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LORAN TRANSMITTING STATION

IWO JIMA

Submitted by

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Iwo Jima is a small island of volcanic origin located approximately 650 miles SSE of Tokyo, Japan. The island is eight square miles in area, about five miles from North to South and about one and one half miles wide at the widest point. The coast line varies from extremely rugged cliffs to long sandy beaches. The North end of the island where the loran station is located is the most rugged part of the island. Mount Suribachi sits pompously at the other end.

The station consists of eight quarters buildings, all of which were damaged by typhoon Louise in September of 1955. Their description would be of no value since the station is presently being re-built by a Japanese Construction Company. When completed, there will be three buildings, all theoretically typhoon proof.

The Air Force has an emergency refueling base on the island which has many recreational facilities. There is an NCO club, Officers Club, swimming pool, bowling alley, library, sick bay, chapel, PX, and post office. All of these facilities are available for station personnel.

The cost of living for enlisted persons is practically nothing. Small stores are purchased by mail from Guam and any ships service stores required are bought at the PX. Cigarettes are rationed but there is no shortage. There are excellent camera buys at the islands PX and items may be ordered for stateside delivery from the main PX in Japan.

The Officers Club has written into their constitution that the Commanding Officer of the loran station will be an honorary member and does not have to pay dues. There are only 14 Air Force officers, but the club is quite large. They serve steaks there every night for a small charge. Mess bills depend on how many meals the officer eats at the station, since there are other messing facilities available for his use.

The station lacks recreational equipment since much of it was destroyed during the typhoon. The roof caved in on the Rec Hall destroying the pool table and ping pong table. There are however movies shown every night. The fishing is good and the Air Force has a 24 foot fishing boat which they let us use occasionally.

Mail arrives and departs the island twice a week. Monday and Friday there is a scheduled plane from Japan which brings mail, chow, and any other logistic support that might be required. Chow is ordered from the commissary at Tachikawa, and takes about two weeks to get here. The chow is excellent. Plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, and also plenty of milk.

It is very hot here in the summer, usually about 95 or higher. The humidity is high which makes it more uncomfortable. There is an active sulphur pit near the station and when the wind blows right it is very obnoxious. This happens at least once a day and lasts for several hours. The winter is cooler, getting down to about 60. It is uncomfortable because none of the buildings have heat and it actually feels chilly. There is a continual water problem since the station's water supply is from a rain catchment system. Normally it is adequate, but presently the station is supporting 40 Japanese laborers which drains the tanks in no time.

Since the station is isolated, dependent information is unavailable. With the new buildings, life on this island might become bearable. Presently the crew is living in very poor quarters, but this will be rectified shortly. Much new moral equipment is on order and should arrive soon. With the new buildings and equipment, this will be a fine station. Pictures would be of no value since the old buildings will be torn down soon.

It is requested that I be directed to furnish pictures of the new station when it is completed. Completion date is presently 31 October 1956.

C.G.STADTLANDER, LTJG
COMMANDING OFFICER