

Webber, Y2c, Spent 10 Hours Adrift When Ship Was Sunk

"I wouldn't have sold my insurance policy for a dollar less than face value," replied Cecil Webber, Y2c, of the Athletic office, when asked how he felt about his chances of survival when the *USS Laffey* was sunk. Webber, who participated in the battle of Cape Esperance, battle for Guadalcanal, the Solomons campaign, and occupation of the Ellice Islands, remembers the *Laffey* incident vividly.

The date was Friday the 13th, 1942, and the battle was one of the first successful surface engagements against the Japanese fleet. A total of 28 Jap ships were officially sunk, while nine American ships were lost—one of which was the *Laffey*.

On the *Laffey*, one of the Navy's newest destroyers at that time, was a crew of close to 200 men. When the ship was sunk, 85 of that number lost their lives.

Forced To Abandon

Time magazine devoted considerable space to the heroic battle of the *Laffey*, and Yeoman Webber's account is much the same, except for a few minute details.

"We were firing on a Jap cruiser," commented Webber, "when out of the darkness came the bulk of a Japanese battleship."

"Our speed indicator swung to 'emergency full,' and then our torpedoes slid toward the on-rushing Goliath. Two connected. Then our five-inch guns let fly at the enemy's bridge. We were so close the Japs could not bring their heavy guns to bear on our ship."

"We were what you might call a friendless ship in a sea of enemies. Astern was the battleship, and two large destroyers lay to port. The destroyers opened fire simultaneously, and our guns almost immediately reduced one to flames. The other, however, put a torpedo into our hull. The bridgeless battleship also found the range, and we were forced to abandon ship."

Webber, along with other survivors, was in the water for 10 hours before being picked up by landing craft and taken to Henderson Field. "The first night there," says Webber, "the Japs caused us plenty of concern as they shelled the beach continuously."

Evacuated By Solace

On Thanksgiving Day Webber left Henderson Field for Esperito Santos where he stayed until the 20th of December. Then he was evacuated by the *USS Solace* to Auckland, New Zealand. Early January, 1943, found him at the Mare Island Hospital in San Francisco, a victim of malaria which he contracted while on Guadalcanal.

Pronounced well enough for limited service he reported to the NACSB in Seattle and ended up in Chapel Hill. On Oct. 6 he



CECIL WEBBER

Lt. Curry To Wed Washington Girl

Wedding bells will ring tomorrow, Dec. 16, for Lieut. Russell Curry, AV(N), Naval flier attached to the Personnel Office, when he marches down the aisle with Miss Jane Booher of Washington, D. C.

It will be an informal ceremony at the bride's home. Best man will be Lieut. Robert Ruger, AV(N), attached to the Operational Command at Cecil Field, Florida. A reception will follow the ceremony.

After a 10-day honeymoon the couple will reside at 520 E. Franklin Street, Chapel Hill.

was married to the former Miss Jean Blanks of Hudson, Mich.

Webber now wears the ribbons of the American Theatre and the Asiatic Pacific with two battle stars. He also holds a Presidential Unit Citation for the Battle of Cape Esperance.

While on the *Laffey*, he was a S1c Fire Controlman. His battle station in the Solomons was beside the gunnery officer in the fire control tower.

Lt. Stone Of 18th Batt Visits Station

Eighteenth battalion alumnus visiting the station last week was Lt. Vernon E. Stone, Marine pilot now stationed at El Toro, Cal.

Lt. Stone completed Pre-Flight training in May, 1943, and won his wings at Pensacola, Fla., Dec. 7, 1943, second anniversary of Pearl Harbor Day. After operational training at Jacksonville, he was assigned to the New York Ferrying Command, piloting Corsairs.

While at Chapel Hill, Lt. Stone was a member of the varsity wrestling team at 128-lbs., and was undefeated in varsity competition. Before entering the V-5 program, he was rated as aviation radioman and gunner.



COMING EVENTS

SATURDAY

DANCES

58th battalion dance in Pine Room, Lenoir Hall, from 2100 to 2400. Refreshments, swing band. Station crew dance at Country Club from 2100 to 2400, Refreshments, swing band.

FREE MOVIES

Village: "Hail the Conquering Hero," with Eddie Bracken and Ella Raines. Features at 1910 and 2058.

SUNDAY

DIVINE SERVICES

Protestant: Memorial Hall at 1000. Catholic: Gerrard Hall at 0615, Hill Music Hall at 1000. Jewish: Hillel House at 1000.

FREE MOVIES

Village: "Sensations of 1945," with Eleanor Powell and Dennis O'Keefe. Features at 1318 and 1453.

OPEN HOUSE

Kenan Dormitory: Tea dance for 63rd battalion, from 1530 to 1730.

MONDAY, DEC. 18

BASKETBALL

Woollen Gym: Cloudbusters vs. Lauberg-Maxton Field, 1930.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 20

BASKETBALL

Woollen Gym: Cloudbusters vs. Fort Bragg, 1930.

Maj. Bowes Terms All Hands Eligible For Audition Shows

Cadets, officers, enlisted personnel including members of the band and civilian employees will be eligible to compete in the Maj. Bowes' audition shows starting on this station on Dec. 27.

The winners of the finals, to be held here on Jan. 9, will win a trip to New York from Jan. 30 to Feb. 2 and will represent Pre-Flight at Chapel Hill on Columbia's coast-to-coast network program on Thursday, Feb. 1. Each of those selected for the trip to New York will receive a cash bonus of \$50.00.

In addition to those selected for the New York trip, Maj. Bowes' talent scouts will select from the final audition show 7 to 10 other acts to whom cash prizes totaling \$100.00 will be awarded.

Ex-Professionals Eligible

The eminent talent-seeker is hopeful of uncovering 6 or 7 acts from the Pre-Flight School for his Feb. 1 broadcast from New York.

Preliminary auditions will begin on Dec. 27 and run thru Jan. 6 inclusive, except on Dec. 30 and 31, and Jan. 1 and 2. Semi-final auditions will be held on Monday, Jan. 8.

It is stressed that whether or not you were a professional entertainer in civilian life the auditions are open. The Bowes' program insists there are no professionals in uniform.

Whistlers, imitators, singers, musicians yodelers, etc., are among those high on the preferred list and even if a routine is not radio material—for instance, if a juggler, ventriloquist, acrobatic dancer, fire eater or magician—entertainers are urged to check in as acts such as these have equal chances of winning the several cash prizes.

OPERATIONAL REPORT

COMING:

Boyd, J. T. Y1/c (T) from NAS, Glenview, Ill.; Jackson, R. D. PhM1c from NAS, Glenview, Ill.; and Macy, W. F. PhM1c from RS, PSNY, Bremerton, Wash.

GOING:

Lt. H. P. Keebler to Comdr. Air Force, Atlantic Fleet, Norfolk, Va.; Lt. (jg) H. J. Grogan to Naval Air Station, Pasco, Wash.; Lt. F. D. Thompson to University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Ind.; Lt. J. O. Reynolds to Naval Air Station, Ottumwa, Iowa; and Lee Lennan, J. C. SM2c to Comdr. Fleet Air, Naval Air Station, Alameda, Calif., for further transfer to CASU.

CHANGE IN RATE:

Dewar, R. A. from SK1c (T) to SKD1c (T).

PROMOTIONS:

To Lieutenant, junior grade: Robert B. McLeary, Jr., and William W. Burchfel.

To Lieutenant:

Leroy M. Willson, and L. T. Blackburn.

New Discharge Emblem

Washington (CNS). — The Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard have authorized a new honorable discharge emblem which may be sewed on a serviceman's uniform as long as he is allowed to wear it.

New Cadet Regimental Staff



Members of the cadet regimental staff from the 62nd are pictured above. Left to right: Joseph Craigmile, Lafayette, Indiana, regimental commander; John Pearce, West Orange, N. J., regimental sub commander; Richard Lyon, Elmira Heights, N. Y., regimental adjutant, and Howard Comstock, Monroe, Michigan, regimental commissary officer.