

HISTORY  
U. S. S. BENNINGTON (CV 20)  
6 August 1944 - 15 September 1945

IN REPLY  
REFER TO

II. NARRATIVE

The USS Bennington (CV20), was named for the Battle of Bennington, Vermont, fought 16 August 1777, near Bennington, Vermont. Her keel was laid at the Navy Yard, Brooklyn, New York, on 15 December 1942, and she was launched 26 February 1944. The Bennington was the first of the so-called "Essex" class carriers to be built in the New York Navy Yard. She was also the first to be built in drydock, rather than on ways, with the consequence that her launching was accomplished by opening the dock gates.

While the ship was under construction, and early in May, 1944, nucleus crews assigned to the Bennington were assembled for an intensive pre-commissioning training at the Naval Training Station, Newport, Rhode Island, and at the US Navy Yard, Brooklyn, N.Y. Specialized training was obtained on other ships then on shakedown cruises, or a special school along the eastern seaboard. During this time also, Air Group 82, designated as the ship's first Air Group, underwent strenuous training at Norfolk, Virginia.

August 6 found the entire ship's company, and the pilots of Air Group 82 who flew to New York for the occasion, on board at the dock in the Navy Yard. The day was a pleasant one, and the ceremony held on the flight deck most colorful, with the New York skyline serving as a background. Some 8,000 guests attended. The ship's chaplain opened the ceremony with a prayer for God's blessing on the ship and her crew. Captain J.B. Sykes, USN, took official command of the ship.