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NAVY DEPARTMENT SHOCKED AT BIG GRAFT IN ATLANTIC FLEET

Revelations of Misdoings of Commissary Stewards Amaze Officials

Officials of the Navy Department are amazed at the extent of graft and peculation said to have been perpetrated by certain commissary stewards attached to various vessels of the Atlantic fleet.

Word has been received at the department of the arrest of G. T. Davis, chief commissary steward of the U. S. S. Louisiana, for indulging in irregular practices in the handling of provisions and supplies for the ship's company and further reported that Davis has made a statement acknowledging his own guilt and implicating five other commissary stewards attached to vessels of the fleet.

The identity of the others said to be implicated will not be disclosed at the department pending the result of the investigation now in progress.

Duties of Steward. The commissary steward of a ship has direct charge, under the paymaster, of the purchasing and preparing of the men's rations. He plans the menu, buys the provisions and supervises the cooking and serving of the food. The bills are paid out of the crew's ration money by the paymaster on the steward's vouchers.

It is now charged that several of the commissary stewards of the Atlantic fleet have been getting a "rake-off" from contractors, sometimes in the form of direct bribes, sometimes in more covert ways, in return for which fraudulent vouchers have been passed by them and unwitting paymasters have paid for stores never delivered, or of a quality much inferior to that represented.

For some time the Louisiana had been notorious throughout the fleet for the inferior quality of food provided. Conditions became so bad that the men held indignation meetings in the forecabin and scarcely a day went by without complaints of the food reaching the captain's ears, but there was no evidence of actual dishonesty.

Trap Laid for Davis. Some of the petty officers suspected that Davis was selling the government stores out of the storeroom and putting the proceeds in his own pocket. So a trap was laid for him.

Several of the younger men of the crew were given money and instructed to try to buy coffee, cocoa, sugar, etc., from the steward in the storeroom. It is understood that this plan was successful. Capt. Welles of the Louisiana placed the accused man under arrest and preferred charges against him with the commander-in-chief.

A general investigation followed and it was found that on several ships an important safeguard against graft had fallen into disuse. The regulations provide that whenever commissary stores are received on board the officer of the deck shall cause a memorandum of the kind and amount received to be entered in full in the ship's log. Through carelessness this had often been neglected.

Problem Before Officers. The problem facing the officers of the fleet is that of securing evidence against the bribe givers rather than solely against the bribe takers. They do not feel at liberty to divulge at this time the nature and extent of the evidence already in their possession, but they hope that when the men involved realize the gravity of the charges they will confess in the hope of clemency and implicate others against whom the government's case is incomplete.

An air of realism will be given to the Atlantic fleet practice off the coasts of the Chesapeake next month by the use of old torpedo-boats as targets in night torpedo-defense practice.

The old torpedo boats Cushing, McKee and Ericson, which have been condemned as useless, are being prepared for the fleet as targets, and spotting practice, alterations being made to make them appear similar to modern destroyers. They will be filled with cork to keep them afloat after being struck.

The program includes the firing of torpedoes against other vessels of the fleet as targets and spotting practice

with the San Marcos as a target in a more extensive sale than heretofore. As it is now generally believed that naval engagements in the future will be at shorter ranges than formerly assumed in target practice the minimum range of the forthcoming practice probably will be put at 8000 yards instead of 12,000 yards as has been the custom.

Maj. Matthew F. Steele of the 20 United States Cavalry, was placed on the retired list of the army on his own application. He was born in Alabama and was graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1883. Since then he has served against the Indians on the western frontier, in the Cuban campaign and in the Philippine insurrection. He was aid to Gen. Joseph Wheeler in the Cuban campaign and took part in the battle of Santiago. He reached the grade of major in September, 1901. It is understood that Maj. Steele will make his home at Fargo, N. D., to look after the estate left by his father-in-law.

Cockroaches and bedbugs are the latest insects to be branded carriers of typhoid fever germs. After considerable laboratory investigation and thorough study of the subject Surgeon R. E. Riggs, U. S. N., makes this statement.

Experiments on the cruiser Newark some time ago made Dr. Riggs suspicious of bugs in general and of these two classes in particular. He tells of an outbreak of typhoid at a naval post on an isolated island where he was in charge of the water and food supply.

Careful study was made to discover the cause of the spread of the disease and after all other insects and vermin had been acquitted as possible disseminators of the disease the responsibility was placed on cockroaches and bedbugs.

The old wooden frigate Wabash of civil war fame, for the past forty years rarely is to be sold. Built in Philadelphia in 1854, of 4600 tons displacement, she was until 1859 flagship of the United States Atlantic and Mediterranean squadrons.

During the civil war she captured several Confederate privateers, and after three days' bombardment forced the surrender of Fort Fisher, N. C.

Removal of the marine rifle range at Winthrop is being considered by the Navy Department and the Marine corps. The range is a part of the proving ground at Indian Head and there is interference between its use and the use of the proving grounds at the same time.

TYPHOON COSTS CEBU PROVINCE MANY MILLIONS

What has been recorded as one of the worst storms that has ever occurred in the Far East was the typhoon which swept along the coast of the province of Cebu, Philippine Islands, during October 14 and 15, and which devastated a great area, details of which have reached Honolulu. The province will probably have suffered in damaged property, destroyed roads and bridges, wrecked homes, and ruined crops, about five million dollars, but the losses of the thousands of people whose homes were wrecked, will never be known.

Rain began to fall October 14 and the next morning two or three rainfalls were reported. All that day the weather was squally and in the afternoon became exceedingly unpleasant with strong winds and rain squalls. In the early afternoon a message was received at the city of Cebu, saying that the typhoon would cross northern Cebu and hardly had this message got through when the telegraph line was interrupted. A little after midnight the direction of the wind changed to the South and remained here until noon of the next day. At eight o'clock in the evening of October 15 the lightning gave out in Cebu and every street lamp flickered in the gale. With the plunging of the city into darkness the storm king seemed to come into his own, the rain increased in volume and the wind grew fiercer at every moment. Terrific crashes announced the smashing of houses and the tearing off of roofs by the fierce wind.

When day finally broke it was evident that the city had suffered severely. The wind was still strong, and it was only by a struggle that way could be made along the streets. The streets were strewn with boards, broken bottles, doors, windows, pieces of roofing, and inches of thick mud. By eight o'clock the pitiful sight of dead being carried through the streets could be seen, and hundreds of poorly clad men and women, wet and shivering, carrying what few belongings they had saved, were making their way against the storm in search of a place of temporary shelter.

The provincial building, customs house, theater, etc., were crowded with the homeless, while the churches were also full. Trees, toppled by their branches, fallen telegraph poles in every direction, the streets blocked with masses of tangled wire, piles of wreckage thrown up by the wind and water held their quota of dead animals, dogs, goats, chickens and cats being drowned or killed by the hundreds.

In the city of Cebu the money damage went up into the thousands and the dead numbered over five hundred. Along the waterfront ships were damaged and some thrown upon the beach. The lighthouses all went out of commission, the damage to the lights and buoys being very great. The steamer San Rafael went down during the storm at Maasin and ten people of the twenty-seven on board were drowned. The Victoria, the launch Maltboe, and the Louisa, were all beached at Liloan. Other steamers went down, several with loss of life, and in each case the steamers were carrying valuable cargoes.

The Scouts and Constabulary of Cebu did gallant work both during and after the storm. On the night of the storm Captain Hutchinson called the Scouts to assemble and make an effort to go to the rescue of some Americans and Filipinos near by the barracks, but the wind and water forbade the attempt being made. Assisting the suffering, collecting the dead, guarding stores, aiding the provincial and municipal authorities in every way the Scouts and Constabulary worked with cheerfulness and readiness and earned for themselves warm praise for they did even more than duty called for.

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The gentleman to the right of the reader (sketched from life) is wearing old style or pasted double-vision lenses. The lines of the reading water are noticeably prominent and he has difficulty in adjusting his eyes to the lenses. The gentleman to the left (sketched from life) is wearing Kryptok double-vision lenses. There are no seams on these glasses, because the reading lenses are fused invisibly within the distance lenses. Thus, either two persons are at ease, less dignified and comfortable.

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