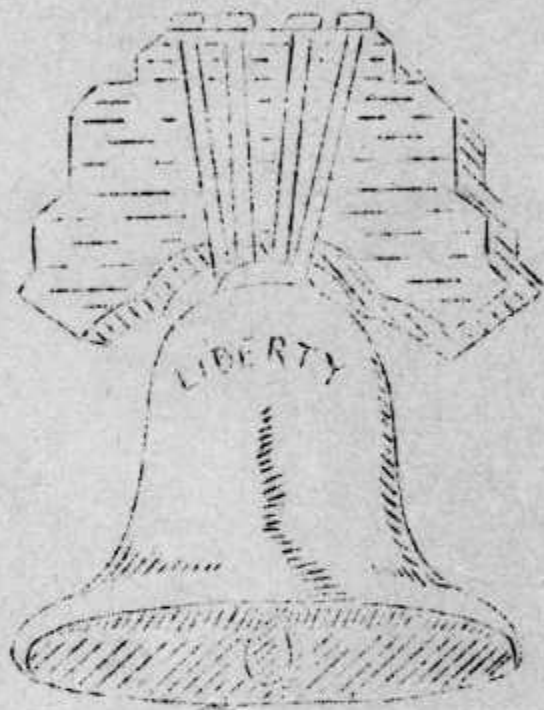


THE
PHILADELPHIAN



EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY
EDITION

November 17, 1944.

U.S.S. PHILADELPHIA



We celebrate today on 17 November 1944 the birthday of our ship -- the anniversary of her launching eight years ago here in the Philadelphia Navy Yard.

Our Chaplain has recorded in the following pages, her progress through these years. It has been a highly successful progress; 259,445 miles of cruising that have reached from Midway in the West, to Malta in the East. It has included an expenditure of some fourteen thousand rounds of six inch ammunition, over nine thousand of them fired at the enemy. But, neither cruising nor shooting would have come about except for the five thousand officers and men who have served in the ship, have warmed her, and given her life and character. It is in that bond of her life and character made from hard work, trouble, some pain, some play, and not a little achievement, that we rejoice together today.

Fortuitously this year's anniversary coincides with our return home from an eventful year's action in the distant Mediterranean. It becomes, therefore, for us, a doubly happy occasion.

For the many anniversaries to come, we wish our gallant ship and all who serve in her the same good fortune that has attended us.

Walter Ansel

WALTER ANSEL.

The Morning Orders for this day, 26 October 1944, inform all hands that the long trick in the Mediterranean comes to a close today. They tell us that at 1630, Chief Boatswain Larsen will have his Special Sea Detail ready to cast off all lines for home sweet home. If your imagination is very vivid, you might be able to see the ship, herself, at 1700, straining to part the lines, to get past the submarine net and out to the open sea; for it's "Home, Boys, Home" in a very special way to all of us, as the U.S.S. PHILADELPHIA pushes her way back to the place where she was spawned, almost eight years ago to the day to the Philadelphia Navy Yard.

Seldom has any ship enjoyed the good luck to unite in one happy chain of coincidences the bright good fortune that we will enjoy on this homeward voyage. First, our course is West. Second, in a few days we will celebrate our ship's birthday. Third, with any sort of luck, we will celebrate our ship's birthday in the place where she was built; and if you search the history of the ship, you will find that she now returns to the United States after one of the longest separations from her home shores. No wonder that she will strain to get free, for she has an appointment with destiny at the Yard where she came into being. We have a date with a birthday!

To a very few of us the pages which follow will not be necessary. Those very few are the twelve plank-owners who have been with the ship from the first. They can narrate her history with the ease of men who have been a part of that history. Ask

Chief Quartermaster Gravel, for instance, where the ship went, what she did those first few months of infancy, and he'll say something like this:

"I can recall pretty well when Captain Jules James, our first Skipper, took the PHILADELPHIA on the "River Run" on 19 October 1937. The river was the Delaware, and we were heading for the Atlantic to undergo some preliminary trials at sea. Yes, we were then sent on a shakedown cruise to the West Indies, and I remember President Batista of Cuba coming aboard for a visit to see the ship. In those days we were the very latest model in cruisers, and I guess even the "Strong Man" of Cuba had a yen to see what we looked like. Commander Davis was our Executive Officer, and had us looking our best in gleaming whites and gold that glittered."

That, Shipmates, is an example of how a favored few know the PHILADELPHIA; where it went, what it did, and all the incidents which go to make up the life history of a ship. For the many non-plank owners we have a record of the ship's activities, compiled, for the most part, with the aid of one man's tenacious memory -- the above mentioned Chief Gravel.

Now, if you ask Chief Commissary Steward Tisdale to continue on from the 1937 West Indies Cruise, he'd tell you that the ship returned to Philadelphia for a check-up before holding final trial runs off Rockland, Maine, in March of '38.

Chief Bitcon ("Swede", to you), would easily take it up from there. He was around when the big event happened. Let him tell it:--

"Yes, sir, we went down to Charleston Navy Yard - must have been about the end of April, '38, and then the big honor came to the PHILADELPHIA. President Roosevelt came aboard for a 'Presidential Cruise'. I remember us manning the rail - all at attention and 'bug-eyed'. It was a great day for the PHILLY when we headed for the West Indies with the President aboard. He brought along a lot of fine fishing tackle - had a special barge, coxswain, and all. But the first fish he hooked measured from head-to-tail about six inches. He seemed to enjoy the joke more than anyone else - except the poor fish, of course. Anyway, he laughed the loudest, and we sort of realized he was one of us.

Down around the Dominican Republic we touched coral bottom, and put a slight hole in our Sound Room, which was then directly below the anchor windlass room. It wasn't serious enough to interrupt the trip, which took us through all the old time pirate haunts of the Spanish Main. We took the President back to Charleston and went on ourselves to Philadelphia to have the hole patched up."

Mr. McMullen, who is still interested in Gunnery, will tell you of that summer of '33 with the ship firing test shots in Long Island Sound. He took part in that exercise - the first firing since the commissioning of the ship. He never realized then that the main battery, one day, not too far distant, would be firing close to a thousand rounds in a single day in the Sicilian fracas.

"All that fall of '38, we spent in Chesapeake Bay, where Short Range Battle Practice was held. With its firing tests completed, the ship left on a "Good Will Tour" of the West Indies,

returning to Philadelphia for the holidays - mighty fine tradition we're doing our best to maintain this year of 1944."

Your Chief Boatswain's Mate, Mike Perillo, will tell you how glad he was to leave Philadelphia that cold January 4, 1939, and head for the warm waters of the Caribbean.

"We joined up with the Fleet off the Canal Zone about the end of January, and had our first tactical exercises, which lasted all of February. Did'ja know we had our first taste of shore bombardment in February of '39? If we only had a crystal ball around in those days to prophesy how much shore bombardment we'd do up, down, and around the Mediterranean. It was around this time that we gave ourselves the name "Quantanamo Ferry" - that seemed to be our beat. But those days, too, were heading to an end."

Mr. Ward will come up from the Log Room anytime and tell you how lucky the ship was that Spring of '39.

"It seems that most of the Fleet in the Atlantic was sent to the Pacific -- you can guess why. But we were lucky enough to get orders to take the ship to New York. That's never hard to take, so we anchored in the Hudson River, enjoyed the World's Fair out in Flushing Meadows, and wondered if a combatant ship would ever see action, what with a World's Fair dedicated to Peace and Progress. Anyway, after three weeks in the Hudson, we got underway for Boston, and a little later, we departed for Hampton Roads. There a new Executive Officer took over, the then Commander Zir-oli, who now is Commodore Zir-oli. (You probably recall that he was aboard not so long ago on a trip from Palermo to Naples.)

We didn't know it at the time, but we were on our way to the Pacific, and in a short while we were making our first transit through the 'big ditch' - the first day of June, 1939. We touched one port after another up the West Coast - San Pedro, Monterey, San Francisco (in time for our second World's Fair), and on to Portland for Fleet Week, and then down to Mare Island for a three month Yard period with time out for leave, liberty, and recreation."

Chief Water Tender Bates remembers the time when the new skipper, Captain Vance D. Chapline, was piped aboard to succeed Captain Jules James. "The date was 6 November and the ship immediately got underway for the Short Range Battle Practice and other practices in the San Clemente Area. The holidays were spent at San Pedro.

Then on to Hawaii to engage in the Fleet Problem, back to the West Coast (Bremerton to be exact), and back again to Pearl Harbor. The ship held the usual horseplay the day we crossed the Equator on July 24th. We returned to San Pedro and later to Mare Island in the late Fall. Christmas and New Year were spent in Hawaii - no White Christmas this year.

We made a trip to historic Midway in February of '40, and then while enroute to the West Coast, we had a sudden change of orders to proceed to Panama and the East Coast".

Chief Gunner's Mate Horne will tell you of the increased tensivity, dating from June 1940. "We knew that more serious days were ahead from many warlike indications and

preparations. For instance, we first went into condition watches about this time, with dawn and dusk General Quarters at frequent intervals. We travelled up to Boston with the ship darkened and when we arrived there we had established a record of thirty-two days without a single liberty. (This record, incidentally, was broken at St. Tropez this past summer).

Captain Moore took command in September, 1941 and Commander Smith became our new Executive Officer (a fine officer, who later went down with his torpedoed ship, the JOSEPH HERTZ off Casablanca in the opening days of the Moroccan Campaign). It's a bit difficult to trace our course from now on, but suppose you just say the ship was doing Neutrality Patrol from Halifax, south to Bermuda, and east to the Azores. We had a stroke of tough luck when the ship ran aground at Casco Bay, putting us in Boston Navy Yard the fateful Sunday, 7 December 1941"

Moore, Boatswain's Mate First Class, still shivers at the recollection of those convoys in the dismal winter of 1941-1942. "Imagine spending the holidays in Argentia, Newfoundland, with the mercury frozen, to say nothing of your nose and toes. And Casco Bay, sheathing us from stem to stern in a couple of inches - feet almost - of ice and snow. We were a beautiful sight returning to Brooklyn - the kind of winter picture the newsreels and rotogravure like to get. Then back we went to Iceland, with submarines having a field day up and down our Atlantic seaboard that winter and early spring of '42.

By one of those crazy bits of hard luck we were sent down to Panama just as soon as the weather took a turn for the better.

It was a speed run all the way from Norfolk to Cristobal, and a mighty fine chance to thaw out and remove the icebergs inside the funnels. I'll bet some of that Newfoundland ice is still around the keel of the ship."

Nobody ever forgets their maiden voyage, and your Chaplain, least of all. "I'll never forget that stormy trip across the North Atlantic in July, 1942 - the ship anchoring in the Clyde, off historic Greenock. Some of the lads aboard still correspond with the charming Scottish lassies. We made that trip once more to Greenock, but this time our trip was marred by a tragic accident on our first night out of Halifax - the gallant destroyer, U.S.S. INGRAHAM, went to the bottom in performance of duty. She collided with a tanker, and all but a few men went down with their ship. It was a dismal experience - one we'll not soon forget. Soon after arriving at Greenock, we held a ship's dance in the town hall and were shown the true meaning of hospitality by the warm-hearted Scots. Remember Tweed Shedden, too, crooning at the dance, while Lyons showed how a rug could be cut even in Scotland?

Many of us will recall that Captain Moore was relieved by Captain Paul Mendren between the two trips to Scotland. It was now that the ship entered upon her real combat history. Gone were the days of shepherding lumbering transports and slow merchantmen. We took the ship to the Chesapeake and started an intensive period of training, lasting through October, 1942. We know we were in for it this time - something bigger than we had ever attempted before.

And so it was that, training completed, we stripped ship of everything superfluous, piled them all aboard a barge alongside, and set out for war. We weren't alone. When the dawn came of our fifth day out, we saw the amphibious force spread out for miles and miles; converted carriers, cruisers, battleships, destroyers, sea-going tugs, tankers, transports, specially fitted four-pipers with silhouette so low we joked about the crew getting sub pay. We knew we were headed for Safi - Captain Hendren had told us the place, the plan and our function in the plan. We'll never forget that final day with the Task Force splitting up into the three attack groups. How we worried about the heavy swells which might bring disaster to the landings! The relief when the swells miraculously subsided - the "T" bone steak dinner - the prayers and hopes as we went into our first battle experience. Were we frightened? Were you scared going into your first trial by fire?

Here's a page or two from some notes made at the time and they may bring back to some of you old timers the realization that we too were scared amateurs once upon a time. If they are written in the first person, remember this Padre was as concerned as any of you as to whether he could take it along with the rest of you. He's still wondering. Here are the observations which begin on the eve of the assault on Safi, Saturday, 7 November 1942:

'General Quarters at 2100. I take my station at the mike on the Navigation Bridge. This night is history-making and it will be our privilege to take a part in it. As far as

possible, I have prepared the souls of the men for any eventuality by Mass, Confession, and Communion. The oils are in the Chart Room and I've left instructions to be called to any lad. May I never have to be called!

The weather is beyond all our hopes, sky studded with stars, water calm (our greatest boon - the lack of a pounding surf will save us a thousand lives). The ship settles to a spooky quietness, following the grand old NEW YORK, and astern of us the transports and tug; near us the destroyer screen slipping along noiselessly through the black African night. Below decks are hundreds of men to whom I must be ears, and most especially eyes. At this post I have an unbroken vision - a fifty-yard-line view of the whole action soon to take place.

By 2230 lights are beginning to appear - our first land since two weeks ago. A good omen these lights - perhaps they don't expect us. Then moving lights - ships, none of which (fortunately for them) intercept us. Closer and closer we come in - this is like something one reads about. At a distance of seven or eight miles is Safi - slumbering. We have every maneuver so carefully planned; every possible shore battery spotted. The Cole and Bernadou, with their daring volunteers, are to sneak in and tie up alongside the docks to prevent sabotage. The Transports start disembarking troops into the landing boats at 2200, to maneuver for the assault and make landings on the different beaches by 0430.

