

U. S. S. BENNINGTON (CV-20)
BEN-TRAV-LOG NO. 6

Dear _____

Now that the fighting part of the war appears to be over, I'm able to tell you, in pretty much detail, the part the BENNINGTON played in combat operations against Japan. As a matter of fact, if the local newspaper cares to print some of what I write, the Navy has no objection, and I for one would be glad to see the BENNINGTON get some recognition for its accomplishments in the war. (Of course, if you do give this letter to the newspaper, it must be identified as not officially released by the Navy Department.)

You know, of course, that our ship, an Essex Class carrier, celebrated her first birthday on 6 August 1945. We arrived, you'll remember, in the Western Pacific combat area in February, and received our first baptism in combat during the first carrier raids on Tokyo. From that time we have operated as part of Admiral Marc Mitscher's Task Force 58, and Admiral William Halsey's Task Force 38, with our planes covering the invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. We have been roaming the East China Sea and the coasts of the Japanese Empire from Kyushu to Hokkaido sinking coastal shipping and convoys, hitting the enemy fleet and destroying enemy planes in the air and on the ground. And now the "Busy B," with the recent cessation of hostilities, is standing by to play her part in the peace.

Because I know you'll be interested, and because the "lid" is partly off, I'm going to list in a kind of chronology fashion, a history of the BENNINGTON'S activities since we left Ulithi Atoll (in the Carolines) in early February. Later on, the ship is going to distribute to all personnel a sort of souvenir pamphlet which will include a real history of the ship with lots of details I won't cover in this little summary. When you read this letter, you'll want to get out maps, and follow our ship in her travels. You'll have to visualize too, the drama and emotional conflicts and stirrings behind each of the items I mention. Believe me, I'll never forget any of those days, when tense with excitement, and at my battle station, we were really in there fighting!

10 February 1945

We left Ulithi, a part of one of five fast carrier task groups. With us were the other carriers HORNET, WASP, and BELLEAU WOOD; and the battleships MASSACHUSETTS and INDIANA, and several cruisers and destroyers.

16 February 1945

Our ship launched its planes as part of the first carrier "strikes" against Tokyo. We were then in a position approximately 100 to 150 miles from Tokyo.

17 February 1945

Tokyo strikes continued.

18 February 1945

BENNINGTON planes raided Chichi Jima.

20-23 February 1945

Our aircraft furnished close air support for the Iwo Jima Invasion.

25 February 1945

We struck again at Tokyo airfields.

1 March 1945

Raids against airfields and installations on Okinawa, Ie Shima, and against shipping off Miyako.

4-14 March 1945

Anchored at Ulithi Atoll. Recreation parties at Mog Mog Island.

18 March 1945

Strikes against airfields and ground installations on Kyushu.

19 March 1945

Continued Kyushu strikes, attacking shipping and units of the Jap fleet in the vicinity of Kure Naval Base.

20-21 March 1945

We returned from waters off Kyushu and were under frequent enemy air attack and "Kamikaze" suicide divers.

23-31 March 1945

Conducted strikes on Okinawa and surrounding islands, in preparation for the Okinawa invasion. We helped sink a Jap convoy in the East China Sea on 24 March.

1 April 1945

The BENNINGTON furnished close air support for the landing on Okinawa.