

Cruise Log

69th U. S. NAVAL
CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

S THEATRE of OPERATIONS
European

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DAVISVILLE
NEW YORK

Cruise Route



PUBLISHED BY AND FOR THE MEN OF THE
SIXTY-NINTH U.S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION
AND DEDICATED TO THEIR WIVES,
MOTHERS AND SWEETHEARTS

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VICTORY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The purpose of this book is to keep fresh in your memory, through the ensuing years, the part you and your unit played in the activities of the European Theatre of War. That it will accomplish this purpose is a foregone conclusion and full credit is due to a small group of enlisted men, your mates, who so unselfishly and unstintingly gave of their time and energy in this noteworthy extra-curricular activity.

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Through their untiring efforts and assistance you have a permanent graphic record of your part in this epic phase of your country's history. In the mellowness which we will attain with the passing of the years, and the memories of these trying times will be the highlights of our reveries, we will always remember with sincere appreciation the efforts they collectively and singularly put forth in the publication of this book.

DAVID A. CONNOLLY, Lieut. D. C.
Welfare and Recreation Officer.

foreword...

This, our Log of the second cruise to foreign shores during World War II of the 69th, "Victory", Seabees, is intended to portray in as representative a manner as possible the varied accomplishments, activities, and experiences of its personnel during what, in many respects, has been a unique cruise.

Although at times the type of work which the battalion was called upon to perform caused some "griping", nevertheless, much worth-while work was accomplished of which the battalion can well be proud; and, visible evidences of it can still be found in England, Scotland, France, Holland, and Germany.

All assignments, whether in the mud of Normandy or the airfields of Devon, manning a Rhino or constructing an airfield, were taken in stride and executed with efficiency and dispatch, thereby earning the respect and approval of all the various Commands with whom we have operated.

Last, but not least, was the fine spirit which prevailed within the battalion. This spirit of all for one and one for all discouraged the growth of petty jealousies which so often develop during a long cruise of a large body of men. Also, it encouraged coöperation between the various departments and fostered a feeling of tolerance for the other fellow's shortcomings. All of this added up to not only an efficient, but also a happy ship.

I wish to extend sincere thanks to every member of the battalion for their efforts in making this a successful cruise. Good luck and God Speed.

F. N. Walsh

INTRODUCTION

The origin of the 69th Naval Construction Battalion dates back to those boom-camp and pioneer days that were Camp Peary of late 1942 and early 1943. On the 15th of December 1942, the first of the raw material that was to go into the makeup of the battalion structure arrived at Induction Center, Camp Peary and was immediately submitted to the primary processing of indoctrination and detention. The recruits of this first contingent were enlistees from practically every State of the Union with the majority boasting allegiance to the Pacific Coast belt of California, Oregon and Washington.

Their proving ground was Area B-7 of Camp Peary's Primary Training Section where for six weeks the process of sorting, fitting, and welding the individual elements into a coordinated military construction battalion was carried on under the experienced direction of officers and instructors of the station. By the end of the detention period the basic structure of the battalion had been formed and the battalion was ready to receive its officers who had in the meantime been undergoing indoctrination and preliminary training separately in the officers' training school. Accordingly, on January 11, 1943, Commander Joseph B. Rigo was introduced to the assembled battalion as the Officer-in-Charge. Commander Rigo then introduced each of the officers in turn after which he read his orders, ordered the Executive Officer to commence the log and post the watch, and the battalion was in commission. A formal review of the new battalion was held at Bolles Field on January 22nd at which

time the 69th standard and national colors were presented to the battalion. On the following Monday the battalion moved from Area B-7 to A-7 in the advanced training section and immediately started trimming ship in readiness for shoving off, which at that time was scheduled for just six weeks hence.

Then fell the first misfortune to befall the 69th Battalion. On February 4th two companies were detached for immediate overseas duty. A few days later another company was detached to provide personnel urgently needed elsewhere, and on February 15th the remainder of what had been a battalion was transferred to the replacement pool in Area B-3. Thus dissolved what might be considered the first or original 69th Construction Battalion. The officer group was left intact and thereby saved the name from complete extinguishment.

During the next month and a half the battalionless officers moved about Camp Peary from area to area drilling new recruits, assisting in the medical and supply departments and playing softball to the edification and chagrin of the enlisted men. (The officers were good in those days.) Finally, on March 23rd authority was issued to re-form the battalion, so the I.B.M. machines in the Personnel office were warmed up; and, presto, on March 25th the battalion was reformed and on its way to N.C.T.C., Camp Endicott, Davisville, Rhode Island for advanced training — and to become acquainted. This second group to bear the distinction of the 69th Battalion had quite a different character from the first. The average age of the new battalion had dropped five years; and, whereas the original group had predominately represented the western sections of the country, approximately 80 percent of the new men were from the vicinity of New York City with about one-third of this percentage from Brooklyn. Only a very few of the original group of enlisted men were on deck with the battalion when it shoved off from Camp Peary. Of these no more than a dozen are still aboard after more than two years of campaigning. At Davisville the battalion was scheduled for eight weeks of advanced

military training, but it was to be the first training for the outfit as a military unit. Who has forgotten that first practice as skirmishers on the rock-bound New England coast during the blizzard under the stern discipline of that imperious Marine sergeant, or how he routed out the detachments who had surrendered to the refuge of convenient shelters? After several weeks of hard work and the outfit had shaken down into a smooth running military machine, the national colors and the 69th standard were again presented to the battalion. The review was held on April 24, 1943 on the parkway before Gate 2 of A.B.D. The battalion's new drum and bugle corps provided the pomp and military airs for the occasion.

Everything now pointed to embarkation, and on May 9, 1943 nine day leaves were granted to all men whose homes were in the eastern half of the country. On May 21, 1943, the battalion transferred from N.C.T.C. to A.B.D., Davisville, and immediately those whose homes were in the western part of the country took their nine days leave. Meanwhile, the rest of the battalion continued with preparations and more training — Sun Valley — the maneuvers at night — the lost patrol (when the compass was wrong).

Suddenly the battalion was ordered to Boston for embarkation and on June 14, 1943, the outfit entrained at A.B.D. siding. Later that same day the outfit was secure aboard the transport S. S. Santa Elena that was to carry it overseas. (The S. S. Santa Elena was afterward torpedoed and sunk off Bizerte, Tunisia, during the African Campaign). On the morning of the 15th the ship sailed out of Boston Harbor, and for the majority of us it was our first experience at sea and our first time away from home. However, the sea was kind this trip, and there were few who did not believe that they were equal to any in the regular seagoing Navy. Dawn of the third day at sea, June 16th, revealed the first dim sight of the land we were approaching — Newfoundland. That afternoon we reached Argentia, which was to be our home for the next five months.

Argentia originally was the name of a little Newfoundland village on the east coast of the Avalon Peninsula at the neck of a pear-shaped appendage of land thrusting out into Placentia Bay, but the name commonly was used with reference to the general area. It was one of the Atlantic base sites acquired from Great Britain under 99 year lease in exchange for fifty U. S. World War I Destroyers. Here too, off Isaac Head in Little Placentia Harbor, the President of the United States and Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Great Britain, had held their memorable meeting on August 9, 1941, which culminated in the drafting of the Atlantic Charter.

From the first, Argentia was a shock. Most of us thought we were going all the way across. Now it turned out we had not gone so far after all — hardly out to deep water — we could even telephone home! Then there was that first night in the old "Newfie" barracks on the Army side with the bedbugs marching — marching — marching —. Later there were the Marines of the gates to the Navy side — there is still some doubt as to who were the victors when we finally moved over to the Naval barracks. Placentia across the gut was out of bounds for Navy so we had to go in and see why. St. Johns was the sainted city of liberty with its capital attractions and the bazaars of High and Water Streets.

But perhaps the profoundest shock of all was the order under which we were to work ten hours a day, seven days a week — at first — then six and one half days a week until near the very end when the work was near completion and the days had grown too short. And Commander Victor W. Buhr came to haunt us even in our dreams.

However, all these were incidentals, the job was the thing and here we had a job to do — a real job. This battalion with the 17th and the 64th formed the 10th Naval Construction Regiment which took over from contractor Merritt, Chapman and Scott, all construction, maintenance and operation of the Naval Base. A large amount of construction remained to be done to complete the base and the 69th Battalion was given an

equitable share of the work. Projects and operations assigned to the 69th included construction of a gymnasium with a clear floor space 100'×300' with additional shower, locker, and training rooms, moving 50 existing structures to new locations and rehabilitating them, paving extensions to existing airplane runways and 11 miles of roads on the Naval and Army Base, and clearing and landscaping approximately 74 acres of the base area. In addition, men of the 69th assisted on construction of a pile-supported, concrete-decked, marginal wharf; construction and installation of mechanical and electrical services; operation and maintenance of transportation and heavy equipment; and in the various maintenance departments. Between construction operations, the battalion unloaded ships, and carried on military training as part of the strategic reserve of the base. Two reviews highlighted the military phase of the program. The first was a battalion review before Captain H. J. Nelson, the Commandant of the Naval Base. The second was a regimental review of all battalions of the 10th Construction Regiment in honor of Rear Admiral Oldendorff.

Near the end of the cruise the battalion gradually took on another job, which for several reasons had best remain unmentioned here; but there are many of us yet who secretly remember the pebbles "like millions of little fishes snapping at the raindrops".

By the end of November the battalion had gained its objective of "mission completed", and on December 6, 1943 — Oh happy day — all hands boarded the U.S.S. *Antaeus* for the return to the States. Home for Christmas it was, for after the arrival back at N.C.T.C., Davisville, the entire battalion was given twenty days' leave. What better Christmas present could we have?

Again it was a period of fundamentals at N.C.T.C. under station instructors. More military and technical training and three campaigns in Sun Valley, during one of which the 69th broke all records on the rifle range. In one official qualifying shoot, 91.03 percent of the battalion personnel qualified as marksmen, 109 men qualified as expert riflemen, and one man fired

the high score of 195 out of a possible 200. Until the battalion left N.C.T.C. for its second cruise overseas, the last two records still stood.

The academic routine continued apace until construction again absorbed the attention of the battalion. One detachment was sent out to Glenview Naval Air Facilities near Chicago. Another group was detached to Charleston on a satellite air field of the Quonset Air Station. Another group was flown to Nantucket Island, and a fourth group was detailed on construction of a pile pier at A.B.D. Other personnel were assigned to automotive and heavy equipment repair. All proved their ability as diversified construction men and established records to the credit of the battalion.

Reorganization was not to be avoided, and on February 23, 1944, 193 of our able bodied seamen were transferred to enrich the complements of two other battalions — 76 to the 49th Battalion and 117 to the 70th Battalion. Prior to this, on February 3rd, Commander Joseph B. Rigo, who had been the battalion's skipper from the beginning, was detached to take charge of Construction Battalion 127. Lieut. Commander Evan E. Ashlock was our next Officer-in-Charge, but he was with the battalion only a short time — from March 3rd to April 7th. The third Officer-in-Charge to join the battalion is our present skipper, Commander Frank N. Walsh, who took over on April 26th after just returning from duty with the 1st Construction Battalion in the South Pacific.

On May 5, 1944 the battalion moved over to A.B.D., Davisville, to prepare for its second tour of duty overseas and here begins the cruise on which this book is written.

CRUISE CALENDAR

- 15 May 1944 Embarkation leaves began.
- 28 May 1944 Battalion split into three units.
- 10 June 1944 Battalion review at A.B.D., Davisville.
- 16 June 1944 Sailed from 35th Street Pier, Brooklyn.
- 29 June 1944 Landed in Liverpool, England
- 30 June 1944 Arrived Teignmouth, England.
- 1 July 1944 Arrived Plymouth, England.
- 11 August 1944 Reconnaissance party sent to France.
- 12 August 1944 Detachment sent to Falmouth, England.
- 26 August 1944 Detachment sent to Dunkeswell, England.
- 14 October 1944 Embarked for Omaha Beach.
- 11 November 1944 Left Cherbourg for England.
- 15 November 1944 Detachment sent to Vicarage.
- 23 November 1944 Detachment sent to Southampton, England.
- 24 November 1944 Detachment sent to Falmouth, England.
- 30 November 1944 Detachment sent to Exeter, England.
- 2 December 1944 Detachment sent to Rosneath, Scotland.
- 29 December 1944 Detachment sent to Upottery, England.
- 19 March 1945 Detachment sent to Falmouth, England.
- 1 April 1945 Reconnaissance parties sent to Germany.
- 6 April 1945 First Echelon left for Germany.
- 7 May 1945 Second Echelon left for Germany.
- 13 May 1945 Battalion united in Bremen, Germany.
- 15 May 1945 Detachment sent to Bremerhaven, Germany.
- 4 June 1945 Detachment sent to Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany.
- 22 June 1945 Detachment sent to England for transport to U.S.A.
- 6 July 1945 First draft left England for States.

THE LOG

The early days of May 1944 were tense with expectancy. The fact that we were once again at A.B.D. was proof enough that our stay in the States was to be short-lived. A.B.D. and foreign duty were synonymous. Many other reasons, too numerous to mention, presented themselves. For one thing we had been built up to full complement once again; and, based purely on past experience we knew it was time to "move out" again. Wasn't it spring-time in Rhode Island? Wasn't the chill leaving the air of New England nights? Didn't the sun feel nice and warm and full of promise; and weren't the flowers blooming and the birds singing again? They were, and the 69th had always uprooted itself and moved on at this time of the year. Again the Gods of Fate decreed that we were still not to witness this awakening and pulsation of nature in "Little Rhoddy". We were strictly a winter outfit in-so-far as stateside duty was concerned. However, all things have their compensations and shipping out meant an embarkation leave ten whole days to spend with our loved ones, playing and having fun, dancing and swimming, and collecting a few last minute hangovers before the inevitably sad job of saying "good-bye" arrived.

Beginning on 15 May 1944, groups of 69'ers began leaving A.B.D. on their embarkation leaves. Groups left over a period of three days depending on the location of their homes and the amount of travel time required.

On 28 May 1944 leaves expired and the men returned to camp, except those who missed the plane.

Then the bomb-shell fell. We were to be split up. What worse news could come fresh on the heels of a pleasant leave? It meant that old friends were to be separated; men with whom we had worked for over a year and men who learned to place a value on their friendships would no longer work together. We were to be split into three units; a half battalion and two CBMU units which would ship out for separate destinations as such.

Then the process of deciding upon the roster which would compose each unit began. A mad scramble ensued with the resultant confusion of trying to accomplish several week's work in the space of a few days. Our skipper and Executive Officer became gray headed over-night. The Personnel and Disbursing Officers were leading their yeoman and store-keepers around on leashes for fear they would bite the leg of some more fortunate Seabee who did not have to worry his head over this detail work. The "lists" changed back and forth; swaps were negotiated; and, there was standing room only in the line of men who wanted to ship out with the 69th again.

Finally the die was cast. On 3 June 1944, 5 officers and 263 enlisted men left „Y" area for an adjacent area to be known in the future as CBMU 611. The following day 4 officers and 270 enlisted men became designated as CBMU 612. The remainder of the battalion which was to continue to be known as the 69th Battalion then settled down to a period of sweating out the scuttle-butt as to where our new Island X was to be, when we would leave, and what kind of a job we would have.

The concensus of opinion was that we were headed for the European Theatre of Operations where things were pretty hot at that time. Even

money bets were being made as to our exact location including our port of debarkation. All of this sounded attractive for it spelled action with lots of promise for worthwhile endeavor; and, after five months of training camp inactivity the boys were ready for this work.

Preparations went forward for a battalion review which was to be held under arms and with packs. This event came off on 10 June 1944 and was the first of its kind held at A.B.D. Favorable comments were received from the other activities who saw it. Four days later, "we had had it". Marching to the snappy music of the A.B.D. Station Force Band we arrived at the train shed that is the jumping-off place for Seabee outfits. It seemed as if everyone at Endicott was there to wish us "bon-voyage". The Red Cross was on hand as usual with hot coffee and doughnuts. The band played, last minute handshakes were exchanged, and then the engineer pulled the whistle and we were off to our second Island X. If we had not been loaded down with gear it could easily have been another week-end liberty in New York for that was the direction in which we were headed. After several hours on the train and numerous "security" detours which took us practically to Texas, we arrived at the 35th Street pier in Brooklyn from which we were to embark.

Our ship was the SS General William Mitchell, a huge transport, new and sleek and clean. It had just been commissioned a few months previously. We found that we were to have ample company on our voyage. Soldiers marched aboard for hours until we finally had a cargo of 4500 of them and our own small band of Seabees. All equipment was loaded and we secured until 0300, 16 June, at which time we sailed. Because of darkness we were deprived of waving a farewell greeting to the "Lady of the Harbor". However, we all left our hearts in her keeping.

Daylight found us in open water, a part of a convoy of 42 ships. Most of

the trip we were blessed with reasonably smooth water. However, at times we wondered if the tankers off our starboard beam would ever come back out of the troughs. We settled down to life aboard ship with its attendant discomforts and monotony. This monotony, however, was short-lived for the 69th "got on the beam". Twice daily our military band and dance orchestra gave concerts for the entertainments of the troops. Shows were given and a "sea-going" edition of the battalion paper was published. The daily paper of the ship had this to say: "Of all the entertainment groups that this ship has carried on it's many crossings of the Atlantic, this Seabee group is the finest."

No enemy action was encountered, thanks to the watchful eye of our DE escorts.

After ten days of nothing but water we saw our first "dry-land" 26 June 1944. The battalion log for the next few days best describes our activities

"26 June 1944 At sea aboard the SS General William Mitchell. Sighted land for first time since leaving N. Y. at about 2230 . . . the North Irish coast. Entered North Channel and picked up Scottish coast about 0300."

"27 June 1944 At sea aboard the SS General William Mitchell. Proceeding through Irish Sea to anchorage off Liverpool. Anchored in bay off Liverpool. Rode at anchor. No unusual incidents."

"28 June 1944 Remained aboard the SS General William Mitchell at anchor off Liverpool."

"29 June 1944 SS General William Mitchell weighed anchor and began moving into Liverpool. SS General William Mitchell tied up to dock in Liverpool."

From there the story goes on — — —

"We had landed in Limey-Land."

The Red Cross was there, of course, to refresh us physically and mentally. Even "Little Rhoddy" was represented among the girls who passed through our train dispensing eats and smokes and, of all things, our first taste of English tea with which we were later to become very familiar.

As we left Liverpool we had a first-hand sight of the actual results of a country that had been at war for over four years. Bombed out buildings, Anderson shelters, and debris were to be seen from our train window as we pulled out of the city.

Later as our train moved out into the country-side, all that we had read of rural England came true. The picturesque little farms with their patchwork quilt effect made one think of a story-book. The sheaves of grain were stacked in the fields like an army at attention and white dots of sheep on the hillsides were like snow that had fallen on the earth.

Our first destination proved to be Newton-Abbott where we were met and welcomed by officers of the 29th Battalion. From there we were taken by trucks to Teignmouth where we were billeted in hotels that during peace time were holiday spots for the British elite. It was there that we became introduced to English pubs and their stocks of mild and bitters. We found that to the middle class Englishman, the pub was the center of social life much as our corner coke stand in the States a place to discuss their politics, the war, their family life and the lives of their neighbors.

Our stay in Teignmouth was brief. On 1 July we began the movement of personnel to Edinburgh Road Camp and Shapter's Field in Plymouth, noted historically as the place from which the Pilgrims sailed to America. Plymouth, once a proud and picturesque city, had suffered one of the worst beatings of any city in England during the blitz. The only thing

which had not suffered was the peoples' courage and good nature. Some the men soon found "homes" and six of them married English girls.

Work of course, started at once. Various jobs were undertaken, the principal one being pontoon assembly at Cattedown Wharf. Although not a pontoon battalion and never having had any previous experience along this line, we soon set some kind of a record for speed and efficiency. Between 3 July and 12 August, the battalion had assembled over 900 strings, using more than 6000 pontoons with a weight of over 10,000 tons for a total deck area of 254,000 square feet. These were assembled for both the Army and Navy.

It was on this work that the outfit suffered its first casualty in the accidental death of "Mike" Tsavlopoulos. No one had more friends and the men of the battalion felt his death keenly. A guard of honor was selected to escort his body to Cambridge Military Cemetery where he was interred. In addition to pontoon work done, various jobs of camp construction and maintenance were done in Plymouth and other towns in Southern England. We all felt that this work was incidental to the big job ahead that of going to France and becoming a part of the war where it was actually happening.

The first step in this direction came on 11 August when 5 officers and 33 enlisted men formed our first reconnaissance party and left for the Quiberon Peninsula of France. The plan at that time was to survey for the possible construction of naval bases in that section which the 69th would operate. This plan, however, was abandoned and the reconnaissance party returned to Plymouth.

During August the men of the battalion were granted their first leave in England. This gave them the opportunity of seeing London for the first time and getting their baptism of fire from the buzz-bombs which were



ravaging London at that time. Places that had only been names in books and newspapers became realities; the House of Parliament, Big Ben, Westminster Abbey, Covent Gardens, Trafalgar Square, Rainbow Corner and the famous "commando run" of Piccadilly Circus. Some of the men chose Scotland or Ireland with all of their scenic beauty for their leaves.

Work went on as usual with scuttle-butt flying thick and fast about our embarking for France. Finally on 14 October we boarded 3 LCI's at Saltash Passage and were on our way. The next day found us off Omaha Beach from which the invasion of the continent took place on D Day.

Within 24 hours of our arrival at Omaha, the 69th took over the operation of the Rhino barges used in lightering cargo and troops from ship to shore. The harbor was a veritable bee-hive of activity with as many as 50 ships anchored off the break-water at a time. 19 Rhinos were in operation and this called for around-the-clock work from all hands. Seamanship had to be learned both afloat and ashore since our camp was a sea of knee-deep mud. Troops and cargo were unloaded at an unbelievable rate. Supplies were hardly allowed to hit the shore before they were loaded on trucks and started for the front over the Red Ball Highway. The troops were sent to staging areas and thence to the front which at that time had not gotten out of France. Every man in the outfit was busy and the work was hard but each felt that he was doing something vital towards winning the war, and was therefore happy and content.

The decommissioning of Omaha came in November at which time the battalion embarked from Cherbourg for England. Back in Plymouth again, detachments began to ship out for jobs at various places in the United Kingdom. One was sent to Rosneath, Scotland, to do base maintenance and construction work. All reports were that the boys "had never had it

better". They saw Loch Lomond for the first time; Glasgow was a great liberty town with plenty of "spirits" and the usual "commando runs". Another detachment was in Exeter where they did maintenance work on all naval equipment in the United Kingdom.

Then the largest detachment left for Upottery Air Field near Taunton. This job involved the widening and paving of 8 miles of highway, construction of hangers and huts, and the maintenance of existing structures. Living conditions were rather rugged when the men first arrived, but soon, through their Seabee "know how" they had fixed things to their liking. Recreation facilities and liberty were both good at this base and the men's morale was never better.

The balance of the battalion remained in Plymouth, except for small detachments which went to Southampton, Falmouth and Weymouth. The ones remaining in Plymouth had varied jobs. One group was stationed at Vicarage Receiving Barracks for base maintenance while the other did remodeling and maintenance work at other camps and activities near and around Plymouth.

The 69th dance band made quite a name for itself in England. Upon our first arrival in Plymouth, weekly open air dances were held on The Hoe. The English people got a real sample of good old American sweet and swing and the band was very much in demand. Dances were played for all branches of the Allied forces and concerts were given aboard ships and at the children's orphanage.

The peak of their success came, however, in the early days of spring when they were auditioned for a broadcast over the BBC. This proved to be a success and the boys of the band were invited to London to broadcast. The great day came and they loaded into trucks and proceeded to the studios. Their music was broadcast over the BBC and transcriptions

were made which were flown to the States and there re-broadcast over the Mutual network. Later they played for the forces in the famous Dunker's Den at the Rainbow Corner Red Cross.

Work went on as usual during early spring with scuttle-butt working overtime as to our future. Some said we were to go home while others took a more pessimistic view-point that we were destined again for the continent. The latter proved to be the better prophets.

In early April, reconnaissance parties departed. Destination . . . Germany, where the war was very much alive at that time. On 6 April, 360 men and officers entrained for London for shipment across the channel to an unknown destination. It seemed as if half of England was on hand to wish us well the night we left Plymouth. Our shipmates who were left behind had mixed emotions. They knew of the ever present danger that existed in the war zone.

Arriving in London, the first Echelon proceeded to Tilbury Docks on the Thames River where they were joined by a large group of regular navy men. There they boarded the Duke of York, an English ship, and sailed at 1600. At 0900 the following day they docked at Ostend, Belgium from which city their travels were to begin. Ostend had been liberated for some time but the scourges of war were visible everywhere. The night was spent in an old barracks, which was formerly used by the Germans during their occupation of that part of Belgium.

On 8 April our convoy of 103 trucks of men and equipment left Ostend. During the day we crossed Belgium and part of Holland. Our first geographical big moment came when we crossed the Maas River near Venlo, Holland, thus becoming the first Seabee battalion in Hitler's Germany.

Now came the evidence of how well the Germans had been repaid for their destruction of other countries. Cities were leveled and even the

trees along the highways were splinters of wood. Our first realization of just how close we were to the front came that night as we bivouaced on the ground near Kevelaer, Germany. Artillery fire lighted the sky and the earth trembled.

At 1300 the next day we crossed the Rhine River at Rees over a Bailey bridge constructed by the British Engineers and very appropriately named "London Bridge". The famed "Watch on the Rhine" was conspicuous by his absence. Following closely on the heels of the British 2nd and Canadian 1st Armies we cut back into Holland over a circuitous route and passed through little Dutch towns that had been liberated for only a few days. As we passed through these places it seemed as if the entire population was on hand to welcome us. Happiness and relief from strain were written on everyone's face. As the convoy passed through Enschede, which had been liberated for only two days, the civilians' joy and enthusiasm was contagious. K ration cigarettes, gum, chocolate and biscuits were thrown from our trucks and it seemed at times as if our convoy would have to stop to avoid injuring someone.

We arrived that night in Hengelo. Hengelo, which had been liberated five days prior to our arrival, was to acquaint us with the Dutch, their customs, homes, and way of living. The cleanliness and beauty of the homes which had not been damaged by bombs and artillery fire was commendable. Our stay here lasted two weeks. This delay was due to the fact that Bremen, which was our ultimate destination, had not yet been taken by the British.

On 24 April the word came to proceed. Leaving Hengelo, we soon crossed the Dutch-German frontier. Road signs at the border proclaimed, "This is the end of the civilized world" and "You are entering Germany. Behave as conquerors". Later that day we crossed the Weser River and set up

camp at the Nempcel Kazarne on the Brunneweg Strasse in Verden, Germany. This was formerly a large German Cavalry school which had recently been vacated. In clearing the buildings many grenades, mines, and booby traps were exploded; however, none of the battalion personnel suffered injury.

We were to stay in Verden for a week since Bremen, 22 miles distant, had not yet fallen. Street fighting was in progress and our buildings shook from the heavy artillery fire. We learned that near our base was one of the infamous concentration camps where the Germans had practiced their atrocities. The camp at one time had a capacity of over 50,000 and the death rate was as high as 700 daily. A prisoner-of-war cage across the road from our camp was kept full as the British brought in their prisoners.

On 27 April the city of Bremen fell and the First Echelon proceeded there. As we entered the city, smoke from the ruins was still rising. Any section of the city that had offered resistance had been completely destroyed. Very few of the civilians who had been evacuated had returned; but those that had were going through the piles of rubble trying to salvage something from homes newly destroyed by the siege.

Our camp again was a number of German barracks from which the Germans had been ejected only a few hours previously, the Lettow-Vorbeck Kazarene some few miles outside Bremen. This was to be our primary job in Bremen. Re-roofing the buildings where artillery fire had made huge gaps, installation of plumbing and lighting, setting up shops and offices were necessary to make the place a first class base. German homes were taken over for officers' quarters and these had to be made liveable. Flag headquarters had to be set up in the city and this project required a great amount of varied work. There was work to be done at the docks.

High lines to furnish power had to be repaired and strung into the city. The 69th dug in and got busy.

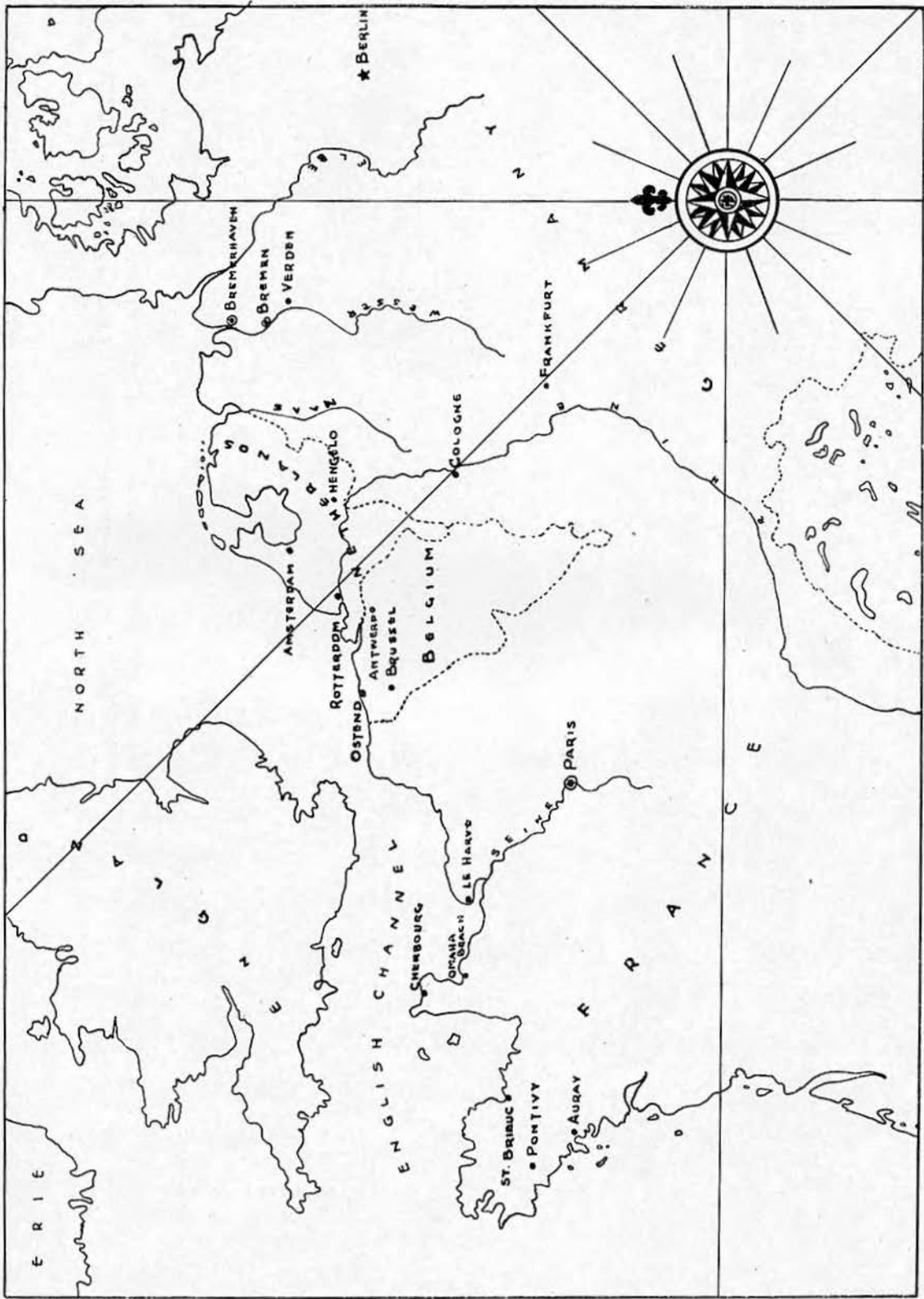
After several false alarms, V-E day came on 8 May. The news was taken very soberly by the men of the outfit. While it was an occasion for celebration the men knew that there was still an enormous amount of work to do.

We learned that the Second Echelon or remainder of the battalion had left England and was somewhere on the continent and we expected their arrival daily. On 13 May the balance of the battalion arrived, a tired and very dirty bunch of Seabees, but all happy to be with the rest of their shipmates again. While possibly not having quite as an exciting time as the first group they none-the-less had stories to tell.

After an 0300 breakfast they had entrained for London on 7 May. That night was spent in the staging areas at Tilbury. On 8 May the Second Echelon, and regular navy personnel who had joined them at Tilbury, boarded the Duke of York for the crossing to the continent. The night was spent anchored just off the east coast of England at the mouth of the Thames. V-E celebrations ashore were visible and audible to the group aboard who could only wish to join in the fun.

9 May saw the group in Ostend. The first continental liberty was had here since they stayed until the morning of 11 May. For the first time since leaving the States strawberry sundaes were available. Music halls were full and it was with regret that the stay was terminated.

11 May saw the second group wending its way through Ghent and Antwerp and finally encamping for the night near Eindhoven, Holland. It was the first taste of washing in a helmet and going on cold rations that the group had had. The weather was balmy and sleeping on the



ground proved to be a delightful experience after the slow, hot travel during the day.

The following day the group entered Germany and proceeded as far as Lingen where the overnight stop was made. Again sleeping on the ground and cold rations were in order. Sunday, 13 May found the objective near. After winding over circuitous side roads the convoy was finally met outside Syke by members of the First Echelon. With expert directions the convoy quickly rejoined the first group in Bremen.

It is believed that the journey from Plymouth, England, to Bremen, Germany, is the longest overland convoy trip made by any Seabee battalion outside the continental limits of the United States, the total mileage covered being in the neighborhood of slightly more than 800 miles. In Bremen the battalion adopted the title of "Victory Battalion" for the reason that it was the only one which operated in the forward combat area in Germany and participated in the final surrender of that country.

The 69'th's participation with other U. S. Naval forces in the campaign which culminated in the occupation of the Weser River ports of Bremen and Bremerhaven was mentioned in a front page article carried in the London "News of the World", Sunday, 20 May 1945, edition. The article in part is as follows:

"Vice-Admiral Robert Lee Ghormley is now serving as Commander of the U. S. Naval Forces in Germany, it was announced yesterday, and Rear-Admiral Arthur Granville Robinson as Commander U. S. Ports and Bases there.

As such the latter will direct port activities at Bremen and Bremerhaven in the recently established American Enclave to maintain the U. S. Army of Occupation.

Advance reconnaissance, disarmament, salvage, patrol, and construction battalion units of the U. S. Navy, under Rear-Admiral Robinson followed British Second Army troops into the dock areas of Bremen on the day of the city's fall in order to put the first captured German port into operation as soon as possible.

The entry of American blue-jackets into the Weser River ports was the climax to a unique cross country trek through Belgium, Holland and Germany.

In a complete reversal of normal military procedure, and for the first time in history, the U. S. Navy was carried overland by Army units to occupy an enemy port from the rear."

Thus the 69th had set another precedent; another to add to the growing list of "firsts".

Work continued at a rapid pace in Bremen, and, as visible signs of progress were apparent, detachments began leaving for Bremerhaven and Frankfurt-am-Main. Bremerhaven was to be set up as the main port of entry into Germany for the occupation army. Quarters for the officers and men had to be made liveable as they had in Bremen. Dock installations, power lines, and other facilities were to be repaired. Frankfurt-am-Main was designated as Headquarters for the U. S. Navy for the occupation of Germany. Living quarters for personnel and office facilities for Admiral Ghormley and his staff had to be made available.

In the meantime, employment of German civilian labor was begun at Bremen. The men were investigated thoroughly by the Allied Military Government as to their activities before and during the war to make certain they were not dangerous Nazi sympathizers. These men were to be trained in the shops, transportation, and the operations of the base

so that eventually only a skeleton crew of Seabees would remain in Germany in supervisory capacities.

As work neared its completion, scuttle-butt, the Navy's grape-vine, came into operation again. We were going back to England; we were going straight home from Germany; we were going to replace another outfit in United Kingdom so that they could go home.

The bud of possibility burst into full bloom of actuality on 22 June 1945, as thirty men left by plane for England. Followed thereafter two lifts daily of men and cargo, with a skip of a few days now and then for cargo alone.

Another "first" had been born for the 69th. For the first time in history of the ETO a Seabee battalion was being moved entirely by air over a distance of approximately 600 miles. Various routes were taken. Some of the men were favored with a northern route which took them from Bremen across the Zuider Zee and over the shell which was once the gay and care-free city of Amsterdam, Holland. From the air the canals and streams looked as if they were huge snakes or caterpillars twisting their way across the land. Then further on, over the Hague and out over the Channel where we approached the English coast, sunken skips were seen resting on the bottom the relics of the earlier days of the great conflict. The huge activity on the Thames up to London and the vastness of that city as seen from the air left the men spell-bound. Places that they had visited on leave such as London Bridge, Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's, and the House of Parliament all looked like toy houses that one used to make as children. From London they flew out over the midlands and the moors with their patch work quilt farms and tiny thatched roof farm houses.

The destination of the outfit was Harrowbeer Air Field near Plymouth.

From there we were taken to Heathfield Naval Base to await further orders.

On 27 June 1945 the news that the whole outfit had been awaiting came. As men continued to arrive from Germany daily, a shipping list was being prepared for the first one hundred men who were to begin the long journey. On 6 July 1945 the first group left for the States with the expectation that the remainder of the 69th would soon follow on the way to the United States and home!

In Memoriam

ANGELO MIKE TSAVLOPOULOS

*Boatswain's Mate First Class
United States Naval Reserve*

Born June 29, 1915

Died July 24, 1944

In reviewing the achievements of this battalion, it is fitting to pay our respects to one who made the supreme sacrifice for his country. At 1425, July 24, 1944 at Plymouth, England, this battalion suffered its first and only casualty of the war in the death of Angelo Mike Tsavlopoulos. Death was caused almost instantaneously by intracranial injuries resulting from a rope's accidentally striking Tsavlopoulos on the back of the head and forcing his head against a steel steering wheel of a tug which he was piloting. Burial was in Cambridge American Military Cemetery, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England, 27 July.

To all of us "Mike", as he was known, was one of the family, a buddy whose cheerful personality will be long remembered. Words are inadequate to express the sorrow felt in the hearts of the officers and men of this battalion by the death of our mate.



F. N. WALSH
Commander, CEC, USNR
Officer-in-Charge



E. A. BLOUT
Lieutenant Commander, CEC, USNR
Executive Officer

PRESENTING THE OFFICERS

OF THE

SIXTY-NINTH BATTALION





H. L. LAWDER
Lieutenant, MC, USNR



H. W. LINDHOLM
Lieutenant, CEC, USNR



I. A. KIRCHER
Lieutenant, CEC, USNR



D. A. CONNOLLY
Lieutenant, DC, USNR



R. H. BROOKS
Lieutenant, MC, USNR



J. MERLE, JR.
Lieutenant, CEC, USNR



R. W. MASON
Lieutenant (jg), CEC, USNR



L. J. MURPHY
Lieutenant (jg), CEC, USNR



G. S. HALL
Lieutenant (jg), SC, USNR



R. R. CLOPPER
Lieutenant (jg), SC, USNR



W. M. COPP
Lieutenant (jg), CEC, USNR



B. R. MAGRUDER
Lieutenant (jg), CEC, USNR



R. E. WHEELAHAN
Lieutenant (jg), CEC, USNR



H. E. COBB
Lieutenant (jg), CEC, USNR



L. F. ARMBRUSTER
Chief Carpenter, CEC, USNR



O. L. HINSON
Chief Carpenter, CEC, USNR



S. D. CRANDALL
Chief Carpenter, CEC, USNR



K. E. STRAYER
Chief Carpenter, CEC, USNR



O. E. HIGHFILL
Chief Carpenter, CEC, USNR

The Sixty-ninth

VERSE

We're the boys of the Sixty-ninth we're

not so very neat, we very seldom comb our hair we

never wash our feet we're the scum of the

seven seas we're always looking for booze we're the boys of the

Sixty-ninth, so who in the hell are you?

WORDS BY

MRS. J. B. JOHNSON, JR.
SCORED BY

on Parade

CHORUS

The musical score is written for a three-part setting (Soprano, Alto, and Bass) in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "As we go march - ing and the band be - gins to P - L - A - Y - you can hear the skip - per shout - ing my rag - ge - dy ass sea - bees are on par - ade - Ach - tung!". The score includes guitar chords (G, A7, D7, G6, Bmi) and various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

As we go march - ing and the
band be - gins to P - L - A - Y -
you can hear the skip - per
shout - ing my rag - ge - dy ass sea -
bees are on par - ade - Ach - tung!

Music By
J.L.R.

UNKNOWN



First row: J. M. Brady EM3c, N. J. Brady SK1c, J. J. Brand WT3c, F. H. Braun CM3c, I. Breeding CM1c.
 Second row: J. H. Breit SKD2c, C. D. Brenneman CWT, L. Breton SF3c, H. S. Brewer CM3c, A. E. Britton CCS.
 Third row: C. O. Brown S1c, H. K. Brown PhM1c, J. D. Brown CM2c, R. Brown SF2c, R. E. Brown EM3c.
 Fourth row: W. J. Brown Y2c, W. H. Bryant EM3c, D. L. Buchanan MM3c, P. G. Buck MM2c, R. Buczynski EM3c.
 Fifth row: H. Buhay Bkr3c, C. E. Buller S1c, R. M. Bulley CM3c, C. S. Burke Ptr1c, J. S. Burker, Cox.



First row: J. M. Burton SF2c, F. R. Bushee MoMM3c, J. J. Butterfield S1c, J. J. Buyarski, Cox, W. C. Callender SF2c.
 Second row: R. S. Camiola Bkr3c, C. M. Campbell MM2c, J. J. Campbell GM2c, L. R. Campeau CCS, C. J. Capodice MM3c.
 Third row: C. W. Capella CM1c, J. M. Cardillo CM3c, R. C. Carlisle MM3c, C. C. Carlton CM1c, W. H. Carnes MoMM1c.
 Fourth row: W. L. Carpenter, Jr. MM1c, E. J. Carroll MM3c, H. E. Carson SC3c, E. B. Carver CM3c, G. Casey CM1c.
 Fifth row: J. C. Castagna SF3c, O. Cates SF2c, A. J. P. Caya CM3c, L. Cerino S1c, N. A. Cervino SF2c.



First row: D. D. Chance SF2c, R. D. C. Chapman CM3c, O. J. Chastain PhM1c, J. D. Cheatham MoMM1c, R. Christenson S1c.
 Second row: H. J. Christians Bkr3c, L. J. Cibley, Cox, J. F. Ciccarelli S1c, R. M. Cieslik MM3c, J. F. Cirigliano CM1c.
 Third row: E. C. Civetti GM3c, A. B. Clark CM1c, C. D. Clark CM1c, K. L. Clark EM2e, P. J. Clark SF1c.
 Fourth row: V. G. Clark MM3c, B. F. Clearwater S1c, J. J. Clements EM2c, A. J. Cloak MM3c, B. M. Cole CCM.
 Fifth row: J. Coley, Cox, M. Collingwood CM1c, G. H. Collins MM3c, G. L. Collins MoMM1c, J. C. Collins, WT1c.



First row: J. T. Collins CCM, C. F. Connors BM2c, R. B. Connors EM3c, J. W. Conrad S1c, W. C. Consolver CM1c.
 Second row: J. N. Cooke S12c, J. J. Corbin CM1c, J. J. Cox BM1c, C. M. Crispen MMR3c, K. L. Croft SC3c.
 Third row: C. C. Crogan CM1c, R. B. Cudahy CM3c, D. B. Cunningham MoMM1c, N. E. Curd CSF, F. J. Curran MM3c.
 Fourth row: E. B. Carrier SC3c, M. A. Dagenhart CM1c, V. S. Dagon MM3c, R. F. Dainty CM3c, E. B. Dalton CM1c.
 Fifth row: B. H. Daniel EM2c, R. L. Darlington SF2c, C. O. Davis SF2c, E. H. Davis EM1c, W. A. Davis CM1c.



First row: J. J. Day SF1c, W. C. Day MMS3c, S. DeFillippo, Cox, G. H. DeForest CCM, O. B. DeMaine EM2c.
 Second row: J. DePaolo SC2c, A. H. DeVoe CCM, B. T. Dean CM1c, H. A. Deemer Jr. PhM2c, G. C. Deits CCM.
 Third row: J. Demmers CM3c, W. Denniston S1c, M. D. Denton SF3c, R. O. Desroches CM3c, D. R. DiBari S1c.
 Fourth row: L. F. Dickinson CSK, H. E. Dietrich SC2c, S. Dietz MoMM3c, J. C. Dillon WT1c, N. A. Dippolito MM2c.
 Fifth row: T. K. Dismukes CM3c, C. J. Ditta Bkr2c, L. Dlugosinski, Cox, L. E. Dodd Jr. MM1c, C. W. Doherty Jr. SSML3c.



First row: C. L. W. Dolloff EM2c, A. F. Donofrio M2c, C. E. Dorris Y2c, E. E. Douglas EM1c, J. T. Douglas MM3c.
 Second row: F. C. Downs Jr. S1c, R. E. Drasher MM1c, R. A. DuVall SK2c, J. A. Dubiel S2c, H. L. Dunbar SF1c.
 Third row: U. C. Cuncan SF2c, R. A. Dunham Ptr2c, E. W. Durham MM3c, F. A. Dutil SK1c, H. J. Dyer CM3c.
 Fourth row: D. C. Eggert CM3c, C. C. Ehlert S1c, E. R. Eide BM2c, G. L. Elder MM3c, T. Elders EM1c.
 Fifth row: R. W. Ellington Jr. SF2c, L. F. Ellis Jr. CM3c, M. L. Ellis Jr. S1c, J. C. Emery WT2c, Z. Erdelyi EM2c.



First row: W. U. Erick MM3c, C. E. Erickson CPhM, A. A. Erwin CSF, B. Espeland CBM, S. J. Esposito SF2c.
 Second row: H. T. Essex CM3c, T. L. Evans MoMM3c, V. F. Fabrizio S1c, M. Fantozzi CM3c, L. Farrel SF1c.
 Third row: A. Felderhoff S1c, J. M. Ferguson SSMC2c, M. J. Fetsko CM2c, W. R. Fitton S1c, R. F. Fitzgerald MaM3c.
 Fourth row: L. B. Fitzpatrick MM1c, P. E. Flach CM1c, R. M. Flynn CM2c, R. E. Flynn Jr. MM3c, C. M. Forgione SF3c.
 Fifth row: L. Forrester S1c, R. W. Forward M1c, C. L. Foster MM1c, W. E. Foster MM1c, Edmund H. Fournier CM1c.



First row: K. W. Fox CM2c, T. E. Fraley CEM, C. C. Frane MoMM2c, G. A. Frazier CM1c, G. P. Freeman CM3c.
 Second row: H. D. Friend BM1c, A. F. Fronc CM3c, W. P. Fry CM2c, J. E. Fullerton CCS, M. Carcia Bkr3c.
 Third row: J. W. Gardner CM3c, B. F. Gates MMS2c, W. F. Geerhold MoMM1c, J. Geeter, St3c, J. J. Geiger SF3c.
 Fourth row: C. C. Gentle MM3c, C. S. Gentle MM3c, T. Gerasimchik CM3c, G. W. Gibson CM1c, R. J. Gibson MoMM3c.
 Fifth row: V. L. Gibson CM2c, W. L. Gilbert CBM, H. I. Gill MM1c, R. W. Gillespie CCM, R. J. Gilmore EM1c.



First row: W. C. Given SF1c, B. Glazer SF2c, A. P. Gnoza SF1c, M. Gomez S1c, H. A. Goodman Jr. CM3c.
 Second row: F. E. Gordon SF2c, J. E. Gordon MM3c, J. L. Gordon CM3c, O. R. Gorzney CM3c, J. W. Graff CM3c.
 Third row: A. A. Granholm MM3c, C. A. Grant MM1c, D. C. Grant WT2c, G. J. Grassani S1c, C. D. Graves EM3c.
 Fourth row: C. W. Gray Jr. SC3c, L. N. Greeves CM1c, W. B. Greiman MM2c, E. I. Grinder CM3c, H. W. Grunst CM3c.
 Fifth row: S. D. Guzell SF2c, J. F. Haberle SF1c, A. L. Hamett S1c, D. R. Hamett MoMM3c, H. B. Hammond CM3c.



First row: R. E. Hammond CSF, L. H. Hampton CM1c, C. W. Hanson CM1c, R. A. Harding BM2c, J. T. Harris S1c.
 Second row: H. P. Hartline SSMC2c, J. Hartman SC2c, G. D. Hatch CMM, J. A. Hauck S1c, O. Haude Jr. CM3c.
 Third row: A. Hawes WT1c, J. D. Hayden Jr. EM1c, L. N. Haynes Jr. MoMM3c, Ben Heald BM1c, R. F. Healy CSF.
 Fourth row: E. R. Heckman MM2c, H. H. Hedin CM2c, H. W. Hedgepath SC2c, A. A. Heinze CM1c, J. A. Helling CM2c.
 Fifth row: J. A. Helms PhM3c, G. H. Henderson MoMM1c, J. G. Henderson MM2c, P. W. Hennessey CBM, L. J. Herzing M2c.



First row: E. J. Hesse SF1c, H. M. Hill EM1c, R. H. Himel SF2c, T. E. Hines SF3c, R. F. Hoffman S1c.
 Second row: J. Holaz BM1c, R. S. Hollingworth CCM, J. H. Holloway CM2c, E. J. Holmes M3c, T. R. Hood MM2c.
 Third row: C. G. Horkans MM2c, J. S. Horne CM3c, R. H. Hostetter MM1c, O. Hough Jr. MMS3c, E. W. Howard Bkr2c.
 Fourth row: L. Howard S1c, R. A. Howard CCM, H. Howells MM3c, L. Hoznor SF1c, E. J. Hrabal Sr. CM3c.
 Fifth row: G. T. Humphrey CEM, A. D. Hunt CMM, O. C. Huntley GM1c, E. F. Hurley SF1c, M. D. Hylton SF3c.



First row: R. Irick EM2c, J. Iwanuk, Cox, H. R. Jackle EM3c, J. E. Jackson Bkr2c, A. A. Jahns, Cox.
 Second row: N. E. James SK1c, P. Z. James CK1c, J. P. Janssen M1c, M. A. Jaynes S1c, R. E. Jeffries EM1c.
 Third row: P. C. Jennings CMoMM, L. L. Jensen CM3c, D. E. Jewell BM2c, L. H. Johnsey MM1c, C. E. Johnson EM3c.
 Fourth row: H. J. Johnson Jr. WT1c, J. B. Johnson Jr. Ptr1c, J. C. Johnson CM3c, R. Johnson SF3c, S. H. Johnson CM3c.
 Fifth row: E. A. Johnston CEM, A. C. Jones MoMM3c, J. B. Jones CCM, S. W. Kafchinski SC2c, M. T. Kambourakis CM3c.



First row: J. Kaplan MM3c, W. S. Karrick SC1c, R. V. Kausal MM3c, A. T. Kearsley MM1c, R. V. Keen SC1c.
 Second row: R. B. Keesler MM3c, L. A. Kellow EM1c, L. F. Kelly SF2c, R. D. Kelly Y1c, J. Kennedy SKD2c.
 Third row: C. L. Kerr MM1c, A. Kimbler MM1c, B. I. King CMM, C. A. King CCM, F. G. King MM2c.
 Fourth row: J. M. King CM3c, N. F. King Ptr3c, E. W. Kirkendall CMM, H. Kloh MoMM3c, K. W. Knight BM2c.
 Fifth row: H. J. Knisley S1c, H. H. Koerbel S1c, E. T. Kondracke CM2c, K. H. Koons Ptr2c, M. L. Korinek CM1c.



First row: T. J. Korona CM3c, C. E. Kreienkamp CM1c, D. R. Krieger SK1c, A. Krukar CM3c, J. R. Kubiak SF3c.
 Second row: W. L. Kummer GM3c, L. C. LaMar MM3c, E. R. LaVanda SF3c, E. F. Lajewski GM2c, R. F. Land SF3c.
 Third row: A. O. Landry, Cox, H. A. Lang M2c, J. W. Langston CM3c, G. F. Lansing Jr. EM3c, E. L. Lanterman SC3c.
 Fourth row: K. J. Laufers EM2c, H. Lawson CEM, L. P. LeBlanc MM3c, R. H. LeFevre MM1c, P. J. Leach, Cox.
 Fifth row: R. R. Lecher MM3c, W. G. Lehman Y2c, J. L. Lemen Jr. CM3c, J. S. Lenhard CM2c, R. L. Lentz MoMM3c.



First row: D. A. Leonard MM3c, E. J. Letkiewicz CM3c, J. B. Lewis Jr. SF3c, T. Licurgo S1c, W. I. Lippincott S1c.
 Second row: F. L. Lloyd CSF, L. V. Locke MoMM3c, B. J. Logan WT1c, J. H. Longfellow CM3c, O. E. Loy SF1c.
 Third row: J. W. Lucas MoMM1c, W. P. Luckel MMR1c, R. M. Ludwig EM1c, J. E. Lundstrom SF3c, E. J. Lynch SF1c.
 Fourth row: H. O. Lyons EM1c, R. B. McArdle CM3c, H. R. McCann CCM, H. D. McCauley Jr. CM3c, R. D. McClendon Ptr1c.
 Fifth row: H. J. McClernan SF3c, J. J. McConnell CCM, R. C. McCoy Ptr3c, W. P. McCue Y3c, E. O. MacDonald SF2c.



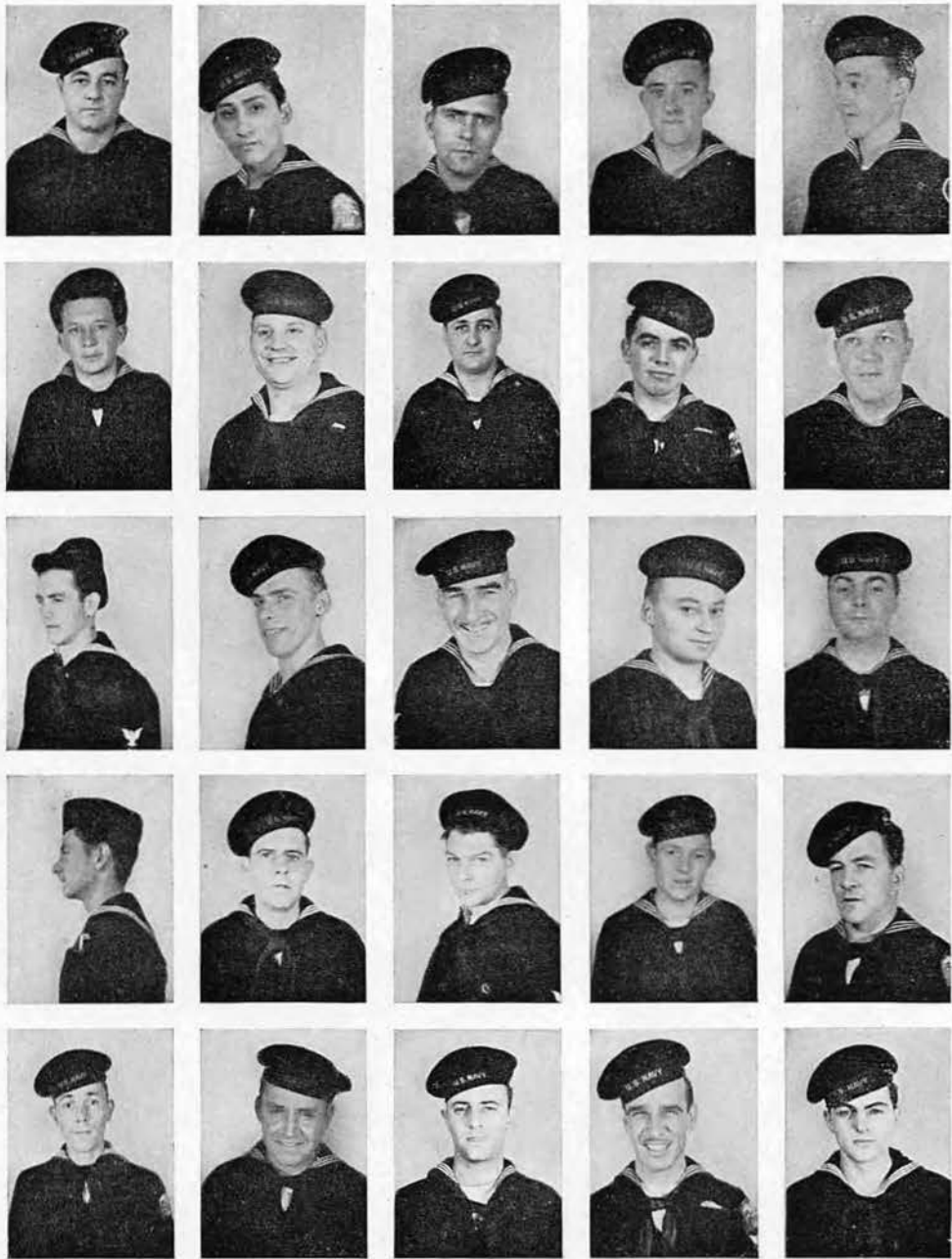
First row: J. E. McDonald SF3c, D. F. McDougal, Cox, G. L. McDowell EM2c, L. McGlaun MM1c, D. R. McGonigal F1c.
 Second row: G. L. McGuire CM3c, J. P. McGuire, Cox, J. J. McIntyre CM3c, W. H. McKenzie SF2c, J. R. McKinney CM1c.
 Third row: M. McMillian Jr. ST3c, H. F. McNeese CMM, J. L. McNulty CWT, W. H. Magennis SF1c, J. S. Magowan EM3c.
 Fourth row: R. W. Malloy S1c, M. A. Maloney SF2c, D. A. Mancini CM3c, R. F. Manning CM1c, J. H. Manny Jr. CM3c.
 Fifth row: M. Mara CBM, W. E. Marcille SF1c, R. W. Marks SKD1c, B. Marten CM2c, D. H. Martin CM3c.



First row: P. Martinez SC2c, J. J. Martuscello F1c, B. B. Marvin MoMM3c, P. J. Masek SF3c, S. A. Maslowski CM3c.
 Second row: R. M. Mason GM1c, D. W. Masser SF3c, G. W. Massey M3c, J. E. Massey SF3c, B. E. Matthews MM3c.
 Third row: W. T. Maughan SF3c, S. M. Mead F1c, J. E. Meehan SK2c, L. W. Mehler S1c, G. A. Meier, Cox.
 Fourth row: W. J. Menig S1c, D.F. Mensching SF3c, B. L. Mente Ptr3c, G. N. Merys EM3c, J. J. Messina S1c.
 Fifth row: A. L. Miller F1c, B. C. Miller Jr. MM1c, C. E. Miller EM1c, R. S. Miller S1c, H. J. C. Minehart S1c.



First row: C. N. Minzghor BM1c, E. A. Mitchell SC2c, H. R. Money S1c, J. P. Monroe EM1c, W. E. Monsen WT3c.
 Second row: J. A. Moonan Jr. SF1c, F. Moore St3c, J. D. Moore SF2c, J. R. Moore Jr. MM3c, M. H. Moore SF2c.
 Third row: J. H. Morgan CM3c, M. J. Morreale Bkr1c, A. N. Morris CM2c, H. W. Morris CMM, J. P. Morris CM3c.
 Fourth row: W. H. Morris EM1c, R. W. Morrow CM3c, C. A. Morse SF2c, E. A. Mortl Ptr3c, W. T. Mount CSF.
 Fifth row: R. T. Muhler M3c, A. H. Murphy Jr. MM2c, J. W. Myers CM2c, A. A. Nadeau MM1c, A. Nantz CM3c.



First row: A. E. Nash MM1c, L. R. Navarro CM3c, J. D. Nearey SK3c, G. A. Neitzke S1c, D. E. Nelson CM2c.
 Second row: D. H. Nelson MM3c, H. J. Nickl MMS1c, A. Nocito SF2c, R. R. Nolette M3c, J. R. Noll CM3c.
 Third row: J. A. Norwood MM3c, R. A. Novotny MM2c, R. J. O'Brien BM1c, T. O'Brien, Cox, D. C. O'Connor WT2c.
 Fourth row: C. J. O'Leary Jr. S1c, J. O'Neill BM1c, J. J. Ochocinski SSMB3c, M. D. Odom CM3c, F. E. Olson SC3c.
 Fifth row: J. A. Otey S1c, J. H. Owens MM1c, R. P. Packard SF1c, A. L. Parker MMS1c, G. M. Pasternak CM3c.



First row: R. L. Payton GM1c, W. H. Paxton CCM, R. E. Payne MoMM2c, J. W. Peery EM2c, T. D. Perdue CM1c.
 Second row: E. Perry EM3c; W. F. Peterson MoMM3c, J. P. Petrosky, Cox, W. F. Phifer GM1c, J. L. Phillippe Jr. CCM.
 Third row: C. F. Phillips MM3c, R. J. Phillips SF1c, C. B. Pickering CMMS, A. S. Pierce CM3c, H. A. Pinder BM2c.
 Fourth row: A. D. Pirrotti MM2c, J. R. Plant BM1c, W. C. Poole BM1c, M. C. Powell SF3c, W. T. Prader Jr. SF3c.
 Fifth row: D. C. Prior S1c, G. E. Protrka CM3c, G. A. Purnell Jr. EM2c, G. J. Quackenbush CM3c, S. O. Queen Ptr3c.



First row: L. E. Quick CMM, L. C. Rader S1c, L. J. Radke WT3c, E. F. Rafferty SF3c, J. L. Ragain CMMR.
 Second row: J. O. Rainer SF3c, C. R. Ramey CGM, E. C. Ramsdorfer SF3c, R. C. Rape SF1c, L. A. Ratajczak EM2c.
 Third row: F. F. Ray EM1c, J. W. Rayn MaM1c, E. W. Rice Jr. MM3c, R. J. Richardson MoMM1c, K. F. Ricker SF1c.
 Fourth row: F. C. Rideout MM2c, E. L. Riker EM1c, J. W. Riley EM3c, W. C. Roark MM2c, J. H. Robinson CM2c.
 Fifth row: I. P. Rodriguez SC1c, I. Rosen SC3c, D. A. Rosenberger Y1c, J. W. Ross SF1c, R. P. Rousseau SF3c.



First row: P. W. Rucker CBM, J. B. Ryan SF2c, R. Saiz S1c, R. A. Sample MM3c, R. M. Sanchez SF2c.
 Second row: L. J. Sandman SF3c, L. O. Sapp S13c, G. V. Savage, Cox, R. P. Schofransky SF3c, G. H. Schild S1c.
 Third row: F. W. Schmidt S1c, G. Schmitt, Cox, J. M. Schneider EM2c, A. C. Schoeneman CM1c, A. V. Sciollino MM3c.
 Fourth row: O. P. Selissen WT1c, H. H. Serratt Bkr1c, A. K. Severson CM1c, C. H. Shaeffer SF3c, G. Shane CM2c.
 Fifth row: E. G. Shaw Jr. Ptr1c, J. V. Shaw CM3c, J. H. Shaw CM2c, J. B. Shelton CMoMM, V. H. Sherman CM1c.



First row: W. A. Shipman MoMM3c, L. H. Shirley CM1c, H. Sho SK2c, M. A. Shockett SK2c, J. L. Shockley CCM.
 Second row: L. P. Shortt MM3c, B. H. Shuler MoMM2c, A. J. Silva MM2c, H. R. Simpson SC1c, O. Simpson ST3c.
 Third row: W. J. Simpson STc, S. C. Sincher CM2c, A. C. Skaw MoMM3c, J. E. Skillman STc, B. Slabbekorn CCS.
 Fourth row: A. J. Smith CK1c, E. C. Smith SF3c, F. H. Smith SF3c, G. H. Smith MoMM1c, J. C. Smith SF2c.
 Fifth row: P. A. Smith MoMM1c, R. E. L. Smith MM3c, W. K. Smith Y1c, W. T. Smith SKT2c, S. W. Smoot MoMM2c.



First row: R. S. Soper BM1c, F. P. Souza CM3c, R. C. Speer S1c, G. M. Spokes CM3c, C. L. StAnge SC3c.
 Second row: C. R. Stafford SF3c, T. Stamps SC2c, C. M. Steck Ptr2c, O. R. Stephens CM3c, O. E. Stewart MM1c.
 Third row: W. E. Stietenroth BM1c, B. P. Stone SF1c, J. C. Stoner CM1c, R. A. Strafford SF3c, E. F. Strobel Jr. F1c.
 Fourth row: H. E. Stroud MoMM1c, S. L. Sukovich SF2c, F. J. Sullivan S1c, D. A. Swafford CEM, G. W. Swain MM2c.
 Fifth row: B. C. Swanson SC3c, V. Tamboles EM2c, J. Taranta S1c, O. T. Tarsitano MM1c, E. F. Taylor CM1c.



First row: M. W. Taylor CM1c, H. M. Thompson CCM, J. R. Tibbs MM3c, V. H. Tiber CM1c, W. C. Ticer MM1c.
 Second row: P. A. Tolisano MoMM3c, B. J. Toon CM2c, R. H. Traywick SF2c, W. J. Trimble MM2c, L. Tuccio MM3c.
 Third row: J. L. Tucker CCM, J. Turley CSF, A. W. Tuttle CY, W. S. Uba CM2c, R. Uldrich Jr. SF3c.
 Fourth row: W. R. Ulinsky M2c, C. J. Ulrich SK3c, W. J. Valliere BM2c, M. L. Vann SF2c, H. W. VanOrden Bkr3c.
 Fifth row: H. M. VanSlooten CM2c, A. A. Vaughan CCM, G. H. Vaughn SF1c, A. Vinchiarello CM2c, J. B. Vinyard SC3c.



First row: F. W. Vogt Ptr2c, J. J. Volack EM1c, G. L. Voyles CCM, L. A. Ware CM1c, E. A. Wendlandt CM2c.
 Second row: J. G. Werner SF1c, C. B. Whitehead BM1c, R. A. Widen CM3c, R. P. Wild Jr. MM2c, J. F. Willard MM2c.
 Third row: R. T. Wille CM1c, D. O. Williams CM1c, J. M. Williams M3c, P. Williams CSK, L. D. Wilson EM2c.
 Fourth row: S. M. Wines MoMM1c, D. C. Winner CM3c, L. F. Wolf Ptr1c, W. O. Wright Jr. BM2c, C. L. Wynn Ptr1c.
 Fifth row: F. L. Young SF1c, K. H. Young CM3c, S. W. Young CM2c, J. Zager EM1c, R. I. Zajicek CM2c.



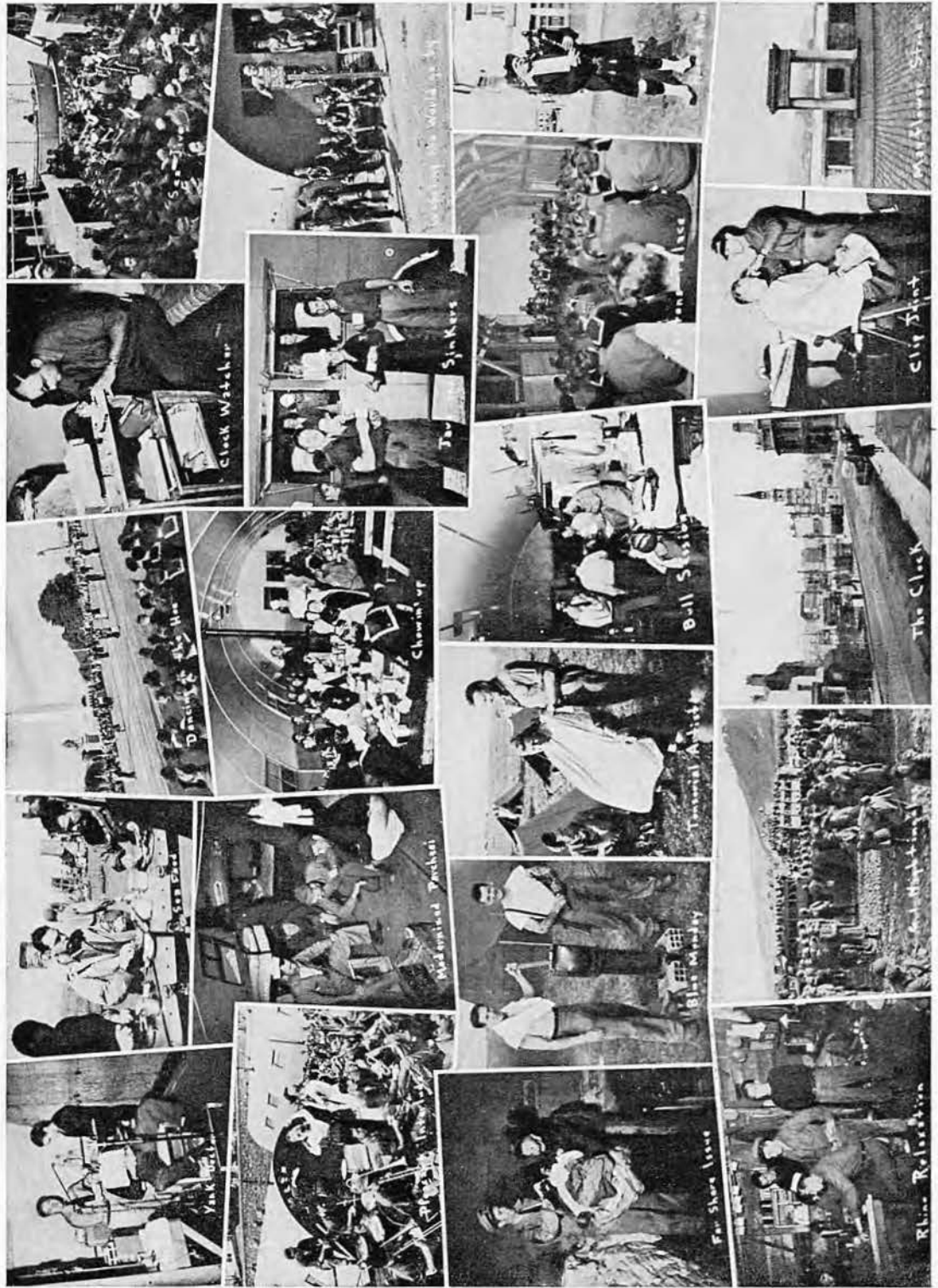
J. Zikratch, CCM

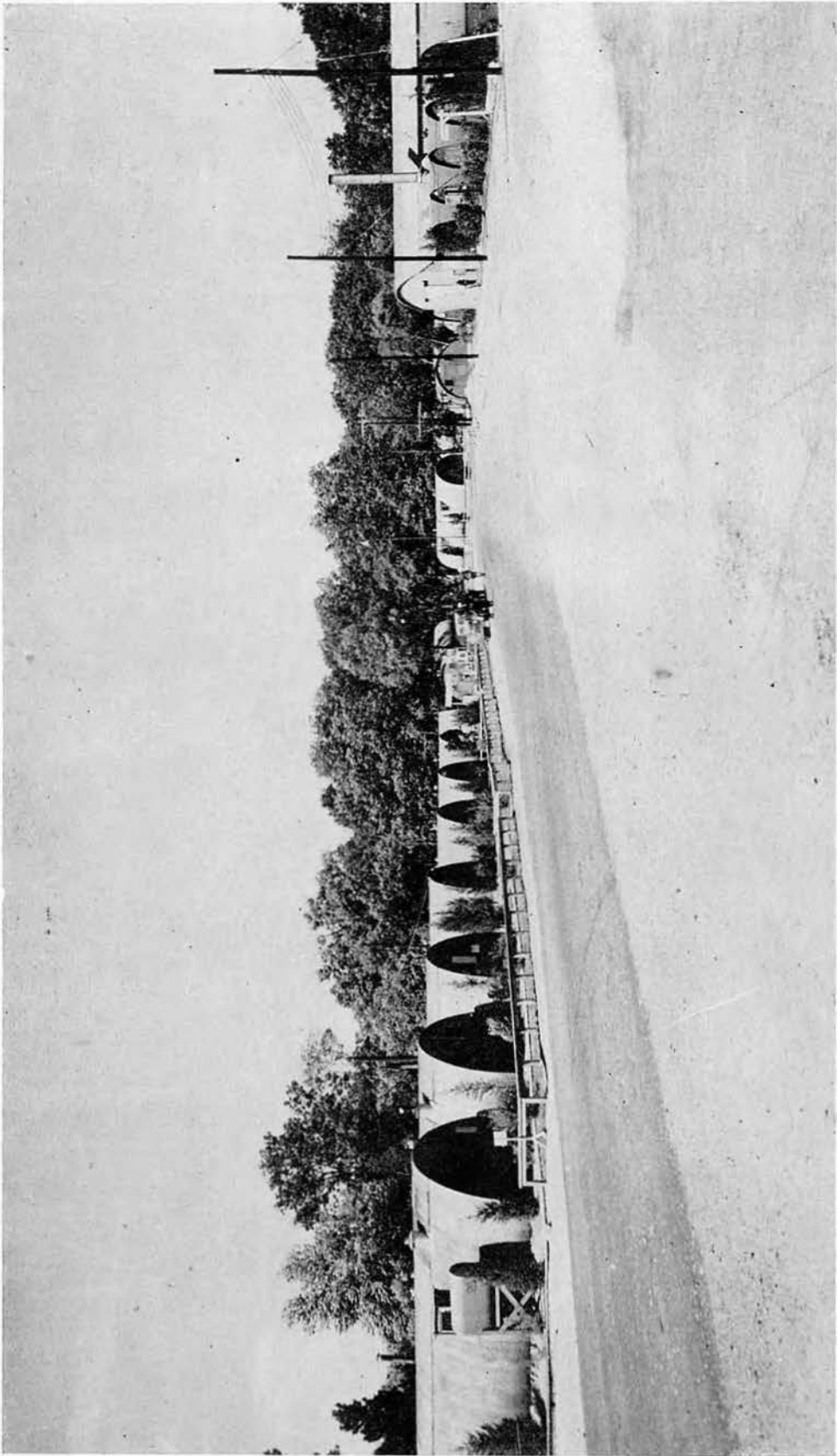


A. Zimmerman, MM1c

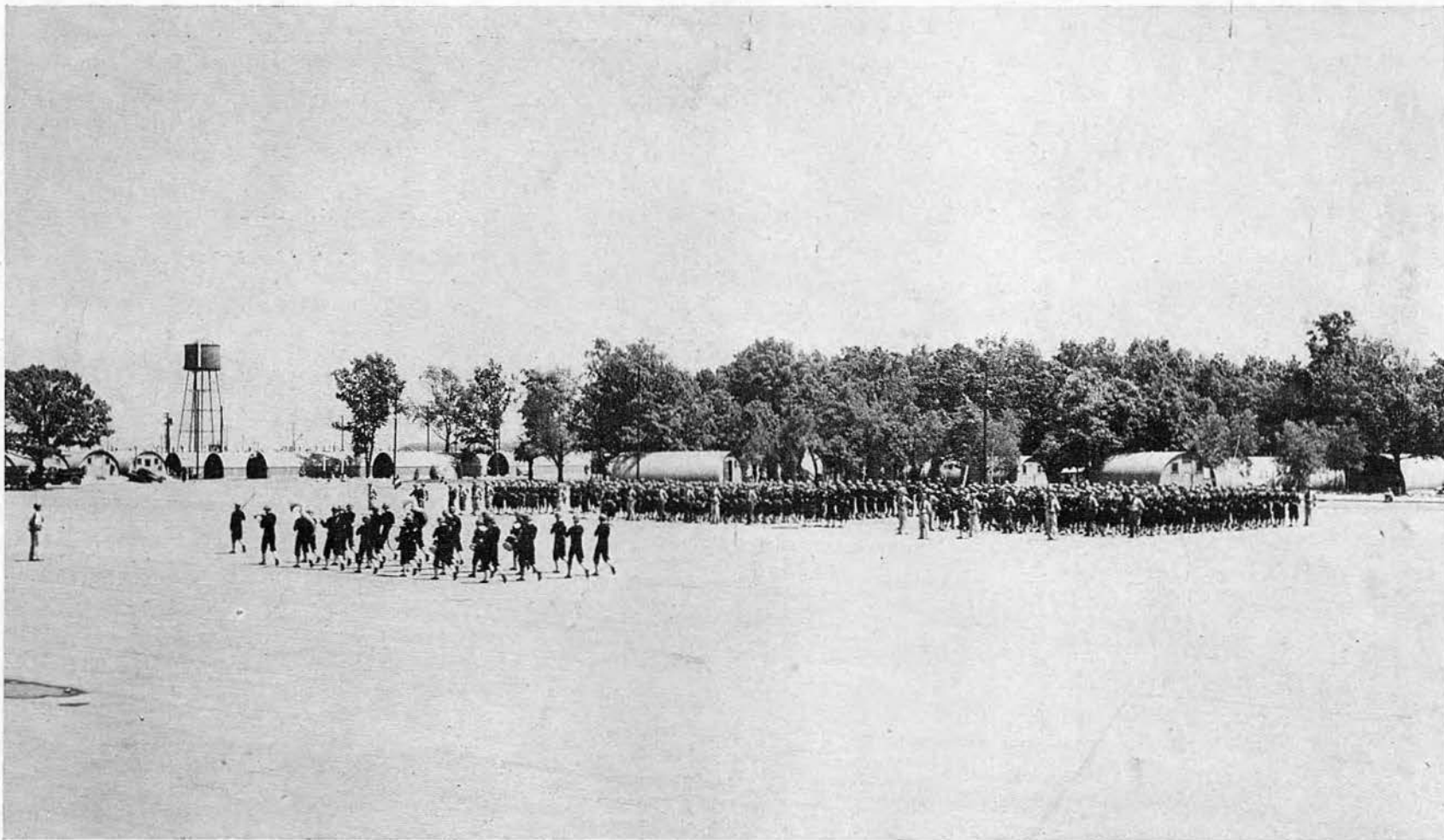
The names listed below are all former members of the Sixty-Ninth Battalion, who, for various reasons were transferred from this unit during this cruise. To those mates, wherever they may be, we wish good luck and smooth sailing in the years to come.

R. F. Athens	SSMB2c	H. H. Husk	MM3c
R. A. Barrett	CMMS	L. H. Johnsey	MM1c
C. F. Boisselle	MM3c	C. A. King	CCM
J. W. Bradham	MM2c	G. W. King	MM1c
L. R. Campeau	CCS	L. B. Lamb	MM3c
J. T. Collins	CCM	E. B. LaPree	CMM
P. L. Crotty	MM3c	H. Lawson	CEM
N. C. Danielson	CM1c	F. A. Lombard	CM3c
T. A. Dawson	SK2c	J. A. Lynch	CSF
F. A. Dutill	SK1c	W. H. Magennis	SF1c
C. M. Ellis, Jr.	MM3c	P. J. Masek, II	SF3c
L. R. Elwell	CSF	W. L. Pittis	CM1c
A. J. Fieguth	MM1c	J. F. Powell	CM3c
C. L. Foster	MM1c	H. E. Primmer	MoMM1c
J. F. Galloway	S1c	J. W. Riley	EM3c
N. C. Galloway	CCM	R. B. Schaefer	MoMM2c
J. A. Goodall	SC2c	J. B. Shelton	CMoMM
R. E. Grimm	SK3c	B. A. Shuler	MoMM2c
M. C. Hald	MM3c	F. H. Simpson	CEM
E. I. Hein	CSF	J. E. Siverling	BM1c
G. P. Hilmes	CM1c	O. A. Smith	PhoM1c
G. T. Humphrey	CEM	B. P. Stone	SF1c
A. D. Hunt	CMM	L. Talavera	S1c

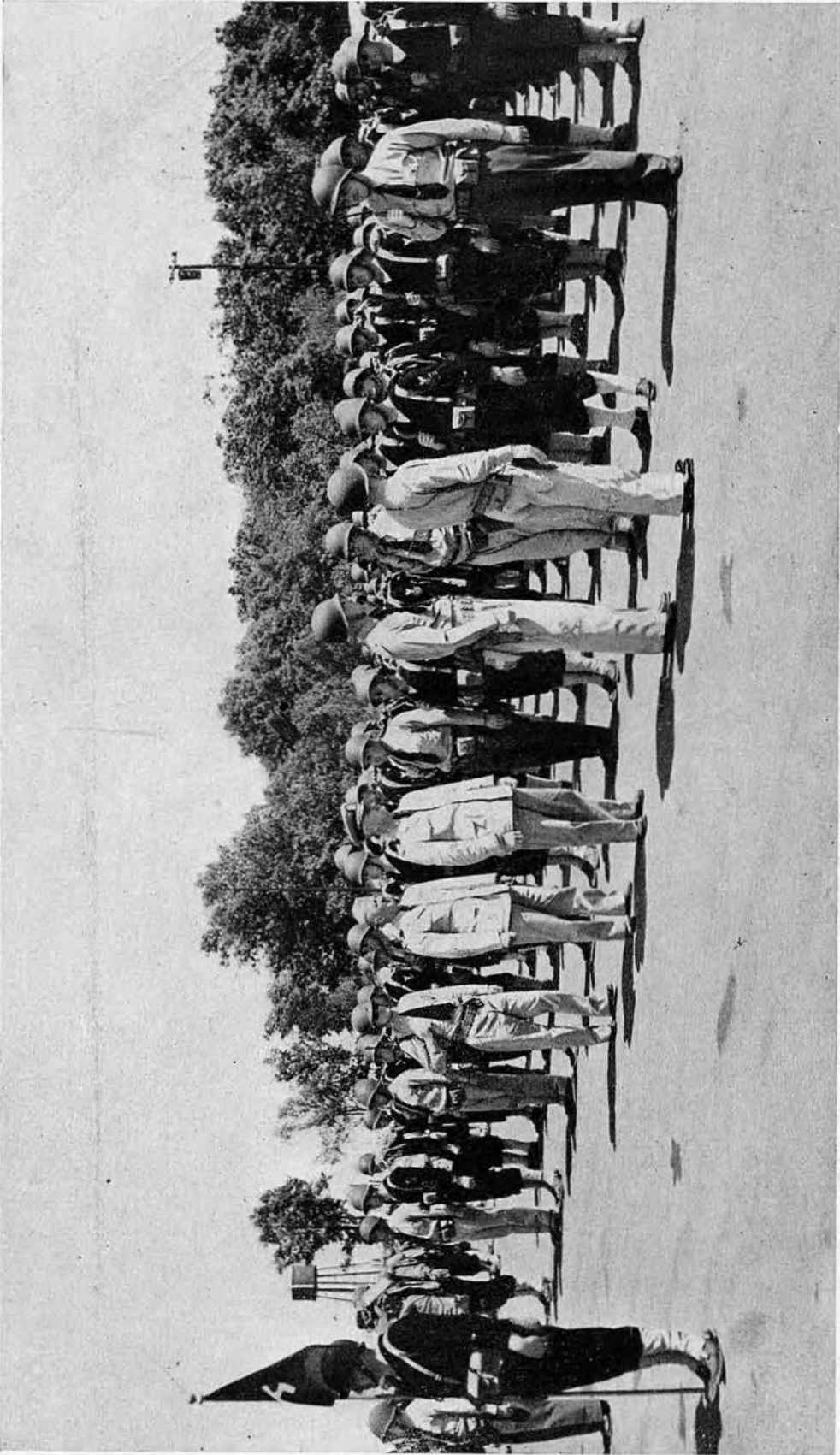




SIXTY-NINTH BATTALION HEADQUARTERS at Camp Thomas, Advance Base Depot, Davisville, Rhode Island.



BATTALION REVIEW, June 8, 1944 at Camp Thomas drill field prior to departure for the destination overseas.



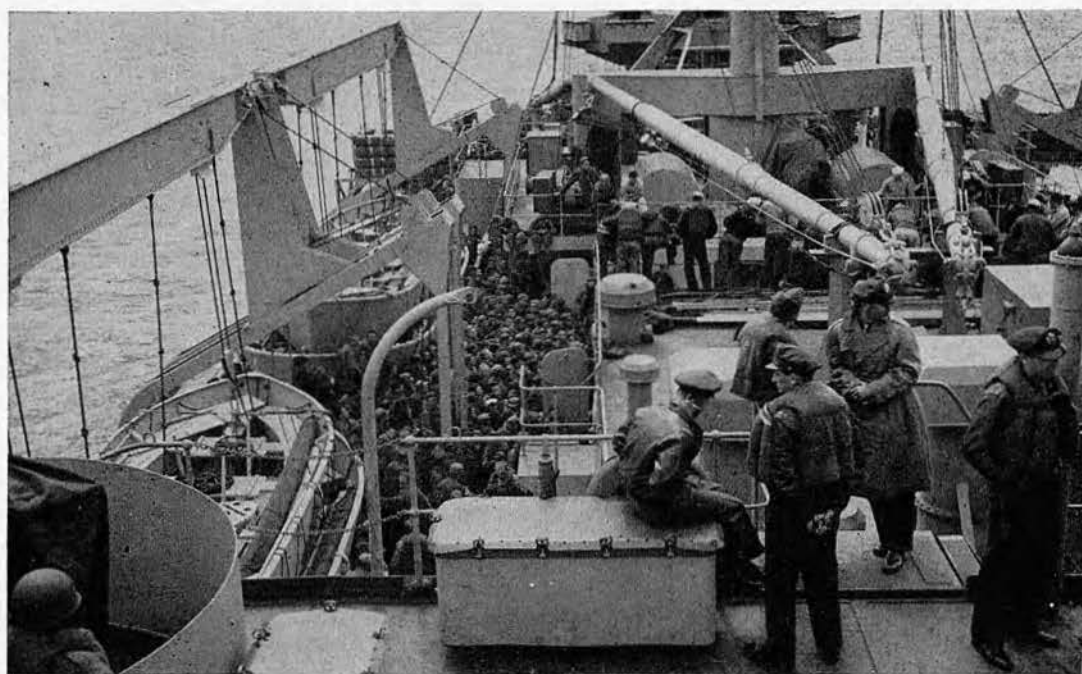
REVIEWING PARTY: Inspection of "A" Company personnel by battalion and base officers.



MILITARY BAND of the Sixty-Ninth Battalion on the day of battalion review. Theme music for the occasion, "Let Me Call You Sweetheart".



BOARDING TRAIN at Davisville, Rhode Island June 14, 1944 enroute to Brooklyn Navy Pier, port of embarkation.



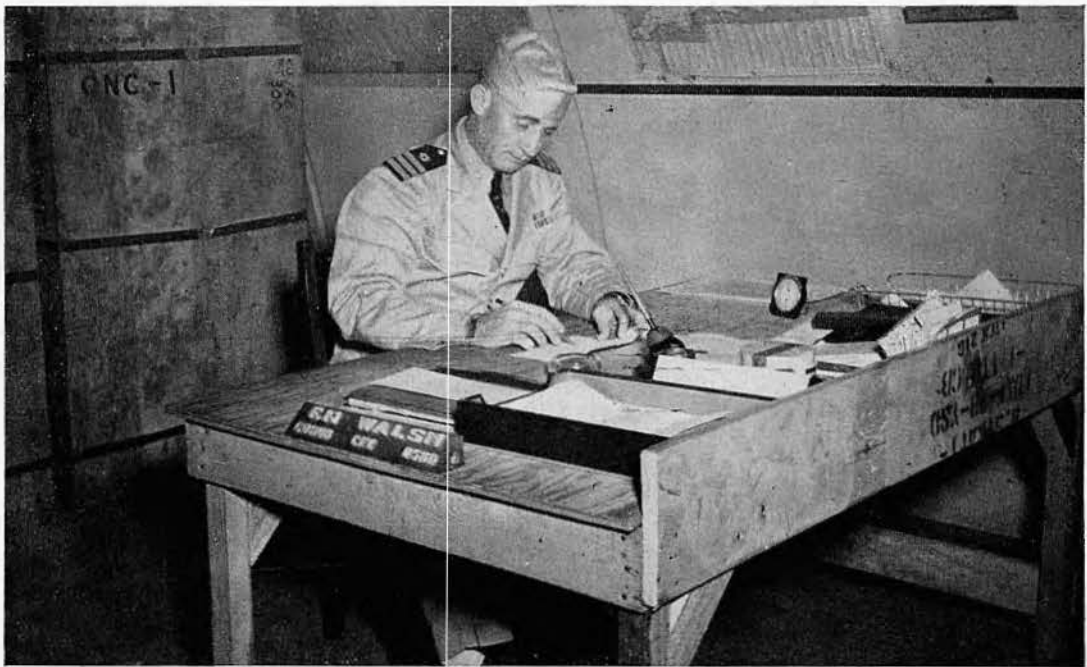
TROOPSHIP: View facing aft on the U.S.S. General William Mitchell, which, in convoy, transported the battalion on the Atlantic crossing to Liverpool, England.



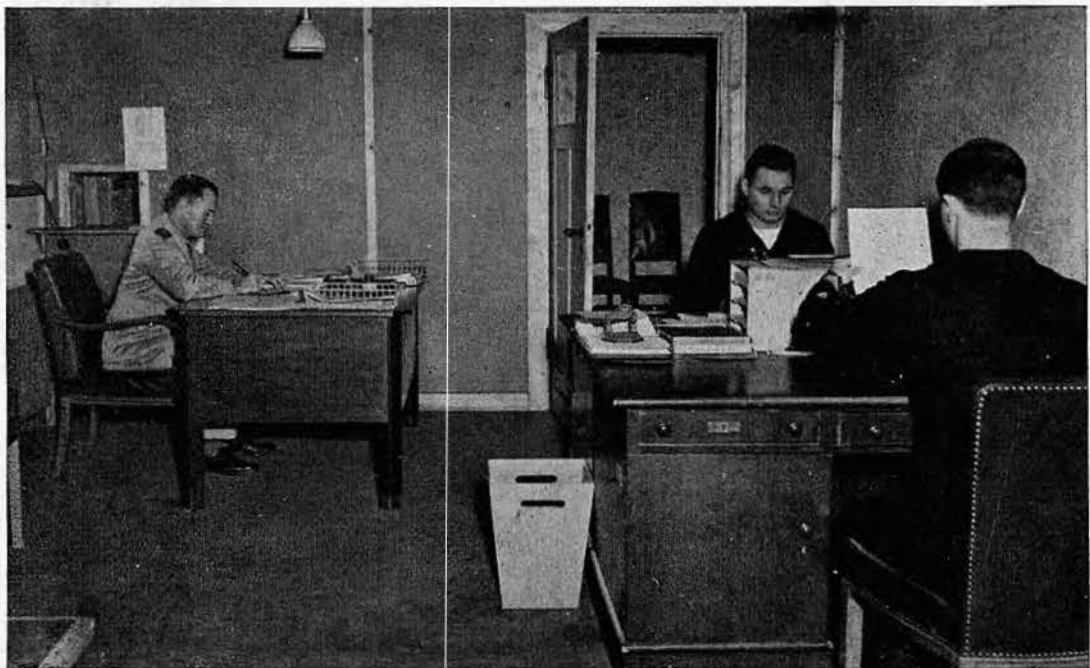
CHURCH SERVICE aboard ship in the North Atlantic. Chaplain J. F. Onorato, Lt. (jg), USNR, of the Sixty-Ninth Battalion holding mass.



EDINBURGH ROAD CAMP, headquarters of the Sixty-Ninth Battalion in Devonport-Plymouth, England. All detachments operated from this base.

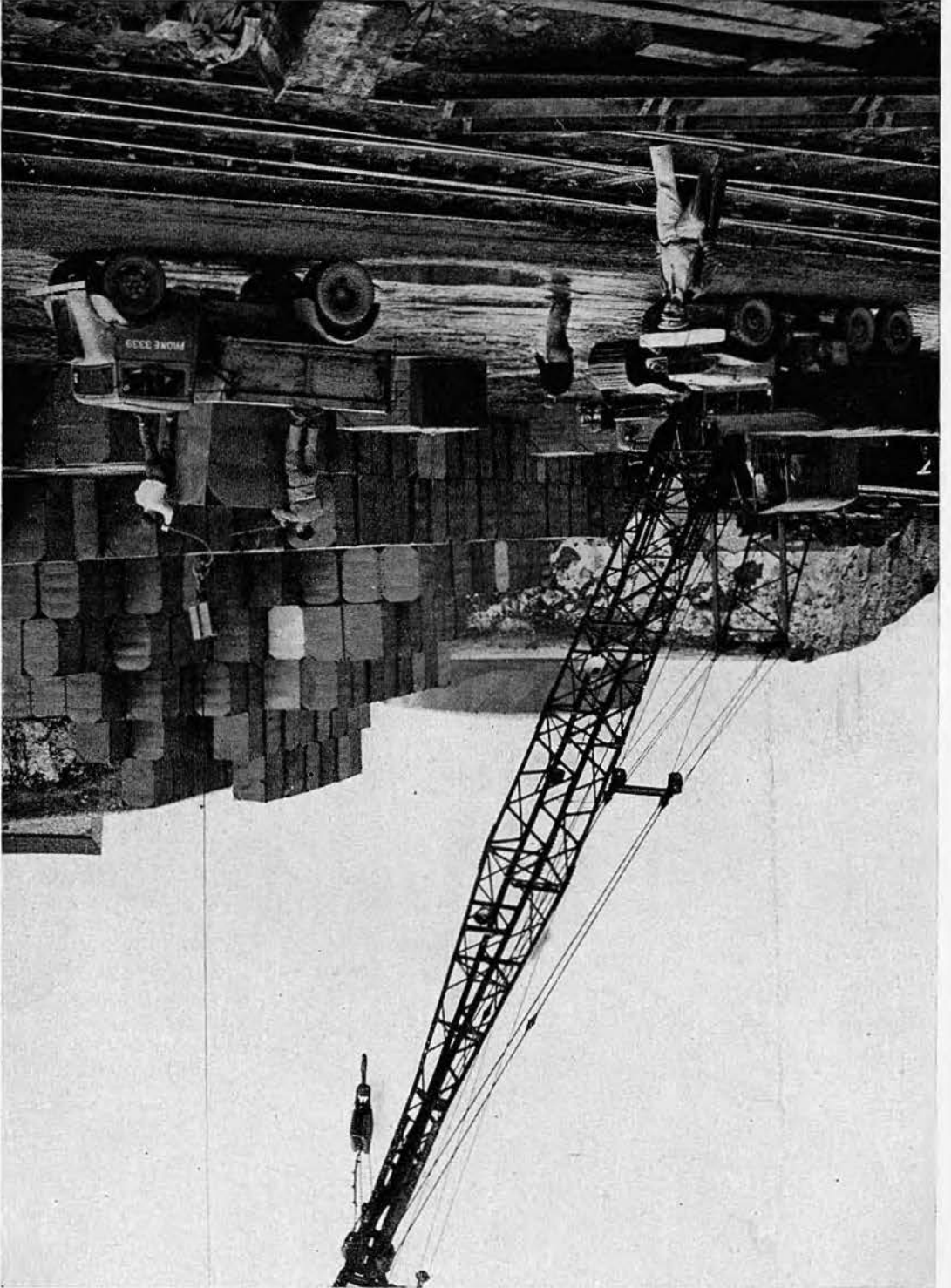


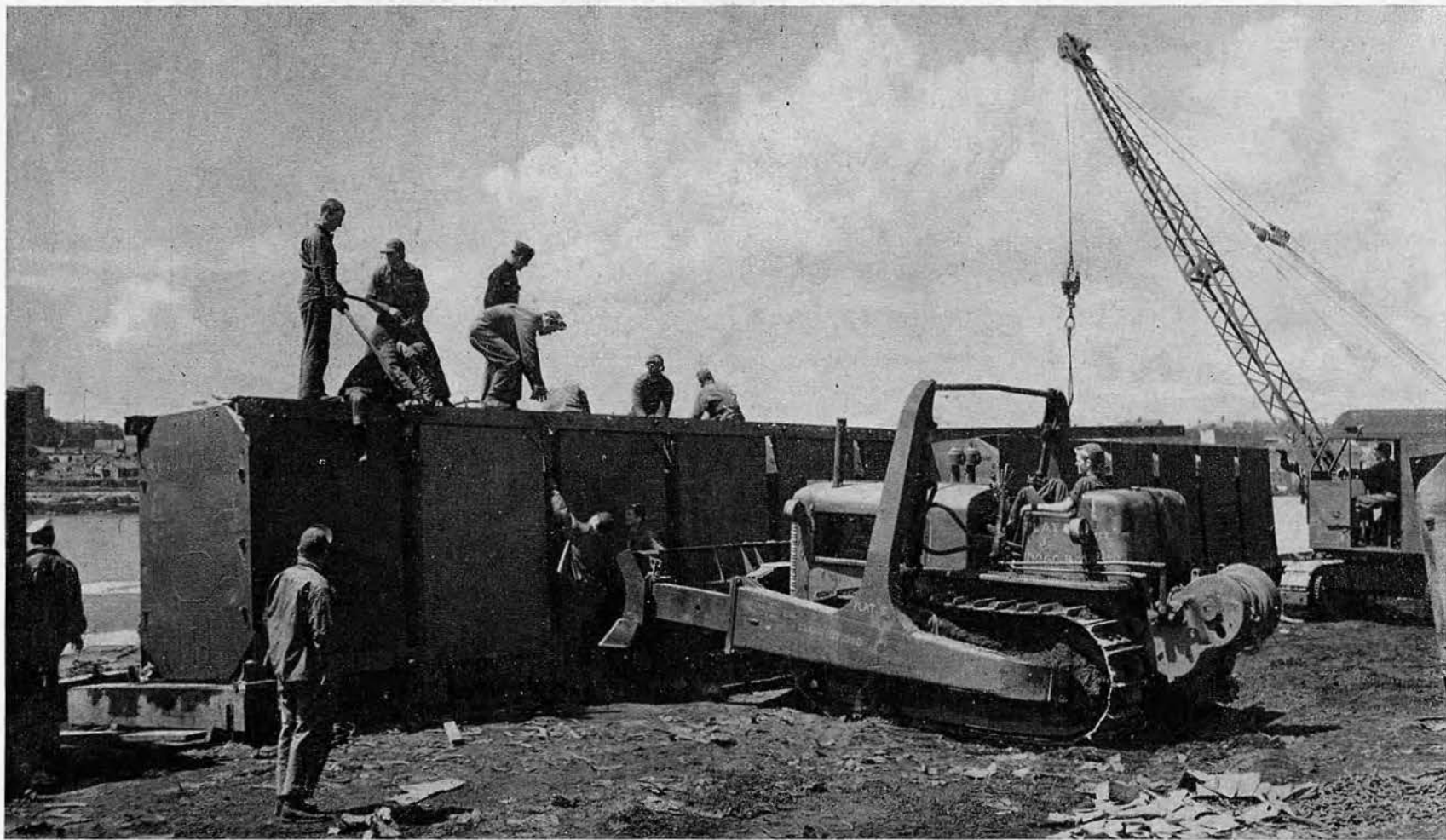
COMMANDER F. N. Walsh at his desk in Edinburgh Road Camp, Plymouth, England.



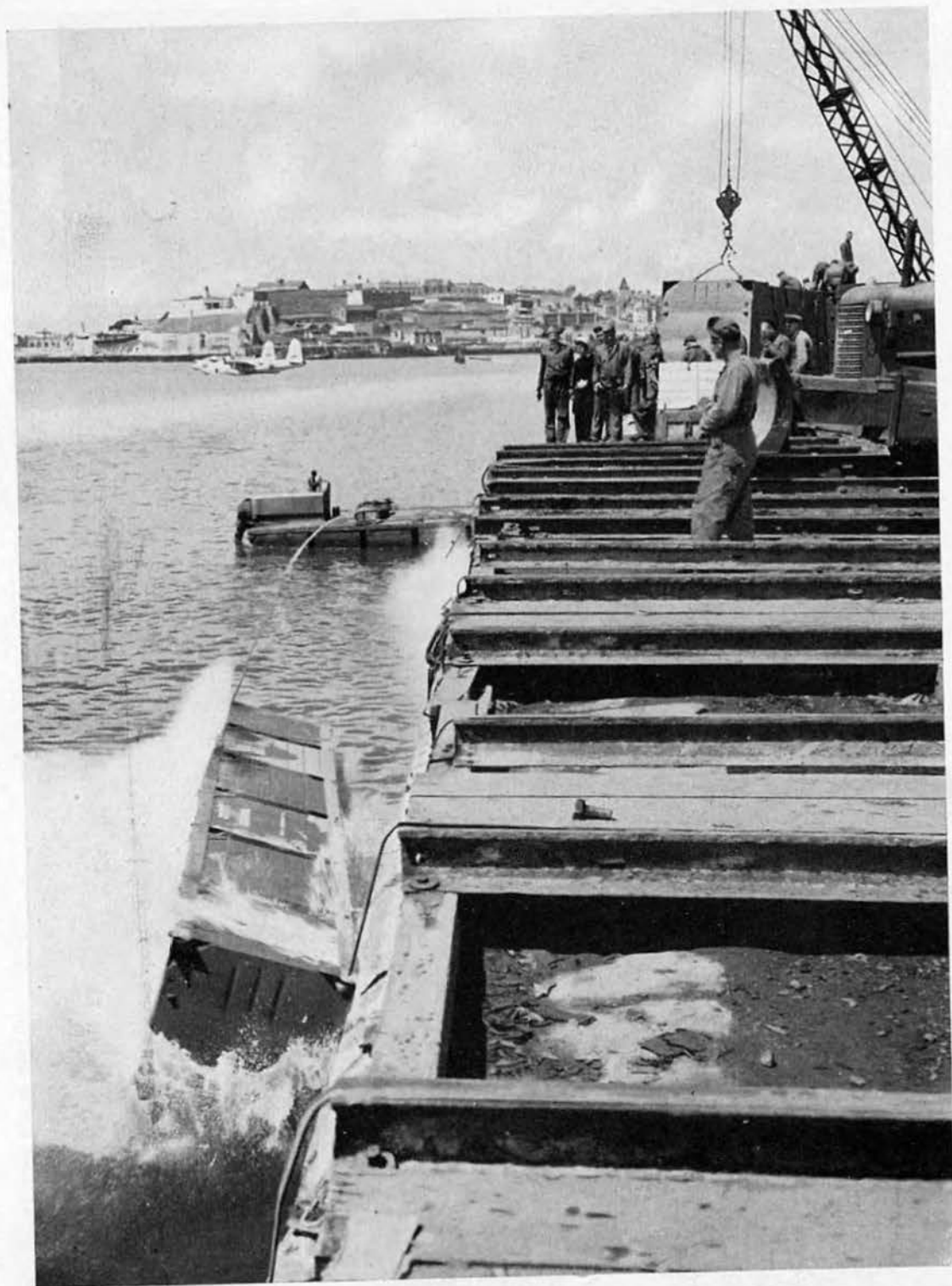
THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE at the Navy compound, Bremen, Germany.

RIGGERS loading a pontoon for trucking from storage area to assembly ways.





FINAL CHECK on angle bolts with air and manual wrenches as assembling of "pontoon string" is completed. Dozer operator is poised for the launching.



THE LAUNCHING "into the drink". An attached line keeps the string under control after it strikes the water until secured to other anchored units.



PONTOONS IN STORAGE STACKS, too high to be removed by smaller rigs, are lowered and distributed to within easy reach by a heavy crane with an eighty-five foot boom and jib.



BLACKSMITH SHOP: Expansion of pontoon assembly operations created a demand for "jewel wrenches", an improvised tool. Blacksmiths heat and shape them.

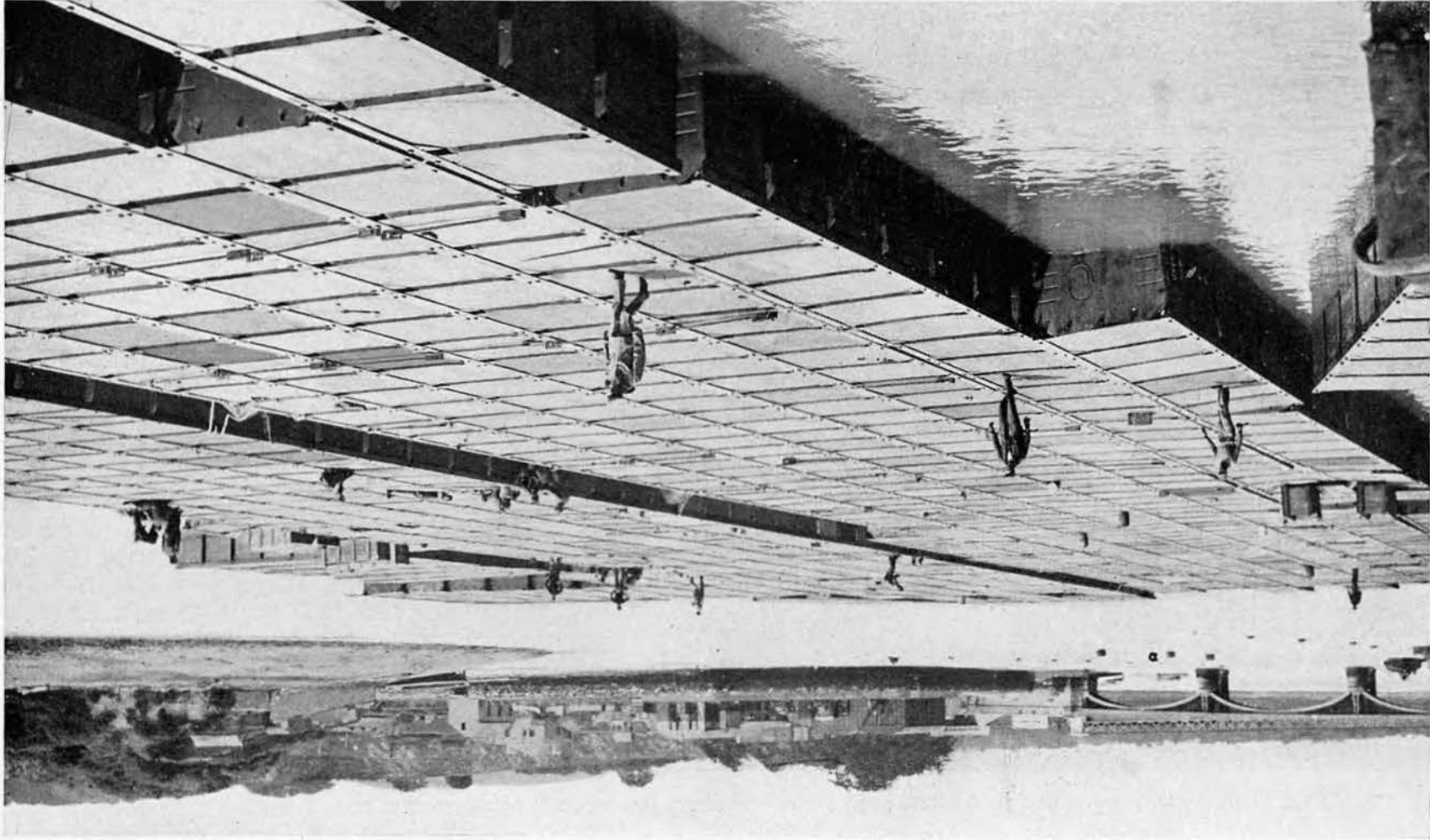


PONTOON STRINGS on the ways ready for launching. Tidal fluctuation here was approximately seventeen feet. Strings in the water are lashed together and anchored to prevent drifting until assembled into "tows".



A LAUNCHING SEQUENCE to the previous picture of the completed strings. Such "shakedown" as this, occasionally necessitated the retightening of bolts, loosened by the impact.

PONTON TOWS in assembly from strings. Sectional tie rods are being installed to secure the strings into tow units.





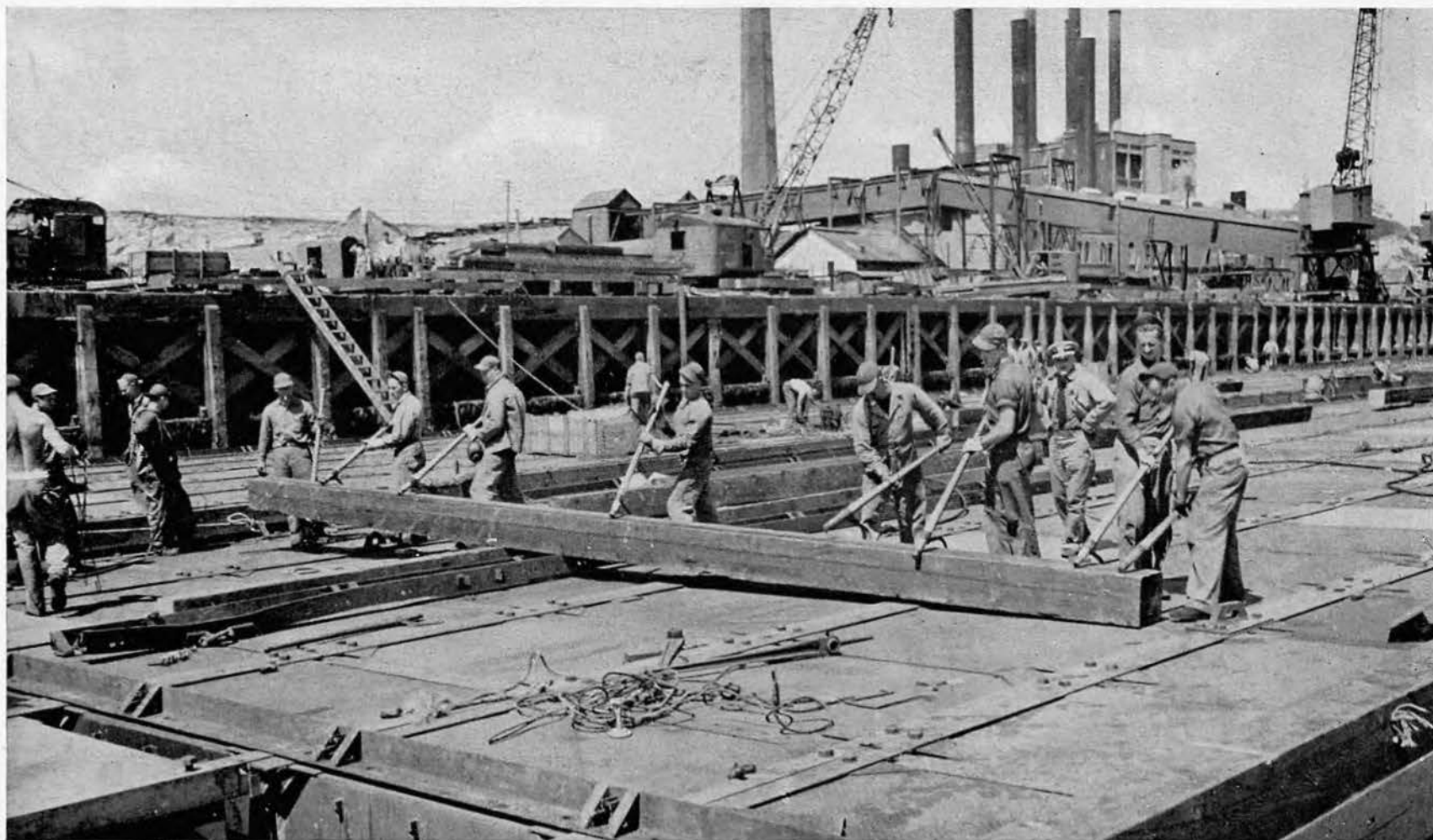
CHOW TIME on the waterfront. Queuing up for sandwiches, pie and coffee.



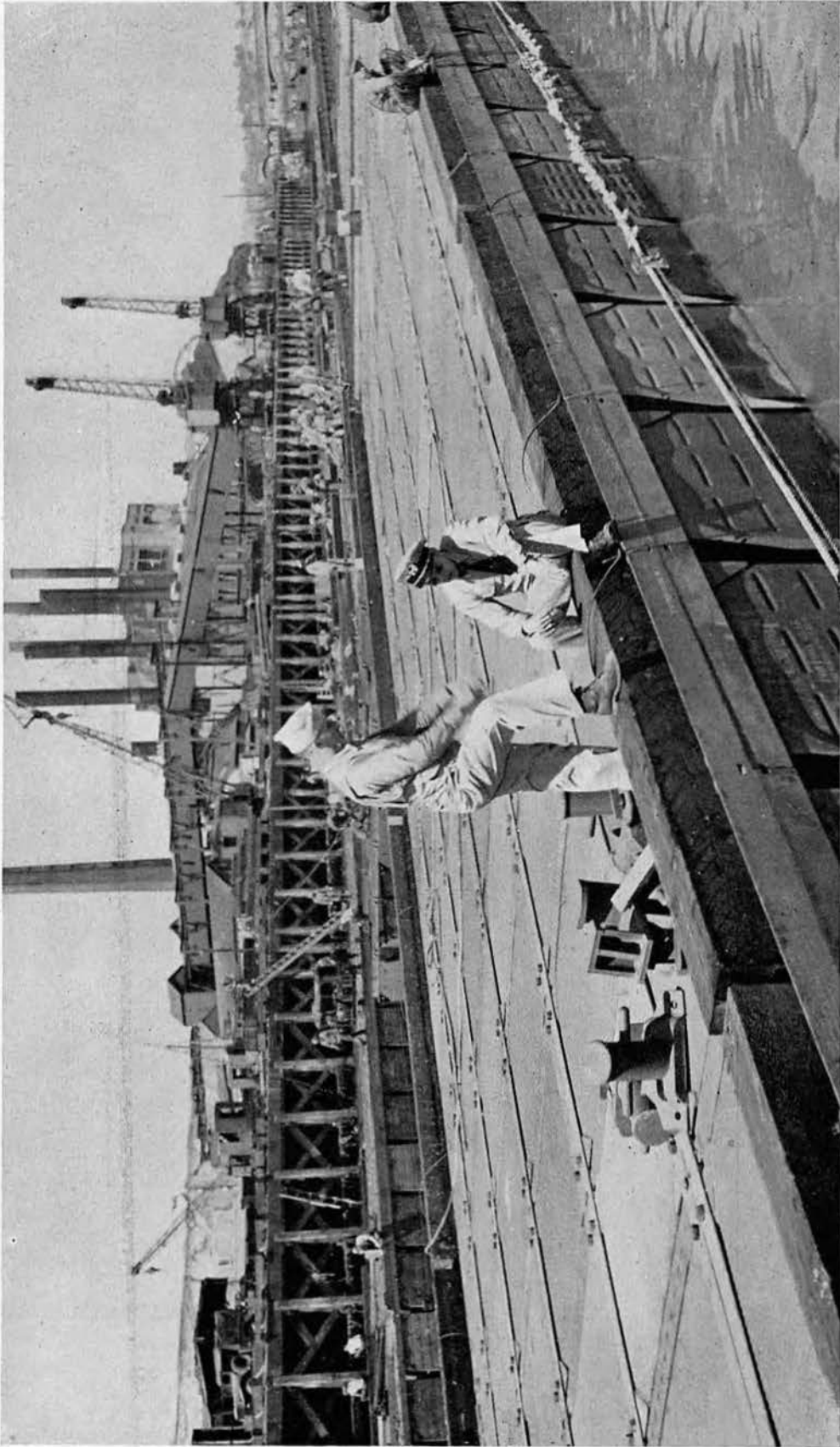
RETAINING CABLES: Laying out cables which, when clamped around entire tow, act as an additional security against "cracking up" in heavy seas.



TOW BRIDLES: Riggers splicing a thimble into a heavy cable to be used in harnessing the tows for delivery to destination.



CHAFING TIMBERS: Installed, the timbers serve as protective buffers for both the pontoon wharf and ships moored alongside.



COMMANDING OFFICER discussing with Warrant Officer the cable lashings of chafing timbers.



SEAMULES IN CONSTRUCTION: Steel prows are filled with concrete for a ballast. These tugs are essential for the maneuvering of pontoon tows.



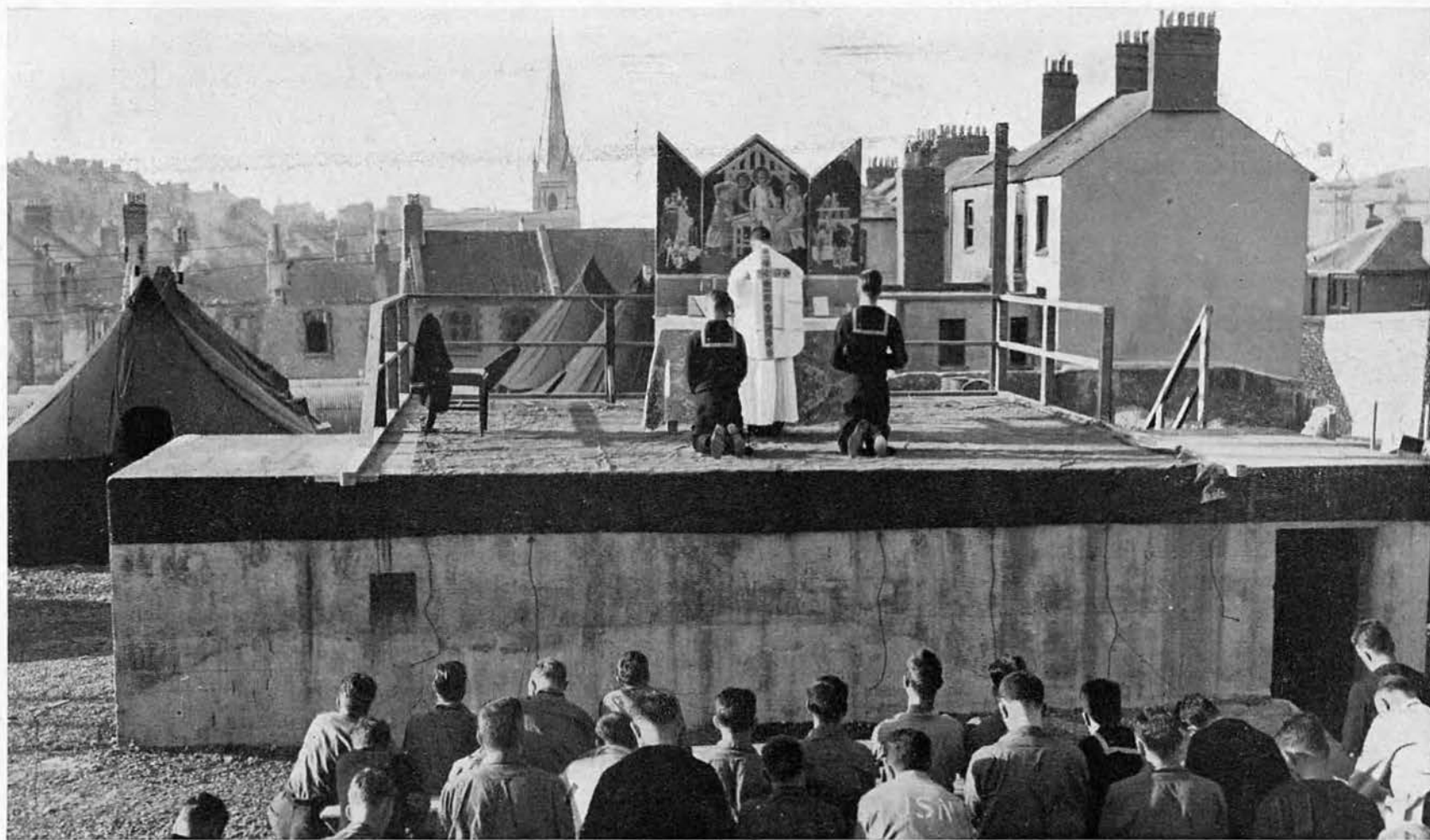
THE HEAD at Edinburgh Road Camp where plenty of hot water served hot, tired, and dirty Seabees of the Sixty-Ninth.



BLITZ HOUSE supply room which supplied plumbers, metal workers, surveyors, and many other trades with odd tools for their jobs.



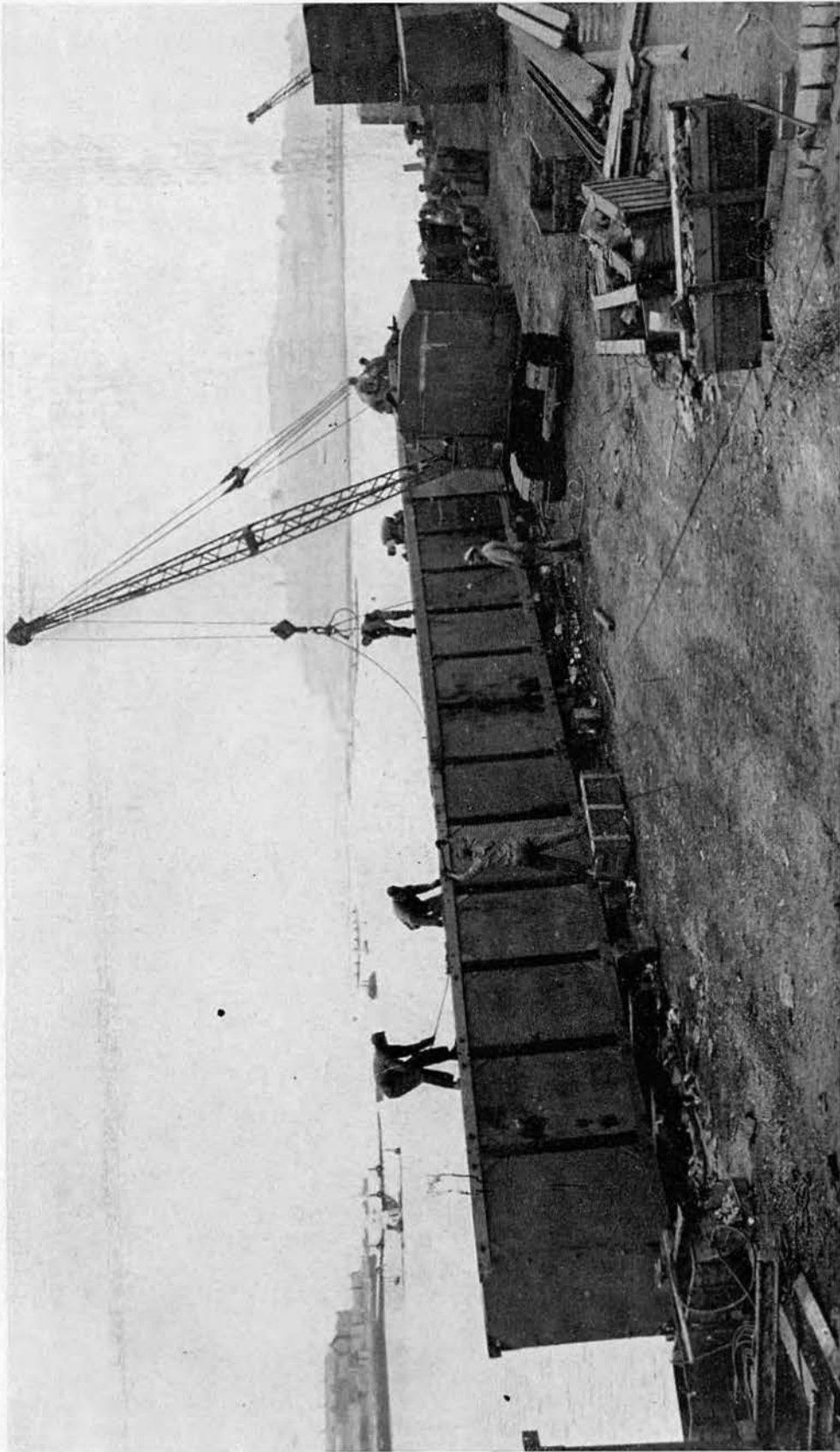
MEMORIAL SERVICE for Michael A. Tsavlopoulos, fatally injured in accident involving a seamule he was operating at the time.



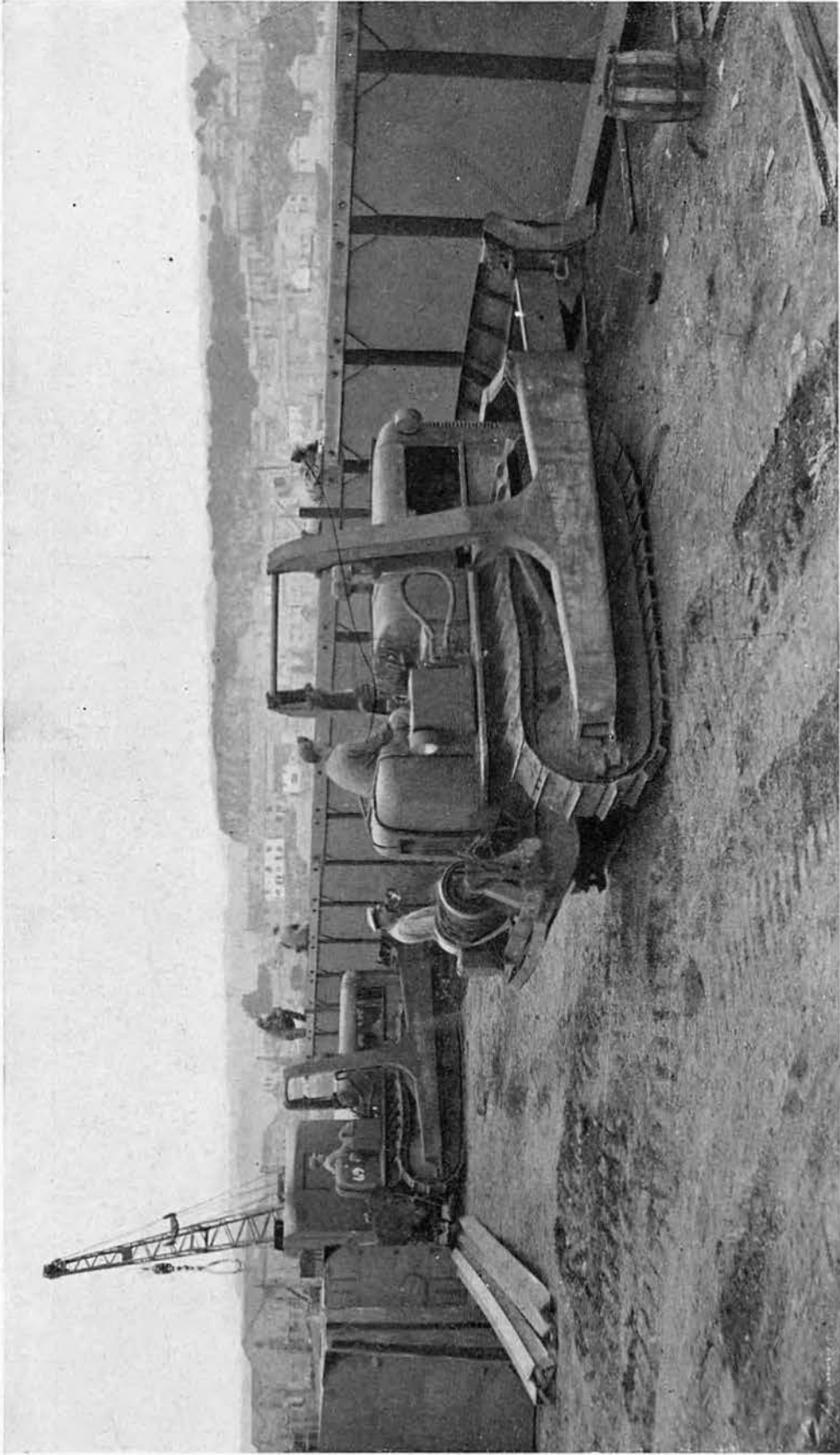
CATHOLIC MASS being held on an air-raid shelter at Edinburgh Road Camp. Chaplain J. F. Onorato, Lt. (jg), USNR, is conducting the service.



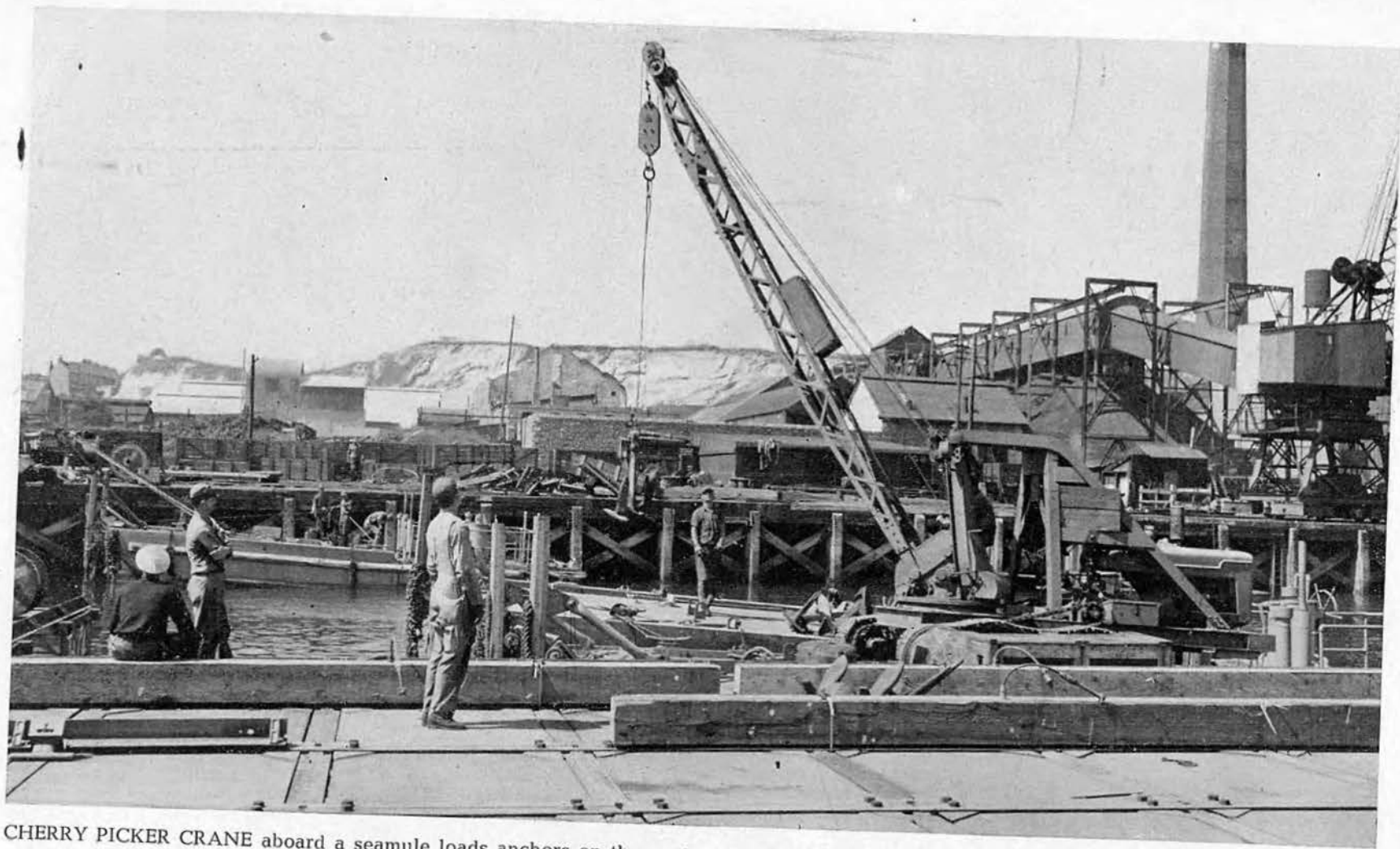
ARC WELDERS joining angles for long pontoon strings, to be used in the assembly of finger piers. A steel splint is welded across the abutting angles.



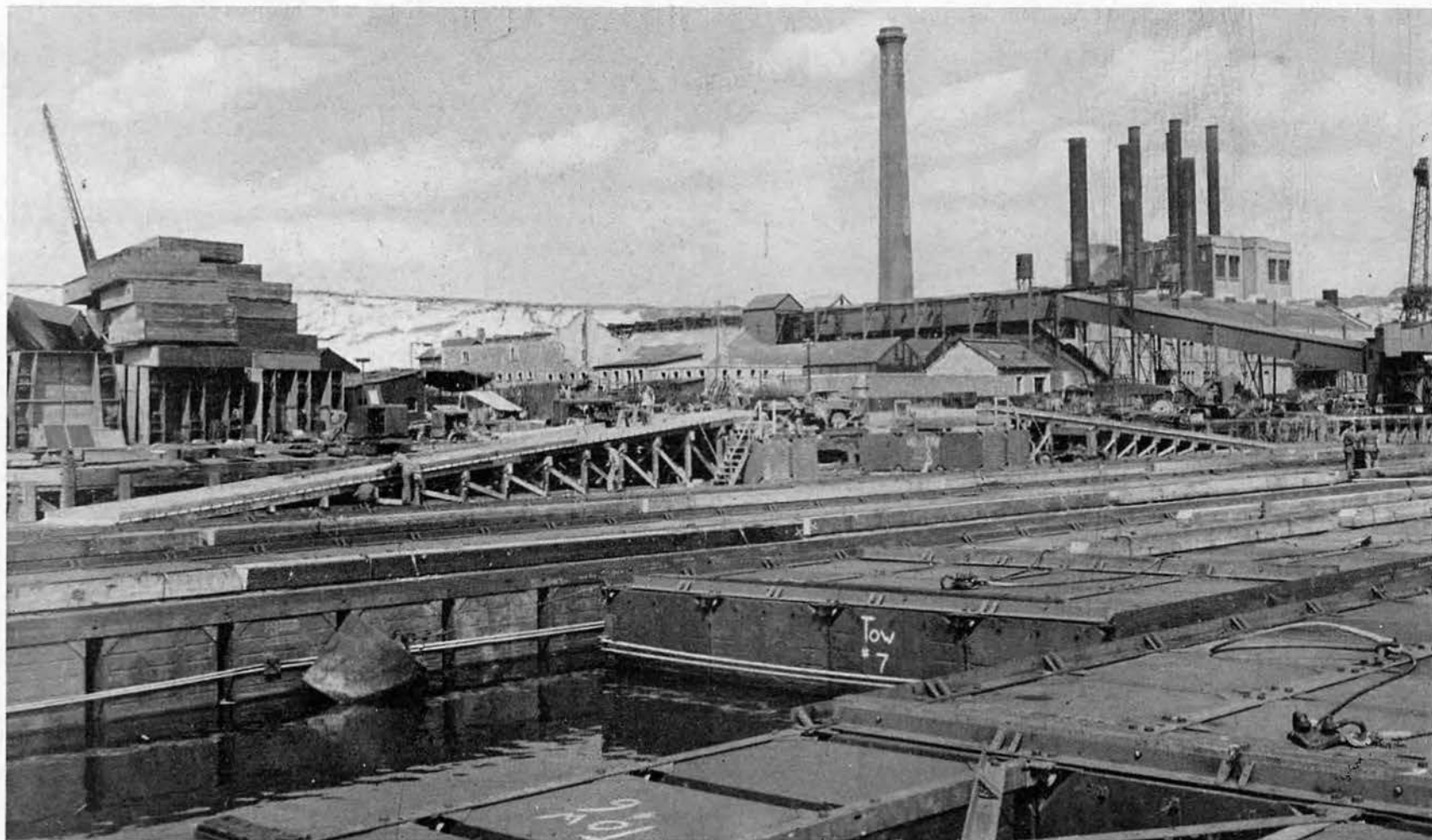
PREPARATIONS FOR LAUNCHING of a finger pier pontoon string from the assembly ways.



BULLDOZERS MANEUVERED INTO POSITION for a twin push on a long siring when the signal is given for the launching. Jewel insertions must first be completed.



CHERRY PICKER CRANE aboard a seamule loads anchors on the pontoon tows. Anchors are to retain tows in position when installed as a wharf.



FINGER PIER TOWS: A general view, with approach ramps under construction. Army "Bailey Bridges" secured from ramp to shore would serve as a hinge to allow for the tidal effect on the floating wharf.



ASSEMBLED TOWS lying at anchor near Cattedown Wharves, Plymouth. Paraphernalia distributed on decks is for use in the installation of the piers.



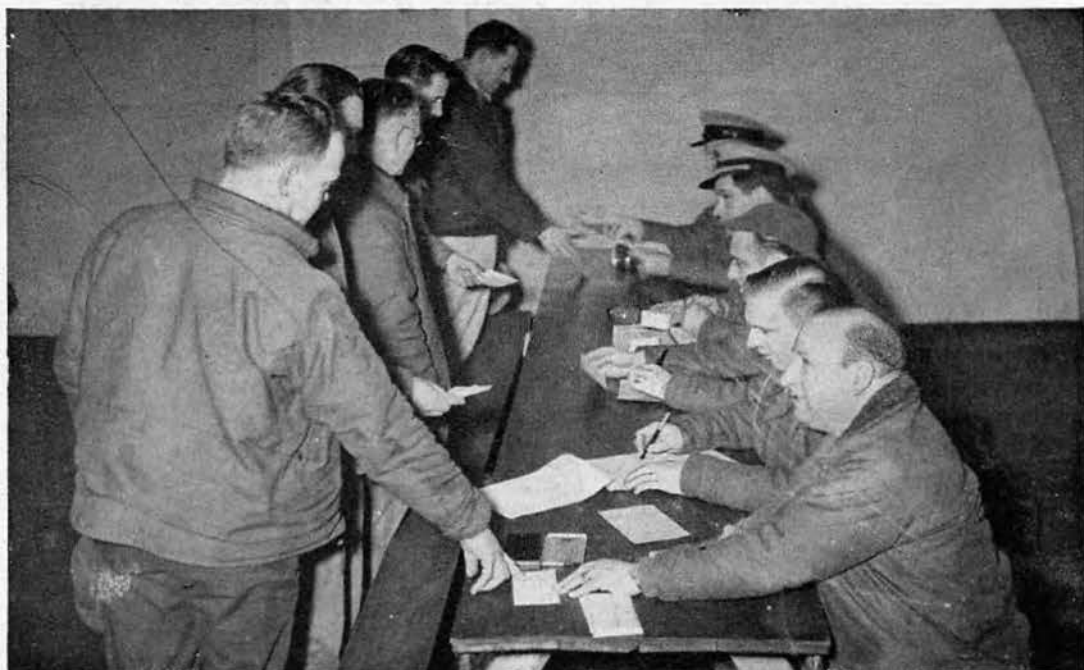
UNLOADING SUPPLIES: Storekeepers checking items in transit from the transport to supply yard at Export Park.



EXPORT PARK: Equipment and supplies consigned to the Sixty-Ninth Battalion. One, of two pontoon assembly yards is visible in right, center background.



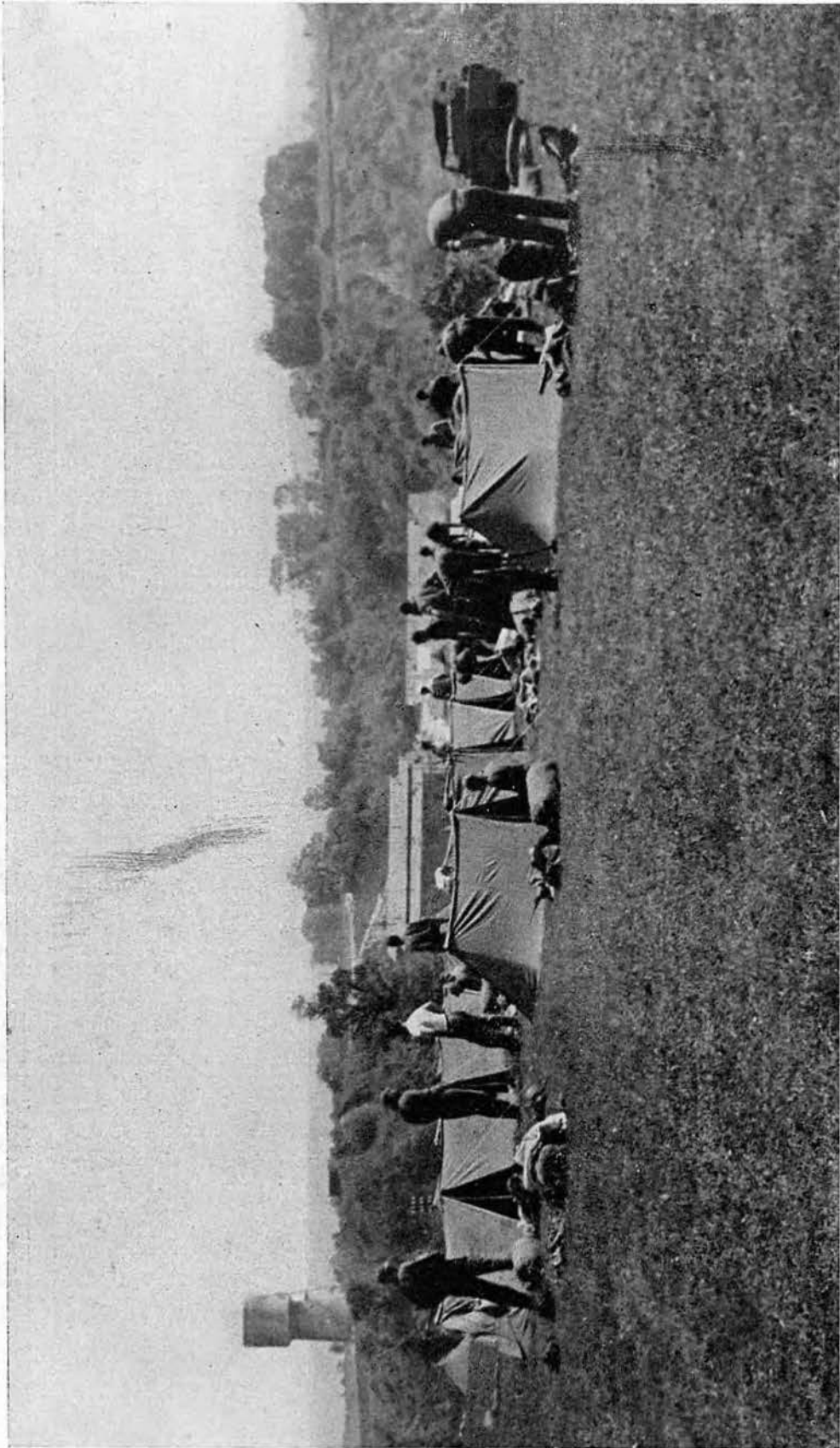
SUPPLY OFFICE: Through hundreds of records, invoices, and receipts these storekeepers procured the materials for production.



PAY LINE: Men of the Sixty-Ninth line up before the Disbursing Officer for one of their semi-monthly pay days.



RECONNAISSANCE PARTY: The first detachment to leave the battalion, on a survey through the Normandy and Brittany peninsulas of France.



PITCHING TENTS for the encampment on the outskirts of Cherbourg, pending resumption of the southward trek.



MAA TENT at Edinburgh Road Camp where personnel received that precious little piece of cardboard — — — "Liberty Card".



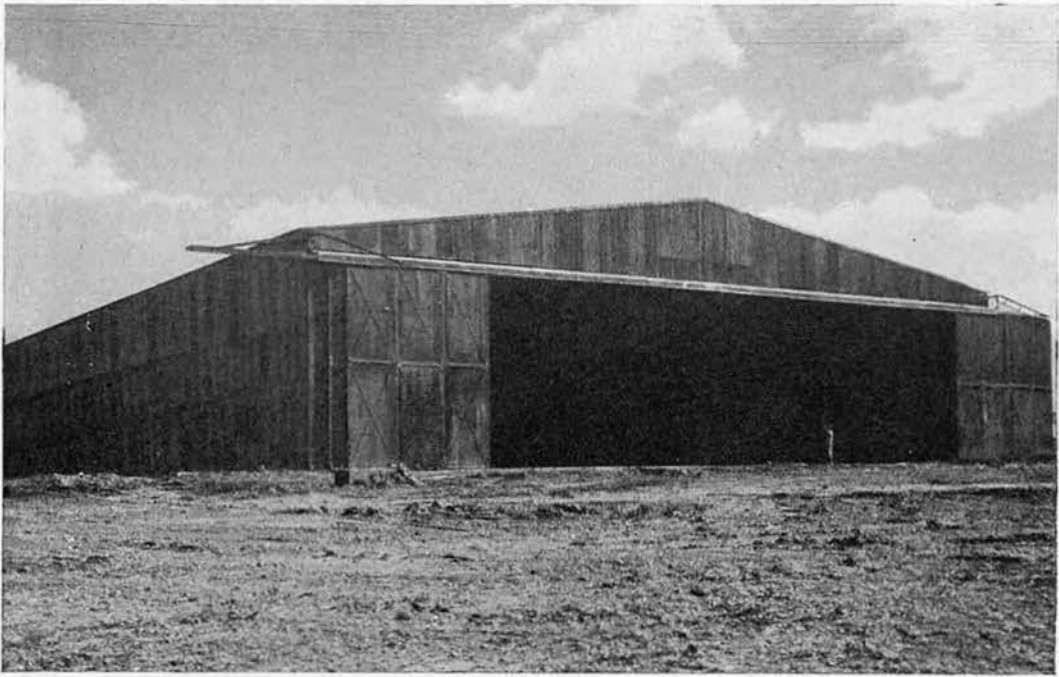
THE SHIP'S BELL in front of the Administrative Office which rang out each half hour from reveille until taps.



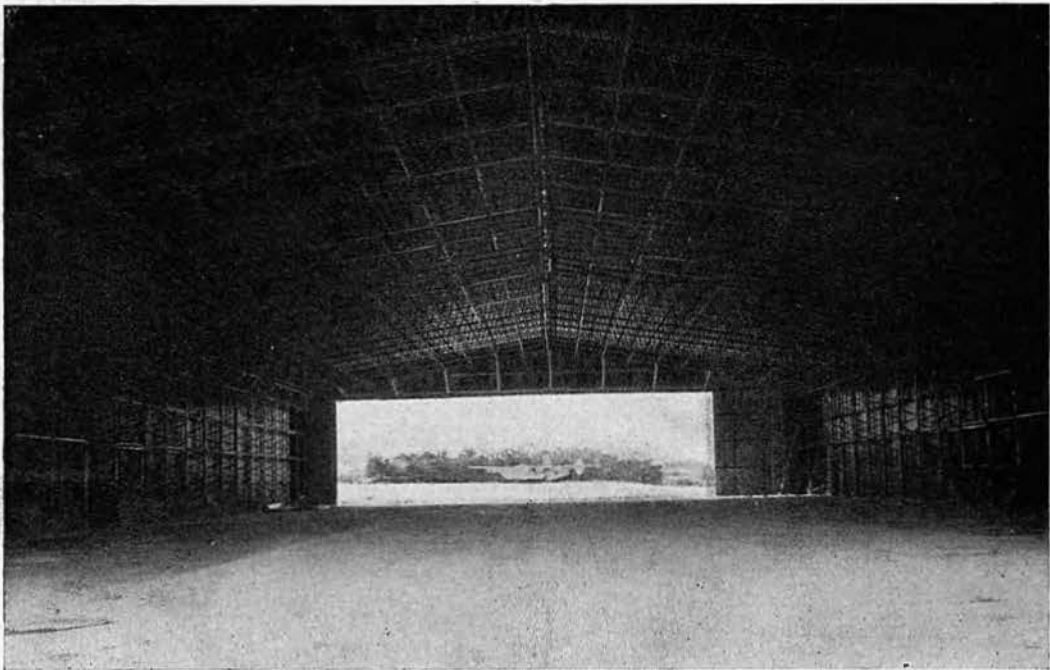
VIEW OF DRY DOCK with chocking partially installed, for receiving a vessel to be raised. The stabilizers maintain the deck in level position as it is sunken by water ballast let into the pontoons.



DRYDOCK IN OPERATION: A small escort craft is raised for emergency repairs.



AIRFIELD HANGAR: Finished project erected at Dunkeswell in Devonshire by a detachment temporarily stationed there.



INTERIOR VIEW of above hangar showing truss construction.



OFFICERS' MESS at Hamoaze House, Plymouth, a remodeling and painting project of the local base maintenance assignment.



PAINTERS working on one of the many paint jobs assigned the Sixty-Ninth throughout England. This job — Hamoaze House.



MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAM: Rifle practice at Royal Navy Base, H.M.S. Raleigh, the Treval Range near Torpoint in Cornwall.



INSTRUCTION IN MAPREADING at Edinburgh Road Camp. A "refresher lecture" for men about to embark for France.



PERSONNEL OFFICE: Hard at work preparing their reports before leaving for France.



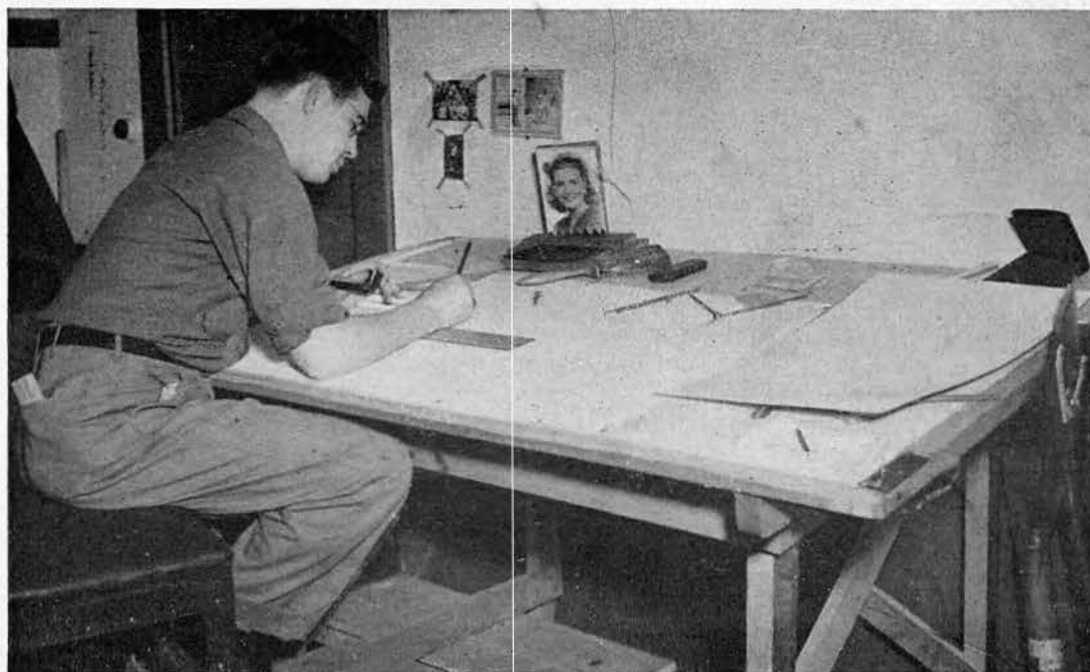
SICK BAY: Pharmacist mates receiving instructions from the senior medical officer.



PROTESTANT SERVICE held by Chaplain R. Kjeldahl, Lt., USNR, successor to Chaplain Onorato after the latter's transfer to another station.



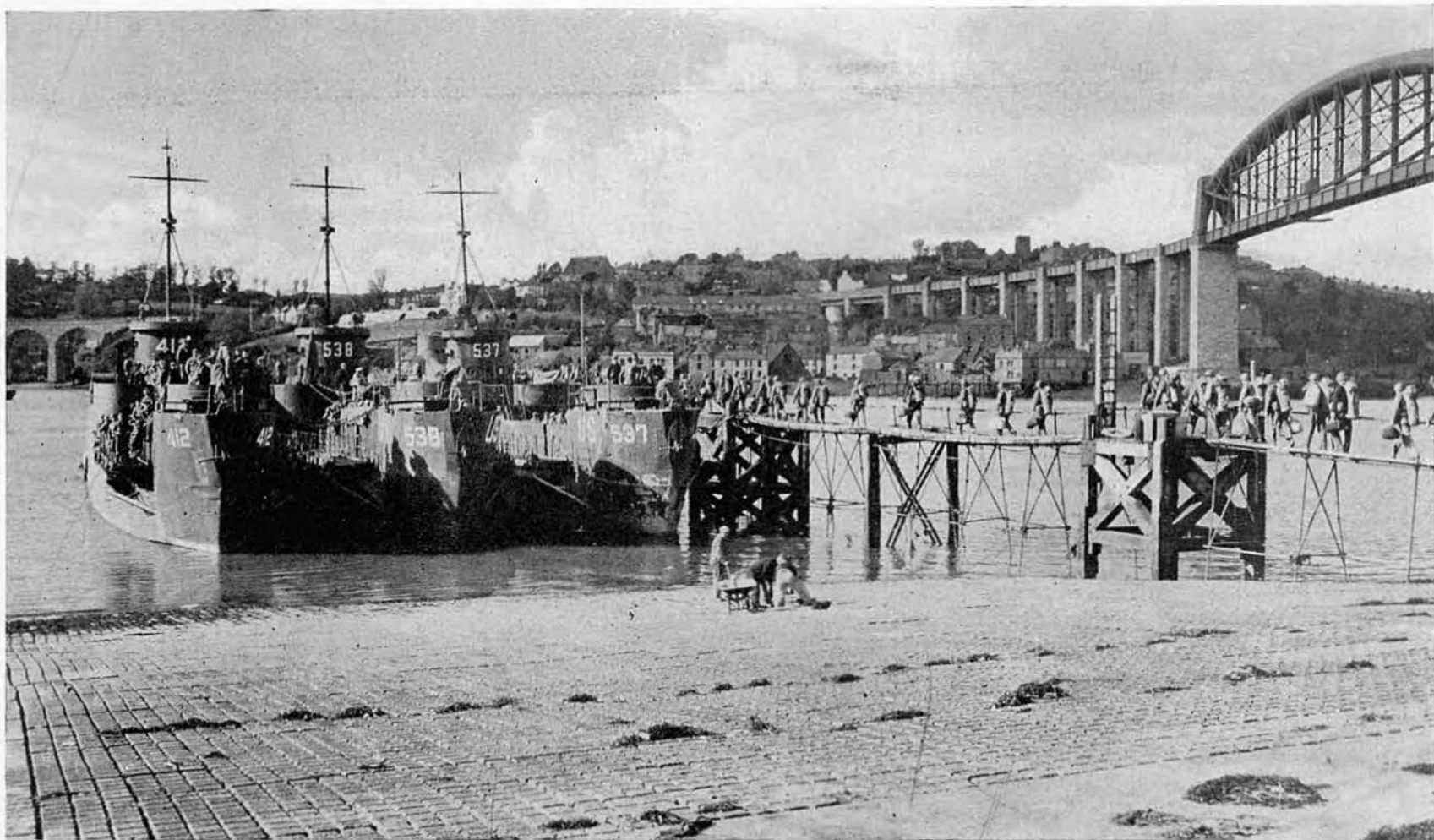
SHIP'S STORE STOREKEEPERS handing out the weekly quota of candy, cigarettes and gum. No points required, but it's all rationed.



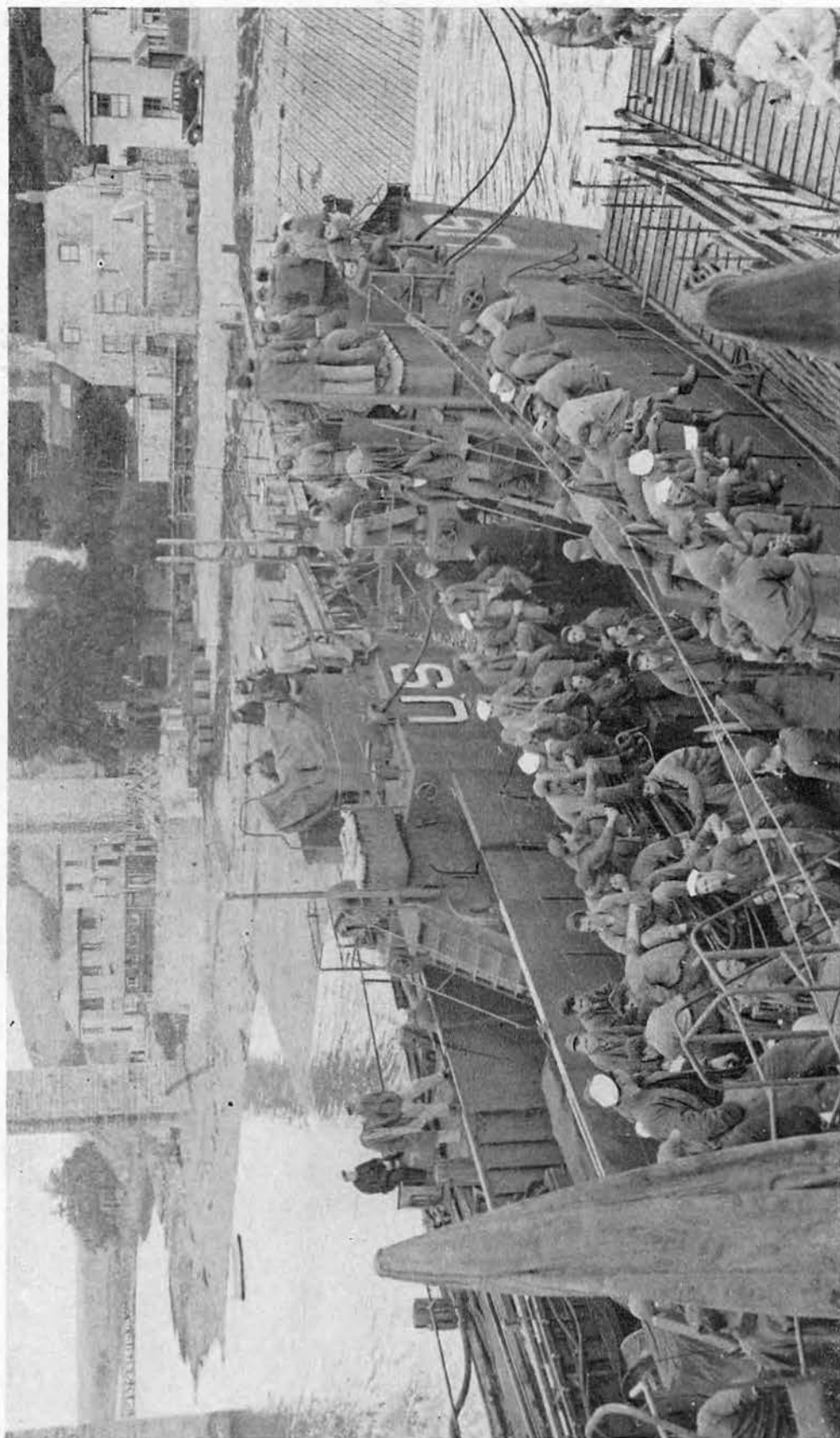
DRAFTING ROOM of the engineering department. Hundreds of drawings, tracings, and blueprints were needed on the battalion's projects.



CHOW AND SCULLERY LINES: Personnel returned to Edinburgh Road Camp temporarily, after false start for France. Delay was caused by rough water in the channel.



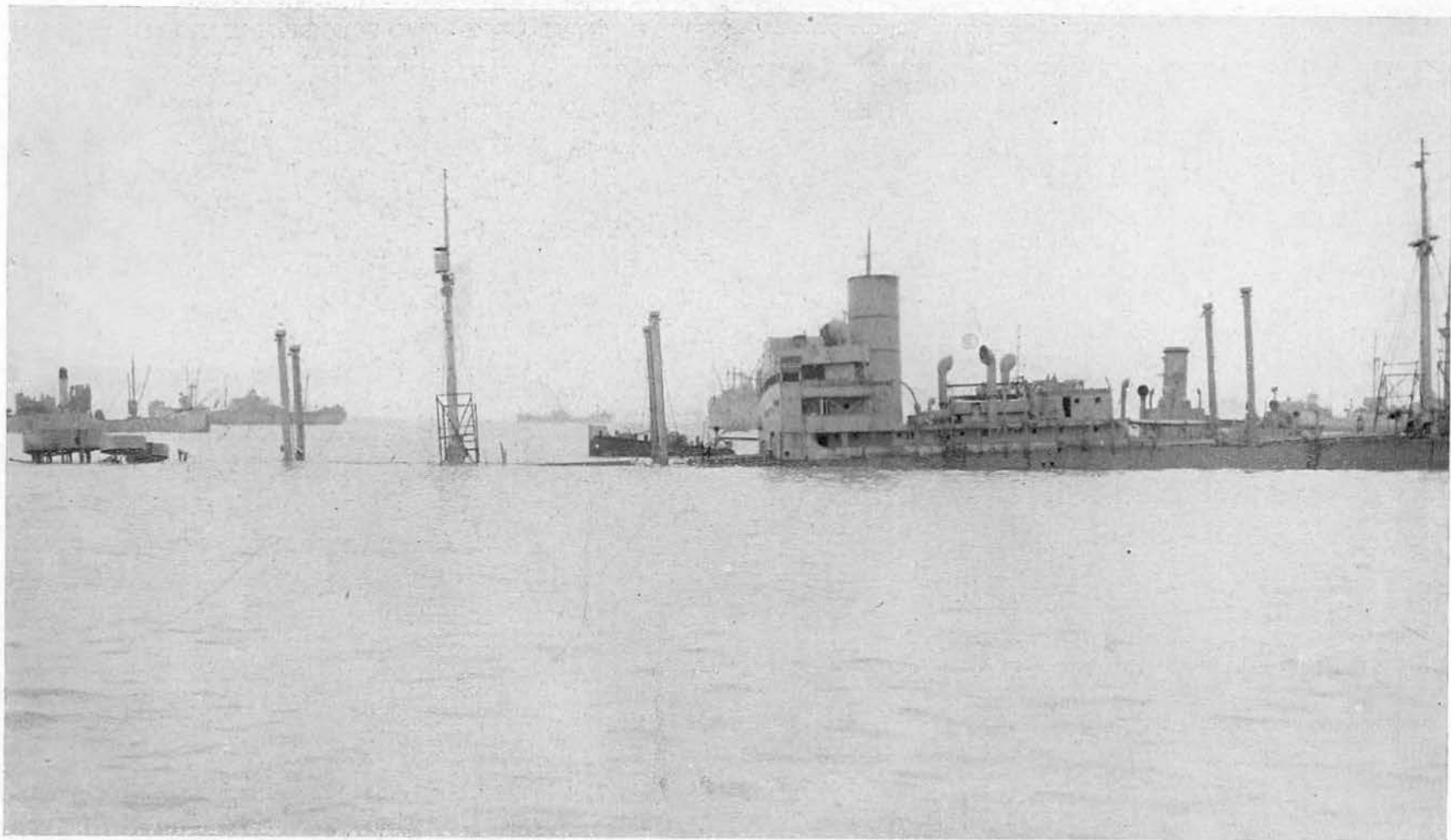
EMBARKATION of the Sixty-Ninth Battalion from St. Budeaux near Plymouth for "far shore". Destination — Omaha Beach in Normandy.



AWAITING DEPARTURE from St. Budeaux Hard. Men aboard LCI's for the channel voyage.



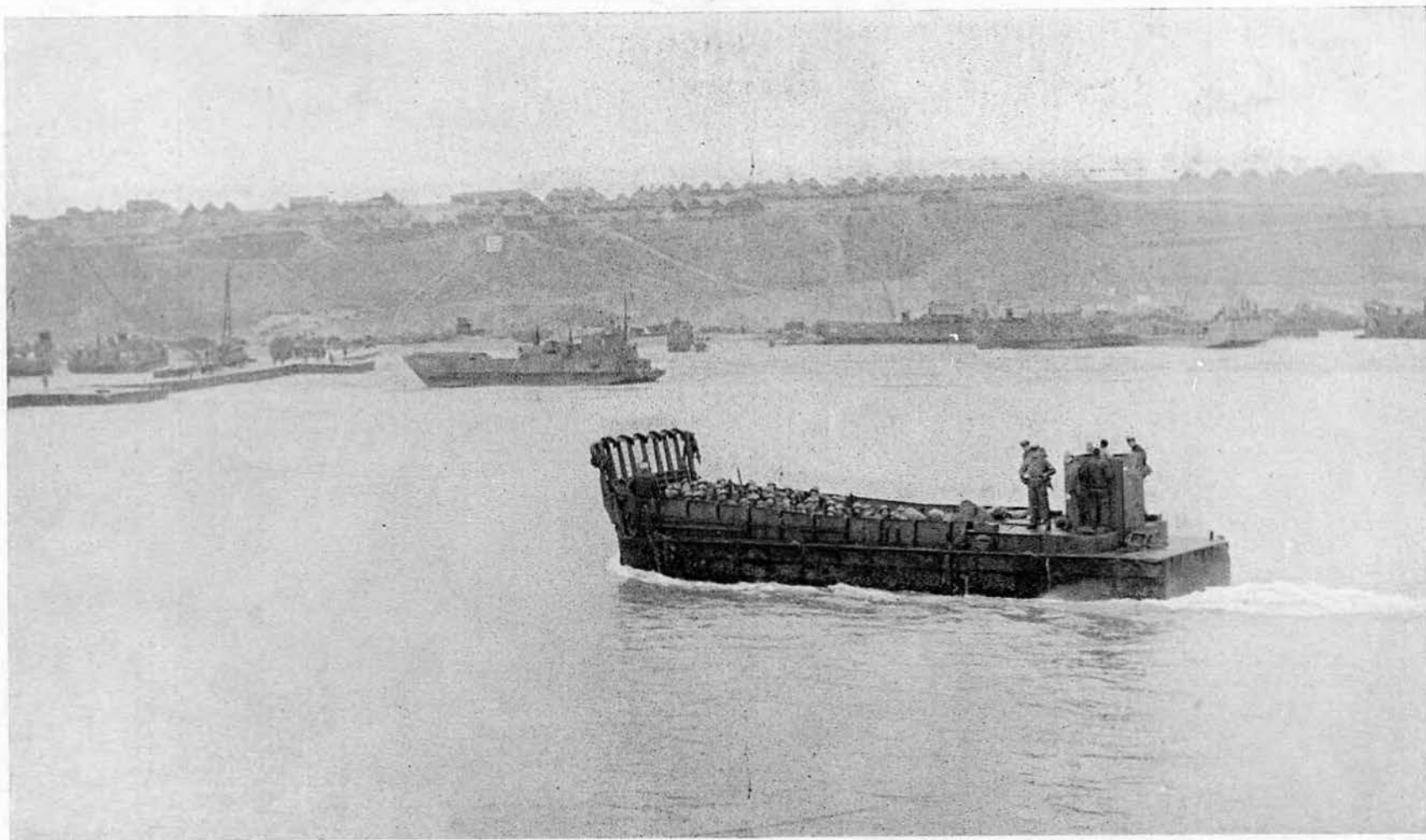
ENTERING THE OUTER HARBOR at Omaha Beach. Transports in the background are laden with cargoes which the Sixty-Ninth Battalion is assigned to ferry ashore on Rhino Barges.



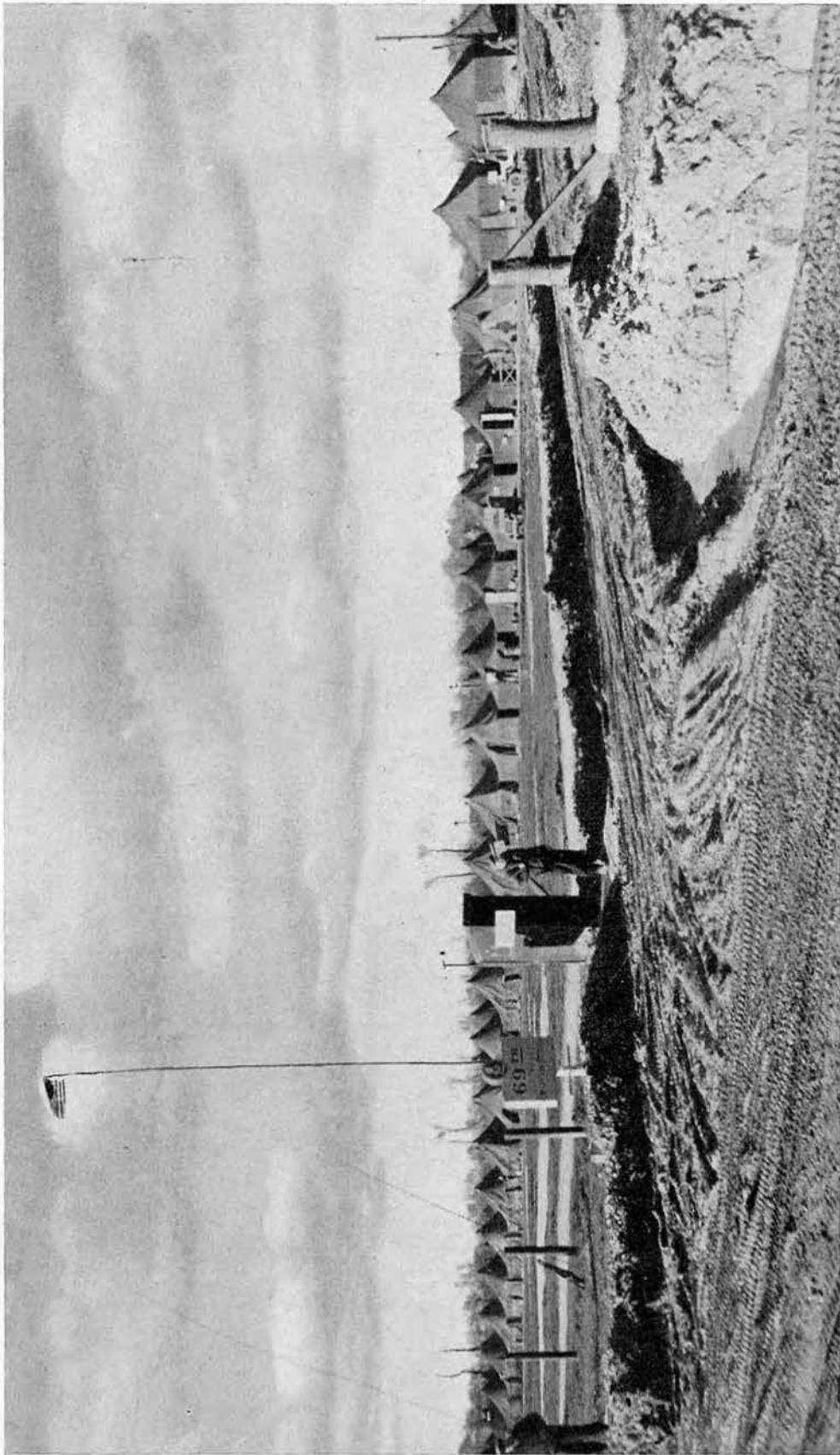
WITHIN THE INNER HARBOR created by the sunken blockships. Only shallow draught craft entered the artificial harbor designed primarily as a breakwater for beaching operations.



PERSONNEL DEBARKING from LCI transport to landing craft at Omaha Beach.



APPROACHING THE CAUSEWAY for the initial landing of the main battalion force. Naval headquarters encampment surmounts the bluff in background. The bluff was formerly the site of German gun emplacements.



10*

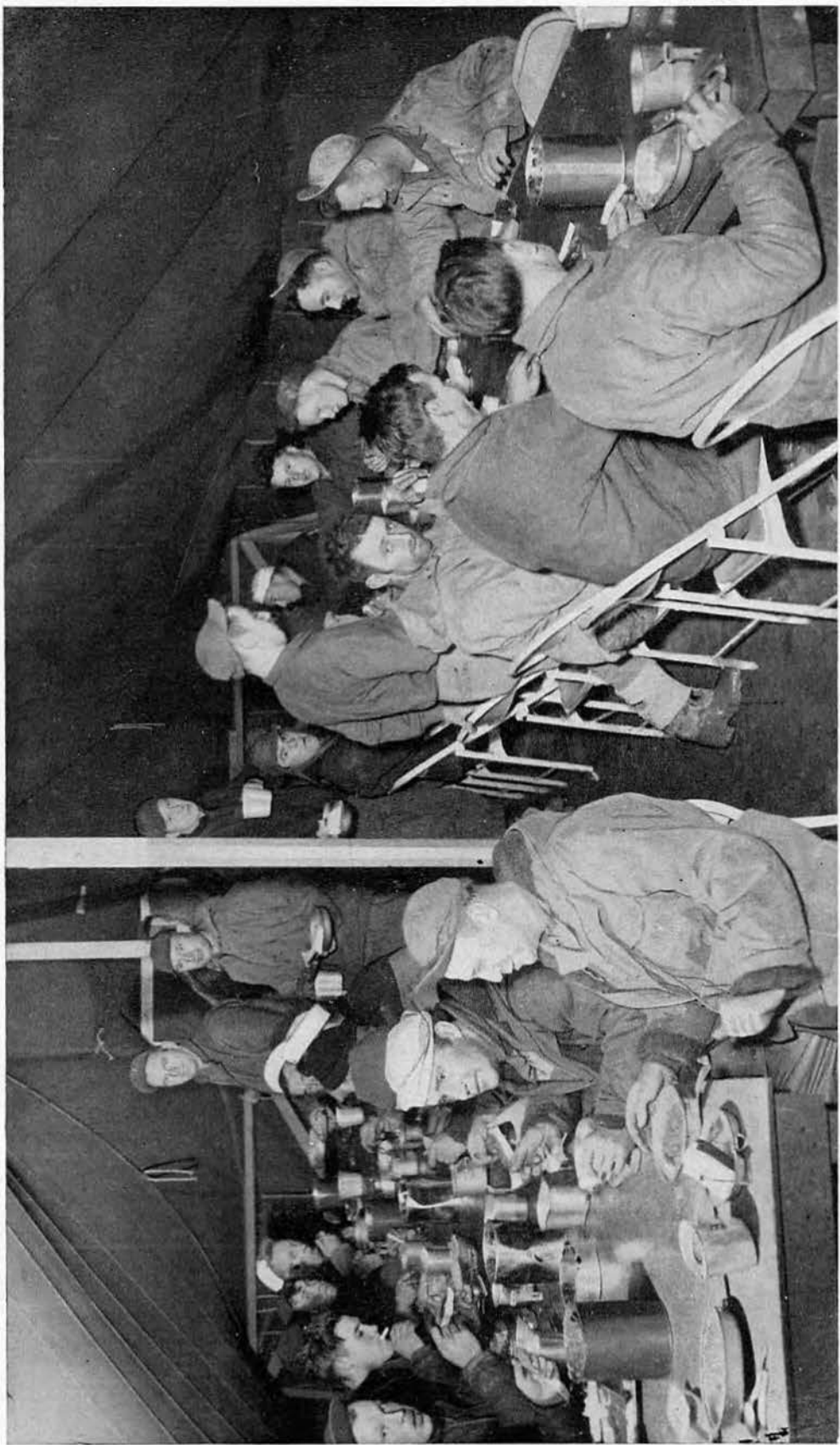
CAMP ENTRANCE near village of St. Laurent sur Mer. Tents in right foreground contain administrative offices.



SENTRY POSTED at a side service entrance to the camp area.



CHOW LINE, unrestrained by French mud. Elements of the hundred and fourteenth battalion were also fed by the Sixty-Ninth commissary organization.



MESS TENT: Table accommodations for Seabee personnel of the area.



OFFICERS' STEWARDS take time out in France to pose for one of the rare group photographs of these boys.



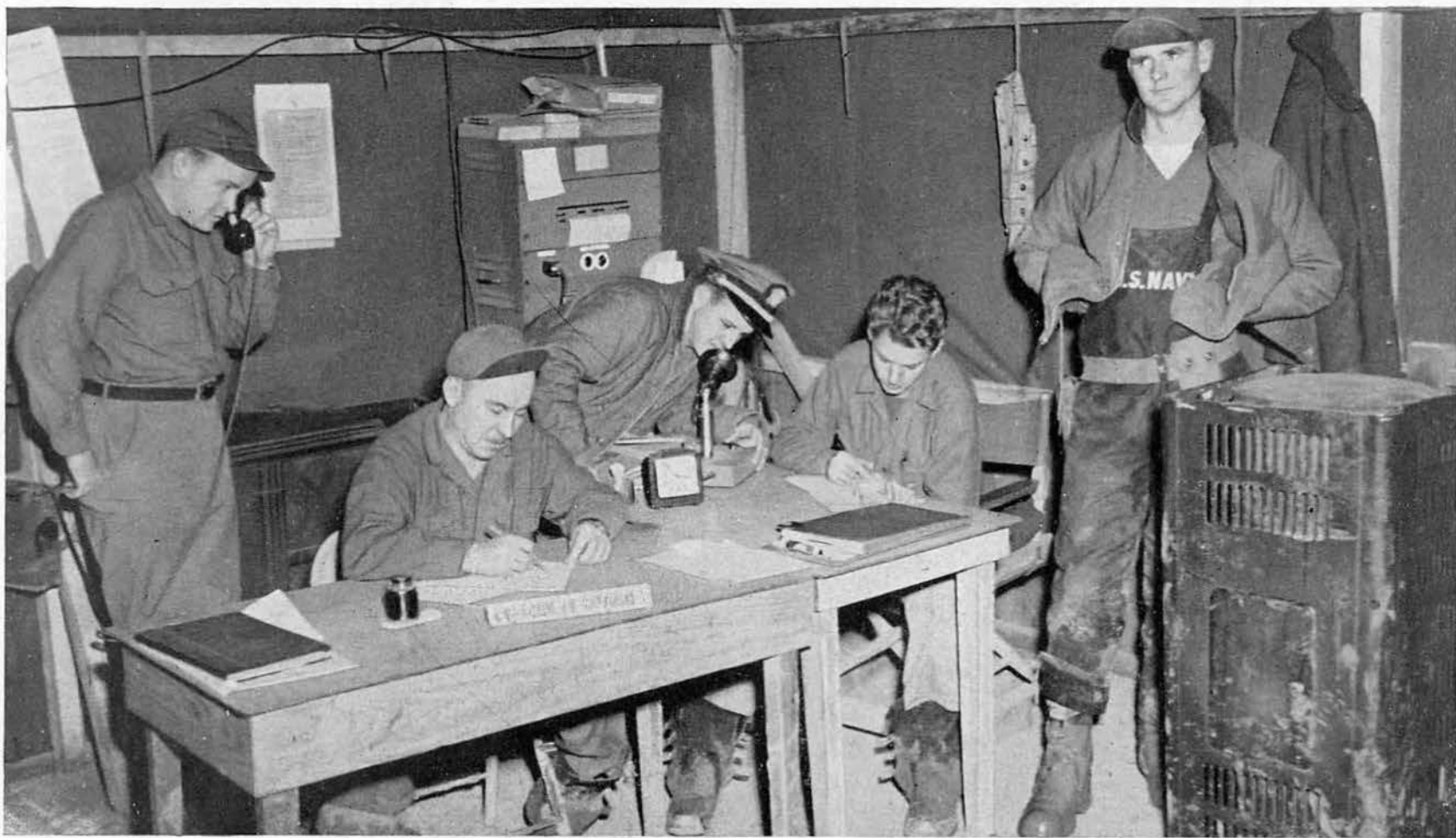
OFFICERS' MESS: With tables set, Stewards prepare for the first officers to appear for dinner.



CAMP POST OFFICE: Sixty-Ninth Battalion postmaster and assistant sorting mail in France.



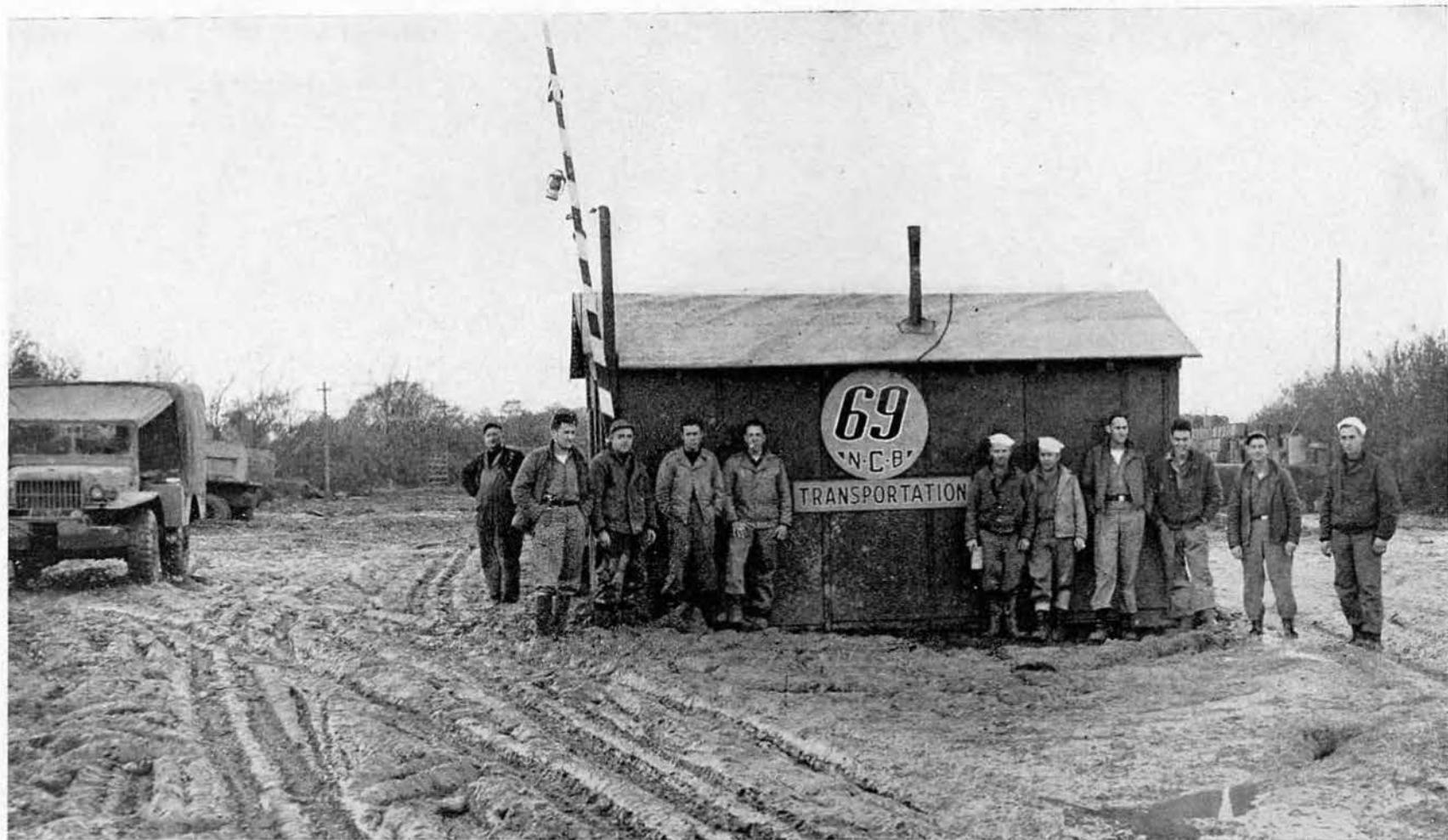
SIXTY-NINTH BATTALION ARMORY: Chief gunner's mate and assistants in workshop.



O.O.D.'s OFFICE: Personnel widely dispersed over the camp areas were reached by announcements for work assignments by public address system from this office.



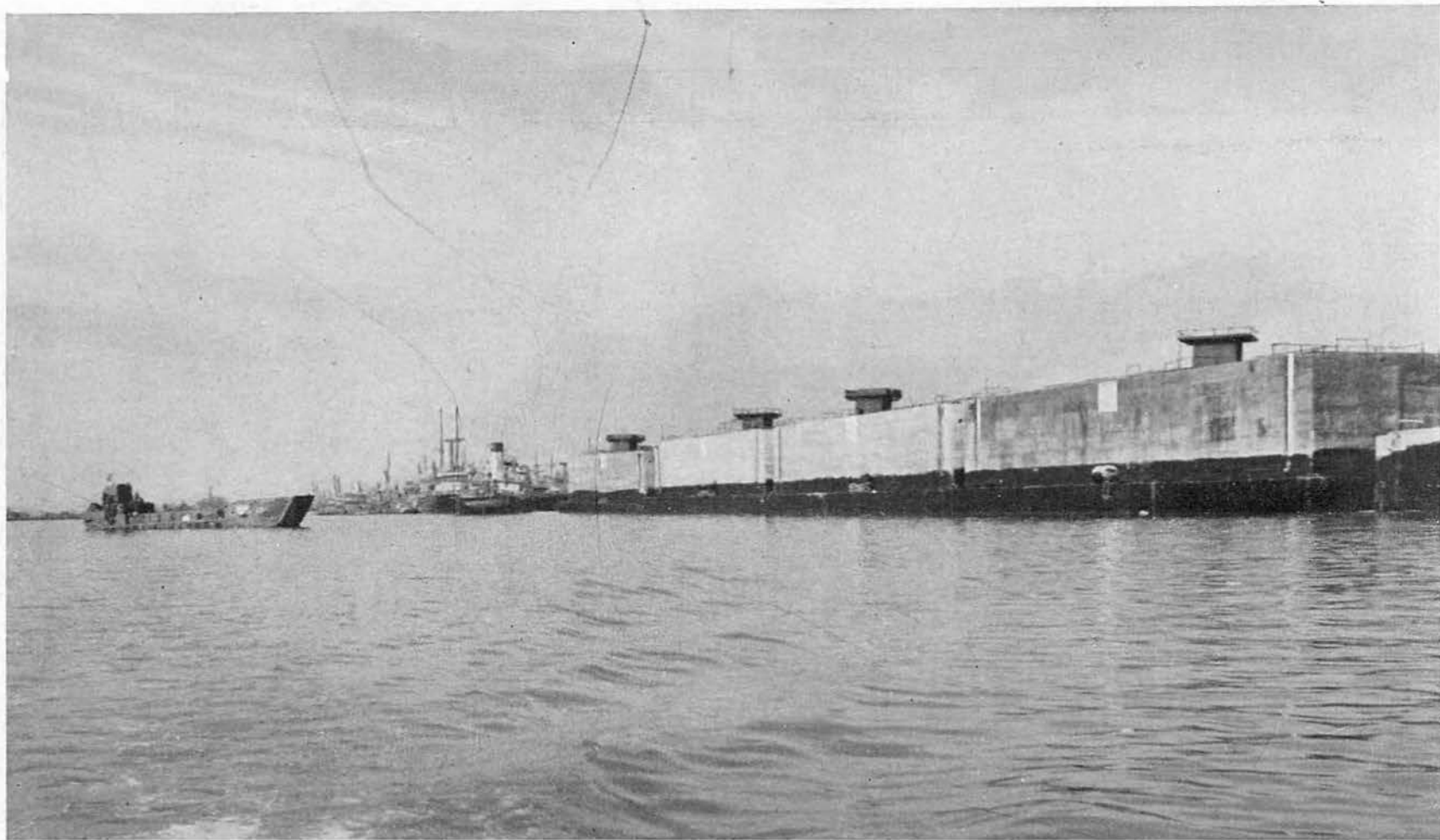
CARPENTRY SHOP: Crew from this shop maintained and improved the facilities at the camp.



TRANSPORTATION: A shuttle bus was operated between camp and the beach for officers and personnel engaged there.



OMAHA BEACH: Scene of operations. Sunken blockships in background with troop and supply ships anchored beyond. Left center, the sunken causeway. Center, Rhino Barges "dried out" on beach at low tide, and in foreground, equipment and supplies ferried ashore by Rhinos.



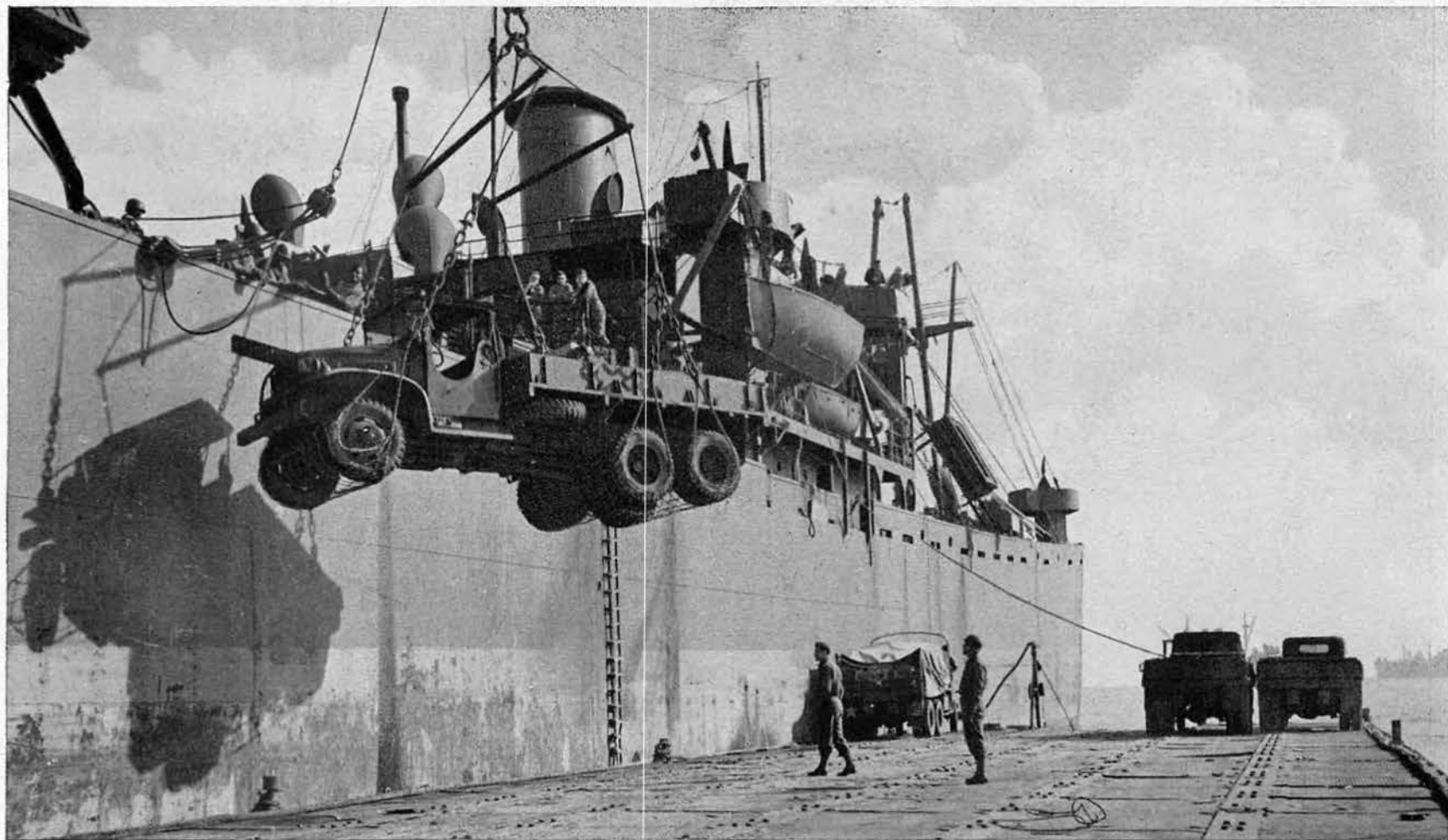
PHOENIXES: Concrete blockhouses, floated into position and sunk where they form part of the breakwater creating a "Mulberry" or artificial harbor.



BLOCKSHIPS: Numerous sunken ships extended the breakwater line from the "Phoenixes" parallel along the length of the coast.



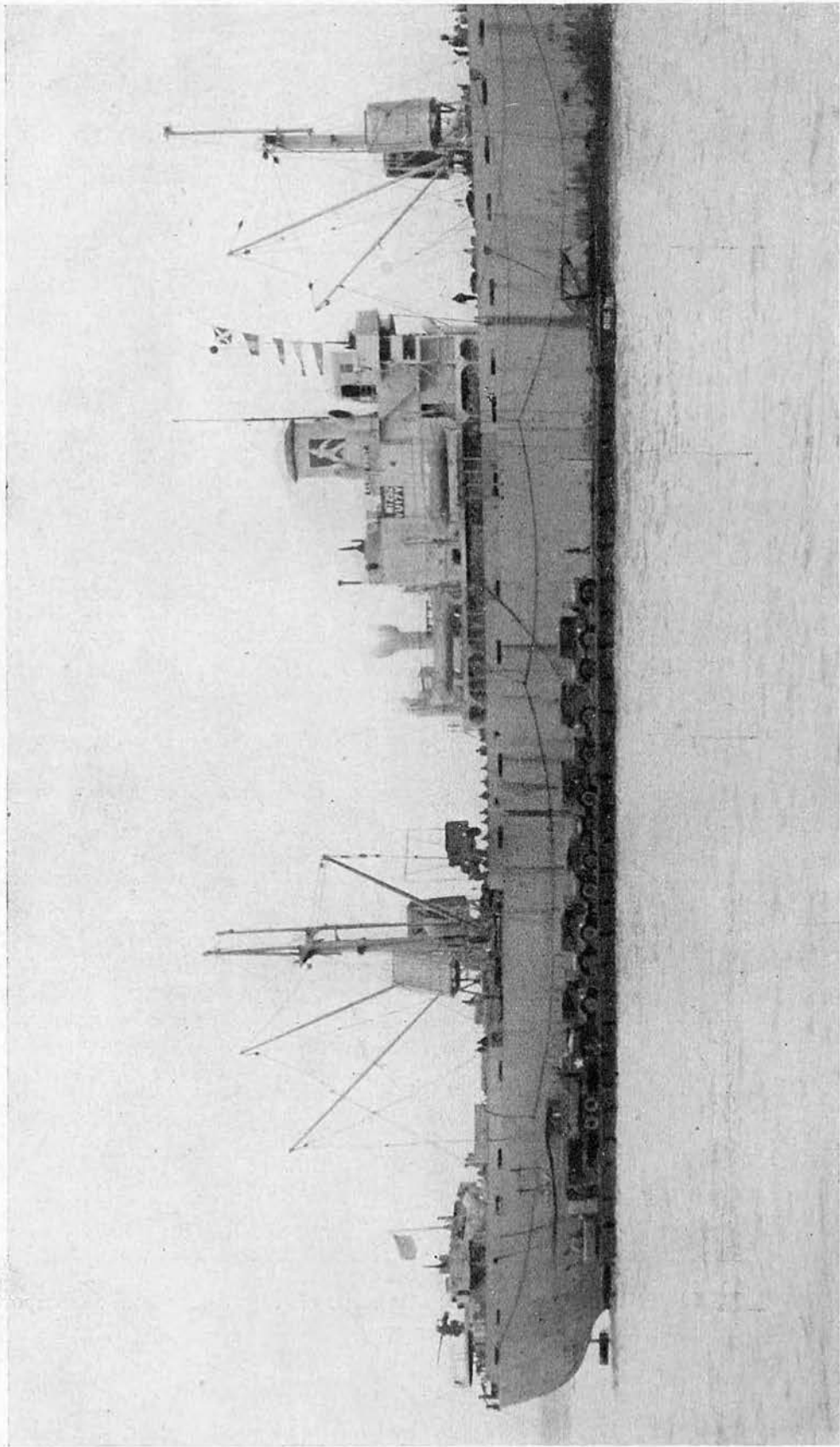
COMMUNICATIONS: Overnight the need for signalmen arose in carrying on ship to shore operations at the beach. A night crew on post of duty.



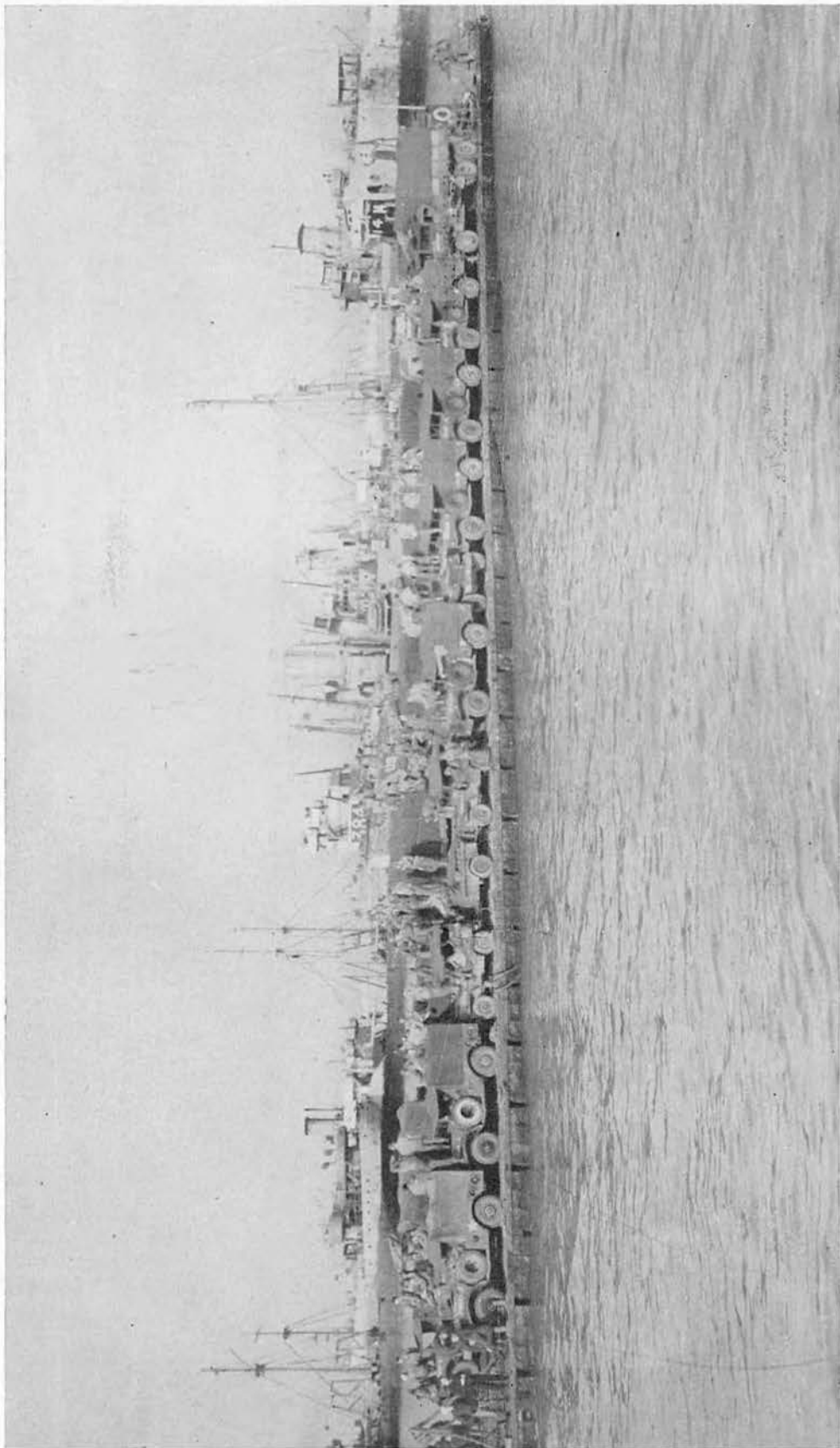
LIVE CARGO TRANSFER from transport to deck of the Rhino moored alongside for the ferry trip to the beach and to the fighting fronts via "The Redball Highway".



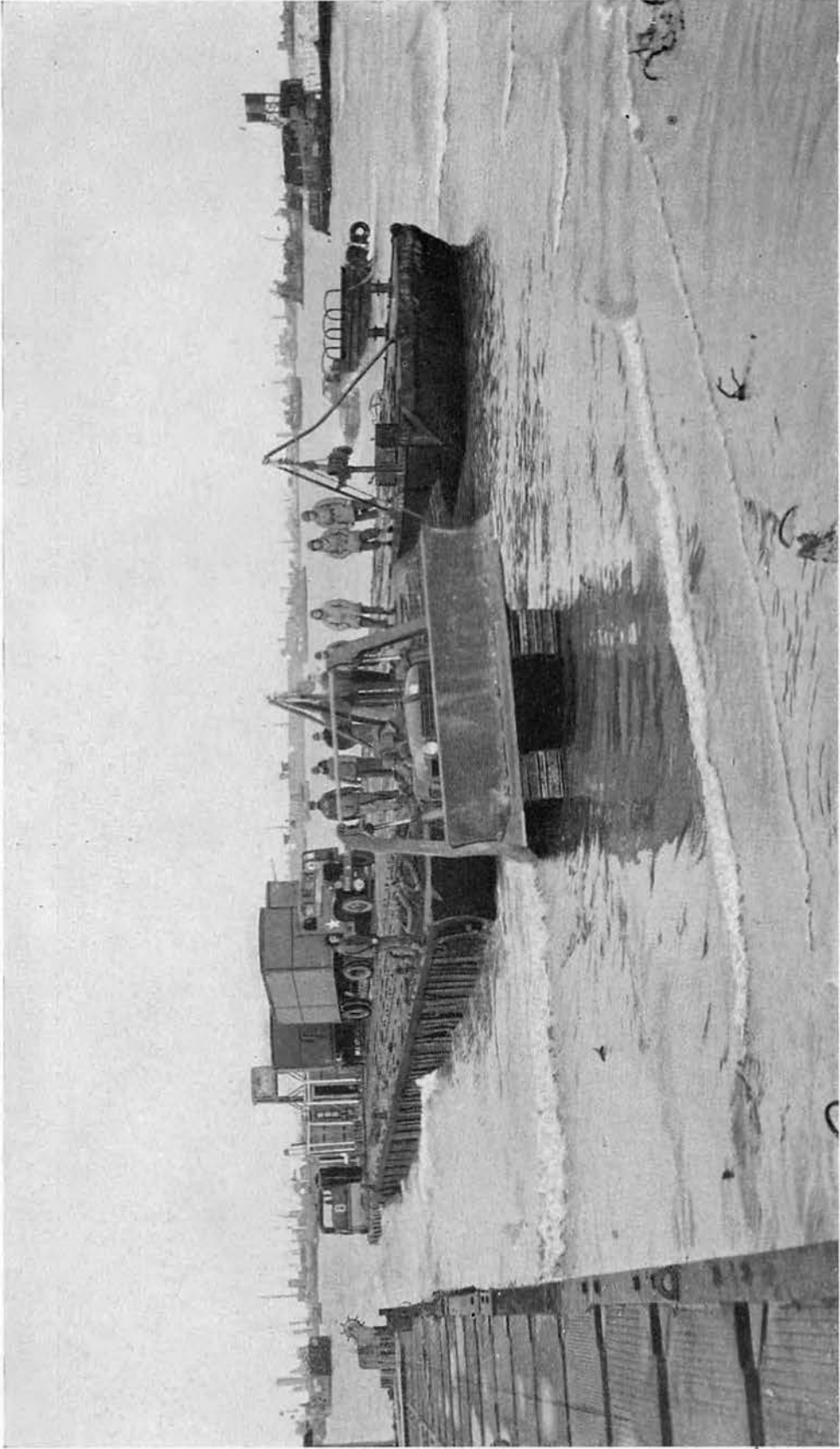
THE RHINO BARGE "KENTUCKIAN" receives its cargo of army trucks from a transport riding at anchor in deep water beyond the Mulberry.



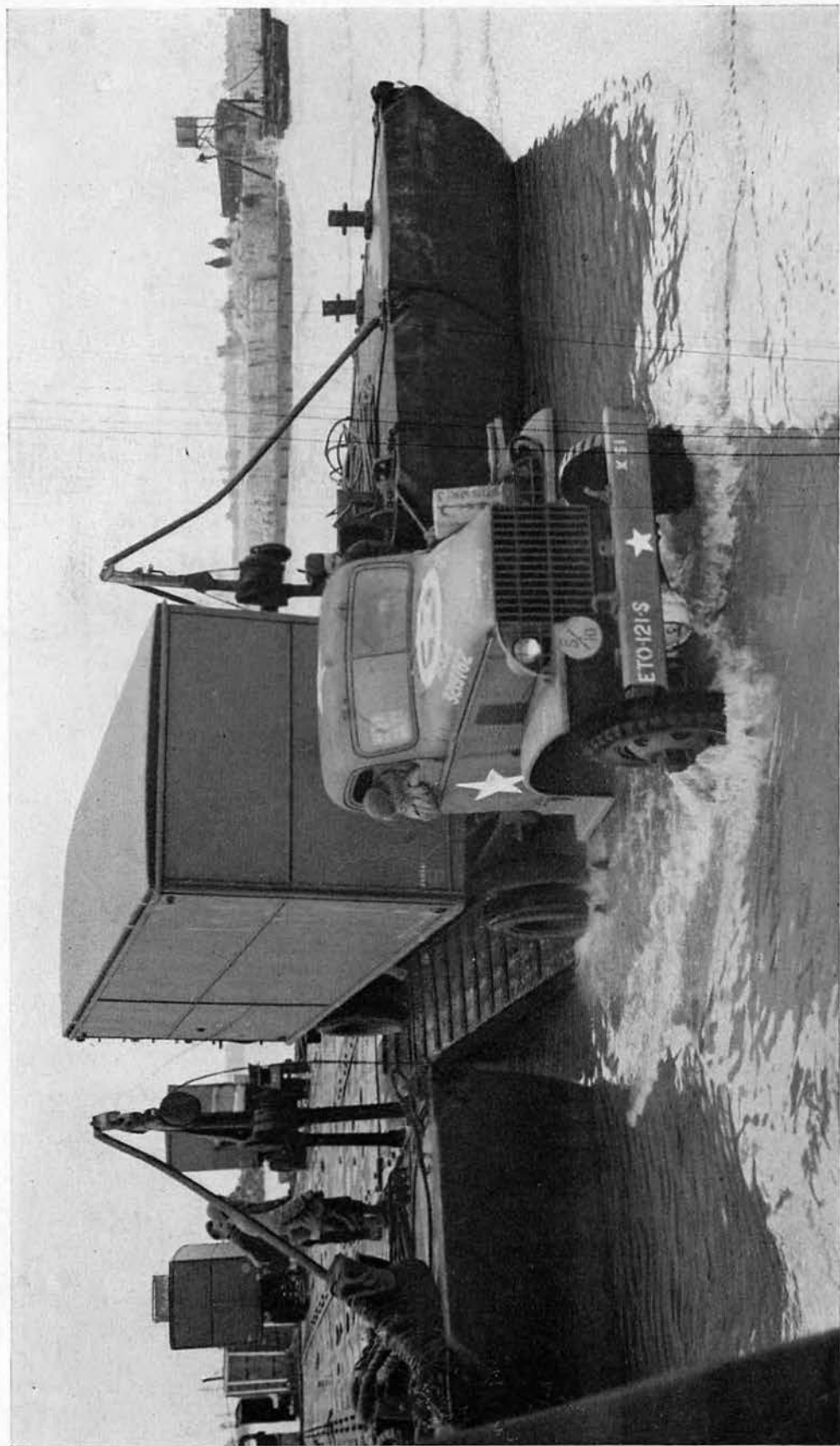
LIBERTY SHIP booming a truck overboard to the Rhino below.



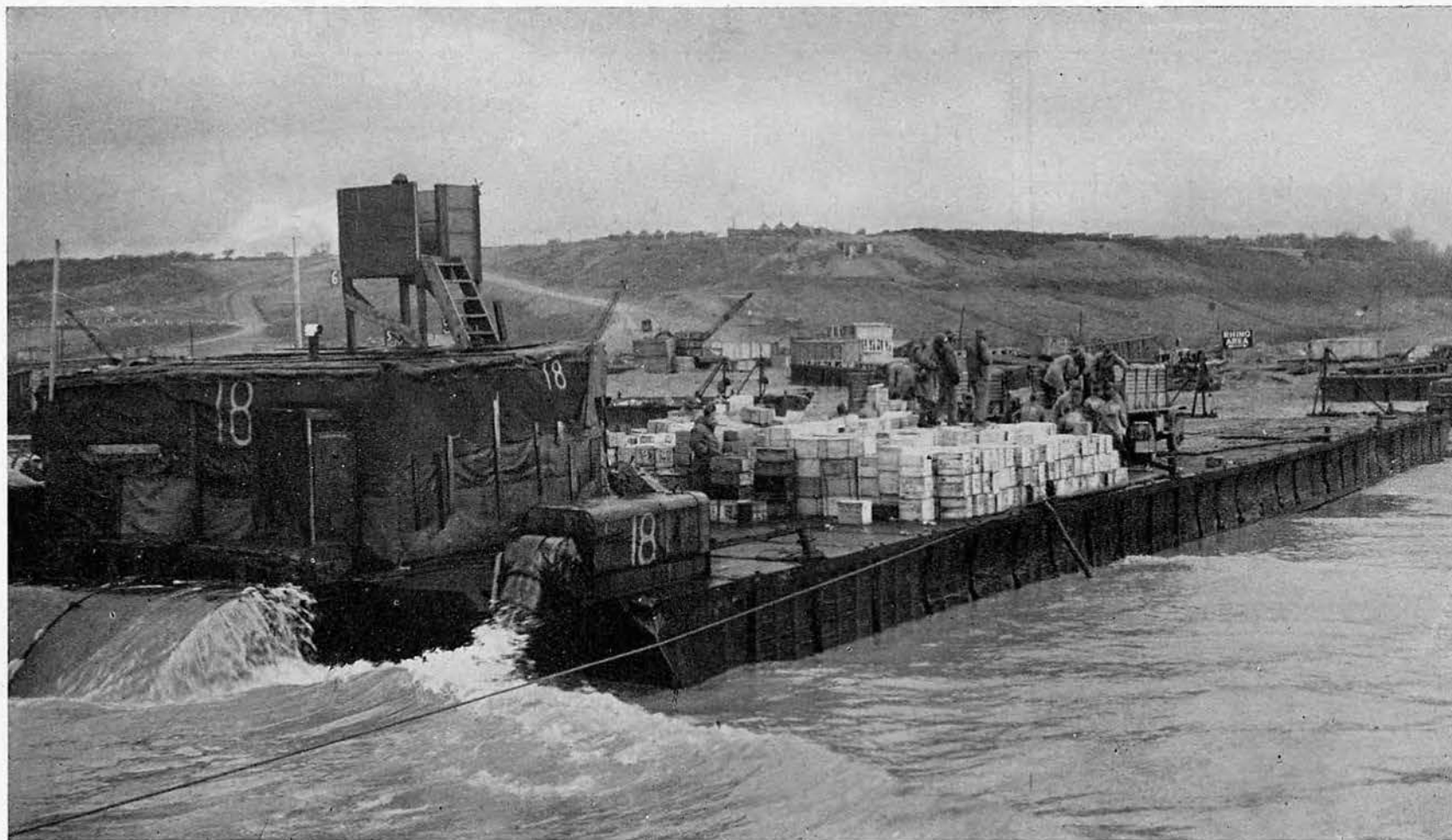
HEAVY DISPLACEMENT: A fully loaded Rhino maneuvers in toward the beach to discharge its cargo.



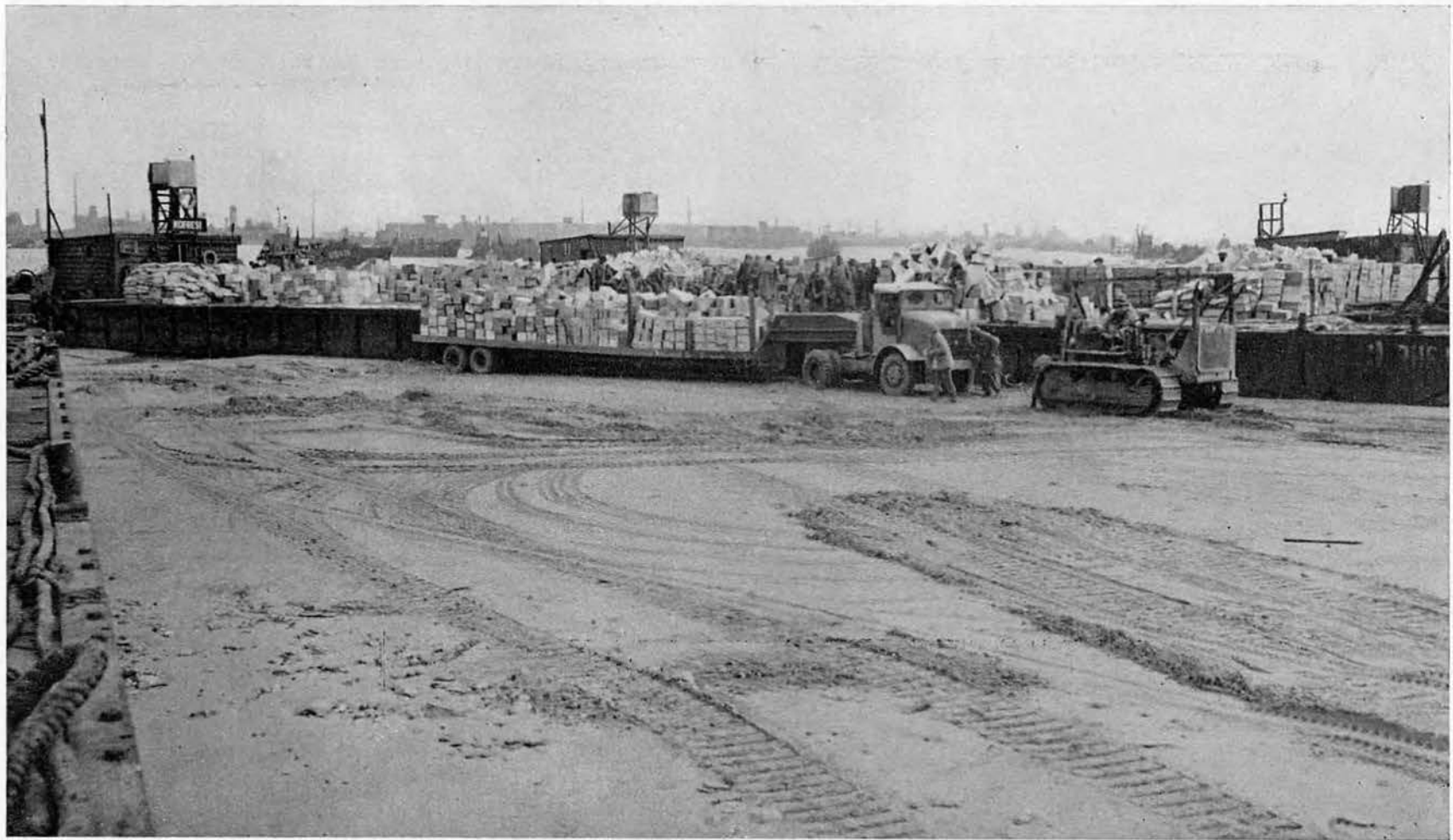
BEACHING: Bulldozer in the foreground is towing Rhino inshore to permit the trailer trucks to drive off higher on the beach.



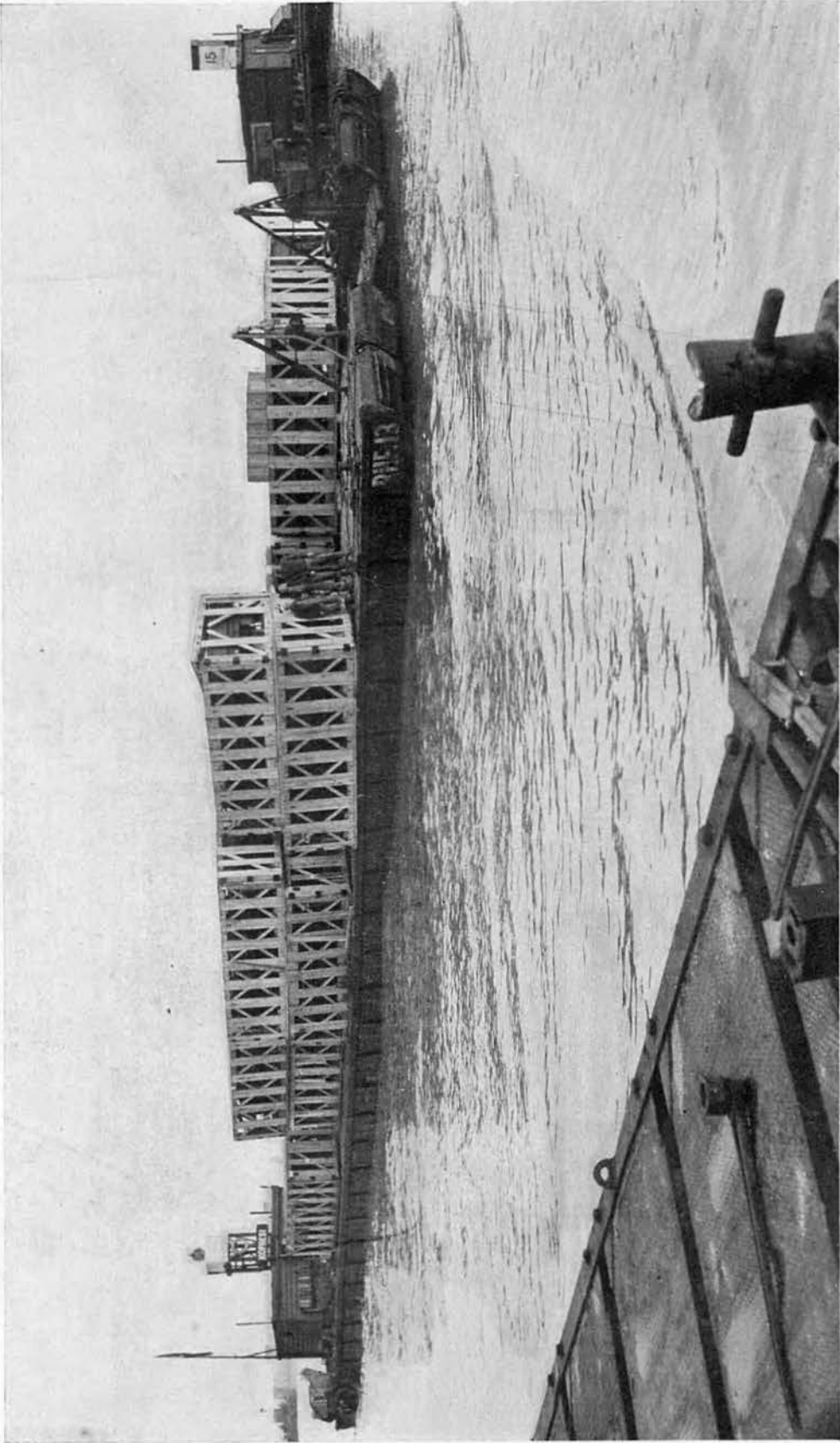
RAMPS DOWN, an unloading sequence to the previous photograph, as a truck rolls off onto the beach.



BEACHED RHINO: Cargo being loaded on truck for removal to storage dumps by German prisoners. Rhinos being only semi-rigid, warp with the incoming swells.



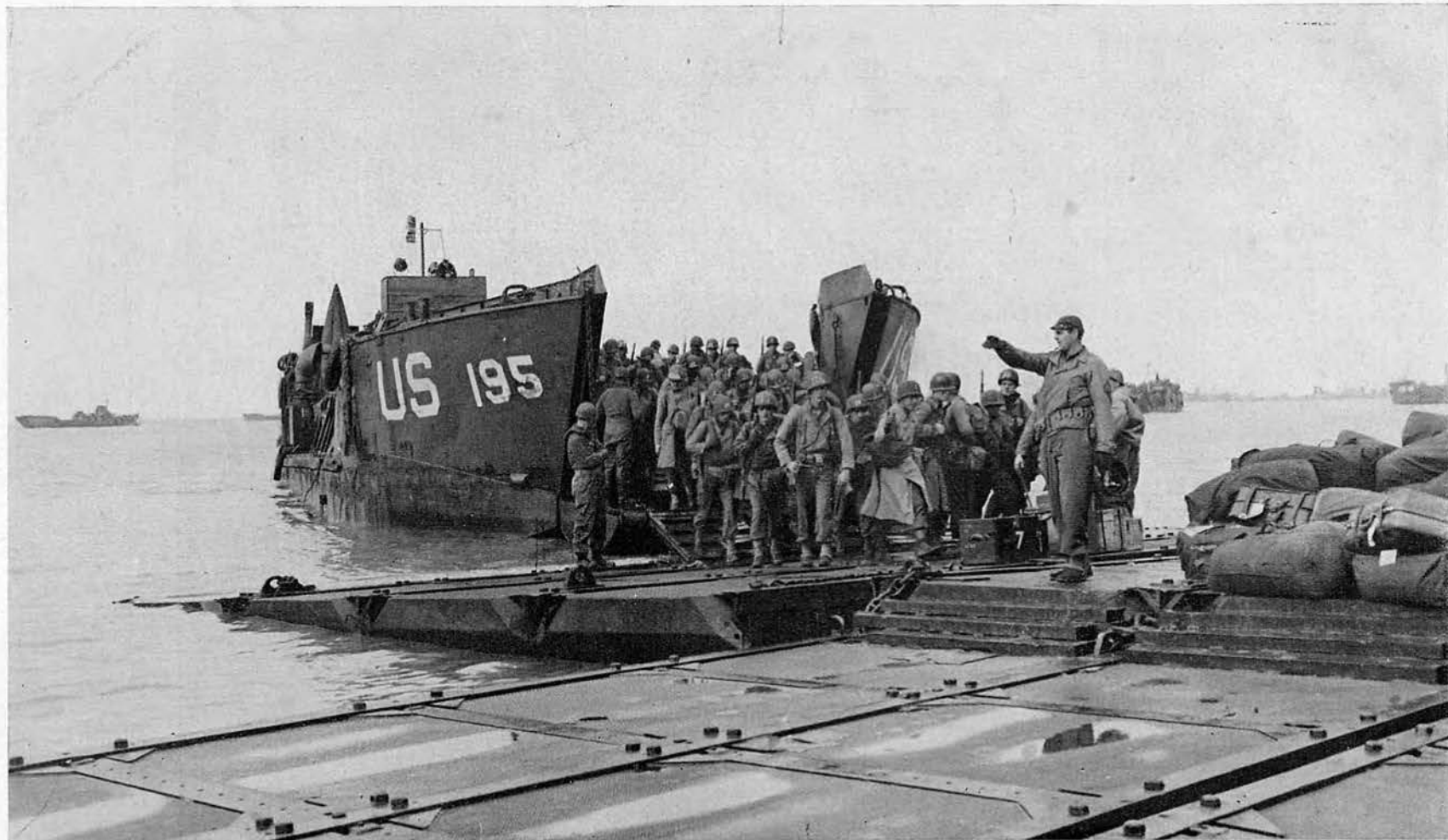
RHINO "DRIED OUT" at ebb tide, unloaded from the side. Bulldozer is prepared to give added traction to break the truck loose from a standstill on the soft surfaced sand.



SHIP TO SHORE ferry service. Berthing a load of crated army truck trailers.



CAUSEWAY OPERATIONS: Semaphore and blinker light signalmen directing the landings of troop laden LCT's and Rhino Barges at the causeway and the beach.



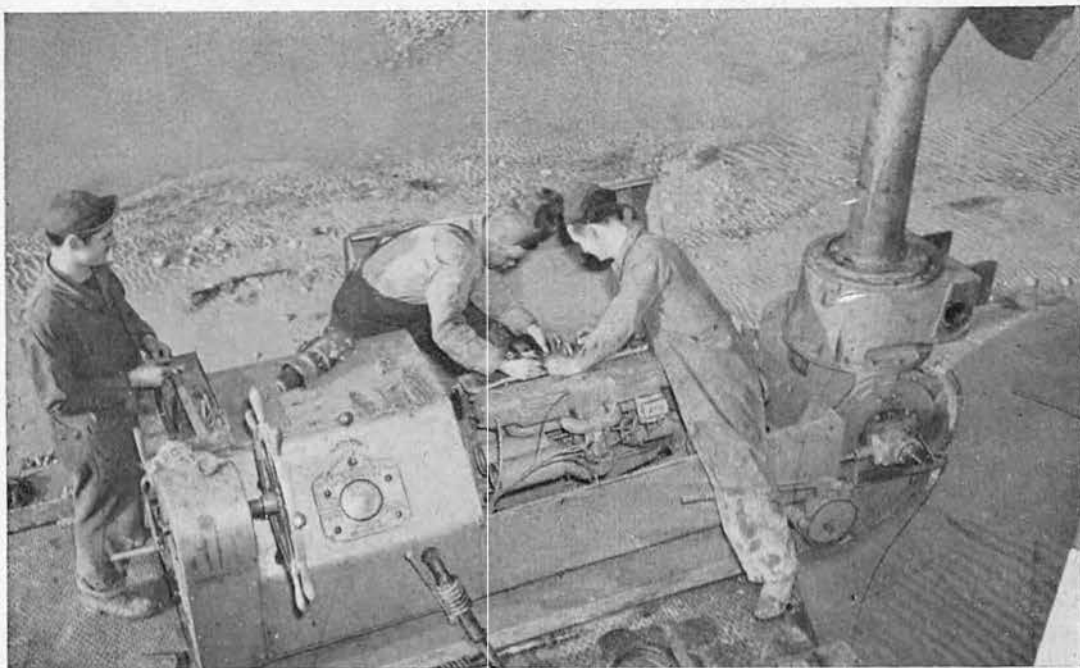
TROOPS DEBARKING from an LCT at point on the causeway to which the craft had been directed by the signalmen ashore.



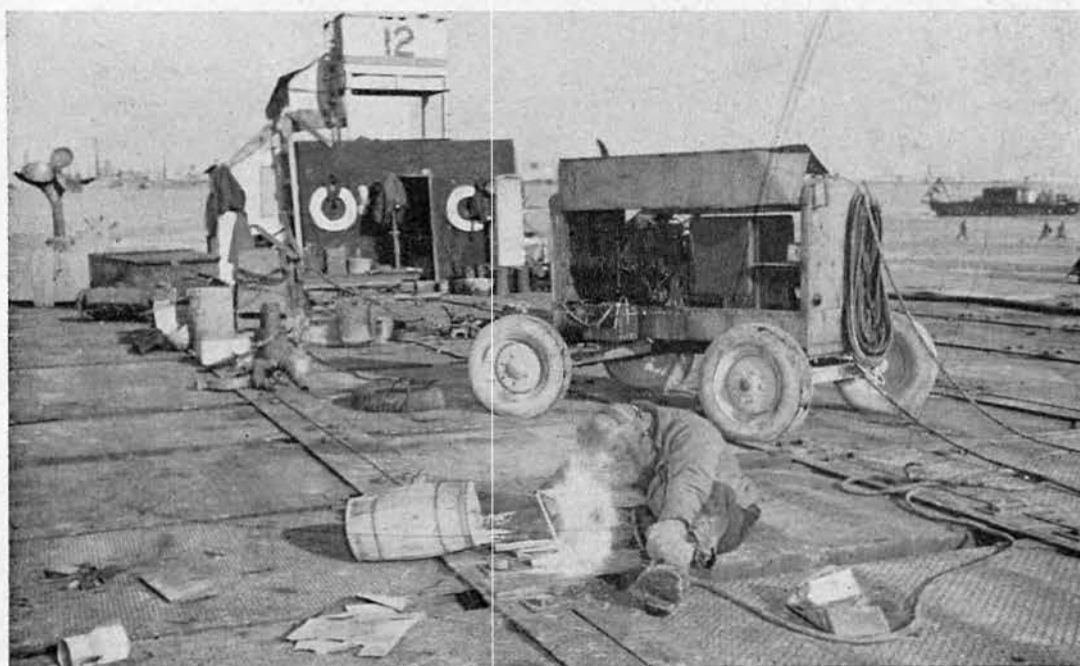
A BUSY DAY at the causeway as thousands of troops came ashore from the transports at anchor outside the harbor blockships.



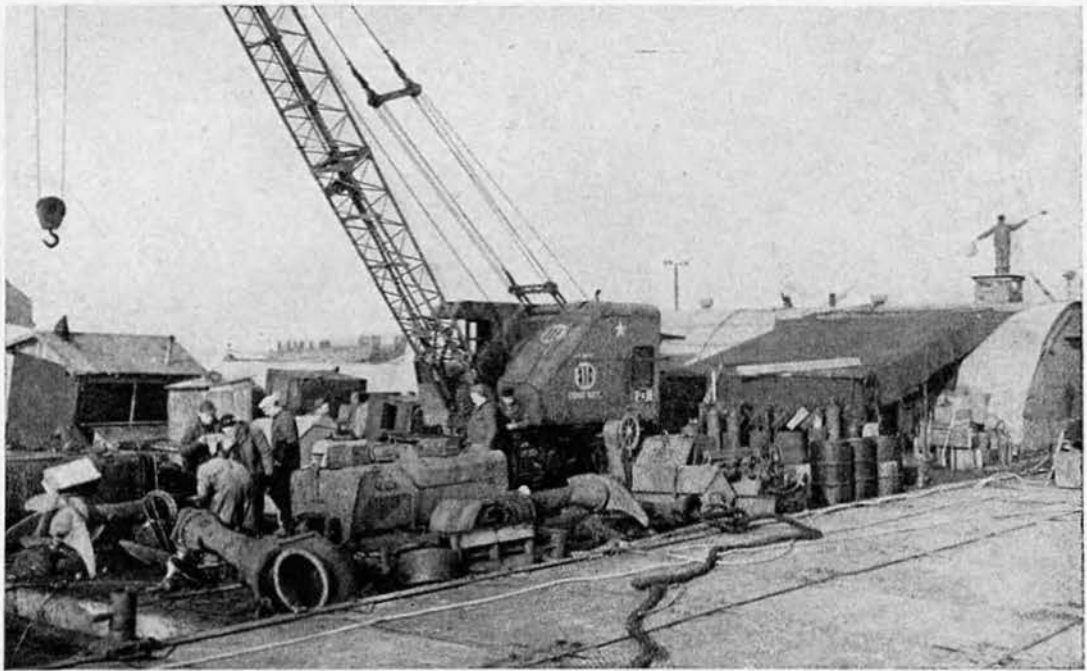
TROOP ASSEMBLY AREA: A general view of LCT's discharging troops at the causeway as other troops relax before the march to reception camps in the rear.



ENGINE REPAIRS: Minor repairs to propulsion units were made in location on the Rhinos.



WELDING STEEL PLATE to reinforce an angle broken by the storm.



RHINO REPAIR BARGE to which propulsion units were transferred for general overhauling.



PORTABLE MACHINE SHOP: Installed on repair barge for precision machining operations.



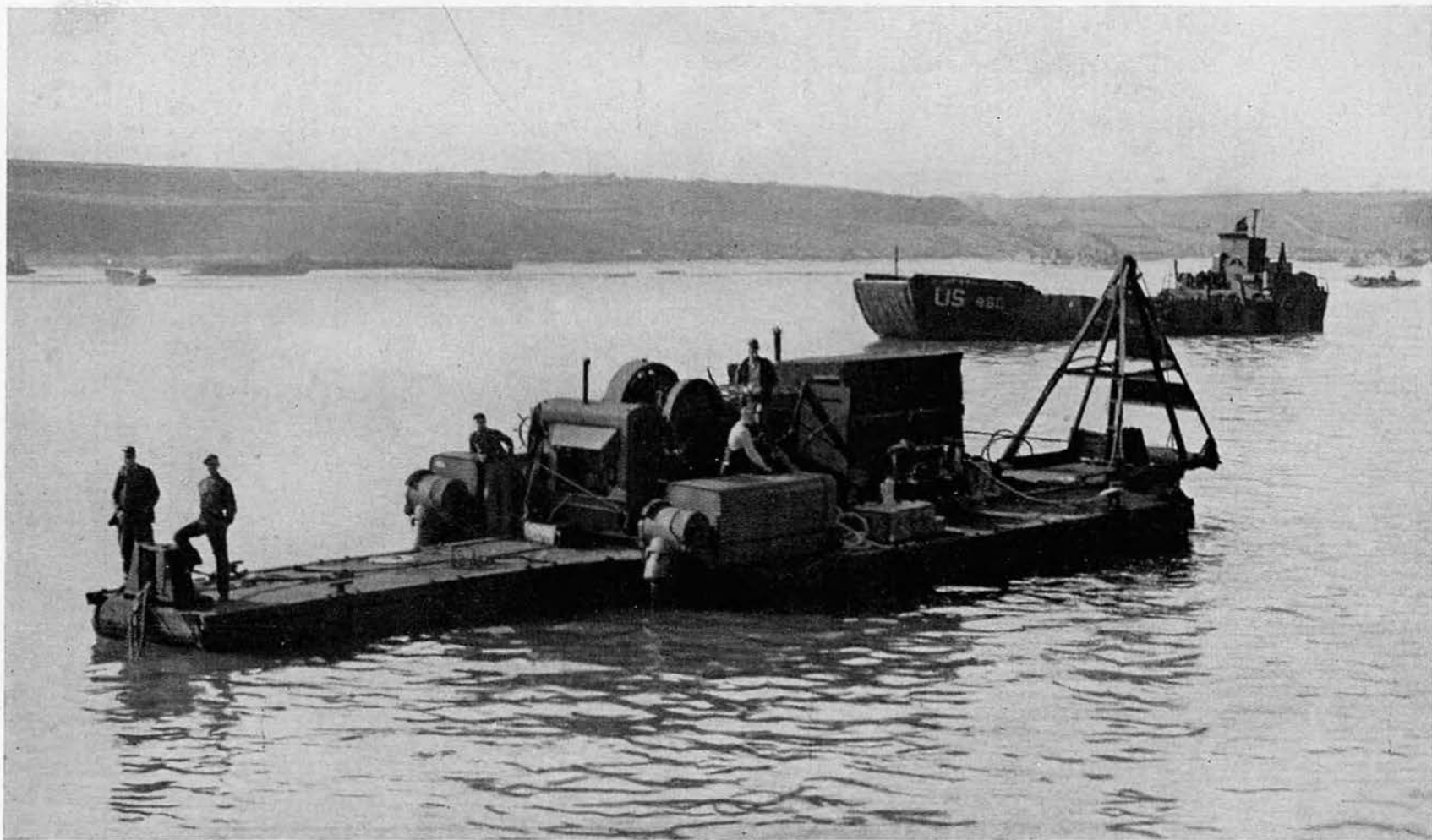
ELECTRICAL SHOP aboard the Rhino repair barge. A truck generator being repaired for an improvised battery charging apparatus.



BRAZING: Broken parts must frequently be retained in service. Welders keep busy in maintaining equipment not easily replaced.



REMOVING PINION GEAR from the housing of a propulsion unit on the repair tug. Underwater obstructions caused damage to the units in shearing off rudder fins and through fouling the screws.



WARPING TUG, used to free small craft stuck on the sand. With anchor out from the bow, a bight line secured to the stranded craft receives the strain from the winch through the stern bit.



FERRY DUCK: Operated as a personnel and supply carrier between the beach and the Rhino repair barge.



NIGHT OPERATIONS: Bulldozers are put to numerous tasks about the beach such as grading, beaching and floating Rhinos.



AFTERMATH OF STORM that closed Omaha Beach as an operational port. Huge swells breaking over the blockships cast Rhinos and other craft high on the beach, causing critical damage.



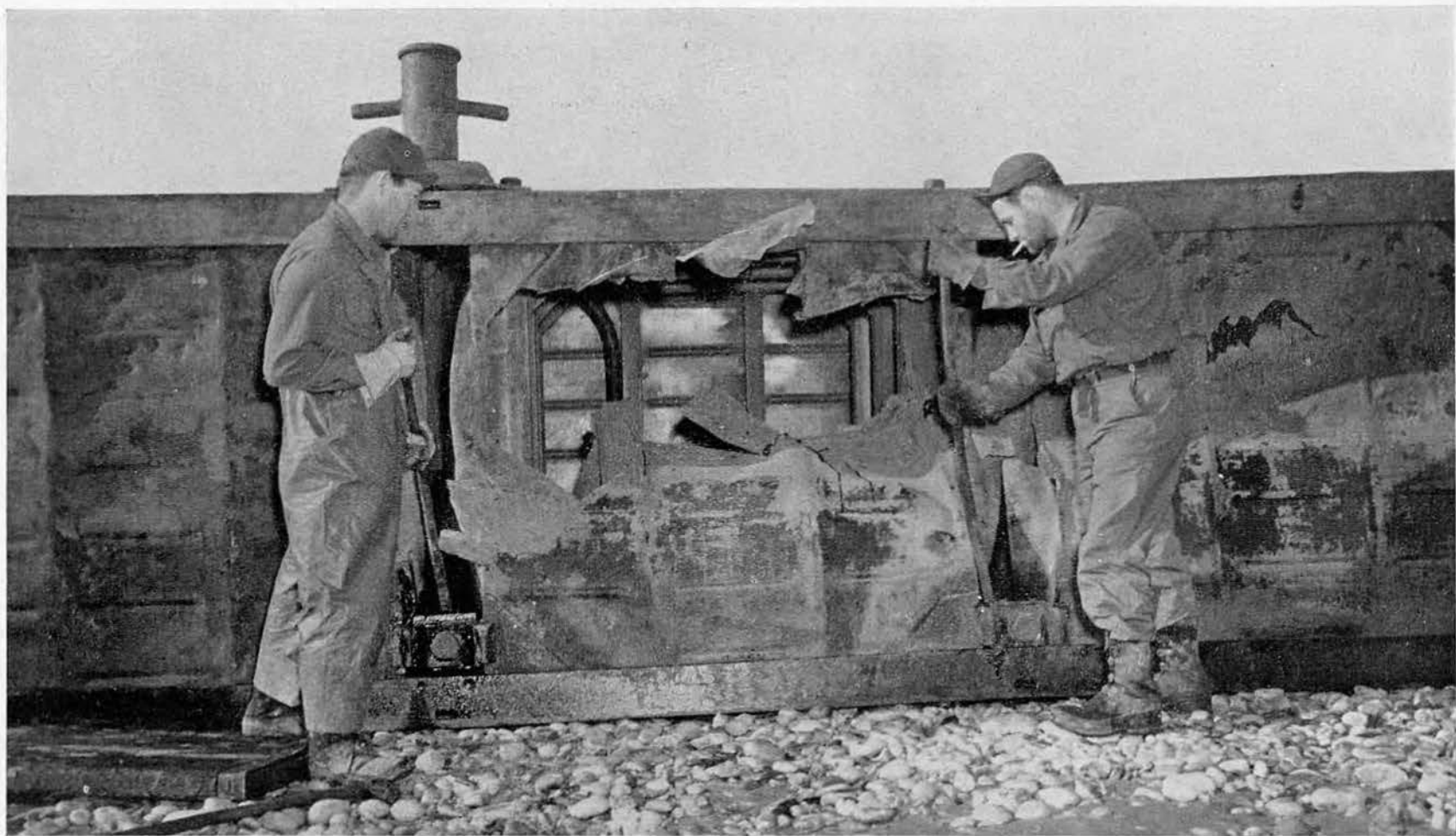
STRONG COASTWISE CURRENTS wrested this Rhino from control as a beaching was attempted, drifting it over the submerged causeway where it grounded until released at flow tide.



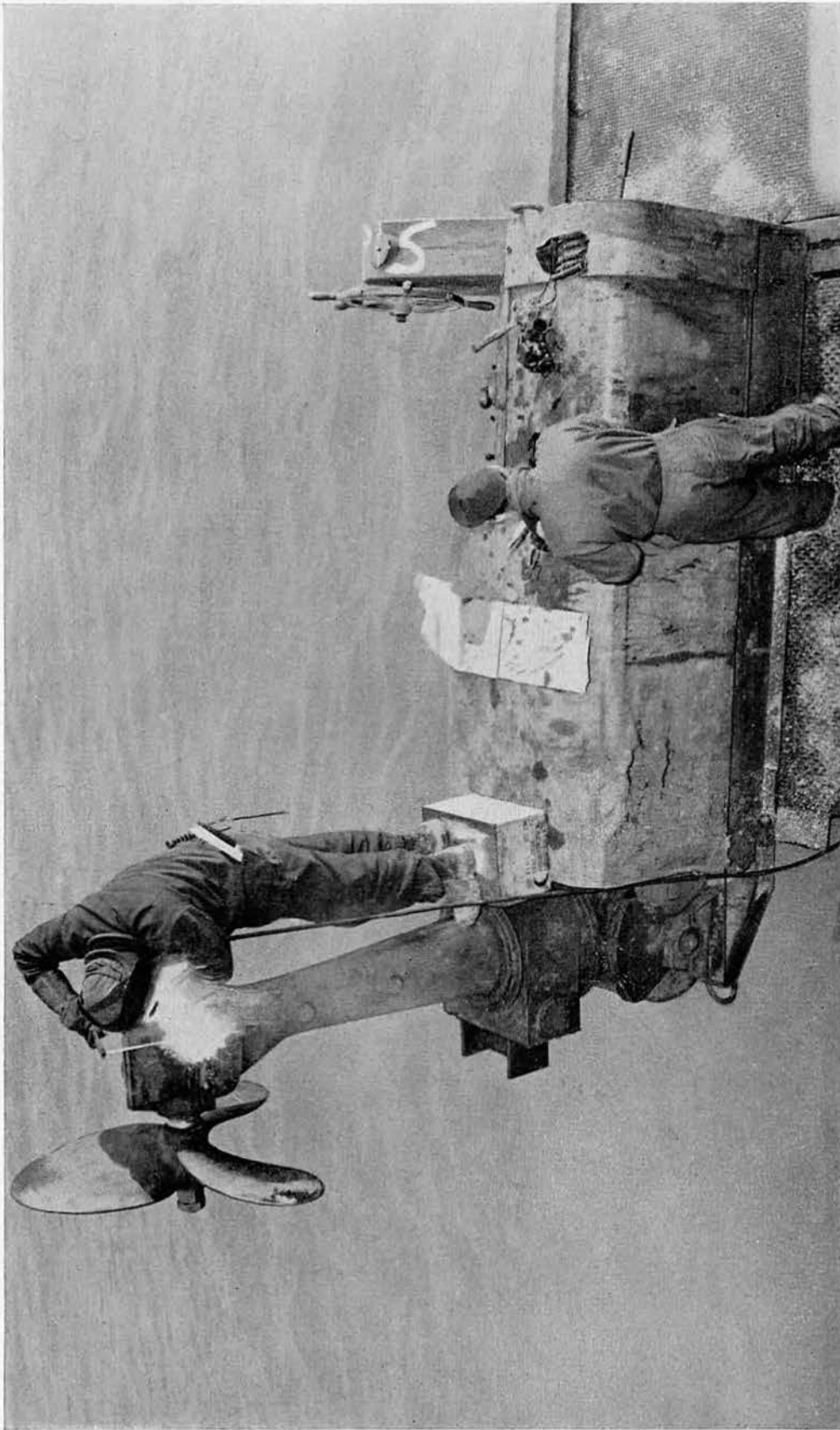
BREAKERS WASHING THE DECKS OF RHINOS as they pound and grind together on the beach.



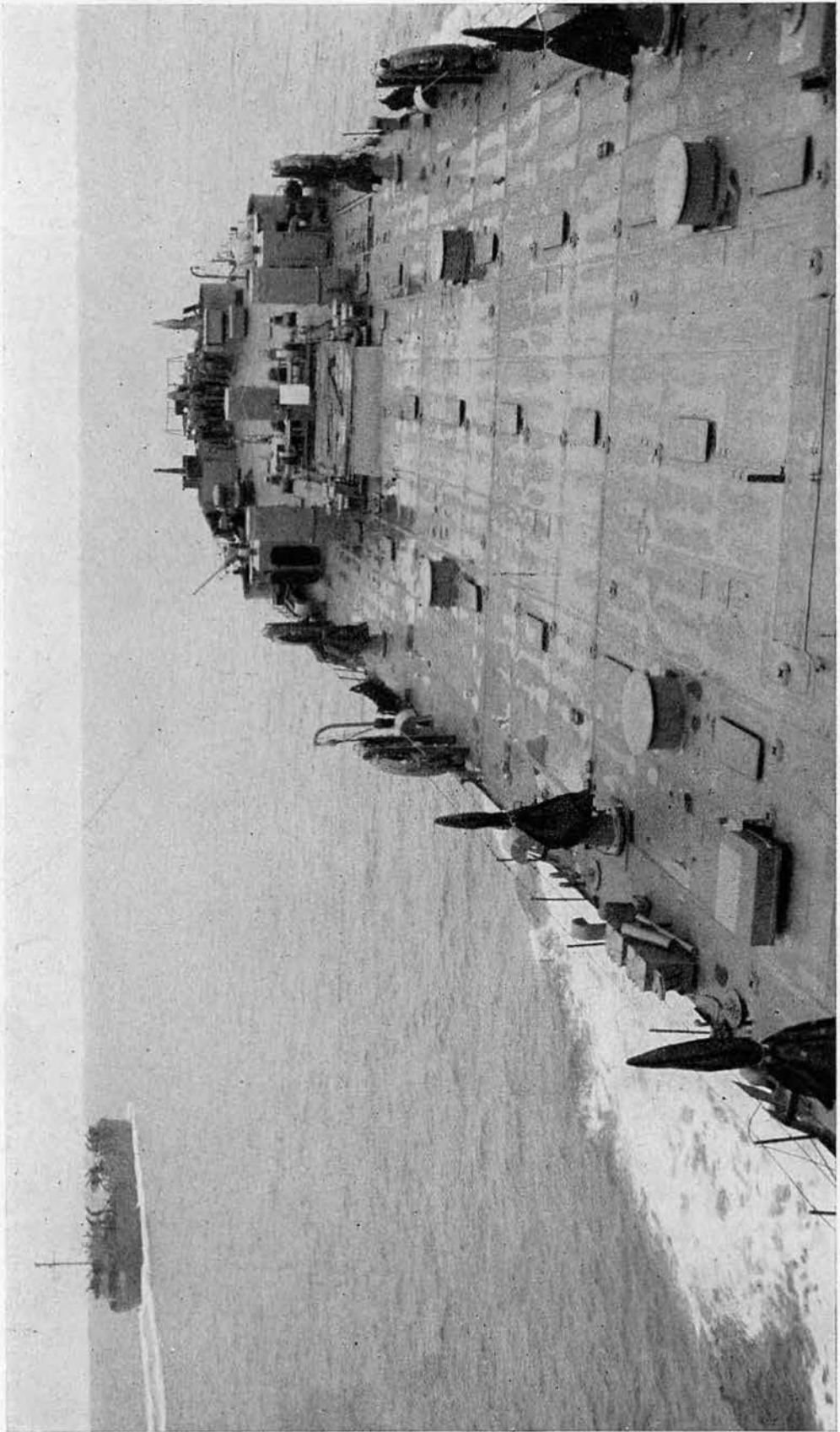
RUNNING A HAWSER to secure a Rhino during disastrous storm on night of October 23-24, 1944.



STORM BATTERED: An example of the damage sustained by the Rhinos. Others were shattered beyond immediate restoration to service.



PROPULSION UNIT REPAIRS: Welding a damaged gear housing.



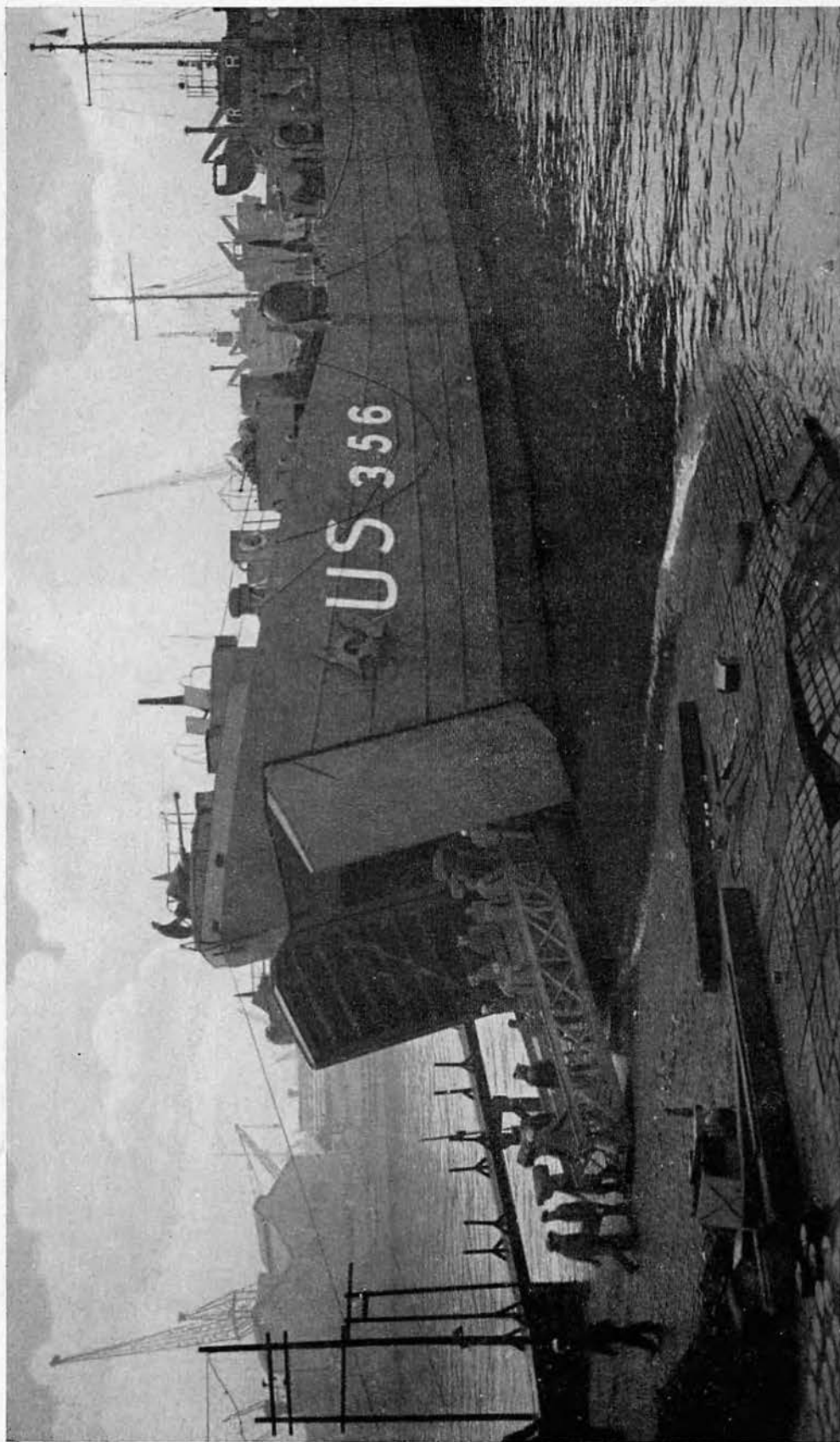
ASSIGNMENT COMPLETED AT OMAHA BEACH: The return voyage to England from Cherbourg aboard LST's.



SLEEPING ACCOMODATIONS: Men unable to obtain bunks in living quarters above were obliged to use these makeshift bunks in the hold for the night.



CHOW IN CREW'S MESS: Sixty-Ninth Battalion mess cooks assisting the ships cooks prepared excellent meals.



DEBARKING at Southampton, England from which port travel was resumed by rail to the base in Plymouth.



PERSONNEL INSPECTION: Inspection party viewing men of Headquarters Company at Edinburgh Road Camp.



BARRACKS INSPECTION: Saturday morning examination of the personnel quarters.



SIXTY-NINTH BATTALION SWING BAND playing for a dance from the stage of Ragland Barracks gymnasium, Plymouth.

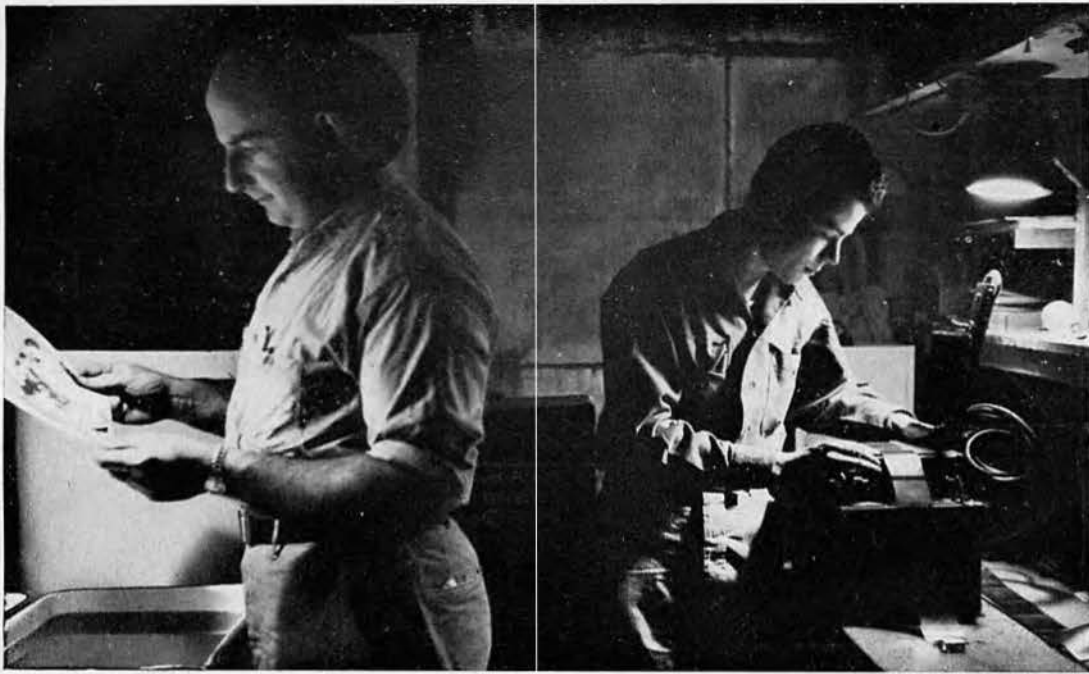
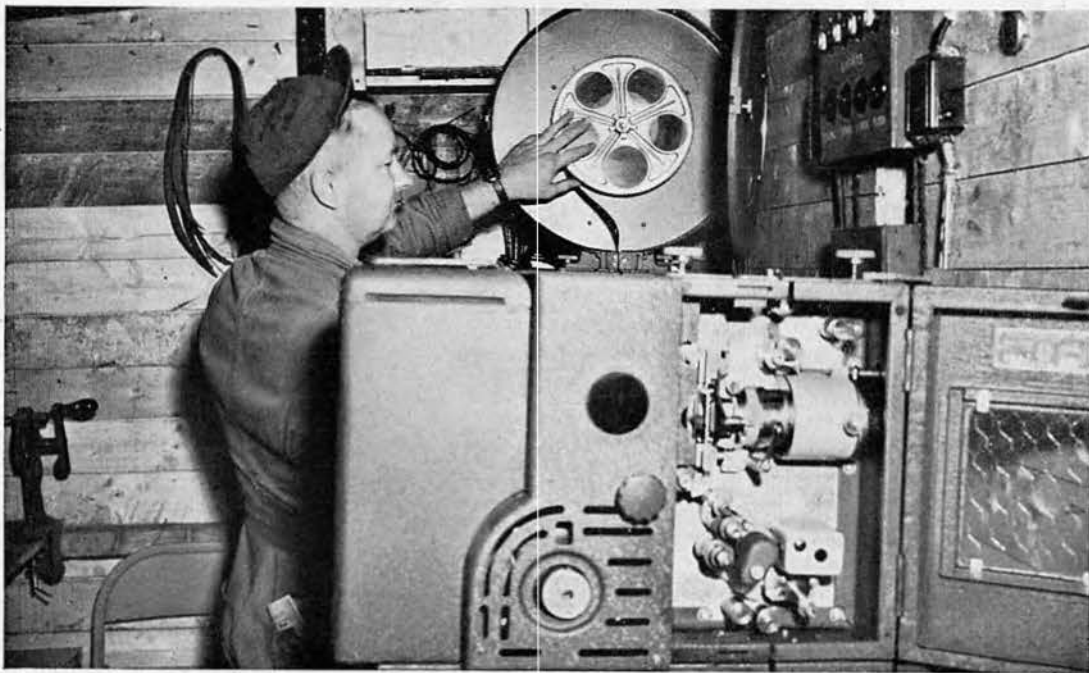


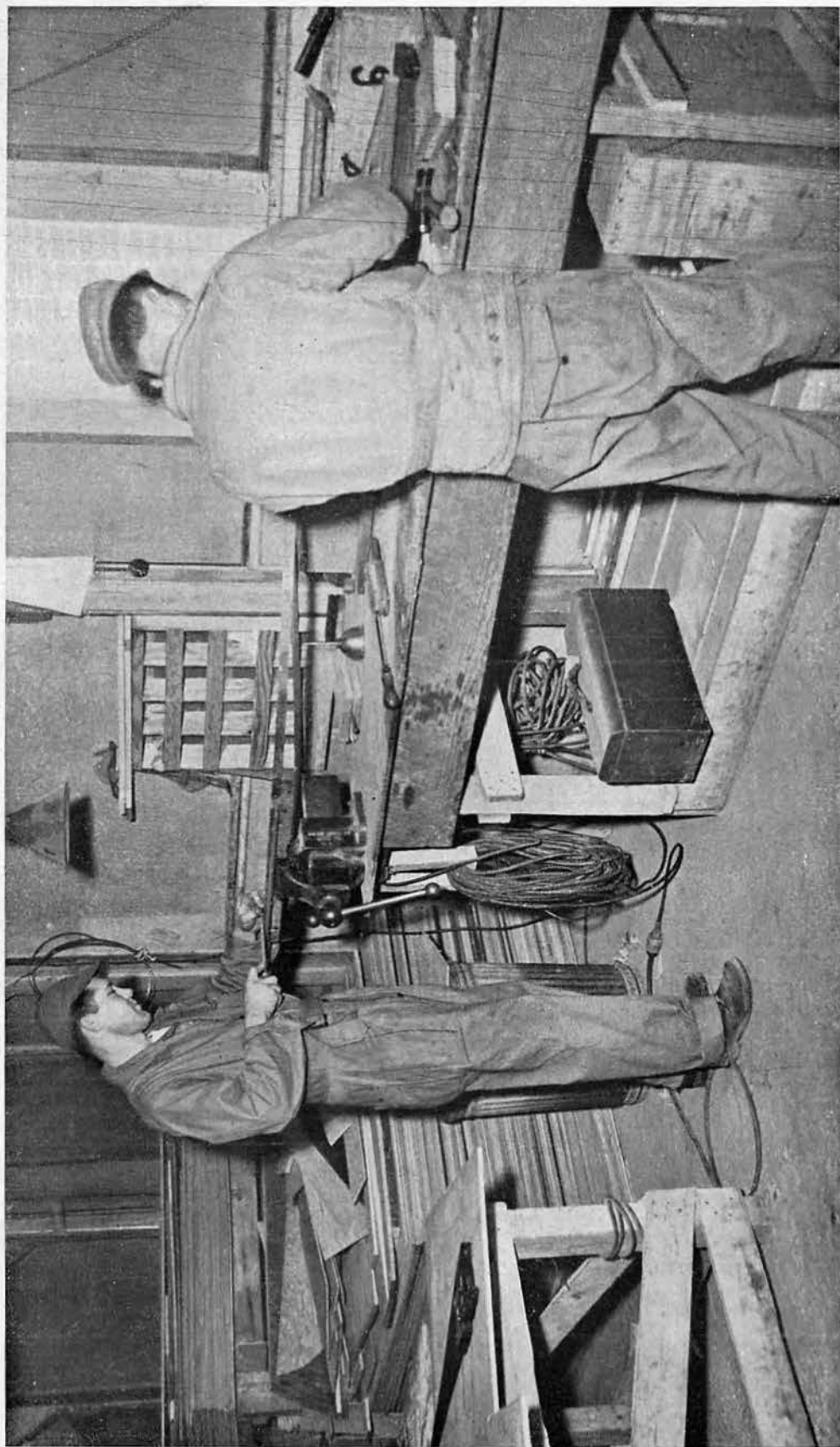
PHOTO LAB: In this small dark room the many photographs in this book were produced along with many photographs for monthly reports.



THE PROJECTION BOOTH at Paxton's Palace. The movie tent was small but well equipped, including two machines for continuous projection.



METALSMITHS engaged in maintenance work, braze an angle at Vicarage Camp.



SHOP MAINTENANCE: Filing a band saw.



OUTDOOR DISPLAY erected at Edinburgh Road Camp to stimulate a Christmas atmosphere. Background painted by Frederick W. Vogt, Ptr2c.



COMMISSARY STORE ROOM where storekeepers are busy breaking out the daily food stores.



THE GALLEY: Small but efficient, it provided cooks and bakers with the facilities they needed to give the battalion good food.



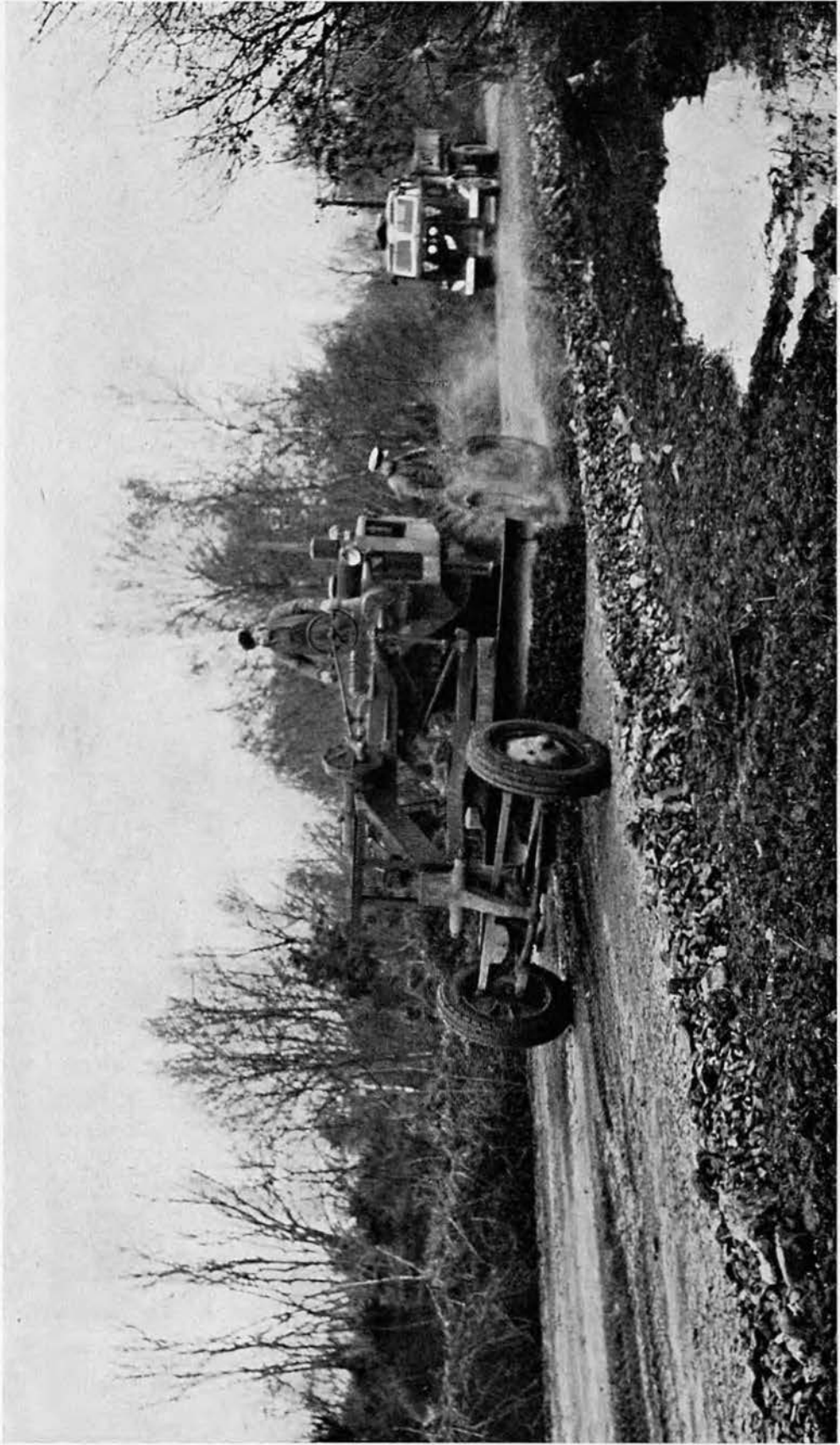
ART SHOP: The birth Place of the "Cruise Log". It was in this shop that the many signs and odd paint jobs were done.



THE RECREATION HUT was the newest renovation at Edinburgh Road Camp. Here the enlisted men played ping-pong, darts, read, and wrote letters.



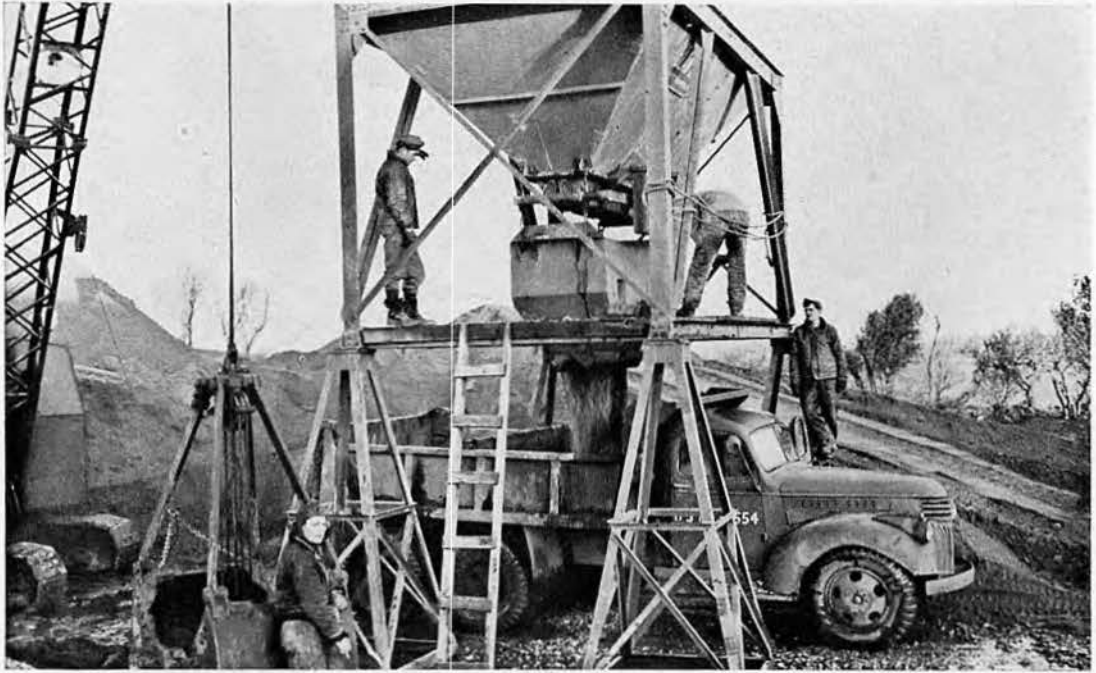
ROAD CONSTRUCTION: Laying the smoking "Tarmac" black topping on the road widening project between Dunkeswell and Upottery air fields near Taunton.



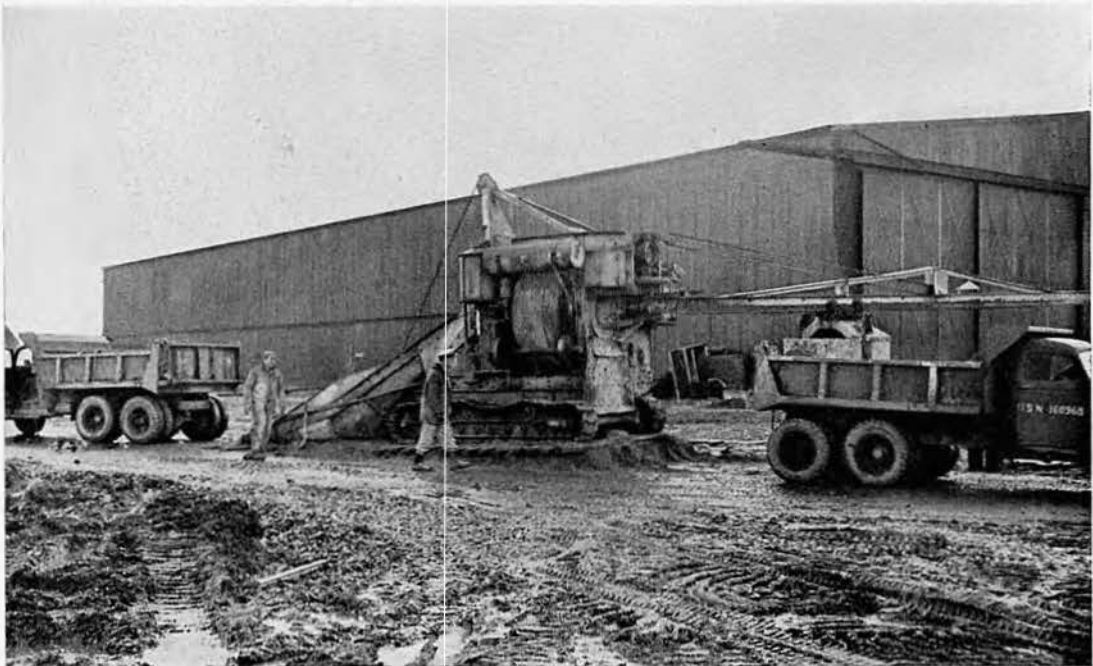
BLADING THE BLACKTOP while it is hot, to prepare the surface for rolling.



ROLLING THE STRIP to compact the substance and complete the paving operations.



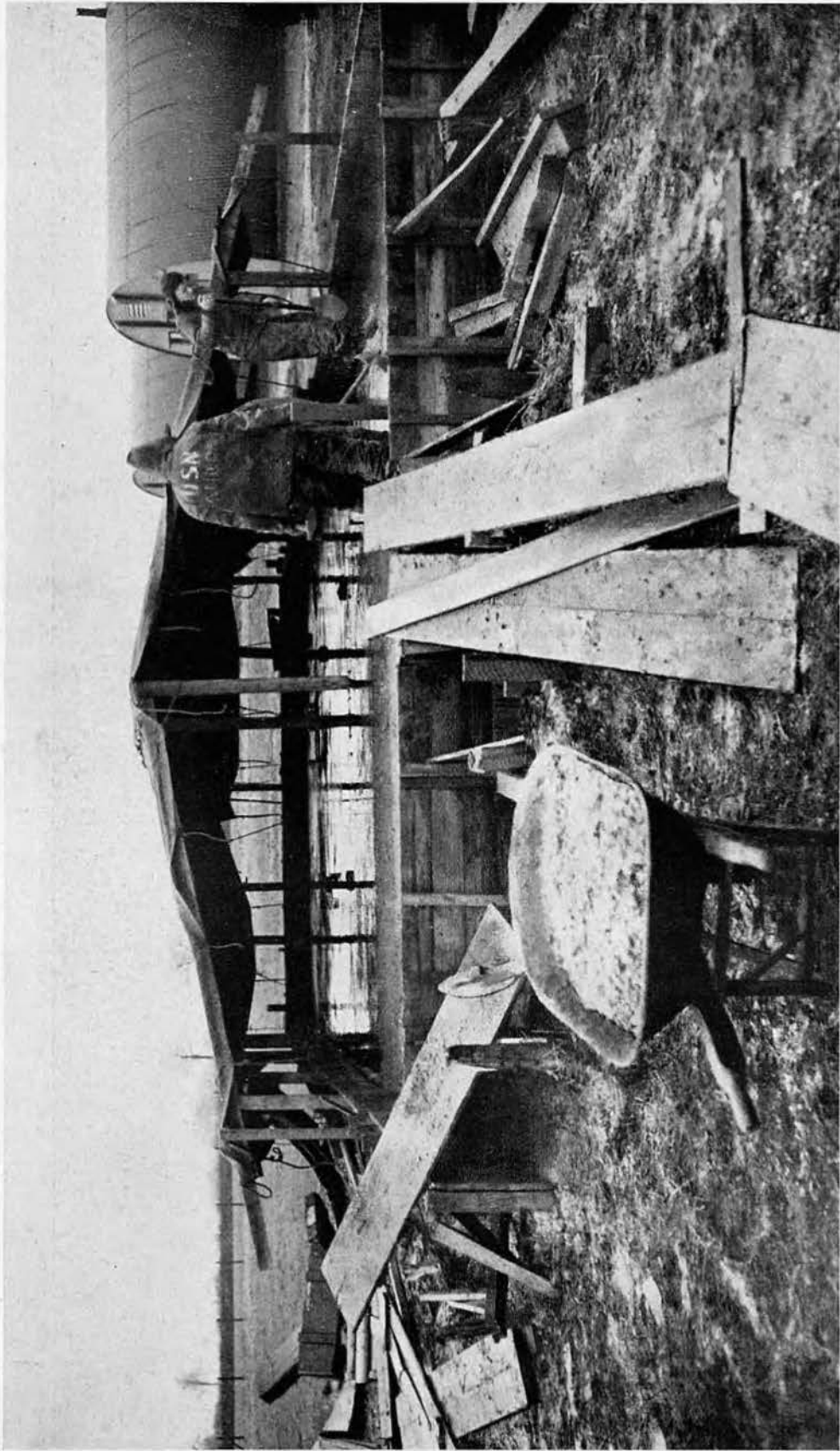
WEIGHING AND LOADING AGGREGATES to be used in concrete mixtures for various projects.



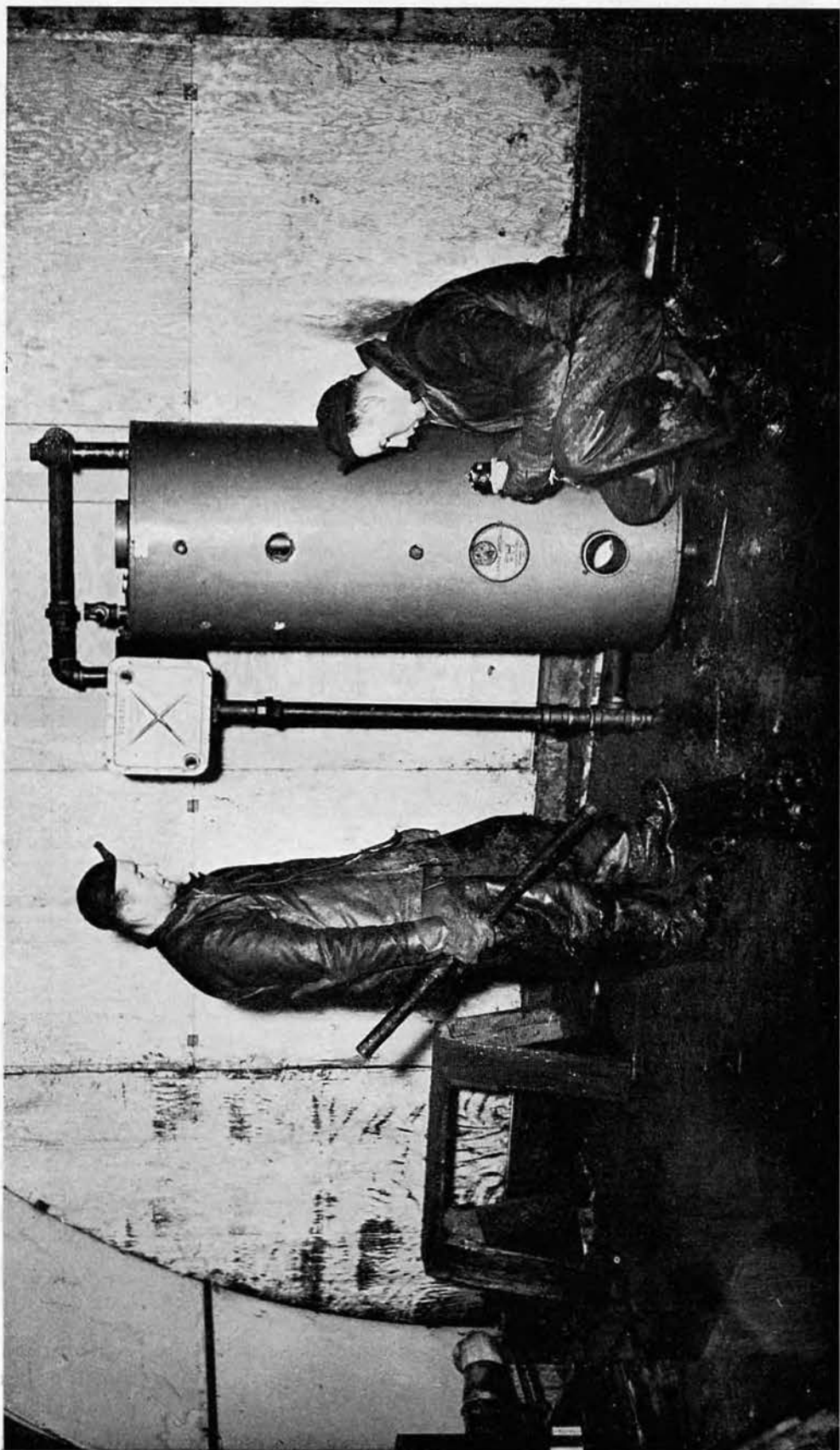
CONCRETE MIXING PLANT at Upottery Air Field.

HOPPER CREW on the concrete mixer.





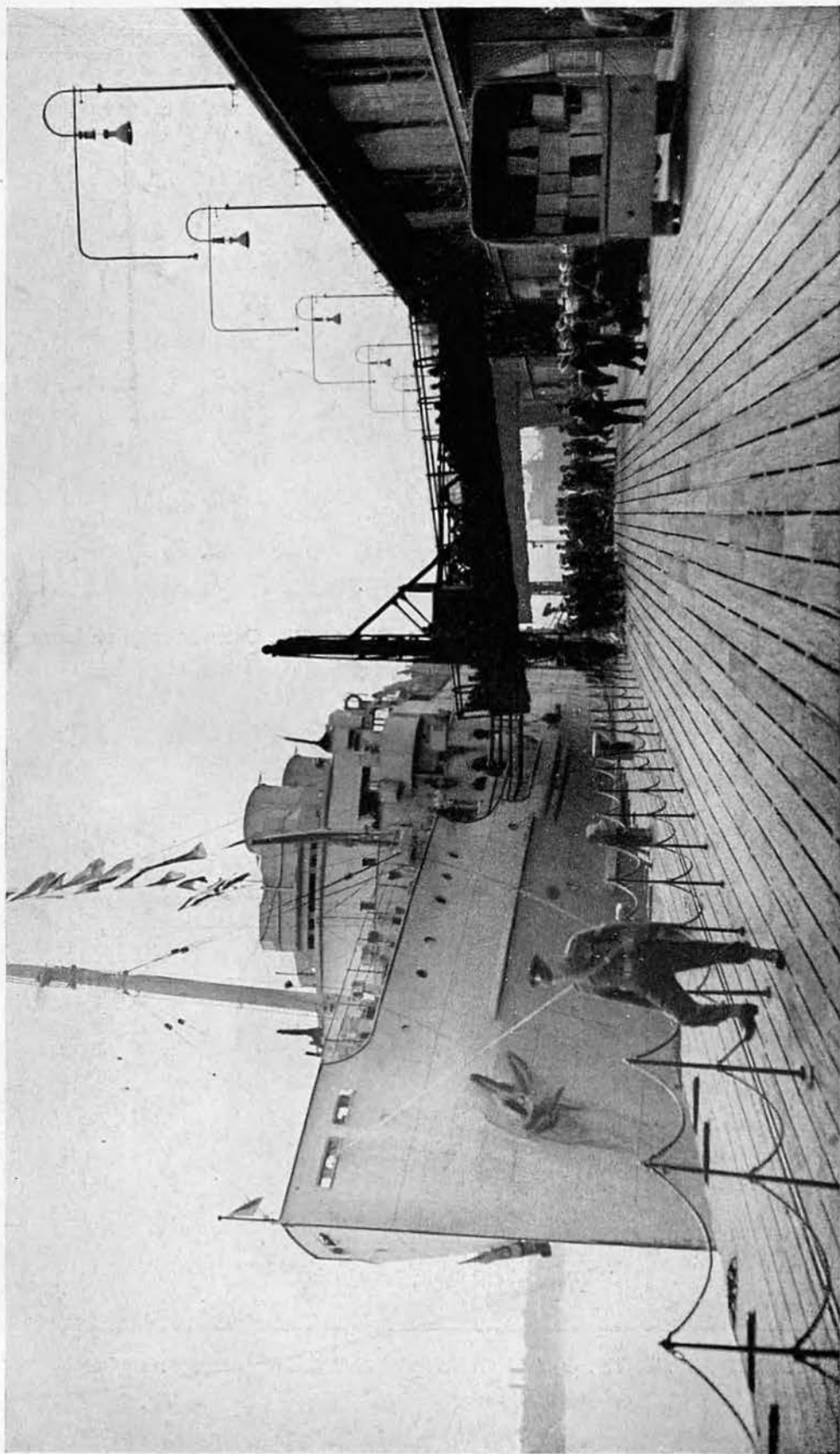
CONCRETE CREW pouring the foundation for a Quonset hut head, part of the assignment for improvement of the air field facilities.



INSTALLATION OF HEATER UNIT to provide hot water for lavatory and shower outlets.



NEW DEPARTURE FOR CONTINENTAL SHORES: A platoon of the First Echolon boards a truck at Edinburgh Road Camp for transportation to North Road Station in Plymouth.



EMBARKATION ON THE THAMES: The First Echelon boards H.M.S. Duke of York at Tilbury Docks in London.



ARRIVAL AT OSTEND BELGIUM: Awaiting directions to the Ostend reception barracks.



OSTEND STREET SCENE: The Ostend Cathedral dominates the seaport's skyline.



SMALL CRAFT HARBOR: A view of the Ostend waterfront. The fishing fleet dries its nets.



GEAR LADEN TRUCKS of the Sixty-Ninth Battalion await rendezvous with British Second Army lorries at Ostend for the convoy across the Low Countries.



CONVOY ENROUTE over a cobblestoned country road flanked by rows of birch trees.



CONVOY REST PERIODS spaced at two hour intervals affords welcome relief on the fatiguing journey.



SYMBOL OF LIBERATION: A Dutch windmill proudly flies the national colors in the spirit of jubilation then sweeping the country.



TASK FORCE BILLET in the former office building of the Stork Machine Fabrik at Hengelo, (O), Holland.



BATH HOUSE AT HENGELO was pressed into service to take the bathers off the streets and away from the public gaze.



GALLEY AT HENGELO: German field ranges obtained by a procuring party are pressed into service to accommodate battalion needs.



CHOW TIME: Standing up to eat at a Hengelo station freight platform. The mates are eating stew.



V-1 BOMB LAUNCHING SITE near Borne, Holland. Two launching catapults in this vicinity had been firing on Antwerp, Belgium.



DEMOLITION CHARGES set off by the operating crews before abandoning the sites prostrated the catapults as shown.



DEFECTIVE V BOMB: Some would plunge to earth a few hundred yards from the catapult. Note the spherical fuel chamber. It is made of rubber wound with steel wire.



VIEW OF PROPULSION EXHAUST CYLINDER in foreground. Note burnt out war head on section in the background.



INSPECTION PARTY viewing the wreckage of a dud missile.



THE ECHELON HIKES to the V bomb site over a Dutch country road that is being repaired by the Netherlanders.



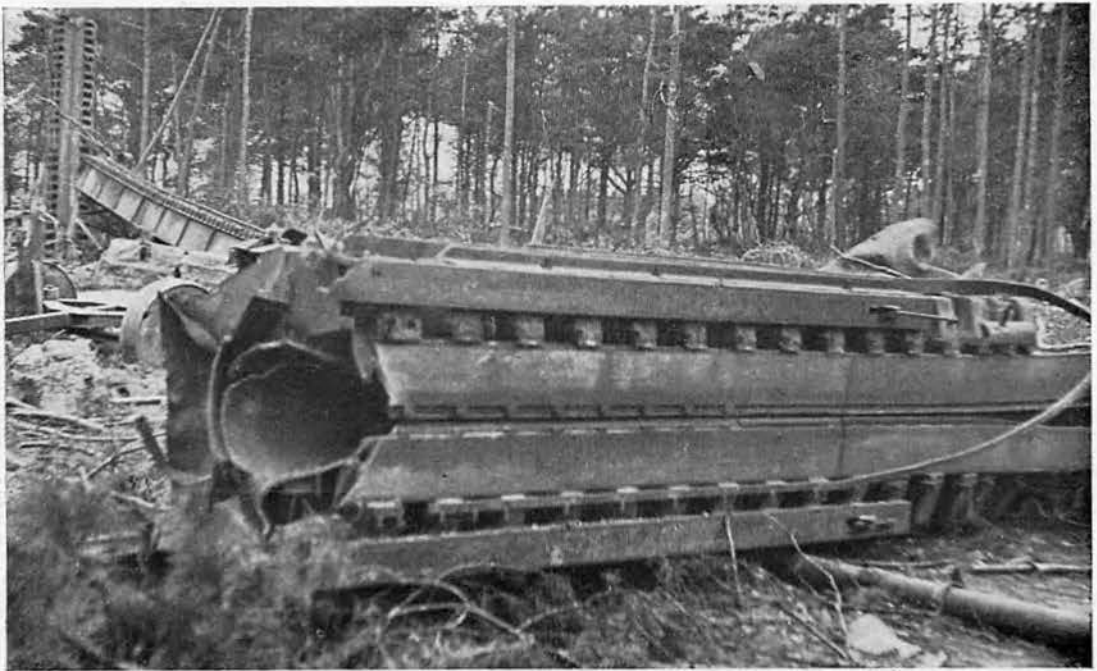
ARRIVAL AT THE SITES: Demolition charges had shattered the dense pine woods and woodcutters had moved in to salvage the timber for firewood.



FIELD MESS: Stew on locale at the V-Bomb site.



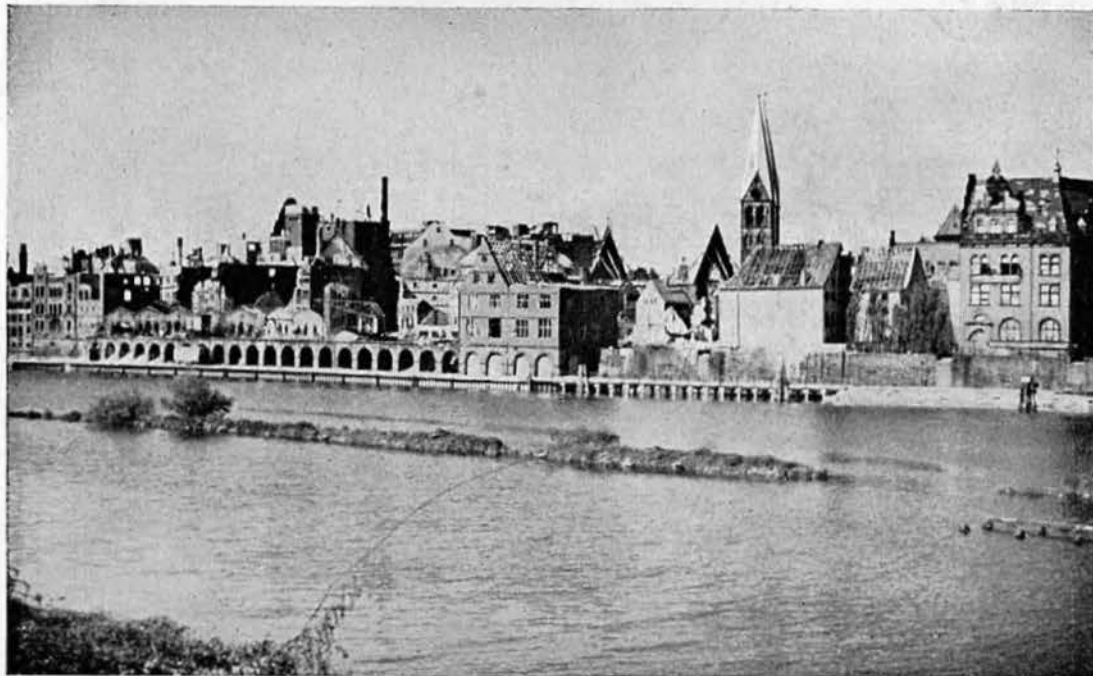
DEMOLISHED CATAPULT: Allied reconnaissance had not disclosed these concealed launching ramps until after the German retreat.



SECTIONAL VIEW: A piston with a projecting dog that engaged the V-Bomb was ejected through the tube by a launching charge.



TWISTED HULK OF A BRIDGE across the River Weser at Bremen, Germany.



VIEW OF BREMEN from west of the Weser. The towering Dom is visible for miles across the flat plains countryside.

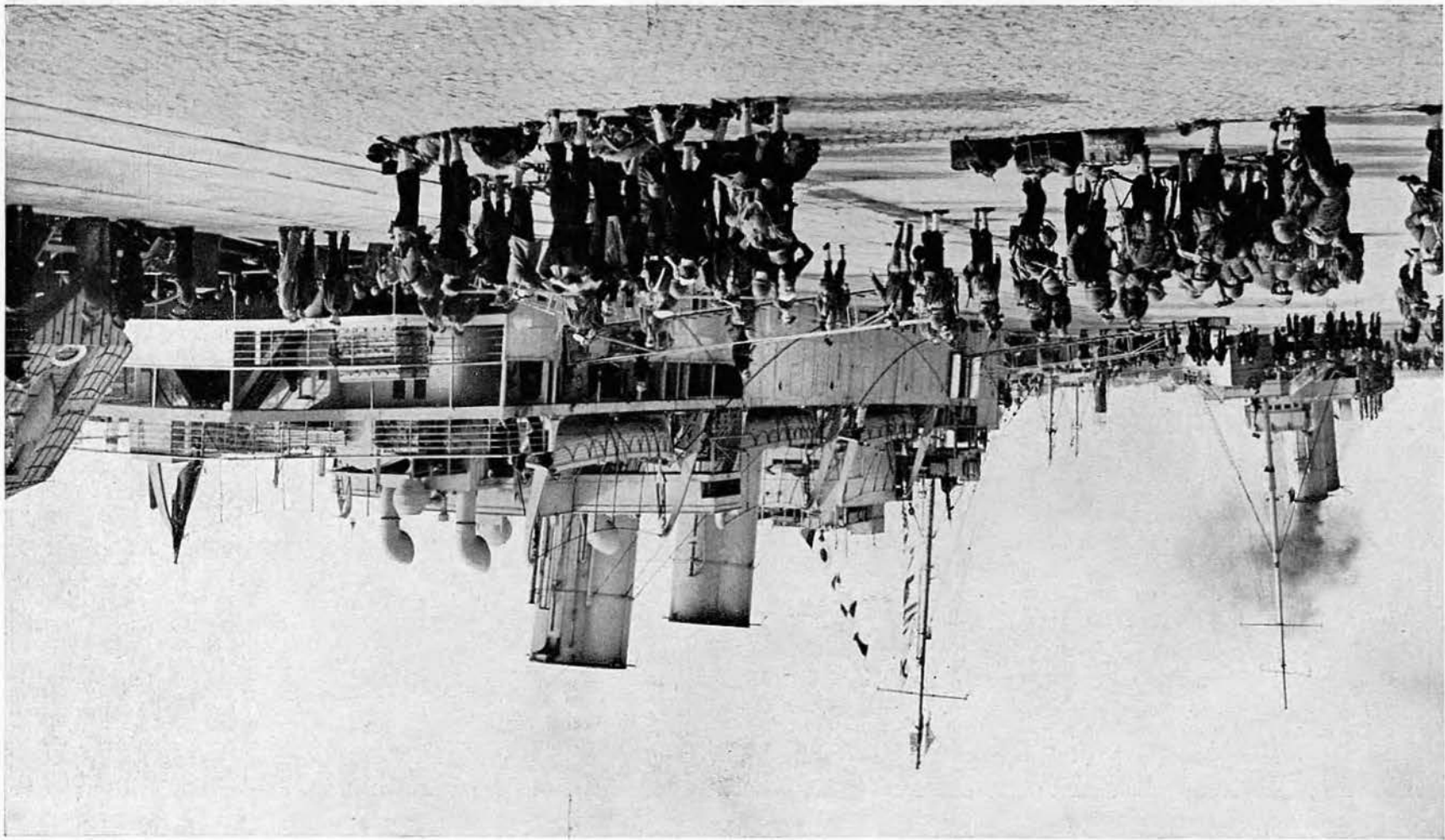


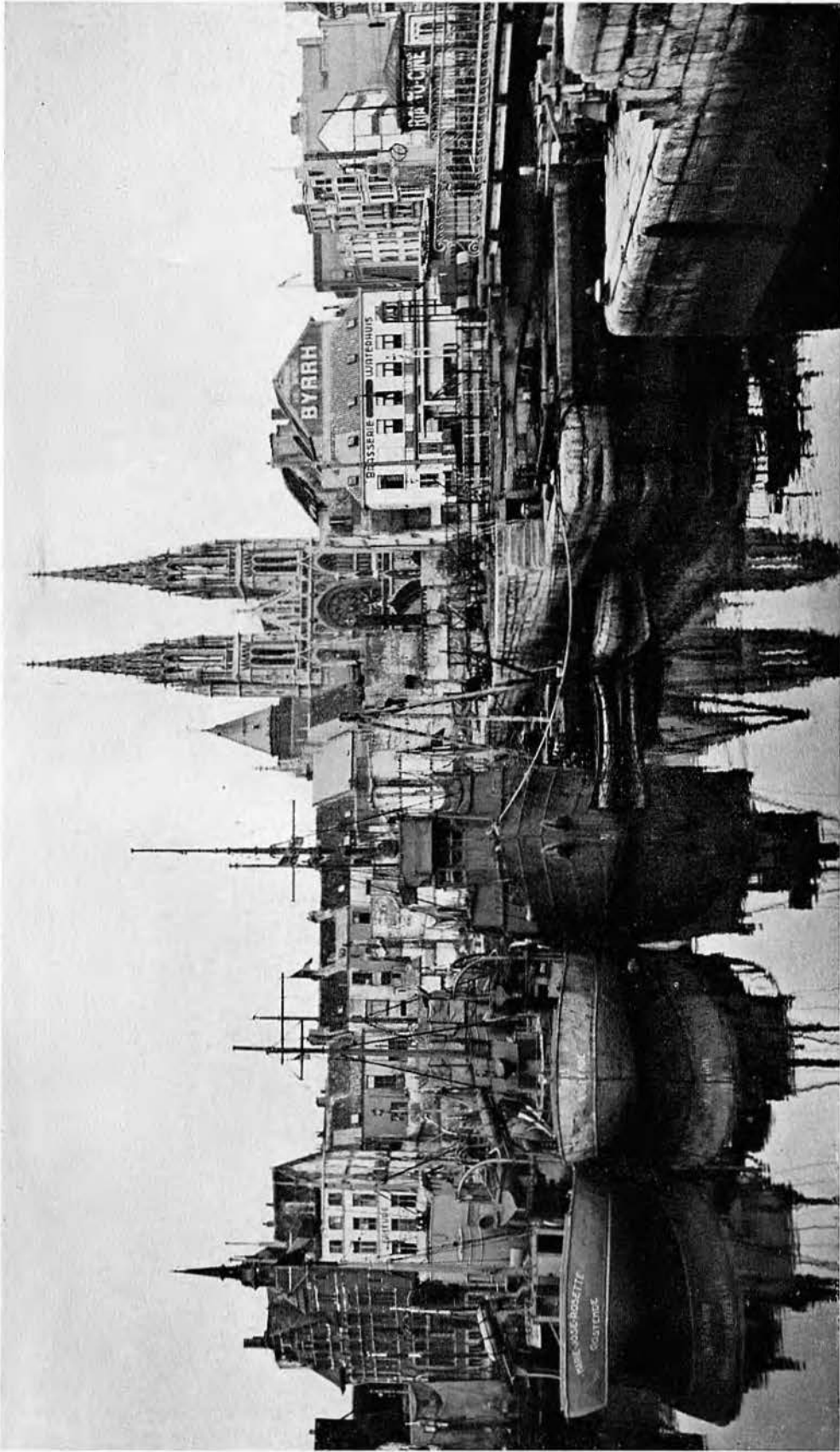
SECOND ECHELON ENTRAINING at North Road Station in Plymouth, to rejoin the First Echelon at Bremen.



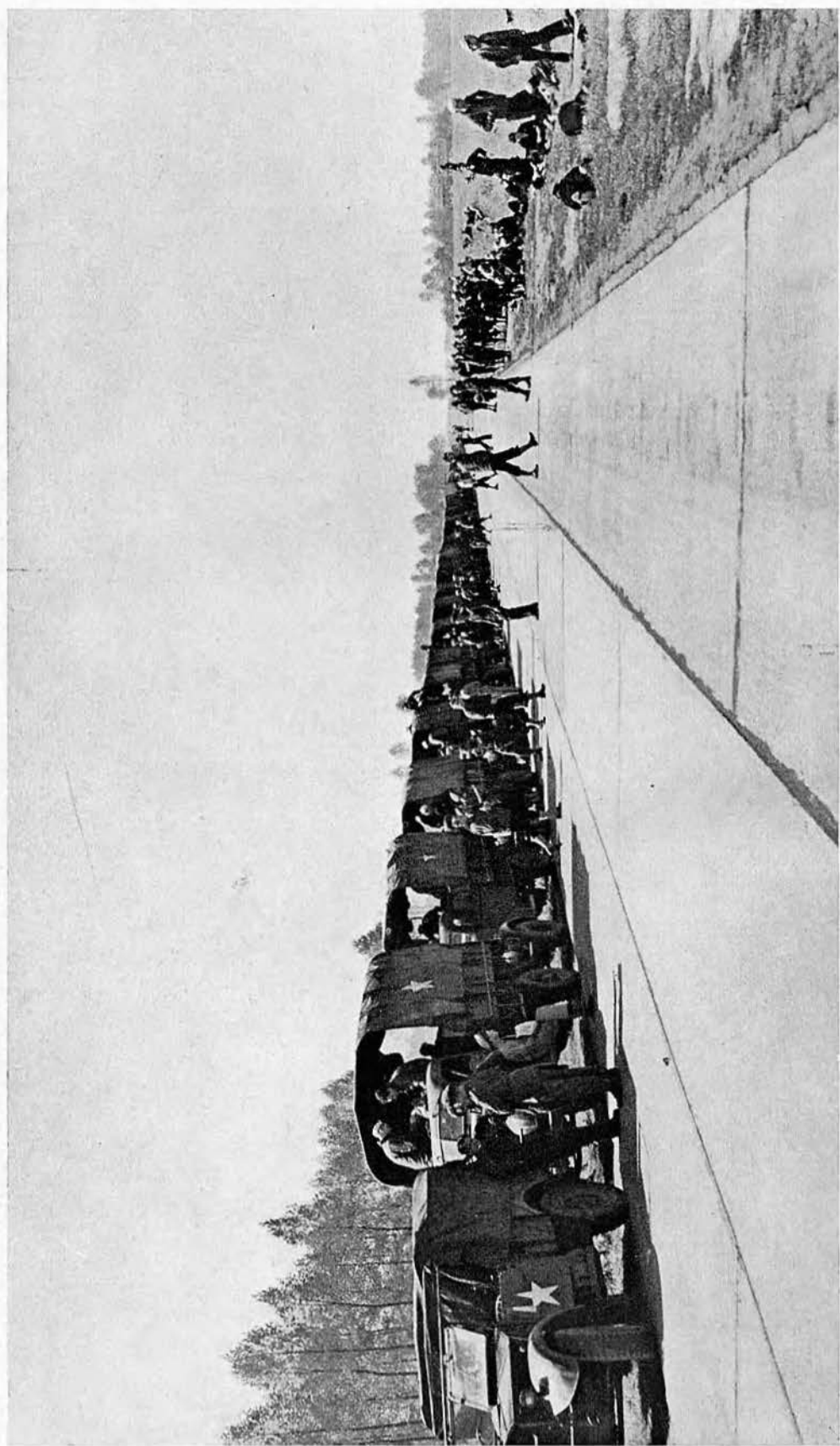
IN SINGLE FILE at Tilbury Docks on the Thames at London prior to embarkation on H.M.S. Duke of York for the voyage to Ostend, Belgium.

DEBARKATION from the Duke of York at the Port of Ostend.





AN ADDITIONAL VIEW of the Ostend waterfront.



RELAXATION ENROUTE as the convoy stops near Antwerp, Belgium.



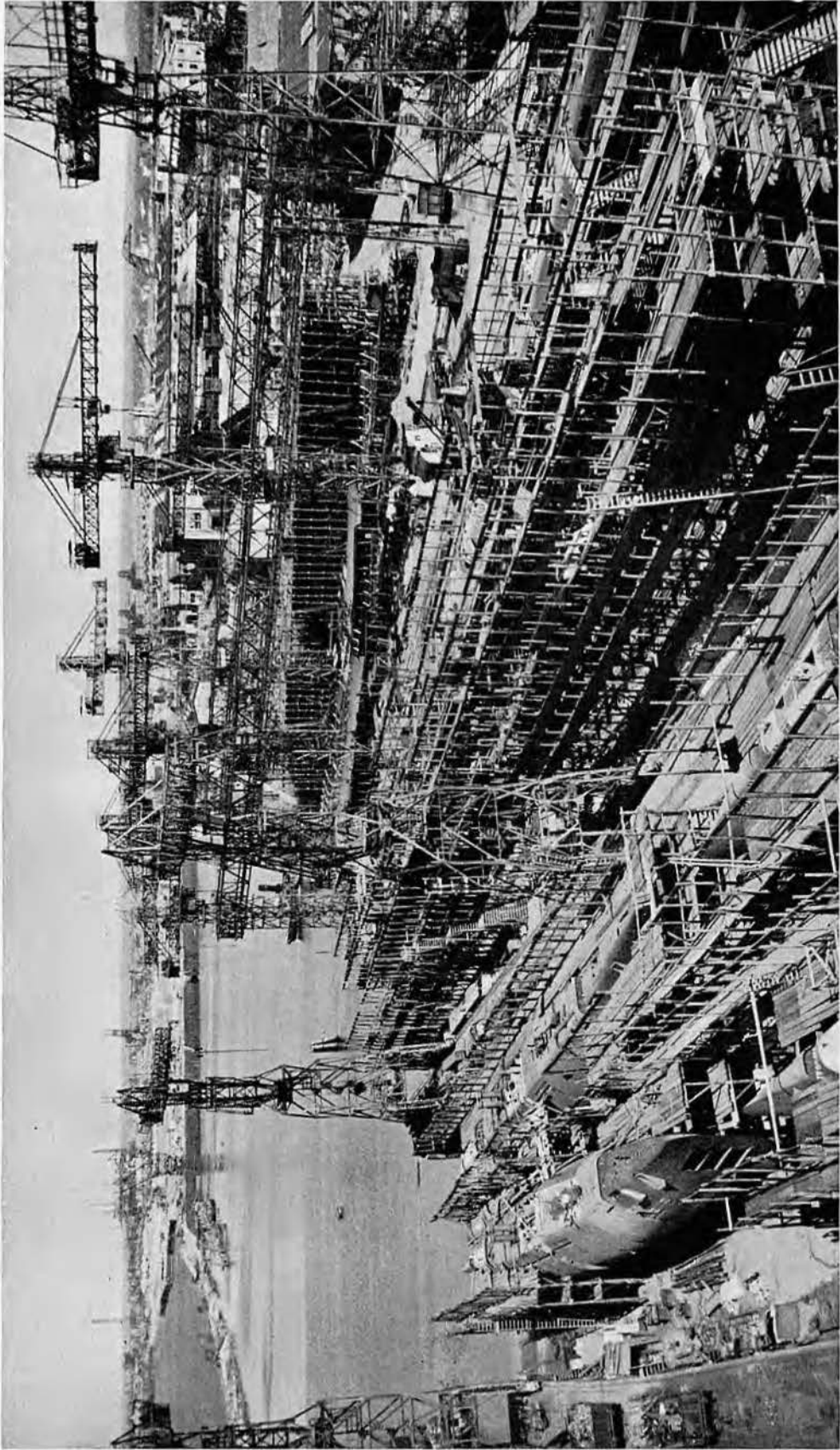
BAILEY BRIDGE installed across the Maas River.



BAILEY BRIDGES replaced all the bridges the retreating Wehrmacht destroyed in its effort to stem the Allied advance across the British sector.



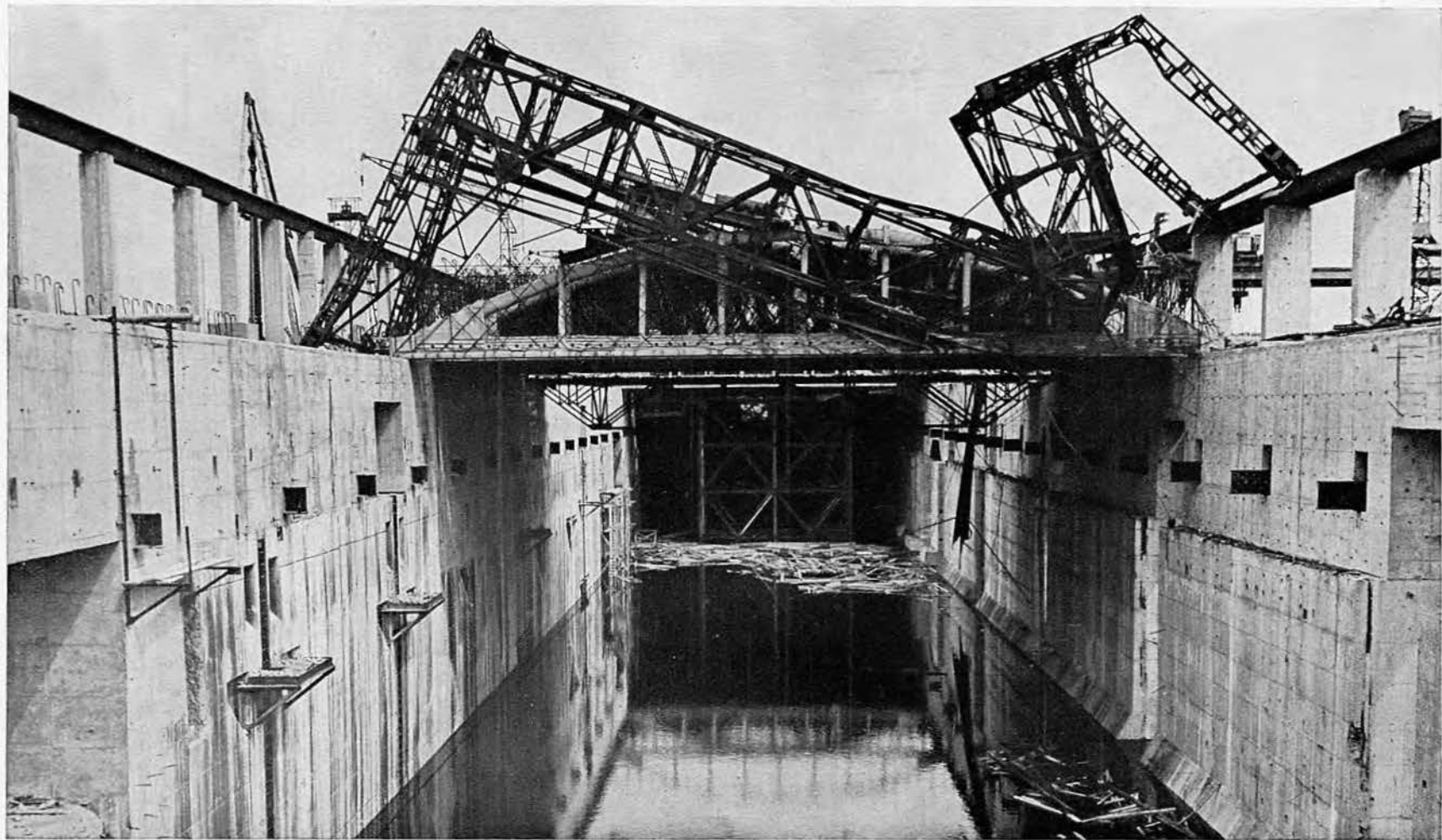
THE COMPOUND, naval barracks. The twin spires of the Bremen Dom rise above the distant horizon. Note the midget one man submarine on the trailer.



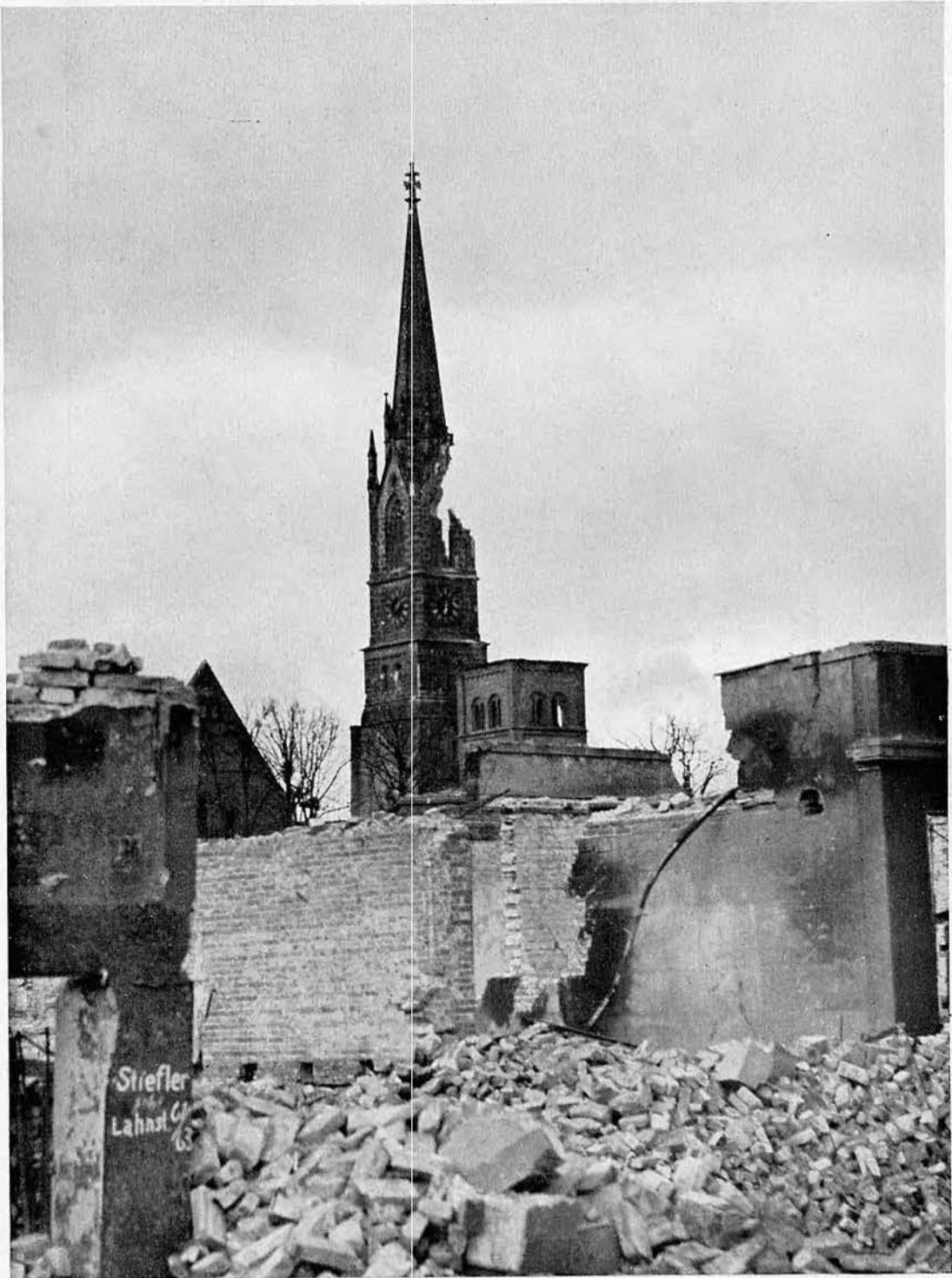
GENERAL VIEW of the Bremen dockyards with submarines under construction on the ways.



SUBMARINE KEEL: The initial and final phase of this underseas craft which will never know completion.



SUBMARINE PEN with demolished traveling crane at the Bremen dockyards.



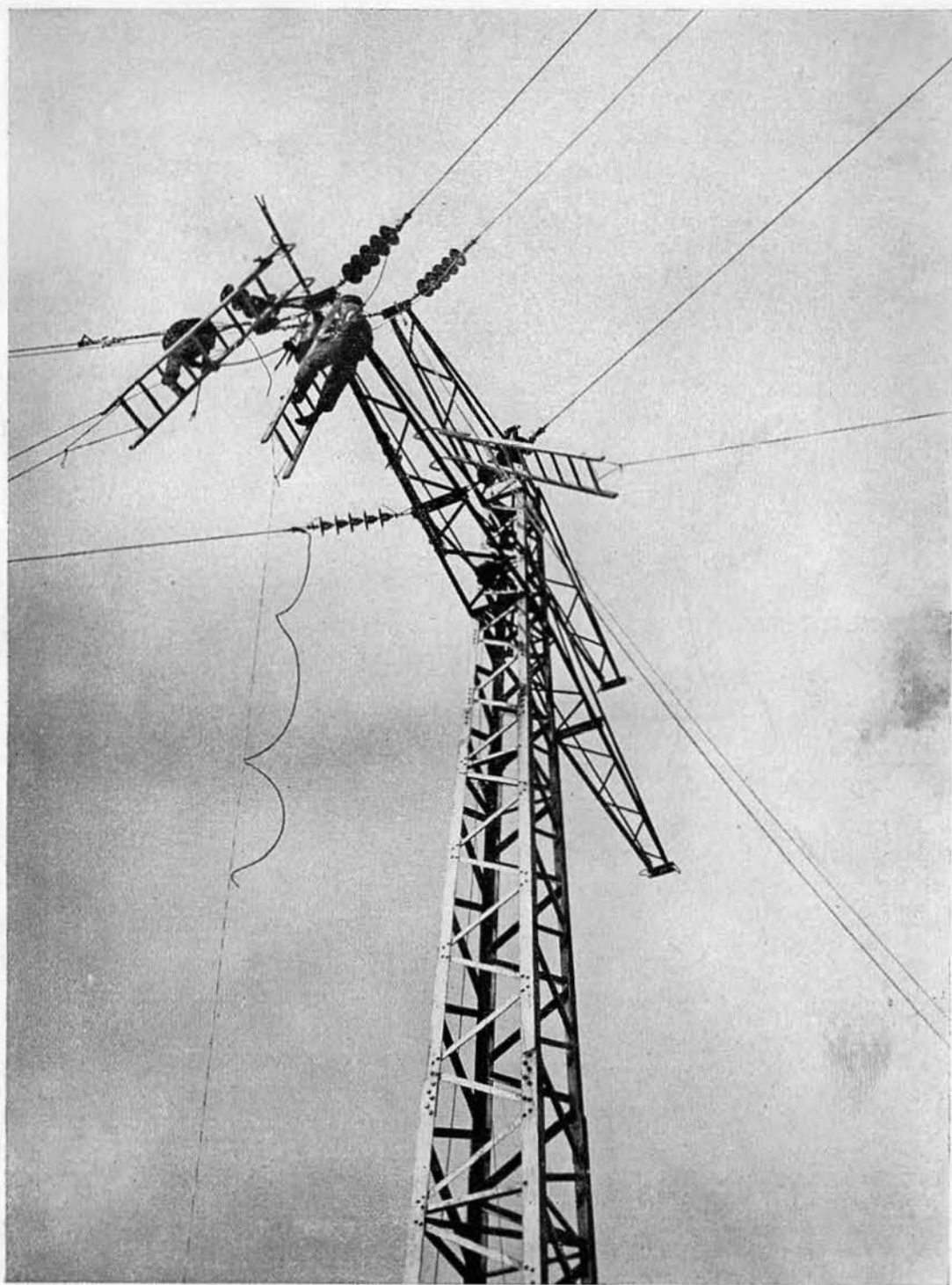
STEEPLE OF St. STEPHANIKIRCHE near the Weser waterfront remains amid the rubble of a once vast warehousing district.



A DEVASTATED AREA of Bremen, testimony to the thorough pummeling meted out by the Bomber Command.



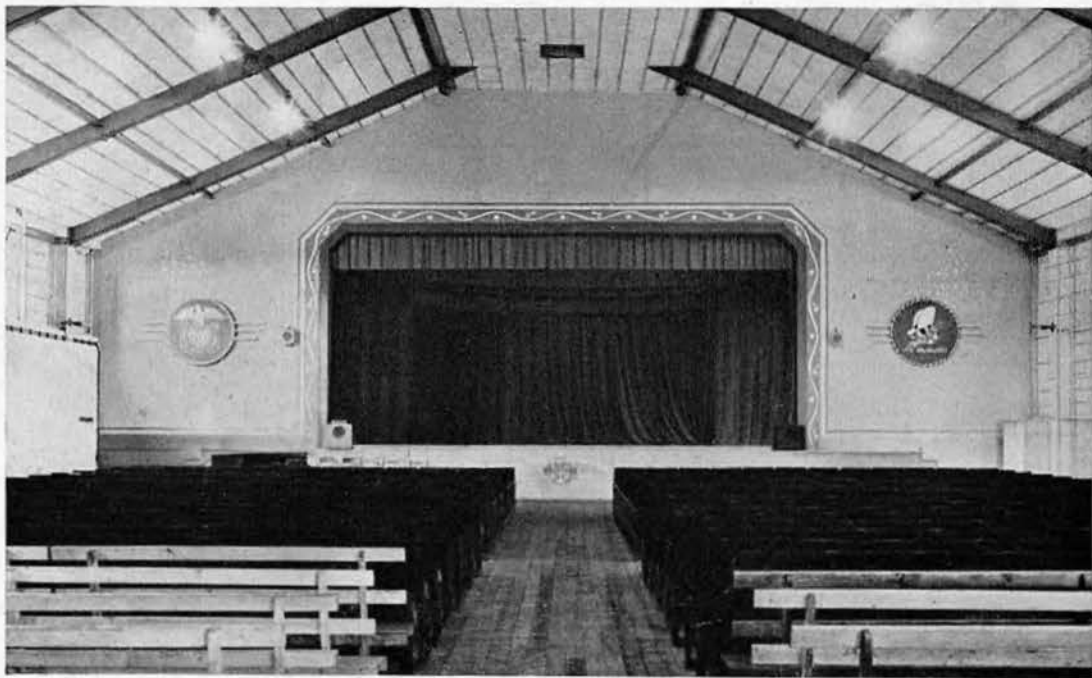
HIGH LINE CREW, suspending the high tension lines that are being restored to service.



CLIPPING IN a high tension wire to the tower insulators. The wire from the far insulator will be connected to the dangling wire on the right of the tower to bridge the gap made by the insulators.



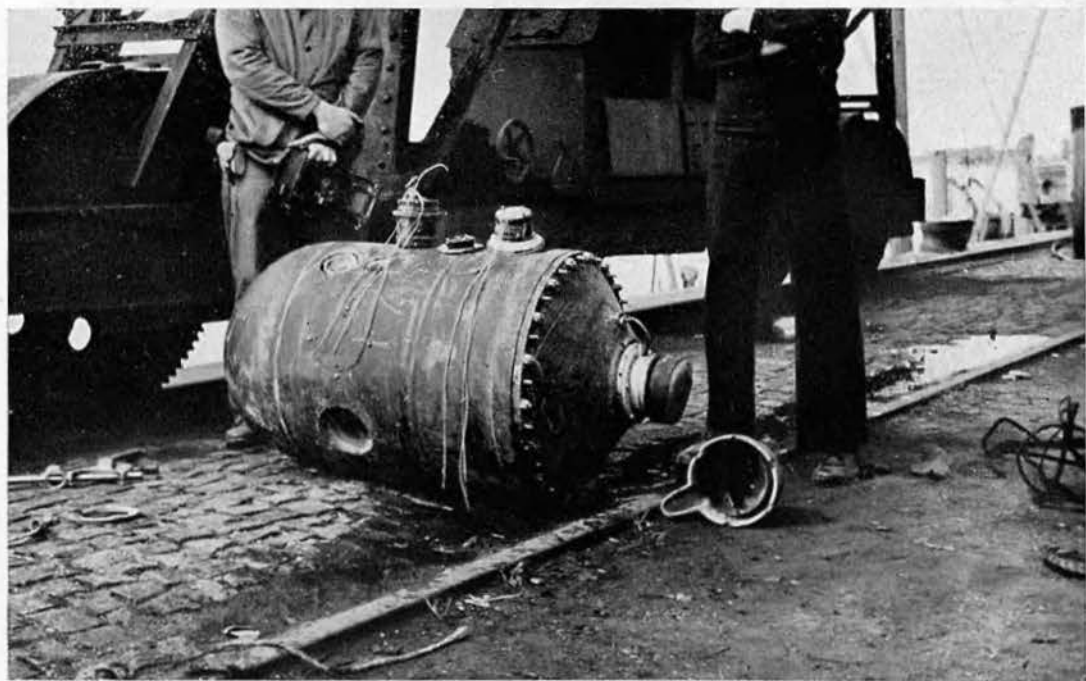
SIXTY-NINTH BATTALION B.O.Q. at number 405 Vahrer Strasse, Bremen.



RECREATION HALL at the naval compound. A remodeling project by the Sixty-Ninth workers who converted it from a former garage.



SEA BEE PAINTER at work on a sign at the Ship's Salvage Yard.



INSPECTION of a new magnetic pressure mine recently removed from the dock area near Bremerhaven.



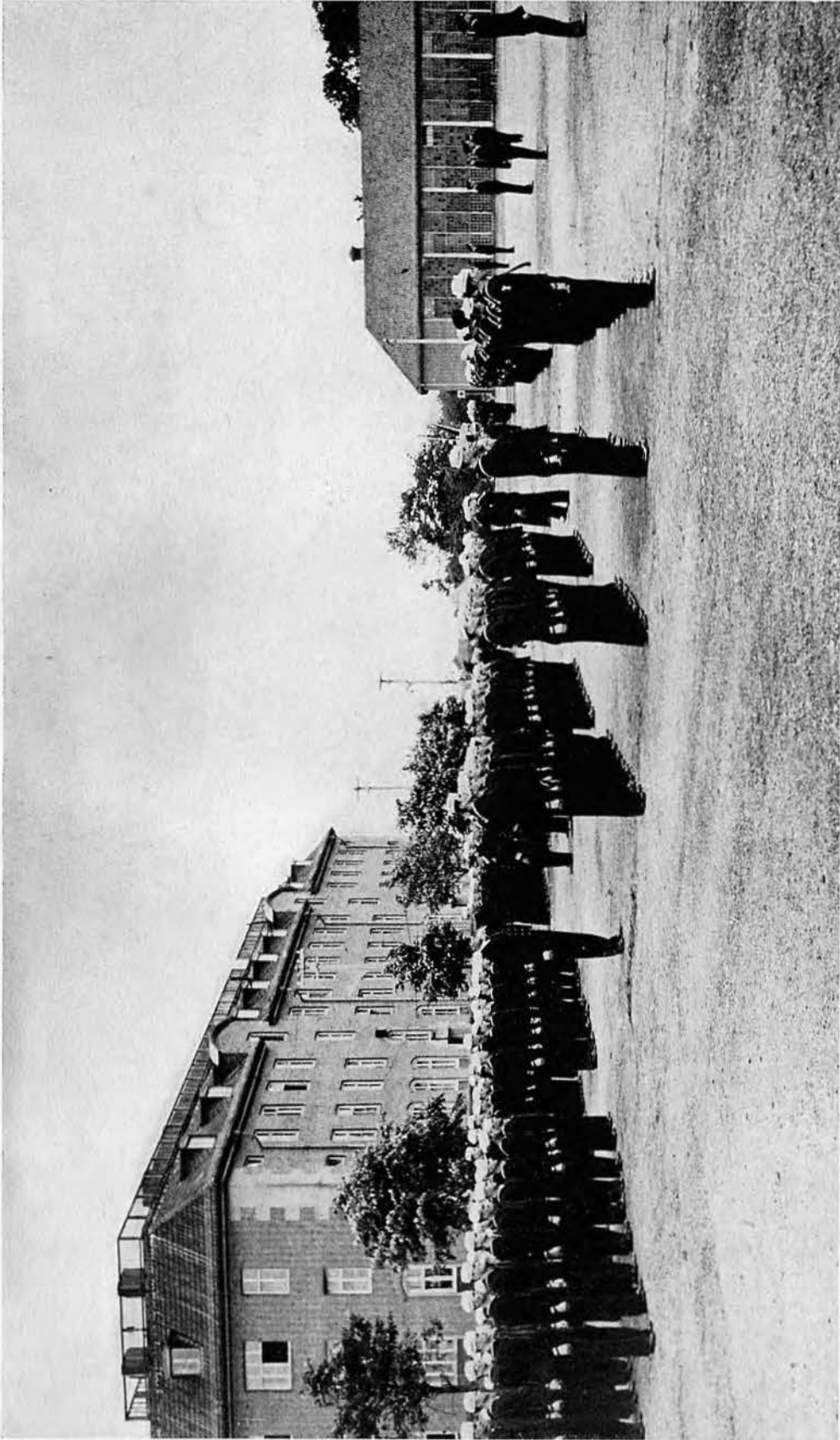
FIELD MARSHAL MONTGOMERY addressing the Armoured Guard at Rotenburg as the unit was decommissioned.



REVIEW OF BASE PERSONNEL at the Bremen Naval Advanced Base by Rear Admiral A. G. Robinson.



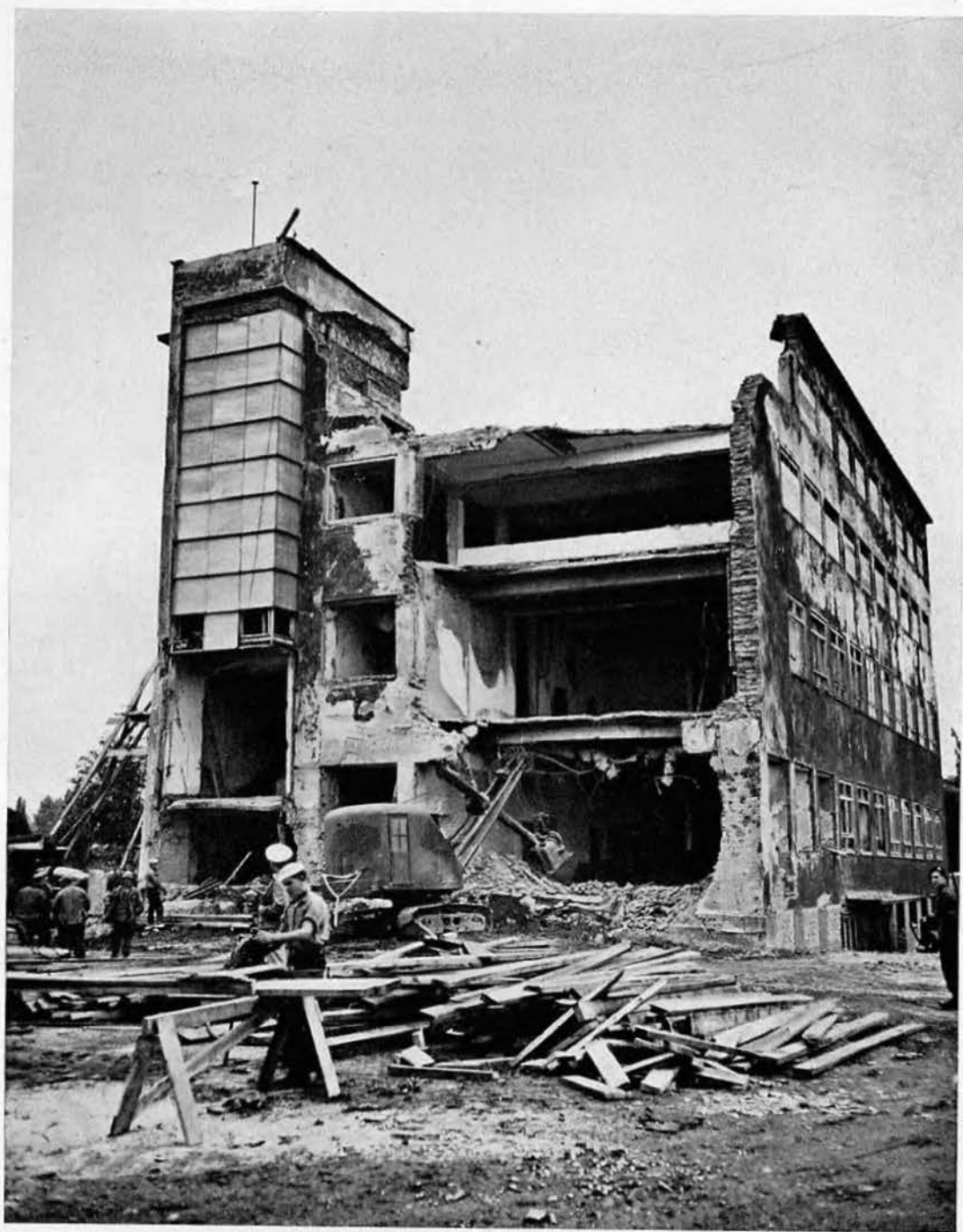
PERSONNEL INSPECTION by Admiral Robinson's reviewing party and Commander Walsh. The men being inspected are "old timers" who have accepted discharge from the service.



SIXTY-NINTH BATTALION: An additional view of the Admiral's inspection on 16 June 1945.



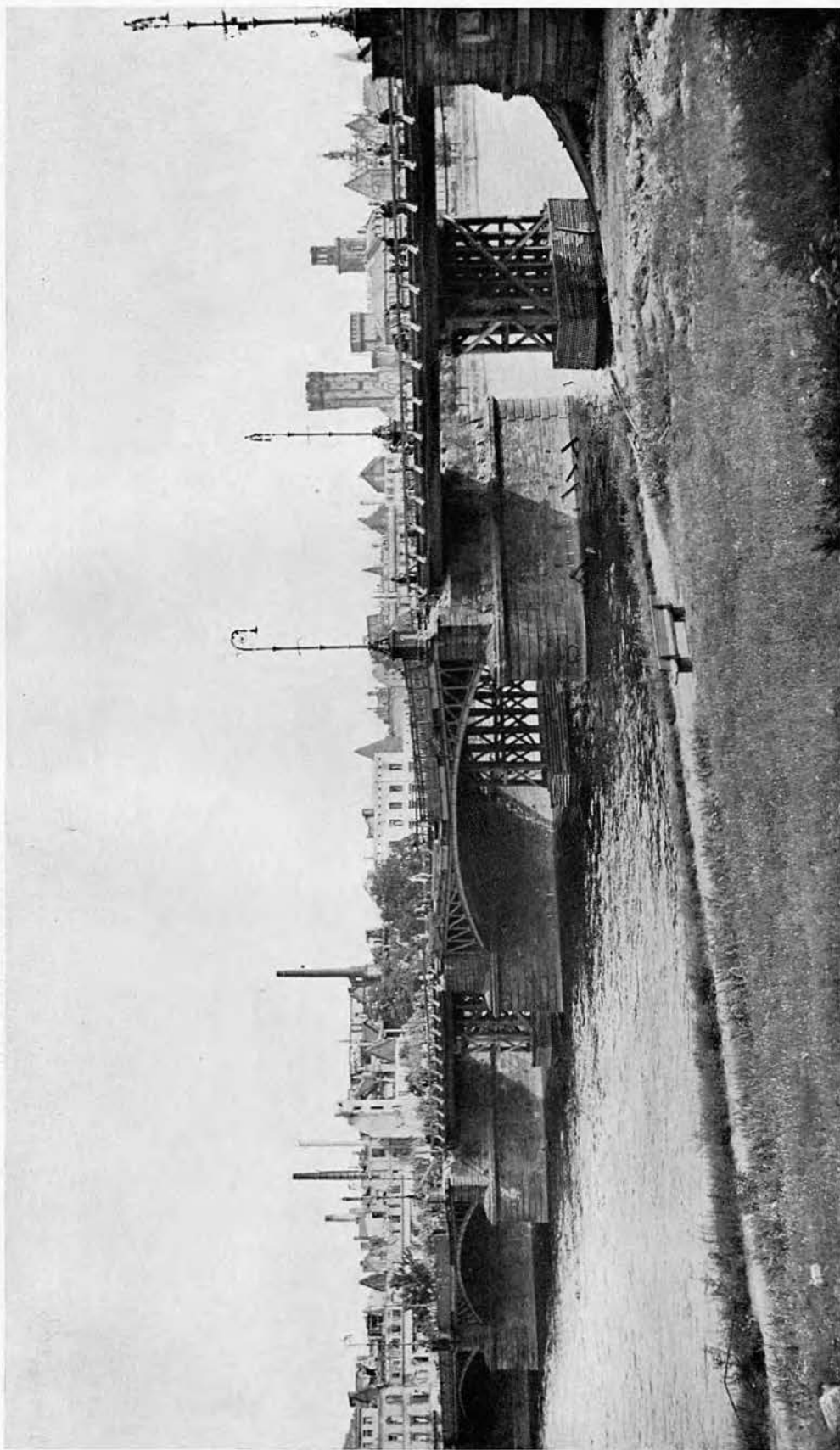
BREMEN CHIMNEY SWEEPS: Two professionals of this time honored vocation bearing the tools of the trade.



NAVAL OCCUPATIONAL FORCE HEADQUARTERS at Frankfurt-am-Main. Battalion workmen are closing in the end of a bomb shattered structure.



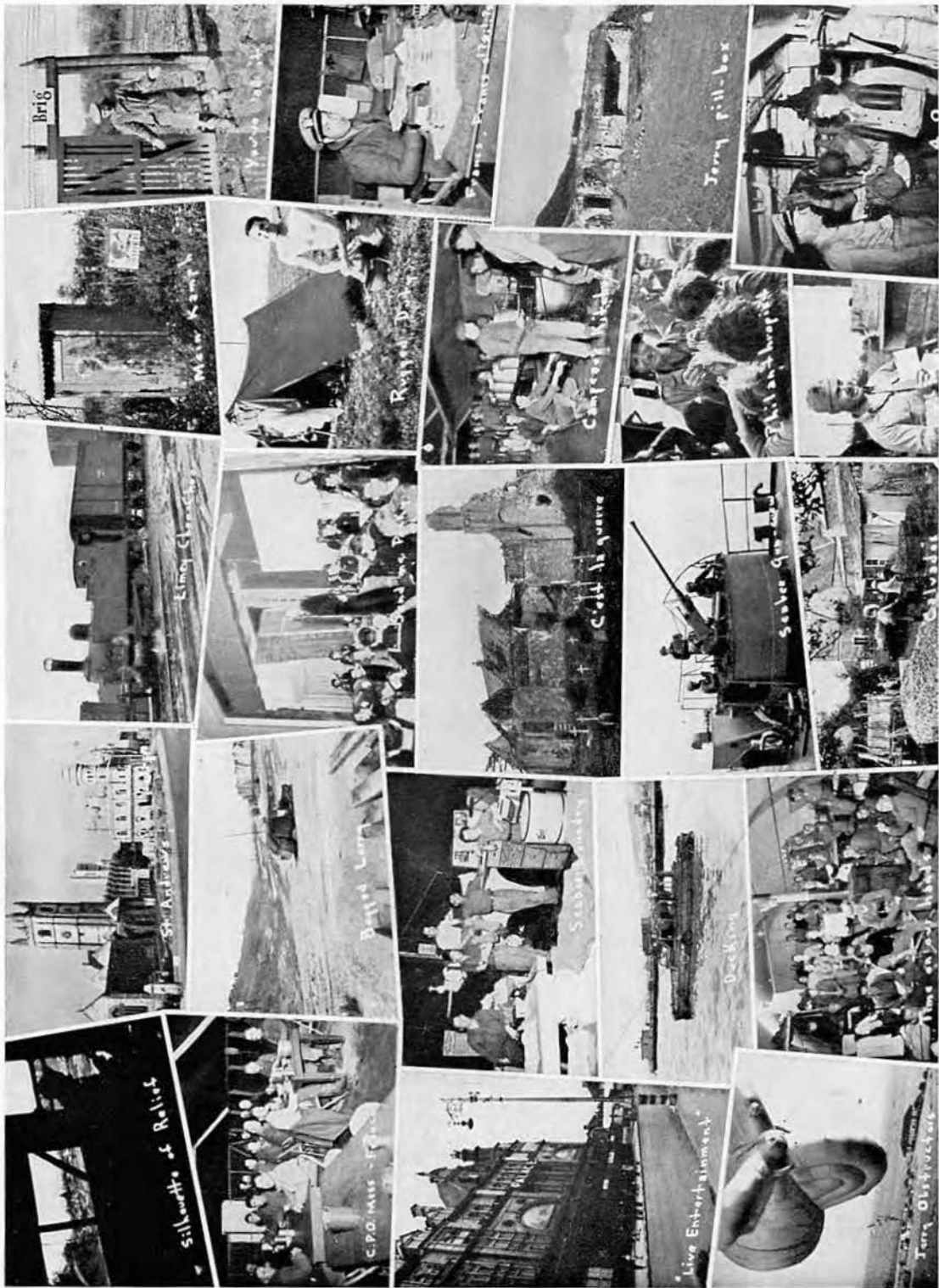
GERMAN CIVILIANS of Frankfurt-am-Main reading news bulletins and Military Government proclamations.



VIEW OF FRANKFURT-AM-MAIN: The bridge has been restored to service by Army Engineer Corps.

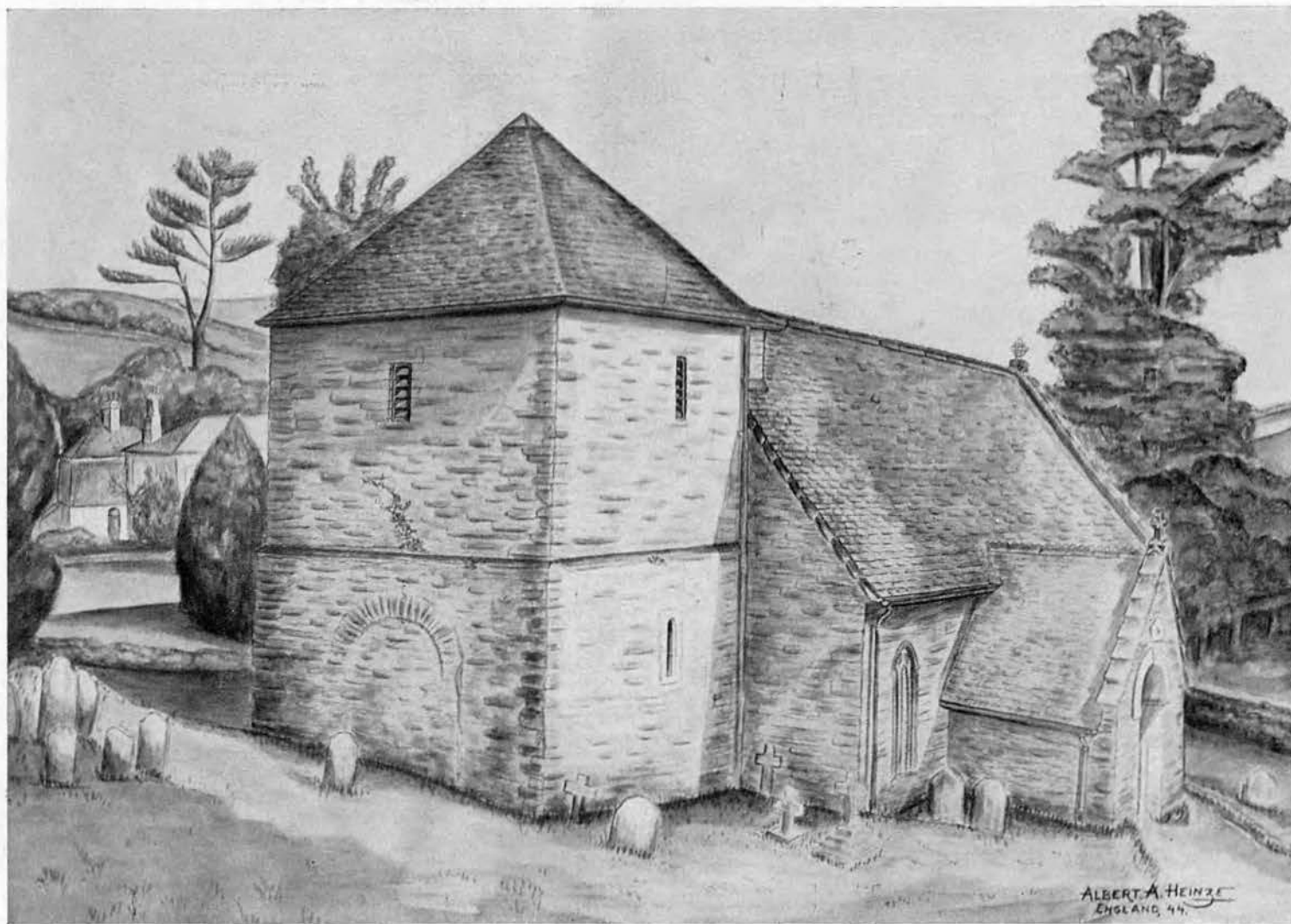


THE FIRST FLIGHT GROUP to fly from the Bremen Air Port to England enroute home to the States as this saga of the Sixty-Ninth Battalion's activities in the European Theatre of War draws to a close.





STONEHENGE. A massive relic, climax of the Neolithic Age, 2000 B.C., erected by a "Beaker Folk" of Celtic origin, on the Salisbury Plain as a temple and almanac of the seasons.



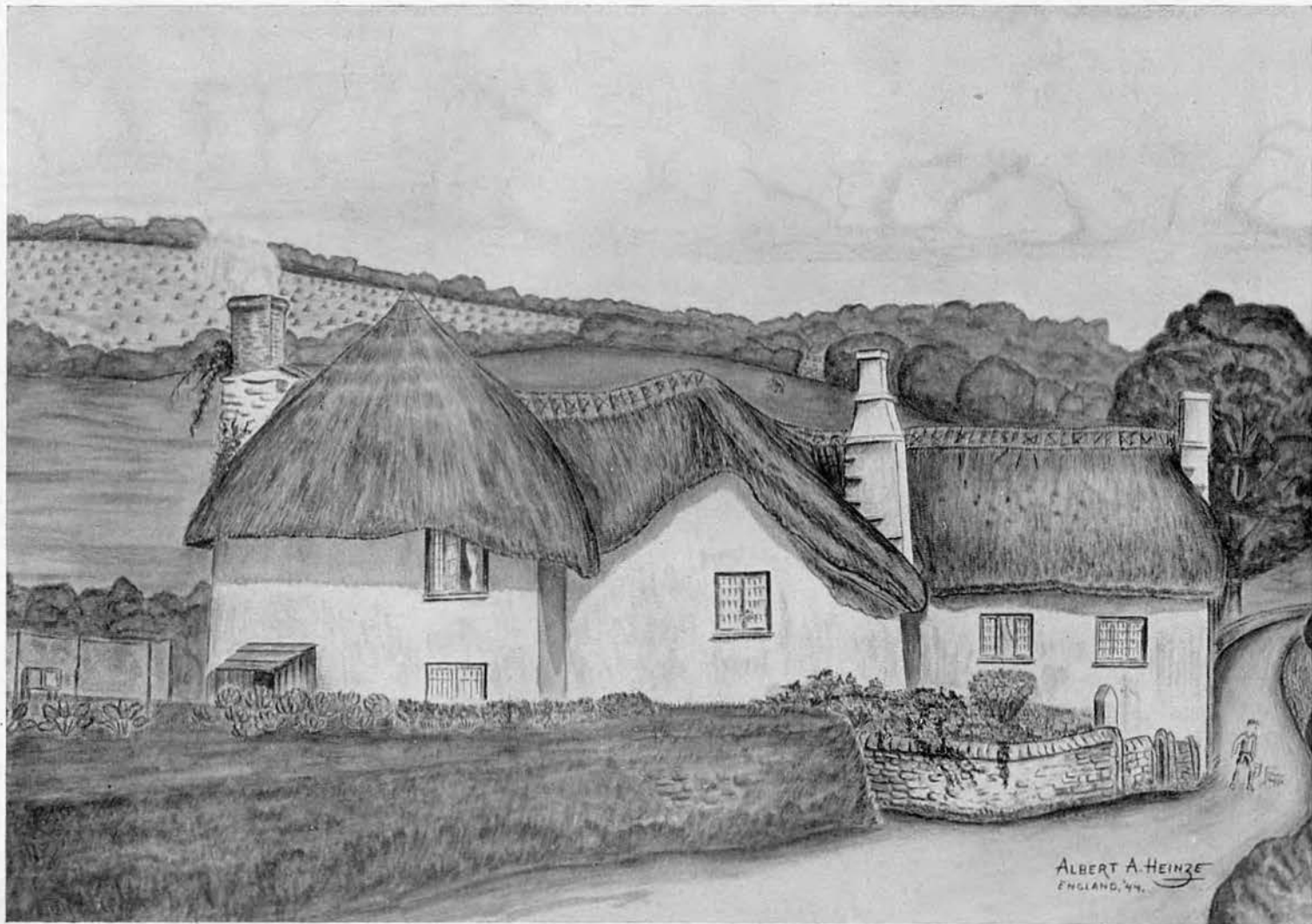
CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST. The tower of this church at St. Johns in Cornwall is of Norman design dating 1150. The typically Norman rounded arch of the original entrance remains embedded in the west wall. The hipped roof is of purely local origin.



CHURCH OF ST. MARY AND ST. JAMES. The battlemented tower of this church at Antony in Cornwall, in decorative early English design, dates to 1470. Oliver Cromwell's followers in their puritanical zeal of reform destroyed much of the original interior, including a carved rood screen before the altar.



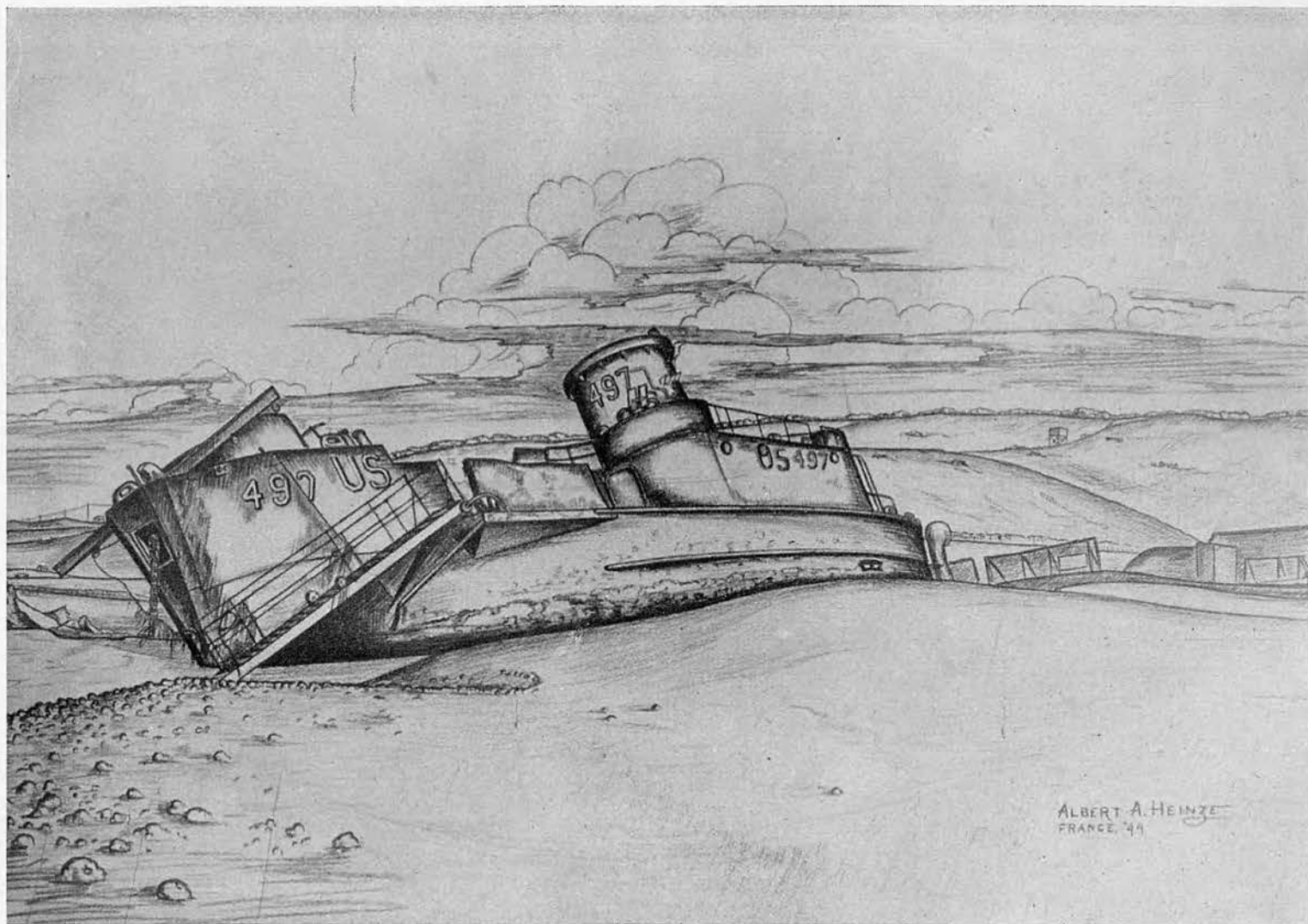
BERRY POMEROY CASTLE. The bastioned stronghold of Ralph de Pomeroy near Totnes, Devonshire, built on the feudal manor bestowed on him by William the Conqueror for his services in the Norman invasion of 1066.



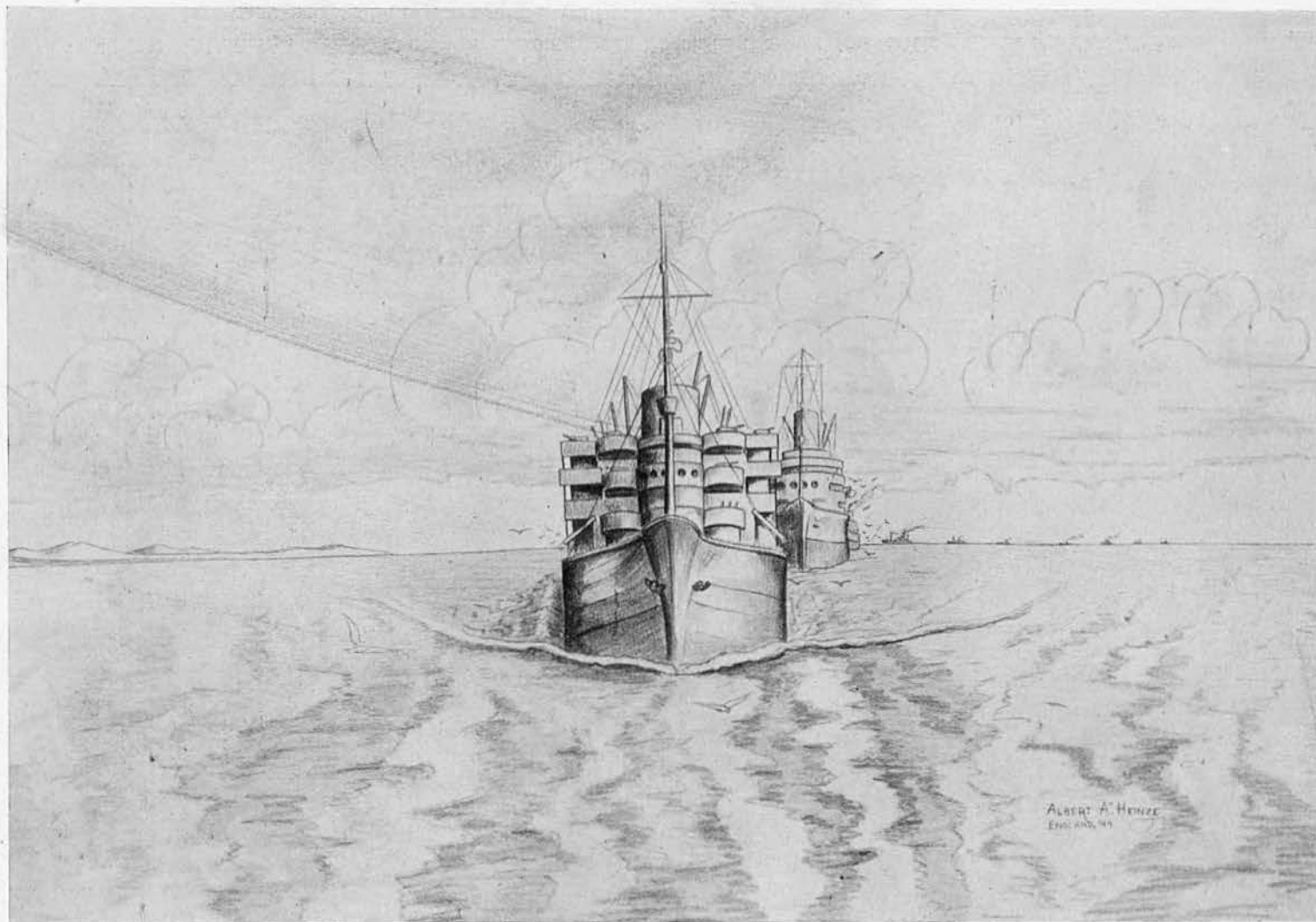
PARLIAMENT COTTAGES. The thatched cottage near Totnes in Devonshire is reputed to have been used by William, Prince of Orange, to house his first parliament in 1688 after his bloodless invasion of England.



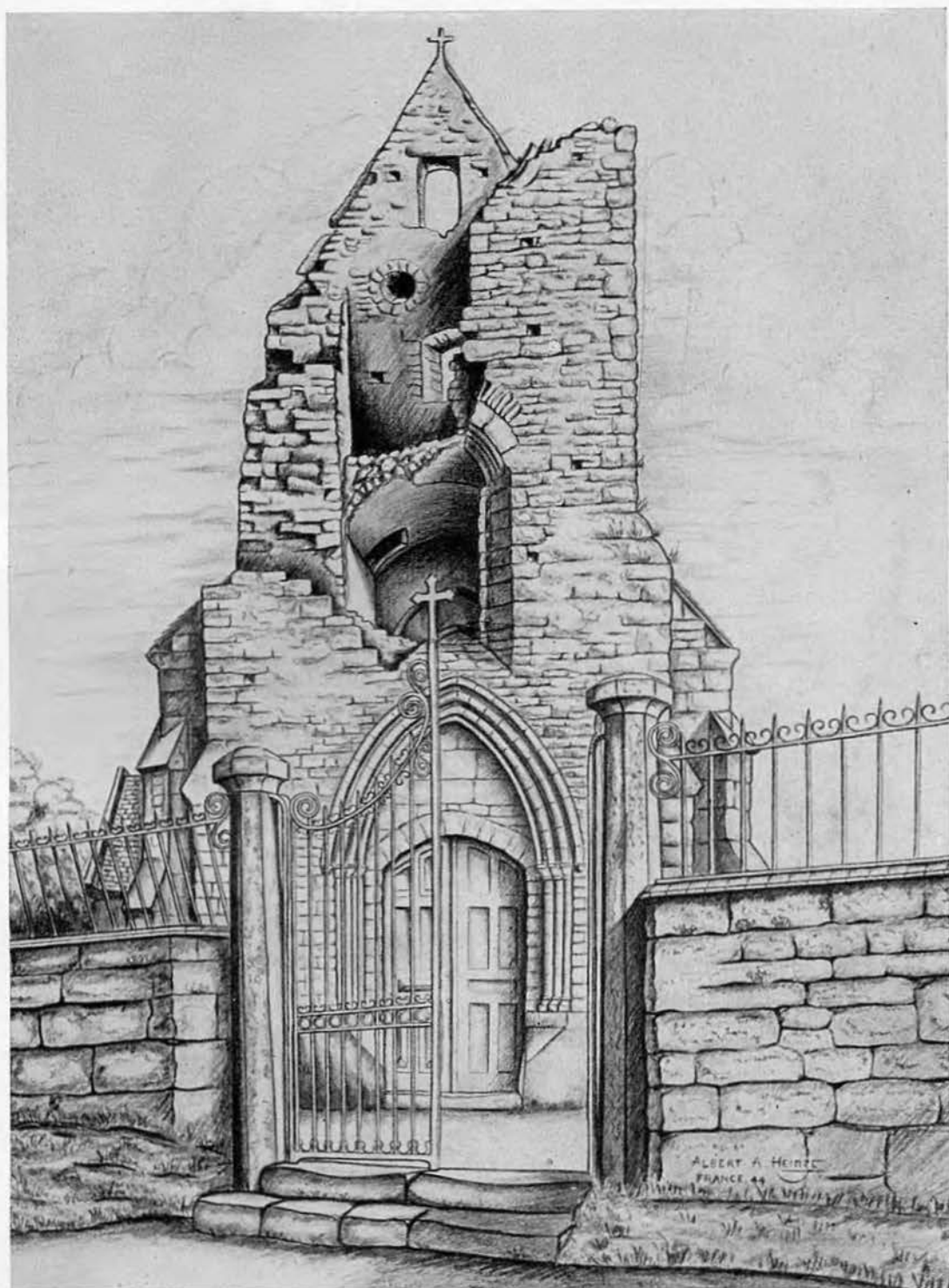
ST. ANDREWS PARISH CHURCH. This mellowed Gothic edifice on "God's Acre" at Plymouth, England was erected in the 14th century on the site of an earlier Saxon church. Blitzed in the Nazi air raids of March 20-21, 1941 it received three direct hits by high explosive bombs and many incendiary bombs set it afire.



INVASION CASUALTIES. This LCI struck a mine on Omaha Beach in the invasion landing which sunk it. Tides shifted it into the position with bow seaward. Decks of the sunken and burnt LCT in background were riddled with gunfire.



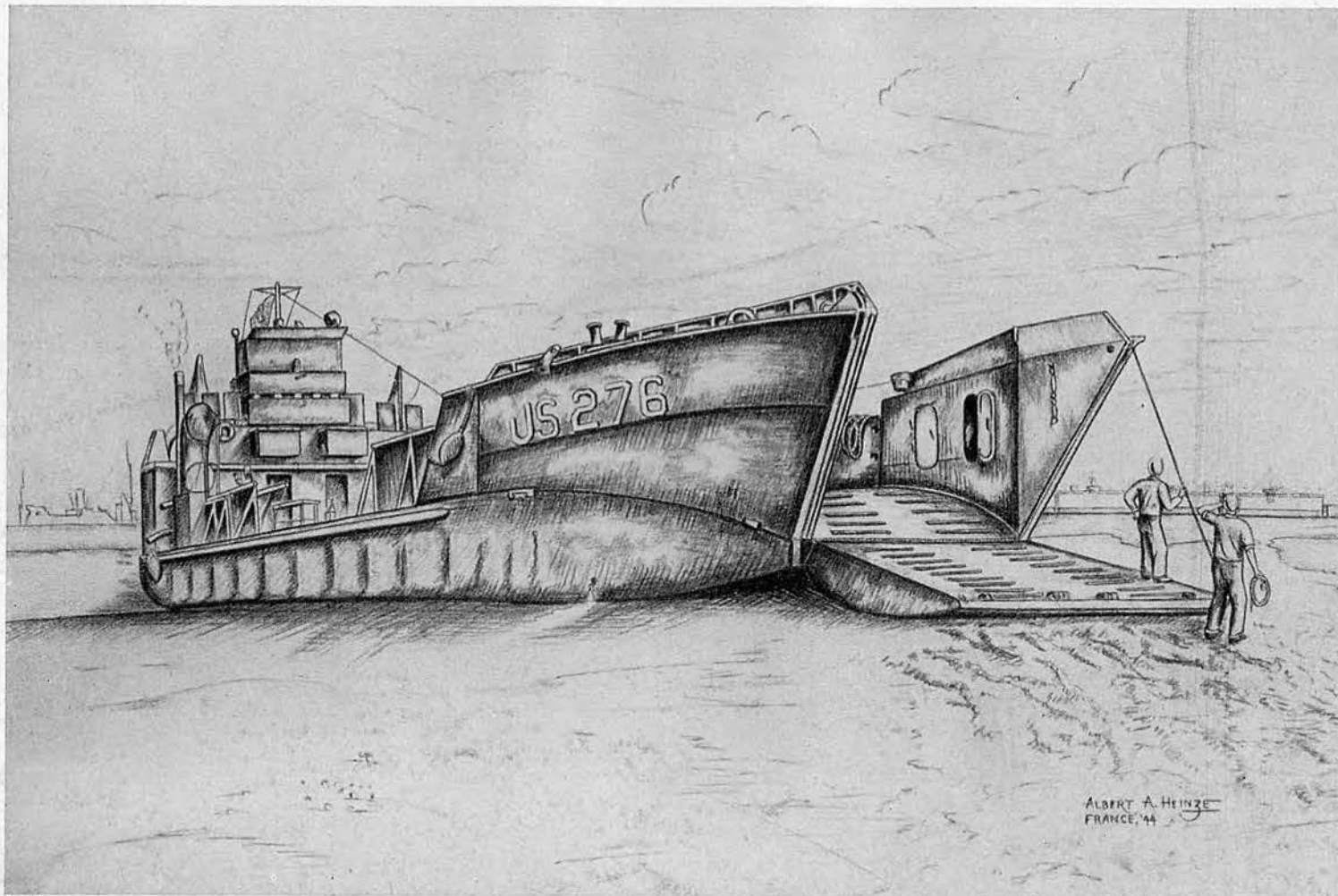
APPROACH TO LIVERPOOL. The convoy in column steams through placid seas to an anchorage at Liverpool Harbor to conclude the fourteen day North Atlantic voyage.



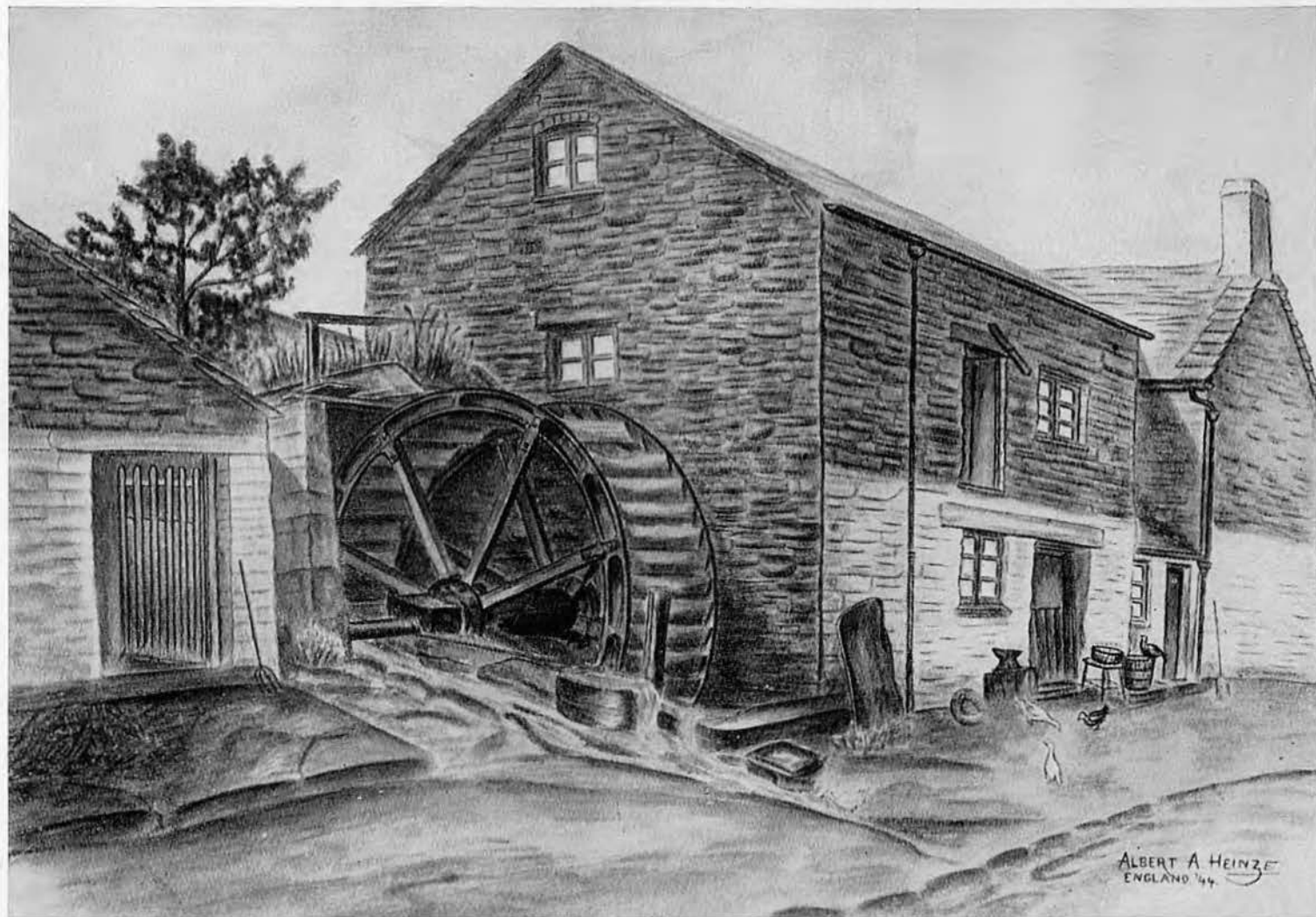
EGLIESE ST. LAURENT. This parish church at St. Laurent in Normandy was used as an observation post by the Nazis to direct artillery fire until shelled by a naval destroyer off Omaha Beach.



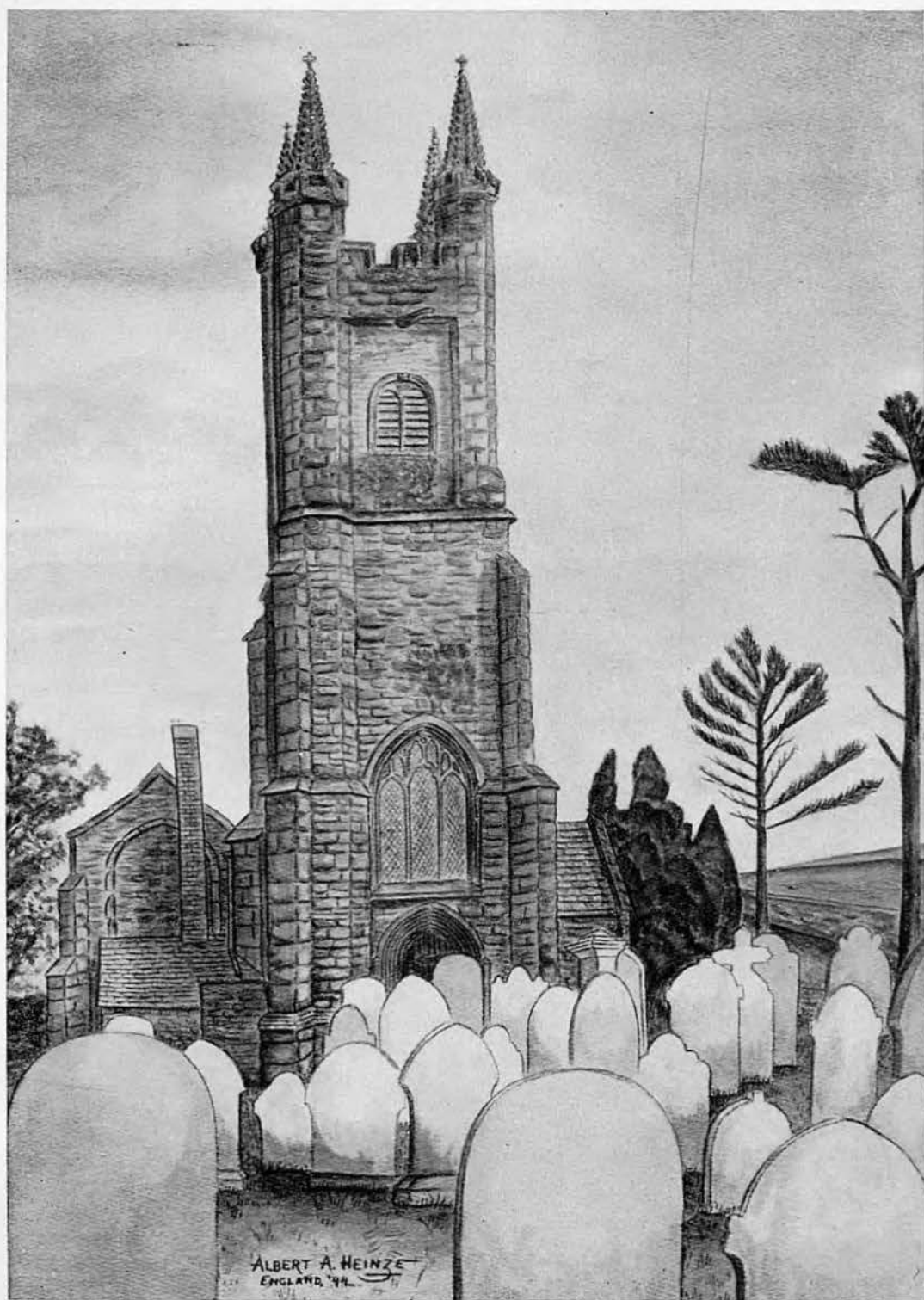
CIDER PRESS. French farmers making cider in the village of St. Laurent, Normandy. The crushed apples are layered alternately with grass reeds which conduct the juice from the bulk when pressure is applied.



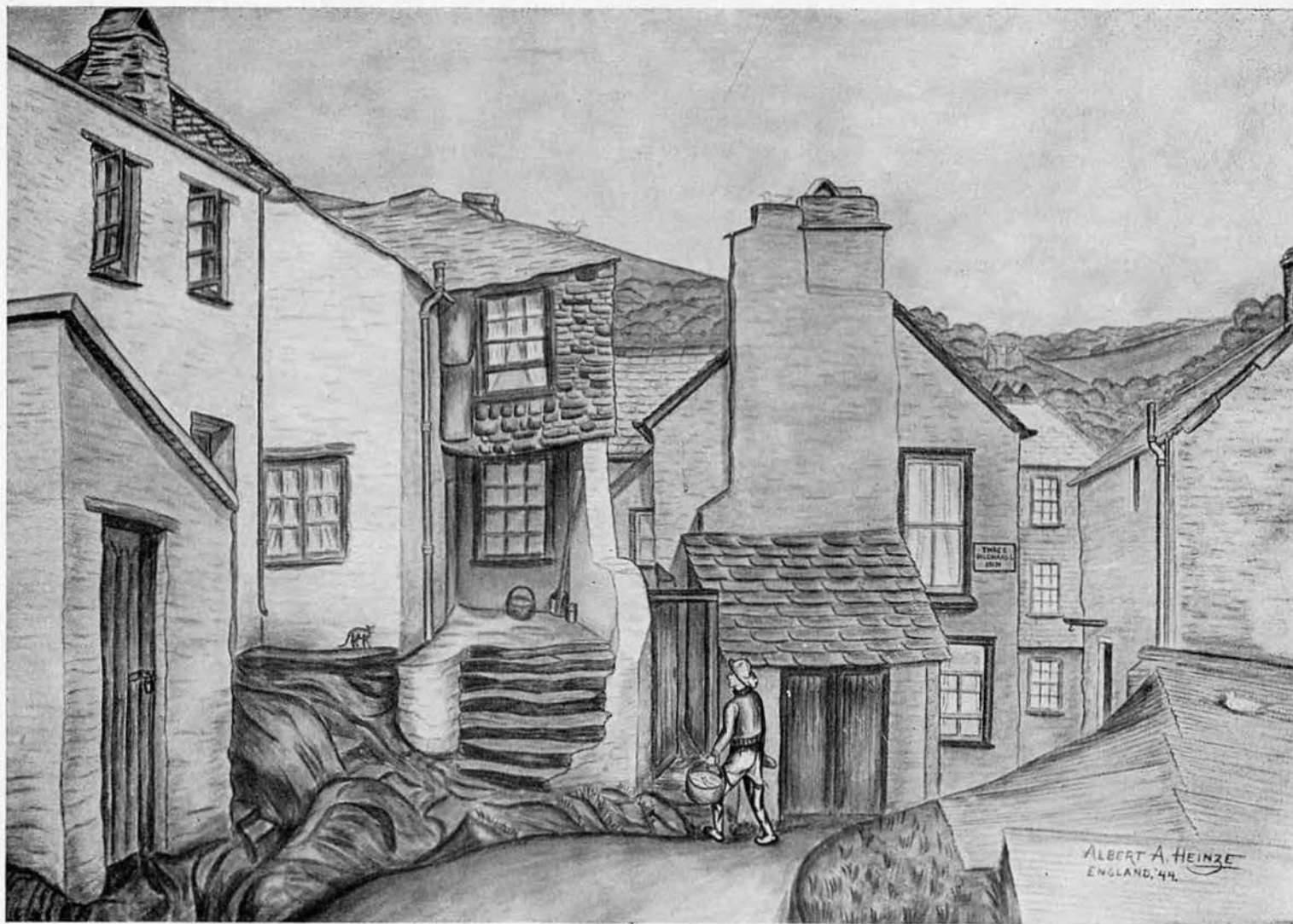
LANDING CRAFT. Dried out on the sands of Omaha Beach at ebb tide, this LCT was said by crew members to be a veteran of four invasions; Africa, Sicily, Salerno, and Normandy.



OLD MILL. Once a grist mill, later converted for the generation of electric power at Hackworthy Bridge on Dartmoor, the wheel remains but an idle relic with the flume grown up in grasses.



WALKHAMPTON CHURCH. The present church on Dartmoor was erected in the 14th century on the site of an early Celtic shrine of 300 A.D. Adjacent are remnants of crossroads of an old Roman trade route, in later christian era known as the "Abbots Way".



SMUGGLER'S COTTAGE. Legend holds that Polperro, a small fishing village on the southern Cornish coast was the scene of smuggling enterprise in years past.



OLD SMUGGLER'S HOUSE. The rear view of a quaint three hundred year old home at picturesque Polperro in Cornwall. Gulls await refuse thrown into the River Pool, the small stream flowing through the village.



THE BREMEN DOM. The erection of St. Petri Cathedral on the Marktplatz began in the early medieval period 1003 A.D. but was not completed in present form until the late 19th century. Dom and the Bosse at right were damaged in air raids of October 1944.



A sample of pencil sketches
done by Charles S. Burke,
Pfc, in off duty hours.





A mural painted on the wall of the Quonset quarters of Commander F. N. Walsh at Edinburgh Road Camp.



Another sample of the artistic ability of painter Bruke. The painting shown here, which is done in oils, is of Charles H. Foley, battalion photographer.



"WHISKEY". Adopted as a battalion mascot during the early days of this cruise in England, Whiskey has traveled with the unit all over England as well as to Omaha Beach, France and Bremen, Germany. He has been a regular at every battalion muster and in the Chow Line he has been a real "Chowhound". Except for several occasions when he has been listed as AWOL he has a record that is commendable.

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