

U. S. S. Bennington Command

THE COMMANDING OFFICER

In Dansville, N. Y. in 1895 Captain J. B. Sykes was born. Schooling in Lyons, N. Y., Norfolk and Newport News. Two years University of Rochester, and then the Naval Academy with the class of 1919. Graduation and the first stripe came in June 1918.

World War One gave the Captain his first tour of duty - a destroyer operating out of Queens-town, Ireland. Two years battleship assignment followed.

Submarine school in 1921, and soon after commands, successively, of the O-11, O-10 and R-27. Pensacola in 1925, where after earning Naval Aviator designation and prized wings he served with VS-1.

This duty was followed by assignment to BuAer in Washington until 1928. Then three years post graduate work in ordnance.

The USS SARATOGA was the next tour in 1931 with duty as Air Ordnance and Senior Watch Officer. Again assigned to BuAer in 1933, he was in charge of Armament until 1936.

After commanding VP-9 in 1936, he returned to the USS SARATOGA as Air Group Commander in 1937, and as Air Officer in 1938.

To the American Embassy in Rome the Captain then reported as Assistant Naval Attache. These were powder-spark days in Europe and it was a front row seat from May 1939 until June 1941.

After Rome came flying duty as Commander Patrol Wing 5, until Pearl Harbor took him to the USS RANGER as Executive Officer.

He commissioned the USS CAGD, and remained in command of this famed carrier until May 1943.

Ordered to Washington again as Assistant Director of Plans, BuOrd, he was made Director until July 1944, when he was selected to command one of the Navy's newest and finest CVs, the USS BENNINGTON.

THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Born in Tonica, Illinois, in 1898, Commander R. M. Signer was appointed to Annapolis from North Dakota. Graduation was with the class of 1920.

First Naval duty was aboard the Pacific Fleet Flagship, the USS NEW MEXICO, where he served until ordered to Pensacola for school in 1924. Flight training completed, his first air duty was with the Aviation Unit attached to the USS MISSISSIPPI.

Orders came in 1925 to the USS LANGLEY, historic pioneering carrier. From this ship he returned to Pensacola for regular duty.

Post graduate work was taken at Annapolis and Harvard in 1928-30, followed by duty with VP Squadron 9. During 1932-33 he served with Staff Aircraft Squadrons, Battle Force.

Two years duty at the Naval Air Station, Anacostia, D.C. was followed by another tour of sea duty, this time on the USS SARATOGA. In 1938 he was ordered to duty as Operations Officer at NAS, San Pedro, remaining there until 1941. He was then assigned for a year as Executive Officer of the USS TANGIER.

Prior to his present duty, Commander Signer was Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi.



Captain J. B. Sykes
Commanding



Commander R. M. Signer
Executive Officer