

The North Carolina Shipbuilder

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THINK OF THESE MARINES

By HERBERT CLYDE LEWIS
(Condensed from This Week)

I was drinking a Daiquiri and debating whether to order the \$2 filet mignon or the \$1.75 sirloin steak when my eyes lit on that picture in the magazine.

Joe's Chophouse was crowded. My wife wasn't able to join me for dinner because she was shopping for a new coat, but I didn't mind dining alone at Joe's. In fact I had become one of Joe's steadiest customers. It was a pleasure merely to roll one of his Daiquiris around your tongue, or to eat one of his famous steaks.

Yes, it was a pleasure—until I saw that picture.

I picked up the magazine and looked at the picture. It showed six American Marines in a Jap concentration camp in Shanghai.

These men are Americans and most of them are not 30 years old, in spite of their prison-camp beards and mustaches. "Smile! Look happy!"—one can almost hear the Jap photographer hissing the commands. And this was their reply—those faces staring back proudly, defiantly.

Only now, these men seemed to be staring at me with eyes cynical and mocking as I lifted my glass and drained my drink.

Let me tell you about myself. There must be millions like me in the country. I'm in my thirties, married ten years, the father of two wonderful kids. I've got a pretty good job in a field that's probably vital to the winning of the war. I make a decent salary and live fairly well.

After Pearl Harbor, like most other family men, I started fighting the war on the home front. I bought War bonds, became a blood donor, joined the air-raid wardens, gave away my scrap and paid my taxes. My wife and I did all that, and more, pretty thoroughly.

At least, we did for a while.

But then, as the months dragged by, something happened to me, something that might be called patriotic dry rot. Slowly I began to lose my drive as a home-front fighter. Slowly I began to indulge myself beyond all reason in expensive food and other luxuries and a desperate sort of merriment.

I still can't explain it fully. Partly, I believe, it was the absence of any real feeling of accomplishment in my home-front work.

At any rate, the war began to seem remote — "something that was happening to two other guys." I gave up my civilian-defense activities. My War bond purchases lagged. I gossiped a lot about "Washington inefficiency" and "English stupidity," and once, to my utter disgrace, I bought five gallons of gas that I wasn't entitled to.

And now here I was at Joe's, with those bearded American prisoners of war staring at me. Suddenly I realized with an overwhelming sense of shame that I wasn't able to look any of them straight in the eye. I tried to, but I just couldn't.

Henry, the waiter, came over to my table and hovered expectantly, waiting for my order.

Suddenly, I didn't feel hungry. These boys will be lucky if they get some scraps of fish for their dinner tonight.

I got up and walked out of Joe's, after paying for my drinks.

AS OTHERS SEE US

The following editorial appeared in the Charlotte Observer January 25, 1943:

All North Carolina citizens have reason to take pride in the record being made at its chief seaport of Wilmington in the matter of building ships for use in the war, to transport equipment, food and other supplies to our armed forces abroad, and to our allies.

Launchings of new freight ships of 9,500 to 10,000 tons at the rate of two a week or better have been so commonplace at the Wilmington plant for months past that the individual event of the kind has lost its former news value and attracts but little general attention.

But the importance of what is being done by the North Carolina Shipbuilding Company can be the more appreciated when one considers the essential facts that 39 or 40 such vessels have been launched at Wilmington, that they are now being turned out at the rate of about one every three days, that the speed has excelled that of any other yard on the East or Gulf coast, that production is being stepped up, that about 15,000 people are employed at good wages, and many or most of them working ten hours a day.

It is of peculiar interest to the people of the State that the great Wilmington enterprise is headed by a North Carolina man.

The North Carolina Shipbuilding Company is a subsidiary or branch of the Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Company, whose president and board chairman is Homer L. Ferguson, born and reared at Waynesville, N. C., a member of the distinguished Ferguson family of Haywood county, of which Hon. Garland S. Ferguson, Jr., of the Federal Trade Commission is a member.

Editor's note: We have called the Charlotte Observer's attention to the fact that they were a bit conservative as to the number of ships launched at this time. The correct number of course being 61.

The Borrower

By Allan D. Farrar

Who is the fellow who never has a hammer?

The Borrower.

Who asks for your punch, with never a stammer?

The Borrower.

Who is always without soapstone or chalk?

The Borrower.

Who, to ask for your clamps would never balk?

The Borrower.

Who grants you a favor as your square he takes?

The Borrower.

Who demands your stencils as his work he fakes?

The Borrower.

Who grabs your dividers their points to blunt?

The Borrower.

Who must have your steel tape to do some stunt?

The Borrower.

And who is the fellow who lends to this chiseller?

The Borrower.

What I thought later is important because it snapped me out of my lethargy. I hope it does the same to you.

The war seemed awfully clear to me now. I had to get those boys out. That was my job, that was what I had to do.

"Brother," I found myself saying to these Marines, "It's only sheer luck that it's me, not you, going home to my nice warm house in the suburbs. Brother, I'm sorry I let you down, but it's going to be different from now on. I'll tighten my belt a few notches and do whatever I'm supposed to do. Maybe my part in the fight won't be as spectacular as yours or a lot of other people's, but I'll do it thoroughly and uncomplainingly. And anybody who tries to stop me is going to get smacked right in the nose. Brother, some day after we get you home, if I ever run into you I'm going to look you straight in the eye!"



This is interior view of the rationing office at our yard. The staff works under decisions made by members of the County rationing board. Shown at the window at left are Mrs. Frank O'Briant and Cline Warner. At the other window, looking out, is E. L. White of the New Hanover board. Seated at the typewriter is Miss Mary Lib Houston, Mrs. Irma James seated in center, Mrs. Leewanna Ransom bending over the desk, and at extreme right Mrs. Sunny Pinkham. H. A. Marks, who with Mr. White also comes from the county board daily to make rationing decisions, has been most helpful. He was not here when the photograph was made.

Co-Operation Speeds Work Of Rationing For Employees

Don't Risk Danger

Fine cooperation between our yard and the New Hanover rationing board has resulted in speeding the issuance of ration books to employees.

Members of the county board have been most helpful, making all decisions, and the shipyard staff of the board has worked with one end in view—to serve the interests of conservation and at the same time to prevent loss of man hours.

It was decided last July to set up a staff of employees here in order that the employees would not have to lose valuable time crowding the offices of the board in Wilmington, and, guided and assisted by the board, especially by E. L. White and H. A. Marks of the board, the rationing was expedited.

It started with issuance of "A" gasoline cards. Then came "B" and "C" supplementary cards where justified. Later, there was added fuel oil, tires, bicycles, etc.

Mr. White and Mr. Marks spend a while each day in offices in the yard's administration building, supervising the work done by the yard's rationing staff. As a result of their help the proper distribution of rationed articles has been greatly expedited.

Some extent of the work done may be seen from the following figures:

Total issuance since July 9, 1942, to Feb. 1, 1943..... 25,361

The itemized detail breakdown of the figures is as follows:

Gasoline ration books issued.....	15,364
Tire certificates issued.....	4,828
Bicycle certificates issued.....	112
Fuel coupons issued.....	5,057

There is, of course, no expense for the county attached to this. It was organized solely to save time, so that men would not lose it from work by having to go to Wilmington and help swell the crowds already there.

The yard rationing committee is composed of P. F. Halsey, chairman; Aldrich Barton, J. A. Maclay, with O. M. Richardson secretary.

Harry E. Payne is chief clerk of the Rationing Office.

STEEL AND SHIPS

Each Liberty ship requires 3,425 tons of steel. There are 2,725 tons of plates and 700 tons of shapers. Tankers and the larger C-type vessels use more steel, approximately 600 to 1,600 additional tons, depending upon the type.

CORRECTION

The following letter has been received relative to the leading article in the January 1 issue of the "North Carolina Shipbuilder":

"Mr. S. P. Ware, Secretary.

"I wish to get into the record a correction of an inaccuracy wherein the statement is made that numerous improvements had been made in the plant, including completion of the new North yard.

"The Fabricating Shops which are a part of the North Yard are nowhere near completion, and we have felt practically no benefit from these shops, rather so far, a hindrance because of the division of the shipped forces, which hindrance will be continuing for some months, until the moving of the machines is completed.

"J. A. MACLAY, Superintendent Hull Construction."

NOTE: We are glad to publish this letter of correction and to know that our paper is read so carefully by the Hull Superintendent.

Buy War Bonds—Ten per cent every payday.



Who is he? Maybe he is you. If you recognize this drawing as yourself, come to the editor's office in the Administration building and if you are the subject of the drawing you will be presented the original drawing.