

DUTIES OF AN ICEBREAKER



visions to last for a six month cruise of more than 38,000 miles. Her special propellers and powerful engines enable her to bash and batter her way through up to 12 feet of solid ice.

The primary duties of an icebreaker are supply and logistics. The United States and other allied nations have military and scientific stations located in regions near the poles where it is possible for a thin skinned cargo ship or tanker to go. The breakers escort these vessels, clearing a safe passage through the treacherous ice and allowing the cargo ships to get to these lonely outposts with vital fuel and supplies. Many of these stations and bases can be reached only once a year, even by the mighty icebreaker.



The Coast Guard Cutter Southwind (center) while operating with the Navy, teams up with the U.S.S. Glacier (right) and U.S.S. Burton Island to remove a massive chunk of ice from the shipping channel previously opened.

An icebreaker's heavy construction and unique hull design make her ideally suited for her duties in the desolate polar regions of the Earth. Completely self-sufficient, she can stock enough fuel and pro-



One of the many hazards to navigation encountered by the SOUTHWIND during Arctic East 1973.

A secondary mission of growing importance is that of scientific exploration. The icebreakers can go where no surface ship can, opening to scientists and oceanographers vast stretches of the earth which have never before been studied. A complete oceanographic laboratory is maintained aboard Southwind, and quarters for a dozen or more scientists are available.

Finally, the icebreakers, along with all Coast Guard Cutters, are dedicated to the protection of life and property at sea. A small but complete hospital staffed by a U.S. Public Health Service doctor and trained hospital corpsmen is maintained aboard. In addition, Southwind has extensive salvage capability, and her two helicopters are ideal for rescue missions.