

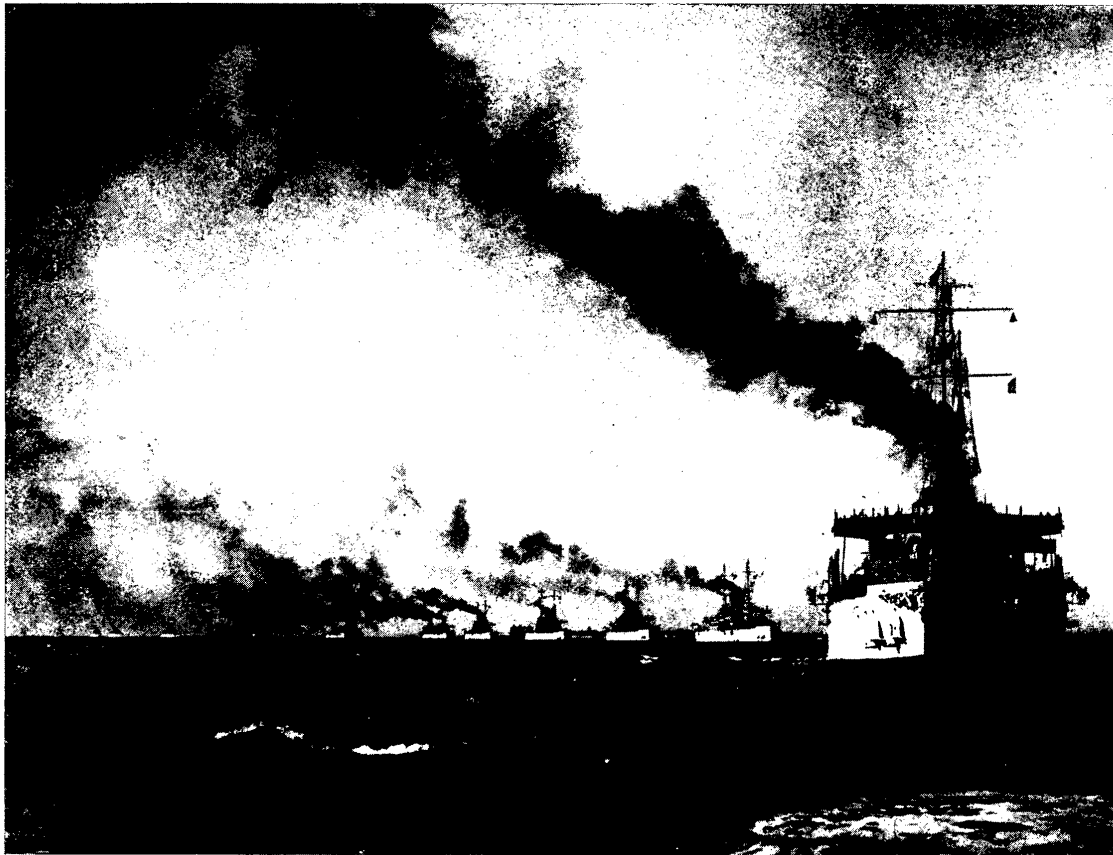
July 27 1959

THE EDITORS OF

LIFE

PRESENT

BOLD PEACE PLAN FOR THE U.S. A NEW 'GREAT WHITE FLEET'



ORIGINAL GREAT WHITE FLEET, LED BY BATTLESHIP "CONNECTICUT," TRAILS CLOUDS OF COAL SMOKE AS IT STEAMS TOWARD PACIFIC

Unarmed ships, loaded with goodwill, would carry out mercy missions

Fifty-two years ago President Theodore Roosevelt sent 16 battleships off on the historic world cruise of "The Great White Fleet." Fully armed and freshly painted (all U. S. battleships were white in those days), the 1907 fleet dramatically fulfilled its mission: to impress the world with U.S. naval power and the nation's coming of age.

This week LIFE places its support behind a proposal for a "New White Fleet" (*see cover*) with a new mission. Its ships, painted white as a sign of peace, would carry no guns at all. Instead they

would sail around the world with food for the hungry, medical facilities for the sick or injured, and technicians to help underprivileged peoples improve their own lot. LIFE's editors believe the New White Fleet—first suggested by Commander Frank Manson (*pp. 20, 21*)—is a bold, imaginative idea which could harness America's productive goodwill and energies to help insure peace and combat the spread of Communism. On the following pages LIFE shows how the New White Fleet could be commissioned and how it might operate.



NEW WHITE FLEET AS IT MIGHT LOOK IN ACTION IS SHOWN IN DRAWING OF DISASTER VICTIMS BEING BROUGHT ABOARD HOSPITAL SHIP. LANDING CRAFT AND

FOR PEOPLE IN TROUBLE, THE GLEAMING U.S. SHIPS WITH ON-THE-SPOT HELP

A New White Fleet would carry good deeds, vital goods and fresh ideas to remote areas of the world which need them most. The first of these immense capabilities is shown in the drawing above. The scene is a small port city somewhere in southeast Asia. A disastrous earthquake has occurred, injuring thousands of citizens and setting fire to the city. Local medical facilities and food supplies have been destroyed; disease is spreading in the wake of the disaster.

Summoned by radio, the White Fleet has steamed into the harbor. Its hospital ship, in the foreground, is already taking on patients. In the background other ships, including a small aircraft carrier loaded with helicopters for rescue work, are carrying out their own duties. They will remain anchored here until the city can be restored to self-sufficiency.



HELICOPTERS FROM FLEET AIRCRAFT CARRIER (CENTER, REAR) BRING OUT MORE PATIENTS. SHIPS AT FAR LEFT ARE CARGO VESSELS ATTACHED TO THE FLEET

The fleet, as its planners envision it, would consist of six ships to start with—the hospital ship, complete with operating rooms, X-ray facilities and medical wards; the carrier; a small destroyer escort to provide coastal communities with emergency power; a cargo vessel loaded with stores of food and clothing; a transport converted into a floating technical school to help improve the local standard of living; and a supply vessel to replenish the fleet. Later on, when the fleet has become established, a seventh ship could be added with an exhibit of U.S. culture and industry.

In the normal pursuit of its duties the fleet would steam from port to port on invitation, timing its cruise according to a schedule which has been worked out ahead of time with local authorities. In each port of call the hospital ship would normally take on only patients who are

suffering from serious ailments which the local doctors cannot cure. These doctors would be invited to serve on board as internes and learn how to care for such patients themselves. In the event of a disaster elsewhere in the area the entire fleet could interrupt its regular schedule, pull up anchor and steam to the rescue.

The ships of the White Fleet would be assigned and turned over to it by the U.S. Navy. But the military connotations stop there. To be effective in many areas of the world, where a sense of nationalism or political neutralism might spoil the welcome of a foreign naval fleet, the U.S. White Fleet must be scrupulously true to the high motives and principles behind it. A successful White Fleet could win the U.S. more real friends abroad than any other great project since the Marshall Plan.

NEW WHITE FLEET CONTINUED

THE ORIGINAL GREAT WHITE FLEET

AUTHOR OF

Commander Manson, the man who thought up the idea of a New White Fleet, is 38 and a native of Oklahoma. He is now on duty at U.S. Navy headquarters in London. The following article expresses his personal ideas and should not be construed as the official view of the U.S. Navy.

by FRANK MANSON

Commander, U.S. Navy

THE idea of organizing a New White Fleet grew out of things I witnessed at the close of World War II. Like thousands of U.S. servicemen, I saw diseased, destitute and poverty-stricken peoples living on the Asiatic rimland and in parts of Europe and Africa. In some areas I saw people actually dying on the streets of starvation and disease. Such sights made deep and lasting impressions on me. Even then it was apparent that the urgent problems facing the impoverished and underdeveloped countries were far from settled.

Something more was needed, something to combat poverty's eroding influences, something to make the benefits of civilization available on a broad scale. The primitive societies wanted something more than a bare subsistence. We were moving swiftly into an era of increased desire and rising expectations. To paraphrase President Lincoln, the world simply could not peacefully continue to exist half starved and half free.

But it was many years before a specific plan occurred to me. At my Pentagon office on a December afternoon in 1957 I happened to thumb through a photographic World War II file that included pictures of auxiliary and hospital ships. Later that same afternoon I talked with an observant Navy doctor who had just returned from a brief journey through Southeast Asia. The doctor had seen medical conditions almost too sad and painful to describe. He had administered a few drugs, serums and vaccinations and had performed one major surgical operation in addition to his official duties, but it was only a droplet in a desert of need. The doctor suggested that disease and inadequate nutrition might be contributing to the area's social and political problems.

It was not the first time I had heard this theory, but it made plenty of sense. In addition to inefficient food production methods one of the major problems of underdeveloped nations is the vicious circle of deprivation. Because of malnutrition the farmers grow too weak to work with maximum efficiency and are thereby unable to produce the full potential of their land—and this in turn keeps them undernourished. Something from outside is needed to break the circle.

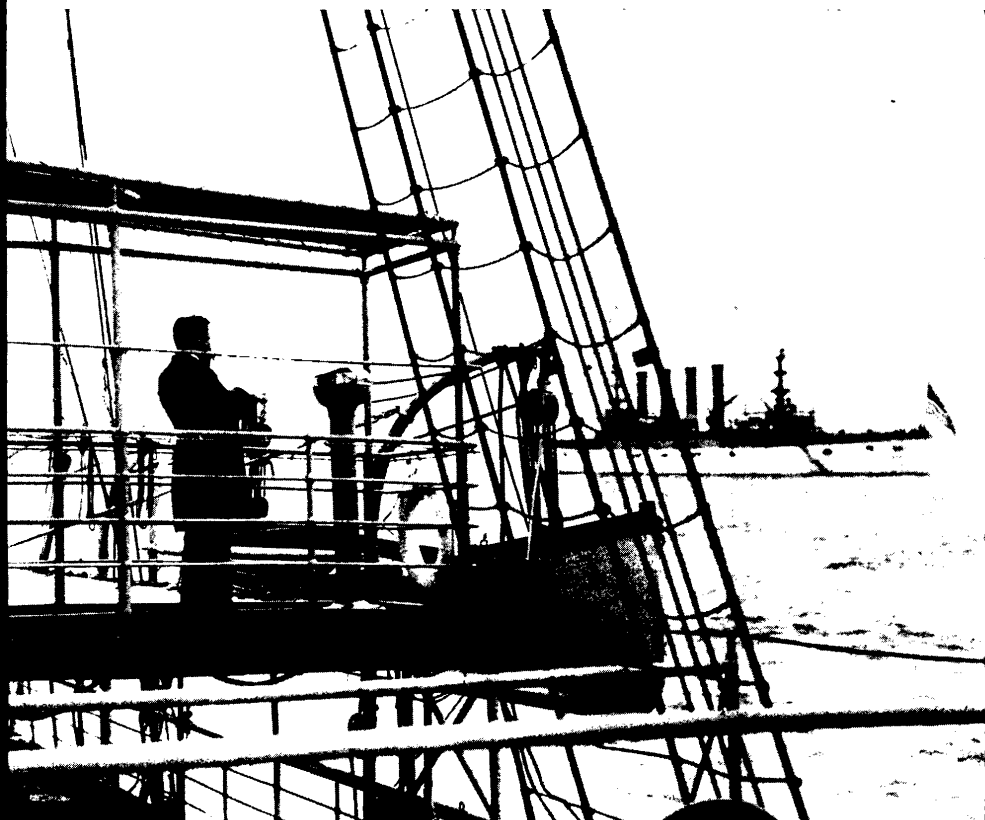
And so I asked the doctor, "Would hospital ships help?" I think the doctor's enthusiastic response to my question was the actual trigger. In any case, as I drove home to Falls Church that evening, I suddenly thought: why not have an entire fleet of mercy ships—grain ships, hospital ships, education ships, power ships—a fleet designed to make the benefits of the free enterprise system available to the entire human race?

The people of the U.S. are builders by nature. They like positive and creative programs.



VISITING JAPAN, sailors of Great White Fleet march through streets of Yokohama and are greeted

by Japanese schoolchildren waving American flags and singing *The Star-Spangled Banner* in Japanese.



REVIEWED BY PRESIDENT, Great White Fleet steams into Hampton Roads, Va., returning home

after cruise of 46,000 miles in 14 months. Cruise was considered a great feat of sailing and diplomacy.

THE BIG PLAN EXPLAINS



COMMANDER FRANK MANSON, U.S.N.

And their organizational brilliance is beyond dispute. At the same time they have fallen grievously behind the Soviet Union in the field of propaganda. Why not take advantage of the American ability to organize for material well-being so as to make up the lost ground in world propaganda?

Ordinarily as I drive home I fume about the traffic situation. But that particular afternoon I counted our national blessings. The United States leads the world in the field of medicine. Why not put this splendid advantage to full use in a White Fleet? Ships painted white have long been an established worldwide symbol. They are recognized by international convention as a symbol of peace and helpfulness, even in the midst of war. Doctors are still welcome diplomats in all lands.

It seemed to me that the cost of such a fleet would not be great. Certainly it would not be great compared to the sums being spent in preparation for war or even to the sums spent on foreign aid programs. Besides, the ships could be drawn from the mothball fleet that has been growing more and more obsolescent.

One thought led to another. The New White Fleet would be supported by a campaign in which every American would have a chance to participate and contribute. I felt that Americans wanted to help wage peace, and I knew they were willing to sacrifice as long as their sacrifices were made in behalf of sensible goals. The problems facing the underdeveloped countries were not beyond human comprehension. They were not very different from those of the American wilderness in the 17th Century. They were practical problems and lent themselves to practical solutions. By the time I got home these and many other thoughts were swirling through my mind.

My wife thought my idea had promise, but she brought me to earth in a hurry. A thing like this was beyond the scope of my job as Special Research Assistant to Chief of Naval Operations. In fact, we could not even decide whom I should see to get the White Fleet started. We finally agreed that I should simply talk to anyone in an influential spot. Starting

the next day, I told my idea to everyone who would listen: business and labor leaders, other naval officers and people in many walks of life.

The New White Fleet gained acceptance faster than I could have imagined. One of my jobs in the Pentagon was congressional liaison, and the first U.S. senator to hear of the idea asked me for a memorandum on it. A short time later he asked for more detailed data. Soon another senator indicated a personal interest in the proposal. My own congressman indicated his enthusiastic support as did other congressmen from both parties.

But I needed time to work out the details. Fortunately in the spring of 1958 I was sent to the U.S. Naval War College. There as a student I had the opportunity to reflect and to research the White Fleet concept.

After talking to literally dozens of highly qualified people, both civilian and military, I have yet to find one person who is against the proposal. All have favored the fleet's formation. Many have made specific recommendations regarding its composition and its mission. Some have underlined the importance of assigning personnel particularly well qualified for this type of duty. They point out, for example, that those responsible for the Navy's nuclear power program have insisted on competent and highly qualified personnel for many reasons, not the least of which is the cost of one mistake. The same would hold true with White Fleet operations. Mistakes would prove incalculably expensive. The fleet should be manned by qualified, imaginative and understanding personnel. One congressman suggested the White Fleet should start from the heartland of America and sail out through the St. Lawrence Seaway. One retired admiral who is now busily engaged in civilian pursuits volunteered to drop everything he was doing to get the White Fleet organized.

The ships might be named for foreign countries or cities, for rivers that flow through several countries or for world-famous events or mountains. They might be named for eminent figures in the age-old fight against disease and ignorance—Clara Barton, Louis Pasteur, Albert Schweitzer. Or they might be named for the principles which underlie the U.S. system of government.

What kind of emergencies will rate a White Fleet visit? One thing is certain: there will never be a lack of such emergencies. Today, for example, malaria is rampant in Indonesia. Each year India suffers untold deaths from dysentery.

I have no illusions that a New White Fleet will bring peace to the world in one sweeping movement. Progress toward peace will come only a bit at a time. America may never be able unilaterally to bring peace to the world, but American leadership can prevent the people of the world from losing hope. That is why I propose the New White Fleet. The main efforts for peace must of course be made through regular government channels and through institutions that governments have established. But, as President Eisenhower has frequently said, much can be done "people to people." This is my hope: that the New White Fleet will bring people closer to people.

OTHER NAVY RESCUES



ON GREEK ISLAND, after 1953 earthquake, the U.S. Navy lands with supplies of food and medicine.



IN MEXICO FLOOD sailors from a U.S. carrier land in Tampico in 1955 to help gather up refugees.



RESCUE BY AIR is carried out by Navy helicopter picking Mexican farmers off a roof in 1955 flood.



WARM THANKS for rescue is painted by Mexicans on roof. Navy pilots hauled out 5,871 people.

NEW WHITE FLEET CONTINUED

NEW WAY TO PLOW, using ancient pulling power but new implement which makes deeper furrow to increase crop yield, is demonstrated by White Fleet

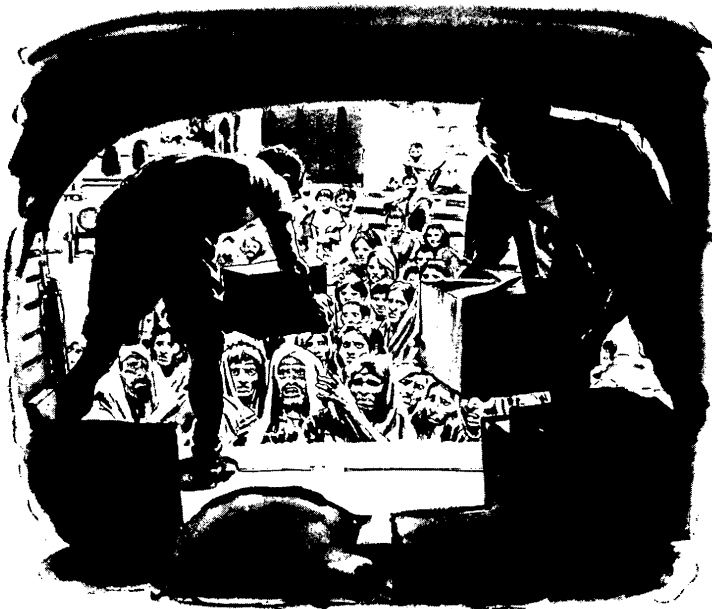
agricultural expert to natives of North African village. This and other possible fleet activities shown on these pages were drawn for LIFE by Artist Ed Vebell.

DEEP PLOWS, ACTS OF MERCY AND TEACHING BY TV

The hospital ship and aircraft carrier would be the backbone of the New White Fleet and carry out its most dramatic missions. But steaming in their wake would be two busy, indispensable converted Navy transports. One would be stocked to the gunwales with bags and crates of staple foods—wheat, milk, rice—for distribution to the inhabitants of any area hit by drought or other disaster. The second ship would serve as a floating educational center, complete with classrooms, dormitories and even a television transmitting station.

Wherever possible, groups of native students would be brought aboard the educational ship for basic courses in agriculture and public health.

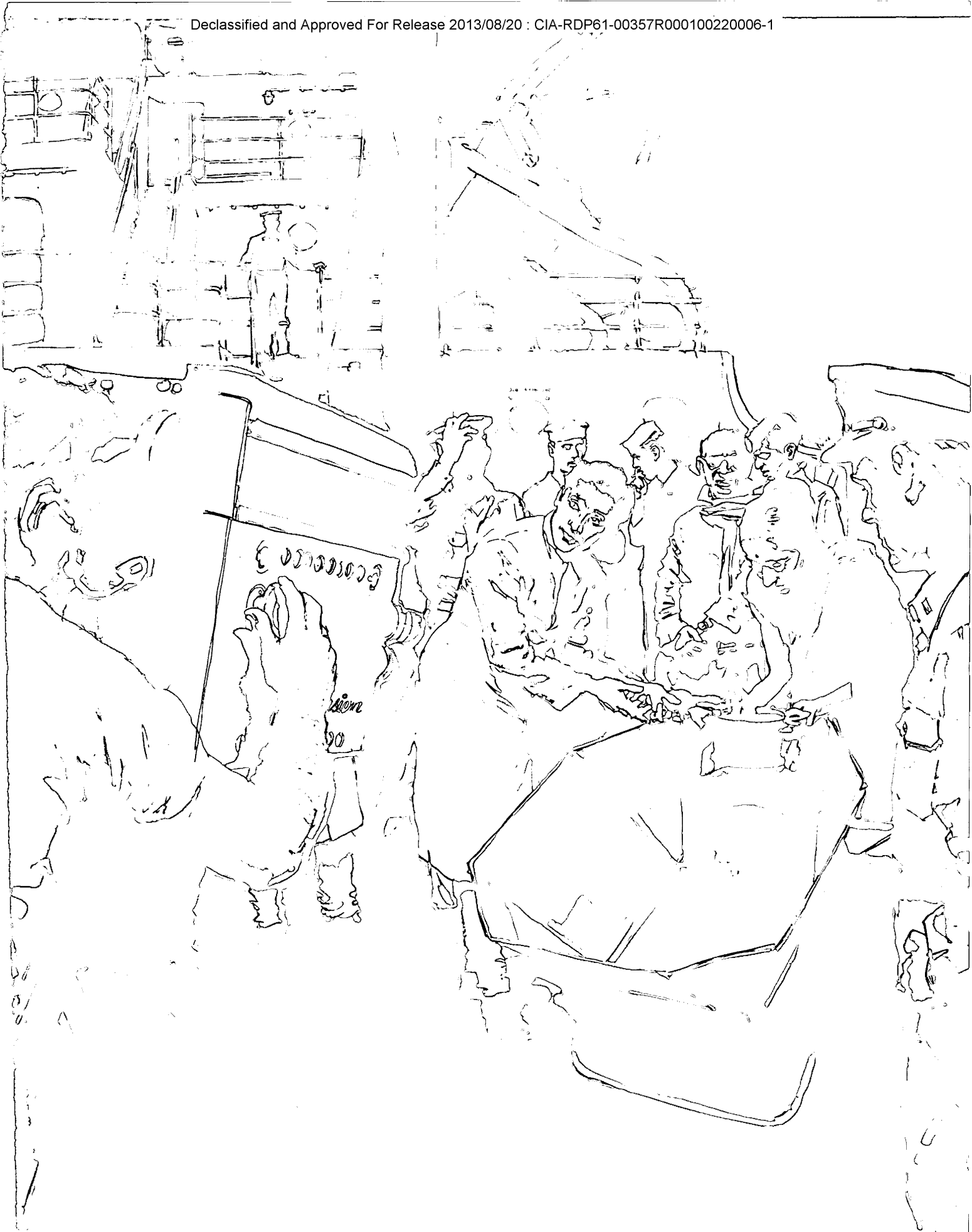
In areas where most of the people in need live too far from a harbor to visit the fleet, helicopters from the carrier would carry the doctors and instructors to them. Portable television receivers could be flown to remote villages so that the thousands of inhabitants could watch the same demonstration over the air. In each case, for best results, the instruction would be given by local teachers (*opposite page*) under the supervision of U.S. experts traveling with the fleet. It would be the fleet's standard operating procedure to act on the belief that people are best helped who learn to help themselves. The White Fleet would be a guest, bringing in U.S. know-how. Its hosts would provide the will to know.



EMERGENCY RATIONS, rushed to a famine-stricken town in India by the fleet helicopters, are distributed from a truck by members of the White Fleet crew.



PENICILLIN CURE for yaws, a serious skin disease prevalent in the South Pacific, is given first to the village headman as the other natives wait their turn.



DEMONSTRATING A STOVE, a solar furnace which would be extremely useful in many areas of India where fuel is scarce, local leaders perform before TV

camera on deck of the educational ship. The program could be broadcast to several villages at the same time and received on previously distributed TV sets.

NEW WHITE FLEET CONTINUED



"PROJECT HOPE" CHIEFS are its president, Dr. William Walsh holding model of hospital ship which will be sent out, and Mr. John Spreckelmyer, hospital administrator, who holds stack of applications from volunteer doctors and nurses.



CONGRESSIONAL BACKERS of the White Fleet proposal study photograph of the painting used on LIFE's cover. From left they are Senator George Aiken (Rep.) of Vermont, Senator Hubert Humphrey (Dem.) of Minnesota, Representative

WHAT IS BEING DONE AND HOW YOU MAY HELP

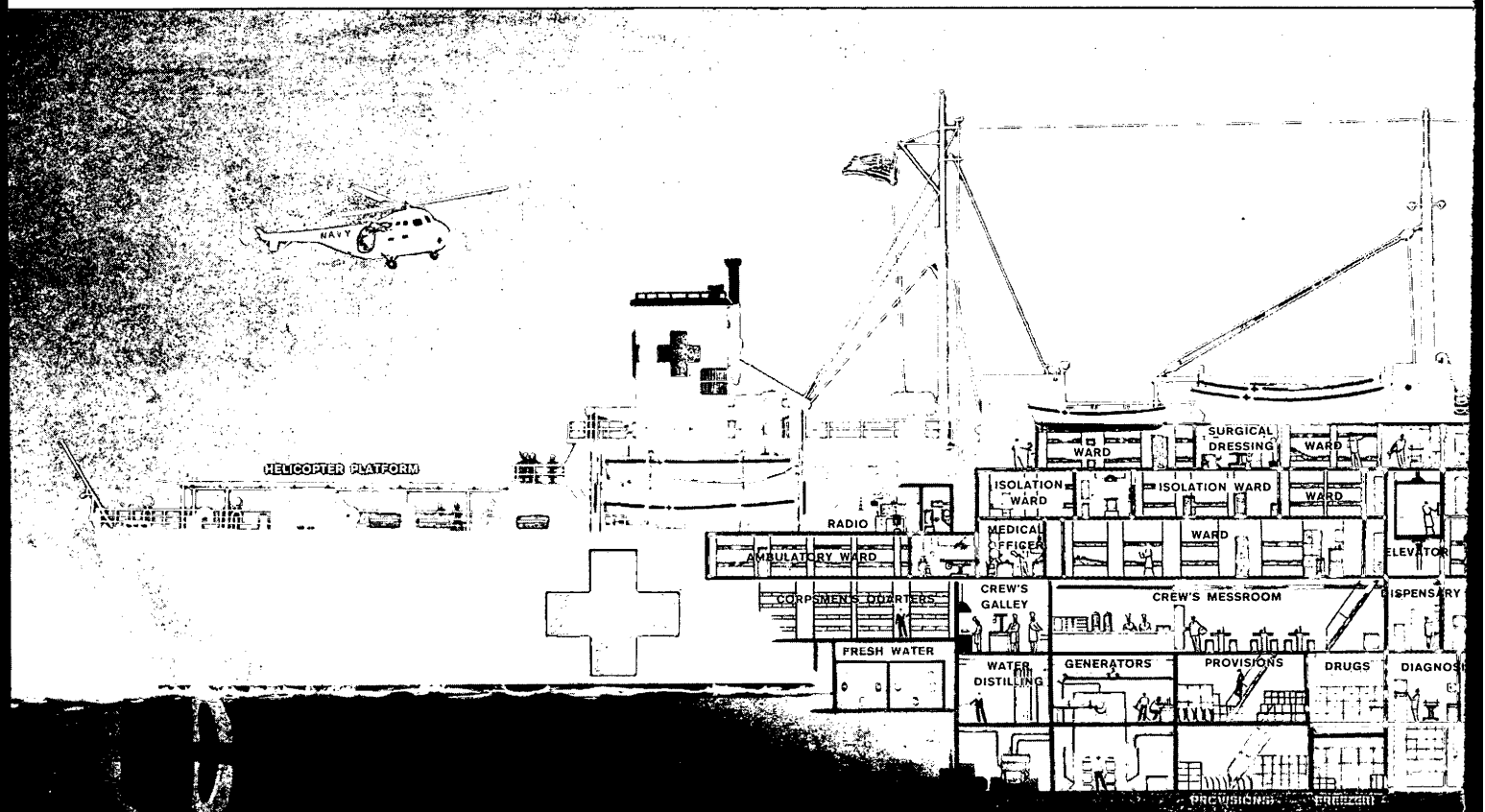
Imposing as its job will be, the White Fleet would be a relatively simple and inexpensive armada to outfit. All of the necessary ships are lying unused in U.S. Navy mothball fleets. It would require about 18 months to get them ready to sail. The most essential vessel of the new fleet would be its hospital ship (*below*) with a crew of 75 doctors and nurses. There are four big hospital ships now in Navy mothballs. All of them are kept stocked with surgical instruments, sheets and even fuel.

The cost of readying a fleet and keeping it

going for 18 months would amount to \$20 to \$30 million. Each additional year of operation would cost another \$10 million. This does not include emergency food supplies which would come from U.S. stockpiles of surplus food.

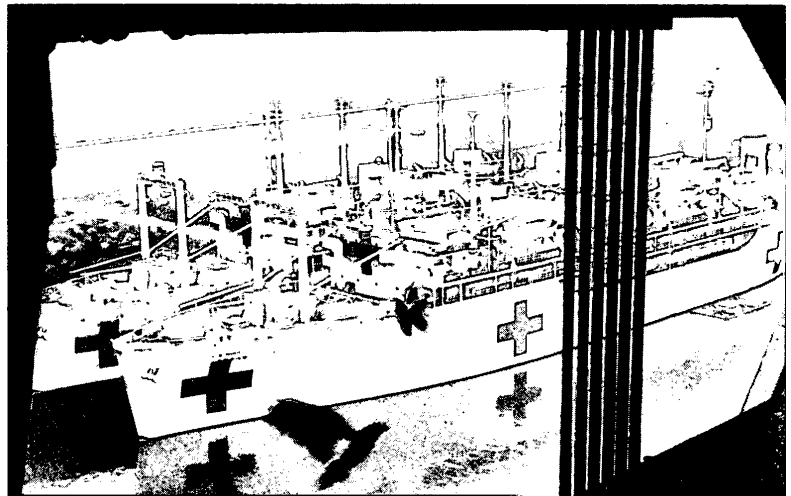
A small-scale prototype of the White Fleet consisting of one hospital ship is already being prepared to sail in January. Known as "Project Hope," the operation is sponsored by the People-to-People Health Foundation and is being financed by public subscription. Drug manufacturers are furnishing the medicines; the oil

CUTAWAY OF HOSPITAL SHIP SHOWS FACILITIES FOR MEDICAL CARE AND TRANSPORTATION OF PATIENTS TO AND FROM SHIP BY HELICOPTER. WARDS WILL





William Bates (Rep.) of Massachusetts and Representative Ed Edmondson (Dem.) of Oklahoma. Together they are sponsoring twin resolutions asking President Eisenhower to take the necessary steps to put New White Fleet into operation.



MOTHBALLED HOSPITAL SHIPS, berthed in the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard are photographed from a bridge as birds fly past. could form the nucleus for two separate White Fleets, one to serve in Pacific waters and one in the Atlantic.

industry is providing money for the fuel: the American President Lines will man the ship at cost; the doctors and nurses are volunteers. The White Fleet would benefit from some of the lessons learned by Project Hope, which is still busy raising the necessary funds.

This week four members of Congress (*above*) are sponsoring resolutions asking President Eisenhower to take whatever steps are necessary to help put the fleet into being. The resolutions do not provide for funds but suggest that surplus government ships be turned over

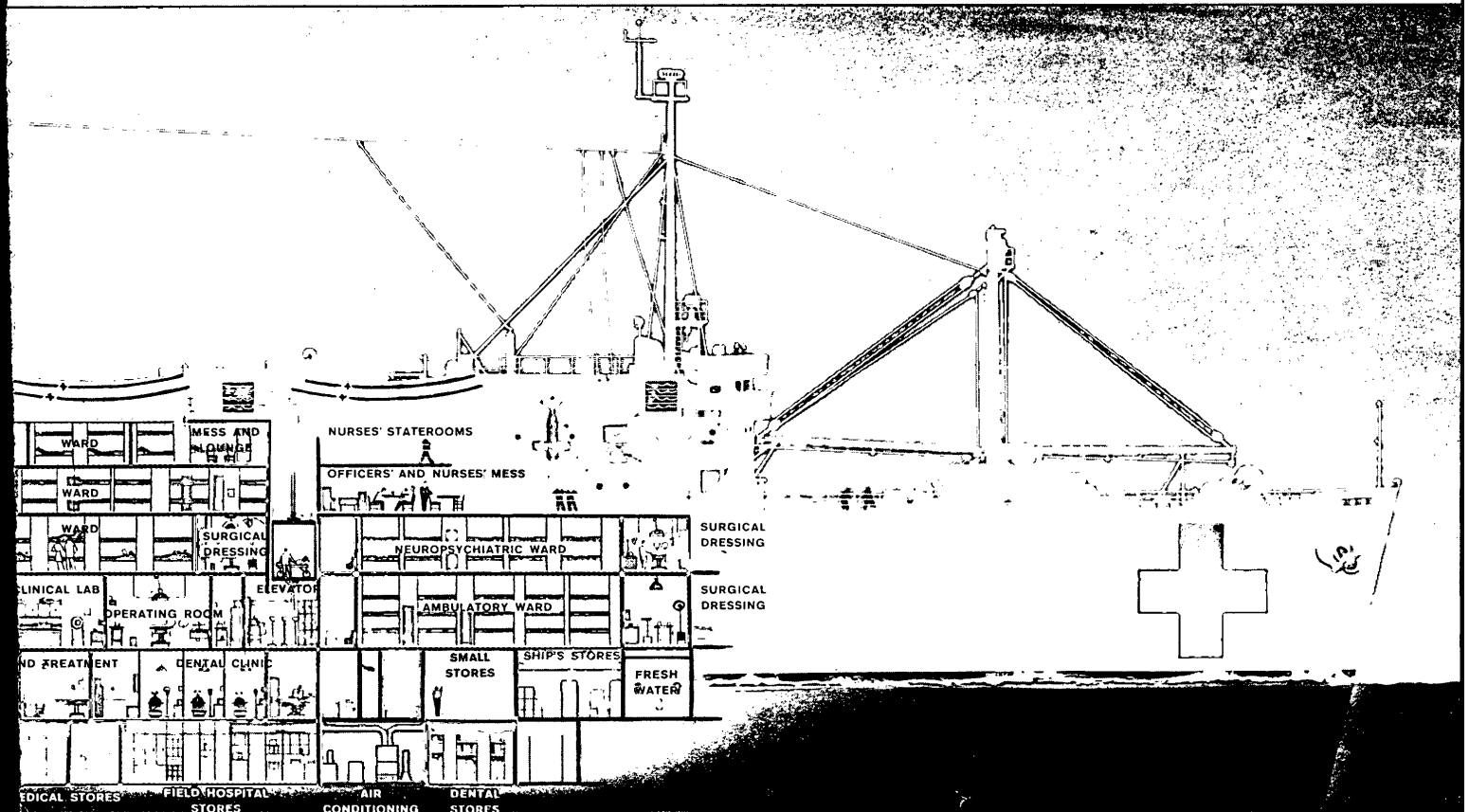
to private organizations which could operate them. "It would dramatize American goodwill," says Senator Hubert Humphrey; "It is just good business," says Senator George Aiken; "An imaginative, stimulating concept," says Representative William Bates; "It makes a lot more sense," says Representative Ed Edmondson, "than some parts of our foreign aid program." LIFE readers who wish to lend their encouragement could write to the four sponsors, whose addresses are listed at the right and who will forward the mail to the proper committees.

SUPPORTERS OF WHITE FLEET SHOULD WRITE THESE PEOPLE

Senator George Aiken, Room 358, and Senator Hubert Humphrey, Room 1311, Senate Office Building, Washington 25, D.C.

Representative William Bates, Room 458, and Representative Ed Edmondson, Room 108, House Office Building, Washington 25, D.C.

HOLD A TOTAL OF 800 PATIENTS. THE SHIP CAN CARRY A YEAR'S SUPPLY OF MEDICINES AND ENOUGH FOOD TO LAST CREW AND PATIENTS FOR SIX MONTHS



HAMMING IT UP FOR THE CAMERAS, CASTRO FLINGS ARMS ALOFT AS HE DENOUNCES PRESIDENT URRUTIA. HE ATTACKED URRUTIA BY INNUENDO, DECLAIMING, WHOOPING IT UP FOR CASTRO BEFORE HIS TV SPEECH, STUDENTS MILL ON STEPS OF HAVANA UNIVERSITY. THEY BRANDISH SIGNS PLEDGING THEIR LOYALTY

