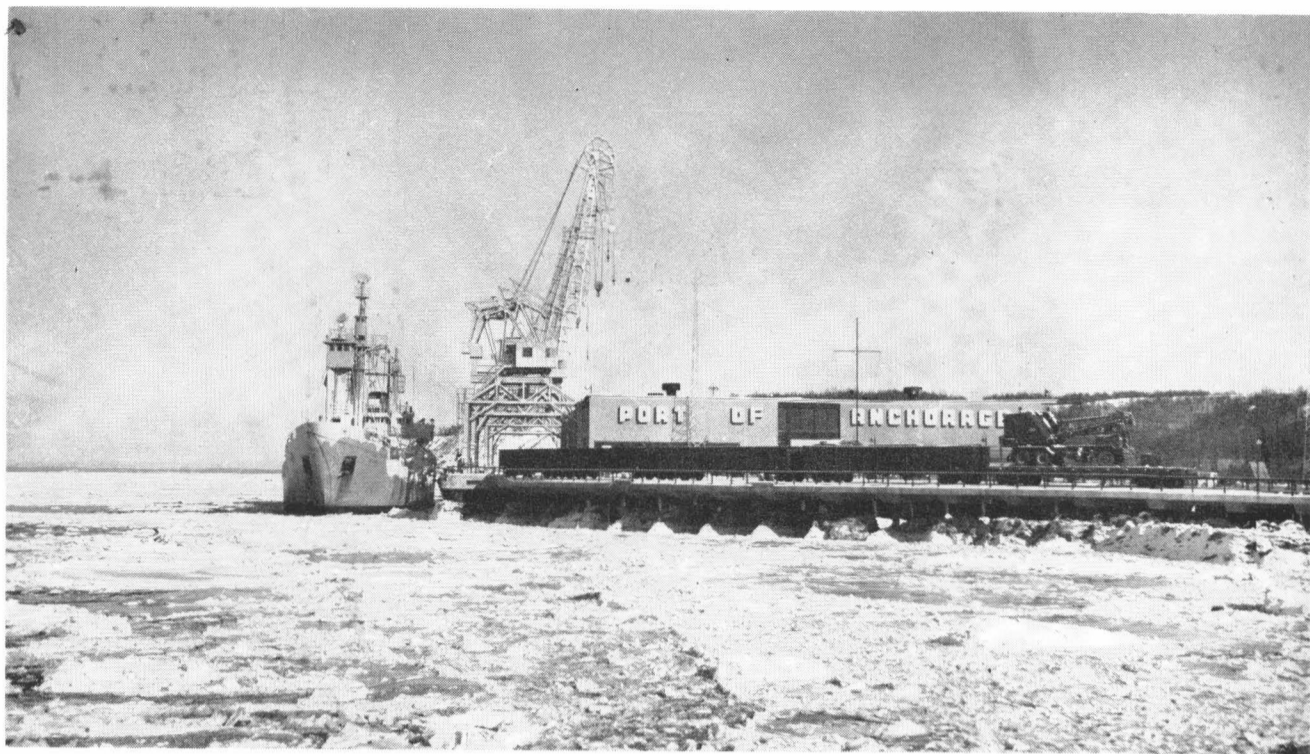


# MSTS Port of Call: ANCHORAGE ALASKA "Gateway To The Last Frontier"



In a fairly typical scene for this icy port, the USNS Mizar lies alongside the City Pier. This pier, along with the Army Ocean Pier, forms the city's major port facilities.

ANCHORAGE, Alaska—In addition to having what is probably the most nautical name of any MSTSO, this outfit has another distinction to its credit. It is the only naval command on the mainland of Alaska.

The office here is located in the Headquarters, Alaskan Command Building, at Elmendorf Air Force Base. Elmendorf is a hub of American defense forces providing "top cover for America at the top of the world."

The Port of Anchorage—which calls itself "Gateway to the Last Frontier"—is located on the Knik Arm at the north end of Cook Inlet. Tides here are the third highest

tabulated in the world. Adding to tidal troubles are icing troubles. Heavy icing is encountered in Cook Inlet from November through April—one of the factors that resulted in the Mizar taking over the Seattle-Alaska run from the Harris County. (See the last issue of Sealift.)

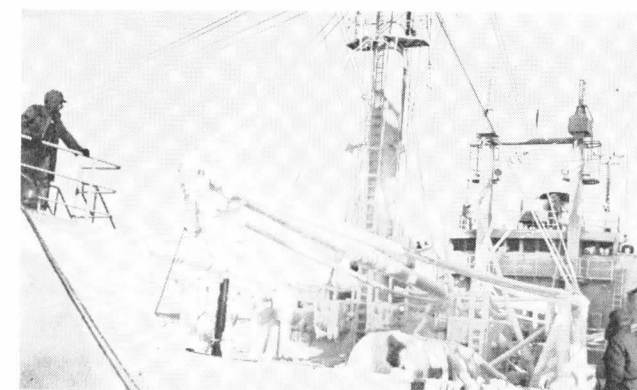
Cook Inlet and Knik Arm do not freeze solid. The problem is with float ice that breaks from the entrance of many streams and rivers flowing into the Arm. Now that a Coast Guard ice breaker has been stationed at Kodiak, it is expected that the Port of Anchorage will be kept open

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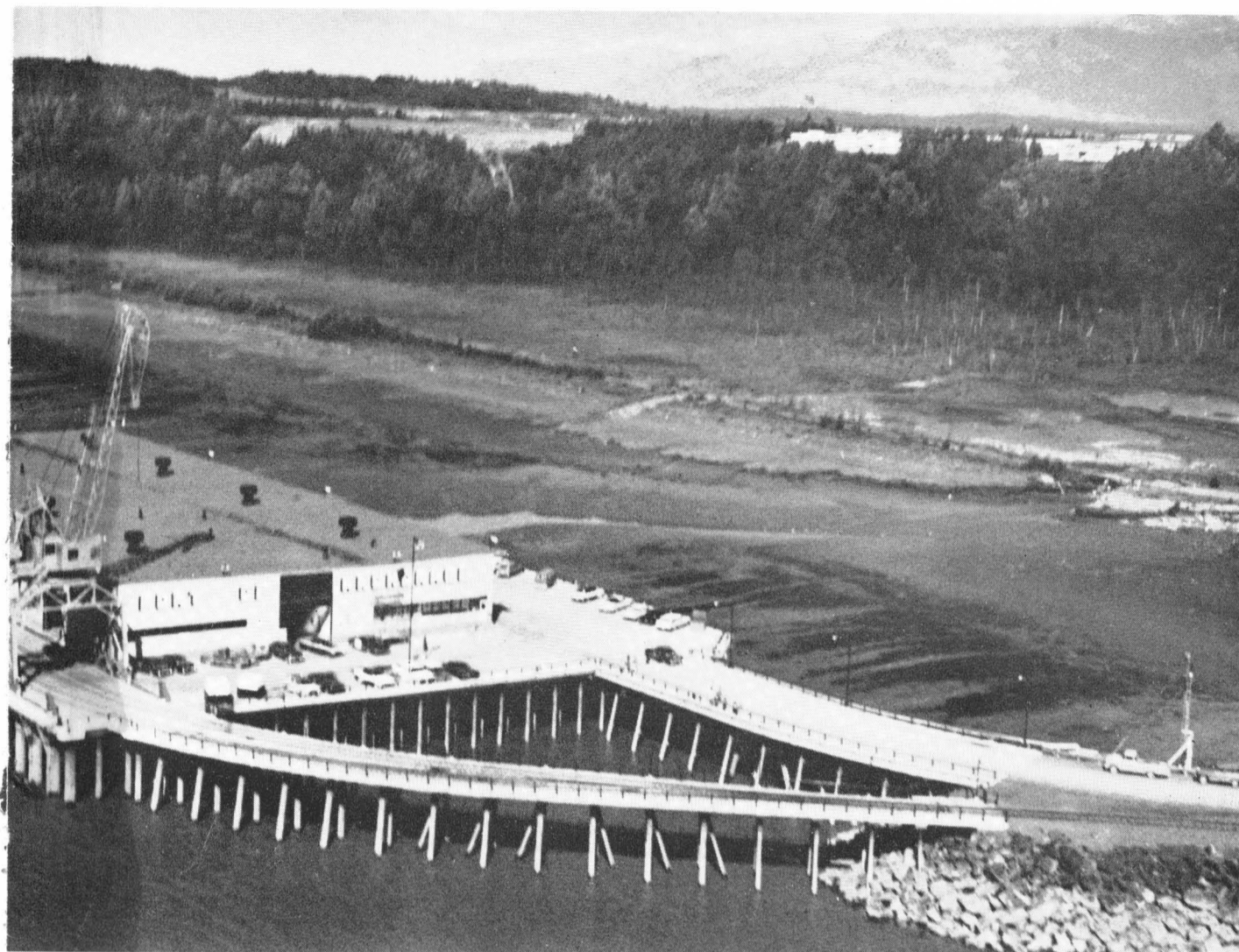
the Panhandle; Adak, 1300 miles to the west near the end of the Aleutian Chain; and by the Arctic Ocean, 1847 miles to the north.

Frequent trips are often made to outlying ports for liaison purposes. Along with routine MSTSO-type functions, this office also carries out all the administrative duties of a large naval command. During the summer months, for example, it acts as a Navy Receiving Station for Navymen who drive the Alcan Highway. This ties in with the fact that Anchorage is the jumping off point for Kodiak and Adak.

To carry out its duties, MSTSO Anchorage has an on-board count of 6, with an additional representative at Kodiak and Adak. The Commanding Officer is Lt. Comdr.



Topside view of the Mizar shows the rugged winter conditions that can be met at Anchorage.



1. Ship at pier is MSTSO's USS Mann. The Mann is the largest ship ever to transit the waters leading to Anchorage. Note height of pier pilings. The tidal range at Anchorage is extremely large.

N. P. Chokas, who had been the skipper of the USS Roy O. Hale, an escort vessel, before joining MSTSO.

Lieut. E. F. Howard is the Exec and Operations Officer. He came from the Embarkation and Combat Loading School, where he was an instructor. The Transportation Officer and Operations Assistant is R. P. Phillips. He joined MSTSO in 1950 as a Chief Quartermaster and shifted to his present job when he retired from the Navy in 1955. He's the office's sole civilian and provides continuity of functions and operations during the frequent changes of military personnel.

The clerical and office supervisor is J. L. Playle, YN2. Cargo and passenger yeoman duties are handled jointly by a pair of yeomen third class: T. J. Gardner and K. E. Christensen.

Logistical support is furnished by Commander-in-Chief Alaska. On the other hand, coordination control is exercised by ComAlSeaFron/Com17thNavDist, located at Kodiak.

The major port facilities at Anchorage are the Army Ocean Pier and the new City Pier. A truly modern installation, the City Pier cost \$8.5 million to build—more than any similar pier in the world.

Anchorage was once known as Ships Creek. At the outbreak of World War II its population consisted of two families. A mere dozen years ago it numbered only 11,000, military and civilians combined. Today its population is more than 68,000, the result of the establishment of major military installations in the area.

When MSTSOers at Anchorage point with pride, it is to the fact that their office is located in the heart of Alaska's population, transportation, and communications center.



Technical Advisor R. P. Phillips goes over matters with the Exec and the CO. Clerical Supervisor J. L. Playle, YN2, takes notes in shorthand.



The USNS Petrarca follows the USCGC Staris into Anchorage. This particular event was a local milestone, for it was the first time a self-propelled cargo ship reached Anchorage under extreme weather conditions and heavy icing.

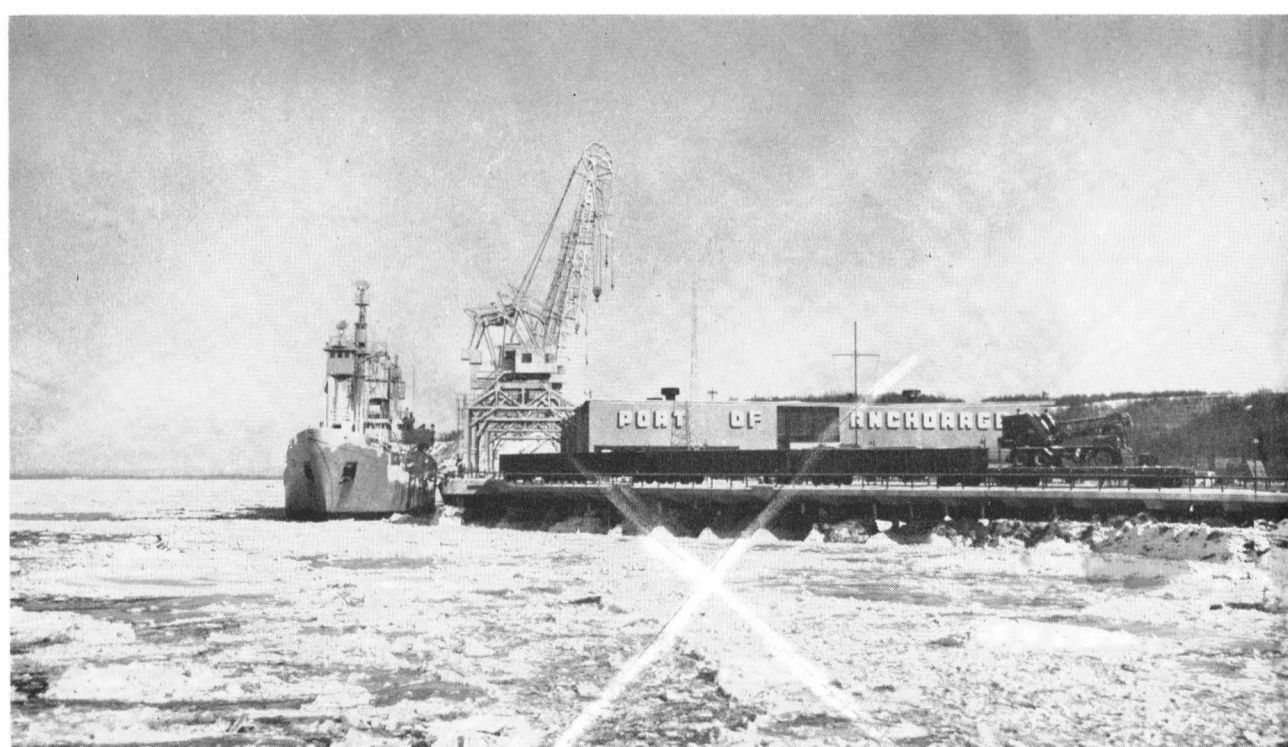
One term they don't particularly like is the well-known "Uncle Sam's Ice Box."

"After all," they say, "the weather in Alaska is comparable to that of New England."



No doubt what outfit they're with. Cargo Yeoman T. J. Gardner, YN3, and K. E. Christensen, YN3, aid their skipper, Lt. Comdr. N. P. Chokas, as he checks over the list of ships scheduled to deliver Department of Defense cargo to Alaskan ports.

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