

THE AERIAL PLATFORM AND BATHYSCAPH

A strange new vehicle that flies: This one, called an "aerial platform," combines important features of the helicopter and jeep. Its first public demonstration is at Santa Barbara, California. Designed for the Army, it needs no runway for landing or taking off. Like a helicopter, the aerial platform rises vertically and can operate in all kinds of terrain. In addition, it can move troops or cargo with ease, hugging the ground almost as closely as a jeep to take advantage of natural cover. It's a four-rotor job with a low silhouette and enough deck space to carry plenty of surprises as it comes skimming 'round a hill. Another unusual craft, this one with a strong and sizeable bubble under its belly, was built not to fly, but to plumb the depths. The bathyscaph, purchased by the Navy from famous Swiss scientists August and Jacques Piccard, is making explorations off the Southern California coast. The hull is filled with gasoline - lighter than water - to keep the bathyscaph bouyant even as it probes beneath the surface. Two men can comfortably fit inside the 6½ foot observation sphere. They can go down more than three miles.