

# **USS BENNINGTON CV/CVA/CVS-20**

## **TIME LINE**

### **15 December 1941 - 7 December 1994**

#### **15 December 1941**

The 76<sup>th</sup> Congress of the United States authorized the construction of the United States Ship BENNINGTON.

#### **15 December 1942**

Keel laid down at the New York Naval Shipyard in Brooklyn, NY

#### **26 February 1944**

Launched from the New York Navy Yard by Mrs. Melvin J. Maas, wife of Congressman Maas of Minnesota. BENNINGTON was the first of the "Essex Class" carriers to be built in the New York Navy Yard and it was also the first carrier to be built in a dry-dock.

#### **6 August 1944**

Rear Admiral Monroe Kelley, USN, Commandant, Third Naval District, placed the USS BENNINGTON CV-20 in commission at the New York Naval Yard in Brooklyn, NY. Captain James B. Sykes, USN, of Washington, D.C., assumed command. BENNINGTON was moored starboard side to Pier K, Berth 19.

#### **1 - 7 September 1944**

Commenced Dock Trials. Rear Admiral A.G. Robinson, USN, and the Board of Inspection and Survey completed inspection of the ship.\_

#### **12 September 1944**

USS BENNINGTON got underway for the first time. Cleared the dock and stood down East River and Upper Bay. Anchored in Berth 20, Upper Bay, New York Harbor. Underway for dry-dock, Bayonne, New Jersey. Moored at the U.S. Naval Dry-Dock #7, Bayonne Annex, Navy Yard.

21 - 23 September 1944

Left dry-dock and moored starboard side to Berths #5 & #6.

24 September 1944

Underway for anchorage in Gravesend Bay, New York Harbor. Anchored in Gravesend Bay.

25 September 1944

Underway for Norfolk, Virginia and gunnery operations in company with USS DALLAS (DD-199) and USS BERNADAU (DD-153).

26 September 1944

Anchored at Berth X, Anchorage "A", Hampton Roads, Virginia.  
Underway for deperming crib, Lambert's Point, Norfolk, Virginia.  
Moored in deperming crib.

27 September 1944

Underway from Lambert's Point for the Naval Operating Base, Norfolk, Virginia.  
Moored starboard side to North Side of Pier #7.

29 September 1944

Reported for duty to ComInCh, CinClant, ComAirLant, ComFairNorfolk.  
Moored to Pier #7. Carrier Air Group Eighty-Two reported to BENNINGTON for duty.

30 September 1944

Underway for anchorage at Hampton Roads, Virginia. Anchored at Berth "Z".

1 October 1944

Underway for Chesapeake Bay and anchorage in bay off the degaussing range.

2 October 1944

The first plane to land and take-off from BENNINGTON was plane #97 of VF-82 in the Chesapeake Bay area was piloted by CDR G.L. Heap, Commander of AIR GROUP 82.

3 October 1944

Underway from Chesapeake Bay to anchorage off Cape Charles.

4 October 1944

Underway for the U.S. Navy Yard, Norfolk, Virginia. Moored starboard side to Pier #3 at Berths #23 & #24, Norfolk Navy Yard, Portsmouth, Virginia.

5 October 1944

Moored at the Norfolk Navy Yard.

6 - 11 October 1944

Underway in Chesapeake Bay to conduct Air Operations, Gunnery Exercises and various drills.

12 October 1944

Moored starboard side to North Side of Pier #7, Naval Operating Base, Norfolk, Virginia.

13 October 1944

While moored at Pier #7, Commander Fleet Air Norfolk, Rear Admiral H.C. Read, USN, conducted an inspection of the ship.

14 October 1944

While moored at Pier #7, BENNINGTON loaded provisions, supplies, ammunition, fuel and received personnel for cruise to the Gulf of Paria.

15 October 1944

Underway for Chesapeake Bay Operations Area to land Air Group VF-37, VB-36 and VT-18. Anchored in Chesapeake Bay off Windmill Point.

16 October 1944

BENNINGTON's first shakedown cruise - bound for the Gulf of Paria. Commenced sortie from Chesapeake Bay en-route to Trinidad, BWI., in the Caribbean. The USS DECATUR (DD-341) and the USS ABILE (DD-733) were in company.

19 October 1944

En-route to Trinidad, Ensign T.J. Connors, A-V(N), USNR, of VF-67 (HELLCAT) crashed astern of the BENNINGTON while making a strafing run on a towed target sled. Search results were negative.

21 October 1944

Anchored Berth B-2, Trinidad, BWI (off the Naval Air Station)

22 October 1944

While anchored, BENNINGTON took on fuel and fresh water.

23 October 1944

Underway for the Operating Area off the Paria Peninsula, Gulf of Paria, for flight exercises and gunnery operations.

27 October 1944

Anchored at Berth B-6, Naval Operating Base, Trinidad. Took on aviation gasoline and fresh water.

28 October - 5 November 1944

Underway in Gulf of Paria, off Trinidad, for flight operations and gunnery exercises.

6 November 1944

Anchored off Naval Operating Base, Trinidad.

7 November 1944

Received fuel, aviation gasoline and fresh water from barges alongside.

8 November 1944

With its first shakedown cruise completed BENNINGTON got underway for Hampton Roads, Virginia. The USS DECATUR (DD-341) and the USS CHAMPLIN (DD-601) were in company.

13 November 1944

While approaching the Virginia Capes, CAG-82 launched planes for NAS Quonset Point, Rhode Island.

14 November 1944

BENNINGTON moored at Pier #7, Naval Operating Base, Norfolk, Virginia. Orders from ComAirLant changed aircraft complement of CAG-82 from VF-36, VB-36 and VT-18 to VF-54, VB-24 and VT-18.

15 November 1944

Underway from Norfolk for Damage Control Exercises in Chesapeake Bay, en-route to Navy Yard, New York.

16 November 1944

Moored starboard side to South Side of Jetty at Berth's #51 & 52, New York Navy Yard Annex, Bayonne, New Jersey.

8 December 1944

While moored at the New York Navy Yard the complement of CAG-82 changed from VF-54, VB-24 and VT-18 to VF-73, VB-15 and VT-15 with 36 F4U's to be picked up on the West Coast.

11 December 1944

Ground personnel for Air Group 82 came aboard.

13 December 1944

Underway from New York Navy Annex for Naval Anchorage, Gravesend Bay.

14 December 1944

Underway for Delaware Capes and Christobal, Panama Canal Zone in company with the DM-27 & DM-30. Designated as Task Group 27.3

15 December 1944

While underway, heading toward the Canal Zone, Air Group 82, consisting of VF-33, VB-24 and VT-18 landed aboard while the ship was off the Delaware Capes.

16 - 19 December 1944

En-route Panama Canal Zone.

20 December 1944

While approaching the Canal, Air Group 82 launched its aircraft for simulated attacks on the "LOCKS" as previously arranged with the United States Army, to test defenses. BENNINGTON moored starboard side to North of Pier #8, Christobal, Panama Canal Zone. Liberty was granted for half the crew.

21 December 1944

Transit of the Panama Canal ("Big Ditch") was made. The elapsed time was 11 hours and 31 minutes. BENNINGTON then moored starboard side to North Side of Pier #18, Balboa, Canal Zone and reported to the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet for duty. Liberty was then granted for the other half of the crew.

22 December 1944

BENNINGTON gets underway for San Diego, California.

23 - 28 December 1944

While underway, BENNINGTON conducts flight operations and gunnery exercises.

29 December 1944

Moored starboard side to Berth "K", Naval Air Station, San Diego, California.

30 - 31 December 1944

While moored at Berth "K", BENNINGTON was fueled, aircraft, ammunition and provisions brought aboard. United States Marine Corps Squadrons, VMF-112 and VMF-123 reported aboard for duty, each with 18 F4U's.

1 January 1945

BENNINGTON departed NAS, North Island, San Diego, California, en-route to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

7 January 1945

Docked at NAS, Ford Island, Pearl Harbor

8 January 1945

Pursuant to ComAirPac's "SECRET" dispatch, 080402 of January to the Commanding Officer of the BENNINGTON, Air Group 82 was temporarily transferred to NAS, Kahului, Maui Island for training.

11 January 1945

LCDR Hugh Wood, Jr., received orders as the Commanding Officer of VB-82.

13 January 1945

While shifting berths at the Navy Yard in Pearl Harbor, the USS SARANNC (that is how it is spelled in the reports from the Navy that I have) AO-74 rammed into the stern while passing, causing slight damage to the port side of the flight deck overhang and gun aponsons.

19 January 1945

Training at Kahului continued until this date. ComAirPac's "SECRET" dispatch, 192132 directed the BENNINGTON to report CinCPac for operational control.

20 January 1945

Pursuant to a ComAirPac "SECRET" dispatch, the BENNINGTON departed the Navy Yard, Pearl Harbor, for training exercises at sea. CVG-82 landed aircraft aboard while at sea.

21 - 24 January 1945

Training exercises while based on the BENNINGTON, while operating in the vicinity of the Hawaiian Islands. On the 24<sup>th</sup>, LT.(jg) G.D. Switzer, of VB-82 (Engineering Officer), made the 3,000<sup>th</sup> landing aboard the ship.

#### 25 - 28 January 1945

No flight operations. BENNINGTON was moored at NAS, Ford Island, Pearl Harbor. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of January, ComFIFTH Fleet assumed command of all units assigned by CinPac to the FIFTH Fleet and Central Pacific Task Forces, according to ComFIFTH Fleet's "SECRET" dispatch, 261401 of January (received on this date).

#### 29 January 1945

At 0715 the BENNINGTON, with CVG-82 aboard, sortied Pearl Harbor, as part of Task Group 12.2, which also included the USS SARATOGA (CV-3), USS RANDOLPH (CV-15), USS BUNKER HILL (CV-17), USS BELLEAU WOOD (CVL-24), USS ALASKA and seven destroyers, headed for Ulithi Atoll, Caroline Islands, for WESTPAC and battle action against Japan.

#### 1 - 2 February 1945

BENNINGTON crosses the International Date Line (the 180<sup>th</sup> Meridian of Longitude) for the first time at approximate Latitude 17-4N.

#### 7 February 1945

At 1218 the BENNINGTON anchored in Ulithi Fleet Anchorage and reported to ComFirstCarTaskForPac for duty and becomes part of Task Group 58.1.

#### 10 February 1945

As a unit of Task Group 58.1 (under Admiral J.J. Clark) BENNINGTON sortied Ulithi for TF 58 attack on the Tokyo area.

#### 16 February 1945

BENNINGTON goes to her first "General Quarters" approximately 80 miles of the coast of Japan. As the western - most carrier in the five Task Groups, BENNINGTON was the closest carrier to Japan at all times. Launching aircraft for strikes over Tokyo and Yokosuka, BENNINGTON aircraft were over the target at 0810 and at 0812 radio Tokyo goes off the air. First combat flight of VB-82, five Helldivers in TG 58.1, Strike One Baker Two, on airfield installations at Nachijo Jima and Nanpo Shoto. Eight VB-82 Helldivers in the afternoon strike One Fox, against Mikatagahara Airfield at Honshu, Japan. Only one of BENNINGTON's aircraft was shot down.

### 17 February 1945

Ten of our planes in TG 58.1, Strike One Baker Two, struck against Mikatagahara and Hamamatsu Airfields. The Task Force retired during the afternoon.

### 18 February 1945

Two anti-picket boat sweeps, each with one VB-82 navigator and eight fighters. Four vessels were listed as probably sunk as a result of the attacks. An afternoon strike on Chichi Jima shipping facilities and installations. LT. A.W. Lundblade and 3<sup>rd</sup> Class, ARM, E.J. Gerber were considered "missing in action".

### 19 February 1945

BENNINGTON aircraft flew the beachhead support strikes to help sustain the Invasion of Iwo Jima.

### 20 February 1945

Aircraft from VB-82, in three flights (totaling 20 sorties) flew in support of the landings on Iwo Jima.

### 21 February 1945

Ten aircraft from VB-82 (with 16 fighters and 7 torpedo planes) participated in a "special" strike in support of the troops on Iwo Jima.

### 22 February 1945

VB-82 made 20 sorties in support of Iwo Jima occupation operations. Ensign R.B. Cahill of VB-82 made the 4,000<sup>th</sup> landing aboard BENNINGTON.

### 25 February 1945

Second series of carrier strike attacks against Tokyo City, which, because of weather over the target, was aborted. Bombs from aircraft were jettisoned at sea by order of the strike leader from the USS HORNET.

### 1 March 1945

Aircraft from BENNINGTON hit Okinawa. One of the strikes was from as Far West as Miyako Shima. Meanwhile BENNINGTON's planes and pilots photographed the beaches of Okinawa and the Islands of Kerama Rhetto to determine what beaches offered the best invasion points.

#### 4 March 1945

BENNINGTON returns to Ulithi Atoll for "R & R".

#### Mid-late March 1945

VB-82 aircraft attacked Japanese Naval vessels in the Inland Sea. A two-engine Japanese "Betty" flew in low and several ships opened up their guns. The "Betty" was struck by one cruiser's gunfire causing one of the engines to catch fire. The plane turned toward BENNINGTON's starboard quarter in an attempt to hit the flight deck. All starboard guns opened up and sent the plane into the sea about 200 yards from the ship. Late in March a Japanese plane joined a landing circle aft of the ship and was stopped short of the fantail by 20mm and 40mm gunfire. As the month of March drew to a close, the submarine USS TUNNY (SS-282) rescued one flier from the USS BENNINGTON (CV-20) and two fliers from the aircraft carrier USS INTREPID (CV-11) as those ships took part in the assault on Okinawa.

#### 7 April 1945

BENNINGTON squadron aircraft participated in Task Force 58's attacks on the Japanese "super" battleship, the YAMATO. The attacks resulted in the sinking of the YAMATO, one cruiser and four destroyers.

#### May 1945

Continued strikes against Okinawa and provided support during the invasion of the island. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of May, BENNINGTON collides with a "whale".

#### 1 June 1945

Underway approximately 65 miles east of Okinawa maintaining patrols and missions over Okinawa. One special mission dropped supplies to U.S. Marines bogged down by mud, west of Shuri.

#### 2 June 1945

Operating in the Okinawa area maintaining patrols. Adverse weather prevented strike operations.

#### 3 June 1945

Continued bad weather but special missions are once again flown to drop needed supplies to troops in front of regular lines at Okinawa.

#### 4 June 1945

Underway in the refueling area approximately 311 miles south of Okinawa, receiving fuel and aviation gasoline.

#### 5 June 1945

Underway in an area approximately 300 miles southeast off Okinawa, BENNINGTON seeks to avoid an approaching storm from the south. The ship sets, "Typhoon Condition Two". Condition ZEBRA and Typhoon Condition One was set at 0423 hours. The wind increased in velocity to 60 knots at 0507 hours. At about 0528 hours, the forward 25' of flight deck collapsed due to heavy pounding seas. BENNINGTON passed through the center of the storm at 0700 - 0730 hours. Storm damage other than the flight deck included the bulkhead at Frame 4. The starboard catwalk at the flight deck level was torn away. A portion of the fire main at Frame 15 buckled. All the lifelines on the starboard side of the forecastle were torn away. The wind finally subsided during the late morning. No personnel casualties noted. BENNINGTON steamed toward the refueling area in the evening.

#### 6 June 1945

Underway approximately 150 miles southeast of Okinawa, we began exercises with anti-aircraft firing.

#### 7 June 1945

Continued patrols and special missions over Okinawa.

#### 8 June 1945

BENNINGTON launches patrols and strikes against planes at the Kanoya Airfields.

#### 9 - 10 June 1945

Underway and en-route from Okinawa to Leyte Gulf.

#### 11 June 1945

Anchored in Berth #29, San Pedro Bay, Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands. Repairs being completed because of storm damage.

### 17 June 1945

The officers and men of Air Group 82 was embarked in the USS WHITE PLAINS (CVE-66) for transit back to the states. The rest was well earned. During the four and one-half months of intensive combat, the Air Group shot down 167 enemy planes, destroyed 220 aircraft on the ground and damaged an additional 150-200. It had helped to break the back of the Imperial Air Force. The price it paid for its accomplishments was heavy. Forty pilots and 13 aircrewmen (25 percent of the compliment) were listed as lost or missing. Air Group 82 was to be replaced by Air Group ONE, commanded by Commander H.B. Harden, USN.

### 28 June 1945

Underway from San Pedro Bay for scheduled operations. Conducted Air Group Training operations in Leyte Gulf, flying simulated strikes and sweeps.

### 30 June 1945

While anchored at Berth #29, San Pedro Bay, Captain B.L. Braun, USN, relieved Captain J.B. Sykes as Commanding Officer of the USS BENNINGTON.

### 1 July 1945

BENNINGTON heads back to WESTPAC for continued action against Japan (TG 58.1)

### 29 July 1945

BENNINGTON maneuvered to avoid contact with a submarine.

### 15 August 1945

The Japanese surrender.

### 2 September 1945

As the Japanese departed the USS MISSOURI with their orders (after their surrender), 400 B-29's and 1,500 carrier planes, led by BENNINGTON fighters and bombers, flew overhead as a grand finale to the end of World War II.

### 19 - 27 September 1945

Japan to Eniwetok, Marshall Islands

21 October 1945

BENNINGTON received the Navy Occupation Service Medal for two periods of service in Asiatic waters.

7 November 1945

BENNINGTON receives a World War II "Home-Coming" as she arrives at San Francisco.

13 - 17 March 1946

BENNINGTON passes through the Panama Canal en-route to Norfolk for pre-inactivation repairs.

8 November 1946 - 26 October 1950

USS BENNINGTON CV-20 is decommissioned at Norfolk and placed in the Reserve Fleet.

26 October 1950 - 1 October 1952

USS BENNINGTON began its 1<sup>st</sup> modernization (SCB 27A) at the New York Navy Yard.

1 October 1952

USS BENNINGTON was designated as (CVA-20) - attack aircraft carrier.

13 November 1952

Re-commissioned for service in the Atlantic Fleet as CVA-20. BENNINGTON received her new Commanding Officer, Captain David B. Young.

16 February 1953

Lt. Colonel, T.W. Furlow, "skipper" of VMA-211, made the first landing on the BENNINGTON, since the ship's re-commissioning. It was made in an AD Skyraider.

18 February 1953

Major Carl E. Schmitt, in an F9F-5 became the first pilot to land a "jet" aircraft aboard the BENNINGTON.

27 February 1953

BENNINGTON undergoes eleven weeks of intensive shakedown training.

9 March 1953

A bizarre accident interrupted the otherwise dull routine of this training period, when, Captain William H. Bezzell, USMC, missed the arresting wires in landing his F9F-4, tore through the barricades and dropped down the #1 Elevator pit on top of another Panther jet of VMF-223 which had just been lowered to the Hanger Deck.

11 April 1953

The ship anchors off Port-au-Prince, Republic of Haiti, for two days of "R&R".

27 April 1953

At 1003 hours an explosion resulted from a failure in boiler tubing. The blast killed 11 and injured seven. The ship was on a shakedown cruise off the southeastern part of Cuba. The shakedown cruise lasted until May.

25 May 1953

BENNINGTON arrives at New York Naval Shipyard where she would remain until 12 July.

8 - 9 July 1953

While in New York, BENNINGTON played host to radio's "Great Day" show. All hands held a gala party at the Hotel Astor on Times Square.

28 July 1953

410 Midshipmen from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions of the United States Naval Academy reported aboard for a three-week training cruise in the North Atlantic. They were to observe Air Operations during the cruise and a detachment from VR-22 flew them over the Task Force, demonstrating deck launches and arrested carrier landings.

9 August 1953

BENNINGTON departs Halifax, Nova Scotia for Norfolk, VA. Enroute, BENNINGTON had to ride out Hurricane Barbara.

15 August 1953

BENNINGTON puts in to Norfolk to off-load the Air Group and the 410 Midshipmen.

20 August 1953

BENNINGTON receives its new Commanding Officer, Captain, William A. Sutherland (USNA Class of 1927).

September 1953

BENNINGTON participates in its only Mediterranean Cruise and "OPERATION MARINER" on the 19-23<sup>rd</sup> of September.

4 October 1953

OPERATION MARINER ends off Gibraltar.

6 February 1954

The Assistant Secretary of the Navy (AIR) James H. Smith, Commander 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet, Vice Admiral J.H. Cassidy, USN, Commander of Battleships and Cruisers Atlantic Fleet, Rear Admiral E.T. Woodridge, USN, and Commander Carrier Division FOUR, Rear Admiral R.K. Moorhouse, USN, came aboard to "observe day and night Air Operations.

9 - 24 April 1954

Operating out of Mayport, Florida, some 2,689 landings were made qualifying pilots from the following squadrons: VA-15, VA-42, VA-45, VF-11, VF-21, VF-34, VF-41, VF-101, VC-4, VC-5, VC-8, VC-12, VC-33, VC-62, VJ-62, VR-22 and VX-3.

5 May 1954

BENNINGTON receives her new Commanding Officer, Captain William F. Raborn

26 May 1954

Catapult exploded and secondary explosions killed 103 crewmen and injured 201 others. BENNINGTON proceeds to Quonset Point, Rhode Island.

12 June 1954 - 19 March 1955

Repairs and complete rebuilding of BENNINGTON (SCB-125) at the New York Naval Shipyard. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of August 1954, 109 crewmembers received Navy Meritorious Mast and 79 received Letters of Commendation for their actions during the explosion and fire on 26 May 1954.

15 January 1955

Mrs. Raymond F. Kennedy, Judge Advocate of Post Number 1, Federal Employees Veterans Association of America, presented scrolls to the officers and men of BENNINGTON to commemorate those who lost their lives on 26 May and to honor those who were cited for heroism.

22 April 1955

Secretary of the Navy, Charles S. Thomas came aboard to present medals and Letters of Commendation to the 178 officers and men for their heroism on 26 May 1954.

28 May 1955

Captain Paul F. Foley, Jr., USN, becomes BENNINGTON's newest Commanding Officer.

1 - 5 July 1955

Completed refresher training at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

5 - 6 July 1955

At Guantanamo Bay conducting Operational Readiness Inspection. Upon completion, debarked VF-13 and embarked VMF-533. Underway for Mayport, Florida with ComCarDiv TWO embarked.

8 - 10 July 1955

En-route Mayport, Florida.

10 - 12 July 1955

While off Mayport, Florida - ORT Exercises with ATG-201 (Operational Readiness Training).

13 July 1955

All aircraft from ATG-201 and VMF-533 departed the ship. BENNINGTON now underway for Norfolk, Virginia.

15 July 1955

At Norfolk. Off-loaded equipment.

15 - 16 July 1955

En-route to New York Naval Shipyard, Bayonne ANNEX, Bayonne, New Jersey.

16 - 18 July 1955

At Bayonne, New Jersey

18 July - 22 August 1955

At the New York Naval Shipyard, Brooklyn, NY, for refitting and loading for overseas movement.

22 August 1955

BENNINGTON tests out its new "Mirror Landing Aid" (glide path indicator). Conducted tests day and night through the 26<sup>th</sup>. The Commander of Operational Development Forces engaged the system. Pilots from VX-3 and VC-4 made a total of 536 landings without incident.

24 August 1955

The first night carrier landing using the experimental landing mirror system was made by LCDR R.C. MacKnight, as he put down an F9F-8 Cougar on BENNINGTON's flight deck.

26 - 29 August 1955

At USNAS, Quonset Point, Rhode Island.

29 - 31 August 1955

En-route to Mayport, Florida.

31 August - 4 September 1955

Conducted day and night carrier qualifications of ATG-201 and detachments of VC-33, VC-4, and VC-12 using the mirror landing aid system.

4 - 8 September 1955

At Mayport, off-loaded ATG-201 and all detachments.

8 - 12 September 1955

En-route to Port of Spain, Trinidad and the British West Indies. (refueled at Port of Spain).

13 - 24 September 1955

En-route to Montevideo, Uruguay. (On the 17<sup>th</sup> BENNINGTON crosses the International Date Line at 0 degrees-00' Latitude and 37 degrees West).

24 - 27 September 1955

At Montevideo, Uruguay. (refueled)

27 September - 5 October 1955

En-route to Valparaiso, Chile. (On 1 October, BENNINGTON rounded Cape Horn).

5 - 8 October 1955

At Valparaiso, Chile. (refueled)

8 - 20 October 1955

En-route to San Diego, California.

20 - 31 October 1955

Restricted availability at San Diego. Embarked ATG-201 and replenished for overseas movement.

31 October - 4 November 1955

BENNINGTON departs for Yokosuka, Japan via Pearl Harbor, with ComCarDiv FIVE embarked.

4 - 9 November 1955

Conducting Air Operations off Pearl Harbor and refueled.

9 - 17 November 1955

En-route to Yokosuka, Japan. (On the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, BENNINGTON crossed the International Date Line at 24 degrees 55.4' latitude and 180 degrees 0' East)

17 - 23 November 1955

BENNINGTON arrives Yokosuka for voyage repairs. ComCarDiv FIVE disembarked. ComCarDiv ONE embarked.

23 - 29 November 1955

Off Yokosuka conducting Air Operations.

29 November - 3 December 1955

At Buckner Bay, Okinawa.

3 - 5 December 1955

Off Okinawa, BENNINGTON participates in NAVMARLEX 4-55. (This was a "support" exercise for the Navy & Marine Corps landings).

5 - 9 December 1955

Continued training off the coast of Okinawa.

9 - 18 December 1955

TASK FORCE 77 Exercise - "Jack Pratt".

18 - 19 December 1955

Underway replenishment (at sea).

19 - 21 December 1955

En-route to Hong Kong.

21 - 27 December 1955

At the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong.

27 - 31 December 1955

En-route to Manila. At sea training.

1 - 3 January 1956

While en-route to Manila, the BENNINGTON conducted training in the South China Sea in company with the USS KEARSARGE (CVA-33), DesDiv 132 and units of DesRon 11.

3 - 10 January 1956

At Manila.

10 - 13 January 1956

Conducted ISE Training in the South China Sea.

13 - 21 January 1956

Conducted Task Force Operations in the East China Sea in company with the USS HANCOCK (CVA-19) and units of DesRon 11 and DesRon 12.

21 - 24 January 1956

En-route to Manila.

24 January 1956

At Manila an off-loading damaged aircraft.

24 - 25 January 1956

En-route to Subic Bay, P.I.

25 January - 8 February 1956

At Subic Bay.

8 February 1956

Depart Subic Bay.

9 - 11 February 1956

En-route to Okinawa operating area in company with the USS ORLECK (DD-886) and the USS PERKINS (DDR-877).

11 - 14 February 1956

Conducted training in accordance with CTF 77 Operation Order #201-T-56. (On the 13<sup>th</sup> of February, the USS PASSUMPSIC (AO-107) collided with the BENNINGTON during refueling evolution.

14 - 17 February 1956

Operated in the Philippine Sea as TG 92.1 in accordance with CTG 92.1 (ComCarDiv ONE) Operation Order #1-56.

17 - 20 February 1956

En-route to Yokosuka, Japan.

20 February - 3 March 1956

At Yokosuka, Japan. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February the BENNINGTON was "backed up" into Dry-Dock #5 at the Yokosuka Naval Shipyard Repair Facility to undergo voyage repairs and have a "cracked" screw replaced. Her angled deck construction forced the novel "stern-first" dry-docking maneuver in order to make the best use of the dockside cranes.

3 - 8 March 1956

En-route to Subic Bay, P.I.

8 - 10 March 1956

While in the Subic Bay operating area, BENNINGTON conducted Task Group Operations in company with the USS KEARSARGE (CVA-33) and units of DesDiv 11 and DesDiv 151.

10 March 1956

Anchored at Subic Bay, P.I.

10 - 12 March 1956

Conducted ADEX-10 in company with the USS YARNELL (DD-541) and the USS KNAPP (DD-653) in accordance with CTF 77 letter, serial number 077 of 29 February 1956.

12 - 14 March 1956

Conducted Task Force Operations in the South China Sea.

14 - 20 March 1956

En-route to Kobe, Japan.

20 - 24 March 1956

At Kobe, Japan.

24 - 26 March 1956

En-route Yokosuka, Japan.

26 March - 6 April 1956

At Yokosuka, Japan.

6 - 9 April 1956

En-route to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

9 - 11 April 1956

At Pearl Harbor.

11 - 16 April 1956

En-route to San Diego, California.

16 April - 22 May 1956

At San Diego. Leave period commences.

22 - 25 May 1956

Conducted refresher training in San Diego operating area in accordance with ComFltTraGrp Operation order #201-56 and 21-56.

25 - 28 May 1956

At San Diego.

28 - 29 May 1956

Conducted refresher training.

29 - 31 May 1956

While at San Diego, Captain Robert E.C. Jones, USN, relieved Captain Paul Foley, Jr., USN, as Commanding Officer of BENNINGTON.

31 May - 1 June 1956

Continued with refresher training.

1 - 4 June 1956

At San Diego.

4 - 8 June 1956

Conducted refresher training in San Diego operating area.

8 - 14 June 1956

At San Diego.

14 June 1956

En-route to Long Beach, California.

14 - 18 June 1956

At Long Beach Naval Shipyard.

18 - 21 June 1956

Conducted Air Operations in the San Diego operating area.

21 June - 9 July 1956

At San Diego.

9 - 13 July 1956

At sea conducting day and night air operations.

13 - 23 July 1956

At San Diego.

23 July 1956

BENNINGTON holds a dependent's day cruise.

23 - 27 July 1956

Conducted Air Operations in the San Diego operating area.

27 July - 6 August 1956

At San Diego.

6 - 8 August 1956

En-route to San Francisco, California.

8 - 9 August 1956

At San Francisco.

9 - 10 August 1956

En-route San Diego.

10 - 13 August 1956

At San Diego.

13 - 17 August 1956

At sea conducting Air Operations.

17 - 20 August 1956

At San Diego.

20 - 21 August 1956

En-route Long Beach, California.

21 - 23 August 1956

At Long Beach.

23 - 24 August 1956

While en-route to San Diego, the ship conducted Carrier Qualifications.

24 August - 10 September 1956

At San Diego. (The ship's annual party was held on the 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> of September.)

10 September 1956

Bulk Aviation Storeroom C-414-A was completely flooded by an open sprinkler system valve.

10 - 14 September 1956

While in the San Diego operating area, BENNINGTON participated in ADEX-10 in accordance with COCarDiv FIVE, Operation Order # 1-T-56.

14 September 1956

At Long Beach for the "First Fleet Review" to honor Mrs. U.S. Navy

14 - 15 September 1956

Conducted day and night flight operations.

15 - 24 September 1956

At San Diego.

24 - 25 September 1956

Conducted flight operations off the coast of San Diego, California.

25 - 28 September 1956

At Long Beach for electronics installation and loading of explosives.

28 September 1956

En-route to San Diego, California.

29 September - 12 October 1956

At San Diego. Fitting out for overseas deployment. Embarked Air Task Group 181.

12 - 17 October 1956

En-route to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

17 October 1956

At Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

18 - 19 October 1956

At sea in the Hawaiian operating area preparing for Operational Readiness Inspection.

19 - 22 October 1956

At Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

22 - 26 October 1956

Continued operating in the Hawaiian waters preparing for ORI.

26 - 29 October 1956

At Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

29 October - 3 November 1956

BENNINGTON undergoes ORI in accordance with ComFAirHawaii Operation Order #8-56.

3 - 5 November 1956

At Pearl Harbor - Embarked ComCarDiv FIVE (RADM A.P. Storrs) and Staff.

5 - 12 November 1956

En-route to Yokosuka, Japan. (On the 8<sup>th</sup> of November, BENNINGTON crossed the International Date Line)

12 - 20 November 1956

At Yokosuka, Japan.

20 -25 November 1956

En-route to the Philippine operating area with CTF 79 (ComCarDiv FIVE) embarked.

25 November - 2 December 1956

Operated in the South China Sea as TG 77.5.3.1 in company with the USS ESSEX (CVA-9) and DesDiv 112.

2 - 7 December 1956

En-route to Yokosuka, Japan.

7 - 8 December 1956

At Yokosuka, Japan.

8 - 12 December 1956

En-route to Subic Bay, P.I.

12 - 18 December 1956

At Subic Bay, P.I. ATG-181 shore-based at Cubi Point.

19 - 22 December 1956

En-route to Hong Kong, B.C.C. Conducted limited flight operations and gunnery tracking and firing exercises.

22 - 29 December 1956

At Hong Kong.

29 - 31 December 1956

En-route to Yokosuka, Japan, BENNINGTON conducted Task Group exercises in company with USS ESSEX (CVA-9), USS TOLEDO (CA-133), DesDiv 232 and DesDiv 112.

24 April 1957

BENNINGTON crosses the Equator on its way to Sydney, Australia.

8 May 1957

BENNINGTON departs Sydney, Australia.

24 June 1957

BENNINGTON receives its new Commanding Officer, William M. Ryon.

3 July 1958

BENNINGTON receives its new Commanding Officer, James R. Compton.

July 1958

BENNINGTON participates in the Canada Centennial Festival, Victoria, British Columbia.

21 August 1958

Deployment for Taiwan service. (Through 3 December 1958).

February 1959 - 30 June 1959

BENNINGTON to undergo a refit & major overhaul at the San Francisco Naval Shipyard.

30 June 1959

BENNINGTON is re-designated as an Anti-Submarine Warfare Carrier, (CVS-20).

28 August 1959

BENNINGTON receives its new Commanding Officer, French Wampler, Jr.

11 August 1960

BENNINGTON and the destroyer USS EDWARDS collide approximately 175 miles off the coast of San Francisco. No injuries were reported. The accident occurred when the USS EDWARDS "apparently lost steering control", as it refueled with BENNINGTON. Its super structure smashed into the #3 Elevator of the BENNINGTON.

21 September 1960

BENNINGTON receives its new Commanding Officer, Robert M. Ware.

1 October 1960

BENNINGTON deploys for its 4<sup>th</sup> WESTPAC to the South China Sea, Laos Crisis.

2 May 1961

BENNINGTON returns from WESTPAC cruise.

29 September 1961

BENNINGTON receives its new Commanding Officer, John A. Ferguson.

6 January 1962

CVSG-59 embarked BENNINGTON (aircraft Tail Code, "NT"). Departed San Diego for 7<sup>th</sup> extended deployment.

May - July 1962

BENNINGTON conducted CARQUALS.

6 September 1962

The Operations & Weapons Departments won the Navy "E" for Excellence. The Supply Department received the ComNavAirPac Supply Award.

12 September 1962 - 31 March 1963

BENNINGTON undergoes a six-month, 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet Rehabilitation and Maintenance Overhaul, (FRAM II) at Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Washington. The new sonar equipment installed, increased BENNINGTON's ASW capabilities. (On the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 1962, BENNINGTON received her new Commanding Officer, Charles E. Healy.

7 January 1963

The Operations Department was awarded the Navy Battle Efficiency "E" Award for outstanding performance during anti-submarine warfare exercises. The Combat Information Center (CIC) was the "major" contributor to the final grade given.

11 February 1963

The day was spent "testing" the newly acquired "bow anchor".

1 May 1963

Upon completing refresher-training exercises the BENNINGTON arrived in her new homeport of Long Beach, California.

5 - 30 August 1963

Cruise to Seattle, Juneau, and Kodiak, Alaska.

27 September 1963

BENNINGTON receives its new Commanding Officer, John S. Hill

16 - 18 December 1963

USS BENNINGTON CVS-20 is the "host" for the "new" Secretary of the Navy, Honorable Paul Nitze, while he visits the West Coast.

January 1964

At Long Beach, California.

February 1964

At Long Beach, California - enroute to and moored at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. (for a 6<sup>th</sup> WESTPAC Cruise).

March 1964

At Pearl Harbor, Hawaii - enroute to and moored at Yokosuka, Japan.

April 1964

Moored at and operated between ports of Yokosuka, Iwakuni and Sasebo, Japan.

May 1964

At Sasebo, Japan - enroute to and moored at Hong Kong, BCC - enroute to Manila Bay, PI.

June 1964

At Manila Bay - enroute to and moored at Subic Bay - enroute to and moored at Sasebo, Japan.

July 1964

At Sasebo, Japan - enroute to Kobe, Japan - enroute to Yokosuka, Japan and moored. Enroute to Hakodate, Japan and back to Yokosuka and moored. Enroute to San Diego, California.

August 1964

Enroute to and moored at San Diego, California - enroute to and moored at Long Beach, California.

September - December 1964

At Long Beach, California and Newport Beach, California. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of September, BENNINGTON received her new Commanding Officer, Marvin E. Barnett. In October, BENNINGTON took part in "Operation HARDNOSE". On the 24<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> of December, the ship assisted in the Eureka, California flood disaster (102 relief missions). NOTE: BENNINGTON did not operate in Vietnam waters at any time during 1964.

12 February 1965

Dependent's Day Cruise.

Mid - to - Late February 1965

BENNINGTON participates in Operation SILVER LANCE.

22 March - October 7<sup>th</sup> 1965

BENNINGTON is off to WESTPAC/Vietnam/South China Sea

27 March 1965

Arrived in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

22 April 1965

International Date Line. LONGITUDE 180 degrees LATITUDE 24 degrees - 50' 00"N.  
Visited ports of: Yokosuka, Sasebo, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Subic Bay (the ship's Crew Party on Grande Island - used launches to get us to and from. A game of Rugby was played with the Australian crew of the HMS MELBURNE.

23 September 1965

Left Yokosuka, Japan for the United States.

7 October 1965

BENNINGTON arrives at Long Beach, California.

12 October 1965

BENNINGTON receives its new Commanding Officer, Wiley B. Howell.

15 November 1965 - April 1966

BENNINGTON goes into Dry-Dock at the Long Beach Naval Shipyard.

6 May - 13 May 1966

BENNINGTON hosted the reception for the National Red Cross Convention at San Diego. The ship underwent CARQUALS and an ORI off San Diego.

18 May 1966

The first carrier landing of VTOL (Vertical Take-Off & Landing) was conducted aboard the BENNINGTON with an experimental aircraft (XC-142A).

26 - 28 May 1966

Anchored at Santa Monica and held an "open house" for the National Convention of the Navy League.

6 July 1966

Airman Apprentice J.A. Caruso was killed when he was struck by a turning propeller on the flight deck.

26 August 1966

BENNINGTON was presented with the Admiral Flatley Award for superior aviation safety by Vice Admiral Thomas F. Connolly, ComNavAirPac.

28 October 1966

BENNINGTON receives its new Commanding Officer, Richard Graffy.

4 November 1966

BENNINGTON departs for WESTPAC/Vietnam

1 December 1966

BENNINGTON is over-flown by Soviet "BEAR" aircraft.

2 December 1966

The USS NICHOLAS (DD-449) collides with the USS BENNINGTON CVS-20 while refueling, West of the Hawaiian Islands.

15 December 1966

Chiou Chin Cheu, Seaman, Nationalist Chinese Navy, was received onboard the BENNINGTON for an emergency appendectomy.

20 December 1966

An SH3-A helicopter (NT64) rescued 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. P.A. Stiff (USAF) after he ejected from his aircraft while on Yankee Station.

26 December 1966

The Bob Hope Christmas Show was performed aboard BENNINGTON (flight deck).

### 1 - 25 January 1967

Yankee Team Operations and en-route Subic Bay, P.I. BENNINGTON also conducted oceanographic surveys during all transits while deployed up until Pearl Harbor in May.

### 6 January 1967

ATN3 William J. Duggan, USN, was received via helicopter from the USS GRIDLEY. Duggan died as a result of wounds received while performing duties as a crewmember aboard GRIDLEY's UH-2 helicopter. His remains were transferred from BENNINGTON to the U.S. Naval Hospital in Subic Bay, for disposition.

### 9 January 1967

A SH-3A crashed on the flight deck during take-off. Crewmembers received minor injuries only.

### 11 January 1967

A SH-3A struck the water and sank at sea during night operations. The following casualties were received aboard: LT(jg) William L. Finkenhagen, USNR and AX2 Roberto B. Reed, USN, were transferred to Subic Bay for further care. LT(jg) Charles B. Stella, USNR and RD1 William T. Smith, USN, were treated and retained aboard. AX3 Clayton Kemp, USN and AX3 Wayne C. Reinecke, USN, were declared dead after an extensive air-sea search following the accident.

### 12 January 1967

While BENNINGTON was inport at Subic Bay, Philippines, arrangements were made by Port Services to have 45 men from Subic Bay assist in the painting of the ship. The cost for four days for the 45 men was seven hundred dollars.

### 3 - 8 February 1967

Inport Hong Kong, BCC

### 10 - 28 February 1967

En-route TONKIN GULF. Yankee Team Operations.

### 1 - 12 March 1967

Yankee Team Operations. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of March, the Medical Department performed emergency surgery on SN Robert Paszkiewicz, USN, for a ruptured urinary bladder. Surgery was successful and he was transferred to Subic Bay for care.

## March 1967

Henry Fonda paid the BENNINGTON a visit while it was on "Yankee Station". Mr. Fonda, apparently in rebuttal to the disgraceful and seemingly treasonous actions by his daughter, Jane, in Hanoi, made an unaccompanied visit to the ship for several days as the ship steamed on Yankee Station. His stated purpose was simply to fraternize with the crew, which he did, by eating in the crews mess and voicing his support for the hard work which all hands were engaged in.

Mr. Fonda, who achieved great fame for his leading role in the play and later movie, "Mr. Roberts", played the part of a Naval Officer who suffered much under the tyrannical commanding officer whose hallmark was a potted palm tree carefully tended on the bridge of the ship. When Mr. Fonda arrived on BENNINGTON, his helicopter was met on the Flight Deck by the Executive Officer who escorted Mr. Fonda to the bridge to pay his respects. In a carefully staged moment, the door to the bridge was opened, where Mr. Fonda was greeted with the sight of the Captain (Richard Graffy) carefully watering a potted palm (artificial) next to the captain's chair. In all of his roles in movies and theatre, Mr. Fonda never laughed as heartily as he did at that moment.

## 12 - 26 March 1967

Inport Sasebo, Japan. En-route TONKIN GULF.

## 26 - 31 March 1967

Yankee Team Operations.

## 1 - 17 April 1967

Yankee Team Operations. (Relieved of Yankee Station duties on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April)

## 19 April 1967

Seaman Ronald R. Johnson was injured when he was caught between a railing and Radar Director #51. Johnson subsequently died on 28 April while being treated in the U.S. Naval Hospital, Subic Bay, P.I.

## 23 April 1967

BENNINGTON crosses the Equator and is visited by "King Neptune and his Royal Court". All Pollywogs were initiated and became "Shellbacks"...

29 April - 4 May 1967

BENNINGTON participates in the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Coral Sea in Sydney, Australia.

8 - 18 May 1967

En-route Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

18 May 1967

Inport Pearl Harbor for refueling.

18 - 23 May 1967

En-route to San Diego, California.

23 May 1967

Off-loaded Air Group in San Diego, California. AIRGROUP CVGS-59 was made up of Squadrons from VS-33, VS-38, HS-8 and Detachment 20 of VAW-111. Enroute to Long Beach, California. BENNINGTON arrives Long Beach after being deployed 170 days. BENNINGTON also received letters of appreciation from the Oceanographic Office of Ocean Bottom Surveys for work (surveys) performed on 20 January, 15 and 23 May.

25 May 1967

Anchored at Seal Beach, California, in order to off-load ammunition.

29 May 1967

BENNINGTON commences an eight-week restricted availability period (RAV) in Long Beach Naval Shipyard.

5 June 1967

Following an emergency request for blood from the U.S. Naval Hospital, Long Beach, BENNINGTON provided nine type "O+" blood donors.

30 June 1967

BENNINGTON is called on again by the American Red Cross for more blood donors. 167 pints of blood were donated on this day.

21 July 1967

Conducted dock trials using boilers 3, 4, 7 and 8.

25 July 1967

Underway for sea trials using boilers 1-8 for approximately eight hours.

2 August 1967

Moored portside to pier at Seal Beach for ammunition on-load.

3 - 7 August 1967

After taking on aviation gasoline while at anchor outside Long Beach Harbor, BENNINGTON conducted Independent Steaming Evolution in offshore operating area.

12 - 26 August 1967

Conducted in-port inspection, indoctrination and underway training with Fleet Training Group, San Diego.

24 August 1967

Two E-2A type aircraft completed 10 arrested landings and 10 catapult assisted launches with newly installed nose launch system. They were the very first launchings of this class aircraft from an H-8 Catapult system.

29 August 1967

Underway with approximately 1,700 guests for a dependents day cruise. BENNINGTON's Medical Department attained a score of 93% during its underway training (12-26 August). This is the "highest score" ever given to any Medical Department aboard a ship in the U.S. Navy.

13 September 1967

Airman Somerville of V-1 Division, fell overboard from the undercarriage of elevator #3. He was recovered by HS-8 plane guard without injury. On this day, the 100,000<sup>th</sup> arrested landing was made by LCDR H.J. Strasler, Officer-in-Charge of Detachment 20, Airborne Early Warning Squadron 111 (VAW-111) in a E-1B "Willy-Fudd".

15 September 1967

Anchored at Seal Beach for ammunition on-load.

3 - 9 October 1967

After embarking the Air Group in San Diego, BENNINGTON operated in the (SOCAL) Southern California waters except for weekends at which time the ship moored at North Island (NORIS).

10 - 15 October 1967

En-route Pearl Harbor, Hawaii for Middle Pacific Operations in preparation for duty as primary recovery ship for Apollo 4/Saturn 5 Mission (NASA).

24 October 1967

Conducted trial pick-ups of a mock-up spacecraft in area G-2 off Oahu for VIP's. En-route to the trial area, Airman R.L. Walter was killed on the flight deck. Walter slipped and fell while moving a helicopter and was run over. The accident occurred at 0825 hours and Walter died at 0830 hours. His remains were transferred to Tripler Army General Hospital for preparation, encasement and transportation.

26 October 1967

Conducted trial pick-ups of the mock spacecraft.

31 October 1967

Conducted additional trial pick-ups of the mock spacecraft.

8 - 9 November 1967

BENNINGTON arrives at her recovery station at 082400Z with NASA Scientists and technicians on-board. The descending spacecraft was sighted at 092037Z, 11 miles ahead. Upon retrieval of Apollo 4 Spacecraft, the ship steamed back to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

11 November 1967

BENNINGTON off-loaded the Apollo 4 Spacecraft at Pearl and refueled. En-route to San Diego, California.

16 November 1967

En-route to San Diego, BENNINGTON was diverted to Alameda Naval Station, San Francisco, to off-load a damaged A-3 Aircraft.

20 November 1967

BENNINGTON receives its new Commanding Officer, Captain Daniel J. Murphy.

27 November - 1 December 1967

BENNINGTON conducts CARQUALS in the local operating areas. (On the 27<sup>th</sup> of November, the BENNINGTON was awarded the "Meritorious Unit Commendation Award" (Ribbon), for the recovery of the Apollo 4 Space Capsule Operation.

1 -11 December 1967

In-port Long Beach, California.

11 - 16 December 1967

Conducted CARQUALS in the local operating areas. (On the 12<sup>th</sup> of December an E-2A aircraft snapped an arresting wire and plunged over the angle deck while attempting an arrested landing. Both the pilot and co-pilot were rescued by helicopter. Both received minor injuries and the aircraft was lost (sank).

16 - 31 December 1967

In-port Long Beach, California.

2 January 1968

FN Ray R. Archer was placed in the ward for severe hypoxia. Archer had gone into #10 Fire Pump Void and passed out. He was resuscitated on the scene and subsequently placed in the ward overnight for observations.

7 January 1968

BENNINGTON retrieved her 103,000<sup>th</sup> fixed wing aircraft, which was flown by LCDR J.R. Juliano of VA-76.

8 - 11 January 1968

BENNINGTON participates Operation Beadstringer in the Southern California Operating Area (SoCal-OpArea).

11 - 15 January 1968

In-port, Long Beach Naval Shipyard.

15 - 19 January 1968

SoCal-OpArea.

19 - 22 January 1968

In-port, Long Beach Naval Shipyard.

22 - 25 January 1968

The Secretary of the Navy is a guest aboard for the SOCAL-OPAREA Carrier Qualifications (CARQUALS). On the 24<sup>th</sup>, BENNINGTON's 104,000<sup>th</sup> landing was made by LCDR W.C. Rook of VA-125. On Rook's next attempt that evening, his A4D Skyhawk, struck the round down, exploded and skidded off the portside of the flight deck. His body was not recovered.

25 - 28 January 1968

Administrative & Materials Inspection.

25 January - 5 February 1968

In-port Long Beach Naval Shipyard.

5 - 9 February 1968

SOCAL-OPAREA for CARQUALS.

7 February 1968

BENNINGTON's 105,000<sup>th</sup> landing is made by LCDR R.E. Wolf of VS-35.

8 February 1968

An experimental E-2A aircraft snapped the #4 arresting cable and plunged over the portside of the flight deck. The entire crew was saved. The fixed-wing aircraft floated for approximately 14 hours and was finally sunk in deep water after unsuccessful salvage operations.

9 - 19 February 1968

In-port Long Beach Naval Shipyard. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of February, 110 dependent children received oral examinations and stannous fluoride treatments aboard CVS-20.

19 February 1968

Commander Anti-Submarine Warfare Group THREE embarked.

19 - 26 February 1968

SOCAL-OPAREA for HUKASWEX 1-68 (Hunter Killer Anti-Submarine Exercises)

26 February - 4 March 1968

In-port Long Beach Naval Shipyard.

4 - 8 March 1968

SOCAL-OPAREA for CARQUALS.

5 March 1968

BENNINGTON's 106,000<sup>th</sup> landing was made by LT(jg) R.W. Martin of VS-41.

8 - 11 March 1968

In-port Long Beach Naval Shipyard.

11 - 15 March 1968

HUKASWEX 2-68. On the 12<sup>th</sup> BENNINGTON's 106,000<sup>th</sup> landing was made by LT B.W. Ray of VAW-111 Detachment 20.

15 - 18 March 1968

Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI).

18 - 19 March 1968

In-port Long Beach Naval Shipyard.

19 March 1968

Seal Beach for ammo on-load.

19 - 26 March 1968

In-port Long Beach Naval Shipyard.

26 March - 1 April 1968

HUKASWEX 3-68. Accident with a helo from HS-8 (in the water). Co-pilot, Cornelius Shea, was found uninjured. Lost in the accident was, LCDR J.R. Griffiths, AX3 G.M. Penniman II and Airman Apprentice E.C. Sowell, Jr.

1 - 24 April 1968

In-port Long Beach Naval Shipyard.

24 April 1968

Dependents Day Cruise.

24 - 30 April 1968

In-port Long Beach Naval Shipyard.

30 April 1968

BENNINGTON departs for her last WESTPAC Deployment to Vietnam with a stop in San Diego to load the Air Group, CVSG-59.

1 - 6 May 1968

En-route from CONUS to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

6 - 7 May 1968

In-port Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

7 - 15 May 1968

Operational Readiness Exercise (ORE) with the HMNZS OTAGO (F-111).

15 - 20 May 1968

In-port Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

20 - 29 May 1968

En-route Yokosuka, Japan. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> BENNINGTON chopped the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet. On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, BENNINGTON crossed the International Date Line. On 29 & 30 May, BENNINGTON was in-port Yokosuka, Japan (Joint ASW Training).

31 May - 2 June 1968

En-route Sasebo, Japan.

2 June 1968

BENNINGTON transited the Tsugara Straits.

2 - 9 June 1968

Conducted Operation "POWER PACK" in the Sea of Japan. Experienced Soviet "BEAR" over-flights and were in contact with Soviet Naval Vessels. During the anti-submarine exercise approximately 100 Japanese Maritime Defense Officers were aboard to observe. On the 5<sup>th</sup> BENNINGTON's 108,000<sup>th</sup> landing was made by LT J.W. Fitzgerald of VS-38.

9 - 10 June 1968

En-route Sasebo, Japan.

10 -21 June 1968

In-port Sasebo, Japan. On the 21<sup>st</sup>, EM2 Donald J. Prince was working on an electrical panel and shorted two circuits. Prince received second and third degree burns of the face; second degree burns on both hands and a second-degree burn of the cornea. Prince was transferred to the Yokosuka Naval Hospital, Yokosuka, Japan.

21 - 25 June 1968

En-route Yankee Station.

25 June - 18 July 1968

On Yankee Station. Transferred torpedoes by helicopter. Another "first" set by the BENNINGTON. This sped up the exchange of torpedoes and enhanced the strategic training in torpedo warfare. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of June, ABE3 James Jorgenson was injured on the flight deck. The catapult misfired and struck Jorgenson. He suffered a contusion to his right foot and bruises to his right elbow.

18 - 22 July 1968

En-route to Singapore.

21 July 1968

BENNINGTON crosses the Equator at 105 degrees - 30'E, and is paid a visit by King Neptune and his Royal Court. All Pollywogs were initiated, thusly becoming SHELLBACKS.

22 - 28 July 1968

In-port Singapore.

28 July - 7 August 1968

Transist to Sasebo, Japan. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of July, BENNINGTON received the Admiral Flately Memorial Award.

1 August 1968

BENNINGTON's 109,000<sup>th</sup> landing was made by LT J.C. McDonald of VS-38.

1 - 4 August 1968

HUKASWEX 4-68 (Operation "SWIFT MOVE").

7 - 8 August 1968

In-port Sasebo, Japan.

8 - 18 August 1968

INSURV Inspection.

19 - 24 August 1968

En-route Yankee Station. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August, BENNINGTON crossed paths with Typhoon Shirley and it delayed our arrival on Yankee Station by one day.

24 August - 18 September 1968

On Yankee Station. HC-7 Detachment 20 exchanged pilots with the Air Force to enhance better teamwork in Search & Rescue Operations. BENNINGTON's Operational Commander, Rear Admiral William J. Moran, COMMANDER ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE GROUP THREE set this in motion.

18 September 1968

BENNINGTON's 110,000<sup>th</sup> landing was made by LT A.E. Rypka of VS-38.

18 - 22 September 1968

En-route Hong Kong, BCC.

22 - 26 September 1968

In-port Hong Kong, BCC.

27 - 28 September 1968

En-route Subic Bay, P.I.

28 September 1968

At anchor in Subic Bay because a typhoon was raging through the Philippine Islands when BENNINGTON arrived.

29 September - 5 October 1968

In-port Subic Bay, P.I.

30 September 1968

Pre-overhaul conference.

2 October 1968

Project "HANDCLASP". Equipment was presented to the Boys Town of Olongapo.

5 - 7 October 1968

En-route Yankee Station.

7 - 20 October 1968

On Yankee Station. BENNINGTON maintained the logistic support of approximately 50 ships while on-station.

20 - 25 October 1968

Enroute Yokosuka, Japan. BENNINGTON and her escort destroyers are slowed by yet another typhoon.

25 - 27 October 1968

In-port Yokosuka, Japan.

28 October - 9 November 1968

En-route CONUS. Air Group debarked in San Diego, California.

1 November 1968

BENNINGTON crosses the International Date Line.

2 November 1968

BENNINGTON chopped the First Fleet.

9 - 11 November 1968

In-port Long Beach, California. BENNINGTON returns home from its 11<sup>th</sup> WESTPAC Cruise. It will begin a six-month Yard Period.

12 - 14 November 1968

Seal Beach to off-load ammo.

14 November - 31 December 1968

In-port Long Beach Naval Shipyard. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of December, scheduled "dry-docking" was delayed due to emergency repairs needed by the USS BON HOMME RICHARD (CVS-31). On the 19<sup>th</sup> - BT3 David L. Clemmer suffered first and second degree burns on his back and shoulders from a broken steam line. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of December, BENNINGTON received her new Commanding Officer, Captain W. B. Barrow, USN.

NOTE: (at the end of the year 1968, 110,617 fixed-wing aircraft and 26,154 helicopters had landed on BENNINGTON's flight deck.)

1 January - 22 April 1969

In-port Long Beach Naval Shipyard for regular overhaul.

7 January 1969

BENNINGTON entered Dry-Dock #1. During this period the ship's voids received a thorough sandblasting and painting. The hull was chipped and painted and the flight deck was reworked.

19 March 1969

BENNINGTON leaves Dry-Dock #1.

4 April 1969

BENNINGTON was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation for her role in direct combat/support operations in Southeast Asia during the period 21 June - 27 October 1968.

22 April 1969

BENNINGTON's first day at sea in 1969. This and several other at sea periods through 16 May were spent conducting sea trials.

22 - 30 April 1969

Back into Long Beach to continue overhaul.

30 April - 2 May 1969

At sea in the Southern California Operating Area (SOCAL-OPAREA).

2 - 13 May 1969

In-port Long Beach Naval Shipyard to continue with overhaul.

13 May 1969

At sea in the SOCAL-OPAREA for sea trials.

13 - 19 May 1969

In-port Long Beach. (The Yard Period officially ended on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May).

19 - 20 May 1969

At sea. (Anchored off Seal Beach for ammo on-load)

20 - 21 May 1969

In-port San Diego, California.

21 - 24 May 1969

At sea in the SOCAL-OPAREA for training.

24 - 28 May 1969

In-port San Diego, California

28 - 29 May 1969

At sea in SOCAL-OPAREA for further training and transit to Long Beach.

29 May - 2 June 1969

In-port Long Beach for Memorial Day Weekend.

2 June 1969

Personnel from Fleet Training Group, San Diego, embarked for the commencement of REFTRA (refresher training).

6 June 1969

BENNINGTON's 111,000<sup>th</sup> arrested landing was made by Commander, William M. Callaghan, Jr., Executive Officer.

6 - 9 June 1969

In-port San Diego, California.

9 - 13 June 1969

At sea in the SOCAL-OPAREA for refresher training.

13 June 1969

BENNINGTON received an over-all REFTRA grade of Excellent and the "highest rating ever achieved by any carrier crew" in the history of the Fleet Training Group.

13 - 23 June 1969

In-port Long Beach. (On the 16<sup>th</sup> - Commander, ASW Group THREE, Rear Admiral Norman C. Gillette, Jr., USN, broke his flag aboard the USS BENNINGTON CVS-20.

25 June 1969

BENNINGTON's 112,000<sup>th</sup> arrested landing was made by LCDR Lowe of VA-125. During the night of the 25<sup>th</sup>, four minutes after a catapult launch, LT(jg) Victor A. Demick of VA-125 reported a loss of gyro in his A-4 Skyhawk. He was told to use the stand-by gyro, to level his wings and climb. He reported that his aircraft was stalling and 10 seconds later, with the aircraft approximately 6 nautical miles away, radar lost contact. An extensive search was conducted yielding only aircraft debris. During these CARQUALS, BENNINGTON became the first ship to qualify the TA-4F aircraft for carrier landings.

28 June - 7 July 1969

In-port Long Beach, California.

7 - 10 July 1969

At sea in the SOCAL OPAREA for Air Operations.

11 July 1969

Dependents Day Cruise.

11 - 12 July 1969

In-port Long Beach, California.

### 22 - 25 July 1969

CARQUALS were again conducted at sea. During this period, LT McKinney of VA-125 made the 113,000<sup>th</sup> arrested landing.

### 25 - 30 July 1969

In-port Long Beach, California.

### 30 July 1969

Anti-Submarine Exercise HUKASWEX 7-69. BENNINGTON with CVSG-59, USS RAMSEY (DEG-2), USS DAVID (DE-1040) and the USS O'BRIEN (DD-725), simulated wartime operations with the USS CUSK (SS-348) and USS SCAMP (SSN-558) acting as aggressor forces. HUKASWEX 7-69 was completed on 7 August. BENNINGTON returned to Long Beach and remained in-port until August 21<sup>st</sup>.

### 6 August 1969

BENNINGTON celebrates her 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by a cake cutting ceremony on the flight deck and in the wardroom.

### 11 August 1969

BENNINGTON experiences its second tragedy of the year when Seaman Apprentice Michael E. Jagers was fatally injured by a hatch cover he was trying to close.

### 13 August 1969

BENNINGTON was given an Administrative Inspection directed by Commander, Anti-Submarine Warfare Group THREE and including officers and men from his staff as well as members from the following commands:  
Commander, Naval Air Forces, U.S. Pacific  
Commander, Fleet Air San Diego and USS HORNET (CVS-12)

(BENNINGTON) received a grade of Excellent with a numerical grade of over 92%. BENNINGTON also received notice of her selection for the CVS 1969 Admiral Flatley Memorial Award for superior performance in aviation.

### 21 August 1969

At sea in the SOCAL-OPAREA and Pacific Missile Range for Project SPRA test.

21 - 26 August 1969

In-port Long Beach, California.

26 August 1969

At Seal Beach Anchorage for off-load of ammo and the shifting of the Flag of Commander, Anti-Submarine Warfare Group THREE to the USS HORNET (CVS-12) on 30 August.

28 August 1969

At sea in the SOCAL-OPAREA and Pacific Missile Range for SPRA test.

28 August - 2 September 1969

In-port Long Beach, California.

2 September 1969

In transit to San Diego, California.

2 - 5 September 1969

In-port San Diego, California.

5 September 1969

At sea in the SOCAL-OPAREA and Pacific Missile Range for SPRA test.

5 - 10 September 1969

In-port Long Beach, California.

10 September 1969

At sea in the SOCAL-OPAREA and Pacific Missile Range for SPRA test.

10 September - 10 October 1969

In-port Long Beach, California. (NOTE: On 19 September - Command Deactivation)

9 October 1969

Change of Command Ceremony

10 October 1969

BENNINGTON CVS-20 goes to sea for the very last time, as she makes her way to Bremerton, Washington where her final de-activation steps were taken prior to her being decommissioned.

13 October 1969

Arrived at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard for "final de-activation" and mothballing.

30 November 1969

BENNINGTON enters Dry-Dock #4.

15 January 1970

The USS BENNINGTON CVS-20 is decommissioned.

20 September 1989

BENNINGTON stricken from records. To be scrapped.

12 January 1994

BENNINGTON is sold for scrap.

13 September 1994

BENNINGTON is towed from Puget Sound for scrap at Port Angeles.

7 December 1994

BENNINGTON is towed to Alang, India for complete scrapping by the "shipbreakers".

This document has been prepared and made available by:

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