

CARRIER ORISKANY PUT INTO SERVICE

\$88,000,000 Ship Is Designed to Launch and Retrieve New Heavy Jet Air Fighters

KEEL DATES FROM MAY, '44

Upper Construction Modified to Embody Lessons From Pacific Kamikaze Attacks

By MEYER BERGER

The U. S. S. Oriskany, most modern aircraft carrier in the Navy, was commissioned at the New York Naval Shipyard in Brooklyn yesterday. She will leave shortly on shakedown cruise.

Eighteen hundred guests seated on the stout flight deck heard Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, Chief of Naval Operations, tell the carrier's crew:

"You officers and men of the Oriskany will have the privilege of taking to sea—and possibly into combat—the latest embodiment of the tactical and technological developments applicable to a ship of her class."

The Oriskany cost about \$88,000,000 to build, displaces 37,000 tons—10,000 more than her sister carriers of the Essex class—and is better equipped to launch and retrieve the new heavy jet fighters than any carrier afloat.

The carrier's keel was put down in May, 1944. She was launched on Oct. 13, 1945, under the sponsorship of Mrs. Clarence Cannon, wife of the Missouri Representative. Further construction was held up while Navy designers modified the original Essex conception.

Decks Are Sturdier

Lessons learned from kamikaze attacks in the Pacific were responsible for the Oriskany's sturdier decks. The pilots' ready room, instead of being placed between the flight and hangar decks, has two reinforced decks above it.

The Oriskany has far greater fuel capacity than her sister ships to meet the greedy needs of jet aircraft. She is the first carrier equipped with escalators to lift pilots to the flight deck instead of having the men pound upstairs in emergencies.

Additional blisters, to compensate for the added 10,000 tons, are new features on the Oriskany. Her island superstructure, with stub mast aft of the island for radar equipment, also changes her outline substantially in comparison with other Essex-type carriers.

Visitors were awed by the Oriskany's size—888 feet, the equivalent of four city blocks. She is only 8,000 tons lighter now than the Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Coral Sea and the Midway, the Navy's largest. They are 968 feet long.

Black and white smoke plumes rose from the busy yard as visitors climbed to the flight deck. Forest-fire smoke from the Far North veiled the sun and transformed it into a flat silvery disc. Racing low clouds shadowed the carrier.

A platoon of marines stood at attention at the bunting-draped platform on the flight deck when the ceremonies started at 3 P. M. Forward and aft the ship's current contingent of 1,700 officers and men—she will have 2,500 later—were massed.

Blessing Invoked

Lieut. Comdr. W. L. McBlain, the Catholic chaplain, invoked God's blessing on the Oriskany and her crew in the opening prayer.

"Keep it safe, at all times," he intoned, "from all disaster."

Rear Admiral Walter S. De Lany, commandant of the Third Naval District, read the commissioning orders and formally turned the carrier over to Capt. P. H. Lyon of Sioux City, Iowa, her skipper. He is a pilot with extensive carrier training.

Over the ship's communications system Captain Lyon crisply uttered the first command: "Commander Howe, place the ship in commission."

Comdr. F. N. Howe called out, "Aye, aye, sir," and gave the order to break out the commissioning pennant. The first watch was set. Admiral Sherman's four-starred flag was run up on the island tower. Then the admiral spoke.

Some queer acoustical situation gave back, syllable for syllable, every word he spoke, in subdued ghost image.

"Today" the admiral said, "the Oriskany joins the fleet. In her have been incorporated all practicable improvements to facilitate the operation of the latest carrier aircraft. Soon she will be ready, if needed, to join her older sisters, the Valley Forge, Phillipine Sea and Boxer, together with the gallant Sicily and Badoeng Strait who have rendered such effective service in the fighting off Korea.

Lessons From Korea

"The operations in Korea have taught us many lessons—some new, some old—some with respect to strategy and tactics, more with respect to operating techniques and operating requirements.

"As long as any potential enemy has an effective submarine flotilla our naval service must place great emphasis on readiness to destroy submarines and to safeguard the movement of men and material over the vital sea lanes."

The captain addressed the crew. Lieut. William G. Sodt, Protestant chaplain, pronounced the benediction. A group of citizens from the Mohawk Valley, principally from Oriskany, N. Y., gave the ship a parchment scroll, a national ensign, a battle flag and ash trays. The New York Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution, gave a painting of the Battle of Oriskany.

Assemblyman Ira F. Domser of Oriskany headed the up-state delegation. Norma J. Yoxal and Charles Helmer, in behalf of Mohawk Valley school-children generally, presented funds for a ship's organ.

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