

reconnaissance for new camp locations, many camps were located, and our pilots invariably reported wildly cheering prisoner groups each time they flew low over the camps; the American flags dropped preciously waving proudly. On the 27th and 28th of August, we were in the fueling area receiving much needed provisions and small stores, and also replenished our aviation gasoline and fuel oil. From this time on until 10 September, when we headed for Tokyo Bay, our ship cruised close off the Japanese coast in assigned areas, making POW camp searches in various sectors, and ~~was~~ flying observation and photographic missions in investigations and confirmations of Japanese compliance with the preliminary surrender terms and directives.

On 10 September 1945, ~~at~~ after approximately two and one-half months of continuous cruising, the Bennington dropped anchor in Berth F-63, Tokyo Bay, Japan, almost adjacent to the USS Missouri on whose decks, a short time before, the Japs had placed their official signatures to General Mac Arthur's surrender documents.

13 September was an especially memorable day in our lives aboard the Bennington. On this day, in Tokyo Bay, the fose harbor of the former enemy, the ship celebrated her first birthday. The Birthday actually occurred a little more than a month previous of course, but the celebration was necessarily delayed dur to combat operations. A program of entertainment and music, presented by ship's company from able talent, followed a grand dinner, and the whole affair was in fitting jubilation - a dual one celebrating the ship's first anniversary, and the triumph over Japan. To make the event more noteworthy, and so far as we know, the Bennington is the first American combat ship to celebrate in a conquered land.

On 15 September, refreshed with our short stay in Tokyo Bay, we headed out to sea again for missions as assigned.

THE END