

The Oldest Rate In The Navy

The oldest rate in the Navy today has such a varied amount of work to do that the men connected with it might well be called Wacks of all Trades." It's hard to say sometimes just where the Boatswain Mates work starts and ends.

First Division has control over the foreccastle, all of the ground tackle there, the sidecleaners, plus the cleaning and upkeep of certain internal spaces.

Just about the most important work on the foreccastle is the upkeep of the ground tackle (anchors and chains, etc.) and the machinery connected with Bennington's big center-line and starboard hooks. Besides this work are the many square feet of deck, bulkhead and overhead areas that have to be scrubbed, chipped, scraped, sanded and painted and then, sometimes it seems, started all over again, to keep Benn one of the finest appearing ships afloat.

Taking care of the external appearance of Benn are the sidecleaners. A lot of thankless and often tiring, dirty tasks go to these men, very often starting when the rest of the crew are secured to go on liberty. Sometimes, but not often, on a large or difficult job, lights are rigged for the men to go on working after dark.

Nearly all of the jobs that the sidecleaners have to do in port are accomplished from a paint float. But when there are hard-to-reach areas that can't be taken care of from the float, they break out the old standy, the boom chair. These things resemble a small swing but when you have to work out of one, they are anything but playthings. A side-cleaner hanging underneath of and painting a 16-ton anchor or the external parts of its hawsepipe doesn't have time to think of swinging around, just get the job done and back on deck in the shortest possible time.



"Dear Blabby"

Dear Blabby,
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Unsigned

Dear Unsigned,
Okay Boats, we'll see what we can do about it.

Dear Blabby,
I have just received a letter from my best friend at home, telling me that he has been taking out the girl I am engaged to. He goes on to say that they are planning to get married next week. I know that if I was home I could stop this, and have my girl back, but I'm at sea and can't get home. I have a problem, what can I do?

Far Away

Dear Far,
Say, you have got a problem haven't you.

Dear Blabby,
I reported for duty on the Bennington in 1947. I came aboard as a seaman apprentice, and now I'm a third class. Friends kept telling me that when I made third, I would be sure to get a transfer. I made third in '49 and have been waiting for my transfer ever since. I think 17 years is too long to spend at sea, I am beginning to feel forgotten, what can I do?

Forgotten

Dear Forgotten,
You should make your situation known to influential people who may help you get a transfer. Here are a few of my contacts, whom I am sure will be more than happy to help. John Glect, he works down in the scullery, and knows a lot of the right people. Then there's Melvin Pudd, he works in the speed locker, and really has a lot of pull. And also Herman Nurd, who can be found on the fantail conducting mail boy watch exercises. These guys really know the straight scoop, and will be glad to help you.

Dear Friends and Readers,
Let Blabby help you! If you have problems on your mind and feel you need assistance in solving them, don't hesitate to drop us a line. Simply write down your troubles on a piece of paper, address it to "Dear Blabby," in care of PID, and drop it off at the post office. Incidentally, if you have any confidential problems and would like private consultations, this can be arranged for the nominal fee of \$67.43. Handkerchiefs are available for the more emotional cases. Let me hear your troubles friends!