

Floating U. S. Supply Base 'Secret Weapon' at Okinawa

By WILLIAM McGAFFIN
Times Foreign Correspondent
WITH SERVICE SQUADRON 10
in the Pacific, April 3.—Censorship wraps have been lifted to permit the disclosure of how a "secret weapon" performed the prodigious job of rearing the U. S. 5th fleet for its vital role of spearheading and supporting our Okinawa landing.

This "secret weapon"—it was designated as such by Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, himself—is a floating base, a Mr. McGaffin noble supply and repair base. Unlike fixed-land bases, this is a city of floating filling stations, water tanks, drydocks, repair shops, ammunition storehouses and hotels for thousands of mechanics, repairmen and ammunition handlers.

completely housed in ships, which can follow the fleet anywhere.

Saves Many Years

More than any other single development of the war, perhaps, this floating base has utterly upset Japanese calculations. It would have taken years to establish land bases close enough to threaten Japan's vital areas.

But for the development of service squadron 10, official name of this floating base, Japan might have gotten away with its plans to develop its conquered territories to a point where it would be so strong it could not be defeated.

This product of American ingenuity literally has revolutionized distances from ports in which the fleet can operate. In previous wars 1000 miles or so was the maximum. Now we are operating 6000 and 7000 miles from base.

Ordered By Nimitz

The Okinawa operation—three times as big as anything the navy has before attempted—would have been impossible without this floating base, ordered by Adm. Nimitz and built by the naval genius, Commodore Worrall R. Carter, Norfolk, Va.

From anchorage service squadron 10 supplied fighting ships with astronomical amounts of supplies before they jumped off. Exact amounts cannot be disclosed. But this will give you an idea of what was loaded aboard.

ONE: Enough fuel oil to make a train of tank cars 238 miles long, with enough left over to heat 10,000 homes for a year.

TWO: Enough gasoline to run 30,700 American automobiles for a full year—enough to run one car for 300,000,000 miles.

THREE: Sufficient lubricating oil for complete change of oil in 466,000 automobiles.

FOUR: Enough explosives to blast Tokyo out of existence—the equivalent of 480 freight cars full.

FIVE: Nine million gallons of water to ease the task of distilling plants carried by each ship for converting ocean waters to fresh.

SIX: Enough food to feed Columbus, Ohio, for 30 days.

SEVEN: Enough clothing to completely clothe more than 1,500,000 persons.

EIGHT: Enough tooth powder, candy, stationery, shaving cream and razor blades to fully stock 66,000 drugstores.

NINE: Two hundred and seventy thousand pounds of soap and 5,000,000 packs of cigarettes.

All these thousands of tons of supplies, ammunition and fuel for this operation were brought to the floating base from ports on both the east and west coasts of the United States.

Floating Warehouses

This floating base is as far from San Francisco as San Francisco is from London. It is as far from Pearl Harbor as New York is from San Francisco.

Both conventional types of ships and some special designs such as a "crockery fleet," or a green dragons," comprise the hundreds of ships of service squadron 10. The green dragons get their name from the fact that they are made of cement and are painted green. Fifty per cent steel was saved in the construction of these floating warehouses.

Cmdr. James Farrin, a junior assistant maintenance officer, and Lt. Seymour Simon, staff secretary, both of Chicago, hold key positions in this floating marvel.

Doubtful Possibility

Simon, a Northwestern graduate and prewar lawyer, is one of the two original officers who helped build the base in less than 18 months time. The commodore, who commands the base he built, is a salty, bald 60-year-old veteran naval officer.

When Carter set out on the project in the fall of 1943, some did not think the job could be done.

"The idea of a mobile base is not new," says Carter. "It was first conceived back in the early 1920's, when the navy was experimenting with a so-called base, designed to supply the fleet when on the move. The experiments, however, were never carried beyond the preliminary stages."

Serviced Troop Ships

By last June, the floating base had gained practice in servicing task force carriers and escort warships for such as raids as Truk and Palau. It was ready for servicing its first big invasions—Saipan, Saipan, Tinian and Guam.

"We never had had amphibious forces with us before," said the commodore. "The floating base had always been concerned only with servicing fighting ships of the task force. Now, suddenly, it had the great extra burden of hundreds of troop ships and auxiliary vessels of all kinds."

"This was something we had not planned on," he added. "Things went off well considering."

There were moments during the

Knit-Wit Club Makes Toy Animals



School 80's Knit-Wit clubbers (left to right) Don Kirkpatrick, Spencer Trudgen, Richard Macy, Frank Abbott, Carol Crosbie, Gloria Chandler, JoEllen Geiger and Janet Ragsdale.

THE KNIT-WIT CLUB of school 80 at 920 E. 62d st. has just completed its Easter project.

Club members made 45 stuffed animals of assorted sizes, shapes and colors for the children at Riley hospital and knitted a large afghan for patients at Billings hospital.

A leisure-time organization of 35 members, the Knit-Wit club is sponsored by Miss Hazel F. Force, a teacher at school 80.

WAC'S KIT IS FOUND NEAR TIMES OFFICE

A transparent celluloid kit belonging to WAC Cpl. Mary H. Herak was found near The Times office yesterday by Alvan L. Foley, maintenance man for the Western Union Telegraph Co.

Included in the kit, which is at The Times office, are an identification card giving Cpl. Herak's station at Freeman field, Seymour, and military passes.

O. E. S. PLANS PROGRAM
Southport chapter, 442, O. E. S., will meet at 8 p. m. tomorrow in the Southport temple for an Easter program. Mrs. Florence Wright is worthy matron and Francis E. Venes, worthy patron.

Marianas campaign when we wondered how it was going to turn out. But we found a way to do it so the operation would not have been curtailed," he went on.

"One bad moment was when the arrival of oil was badly timed and nearly got out too late. Another was when an ammunition ship was not properly loaded. Because of this mistake we had to unload 1000 tons of ammunition to get down to the eight-inch shells, which were urgently requested by the bombardment group at Saipan."

Carter's floating-base has grown in experience and size since then, until it was capable of jobs such as that just performed for Okinawa operation. The commodore estimated that more than 1000 ships of all types were serviced for that.

"Comseron 10," as the name of the floating base is telescoped in dispatches, has grown so big now that it has several floating branches about the Pacific.

"The U. S. navy today can go anywhere in the world and take its supply base right along with it," said Carter, "which means, that the striking power of the fleet is unlimited."

"This," added the commodore, "means a material shortening of the war."

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and keep
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STEADY...
STRONG...

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helps build STURDY HEALTH

BRICKER TO ADDRESS BUTLER GRADUATES

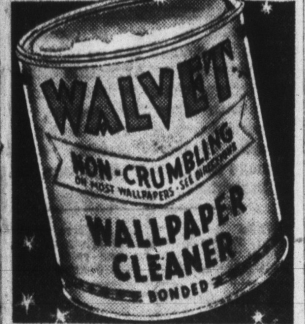
John W. Bricker, former governor of Ohio and 1944 Republican nominee for vice president, will speak at the Butler university commencement exercises June 11. Dr. M. C. Ross, Butler president, announced today.

Three times elected governor of his native state, Mr. Bricker served as assistant attorney general of Ohio from 1923 to 1927. He was a member of the public utilities commission from 1929 to 1932.

Former Governor Bricker formally opened his campaign for the vice presidency in Indiana last September.

LT. HYTEN IN CHINA
First Lt. Warren F. Hyten, husband of Mrs. Mary Jane Hyten, 302 Buckingham dr., is an assistant personnel officer at a Chinese combat command field headquarters in south-central China after spending several months as a courier on the Burma rd.

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