

# QM1 IS 'MAN OF MONTH'

## Benn Deploys; Visits Hawaii; Recovers Apollo



Quartermaster John D. Cathcart beams as he accepts the \$25 U. S. Savings Bond being presented him by Captain Richard Graffy. October was a good month for Cathcart. During October he was selected as "Man of the Month" and found out that he will be advanced to Chief Quartermaster in December.

Quartermaster First Class John D. Cathcart has been chosen Bennington's October "Man of the Month." With the selection goes a \$25 U. S. Savings Bond, a special 48-hour liberty and a letter of the accomplishment in his service jacket. He will also be eligible for "Man of the Quarter" selection. Cathcart has served aboard Bennington since December, 1966, and was very happy and surprised at the selection.

After quitting high school in 1952, Cathcart went to work for the Peppercell Textile Mill in his home town of La Grange, Ga. However, the fine art of weaving didn't appeal to him so September of that same year found him in San Diego in Navy boot camp.

Upon completion of basic training, Seaman Apprentice Cathcart reported aboard USS Oriskany where he spent nearly three years. He had wanted to be a disbursing clerk, but at the time it was ship's policy to send all non-rated men to the deck force before they were eligible to strike for a rate. However, after a year in the deck force he decided to go up for Third Class Boatswain's Mate and made it on Jan. 1, 1965.

From Oriskany Cathcart went to the Randolph in 1966, to the Ticonderoga in 1967 and to the Bon Homme Richard in 1968. It was while he was aboard the Bonnie Dick that the Ship's Navigator encouraged him to change his rate to quartermaster. On Dec. 16, 1969, he became Quartermaster Third Class.

He then made QM2 in May, 1960, and shortly afterwards was transferred to his first shore billet after nearly nine years in the Navy.

Cathcart spent his first nine months of shore duty at Astoria, Ore. After the base was closed, he was transferred to Treasure Island, San Francisco, where he served on the staff of Commander Radar Picket Squadron ONE.

From Treasure Island he spent short periods of time on the USS Tweedy and the USS Kretschmer. He then served three years on the USS Boston before reporting aboard Bennington. He made QM1 in May, 1963, aboard Boston.

When asked about his Navy career, Cathcart replied, "I was originally a Kitty Cruiser and was out for 69 days before reenlisting. The best ship I have served on so far as working conditions, is the Oriskany, but I feel that the present Bennington navigation gang is the best crew I have ever worked with."

He also stated that if he had it to do all over again he would make the Navy a career but would start out as a quartermaster instead of a boatswain's mate. Cathcart is especially proud of three letters of commendation that he has received from various commands for outstanding performance.

Cathcart holds the Good Conduct Medal for 12 years service, and during that 12 years his most memorable cruise was when the Ticonderoga sailed from the east coast to the west coast. It was

The 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -orbit, eight and three-quarter hour flight of the Saturn 5/Apollo 4 spacecraft would for the first time give U. S. scientists an undisputed lead over Russia in rocket power--a crucial factor in the ability to send men to the moon.

Bennington stood by 600 miles northwest of Hawaii to retrieve the scorched Apollo command section and to see if it withstood the 4,500-degree re-entry heat.

At 9:37 a.m. local time Bennington's crew had the Apollo capsule visually spotted. By noon the spacecraft was safely on board and Bennington was heading home.

How did this all begin? For Bennington it began more than three months ago when she was selected as the primary recovery ship for the Saturn/Apollo flight.

Bennington began to prepare for her mission late in August. Postponement after postponement of the shot, however, caused more than a month's delay for Bennington. But finally, after a week of carrier qualifications off the California Coast, the word was "go" and Bennington left San Diego for Pearl Harbor and her ultimate destination--approximately 600 miles northwest of Hawaii.

During her transit to Pearl Harbor general quarters drills, gun shoots, and other operational training drills were conducted. The ship arrived in Pearl Harbor Oct. 16, only to have her assigned mission delayed three more weeks. (cont. on page 30)

then that he became a shellback and visited the port of Valparaiso, Chile, which stood out in his mind as being very friendly and picturesque. "Almost like a 'story book' atmosphere," says Cathcart.

Quartermaster Cathcart is married to his high school sweetheart, the former Miss Peggy McCall of Atlanta, Ga. They were married in 1954 and have two children: a girl, Joanna, five, and a boy, Michael, two. The family currently resides in Long Beach and are expecting a new addition in February.

While in high school Cathcart played right halfback on the football squad and ran the 100-yard dash for the track team. He is a devoted family man and says that his greatest pleasure is being with his wife and children. After retirement he plans to study the art of hairstyling.