

During our stay off Trinidad, Commander K.J. Brew reported aboard as relief for Commander R.M. Signer, and following Commander Signer's transfer to a Naval Hospital, became the Bennington's new Executive Officer. While we were at anchor off MOB Trinidad, Commodore C.C. Baughman, MOB Commandant visited the ship, and later, Rear Admiral A.C. Read, COMAIRFORFOLK, was a passenger for a day's run, observing our flight operations and gunnery exercises.

We departed Gulf of Paria for the cruise north on 9 November 1944, and conducted power runs and various engineering tests enroute to Hampton Roads. On 13 November, off Virginia Capes, Air Group 82 flew their planes en masse to spend the ensuing weeks at NAS Quonset Point, R.I. On 15 November we were underway from MOB Norfolk for Damage Control exercises in the Chesapeake Bay, and on the late afternoon of the same day, moored against the Navy Yard Annex at Bayonne, New Jersey.

During the period between 16 November and 13 December 1944, the entire ship's company, by sections, enjoyed 8 days leave, and the ship was receiving last-minute attention in post-shakedown availability at the Navy Yard. Ground personnel of Air Group 82 reported back aboard from NAS Quonset Point on 11 December.

13 December 1944, found us underway again for anchorage at Gravesend Bay and the next day we passed Amresse Light enroute to ~~Southampton~~ the Delaware Capes, and Cristobal, Panama Canal Zone. Enroute ~~back~~ down, Air Group 82 flew their planes back aboard. On 17 December we were closing Crooked Island Passage off the Bahamas, and on the following day had our calibration runs on the measured mile off Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. As we approached Panama, our planes, cooperating with the Army, in a test of Canal Defenses,