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NAVY DEPARTMENT
BUREAU OF NAVIGATION
Washington, D. C.

November 4, 1941

R E S T R I C T E D

BUREAU OF NAVIGATION CIRCULAR LETTER NO. 136-41.

From: The Chief of the Bureau of Navigation.
To: All Ships and Stations.
Subject: Subversive Activities - Combatting of.

1. The discipline officer of the Bureau of Navigation has recently had occasion to review a number of instances of grave indiscretion on the part of naval personnel.
2. On one occasion the security of an important naval operation was menaced by the careless words of junior officers. In another instance a seaman writing to a "pen pal" in occupied France revealed in a casual way a great deal about the armament and functions and occupations of the destroyer on which he was serving. In still another instance a flying cadet writing to a captured British flyer in a German prison camp revealed considerable restricted matter about naval aviation training.
3. These almost incredible examples of violation of security principles are indicative of what must be a large number of indiscretions, grading down to the more common but equally dangerous careless talk in bars and other public places.
4. It is obvious that there is still much to be done in the indoctrination of security principles among both officers and men. Commanding officers are responsible for such indoctrination and it is urged that everything possible be done to make every member of the naval personnel realize that with a few words, he may do more to do harm to his service and his country than the most brilliant enemy spy might be able to accomplish by careful planning.
5. Correspondence with unknown persons abroad shows a lack of appreciation of the responsibilities of an officer or man toward his country and his Navy. Such letters are undoubtedly read by military censors and the information contained therein carefully digested. Even when writing to personal friends abroad this is probable and the greatest care should be exercised that no information of past or prospective movements or other military information is contained in such letters.

J. F. Shafroth
Assistant Chief of Bureau

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