The Spearhead



THE WORLD WAR II HISTORY OF THE

5th Marine Division

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Arrival in Japan

AT EARLY DAWN of September 22, 1945, seven months and three days after the assault on Iwo Jima, the 5th Marine Division arrived in its transports off northwestern Kyushu, the southernmost of the four large islands that form the country of Japan. As the ships began to twist from the open sea through narrow land-locked channels into sheltered bays, the Leathernecks of the 5th saw Japan for the first time. It is a green and mountainous land and it seemed untouched by war. Gray mists parted over it to disclose the neatly graded and extensively cultivated terraces climbing from the water's edge to the tops of the steep hillsides.

Two days before this Lieutenant Colonel Kenyth A. Damke, the 5th Division inspector, and Major Erskine, the senior Japanese linguist, had landed in the port of Sasebo with a Corps reconnaisance party. Later on the morning of the 22d they came back to the 5th Division headquarters ship to make their report. They said that the Japanese cooperation was excellent but that the city was a shambles and in a very insanitary condition. While this and other detailed information was relayed from ship to ship, the convoy nosed on into Sasebo's huge inner harbor. Crowding the rails, Marines of the 5th saw clusters of ships riding at anchor, ships of two navies. Sleek, battle-trim U.S. men-of-war of the Pacific Fleet stood to proudly in the center of the harbor, covering the sprawling mountain-locked city with their guns. Here at Sasebo was Japan's third largest naval base and in rock-bound inlets along the harbor shore floated remnants of the enemy's sea power.

The chief interest of the watching Marines centered on the enemy aircraft carriers. There were three of them, two aground and a third, though still afloat, listing heavily. Near the carriers were nests of destroyers with their superstructures blasted and wide holes in their hulls. Twelve submarines coated with rust lay deep in the water or beached against the ragged shore line.

The convoy dropped anchor about two miles from Sasebo. A flat peninsula close by extended into the bay and on it was a naval air station. From their transports the Marines of the 5th could see a small grass-covered runway, deserted hangars and heaps of aircraft wreckage around the field. It was here that the first occupation troops for southern Japan would go ashore.

Colonel Graham's CT 26 was the first unit to clamber down the cargo nets from the *Grafton, Karneş, Bowie, Fallon* and *Alamance* into the landing craft. The Marines debarked with their full battle equipment, ready for any emergency. The landing craft formed into waves at 0900 and made the short, choppy run ashore. There were no steep black beaches this time, but gently sloping seaplane ramps of concrete. Major Rea's LT 2/26 landed first and on their heels came Lieutenant Colonel Pollock's LT 1/26 and supporting units of the combat team and regimental headquarters. In less than two hours the combat team, less the 3d Battalion, the Weapons Company, and minor attachments, was ashore and advancing inland. It met no opposition of any kind.

The mission of the occupying forces was to see that the Japanese observed the terms of surrender. Accordingly surveillance over the area was immediately established. Units moved along the roads into Sasebo, placing guards on ammunition dumps and other stores of war materials and on gun emplacements and military buildings. When armed Japanese sentries were found they were disarmed and replaced by Marines.

Meanwhile General Robinson, the Assistant Division Commander, had debarked from landing craft at Sasebo itself with his staff and with Signal, Reconnaissance and Military Police detachments. This group moved rapidly through the center of the city to the Sasebo fortress artillery barracks and set up an ad-



(1) Transports carrying Marine occupation forces for southern Japan steam into Sasebo's huge inner harbor. (2) Fighting ships of the Navy were already there. (3) Primed for any emergency, troops prepare to land on the enemy's homeland. (4) Leathernecks of CT 26 in landing craft ready to go ashore. (5) Ships move into the dock area to unload.



The infantryman's personal means of transportation comes in for attention as occupation spreads throughout Sasebo.

vance Division command post in these abandoned buildings.

Concurrently also, the transports carrying Colonel Wornham's 27th Marines moved into the Sasebo Navy Yard and debarked the 27th onto the docks. The regiment immediately deployed and moved out into the harbor area and the city proper. Shore-party battalions and LT 3/28 began to unload ships by 1500. Artillerymen under Colonel Waller landed at the Sasebo aircraft factory, a mile and a half away. The 1st Battalion of the 13th Marines had its howitzers emplaced and ready to fire by 1200. The 2d Battalion of the regiment acted as infantry troops and occupied the Japanese installations of the area. The 5th Tank Battalion landed at the naval air station and was also used as infantry. Other troops remained in reserve aboard ship prepared to debark instantly on order.

► OCCUPYING THE CITY

THUS THE MARINES of the 5th Division rapidly enveloped Sasebo, placing guards on every military installation and on such civilian centers as the post office, the police and fire stations, the water and gas works, the city hall, bus terminals, newspaper offices, the telephone and telegraph exchanges, and all sanitation and public health facilities. It rained at intervals as the work went on. The roads were poor and this slowed down the occupation to some extent, but nowhere did the 5th run into resistance. Japanese forces had been cleared from the area and so, apparently, had practically all civilians. Throughout the city itself were civilian police wearing swords but these had no clear notion of their duties and saluted when they were hailed and stood at respectful attention when they were questioned. They bowed deeply when the questioning was over.

The Leathernecks found satisfaction in what they saw. They had helped to whip the Japanese when the going was hardest. Now they saw that Sasebo was in the same condition as the fleet it once had harbored. It was a dead and unmanned city of two hundred thousand people. It seemed beyond all hope of recovery; its commerce and industry were at a standstill and extreme poverty was apparent. It was a scarred shadow of a once prosperous port, a symbol of war's destructiveness. Three months before this American B-29s had dropped thousands of fire bombs onto the city. In the words of an eyewitness, Sasebo became "a veritable hell . . . flames shooting two hundred feet into the air . . . screams of the dying and injured . . . rain pouring down in torrents . . . thousands of frightened Japanese running."

The raid caught the city by surprise and when the bombs had done their work great sheets of flame were driven across the city by the high winds, damaging or destroying three-quarters of the city area in the next twenty-four hours and killing more than a thousand and injuring two thousand more. Since then there had



The Division moves into ruined Sasebo. Only Japanese police (left) showed themselves to the occupation forces.

been no attempt to clear the wreckage except for a few of the principal streets. There was still an area two miles square covered with stinking rubble, the few frame buildings still rising from the ruins were scorched and blackened, and structures of corrugated iron were rusting and crumbling from rain and disuse. There was hardly an intact pane in any window. By government order all ceilings had been removed from houses, barracks and other buildings in order to keep incendiary bombs from starting fires in attics. A large Catholic church on one of the many hills sloping into the city remained intact.

The naval base had not been struck by bombs. It had, however been abandoned about a month before the 5th Marine Division occupied Sasebo and the Division found it a picture of decay and despair. With the steady shrinking of the Japanese fleet, the drydocks, ship cranes, and warehouses of Sasebo had deteriorated from lack of use and repair. Some shops had been stripped bare of their machinery, and the few still containing their equipment indicated that much of the machinery used had been of American and English make. Fuel drums and metal wreckage of all sorts lay along the concrete piers in an advanced state of rust. Long lines of military vehicles, flimsy in appearance, stood nearby. These had not been bombed; they were simply worn out.

But this surface appearance of weakness was belied by many facts to the contrary. As men of the 5th Division closely examined the city, they found numerous war plants and other military installations deep underground, untouched by bombs or fire. It became rapidly apparent that an invasion of Kyushu would have been costly indeed. The large army forces on the



Sasebo Artillery Fortress, the Division's first command post in Japan, later became the home of the Pioneer Battalion.

island had never been defeated. Kyushu was still a vast storehouse of military equipment. Its ample underground command and communication centers were intact as were the complete submarine assembly plants found in waterfront caves. Everything underground, including machine shops, repair shops, lens-grinding shops, was in an excellent state of preservation, and on close study of the installations above the surface it seemed probable that much of the deterioration from rust had occurred in the period of five weeks between the surrender and the occupation.

► THE JAPANESE CIVILIAN

THOSE PEOPLE OF SASEBO who had not fled peered from behind shuttered windows as the Marines advanced through their city. A few of the especially curious watched briefly from the doorways, but for the most part the native population hid fearfully from the occupying forces. Marines guarding installations and buildings even in the very heart of the city found that there was no one to guard them against. The streets remained deserted except for a few civilian police in their black uniforms and capes. Sasebo had been a rigidly guarded military area and few of its residents had seen white men before. All they knew of Americans was what lying propaganda had told them. And they knew, also, from that propaganda that the invading "barbarians" would in all probability kill them on the slightest provocation. The reason so many had fled the city was the expectancy of loot and rape, and their first sight of the grim and heavily armed Marines did nothing to alleviate their fear.



Men of Company E, 27th Marines, raise the U. S. colors atop a hill overlooking Sasebo.



A Catholic church stands amid Sasebo's ruins.

But the city was not without signs of life. A baby cried behind one lattice-work with the yell of children all over the world. A few of the more venturesome came out hesitantly to sweep their shabby doorsteps. Late on the first day a few more came out into the streets and went nervously about their business. In the very center of the city a woman hoed a tiny vegetable patch between two burned-out buildings.

Soon there was a change. The children were the first to lose their fear. These doll-like small fry, most of them wearing uniforms and thoroughly accustomed to saluting, soon began to line the streets and gaze with wide eyes at the Marines and their vehicles. The children's curiosity was soon shared by their elders. Old and young alike seemed especially amazed at the American jeeps and trucks which, regardless of heavy rains and bad roads had the power to travel where their drivers took them. Bulldozers and other earth-moving equipment brought even more amazement. And not the least of the startling sight were the Marines themselves. Men with blue eyes and light hair were astonishing enough, but red-haired Marines were beyond imagination.

Direct indications of friendliness and hospitality were not long in following. One of the first units to enter Sasebo was the reinforced platoon of seventy Marines under Lieutenant Robert L. Davis. As his men moved rapidly through a cold rain into the heart of the city they were ready for trouble. But suddenly a Japanese woman ran toward them with a tray of cups and a steaming pot of tea, and then came a man with a basket of cakes. The men were hungry and cold but the order was—"no fraternization," and the platoon commander stuck to his orders. In the continuing rain his men then began to set up his command post in an open area that had been levelled by fire. In a little while several Japanese women came up with a sheet of canvas and began to erect a tent and Lieutenant David put it to use. A little later on another decision was necessary. Four girls from a nearby *geisha* house came to his headquarters in their best silk kimonos, squatted in a row in front of the tent and began to sing and create weird dances with dolls. This the Marines later described as "rather distracting," and so they ignored the *geisha* girls as best they could until they went back to their house. Still later one Leatherneck on guard at a busy intersection called frantically for the sergeant of the guard. The sentry was a tall, wavy-haired blond Marine of twenty. He was in special trouble for a Japanese woman had so admired his golden



Top: B-29s had visited Sasebo. Bottom: Fire-gutted Sasebo—suburbs minus a business district.

locks that she was following him back and forth along his post, tugging at his elbow and trying to stroke his hair, and he found it impossible to maintain a military bearing. Lieutenant Davis solved this one too. "The only thing I could do," he later explained, "was to call the Japanese civilian police to take her away. Then I put 'Blondie' on a less conspicuous corner."

By the close of the first day forty per cent of the 5th Marine Division was ashore. There had been no resistance whatever and the Japanese had everywhere cooperated exactly as directed. Unloading continued through that night and all the next day. The occupying Marines now had complete control of all military installations and equipment in the immediate Sasebo area.

On the afternoon of the second day General Bourke opened his Division command post ashore at the Sasebo Fortress. General Robinson's ADC group, which had first occupied the shabby, abandoned barracks, were forced to make one of the few retreats in



Famed Marine Corps "Devil Dogs" accompanied the Division to Japan. Here Tony stands watch with his handler, Pfc. Llewellyn Tinner.

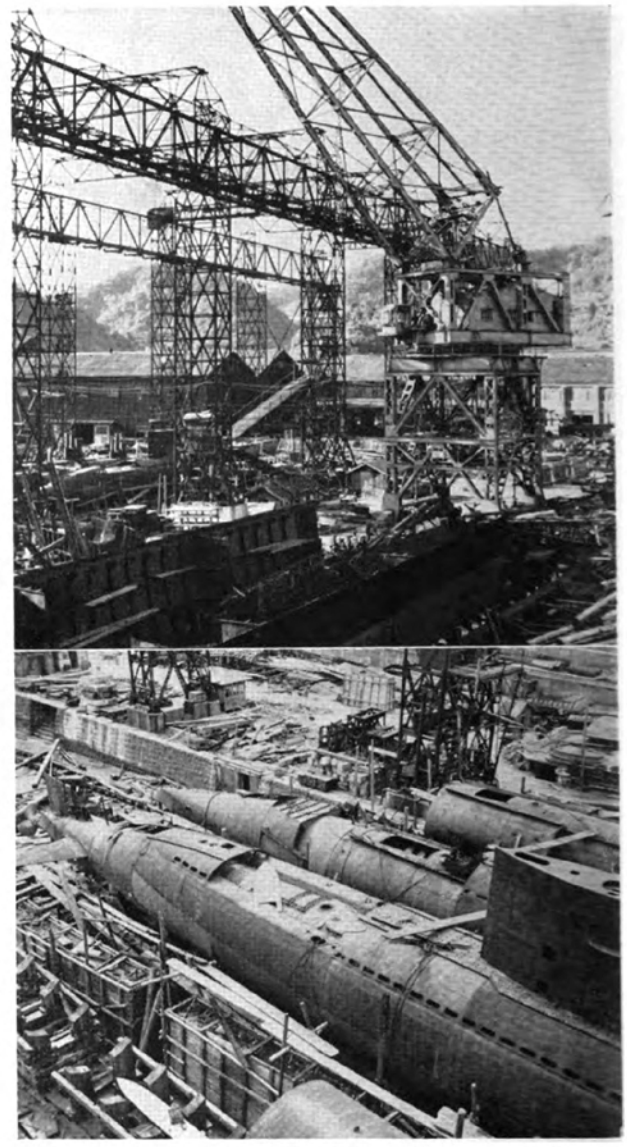
Marine Corps history. Lice and other vermin had driven them out-of-doors. They went back into the barracks only after gallons of DDT had been sprayed by sanitation squads.

At dusk of the second day the whole of the 5th was ashore except for LT 3/26, CT 28 headquarters, and some of the service elements. They all landed the following day.

► GETTING SETTLED

IT WAS THE LIMITED DOCKING SPACE and the rundown port facilities which made the Sasebo unloading slow and difficult. Some ships unloaded in the stream into small boats. Ashore there was hardly any open storage space to be found, and most covered areas were crammed full of Japanese material. There was nothing to do but clear away parts of the burned-out sections with bulldozers to create space for storage dumps.

Hence the immediate demands on the engineer and Seabee units were heavy. They also had to go to work on supply roads at once for these soon proved inade-

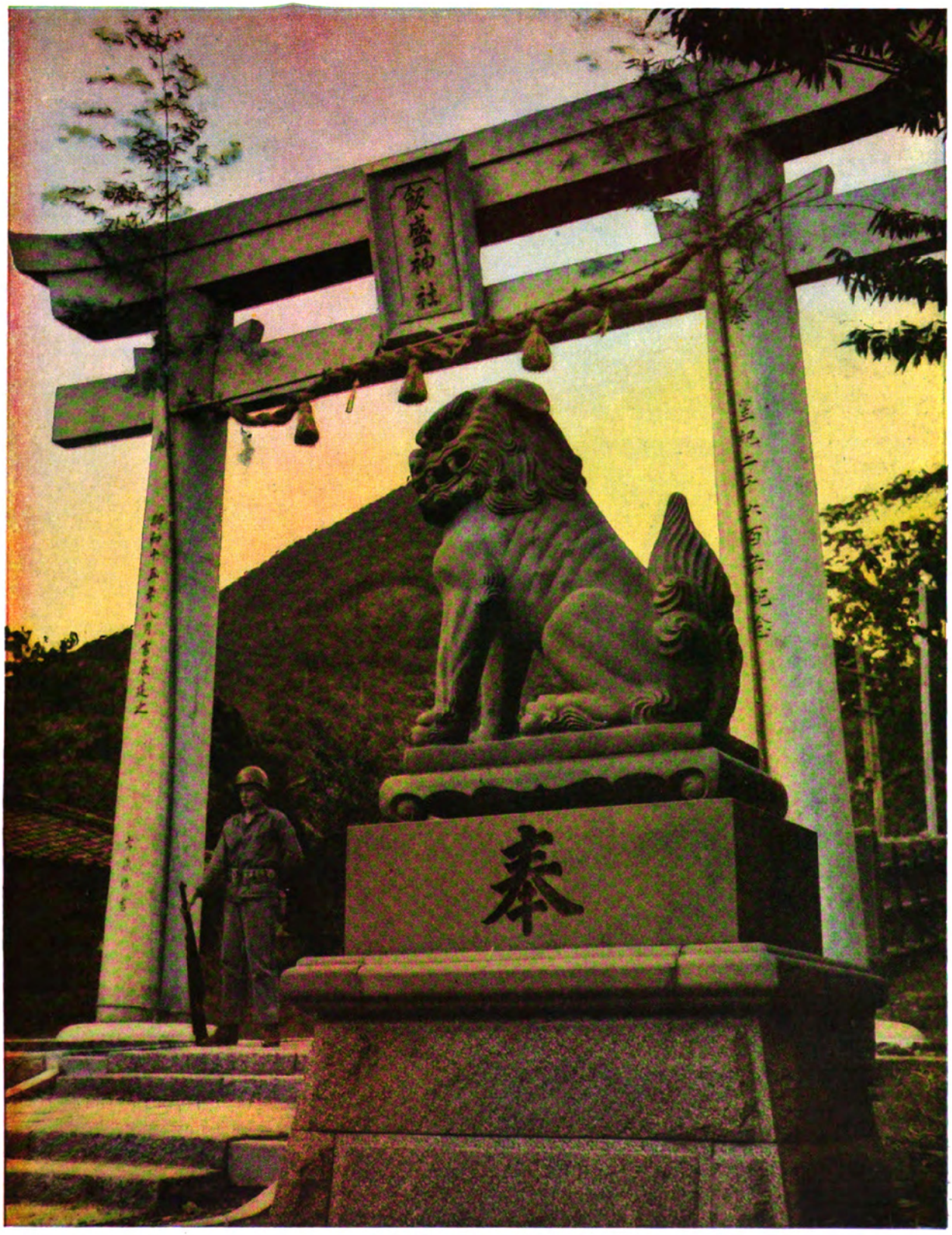


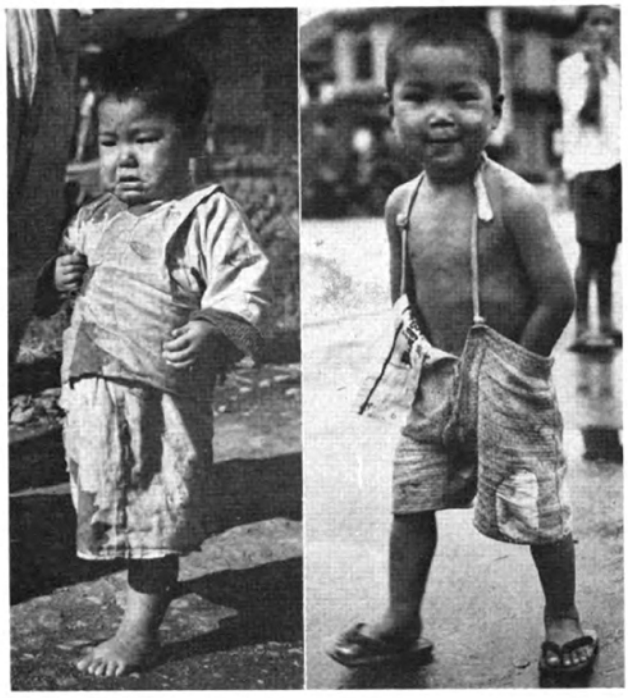
Top: Japan's third largest naval base lies rusting and abandoned. Bottom: Submarines in various stages of construction. Marines also found assembly plants for undersea craft in huge caves near Sasebo.

quate, especially the roads that ran through rice-growing areas which were simply a mass of mud. Without sufficient equipment to quarry and crush rock for roads, they used what material they could find to widen and re-surface them and keep them in repair.

The Japanese military buildings used for billeting also needed extensive repairs. Native bathing and other sanitary facilities that were available did not come up

A Marine stands guard at one of the out-of-bounds Japanese shrines

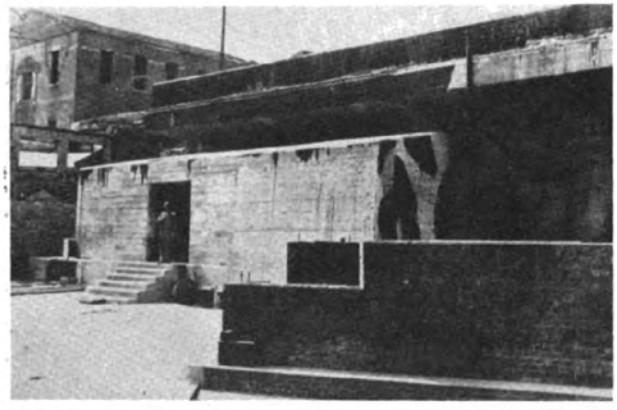

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Small fry were the first to lose their fear of Americans, although some, like the one at left, weren't quite sure at first.



No rape, no pillage. Top: Japanese return to Sasebo from hiding places in the hills. Bottom: Sasebo residents poke through the rubble-filled city in search of their possessions.



Spearhead Marines found hundreds of underground Japanese military installations, factories, and ammunition depots. Above, the entrance to a bombproof command post.

to American standards, and the acrobatics required to use them were beyond the capabilities of most Marines. Nor could the filthy Japanese galleys be used. Moreover, the Japanese had not held men in the area to run the power systems which served the barracks. This and the fact that all local sources of water for washing and bathing had to be initially prohibited threw still further burdens on the engineers and Seabees. But soon they had units installed to purify the water for drinking and cooking.

In a few days General Bourke moved the Division command post from the artillery fortress in central Sasebo to the naval recruit training station at Ainoura, seven miles to the west, which CT 28 had originally occupied. Here there were wooden barracks and administration buildings for thirteen thousand troops, and in this area since 1941 the Japanese had trained recruits and held advance schooling in gunnery, torpedoes and signalling. More than one hundred forty thousand Japanese sailors had passed through the station by the end of the war. Marines of the 5th rapidly converted its huge parade ground into athletic fields and a landing strip for the planes of VMO-5.

The 5th Pioneer Battalion with military police and motor transport units then took over the Sasebo fortress. They furnished working parties to the Division quartermaster, unloading ships and providing guards for dumps and water points, and military police for the city.

Likewise busy were the Marine communication units. They set up a network of telephone wires to supplement radio contact between the different Division

units and they tied in the Japanese wire circuits to other cities. They attracted so many native sidewalk supervisors that they were sometimes hardly able to complete their work. The wire-laying jeeps and Weasels and the wiremen's pole-climbing spikes had a special fascination. Almost the only vehicles the Japanese were accustomed to were antiquated trucks and cars converted into charcoal burners because of the gasoline shortage.

The military police posted "safeguard" signs on churches, shrines and schools. These signs exempted certain installations from search and trespass by occupation troops. They put "out-of-bounds" markers on the different "red light" districts. They handled the local traffic, adapting readily to the fact that it drove on the left-hand side of the road, and they kept a close watch for looting and straggling, and enforced a curfew from 1800 to 0600.

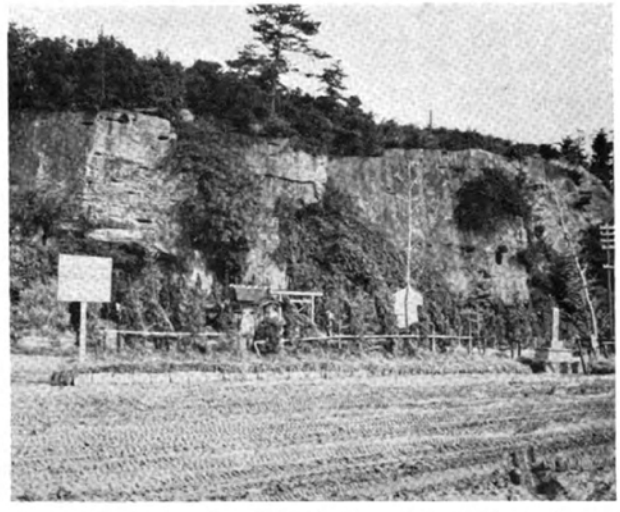
The Division quartermaster section wrestled with the big problem of furnishing the widely scattered and frequently moving military units with the items they needed. The Division Ordnance Company set up an ammunition dump and also began to sort the Japanese weapons classified as trophies. In their warehouse were 65,000 swords, 99,000 rifles, and thousands of other souvenirs—pistols, field glasses, spears and bayonets. The Division medical companies set up unit sick bays and staffed the Division hospital at Ainoura.

The 6th War Dog Platoon did night guard duty in the zone of CT 27. Many K-9s were already being demobilized. Many others could not be "agitated" for over three months and hence were of no use for guard or patrol.

The 31st Seabee Battalion repaired roads and performed other much-needed construction work. The artillerymen of the 13th Marines found the aircraft factory in the hills east of Sasebo completely vacated. The Japanese had even emptied hundreds of filing cabinets of records, and the actual work had been discontinued weeks before. Sagging and collapsed warehouses were still half-filled with crated parts of planes, the seaplane ramps and docks over which the 13th had landed were still piled high with materials, and there were thousands of airplane engines, boxes of 100-pound bombs, seaplane floats, and damaged planes in the storage areas near the factory.

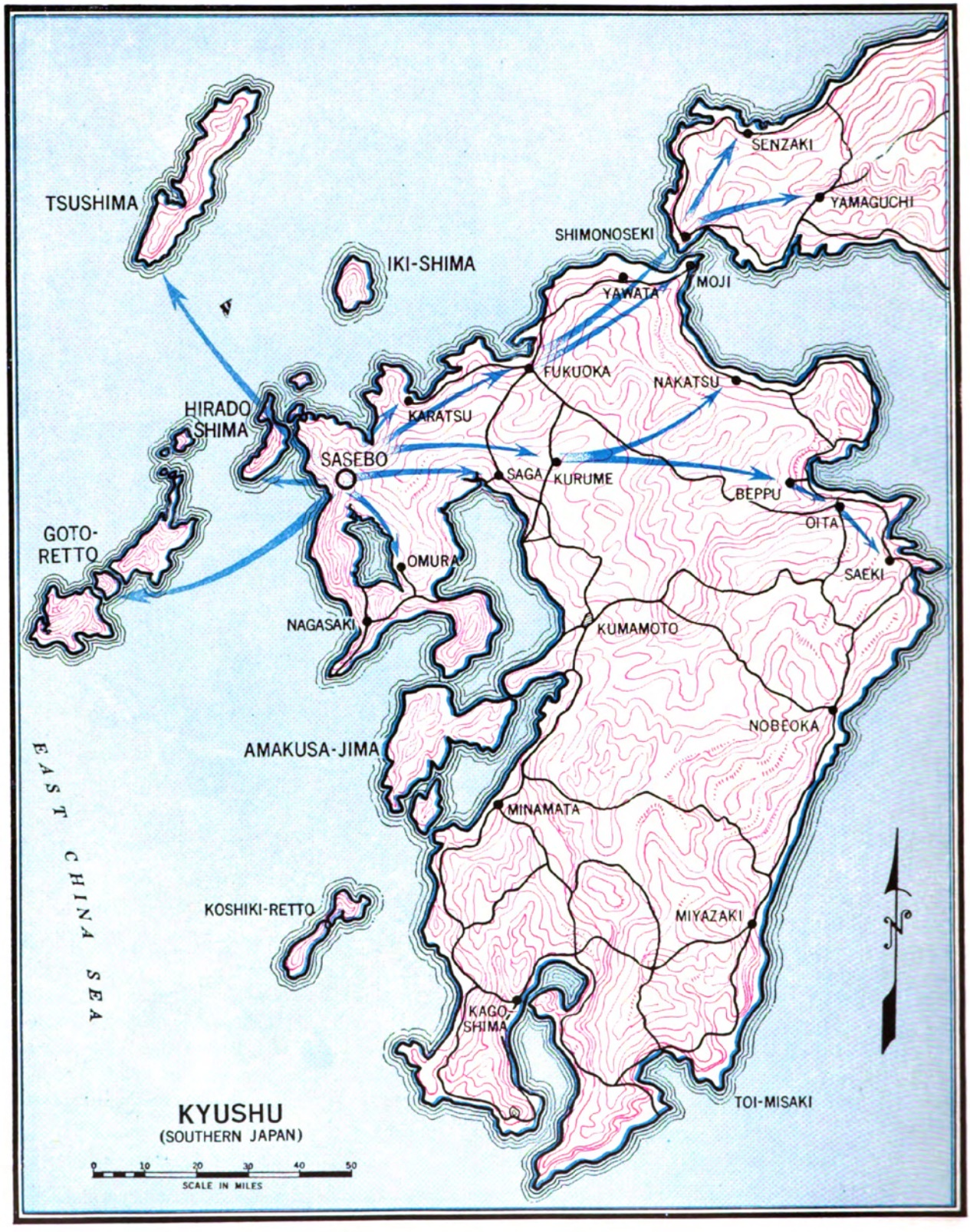


War trophies. Thousands of rifles, swords, and other weapons were turned over to the occupying forces as they stripped Japan of its armament.



A small Japanese shrine beside a road near Sasebo is protected by a safeguard sign and is out of bounds.

As the 5th Marine Division completed its work of establishing order in the Sasebo area, preparations began for parts of the Division to extend the occupation throughout the northern areas of Kyushu and into nearby islands, including southern Honshu, the principal Japanese island.


TSUSHIMA
IKI-SHIMA
HIRADO SHIMA
GOTO-RETTO
SASEBO
KARATSU
OMURA
NAGASAKI
AMAKUSA-JIMA
KOSHIKI-RETTO
EAST CHINA SEA
SHIMONOSEKI
YAWATA
MOJI
SENZAKI
YAMAGUCHI
FUKUOKA
NAKATSU
SAGA
KURUME
BEPPU
OITA
SAEKI
KUMAMOTO
NOBEOKA
MINAMATA
MIYAZAKI
KAGO-SHIMA
TOI-MISAKI
KYUSHU
(SOUTHERN JAPAN)
0 10 20 30 40 50
SCALE IN MILES

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Spread of Our Occupation

THE EXTENSION of the occupation beyond Sasebo actually began on the day after the first Marines of the 5th Division landed on the Japanese mainland. On the morning of the second day, the Omura occupation group—C Company, 27th Marines—began a thirty-mile trip by DUKW to seize the only airfield in that part of Japan capable of handling American fighters and transport planes. The big amphibian trucks, the DUKWs, rightfully famed for the fact that they could go almost anywhere, found the highway system of Kyushu considerably worse than the thick sands of Iwo Jima. The convoy wallowed for eight hours over narrow, muddy, and almost impassable roads before it reached Omura.

Marines of the 27th, under Lieutenant Colonel Robertson, occupied the town and the air station without a sign of opposition. All around the landing strip were bomb-blasted hangars, hundreds of wrecked and half-wrecked planes, and great stacks of other Japanese equipment. There was everything from furlined saddle bags from the Manchurian campaign to bombsights, aerial cameras, machine guns, artillery pieces, and mortars and even several hundred obsolete Russian rifles taken during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05.

At this area there developed some hesitancy on the part of Japanese naval forces to cooperate. They answered the questions asked of them but seemed indifferent as to whether or not their answers were correct. The army units, however, cooperated fully. Elements of the 2d Marine Division, which was based at Nagasaki, relieved our Omura occupation group on October 4, upon which C Company rejoined LT 1/27.

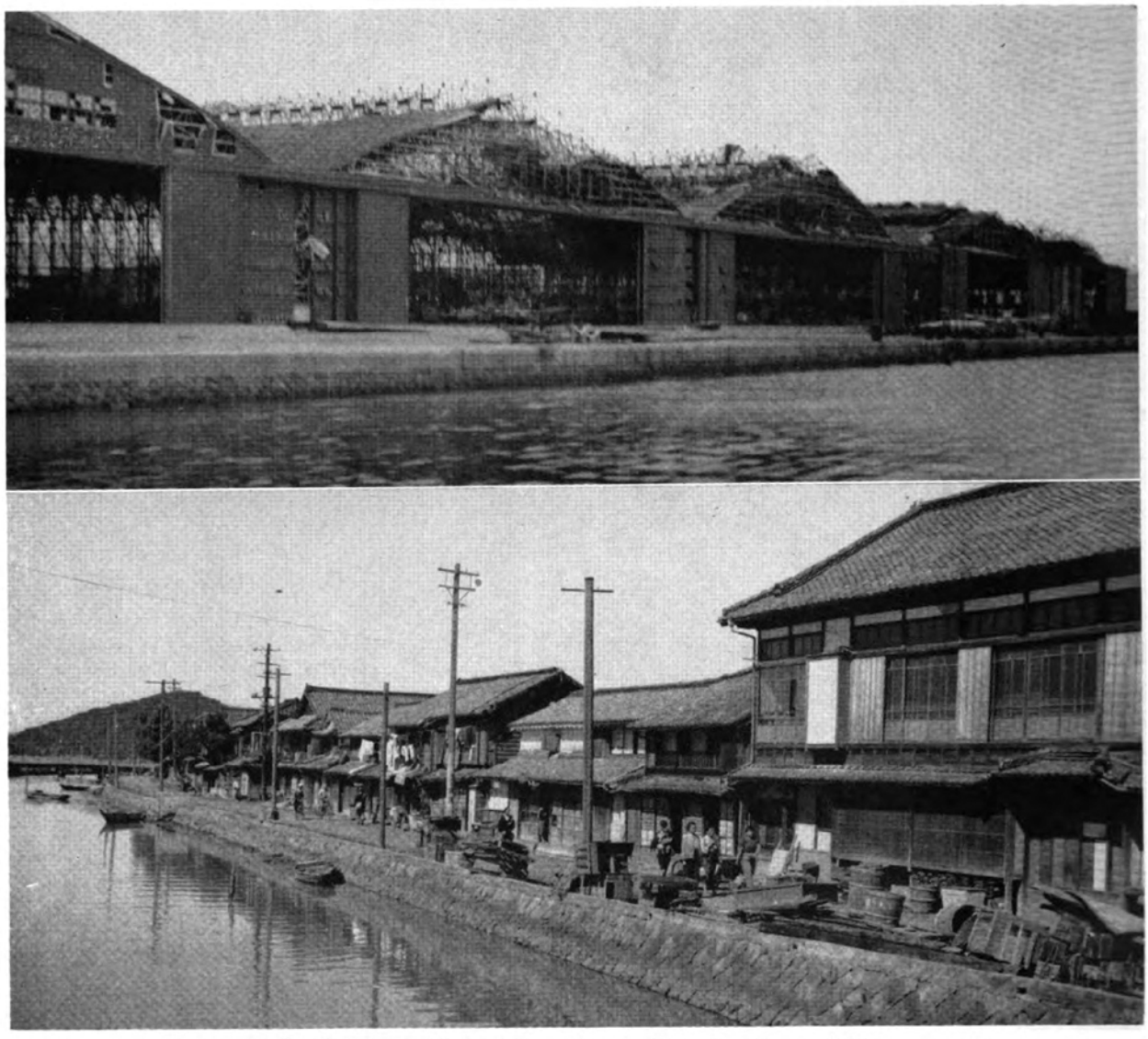
Three days after the occupation 5th Division patrols were sent to nearby rural areas and outlying villages. Only jeeps could negotiate some of the roads. From what they observed in these areas, the Marines felt thankful that the invasion of Japan never went beyond the planning stage. The same burrowing defenses which the Japs had used throughout the Pacific were evident in their homeland. Many extensive defenses were well along in construction. There were thousands of caves and gun emplacements along the principal roads and railroads, and storerooms, machine shops, and living quarters deep underground. Thick concrete made them bombproof, and clever camouflage hid them in the green hillsides. One huge ammunition dump had three steel doors, each like a vault entrance in a modern American bank.

The civilian population had apparently taken little notice of these preparations. In the scenic valleys and along the climbing terraces the Japanese farmer labored peacefully enough. Horses, oxen, and sometimes men and women turned the earth by pulling simple wooden plows, and in many places water buffalo stirred the flooded rice paddies. Misshapen dogs trotted lazily beside rickety farm carts, and children who had never known the horrors of bombing romped as youngsters do on any farm.

A few of the country women and children scrambled into their thatched-roof houses in plain fear of the Americans. But most of the Marine patrols were met with cheers, smiles, and bows instead of the sullen resentment which they had expected. For the most part, the people seemed happy to be rid of the Japanese Army, for it had confiscated everything of value they owned.

These rural Japanese were healthier and more prosperous than the people of the coastal cities. Their homes were in neat repair and the village streets were clear of filth, trash, and mud. The local officials and civilian police welcomed the Leathernecks and helped in collecting thousands of swords, pistols, and rifles.

One week after the landing, the 5th Marine Division's zone of responsibility was extended to include



Hangars at the Omura naval air station (above) shows the effects of U. S. air raids. Below: Japanese homes along the Omura River.

Yagahara, Miyazaki, Arita, Takeo, Saishi, Sechihara, and other small towns to the north and west of Sasebo, and these occupation missions proceeded satisfactorily. Everywhere, the Japanese guards over installations, stores, and equipment were relieved and Marine sentries placed on post offices, city halls, and other civic centers. And throughout the new zone the inventorying of war equipment began. Military government headquarters was established, and liaison with Japanese military and civilian leaders went according to plan. Whenever possible, the Japanese equipment was moved to central storage dumps in order to keep down the number of guard posts. In some places where the Marine detachments were too small to relieve all Japanese guards, surveillance was done by patrols and inspection parties instead.

Once occupying detachments were established, Marine patrols were ordered to surrounding areas to investigate Japanese compliance with the surrender terms and to collect weapons from military guards and civilian police. These patrols—which varied in size from a reinforced platoon to a few men—sometimes remained in small towns for several days until they had completed their missions, and then went back to them at irregular intervals to check on the people. Foot patrols several times checked remote areas.

In each town or village occupation orders were issued to the civil police, mayors, and *ken* (county)





Rural Japan. Using primitive agricultural methods, native farmers till every inch of arable land.

officials, who were held responsible for their execution. One patrol uncovered a cache of twenty-three tons of Chinese coins brought over from Shanghai in 1944 more for their scrap metal value than their currency value.

Jeeps were the most satisfactory vehicles for patrolling. Larger patrols sometimes used DUKWs but they were difficult to navigate over the narrow, twisting roads. However, the Japanese in this area, too, were indiscriminate in their admiration of all American vehicles, from jeeps to earth-moving equipment. Heavy rains at this time of year made roads impassable to Japanese rolling stock, but American transportation churned through the mud without much trouble while the Japanese looked on in open-mouthed wonder.

Other Marine units that pushed along the coastline found in one inlet 150 swift, wooden suicide boats built to ram invasion ships as they approached Japanese shores. Nearby were assembly and machine shops, abandoned and dilapidated.

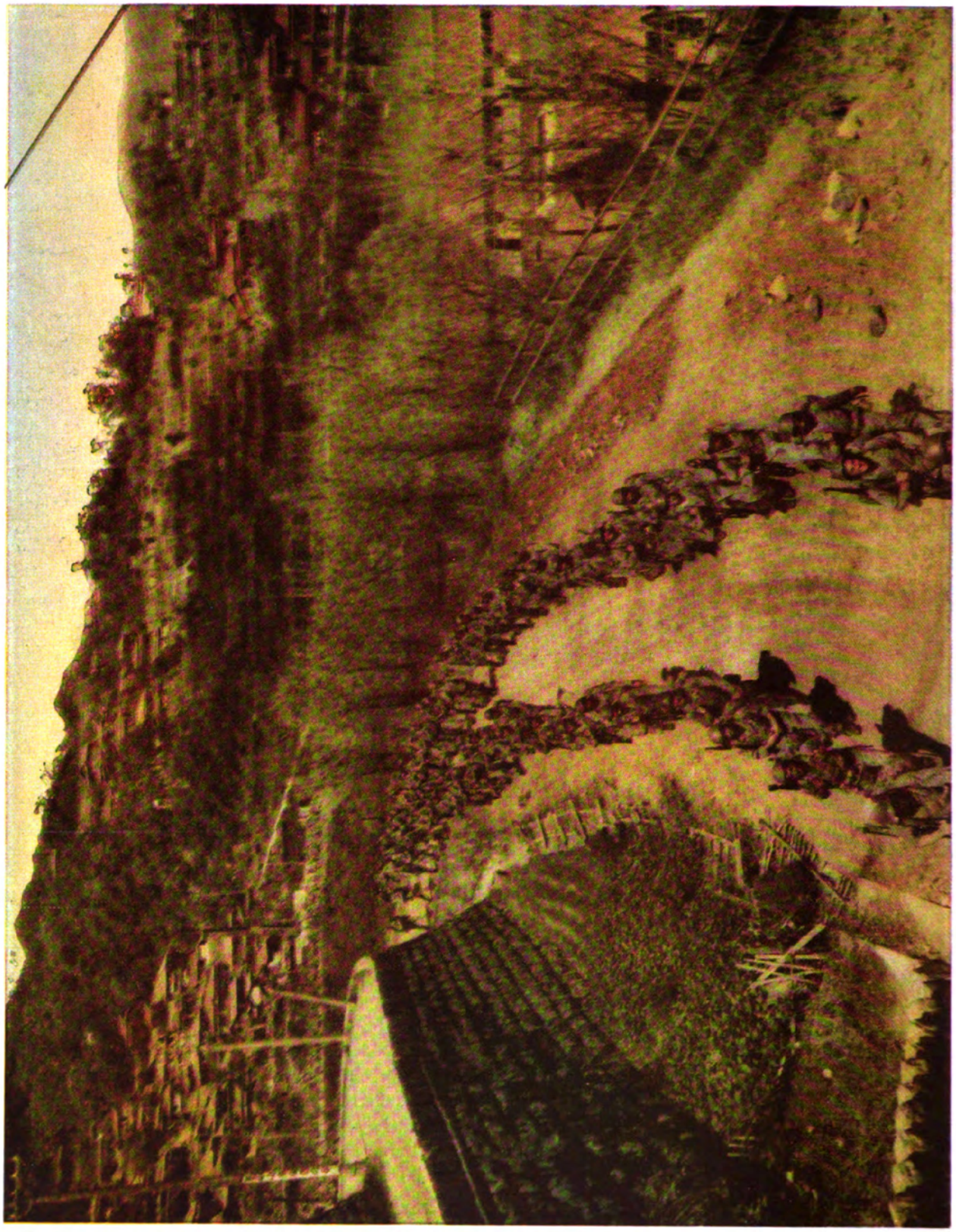


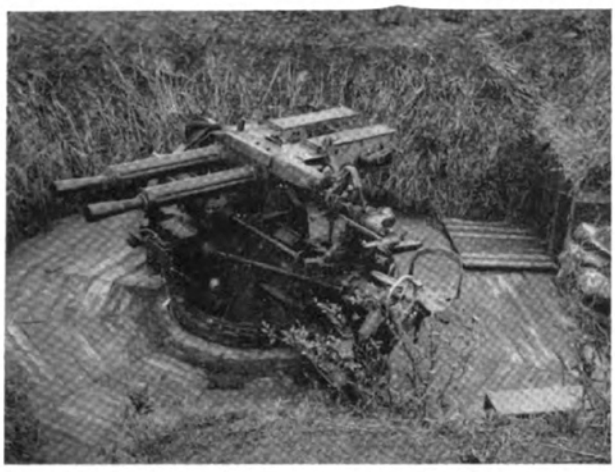
Suicide boats. These explosive-filled craft, found in a cove between Sasebo and Omura, were set to ram ships of the Allied invasion fleet.

Seven miles west of Sasebo near the fishing village of Ainoura, a patrol boarded the battleship *Shikishima*. Immobilized since 1920 and stripped of her guns, this barnacle-ridden man-of-war had been the flagship of Admiral Kaminura, Admiral Togo's deputy during the great naval battle which had destroyed the Russian fleet forty years before. The 15,000-ton battleship—the size of a modern cruiser—had become a national monument. Near *Shikishima* was a modern Japanese destroyer badly damaged by carrier planes off the Philippines. Together these ships symbolized the beginning and end of Japanese sea power.

On October 2 the Reconnaissance Company pushed north from Sasebo in DUKWs, put to sea for a few thousand yards, and then moved west onto sixty-square-mile Hirado Island. This island, never bombed, still had felt the pinch of war through extreme poverty. Shopkeepers and plain citizens, many of whom were seeing white men for the first time, apprehensively retreated into their homes and barred their doors.

After Marines set up their command post and living quarters in an elementary school, education began to suffer. Teachers—always deferred to before the occupation—found themselves of secondary interest to the strange-looking men who had come to Hirado. Marine attention, on the other hand, centered more on rifles they found in the school, where military drill and bayonet fencing had been part of the curriculum. After the Marines had been on the island a short time





All Kyushu bristled with defenses as the Japanese prepared to repel an American invasion prior to the surrender. Above, a 40mm dual-mount gun near Sasebo.



"I've got sixpence!" In this case a box of Chinese copper coins are worth little more. "Liberators" above are Cpl. Leslie G. Karel and Pfc. Alfred M. Taylor.

they started patronizing the barber shop, always in pairs. One Marine sat in the chair while another stood armed guard to make certain that the barber did not suffer an attack of patriotism while he had a razor in his hand. There were ticklish moments when they found that a Japanese shave included running the sharp blade lightly over the nose and high on the cheeks under the eyes, but there was apparently enough universality in barbering to allay suspicions.

The Reconnaissance Company stayed on the island for three days collecting weapons and inspecting shipyards and fish canneries, went back to the mainland, and returned to Hirado for six days in mid-November to dispose of weapons.

Before large bodies of troops spread over northern Kyushu to expand the occupation, advance parties moved into the new areas and arranged with military and *ken* officials for housing troops and for collecting arms and war material. Sanitary squads went along to delouse billets. Everywhere the Japanese cooperated fully and prepared the civil population for the arrival of the main force.

► FUKUOKA

ONE WEEK AFTER the landing, General Robinson took command of the Fukuoka occupation force, consisting of the 28th Marines, the 5th Assault Signal Company, and medical, engineer, motor transport, and headquarters units. This force, under Corps control, moved to the port of Fukuoka, seventy-five miles north of Sasebo, by truck and railroad.

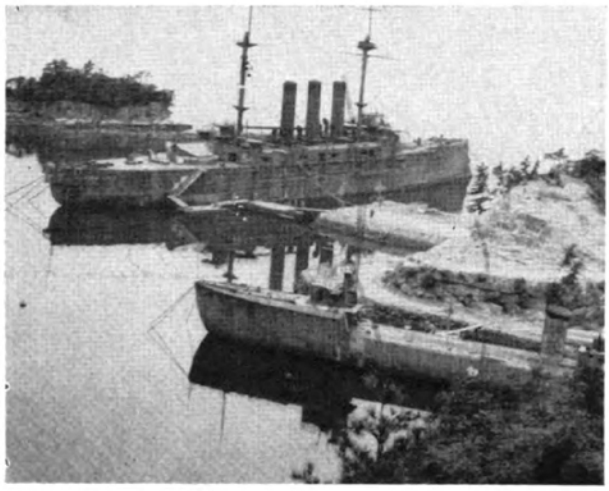
The three hundred thousand residents of northern Kyushu's biggest city scarcely paused in their daily routine as the occupation force moved in. After General Robinson conferred with ranking Japanese officers, he ordered sentries posted on the more important buildings and dock facilities, and, in a swift move to crush a suspected black market in foreign exchange immediately closed all branches of the Bank o Chosen, posted guards, sealed safes and vaults, and impounded records.

B-29s had raided Fukuoka, blasting thirty square blocks of its business and waterfront area. Through the center of the rubble a wide, paved street stretched for two miles from the railroad station to the docks. It was choked with long, straggling lines of Oriental people going home. Thousands of Japanese soldiers who had arrived from Korea were streaming inland to board trains. Unarmed but in uniform, they struggled

◄ **The occupation spreads as Marines strike out from Sasebo**



Japanese 75mm artillery pieces and caissons lined up alongside a highway prior to being turned over to the Fukuoka occupation force.



The 15,000-ton battleship Shikishima, *which fought in the Russo-Japanese War, symbolized the beginning of Nippon's sea power. In the foreground, a modern enemy destroyer, badly damaged by U. S. planes off the Philippines.*

under the weight of bulging packs and recently deloused bundles of bedding. These stone-faced, beaten troops had been mustered out of the army when they left Korea for the dangerous voyage through mined waters to Fukuoka, and each one of the fifty-two thousand who debarked in October paid his own railroad fare home.

On the other side of the street, Koreans shuffled hopefully toward the ships which would take them home. More than two million of these oppressed people were in Japan at the close of the war. Many had been slave laborers in coal mines and most of them wanted to go back to Korea. As they straggled along the street some dragged rickety carts heaped with children and a few possessions, others were in rags, many were barefoot, and the rest had only paper-thin sandals. The more fortunate ones had reached Fukuoka from the interior by train, but the rest had trudged for days over rough, dusty roads to reach the coast. Near the docks as many as five thousand huddled in filth and squalor, covered with flies, and fighting off huge harbor rats that more than rivalled them in number.

The U.S. Navy moved quickly to safeguard the lives of Japanese and Korean repatriates, sending the minesweeper *Prestige* in to clear Fukuoka harbor. Nineteen Japanese ships already had struck magnetic mines sown by B-29s during raids on the port, and sixteen of those, totalling forty-eight thousand tons, were either sunk in the harbor or beached with heavy loss of life. The *Prestige*, first American ship to enter Fukuoka since 1941, and several Japanese minesweepers, began clearing the deadly mines from the harbor.

Patrols from the 28th Marines occupied airfields and military installations in the Fukuoka area. At one aircraft factory they found a new-type fighter plane—a six-bladed pusher capable of 420-mph speeds.

Marines discovered that seventy-five per cent of all Japanese military aircraft had been so badly damaged by a late-September typhoon that they could not get off the ground. In accordance with surrender terms, the planes had been parked and abandoned on nearby fields for delivery to the occupation forces. (The Japanese, when they surrendered, still had at least 7,500 planes capable of making a one-way suicide flight against an invasion armada.) The typhoon, striking less than a week before the American forces landed, had smashed hundreds to bits and had stacked others in piles six deep.

Patrols also found that many American flyers killed during raids over Japan and buried in scattered graves, could never be identified. The Japanese had destroyed all burial records. This came to light when Marines tried to identify three graves near Yawata—the Pittsburgh of Japan—north of Fukuoka. Simple markers said only: "Grave of flyers of United States



Ruined Fukuoka, showing the mine-filled harbor. At right, the road used by Japanese and Korean repatriates.

plane," and gave the date of crash. At some of these grave sites there was not even any indication of how many men had been buried in the common grave.

Squads from the 28th Marines posted guard over eleven camps which held about 3,200 Chinese coal-mine workers in the Fukuoka area. About half were civilians who had contracted voluntarily to work for the Japanese, but the others were prisoners of war from Communist forces in North China and from the armies of Chiang Kai-shek, and civilians brought to Japan by force.

The Chinese, who had been idle for nearly two months after the surrender, began looting Japanese supplies and running wild, terrorizing the countryside. They claimed that coal-mine operators had not paid them their five yen (thirty-three cents) a day and that one-third of their group had died from exposure, starvation, and lack of medical attention. The Marines interceded only after the Japanese police admitted they were powerless to control the rioting Chinese.

While the Fukuoka occupation force kept order and supervised the arrival of Japanese troops from overseas, raiding parties were sent out to check prisons to determine whether or not they had obeyed General MacArthur's decree ordering the liberation of political prisoners. Intelligence patrols scoured villages for weapons and subversive activity.

Extension of this northern zone began on October 4 when K Company, LT 3/28, under Major Peatross



Enemy seaplanes destroyed by a typhoon.

crossed the narrow strait onto southern Honshu and occupied Shimonoseki. Shimonoseki Strait—a tight passage into Japan's scenic inland sea—had been heavily mined by B-29s during the war, and now many half-sunken ships choked the sea around Moji and prevented movement of shipping.

Two days later another reinforced company moved to Moji at Kyushu's northern tip, and the rest of Major Smoak's 3d Battalion soon followed, forming the Shimonoseki–Moji occupation group. Unable to find suitable billets in the smashed city, Marines moved aboard a tied-up Japanese passenger liner.

Major Henry R. Rolph and a fifty-man detachment moved from Shimonoseki farther north to Yamaguchi



Funeral pyre for Japanese air power. Marines burn seventy-two enemy planes near Fukuoka.



The U. S. colors are raised over Kurume as the 27th Marines extend their occupation zone into central Kyushu.

on October 11, and a week later forty-two Marines occupied the port of Senzaki. Here they inspected Japanese arriving from overseas for excess currency and food, and supervised medical examination. This detachment also processed thousands of Chinese and Koreans for repatriation.

Patrols and small military police detachments operating from Fukuoka policed Kokura and Yawata, both heavily damaged. In Yawata, oddly enough, Japan's largest steel mills were only lightly damaged but the business and residential sections of the Pittsburgh of Japan were shattered.

Only once did Japanese in the northern occupation zone fail to comply with the surrender terms. A major general and three majors on the staff of the Western District Army had retained their pistols. The commanding general of this Japanese army was ordered to arrest these officers. They were jailed for thirty days and lost half their pay for that period.

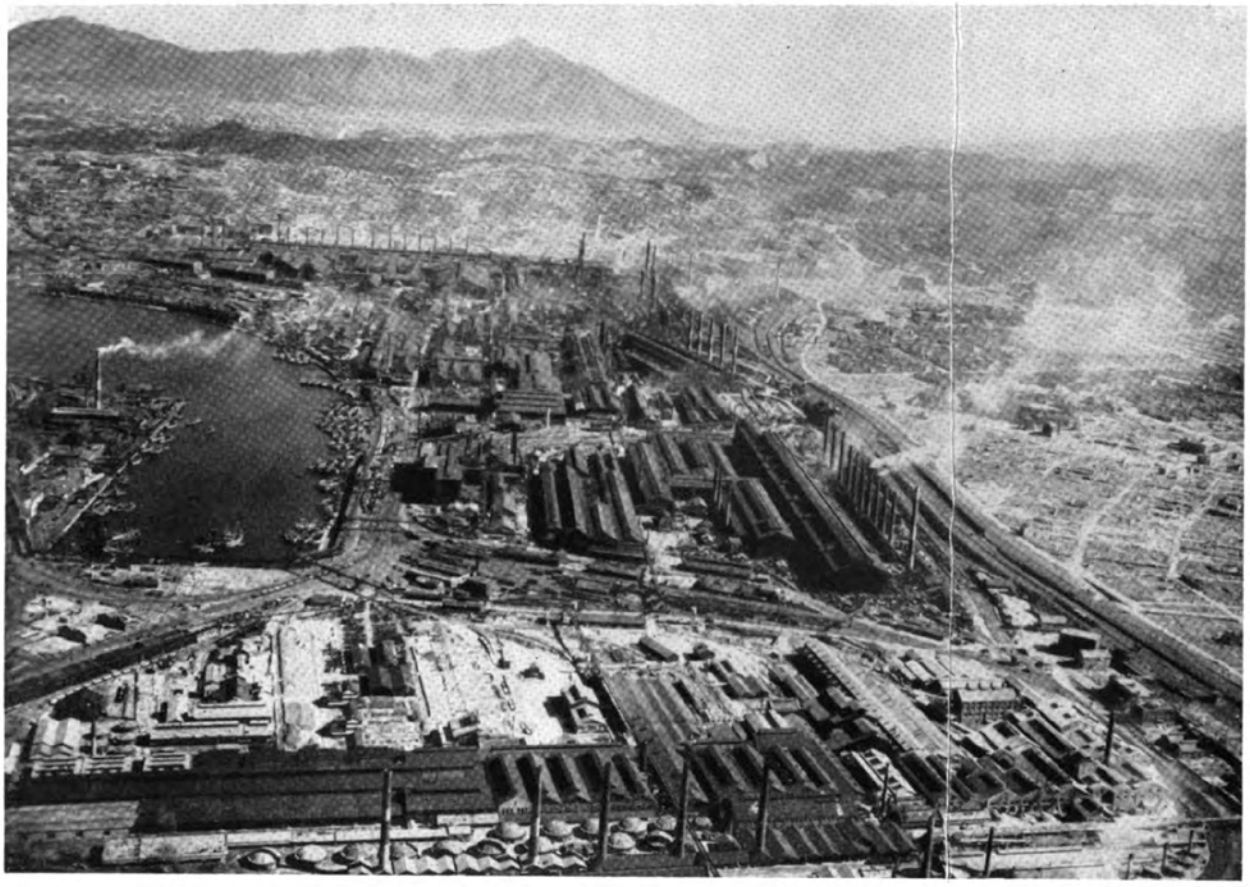
The Army's 32d Infantry Division, which arrived at Fukuoka in mid-October, gradually took over occupation missions from General Robinson's Marines. CT 28 returned to Sasebo, and General Robinson's headquarters was renamed the Fukuoka Base Command with orders to concentrate on opening the harbor for United States shipping.

► ISLAND HOPPING

ALTHOUGH PATROLS USING LCVPs covered the small outlying islands around Sasebo, the heavily mined waters of western Kyushu delayed occupation of the larger islands in the Division zone. On November 3, however, a reinforced company from LT 1/27 under Major Russell set out to patrol the ninety-six islands of Goto Retto.

Most of the 250,000 natives were farmers or fishermen, and over half were Roman Catholics whose ancestors had sought haven from persecution by early Japanese rulers. The militaristic spirit among these people was less pronounced than among those on Kyushu, they were better fed and healthier, and their homes were larger and cleaner. Too, they seemed pleased at the arrival of the occupation force, and many of them said openly that they were disgusted with the militaristic policy of the government of Japan and hoped the Americans would stay to help reconvert their country.

Marines found that these Japanese hated Tojo. His



Huge steel mills at Yawata remain virtually undamaged while the bordering business and residential areas lay gutted by B-29 raids.

propaganda and deception during his last year as Premier were so gross that even the lie-fed Japanese could no longer be deceived. The people of Goto Retto felt that Japan was experiencing "great shame" because of the Japanese soldiers' treatment of prisoners. They felt this more, they said, after "observing the gentlemanly actions of the occupation troops."

A patrol from Major Russell's reinforced company destroyed big guns on three islands of the Goto Retto, demolished or dumped into the sea automatic weapons and all ammunition for them, and returned to Sasebo with about 6,000 rifles, 7,000 bayonets, 550 swords, and 138 pistols.

► MOVEMENT EAST

WHEN the Division zone was expanded again on October 5 to take in north central Kyushu, newly promoted Lieutenant Colonel Antonelli moved his LT 2/27 to Saga about forty miles east of Sasebo. At an airfield there the battalion found 178 fighter planes, all but eight smashed by typhoons. Antonelli's men also discovered a huge ammunition dump where the Japanese had stored about one-fifth of the country's ammunition for home defense.

A patrol from the Saga group located an internment camp at Shimizu where Dutch, British, Italians, Portuguese, Swiss, and Belgians had been confined during the war. The only remaining internee was an 82-year-old Swiss who amazed everyone by proving that he was an ex-U.S. Marine. Edward Zillig had enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1888 in Philadelphia, had been discharged in 1893, and then had re-enlisted during the Spanish-American War. He produced a letter from the Veterans Administration showing that he had received a pension. From 1936 until his house was blown to bits he had lived in Nagasaki with his Japanese wife. Zillig turned over two items to the patrol: (1) a statement of the kind treatment he had received



Edward Zillig—Semper Fidelis, M1888.

from a Japanese police sergeant, and (2) a request for renewal of his $60-a-month pension.

Back in the Sasebo area the 1st Battalion, 27th Marines, assumed control of the entire regimental zone when Colonel Wornham moved his headquarters and the 3d Battalion to Kurume on October 21. In spite of an August air raid that had smashed the business district, Kurume—rubber industry center of 77,000 people—boasted a Chamber of Commerce as aggressive as any in the United States. It held classes in English for its members, and, when the provost marshal closed the city's *geisha* houses, the CofC staged an all-*geisha* show for Marines in the latter's own theater.

The 27th Marine headquarters at Kurume assumed control of its 2d Battalion at Saga, twenty miles to the west, and directed patrolling in its new zone during the next month, searching out Japanese installations and war material. Supplies civilians could use were turned over to the Japanese Home Ministry and strictly military supplies were destroyed. In late November Colonel Wornham, who had led the regiment since its organization, was ordered to the United States and Colonel Williams, executive officer of the Fukuoka Base Command and CT 28's exec on Iwo Jima, took charge.

► TSUSHIMA

MAJOR RUSSELL and his 1st Battalion, 27th Marines, left Sasebo in late November to occupy Kamino Shima and Shimono Shima, two large, heavily fortified islands halfway between Kora and Japan. Together they formed the Tsushima group.

A Japanese general who had commanded eight thousand garrison troops there during the war formally surrendered the area aboard an LST. Within two hours Marines had a command post set up ashore, and the Japanese were hauling ammunition and weapons aboard ship for dumping at sea. The speed with which the islands were disarmed amazed the natives who turned out by the hundreds to get a glimpse of the Americans.

On Shimono Shima two 12-inch guns, supposedly destroyed by the Japanese after the Washington Disarmament Conference of 1922, were finally blasted out of action. The Japanese battleship whose guns these were had been scrapped more than twenty years before in accordance with the 5-5-3 agreement among



Giant Japanese coast-defense guns were destroyed by the occupation forces.

the United States, Great Britain, and Japan, but the guns had been carefully removed first.

On Kamino Shima Marines found an even bigger prize. Here two 16-inch cannon pointed toward Korea, where an identical set was emplaced to fire back toward Kamino Shima. Between them the batteries could cover the entire width of the 60-mile strait between Kamino Shima and Korea. For seven days Marines supervised the disposal of the huge 1,000-pound shells for these guns. Troops lived aboard ship during their two-week stay at Tsushima.

Patrols operating ashore discovered the grave of an American flyer. It was decorated with bamboo vases and persimmon branches and had been well cared for by the Japanese. There was one Christian church on Shimono Shima but it was closed. The minister, natives explained, "was absent."



Breakfast in Beppu. Pfc. Joseph D. Fatt and Cpl. Edward S. Kozlowski discuss the advantages of occupying Japan's famed seashore resort.

► OITA-BEPPU

TANKS WERE NEVER USED even for show purposes because the soft roads would not bear their weight. The Iwo-scarred Shermans had been landed and parked at the Sasebo naval air station, and there they remained. Leathernecks of the 5th Tank Battalion did guard duty and formed disposition and unloading details. In mid-October Company A, reinforced, under Lieutenant Colonel Collins, boarded a train for occupation duty at Oita on the eastern side of the island.

These Marines had a memorable 180-mile trip as two sputtering engines pulled the rattling train through the story-book scenery of northern Kyushu. The cars, much like obsolete day coaches on American railroads even when they were new, and now in sad shape, were still considered among Japan's finest. Conductors were totally unfamiliar with English, and so stayed in continual befuddlement through the trip as Marines kept stopping them to ask such questions as "When do we change for Pittsburgh?" and "Where's the club car?"

The fertile valleys and sharp peaks of Japan's miniature mountains frequently disappeared as the train passed through tunnels while smoke and cinders poured through broken windows and gagged the passengers. When the Nipponese "Super Chief" stopped at small villages, children and grownups alike flocked around the coaches to see the "men of victory."

At Oita, Marines found the naval air station smashed by bombs although about a hundred planes



The heart of fire-gutted Kurume.

were semi-operational. The city itself was forty per cent razed. (Oita had never been singled out for U.S. Air Force raids but it was used as a last resort target whenever B-29s were diverted or had part of a pay load left to drop.)

The occupation of eastern Kyushu soon spread north to Beppu where Japan's famous beaches and shore resorts were located. When they questioned an Italian-born priest in Beppu, Marines learned the Japanese press version of the battle of Iwo Jima. The Japanese, it seemed, were "progressing daily" toward the northern part of the island, had lost only three thousand men to America's twenty thousand and had

finally allowed the invaders to capture the island in order to trap them.

"We didn't know until a long time after the battle had ended that Iwo Jima was lost," he said.

Later a Marine scouting party set out from Oita to find the common grave of four B-29 crewmen which was reported in the area. When they found it they discovered a group of Japanese holding a memorial service for the flyers, whose plane had crashed a year ago to the day. While a Buddhist priest conducted the service, a Japanese Christian minister prayed for the souls of the American airmen.

By late October the Division was deployed across the entire island of Kyushu with major elements at Sasebo, Fukuoka, Saga, Kurume, and Oita. Most supply was by Japanese railroads, because the highways had literally disintegrated from heavy rains and lack of repair and were passable only for jeeps. During this time VMO-5's light planes were used for reconnaissance, air courier service, personnel and freight transportation, and aerial photography.

Everywhere the "Spearhead" troops were showing the same skill at occupation missions as they had at combat.



Marines from the 5th Tank Battalion arrive at Oita and Beppu on Kyushu's east coast following a memorable train ride from Sasebo.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Japan under the Occupation

THE OCCUPATION TROOPS soon realized that, although Japan had been a world power, her standards of living and efficiency were far below those of the Western world. Men who occupied the once-great naval base at Sasebo saw that the city's business, manufacturing, and residential centers were about on a level with those common in America a half century before. They were not prepared for the poverty of the people, their ignorance of world affairs, their backward, almost medieval way of life. Little they saw matched their preconceived idea of Japan as a modern nation, the leader of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Construction equipment, tools, and transportation were sadly lacking. Men and women alike labored days to accomplish what one American bulldozer could do in minutes. Japanese labor gangs with straw baskets and simple hand implements would have taken ten years to clear the rubble from their burned-out cities.

Unclean living conditions, poor diet, and lack of clothing and household goods were partly but not entirely due to the war. The eighty million people jammed into an area the size of California had never known much better. Those who rebelled had been whipped into line by fear of the military, the civil police, and the dreaded secret societies.

Marines discovered something else about the Japanese. They learned why they had fought with the tenacity and fury that had cost the lives of so many Americans in battles across the Pacific. Unbelievable discipline, stoicism, and blind courage, the roots of which reached back to early childhood, enabled them to fight bravely against impossible odds, to die in a lost cause.

Before Marine occupation forces landed on Kyushu an Army recovery team had made a nine-day sweep through the twenty-two prisoner-of-war camps on the island. The team liberated over nine thousand Allied soldiers and civilians, about fifteen hundred of whom were Americans. Dutch, British, and Australians made up the majority of the rest, although a few Canadians, Norwegians, South Africans, Indians and Czechs also were freed.

Prisoners had reported atrocities almost everywhere. Japanese at a camp at Inatsukumat forced an American soldier to work in a coal mine although he was rapidly going blind from vitamin deficiency. Other prisoners saved every carrot in their scanty rations for the ill man. An Australian who had been appointed head of prisoners at another mine, was blamed when a coal train broke loose and smashed up. The Japanese strapped him in a kneeling position with a bamboo rod under his legs to cut off circulation, left him outside in freezing weather for thirty-six hours, and then threw him into a cell for a week with only bread and water to eat, and without medical attention. Both his legs had to be amputated.

At another camp, prisoners amputated the arm of a man who had been injured in a mine accident. The amputation was performed with razor blades and a hacksaw after the Japanese refused medical instruments or opiates, although they had large supplies of both.

After Japan's surrender, B-29s dropped supplies to these prisoners with such good aim that the POWs themselves were endangered. With every man gaining a pound a day, plenty of supplies on hand, and their quarters smashed when supply chutes failed to open, inmates of a camp at Ita used flour to spell out a message to relief planes. It read, "No More!"

The Division's seventeen language officers and twenty-two enlisted linguists had been parceled out among the units, where they checked Japanese inventories, made contact with civil officials and military commanders, accompanied patrols, aided in the dispo-



Gaunt and emaciated, but with new hope shining in their eyes, these Allied POWs were rescued by special recovery teams prior to the 5th Division's arrival in Japan.

sition of military equipment, translated documents, and did a great deal of interrogating.

They questioned many prominent citizens, most of whom contended that the peoples' minds had been warped and stifled by war lords who had fed them a diet of steady lies. Nearly all felt that the occupation would improve social, business, and economic conditions in their country. This, of course, is hardly a startling revelation since almost any change would have been for the better.

A few Japanese hoped that Emperor Hirohito would be removed or limited in his powers, but most believed he should not be deposed, and still held a strong loyalty to the Throne.

Most ordinary citizens did not know for three days after the surrender that Japan had been defeated. One Japanese told a language officer: "It was a great shock to us. We had no idea that our country's losses were so great and had no conception that Japan would ever surrender. It is impossible to describe the near-panic that most of the people here felt. They were certain that they would be killed."

Among the political reforms planned for Japan was the introduction of female suffrage. A public opinion survey showed that 52 per cent of those interviewed favored giving women the vote, 34 per cent did not express an opinion and the rest had no idea what female suffrage was.

Japan was evidently not ripe for public opinion polls. The poorly educated, ill-informed man in the street had been denied the privilege of free thought, expression, and knowledge of national and world affairs for so many years that he could not be persuaded to express an opinion on anything, assuming, of course, that he had one.

After the initial shock of the "invasion" these people were satisfied for the most part to return as quickly as possible to the routine of daily living without giving much thought to their newly won rights and civil liberties. Military occupation, though much in evidence, interfered as little as possible with the normal civilian pursuits of eating, sleeping, earning a living, and bringing up children.

Before 0800 each morning the children of Japan assembled in their various neighborhoods and marched to school. Student sentries saluted the leaders smartly as the uniformed boys and girls entered the schoolyards. Inside the students sat at attention during classes.

According to the principal of one school, all this had nothing to do with militarism. Military training had stopped, he said, a few days after the war had ended and instructors in military education had been dismissed. Saluting, he pointed out, was an ordinary form of greeting—the simplest and most convenient thing to do. The children marched to improve Japanese posture and style of walking "which suffered in comparison to Occidentals." Group formations, he said,



The occupation interfered as little as possible with the normal civilian pursuits of the Japanese. Here, women and children line up to buy rice in Haiki, north of Sasebo.

were to foster "cooperative spirit." The Japanese educator conceded, however, that Nippon's army had encouraged all this.

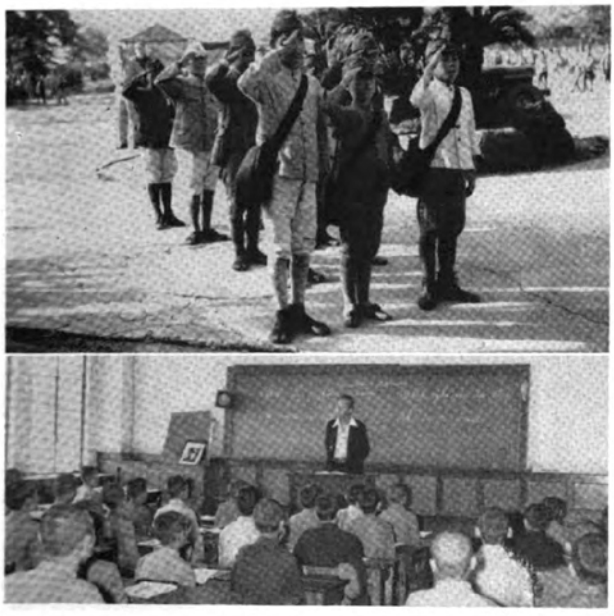
It was obvious that schools had introduced strong military, anti-democratic, and anti-American propaganda. In one institution a bamboo spear corps whose mission was to oppose U.S. landings had been organized and was attached to the local garrison force of old men and young boys. Marines soon put a stop to all this. Schools were ordered to discontinue *Kendo* and *Judo* and soon were stressing cooperation with occupation forces. By November military government detachments assigned to units of the 5th had eliminated the last vestige of military training from school curricula. In addition, nationalistic doctrines championing a greater, more powerful Japan were fast being deleted from courses. Lack of new textbooks greatly handicapped democratic education, but teachers in many cities made up for the lack by lecturing on the principles of democracy.



Above, goose-stepping Japanese children use recess time for military drill. Below, schoolboys at calisthenics.

► LIBERTY

TO COMBAT INFLATION, Marines coming into Japan did not carry a single piece of U.S. money. Paymasters collected all U.S. money from the men and repaid it later in Japanese Government yen at fifteen yen to the dollar.



Top: Militarism among school children as displayed here was soon stamped out. Changes in Japanese education (below) stressed cooperation with the occupation forces and the principles of democracy.

A week after the initial occupation, Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Shippey, the Division paymaster, made the largest single financial transaction ever handled by the Sinwa Bank of Sasebo. As wide-eyed bank employees looked on, his Marine guards drew more than seven and a half million yen—about $450,000 in American money—for the first payday ashore.

Liberty call sounded on October 1 and Marines began to get a more leisurely look at Japan. Special MP units patrolled Sasebo, Haiki, and Ainoura, where troops were most heavily concentrated. Only twenty-five per cent of each unit was granted liberty at one time, and passes expired at 1800 because of the curfew.

Leathernecks "went ashore" with a set of commandments ringing in their ears. Private dwellings, churches, shrines, and schools were out of bounds. Anything more than casual fraternization with civilians was forbidden. All Japanese religious and domestic customs were to be respected, and the Emperor was not to be mentioned in conversation. Marines could trade neither clothing nor equipment for goods or souvenirs, nor eat Japanese-prepared food. Each man was ordered to shave daily, wear clean clothes, and remain in the uniform of the day.

Marines on liberty in Sasebo found the streets,



Two Leathernecks eye a display of sake. *Health regulations, however, forbade drinking it or eating Japanese-prepared food.*



Marines buy souvenirs in a Japanese store while on liberty.



Marines buck ninety-miles-an-hour winds during a typhoon to throw a tarpaulin over their equipment.

deserted ten days before, teeming with Japanese who seemed always to be on the move. An endless line of scurrying pedestrians and bicyclists, most of whom carried heavy bundles, turned the small shopping area that remained unburned into a human ant hill. Who were these people? Workers? Most of the factories were closed or destroyed. Shoppers? Very few stores were open and these had almost nothing to sell. Marines decided that the Japanese had come out to look over their conquerors.

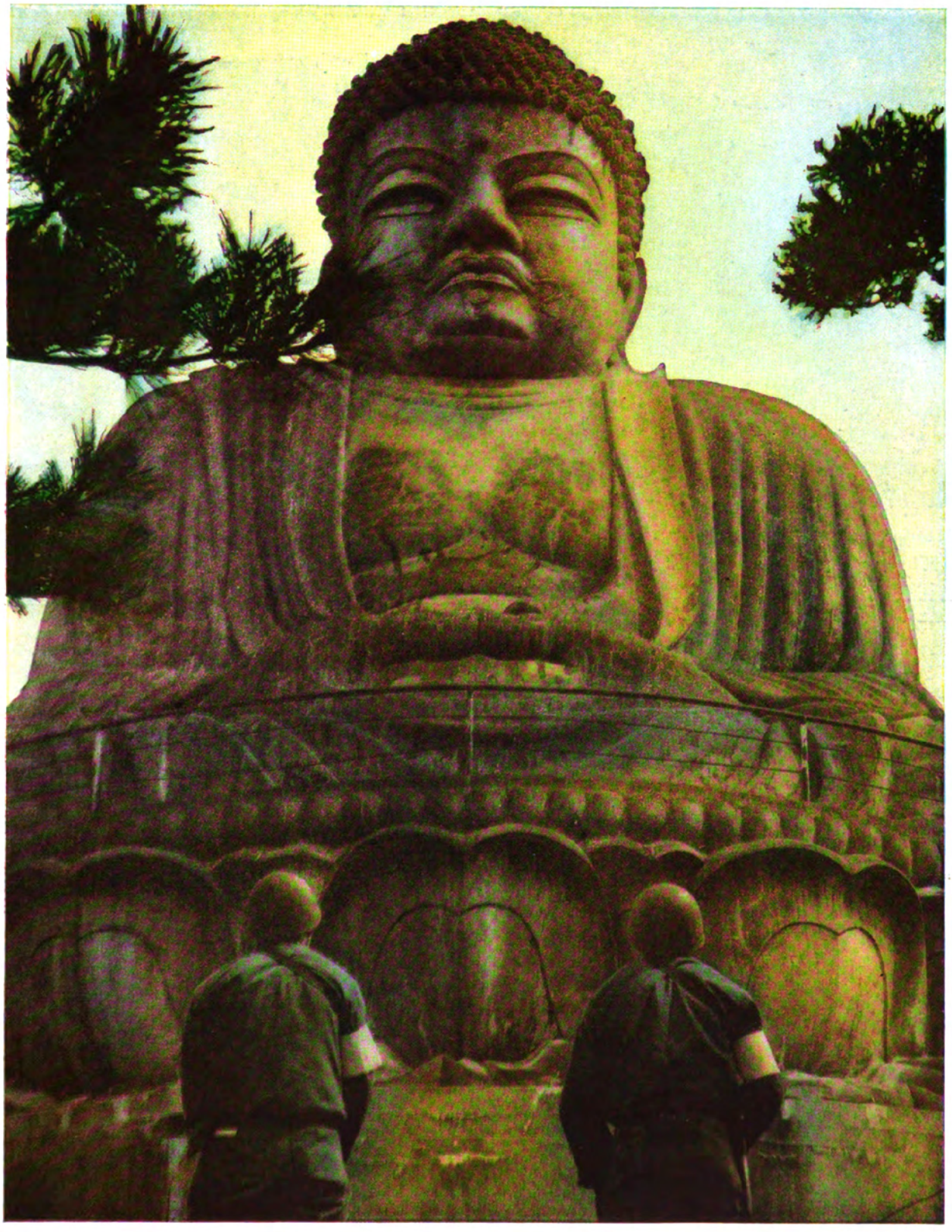
Division troops had a field day exchanging salutes with their late enemies. Stocky little Japanese soldiers, sailors, and civilian police stood at attention and saluted each passing Marine from buck private on up, apparently taking no chances with rank. One wandering four-year-old, naked as a jay-bird, emulated his elders by throwing snappy salutes at each passing Marine. A few coolies appeared with rickshas and soon were doing a brisk business, but the inevitable happened—Leathernecks exchanged places with them and raced pell mell through the crowded streets.

The few shops that were open had little to sell, but made the best of what they had. One enterprising Japanese merchant did a lively business selling wooden back scratchers. Others peddled paper flags, well worn kimonos and Japanese dolls.

The closest thing to entertainment in Japan was the *geisha* house, and the popular notion that these were houses of ill repute turned out to be untrue. Visiting Marines, leaving their shoes at the door, sat cross-legged on the mat floor and watched as heavily powdered girls dressed in colorful silk kimonos enacted dramatically significant native dances as they weaved in circles, looked coyly down their sleeves and poured imaginary streams of water over their wrists and arms. When they sang they were accompanied by other *geishas* who strummed three-stringed, lute-like instruments. To Marine ears the shrill, sing-song lyrics sounded vaguely like *"Peachie, peachie, choppa, choppa, dong, dong, dong."*

The only state in the U.S. the Japanese knew about was Ohio—so the occupation troops thought. It turned out, however, that what the natives were saying was *"o-ha-yo,"* which means "good morning" in Japanese. It soon became a national byword between Marines and natives, and most Leathernecks used it any time of the day, although a few "students" of the language

Huge Buddha war shrine at Beppu contains boxes of ashes of Japanese war heroes





"Peachie, peachie, choppa, choppa . . ." *A Geisha girl sings and dances for a group of on-liberty Leathernecks.*



The cold, wet weather of Japan calls for special clothing. Pfc. Larry D. Beaudry, of southern California, tries on his first pair of woollies and heavy rubber boots.

varied it with "*koan-bahn wa*" which means "good day."

Equipped with orange-colored GI phrase books many Americans quickly learned enough Japanese to buy souvenirs and stamps and to carry on simple conversations. The average Marine, however, summed up his thoughts on the language barrier somewhat like a Georgian who said: "I was going to surprise the folks back in Georgia by learning to speak Jap real well while I was here. But this stuff snows me. So I guess the folks'll have to settle for me talking just plain Georgian some more."

The Japanese, in turn, picked up some English. "Hubba, hubba" in Marine Corps lingo meant "hurry up." Children followed Leathernecks along the streets shouting "*hubba, hubba, Ma-warine.*" Although the native word for candy was "*ka-shee*" tiny street urchins soon learned that "*can-dee*" brought better results, and screamed it endlessly as they stretched out their hands. The Japanese word for cigarette—"*to-ba-ko*"—soon was changed to the more understood "*sigaretto.*"

The Division's hurried move from Hawaii had resulted in most personal baggage being left with the Division rear echelon, and this, combined with life in drafty unheated barracks and the cool, damp weather of Japan, made living quite uncomfortable.

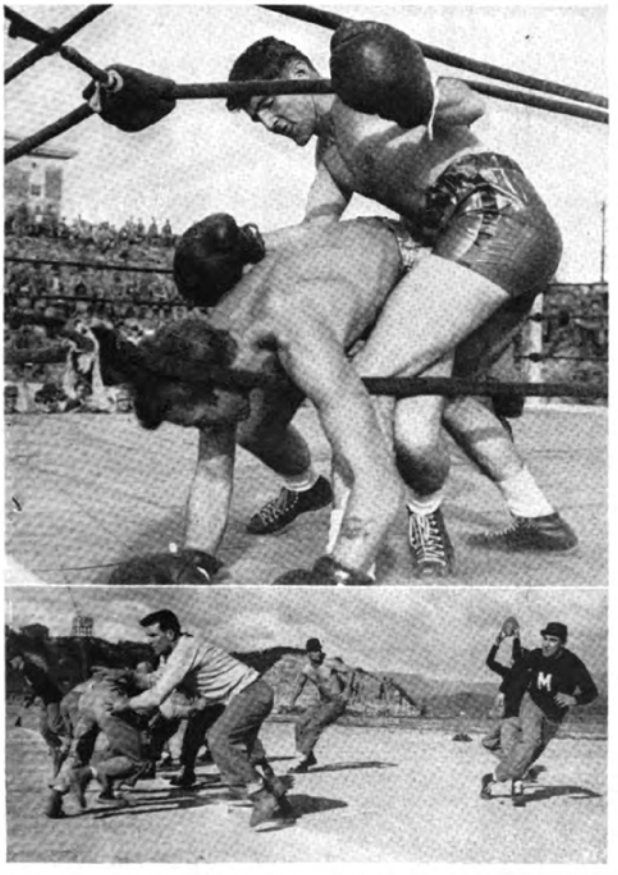
The occupation troops' health, however, was excellent. "Cat fever" was common but heavy wool and wet-weather clothing, shots, and rigidly enforced disease control reduced sickness. DDT eliminated vermin, troops practiced strict water discipline, and Japanese were not allowed to handle or prepare food for Marines.

Food issued to the Division was unbalanced and lacked variety at best, and frequent moves and patrols required extensive use of combat rations. C rations, heated in tubs of boiling water, were the standard menu until the galleys went into operation, and then it turned out that the garrison rations were two-thirds corned-beef hash. Providentially a load of turkeys arrived at Sasebo on November 1, the Division's private Thanksgiving Day in gratitude for the fact that Spearhead Marines were not at that moment assaulting Kyushu, as had been originally planned.

Planes landing at Sasebo Bay and Omura brought occasional mail from home, although several tons of letters and packages bound for the 5th Division had been destroyed in the October 10 typhoon that flattened Okinawa. This same typhoon hit Kyushu on



"Candee . . . sigaretto . . . hubba, hubba Ma-warine."



Sports programs kept Leathernecks in trim.

October 11 and heavily damaged barracks, communications, and power facilities. Marines who tried to buck the 90-mile-an-hour winds were blown off their feet.

Special Service officers launched a series of programs to occupy off-duty time and to raise morale. Athletics played an important part in these programs, and units squared off in football, basketball, baseball, and volleyball tournaments. Marines occasionally played local Japanese teams, especially in baseball, which the Japanese played extremely well.

Warehouses became recreation halls equipped with radios and phonographs and featured beer gardens, reading rooms, post exchanges, and libraries. Moving pictures were shown nightly in each area.

Stateside newspapers and magazines circulated through the units, and the Public Information Section and Signal Company teamed up to publish a daily edition of *The Spearhead*. Boxing smokers, band concerts, Japanese entertainers, and several USO shows all took up Marines' leisure hours. Groups of Leathernecks fished or went sailing while others worked out in made-over gymnasiums where Japanese experts gave demonstrations of *Judo* and *Kendo*. At Fukuoka a Japanese professor at the Kyushu Imperial University opened a language school for troops in the northern area.

In November the 5th Division began a training program designed to help Marines prepare for their return to civilian life. Instructors explained veterans' benefits, the GI Bill of Rights, and the advantages of Government Life Insurance. Lieutenant Colonel DeSantis, the 5th's Special Service officer, set up a Division school—which drew nearly a thousand students —in a Japanese naval museum at Ainoura. Units scattered across Kyushu launched separate educational programs.

Voluntary instructors taught academic and vocational courses, covered contemporary political and economic problems, and surveyed civilian job opportunities. Enrollment for correspondence courses in the Marine Corps and Armed Forces Institutes increased as Marines began working for high school diplomas and credit for college courses.

► CIVIL AFFAIRS

MILITARY GOVERNMENT UNITS attached to the Division kept careful watch on Japanese civil af-



General Bourke, Division Commander, uses a Japanese sword to cut the Marine Corps birthday cake during anniversary ceremonies at Ainoura athletic field. At right, Sgt. Maj. Richard L. Harris.



A Japanese baby carriage is usually big sister.

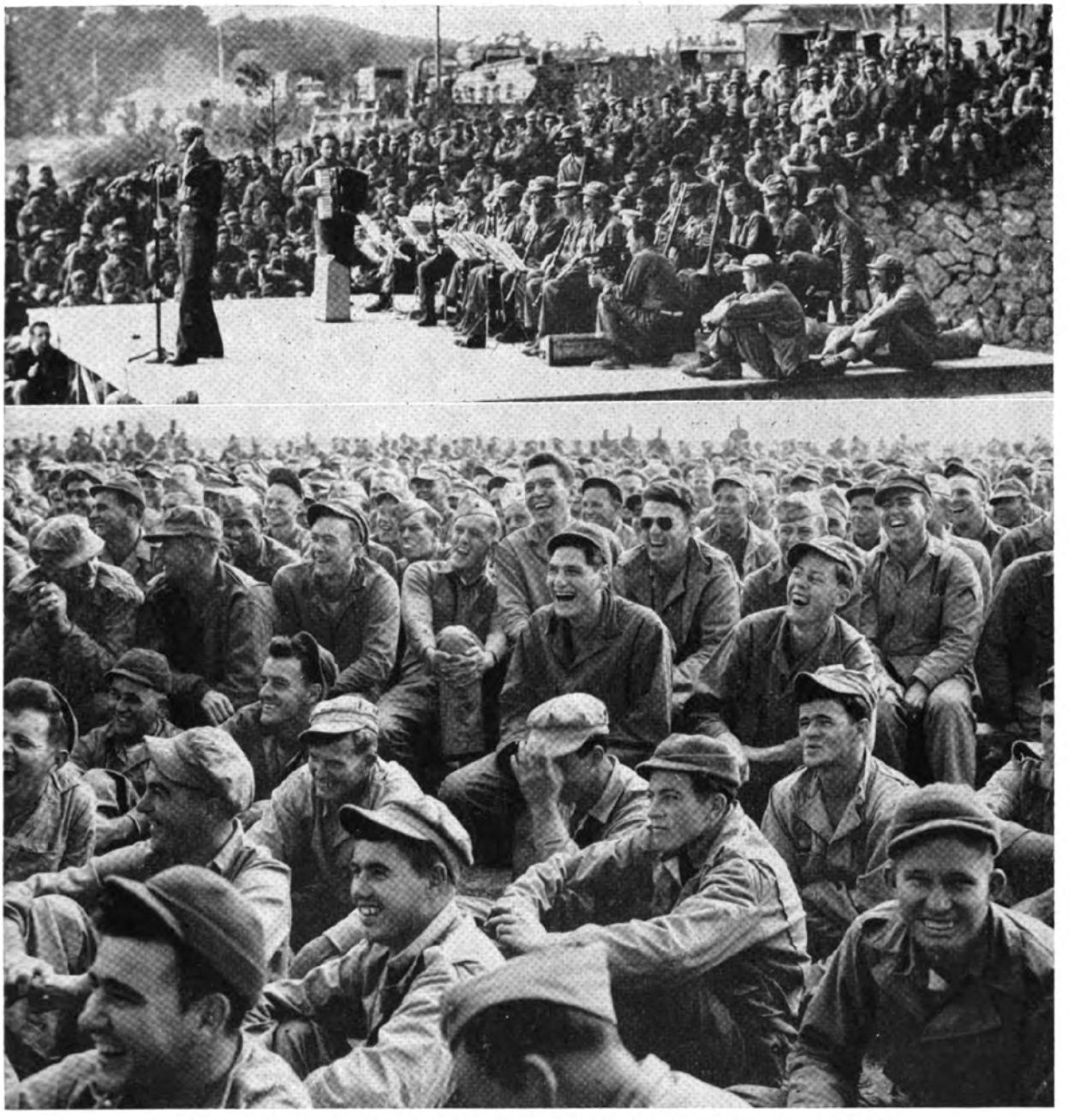
fairs, investigating the status of homeless people, the work of Japanese public welfare agencies and neighborhood associations, and medical facilities. They checked the Japanese education program, public utilities, transportation, agriculture, fishing, shipping, coal mining, banking, price control, rationing and wage ceilings. Military government teams also screened the police and fire departments of Kyushu cities to find out whether they still employed former members of unfriendly or secret organizations. Those who had belonged to the *Kempei Tai* (secret police) were discharged. The Black Dragon Society and other fanatical groups were purged and ordered to disband.

Sasebo began to help itself by setting up a city reconstruction committee of leading citizens. The committee met to draw up plans for reconstruction, and it also supplied valuable information to military government officers and helped them locate and requisition native labor.

The Division was able to provide daily work for five thousand Japanese, but quotas, oddly enough, were not filled and it became apparent that there was a labor shortage on Kyushu. There were several reasons for the shortage. Many Japanese were in the fields harvesting the rice crop, and a few still thought that working for the Americans was dangerous. Forced labor legislation, which had been abolished with the end of the war, gave many an excuse for a prolonged holiday, but the major cause of the shortage was the ex-serviceman who had received his separation pay. With his separation pay of $120 the average Japanese soldier—if he had not too large a family—could loaf for almost two years if he wanted to.

There was a shortage of technicians as well as laborers. The Japanese demobilization had been so rapid and complete that there were few specialists left who knew how to handle Japanese explosives safely and to maintain utilities used by Marine units. About seven thousand Japanese sailors had been billeted near Sasebo at the time of the landing, but by October 1 only four thousand remained to perform naval police and administrative work. Army troops who had been in the area had been demobilized and were scattered throughout Japan.

Men and women who wanted to work were hired indiscriminately for cleaning and maintaining billets and for necessary construction, but women actually performed most of the menial tasks. The men liked to supervise in order to "save face." The Marines felt, however, that many Japanese were doing their work



Four thousand belly-laughs greet Japan's first USO show as Danny Kaye entertains Marines in front of Division Headquarters at Ainoura.

the hard way. One day a shaky, little bus limped over a soggy, rutted road and pulled up before a warehouse where Marines were billeted. A Japanese officer alighted, followed by ten soldiers. They lined up, dressed right, counted off, fell into two ranks and marched inside the building. Their job: to install twenty light bulbs in the Marine living quarters.

Another light-bulb incident was reported later by men of the 13th Marines stationed at Kawatana. Civilian electricians were installing lights in a barracks when one of their group asked Corporal George J. Byrnes to what branch of the American forces he belonged.

"The Marines," answered Byrnes.

Within two minutes the building was empty of Japanese.



A few months before Marines and Japanese were tossing grenades at one another.



The 5th Division's Military Government Liaison Committee which handled civil affairs. Left to right: Major Joseph Cason, Lt. Col. Tom Bigger, Lt. Comdr. Charles E. Frazier, Lt. Joseph O. Zurhellen, and Lt. Milton Evans, USN.



Japanese inventories of war matériel were checked by Marines. A member of the occupation forces supervises the counting of enemy ammunition. Enemy arms and ammunition were dumped at sea.

In this same village artillerymen found an antiquated hospital which at one time had held 276 victims of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, thirty-five miles to the south. Of these, 76 had died, 25 were still hospitalized and the rest had been discharged.

Marines who talked with the supervising doctor learned that the first patients brought in were "burned badly" and most of these died shortly after admission. Those who came in later seemed to fare much better.

One sallow-faced little girl, ten years old, was sitting on a bare bed. Almost all her hair was gone. Both parents and her brother had been killed in the blast.

"Her teeth are decaying and she has high blood pressure," the doctor said. "She will be completely bald soon."

The little girl smiled weakly when Marines gave her a bar of chocolate. Despite her suffering, she remembered her manners and inclined her head in a bow.

There were other atomic-bomb casualties in the Di-

vision area. Of 82 who were evacuated to Haiki, near Sasebo, 21 had died on the first day and 21 more on the second.

► NEW MISSIONS

THE 5TH DIVISION'S initial occupation mission had been to enforce the surrender terms throughout its zone. In October, however, Supreme Allied Headquarters in Tokyo had ordered that American troops on Kyushu perform two additional missions: disposition of enemy war material, and supervision of repatriation of Japanese coming home and Chinese and Koreans leaving Japan for their homes.

From October 20 to the end of November the Division's primary job, therefore, was to dispose of huge stores of military supplies and equipment. Kyushu was a gigantic arsenal of Japanese army, navy and air force matériel, and literally thousands of caches had been discovered in caves, factories, depots, and dumps.

Lieutenant Colonel Jack Tabor was appointed Division Disposition Officer to coordinate the work of disposition officers appointed on regimental and battalion level. Marines were careful not to destroy food, clothing, equipment, and machinery useful to the Japanese peacetime economy, but still thousands of tons of matériel were smashed, burned, blown up, or dumped at sea. Japanese laborers did most of this under American supervision.

Ammunition and explosives presented the greatest single disposition problem. Here the 5th Engineer Battalion and other specially trained Marines brought their highly developed skills into practice. Ordnance technicians who had taught hundreds of Division members the finer points of handling demolitions had not neglected training on disarming explosives. Men who had become experts in disarming on Iwo Jima now began wholesale destruction of enemy ammunition.

The largest ammunition dump in Japan had been at Saga, but there were plenty of others. One, for instance, inventoried twelve million pounds of picric-acid explosives. At Sasebo units of the 13th Marines had found themselves camped over a huge store of naval ammunition at the Sasebo aircraft factory. The stuff was everywhere! Cave-stored ammunition was partly decomposed, impossible to move, and dangerous to handle. It was exploded where it lay. Safer ammunition was moved by the trainload to the seacoast and dumped in the ocean. At Saga disposition teams set up



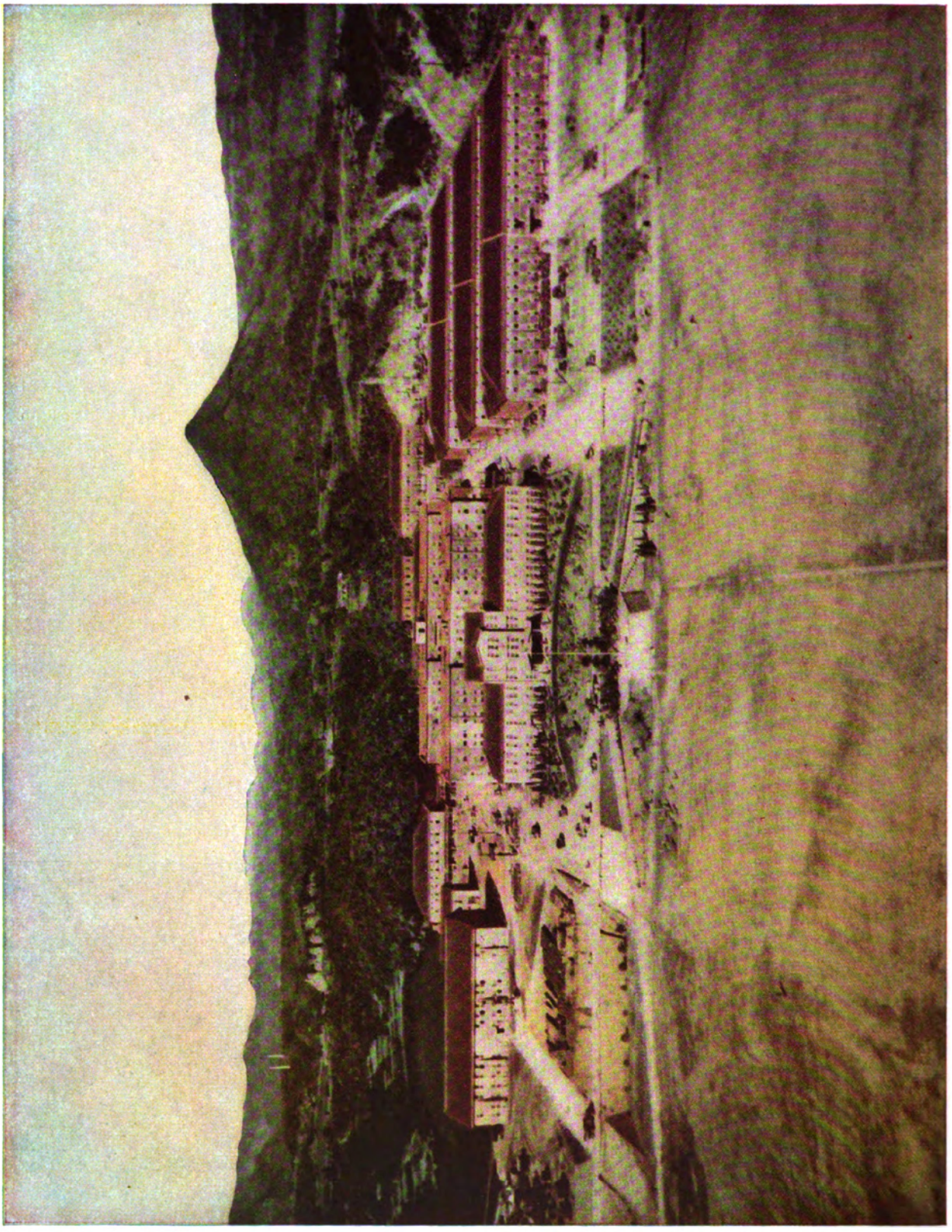
A formal Japanese tea ceremony supervised by Mama-san.

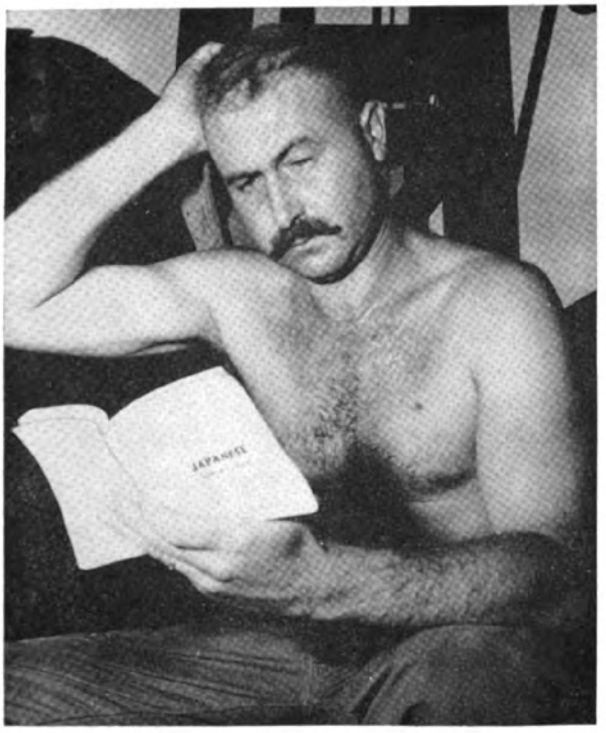


Japanese Christians join with Marines in religious services.



Thousands of Spearhead troops attended school in Japan.





"O-hayo."

the world's largest "popcorn popper" for destroying small-arms ammunition. They simply converted a concrete emplacement into a furnace and shoveled cartridges in by the truckload. As war material was destroyed it was checked off inventory lists (made by the Japanese and gone over by Marines) and disposition reports were made to higher headquarters.

► REPATRIATION

SUPERVISION OF REPATRIATION and demobilization of Japanese soldiers returning from China and Korea fell to the 13th Marines and the Fukoka occupation force. In the Sasebo area, where the 13th operated, American LSTs landed the incoming enemy soldiers and a few civilians at Uragashira. At Fukuoka Japanese shipping was used exclusively because of the heavily mined waters surrounding the port.

One Japanese admiral was apprehensive about how these repatriates would react to the American occupation. He described them as "narrow, selfish, haughty men, who had on many occasions appropriated power to satisfy their own greed." These Asia-based soldiers had not tasted defeat and the admiral was afraid that their reaction to the surrender might take the form of violence.

Later in October the Japanese 58th Army and other scattered units began arriving at Uragashira—a thousand men packed aboard each LST.[1] The rate of entry increased during November until Japanese were landing at the rate of three thousand a day. These troops were so well disciplined that earlier preparations for trouble were relaxed, and soon forty Marines under Major James Blackwell were handling thousands of home-bound Japanese.

Once ashore the Japanese were stripped, deloused, given shots, a medical examination and a general shakedown, and handed back their deloused clothing. Japanese police under Marine supervision put them through a rigid inspection to prevent weapons, loot, or excessive money from entering the country. After that they were marched three miles to Hario. Here Marines stood by Japanese officials who issued discharge papers and ordered the ex-soldiers to their homes.

Repatriates left this separation center with little comment and repeated refusals to admit that they had ever taken part in early Pacific conquests. One NCO declared that he was not sure whether he was happy to be back home or not—it was too early to tell—but he was definitely displeased at being dismissed from the army. That statement floored homesick Marines who overheard the interview.

Troops repatriated later from Saishuto, off the Ko-

[1] These troops were being evacuated from China by General Rockey's III Amphibious Corps.



Navy Lt. Thomas M. Brown with a Japanese doctor and nurse examines a victim of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki.

Marine Camp, Ainoura. Division headquarters in Japan.

rean coast, were surprised at the sudden end of the war. Many had not learned of Japan's loss of Okinawa. Older men were happy over the return of peace and their homecoming, but the younger ones made little comment.

By the end of November the 13th Marines and General Robinson's Leathernecks in Fukuoka had supervised the unloading, inspection, and demobilization of more than a hundred thousand incoming Japanese soldiers and civilians.

Ships bringing in these repatriates did not return to the Asiatic mainland empty. Thousands of Koreans and Chinese slave laborers wanted only to be returned to their homes. Fukuoka and Uragashira again were embarkation points, and Japanese police supervised by Marines processed the repatriates.

Men, women, and children shivered through outdoor assembly lines as they were inspected, deloused and given physical examinations before being packed aboard Japanese ships and American LSTs. During October and November the 13th Marines and the Fukuoka occupation force shipped over fifty thousand Chinese and Koreans back to Asia.

► SLEUTHING

ONE DAY a naval intelligence officer appeared at



Repatriation of Japanese soldiers from China and Korea became another major mission of the 5th Division. (1) Enemy troops prepare to land at Uragashira, near Sasebo. (2) Well disciplined troops, still under their own officers, soon were arriving at the rate of three thousand daily. (3) Japanese doctors under Marine supervision give physical examinations as part of a thorough shakedown upon arrival in Japan. (4) Enemy soldiers shoulder their packs for the three-mile march to demobilization barracks at Hario. (5) Civilians again, Japanese wait to board trains for home.

Division headquarters with a strange request.

"When the atomic bomb was dropped over Nagasaki," he told the G-2, "two metal cylinders containing instruments to measure the force of the blast and other data were parachuted down at the same time. These cylinders, we have reason to believe, are in the hands of the Japanese. Your job," he added, "is to find them—and in a hurry!"

Japanese language officers immediately began to question former enemy personnel who might furnish a clue to the recovery of these instruments. Finally Lieutenant Joseph O. Zurhellen extracted from a Japanese admiral the admission that the cylinders had been found by the enemy, but only after he had questioned the admiral for twenty-four solid hours. Within forty-eight hours one cylinder had been recovered. Ten days later the second was found in a physics laboratory in Fukuoka. Japanese experts had field-stripped it and were on the verge of knowing exactly what had fallen into their hands.

As the occupation went on, civilians around Sasebo, although perfectly friendly, had become bolder and less subservient. They no longer made way for vehicles, which increased the traffic problem, and a few were guilty of minor violations of the law and noncooperation. Fifty-two Japanese soldiers were jailed for arrogance, and several civilians, including one woman, who were caught with Marine clothing and rations, were turned over to civilian police who promptly beat them severely.

The military government and the Division G-2 section suspected that large supplies of naval stores had been issued to civilians and government agencies by the Japanese navy after the surrender. After one high-ranking Japanese naval officer sweated out a week of solitary confinement he told the story. A special civilian agency run by demobilized naval officers had been set up and had received about half of the gasoline, clothing, food and other small stores of the Japanese navy.

Profiteers had netted millions of yen selling these items to civilians. Crafty intelligence work by the Division thwarted this huge black market and resulted in the arrest of numerous Japanese.

Soon, however, a food shortage developed, caused by a steep rise in prices which had taken place since the occupation. Government buyers offered farmers 30 yen for rice; the black market gave 500 yen. Cigarettes leaped from 60 sen to 10 yen a pack. To have a shirt laundered before the occupation cost 25 sen—about one and a half cents. Now it was 2 yen—about 13 cents.

In mid-November the Division received startling reports of rice selling at eighty times the fixed government price and of impending starvation of the poor. These came from prominent Sasebo residents who, when they were questioned about the black market (which they referred to as "the dark market") also involved local police and the Japanese Navy. Some said the illicit buying was necessary for survival at a time when the average adult was receiving 1,040 calories a day. Unlawful purchases in the country by merchants who resold food in the city was the alleged cause of the skyrocketing prices. One citizen explained that



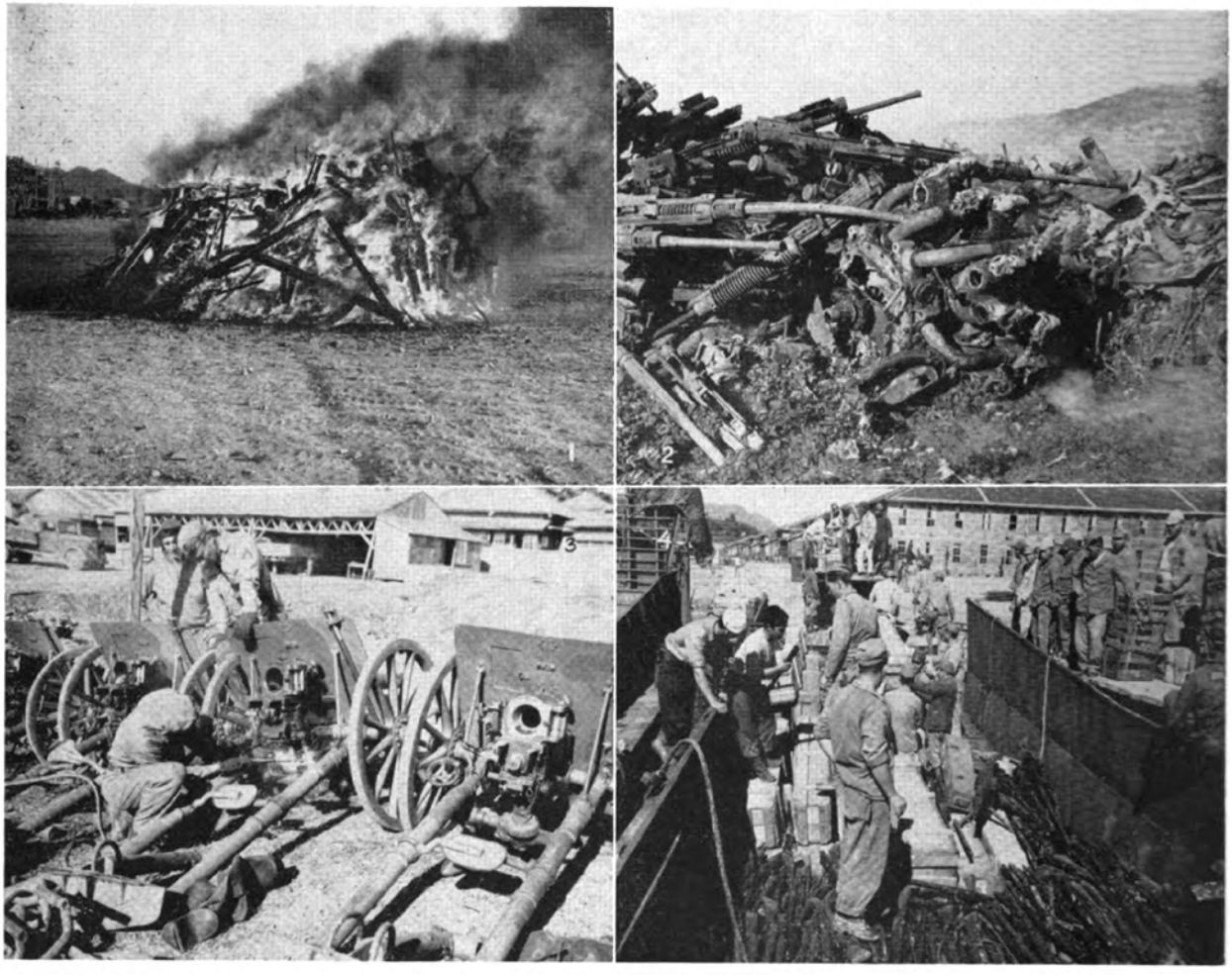
Disposition of vast stores of enemy weapons and war matériel soon became the 5th Division's primary mission in Japan. Top: A Japanese ammunition dump. Center: A cache of shells and explosives stored in an underground shelter. Bottom: Mortars and machine guns found in a school.

when the Navy was demobilized the "uncultured, uneducated" police lost face completely with the people.

Some sources linked control of black-market rings to military underground groups. Others claimed that demobilized officers and NCOs who received huge bonus payments were the cause of the trouble.

Many of these accusations appeared to be true. Only forty-seven per cent of the rice crop had been reported to the authorities, the rest apparently having been sold on the black market. One result of this was that school children in some areas did not have lunches and began to show signs of want and malnutrition.

On November 15, 5th Division search parties struck at forty-one shrines, temples, and school buildings in the Sasebo area, which up until then had been protected from search and trespassing by "safeguard" signs. Marines sought secret caches of weapons, documents or military matériel. Eleven teams reported they had found some contraband. Searches of Saga and Kurume schools yielded a few weapons and wooden rifles and some shrines contained swords. Nothing of importance turned up, however.



Japan is quickly stripped of its war potential as Marines supervise destruction of weapons, explosives and equipment not usable by the civilian population. (1) Burning Japanese Army equipment. (2) Aircraft engines and naval 20mm AA guns are destroyed by the 13th Marines. (3) A cutting torch renders enemy artillery pieces harmless. (4) Japanese, with Marines looking on, load an LSM with rifles and machine guns for dumping at sea.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

End of a Mission

AFTER TWO MONTHS of occupation the 5th Division could measure statistically some of the results of its enforcement of surrender terms. The enemy armed forces had been demobilized, war matériel was ninety per cent razed, ammunition and explosives twenty per cent destroyed, and turnover to the Japanese Home Ministry of materials and equipment usable by the Japanese in peacetime eighty per cent complete.

The 13th Marines alone had scuttled at sea or otherwise destroyed about 188,000 rounds of artillery and mortar ammunition; 25,000 aerial bombs; 400 tons of aircraft parts; 30 tons of signal equipment; 1,800 machine guns; 161 miscellaneous warmaking machines; 270 torpedoes; 650 tons of torpedo parts; 4,500 mines and depth charges; 83 large guns; and tons of other equipment.

The 13th's brother regiments and the separate battalions built up similar records. All units continued their inventory of remaining matériel to assist units which would replace them.

Changes in civilian life also had come to Japan. Secret societies and "thought police" had been rooted out and suppressed. Reconstruction of cities and towns had been hastened by the liberal use of American engineering equipment. Factories had reconverted to peacetime production—a naval boiler plant was producing farm machinery; a TNT factory began making dyes; a machine-gun plant now turned out irrigation pumps and printing presses; arsenals were converted into kitchen utensil factories; aircraft factories were taken over by manufacturers of bicycles, prefabricated houses, and bricks. New agricultural land—once restricted military zones—was sprouting crops. Farmers began to plant rice on airfields.

The rank and file of the people had not yet begun to appreciate or even to realize the widespread changes in their form of government and their new civil liberties. For the moment their problem was to exist. In time, however, the people could make their democracy work. Now it was enough that the military government officers and the occupation forces should demonstrate the American ideal of justice tempered with mercy. The 5th Division's demonstration of this in their conduct was, perhaps, their greatest contribution to the success of the occupation.

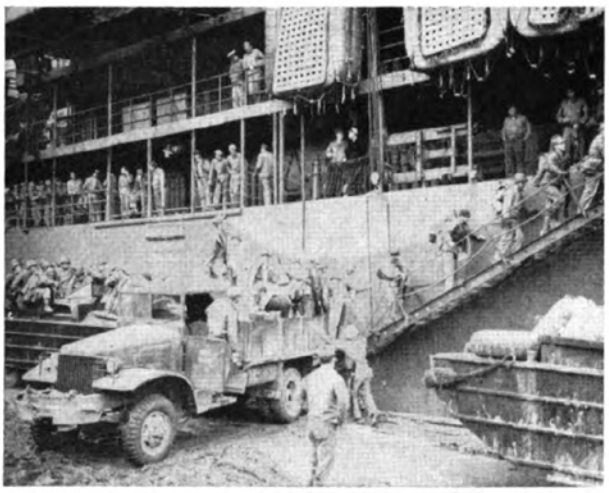
► FAREWELL TO JAPAN

EARLY IN OCTOBER American mop-up forces in the South Pacific had become critically short of troops to supervise the repatriation of Japanese from conquered and by-passed islands. Such an emergency arose at Peleliu and the 26th Marines were recalled from occupation duty to do the job. On October 19, Colonel Graham's regiment was relieved by units of the 32d Infantry Division. The 2d Battalion was disbanded and the remainder of CT 26 left Japan for the South Pacific.

"Home—when do we go there?" was the main topic of conversation among the remaining Marines in the Division. After two months of occupation duty, it seemed that a new back-to-the-States rumor started every hour. To illustrate the trend of the times, one unit's news bulletin topped its masthead with: "If You Haven't Heard the Latest Rumor By 1730 Start Your Own."

Demobilization of high-point Marines had been going on, of course, all during the occupation. In October and November 265 officers and 2,939 men were returned to the United States.

As the "old men"—Marines who had been fighting the war in the Pacific long enough to pile up 90 to 140 points—arrived at the docks, they stood in small groups waiting for LSMs to take them to their trans-



The 5th Division's job was done. Marines board ship for the voyage home.

ports. Japanese rifles or swords, given to each Marine as a war trophy, poked out of sea bags stacked nearby.

A colonel drove down to the dock to say goodbye to a private first class who had been his jeep driver. A first sergeant stood in the middle of a group, wishing his "ex-Leathernecks" good luck. A captain on his way home—a wide grin on his face—talked to a group of his men. The Division band marched up and played music the homeward-bound Marines would be hearing Stateside—swing numbers and the inevitable "California Here I Come."

This transfer of personnel for separation, however pleasant for the men being discharged, greatly handicapped the remaining forces. It stripped units of many of their best and most experienced officers and NCOs and caused a constant reassignment of duties.

Beginning on November 23, V Amphibious Corps began to relieve the 5th of its areas of responsibility and to assign them to the 2d Marine Division and the 32d Infantry Division. It arranged for the disbandment of the Fukuoka Base Command and assigned its missions to the Army. High-point men of the 5th Division remained with their units while low-pointers—those who were not going home immediately—were assigned to the 2d Division and to Corps troops.

Units spread across Kyushu soon were pulled back to Sasebo and began to turn over much of their equipment to the 2d Division and 8th Service Regiment.

On December 5, the transport *Pondera* carrying homeward bound 5th Division Marines sailed frome Sasebo. Two days later five other troopships put to sea. On December 8 the 2d Division assumed control of the entire Division zone and occupation duty ended for the "Spearhead" troops.

As the last of the Division prepared to embark, Headquarters received the following commendation from Lieutenant General Roy S. Geiger:

"On the occasion of the prospective separation of the 5th Marine Division from the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, the Commanding General desires to take this opportunity to extend to the officers and men of the division a 'well done' for its part in the prosecution of the war against Japan.

"In the Iwo Jima operation, and in the occupation of the Japanese homeland, the 5th Marine Division, by its execution of assigned missions, exhibited beyond any doubt that its success was derived from a well-trained, and well-led professional team.

"The officers and men of the 5th Marine Division may take pride in the knowledge that they have played an important role in ultimately defeating the enemy.

"The performance of the 5th Marine Division has been in keeping with the highest tradition of the U.S. Marine Corps and has added laurels to its history."

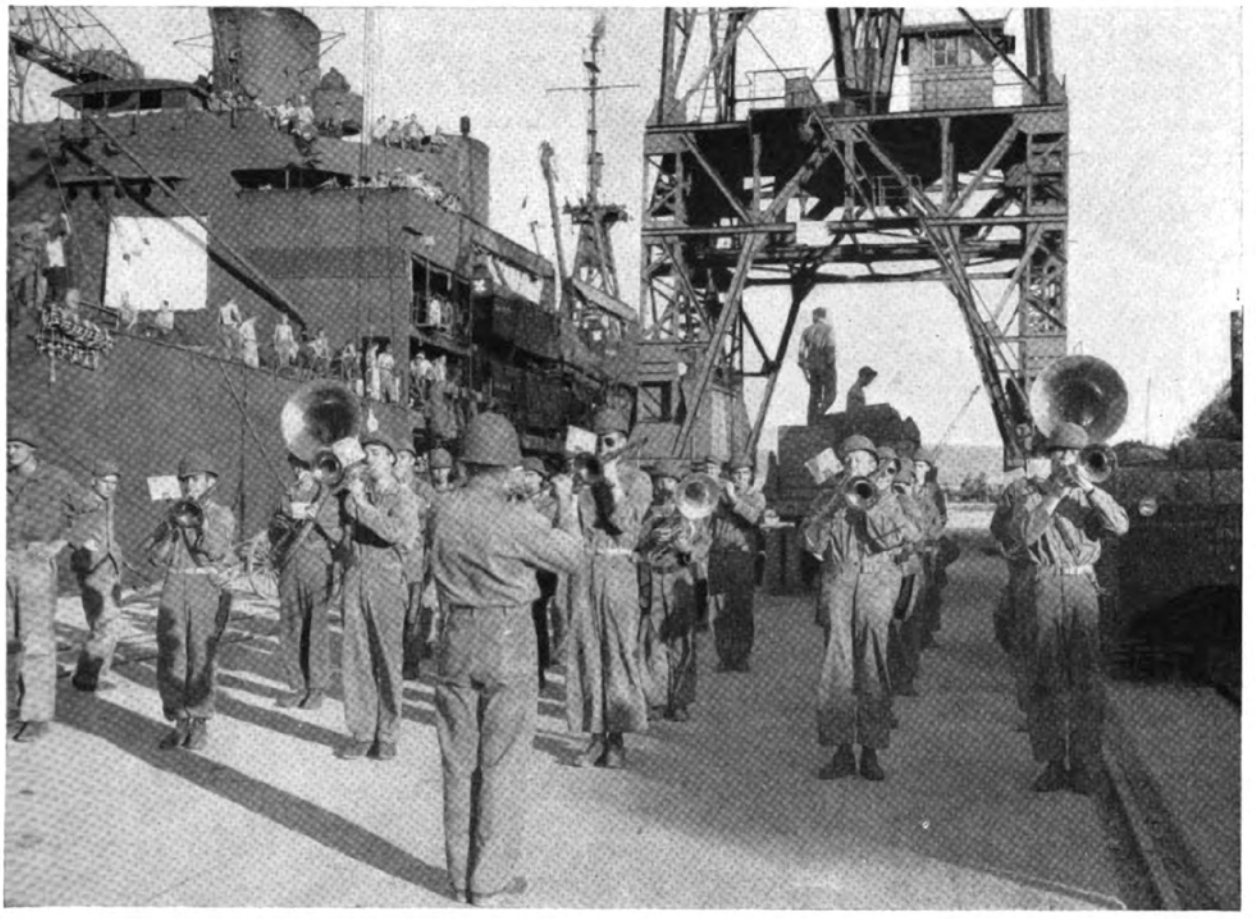
On December 18 General Bourke was detached and General Robinson assumed command. That day the command post closed at Marine Camp, Ainoura, and opened aboard the transport *Leon*.

Every day, between December 20 and the end of 1945, transports carrying 5th Division troops from Japan docked at San Diego. Division Headquarters arrived on Christmas Day. Equipment went to Camp Elliott and only necessary records accompanied Marines to Camp Pendleton. The 28th Marines (as they had done two years before) went to billets in Tent Camp No. 1.

As the Division units reported to the Marine Training and Replacement Command, San Diego Area, they received instructions for the gradual transfer of men for separation and reassignment. During January 1946, more than 500 officers and 11,000 men were relieved from active duty and discharged; 93 officers and 529 men were transferred to the other units.

Throughout the entire pre-discharge period, Marines received instruction which prepared them for return to school or to civilian employment, with special emphasis on veterans' benefits.

Between January 5 and 10, 1946, the 13th and the 27th Marines were disbanded. On January 12, General Robinson, the Division Commander, was detached



A musical send-off for high-point Marines leaving Japan for the States and discharge. Every day, between December 20 and the end of 1945, transports carrying 5th Division troops from Japan docked at San Diego.



Back at Camp Pendleton. Reassignment for the regulars, discharge for the reserves.

and Colonel Liversedge took command of the remaining units.

The Division rear echelon arrived from Hawaii on January 15 and the next day eight LSTs carrying the 5th's last overseas personnel reached San Diego. Late in January the 28th Marines were disbanded along with the Pioneers, Engineers, and service elements, and on February 5, 1946, Headquarters Battalion was disbanded and the 5th Marine Division passed into history.

Exactly one year after the Division had landed on Iwo Jima, Headquarters and the 3d Battalion, 26th Marines arrived at San Diego from Peleliu. Disbandment came quickly for these units. The 1st Battalion completed its mission on Peleliu in March and moved north to Guam where it, too, died an honorable death.

The 5th Marine Division is no more than a memory, but it is a memory that its men will carry with them all their lives. It was born of the terrible necessity of war, but it fought as few divisions were called upon to fight and the courage of its men became a legend in its own lifetime.