

BOB HOPE'S *Communique*



Aboard the U. S. S. Dakota--The other night I found out why our sailors were always fighting mad. I slept in a navy bunk aboard the U. S. S. South Dakota. The bunks are narrow pieces of steel and canvas that fold up against the side of the ship like collapsible kitchen shelves. But they're very comfy and I slept like a baby. . . . Yes, Sir, I slept just like a baby . . . with my toes in my mouth.

And those sleeping quarters are really crowded. There's a sign over the door that says "Please don't open the portholes at night. We need the men."

The bunkers are really small. All night long I dreamed about Betty Grable. . . . And it came out Margaret O'Brien. During the night I heard a terrible moaning and groaning and I said, "heart attack, sailor?" And a voice answered, "No, I'm on mid-watch and I'm putting on my pants."

The next morning I had breakfast with the sailors. I don't know if those boys forget their Emily Post or not when they sit down to eat, but it was the first time I ever saw shuffleboard played with hotcakes.

Afterward, I was shown all over the ship by Machinist Mate 2-C Thomas A. Demetros of Endicott, N. Y. Demetros used to work in a cash register factory and now he's in charge of No. 2 engine room. Every time the Captain pulls the lever to signal for more speed, he gets 25 cents change.

These sailors get a lot of ice cream on this ship and they really go for it. In fact, they eat so much that to save time the cook just pushes the freezer behind an anti-aircraft gun and fires the scoops down their mouths in bursts of six.

Well, Navy Day was a big one for the Navy. The officers celebrated the founding of the Navy League, the sailors the 170th birthday of the Navy and the marines just celebrated.

The Mayor of Los Angeles was very pleased by the way the boys conducted themselves. Besides, he said he always had thought the City Hall would look better on board a battleship.

When the Navy was founded on Oct. 27, 1775, it only had two men. One Bosun I know insists it still only has two: Him and Admiral Nimitz.

You can always tell how long a man has been in the Navy. When he joins the Navy he usually has roses in his cheeks. After about 20 years four of them move over to his nose.

I wanted to enter into the spirit of Navy Day, so I borrowed Errol Flynn's yachting cap and started down the boulevard. And in no time four lawyers had offered to defend me.

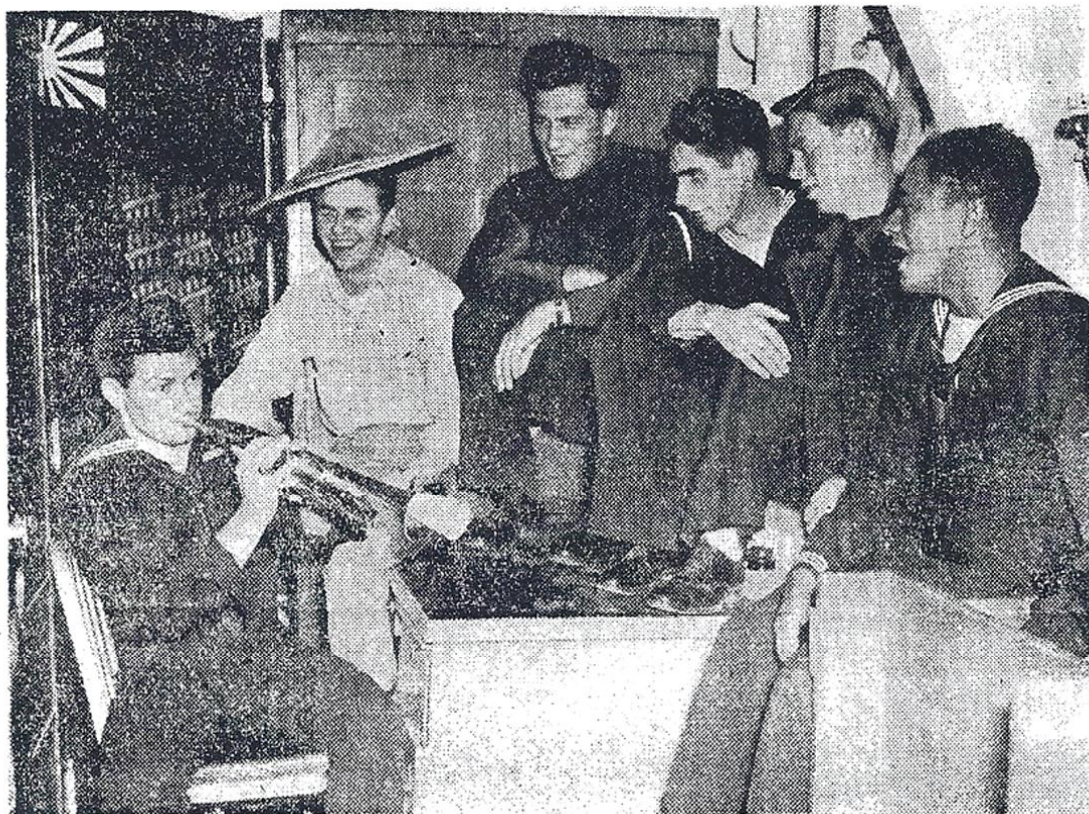
But Navy Day always recalls

those great sayings of naval heroes such as "Don't give up the ship," "We have not begun to fight," and "Nuts to the deck officer. I'm coming out for fifteen dollars."

All over the town you could hear little knots of sailors singing, "Anchors Aweigh." A soldier singled up to one group and started "Off we go, into the wild blue yonder." And that's just exactly where he went.

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Harmonious Homecoming from Pacific War



Members of the crew of the U. S. S. South Dakota, which arrived at Philadelphia Naval Base yesterday, make a little music in the ship's library. Left to right: Musician Paul Ferla, Ambler; Seaman Joseph Uchman, Adams, Mass.; Seaman Frank Salvatore, Morrisville, Pa.; Seaman George Anderson, West Chester; Seaman Austin Hallman, Iona, N. J., and Steward's Mate Harry Harding, Chester

Back to home port for the first time since she was commissioned in March, 1942, the 35,000-ton battleship South Dakota—"Battleship X" of Pacific war fame—docked at the Philadelphia Naval Base yesterday.

Because there were not enough crane operators on hand for the work needed to get the heavy gangplank to the ship, members of the liberty party were forced to help in the work themselves so they could get ashore.

The South Dakota set one record which remained unbroken throughout the war. In the battle of Santa Cruz, in October, 1942, the battle wagon was credited with downing 32 Japanese planes. No other ship ever topped this record in one engagement.