

EX-WARSHIP to Be FLOATING MISSION

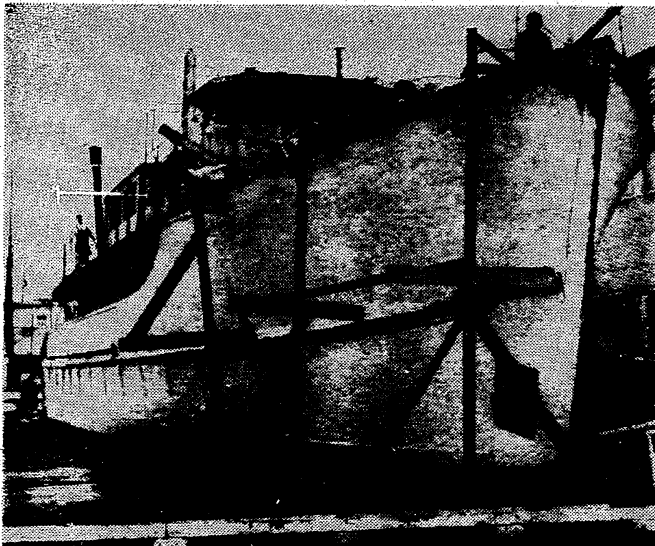


DOROTHY RODKEY sandpapers a bulkhead. A member of the University Presbyterian Skymasters group, she is one of dozens of volunteer helpers who have been working aboard the mission vessel.

At a wharf in back of 1104 Westlake Av. N., a 136-foot minesweeper that saw action in the Aleutians and in the South Pacific has been converted, both physically and spiritually. From the mere bearer of Navy number 337, it has become the medical-mission ship Willis Shank.

About July 10 it is scheduled to sail for Alaska on an enterprise of good will which has demanded considerable self-sacrifice and boundless faith on the part of its sponsors.

"Somehow, when we get stuck the Lord kind of takes care of things," says C. F. Stabbert, who will skipper the vessel and who bought and equipped it. "There was a Friday night not so long ago when things were going so slowly I could see July coming and nothing accomplished. I had a private prayer meeting all by myself and I told Him, 'Oh Lord, if you want this packet to sail you've got to do something!' Would you believe it, by Sunday night we had the promise of more than 100 days of labor from different sources and all available in the next two weeks."



MEN who served on the minesweeper Number 337 in war days would have difficulty recognizing it as the Willis Shank, with added superstructure and other changes made in recent months.

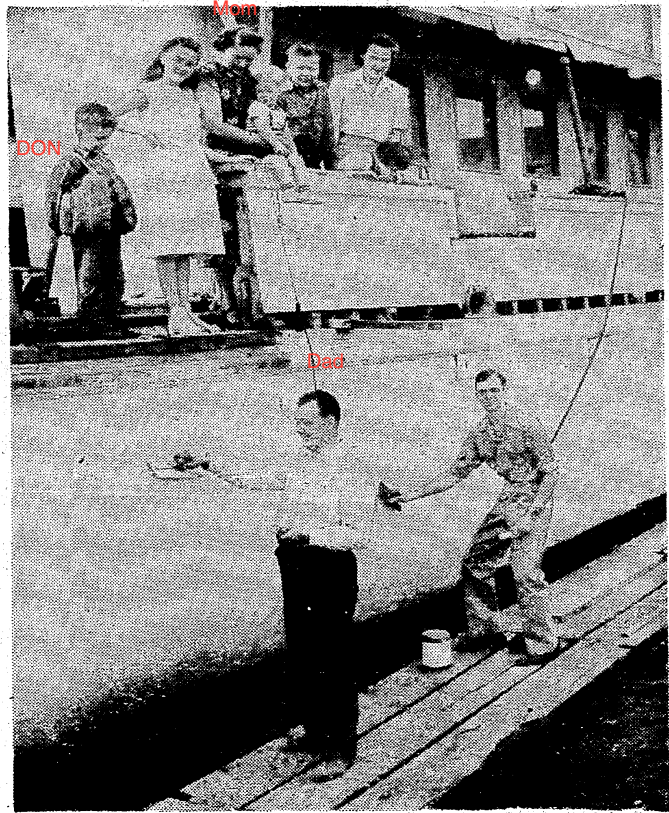
ALMOST night and day the work of rebuilding the ship has gone on, for the volunteer help has come at odd hours. By word of mouth the needs of the Willis Shank have been spread. Help has come from plumbers, a radar technician, funnel makers, metal-window-frame makers, carpenters, and so on right down to a color engineer and a paint manufacturer. "We haven't asked anybody for anything, but it is surprising how things have come to us," Stabbert continued.

Closely associated with him in preparing the minesweeper for its new career is Dr. Lindsay McClenny, resident surgeon at Doctors Hospital. The latter attended the University of Washington and took his medical degree at Northwestern University. He originally planned to enter the medical-mission field in Ethiopia to take the place of his brother-in-law and sister, who were among the first casualties in the Italian campaign. However, two years ago last September he met Percy Mills and Harold Peters of the Shantymen's Association of Vancouver Island, who came here in their small tuna boat to attend a missionary conference. They told of their medical and evangelical work among the scattered settlements on the West Coast of the island. Both Dr. McClenny and Stabbert, who had been active in the Youth for Christ movement in Seattle, wanted to hear more about their accomplishments. Wasn't it possible something of a similar nature could be done in Alaska?

ONLY a month later they were talking with Willis Shank, Seattle director of the Youth for Christ movement, who was just back from a trip to the territory.

"He was much concerned with the health situation of the people on the coast, particularly the youngsters, and said he had decided to do something about it as soon as he was through with his Seattle duties," Stabbert related. "On a Saturday evening after a Youth for Christ rally he came out to a restaurant to have a snack with the McClennys and ourselves. We sat and talked about his ideas until 11:30. We all thought the approach should not be as a straight mission but as a health-and-social service."

Next day by 1:15 p.m. Shank was dead, killed in the crash of an airplane at Annette Island, while he was on his way to dedicate a children's mission at Ketchikan. Both Stabbert and Mc-



WHILE their families watch from the deck, C. F. Stabbert (left) and Dr. Lindsay McClenny pause in their work of preparing the sides of the mission ship Willis Shank for painting. The spectators, most of whom usually are busy at various jobs about the ship, are (from left) Donnie, Sandra and Mrs. Stabbert; who is holding little Dickie, David Stabbert and Mrs. McClenny and daughter, Claire (leaning over the rail). Another of the Stabberts, Donna, was absent when the picture was taken.

Clenny were deeply impressed by the tragedy and together they decided to carry out the program which had taken hazy form that night in the restaurant. Stabbert's father, now dead, went with him looking for boats. They found a minesweeper best suited and at the price they could afford to pay. A year ago last February they bought the boat, towed it here from Scow Bay and the conversion began.

"Dad never lived to see it finished," Stabbert concluded.

THE ship will have a complete surgery, an X-ray and examining room and an eight-bed hospital, also a dental outfit. The main lounge cabin will serve as a chapel and a place where health-education films can be shown. Some war-surplus material equipment has been purchased and some has been donated.

On the lower deck will be living quarters for Stabbert, his wife and five children, the McClennys and their small daughter. Mrs. McClenny, a former teacher, has arranged to carry on school class work for the youngsters. There also will be two or three nurses and a dentist. Several have applied.

"We needed an engineer badly," Stabbert related. "One day a good-looking fellow named Walter Kallstrom came to the dock. He had been an engineer with the Coast Guard and now had a business of his own. He explained he had heard we were equipping a medical ship. Next thing we knew he had moved his tools on board and was working 16 hours a day to help us get finished. He goes along as chief engineer."

NONE of the group is a minister, but they are not worried about ways and means to make their chapel services equal to the best. A number of clergymen have volunteered to take their vacations on board. The first will be Dr. L. David Cowie of the University Presbyterian Church. The plan is to share visiting ministers with nearby communities, taking them by small boat or plane to churches within a reasonable distance.

"Three different denominations offered to take us on and share expenses, but we'd like to run the boat as independently as we can so that we will be free to work with anyone," Stabbert said.

"Our primary idea is medical service, all that we can take to the Alaskans. Certainly we're going to run a spiritual line with it, but we aren't going to run a buzz saw."

The first district to be visited is around Craig and Klwak. The approximately 1,600 people in these two areas, Stabbert understands, have not had a doctor among them in several years. The Willis Shank will remain there a few weeks, then move on to another community to be suggested by Dr. Albrecht of the Territorial Health Commission, which probably will render some financial help to the vessel on a per capita basis of persons served.

Medical staff on the Willis Shank except for Dr. McClenny, will rotate in the same manner as the ministerial representatives, a number of doctors having offered to go for several weeks at a time.