

Navy Cross Awarded To Three Pilots



"Awarded for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy . . ."

Three winners of the coveted Navy Cross are attached to the U.S.S. Bennington. Few merit the distinguished award, fewer still live to relate their experiences. It is a pleasure and an honor to serve with these men.

Four Direct Hits

One large Japanese aircraft carrier never returned home from the battle of the Philippine Sea because of LCDR W. H. Junk's four direct bomb hits on her flight deck. It was a perfectly executed run through heavy flak, and LCDR Junk's TBM only carried four bombs. The carrier was left wallowing dead in the water but remained afloat until nightfall when our destroyers moved in and sent her to the bottom.

LCDR Junk had earlier distinguished himself at Guadalcanal. A 10,000 ton Jap transport loaded with ammunition went up and a Jap submarine went down—both the victims of his astute bombing attacks. Again at Bougainville, LCDR Junk scored against the Japanese. This time it was a hit on a cruiser. The other members of his squadron, VT-21, shared in the final sinking.

Two Against Nine

On April 6, 1945, four Japanese pilots over Okinawa found ample reason for regretting that LT S. J. Brocato had ever been commissioned a Naval Aviator.

While attached to VF-83, flying off of the U.S.S. Essex, LT Brocato and another fighter pilot were vectored into a flight on nine "Zekes", one of the best land-based Jap fighters. Despite the handicap, the two pilots engaged the nine planes. In a matter of minutes, skillful flying and fighting splashed eight of the nine bogies. LT Brocato and his companion had each bagged four.

The Lieutenant later ran his string to seven kills. Two "Jacks", Jap Navy fighters, crossed his gunsights once too often over Matsuyama, and after that he tagged a "Tony" army fighter over the Japanese mainland.

During the six and one half months spent aboard the Essex, LT Brocato was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross twice, six Air Medals and shared in the Presidential Unit Citation.

Hits Battleship

LT A. C. Flynn's squadron, VF-6, attached to the U.S.S. Hancock, was ordered to fly fighter cover for a TBM strike against a Jap fleet concentration in the Inland Sea of Japan. In addition to their regular load of fuel and ammunition, each

Eight Department Heads Assume Duties At Recommissioning Ceremonies Today

Eight Officers will assume their duties as Department Heads when the Bennington goes back into commission today. All are World War II veterans with outstanding records in the Naval Service.

Commander Joseph T. Lawler, who will head the Operations Department, comes to the Bennington from the Bureau of Aeronautics in Washington, D. C. He served in the South Pacific for 18 months during World War II. He wears the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross with two gold stars, and the Air Medal with six gold stars.



Cdr. Lawler

A graduate of Purdue University, CDR Lawler entered the Navy in July of 1937 and received his commission in 1938. He is married to the former Betty Kidd of Norfolk, Virginia. CDR and Mrs. Lawler now reside in Dekalb, Illinois.

In charge of the Air Department will be Commander Ronald W. Hoel. A seasoned carrier pilot, his awards include the Distinguished Flying Cross with three gold stars, the Air Medal with ten gold stars, the Purple Heart, and a Presidential Unit Citation. His last duty station was at the Air Support School, NAB, Coronado, California.

A native of Duluth, CDR Hoel is a graduate of the University of Minnesota.



Cdr. Hoel

He is married to the former Dolores Drey. They have four children—Bruce, Cheryl, Craig, and Denis. The Ship's

Navigator will be Commander Harry W. Wood, a native of Seattle, Washington. Prior to coming to the Bennington, he served on the staff of the Chief of Naval Air Training at Pensacola, Florida.



Cdr. Wood

Another veteran carrier pilot of World War II, he received the Distinguished Flying Cross with three gold stars and the Air Medal with six gold stars for his service in the South Pacific.

CDR Wood is a graduate of the University of Washington. He and his wife, the former Virginia Moore, have two children—Harry Jr., and Bret Micheal.

Commander Albert E. Pallon will head the Supply Department aboard the Bennington. CDR Pallon was stationed at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard before coming to the CVA-20. His home town is Eliot, Maine.



Cdr. Pallon

A graduate of Harvard University, class of 1937, he served in the South Pacific for 38 months during World War II. CDR Pallon is married to the former Adele Wilcox. They have two children—Carol Elaine and Michael Edward.

Commander Claude E. Adkins of St. Paul, Minnesota will head the ship's Dental Department. He comes to the Bennington from the Naval Air Station at Memphis, Tennessee.



Cdr. Adkins

CDR Adkins received his degree from the University of Kansas City Dental College. He entered the service in July of 1931. CDR and Mrs. Adkins, the former Marion E. Black, have four children—Sharron Irene, Bonnie Gail, Elanore June, and John Franklin.

Commander Clyde W. Norman will be in charge of the Bennington Medical Department. His last duty station was the U.S. Naval Hospital, San Diego, California.

CDR Norman is married to the former Helen I. Lowry, of Cambridge, Ohio. They have three children—Carol, Jimmy, and Steven.

Engineering Officer for the Bennington will be Lieutenant Commander Paul E. Fournier. LCDR Fournier, a resident of Winehendon, Massachusetts, joined the Navy in February, 1932, as a seaman. He was commissioned in June of 1943.



Lcdr. Fournier

LCDR Fournier wears the Bronze Star for meritorious service in the South Pacific during World War II. He is married to the former Rose Combs. They have two children—Pauluice Virginia and Pauline Suzanne Marie.

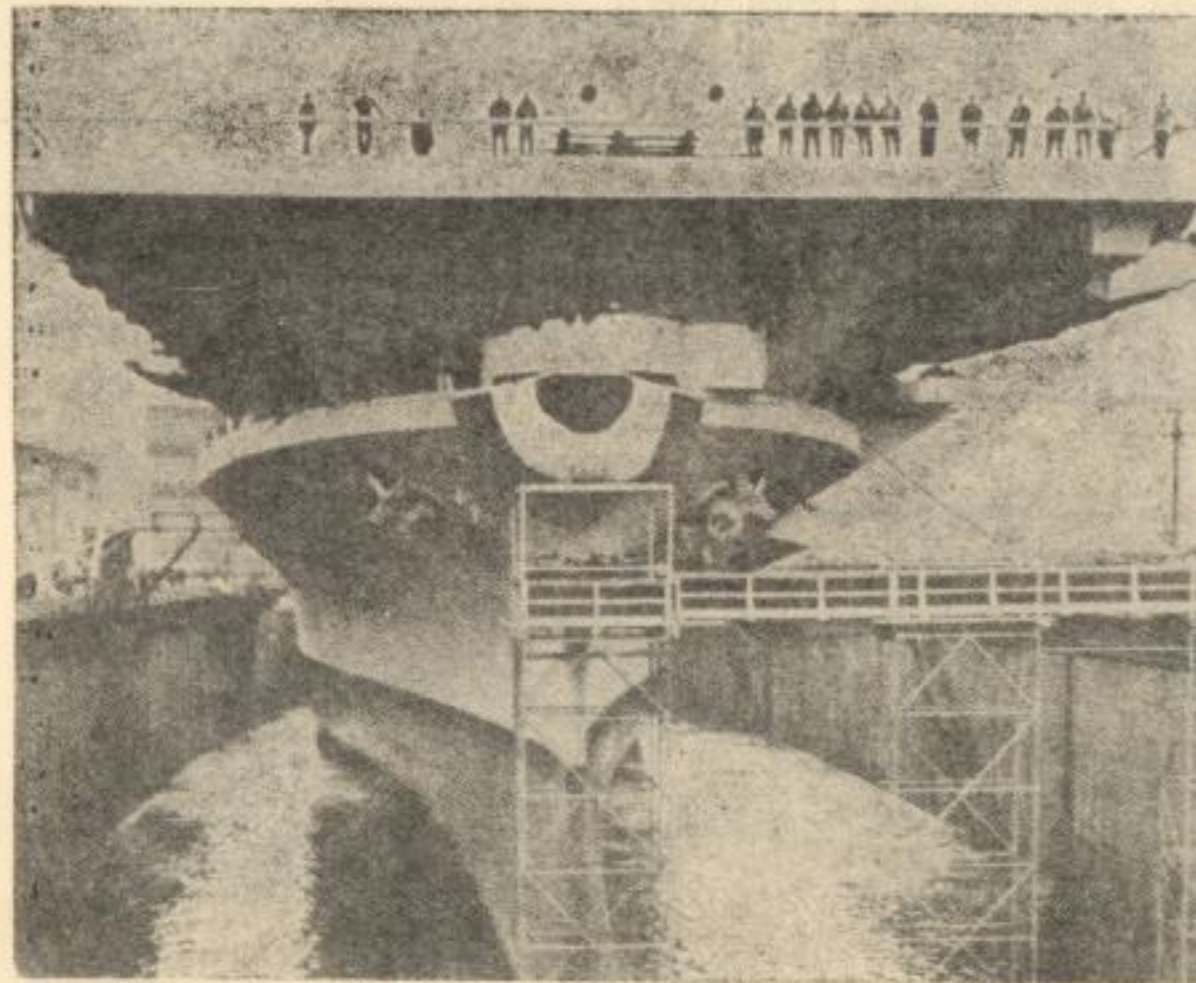
Bennington Gunnery officer will be Lieutenant Commander Charles W. Smyers. He was



Lcdr. Smyers

commissioned in June, 1942, on graduation from the Naval Academy, and has just completed a tour of duty on the USS Wasp. A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, LCDR Smyers and his wife, the former Pauline Whites, have one child, Robert.

Launched in Drydock



The Bennington rests in drydock in the New York Naval Shipyard, Brooklyn, New York shortly after her launching on February 26, 1944. Unlike the usual ceremony, the ship was launched by admitting sixteen feet of water through the drydock gates. As the water touched the keel, Mrs. Melvin J. Maas, wife of Representative Maas of Minnesota, cracked the traditional bottle of champagne over the bow and christened her "U.S.S. Bennington".

F6F carried a 1,000 pound bomb, a familiar sight to LT Flynn, who had earlier dive bombing experience.

The Jap anti-aircraft screen extended 20 miles out and the heavy flak knocked out the first three TBMs to press in. LT Flynn, however, managed to break through and make a dive bombing run. The result was a direct hit on a Japanese battle-

ship. Lt. Flynn rejoined the other flyers of VF-6 and helped ward off the strong Jap air reinforcements from the mainland. The group fought their way back to the Hancock.

Commissioned in 1944, LT Flynn spent 1945 in the Pacific, winning three Air Medals and sharing in a Navy Unit Citation.

Capt. Young

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Born in St. Louis on May 8, 1903, Captain Young was graduated from Soldan High School, St. Louis, and then attended Washington University prior to his appointment to the Naval Academy in 1923. He was commissioned upon graduation from the academy on June 2, 1927.

Wins Wings

His first assignment to active duty was aboard the battleships West Virginia and Arkansas, respectively. After a tour of duty aboard the destroyer Litchfield in 1933, he reported for flight training at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. In March of 1934 he received his coveted "Wings" and joined Scouting Squadron NINE, attached to the U.S.S. Northampton. In 1935 he began a three year course in post-graduate instruction in Aviation Ordnance Engineering. Upon completion of the course he reported aboard the U.S.S. Lexington for duty with Fighting Squadron TWO.

When World War II began, he was on duty in the Development Division of the Bureau of Aeronautics in Washington. In 1943 he became Executive Officer of the U.S.S. Prince William (CVE-31) and a year later joined the staff of Commander Roi Island, Kwajalein Atoll, as Chief Staff Officer. After his return to the States in the summer of 1943, he was assigned to the Aviation Ordnance Section, Research and Development Division, Bureau of Ordnance, as Officer-in-Charge. He remained there until August of 1945, at which time he assumed command of the carrier Takanis Bay.

Special Training

From February 1946 to June 1947, he served in the Guided Missiles Section, Special Weapons Division, in Washington. Following his tour of duty in Washington, he joined the staff of Commander First Task Fleet as Plans and Operations Officer. In October of 1948 he reported as Naval Deputy, Armed Forces Special Services Project, Albuquerque, New Mexico. There he participated in the development and operational application of atomic weapons. He returned to the Navy Department in May of 1951, serving as Naval Aide to the Secretary of the Navy until ordered to the Bennington.

In addition to the Commendation Ribbon with Combat "V", Captain Young wears the American Defense Service Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with one bronze star, the World War II Victory Medal, and the Japanese Occupation Medal.

Captain Young's official address is 6110 Pershing Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri. He is married to the former Jane Thornton Jones of St. Louis. They have two children, David B., Jr., and Jane Young.

Unique Attack

The Bennington was subjected to a unique combined attack on May 21, 1945. During AA firing drill, a target drone plane was hit, and in true kamikaze fashion crashed into the ship at the water-line, causing no damage. Several minutes later the bow of the ship was struck a sneak blow by a WM (whale, medium). He was impaled for several hours, until the ship had a chance to back down and free the carcass.

Basketball Team Begins Practice

The first of the U.S.S. Bennington's athletic activities to get underway before today's recommissioning ceremony was the ship's basketball team.

Early practice sessions indicate that the Bennington "Green Mountain Boys" will be flooring a strong, fast, aggressive team. From first reports the team will be relying on speed, although the line-up is sprinkled with several players well over the six foot mark.

The first call for candidates brought over a hundred aspiring ball players for the first practices. The squad has since been trimmed to sixteen players. However, Ensign John J. Shumaker, basketball coach, urges all who wish to try out for the team to do so. Any crew member aboard the Bennington is eligible.

Those who will comprise the original squad will be LTJG G. F. Brough; Walsh, G.W., PH2; Farrar, G.E., AK3; Lewis, E.S., AO3; McKay, T.J., AN; Boyer, R.A., LISN; Gelet, S.C., AKAN; Kluter, W.J., AN; McMasters, E.L., AN; Fitzgerald, W.D., SN; Reffner, W.D., SN; Hobson, H.A., AN; Laffman, J.J., SN; LaValley, C., SN; McIntyre, M.E., SA; and Lathrope, W.E., AA. Richards, R.E., GM2, will be the team's manager.