

★ news release

Flanagan - Interior 5634

SECRETARY UDALL TO DEDICATE NEW FEDERAL OCEANOGRAPHIC VESSEL MAY 9, 1963

Completely equipped as a floating laboratory, the 187-foot craft is designed to operate efficiently in any clime and any weather in her quest for scientific knowledge.

Unique features of the Albatross IV are her variable-pitch propeller (similar to those used on airplanes) which will permit her to remain stationary at strategic locations, and her steering mechanism which employs a circular "nozzle" around the propeller instead of the traditional rudder. Its movement from left to right changes the direction of the propeller's thrust and consequently the course of the vessel.

"For more than three centuries the fishing industry has been an important part of the history and economy of the New England area," the Department said. "Now with the dietary value of fishery products becoming more generally understood and

with many nations of the world increasing efforts to harvest the resources of the oceans, we are working to improve our knowledge of the riches of the sea as well as our fishing techniques. Albatross IV, sturdy and versatile, will help speed our research projects."

The Albatross IV is the largest and best equipped of the Department of the Interior's oceanographic vessels. She is an all-season ship, designed for biological and oceanographic studies in any ocean. Her air-conditioned laboratories will enable her research to extend to tropical waters if conditions arise. The stern ramp for handling gear will permit operations in the roughest weather, the Department said. Her hull is especially braced against ice pressures for work in cold areas.

Twin diesel engines will drive the ship at 12 knots over a range of 9,000 miles.

Complete research facilities include wet and dry laboratories, photographic and electronic center, underwater television for studying the reaction of fish under natural conditions or within nets, underwater sonar, and an underwater electromagnetic log.

Quarters are provided for a crew of 22 and a scientific staff of 16.

Research will include charting the distribution and abundance of groundfish and scallops; environmental factors causing seasonal and long-term fluctuations in fish stocks; collection of bottom organisms which form the food supply for groundfish; and investigation of plankton populations and general oceanographic conditions.

The ship was designed by Dwight S. Simpson & Associates of Boston, Mass., and was constructed by the Southern Shipbuilding Corporation of Slidell, La.

The original Albatross was decommissioned in 1921 after nearly 40 years of service as a fishery research vessel in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, as a naval auxiliary craft during the Spanish-American War, and a patrol boat in the North Pacific. She was 234 feet long, 47 feet longer than the present Albatross. The Albatross II was a converted Navy tug which saw fishery service from 1926 to 1932. The Albatross III was obtained from General Seafoods Corporation in 1939 for \$1.

But like the first Albatross, she "went to war" and did not begin her fishery research until 1948. She was deactivated in 1959.

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