

The HOPE is one of three hospital ships built into a Maritime Commission C-1-B hull, HOPE, COMFORT and MERCY, 400 ft. long, 60 ft. wide, 14 knots, 9,000 tons displacement, 600 beds and 12,000 cubic feet cargo space, with complete hospital facilities, except eye clinic. The vessel was converted at U.S. Naval Drydocks, Terminal Island (San Pedro), California. Special feature is that the HOPE is a Navy Hospital Ship operated by a Navy crew but with an Army Hospital on board, manned by the 215th Army Hospital Ship Complement, commanded by Colonel Thomas B. PROTZMAN (MC), A.U.S.

Commissioned 15 August 1944.

Commanding Officer of the HOPE is Commander Albert E. RICHARDS, (DM), USNR. Both assumed command on commissioning 15 August 1944.

The HOPE was intentionally and deliberately bombed twice, on 3 December 1944 in broad daylight by a Jap torpedo plane, and on 6 December 1944, when fully illuminated at night, by a Jap bomber. The Japs missed both times. The HOPE was also under bombing attack at various times in Leyte, Lingayen Gulf and at Okinawa when darkened and in company with combat ships of the fleet, and was also under Japanese artillery fire on 27 April 1945 at Okinawa when awaiting patients from operations on Okinawa.

The commanding officer of the HOPE, as well as Commander Elmer C. HURLEY, (DM), USNR, executive officer, and Lieutenant Brian D. MAHEDY, CHC, have received letters of commendation for their services.

The hospital personnel of this ship have performed unselfishly and have worked, when necessary, to the point of exhaustion. No distinction has been made between Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Merchant Marine or allied forces. All are treated the same. The surgeons of this ship have saved lives by their skill and knowledge. The medical officers have worked over their pneumonia cases and fever-ridden cases without letup until the men were well. The boys who have received treatment on this ship have received it from skilled doctors whom they could hardly afford to visit in private life. The nurses have been happiest when called upon to work hard for long hours. Their unhappiest times have been while idle awaiting their next operation.

The commanding officer wishes to draw a comparison between the medical personnel of this ship and the medical personnel of a strictly Army Hospital Ship which received an award for making one trip to the war zone and return, carrying passengers.

The medical personnel of this ship has remained in the war zone for the entire life of the ship and has made 13 trips carrying patients. While waiting for planned operations they have treated everyone that came. They were on a ship which was able to move anywhere at any time because of the competence of the personnel manning the ship.

The commanding officer of the HOPE hesitates to single out any doctors as more worthy of commendation than any others, but lists Colonel Thomas B. PROTZMAN and Major Max KAISER, surgeons, and Major Norman SILVERSTEIN, medical officer, as the doctors referred to when he says, "the boys received treatment they could hardly afford in civilian life." Although less experienced, the commanding officer commends Captain Russell H. PATTERSON, Jr., surgeon, and Doctors Marion J. KERNS and Morris J. STEINMAN.

The ship has never lacked critical medical supplies due to the competence of First Lieutenant Charles W. KERSTEN (MAC), A.U.S.

The HOPE has one Navy medical officer, Lieutenant Commander Winthrop Steele FRANTZ, (MC), USN. Co-operation has been such that it never occurs to anyone on board that Lieutenant Commander FRANTZ and the other doctors are in different services.

The diligence and industry of the dental officers, Major Ira I. KAMINSKY, (DC); and Captain Milton M. KURTZ, (DC), is attested by the fact that they have treated 2, 349 patients in a year and the dental clinic has had over 4,500 sittings.

Although a new ship, and after a year still on her trial and maiden cruise, the HOPE has never been delayed by any breakdowns of any kind. The HOPE, now 16 months out of drydocks has had one day availability in a year. Credit is due to the former engineering officer, Lieutenant Albert DUNKLY, (EM), USNR, and the present engineering officer, Lieutenant (junior grade) Joel Harmon SANTRUCK, USN. The large amount of electrical equipment has functioned perfectly due to the competence and skill of the electrical force headed by Lieutenant (junior grade) Jack Oliver HEUSTIS, USN. The commanding officer almost regrets having to commend certain officers only. He would be glad to sail again with any man on board, officer and enlisted.

Since going into commission 15 August 1944, the HOPE steamed 51,000 miles, admitted 8,400 patients in the hospital and treated several thousand others as out-patients. The dentists alone have worked on 4,500 people, and have seen numerous others who required no treatment. The HOPE has also transported, as passengers, over 900 medical personnel and has carried supplies at various times amounting to 1,000 tons.

This in spite of the fact that the hospital has been full but forty per cent of the time.

The HOPE has weathered four typhoons, one in Leyte, one in Okinawa and two in Wakanoura Wan, Japanese waters.