

YANK

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ATLANTIC VS. PACIFIC



Pacific waters are warmer to be sunk in,
but their mostly end there.

Sailors who have served on both oceans prefer the Atlantic; it's safer now, the weather's better, and shore liberty is best of all.

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WESTERN PACIFIC—"There's not a damn thing out here that can compare with liberty in the Atlantic.

"Why I remember one time when the old *Nevada* hit Belfast, North Ireland. I had to pull shore-patrol duty down by the American Red Cross. I was standing there, minding my own business, watching the dancing, when someone tapped me on the shoulder. A soft, feminine voice asked, 'May I talk to you, Shore Patrol?'

"I turned around expecting to see a little bit of a thing, but my eyes hit just about chest level on her. There, standing in front of me, was the tallest damn girl I ever did see. Well proportioned, mind you—but big. She must have stood a good six foot one. Well, we had a little conversation—mostly about the shore patrol—and then she asked me to have a coke. I couldn't take any while on duty, but I walked over with her to some seats lined up by the bulkhead and she sat down.

"She asked me to sit down too, and when I told her I couldn't because of regulations she just set down those cokes and reached out with one arm for my waist and the other for my knees and set me down on her lap—just as easy as that. I don't reckon you'll ever see anything as nice as that hunk of girl in the whole Pacific, no matter where you go."

That was Tiny Herrington BM1c sounding off on the difference between Navy duty in the Atlantic and the Pacific. Tiny weighed about 245 and was a good six feet himself, and the rest of the guys laughed at the part where the girl picked him up and sat him down. But, whether or not they thought Tiny's story was true, they did agree with his statements about liberty in the two oceans. The Atlantic had it all over the Pacific.

Eight or nine of us were sitting on our sacks on a new battleship somewhere in the Western Pacific. All of us had seen both oceans—the sailors had served actively aboard ship in both—and it seemed natural to compare notes.

Gordon Hasby Slc, who had been on tankers in the Atlantic for over a year before coming out to the Pacific, said, "The best duty of all is Stateside—shore duty." Everybody agreed.

"You're damn right," said Gerald Lindstrom MM1c. "But when I have to go to sea give me the Atlantic, and I mean the North Atlantic. I've been on convoys to Murmansk and I was with the British Home Fleet for a long time. It's plenty cold up there, but you can still be comfortable on a good ship."

"Yeah," said Tiny, "it's okay for you to talk about cold weather when you pull a lower-deck

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watch, but I'd like to see you topside on the guns in that sub-zero weather."

"Cold or not," said James Dillon MM3c, "it's like you said yourself, Tiny. I can take all the cold they throw at me if I get good liberty at the end of every few months."

Tiny, speaking practically, made a good point. "A bar of soap or a box of pogeys bait," he said, "could go a long way in the Atlantic, but all you can do with it in the Pacific is wash yourself and eat the candy. There are no girls to give it to out here."

Bill Effingham FC2c, who served on the USS *Quincy* both in the Atlantic and the Pacific before she was sunk on August 9, 1942, tied up the whole thing when he said, "Except for New Zealand or Australia, both of which are out now, there's not a liberty port worth anything in the whole Pacific except the Stateside ports."

When it came to actual sea duty, however, most of the men agreed that the Atlantic, when the Jerry subs were out in strength, was much rougher service.

Charles Mahoney Y3c, who had been in the Atlantic on a sea-raiding Q-boat, was emphatic about that. "The Japs never had anything like those German wolf packs," he said.

"Yeah, the Japs seem to hit our shipping more from the air," said Tiny.

Lindstrom, remembering his Murmansk convoys, said: "If you're sunk in cold waters, you don't have much of a chance. Even if you get on a life raft the cold will kill you off once you get wet. Out here where the weather is warmer you can usually make a go of it. There are more storms in the Atlantic, too."

"But the water in the Atlantic isn't as heavy as in the Pacific," broke in Tiny. "It's almost always choppy and a bit rough in the Atlantic, but these long swells out here can do real damage."

Hasby was on Tiny's side: "I saw more than 200 oil drums swept right off the deck of my ship once by one of those long, lazy Pacific swells. They don't look bad, but they are. And they can make you damn seasick, too."

"Hell, they've got those swells in the Atlantic, too," said Dillon. "One lifted me clean out of my sack off Casablanca last year."

"Storms are bad wherever they hit," Lindstrom summed up. "Generally I'd say the storms in the Atlantic last longer than those in the Pacific—about 21 days, maybe, for the Atlantic ones and three for the Pacific."

"As for combat," said Kenneth McNally EM1c, "I think the Pacific has it all over the Atlantic—rougher, I mean—now that the German U-boats are licked. It was rough in the Atlantic when the subs were out in full strength, but they never put out anything like the surface fleet the Japs have had against us."

"The Japs might have had a big navy, but their ships weren't ever as good as Jerry's," said Lindstrom. "Why, the Jap destroyers don't even have watertight compartments. I remember once when we ran 26 knots to get away from the *Tirpitz*. I doubt if we would ever run from the Japs."

Tiny agreed: "The German ships have better fire control as well as watertight integrity."

"In spite of that," said Effingham, "the Pacific war is the tough war for the Navy man right now. The Germans don't have any naval strength left while the Japs still have plenty."

"One thing I liked about duty in the Atlantic was that you could transfer from one job to another easier than out here," said Lindstrom, on a new tack.

"That's right," said McNally. "Out here you're stuck once you get experienced along any special line. Replacements are hard to get. Back in the Atlantic you could get a chance at any number of different jobs. Doing the same thing over



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and over, like you have to do here, gets on your nerves after a while."

"One thing the Atlantic doesn't have, even off Africa," said Lindstrom, "and that's the terrific humidity you run into here."

"That's right," agreed Hasby. "At least in the hottest part of the Atlantic it cools off some at night. Never does out here. Right, Ef?"

Effingham smiled: "Out here I wake up in the morning and my bed is as wet as if I had kidney trouble."

For recreation in the out-of-the-way spots where liberty is impossible, all the men seemed to feel that the Atlantic fleet does a better job.

McNally, who runs the movie projector on this ship, said: "We left Brooklyn with 18 movies, all new, and they didn't know there whether we'd stay in their area or not. When we left Pearl Harbor they gave us only five prints. For some reason the men in the Atlantic get more movies than the men out here, and newer ones too. At least that's how I've seen them distributed. And look at that island of Mog-Mog. What a spot that recreation center is!"

"In Trinidad," Dillon said, "they set up a recreation center where you could buy all the beer you wanted. Out here we get three lousy hours on a little island, get three hot beers and they tell us to have a good time."

Lindstrom expressed everyone's feeling when he added: "The main trouble with the recreation areas out here is that you're still ordered around. You can't get away from the fact that you're in the Navy. In the Atlantic rest areas we could usually get away by ourselves. I think it could be done that way out here too."

By this time most of the group had drifted off to get ready for the 2000 to 2400 watch. Lindstrom, who didn't have to stand that watch, remained behind.

"You know," he said, "one reason I liked my Atlantic duty better than my present job is that off Europe you have more of a feeling of fighting with others. When we convoyed a group of tankers or freighters to Murmansk, there were ships in the convoy representing many different countries. Out here in the Pacific we seem to be all alone. I used to like talking to and meeting the British and the French and the Poles. Those British are pretty good with their navy even if their ships are a bit dirty. One thing sure, they won't run from anything. I liked serving with the British Home Fleet.

"We all hated to come out here. Our faces fell when we went through the Panama Canal. Well, maybe soon we'll all be out here together again."

