

"We've only had one man fall out of the nets in the three years I've been in this division," recalled Radarman Seaman Wayne Cooper of Nampa, Idaho. "He was chipping paint near the edge of the net and lost his balance. Someone dropped him a lifeline, and he was quickly recovered."

A new concept in mobility had to be developed for travel over the nets. It is nearly impossible to walk on a spongy webbed surface. Seaman Gary Pretzer of Bay City, Michigan, demonstrated one method. Squatting on the net at its high side, he rolled into a giant somersault. The springiness of the net tossed him into the air, and when he landed again he launched into another somersault. He halted about five feet from the bottom edge of the net. Pretzer had travelled some 60 feet in about three seconds.



TIME FOR A BREAK--SV Johnny P. Jenkins, 22, takes a break with "knucklebuster" in hand. He is shown suspended in a nylon net about 80 feet over the water in Long Beach harbor.

One man noted the nets are used only while the ship is in port, not at sea, and not in dry dock. "In port," he explained, "if you fall, you land in water. In dry dock, it's concrete."

The maintenance of Navy ships never ceases. Heat, cold, salt, pounding, scraping, vibration and a host of other troubles continually plague the metal of which ships are made. The task of chipping, sanding and painting is tedious, tough and filthy, but, nevertheless, it must be done. And the men of the aircraft carrier Bennis do the job and do it well.

Ed's Notes

With the Holiday Season behind, once again Bennis is a hubbub of activity. Yardworkers bringing on odd looking tools to work in some obscure hold or scaffolding, scaling the side of the ship, tells Bennis story: An extended yard period.

There are several conflicting views aboard ship about the yard period. Some say "It will sure be nice when all the heads are operative again." or "I wish there wasn't so much dirt and noise." But then the same people are sure happy the ship isn't pulling out for WestPac or carrier qualifications tomorrow.

RECENT HISTORY REVIEWED

Since Bennis's last extended yard period, which ended April 25, 1967, old number 20 has made two cruises to Vietnam, recovered the Apollo IV command module, made a Sea of Japan transit, visited Sydney, Australia, for the 25th Annual Commemoration of the Battle of the Coral Sea, conducted several anti-submarine warfare exercises, hosted the Bob Hope Christmas Show, has been under the command of four captains, and has spent about 75 per cent of her time at sea. Yes, it was time on November 14 for the old warhorse to pull in for a yard period, making it the first time in approximately 19 months that all her boilers were shut down.

In upcoming issues of the Roaring 20 there will be features dealing with yard work that goes by with little or no recognition. There is even a rumor that a Boilerman plans to reenlist while in a fireroom. It looks like there will have to be a lot of cleaning and shining or some dress uniforms may get a bit dingy.

Also in the next issue a pictorial story of Bennis moving into drydock will reveal the actual size of the big carrier.

SILVER ANNIVERSARY

This year, 1969, marks the 25th year Bennis has been in service. She was commissioned on August 6, 1944, and since that time Bennis has had an eventful history. In the upcoming issues, the Roaring 20 staff plans to bring out Bennis's past glories and tragedies in tribute to the ship's silver anniversary.