

Ike Shima Loran Station

Celebrates Coast Guard 171st Anniversary

On a lonely little island 6-1/2 miles due east of Kin beach in northern Okinawa, 18 men take turns keeping their eyes glued to a mass of machinery that makes up a LORAN station. Without going into what LORAN is, it is safe to say that it is an important aid to navigation, that it has been going on since World War 2 and that there are a bunch of stations all over the Pacific. With the technical aspects of the story out of the way, let's look at the men. Skipper of the unit is pipe-smoking Lt. Richard J. Marcott, a '57 graduate of the Coast Guard Academy who next week leaves his command after the standard one year tour of duty. Aiding the Skipper is Chief Bosun Mate Robert R. Smith who arrived

in January of this year. The other 16 men, each capable of doing more than one job, are electronics technicians, a cook, a radioman, a corpsman, an engine maintenance man and so on. The self-contained unit sends a party to the Big Island by the unit's M-boat every Thursday to draw rations and equipment. Known as isolated duty, one year is about the maximum the men put in though an occasional extension is granted and some men like Ike Shima well enough to return on later tours.

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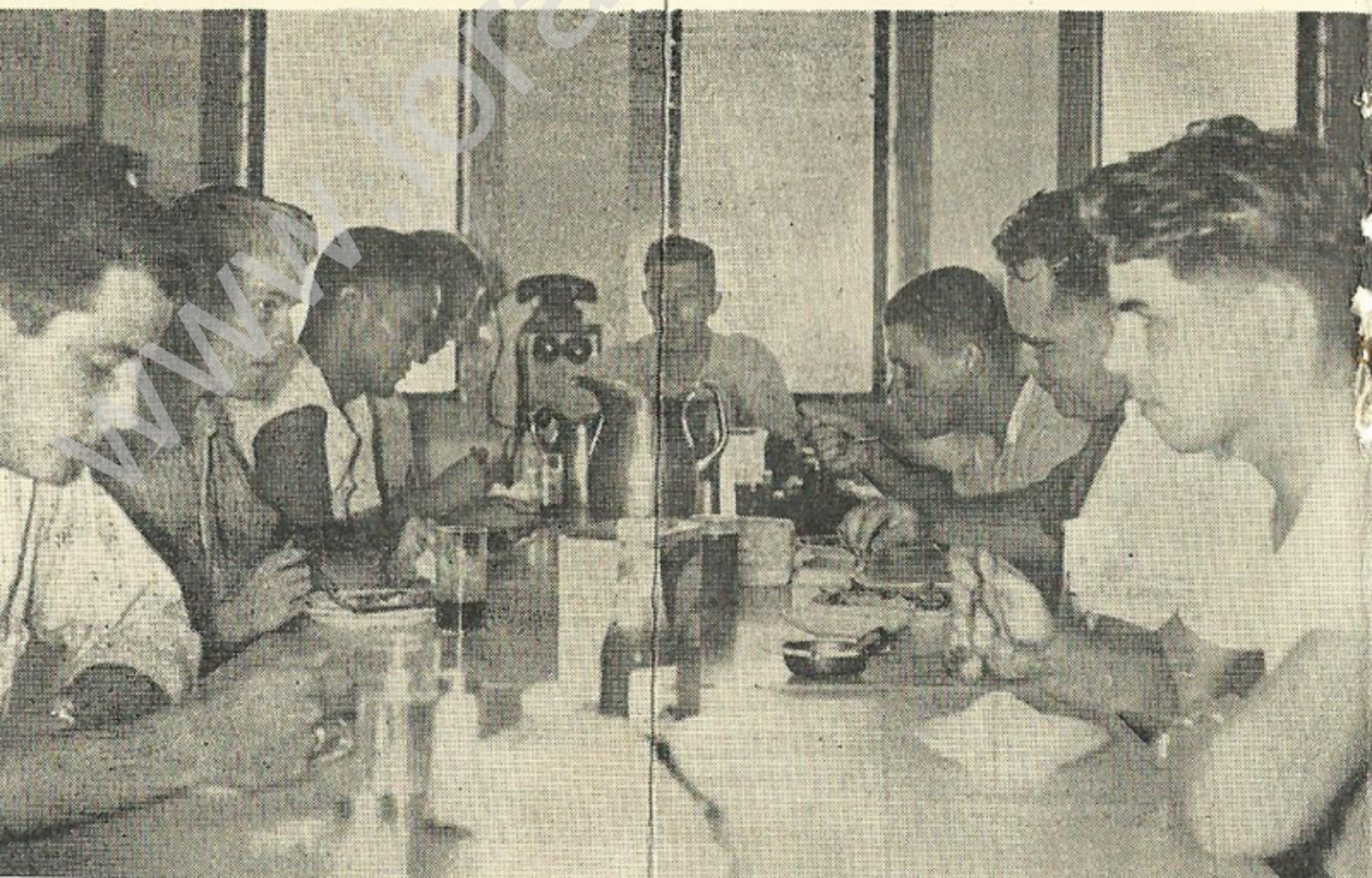


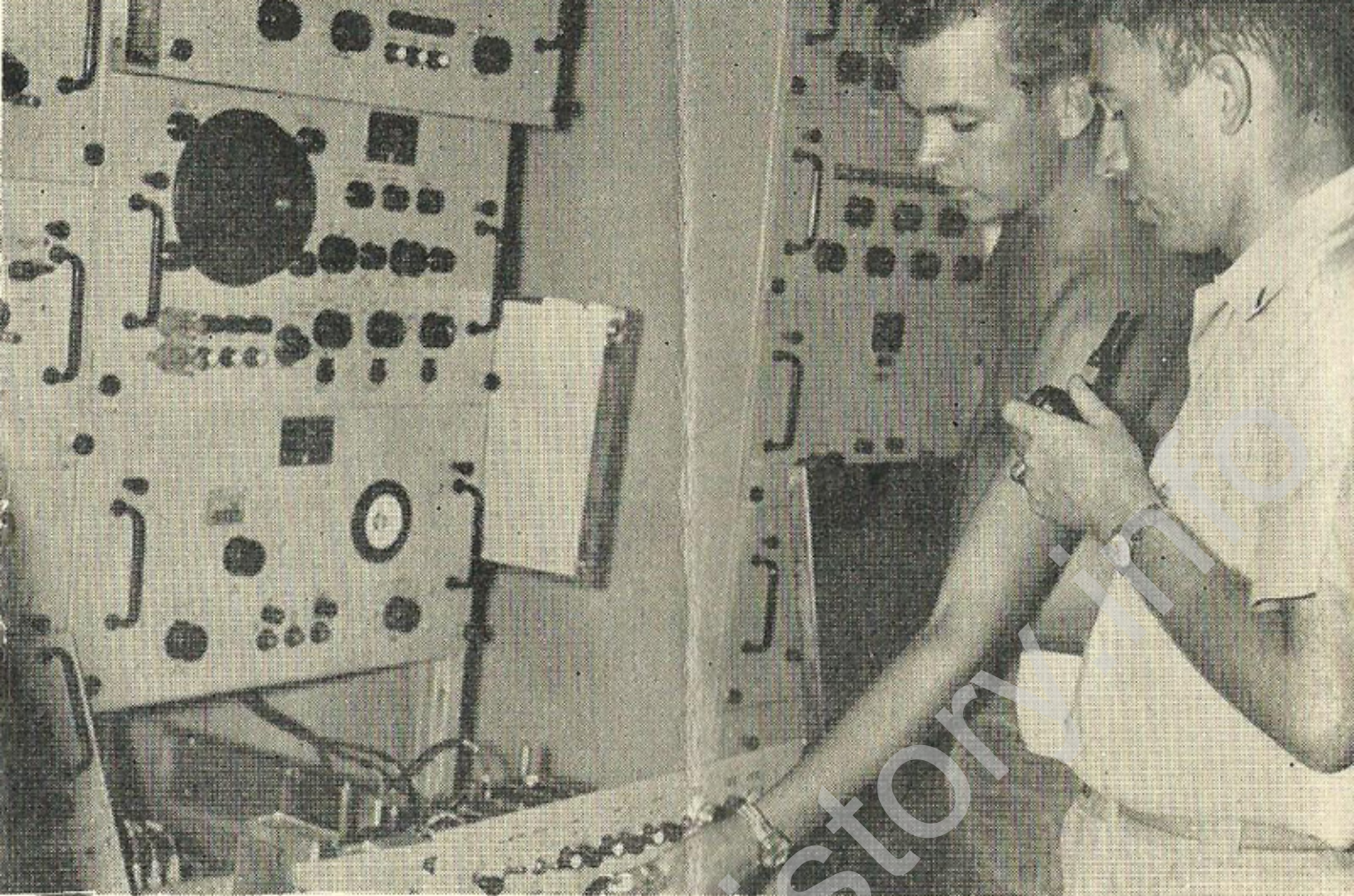


Lt. Richard J. Marcott can calculate his time on Ike Shima by one can of pipe tobacco for each two weeks. Two cans are missing.

IKE SHIMA COAST GUARD DUTY IS QUIET, HEAL

Messing facilities are simple. No Officer's table here. Two men to left of Marcott aren't Coastguardsmen, but TW's crew who came over for the ride.

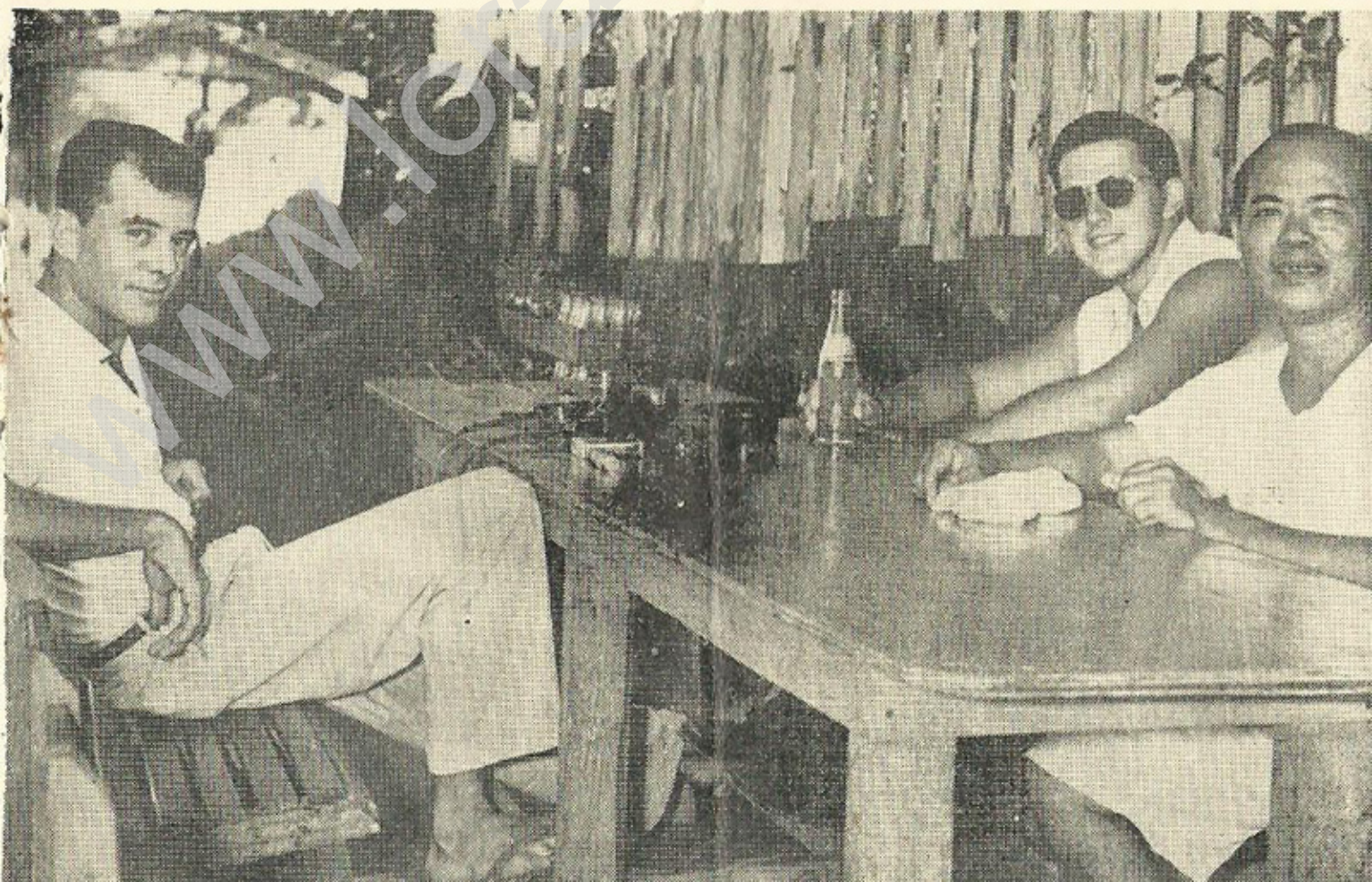




LORAN station equipment must be checked constantly. Time off the air for repairs or malfunctions averages less than two tenths of one percent.

THY, SCENICALLY BEAUTIFUL... AND LONELY

Every tropic isle should have an outside beer garden—and Ike Shima is no exception. Here proprietor Jensuke serves two off-duty Coastguardsmen.



Island Has 1,129 Ryukyuan Souls

Ike Shima probably has one of the best People-to-People programs in the Ryukyus—and probably the oldest. The station was originally set up in May 1945 and since then has been an integral part of island life. Somebody from the station is always invited to attend weddings, birthdays, village festivals or any other sort of gathering. The island's water supply comes from a deep well, brought to the surface by pump and distributed to both the station and the rest of the island.

Three stores in town are authorized to sell liquor and one—Jensuke's, shown on the previous page—even has a table and chairs set out under the trees. There is a strict 11 p.m. curfew, and a delicate inquiry about night life received a smile and "There's not very much doing."

The station is situated under the roof of a long, low, airy typhoon-proof building built after a typhoon blew the Miyako station into the sea a couple of years ago. Television reception is not too bad. With a lot of time on their hands, sometimes a practical joke is in order. Such as when the last replacement came in. He got off the Okinawan taxi boat and was greeted by the Skipper and Chief Bosun, guns at the ready. About this time Jensuke burst through the brush with a machete in his hands, and a murderous glint in his eyes. "Stay between us", the Skipper whispered, "and there won't be any trouble." When the shaken replacement got to the station, two men were sitting in a mud puddle playing cards. Another was on the roof with a gun. "Things are a little informal around here," the Skipper said. It took quite a bit of talking to persuade the new man it was all a joke.

Oh, yes. The Coast Guard birthday is August 4. Happy Birthday.



Below, a Coast Guardsman sits on the edge of his bunk while his buddy topside, obscured by mosquito netting, reads a book.