



awaited her return. After enjoying her multi-faceted services for a month, they had become spoiled by Bennington's efficiency and reliability. Benn's squadrons, VS-33 and VS-38, became an integral part of the Yankee Station team during this line period. Flying the prop-driven S-2E's, pilots picked out coastal targets for destroyer guns. Once an enemy target had been spotted, the pilots would radio its co-ordinates to the destroyer gun crews, lending impressive effectiveness to Operation Sea Dragon. Reports poured in from various commands about the accuracy of the spotting and about the curtailment of North Vietnamese coastal logistics.

In order to keep planes in the air, safety on the flight deck is essential. Again Benn came through with honors. She was awarded the Admiral Flatley Safety Memorial. With the carrier Randolph going out of commission, Benn will be the only CVS in commission which has captured the award more than once. Benn's Air Department captured the award for the first time in 1966.

A new twist in Benn's duties came when she rendered assistance to three Chinese fishermen who were lost at sea. Sailing in a small junk without food or water, they were spotted by an HS-8 pilot who called Benn in for the rescue. Spending the night on board, being checked by Benn's Medical Department and consuming some good Navy chow, the three grateful Chinese were flown to Da Nang for further transfer.

A few guests dropped by Benn during this line period. Former Secretary of the Navy Thomas spent a day touring the ship. Escorted by COMSEVENTHFLT Vice Admiral Bringle, Mr. Thomas was very impressed by Benn's ability to handle all the tasks assigned