

A Fleet in Being.

WORK AND PLAY ON A BATTLESHIP.

A FINE TRAINING.

(By WALTER L. DOYLE.)

(Is the "San Francisco Chronicle.")

"In times of peace prepare for war." This is the motto of our American navy, and this is the reason that our sailor boys are able to make such perfect scores with Uncle Sam's big guns. No one knows when the order, "Clear ship for action" is to be given, and that is why the officers and enlisted men of the United States navy are kept in constant training so as to be in readiness for that bugle call which is the most thrilling given on shipboard, bringing forth the same manifestations of spirit as does the call to "charge."

Life aboard an American man-o-war is one of expectancy. The same stirring scenes were enacted on board ship at Magdalena Bay as on the American war vessels which went to avenge the Maine in Havana harbour in 1898. The order to clear ship is one that is frequently given. When it comes officers and men instantly spring to quarters.

The divisions are set to work in their respective portions of the ship and in a comparatively short time the outward appearance of the vessel is greatly changed. If it is a real battle, and the enemy be near, then the work is speedily carried on. The steel wires and braces which encircle the upper deck of the ship are taken down. The boats are taken from the boat nests. The boat davits are removed, and every loose and movable object is cleared from the outer decks of the ship. Everything on the hurricane deck is either thrown overboard or stowed below. If there is time in which to anchor the boats together this is done. If not the small boats are simply set adrift, and the plugs are removed from the bottom of each in order that they may fill, and thus drift very slowly.

All wooden objects are instantly removed from the decks, as the splinters are very much dreaded by officers and men, and have been known to injure large numbers. Splinter mats, usually made of canvas, are used to prevent splinters from flying. It takes from two to eight hours to clear a ship for action, and every ship strives to break the record in the practice drills.

AT THE GUNS.

While the ship is being cleared, others on shipboard are getting the guns ready. Ammunition is being placed on the carriers and the gun crews are at their posts. The range finders have long since obtained the range of the enemy, and all are awaiting the signal to "fire." At each gun, which faces the enemy, the pointers have found their object. Pointer No. 1 trains the gun on the enemy's ship by raising or lowering the gun barrel according to the motion of his own ship, and pointer No. 2 moves his gun sideways. The ranges are telephoned to the gun-pointers who never remove their eyes from the gun sights again until the order "cease firing" is given. Each gun crew has its own work to perform, and one crew cannot know what another crew is doing and shoot effectively.

Target practice with heavy guns is held by every vessel in the navy several times a year. The target is usually buoyed about 1600 yards away from the ship, and the firing is done while the vessel is steaming at the rate of 10 knots an hour.

THE SAILOR'S LOT.

Life aboard a United States warship is not as unpleasant as the uninitiated believe. The United States navy offers an excellent opportunity to all industrious young men. A young man may learn one of many trades aboard ship, which will fit him to earn his livelihood when his term of enlistment is over. The United States pays its sailors much better than does any other navy. The American sailor gets better food, clothing, and better treatment than do those in other navies. The United States knows how to make its sailors happy. Uncle Sam keeps his sailor boys in good spirits by serving plenty of good, wholesome food. There is a generous supply of fresh meat, fish, vegetables, strong coffee, and an abundance of bread and butter served each day, and, in addition to the above, the ship's larder often obtains a bountiful supply of fruits, puddings, and pies.

The proverbial turkey dinner is also served many times during the year. Not only is there an abundance of food, but it is of an excellent quality. It is the duty of the chief surgeon and chief steward to inspect the food furnished the ship by the commissary, and unless it is of the required standard it is not allowed on the mess table.

The newly enlisted man, provided he has not had previous experience in seafaring life, is sent to a training ship, where he receives a thorough course of instruction in the duties of a sailor.

A DAY'S ROUTINE.

On shipboard the men turn to at two bells, which is 5 o'clock. Half an hour is spent in rolling their hammock and blankets, and in dressing. This is when the day's work begins for those who are not on watch. The pipes of the coxswain and boatswain, together with the roar of the "jimmylegs," are heard. With pants rolled up to their knees and in bare feet, the sailors seize brooms, mops, sand stones and buckets. For nearly two hours the time is spent in cleaning the ship. No scrubwoman, no matter how thorough in her work, ever leaves a cleaner task behind her than does the sailor. After every piece of brass is brightly polished and every gun is thoroughly cleaned, the ship is dressed for the day. Rain or shine, storm or calm, the fighting ship receives its daily wash.

When the work of cleaning the ship is over, the men don their neat uniforms in order to be ready for assembly and inspection, which comes at about 7.30. Following inspection, the welcome call to mess is given on the bugles. While the work of cleaning ship was going on, scores of cooks and mess boys were preparing the first meal of the day. The men now file to the gun and berth decks, where the swinging tables have been set to place. When all is ready the officer in charge of the mess gives the signal to be seated. After removing their caps, which is the sailor's grace, all are soon busily engaged in satisfying the wants of the inner man. Cereals, a meat or fish stew, fried or boiled eggs, potatoes, fruits, bread and butter, and coffee, are some of the things found in the breakfast menu.

The chief petty officers eat at a separate mess. As a rule, the chief petty officers contribute a small sum each month in order that their table may be supplied with certain delicacies not on the ship's food list. They have a chef and steward of their own, who attends to their wants. The commanding officer of the ship usually dines in state, all alone. If he be of an amiable disposition, he may frequently grace the table of the senior and junior officers.

On every ship there is a well equipped hospital, with a competent staff of physicians, nurses, and pharmacists. The ship's medicine chest contains all the drugs necessary to combat any form of disease, and every precaution is taken to prevent illness.

ENFORCEMENT OF DISCIPLINE.

Discipline is demanded of the sailor. If he neglects his duty, becomes quarrelsome, violates a rule, oversteps his liberty, disobeys an order from a superior, or is guilty of any other breach of ship discipline, he soon learns to regret it. For any of the above offences his shore liberty, which is dear to the heart of every sailor, may be denied him. He may be placed in the brig, which is the ship's prison, and eat bread and water for two meals a day.

If the unruly jack is looking for fight, the chief master at arms, or any of his assistants, and there are several of them aboard a ship, is very sure to accommodate him. The chief master at arms, or the "big bull" as he is known, is supposed to be the best rough and tumble fighter aboard the ship, and if any man proves himself more worthy of the position than the chief he can put himself in line for it by whipping the ship's police officers. As a rule the "Chief Bull" is able to take care of himself, as he has, in all probability, fought his way to that position. The word of the chief master at arms aboard ship is law, and no one can dispute him. If he sees any one, it makes no difference whether he be captain or enlisted man, violating a ship's rule, he has the power and authority to stop him.

The writer has heard a chief master at arms tell a party of officers, who were making a loud noise in a cabin after the call for "lights out" had been given, to "stop that noise." His order in the officers' case was instantly obeyed. It is the duty of the chief

master at arms and his assistants to inspect the ship when the order "lights out" is given, and see that all noises cease. This order comes at 9 o'clock.

LOVE FOR AMUSEMENTS.

A ship's crew of from 450 to 600 men must necessarily be quite cosmopolitan. One may find aboard a United States war vessel nearly every nationality.

The jacky loves his fun, but the general public must not think that all of them are care free and love nothing but a good time. Every sailor likes to go ashore and see the sights, and a large number like to spend money. Not all of them, however, spend all of their wages; the majority of the men have a good sized sum on the books when the cruise is over. They are encouraged to save their coin, and the Government will pay them a generous interest for any money they may leave with the paymaster.

Hardly a week passes aboard a ship without some form of amusement to which the entire ship is invited. Among the several hundred men aboard a cruiser or battleship there are always to be found several talented performers.

If it is learned that there is a clever instrumentalist aboard the ship who is without a violin, cornet, mandolin, or whatever may be used by him, the men appoint a committee and in the first port this instrument is obtained. The sailor is not mean with his money, and any worthy shipmate in hard luck is always sure of a generous subsidy, and his fellows do not get a megaphone and go on the forecastle and cry out about their good deeds, either. Athletics are, of course, the chief entertainment of the sailors. Athletic contests of nearly every kind are indulged in. Every ship has a baseball and football team, and whenever two ships make port at the same time the commanding officers, when it is possible, allow the two teams to meet. As many of the ships' men as can be spared are allowed to accompany and root for their respective teams. Yes, the jacky supports his team, and if you think your team is better than that of the other ship your money will speak for you.

Perhaps the greatest form of amusement, and in which every sailor takes an interest, is the boat race. Each ship has a racing crew, and the members of the crew, if it is a good one, are fairly idolized.

PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS.

Many a clever prize fighter has been turned out by the navy. If a man thinks he can box he is encouraged and is given an opportunity to manifest his powers. Fighting tops and training machines are secured for him, and he is backed against men of other ships. Sailor Burke, Reddy Hoskins, Tom Sharkey, Young Griffo, and many others received their initial training in the navy.

The sailor loves a fight, and if one "gob" has it in for another and wishes to get revenge, he invites the person who is the object of his scorn to don the mitts. This is the only way in which fighting is permitted on ship, and then the ill-feeling must only be hinted at.

No ordinary person has the opportunity of seeing the world with so little cost to himself as has the sailor. In the winter his ship visits southern ports and in the summer months the fighting vessel cruises north. No more interesting traveller can be found than the Jack Tar. In relating some of the incidents of his journeyings, and when telling of the cities he has visited, the sailor may embellish his story, but his talk is sure to be interesting.

EFFECT OF THE TRAINING.

Discipline is a good thing for every man, and any one who has seen service is sure to make a good workman and often a fine executive. The navy teaches men to obey, and they thus become respecters of law and order.

There is a large library on shipboard, and when off duty the sailor has the privilege of borrowing these books. Educational writings of every description may be found in the ship's library, and if a man is a diligent student he may learn a great deal. An excellent opportunity is offered to young men in the United States service. The college man is not a stranger in the navy, nor is the professional man found absent from the ranks.

Some of the ingenuity shown by the sailors in smuggling liquor aboard ship is almost to be marvelled at. All sorts of rubber bags are sometimes placed inside a blouse or strapped against a

leg. A home made liquor is sometimes prepared by mixing painter's shelles, flour, the white of an egg, and lime or lemon juice. All of these things go to make the jackies' life one long day of song and pleasure.



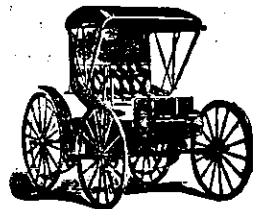
TENDERS FOR LEASING.

District Lands Office, Auckland, 21st July, 1908.
It is hereby notified that written Tenders will be received at the Lands Office, Auckland, up to 4 o'clock p.m. on FRIDAY, 14th August, 1908, for a Lease of Part of Titi Island (488 acres 2 rods 6 perches), Hauraki Gulf.

Term of Lease, 10 years, from 1st September, 1908, for GRAZING PURPOSES ONLY. Full particulars, also poster plans can be obtained on application at the Lands Office.
JOHN STRAUCHON,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

The two sons of Mr. Chas. A. Finch, Ph. O. M.P.S., "Kuranda," Boyce St., Glebe Point, Sydney, N.S.W., were both cured of a very severe cough and cold with one bottle of Dr. Sheldon's New Discovery.

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