



# Mutiny?

**The real story of how the Navy branded  
50 fear-shocked sailors as mutineers**

martial board of 7 high-ranking naval officers, of "making a mutiny" because they were afraid to go back to loading ammunition three weeks after they had seen those bits of charred flesh rain down on them from the sky.

They were prosecuted by a naval officer, Lt. Commdr. James Frank Coakley, formerly chief assistant district attorney of Alameda County, Calif., who was, unknown to the defense or the public, the brother-in-law of one of the two white officers involved in the case — who, in his final vitriolic plea for a conviction, shouted, "Any man who is so depraved as to be afraid to load ammunition deserves no leniency!"

They can still remember the flare of hope they felt when they entered the job that was to be for them, as it has been for millions of young Americans, a testing ground of their valor, their courage, their willingness to fight and die to rid the world of fascism.

They were tried at the largest mass trial in Navy history — with photographs and publicity issued by the Navy — the first naval mutiny court-martial of this war.

The trial lasted six weeks in an atmosphere of what the Navy piously calls "complete impartiality." But, behind and underlying this fair front are bias, bigotry and bungling. The record of the court-martial of these 50 young men contains not one word of the most important issues of the case. It contains not one hint that while these 50 bewildered youngsters sat for six weeks in a courtroom as the "accused," the real offender was the "accuser" — the Navy.

These 50 young men are Negro sailors.

Why is that so important, you ask.

The answer is simple. It's true there are two kinds of sailors in the United States Navy — sailors, and Negro sailors. It's that the policy of the United States Navy is to segregate Negroes, to keep them isolated, and with few exceptions, not to send them to sea except as messmen, and to give them, regardless of their training or capabilities, every kind of dirty, heart-breaking shore duty that can be found.

It's that any trials of any Negro for any offense in the Navy cannot make any pretension to justice if the Navy's policy of racial discrimination and its effect upon the Negro sailor are not made a part of the record of the case.

Who are these "depraved men" on trial as Lt. Commdr. Coakley called them?

Well, there's John H. Dunn, seaman second class.

That's a pretty impressive name for a 17-year old, 104-pound kid, isn't it?

"Guilty of mutiny" is a pretty impressive verdict to find against a 17-year-old, too.

Dunn is slender and small and he has an appealing kid's grin that reminds you of your little brother or the kid next door. You should have seen his face on October 24 when we was found guilty! It would have strengthened your faith in the United States Navy. No depraved mutineer like Dunn is going to get away with taking over the Navy. Not while Lt. Commdr. Coakley and the 12th Naval District are around!

Then there's Martin Bordenave who was injured in the explosion. He's even more depraved than Dunn. Bordenave is 18 and he's been in the Navy since he enlisted at the age of 16. He's a really tough character. He must weigh 125 pounds and he's at least 5 feet 5 inches tall.

Another of these dangerous degenerate men is C. N. Hazzard. He's 21 and on his arm he wears the insignia of a chaplain's assistant. His voice is soft as he tells of "picking up bodies" at Port Chicago. You can feel safer now that Hazzard is going to spend a long time in a federal penitentiary.

Charles S. Widemon is 19 years old. He enlisted when he was 17. He was at Port Chicago for two years and had asked for a transfer to sea duty at least six times. During the trial Prosecutor Coakley made a great point of the fact that Widemon is alleged to have called out to a commissioned officer, "Do you think this is what I enlisted for?" According to Coakley, that was the last word in arrogance. It proved that Widemon was a degenerate mutineer — insolent — demanding!

"Do you think this is what I enlisted for?"

Well, was it? Was two years of laborer's work what the 17-year-old boy had enlisted for? Maybe so. Maybe he should have known better than to expect to be treated like an American sailor. What did he think the Navy was — democracy? Off to federal penitentiary with him. He's a dangerous man.

## FOREWORD

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*The present status of the case described in this pamphlet is that the trial record and briefs are being reviewed by the Judge Advocate General of the United States Navy in Washington. His decision will be reviewed by Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal.*

*Ten of the men were sentenced to 15 years in prison; 11 to 10 years; 24 to 12 years; and 5 to 8 years.*

*Civilian counsel for the sailors on their appeal is Thurgood Marshall, chief counsel for the NAACP. Mr. Marshall filed a brief in behalf of all fifty men at the written request of the sailors themselves.*

*Mr. Marshall, who attended the trial at Yuerba Buena Island in San Francisco bay for twelve days in October, 1944, stated at that time: "These men are being tried for mutiny solely because of their race and color."*

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*Cover is Official U. S. Navy photograph and shows sailors handling  
1.1 shell cans on a conveyer.*

# Mutiny?

## REMEMBER Port Chicago?

You should.

Over 320 American sailors were blown to tiny fragments there in less time than it takes to say "Jim Crow."

It was an explosion — a nerve-shattering, unimaginably horrible explosion that rocked Northern California into a frightened uproar.

Over 300 young sailors died there. They died suddenly and they had no time to be afraid.

In some ways they were luckier than the eight or nine hundred who didn't die — who were left to watch as bits of charred flesh dropped from the sky and fell all about them — who were left to pick up the bits of charred flesh and put them into baskets and know that those baskets contained all that was left of their friends, their buddies.

The Port Chicago explosion happened months ago, on July 17, 1944 to be exact; but its reverberations haven't stopped yet.

The ground is still shuddering under the feet of 50 of the young men who lived through it.

Somewhere under the late autumn sun that shimmers down on San Francisco Bay, those 50 young men sit in a closely guarded jail and wait to learn how soon they will walk under that sun as free men.

While they wait, their minds are a confusion of hurt and bewildered resentment and fear — fear that has whispered along beside them for so many months that it is a part of the inexplicably twisted pattern their lives have become.

These 50 young men, over half of them under 21, were convicted last October 24 of a crime which can mean life imprisonment — or death.

They were convicted, after 45 minutes deliberation, by a court-

Joseph R. Small, clean-cut, intelligent 23-year-old from New Jersey, was, according to Prosecutor Coakley, a ringleader of the "mutiny." The only reason Mr. Coakley could give for this opinion was that after having been made an acting petty officer by his division officer, Small proceeded to act like one in keeping discipline among the men who were quartered together after they had not gone to work.

He called a meeting of the men and warned them to "straighten up and fly right!" Because he had not been given specific orders to call a meeting, Mr. Coakley contended that Small had called a "mutinous assemblage," was a ringleader in a "mutiny." This in spite of the fact that the "mutiny" had taken place two days before.

There are a lot more of these depraved criminals. They come from all over the United States and they have varied backgrounds. Some are city kids; some come from the country. Some are high school graduates; some had only a year or two of southern grammar schools; one is an illiterate.

Over half of them are too young to vote.

Forty-four out of the 50 had perfect conduct ratings in the Navy.

Here's what one of their petty officers, not involved in the trial, said about them: "The cooperation of my men was always wonderful, their discipline excellent. We had the top division in the base"

**T**HESE are the depraved mutineers who were convicted on October 24! How did they get that way? What "depraved" them? When did it start?

The day each of them entered the Navy is as good a place to start as any. They went to Great Lakes for boot training. So far, so good. They had pretty much the same boot training as any other sailor, and they came out with ratings as 2nd class seamen. Since they were told that they were seamen, they thought they'd be sent to sea. Maybe some of them had visions of coming home with service ribbons and a medal or two, and stories of battles and heroism to dazzle the girls. Maybe they did.

But the day they finished training and were assigned to "active" duty, they woke up to find that this brave new world was just the same old Jim-Crow world they had always known, only worse — because the other world was changing, and this one was not.

They were shipped to a little town on San Francisco Bay — Port Chicago — and the new Naval Ammunition Depot where Navy explosives were loaded for overseas.

They weren't going to sea. They were going to load ammunition.

That was all right. They were disappointed, but they were philosophical about it. Somebody had to load ammunition. They might as well do it. Of course this work had special hazards requiring special training, and they were not trained for it. That, too, was immaterial.

But on the first day they noticed something.

Every man loading ammunition at Port Chicago was a Negro.

Every commissioned officer at Port Chicago was white; so was every chief petty officer.

That was when the little ache inside that they hadn't had since they entered the Navy came back. And every day they spent at Port Chicago it got a little worse

They were assigned to "divisions" and the next thing they knew they were on a ship loading ammunition.

Ammunition — high explosives — heavy work — dangerous work.

And all the instruction they received was the warning to be "careful."

Careful of what? They didn't know one kind of explosive from another. They didn't know what would make them go off. They didn't know which ones would explode if they were dropped or bumped.

But what they did know was that they were beginning to get scared. As the weeks passed they began to feel that they were shadow boxing with an enemy they couldn't see. In each fist he held a bottle of nitroglycerin which might go off at any moment if they made a wrong move.

The trouble was that they didn't know which move might be the wrong one.

And they noticed that a lot of the men they worked with were in the same condition — nervous, jittery. One night, one of the men went completely berserk in the hold of the ship.

They added to their own fears the knowledge that their buddies were

scared. And every so often somebody, nervous and unsure of himself, dropped something — a box of grenades — an anti-aircraft shell.

Running through the nervousness and the nagging awareness that they were not adequately trained for the work, was another thread. Why were only Negroes doing this work?

Morale got a little worse when they overheard white commissioned officers asking the section leaders to “pour it on tonight” because the white officers had five dollar bets on with each other as to whose division would load the most ammunition that night. Five dollar bets — on sudden death.

One of the boys went to the Buchanan street USO in San Francisco on his next liberty. He was still thinking about those five-dollar bets. When one of the white senior hostesses sat down beside him and tried to cheer him up, he found himself pouring the whole story out to her — sort of thinking out loud.

Why were only Negroes used to load ammunition? Why were the white seamen at Port Chicago given other jobs? Why was it almost impossible for a Negro to get a promotion? Why were most of the men at Port Chicago still second class seamen, even though a lot of them had been there for two years and had excellent conduct ratings? Why were there so few Negro petty officers?

He told her about something he had read that night in a Negro paper about Negroes on the Anzio and Normandy beachheads — about a Negro air corps captain in the 99th fighter squadron who had shot down his third Nazi plane over Italy — about a Negro artillery battalion in France that had hit the turret of a German tank with a 155 mm. shell at a distance of 9 miles.

Those guys were getting a chance to prove that they had as much guts and brains as anybody — but in the Navy —.

The woman listened carefully. That night she wrote a letter to Mrs. Roosevelt telling her the whole story — of the lack of training, the speed-up, the man who had gone berserk from nerves strained too far — the betting — the discrimination. The letter reached Mrs. Roosevelt just too late.

A week or so later another boy ran into another morale shaker. He met a longshoreman in San Francisco and heard bad news. He learned



for instance, that civilian longshoremen in the Bay Area had, on a number of occasions refused to work on the same ship where Navy personnel were loading. He learned that the Longshoremen's union wouldn't permit a winch driver to work on ammunition unless he had had years of experience on other loads.

He kept remembering that the winch driver on his gang had had exactly two months' experience — all of it on ammunition.

The boys in the barracks felt fine when he went back and told them. It was lucky they didn't know the whole story.

They would really have gotten shaky if they had known that the San Francisco waterfront unions had that very week warned the 12th Naval District that there would be an explosion if they persisted in using untrained seamen to load ammunition.

And they would have been really bewildered if they had known that the Navy had ignored an offer by these same unions to send experienced longshoremen to train them in the safe handling of explosives.

But they didn't know, so they were saved a little worry.

Morale in the barracks got another crack on the head a few days later when one of the boys asked his division officer for a transfer to sea duty.

The officer told him in all seriousness, "It's a policy of the 12th Naval District not to use you Negroes on ships because you can't settle any kind of argument without a knife!"

It's July 17. It's a few minutes before 11 p.m. and men are scattered around the barracks, some of them going to bed, others getting ready to go to work at midnight loading the two ships out in the harbor. Somebody is whistling "Can't See for Looking." He reaches for a high note and just as he hits it the long room shudders and then gathers itself together and the walls lurch forward in a noise too loud, too violent to register on anyone's ears. Then the men are flying through the air and the whole barracks is flying with them and their eardrums are screaming with sound that is too intense to have any meaning. Furniture catapults into walls and the air is full of flying bodies. Above their heads, the roof suddenly rips wide open and they see stars through a great yawning rent. That was the last a lot of them remember for a while.

For that was the Port Chicago explosion —the worst home front disaster of the war. The two ships in the harbor had blown up, killing the more than 320 men who were loading them.

The papers bloomed with headlines and pictures and feature stories that told how the people of the town of Port Chicago were so dazed that they couldn't speak coherently for a week after the blast. The razed buildings were described and the vacant staring eyes of the shopkeepers and the children who were too frightened to cry.

Case-hardened newspapermen in San Francisco still get a little sick when they remember the stench of charred flesh, the bits of burned and blackened and bloody flesh that littered the ammunition depot. They still speak of the hysteria that ruled officers and men alike all that night and far into the next day.

But what does Lt. Commdr. Coakley say — “Any man so depraved as to be afraid to load ammunition deserves no leniency!”

**R**EMEMBER what you learned in your First Aid class about shock?

Here's what two California authorities on psychology had to say about this particular shock:

Dr. Cavendish Moxon, practicing psychologist in San Francisco: “There are sound psychological reasons why the 50 Negro sailors should not be accused of conspiracy to mutiny. When men are shocked by an explosion into a serious state of panic, they are not free to undertake new risks or even normal activities until they have been helped to overcome their nervous and mental upset. To accuse such persons of a crime is as meaningless and cruel as to punish a neurotic for being unable to overcome his panicky fears.” *Any man so depraved as to be afraid to load ammunition deserves no leniency.*

This is what Prof. Harry C. Steinmetz, chairman of the psychology department at San Diego State College had to say: “Men who have not received unusual reassurances after an unusual catastrophe obviously have provocation for acting unusually. If adequate reassurances were not given following the tragic Port Chicago explosion, certainly the men involved deserve not public condemnation, but rather public sympathy.”

Were “adequate reassurances” given?

The Navy brought in swing bands to play jive for the boys.

They brought in USO camp shows. The swing bands and the USO shows played in buildings that were roofless and twisted by the blast, and there were still a few fragments of bodies lying around, but maybe the idea was good.

And, oh yes, they kept telling the men that they shouldn't be afraid, that there was really nothing to be afraid of. Very few of them were convinced.

The survivors were split up. A large group, including those who had been injured, was sent to Camp Shoemaker; the rest were kept at Port Chicago, "cleaning up" after the explosion.

None of them was given leaves. They were just kept sitting around thinking — about ammunition and explosions and Jim Crow.

Less than two weeks after the explosion some of the men of the first division at Port Chicago were told to go back to loading ammunition. Most of them refused. It was tried again with other men. Still more refused. Some of them were put in the brig, and then let out again. And then suddenly over 100 men, most of whom had refused to load ammunition, were gathered up, transferred to Treasure Island and then shipped to the South Pacific.

In the meantime, the 2nd, 4th, and 8th divisions, the last three remaining of the loading divisions which were at Port Chicago at the time of the explosion, were scattered around at various camps.

On the 9th of August all three divisions assembled at Vallejo, scheduled to go to work loading ammunition.

The 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th of August are days which the 12th Naval District would probably very much like to forget. You would have to search long and far to find a more magnificent display of ineptness and bungling.

The men were supposed to go to work loading ammunition. Three white officers, Lts. Ernest Delucchi, J. E. Tobin, and C. G. Morehouse were responsible for getting the men to work. And not one of them was capable of giving a direct order.

"If you are willing to obey orders fall out — stand on this side — stand on that side — cowards over here — do this, do that." And never once a clean-cut direct order to march.

The result was that out of approximately 400 men, 257, admitting that they were afraid, were marched off to a barge and put under marine guard.

Tobin and Delucchi, completely confused by now, ran wild. They gathered up mess cooks, compartment cleaners and sick men, none of whom was supposed to load ammunition. When these men said honestly that they were afraid, they were shunted off to the barge.

Among these latter additions to the "mutineers" were: 104-pound, 17-year-old John Dunn, who had never loaded ammunition in his life. He had been made a mess cook because the doctor had said he was too light to work on the docks.

Another was a boy named Julius Dixson, who, on Lt. Delucchi's own testimony, had been made a permanent mess cook because of his inefficiency on the docks, lack of control, and because he was a hazard to others.

Another was a seaman named Ollie Green. On the day before, August 8, he had broken his wrist, which was still in a cast late in September.

The nerves of the officers seem to have been pretty thoroughly shattered too. And that is a charitable judgment.

On the 12th of August, the commandant of the 12th Naval District arrived at Vallejo and spoke to the men, telling them to go back to work.

After his speech Lt. Morehouse lined up his 8th division, said clearly, "We're going to work — March!" and every one of his men went to work.

Lts. Tobin and Delucchi, however, continued to shilly-shally, continued to give vague orders. As a result 44 men from the two divisions, still saying they were afraid, were taken under guard to Port Chicago. Subsequently six of the men from the 2nd and 4th divisions who had said they would go back to work, for various reasons didn't. They were taken to Port Chicago, making up the nice round even number of 50 men to be tried for conspiracy to mutiny.

That's the essence of the "mutiny."

**T**HERE are a lot of interesting details, however. For instance, the so-called "don't work lists" which the prosecution repeatedly claimed were subversive pledges binding the signers to mutiny. The only trouble

was that not only couldn't the prosecution put its hands on a copy of these dread lists, but they couldn't produce any witnesses who could even come close to describing them. The defense, on the other hand, produced a very good description of at least one of the lists. It was a petition to Lt. Delucchi, stating that the men were afraid of ammunition and would like a change of duty!

Lt. Delucchi is an interesting link in the case. It was Delucchi who, according to half a dozen witnesses, appointed Joe Small as acting petty officer after the 9th of August.

On the stand Lt. Delucchi testified that he hadn't appointed Small. If he did not, Small's calling of a meeting on the barge might be construed as some sort of a mutinous assemblage — which is exactly what Prosecutor Coakley wanted it to be.

Lt. Delucchi's conduct on the 9th, 10th and 11th of August was not exactly the conduct of a naval officer who was competent to handle men. In fact, as the trial went on, Delucchi showed up in a worse and worse light, but in Coakley's final argument he made an appeal to the trial board which was in effect, "Are you going to take the word of *these men* or are you going to believe the word of a gentleman like Lt. Delucchi?"

Lt. Delucchi is Coakley's brother-in-law.

The fact wasn't discovered until two days after the trial was over when a San Francisco reporter dug it out by accident. The reporter also dug out the fact that the relationship between the prosecutor and his star witness was common gossip among naval men at Vallejo. Which leads to two questions: Why didn't the 12th Naval District know about it, and why was Coakley allowed to superintend the original investigation of the case — the investigation which was the basis for a charge of "conspiracy to mutiny," when his own brother-in-law's action were part and parcel of the case?

But there were other peculiar things about that investigation. Naval officers, working under Coakley's supervision, took statements from the men involved, in some cases, without telling them that they did not have to make statements or that they could have counsel — in others — according to testimony — by the use of threats. The statements, by which Mr. Coakley attempted to prove conspiracy, were, in almost no instance, complete statements made by the men themselves. They were "compiled"

by a question and answer method, and included only, as one of the officers testified, what facts he thought were relevant to the case. Insert the word "prosecution" before "case" and you will have a clearer idea of what he meant.

Prosecutor Coakley made the most of sectional prejudice during the trial. Mr. Coakley is a northerner, but he did as good a job of dragging race prejudice into that courtroom as anyone could have done. He used one of the oldest tricks in the old race hate bag. It goes like this:

The defense puts one of the accused on the stand — the first witness for the defense. His name is Longmire. He speaks with a decided Southern accent. Coakley doesn't ask him where he comes from. He doesn't have to, because in front of him he has 50 slender tan-covered books which contain the complete record of each of the 50 accused.

The next two witnesses speak with a Southern accent. Coakley doesn't ask them where they are from.

Then the fourth witness! It's Joe Small. He's a good witness and he's the man Coakley is trying to prove is a "ringleader."

"Where are you from, Small?" "New Jersey, sir."

"What did you do before you came into the Navy?" "I was a truck driver, sir."

Ah, a teamster. Coakley gloats, both eyes pinned to the Southern members of the court. You can see the thought waves going out. A smart Northern N----. Probably a union member, too.

The next eight witnesses have Southern accents, so there is no question. But the next one brings it out again.

Coakley looks down at the man's record, looks up, eyeing the southern officers. "Where are you from, Grimes?" "Detroit, sir."

"How much education did you have?" "High school, sir."

"What did you do before you came into the Navy?"

"I worked in a defense plant, sir."

And so it goes, day after day — where are you from? New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, New York, Chicago, Detroit. How much education did you have? High school graduate — three years of

high school — two years of high school. Never does he question the defendants who have obviously had not more than a couple of years of grade school. Never does he question defendants obviously from the South.

He was particularly obvious with a youngster named Freddie Meeks. The routine was changed a little. "Where are you from, Meeks?" "Memphis, Tennessee, sir."

A slight frown from Coakley, then, "Before you came into the Navy, weren't you in Los Angeles?" "Yes, sir." "How long?" "About two years, sir."

"What did you do?" "I was a welder, sir."

Didn't you go to Jefferson High School there?" "Yes, sir."

By the time 40 of the 50 accused had been on the stand Coakley had really warmed up and he had a new angle.

"Where are you from?" "Chicago, sir."

"What part of Chicago?" "The south side."

He tried this one only three times, once with the boy from Chicago, and twice with boys from New York. The New York boys crossed him up. When he asked "What part of New York?" they innocently answered, "Upper Manhattan, sir," knowing all the time that he wanted them to say "Harlem."

Here's a fairly accurate box score on Mr. Coakley's "north-south" poll. He asked 27 defendants where their homes were.

Twenty-one of them were from north of the Mason-Dixon line.

Two of the other six were asked, apparently because Coakley was under the misapprehension that Baltimore and St. Louis are Northern cities. The other four were asked because, after the newspapers started commenting on Mr. Coakley's peculiar little habit of questioning, he was instructed by the court to ask his question of each witness.

Mr. Coakley was made senior judge advocate for the 12th Naval District at the close of the trial.

**N**OW let's go back and pull a few threads together.

These 50 young seamen were tried because of an act which they

committed through fear and shock which was largely based on the fact that they knew that thanks to the Navy's lack of training, they were not competent to handle explosives safely — shock which is so well known and serious a phenomenon that the Army and Navy make elaborate provisions for most men to relax and recuperate from such shock before reassignment to hazardous duty.

They knew before the explosion that ammunition at Port Chicago was not properly handled. Most of them were afraid then — and not afraid because Negroes are cowards—but because they had sense enough to know that explosives are dangerous unless skillfully handled. They knew that they did not have that skill, and that the Navy was doing nothing to train them. Then the explosion proved that their fears were correct — proved it by wrecking an entire town and killing over 300 men who had also been afraid.

So, three weeks later, flouting everything that modern neuro-psychiatry has learned about shock, the Navy ordered them back to loading ammunition.

Is it any wonder that they didn't go back? Is it any wonder that 350 besides these 50 "examples" didn't go back?

The Navy has denied them every right of equality in the service. It has denied them their rights as Americans to serve in active sea duty. It has segregated them, insulted them, risked their lives by sheer unnecessary inefficiency and now it will send them to a Federal penitentiary for years in order to save its own face.

Somebody had to take the rap for the Port Chicago explosion. The 320 Negroes who died there couldn't do it, so the Navy found 50 others.

Fifty Negroes were singled out of over 400 men, all of whom for the same reasons, and with the same justification committed the same act.

What matters is that these 50 men were charged with "conspiracy to mutiny" a charge which evidence in the trial did very little to substantiate. They were convicted after a trial which, not once in its entire six weeks even approached the basic issues at stake.

Only once was any criticism of the Navy allowed to come out in open court and that was an accident. Early in the trial, one of the defendants when asked the routine question, "Have you anything to add



to your testimony?" almost gave apoplexy to every naval officer in the room by saying, "Yes, I have. I want to say that the reason I was afraid to load ammunition was because I knew it wasn't handled properly. The officers used to race each other and make us speed up."

The public relations officer assigned to the trial, after a word with the president of the courts-martial board, immediately cornered all reporters, trying desperately to get them to suppress that bit of information.

And after that, the defendants were instructed to consult with their attorneys before they said anything. The attorneys, being lieutenants in the Navy and perforce required to get along with the brass hats, their superior officers, saw to it that no more slips were made. There was no room for justice in this court-martial, because justice happened to conflict with the prestige and honor of the Navy.

The Navy is doing a great job of fighting fascists off foreign shores. It's doing a fighting job that every American can be proud of, but it's about time that it found out that it is a functioning part of a democracy, and that democracy means equality for all of the people in it. It can't treat men as these defendants were treated and then be piously shocked at a "breach of discipline."

Let's take a last look at one of these men whom the Navy is sending to a penitentiary, possibly for the rest of his life.

This one is older than the others, and because he's older, he has stored up a greater capacity for mental torture.

We'll call him "Arthur Hunt." He's 35 years old. Before he came into the Navy he lived in New York and worked at an electrical company in New Jersey.

He was a skilled worker — did light machine work and electrical parts assemblage.

You know what kind of work he's been doing in the Navy.

Hunt's face as he sat in that courtroom week after week was thin, sensitive, the face of a man who has been Jim-Crowed for 35 years and who, in the explosion and in this trial had reached the limit of mental endurance.

He sat in that courtroom for six solid weeks and stared straight

ahead. His expression never changed, never varied by the twitch of a muscle.

He sat and stared and you knew he heard nothing of what went on during those six weeks.

You knew that in his attempt to escape pain he had retreated so far back into himself that he would probably never be quite able to get back.

In his staring, carefully blank eyes, you could see many things — years of discrimination, segregation, humiliation. Then suddenly a chance to reach out and grasp at dignity — skilled work, vital work, work that he could do with pride. And then suddenly, the Navy — the kick-back, hurling him down, back to laboring, back to menial humiliating Jim Crow jobs.

The explosion, the trial, could only have been the final scratches that opened up the bigger wound that festered within Arthur Hunt.

You can't forget Arthur Hunt's face. It follows you around, still and quiet and tragic.

And when you think of John Dunn and Martin Bordenave and Hazard, the Chaplain's assistant, you know that their young, vital, hopeful faces must never become like Hunt's. For their sakes and the sakes of thousands of Negro youngsters like them, Jim Crow in the Navy must be cleaned up.

The Navy has a slogan — "Remember Pearl Harbor" — a reminder of foreign treachery against a democracy.

There is another slogan the Navy should adopt.

It is a reminder of what treachery to our own ideals within a democracy does to that democracy.

The pointless, meaningless deaths of over 320 Americans must be given a point, must be given a meaning — for the living.

Remember Port Chicago!

**NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.**  
**69 Fifth Avenue, New York 3, N. Y.**

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