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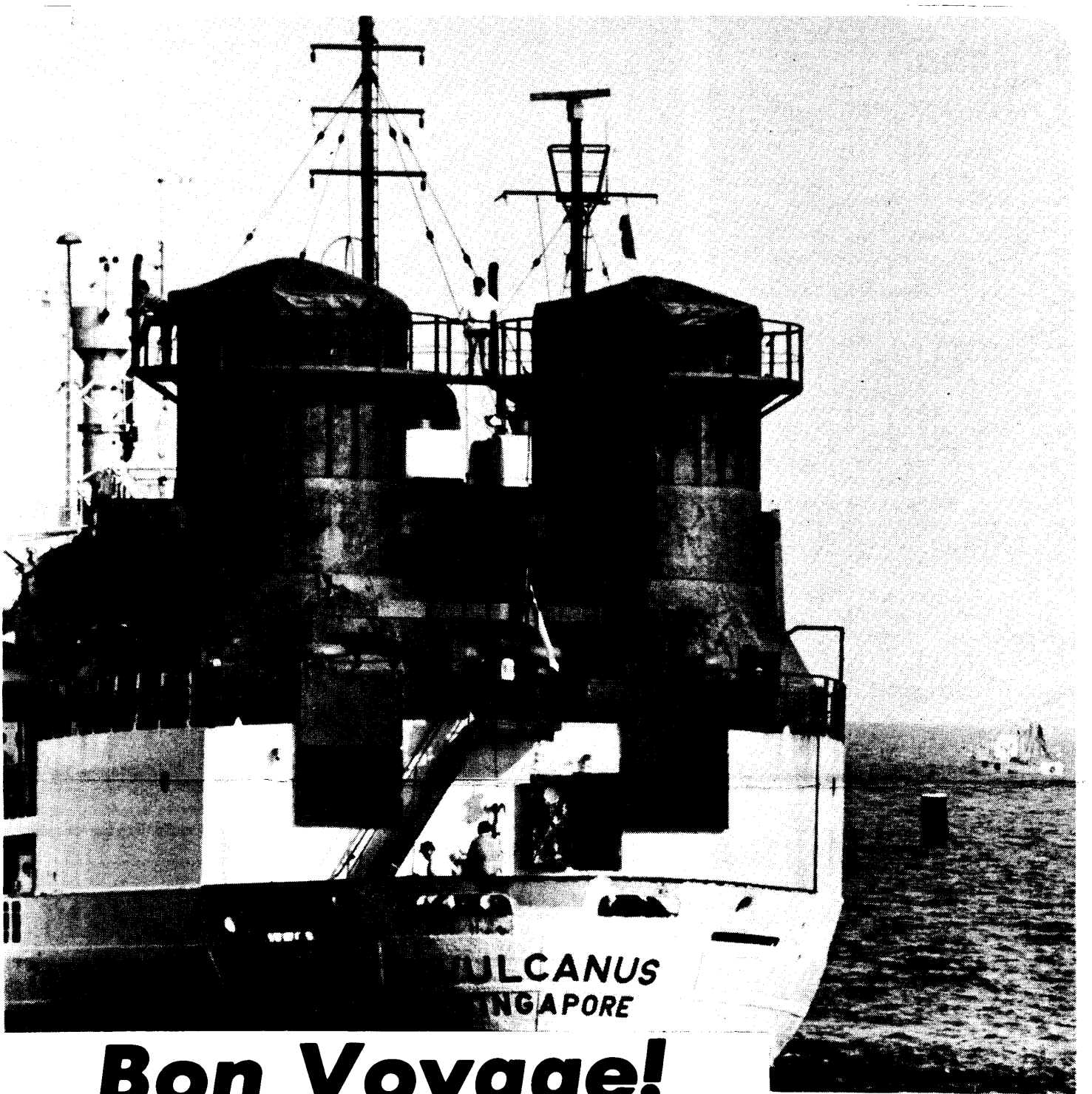
NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "BON VOYAGE!" NCBC GULFPORT MS
6/24/1977
THE SEABEE COURIER

The Seabee Courier

Naval Construction Battalion Center, Gulfport, Mississippi



Bon Voyage!

The incinerator ship Vulcanus steams out of the Port of Gulfport, loaded with 860,000 gallons of Herbicide Orange. The chemical will be burned within the ship at a mid-Pacific Ocean site.

More on page 4.

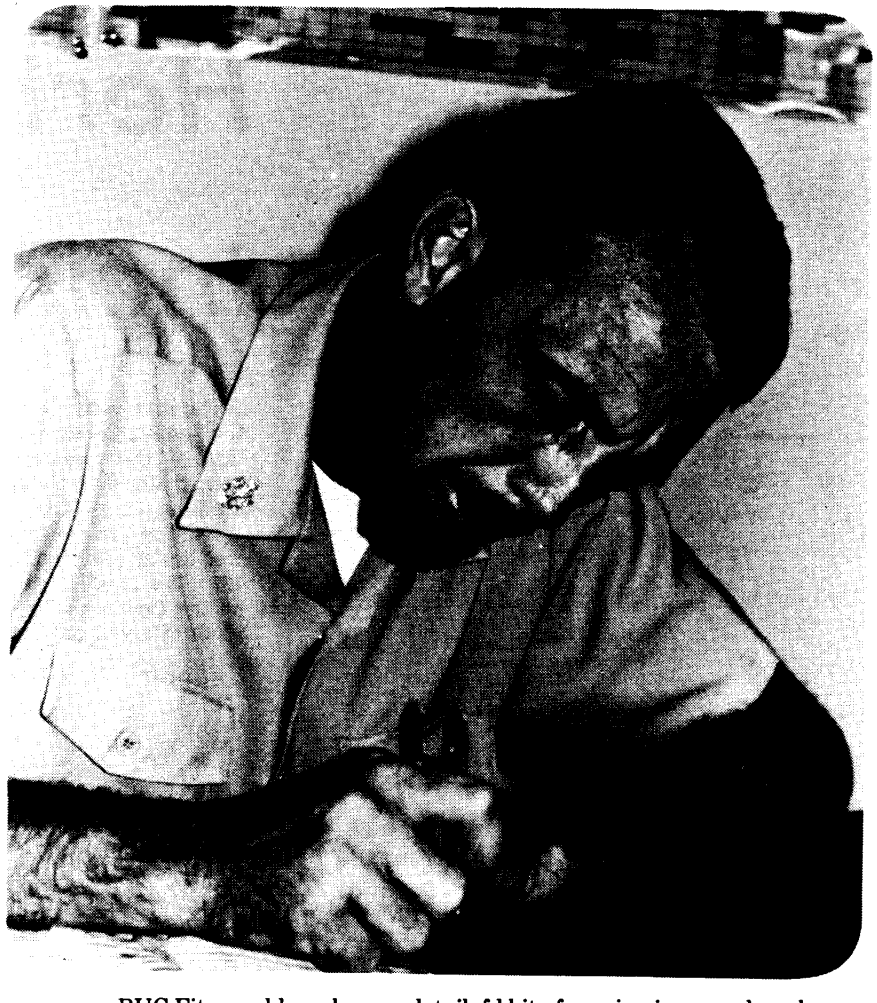
(U.S. Navy photo by Dennis Boxx)

WELL DONE!

74 promotes 159

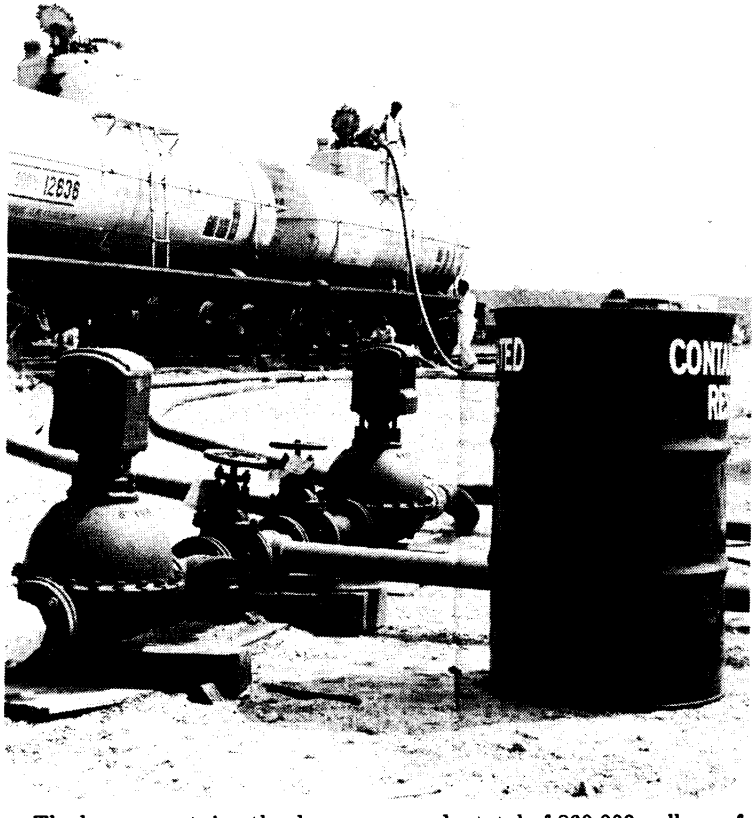
One-hundred-fifty-nine men from NMCB-74 were promoted from the February advancement examination, constituting one of the largest battalion advancement examination, constituting one of the largest battalion advancement cycles in recent years, according to the Educa-

men were chosen as selectees and 60 men received additional advancement credit points, a performance record PNC Raymond L. Braden, CPO in charge of ESO, described as "outstanding." The battalion's test results were "undoubtedly the most impressive thing I've seen

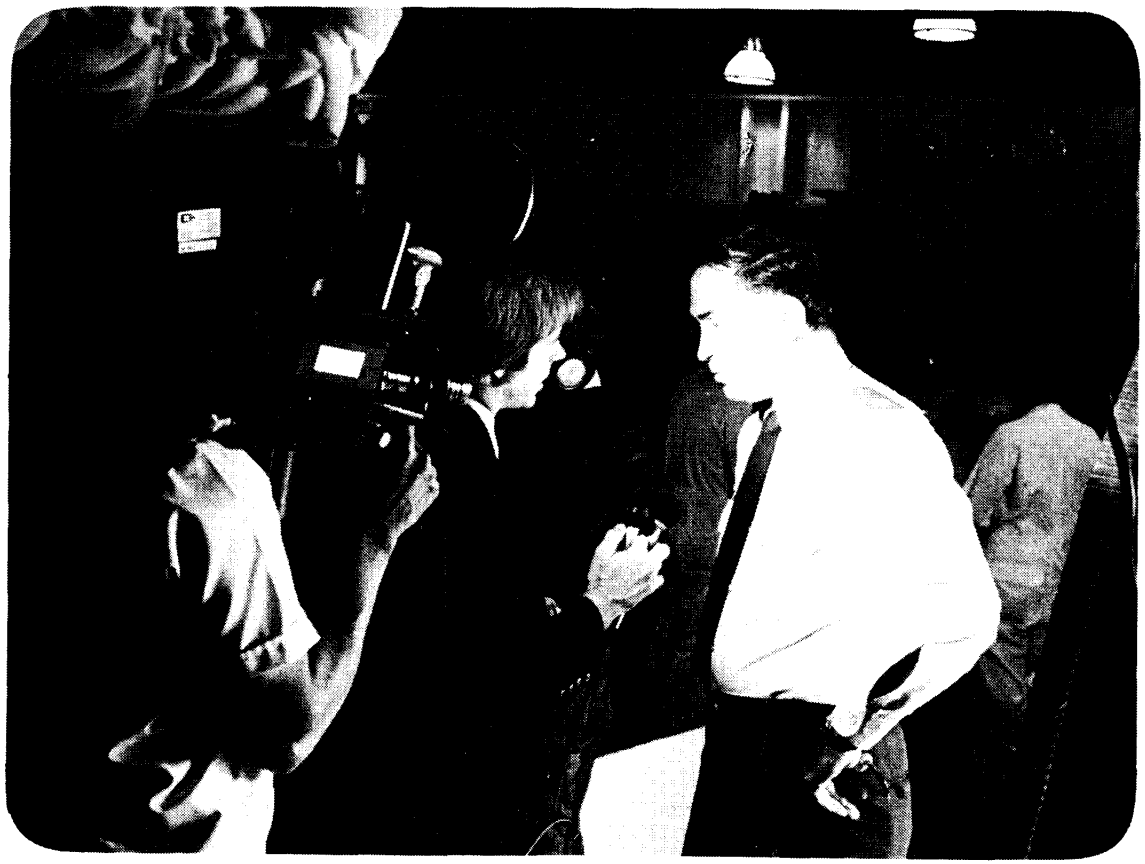


BUC Fitzgerald works on a detailefd bit of carving in a wooden plaque. After he finishes the woodwork, he may stain the piece

At the dedrumming facility for Herbicide Orange at CBC, a special team of 100 Air Force personnel cut open each drum. A special hose was inserted which sucked out the herbicide. After empyting, the drums were rinsed out and crushed. Personnel wore respirators more because of the smell than because of any dangerous fumes.
(U.S. Navy photo by PH3 Shaffer)

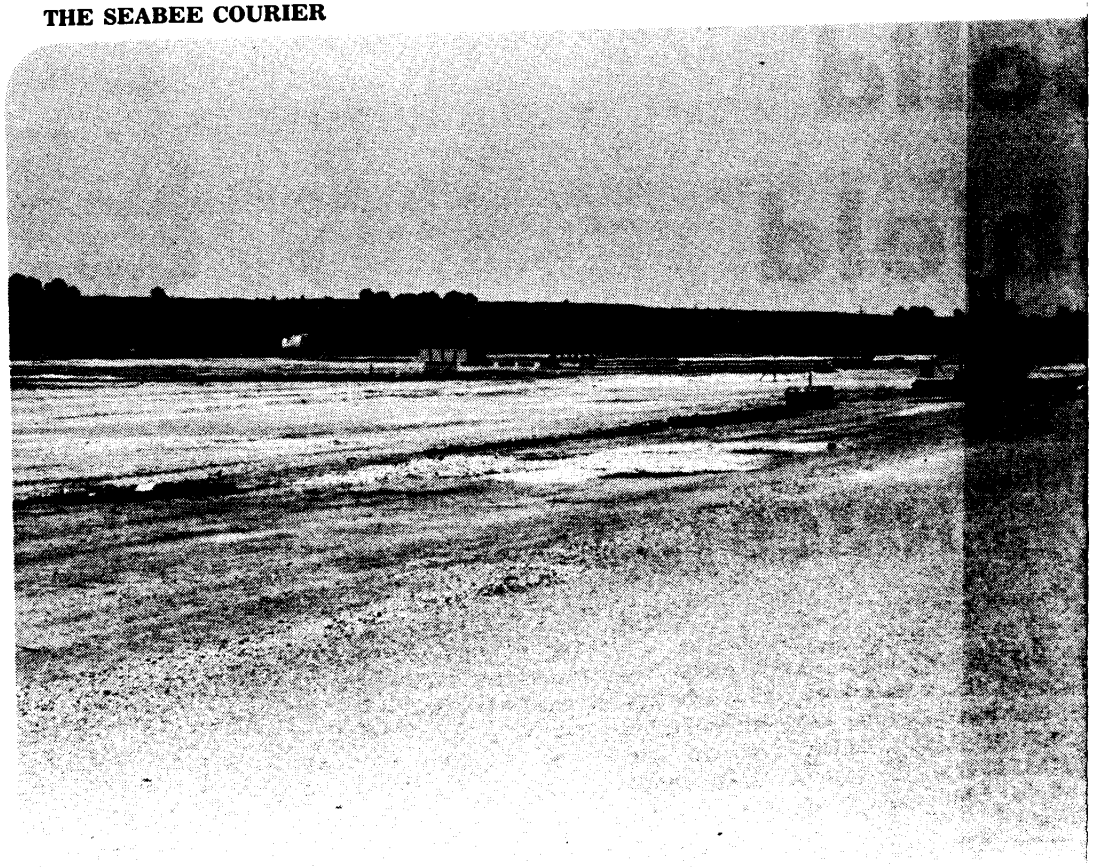


The hoses emptying the drums pumped a total of 860,000 gallons of Herbicide Oranges into rail road tank cars, in order to move the substance to the port. More than 1,000 55-gallon drums were emptied each day, for 15 days. (U.S. Navy photo by PH3 Dubina)



Major James Tremblay, USAF, talks to Dennis Wolter, of WWL New Orleans, about the Herbicide Orange dedrumming. Over ten television stations, including NBC, covered the operation, plus news media from across the country. (U.S. Navy photo by PH3 Dubina)

aboard



DESERTED An empty field gives witness to the end of CBC's long association with Herbicide Orange.
(U.S. Navy photo by PH3 Shaffer)

SOUTH MISSISSIPPI SUN/VERNON MATTHEWS

Air Force sergeant checks hoses as herbicide is pumped to railroad tank cars

Tank cars containing herbicide will creep to incinerator ship

Six railroad cars containing Herbicide Orange will roll from the Seabee Center to the State Port at Gulfport Thursday and their contents will be pumped into the incinerator ship Vulcanus.

As the tank cars move at "creep" speed to the port, Air Force officials said, guards from Illinois Gulf Coast Railroad will guard secondary street crossings and Gulfport police will block off U.S. 90.

The train is scheduled to cross U.S. 90 at about 6 a.m.

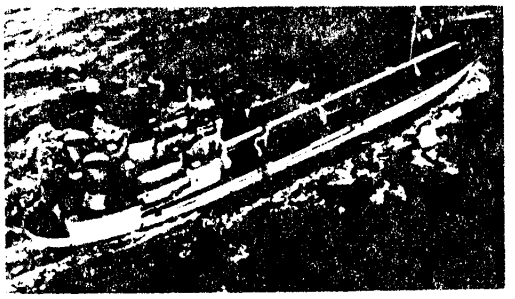
Whether the herbicide would be pumped immediately on to the Vulcanus was uncertain until Wednesday night when project director Col. Stanley A. Morrow was notified by Air Force officials in Washington to proceed.

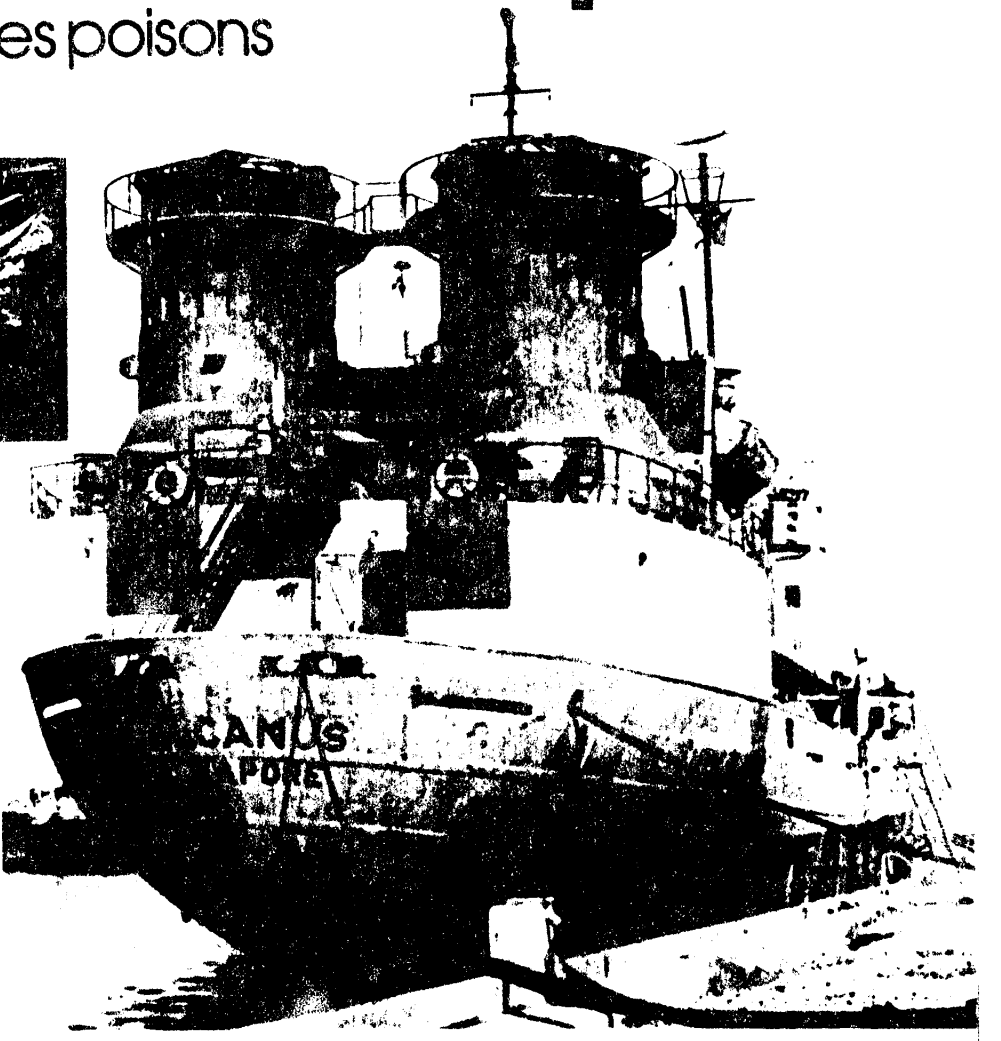
Morrow said Tuesday he would not load the Vulcanus until a written agreement was made between the government and the owners of the Dutch-owned ship. Officials said Wednesday afternoon no contract or agreement had been made but only relatively minor points needed to be ironed out.

As more than 100 servicemen open the 15,000 55-gallon drums at the Seabee Center over the next two weeks, tank cars will be moved to the port each morning. Project officials estimate more than 50,000 gallons of herbicide will be loaded on to the Vulcanus daily.

After the ship is loaded, it will steam to the Pacific by way of the Panama Canal and burn the toxic material at more than 1200 degrees Centigrade.

Incinerator ship
deep-sixes poisons





Twin stacks of Vulcanus emit wastes from six burners below. EPA requires combustion efficiency of no less than 99.9 percent, at no lower than 1250° C.

A converted cargo ship destroys a deadly chemical and proves a new method that's 99.9% efficient

By BRYAN BERRY

Last July, 120 miles west and downwind of Johnston Island in the Pacific Ocean, the cargo of a strange double-hulled ship began burning. It was no ordinary cargo: Called herbicide orange after the identifying stripes on the original storage drums, its use in Vietnam was halted when one of its components—dioxin—had been linked to an increased occurrence of birth defects there. Authorities had been wrangling for seven years over how it could be safely disposed of. The answer: incineration at sea. After the first burn, lasting two weeks, combustion was nearly complete: 99.99 percent, according to the EPA.

The incinerator ship, called Vulcanus after the Roman god of fire, had received high marks for combustion efficiency from EPA before—99.9 when it burned 16,800 metric tons of Shell's chlorinated hydrocarbon wastes in 1974-5. Since 1972, 50 to 60 miles off the North Sea coastline, the German-owned ship has been incinerating the chemical wastes of major European firms. Of the 10 million tons of nonradioactive toxic chemical waste generated annually by American industry, ships like the Vulcanus, some estimate, could safely destroy 5.4 million tons.

"Destroying the wastes *before* they reach the ocean is far preferable to direct dumping—or land-based methods such as deep-well injection," says Donald Carruth of the American Eagle Foundation, one strong proponent of at-sea incineration. "It's cheaper than land incineration, which requires scrubbing of emissions and operation of costly shore facilities." The hydrogen chloride (a combustion product) in Vulcanus's plume is dispersed over and neutralized by "the greatest buffering agent on the face of the earth—the ocean," says Russ Wyer of EPA's Division of Oil and Special Materials Control.

The ship's 15 cargo tanks hold 3503 cubic meters and are safely separated from the engine room by double bulkheads that enclose a pump room and generator room. At the rear of the ship are two combustion chambers, each housing three burners. Lined with silica firebrick, the burners have a rotating-cup fuel-injection system that provides vortex turbulence and distribution of the waste feed throughout the entire chamber.

The furnace is preheated with fuel oil to at least 1200° C. Large blowers supply up to 90,000 cubic meters of air per hour to each incinerator; total incineration capacity is 20-25 metric tons per hour.

The EPA, which hasn't yet issued final regulations on the method, "should actively encourage the building of incinerator ships," says Carruth. One source of ships could be the Maritime Administration, which offered in 1976 to sell small dry-cargo vessels from the National Defense Reserve Fleet for conversion to these new floating furnaces.