

USS BENNINGTON (CVS-20)
CAPTAIN John S. Hill, USN
COMMANDING



19 May 1964

Dear Families and Friends:

Greetings from BENNINGTON. We are currently cruising the calm blue waters of the South China Sea, having steamed over ten thousand miles since you received the last Familygram. The ports we have visited have been most interesting. Our periods at sea have been busy ones - long hours of concentrated fleet anti-submarine operations of the most complex nature. We are now full fledged members of the Navy's first team of the Far East - the Seventh Fleet, and I am extremely proud of the performance of BENNINGTON personnel, not only as operating sailors during our at-sea periods, but also as ambassadors of American goodwill in the foreign ports we have visited.

After departing Yokosuka, we steamed south to the Japanese port of Iwakuni, located on the southern part of Honshu in the Japanese Inland Sea. From there we went to Sasebo, Japan where we spent two weeks concentrating on minor voyage repairs and routine upkeep. The crew took maximum advantage of our Sasebo visit. Hundreds of our officers and sailors participated in the many tours which were available. They visited the many shrines and parks which abound in that part of Japan. Many took the beautiful fifteen

mile drive to the town of Arita, known for its fabulous porcelain factories. While in Sasebo, we had the pleasure of meeting many Japanese nationals by opening our ship to large organized groups such as schools, orphanages and Japanese Sea Scouts. BENNINGTON sailors were used as guides for all of these activities. They conducted themselves in a manner which generated many favorable comments from our Japanese visitors.



We are now about to enter the