

KIMBLE, Willie O.

DC1 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, 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 fire which occurred on the BENNINGTON while he was serving in the Engineering Department. On 26 May '54, the BENNINGTON was conducting air operations 75 miles south of Newport, RI, when the ship experiences a series of violent explosions that spread flame, flash fires, intense heat and dense smoke throughout the forward section of the ship, causing death or injury to 220 officer and men. Fully aware of the dangers involved but without regard for his own safety KIMBLE entered the most critical area, where smoke, debris, and threat of further explosions existed to assist in the removal of casualties. The exemplary manner in which he carried out firefighting duties and investigated scenes of damage and fire contributed immeasurably to the success of the damage control parties in their functions of rescue and firefighting. His courageous and untiring efforts were instrumental in minimizing damage to the ship and in removing casualties in a most expeditious manner, thereby resulted in saving lives. His actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.”