

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

ADDRESS REPLY TO:

Commanding Officer,
CGLORSTA, Saipan, M.I.



• 16 July 1956
File A7, Serial 9-57

From: Commanding Officer, CGLORSTA, Saipan, M.I.
To: Commandant(PO-2)
Via: (1) Commander, Coast Guard District Fourteen(p)
(2) Commander, Marianas Section

Subj: Overseas Loran Station Survey Report

Ref: (a) COMDT(PO-2) ltr of 22 May 56, File A7,
(b) COMMARSEC msg RRL20600Z Jun 56

1. In accordance with the references the comprehensive report requested by reference (a) is herewith forwarded as Enclosure.
2. Due to the relative inexperience of the Station personnel in the processing of black and white prints and the limited darkroom facilities available at the Station at the present time, only one (1) set of photograph prints is included with the report; it is requested that the District make additional prints if they deem it feasible. The negatives of the set of prints included with the report are included herewith.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jerome V. Flanagan".
JEROME V. FLANAGAN

Encl: (1) Overseas Loran Station Survey Report on LORSTA, Saipan, M.I. (5)
(2) Negative of prints included in Enclosure (1)

Copy to:
COMDT(PO-2)
CCGD14(p)
COMMARSEC
File

24 July 1956

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on CO, CGLORST SAIPAN ltr dtd 7/16/56 file A7, Ser: 9-57

From: Commander, Marianas Section
To: Commandant (PO-2)
Via: Commander, 14th Coast Guard District (p)

1. Forwarded.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "M. G. Blandford".
M. G. BLANDFORD
Acting

O'Connor
POA

P
13 August 1956
A7

SECOND ENDORSEMENT to CO, CGLORSTA SAIPAN, M.I. ltr of 7-16-56, A7, Ser.9-57

From: Commander, 14th CG District
To: Commandant (PO2)

Subj: Overseas Loran Station Survey Report; forwarding of

1. Forwarded.

N. W. SPROW
By direction

Encl:

As listed in basic letter but including
3 sets of photograph prints

PO2
gm

Overseas Loran
Station Survey
Report
on
CGLORSTA, Saipan, M.I.

This is a report, current as of July 1956, on the living conditions found on the Island of Saipan in the Marianas Islands as they apply to military personnel assigned to duty at the Coast Guard Loran Station on the Island. As such it shall deal with the conditions that a man could reasonably expect to find on Saipan should he be ordered to duty at that Station in the near future; in the near future is specified because presently the U.S. Navy administers the Island but the duration of its stay is not too certain and it is possible that it could move out at any time.

Saipan, located approximately one hundred ten miles north of Guam, (largest of the Marianas with its two-hundred-twenty-five square miles of land area) is of volcanic origin and measures some twelve and one-half by five miles. Lying just within the zone of convergence of the trades, it, like Guam experiences the seasonal climatic conditions of the Marianas, but due to its lower elevation does not feel the onslaught of the rainy season quite as thoroughly as does Guam; annual rainfall hovers around the eighty-two inch mark for Saipan while it averages closer to ninety inches for the Island of Guam. Throughout the year, the temperature averages between eighty and eight-five degrees Fahrenheit while the diurnal variation is usually ten to twenty degrees. During the rainy season, which usually lasts from late June till early October, the relative humidity averages anywhere from a high of eighty-eight per cent in the morning to seventy-two per cent during late afternoon; during the dry season the latter figure could more generally be considered the daily average. Fog is unheard of in the Islands and for the past eight months, which is the extent of this writer's stay on Saipan, not a day has yet to pass during which Ol' Sol hasn't beamed down on the Station for a few hours at least. However, despite the ever-present sunshine on the Island, the climate is indeed comfortable due to the easterly trades which seldom desert Saipan and which tend to keep the days pleasant and the evenings cool enough for comfortable sleeping. In summation, it would be hard to find a more pleasing climate than that enjoyed by this Pacific Isle.

The Island was originally discovered by the Spaniards and vestiges of the Spanish influence are still very much in evidence in the ways of the people, especially so in their religious life; approximately ninety-nine per cent of the indigenii embrace the Roman Catholic faith. Capitol of the Northern Marianas, Chalan Kanoa is a village which is distant about one mile from the Loran Station and is the largest settlement on the Island, housing approximately three-fourths of the Island's six thousand natives, the majority of whom are locally known as Chamorros. Religious leadership on the Island consists of two Roman Catholic Priests and one Baptist missionary in addition to about fourteen Catholic nuns, five of whom teach in the local parochial school.

In times past, Saipan has been known as a large producer of sugar and copra for export but since the influx of the Americans after World War II most of the natives have worked the land only for their own needs, relying on U.S. Navy employment as their main source of income; and more and more each day it is becoming evident that the Saipanese are gradually coming round to the American way of life and acquiring the modern everyday conveniences that Americans have taken for granted for a number of years. Recreation for the natives consists chiefly of fishing, cock fights and American movies; there are, incidentally, three local movie houses on the Island, one of which is equipped for Cinemascope projection.

As for the Loran Station itself, it is undoubtedly the most modern and architecturally-speaking, the best-looking site on the Island, barring none. Situated on some sixteen-and-a-quarter acres of grass-covered land overlooking the Phillipine Sea, the installation is comprised of five buildings, four of which are of cinder-block construction and are not yet three years old; the fifth is of poured-in-place concrete construction and is five years old. For an overall picture of the Station layout see Enclosure One to this report; for the best description available of the Station buildings see the photographs which accompany this report.

And now let us get into the conditions on Saipan which will directly affect you as a Coast Guardsman, newly-assigned, to this Loran Station.

First, the cost-of-living on the Island for military personnel is quite low; other than expenses for personal items such as toothpaste, soap, and necessary items of uniform clothing such as underwear and dungarees there is little for the Coast Guardsman on Saipan to spend his money on; this will, however, be more apparent when we get to the section of this report dealing with the recreation facilities on the Island. The one exception to this is in the question of photographic items; thus far everyone who has reported here during the past eight months has purchased a new camera in view of the fact that photography is one of the major recreational pursuits on the Island; but more on this later!

Next, let us consider the question of Mail and Supplies: This Station undoubtedly has the best facilities in the Marianas in this respect in view of the fact that the Navy furnishes logistic support to its facilities on the Island in the form of two surface shipments and two aircraft flights a week. Mail is delivered to Saipan twice a week via Navy aircraft while freight such as general stores items and commissary supplies are delivered via surface craft; in addition the Coast Guard Air Detachment on Guam makes periodic logistic flights when the amount of freight on hand for the Loran Station, Saipan, at the Coast Guard Depot, Guam warrants such; this incidentally is usually not more often than once a month.

It might also be of interest to note here that electric power and water are furnished the Station by an Island-wide system owned and operated by the Navy, hence the Station has few troubles in this respect.

Medical facilities on the Island consist of a well-equipped one hundred fifty bed hospital staffed by two regularly-assigned U. S. Navy doctors and five native practitioners. The two Navy doctors care for the Americans and supervise the practitioners who care for the indigenii. The medical care available to military personnel is quite adequate and the men assigned here can normally receive any medical treatment required during their tour of duty; major surgery, incidentally, is usually performed on Guam due to the lack of a qualified anaesthetist on Saipan. As for dental work, there is one native dental practitioner on the Island who is quite competent insofar as routine restorations and periodic checks are concerned; he also does emergency dental surgery but that usually is performed on Guam.

Private automobiles in general are a poor investment on Saipan due to the lack of proper repair facilities, the poor condition of most of the Island roads and the generally hot and humid climate of the Marianas; the exception to this is the case of one who has an old car which he would be willing to sell at the end of his tour of duty for something less than five hundred dollars. In this case it might be well to bring a car out from the States in view of the fact that there is no common carrier on the Island and transportation is quite hard to come by. In this connection, for a person who could procure an old Jeep in the States for less than three hundred dollars, it might be well to ship it out to Saipan for the individual's use during his tour of duty and eventual resale prior to his rotation date. An advantageous selling price is virtually assured for such a vehicle in view of the fact that the chief mode of transportation for the natives consists of military vehicles which were left here by the American Forces after the second World War and the useful life of most of them has long since expired. The reason for specifying that a person should not expect to sell a vehicle for more than five hundred dollars is the fact that there are very few natives on the Island who could possibly afford to pay any more than that figure.

And now to recreation which is probably the most important part in the entire report in the minds of newly-assigned personnel. Saipan, unfortunately (???), is unlike most of the Loran Stations that the men of the Coast Guard hear about on the ships and stations back in the States in that the morale here is excellent and thus far no one is calling the Gooneybirds by their first names- or at least none has been caught doing so!!!

Saipan, although not offering the commercial facilities of the Bahamas or Atlantic City, certainly makes available to the energetic and resourceful Coast Guardsman recreational pursuits far in excess of his possible interests or his available time. For the man who likes swimming or shell hunting, it would indeed be hard to find a better or more easily-accessible location than the Station Beach which borders on the Phillipine Sea as shown in Enclosure One nor more fruitful hunting grounds than the waters off the coast of Saipan. And for either the novice golfer or the fellow who dubs himself another "Ben Hogan", one could hardly find a better opportunity to polish up his game; located but a mile and a half from the Station in the foothills of Mt. Tagpochau is the Saipan Golf Club which is owned and operated by the Navy and open to all, military and civilian, officer and enlisted alike.

Although not kept in a manner comparable to the Pebble Beach Course the nine-holer is certainly quite adequate for the needs of the average golfer and this writer has yet to wait more than five minutes to get off the first tee, weekends included, a boast which few Stateside courses can lay claim to. Greens fees are five dollars a month while the going rate for caddies is a nickel a hole.

And of course regardless of the Station or Ship in the Service there is always at least one "shutterbug" aboard who could really do wonders with his camera if only he had his own darkroom facilities! For this individual, the Station darkroom at Saipan is indeed a dream-come-true; fully-equipped with an OMEGA D-II Enlarger, 18"x24" Print Dryer, 8"x10" Contact Printer, and all the other paraphernalia necessary to the production of good and durable prints, the darkroom has indeed consumed a tremendous number of the spare hours of this Station's personnel. Incidentally, it might be well to point out here that most of the personnel at the Station started out only a few months ago without any previous knowledge of darkroom procedure and have already attained a remarkable degree of proficiency in the developing and printing of black and white photographs through practical application of the material they have studied in the photography handbooks available here on Saipan. In summation, all the individual need furnish to become a quite proficient photographer is the interest and the film; the rest is provided by the Coast Guard. The Navy Exchanges both here and on Guam, incidentally, carry a quite extensive line of German and Japanese-made cameras, hence newly-assigned personnel, if they are in the market for such, would do well to wait until their arrival out here to purchase one.

On the out-of-doors scene the Station this past spring entered a somewhat short-handed softball team in the Sainan Softball League, which is composed of five local teams (three of them Navy-sponsored) and although it failed to finish on the top of the ladder due to the shortage of adequate reserves it did nonetheless furnish many hours of entertainment and give the crew some good wholesome exercise. Volleyball, of late, has become the most popular sport at the Station and now utilizes the crew's time from immediately after chow in the evening until dark.

In addition to the above the Station recreation program also includes nightly movies, cards, leathercraft, model building and a small but rather interesting hard-bound book library, the latter due chiefly to the efforts of the Wives Club on Guam. And lest newly-assigned personnel feel that they shall lose contact with the rest of the world when they come to Saipan let it be pointed out here that the District Morale Fund provides for annual subscriptions to several periodicals such as Time, Newsweek, the Coast Guard Magazine and Navy Times; in addition the District also provides for a regular supply of phonograph records and pulp-type pocket books to be sent to the Station from Hawaii on a monthly basis.

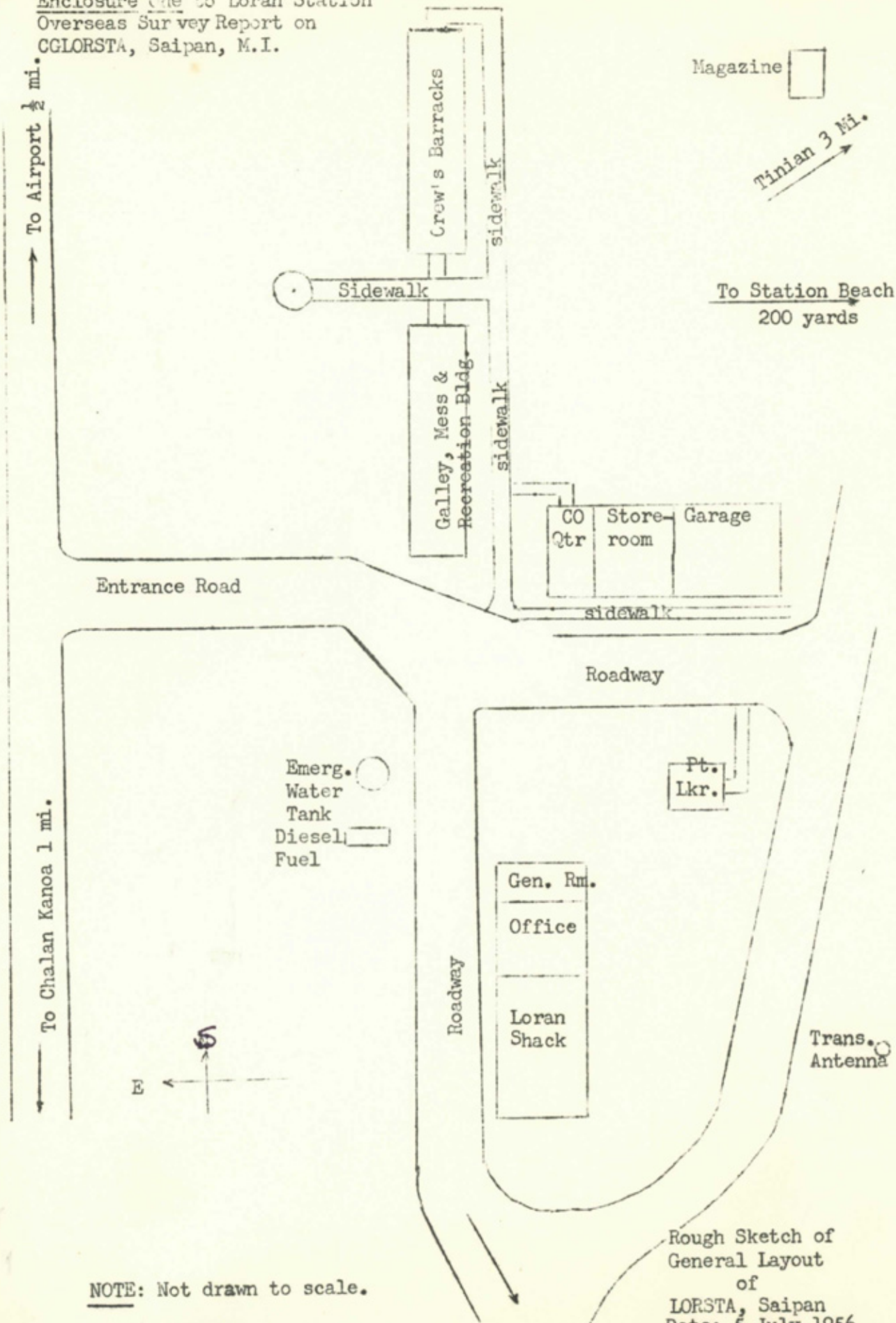
Of necessity the off-Station recreation program is quite limited due to the fact that the Coast Guard has declared Saipan an "isolated-duty" station and therefore regular liberty is not granted; however, the men are allowed to go ashore occasionally for the purpose of sightseeing and picture-taking. The Loran Station personnel have always been more than welcome at both the Enlistee Men's and Officer's Clubs on the Island, both of which feature Bingo-Night as a weekly affair; also the latter has recently introduced a Bridge Night on a bi-weekly basis.

In this respect it is of interest here to note that there are at the present time about one hundred fifty American families on the Island thus both of the Clubs are usually quite active, especially during the week ends.

In conclusion, let it be here stated that none of the personnel assigned to duty at the Loran Station, Saipan will want for things to do during his spare time. Undoubtedly, the greatest disadvantage in being assigned to this type of duty is the fact that such assignment necessarily entails a year-long separation from one's family and loved ones due to the fact that the Coast Guard does not allow dependents to accompany personnel assigned to this Station. In general, however, the personnel departing Saipan during the past year have indicated that their tour of duty had passed quite rapidly.

JEROME V. FLANAGAN,
LTJG, USCG
Commanding Officer,
CGLORSTA, Saipan, M.I.

Enclosure One to Loran Station
Overseas Survey Report on
CGLORSTA, Saipan, M.I.



NOTE: Not drawn to scale.

ENCLOSURE ONE



LORAN BUILDING
from
FRONT LAWN



GALLEY & RECREATION BUILDING
from
DRIVEWAY



GARAGE AND STOREROOM



MESS HALL AND BARRACKS
(rear view)



AFTER-SUPPER VOLLEYBALL
on
FRONT LAWN



GALLEY & MESS BUILDING
(Front View)



VIEW FROM FRONT
OF GARAGE



COMMANDING OFFICER'S
QUARTERS