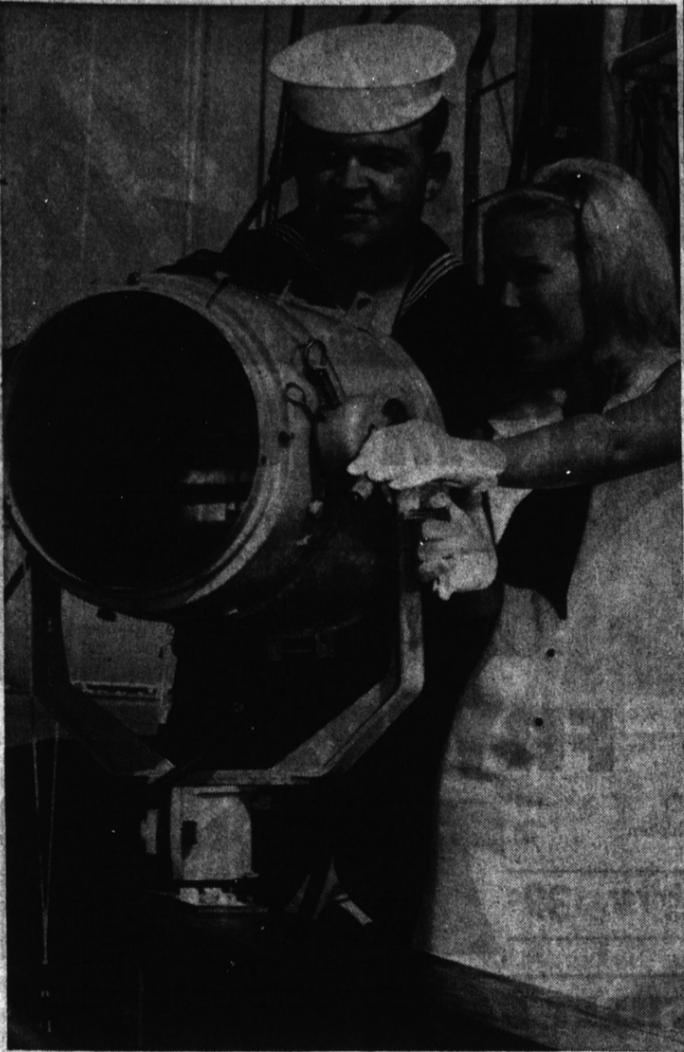


Navy Joins Torrance Celebration



SENDING THE WORD... The signal light of the minesweeper USS Conquest is sending out the signal AFD TORRANCE AFD to remind Navy men they have been invited to participate in the 8th annual Armed Forces Day parade and celebration in Torrance on May 19 and 20. Here Marcia Reich, Torrance Princess and El Camino junior, lends a hand to Seaman Michael D. Cook of Modesto as the signal is flashed.

How the flow of supplies from North Vietnam to the Viet Cong by coastal water routes is being cut off was revealed this week to Marcia Reich, newly designated Torrance Princess, by the veteran crew of the minesweeper USS Conquest.

Miss Reich, upperclassman at El Camino College, visited units of the Pacific Mine Force headquartered at Long Beach where she welcomed all Navy entries into the 8th Annual Armed Forces Day parade and celebration here on May 19 and 20.

Freshly refitted for another duty tour in Vietnam, the 173-foot USS Conquest, commanded by Lt. Comdr. Wayne M. Holmes, is shortly scheduled for departure. It will join other minesweepers, radar destroyer escorts, Coast Guard cutters, and more than 50 fast patrol craft called "Swifts" in a patrol called Market Time.

An estimated 40,000 to 50,000 junks engage in legitimate fishing and transportation along the heavily congested 1,000 miles of South Vietnam's coast. Junks appearing suspicious are hauled alongside or boarded from the minesweeper's motor whale boats and thoroughly searched for contraband.

If the boarding party judges that a more thorough inspection is warranted, junks are then turned over to the South Vietnamese Junk Force for actual custody or final apprehension. The Market Time force frequently visually inspects over 1,000 contacts daily, and boards and searches an additional 500-800 junks.

In addition to sweeps to detect suspicious junks, the minesweepers stand ready to perform their minesweeping duties for the Seventh Fleet in the waters of Southeast Asia. These missions reflect the minesweeper motto: "Where the Fleet Goes — We've Been!"

Marcia additionally learned that the USS Conquest displaces about 780 tons. Because of its minesweeping capability, it is constructed almost entirely of wood and nonferrous metals to minimize magnetic disturbance. This allows the craft to operate safely in enemy fields of magnetically activated mines.

Navy entries already entered in the parade include the Terrier Missile Float and Drum and Bugle Corps from Point Mugu; the Crack Fire Control Technician School Drill Team from Vallejo; plus a marching unit of Naval Reservists from Santa Monica. Other entries will include color guard and marching units from ships afloat at the Los Angeles Naval Station.

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