



1944 to 1964; USS BENNINGTON, Sleek, fast, modern...

TWENTY YEARS OLD

BENNINGTON is 20-years old this month but the story behind the ship and her famous name go back in history 187 years.

On 16 August 1777, about 2,000 "Green Mountain Boys" under John Stark took up positions five miles south of Bennington Vermont. There, the British Army, commanded by the wily



Gen. John Burgoyne, sent first one division and then another against the Americans, who fired from behind trees and boulders at the "stand up" British ranks.

When the battle was over, the fleeing English left 900 casualties while Stark counted 82 casualties. Stark's men had successfully defended a store of American supplies at Bennington, and inflicted a major defeat on Burgoyne to boot.

THE GUNBOAT

In its first tribute to this victory, the Navy assigned the name BENNINGTON to a 1700-ton gunboat, sister ship of the gunboats LEXINGTON and CONCORD. Commissioned in 1891, the vessel was built as a three-masted steam schooner and armed with six guns. She operated in South Atlantic and European waters until 1894 when she joined the Pacific Fleet.

Based out of Marine Island, BENNINGTON operated along the Pacific Coast of North and Central America and the Hawaiian Islands until the outbreak of the Spanish-American War. On 17 January 1899, while en-

route to the Philippines, she took formal possession of Wake Island. BENNINGTON cruised in Philippine waters assisting the U. S. Army in suppressing the insurrection until her return to Mare Island on 3 January 1901 when she was decommissioned. Recommissioned on 2 March 1903, she again cruised along the Pacific coast of North and South America until 17 August 1905 when the first USS BENNINGTON was permanently decommissioned.

THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER

The second ship to bear this historic name was the aircraft carrier BENNINGTON (CV-20) commissioned on 6 August 1944.

On 15 December, BENNINGTON got underway from New York and transited the Panama Canal on her voyage to the Pacific. The carrier arrived at Pearl Harbor on 8 January 1945 and then proceeded to Ulithi Atoll, Caroline Islands where she joined