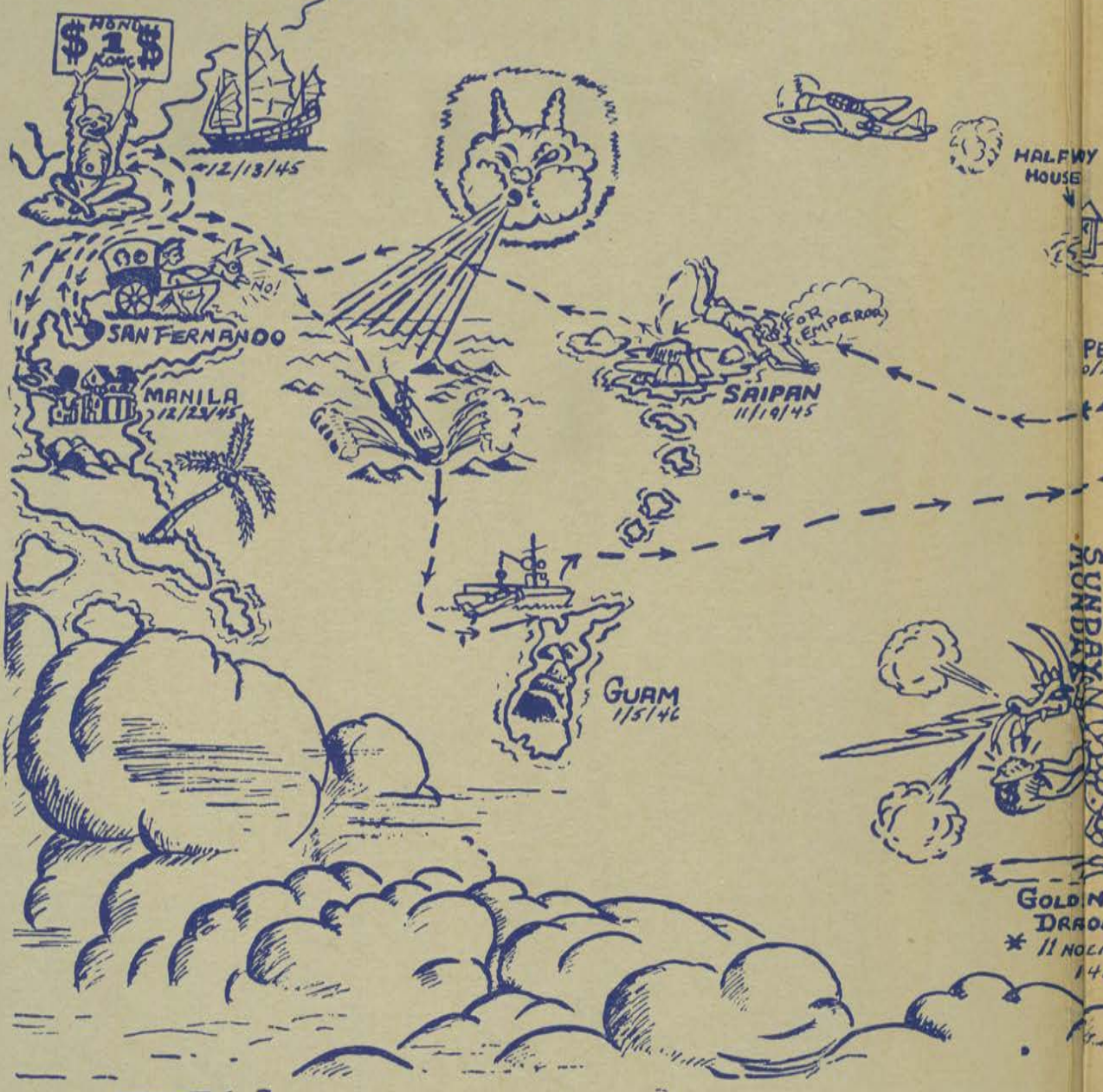


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ALBUM

USS BAIROKO

CVE 115



R.C. KROEGER - 46
USNR



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ALBUM
USS BAIROKO
CVE 115

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B A I R O K O



BAIROKO HARBOR is a small inlet on the North coast of New Georgia, one of the Solomon Islands. A Spanish navigator, coming upon these islands in 1567, and hopefully believing he had finally touched on the fabled and wealthy lands of the Indies named the group "Ilas de Solomon." Subsequent English explorers claimed part of the group for Britian, and at the outbreak of the war New Georgia was under the English flag.

During the early part of 1942, in their effort to cut the Allied supply line to Australia, the Japanese seized the Solomons and began the construction of a series of air fields throughout the islands—at Vila on Kolombangara, at Munda on New Georgia, and on Guadalcanal. Vila and Munda were mutually supporting fields. Bairoko Harbor lay between these two airfields and was the port of supply for Munda.

By the spring of 1943 Guadalcanal was secure and we had sufficient men and material to open the offensive against New Georgia. On June 30, 1943, Rendova Island was seized and Munda then placed under artillery fire. Marines and Infantry landed on New Georgia. In the heat and muck of the tropical jungle they met a bitter Nip foe enraged at the loss of Guadalcanal. Resistance was particularly strong near Bairoko Harbor. After six weeks of desperate jungle fighting the Munda airstrip was overrun, but Bairoko Harbor did not fall until August 25th. Its seizure marked the end of the fifty-seven day campaign for New Georgia.

Bairoko signified the end of this early Pacific campaign—so the name of our ship is a symbol for that final victory which came during her shakedown cruise.



CAPTAIN H. B. TEMPLE, U.S.N.
Commanding The U.S.S. Bairoko CVE 115

Captain Harry Brigham Temple was born April 7, 1901, in Leicester, Massachusetts. He was graduated from the Naval Academy, Annapolis, in 1924; has been on active duty since that date. In 1929, he reported to the Aviation Flight Training School at Pensacola, Florida. Since completion of Flight Training, Captain Temple has served in many of the various Naval Aviation activities, ashore and afloat, including sea duty on cruisers and carriers, in the Bureau of Aeronautics of the Navy Department, in the Flight Division, with the U. S. Naval Mission to Brazil, in which capacity he served as Aviation Advisor to the Brazilian Naval and Air Ministries and on the Staff of General MacArthur, Commander-in Chief of Southwest Pacific area. This duty lasted for a period of four months and involved service in Australia and New Guinea. He was then detached and ordered to report to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Air, as Head of the Aviation Special Development Section and, later, as director of the Division of Aviation Military Characteristics. Captain Temple was detached from this duty and ordered to report to the Commissioning Detail, Tacoma, for ultimate duty as Commanding Officer of the *Bairoko*.

Commander Frank F. Gill, U. S. N., whose home is at Livermore, California, was born 14 January 1907. Leaving school in 1928, he went to Pensacola, where he won his wings as a Naval Reserve pilot in 1930. He was commissioned a lieutenant in the U. S. Navy in December, 1940, while chief flight instructor of a reserve air base at Oakland, California.

For the first two and a half years of this war, Commander Gill had combat aviation duty which took him into two war theaters. He was aboard the *Lexington* as arresting gear and gasoline officer the day Pearl Harbor was attacked and was immediately named Fighter Director of that ship, and served through her engagements until she was lost in the Coral Sea May 8, 1942.

Until February 1, 1944, Commander Gill served aboard the *Santee* as Assistant Air Officer and at the Naval Air Station, Miami, as Superintendent of Aviation Training and later as Executive Officer. He reported in for the outfitting of this ship as its Executive Officer 27 April 1945.



COMMANDER F. F. GILL, U.S.N.
Executive Officer

USS BAIROKO

CV 115

We first began to know one another at Bremerton. For some of us, the experience of going aboard a new ship had long since lost its newness, but to a greater number of us, this represented something entirely new. Most of us were only beginning to become accustomed to the wearing of a uniform, and even the sight of salt water was, to a few of us, still novel. We had received our orders to report to Bremerton and knew that we would later go aboard the U.S.S. *Bairoko*, the pronunciation and spelling of which we were never quite sure, and we knew that we were not sure of the jobs that lay ahead of us. In May of 1945, we were formed into a pre-commissioning detail and began to learn those jobs, learning both from the instructors in the school there and from those of our future shipmates who were the "salts"—those who knew carriers from actual experience in battle.

It was now that we began to become acquainted with the ship that we were to man. We learned that she was not a converted merchant ship, but that she had been designed throughout for the purpose she was to serve and that we were to have the advantages of lessons in ship designing and outfitting which had been learned in the many battles in which the "Baby Flat-tops" had participated. Her keel had been laid more than a year previous to our assembly at Bremerton, on the 25th of January 1944 at the Todd Pacific Shipyards, Tacoma, Washington, where the final phases of her construction were in progress. Mrs. J. J. Ballentine, wife of Rear Admiral Ballentine, had sent the hull sliding down its ways into the waters of Puget Sound on January 25, 1945, christening the vessel the U.S.S. *Bairoko*. It was not until July 16 that the ship would be ready for us to go aboard her, just a few days short of 18 months from the laying of her keel until completion, an amazing record for the construction of a ship as large and as complex as this one.

About two weeks prior to the time when we were to attend the commissioning ceremonies at Tacoma, we got a first-class picture of what our lives aboard ship

were to be. For two weeks, we lived and worked aboard the *Commencement Bay*, the first of this class of carriers, gaining confidence in our ability to man our own ship. Although the crew of the *Commencement Bay* was with us at all times, ready to assist and give advice, it was we who were manning the stations. As new as most of us had been when we first reported to Bremerton, here was evidence that we had learned much during those months and were now ready to go aboard our own ship.

On Commissioning Day, July 16, 1945, many of our friends and relatives were our guests to see the ship accepted for the Navy by our Commanding Officer, Captain H. B. Temple, USN, and to see our first watch set in as colorful a ceremony and gathering as the *Bairoko* has yet seen.

It now became our task to fit the ship for battle. Offices had to be organized, store rooms had to be filled; there were bunks to be made, lockers to be filled, and soon we were underway for the first time in Puget sound. Day by day, we became better acquainted with the equipment we were to handle, first in the inland waters of Puget Sound and then in the open sea en route to San Diego, where shakedown operations were to be conducted under the cognizance of Fleet Operational training Command, Pacific. Assisting us in these days of Training prior to our formal shakedown operations were a group of instructors from Fleet Operational Training Command, Pacific, who supervised the battle problems and damage control drills which were held almost daily.

On August 7, while the ship was at the Naval Air Station, Alameda, California, the well-known Dr. Margaret ("Mom") Chung was a luncheon guest of the ward-room mess. Beloved by aviators and submariners, and particularly by those designated as "The Fair Haired Bastards of Mom Chung", "Golden Dolphines", or "Kiwis," "Mom" Chung presented the ship with a special battle flag. Both Captain Temple and the Executive Officer, Commander Frank F. Gill, USN, are "Bas-

tards," Commander Gill being "Bastard No. 4" of a group which now numbers almost a thousand officers of the Army and Navy. The ensign given the ship by Dr. Chung has been suitably mounted and displayed in the wardroom.

On August 10, we moored at North Island, Naval Air Station, San Diego, and had our first inspection by representatives of Commander, Fleet Operational Training Command Pacific. On the following day, the CASD Unit of Air Group 38 reported aboard, bringing the air department almost up to full strength,

During the next three weeks, we were to know little rest from the sounding of general quarters or flight quarters, for in those three weeks, we had to shape ourselves into a fighting unit. For a week, a full daily schedule of damage control, gunnery, C. I. C., communications and ship handling drills were held, and after a short period at North Island the ship left again for the training areas with the Air Group CVEG 38 embarked. At first, our flight operations went slowly with so many new men being among our number, but the next two weeks saw rapid improvement in our work. By the time the final test was conducted, an underway battle problem conducted by Captain H. B. Jarrett, USN, and his group of observers from Fleet Operational Training Command, Pacific, on September 3, we performed in such a manner as to be rated by them as "Above Average".

After a month of availability in the Naval Drydocks, Terminal Island, during which time various alterations and changes were made by the Naval Drydocks' and Ships' personnel, we and our ship were ready to take our place in the Fleet. Final preparations for our departure from the United States were made at San Diego where CVEG 38 returned to the ship. On October 18 we steamed out past Point Loma and set our course for Pearl Harbor.

For most of us it was the first time out—out to where the greatest fleet in the world had just written the last chapter of the greatest naval history in the world, and we were eager to see the spots where that history was made.

Six days after looking on the Point Loma light for the last time, we came in sight of the Hawaiian Islands. It was a glorious morning, not a cloud in the sky—the sea that deep blue characteristic of the Pacific. Everyone

who could be was on the flight deck. Points of interest were announced over the loud speaker—Molokai the island of lepers, Oahu with its Diamond Head, the Royal Hawaiian and Waikiki beach. Finally, Pearl Harbor itself. It was quite different from what it had been that December of '41—1310 October 24, 1945.

We remained in Pearl Harbor two weeks. During that time the *Bairoko* played host on Navy Day to thousands of civilians who came aboard a carrier for the first time. Thousands is advisedly said, for within an average fifteen minutes nine hundred and eighty-seven by actual count came aboard. We got our first taste of Hawaiian life when two Hawaiian groups came aboard to entertain us with the ancient Hawaiian dances and music. Waikiki—the Palis—Kailua—Honolulu and souvenirs filled in our stay.

Then, one morning, on November 7th, we sailed out of Pearl Harbor for Okinawa. We were really getting out into the wide Pacific and beginning to appreciate how apt that adjective is. Day after day with no sight of land—just stretches of blue water bounded by the horizon met our gaze—Sunrise found us at flight deck parade every morning, and the glory of the sunrise made even a flight deck parade a cheap price for the dividends paid off.

The first Sunday out, November 10th, we crossed the International date line, and Sunday 1100 became Monday. We became members of the Golden Dragon.

Then our orders were changed. "Meet the division in Saipan, not Okinawa." The *Bairoko* changed to a southerly course. On November 19th Saipan loomed out of the water, Saipan where such a glorious victory was won in spite of the obstacles to be overcome. Everyone crowded the flight deck, to get a first view of Suicide Cliff, where the Japs had leaped into the swirling waters below.

Two days later, the *Siboney* and *Puget Sound* came in, the two with whom we were to operate. For days we swung at anchor, and had the opportunity to get in and marvel at American building ability—at the wonderful roads all around the island—at the courage and doggedness that was able to overcome the natural obstacles of the island to push the defenders from sea coast to sea coast and off into the sea.

November 30th—anchors up, still farther west—

China as our destination. On the way we got our first sight of the Philippines as we swung around the northern tip—down the coast to Lingayen Gulf and the little town of San Fernando, December 6, 1945.

Everyone who desired got a few hours ashore—the first time on Philippine soil. Our stay here was short. At 2130 December 10th we started for Hong Kong. Early in the morning of December 13th the rocky mountainous islands off the China coast loomed up. Soon Chinese craft drew the attention of all. By 0800 we were at the entrance to one of the most picturesque harbors in the world—winding through chains of island rocks jutting out of the sea. The colorful and familiar Chinese junks crowded the harbor. Small craft, so packed with family life that they made the “Old Lady who Lived in a Shoe” take on the conservatism of reality, crowded around the ship. Friendly hands and friendlier smiles welcomed us to China. That day is one that shall ever remain vivid in the memories of the men who crowded the flight deck. That morning at 0920 the *Bairoko* dropped anchor inside Hong Kong harbor.

It was an interesting stay—that eight days in Hong Kong—souvenir hunting spiced by the proverbial bargaining of the Chinese—rickshaws—tour of the island—contact with a civilization so different from ours—contact with our own civilization transplanted to the East—all provoked the imagination, a reality so different from that of our world that it bordered on the fictitious and gave one the feeling of a dreamer.

At 0815, December 21, we sailed out of Hong Kong, the *Bairoko* leading the division, on our way to Manila. The entrance to Manila was interesting in a different way. It was a return to a home we had lost and regained—to an old neighborhood that had suffered a lot during our absence. We dropped anchor in Manila outer harbor at 1402, December 23rd.

In Hong Kong we wanted to see what was there; in Manila we wanted to see what was destroyed. The men of the *Bairoko* shall never forget it. The terribleness of the destruction shall ever be emphasized in the telling of it, in the realization that those to whom we tell the story cannot grasp the real picture, that reality escapes the confinement of words.

Christmas Eve, Midnight Mass was celebrated on the hangar deck. Ships in the harbor sent boatloads of

men over to attend. A Christmas tree stood in the center of the hangar deck; at the forward end was the altar. The thought of all was the contrast between Christmas '45 and the year before. From our radar mast the Star of Peace shone out over the waters. “Peace on earth to men of good will.”

At 1000, December 30th, the *Bairoko* started on her homeward journey—first stop, the island of Guam. It was a journey of seven days. Those seven days rounded out our experiences, gave the ship the chance to prove it was a real ship and the men an opportunity to prove they were real sailors—both came through with flying colors. A head wind, that rose at times to sixty-two knots an hour and never dropped below forty-five, struck us as soon as we rounded the tip of the Philippines and gave up the struggle only the night before we reached Guam. It was a week living on the end of a see-saw. But the ship and the crew came through in real navy style.

Our stay in Guam was the shortest of all—0810, January 5th to 0740, January 6th. It was long enough to load the ship with planes, flight deck and hangar deck—long enough to know pride in the navy that could bring the task force necessary for the taking of such an island, in the country that could reach so wide in its arm of power to subdue it.

1100, January 14th, found us back in Pearl. Planes from Guam were unloaded, other planes were taken aboard for the States. Five days after, 0700, January 19th, we started on the last leg of our journey back to the States. Three hundred and more men were due to return to civilian life. Our air group which had done so well—not a serious accident to pilot nor flight deck personnel in spite of so many landings—was scheduled to leave us.

January 24th, the night before getting into San Diego—our last happy hour in honor of the men who were leaving, Auld Lang Syne rang out with a volume and heart that gathered together many happy memories of a cruise that shall always remain vividly in mind and, like old wine, mellow into an ever greater richness with the years. At 0936, January 25, 1946, the first line dropped over the bollard on the dock—one long blast on the bugle—colors changed—the *Bairoko* was back—0817, October 18, 1945, to 0936, January 25, 1946—19,330.66 miles.

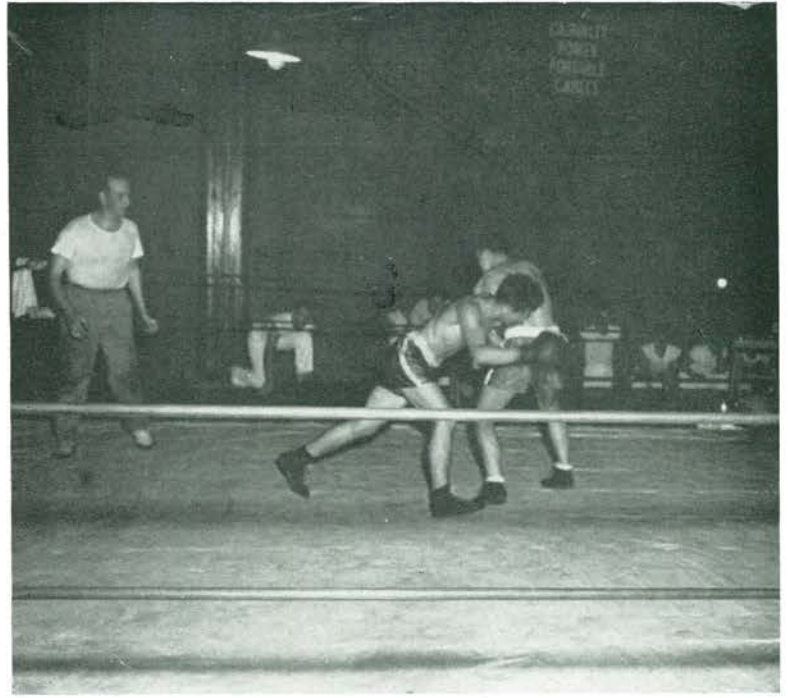
SNAPSHOTS



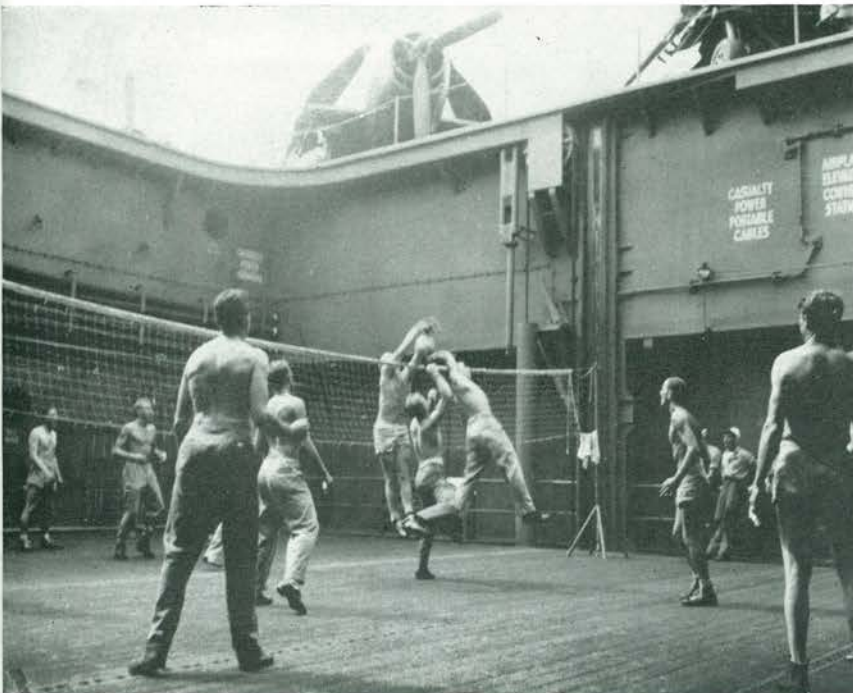
*Enlisted man reporting aboard
for duty*



Captain's inspection



★ ★ ★ SPORTS ★ ★ ★





HOLLYWOOD USO PARTY



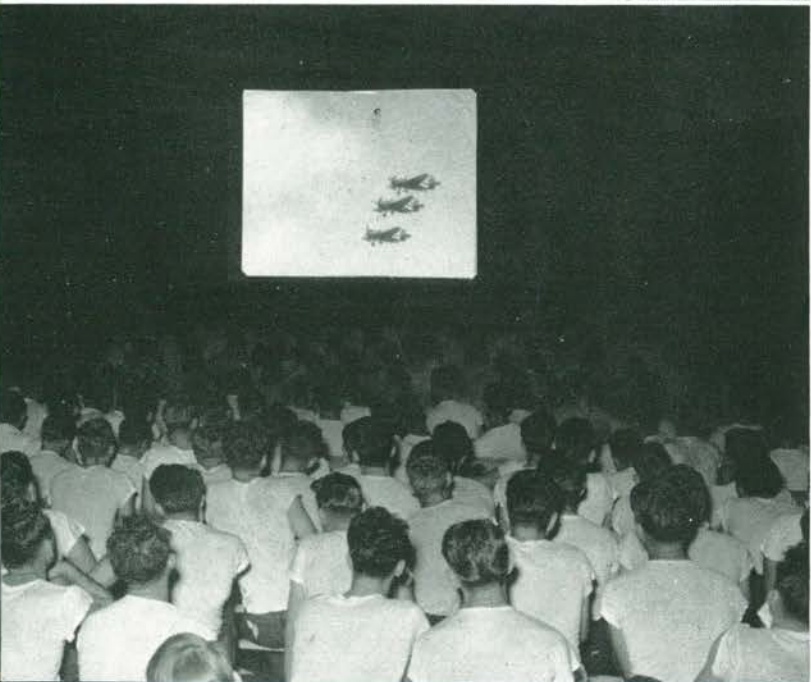


HULA SHOW



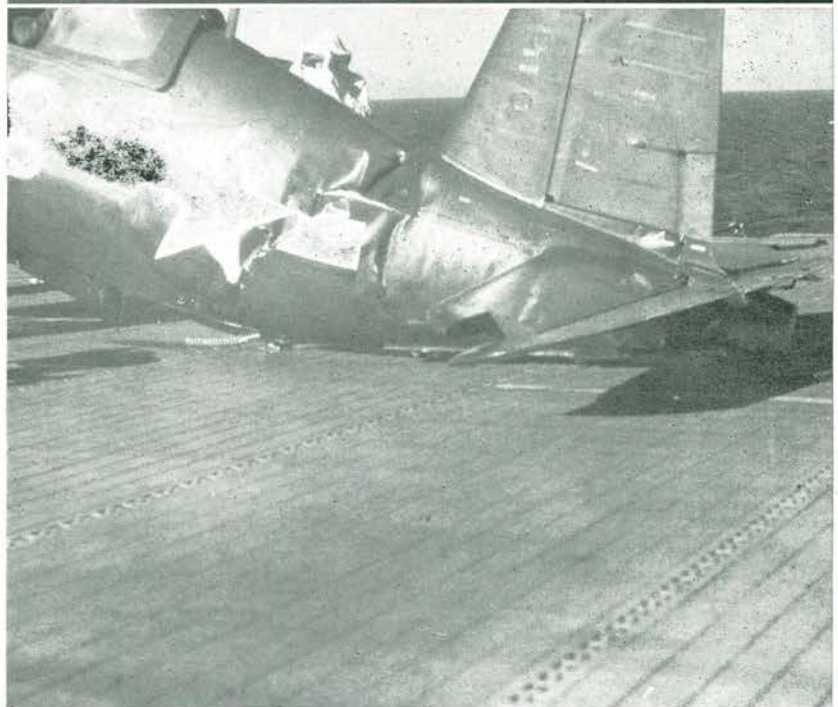
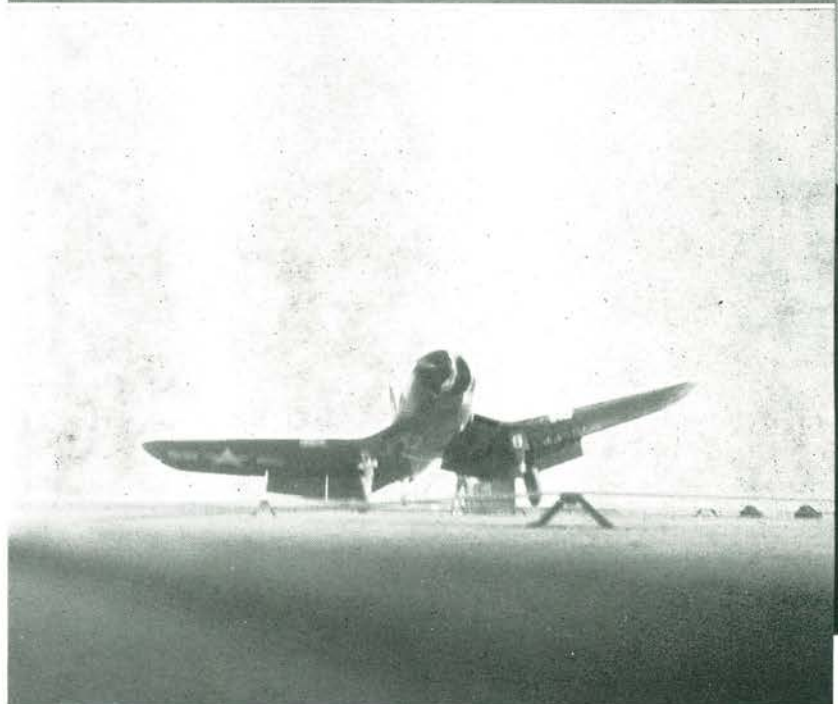
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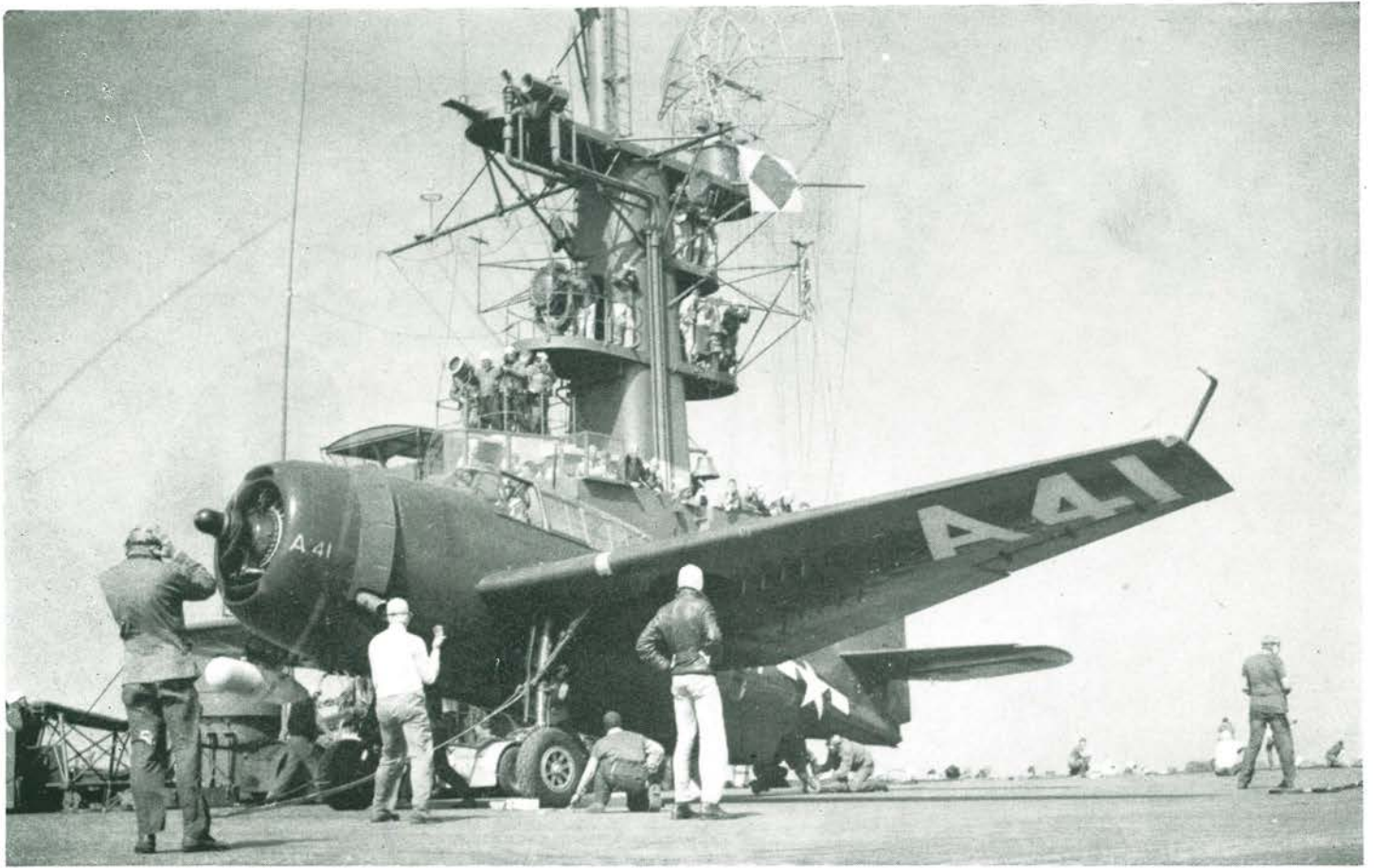




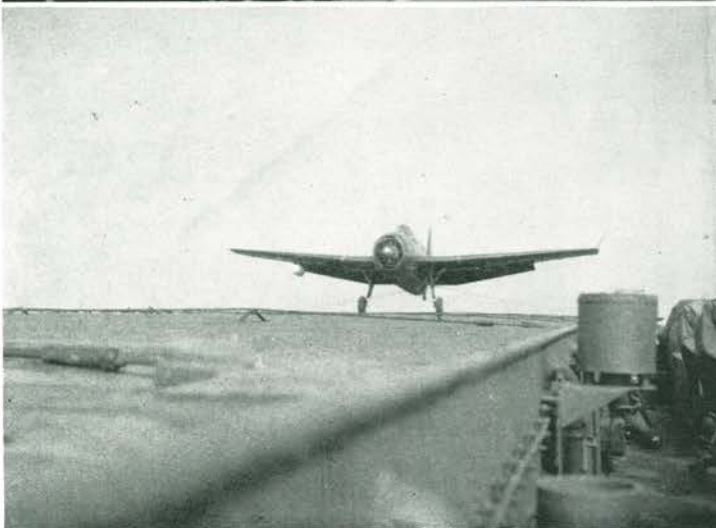
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TAKE-OFFS, LANDINGS, CELEBRATIONS



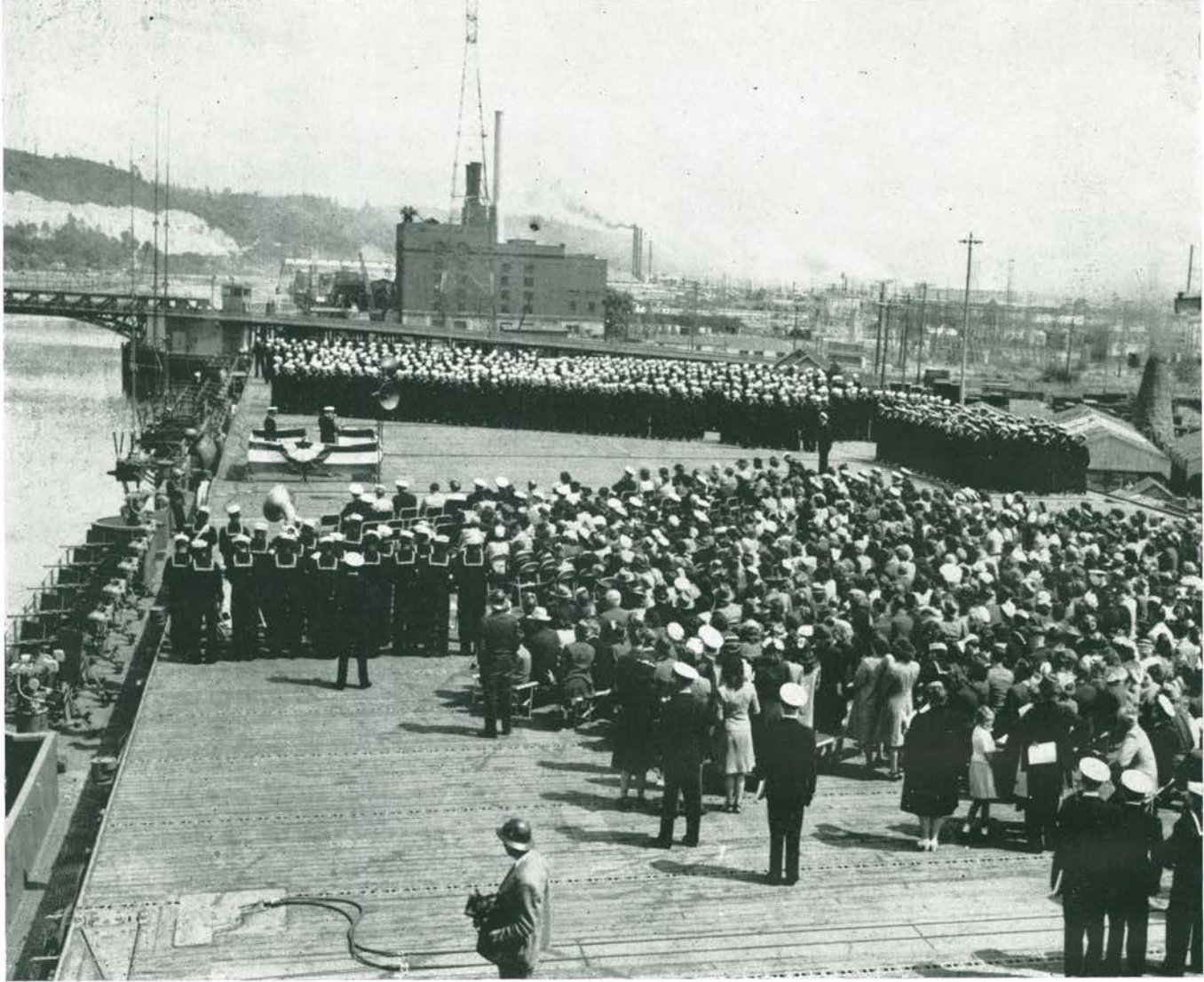


COMMISSIONING DANCE



STEWARDS MATES' DANCE—LONG BEACH





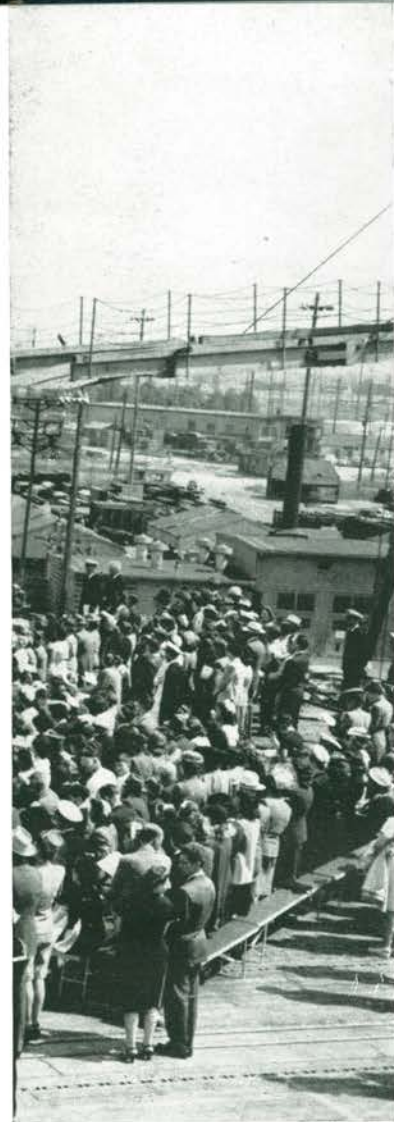
COMMISSION

Captain Temple at Commissioning



*Hoisting the colors,
U.S.S. Bairoko*

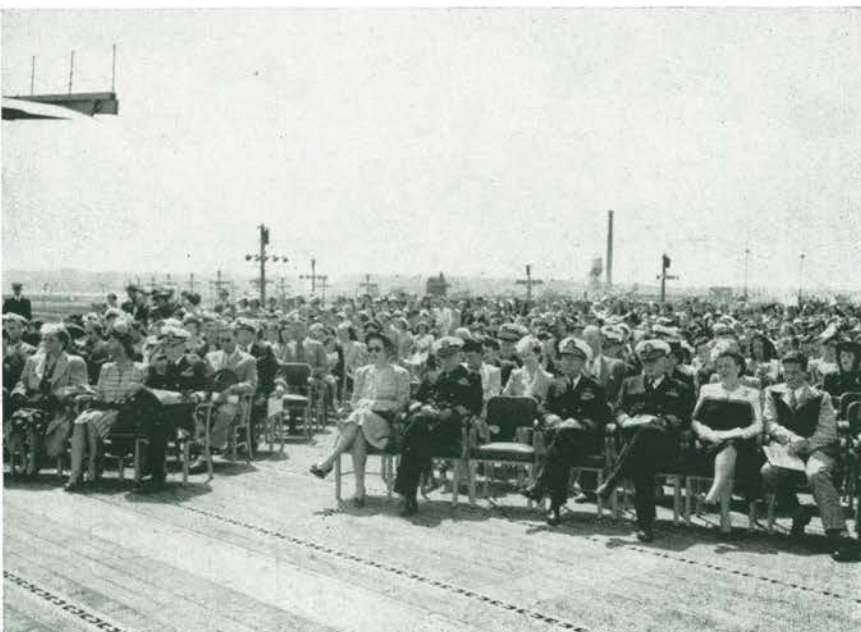




ING DAY

*Above: Flag presented by Madame Chung
Below: Captain Temple, Madame Chung,
Commander Gill*

Visiting officers and guests





SHIP SERVICE ACTIVITIES

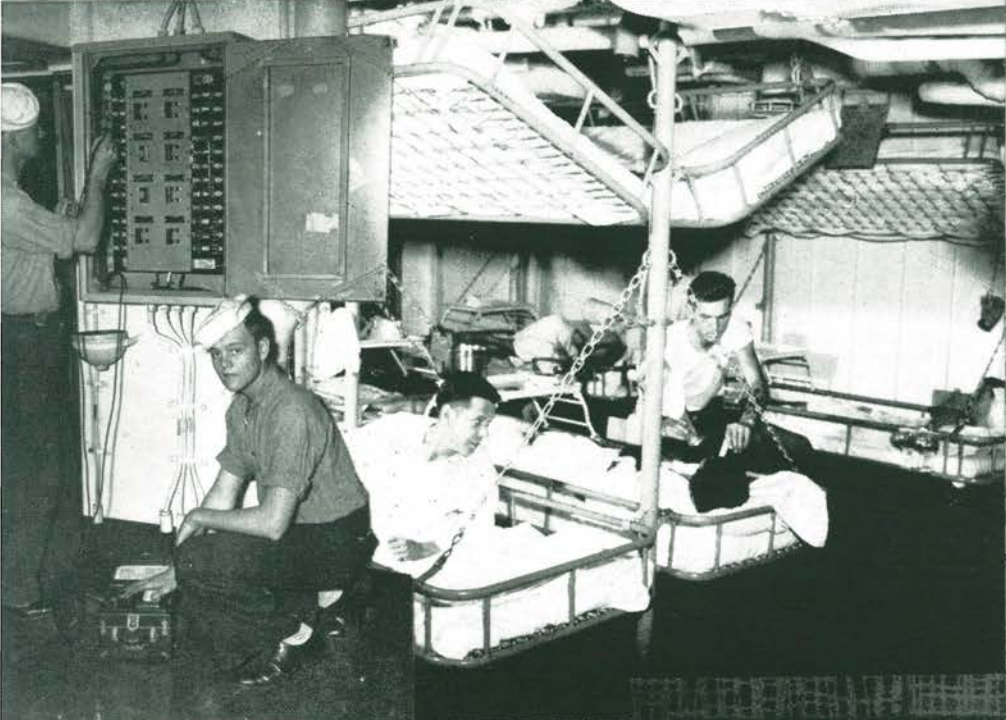


CHOW

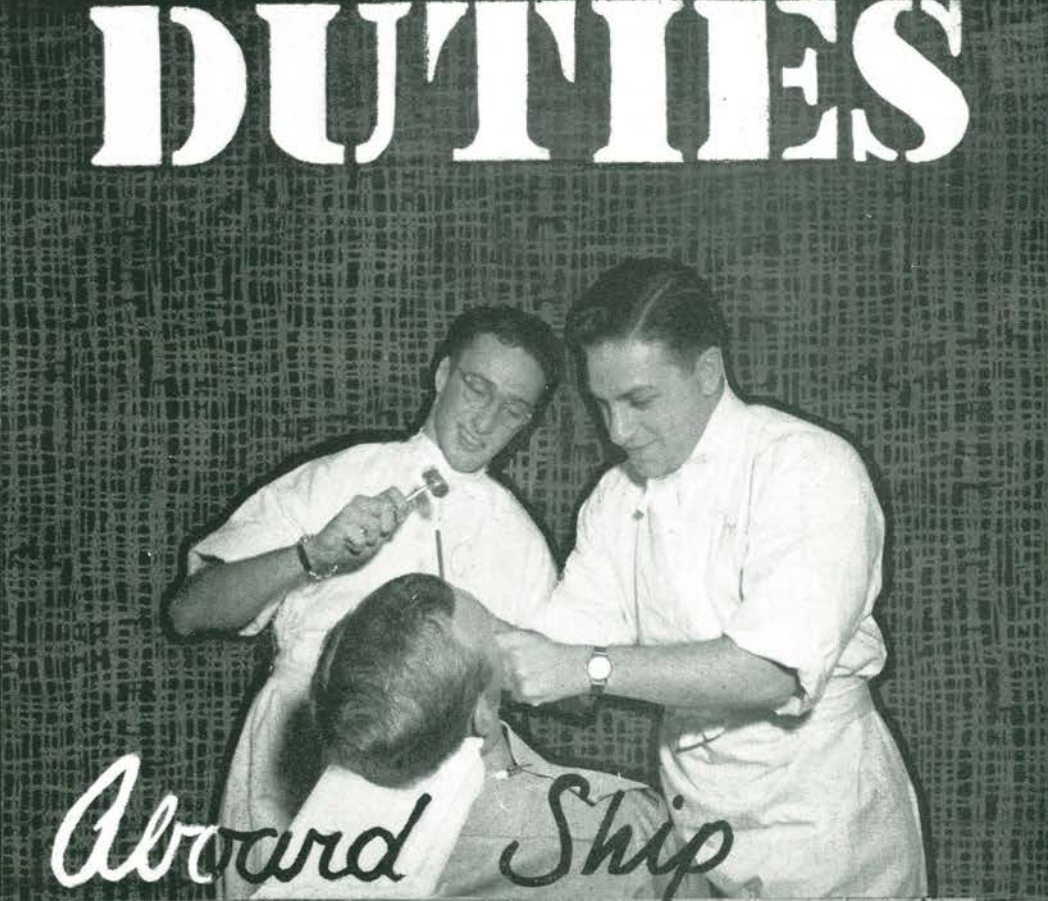
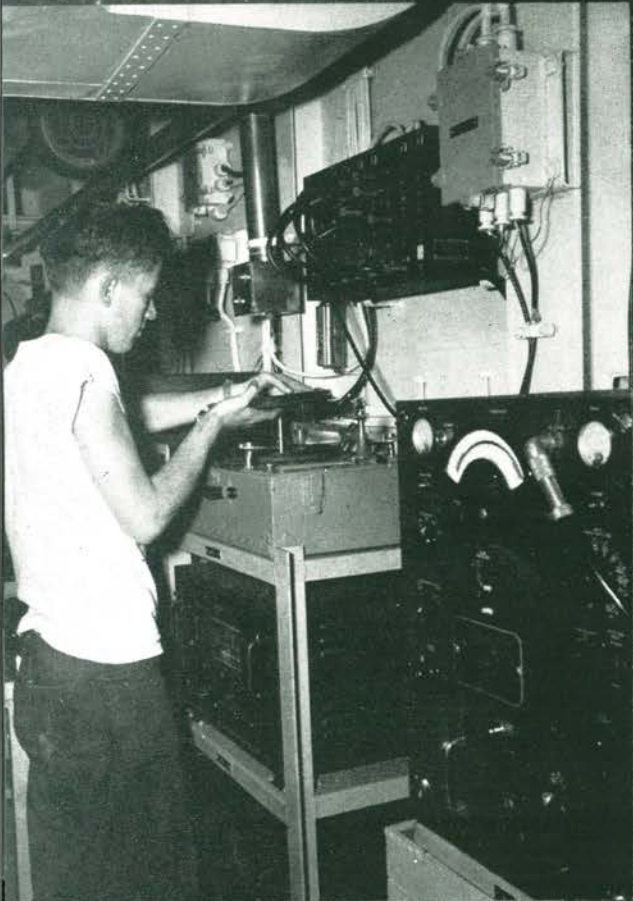


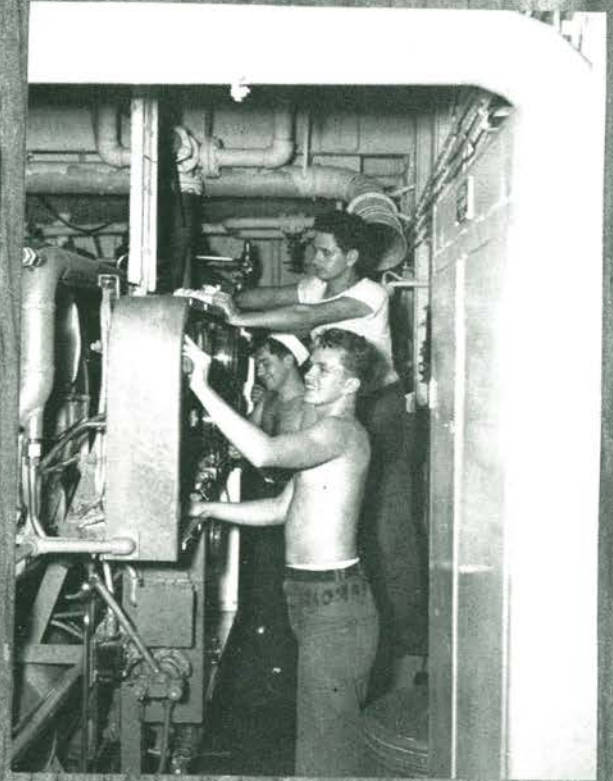
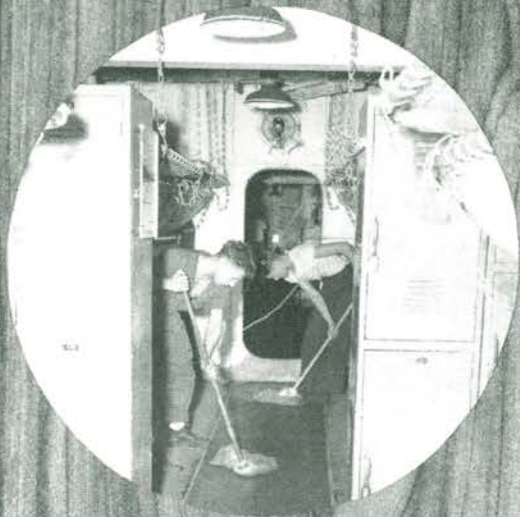
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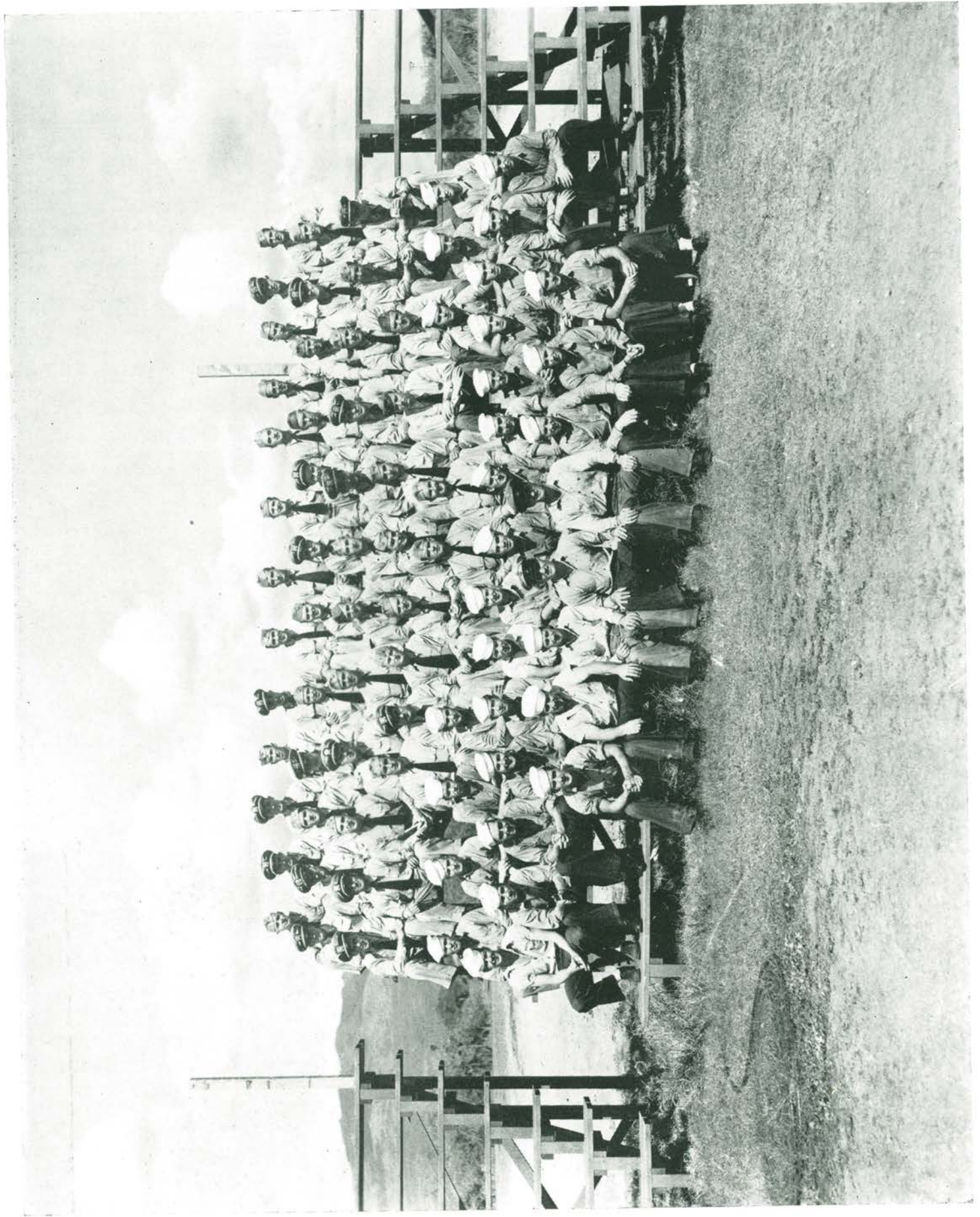
DUTIES





FIELD DAY

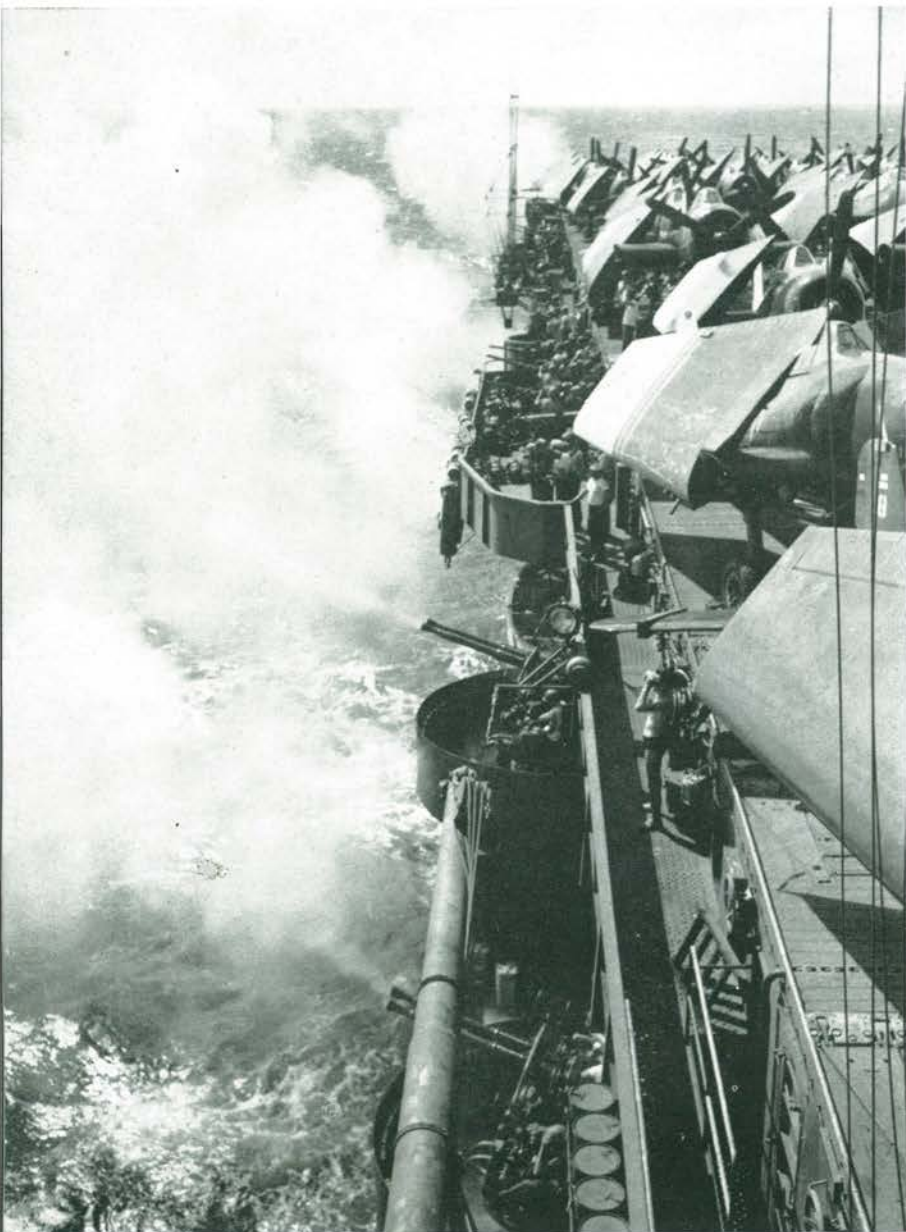




*Air Group 38 — Barbers Point — Nas Oahu T.H.
November 4, 1945*



V-J DAY



Firing run taken from 20-mm bridge

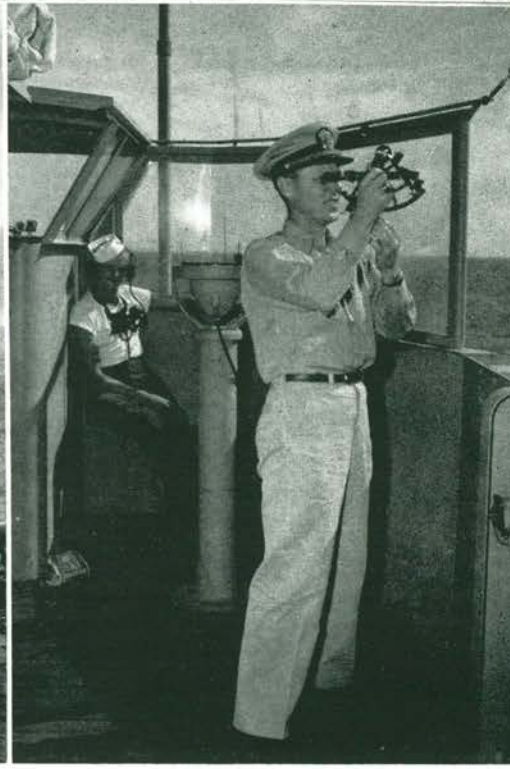
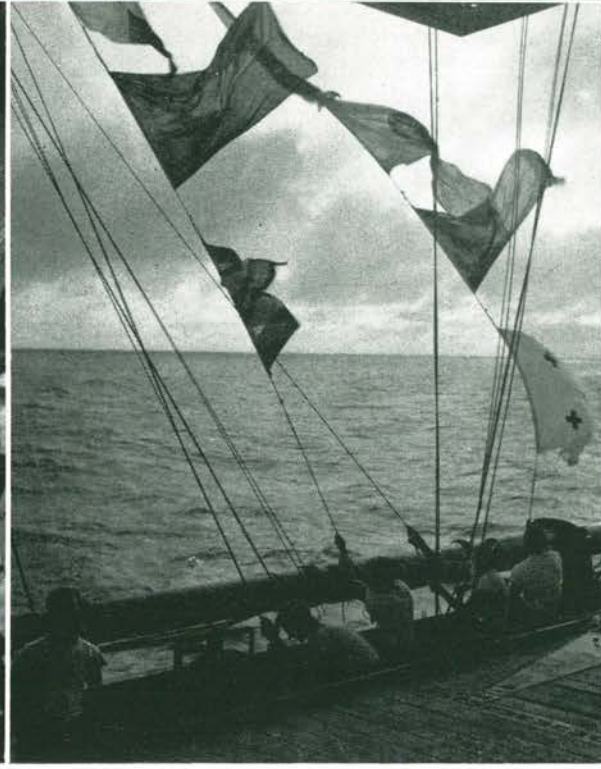
Firing run



Loading 40-mm ammo

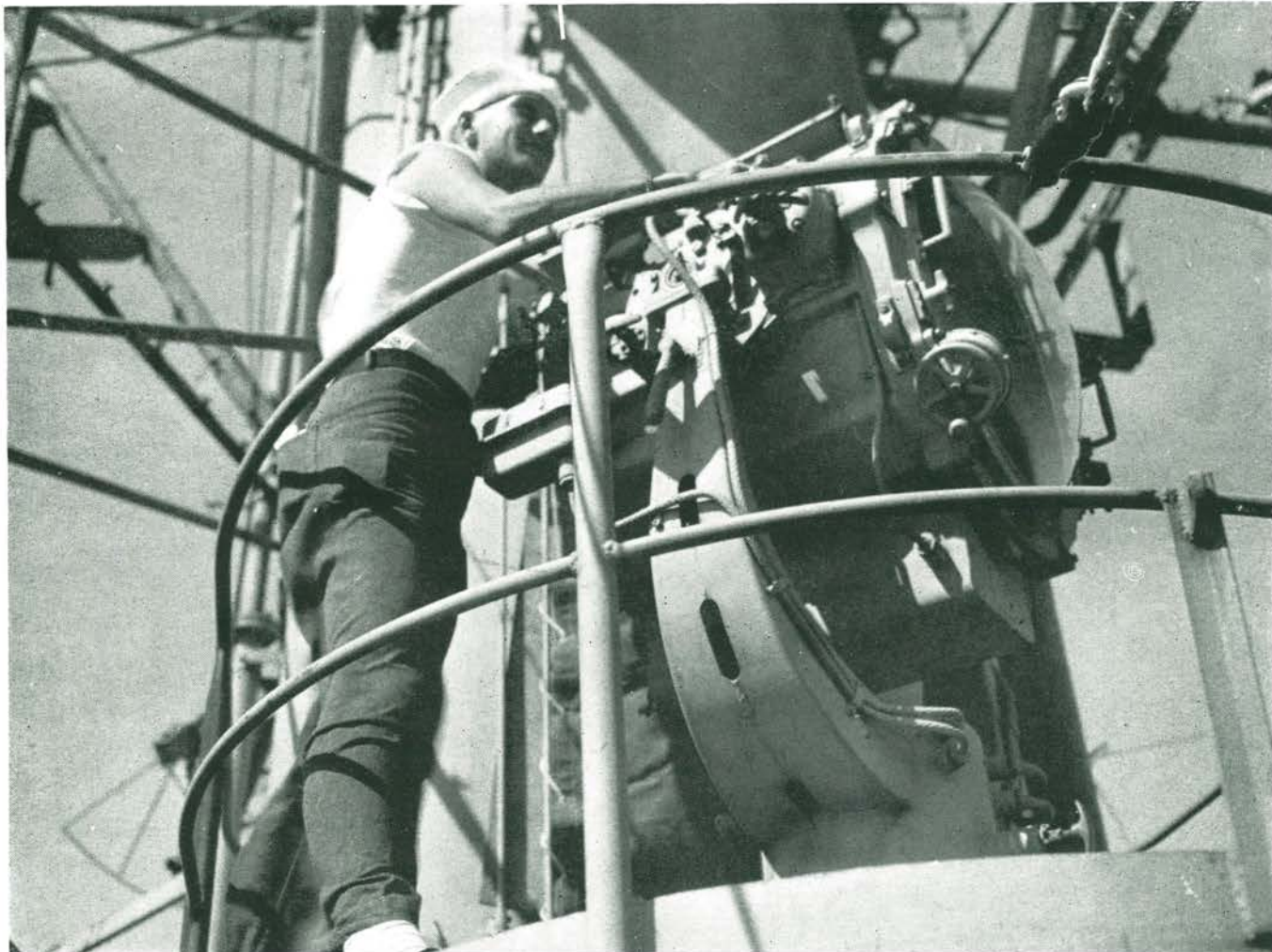


**GUNNERY
RUN**



Signal flags

"Shooting" sun from bridge



Sending blinker

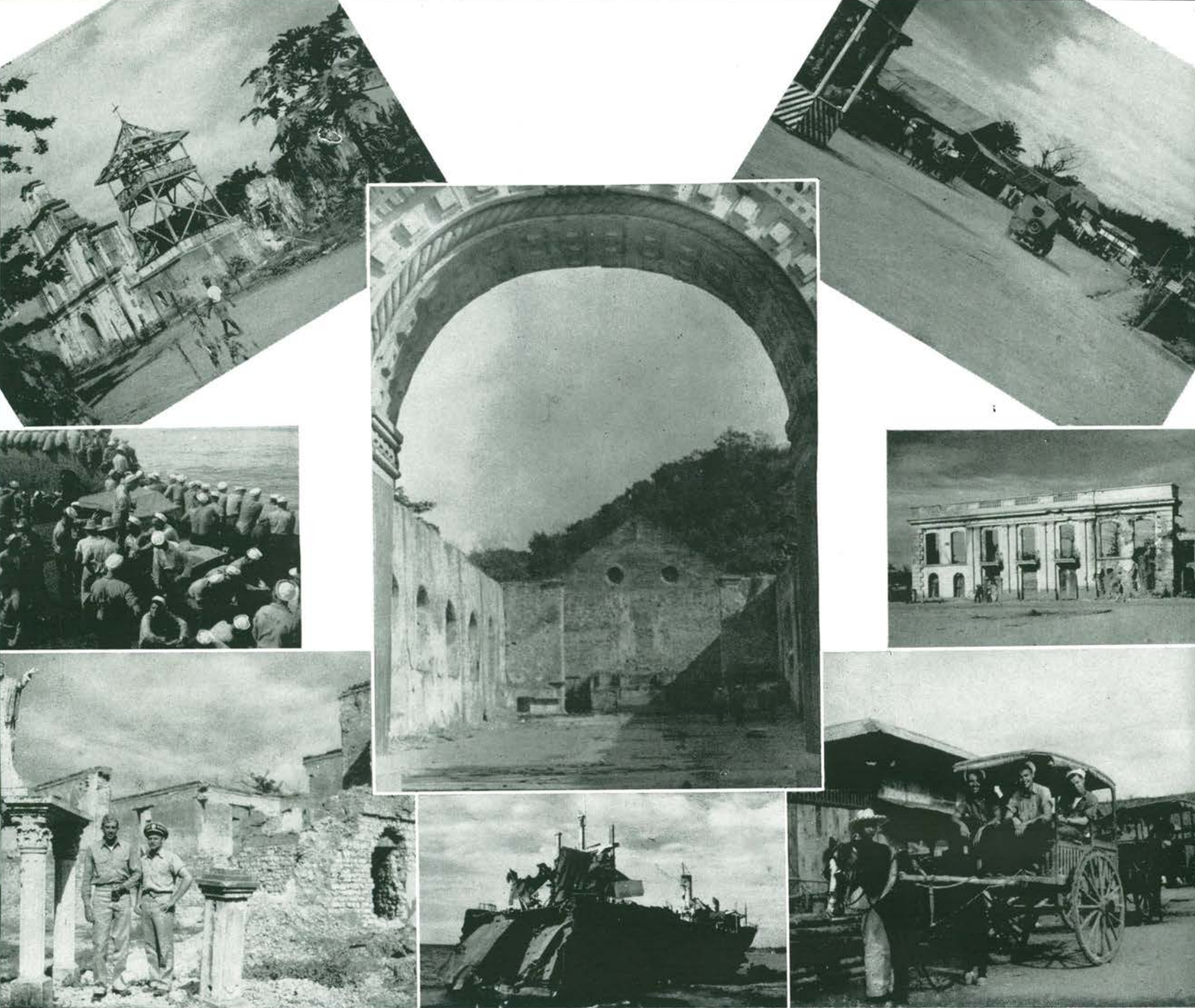
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MANILA





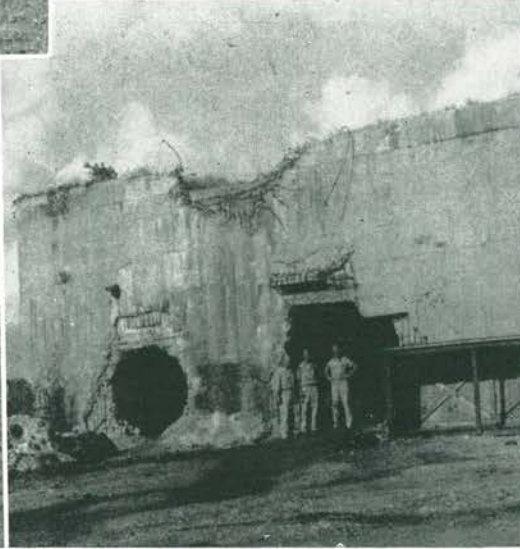
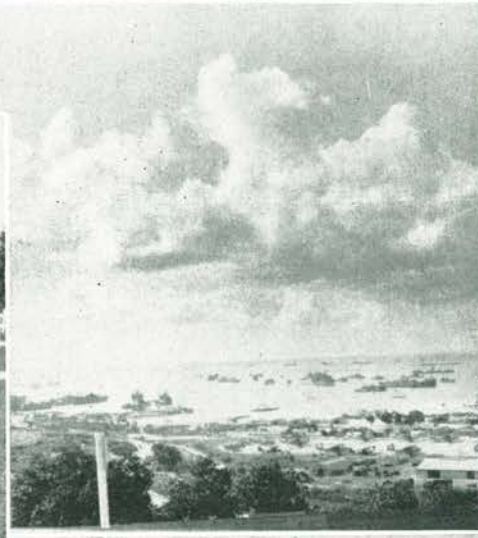
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SAN FERNANDO

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LUZON

SAIPAN

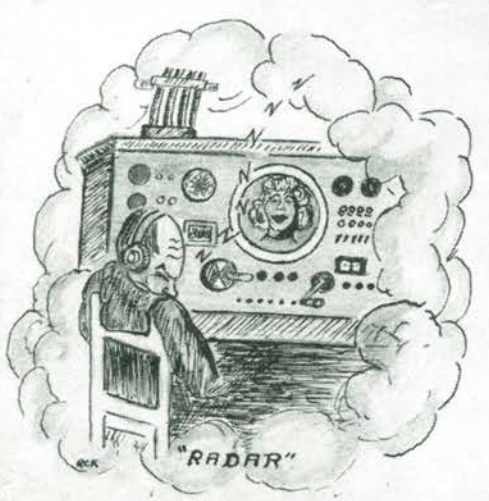
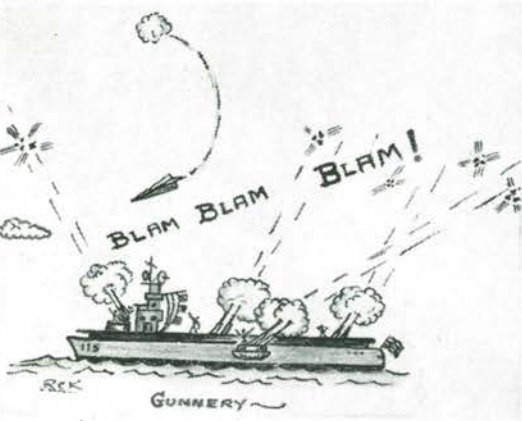
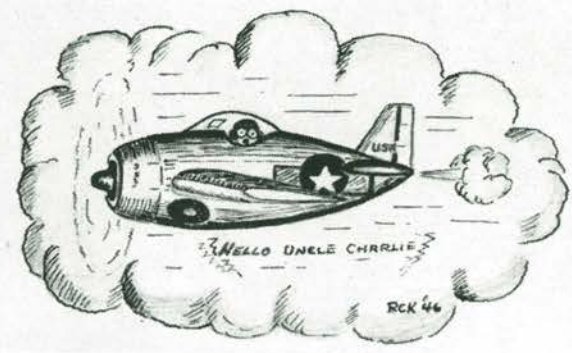
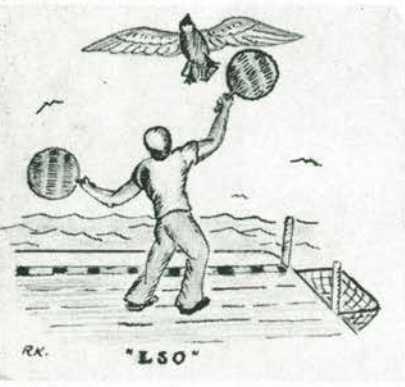
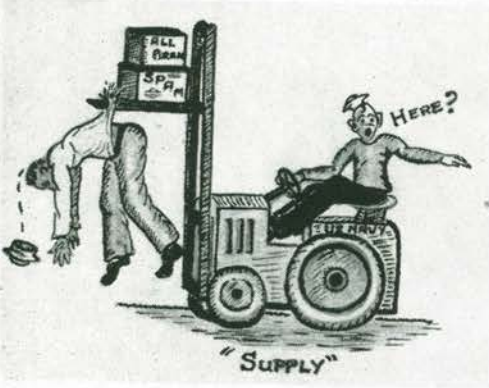




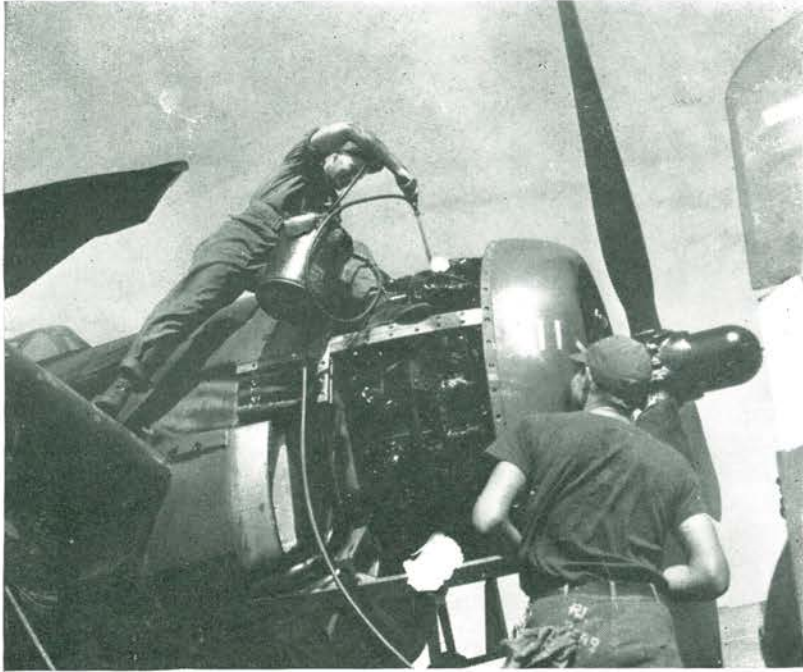
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AT WORK . . .

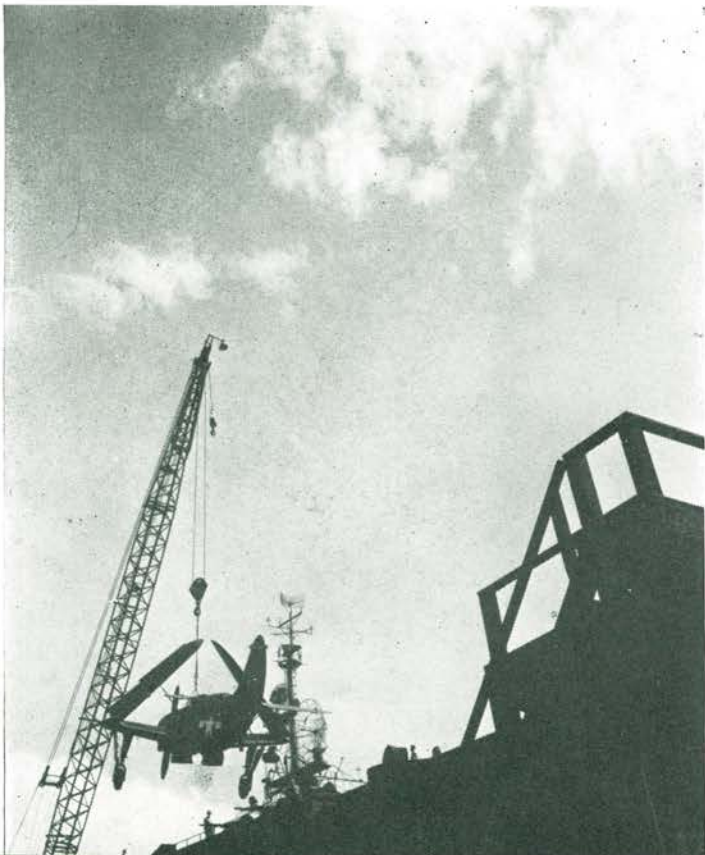


Maintenance work

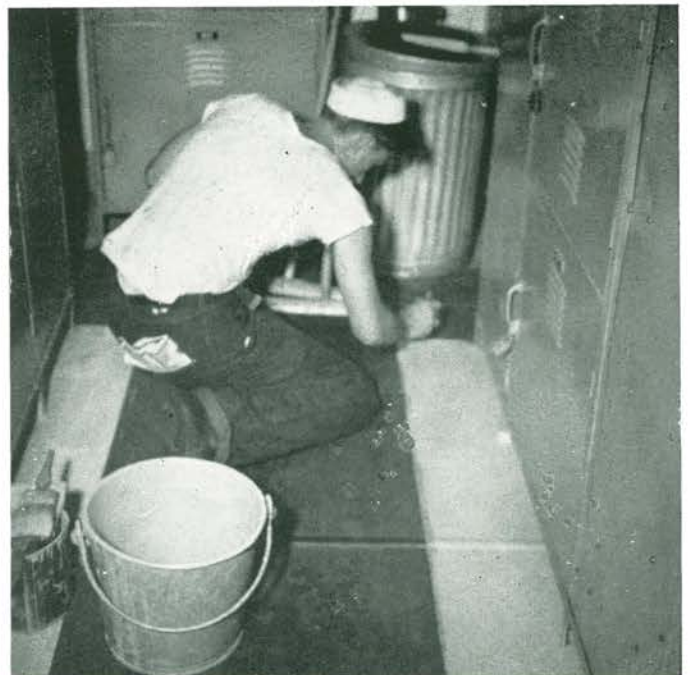
Loading mail at Guam



Loading planes at Pearl

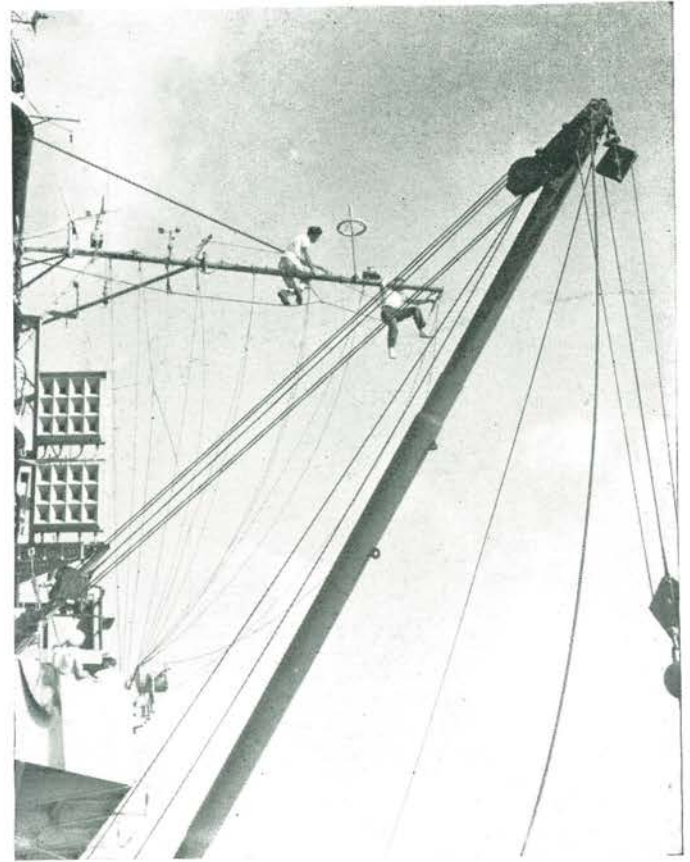


Painting the deck





Painting side of ship



Men on mast with boom rig



Flight deck—looking aft

Aerology experiment





Easter services



Song fest

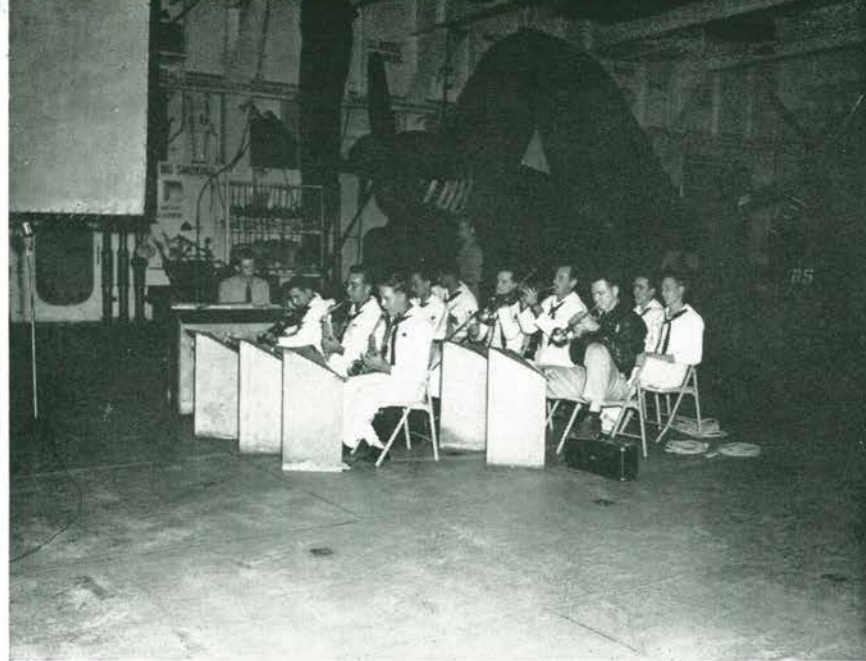


Presenting medals

... A T

Snoqualmie Pass





Happy Hour band



Shorthand class

PLAY . . .

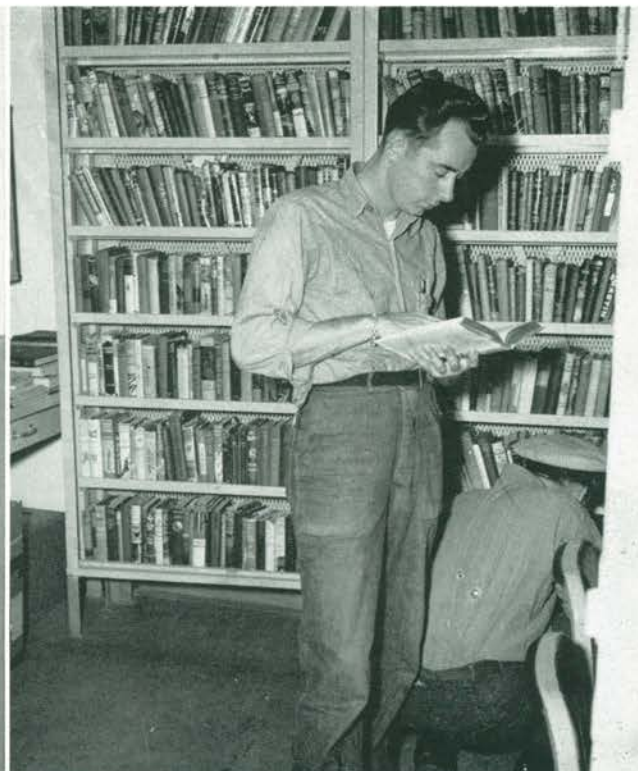


Snoqualmie Pass

Captain Temple and Chaplain



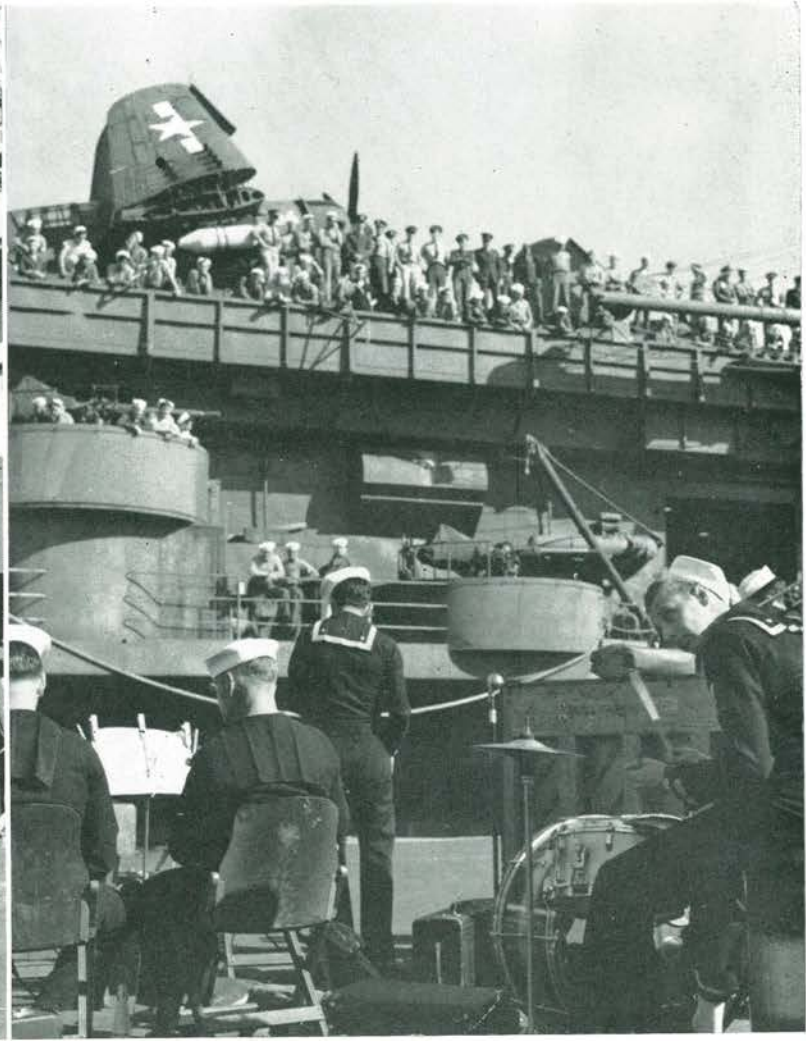
Library

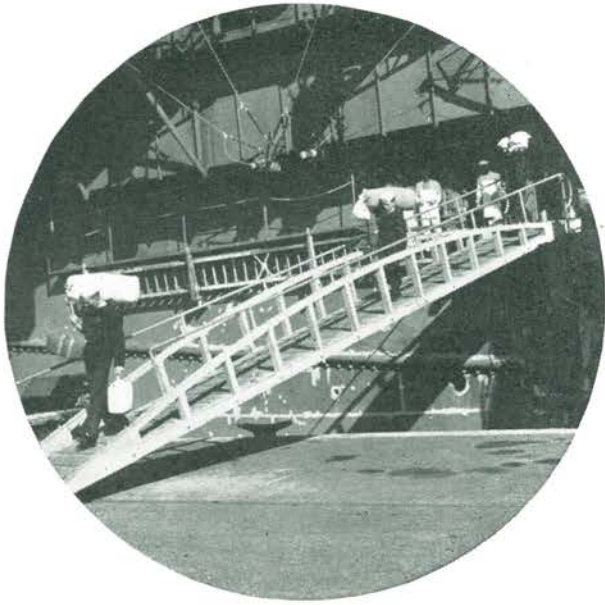




BACK

TO





SAN DIEGO



PERSONNEL



V-1—SECTION 1





V-1—SECTION 2

V-1—SECTION 3

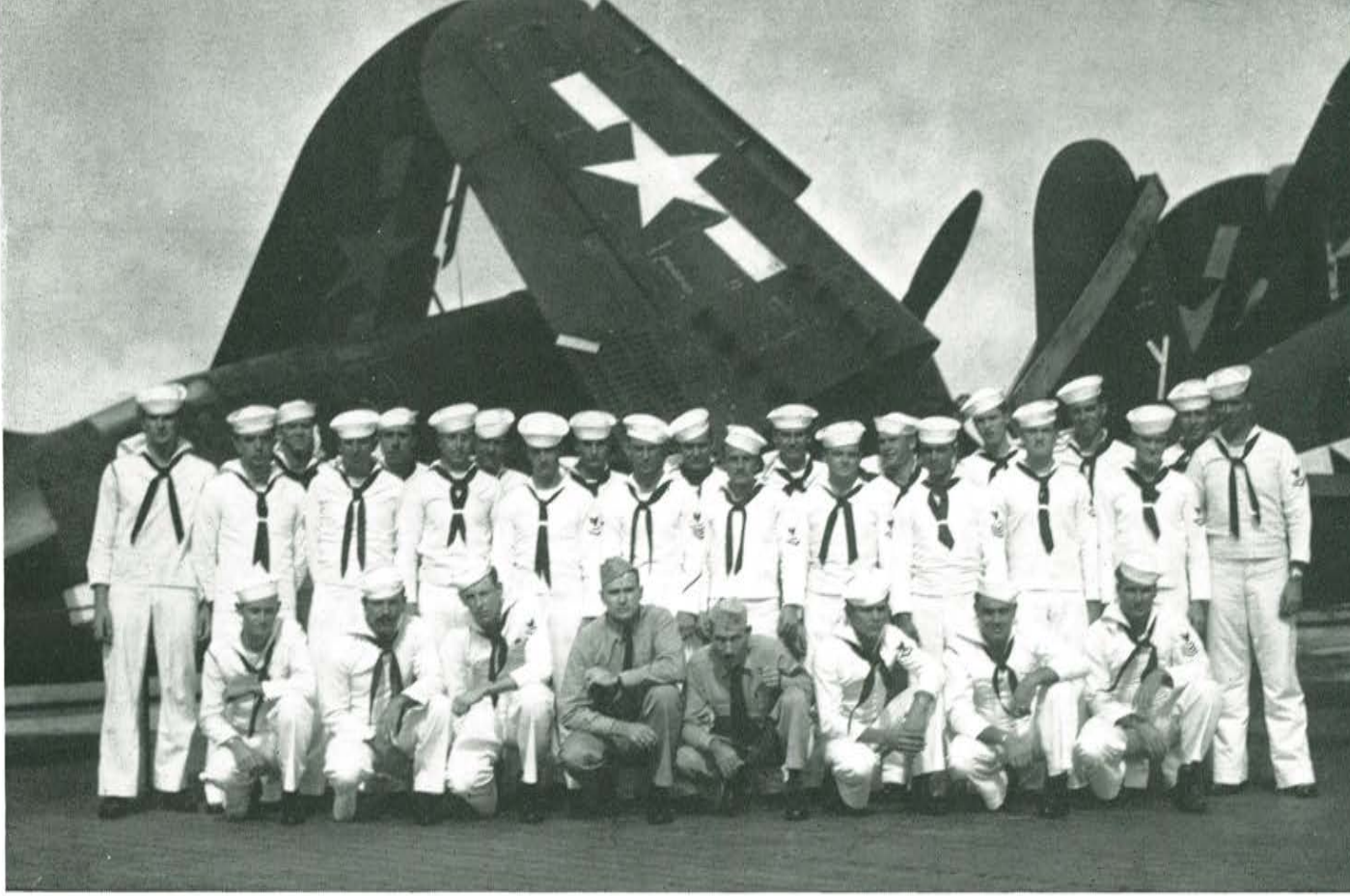




V-1—SECTION 4

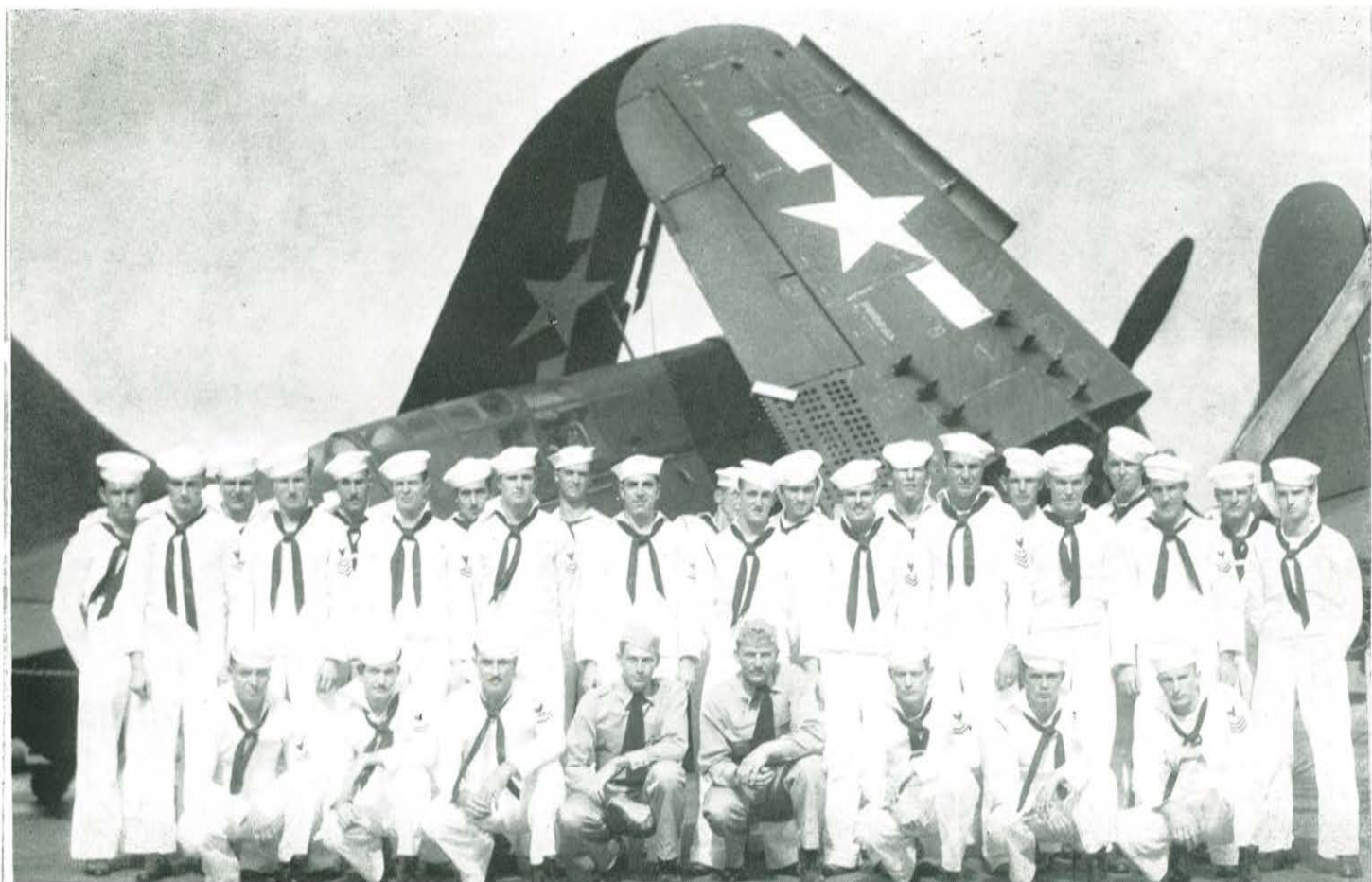
V-2—SECTION 1

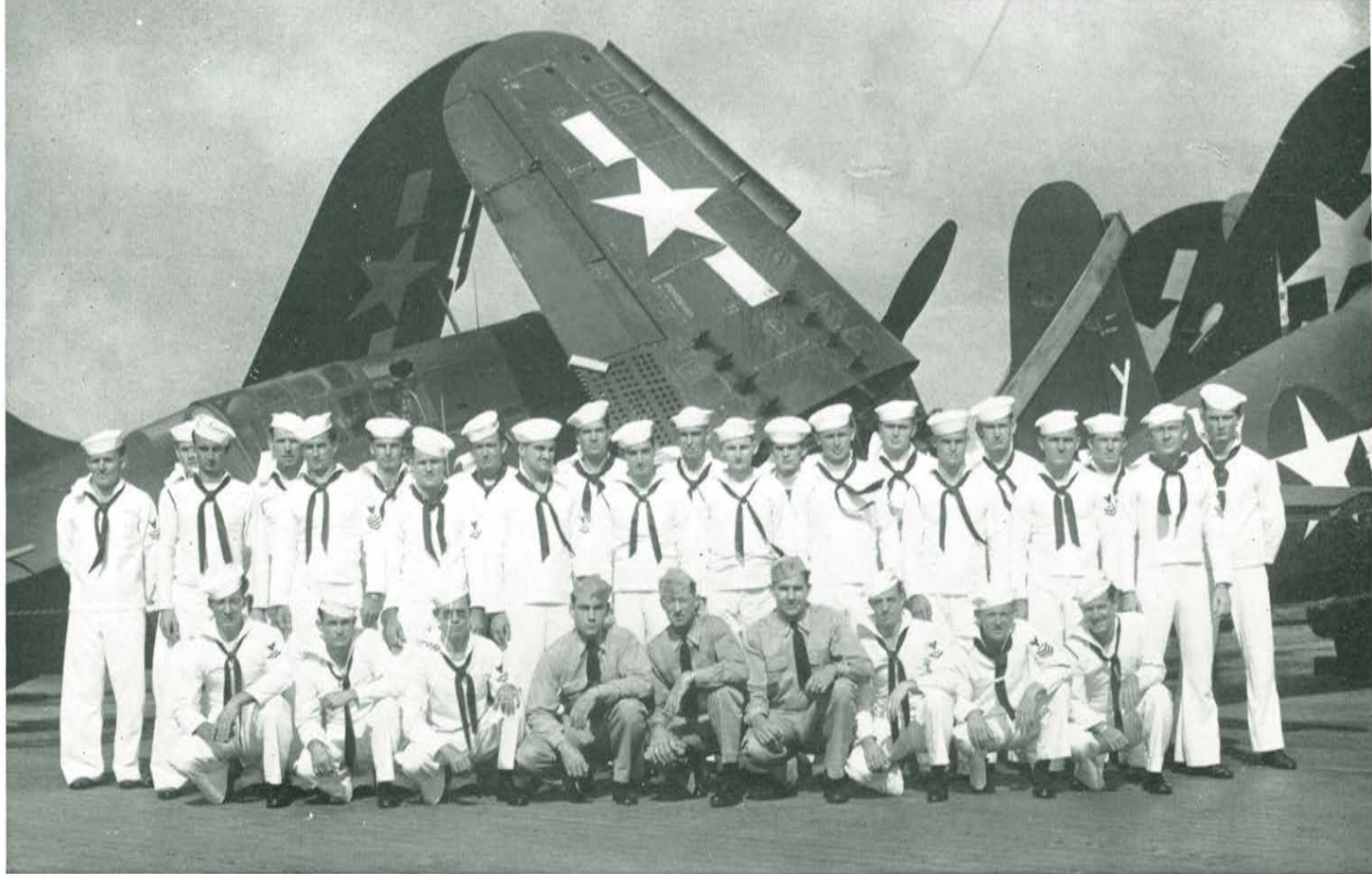




V-2—SECTION 2

V-2—SECTION 3





V-2—SECTION 4

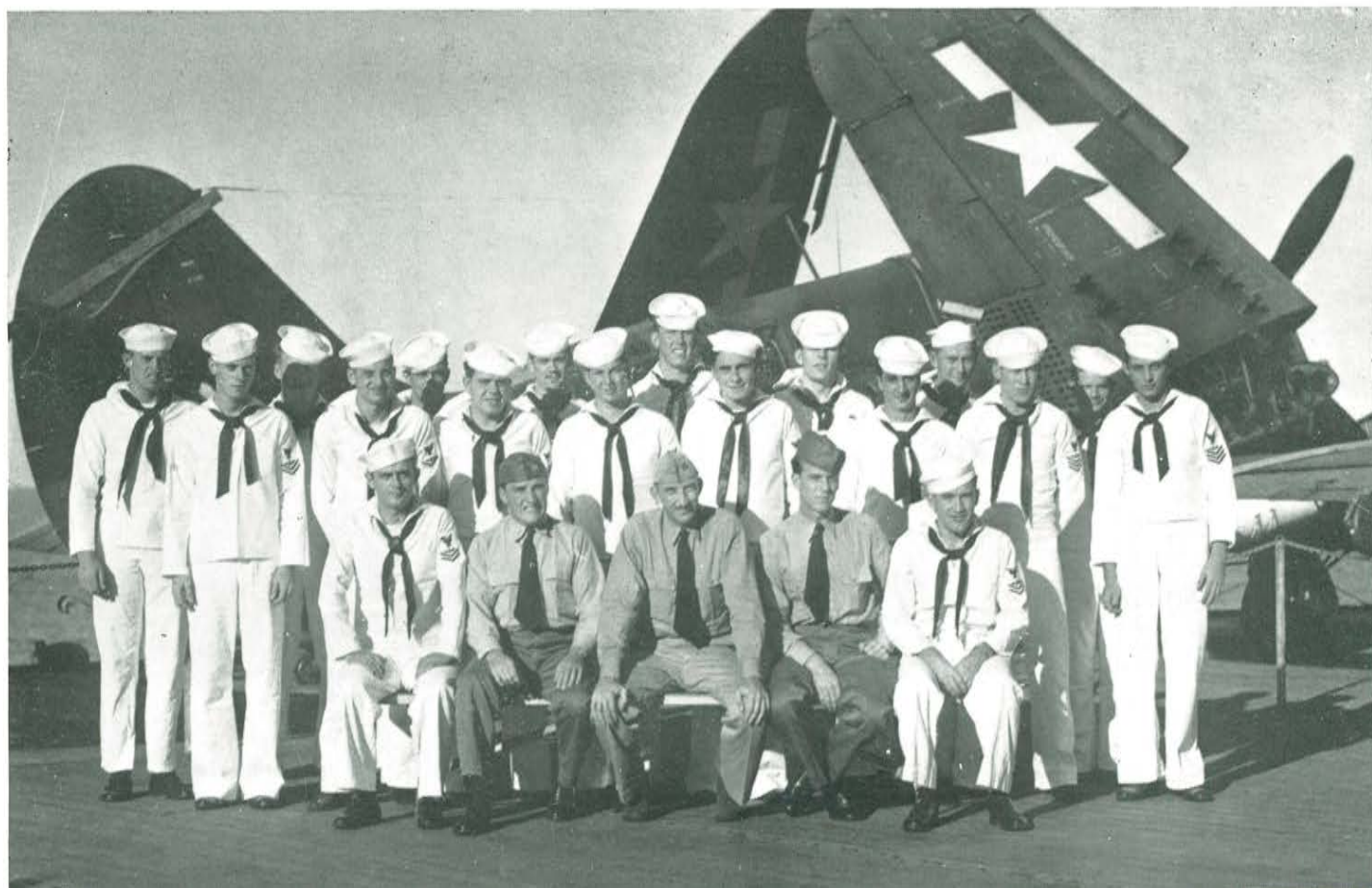
V-3—STARBOARD WATCH





V-3—PORT WATCH

V-4—SECTIONS 1 AND 2





V-4—SECTIONS 3 AND 4

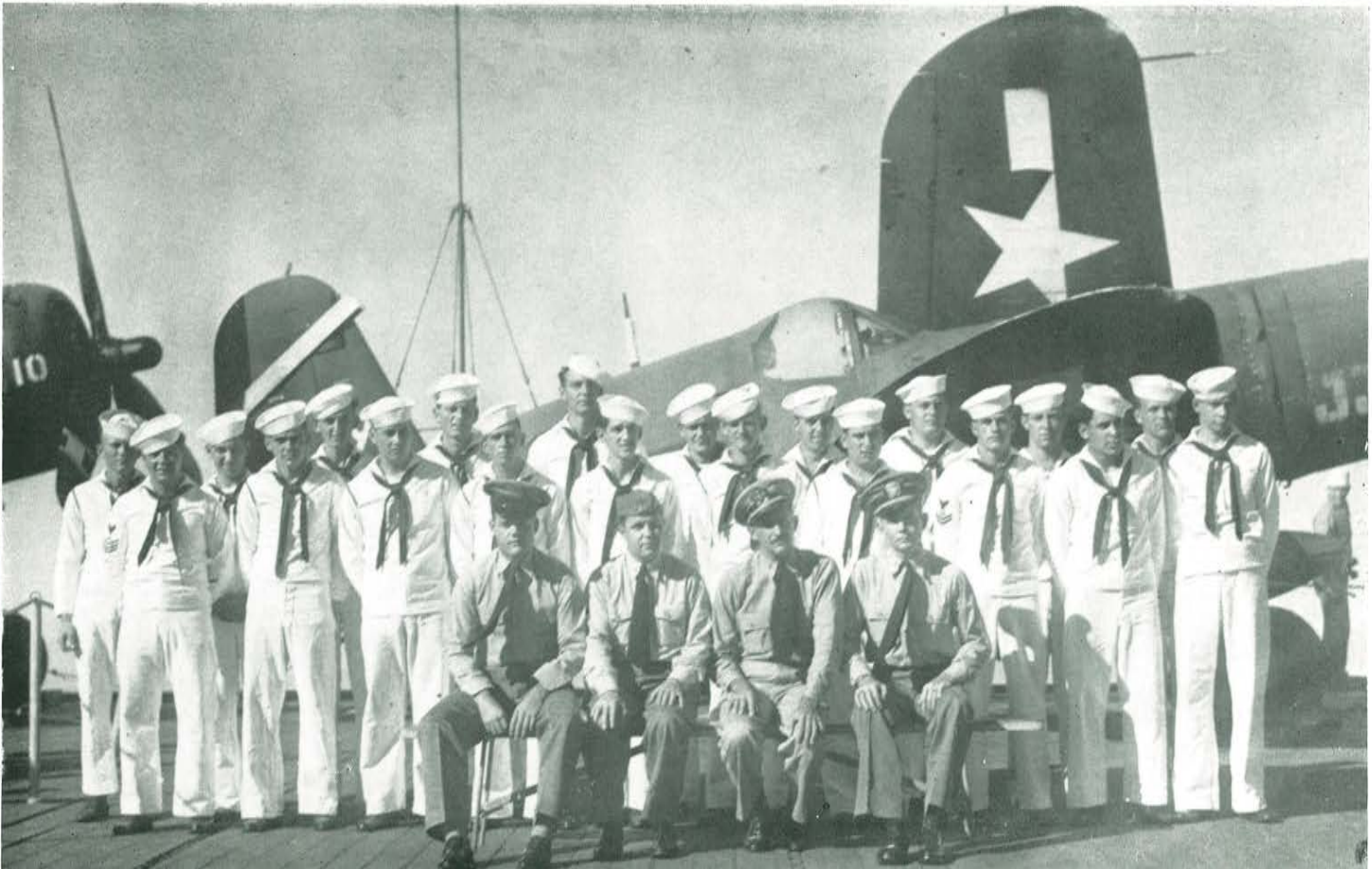
1ST DIVISION—STARBOARD WATCH

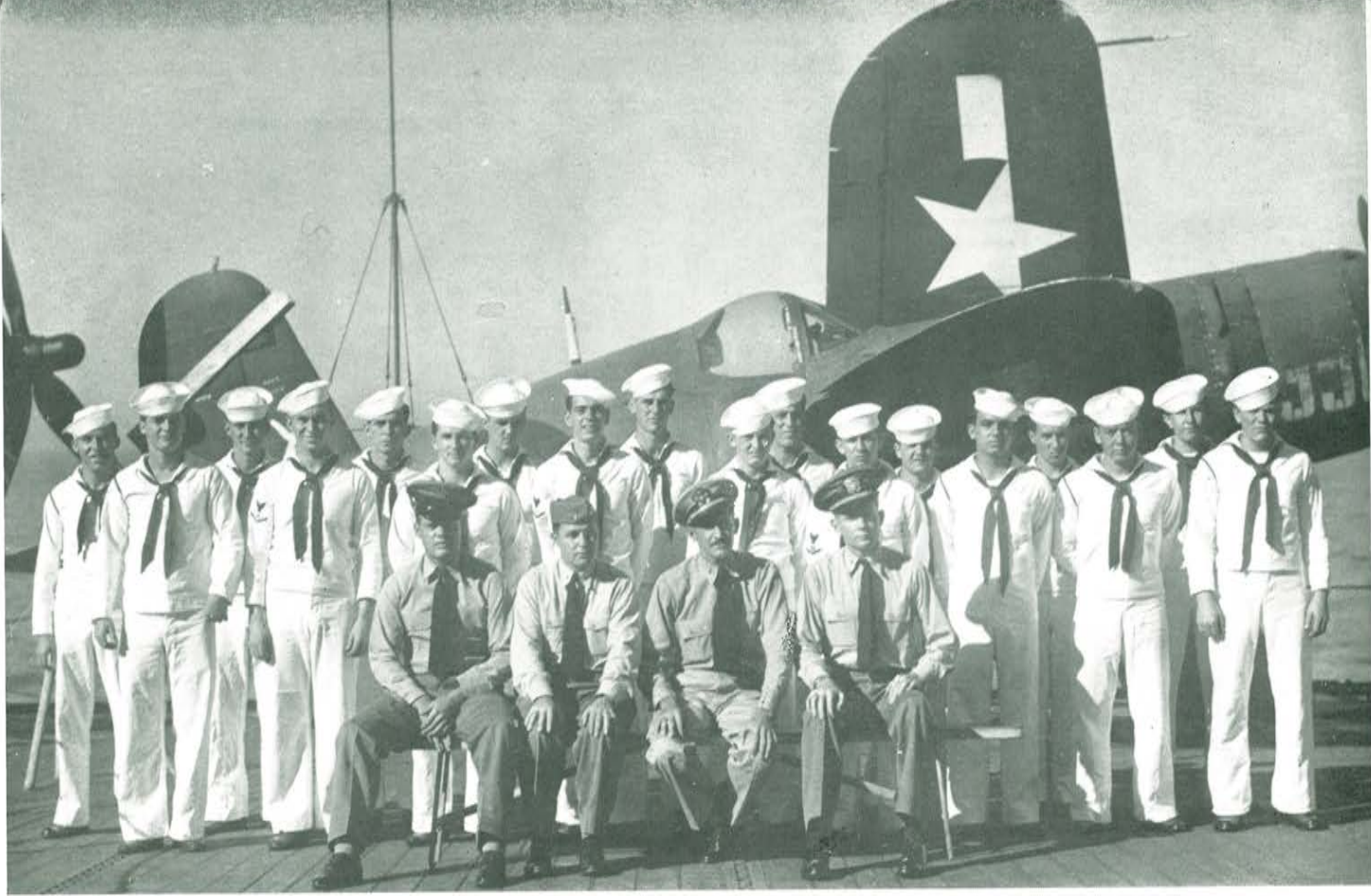




1ST DIVISION—PORT WATCH

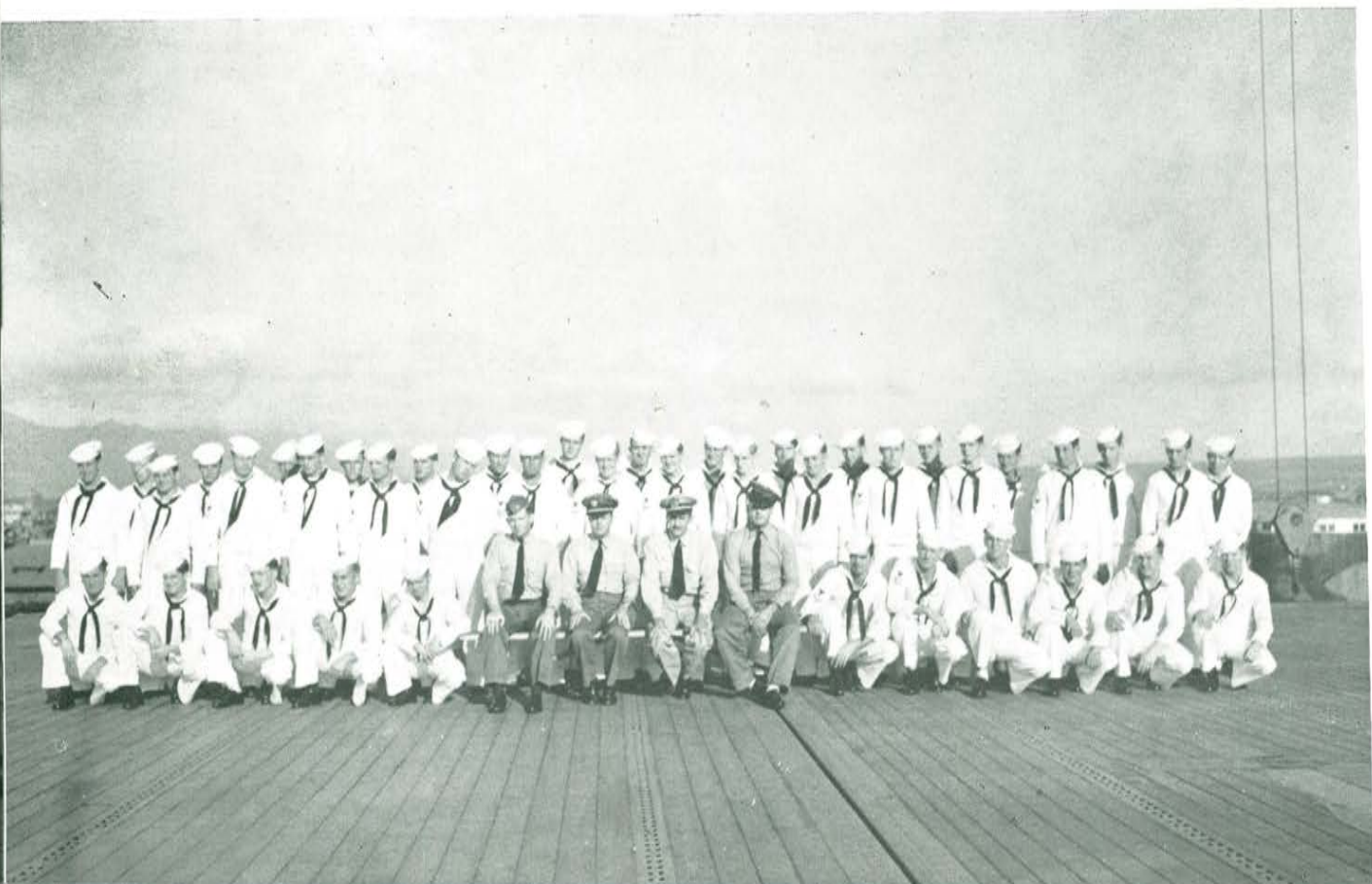
2ND DIVISION—SECTION 1

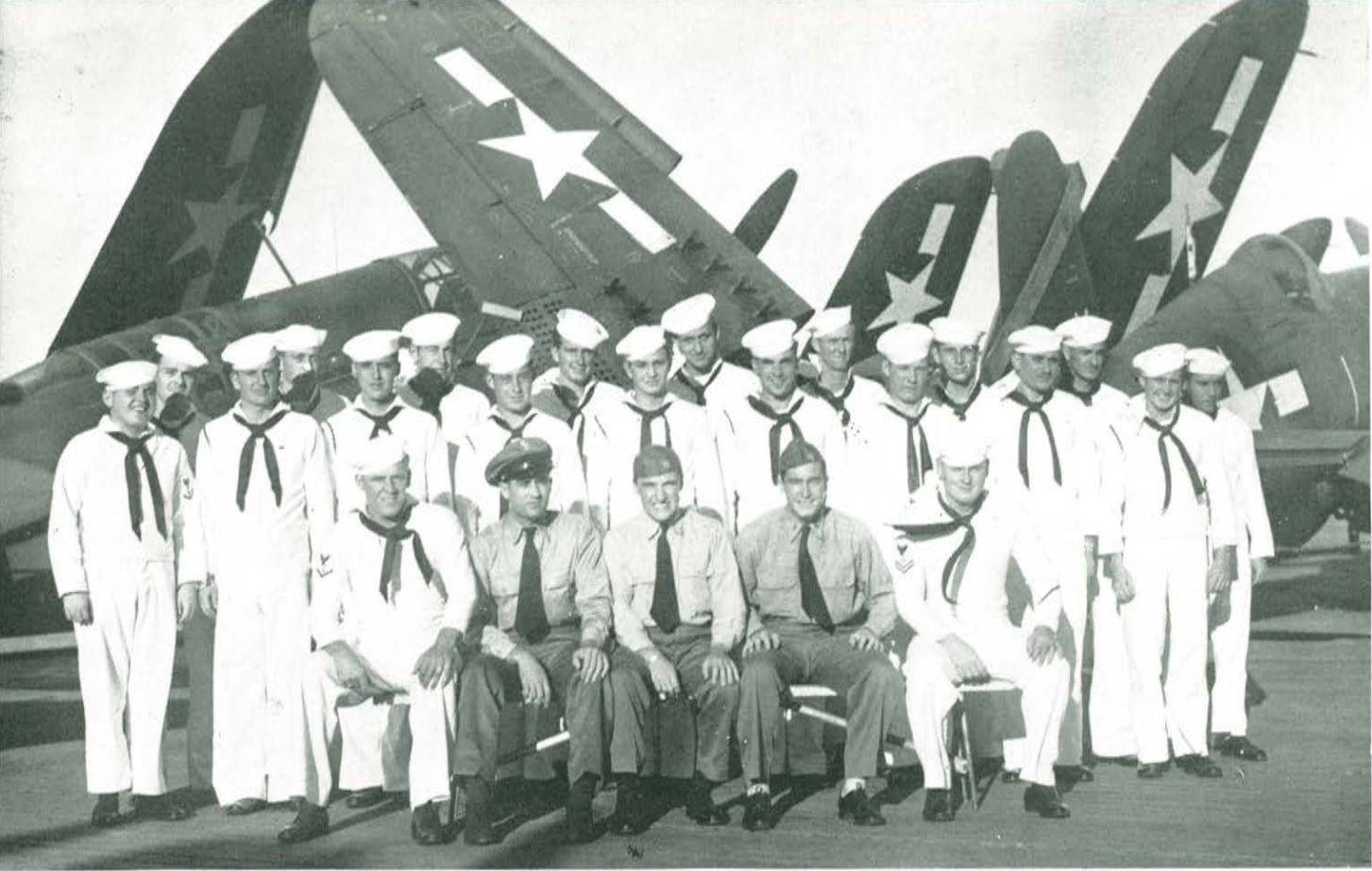




2ND DIVISION—SECTION 3

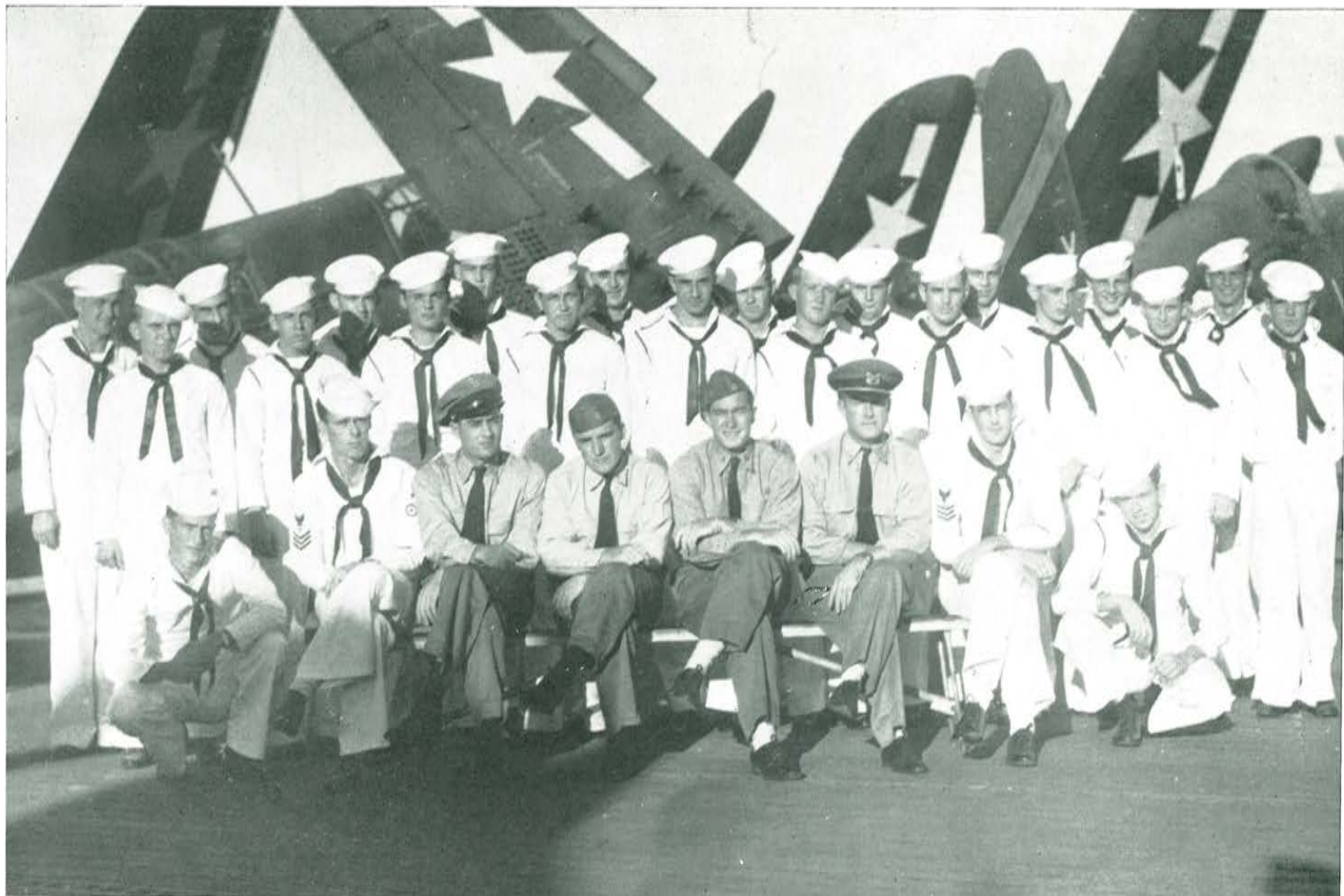
2ND DIVISION—PORT WATCH





3RD DIVISION—STARBOARD WATCH

3RD DIVISION—PORT WATCH

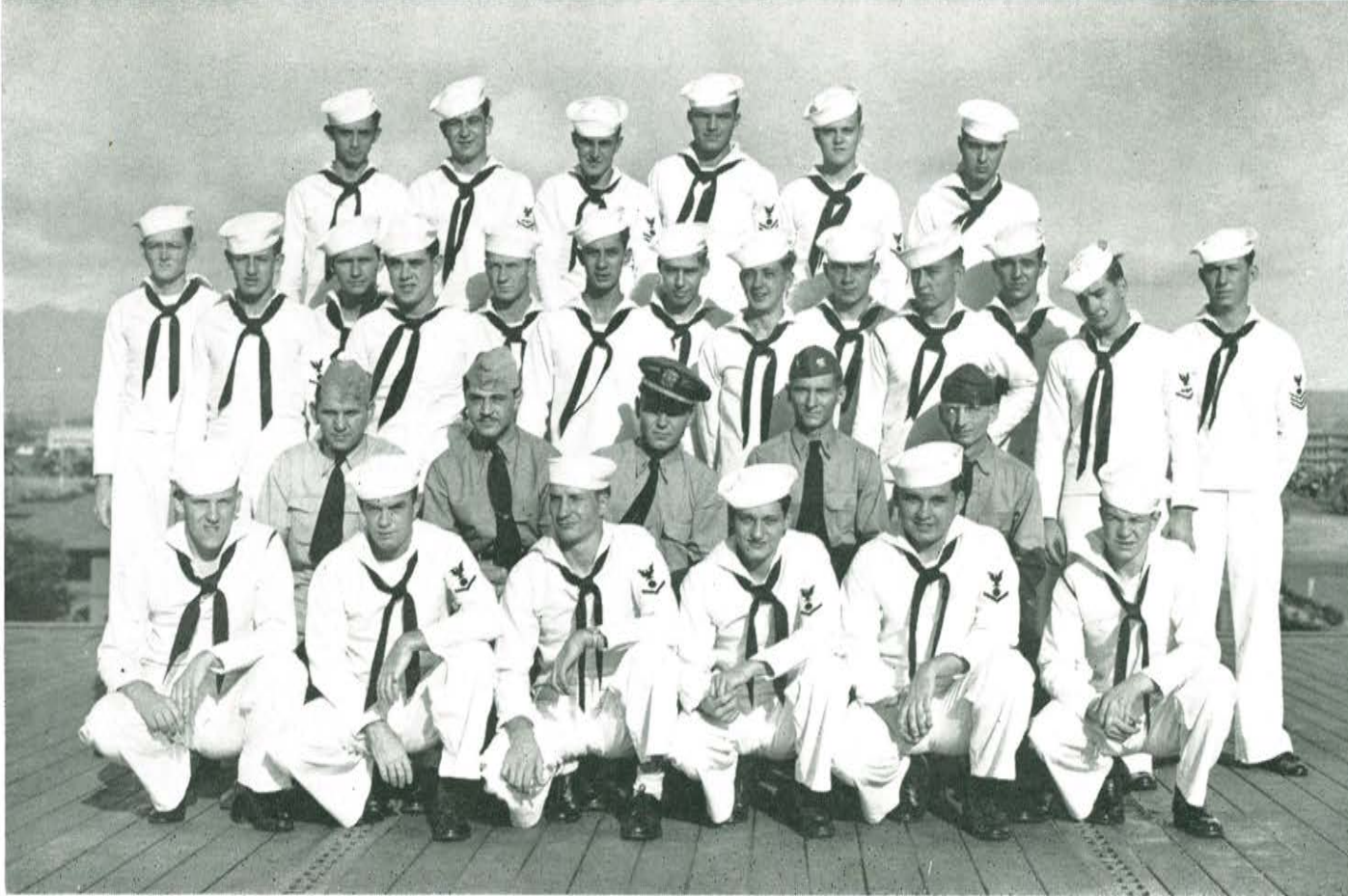




"A" DIVISION

"B" DIVISION





"E" DIVISION

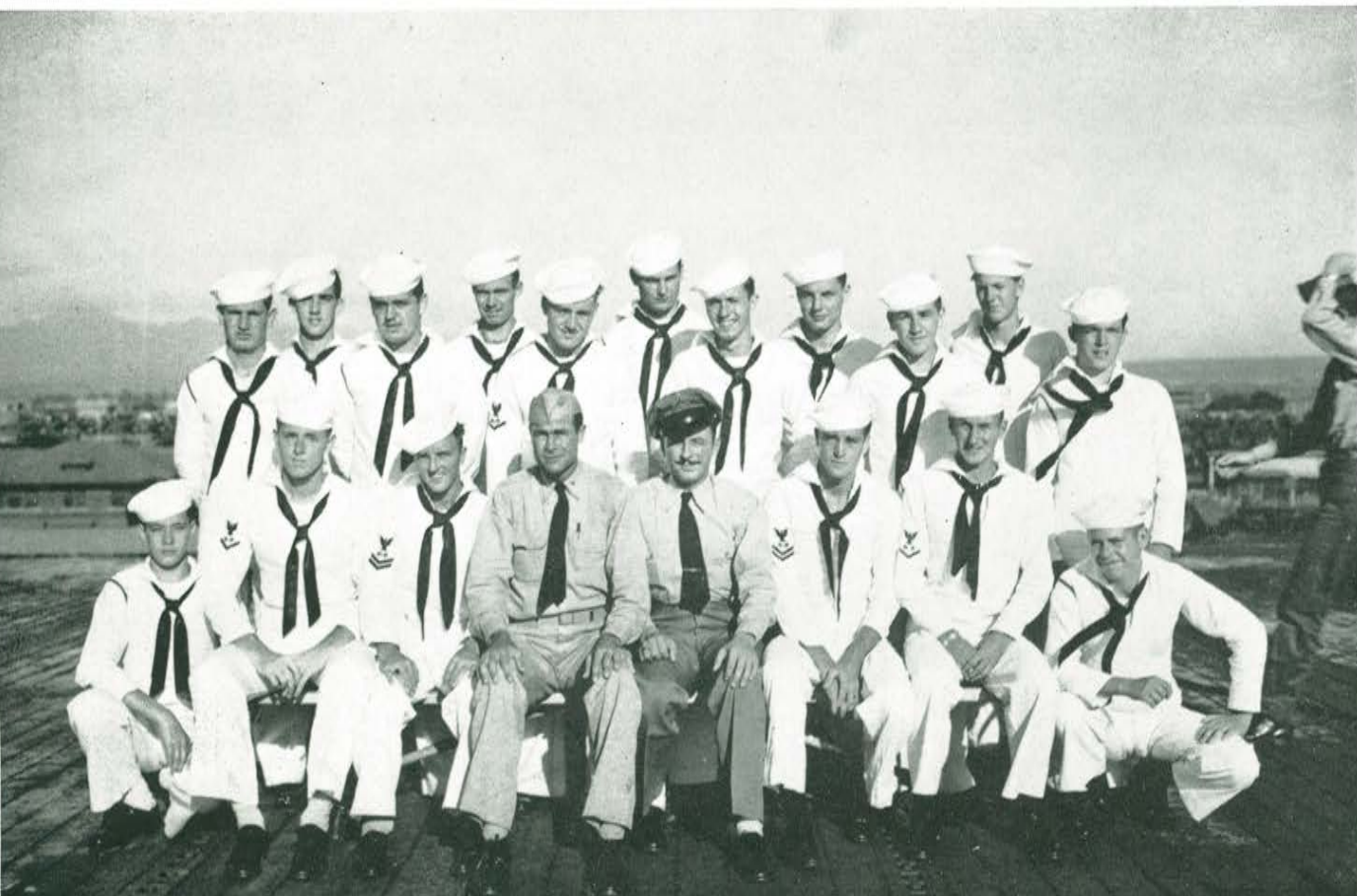
"H" DIVISION





"K" DIVISION—RADIO

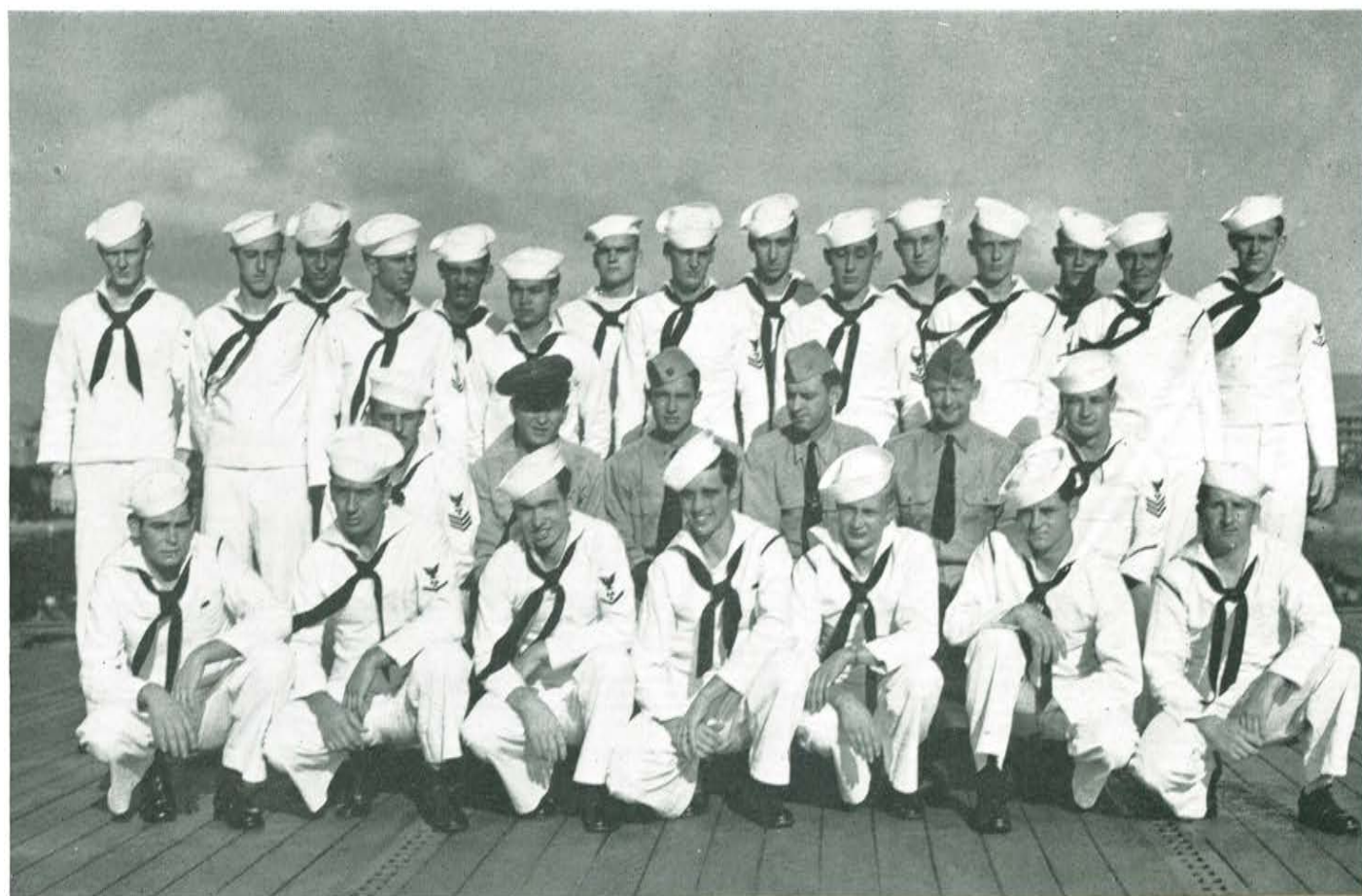
"K" DIVISION—SIGNAL FORCE





"K" DIVISION—YEOMEN

"M" DIVISION





"N" DIVISION

S-1 STARBOARD WATCH





S-1 PORT WATCH

S-2 DIVISION





MASTER AT ARMS

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