

Monticello Transports Trieste II From Mare Island to San Diego

The USS Monticello arrived in San Diego May 24 with Trieste II firmly anchored in her well deck.

Monticello had been in Mare Island where she picked up Trieste, the Navy's only bathyscaph.

Trieste had just completed an eight-month overhaul at Mare Island Naval Shipyard.

Monticello was assigned the job of picking up Trieste one month after returning from an eight-month western Pacific cruise.

Capt. Vincent F. Kelley, Monticello's commanding officer, says the ship was selected because a dock landing ship is best fitted for the job.

"This operation demonstrated the versatility and capabilities of a dock landing ship," says Capt. Kelley. "Just over a month ago we were putting Marines ashore in Vietnam. This month we're transporting a small submarine in the eastern Pacific."

Monticello left San Diego May 18. Before leaving, crewmembers removed a 22 ft. 7-in. section of the ship's flight deck. They also removed a stern safety net and a steel 'H' frame that runs the width of Monticello's flight deck.

This would enable a crane to drop Trieste directly into the ship's well deck with a minimum angle.

Monticello stopped at Long Beach while enroute and picked up a 26-foot whaleboat for transport to Mare Island.

The ship arrived at Mare Island May 20. Trieste, supported by two steel skids, was waiting on a pier. Loading began at 1 p.m. that afternoon.

The bathyscaph was loaded aboard Monticello by civilian employees of the shipyard. They used a 150-ton floating crane.

A yard foreman explained that loading Trieste was a delicate job. He said exact measurements would be neces-

sary to load the electronic equipment aboard the bathyscaph.

First, workmen attached four steel lines to Trieste, each with a test strength of 78,000 pounds. The lines were then attached to the crane.

Trieste was slowly lifted into the air and swung onto the same platform as the crane. Two Navy tug boats pushed the crane alongside Monticello's port side, aft.

The bathyscaph was lifted directly over the hole left by removal of the after section of Monticello's flight deck. It was suspended with its bow facing the ship's stern gate.

As it was being lowered and maneuvered under the remaining portion of the flight deck, workmen discovered that a mercury vapor lamp on Trieste's fantail wouldn't fit under the flight deck.

The lamp sat atop a five-foot pole. Both were removed by workmen and loading continued.

Trieste was rested on three 5½ in. thick steel skids in Monticello's well deck. The first skid was 11 ft. 7 in. from Trieste's bow. The second was precisely located 13 ft. 2½ in. behind the forward one. The third was 23 ft. 3¼ in. behind the second.

Two four ft., 12 in. by 12 in. blocks of wood were then placed under Trieste's stern for support. Each was wedged securely by smaller blocks of wood.

Workmen then began construction of two wooden frames that would surround Trieste. These frames would insure that Trieste stay on its skids during the return trip to San Diego.

The frames were made of beams a foot thick. They had to be loaded aboard Monticello by a crane. Each was located about 25 ft. from Trieste's stern and bow.

Horizontal pieces ran the width of Monticello's well deck

Perpendicular pieces ran up the side of Trieste and up the bulkheads of the ship's well deck.

The wood was bolted to the well deck and bulkheads. Wedges were inserted to insure maximum stability.

Workman then lashed ¼ in. steel wire from Trieste to cloverleaves on Monticello's well deck. Eight pieces were fastened on each side, two pieces were secured directly under the bow.

Trieste was ready for the trip to San Diego. The time was 4:30 a.m. It had taken 15½ hours to load Trieste.

While Trieste was being loaded in Monticello's well deck, equipment and supplies used by a Trieste detachment at Mare Island were loaded and secured on Monticello's mezzanine and super decks.

The ship steamed to Alameda Naval Air Station Saturday morning, May 21. This was Armed Forces Day and 917 civilians and over 100 sailors toured the ship.

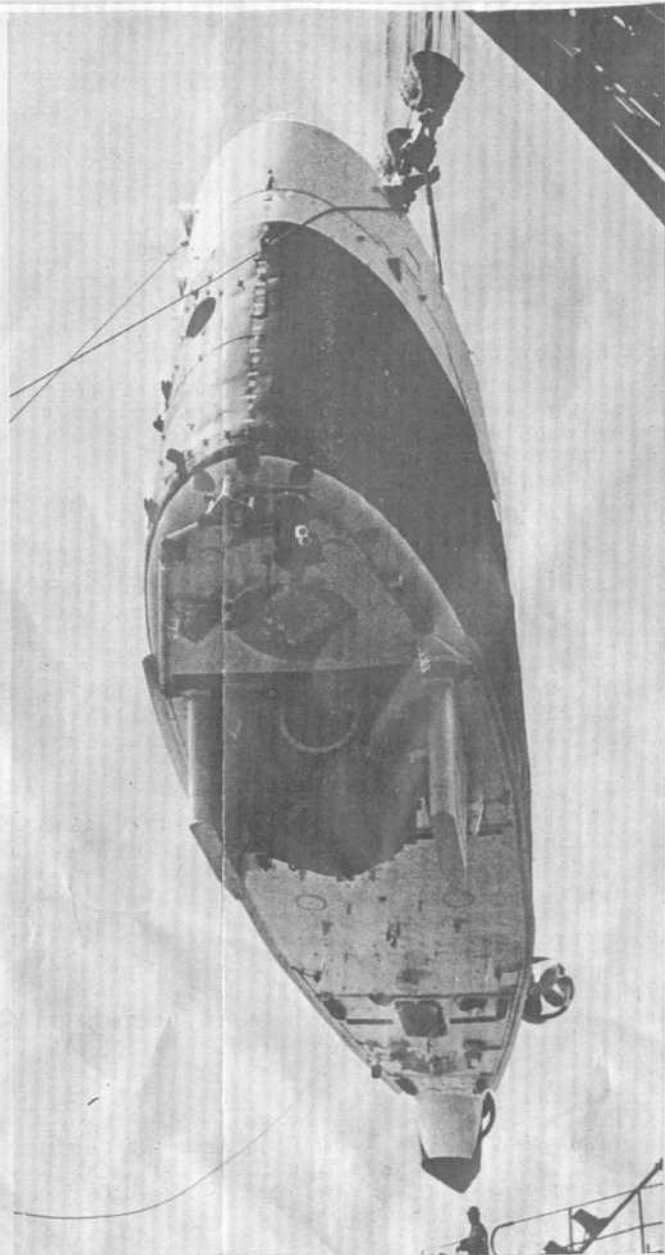
Monticello left Alameda May 23 and arrived at Ballast Point, San Diego, at 1:15 p.m. May 24.

Trieste was to have been off-loaded there. However, a 100-ton floating crane that was to have been used broke a cable and was unable to do the job.

So, Monticello crewmembers used the ship's 50-ton crane to off-load equipment and supplies and the ship moved to a Naval Station berth May 25.

At AMPHIBIAN press time, it appeared that Trieste would be off-loaded today, but the operation hinges on replacement of the broken cable.

Trieste II is capable of descending to the ocean floor. It is equipped with underwater television cameras and electronic equipment for tests and evaluation. It holds the world record dive of 35,800



THAT'S THE BOTTOM—Trieste II looms over Monticello's well deck during loading at Mare Island Naval Shipyard. It took 15½ hours to complete the loading operation.