

it was learned that the ~~Agave class cruiser~~ ~~Blaze~~ ~~up~~ ~~and~~ ~~sank~~ immediately at 1350. The Yamato was observed dead in the water at 1430, and minutes later she was ~~seen~~ enveloped in an enormous explosion, and shortly thereafter sank. The Bennington was slated for another rest, and during 1 - 9 May we were again anchored at Ulithi, for replenishment. Leaving Ulithi on May 9, our "70 days" operations was resumed. Our planes flew up and down the Ryūkyū Island chains with increasing impunity, as Japanese air attacks weakened. Between 16 April and the conclusion of the operation on 8 June, this ship participated in only one anti-aircraft action. That one was spectacular however. At 0659 on the morning of 16 May, a single-engined plane was observed tagging along behind three Hellcats at a distance of about 8 miles, approaching plane. At 12,000 yards the F6Fs turned on the intruder and made runs on him without success. By this time, the "Tony" was about 1000 feet high, coming in straight with no attempts at evasion. However, he was boring in directly behind the destroyers, making  $\frac{1}{2}$  5" fire extremely dangerous. Our five inch guns finally opened up at 3500 yards, with most unusual results. The second round was evidently a direct hit as, gas tank and his bomb erupted together. Small pieces floated down, some onto the deck of the destroyer. A week later the CV-20 was subjected to a unique combined attack. During ~~practice~~ ~~practice~~ AA firing, a TDD target ~~drone~~ plane was hit by our gunfire, and in true Kamikaze fashion, crashed into the ship at the water line, causing no damage. A little while later, the bow of the ship was struck a sneak blow by a ~~whale~~ (whale, medium). He was impaled for several hours, until the skipper had a chance to back the ship and dislodge the carcass. Naturally, after these events, the Bennington felt that at last she had reached combat maturity.

The ship's staff was changing. On 15 May, our Executive Officer, Comir., E.J.