"

"Yes, I use the Columbus system."

"What's that?"

"I discover a key, then land on it."

## Tell Your Worries

There is arising of late a very benevolent society on the Houston, whose purpose is to take care of the ills and worries of all the crew. If you have a worry complaint or merely wish to tell some one of your troubles and clear your mind of all its turbulence just go to the chaplain on watch. He will be more than glad to give you all the sympathy you desire. On some occasions he will even render advice if the matter on hand is not too heavy. The chaplain on watch will wear a white collar with his uniform. This collar may be a genuine collar of priesthood or merely the hat band of a white hat. In any event it is sufficient to identify the man standing the watch. The leading six of this splendid and generous society stand the watches. They are in the order of seniority: Ensign B. Johnson, Gamache, Holdren, DeForge, Cotton and Pederson. The order of seniority holds only in the society, it, however, is nearly in keeping with their seniority aboard ship but the two are wholly separate. They stand one on and five off, any one of the lot being able to let you know who is on watch.

## Boxers and Wrestlers Return

A few hours after the ship dropped the mudhook off Culebra Is. "Archie" Arsenault brought aboard a grinning band of grapplers and fighters. It looked like old home week for awhile with Chick, Lewdanski, Butler, Harris, Hodge, and Arsenault on the receiving end of numerous handshakes. Looks like the weather of Guantanamo Bay area agreed with them. They're rather glad to be back aboard again though if you can believe what they tell us. They're certainly going great guns in the fleet competition and the ship looks for some fleet champions.

Welcome aboard, fellows.

What's this! Surprise orders! ! Chick, Harris, Hodge, and Arsenault were transferred to the Northampton just prior to sailing for the States. We still wish them luck.

Chief of Police: "Can you give a description of your missing cashier?"

Banker: "He is about five feet, five inches tall and \$7,000 short."

## Aves (Bird) Island

It's nothing more than a pin point on a large scale map, yet two distinct types of sea birds have found it an appropriate nesting place for the procreation of their kind. Where they go when a sudden hurricane whips up from the mistful horizons is another thing, for at such times ocean waves surely roll across the tiny expanse of sand and threaten to wear away the few pitiable feet of altitude it does have. Why then do the birds select these precarious five acres of treeless shelter? No one really knows because it is as unexplainable as the homing instinct of the pigeon.

These were some of the questions the band of exploring curiosity seekers asked themselves when they went ashore from our ship last Friday as the Houston lay anchored off Aves Island. There wasn't much else but the birds. One couldn't move around without hearing the crunch of countless eggs underfoot. The birds were so numerous and unafraid of man that they had to be brushed aside before they themselves started taking exploratory pecks at the party. It was the bird city of the Leeward Island Group.

Another thing of interest was the Venezuelan Flag and plaque discovered at the end of the Island. The plaque mentioned the visit of Venezuelan Midshipmen from their training ship during the year 1930.

As we look back upon the visit to this out-of-the-way place on the earth it makes one feel a bit more versed into the ways of life. It makes one wonder how life on a truly small desert island might be.

1. What is a keelson?
2. What is a lewis bolt and where is it located?
3. What are man-o'-war lights?
4. What is a lightening hole?
5. Where are "limbers" located?

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Key West, Florida, is 375 miles south of Cairo, Egypt.

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excuse in the imbiber's mind to accept their numbing properties on frequent occasions. The yearning for them oftentimes grows according to some mathematical power and before long the need of alcohol in the system is real. When this comes to pass a man's body and soul must surely suffer accordingly. Alcohol, gentlemen, is a blot on the face of the earth."

A little flicker of confusion rippled through the assemblage because of the fanatical fury with which these last words had been said. It seemed to have reached proportions beyond that of mere advice.

With a purpling face "Ramrod" continued with the scathing harangue. "Need you doubt for an instant one word that I have said? There can be no question concerning its despoiling powers. It is the devil's own brew. Drink it and . . . ."

What he was going to say was never quite finished. For when the doctor arrived "Ramrod" was officially pronounced dead.

The mourning, yet admiring recruit company bore his coffin to the grave but that last lingering bit of advice was forever unshakeably lodged in their hearts. Why they had received the argument against drink never entered their guileless minds.

I could have told them, though I wouldn't have under any circumstances. To have done so might have blasted some silly ideals out of their heads. I knew — because I was the Doctor. I diagnosed the case, and, for the cause of death I wrote "acute alcoholism" on the death certificate. "Ramrod" Eickes was a remarkable man.

"Ah wins."

"What yuh got?"

"Three aces."

"No yuh don't. Ah wins."

"What yuh got?"

"Two nines and a razor."

"Yuh shoh do. How come yuh so lucky?"

## St. Eustatius Island

The Houston touched at the Dutch island of St. Eustatius (More popularly known as Statia) on account of the significant event in American history which occurred there. Immediately after the war of the revolution in November of 1776 Captain Robinson commanding the U.S.S. Andrea Doria landed there and read the Declaration of Independence to the governor of the island. The governor then ordered a salute fired in honor of the new nation—it being the first given by any foreign country to the flag of 13 stripes.

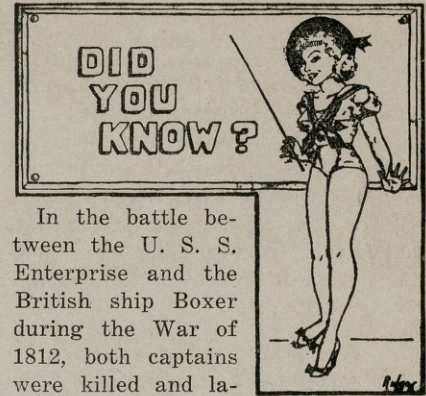
## Answers to Questions on Page 3

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1. A keelson is a strengthening beam or girder above the keel and secured to it.
2. A lewis bolt is a bolt with a horizontal hole bored in its flat head so that it can be screwed into a nut and sunk in the deck to support a king post or be used as a pad eye for general utility.
3. Man-o-war lights are two vertical white lights hoisted at the peak by all naval vessels when approaching an anchorage where men-of-war are likely to be found.
4. A lightening hole is a hole cut in a beam or girder to lessen its weight.
5. Limbers are small waterways on each side of a keelson to carry water to the pump well.

## Oldest Living Navy Man

You have read many interesting Navy facts and items of interest persistently sleuthed out by the tireless editors of ships' papers these days. A new one carried by one of our contemporaries is concerning the oldest living retired blue jacket. His name is John Bright who retired as a Chief Gunner's Mate, 25 April 1914. He first enlisted in the Navy on May 6, 1876, and served honorably during the Spanish American War, Philippine Insurrection and the World War. He was born in England in 1843 and is therefore now a young chap of 95 summers. It is interesting to note that the year of his retirement is earlier than the average year of birth of recruits enlisting in the Navy for the first time. It's the salty breezes and beans that does it.



In the battle between the U. S. S. Enterprise and the British ship Boxer during the War of 1812, both captains were killed and later were buried side by side at Portland, Maine.

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The Act of June 24, 1928, authorizes the admission of not more than one citizen from each of the American Republics to receive instruction at the United States Naval Academy.

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The title "Fleet Reserve" has been substituted for the former designation "Fleet Naval Reserve", and the civilian component of the Naval Reserve, formerly also called "Fleet Naval Reserve" has been renamed the "Organized Reserve."

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Navy post offices on ships and foreign stations are branches of the United States Post Office, New York City.

## President Takes Leave

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tain D. J. Callaghan, Lieut. Comdr. Freiseman, Lieut. L. M. LeHardy, Lt. H. L. Reed, Lt. R. J. Fabian, Lt. M. S. Holmes, Chief Pharmacist G. Fox, Mr. Russel C. Wood, Mr. T. J. Qualters, Mr. M.F. Reilly, Mr. E.J. Michel, Mr. C.F. Pattavina, Mr. W.D. Simmons, Chief Yeoman J.L. Learson, Chief Boatswain's Mate W.A. Bartos, and Irving McDuffie.

Also leaving are the 60 enlisted men that comprised the extra radiomen, mess attendants, etc. that were needed to make this cruise the enjoyable one it has been. And with this group may go, to our dismay, the members of the band, truly great players and shipmates.

We all hope that if and when the Houston makes another trip of like nature that we have as good a collection of shipmates.