

NAVY REFITS VITTLES PLANES

VR-44, MOFFETT FIELD--It takes a lot of fixing before VR-6 and VR-8 planes from the Berlin *Vittles* run are ready to resume their peaceful flying for the air Navy.

Here is what, the maintenance division of this squadron does when it gets a coal-dust smeared plane from Berlin now that the Airlift is over. The planes have to be reconfigured into a standard cargo job.

As soon as possible after arrival, each plane is preflighted, engine oil drained, and cargo compartment decking removed. Then the damaged scuffboards, side panels, baggage compartment decking, and the *Vittles* head are also removed.

The batteries are taken out and the plane sent to the wash rack where it is washed externally. The inside of the wheel wells also are cleaned. After a fresh water wash-down, the interior is vacuumed and the bilges are cleaned.

Radio and radar equipment is then re-

moved for cleaning and inspection. The prop de-icer shoes are examined for damage and replaced, if necessary.

At this point, the decking, side panels and scuffboards are reinstalled. The fuel tank bulkhead and the fuel tank and lines are put in; a Maxson cabinet is added and the troop seats are installed.

Tires, landing gear and de-icer boots are inspected for wear and tear and appropriate changes made where necessary. The engines are changed if changes are called for, and the oxygen equipment inspected and replaced as required. All metal squawks are taken care of and the interior of the plane is touched up. The MATS insignie is painted on, batteries are installed and the plane is ready for weighing.

After the plane is weighed, it is preflighted and flight tested. Fleet Logistics Support Wing then assigns it to a squadron. This is all part of the price the Navy had to pay for helping feed Berliners during the Russian blockade. VR-6 and VR-8 led all squadrons on the airlift and their planes showed the wear and tear.