

Extra copy

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WHAT CAN WE BELIEVE?

No one has thought of questioning the quantity of information emanating from Washington in the past few years. However, many people complain about the quality of that information. When we realize that every Department and Bureau has a press section consisting of many publicity men, we can easily see why the quantity holds up. Tons of printed matter pour out of Washington every month. United States citizens may not be fully informed of the War situation in the Pacific, but they still can learn from the Department of Interior's Fish and Wild-life Service how to cook planked shad.

As an example, the biggest of all, is the Department of Agriculture Press Division: 711 full time and 20,543 part-time employees who cost the United States taxpayers last year \$11,887,000.00 for salaries and printed matter.

Added to the press sections of the regular Departments and Agencies are whole groups of new ones in the Office of Emergency Management. To name a few of the other new sections we have, the Office of Censorship, the Office of Government Reports, the Office of Government Films, the Office of Coordinator of Information, the Office of Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, the White House Executive Office, the Office of Civilian Defense and finally the Army and Navy Press Sections.

John D. Capron

In spite of this huge publicity personnel or possibly because of it, a great deal of erroneous or misleading information is published. A classic example where the press section itself was at fault, was the release some months ago of the story of arrows pointing to important military installations supposedly placed by saboteurs.

When this story was finally traced to its source, it was found to have originated in the brain of an officer in the Army Press Section. As a result of this story, a large number of officers were transferred from a soft publicity job to active service.

Often times erroneous information is released because the author of the statement is so high up in the Government that any statement he makes is news. Many of you undoubtedly remember that just a few days before Gas Rationing was put into effect in the East, Harold Ickes, Oil Coordinator, laughed at the idea that we would have as little as five gallons a week.

It is possible that no shortage has had the careful attention the people have accorded the rubber problem. Just about the time that the various Bureaus had convinced Americans that they would have to get along without tires, the President, in his Press Conference, stated that things looked brighter and he expected to see "tires for civilians in the near future". It took weeks to re-establish the desired feeling of self-sacrifice among car users.

Some times erroneous information is published by some department due to the desire to carry out their assignment successfully. Instructions to American housewives as to

how to prepare tin cans for salvage caused many a headache to local salvage committees. The mistake in this case was that the news broke too soon, before methods of reclaiming the cans were worked up.

Exactly the same situation occurred in the effort to collect household fats. There is no commodity more badly needed for the War Effort, but methods of collecting the fat should have been worked out before instructions as to how it was to be saved were issued.

Without question more contradictory information has been published about the draft than any other single feature of the Government setup. This is easily understandable when we realize that up to the present time Washington has issued no definite instructions to the state or local offices. Every local board, at the present time, is a law unto itself, and in many communities their rulings are in direct opposition to the stated policies of the National Selective Service System.

As an example of the difference in policy nationally and locally, our Company was recently instructed by the National Board to immediately request deferment of such of our employees as were essential to the War Effort. The Local Draft Board would not give us the necessary blanks. When we so advised Washington, they sent us the blanks immediately, but without comment as to the local situation.

With these facts before us it is easy to see why the information regarding when married men with dependents will be called or whether deferment will be permitted for

essential war workers varies with the locality. It is well to bear in mind, too, that the formal release from the National Selective Service System cannot be relied upon to inform you as to the situation in any specific locality.

However, it is not in these fields that the dissemination of erroneous and misleading information may be serious. Most Americans feel that they should have all information which will not give aid and comfort to the enemy with regard to the activities of our Army and our Navy. This phase of the War effort has been handled very badly up to the present time. It is my belief that no government has ever judged more erroneously the temper of its people and their ability to stand bad news than our present Government in this war. It has even been suggested that the outcome of the recent election may, in part, be the result of the resentment of the American people against a censorship which does not allow the nation to know, within the realms of reason, how the War is going. Seventeen candidates listed as one cause of their defeat, "mistrust of Government War news".

Although the excuse always given for misleading information is that the truth would give aid to the enemy, it really appears that it is the result of the ingrained secrecy of the Armed Forces.

It will be a long time before the people forget how the story of the Tokyo Raid was handled. Jimmy Doolittle's statement, undoubtedly under instructions from the War Department, that, "All planes reached their objectives and returned to their base" was certainly not necessary.

The mere statement that the Raid was successfully carried out should have been enough, and certainly would not have inspired Japan to search for grounded fliers. As the story was handled, the American people learned of the capture of some of our fliers from official Japanese propaganda.

Since the start of the War, the Japanese releases have been much more accurate than our own. Let us consider the various naval battles which have taken place.

Immediately after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, our Navy announced the loss of 1 battleship and 1 destroyer. The Japanese claimed the destruction of 3 battleships and 4 cruisers. Two weeks later we announced that the following ships had been destroyed:

- 1 battleship - Arizona
- 1 obsolete battleship - Utah
- 3 destroyers - Shaw, Cassin, Downes
- 1 oiler - Oglala

As it would have been impossible for the Japanese to mistake destroyers for cruisers, it is quite probable that there was an error in translating their broadcast on this subject, and that they referred to the loss of 4 destroyers. On this basis the Japanese report was very accurate.

It is interesting to note that on March 2, 1942, the President, in his broadcast, stated that only 3 combatant ships were lost at Pearl Harbor. This announcement was hard to understand until we learned, two weeks later, that the destroyer Shaw, which had had its bow completely shot off, had been repaired and was again in service.

In the battle of the Java Sea which started on January 23, 1942, we at first claimed that no U. S. Warships had been sunk. Almost a month later, when the score for the Allied Fleet was given, it was implied that 2 of the cruisers lost were American. At that time the Japanese claimed the sinking of 11 Allied warships.

The actual loss in Allied warships in these engagements was as follows:

U. S. ships sunk:	Aircraft Tender - Langley
	Cruiser - Houston
	Destroyer - Pope
British ships sunk:	Cruiser - Exeter
	Destroyers - Encounter, Stronghold, Jupiter, and Electra.
Dutch ships sunk:	Cruisers - Java and DeRuyter
	Destroyers - Kortenaer and Evertsen
Australian ships sunk:	Cruiser - Perth
	Sloop - Yarra

It is easy to see that the Japanese were very conservative in their claims in this battle. Our Navy Department did not release the information on the sinking of the Aircraft Tender Langley until a month after it had been received from Toyko.

Japan never made any official admission as to their losses in this battle. The Allies claimed the sinking of 1 aircraft carrier, 2 cruisers and 2 destroyers.

The raid on the Marshall Islands made February 1, 1942, was such a successful foray for the U.S. Fleet that their first announcement, made 3 weeks later, was apparently complete and accurate. The Navy Department claimed no losses for our

fleet and the sinking of 1 Japanese aircraft carrier as well as 1 cruiser and 1 destroyer.

After the battle of the Coral Sea May 4 to 9, the Japanese claimed that they had sunk 2 aircraft carriers and 1 battleship. General McArthur himself said that the Japanese claims were "fantastic". However, he was only partially accurate. Exactly one month later the Navy Department announced the sinking of the aircraft carrier Lexington in this battle. However, it is well to note that as the size of the Japanese fleet dwindled, the size of their claims increased.

The battle of Midway from June 4 to 6 was, without doubt, a great victory for the American Forces; and for the first time, I was unable to find any statement by the Japanese as to our losses. Actually we had the following ships sunk:

Aircraft carrier - Yorktown

Destroyer - Hammann

The Navy Department did not immediately release any statement on the sinking of the Yorktown but held it up over three months after the battle took place.

For comparison we might add that the Japanese losses in this battle, all of which had been fully authenticated, consisted of 4 aircraft carriers, 2 cruisers, and 3 destroyers as well as serious damage to 3 battleships, 1 cruiser and 3 destroyers.

In the battle for the Solomon Islands which started on August 7 and is still continuing, we find the first evidence of accurate reporting on the part of the U. S. Navy and gross exaggeration on the part of Japan. Ten days after the battle started, the Japanese claimed that they had sunk 1 battleship and 21 other combatant ships. It is probable that our losses

during the entire engagement did not exceed 19 combatant ships of which none were battleships.

It is only in the case of the disaster at Savo, a part of this battle, that our Navy Department failed to report promptly what was happening. You may recall that on the night of August 9th, 4 Allied cruisers were surprised and sunk by the Japanese. The Australians announced the loss of their cruiser Canberra within a week. However, it was exactly 3 months later that the Navy admitted our loss.

The handling of War news became so unsatisfactory that in June of 1942 the President created the Office of War Information and abolished the Office of Facts and Figures, the Office of Government Reports, the division of information of the Office of Emergency Management, and the Office of the Coordinator of Information. The man he appointed as head of this Bureau was Elmer Davis. Mr. Davis had the confidence of everyone, if he could only get the cooperation of the Army and Navy the job would be well done.

During the first month in office little was accomplished beyond establishing a set of rules.

1. Each Government agency was to continue to issue its own releases that did not pertain to the War. However, all news bearing on the War Effort was to be cleared through the Office of War Information.
2. The Army and Navy were to have the final say as to what news was to be released about the Armed Services.
3. The Office of War Information undertook to coordinate reports of Government projects relating to the War for radio broadcasts, motion pictures, posters, advertising, etc.

4. The Office of War Information was to have complete charge of the official news sent overseas except the news to Central and South America.

The first comprehensive evidence that Mr. Davis could help the American people to know the truth came in his report on Aircraft issued this Fall. For months a controversy had been raging as to whether American planes were inferior to those of our enemy. This argument had begun to affect the personnel of our Air Forces. Mr. Davis' frank evaluation settled the question almost overnight. He told in what ways certain of our planes were not as good as certain of our enemy planes, but he showed how our weaker planes were used against the weaker ones of our enemy. No controversy was ever dropped more quickly.

However, the Navy, and to a lesser degree, the Army continued to suppress unfavorable news. In "Time Magazine" for November 9, 1942, appeared the following summary of the situation:

"Once, after a hard fight for a sensible, democratic censorship, newsmen had been reassured by the appointment of Byron Price as head of the Office of Censorship. When able Elmer Davis took over as head of OWI last summer, with executive powers straight from the President, newsmen believed that the military news jam would be dynamited. Yet within the last weeks have come some of the war's worst examples of inept, demoralizing suppression of war news."

"Few Washington correspondents blame Elmer Davis for his failure to prevent news suppression. He has tried

hard, against tough opponents, to relax what he politely calls 'the ingrained habitual reticence of the services.' That he has not gotten further is not for lack of a liberal charter: The President himself had long since declared that censorship must be 'in harmony with the best interests of our free institutions.' Newsmen recalled that George Creel, in World War I, had found himself up against like reticence in Army & Navy. He won out only partly because of his own forcefulness; more important, Creel was able to thaw out military news because he got the unequivocal backing of Woodrow Wilson.

"Newsmen implicitly accept the need for a wartime censorship but do not like the notion that a tighter censorship is justified by military defeats. Victories have never created censorship trouble. The test of a sound censorship is how it copes with bad news."

It was about this time that Mr. Davis stated that, "all sinkings of major U. S. Naval vessels have been announced". He stated at that time that the guiding principle of the Office of War Information was, "That the American people have a right to know everything that is known to the enemy, or that would not give him aid if he found out."

It was very unfortunate that the next day the Navy announced the sinking of an unidentified carrier some days before. It is barely possible that the information had not been received in Washington when Mr. Davis spoke. In any event no one questions the accuracy of the facts as far as he knew them.

Whether it is because our War Effort is now more successful or for some other reason, a careful check leads me

to make the same statement now that Mr. Davis made two months ago--the American people know the extent of our Naval losses todate. Let's see how they change the balance of Naval power.

The figures for December 7, 1942, are the most accurate available, and are those used by our Navy in their estimates of relative power. Only fully authenticated sinkings have been considered.

	<u>Commissioned</u>		<u>In Service</u>
	<u>12-7-41</u>	<u>Reported lost</u>	<u>1-16-43</u>
<u>Battleships:</u>			
United States	17	1	16
Japan	12	2	10
<u>Aircraft Carriers:</u>			
United States	7	4	3
Japan	8	6	2
<u>Cruisers:</u>			
United States	37	7	30
Japan	46	38	8
<u>Destroyers:</u>			
United States	172	23	149
Japan	125	58	67
<u>Submarines:</u>			
United States	113	5	108
Japan	71	29	42

In looking at the resulting figures it is well to bear in mind several factors. First, we have not considered damage to ships. Owing to the location of the battle fronts far from our bases, minor damage to one of our ships is more serious than minor damage to a Japanese vessel.

To offset this, serious damage to Japanese ships is almost equivalent to a sinking. They are so short on steel, particularly armor plate, that the use of material for repairs must delay new construction.

Our naval force is used in the Atlantic as well as in the Pacific. However, we can assume that all our aircraft carriers and most of our Battleships are in the Pacific. Lighter warships, cruisers, destroyers and submarines are in both Oceans. Convoy duty in the Atlantic is a vital job in this total war.

In the above discussion we have considered only the ships known to have been in service on December 7, 1941. To have a correct comparison in naval strength, we must take into consideration the ships commissioned since that time as well as such information as is available on secret construction in Japan prior to Pearl Harbor. One authority states that every ship launched in Japan in 1940 and 1941 had a twin ship launched the same day. The idea being that the news of the launching of a warship could not be suppressed, but that dual launchings were not usual and could be denied.

"Janes Fighting Ships" for 1941 makes the following statement in this connection:

"Information on Japan is certainly of a less definite character than could be desired". "The actual number of capital ships under construction is still somewhat doubtful."

It would appear that Japan had only 12 battleships at the start of the war. Two of these were modern and fast enough for offensive action as an escort for aircraft carriers.

It is probable that another fast Battleship was completed in 1942. However, Japan's peak rate of Battleship construction is one a year, and this rate would be seriously reduced if much repair work on damaged ships were necessary.

In the Battle of the Coral Sea our Navy encountered two aircraft carriers whose existence had never been admitted. One of these was reported as of the Shoho class. There is little information regarding these ships and they may be converted luxury liners. To be conservative we should add to the list of older Japanese flat-tops still afloat two Ryukakus and two or three Shohos.

Japan has used her cruisers to furnish most of the fire power for the war in the Pacific. As a result the losses have been high. Crediting all possible construction and considering her exceptional repair facilities, it is doubtful if she has been able to maintain her maximum strength at 25 cruisers.

The construction of a destroyer is not a major problem. However, the best estimate available gives Japan 85 warships of this type.

The list of United States Warships as of December 7, 1941 was known not only to our citizens but also to Japan. Although lists of newly commissioned ships are no longer available, careful study of the official news releases for the last 13 months gives a fairly complete picture.

During 1942 three large Battleships were added to our fleet. These were the South Dakota, Indiana and Massachusetts. The Alabama will be commissioned by early summer. All these

ships are of the Washington Class and have a standard displacement of 35,000 tons. These are to be followed by 6 huge Battleships of the Iowa Class (45,000 tons) to be completed in two years. And twelve additional Battleships are under construction.

In Aircraft carriers the program has been slower. Although some converted merchantmen have been added to our badly depleted line, no real "flat-top" will be available until April of this year. Then the picture should change rapidly. In the next eighteen months 11 carriers of the Essex Class (25,000 tons) and 10 converted light cruisers (10,000 tons) will be commissioned.

Our Cruiser program is the heaviest ever undertaken by any nation. All we know of the construction todate is that 6 modern cruisers have been completed during 1942. This figure is obviously too conservative.

The Destroyer program contemplated an output of 243 craft during 1942 and 1943. These useful ships are now being put in service at the rate of at least three a week.

Let us consider how the above factors change the overall picture. It is my opinion that as of today the United States and the Japanese fleets stand about as follows:

	<u>Battleships</u>	<u>Aircraft carriers</u>	<u>Cruisers</u>	<u>Destroyers</u>	<u>Submarines</u>
U. S.	19	3	36	200 plus	140 plus
Japan	11	7	25	80	70

On December 7, 1942, the Secretary of Navy, Knox, made the following statements:

"The enemy's 'maritime strength', has been cut in one year of war 'to a few thousand tons short of desperately impairing Nippon's extended lines of communication and supply'."

"Our own shipyards are launching naval vessels at a constantly accelerated rate, which has already provided us today with a far larger, harderhitting and faster fleet than we had on December 7, 1941."

This we can believe.

Warships Sunk - Present War

10-31-41 to 1-16-43

<u>Battleships</u>	<u>Tonnage</u>	<u>When</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>Reported</u>
Arizona	32,600	12-7-41	Pearl Harbor	12-22-41
<u>Aircraft Carriers</u>				
Lexington	33,000	5-5-42	Coral Sea	6-12-42
Yorktown	19,900	6-7-42	Midway	9-16-42
Wasp	14,700	9-15-42	Solomons	10-26-42
Hornet	20,000	10-26-42	Solomons	10-31-42
<u>Cruisers</u>				
Houston	9,050	March	Off Java	3-14-42
Unidentified				
Astoria	9,950	8-9-42	Solomons	10-12-42
Quincey	9,400	8-9-42	Solomons	10-12-42
Vincennes	9,375	8-9-42	Solomons	10-12-42
Atlanta	6,000	11-13-42	Solomons	11-17-42
Juneau	6,000	11-13-42	Solomons	11-17-42
Northampton	9,050	11-30-42	Solomons	12-4-42
<u>Destroyers</u>				
Reuben James	1,190	10-31-41	Atlantic	
Unidentified (Shaw)	1,500	12-7-41	Pearl Harbor	12-22-41
Cassin	1,500	12-7-41	Pearl Harbor	12-22-41
Downes	1,500	12-7-41	Pearl Harbor	12-22-41
Peary	1,190	2-19-42	At Darwin	4-3-42
Jacob Jones	1,090	2-28-42	Atlantic	3-3-42
Pope	1,190	3-9-42	Off Java	3-14-42
Stewart	1,190	3-2-42	Surabaya Before	3-15-42
Edsall	1,190	March	Off Java "	3-15-42
Pillsbury	1,190	March	Off Java "	3-15-42
Sturtevant	1,190			
Sims	1,570			
Hamman	1,570	6-6-42	Midway	6-14-42
Blue	1,500	After	South Pacific	9-5-42
		8-22-42		
Jarvis	1,500	8-9-42	Solomons	
O'Brien	1,570	About	Solomons	10-22-42
		10-19-42		
Meridith	1,630	About	Solomons	10-22-42
		10-19-42		
Porter	1,850	10-26-42	Solomons	10-26-42
Duncan		10-12-42	Solomons	11-10-42
Monessen	1,630	11-13-42	Solomons	11-17-42
Cushing	1,465	11-13-42	Solomons	11-17-42
Benham	1,500	11-13-42	Solomons	11-17-42
Preston	1,480	11-13-42	Solomons	11-17-42
Walke	1,750	11-13-42	Solomons	11-17-42
Barton	1,700	11-13-42	Solomons	11-17-42
Laffey	1,700	11-15-42	Solomons	11-22-42

<u>Auxiliary Craft</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>When</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>Reported</u>
S-26	Submarine	1-24-42	Collision Off Panama	2-7-42
Shark	Submarine		Missing	3-18-42
Sealion	Submarine	March	Cavite	Before 3-15-42
Perch	Submarine			
Grunion	Submarine			
Utah	Target Ship	12-7-41	Pearl Harbor	12-22-41
Penguin	Minesweeper	12-8-41	Guam	Before 3-15-42
Bittern	Minesweeper	4-9-42	Batan	Before 5-1-42
Finch	Minesweeper			
Pigeon	Minesweeper			
Quail	Minesweeper			
Tanager	Minesweeper			
Ogala	Minelayer	12-7-41	Pearl Harbor	12-22-41
Calhoun	Transport	After 8-22-42	South Pacific	9-5-42
Little Coolidge	Transport Transport	8-9-42	Solomons South Pacific	12-12-42
Liberty	Freighter			
Meigs	Freighter			
Geo F. Elliott	Freighter			
Gregory	Freighter			
Neches	Oiler			2-3-42
Pecos	Oiler	3-1-42	Off Java	4-3-42
Neosho	Oiler			
Acacia	Coast G. Cutter	March		Before 3-15-42
Alexander Hamilton	"	February	Off Iceland	2-23-42
Muskeget	"			10-9-42
Langley	Tender (Aircraft)	2-27-42	Off Java	4-3-42
Asheville	Gunboat	In March	Off Java	3-21-42
Mindanao	Gunboat			
Wake	Gunboat	12-7-42	At Shanghai	12-15-42
Oahu	Gunboat			
Luzon	Gunboat			
Unidentified	Torpedo Boat			
PT-35	"			
Q-1	"			
Q-111	"			
Q-LV	"			
QV	"			
Conopus	Sub. Tender	4-9-42	Batan	Before 5-1-42

<u>Auxiliary Craft</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>When</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>Reported</u>
Napa	Tug	4-9-42	Batan Before	5-1-42
Gannet	Tug			
Seminole	Tug	10-25-42	Solomons	10-27-42
Cythera	Patrol Boat			
YP-389	Patrol Boat			