

1946

The history of the U.S.S. Neshoba

United States Navy

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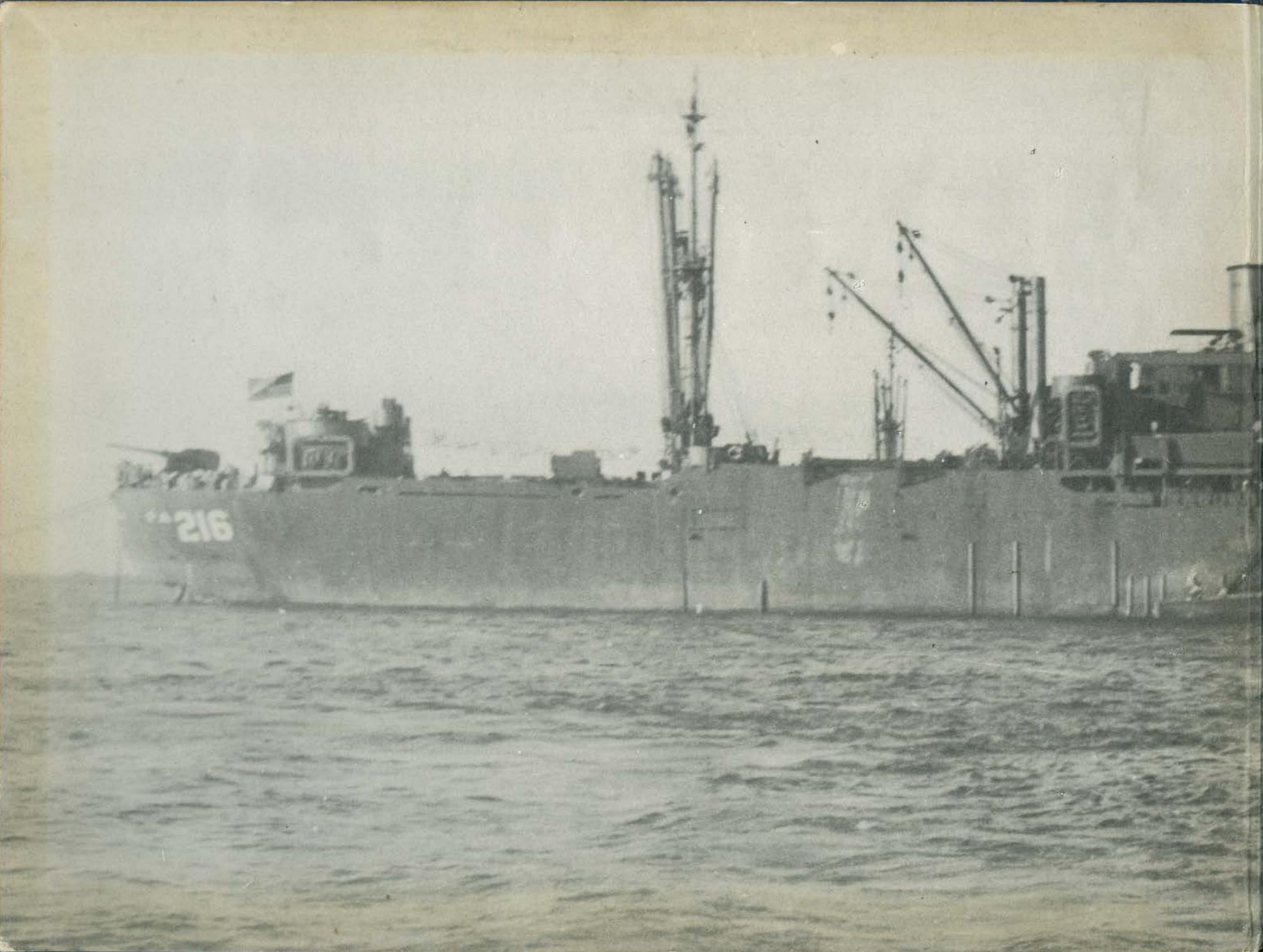
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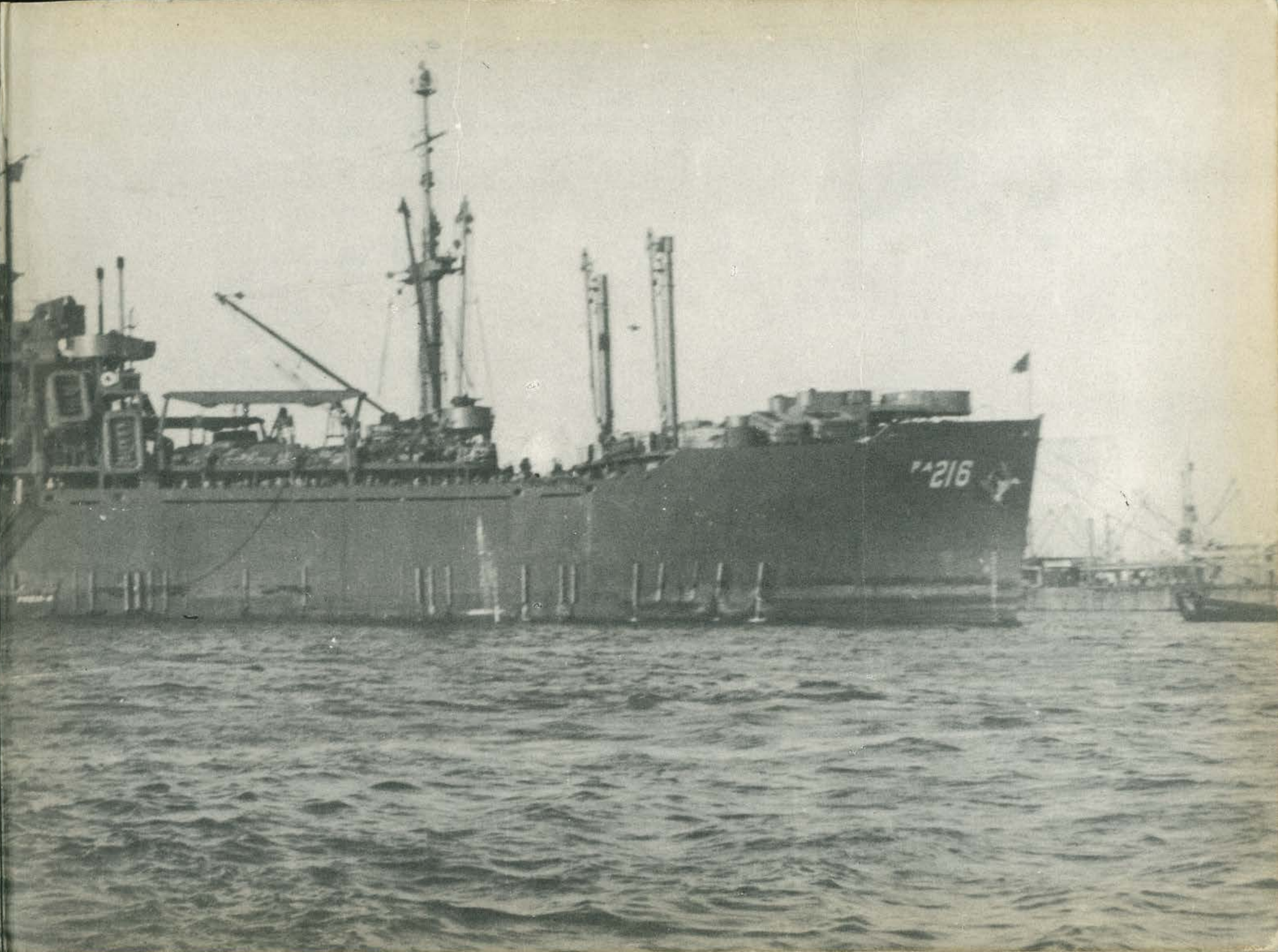
United States Navy, "The history of the U.S.S. Neshoba" (1946). *World War Regimental Histories*. 151.
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U.S.S. Neshoba







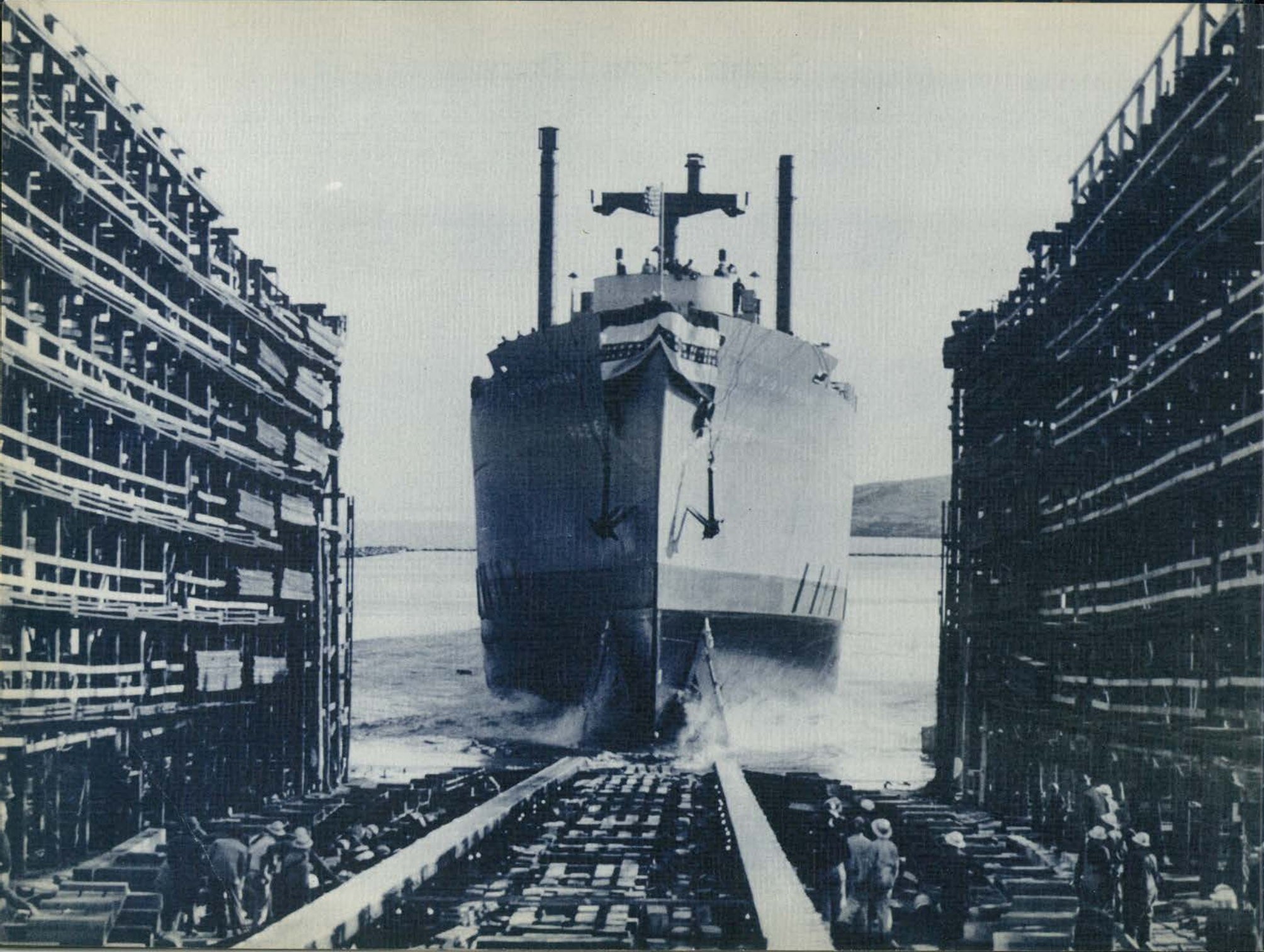
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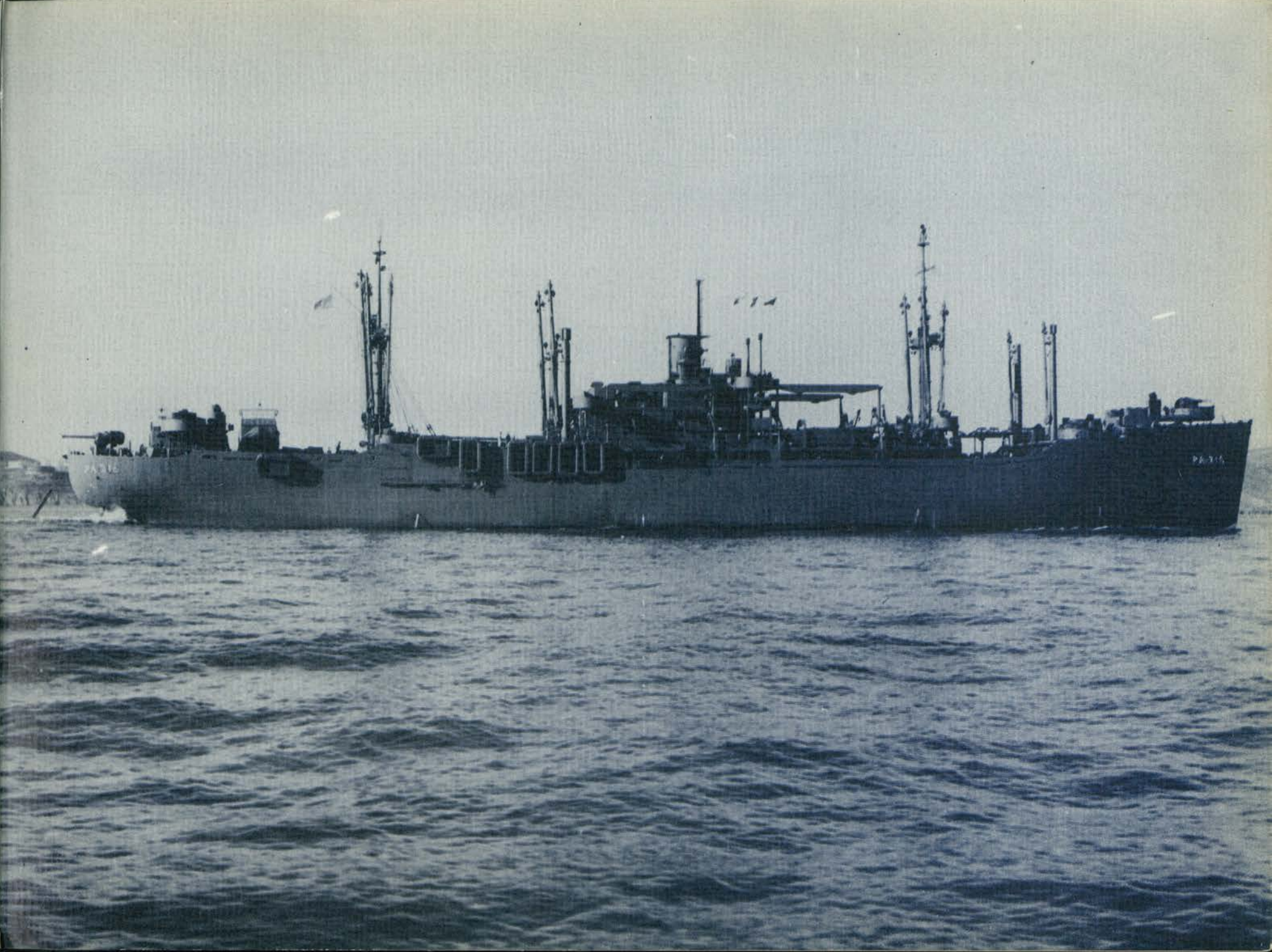
U.S.S. Neshoba

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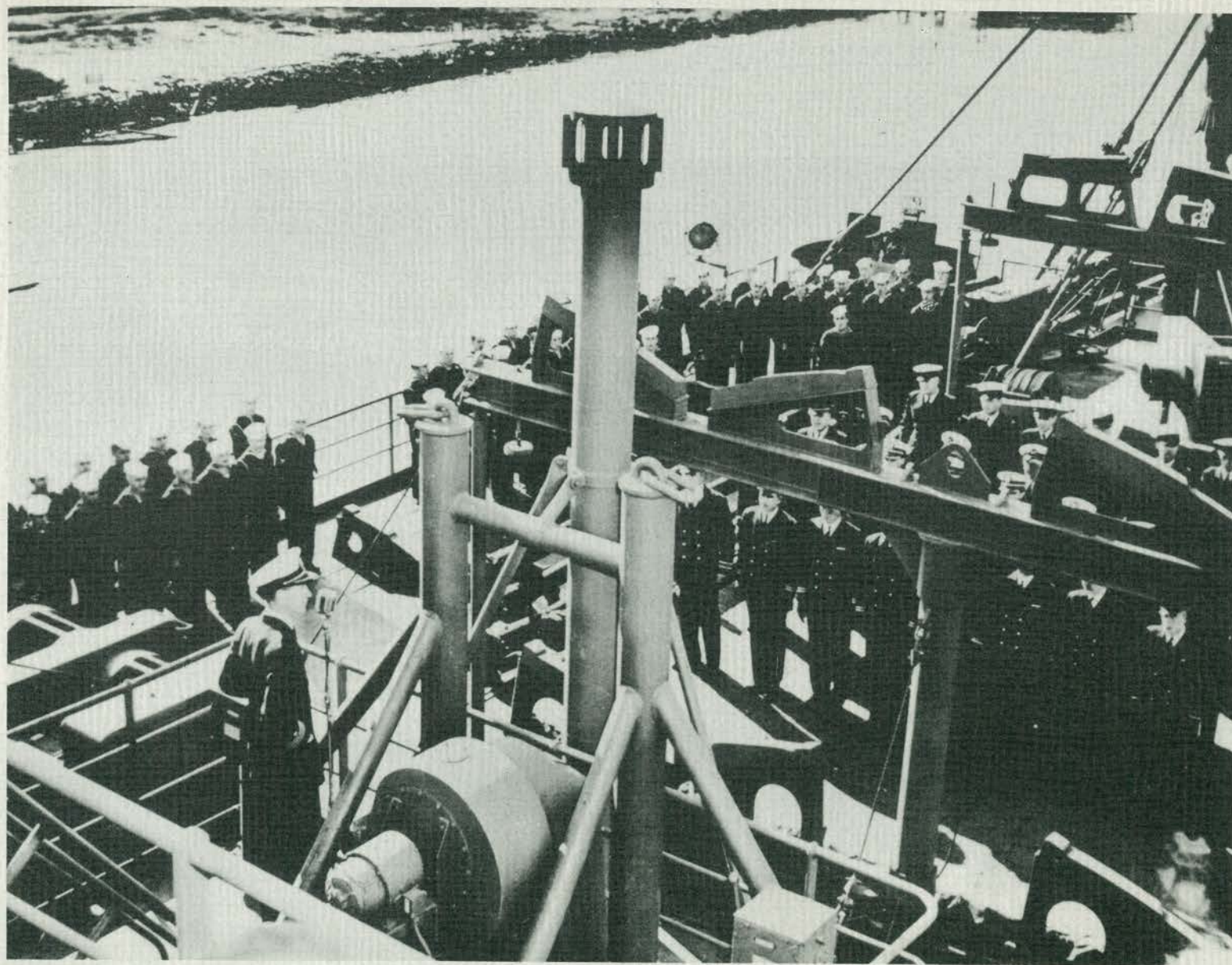














Captain Andrew R. Mack



JORDAN A. BUSHOUSE
U.S. N. S. H. O. R. A.
- 23 SEPT. 45 -

The Commodore



Captain Edward J. Sweeney



Lt. Comdr. D. M. Newbern



Captain Martin J. Drury

Captain Martin J. Drury, skipper of the U.S.S. Neshoba, strikes one with his affable personality, immediately after speaking to him. Prolonged conversation further reveals why he is liked so well by both his officers and crewmen.

Tall, straight as an arrow, his voice is soft; but no doubt remained in your reporter's mind that when the time for action came that same voice issued orders with the same unhurried modulation.

Capt. Drury graduated from the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis in June 1925. As an ensign, his first tour of duty was aboard the U.S.S. New York, as communications officer, making midshipmen cruises to Europe.

After two years aboard the dreadnaught, the captain was assigned to the destroyer U.S.S. Goff, and later as assistant engineer aboard the aircraft tender, U.S.S. Wright. Still in the Atlantic Fleet, but promoted to the rank of lieutenant jg, Capt. Drury was transferred to the Scouting Forces Staff of the U.S.S. Wyoming, serving two years touring the East coast and European ports.

In 1932, he had a change of oceans when he was assigned to the battleship Arkansas. He was in command of a Gun division.

Capt. Drury saw his first bit of shore duty when he attended the post graduate school at Annapolis. A year later he went to the Fifth Naval District, Norfolk, Virginia to work in the War Plans Office.

Promoted to lieutenant, Capt. Drury was assigned as executive officer of the destroyer, U.S.S. Semmes, which was engaged in sound experimentation off the Navy's principal submarine base at New London, Connecticut.

Still acting as an engineer officer he again saw duty in the Pacific, aboard the battlewagon, U.S.S. West Virginia, which was hit at Pearl Harbor. In June, 1938 he returned to the Naval Academy as instructor in Marine Engineering, until 1940 when he was transferred to the China Station. He reported aboard the light cruiser, the U.S.S. Marblehead, as 1st lieutenant. The equally famed U.S.S. Houston was flagship of the Asiatic Fleet. The fleet operated out of Tsingtao, China, with Jap destroyers and cruisers also making use of the harbor. As Capt. Drury remembers the Japanese were outwardly very polite.

With growing tenseness in the Pacific the fleet moved further south, cruising around the many Philippine Islands.

In November 1941 they were ordered to Balikpapan, Borneo, and were in that vicinity when the Japs struck at Pearl Harbor. The Marblehead continued to operate in those waters, protecting convoys to Australia.

Then on February 4, 1942, while in the straits of Madura, off the island of Java the Marblehead was hit by three 500 lb. bombs. She suffered the following devastating damages:

(1) Large hole forward, well below waterline, forward part of ship flooded, with increase in draft from 19 to 32 ft.

(2) Fire and flooding amidships; sickbay demolished; 1 fireroom out of commission.

(3) Steering engine room wrecked; serious fires aft; no steering gear, steamed from Java to South Africa, steering by engines.

It was through tireless efforts of Capt. Drury, in capacity of damage control officer, that the gallant Marblehead didn't find a resting place in South Pacific waters. Not able to spare any Navy units, the Marblehead had to "run for it" alone with no escort whatever, to seek haven where she could succor her wounds.

She stopped off at Ceylon; Cape Town, South Africa; making her way across the Atlantic to Recife, Brazil. On May 4, just three months from when she was hit, the Marblehead pulled into Brooklyn Navy Yard for repairs. Capt. Drury received the Navy Cross for nearly circling the globe with a crippled ship.

Capt. Drury was assigned to the South Atlantic patrol operating from Recife and was promoted to commander.

In September 1943, Capt. Drury was assigned to the heavy cruiser Quincy as executive officer. The cruiser participated in invasion of Normandy, and later in the invasion of Southern France by Lt. Gen. A. M. Patch's Seventh Army. For this, he received the Bronze Star.

While aboard the Quincy, he received his present rank of captain.

Capt. Drury took command of the Neshoba when she was commissioned in October 1944. The Neshoba was flagship of Transport Division 42, when Okinawa was invaded, carrying members of 96th Infantry Division.

The skipper counts among post-demobilization dreams, cruiser duty in the Atlantic, to settle down in a comfortable cottage far from the sea with his wife, Mrs. Jeannette Drury.

Captain Andrew R. Mack

By Pat D'Angelo

Commodore Andrew R. Mack typifies everyone's accepted opinion of what a seafaring man should look like.

Lines appearing on his face could only have been put there by blustering breezes of the Atlantic and Pacific.

You aren't surprised when the commodore admits that he is the third generation of the family to wear the blue and gold of our Navy.

(A grandfather was an Army colonel, however, and fought in the Civil War!)

Captain Mack (he is an acting commodore, as commander of Transport Division 42) received his commission at the Naval Academy just a week before the United States declared war on Germany in World War I. He was immediately assigned to the flagship of the 6th Battle Squadron, the U.S.S. New York, in charge of a broadside gunnery division.

The fleet made no contact with the Kaiser's Navy, but the ship he served on was credited with sinking a German U-Boat in the treacherous channel of Scapa Flow, Scotland. The New York collided with U-Boat 53, cutting open the sub with her propellers.

He was transferred to the United States and ready to go over again on a destroyer at the armistice. Captain Mack attained the rank of lieutenant during that war.

Capt. Mack was then assigned to the battleship Kentucky as engineer officer and held that responsible post for three months before it was discovered that a mistake in orders incorrectly assigned him to that ship.

It seems a senior officer with the same initials was the one for the job, which proves the Army and Navy weren't strangers to humorous errors even then.

In 1920, Captain Mack joined the staff of Adm. Hilary Jones as communications officer, serving on the U.S.S. Connecticut and Utah.

Adm. Jones was the first to hold the title, commander in chief US fleet. Capt. Mack subsequently became flag lieutenant, and the venerable battleship that we met in Port Apra, Guam, the U.S.S. Pennsylvania, served as flagship.

Two years later, the commodore went aboard the battleship Wyoming as a turret officer. He then spent 2½ years as commanding officer of the Torpedo School at Newport, R. I.

He was assigned to sea duty as executive of the U.S.S. Decatur, then was transferred to the destroyer McDermott, which served as torpedo school-ship, because of the commodore's previous experience in such work.

Capt. Mack took the course at Naval War College and remained as instructor for two years. In 1931 he was transferred to China as executive aboard the destroyer U.S.S. Truxton. While in China waters he also held the same position aboard the tender Blackhawk.

Later he was attached to the armored cruiser Rochester, station ship at Shanghai, China.

He returned to the States a year later to serve at the Staff Naval War College as assistant director. He was then assigned to the heavy cruiser, U.S.S. Chester, as gunnery officer, making trips to the far east. There were dignitaries aboard among them Secretary of War George Dern who went as special representative of the President to the inauguration of Manuel Quezon, first president of the Philippine Commonwealth. The cruiser Chester did extensive traveling in South America, Panamanian, Alaskan, and Pacific waters.

In 1936, the cruiser had the honor of carrying to South America, in furtherance of our Good Neighbor Policy, the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Capt. Mack recalls that off the Brazilian coast the cruiser "hove to" for a try at the President's favorite sport—fishing.

He remembers the good-natured kidding that he received from the President by catching the largest fish that day.

While he was still aboard, the Chester flew the Navy "E" Pennant by winning the short range gunnery trophy with ease. The cruiser's .50 cal. machine gun crew also under command of Capt. Mack, attained the highest score then recorded, walking off with top honors in anti-aircraft firing.

The commodore was assigned to Boston Navy Yard as War Plans and Operations Officer on staff of Commandant, 1st Naval District. He received three letters of commendation; two from the Secretary of the Navy, the other from President Roosevelt, for a manual he wrote on "Cruiser Maneuvers and Battle Tactics."

In 1940, as Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. Erie, flagship of special service squadron, he cruised to South and

Central American ports, and was also sent as delegate to inauguration of the President of Ecuador.

Then came Pearl Harbor and Capt. Mack in command of offshore patrol at Panama, operating with the cruiser and five destroyers. Within 16 days after war was declared, his patrol captured 36 Japanese prisoners from the Tuna fleet that continuously fished off the Panama Canal and off Central America. Included among the catch were a commander and two lieutenant commanders of the Imperial Japanese Navy, posing as "fishermen," but in reality relaying vital information via radio sets aboard their fishing vessels.

When the German U-Boat toll was running rampant, he was put in charge of convoying troop and cargo vessels in the Carribean. Vessels carrying oil from Venezuela and bauxite from Brazil, were some of "must" cargo that had to get through to the States. While not convoying he was kept busy picking up survivors of submarine sinkings.

He matched wits with a Nazi wolf-pack four times in a 2½-day running battle.

The Erie didn't escape, however, and was finally torpedoed. Capt. Mack saved the cruiser by beaching her on the island of Curacao. Luckily the island boasted an Army hospital unit, which took care of and brought through, all the wounded who were severely burned. Six officers and one enlisted man had been killed by the torpedo.

March, 1943, found Capt. Mack in charge of a gigantic "secret force" that was to play an important part in whipping

the Japs, for his force contained the tactical element of "surprise"—floating drydocks. Doubt existed among some of the top men in the Navy, among them engineers, whether such a cumbersome object could weather the uncertain waters of the Pacific and ever succeed. Capt. Mack didn't argue, but went ahead and proved it could be done. It enabled our warships to be repaired right on the spot, and back in action in the space of time that before was spent in returning to a State-side port.

Such a serious task wasn't without its lighter moments, as Capt. Mack discovered afterwards. The dry-dock was towed in ten sections and it looked like a veritable task force stretched out over the water. American planes spotting this strange sight reported them as (1) "Aircraft Carriers," (2) "Aircraft Carriers in tow," (3) "Don't know what the hell they are!"

Captain Mack came aboard the Neshoba as commander of Transport Division 42, in time for staging, rehearsal, and finally actual invasion of Okinawa. (The saga of holding together an invasion fleet in the story of the Neshoba.)

The commodore was satisfied that at least one member of the Mack family, Ensign Robert B. Mack, was on hand in Tokyo Bay to witness the Japanese surrender.

Another son is in flight-training as a Naval Cadet at Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Captain Mack holds the Order of Abonalderon from the President of Ecuador; the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, along with various other medals and campaign ribbons.

Captain Edward J. Sweeney

Passengers and crew need have no fear that the Neshoba is in unseaworthy hands. Twenty-eight years a sailor is the record of her new Captain, Edward J. Sweeney and as one looks at Captain Sweeney they can almost hear the sound of the sea as he recounts his life. His slight New England accent and the twinkle in his eyes, which have scanned the oceans of the world, add interest to his stories which fascinate sailor and landlubber alike.

At eighteen he became an Apprentice Seaman in the Merchant Service. His first ship was the Andrea Luckenback of the Luckenback Steamship Company of New York. All ships on this line were named after members of the Luckenback family. For seven years the Captain stayed on the Andrea. The first three years were spent sailing between New York, Thames Haven, England, Rotterdam, Holland, and Hamburg, Germany. At Thames Haven they used to tie up at the well known Kilbury docks, which during this war the Germans blew to bits.

Regardless of any sailing hazards the Captain stuck to the sea. Three times on his European voyages fires broke out upon the ship. They were grain or coal fires caused by spontaneous combustion and as the Captain puts it, "There was little we could do except keep all air away from the fire, the bulkheads cool and continue on our way."

The ship was finally assigned to the inter-coastal trade and carried her cargoes between the East and West coasts of the United States. "I was never one to stay aboard in port," the Captain states with a smile, and became familiar with all the port cities of the country.

It was with some regret that the Captain left the Andrea, and one can imagine how he must have felt when he learned that the ship on which he started as a Sea Faring man was sunk on Saint Patrick's day 1943.

He stayed with the Luckenback line, a line with which he has over twenty-three years of service. In October 1932, the Captain fulfilled a Horatio Alger ambition for it was at this time that he made the final step and became the Master of his own ship.

He Captained many well known vessels, among them the

Florence Luckenback which became a war casualty in March 1942.

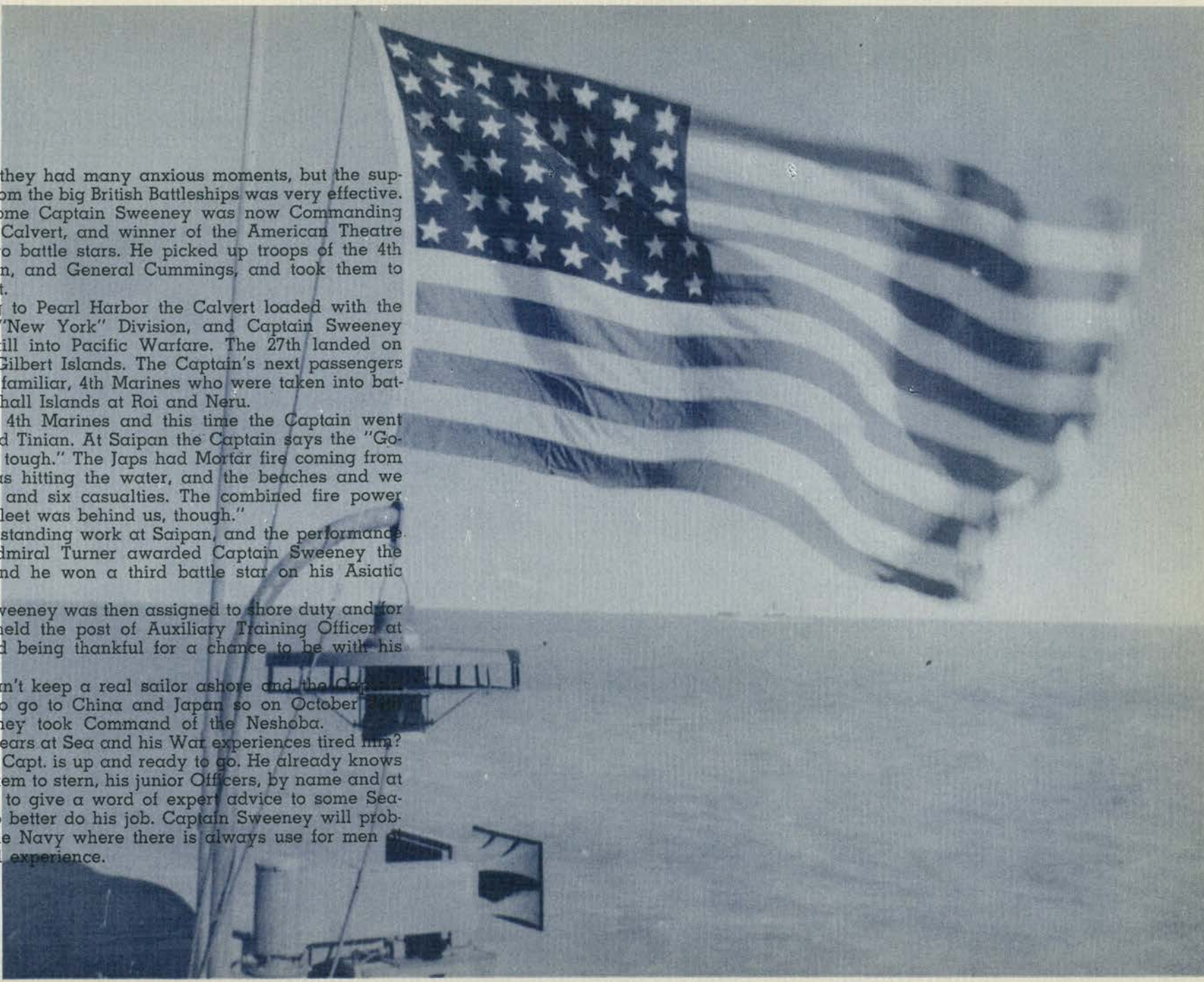
Captain Sweeney joined the Naval Reserve in 1928 with rank of Lieutenant and was called to active duty as a Lt. Commander on the 29th of October 1941. His first duty was as First Lieutenant on the A.P.A. U.S.S. Harry Lee. It didn't take Pearl Harbor to convince Captain Sweeney that we had a dangerous enemy on the high seas for in carrying American troops to Iceland and Bermuda, the Harry Lee was attacked by U-boats. Captain Sweeney rates an A and a battle star on his American Defense ribbon for participation in this hazardous task.

At last the U. S. was ready to strike back and Admiral Hewitt assembled a fleet of ships at Newport News, Va. to carry General George S. Patton's task force into the invasion of North Africa. The Harry Lee broke down and her crew was transferred to the U.S.S. Calvert, with Captain Sweeney taking the post of Executive Officer. Owing to the transfer the Calvert was two days late in sailing, but she caught up to the rest of the convoy. Passengers on this trip were untested in combat but destined to become one of our greatest divisions, the famed 2nd Armored or "Hell On Wheels."

Captain Sweeney recalls one incident that was different than the impending combat. A General was standing in the corridor as a seaman swabbed the passageway. "Move along buddy," said the seaman. The General turned in rage and spying a Navy Warrant Officer asked, "Have these sailors no respect for rank?" "What's the matter with you?" said the warrant to the sailor, "Don't you know a Major when you see one?"

The Calvert landed her troops in Safia and the convoy received a letter of Commendation from General Patton.

Sicily was next on the invasion schedule and the Calvert took elements of the 45th Infantry "Thunderbird" Division. This Division was mainly from Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Colorado, and contained many American Indians, among them Lt. Ernest Childers, Medal of Honor winner. "Commando" Kelly was also in the 45th and General Cushing was a passenger on the Calvert, especially air attacks, and Captain



Sweeney said they had many anxious moments, but the support they got from the big British Battleships was very effective.

Coming home Captain Sweeney was now Commanding Officer of the Calvert, and winner of the American Theatre ribbon with two battle stars. He picked up troops of the 4th Marine Division, and General Cummings, and took them to the West Coast.

Proceeding to Pearl Harbor the Calvert loaded with the 27th Infantry "New York" Division, and Captain Sweeney brought his skill into Pacific Warfare. The 27th landed on Makin in the Gilbert Islands. The Captain's next passengers were the, now familiar, 4th Marines who were taken into battle in the Marshall Islands at Roi and Neru.

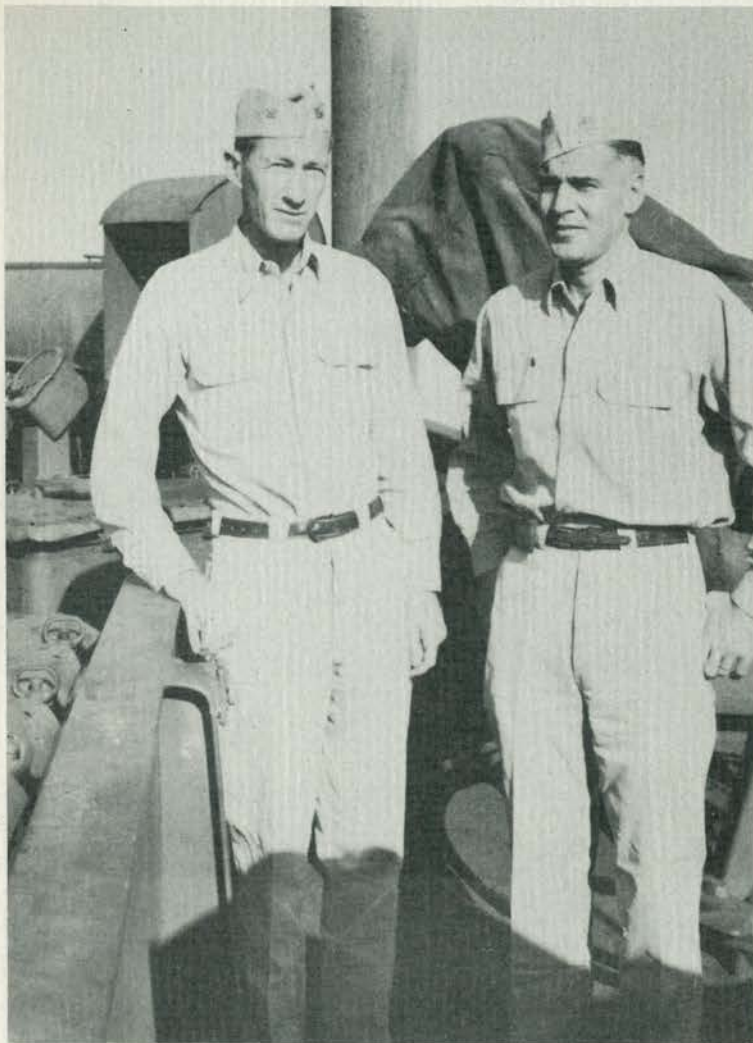
Again the 4th Marines and this time the Captain went into Saipan and Tinian. At Saipan the Captain says the "Going was really tough." The Japs had Mortar fire coming from the hills. It was hitting the water, and the beaches and we lost two boats and six casualties. The combined fire power of the Pacific Fleet was behind us, though."

For his outstanding work at Saipan, and the performance of his Ship Admiral Turner awarded Captain Sweeney the Bronze Star, and he won a third battle star on his Asiatic Pacific ribbon.

Captain Sweeney was then assigned to shore duty and for eight months held the post of Auxiliary Training Officer at Treasure Island being thankful for a chance to be with his wife.

But you can't keep a real sailor ashore and the Captain saw chances to go to China and Japan so on October 1944 Captain Sweeney took Command of the Neshoba.

Have his years at Sea and his War experiences tired him? No, at 0400 the Capt. is up and ready to go. He already knows his ship from stem to stern, his junior Officers, by name and at anytime is apt to give a word of expert advice to some Seaman on how to better do his job. Captain Sweeney will probably stay in the Navy where there is always use for men of his calibre and experience.



Capt. Drury and Lt. Comdr. Davis

"I have one ambition," Lt. Comdr. D. C. Davis, executive of the Neshoba, says.

"I want to sit in the Cliff House over-looking the Golden Gate, sip Martinis, and watch the Navy ships come and go."

And, it appears, Mr. Davis will have his ambition come true. He anticipates that this is the last trip he will make before reverting to his civilian status and his job running a mortgage business in San Francisco.

According to a story by Rudolph Elie, Jr. of the Boston Herald, "The executive officer is universally admired on ship-board. He is also liked. This is too much for the men to understand, for nobody ever heard of both the skipper and the exec being acceptable all around by everybody."

The exec, the working boss of the ship, sets "the tone of the wardroom, and this tone of correct but easy informality, of fellowship, of 'Let's get the damn job done and go home' is reflected throughout the ship."

Mr. Davis, Elie says, "looks pretty much like Esquire thinks a Naval officer ought to." He figures "the Neshoba isn't all a boys' camp, and that everybody knows what has to be done and how to do it."

Mr. Davis is a young-looking but graying man with a decidedly landlubber attitude toward life. He had no sea experience before his sea duty with the Navy—"unless you want to call my shipping out on a coastwise freighter sea experience, and that was just the kid urge for adventure."

The exec joined the Navy reserve in 1940 and was called to active duty in August 1941 as a lieutenant (jg) in the intelligence section of 12th Naval District.

Volunteering for sea duty, he was assigned as a gunnery officer on an attack transport. He participated in the invasions of the Marshalls, Gilberts (Tarawa), and Marianas and finally with the Neshoba in the invasion of Okinawa 6 months ago.

He came to this ship as a lieutenant commander, immediately assuming duties as executive officer when the Neshoba was commissioned at Richmond, California, in 1944.

Now, the commander, who was educated at the University of California, and who attended law school in San Francisco, is going back to his home and the fog.

"Fog," he says, "I love the stuff. And if anybody doesn't like it, well - - -"

NOT YET MARTHA— I'LL LET
YOU KNOW WHEN SHE'S FINISHED



Her name, the U.S.S. Neshoba. Like most of her sister Attack Transports, she was named for a county in the United States. Neshoba county is located in the state of Mississippi, but the ship was built many miles away from there. One of the 130 ships of her class, the Neshoba was built by the Permanente Metals Corporation of Richmond, California, and launched on 7th of October, 1944. She was commissioned as a ship of the United States Navy on November 16th, 1944 being sponsored by Mrs. Wendall E. Adams of Berkeley, California, and placed in command of Commander Martin J. Drury, USN. Commander Drury was later promoted to the rank of Captain. The conversion to an attack transport was made at Hunter's Point Ship Yard in San Francisco. The conversion consisted of installing Navy Radio and Radar equipment, armament, adding welin-davits for landing craft, and the landing craft. At the conclusion of this conversion, the Neshoba was a fullfledged, ready to APA.

From time immemorial, every Navy ship has had its shakedown cruise. The Neshoba was no exception. Her shakedown brought her from San Francisco to San Diego. It was during this coastal run that she attained her top speed of 19 knots. At San Diego, she was committed to Amphibious Training at which time the new boat crews got a feel of their craft. She acted as flagship for Transport Squadron Thirteen whose commanding officer at that time was Commodore John G. Moyer, USN. The training was supposed to last a period of two weeks, but sudden changes in the Pacific Fleet organization made the Neshoba's entrance on the scene of action very imperative and the training was cut short. She proceeded to San Pedro, California, where final repairs and checkups took place.

Ten days were allotted for this work, then she loaded with a cargo of food at San Francisco and received her first set of combat sailing orders. Just what was in store for her,

no one knew, since she was told merely to "Proceed Pearl Harbor". Upon arriving at Pearl Harbor, the cargo was dispatched and its place was taken by a new and decidedly different cargo. "Human Cargo" Seabees were taken aboard by the hundreds and the Neshoba was instructed to sail for the Philippine Islands, stopping off at Eniwetok, Ulithi, and Palau, on the way. After twenty days at sea, new surroundings for most of the crew on board, the Neshoba arrived in Leyte Gulf on the 20th of February. The Seabees were taken off and brought into Samar Island. She then settled down for a long wait. She was to wait much longer than anyone had anticipated. While at Leyte Gulf, the Neshoba was designated as the flagship of Commander Transport Division Forty Two, Captain Edwin T. Short USN. Preparations were underway at this time for the eventual invasion and occupation of Okinawa Shima in the Ryukyus. Combined with Transport Divisions Forty and Forty one, they made up Transport Squadron Fourteen commanded by Commodore Richardson, USN. It was decided to hold extensive maneuvers in Leyte Gulf for the ships and troops scheduled to take part in the forthcoming operation. Transport Squadron Fourteen was to carry troops and equipment of the 96th Infantry Division to the assault, so these troops were made subject to the maneuvers in Leyte Gulf. Maneuvers were to last for six days, during which time, two "dry runs" were made on the island of Leyte. Everything worked out as planned, and the high command set the date for the invasion of Okinawa on April 1st, Philippine time. Transport Squadrons Thirteen and Fourteen got underway from Leyte Gulf on 27 March for the four day trip north to Okinawa.

Boats from the Neshoba were assigned to take in the first six waves of assault troops. Since the landings were virtually unopposed, no casualties were inflicted on the crew and upon completion of the unloading phase, many transports were

ordered by Admiral Turner to return to Pearl Harbor. Captain Short, aboard the Neshoba, was named O.T.C. of fifteen ships in convoy which left Okinawa on the 5th of April and proceeded to Pearl, via Guam. At Guam she was loaded with ninety Japanese prisoners of war and sailed from Guam with her convoy on 10th April bound for Pearl. Captain Short was relieved as CTD 42 by Captain Andrew R. Mack, USN. He continued as OTC for the remainder of the trip.

The convoy arrived on time at Pearl Harbor on 22nd of April and many of the ships received sailing orders for the United States. The Neshoba was not among the lucky ones. Instead, she was ordered by AdComPhibspac to take part in training maneuvers at Maui. OTC for the training schedule was ComTransRon 19. It was during these practice runs that the Neshoba achieved the remarkable record of lowering all her boats into the water in the record time of nine minutes. Upon conclusion of these maneuvers, she proceeded back to Pearl Harbor where the wonderful orders read, "REPORT SAN FRANCISCO FOR LOADING". With very little delay, she was on her way early the next day. The 24th of May saw the Neshoba passing under the Golden Gate Bridge. Most of the crew had enough leave to go home for a few days, and when they returned from their refreshers, the 216 was ready to sail again. This time, it was Okinawa with a load of Naval Ship Repair Unit personnel. The first leg of the trip carried her all the way to Eniwetok Island non-stop. Due to unloading difficulties in Okinawa, ships were held at all ports in the Pacific to wait their turn to go there. The Neshoba was held for three weeks at Eniwetok.

The extreme July heat did not set too well with those on board, so at every opportunity recreation parties were held ashore for the officers and men. On the 9th of July she sailed in convoy to Ulithi, then to Okinawa. This trip to Okinawa did not find the same peaceful conditions as prevailed on

D-Day. The Japanese Air Force composed of the Kamikaze Corps was in full swing at the time and there was that air of uneasiness about the ship during our entire five-day stay there. She was under several air raids which did not come near the berth, but nevertheless all hands were relieved when her orders came to depart on 29th of July. Once again, it was convoy duty for the 216, but one of a very different nature. She was not in a convoy of ships of her type, but was the mother ship to upwards of seventy craft, ranging in size from LST's down to Ocean Tugs. Captain Mack was the guiding hand of this convoy as it set out on that bright, clear July morning bound for Saipan. During the trip, a small, but very annoying typhoon was encountered which caused many gray hair to be sprouted on various officials of the ship. But, all ships, craft, and what have you, weathered the storm, and we sailed into Saipan harbor on the 6th of August.

Passengers were taken aboard, Army and Navy discharges to be exact, and 8th of August, the Neshoba was told to take to the Pacific. Original orders read to proceed at top speed to San Francisco, but through some change of administrative orders, the Neshoba was told to change course and head for Pearl Harbor. This order was reluctantly carried out, and once more the sun rose over our stern. But not for long, because once again, administration got an idea and passed it down to operations. Further orders added to by-pass San Francisco and report to the Thirteenth Naval District, Seattle, Washington. The arrival at Seattle was heralded by a shore based ovation which made every man aboard feel just a little better. Following the debarkation of the passengers, the ship was brought over to the Bremerton Navy Yard for motorvoyage repairs, the yard workers concentrating mostly on the boilers which were in dire need of attention. Temporary repairs took one week after which, the headquarters detachment of the 97th Infantry Division was embarked at Pier Forty-

two. The commanding general aboard was Brigadier General Partridge, USN. The 216 once again put out to sea with original orders to carry her passengers to Leyte Island in the Philippines. By now, this Pacific run was an old story to the crew of the Neshoba. A stop at Pearl Harbor was ordered and the 216 made her re-appearance there on September 17, 1945. Since there were only seven hundred army passengers on board the Navy found it very convenient to embark an additional seven hundred men; sailors, marines, and seabees. These people were bound for Guam, we left Pearl on September 20th. A three-day stopover at Guam was concluded, and the ship received her orders to continue with the 97th Infantry on to Yokohama, Japan. All hands, officers and men, lined the rails to observe the slow entrance into Tokyo Bay. The troops were disembarked in due time and once again, the Neshoba lay at dock, her holds and compartments empty, waiting to receive more passengers. It was during the brief stay in Yokohama that the 216 was assigned to Task Group 16.12, popularly known in the Navy as "The Magic Carpet". Commanded by Rear Admiral Kendall, USN in Pearl Harbor, the "Magic Carpet" fleet has the specific duty of moving eligible dischargees from overseas to the United States.

In Navy lingo, this known as "Good Duty", the remaining units of the Forty-Third Division were embarked at Pier Four in Yokohama, and our sailing orders directed us to carry these men to San Francisco over the shortest possible route. The Captain and the Commodore jointly agreed on taking the Great Northern Route, which roughly is about 4,700 miles from Yokohama to San Francisco, it cuts off about 2,000 miles from the southern route.

Upon arriving in Frisco and debarking troops we headed for Mare Island Navy Yard for minor repairs.

Captain Drury and Lieut. Comdr. Davis were relieved of duty by Captain E. J. Sweeney, USNR, and Lt. D. M. Newbern as the executive officer, later promoted to Lieut. Comdr. This was a sad day for the crew and officers as they gathered to hear the ceremonies of their departure. The Neshoba at this time was in dry dock, its first time, and only five short days were taken in the repairs, once more she was ready for the sea and this time it was to be non-stop to Guam. On this trip the crew awaited a fine dinner for the first birthday of the

ship, but it so happened that we crossed the date line gaining a day and skipping the 15th of November, so the anniversary was celebrated on the 16th. We arrived the 23rd at Guam, with Marines aboard she headed from Guam to China. With the escort of the U.S.S. Haverfield, D.E.393 to clear mines in the Yellow Sea, this was one of the most unpleasant trips ever made, none of the crew were used to cold weather and that's just what we had most of the trip. November 30th the hook dropped in the Yellow Sea about 20 miles from the coast and liberty was granted for all hands. I don't think I have to tell anything about the liberty in Teintsin, that should be left up to anyone who went ashore there; but which ever one of you does tell about it don't forget D-D's, The French Basaar, St. Ann's, Little Club or the Balalika. (Those are just a few of the well known places to this crew.) After a short stay in China the orders read once more for statewide and on December 5th we were underway for San Diego, California.

Christmas and New Year's were spent tied up at the Destroyer Base in Diego, awaiting more orders and passengers. They both came, we headed for Guam the 11th of January and arrived the 26th, debarking troops. A very short stay in Guam brought us back to the blue Pacific with orders for Frisco. By this time every one was hoping that she would be put out of active service and on March 13th final word came through. With a new paint job, sealing of guns, compartments and everything ready for the old storeroom, the Neshoba, commonly known as the "Mighty N", left Mare Island for Stockton, California. She is to be a "Mother Ship" for five other ships tied together. For just how long no one knows but if there is another war shortly she will be in it. This time with a new crew and officers who I'm sure will be just as ready, willing, and cooperative as the last one, she will once more do her duty. She has had a very short life in this Navy but a very interesting one, especially to those of us who were the reserves during this World War II.

By

Charles W. Smallwood SK3/c
and

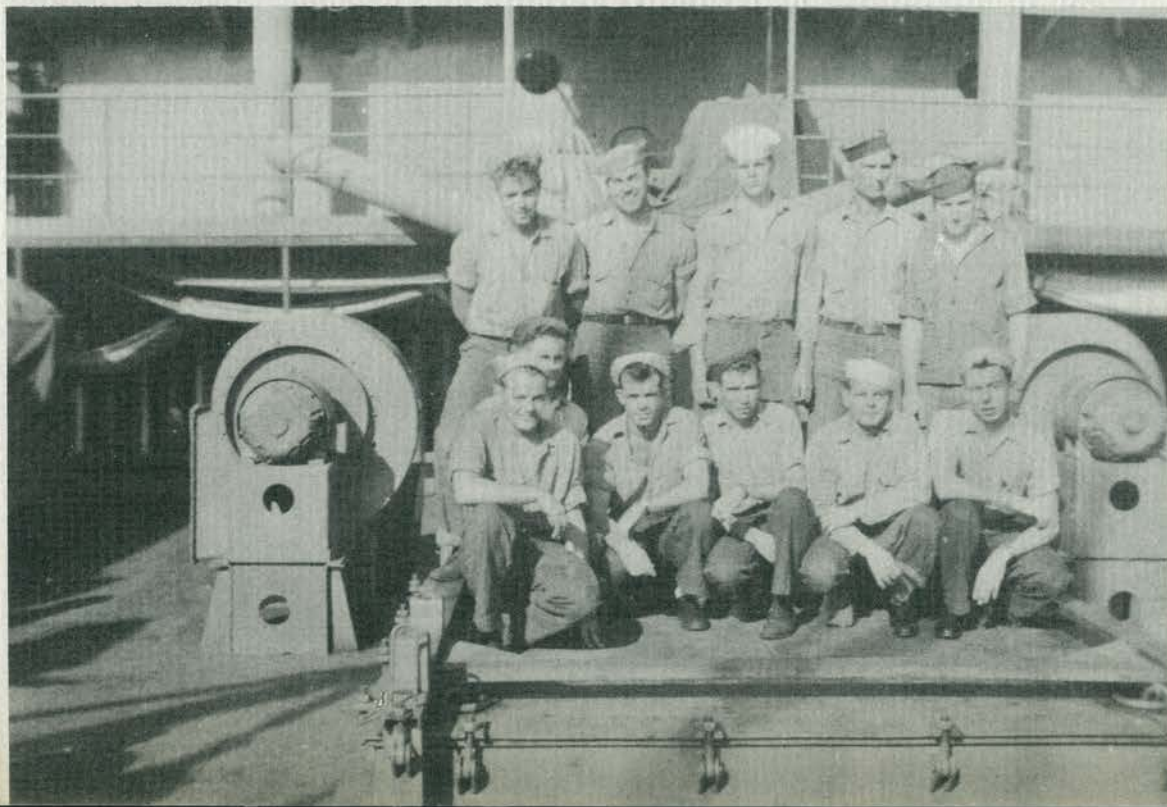
Clifford Mackin RM2/c

**SQUARE
THAT
HAT!**



Personnel



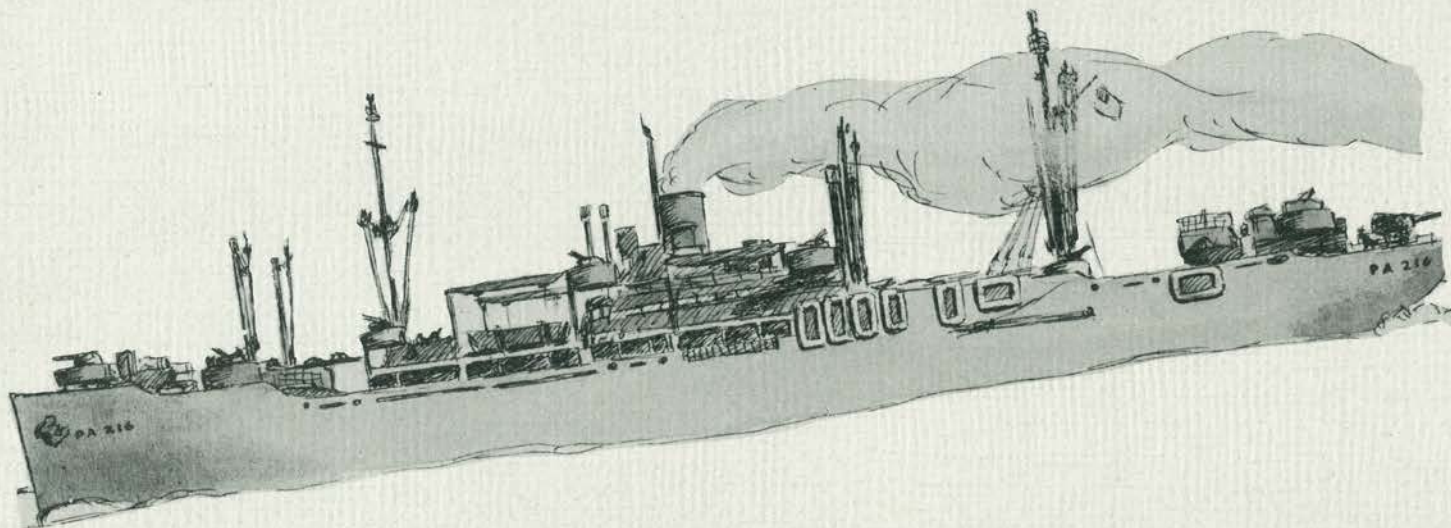




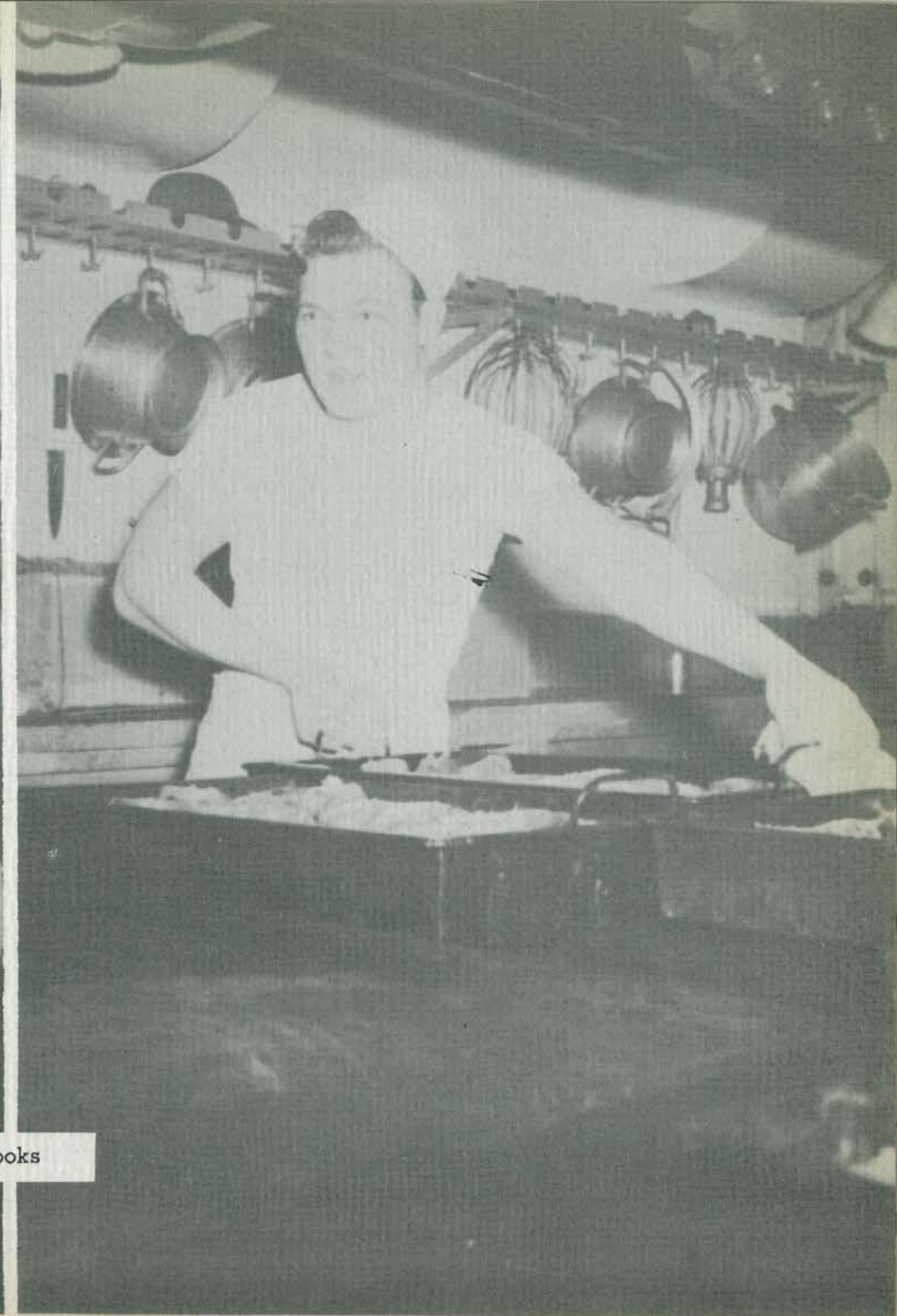


Chaplain Dan C. Thomas

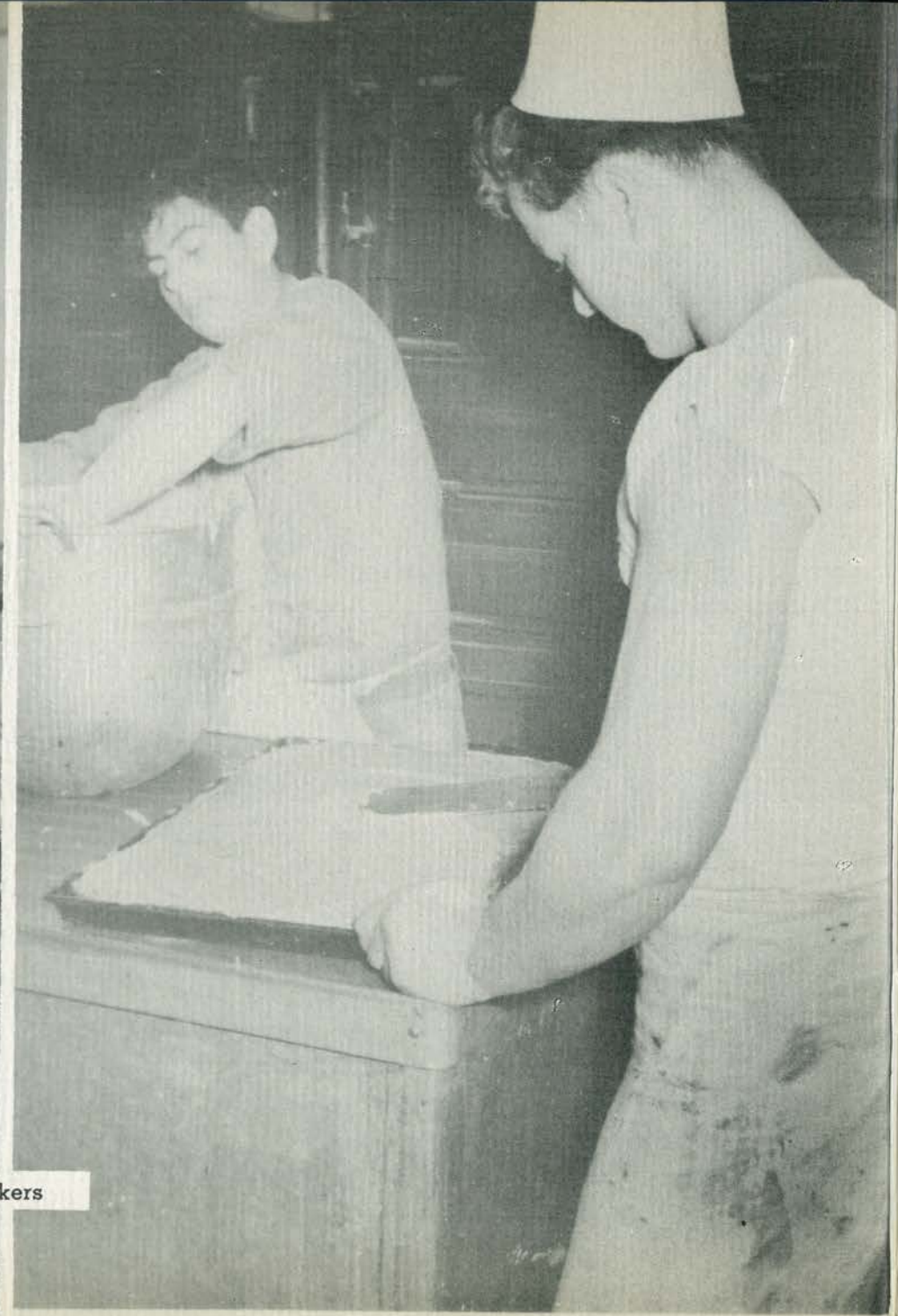




Departments



Cooks



Bakers

Crew's Mess



Officers' Mess





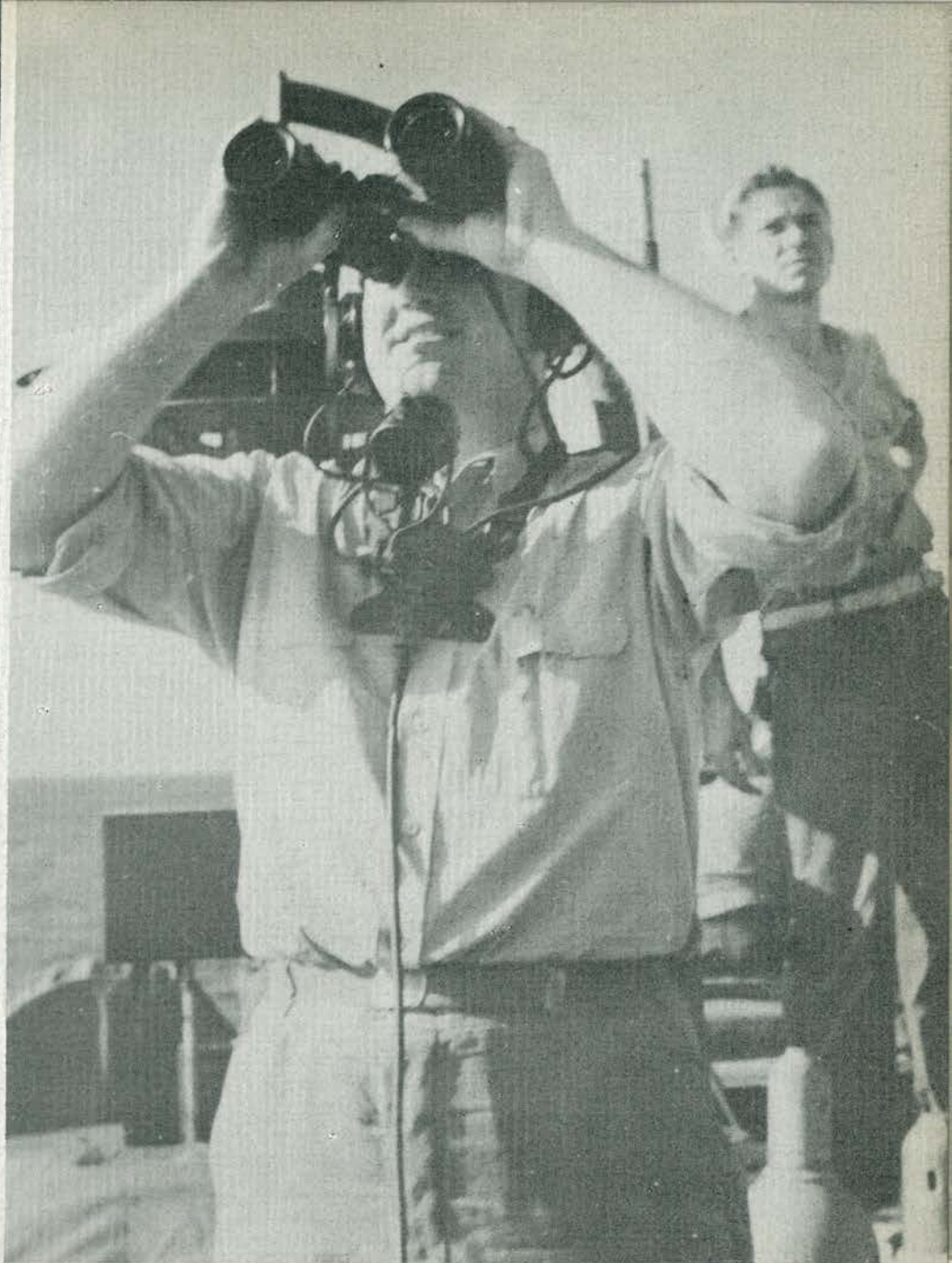
Thanksgiving Turkey



Laundry



Look Guys



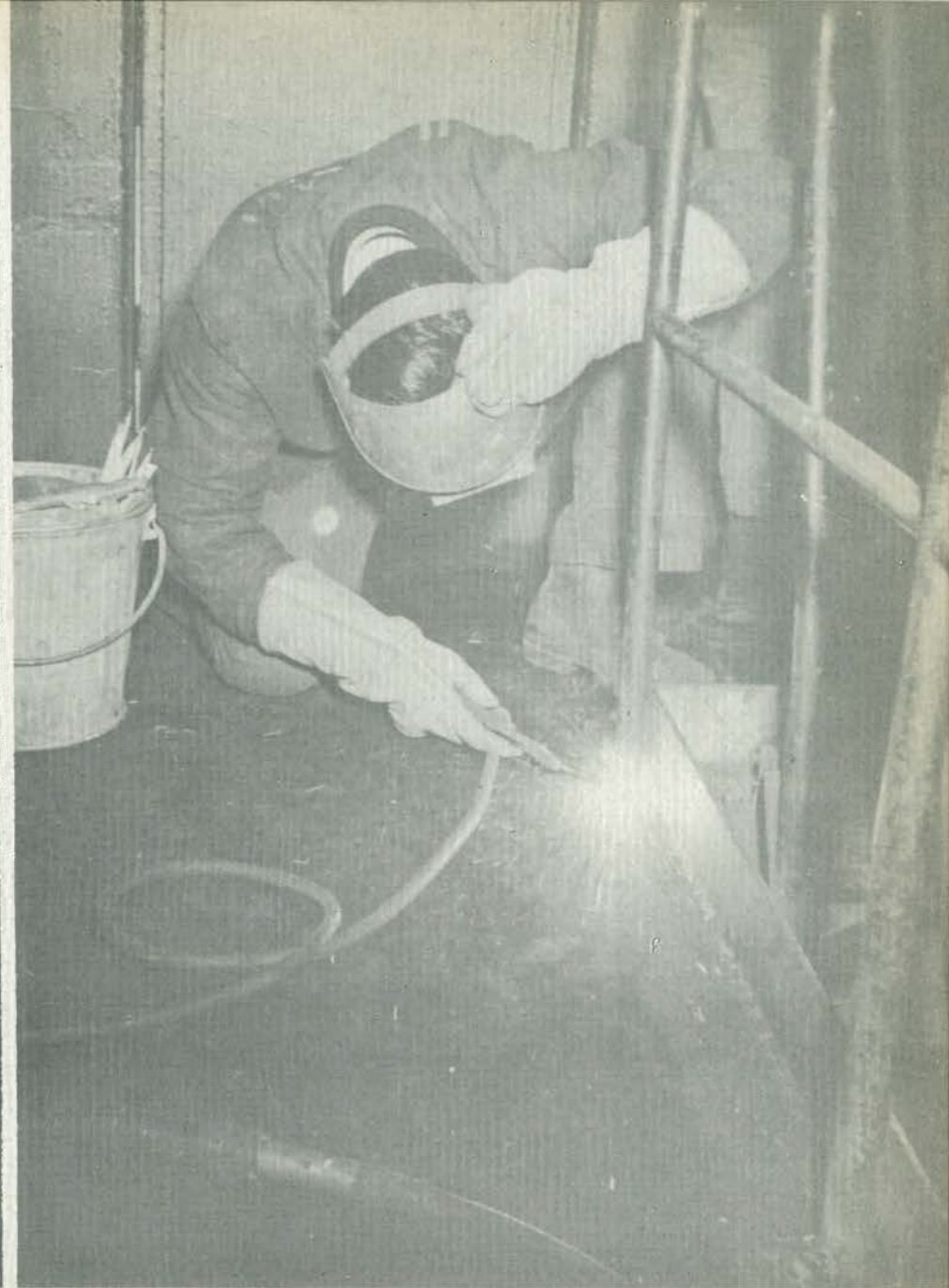
"Spotting" for the 5" Battery



On Course



Welding





Library



Tailor Shop



Tailor Shop



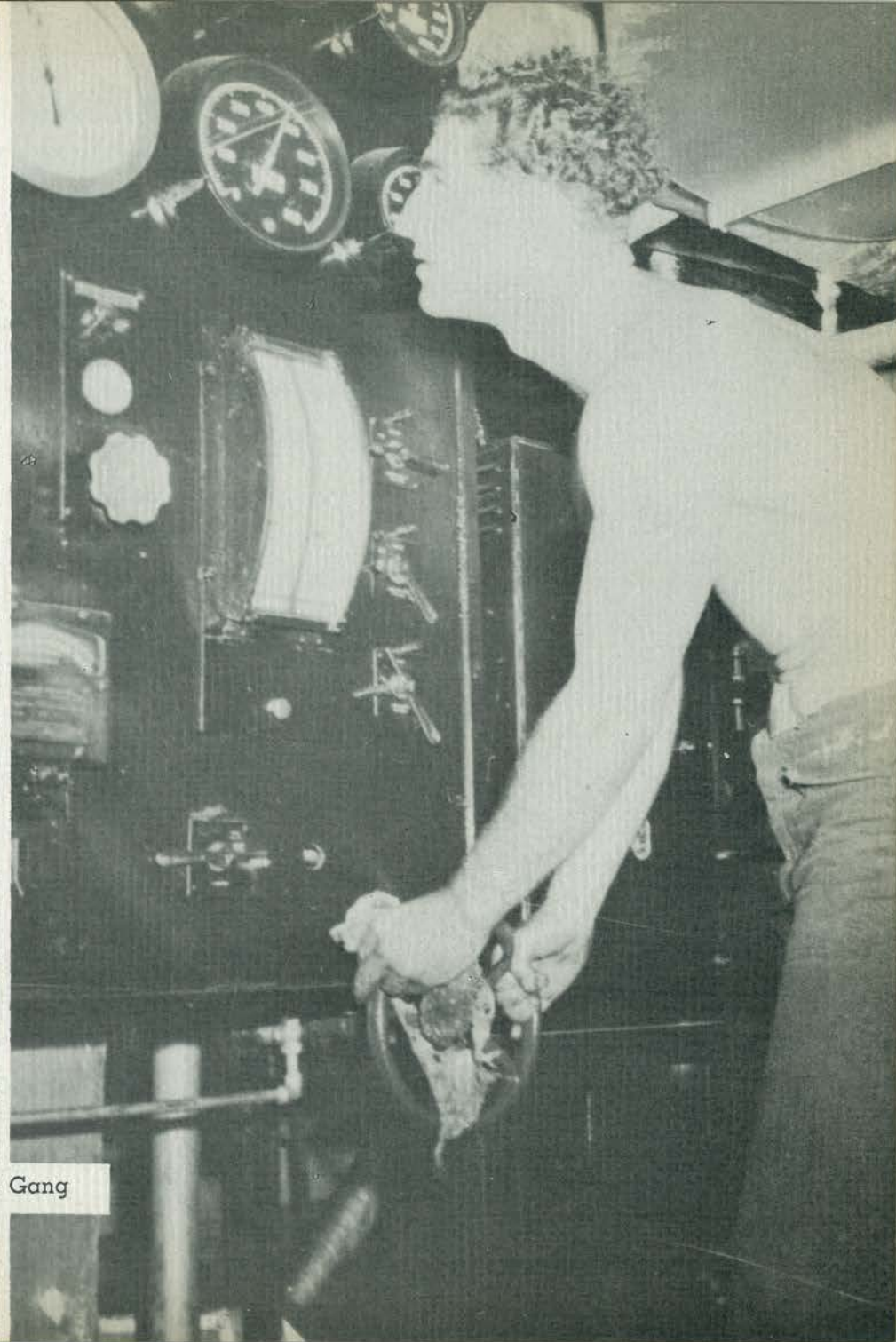
Barber Shop

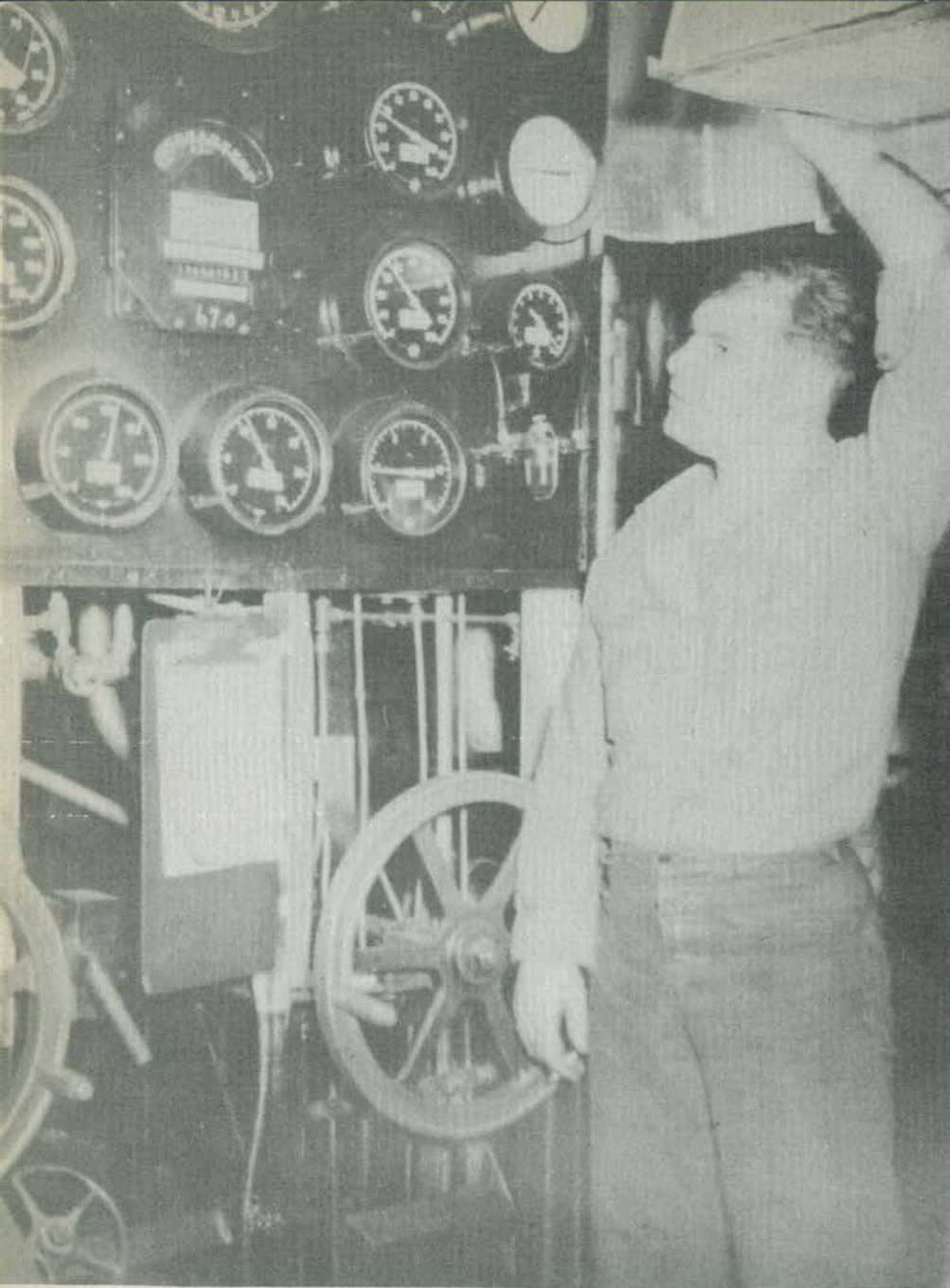


Chipping Decks

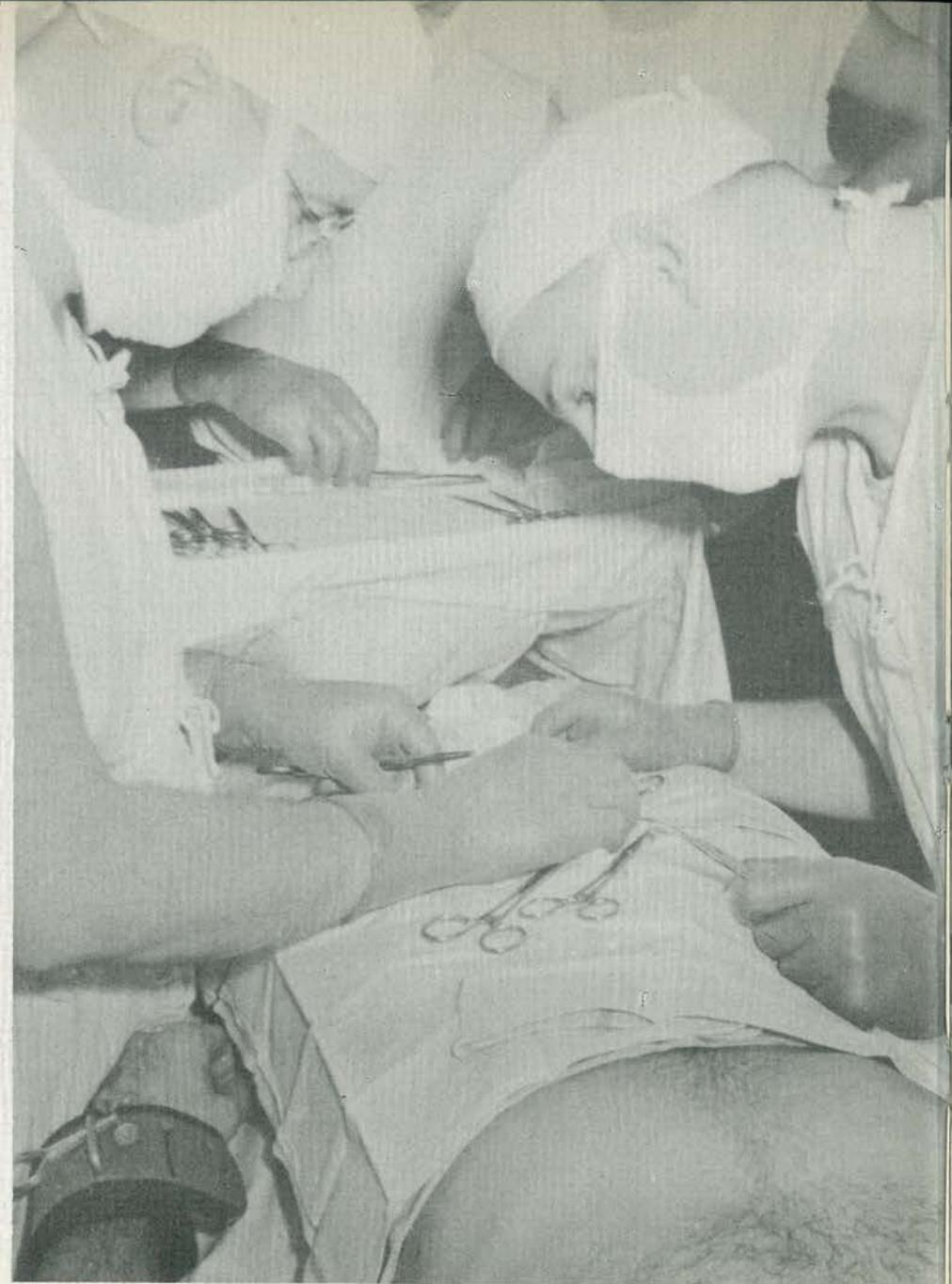


Black Gang





Engine Room, Main Control



Operation

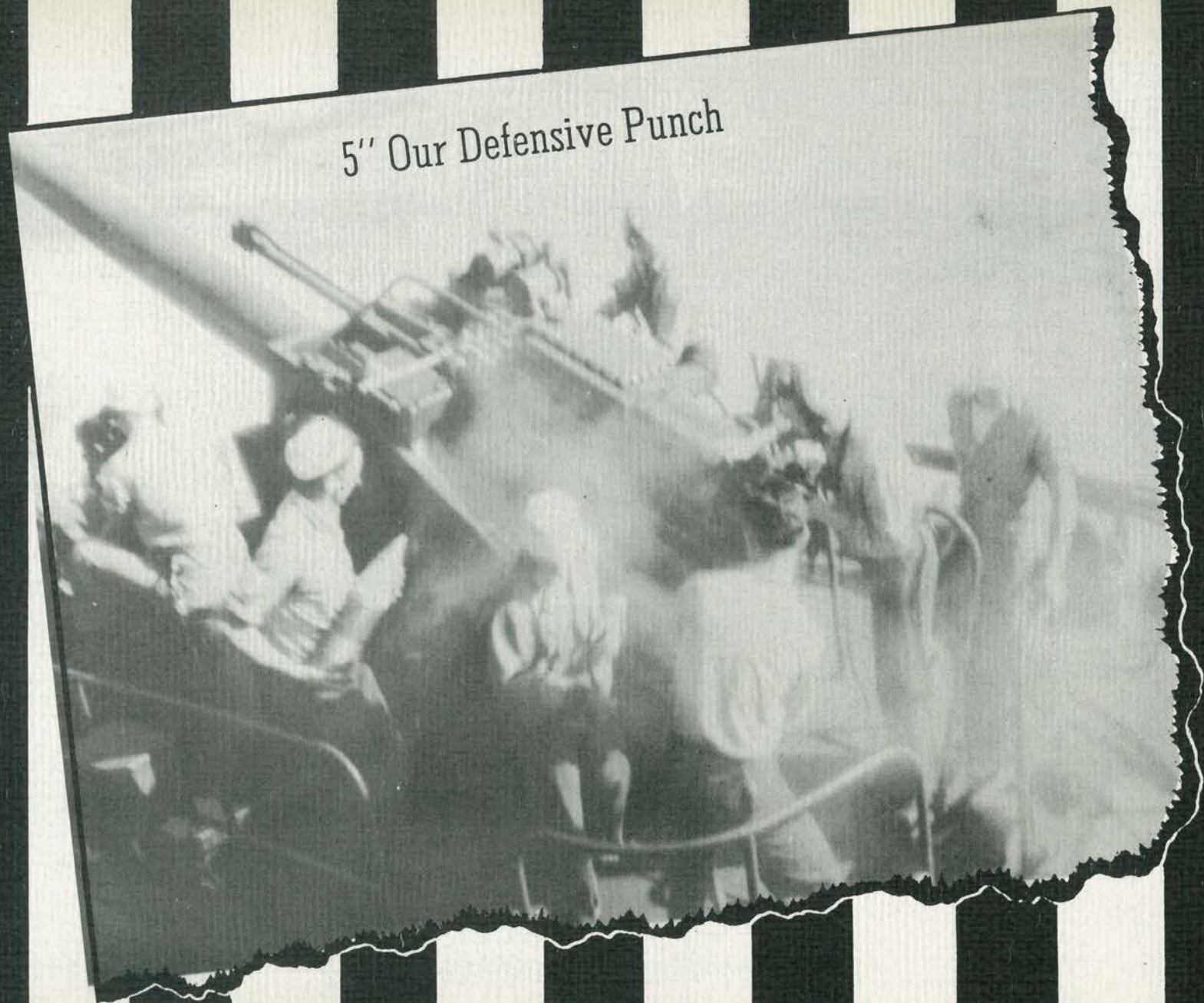


Ship's Store



Radio Shack

5" Our Defensive Punch

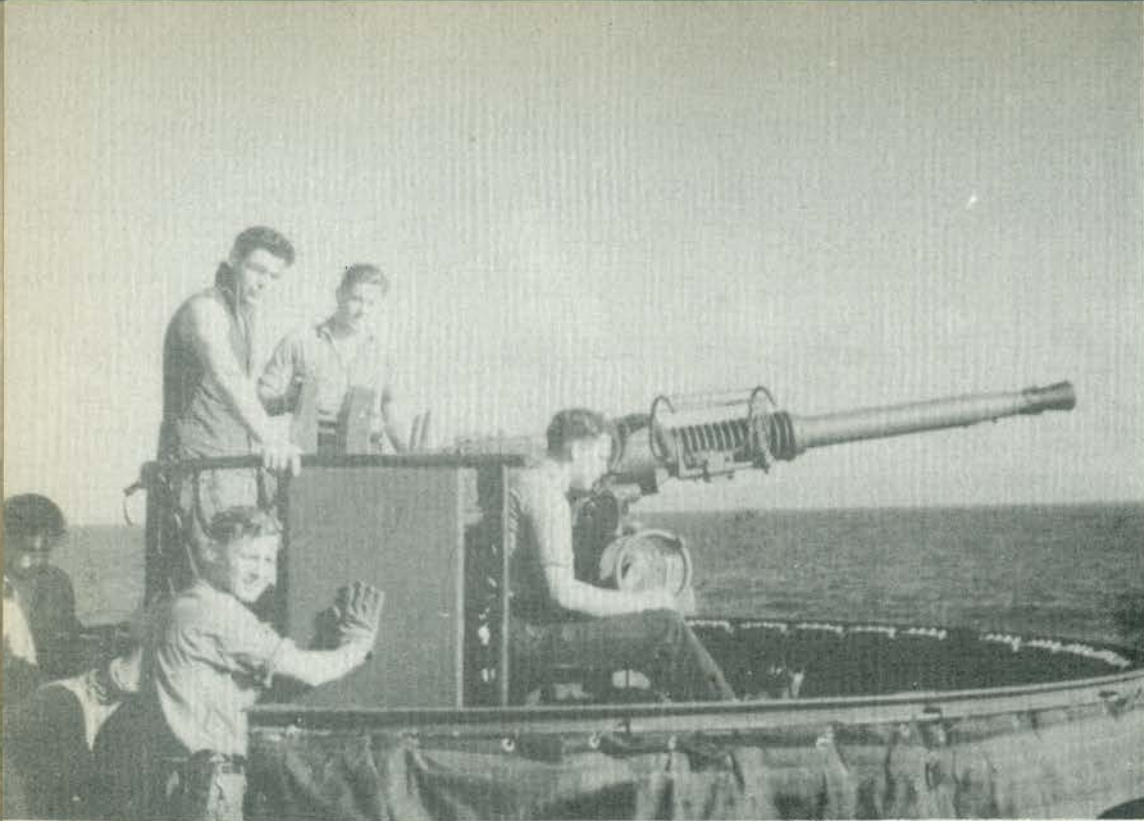




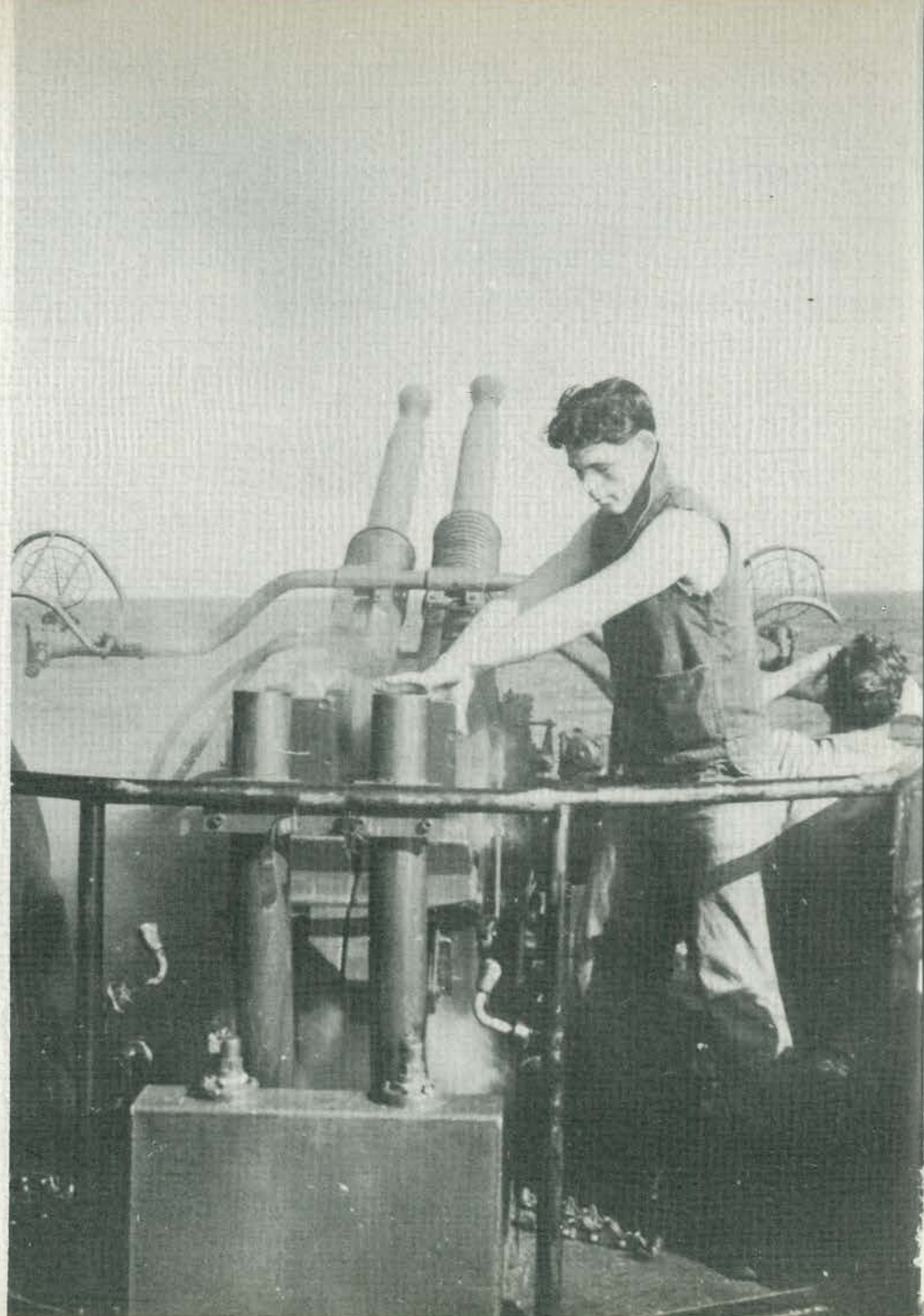


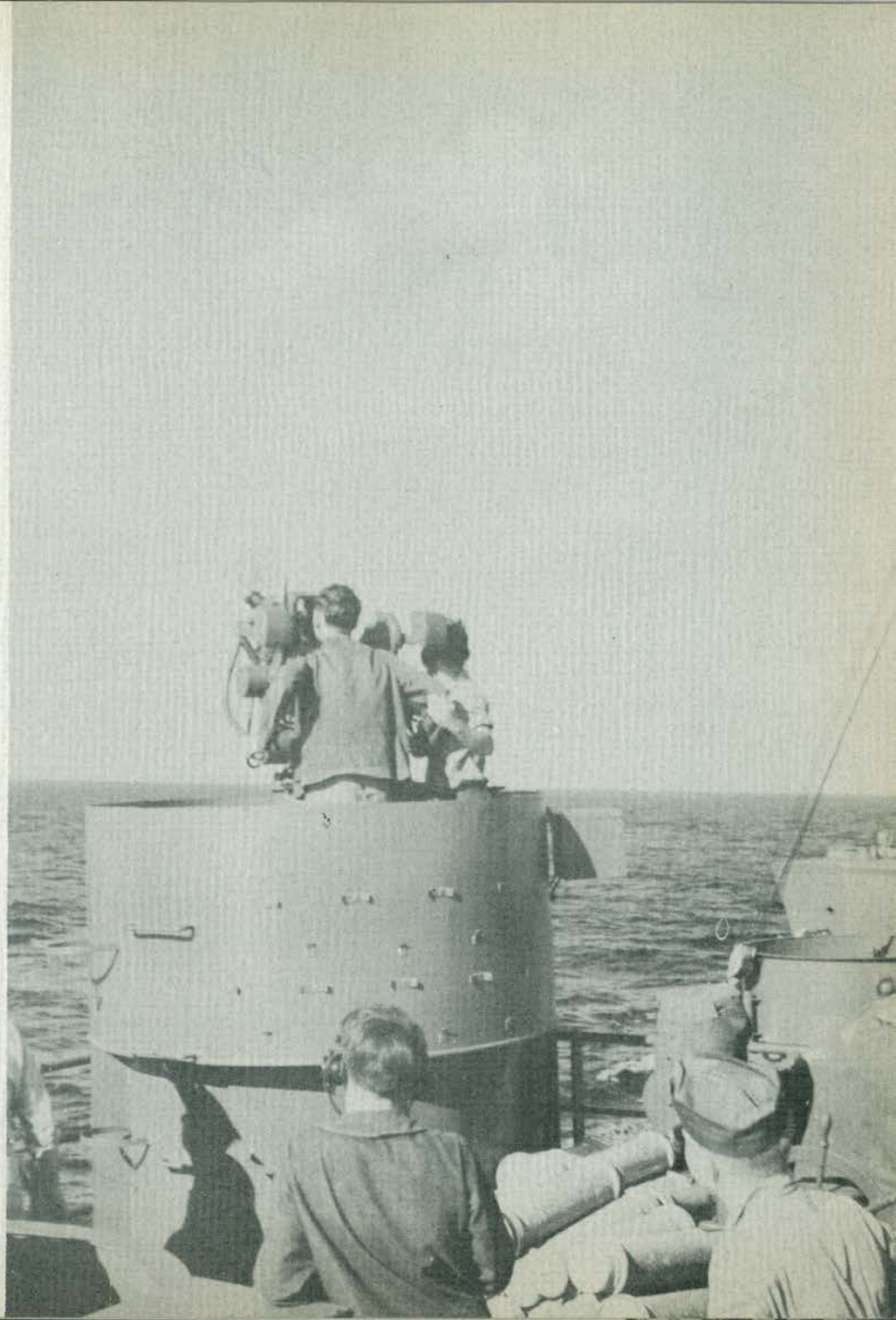
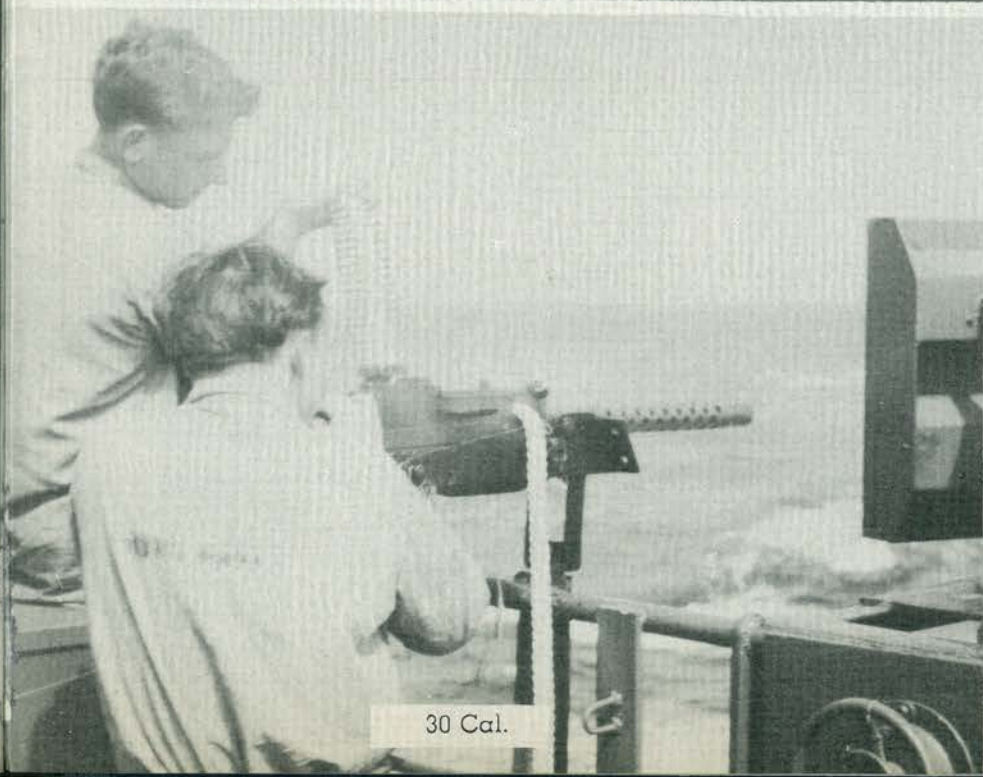


"40 mm"







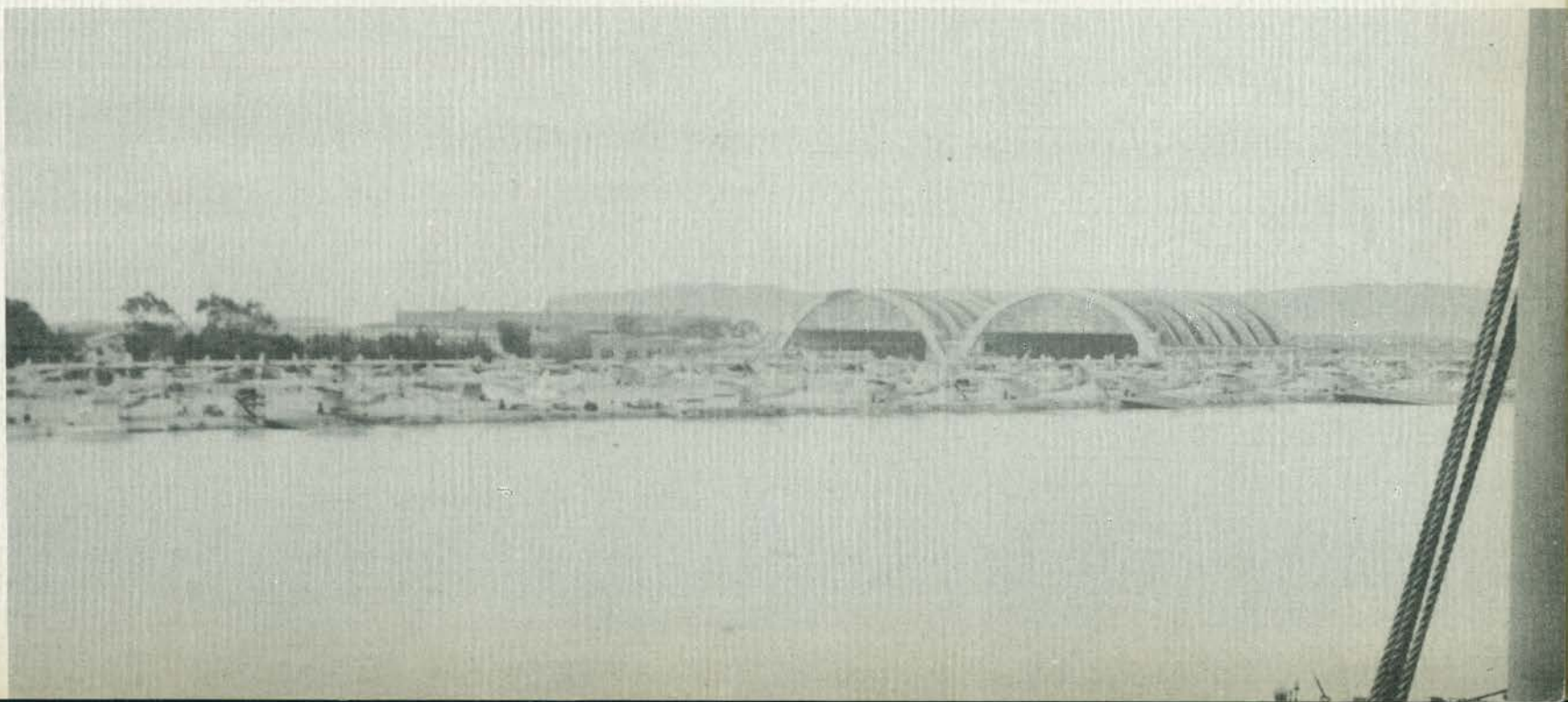
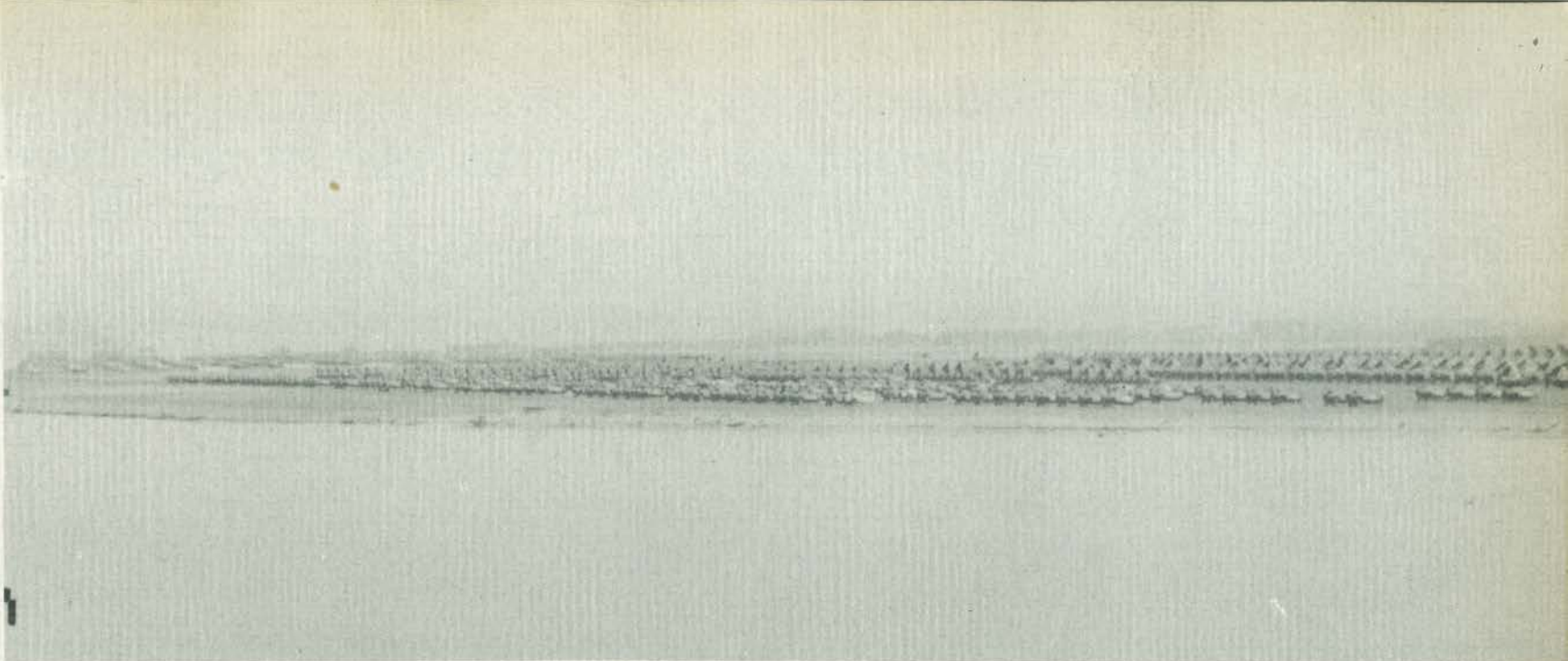


We Saw The World



Mascot #2 — So I joined the Navy to see the world —
Now where's all those trees or even one small tree?

San Diego





Oahu—Mormon Temple

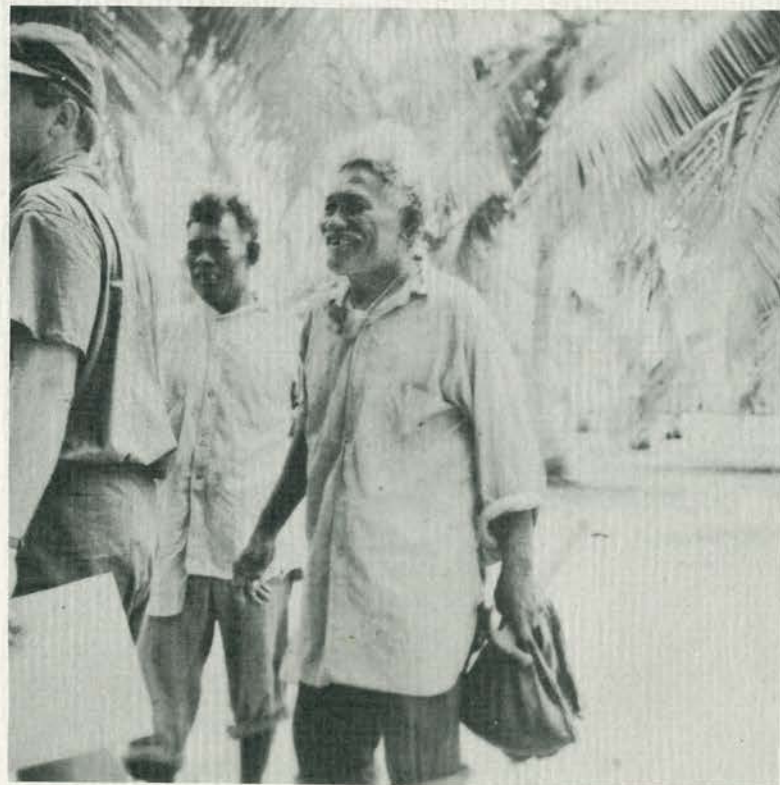
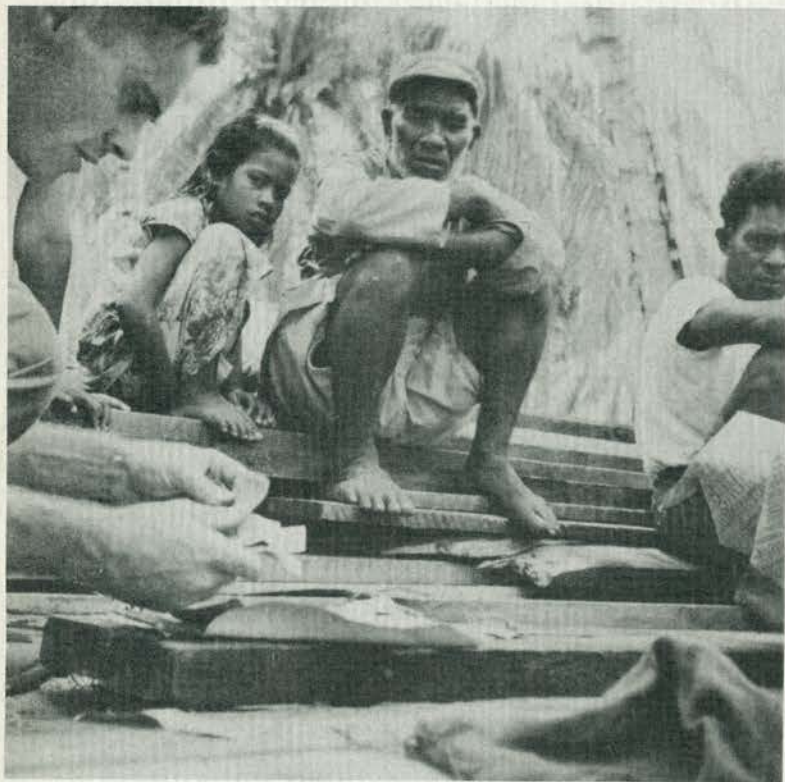


Diamond Head



Philippines — "Rosa and Celie" and
their uncle. Rosa wouldn't go out on
dark nights — had to be a moon

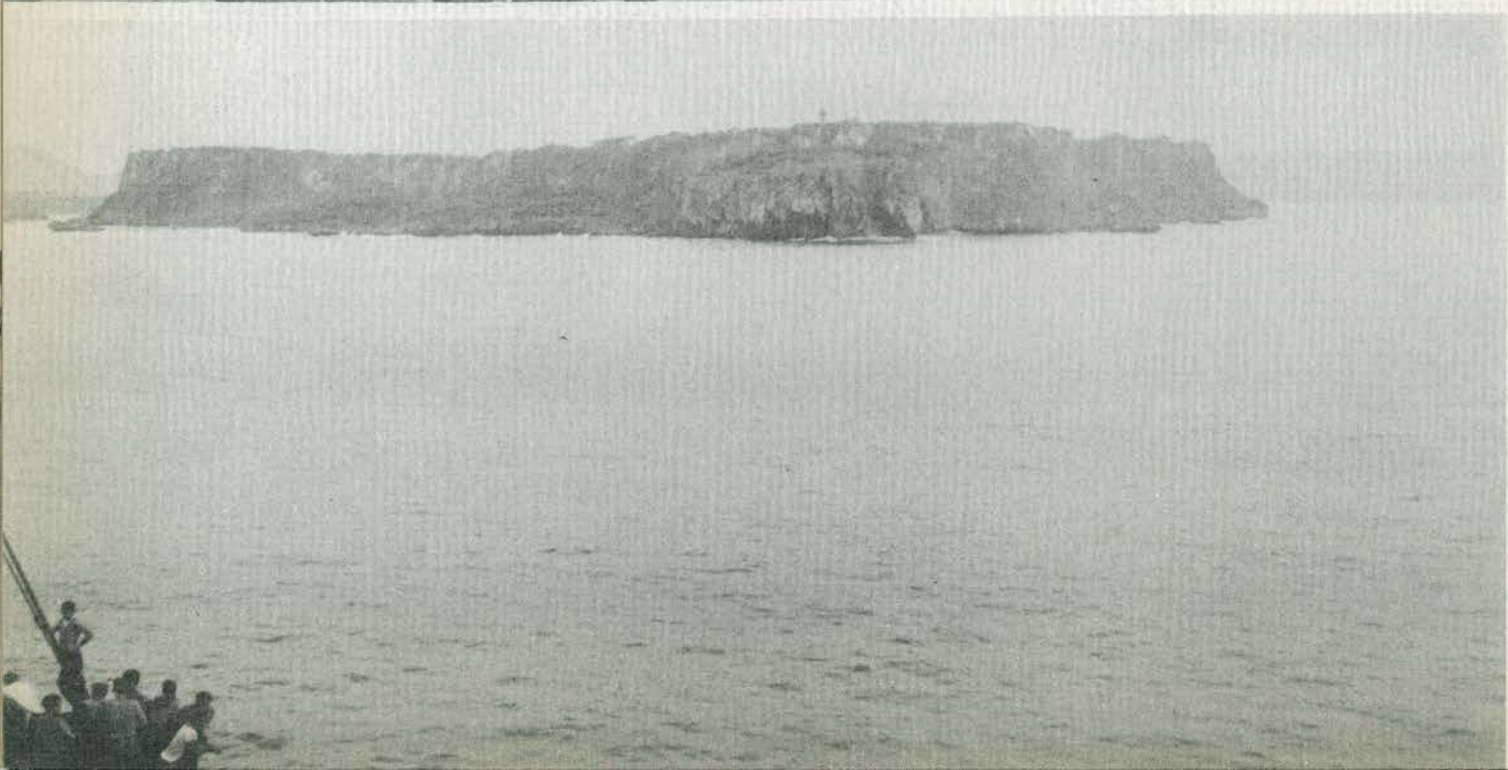
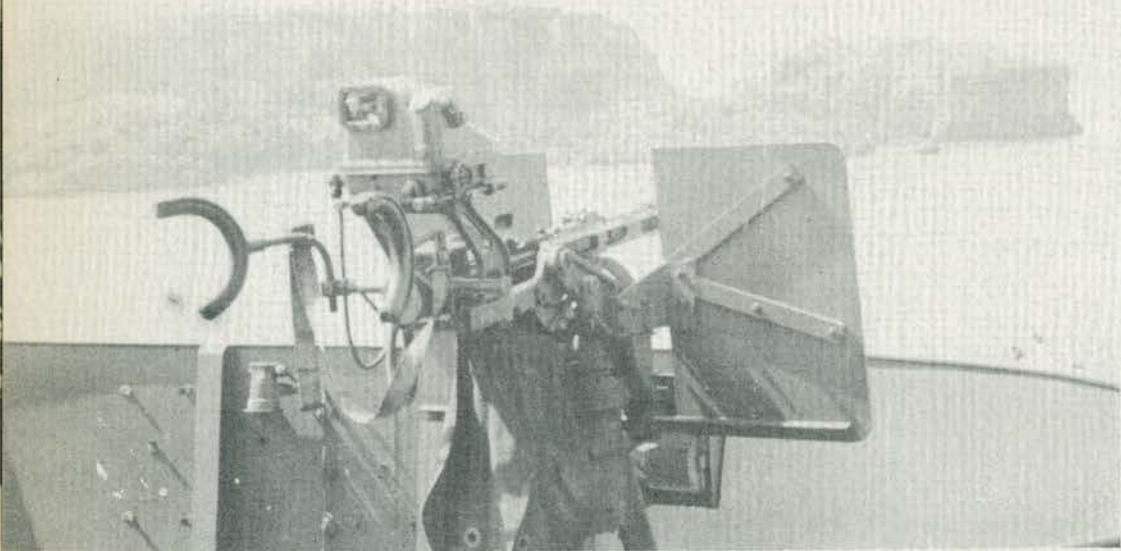


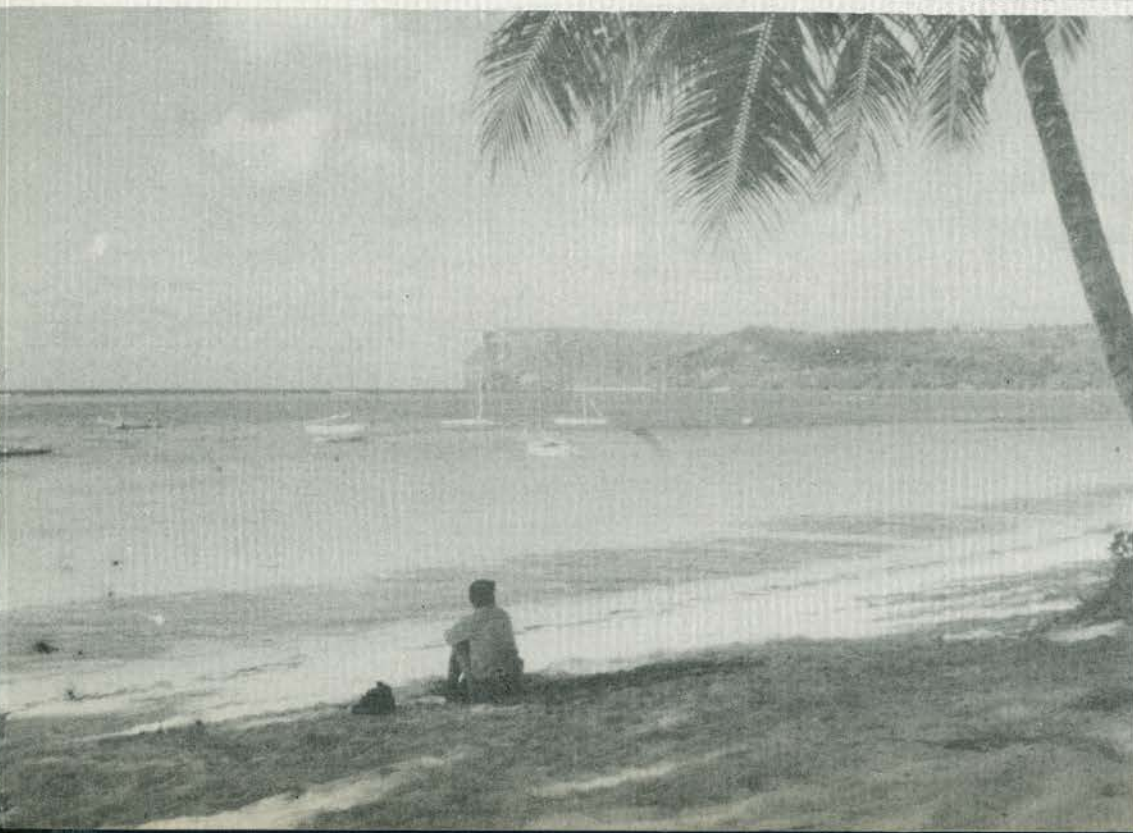


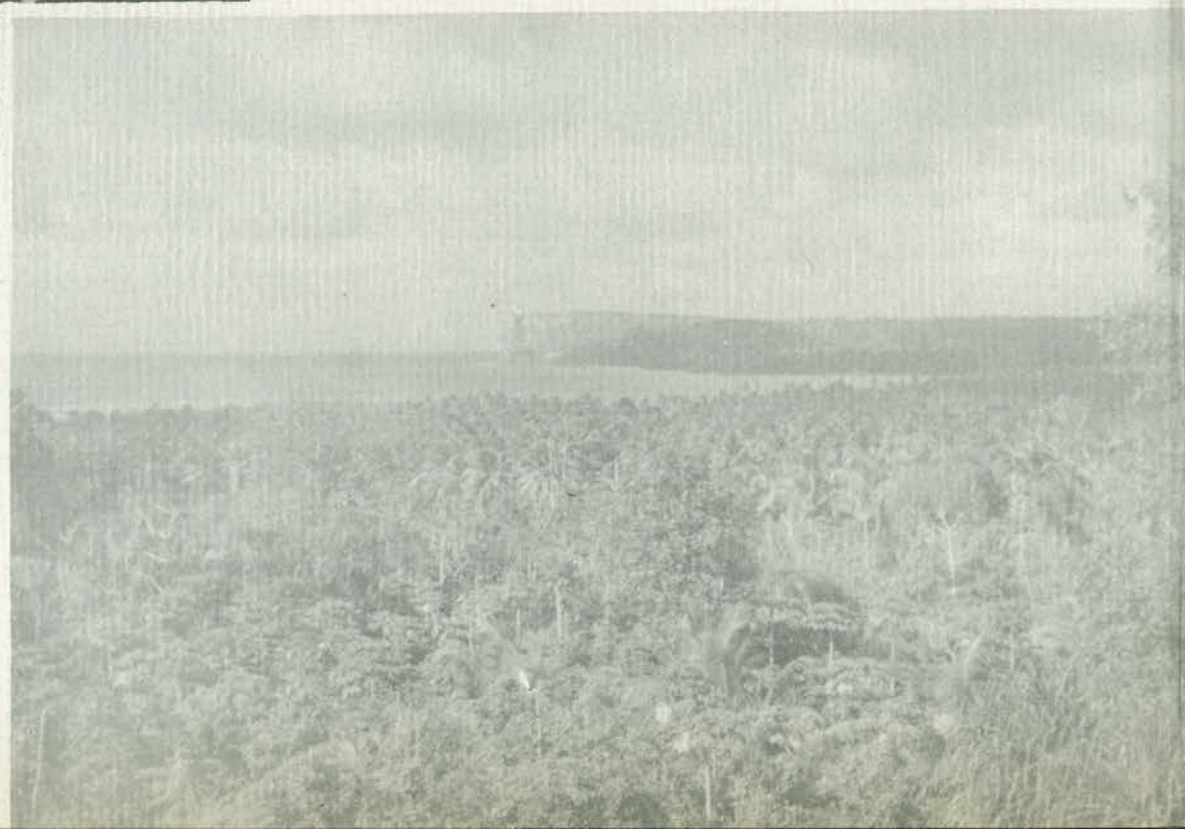
Philippines

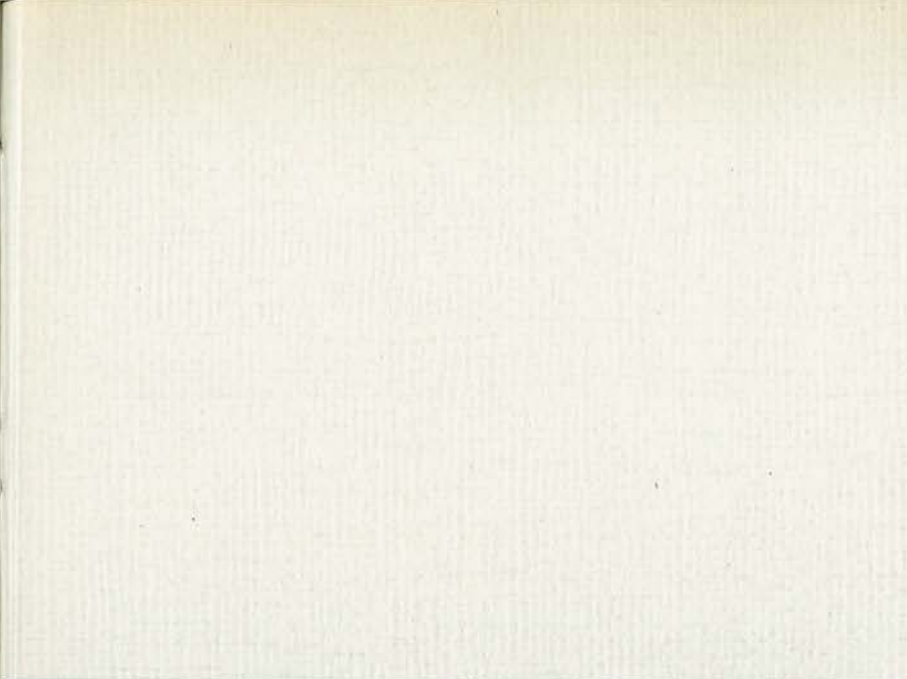


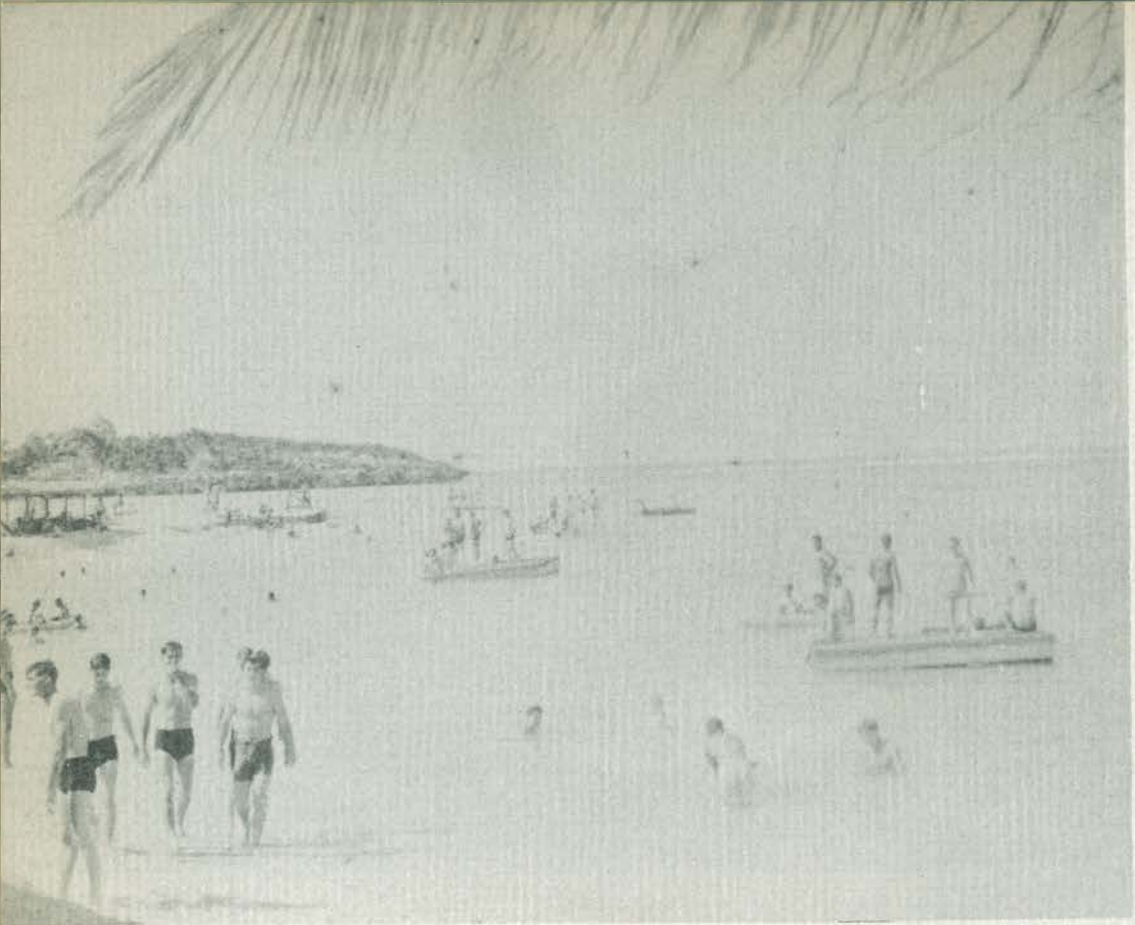
Guam

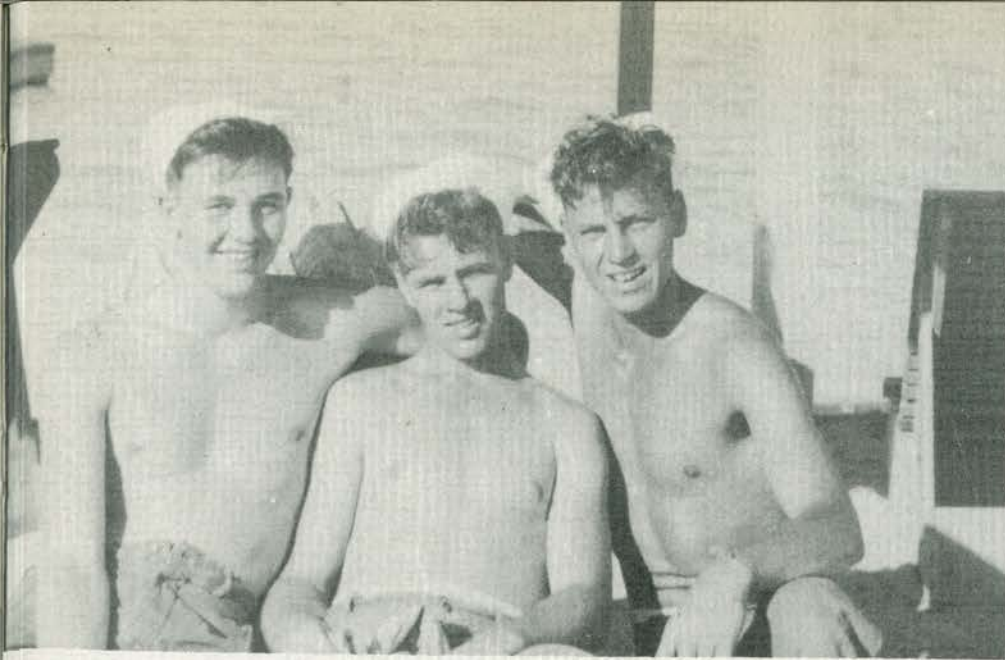








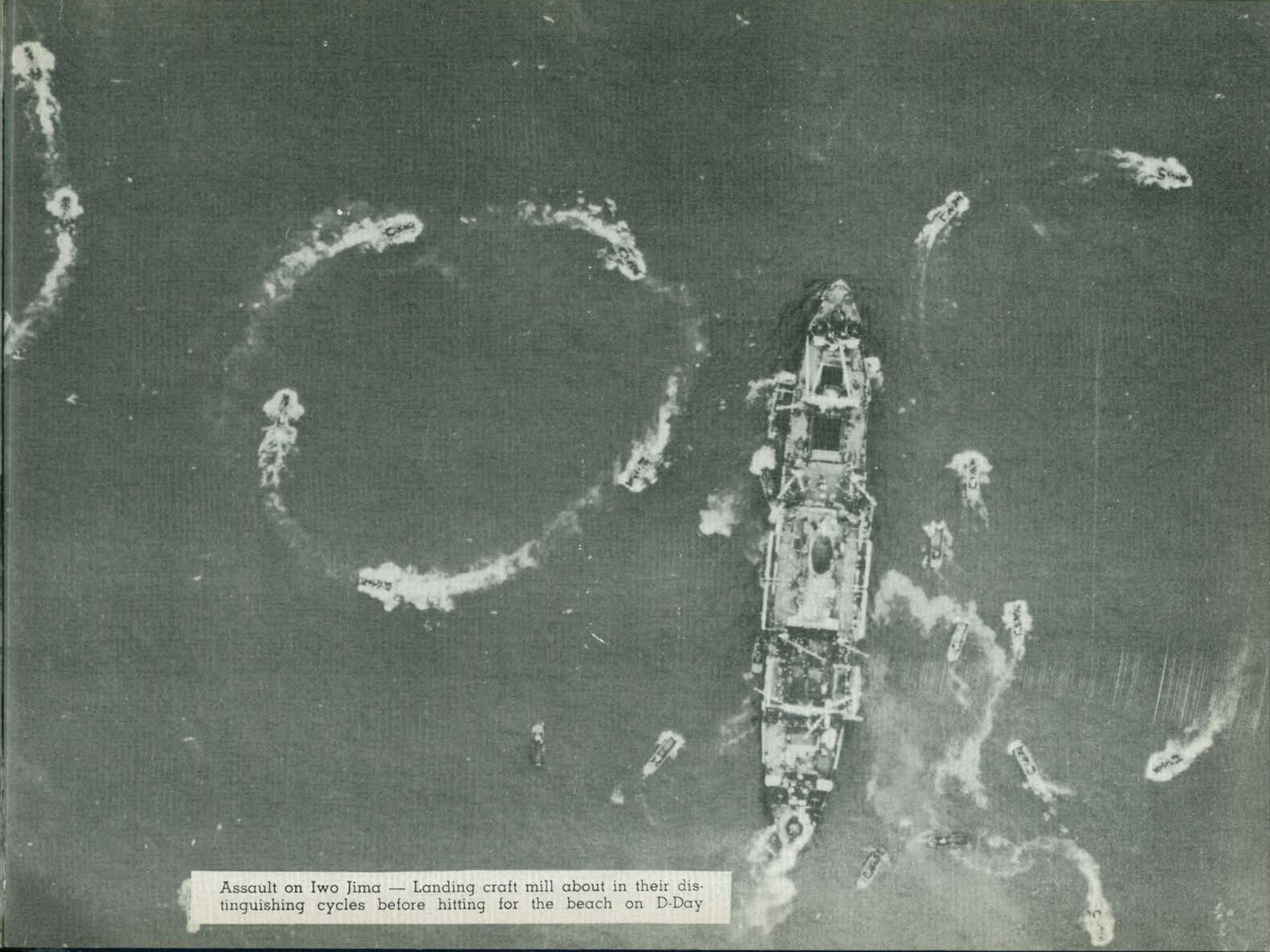








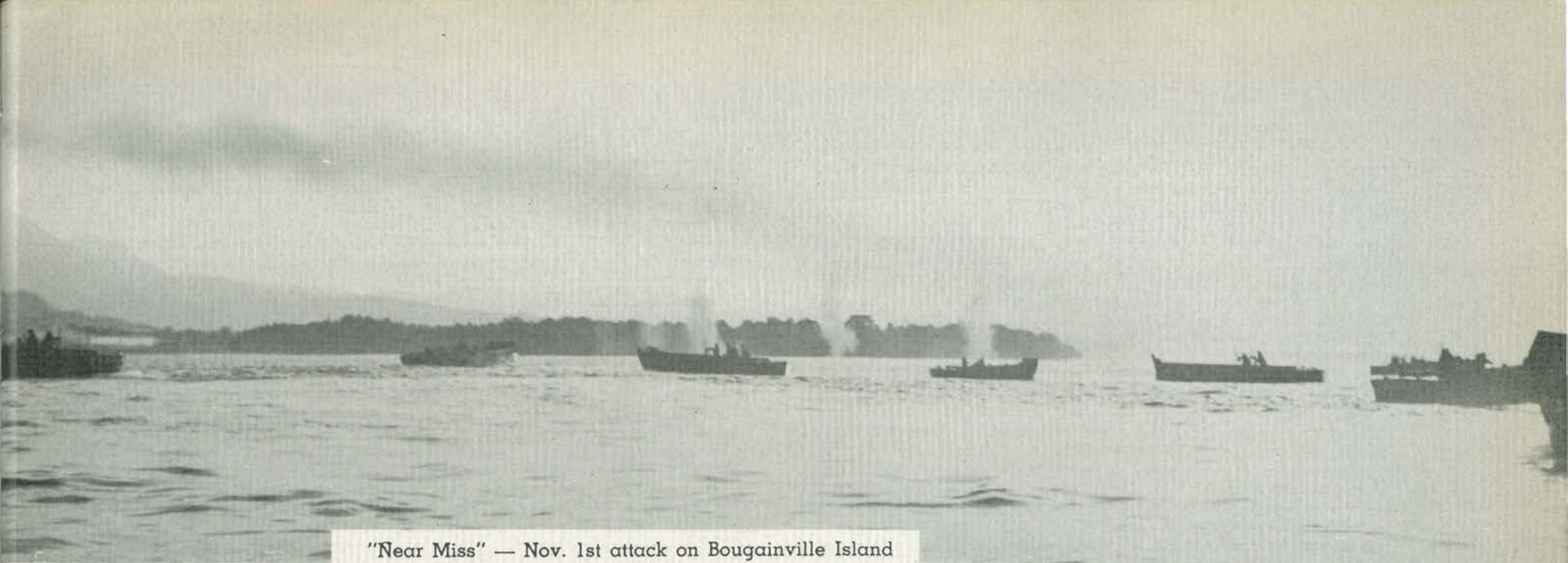




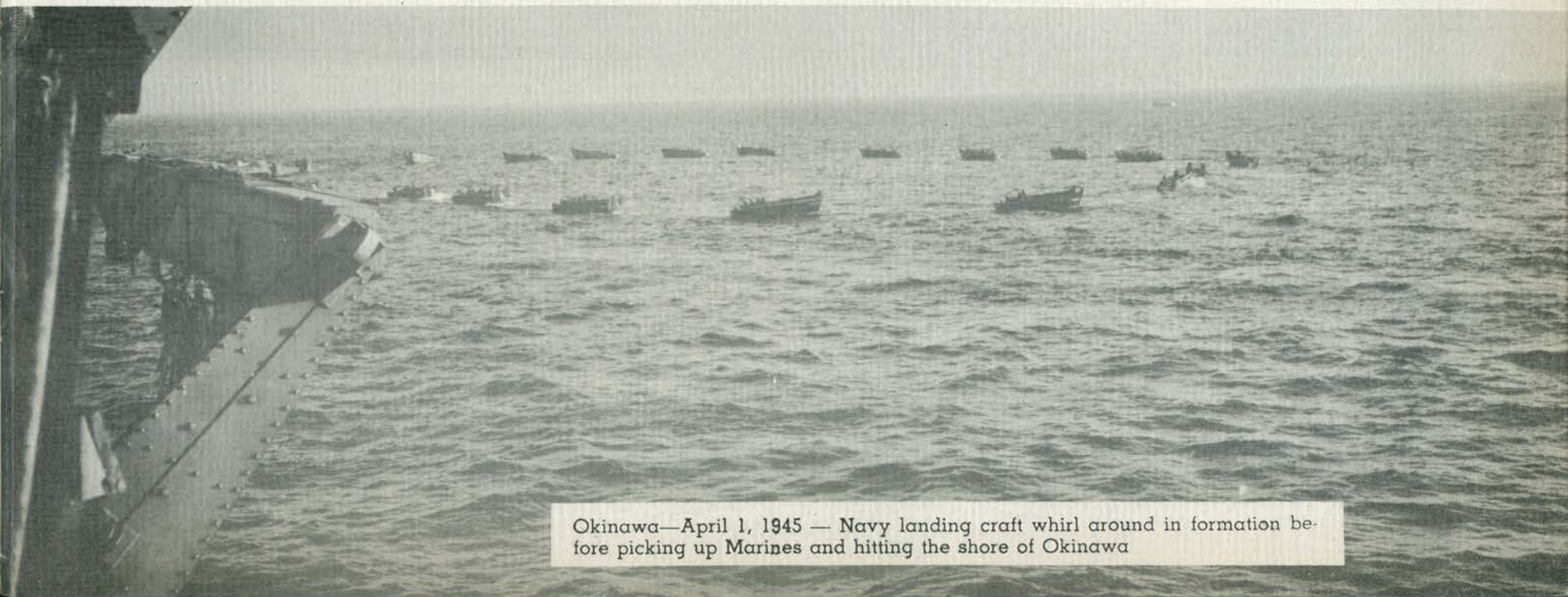
Assault on Iwo Jima — Landing craft mill about in their distinguishing cycles before hitting for the beach on D-Day



Marking time for H-hour — Iwo Jima



"Near Miss" — Nov. 1st attack on Bougainville Island



Okinawa—April 1, 1945 — Navy landing craft whirl around in formation before picking up Marines and hitting the shore of Okinawa

We Played Third Base At Okinawa

You know how it is with the boy riding the "hot corner" in a ball game when his own pitcher is clipping the corners and the opposition is going down in one-two-three fashion. He might as well be up in the bleachers.

That's the way it was with us. Our ship was in the "hot corner" closer to the beaches and Jap-held shoreline than any other except landing craft and patrol vessels.

Of course, anything can happen to the fellow playing third. The pitcher might ease up or a pinch hitter line out a hot one putting the third baseman in the middle. But it never happened to us. Our side was doing the most hitting and the best pitching. Nothing came our way, so there we were—first row in the bleachers.

We were so close we could easily watch the tide of battle (the tide rolled in and never came out.) So close, in fact, we were within easy range of light artillery. A pretty target.

It was Easter Sunday for you lucky birds back home. It was April Fool's Day for a bunch of little yellow bastards on Okinawa. It was "Love" day for us, a name probably picked up by some arm-chair sailor who has been away from the States too long.

From my vantage point on the bridge of my attack transport I could see a large section of Okinawa's western shore line—watch our troops go into action—watch the navy's supporting fire blast hell out of Jap positions—watch flame throwers burn 'em alive in caves—watch a city burn—watch a mighty air force bomb and strafe.

A news reel in technicolor.

But I'm getting ahead of my story.

Where were you the night before Easter? Seeing a show? Bowling? Going to church? In bed with your wife? You lucky bum.

Considering that we were less than 100 miles from what Japs consider their homeland, we didn't do too badly. You know that as long as I can eat, I'm not too perturbed. In the wardroom we sat down to the usual linen-covered table and destroyed some Australian steaks. Through open doors we could see an expanse of choppy sea slowly turning from blue to grey as the sun turned smokey red and dropped over the horizon.

From the wing of the bridge I watched the day become dusk and turn into night. The only warlike manifestation was the columns of transports and the circle of escorting destroyers—a reassuring sight—slashing their way through the sea in a purposeful manner.

Then the ships became black shapes floating along between a dark sky and a darker ocean. Life aboard was as usual. The watches changed. Doors were closed so that no lights showed. But we would have done that the first night out of New York or Frisco.

There was no discernible quickening of the pulse in anticipation of the morrow even though one of the boldest strokes of the Pacific offensive was at hand. There was a bridge game in the wardroom and the usual amount of lounging about. I was scheduled to hit the deck early so I turned in and slept like the proverbial babe.

A messenger awakened me at 0330. What were you doing at 0330 on Easter morn? Don't tell me.

A pale moon was shining overhead as we made the "approach to the

objective." That's Navy for saying we were on our way in to turn a nice, quiet island into an inferno of death and destruction. There was still nothing to indicate that this was going to be THE DAY.

Dawn came as we arrived in our designated area. Weeks before, the very spot where our ship was to stop had been decided on and placed on charts of the island. The dawn revealed hundreds of ships of all shapes and sizes. But the beaches remained hidden in smoke and fog.

Here and there through the haze we made out the shapes of battleships and cruisers.

Then came the warning of an air attack. A minute later all the ships to the north let loose a curtain of fire. Tracers carved steep red arcs into the morning sky, leaping upwards toward the mushrooms of shell bursts so thick a pilot could get out and walk. And what a racket.

A plane burst into flames and came down in a long glide to crash into the sea and burst into flames. It was soon followed by another. We never saw them until they were caught by the firing. Just as suddenly as it started the firing stopped and we received the "all clear" signal.

In a matter of minutes we heard the hum of many motors. High up in the sky there were planes by the dozens, all bearing the familiar star, wheeling over us and over Japan's stronghold. We were thankful.

As the smoke cleared away from the area, it seemed that every few thousand yards there was a combat ship, and a big one, while in between were the little fellows whose bite and bark both are pretty big. Destroyers, escorts, gunboats, and others too many to count.

But the smoke clung stubbornly to the beaches as the troops were loaded into small craft for the assault.

Shortly before Zero hour, the thunder of a thousand Thors shook the sea as all the combat ships in the area opened up with shell fire and rockets. The smoke along the beaches became more intense. Boat crews returning from the assault told of the shoreline and the adjacent hillsides leaping into a solid mass of flames as the Navy knocked the hell out of Okinawa waterfront real estate values.

And it was effective. Assault troops secured their beachheads with a minimum amount of resistance, escaping almost entirely the deadly toll of lives which is the usual price of merely getting ashore. As the hours passed, the smoke moved away to reveal an attractive island—the most promising place we had seen since leaving Hawaii. And that seems a long time ago.

Gentle slopes were terraced in irregularly outlined but neat and varicolored patches of farmland. The ridges and steeper slopes were crowned by woods and heavy underbrush. Along the ridges, the silhouettes of cedar trees were duplicates of Japanese prints. Here and there were clusters of houses, villages protected by groves of trees. White, horseshoe-shaped, flat-topped structures on the lower hillsides were tombs containing the remains of ancestors whom the defenders were speedily joining.

There were sugar mills with clusters of outbuildings. To our right lay a city, the largest on the island, the capital of 60,000 persons. Smokestacks and radio towers were outlined against the sky.

As if flaunting our might before the warlords who made us eat dirt not so long ago, the ships moved in closer to the beaches to facilitate movement

of cargo and troop carrying small craft. The "hot corner" could have become hotter but it remained a spectator's seat at a turkey shoot.

After we had moved in, our carrier planes gave us a first hand demonstration of precision bombing, rocket firing and strafing on live targets. It seemed incredible that anything or anybody could survive. But men do.

Later in the afternoon a Jap battery on a hillside opened up on our beach positions. We itched to take him under fire ourselves but it wasn't long before the closest cruiser's secondary battery was tossing curves at the hillside. Soon the Japs were silenced. Next day one came to life again, but the second was done for good.

Strange sights for a country boy.

As night fell we made ready to retire to the open sea where we would roam and come back with the dawn. Then came another air attack. Again all the ships to the north opened fire, their tracers cutting the evening into a million red ribbons. Again we saw no planes until one came tumbling down in flames to burst into a big blossom of fire in the water. The firing ceased within minutes and we got to hell out of there.

We thumbed our noses on the way out, though, passing between the city and small Jap-held islands—a stone's throw either way—as we headed out to sea. Again I slept soundly to be awakened too early to make another run into the beaches. Again we had the morning anti-aircraft show. Before noon, the carrier planes gave us another exhibition as they supported infantry advancing across the island. It was getting to be an old story.

In the afternoon, a destroyer which had hung about in our shadow leveled off at Jap strongpoints, dropping phosphorus shells which burst into white clouds like cotton bolls above the green of the hillside woods.

A new but grim feature was added during the afternoon as a dazzling white hospital ship anchored nearby. But my binoculars failed to reveal a feminine form along the rails.

Damn!! What a war.

That night and the next day it was the same thing all over again. Just like seeing the same movie twice. During the day we seemed to be on the seaside end of a front line angling across the hills. American trucks and tanks chased each other up and down the hilly roads and disappeared into wooded sections and villages.

There was one spot near the beach where a road angled down the hill and dropped into a grove. As it emerged on the shore side of the trees it doubled back along the beach. Vehicles dashed into the trees coming down the hill at breakneck speed. Then there would be a long wait before we saw them emerge slowly and carefully, stop as if looking carefully both ways before coming out into the open and turning along the beach.

Everyonce in a while, a destroyer or cruiser would hit the jackpot up in the hills, with the payoff in big explosions and fires which we hoped were ammunition or fuel dumps.

The town burned all day and heavy firing could be heard in the distance. Just beyond the beaches, flame throwers were at work, methodically going from cave to cave, dugout to dugout, house to house, carrying out a slogan of "let's not bring 'em back alive." By contrast, soldiers were swimming in the surf.

The sun was warm too. It was a lovely spring day at Okinawa.

From then on, we stayed right in there at night. My slumbers were troubled as a cruiser right behind us lobbed shells over my bunk, while a destroyer off our bow maintained a steady fire of five-inch shells past my topside ear.

The coming of dawn rolled back the curtains on a now familiar scene. Same noise, same shooting, same commotion ashore. The planes had evidently lost interest and were busy elsewhere. I lost interest too, staying below to take up routine prosaic tasks where I had forgotten them several days before. I even grabbed some sleep in the afternoon.

When we finished our business I thought we might leave but we didn't. On the final night we laid down a smoke screen so thick our own boats couldn't find us. It must have been effective. Nothing happened and I really pounded the sack.

But on the next day we bid Okinawa adieu. We were off again over those ever-so-long reaches of the Pacific, bound for other scenes and other missions. Here's hoping that when it comes our turn again to play the "hot corner" we set 'em down hard again with no hits, no runs, no errors, and none left on base.









China

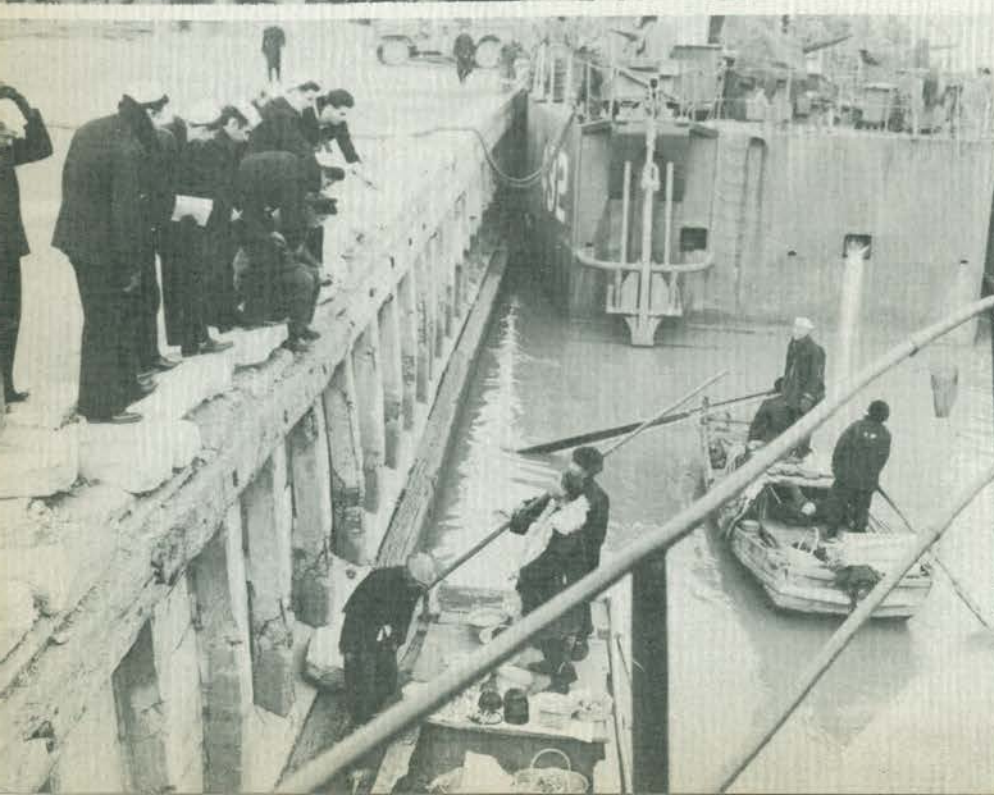
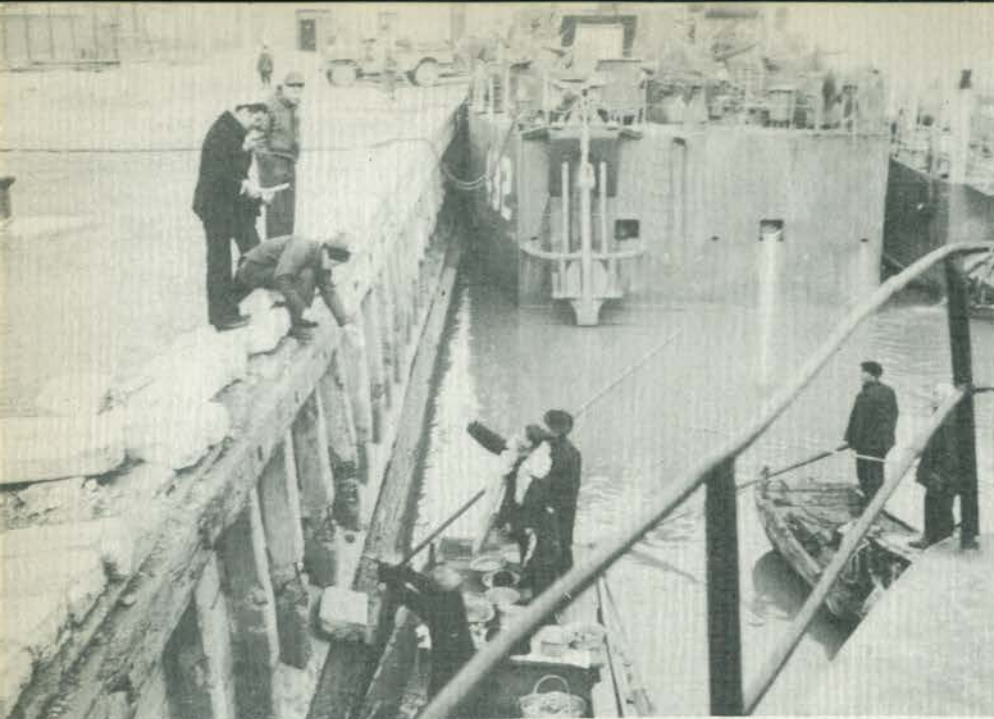


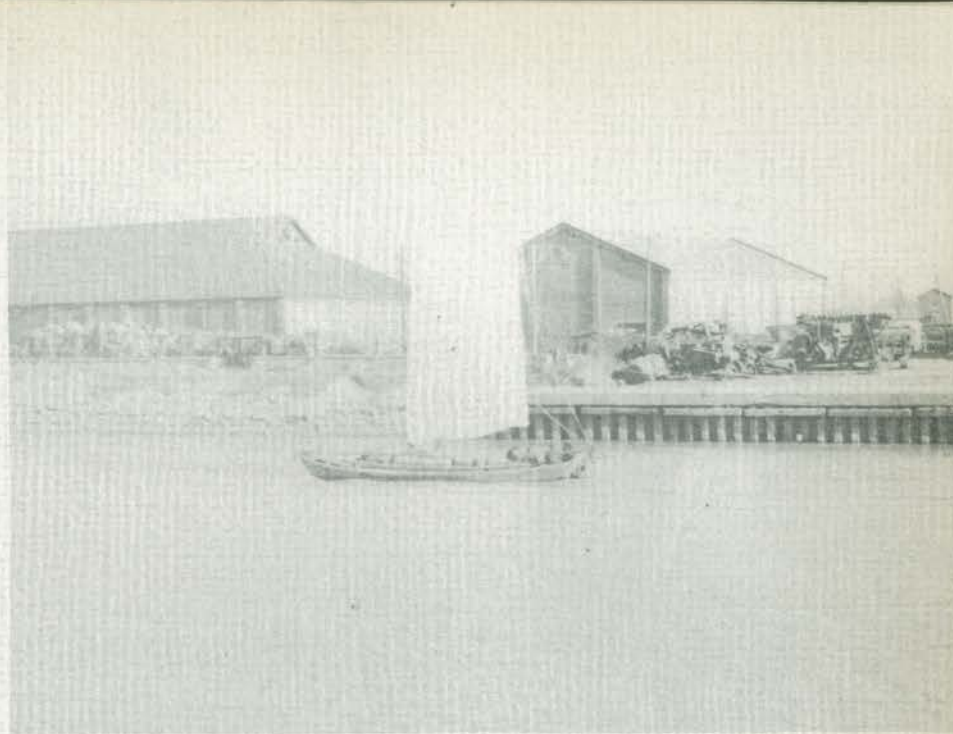


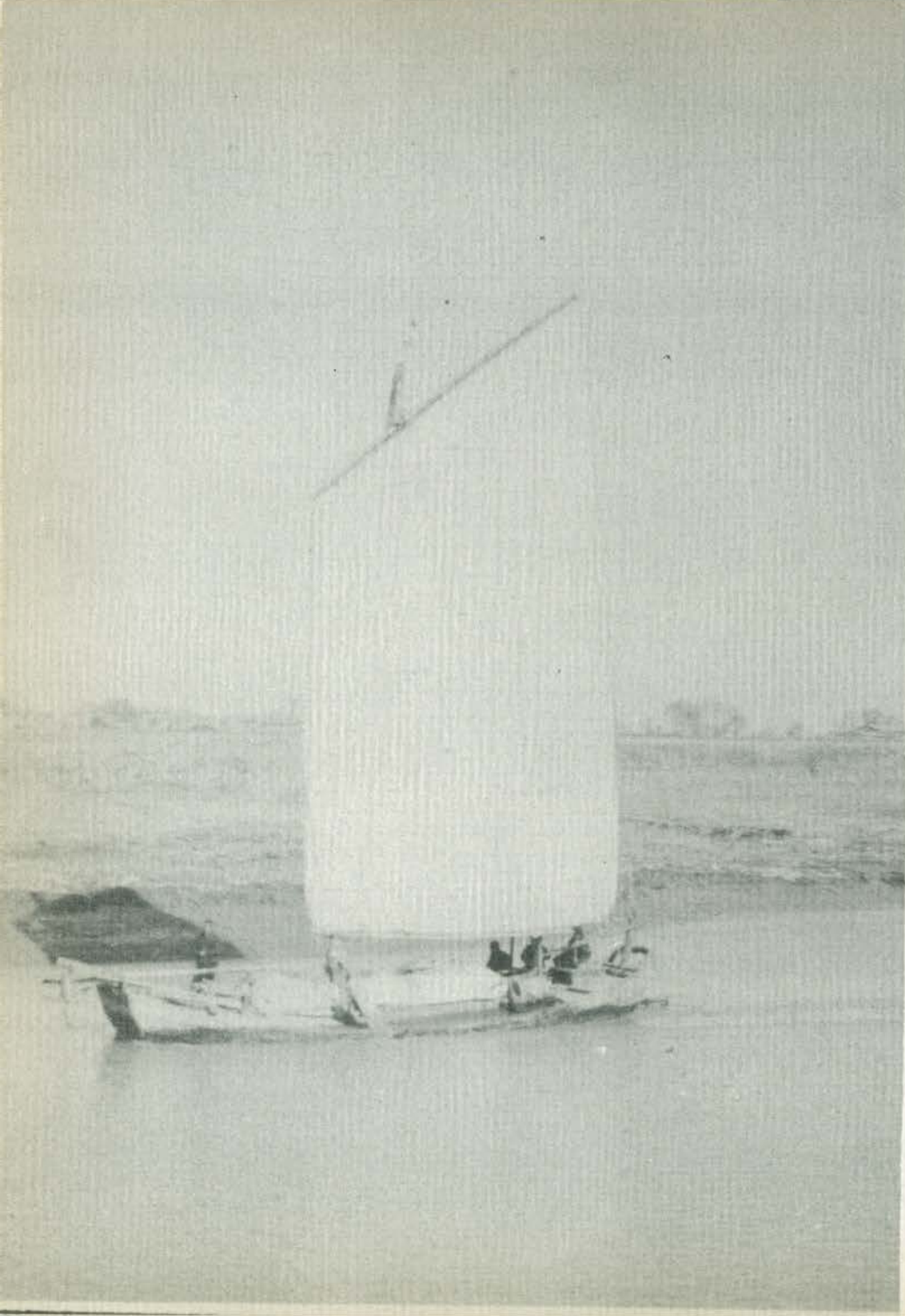
Guam was never like this

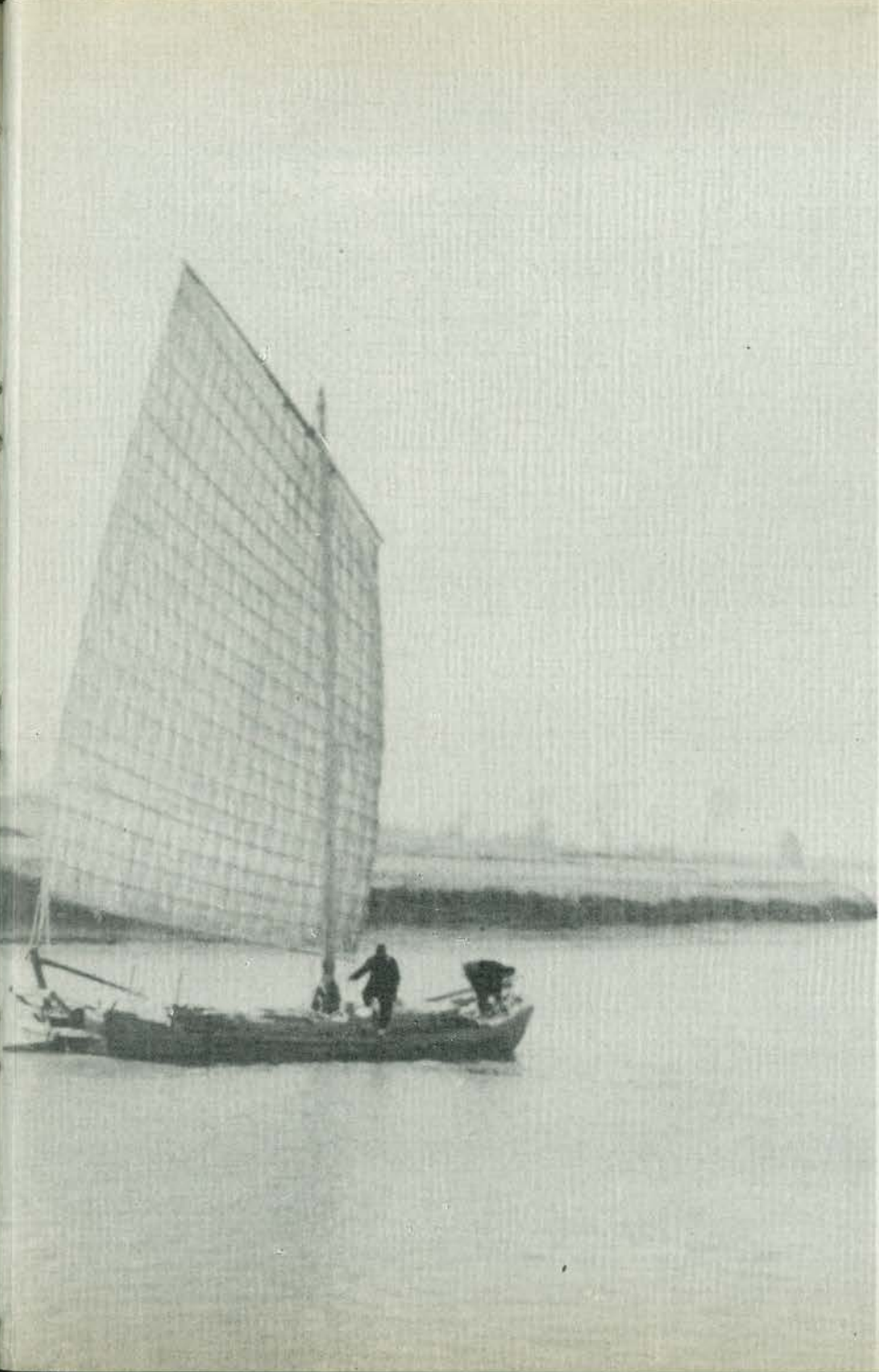


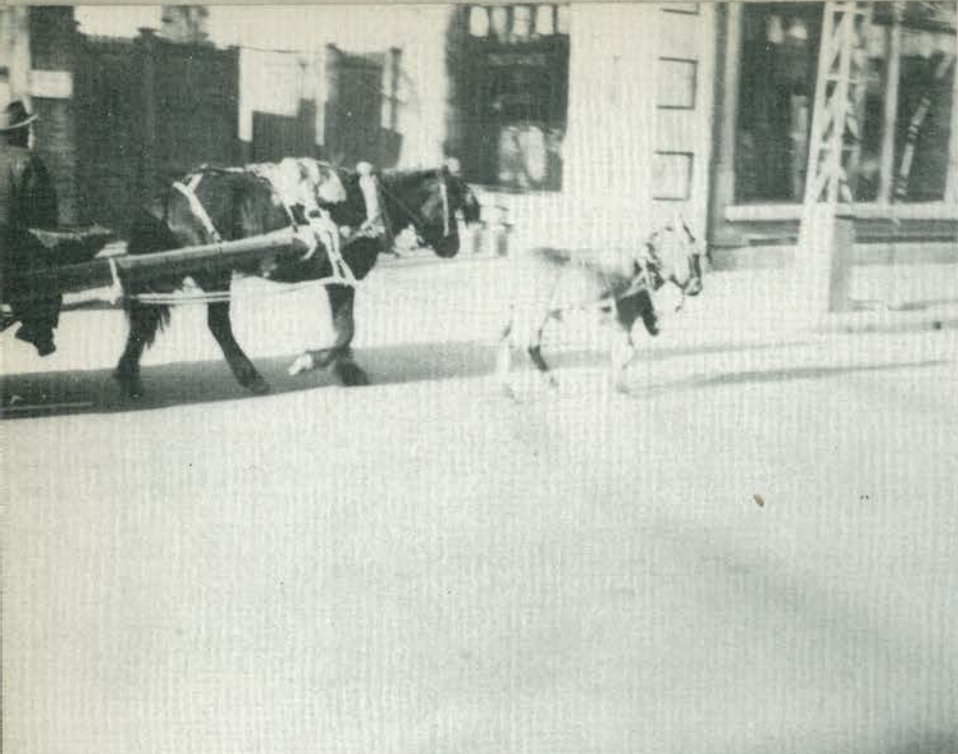






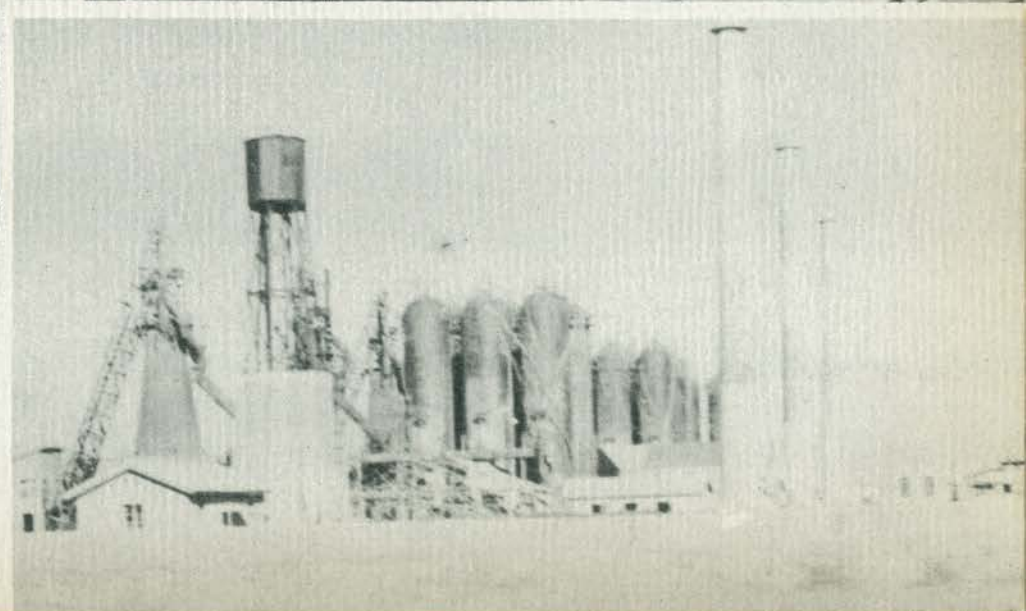
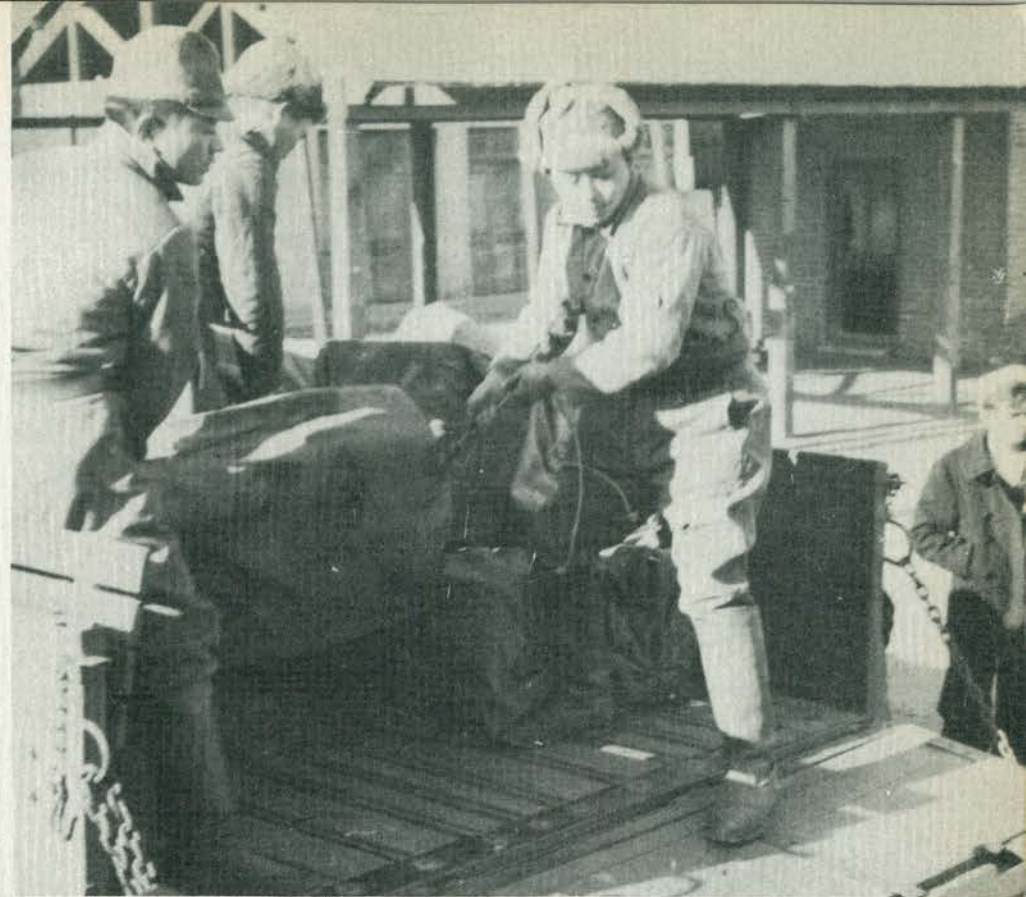


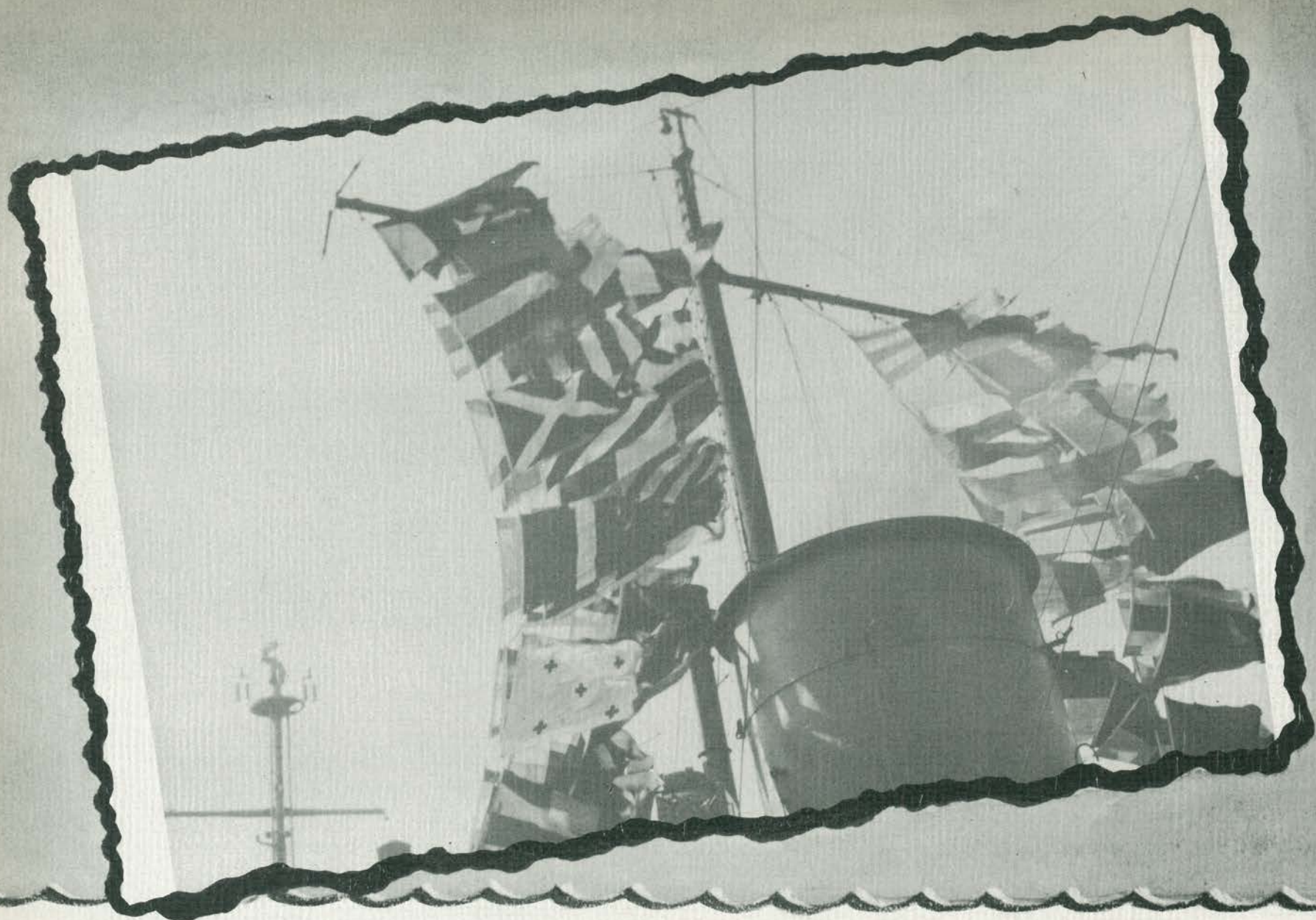




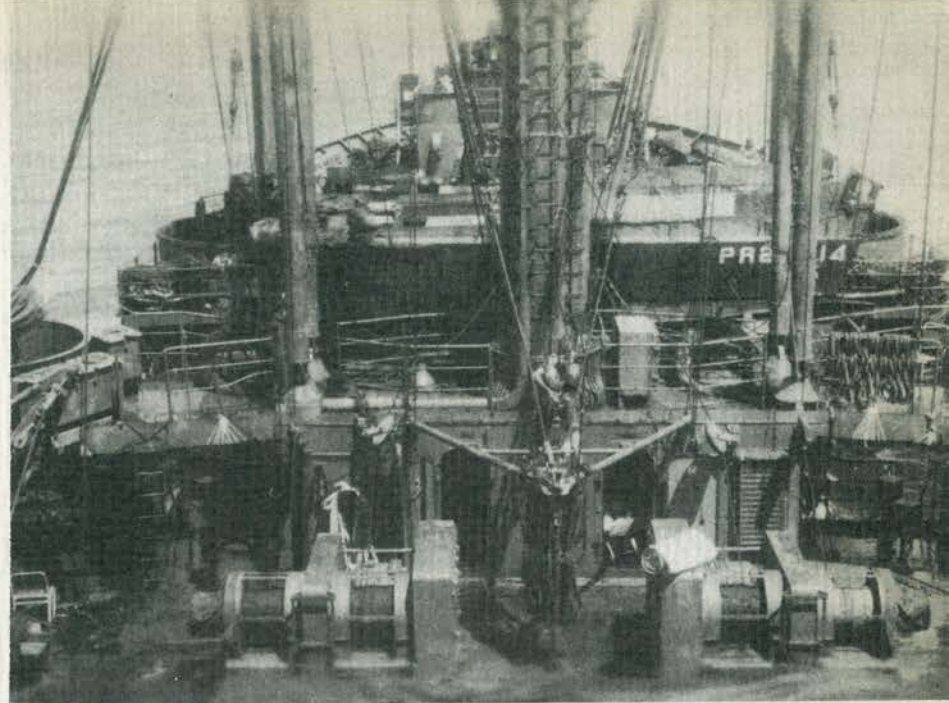








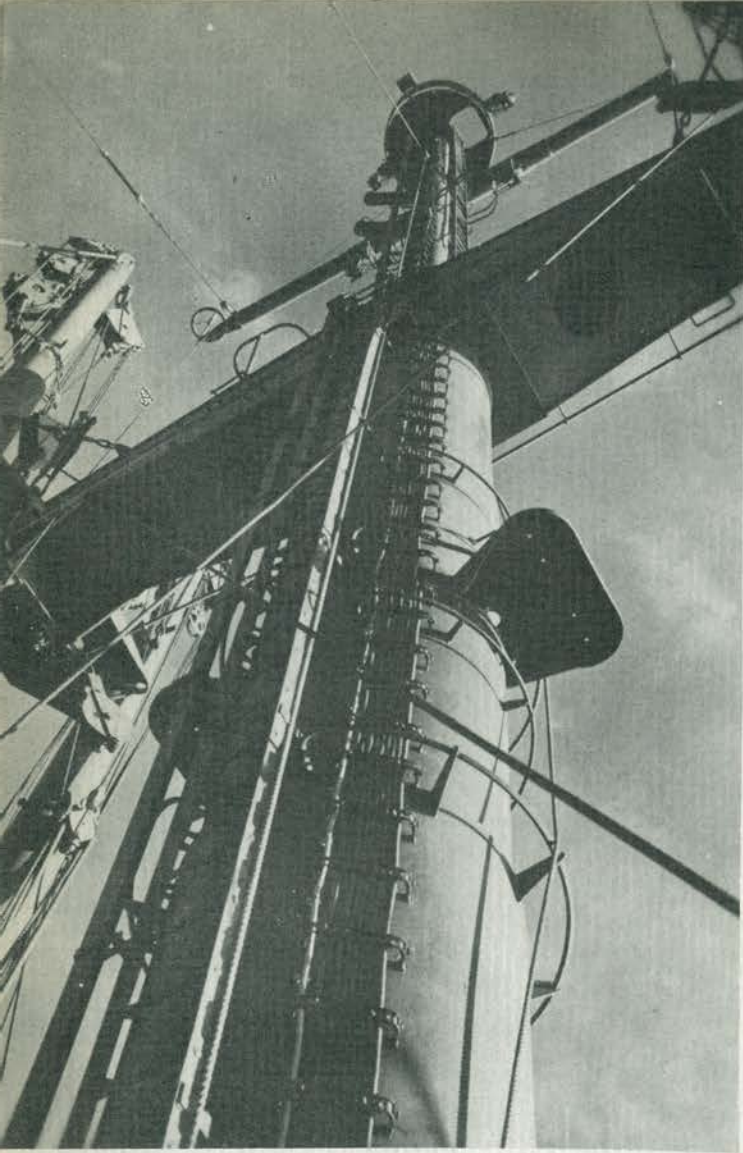
Topside Views



Looking Forward

Our call signal

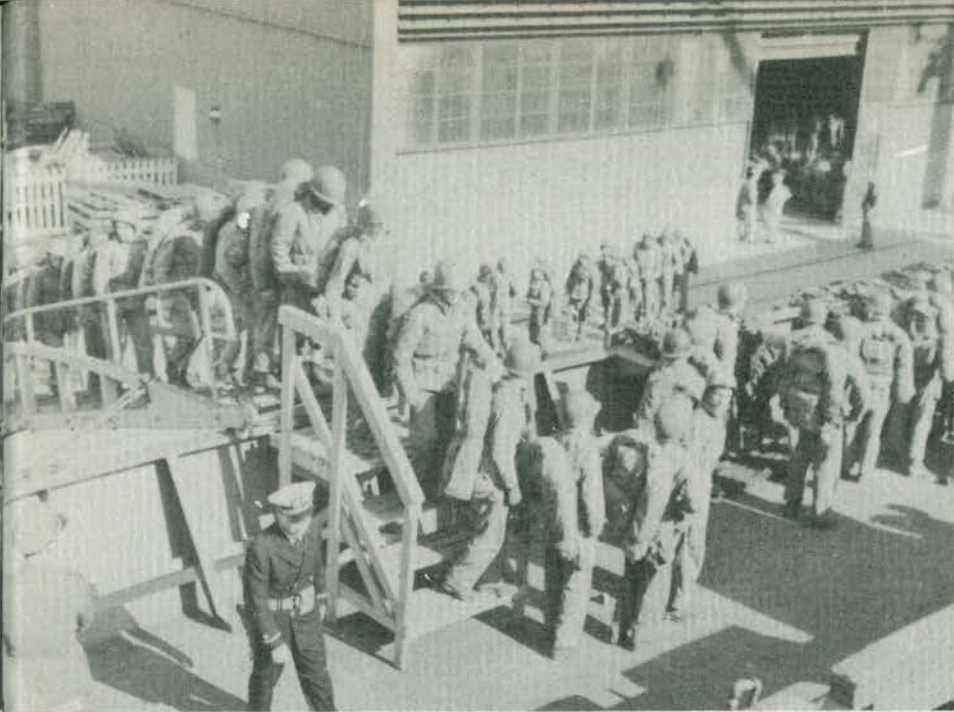




Foremast—from the bottom up

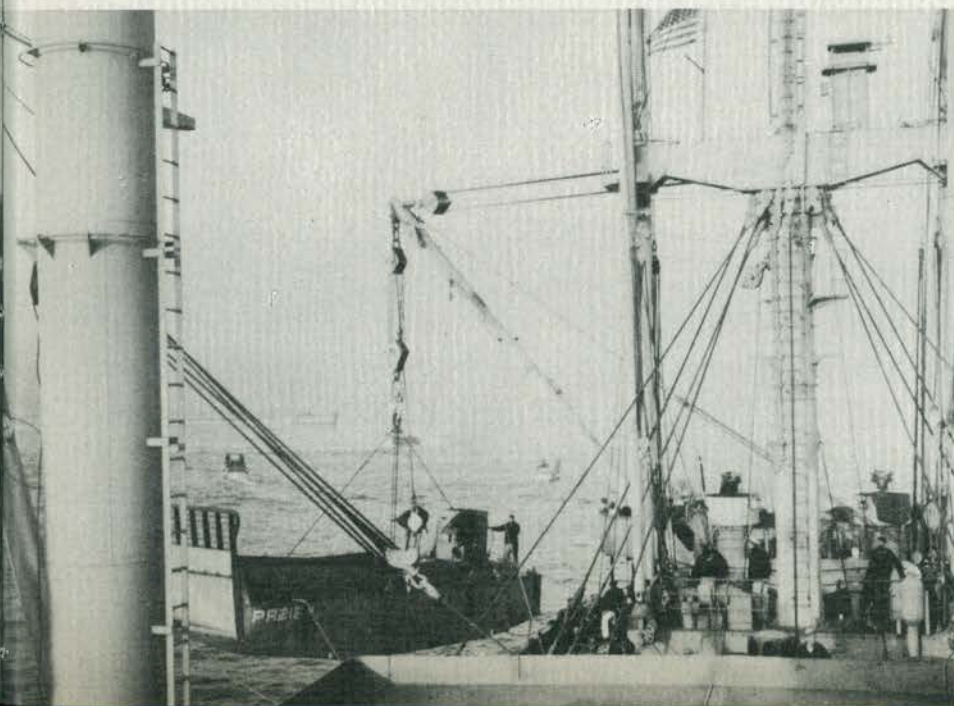


Radars Silent Search

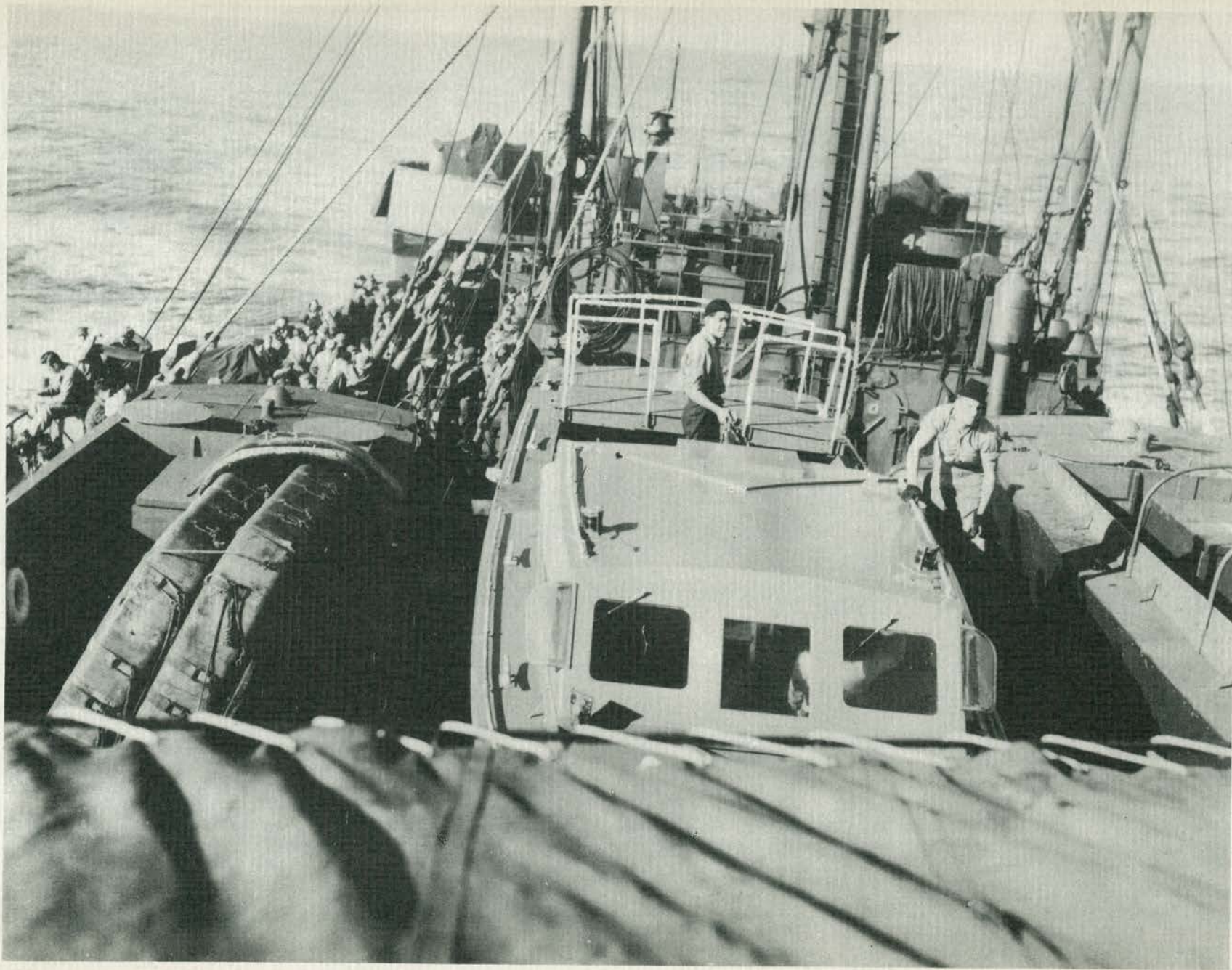


Troops coming aboard

Lower away



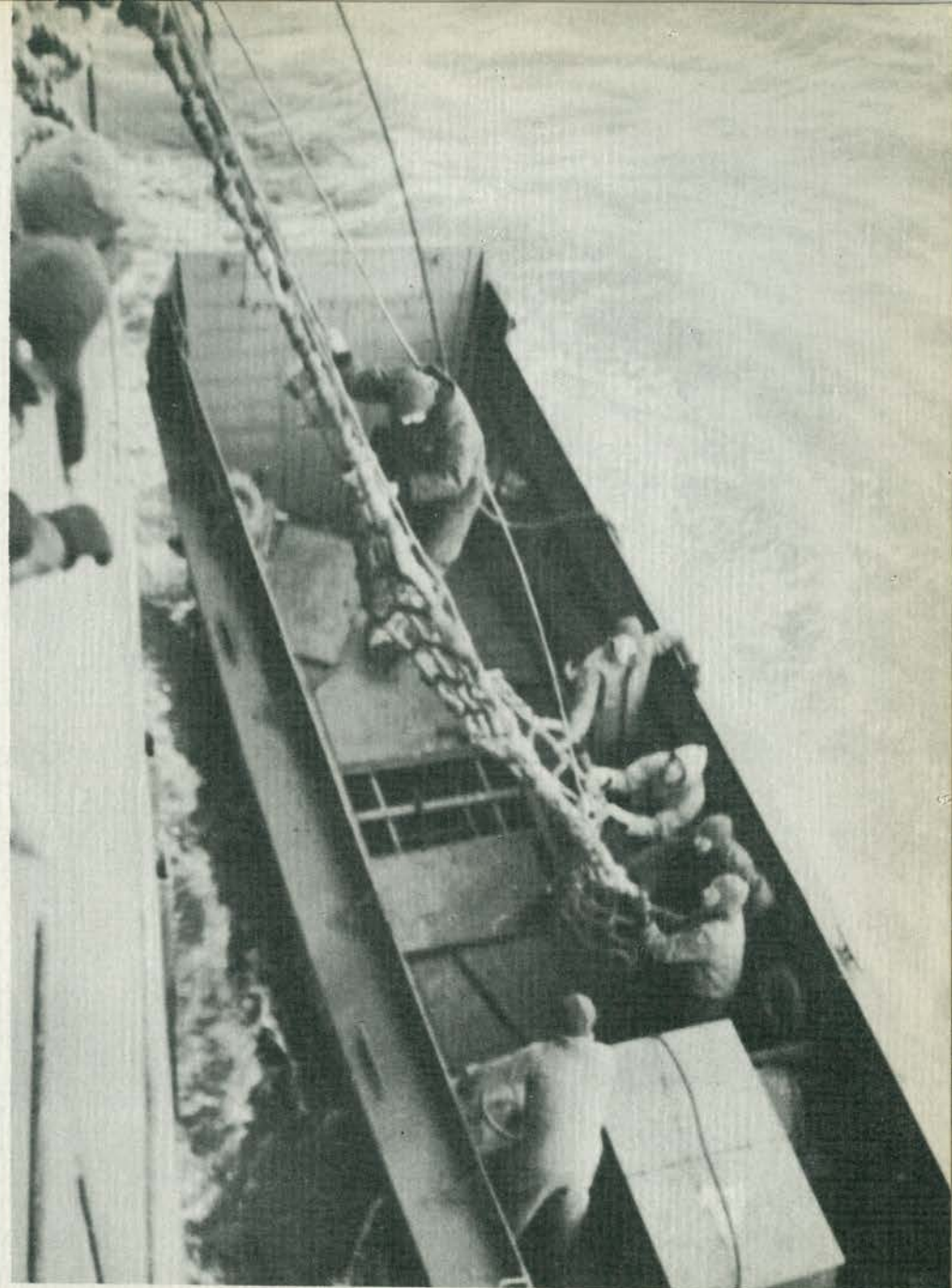
Deck space?



Looking aft



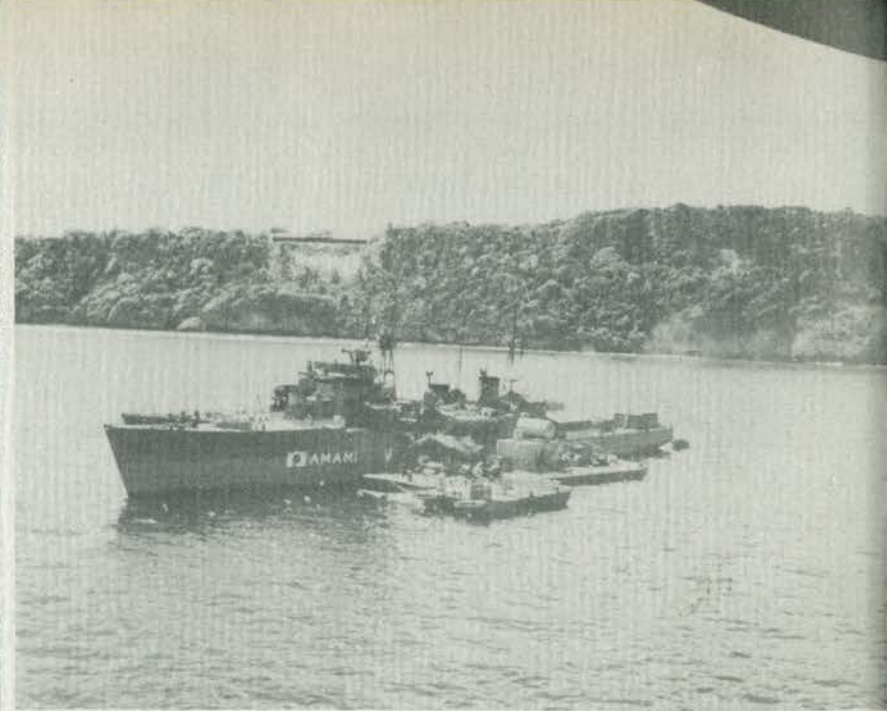
"Breachers Boy"



Into 'P' boat via cargo net

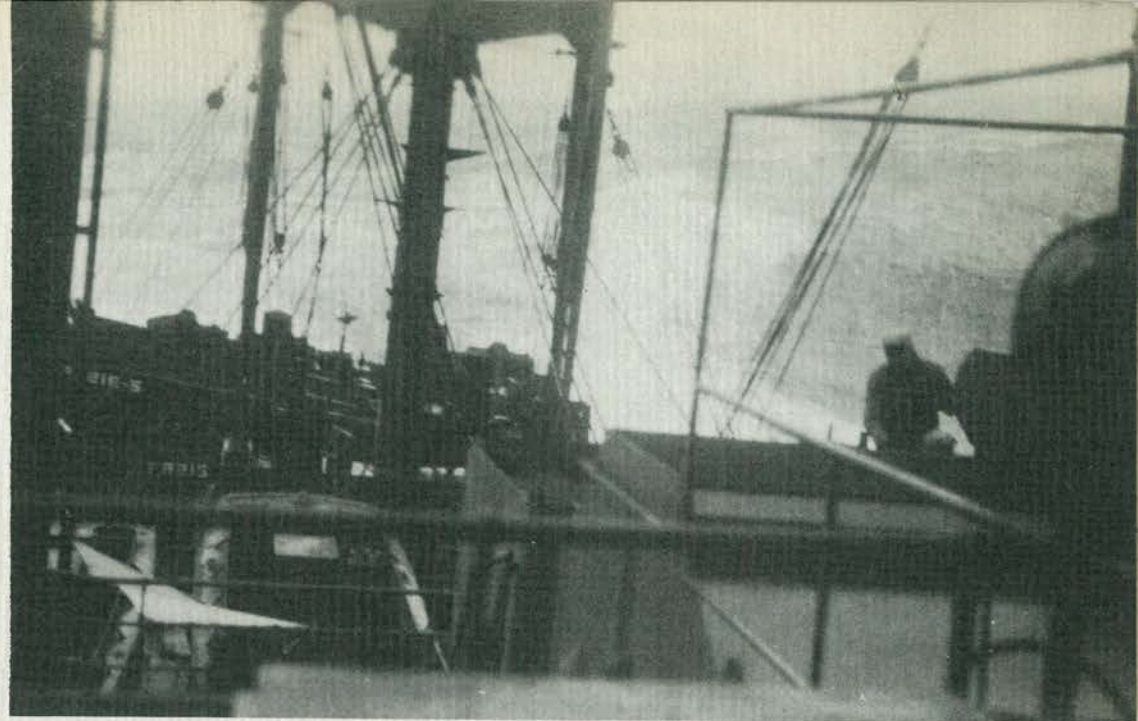


Into the setting sun

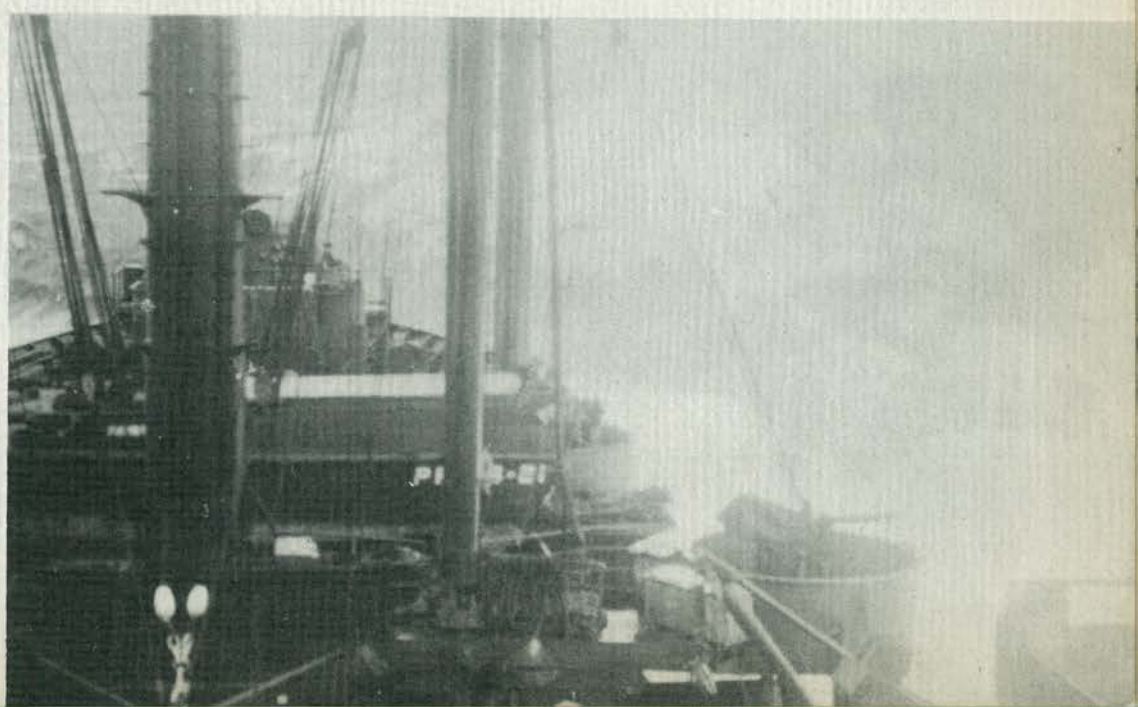
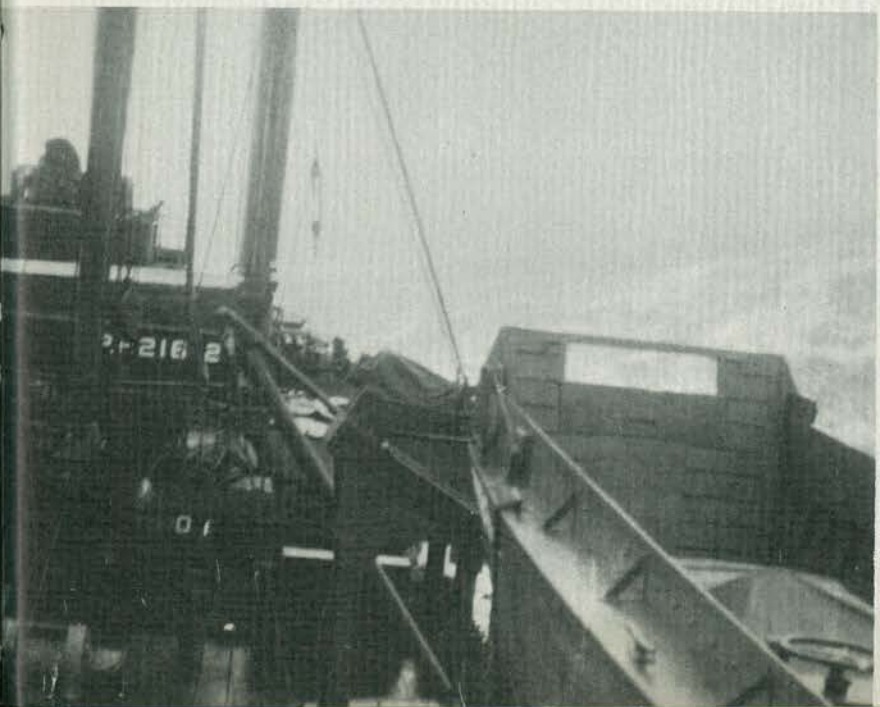




Captain's gig



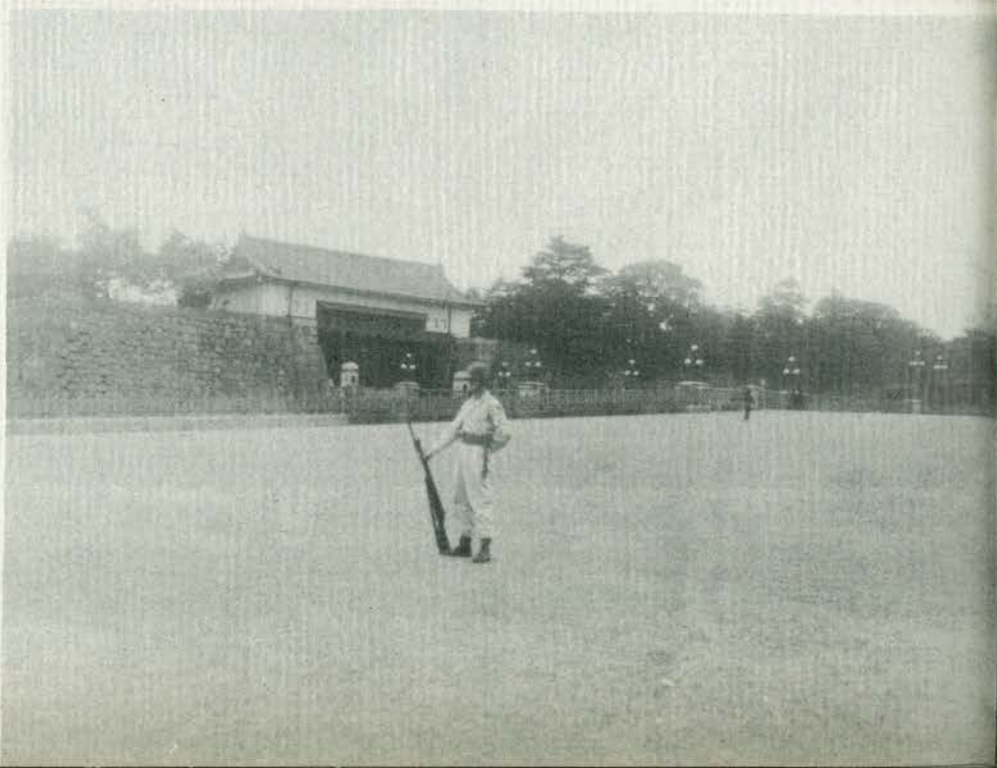
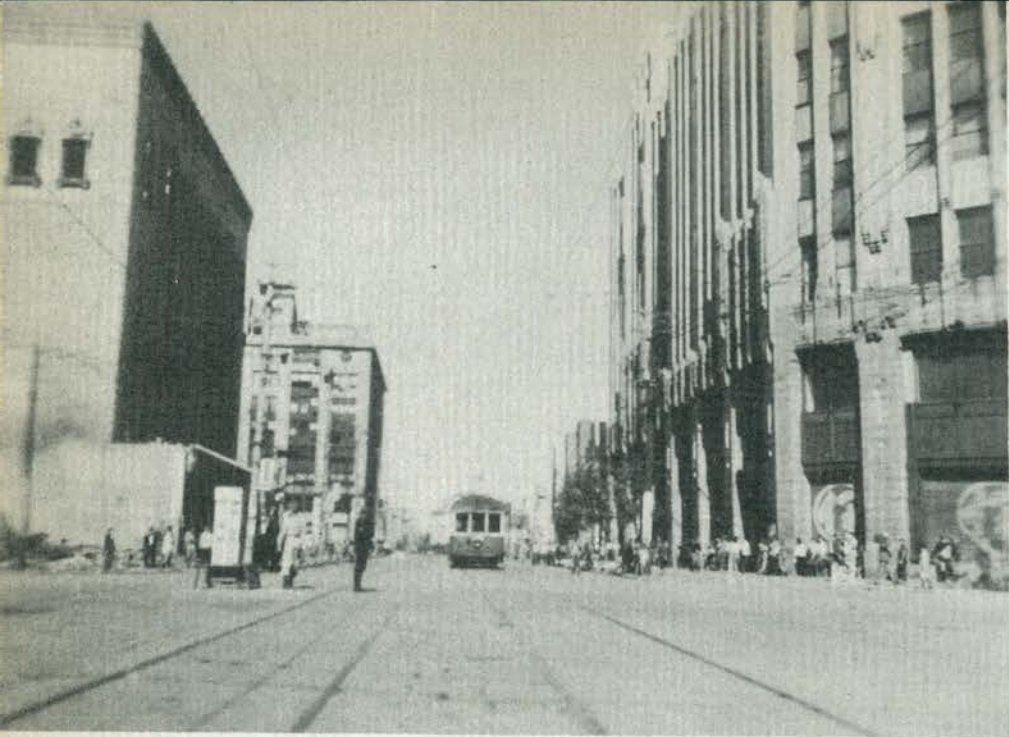
Heavy seas

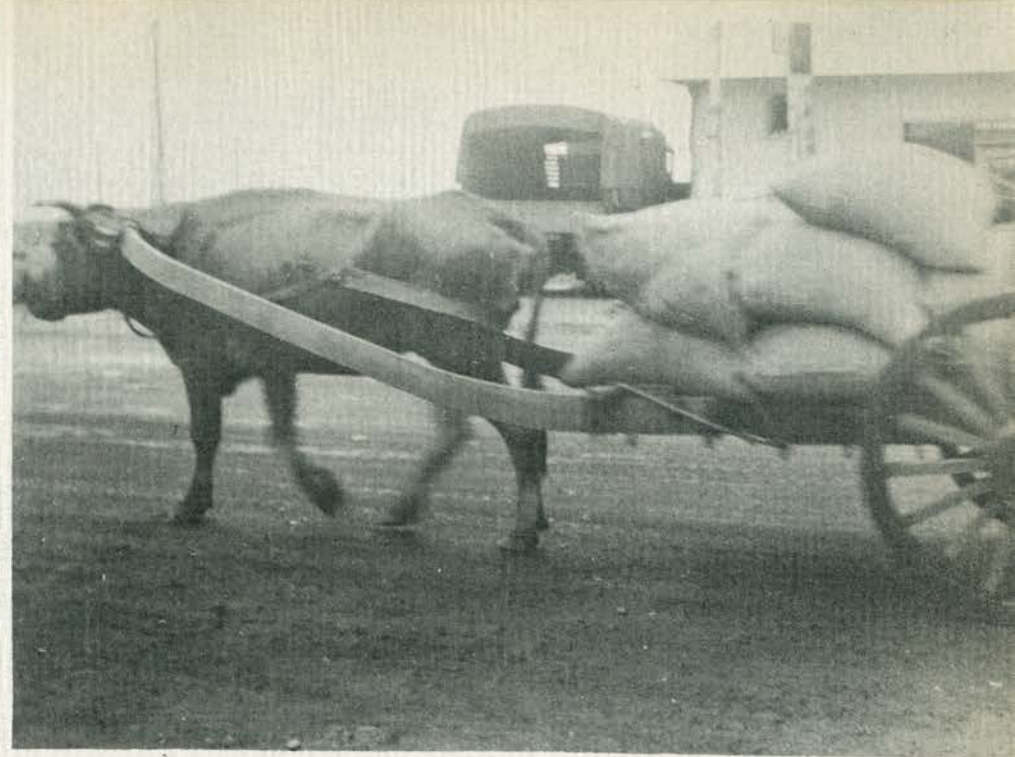


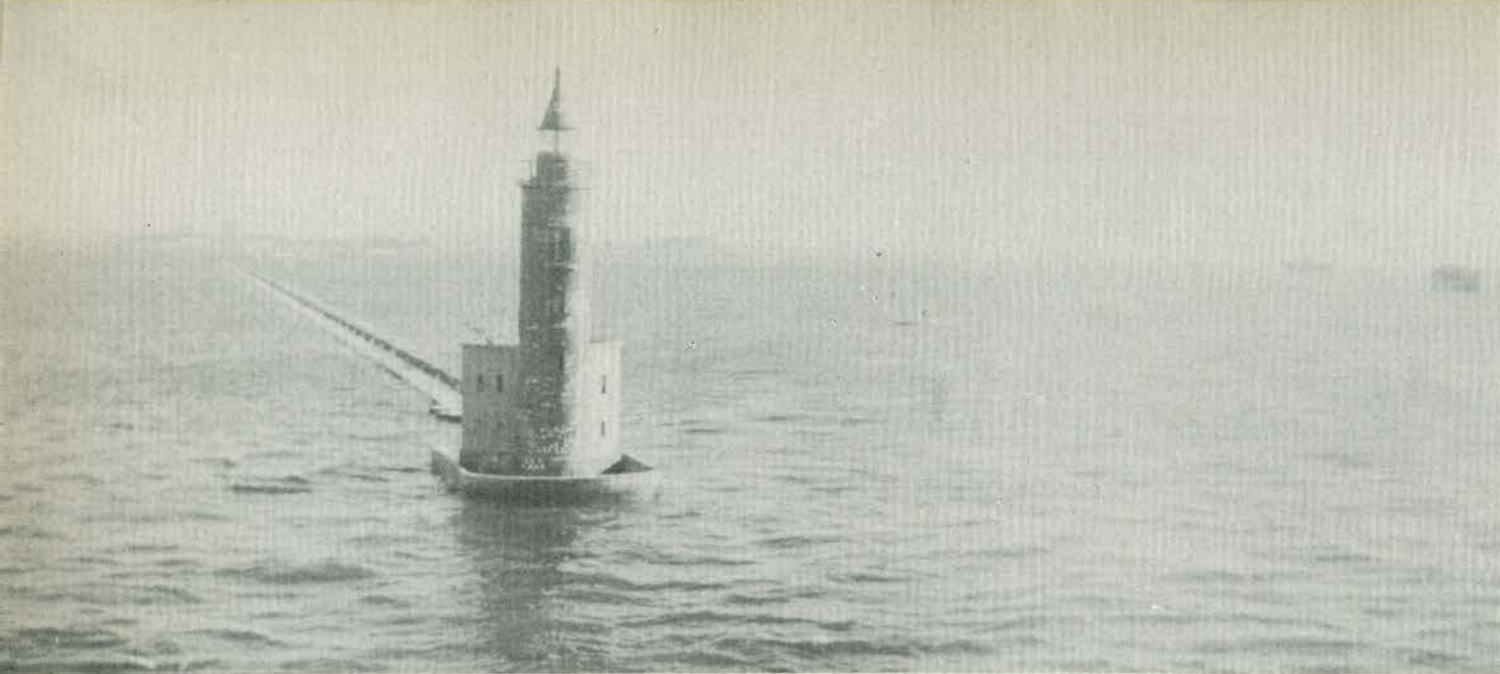


Tokyo and Yokohama





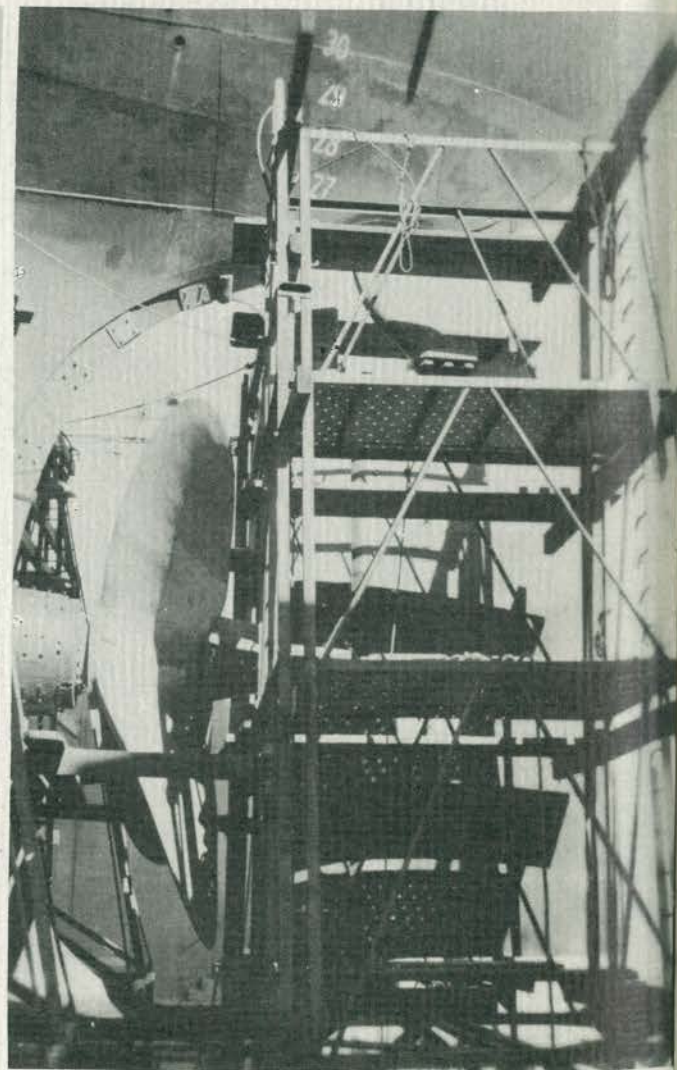
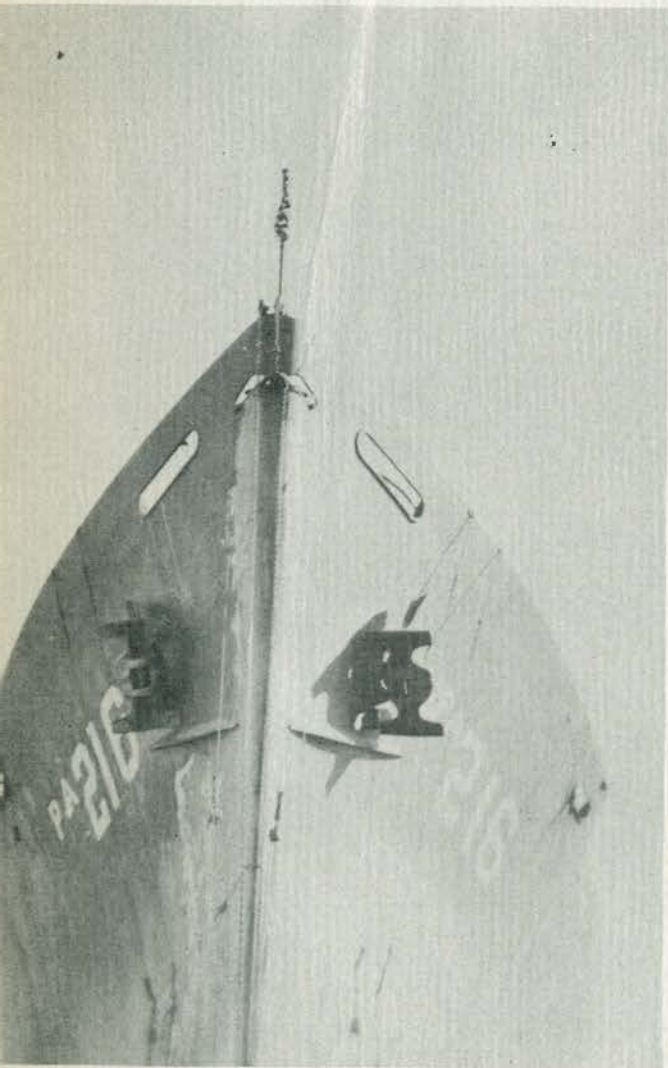


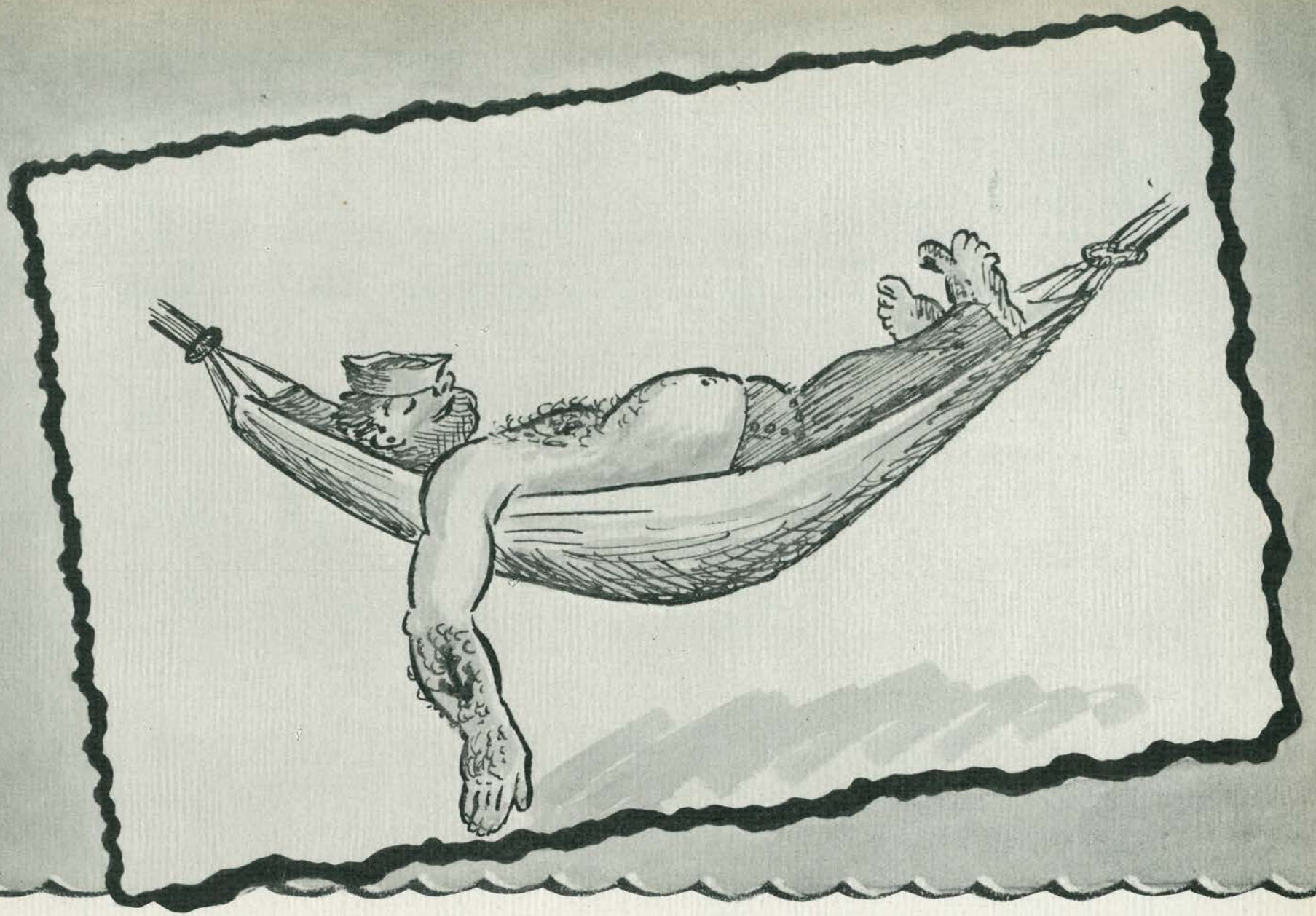




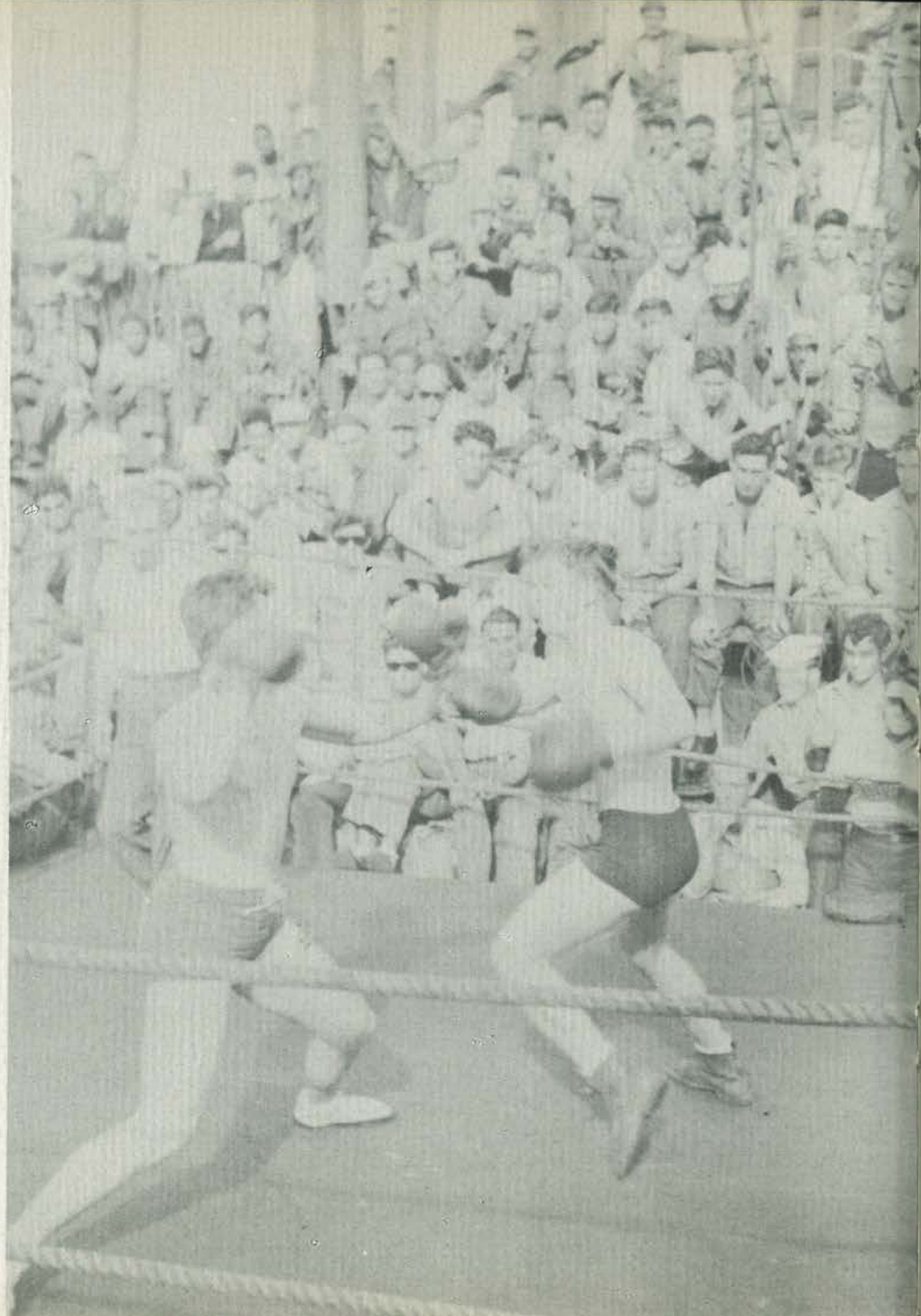
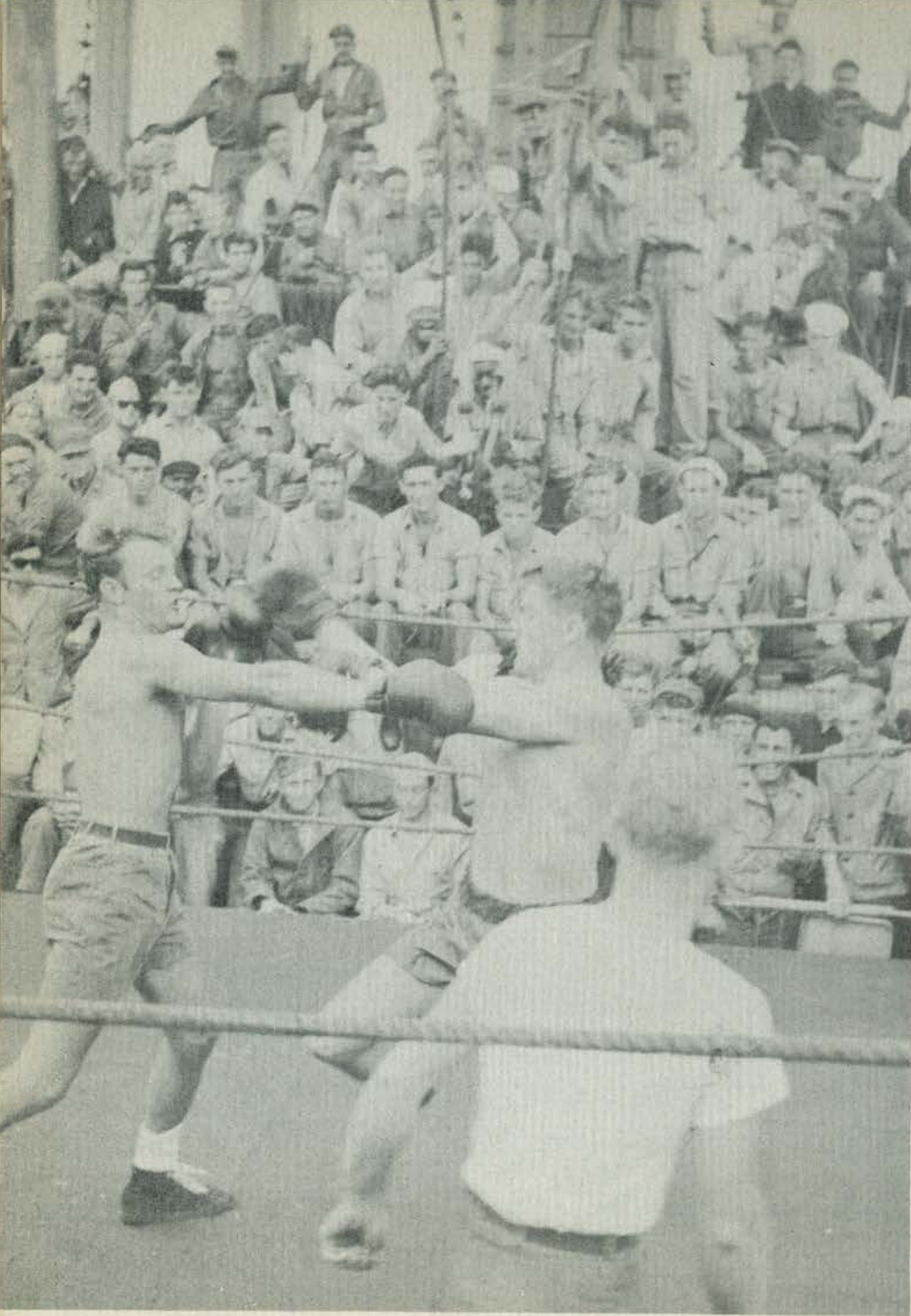
Overhaul

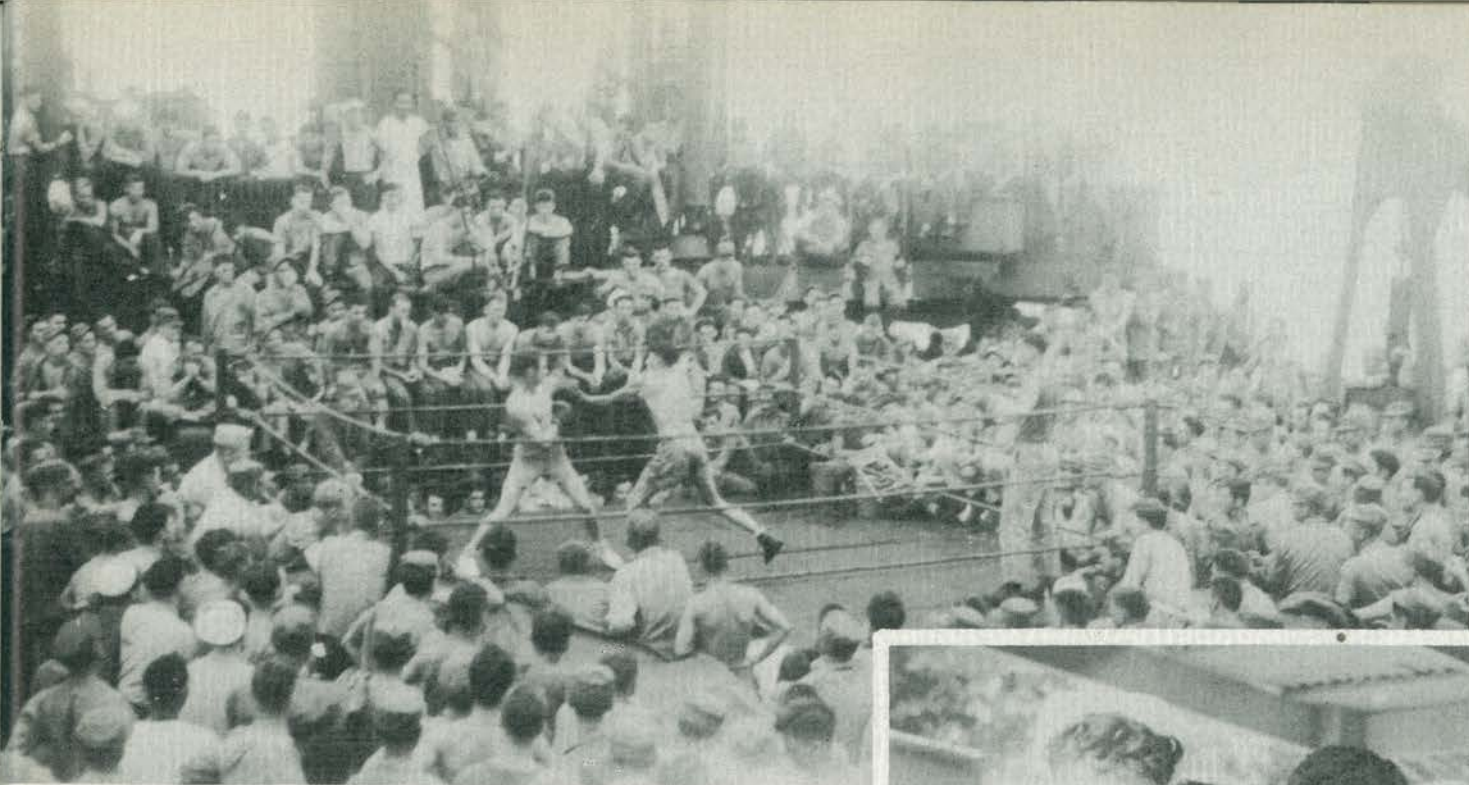
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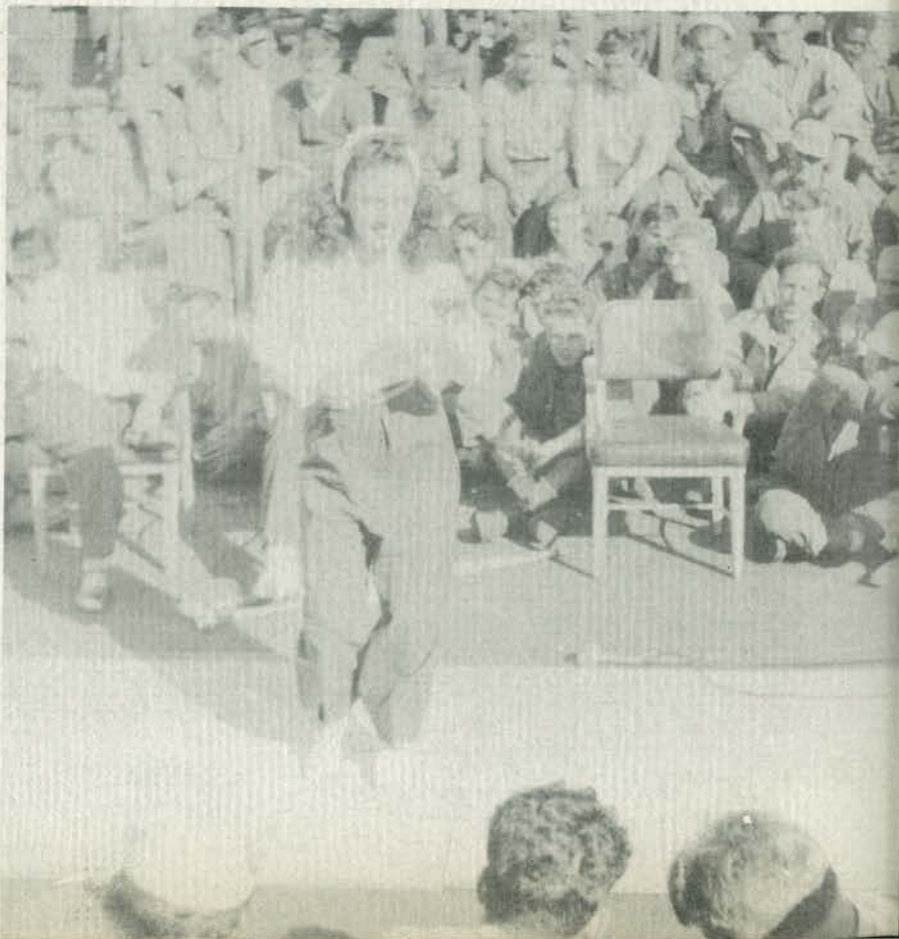


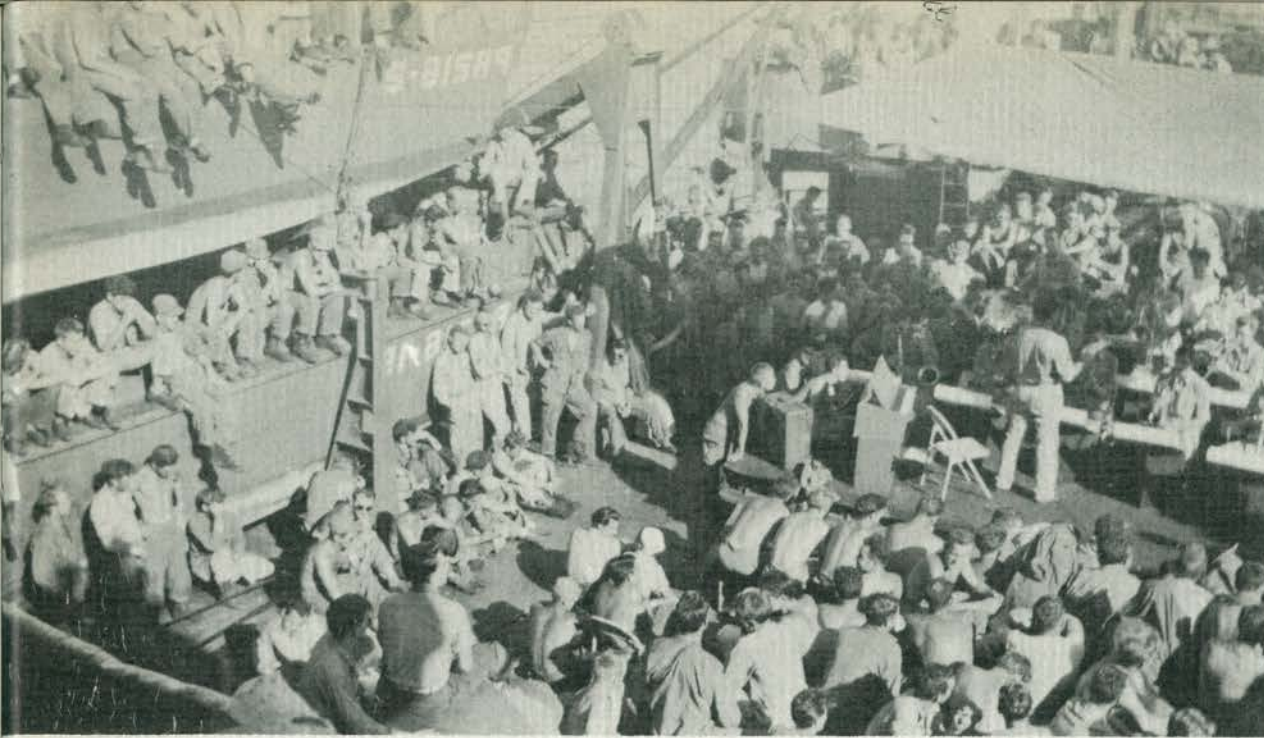


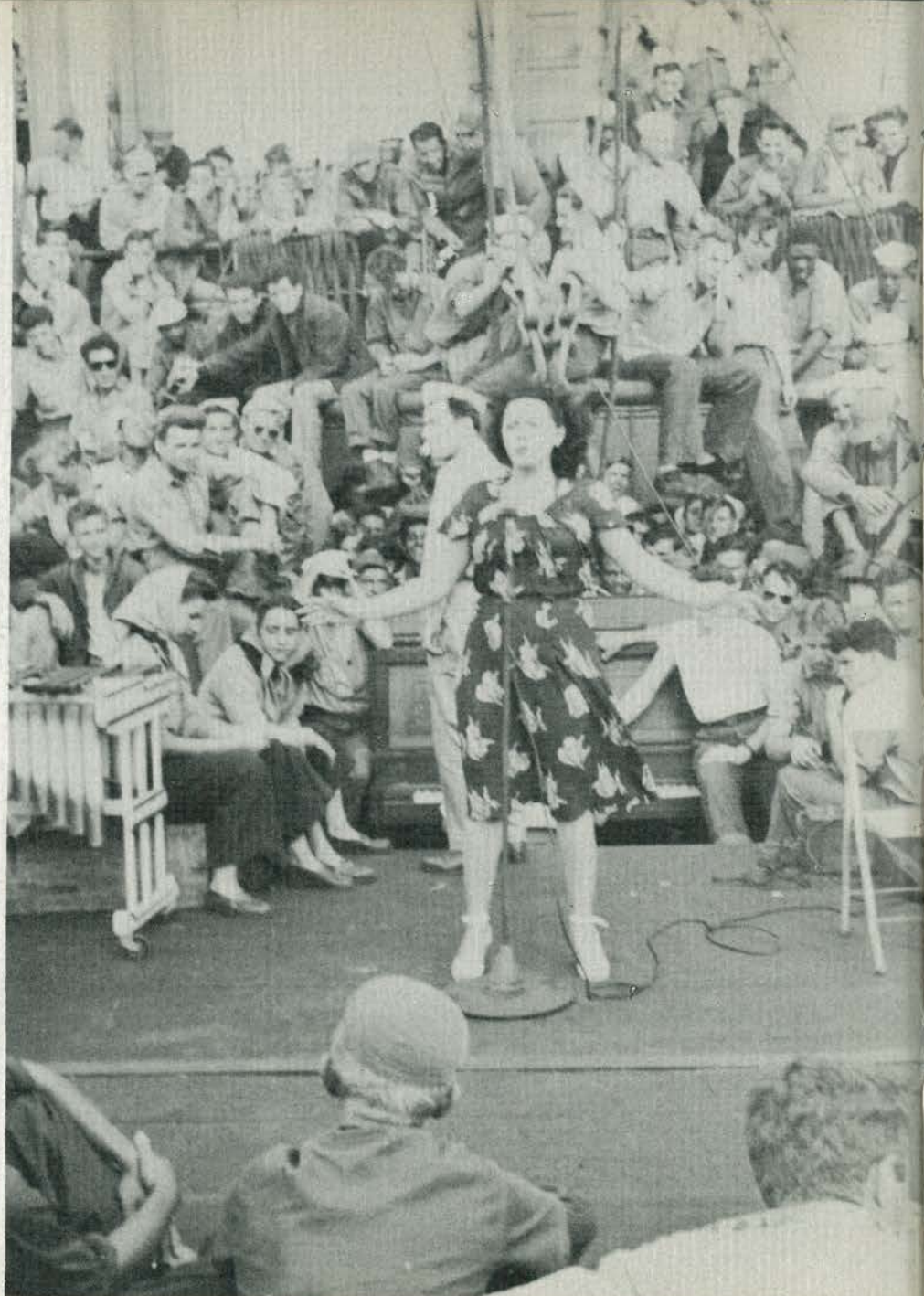
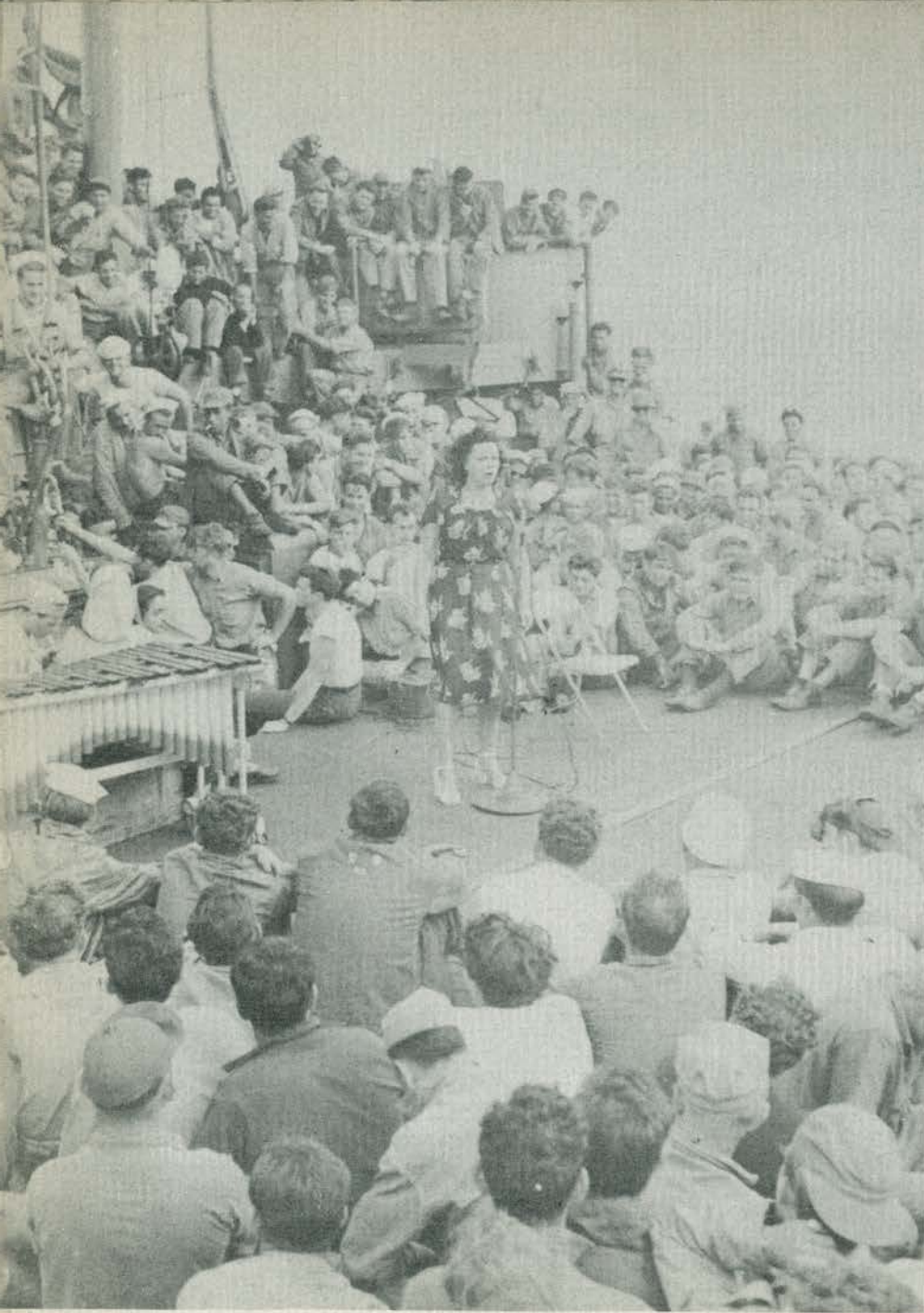
Happy Hour



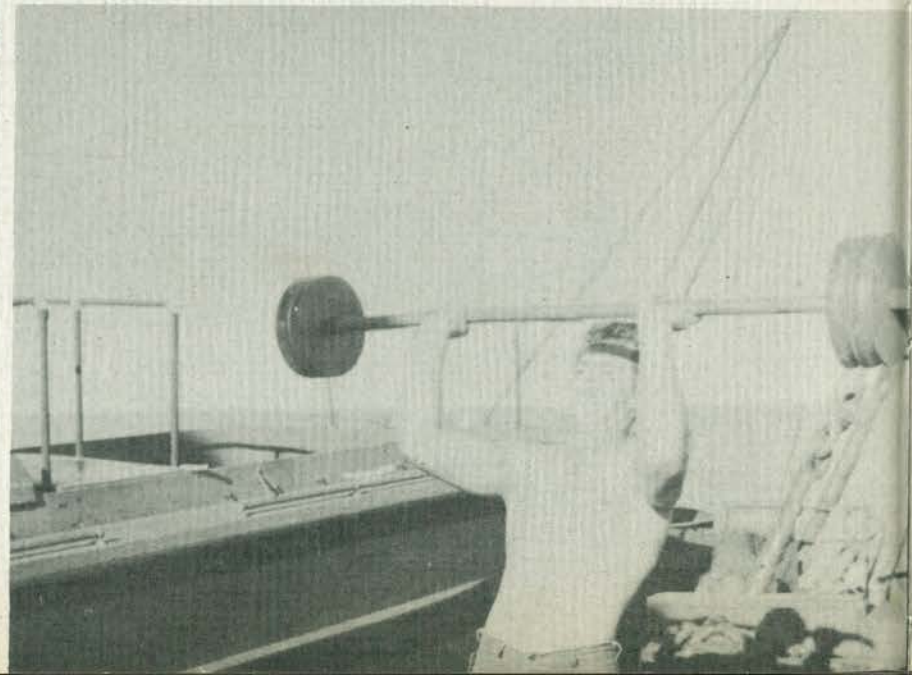
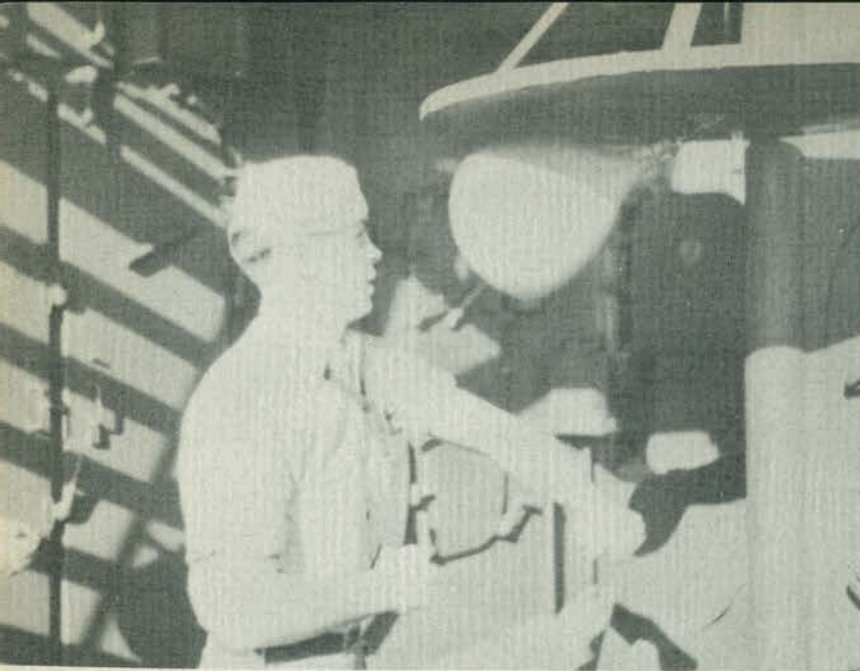


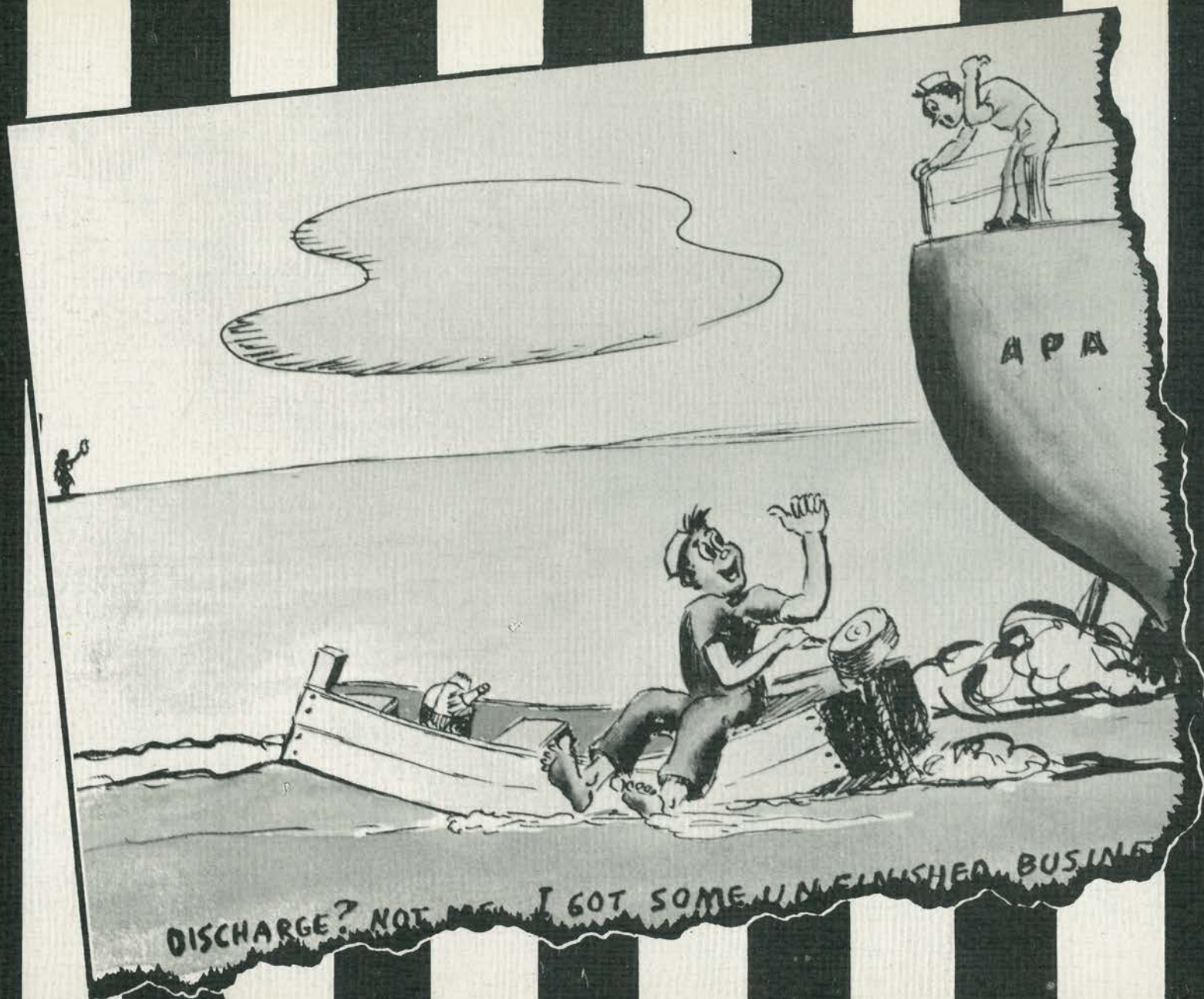












DISCHARGE? NOT ME I GOT SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Woof! Woof!



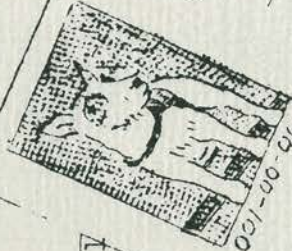
Trident Tribune

THE SOLDIER'S NEWSPAPER

VOLUME 1

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1945

AT SEA
BY T/5 JACK EISEN, Tribune Langming Editor



UNITED STATES NAVY
Identification Card

CARELESS, Shobie (n)

White

Color: Blue & Brown - Eyes: Longing
Mighty Stone - Old enough
Word after DOG - to drink

D. L. EISEN, USNR
Validating Officer

SHIP'S MASCOT DE LUXE

The dog which USS Mesheba sailors call by the name Shobie is no ordinary mascot. He's a dog de luxe, complete with combat credit.

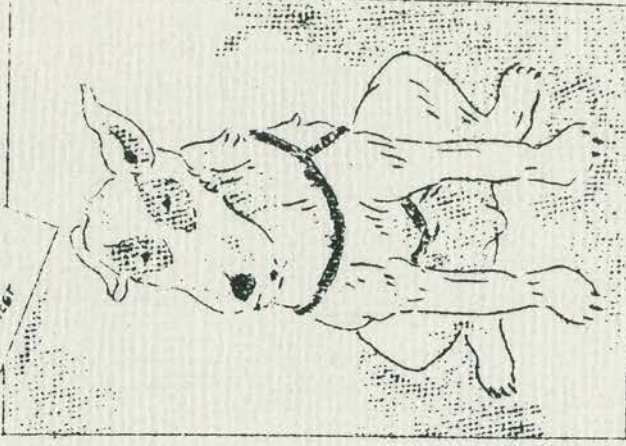
Shobie boasts a service record, just like the boys in blue. On second thought, he's not so boastful, even if it does give him a rate as temporary Chief Bos'un's mate--because, it seems, the little brown and white terrier has some "OL time behind him.

It was back there at Hawaii, when he wanted, well--to go ashore and smell the trees and stuff.

Anyhow, it took him three days to get back and when the boat--pardon, salts, it is a "ship"--got under way, Shobie found himself in the doghouse. In fact, a sunny court martial ordered him restricted to the ship for God knows how long--and, gee! lookit all the free swimming space all around the ship.

One other time, too, he--well, the report turned in tells the story better:

"Encrusted in captain's passageway also borrowed commodore's bedroom slippers for reasons unknown." Executive officer punished him with a clowding, good and proper administered only as a commander can.



"SHOBIE"

Combat Credit--and "VOL"

seen to remember it, though. His service record (he's USNR) reads that he was "shanghaied", which is nothing unusual thanks to a modern institution called Selective Service.

Oh, yes, he cost five bucks for the CPO who got him out of the San Francisco ("Of Frisco) pound, and--geeziz, the chiefs tell us now that he has moved above into that mysterious domain with the sign on the hatch--"Officer Country."

The well-decorated littl pooch is well-trained for combat. (After all, he has the Asiatic-Pacific with battle star for Okinawa, the American theater, the Philippine liberation--no poor conduct, alas). Yep at the first sound of gunfire he heads for his GO station--below in the bilges!

Shobie has a mother, back in his home town of San Francisco (writer's note: iv home town too!) She goes by the name of Ira Little Careless.

Oh, sure! That's Shobie's last name, too, and his service number is 001-00-00--member. Shobie can never which is an easy one to remember it, though.

His service record (he's USNR) reads that he was "shanghaied", which is nothing unusual thanks to a modern institution called Selective Service.

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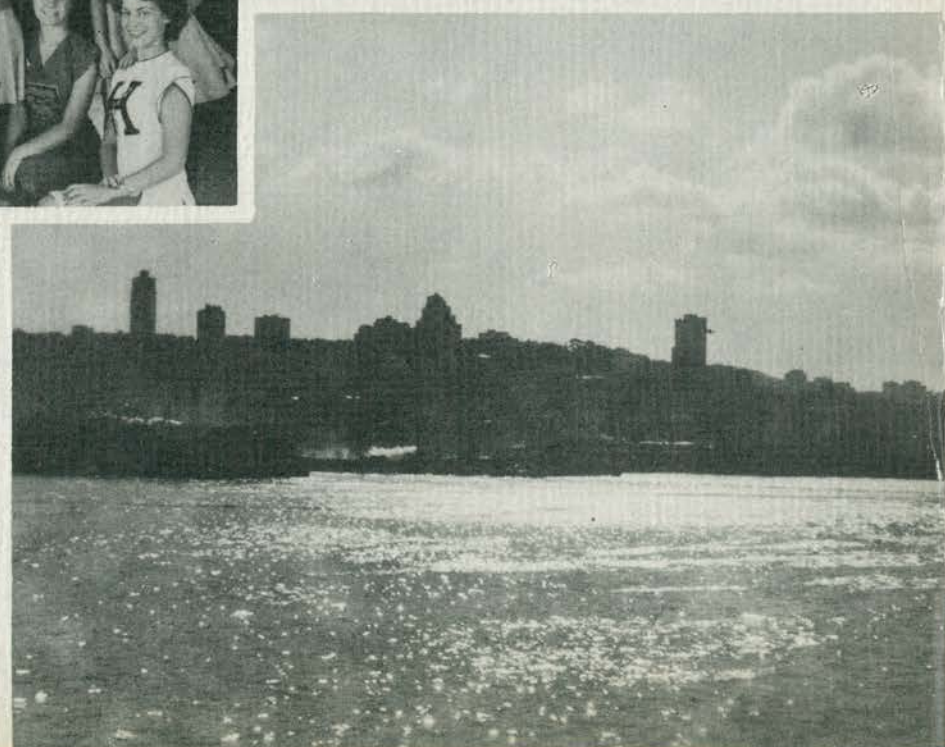
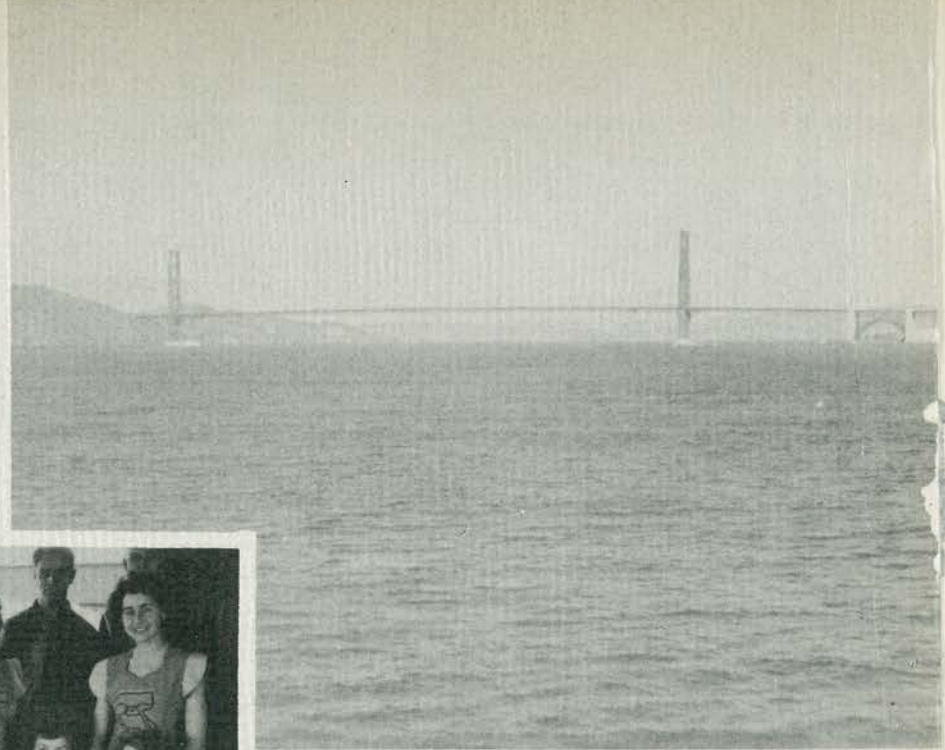
TRUE STORY OF THE LITTLE TERRIER
THAT WENT AWOL TO SELL THE TIMES

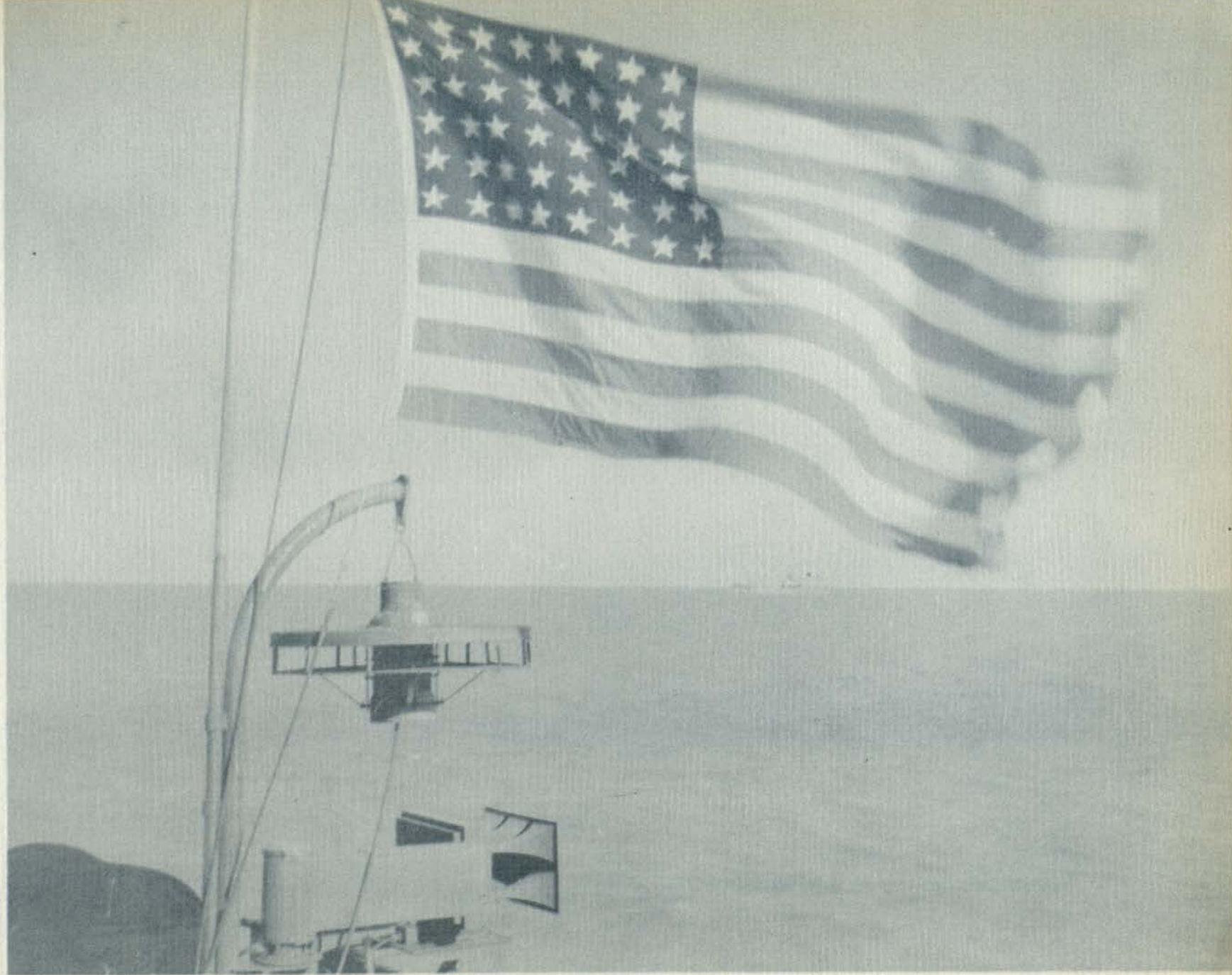
(ETC) ON THE HAWAIIAN ISLAND OF OAHU





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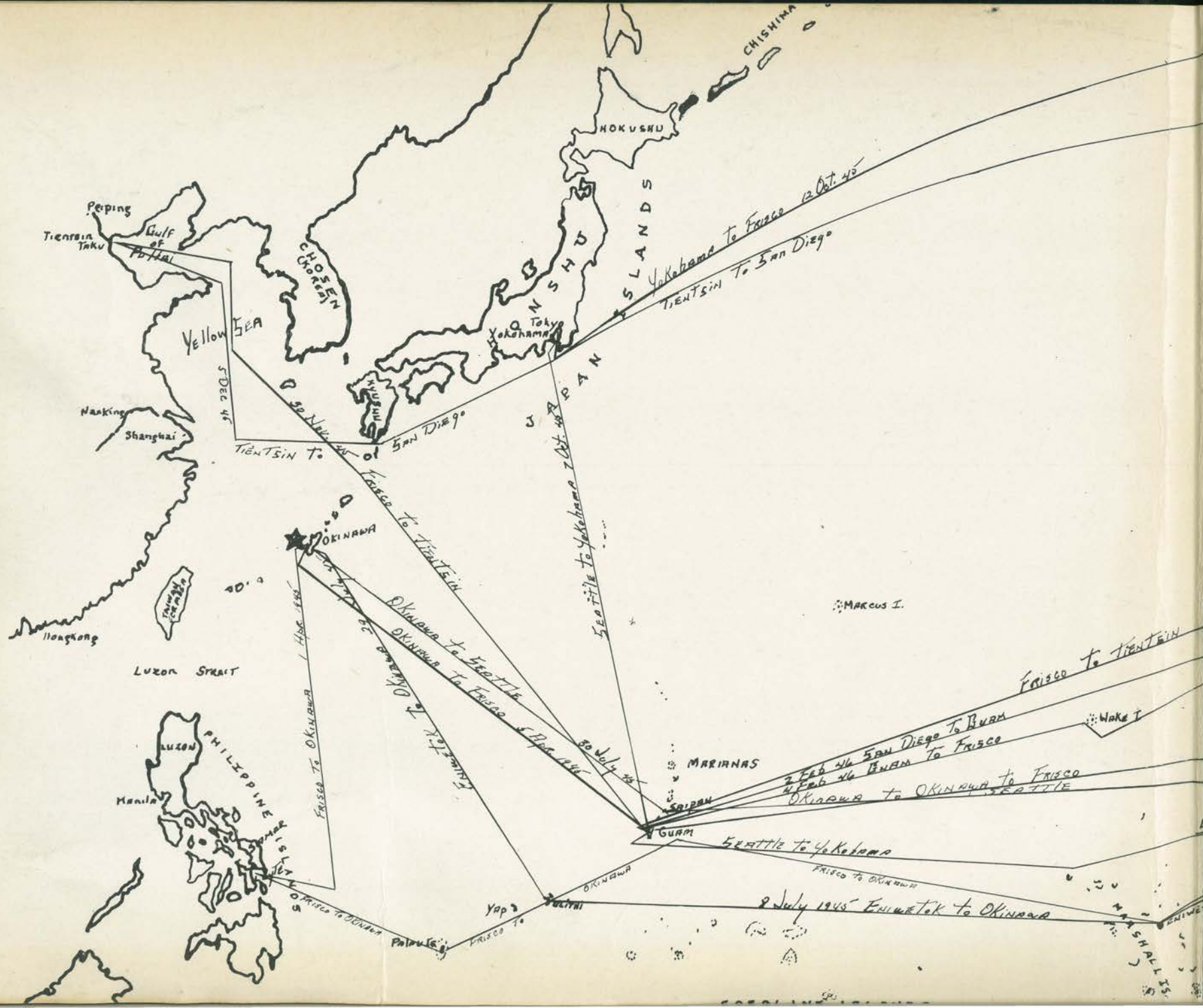
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Yokohama To Frisco

Tientsin To San Diego

Yokohama To Frisco

Seattle To Yokohama
Okinawa To Seattle

10 Sept. 45
24 Aug. 45
8 Nov. 46

Frisco To Tientsin
Frisco To Eniwetok
Frisco To Okinawa
Guam To Frisco

San Diego To G

HAWAIIAN ISLANDS
Midway I.

San Diego To Guam

Guam To Frisco

Okinawa To Frisco

Okinawa To Seattle

Okinawa To Frisco

Seattle To Yokohama

Frisco To Okinawa

