

U.S.S. Indiana

Newport News, Va.

June 14, 1902

Dear Father:-

Your letter came here just about the same time that the Indiana arrived. I was glad to hear from you and thank you very much for the money. We left Annapolis last Monday morning and dropped down the Bay about twenty miles.

[Page 2]

2

We came to anchor about four o'clock that evening. The next morning we went about the same distance. We staid at anchor all Wednesday and Thursday. Friday morning we steamed down to the Capes and then turned around and arrived at Newport News about four in the afternoon. During all this time we followed our regular routine of drills and practical instruction.

Our drills are as follows; gun drills, this consists in drilling with the great guns; fire drills; and "abandon ship" drill. Our practical instruction consists in going over every part of the ship from top to bottom and learning the names and uses of every part of machinery, etc. Then we ~~would~~ have recitations on the subject. Whenever we are underway,

[Page 3]

some of the midshipmen are detailed in the "chains," to heave the lead. Notice, we are no longer "naval cadets," but are "Midshipmen." This is according to a recent act of Congress.

Twice a week we have recitations in navigation, solving problems, etc. The above is a general outline of what we have to do, and it keeps us on deck all day long.

[Page 4]

4

We have about three hours of the day for loafing about the ship, listening to the Italian band, (our band is composed entirely of Italians), etc. The crew is composed of men of nearly every nationality. It is just like a little city.

The following is a list of the class standing of the first nine for the plebe year. For my one month in the sick

[Page 5]

5.

quarters, I did fairly well.

1* Frankenburger

2* Ingersoll

3* Smith, R.C.

4* Irwin

5* Gawne

6* Con

7* Leary

8 Nimitz

9 Church

The first seven “starred”, that is they made 85% of the multiple. I missed it by a hair’s breadth. My roommate and I stood just together, I beat him one number.

118 members in our class now.

Tonight I am going to ~~wry~~ write to Mr. Slayden and to Grandfather.

Today we were given liberty from 12AM to 10PM to visit Newport News and vicinity. I went ashore with a friend, but as there was nothing much at Newport News, we took a street car ride out to Old Point Comfort Va, and Hampton. Some of the fellows went to Norfolk. At Old Point, we went all through

[Page 6]

Fortress Monroe. This is an important position because it commands the entrance into Hampton Roads. There we had to have a pass to get in. We saw all kinds of disappearing guns, etc. This is about eight miles from Newport News.

Do you remember Captain Best of the Artillery? As we were coming back, Major (he is a major now) Best and his wife got on the seat just in front of me. I did not know him

[Page 7]

8

well enough though to go up and strike up a conversation.

Some of the boys that live in Virginia obtained leaves of absence for several days to visit their homes. On account of a strike, we cannot obtain coal just at present, and will go to New York to coal.

Our stay here will be spent in going over the shipyards.

[Page 8]

There are several US ship in course of construction here, the “Missouri” “Maryland” “West Virginia” “Virginia” (battleships and cruisers) and the monitor “Arkansas.” There is a German cruiser here, the “Veruta.” [sp?]

When we arrived there was an exchange of salutes, etc.

So far, everything has been very pleasant, but wait until we strike the Atlantic!

We leave here on the 19th for Newport, R.I.

Today I sent Dora a very appropriate souvenir of this part of Virginia. I never saw so many Negroes in one place before. Point Comfort consists of one very large hotel, it is a kind of health resort.

Well Father, I have written about all of interest, so I will close.

My best love to Mother and all

[Page 9]

the rest.

Your son,

[signed]

Chester W. Nimitz

P.S. I will write another letter before I leave here.

In addressing letters, do not use the term "Naval Cadet," or "Cadet," 1st because there are no more in the Navy, 2d, because, as our captain says "it sounds land-lubberly."