



Crewman (left) aboard an aircraft carrier unfold wings of a Navy fighter plane as it prepares to take off on air patrol duty east the ocean. And now (below) it's Gal a Navy Avenger torpedo plane starts a takeoff run down the deck of an escort carrier.

DRUM 2 of New York Times

'All Men to Battle Stations' And In Come the War Birds

Third of a series.
By MAX E. COOK

Special-Annals Aviation Editor

ABOARD USS BENNINGTON, Escort-Class Carrier, Somewhere at Sea. (Delayed)—Mother Eagle's brood come home today—but not to rest.

"All men to battle stations." Call it in our ears, we noticed the same—big and small—on down a certain air field at a fast-moving target. It was the usual gunnery practice, but all too short, for the target was blasted in fact as time as it. The observation took the crew and seemed to lift us from the deck as we stood on the flag deck just behind and above stood one battery of five-inchers. Men in uniform, some in flight suits, were lined up in a stony area on high-flying planes some were away. As they came closer and circled the ship they were identified as the Bennington's fighters and bombers as they to their beating "home base" from an undisturbed island.

The flight deck was "readied" with few lines of shore cables swung up across the deck just astern of the island. Crewmen heaved the "arresting" cables which were to catch the landing hooks and bring the fast-flying planes to a halt. The shock cables were there just in case a landing hook did not engage one of the many cables. They would prevent the plane from crashing further up deck or possibly into the island.

Landing Signals Ready.

The landing signal officer on the catwalk on the port side of the stern, stood on his red and yellow signal "indicator" with which he would varied away colored patterns or colored lines to land. One of our landing airplanes, heavily camouflaged, took up a position about 500 yards to the stern. The plane as it lifted port in the clouds as they circled in and disappeared over. Another aircraft, whose name, nearby, set to sea.

Then in their usual formation, several P-51 fighters which have knocked hundreds of Zeros from the

Pacific skies, swooped in to perfect "arresting" landing and a time, only seconds apart, that came the Navy's Avenger TBMC, powerful and fast torpedo bombers now produced by Eastern Aircraft. (Name of General Motors and a Grumman originated plane. Later, in some great Carrier Battle Group dive bombers which have made history against the Japs. And manned by some of the Navy's best pilots and aviators. Right-handed instructions for the plane handlers and elevator operators magically vanished each place, out of the way, either down to the hangar deck or up on the deck of the flight deck. Besides the two wired ways of distress for the enemy!

Terrific Response.

The Bennington, within less than an hour, had settled down to 150-200 horsepower as its spinning propellers that being capable of maintaining the speed will give that two-core loss of horsepower and hence as a single stroke, hundreds of miles away. And added to that was the terrific massed response of these planes for straining ships and heavy, breaking enemy planes out of the air, protecting battle ships and convoys and defeating the carrier fleet.

Quickly available to both light and heavy decks are tens of thousands of gallons of high-oil fuel and thousands more of oil. Those bombers and torpedoed, ready for use, are stacked below another part of the ship, only second removed from hundreds of thousands of gallons of fuel.

And another "war" are "heads of a destroyer" and a landing battleship signal. The answer is a 35-ton tower, with no superstructure above it and electric, heavy machinery that does the work. The helicopter without

effort, can move it automatically with practically no effort at all. Clear accumulators are the complete torpedo, heavy and crew men and quarters. Also, intricate ways placed, over the huge refrigerator and other portable supplies. Current funds come from more space. A complete laundry supplies more than 2000 crew members. Thousands of boxes of household sized, hundreds of pairs, socks and other gear are turned out weekly in the camp. Special 200 gram trousers and special 200 gram trousers not only the carried, clothes and crew, but also accurate distress at times.

No Limit on Food.

Long lines of crewmen in stripes are quickly served at a cafeteria type of mess deep in the ship. The food is as good as in the mess room and there's no need on the account either. While every foot of space is utilized in crew quarters, they are comfortable. Men of our course are sent, writing letters or reading. Books can be found in, after a tedious plenty of room for exercising. Ready showers keep the men clean and healthy. The ship's overall look beautiful and

crew more relaxed a civilized heavy trade. The carrier's refrigerators carry tons of beef, brook, pork, liver and other meats. In any portion of the tons of vegetables, canned goods, flour and other food necessities. If supplied for only a month, it can easily be figured out, if each man use only one pound of meat daily, an estimate of meat would be needed daily 10 tons for the month. But that is only part of the picture.

Melancholy Every 10 Days.

An interesting feature of the officer ship is the initiate and efficient system of scuttling fresh water from salt water. This keeps the floating vessels at sea. With-out providing ligatures a daily report reads something like this: "On hand at 0730, 45 water thousands of gallons; used—50 more thousands of gallons converted." And despite the enormous amount of water for washing, shaving and brushing every 38 hours, the scuttling groups, distribution and daily produce more water than has been used.

And crew laundry (how though they may work only four hours

daily—most days—the barbers on the carrier cut the hair of every crew member every 10 days! As a result they're a deck-looking!

An amusement park "house of mirrors" might easily describe the ship's state of passiveness. After traveling what seems miles one wonders how much writing one might be necessary to keep the big carrier going. In spite the distance cables alone would extend in a straight line from New York to beyond Washington, about 210 miles. The gray paint on hard steel weighs about 100,000 pounds. And nearly 2,000,000 men hours of labor went into the ship. Heavy steel beams for the flight deck had to be fused on special cars in sections far across the country, plus nearly every state in the Union has supplied some part of the carrier. It's really an all-American.

How many miles of insulation or "corking"? Not one square inch! The reason is that, in case of fire, insulation and corking will burn. And insula develop from some types. So, in wartime, the best of officers and crew tramp only over cold steel, with the exception of the wooden-floored flight deck—and that's it!

Tenmore—a dive bomber hits the sea—and a U-Boat returns.