



*Tom Seeburger  
1/69 to 3/71 A Gary* ★

# The HELMSMAN

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USS CANOPUS (AS-34)

6 MARCH 1970



# ON THE COVER

Here's a mother and her child on the edge of land facing the sea. But they are not looking at the sea. They are looking at tomorrow, as many miles and years out into tomorrow as there are miles and years in tomorrow.

They are waiting.  
They are waiting for a sailor.  
A husband.  
A father.

A woman's shadow is at the mother's feet. But it isn't the mother's shadow. It is the shadow of all the women of the world who have waited at the edge of land for a sailor to return from the sea. Her child is all the children of time who have celebrated their

birthdays and first Christmases (and sometimes their second and third) without a father.

But they keep on waiting and looking out into tomorrow.

They love the man who sails the sea.

And they understand that he didn't leave because he wanted to or because of the draft, as some say, or because of the call of the sea. But because he had to . . . and that's enough for them.

See the child.

See the mother and the child.

See the mother and the child on the edge of land facing the sea waiting for a sailor, a husband, a father.

Say goodbye to the mother and the child, goodbye - they will be waiting in Charleston.

What a hell of a place for a family reunion!

## UNDERWAY THOUGHTS

By LTJG JOHN M. BARGE

There is something about the powerful expanse of the ocean that makes us at once naive little boys and awesome mighty seafarers.

The other day after a busy morning below and an afternoon watch, we emerged topside to walk about a few moments, breathe deeply, and observe the world about us.

From a vantage point high about on the 05 level, we glimpsed first the relaxed sunbathers scattered about us, then gazed upon the enthusiastic throngs before the golf net. Continuing to expand outward our sphere of attention, we challenged visually the vast stretches of ruffled blue all about us, with

the horizon beyond, and saw a first reflection of ourselves in a suddenly broader context. We felt an urge to record it all on film, but paused and decided instead to make more indelible the mental image we wanted to keep with us forever.

Almost giddy with the novelty and excitement of it all, strong feelings formed that this would indeed be an enjoyable and memorable cruise.

But as our eyes resumed their lustful wander aft, in search of similar diverting activities perhaps on the helo deck, they reached the break in the superstructure at the missile plug area and were suddenly stopped by the apparent discontinuity, unable to proceed. We were irrevocably awakened from our fanciful dream, for here at the very center of CANOPUS was here unseen, inscrutable *raison d'être*, the apparently incompatible symbolism of brute force.

Almost as suddenly, we resolved the initial irony of it all: We realized again the immense priority accorded CANOPUS, the unsparing efforts of all concerned to make her the most effective tender ever known, and the importance of habitability and crew morale to her success. We felt we had better grasp the big picture.

With a smug smile, and a certain feeling of lost innocence, we returned below deck and went back to work.

sea chest



of the month

CAPTAIN JOHN M. DAVIS  
Commanding Officer  
COMMANDER JOHN E. BROWNLEY  
Executive Officer

LIEUTENANT (JUNIOR GRADE) RICHARD M. COLMAN  
Public Affairs Officer

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# CANOPUS CROSSES CANAL

## Goodbye, Pacific . . . Hello, Atlantic

On a Sunday, the USS CANOPUS started her 50-mile trip through the Panama Canal . . . after a day and night of liberty in Balboa and picking up dependents (disguised as tourists) to carry with us through the locks.

The trip took about 8 hours.

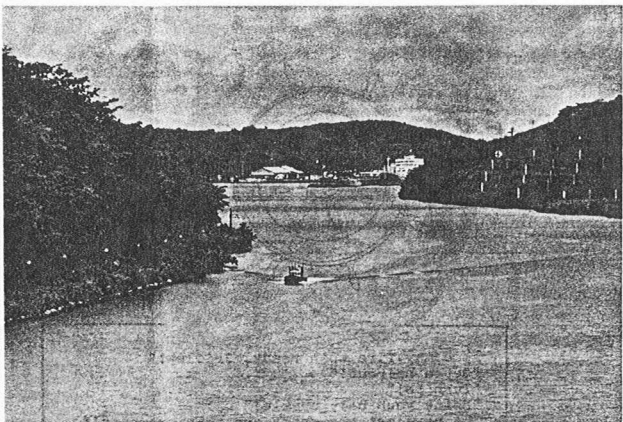
First, CANOPUS was raised 54 feet to the level of Miraflores Lake by two steps, locks named after the lake. After crossing Miraflores Lake two sets of twin locks raised us 33 feet to the level of Gatun Lake. These locks are called Pedro Miguel.

At the Gatun Locks approach to the Atlantic, after moving under our own power, a large illuminated arrow activated from the Locks Control House, a half a mile away, moved to show us which set of locks to use.

Linemen in small rowboats connected us with towing locomotives by steel cables. All but the smallest ships are towed through the locks by electric locomotives or "mules."

The big gate leaves swung back to let us enter the highest chamber. The steel gate leaves are 7 feet thick, compartmented so that they practically float, and so delicately balanced that they move by a 40-horsepower motor.

Before the Canal was built, no locks of this magnitude had ever been constructed. Accordingly, much of the mechanism had to be devised or invented. To pull big ships like the CANOPUS, mechanical "mules" were invent-



ed. Each of these mules weighs 55 tons, and is capable of exerting 70,000 pounds of pull or braking power. Six, three on each side, are used for ships of average size.

Each lock chamber is 110 feet wide and 1,000 feet long.

No pumps are used in operating the locks. The water moves by gravity and flows from one level to the level below.

When the water level in the first chamber and the one in the next were equalized, the gates between them were opened and the CANOPUS was towed forward.

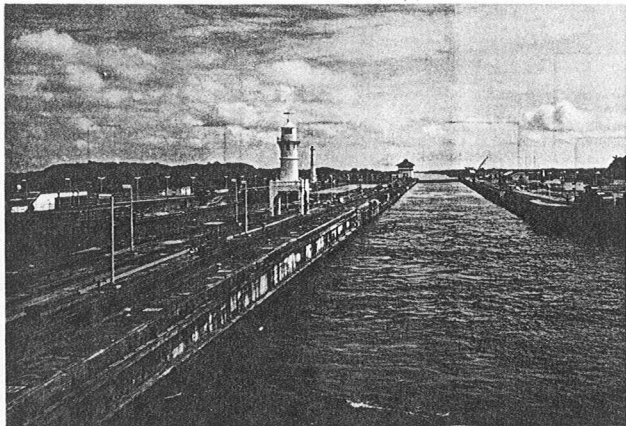
After this was repeated twice, CANOPUS was once again on the Atlantic Ocean.

Heart of the Lock operations is the Control House, the red-roofed building you saw on the center wall. Inside is a long control panel which, in effect, is a miniature of the Locks and its principal moving mechanisms. These miniatures - of the Lock gates, fender-chains, or valves - are synchronized to move with their giant counterparts below.

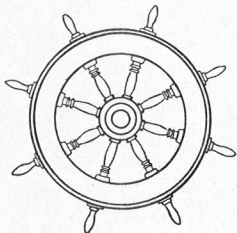
When CANOPUS went through the Canal, 52 million gallons of water, enough to supply a city of 350,000 for 1 day, was spilled out to sea.

The Panama Canal was opened to commercial ship traffic August 15, 1914. Since that time more than 403,000 ships of every category and over 1.8 billion tons of cargo have gone through the waterway -

Including the dependents we carried from the Pacific side to the Atlantic.



# LIFER LINGO



One day the Great Chief Petty Officer in the Sea said, "Let there be Lifers" . . . and there were Lifers.

Then the Great Chief Petty Officer in Washington said, "Let there be regulars and reserves and kitty cruisers" . . . and there were regulars and reserves and kitty cruisers.

And since that day there has been a conflict in communication between the two groups.

For, you see, Lifers speak a different

"You may fire when ready, Gridley!"  
"Get a haircut!"  
"Turn to!"  
"Shine your belt buckle!"  
"We have met the enemy and they are ours!"  
"Aye, aye, sir!"  
"Very well!"  
"Negets!"  
"Don't give up the ship!"  
"Trim your mustache!"  
"Get hot!"  
"Turn and burn!"  
"Surrender? I have not yet begun to fight!"  
"Square your hat away!"  
"Reveille, Reveille!"  
"Damn the torpedoes! Full steam ahead!"  
"The smoking lamp is out!"  
"Permission granted!"  
"Shine your shoes!"  
"Secured due to wet paint!"  
"Fire, fire!"

barked  
growled  
whispered  
bellowed  
screamed  
stammered  
stuttered  
laughed  
grunted  
yodded  
caressed  
giggled  
yelped  
sighed  
sang  
hissed  
squealed

one-armed  
clean-cut  
sun-burned  
All-American  
Communist  
Facist  
Draft-dodging  
Pill-popping-acid-headed  
Long-haired  
Pimple-faced

Messcook  
Hippie  
Pollywog  
Short-timer  
Reserve  
Regular  
Boot  
Kitty Cruiser  
Yippee  
Boy Next Door  
Admiral's Son  
Admiral's Daughter

swabbed  
swept  
kissed  
saluted  
chipped  
red-leaded  
sanded  
drilled  
flushed  
painted  
scrubbed

the

# MADE EASY

language than most people.

They speak, what is commonly called, "Lifer Lingo." While reserves, regulars, and kitty cruisers speak - English.

But, now it is possible for you to speak "Lifer Lingo," too. Below is a short diagram of Navy lifer expressions and situations . . . with hundreds of different combinations.

Memorize the chart below and you will be able to speak to any lifer - whoever he may be - in his own language.



tattooed  
long-haired  
pot-bellied  
hash-marked  
bald  
red-nosed  
sadistic  
jealous  
gold-barrred  
chief petty officer  
double-chinned  
knobby-kneed

Master-at-arms  
OOD  
Admiral  
Ensign  
Marine  
La Huerta seniorita  
Lifer  
Barmaid  
Boatswain

as the

Panama Canal  
Gunmounts  
Lifeboats  
Flag  
Bulkhead  
Stanchion  
Deck  
Overhead  
Stateroom  
Berthing Compartment  
Pilot House  
Bridge  
Head  
Mess Decks  
Galley  
Captain's Office  
Drift Inn

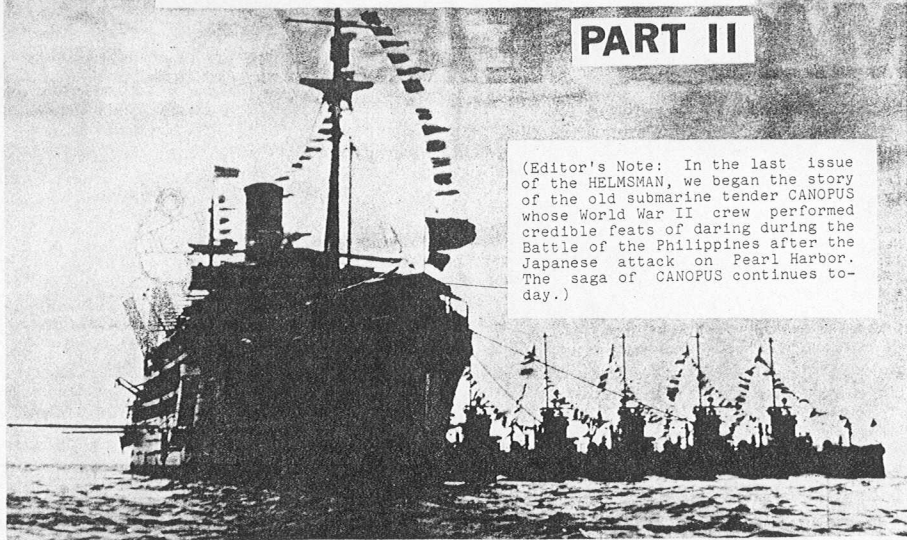
during

Holiday routine  
Ship's work  
Liberty  
Knock off  
Turn to  
GQ  
Leave  
Movie Call  
Christmas  
Sun call  
NBC attack  
Special sea & anchor detail  
Refresher training  
Abandon Ship  
Man overboard  
Quarters for muster & inspection

# THE OLD CANOPUS WAS A HERO

## PART II

(Editor's Note: In the last issue of the HELMSMAN, we began the story of the old submarine tender CANOPUS whose World War II crew performed credible feats of daring during the Battle of the Philippines after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The saga of CANOPUS continues today.)



By mid-January 1941 the remnants of naval aviation that were left in the Philippines - some 150 men, mostly ground crews who had nothing to do now that their planes were destroyed - were gathered under Commander Francis Bridget, and Bridget was worried.

The Army was dug in some 20 miles to the north, true enough, but what worried Bridget was that the coastline between Mariveles and the Army front was inadequately defended against a sudden amphibious landing.

Commander Bridget had an idea, and he sold it to what was left of the other naval organizations around Bataan. He collected 130 men from the crew of the submarine tender CANOPUS - they could be spared now that the submarines were being pulled out of the Philippines - about 80 more from the Ammunition Depot detail, a hundred or so Marines, and a few refugees from the Cavite Navy Yard.

With these, plus the 150 ground crewmen, Frank Bridget formed what he called a naval battalion. It was probably the only time in history that the Navy organized its own infantry under fire.

The Marines were equipped for the field, of course, but the Navy men had to scrounge for their weapons. They borrowed, begged and stole rifles, automatic weapons and pistols without the vaguest idea of how to use them. A sailor would acquire a weapon and get one of the Marines to show him how to use it.

Thus equipped, and with their Navy uniforms dyed yellow - they tried to dye them a khaki color but it came out yellow - the Navy "army" set out to fight the Japanese.

Five days of the nuttiest jungle fighting in the annals of warfare ensued, with all accepted principles of infantry warfare violated because they didn't know what the principles were in the first place.

At night the Japanese would infiltrate the naval battalion's lines. However, this did not have the expected results. The Navy men, never having been indoctrinated with the ancient Army principle that it is fatal to be outflanked, simply held their ground and sent back detachments to clear out the infiltrators.

Their unorthodox tactics nearly drove the enemy crazy. The Japanese knew the business of war and were sure these screwy jungle fighters were backed by a force of powerful reserves somewhere in the vicinity, else they would never take such chances. The trouble was the Japanese couldn't find the reserve forces because the naval battalion had neglected to provide any.

A diary found on the body of a Japanese officer testified to the complete bewilderment of the Sons of Nippon at being confronted with such outlandish conduct. The Japanese officer wrote that the foe was composed of "new types of suicide squads which thrashed about in the jungle, wearing bright-colored uniforms and making plenty of noise."

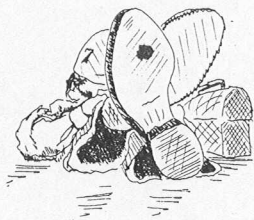
"Whenever these apparitions reached an open space," the Japanese officer added, "they would attempt to draw Japanese fire by sitting down, talking loudly and lighting cigarettes."

On the fifth day of the weird jungle battle, a regiment of Filipino Scouts arrived and relieved the naval battalion. But the battalion had not lost interest in the course of events. It decided to attack the problem from a sailor's point of view - shoot into the Japanese from the sea.

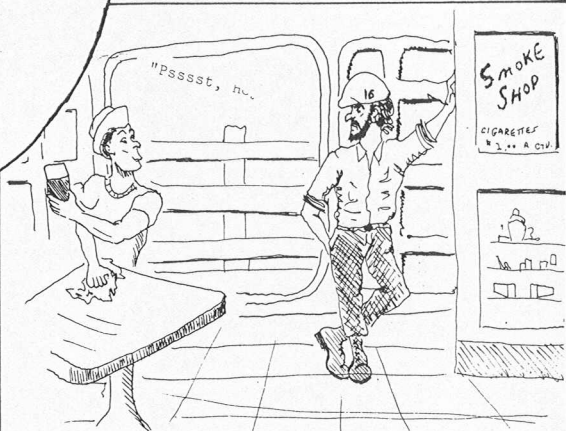
How they built what they called their "Mickey Mouse battleships" and what they did with them will be in the next issue of the HELMSMAN concluding this three-part series.

# REMEMBER THE BIRDS?

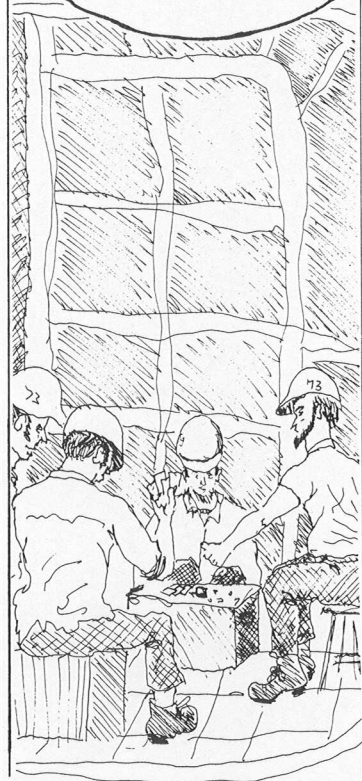
By DM3 GARY A. KIMBLE



ENERGETIC



HONEST



DILIGENT WORKERS



TRUSTWORTHY



## WHAT SORT OF MAN READS *The Helmsman*

He's a member of the world's biggest fraternity - the United States Navy. He's democracy in a pair of bell-bottoms. He's freedom in a dungaree shirt. He's America with a white hat cocked over his left eyebrow. Facts: THE HELMSMAN is the most avidly read ship's newspaper among personnel on the USS CANOPUS (AS-34). To join the world's biggest fraternity, read THE HELMSMAN. (Source: 1970 Editor's Survey.)

Nav \* Ops \* Med \* Repair \* Admin \* Eng \* Deck \* Supply \* Marines

## STATEROOM OF THE MONTH

What a strange thing a room is.  
What a portrait of it's occupant's soul.  
Some rooms are like antiseptic test-tubes.  
There is no dust in them.

Everything is in its place, as it is with a man  
in a coffin.

People who do alot of work live in rooms that  
are impossible to put right, because too much is  
going on in them, too much life is being lived in  
them.

Which of the following is the picture:

- (a) a room at La Huerta
- (b) Mel's Gym Clubhouse
- (c) Boatswain Locker
- (d) Stateroom of the Month
- (e) All of the above

The answer is yours to decide. The name of the  
real owner is being withheld to protect the living.

