OUR HENRY AT SEA

W. H. Lambert, Jr., of Chestertown, a navy boy, writes as follows:

This is the day on which the start of the greatest and most interesting trip I have ever taken on a naval vessel and perhaps will be the greatest of my life.

Preparations were made for getting under way at 6 a. m. and all hands as busy as they could possibly be getting the ship ready for sea and doing a thousand and one things about dock to which we were secured. At 10 a. m. the last cable connecting us with the dock had been cast loose and the little tugs began their duty of taking us into the stream and turning us around and as finally swung our head down stream we cast loose the last tie with the States. At 6 p. m. we were fairly well out to sea, is fact, just off Cape Henlopen which proved to be the last sight of land we would see for five days.

After five days of placid sailing with the sea like a mirror the entire time we dropped anchor in the harbor of Charollette-Amelia, on the Island of St. Thomas, one of the group comprising the several bought from Denmark. Really it is a sight for sore eyes to stand upon the deck of a vessel in the harbor and gaze upon the town. Here the houses are painted every color of the rainbow and each one blends with the other and together with the green of the hill forming the background makes a very beautiful picture. We were given liberty from 1 p. m. to 5 p. m. Of course it had to rain to spoil our visit but that did not deter us from looking the town over. I have been in quite a number of towns both in America and France but I think without exception this town was the cleanest I ever saw. The town has a population of about 13,000 of which three fourths are blacks. We left St. Thomas the following day at 5 p. m. in the worse rain storm I ever saw. In fact, for four hours it rained so hard that we had to sound the fog whistle.

We were four days sailing across the Carribean Sea to Colon, Panama, which place we reached on Saturday morning about 7 a. m. We had expected to go straight through the Canal without stopping here but on learning that we had to rig our guns which would take us the entire day to do, we also decided to coal ship here. Consequently we move alonside the coal dock. This is the largest coaling dock in the world and has a capacity of 2,000 tons of coal an hour. Here everything is controlled and handled by electricity. Not a hand touches a piece of coal during its several stages of moving before reaching the ship. After coaling we were moved along side an old pier and tied up for the night. We were allowed to go in swimming for about 20 minutes after completion of coaling. No liberty was granted at Colon as we were to go thru the Canal at 6 a. m.

At 6 a. m. on Sunday morning we cast loose from the dock and proceeded towards the Canal. The entrance of the Canal is hidden so that you cannot see it until you are within a half mile of the entrance. After proceeding thru the Canal about a mile we came to the first locks, Gatun, three in number in which we were raised a height of 85 feet to the level of Gatun lake. Imagine a ship weighing 10,000 tons being lifted 85 feet in the air practically in a little less than an hour. Here also everything is controlled by electricity. In fact everything on the Isthmus is controlled by that power. Upon reaching the level of the last lock we entered Gatun Lake. This lake covers about 500 square miles and is entirely fresh water. There are numerous islands in the lake but all very small and covered with a dense vegetation. It took nearly an hour to cross the lake and then we entered the Canal proper. Here it narrowed down until it is about 300 feet in width. A ship can tie up along side the bank practically and two ships can pass with ease. From here on until the end the Canal is cut thru almost solid rock and in some places thru hills nearly 300 feet in height, especially at Gold Hill. This hill has proved the most treacherous of them all and is now being washed away by hydraulic pressure. After passing thru Galliard Cut we came to the first lock on the Pacific side, Pedro Miguel in which a drop of fifty feet is made in a single lock. After leaving Pedro Miguel and about three miles further we came to Miraflores locks, two in number, in which were dropped to later tied up to the pier in Balboa. The Canal is a little over 48 miles in length and takes a little over 6 hours to traverse its length.

At Balboa we were granted liberty until sundown and all who could go went over into Panama City. Here everything is typically Spanish and since the Americans into the town it has been cleaned up and presents a very creditable appearance.

The next day we again got under way, this time for San Pedro, Cal. We sailed within sight of the shore line nearly all the way up the coast and afforded us a very pretty scene. While off the Mexican coast we had the pleasure of watching two electrical storms meet over the mountain tops. The ocean seemed to abound with sea turtles and fish.

After ten days sailing we at last reached San Pedro, Cal., and came to anchor in the bay. We had a stay here of seven days and took in all the sights of visitation.

After a seven-hour stay here we again weighed anchor for Puget Sound, Navy Yard, Wash., which place we reached on the following Sunday. As there was a very heavy forest fire burning and the smoke hanging low over the Sound we were unable to see any of it until we had reached Bremeton in which town came the end of our journey. It took us just exactly 31 days traveling to come from Philadelphia to Bremeton, counting the stops.

It seemed rather strange at first to go ashore in the town of Bremerton, for there are neither street cars nor railroad here, the only exit from the town is by steamboat to Seattle. But then we have by now gotten used to these things and count them for naught.

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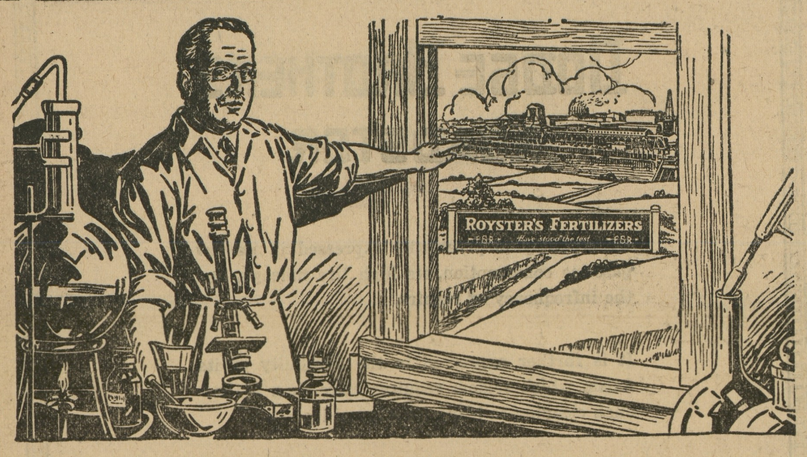

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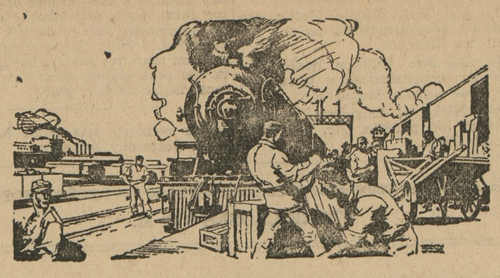

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This advertisement is published by the Association of Railway Executives

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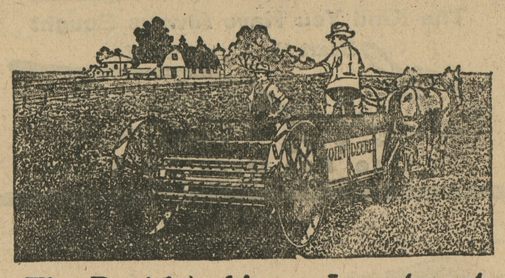

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