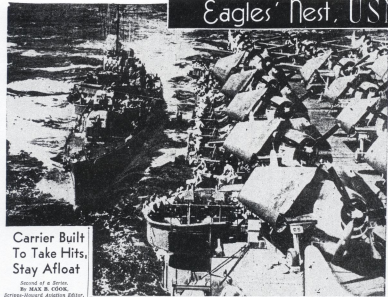


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Eagles Nest U.S.



Any kind of emergency is routine on an airplane carrier at sea. Here's the scene as a destroyer comes alongside to transfer a wounded man by breeches buoy. Crews of both ships are out to sea for damage. The top deck of a carrier is the flight deck, the one below, the standard level, the hangar deck.

U. S. Navy Photo from AP.

Carrier Built To Take Hits, Stay Afloat

Second of a Series.
By MAX H. COOK.
Scripps-McDonald Atlantic Editor.

ABOARD U.S. BENNINGTON, Essex Class Carrier, Somewhere at Sea (Delayed).

"We hit the deck in the admiral's cabin within minutes, it seemed, of the time we turned in."

"It's 9:30, sir, and the captain wonders if you'd like to see us again?"

Lightly we go up and an orderly stood quietly beside our cot. Through the narrow-shaped door came Capt. Beckmann.

"Come on, lieutenant. It's a real show. Here, get into these," he said. He tossed over the rail windbreakers, which we hurriedly pulled on over khaki shorts. We donned cleaned-down, three-throat flight suits to the hangar deck, went forward through a maze of crew workrooms, finally emerging on the foremain in pitch darkness. A light, cool, zesty wind was blowing.

Muffled figures bent over two overhead searchlights, each with a searchlight as large as some auto wheels. Pulled by motive power far down in the ship, they may change are creating as they slowly turned upward and along the deck around sturdy castles to somewhere below.

There's Always Coffee.

With large paper brushes crisscrossing over the lines with white paint every six feet so that the shadows of ships might be discerned when the clouds again were let out. Soon, with anchors up, the carrier swung its bow around and headed out to sea at a speed in excess of 25 knots.

clearly, star-ensured sky hid the proceedings.

"There's always coffee in the ward room," he said, "aboard. Cent. Beckmann, further adding a nice touch in remarks, a touch we'll never forget. Coffee, hot, steaming and real. At any hour of the day or night, that does it in the ward room and pantries. Four-year-old Cream? Sugar? Whatever you like. And a small assembly room at the bow end of the ward room offers sleeping quarters, lounge chairs and a small library if you want to relax with your coffee."

The ship was under way and we climbed back to the admiral's cabin, where chain coffee awaited us, served by the captain's orderly. It was beginning to be a life.

General quarters sounded at 9:30. And more coffee. A shave, shower and redressing and then again at 9:30. Grange, Jitter, bacon and eggs (any style), cold cereal. If you wanted it, toast, a large dish of jam or jelly and coffee from the spicuous kitchen.

Flanked by Guns.

We then began a series of changing trips from the upper bridge to the very bowels of the carrier and back.

Tenside's deck from 800 to 200 feet in length. That's about 200 yards, or the length of three football fields.

Strip everything from its entire top deck, including mainmast, one side, center, for a rail-squad, airport control tower and administration building. Move the entire deck up into the air, high steamer is located at a spot where

self, and install another deck beneath it at its former level.

The top deck is the flight deck, the one below, at the standard level, is the hangar deck.

The "islands" located on the starboard side of the carrier, is flanked at each end by powerful batteries of rapid firing five-inch guns that can fill the skies with a shower of flak on a moment's notice. These are augmented, completely around the flight deck, with rows of fast-firing anti-aircraft guns, their muzzles projecting where the outer edges of the deck. They are located on a sort of catwalk below the deck's level and manned by the carrier's highly trained gunners.

Planes Ride Elevators.

At a level of the island, just above the five-inchers, is the flag deck and following this around, one sees the long lines of signal masts and more anti-aircraft guns. Here too is the air officer who handles the whole launching flag for bomber and fighter takeoffs and the red flag that signals no takeoffs.

Above the flag deck toward the bow is the bridge where Capt. Sikes directs the carrier.

The several decks of the island house the four air-conditioned ready rooms for the pilots, the cockpit and admiral's quarters, pilot's lounge, mess and pantry, electrical control rooms and a number of military stores. The top of the island appears much like the superstructure of a modern battleship. The ship's signal beaker is located at a spot where

visibility is 200 degrees at all times. Directly below the flight deck is the big hangar deck where the battle planes are serviced, maintained and repaired.

On the stern end of the hangar deck is a supply department which has thousands of spare parts, complete instruments, tools and all necessary replacements for the bombers and fighters operating from the carrier. Expert technicians are on hand to complete such jobs in record time. More powerful anti-aircraft guns poke their noses out beneath the flight deck from this point.

Below the hangar deck and far down into the ship, crewmen, technicians, engineers and experts in many lines work and sleep day and night, often going far down without seeing the flight deck or the sky above it. It is an amazing sight at industrial, electrical and steam commercial and luxury activities. For it is where the majority of the crew live and work.

Light's Tail of Trouble.

This under-the-water city, most of it in anti-submarine day and night, appears to the observer to be a maze of steel ladders, narrow passageways and small bathtubs. Dropping down through a hatch and half sliding down a perpendicular ladder, one finds oneself in the center of the dark, hot, smelly activity.

One such spot was one of the normal rooms. On the wall, in miniature, were the electric circuits that covered every part of the carrier.

viewed what doors and hatches were open and which ones were closed. Other charts offered information on active vital parts of the ship. In case of any trouble, anywhere, lights told the story so that instant action might correct the trouble.

In case of battle damage this room acts as the nerve center of the carrier. Its brain centers in the space thinking and acting of the technicians in charge. X, Y and Z doors throughout the carrier are important in that order in case of emergency. When all are closed in battle each part of the ship is a separate unit and itself and with the crew men-performance flooded the others can quickly be cut off.

Far down in the stern of the ship are four drive shafts which resemble large steel water mains in size. They drive four tremendous propellers which send the carrier along at surprising speed. The initial reduction and secondary bearings to drive the shafts and keep them operating smoothly, with no side play, is a marvel of engineering skill.

We marveled at one thing. That was the careful planning that went into the carrier to prevent it from becoming completely disabled by damage to any one part. There are duplications of most operating units aboard the ship. And this is true of the propulsion. If one is damaged there are three to carry the two shafts. And if those are still two to do the work. This is also true of electric systems.

