

E.B. Launches Caiman; Wins Recognition as Enlisted Man's Sub
New London Day
March 31, 1944

The Caiman, the "enlisted man's submarine" was launched at 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon from the Victory yard ways of the Electric Boat Co.

The Caiman won that title when she was christened by Mrs. A. E. Bonjour of 65 Federal street, this city, wife of an enlisted man in the submarine service while scores of bluejackets, attending the Submarine school at the Submarine Base, looked on. And in addition, G.T. Adams, an enlisted man who has served aboard three Electric Boar Co. submarines in this war, shared speaking honors with Gov. Raymond E. Baldwin. The Submarine Base sailors were given special liberty to attend the launching and their presence added much color and impressiveness to the occasion.

Workers Win Awards

Mrs. Bonjour, who is president of the Periscope Navy Wives' club of this city, smashed the champagne bottle against the ship's bow after a program which saw 13 company employees receive cash and war bonds for suggestions to speed production from Joseph Milligan, chairman of the plant's labor-management committee.

The launching time was arraigned so that all employees of the Victory yard could view one of their ships slide into the Thames river and hundreds of them availed themselves of the opportunity. Many of the yard's women employees were in the launching throng.

Mrs. Luba Eaves and Mrs. Alida Alligood, two women burners, cut through the restraining plate holding the ship on the ways and at the count of 11, the ship started her majestic slide into the river as Mrs. Bonjour sent champagne spraying with a forceful swipe at the hull with the metal encased bottle from her position on the sponsor's platform which held company officials, navy officers and their wives and guests.

L. Y. Spear, president of the Electric Boat Co, put the enlisted man's note into the proceedings at the very outset of the pre-launching ceremonies when he remarked over a public address system that Mrs. Bonjour, as sponsor, represented the enlisted force of the navy. Mr. Spear introduced Mr. Baldwin, who served as an enlisted man in the last war, and Connecticut's chief executive spoke as follows:

Governor's Talk

"I'm proud to be here today; proud to have a part in the launching of this great new submarine, the U. S. S. Caiman. And I share with every citizen of Connecticut a feeling of great pride in the tremendous contribution which both labor and management here at the Electric Boar Co. have made, are making now and will continue to make in days to come towards the winning of this war.

"Here before you is the Caiman, the latest submarine that your brains, your ability, your energy and your will to win this war have produced. Your record for increased production is one which can be counted in

ever-increasing numbers as submarine after submarine slides down these ways. This launching today only marks one event in a great succession of events which attest to an outstanding job for your company, for your state, for your nation, for the cause for which we fight-for freedom!

In Natural Element

"As this submarine slides down the ways to her natural element, the sea, she begins her long journey to some fighting front. She will be in your charge for yet a little while until she flies the commission pennant of the United States Navy. Then your work will have been finished. The remainder of the job will be carried on by a fearless, gallant crew. They will take this ship. They will sail her through the seven seas, seeking our enemies and blasting them to the bottom where they belong. They will stand watch in the icy waters of the north; and they will lie in wait for the enemy in the warmth of the South Pacific. But wherever they go, wherever they fight they will always carry with them the memories of New London and of the men and women who, fighting against time at their work here, built and delivered the Caiman to the Navy.

"We all have a great personal stake in this war. It is ours to win or lose. And no one appreciates the responsibilities that fall upon each one of us any more than I do. For I know what the sailor on combat duty at sea thinks and feels-and I know what the person who has been left behind here at the home thinks and feels. For I have been a sailor and now, in this war, my job is here at home.

Job Still to Be Done

"When the U.S.S. Caiman goes to sea-out to the fighting fronts of this world-wide war-there will still remain a job to be done here at home. And no little part of that job will fall to the wives, the sweethearts and the mothers of the men who man the Caiman.

"Believe me, it is a great honor to be here as Mrs. Bonjour, the wife of one of the enlisted men in submarine service, sponsors the launching of the Caiman. For to this ship and to the men who man her, I can say little more than that which is in the heart of all whom they will leave here at home. That is Good Luck. May God go with you and bring you back - safe and victorious."

Tough, Rugged Life

Remarking that he has already served aboard three Electric Boat Co. submarines on war patrols, Chief Adams said the submarine service is a tough and rugged life but the crews are never concerned with the ability of their ship. He said that when Mrs. Bonjour christens the Caiman she will be acting for the wives and sweethearts of all enlisted men in the submarine service.

Mr. Milligan was then introduced and presented the cash and war bond awards to workers as follows:

Albin Kosiba, an Erector - cash award for an improved method of securing the bulkhead to the positioner for welding.

John J. O'Neill, a Shipfitter - cash award for a suggestion to re-tap holes in deck structure on the ground before installation.

Alfred Sullivan, an Inside Machinist - A cash award for a jig to position latches on watertight doors for welding and finishing grinding.

Leon L. Martin, an Outside Machinist - A cash award for a pulling jig used to remove shafts for work on bearings.

War Bond Awards

Ralph H. Sabins, a Pipefitter \$25 war bond for an improvement in the fresh-water line from main engine exhaust valve.

Irving A. McCritchie, a Sheet Metal Worker - A \$25 war bond for an improved method of fabricating utility containers eliminating waiting.

Isador Levine, Inside Machinist - A \$25 war bond for an improvement in cast worm wheels and various improved jigs and fixtures.

George L. Degnan, Outside Machinists' Department - A \$25 war bond for an improved design of the adjustable stop seal in the torpedo tube breech door.

Elmer C. Roth, Outside Machinist Department - A \$25 war bond for the design and construction of a machine to make sprill jigs.

William F. Orkney and James Chaplin, both of the chippers drillers department. Each a \$25 war bond for suggesting and accomplishing the preparation of battery tanks by sand blasting in place of chipping and grinding.

Maurice Killeen, Shipfitter - \$25 war bond for a clamp which eliminates welded pads for pulling plates into position.

George J. Nauta, Inspector - \$25 war bond for a new method of blanking off the safety tank for testing, saving many hours and eliminating accident hazard.

The awarding of prizes completed, Mrs. Bonjour christened the U. S. S. Caiman and the submarine slid down to the Thames river with pennants whipping in the early spring breeze while the Electric Boat Co. band struck up the traditional number, Anchors Aweigh.

The Caiman was the sixth submarine launched by Electric Boat Co. this year.