



NO NEED to stow it under the mattress—Navy's new and modernized ships have more convenient locker space.

Fighting Ships—

They're Still Snug But a Better Fit

CHIEF Joe Brown, USS, flashed his I. D. card at the sentry, passed through the gate to the naval shipyard and turned hard right.

Joe knew the base and he knew his destroyers. He'd served in tin cans in World War II and in the Pacific and again in the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean. He knew the ships and was looking forward to duty in this one, USS *Meredith*.

He had swung in the right direction automatically and was now approaching the pierhead. As he rounded the corner of a shop building, the familiar outline of a *Gearing*-class destroyer caught his eye. He spotted the big "890" on her bow. This was the one all right.

She was just out of a yard overhaul and you sure could tell it. Scraggly scars had been scraped into her deck paint. Wood chips and waste clogged the corners. Her topside needed nothing so much as a good washdown.

Joe strode quickly up the brow and saluted aft, then the Officer of the Deck, "Brown, Chief Machinist's Mate, reporting aboard for duty, sir."



"Glad to have you aboard, Chief," the OOD replied.

After turning his orders over to the quartermaster and exchanging a few words, Joe swung down the nearest ladder for a look around. He stepped into the crew's mess—and stopped in his tracks!

Someone had been doing something to this ship, something besides dirtying up her topside. And what they had done was enough to gladden the heart of any tin can sailor.

The mess compartment looked like a Times Square restaurant. Warm fluorescent lights flooded down from the overhead. The traditional rows of long tables and benches that

stretched the length of the mess hall had given way to groups of four-man and two-man tables and benches with backs!

Instead of the usual plain white bulkheads and gray painted deck, Joe found a rust-red deck underfoot, blue gray and white mingled to brighten the bulkheads and a sparkling white overhead.

Sticking his head around the corner for a look at the steam table line-up, he quickly noted one big improvement. Instead of having the ladder leading into the area in such a position that the men standing in chow line had to double back and around to get ready to move down the steam tables, the ladder was turned end for end, thus eliminating a nasty snarl.

Another innovation, a dumb waiter, had been installed next to the steam tables. It will bring the hot food directly down from the galley on the main deck above. Anyone who has ever had a bowl of hot soup poured down his neck while standing in chow line would appreciate that little change, Joe mused to himself.