

SHAW, Charles M.

IC1 USN

USS BENNINGTON (CVA-20)

Rhode Island

RECOMMENDED: (SECNAV) LETTER OF COMMENDATION on CO USS BENNINGTON ltr ser 5025 of 8/26/54. Rec'd Bd D&M 12/14/54.

AWARDED: (SECNAV) LETTER OF COMMENDATION (WITHOUT RIBBON) by Sp Bd D&M Mtg, Ser 2 of 4 Jan '55. App SecNav 8 Jan 1955.

“ For courageous action and performance beyond the call of duty in connection with the disastrous explosions and fires which occurred on the BENNINGTON while they were serving in the Special Weapons Unit. On 26 May '54, the BENNINGTON was conducting air operations 75 miles south of Newport, RI, when the ship experienced a series of violent explosions. These explosions spread flame, flash fires, intense heat, and smoke throughout the forward section of the ship, causing severe damage to the ship and death or injury to 220 officers and men. Knowing full well the many dangers involved and despite the thick asphyxiating smoke, SHAW, KAIGLER and GLENN disregarded their own safety to man stations in a critical area of the ship and to perform emergency damage control procedures. While conducting these measures and explosion severely injured KAIGLER and GLENN and blocked all normal routes of exit from the area. The only escape route available was through the bomb elevator, and by almost superhuman effort and the aid of SHAW, they succeeded in climbing up the elevator shaft to safety. Their courageous efforts and outstanding devotion to duty were highly instrumental in minimizing damage suffered by the ship. Their actions throughout were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.”