

Capt Young

Page #1

C'd'r Lucien Young, last captain of the illfated gunboat Bennington, was an odd character. His facial expression varied from a fierce scowl to amiability, and depended upon just how much liquor he had aboard him. About 50 years old, built like a wrestler, he came to the Bennington to relieve ~~its captain~~ Kosuth Miles, its ailing captain, at Panama in 1904, several years before the canal had been dug.

A shore boat brought him to the ship as she lay ^{at anchor} ~~waiting~~ in the open roadstead, about three miles from the ancient city of Panama. As the Boatswain's Mate on duty, I piped him aboard while the ship rolled incessantly, but that was not the reason for his stumbling, as he came on deck. His breath smelled of whiskey as he staggered past me to shake hands with our officers lined up in the starboard gangway, ready to welcome him. Then after much hand shaking and back ^{slapping} ~~slapping~~ he was led back to the poop, where captain Miles waited to receive him.

An old ship, the Bennington had a high poop and foc'sal, both being about eight or ten feet above the main deck in between. Slanting ladders with grab ropes on both sides led upward to both foc'sal and poop decks.

No stranger to climbing ladders, drunk or sober, Young was soon shaking hands with Miles. /Then Young wanted to meet the crew. (Because of a smallpox epidemic in the city of Panama, nobody was allowed ashore.)

