SEAMEN'S *The* NUMBER

LOOKOUT

TITANIC LIGHTHOUSE TOWER *Photo by L. D. Miller*

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

VOL. XXXII NO. 8 AUGUST, 1941

Sanctuary

Stir up, O Lord, the spirit of service throughout our country and especially among all seamen and boatmen; may the soul of the nation respond to the call to sacrifice, and help all of us to play a worthy part in this great day, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(From Forward Day by Day, adapted)

EDITOR'S NOTE: In response to many requests from readers we are having another SEAMEN'S NUMBER of THE LOOKOUT. The articles, poems, stories and some of the illustrations in this issue have been contributed by merchant seamen.

The LOOKOUT

VOL. XXXII, AUGUST, 1941

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LEGACIES TO THE INSTITUTE

You are asked to remember this Institute in your will, that it may properly carry on its important work for seamen. While it is advisable to consult your lawyer as to the drawing of your will, we submit nevertheless the following as a clause that may be used:

I give and bequeath to **"Seamen's Church Institute of New York," incorporated under the laws of the State of New York,** located at 25 South Street, New York City, the sum of ....Dollars.

Note that the words **"OF NEW YORK"** are a part of our title.

It is to the generosity of numerous donors and testators that the Institute owes its present position, and for their benefactions their memory will ever be cherished by all friends of the seamen.

The Lookout

VOL. XXXII August, 1941 No. 8

Torpedo On the Starboard Bow!

By Aubrey Tidey

Radio Officer, British Merchant Navy

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Following are excerpts from Mr. Tidey's article "Torpedo on the Starboard Bow" which are reprinted with the kind permission of the author and the Saturday Evening Post. Mr. Tidey used to visit the Institute's Apprentices' Room when he was a young radio operator in the New York to West Indies run ten years ago, and recently, he has stopped here between trips.*

IT was black midnight and dead still when I sailed on my latest voyage in convoy. I was aware of the bulky figures of the Old Man and the pilot on the bridge . . . I have sailed eight times on voyages in convoy to America, but probably because it was at night and so black, I was more impressed than I had been before. We were a great power of ships and men, using all our skill and cunning to bring our line of communication out into the Atlantic through the dangers above and below. There was an air of enormous stealth . . .

I had no idea where the ship was bound. We hardly ever know whether the trip is to be long or short, and if we have been able to find out where we are going we are under orders not to notify our relatives. We do know that at a certain hour we are to be aboard, although this does not mean that we will sail at that time. Once actually at sea, we are informed of our destination, since, should we lose the convoy, we must know in what direction to head. The radiomen must be advised, so that we can copy any weather reports and warnings that might affect us . . .

Once well at sea, where we had room to do so, our convoy formed up. Each ship had been allotted a number which represented its position. We arranged ourselves in a solid formation, so many ships abreast, each a fixed distance from its neighbor on either side and each followed or preceded at regular distances by other ships in the same line, like a column of soldiers in extended formation.

Our speed and course were determined by the commodore vessel, which usually has a naval officer aboard, and all orders on the trip across are made by him. Another vessel, the vice commodore, is deputed to take control should anything happen to the commodore . . .

There is no more moving sight to a sailor — though few would admit it — than a convoy of thirty or forty ships proceeding as one, majestically. In such a peaceful armada a dirty, rust-streaked, salt-encrusted tramp takes on a certain pathetic dignity.

Many of the ships in our convoy were oil tankers. I would say well over fifty per cent of the world's merchant shipping consists of tankers, and in a convoy of, say, thirty-six ships, perhaps twenty will be carrying fuel oil, lubricating oil, kerosene, high-octane gasoline, Diesel oil and, in some cases, whale oil.

I was aboard a tanker, a biggish one, 11,000 tons. The radio-room portholes were walled in by concrete blocks to protect the apparatus against machine-gun fire. At one time sandbags were used, but concrete is less bulky and affords better protection. I think that some ma-

chine-gunning pilots make a special try for the radio apparatus. On a previous voyage my quarters were pretty well cut up, and I felt that the pilot had a personal grudge against me.

When a ship is by herself there is, of course, no necessity for nice adjustment of speed. But, obviously, the speed of the convoy must be regulated to suit that of the slowest ship, and vessels capable of fourteen or fifteen knots may have to travel eight or nine in order to maintain their positions . . .

The convoy system has advantages and disadvantages. The most convincing argument in its favor is undoubtedly the sudden fall in shipping losses after its adoption in World War I . . . It is hazardous to bomb a convoy from the air. A barrage from thirty to forty high-angle guns, manned by crews especially trained, presents a problem to the pilot of a bomber. To supplement them there are machine guns for strafing low fliers.

A purely defensive device is a large kite flown from the masthead on light, tough wire. A plane traveling 300 miles an hour, upon striking the wire, can do itself great damage. A variation of this device is a rocket which sends to a predetermined height two small parachutes connected with wire. This contraption has proved itself time and again, and I know of one case when a bomber became entangled in it and was gradually forced down into the sea . . .

When I first became a radio operator I was sent to a cruise ship plying between New York and the West Indies. Existence consisted of sending and receiving routine messages, playing games, dancing, attending parties, talking to passengers and going ashore for tennis or golf. Nowadays my radio is silent, except in cases of urgent necessity. I spend my time listening for warnings, and receive messages in code on predetermined wave lengths at fixed times. I check and recheck my sending apparatus, so that it may function at the touch of a button. In the old West Indies days, if we heard a distress signal we telephoned the bridge, and full steam was ordered as we rushed to the rescue.

Today an S O S is a signal for us to take to our heels in the other direction to avoid being caught in the same trap as the victim. We leave the rescue work almost entirely to the navy, and it is comforting to see how admirably they do it . . .

When we had passed the danger zone I no longer had to keep in mind the little attache case in which I kept my passport and wireless certificate, a pocket compass, tobacco, a diary and a pencil, sometimes a book. It was pleasant again to take off one's clothes and sleep in pajamas. I could put my life jacket up on top of the locker.

Then there came a time when we dispersed convoy. One fine afternoon about bour bells, going through the Gulf Stream, I was standing on the bridge with the second mate, when the lookout reported an object about six miles off the port bow. Through the glasses we could see that it was a raft. There was no sign of life on it. Our course would take us within half a mile of it, and we held on. However, when we had approached to within about a mile and a half, we saw a red flare burning. There were men on the raft. One of them was standing up and waving what we later found was a paddle with a shirt tied to it. We called down through the ventilator to the captain, who came up immediately and ordered course altered to bring us alongside . . .

We now saw that there were six men on the raft. Five were sitting down apathetically. Looking down on them, I thought the whole thing was more Hollywood than Hollywood. Scantily dressed in oddly assorted clothing, ranging from pajamas to oilskins, they were burned black. Around the raft slowly swam a great shark, his fin drooping, flapping lazily. Through the green, transparent water I could see shoals of evil-looking barracuda . . .

SNATCHED FROM DEATH *(Associated Press Photograph)*

Here is the climax of a saga of the sea as thrilling as any in fiction. Photo was made at the instant a British cruiser tossed a life ring to the three men clinging with a last grim remnant of courage to the keel of an overturned lifeboat. Only the officer has strength enough to reach out and grip the life ring. Survivors of torpedoed ship, they had spent 10 days on gale-swept sea during which one man was swept away and boat capsized.

The six rescued men had just strength to climb a rope ladder. One said there was another raft somewhere with survivors on it, and we began moving in a wide circle. About ten miles away we picked up the second raft with another six men.

Their ship, a Dutchman, had blown up five days previously, sinking within three minutes, and they were the only survivors of a crew of thirty-two. Although they suggested that they might have been torpedoed, we were convinced that this was a case of sabotage, in which a time bomb had been placed in their cargo. Those on the second raft were not so badly off. They had water. The water in the tank on the first raft had gone bad; there had been nothing to drink for two days and the men had not expected to last more than another twenty-four hours.

We brought them safely to New York, that city of brightly lit nights and no ration cards. As usual, the good New Yorkers overwhelmed us with hospitality . . .

From an Eleventh Floor Window (S.C.I.)

I sit and muse at my window
High up as in a tower,
And watch the ships go by—
Small bugs upon the water
Huge crawling things of power.
At night across the water,
A string of jewels is spread,
As the world of ships sails by—
All busy glow-worms now
With eyes of green and red.

By Seaman Thomas Holt Friend

Convoys

By Seaman Kermit W. Salyer

THE July 5th issue of the *Saturday Evening Post* carried an article on convoys by Aubrey Tidey, radio operator of a British-flag Standard Oil tanker. Incidentally, Tidey is one of my friends and occasionally gives me interesting bits of war news.

He has had a very colorful career up to now and he is still not an old man. Twenty-eight, I think. He tells me that he has a personal grievance against the Germans, since they drove him away from the Island of Jersey, where he owned a thriving holiday camp.

Tidey, a Londoner, has been going to sea about eleven years, all told. His sea career has been broken up by short tenures of other odd jobs. For one year he was a member of the London Metropolitan Police Force, or a Bobby, as the world calls them.

After his year on the police force he went back to sea again and took a job around the world. Strangely enough, he feels that he resigned from the police force about two days before he was to be sacked, or fired.

Various sailings hither and yon finally led him to settle down on the Island of Jersey, where he opened his ill-fated holiday camp. The channel islands are favorite spots, Jersey being the best-loved of the lot. Before long, Tidey found that he had a growing business and he hoped that 1940 would be his banner year. But the Germans moved in.

The Jerries provided more business than Tidey had ever dreamed of having, but he was not there to receive them. He moved out ahead of them. As Tidey so aptly put it, all the rulers of other European countries found it most expedient to move out ahead of Hitler, so who was he, a holiday camp operator, to stay and receive them.

He salvaged only an 18-foot fishing rod.

He lost twelve thousand pounds sterling in the venture, so you readers can readily see why he has a personal grudge against the Jerries.

He has made eight voyages in convoy since the war began, and he had no idea of doing an article on the men and ships who feed Britain until the possibility of such was suggested to him by an editor of King Features Syndicate.

Tidey had taken a batch of crossword puzzles up to the Syndicate to peddle. The editor told him that they were too small and said to him, "Why don't you write an article on convoys?"

No sooner said than done, and you have the result in the Saturday Evening Post.

But Tidey still stands up for those puzzles. He has been doing puzzles for the London papers for years. He was very careful to inform me that they were not ordinary puzzles, but sticklers that required a maximum of intelligence.

Tidey is very proud of the fact that the article was rejected by a popular magazine of national circulation because it was not "sufficiently hair-raising."

Survivors

Officers and members of the crew of the Belgian freighter "Mercier," sunk by a Nazi submarine, who were saved by the Finnish vessel Hammarland. *Times Photo*

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Forty-seven survivors of three ships sunk by Axis raiders arrived at the Institute on June 30th and were given care. One group of twelve had drifted for 14 days in an open boat before being rescued; a crew of 25 endured the bitter cold of the far north Atlantic for five days in an open lifeboat; a third group of ten were rescued from an enclosed lifeboat after nine days in the same seas. Following are brief accounts of some of the seamen. Since the rescued men have relatives in Holland and Belgium, their names are withheld. Not only do seamen expose themselves to sudden and terrible death upon the seas during this war, but when they are rescued they have to keep their luck secret for fear that it will make the Germans angry and bring quick vengeance upon their families at home.*

SURVIVOR NO. I

I represent the twelve remaining crew members of the Dutch tanker *Pendrecht*. We were rescued by the American Export liner *Excalibur*. Our ship was the largest of the Dutch fleet, with a gross tonnage of 10,746. We were first torpedoed near Wales while traveling empty back to the United States. We put into a Welsh port for repairs and then set out to sea again. On June 8th we were torpedoed by a submarine. I think it was Italian, but the commander was German. The boats were put over immediately, also a large motor launch. As soon as it touched the water a second torpedo from the submarine struck it and blew it to bits. The crew then took to the three life-boats. The boats separated and we have never heard from the other two boats. We traveled 750 miles. We were burned by the sun and our feet swollen from being in the cold water so long. (*Editor's Note*: The officers and men received special diathermic treatment in the Institute's clinic and great improvement was noted.) On June 22nd we were picked up by Captain S. M. Groves of the *Excalibur*. Yes, as soon as our feet have healed, we shall resume convoy work for England.

SURVIVOR NO. 2

I represent the officers and men of the Belgian freighter *Mercier*. Without warning on the night of June 9th our ship was torpedoed. Our skipper, Captain Maurice Lambe, and six members of our crew went down with the ship. Seventy of us, including passengers, managed to get away in two lifeboats. The other boat has since been picked up by another Finnish freighter. There were thirty-five men in our boat. We drifted for five days in the open sea. Rations were a single biscuit a day. The Finnish freighter *Hammarland* picked us up, brought us to Norfolk and left ten of our crew in the hospital there. Less than three hours after rescuing us, the *Hammarland* picked up ten men of the *Yselhaven*.

SURVIVOR NO. 3

I represent the ten men from the Dutch freighter *Yselhaven*. We were torpedoed by a German submarine about 500 miles off Labrador. Fortunately, we escaped in a covered lifeboat. Our captain, M. P. de Unaard and eight men went down with the ship. Fifteen men in the other lifeboat have not been reported. All of us are residents of Rotterdam and we have been away from our native land since before the Nazi invasion last year. After nine days in our lifeboat we were picked up by the Finnish freighter *Hammarland*, some of us ill from exposure. Soon we shall be well, again, however, to continue our sea duties.

Robin Moor

COLUMNS have been written about the U. S. freighter *Robin Moor*, which was sunk by a Nazi U-boat, thereby raising the controversy of the freedom of the seas. At the Institute special concern was felt for the safety of several members of the crew: John McHenry, oiler, who gave 25 South Street as his home address; Antonio Santos, the *Robin Moor's* cook who has been visiting the Institute for 27 years and Virgil Sanderlin, third engineer, whose wife had been corresponding with Mrs. Janet Roper, head of the Institute's Missing Seamen's Bureau, trying to locate her husband.

When the good word came that all were saved, we learned that Santos, Sanderlin and McHenry were in different lifeboats but had been rescued. Santos returned to New York and told us how for 18 days, through heavy rains, high seas and blazing sun, his lifeboat headed toward the coast of Brazil. On the 18th day they sighted a ship on the horizon and signalled across the water with flashlights. The ship was the *Ozorio*. She halted and picked up the seven seamen, two engineers, one mate and one British passenger.

THE LOOKOUT editor has known Antonio Santos for twelve years. He has olive skin and a winning smile. We recall that since 1923 he has been sending $2.00 a month to his home in Portugal to pay for food for the old mule owned by his father and mother. "My father wrote me that he was going to turn her out in the hill because she could do no more work. I write to heem and say: 'How you like to work twenty year and be turned out in the hill to starve? I send you $24. a year to keep her.' "

Back in New York after the *Robin Moor* experience, Santos told us that his father died recently, but that his mother is still taking care of the old mule and Santos is still sending money home to Portugal. His old dog is also alive, he says. Santos is a good American citizen and very proud to be one. He did not want to talk about the *Robin Moor*, and as we go to press, he has found another ship job. He is a splendid example of a hard-working, self-respecting seaman.

My Experience Aboard the W—— *

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This is the story of George B——, a young gunner on the British tanker W————. It is a plain tale, and simply told. The nineteen surviving members of the crew were brought to the Institute on June 19th and for a few days enjoyed a well-earned rest before shipping out again to face the perils of mine, submarine, raider and bomber.*

ON Wednesday night, June 4th, we were proceeding from Curacao in ballast. I was on watch with the third mate. I am a gunner, loaned from the British Army. I had the machine gun and a Navy gunner had the big gun on the stern.

Suddenly I heard a loud explosion. Three torpedoes from the German submarine U 38 (we saw her number later) hit our engine room. Then she came up, looked at our ship's name, and blew up our magazine.

We had no time to get any belongings. There were 29 men in our lifeboat, with the third mate in charge. Later we transferred ten men to the second lifeboat and in the third boat were the captain, mate, 2nd mate and engineer. Three engineers were killed when the torpedo hit our engine room.

About six hundred yards off we saw a cargo boat. We burned flares but she did not stop — she may have been a supply ship for the Nazis. We used both sail and oars but the ocean was too rough to make much headway. A huge wave washed our chronometer overboard. That was a time! Luckily, I had a flashlight and I helped the radio operator. He had a small radio transmitting set and after we dried it out he sent an S O S message every six hours to conserve the small battery. We could only give a rough position.

Our little boat had the usual stores: barrels of water, canned beef, biscuits. I had a cigarette lighter and we dried our cigarette papers in the sun and rationed the cigarettes. Then for our meals, we'd put condensed milk on the big pilot biscuits and boy, they tasted really good! The mate made us go lightly on the water, because he didn't know how soon we'd be picked up. We had a small first-aid kit. Our chief trouble was our feet were in bad condition, always wet (the boat leaked and had to be bailed constantly) and we had, of course, no changes of clothing.

We had five days of this. The sun was hot and at night it was very cold. We had blankets, fortunately. On June 9th we were picked up by the British tanker *A*———— and brought to New York. The chief engineer and several of his men are in the hospital.

This was my second experience in this war. I was in the English Army at St. Lazaro when France surrendered. We returned to London in a cargo vessel, in convoy. One of the convoy, the *L*————, was bombed.

Of course, I am glad to be safe ashore and have sent word to my wife in Surrey. Our home had been in Hammersmith but the air factories nearby were bombed so my wife moved to the country.

Where do I go next? Wherever I am sent. Probably to man a machine gun on another British tanker.

* Names omitted by request.

"Fishing"

By Captain Harry Garfield

THIS is the story of a voyage on a ship where good food was conspicuous by its absence.

Stories of the sea usually tell of suffering, disaster or shipwreck, especially on those ships whose lofty spars and white bellied sails roamed the seven seas a few years ago, and yet even on these hard driven, hard living ships, life often had its humourous aspects.

The story I have in mind happened on just such a ship. We were bound from Puget Sound for Hong Kong and the crew consisted of the usual variety of nationalities picked up in a last minute drive along the waterfront. There is no place in the world where a man is rated according to his worth faster than on board a ship. After a few days of strenuous labor a few good seamen emerge from behind their hard-bitten nondescript exteriors. The others are classified as greenhorns and treated accordingly. They may have been "big shots" ashore, but here they perform the lowly tasks, and are abused forward and aft.

The food was below the average even for those days, and our Chinese cook made no attempt to render the food more palatable by a little extra effort on his part.

The Captain had his own provisions, needless to say, of far better quality than ours.

We had been at sea about ten days, and I was engaged in some trifling job on deck when an aroma from the galley almost drove me frantic with its appetizing smell — the fragrant smell of a boiling ham. A few minutes afterward the cook appeared on deck, and with the ham poised on a plate, purposely passed a few inches to windward of me, so that sight now was added to the sense of smell. The cook leered at me as he passed and said: "Sailor get salty horse. Captain get ham." Exercising great will power I turned away and walked forward.

That night I had the middle watch, 12 to 4. The weather was fine, the wind was steady, and there was very little work to be done on deck. This gave me plenty of time to concentrate on the fact that I was hungry. Thoughts of that ham were ever present in my mind.

Suddenly another thought came to my mind. Why not try to get some of it? True, the galley was locked, but the skylight was open. Quickly I investigated and discovered that the skylight was protected by iron bars spaced about six inches apart. "Where there is a will there is a way." One of the crew was a read head named "Dan." I had become fairly friendly with him so I decided to seek his cooperation. "Are you hungry, Dan?" I asked him. "I'm always hungry," he replied, "and why wouldn't I be hungry," he continued. "I can't eat them biscuits fast enough to keep from getting hungry. Sawdust and cement is what they are made of." "Well listen to this," said I, and I explained to him about the ham. "I've got just what we need, wait here a minute." He returned with four fishhooks; these we lashed back to back and making them fast to the end of a line, we climbed to the top of the galley, lowered the hooks between the bars and started fishing. We hauled up a few pots and pans and a couple of dirty dishcloths before we finally hooked on to the ham. We could not get it through the bars, but we managed to tear off a couple of pounds before it finally slipped off the hook and fell to the galley floor.

The following morning when the cook discovered the ham, or what was left of it, he went right aft and told the "old man" that somebody had broken into the galley during the night. The very thought of sailors eating his prized ham rendered him speechless, but he didn't remain in this condition very long. He glared at the inoffensive ham again, grabbed it in his hand, and for a minute I thought he was going to crown the cook with it. Instead he looked at me — I was at the wheel at this time — and roared "Did you ever see this before?" I answered respectfully that I had not, it being dark at the time we had hooked it. I was not quite certain as to the correct answer to this question but the sight of him standing there with the ham clenched tight in his fist convinced me that an answer was expected. "Well!" he growled at me. I muttered something about it coming from the sound end of a pig. Abruptly he turned away, threatening to keelhaul the culprit if found.

It was not considered a crime on board any ship for a sailor to add to his food supply whenever opportunity offered, the idea being to keep the food locked up some place where the crew couldn't reach it. In the meantime, the Captain came to the conclusion that someone among the crew had a key which fitted the galley door. This would never do. The thought of the sailors eating the cabin delicacies caused the after guard to shudder and turn pale. Another thought, too, they might have to finish the voyage on salt pork and Irish turkey themselves.

Realizing that something had to be done, the Old Man and the cook put their heads together and decided upon a plan to trap the man whom they figured had the key. Of course we knew nothing of these arrangements. Hence it came to pass that a few nights after these events, Dan and I once again found ourselves on deck and again it was the middle watch. We were standing by the lee rail watching the phosphorescent streaks in the sea to leeward of us as a giant fish darted here and there in search of food, when Dan exclaimed "I'm hungry enough to eat a sea boot." "Hush," I whispered, "someone might hear you. I saw the cook carry some more ham into the galley just before eight bells." "I'll get my hooks and we'll go fishing again after a while," said Daniel.

Watching our chance, we made our way to the forward house and climbed on top of the galley. All seemed quiet within. We soon rigged up the hooks and lowered them through the bars. Slowly I swung the hooks back and forth, at first with no results. "Let me try it awhile," Dan whispered. "This is my lucky day. I found the cat in my bunk this morning." Sure enough he got results right away. First he hauled up a pair of dungarees or overalls that we recognized as belonging to the cook. This was followed by various other odds and ends. We decided to shift our position to the other end of the skylight. Dan got a bite immediately. "The hook seems to be caught. I can't haul it up," he muttered. "Let me try," I suggested. Reaching over his shoulder I gave a pull on the line with unexpected results. A weird, dismal howl ascended from the dark depths of the galley. "Oh, dear Lord, we have caught the cook," groaned Dan. "We can't leave the hooks down there. They will know it is us if we do." We gave a mighty heave and the hooks came clear. At the same time a shriek that resembled nothing human awoke all hands. We heard footsteps approaching on the run, and we ducked forward around the house and joined the rest of the crew gathered around the galley door. Out dashed the cook just as the Mate appeared on the scene. "What is going on here?" yelled the Mate, as he grabbed the cook. "What are you making that racket for?" The cook was never a fluent conversationalist in English, but now all he could do was leap up and down and make weird noises punctuated by prolonged howls.

"Maybe he is praying," suggested Dan. "I can pray without making that noise," said the Mate. "Well, maybe his prayers have further to go than yours," said Dan.

The Captain now joined the group. He too wanted to know what

was going on, but it was easy to see that he was not quite as mystified as the other members of the crew. The cook had by now calmed down somewhat and the Captain led him aft to his own quarters where he could question him about the recent happenings on deck and in the galley. Strange as it may seem they were still in ignorance of what had actually happened. The cook figured he had been stabbed.

We had expected there would be an investigation, at least a few inquiries among the crew, but apparently the Old Man had decided to let the matter drop.

The crew discussed the matter among themselves. They too figured that one among them had a key and prowled the galley during the night. They decided the cook, at the request of the Captain, had been sleeping in the galley and had awakened suddenly and been stabbed in the melee which followed his discovery of the intruder. The crew were peeved because they had not been invited to share in the spoils.

The following morning Dan went to the galley for the morning coffee, or "bilge water and ink", as he called it. It was sweetened with molasses. Its one redeeming feature was that it was hot. I could see that Dan had something on his mind. At the first opportunity he informed me that the cook suspected us. "Every time I go to the galley he starts putting an edge on the meat axe."

The next day we sighted a school of dolphins. The wind was light and fair, ideal weather for fishing. Delighted at this opportunity of adding to our larder, the Mate suggested that those of us who had hooks try our hand at fishing. A white rag tied to a hook and trailed along the surface of the water from the gib-boom is the method usually adopted.

Dan arrived on deck with his hooks and in his eagerness to get started failed to remove a tell-tale strip of blue dungaree, that had been torn from the seat of the cook's pants during our ham fishing venture. "Hey!" shouted the Mate, "you need a white rag. Wait a minute, let's take a look at that hook. So that is how it happened," said he as a gleam of great understanding appeared in his eyes. "Come aft with me and you can tell the Old Man all about it." Aft they went and Dan's confession brought unexpected results. For the first time during that voyage we found out that the Captain could laugh. Now laughter is infectious and soon all hands were grinning, that is, of course, with the exception of the cook.

In the S.C.I. Mail Bag

TO MRS. BAXTER, Apprentices' Room:

This is the second time I have been on your side of the ocean since I enjoyed your hospitality in February. Each time I have been across I had hoped to be able to pay you a visit, but I have been unlucky.

Since my visit I have met many fellows who have been entertained by you, and you would, I know, be glad to learn how much your kindness is appreciated. The trouble with most of we Englishmen is that we are inarticulate when the time to express our thanks arrives.

Please give my kind regards to your lady helpers. I hope to see you all again before we finish off Adolph.

Yours sincerely,

J. W.

TO MOTHER ROPER:

I hope you have not forgotten me. I am one of your sailor boys. But now I am in the Canadian Army trying to do my part in this mess. I have been in here now for the past five months and I'll put my stamp of approval on Army Life. It's quite a bit different from sailing on ships as I have been for the past eighteen years. One thing tho, the quicker it's over with the quicker we will be able to sail our ships to any part of the world without interference by Adolph. The only way to get it finished is for all hands to "turn to".

One thing is that I am sort of lonsome. No one writes to me. So I happened to see your name in one of the papers here in Canada and then I wondered why I did not think of my "Mother Roper." I know you are always glad to hear from any of your boys, so now I know I'll get at least one letter from you. And if you tell Chaplain MacDonald he will write to me too. I'll promise to answer any and all letters sent to me and to tell any stories about the Army life I am allowed to tell. If you also know any one else who would care to write tell them to for I really would love to hear from home. Any of my old shipmates, too. Tho I'd rather have a lot of them in uniform here with me, then we would clean up Adolph quicker.

"IS THERE A LETTER FOR ME?"

An oft-repeated query at the window of the U. S. Post Office on the second floor of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, 25 South Street.

Photo by Marie Higginson

Our outfit keeps going over fast for we are the repair gang. Some call it the Suicide Squad, for we go up into the front for anything damaged and bring it back to repair it. Anything from a pair of boots, rifle, machine gun, truck or tank. The rest break them; we fix them.

A word about the treating here. Well, I have really never been treated better. As soon as the Canadians hear I am a "Yankee" they cannot do enough to entertain or please me. All kinds of dances, shows, etc. But that isn't hearing from home or hearing news about the sea and ships, if you know what I mean.

I get my furlough next month or around August and if I am not over seas by then I will try to scrape up cash and visit you and the boys in the Institute.

One other thing and I guess it is the only complaint I have about Canada — that is they don't know how to make good cigarettes and the cost of them. Believe it or not but they charge us 28 cents for 18 cigarettes in our canteen. They cost 25 cents for 25 and still they are no good. If I could send any money out of the country I would ask you to send me a couple of cartons of good old "Pall Mall," but I can not. So if you will trust me to pay you after I shave Adolph's mustaches off, I wish you could spare me a carton. I will pay you back if I come back.

Hoping you are in the best of health and feeling fine, I am

Your sailing soldier son

Private W. J. D.

P. S. If you send the cigarettes put on the package "On Active Service".

TO ONE OF THE INSTITUTE VOLUNTEERS:

Today I find myself aboard a vessel that I would have laughed at a few short months ago, today it is no laughing matter, it is deadly serious business. Picture an old wreck, a passenger ship and a good one in her day, paint cracked and peeling, fine woods in the salons split and warped, musty, damp and almost derelict. Her rigging is all slack and her stack slants to one side eight degrees out of line with her spars, her anchors are catted on deck for she was built before the days of self-stowing anchors.

This slab-sided old rustpot that was refused for transport duty during the last war because of her age is now hauled out of the boneyard and with an absolute minimum of work done, sent to sea! We are torpedo bait. Once struck we're done for, there are no bulkheads, she'll fill like a bottle with a bottom knocked out and sink in five minutes or less.

We won't want war for many reasons, but chief among them is the thing all seamen fear. Every war aside from those it kills works hardship on those that survive in this way: Today for the first time since Erik the Red, seamen are paid a living wage and get a share of decent food and quarters, in short, to become almost fullfledged human beings.

War will destroy all that we have built up and return us virtually to where we started years ago: Thirty dollars or less a month, poor food and filthy overcrowded quarters. This we know, for it is inevitable, it always has happened.

I love the sea and always shall but the waters are not ever improved by the addition of mines and their contents to the chemicals already in them. And I

have never seen a view that would be at all enhanced by a submarine's conning tower in the foreground.

Though the sea is still blue I look at it through eyes that are anything but normal, everything takes on a jaundiced view, the future is most disturbing. My men are of the same opinion though they say but little. I see them looking over the lifeboats and their gear and that is most expressive to a seamen. They expect to be sunk!

But enough of this morbid maundering. There are still bright spots to be seen and pleasant sounds to be heard.

The other night I attended a concert and among the first violins was a young woman who seemed to embody the piece at the moment being played. Johann Straus brought a twinkle to her eye and a smile to her lips, Sibelius drew her face to stern lines a frown at times almost an expression of agony was most apparent. The score was easily read in her facial expression she lived each piece as she played it. It was of course quite impossible to catch the notes from her instrument from among those with the same sonic value, but one imagined that they should be truer and sweeter than the others because each note was loved so intensely. And so it becomes apparent that no matter what our work may be our love of that work shows in our every action.

There seems to me to be something wrong just now, even as I write I seem to sense some disturbance of an unknown nature, odd that while my head is busy there should intrude a thought so foreign. I wonder what the cause may be? I think I'll look around the ship just in case.

I can see nothing wrong yet the feeling persists — I wonder what is up?

As yet there's no sign of what disturbed me while writing to you yet so intense was the feeling that there was something wrong that I could write no more, nor could I sleep. And now I think I'll close this letter and bid you goodbye for the present.

Always your friend

R. L. B.

Editor's Note: *Shortly after this letter was written the ship on which the writer is an officer sprung a leak but got into port safely.*

Book Reviews

SEA POWER IN THE MACHINE AGE

By Bernard Brodie

Princeton Univ. Press, $3.75

Mr. Brodie, a member of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University, here presents a painstaking analysis of the fighting power of the types of machines used in present-day sea warfare; of the tactics to which these new combat tools have given rise; and of their interrelation with national policy. Into 465 pages he has crammed enough historical background to give meaning to present designs of guns and armor, of subs and aircraft; and enough technical facts to equip the arm-chair strategist for any debate on naval tactics. Through the book runs the story of the impact of invention upon naval strategy: the old race between ordnance and armor, and the record of many a bad guess as to the worthlessness of the other fellow's newly-invented gadget. Amateur admirals concerned with the plane versus battleship problem will immediately turn to chapter XIX and find accounts of all such engagements, down to early 1941, with a realistic appraisal of the worth of the aircraft carrier and the torpedo-carrying plane. A valuable feature of the book is its large number of references to source material.

Reviewed by Charles S. Hazard, *Ex-Ensign (Engineering) U. S. Naval Auxiliary Reserve.*

* * *

THE DEEP

By Kaj Klitgaard

$2.75, *Doubleday Doran and Co.*

In spite of its title, this is much more than a novel of the sea. It is a well-constructed, thoughtful, psychological novel, certainly autobiographical in parts. Although the author's native tongue is Danish, his English prose is forceful and vivid. The chapters which recount impressions of his childhood and early days at sea are among the best—they set the reflective mood which characterizes all of the more mature observations which are to follow. Much of the "ship talk" is splendid . . . yet one senses a detachment from it all in the somewhat ironical comments made upon seamen and officers alike. The unusual technique of using the second person plural works out with surprising effectiveness.

A.W.C.

Star of Hope

By Captain Harry Garfield

THE sight of a star peeping through a break in the clouds carries no message to a vast majority today, but to the storm-bound mariners in the days of sail it was indeed a star of hope.

Even today this vision recalls to my mind my first long voyage. Bound for Capetown from Port Townsend, we had experienced fairly good weather until we arrived in the vicinity of the dreaded Cape of Storms at the tip of South America.

Vicious squalls kicked up a nasty sea that broke and hissed about our decks. High aloft our trucks made wild arcs in the low evil looking clouds.

The crew shivered in the bitter cold while their thoughts went back to the previous weeks of pleasant sunny days wafted onward by the warm Trade Winds.

The weather had been bad now for several days and was rapidly getting worse. Under a reefed lower topsail and a rag of canvas aft the straining hull of the ship groaned as she buried her nose in the oncoming sides of the giant combers that fought so hard to send us to the cold, dark depths below.

It was night by the clock in the cabin but night had been with us for an eternity it seemed.

Snow and ice covered the masts and yards. The acme of suffering had been reached. Surely nothing built by man could withstand this terrific onslaught by Nature's armaments. What mattered to us the happenings in the great world beyond.

Standing under the break of the poop we were unaware of each other's presence. Each man was alone upon the dark raging sea. Cold and hunger were forgotten now. A giant greybeard threw us on our beam-ends. I struggled to my feet, although hope of survival had long since left me.

Suddenly through the murk overhead a single star sent its message of hope to the madly plunging ship and its weary crew. Star of Hope indeed it proved for us. Down through the ages it has been considered a good omen at sea when a single star casts its ghostly light upon a storm-tossed ship. Superstition? — maybe but there is no denying the hope it has brought to many of those who go down to the sea in ships.

Book Reviews

WHAT THE CITIZEN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE COAST GUARD

By Hickman Powell

Illustrations by Charles E. Pont. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Incorporated. $2.00. 194 *pages.*

Despite the fact that last year the United States Coast Guard celebrated its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary, comparatively few people know much about this versatile and important branch of our government services. Hickman Powell rectifies this lack in a comprehensive survey of the history, personnel, and duties of the Coast Guard. The duties of this maritime police force range from giving aid to foundering ships in mid-ocean to saving victims of great inland floods; from the enforcement of whaling and sealing treaties to taking the meteorological observations which make transatlantic aviation possible. Particularly interesting is the part of the Coast Guard in the event of war. As in 1917 it would become a part of the Navy. Thus it would relieve the Navy of a great deal of detail, enabling the fighting force to concentrate its efforts on matters of combat.

TRADE WINDS BLOWING — *From the Painting by Frank Vining Sm*
Courtesy, Findlay Galler

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