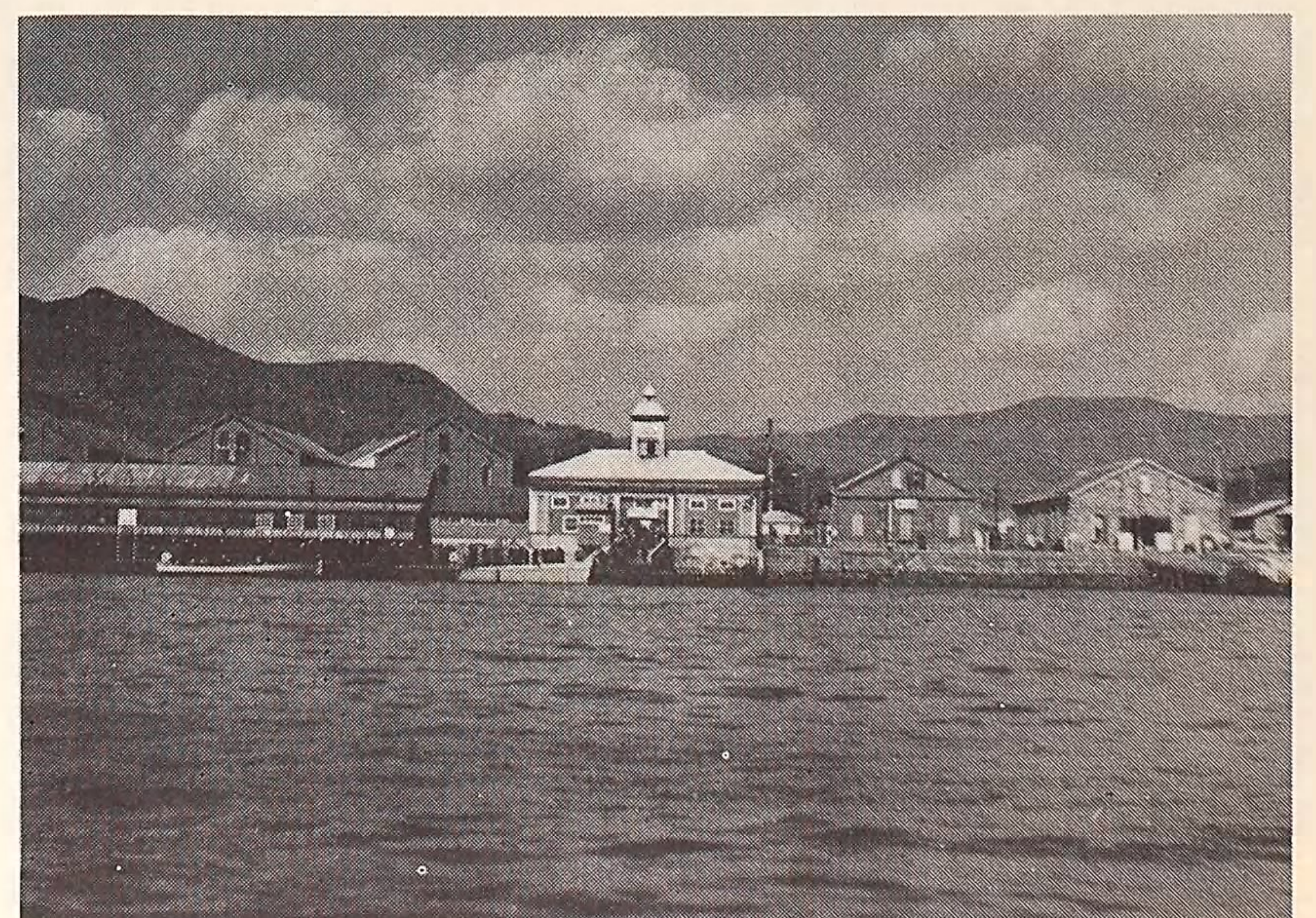


It is hard to describe the Japanese people or their customs to anyone who has never been to Japan. They are unique in their industriousness and their ability to make things by skill and patience alone with little or no raw materials. Another very surprising thing to those of us who were seeing the Japanese for the first time was the fact that their complexion was not yellow and their eyes were not as almond shaped as we were led to suspect. In fact, after a few liberties on the beach some of us began to believe that not a few of the Japanese were more Americanized than some sailors.

To most of us Yokosuka was Japan. It was there that we made our first acquaintance with the Japanese people and their way of life. It was there that we always came for "R & R". It was a blend of the traditional customs of the Japanese and the customs and ways of Americans as brought here by the American serviceman.

Rickshaws and taxicabs jammed the streets; women in kimonos walked side by side with girls in skirts and sweaters; saki and Pabst Blue Ribbon were sold at the same bars; State-side songs and Japanese folk tunes were played on the same juke boxes; steam heat replaced the habatchi pot in some places; the people talked English with a Japanese brogue. Everywhere could be found evidence of the American influence of the Japanese way of life.

We stayed in Yokosuka just long enough to enliven old memories for those of us who had been there before. For those who were seeing Japan for the first time it was a brief but very promising taste of the Japanese people and their culture.





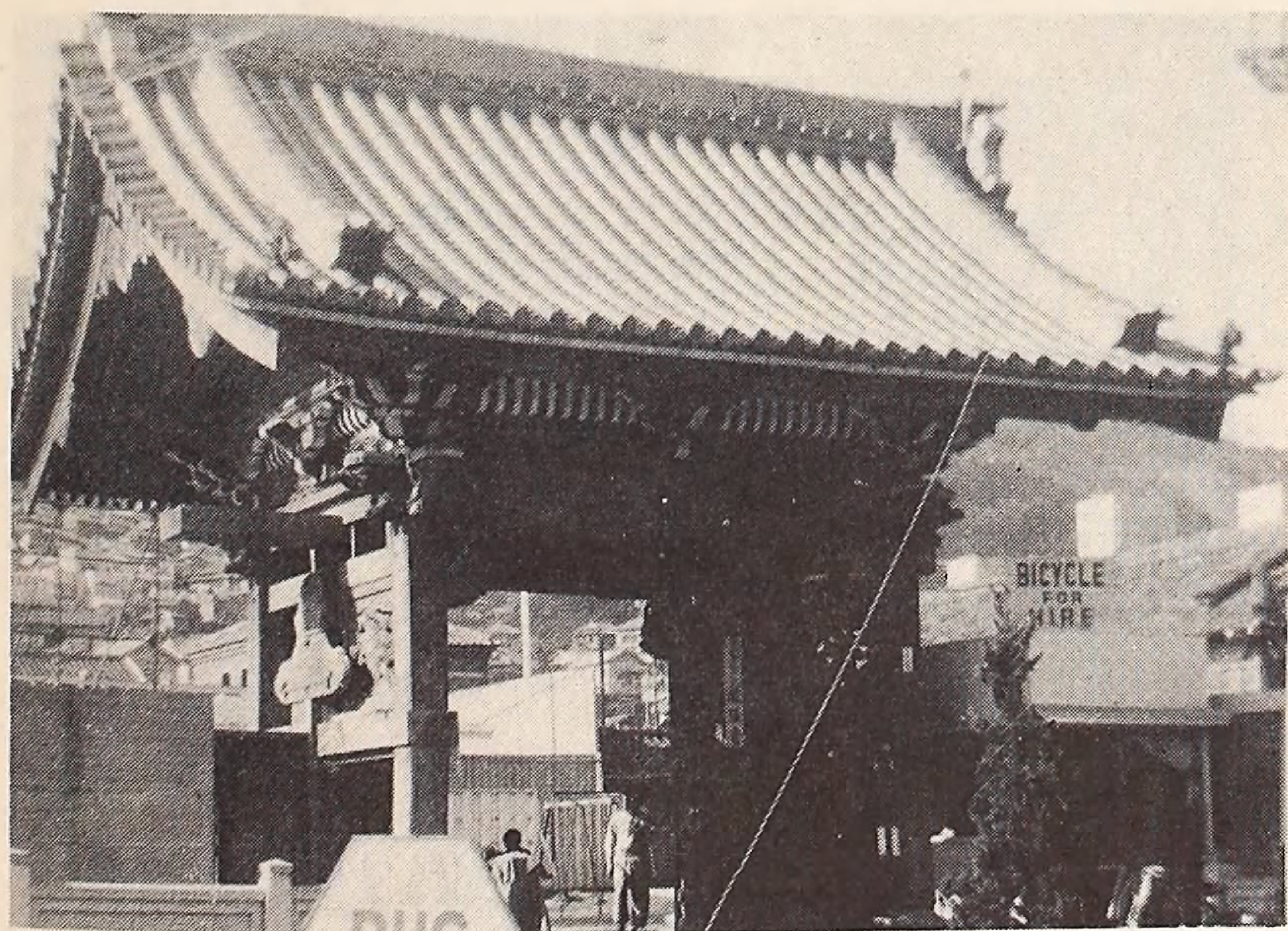
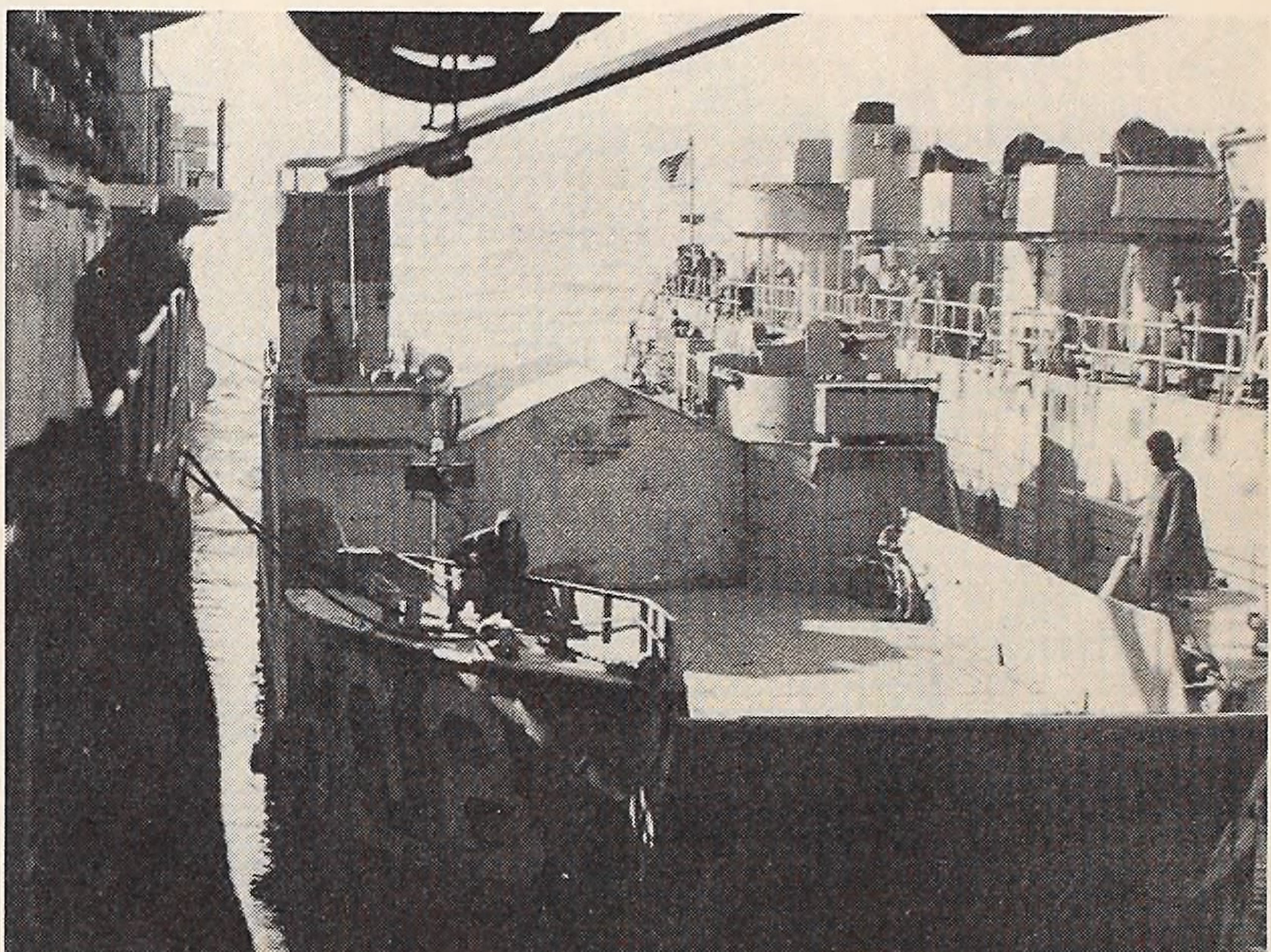
From Yokosuka we went to Sasebo, Japan. The first few days all hands were busy transferring stores and supplies aboard. It was here that we picked up MSB Division ONE and COMINRON THREE. In the next nine months we were to see them often.

Finally after a week in Sasebo we headed for Wonsan, Korea, arriving the latter part of October. Korea at any time of the year is never very warm, and at this time it was starting to breed weather that would eventually turn into a severe and bitterly cold winter. Condition III watches were the order of the day in Korea and after 30 days of watch standing most of the crew did not care if they never saw Korea, a mid-watch, or an LSD again.

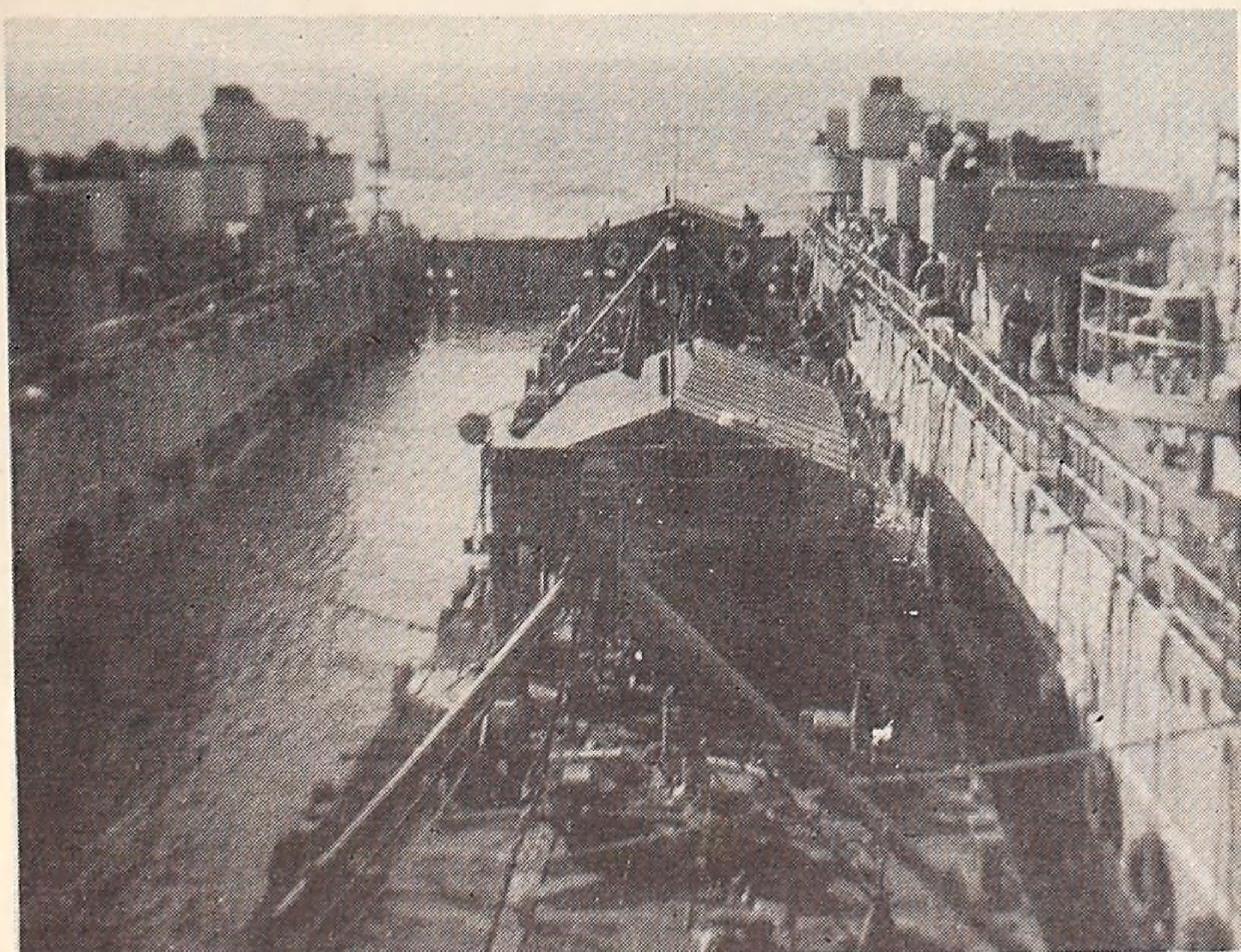
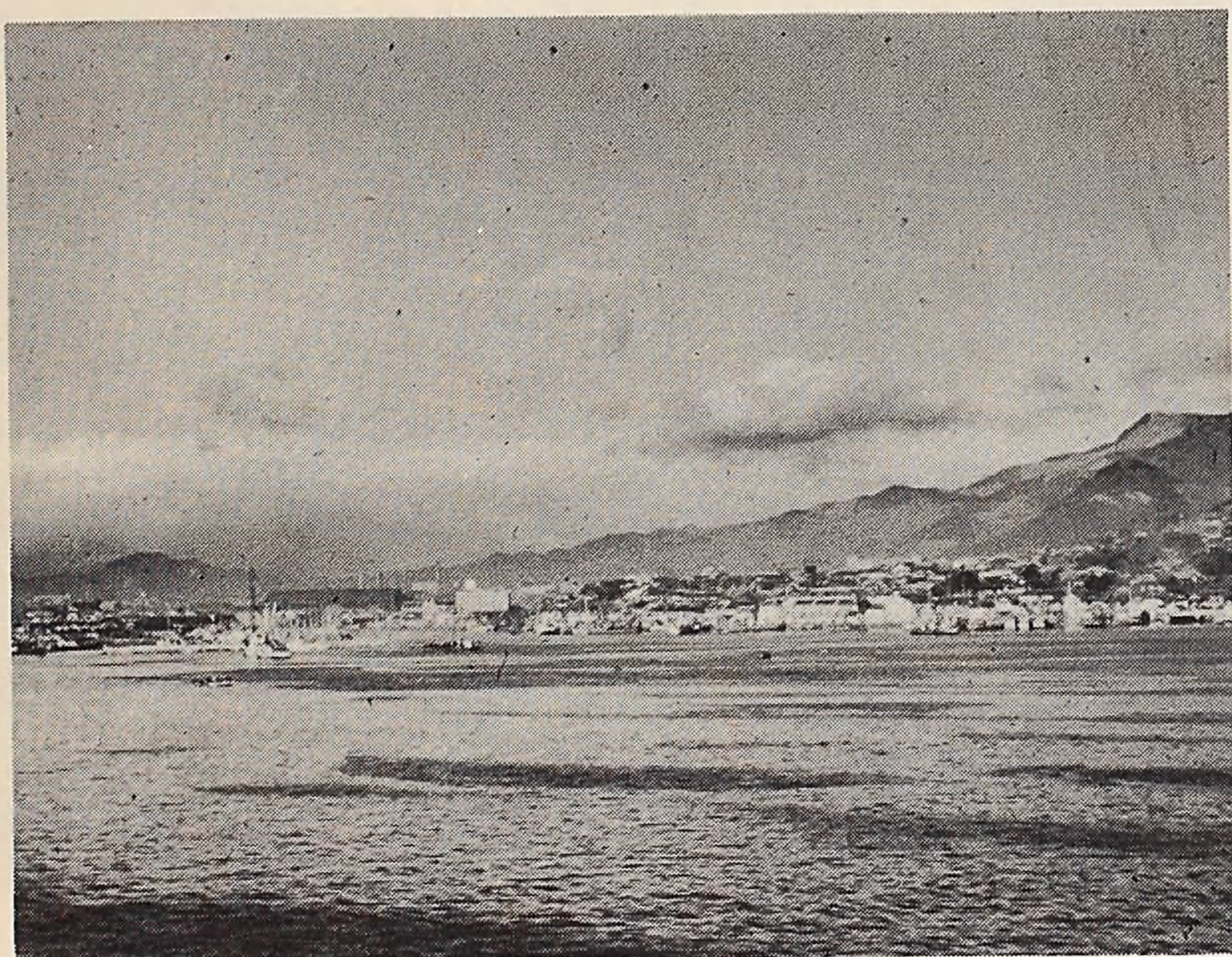
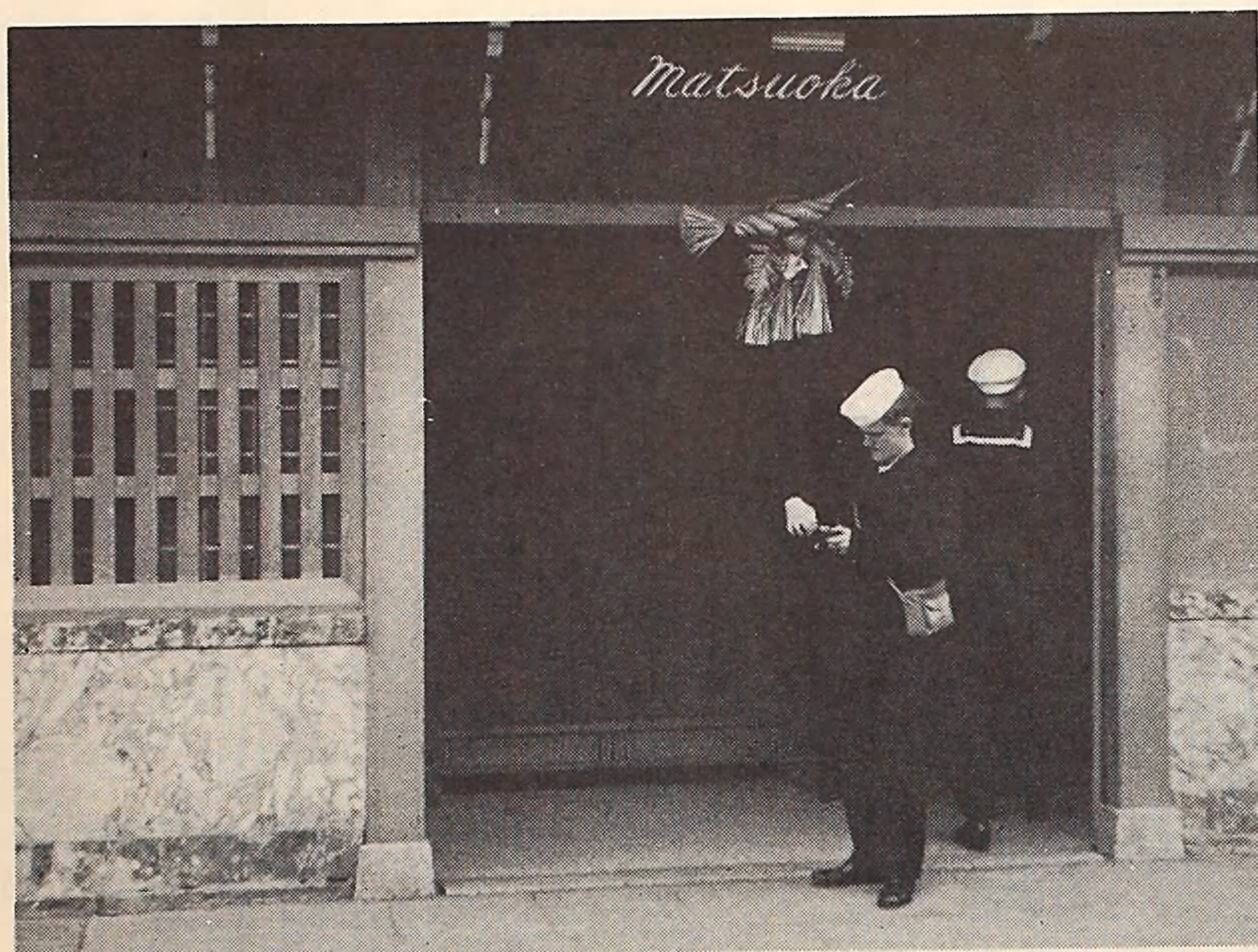
In spite of watches, regular duties, sleeping and eating, time was passing pretty slowly. Volleyball tournaments, cribbage tournaments and acey-duecey tournaments all helped to pass away extra time.

Halloween and Thanksgiving passed before we got back to Sasebo. In Sasebo we transferred MSB Division ONE and COMINRON THREE. The personnel from MSB and COMINRON THREE were a fine group of fellows. Their tour of duty in WESTPAC lasts anywhere from 18 to 24 months. During that time most of their time is spent on one ship or another in Korea. They seldom, if ever, have a ship that they can call their own. During all kinds of weather they are called upon to sweep Korean waters. They live out of their sea bags and much of their time is spent in transit. In spite of these many and varied hardships they do an outstanding job.

About the first part of December, when our thoughts were of the coming Christmas back







in the States, we left for Inchon, Korea. Inchon was quite an experience. For us it meant G.Q. at least three times per day.

After ten days in Inchon we got an unexpected lucky break. We loaded LCU's and steamed to Nagasaki for two liberties. Nagasaki must have known that we were coming because the people welcomed us with open arms. We had port and starboard liberty, one-half of the crew went on shore patrol. The next night the situation was reversed. When we finally steamed back to Inchon the crew was really beat — liberty one night followed by shore patrol the next night seemed to be too much even for the most hardy.

In Inchon we unloaded the LCU's and embarked troops for a big Marlex operation. In the next few days we practiced every exercise for which the LSD was ever intended. It was by participating in training operations such as this that we realized the value of the teamwork and training that is so necessary for the success of any large military operation.

After the Marlex we headed for Camp McGill and Yokosuka — in a round about way. We went via Inchon picking up some LCU's to take back to Camp McGill.

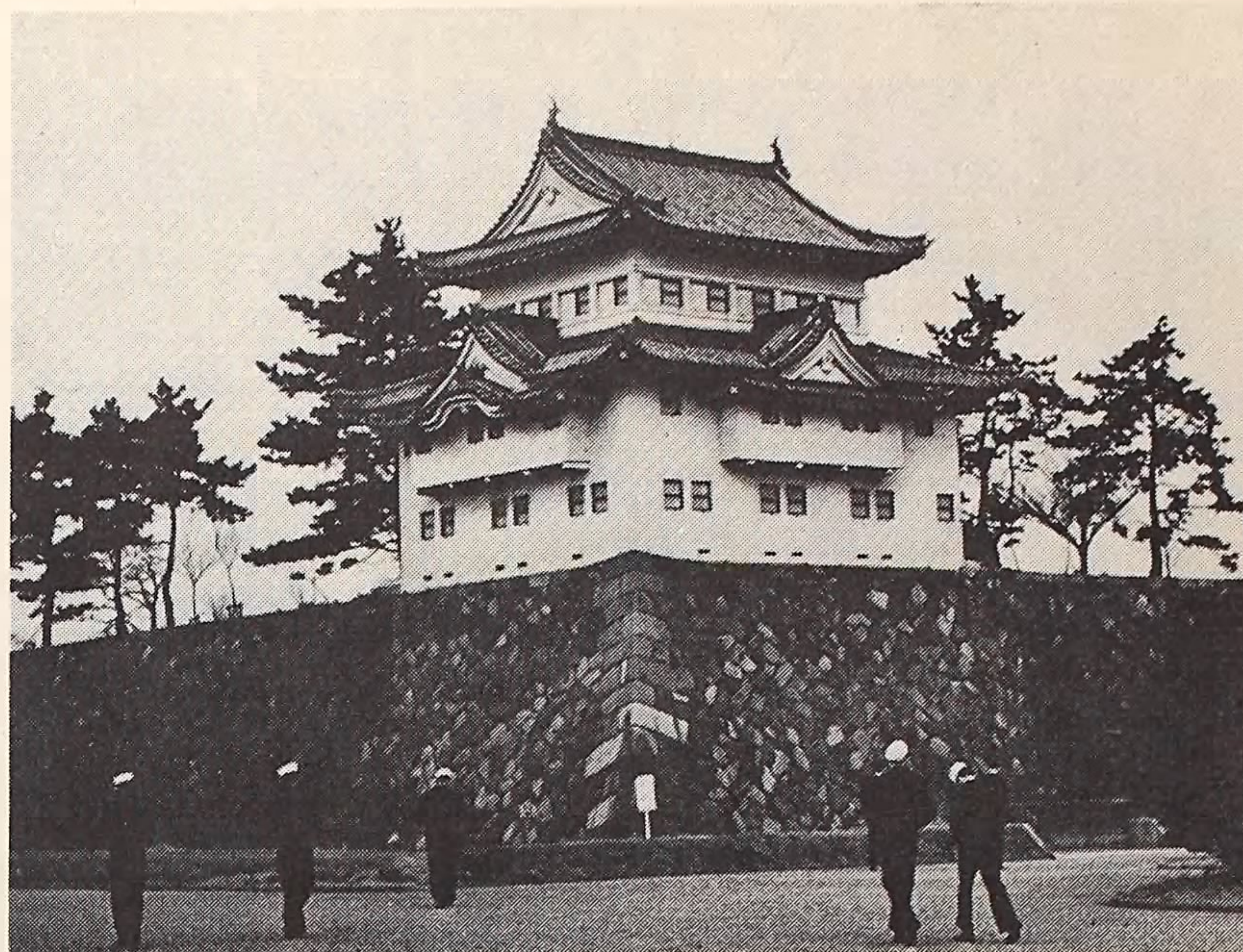
It was a weary crew and a weary ship that finally found its way to Yokosuka on Christmas Eve in the year of Our Lord nineteen hundred and fifty-two. We had packed a lot of sea miles and experiences into the two short months since first arriving in Yokosuka. This time we were to get some very welcome "R & R", and the ship was also due for a little rest and overhaul. For the first time since arriving in the Far East, except for the two days in Nagasaki, we were to be tied up to a pier. After riding VP's to the beach for lib-











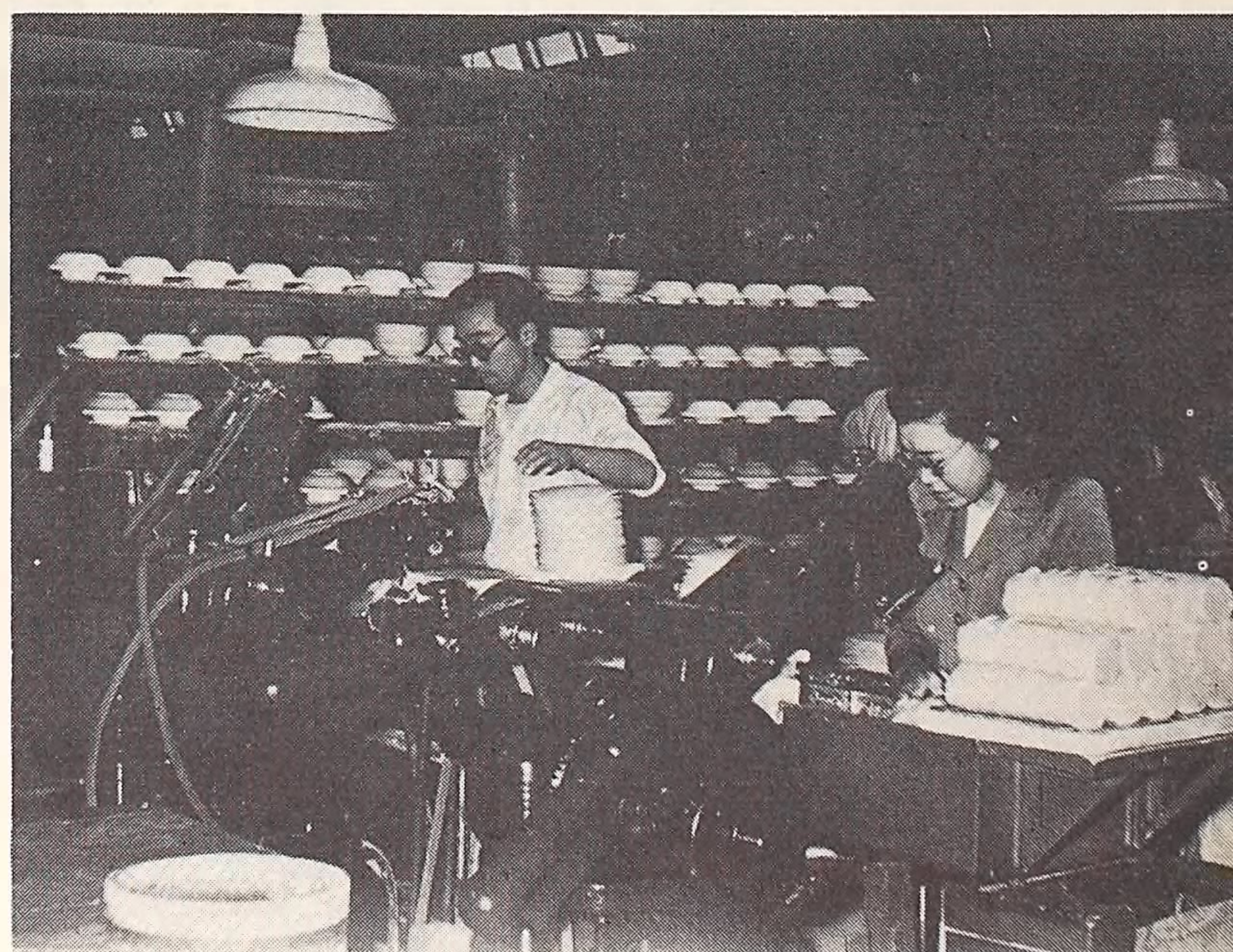
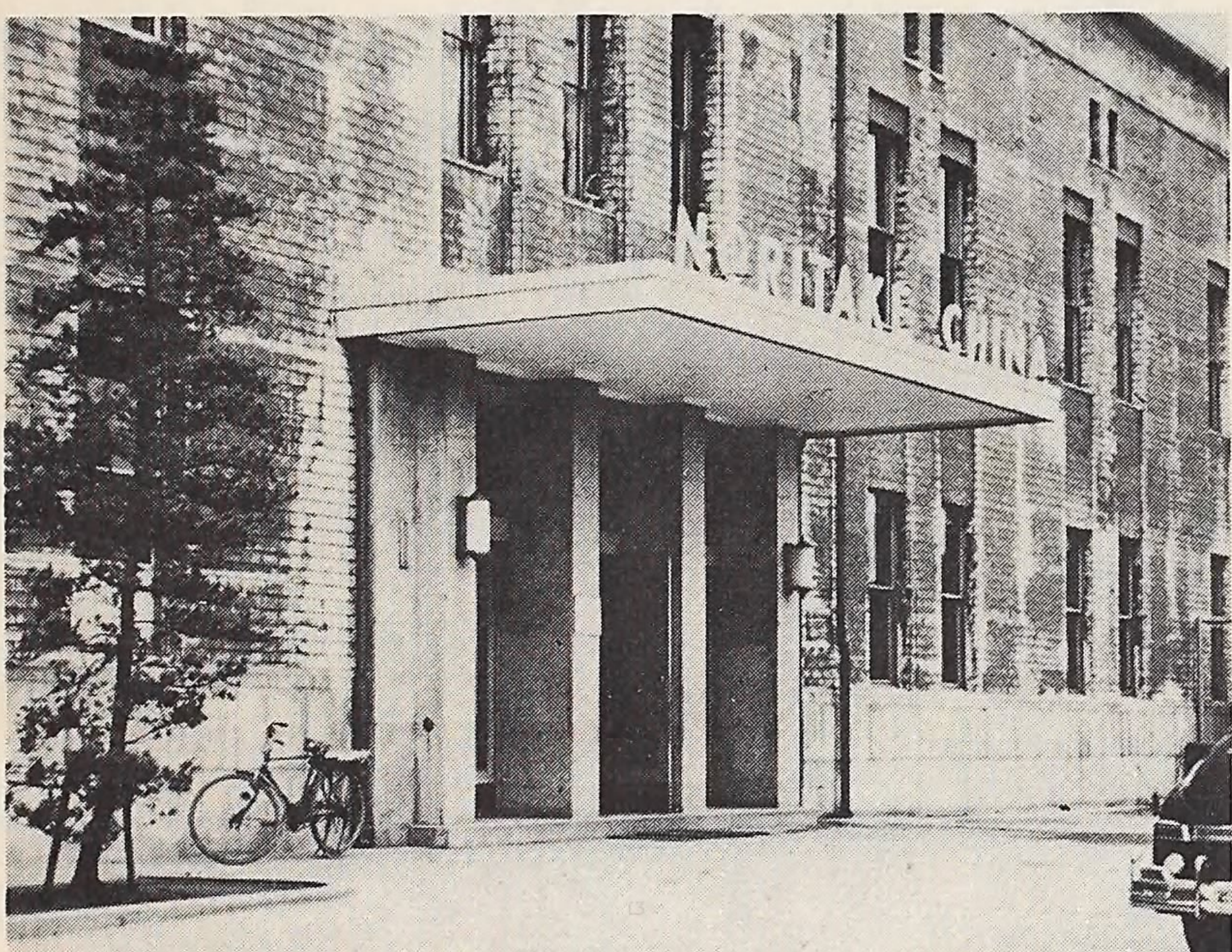
erty it was a welcome treat to be able to walk off the gangway directly onto a dock.

Christmas and New Year's away from the States was not exactly what any of us wanted, but in WESTPAC spending the holidays in Yokosuka was about as good as we could expect. We bought china, Japanese records, suits and sport clothes, almost everything imaginable while we were in Yokosuka.

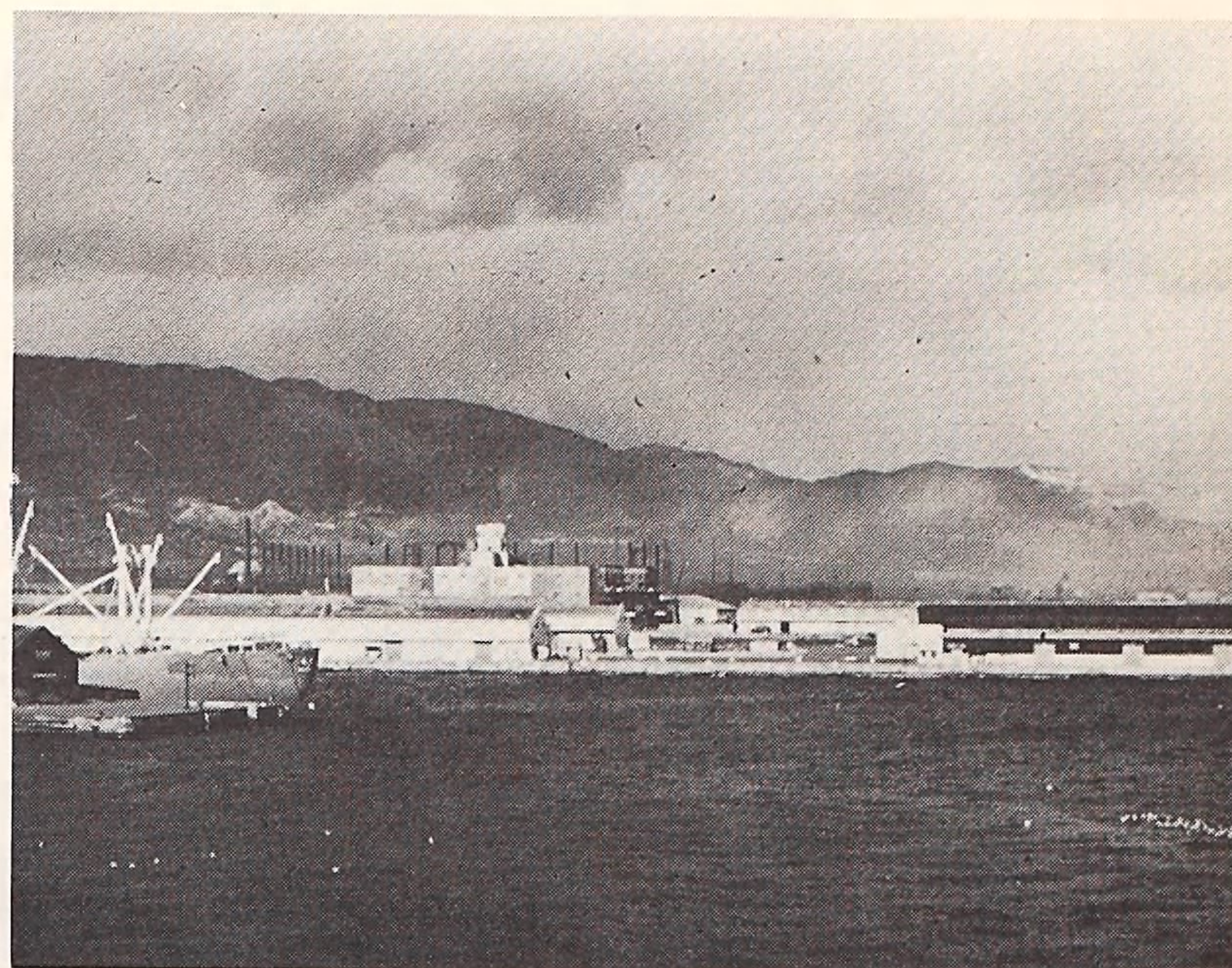
When we left Yokosuka about the middle of January it was with much sadness in our hearts for the friends and good times we had left behind. And we looked forward in anticipation to our next visit there.

The next few weeks we spent in operations in and around Camp McGill, finally ending up in Nagoya, Japan. In Nagoya we found a thoroughly modern city, rivaling even some of the bigger cities in America.

From Nagoya we went back to our old standby port, Sasebo. Sasebo had none of the glamor of the bigger Japanese cities, it does not have the recreational facilities of Yokosuka, it did



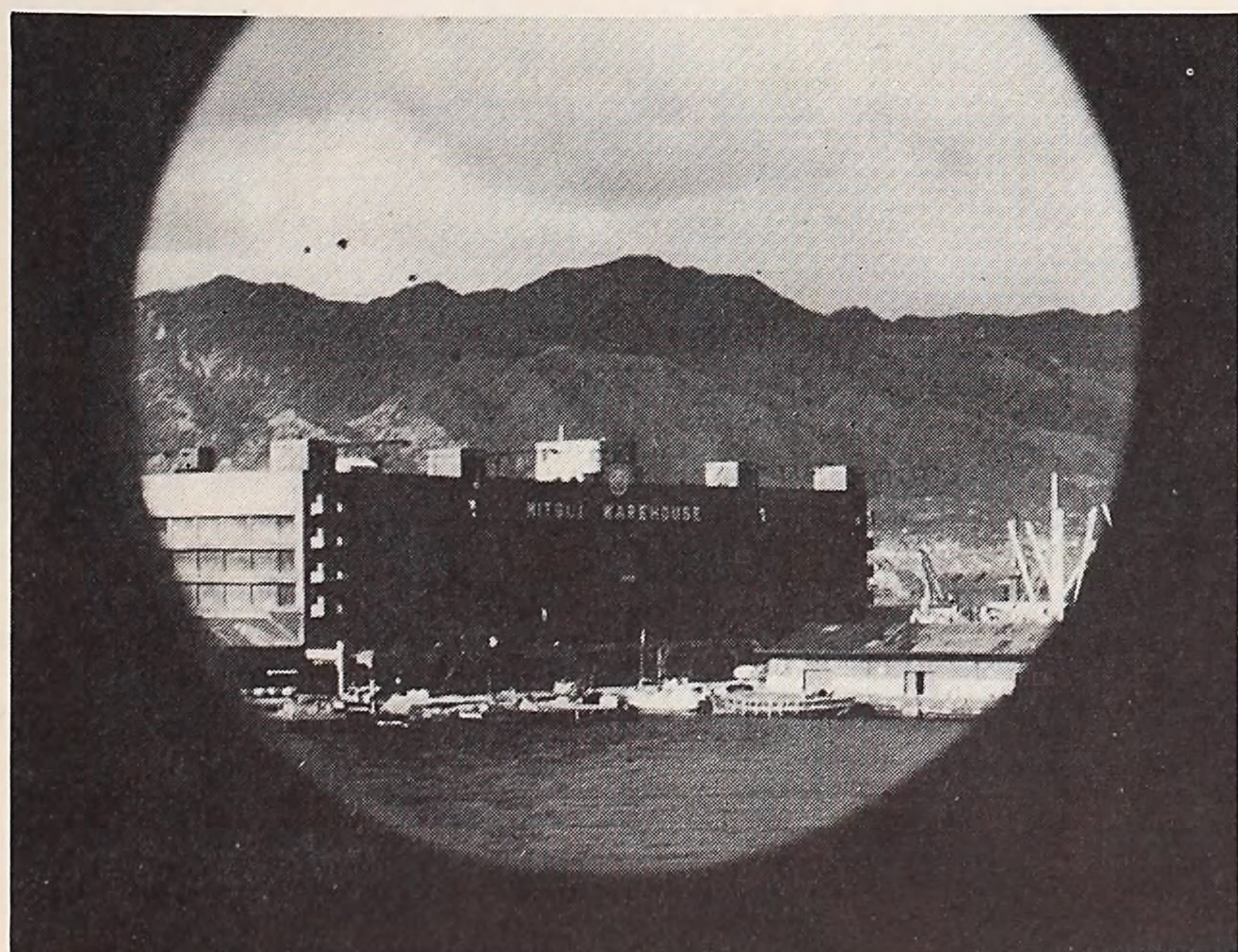




not have the big fancy cabarets and dance halls of other big Japanese ports, but it was invariably the last stop before Korea. To us that meant the last chance for a little fun, a few cool beers, and the usually warm and friendly companionship of the Japanese people. In addition, Sasebo was usually our first stop after our tours of minesweeping in Korea. Yokosuka might have held the hearts of the majority of the Epping Forest sailors, but Sasebo ran a close second.

We stayed in Sasebo just about long enough to drop the hook and we were off on our way to Kobe. Kobe is one of the principal industrial cities of Japan. After seeing the tall smoke stacks outlined against the sky and all the commercial shipping facilities we were convinced of that.

From Kobe we went to Wonsan, Korea, stopping in Sasebo just long enough to pick up MSB Division ONE and COMINRON THREE. A week of minesweeping and tender duties in Wonsan and we steamed to Pusan to pick up some Korean junks to take to Sasebo. After





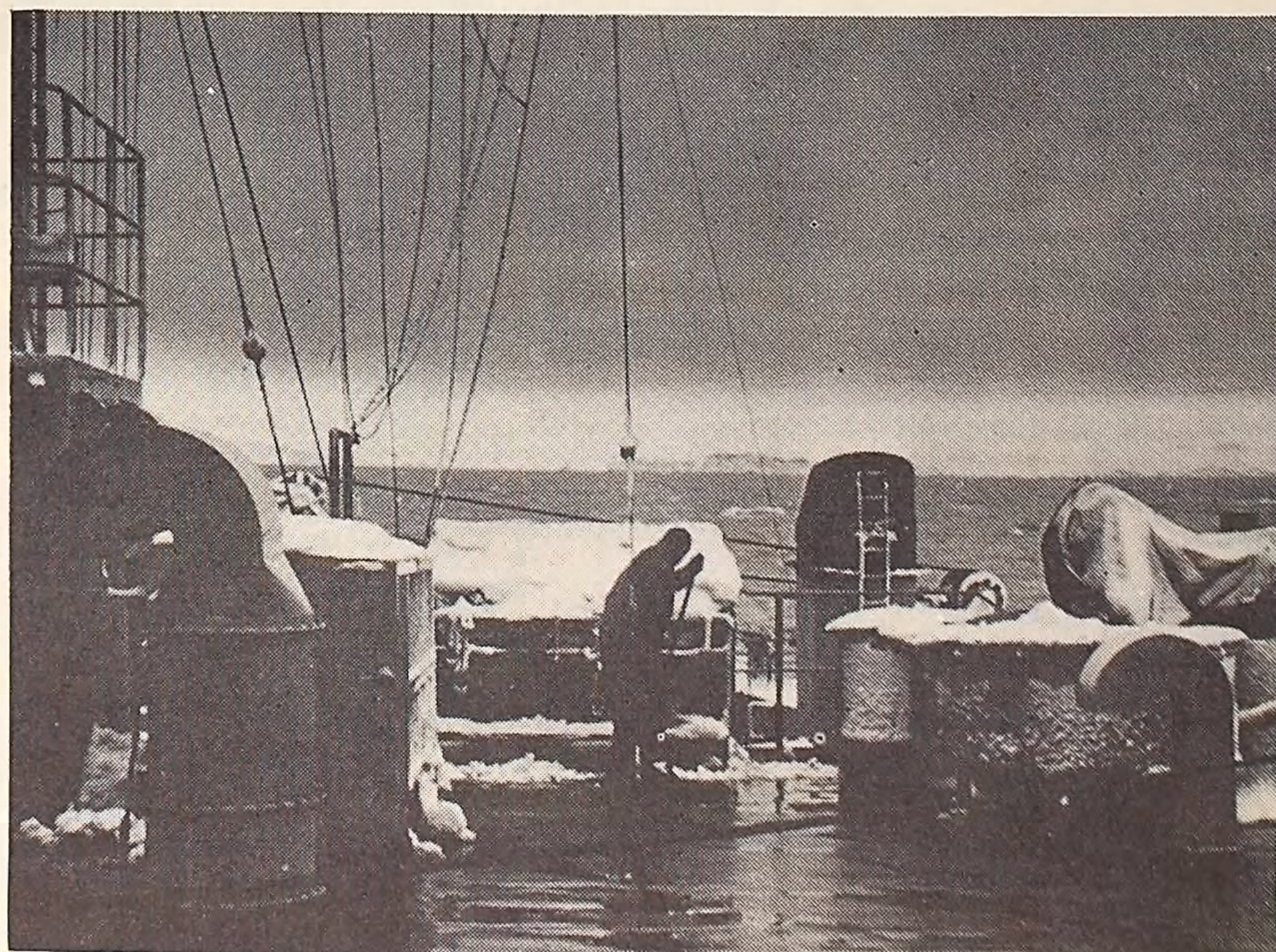
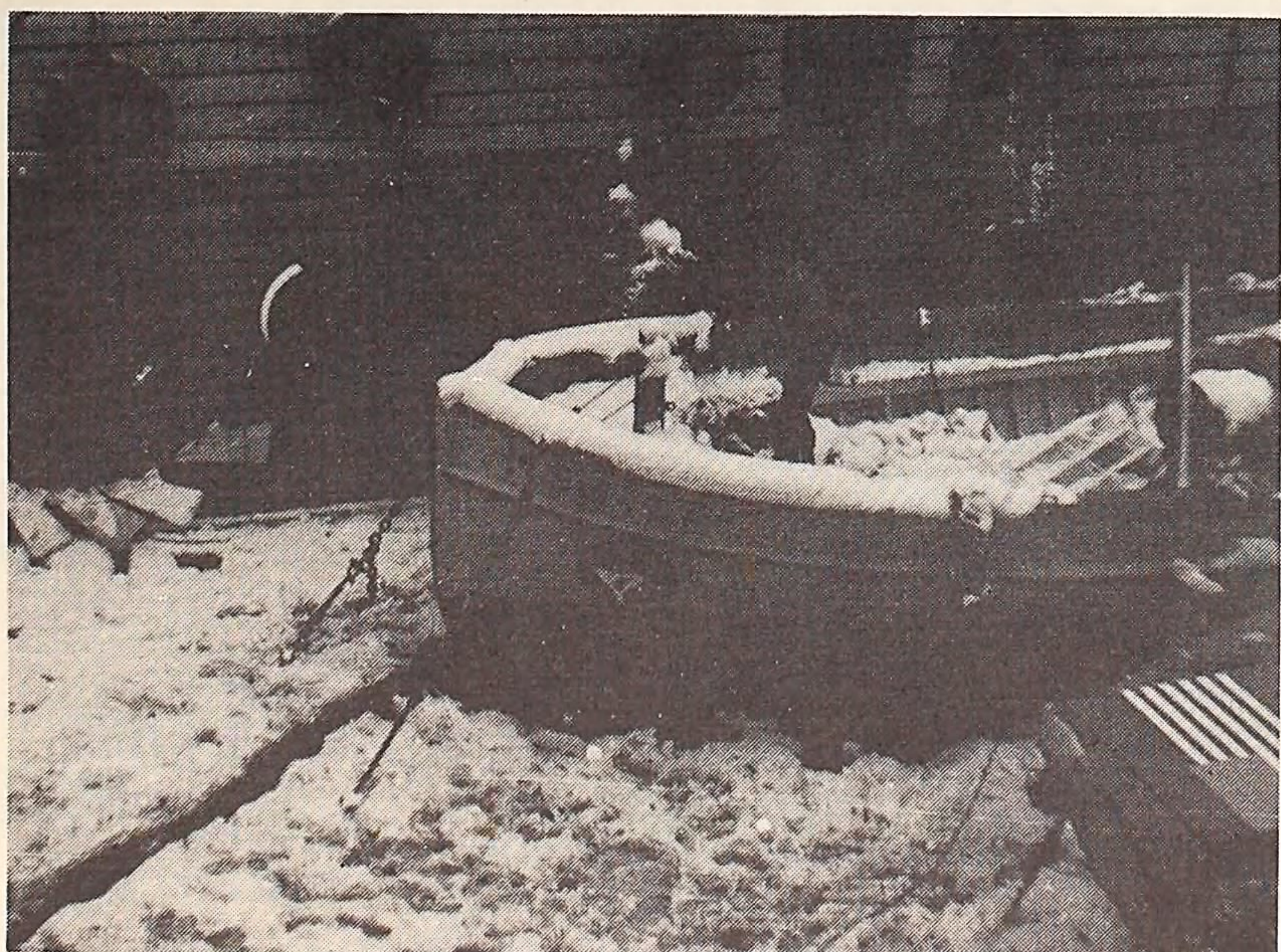
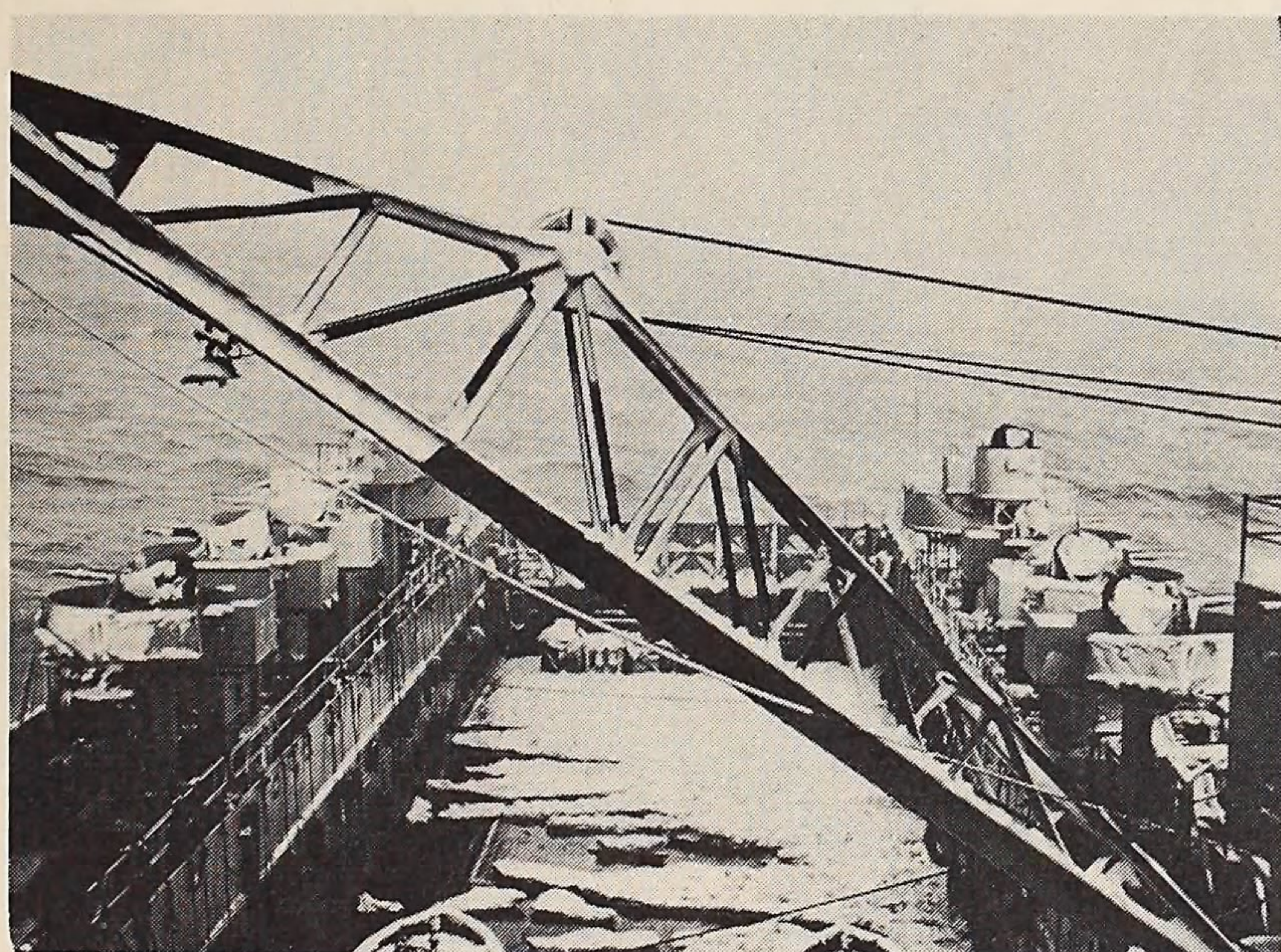


a few days in Sasebo we were again on our way to Wonsan where we were to stay for another week. It was during these times in Wonsan, February and March, that we really learned of the severity of the Korean winters. Snow, wind, and ice were our constant companions as we lay at anchor in Wonsan harbor. During all this time the big guns of our fleet, the battleships, cruisers, and destroyers never let up in their constant shelling of the Communist installations and positions on the beach. Neither did the personnel of MSB Division ONE let up in their never-ceasing vigil of keeping the Wonsan harbor free of mines and open for the bigger ships of the fleet.

Finally in the latter part of March we steamed to Yokosuka via Sasebo, where we transferred MSB Division ONE and COMINRON THREE. We were to stay in Yokosuka for over two weeks. The highlights of our stay in Yokosuka were the two ship's parties at the Broadway Hotel. The parties both nights were successes as can be attested to by anyone that was there—and who wasn't!

Okinawa was next on our list of ports of call. Here we participated in one of the biggest practice amphibious operations ever attempted in WESTPAC. Along with a host of other amphibious ships we participated in a large scale amphibious landing. During the entire four days that it took us to complete the exercise we were hampered by rainy, squally, weather. In spite of this the operation was a success.

May was beginning to fade away as we again started back to Sasebo to pick up MSB Division ONE, COMINRON THREE and COMINRON SEVEN. From Sasebo we went directly to Wonsan. This was our longest tour of





minesweeping in Korea, lasting almost two months with only one short break in Sasebo. During all this time the world was anxiously awaiting news of an armistice in Korea. We waited with them.

The monotony of this tour in Korea was broken one morning about the middle of July when we got an emergency order to steam at flank speed to Yang-Do, Korea. A Canadian destroyer had run aground and we were ordered to steam up there and make emergency repairs to her hull. But because of heavy seas and inclement weather we were unable to effect any repairs. So after two days of waiting for better weather we got orders to steam back to Sasebo via Wonsan.

Sasebo was a very welcome sight that day in July when we came steaming in. It was the last time that we were going to be there this tour. From Sasebo we steamed to Yokosuka and began making preparations for the homeward voyage to San Diego.

But fate and the Navy Department have a way of changing even the best laid plans, for on the day that we were scheduled to depart for the States we received orders to proceed to Sasebo and thence back to Inchon, Korea. It was a real heartbreak to us who had been counting on starting for the States from Yokosuka.

Sooner or later we had to start back to the States so it was during the first few days of August that we lifted anchor in Inchon and sailed for Guam.

One week later on Sunday morning we arrived in Guam. The same afternoon we loaded a barge and started for Pearl Harbor.

