



TRIM SUPERSTRUCTURE, LACK OF DECK TURRETS FEATURES 'NEW LOOK' OF FAMOUS OLD ESSEX

ESSEX JOINS KOREAN WAR

USS ESSEX, KOREA—A familiar sight greeted all eyes in Task Force 77 in late August when the famous old battle carrier USS *Essex* (CV-9), now remodeled and reactivated, steamed into the Korean combat zone to relieve the *Princeton*.

Sixty-eight times in World War II, the 27,000 ton carrier poked her prow into the thickest of battle to earn herself the title "Fightingest Carrier in the Navy". From the initial Marcus island campaign to Okinawa, she set records.

From her first days in the Ko-War, it was apparent that she was up to her old habit of setting records again. She is the first carrier to operate two squadrons of jet aircraft, each of a different model (F9F and F2H), and the first to launch twin-jet *Banshee* fighters against the enemy. They were flown by the *Blue Bolt* squadron VF-172, of NAS JACKSONVILLE.

The *Essex* is the flagship of RAdm. John Perry, ComCarDivOne, and commanded by Capt. Austin W. Wheelock. Air Group Five operates from the *Essex* and is commanded by Cdr. M. U. Beebe.

Steaming in the wake of typhoon *Marge* and finding near-zero visibility over the target area on her first day of combat, *Essex* more than made up for this setback on succeeding days. With planes of the *Bon Homme Richard*, her aircraft ranged far and wide over North Korean transportation targets, scattering the enemy with bombs, rockets, strafing fire and fiery napalm. Her activities helped the Navy pile up its consistent record of flying 45% of all combat sorties in the Korean war.

VF-172 pilots found the heavier, larger *Banshee* a top-notch weapon and ideally suited for the Ko-War. Commented one airman upon returning to his ship, "She handles beautifully—most

wonderful plane I've ever flown."

Despite their heavy combat schedule, *Essex* and *Bon Homme Richard* found time for humor too. *Essex* was chided gently by her sister carrier in poetic dispatch, with reference to certain "luxuries" such as air conditioning and a personnel escalator to the flight deck which had been installed as part of the *Essex*' \$40,000,000 modernization program. The dispatch read, in part:

"We're sure that your conditioned air will prove a boon and serve you fair, The *Bonny Dick* has naught so fancy Not even one *McDonnell Banshee*. We scramble still from deck to deck By power of sturdy legs, by heck! You see, we haven't reached the state Where we're required to escalate."

When the third day of air strikes had been concluded, *Essex* was consid-

ered in the veteran class. On 26 August her aircraft spotted so many Communist targets along the transportation arteries feeding troops and supplies they had to call for assistance, and marked several for future attacks.

Night hecklers kept the enemy jumping while attempting to repair severed bridges and other transportation facilities after dusk.

During the last two years of *Essex*' inactivation, she underwent a modernization program to enable her to handle faster and heavier aircraft. Her flight deck was strengthened and anti-aircraft turrets fore and aft of the island removed. Her island was streamlined in the pattern set by the USS *Oriskany* and the famous old CV-9 silhouette was a thing of the past with the Number One Lady in the class.

McDonnell Wins Contract New Cargo Helicopter to Be Built

McDonnell Aircraft of St. Louis, Missouri, recently was awarded a contract by the Navy to build a jet-powered "cargo unloader" type helicopter. Six companies participated in the design competition. McDonnell's winning design uses a single, three-bladed rotor driven by small jet engines on the blade tips.

The new ship-based helicopter will be capable of transferring heavy equipment in short range operations under all weather conditions. It will have powerful winch equipment and retractable cargo sling and is designed to airlift cargo pods.



A HAWAIIAN welcome was extended to the *Princeton* when it arrived at NAS Pearl Harbor after nine months operations in Korean waters. Aboard were 111 officers and 2,027 enlisted men including Air Group 19. The ship was commanded by Capt. Paul D. Stroop.