

Re-Commissioned Escort Carrier Thought To Be World's First Helicopter Carrier

San Francisco — (AP) — The Navy has re-commissioned the USS Thetis Bay, a former World War II escort carrier, as a new standard assault carrier and believed to be the world's first helicopter carrier.

The vessel, which has number 9000 and 58,000 tons displacement, was re-commissioned at the San Francisco Naval Shipyard at Hunter's Point. Rear Adm. John R. Best, commander of the 12th Naval District and commander of the Western Sea Frontier, presided.

The Thetis Bay, displacing 10,500 tons when fully loaded and 312 feet long, was converted into what Navy and Marine experts believe is a key unit in a new concept of sea-

land assault known as amphibious operations. The other key is the helicopter.

From the point of attack, the assault is based upon Navy strategists following the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan, in 1945.

In the few seconds of the Hiroshima bombing, said Col. Edward N. Rydahl, commander of Marine Corps Test Unit No. 1, assigned to the Thetis Bay, "all theories of amphibious assault became obsolete."

New Approach

This was true because Navy and Marine experts realized that never again could men and ships be concentrated on a beachhead to overcome this

problem, a board of Marine Corps officers developed the theory of "vertical envelopment," which consists of landing assault troops by helicopter from a carrier behind enemy lines. The theory was tested in the Korean conflict and under simulated war conditions at Quantico, Va. In 1954, the Navy decided to bring the Thetis Bay

out of mothballs and convert her to a helicopter carrier.

The vessel's conventional landing gear was stripped and a special elevator was installed for "choppers." Provision was made to accommodate 1200 Marines who would man the whirlybirds and carry leatherneck assault troops. The first fully-trained Marine unit has been

practicing for months in hills of Camp Pendleton from the "deck" of the USS Horno, a landing ship with the same dimensions of the Thetis Bay.

This Marine unit will become the prototype of others in the future, and the converted Thetis Bay will be the test model on which future helicopter assault carriers will be built from the

keel up.

The experts believe that by employing many ships and larger and faster helicopters, now being built, the new air assault theory offers great shock value because of the speed of attack and varied directional approach. In addition, its advocates believe, it will force the enemy to disperse because of possibility

of attack from any direction. This, in turn, will permit greater dispersion of attacking forces.

The commander of the Thetis Bay is Capt. Thomas W. South II, 45, graduate of Annapolis and a native of Philadelphia, Pa. The vessel will join the Pacific Fleet in September with a complement of 500 Navy enlisted men and 40 Navy officers

in addition to the Marine units.

Escort carriers were named for bays, islands and sounds of the United States and World War II battles. Thetis Bay is on the edge of MacKenzie Bay in northern Alaska. "Thetis," coming from Greek mythology, was the mother of Achilles. The Navy hopes the Thetis Bay has no vulnerable "Achilles' heel."



TENSION BREAK—Marine S Sgt. Matthew McKeon, being court-martialed for manslaughter in the deaths of six Marine recruits at Parris Island, S. C., relaxes between trial sessions with his year-old son, Johnny.



The Home Library . . .

The American home library is coming back. The handsome sign of the fact is in the "Pace Setter House for 1956," shown in the July issue of "House Beautiful" magazine. A nice thing about it, from the outlook of an old sawmill hand, is that you can scarcely have a home library without bookshelves and architects agreed long ago that West Coast hemlock shelving is the best thing available under books as well as under kitchenware and dishes.

In Seattle Realtor Henry Broderick and Attorney Ralph Bushnell Potts, both of them authors of books, have local prize contests going for essays on two subjects. One is "The Home Library and Its Character Building Influences." The second essay contest is on the theme, "The Value of a Home Library for Self Education."

In each case a first prize of \$100 is offered, with a number of secondary prizes to go along. Famous author of books, Nard Jones, is promoting the contest, while the Seattle Operation Home Improvement program is sponsoring it.

The Pace Setter House . . .

The home library spot makes a good talking point to start on in "House Beautiful's" fine feature for July. Here is a picture that fills the better part of a big page. It is glorified by wood in walls window frames, furniture, the paneling of a double fireplace divider between living room and dining room and in the far end living room.

From the shelves a glow shines forth in a blend of colors that light the view with vivid appeal for the 50-foot length of living room and dining room, plus fireplace space. The colors are in the rich bindings of rare

old books, a noble collection that fills the main shelves.

Move to the left and look along the side wall, between doors that open to a spacious patio, and there more shelves of books rise from floor to roof. Here are new books, and the colors are from decorated dust-jackets.

All the books new and old harmonize with the wood of the walls. It is the new trend, the modern way. Not so long ago the book publishers feared that television might be their ruin. But, no. Somehow TV has helped the booksellers. Seems that people like to turn on the television, and then go sit down and read books.

Old Standby . . .

Library or not, books or what, not, the Pace Setter House projects wood as the basic material for a house of permanence, yet a house with flexibility and workability of framing, siding, flooring and interior walls. Thus Architect Morgan Stedman has been able to make a 40-year-old house over into a residence of contemporary design and character.

An accomplishment of the kind means a tremendous lot of the timber economy of the Pacific Northwest. This year's "House Beautiful" Pace Setter is of a style that calls unmistakably for Douglas fir beams, posts and framing, with West Coast hemlock decking and shelving, and Western red cedar paneling and siding.

Every nationally published example of the kind, and every new enthusiasm like that of the Seattle home library promotion, helps to put lumber to work in home construction. And so out in the woods we keep the logs moving and the saws turning "makin' 'er pay."

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