

INTRODUCTION • *Navies thrive upon traditions and those traditions are man-made. Ancient luster still shines from such names as Jones and Barney, Hull and Peary, Decatur, Nelson, Drake and Hawkins, Lief Ericson and Ragnor Lodbrok. And behind these are other clever sailors from Crete and Phoenicia whose titles and distinctions may not have descended through the veils of history but whose methods and know-how certainly did.*

So are there also tradition-makers among the mariners of deep space—among the men and officers of that patrol which keeps the peace of the inner and outer planets, or wages the grimmest of all war in that black night where stars are suns and the slightest miscalculation means a death undreamed of when men rode sea water instead of interstellar vacuum.

John Bullard was a tradition-maker (and breaker, too, when the occasion demanded). He did not choose this unique position in regard to the Service; it was forced upon him by fate, luck, or whatever Power decides the future of space-roving humans.

There was nothing heroic about him to catch the eye or rivet the attention. He was neither six-foot-three with muscles to awe an envious Jovian, or a little Napoleon. He was neither handsome nor ugly enough to cause comment. He was reputed to be able to think fast in an emergency—but since that is an attribute demanded of

all space officers, it did not distinguish him in any way from his fellows.

Born on Terra, in the ancient district of Ohio, in the year 3915, he passed in due course into the Patrol Academy, where he was an average student, and graduated into the Service standing about a third of the way down his class. From there on he served the usual tricks in various ships, gathering during that process the rating of "competent" and the liking of those who knew him well enough. (He was a quiet, rather studious youngster and had few close friends.) When he passed from ship to ship it was with the good wishes and favorable reports of each commander.

In 3940 he had reached the rank of Lieutenant by regular, steady promotion. And then came the affair of the Admiral's Inspection and Bullard's real career began. As it continued he showed that he was the stuff from which such biographies as this are made. "Deep Space" Bullard—maker of traditions!