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SAGA SHANNON

THE STORY OF THE USS SHANNON DM25 IN ACTION
1944 - 1946

A documentary, historical account of the lives of the light-minelayer Shannon, of the men who served in her and fought her so valiantly through the Iwo Jima and Okinawa campaigns, extensive mine-sweeping operations in the East China Sea, and the Occupation of Japan.

Her part in operations of such size and scope was small, but vastly important and extremely well executed, contributing measurably to final victory, which was the end of World War II.

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On completion of the day's operations September 3, the Smith joined Sweep Units 1 and 3 to remain in the Arcadia area, while the Shannon and Sweep Unit 2, as TU 95.4.92, proceeded northward to Jinsen, Korea, to conduct an exploratory sweep of the harbor and approaches in preparation for landings in that area.

Early in the morning, the unit arrived off Kakureppi Retto, and, by 1000, began an exploratory sweep of the approaches to Jinsen Harbor. The Shannon's assignment was to lay buoys to mark the center of the channel and coincidentally, the limit of the first pass. At the end of the first pass, the sweeps explored an area which was later to be used as an anchorage. They then returned toward Kakureppi, sweeping the other half of the channel. By 1800, the day's operations, during which no mines were cut, had been completed. We anchored for the night in the western end of the swept channel.

Shortly after we anchored Commodore Davison shifted his pennant to the Dour (AM 223) to remain in the Jinsen area directing the operation. The Shannon was then ordered to return to Arcadia, and left at 1908, with several other ships.

Early the next morning we made a rendezvous with TG 70.6 to fuel from the Chiwawa (AO 68), on the completion of which we continued to Arcadia. When we arrived, at noon, the Commodore relieved the Smith as OTC, allowing her to meet the Chiwawa and fuel.

By September 7, the area had been completely swept and checked, and a line of buoys laid to mark the channel through the mine lines. As we were completing the last check, several Seventh Fleet units, mostly transports and escorts steamed safely through, enroute to Jinsen for the occupation.

At 1830, our job finished, TU 95.4.8 and TU 95.4.9 were



... and no beer ever tasted better.



Plenty to Celebrate . . .

dissolved and TG 52.3 was formed of the same units, with Commodore Farrow in command. The sweeps assumed their steaming disposition and we departed Area Arcadia, enroute to Sasebo, Kyushu, Japan.

ANNIVERSARY

During the night, as we passed within 25 miles of Saishu To, the Fitch (DMS 25) joined our formation. Early the morning of September 8, the Fitch came alongside to transfer a load of very welcome mail and one passenger, Lt.(jg) D. D. Coffin, a Japanese language officer, who was to be our interpreter throughout the coming operations.

This being the first anniversary of the Shannon's commissioning, a celebration, as proper as the time and place would permit, was in order. All work was knocked off early that afternoon, and all hands off watch moved to the fantail, where two cans of cold beer awaited each man. Never did beer taste so good! Besides being a long time since the last one, the afternoon was hot and sultry. Everyone drank in toast to the Shannon, to her accomplishments during the historical past year, to her future, and to victory and peace.

Adding to the significance of the day, an order was received to burn peace-time navigational lights. At sunset running lights were turned on by all Naval vessels for the first time since December 7, 1941, and by the Shannon for the first time in her history. That night, further celebration was both occasioned and accomplished by showing movies topside. It was, indeed, an historical day for the Shannon.



SASEBO - NAGASAKI SWEEP

Operations in the Sasebo area were equally as important as those in the Arcadia area and the approaches to Jinsen, if not more so. The waters between Goto Retto and the west coast of Kyushu, the harbors and approaches, had to be free

of mines before the occupation forces could land at Nagasaki and Sasebo to take control of Kyushu.

During the morning watch, September 9, the Task Group passed between Fukao Shima, the southern-most island in the Goto Retto chain, and Danjo Gunto.

General Quarters was sounded at 0750, as we stopped and lay to about 30 miles southwest of Nagasaki, Kyushu. A Japanese ship had been sighted and contacted, and was closing us, according to plan. At 0810, the Saishu (CMc 31), a Japanese light mine-layer, lay to several hundred yards away. A small pulling boat was put in the water and loaded. At 0846, a delegation of Japanese coastal defense officers, headed by Commander Tsunji Azuma, came aboard for a conference with CTG 52.3.

The conference, held in the wardroom, was conducted by Commodore Farrow and attended by Commodore Davison, Captain Ingram, the Navigator, the Flag Lieutenant, the Interpreter, Lt. (jg) Howard, and the Japanese delegation.

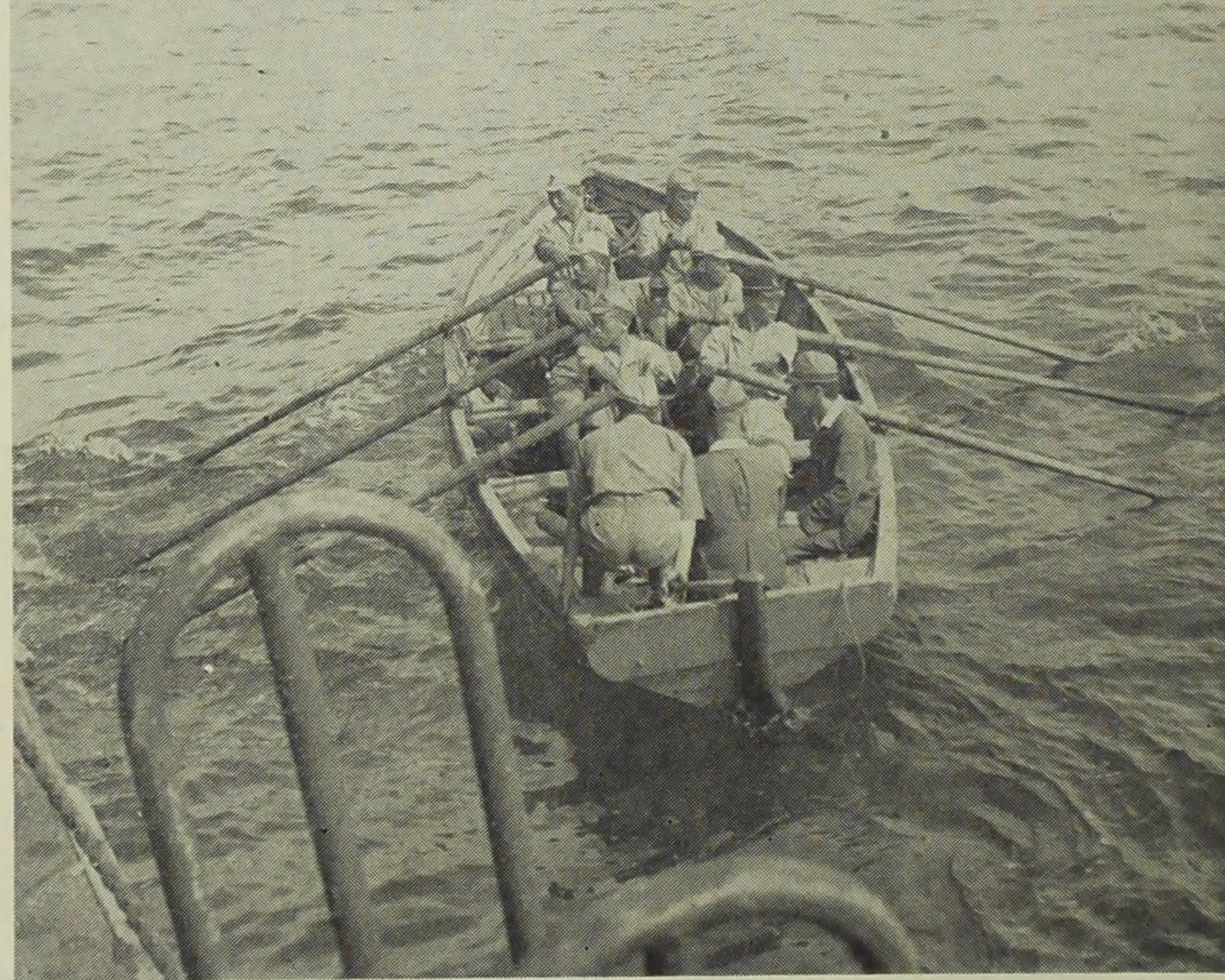
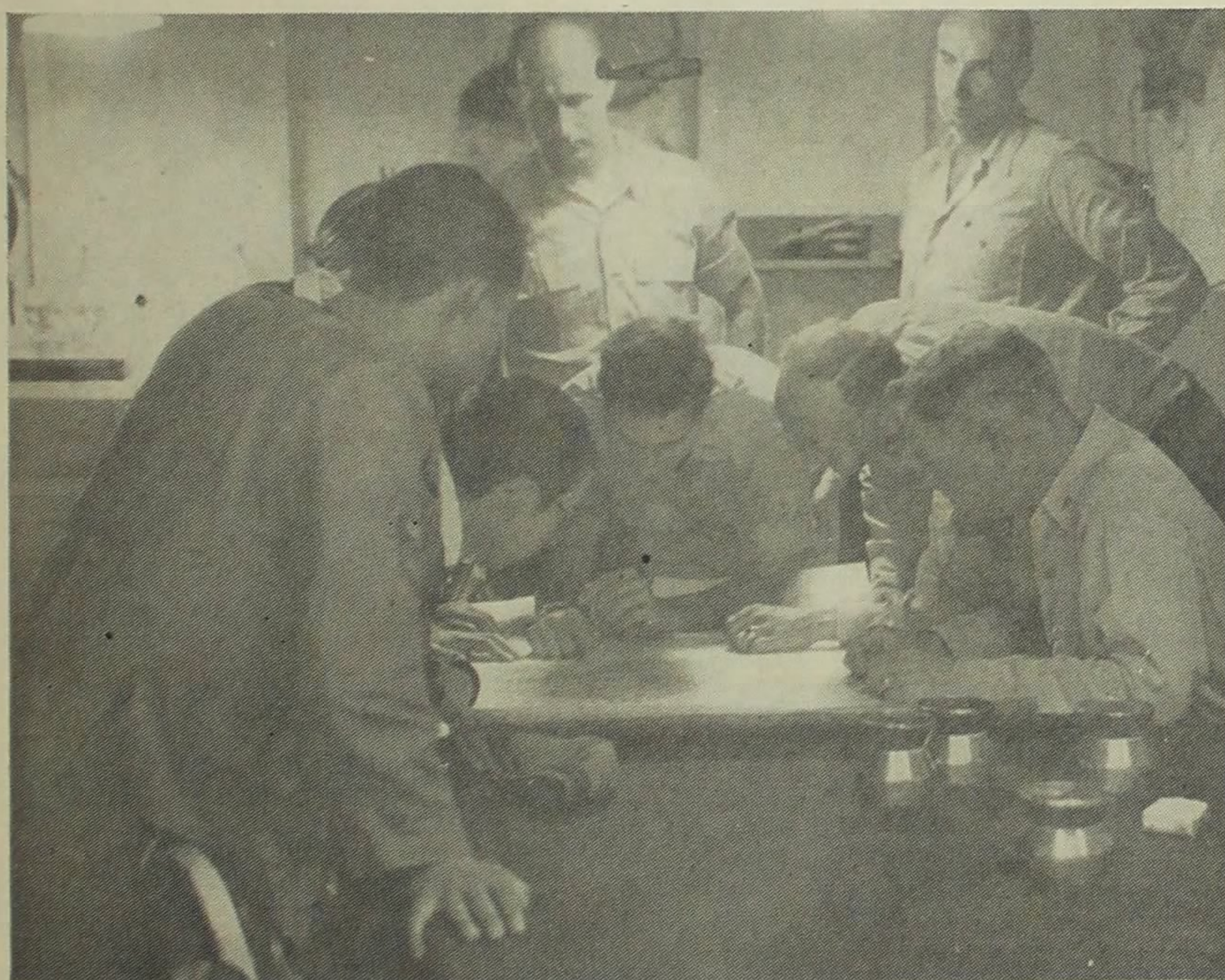
Charts brought aboard by the Japanese showed the location of all the minefields in the area. A description of the local

the Smith, on the right flank of the sweep formation, planted buoys to mark the eastern boundary.

At 1600, the right flank unit left the formation to sweep an anchorage area north of Matsu Shima, while the rest of the ships continued past O Shima, clearing the channel up to the entrance of Sasebo Harbor. At that point we reversed course and enlarged the channel to the newly swept anchorage area, where we anchored for the night. Lt. Commander Kimura returned to his ship.

Early the next morning, Lt. Commander Fujii, Japanese Imperial Navy, came aboard to assist in the days operations. The units then proceeded from the anchorage and began sweeping.

When the channel and approach to Sasebo Ko had been completed, we started a clearance sweep of the area north



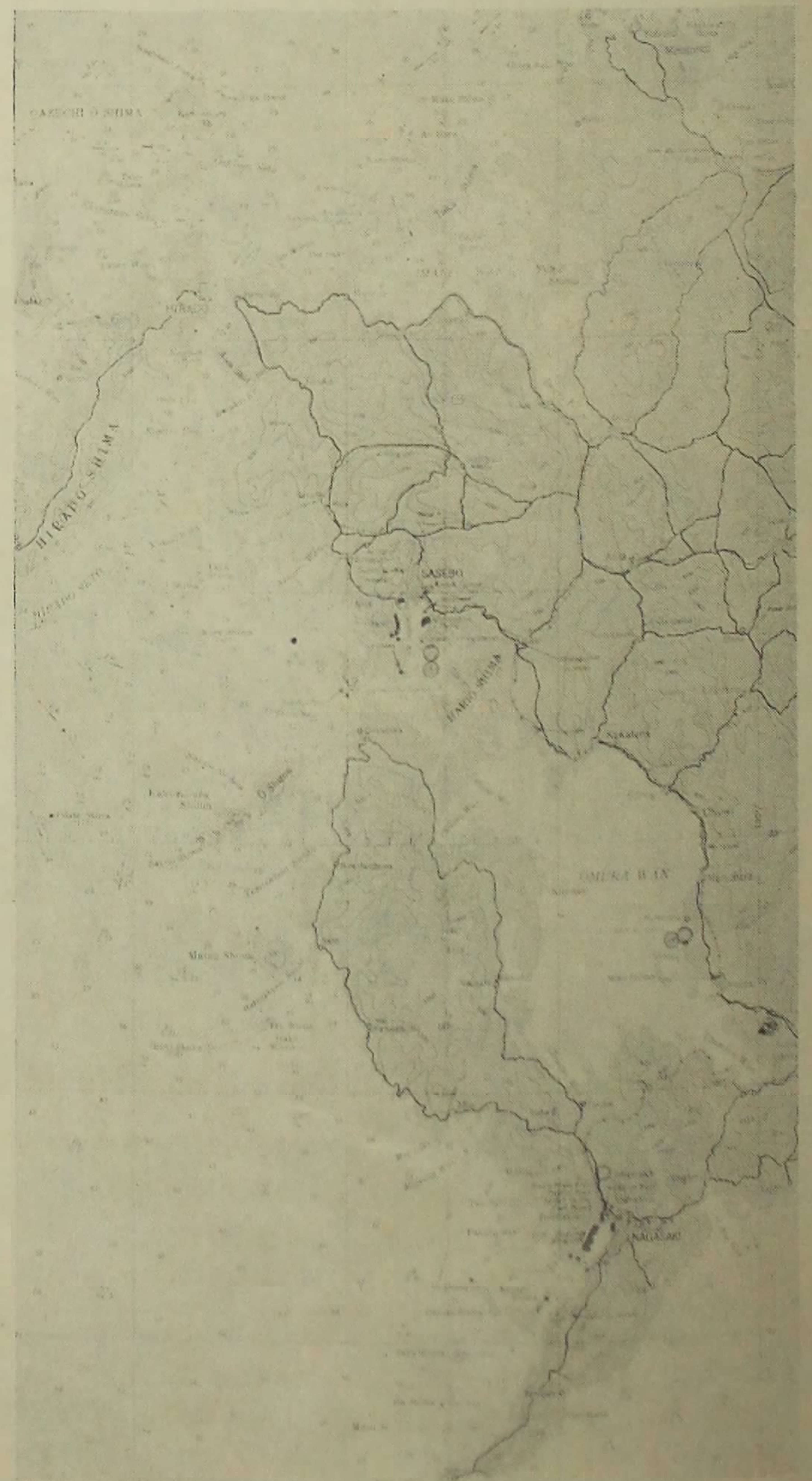
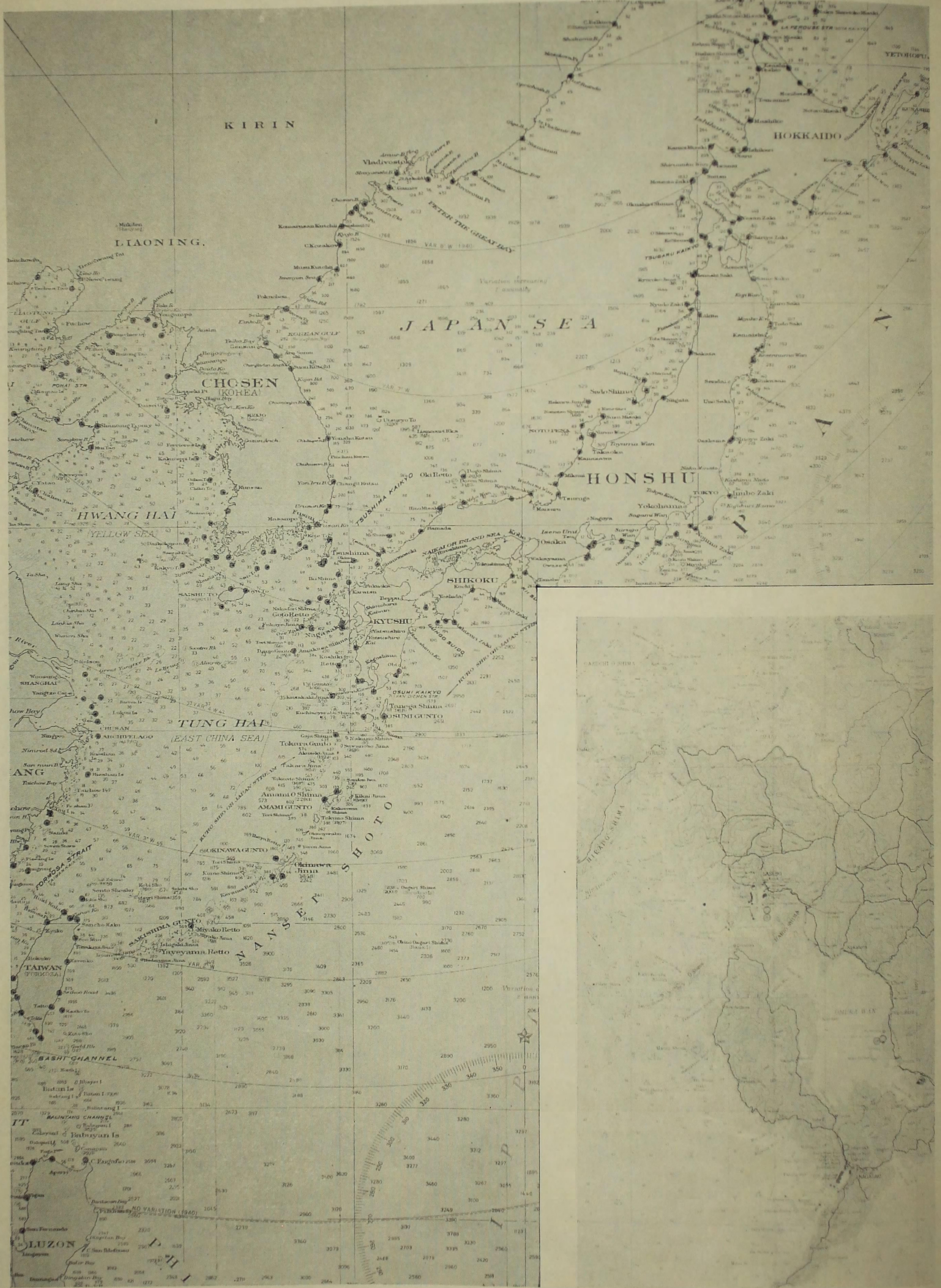
defenses was given by the delegation. In addition, the facilities, size, and location of anchorages and harbors was discussed, as well as the number, size, and capabilities of Japanese ships which might be used to assist in minesweeping.

The delegation left the ship at 1033 leaving Lt. Commander S. Kibura on board to assist in the day's sweeping operations.

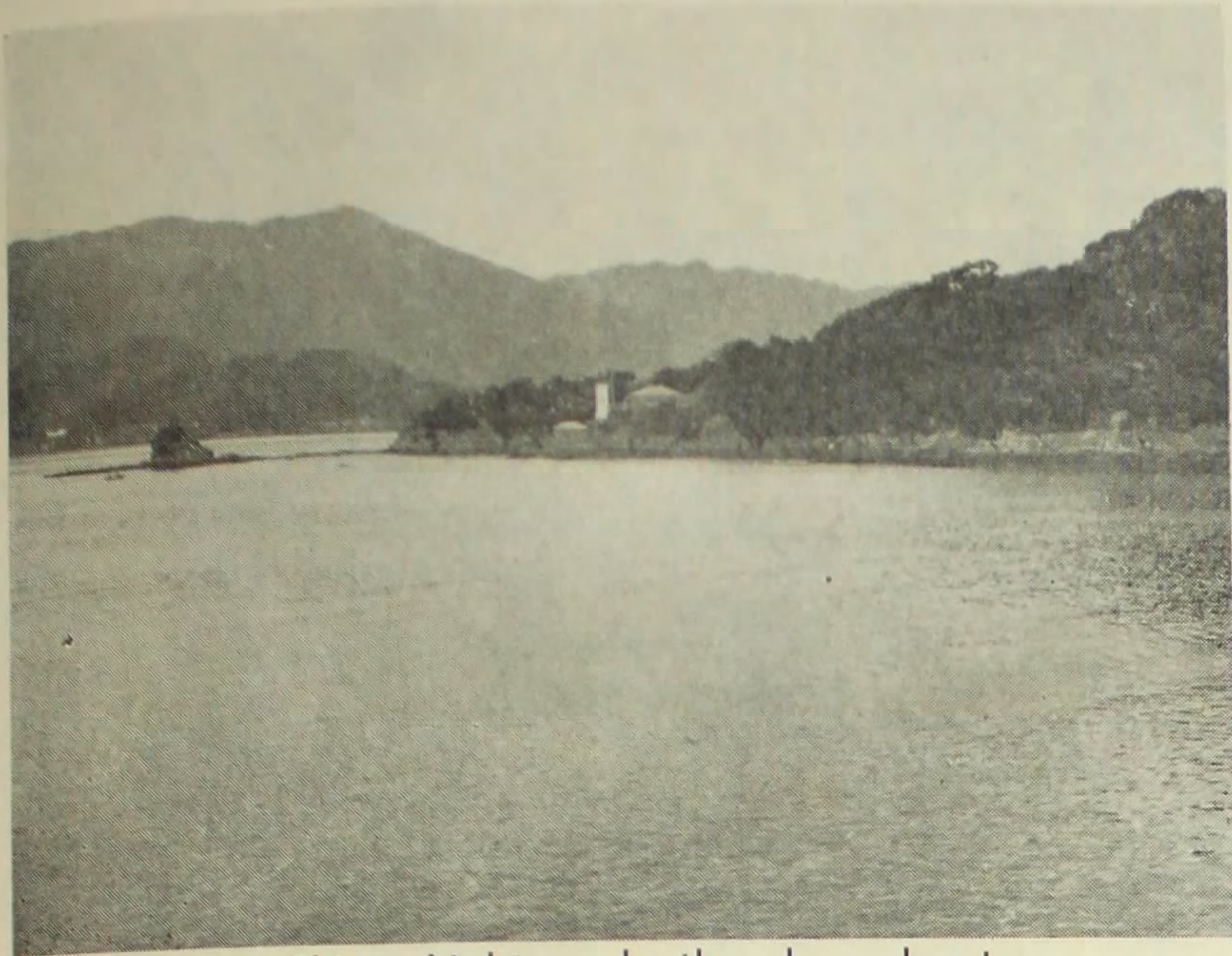
As soon thereafter as possible, the sweeps streamed their gear, and we commenced a clearance sweep of the approach channel to Sasebo. During the operation, the Shannon laid buoys to mark the western limit of the swept channel, while

of the channel. At the end of the day we returned to the Matsu Shima anchorage, which was rapidly coming to be known as "Stewards' Cove". During the day, the tanker Millicoma (AO 73) arrived, providing us with much needed fuel.

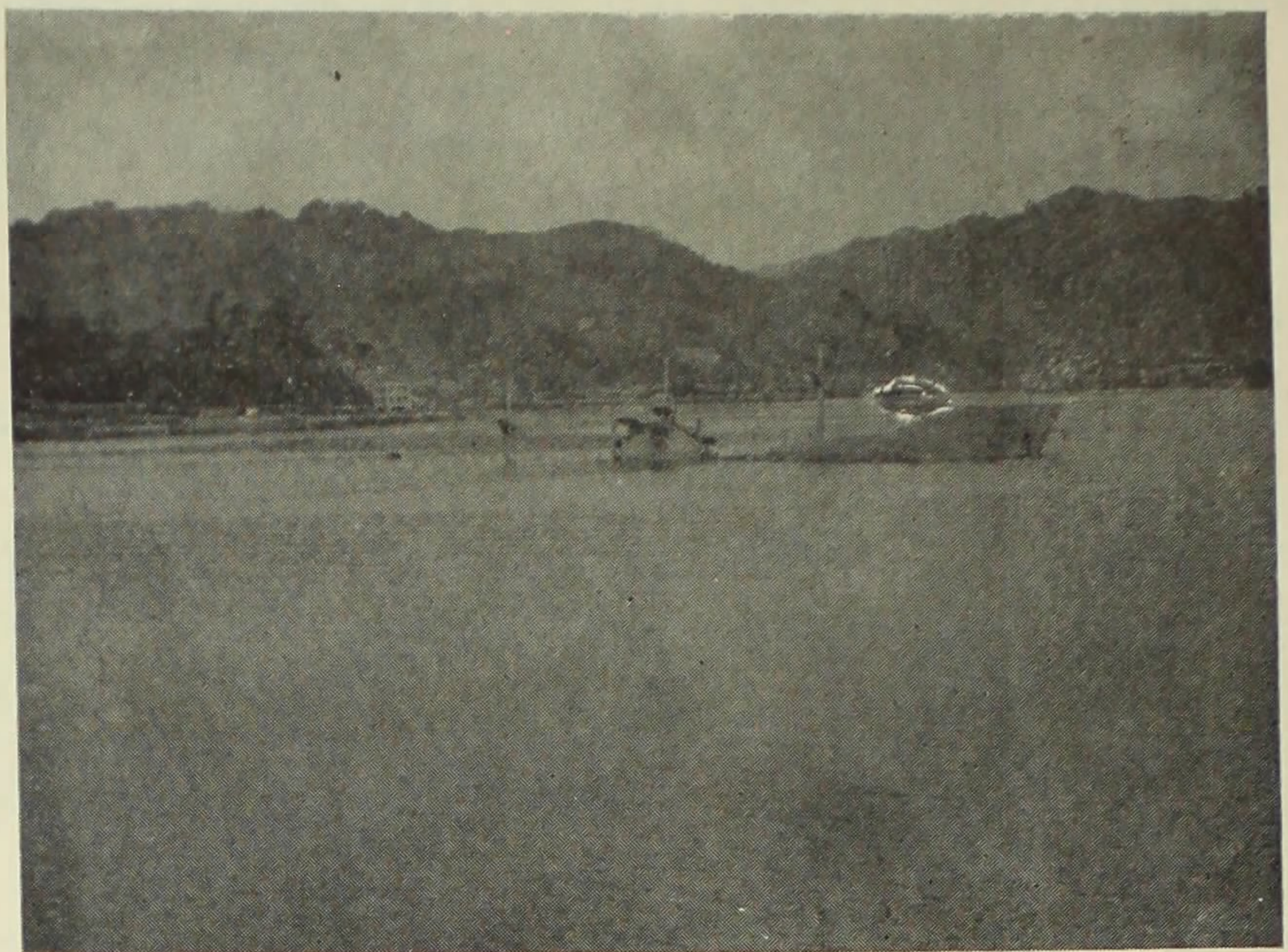
From that time on the Shannon ceased to participate actively in the sweeping operations in the Sasebo-Nagasaki area. Our duties became those of a courier, in addition to directing the progress of the sweeps and controlling the operations of the ships in TG 52.3. September 11th, the Shannon lay at anchor.



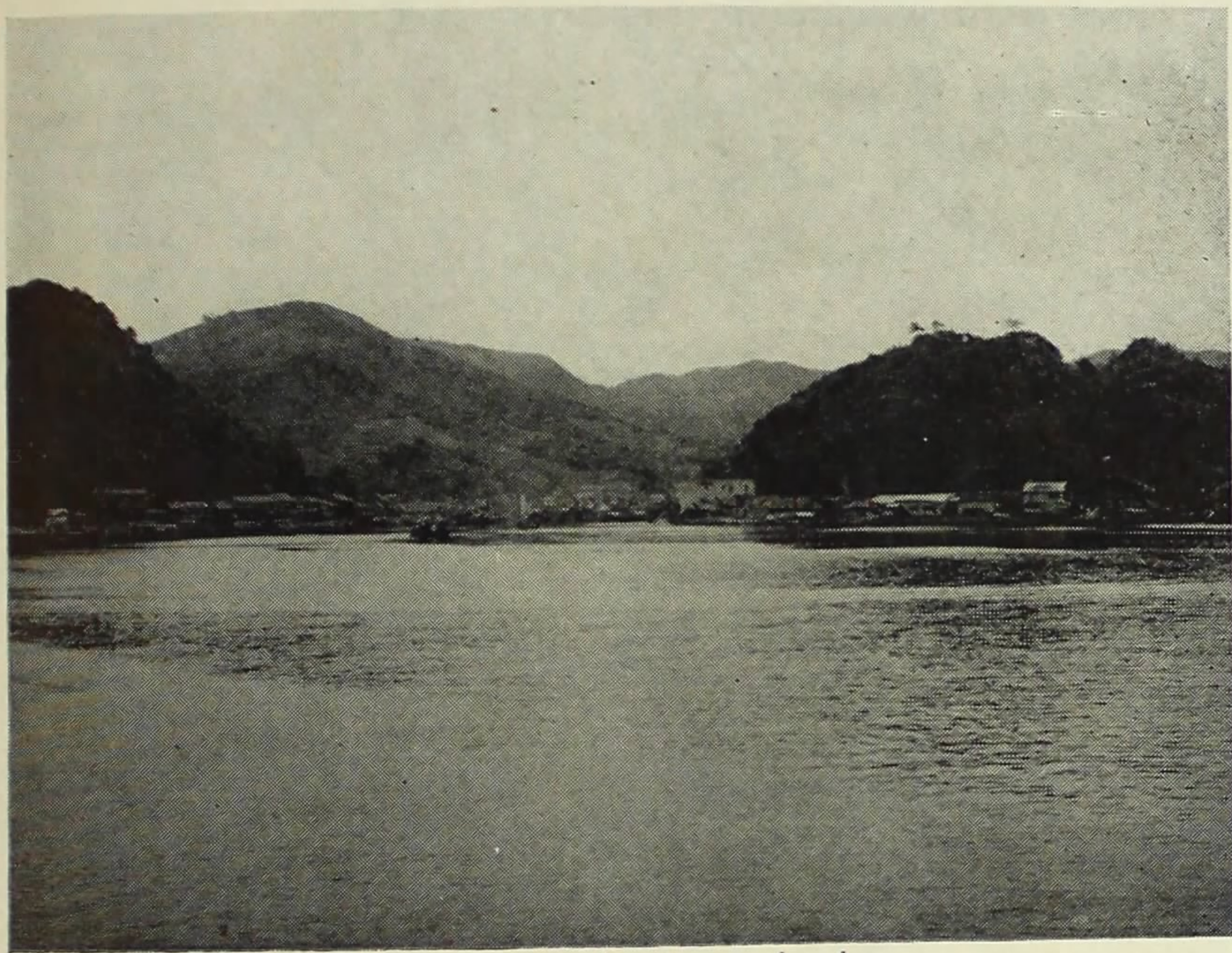
NAGASAKI



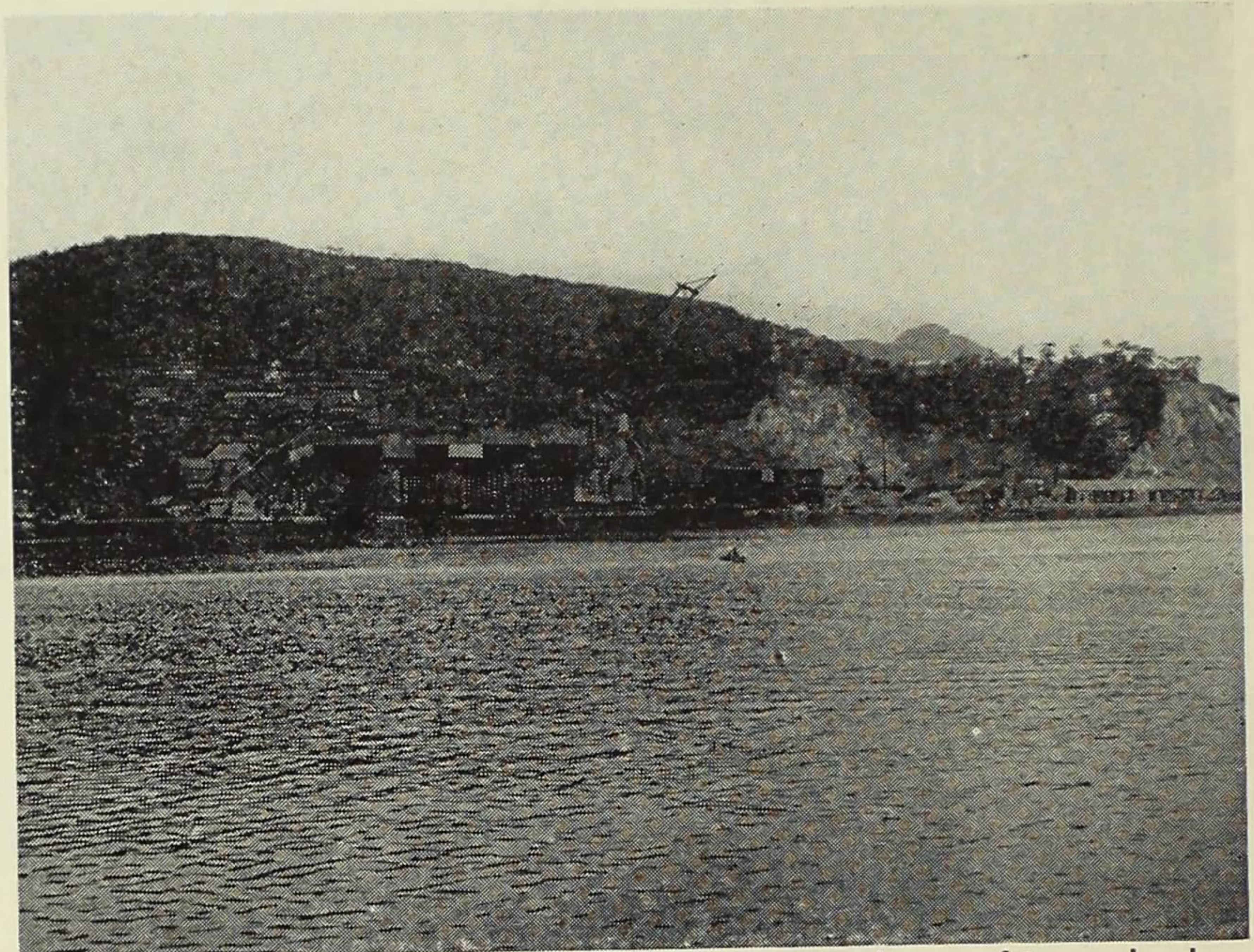
Koyagi Shima Light marks the channel entrance.



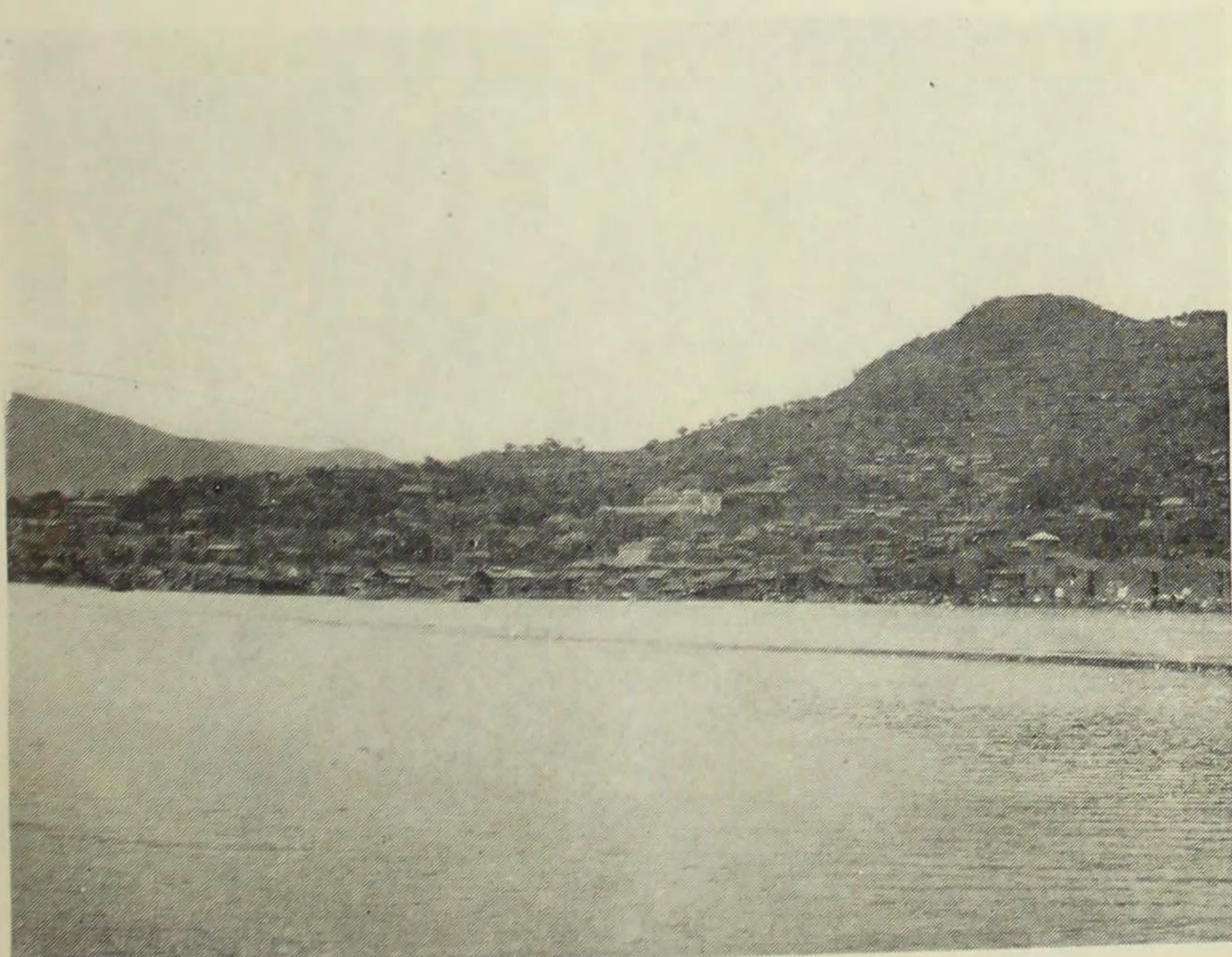
This new Jap merchantman never got out of port.



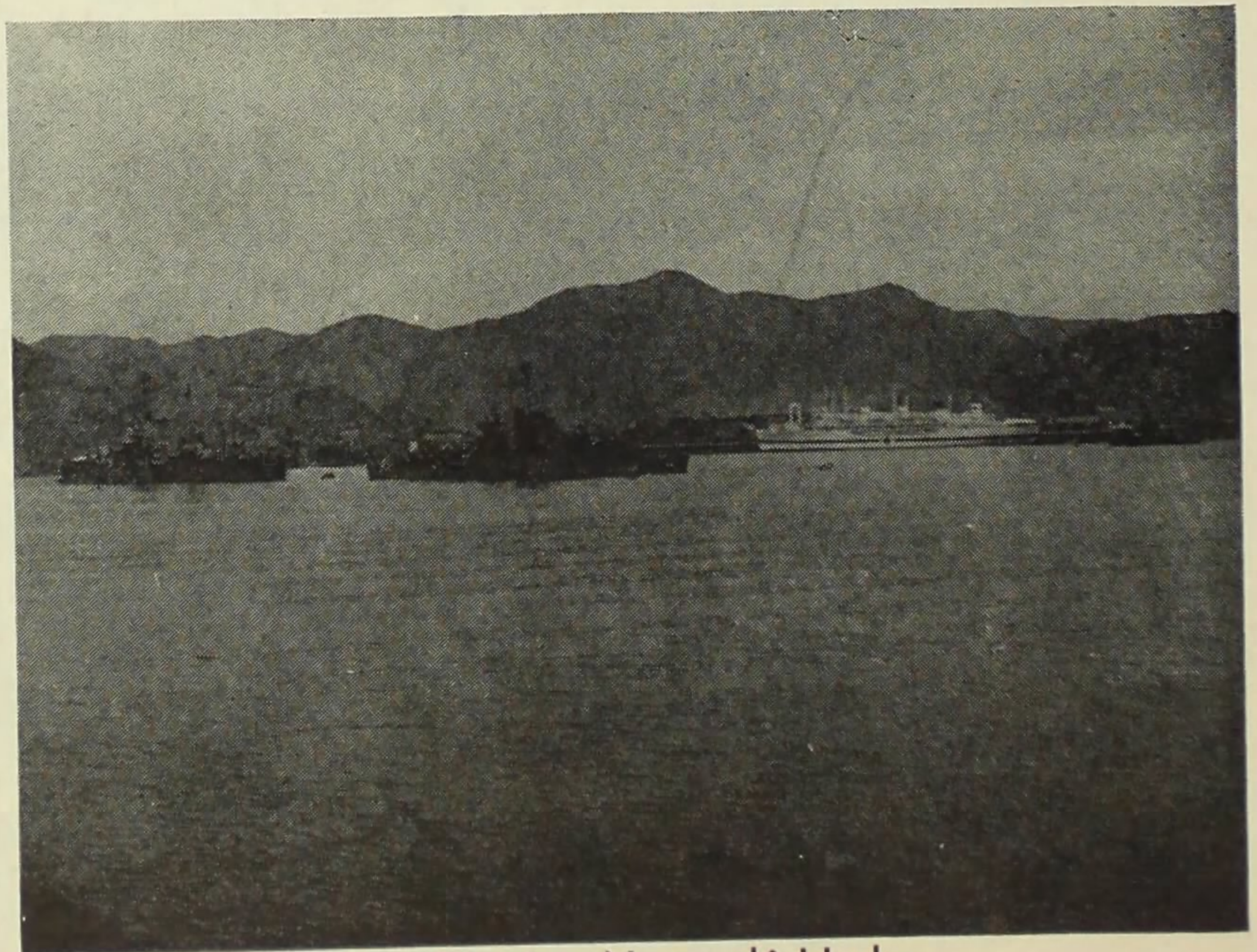
Entrance to the inner harbor.



Midget submarine ways and pens—western shore of inner harbor.

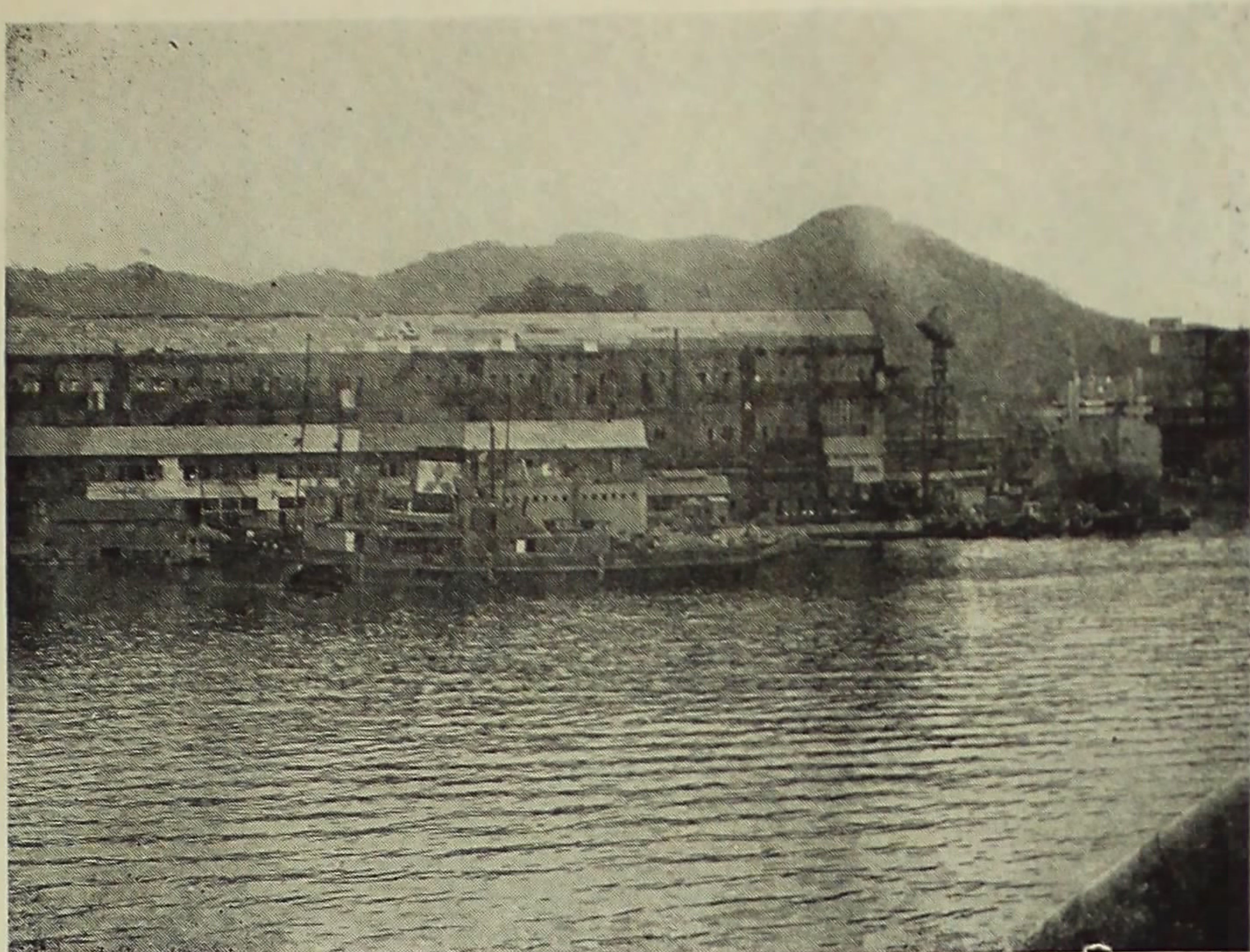


Eastern shore of inner harbor.

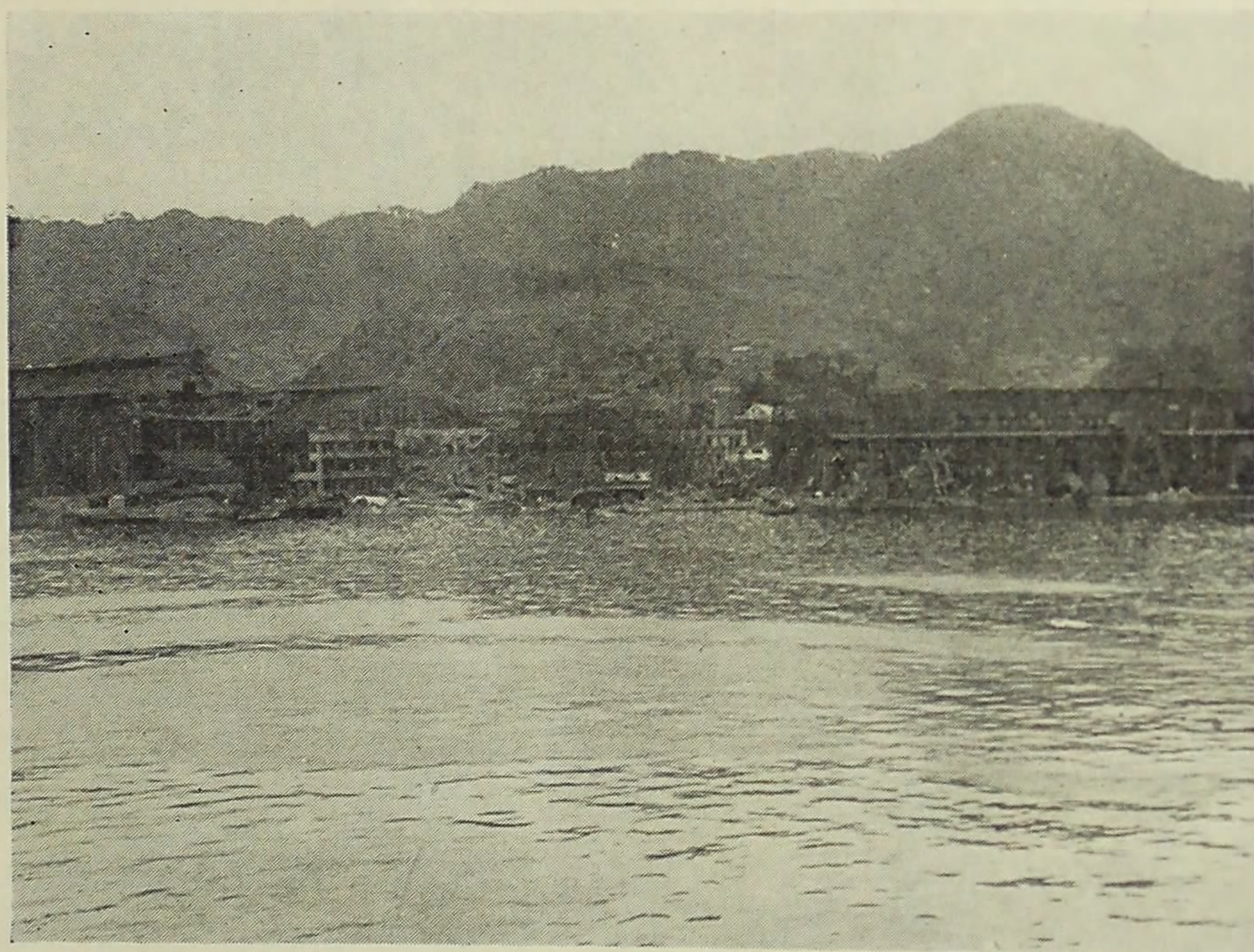


First District, Nagasaki Harbor.

N A G A S A K I



Mitsubishi Aircraft Engine Works.



Skeletal remains of Mitsubishi attest to the aim of American bombs.



Allied POW's processed at Nagasaki Customs House and on board Consolation (AH-15).

The word spread rapidly when we got underway the next morning, that we were going to Nagasaki—target of the second atomic bomb. Curiosity filled every man's mind. We were all anxious to see the results of this tool of war and disintegration, which had played so great a role in fostering peace. After two hours of steaming down the swept channel, we arrived off the entrance to Nagasaki Harbor.

The countryside there is unusually picturesque, its beauty enhanced by rugged, wooded and partially terraced mountains. Numerous verdant islands mark the approaches, while sentinel lighthouses herald the harbor entrance.

Only one narrow channel had been swept through the minefields which guarded the approach and entrance, so a YMS familiar with that channel met us outside and led the way.

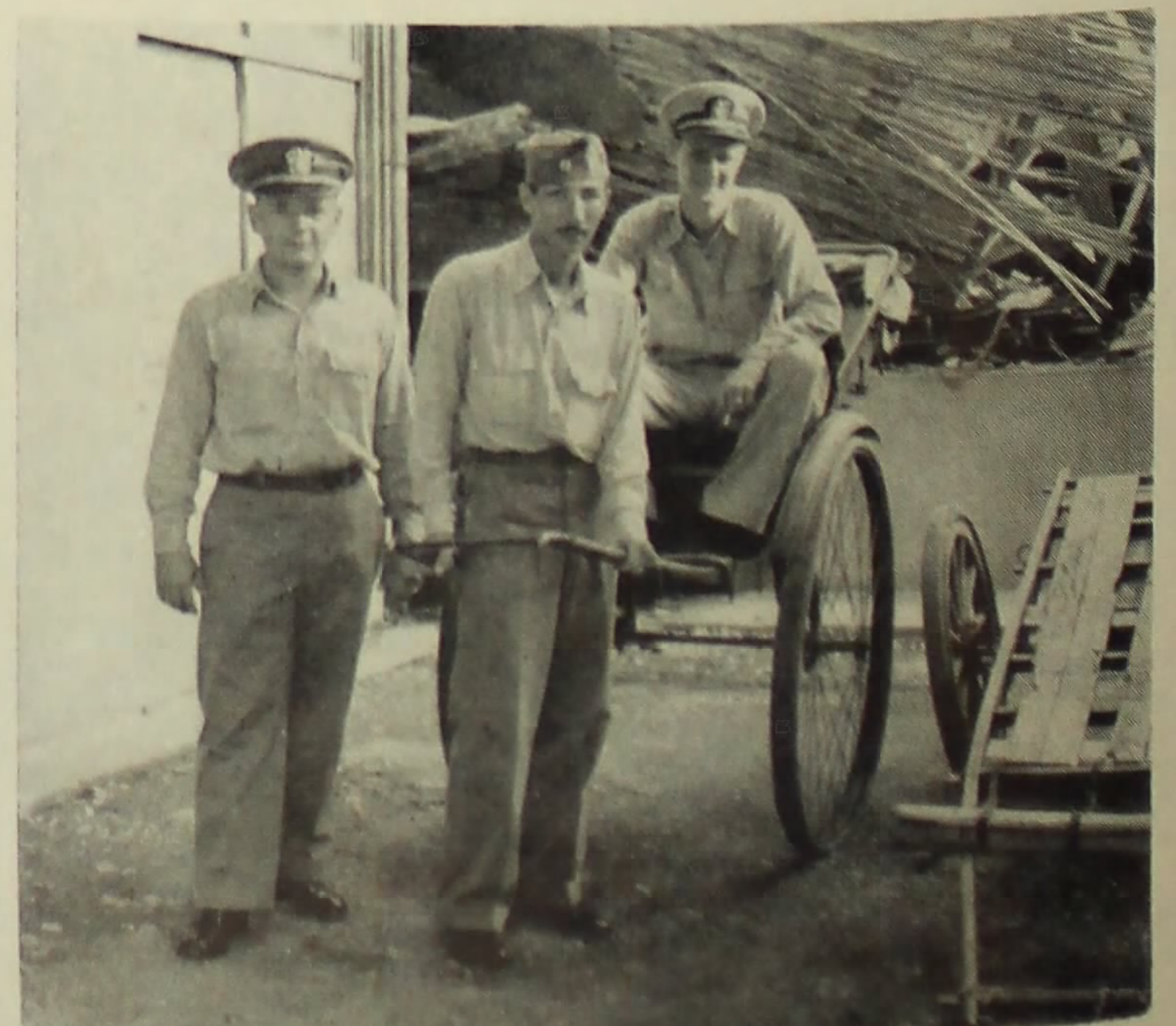
Several small, picturesque fishing villages on the islands and the perimeter of the outer harbor, along with the numerous fishing boats in the bay, held our attention as we rounded the first turn in the channel, but only briefly, for evidence of destruction and war was mingled with the beauty. To the left lay a sunken ship, with only part of its bow and superstructure showing above the surface.

Signs of occidental culture were surprisingly prominent, mingled with those of the orient. On the hillsides stood several Christian churches, apparently untouched by the ravages of war. Surprise at seeing these was lessened when we learned later that Nagasaki was one of the centers of Christian Faith in the Orient.

Proceeding further into the harbor we passed a long flight of stairs, arched by oratorii, which led up the hillside to a Shinto shrine.

Shipyards and submarine pens were numerous but empty, ways gutted with bomb craters, steel cranes reduced to wreckage; buildings, shops and factories torn and twisted, or merely piles of rubble. A midget submarine factory was a skeleton, filled with unfinished, rusted and battered hulks.

The Mitsubishi Engine Works, which made aircraft engines, was probably the hardest hit of all the factories. The few buildings which remained standing were almost completely gutted. One large, newly built cargo ship, and some smaller ships, had been sunk alongside the Mitsubishi docks. Although some repair work had been done, the streets and yards in the factory district were still



The Gunnery Officer and First Lieutenant take the Exec for a jinriksha ride in Nagasaki.

ASAKI

cluttered with debris. Most of the destruction visible from the harbor had been caused by incendiary and high explosive bombs dropped by Army heavy bombers and carrier-based Navy bombers, not by the atomic bomb.

Effects of the atomic bomb were noticeable from the harbor, manifested mostly in a large burn scar on the side of a hill, and somewhat in the destruction of buildings in the northwestern part of the city, but not prevalent as one would expect. The main reason for this is that the bomb, dropped through a heavy overcast which limited visibility, missed its target. It landed somewhat north of the center of the city in one of the valleys which runs off the large valley in which Nagasaki is located. The hills which form this valley generally limited the movement of concussion waves and heat from the explosion to the direction in which the valley runs, and, therefore, limited the destruction to less than was expected.

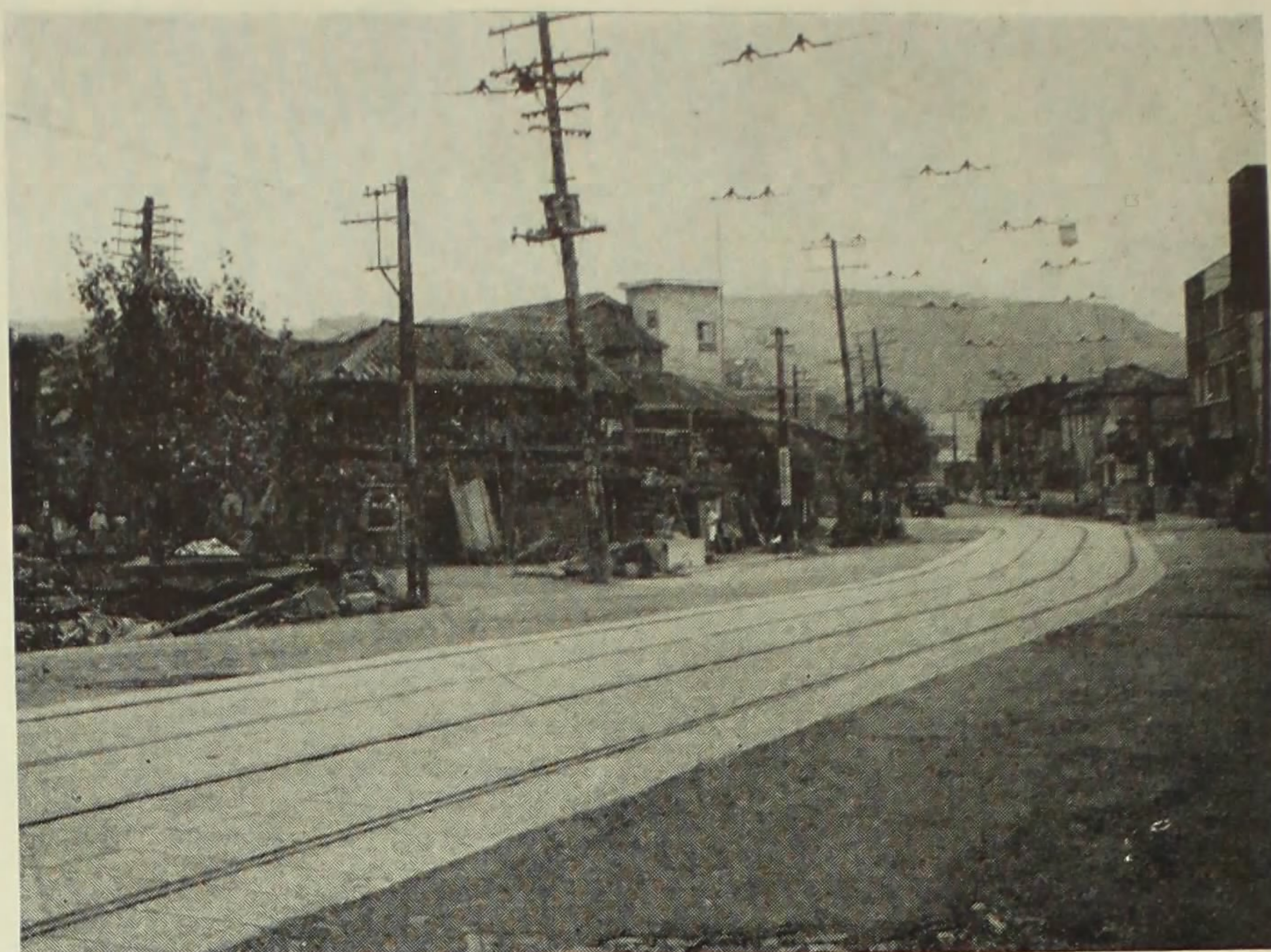
The atomic bomb explosion had a much greater effect on the people of Nagasaki than on the physical structure of the city. Many were killed outright, and many more died later from radioactive burns, which generally destroy the blood cells and vital organs of the body. At the time of our arrival, a month after the explosion, there were still about twenty or thirty people dying each day. Doctors working at the local hospital and on board the hospital ship were obtaining much valuable information and experience.

A very decided mental effect was evident in those natives who still lived. Every one of them was very apathetic and reticent. They moved about on their business, but very little was accomplished. A death-pall of silence hung over the city. These people of Nagasaki were completely beaten and submissive.

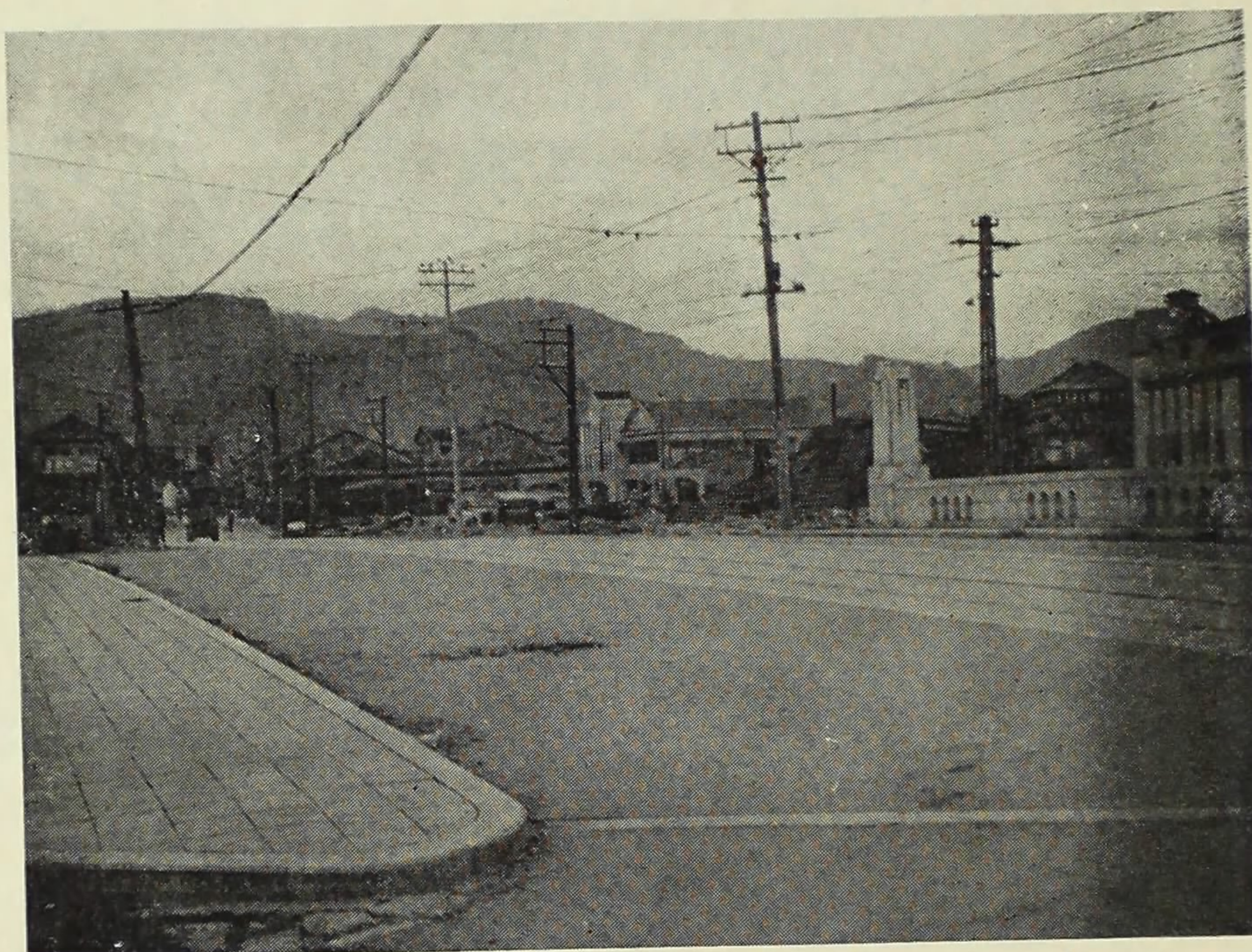
The atomic bombing had not accomplished the complete destruction that was expected, but its effect was great and complete enough to achieve one desired purpose: effecting or at least aiding in effecting unconditional surrender.

Late in the morning we moored alongside the Phantom (AM 273) in Berth C, First District, Nagasaki Harbor, where we remained until 1600, while Commodore Farrow called on the Admiral to discuss future plans and obtain orders.

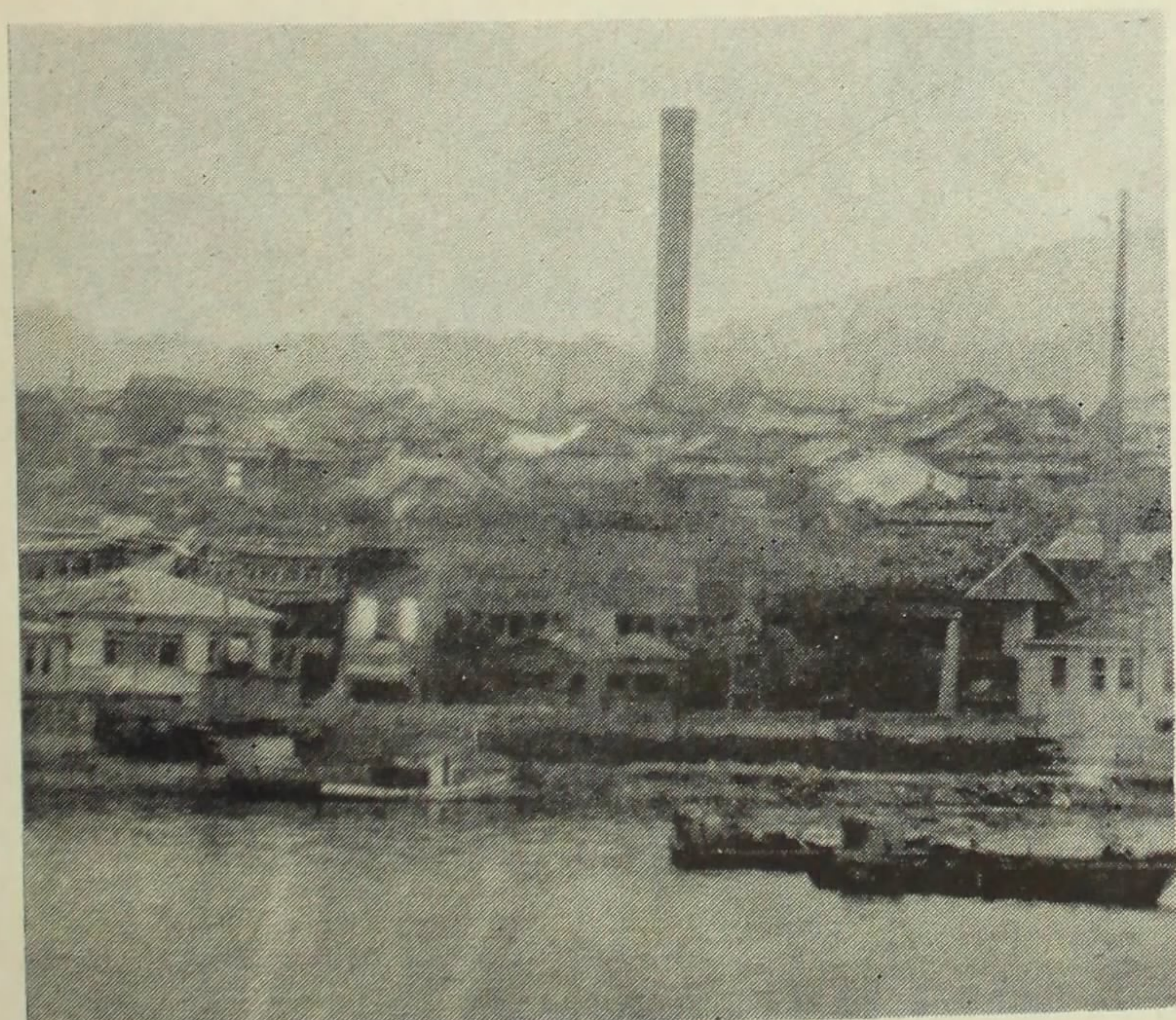
In the late afternoon, we turned to "Farrow's Cove," between Matsu Shima and Kakinoura Shima, where we anchored and remained throughout the next day.



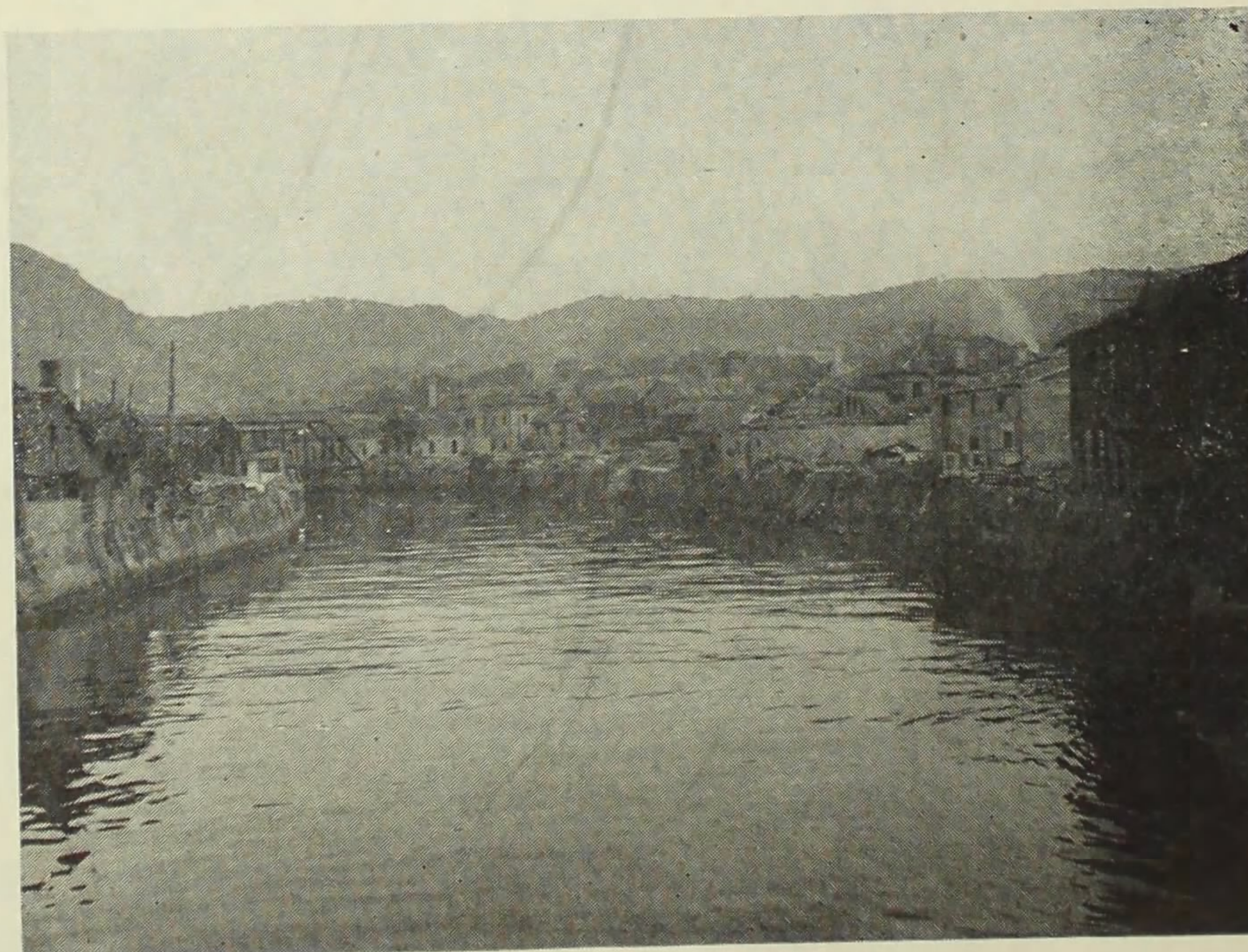
Nagasaki street scene.



Looking across a bridge in the Nagasaki business district.



Looking north from the harbor toward the valley in which the atomic bomb landed.



Nagasaki commerce canal.

SASEBO

A SHANNON PRIORITY

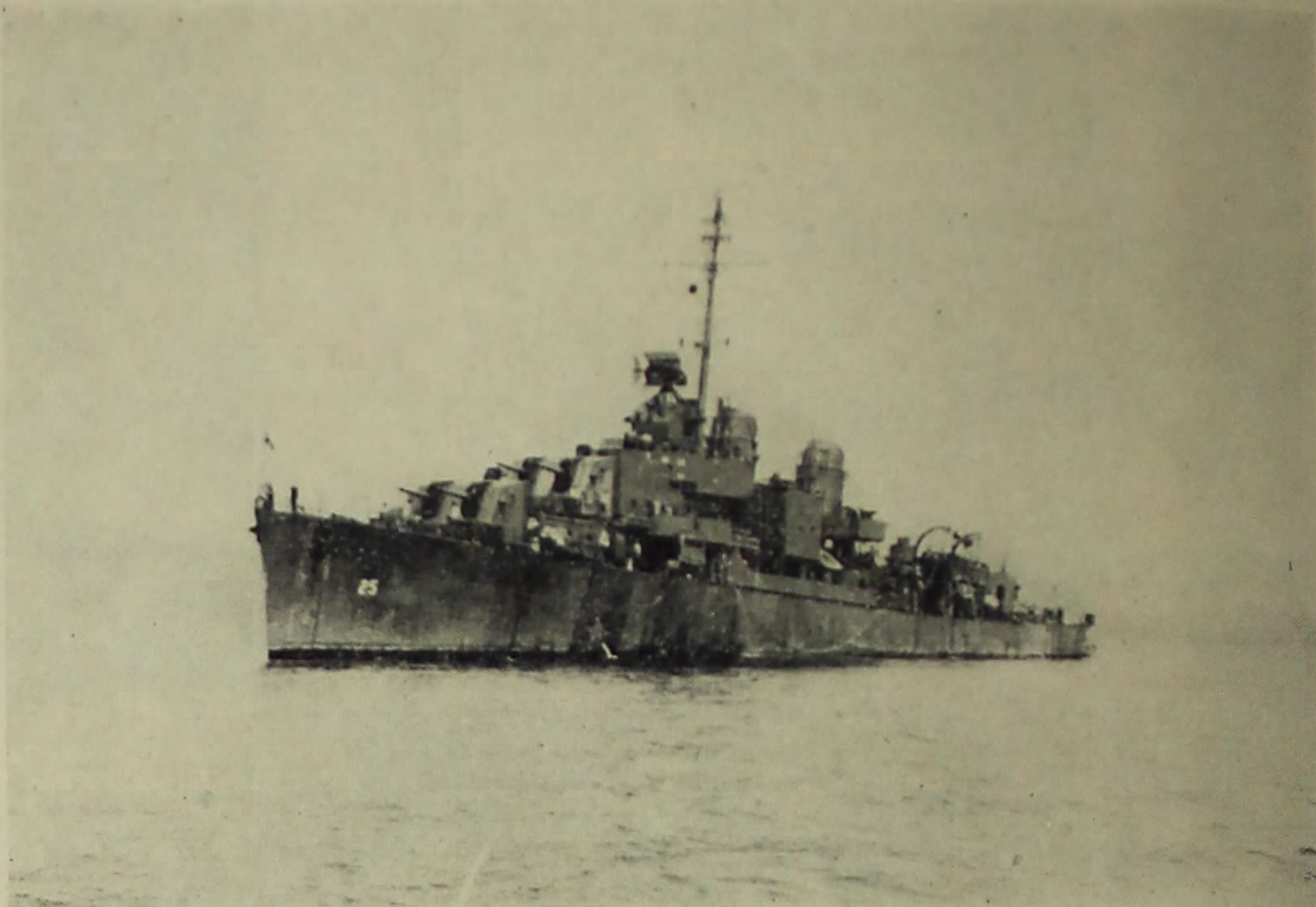
The Shannon got underway again in the early morning, September 14, and steamed down the swept channel to Nagasaki, where we moored alongside the Phantom (AM 273). When Commodore Farrow returned from his conference with the Admiral, he ordered the Shannon to get underway in order to carry out the orders he had just received. Two hours later we anchored in the Matsu Shima area. At 1353, we were again underway in accordance with verbal orders from the Nagasaki-Sasebo Area Commander.

The Shannon passed through the entrance to Sasebo at 1445. At that moment, she became the **first U. S. Man-o'-War to enter that harbor.**

Sasebo, normally a city of 133,000, is one of the principle naval bases and shipyards in Japan, and the largest in Kyushu. The city is built around the harbor, with the residential sections extending well back into the hills. The countryside is not as rugged as that around Nagasaki, although there are a great many large and rather steep hills. Nor is it as picturesque as Nagasaki, but from the harbor the scenery is pretty.

The harbor entrance is narrow and the approaches confined—both protected by well concealed fortifications. At the southern end of the harbor, near the entrance to Omura Wan, lay several new ships, the largest of which were carriers. These were abandoned—some not even completely built.

We steamed east for two and a half miles and then turned north to enter the main part of the harbor. Shortly after turning, the installations around the perimeter of the harbor became visible. On the western shore there were fuel storage tanks, coal yards, wharves, and caves presumably used for storage and as air-raid shelters. Along the eastern shore could be seen a Naval air station, torpedo testing station, a large ammunition dump, a mine base, and numerous smaller installations such as barracks and shops. At the head of the harbor were several large drydocks, piers, shipyards, an outfitting



Standing into Sasebo Harbor - The first Allied Man-O'-War.

wharf and arsenal, naval gun factories, machine shops and an aircraft factory. On the highest hills we could see radar and radio antennae. The base was, on the whole, well equipped and well protected.

At 1503, the Shannon anchored close to the western shore, in the First District, Sasebo Harbor. Twenty minutes later a small tug came alongside with the boarding party.

Rear Admiral K. Ishii, the Chief of Staff, Sasebo Naval Station, came aboard with his staff, a Captain, Commander, Lieutenant Commander, and an Ensign.

The Admiral, after saluting the Quarterdeck, saluted and bowed very formally to Captain Ingram. The others of the Japanese delegation followed suit. Captain Ingram was assisted in receiving them by Lt. (jg) Coffin, who acted as interpreter, Lt. (jg) Berg, Lt. (jg) Geyer, and armed gangway petty officers Allen, BM 1c, and Reisinger, QM 3c.

The delegation was then escorted to the wardroom. When all was ready, Commodore Farrow entered and the conference began.





The base was informally surrendered by Admiral Ishii and then the principal topics of the conference were discussed. Charts of the harbor defenses, particularly the location of controlled minefields, were turned over and explained. Methods of and arrangements for disposing of the mines were discussed and agreed upon. Other topics of discussion included the number and types of Japanese ships available for minesweeping outside of the harbor, the facilities of the harbor and the base which would be available for use by Allied ships and the occupation forces, control of the natives during the early days of occupation, and the disposition and employment of Japanese troops during occupation.

This conference by no means settled all of the questions and problems that presented themselves at this time and in the future, but it did lay the foundation for occupation, and arranged preparation of the harbor and station.

As soon as the conference was over, Admiral Ishii and his staff left the ship. Shortly afterwards, we returned to Matsu Shima, where we anchored for the night.

The visit of the Japanese delegation had an interesting and ironical sidelight. The Japanese Ensign, who was a member of the party to act as interpreter, had been a classmate of Lieutenant Petersen at Pasadena (California) Junior College in 1936. Just before the delegation left the ship these two former fellow-students recognized each other and exchanged very formal and somewhat cold greetings.

The following day the Shannon returned to Nagasaki with Commodore Farrow. When the Commodore had reported the results of the Sasebo conference to the Admiral, he returned aboard. The Shannon went back to Matsu Shima, only to return to Nagasaki the next day to ride out the typhoon which was approaching and of which we had warning.

During the afternoon and evening of September 17, the typhoon reached its full fury. In spite of the protection offered

by the surrounding mountains, winds in the harbor increased to well over 65 knots. Fortunately, the center of the storm passed about 100 miles to the east of Nagasaki. Our mooring held and no damage was sustained. By midnight the storm had abated, and dawn broke clear and fresh.

We left Nagasaki at 1400, enroute to Sasebo, where we anchored in the outer harbor three hours later, and remained throughout the night.

The following day, Lt. (jg) Ayres and Lt. (jg) Coffin went ashore to supervise the destruction of the controlled mines which guarded the harbor entrance. After some difficulty, most of the mines were detonated, and arrangements were made for the destruction of those which could not be fired from the control station. Upon their return, in the late afternoon, the Shannon left for Matsu Shima, our anchorage for the night.

Ships, by this time, were coming into Sasebo in preparation for the Occupation Forces, which were to follow. When we returned to the harbor on the 20th, we moored alongside the Flusser (DD 368), in berth 17, remaining over night.

The Shannon's duties continued to be varied, some of them becoming menial, others providing considerable interest and excitement.

September 21, we met and escorted the Rooks (DD 804) into Sasebo, and then went alongside the Cossatot (AO 77) to fuel. After fueling, we moored with the Smith and transferred 25 radar reflector buoys from her tracks to ours. That night, we anchored again in "Steward's Cove."

The occupation troops arrived in the harbor September 22nd, and landed the same day. Shortly after their arrival, CominDiv 7 ordered the Shannon into Sasebo so that he could call on and confer with the Admiral in command of Occupation Forces.



The next several days were spent in Sasebo, controlling the sweeping operations and occasionally escorting ships into the harbor, although we returned to Matsu Shima each night to anchor.

September 26th provided a considerable departure from the routine of the previous week. Starting early in the morning we went hunting for an anchorage for TG 52.3, and particularly for one which would provide a good typhoon shelter. The most likely possibilities were in the coves of the Goto Retto islands. Our first stop was Fukae Shima, where we investigated Tomiye Wan and the waters between some of the outlying islands and the coast of Fukae. From there we headed northeast, checking all the possibilities along the chain. Our last stop—Arikawa Wan, on the northern coast of Nakadori Shima—was the most promising, but still hardly suitable as a typhoon anchorage for the Bay was open to the north.

Upon our return to Sasebo Ko in the late afternoon, Lt. Commander Sujiyama, Japanese Imperial Navy, and his staff reported aboard for a minesweeping conference with CominDiv 7, which lasted a little more than an hour.

After a night in Sasebo Harbor, rare for us, we returned to Matsu Shima Anchorage, where we fueled and then waited for the signal to proceed on a special mission.

Most of the 28th was spent in Sasebo while the Commodore made preparations for a conference he was to conduct the following day.

Fusan, Korea was our destination when we got underway from Sasebo, just before sunset. Before we left, Commander W. C. Michels, USNR, a mining expert from the Bureau of Ordnance, came aboard to join the staff of CTG 52.3 temporarily.

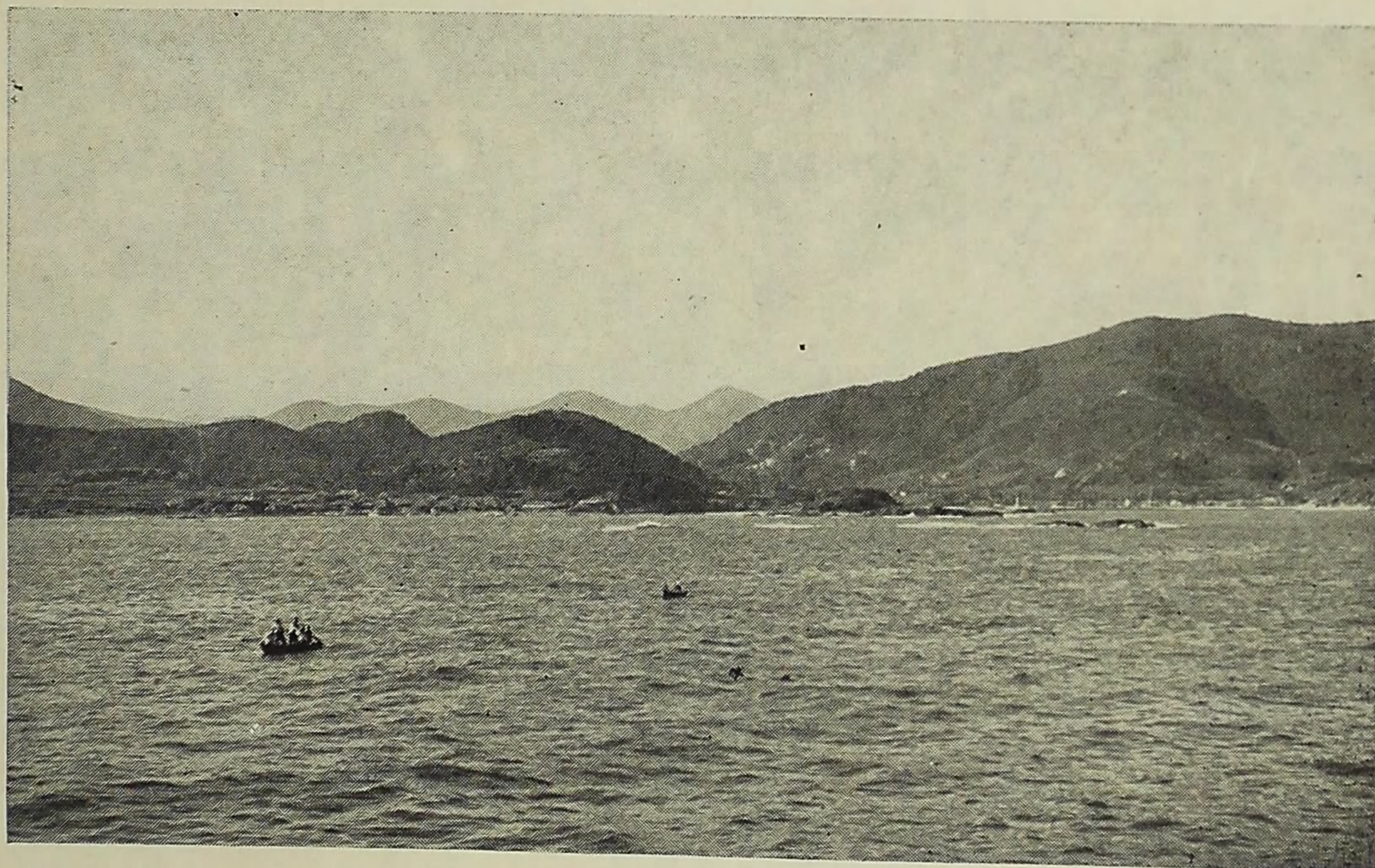
The morning of September 29, the Shannon arrived off the entrance to Fusan, intent on a special mission of inspection and investigation.

The city of Fusan has a long and interesting history in connection with Korean-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars, and with the struggle for control of the Tsushima Kaikyo, or Korean Strait, a narrow and very important passage between Korea and Japan, on which stands the city of Fusan. It was in these Straits that the Russian fleet, in 1905, after steaming from the Baltic Sea through the Atlantic, around the Cape of Good Hope, and through the Indian Ocean and China Seas, in hopes of basing in Vladivostok and blockading Japan, was completely annihilated by the Japanese fleet, under Admiral Tojo.

The harbor at Fusan is large and roomy, and has recently become one of Japan's large naval bases. The city has a population of over 200,000, although the area it covers is comparatively small.

Because of the dangers from mine fields and numerous derelicts in the channel, we did not enter the harbor. The inspection party—Commodore Farrow and his staff—was met by a YMS and taken ashore for the conference and tour.

WELCOME INTO SONG JUNG



The Shannon sought an anchorage which would be more suitable and better protected. On information from local authorities, we steamed about 15 miles northeast to a small and very picturesque bay, known on the charts as Yoguamupo Wan. There, in the middle of the afternoon, we anchored.

In this bay, there were numerous rocks and small islands. Along its shore, at the foot of the mountains, was a village, whose people apparently made their livelihood from fishing and difficult farming on the terraced slopes. The houses were of either stone or wood, and most had thatched roofs. A great many trees covered the land that was not terraced for farming. It was, indeed, a pretty setting.

The people on shore were curious about our ship, but cautious, and those in boats kept their distance, at first. Soon, however, when they saw that we made no hostile move, their curiosity overcame their fear. People flocked from their homes to look. Boats already in the bay came closer, and many more started out from shore. As these boats approached, the crew watched in silence, with reserve. They expected to find the people the same glum, silent Japanese as those that had met us in the "bum-boats" at Nagasaki and Sasebo. But as they approached, much to everyone's surprise, we could see their smiles and hear their laughs and cheers. The word soon got around that these people were Koreans, not Japs. A happy people they were, too—singing, laughing, and cheering. It hadn't taken them long to discover that we were the long awaited American Navy.

The first few boats that ventured alongside were greeted with a shower of cigarettes and candy. This was a natural and spontaneous reaction for a group of men who had been at sea for nine months of war and flaming hell; men who, for that long nine months, had received no friendly greeting or smile of welcome. It was a refreshing experience for all of us. We were as glad as they to see a friendly face.

Almost immediately, the international jargon of barter began, augmented by a mixture of English, Korean, several pidgin adaptations, and a variety of very expressive gestures. Cigarettes, gum, candy, shoes, hats, and watches were traded for pipes, chopsticks, money, sandals, books and posters. Each party to a trade thought he got the better of the other. In relative value to the recipient, the natives undoubtedly fared better than the sailors.

In the excitement of greeting and dickering, one bearded old man gestured so vigorously that he toppled backwards out of his boat. Amid the howls of American and Korean laughter, he was quickly pulled back aboard, drenched but happy.

Shortly before sunset, a small coal-burning steamboat approached from the village landing. As it drew near, we could see the occupants and hear their cheers and songs. The boat was crawling with humanity—people hanging over the gunwales, sitting on the pilot house, and clinging to the smokestack. Each man and boy waved a small, rice-paper American or Korean flag, which was drawn from a seemingly inexhaustible supply. One bespectacled young man led the passengers in organized cheering, reminiscent of the most enthusiastic cheering section at a high school football game.

When this boat had come alongside, its passengers swarmed over our decks before they could be stopped—bowing, shaking hands, and shouting greetings to all they met. Each carried some gift to present to our captain. It is hard to estimate the value of these gifts to these peasant people, but it is sure that the chickens and large bottles of milky-white rice wine were among their most prized possessions. They were determined, in spite of our protests, to show their appreciation with those tokens of friendship and welcome, and insisted that we keep them.

As the boats and the town disappeared in the distance one of the chiefs remarked, "The Government doesn't need to send any diplomats; just give a bunch of sailors a few cigarettes and some candy and they'll make friends. These guys could win over anybody." That is certainly true in Yoguamupo, Korea, or Song Jung, as the natives apparently call it.

This had been a mighty pleasant interlude from months of grueling sea duty. But to everyone on board the Shannon it was much more. There in Korea, a country which, to most people, seems like the end of the Earth, we found an expression of what we had been fighting for.

To those somewhat primitive, peasant people, we symbolized America—and America meant freedom. These people believed in and worshipped a far-away country, which they had never seen, because of the things for which it stands.

The Korean spokesman had said, "We wait for you long time." That made most of us feel a bit ashamed that it had taken us, the United States, so long to get there and fulfill the promises we had made some forty years before. But our shame was far overshadowed by the joy that our coming had wrought.

It is a wonderful experience to free a people, whether actually or symbolically. Their happiness and gratitude was, in a measure, payment for the hell and horror we had experienced. All that seemed to matter little when we saw its results. Freedom, war, ways of life—much that had before been intangible, expressed in generalities—took on new meaning. Our experience in Korea had made many things specific and real.

Probably never again will we be given as sincere and appreciative a reception, and in no port in the world will the Shannon ever be more welcome than in Yoguamupo, Korea.

BACK TO OKINAWA

Shortly after leaving Yoguamupo Wan, we anchored off the entrance to Fusan harbor, in the vicinity of the sea buoy. An LCS came alongside at 1600, returning CominDiv 7 and his staff to the ship.

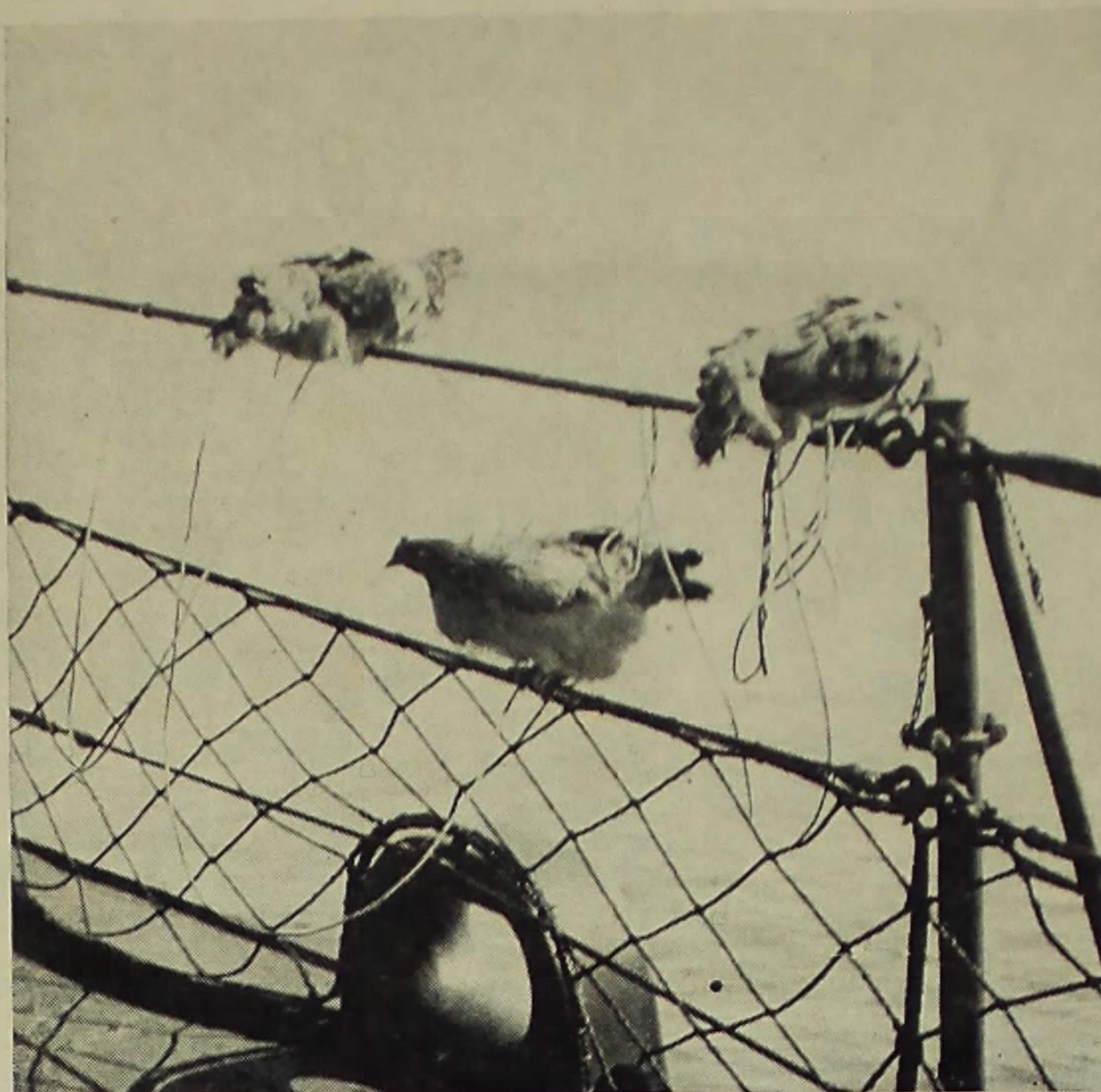
Our orders then called for a hurried trip to Okinawa, the main purpose of which was to report to CominPac the findings of the Korea conference and the progress of sweeping operations around northern and western Kyushu. Time was pressing, so we made 25 knots all the way down, and arrived in Buckner Bay at 1700, October 1st.

LOST: ONE WORKING PARTY

On the following day, while the Commodore called on CominPac to make his report, the Paymaster and a working party of twelve men went over to Brown Beach for provisions and much needed GSK stores. During the afternoon, a third of the crew enjoyed a beer picnic and baseball game on Tsuken Shima.

Later in the day, the Commodore returned, but there was still no word from the working party. This caused a great deal of concern for we were scheduled to leave for Sasebo prior to sunset.

Our departure was subsequently delayed in the hope that a few more hours would produce the lost. Finally, about 2000, word was received that the Supply Officer, the working party, and several tons of provisions were sitting on the dock waiting for a boat to bring them out to the ship. Four hours of searching, in-



"Pipe down the chickens on the forecastle."

quiring, and pleading had produced no transportation. The probability of getting a boat at night was even less.

Of greater concern than getting our men and supplies back, was the approach of a very severe typhoon. Considerable danger and loss of precious time would result if we did not get back to Sasebo ahead of the storm. Finally, at 2200, we gave up, and headed north at 26 knots in hopes of making up the time which had been lost.

This left our men stranded on the beach, all without a change of clothes, and most without even a foul-weather jacket. Luckily, Mr. Weager had enough money to buy each man a tooth brush, but that was hardly a necessary item the first day for no one had had anything to eat since breakfast.

As we proceeded, the weather got worse and the sea heavier. By the end of the mid-watch, we were steaming through 25- to 40-foot seas. Green water washed over the bow constantly, and very heavy spray kept the bridge personnel looking like drowned rats. The impact of each wave shook the ship so severely that we soon wondered what kept her in one piece. Since we were heading into the sea, our roll was negligible, but the pitch was terrific. As we rode up each wave, the ship would pause momentarily at the crest, and then plunge downward as if the sea had opened up and its bottom had fallen out.

This constant pounding, and eventually an engineering casualty, forced us to slow to 18 knots, which speed we maintained until noon. Reducing the speed only eight knots had eased the strain considerably, but we found it necessary to resume the former rate in order to reach Sasebo before dark. Our calculations proved correct, for, shortly after sunset, October 3, we were moored alongside the Ralph Talbot (DD 390), in berth 25, Sasebo Ko.

By the time we moored, the wind had abated. Since the typhoon was moving much more slowly than had been anticipated, and since the Shannon was not operating, we had a short breathing spell. This allowed us some time to spend in upkeep and preparations for painting in case we should get some paint, which was then almost unobtainable.

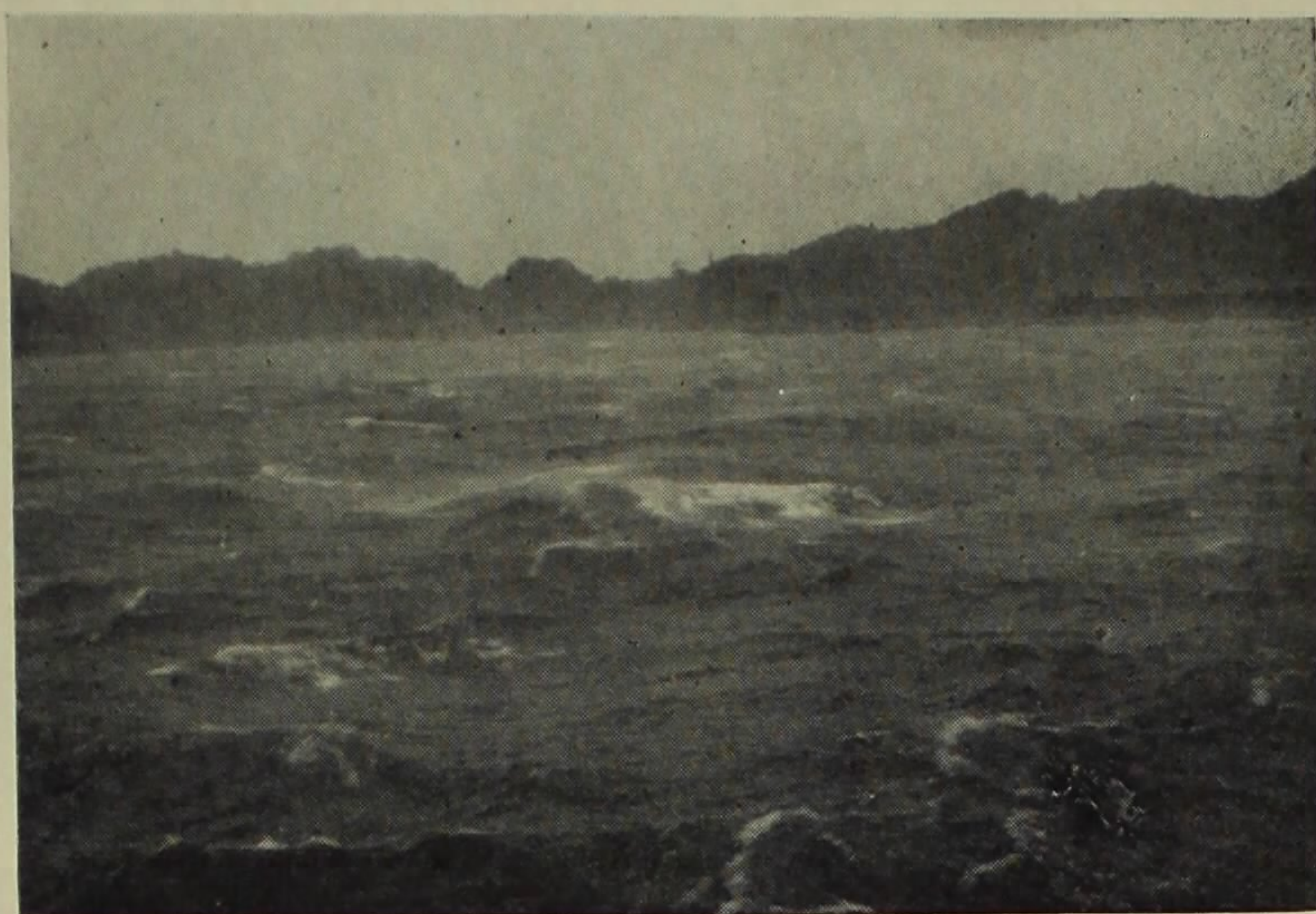
October 4, the Sasebo Officers' Recreation Center was opened for business on a "bring your own" basis. A full delegation from the Shannon was on hand for the inauguration, and all those present became charter members. The club was housed in a small, two-story, brick building in one of the coal storage yards on the western shore of the harbor. Business boomed, so, by the end of the month, a frame shed and a small, fenced-in terrace had been built as additions.

A large warehouse just across the road was taken over and renovated for use as an Enlisted Men's Recreation Center. This was ready for use the second week in October. A cinder field, next to the building, provided room enough for touch football and baseball games.

Although the condition and location of the recreation centers and the adjacent playing field was far from ideal or adequate, it did provide a place for much needed relaxation. It gave everyone the chance to get away from the cramped quarters of a ship, and to drink a little beer. This was very welcome, for liberty had been mighty scarce in months past. Each afternoon one third of the ship was sent over to the beach, armed with plenty of beer.

TYPHOON

The morning of October 9th, word was received that the expected typhoon was close at hand. Shortly afterwards, in accordance with typhoon plan "William," the steering gear was energized and the boilers lighted off. The number of ships in each nest had to be reduced, as a precaution, so we were ordered to shift to buoy 14, which was in a more sheltered part of the harbor.



At 1335, just after we had moored, the Helm (DD 388) moored alongside. This maneuver was made difficult by the steadily increasing winds, which had already reached 30 knots. On the first two attempts, the Helm was caught and swung broadside by the wind, forcing her to ram us on each occasion. Fortunately, she had little way on and the skin of the ship was not broken.

By sunset, the wind had reached about 45 knots, where it stayed throughout the night and until early the next afternoon.

During the day, several ships were torn from their moorings and drifted, out of control, down the harbor. An APD, adrift from the mooring just north of buoy 14, miraculously swerved aside to miss the Shannon by scant inches. A few minutes later, an LST began to drag her anchor and passed only a few hundred yards east of us. She was almost completely out of control—a perfect target for the wind because

of her very high freeboard, shallow draft, and very little available speed. When we last saw her, she crashed into the Wichita (CA 45), scraped the length of her side, and then slid off, only to go drifting on down the harbor. Several smaller landing craft were in equal difficulty, but finally managed to beach at the southern end of the harbor.

The full fury of the typhoon struck at about 1600 when the wind reached 97 knots, with gusts to well over 100. After about two hours of full force, it began to subside, dropping to

about 40 knots by midnight.

By noon the 11th, the storm had passed and the weather was back to normalcy, although a little colder. Very fortunately, the center of the typhoon had passed about 100 miles southeast of Sasebo, as it veered to the northeast. The velocity of the wind at the center had been estimated at over 125 knots. The damage inflicted at Okinawa, which had been directly in the path of the storm center, is a grim, well known fact. More than 200 ships of all classes and sizes were destroyed or severely damaged in Buckner Bay, and numerous lives lost. The effect of those losses was felt by us only in the temporary loss of mail service, a not serious shortage of supplies, and considerable concern for Lt. (jg) Weager and his working party, which had not yet returned from Okinawa.

SASEBO CITY

Occupation proceeded according to schedule. The city was being slowly cleaned up; military forces had been disarmed; all military installations and factories had been taken over; NavTechJap Engineers had arrived from Washington to inspect Japanese military, naval, and production material, and to recommend and arrange for its proper disposition; the people were under control and orderly. There was still much to be done—work that would probably require years—but the city was orderly enough to permit liberty parties within certain limits.

Everyone was curious to see as much as possible of Japan and its people, and to collect souvenirs. Each man went ashore at least once when his turn came. What they saw was not pretty.

The city was filthy. Those utilities and facilities that still existed were very primitive in comparison with a city of the same size in the United States. The community as a whole was very poor, as one would expect in the feudal society of Japan. This poverty was made more acute by the sacrifices and ravages of war.

Only a few of the streets are paved, most of which were in the business district. Except for the government buildings, a bank, a hospital, two department stores a new theater, one or two temples, and a few miscellaneous buildings, all structures in the business district were of flimsy frame construction.

Sasebo had been hit by only two small raids of medium bombers, dropping mostly incendiaries, but about half of the business district was completely leveled. The amount of destruction was almost unbelievable for the number of bombs

dropped. The railroad and most of the roads were intact and open to traffic, under the control of the occupation forces.

Most of the people traveled on foot, although some of the most prosperous had bicycles. The few automobiles that one might see belonged to the government. Practically all material was hauled on the back or in crude carts, pulled by men and women. Only a very few people were fortunate or wealthy enough to own a horse.

Small shops were numerous, but had practically nothing to sell, at first. Souvenir hungry sailors, rich from months at sea, were willing to buy anything that looked Japanese, and did. Cheap pottery, fans, cheap kimonos, wooden sandals, chop sticks, stamps, and pictures were the most common items of purchase. When the natives learned that Americans would buy anything and everything they had to offer, they gathered old books, chopsticks, pictures, household utensils, pieces of silk, and every other item available to put on the market.

佐世保市



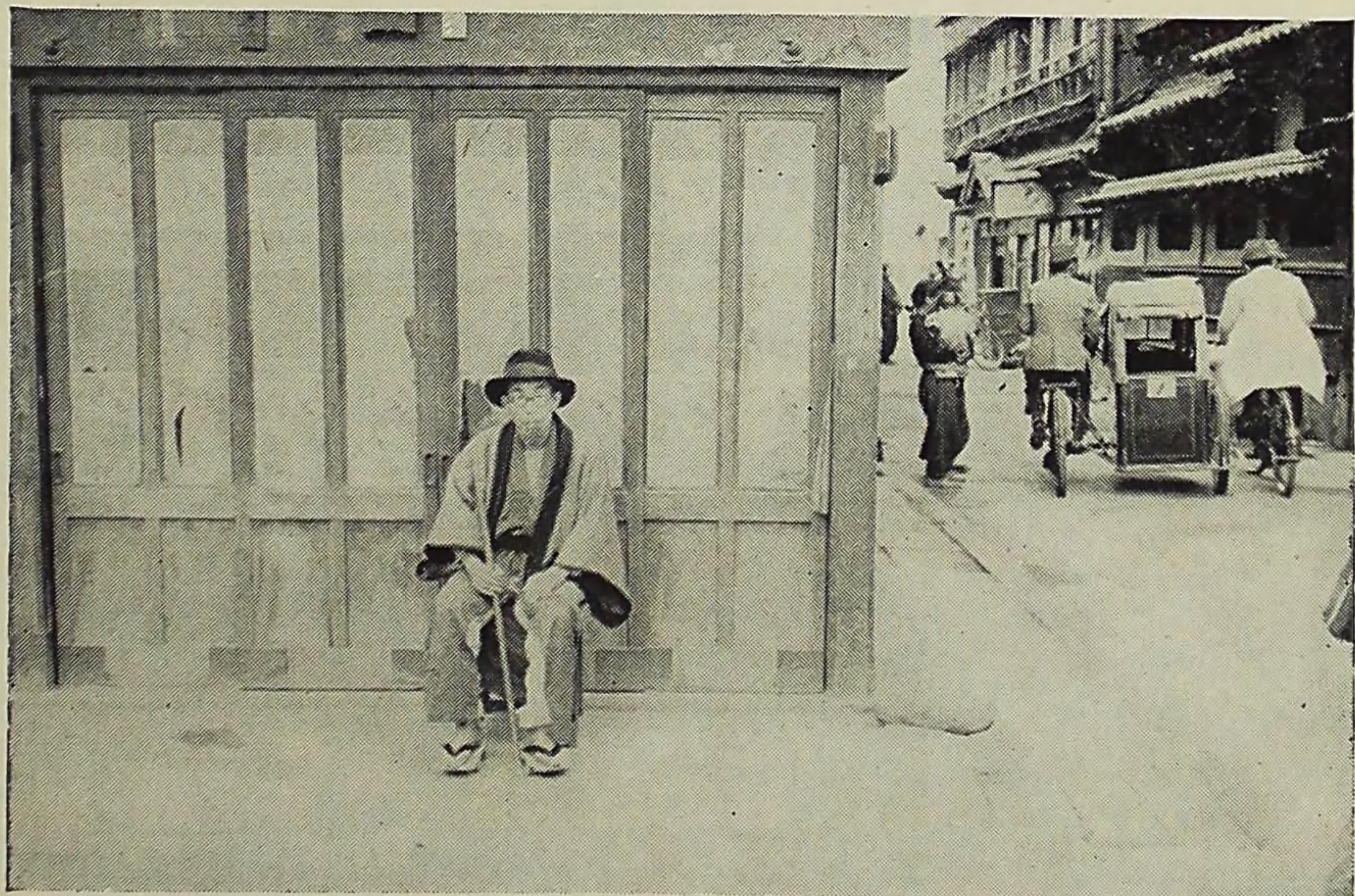
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Occasionally someone would find a good silk kimona for sale. A few fortunates traveled to Kakyaimo's pottery shop in Arita, or to a pearl diver's home on Amura Wan, where items of unusually fine workmanship and value could be purchased.

The residential sections of Sasebo surrounded the city, extending all the way up the hillsides. Most of the houses were small, frail wooden structures, roofed with tile, and built practically on top of one another. The interiors of these houses were almost devoid of furniture, having, at the most, a few floor mats, a low table, and a small charcoal stove which served both for heating and cooking. The buildings were divided into rooms by thin portable screens.

Narrow streets and stairways wound up the hillsides, and in among the groups of houses. A few open canals flowed down the hills to provide drainage and to carry off sewage. Each family, or group of families, kept a small vegetable garden in rocky, terraced plots, carved from the hillside. Much of the sewage was used to fertilize these gardens.

The people of Sasebo were not nearly so reticent as those of Nagasaki, although they were thoroughly beaten and, for the most part, submissive. During the early days of the occupation, many had been moved or frightened into moving back into the hills. After a few weeks, they were allowed to return to the city, or had overcome their fright enough to come back. As the city became more populous, the natives became more friendly, especially the children and elderly people.

Every child had a greeting for the visitors. Laughing and giggling, they would call out, usually with a bow or a nod, "Ohio" (Good morning), "Ohio Gozy'mas" (Good morning, Sir), or "Sayonora" (Good evening). After a few days, natives and Americans began to pick up words from each others languages. Jap children would say "Goo'-day" or "Haro" (Hello), and the sailors would reply with the Japanese equivalent, "Kon-nee-chee-wa."

1 Overlooking the city and harbor from northeastern Sasebo residential section.

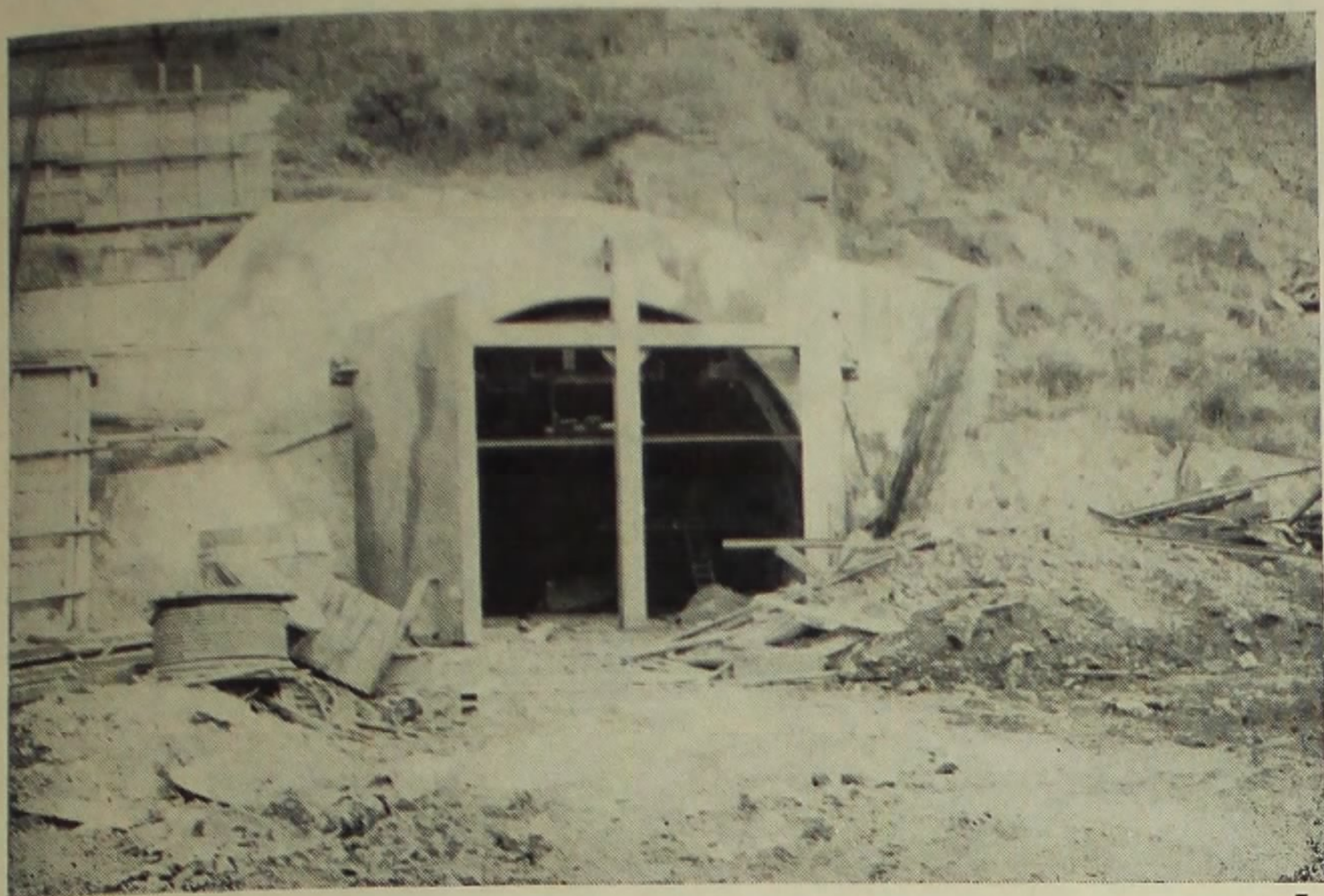
2 Remains of Sasebo business center.

3 Street scene — Sasebo business district.

4 Shopkeeper rests during lull. (Vehicle in right background is a taxi.)

5 The children were friendly. (Note, extreme left, girl wearing identification tag, and, center, girl carrying her baby brother on back.)

6 Mothers watch dubiously as sons pose.



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On the whole, Sasebo is a picturesque city, especially in the residential areas, with the mountains as a backdrop to the hillside homes and shrines. But the filth and squalor detracted from, and often obliterated, anything of beauty that might be there. Much was learned of the Japanese people and their way of life in Sasebo. It was exceedingly interesting, but not a single American envied the Japanese.

October 14, Lt. Commander Goranson was detached. In order to catch the Ellyson (DMS 19), of which he was to assume command, he flew in a small Marine plane to Kobe, Honshu, a city which had not yet been occupied. From there he traveled overland to Wakayama where his new ship was based. Just before leaving, he had been relieved as Executive Officer by Lieut. Grehan, who in turn had been relieved as Gunnery Officer by Lieut. Caldwell.

The following day, the Shannon moved out to Buoy 23 to nest with the Helm, Lamson (DD 367), and Coghlan (DD 606).

In the afternoon of October 17th, the Supply Officer, with Boone, Welch, A. J. Hall, Pajas, Frey, Manning, Schwartz, Gilliam, Hendershot, Gumble, T. D. Allen, and Matarazzo, returned aboard, after 16 grueling days on Okinawa and on an LST in Buckner Bay. They were all mighty happy to get "home." All had had to borrow or draw clothes and toilet articles, since none of them was prepared for so long a stay. The time and effort to get supplies was in vain, for nothing could be brought up from Okinawa. Perhaps the biggest blow of all was that among the stores which we almost got, was 250 gallons of paint. We had long since resigned ourselves to the fact that we would have to use a conglomeration of whatever we could beg, borrow, or steal. Most of what we did get was Japanese lacquer in a variety of colors, including bright purple, yellow, and green.

7 Entrance to bombproof underground factory.

8 Sasebo's crowded hillside homes, tile roofs, terraced roads, and steps are typical of all Japanese cities.

9 Wayside shrine stands amid bombing rubble.

10 Suburban Sasebo street.

11 Geisha girl plays her unmusical stringed instrument.

12 Party at a Sasebo Geisha House. (The only furnishings, as in most Japanese homes, are a low table and thick floor mats. Note sliding screens which divide rooms.)



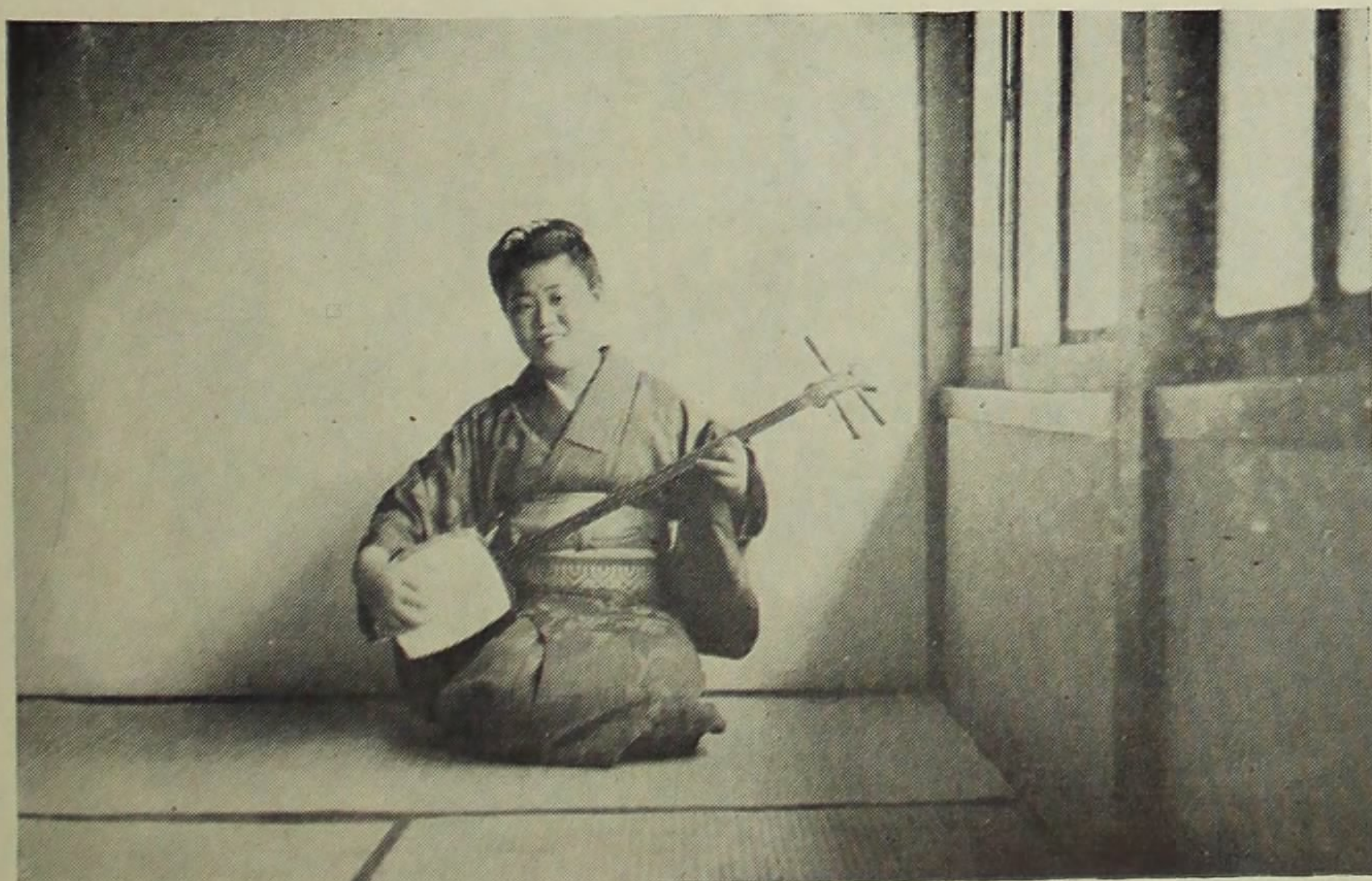
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