

# Inside Story

"The ship will get underway in three days. This has been the constant reminder to Big Benn's crew that Bennington is the ready CVS on the West Coast. Drills, exercises, inspections and schools have brought the ship to battle readiness, and now it is ready for its 11th Far East deployment.

Since Big Benn returned from the Far East on May 23, 1967, she has constantly been preparing herself and her crew for her next deployment. First there was a two-month upkeep period before Benn returned to sea. After her initial sea trials on July 25, 1967, Benn conducted carrier qualifications for several squadrons.

Benn showed she could handle a variety of duties when she picked up the Apollo 4 module near Midway Island on Nov. 9, 1967. After her 1½-month MITDPAC, Benn men were able to spend Christmas in port before participating in a major First Fleet Exercise, "Bead Stringer", on Jan. 8.

Hunter-Killer exercises and carrier qualifications were the plan of the day during February as Benn men put the final touches to their skills.

Benn men were not only busy during sea periods, as in-port periods found them adjusting and repairing equipment on the antisubmarine carrier, while others were presenting the ship during open house and numerous tours.

Administration and Materiel inspection was held by Antisubmarine Group Three Jan. 29 to Feb. 2. Receiving an overall average of 92, Benn men proved they were ready.

Now as deployment time draws near, many rumors are being passed around. Some of the rumors have the ship leaving within the next two days and others have a more optimistic view point, giving the ship a couple of weeks before deploying. At least the rumors give Benn men something to discuss during "off" moments of a work day.

## BEADSTRINGER

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Bennington was only a phase of the exercise, Bead Stringer. There were 22 other ships and a total of nine air units participating. Nearly every size and shape of ship in the U. S. Navy were in the exercise from small PT boats to huge attack aircraft carriers.

Advance training in surface warfare tactics, anti-air warfare, shore bombardment, anti-PT boat operations and antisubmarine warfare reflected the realistic emphasis placed on the numerous ships and air units participating in the exercise. Bead Stringer was planned to prepare the ships and aircraft for conditions prevailing in Southeast Asia. Surface gunnery and air strikes sank the target ship ex-USS Abercrombie (DE-243) as part of the exercise.

San Diego-based units that participated were: USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31), USS Floyd B. Parks (DDG-7), USS Oklahoma City (CLG-5), USS Buchanan (DDG-14), USS Mullany (DD-528), USS Henry B. Wilson (DDG-7), USS Dennis J. Buckley (DD-808), USS Uhlmann (DD-687), and USS Mataco (ATF-86).

Long Beach-based units besides Benn included: USS Long Beach (CGN-9), USS Turner Joy (DD-951), USS Henderson (DD-785), USS Edson (DD-946), USS Pickens (DD-685), USS Gridley (DLG-21), USS Mississippi (AO-105), USS Cape (MSI-2), USS Cove (MSI-1), USS Leader (MSO-490), USS Excel (MSO-439), and USS Guide (MSO-447).

The Concord-based ammunition ship USS Virgo (AE-30) also operated in the exercise.

Air units in the exercise were Carrier Air Wing Five, Bennington's own Antisubmarine Air Group 59; Fleet Composite Squadrons Three and Seven; Patrol Squadron One, Airborne Early Warning Squadron 111; and Marine Composite Reconnaissance Squadron Three.

Aboard his flag ship USS Oklahoma City, Vice Admiral Roeder was in overall command of the exercise forces. Rear Admiral F. A. Bardshar, USN, Commander Carrier Division Seven, embarked in the attack aircraft carrier USS Bon Homme Richard, was in tactical command of units at sea while Rear Admiral C. A. Karberis, USN, Commander Fleet Air San Diego, was in command of the opposing forces.

# Dental Examines 104 Dependents

What is a cavity? Why do I have to brush my teeth? What can I do to help prevent tooth decay?

These questions and many more were answered by Benn's Dental Department Saturday, Feb. 17, when more than 104 children, dependents of ship's company, came aboard for their annual checkup.

Each year during Dental Health Week Feb. 14-19, Benn's Dental Department sends an invitation home with Dad to bring his kids in for a dental checkup. With Dad goes a tube of pumice to help begin the treatment.

An appointment is made and soon the day of torture comes. With Benn's expert care, however, torture becomes fun and the fun into a preventative tooth decay program that really works.

First the children are examined and their teeth evaluated for either further immediate dental care or future dental care. Next literature is passed out, and lectures are given on proper brushing techniques. And then finally the most helpful part, and the most distasteful too, the application of fluoride to the teeth.

The departing gift for each youngster is a complete dental care kit with tooth brush, tooth paste, and an answer to all his answers.



THE CORRECT WAY -- DT2 Art Mahana shows the proper brushing technique to, from left, Frank Dean Jr., Darrin Martin, Don Fiene, Sharon Fiene, Paul Martin, and James Burns.