

DIVISION  
USS BENNINGTON (CVA-20)  
c/o FPO, San Francisco, Calif.

May 16, 1957

Dear :

The recruiting people seem to think that the old poster slogan "JOIN THE NAVY AND SEE THE WORLD" has been worn out. Even though every gag man from New York to Hollywood has made a joke about it, right now, for my money, that old slogan is truer than it ever was. I've been doing some world sight-seeing during the last seven months that makes pikers out of the characters in those stories by Somerset Maugham and Joseph Conrad. In order to tell you all about our most recent experiences several of the fellows have concocted this news letter with the idea of telling the story to you and everyone else interested in our doings before BENNINGTON, at long last, arrives at the quay wall of North Island Naval Air Station in San Diego.

Since we left there on Columbus Day (October 12) last year we have really toured the Pacific (East, West and Southwest) and Far Eastern spots with magical names like Tung Hai or Eastern Sea, South China Sea, Philippine Seas and the Coral Sea. You probably heard that we were in Hong Kong for Christmas and that when we finally left good old Yokosuka (one of our favorites) on the 18th of April we headed south for Sydney, New South Wales in that great land down under -- the Commonwealth of Australia.

On our way down we passed by famous Iwo Jima, the Marianas, the Carolines and we even went over to see Truk, which was the Japanese Navy's Gibraltar' at one time. King Neptune took over the ship as we crossed the Equator and that is another story with pictures. While the new shellbacks were licking their wounds the history review continued as we passed near the old strongholds of Rabaul, Bouganville and Guadalcanal that played such a big part in the Japanese defensive system when we began to beat them back in 1942.

In the Coral Sea we located the spot where the old USS LEXINGTON was sunk with 300 of her gallant officers and men. We took time out at midday to salute them as well as their comrades on other ships who gave their lives to stop the Japanese fleet's advance in the Battle of the Coral Sea. After the Chaplain's benediction at the end of the service two of the LEX's crewmen, who are now aboard our ship, dropped a wreath into the water in quiet tribute to their old shipmates.