

We're Going Where!?

Amazement struck in April of 1967 when the WINONA received official word from district headquarters that she would depart sometime in December of that year on a tour of western waters. The exact date would not be known for some months.

Through the guidance of headquarters and experienced crews, it was ascertained that the ship would need more adequate facilities for refueling at sea, air conditioning, and armament. The ship's company would have to be augmented in strategic areas. Such areas as radio, radar, sonar, and quartermaster were the deficient ones as peacetime complements were not geared for wartime steaming.

A journey to the yards was ordered for complete physical outfitting of the ship. Weeks of careful planning, measuring, calculating, cutting, welding and the tightening of nuts and bolts finally resulted in the appearance of a much changed vessel. The overhaul gave the necessary deck hardware needed for refueling and replenishment at sea, the installation of new air conditioning systems to enable inside comfort, a larger sick bay to accommodate anticipated increase of use, and armament for nighttime illumination of the sea.

The new crew would have to be trained in the manner of which peacetime schools did not stress. They would have to meld into a close-knit team, skilled in carrying out problems of wartime conditions at peak efficiency. This was accomplished by a rigid training regimen conducted throughout the ship in daily sessions. The ragged edges were honed smooth by a three and a half week period of extensive maneuvers in San Diego. We then returned to Port Angeles to await our final deployment.