

# PACIFIC CRUISE A NERVE AND ENDURANCE TEST

### COLUMN FORMATION FOR 13,772 MILES MEANS FOUR MONTHS OF TIRELESS DAY & NIGHT VIGILANCE FOR OFFICERS AND MEN



REAR-ADMIRAL ROBLEY D. EVANS

"You will not be disappointed in the fleet, whether it proves a feat, a frolic or a fight." When Rear Admiral Robley D. Evans said this in telling the Lotus club and its members about the cruise of his command, the Atlantic battleship fleet, to the Pacific, he received a great round of applause, and the succeeding speakers outdid themselves in heaping compliments upon the navy.

can write it down that the cruise won't be a frolic." "The old man" has a sharp eye for distance. From the quarter deck of the flagship Connecticut he can estimate within 10 yards whether a ship is maintaining its correct distance. If it is not the captain soon gets a crisp reminder by signal to move up or drop back.

To the landslubber the precision with which the positions are kept is a marvel. Deck officers use the stadimeter, a measuring instrument, to watch the intervals by day and night. If the ship appears to lag the fact is communicated to the engine room and the vessel immediately responds to greater power.

#### Fresh for the Start

The rendezvous at Hampton roads found the ships of the fleet fresh from the navy yards, hulls scraped, boilers cleaned, machinery overhauled and painted work renovated. This will make a difference in navigation. After the vessels make out the Virginia capes it may be the engineer officers will need a little experimenting to learn the capabilities of their engines. The great endeavor is to make the required speed on as small coal consumption as possible. At noonday each ship signals to the flagship the amount of coal remaining in bunkers. The smaller battleships, like the Kentucky and the Kearsarge, have comparatively small coal capacity, especially for such long legs of the cruise as that from Callao, Peru, to Magdalena bay, Mexico, 3,112 knots. With such a condition confronting him, officers and men agree that "the old man" will not cut up many "doodles" on the way. Asked about this, Rear Admiral Evans said:

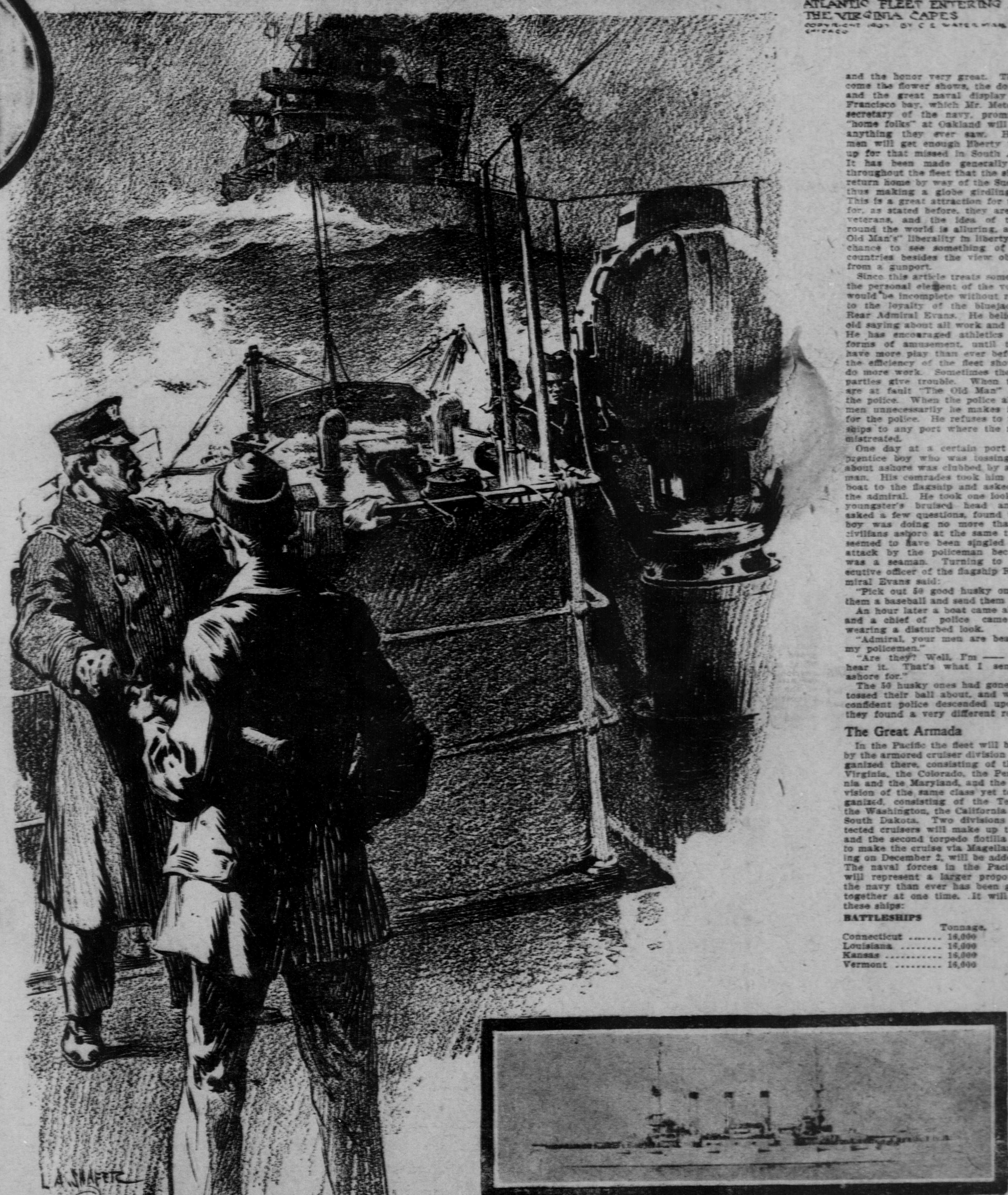
"Of-course not. If we try many drills out at sea we will find ourselves out of coal, and how we would get home then I don't know, unless we should go ashore at Sandy Point and cut wood." So the idea of elaborate maneuvers en route or high speed trials and "war games" is scarcely well grounded. Ten knots speed has been adopted because then the ships can go farthest on least coal. The officers call it "economical, cruising speed." Every engineer officer, nevertheless, will be confronted with something of a problem. If he could feel certain that 10 knots would be maintained constantly he could then keep just as few boilers going as are required to make that speed. But, on the other hand, "the Old Man" is known as one who delights in subjecting his command to sudden efficiency tests. The chief engineer, therefore, never knows when the bells will tinkle down a signal to hit it up to 11 or 12 knots to keep position in the column or change formation. That requires more boilers, and more boilers burn more coal.

#### The Strain in the Engine Room

"Disquieting possibilities crowd upon you, but you must not let them distract you for an instant. Is there a sleepy signalman ahead or astern or on board? Is every man in your engine room alert, so that your slightest order there will meet with instant response? Is there a chance bit of badly oiled machinery that will heat and fuse a cylinder packing? Then there is the contingency of a signal from the flagship to hit up speed to 12 knots or more and reduce the intervals to 150 yards of clear water between ships. This may happen at any moment, for the admiral knows it might be necessary in time of battle, and if we can't do it in time of peace the fact ought to be known at once. Now, suppose, instead of being on the bridge, that you are the engineer in charge when this order comes. You have been trying to economize in coal, for that is part of the whole maneuver. Have you ever economized? Can you make the extra steam on the instant? If you can't, perhaps the fellow behind you can, and you are overhauled. Then something happens—if not to your ship, at all events to your rating in the department. So, you see, even if you're below with the engines it's a clear case of remorseless watchfulness, and strain—and of danger, too. If full speed is ordered, for perhaps you don't know that the modern battleship is going at the speed limit of 19 knots there is more danger to life in the engine room than there is in a turret under fire.

"And so the four months will pass in six-hour watches for officers and men, and the strain will be felt all down the line, for the jackies are loyal to a man to the officer over them and will do all they can to do credit to his training and to their own ships. No," concluded the lieutenant, with a grim smile, "you

will show their skill. Entering a port splendid opportunity offers for an exhibition of seamanship. British fleets in their home harbors and



BATTLESHIP CONNECTICUT, FLAG SHIP

European ports which they were well frequently challenge admiration by the dash with which they steam into a harbor and come to anchor with absolute precision. The American navy can do as well, but probably will not have the opportunity in the unfamiliar harbors of Port of Spain, Trinidad, Rio Janeiro and Callao, for these never before have been visited by more than two or three American warships at once. Rear Admiral Uriel Sebree's special service squadron, which preceded the battleship fleet to the Pacific, sounded the harbor at Rio to judge its anchorages for the larger command.

Fifteen thousand bluejackets are regarded by "the Old Man" as just that many American citizens. He recognizes that they have sensibilities just the same as their fellows ashore. Accordingly, he always has done whatever he could for their welfare and pleasure. The result is a happy fleet, and the men expect liberty whenever it can be given them. Here is a problem. Will all the ports visited look with favor upon the landing of several thousand men daily for purposes of amusement of a rather vigorous sort? The commander in chief is bound to comport with the desires of foreign governments in this.

Time was when the men headed direct for dancehalls and grogeries when they landed, but the character of enlisted personnel, recruited of youngsters from inland states, has changed the custom. The men take more interest than formerly in seeing the sights. On a recent European cruise large parties of seamen visited points of interest at a distance from port under guidance of the chaplain. The old man-o-war's man would have scorned the idea of viewing picture galleries under the wing of the sky pilot.

Moreover, there is serious business afoot. The fleet baseball championship must be fought out. Each ship has a nine, and a schedule arranged by the fleet athletic association. Lieutenant David A. Weaver has just been appointed to Rear Admiral Evans' staff to act as fleet athletic officer. Some of the games will be played at the ports of call during the cruise, so that by the time they reach San Francisco the best ball tossers will be ready for the deciding contests for the fleet trophy.

One day for every ship in port may be well marked with a black line, for that length of time will be necessary to coal ship. The fuel is to be transported in colliers, four to each port of

call, each capable of coaling four ships in four days. The plan is to coal a division each day, thus completing the job in four days. The colliers come alongside the ships and the crew fills the bunkers, the coal being hoisted aboard in bags. It is the bad day of all days afloat and the worst for a civilian to choose for a call, for every one, officers and men, is busy and far from good humor. Even the practice of having the band play does not put a cheerful aspect on the grimy task.

Routine will be relieved by lighter things. The itinerary shows that anchors will clutch the mad bottom of the harbor at Port of Spain on December 24, Christmas eve, so that everything can be made snug and tight for enjoyment of that holiday, which is always made much of aboard ship. The carnival spirit which breeds frolic in Latin America will contribute to the command's having a good time for several days in Trinidad. And after leaving Trinidad, on December 29, there will be the crossing of the line to look forward to, the time when every man who never before has voyaged across the equator must pay homage to old Neptune. The time honored rites and customs of this ordeal must, if tradition be followed, be administered to 12,000 or 13,000 men, for the naval service is made up largely of young men who have served comparatively short periods. The policy of fleet distribution has been such that the equator is seldom crossed by the battalions of the Atlantic fleet. Upon the two or three thousand who have crossed will devolve a herculean task, for the

"business" is not light. Here a secret may be revealed. It is whispered in naval circles that traditions may be defied and that the novices will set upon and overwhelm by main force the veterans, turn the tables and give them the plunges in the pool and feed to them the delightful beverages served on this day of days.

To none on board will these diversions be more welcome than to the officers. The commissioned personnel of the American navy is loyal, and it is well for it is frightfully overworked. There are not enough officers, especially junior officers, properly to man the ships. The strain is great enough in peace time, but if war came it is difficult to estimate the manna of the handicap would impose. The largest American battleships have not more than 23 officers, including half a dozen midshipmen less than two years out of the academy. English battleships of similar class have no less than 35 to 40 officers, including midshipmen. The French battleships have nearly as many as England, and even Germany, in some straits as to personnel, is better off than the United States. This means that responsible duties devolve on officers who have had slight experience. This is a splendid thing for the training of the personnel. The youngsters have measured marvelously up to the burden, but it is not conservative policy nor satisfactory. In a few years the want will be filled by the flood of new officers, twice as heavy as formerly, coming from Annapolis.

The cruise will occupy about the same time that winter maneuvers in the Caribbean would have taken had the program in force for several years been followed. But it will not interfere with target practice, for a stop of 30 days will be made in Magdalena bay in March and April. The competitive firing will be harder fought than ever before, for the prizes are considerable

ATLANTIC FLEET ENTERING THE VIRGINIA CAPES

and the honor very great. Then will come the flower shows, the dog shows and the great naval display in San Francisco bay, which Mr. Hottel, the secretary of the navy, promised his "home folks" at Oakland will surpass anything they ever saw. Here the man will get enough liberty to make up for that missed in South America. It has been made generally known throughout the fleet that the ships will return home by way of the Suez canal, thus making a globe girdling cruise. This is a great attraction for the men, for, as stated before, they are not all veterans, and the idea of traveling round the world is alluring, and "The Old Man's" liberality in liberty gives a chance to see something of strange countries besides the view obtainable from a gunport.

Since this article treats somewhat of the personal element of the voyage, it would be incomplete without reference to the loyalty of the bluejackets to Rear Admiral Evans. He believes the old saying about all work and no play. He has encouraged athletics and all forms of amusement, until the men have more play than ever before, and the efficiency of the fleet shows they do more work. Sometimes the liberty parties give trouble. When the men are at fault "The Old Man" sustains the police. When the police abuse his men unnecessarily he makes it warm for the police. He refuses to take his ships to any port where the men are mistreated.

One day at a certain port an apprentice boy who was tossing a ball about ashore was clubbed by a policeman. His comrades took him off in a boat to the flagship and asked to see the admiral. He took one look at the youngster's bruised head and face, asked a few questions, found that the boy was doing no more than other civilians ashore at the same time and seemed to have been singled out for attack by the policeman because he was a seaman. Turning to the executive officer of the flagship Rear Admiral Evans said:

"Pick out 50 good husky ones, give them a baseball and send them ashore." An hour later a boat came alongside and a chief of police came aboard wearing a disturbed look.

"Admiral, your men are beating up my policemen."

"Are they? Well, I'm glad to hear it. That's what I sent them ashore for."

The 50 husky ones had gone ashore, tossed their ball about, and when the confident police descended upon them they found a very different reception.

The Great Armada

In the Pacific the fleet will be joined by the armored cruiser division now organized there, consisting of the West Virginia, the Colorado, the Pennsylvania and the Maryland, and the new division of the same class yet to be organized, consisting of the Tennessee, the Washington, the California and the South Dakota. Two divisions of protected cruisers will make up the fleet, and the second torpedo flotilla ordered to make the cruise via Magellan, starting on December 2, will be added later. The naval forces in the Pacific then will represent a larger proportion of the navy than ever has been gathered together at one time. It will include these ships:

BATTLESHIPS	Tonnage	Speed
Connecticut	16,900	18 knots
Louisiana	15,250	18 knots
Kansas	15,000	18 knots
Vermont	16,000	18 knots

ARMORED CRUISERS	Tonnage	Speed
West Virginia	13,800	22 knots
Colorado	12,800	22 knots
Maryland	12,800	22 knots
Pennsylvania	12,800	22 knots
Tennessee	14,500	22 knots
Washington	14,500	22 knots
California	13,800	22 knots
South Dakota	12,800	22 knots

PROTECTED CRUISERS	Tonnage	Speed
Charleston	9,700	22 knots
Milwaukee	9,700	22 knots
Chicago	8,900	18 knots
St. Louis	9,700	22 knots
Albany	7,700	20 knots