

Bowditch Scuttlebutt



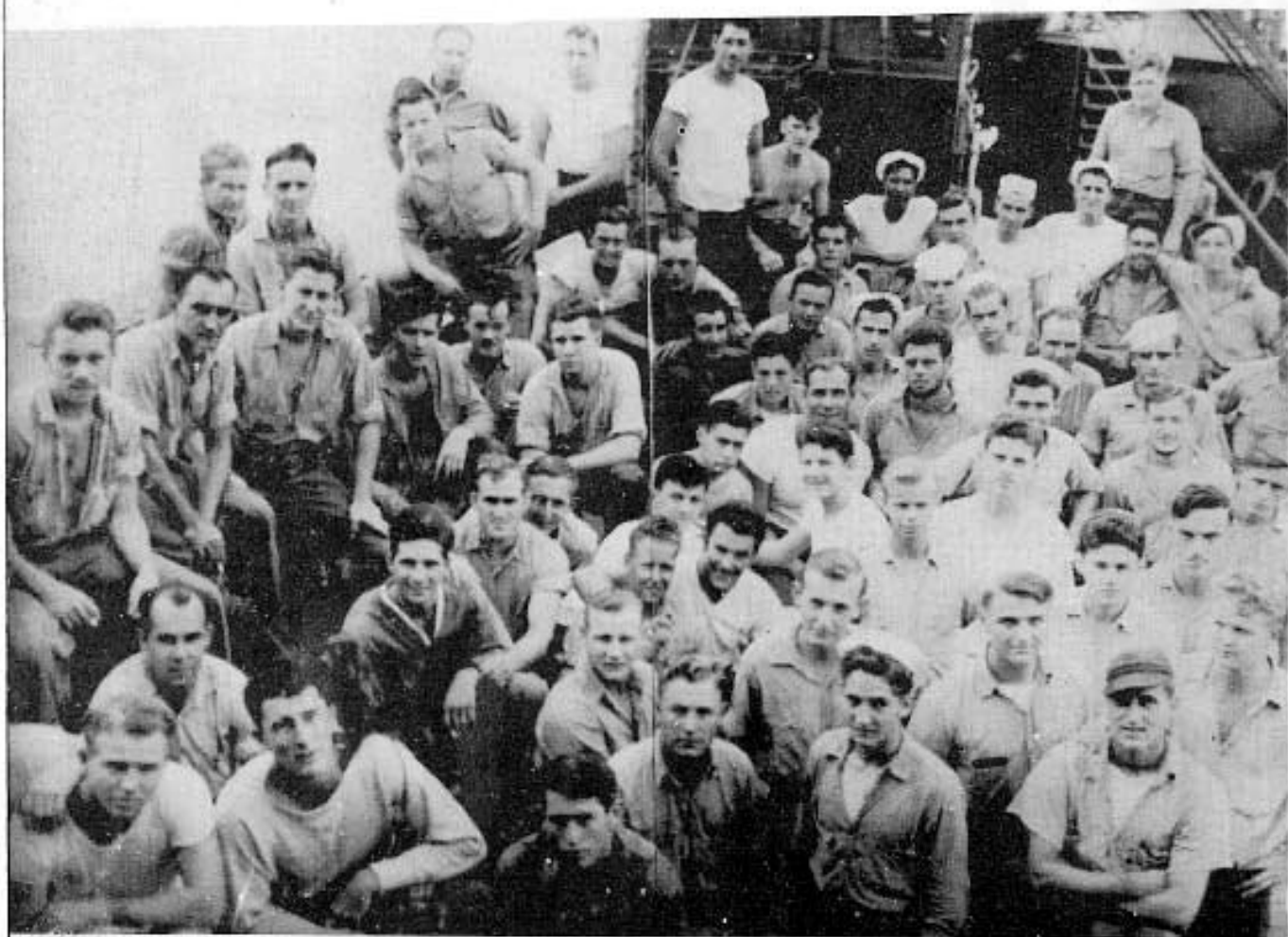


Commander Clifford B. Schiano
Skipper



Lt. Commander James H. Willett
Senior Survey Officer

Jim Willett



The Crew



Trail of the Smokey



As yet we saw no sign of the anchor. From the dark and stormy night we took our departure from San Pedro Harbor early in January, 1941, after spending the first six days in the States since February, 1940. Heading west, we proceeded to the once famous play-land of the ribs, Honolulu, T.H. (Tired Hips) now the sailors' last stand. After a couple of weeks play among the islands and splendors, we started looking for the war. Our first introduction was at Tarawa. It consisted of being initiated to the oldest traditions living in the Navy today -- sea stories. Tarawa, in the Gilbert Islands was just a whistle stop for us [we delivered mail and mail on our way to Hawaii, in the Marshalls]. We arrived early in the morning and with our sons in the air we steamed through hundreds of warships all sizes, straight into the attack. These mighty dreadnaughts of the deep assembly followed us in.

Our stay in Hawaii was pleasant and uneventful. The major part of our time was spent in swimming, looking for souvenirs, sea shells, and in resting. In between we surveyed seven days a week from nine to twelve hours a day. As all good things must come to an end, so did our stay here, and one morning bright and early in April we left for Eniwetok. We followed an old proverb -- "The early bird gets the worm" -- and arrived just after dawn. This really was the first time, attacking way out into the water and no fleet for protection, at least close at hand. Of course the still had been secured a few weeks before we arrived and it certainly was a desolate looking place. We dropped the hook when we were half way up to the north end and started to work. Things went along smoothly for a couple of weeks and then one morning around 0400 we were rudely awakened by the old general alarm and off we dashed to our OQ stations. We were used to drills but this was going a little too far. We had been at our battle stations for over an hour when suddenly the guns at the north end about ten miles away sounded off. Yes, the Japs had come. We waited with bated breath for them to lead our way -- every man at his station eager to fire the first round but we were too far away to participate in the "fun" we did see three Jap planes burst and crash into the water. Imagine -- we had finished another job and with nothing more to do, just laid around drinking beer and watching also playing a little baseball on the side.

We had started up the "Road to Tokyo" and there was nothing to stop us. Salpa was the next stop, and we arrived around the middle of July. Dead Japs going out with the tide and flies by the millions were our welcoming committee. This was a little more like it. The Japs on Tinian were being shelled by our forces from Saipan, shelled by our Sea-O-War, and bombed by our ever present airforce. The survey of Salpa was more exciting than any of our previous jobs. The shore parties all left ahead to the teeth, a real bunch of "Rangers". A number of Japs were killed and many others taken prisoner by our rugged signal and triangulation parties.

Tinian was another hot task, but we took it in our stride. In October the most unusual and ferocious task unit ever formed was built around our own little "Bones". We were off to occupy Ngila in the Northern Carolines. We steamed into the lagoon and disgorged our LVT's. Soon the troops were on the beach -- 30 Japs --. The lagoon was still being swept and the Japs in charge of operations was hit by a mine (or vice versa). The Southwest to the rescue. All about boats and motor while boats took off at top speed for the stricken vessel. When that Jap jumped into the water were covered with oil.

Our deck force constructed a collision net and put it into place, then a destroyer towed it back to our ship. That night and for several more, we had a lot of guests. It was our sad duty to bury the dead. On another of the islands in the group, Japs were killed and one captured.

Back to Oahu -- the first time ashore on American territory in ten months. Again our shore parties had field battles with the little devils. Number killed is unknown, but our men had been safe.

"We want to go home" was the popular saying of the day, and then we were up one morning to discover we had one more job to do and this time they weren't kidding. Leaving Oahu the middle of March we headed for Iwawa, Baito, Okinawa. We missed the convoy and laid around for a few days waiting for an escort. Finally the night we started on a 1500 mile jaunt into Jap waters with only an AM for protection.

Everything was quiet until the last evening. Just at dusk we passed over a submarine. Our taste in realistic figures declined in favor of the fast figure eight in which we maneuvered. We couldn't tell if it was our base knocking or the ship shelling from the rescue-breaking speed we were making. We had immediately gone into offensive and defensive action, but contact was lost. In fact everyone was too busy looking back waiting for the sub, that we broke into a tremendous riot of carriers before we knew it.

The Japs had an embassy to meet us as we were approaching Eniwetok. We didn't even know it until a Hell cat interrupted his dive on our stern. Oh, well, live and learn -- if you live. The fleet passed us on their way to Iwawa. Our Summary Officer wanted to know what the Big Freighter was doing leading the way and cruisers. We hope the general and admirals on that JAC never got wind of this. Some the 20th of March we dropped the hook in Iwawa Baito.

It last we were to see action, more than we had hoped for. We held the foundation for our newly acquired nickname "The Smokey B" at Oahu, but now we knew what smoke really was. At "Flash Red" out would go the smoke boat, number five motor launch and for the duration of the alert we would feel like "smoked ham". Here he came flying high and directly across our stern. Our 21 opened up and let go with six rounds, every one on line but short. The trainer forgot to shut his eyes and as the flash blinded him he yelled "We got him!" We think he still believes we have five instead of four planes. The 20's were doing their part, but he was just too darn high.

In the days and hours that followed, we became experts at rapid dressing. Jay was turned into night and night into day. The only nights we could get any sleep was during a rain storm.

One evening just at twilight two planes came in low. One dove into an ammo ship; the other was hit by our fire and crashed into the water. Very little surveying was done, but we did establish the Sprague Light. Shortly afterwards we left for China Wan. Here we were practically on our own. We were the largest ship in the harbor with a few LCI's and some mines on or near LCI's. GC was kind every night unless it was raining. Most of the action was on the other side of the island and it was an exciting entertainment time we used to see on the Fourth of July.

Jap planes were no longer strangers to us. This night in particular, April 26th, the plane came in low. We let him have it with all our forward guns. He crashed in shallow water and parties from the ship found it the next morning. Part of the green house was returned to the ship and many types of souvenirs were out from the aerial. The plane was a Jap.

The next night a plane came in low over the port bow during "Condition One Easy" and dropped a 100 to 200 pound bomb between our two smoke boats, hitting the water about fifty feet from our bow. It exploded and covered the forward part of the ship with water and shrapnel, with one piece tearing a large hole in the smoke boat. Our 20's opened up on him, but he was quickly hidden by our own smoke.

Between alerts the survey went on, with the majority of the crew getting by with three and four hours sleep a night. In May we moved on to Suwaya Bay. Shore parties were going ashore well armed, but all they brought back were souvenirs -- on dead Japs. We were anchored close to the peninsula between China Wan and Suwaya Bay soon to be known as "Suicide Point".

(Continued on inside back cover)

(Trail of the Smokey "B" continued)

Many nights we had as many as eight alerts. How the popular saying was "What, not another OQ?" The 27th of May, shortly before 0600, we got our second plane. Val. The next night we went to battle stations at 2015 and at 0515 the next morning we were still at our stations. At that time we had the heart-breaking experience of watching a Jap airplane, which evidently had landed in the next harbor during the night, fly thru the early dawn just above the water and suicide into the Mary D. Livermore. He ship was able to fire a shot at it because of the shore installations in line of fire. This put us in the mood for the coming days battle. A short time later we secured and had breakfast, with orders to "Eat, sleep and rest". Everything was lovely until 0815 when off she went again. The ammo train was really colicking it. During the firing they passed ammo, between the alerts they would handle smoke pots, carry coffee and spun sandwiches to gun crews and when they had nothing else to do, emptied garbage cans. It was suggested several times that they be rotated to other ships for utility purposes.

This was to be our life morning. Our little sail thru the clouds was the football game between the repair party and a group of new men. As a plane came in like hell toward the starboard side; a group of new men were going like hell from starboard to port to see what the shooting was all about. Ohio vs Southern Cal. Never met in mid-field as these men did. The tension was relieved. We got our third plane and a few more alerts. All was quiet for a few days and we built a good number of beacons and planted a lot of bouys. Bombing and wire dows were going along as scheduled. Every now and then a typhoon warning would come in and then it would rain so hard you couldn't see fifty feet away.

June third we were trying to see our first movie since Okinawa when off she went again. Here he comes and we let him have it. He crashed into the water about 100 yards from our port quarter. That was number four.

The eleventh of June was to be our last big day with the enemy. Day out on the horizon we could see a destroyer firing for all he was worth. We couldn't see the plane but the bursts of smoke were moving our direction and stopped just as they got overhead. There was a high thick cloud bank above and behind us. The plane had gone into the clouds. Only seconds later he came out of the clouds right at us. He had a light burning on his left wing so we held our fire. Then a ship to our left opened fire and we joined with all the guns that would bear. The plane then turned right about 200 yards astern of us and dove on an LCI. It went down to about 75 feet and then started up, at the same time turning left and heading our direction. By this time every ship in the harbor was firing. The 20's were literally tearing his apart, yet the pilot never lost control. The plane went up to around 300 feet still heading our direction. He started a dive on our port quarter, after a few seconds he made a sharp right turn, went into a steep dive and crashed by a liberty ship 300 yards astern of us. A few more alerts, but no more planes came close. The final count shows 280 OQ's since arriving at Kerama Baito.

Misses: "I suspect my husband is having an affair with his stenographer."

Meid: "Oh, you're just saying that to make me jealous."

More stuff: Many a man who marries his wife because he admires her carriage, has worked like a horse for her ever since.

One sailor reports that his girl's mother said she was worried about the sailor who calls on her.

"What," wondered mama, "fire is intentions."

"I know," said the daughter, "he keeps me in the dark."



Nathaniel Bowditch

1773-1838

Nathaniel Bowditch was born on March 26, 1773 at Salem, Massachusetts. Circumstances forced him to educate himself in spare time after he was 10 years old, which he did with such skill and ability that at the age of 21 he was unusually well informed and an outstanding mathematician.

In 1795, Bowditch went to sea on his first of four voyages as supercargo and Captain's writer. A fifth voyage he made as master and part owner of a ship, returning to Salem in 1803, to retire to his studies and the insurance business.

Early during these voyages, Bowditch became keenly interested in navigation and aimed an opportunity to take observations of and to study the movements of celestial bodies. Many errors were known to exist in the most recent volume on navigation and Bowditch commenced the laborious task of reconciling the tables. The task involved such extensive revision that he decided to write his own book.

In 1802 the first edition of the American Practical Navigator, better known as Bowditch, was published and was received with such great acclaim by the maritime world, that over 30,000 copies in 10 editions were sold prior to his death. In 1866 the U.S. Hydrographic Office bought the copyright and since that time has published the book and have revised it from time to time, to keep up with modern navigational methods.

Death at 55 on March 16, 1838, closed a record of wonderful achievement during a life of stainless integrity. Many honors had been conferred upon him by his fellow men. On July 1, 1940 in the Norfolk, Virginia Navy Yard, the Great Liner Santa Inez was re-named and commissioned the U.S.S. BOWDITCH, the largest and finest survey ship in the Navy.



Surveying Boats



Smooth Plot



Photogrammetry

Triangulation



Photography



Chart Construction



Plate Printing



Chart Reproduction

Bowditch AT WORK



Dental Office



Mail Room



Ship's Office



Radio Shack



Radio Shack



Radio Tech Shack



Supply Office



Carpenter's Shop



Laundry



Ship Fitter's Shop



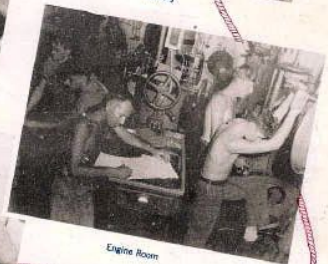
Machine Shop



Seal Maker



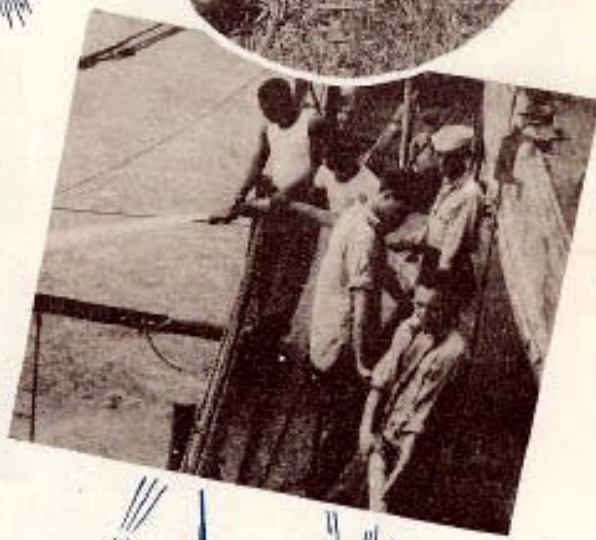
Armory



Engine Room



Earl Clark



THE Bowditch AT PLAY



The Break in The Ward Room



Beer Party



Mrs. Camacho's Favorite Daughter



Quinn Takes Over



Four Banana Splits Present



Crews Lounge



Bowditch Kittens



Our Own Genius - Mr. Trotter



Keeping in Trim



Baseball Game



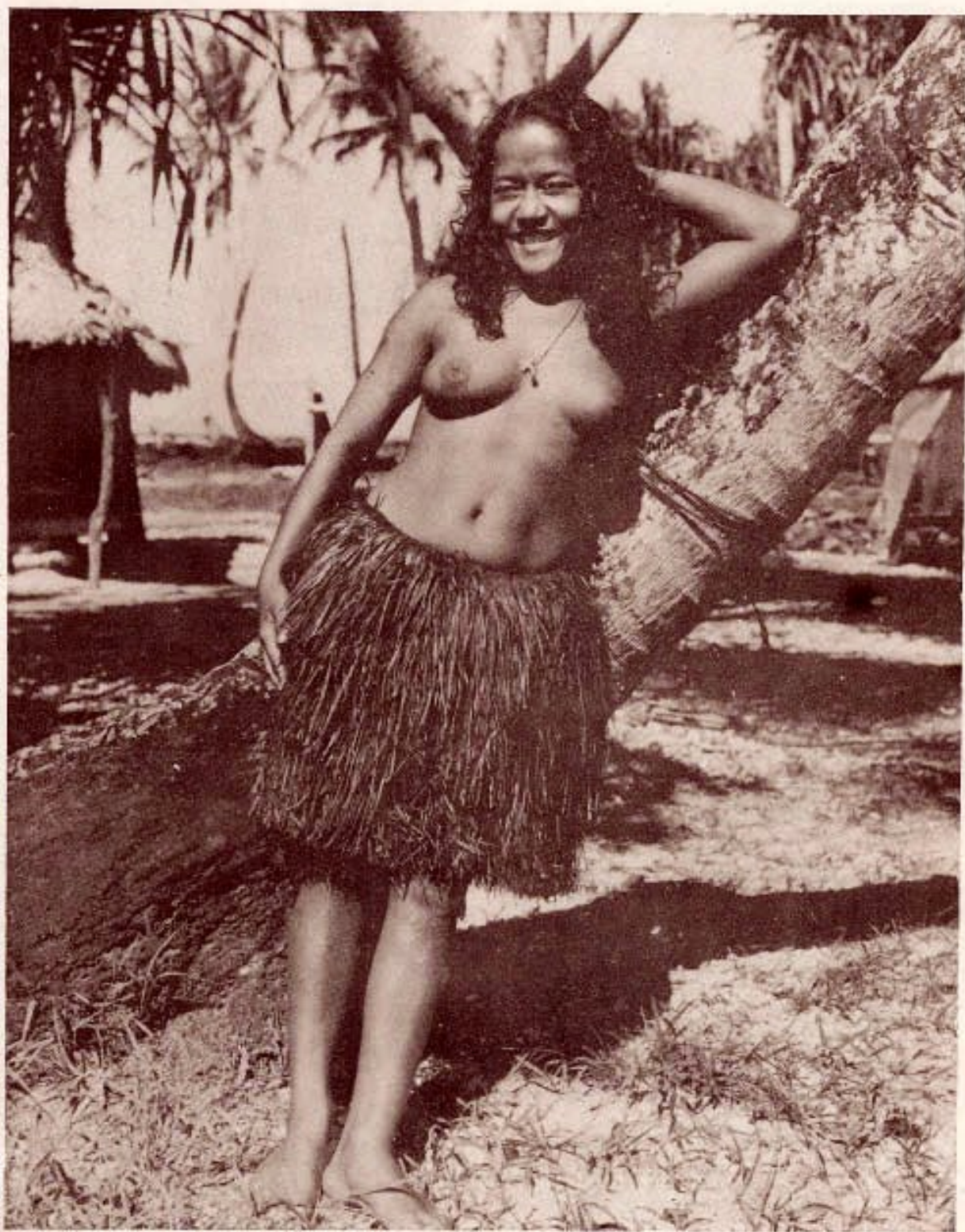
Crews Living Compartment

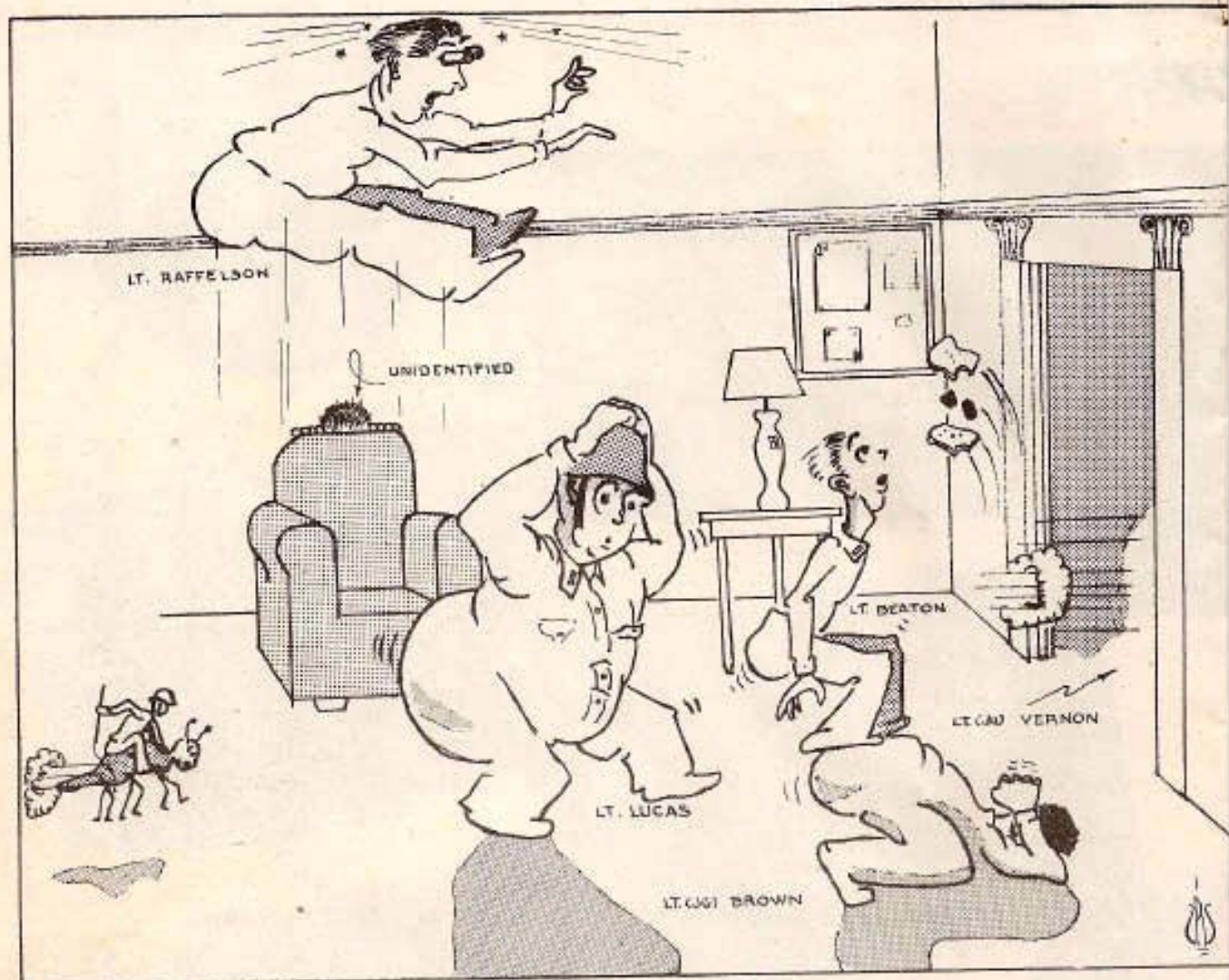


Oh, For Some More Of This



BOWDITCH
STATESIDE SUPPLEMENT





SAGA OF THE WARDROOM

Into the dim-lit wardroom
Out of the choking smoke
Straggled seven officers
For a cig and a cup of jamoke.

Away from the wearying lookout
Relaxed this forlorn group.
No hip can see the "Sucky B".
She's fogged in from folc's'l to poop.

Ten minutes of relaxation
A rest for the "sensitive" and,
A couple of jokes with the coffee and smokes
A chance to really unbind.

The first lieutenant's snoring,
"One easy" meant easy to him
Was the only noise to disturb the boys
As he sat back and started to dream.

Then out of the quiet darkness
Came the fear of an enemy "Jake"
As it dived nearer, it became clearer
The Howditch was in for a shake.

The bomb made a noise like thunder
The oerlikons chattered like hell.
What topside scene could it possible mean
The officers there could not tell.

But they were undaunted these seven
And they bravely and calmly came through.
They had, understand, the situation in hand
It was as usual snafu.

Bits Of Gold Braid

Mr. DOLTON..sound boat officer. Known as a "timber cruiser". He won the Dewey Medal for voting for Dewey, but he loves Eleanor Roosevelt. Quiet, unassuming and known as "Muscles Dolton".



Mr. WILLETT..Senior Hydrographic engineer. Is a candidate for the regular Navy. Sincere and a regular fellow. Favorite expressions; "This is the way we did it on the Pathfinder"... "Now on the Sumner"....



Mr. BRYAN..Our movie operator and engineer. Great inventor, preacher and proud of his manly physique. Is a woman hater, expert high diver and famous as a jellybread eater. Crusading for a voltage regulator.



Mr. Balkunas..Our Exec. A little Caesar-brains at work. Favorite expressions are; "Jack 'em up", "Don't let 'em dope off", "Give 'em a growl! Is a famous Sackmaster. Ever see his private head?



Dr. HART..Our physician, our chaplain and the sparkplug of our "All Star" ball team. Ever read his thesis on sick bay alcohol? He is famous 'round the world as "The Yankee Clipper".



Mr. BROWN..A beacon builder.. the best in the trade. Set a record. Says he can build more than one a day..never has. He is known as "Smoke Pot Brown."



Mr. TUCKER..Loves his survey work, especially aerial photography. Is our athletic officer. Quite the ladies man is he was the "Mayor" of Apra Village. Favorite expressions are, "Boy am I tired", "I had the mid-watch again", "I wish they would not work me so hard".



Mr. DRUCKER..Our gunnery officer. Also known as "One easy Drucker". His favorite expression is "I don't know how we ever got through it" also "My boys up there". His beard was our homeward bound pennant. Loves spaghetti and meat balls!



Mr. BEATON..Sleeps, eats and dreams of survey work. Says he can compile a chart in his sleep. Famous as the "Pusher of the Drafting Room". Known as "Concentration camp Beaton" and "Machine Gun Beaton". Ever see his Death March? Love life in Guam? Who said that?



Mr. Marks..Supply Officer extraordinary. Give him a 50 man working party and six boats and he is happy. Wants to be our Mess Treasurer again, Great Idea!!



Mr. PRICE...Survey gear officer loves the rough sea. Known as "Tapper". Favorite expressions, "Oh that is title "B"....."Stop picking on me". Is that Ocean and Lakes watch still in Pearl Harbor?



Chart Construction

In the war of the Pacific, survey vessels of the U.S. Navy have invaded enemy waters, time after time, in order to conduct hydrographic surveys and to print navigational charts at the scene of action. These charts, so essential to fleet operations, emphasize menaces to navigation such as, wrecked ships and tanks, sunken craft, and other obstructions that remain after the battle is finished. Among the numerous aids to navigation charted, the principal ones are the large lettered tripod beacons erected by survey ships. These beacons serve to guide mariners along unfamiliar coasts, through hazardous channels, and into safe harbors. Great numbers of ships that anchor, line after line, in the huge fleet anchorages are able to "fix" their position accurately in their assigned berths by means of these prominent artificial navigational aids. Landing beaches for the unloading of personnel and supplies are charted showing buoys and range markers that indicate safe routes through coral reef-studded waters. Harbor developments such as new piers and wharves, breakwaters, ranges, mooring areas, dredged limits, cables, and sea-plane runways are all charted in detail.

Preparations of the field charts commence soon after the survey itself is well underway. The depths shown on the charts represent a careful selection from tens of thousands of soundings made by survey parties to determine the exact nature and contour of the ocean floor. The green tinted areas shown, indicate ocean regions cleared by the wire drag set at various depths in search of uncharted dangers. Tide records are used to reduce all soundings to one plane of reference; current data, to indicate the magnitude and direction of water movements; and magnetic observations, to determine the magnetic attraction upon ship's compasses.

Aerial photographs are important sources for mapping adjacent land areas where certain landmarks and shore developments are situated. Topography such as, roads, buildings, drainages, marshes, mudbanks, shoreline, and reefs are rapidly delineated from plots of overlapping photoprints with control points.

Lithographic reproduction plants, equipped complete, on board the larger survey ships make it possible to print unlimited quantities of up-to-date charts of strategic areas at times when they are most needed. Survey ships, indeed, may be called rightfully, "fisher-outers of road maps to Tokyo".

He had Tarzan eyes: They swung from limb to limb.

Men are peculiar. A fellow who hadn't kissed his wife in five years shot a fellow who did.

A nurse in New Guinea fell in love with an officer patient, and they planned to wed the day he was released from the hospital. Not wishing to be married in her khaki uniform, she got permission to wear a wedding gown. After the ceremony the overwhelmed groom announced to all: "Isn't she lovely? This is the first time I've ever seen her with a dress on."

"Isn't he handsome?" the excited bride exclaimed, "It's the first time I've ever seen him when he was't in pajamas."

A Midwestern newspaper heads the list of births, marriages, and deaths briefly: "Hatched, matched, and detached."

"But Betty don't you trust me?"

"Yes Jerry. I'll gladly go to the ends of the earth with you, but I absolutely refuse to park on the way."

Photogrammetry

To many of us, photographs mean a flock of beautiful "pin-ups" decorating our bulkheads with gorgeous feminine pulchritude. Photography however, has many other uses and this article will attempt to describe its function in hydrographic work as applied to the subject of photogrammetry. In this field it is used as one of the most efficient means of obtaining and recording complete detailed and essential information in the production of hydrographic charts.

Aerial photography is the science of obtaining reliable measurements by means of aerial photographs. Air photo squadrons and field parties construct the shore signals. Most of this work is done under combat conditions. Photogrammetrists conduct their field work (nothing like we did at Hydro) by spotting these signals or control points on the photographs. Spot shot obliques are taken at low altitudes by photogrammetry personnel for additional interpretation. With control established, the vertical photos are assembled and compiled at a definite scale, indicating all surface details. They are interpreted as to shore line, topographic, hydrographic and geographic details in addition to determine shoal areas, character of the bottom, or dangerous sunken rocks which could not be detected from the surface. This information also aids the sounding work in determining the areas to be sounded.

Under a stereoscope, which is necessary for interpretation, two over-lapping photos furnish a three-dimensional model of the earth and its objects. (We have no three-dimensional "pin-up" but it's a good idea).

In carrying out their field work, Bewitch personnel proved "ducks" to be very useful as a means of transportation to inaccessible areas and at times they became very convenient living quarters for the air-photo party. Occasionally Thompsons and machine guns were more important than air photos.

Aerial photogrammetry is a most important weapon for defensive and offensive operations in modern warfare, and is constantly being used for many purposes.

From: SECNAV

To: ALNAV

ALNAV 296-45

Due to public criticism of Navy points discharge plan, ALNAV 296-45 is hereby cancelled. After intensive study of faults of Army Plan, Navy Department has concluded subtraction of points easier than addition. Consequently, Navy has adopted the following system of computing points, using both addition and subtraction. Forty-five points is hereby established for release of all hands. One hundred points granted outright as penalty for joining Navy. From this total deduct one-half point for each year of age plus two points each year of age you feel you are over sixty. Deduct points for each legitimate dependent and the points for each illegitimate dependent acquired in true Navy tradition before midnight 15 August. Illegitimate dependents acquired or started thereafter do not count. Deduct ten points for volunteering for overseas duty but add five for being tricked into leaving country. Deduct one-half for each gray hair over one thousand acquired in service. Deduct ten points for no hair at all if due to prolonged shore duty. Deduct fifteen points if you did not try to get psycho-neurotic medical discharge. Commissioned officers subtract five points for missing out on free drinks often provided for enlisted men. Waves subtract five points if acquired a husband while in service but add fifteen points if no prospect in sight as of 15 August. Subtract five points if your score is below fifty without cheating. Officers with noses duty deduct ten points for middle age spread if over thirty years of age. All personnel qualifying for release within one year under this formula will receive mustering-out bonus of sixty-four dollars plus one Eversharp pen. Those not qualifying automatically come under provisions of ALNAV 202-45 and will receive, instead of Eversharp pen, one embossed scroll on Government tissue paper, bearing inscription, "YOUR NAVAL CAREER IS GUARANTEED ... NOT FOR A MONTH, ... NOT FOR A YEAR, ... NOT FOR LIFE, ... BUT GUARANTEED FOREVER."

