U.S.S. Bennington Rejoins Fleet Today

SecNav Kimball To Give Recommissioning Address

Dan A. Kimball, Secretary of the Navy, will be the principal speaker at recommissioning ceremonies for the U.S.S. Bennington (CVE-20) at 1400 today at the New York Naval Shipyard, Brooklyn, New York.

Prior to taking office as Secretary of the Navy July 31, 1961, Mr. Kimball held executive positions in the General Tire and Rubber Company and later headed the And Other Engineering Corporation at Azusa, California, before a corporate subsidiary of General Tire.

Ship's War Record
A Story of Action

The U.S.S. Bennington (CVE-20) had its origin in the tremendous upsurge in the Navy's shipbuilding program in the early months of World War II. The impetus of the war spawned 24 of the CV class aircraft carriers which were later to form the backbone of the task forces carrying the war to the Japanese homeland.

The Bennington's keel was laid at the U.S. Navy Yard, Brooklyn, New York on December 15, 1942. The ship was over 14 months in building, being launched February 26, 1944.

Nuclear crews assigned to the ship were assembled at the Naval Training Station, Newport, R. I., and at the Brooklyn Navy Yard early in May, 1944. At the same time, Air Group 82 began training at Norfolk.

Commissioned in 1944

On August 6, 1944 the Bennington took her place in the ship's war in the world in simple but impressive ceremonies at New York. Captain J. B. Sykes took official command of the ship as the Bennington's first skipper.

Ceremonies Speculated As Large Crowd Is Anticipated

The U.S.S. Bennington (CVE-20), famed World War II aircraft carrier, will be recommissioned at 1400 today in formal ceremonies at the New York Naval Shipyard, Brooklyn, New York. Secretary of the Navy Dan A. Kimball will deliver the principal address to an anticipated crowd of 6,000 guests, officers and crew members.

Captain D. B. Young, Commanding Officer of the Bennington, a veteran 25 years of Naval service, will address his crew and guests following the ceremony to be held in the Secretary of the Navy, Rear Adm. Samuel E. Ewell, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Commandant of the Third Naval District, will act as the recommissioning officer.

The Bennington, named for the Revolutionary War battle which took place near the city of Bennington, Vermont, will be the third Essex class carrier to be converted into the modern "catoblepous" type carrier by the Brooklyn, New York, shipyard, U.S.S. Over- ishank and the U.S.S. Wasp have previously been converted.

Action in Pacific

Originally commissioned on August 6, 1944, the Bennington saw action in the South Pacific in the later stages of World War II as a member of Task Force 38. The ship was the first carrier to be built by the New York Naval Shipyard. On November 19, 1944 she placed on the inactive "mothball" list at Norfolk, Virginia and was removed there until October of 1950. The recommissioning period was October 16-30, 1950.

Over 11,500,000 man-hours went into the two-year job of converting the ship. The Bennington was reactivated from drydock on October 5, 1952. The conversion was completed at the ship's berth alongside Pier K.

Cost $62,000,000

To "mothball" the Bennington cost the government approximately two million dollars, while the final modernization cost will over sixty million dollars. Originally displacing 27,100 tons, the present Bennington displaces 52,000 tons. She will carry a crew of approximately 10 officers and 2,000 enlisted men, 19 officers and men of the Air Group which will operate from her deck.

Among the many changes which characterize the conversion are a strengthened flight deck necessary for jet aircraft operations, increased automatic armament for anti-aircraft protection, new airplane fueling systems, stronger elevators and improved communications for more complete control of operating aircraft.

U.S.S. Bennington Before Conversion

The U.S.S. Bennington (CVE-20) as she looked while acored at Gravesend Bay, New York, on December 15, 1944. The Bennington was in commission for 15 months during World War II, contributing heavily to the final defeat of Japan. Bennington planes shot down 167 Jap planes in their first five months of combat. 229 were destroyed on the ground with over 150 more being listed as damaged.