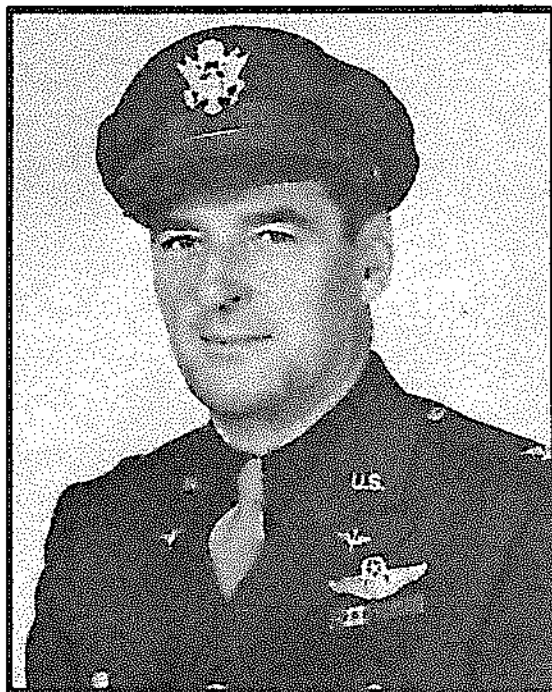
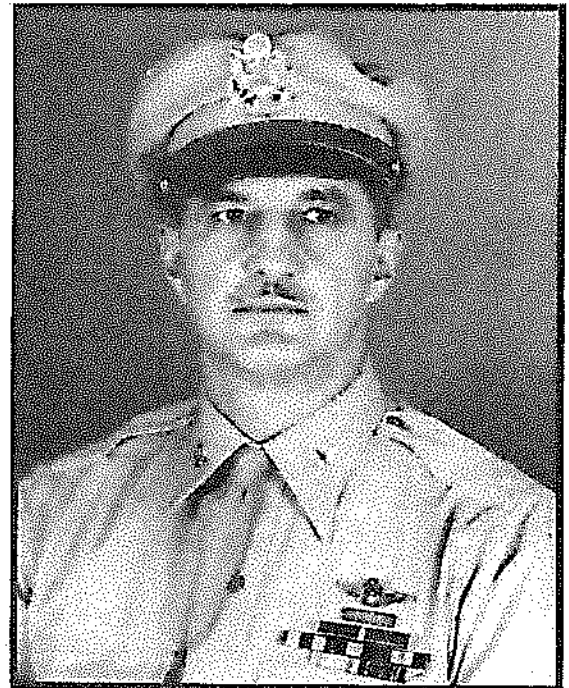




COL ARTHUR W. BROCK JR.
 COMMANDING OFFICER, KEESLER FIELD
 17 JULY 1941 - 14 APRIL 1942



COL ROBERT E.M. GOOLRICK
 COMMANDING OFFICER, 3704th AAF BASE
 UNIT AND KEESLER FIELD
 15 APRIL 1942 - 30 APRIL 1945



COL THOMAS S. VOSS
 COMMANDING OFFICER, 3704th AAF BASE
 UNIT AND KEESLER FIELD
 1 MAY 1945 - 2 OCTOBER 1945



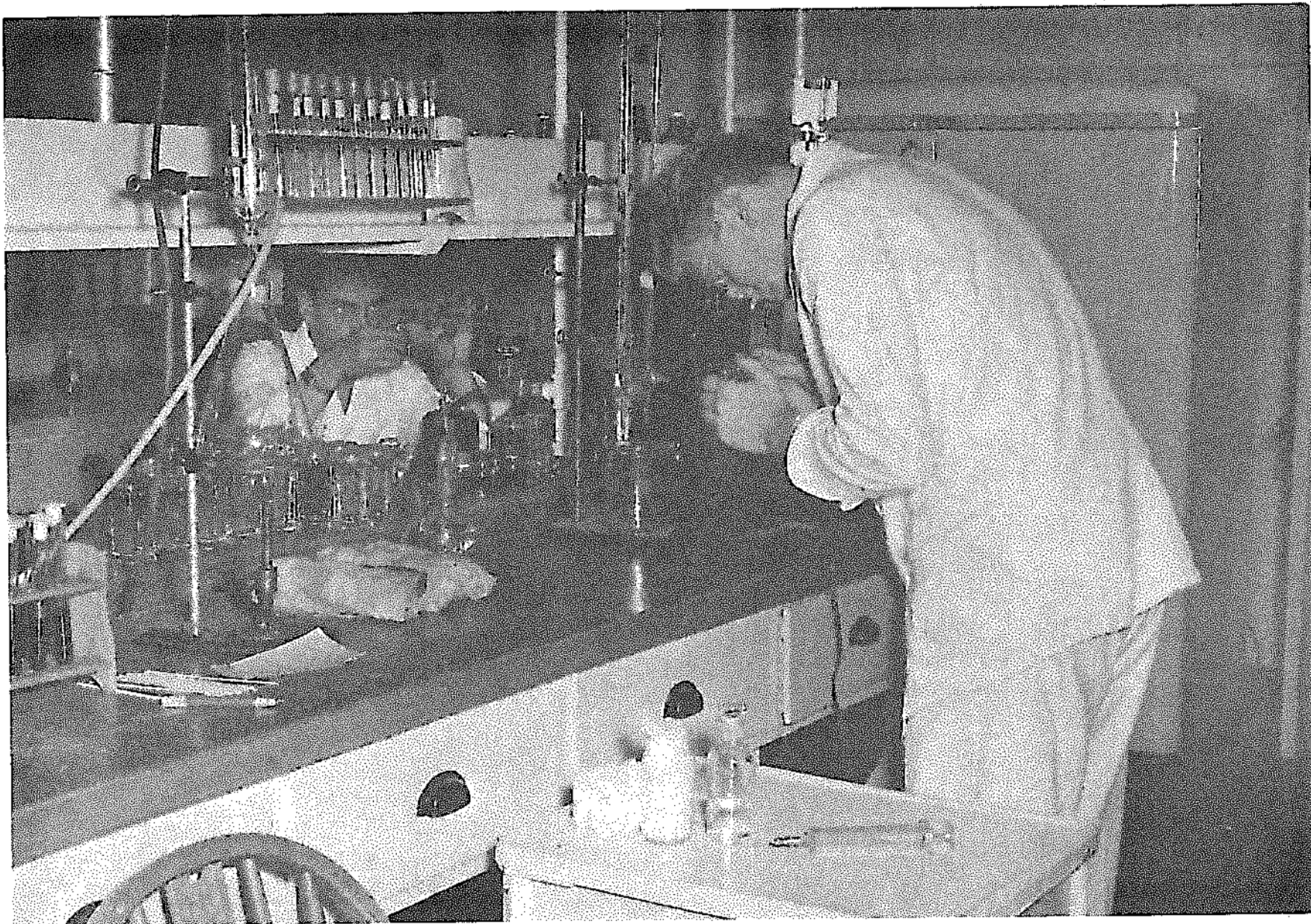
The original staff of the Keesler Field Station Hospital, March 14, 1942. Standing left to right: Capt S. H. Hamilton, Adjutant; 1st Lt A. M. Johnson, Principal Chief Nurse; Lt Col R. J. Platt, Commanding Officer; Lt Col H. E. Smalley, Dental Surgeon; Lt Col R. D. Henderson, Hospital Inspector; Lt Col A. Tripodi, Chief of Surgical Service. Front Row: Capt E. D. Epstein, C O, Detachment Medical Department; Capt F. B. O'Connër, Medical Supply Officer; 1st Lt R. D. Franks, Station Veterinarian; 1st Lt M. F. DeSalvo, Medical Inspector; Capt L. F. Rogel, Chief of Medical Service.



The exterior of the Officers' Club after it was remodeled in 1943. Many morale functions were held at the club during World War II.



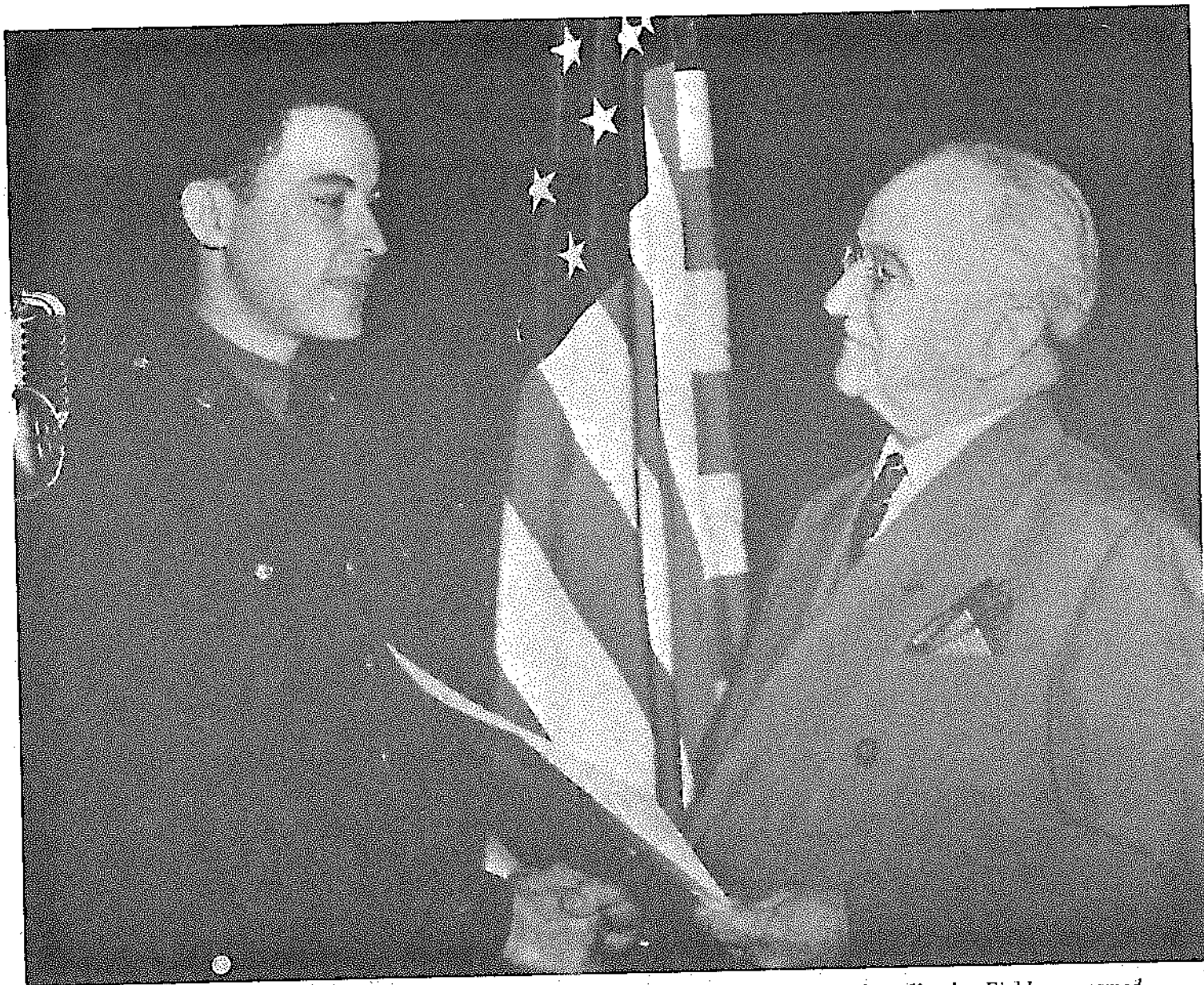
Training administrators lost no time in scheduling four around-the-clock shifts in the newly completed airplane mechanics training classrooms. Shown here February of 1942 at dusk, the nighttime lighting was reported off-shore as a source of "brilliant illumination." The window shades were lowered half-way to solve the problem.



A technician at work in the hospital laboratory. The station hospital opened in March 1942.



The interior of the Post Exchange prior to renovation in July 1943. Many items could be purchased at a reduced rate.



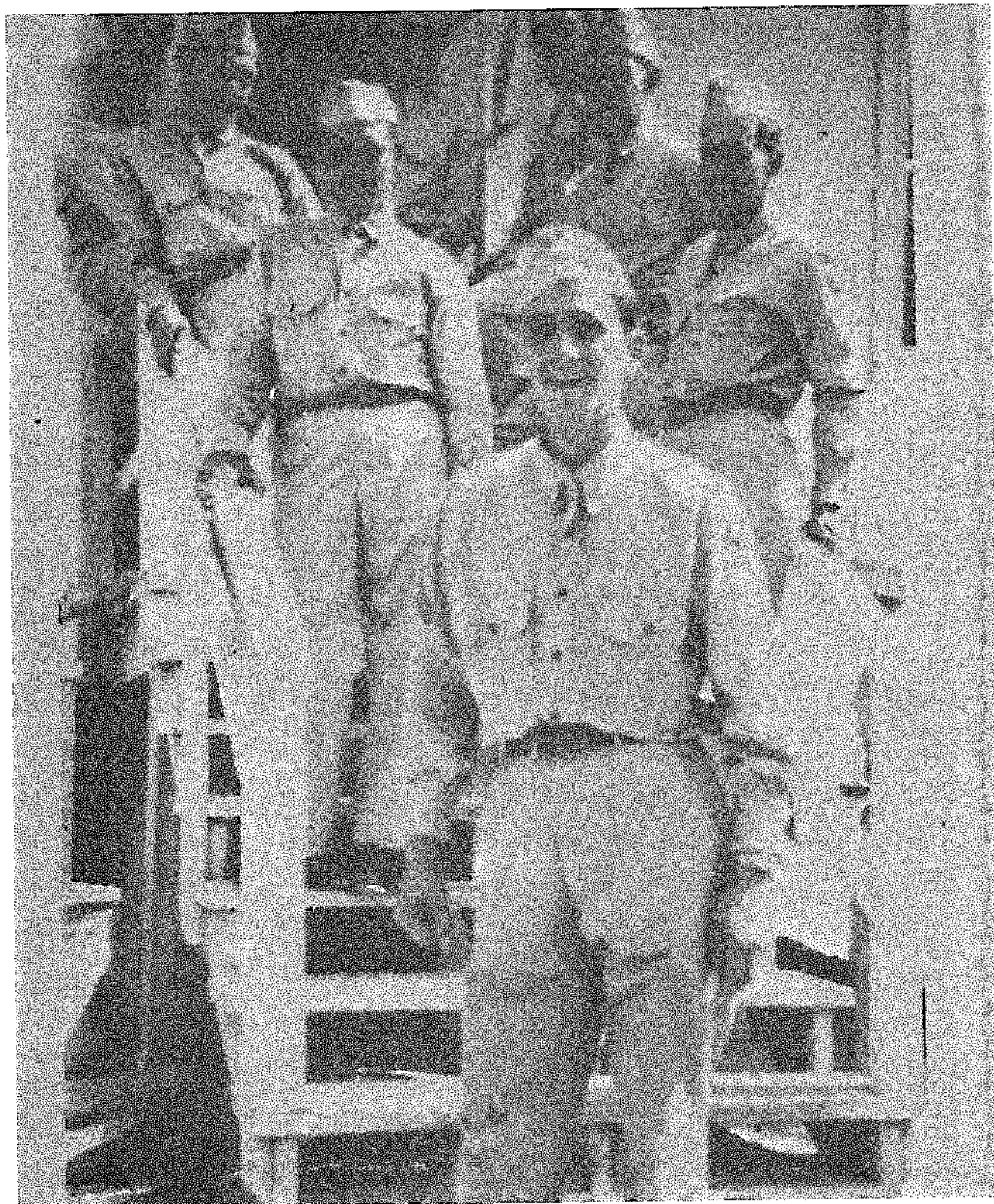
Major General Samuel Reeves Keesler, father of the WW I flier in honor of whom Keesler Field was named, congratulated Pvt Willie J. McManus of Pollock, Louisiana, the honor student of the first Aircraft Mechanic class on 27 February 1942.



Keesler Field Military Police receive their assignments prior to shift duty.

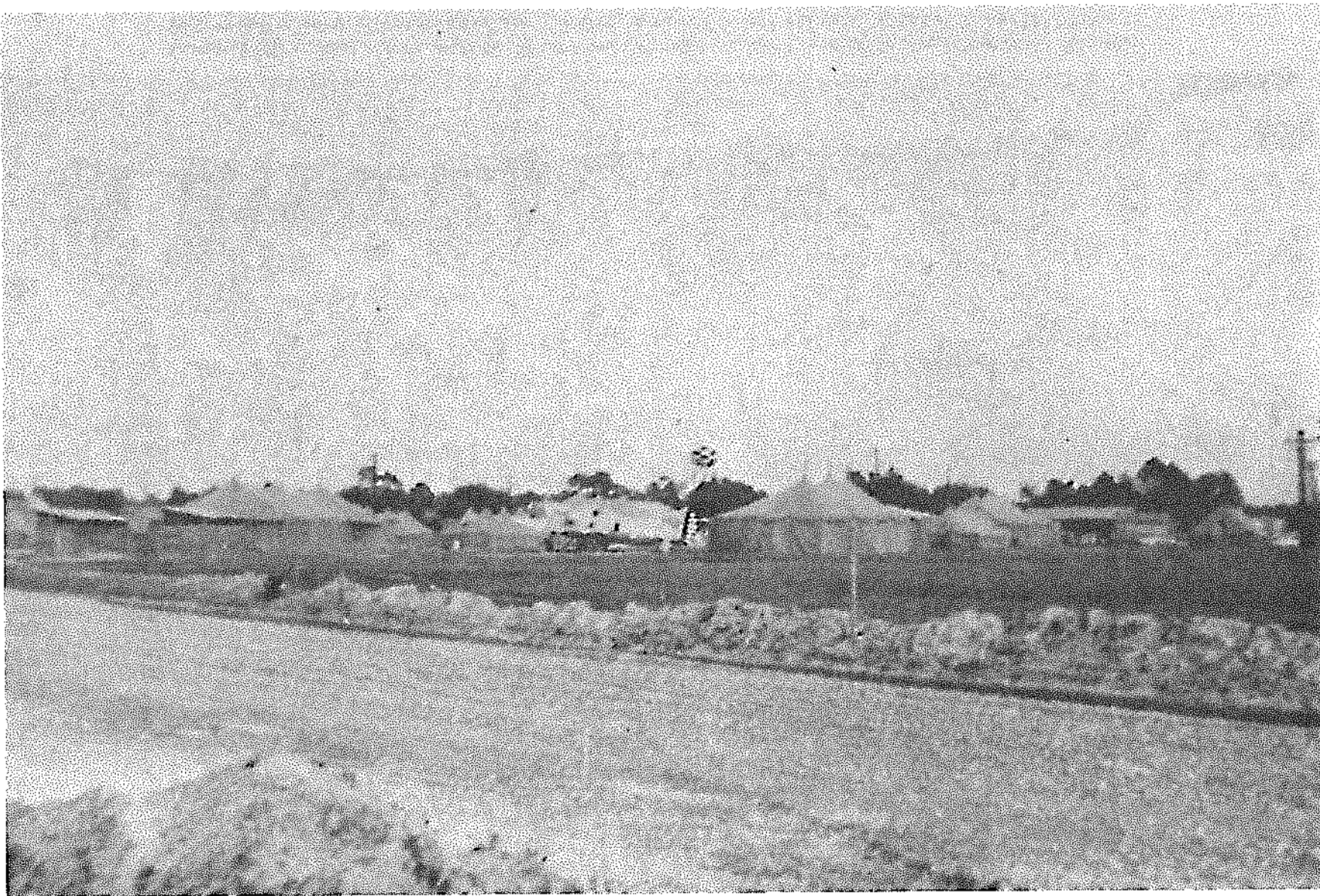


A second visit by the Keesler family on 4 March 1944 was to dedicate the "Lady Keesler." The B-24 Liberator, named in honor of Mrs Samuel Reeves Keesler, mother of Lt Keesler, was purchased with cash investments of base military and civilian personnel during a war loan drive.

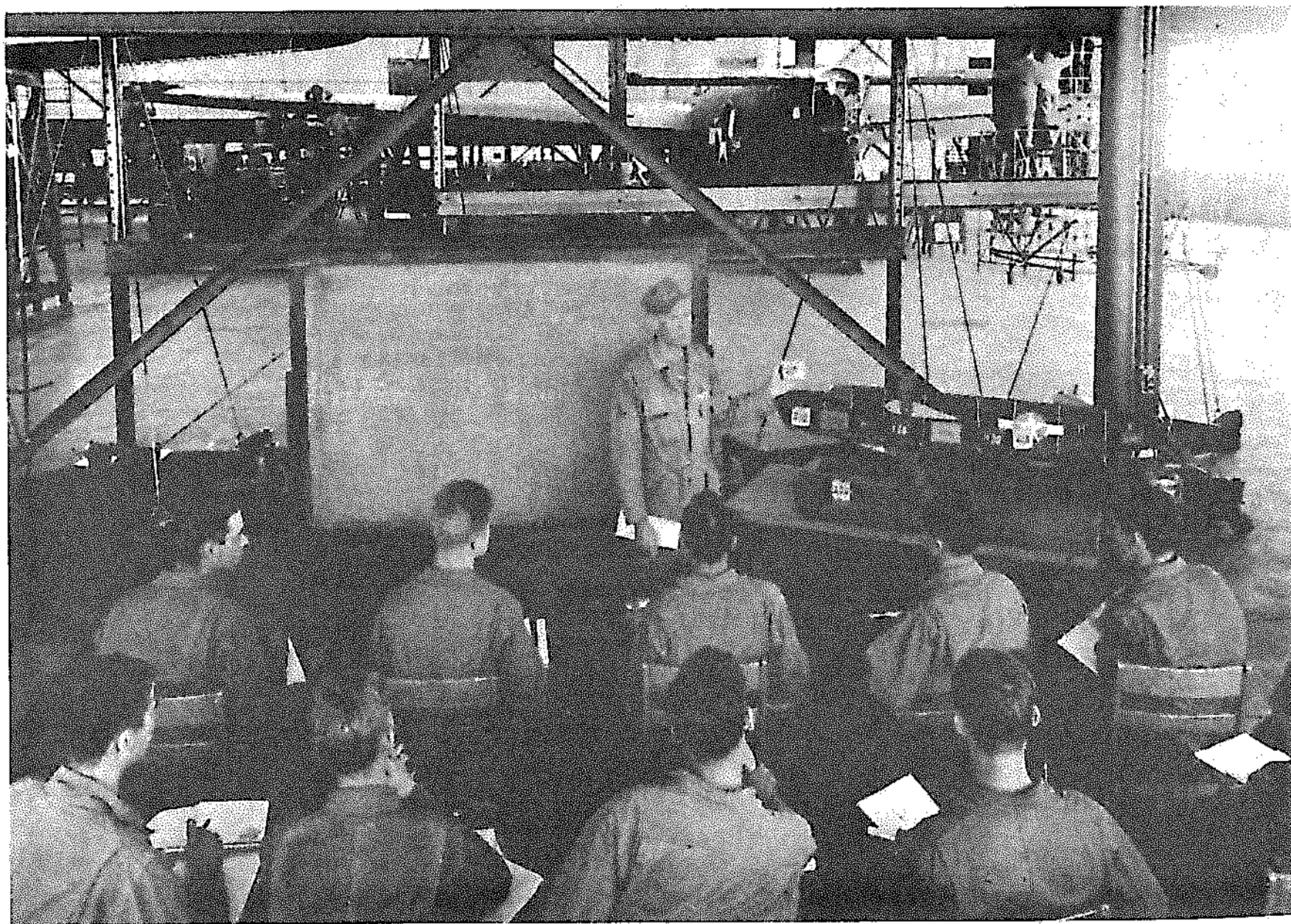


On pass. After the regular Saturday morning barracks inspection, Keesler Field soldiers became eligible for a pass if they could recite the General Orders to their barracks chief. Here Corporal Louis A. Rotundo of Perth Amboy, New Jersey, with other members of the 303rd Squadron Mess Detachment, prepares to leave for downtown Biloxi. Rotundo returned to Keesler in 1971 as an Air Force civilian employee.

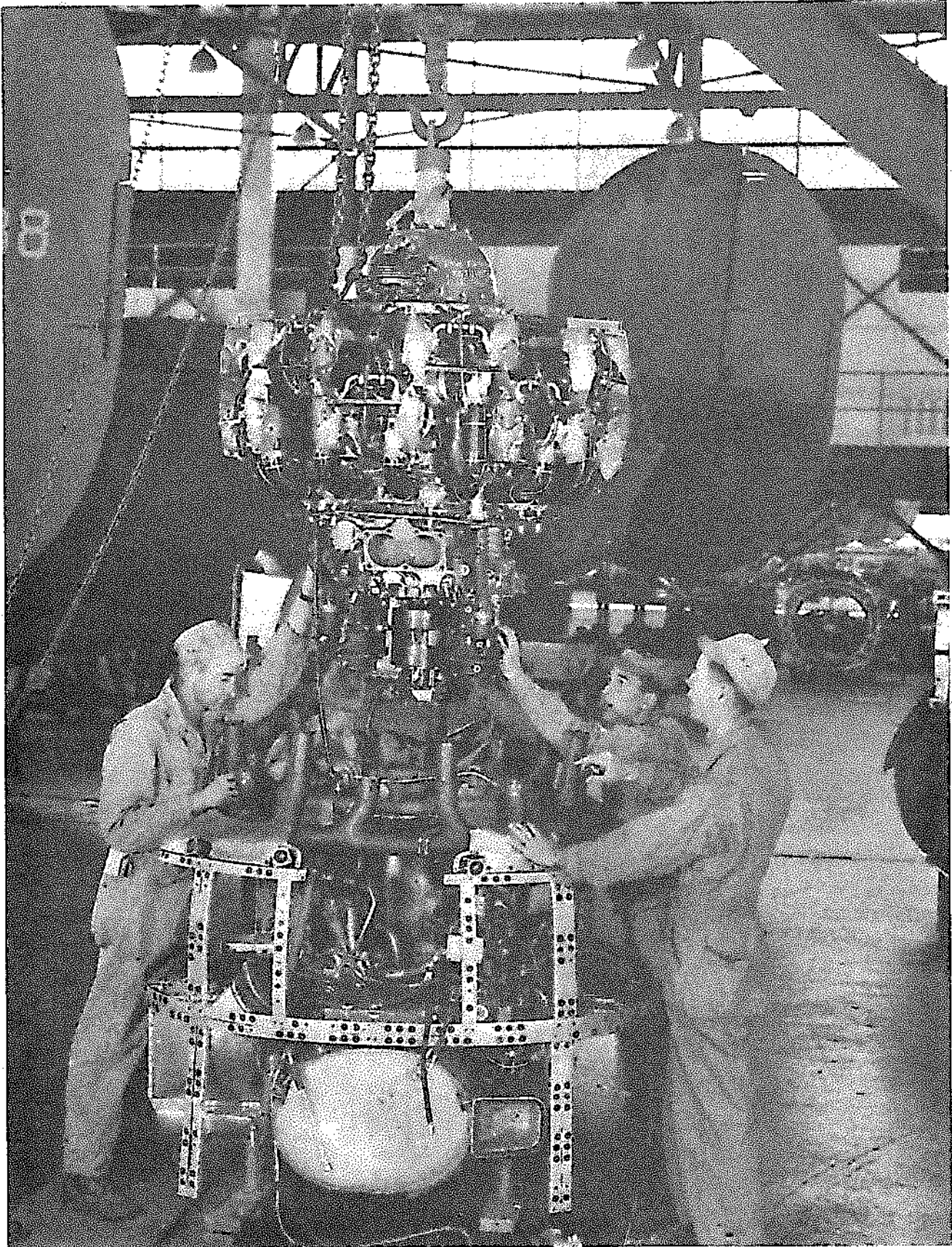
Louis A. Rotundo photo



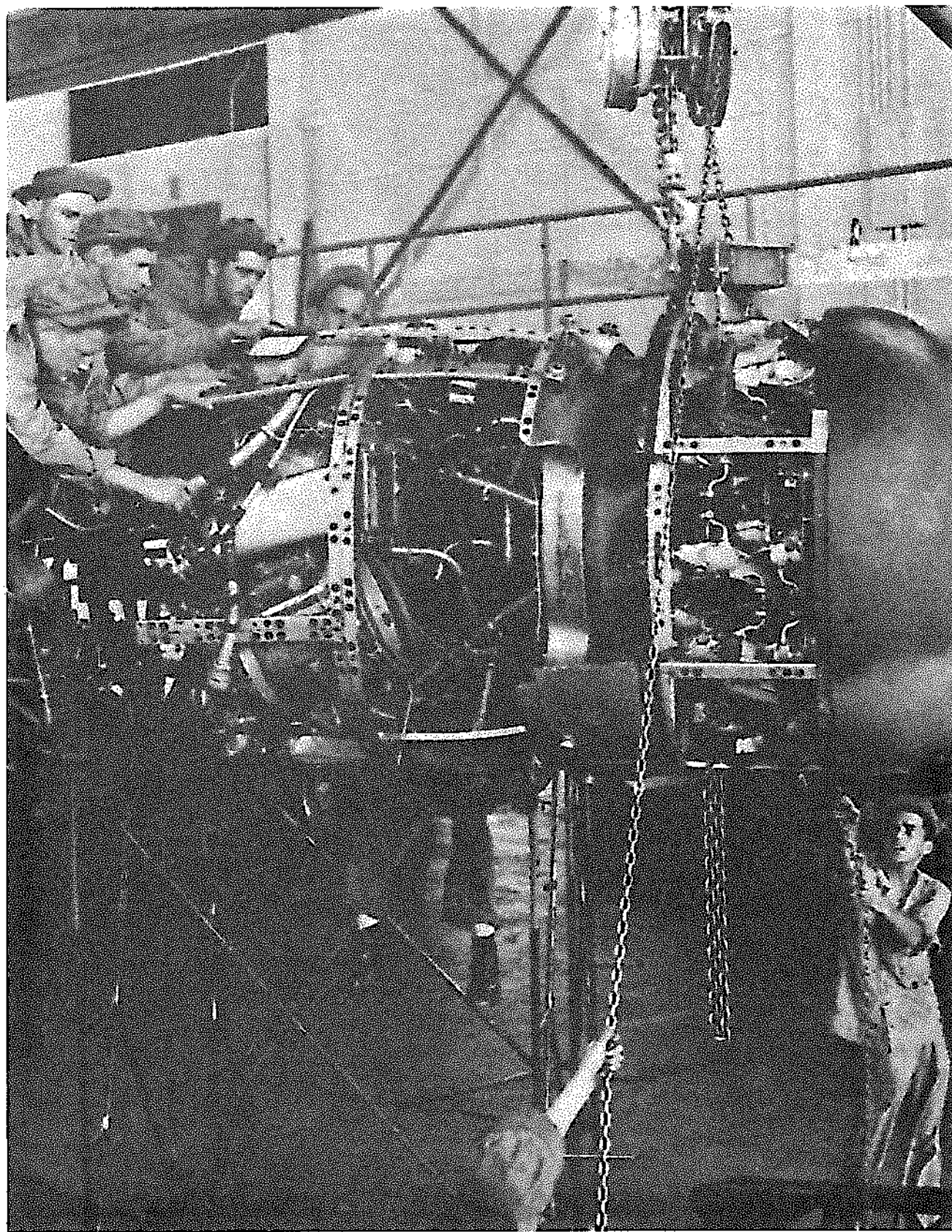
This was the area southeast from the present site of the Training Services Division. Keesler Field's first mechanics training classes were held in large circus tents erected on the old Biloxi airport. In early 1942 a few nonflyable aircraft were available for student training. Courtesy Richard E. Florea



One portion of the airplane structures branch included instruction on aircraft weight and balance procedures.



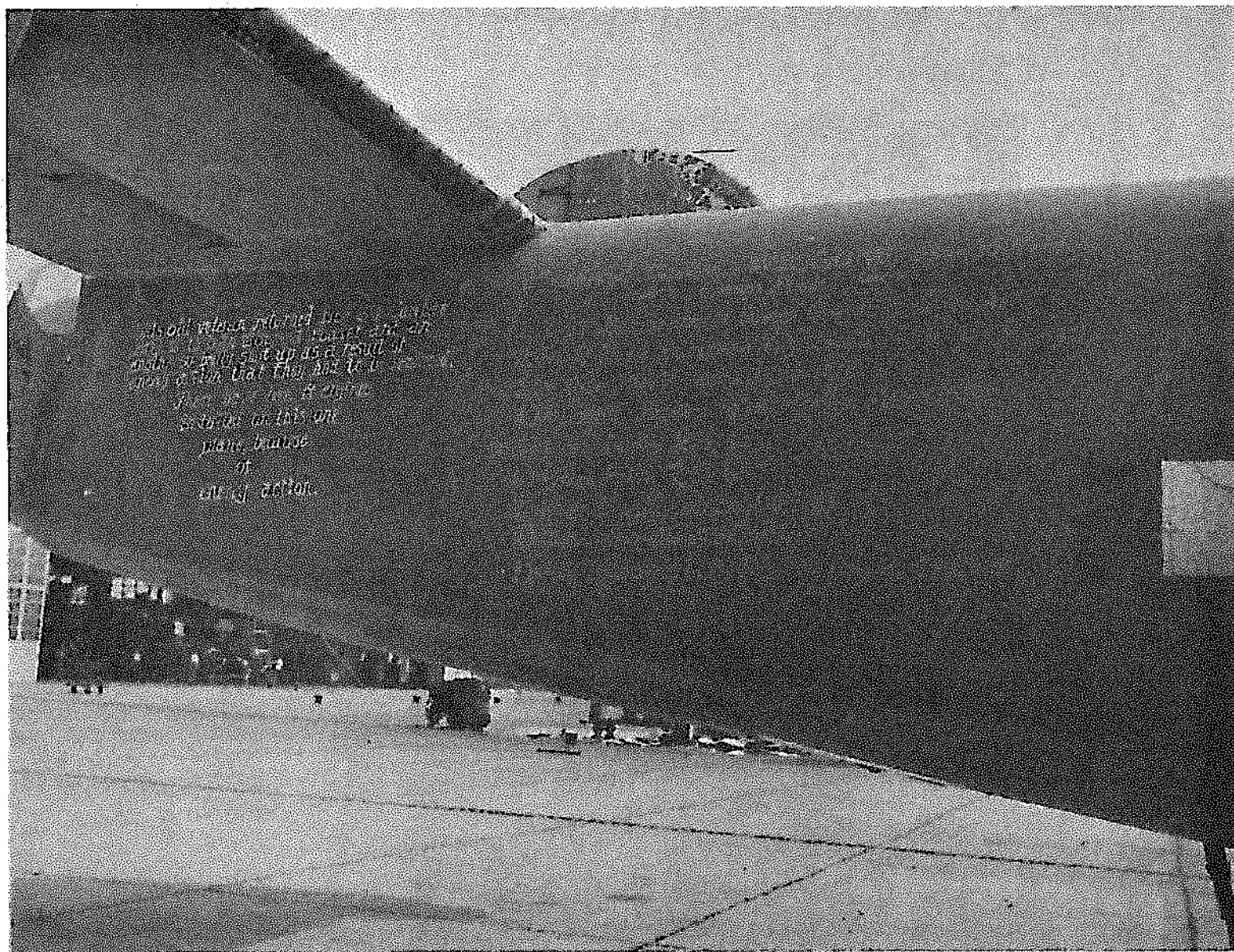
Students use a heavy duty winch to mount an airplane engine in the nacelle of a B-24 Liberator.



Installation of engine and nacelle to the airplane was part of the airplane inspection branch training on the floor of Hangar No. 4.



As part of the graduation field test trainees were required to replace a landing gear under simulated war-time conditions.



The war record written on the fuselage of the "Blue Streak" after 110 missions. A number of B-24's, in Class 26 status, were used to instruct students at the Technical School.



Col. William E. Hanlon, Commanding Officer of the Basic Training Center at Keesler Field, 1943.

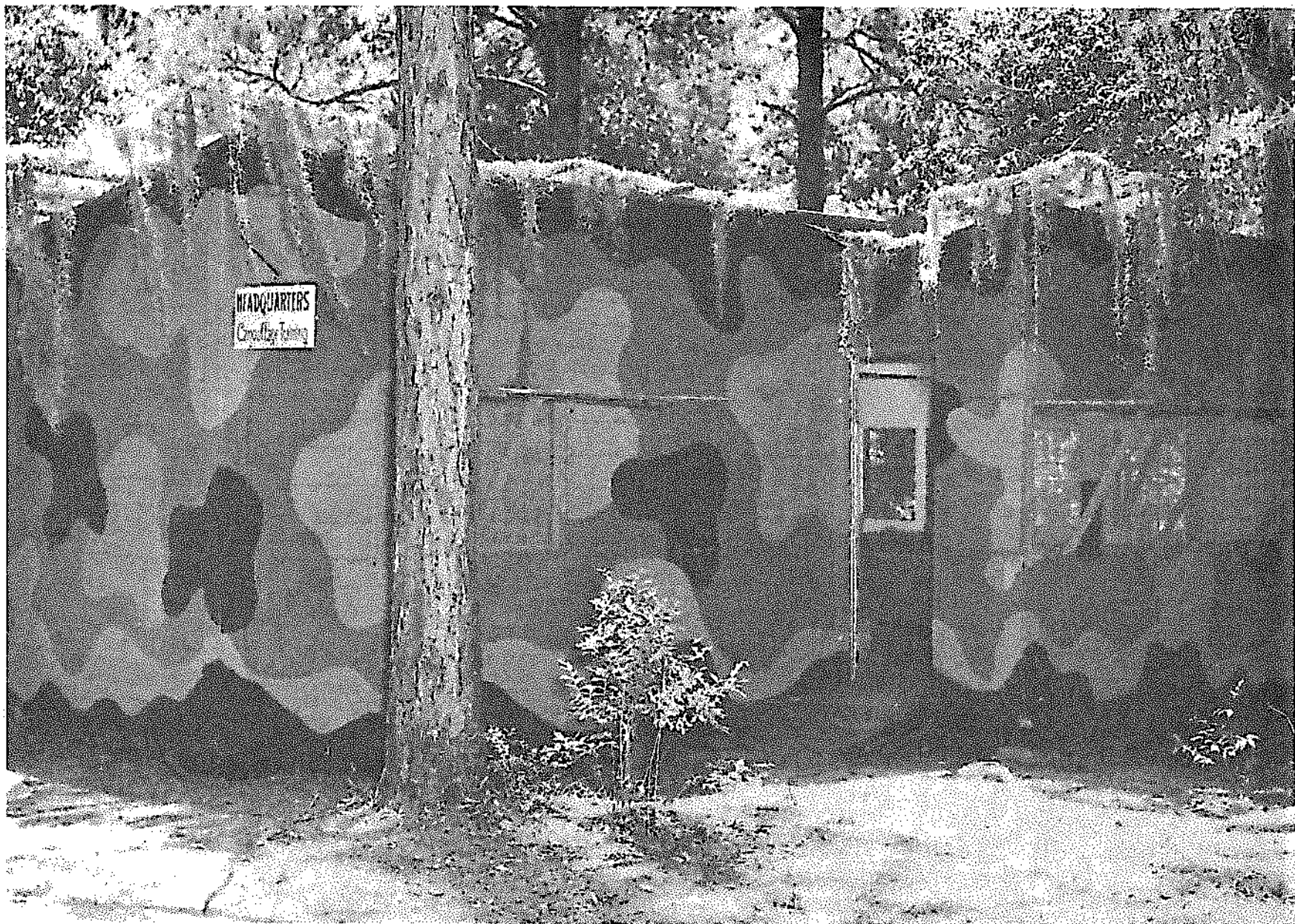


Torrential rains followed by freezing temperatures caused many hardships for Keesler Field personnel during WW II. Courtesy Richard E. Florea

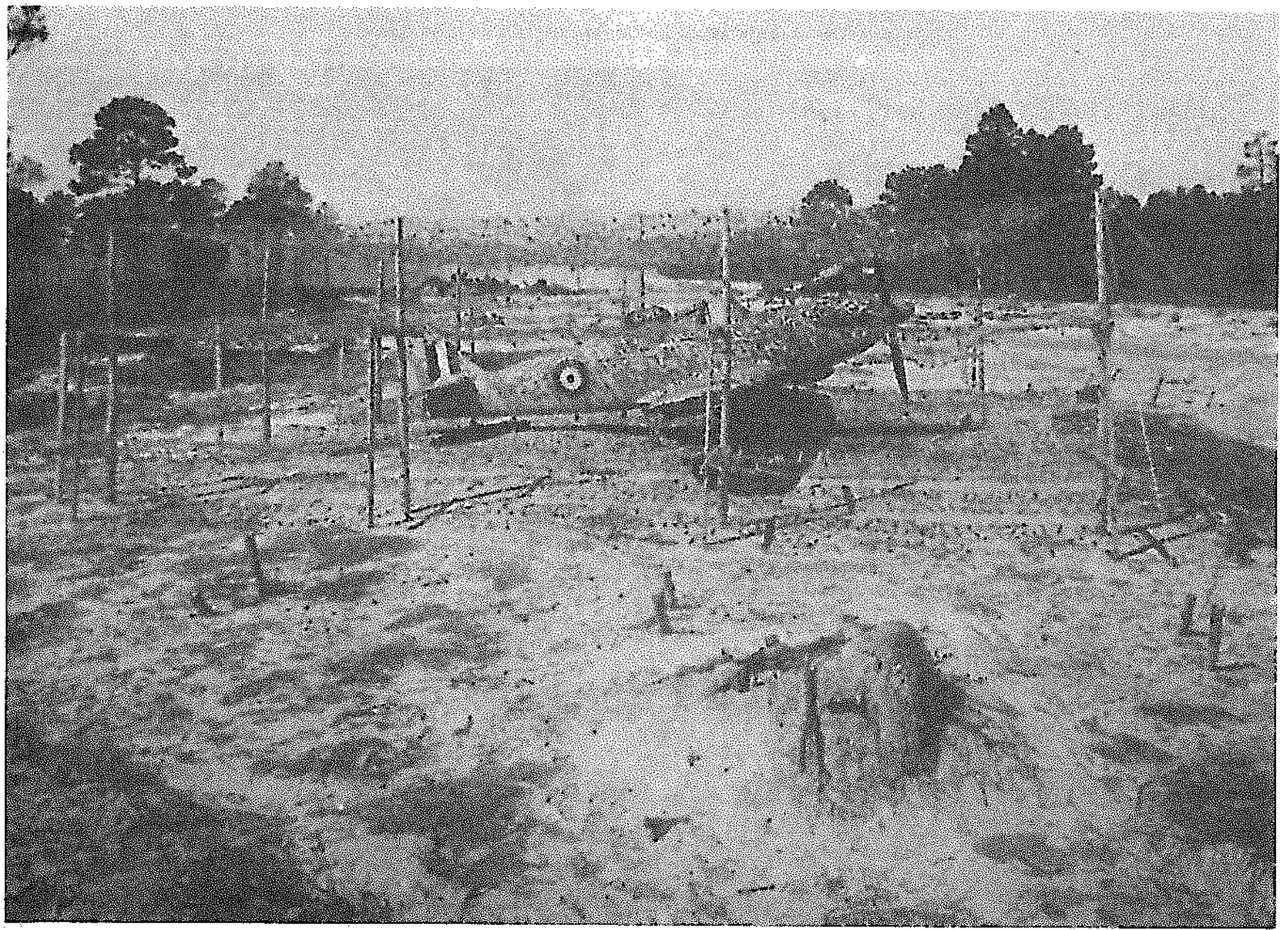




Physical training at Keesler's Basic Training Center.



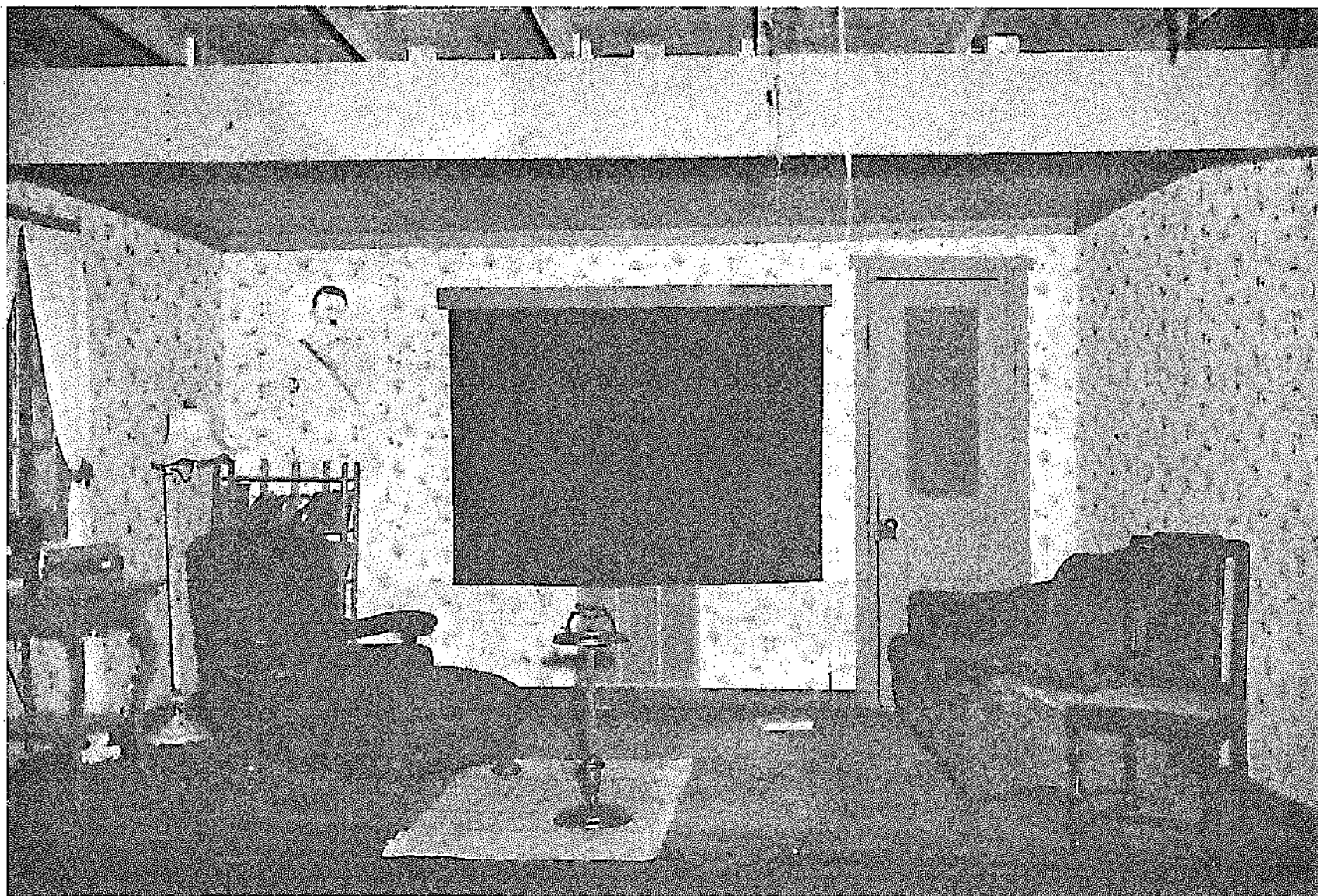
The headquarters building of the Keesler Field camouflage training area in 1943.



Aircraft area in the camouflage training site.



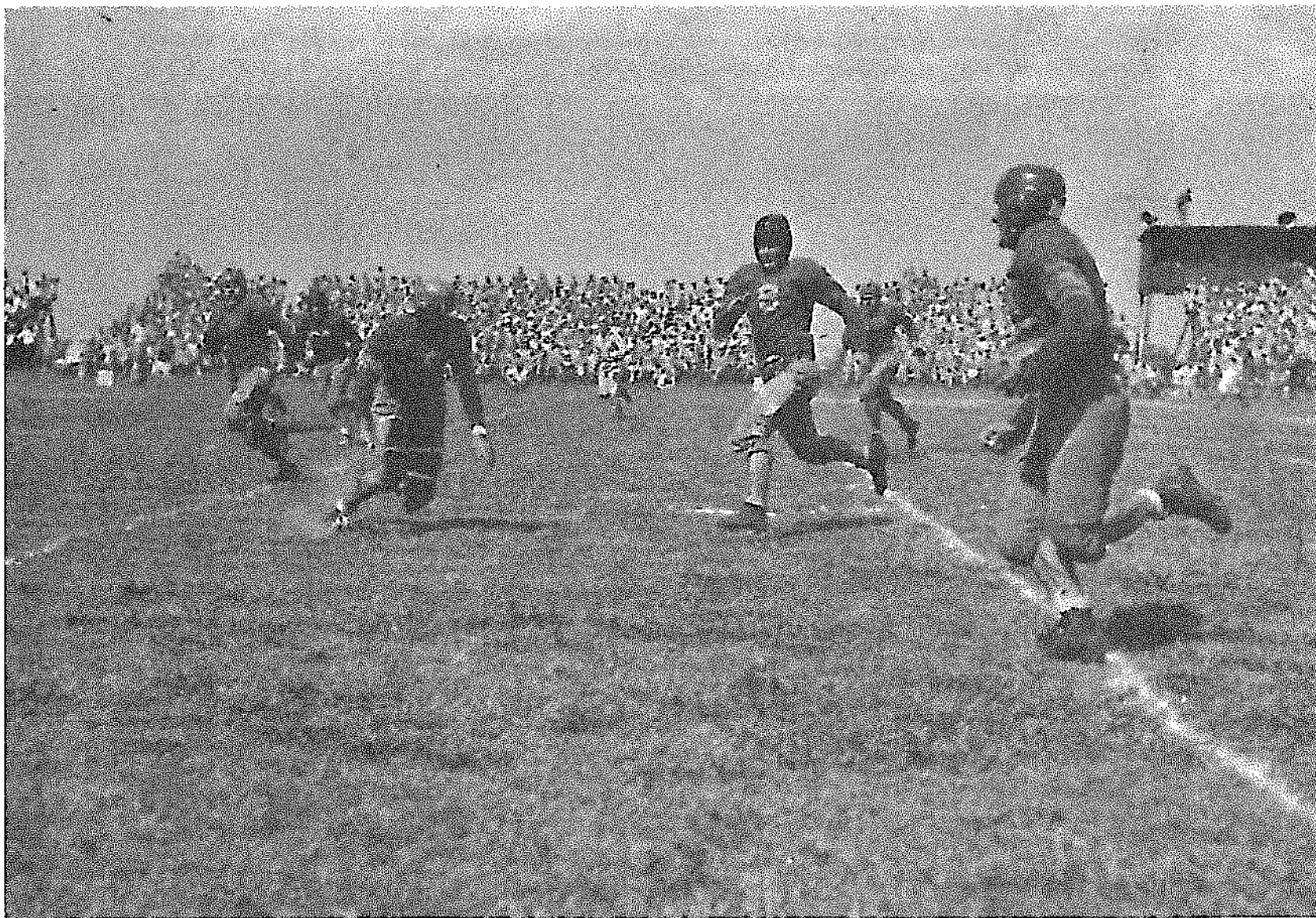
This dummy plane was used in the camouflage area to teach the use of decoys.



Late in 1944, a replica of a German farmhouse was built in the camouflage training area of the Basic Training Center. Several "booby traps" were placed in the room and trainees were instructed to find them. The curtains on the back wall covered a motion picture screen on which was projected a film about booby traps. The film completed the two-hour lecture-demonstration period presented during the advanced basic training course.



A familiar sight in 1945 was a rocket assisted take-off of an OA-10A Air-Sea Rescue plane.



2nd Lt Earl Graves (Keesler Field) is about to take a player of the Algiers, Louisiana Naval Base team during the opening game on 24 September 1944. In the background are the north stands and the press box from which a play-by-play description of each game at Keesler Field was broadcast.



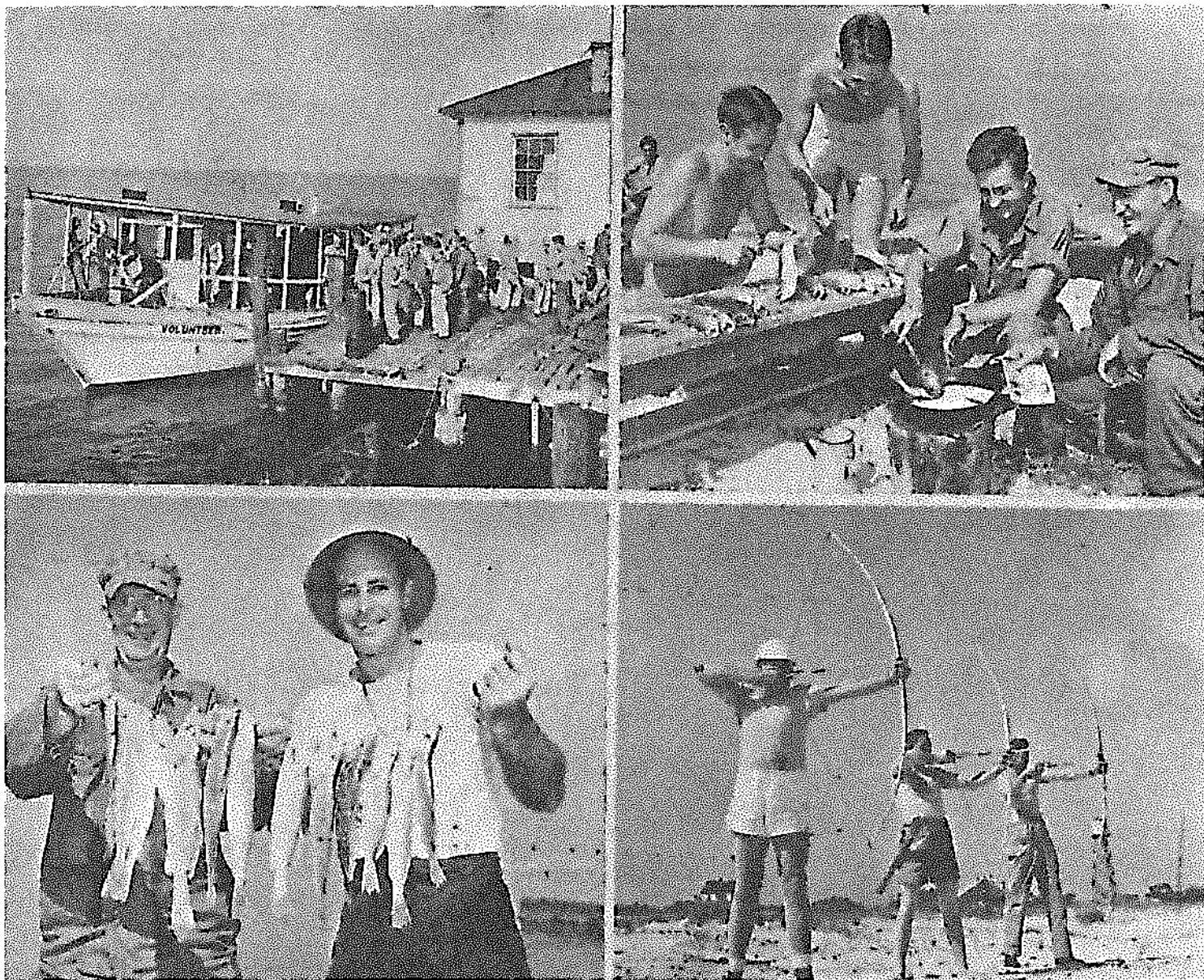
Dancer Ann Miller was one of the many top name performers to entertain Keesler soldiers.



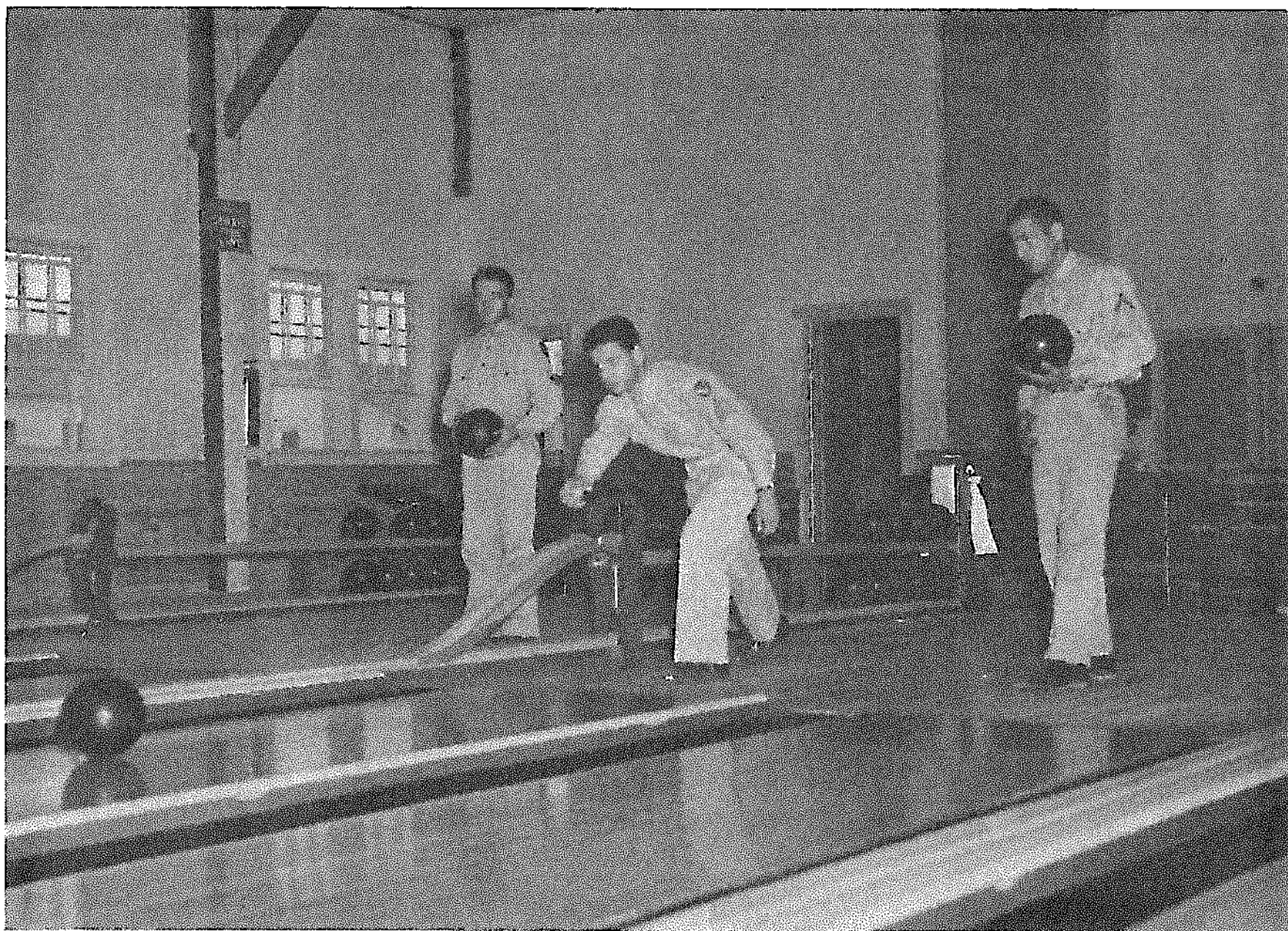
World's heavyweight boxing champion, Joe Louis (second from right), visited Keesler Hospital patients in 1943.



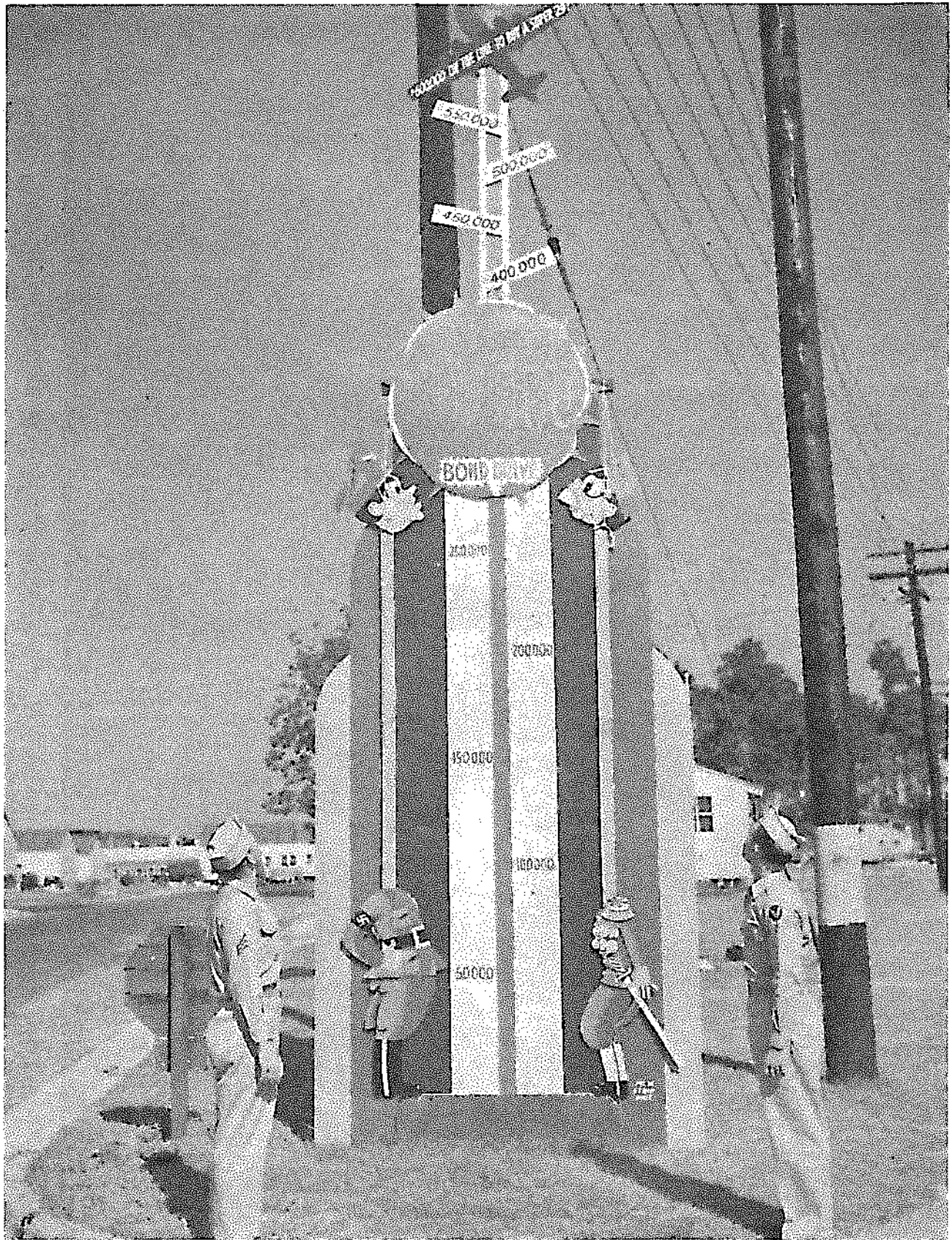
An aerial view of Ship Island two years before it opened as a recreational facility. The structure was the Quarantine Station that later became the recreational center for Keesler personnel.



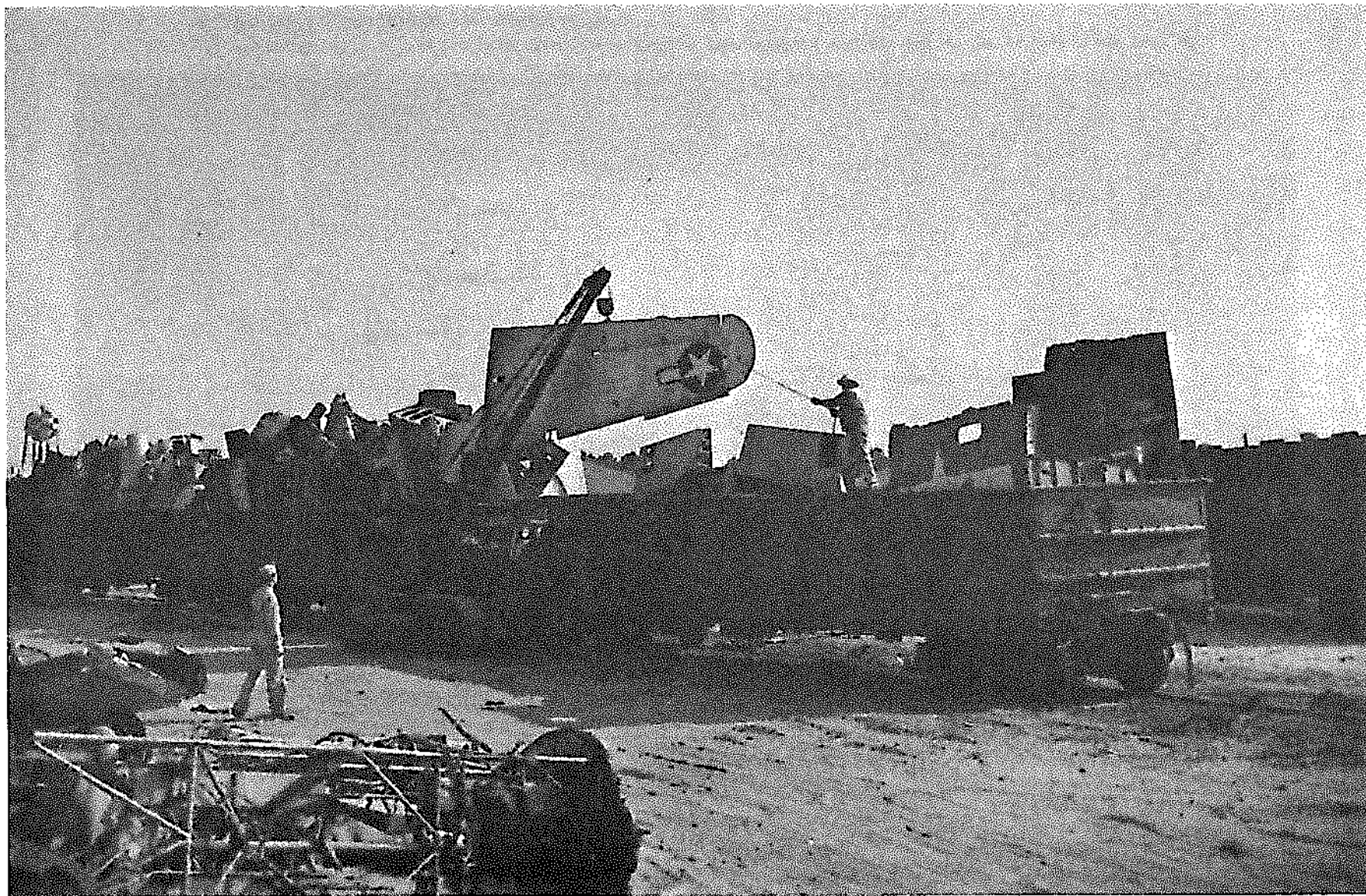
Fishing was the favorite sport at Keesler's Ship Island recreation Center although swimming and other outdoor activities had their ardent devotees.



Keesler's first bowling alley opened in 1943.



Keesler Field's Fifth War Bond Drive closed on 31 July 1944. Although the original quota was \$300,000, the amount subscribed was well over \$1,300,000. The Personal Affairs department directed the campaign and used this meter to measure the war bond purchases by Keesler personnel.



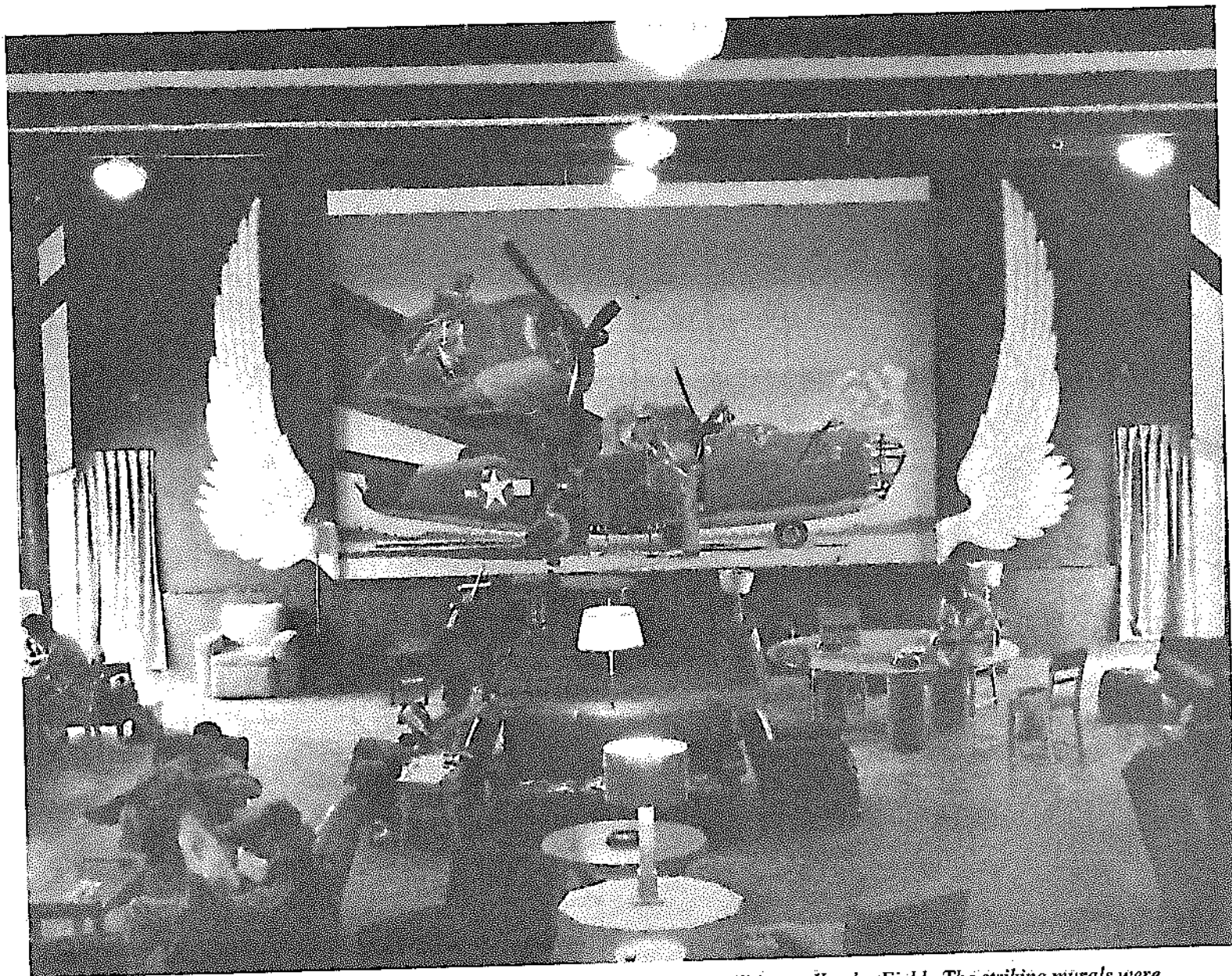
Throughout the war years, a consistent effort was maintained at Keesler Field to salvage all possible material. In one week, during the spring of 1945, eight railway cars were loaded with reclaimed materials. Three of these cars contained scrap aluminum.



An orientation map of the European and Mediterranean War theaters was painted on the waiting room wall of Keesler Field's classification interviewing section.



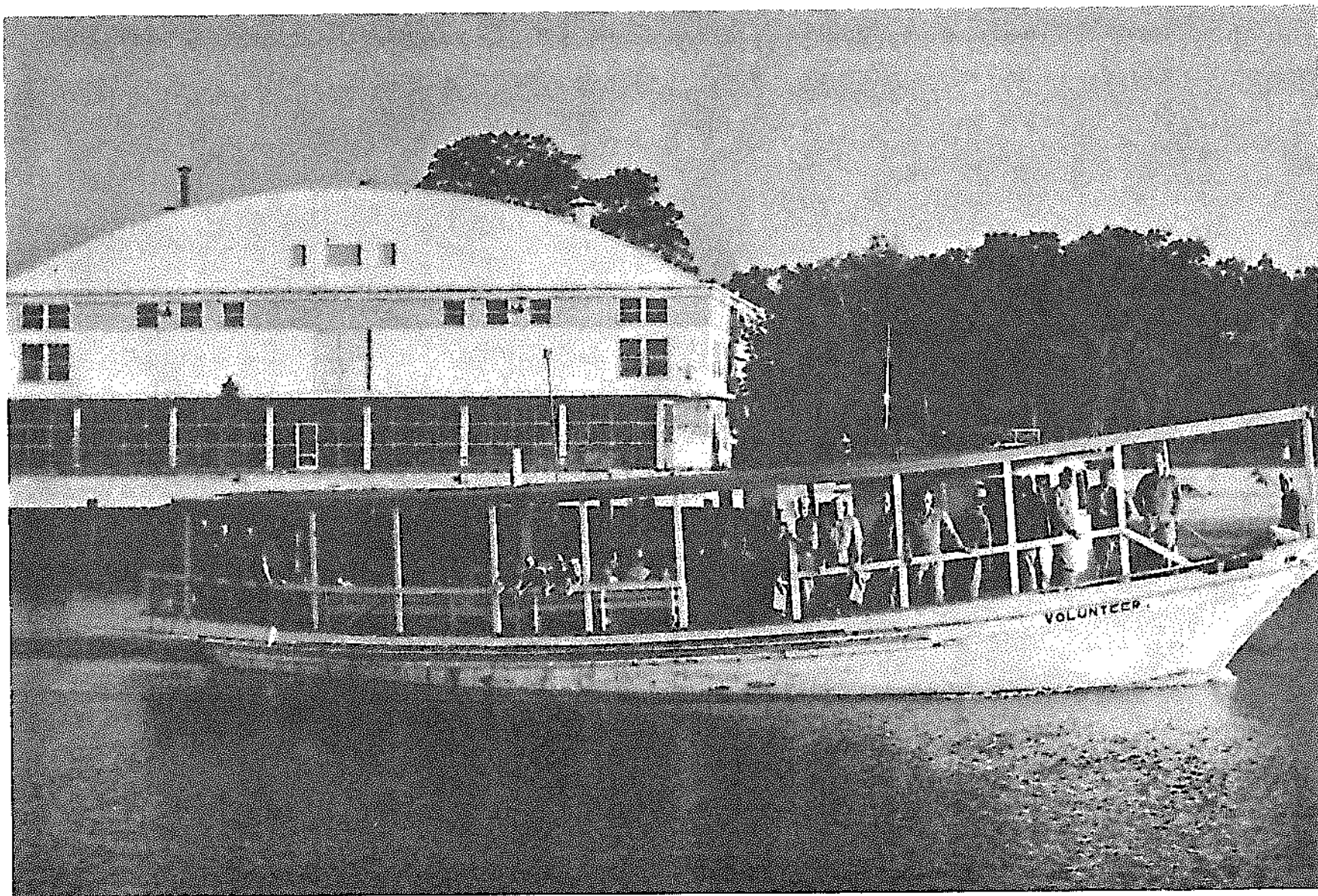
The amount of paper salvaged per week increased during the spring of 1945. Close attention was paid by all squadron commanders to the salvage operations of their units.



An example of the "soldier art" found in many of the recreational facilities on Keesler Field. The striking murals were painted by talented Keesler soldiers.



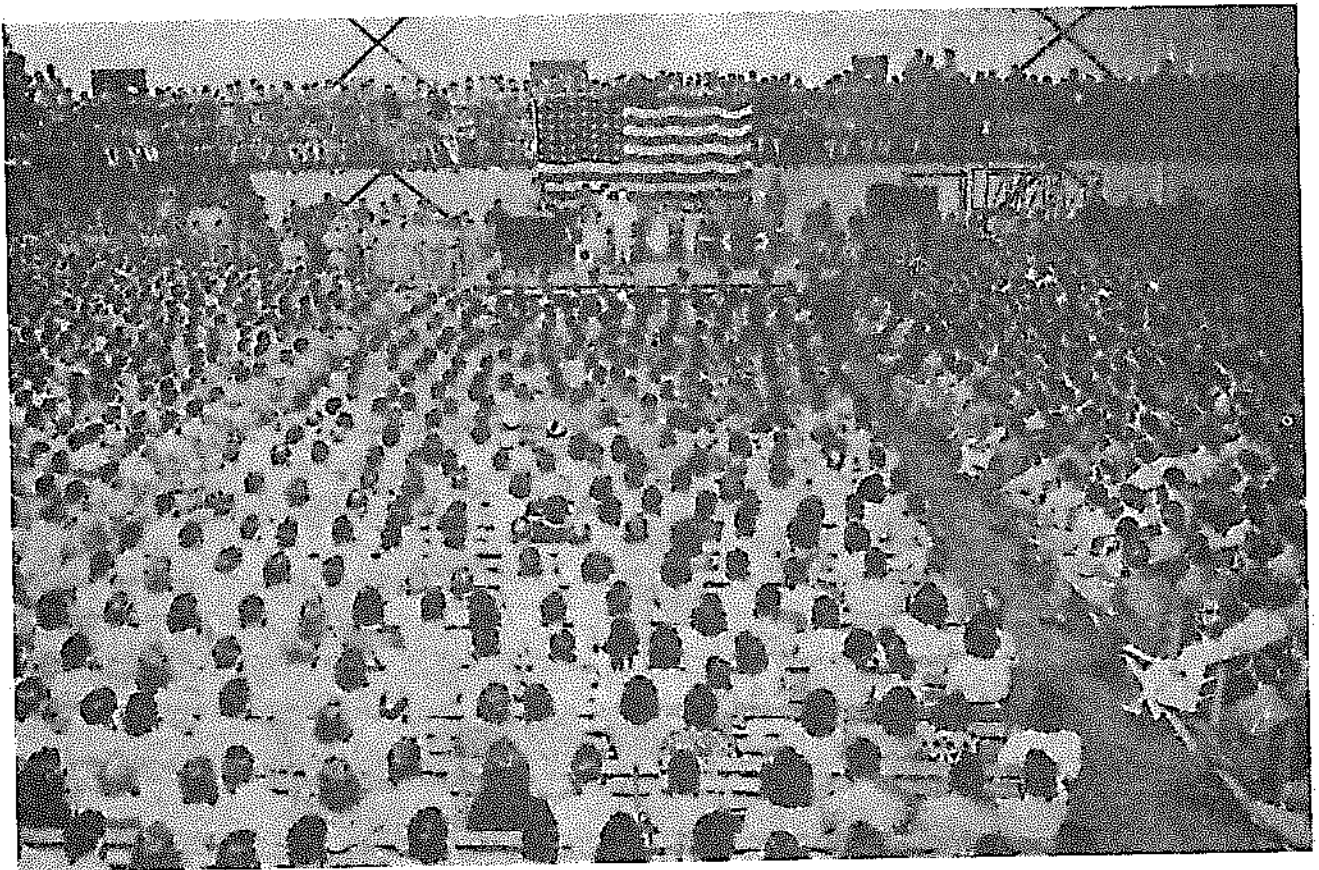
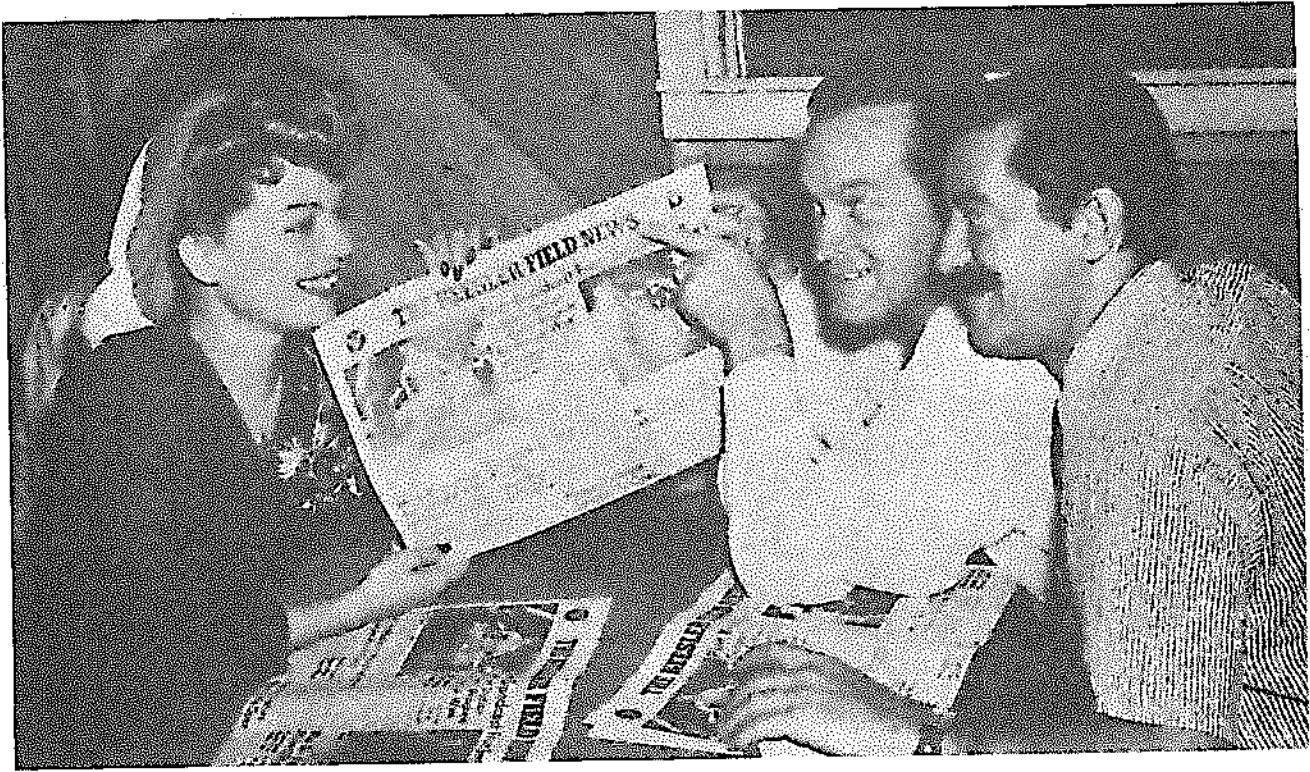
On 18 March 1945, the "Army Hour" broadcasted a simulated air-sea rescue operation. The parachute drop of the airborne lifeboat, "Yalta," in the Mississippi Sound was described during a nationwide broadcast over the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) network.



On 14 August 1944, a new recreational center was opened for use by the military personnel of Keesler Field. It was located on Ship Island, in the Gulf of Mexico, approximately 12 miles from Biloxi. The "Volunteer," a charter boat, shuttled military personnel from Biloxi to the island.



Probably the most widely known show of local origin was the Keesler radio program "Free for All." The musical extravaganza was carried over WWL, New Orleans, from the stage of Theatre 2 (later Andrews Theatre). Cpl Jack Pollack conducted the base band, and SSgt Don Barber was the announcer.



On 20 May 1942, Bob Hope, Jerry Colona, and Frances Langford gave a show before 10,000 men in a Keesler Field hangar.



At no time in the history of Keesler Field was an athletic program carried on more extensively than during the first six months of 1945. The WAC softball team competed not only in a women's softball league but also played against male teams.



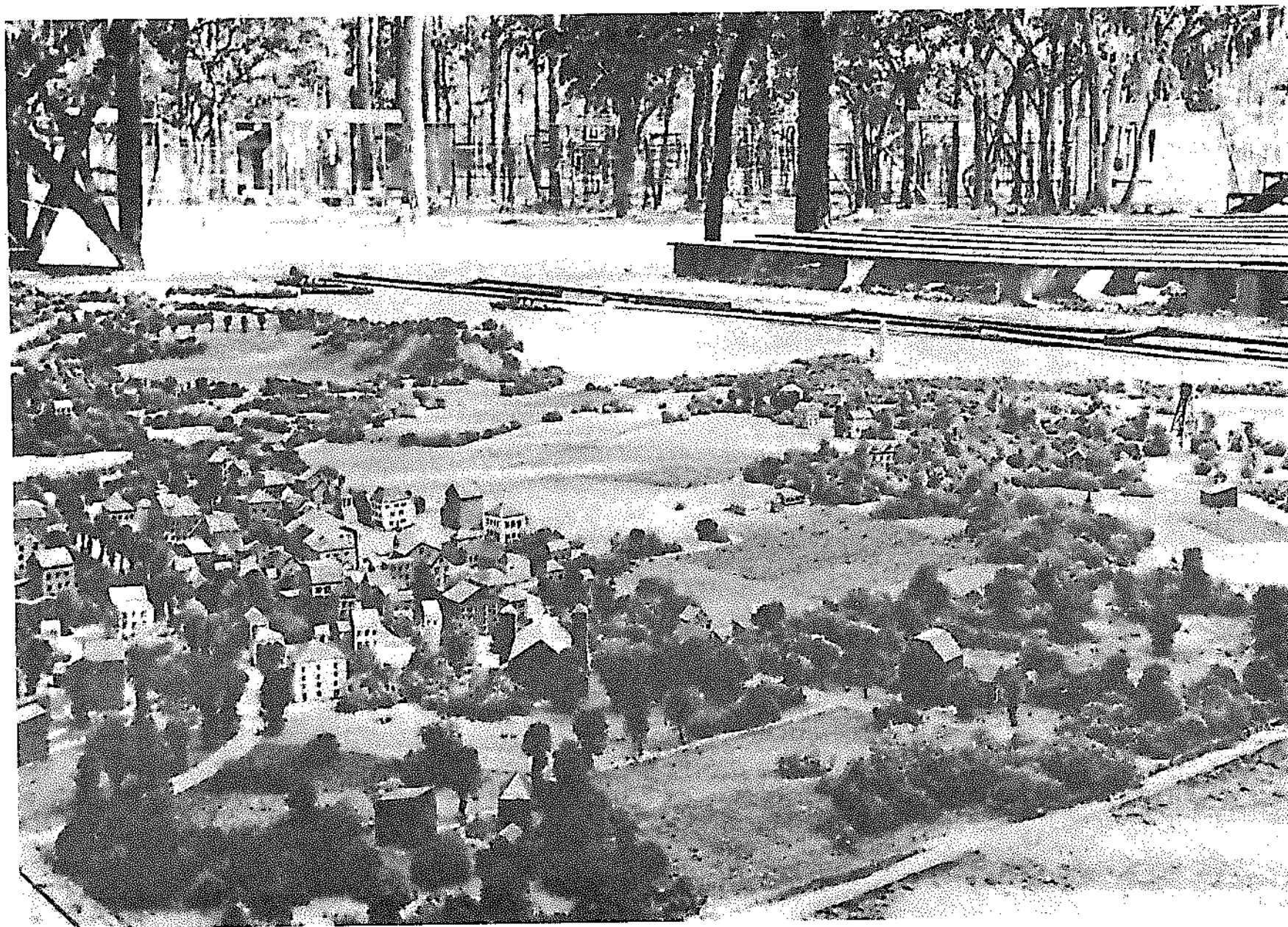
The training of air crews in air-sea rescue operations began at Keesler Field on 1 April 1944. On 31 July 1944 the 2121st Army Air Force Base Unit, which had been activated at Keesler Field on 7 April 1944 was deactivated, and the 3704th Army Air Forces Base Unit became responsible for both air and marine training by the Emergency Rescue School. A sign erected in front of Hangar No. 1 recorded the number of men who were rescued overseas by the two Emergency Squadrons.



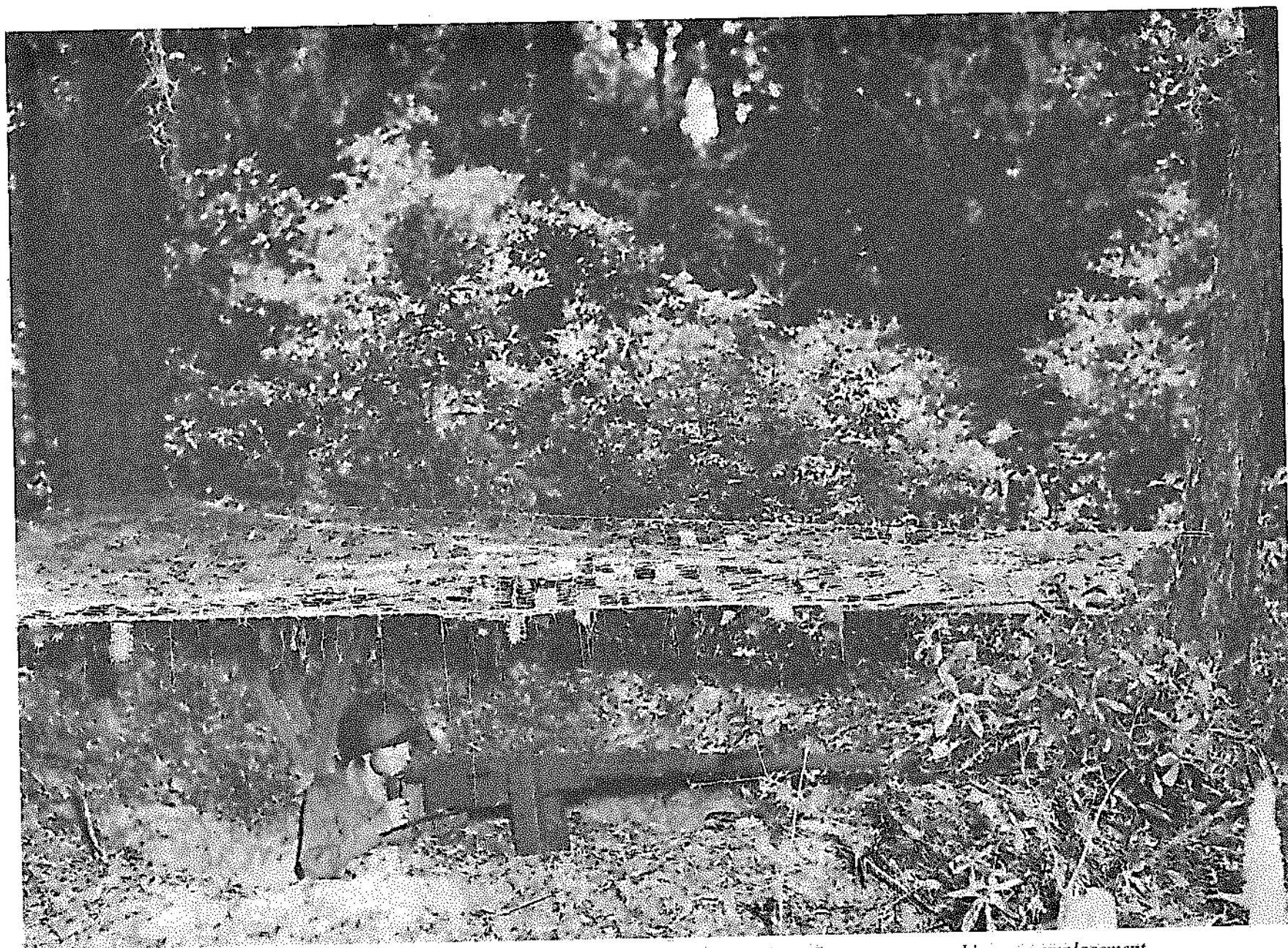
A simulated rescue of three standard crewmen in a lifeboat. During 1945, the Consolidated OA-10A, based at the Air-Sea Rescue School at Keesler Field, conducted training flights almost daily over the Gulf of Mexico.



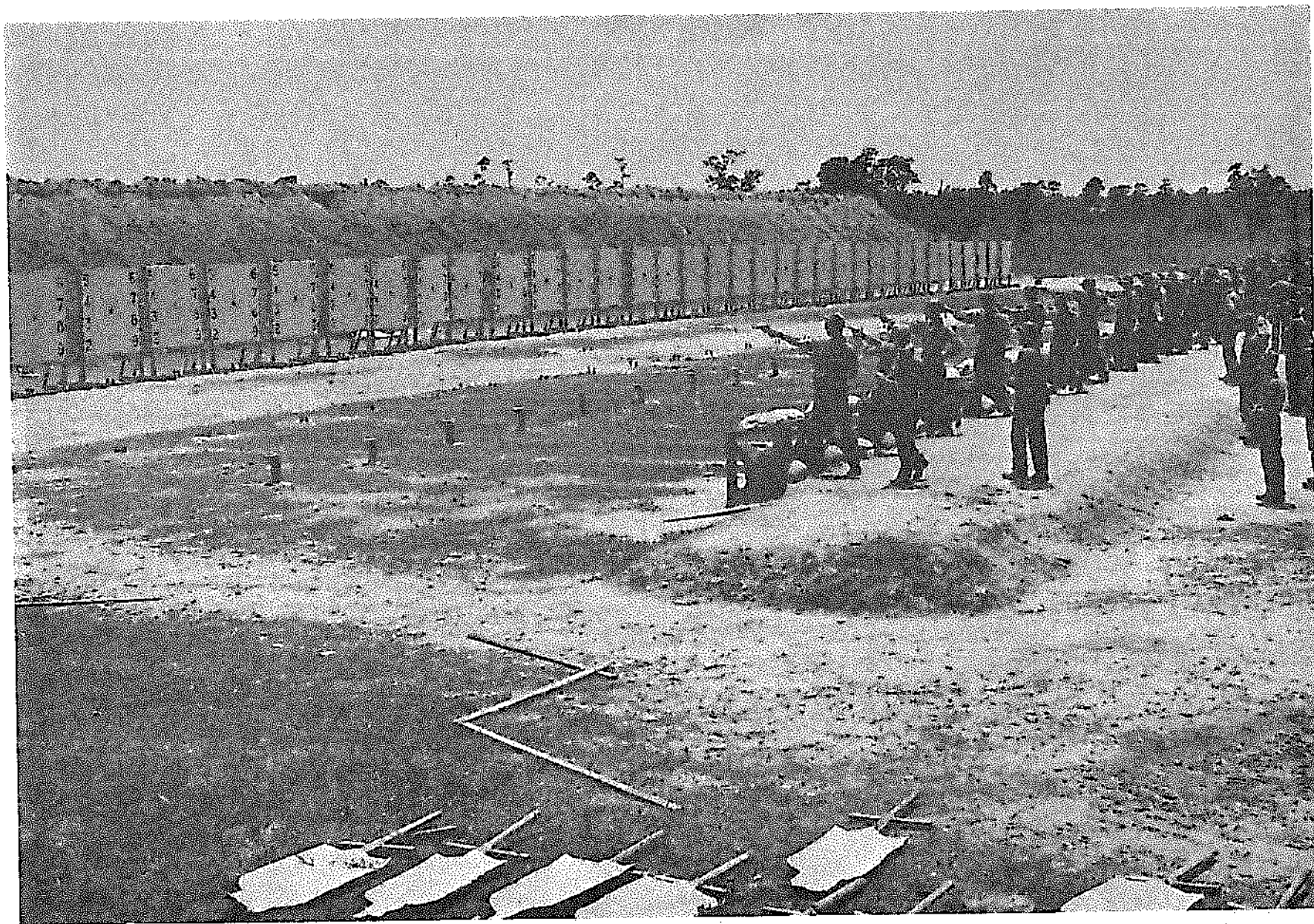
In 1943, troops performed gas mask drills in the chemical warfare instruction area of Keesler Field.



A terrain model was used in 1944 as part of camouflage training at Keesler.



One form of concealment taught in the camouflage area was the cantilever flat-top over a machine-gun emplacement.



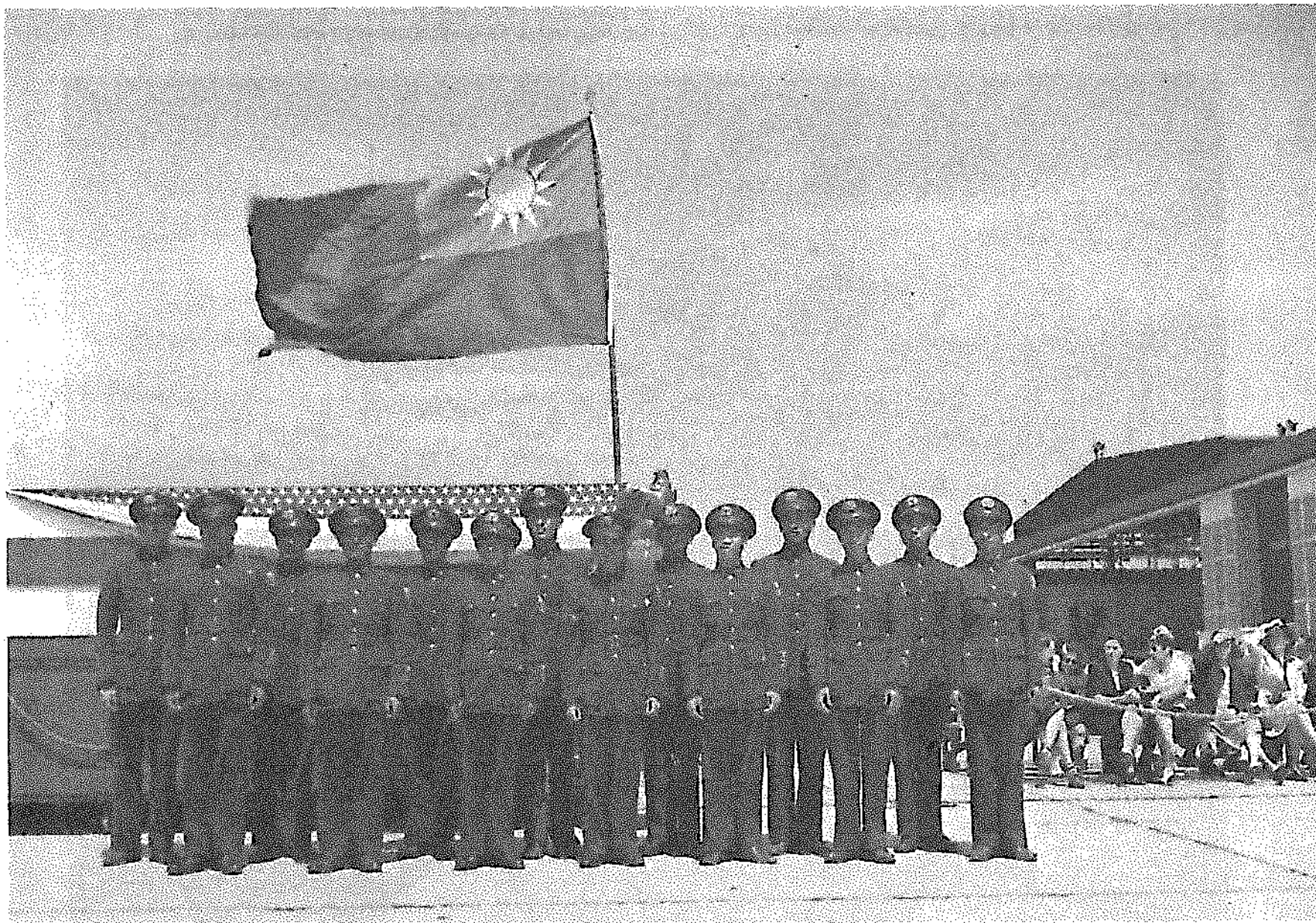
Basic training recruits qualified with the Colt .45 on the pistol range.



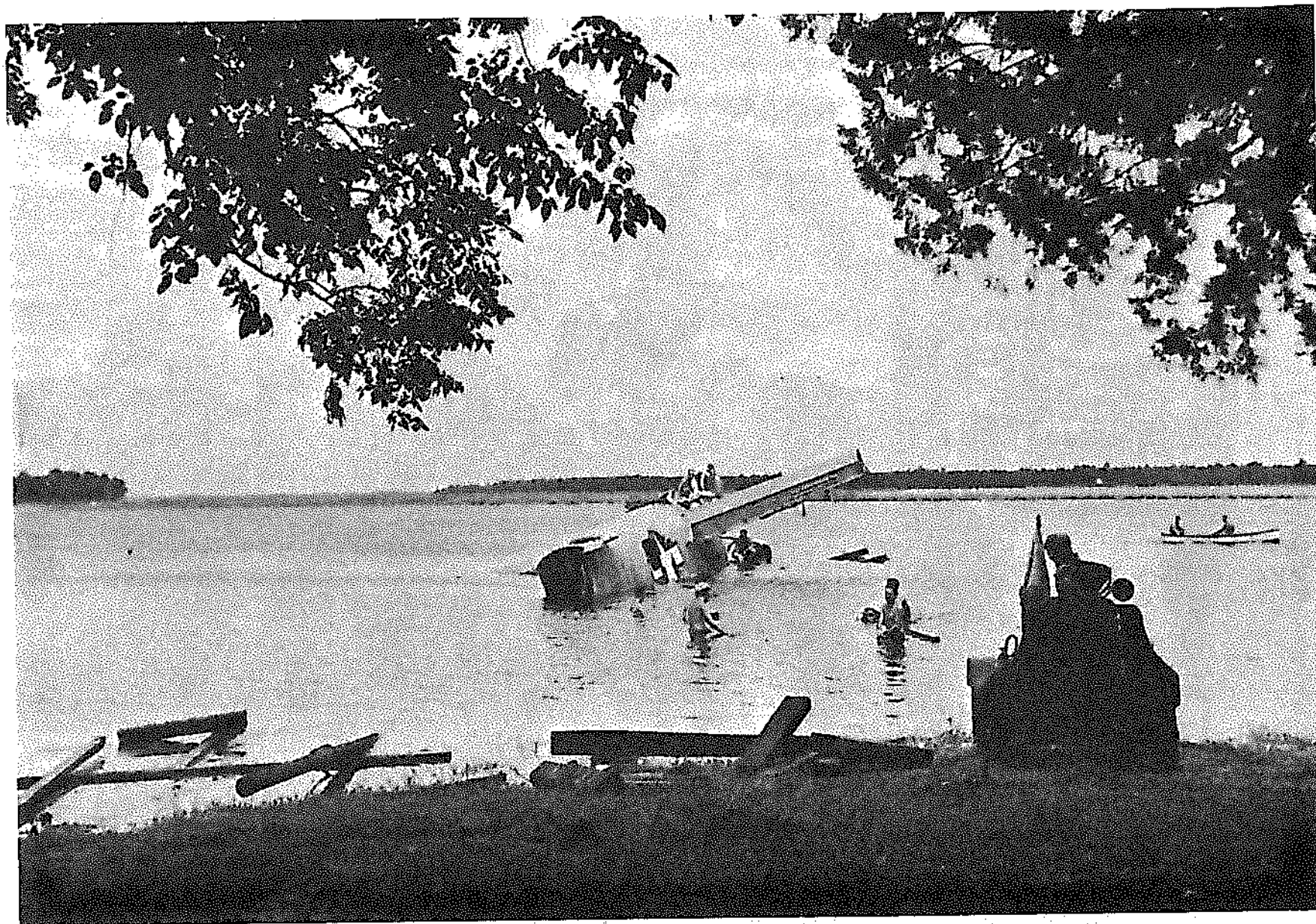
Those classes of the Basic Training Center with outstanding training records received special recognition. A neat and well kept appearance of the section area was especially noted. Col Goolrick encouraged the improvement of section areas because he believed the physical appearance of a station played an important part in the morale of its troops.



A Keesler Field recruit marches with full pack in 1943 basic training.



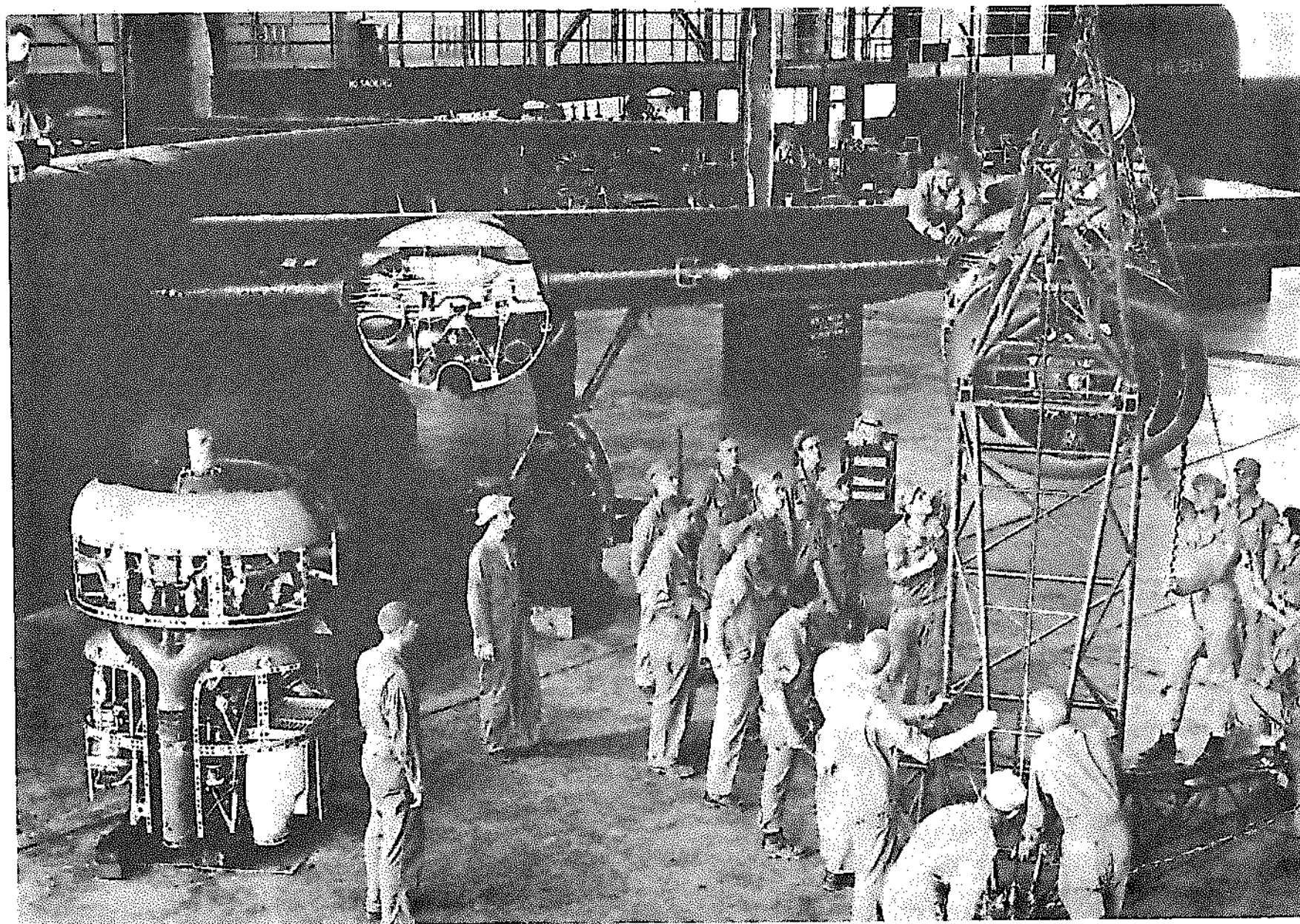
The first group of Chinese officers graduated at the Technical School on 6 April 1944, with a class average of 3.75.



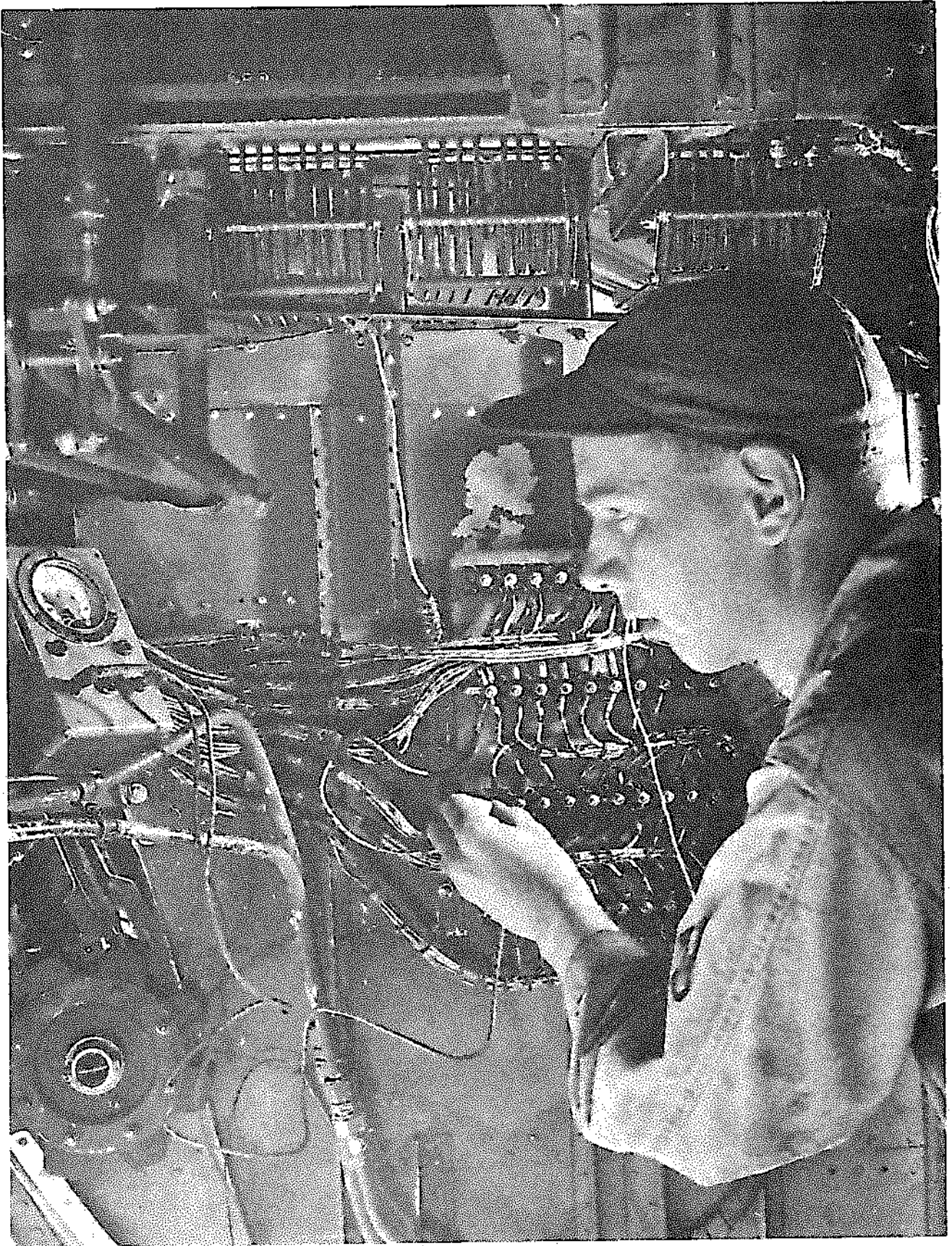
The flight procedures branch of the Technical School trained mechanics in aircraft ditching procedures with the hulk of a B-24 ditched in the Back Bay of Biloxi.



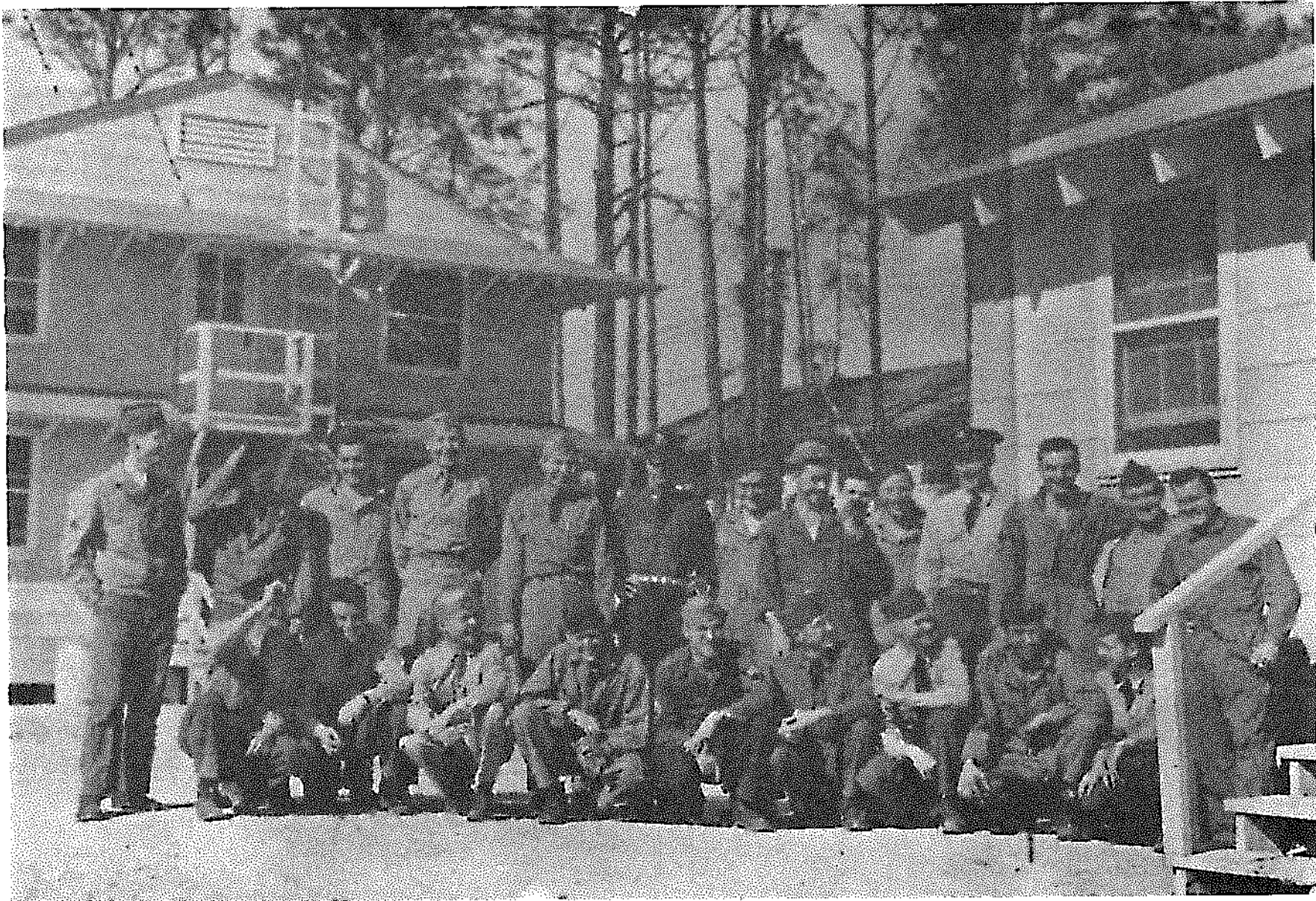
Students in the Graduation Field test training phase change an engine on a single-engine fighter plane under simulated war-time conditions.



Students remove complete engines from the airplanes as part of their training in Inspection Branch II.



Deep inside a B-24 bomber, a mechanic trainee troubleshoots the plane's electrical system.



Squadron officers and permanent party soldiers pose informally outside a barracks in a squadron area. The many uniform and fatigue dress combinations are evident in this early Keesler Field photo. Courtesy Richard E. Florea



Private Douglas Franklin of upstate New York, who was later killed in action in the European Theatre of Operations, sits on his cot in an open bay barracks. Although they were better than tents, the first Keesler wartime barracks were austere. The interiors had unfinished and unpainted walls, exposed studs, book shelving, oiled pine floors and an iron cot for each man. Because footlockers had not yet been issued to the soldiers, they stored their clothes and personal belongings in a barracks bag that was tied against the wall.

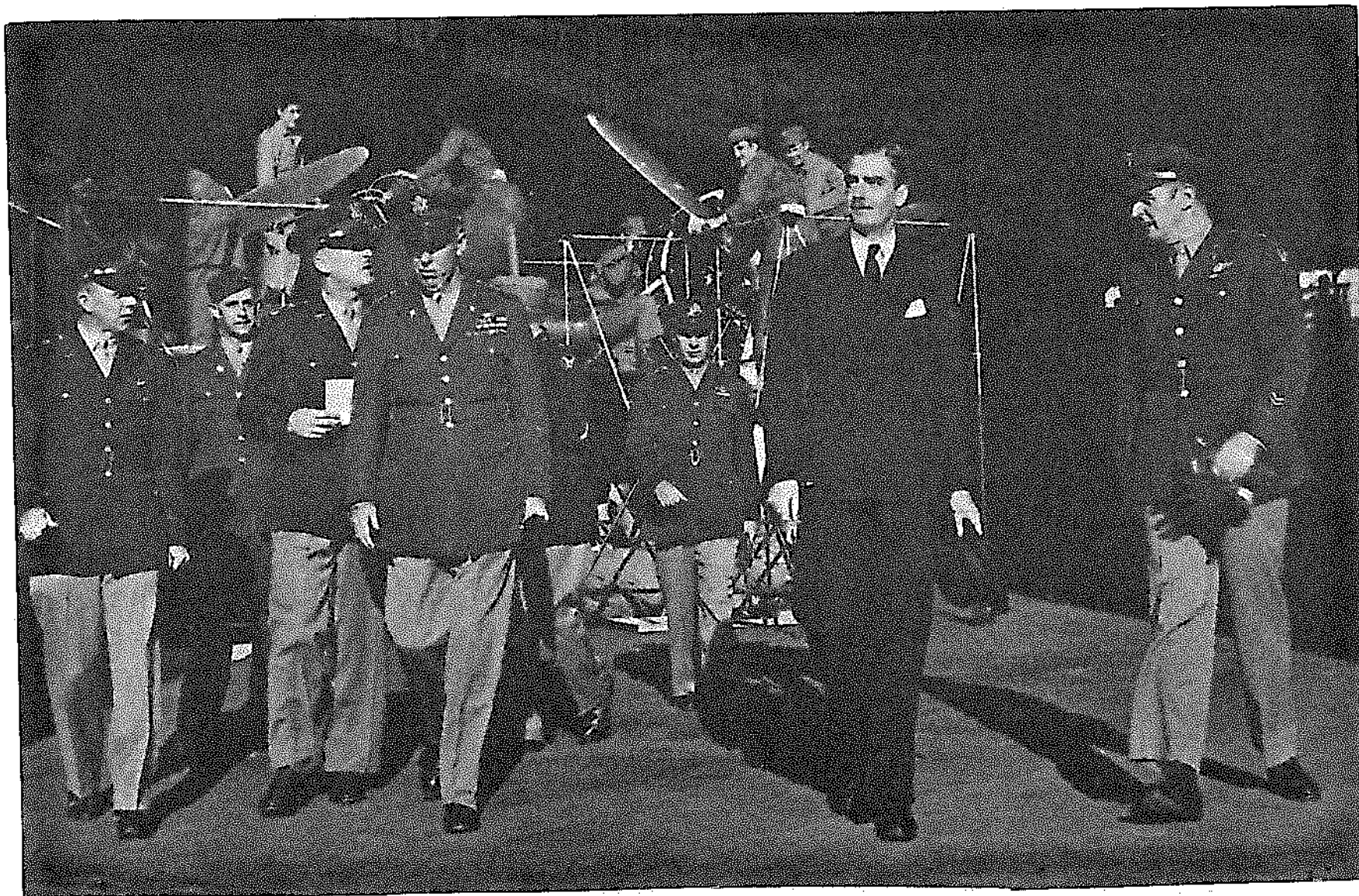
Louis A. Rotundo photo



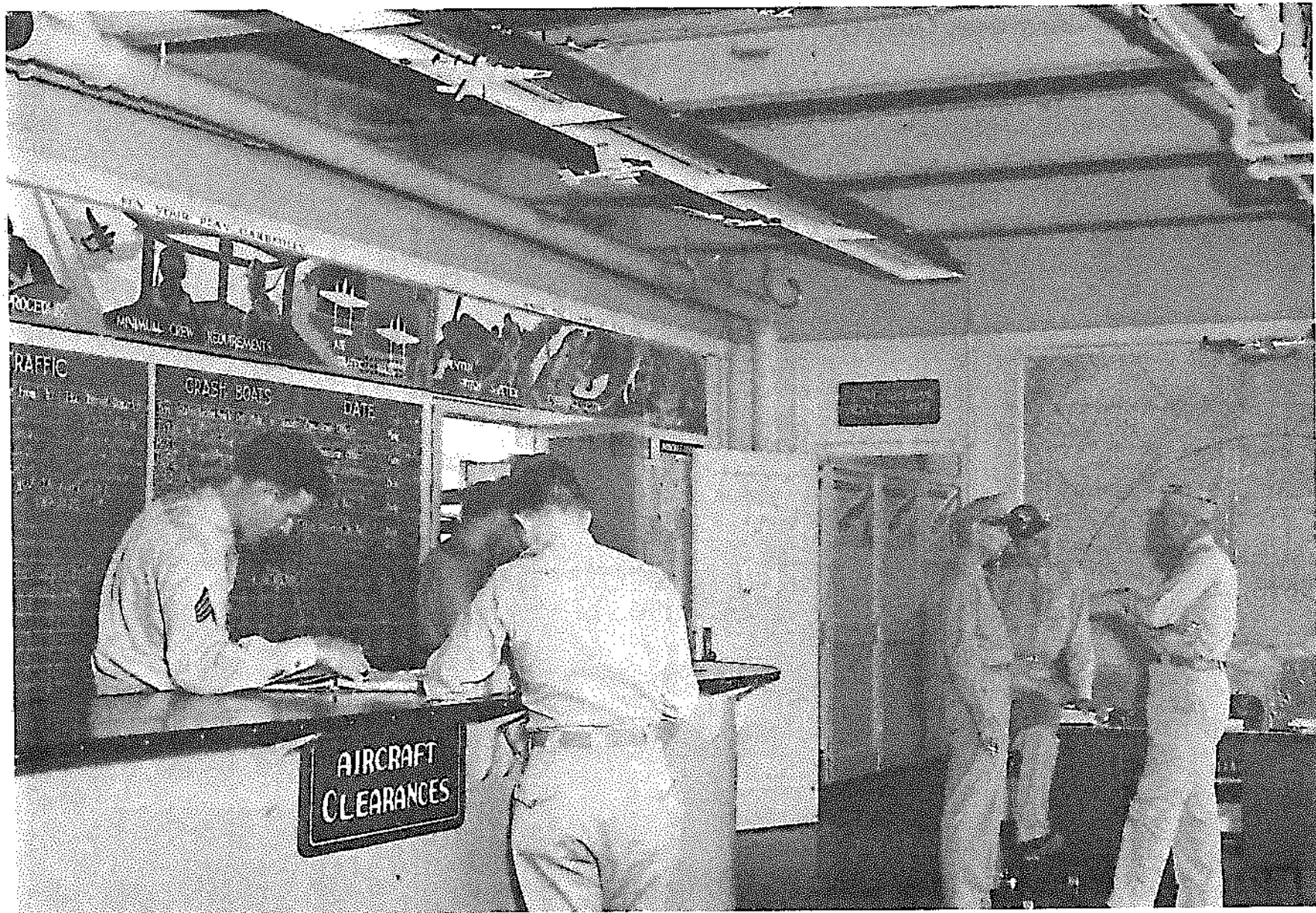
The base flagpole marked the site of the newly constructed Keesler Field Headquarters in 1941. The structure was one of the first to be completed on the base.



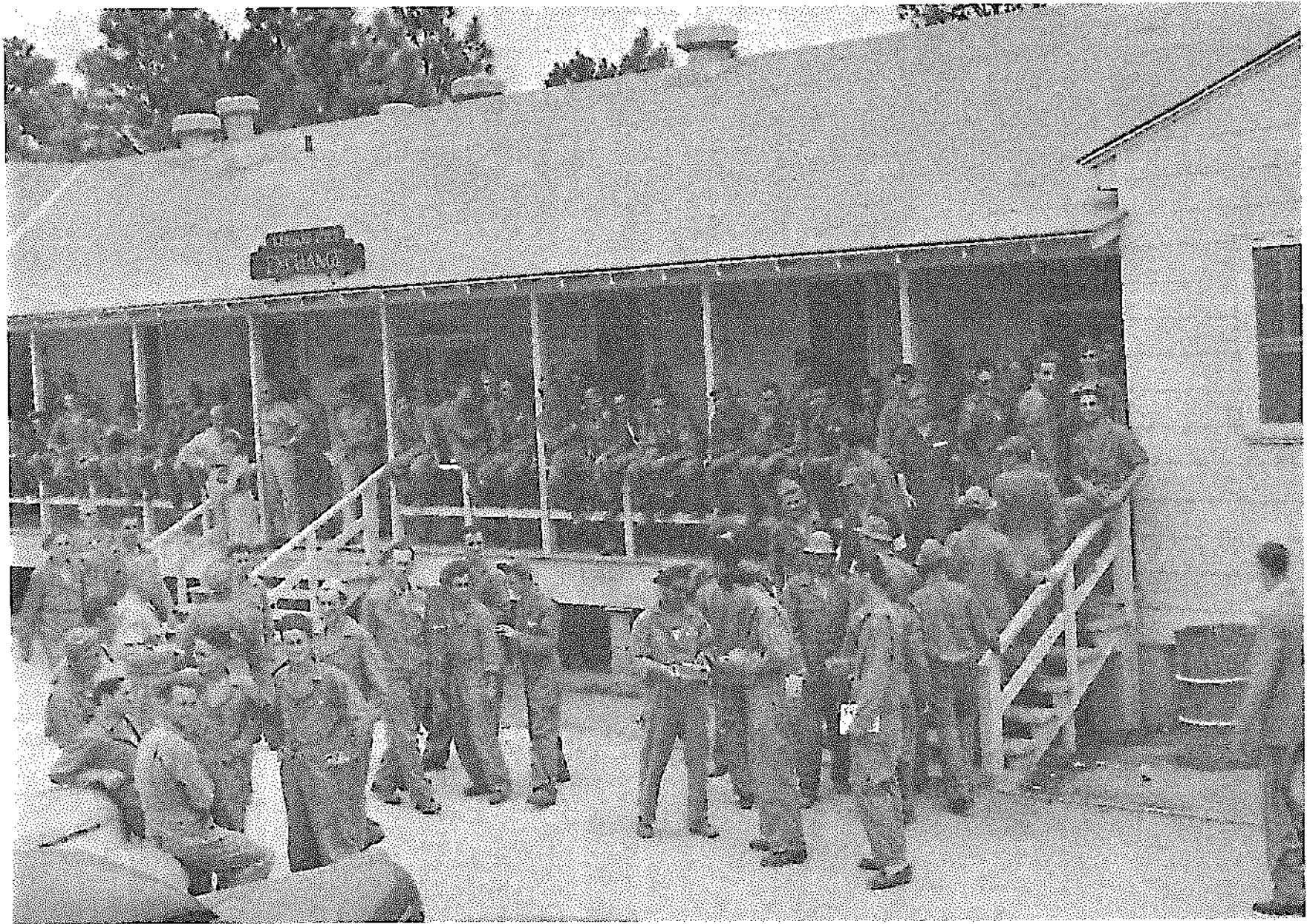
Shown with their sentry dogs are, left to right, Cpl Carl Ellison, Trainer, and Shep; Cpl Arch Ingrahm, with Nip; SSgt William Moore, with Maki; and Sgt Roger P. Loupe, with Duke. Standing at the rear is Capt Morris E. Moore, Station Veterinarian. The dogs, donated by private owners, were used on Keesler guard details during WW II.



The most notable visit to Keesler occurred on 23 March 1943, when General George C. Marshall, US Chief of Staff; Mr Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary; and Field Marshall Sir John Dill, inspected training operations. Maj Gen Jacob E. Fickel, Commander of the Third District, AAFTTC, and Col Goolrick, Commanding Officer of Keesler, were on hand to greet the dignitaries.



The flight dispatcher's desk cleared local and cross-country flights and controlled all aerial operations at Keesler Field.



Exterior of the Keesler Field Main Exchange prior to its renovation in July 1943.