



Welcome Aboard Our Coast Guard

Loran Station Gesashi

by SN S. F. Lanum, Loran Station Gesashi

Okinawa, Japan is a land of mystery and adventure; home of the sea snake, the deadly habu and approximately 50,000 military service personnel and their families. Among those are the 23 members of Loran Station Gesashi.

Loran Station Gesashi, nestled in the rolling hills of the Okinawan countryside, is an important link in the Northwest Pacific and Commando Lion Loran-C chain. The station offers its crew experiences not found anywhere else in the world. Those who have never seen the vast beauty and splendor of the Pacific Ocean just stand in awe gazing at the still blue waters. The station is bordered on one side by the Pacific and on the other two sides by the villages of Gesashi and Taira. This helps the crew learn the national language, Japanese, a beautiful and flowing language. Most of the crew has decided to learn it.

The crew has eight engineers led by MK1 Sherouse, seven ETs led by ETC Troha and six

deck force members led by BMC Collier. They live in H-shaped barracks which house a galley, mess deck and recreation deck.

The station is commanded by LTJG Collins. He feels the station combines the excitement of an overseas tour with the responsibilities of a command. His second in command is CWO2 (ELC) Stein, electronics material officer.

The tour here is one year. It is considered isolated duty but this "drawback" is balanced with an additional 30 days of compensatory leave upon completion of the tour.

The crew spends its free time in basketball, snorkeling, glass ball hunting, cliff climbing and dodging the path of the habu — native to the island and one of the most dangerous snakes in the world.

So, for any of you who were not aware of the Coast Guard's presence in this part of the Pacific ... we are here ... and we love it!

CHRISTMAS AT LORAN STATION GESASHI

The Gesashi village children arrived early Christmas Eve. The children's initial shyness and embarrassment was soon overcome by the sight of a jolly red Santa Claus, cookies and juice, and the happy sight of so many unopened bags of toys. Watching the children's faces and sharing their happiness, we knew the warm weather and lack of snow didn't make a difference. It was Christmas at Gesashi.

Gesashi, a small Okinawan village just outside the station, consists of about two hundred people, mostly farmers and fishermen. We hosted fifty of their children, mothers and fathers, and the village mayor that evening. Thanks to the Okinawan Toys for Tots Organization, who donated enough toys for over a hundred children, each child went home carrying a bag or two of gifts. "Domo arigato gozaimashta!" (thank you very much) from the fifty beaming faces was a sentiment shared equally by the crew. The children made our Christmas complete.

Christmas day saw a traditional dinner prepared by the legendary SSI Dave Vogt and Mr. "Ace" Eisho Eda of Gesashi. Dinner was preceded with a live performance from the DOD Show Band "Bravo" under warm and sunny skies. Special guests included about twenty members of the station's weekly English class from Nago City. Dinner was followed by a gift exchange and a round of Christmas carols shared between the station and the students.

We remembered and missed our families back home, but we were thankful to be celebrating Christmas as a Coast Guard Family, along with many of our Okinawan friends.