

"YOU'RE DARNED RIGHT WE'RE BACK"

27TH

FIGHTER ESCORT WING

"JUST FAMOUS"

Figures, figures, figures. One often wonders why the Wing Comptroller section directs such emphasis on figures. Lt. Col. Albert H. Dutton, 27th Wing Comptroller, last week came up with some very interesting facts, collected from the many figures compiled by his section these past six months.

On a 24-hour day, for every day of operation in the United Nations' war against communist aggression in Korea, from December 7, 1950 through May 14, 1951, when the 27th Fighter-Escort Group flew its 10,000th effective sortie, the Thunderjets had:

1. Averaged 3.25 Thunderjets every hour of every day over enemy-held territory.
2. Fired one round of 50-caliber ammunition for every second of every day.
3. Averaged 7.3 combat hours for every hour of every day.
4. Dropped a ton of explosives for every 45 minutes of every hour of every day.

The 27th Fighter-Escort Group pilots have been credited with casualties equivalent to two Chinese Divisions.

If the temperatures of the total napalm expenditures were concentrated into a single, mass fire it would total a heat of 13,280,000° Fahrenheit.

These are facts, not fiction, based on classified files of the Wing Comptroller's Section, 27th Fighter-Escort Wing.

A LETTER HOME

2 May, 1951

Dear Dad:

Yesterday was a beautiful day here in southern Japan. The sun was brilliant from earliest dawn, radiating a most comforting warmth. The flowers bloomed magnificently, lending an atmosphere of natural perfume. The green of the grass was a thing of beauty. It was May Day — an ancient day of rejoicing stemming from our earliest peasantry, unhappily purloined by the Communists and thus lost to most of the world.

For all its beauty, yesterday was a tragic day for the 27th Fighter-Escort Wing. In a single blow, we lost two of our best men. Colonel Ashley B. Packard, the Wing Commander, and Major Maurice H. Smith, a staff officer, were killed instantly in a crash just seven minutes after take-off.

In the Air Force, the average Airman gets to know his Wing Commander on about the same level that your individual union member becomes acquainted with his regional director — you know he's there, at the controls, and you have the strength of the organization in attestation of his fitness for the position.

It is my naturally biased opinion that the Thunderjet-flying 27th Fighter-Escort Wing is the strongest organization on all accounts within the Air Force today. Among ourselves we jestingly refer to the 27th as "the world's greatest fighter wing." Beneath the half-humor of that reference lies a more than half belief.

Our pilots, our cooks, our medics, our crew chiefs, all of our men are the best in the business. They have to be, they're in the 27th — an outfit that will settle for nothing less than the best.

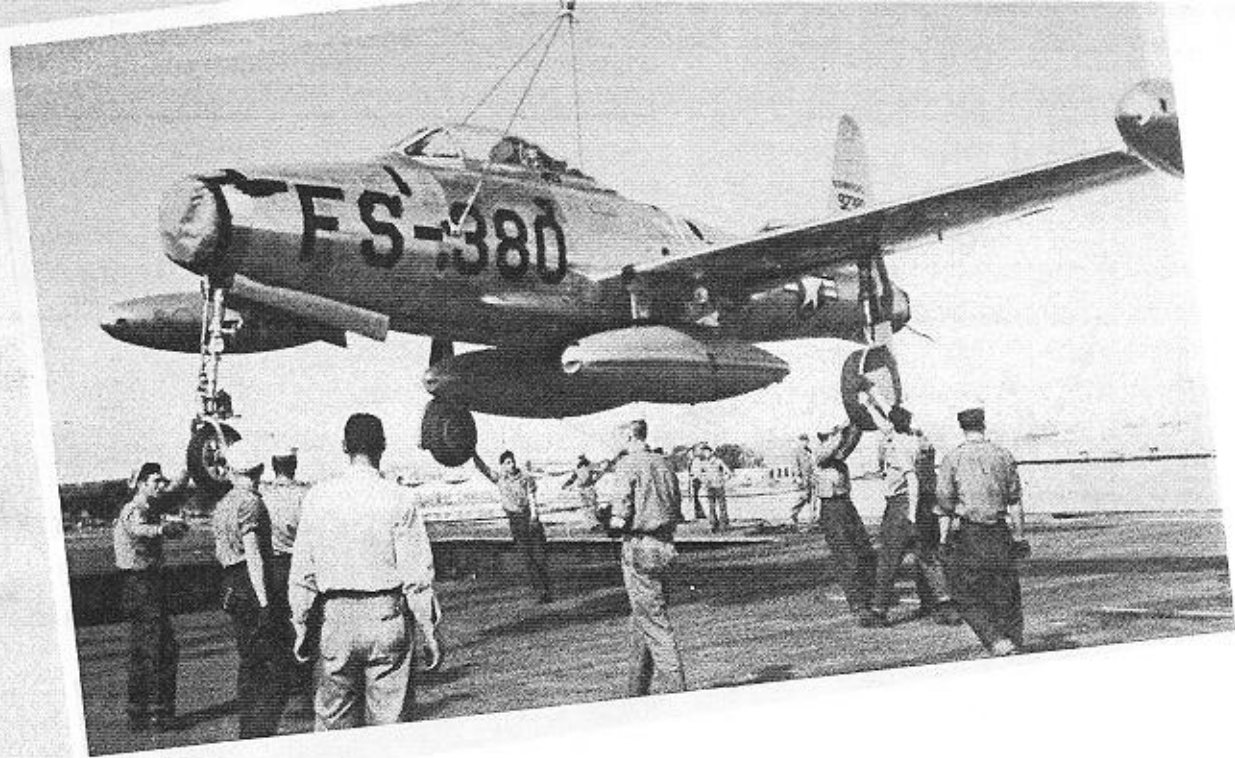
Yesterday was indeed a tragic day for the 27th, but the tragedy was not ours alone — the Air Force lost one of its most capable "youngsters," the nation a citizen, a mother a son, a wife a husband, two young lads a father. We all share the loss, the tragic incomprehensible loss.

Our Thunderjets were airborne at dawn this morning, even as they were yesterday and the days before. Operations are normal, but there is an undiscussed emptiness felt by all.

The Air Force, fortunately, seems to have an abundance of good officers, already the vacancy is filled, by a man that's been deputy commander for months, a man that knows the outfit. The Thunderjets will continue their combat mission.

But for years to come, when career Airmen start a reminiscence over a cup of java or a mug of brew, when the Airmen of today are the oldtimers of tomorrow, the name of Ashley B. Packard shall live on and on and on — " . . . Packard? Best damned commander I've ever had!"

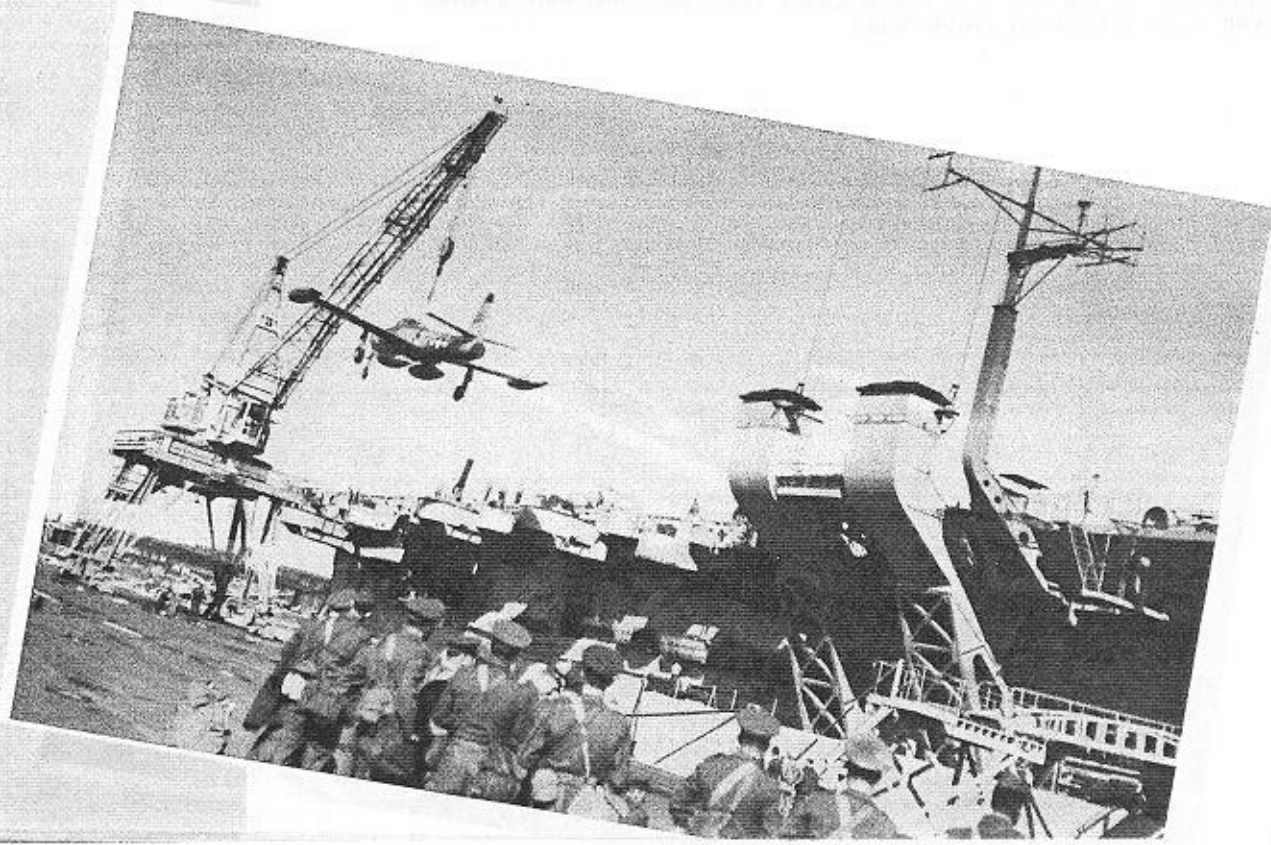
sincerely,
bert

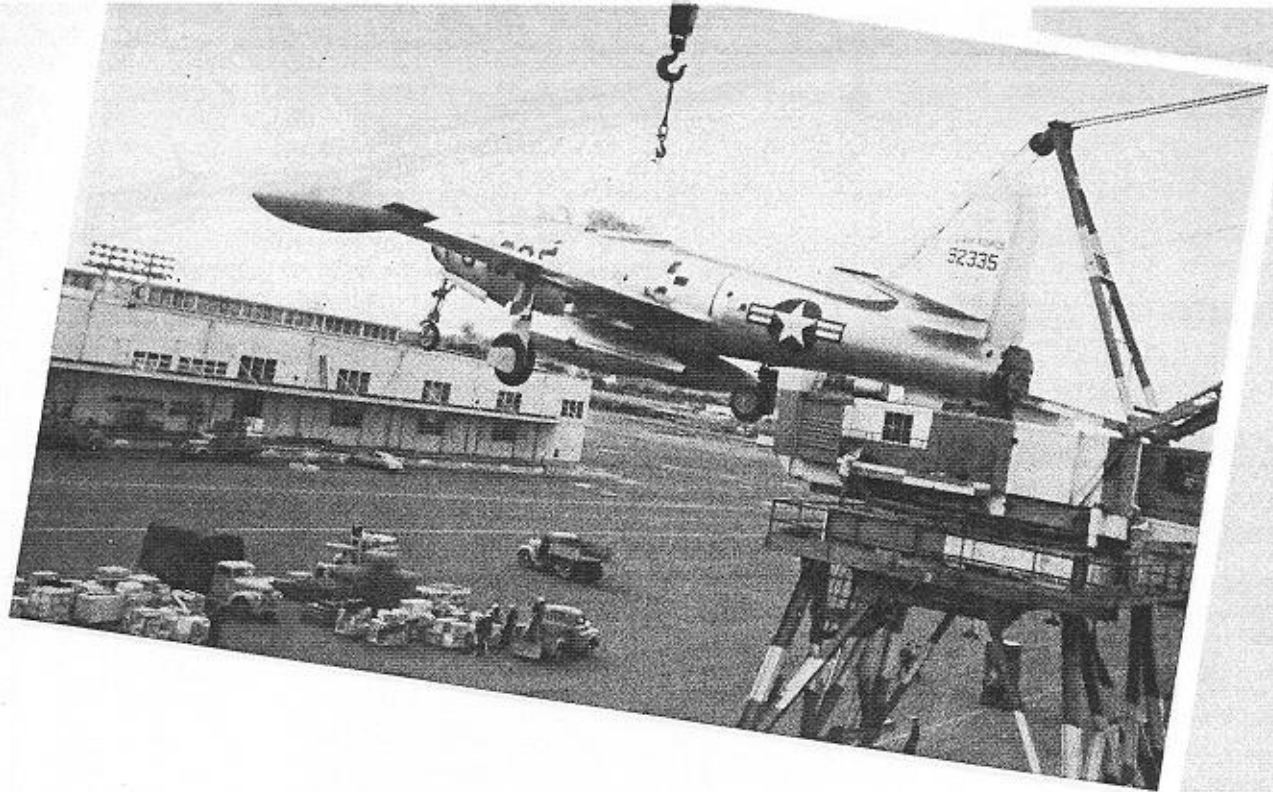


The first Thunderjets arrived in Japan on November 30 at Yokasuka. They were unloaded by the Fighter-Group crew members and the 27th's 4015th Organizational Maintenance Squadron personnel. The planes were moved from Yokasuka to Kizurazu AFB, Japan to be readied for combat.

The 27th was attached to the famed Fifth Air Force for operations upon arrival in the Far East. Fifth Air Force, on December 1, ruled that the Wing would be divided into two sections — an advanced echelon to operate from Korea, and a rear echelon to maintain the aircraft and administration in Japan.

These same orders designated the Korean phase of operations to be conducted from an airstrip at Taegu, Korea, necessitating a redeployment of personnel from Kimpo. Colonel Packard decided to remain with the advanced echelon, which consisted of the 27th Fighter-Escort Group and a minimum of support personnel. Colonel Raymond F. Rudell, the deputy Wing Commander, was to take charge of the rear echelon.





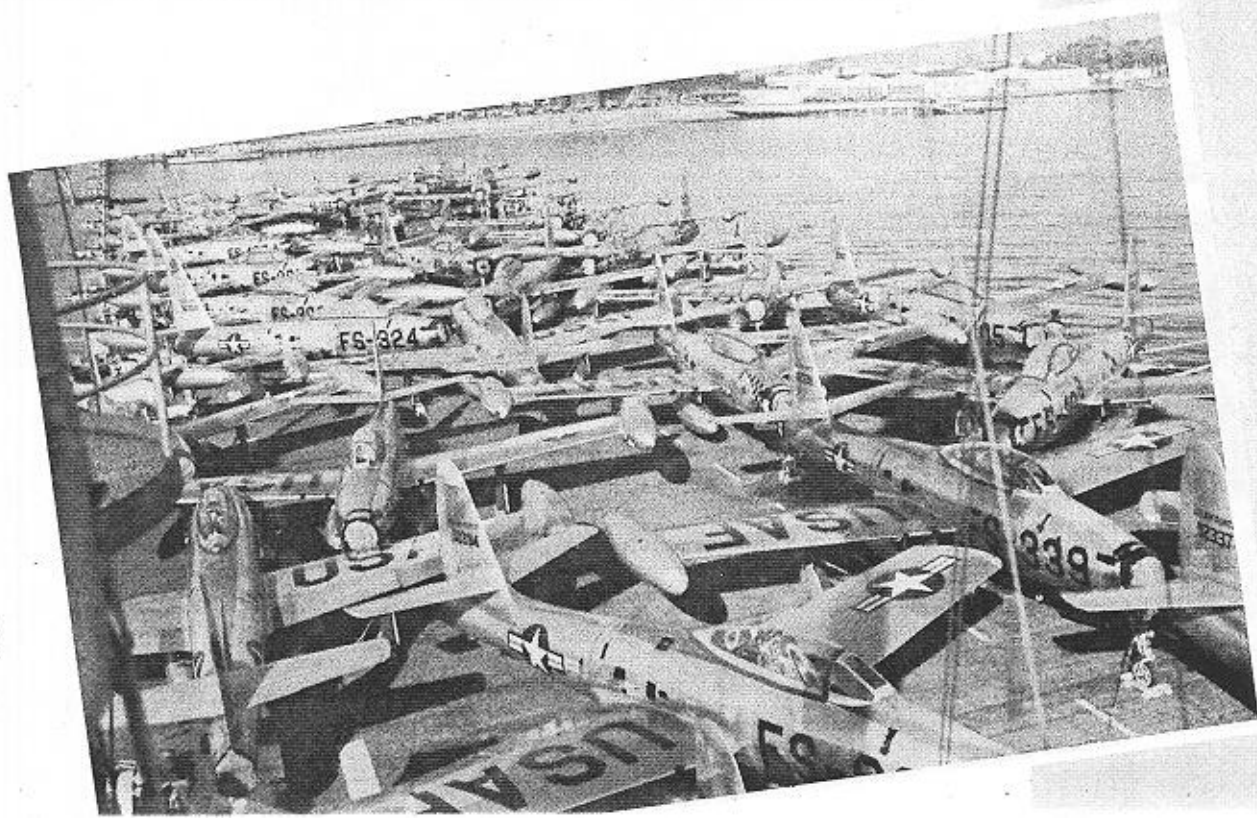
Rear echelon troops were moved from the staging area at Yokota AFB to Itazuke AFB, Japan, and immediate maintenance operations were begun.

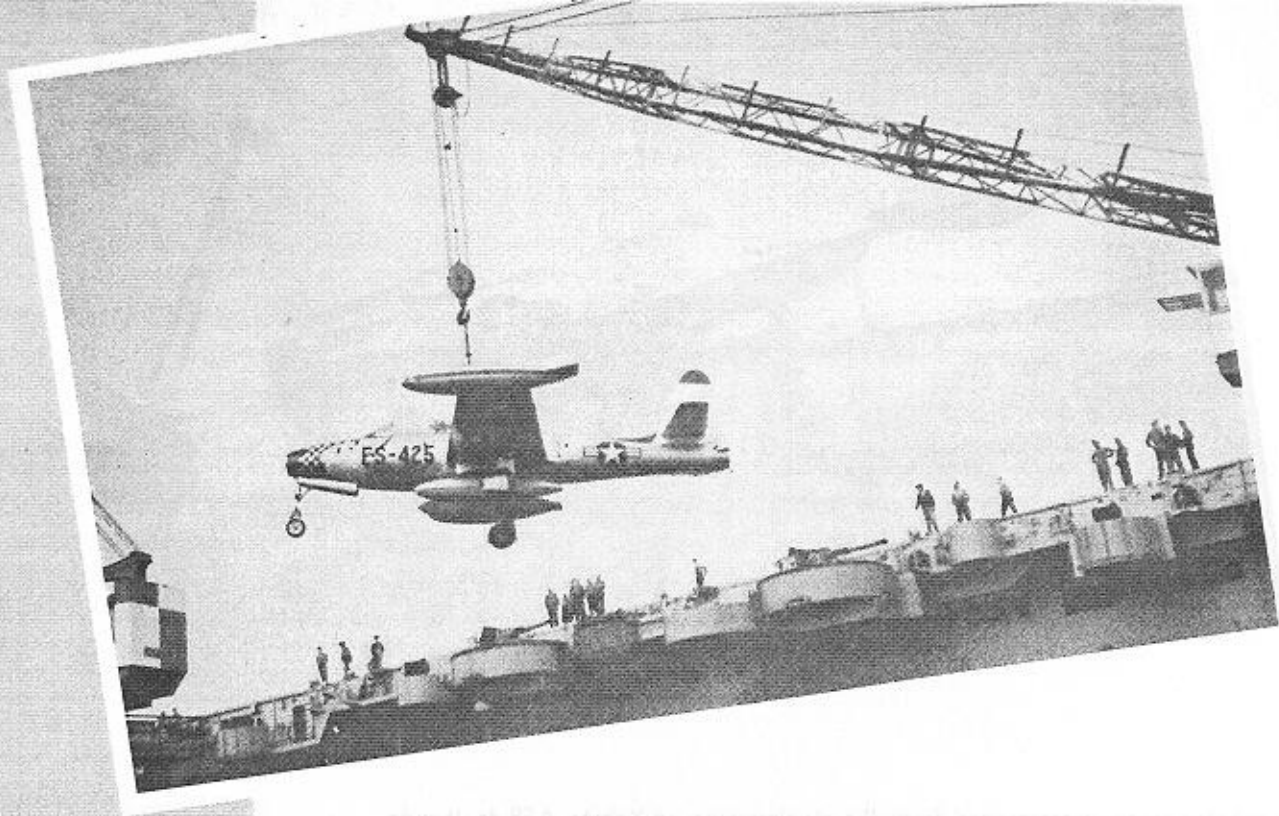
On December 5, Colonel Donald J. M. Blakeslee, then commanding the Fighter Group, led the first flight of Thunderjets from Itazuke AFB to Taegu. The next day, the Thunderjet pilots flew an indoctrination flight with fighter pilots of the 49th Fighter-Bomber Wing, also at Taegu at the time.

On Pearl Harbor Day — December 7 — the first Thunderjet operations began. A flight of four Thunderjets, led by Colonel Blakeslee, flew armed reconnaissance over enemy territory in the Chinnampo area on the west coast of Korea.

Picking targets of opportunity, the flight dropped 32 5-inch rockets and expended 7200 rounds of 50-caliber ammunition strafing enemy positions, knocking out several enemy locomotives, a railroad marshalling yard, sinking a loaded barge in the vital shipping area near Chinnampo, and setting fire to three enemy-held villages.

Other pilots on the first flight included Major (now Lt. Col.) John W. Lafko, Captain Charles E. McWhirk (missing in action since Jan. 2), and 1st Lt. Carlos O. Beasley.



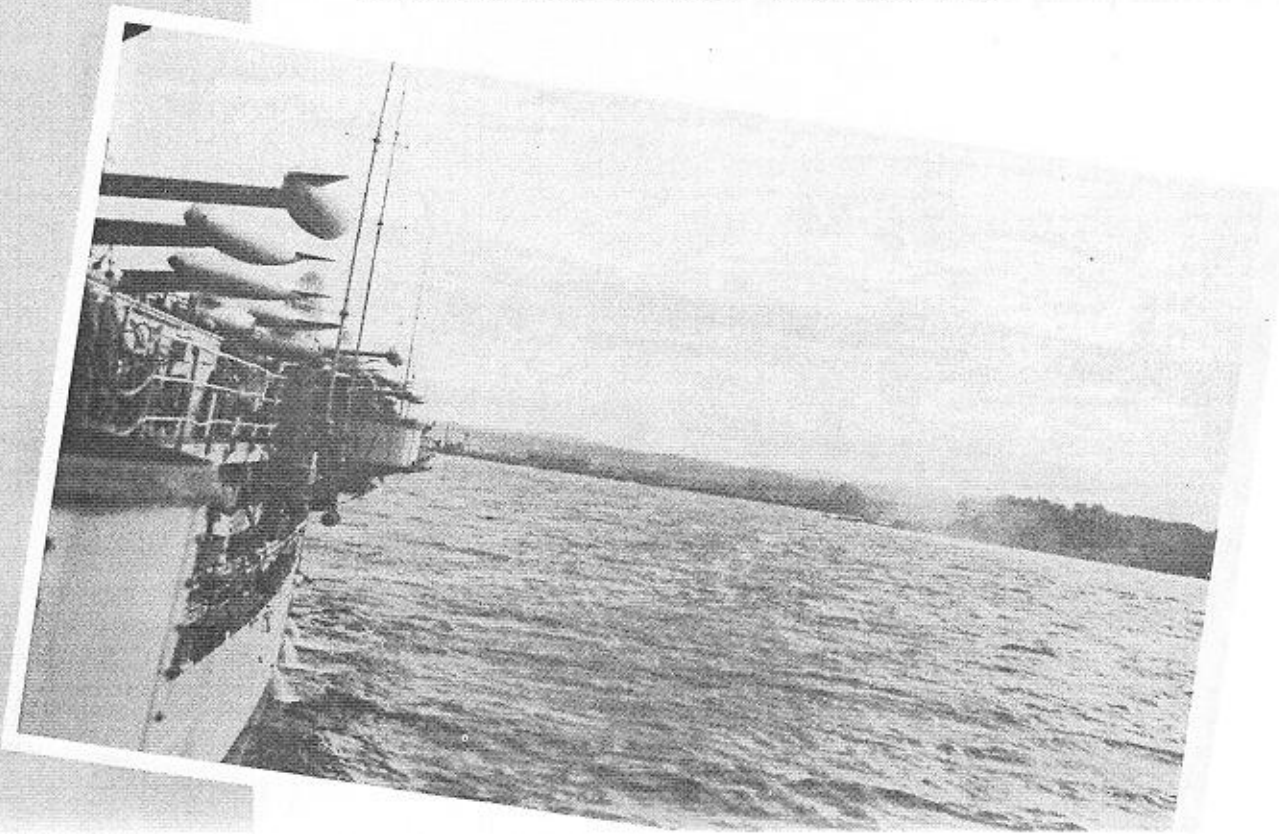


In less than 30 days from the initial alert, the 27th Fighter-Escort Wing was in action — a proof of the effectiveness of combat readiness emphasis stressed these many months by Strategic Air Command.

In late January, after nearly two months of operations, Fifth Air Force moved the Thunderjets from Taegu to Itazuke, where the rear echelon maintenance program was operative.

This move was the result of the long range effectiveness of the versatile Thunderjets. Taegu was a small airstrip, and there were a number of fighter units stationed there. The F-80 Shooting Stars, the World War II famous F-51 Mustangs, and the aircraft of allied United Nations countries could not boast the long range of the Thunderjet. For that reason, the F-84s and the 27th Fighter-Escort Group moved once again.

The last missions from Taegu were flown on January 31. On the morning of February 1, operations began from Itazuke, and have continued from there until the arrival of the replacement, 136th Fighter-Bomber Wing.



MAINTENAN

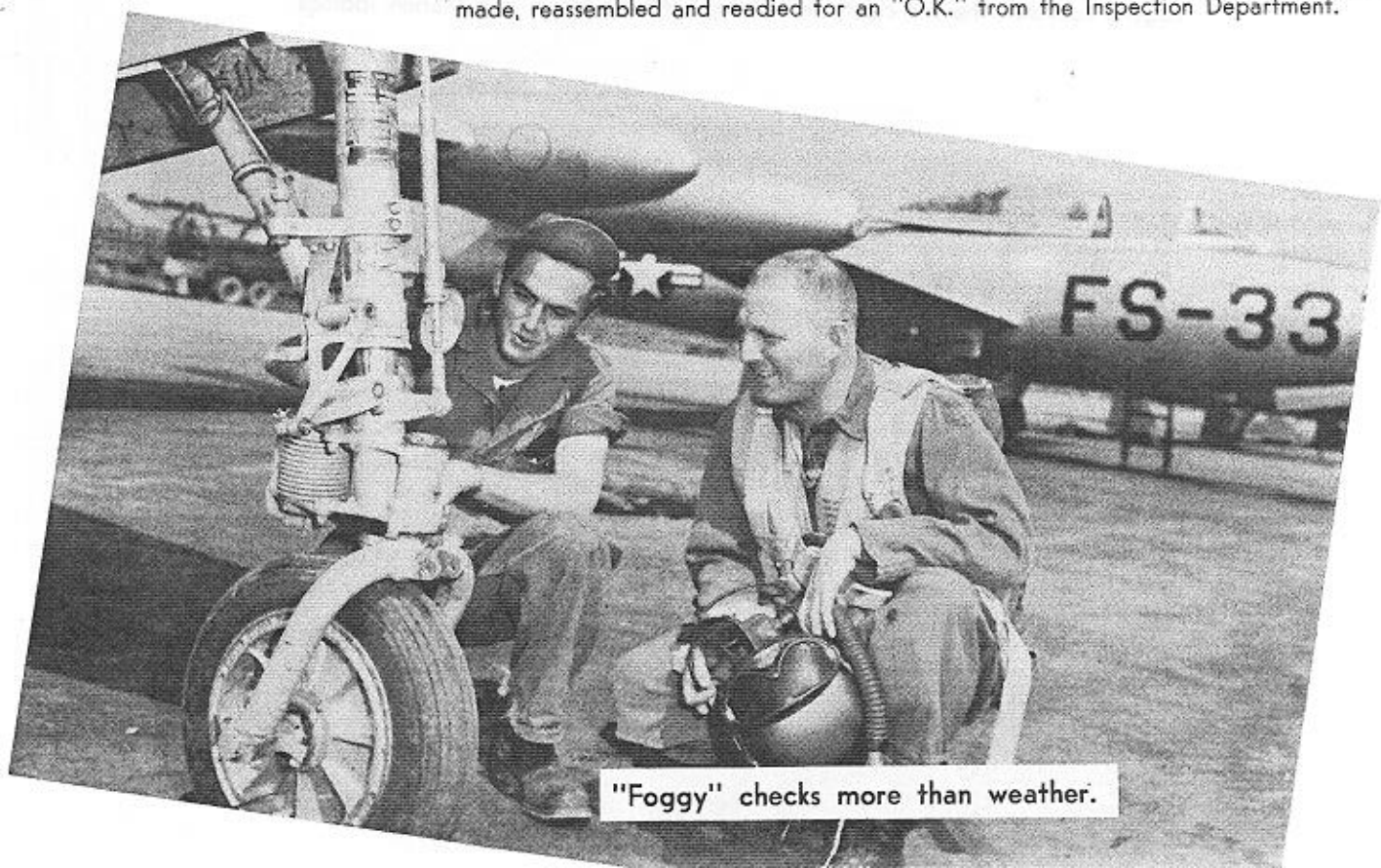




Each of the eight maintenance docks has a crew of six specialists, Air Force-trained technicians that know their jobs. When the Thunderjet moves into one of the docks, the six specialists begin immediately disassembling the plane for the inspection.

Even as the 4015th specialists are dismantling the Thunderjets, working with the crew chiefs of the aircraft, technicians from the 27th Maintenance Squadron are removing the armament and communications systems from the plane. These systems will be checked and overhauled in the Maintenance Squadron's shops.

The dock crews methodically go about the inspection, each man with an assigned phase to cover, covering his own phase with the confidence and speed of many previous inspections. In a minimum time, the aircraft is disassembled, the inspection made, reassembled and readied for an "O.K." from the Inspection Department.



"Foggy" checks more than weather.



Loaded with machine-gun ammo and sporting 500 lb. bombs beneath the wings, two Thunderjets fire "jato" bottles to boost them off the runway shortly before joining bombers on a mission.

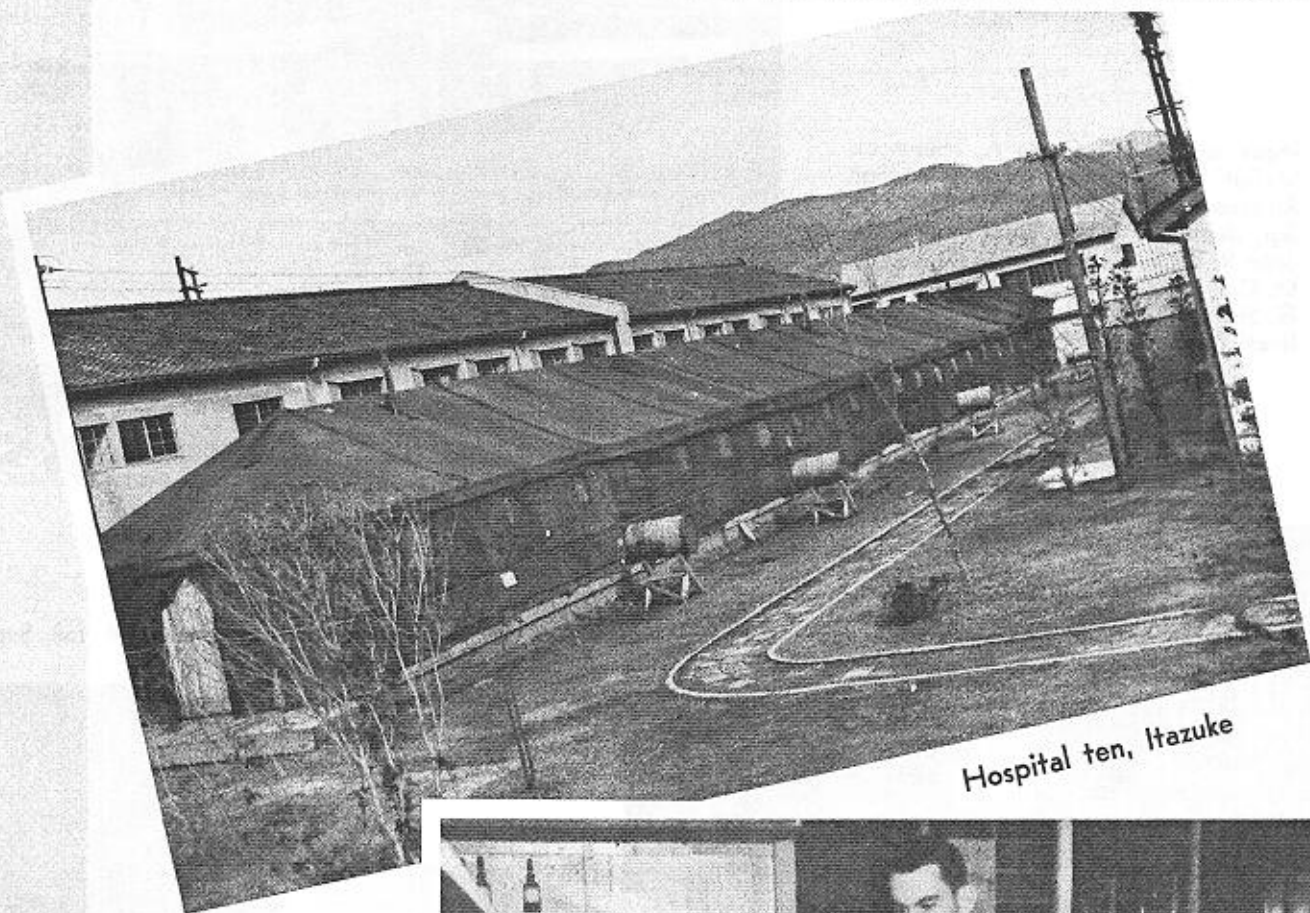
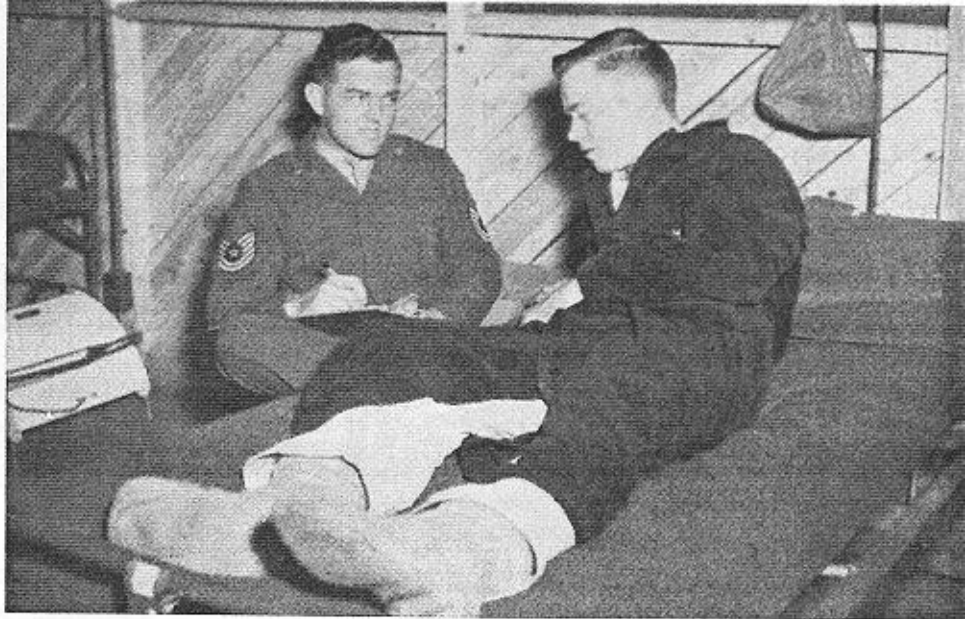
Take-off...

STRIKE!



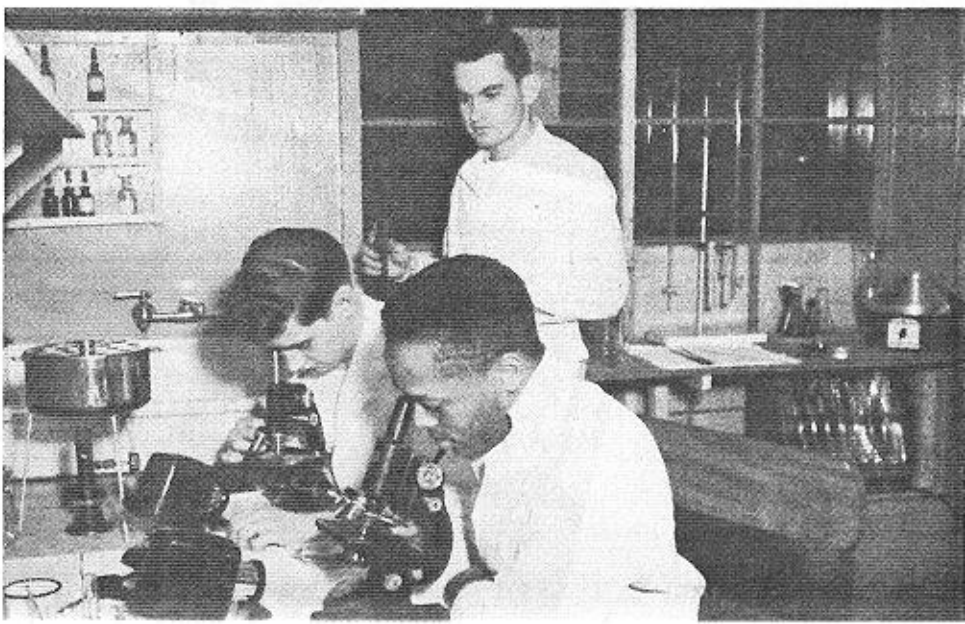
M
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T/Sgt. Glen A. Moon,
Registrar, admits a pa-
tient.

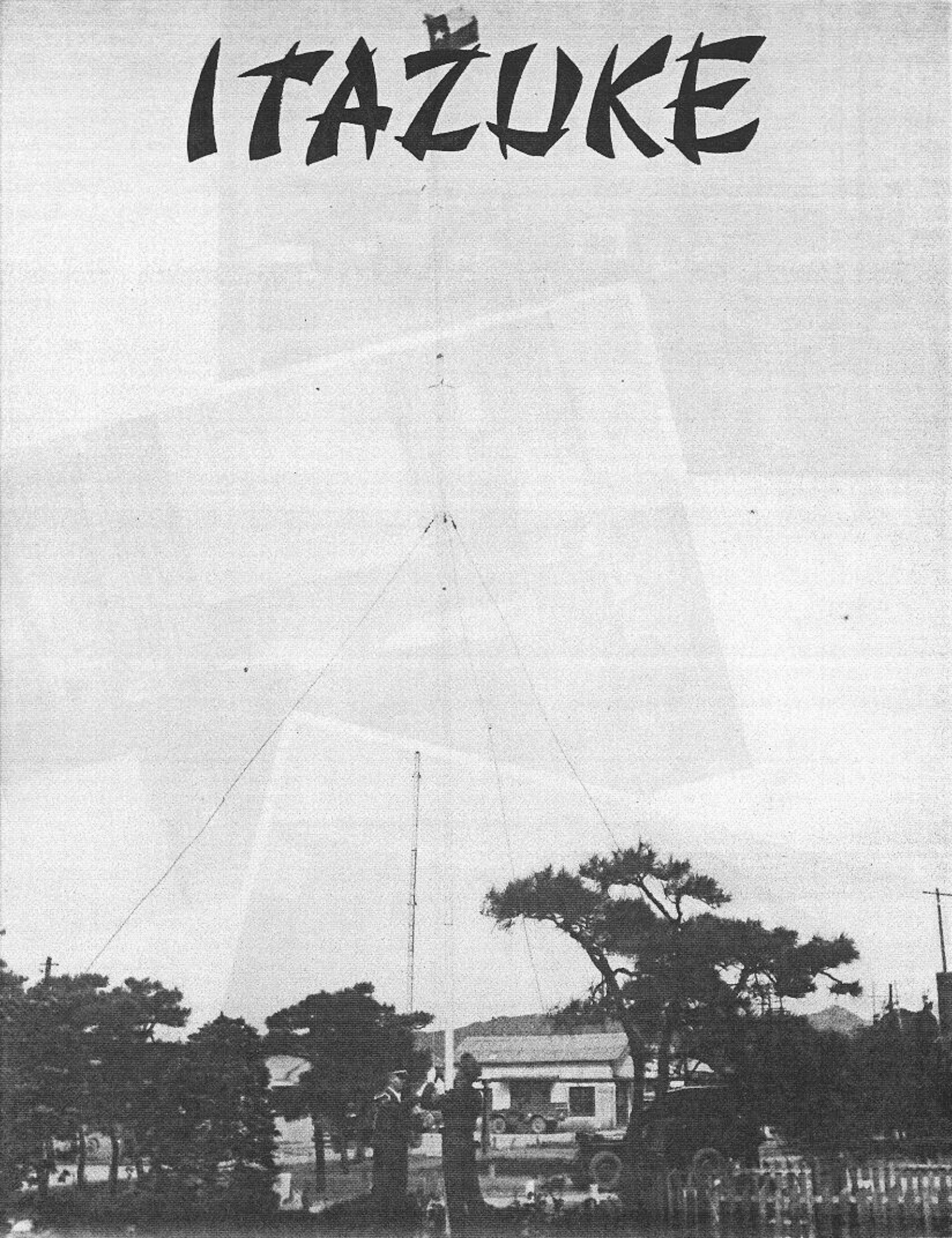


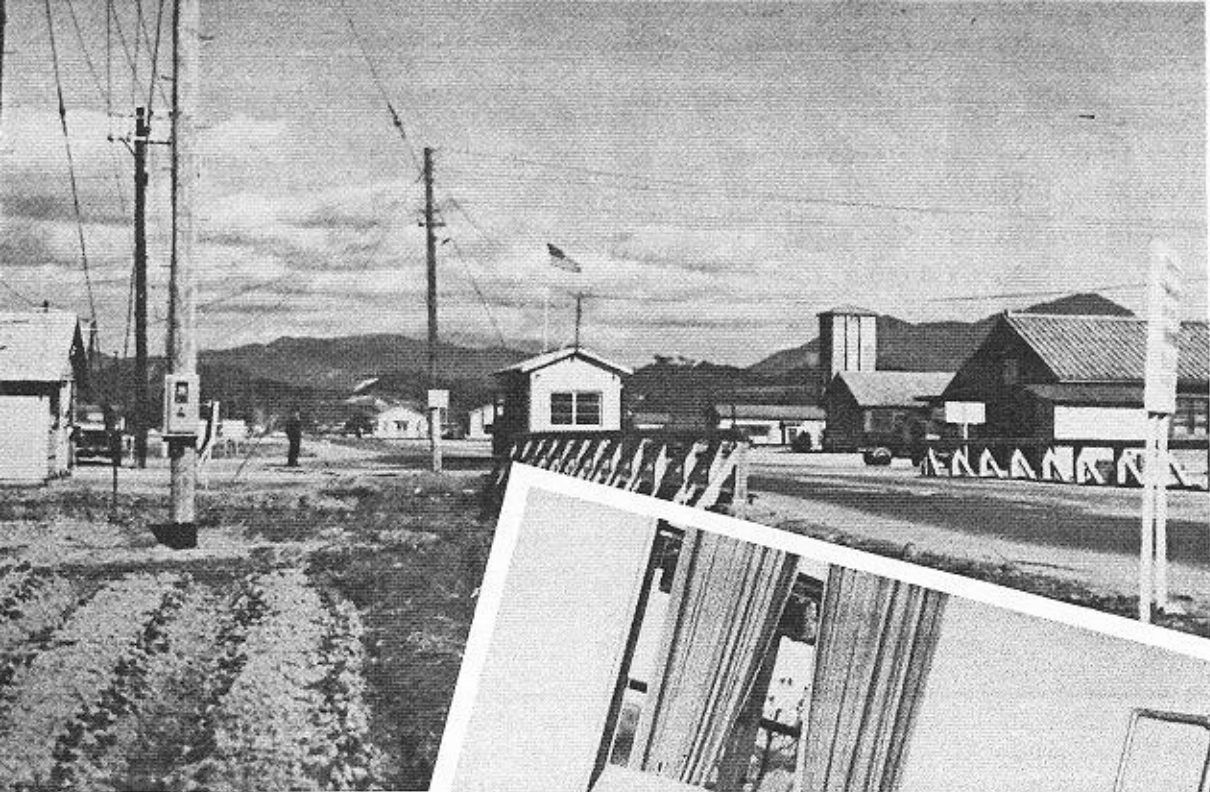
Hospital ten, Itazuke

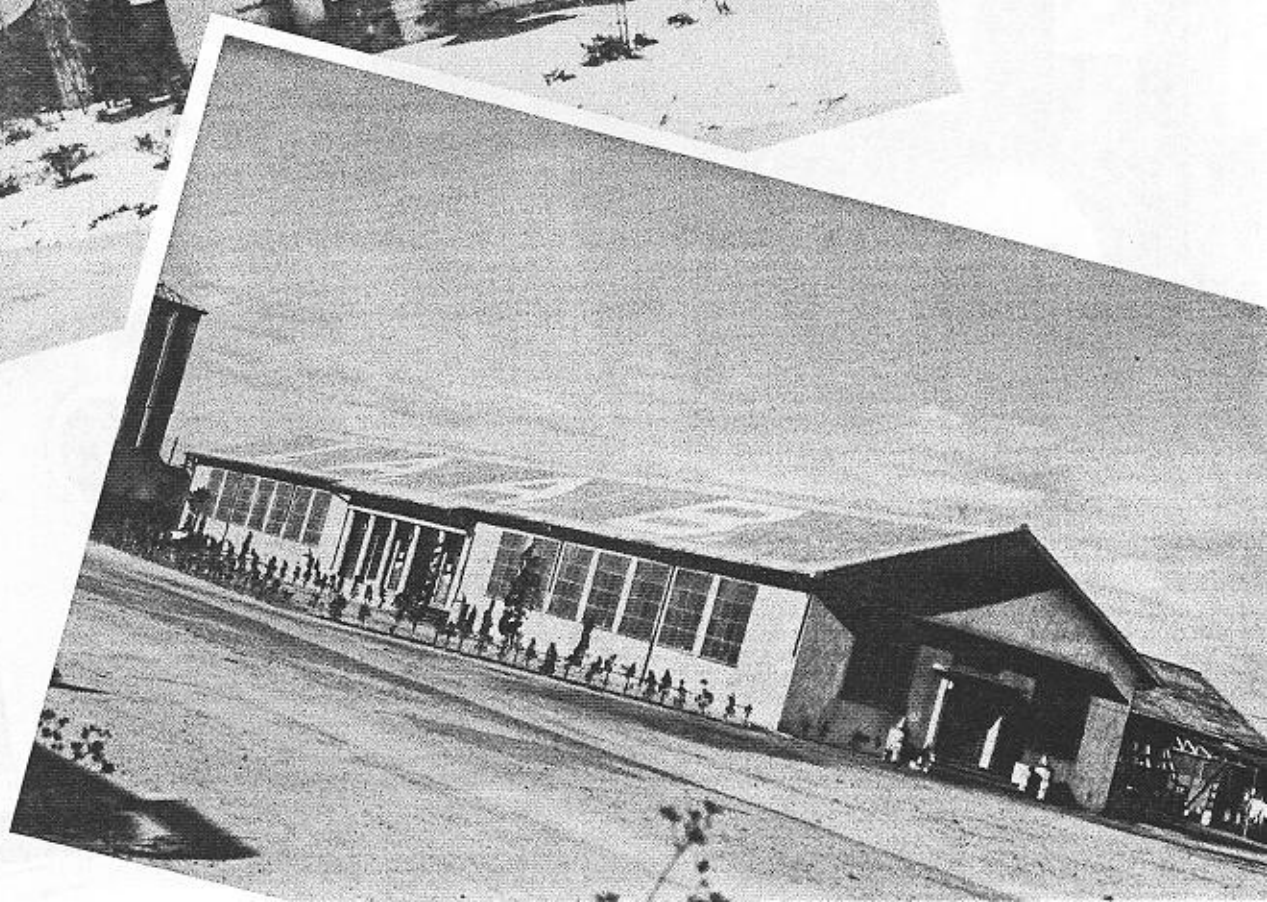
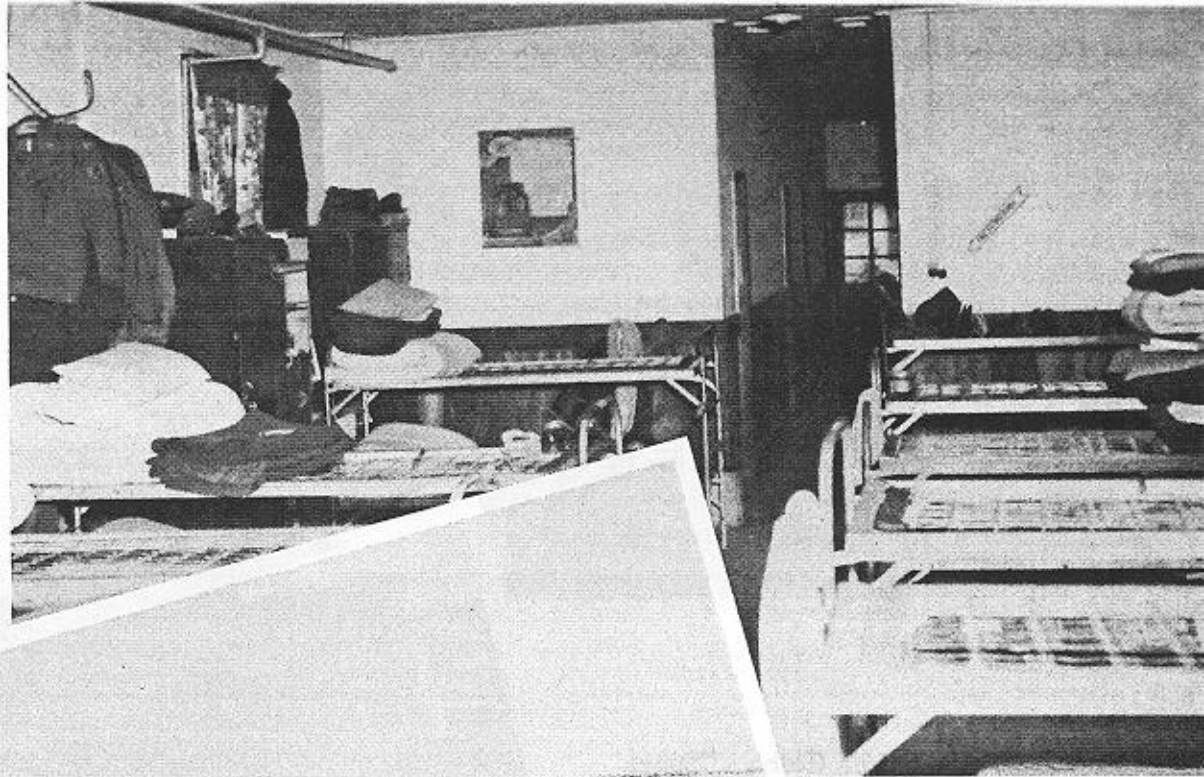
Left to right: S/Sgt.
Joseph W. La Voie and
S/Sgt. Henry J. Shaw.
Standing: S/Sgt. Leland
McGinnis.

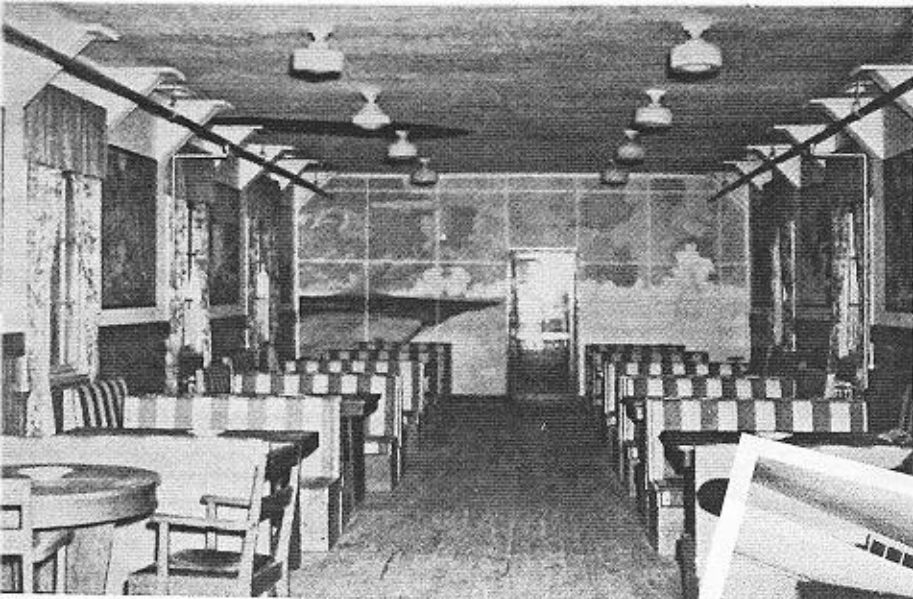


ITAZUKE



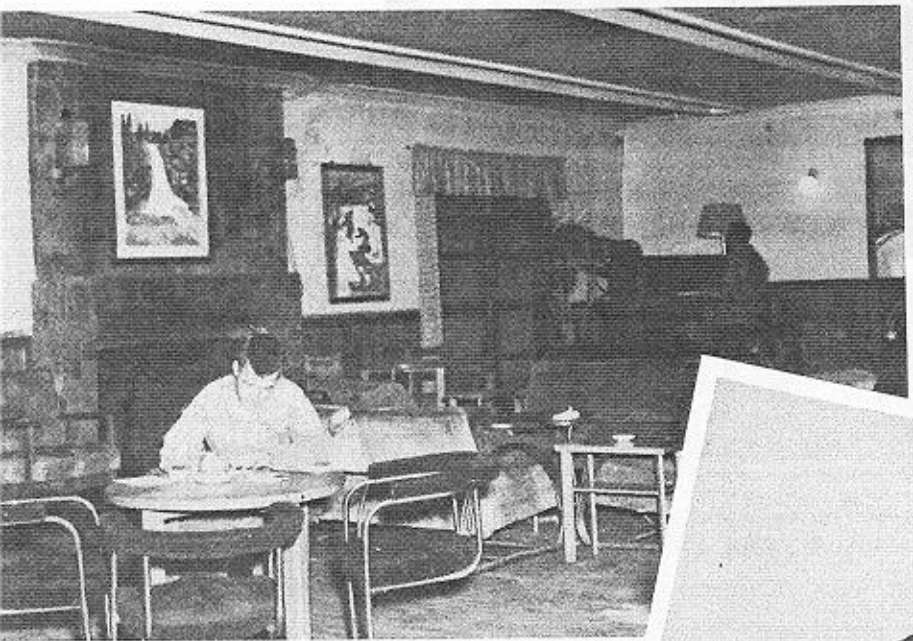
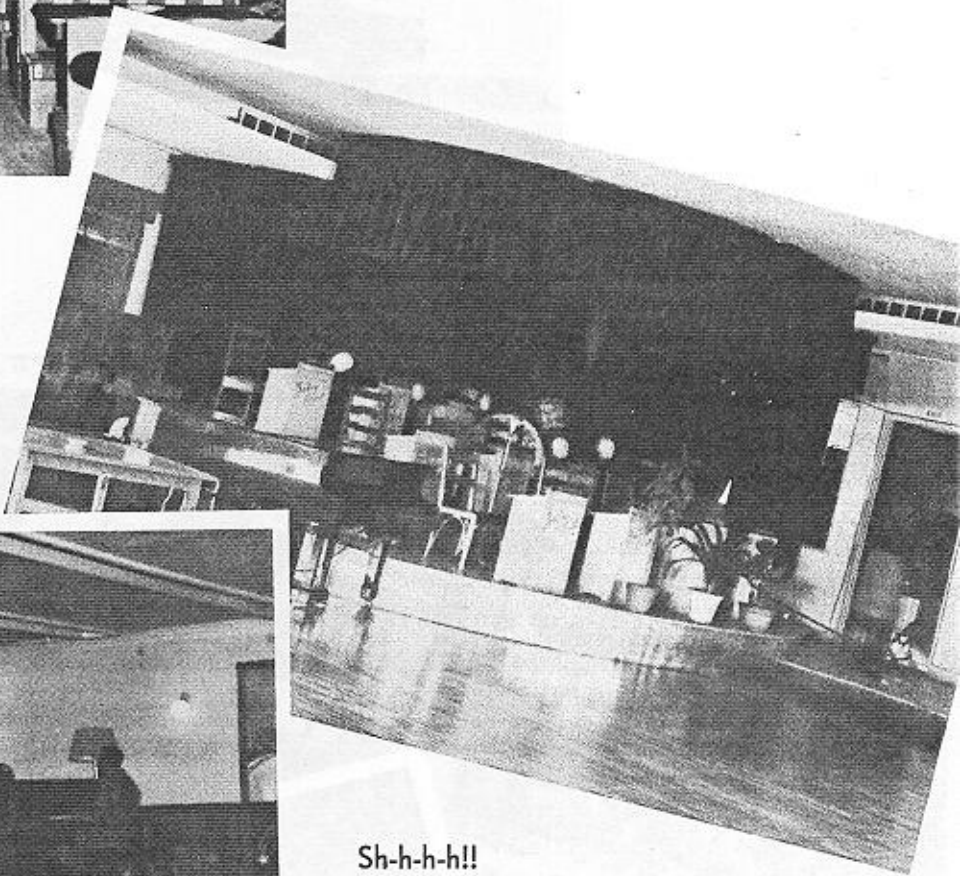




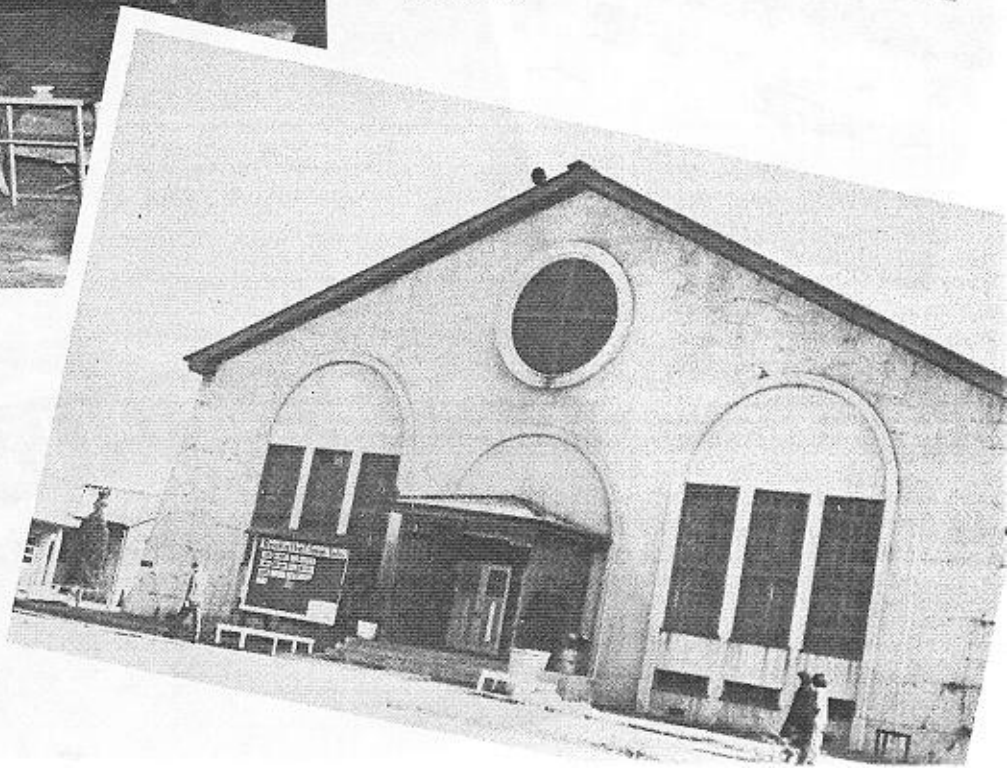


The lounge at the Airmen's Club

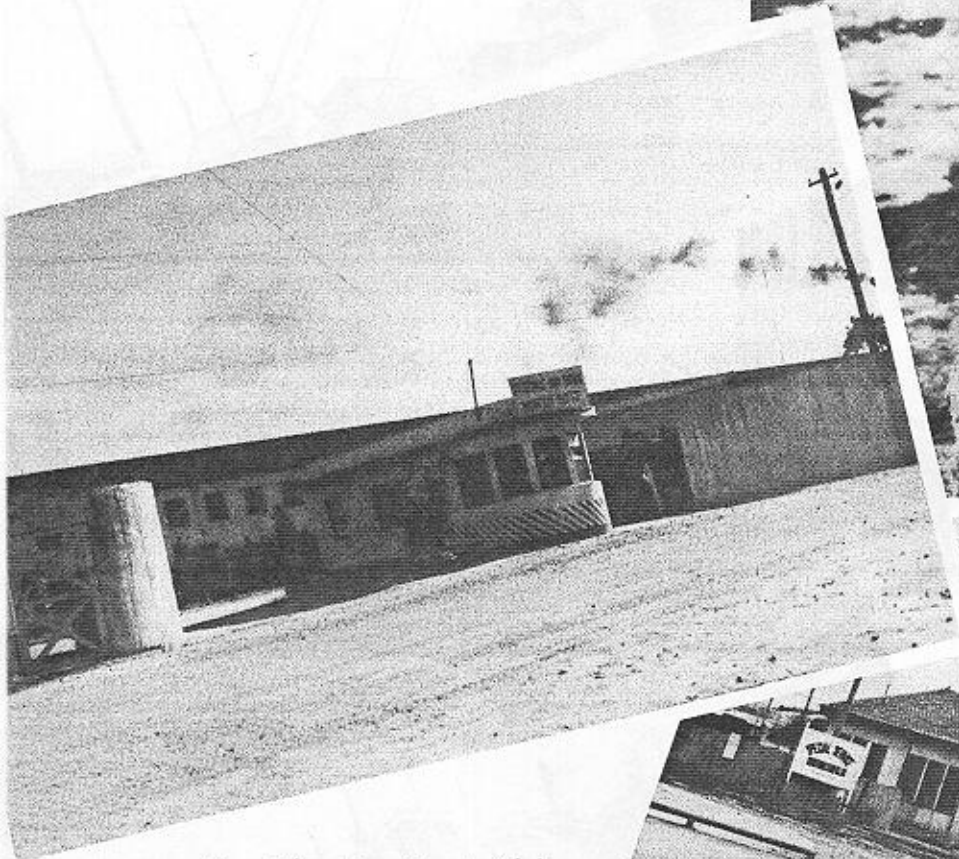
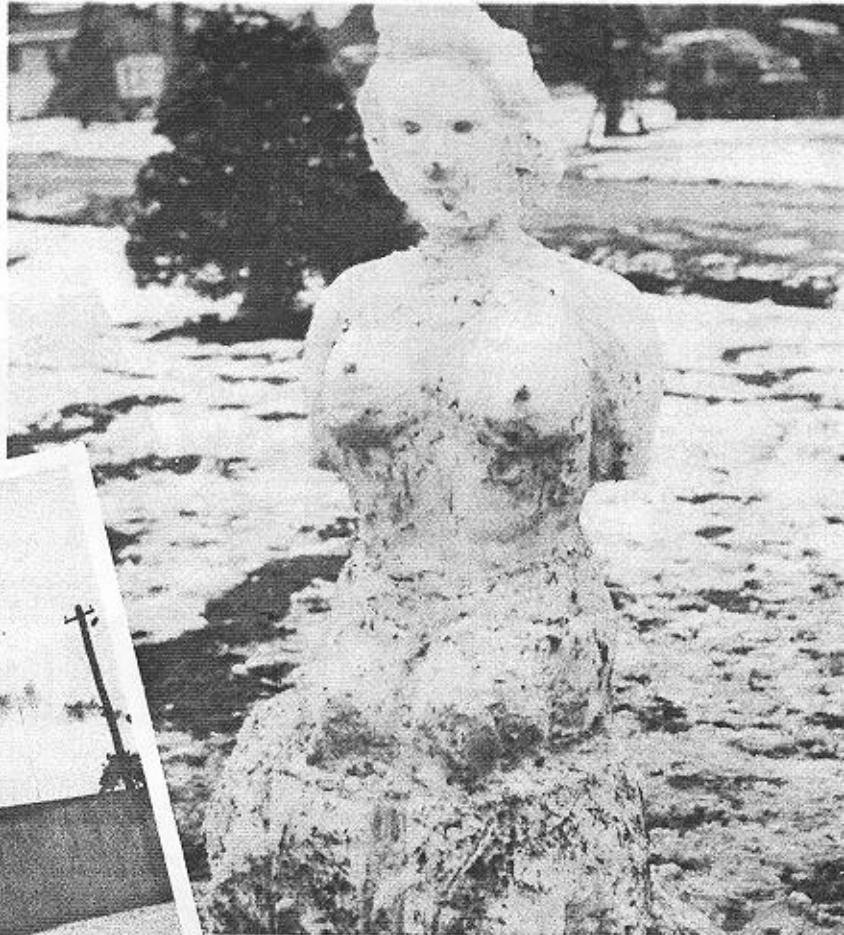
The Zebra Club's "Super-slick" dance floor



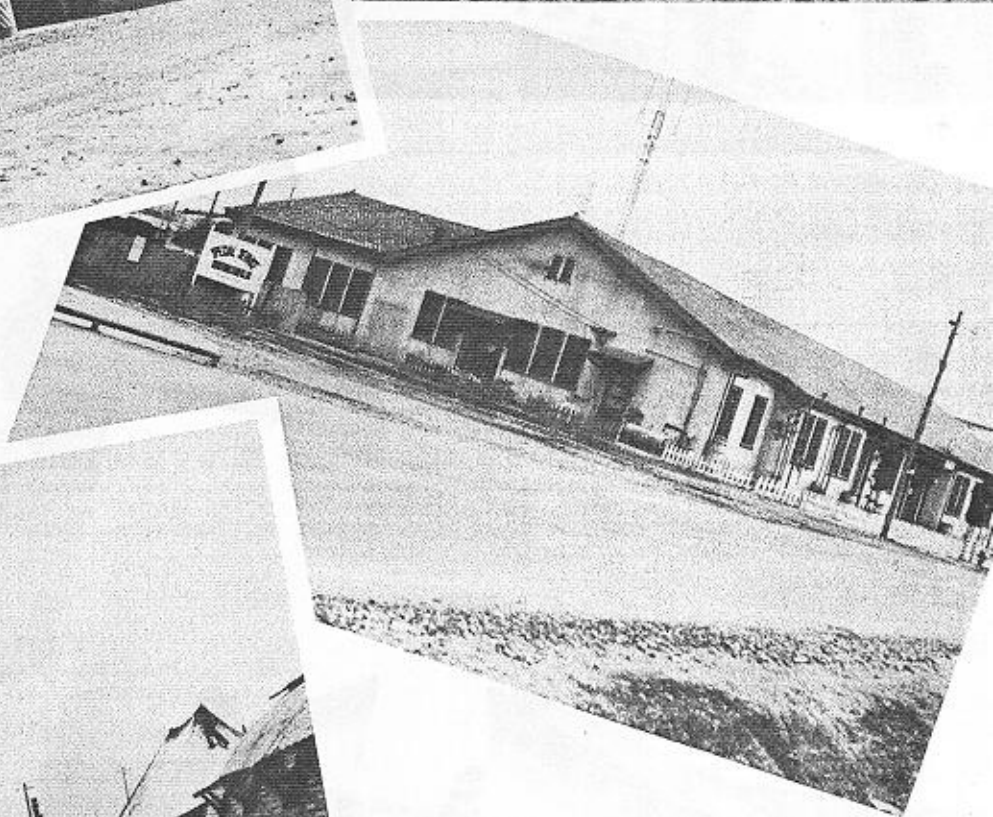
Sh-h-h-h!!



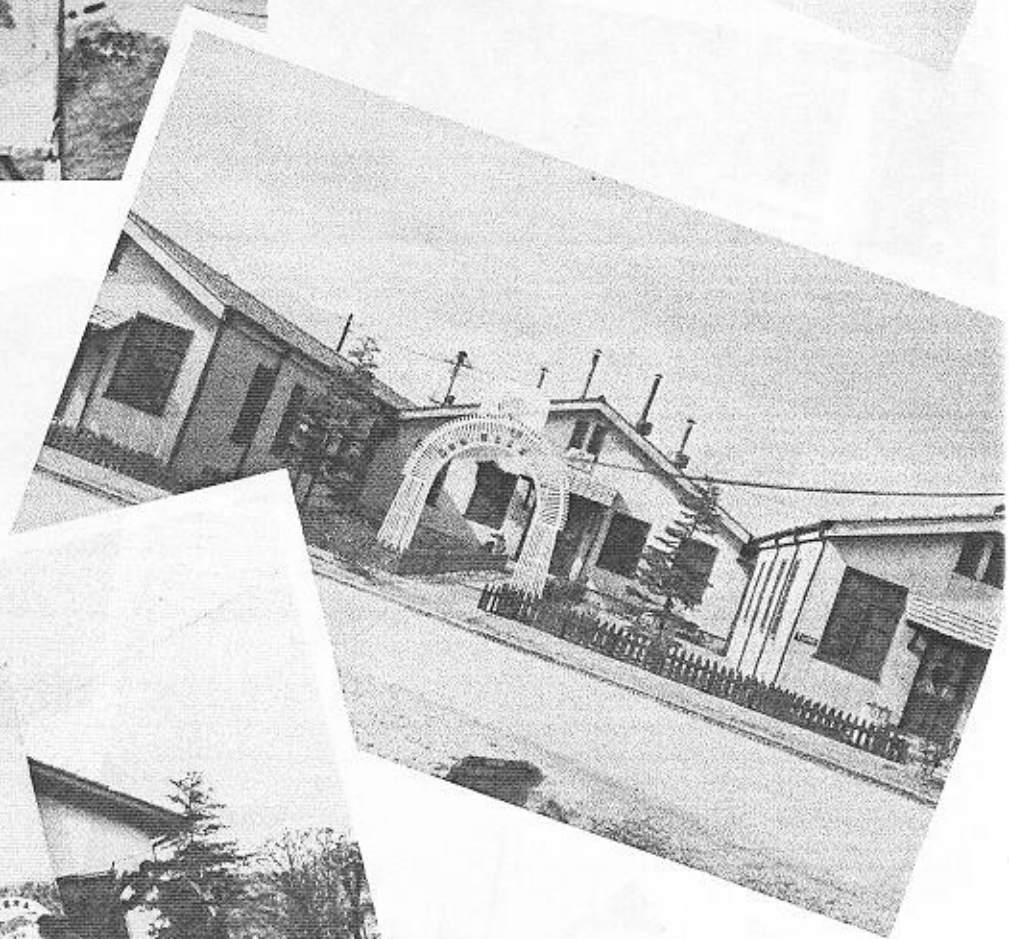
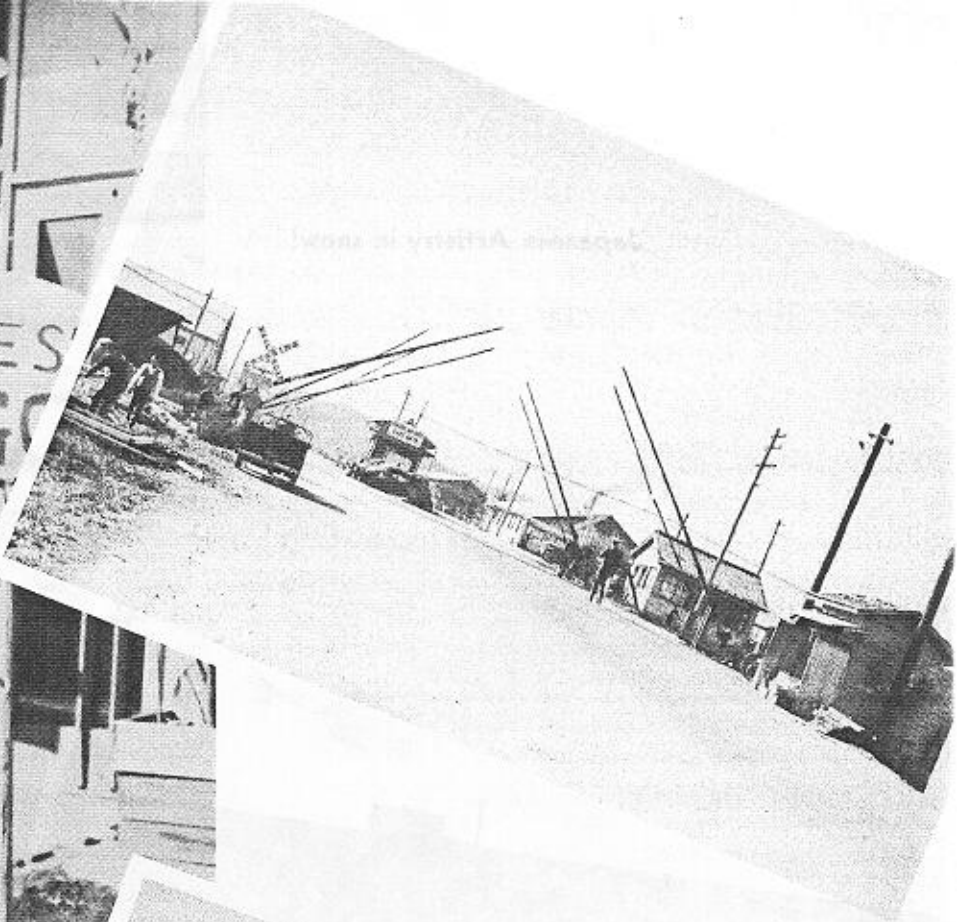
Japanese Artistry in snow!

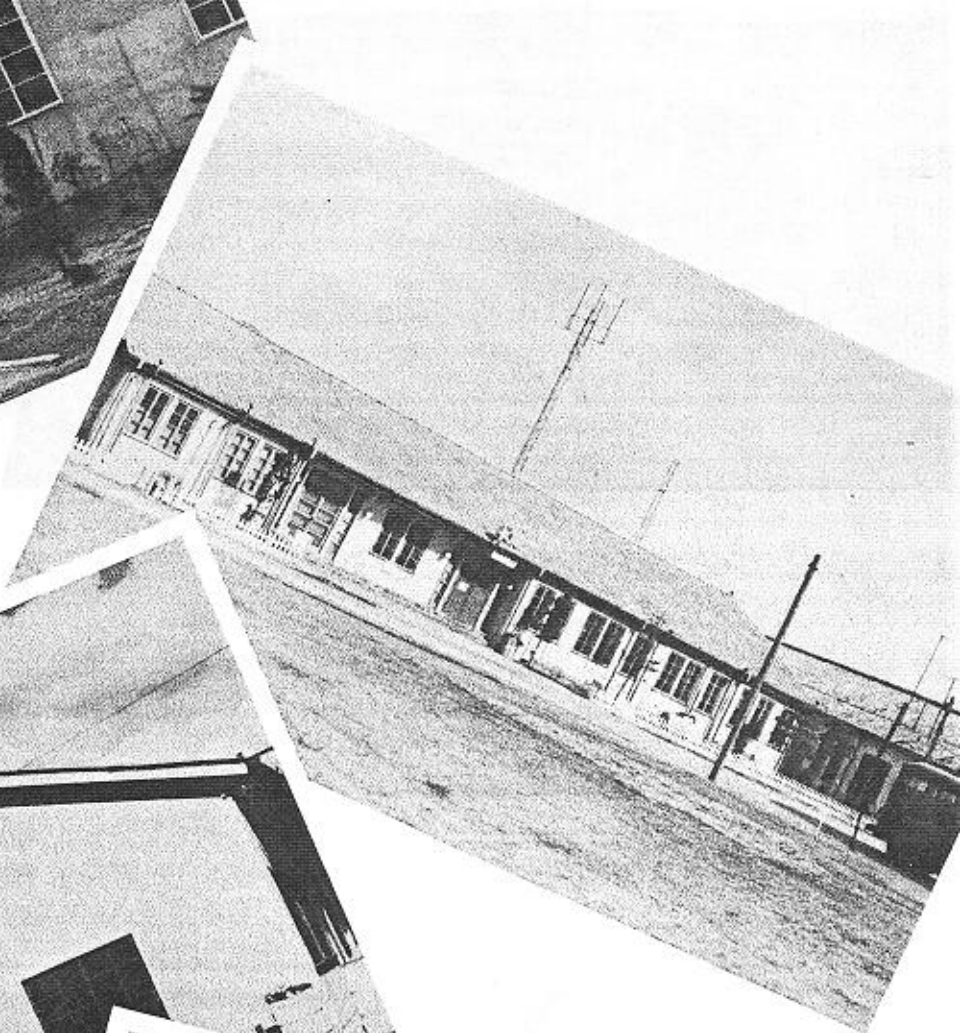


The "Shooting Star" Club



Supply Tent — Itazuke





PANIC SWITCH
M-1

FOR MAJOR PANIC ONLY

FOR minor emergencies use

Switch, Panic, M-1, portable.

RESISTANCE
100
A-1
27 IN. P.T.C. INC. M.I.

FIGME PANIC SUPPLIES

PRES. TRUMAN
GEN. LE MAY

PENTAGON
COL. DUBELL

CREW
PEARSON
CHADLAIN

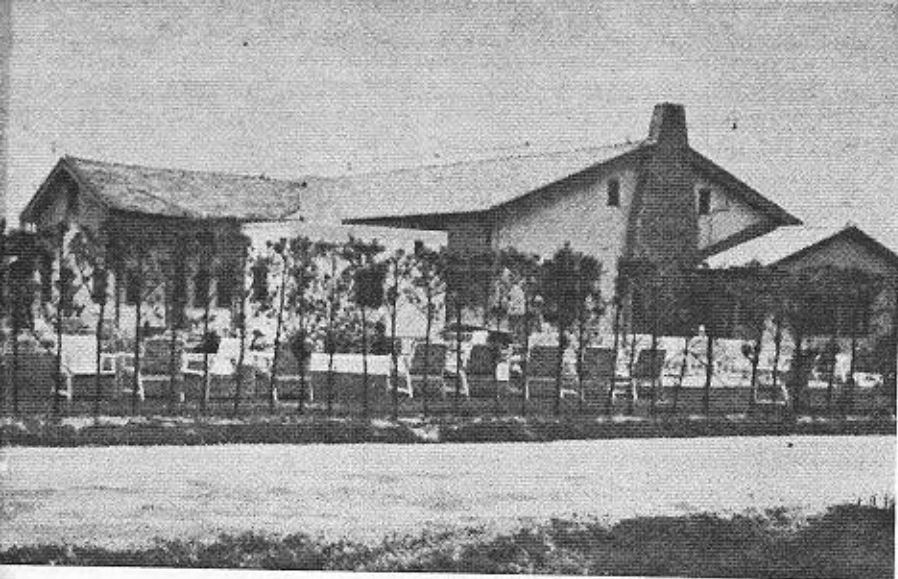


Officers and airmen of the 27th Fighter-Escort Wing accused anyone who unnecessarily became alarmed over incidents of "Hitting the panic switch." The Wing's personnel and administration chief, Lt. Col. Charles A. Dunn, Austin, Texas, designed and constructed this unique panic switch. Labeled for major panics only, the Colonel bragged that at no time during the 27th's seven-month combat tour with the UN Forces has it been necessary to hit the switch. "Just reaching for it seemed to calm things down," he explained.

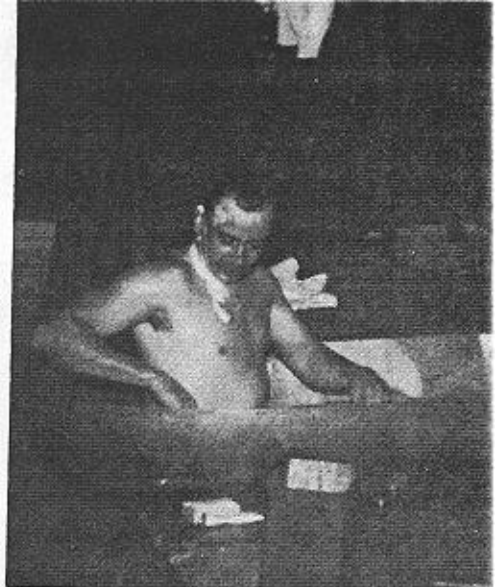


Left to right: Slaughter, Hummel, Minter, and Hamilton.

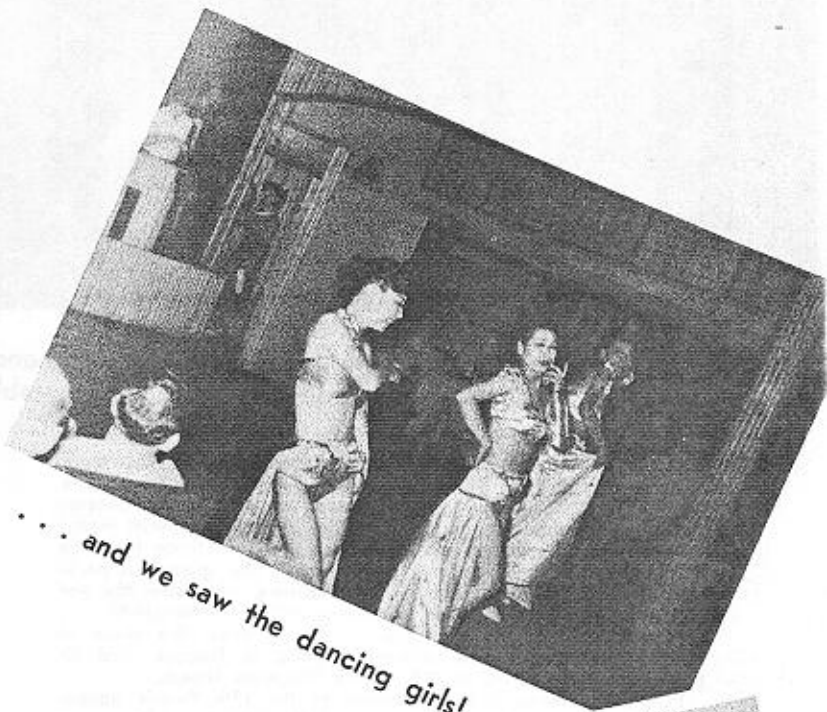




Officers' Club, Itazuke



Saturday night?



... and we saw the dancing girls!



Left to right: McGuire, Maggert, Step-
anian, Edens, Jamison, Cottingham.