

HONSHU CITY FIRED

Kamaishi Iron Works Is Torn by Explosions in First Day's Shelling

FLEET 3 MILES OFF SHORE

It Steams Defiantly Almost Within Rifle Range During Heavy Bombardment

By **GEORGE E. JONES**

By Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

ABOARD THE BATTLESHIP SOUTH DAKOTA, off Japan, July 14—At noon today the United States surface Navy launched its first bombardment of the Japanese homeland. For 125 minutes thereafter battleships and cruisers led by this famous warship hurled salvo after flaming salvo of 16 and 8-inch shells into the Japanese Imperial Iron Works at Kamaishi, 275 miles northeast of Tokyo.

Steaming majestically back and forth on its designated filing course, this column of American warships at one time approached to within three miles of the Japanese coast.

As the bombarding guns howled their wrath under the intermittently sunny skies off Honshu Island, the warships seemed to leap with each recoil of their batteries. Clusters of shells streaked into the target every fifteen seconds or better, and distant thunder from the hill-screened target rolled back to us and mingled with the continuing blasts from our own muzzles.

The bombarding warships, part of Admiral William F. Halsey's

Continued on Page 3, Column 3

U. S. Fleet Guns Sow Giant Fires In North Honshu Iron Works City

Continued From Page 1

Third Fleet, volleyed more than 1,000 tons of high-explosive ammunition into the iron works.

With this audacious assault, the first surface naval attacks on Japan since British men-of-war bombarded Hatsuma in 1863, the Pacific naval war completed its full turn from the black day of Dec. 7, 1941. Today the people of Japan saw for themselves the might of the United States Navy and the fragments of steel and masonry that hurtled through the air symbolized for them the final disintegration of their Imperial Navy's mythical invincibility.

Smoke Blankets Area

ABOARD THE BATTLESHIP SOUTH DAKOTA, off Japan, July 14 (P)—High explosives, bearing made in America stamp, whistled from flaming muzzles of big naval guns into the great Japanese iron works at Kamaishi today.

The bombardment caused sky-explosions and started roaring fires that blanketed the area with smoke.

A battle squadron of three battleships, two heavy cruisers and numerous destroyers, was in plain sight of Japan for three hours before the bombardment started and for some time afterward.

For two hours the squadron swaggered back and forth almost within rifle shot of Honshu, drawing only most meager and apparently timid opposition.

It was as if you strutted back and forth on some enemy's front porch, poked in his front door, messed up his parlor and asked him what he proposed to do about it.

The Japanese chose to do very little about it.

As this is written there is no report of damage to American vessels in this action, one of the most spectacular of the Pacific war.

Kamaishi had a pre-war population of about 42,000, but an influx of workers to the steel mills is believed to have swelled it to nearly twice that.

The Imperial Iron and Steel

Works, prime target of the bombarding warships, is one of the most important in the whole Japanese Empire.

'Safe' Hokkaido Hit

By RICHARD W. JOHNSTON

United Press Correspondent.

WITH THE THIRD FLEET, off Hokkaido, July 14 (UP)—Some 1,000 American carrier planes swarmed over the "safe" Japanese homeland of Hokkaido today and caught the Japanese by surprise.

At times, Superfortresses have been over Hokkaido on reconnaissance, but never had the island experienced the gunning and bombing it got from the Corsair, Hellcat, Avenger and Helldiver bombers and fighters of the Third Fleet today.

Only ninety-six hours earlier these same pilots had blasted the Tokyo area airfields. Then the fleet maneuvered secretly for four days and the Japanese still do not know where it has been. The Japanese have not yet been able to put a single plane over this force.

Some 3,000,000 Japanese live on Hokkaido, and for three years they had been safe from the war, in a zone just beyond reach of big Saipan-based Superfortress fleets or of northern-based bombers from the Aleutians.

The American planes came down through the mists that shroud Hokkaido's mountain peaks to hit their targets. Hokkaido, 500 miles north of Tokyo, gets its weather from the Aleutians, and it is foggy and rainy.

Yesterday may have been a nice day in Hokkaido. Business men read in their newspapers about the destruction inflicted by the Third Fleet, but Hokkaido must have seemed far enough away to be safe.

Hakodate, principal port of Hokkaido on the southern tip of the island, nestled snugly in mined straits.

But that was yesterday and today is another story. The airfields and the ships around Hakodate felt the same punch that the airfields of Tokyo had felt four days ago and now the fishermen, miners and timber workers of Hokkaido know that the war at last has come to them.