

Navy Wins Airlift Honors



Bearing the title, "Berlin Air Lift Champs," VR-8's last plane back to U.S. with its crewmen, left to right: LCdr. Stanford, Lt. Johnson, Lt. Johansen, Lcdr. Lafferty, LCdr. Hart, pilot; Capt. J. C. Clifton, Ens. Jones, Paul, ADC; Ens. Keenan, Lt. (jg) Robinson, J. E. Lindley, AD2; Smith, AEC, J. A. Mauler, YN2; Stevens, ADC; D. M. Hardin, YN2; Felts, AL3; Kelly, AL2; Algrem, YN2 and LCdr. Deneen. Figures on the fuselage tell record.

THE BERLIN Airlift is over for the

Navy, and the two transport squadrons which led the pack in rushing food and supplies to the Germans are back at their old jobs today flying the oceans.

VR-8 returned to the Pacific division of MATS and is based at Hickam AFB Hawaii. VR-6, formerly operating in the Pacific, now flies the Atlantic from Westover AFB, Chicopee Falls, Mass. VR-3, which during the nine months of *Operation Vittles* did trans-Atlantic support flying, operates over continental United States.

While working with the combined Airlift task force in Germany, VR-6 and VR-8 carried off top honors. When the Russian strangle-hold became serious they switched their 24 R5D's to Germany almost overnight from Guam and Hawaii.

In the first two weeks flying the unfamiliar air route from Rhein-Main to Berlin, the combined Navy squadrons carried 6,526 tons of cargo to Templehof. By the end of December, VR-8 under Cdr. James O. Vosseller, was leading all squadrons in the Airlift in every measurable phase of air transport operation. It won first honors in aircraft utilization, total cargo carried, payload efficiency and tons per plane.

For several weeks, VR-6, commanded by Cdr. Harry P. Badger, was engaged in a spirited battle for second honors with the two top Air Force units. By the end of February it forged to the front, equalling and frequently exceed-

ing VR-8 in operational accomplishments.

Performance records unparalleled in the history of air transport were established by the Navy planes and crews in April when the two squadrons flew 8,234 hours in delivering 23,550 tons of food and coal. With each plane making three and frequently four round trips in each, 24-hour period, carrying an aggregate of 37.6 tons, utilization was boosted to 13.1 hours a plane a day.

In their eight months in Germany, VR-6 and VR-8 flew 45,990 hours, carrying 129,989 tons of cargo to Berlin and averaging 10.1 hours a plane a day utilization for the entire period.

Returning stateside, the two squadrons gave NAS PATUXENT one of its biggest rushes in history. During the two weeks when the returning planes were going through, 248 flights were logged in and out, carrying 1,835 passengers and half a million pounds of cargo. Last arrival was the R5D of Capt. J. C. Clifton, VR-8 commanding officer, with the impressive statistics of the Navy accomplishments emblazoned on the fuselage.