

Newsweek

APRIL 23, 1945

'We of the Navy Mourn'

by

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In the death of our Commander-in-Chief, Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Navy lost the best personal friend it ever had or probably ever will have. Other men, military in training and veterans of successful land campaigns, have

sat in the White House, but never before in the history of our country has any man ever sat there whose instincts at heart were essentially those of the sailor.

In his day Theodore Roosevelt did more than any President before him to make the country conscious that the Navy was its first line of defense, and his efforts to build up its strength were unceasing. This he did from a national point of view, but at heart his instincts were those of the fighter and soldier. When the time came for him to play an active role at the front, which he did as a Rough Rider, and later when he desired to play an active role as a defender of his country, his thoughts and instincts turned toward the Army.

From his boyhood days, Franklin Roosevelt loved the sea and everything pertaining to it, and that love persisted unswervingly throughout his entire lifetime. And, had fate decreed that he should play an active role in the armed services, he would undoubtedly have chosen the Navy. It is perhaps fair to say that his happiest days were spent at sea, and when necessity called for him to voyage at sea, as he did many times, while he was received with the deference due his position, he traveled with men of the sea as a brother, born out of that kinship which only men who love the sea can instinctively feel.

No man who loves the sea and travels on it can help but receive inspiration from it. Mother Sea takes him to her heart and whispers in his ears those things which only a lover of it may know. She shows him the vastness and majesty of space. She displays her moods playful and rough. The storm tells you of conflict, and you strive to

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find the way to best it. The calm and sunny days that follow tell you here is peace if you take the right road out of the storm. In the quiet watches of the night Mother Sea says: "I give you imagination, let it roam, but seek to find the truth."

Party politics may cause a man to pursue many strange and devious paths on land, where the overwhelming bulk of detail harasses him to the bone and obscures the vision so that it is difficult to see the trees because of the woods, but in the course of a lifetime Franklin Roosevelt never deviated one whit from his allegiance to the sea or departed from the loyalty he gave to the men who traverse the oceans, a loyalty which they returned.

When the war came, Franklin Roosevelt chose as his Chief of Staff a naval man, Fleet Admiral Leahy, who had been associated with him through many trying years and in whose judgment and loyalty he placed every confidence. For his personal physician he had selected a naval man, Vice Admiral Ross T. McIntire, who served him faithfully to the end. In the many trying days of the war, and there were many, our late Commander-in-Chief never failed to support loyally those naval leaders selected to aid him in the successful prosecution of the war.

The nation mourns the loss of a great war leader, stricken at a time when his services could ill be spared. And the world at large mourns the death of a man in whom it placed its trust. But we of the Navy mourn the loss of our sailor leader and loyal and devoted friend.