



154 PLANES, 16 SHIPS.....The scoreboard covers one side of Benn's flying bridge displaying symbols of the partial total of her victories during World War II.

## BENNINGTON'S 20th BIRTHDAY

the Panama Canal enroute to Norfolk. Following pre-inactivation overhaul, she was decommissioned and placed in the Atlantic Reserve Fleet at Norfolk 8 November 1946. After four years in preservation, BENNINGTON, on 30 October 1950, steamed from Norfolk to the New York Naval Shipyard for modernization prior to recommissioning. For two years she received major alterations which expanded her operating capabilities as well as making significant changes to her dimensions and appearance. BENN now weighed 40,500 tons and gained 43 feet in overall length and 8 feet at the beam, a stronger flight deck, stronger elevators, and higher capacity catapults. BENNINGTON was now prepared for her new role as a jet attack carrier, CVA-20.

BENNINGTON made two deployments to the Far East during the next two years. The first from 31 October 1955 until 16 April 1956, and the second from 12 October 1956 until 22 May 1957. During the latter cruise, she visited Sydney, Australia, taking part in the celebration of the 15th anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea. A.

three-month routine yard overhaul at Hunter's Point lasted until September, followed by a period of nine months operating off the California coast performing shipboard training and carrier qualifications of West Coast Navy and Marine air groups. This training period was culminated in May of 1958 when the ship sailed for Hawaii.

The growing importance of the role of ASW, Anti-Submarine Warfare, in the Navy resulted in the change of mission of BENNINGTON to this specialty in June 1959. After a five months overhaul period at Hunter's Point, the newly designed CVS-20, with Commander Carrier Division FIFTEEN embarked, conducted ASW training and carrier qualifications in preparation for her next deployment.

On 1 October 1960, BENNINGTON again headed toward the Far East accompanied by her destroyers which completed her ASW Task Group. Under the command of the Seventh Fleet, she spent most of her seven month deployment in the area of the South China Sea ready to perform her newly acquired specialty of ASW during the tension over Laos in early 1961.

She returned to San Diego on 2 May but only for eight months. During this time she operated off the California coast conducting ship's training and carrier qualifications with her embarked ASW squadrons.

The BENNINGTON left San Diego on 6 January 1962 on her 7th extended deployment in 12 years of commissioned service. Upon her return to the West Coast in August, she underwent a six month Fleet Rehabilitation and Maintenance overhaul at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, Washington. With the addition of sonar equipment BENNINGTON's ASW capability was again increased. After Refresher Training in San Diego, BENNINGTON moved to her new home-port at Long Beach, California. She conducted carrier qualifications from May through July 1963.

On 5 August 1963, BENNINGTON deployed on a month-long WOPAC cruise. Acting as featured ship in Seattle, Washington's SeaFair celebration 9-11 August, BENNINGTON steamed north to Alaskan waters where she became the first aircraft carrier to visit the ports of Juneau and Kodiak. Returning to Long Beach 30 August 1963, BENNINGTON conducted carrier qualifications off the Southern California coast preparatory to her next deployment.

BENNINGTON left Long Beach 19 February 1964 and sailed to San Diego where she took on board the embarked squadrons comprising CAG 59. Sailing for WestPac on 20 February, she had her annual Operational Readiness Exercise on the way to Hawaii and arrived in Pearl Harbor 28 February 1964. BENNINGTON left Pearl Harbor for Yokosuka, Japan 23 March and arrived at the Naval Base there on 7 April. Interspersed with various training exercises, including OPERATION LIGAS conducted by nations of SEATO, BENNINGTON made several ports in the Far East. Among them were: Subic Bay and Manila, P. I.; Hong Kong; Sasebo, Iwakuni, Hakodate and Kobe, Japan. BENNINGTON sailed from Yokosuka, Japan last month for home and arrived in Long Beach this week.