

Navy Tales

By a Lieutenant in the United States Navy

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POWDER TESTS

ONCE upon a time a chemist was sitting with his feet cocked up on the table smoking his pipe. It was an old day for the bad-smell artist.

The door opened and in walked a boy. He handed a small jar to the artist—I mean chemist. In the jar were several lumps of yellow dough. One was streaked purple like a run-ster's nose. "Mac says he thinks you'd oughta see this," began the boy. A terrific explosion was the answer he got. The chemist seemed to shoot into the air. His pipe landed in the corner. The boy picked it up, stuck it into his teeth, and went away. He was safe because of the purple streaks on the yellow lumps in the glass jar.

The lumps were smokeless powder. The jar was the visual-test jar in which samples of powder brands are kept in laboratories. The purple streaks told the chemist that this particular brand was disintegrating, was becoming dangerous; might at any minute break down, ignite, and blow its container—whether battleship or box—into smithereens.

So he exploded. He wired all ships having that particular "index" of powder aboard what had happened. And he took pains to bury safely all of it that was within danger distance of his own back yard.

That was years ago. Nowadays every man-of-war keeps her eye on her own powder by a series of iron-clad tests and inspections that befit the seriousness of having a thousand lives to guard. Indeed the tons of explosive aboard one warship is sufficient to destroy a fleet if properly placed.

The powder is stowed in bags, the bags in air-tight tanks, the tanks in watertight rooms called magazines. Magazines must be kept at less than 100 degrees F. always, and, as a rule, at not more than 95 degrees F. Each has a little shelf on which stands the glass jars, one for every brand of powder in that magazine. About ten o'clock in the morning the chief gunner goes about the ship recording all magazine temperatures and scrutinizing the little yellow lumps in the jars.

A purple hue which so excited the chemist is caused by action of freed acid on the "indicator." This is added to powders in order to provide a safety signal when there is danger of explosion due to chemical decomposition. The gunner looks carefully for any such signs. Litmus paper is stuck into the necks of the jars. It is saturated with an "indicator" and changes color in the presence of acid.

Besides this daily so-called "visual test" there is held twice a year the semi-annual surveillance test. Samples from all the powders are heated to a temperature of 65.5 C and kept there for sixty days or until they break under the strain.

THE PUNY PAST

"THINK of being a Chinaman," exclaimed a gunnery officer the other day, "and not being able to throw eggs at your ancestors!"

A million examples of what he meant are at hand. Take the Kearsarge and Alabama, two Civil war dreadnaughts which fought off Cherbourg, France, fifty odd years ago. Our countrymen thrilled with the spectacular details of the great engagement.

Each vessel boasted about 800 horsepower in her wheezy old engines. We make no undue comment when we hear that 150,000 horsepower will lambaste the stern-sheets of our new battle cruisers.

The combined armament of the two monsters was one 7-inch, one 8-inch and six 32-pounders. (Alabama); two 11-inch and five 32-pounders (Kearsarge). All fired together wouldn't be the bite of a sick flea alongside a salvo from the dozen 18-inch rifled sky-smilers we'll be buying picture post-cards of to send our sweethearts before long.

In that gigantic enterprise, that bloody duel of hot blood and cold steel, the Kearsarge threw 173 projectiles and the Alabama, 370. Had the pair been 20th century model heavyweights they might have slammed some 10,000 explosives shells against one another's armament. And the weight of each shell, about 1,500 lbs., would have been three times a whole broadside from the old smooth-bores.

The doughty pair sailed circles around each other at distances from 400 to 1,000 yards. Seven complete circles they made; like a couple of lightweight sparrows for a knockout. Oh Holy Tiddley-winks! we shout when we picture this year's Sea Lion crashing over the horizon at 25 knots speed and 30,000 yards distant from her antagonist.

When the Alabama looked like a loser Captain Semmes struck his colors, threw his sword into the sea, and jumped in after it so that he could swim unhampered to a neutral yacht, the Deerhound. The modern skipper wouldn't give a tinker's d—n whether his colors were up or not so long as his vessel floated. He would be imprisoned in the steel conning tower and couldn't jump overboard if he tried. And his sword would be down under his bunk mattress where it

wouldn't be tarnished by nitric fumes from smokeless powder.

But mark me, worthy contemporaries, the next generation are already gathering their eggs for us.

MOON

MR. TAXPAYER, attention! And all you poor brow-beaten people of the streets—especially residential streets. And pacifists, anti-militarists, and other autoethionic landcrabs: I bring a message of cheer. The government from first to last is accustomed to pay some \$40,000 toward the entire and final education of a naval officer. In many ways Annapolis is the grandest educational institution in the world. And yet, even with all this frightful expense, a vital point is overlooked.

One sad example will suffice. He was a graduate ensign. For four long years he had been molded into the bold, resourceful type of youth a warship lures. By choice he had relinquished high marks in engineering and had concentrated on the enthralling subject of navigation.

He soon perceived the popular fallacy of believing that only sun and stars are used in piloting frisky fleets about the wet parts of our globe. The dear old cheesy moon is no less important.

With the sun, for instance, latitude north or south of the equator is far more easily obtained than longitude or time. But by a simple twist of the mathematical wrist one may measure a star's distance from the man in the moon and thereby set one's clock to a second at any time of the night.

Again there is the matter of occultations. These are eclipses of stars. Try one yourself some clear night.

From time to time a fat star goes behind the moon. If you note the time then, and again when it emerges, the mean of the two will be the moment by your watch at which the star was in line with the moon's center. By comparing this time with a list the naval observatory publishes you may discover the exact error of your Ingersoll.

The moon can be observed in the daytime as well as the sun. That she is wan and pale is an advantage in being less trying on the eyes. Both latitude and longitude are to be got this way.

All of which the graduate ensign learned—at a cost of thousands of tax-bid dollars. And yet, alas, when he took a furlough to rest from his labors he discovers (too late) that he'd never been taught one fearful truth about the moon:

That a moon makes moonlight. And that in moonlight a maiden fair is fairer than ever. And—

Well, he has two satellites by now.

VOICE PIPES

THE hairy savage has legends about his gods and spirits. The navy is not so different. In the fleet there are stock yarns about everything, from radio ticklers and secret codes to rubber boots and swabs. The innocent voice pipe has come in for its share.

First what is a voice pipe? This piping is brass or composition (that it will not rust), from two to four inches in diameter, depending on the length; and there may be 10,000 feet of it on a single ship. It is used to communicate from one place to another when telephones, bells, buzzers, and other systems are shot away.

On a certain up-to-date fighting craft—so the legend runs—there was a voice pipe from chart house to engine room, with a branch to the chief engineer's cabin. For the admiral's or captain's curiosity this arrangement was a great gratification.

Two points about this pipe make the story possible. First it led and opened straight just above the middle of the chief's bunk. In emergency he could be called at night. Secondly the machinist in charge of the starboard engine room was an artist on an harmonica. It is worth adding that the admiral abhorred a harmonica, fairly loathed its lethal whinnings.

One quiet night at sea the old man was indulging in a nice hot cup of tea in the pilot house. Said lethal whinnings sifted up through the voice pipe. "That d—d caterwaul again!" he exclaimed. And just the way he said "again" was a hymn of hate by itself.

Such a peaceful tropical night it was. Warm too. And the chief lay face downward on his bunk, bare and cool, bare as the day he was born. Face down—

"WOW!!!" He leaped naked into the night. Clutching himself behind he fairly screamed up the tube. What he said was indelible except at the end came: "Just wait, you—" and a gurgle.

Three minutes later he was in the chart house. It was empty. So was the admiral's teapot. Another ten seconds and he was on the bridge. So was the admiral.

Each said good evening. "That's all one says to an admiral."

FRANCE FREE OF BOLSHEVIK TAIN

American Relief Steadies People in Devastated Areas, Says Noted Writer.

BANGS MAKES OBSERVATIONS

Declares Aid Must Be Continued to Restore Sufferers to Full Vigor—Hope, Not Despair, in Their Hearts.

New York.—Bolshevism will never take root in the miles of ruins along the Aisne as long as the morale of the French is kept high while the people are rebuilding and replanting, asserts John Kendrick Bangs. It is better to build up a human soul than to restore a ruined chateau, the well-known writer and lecturer epitomizes.

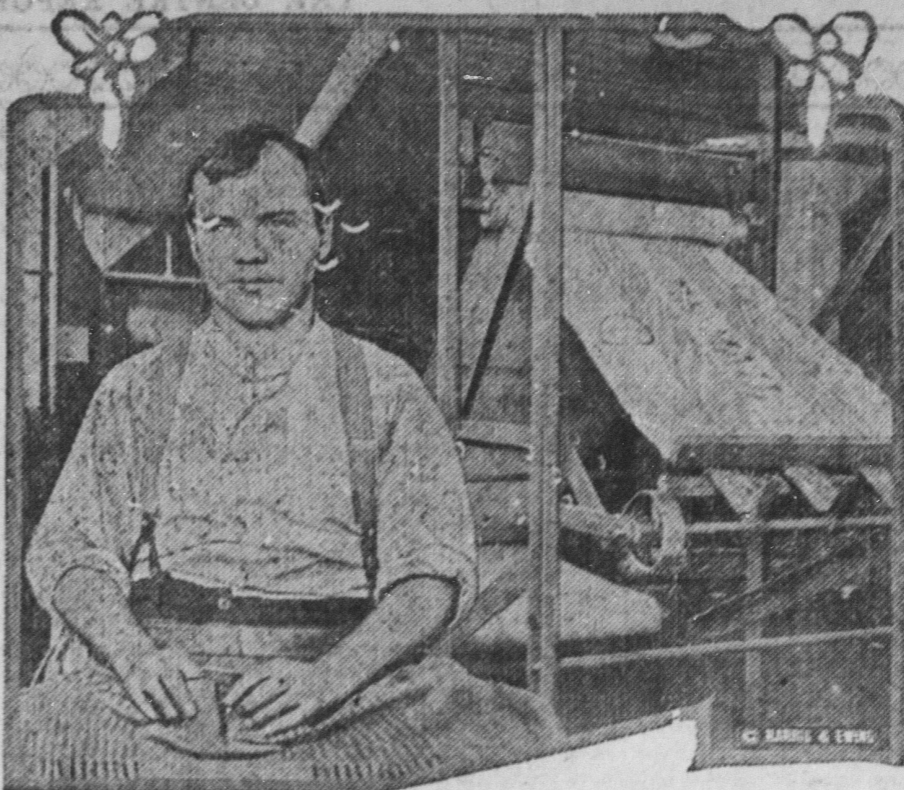
Speaking from observations made in two trips of inspection through the regions which remain almost as wrecked and desolated as the Germans left them, he declares the work done by the American Committee for Devastated France to be most important in steadying the population during the reconstruction period.

Fears Would Be Allayed. "In restless times like these," said Mr. Bangs, "when the great bogey of Bolshevism is being reared everywhere to frighten the timid into all sorts of compromises with conscience, I sometimes wish that every influential factor in America could be transported to Europe to see for themselves exactly how matters stand over there. I think a great many of their fears would be allayed, and that they would find that Bolshevism is to be apprehended only where there exist no standards of any sort by which the poor and ignorant can measure its shortcomings."

That it should succeed in Russia is easily accounted for by the utter illiteracy of over 90 per cent of the population. "If there were any real fear of Bolshevism temporarily triumphant outside of Russia we might with greater reason look for it in countries so devastated by war as to leave their peoples in a state of hopeless despair, and it is to the relief of those, rather than to that of the unscarred, that we should turn our attention, carrying to them not only material relief, but that moral support for which civilization is supposed to stand."

"I must admit that as I traversed the devastated regions of France and Belgium in my two visits to the war area, and looked upon the ruin there, and realized the full measure of the suffering inflicted upon millions of innocent people by the wild forays of the Hun, it seemed to me that any one of these millions of sufferers would be perfectly justified in turning away

Making Mail Bags for Uncle Sam



With a capacity of eight bags a minute, this machine, recently built and installed in the mail shops of the United States post office department, displaces the services of eight men, cutting, stenciling, folding and stitching the canvas cloth at a single operation. William Allen West, shown in the illustration, who has been putting the cords through mail bags in the equipment shops since 1917, has been blind for 20 years. He has a capacity of 325 bags a day.

from old systems, and trying anything new that came along, no matter how idiotic or insane it might be, so long as it promised something different from that which was.

No Such Weakness There. "Had I been one of those returning refugees into any one of the hundred and more villages cared for by the American Committee for Devastated France, for instance, I am not sure that I should not have hoisted the red flag, not that I believed in any of the social absurdities for which it stands, but that it had the virtue at least of being different from the one I had used to reverence. But to my amazement I found no trace of any such weakness in the hearts of those good people in the department of the Aisne."

"They looked with cold, dumb grief upon the wreckage that had once been home, but the flag they raised above them was not the red flag of despair, but the tri-color of hope, and I am proud to say that in one corner of it was a blue field holding 48 stars. They knew that that flag had waved gallantly at Cantigny, at Chateau-Thierry, at St. Mihiel, and in the Argonne and that there it had meant force, but here it stood for sympathy and moral support, and it held them proof against any despairing urge of resentment against a civilization that had superficially seemed to fall them. Indeed it was proof that that civilization was going to see them safely through the charred aftermath of war."

cost of the navy ration, which rose to an average of 70.5 cents, as compared with 65.7 cents in 1919 and a prewar average of around 37 cents. Admiral McGowan asserted that final figures showed that the navy subsisted 500,000 troops en route to France and 1,200,000 returning troops. In connection with the wartime work of the subsistence branch, he said: "Despite the scarcity of certain articles of food and the constant and persistent pressure from outside, amounting in effect to actual propaganda, for relaxation of the rigidity of the navy's specifications, especially on meats, no such thing was done, and the standard of subsistence was never lowered."

Ships Not So Good. The mechanical condition of America's fleet has undergone little improvement since the termination of the war, and the engineer performance of the individual ships "has not been satisfactory," Rear Admiral Griffin, chief of the bureau of engineering, says in his annual report.

In Marriage They Are Not Divided. Cincinnati, O.—When Oscar Heinchen, Jr., and his sister, Miss Hilda Heinchen, participate in a double wedding, they will remain together, as both plan to live in the same house. They met their sweethearts at the same time, proposals were made simultaneously, their engagements were announced together, and now after being married at the same time they will share a double house.

U. S. Navy Best Fed Anywhere

Rations Are So Good That Athletic Training Tables Are Barred.

WARSHIPS ARE NOT SO GOOD

Mechanical Condition of the Fleet Has Undergone Little Improvement Since the War, Says Bureau Chief.

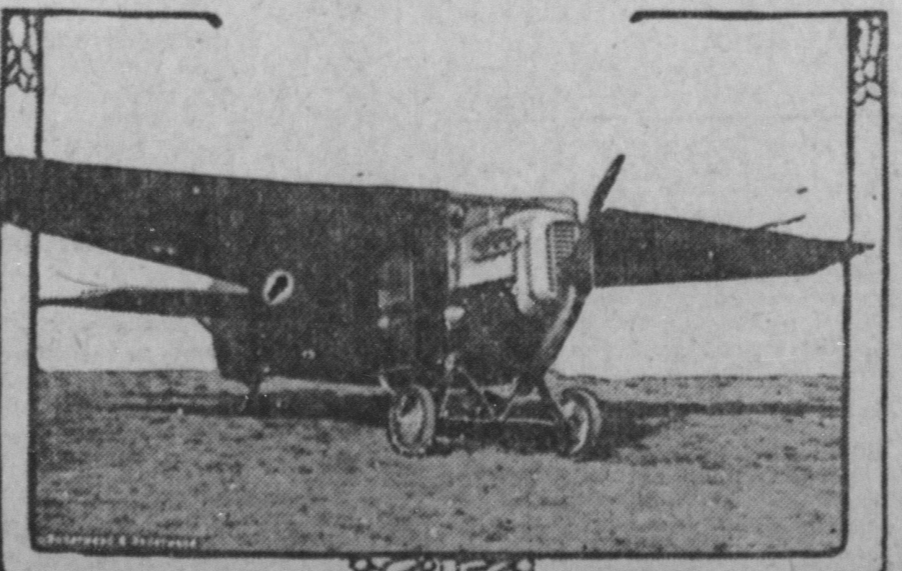
Washington.—Claim still may be made that the American navy is the best fed body of men in the world, Samuel McGowan, paymaster general of the navy, declared in his annual report. In support of his statement, Rear Admiral McGowan cites the following order issued by Admiral Wilson, commander of the Atlantic fleet.

"Due to general excellence of present navy rations and living conditions on board ships of the fleet, 'training tables' for athletic events are considered unnecessary and are therefore forbidden."

Surplus provisions left over after filling the wartime need, Admiral McGowan said, have been disposed of at reasonable prices. He added that new stocks of the current season's pack were being obtained in sufficient quantities to meet the estimated requirements of the coming year.

Increases in the prices of foodstuffs during the year were reflected in the

Stout Monoplane Seems a Success



The Stout monoplane, widely known as the "mystery snip" of the war period just before the armistice, has been redesigned for commercial flying, and has just gone through a remarkable series of preliminary flights. Although a new type of aircraft and built entirely from calculations, the ship, on its first trial and with but a preliminary 50-foot run across the ground, took off at once for a 20-minute flight under perfect control at an altitude of 500 feet. The ship is the design of William B. Stout, and has many novel features. It is a real, commercial three-passenger limousine, built entirely of veneer, including wings which are internally trussed and completely covered with veneer. The plane is twice as strong as former types of airplane and yet weighs but 1,820 pounds. Its maximum speed is in excess of 125 miles per hour, while the landing speed is less than 45 miles per hour.

MAN GIVES UP TO SEE MOTHER

Abandoning Postmaster Surrenders After Two Years of Dodging Officers.

IS CHANGED BY INJURY

Dual Personality Results From Automobile Accident, Man Claims—Fear of Capture Haunted Him for Months.

Chicago.—On Halloween in 1916 a recklessly driven automobile crashed into a telephone pole on a highway near Falls Creek, Pa., hurling three joy riders to the pavement. One of the trio was Joseph A. McGrath, 24 years old, a law student.

Shortly after the accident, McGrath told federal officials recently, he developed a dual personality. There were days when he was normal, in possession of all his faculties. There were days of splitting headaches, when time seemed to pass in a haze. He worked to save when he was normal. At other times he was a spendthrift.

A Good Job—and Trouble. When the war began he tried to enlist, but the examining physician refused to pass him. "Psycho-something," the doctor said.

The home folks pitied McGrath. Somebody thought of the postoffice. He was made postmaster. For a time he prospered. He had only his mother to support; she was the only girl he wished, he said. Then he began to have trouble. On the days when his mind seemed in a haze his accounts were usually short.

In September, 1918, an inspector found something was wrong with the books. He told McGrath he would call again. When he arrived McGrath was gone. So was \$1,000.

A few days ago McGrath, emaciated, beard a month old, eyes sunken and furtive, stopped "Al," the elevator man at the federal building and asked for a deputy marshal. He was sent away. Three times he returned before he was permitted to go to the eighth floor, where he surrendered to Deputy Marshal Tom Smith.

"The federal people in Falls Creek want me," he explained. "I was postmaster there two years ago. I was short in my accounts."

The deputy marshal took him to the back room, bought a dinner.

"I never have seen my mother since the day I left," said McGrath. "I



Asked for a Deputy Marshal. didn't dare to write home. I haven't heard a word.

"I Want to See My Mother." "I haven't dared to get a good job. I have worked hard at what I could find, but I couldn't get ahead."

"I'd work in one place until I could not stand the down and outers any longer; then I'd move. I became a wanderer. Fear of capture haunted me. I wanted to live with real people again and most of all I wanted to see my mother. But all the time I was afraid."

"Yesterday I got to thinking. I didn't know whether mother was alive or dead. I couldn't stand it any longer, so I'm here."

REUNITED AFTER 45 YEARS

Sisters Meet in Minneapolis First Time Since Leaving Home as Girls.

Minneapolis, Minn.—Reunion of two sisters who had not seen each other for 45 years, when they were young girls together in their father's home in Green Bay, Wis., took place when Mrs. J. R. Flynn of Rapid River, Mich., met her sister, Mrs. Pete Sorrell of St. Paul, in the home of Mrs. Flynn's daughter, Mrs. J. M. Carlton, 515 Twenty-Seventh street west.

Mrs. Flynn is the mother of ten children, and Mrs. Sorrell is the mother of a family of nine. The reunion for Mrs. Flynn was not only one with her sister, but also with her sister's children, whom she had not seen.

After the sisters were married, at early ages, their ways never happened to meet. Wrapped up in the interests of their new families, they stayed apart for 45 years, while their respective families grew to maturity.

Armless Mother Made All Her Baby's Clothes

Although she has no arms, Mrs. J. C. Teagarden of Denver, Colo., is able to give her baby the same care that other mothers give and every bit of clothing the baby wears was made by the mother. Physicians and nurses at the hospital where the steri-brought little Delphia May were amazed at the facility with which Mrs. Teagarden, born with no arms, cared for her baby, using teeth, feet and shoulders.

SAYS BREED SKUNKS FOR FUR

United States Department of Agriculture Calls Beast Friend of Farmer.

Washington.—Breeding of skunks as a means of stabilizing the "depressed fur market" is the latest suggestion of the Department of Agriculture.

Despite all the harsh things that have been said about this lowly animal the department describes him as "the best wild animal friend the farmer has." The skunk, the announcement says, can be used for destroying mice, grasshoppers, crickets and white grubs, at the same time furnishing the farmer from \$50 to \$100 worth of fur a year.

All that is required of the farmer, the circular says, is that he "respect the animal's den, keep his poultry in skunk-proof yards, kill an old horse for them every fall and be tactful when he meets them in the evening."

Think Monkey Stole Diamond.

St. Louis, Mo.—Baffled by a wave of robberies and pocket pickings, the police have turned their attention to the Forest Park zoo in the hope of solving at least one light-fingered misappropriation. The quest began with a search of the monkey cages on the theory that an \$800 diamond pin was taken from Mrs. Clifford C. Fox as she strolled through the zoo on a Sunday afternoon. Park police believe one of the monkeys, attracted by the sparkler, reached through the bars of his cage and "lifted" the pin as Mrs. Fox strolled past.