

Taukuba, Nysaurigahara, and ~~the Iida and Mito airfields~~, and photographic coverage of Mito, Ishioka and Iida airfields was obtained. Bennington aircraft were estimated to have damaged or destroyed 98 planes at the airfields visited. One pilot and two aircrewmen were lost when hit by enemy planes were shot down 20 and 43 miles away from the ship. The next day, 11 July, we retired from the Tokyo area, and headed toward the fueling rendezvous. In the late afternoon, we changed our course for Hokkaido, and the following day prepared to launch strikes from our position approximately 70 miles southeast of Hokkaido. Bad weather, however, forced abandonment of the scheduled strikes. On the 14th of July our planes conducted offensives against Akkeishi, a paper mill and a coal mine at Kushiro, and other buildings and rail facilities in and around Kushiro. Many attacks were made on shipping near Kushiro, and in the Kamaiski area. Extensive damage was done to the rail facilities and equipment used in connection with the coal mine. Fires were started in the paper mill, two railroad bridges were damaged, several trains and locomotives were hit, and warehouses were set afire. Two small ships, a freighter-transport and a PC, were sunk and other enemy small craft damaged. The 14th of July is particularly notable because of participation by Bennington Planes in the fleet bombardment of Kamaiski. Our planes provided Carrier Air Patrol protection and sent spotting planes over the bombardment targets. Our SB2Cs carried especially trained spotters for the occasion. This was the first naval bombardment of the Japanese homeland by units of the American Fleet.

Unfavorable flying weather on 15 July reduced our operation to a single strike over northern Hokkaido, in the vicinity of Rumoi. This offensive destroyed two power plants, started fires in ~~several towers near Rumoi~~ several towers near Rumoi, and set fire to a large paper mill at Ebetsu. Other Bennington planes, returning from CAP and mapping flights, sank one small vessel, damaged several luggers and approximately