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14

ADDRESS REPLY TO:

Commanding Officer
CGLORSTA Nomaika POA



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From: Commanding Officer, CGLORSTA Nomaika
To: Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard (PO-2)

Subj: Overseas Loran Station Survey Report; submission of

Ref: (a) COMDT (PO-2) ltr of 22 May 1956, A7.

1. Forwarded herewith, as requested in reference (a), is subject report. Topics have been taken in the order presented in reference (a) and have been designated by the appropriate letters.

W.D. Fox
W.D. FOX

Encl: (1) Subject report

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OVERSEAS ICRAN STATION SURVEY REPORT

CGLCRSTA NOMAIKE
Kyushu Japan

(a) Cost of Living. This depends mainly on how much you smoke and how many pictures you take, and is probably the greatest advantage to life at Nomaike. Several members of the present crew are getting along on about \$20 per month and living very comfortably. The Commanding Officer, of course, has to pay for his meals. Since this station is integral with an Air Force Detachment, we all eat in the Air Force mess and the tariff for the CO is \$1.05 per day. A sizable amount of money can be saved in a year's tour.

(b) Recreational Facilities. Sports are popular, though the facilities are limited. Baseball and softball practice take place in the school yard in Nomaike village. There's a single basketball goal and backboard in the Coast Guard area of the site, and some good teams have been produced. High on the list of records is the victory of the station team over the University of Kagoshima. These games are infrequent, however, mainly because of the difficulty in transporting teams the 55 miles to Kagoshima, where the nearest gymnasium and team are located. Swimming is good for six or seven months out of the year, and fair for another two. A recent (about a year ago) recreational project was the construction of a 12' sailboat, and it gets its workouts in the evenings and on weekends.

Pheasant hunting is good and we have one aspiring bird dog, though his lineage is against his ever being a good hunter. Some of the Japanese fishermen can be prevailed upon to provide crew members with a day's outing and fishing, Japanese-style. Surf casting is also available.

Occasional visits by USO troupes (primarily to the Air Force Detachment, but the USCG enjoys their presence too) take some of the monotony out of life. A recent troupe consisted of an all-girl orchestra, which was a real treat, and a juggler. All the entertainers are of professional caliber and their visits are greatly appreciated by all hands.

The steadiest and most universally appreciated of all the facilities is the nightly flick. Only the men on watch miss most of them. These movies are provided by the Naval Motion Picture Exchange in Yokosuka, and the selection has been very good.

(c) Facilities for Dependents. Dependents are not authorized and in all probability would be most unhappy here. The only safe drinking water in the area is on the station, and there are no supermarkets, or even decent grocery stores in Nomaike. None of the houses would be acceptable for habitation by American wives: they are built of wood and ricepaper and are drafty and cold in winter, insect-ridden in summer. Entertainment for dependents is nonexistent and even the restaurants are doubtful. This is one of the last places that an American woman would want to live.

(d) Climatic conditions. The climate is, to quote a former CO, " In a word, 'wet!', and it looks like it will probably remain wet. Hardly a week goes by without two or three rainy days. The rainy season is a dismal and dank time of the year, with heavy overcasts and light drizzles throughout nearly every day. There are some beautiful days, however and all hands take full advantage of them. The winter of 1955-56 was unique in that there was a snowfall of three inches. The weather seldom gets that cold, however the humidity remains high in winter and the common cold is almost universal. In the summer we experience temperatures of as high as 110° F, and tropical hours are almost a necessity.

(e) The country is beautiful. The mountains are covered with green growth nearly the year around. Farmers get four crops per year down here in southern Kyushu and hardly a day goes by, rain or shine, that the industrious Japanese farm families aren't out working the fields. The station is located on a hill about 480' above sea level. The only road in or out is a one-way, winding mountain road. The village of Noma ike is about a mile away at an elevation of 10' above sea level, and the slope of the road can be roughly determined by considering those two facts.

The buildings at the station are almost ready to crumble to sawdust, however a rehabilitation project is anticipated in the near future. The Air Force has been deferring any repairs to the structures due to an impending phase-out for the past four years, and at present the 14th District has made a proposal to Far East Air Forces that the site be rehabilitated jointly by the Coast and the Air Force.

Facilities on the station are poor, also. Probably the entire problem is that the station was built by Japanese labor in accordance with Japanese building standards. The crew's head is located in a building approximately 75 feet from the Coast Guard barracks, a condition conducive to the colds mentioned in (d) above.

The scenery is a color photographer's delight, with the blooms of the different crops showing various colors in the terraces and paddies in different seasons. The many quaint Japanese rites, celebrations, and festivals add to take some of the edge off the monotony. There are many colorful aspects to duty in the Far East, and the paradoxical appearance of modern machinery and vehicles interspersed among the primitive farming practices and ox-carts and A-frames made Japan truly a land of contrast.

(f) Private cars. My suggestion is, "Don't!" The roads are miserable and would beat a good car to a pulp within weeks. There's no place to go in a private car anyway. Gasoline is very expensive, about 60¢ per gallon, and of inferior quality; parts are hard to come by and good mechanical help is almost impossible to find any nearer than Fukuoka (about 200 miles) for American vehicles. It used to be that a lucrative aspect of having a car in Japan was the price that it drew upon the owner's departure... not so now. Laws have been passed by the Japanese Government requiring a foreigner to be in Japan and to have his car in Japan for at least one year before he can sell it on the open market. The sales tax on American cars is 70%, except on Cadillacs, and 100% for them, and a car also must be at least two years old before it can be sold on the open market.

OVERSEAS LORAN STATION SURVEY REPORT, CGLORSTA N₀maike (cont'd)

(g) Frequency of Mail and Supplies. There is a scheduled flight into the landing strip some 22 miles from here for the purpose of delivering mail, every Tuesday and Thursday. This sounds wonderful, but in reality the aircraft frequently misses at least one trip a week, and has been known to be grounded at Itazuke Air Base for over six weeks, with no trips into our strip with mail. There is usually an Air Force man going on pass who will pick up and deliver mail on his way to Fukuoka and back, but there have been periods of up to 13 days with no mail, incoming or outgoing. Many members of the crew have found the international mails much more reliable and much faster than the APO system, with delivery to and from anywhere in the U.S.A. usually running between four and five days. This is considerably more expensive than the APO mail system -- 25¢ per ounce for air mail -- but Air Letters, or Aero-grams are available at U.S. postoffices for 10¢, and at Japanese post offices for ¥45 (about 13¢).

There is a ration run for consumables and toilet articles to Itazuke Air Base or to Sasebo Naval Fleet Activities once a month. Air Force members usually make these runs, however Coast Guard personnel have been sent in the past. The selection of PX supplies at both places is excellent, and nearly anything within reason that is ordered can be delivered. Cigarettes and some of the more expensive items are rationed to discourage black market operations but the allowable ration is more than sufficient for the normal individual.

(h) Medical Facilities. At the present there is no Coast Guard Hospital Corpsman assigned, however the percentage of time that the station is without its own medical representative is small. The Air Force Detachment has a Medic assigned most of the time. The Hospital Corpsman doubles as the yeoman except when treating minor cuts and bruises at sick call, and arrangement which has been very satisfactory in the past.

Hospital facilities are available at Itazuke Air Base, and there is a large dental clinic there as well. In- and out-patient treatment are provided by the Itazuke Hospital to Coast Guard personnel on a cross-servicing basis, however most of the minor ailments are taken care of at the station because of the difficulty of travel to and from Itazuke.

(i) Summary. There are several exceptionally good bargains in Japan. Among the best are silks, pearls, woolens, hand-tailored clothing, the famous Kagoshima tinware, Hakata dolls, and Japanese miniature trees. One bargain peculiar to this station is in cut stones. There is a stone cutter in Bonsei, a village approximately 19 miles from the station, who sells to U.S. Service Personnel at wholesale prices, and Japanese prices on the wholesale market are fairly low as compared with Stateside prices. This is a fine place to settle down to do some serious saving for the future, and present enforced celibacy results in future prosperity. Here there is an opportunity to observe one of the foreign, exotic lands to discover just how exotic the foreign is.

The greatest disadvantages are the climate, the living conditions and facilities, and the slowness of mail. Nothing can be done about the climate, but positive efforts are being expended to improve the general condition of the station, and a request has been initiated for the use of Japanese mails and postal system for official mail. All hands are advised to indoctrinate Stateside correspondents with the use of the international mails.

Life seldom gets dull, as there are too many projects, both station and recreational, to be completed which keep interest up and time occupied.