

# JET BLAST

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U.S.S. BENNINGTON CVA-20

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## WESTPAC Cruise Ends

Tomorrow BENNINGTON will enter San Diego Harbor after seven and one-half months away from home. When we dock at the quay wall of North Island Naval Air Station we will bring to a close one of the most colorful cruises seen by a Pacific Fleet carrier in many years.

Since we left San Diego last year, beginning our second cruise with the U.S. Seventh Fleet since the ship entered the Pacific in 1955, we have steamed over 57,000 miles on an outstanding itinerary, carrying Commander Carrier Division FIVE and Air Task Group 181 on the entire trip.

First stop was Pearl Harbor where we had 3 weeks of sun and surf before heading westward for duty on the free world's 'line of scrimmage' in Asia. A thorough Operational Readiness Inspection at sea was conducted while we operated out of Pearl. The Fleet Training Group and Commander Fleet Air Hawaii found the ship well prepared and

awarded grades of 'excellent' and 'outstanding' to all departments.

Our normal schedule was interrupted by the Suez Crisis while we were heading leisurely westward toward Japan. Pouring on the coal, we made it to Yokosuka in near-record time to stand by for any emergency assignments that might come our way.

When the crisis settled the ship's normal operating schedule resumed, taking us south to Subic Bay in the Philippines. While most of the ship's company and air group personnel were taking their ease in the warm, sunny climate, units of Air Task Group 181 participated in an Air Show at Manila, celebrating Philippine Aviation Day. The 'Gray Ghosts' of Fighter Squadron 21, led by LCDR Don Engen, stole the show, putting their FJ-3 'Furies' through a series of aerial maneuvers that brought the crowd of more than 25,000 to their feet. An AJ-2 'Savage' of

Heavy Attack Squadron SIX gave a demonstration of in-flight refueling while an P8P-8P 'Cougar' of Light Photographic Squadron 62, Detachment 30, took a series of airman's-eye-view photos of the show for release to the local press.

Christmas in the Sampan-crowded harbor of Hong Kong is becoming a BENNINGTON tradition. For the second successive year the carrier put into the British Crown Colony after a run through the Formosa Straits. Without benefit of snow or sleigh bells, the crew made their Christmas merry by giving 300 Chinese orphans were treated to an afternoon of fun aboard ship that will be long remembered, both by the children and their temporary 'dads'.

After visits to the Japanese ports of Sasebo, Yokohama and Kobe, BENNINGTON joined other ships of the Seventh Fleet at Buckner Bay, Okinawa to be present for the ceremonies in

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WE'RE COMING HOME -- This view of San Diego will be a sight for sore eyes tomorrow when BENNINGTON docks at quay wall after spending seven and one-half months in WESTPAC.