

In 1794 Congress Grudgingly Voted To Build Six Ships; This Year It Talks About a Billion Dollar Navy!

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON
(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S budget recommendation of a billion dollar naval program, the largest peacetime sum ever considered for that purpose, is by its sharp contrast, an interesting commentary on the spirit of economy (perhaps "parsimony" would be the more appropriate word) in which provision for our "first line of defense" was conceived 146 years ago.

For it was in March, 1794, that the first congress approved a bill out of which grew the United States navy, albeit its passage was marked by a long and acrimonious debate during which it was declared that "a navy is the most expensive of all means of defense, and the tyranny of governments consists in the expensiveness of their machinery."

Indicative of the grudging spirit in which this first congressional provision for a navy was made is the fact that the bill won in the house of representatives by a vote of 50 to 39 and in the senate the sentiment was so evenly divided that it took the vote of Vice President John Adams to break a tie and pass the measure.

Despite the success of John Paul Jones and other American sea captains against the superior sea forces of England during the Revolution, one of the first acts of congress, after the fight for liberty ended, was to dispense with the services of the victor of the famous Bon Homme Richard-Serapis battle and begin scrapping such war vessels as we had. In doing this congress was only following the wishes of the citizens of the new nation.

But the United States soon learned a bitter lesson from its naval disarmament program. For centuries the Barbary states in northern Africa—Algeria, Tripoli, Tunis and Morocco—had preyed upon the commerce of European countries and, despite the huge indemnities which France, Spain and the Italian states paid to these pirates, their shipping and their coasts were never safe from destructive raids. England, because of her sea power, had suffered but little from these marauders but her former colonial shipping, now flying a new flag, immediately became the prey of the corsairs.

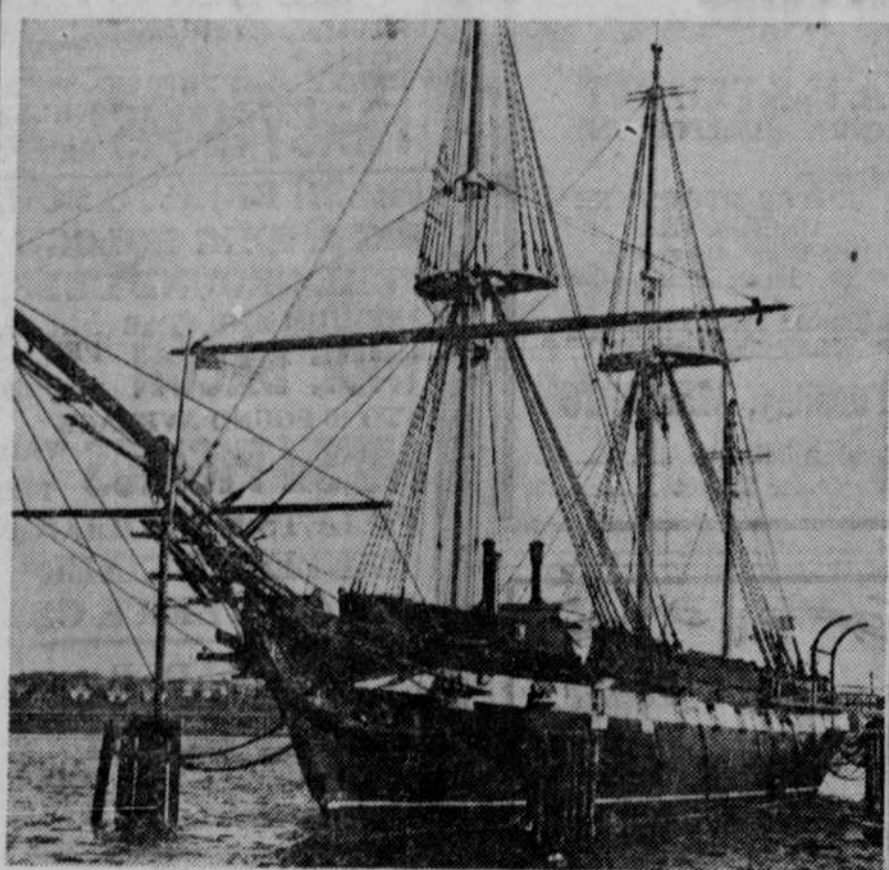
Ask \$60,000 Ransom.

In 1785 the Algerian pirates seized two American merchantmen and by the time of Washington's inauguration their 21 officers and men were still held prisoners. The Continental congress had made some efforts in their behalf but these had been contemptuously rejected by the Dey of Algiers who demanded a ransom of nearly \$60,000 for his captives. Soon after Thomas Jefferson was appointed secretary of state in Washington's cabinet, he was called upon to report to congress upon the negotiations which he, as minister to France, had carried on with the Algerines.

In 1790 Jefferson submitted a report, remarking that a solution of the problem "rests with congress to decide between war, tribute and ransom. If war, they will consider how far our own resources shall be called forth, and how far they will enable the Executive to engage, in the forms of the Constitution, the cooperation of other Powers. If tribute or ransom, it will rest with them to limit and provide the amount; and with the Executive, observing the same constitutional forms, to make arrangements for employing it to the best advantage."

But congress was slow to take any action. In the meantime, the Algerian pirates continued their raids on American commerce in the Mediterranean until it was almost destroyed. Finally by 1793, when the corsairs had captured 10 more American ships and imprisoned 105 more American sailors, the federal government decided to do something about it. In January, 1794, a committee of the house of representatives brought in a resolution for building four ships of 44 guns and two of 20 guns each for the protection of our commerce.

Debate on the matter began early in February and immediately it became apparent that sentiment was against creating a federal navy. One of the leading opponents was James Madison of



The Constellation, oldest vessel on the United States navy list, now used as a training ship at the Newport (R. I.) naval training station. In this old frigate Commodore Thomas Truxton won two great victories over superior ships during our "undeclared war" with France at the beginning of the Nineteenth century.

Virginia who believed that peace with the pirates "might be purchased for less money than this armament would cost." Another Virginia representative "feared that we were not a match for the Algerines" and a Georgian thought that "bribery alone could purchase security from them." A New Jersey congressman objected to the "establishment of a fleet, because, when once it had been commenced, there would be no end to it."

Smith of Maryland and Fitzsimmons of Pennsylvania, who championed the resolution, and Fisher Ames of Massachusetts, who supported them, called upon Madison to define his position and he proposed a substitute for the resolution. It was that "money should be employed in such a manner as should be found most effectual for obtaining a peace with the Regency of Algiers; and failing of this, that the sum should be applied to the end of obtaining protection from some of the European powers."

Navies "Foolish Things."

This suggestion was denounced as an attempt to get other nations to fight our battles for us but Giles of Virginia came to Madison's support with a statement that he "considered navies altogether as very foolish things." An immense quantity of property was spread on the water for no purpose whatever, which might have been employed by land to the best purpose. As it became clear that the two Virginians were taking an isolationist stand which would make the United States a hermit nation, sentiment began to swing in favor of the original resolution.

Despite the effort of opponents of the bill to delay consideration of it, on March 10, 1794, it came up for final passage in the house. Giles made a last effort to prevent its passage. He argued that fitting out a navy would inevitably involve us in wars with all the European powers. Besides that, it would be a perpetual threat to American liberties.

But despite his eloquent plea, the final vote was 50 in favor and 39 against the measure. It had an even harder struggle in the senate for, as has already been stated, it required the vote of the vice president, as presiding officer over that body, to break the deadlock and concur in the action of the house. However, in order to get the measure passed an amendment had to be tacked on that, if peace terms with the Algerines could be arranged, "no farther proceeding be had under this act."

On March 27, 1794, President Washington signed the act providing for the building of six frigates—the President, the United States, the Chesapeake, the Congress, the Constellation, and the Constitution. However, before they could be completed a treaty of peace was concluded with Algiers in September, 1795, under the terms of which we paid Algiers a total of \$642,500 for the ransom of captives, for tribute and for presents to officials. Besides that we agreed to build a frigate for the Algerine navy and also supply naval stores, bringing the total cost of the treaty up to \$992,463.25.

By the terms of the amendment to the navy act, we had to stop building vessels for protection of our commerce. Of the five frigates authorized, work on three, the United States, the Constellation and the Constitution, was already under way and eventually they were completed. The timber for the others was sold, except for the ship which was to

be presented to the Algerines.

Although the navy act of March 27, 1794, was emasculated by the amendment, nevertheless it marked the real beginning of the American navy and, as such, should be a red letter day on our national calendar. In 1793 France and England were at war again and America soon found itself trying desperately to maintain its neutrality in the conflict. Jay's treaty with England in 1794 put an end to most of the disputes between England and America which grew out of the Revolution and which brought us close to another war with Britain. But the next year the British Orders-in-Council against neutral trade with France raised the war fever in this country again and France, angered by Jay's treaty, did all she could to fan that flame.

But eventually France overplayed her hand and when her blackmailing schemes were exposed, American sentiment approved the strong stand taken by the new President, John Adams, against our former ally. Not only did congress agree to complete three of the frigates authorized in 1794 at a cost of \$1,141,160 but on April 20, 1798, it voted \$950,000 for the purchase and equipment of an additional naval force. On April 30 a separate navy department was established (heretofore naval affairs had been administered as a part of the war department) and Benjamin Stoddert was appointed the first secretary of the navy.

A Naval Program.

By this time America was definitely committed to a naval program and on May 4 President Adams was authorized to procure cannon and build foundries and armories. This act was soon followed by an appropriation of \$80,000 for galleys to be used "as porcupine quills in punishing enemy attacks." With what was already appropriated, the President was authorized to accept, if offered by private citizens, six frigates and six sloops of war, and to pay for them with government bonds.

Meanwhile France had substituted force for Talleyrand's devious diplomacy and it had seized nearly a thousand American ships. As a result, our alliance with that country, formed during our fight for liberty, was abrogated and in June, 1798, congress authorized the President to use our navy to "subdue, seize, and take any armed French vessel which shall be found within the jurisdictional limits of the United States or elsewhere on the high seas." This was an important step because it said, in effect, that if we were to compel an enemy to do us justice we must no longer depend upon harbor galleys but must send ships swift enough to search out the enemy vessels in their own waters and strong enough to overcome them.

The result was our "undeclared war" with France which continued for two and a half years during which time one of the new frigates, the Constellation, won two brilliant victories over French men-of-war and our little navy captured 85 armed French vessels, nearly all privateers and lost only one war vessel, which had been originally a captured French ship. But despite the lessons learned in this conflict it required two more of them—the War with the Barbary Pirates of 1802-04 and the War of 1812 with England—to teach us the necessity of maintaining an adequate naval establishment if we were, as Washington said, to "secure respect" for our flag and to save it "from insult or aggression."

Although the name of Commodore Thomas Truxton is but little known to most Americans, yet two victories which he won during our "undeclared war" with France entitle him to a place alongside John Paul Jones, Stephen Decatur, Isaac Hull, James Lawrence, and Oliver Hazard Perry in our galaxy of naval heroes. Early in 1799 Truxton was placed in command of the Constellation, flagship of a squadron of five vessels which were sent to the West Indies.

At noon on February 9 while the Constellation was cruising off the island of Nevis, a large ship was discovered away to the south. Truxton immediately gave chase and by the middle of the afternoon he had overhauled the fleeing ship and was engaged in a hot battle with her. Within an hour and a quarter the swift and accurate fire of the American gunners had so shattered the enemy ship that her captain struck his colors.

She proved to be the famous French frigate, La Insurgente, whose loss was 70 men killed and wounded, whereas the only casualties on the Constellation were three wounded.

The captured French ship was put in charge of a prize crew commanded by Lieutenant (later Commodore) John Rodgers and taken to St. Kitt's. When news of Truxton's victory reached the United States it sent a thrill of joy through the country such as it had not known since the days of John Paul Jones. Truxton was eulogized in the newspapers, sent "congratulatory addresses" by groups of citizens and received from the merchants of Lloyd's coffee house in London a handsome service of plate worth more than \$3,000.

A year later Truxton gave his fellow-countrymen even more cause for rejoicing. Early on the morning of February 1, 1800, while cruising off Guadeloupe seeking the large French frigate, La Vengeance, which was believed to be in those waters, he discovered a sail to the south



Thomas Truxton

which he took to be that of an English merchantman. So he ran up the English colors, but, upon receiving no response, gave chase.

The stranger began piling on sail and for 15 hours succeeded in keeping out of range of the Constellation's guns. Then the American ship came within hailing distance and Truxton discovered that the stranger was the very ship he was seeking—La Vengeance. At eight o'clock in the evening the Americans opened fire and from that time until one o'clock in the morning the two ships carried on a running fight, sometimes coming within pistol shot of each other.

Suddenly the French frigate ceased firing and disappeared so completely in the gloom that Truxton believed she had sunk. But at that moment he discovered that nearly all the Constellation's shrouds had been cut away by the fire of the enemy and that her mainmast was about to fall. Soon afterwards a heavy squall came up and the mast went overboard.

Although badly crippled, the French ship managed to reach the safety of a harbor on the coast of South America. There her commander, Captain Pitot, acknowledged that twice during the engagement he had struck his colors but in the gloom of night this signal of surrender was not seen by the Americans.

Once more Truxton's victory over a superior foe—although La Vengeance carried 54 guns and 400 men, as compared to the Constellation's 32 guns and 300 men, the French loss was 162 killed and wounded while the Americans' was only 14 killed and 25 wounded—sent his name ringing through the United States. Two months later congress authorized the President to present him with a gold medal "emblematic of the late action" with the thanks of the nation, the second time in our history that such an honor was bestowed upon a naval officer.

Two years later Truxton was ordered to command a squadron destined for service in the Mediterranean. His request for a captain to command his flagship being denied, he declined the service and President Jefferson construed this action as a resignation, which was accepted. Thus the navy lost the services of one of the best officers in its history. Truxton retired to a farm near Philadelphia and died there May 5, 1822.

Chinese Colorings New for Silk Prints and Huge Plaids

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



A SPRING fashion picture sans sprightly patterned joyfully colored new silk prints would present as dismal and impossible a scene as a spring or summer landscape minus flowers and birds, blue skies and sunshine. But why entertain such a thought, for at this very moment the scene is all set in fashionland with as tempting an array of silk prints as ere took a bow on fashion's stage in springtime.

Almost seems as if the new prints bring a greater thrill this season than ever. At any rate they're lovely and there's a newness about them that excites lively interest.

There's the perfectly fascinating Chinese colorings, for instance, porcelain blues, lacquer reds, peach blown pinks, bright orange and a new beige tone called "Chinese tea." And the lovely lotus blossom and magnolia designs so delicately flushed with color that is offset with the deep waxen green of their leaves.

The pastels that color the daintiest prettiest prints that we've seen for years are rapturous in their subtle tones and tints. You will be wanting a blouse of adorable pastel plaid to wear with your suit of pastel tweed.

Speaking of plaid silk, it is the center of attraction this season, not only for evening wear, but for the daytime dress. And don't be afraid of the big bold plaid for the bigger the plaid the smarter. Watch for silk plaids!

A plaid silk that assures new sophistication in dramatic raspberry, blue and green tones on a white background is used for the daytime dress shown to the right in the picture. Here is a type of dress that carries unmistakable style conviction wherever it goes. The bodice shirred above a wide molded midriff and the concentrated front full-

ness used for the skirt are done in the Paris manner. You will find it a pleasant innovation to mark your waistline with a self fabric sash tied in a bow as here you see instead of a belt.

The printed silk jacket dress is ever so important this spring. Choose either the new long-jacket types, emphasizing the much talked-of long torso molded figure lines or select if you will a youthful bolero model after the mode to the left in the picture. The use of pockets, here applied vertically and accented with self-fabric scroll detail. Note the smart collarless neckline and the front shirred skirt fullness, all very new and chic. The pattern and the color alliance are also very much of the moment. This is one of the new silks that marks an innovation namely the black and white print that has one other color added. In this instance the scheme is worked out in a black and white horizontal scroll patterning on an olive green background.

For an ensemble for the first spring days in town fashion advocates the printed silk frock topped with a wool jacket that repeats an important color in the print. See the theory demonstrated in the stylish twosome shown in the center. Buttoned up bodice and accordion pleated skirt interpret new vogue to a nicety in the dress which features a neat mesh design in which white dots and squares are outlined in "Chinese tea," the important new beige mentioned above. Peaked lapels and pockets and its one-link fastening are chic accents in the matching wool jacket.

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

Branch Coral



Ladies, listen to this! How about the necklaces, the earrings, the brooches of branch red coral that have been hidden away, lo, this many a year among family heirlooms? Fashion bids you to rescue them from obscurity, for quaint and flattering branch coral is staging a tremendous revival this year. Possibly you may lack a few strands in your treasured collection to achieve the effect pictured. Let not this dismay you, for jewelers are prepared to supply the necessary coral to make up stunning ensembles of neckpieces, bracelets, earrings and lapel gadgets.

Leather on Jersey For Dinner Dress

A wide belt of natural calfskin shaped like a corselet and studded with nailheads trims a dinner dress of white jersey. The blouse top is simply cut, with short sleeves and a full skirt. It buttons down the front from neck to hem with leather buttons to match the belt.

Flower Hats Come Early This Season

Usually flower hats are worn later in the season, but this spring is an exception to the rule.

There is nothing smarter in the way of millinery than a pert, flattering flower turban, or a wee flower covered sailor.

The flower turbans are of a distinctly new type this season. They pose a huge flower or cluster over the brow, and it's a guess how these hats anchor into secure position, until you see at the back the clever snood and ribbon caplike bandeaux.

White hats are something unexpected as a spring "first." But here they are, topping the new navy suits and fitting charmingly into the scene this very moment.

Revive Pinafores For Little Girls

Is there any more refreshing sight than a smiling little youngster in a spic and span starched gandy or dimity pinafore? If so, we can't recall it. Old-fashioned, you say? No, indeed, just the opposite. It is one of the newest items to be included in a little daughter's wardrobe this season. Such was the important news flashed from the children's style show that brought visiting merchants from all over the country to view the latest in juvenile vogue as displayed in the Merchandise Mart, Chicago. So it's authentic—cunning, fluffy-ruffy, primly starched pinafores for little girls!

Printed Jersey Is Used With Plain

Good style is the redingote ensemble that tops a dress of printed jersey, which is a favorite this season, with a softly-styled redingote of monotone jersey.

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Ask Me Another A General Quiz

The Questions

- How long will a date palm bear fruit?
- Is water in a bucket perfectly level on top?
- What was the longest siege in history?
- Is the practice of cribbing for examinations a modern practice?
- What is the name of the science of the earth and its life, geology, geography or geodesy?
- Does United States citizenship confer the right to vote?
- At what battle did the commander order: "Don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes"?
- What country controls the island of Tahiti?
- How did the stiff felt hat come to be called a derby?
- Does mercury evaporate in the open air?

The Answers

- A date palm will bear fruit for two centuries or more.
- Water in a bucket is slightly concave on top.
- The siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, which lasted 13 years, being raised in 572 B. C.
- Evidence of cribbing by Chinese students as early as 1562 have been found.
- Geography.
- No. States grant the right to vote.
- Battle of Bunker Hill.
- France.
- It was first worn at the earl of Derby's race track.
- Mercury, the only liquid metal, may evaporate in the open air for years without a detectable loss in weight.

Wise and Otherwise

THE most completely lost of all days is that on which one has not laughed.—Chamfort.

An optimist has been defined as a man who figures that when his shoes wear out he will be back on his feet again.

Millions of dollars are spent on lipstick every year. Who said that women didn't cater to the masculine taste.

There are many things that science cannot discover; one is why a bald-headed man can have a heavy beard.

Women, says my wife, have cleaner minds than men. Well, they change them often.

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