

# SASEBO AND NAGA

14 July 1969—

As the SPENCER made way through Omura Bay enroute to Sasebo, a cool breeze carrying the smell of trees and grass greeted a crew tired from weeks of patrolling the hot, humid coast of Viet Nam.

Sasebo was to be a working port, and after the fire in the seabag locker the second day, no one had any doubts about that. Nevertheless, the crew did get off the ship once in a while; enough to carry home some vivid memories of Japan.

The shipyard itself was interesting. Before every working day the Japanese laborers did calisthenics to music. One morning, in the middle of colors ceremonies, a nearby loudspeaker boomed out



"March of the Wooden Soldiers". Keeping a straight face was impossible.

Not more than a hundred yards from our stern, the Mobil Pegasus, a huge supertanker well over a thousand feet long, was under construction. The bow of this new ship rose well above the Spencer's mast!

Sasebo lies on the northern end of Omura Bay and is surrounded by steeply rising hills. Looking down from the top, one is impressed by the sheer beauty of the landscape, the serenity, the peacefulness.

The city is quite modern. There are buildings of several stories and the traffic is as heavy as any city stateside. The downtown theaters often feature American movies. It is a little shocking at first to see on the billboards John Wayne portrayed with Japanese features.

In the heart of the city is a large, modern shopping mall. Not far away crowds mill through the open air market which offers everything from egg soup to leechy nuts.



Although many Japanese in the downtown area speak English, language was a problem at times. In one restaurant a frustrated sailor at wit's end climbed into the showcase to point out the artificial display of the meal he had in mind.

