

THE HONORABLE RALPH A. BARD
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY, 2/24/41 to 6/24/44
UNDER SECRETARY OF THE NAVY, 6/24/44 to 6/30/45

Ralph A. Bard was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on July 29, 1884, son of George Morris and Helen (Norwood) Bard. He is a direct descendant of Michael Bard, who sailed from Rotterdam, Holland, in the LYDIA, and later served as a Captain in the Revolutionary War.

He attended public schools in Cleveland, and the Hyde Park High School in Chicago, Illinois, where he was Captain of the football team in 1901. In 1902 he entered Princeton University, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1906. There he played varsity football, basketball and baseball, and was a member of the Senior Council. He received the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, in 1944, and that of Doctor of Laws from Princeton University February 22, 1947.

Mr. Bard's pre-Naval career was a varied one: from miner in Nevada to industrial financing in Chicago. For years he managed his own business, that of financing smaller industrial companies, helping to build them and extend their activities.

He came to Washington in February 1941 at the request of the late Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, and was appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy by the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Without political connections, and with no strong political affiliation, he was a Republican most of his life, but at times an independent in local and National elections. He was sworn in as Assistant Secretary of the Navy on February 24, 1941, by Rear Admiral Walter B. Woodson, USN, then Judge Advocate General of the Navy.

As Assistant Secretary of the Navy, he was responsible for the supervision and direction of all matters relating to civilian personnel and the general administration of the Department, including general control of all shore establishments of the Navy. Divisions operating under his cognizance were: Shore Establishments Division; Transportation Division; Office of Supervision and Management; Administrative Office; Management Engineer's Office; and others.

During his administration, the Shore Establishments Division and the Office of Personnel, Supervision and Management were consolidated and called the Division of Shore Establishments and Civilian Personnel. This merger resulted in greatly improved efficiency in all administrative problems effecting civilian personnel. He also consolidated the management of the industrial departments of Navy Yards under the Bureau of Ships, and organized the Industrial Survey Division to report on the industrial efficiency of those and other industrial activities.

Realizing the necessity of a sound industrial relations program and the strengthening of the supervisory organization, he launched a titanic program in modern industrial relations, beginning with a conference in Washington in the early part of 1942. Here representatives of labor in the various shore establishments met to discuss labor relations problems with the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval

Operations, and other officials of the Navy. As a result of this meeting, Mr. Bard issued the Navy's first official pronouncement of its labor relations policy, a part of which follows:

"This reasoning brings us to the conclusion that the aims, ambitions, plans and hopes of the Navy are identical with those of the vast majority of the men and women who work for the Navy - and that the Navy and its employees are engaged and joined in a common cause and a common objective which can be achieved to the fullest degree only by wholehearted cooperation between those responsible for the operation of the Navy in all states of management, and those who labor to produce ships, guns, planes, and ammunition so vital to its program.

"We are convinced beyond any doubt that the great majority of workers in our Navy Yards, Ordnance Plants and other industrial shore establishments of the Navy are just as interested in production and in progress in all directions towards winning this war, as are those of us in charge of the operations of the Navy in Washington, or on the high seas. We feel that there should be no misunderstanding, no controversies, and no inequities which cannot be solved by management and production workers of the Navy working closely and harmoniously together to help win this war.

"We expect all representatives of Navy management to meet at all times representatives of labor on an all-out basis of open-mindedness, friendship, tolerance, and mutual good will. We believe such a working policy carried on by all concerned will further enhance the morale of our Naval Establishments and we call upon all in authority, in all levels of management, and upon labor spokesmen, and labor itself, to adapt its thinking, its actions, and its sentiments, to the end that the utmost cooperation may exist in all of the relationships within the Navy family, all of whom shall be engaged now in helping to make the Navy the most effective and powerful weapon possible for the service of our Country in this, the most difficult hour of its history."

This policy materially aided in the smooth functioning of the Navy's vast industrial machine, the result being no strike or work stoppage in any Naval activity during the war.

With the aid of experts, Mr. Bard directed his attention to every phase of industrial relations: training, classification, safety, employee services, labor relations, recruiting, employment, social and recreational activities, and efficient utilization of manpower. He established a Personnel Relations Division in every major Naval Activity, and officers with industrial relations experience were obtained to manage these divisions. Resultant accomplishments in this field were outstanding.

When Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal relinquished the Under Secretaryship for the Cabinet Post of Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Bard succeeded him, being sworn in as Under Secretary of the Navy by Rear Admiral Thomas L. Gatch, USN, Judge Advocate General of the Navy, on June 24, 1944. He retained the responsibility for civilian personnel, in addition to the many new problems to be handled as Under Secretary. He also took over the Secretarial responsibilities of all Naval uniformed personnel, including disciplinary action.

Assigned to him were: the Administrative Office; Boards of Decorations and Medals, Medical Examiners, Review, Discharges and Dismissals; Divisions of Shore Establishments and Civilian Personnel, and Training Liaison and Coordination; Industrial Survey Division; Joint Army and Navy Committee on Welfare and Recreation; Management Engineer's Office; Naval Clemency and Prison Inspection Board; Naval Examining and Retiring Board; Office of the Judge Advocate General (Reports to the Assistant Secretary on matters of Legislation and Taxation); Office of War Savings Bonds; Transportation Branch; and War Ballot Office.

Inefficiency and office wastes were objectives of his personal attention. Freeze ceilings were established to control personnel assigned to the Navy Department in Washington and to the major activities in the Field. For a long period he personally insisted on approving each individual added to the Navy Department and a check-up was made on each request before approval was granted. A tight justification procedure was established for additional personnel and a classification made of civilian personnel qualifications.

Among the many steps to improve the administration of the Navy Department, were the consolidation of personnel functions within the bureaus; programs for safety, improved employee health, beneficial suggestions; exit interviews; control of absenteeism; elimination of unnecessary paperwork, duplicate files; simplification of correspondence; revision of passive defense measures; savings and control in Department publications; coordination of vehicular transportation; utilization of space and working efficiency, improvement of employee feeding services; and the establishment of War Production Committees to provide for the joint cooperation of labor and management in improving production. He was the Navy's liaison with the War Manpower Commission and the Selective Service System; and for the War Production Board during a great part of the war period.

Another outstanding contribution was the organization of the Elk Hills Naval Oil Reserve in California, in cooperation with private enterprise. Under his guidance the Navy's Alaskan Oil Reserve was explored for the first time. He was a member of the British-American Oil Treaty Committee.

During Mr. Bard's period of service to the Navy Department, the Navy grew from 383 combatant ships to over 1,300 combatant ships plus a new-born armada of over 58,000 landing craft, over 6,000 smaller vessels, and 40,000 aircraft, thus becoming the most potent sea and air power on earth. The number of civilian employees of the Navy Department mounted from 91,000 to over 753,000 in over 6,000 Naval activities within the continental limits of the United States alone, making the United States Navy the largest single employer of industrial labor in the world.

"For exceptionally meritorious service to the Government of the United States in a duty of great responsibility as Assistant Secretary of the Navy from February 24, 1941, to June 24, 1944, and as Under Secretary of the Navy from June 24, 1944, to July 1, 1945..." Mr. Bard was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. The citation continues, in part:

"...Responsible for the administration of the Navy's industrial shore establishments and civilian manpower, he exercised extraordinary foresight and judgment in directing and supervising the expansion of activities under his cognizance to a point where the Navy had become the largest single direct employer of industrial labor in the world. Advised by a battery of experts, he closely examined every phase of modern industrial relations, subsequently aiding the Secretary of the Navy in the formulation of the Navy's plans and policies with regard to labor and management and in launching a tremendous industrial relations program which resulted in an unparalleled record of production unmarred by any labor strife despite the critical problems encountered as labor, private management and the Navy united to produce the ships, planes, guns and ammunition required to maintain a fighting Navy..... His absolute integrity, deep understanding of human values and uncompromising devotion to the interests of his country were in the highest tradition of patriotic service."

Since his return to business, Mr. Bard was appointed (March 1947) Deputy to the United States Representative, United Nations Commission on Conventional Armament. In other years he has served as Vice President of the Chicago Council, Boy Scouts of America; Director of Military Relief, Central Division, American Red Cross; and Trustee of Northwestern University. He is a member of the following clubs: Chicago, Coleman Lake, Old Elm; Attic; Commercial (Chicago); Princeton; Army and Navy; Chevy Chase (Washington, D.C.)

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