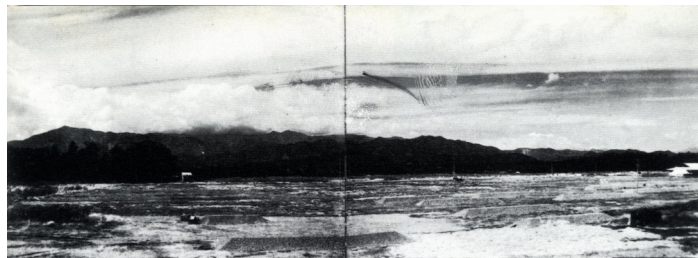


CAMP ZAMA THROUGH THE YEARS....

Rikugun Shikan Gakko [1935~1945]

In 1935 land, consisting mostly of mulberry farms and forest, was selected and purchased for the future *Rikugun Shikan Gakko* – Imperial Military Academy – in Kanagawa Prefecture.



In early 1936 construction began primarily by Fujita Construction Company and mostly completed by the fall of 1937.

On September 30, 1937, the 50th class cadets marched to Zama from Ichigaya in Tokyo to start their training. The billets located on the north side were used mostly by regular cadets, while those on the south side accommodated regular junior class and students from foreign countries.

On December 20, 1937, Emperor Hirohito attended the first graduation ceremony for 426 students of the 50th class. On that day, he named the campus *Sobudai*.

With the China War theater expanding, enrollees increased each year from Class 51 in 1938 to 1,824 students by the last class in 1945. Records show that 18,476 cadets were trained at *Sobudai* and 8,956 men at the Air Academy in Toyooka, Saitama Prefecture.

In June 1945, as a precaution against intensifying Allied bombings, the entire staff and 3,000 students were sent on a long-term bivouac into the mountains of Nagano Prefecture. The *Sobudai* campus was left in care of a small unit of soldiers. On August 15, those in Nagano were informed of Japan's unconditional surrender to the Allies and they disbanded on August 30, 1945.



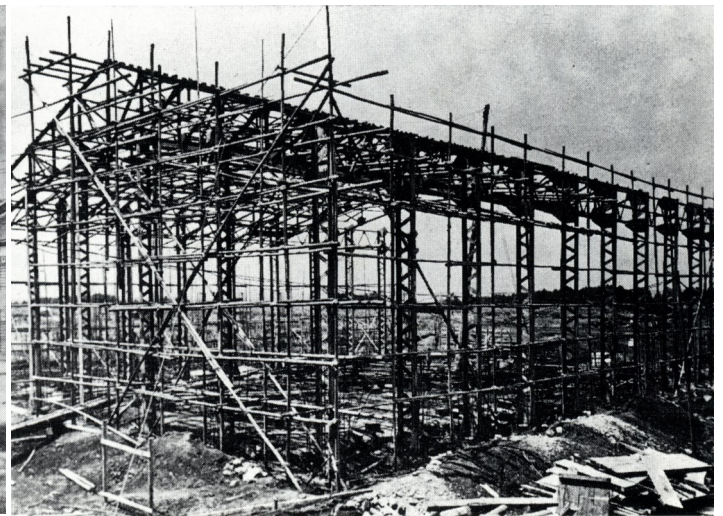
Senior Japanese Army officers and government officials watch the dedication ceremony Oct. 26, 1936, for the new military Academy.



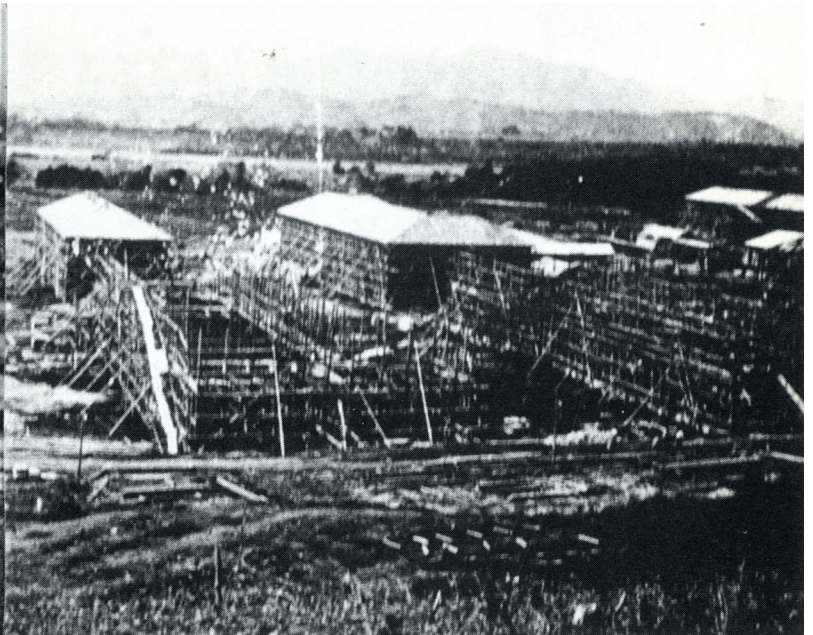
A Shinto priest performs a religious ceremony during the new Academy's dedication proceedings.



Sewer pipes waiting to be laid below ground line an area in front of some nearly completed buildings.

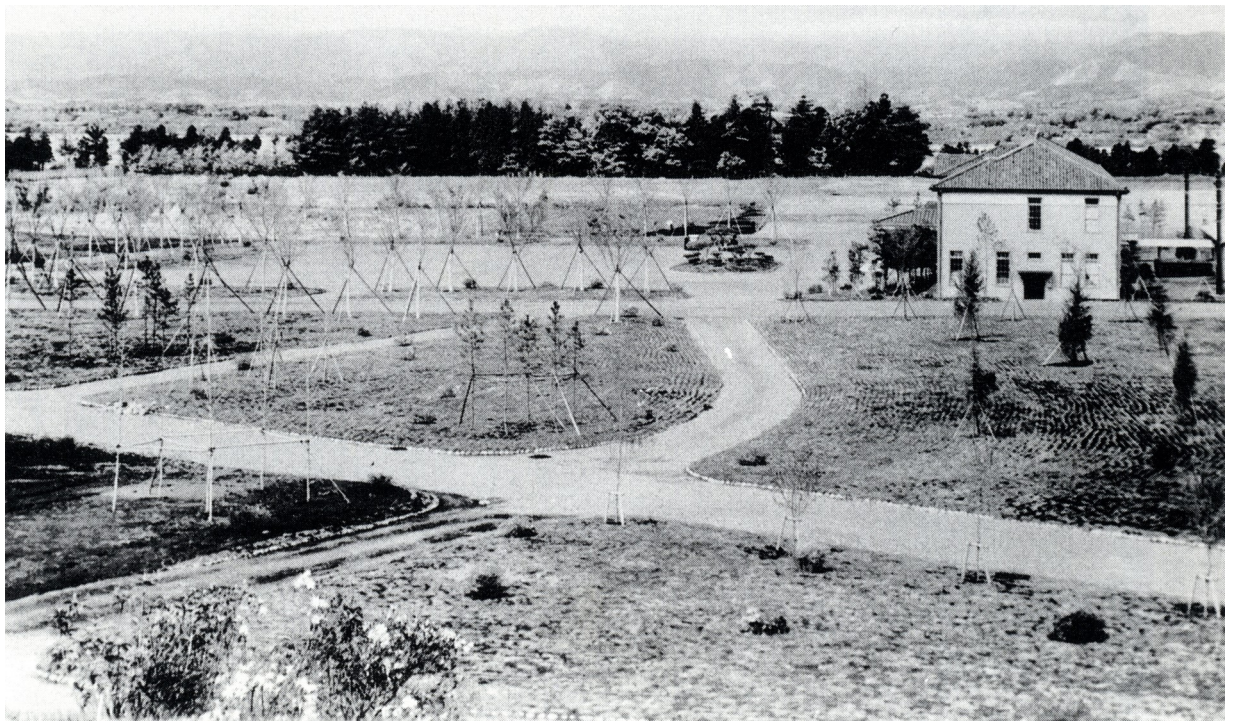


The skeletal framework goes up on one Academy building.



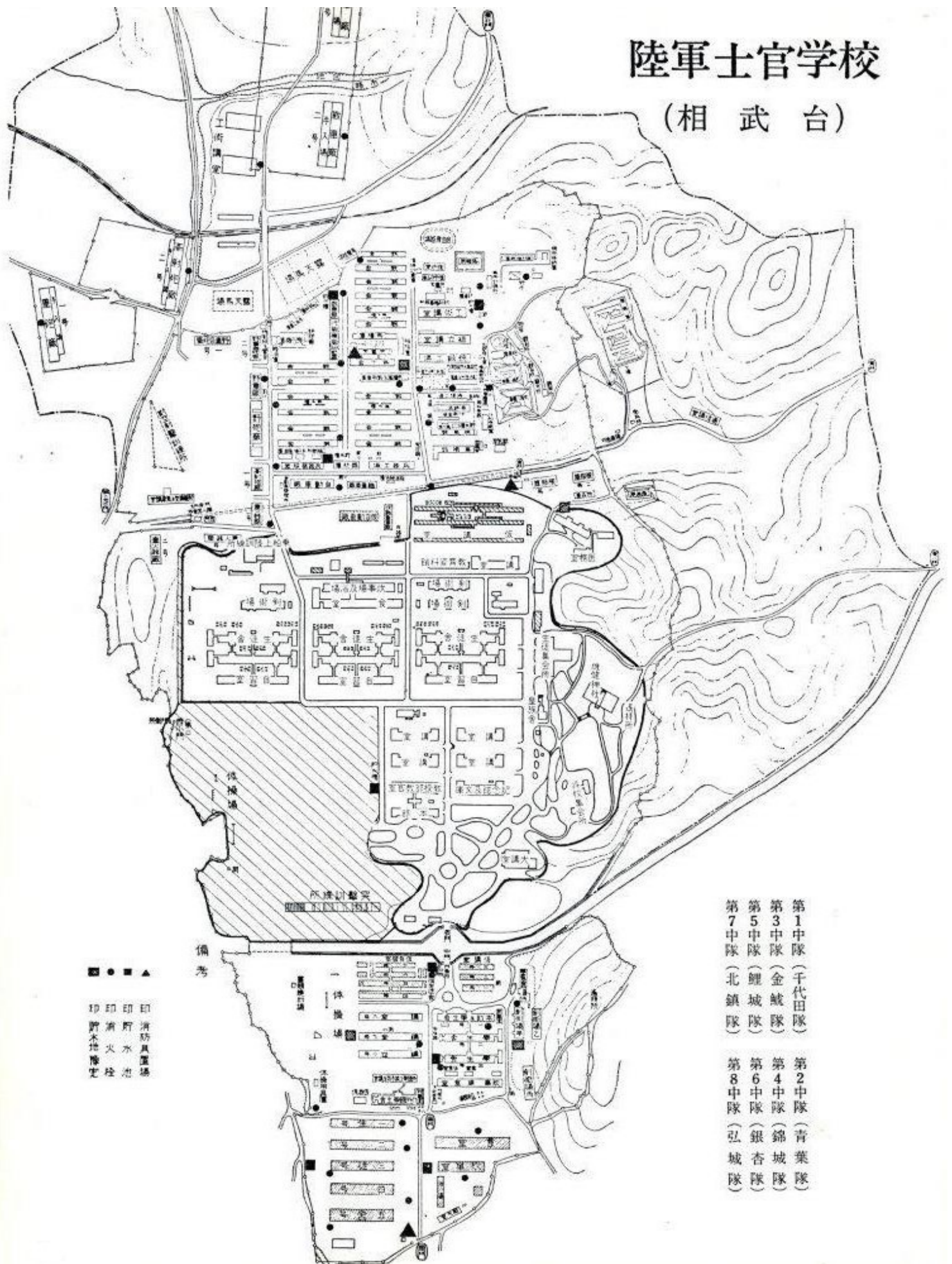
Academy buildings, in various stages of construction, begin to take shape opposite work site buildings.

With the Academy headquarters building already in place, newly planted trees and bushes improve the landscape where work site buildings once stood.



陸軍士官学校

(相武台)



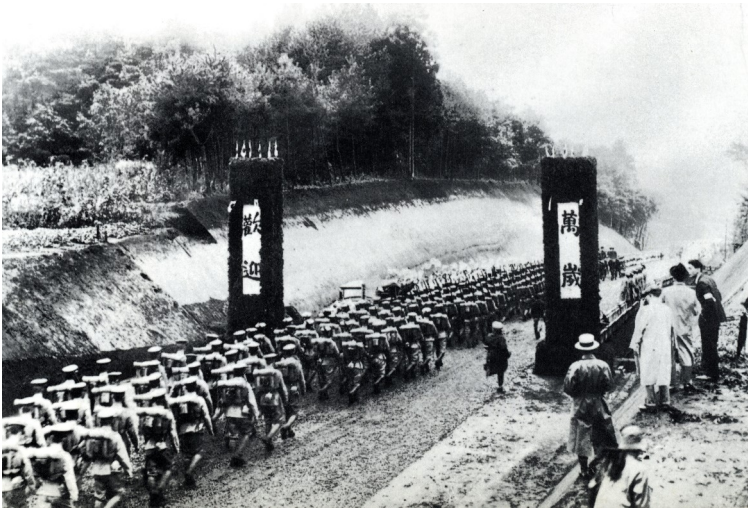
This conceptual map shows the buildings that were intended to be built for the Academy.



Workers take a break from building Gyoko-Doro (today's Highway 51) to pose for a photo.



Imperial Military Academy cadets rest on Sept. 30, 1937, on their march from Ichigaya to their new home.

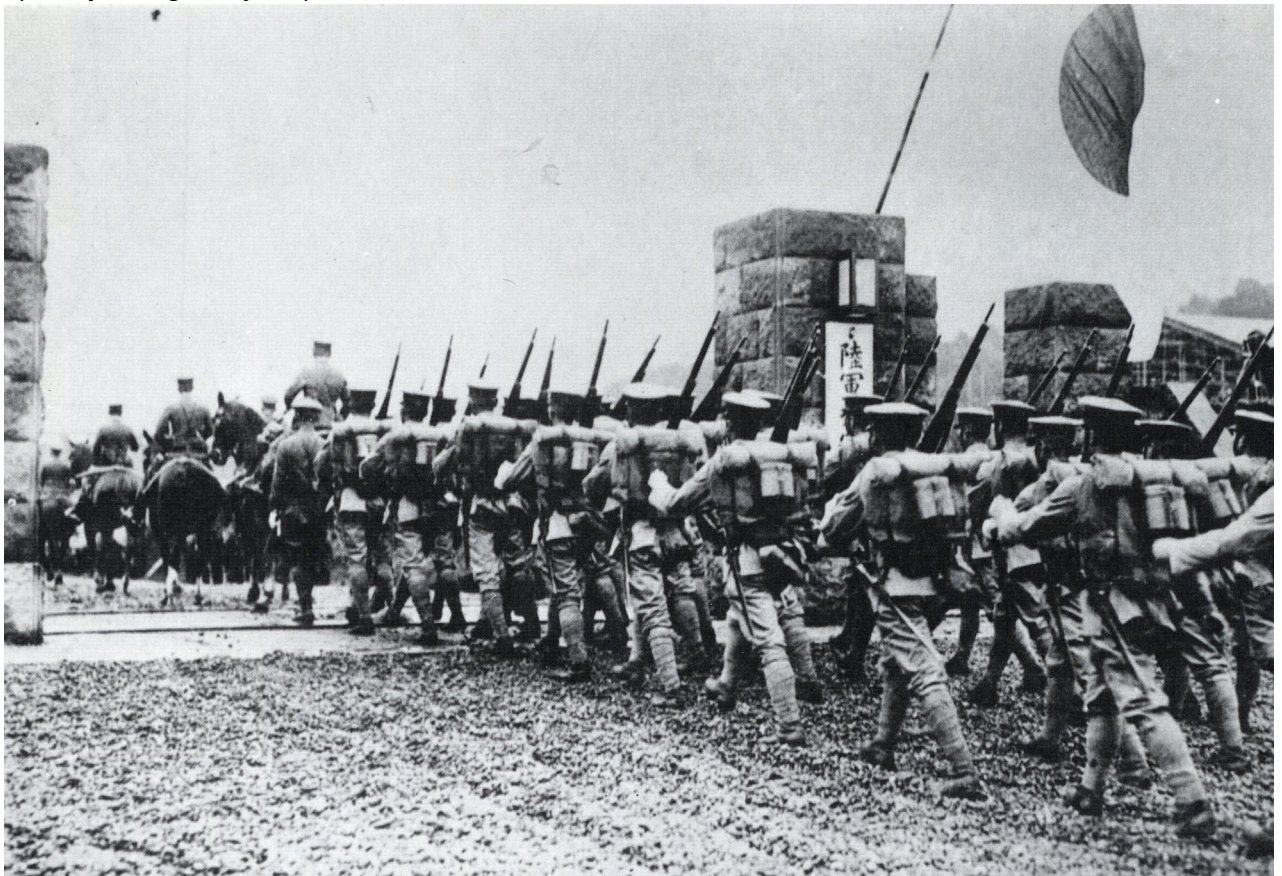


Cadets on their march from Ichigaya along hastily built Gyoko-Doro (today's Highway 51).



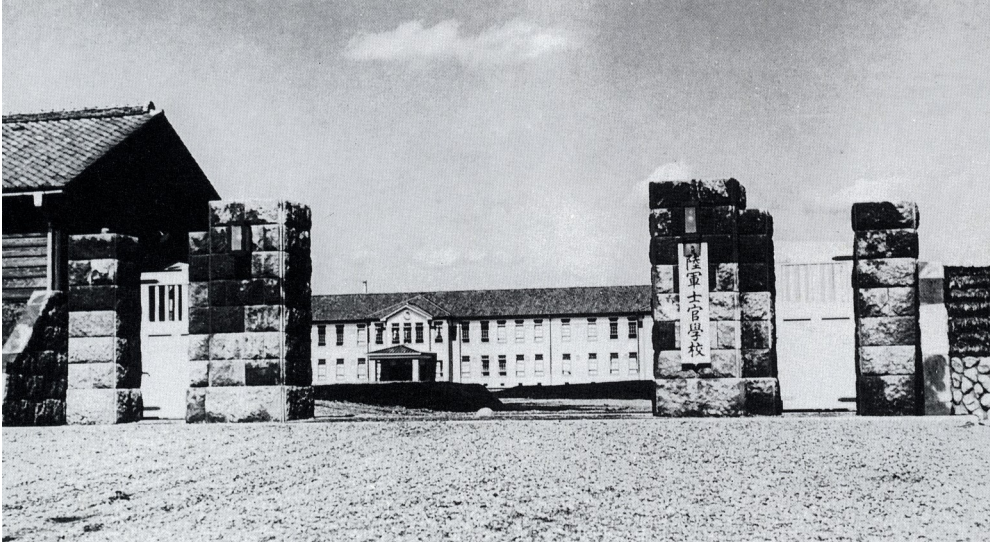
Enthusiastic and curious crowds gather as the cadets march from their old to new campus.

Cadets of Class 50 march through the front gate of the new Imperial Military Academy.





(Above left) Local officials and senior military officers at the Academy's dedication ceremony.



(Left) The Academy's front gate and headquarters building in the background.

(Above) The post at the front gate with the sign of Rikugun Shikan Gakko (Imperial Military Academy).

The headquarters for the Imperial Military Academy was one of the first buildings constructed on the new campus. It would later serve as headquarters for the U.S. Army from 1945.

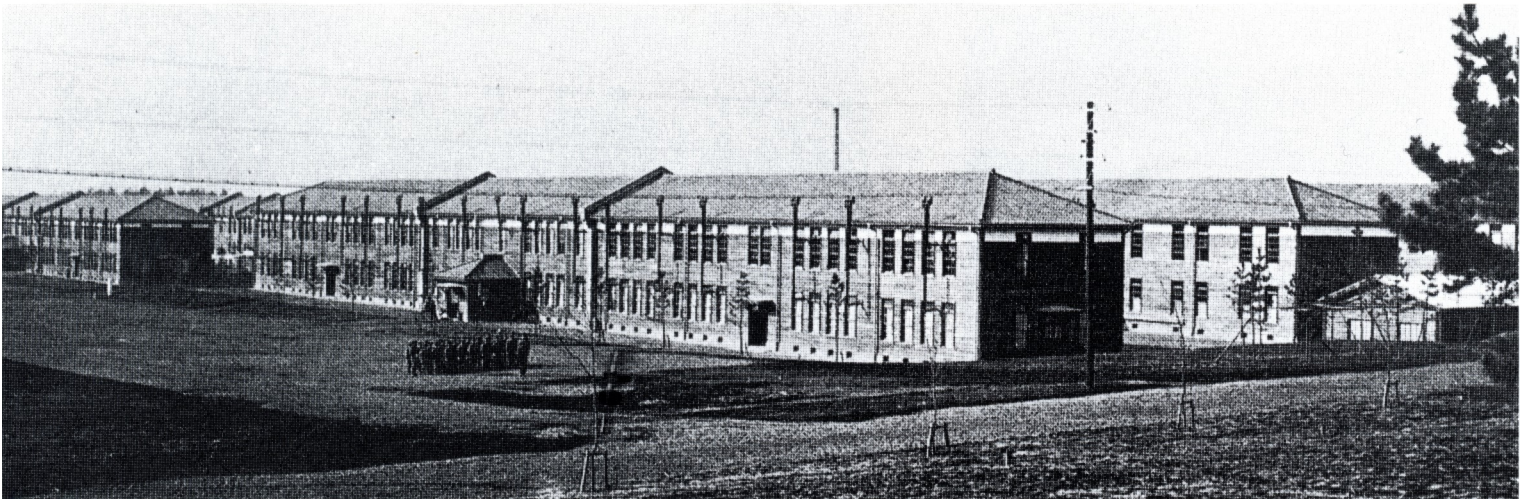




Emperor Hirohito (Japan's 124th emperor) attended all but two of the nine graduation ceremonies with the first being for Class 50 on Dec. 20, 1937, riding his white stallion Shirayuki (White Snow).



Otakebi Shrine was important to the Academy cadets. In 1945 its sacred items were removed and sent to Nagano Prefecture and the shrine was taken down. The wooden *torii* was replaced in 1985 with a stone *torii* by Kaikosha Association (former graduates of the Academy).



A small group of cadets practice drill in front of Academy buildings.



Cadets listen to the instructor during a lesson on building moral character to becoming an officer.



Sleeping quarters for foreign students training on the south portion of the Academy.



Cadets march during a formation.



(Above) The horse stables located in what is now Dewey Park area.



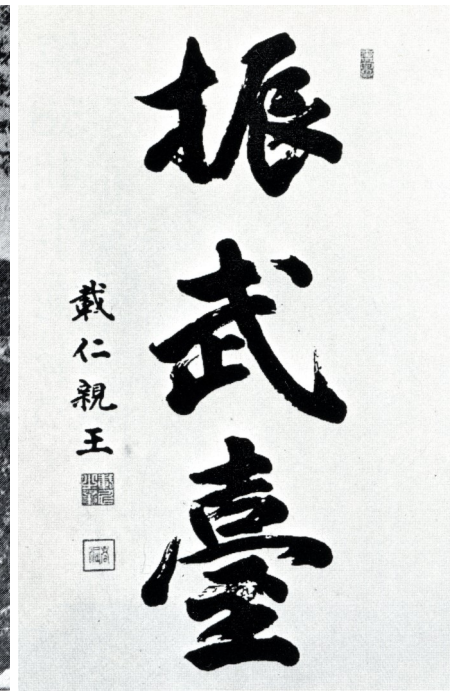
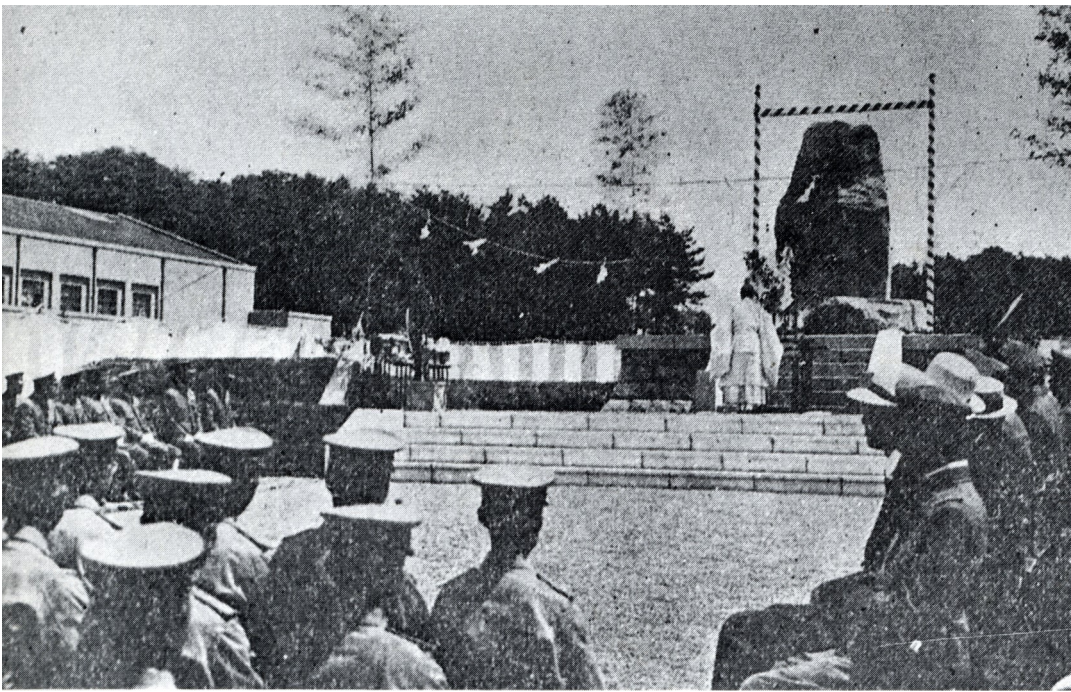
(Above right) Cadets water their horses.

(Below) Horses were an integral part of training for the officer corps.

(Below right) A cadet stands watch at night.



A classroom with instruction manuals piled high for study.



Following the graduation ceremony of the 50th class students, Emperor Hirohito told Army Minister General Gen Sugiyama to name the new campus *Subudai*—military training heights in Sagami—after the name mentioned in an epic of Crown Prince Yamato Takeru. After two years to find a suitable stone, the *Sobudai* monument was dedicated on August 20, 1940, bearing the three characters that he composed at the emperor's direction.



The cadet recreation and assembly building later used by the U.S. Army for a Service Club.



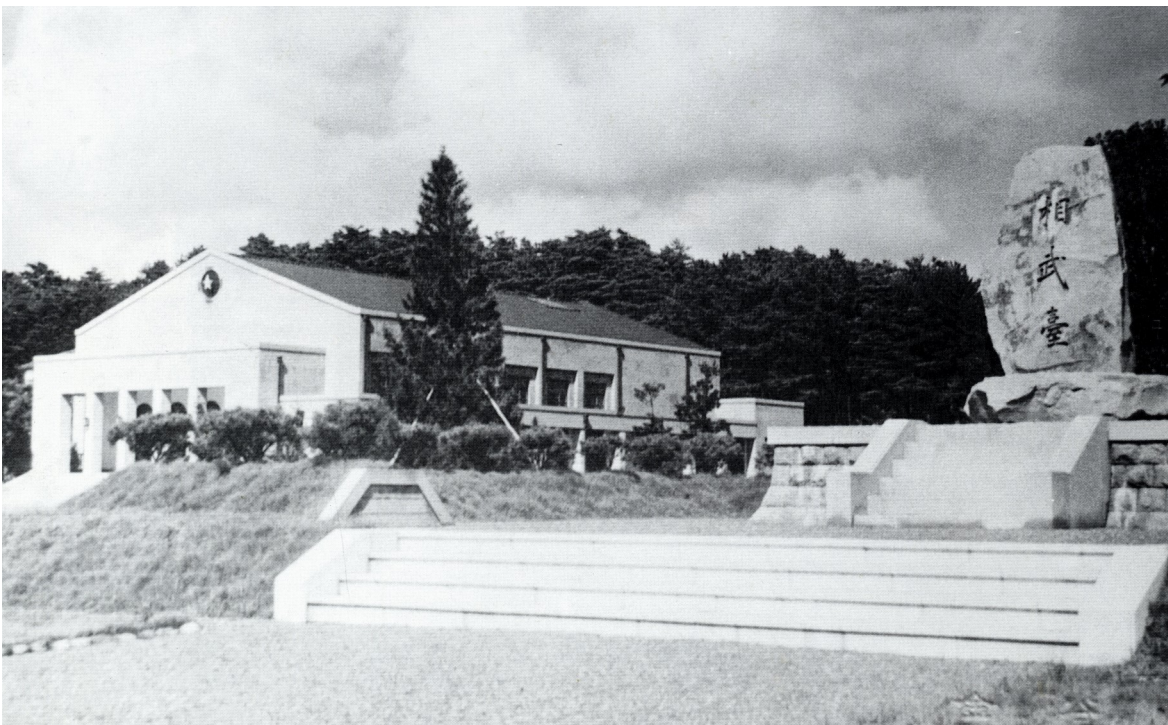
Cadets take a break and spend precious free time at the recreation building.

Graduation ceremony for Class 51 was held on Dec. 22, 1938. Graduating cadets were presented their diplomas despite a heavy rainfall that occurred that day.

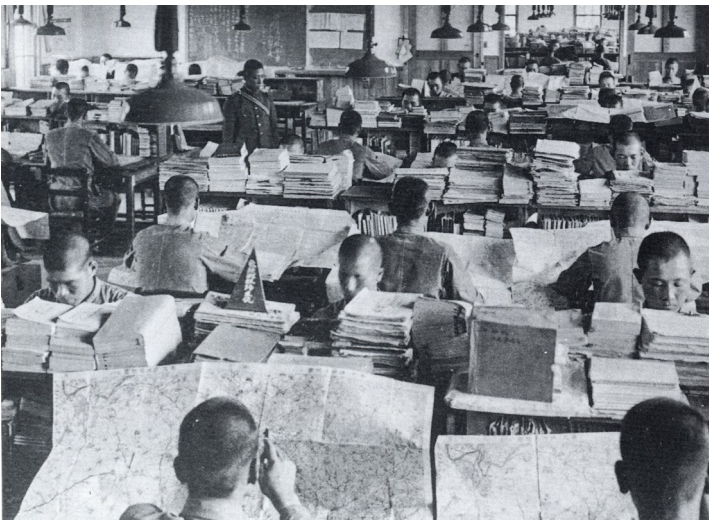




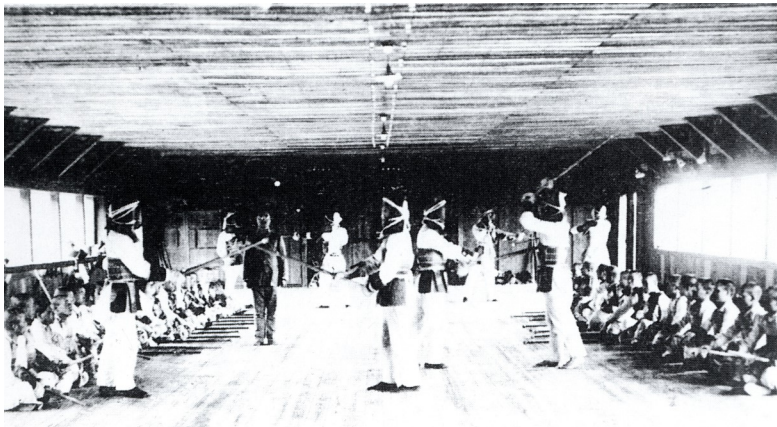
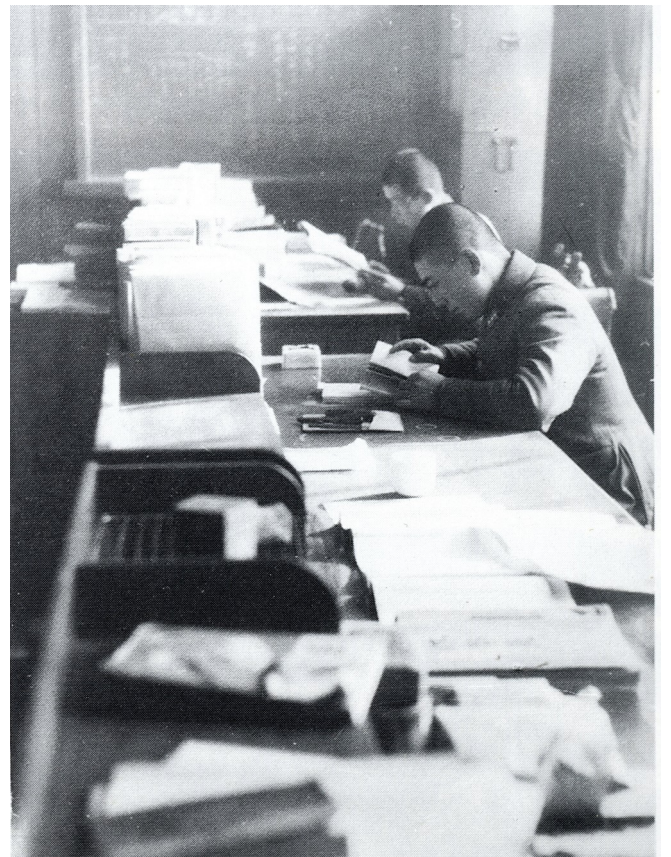
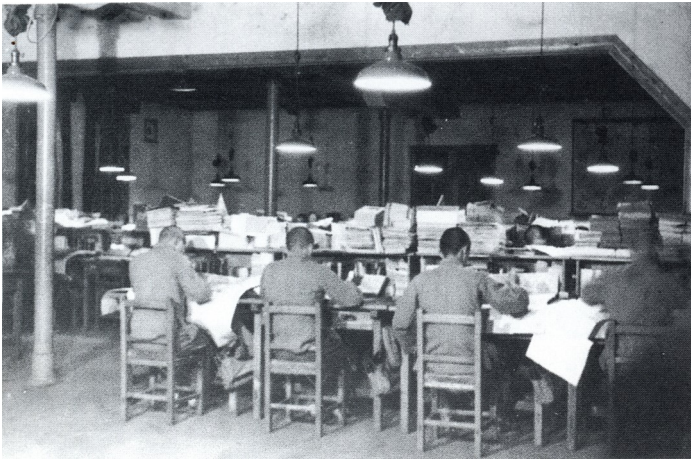
The south side of the installation accommodated regular junior class and other students including those from foreign countries. More than 600 international students from Burma, Republic of China, Korea and Manchuria received training. One notable student was Park Chung Hee who graduated third in his class in 1944 and later became president of the Republic of Korea in 1961.



Sobudai monument and the Academy auditorium.



A cadets life was one of regiment, study and building character. Shown on this page are various activities cadets went through as a daily routine from classroom work and studying to sporting activities such as kendo or horsemanship.

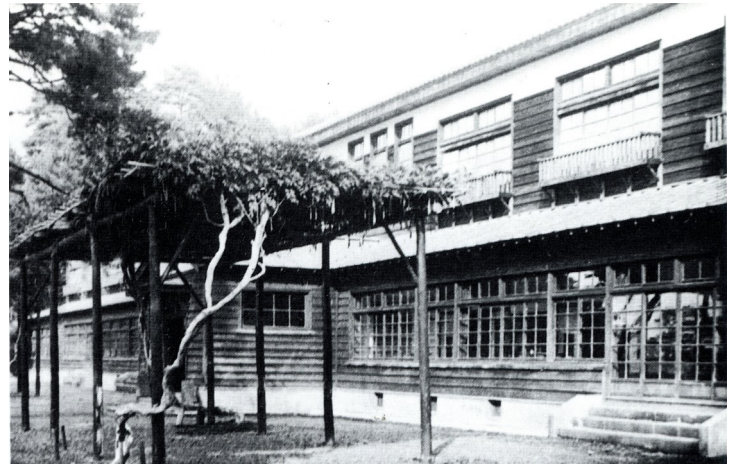




Mass formation of cadets and staff on the parade field.



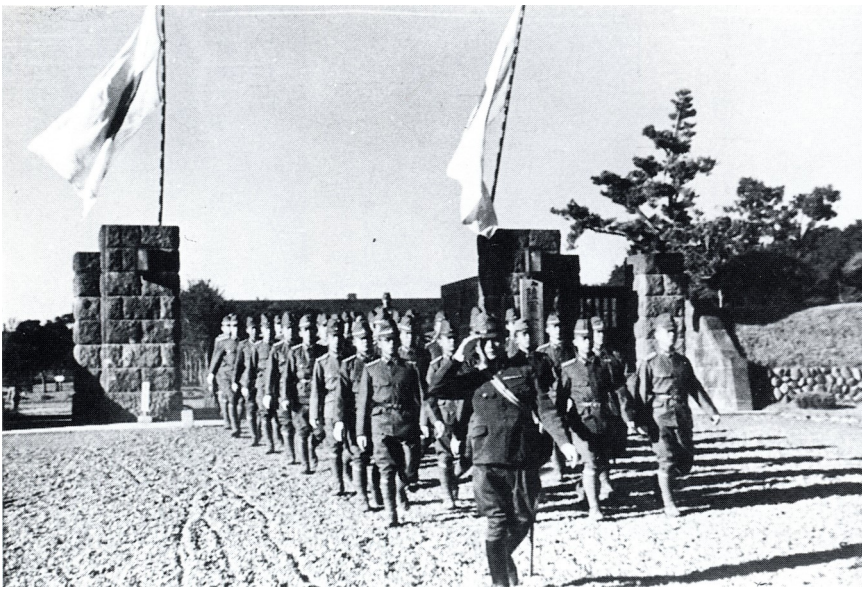
A postcard of the auditorium. Note the two stone lions. The right one was unearthed in 2006.



While the pergola has been replaced, the wisteria growing outside the recreation center continues to grow nearly eight decades later.



Cadets stand in formation as the end of the war draws near.



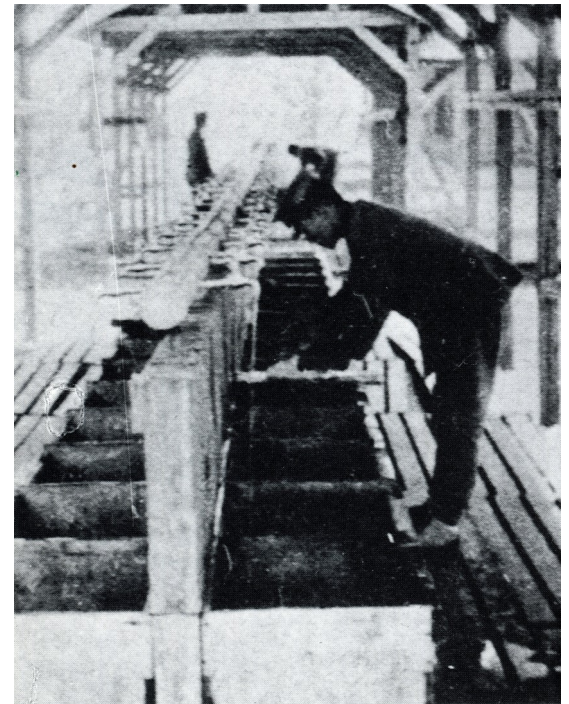
Class 59 cadets march through the front gate Oct. 14, 1944.



Three newly commissioned second lieutenants of Class 50.



During one of their rare free time trips, cadets wait for a train at Shikan Gakko-Mae train station, now Sobudai-Mae.



A cadet washes his clothes.

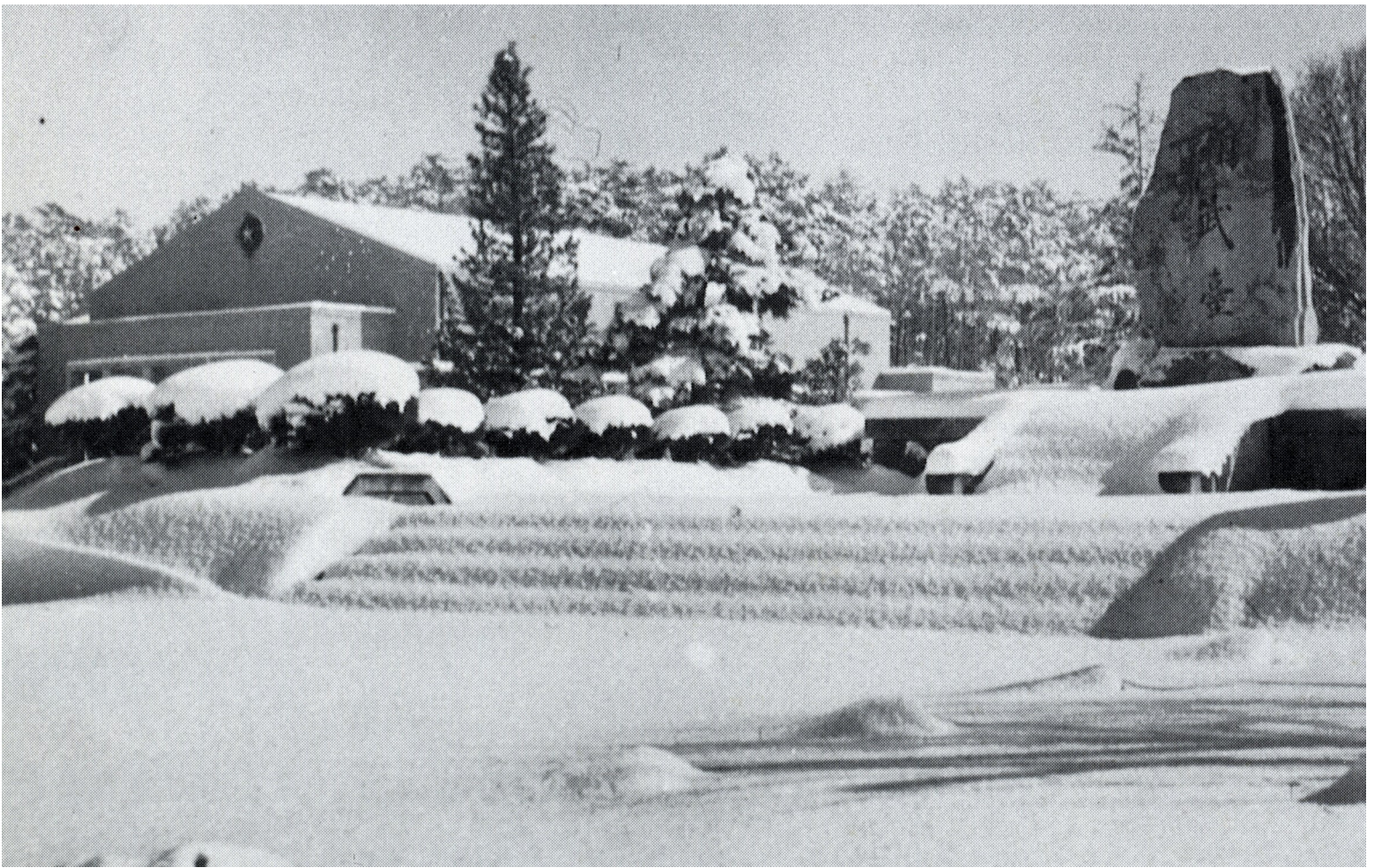


This building was for royal princes, but they preferred to stay with their fellow cadets. Inside (right) was a formal office. The building (now a museum) was moved to Camp Asaka in 1976.





An early aerial photograph of the *Sobudai* campus.



The *Sobudai* monument and adjoining Academy grounds were blanketed by a layer of snow.



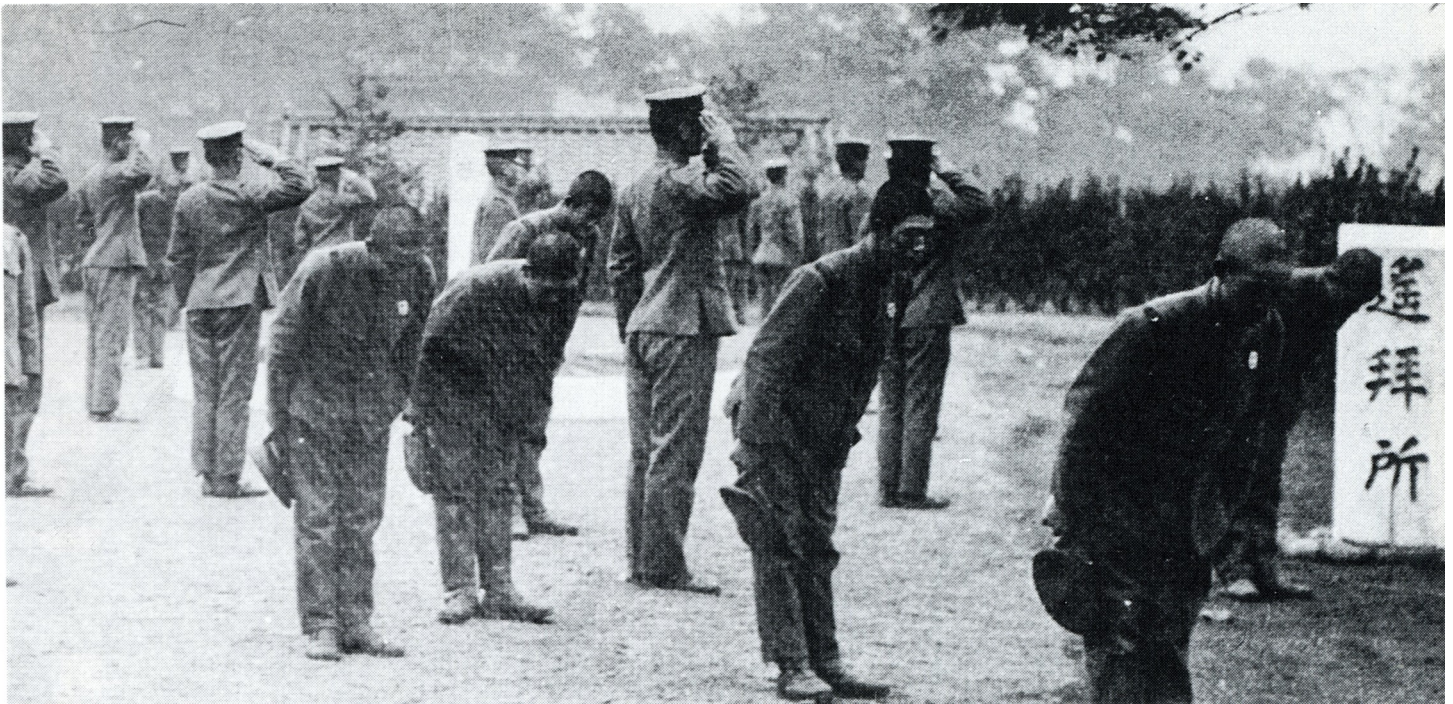
A new Academy superintendent reviews troops during his assumption of command ceremony.



A ceremony prior to presentation of diplomas.



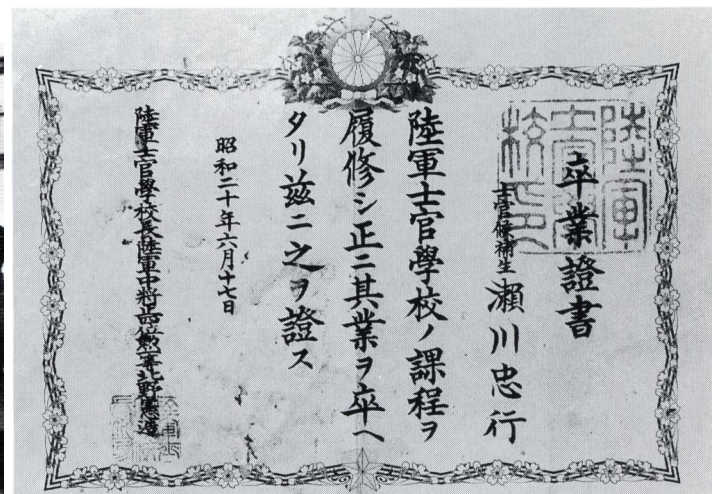
A ceremony honoring Emperor Hirohito is held prior to his departure after attending the first graduation ceremony on Dec. 20, 1937.



Cadets render respect to deities.



Cadets listen intently to the instruction and advice given by their revered instructors.



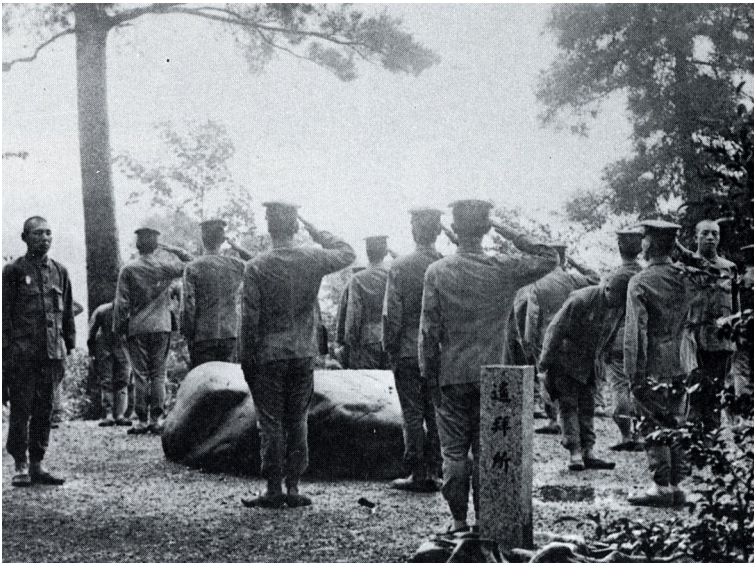
An Academy graduation diploma presented to Tadayuki Segawa on June 17, 1945. Class 58 was the last class to graduate before war's end.



Cadets pose in front of a biplane during a visit to the Air Academy in Toyooka, Saitama Prefecture.

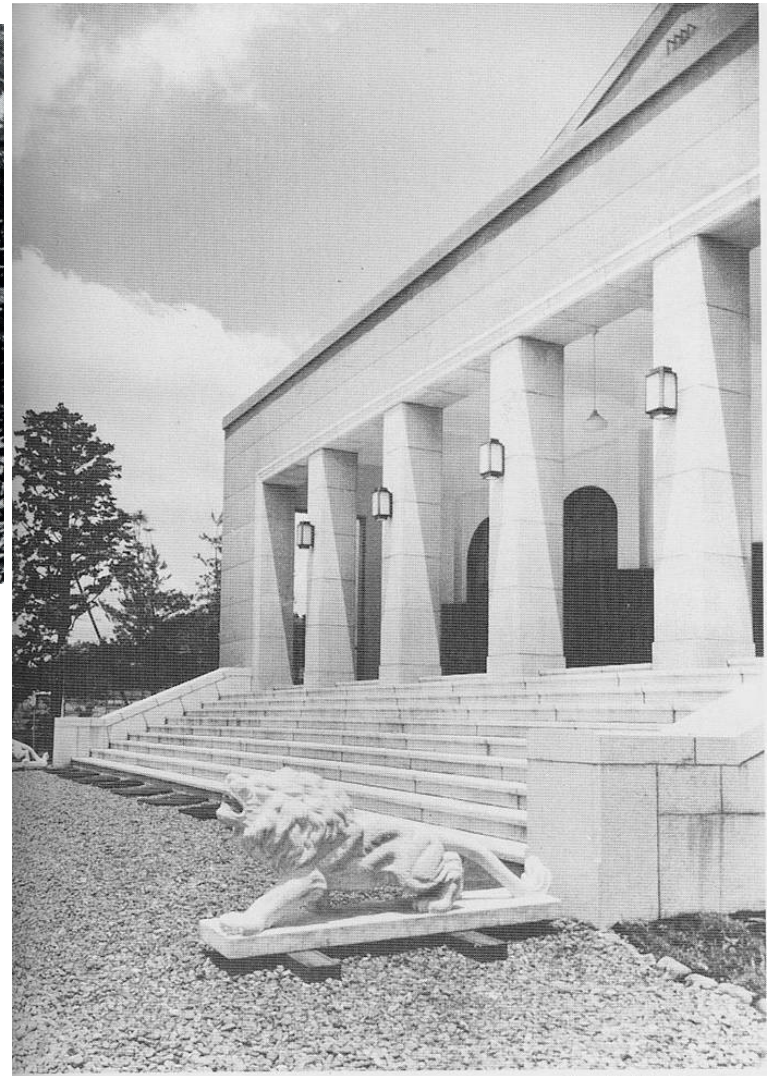


With the Japanese flag flying in a soft 1937 breeze, construction continues on the new Academy. Landscaping is still some time off.



(Above) Cadets pay respect to the Emperor and pray to national guardian deities at one of two azimuth rocks on the installation, which once held a marble disc showing directions to the Imperial Palace, Meiji Shrine and other significant places.

(Right) Two western alabaster lions, believed to be a gift from the Chinese Whampoa Military Academy in Nanking, await to be mounted atop soon to be constructed plinths. The lions were buried before the war's end and the nearest one was located Dec. 22, 2006, beneath a sidewalk about 30 feet from the southwest corner of the building.



(Below) The Academy superintendent and senior staff review a formation of cadets.





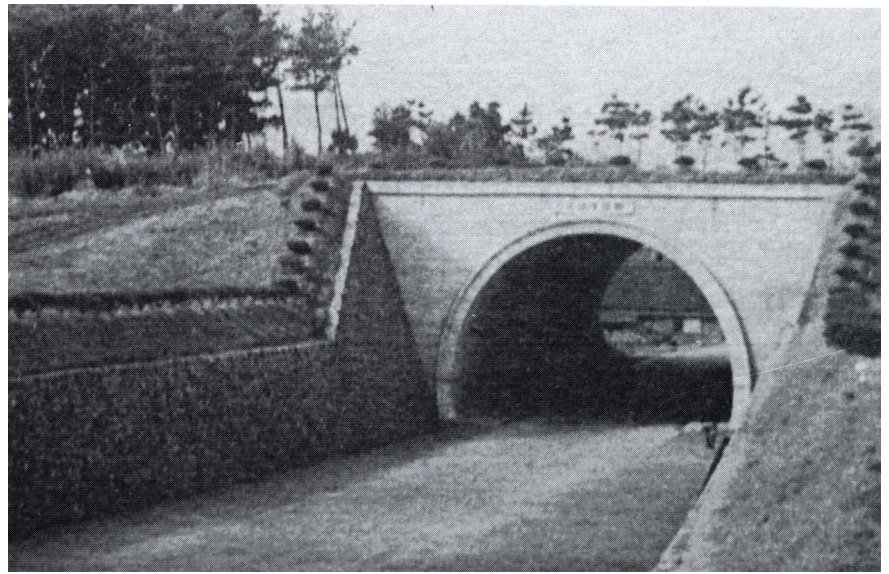
A new swimming and training pool is dedicated in August 1941. A Shinto priest performs the ceremony with senior military officers in attendance.



Cadets take a picture by the pool. Note the shape that was used to train for boarding and disembarking ships.



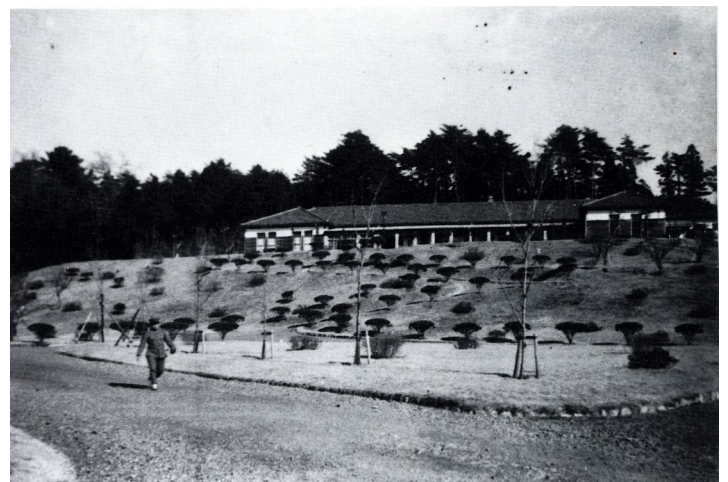
A new Academy superintendent arrives to take command in March 1945.



The tunnel with the road above to connect south and north posts.



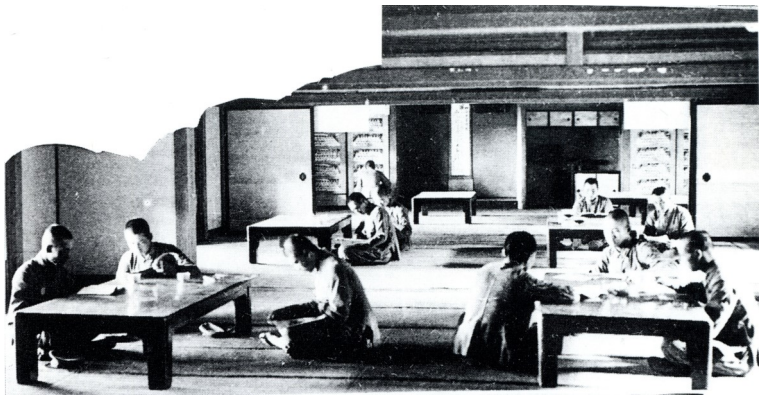
A torii marks the entranceway to Otakebi Shrine further up the hill.



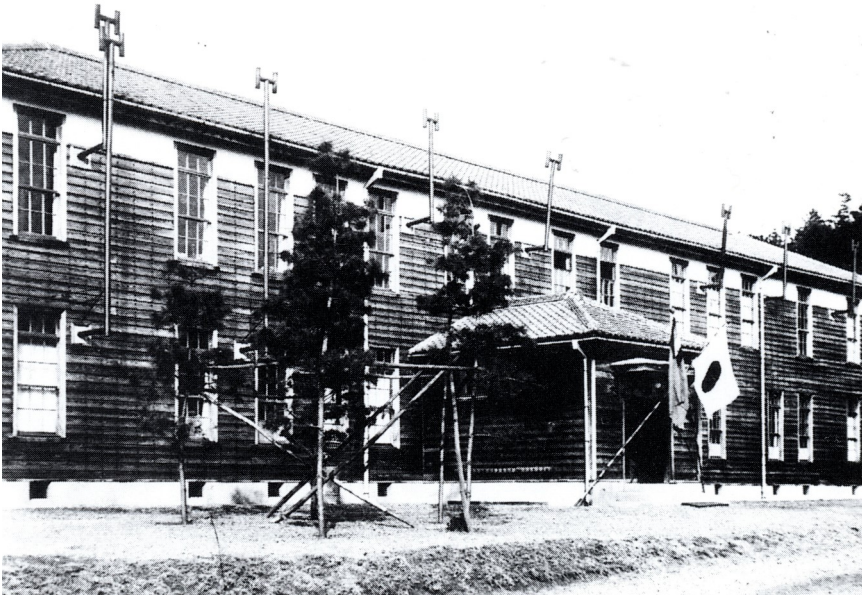
The Academy Officers' Club stood between the auditorium and Otakebi Shrine.



A postcard showing the Academy cadet barracks.



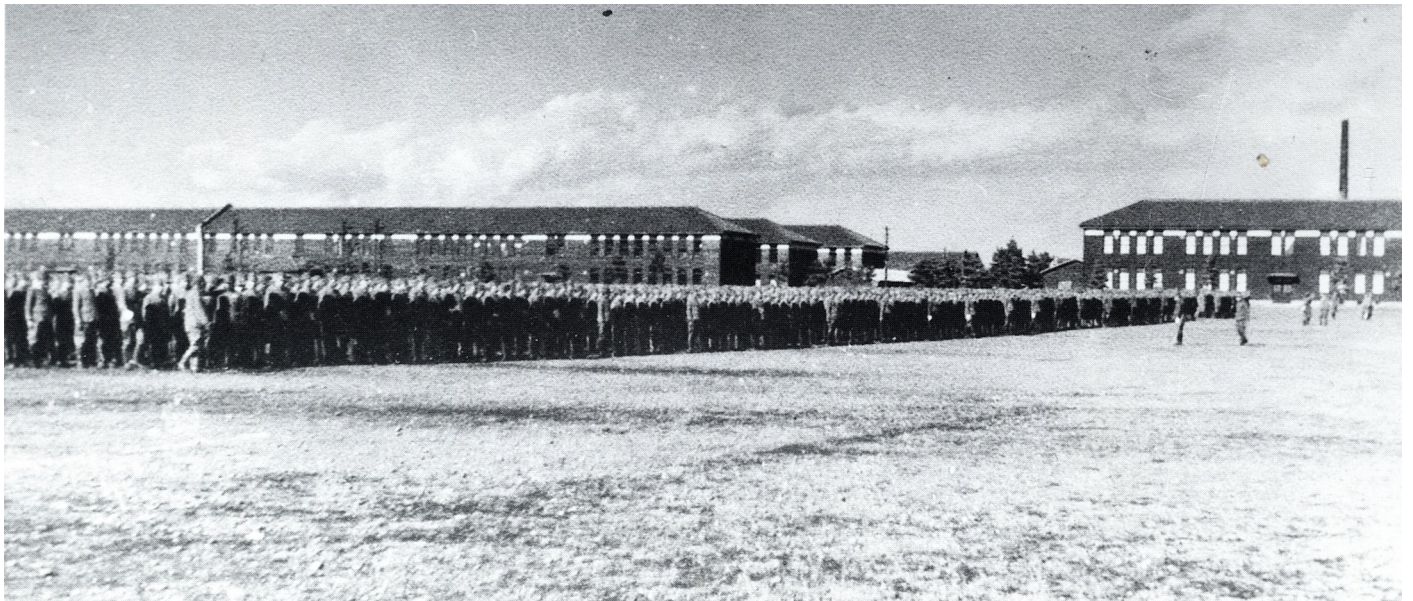
The second floor of the recreation center was used for relaxing and study by the cadets. This is one of the few remaining buildings from that era.



(Above) Classroom building for Manchurian cadets with both the Japan and Manchuria flags on display at the entrance.

(Right) Japan flags fly at the Academy front gate.

(Below) Academy cadet formation.





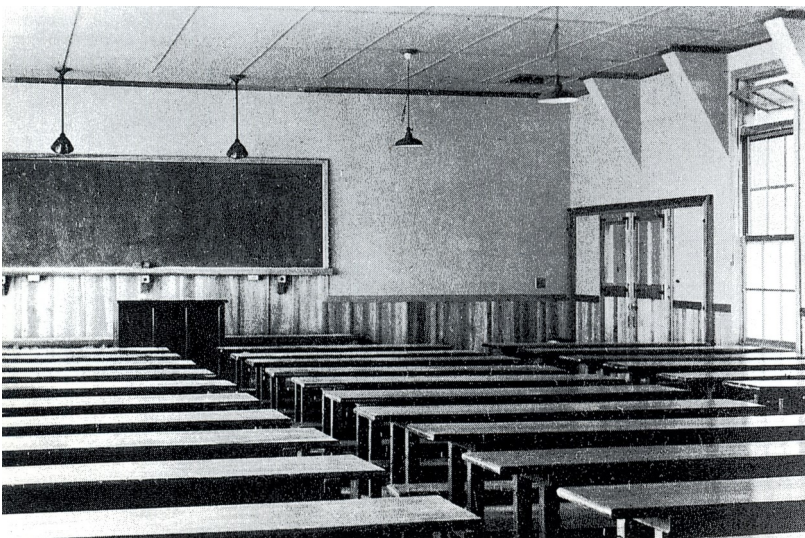
The members of one class unit take a group photograph before graduation.



In June 1945, as a precautionary measure against Allied bombings and possible invasion, Academy officials sent the entire staff and 3,000 students on a long-term bivouac into the mountainous regions of Nagano Prefecture. Here cadets of Class 60, 3rd Company, 4th Unit, pose for a photograph.



Senior officer recreation room in the assembly hall.



An Imperial Military Academy classroom.

(Below) A photo of the Academy's stablemen.



Royal family members inspect construction.



Emperor Hirohito and senior officers walk to the parade field for Class 57 graduation ceremonies on Dec. 20, 1937.