

NAVAL OPERATIONS DURING THE WAR Report of the Chief of the Navigation Bureau.

THE MILITIA OF THE SEAS Many of the Reserves Not Vested With Necessary Experience.

Commodore Crowninshield Recommends That Congress Authorize Enrollment of 20,000 Men.

Commodore Crowninshield, chief of the bureau of navigation, has transmitted his annual report to the Secretary of the Navy. The report includes a detailed account of the movements and duties of the ships of the American navy during the year, the reports of the superintending officers of the Naval Academy, the commanding officers of the naval training station, the chief intelligence officer, the commanding officer of the naval home, and of the superintendent of the Coast Signal Service.

The appendix to the report of Commodore Crowninshield contains a list of documents relating to the conduct of the war with Spain. The report for the year has been made more comprehensive than usual and has been carried up to date in order to make available important information relating to the war.

Commodore Crowninshield in part says: "The bureau's method of conducting the war has proved itself to be satisfactory and adequate to the greatly-increased demands made upon them as a result of the disaster to the Maine and the war with Spain.

"Fifty-eight thousand seven hundred and fifty-six numbers were given to documents received in the bureau or sent out from it during the thirteen months ending July 31, 1893. This number probably represents about 1,000,000 papers. The increase during the war period was 100 per cent. The number of papers sent out to the various departments of the government was 1,000,000. The number of papers sent out to the various departments of the government was 1,000,000.

"The property handled in the increased volume of work, most of it of an original character, requiring much more thought and attention than the ordinary routine work of the bureau, the force of officers and clerks had to be increased, but methods were changed little throughout the active period of the war, and until the middle of August one or more officers were on duty both night and day, and a large part of the force worked habitually well into the night. Most of the clerks, both of the original and increased force, performed their duties admirably and with conscientious devotion. In certain cases their untiring labors meant the highest commendation, and it will be a pleasure to the bureau to suitably reward them as opportunity offers.

"One hundred and twenty-nine applications for naval positions were received during the fiscal year ending July 1, 1893. One hundred and ten claims were allowed and twenty-six claims were disallowed during the same period.

"The statistics of the fiscal year in regard to enlistments, discharges and citizenship of apprentices and general service men, including petty officers, show the total number of men enlisted in the general service to be 20,822, and the total number of apprentices to be 2,026. Of this number 3,229 were serving under continuous enlistment. There were 21,848 discharges during the year 3,229 men and 206 apprentices. Of the number of men in the general service there are 4,425 petty officers. Of this number 22 per cent are active born, and 38 per cent are citizens of the United States, and of the remainder 52 per cent have declared their intention to become citizens. Of the 2,026 apprentices in the service, 90 per cent are native born, and 7 per cent are citizens of the United States. Of the remainder 52 per cent have declared their intention to become citizens.

"The war between the United States and the Kingdom of Spain began on April 21, 1898. On that date three lieutenants and one lieutenant junior grade were given acting appointments to continue in force during the continuance of the war. The various corps and grades from day to day, as the exigencies of the service required. Up to the date of the cessation of hostilities, 1,456 appointments of officers for temporary service were issued. One hundred and ninety-four candidates who passed the required examination were not appointed by reason of their services not being required. Their names remain on the eligible lists.

"The Office of Naval Intelligence. Estimates are submitted for the maintenance of the office of naval intelligence. This office has for some years performed duties of great importance. It collects and classifies practically all important authoritative information relating to the growth and progress of foreign navies and of the material and personnel. It also keeps informed of the changes of foreign ports. At the beginning of the war with Spain it furnished the department with much valuable and accurate information in regard to the Philippines, Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, as well as with accurate information as to the location of all the strong points and fortifications.

"The Bureau has already brought to the attention of the department the need for a change in legislation in regard to promotions of officers on account of gallantry in action or extraordinary heroism. The law as it now stands provides a reward which can only be given at the discretion of the department. It is certain that the Congress be requested to enact legislation which will provide a suitable reward. It is proposed that the award should be given to an officer without waiting the detriment of others, who, while they may have had no opportunity to distinguish themselves in any particular, have performed faithful and valuable service, and should not be compelled to lose rank and pay by becoming stepping-stones for others.

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of the Spanish fleet. All information of the character indicated is kept filed in such a manner that information on any required subject can be immediately put at the disposal of any bureau requiring it. This office through the naval attaches also did valuable duty in arranging the purchase of ships of war and war material abroad, just before the outbreak of the war.

Need for More Sailors. The bureau recommends that Congress be requested to authorize the enlistment of 20,000 men for general service and 2,000 apprentices. It is not possible to make a close estimate of the number of men that will be necessary to man the fleet during the coming year, but it is certain that within a very few years it will reach 20,000. It has always been the policy of the bureau to stop enlistments when the cruising ships were full and there were a few men on board on the receiving ships to make up waste and allow for prompt transfers without interfering with the organization of the cruising ships.

For the year, however, the bureau has had a constant struggle to maintain the established quota sufficient for the needs of the service. The crews have been cut down to the point where the loss of a few men would seriously cripple the fleet. The reserve on board receiving ships has practically ceased to exist, so that now when a vacancy occurs it has to be filled by transfer from some other cruising ship, thereby breaking up the organization of the latter and being a serious detriment to her efficiency.

Work of the Volunteers. The officers who served under volunteer appointments during the war have rendered valuable service to the navy and to the country. It has at all times, however, been necessary, with exceptions in rare cases, to consider the limited amount of experience in each particular case, and the volunteer officer has not been and cannot be the equal in professional attainments of his brother of the regular army. The navy, as amply shown by the experience of the war, can only obtain officers trained in every branch of naval duty and equally well equipped with the necessary training in the Naval Academy and following the training up through the various grades.

The Naval Militia of the various States was organized into the service about the time of the beginning of the war. These organizations were of great help to the department in manning the coast signal stations, in manning the vessels of the auxiliary naval force, and in promptly furnishing material for crews of the auxiliary vessels serving with the regular fleet. For duty on board active ships, however, they could not be considered as more than material. With some individual exceptions, no personnel was found to lack the experience and training which would have been necessary for the performance of the duties of the ratings held.

In the ordinary course most of these would have been enlisted as landmen and nothing higher. Men holding the ordinary blue-jacket ratings were, moreover, professional men, while they might have been able to camp on shore and look out for themselves and their surroundings, found it a much different matter on board of a ship, where they would have to have a thorough understanding of how to make the best of everything which would make their position bearable. These men were landmen, and they were not given the general or particular sense of the word. All, as was expected, had to be put through a thorough course of drill, even the officers, with exceptions—principally Naval Academy graduates—were found to be unequal to the task of instructors.

"The bureau does not wish to be understood as underrating the zeal of the members of these organizations. The reports made by commanding officers show, all without exception, that all were zealous and attentive to duty, but they also show that officers and men lacked all of that training and sea experience which would have made them really efficient. The bureau wishes further to emphasize that the work of the Naval Militia at the signal stations—duty for which they were better adapted—was most satisfactorily performed, and that they likewise were useful in manning the harbor-defense vessels of the auxiliary naval force, where they were within easy reach of the shore with all its facilities, and were not subject to the privations which are a matter of course on board a man-of-war.

"A difficulty was experienced, too, in mustering these men in. The Government has for some years made a liberal appropriation for the support of the Naval Militia in addition to the amounts allowed by the States. This expenditure does not, however, carry with it the right to call upon the naval militia unless they volunteer. They are in no way subject to the orders of the Department until they have come to be Naval Militia and have been properly mustered into the service. This same difficulty has been experienced in peace times. The period of the annual drills has uniformly been a period of the most vexatious rearrangements of the program for the ships assigned to this duty.

A Federal Naval Service Wanted. The foregoing considerations lead the bureau to recommend that future appropriations shall be made on an entirely different basis. The best plan of all, in the opinion of the bureau, would be to provide only for a national or Federal naval reserve, to be entirely under the control of the Department, and to be recruited from the seafaring classes, each member enrolled being subject to a limited enlistment, which would compel him to remain in the service during the pains and penalties of desertion, and which would require him to report once in each year to the proper authority for instruction in such drills and other matters as the department might prescribe, each man so enrolled to receive one month's pay in his rating, already provided he renders such service.

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The Spanish guns and gunners were ineffective, our guns and gunners were so effective that before the range was or could be reduced the Spanish ships were either seriously crippled or their crews demoralized.

"The experience of the war has been another demonstration of the importance to the nation of a sea power. The bureau will be pardoned this reference to a somewhat trite lesson when its importance is considered. It will, I think, be admitted that from the only apprehension in this country was an account of the Spanish navy. It was Cervantes's fleet that was feared. We did not fear the Spanish navy, as we have feared it if it had been three times as powerful, unless it had been supported by a navy powerful enough to form an efficient convoy and bring it to our coast.

On the contrary, the Spanish navy, even without any Spanish army, would have been a menace, though it had consisted of but one well-equipped cruiser. Until that cruiser had been destroyed, or destroyed, or our coast and all of our sea-borne commerce would have been at its mercy, and no army, however efficient, could have protected us from its depredations for this work, and an effective navy.

Transporting and Loading Troops. "This subject brings me to the question of those operations in which the navy and army are called upon to co-operate. Happily, all points of difference which came up between the naval and military commanders in the late campaign were in the end solved satisfactorily by victory. Some of them were of no military importance. One glaring defect in the system for joint operations was found, however, in the matter of transporting and conveying troops. There can be no question that all this part of the campaign would have been more smoothly handled had the navy been given a thorough understanding of how to make the best of everything which would make their position bearable. These men were landmen, and they were not given the general or particular sense of the word. All, as was expected, had to be put through a thorough course of drill, even the officers, with exceptions—principally Naval Academy graduates—were found to be unequal to the task of instructors.

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