



# The Voice of America Goes to Sea

assign a frequency and a site for a temporary land installation. Should the occasion demand, however, the "Courier" may relay programs from the high seas—lifting its antenna skyward via a captive helium-inflated barrage balloon.

Commanded by Captain Oscar C. B. Wev, United States Coast Guard, the 338-foot vessel is manned by a volunteer Coast Guard crew of 80, including 10 officers with wide radio experience. Its members are representative of all 48 states and the territory of Hawaii. VOICE engineers supervise the radio relay operation.

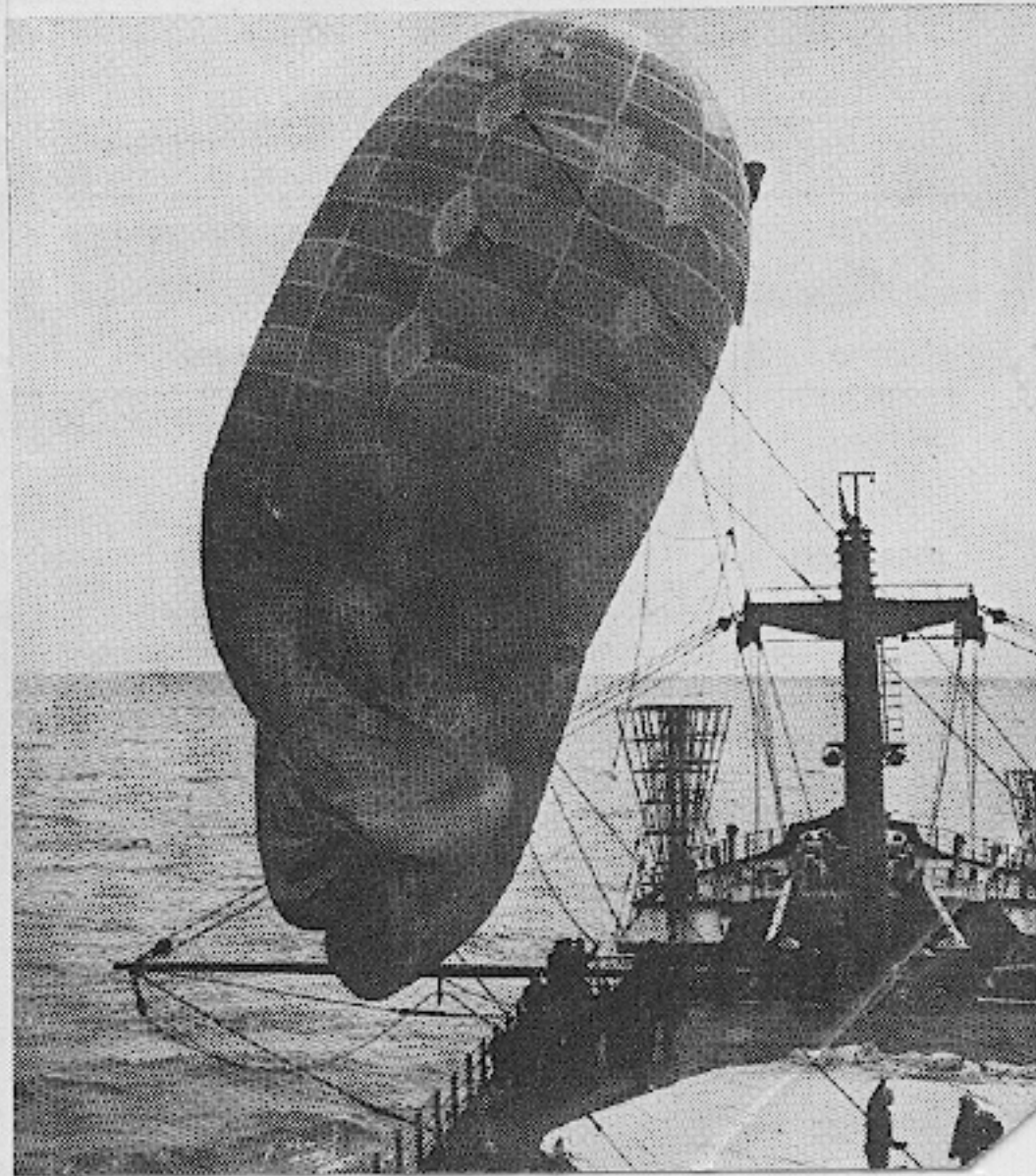
"The spirit of these Coast Guard volunteers typifies the attitude of all connected with the 'Courier'—the feeling that they are bringing the campaign of truth to people who would otherwise never hear it," says George Q. Herrick, Chief of VOA's Division of Radio Facilities Plans and Development, who originally created the plans for floating radio stations.

"As President Truman said at the dedication ceremonies, our arguments, no matter how good, are not going to influence people who never hear them. The purpose of this ship is to help get our message through!"

The "Courier" was constructed under a plan known as "Operation Vagabond." The project—to build a number of sea-going transmitters—was approved by the President and his staff and announced by the Department of State in April, 1951. Foy D. Kohler, Director of THE VOICE OF AMERICA, commented: "The present operation of the 'Courier' climaxes 10 years of VOA's efforts to tell the world how the American people live, work, and think. Shortly after Operation Vagabond began, Captain Wev was introduced to Jean

**A CONTROL PANEL and broadcasting studio enable the "Courier" to originate as well as to relay programs.**

THE HELIUM-FILLED BARRAGE BALLOON is raised aloft to carry the floating radio station's antenna skyward.



Seymour, VOA project engineer—and thus began a hectic year of activity. It was a dream come true when the 'Courier' was dedicated."

The "Courier's" flight deck is for the barrage balloons which will carry antennae far enough aloft to "place" VOICE broadcasts. The ship carries five of these balloons, 69 by 33 feet in size. A winch, located under the flight deck, spools the balloon cables up and down.

A large compartment midship stores 150,000 cubic feet of helium for the balloons.

Another hold contains Diesel engines capable of generating 1,500,000 watts of power. The three transmitters are built on a platform of eight-inch thick concrete. The platform "floats" on cork slabs which absorb the ship's vibrations.

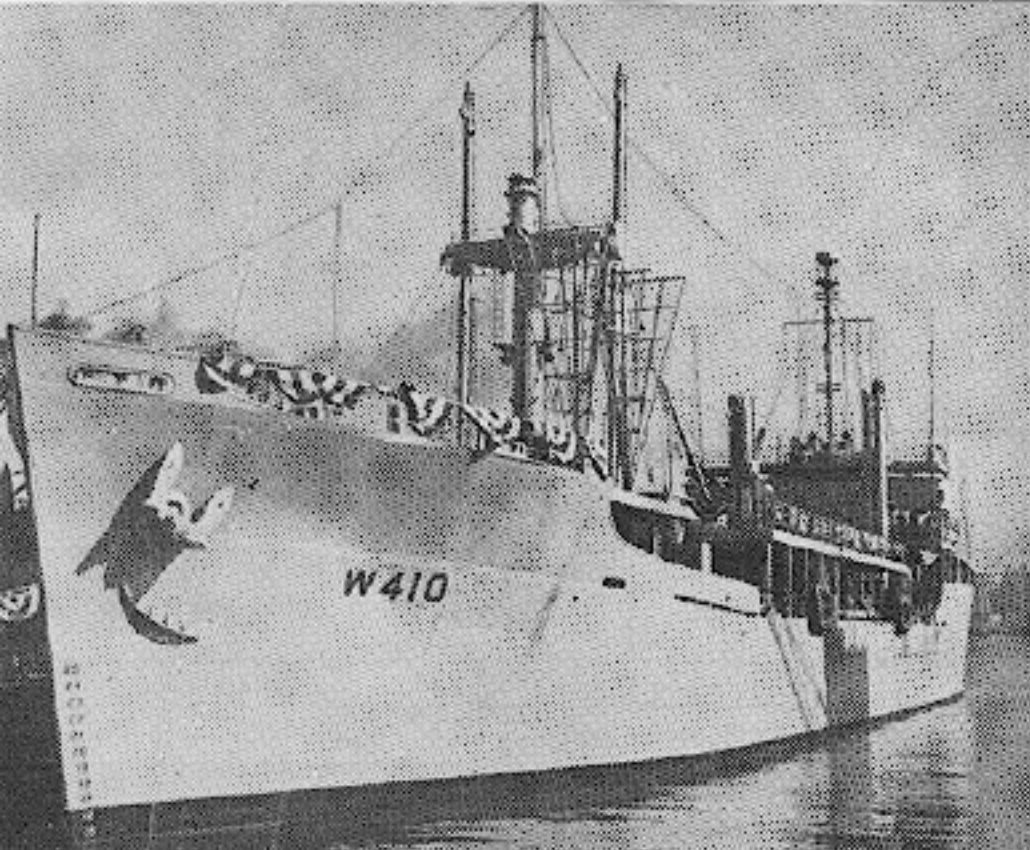
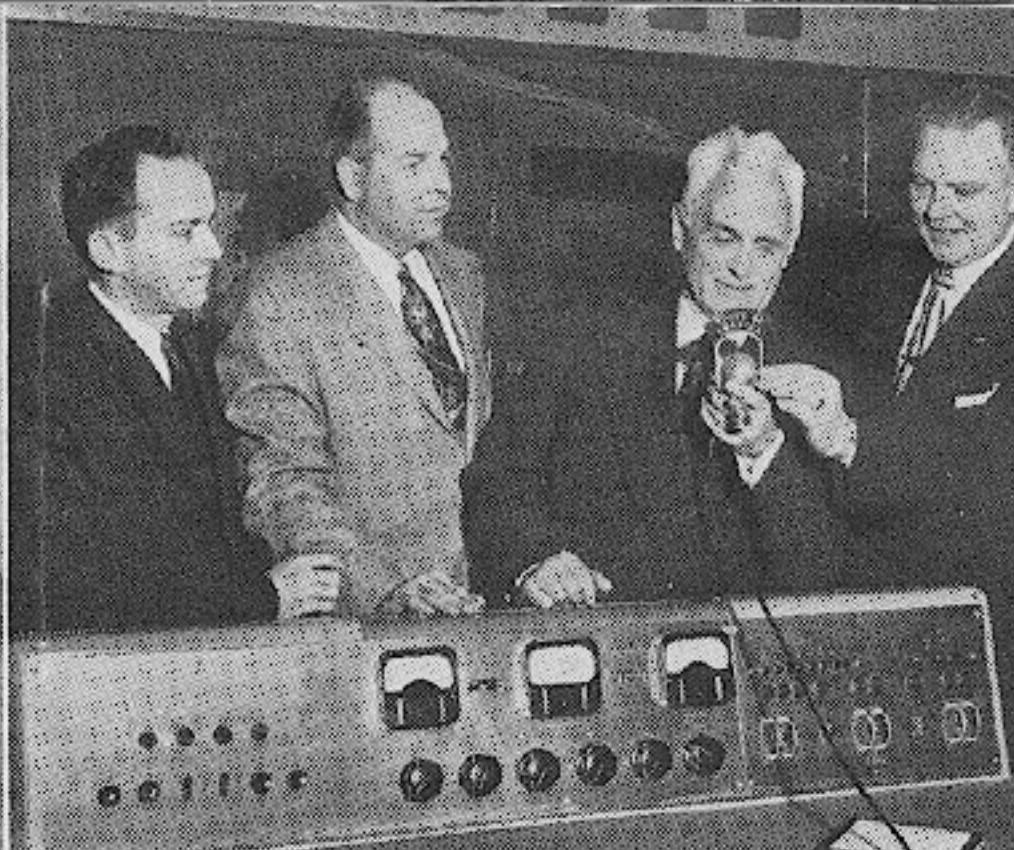
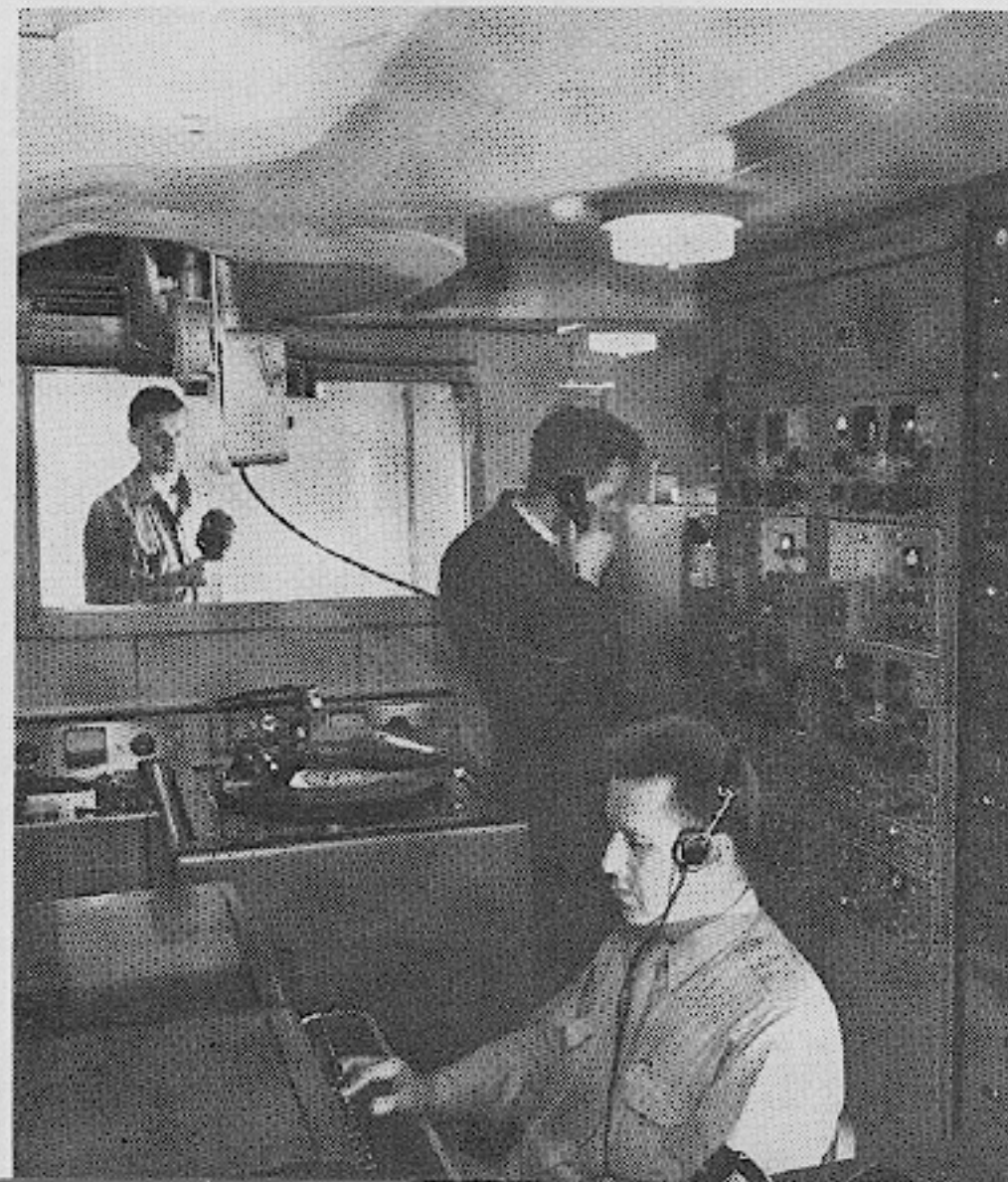
Special announcements and original programs can be broadcast from a small studio and control center located on the top deck.

At both the commissioning ceremonies in Hoboken, near New York City, and the dedication of the vessel in Washington, many outstanding American leaders commented on the "Courier."

Secretary of State Dean Acheson told the distinguished audience assembled in Washington: "The mission of this ship is to bear to our friends who are free, and to those who are not free, the truth about what is happening in the world."

Dr. Wilson Compton, Administrator of the United States International Information Administration, said: "History demonstrates that it is difficult to quarantine ideas. By sending the 'Courier' with its message of hope and freedom to the seven seas, we aim to show the interest of America in other peoples and broadcast the precepts of democracy as opposed to totalitarianism."

But from a listener in an Iron Curtain country comes a letter which perhaps best demonstrates the hope for results of Operation Vagabond: "In our atmosphere of oppression, the moments of hope occur when we hear THE VOICE OF AMERICA. Your voice comes like greetings from a civilized world . . . We can live the life behind the Iron Curtain and keep on praying if you, on the other side of the ocean, continue to feed us with the strength of everlasting hope."



LEFT: The "Courier." RIGHT: Dr. Wilson Compton, Administrator of the U. S. International Information Administration, delivers an address aboard the "Courier" while (from left to right) Foy D. Kohler, Director of The Voice of America, Howland H. Sargeant, Assistant Secretary of State, and George Q. Herrick, Chief of VOA's Plans and Development Division, look on. High-ranking officials took part in two dedication ceremonies on board the ship.