

America Tough — But Are Sailors Getting Soft?

Old Chief Scoffs At New 'Boot Training,' But It's Making Better Bluejackets



NEW STYLE "BOOT TRAINING" may seem easier than the old days, but there's plenty of hard realism in this fire fighting lesson as new sailors learn how to put out a flaming plane.



SHEETS IN THE WIND—well, mattress covers, anyway—seem to puzzle these brand new sailors after they've drawn their gear at San Diego Naval Training Station. Chief Petty Officer at right, who's been around, explains what it's all about.

By Douglas Larsen
(NEA Staff Correspondent)

San Diego, Cal.—Is the Navy getting soft in its "boot" training?

A salty old retired chief who has just made an unofficial inspection of the Navy's huge recruit training command here says:

"I don't see how they make sailors out of those kids the way they're handling 'em. They don't swear at 'em. They baby 'em. They teach 'em about ballots, as if that's got anything to do with sailing a ship. They even call 'em 'son' instead of 'Mac'. It ain't like the old days."

The chief is dead right about one thing. It's not like the old days. But in spite of his doubts, all the evidence is that they're turning out the finest bunch of apprentice seamen, headed for the fleet or advanced schools, the Navy has ever had. I have heard this claim from fleet commanders and commanders of advance training schools at Navy installations all over the U. S.

Not since the depths of the depression in the '30s, when there was a boom in applications for the Navy, has the caliber of recruits been so high, top Navy men claim. Of the 18,000 "boots" now on board, the average boy has had more than three and one-

half years of high school. And about 20 per cent have had some college training.

With the rush demands for new sailors by the fleet relaxed slightly, the basic course has just been increased from nine to 11 weeks. In that time, according to Comdr. F. R. Matthews, head of the program, a "boy can be taught to go aboard ship and handle himself satisfactorily, perform basic duties with a minimum of confusion and not disgrace himself in public as a sailor."

The old chief's reaction to the present boot training—and they are trying hard but not too successfully to change the word "boot" to "recruit"—probably stems from the academic or college atmosphere of the program. It's true that there's a minimum of cussing at the kids. Academic training is designed to interest the boys instead of being shoved down their throats. The old obstacle course has been eliminated.

This is probably because the program is being run mostly by professional teachers and educators who have been called from civilian life to help with the speeded-up program. But the job is being done efficiently and well.

On the theory that you can't ask a boy to go out and fight without knowing what he's fight-

ing somewhat, the Navy's recruit training program has successfully handled the tremendously increased demands of the current mobilization.

There are as many enlistees (many of them fleeing the draft) as the facilities can take care of. There has been no serious shortage of clothing, bedding or medical services which has plagued

the Air Force and Army.

And morale among the boys being trained, as well as among the training personnel, appears to be high. If the program is too soft you can't tell it from the look of the lean, tanned, fit youngsters as they parade smartly before the reviewing stand on graduation day.

No Break Seen In Ship Strike

New York, June 21 (AP)—Ship owners offered the National Maritime union (CIO) a 44-hour week at sea today but the seamen held out for 40 hours work with 48 hours pay, carrying their strike into the sixth day.

Spokesmen for the NMU and 40 Atlantic gulf ship owners resumed negotiations at 10:30 a.m. EDT.

Clyde Mills, assistant director of the federal mediation and conciliation services, said he believed that if the NMU and ship owners got together, the striking Marine Engineers Beneficial association (CIO) and American Radio association (CIO) would also come to agreements.

The ARA, only union striking on the west coast, broke off nego-

Loading Halted

ARA pickets at Seattle halted loading of army cargo destined for Alaska last night, despite the radio operators' pledge to service essential ships, but port agent Carl Lundquist said the misunderstanding would be straightened out.

The ARA has cut its wage increase demand down from \$70 a month to \$63 but said it would go no lower.

The NMU, pattern setter for maritime unions, was still demanding the 40-hour week last night when mediators recessed a long negotiating session at 10:30 o'clock. Ship owners said they would grant 40 hours for work ashore but could not go below 44 hours for men afloat.

The 44-hour week is as far as the companies will go, Frank J. Taylor, head of the shippers' committee, said.

OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. Williams



THE LORD OF THE MANOR

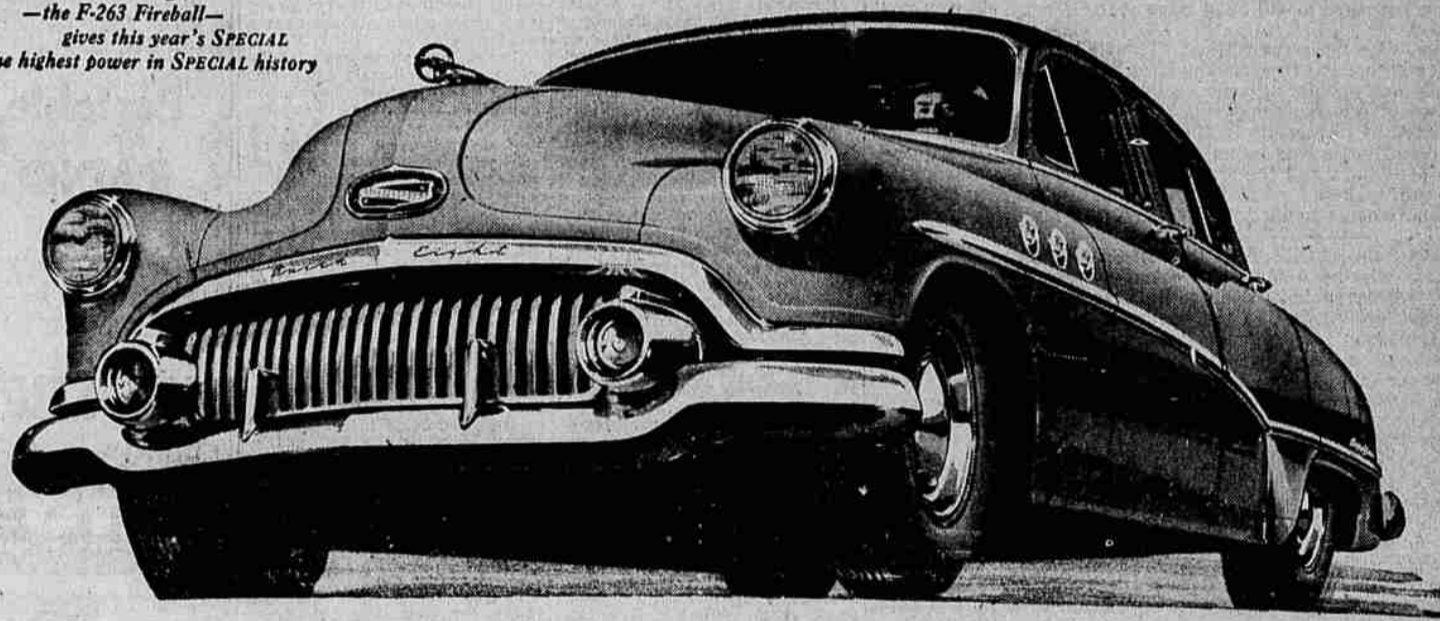
Paving Project Facing Delay

Prineville, June 21 — Because of soil conditions for about 4 1/2 miles of the relocated 19-mile stretch of U. S. 28 over the Ochoco mountains between here and Mitchell, crews of the Rogers Bros. Construction company, now engaged in laying a bitullic surfacing under a U. S. bureau of

public roads contract, will withhold paving of this portion for the time being, the local chamber of commerce has been informed. Engineers have decided that an additional rock base should be placed on the 4 1/2-mile section.

Rogers Bros. crews have already laid the first oil coating on some 14 miles of the new highway grade, which passes at an elevation 500 feet lower than the old Ochoco mountain section of U. S. highway 28.

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