

Chapter VI

Orders

October 6, 1942 – October 19, 1942

Upon returning to Norfolk that Monday evening, Sheffield felt refreshed and rejuvenated. He could now focus on the task at hand with resolve and determination. He found everything on schedule for leaving the navy yard. The break was just what he needed when he needed it. After all, it was difficult to say when he might get another opportunity.

That evening he decided to write back to Ramona.

October 6, 1942

Norfolk, Virginia

Dear Ramona,

Thanks for cookies! What a nice surprise. You'll be glad to know that they made it here intact and fresh. I couldn't believe how fast they got here. And yes, they were medicine to my soul.

There was something else in your letter that was medicine to my soul as well and that was your advise to get off this ship. You were right, I have been living like a hermit. I had almost made this ship my prison to which I sentenced myself.

So, do you want to know what I did? One afternoon I checked out a plane and went for spin. I don't get in the air much anymore. I had forgotten how being in the air can clear my head. So not only did I get in the time I needed to keep my flight status active, I gained a fresh perspective on things.

Then over the weekend I went home to Roanoke to attend my nephew's wedding. All of the family was there. I got to see some of my nieces and nephews that I haven't seen for a while. Seeing them really made me miss

Sandy and Austin.

The wedding was nice, except everyone kept hugging me. At first I didn't know how to respond. After the first couple of hugs it began to feel real good. I had forgotten what it felt like to hold a woman, even if they were my sisters-in-law and nieces. Even old friends and acquaintances had hugs for me. It kind of made me miss Geannie and the way I used to hold her. Then I remembered how you always had a hug for me too.

I had another of those emotional checkups with my brother. He says that I'm well on my way. With just a little more time he told me that I should be out of the woods. He even convinced me that one day, I would be able to love again. At first I had my doubts because I'm still in love with Geannie and always will be. He compared it to how you have more than one child and you love each one differently without diminishing the love you have for any of them. It really made sense to me.

It was good to go home. The only home I really have right now. I was only there over the Fourth of July, but there's no telling when I'll get back again. It too was medicine to my soul. I owe it all to you. Thanks for caring.

We're on track for being ready to sail for the Pacific. I have not received my orders yet, but it is obvious to me that is where we'll be headed. I just hope we get there in time to make a difference. When I do get there, I promise I'll come and see you.

Sheffield paused at that point in his letter and thought for a moment. He hesitated to write what he did next. He felt it would be premature. But then he remembered what Walt had told him about other women

in his life. He remembered how good all of the hugs that he had received at the wedding had felt. He realized that he missed female companionship. A woman has way of making a man whole and complete. His yearning wasn't for romance or love; that was definitely premature. He put his pen to the paper and wrote:

Better yet, how would you like to go out to dinner with me?

Love Sheffield

He hurried and put the letter in an envelope, addressed it, and took it to the mail room before he decided to tear it up and start all over.

The next day was filled with last minute inspections and preparations to leave drydock. All of the items that needed attention had been taken care of. All of the modifications and upgrades had been installed. The yard inspector passed the ship in every category and pronounced her combat ready. She was better than she was the day she was commissioned.

At 0800 Wednesday morning the water began being pumped into the dry dock. Once full, the gate was opened and the mooring lines were slipped and Reprisal was pulled out of the dock and into the Elizabeth River by two tugboats. Lieutenant Sicamour's black gang had been at work since early in the morning and had the boilers lit and had built up a head of steam. Once pointed downstream, Captain Brason gave the order and the huge ship got underway on her own power and steamed slowly toward Hampton Roads. By noon, she was eased into her berth at Pier 7. The size of the Reprisal dwarfed the three auxiliary carriers at the next pier over.

Once again the work of loading the ship began. Again, long lines of sailors carried supplies and from the box cars already waiting on the dock to the storerooms deep inside the ship. Ammunition of all kinds was transferred from the dock to the magazines. Fuel lines began pumping the fuel bunkers full of oil and aviation gasoline. All under the watchful eyes of Commander Gates, the supply officer, and his storekeepers. The work continued for the next three days.

During the third day, Captain Brason was summoned to the onshore office of Rear Admiral Ed McWhorter, the commander of the Atlantic Fleet carriers. Sheffield knew the purpose of the meeting; to receive his orders. He was ready, his crew was ready, and his ship was ready.

After exchanging salutes and greetings, the Admiral asked about the ship's readiness. In response to Sheffield's answer, he said, "Good, Captain. That's real good. I suppose this is what you have been waiting for." and he handed him a sealed envelope. Sheffield anxiously opened the envelope to read his orders.

From: Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet: 8 October 1942

To: Captain Sheffield Brason, Commander USS Reprisal

- 1) Be ready to sail on 28 October 1942. In the meantime, conduct any necessary training for the air group and ship's company prior to departure date.
- 2) You will be the senior officer present and in over all command of Task Group 34.11 consisting of anti-aircraft light cruiser Syracuse and destroyers Percival, Watson, Archer, and Kirkmam.
- 3) Your mission is to ferry USAAF B-25 Bombers to within 600 to 750 miles of Casablanca, Morocco and launch them on 10 November, after airfields have been secured. Your contact is Colonel Harvey Morrison, USAAF.
- 4) Sail to Praia da Vitória on the island of Terceira in the Azores and establish tentative relations with the government on behalf of the United States Navy.
- 5) Wait there for further orders.

Admiral R.E. Ingersoll, U.S. Navy

Sheffield looked up at the Admiral with a puzzled look on his face. Expecting his apprehension the Admiral said, "Not what you were expecting, Captain?"

"No, sir. I was fully expecting to sail to the Pacific where we're so badly needed."

"You're needed here right now, Captain."

Sheffield asked, "Permission to speak freely, sir?"

Admiral McWhorter nodded.

"What you need here, sir, is a ferry boat, not and a front line, combat ready aircraft carrier."

"I thought you might feel that way. Captain. You're all we have have to do the job. Are you aware of Operation Torch?"

"Vaguely, Sir. It has something to do with the invasion of French occupied North Africa."

"Exactly. On November eighth General Patton's Third Army will make a beach head and occupy the coastal areas. It is anticipated that the French will capitulate quickly, with or without a fight. It is anticipated that the airfields will be secured no later than the tenth. The bombers you will ferry are needed as the campaign sweeps across North Africa and meet up with British Forces. The Germans have substantial

forces across North Africa.

“Not only is Reprisal the only ship big enough to carry them, but you have had experience with this sort of operation during the Doolittle Raid. Besides it appears that you have connections with this Colonel Morrison on General Arnold's staff. He seems to think that you owe him a favor.”

“Harvey and I go way back. We did work together on the Doolittle Raid and recently I asked him to put together an inter-service exercise during our shakedown cruise.”

“If you're referring to that brilliant mock torpedo attack; from the reports I read, that was one of the best war games I've heard of in a longtime. And I might add, that was some damned good ship handling on your part.”

Changing the subject, the Admiral stressed, “I need you keep your destination to yourself until you are at sea. We don't want to have someone tip our hand before our forces even get there.”

“Understood. Okay, then. So we deliver the bombers and sail to the Azores to establish tentative relations with the Portuguese. The last I knew, they were neutral but leaning towards the Germans. Has that changed?”

“Not entirely. Previously the Portuguese government only allowed German U-boats and navy ships to refuel there. The last German ship to call on the Azores was the SS Edelweiss back in June. The British have been putting pressure on the Portuguese for access to the the harbors and airfields on the islands. They have been considering it and will expecting you.

“Since they are officially neutral, they still want to continue trade relations with Germany, particularly tungsten metal. It is believed that the Germans want it bad enough that they will look the other way and not take it by force. They have enough on their hands right now, and we're about to give them some more.”

“So once I swing the deal, I'm to wait there for further orders?”

“Once word has reached Washington of the agreement, within two days you will be joined by additional forces with further orders. Washington is working on something that will get you into the fight. Do you have any other questions?”

“No, not at the moment, sir.”

“I'll be leaving on a cruiser tomorrow to catch up with the Ranger in Bermuda, so I won't be available. I'm sure Bill Halsey's former air officer can figure it out. Good luck, Captain. That will be all.”

Sheffield returned to the ship and called a meeting of the senior officers and relayed only a portion of their orders. All he said was that they were to ferry a load of B-25s across the Atlantic to within six hundred miles of an undisclosed destination. He assured them that it was not another Doolittle style raid. Like him, they were surprised and dismayed. They were ready to join the fight, not babysit the Army Air Force.

He confessed his original reaction and said, "These are our orders, be what they may. We're all professionals and we have been given an important job even if it isn't headline grabber. We should be proud of the fact that we are the only ship in the navy capable of pulling it off.

"First, the air group and the ship's company could use a little more training. We have the luxury of time right now, let's use it to our advantage. Today is the ninth so that gives us two and half weeks. We should be able to spend three days at sea next week."

"Even with six hundred men on leave?" Commander Owen asked.

"They're not the ones who need the extra training. It's the new guys I'm worried about, particularly the ones who mustered aboard since the shakedown cruise. Dose everyone agree?"

Heads nodded in unison.

"Good then, lets figure on putting to sea on Tuesday the thirteen and come back in on Thursday afternoon. That way we can still honor the last batch of seventy two hour passes. Seymour, I can help you figure out the logistics for handling the Army bombers. If there is not anything else, let's get to work gentlemen. Dismissed. Except for you Mace. I have an idea to run past you."

Commander Owen remained behind as everyone else filed out of the captain's ready room. "So, Sheffield, can you tell me where were going?"

"Nope, I'm afraid not. But I can tell you that they are formulating plans to send us into action somewhere. He didn't even tell me where that might be. If I were to guess, I'd say the South Pacific by was of the South Atlantic and Indian Ocean."

"So, What's on your mind, Skipper?"

"I realize that I have been kind of a stick in the mud and haven't been very sociable. I was thinking it was about time we had a little fun around here. I used to have get togethers all the time with my section back in San Diego. I continued the same tradition with my squadron and air group. Of course Geannie did all of the planning. She sure had a knack for organizing things and getting people involved. Do you remember what she did for the families of the crew of the Enterprise when we spent Thanksgiving in drydock at Bremerton?"

"Yeah, I do. It was amazing to watch her work her magic. She even had Admiral Halsey eating out of her hand."

"Man, I miss her. If she were here, I'd have her to do what I'm going to ask you to do. I'd like to do two things; one is to host a banquet for the ship's officers compete with an orchestra and dancing. Perhaps at a nice hotel downtown on the twenty fourth, the Saturday before we sail. By then everyone should be back from leave. Do you have anyone who could pull it off?"

"I've been thinking the same thing. Everyone has worked so hard to get us to where we are in such a

short time. I think I have some people I could put on it. Let me see what I can come up with and I'll let you know tomorrow. Whats the other thing?"

"I was thinking along the lines of a barbecue for the enlisted men. Perhaps set up some grills and tables on the flight deck in the shade of the superstructure."

"That one will be a lot easier to put together. I think those are both great ideas. Nothing like a little morale booster before we sail. Who knows when or where we'll get a break. I'll let you know I what I can get put in motion in the morning."

As promised, the next morning Mace informed Sheffield he had people working on the two events. By the end of the day, they hoped to have some preliminary details nailed down. Other details that needed worked out was the logistics for ferrying the B-25s across the Atlantic. After talking to Mace, Sheffield got on the phone and called Washington to talk to Harvey Morrison.

"Colonel Morrison."

"Hello Harvey, this is Sheffield. So, I understand that I owe you a favor."

"Hey, Sheffield, I've been expecting your call. Good to hear from you, old pal. I've got some planes that I need you to haul for me. Are you up to it?"

"I think I can help you out."

"Thanks pal, I knew I could count on you. This should be old hat for you."

"Well then Harvey, why don't you come down here and help me out. I can put you up in the Admiral's suite."

"I can be there tomorrow. Is that soon enough for you. I've got another deal going on there as well. One of your auxiliary carriers is going to haul a load of P-Forties for us.

"The Admiral's suite, eh. I think I'll save that for the voyage and get a hotel until then."

"Suit yourself."

"Actually I'd like bring my new wife along and make a working vacation out of it."

"I've gotcha. Say what's with your new title?"

"Oh, you mean Naval Liaison. I owe it all to you pal. With working on the Doolittle Raid and those exercises in the Gulf of Mexico and now this operation, it was a natural fit."

"Bye the way, Harvey. I haven't thanked you for that. I was expecting one not two. That second one caught me off guard. They were just what we needed."

"Glad to help, as always. So then, I'll see you tomorrow."

"Alright, goodbye Harvey."

It didn't take long for word of their orders to spread among the crew. There was a lot of grumbling

going on about it. That kind of negative attitude can wreck havoc on moral. Sheffield decided that he needed to address the crew and give them a pep talk. He formulated a speech similar to what he gave the senior officers.

He stepped to the microphone on the bridge, flipped the switch and said, "May I have your attention. This is the Captain speaking. By now you all have heard that we have orders to ferry a load of Army Air Force bombers across the Atlantic. I understand your disappointment that we aren't sailing to the Pacific just yet. We're all anxious to get into the fight and to make a difference.

"I assure you that this mission will make a difference. Those planes are crucial to a campaign that is about to unfold. Without them the war can't be waged against our enemies. Our mission to get them there isn't very glamorous and probably won't make it into the history books, let alone the newspapers. Most things don't but the things that do would never happen without what plays out in the background. Once you understand the full scope of the mission and what is to follow, you will be proud to have been a part of it.

"We have been chosen for this mission because we are the only ones capable of carrying it out. That alone is something to be proud of. This is our chance to show the Army what we can do. Remember, where you serve is not important. True honor is found in the fact that you serve and how you serve.

"This is going to be a long hard war. I guarantee that sooner or later we will have to fight. Sometime somewhere we will take the war to the enemy. Sometime in the place least expected the enemy will bring the war to us. I am confident that in either case, we are ready. Just look at how far we have come in such a short time.

Thank you for all of your work. Each of us has a job to do. Every job is important, whether you're a mess steward or a fighter pilot. We're all in this together. There is no finer ship in the Navy and I am honored and humbled to be your captain.

"Carry on men. Lets do our job and do it well. That is all."

The next day, Colonel Morrison arrived and work began on figuring out how to get the job done. Over the next few days it was determined that the Reprisal could handle twenty of the twin engined bombers, four more that the Hornet carried during the Doolittle raid. In many aspects the mission was similar. Twenty four planes and flight crews were training for carrier take offs at Eglin Field near Valparaiso, Florida, the same place where the Doolittle Raiders trained. They too were being instructed by Navy personnel from the nearby Pensacola Naval Air Station and training facility.

Unlike the Doolittle Raid, they would not be launched on a combat mission and would carry no bombs. Their equipment and non essential flight crew personnel were to be transported to North Africa with the invasion force. A few mechanics and support personnel needed to maintain the aircraft would

accompany the planes and would fly ashore aboard the planes.

Some of the Reprisal's planes would be dismantled for storage. Other would be suspended from and secured to the overhead in the hangar. Others would be stored in the auxiliary repair hangar. Captain Brason wanted to keep the forward portion of the hangar free to service the eight Wildcats and six Avengers that he intended to launch and land over the bow for combat air patrol and anti submarine patrols. Unlike the Hornet, they would not have another carrier sailing with them to provide air cover.

In addition, work on getting the ship provisioned was making progress as were plans for the officer's banquet and the crew barbecue. Pat had reserved the banquet hall at the Tazewell Hotel in downtown Norfolk and a flier had been circulated among the officers. The men down in the machine shop had fabricated a large grill and Lieutenant Gates had placed an order for a thousand pounds of rib eye, sirloin, and t-bone stakes and several hundred pounds of Idaho potatoes. Everyone looked forward to these events with great anticipation, but first they had to go to sea for one last training cruise.

On the morning of the 13th the Reprisal and the five ships that were to accompany her stood out to sea. The Syracuse was an Omaha class light cruiser that had recently been converted into an anti-aircraft cruiser in a similar fashion to the Atlanta Class but retained all four stacks. She mounted ten thirty eight caliber five inch guns in five twin mounts and six single mounts along with four dual and two quad forty millimeter anti-aircraft guns, for a total of sixteen, and sixteen twenty millimeter cannon. Technically a cruiser, she was more like a glorified destroyer. The destroyers were all brand new Livermore Class destroyers and this would be there first mission as well.

Once at sea, the Reprisal headed into the wind and began recovering aircraft. However, except for the Bat Team, they weren't her own. The first day was set aside of carrier qualifications for Air Group Nine assigned to the Essex. All day long the old SB2U Vindicators of Bombing Nine and Scouting Nine and the Avengers of Torpedo Nine landed only to be re-spotted to launched again. (Fighting Nine was deployed aboard the Ranger for participation in the invasion.) After a good workout, the planes returned to Norfolk Naval Air Station. The rest of the evening, the ships got in on a couple of hours of gunnery practice.

Right at sunset, the Bat Team was brought up from the hangar were sent aloft. At the time the Bat Team consisted of the four F4F-3Rs, six SBD-4s and six TBF-1s, representing all but Bombing Eleven. That night, their mission proved to be more than a routine training flight. Sixty miles ahead of the Task Group, they found a U-boat on the surface. The first to sweep in were two Wildcats which made a strafing pass. That was followed by a dive bombing attack from three Dauntlesses, each dropping a five hundred pound bomb as the submarine was in the process of submerging. They made another low level pass on a path directly over its last observed course, dropping their depth charges at spaced intervals. The five planes that participated in the attack returned to their patrols, not knowing the fate of their victim. Late into the night, the

Bat Team was recovered. After a few hours of rest and their planes had been serviced, the Bat Team took to the air once again.

During the night one of the destroyers was detached and sent to investigate the site of the attack on the U-boat. At first light they found debris and oil floating on the surface. As it got lighter, a lifeboat was seen off in the distance. The Kirkman was along side the boat crowded with fifteen German sailors and two officers. They were glad to be rescued and willingly surrender themselves. Upon interrogation the senior officer, a Kapitänleutnant which is comparable to a lieutenant, said that they were caught completely by surprise by a night air attack. They had no idea the Americans had such capabilities. He regretted that they were unable to get off a message warning of such tactics. He reported that their boat had been damaged in the dive bombing attack and received further damage from the depth charge attack.

Taking on water they were barely able to maintain periscope depth. They remained submerged long after the planes had left, until water began pouring in faster than it could be pumped out. Forced to surface, the captain ordered the the boat to be abandoned. They were able to launch only one life boat before the submarine began settling quickly by the stern. The boat filled with men and others jumped into the water.

After searching the area further, the Kirkman encountered several bodies and pulled seven more survivors from the water. By the time she returned to the formation, the rest of the air group had flown out. She had missed out on the morning gunnery practice but gladly flashed the signal, "Congratulations Reprisal, you got them. Survivors on board." Rather than resuming her station, Sheffield directed the them to return to Norfolk with the prisoners.

Again Captain Brason addressed the crew over the ships loud speaker informing them of their first victory. Cheers went up from all over the ship. The Reprisal had joined the fight. On the port bridge wing, where it could be seen clearly from the flight deck, was painted a Kriegemarine flag with the silhouette of a sinking submarine superimposed over it.

Through out the day as the task group sailed farther out into Atlantic than the Reprisal had yet ventured, gunnery practice was the order of the day, both aerial and shipboard. As the the gun crews filled towed selves with holes, aircraft worked over the sled that towed behind the Syracuse off in the distance. The shooting only let up long enough to launch and recover aircraft. During the afternoon the task group reached the limit of their training patrol and began working their way back to Norfolk, all the while flexing their muscles. During flight operations, a lot of time was given to launching aircraft with the catapults and landing over the bow. The objective was to select the pilots most capable of the unusual practice to fly missions during the upcoming cruise where only the forward four hundred feet of the flight deck would be available. Again that night the Bat Team was sent up.

After their evening patrol and the Bat Team had been recovered, the sea began to pick up as the

ships entered a storm front. By morning they were encountering some pretty good swells and fifty mile per hour winds. Needless to say, flight operations were suspended for the day and the ships were forced to lower their speed.

During the height of the storm, Storekeeper Second Class Murry Puchesky, who had a homemade still set up in the back of the aviation supply issue room, was at work making a batch of torpedo juice. As the ship rolled with a particularly heavy swell, the beaker containing the distilled alcohol tipped over spilling into the flame. It ignited and the flaming alcohol ran off table and onto the deck and under a filing cabinet, starting a small fire.

In the process of putting it out, another sailor received second degree burns on his arms and had to be taken to the sickbay for treatment. The fire was extinguished before spreading, but not before it destroyed some procurement and inventory records along with some repair manuals.

Lieutenant Wally Bashor, the chief medical officer reported the injury to Commander Owen, who in turn informed Sheffield. He directed that an investigation be launched and the evidence quickly pointed to the illegal still. At first, no one was willing to identify its owner, but it didn't take long for the finger to be pointed at Petty Officer Puchesky, as this was not the first time he had gotten into trouble.

Sheffield called a captain's mast and had the disorderly sailor brought before him. Captain Brason was well respected by the crew for his fair mindedness. Because of that reputation, Puchesky thought he would be a push over. He was mistaken. Fair minded means what it implies, fairness according to established rules. The smug tough guy from the Bronx admitted to causing the fire and possessing the still and waited for a slap on the wrist.

First of all, the captain ordered the still destroyed, secondly he was demoted to Storekeeper First Class, and worst of all, he was to spend the next thirty days in the brig. Thinking he had been unfairly treated, he arrogantly protested.

His protest was abruptly cut off by the captain's rare display of sternness, "Oh, so you don't think the punishment for your poor judgment is fair? How would this be for fairness? What if I make it Seaman Second Class? How about a dishonorable discharge? If this was the days of sail, you'd get forty lashes. Would you like me to reinstate that tradition?"

The instantly humbled Puchesky, with his head bowed responded, "I beg your pardon, sir. I was wrong for operating my still during the storm like that."

"You shouldn't have been operating it at all. Alcohol aboard ship is strictly forbidden by Navy regulations, especially on this ship. Do I make myself clear?"

"Yes sir."

"You not only disregarded regulations, but your irresponsibility put this ship and her crew in danger.

One man had to be treated for injuries. Lieutenant Bashor says he will have to be off duty for at least two weeks.

“I could have gone to the extreme here but I didn't out of fairness to you. Despite your flare for trouble you are a valuable member of this crew. Lieutenant Gates tells me that you are hard working and you do exceptional job. I understand that it was you who acquired those extra radar sets. I don't even want know how you got your hands on them. The truth is, I need you as part of this crew. I want you in the crew. But I can't have you or anyone else jeopardize the rest of the crew or this ship. Take the time off I'm giving you to examine your attitude and behavior. You'll have plenty of time to think about it. Just to show you how fair I am, we'll talk again in two weeks and see where it goes from there.”

As the offender was lead away, he paused and turned around and said, “Thank you, sir. You are by far the best captain I've had.”

Toward evening the storm began to subside considerably, but they had been delayed sufficiently as to not make port that afternoon as planned. Rather, they returned the next morning, on the 16th. Instead of sending off the air group to fly ashore, they were retained aboard as the ship sailed into Hampton Roads and tied up at Pier 7. No sooner than the ship was secured, the last batch of men went ashore to commence their seventy two hour liberty.

That afternoon, Sheffield also left the ship and had dinner with the Owen's and spent the evening. Rather than having Mace take him back to ship so late in the evening, he called for his staff car to come pick him up.

Over the next few days, Commander Whithouse's men worked of figuring out how to stow the entire air group, including spares, below decks. For starers, everything was brought up to the flight deck, freeing all of the space in the hangar. The spare Wildcats, Dauntlesses were already lashed to the overhead of the forward hangar section, the SBDs having had their wings removed.

To make everything fit, eight Wildcats would be put in the repair hangar. Because they were smaller, the rest would be lashed to the overhead of the aft hangar section, between the flight deck support girders, their wings folded and landing gear up. The radar equipped Alleycats, would have to have their wings removed and lashed to the overhead with the spares.

The font section of the hangar was to be reserved for the eight Wildcats and six Avengers that would remain operational. The hangar was designed to be divided into three sections by metal roll down fire curtains, each section with its own elevator. The rest of the Dauntlesses could be squeezed into the center section and all of the remaining Avengers, including the three spares would fit in the aft section.

Once the logistics were figured out and the last group had returned from their three day weekend liberty, the air department with help enlisted from the deck divisions, began the tedious job of shoehorning

everything into the hangar. One by one, the planes to be stored in the overhead were hoisted into place by the ship's two forklifts. The rest were manhandled into place as tightly as possible.

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The Syracuse and destroyers mentioned in this chapter are completely fictional as are their characteristics.

The story of the still is from an experience of my father's while serving aboard the Enterprise. Torpedo juice is American slang for an alcoholic beverage, first mixed in World War II, made from pineapple juice and the 180-proof grain alcohol fuel used in United States Navy torpedo motors. Various poisonous additives were mixed into the fuel alcohol to render the alcohol undrinkable, and various methods were employed by sailors to separate the alcohol from the poison by filtering the fuel mix through a loaf of compressed bread. Aside from the expected alcohol intoxication and subsequent hangover, the effects of drinking torpedo juice sometimes included mild or severe reactions to the poison. The drink's reputation included an element of risk.

The storm referred to actually moved through the Western Atlantic a couple of days later than portrayed here.

