

# Battle's End

## ON TO KUNISHI RIDGE<sup>1</sup>

At the same time the 6th Marine Division was landing on Oroku Peninsula, the 1st Marine Division was rolling up gains totalling 1,800 yards in its drive south from the Naha-Yonabaru valley. (See Map IX, Map Section.) General del Valle's regiments made this advance while a faltering division supply system behind them threatened to break down completely because of the mud and the rain. The roads had become such quagmires that even tractors and bulldozers became stalled when they attempted to drag division vehicles out of or over the mud. Tanks and trucks were unable to cross the Kokuba; the approaches to the bridge at the mouth of the river were untrafficable for a distance of over 500 yards.<sup>2</sup> In an effort to facilitate resupply and evacuation operations, tanks were ordered off the roads. In general, forward units were logistically supported by Marines who hand carried supplies up to dumps behind the lines; the "trails were only negotiable for foot troops—vehicles could not have been used if we [2/7]

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material contained in this section is derived from: *Tenth Army AR*; *IIIAC AR*; *1st MarDiv SAR*; *1st MarDiv G-3 Jnl*; *1st Mar SAR*; *5th Mar SAR*; *7th Mar SAR*; *22d Mar SAR, Ph III*; *7th Mar Hist*; MajGen Pedro A. del Valle, "Southward From Shuri," *Marine Corps Gazette*, v. 29, no. 10 (Oct45), hereafter del Valle, "Southward From Shuri."

<sup>2</sup> *1st MarDiv G-3 Jnl*, 4Jun45.

could have gotten them across the inlet."<sup>3</sup>

On the division right on 4 June, the 7th Marines pushed forward to close off the neck of Oroku Peninsula and further entrap Japanese forces there. The hill mass at the base of Oroku in the division zone held the commanding terrain feature of the area, Hill 108. This height overlooked the East China Sea and the next major division objective, Itoman. Although the exposed right flank of the 7th Marines came under constant harassing fire from high ground to the right of the division boundary, the division left flank was generally secure since the adjacent 96th Infantry Division had moved forward steadily since its advance from the Kokuba River line.

After the Japanese defenses at Shuri had collapsed, the 1st Marines remained behind in the vicinity of the city to patrol and mop up, and the 5th Marines pursued the fleeing enemy. Before the dawn of 4 June, the 1st joined in the pursuit; 3/1 made a wide swing through the zone of the 96th Division in order to take the high ground north of Iwa and Shindawaku while 1/1 passed through the lines of the 5th Marines and took up positions in front of Hills 57 and 107.

By 0930, 3/1 had reached the small village of Tera, just north of Chan.<sup>4</sup> At

<sup>3</sup> *2/7 SAR*, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> This Tera is not to be confused with a second village of the same name located near Itoman on the east coast.

1300, the battalion point was pinned down by fire coming from high ground just west of the Tomusu-Iwa road, and the advance guard attempted without success to clean out the enemy position. Just before 1400, the time scheduled for 3/1 to make its coordinated attack with 1/1, a cloudburst occurred. The supply problems here were further aggravated by the rain, and because of a communications blackout between the battalion and its artillery and naval gunfire support, 3/1 broke contact with the enemy and withdrew to a bivouac area in a draw behind the 383d Infantry.

At 1730, Lieutenant Colonel Ross' entire battalion was in defilade, protected from enemy artillery fire. Contact with the artillery battalions and naval gunfire support ships was still lacking at this time and a mortar ammunition shortage existed. The afternoon downpours had turned the roads into morasses and the fields into calf-deep mud wallows in which the suction of the ooze pulled the soles off of the shoes of men walking in it.

Since food as well as mortar ammunition was in short supply, the 383d Infantry generously supplied the battalion with enough K-rations to enable 3/1 to issue two meals to each Marine.<sup>5</sup> It was the general consensus of the members of 3/1 that "taking all things into consideration, this day probably was the most miserable spent on Okinawa by the men of this battalion."<sup>6</sup>

In addition, 3/1 found itself all but isolated from its regiment, since there was neither communication with nor a supply route to the 1st Marines CP, some 11,000 yards to the rear.<sup>7</sup>

The 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, passed through the lines of 2/5 at approximately 1000 on the 4th. This was nearly three hours after Company F of 2/5 had attacked and seized Hill 107 without opposition, and completed its occupation of the high ground across the entire front of the regiment. When 1/1 took over from 2/5 at noon, the latter passed into corps reserve with the rest of the 5th Marines, but maintained its positions as a secondary line.<sup>8</sup>

Although the downpour on 4 June had forced General del Valle to cancel the attack of 1/1 scheduled for 1400 that afternoon, the 7th Marines on the right had already jumped off. An hour later, the cancellation order was rescinded, and Lieutenant Colonel Shofner's battalion was again ordered to attack, to contact the 7th Marines, and to seize its original objective—the high ground north of Iwa and Shindawaku.

At 1630, the assault companies of 1/1 moved out to secure their target, some 1,500 yards away. The route of attack was up a valley floor, at the end of which a number of lesser hills rose in front of the objective. A creek that ran east to west across the valley was not visible from the LD; but a map reconnaissance indicated that the assault

<sup>5</sup> The commanding general of the 96th Division believed that these Marines "were not equipped or organized for a protracted campaign. I was glad to assist in supply, air drops, and the care of their wounded. They were fine comrades and cooperated to the fullest extent." MajGen James L. Bradley ltr to CMC, dtd 22Oct54.

<sup>6</sup> *3/1 SAR*, p. 41.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *2/5 SAR*, p. 16; *5th Mar SAR*, p. 9. At this time, the 5th Marines CP was moved to the vicinity of Giushi.

forces would be able to cross it with little difficulty. The Marines met no opposition after jumping off until reaching the "creek," now swollen into a raging torrent by the day's rains. It presented a formidable barrier to further progress. A reconnaissance of the stream banks uncovered a rudimentary bridge for carts to the left of the battalion position.<sup>9</sup> The assault troops were ordered to move upstream, cross the bridge, and redeploy on the other side.

As soon as the first Marine elements had crossed and were wallowing in mud towards firm ground, the heretofore-silent Japanese opened up with mortars and point-blank machine gun fire, sweeping the ranks of the onsurging troops. The Marines pushed on, nonetheless, and two platoons made it across to the south bank of the creek, only to become pinned down.

The 7th Marines on the right was unable to negotiate the swiftly flowing waters and was held up on the north bank,<sup>10</sup> and the bridge-crossing site was fully covered by enemy defensive fires coming from a 200-foot-high ridge in front of 1/1. Therefore, the battalion commander ordered his troops to withdraw to the sector of 2/5 for the night.<sup>11</sup> Because 1/1 had sustained a number of casualties, a covering force remained

behind to evacuate the wounded after dark. The next morning, the 1st Battalion was ordered to bypass the enemy strongpoint by swinging into the zone of the 96th Division and follow closely in the trace of the 3/1 attack on Iwa.<sup>12</sup>

Colonel Mason anticipated the problem of maintaining radio and wire contact with his battalions as they raced south. His movement order provided that, in case of a complete communications breakdown between regiment and the assault battalions, the most senior battalion commander of the committed units would assume tactical command overall until contact was established with regiment once more.<sup>13</sup> Following a mud-slogging and wearying march south on 5 June, 50 men from 1/1 dropped out of ranks from exhaustion. During the trek, the battalion lost contact with regimental headquarters for a brief time and temporarily came under control of Lieutenant Colonel Ross.<sup>14</sup>

Out of contact with regimental headquarters from the time he had led his battalion south from Shuri, and with the battalion objective yet uncaptured, Lieutenant Colonel Ross decided to complete his mission nevertheless. He took his command group forward early in the morning of 5 June to make a visual reconnaissance of the target. While this inspection was taking place, the Marines of 3/1 built fires in an attempt to warm themselves and dry as much of their clothing as possible before mounting the attack. Prior to the jumpoff, 3/1

<sup>9</sup> LtCol Austin C. Shofner interview by Hist-Div, HQMC, dtd 19Mar47 hereafter *Shofner interview*.

<sup>10</sup> "There was no bridge in the 3/7 ZofA [Zone of Action]. Several men were drowned attempting to carry lines across the stream in an attempt to get troops across." LtCol Walter Holomon ltr to CMC, dtd 22Mar55, hereafter *Holomon ltr*.

<sup>11</sup> *Shofner interview*.

<sup>12</sup> 1/1 SAR, p. 21.

<sup>13</sup> Col Arthur T. Mason ltr to CMC, dtd 10Mar47.

<sup>14</sup> 1/1 SAR, p. 21.

received 19 supply air drops from VMTB-232 aircraft. In between the day's intermittent showers, the squadron flew a total of 41 resupply sorties; its all-time high to that date.<sup>15</sup> The battalion departed its bivouac area at 1030 and arrived at the assembly area shortly thereafter; Lieutenant Colonel Ross then issued his attack order for the capture of the Iwa-Shindawaku ridge.

Before jumping off at 1230, 3/1 learned that patrols from 2/383 had passed through Iwa without opposition. As soon as the Marine attack began, lead elements were held up for a short time by sporadic machine gun and sniper fire, but took the ridge before dark. In the two days spent to envelop the objective, the battalion had travelled more than 3,000 yards. By this time, the advance CP of the regiment had moved far enough forward to enable Colonel Mason to issue attack orders personally to his battalion commanders.

The plan for the next day's attack called for 3/1 to continue the advance and seize Shindawaku. The 1st Battalion would destroy all bypassed enemy pockets in the regimental zone and to the rear of 3/1, and would backtrack to the stream where the 4 June attack had been stymied.

To the relief of all, the rain stopped during the night of 5-6 June. At dawn of the 6th, 1/1 moved out of its bivouac east of Iwa, swung down to the village, and then turned north. At this point, all three of its infantry companies

<sup>15</sup> VMTB-232 WarD, Jun45. The squadron parachuted more than 20 tons of supplies to 1st Marine Division troops on 5 June. *1st MarDiv SAR*, chap VII, OpAnx, p. 10.

formed a battalion skirmish line over an extremely wide front. The Marines then swept northward and past the zone where 3/7 was preparing to attack in a southwesterly direction. Lieutenant Colonel Shofner's troops accomplished their sweep at 1400 and then attacked and seized the ridge overlooking the stream. The few enemy soldiers still manning positions on this objective, not expecting an attack from the rear, were surprised while changing into civilian clothes. After taking the position with little effort, 1/1 went into reserve near Tomusu.<sup>16</sup>

Because 3/1 had not been resupplied before its attack at 0900 on the 6th, the 383d Infantry again issued the Marines K-rations; this time, enough to provide each man in the battalion with one and a half meals.<sup>17</sup> After jumping off, 3/1 advanced west and reached the outskirts of Shindawaku at 1030, when enemy troops were discovered occupying commanding ground on the ridge running northwest from the village. By 1800, however, the battalion had secured the ridge after a brief fight and 2/1 had moved to an area northwest of Iwa. Although the left flank of 3/1 was tied in with 2/383 for the night, the Marine battalion had not been able to contact the 7th Marines on the right. Early the next morning, 2/1 was moved into position to plug this gap.

During its drive south, the 1st Marine Division was sporadically halted for brief periods before a number of blocking positions organized and manned by small enemy groups. Each of these

<sup>16</sup> *1/1 SAR*, p. 21.

<sup>17</sup> *3/1 SAR*, p. 43.

groups was generally the size of a company, and all of them together comprised a force equaling no more than two battalions. The Japanese holding units had been ordered and were determined to delay the Tenth Army as long as possible. The tactical situation and the nature of their mission, however, prohibited their setting up anything more permanent and stronger than hastily contrived defensive positions, which were unable to hold back the aggressive Marine offensive for long.

When reconnaissance patrols uncovered these strong points, infantry commanders deployed their forces to take the objective by a combination of fire and maneuver. In most cases, the major attack force maneuvered into position to assault the objective from its flank or rear. At this time, Marine elements in front of the target supported the attack by firing on the objective to keep the enemy fixed in position. At times, the enveloping force provided fire support for a frontal attack. Regardless of the methods employed, the weather situation, and the condition of the terrain, General del Valle felt that "it was refreshing to be able to maneuver again, even on a modest scale."<sup>18</sup>

On the critical right flank, the 7th Marines paced the division advance on 5 June with the 2d and 3d Battalions attacking against increasing opposition; 1/7 followed behind, mopping up the rear area. Acting as a screen to the right of 2/7 along the division right boundary, the 1st Reconnaissance Company dispatched patrols far ahead of the battalion advance, which sent back in-

valuable information. The company, however, found that its operations were severely restricted by its limited communications system and supply organization.<sup>19</sup>

Like the 1st Marines, the 7th found the enemy less difficult than such other problems as those caused by the weather and the terrain. Marine wounded were evacuated in the rain over a five-mile sea of mud; sniper fire generally harassed the 8 to 10 litter bearers required for each casualty during the entire trip to the rear. Each day's attack was usually delayed until the weather was clear enough for land- and carrier-based<sup>20</sup> planes to make a supply drop; so many sorties were flown for the 7th Marines as it trekked southwards that the trail of the regiment was blazed with brightly colored cargo parachutes.<sup>21</sup>

The initial attack of the 7th Marines southwards from the Kokuba River bridgehead on 4 June gained the regiment approximately 1,100 yards. That same day, 2/7 captured Takanyuta. On the next day, the formerly raging torrent in front of 3/7 had receded to uncover a causeway over which part of the battalion crossed; the remainder moved to the zone of the 2d Battalion and crossed the stream from there.<sup>22</sup> Once beyond the south bank, the assault

<sup>19</sup> *Snedeker ltr 1947.*

<sup>20</sup> During the course of the entire campaign, carrier-based planes often joined the Avengers of the two TAF VMTBs in making supply drops. Air Delivery Section, H&S Bn, Corps Troops, IIIAC, ICEBERG Op AR, dtd 24Jun45, encl A, hereafter *AirDelSec AR.*

<sup>21</sup> *7th Mar Hist*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>22</sup> *Holomon ltr.*

<sup>18</sup> del Valle, "Southward From Shuri," p. 39.

battalions of the 7th drove forward 1,000 yards to a point just north of Hanja village.

When furious machine gun and mortar fire from a hill mass in the zone of the 6th Division held up the 7th Marines, General del Valle received permission from IIIAC to lay the artillery fire of the 11th Marines on the suspected enemy positions. General Shepherd was authorized to cancel the fire when it threatened his troops. As the 1st Division continued its drive past the neck of the Oroku Peninsula, expanding the already-lengthy right flank of the division, 1/22 was ordered into defensive positions along this flank.

On the next day, 6 June, the 22d Marines battalion had not yet occupied its assigned flank security positions. It became necessary, therefore, to order 1st Division troops into the 6th Division zone to capture Hill 103 and destroy the enemy automatic weapons and mortars harassing the right flank of the 7th Marines. Lieutenant Colonel Berger's battalion had already attacked and was, in fact, within a few yards of the crest of the hill when elements of the 22d Marines arrived. Reorienting the direction of its attack to the south towards Hill 108, 2/7 advanced 1,000 yards before encountering stiff opposition near Dakiton, where it dug in for the night. On the left, the 3d Battalion pushed to the high ground southeast of the same town and likewise dug in.

Clearing skies on 7 June heralded a 1st Division success in breaking through to the coast that day and isolating Admiral Ota and his ill-fated troops on Oroku from the rest of the doomed *Thirty-second Army* in the south. Fol-

lowing up a thorough combined arms preparation, 2/7 overran Hill 108 to command a view of the island south to Kunishi. The former defenders of 108 were seen fleeing south in small groups ranging in size from 10-20 men each. The fire of Marine support weapons and machine guns relentlessly pursued the Japanese troops, killing many. After receiving an air drop of supplies, 3/7 attacked at 1430, overran Hanja, made contact with 2/1 on its left, and dug in for the night on a ridge just north of Zawa.

Following receipt of still another supply air drop early on 8 June, 3/7 resumed its attack with a sweep through Zawa as advance elements of 2/7 probed the Japanese positions guarding Itoman. Besides positioning the division for a final drive south, the breakthrough to the seacoast uncovered beaches on which LVTs could land when a waterborne supply system was established. When the first LVTs touched down on the coast approximately 500 yards north of Itoman shortly after noon on 8 June, General Hodge congratulated General del Valle "for cutting the island in two."<sup>23</sup> Use of this new water route brought in enough rations to permit distribution of the first full issue to 7th Marines troops in more than a week. As the weather improved, some vehicular traffic appeared over slowly drying roads in the south. A few new bridges were constructed across the once-swollen streams in the north to help speed supplies of all sorts to assault troops driving to the southern tip of the island.

<sup>23</sup> *1st MarDiv G-3 Jnl*, 8Jun45.

Advancing abreast of and pacing the march of the 7th Marines to the sea on 7 June, the 1st Marines also reported substantial gains. Early in the morning, 2/1 filled the gap existing on the right between 3/1 and 3/7, while 3/1 maintained contact with 3/383. By 1800, 2/1 was in possession of the height overlooking Zawa, and the 3d Battalion had moved 1,200 yards along the corps boundary to occupy the high ground 1,000 yards north of Yuza; 1/1 had moved to Iwa preparatory to relieving 3/1.<sup>24</sup>

All infantry battalions had been plagued by the supply situation, but it seemed to members of 2/1 that they had been especially dogged since leaving Shuri. Their only source of supply had been the air drops, and by the time that one could be made, the assault companies were several thousand yards forward of the drop zone.<sup>25</sup> The supplies then were recovered by headquarters personnel, who carried them to forward dumps. At this point, Marines from the reserve company would pick up the supplies and carry them to assault units.<sup>26</sup>

Sustained by supplies brought ashore by the LVTs, in the continuing good weather of 8 June, 1st Division troops

pushed ahead against perceptibly stiffening resistance. The 1st Marines rolled forward; 3/1 secured its objective near Yuza at 1600, when it was relieved by 1/1 and went into regimental reserve near Shindawaku. Slightly later that day, 2/1 secured the high ground overlooking the Mukue River. On 9 June, division assault units spent the day probing enemy positions to their front in preparation for a major attack on the 10th.

Improved weather conditions and correspondingly better road nets over which supply convoys could travel served to release the VMTBs for other assignments. Following 6 June, when VMTB-232 made 49 drops, ground units requested paradrop missions on only eight other days in the rest of the month.<sup>27</sup> By this stage of the campaign, the Marine pilots had become quite proficient and accurate in paradrop operations. In reference to a drop Major Allen L. Feldmeier's VMTB-232 had made on 8 June to its soldiers, the 383d Infantry sent him the following message: "Your drops have excellent results. We received 95 of the 97 packs which you dropped."<sup>28</sup> Later in the month, VMTB-131 flew 3 missions totalling 20 sorties in which 70 packs—each averaging 1,000 pounds of food and ammunition—were dropped. Ground units receiving the supplies re-

<sup>24</sup> *1st Mar SAR*, p. 21.

<sup>25</sup> *2/1 SAR*, p. 13.

<sup>26</sup> Since a means of delivering water rations by air drop had not been perfected, the troops were given permission to drink stream water only after each Marine had made the contents of his filled canteen potable by treatment with halazone. Halazone is a white crystalline chemical compound used to disinfect water suspected of being or known to be impure. The compound was compressed into tablets and became a major medical supply item in the war.

<sup>27</sup> VMTB-232 WarD, Jun45.

<sup>28</sup> "A History of MAG-22 in the Okinawa Campaign," Anx A in MAG-22 WarD, Aug45. VMTB-131 arrived on Okinawa on 29 May when it began antisubmarine warfare patrolling, its primary mission. During the later stages of the campaign the squadron made some supply air drops.

ported that they had recovered 90 percent or more of the packs.

Increased enemy opposition arose on 9 June as 1st Marine Division units approached the Tera-Ozato area, which had been outposted by the *Thirty-second Army*. Patrols from both the 1st and 7th Marine received heavy rifle and machine gun fire while attempting to cross to the south bank of the Mukue Gawa. Small infiltration groups finally forded the stream, but were unable to advance beyond the bank. The 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, sustained moderate casualties during this day's fighting, but was unable to evacuate them until after dark because accurate enemy fires covered evacuation routes.

In the 7th Marines zone, 1/7 relieved 3/7, which then went into regimental reserve. No appreciable gains were made as 1/7 companies mounted two unsuccessful attempts to seize high ground overlooking Tera. The second effort was repulsed by extremely heavy small arms fire, which forced the assault elements to withdraw under the cover of a smoke screen. On the extreme right of the division, 2/7 patrols crossed the Mukue Gawa and attempted to seize the ridge north of Itoman,<sup>29</sup> but were thwarted by enemy fire coming from emplacements fronting the 1st Battalion zone. One platoon of Company E was able to get

<sup>29</sup> Actually, the town of Itoman was south of the Mukue Gawa, although the 1:25,000 battle map used during the campaign indicated that the large inhabited area north of the river was Itoman. *Snedeker ltr 1947*, encl D; *2/7 SAR*, p. 8. The latter spot was an undefended suburb of Itoman and did not hold up the advance of 2/7. Capt Verle E. Ludwig interview by HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, dtd 27Jan55, hereafter *Ludwig interview*.

to the far side of the river where it was pinned down immediately by accurate frontal and flanking fire.

Operating a combination CP-OP while aboard an LVT(A) floating 100-200 yards offshore of the battalion flank, Lieutenant Colonel Berger had a grandstand view of the fighting. When he saw that the advance platoon was pinned down, he went ashore to order the rest of the company to cross at the river mouth and reinforce the stricken unit. Steady Japanese machine gun fire prevented the Marines from wading across and shortly thereafter denied passage to troop-laden LVTs attempting the same route. At nightfall, the battalion commander ordered the exposed units to withdraw to the northern bank of the Mukue River under the cover of LVT(A) fire.

The 2d Battalion jumped off on the 10th with Companies F and G passing through the night defenses of Company E, dropping onto the beach from the top of a 10-foot-high seawall, and wading 400 yards across the stream mouth to a point on the south bank opposite the ridge. Shells from LVT(A)s pounded this high ground and Itoman beyond it. Following this preparation, the assault troops scaled the seawall to attack these two objectives. Although the battalion lost five officers in the first seven minutes of fighting,<sup>30</sup> the onsurging Marines swept over the ridge, through the ruins of Itoman, and on to the high ground beyond the southern edge of the town.

At the same time that the 2d Battalion had crashed through Itoman, 1/7, spear-

<sup>30</sup> *2/7 SAR*, p. 8.

headed by Company A, made a rapid and unopposed rush to the crest of the hill north of Tera, where the Japanese strongpoint that had opposed the 7th Marines on the previous day was located. From this newly gained height, the battalion called for an artillery concentration on the high ground immediately east of Tera. Battalion 81mm mortars blistered the village with a barrage of white phosphorous shells, burning to the ground all buildings still standing. Although few Japanese troops were found in the area, numerous dazed civilians, who had miraculously escaped death in the bombardment, were discovered wandering aimlessly among the ruins. After sending the Okinawans to stockades in the rear, 1/7 prepared night positions and organized for the scheduled 11 June attack on Kunishi Ridge. (See Map 21.)

By 10 June, the rains had ended and the transportation problem, although not so critical as it had been previously, was still not completely alleviated. The ground was drying and once-overflowing streams had lowered to a point where the road-construction and bridge-building efforts of the engineers could open the way to tracked and wheeled vehicles. Division engineers had converted oil drums into culverts and built tank fords over the fire-swept Mukue Gawa. In addition, the engineers provided round-the-clock maintenance for these fords so that the heavy traffic south could continue unabated. One especially important ford was built at the point where the Zawa-Tera highway crossed the Mukue.<sup>31</sup>

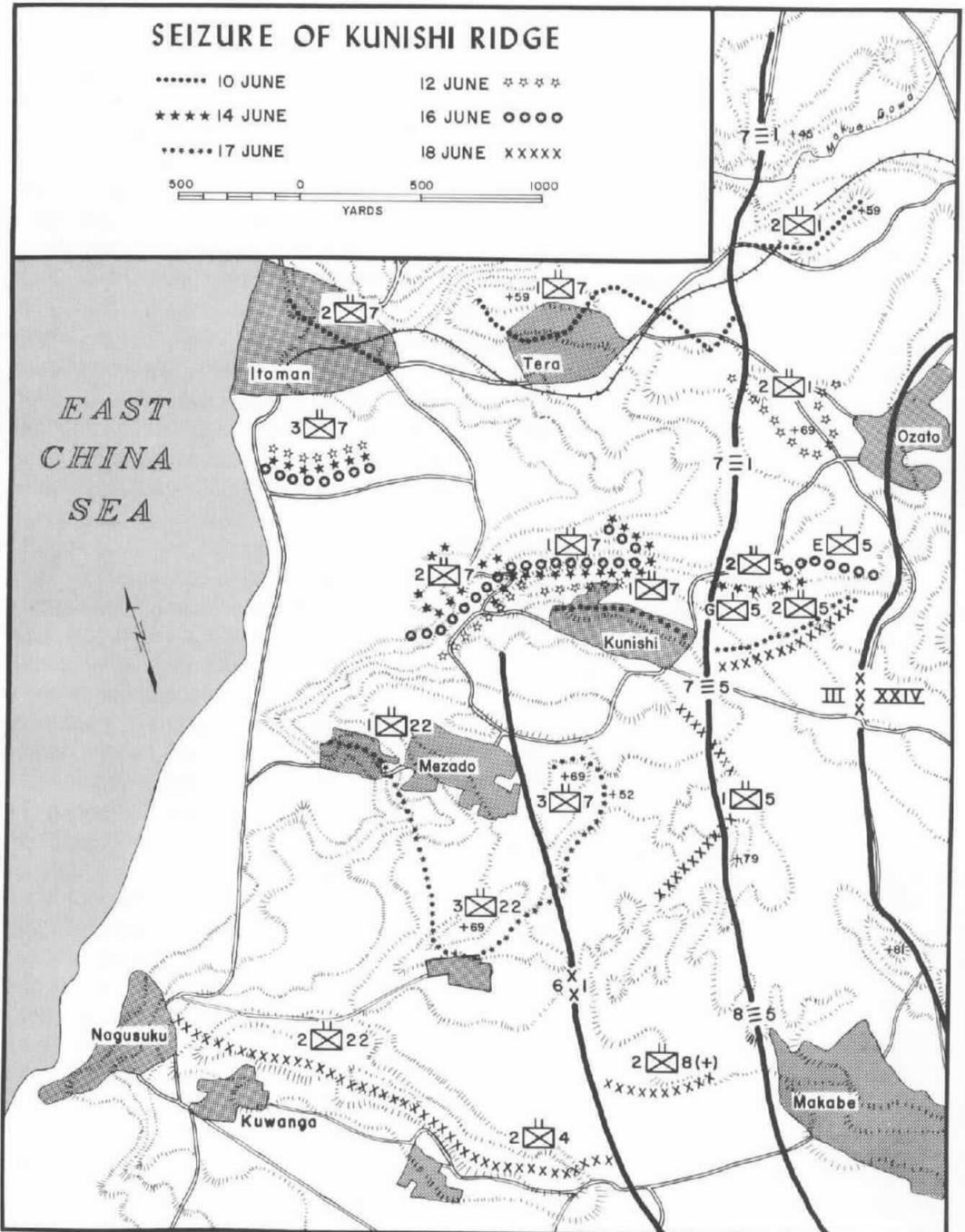
The task assigned to 1/1 was the capture of Yuza Hill, the high ground approximately 700 yards west of Yuza and about 450 yards directly north of Ozato; 2/1 was to support the attack by fire, while units of the 96th Division were to provide security to the left flank of the 1st Marines. When the tank fords over the Mukue were opened on 10 June, Shermans also moved forward to support the 1st Marines attack.

Another support element, the 11th Marines, assisted the infantry assault. Following a rolling barrage, tank-infantry teams from 1/1 swept onto the western nose of the hill and Company C swarmed up to its crest in the face of blazing enemy machine gun and artillery fire. The company lost 70 of its 175 men in this charge.<sup>32</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Shofner's attack plan called for Company B to follow in the left rear of the lead elements and then to attack straight up the hill after first having worked its way through Yuza into jump-off positions. Upon reaching the crest, B was to tie in with Company C on its right and with the Army units on the left. Although the latter had begun the attack abreast of 1/1, Japanese troops entrenched in the extremely well-fortified Yuza Dake escarpment prevented the soldiers from advancing beyond their line of departure. Company B was unable to move forward because of the intense artillery and mortar fire coming from the front of the Army zone, and could not help Company C, which was isolated in an exposed and extremely tenuous position.

Late in the afternoon, Shofner sent Company B around to the right to join

<sup>31</sup> *1st MarDiv SAR*, chap VII, pt III, p. 13.

<sup>32</sup> *1/1 SAR*, p. 21.



MAP 21

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the company on the hill. Both assault companies had sustained heavy casualties in the fighting, but C was hit hardest; all of its officers were either dead or wounded. More Marines were lost during the night, 10–11 June, as a result of the constant deluge of enemy mortar and artillery fire placed on the hill. Added to this heavy toll were the casualties caused by grazing machine gun fire coming from weapons emplaced on Yuza Dake. Twenty more men were wounded in the dawn of 11 June, when at 0400, the Japanese mounted an unsuccessful counterattack. For the next two days, 1/1 waited on Yuza Hill for the 96th Division infantry to reduce the escarpment to the east. The Marine battalion had little trouble in maintaining its hill position despite the persistent Japanese artillery fire harassing it the entire time.

While the 1st Battalion fought to gain its objective on the 10th, 2/1 with the help of armor support successfully cleaned the enemy out of the commanding ridge between Tera and Yuza. The next day, because 1/1 had been stymied on Yuza Hill, Lieutenant Colonel Magee's battalion was ordered to capture Hill 69, the commanding terrain feature directly west of Ozato. At 1030, the closely coordinated tank-infantry-artillery attack began when the battalion moved out in a column of companies. Initial progress was rapid, but when the infantry vanguard entered the valley leading to Ozato, well-placed Japanese mortar and artillery concentrations caused many Marine casualties. As the left flank of the spearhead approached Ozato, enemy machine gun and rifle fire began mowing down the attackers.

These mounting losses gradually slowed the momentum of the Marine assault, which the battalion commander attempted to revive by placing a second company in the line of attack to the right of the first. Despite the increasing volume of the massed fires provided by 2/1 supporting arms, enemy fire continued unabated. Disregarding their slowly ebbing strength and the loss of three supporting tanks, the assault units surged forward to capture the objective shortly before sundown. By dark, the battalion had consolidated the position and set in night defense lines from which it repulsed numerous infiltration attempts and blunted one counterattack before 11 June dawned.

In preparation for the many casualties anticipated during the fighting yet remaining, a light plane landing strip was placed into operation approximately 2,000 yards north of Itoman on 11 June. It was noted at the time that, for maintaining morale and obtaining immediate medical treatment for critical cases, "the value of this means of evacuating casualties cannot be overstressed."<sup>33</sup> Now casualties were flown almost directly from medical clearing stations immediately behind the front to hospitals in the rear, a distance of 12 miles, in an average time of 8 minutes. This brief flight obviated a long and often body-racking haul in an ambulance jeep over roads that were practically nonexistent. From 11 to 22 June, VMO-3 and -7 flew out 641 casualties from this strip.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *1st MarDiv SAR*, chap VII, Logistics Anx, p. 9.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*



**MARINE CASUALTIES** are evacuated by a spotter plane from a temporary airstrip north of Itoman. (USN 80-G-498161)



**8TH MARINES** landing on Iheya Shima. (USMC 126988)

On the same day the landing strip became operational, Colonel Snedeker's 7th Marines advanced 400 to 1,000 yards against ever-stiffening enemy opposition. The 1st Battalion, having cleared Tera, attacked to gain the high ground immediately south of the village. After mopping up in Itoman, 2/7 pushed 500 yards southward. Confronting the regiment now, approximately 800 yards equidistant from the outskirts of Tera and Itoman, was Kunishi Ridge, to be "the scene of the most frantic, bewildering, and costly close-in battle on the southern tip of Okinawa."<sup>35</sup>

#### BATTLE FOR KUNISHI RIDGE<sup>36</sup>

Running from the northeast to the southwest for a distance of perhaps 1,500 yards, the sheer coral escarpment of Kunishi Ridge held Japanese positions which comprised the western anchor of the last heavily defended line in front of Kiyamu. Both the forward and reverse slopes of the ridge were replete with caves, weapons emplacements, and fortified tombs, all of which reinforced natural defenses provided by the complex and difficult terrain features of the ridge itself. In front of the 7th Marines line, a broad valley containing grassland and rice paddies led to this crag and afforded the defenders unobstructed lanes of fire and the attackers little cover and concealment. Approaching tanks would fare no better

than the infantry since they were restricted to two routes leading into the objective area—both covered extremely well by Japanese antitank guns. One road followed the coast line; the second cut across the center of the ridge at a right angle, dividing it. (See Map 21.)

Having pushed through Itoman and Tera during the morning of 11 June, 2/7 and 1/7 prepared to continue on to Kunishi Ridge. Immediately after midday, tank-infantry teams from both assault battalions moved out towards the objective. Two hours later, withering frontal fire from the ridge, enfilade fire from the yet-uncaptured Hill 69, and accurate artillery concentrations on the tanks forced the attack to a halt. Because of these fires, and more coming from Japanese-held Yuza Dake, the commander of the 7th determined that it would be too costly to continue the attack in the daylight, so at 1447, he ordered the assault forces to withdraw. After making an aerial reconnaissance of the ridge in a low-flying observation plane,<sup>37</sup> Colonel Snedeker concluded that a night attack would be the course of action most likely to succeed.<sup>38</sup>

That afternoon, as the battalions dug in a night defense and prepared to continue the attack on the following day, the two assault battalion commanders were thoroughly oriented on the general

<sup>35</sup> Maj John S. Hudson ltr to CMC, dtd 27Mar47.

<sup>36</sup> General del Valle had visited Snedeker's CP that day "in order to see how we could break the deadlock, stop our heavy losses and get on with the war. When he suggested a battalion night attack for a limited objective, I agreed." LtGen Pedro A. del Valle ltr to Asst G-3, HQMC, dtd 1Oct65, hereafter *del Valle ltr 1965*.

<sup>35</sup> Appleman, *et. al.*, *Okinawa Battle*, p. 451.

<sup>36</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material contained in this section is derived from: *1st MarDiv SAR*; *1st MarDiv G-3 Jnl*; *1st Mar SAR*; *5th Mar SAR*; *7th Mar SAR*; *7th Mar Hist*; *22d Mar SAR, Ph III*.

scheme of maneuver at the regimental CP. Colonel Snedeker decided to attack straight across the valley, using the road leading into the ridge as the boundary separating the battalion zones and the telephone poles bordering the road as a guide. The assaulting battalions were to penetrate the enemy defenses at the point where the road entered the ridge. There the battalions were to peel off to their zones of attack and roll up the enemy's line. Until the hour of attack, 0330, on 12 June, normal artillery fires would be placed alternately on Kunishi Ridge and then Mezado Ridge (500–600 yards southwest of Kunishi), and thereafter only on the latter. In order to maintain deception and guarantee that the enemy would be surprised, the division issued an order prohibiting the use of flares and illumination of any kind—except in emergencies—after 0245.<sup>39</sup>

Before the night attack began, however, the Tenth Army decided to employ another type of weapon. Prior to and following the 1 April assault landings, the Japanese on the island had been subjected to a massive psychological warfare effort in which propaganda leaflets were delivered by aircraft and artillery shells. Also, Japanese-language broadcasts were directed at the enemy over loudspeakers placed near the front lines.<sup>40</sup> For a period of several days preceding 11 June, this war of paper and words had been accelerated and an emphasis placed on the hopelessness of the Japanese position and the futility of continued fighting. Both the leaflets and the broadcasts called upon General Ushijima to surrender.

<sup>39</sup> *1st MarDiv G-3 Jnl*, 11Jun45.

<sup>40</sup> *Tenth Army AR*, chap 11, pt II, p. 21.

On the afternoon of 11 June, General Buckner sent a Tenth Army reception party, fully empowered to negotiate with any Japanese parley group, to the 2/7 observation post overlooking Ito-man. At 1700, all American firing ceased in the 7th Marines zone in dubious but hopeful anticipation of an enemy party bearing white flags. No such group appeared, although six Japanese soldiers did surrender about an hour later to Marines in the lines. The battlefield's unnatural silence was shattered at 1804 when hostile mortar fire fell on the surrender point and American artillery resumed fire on Kunishi in answer.<sup>41</sup>

Both battalions were poised to attack Kunishi Ridge with one company leading the assault. At H-Hour minus 1 (0230), Companies C and F proceeded to assembly areas and contacted each other on the line of departure. At 0500, when reinforcing Companies B and G moved out in their trace, the two assault units had already reached the crest of the ridge, achieving complete surprise. Company C, for example, destroyed several small enemy groups in the act of preparing their breakfasts.

<sup>41</sup> *1/7 SAR*, p. 20. General Ushijima did not immediately receive the message affording him an opportunity to surrender to General Buckner. It arrived at *Thirty-second Army* headquarters on 17 June, a week after it first had been dropped behind Japanese lines. Colonel Yahara stated that this was the normal amount of time required for a message to be passed from the front to the rear at this stage of the campaign. *Yahara Interrogation*. Upon delivery of the Buckner communique, "Cho and Ushijima both laughed and declared that, as *Samurai*, it would not be consonant with their honor to entertain such a proposal." *Shimada Interrogation*.

At daybreak, while en route through the valley to reinforce the Marines digging in on the ridge, intense enemy fire caught the two follow-up companies and pinned them down. It became painfully apparent that the Japanese defenders had quickly recovered from their initial setback. In no mood to relinquish their hold on Kunishi Ridge without a last-ditch fight, they began lobbing hand grenades on the Marines situated in the forward positions. Here, Company F was consolidating at a point approximately 400 yards due north of Mezado village and was tied in on its left with Company C, whose line was extended some 450 yards to the northeast.

Under the cover of smoke and with the assistance of tanks, the companies stalled in the valley made three attempts to reach the ridge during daylight on the 12th. Meanwhile, the troops already there needed rations, medical supplies, ammunition, and reinforcements; there were wounded to be evacuated also. Tanks attempting to get into firing positions south of Tera to silence the enemy weapons and relieve the companies pinned down were themselves fired upon, and in fact were unable even to leave the cover of the village.

In midafternoon, the Shermans were pressed into service to carry rations and personnel up to the ridge. At 1555, concealed in Tera from enemy observation, the tanks were loaded with supplies and Marines for the trip forward. Before dark, a total of nine tankloads in three runs had carried a reinforced platoon of 54 Marines and critical replenishment items up to the line. By displacing the assistant driver of each tank, it was possible to cram six riflemen inside in-

stead. On arrival at the ridge, men and supplies were unloaded through tank escape hatches and casualty evacuees embarked in their place.

No further trips to the ridge were possible because of approaching darkness. In addition, the road leading to the front lines had caved in under the last tank in the column returning from the third trip. This tank bellied up, and neither the crew nor the casualties inside could leave through the escape hatch. After Marine mortars had fired a smoke cover for the tank, another came alongside to evacuate the troops it held. The disabled tank was then disarmed and abandoned for the night. In all, 1st Tank Battalion vehicles evacuated 22 wounded from the ridge.<sup>42</sup>

The darkness precluding further tank operations enabled the remainder of the 1st and 2d Battalion of the 7th Marines to move to the ridge without incident. In regimental reserve, the 3d Battalion patrolled to the rear and guarded the flanks of the other two. With three companies now up front, each of the two forward battalions extended its lines further. By midnight, the battalion commanders were convinced that their positions were reasonably secure,<sup>43</sup> and reassured that "the large amount of artillery support available could destroy any enemy counter-attack which might be made against the initial ridgehead. . . ." <sup>44</sup> As General del Valle described it, "The situation was one of the tactical oddities of this peculiar warfare. We were *on* the ridge.

<sup>42</sup> *1st TkBn Summary*, 12Jun45.

<sup>43</sup> *7th Mar Hist*, p. 30.

<sup>44</sup> *Snedeker ltr 1955*.

The Japs were *in* it, both on the forward and reverse slopes.”<sup>45</sup>

Patrols from the 1st Marines ranged south along the corps boundary and into the outskirts of Ozato on 12 June. Although furious fighting was then going on in the 7th Marines zone, the 1st encountered relatively little opposition except for sporadic fire from Kunishi Ridge that was placed on cave-sealing and mopping-up teams working in the vicinity of Hill 69. On the following day, combat patrols began reconnoitering towards Kunishi Ridge in preparation for a predawn attack scheduled for the 14th.

Throughout the division zone, all efforts on 13 June were concentrated on preparing for this large-scale operation. The incessant cannonading of artillery pieces and naval rifles gave the forces of General Ushijima in the southern part of the island no respite. Two rocket launching craft took positions off the southern tip of Okinawa to rake reverse slope defenses of the *Thirty-second Army*. More than 800 5-inch rockets ripped into the towns of Makabe and Komesu in an hour's time alone.

In the four days following its seizure of Kunishi Ridge, the 7th Marines was somewhat isolated from other friendly ground units by “No Man's Valley,”<sup>46</sup> the 800-yard approach to its positions. This broad expanse was thoroughly covered by the fire of Japanese soldiers infesting the lower slopes and crests flanking the ridge. Supplies were either paradropped or brought in by tanks. Some air drops fell in the valley, “but

they were in the minority.”<sup>47</sup> The rest were right on target and fell into a drop zone under Marine control. Sometimes it was even dangerous for the Marines to recover supply containers in these supposedly safe areas because of the many enemy snipers awaiting such targets of opportunity. One Japanese sharpshooter alone killed and wounded 22 Marines before he was finally located and eliminated.<sup>48</sup>

Despite the inviting target their sheer bulk offered, tanks had to be used and did yeoman work in hauling supplies forward to the ridge. On their return trip, they evacuated casualties, some of whom were strapped to the side of the Shermans and then sandbagged as protection against enemy fire. In the morning of the 13th, a tank dozer constructed a bypass around the place where the road had caved in on the previous day. Upon completion of the detour, the lumbering mediums began shuttling back and forth to the ridge. Some of the tanks placed point-blank fire on enemy ridge positions covering the supply route in the 1/7 zone, and other tanks operated in the 2/7 zone, working over the western end of Kunishi Ridge. On the supply/evacuation runs, tanks lifted some 50 Marines from Company A to reinforce the rest of 1/7 on the ridge, and took out 35 casualties on the return trip.<sup>49</sup>

During the course of the day, the assault battalions continued consolidating their holdings on Kunishi, and 1/7 sent patrols east along the ridge to contact

<sup>45</sup> del Valle, “Southward from Shuri,” p. 40.

<sup>46</sup> *7th Mar Hist, loc. cit.*

<sup>47</sup> *Snedeker ltr 1947.*

<sup>48</sup> *7th Mar Hist, loc. cit.*

<sup>49</sup> *1st TkbN Summary, 13Jun45.*

the enemy and uncover his positions. The battalion advanced only slightly. When a Japanese smokescreen obscured Kunishi village to friendly observation, 81mm mortars hammered the area to disrupt enemy activity suspected there. Shortly after twilight, a group of enemy troops was sighted on Mezado Ridge and was quickly dispersed by a heavy concentration of mortar and small arms fire. Marines from 2/7 patrolled along the west coast but were soon pinned down by long-range enemy fire coming from the eastern part of the ridge; they had to be withdrawn under the cover of smoke.

An increasing number of tanks became disabled by the accurate fire of AT guns well hidden in the ridge. A salvo from the main battery of a supporting battleship scored four observed direct hits on enemy emplacements, but did little to subdue other Japanese positions in the area. This particular barrage exploded on targets within 250 yards of friendly troops.<sup>50</sup>

During the night of 13 June, the 1st Marines was ordered to attack the front of Kunishi Ridge in its zone before dawn the next day; H-Hour was set for 0330. Following a 30-minute artillery preparation, 2/1 jumped off with two companies in assault. Despite an earlier division order prohibiting the use of flares by units adjacent to the assaulting force before and during an attack at night, the attack area and the attackers were nonetheless illuminated. Many urgent calls to higher echelons for an immediate ban placed on the

firing of flares proved fruitless.<sup>51</sup> Fortunately, the Marines advanced undiscovered by the enemy and initial progress was unopposed. By 0500, two platoons from Company E had reached the topographical crest of the ridge; the support platoon and company headquarters were stopped well below this point by extremely severe enemy fire.

Half an hour later, Company G had worked one of its platoons up to a point on the ridge where it tied in with the left flank of Company E. At daybreak, increasingly active enemy sniping and intense fire on the flanks and rear of the assault companies served to isolate these platoons from the rest of their battalion. Tanks then rumbled forward to support the beleaguered Marines, whose casualties were mounting rapidly. One company lost six of its seven officers.<sup>52</sup> Because routes to the advance positions were under accurate and direct enemy fire, the mediums were again pressed into action to haul supplies up to the line and carry casualties to the rear, much in the same manner as they had for the 7th Marines elsewhere on Kunishi Ridge. At the end of the day, an estimated 110 wounded Marines had been evacuated by the tanks.<sup>53</sup>

Even though the enemy attempted to dislodge them, the Marines held onto their tenuous position. After dark, the reserve company was moved up and a perimeter defense was established for the night. Japanese small arms, mortar, and artillery fire, and recurring showers of hand grenades poured on the Marine

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<sup>50</sup> Marginal comment by the battalion commander in 2/7 SAR, p. 9.

<sup>51</sup> 2/1 SAR, p. 15.

<sup>52</sup> 1st Mar SAR, p. 22.

<sup>53</sup> 1st TkBn Summary, 14Jun45.

positions throughout the hours of darkness. In addition, the enemy made many attempts to infiltrate all along the line.

As the sun rose on 15 June, 2/1 found enemy pressure to be as constant as it had been the day before, and battalion casualties reaching alarming proportions. Although the tanks continued to carry supplies and evacuate the wounded, 2/1 critically needed ammunition and rations. A requested air drop scheduled for 0900 was delayed until the middle of the afternoon, and then more than two-thirds of the packs dropped into enemy territory and could not be recovered. The efforts of 2/1 assault companies notwithstanding, Kunishi Ridge was far from secured when 2/5 relieved 2/1 after dark on the 15th.<sup>54</sup>

Earlier that day, 3/5<sup>55</sup> had relieved 1/1 on Yuza Hill, following which, the latter moved to an assembly area near Dakiton; 3/1 had already set up in the vicinity of Shindawaku. With 2/5 on the line, Colonel Griebel had complete responsibility for the zone formerly held by the 1st Marines.

During the afternoon before 2/5 was to go into the lines, its company commanders were taken by tank to the front lines to make a personal reconnaissance of the area they were to take over. When they arrived at the positions of 2/1, they discovered that the tactical situation precluded a daylight relief. They also found that 2/1 held only a 75-yard section on the crest of Kunishi Ridge, with a portion of the battalion occupying a small pocket on the forward slopes

of the ridge. As a result of this situation, the commanders of 2/1 and 2/5 agreed that the relief should begin only after it had become dark. In order to maintain tight control over the move and prevent matters from becoming confused in the restricted area where the relief was to take place, Lieutenant Colonel Benedict decided to commit only one of his companies initially. The relief of 2/1 was completed at 2030, a half hour after it had begun. The 1st Marines as a whole went into division reserve at 2300, after having been in the division line for 12 straight days during which it suffered nearly 500 casualties.

On the day before fresh troops had joined in the fight for Kunishi, the 7th Marines resumed its grinding advance by "the slow, methodical destruction of enemy emplacements on the ridge, to which the descriptive word 'processing' had come to be applied."<sup>56</sup> The 2d Battalion was ordered to seize the rest of the ridge in its zone and to be prepared to continue the attack to Mezado Ridge. Company A attacked east to seize the remainder of the reverse slope of Kunishi Ridge within the 7th Marines zone, while B and C provided fire support and mopped up behind the assault company. Despite difficult terrain and an unrelenting enemy opposition, Company A succeeded in closing to the outskirts of Kunishi village.

At 1247, Company B was ordered to continue the advance through Kunishi, and then to attack north to secure the forward slope of the easternmost sector of Kunishi Ridge. Although the company passed through the village and

<sup>54</sup> 2/1 SAR, p. 15.

<sup>55</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Hill assumed command of the battalion on 8 June, when 3/5 had been in reserve.

<sup>56</sup> 7th Mar Hist, p. 31.

began heading for the high ground with only slight interference, withering machine gun fire soon pinned down all but two rifle squads, which were able to climb the height. Once the Marines had gained the crest of the ridge, the Japanese launched a strong counterattack, forcing the squads from their temporary holding. The company as a whole then withdrew to lines held the previous night.

To the right of 1/7, the 2d Battalion was subjected to increasingly intense enemy fire despite suppressive American counter-barrages; 2/7 reported only limited gains that day. At 1530, the logistic and tactical support of the 7th Marines by tanks ended when the armor began assisting the 1st Marines. On the 14th, the tracked vehicles had carried 48 men of the 7th Marines forward and evacuated 160.<sup>57</sup>

During the following two days, 2/7 was supported by naval gunfire, artillery, air, rockets, and 81mm mortars, which mercilessly pounded the enemy. Both gun and flame tanks furnished direct close-in support, but could make no appreciable dent in Japanese defenses. A stubborn enemy notwithstanding, 2/7 moved its lines some 500–700 yards to the right and in front of the first high ground leading to the Mezado Hill mass, the division objective after Kunishi.

The 1st Battalion fared no better in its attempt to seize the rest of Kunishi Ridge in its zone on 15 June than it had on the 14th. Notified that 15 artillery battalions were on call for supporting fires, 1/7 moved out at 0945 following an artillery preparation and preliminary

patrolling. Company C attacked directly east along the ridge while B moved through Kunishi village and then turned north towards the high ground again.

Heavy Japanese fire from prepared emplacements prevented the Marines from advancing across the open ground between the village and the ridge line, and Company C was unable to relieve the pressure on B. At 1600, the two units were withdrawn once again to positions held 13–14 June.

During the night 15–16 June, small enemy groups were active in front of 1/7 lines harassing the Marines with small arms fire and lobbing hand grenades into their foxholes. Before dawn on 16 June, the troops on the left (east) flank were pulled back to the west approximately 200 yards to permit a massive artillery preparation on the objective which had stymied 1/7 the preceding two days. An extremely heavy concentration of artillery, mortar, and rocket fire drummed that day's target for nearly three hours before the assault forces jumped off. By 1345, 1/7 had completely seized the rest of the ridge in its zone and immediately began mopping up and consolidating its newly won ground. Shortly thereafter, battalion troops "repeatedly encountered and destroyed numerous groups of the enemy wandering through the town of Kunishi in a confused, disorganized, and bewildered state. It was evident that the end was not far off."<sup>58</sup>

One other major accomplishment that afternoon was the capture by Company A of "The Pinnacle," a particularly difficult enemy strongpoint situated so that

<sup>57</sup> *1st TkBn Summary*, 14Jun45.

<sup>58</sup> *7th Mar Hist*, p. 32.

it could be neither destroyed nor neutralized by any type of support weapon immediately available. It was in this area that the enemy sniper who had shot 22 Marines earlier was hunted down and killed. Approaches to The Pinnacle were swept by Japanese fire, and its seizure by the infantry was slow, tortured, and costly.<sup>59</sup>

To the right of 1/7, the 2d Battalion lines were extended some 400 yards further west to where the battalion held the first high terrain approaching the Mezado hills. This progress was accomplished even while the battalion had sustained heavy casualties and lost its valuable armored support, which fell victim to Japanese land mines and 47mm AT guns. Expert employment of its supporting arms enabled 2/7 to make slight gains on the 16th. For example, salvos from the main battery of USS *Idaho* were called down on targets located within 400 yards of frontline troops. In addition, air liaison parties controlled air strikes, often consisting of 25–30 planes each, which successfully destroyed stubborn pockets holding up the advance.<sup>60</sup>

No longer was Kunishi Ridge a major obstacle in the way of the 1st Marine Division, for the terrain that the Japanese had so doggedly defended here, including the approaches to Mezado, had been virtually cleaned out by the end of 16 June. Only that portion of the ridge on the far left of the division, in the 5th Marines zone, still presented some problems. With the reduction of enemy opposition on The Pinnacle, the 7th Ma-

rines was able to make physical contact with the 5th.

As 1st Division troops prepared for the final drive south, mopping up operations on Oroku Peninsula neared an end. Concurrently, General Shepherd's staff drew up plans for the eventual commitment of the 6th Division in the southern front. Initially, the 22d Marines was to pass through right flank elements of the 7th Marines on 17 June to relieve 2/7; 3/7 would come out of reserve to relieve the 1st Battalion. (See Map 21.)

In the 5th Marines zone on 16 June, 2/5 attacked at 0730 and spent the day working over that portion of the regimental area that lay between Kunishi Ridge and Hill 69. At approximately 1800, a reinforced company reached the crest of the ridge and tied in with the left flank unit of the 7th Marines. Bitter, close-quarter fighting had been the order of the day for 2/5, whose assault companies had received continuously heavy small arms fire. Rising casualty figures again required tanks to be employed as evacuation vehicles; this task was in addition to their shuttling ammunition and rations forward. In face of Japanese holding action to its front, 2/5 made slow but steady progress.

Although enemy infiltrators attempted to breach 5th Marines lines during the night 16–17 June, they were thoroughly discouraged. As 2/5 resumed the attack on the 17th, oppressive enemy small arms fire coming from the vicinity of Aragachi in the XXIV Corps zone punished the front and flank of the battalion. Its task was to seize that portion of Kunishi Ridge still held by the enemy. Attacking with a two-company front, the 2d Battalion faced the problem of coping

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>60</sup> 2/7 SAR, p. 10.

with Japanese reverse-slope positions and destroying them. To smooth the way somewhat, a rocket barrage was laid on the objective. A short time later, at 1030, tanks moved out and clambered over the ridge route, which had been opened earlier by an armored bulldozer.

Murderous enemy fire criss-crossed the crest of the ridge as 2/5 grimly pushed on. All tanks were pressed into action as armored ambulances once again, but only the walking wounded could be taken inside of the vehicles and evacuated. Stretcher cases presented a serious problem because they could not be taken up through the tank escape hatches, but had to be lashed to their rear decks. Often, wounded were hit a second and third time on their trip to the aid station.

Throughout the afternoon, the volume and intensity of enemy fire as well as the ferocity of the enemy opposition remained undiminished. Tank, artillery, and mortar fire, and the ripple fire of several rocket barrages were directed at suspected Japanese strongpoints and weapons emplacements in an attempt to open the way for Marine tank-infantry teams. At 1700, Lieutenant Colonel Benedict decided to commit his reserve company and further strengthen the assault companies by sending forward 133 replacements, which had been assigned to the battalion three days earlier.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>61</sup> 2/5 SAR, p. 21. On 11 June, the division received 369 officers and enlisted from the 55th Replacement Draft, which arrived that day. With the arrival of the 62d Replacement Draft five days later, the division absorbed 295 more Marines. *1st MarDiv SAR*, PersAnx, p. 7.

With this infusion of fresh troops in its line, 2/5 surged eastward along the ridge; by nightfall, the battalion held approximately three-fourths of the 1,200 yards of Kunishi Ridge in the regimental zone.<sup>62</sup> Because the position of the battalion was somewhat precarious, at dusk Colonel Griebel attached Company K, 3/5, to the 2d Battalion with a mission of protecting the battalion rear. At 2315, an estimated company-sized counterattack hit 2/5 positions, but was thoroughly blunted; Company K troops killed the few Japanese that succeeded in penetrating the lines.

On the coastal flank of the IIIAC zone, 6th Division Marines had become fully involved in the drive to the south by the end of 17 June. Moving forward during the afternoon of the previous day to relieve 2/7, the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 22d Marines attempted to cross the valley between Itoman and Kunishi, but were forestalled by the severe enemy fire covering this route. Forced to turn back to their previous positions, the two battalions waited until dark to begin the relief.<sup>63</sup> The uneventful passage of the lines began at 0300, 17 June, and by dawn assault elements were in jump-off positions at the base of the northern slope of Mezado Ridge, prepared to attack at 0730 in coordination with 3/7 on the left.

An artillery, naval gunfire, and air bombardment of Mezado Ridge, and of Hill 69<sup>64</sup> and Kuwanga Ridge beyond it, preceded the attack. Once the fires had lifted, the 22d Marines moved out with

<sup>62</sup> 2/5 SAR, *loc. cit.*

<sup>63</sup> *7th Mar Hist*, p. 32.

<sup>64</sup> This is not to be confused with the Hill 69 west of Ozato, or the Hill 69 east of Mezado.

two assault battalions abreast—3/22 on the left. Machine gun and intermittent mortar fire paced the advance up the slope of the ridge, but as the morning wore on, the Marine progress became increasingly difficult in the face of stiffening resistance.

To support the attack of 1/22, 6th Division tanks moved around the right flank of the regiment and through the water towards an off-shore reef to gain firing positions commanding direct observation of the caves on the western tip of Mezado Ridge. As one armored platoon began to negotiate the route, the unexpected depth of the water prevented it from working its way forward far enough to enfilade the ridge, and its tanks were forced to deliver supporting fire from the most advanced points that they had been able to reach.<sup>65</sup> Tank weapons could not suppress the heavy machine gun fire coming from the reverse slope of the hill mass holding up 1/22. As a result, the battalion was unable to gain more than a foothold on the forward slope of Mezado Ridge until 1700, when it positioned two companies on the crest of the ridge for night defense.

Inadequate maneuvering room to the front also limited the employment of supporting armor. Besides the flank route through the water, the only other suitable tank road ran through a rice paddy which had been cratered in four places and heavily mined as well. Once the mines were removed or neutralized, tanks lumbered up to these craters and dumped into them bundles of large logs that had been attached to their front slope plates. Tanks and logs instead of

dump trucks and fill dirt were used to plug the craters because only armored-plated vehicles could weather the severe enemy fires.

After two craters in the road had been filled, it was discovered that the approaches to a small bridge further up the road had been mined. Sniper and machine gun fire prevented engineer clearing teams from neutralizing the mined area, and the road project was abandoned temporarily. Nonetheless, the tanks advanced as far forward as possible to deliver overhead supporting fires.

By noon, 3/22 had secured the highest point on the ridge and maintained the momentum of its attack to clean out the town of Mezado as well. Before dusk, the battalion had captured the key terrain around Hill 69 and was in command of the ground overlooking the next objective, Kuwanga Ridge. With the exception of an attempted enemy counter-attack in the sector of 1/22 at 2210, a generally quiet night was passed by the 22d Marines.

When 1st Division troops jumped off on the 17th, 3/7 attacked in a column of companies, Company K leading, to take the Hill 69 east of Mezado. Company I maintained contact with the 22d Marines, and Company L took up positions to protect the left flank of K. Following an unopposed 1,400-yard drive across the plateau just east of Mezado to seize Hills 69 and 52, 3/7 halted for a short time to reorganize, and then attempted to continue the drive to the crest of Hill 79—the last remaining barrier before Makabe. Heavy Japanese fire from positions on the high ground commanding the Kuwanga-Makabe road forced the

<sup>65</sup> *6th TkBn SAR*, Ph III, p. 20.

battalion to dig in for the night before it could gain the hill. Once dug in, 3/7 Marines quickly organized to blunt all enemy attempts to infiltrate and counterattack in the darkness.

When the Japanese *22d Regiment* did launch its counterattack, it was directed against 1/22. This determined effort born of despair was doomed from its inception because that portion of the enemy regiment scheduled to exploit the counterattack had been almost completely destroyed that afternoon. In effect, the near annihilation of the *22d Regiment* meant that the left flank of the Japanese outpost line had all but collapsed, and that the *32d Regiment*, holding positions near Makabe, was faced with the threat of having its left flank rolled up.<sup>66</sup>

The Marines were prepared to turn this threat into reality by exploiting the successes of 17 June with the commitment of fresh troops into the battle on the next day. While the 7th Marines finished "processing" Kunishi Ridge, the 8th Marines (Reinforced), commanded by Colonel Clarence R. Wallace, prepared to relieve 3/7 to continue the attack southward. Before the dawn of 18 June, this 2d Marine Division infantry regiment, now attached to the 1st Division, entered the lines.

### *IHEYA-AGUNI OPERATIONS* <sup>67</sup>

After its feint landings on the southeastern coast of Okinawa on L-Day and

L plus 1, the 2d Marine Division remained on board its transports which steamed in the vicinity of the target area until 11 April. On that date, the Demonstration Group set out for Saipan, arriving there four days later. On 14 May, CinCPac ordered the division (less one RCT) detached from the operational control of the Tenth Army and designated it as the area reserve under control of CinCPOA. In addition, General Watson received an alert for his division to conduct Phase III(d) of the ICEBERG Plan, the landing on Kikai Jima. Once captured, this small island north of Okinawa was to be utilized as a northern outpost for the Ryukyus area, and was to base four fighter groups, two night-fighter squadrons, and one torpedo-bomber squadron.<sup>68</sup> The 8th Marines (Reinforced) remained under the control of General Buckner for the impending landings on Iheya and Aguni Shimas, and was ordered to reembark immediately.

For the entire month after its arrival at Saipan, the division remained on board the transports. A warning order for the Kikai invasion had been issued on 6 May,<sup>69</sup> but this alert was reduced in urgency four days later by a message that indicated that Phase III(d) might not be conducted. With the arrival of the 14 May message releasing the division from Tenth Army control, the Marines began unloading and rehabilitating their equipment ashore in preparation for the time when it was to be

<sup>66</sup> *Okinawa Operations Record*, p. 134.

<sup>67</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *Tenth Army AR*; 2d MarDiv WarDs, Apr-Jun45; Combat Team 8 AR, Iheya-Aguni Operations, n.d., hereafter

*8th Mar AR, Iheya-Aguni*; Combat Team 8 AR, Okinawa Operation (11-22Jun45), n.d., hereafter *8th Mar AR*.

<sup>68</sup> *USAFMidPac G-5 Hist*, p. 245.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

ordered to mount out for Kikai. On 3 June, the landing was deferred for an indefinite period, and on the 19th, the 2d Marine Division (less RCT 8) was released from its role as Ryukyus area reserve and reverted to the control of FMFPac.

Once again, on 24 May, the 8th Marines departed Saipan headed for Okinawa; its eventual target, the islands of Iheya and Aguni. Because of the heavy damage that had been sustained by the fleet and especially the radar pickets during *Kamikaze* raids, early in May Admiral Turner asked General Buckner to begin a study of outlying islands to determine where long-range radar and fighter director facilities could be installed. Resulting from this study was the decision that Tori, Aguni, Iheya, and Kume Shimas could be captured in that order. A special landing force, a reinforced company from the 165th Infantry, made an unopposed landing on Tori on 12 May and a detachment from Air Warning Squadron 1 began operations almost immediately. (See Map 22.)

Since the Okinawa campaign was now reaching a crucial stage, General Buckner believed that the forces already committed in the fight southward should not be diverted to such secondary actions as the proposed landings on the other outlying islands noted above. He requested, therefore, that the reinforced 8th Marines be returned to Okinawa to effect the Iheya-Aguni landings. Brigadier General LeRoy P. Hunt, ADC of the 2d Marine Division, was designated the landing force commander for these operations. Flying to Okinawa with key members of his staff on 15 May, General Hunt spent the 16th and part of the 17th

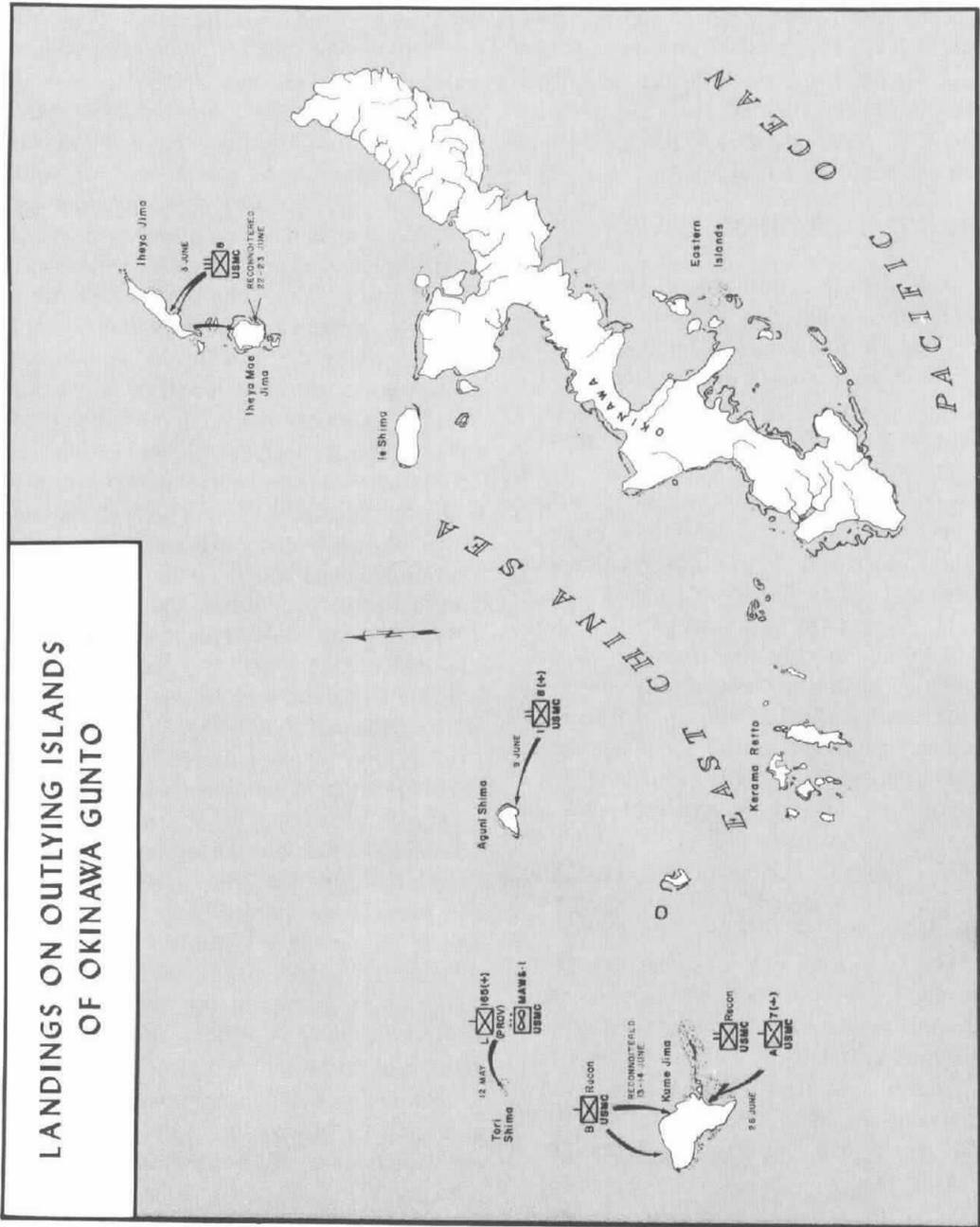
conferring with Tenth Army staff officers about the proposed operation plan. By 30 May, when the 8th Marines arrived at Okinawa, a complete naval gunfire and air support schedule had already been established, and detailed contingency plans drawn up to meet any situation that might arise from enemy sea or air action.

The attack force, commanded by Admiral Reifsnider, steamed from the Hagushi transport area early on 2 June and set a course for the target, located 15 miles northwest of Hedo Misaki. The bombardment prior to the H-Hour of 1015 proceeded as scheduled;<sup>70</sup> 2/8 and 3/8 landed on Iheya 27 minutes later.<sup>71</sup> Neither enemy opposition nor enemy troops were encountered. The Marines only found some 3,000 confused but docile natives who were taken under tow by military government teams supplied by the Tenth Army Island Command. Late in the afternoon of the 3d, the troops began general unloading and the island was officially declared secure the next day.

The landing on Aguni Shima, 30 miles west of Okinawa, was delayed until 9 June by inclement weather. On that day, 1/8 went ashore under circumstances similar to those found at Iheya. The only Marine casualties of the two amphibious assaults were sustained at Iheya; 2 Marines were killed and 16 wounded by aerial rockets and short rounds of naval gunfire. In accordance with the instructions it had received from Tenth Army before the operation, the 8th Marines stood ready for im-

<sup>70</sup> ComPhibGru 4 AR, Iheya-Aguni, Ser 0327, dtd 3Aug45, pt VI, p. 8.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pt I, p. 1.



MAP 22

mediate commitment on Okinawa upon completion of the two landings. When fresh units were needed for the final thrust against the Japanese dug in on Kiyamu Peninsula. Colonel Wallace and his troops were available.

### THE FINAL PUSH <sup>72</sup>

By 4 June, the remnants of the *Thirty-second Army* had fully manned the outpost line of Kiyamu Peninsula. Concentrated in this area were approximately 30,000 Japanese troops, distributed as follows: *24th Division* and attachments, 12,000; *62d Division* and attached units, 7,000; *44th IMB* and attached units, 3,000; *5th Artillery Command* and attached units, 3,000; and troops attached directly to *Thirty-second Army Headquarters*, and the command itself, 5,000. "Attrition during retirement operations," <sup>73</sup> was the official Japanese explanation for the 20,000-man differential between their estimated strength figure of 50,000 in late May and the total number of effectives available at the beginning of June.

Of General Ushijima's remaining forces, approximately 20 percent were survivors of the original, first-rate infantry and artillery defense garrison; the rest were either untrained rear-echelon personnel or *Boeitai*. Leading this motley force at battalion level and above were many of the original senior commanders who had remained alive and were still capable of arousing a

fighting spirit in their men.

Their unflagging belief in a final Japanese victory was unrealistic in view of the alarming losses of weapons and equipment that the *Thirty-second Army* had sustained since the American landing on 1 April. Hand grenades and explosives either were in short supply, or in the case of some units, non-existent. Only 20 percent of the original number of heavy machine guns owned by the army remained, and few of its heavy infantry cannon and mortars were still firing. Although the army ammunition supply along with 2 150mm guns, 16 150mm howitzers, and 10 anti-aircraft artillery pieces had been transported south to Kiyamu when Shuri was abandoned, the stock levels of artillery ammunition precluded more than 10 days of sustained firing.

Despite these outward signs of its imminent defeat and impoverished condition, the belief held by General Ushijima's army in ultimate victory was derived from deep-seated tradition, strongly enforced discipline, and the historically pervasive influence of Japanese military doctrine throughout the Empire. These intangibles, almost completely alien and incomprehensible to Americans, promised that Kiyamu Peninsula was not to fall and the battle for Okinawa was not to end before a final, violent climax.

Influenced by the location and relative strength of enemy strongpoints facing the Tenth Army, and the availability and status of his assault forces, General Buckner had shifted the corps boundary west on 4 June. In the now-narrower IIIAC zone, General Shepherd's division sought to capture the Oroku Pen-

<sup>72</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material contained in this section is derived from: *CTF 31 AR*; *Tenth Army AR*; *XXIV Corps AR*; *7th InfDiv AR*; *77th InfDiv OpRpt*, Okinawa; *96th InfDiv AR*; *Okinawa Operations Record*.

<sup>73</sup> *Okinawa Operations Record*, p. 122.

insula while the 1st Marine Division was to cut off the peninsula from the rest of the island, capture Itoman, seize both Kunishi and Mezado Ridges, and drive to Ara Saki, the southernmost point of the island. The assignment given XXIV Corps included the capture of the Yuza Dake-Yaeju Dake Escarpment as a primary objective. On line facing this foreboding terrain were the 96th and 7th Divisions.

Nearly two weeks of punishing and brutal fighting were to ensue before the two army divisions could eliminate all enemy resistance in this *Thirty-second Army* defense sector. (See Map IX, Map Section.) XXIV Corps units spent the period 4-8 June in regrouping and attempting to gain favorable jump-off positions for the attack on the escarpment on the 9th. All supporting arms were employed to soften the well-organized enemy defense system. Armored flamethrower, tank, assault gun, and artillery fires were added to the point-blank blasts of experimental 57mm and 75mm recoilless rifles<sup>74</sup> in

<sup>74</sup> These newly developed weapons had been sent to Okinawa in late May by the War Department for test firing under combat conditions. After the limited supply of ammunition accompanying the weapons had been expended, air shipments of the special ammunition were rushed to the island in time for employment by XXIV Corps units at the escarpment. Field commanders who had the opportunity to use these weapons were unanimous in their praise and recommended that the recoilless rifle be adopted as a standard infantry weapon. According to the former commander of the 7th Marines, these weapons ". . . could have been used to great advantage by the 7th in its seizure and processing of Kunishi ridge. They were asked for but the reply came back [that] all their ammunition had been used up." *Snedeker ltr 1965.*

an effort to reduce the natural bastion.

The defense of the Yuza Dake-Yaeju Dake outpost line had been assigned to two units. Guarding the escarpment from Hill 95 on the east coast to Yaeju Dake was the *44th IMB*; the remainder of the high ground, including Yuza Dake, was the responsibility of the *24th Division*. Added to the tenacious determination of the foe was the natural, fortress-like quality of the terrain he guarded. This combination enabled the Japanese to defend the Yuza Dake area with only one regiment, the *89th*.

Facing the 7th Division were enemy troops who compared unfavorably with the veterans defending Yuza Dake. Coming from miscellaneous shipping engineer, sea raiding, mortar, and line of communication units, the soldiers were loosely organized into provisional infantry regiments and put into the *44th IMB* line. The vital Hill 95-Nakaza Valley area was held by survivors of the *15th Independent Mixed Regiment*, which first began to give way under the repeated pounding of the 7th Division attack. General Arnold's soldiers relentlessly pushed forward on 11 June, the second day of the all-out corps assault on the escarpment, and threatened the rest of the *Thirty-second Army* line by breaking into the *44th IMB* defenses. An attempt by General Ushijima to shore up this section of his rapidly crumbling outpost by committing jerry-built infantry units comprised of service and support troops proved to be "as ineffective as throwing water on parched soil."<sup>75</sup>

The *89th Regiment* continued to withstand the inroads of 96th Division in-

<sup>75</sup> *Okinawa Operations Record*, p. 129.

fantry on 12 June, but this day marked the beginning of the end for the *44th Independent Mixed Brigade*. Although it had been reinforced with two battalions from the *62d Division* as a result of the brigade commander's urgent pleas, the time for decision was already past, as was the chance for these newly committed units to affect the ultimate course of the battle.

Clear weather on 13 June, following a night of abortive enemy counterattacks, permitted General Hodge to employ fully all of his supporting arms. Units of the *62d Division* attempting to reach and revive the hapless *44th IMB* were themselves blasted by American air, artillery, and naval gunfire. Although the *89th Regiment*—reinforced by the *24th Reconnaissance Regiment*—still maintained its hold on Yuza Dake, its rear and flank were threatened this day by the impending penetration south of Yaeju Dake. (See Map X, Map Section.) Further advances on 14 June forced General Ushijima to commit the *13th Independent Infantry*, which was almost immediately smashed by 7th Division troops. Also committed and destroyed on the 14th were the remaining reserve battalions of the *62d Division*.

Elsewhere, as Japanese positions began to give way under the pressure of the American onslaught, *Thirty-second Army* headquarters lost all contact with the *15th IMR*—the last infantry element of the *44th IMB* able to maintain unit integrity. To stave off the last stages of a crushing defeat, General Ushijima ordered the *62d Division* into the deteriorating Japanese line from reserve positions southwest of Makabe, but a savage lashing from American artillery,

naval guns, and air-delivered napalm and bombs thoroughly disrupted the deployment. Few, if any, of the enemy troops arrived at their destination.

The 96th Division took advantage of this confused situation to rush its infantry through the Yuza Dake perimeter. On the left, the 7th Division surged down the coast. By the end of 17 June, XXIV Corps regiments held firm control of all commanding ground on the Yuza Dake-Yaeju Dake Escarpment. Compressed between the front lines of the corps and the southern tip of Okinawa were the remnants of the *Thirty-second Army*—a hodge-podge of units and individuals from the *62d Division*, *44th IMB*, and *24th Division*. Before the island had been secured by the Tenth Army, most of these Japanese troops would die violently in a forlorn attempt to protect the headquarters of General Ushijima.

#### DEATH OF AN ARMY <sup>76</sup>

The death throes of the *Thirty-second Army* became even more obvious as the Tenth Army advanced against steadily lessening resistance on 18 June. Although most sections of the Japanese line proved softer than before, two isolated centers of opposition developed during the day—one around Medeira and the other in the area of Mabuni. The first was held by the remnants of the

<sup>76</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *CTF 31 AR*; *Tenth Army AR*; *IIIAC AR*; *XXIV Corps AR*; *1st MarDiv SAR*; *6th MarDiv SAR, Ph III*; *7th InfDiv AR*; *77th InfDiv OpRpt, Okinawa*; *96th InfDiv AR*; *4th Mar SAR, Ph III*; *5th Mar SAR*; *8th Mar AR*; *29th Mar SAR, Ph III*; *Okinawa Operations Record*.

24th Division, and the second, around Hill 89, was defended by elements of the headquarters and troops of the remaining *Thirty-second Army* units. (See Map 16.)

Leading the 1st Marine Division attack was the 8th Marines, which had relieved the 7th Marines the previous night. At 0730, 2/8 (Lieutenant Colonel Harry A. Waldorf) jumped off from Mezado Ridge to head south and occupy a line west of Makabe from which it could launch a "quick decisive thrust" to the sea.<sup>77</sup> Light machine gun and rifle fire, later mixed with sporadic mortar and artillery rounds, hit the left front and flank of the battalion as it made a rapid 1,400-yard advance to cap its first day in the lines. By dark, the battalion had secured its objective and began digging in for the night. Since its left flank was well forward of 1/5, Company B, 1/8, was attached to fill the gap.

Early on 18 June, General Buckner had gone forward to witness the fighting, and "probably chose the 1st Division front on this date because he wanted to see the 8th Marines in action," as he thought well of the regiment.<sup>78</sup> As General Oliver P. Smith recalled:

On his way to the front [to the 3/8 OP], General Buckner met Bob Roberts (Colonel

Harold C. Roberts, commanding Officer of the 22d Marines). Roberts urged General Buckner not to go to the front at this particular point as the rapid advance had bypassed a good many Japanese, and, further, there was considerable flanking fire coming from the high ground in front of the 96th Division. General Buckner did not heed this advice. (Roberts was killed an hour or so later on another part of the front.) The General got up on a ridge where Lieutenant Colonel Paul E. Wallace [commanding 3/8] had an OP. Tanks and infantry were operating ahead. A rifle company was on the ridge preparing to move forward. General Buckner took position behind two coral boulders separated by a slit through which he could look. His position was slightly forward of the crest. He had not been in this position long when a Japanese 47mm shell hit the base of the boulders. The first shell was followed by five more in rapid succession. Either a fragment of the first shell or a piece of coral rock thrown out by the detonation hit General Buckner in the chest. This wound was mortal. Hubbard [General Buckner's aide], with the assistance of others in the vicinity, dragged General Buckner over the crest to a defiladed position. A Navy hospital corpsman was there and a doctor arrived within three minutes. Plasma was available, but the General had lost blood so rapidly that plasma could not save his life.<sup>79</sup>

Upon being informed of General Buckner's death, Brigadier General Elwyn D. Post, Tenth Army Chief of Staff, sent a message to CinCPOA reporting the death. In addition, General Post, knowing General Buckner's expressed desires concerning the succession of command, recommended in the message that General Geiger be designated the new Tenth

<sup>77</sup> LtGen Pedro A. del Valle ltr to CMC, dtd 9Mar55, hereafter *del Valle ltr 1955*. "When General Geiger gave me the 8th Marines, a fresh regiment at full strength, I conferred with Colonel Wallace and we agreed upon his leapfrog attack, 3 battalions in column, with limited objectives, while I would cover his flanks with my exhausted troops. This was the 'coup de morte' [death blow] which broke the remnant of the 32d Japanese Army." *del Valle ltr 1965*.

<sup>78</sup> Smith, *Personal Narrative*, p. 135.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

Army commander.<sup>80</sup> On 19 June, General Geiger was appointed a lieutenant general and was officially designated Commanding General, Tenth Army (CTF 56), the same day, making him the senior officer present on Okinawa. This was the first time that a Marine officer had commanded a unit of this size. General Joseph W. Stilwell, U. S. Army, former deputy commander of the Southeast Asia Command, arrived on the island at 0700, 23 June, succeeding General Geiger the same day,<sup>81</sup> after the Marine general had successfully directed the final combat operations on Okinawa.

Early in the morning on which General Buckner died, the 5th Marines was to take Hill 79, northwest of Makabe. At dawn, 1/5 moved out around the western nose of Kunishi Ridge and then south through the 8th Marines zone in order to get into positions to jump off at

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136. During the planning phase of ICEBERG, General Buckner stated that a second-in-command of the army should be designated prior to the operation, and that he felt General Geiger capable of handling a field army. A letter recommending this appointment was sent to CinCPOA—the strategic commander of the area in which the operation was to be held—via Lieutenant General Robert C. Richardson, Jr., the Commanding General, U. S. Army Forces, Pacific Ocean Areas. The latter returned the letter with a note stating that this assignment was one for the War Department to decide. No further action was taken until the time of General Buckner's death. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35. The right of Admiral Nimitz to make this assignment evolved from the fact that the Tenth Army, Task Force 56 for the Okinawa campaign, was a task unit within the Fifth Fleet, and not under the control of General Richardson's command.

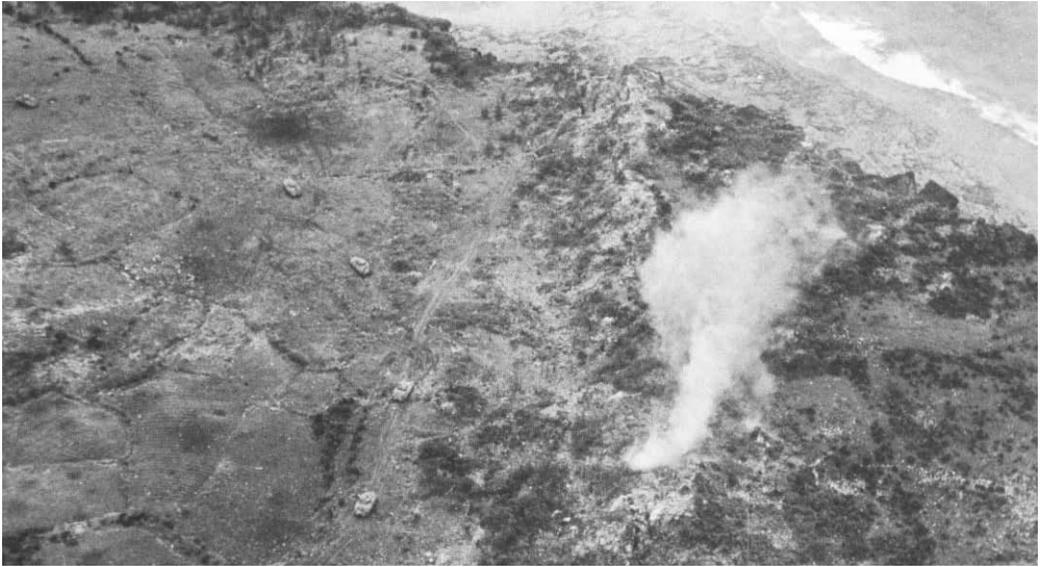
<sup>81</sup> LtGen Merwin H. Silverthorn comments to HistBr, HQMC, dtd 25Oct65.

0730.<sup>82</sup> As soon as the attack began, the assault units were pinned down by fire coming from the objective and unable to move until 1100, when tanks arrived and rumbled into support positions. A coordinated tank-infantry assault was launched soon after, and the Marines were on the hill by noon. Following in the wake of the attack was 3/5, up from reserve, which moved into support positions behind the 1st Battalion for night defense.

Enemy AT fire forced the Marine tanks to operate cautiously, but did not slow them down. Artillery-delivered smoke on a suspected antitank gun position on Hill 81 just north of Makabe blinded the enemy gunners and permitted the Shermans to operate without being fired upon. Other AT guns were destroyed during the day after having been spotted from the air by an experienced tank officer, who was flown over the battlefield for that purpose.<sup>83</sup> By dark, 1/5 had gained the lower slopes of Hill 79 with armored assistance, but could not advance beyond that point because of heavy enemy fire from high ground in the 96th Division zone and Hills 79 and 81. At the end of the day, tank-infantry teams from 2/5 eliminated the last large pockets of enemy

<sup>82</sup> The right (east) flank of the 5th Marines had been exposed by the rapid advance of the 8th Marines. Therefore, "the battle-weary and decimated infantry of the 1st MarDiv had to be employed in attacking the various hill positions along the [eastern] flank simply to cover it. . . . We knew that the XXIV Corps could not keep up with the penetration executed by fresh troops, so we planned our maneuver to provide for this expected contingency." *del Valle ltr 1955*.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*



*MARINE TANKS shelling positions in the south, where the enemy is holed up in a last-ditch stand. (USMC 126411)*



*COOPERATIVE PRISONERS call upon other Japanese to surrender. Note man at water's edge preparing to swim out to the LCI. (USA SC209533)*

resistance on Kunishi Ridge, and dug in on commanding ground for the night.

In the 6th Marine Division zone, 2/22 passed through the lines of 3/22 on 18 June to attack Kuwanga Ridge. Moving rapidly ahead despite steady automatic weapons fire, the battalion gained a foothold on the high ground and began simultaneous drives to the east and west to clear the ridge of enemy. Although fired upon by rifles, machine guns, and mortars, the battalion possessed the greater part of the ridge before mid-afternoon. At this time, General Shepherd saw that the understrength 2/22 was spread too thinly over the 1,800-yard-wide ridge to withstand a concerted enemy counterattack, so he ordered the 4th Marines to attach one battalion to the 22d for night defense; Colonel Shapley ordered 3/4 forward.

The other two battalions of the 22d Marines spent the day hunting down and destroying numerous enemy groups infesting the reverse slopes of Mezado Ridge. Forward observation posts became especially plagued by all sorts of fire coming from these bypassed Japanese soldiers. Colonel Roberts, the regimental commander of the 22d Marines, was killed at his OP by sniper fire at 1430. The regimental executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel August Larson, assumed command.

Assault forces of XXIV Corps also made important gains on the 18th. The 96th Division push on Medeira positions from the east was coordinated with the 1st Division attack on the same objective from the west. The 7th Division continued its drive with a two-pronged attack. One assault element dashed down the reverse slope of Hill

153 to sweep past Medeira and ended its attack at the corps boundary near Komesu. Three battalions abreast spearheaded the second prong of the attack, advancing slowly down the coast towards Mabuni. During the night of 18-19 June, at least 340 Japanese soldiers were killed in attempted infiltrations and scattered attacks all along the Tenth Army front.<sup>84</sup>

With the realization that "his Army's fate had been sealed,"<sup>85</sup> General Ushijima began spiritual and physical preparations for a *Samurai's* death. On 16 June, he sent the first of his farewell messages, this a report to IGHQ in Tokyo, which read:

With a burning desire to destroy the arrogant enemy, the men in my command have fought the invaders for almost three months. We have failed to crush the enemy, despite our death-defying resistance, and now we are doomed.

Since taking over this island our forces have, with the devoted support of the local population, exerted every effort to build up defenses. Since the enemy landing, our air and land forces, working in concert, have done everything possible to defend the island.

To my great regret we are no longer able to continue the fight. For this failure I tender deepest apologies to the emperor and the people of the homeland. . . . I pray for the souls of men killed in battle and for the prosperity of the Imperial Family.

Death will not quell the desire of my spirit to defend the homeland.

With deepest appreciation of the kindness and cooperation of my superiors and my colleagues in arms, I bid farewell to all of you forever.

Mitsuru Ushijima<sup>86</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Tenth Army G-2 Rpt No. 86, dtd 20Jun45.

<sup>85</sup> *Okinawa Operations Record*, p. 133.

<sup>86</sup> Inoguchi, Nakajima, and Pineau, *Divine Wind*, pp. 148-149.

Three days later, he sent a last message to all *Thirty-second Army* units with which he still had contact, congratulating the survivors on having performed their "assigned mission in a manner which leaves nothing to regret" and calling upon them "to fight to the last and die for the eternal cause of loyalty to the Emperor."<sup>87</sup> General Ushijima then directed most of his staff officers to leave the Mabuni command post, to disguise themselves as island natives, and to infiltrate the American lines in order to escape to northern Okinawa. Some of his key advisors, like Colonel Yahara, were assigned the mission of reaching Japan in order to report to *Imperial General Headquarters*; others were ordered to organize guerrilla operations in the rear of Tenth Army tactical units and the Island Command.<sup>88</sup>

Despite their having been thoroughly indoctrinated with the tenets of Japanese military tradition, there were some enemy soldiers who did not particularly wish to die for Emperor and Homeland. Psychological warfare teams had interpreters and cooperative prisoners<sup>89</sup> broadcast surrender inducements in Japanese over loudspeakers mounted on tanks operating at the 7th Division front and on LCIs cruising up and down the southern coast. These broadcasts

successfully convinced 3,000 civilians to surrender.

A more significant result of these messages occurred on 19 June, for instance, when 106 Japanese soldiers and 283 *Boeitai* voluntarily laid down their arms and gave up in the face of the 7th Division advance.<sup>90</sup> At this stage of the campaign, the broadcasts influenced increasing numbers of the enemy to surrender as the conviction that all was lost and their cause was hopeless sank into their war-weary minds.

Their forward progress now slowed by fleeing civilians as well as the entrenched enemy, 7th Division troops, nonetheless, advanced to within 200 yards of the outskirts of Mabuni by nightfall of 19 June. Tanks accompanying the assault infantry placed direct fire on caves fronting Hill 89, not knowing that at that very time, General Ushijima was giving a farewell dinner for his departing staff officers.

Farther inland, on the right of the division zone, 184th and 381st Infantry units drove towards Medeera from the south and east against considerably lessened fire and resistance. Nevertheless, small fanatic groups, defending the complex terrain protecting the *24th Division* headquarters, had to be overcome before the major objective could be seized. To the northwest of Medeera, 96th Division soldiers pushing towards Aragachi from the north found the same enemy reluctance to withdraw, encountered elsewhere along the Tenth Army front, before they could reach the high ground overlooking the village. While observing the 384th Infantry fighting

<sup>87</sup> *Okinawa Operations Record*, p. 134.

<sup>88</sup> *Yahara Interrogation; Shimada Interrogation*.

<sup>89</sup> Commenting on this after the campaign, the 6th Division noted that "By far, the most potent propaganda messages are those composed by local civilians and prisoners of war, and the most satisfactory broadcasts are those in which such persons are utilized." *6th Marine Div SAR, Ph III*, chap VI, p. 13.

<sup>90</sup> Tenth Army G-2 Rpt No. 86, dtd 20Jun45.

to gain these heights, the ADC of the 96th Division, Brigadier General Claudius M. Easley, was killed by enemy machine gun fire.<sup>91</sup>

The advance of IIIAC assault forces on 19 June was highlighted when the 8th Marines completely penetrated Japanese defensive positions to reach the sea. Less successful, however, were the efforts of the 5th Marines in a day-long attack on Hills 79 and 81. With a company of tanks in support, 1/5 jumped off at 0730 to take Hill 79 first and then 81. Despite the direct fire placed on the initial objective by the Shermans and M-7s, the battalion was unable to take Hill 79 and was forced to return to positions held the previous night.

As he observed the course of the fighting and judged that neither Hill 79 nor 81 were going to be taken, Colonel Griebel ordered 2/5 to take the latter from the south in order to lift some of the enemy pressure on 1/5. Lieutenant Colonel Benedict's 2d Battalion, which had been relieved on Kunishi Ridge at 1315 that day by 3/7, moved out in a march column at 1515, made a wide swing to the southwest through the 8th Marines zone, and halted at a point some 300 yards southwest of Hill 79 at 1700. Moving out some 15 minutes later, the battalion headed towards Makabe preparatory to attacking Hill 81. As the battalion cleared the southern slope of Hill 79 and began to maneuver across the 1,000 yards of exposed flat terrain lying between that hill and Makabe, the entire column was taken under sniper fire from the hill. Company G, in the

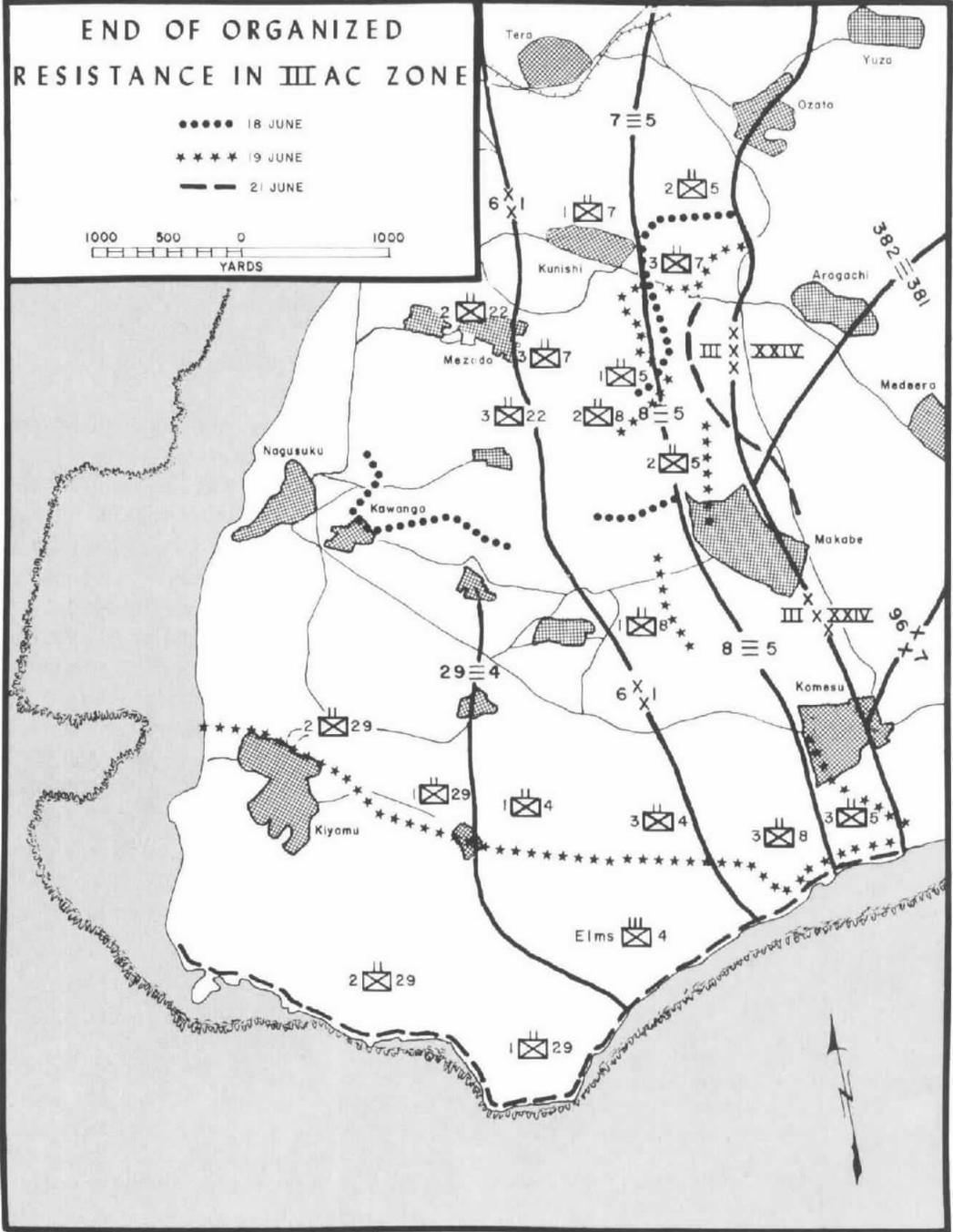
lead, was forced to double time over the entire route in order to reach some cover in Makabe. During this race for life, the company sustained some casualties from the fire as well as 20 exhaustion cases.

To maintain the momentum of the attack, the battalion commander passed Company F through G at 1950 and he himself accompanied the assault platoon, which was pinned down as soon as it attempted to move up the slope of Hill 81. The condition of his men, the lateness of the hour, and the intensity of the enemy fire compelled him to call off the attack and organize his battalion into a defense perimeter near Makabe.

More satisfactory progress in the 1st Division advance was made by the 8th Marines. (See Map 23.) After moving through 2/8 at 0800, 3/8 continued south to attack Ibaru Ridge following an hour-long artillery preparation and a 15-minute smoking of the target. At 1024, the battalion was on the ridge. Quickly it reorganized and resumed its drive by passing Company K, 3/8 reserve, through the initial assault elements more "for the experience rather than for any tactical necessity."<sup>92</sup> By 1634, the entire battalion line was in place on the seacoast in its zone. The 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, which had taken Makabe that morning, kept pace with the rapid 2,500-yard advance of 3/8 and reached the coast in its zone at approximately the same time. With 3/5 attached, Colonel Wallace's regiment took charge of the night defense of the coastal zone, and tied in with the 5th Marines and the 4th Marines along a

<sup>91</sup> Davidson, *et. al.*, *96th InfDiv Hist*, pp. 182-183.

<sup>92</sup> 3/8 AR, p. 6, encl to *8th Mar AR*.



MAP 23

T. L. RUSSELL

curving line reaching from Komesu to the boundary between the Marine divisions.

The 4th Marines made the major effort of the 6th Division on 19 June, with the 22d Marines mopping up behind. Colonel Shapley's battalions kept pace with the 8th Marines most of the day, but strongly defended enemy positions in the Kiyamu-Gusuku hill mass prevented the 4th from reaching the coast on the 19th. Mortar fire from defiladed emplacements behind the hill, and machine gun fire as well, increased in volume as the 1st and 3d Battalions moved into the low ground leading from Ibaru Ridge to the Kiyamu-Gusuku plateau. With the approach of night, the two battalions dug in at the foot of the steep rise leading to the hilltop. At 1845, 2/4, which had covered the open right flank of the regiment and had taken part in the attack on the ridge, was relieved by 1/29.<sup>93</sup>

Before moving into the 6th Division line on 20 June, the 29th Marines began

<sup>93</sup> At 1600, a POW revealed that there was an enemy force of about 20 entrenched on the small island approximately 300 yards off Nagusuku, and that these men were armed with mortars and light machine guns, which had fired on the 4th Marines flank that day. Following a short but intense Marine artillery concentration on the islet, five soldiers waded to the mainland and surrendered. One was sent back to induce the others to do the same, but without success. "The answer that came back was a definite no, and also included a remark that was not exactly complimentary." *4th Mar SAR, Ph III*, p. 15. A task force, hastily organized from the regimental weapons company, LVT(A)s, and the 1st War Dog Platoon, stormed the island. Five prisoners were taken, 20 enemy killed, and several machine guns and mortars destroyed without a single Marine casualty.

marching south from Oroku Peninsula at 0800 on the 19th. Its former sector was then occupied by the 6th Reconnaissance Company. At 1415, Colonel Whaling received orders to attack immediately in coordination with the 4th Marines. The regiment jumped off from Kuwanga Ridge at 1705 with 1/29 on the left, 2/29 on the right. Moving rapidly against light enemy resistance, the troops reached the Kiyamu-Gusuku Hill mass before dark and immediately tied in with the 4th Marines for the night.

Unperturbed by night-long disorganized enemy infiltration attempts all along its front, the 6th Division jumped off with four infantry battalions abreast—3/4, 1/4, 1/29, and 2/29 from left to right—to take the hill complex on 20 June. Again making the division main effort was the 4th Marines, in whose zone lay Hills 72 and 80, the key terrain features on the objective. Directly in front of 1/4 line of departure was Hill 72, but the battalion could not place enough men on the crest of that height at one time to maintain a solid foothold. Japanese defenders hidden among the brush and boulders lining the narrow approach to the top frustrated all efforts to gain the hill. Tanks attempted to cut a road to the crest from the flank of the position, but this scheme was foiled when an armored dozer was completely destroyed by a satchel charge thrown from a distance of 15 feet. After a day of bitter fighting at hand-grenade range, the battalion dug in for the night at the same place it had been the night before, less than 20 yards away from the enemy on the ridge above.

Steep rock cliffs, ranging from 50 to 200 feet in height and covered with heavy undergrowth, faced 3/4. Since a frontal attack was clearly infeasible, the battalion commander sent a company to the left through the 8th Marines zone to take the ridge by attacking up its nose on the east; this sector appeared to be the one most susceptible to attack. Clearing out several bunkers and numerous caves to make way for Company L following in its wake, Company I mopped up the eastern slope while Company L tied in with the 8th Marines in order to extend the battalion's hold on the ridge. By late afternoon, 3/4 held strong positions on the left flank of Hill 72 and was ready to close in on that strong point.

Although it was in regimental reserve when the attack had begun, 2/4 was alerted to support either of the other two assault battalions. At 1040, it was committed on the right of 1/4 with orders to take Hill 80. Attacking with two companies abreast, the battalion reached its objective at approximately 1230, when Company G fought its way to the top against only moderate resistance. Company E, the other assault element, was held up at the base of the hill by an enemy pocket, which the battalion commander decided to bypass, leaving a Company E platoon behind to guard it. At 1520, the two-platoon company passed through the right element of Company G to seize the remainder of Hill 80 from the west. By 1645, all units of the battalion were on the hill and digging in. Possession of Hill 80 gave the battalion terrain commanding the right flank of the stubbornly held Hill 72.

On the extreme right of the division, the 29th Marines advanced to the coast

on 20 June against little opposition except for heavy fire received on the left flank of 1/29 from enfiladed positions on the reverse slope of Hill 72. Later in the afternoon, when General Shepherd decided to envelope the Kiyamu-Gusuku sector from the left (east), he shifted the boundary of the 29th Marines to the east to include all of Ara Saki. The regimental line was then tied in with the 4th Marines for the night. The 29th Marines positions barred escape to the sea from the tip of the island.

On 20 June, psychological warfare detachments on board a LCI equipped with a loudspeaker broadcast surrender inducements to the many civilian and military personnel hiding in inaccessible cave refuges lining the coastal cliffs. A feeling that further resistance was futile as well as a sense of impending doom impelled over 4,000 island natives and some 800 soldiers to heed the message and to surrender. These POWs were then herded through the front lines before dark to stockades in the rear.<sup>94</sup>

By 20 June, 1st Marine Division action centered about Hills 79 and 81. While 1/5 and 2/5 concentrated their efforts

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<sup>94</sup> IIIAC G-2 PeriodicRpt No. 81, dtd 21Jun-45. A large number of the enemy surrendered in the zone of 3/4, which detailed some of its Marines to strip and search the military prisoners. Before they were escorted to the rear, the POWs were employed to distribute the last supply air-drop made during the campaign. *3/4 SAR, Ph III*, p. 10; VMTB-232 WarD, Jun45; *AirDelSec AR*. Some of the supplies in the drop were for 6th Division tanks, also. Pilots flying the mission reported that the tanks were so close to enemy troops that the Marine armor was "obliged to use their flame throwers to keep the Japanese away from the provisions." MAG-33 WarD, Jun45.

in this area, extensive mopping up operations were conducted by the 7th Marines at Kunishi Ridge, the 8th Marines along the coast north of Ara Saki, and 3/5 around Komesu. These exercises added approximately 50 military and 2,000 civilian POWs to those already captured by IIIAC forces.<sup>95</sup>

After 3/5 gave fire support to the 7th Division from positions on Komesu Ridge, its patrols linked up with 1/184 at 1520. Physical contact was not maintained for the night, but both battalions occupied high ground near Komesu and Udo and were able to cover the gap between battalions by fire.

A brief but soaking downpour before dawn turned the roads around Makabe into knee-deep quagmires, and the tanks and M-7s supporting 2/5 were prevented from moving into position until shortly before noon. A more favorable situation existed in the 1/5 zone, where tanks lumbered forward at 0730 to join the infantry in the attack on Hill 79. The battalion commander swung the axis of attack from the northwest to the southeast and assaulted the objective with three companies abreast. By 1300, Company C on the right flank was 75 yards from the hillcrest, while the other two companies, A in the center and B on the left, were destroying snipers and machine gun nests on the hillside with the aid of flame and gun tanks. At 1635, Company A announced that some of its troops were on the hill, but less than two hours later it reported that heavy small arms fire had prevented it from consolidating its slight hold with the few men available;

it was forced, therefore, to withdraw. In possession of most of Hill 79, 1/5 dug in for the night, fully expecting to secure the entire objective the next day.

At 1230, when the 2/5 tank-infantry assault on Hill 81 began, the tracked vehicles reported that road blocks in Makabe denied them passage to the hill. An armored dozer cleared the way by 1400, and tanks moved along the road on the corps boundary to positions where they could fire into the right of Hill 81. The infantry battalion moved to and jumped off from the northern edge of Makabe at 1520 with Companies E on the right, F on the left, and G in reserve. Twenty-five minutes later, Company F was pinned down in the low ground south of the hill; a smoke screen was required to cover the evacuation of casualties. Company E, attacking from the southeast, pushed forward for about 100 yards along the eastern slope of the hill before it too was pinned down. First Company F, and then G was ordered to pass through E and continue the attack. Enemy machine gun and mortar fire pinned down these two companies also. When tanks supporting the attack ran out of ammunition at 1910 and withdrew, the assault companies attempted without success to garner more ground on their own. His troops stymied, the battalion commander pulled them back to more favorable positions for night defense.

To the left, in the XXIV Corps zone, only two strong enemy pockets remained at the end of 20 June. One was centered about the caves containing the *Thirty-second Army* headquarters in Hill 89, and the other was in Medeera and west of the village on Hills 79 and 85, which

<sup>95</sup> IIIAC G-2 PeriodicRpt, *supra*.

together with Hill 81 in the 1st Marine Division zone formed the Makabe Ridge defenses. The last courier contact between the two strongpoints was made on the night of 20 June, after the commander of the *24th Division*, Lieutenant General Amamiya, urged his soldiers "to fight to the last man in their present positions."<sup>96</sup>

This exhortation fell on deaf ears for the general had few live men remaining to defend the Medeira sector at the time of proclamation. The 1st Marine Division had just about annihilated the *22d* and *32d Regiments* during its march to the coast, and the 96th Division had destroyed the *89th Regiment* and its reinforcements when taking Yuza Dake and Aragachi. The only troops left to General Amamiya were a motley conglomeration of artillerymen, drivers, medical attendants, engineers, *Boeitai*, and personnel from almost every headquarters unit of the forces that had made up the island garrison on L-Day. Despite the growing numbers of the enemy which surrendered and others who committed suicide, the Tenth Army still had to contend with some Japanese who fought to the last with fanatic determination. An attack to destroy these soldiers holding the Makabe Ridge defenses was scheduled for noon of 21 June.

At 1027 that day, General Shepherd notified the Tenth Army commander, General Geiger,<sup>97</sup> that organized resist-

ance had ended in the 6th Marine Division zone of action. Beginning this last official day of the Okinawa campaign, the 4th Marines enveloped troublesome Hill 72. While 2/4 and 3/4 worked around to the south of the ridge, 1/4 held its position to support the attack by fire. Linking up at 0930, the two assault battalions and supporting armor worked north to the objective, and then drove over its top and down the reverse slope. By 1020, the Marines and both flame and gun tanks were mopping up the last vestiges of enemy resistance on the hill. At the tip of the island, the 29th Marines met only light opposition during its sweep of Ara Saki; Company G, 2/22, attached to 1/29, raised the division colors on the southernmost point of the island later in the day.<sup>98</sup>

Both the 7th and 8th Marines were assigned the task of flushing out enemy holdouts in the IIIAC zone and of accepting the surrender of an ever-increasing number of soldiers and civilians. Hill 79 was finally taken by 1/5 at 1735; more difficult, however, was the capture of Hill 81.

Although scheduled to jump off at 0900, the attack of 2/5 was delayed until 1104 in order that tank routes could be prepared and so that the battalion could take immediate advantage of a blistering rocket barrage on the hill ob-

<sup>96</sup> *Okinawa Operations Record*, "Record of the 24th Division," p. 194.

<sup>97</sup> General Geiger retained command of IIIAC during the period he temporarily commanded the Tenth Army. LtGen Merwin H. Silverthorn comments to HistBr, HQMC, dtd 25Oct65.

<sup>98</sup> This company thus duplicated what it had done earlier in the campaign when it had been the first unit to raise the same flag over the northernmost point on Okinawa, at Hedo Misaki. Cass, *6th MarDiv Hist*, pp. 174-175. It appears as though the 22d Marines had a predilection for securing the extremities of island objectives, for it had done the same thing during the retaking of Guam. Lodge, *The Recapture of Guam*, p. 154.

jective.<sup>99</sup> The attack plan called for Company E to lead the assault on the hill, and to be followed successively by Companies F and G, which were to be fed in from the left until Hill 81 was taken. Company E encountered only light and scattered small arms fire as it jumped off, and finally fought to and occupied its assigned objective after having destroyed two machine gun positions that had halted it on the way up. Almost immediately, Company F began fighting its way up the slope to the hilltop, burning out and sealing caves along the route. Shortly thereafter, Company G made its tortuous trek up the incline to join the other two at the top, all companies received heavy fire from caves, which honeycombed the enemy position.

The effort to secure the objective was spurred on by information received at the battalion CP of that Hill 81 was the last organized enemy position on Okinawa; this story later proved untrue. After having made several unsuccessful requests for reinforcements, and been ordered in turn to continue the attack with the forces at hand, at 1430 Lieutenant Colonel Benedict was relieved and ordered to report to the regimental commander. He then turned over command of the battalion to his executive officer, Major Richard T. Washburn. At 1500, the commander of 3/5 reported in at the 2/5 OP and assumed joint command of the two battalions; his Company L began moving to Makabe soon after to support the attack on Hill 81.

All companies advanced slowly during the afternoon, and as 2/5 reached the crest of the hill, enemy fire slackened

<sup>99</sup> LtCol William E. Benedict ltr to CMC, dtd 27Mar47.

noticeably. At 1700, all companies reported their portion of the objective secured; all organized enemy resistance in the IIIAC zone had ended.<sup>100</sup>

In the XXIV Corps zone, a heavy 4.2-inch mortar concentration on Hill 79 preceded the attack of 305th Infantry elements at 1200. The crew-served weapons organic to the infantry battalions supported the tank-led attack. At 1630, following an afternoon of withering rifle and machine gun fire coming from caves and pillboxes on Makabe Ridge, the infantry launched a final, successful surge to the top of the hill. Before XXIV Corps units could report the end of organized resistance in the army zone, they had to come to grips with a bitter, last-ditch Japanese defense; objectives were captured only after enemy defenders had been killed to the last man. The soldiers first secured Mabuni and then Hill 89. General Buckner's doctrine of "corkscrew and blowtorch" was employed effectively by flame tanks and demolition teams burning and blasting the "palace guard" defending the cave entrances leading to General Ushijima's headquarters. By the end of the day, Hill 89 had been secured, and its inhabitants were frantically attempting to escape a death by entombment.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>100</sup> 2/5 SAR, p. 25.

<sup>101</sup> It was surprising that there were any Japanese alive in the vicinity of Hill 89 at this point. Discovered earlier in the month, the *Thirty-second Army* CP had been a prime target for TAF aircraft ever since. On 13 June, for instance, a total of 64 planes—23 from VMF-323, 24 from VMF-441, and 17 from VMF-314—burned and blasted the hill and its environs with 124 napalm bombs and 335 5-inch rockets in less than an hour. *ADC IntelSums*, Jun45.

After 82 days of bloody and bitter fighting, the rapid advance of the Tenth Army in the final stages of the campaign brought about irrevocable collapse of all major Japanese opposition. General Geiger could thus announce at 1305 on 21 June that the island of Okinawa had been secured by American forces. The official end of the Okinawa campaign was marked by a formal flag-raising ceremony at Tenth Army headquarters at 1000, 22 June, attended by representatives of all units in that command. As described by General Smith: "A large metal flagpole had already been erected at Army Headquarters. . . . The only band available<sup>102</sup> was that of the 2d Marine Aircraft Wing. Prior to playing the National Anthem,"<sup>103</sup> the band played "Anchors Aweigh," "The Marines Hymn," and an appropriate Army tune. Brigadier General Lawrence E. Schick, USA, Tenth Army Deputy Chief of Staff, read the official dispatch declaring the end of organized resistance, and General Geiger then gave the signal for the flag to be raised.

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<sup>102</sup> Each Tenth Army division had its own band, which participated in the campaign according to the combat functions assigned it by the parent division. None of the bands functioned as musical units until after Okinawa had been secured. During the fighting, the bandsmen performed as stretcher bearers.

<sup>103</sup> Smith, *Personal Narrative*, p. 138.

Following the official announcement on 21 June of the ending of organized resistance on Okinawa, Tenth Army headquarters began receiving congratulatory messages from statesmen and military commanders throughout the world. Though heartfelt and sincere, none of these commendations to the men who had fought the Battle of Okinawa could match the simple accolade bestowed on Marines of the IIIAC by the commander who had led them, for as General Geiger wrote:

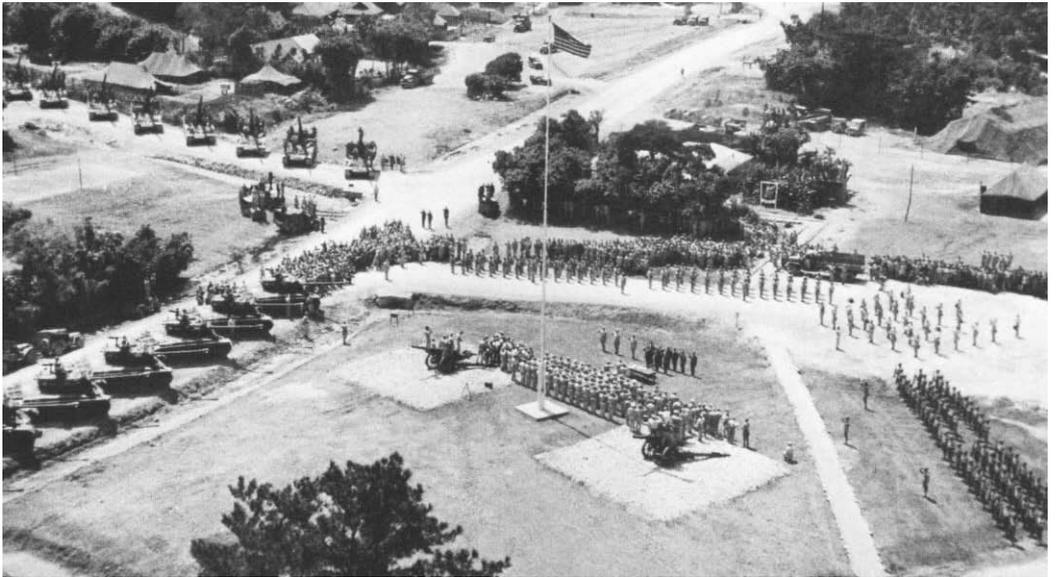
This has been a hard campaign. The officers and men have simply been marvelous. They have carried on day and night, mud and battle, without a murmur and could have continued had it been necessary. They have carried out every mission assigned by the Tenth Army and have broken through every position of the Japanese defenses which stood in their way in a minimum of time. The Marine Corps can ever be proud of the two divisions which fought on this island. The cost has been high, but the time element was essential and I am sure you will be happy to know that the Marines required no urging to attack, attack, and again attack, until the Japanese were completely annihilated. You will never know how I regret leaving the III Corps.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> LtGen Roy S. Geiger ltr to CMC, dtd 26Jun45 (Vandegrift Personal Correspondence File, HistBr, HQMC). Shortly thereafter, General Geiger became the Commanding General, FMFPac.



*MEN of the Tenth Army pay homage to their fallen leader, Lieutenant General Simon B. Buckner, Jr. (USN 80-G-498161)*



*SURRENDER of all Japanese forces in the Ryukyus takes place at Tenth Army headquarters on 7 September 1945. (USA SC211950)*

# ICEBERG Dissolves

## MOPPING UP<sup>1</sup>

With his defenses overrun and forces shattered, there was little hope of diverting or lengthening the path leading to the inevitable fate of his *Thirty-second Army*. Lieutenant General Mitsuru Ushijima decided, therefore, to end his life according to the dictates that governed his living of it, the traditional way of the *Samurai*. Joining him in fulfilling his obligation to the Emperor and dying in the symbolic way of *bushido* was the army chief of staff, Lieutenant General Isamu Cho.

Following a meal late on the night of 21 June, Cho and Ushijima composed their last farewell messages and the following valedictory poems written in the classic Japanese style:

The green grass of this isle  
Withers untimely before fall,  
Yet it will grow again  
In the warm spring of the Empire.

Smearing heaven and earth with our blood,  
We leave this world with our ammunition  
gone,  
Yet our souls shall come back again and  
again  
To guard the Empire forever.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *Tenth Army AR*; *IIIAC AR*; *XXIV Corps AR*; *1st MarDiv SAR*; *6th MarDiv SAR, Ph III*; *7th InfDiv AR*; *77th InfDiv OpRpt*, Okinawa; *96th InfDiv AR*; Capt Russell A. Gugeler, USA, *The Operations of the 7th InfDiv on Okinawa, 1Apr-22Jun45*, 3 vols, n.d., (OCMH), hereafter Gugeler, *7th InfDiv Hist*.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Hattori, *War History*, p. 131.

At noon on 22 June, Ushijima dressed himself in his full field uniform and Cho donned a white kimono on which he had written "The offering of one's life is to fulfill the duties towards the Emperor and the Country. Cho, Isamu."<sup>3</sup> As the two led a party of aides and staff officers out to a ledge at the mouth of the cave headquarters, Cho was quoted as saying, "Well, Commanding General Ushijima, as the way may be dark, I, Cho, will lead the way." Ushijima replied, "Please do so, and I'll take along my fan since it is getting warm."<sup>4</sup>

Ten minutes after leaving the cave, first Ushijima and then Cho died in the Japanese time-honored ritual of *harakiri*. Each in turn bared his abdomen to the knife used in the ceremonial disembowelment and thrust inward; as each did so, there was a simultaneous shout and flash of a sword as the headquarters adjutant decapitated first one general and then the other. The bodies were then secretly buried in graves prepared earlier. Three days later, 32d Infantry patrols discovered them at the foot of the cliff of Hill 89 where it faced the sea. On the white bedding

<sup>3</sup> Gugeler, *7th InfDiv Hist*, p. 497. The account of the deaths of the two generals in this work was derived from a POW interrogation. The Japanese officer who told this story had learned the details from other prisoners and prepared this account.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 498.

cover which served as his winding sheet after death, General Cho had written:

22d Day of June, 20th Year of Showa  
I depart without regret, fear, shame, or obligations.  
Army Chief of Staff, Army Lt. Gen. Cho, Isamu  
Age at departure, 51 years.

At this time and place, I hereby certify the foregoing.<sup>5</sup>

On 25 June also, the *Imperial General Headquarters* in Tokyo announced the end of Japanese operations on Okinawa, and, in effect, of the *Thirty-second Army*.<sup>6</sup> IGHQ then put all of its efforts into preparations for the defense of the Home Islands against an anticipated American invasion.

Although the commander and chief of staff of the *Thirty-second Army* were dead, and many Japanese officers and enlisted men were surrendering, other enemy soldiers both in groups and individually continued a fanatic, last-ditch stand until they were destroyed. General Stilwell believed it necessary to eliminate these isolated Japanese pockets to safeguard the Island Command forces that were developing the additional supply, training, airfield, and port facilities required to convert Okinawa into a massive base for further operations against Japan. He ordered, therefore, the Tenth Army to begin an intensive, coordinated mop-up of southern Okinawa on 23 June; 10 days were allotted to this task.

The 1st Marines and 307th Infantry were deployed in a line of blocking positions paralleling the Naha-Yonabaru

highway to bar the way to enemy soldiers who were attempting an escape to northern Okinawa. The American sweep northwards was mounted by the five assault divisions that had made the final drive in the south and had been on line when the war ended; they began the sweep by merely making an about-face in position. As the soldiers and Marines drove towards the Tenth Army blocking positions, they smashed all remaining enemy opposition, blew and sealed Japanese caves, buried all Japanese dead, and retrieved all salvageable enemy and friendly equipment along the way. To coordinate and pace the 10-day sweep, three phase lines were established. Flanking divisions were to guide on the 96th Division as it progressed up the center of the island. General Stilwell retained control of the entire operation.

On 30 June, in less than the time allotted, the mop up was successfully completed. Elements of the 77th Division reduced the final defensive positions of the *24th Division* near the ruins of Medeera; the 96th Division thoroughly cleaned out enemy pockets in the Medeera-Aragachi sector; the 1st and 6th Marine Divisions worked over Japanese survivors in the Kiyamu-Gusuku and Komesu Ridges; and the 7th Division did the same to the Hill 89-Mabuni area. Several brief but bloody fire fights flared during the methodical, workmanlike sweep of the objective area when strongly armed enemy bands tried futilely to break through the American line and were smashed.

Results of the sweep indicated that an estimated 8,975 Japanese had been killed and 2,902 military prisoners and 906 labor troops had been added to those

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Hattori, *loc. cit.*

already in Tenth Army stockades. Enemy losses for the entire Okinawa campaign, were placed at 107,539 counted dead and an estimated 23,764 more which were assumed to have been sealed in caves or buried by the Japanese themselves. In addition, a total of 10,755 of the enemy had been captured; some of this number had surrendered. As the overall Japanese casualty total of 142,058 was "far above a reasonable estimate of military strength on the island," Tenth Army intelligence agencies presumed that approximately 42,000 of these casualties were civilians that had been unfortunately killed or wounded in American artillery, naval gunfire, and air attacks on enemy troops and installations while the natives had been in the proximity.<sup>7</sup>

American losses were heavy also. The total reported Tenth Army casualty figures were 7,374 killed or died of wounds, 31,807 wounded or injured in action, and 239 missing. There were 26,221 non-battle casualties in addition. The combat divisions alone reported a total of 38,006

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<sup>7</sup> *IntelMono*, pt I, sec B, chaps 2, 3. One Japanese source indicated that approximately 75,000 soldiers and 50,000 Okinawan non-combatant civilians were killed during the battle for the island and that half of the survivors were wounded. *Okinawa Operations Record*, p. 152. A second and more recent Japanese account, contradicting the casualty figures noted above as well as those cited by American sources, stated that about 90,000 Japanese troops and Okinawan volunteers were killed and that there were as many as 150,000 island natives killed. This source said also that slightly more than 7,800 troops had survived the battle, but half of these were wounded. The other half continued to resist from underground positions and by operating as guerrillas. Hattori, *War History*, p. 132.

casualties of all types.<sup>8</sup> Between 1 April and 30 June, Army units received 12,277 replacements; Marine units joined 11,147 Marines and naval corpsmen in the same period.

Both British and American naval forces took heavy casualties while supporting and maintaining the Tenth Army. During the 82 days of ground operations, 34 ships and craft were sunk and 368 damaged; 763 carrier-based aircraft were lost to all causes. In addition, 4,907 sailors were killed or missing in action and 4,824 were wounded. At the time that these losses were sustained, ships and ground anti-aircraft artillery and planes controlled or coordinated by the Navy claimed the destruction of 7,830 Japanese aircraft and 16 combatant ships.<sup>9</sup>

In accordance with the planned succession of operational control established for ICEBERG,<sup>10</sup> Headquarters, Ryukyus Area superseded the Tenth Army on 1 July 1945. At that time, General Stilwell became a joint task force commander directly responsible to Admiral Nimitz for the defense and development of all captured islands and the defense of the waters within 25 miles of Okinawa. Concurrently, after

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<sup>8</sup> Sources for these figures are the appropriate annexes in the *Tenth Army AR* and the ARs of the combat divisions. See Appendix M for the final compilation by unit of all Marine casualties.

<sup>9</sup> *USSBS Campaigns*, p. 331. A Japanese source states that 7,852 aircraft (2,393 *Kamikazes*) in both *Kikusui* and smallscale attacks were sent against American forces between 6 April and 22 June. Of this number, 2,258 never returned. Hattori, *War History*, table facing p. 132.

<sup>10</sup> *Tenth Army Tntv OPlan 1-45*, Anx 1, p. 4.

CinCPac had dissolved Task Force 31, Admiral Hill and his staff departed for Pearl Harbor and Rear Admiral Calvin H. Cobb took over as Commander Naval Forces, Ryukyus, under General Stilwell. TAF at this time came under the Ryukyus command. All of these forces, and others that were to be sent to Okinawa, were to be commanded by General Stilwell. He was to coordinate and control the massive effort supporting the impending operations against the center of the Japanese Empire. Slated to become a major force in carrying the air war to Japan was the Tactical Air Force.

#### TAF FIGHTS ON <sup>11</sup>

Only five days had intervened between the eighth mass *Kamikaze* raid of 27–28 May—*Kikusui* No. 8—and the ninth, which began on the evening of 3 June and lasted until 7 June. As before, TAF fighter aircraft rose from fields on Okinawa and Ie Shima to meet approximately 245 Japanese planes coming from the Home Islands. American pilots and antiaircraft artillery units

<sup>11</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *CNO Record*; *AirIntelBuls*, May-Sep45; *CTF 51 AR*; *Tenth Army Tntv OPlan 1-45*; *Tenth Army AR*; TAF WarD, Jun45; TAF PeriodicRpt, Jun45; ADC WarDs, Jun-Jul45; *ADC AcftOpAnalysis*, Jun45; *ADC IntelSums*, Jun45; *IIIAC AR*; *XXIV Corps AR*; *1st MarDiv SAR*; 2d MAW WarDs, Jun-Jul45; *6th MarDiv SAR, Ph III*; *1st Prov AAA Gru AR*; *53d AAA Brig AR*; MAG-14 WarD, Jun45; MAG-22 WarD, Jun45; MAG-33 WarDs, Jun-Jul45; VMTB-131 WarD, Jun45; VMTB-232 WarD, Jun45; *AirDelSec AR*; Hattori, *War History*; Sherrod, *Marine Air Hist.*

claimed a total of 118 enemy planes downed during *Kikusui* No. 9; the Marine pilots of TAF claimed 35 of this number.<sup>12</sup>

At the same time that Generals Cho and Ushijima began their suicide preparations, Japanese pilots flying the final mass *Kamikaze* raid of the Okinawa campaign arrived over the island, prepared to die according to the philosophy of the *Samurai*, but in a more modern fashion. Approximately 68 of the 257 aircraft launched in *Kikusui* No. 10 were suiciders. The first group of raiders appeared over Kerama Retto on 21 June at 1830, and correctly replied to friendly recognition signals.<sup>13</sup> One *Kamikaze* dived headlong into the sea-plane tender *Curtis* to start night-long fires that severely damaged the ship. Shortly after, planes from this flight attacked LSM-59 as it was towing the hulk of decommissioned *Barry*<sup>14</sup> away from the Kerama anchorage to act as a *Kamikaze* decoy, and both vessels were sunk.

On 22 June, Marine pilots from MAG-22 were flying a barrier combat air patrol over Amami O Shima, when they were jumped by approximately 60 enemy planes heading for Okinawa along the well-travelled *Kamikaze* air route

<sup>12</sup> *CTF 51 AR*, pt III, pp. 51–61; TAF WarD, Jun45. Japanese sources claim that only 54 planes did not return. Hattori, *War History*, table facing p. 132.

<sup>13</sup> CinCPac WarD, Jun45, p. 75.

<sup>14</sup> The APD *Barry* had been crashed by a *Kamikaze* and gravely damaged late in May. A Navy Board of Inspection and Survey recommended that it be decommissioned and cannibalized. *Ibid.*

from Kyushu. The skies immediately buzzed with a frenzy of darting and diving aircraft. One pilot was later heard to say over the radio, "Come on up and help me, I've got a Frank and two Zekes cornered."<sup>15</sup> No further word was heard from him, and he was later listed as missing.

During the debriefing after this engagement, the MAG-22 fliers reported that the enemy had tried to decoy them into unfavorable positions. Four of the Japanese planes were first sighted at 20,000 feet, and as a division of Corsairs went after them, the decoy planes made a run for safety, but pulled up "and dropped their belly tanks in front of and above the Marine planes. Our pilots had to [maneuver violently] in order to evade the falling tanks. The F4Us turned to press home their attack when the larger force of enemy planes jumped in and a general melee resulted."<sup>16</sup> In evaluating the enemy, the Marines reported that the Japanese pilots flew a good, tight division formation of four planes abreast, and "they seemed to be good pilots but maneuvered poorly."<sup>17</sup> Of the 51 planes Americans claimed to have shot down in this encounter, TAF pilots listed 44.

Although MAG-14 (VMF-212, -222, -223), commanded by Colonel Edward

<sup>15</sup> MAG-22 WarD, Jun45. The Zeke, known earlier in the war as the Zero, was a single engine fighter manufactured by Mitsubishi. The Frank, likewise a single engine fighter but manufactured by Nakajima, was a newer and faster plane that appeared during the late stages of the war.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

A. Montgomery, did not arrive on Okinawa until 8 June, too late to participate in the "turkey shoots" against the *Kamikaze* attacks, once the group began operations on the 11th, its pilots and planes took part in the stepped-up tempo of TAF strikes on such scattered targets as Sakashima Gunto to the south of Okinawa, Kyushu to the north, and the coast of China to the west. On 22 June, Captain Kenneth A. Walsh, an ace at Guadalcanal and winner of the Medal of Honor for achievements during the same campaign, shot down his 21st enemy plane. In its brief combat tour in the Ryukyus, the group as a whole claimed nine kills.

Whenever the weather permitted in June, TAF greatly expanded its offensive operations and strikes on outlying targets. The primary mission of the far-ranging American planes was to seek out and destroy enemy planes and support installations. These operations involved flights of large numbers of single engine aircraft over water for distances nearly equalling their maximum ranges. Because of their long-range capability, the P-47 Thunderbolts of the AAF fighter squadrons attached to TAF<sup>18</sup> performed a dual role as both fighters and bombers. On some missions, the P-47s bombed and strafed targets of opportunity as well as assigned targets; they escorted light, medium, and heavy

<sup>18</sup> The 318th Fighter Group joined TAF about 30 April and began operations from the field on Ie Shima almost immediately thereafter. The other two groups of the 301st Fighter Wing arrived in Okinawa in succeeding months; the 413th on 19 May and the 507th on 24 June.

bomber missions after Bomber Command joined TAF in June and July.<sup>19</sup>

At this time, existing airfields on Okinawa were expanded, and new ones built at Awase on the east coast and Chimu in the north in accordance with base development planning. The influx to these and the other fields of newly joining squadrons increased ADC aircraft strength from 432 planes at the beginning of June to 711 at the end.<sup>20</sup> With these additional aircraft, TAF mounted increasingly stronger air attacks against the Japanese Home Islands. Marine fighter planes from ADC hit Kyushu installations for the first time on 10 June, the day before Major General Louis E. Woods relieved Major General Mulcahy as TAF commander.<sup>21</sup>

There was little change in the missions of TAF, Ryukyus Command, from those it had fulfilled as an agency of the

Tenth Army. On 1 July, when the command change occurred, ADC assumed complete responsibility from TF 31 for the air defense of the Ryukyus. At this time, TAF aircraft strength was substantially increased, especially by the bomber squadrons, and General Woods could send his planes to better objectives further away from Okinawa than those attacked previously. In its first raid under TAF, on 1 July the 41st Bombardment Group sent its Mitchell bombers to blast Kyushu. On that same day, TAF inaugurated a combat air patrol over Kyushu in hope that Japanese pilots would take off from island airdromes to engage the American planes. Few enemy pilots rose to the occasion.

In another phase of TAF operations, Thunderbolts began hitting Japanese installations on the China coast near the Yangtze Estuary on 1 July. A landmark

<sup>19</sup> Four AAF bomber groups of the Bomber Command joined TAF, beginning with the 41st which arrived in Okinawa on 7 June. The 494th Bombardment Group arrived on 24 June, the 319th about 2 July, and the 11th actually on 2 July.

<sup>20</sup> ADC WarD, Jun45.

<sup>21</sup> "My assignment as General Mulcahy's relief was a most unexpected one for me. I was in Pearl waiting to see [Major] General [Ralph J.] Mitchell, whom I was relieving as CG of the First Air Wing, then at Bougainville, when AirFMFPac gave me immediate orders to go there. I took off with double crews and flew continuously until arrival. Upon arriving, I reported to General MacArthur's Headquarters by dispatch. Several hours after my arrival I received immediate orders to proceed to Guam and to report to Admiral Nimitz. I did as ordered and Admiral Nimitz personally briefed me, and told me to take the necessary steps to have the ADC of TAF take over the air defense of the area in the very near future as

the losses from the Kamikaze attacks were heavy and he was going to withdraw all ships as soon as possible. Upon my arrival [at Okinawa], I found that Admiral Hill and his flagship were responsible for the air defense of the area, and that the ADC of TAF was really only a fighter command and not responsible for keeping track of friendly aircraft in the area. When I took command . . . I ordered the ADC to get set up to take over the complete responsibility for the air defense . . . without delay. . . . Why the ADC hadn't been called upon to [keep track] of the friendly planes in the area long before this has always been a mystery to me, for how can an outfit provide air defense properly unless it has full information about all friendly and enemy aircraft in the area?

To deepen the mystery was the fact that it has been reliably reported to me that neither AirFMFPac nor Headquarters Marine Corps knew of my being sent to Okinawa until after my arrival." *Wood ltr I.*

in TAF operations occurred on the 9th, when B-24s attacked Japan from Okinawa. All together, the 47 heavy bombers—and the 25 Mitchells and 32 Thunderbolts acting as bombers accompanying them—spread 1,880 clusters of fragmentary bombs and 280 clusters of incendiary bombs over dispersal areas and field installations of Omura airfield on Kyushu. Another 92 Thunderbolts escorting the mission acted merely as spectators; no enemy interceptors appeared.

In accordance with orders from CinCPOA, TAF, Ryukyus was dissolved on 14 July.<sup>22</sup> On that date, all Marine air units reported to the 2d MAW, which was then designated Task Group 99.2, and assigned to the Ryukyus Command. AAF squadrons and groups that had been temporarily assigned to TAF were transferred to the Far East Air Forces (FEAF), which assumed control of the mounting number of air attacks against Japan.

Under the Ryukyus Command, Marine squadrons continued flying the types of missions they had flown previously, but they now ranged much further away from the island than when they had been committed to the air defense of ICEBERG forces. On 19 July, ADC flyers made their first visit to the China coast, when 59 F4Us flew cover for TF 95, then operating off the enemy-held littoral.<sup>23</sup> At 0001, 1 August, the 2d MAW and all of its squadrons with the exception of VMTB-131 and -232, and VMB-612,<sup>24</sup> passed to the operational

control of FEAF; the three other squadrons were assigned to the control of Fleet Air Wing 1.<sup>25</sup>

In the period 7 April through 13 July, TAF amassed a creditable record. A Marine aviator himself, General Geiger wrote General Woods that the air support provided by TAF pilots was "outstanding and contributed materially to a speedy and successful completion of the campaign."<sup>26</sup> By the end of 13 July, TAF claimed a total of 625 Japanese planes destroyed in the air and 29 probables; MAG-33 pilots were the high scor-

squadron trained to operate at night employing radar-operated bomb sights and search gear, and to launch rockets from its PBJs (Mitchells, twin engine bombers), the Navy-Marine Corps designation for the B-25. The squadron arrived on Okinawa in July, and operated from Chimu airfield until the end of the war.

<sup>25</sup> 2d MAW WarD, Jul45. Before this change took place, General Stilwell had received a different set of orders from CinCPac headquarters concerning the future disposition of the 2d MAW. According to Admiral Nimitz' first directive, which assigned ". . . all the Fighter Squadrons to the [FEAF] Fighter Command, and the VMTB squadrons to the Fleet Air Wing. That left only my [General Woods] command headquarters without any units . . . under General Stilwell. On the last day I was under his command, I went . . . to see him, and told him I was a General 'without portfolio' and asked permission to fly to Guam. I told him that I would be back in command of the units of the Wing or I wouldn't be back. He wished me luck and I left. When I got to Guam, I saw Vice Admiral [Charles H.] McMorris [CinCPac Chief of Staff] and after some discussion all units were returned to my control and new orders were issued." *Woods ltr I.*

<sup>26</sup> 2d MAW WarD, Jun45.

<sup>22</sup> TAF WarD, 1-13Jul45.

<sup>23</sup> 2d MAW PeriodicRpt No. 1, 14-20Jul45.

<sup>24</sup> VMB-612, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Jack R. Cram, was the first Marine bomber

ers with claims of having shot down 214 enemy aircraft.<sup>27</sup>

Of particular interest is the fact that Marine night fighters came into their own in the air above Okinawa; VMF(N)-533 registered claims of 35 enemy planes downed,<sup>28</sup> while VMF(N)-542 claimed 17, and -543, 11.<sup>29</sup> Some overwhelming statistics appeared in the course of the Okinawa air operations. For example, while flying 118,982 hours and 38,192 sorties, TAF pilots expended 4,102,559 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition and 445,748 rounds of 20mm. In addition, the flyers released 499 tons of napalm, 4,161 tons of bombs, and 15,691 rockets.<sup>30</sup>

The pilots and planes of VMTB-131 and -232 recorded some amazing statistics during their supply drop operations to ground troops. In addition to the 70 supply sorties carrier-based aircraft flew in support of IIIAC ground units, the two TAF squadrons flew 760 sorties for the Tenth Army—80 of these went to XXIV Corps, the rest to IIIAC. The total weight that the TBMs carried on these missions was 668,984 pounds; the supplies weighed 495,257 pounds, cargo paracutes and air delivery con-

tainers took up the rest of the weight.<sup>31</sup> Handling these supplies on the carriers first and at the airfields on Okinawa later was the IIIAC Air Delivery Section. Consisting of 1 officer and 82 enlisted Marines, the section was attached to Tenth Army and worked very closely with the TAF squadrons.

Although seemingly prosaic when compared to combat air patrols, supply drop missions were very often just as hazardous. For optimum results, the Avenger pilot had to maintain an air speed of 95 knots, very close to a stall, at an altitude of about 250 feet while trying to spot a drop zone that was supposedly marked by colored smoke, WP grenades, or panels, either separately or together. At the same time, he was being fired upon by Japanese weapons of all sorts—antiaircraft guns as well as small arms. Some pilots had to fly under an arc of friendly artillery and naval gunfire.<sup>32</sup>

In attempting to drop supplies on targets, Marine aviators often found that the drop zone had not been properly marked or correctly identified, or that the Japanese were using the same color of smoke that Tenth Army ground units were supposed to have employed. As a result, the drop mission either was aborted until the zone could be properly identified, or the pilots made an educated guess—in which case, the supplies sometimes were dropped into enemy territory.

When the drop zone was particularly difficult to spot, Air Liaison Parties from

<sup>27</sup> The pilots of the "Death Rattlers," VMF-323 commanded by Major George C. Axtell, Jr., contributed over half, 124½ planes, to the MAG-33 score. One unusual feat in the air campaign of Okinawa took place during the *Kamikaze* attack on 22 April, when, in a 20-minute period, Axtell shot down five raiders and his two wingmen—Major Jefferson D. Dorroh, squadron executive officer, and First Lieutenant Jerry J. O'Keefe—destroyed six and five enemy aircraft, respectively.

<sup>28</sup> VMF(N)-533 WarDs, May-Jul45.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, Jul45.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *AirDelSec AR*, p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> See discussion of LFASCU operations below for further comments on this problem.

the Joint Assault Signal Companies<sup>33</sup> attached to frontline infantry units coached the TBM pilots to their target by radio. The primary mission of the ALPs was to direct TAF and carrier-based aircraft to the target. Coordinating the requests from lower echelons were the three Marine Landing Force Air Support Control Units (LFASCUs) commanded by Colonel Vernon E. Megee. Colonel Megee wore two other hats: he was representative ashore of the Navy Close Air Support Control Unit (CASCU) that was on board *Eldorado*, and he commanded LFASCU-3 which was the control unit at Tenth Army headquarters. LFASCU-3 coordinated the air requests forwarded from the IIIAC infantry regiments by LFASCU-1 and from XXIV Corps units by LFASCU-2. Each of these control units operated at the headquarters of the corps to which it was attached.

Although close air support techniques and the methods for their control were rudimentary at the beginning of World War II, during the latter stages of the war and especially on Okinawa, improved aircraft, proven control procedures, and pilots skilled in providing close air support served together to make this supporting arm one of the most powerful that was available to the infantry. On Okinawa, ground troops

<sup>33</sup> The JASCO was a joint Navy-Marine Corps organization; the naval component contained the shore fire control parties, which operated with the frontline infantry battalions, spotting targets for and controlling the naval gunfire support of these ground units. The Marine ALPs functioned similarly, but controlled the close air support provided the infantry.

developed great trust and confidence in the ability of close air support to strengthen attacks on particularly stubborn enemy strongpoints and to clear the way for assaults in general. Surprisingly enough in view of the many support sorties flown, there were but few instances when friendly troops were bombed, strafed, or rocketed by accident, even though strikes were often conducted less than 100 yards away from friendly lines. After getting their first taste of what close air support could do for them, Army units were soon "insatiable in their demands."<sup>34</sup>

Throughout the course of the war in the Pacific, senior Marine commanders became and remained staunch adherents to and supporters of the close air support doctrine. As it developed, they became convinced that more extensive use of the ALPs at the division, regimental, and battalion levels would increase the quality and quantity as well as the effectiveness of air support.

After the Okinawa campaign, the consensus of the Marine commanders present there was that, with proper communications equipment and more intensive and complete training, ALPs could easily take over control of strike missions from LFASCUs and "talk" the pilots directly to their targets.<sup>35</sup> This

<sup>34</sup> Col Vernon E. Megee quoted in Sherrod, *Marine Air Hist*, p. 411.

<sup>35</sup> IIIAC AR, pp. 197-198; *1st MarDiv SAR*, Air Support Anx; *6th MarDiv SAR*, Ph I&II, pt X, pp. 24-26; CG, AirFMFPac ltr to CMC, ser 002233, A16-3/G-3/eas, Subj: Air Support, dtd 28Aug45, with encls A-H, Rpts of 1st MarDiv (Rein), 6th MarDiv, XXIV Corps, 7th InfDiv, 27th InfDiv, 77th InfDiv, 96th InfDiv, and IIIAC, hereafter *CG, AirFMFPac ltr*. These reports duplicate the comments concerning air support each command made in its Okinawa action reports.

procedure of direct air-ground control between ALPs and the planes above them had been developed by the Marine Corps prior to the Okinawa invasion and was used in the 1st and 6th Marine Division training cycles. Colonel Megee later explained that this system was not used at Okinawa because:

. . . to have permitted each battalion air liaison party to control striking aircraft on a corps front of only ten miles, when many simultaneous air strikes were being run, would obviously have led only to pandemonium and grave hazard for all those concerned. On the other hand, where conditions approximated those in the Philippines, i.e., battalion or regimental actions in an uncrowded area, actual control of aircraft was frequently delegated to the air liaison party.<sup>36</sup>

After having read the comments and recommendations of both Army and Marine commanders concerning the air support they received in the Okinawa campaign, Major General James T. Moore, commander of Aircraft, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, forwarded them to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. In a covering letter, General Moore recommended "that Marine Air and Ground be organized and combined under one command with the primary mission of Marine Air being the support of Marine Ground Forces."<sup>37</sup> This might very well be interpreted as the first definitive recommendation made by a senior Ma-

rine general for the establishment of the balanced air-ground amphibious force in readiness which has become the hallmark of the present-day Marine Corps.

That the ready acceptance of Marine aviation by Marine ground forces as an equal or supporting partner in amphibious operations was not an immediate thing is indicated by General Woods, who said:

All senior ground generals in World War II believed in the air-ground team but when in the combat area, they were never able to keep aviation under their command. Maybe it is because they gave only lip service to the doctrine. Even as early as Guadalcanal, the First Wing was not under the command of General Vandegrift, and when the First Division left the combat area, all [Marine] aviation units were left behind!<sup>38</sup>

A review of Marine air activities is not complete without mention of the Marine observation squadrons, the VMOs. Although their exploits were not so spectacular as those of the fighter and torpedo bomber squadrons, nor their planes so swift and deadly, the VMOs attached to IIIAC performed as vitally important a role in the successful prosecution of the Okinawa campaign. Assigned to the Marine components of the ICEBERG forces as artillery spotters, VMO-2,<sup>39</sup> -3 and -6 and their OY "Grasshoppers" were ashore and operating from Okinawa fields by 3 April. The squadrons were soon flying other types of missions, however, and not neces-

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in Isely and Crowl, *Marines and Amphibious War*, p. 567. For the story of Marine close air support operations in the recapture of the Philippines, see Maj Charles W. Boggs, Jr., *Marine Aviation in the Philippines* (Washington: HistDiv, HQMC, 1951); see also Garand and Strobridge, "Western Pacific Operations," *passim*.

<sup>37</sup> CG, *AirFMFPac ltr*.

<sup>38</sup> Wood ltr I.

<sup>39</sup> Until 15 April, when they returned to Saipan, VMO-2 pilots flew missions for the 11th Marines with VMO-3, but used VMO-6 planes. *Tenth Army AR*, chap 11, sec VI, p. 59.

sarily for the Marine artillery regiments. Within two days, for example, both VMO-2 and -3 were serving a total of 11 Army and Marine artillery battalions—the equivalent of nearly three full regiments.<sup>40</sup> As soon as VMO-7 arrived in early May, it, too, was kept busy.

In addition to spotting missions, Grasshopper pilots and their aerial observers flew photographic and reconnaissance missions. Sometimes, line routes for ground communications were selected after the observers had reported the number and location of telephone poles still standing.<sup>41</sup> In early June and until the end of the campaign, the VMOs made many evacuation flights. During the 12-day period from 11-22 June inclusive, VMO-7 made a total of 369 evacuation flights from the strip behind 1st Division lines; these were in addition to the 243 spotting and 17 photo-reconnaissance missions flown in the same period.<sup>42</sup>

By the end of the Okinawa battle, the four VMOs had flown 3,486 missions.<sup>43</sup> The most valuable of these, in the view of artillery commanders, were the spotting missions. As the G-3 of IIIAC Artillery noted later:

If there was any group of indispensable officers in IIIAC Artillery on Okinawa, it was our air spotters. The nature of the terrain in southern Okinawa seriously limited ground observation—especially while

<sup>40</sup> *Air IntelBul*, Jun45, p. 11.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, Aug-Sep45, p. 22; VMO-7 WarD, Jun45.

<sup>43</sup> *Tenth Army AR*, chap 11, sec VI, p. 59. Included in this number are the ones flown by VMO-2 from 3-15 April.

we were fighting our way uphill on the Shuri massif. Without our AOs [Aerial Observers], IIIAC Artillery would have been blind.<sup>44</sup>

Colonel Henderson continued:

The courage and daring of our AOs and the VMO pilots was an outstanding feature of the campaign. I think that VMO pilots are the unsung heroes of Marine Aviation. . . .

When they wanted to really investigate something . . . they would go right down on the deck. Often they would fly past cave openings at the same level so they could look in and see if there was a gun there.<sup>45</sup>

This tactic was most important because of the difficulty that often arose in locating Japanese artillery positions, especially those sited in cave mouths.

Considered more a hindrance than a safeguard by both artillery and air support units, restrictive fire Plans Negat and Victor<sup>46</sup> greatly diminished the effect of artillery and naval gunfire bombardments during the early part of the campaign. Colonel Henderson noted that "They were supposed to protect our own close air support planes from friendly artillery fire, but more often served to protect the Japanese from our fire."<sup>47</sup> In addition, the plans were invoked too often, and then remained in effect far

<sup>44</sup> *Henderson ltr.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Containing safety factors that were contingent on specific danger conditions, Plans Victor and Negat were invoked either separately or jointly whenever an air strike was to be delivered on the same target being fired upon by artillery and naval guns. The effect of the plans was to protect the pilots and planes flying the close support mission. *Tenth Army Tntv OPlan 1-45*, Anx 5, p. 5.

<sup>47</sup> *Henderson ltr.*

too long. Colonel Kenneth H. Weir, commander of LFASCU-1, agreed in principle with this complaint. He said that "if air support units could have been given the maximum ordnates and azimuths of the artillery and naval gunfire falling into an area in which air strikes were to be made,"<sup>48</sup> in many instances the aircraft could have attacked or continued an attack without invoking the restrictive fire plans. This controversial point was settled on 16 May when Tenth Army cancelled the use of Plans Negat and Victor, except in unusual circumstances.<sup>49</sup>

### ISLAND COMMAND ACTIVITIES<sup>50</sup>

The tasks to be carried out by Island Command during both the combat and the garrison phases of the Okinawa campaign were more complex and staggering in many ways than those assigned to other Tenth Army combat organizations. Major General Fred C. Wallace was responsible for providing administrative and logistic support to combat units, executing the CinCPOA base development plan, and assuming—when directed by Tenth Army—the responsibility for the garrison and defense of Okinawa and its outlying islands. To achieve the objectives required in these various assignments, Island Command had been organized so that it would direct, control, and coordinate a joint task force comprised of a large portion

of the service and support troops in the Tenth Army. As Tenth Army noted later: "In effect, Island Command [served] as a combined Army Service Area and advance section of a Communication Zone."<sup>51</sup>

The degree and scope of the functions delegated by Tenth Army to General Wallace increased in an almost direct proportion to the decrease in fighting and subsequent narrowing of the combat zone. Before the beginning of July, Island Command controlled some 153,000 men and had become responsible for the defense and development of every major island in the entire Okinawan chain of islands.<sup>52</sup> Subordinate and reporting to General Wallace were the commanders of Naval Operating Base, Ryukyus; Joint Communication Activities; Hydrographic Survey; Army and Navy Air Bases; Construction Troops; Military Government; and Ground Defense Forces. Additionally, General Wallace exercised control over a large number of service troops which had been assigned directly to his headquarters.

When ICEBERG Plan Phase III operations against Miyako and Kikai were cancelled in late April, all base development efforts, and troops scheduled for employment on these and other islands of the Ryukyus, were reassigned to Okinawa. In the planned revisions,

<sup>51</sup> *Tenth Army AR*, chap 11, sec XXVI, p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> Patrols of the 2d Marine Division reconnaissance company scouted Izena Shima—to the north of Okinawa—from their base on Iheya Shima, on 23 June. No enemy soldiers were found; the island held some 4,000 natives, however, who were friendly to the Americans. On 29 June, Island Command took over Kume Shima, which had been captured by the FMF Reconnaissance Battalion earlier in the month.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in *AirIntelBul*, Aug-Sep45, p. 24.

<sup>49</sup> *Henderson ltr.*

<sup>50</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, the material in this section is derived from: *IsCom AR*; *MilGovtSec*, *IsCom*, *Histories of MilGovt Ops on Okinawa*, Apr-Aug45 rpts; *27th Inf Div OpRpt*.

the number of airfields originally scheduled for development on the island was doubled, and a corresponding increase in supply installations and troop staging, rehabilitation, and training areas was envisioned. All of these impending developments, however, were held in abeyance until remnants of the *Thirty-second Army* had been destroyed.

As an example of his single-minded determination to pursue the basic objective, General Buckner had ordered all airfield construction units to concentrate on maintaining and reconstructing supply roads to frontline organizations when the heavy rains and resultant mud of late May and early June threatened to bog down but failed to halt the Tenth Army attack. In spite of the weather and incident delays, the first American-built airstrip on Okinawa—a 7,000-foot runway at Yontan—was completed by 17 June. Before the end of the month, 5 airfields were operational on the island, and 8 of the 18 proposed fields were sited and were in the midst of being rehabilitated or constructed to meet the needs of the increased numbers of newly arriving B-29s.

Besides air base development and road maintenance, the Island Command engineering troops fulfilled other important tasks. They widened over 160 miles of existing native roads into two-, three-, and four-lane highways to accommodate the burgeoning load of supply and troop traffic. Island Command also opened new beaches, constructed piers, and cleared dump areas to handle the influx of supplies to be used in the impending operations against Japan proper. Engineers developed a massive water system capable of answering the

needs of hundreds of thousands of soldiers and civilians. Other pipelines were laid and tank farms built to handle the tankerloads of aviation fuel necessary to maintain current and act as a reserve for projected air operations. Construction of the hundreds of storage, administration, and hospital buildings to be used by invasion-bound troops paced the buildup elsewhere on the island.

As the end of organized resistance on Okinawa neared, Island Command shifted the weight of its logistical support from Tenth Army to preparations for approaching operations. One base development phase influenced by planned future operations resulted in the pre-emption of vast areas of arable land in southern Okinawa and on the Motobu Peninsula. Not only was the topography of the island altered, but the way of life, means of subsistence, and sources of sustenance of island natives were irrevocably changed. Ejection of the natives from generations-old family holdings and removal of other islanders from more populated areas meant that they became, in effect, wards of the Island Command.

The agency responsible to Island Command and taking over its role as guardian for the displaced Okinawans was Military Government. Like so many of the other agencies directed by General Wallace, this one was a joint service effort. Even during the initial stages of the battle, military government teams functioned as though they were conducting a "disaster relief operation,"<sup>53</sup> in which they had to clear the islanders out of the way of the course of the fighting

<sup>53</sup> *Tenth Army AR*, chap 11, sec XXVII, pp. 3-4.

for reasons of mercy as well as for the purpose of keeping them from hampering Tenth Army operations. In this period, as the native population became concentrated in stockades and resettlement areas in northern Okinawa, the Americans gave assistance to the Okinawans as the natives reconstituted the normal functions of civil government and developed a self-sustaining local economy. Primary emphasis was on increased Okinawan participation in both areas. An idea of the magnitude of the job that was performed by a relatively small group of military government personnel is reflected by the fact that it was in charge of 261,115 civilians on 30 June, and 100,000 more by the end of the war.

Complementing the sweep that Tenth Army forces made in the south after the end of organized resistance, Island Command garrison forces in occupied areas of northern Okinawa conducted mop-up operations, which lasted well into August and assumed the proportion of pitched battles at times. The majority of the flare-ups occurred north of the Ishikawa Isthmus, garrisoned by the 27th Infantry Division on 2 May. Army forces on Kerama Retto also felt the backlash from survivors of Japanese units that had been defeated but did not know it.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>54</sup> A provisional infantry battalion, formed from the 870th Antiaircraft Artillery (Automatic Weapons) Battalion, relieved 2/305 as the Kerama Retto garrison on 23 May. The former AAA gunners were given some rudimentary infantry training by experienced 27th Infantry Division officers and noncommissioned officers, and then began operations which lasted until the end of the war to destroy the numerous survivors of the sea raiding battalions hidden out in the rugged hills of the island.

Upon passing to Island Command control and moving to the areas in northern Okinawa formerly occupied by the 1st and 6th Marine Divisions, the 27th Division began patrolling extensively, assisting the military government collection teams, and blowing caves as well as fortified and prepared positions found in its assigned zone of responsibility. When the toll of enemy dead rose from an average of 3 or 4 to 15 a day and Army troops found evidence of increasing numbers of recently occupied and prepared bivouac positions, General Wallace decided to make a thorough sweep of northern Okinawa to kill or capture the Japanese remaining there.

On 19 May, the division began a sweep northwards from the base of Ishikawa Isthmus with three regiments abreast. Within five days, the soldiers met heavy resistance at Onna Take, the heavily forested hill mass rising to 1,000 feet from the center of the isthmus. Here, 1st Division Marines had fought guerrillas in April while the 6th Division was fighting the battle on Motobu Peninsula. Since that time, the enemy had added to the natural defenses of the area and extensively fortified the region. The soldiers fought a 10-day pitched battle here without benefit of air or artillery support. After it was over, there was evidence that a sizable number of Japanese had escaped the trap and headed further north. The 27th Division continued its sweep and followed the Japanese. The mop up was finally completed on 4 August, when Army troops reached Hedo Misaki. The division reported at the end of the nearly three-month drive

that it had killed over 1,000 Japanese and captured 500.<sup>55</sup>

As the fighting on Okinawa drew to a climax, preparations for another off-island operation began. Like Tori, Ibeya, and Aguni Shimas, Kume Shima had been one of the targets originally selected for capture during Phase III (d) of the ICEBERG operations.<sup>56</sup> The priority of these targets was downgraded later as the ground campaign unfolded, and this phase of the ICEBERG operation was finally cancelled. A Tenth Army study in late May resulted in the choice of these islands as radar and fighter director sites. The first three were captured in early June, and Kume was targeted for seizure during the mop up phase on Okinawa. Largest of the outlying islands selected for early-warning facilities—some 40 square miles in size—it is approximately 55 miles west of Naha. Assigned to capture the island was the FMF Amphibious Reconnaissance Battalion, which had been attached to Island Command for garrison duty in the Eastern Islands after the Marines had seized them. On 21 June, the battalion was released to Tenth Army control for the Kume Shima assault landing. (See Map 22.)

Kume was scouted in the night of 13–14 June by Company B patrols. Information received from captured civilians indicated that only a 50-man enemy garrison held the island. This intelligence proved correct after the landing on 26 June, but Company A and the 81mm Mortar Platoon from 1/7 were attached to Major Jones' 252-man

battalion in case the Japanese force encountered was larger than expected.

Leaving the company from 1/7 behind to guard the beachhead, Major Jones and his battalion set out to contact the enemy. After five days of intensive patrolling, no Japanese were found and no opposition was developed. On 30 June, Jones declared the island secure.<sup>57</sup>

Although the Kume assault force had encountered no enemy in the late June operation, the garrison troops only several days later became involved in two fire fights with Japanese soldiers. Six of the enemy were killed and three of their four machine guns were captured. Constant aggressive patrolling forced the survivors to scatter into the hills in the interior of the island, where they offered no threat to the successful operation of air warning facilities. Air Warning Squadron 11 arrived at Okinawa on 4 July, and its units were set up on Kume Shima two days later. By 12 July, the radar and fighter director sections of the squadron had begun operations and been integrated into the system controlled overall by the Air Defense Control Center on Okinawa.<sup>58</sup>

#### EVALUATION OF OPERATIONS<sup>59</sup>

As some scholars in the field of military history and tactics have noted, the

<sup>57</sup> *PhibReconBn AR*, Ph III, encl A, The Assault and Capture of Kume Shima, dtd 15Aug45.

<sup>58</sup> *ADC Hist*, p. 6.

<sup>59</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *Tenth Army AR*; *IIIAC AR*; *XXIV Corps AR*; *1st MarDiv SAR*; *6th MarDiv SAR*, Ph III; Isely and Crowl, *Marines and Amphibious War*.

<sup>55</sup> Love, *27th InfDiv Hist*, p. 649.

<sup>56</sup> *ICEBERG Study*, App H.

Okinawa operation represents "the culmination of amphibious development in the Pacific war."<sup>60</sup> Shortly after the initial landings, British observers accompanying the ICEBERG force reported that "This operation was the most audacious and complex enterprise which has yet been undertaken by the American Amphibious Forces, . . ." <sup>61</sup> And they were undoubtedly right, for "more ships were used, more troops put ashore, more supplies transported, more bombs dropped, more naval guns fired against short targets"<sup>62</sup> than in any previous campaign in the Pacific. Despite the immensity of all of the factors involved in the ICEBERG operation, the Okinawa landing realistically demonstrated the soundness of the fundamental amphibious doctrine that the Navy and the Marine Corps had developed over the years and had tempered in the Pacific fighting. This thesis was amplified by General Geiger, who pointed out that the battle for Okinawa "reemphasized most clearly that our basic principles of tactics and technique are sound, 'in the book,' and need only to be followed in combat."<sup>63</sup>

The touchstone to success at Okinawa was interservice cooperation, where "Army artillery supported Marine infantry and vice versa," and "Marine and Army planes were used interchangeably and operated under the same tactical command," and "each contiguous infantry unit was mutually supporting and interdependent," and finally, when

"the Navy's participation was vital to both throughout."<sup>64</sup> The target information center (TIC) was the primary Tenth Army agency that coordinated the request for and assignment of supporting arms. In the TICs existing at division, regimental, and battalion levels throughout the Tenth Army, a centralized target information and weapons assignment system gave unit commanders the ability to mass the maximum amount of firepower on both assigned targets and targets of opportunity.

At each infantry echelon down to battalion level, the artillery liaison officer was also in charge of the TIC and worked very closely with the operations officer. Utilizing previously collated intelligence pinpointing enemy positions and screening support requests, the TIC section head—an artillery liaison officer—and the naval gunfire and air liaison officers allocated fire missions to each of the three support elements which they represented. A primary consideration in making each assignment was the capability of the weapon or weapons to be employed.

The target information center at IIIAC headquarters was controlled by the Corps Artillery commander—who made it one of his special staff agencies—and its mission was to provide supporting arms with target information. Colonel Henderson, the operations officer of IIIAC Corps Artillery, described the TIC as General Nimmer's S-2 Section:

. . . expanded to meet the needs of artillery, NGF and CAS [close air support] on a 24 hour basis. The Corps Arty S-2 was the IIIAC TIO [target information

<sup>60</sup> Isely and Crowl, *Marines and Amphibious War*, p. 551.

<sup>61</sup> *British Observers rpt.*

<sup>62</sup> Isely and Crowl, *loc. cit.*

<sup>63</sup> *IIIAC AR*, p. 194.

<sup>64</sup> Isely and Crowl, *op. cit.*, p. 578.

officer]. The working responsibility for coordinating arty, NGF and air lay with the Corps Arty S-3 for both planned fires and targets of opportunity.

The Corps Arty S-3, S-2 (TIO) and Corps AirO and NGFO were all located in a big hospital tent adjacent to IIIAC headquarters most of the time. The S-3 and S-2 (TIO) had 'hot line' phones to Corps G-3 and G-2. The Corps Arty FDC [fire direction center] and the Corps fire support operations center were one and the same facility—with NGF and air added.<sup>65</sup>

The TIC was given radio jeeps and operators from the Corps Signal Battalion and Corps Artillery to man the Support Air Request, Support Air Observation, and Support Air Direction (SAD) radio nets. As all division and corps commanders commented favorably on the TIC system, Tenth Army recommended that it be adopted for all future operations.

In writing about the fire support functions of the TIC, the commander of the 11th Marines noted:

For the first time in the Pacific, coordination of naval gunfire and air support with artillery was prescribed in army orders, a forerunner of the present FSCC [Fire Support Coordination System]. Examination of the record will show that each division and corps, Army and Marine, used a different modification of it. It is worthy of note that the system used by the First Marine Division was most like what we have today.<sup>66</sup>

Until the *Kamikaze* threat waned in late May and early June, most of the close air support missions were flown by carrier-based planes rather than the TAF aircraft on Okinawa. The latter were too fully committed flying combat air patrols and intercepting Japanese

planes to fly strike missions until the later stages of the campaign; Marine-piloted Avengers on supply drops were an exception. The majority of the close support missions in the Okinawa campaign were pre-planned; strike requests were submitted to the LFASCUs, which assigned them well enough in advance so that the strike pilots could be thoroughly briefed before the mission was flown. When a ground element urgently needed close air support, its air liaison party submitted a request through the chain of command to the LFASCU at corps headquarters, which approved the request or turned it down, if, in fact, this action had not taken place earlier at regimental or division level.

Tenth Army unit commanders were favorably impressed also by the aerial supply drop system that was of such vital assistance to the attackers when supply routes had become bogged down. They recommended that a unit similar to the IIIAC Air Delivery Section be formed to work with each field army or independent corps. Tenth Army also recommended that the JASCOS assigned to each combat division be disbanded.<sup>67</sup> Motivating this proposal was the feeling that when the marked dissimilarity in the training and functions of the various components of the JASCOS were taken into account, separate air liaison, shore fire control, and shore party communications parties would operate more effi-

<sup>67</sup> It will be noted in the discussion of the Marine division in pt VI, chap 2, *infra*, that this is what in fact took place with the publication of the G-Series Tables of Organization in late 1945. An Assault Signal Company (ASCO) was made organic to the Marine division and placed in the division headquarters battalion.

<sup>65</sup> Henderson ltr 1965.

<sup>66</sup> Brown ltr.

ciently. The naval gunfire spotting and liaison teams were specially commended for competently handling the staggering volume of naval shells fired in support of the land forces.

The shore bombardment of Okinawa on L-Day was "the heaviest concentration of naval gunfire ever delivered in the support of the landing of troops."<sup>68</sup> Some 3,800 tons of shells poured in from battleships, cruisers, and destroyers, and from the rocket racks and mortars of the support vessels to explode on enemy shore targets. During most of the campaign, each frontline regiment was assigned one call fire ship and one illumination ship. In certain instances, such as during the 6th Marine Division drive to the Motobu Peninsula, each assault battalion had a destroyer on call. Most fire support ships remained on station for the entire campaign and were not rotated to other duties. As the operation progressed, the quality and results of their shooting improved immeasurably.

On certain occasions, however, the ground units encountered intricately sited and deeply dug-in enemy positions which were impregnable to even the weight of naval gunfire salvos. At these times, the Japanese positions would withstand the fires of individual supporting arms or all of them together. Then, assault forces began a wearing-down process involving the employment of flame and gun tanks, demolitions, and infantry all together in what General Buckner referred to as "the corkscrew and blowtorch" method. Although artillery utilized every expedient conceivable, including the use of anti-aircraft

artillery guns and LVT(A) howitzers to supplement their regular fires, the Shuri and Kiyamu defenses remained invulnerable for long periods at a time.

One artillery weapon that was organic to the infantry regiments and immediately available for employment under optimum frontline conditions was the 105mm self-propelled howitzer, the M-7. This field piece was found in the 105mm howitzer (self-propelled) platoon containing four gun sections, which replaced the 75mm howitzer (self-propelled) platoon, in the regimental weapons company when it was reorganized on 1 May 1945 according to the G-series Table of Organization (T/O). The 1st and 6th Marine Divisions had received the T/O change, revamped their weapons companies, and were supplied with the M-7s before embarking for Okinawa.<sup>69</sup>

No other Tenth Army units remained continuously on line so long a period as the artillery battalions of both Marine and Army divisions during the battle in southern Okinawa. In this period, the artillery of all six infantry divisions supported the attack. Marine and Army corps artillery units supplemented the fires of the 24 divisional battalions with 12 of their own in general support.

Augmenting the Marine artillery were the guns of two LVT(A) battalions, which had been organized and trained as field artillery before the landing. Be-

<sup>68</sup> *Tenth Army AR*, chap 11, sec V, p. 6.

<sup>69</sup> Prior to the T/O change, the regimental weapons company consisted of a 75mm howitzer (self-propelled) platoon and three 37mm gun platoons. After the new T/O went into effect, the company was comprised of the 105mm self-propelled howitzer platoon and two 37mm gun platoons.

cause of its organization, each LVT(A) battalion had the fire support capability of a four-battalion regiment of 75mm howitzers.

Prior to Okinawa, General Geiger had become convinced that the armored amtracs could be trained as field artillery and used as such immediately after landing on L-Day at H-Hour and until direct support battalions arrived ashore. Thereafter, the LVT(A)s would reinforce corps and divisional artillery. After landing on L-Day, the LVT(A)s had their "batteries laid and ready to shoot for forward observers as early as H plus 30 minutes—but the Japanese wouldn't accommodate us with targets."<sup>70</sup>

A total of 2,246,452 rounds were fired in support of the infantry by tanks, LVT(A)s, M-7s, and field artillery pieces; this was more than triple the 707,500 rockets, mortars, and rounds of 5-inch shells or larger fired by the gun-fire support ships.<sup>71</sup> In either case, the figure is staggering. Because Tenth Army had established a centralized system of target assignment and fire direction, unit artillery commanders were able to mass the fires of all their guns that were within the range of a specific

target with little effort in a minimum of time.

In an analysis of Marine artillery operations on Okinawa, General Geiger discovered that there had been instances when 155mm guns and howitzers were unable to destroy certain well-built Japanese defenses when called upon to do so. Further, both corps and division artillery often found it difficult to reduce natural cave positions, which fell only under the direct fire of self-propelled guns or when artillery of a larger caliber than that found in Marine artillery battalions were employed.

The expectation that the invasion of Japan would require a vastly increased fire potential in the existing Marine artillery organizations led General Geiger to recommend changes in its makeup. Accordingly, he proposed a new setup consisting of a field artillery observation battalion and four group headquarters and headquarters batteries, and the following firing batteries: one 105mm howitzer (self-propelled); three 155mm howitzer; two 155mm gun; one 155mm gun (self-propelled); two 8-inch howitzer; one 8-inch howitzer (self-propelled); and one 240mm howitzer.

unit in which a specific weapon was organic; the reports of the LVT(A) battalions, attached to the 1st and 6th Marine Divisions, were incorporated within the division reports. The 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, alone fired a total of 100,339 rounds of 75mm ammunition, "which was the largest number of rounds fired by Marine 75mm pack howitzer battalion in any of the Pacific campaigns during World War II." LtCol Robert C. Hilliard comment to HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, 6Apr65. Colonel Hilliard is an artillery officer who served with the 11th Marines at Okinawa.

<sup>70</sup> *Henderson ltr.*

<sup>71</sup> A breakdown of the first figure by type of shell fired reveals: 75mm guns (tanks)—199,522; 75mm howitzers (including LVT(A)s)—387,112; 105mm howitzers (including M-7s)—1,119,210; 155m howitzers—375,241; 155mm guns—146,359; 8-inch howitzers—19,008. Because of discrepancies appearing between the figures given in the appropriate ammunition expenditure sections of the section reports of the Tenth Army, the two corps, and the divisions, these totals represent those given by the

General Geiger was particularly impressed by the penetrating and destructive power of the 200-pound shell of the 8-inch howitzer when compared with the results achieved by the 95-pound projectile fired by 155mm guns and howitzers, the largest caliber pieces organic to Marine artillery units. The Marine commander asked that some of these 8-inch battalions be included when task organizations were formed for future scheduled Marine operations against Japan scheduled for the future.

Teamwork was a most important ingredient in the formula for reduction of heavily fortified Japanese positions. During the course of the Okinawa campaign, the work of supporting arms, infantry-engineer, air-ground, and tank-infantry teams played a vital role in the defeat of the enemy. Ground assault operations, however, were the especial province of the tanks and the infantry. Concerning the armored support of 6th Division Marines on Okinawa, General Shepherd wrote that "if any one supporting arm can be singled out as having contributed more than any others during the progress of the campaign, the tank would certainly be selected."<sup>72</sup> In a battle lesson issued to the *Thirty-second Army*, General Ushijima supported this opinion, stating that "the enemy's power lies in his tanks. It has become obvious that our general battle against the American forces is a battle against their M-1 and M-4 tanks."<sup>73</sup>

In comparison with the factors limiting armored support during some of the

<sup>72</sup> *6th MarDiv SAR, Ph III, pt III, p. 28.*

<sup>73</sup> Quoted in the preface to the Tank Support Anx, *1st MarDiv SAR.*

other Pacific island battles, tanks were more widely employed, on Okinawa because its terrain, for the most part, favored armored operations. Tenth Army units lost a total of 153 tanks to accurate enemy AT fire, vast and thickly sown minefields, and demolitions-laden Japanese soldiers who attempted to destroy both the tanks and themselves, but who failed in their efforts for the most part, however, because of the accurate fire of the infantrymen protecting the tanks. Individual Japanese damaged seven tanks from the five Army battalions, disabled one from the 6th Marine Division, and none in the 1st Marine Division where "the alertness of the covering infantry and the tank crews prevented the successful completion of these attacks."<sup>74</sup>

Tanks from the Army 713th Armored Flamethrower Battalion, the first unit of its type to be formed and take part in sustained action, supported Army and Marine units alike. After the campaign, the battalion was highly praised for "a consistently outstanding record of performance."<sup>75</sup>

While covered by infantrymen and standard tanks, flame tanks were par-

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41. A few tanks in each of the standard tank battalions on Okinawa were equipped with small, limited-range flamethrowers, which were mounted either on the periscope mounts or where the bow machine gun had been. Both were inferior to the gun tube flamethrower of the 713th Armored Flamethrower Battalion, which had "a greater range in addition to being an all-around better weapon and the most practicable of the three." *Tenth Army AR*, chap 11, sec IX, p. 12. See also pt VI, chap 2, *infra*, for a discussion of armored flamethrowers.

ticularly successful in burning the enemy out of rocky outcroppings, reverse slope positions, and ruins. The commanders of both the XXIV Corps and the IIIAC favored the increased employment of flame tanks. General Hodge suggested the addition of two battalions to each corps in future operations; General Geiger recommended that one company of these tanks be made organic to each Marine tank battalion.

Both Marine combat divisions had Army 4.2-inch chemical mortar companies attached for the campaign. The division commanders reported that they were very satisfied with the performance of the large-caliber mortars, which could furnish high angle fire on targets not otherwise suitable for 81mm mortars and artillery howitzers. After noting the successful results that had followed employment of the 4.2-inch mortars attached to his division, General del Valle was convinced that their accuracy, long range, and tremendous destructive power were such that he recommended the inclusion of this type of company in the T/O of a Marine division.

Two other new Army support weapons impressed Marine leaders for the same reasons as had the heavy mortars; they were the 57mm and 75mm recoilless rifles. Although neither had been issued for testing by Marine units, nor were the rifles employed extensively by the Army, after viewing a combat demonstration of the effectiveness of the new weapons, IIIAC observers reported that the recoilless rifles held considerable promise for tactical employment. General Geiger acted on this informa-

tion and recommended that the Marine Corps thoroughly field test both weapons with a view of adopting them in place of the 37mm guns and 2.36-inch bazookas in the infantry regiments at that time.<sup>76</sup>

Few startling innovations to accepted infantry tactical methods appeared out of the Okinawa fighting. Concerning this, General Geiger commented: "No new or unusual features of infantry combat were disclosed or developed during the campaign on Okinawa which would tend to modify or annul current standard principles or doctrines."<sup>77</sup> Those facets of the battle sometimes cited as having reflected the emergence of new concepts in the Pacific war—such as the employment of night attacks and refinement of tank-infantry tactics—were actually just the logical outgrowth of existing tactical doctrine that evolved after the Americans had become familiar with the enemy and his way of fighting.

For the most part, in the early years of the war, there was little inclination toward night offensive action; Marines were too intent on tying in their lines before darkness in order to blunt inevitable Japanese counterattacks and infiltration of the lines. During the Okinawa campaign, however, Marine units took part in night operations more extensively than ever before, and with a great degree of success. Approximately 21 patrols and attacks were mounted at night by Marines; 13 of this number were conducted by the Amphib-

<sup>76</sup> IIIAC AR, p. 214.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

ious Reconnaissance Battalion.<sup>78</sup> In commenting on this aspect of Marine tactics on Okinawa, General Geiger said:

All night operations were characterized by the fact that they were performed in an orthodox manner. Previous training in such maneuvers and existing doctrines on the subject were employed and proved sound. Daylight reconnaissance, a limited objective of a prominent terrain feature, explicit orders for all echelons, noise discipline, and contact were as prescribed in the training manuals. In every case surprise was achieved and the night attack or movement was successful.<sup>79</sup>

Regarding the American night attacks, Colonel Yahara commented that they were:

. . . particularly effective, taking the Japanese completely by surprise. The Japanese had so accustomed themselves to ceasing organized hostilities at nightfall, and . . . reorganizing and relaxing during the night that attacks in these hours

<sup>78</sup> Major Jones' Marines conducted the following night patrols and operations as follows: Keise Shima, Aware Saki, Mae Shima, and Kuro Shima, all pre-L-Day; Tsugen Shima, 5-6 April; Ike Shima, Taka Banare, Heanza Shima, and Hamahiki Shima, all 6-7 April; Kutaka Shima, 7 April; Minna Shima, 7-8 April; Yagachi, 20 April; and Sesoko, 21 April. The following IIIAC units conducted night operations on Okinawa proper as noted: Asa Kawa crossing by 22d Marines, 10 May; Relief of 1st Marines at Dakeshi-Wana by 5th Marines, 13-14 May; Naha Canal crossing by 22d Marines, 29 May; Reconnaissance of Oroku by 6th Reconnaissance Company, 2 June; Kunishi Ridge attack by 7th Marines, 12 June; Kunishi Ridge attack by 1st Marines, 14 June; Kunishi Ridge relief by 22d Marines, 17 June; and Mezado Ridge relief by 8th Marines, 18 June.

<sup>79</sup> IIIAC AR, p. 103.

caught them both physically and psychologically off-guard.<sup>80</sup>

In general, a study of the Marine conduct of night operations on Okinawa revealed no new, startling doctrine, for it indicated the following:

1. Orthodox methods are good methods.
2. A correct estimate of the situation is a major contributing factor toward success.
3. Night operations need not be confined to highly specialized units.
4. Such operations afford echelon commanders with an excellent tactical device.
5. Present doctrine is quite satisfactory for the training and indoctrination of troops.<sup>81</sup>

In reviewing the success of those night attacks launched during the Okinawa campaign, it seems surprising that American commanders did not employ this offensive tactic more often.

Immediately after the fighting for Shuri had intensified, severe gaps appeared in the ranks of the assault elements. Although replacements were fed to Tenth Army continually during the course of battle, they were often too poorly or incompletely trained to go into the frontlines immediately. Yet, they were needed to beef up the strength of the hard-hit units. Nevertheless, Tenth Army issued an order to the corps commanders directing that newly arriving personnel were to be indoctrinated and oriented before assignment to frontline units. It was very often difficult to adhere to this directive, especially when the situation demanded

<sup>80</sup> Yahara *Interrogation*.

<sup>81</sup> Capt James R. Stockman, "Night Operations on Okinawa," *Marine Corps Gazette*, v. 30, no. 9 (Sep46), p. 28.

that the replacements be committed into the lines before they were completely "shaken down."

General Geiger "had only two divisions to fight" on Okinawa and found it impossible to guarantee the "relief of front line divisions for rest and assimilation of replacements." To remedy this, he suggested that a corps on extended operations should have a triangular organization much like that of the Marine divisions to provide for an "automatic reserve." Without this, his two Marine divisions had to remain constantly on line until the end of the operation. Based on the knowledge gained at Okinawa, a corps of at least three divisions was considered a must for future joint operations of a similar nature.<sup>82</sup>

Some serious personnel problems arose before and during the campaign for Army and Marine divisions alike. Most deeply concerned was XXIV Corps, which had been deeply involved in the Philippines operation during the time that preparations for ICEBERG were underway. General Hodge favored the Marine replacement system in which Marine replacements were attached to and trained with infantry units during the preinvasion phases, and then travelled with these units to the target area, where they worked as shore party labor units until needed in the lines to replace infantry casualties.

Including the replacements they had received before departing Pavuvu and Guadalcanal respectively, the 1st Marine Division landed at Okinawa approximately 10 percent over T/O strength,

and the 6th Marine Division arrived at the target with a 5 percent overage. Because they had participated in the training and rehearsal phases of ICEBERG, the replacements could be assigned to line regiments when required. Most of the replacements who arrived at Okinawa during the later stages of the battle had come directly from State-side. Since they were not so well trained as the earlier replacements, the infantry units to which they were assigned had to divert some of their efforts to indoctrinate and train the new arrivals for battle rapidly.

Possibly influenced by the Marine replacement system, Tenth Army recommended that, in future operations, a large-sized replacement company should be assigned to and train with an infantry division before an invasion, and then accompany that division to the target area. General Hodge suggested that infantry battalions be permitted to carry a 25-percent-strength overage to the target, and that balanced infantry replacement battalions, each consisting of 1,000 men, be attached to and loaded out with every invasion-bound infantry division.

Both the 1st and 6th Marine Divisions contained a large number of combat veterans who had participated in two or more campaigns in the Pacific.<sup>83</sup> As of 30 June 1945, the 1st Marine Division had 205 officers that had served overseas 24 months or more; over half of these had been in the Pacific area for more than 30 months. Nearly 3,200 enlisted Marines had been in the field

<sup>82</sup> *IIIAC AR*, p. 195.

<sup>83</sup> See pt II, chap 3 above, section entitled "Training and Rehearsals."

for two years or more; almost 800 of these had been in a combat zone for 30 or more months. General del Valle considered that these facts reflected the approach of a serious personnel and morale problem in the division. By the fall of 1945, 1st Marine Division personnel already in or entering the two-year category "will have spent their entire time in a coconut grove or jungle with not a single opportunity for leave or liberty."<sup>84</sup> Steps were taken later, however, which alleviated the situation before it reached a crucial point.<sup>85</sup>

The immediate replacement of infantry losses was a problem common to commanders of all assault echelons. They believed that the solution was to be found in the establishment of a smoothly working replacement systems, wherein replacements would be attached to and train with an infantry unit before an invasion. Experienced troop leaders knew that long hours of closely coordinated training were needed before assault and replacement organizations could be considered combat ready. Arduous hours of team training served as the basis of American successes at Okinawa. The final action report of the Tenth Army noted:

The support rendered the infantry by naval gunfire, artillery, air and tanks was adequate in every respect. Without such magnificent support, little progress could have been made by the infantry in their advance against the heavily organized enemy positions in southern Okinawa. Supporting fires enabled the infantry to carry out the tremendous task of repeated

assaults against strongly fortified positions.<sup>86</sup>

Logistical planning too required teamwork, and the problems facing the logistics planners reflected the magnitude of the Okinawa operation. Consider for example, that in Phase I of ICEBERG alone, a total of almost 183,000 troops and 746,850 measurement tons of cargo had to be loaded into 433 assault transports and landing ships by 8 different subordinate embarkation commands at 11 widely separated ports from Seattle to Leyte over a distance of some 6,000 miles.

The Joint Expeditionary Force alone contained 1,200 ships of all kinds.<sup>87</sup> By the time that the island was secured, "About 548,000 men of the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps took part, with 318 combatant vessels and 1,139 auxiliary vessels exclusive of personnel landing craft of all types."<sup>88</sup> These figures coupled with the long distances over which supplies had to travel, created logistics problems of an immense nature beyond all that which had transpired in earlier Pacific operations.

Some concept of the size of the unloading job at Okinawa may be seen in the table in chapter 7, p. 240, which depicts the amounts of assault and first echelon cargo unloaded in all the Central Pacific campaigns from the Gilberts through Okinawa. This chart dramatically indicates that in the overall tonnage of supplies and equipment unloaded, the total for Okinawa was almost double that for the entire

<sup>84</sup> *1st MarDiv SAR*, PersAnx, p. 4.

<sup>85</sup> See pt III below, section dealing with the rotation home of combat veterans.

<sup>86</sup> *Tenth Army AR*, chap 11, sec IX, p. 1.

<sup>87</sup> *War Reports*, p. 665.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 664.

Marianas operation and three times that for the Iwo Jima campaign. Errors of omission and commission in the logistics program seemed critical at the time that they appeared, but none was grave enough to effect the fighting for long. Some problems arising from the nature of operations began before L-Day and continued thereafter; they were important enough, however, to cause unit commanders to comment on them and make recommendations for improvement in their action reports.

In the logistics planning phase, embarkation officers too often found that ships' characteristics data for assigned ships was incorrect or out of date; at times, it was either not furnished or unavailable. When division staffs began completing loading plans, they found that, for the uninitiated and non-specialist, there were too many forms. These were too complicated and often repetitive. During the loading phase, ships' captains often received confusing and contradictory orders, which on several occasions resulted in their ships arriving in loading areas or appearing at places other than those to which they were to have gone. In most cases, the confusion arose from poor coordination between Marine and Navy staffs.

A sequel to this liaison gap at times appeared in the improper loading of assault transports. The commander of the transport group that lifted the 1st Marine Division to the target from the Russells reported that plans for loading some of his ships were not even begun until the vessels were alongside waiting to take a load. In reference to the loading of his entire group, he also said:

It can be fairly stated that these ships were not combat loaded. It is true that cargo was landed according to priority. However, the 60 per cent combat load as expressed in Transport Doctrine was greatly exceeded. All ships were, in the opinion of the squadron [TQM] 'commercial loaded, according to a definite priority.' This was due to the fact that an inadequate number of vessels were assigned by higher command to lift the First Marine Division.<sup>89</sup>

During the preinvasion preparatory period, Marine divisions, especially the 6th, found the Marine Corps supply system on the Pacific overly cumbersome. Two basic factors aggravated the situation. One was the fact that the relations of the Marine Supply Service, FMFPac, to the several combat and service commands in the Guadalcanal area—where the greater portion of IIIAC strength was based—caused many delays because of the many agencies through which supply requisitions had to pass before the requestor received the items requisitioned. In addition the 6th Division was located too far away from the stocking agency, which in this case was the 4th Base Depot on Banika in the Russells.

General Shepherd believed:

Supply problems, many requiring written correspondence and decisions by high authority, were not simplified by the addition of another senior echelon, the South Pacific Echelon, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific. The recent change in the concept of operations of the Corps, by which administration of divisions is theoretically divorced from the Corps, has not benefited the Division. Supply and administration

<sup>89</sup> Commander, Task Group 53.2 (Transport Group Baker) rpt in *CNO Record*, chap 7, p. 32.

cannot, in practice, be separated from command.<sup>90</sup>

A built-in problem, inherent in the nature of the organization and equipment of a Marine division, appeared on L-Day. The initial lack of resistance beyond the beachhead permitted the landing of many Marines who would otherwise not have gone ashore until scheduled. This caused a shortage of landing craft slated to move cargo to the beaches and in turn brought about a delay in the landing of such selected items of division cargo as motor transport and prime movers, which were ticketed for unloading on L-Day.

The truth is that neither Marine division ever had enough motor transportation either to supply itself adequately or to move its artillery. An allotment of motor vehicles and prime movers which might have been sufficient to the normal small island type of fighting to which Marines were accustomed was insufficient for a long operation such as Okinawa.<sup>91</sup>

At the end of the campaign, General del Valle recommended that each infantry regiment be furnished five prime movers with trailers to supplement motor transport already organic to the division. He also recommended that the infantry regiments be given in addition two bulldozers for "initial road, trail, dump clearance. . . ." <sup>92</sup> The 1st Division commander noted that motor transport, tractors, and engineering equipment, urgently needed for combat operations were often deadlined for lack of spare parts. To alleviate this situation, he

<sup>90</sup> *6th MarDiv SAR, Ph I&II*, chap III, p. 6.

<sup>91</sup> Isely and Crowl, *Marines and Amphibious War*, p. 574.

<sup>92</sup> *1st MarDiv SAR*, chap X, p. 19.

recommended that, in future logistical planning, provisions should be made for the inclusion of an ample supply of spare parts in resupply shipments.<sup>93</sup>

According to an officer who was deeply involved in shore party and supply operations at Okinawa:

Logistically, the touchstone of success was . . . interservice cooperation. In many instances, shortages of . . . supplies suffered by one service was made up by another service. It was a unique example of the unification that was developed throughout the campaign through the Central Pacific.<sup>94</sup>

In the end, hasty field expedients and the overwhelming superiority of American materiel strength, as well as the interservice collaboration, overcame any obstacle to the capture of Okinawa that logistical problems may have caused.

The story of the Okinawa campaign is incomplete without a brief investigation of enemy tactics. Contrary to the Japanese beachhead defense doctrine encountered in earlier Pacific landings, when the enemy strongly defended his beaches or ferociously attacked the invader before he could organize the beachhead, at Okinawa, the Tenth Army met a resistance in depth similar to that experienced by Americans in the Philippines invasion. *IGHQ* had ordered General Ushijima to fight a long holding action to buy the time necessary for Japan to complete Homeland defenses. If the Americans sustained a high attrition rate while attempting to batter down the *Thirty-second Army* defenses, so much the better; there would be that fewer Americans in the anticipated in-

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *Blakelock ltr 1965.*

vasion of Japan. From the time that the Tenth Army landed over the Hagushi beaches until it encountered the northern outposts of the Shuri line, it was harassed, harried, and delayed by small provisional units and somewhat stronger blocking forces, the latter comprised of veteran regulars.

The fall of Saipan in 1944, if nothing else, brought home to *IGHQ* the military potential of the United States. This loss caused the Japanese command to accelerate the construction of defense positions in Japan as well as on Iwo Jima and Okinawa. The fast carrier task force air raids on Okinawa beginning in October 1944 spurred General Ushijima's *Thirty-second Army* on to strengthen Okinawa defenses further. Beginning in mid-April, when the Tenth Army encountered the maze of concentric defense rings encircling Shuri, Americans became painfully aware of the results of these efforts.

The rugged and complex ridgelines in the Shuri area were defended from vast entrenchments, from a wide variety of fortified caves employed as pillboxes, and from elaborate, multi-storied weapons positions and gun emplacements that had been gouged out of the ridges and hills and connected by tunnels, which usually opened on the reverse slopes. "The continued development and improvement of cave warfare was the most outstanding feature of the enemy's tactics on Okinawa."<sup>95</sup>

Among other outstanding features of *Thirty-second Army* defense tactics was the use of a considerable amount of reinforcing artillery, mortar, and ma-

chine gun fire. Also, the Japanese made mass *Banzai* charges only infrequently, but with a hopeful view either of exploiting a successful attack or of just keeping the Americans off-balance. The enemy did, however, fritter away his strength and dwindling forces in small-sized counterattacks, which had little chance of success and which were, in most cases, blunted easily by the Americans.

Despite the obvious fact that his *Thirty-second Army* was decisively beaten, General Ushijima must be credited with having successfully accomplished his assigned mission. He did provide Japan with valuable time to complete the homeland defense.

The final act of the Okinawa story unfolded on 26 August 1945, when General of the Army Douglas MacArthur—appointed earlier as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP)—authorized General Stilwell to negotiate the surrender of enemy garrisons in the Ryukyus. Responding to orders issued by Stilwell, top enemy commanders reported at the headquarters of the Ryukyus command on 7 September to sign "unconditional surrender documents representing the complete capitulation of the Ryukyus Islands and over 105,000 Army and Navy forces."<sup>96</sup> Witnessing the ten-minute ceremony in addition to those officiating were Army and Marine infantry units and tank platoons, while above it all hundreds of planes flashed by.

<sup>95</sup> 1st Information and Historical Service, Documents Relating to the Surrender of Japanese Garrison in the Ryukyus and the Occupation of that Area by Elements of the Tenth Army, September and October 1945, dtd Dec45, attached news release.

<sup>96</sup> *Tenth Army AR*, chap 8, p. 4.

In a report to the Secretary of the Navy, Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King, CominCh, stated that "the outstanding development of this war, in the field of joint undertakings, was the perfection of amphibious operations, the most difficult of all operations in modern warfare."<sup>97</sup> As the next to last giant step

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<sup>97</sup> *War Reports*, p. 658.

leading to the defeat of Japan, the Okinawa invasion was a prime example of a successful amphibious operation, and the culmination of all that Americans had learned in the Pacific War in the art of mounting a seaborne assault against an enemy-held land mass. This knowledge was to serve well in preparing for the invasion of Japan.

**PART III**

***The End of the War***



# Future Operations

Following its participation in the sweep of the southern portion of Okinawa in June, on 2 July IIIAC was released from taking part in further mop-up activities. Thereafter, corps units not already in the process of doing so, moved to rehabilitation areas that were either on the island or at bases elsewhere in the Pacific.

IIIAC was detached from Tenth Army and came under the operational control of FMFPac on 15 July, the same day that the corps CP closed on Okinawa and opened on Guam.<sup>1</sup> During the period 13–18 July, Corps Troops, less the 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion, a portion of IIIAC Signal Battalion, and a small detachment from the IIIAC staff redeployed to Guam. General Shepherd's 6th Marine Division had begun the move to Guam on 4 July and completed it on the 11th. The 8th Marines (Reinforced) had left Okinawa on the first of the month and by 12 July the whole of the regiment and its reinforcements had rejoined the 2d Marine Division on Saipan. IIIAC Corps Artillery

and the 1st Marine Division remained on Okinawa and set up rehabilitation camps on Motobu Peninsula.

About a thousand of General del Valle's 1st Division Marines had been sent to Motobu during the last week of June to begin building campsites for the rest of the division, which had remained in southern Okinawa until the early part of July, when the new camp areas were ready for occupancy. Between 1 and 15 July, some troops and light equipment were moved overland to Motobu; heavy equipment was moved over a water route by way of Oroku in the same period. On the 20th General del Valle opened his CP at the Motobu camp area.<sup>2</sup>

Originally, the division was to have been rehabilitated in the Hawaiian Islands and a number of units of the rear echelon, which had remained on Pavuvu, had embarked for the new rest area before the Okinawa campaign was over; a few had actually arrived in Hawaii before the remainder was diverted to Okinawa. When the rumor that the division would remain on Okinawa and build its own bivouac area was confirmed, "there was outright dismay and discouragement in high and low ranks."<sup>3</sup> Of the six Marine divi-

<sup>1</sup> IIIAC WarD, Jul45. On 30 June, Major General Keller E. Rockey took over as commander of IIIAC, relieving General Geiger, who shortly thereafter relieved Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith, Commanding General, FMFPac. Brigadier General William A. Worton relieved Brigadier General Merwin H. Silverthorn as IIIAC Chief of Staff. *Ibid.* On the 25th, Major General Thomas E. Bourke had relieved General Rockey as commanding general of the 5th Marine Division. VAC WarD, Jun45.

<sup>2</sup> 1st MarDiv WarD, Jul45. Major General DeWitt Peck assumed command of the division on 9 August, relieving General del Valle. *Ibid.*, Aug45.

<sup>3</sup> McMillan, *The Old Breed*, p. 424.

sions, the 1st had been away from civilization and in the Pacific for the longest period. As the troops began the displacement to the north:

... the feeling of persecution had begun to go through its classic transformation. 'Well, dammit,' said one man above the rumble of the truck, 'if they can dish it out, I can take it!'

And as he straightened the straps of his pack and turned to look out toward the sea, there were grunts of belligerent agreement behind him.<sup>4</sup>

Even while IIIAC Marines took a breather before preparations for the final operation of the war, the size of the Corps continued to grow. Marine Corps strength on 30 June 1945 was 476,709 men and women, nearly a seventeenfold increase over the size of the Corps in July 1940.<sup>5</sup> Over half of the Marines represented by the 1945 total were serving overseas, most of them in the Pacific; 184,800 alone were in FMF ground units. By June, final plans had been initiated to commit them and other forces in the massive assault against Japan.

#### OPERATIONS OLYMPIC AND CORONET<sup>6</sup>

While en route to Hawaii from Iwo Jima, General Harry Schmidt's VAC

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *CMC Rpt*, 1945.

<sup>6</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: CinCPac WarDs, Jan-Aug45 (OAB, NHD); *USAFMidPac G-5 Hist*; IIIAC WarDs, Jun-Aug45; VAC WarDs, Apr-Aug45; *War Reports*; McMillan, *The Old Breed*; Johnston, *2d MarDiv Hist*; Aurthur and Cohlma, *3d MarDiv Hist*; Proehl, *4th MarDiv Hist*; Conner, *5th MarDiv Hist*; Cass, *6th MarDiv Hist*.

was ordered by CinCPac to begin planning for Phase III(c) of Operation ICEBERG, the invasion of Miyako Jima in the Sakishima Gunto, southwest of Okinawa. The VAC command post opened on Maui on 29 March, and on the next day its staff officers flew to Pearl Harbor for a conference at FMFPac headquarters concerning future VAC operations, primarily the Miyako Jima landing. Following their return from Iwo Jima to rest camps on Guam and in the Hawaiian Islands, the 3d, 4th, and 5th Marine Divisions began a period of rehabilitation and filled in their depleted ranks with replacements. Some replacement drafts that had been slated to restore VAC infantry regiments to full strength were diverted to Okinawa, where there was an even greater need for fresh troops. Within a short period of time, other replacements arrived, however, and the three VAC divisions were steadily built up.

When the Iwo Jima veterans were rested and most infantry regiments were again near-T/O strength, General Schmidt's three divisions embarked upon an extensive training program based upon a VAC schedule for the period 23 April to 1 July. By 1 July, all VAC units were to be ready for "amphibious operations involving opposed landings on hostile shores. . . ." <sup>7</sup> Despite the cancellation on 26 April of the Sakishima Gunto operation,<sup>8</sup> VAC adhered to the 1 July readiness date, and its divisions keyed their preparations to the requirements of Operation LONG-TOM, which directed assault landings

<sup>7</sup> VAC TrngO 1-45, dtd 15Apr45.

<sup>8</sup> *USAFMidPac G-5 Hist*, p. 257.

on the China coast south of Shanghai. The FMFPac warning order issued VAC gave a target date of 20 August, and also said that should this operation be cancelled, another would take place at some date after October.

As reflected in the CinCPOA Joint Staff Study LONGTOM, issued on 27 February 1945,<sup>9</sup> Admiral Nimitz' planners assumed that ICEBERG had been completed, Luzon had been captured, and that necessary service forces would be made available for LONGTOM from the United States or sources outside of the Pacific Ocean Areas. The purposes of LONGTOM were "to intensify air attacks against Japan" and "to seize approaches to increase the effectiveness of the blockade against Japan. . . ."<sup>10</sup> The assault forces assigned to LONGTOM consisted of three Marine divisions in VAC, three Army infantry divisions in IX Corps, and two Army parachute regiments. Once their objective was captured, a garrison air force consisting of three Marine aircraft groups, two Army Air Forces medium bombardment groups, and other naval and Marine aviation organizations would be established. On 16 May, CinCPac assigned VAC the duty of developing plans for a future operation based on a Joint Staff study; on 27 May CinCPac informed all of the commands concerned that the JCS had ordered Operation OLYMPIC—the invasion of southern Kyushu — executed on 1 November 1945, and consequently LONGTOM was deferred for an indefinite period. It was finally cancelled. On 31 May, CinCPac ordered General

Schmidt to report by dispatch to the Commanding General, Sixth Army, for purposes of planning for a future operation—OLYMPIC.

The many changes in strategic planning during the final year of the war with Japan, and particularly in the last six months, reflected the constantly changing aspects of the conflict itself during those 12 months. None of the adjustments that were made, however, deflected from the aims of the Cairo Declaration of 1943, in which the Allies stated their determination to end the war by forcing Japan to surrender unconditionally. At the various major conferences and in their innumerable meetings, the wartime heads of government and the Combined Chiefs of Staff were faced with the problem of deciding just how Japan was to be defeated.

Events during the winter of 1944 and spring of 1945 provided a variety of indications of the course that the war might take in the Pacific in the summer of 1945. The atomic bomb project was near completion but its future was uncertain. It seemed possible that Russia would enter the Pacific battle because Stalin had committed his country to this action at the Yalta Conference in February 1945, but this matter was equally uncertain. Although the successful invasion of Luzon had undoubtedly made the collapse of Japan that much more imminent, American planners were faced with the urgent requirement of deciding the strategy by which the enemy was to be brought to his knees. Two of many alternatives particularly favored by the JCS were: first, to rush the defeat of the Japanese by continuing and intensifying the

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 263.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

existing blockade and bombardment of the Home Islands, and, second, to invade Japan and force the enemy to capitulate when he was left with no other resource. Actually, these two concepts were not so much alternatives as they were parallel steps by which the Allies planned the defeat of Japan.

In July 1944, the JCS had submitted a proposed revision of the SEXTANT timetable of operations against Japan to the Combined Chiefs of Staff for consideration at the OCTAGON Conference to be held at Quebec in September.<sup>11</sup> The American leaders had based their recommendations on one concept, among others, that envisioned an invasion into the industrial heart of Japan following the capture of Formosa. The JCS stated:

While it may be possible to defeat Japan by sustained aerial bombardment and the destruction of her sea and air forces, this would probably involve an unacceptable delay.<sup>12</sup>

The JCS recommendations were accepted at OCTAGON, where the Combined Chiefs approved for planning purposes a new schedule of operations for 1945; Kyushu was to be invaded in October and the Tokyo Plain in December.<sup>13</sup>

The Navy view of an invasion of Japan has been stated succinctly by

<sup>11</sup> See pt I, chap 1, *supra*, for a discussion of Allied strategic planning in 1944.

<sup>12</sup> CCS 417/3, 11Jul44, title: Over-All Objective in War Against Japan, cited in Cline, *Washington Command Post*, p. 339.

<sup>13</sup> CCS 417/8, 9Sep44, title: Op for Defeat of Japan; CCS 417/9, OCTAGON, 11Sep44, title: Over-all Objective in War Against Japan; Min 173d Meeting CCS, 13Sep44, all cited in *Ibid.*

Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy, Chief of Staff to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, who wrote of the Quebec Conference:

. . . here the coming Battle of Japan was at the top of the agenda. Nothing had happened to alter my conviction that the United States could bring about the surrender of Japan without a costly invasion of the home islands . . . although the Army believed such an offensive necessary to insure victory.<sup>14</sup>

Leahy never was in agreement with the proposition that an invasion of Japan was a prerequisite to a final Allied victory, reasoning that:

A large part of the Japanese Navy was already on the bottom of the sea. The same was true of Japanese shipping. There was every indication that our Navy would soon have the rest of Tokyo's warships sunk or out of action. The combined Navy surface and air force action by this time had forced Japan into a position that made her early surrender inevitable. None of us then knew the potentialities of the atomic bomb, but it was my opinion, and I urged it strongly in the Joint Chiefs, that no major land invasion of the Japanese mainland was necessary to win the war.<sup>15</sup>

Leahy credits the early pressure for an invasion of Japan to the Army, which:

. . . did not appear to be able to understand that the Navy, with some Army air assistance, already had defeated Japan. The Army not only was planning a huge land invasion of Japan, but was convinced that we needed Russian assistance as well to bring the war against Japan to a successful conclusion.

<sup>14</sup> FAdm William D. Leahy, *I Was There* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1950), p. 2, hereafter Leahy, *I Was There*.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245.

It did not appear to me that under the then existing conditions there was any necessity for the great expenditure of life involved in a ground force attack on the numerically superior Japanese Army in its home territory. My conclusion, with which the naval representatives [on JCS and JCS planning staffs] agreed, was that America's least expensive course of action was to continue and intensify the air and sea blockade and at the same time to occupy the Philippines.

I believed that a completely blockaded Japan would then fall by its own weight. Consensus of opinion of the Chiefs of Staff supported this proposed strategy, and President Roosevelt approved.<sup>16</sup>

Leaders of the Army Air Forces took the Navy view that the Japanese could be forced to surrender—without an invasion of the Home Islands—under the “persuasive powers of the aerial attack and the blockade.”<sup>17</sup> It appeared that other military planners, however, “. . . while not discounting the possibility of a sudden collapse, believed that such a cheap victory was not probable, at least within the eighteen months allotted in the planning tables” established in the revised strategy agreed upon at OCTAGON.<sup>18</sup> In the end, the concept that an invasion was necessary prevailed and vigorous efforts were applied in planning and preparing for it.

As the basic directive ordering the invasion of Japan took shape, it became obvious that the command relationship established between MacArthur and Nimitz in the Pacific in 1942 needed revision. Recognizing this need, the JCS designated MacArthur Commander in

Chief, Army Forces in the Pacific (CinCAFPac) on 3 April 1945 and gave him control of all Army units in the Pacific except those in the North and Southeast Pacific Areas. This new appointment was in addition to the position he held as commander of SWPA. Admiral Nimitz was to retain his position and title as CinCPac–CinCPOA, and would have under his control all naval resources in the Pacific with the exception of those in the Southeast Pacific. The Twentieth Air Force, with its B–29s based in the China-Burma-India Theater as well as in the areas controlled by Nimitz and MacArthur, was to be subject to the requirements of both commanders under the new setup, but would remain under the direction of the JCS.<sup>19</sup> In addition, the directive stipulated that the JCS would issue directions for future operations, assign missions, and fix the command responsibility for major operations and campaigns. The JCS also stated that hereafter MacArthur would be responsible for the conduct of land campaigns and Nimitz for naval operations.

On the same day that this directive went out to the Pacific commanders, the JCS sent them another operational directive which among other things, in-

<sup>16</sup> JCS 1259/4, dtd 3Apr45, cited in *Ibid*, p. 682; JCS msg to CinCSWPA, CinCPac, and CG, Twentieth AF, dtd 3Apr45 in *Ibid*, and in LtCol Henry G. Morgan, Jr., “Planning the Defeat of Japan: A Study of Total War Strategy” (unpublished MS, OCMH), p. 152. The Twentieth was a strategic air force established in 1944 to operate under the direct control of the JCS. General H. H. Arnold, commanding the AAF, was the executive agent of the JCS to implement its directives concerning the deployment of the very-long-range bombers of the Twentieth.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259.

<sup>17</sup> Craven and Cate, *Matterhorn to Nagasaki*, p. 703.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

structed Nimitz to continue and complete the Ryukyus operations in accordance with his earlier orders. Included in this followup message was the provision that the two theater commanders would continue to command forces of the other services then allotted to them and would not transfer these forces except by mutual consent or by order of the JCS. MacArthur was directed to complete the liberation of the Philippines, to plan to occupy North Borneo, and to provide Army forces needed by Nimitz. Both MacArthur and Nimitz were to make plans for the invasion of Japan, cooperating with each other in the task.<sup>20</sup>

On 30 April, Admiral King proposed to the JCS that they issue the order for the land-sea-air assault of Kyushu.<sup>21</sup> Less than a month later, on 25 May, the JCS issued the order setting forth the provisions for Operation OLYMPIC and assigned a target date of 1 November 1945 for the invasion.<sup>22</sup>

This document presupposed that Japan would be forced to surrender unconditionally as the Allies lowered both its will and its ability to resist, and as the Allies later seized objectives in the industrial heartland of Honshu. The defeat of Japan would be accomplished in two steps. The first, OLYMPIC, was the invasion of Kyushu on 1 November, which was designed to isolate this southernmost island of the Japanese chain,

<sup>20</sup> JCS msg to CinCSWPA, CinCPac, and CG, Twentieth AF, dtd 3Apr45, cited in *supra*.

<sup>21</sup> CominCh-CNO Memo to JCS, "Proposed Issue of 'OLYMPIC' Directive," dtd 30Apr45. (OAB, NHD)

<sup>22</sup> JCS 1331/3, dtd 25May45, cited in Craven and Cate, *Matterhorn to Nagasaki*, p. 686.

destroy the enemy forces there, and capture the airfields and bases required to support the second step, Operation CORONET—the invasion of Honshu, tentatively set for March 1946.

At a series of White House conferences following the issuance of the 25 May directive, its contents were discussed but not altered appreciably. The JCS determined at their 14 June meeting that, pending the approval of President Truman, the invasion and seizure of objectives in the Home Islands would constitute the major effort in OLYMPIC and that no other operations would be considered if they did not contribute substantially to the success of the Kyushu landings. On the other hand, the JCS agreed that while preparations for the invasion were taking place, aerial and naval blockades and bombardments of Japan were "to be maintained with all possible vigor."<sup>23</sup>

In their meeting with the President on 18 June, both Marshall and King strongly recommended an invasion of Kyushu at the earliest possible date. Admiral King had evidently modified his preference for an invasion of the China coast in the vicinity of Amoy, and decided to go along with Marshall in recommending the landings on Kyushu.<sup>24</sup> In accepting Marshall's views, King noted that the more he had studied the matter, the more he was impressed with the strategic location of Kyushu, whose capture he deemed a necessary prerequisite to any siege operations against the rest of Japan.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> King and Whitehill, *King's Naval Record*, p. 605.

<sup>24</sup> Leahy, *I Was There*, p. 384.

<sup>25</sup> King and Whitehill, *op. cit.*, p. 606.

Despite his concurrence in the plans for the Kyushu landings, King retained his earlier belief that Japan could be defeated by the sea-air power combination and without the necessity of invasion. He was fully aware of the fact that planning for an amphibious operation was a slow and painstaking process, and posed no objection to the preparation of contingency plans for the invasions of Kyushu and the Tokyo Plain. It was apparently for this reason that in June 1945 he joined in the majority decision of the JCS "to make plans for the invasion and seizure of objectives in the Japanese home islands without sharing the Army conviction that such operations were necessary."<sup>26</sup>

Marshall advanced the opinion that OLYMPIC "would not cost us more than 63,000 casualties of the 193,000 combatant troops estimated as necessary for the operation."<sup>27</sup> After hearing all arguments and absorbing the estimates, President Truman approved the Kyushu operation, but withheld his approval of a general invasion of Japan for consideration at a later date. He also said that he was in complete favor with any plan that would defeat the enemy with the smallest loss possible of American lives. "It wasn't a matter of dollars. It might require more time—and more dollars—if we did not invade Japan. But it would cost *fewer lives*."<sup>28</sup> On 29 June, the JCS met again to prepare the military agenda for the impending Potsdam Conference, and firmly set 1 November as the date for OLYMPIC.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 605n.

<sup>27</sup> Leahy, *op. cit.*, p. 384.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 385.

<sup>29</sup> King and Whitehill, *op. cit.*, p. 606.

The JCS charged General of the Army MacArthur,<sup>30</sup> in his capacity as CinCAFPac/CinCSWPA, with the primary responsibility for conducting Operation OLYMPIC including control, in case of exigencies, of the actual amphibious assault through the appropriate naval commander. In addition, MacArthur was to make plans and preparations for continuing the campaign in Japan and to cooperate with Fleet Admiral Nimitz in planning and preparing for the naval and amphibious phases of this aspect of OLYMPIC.

On his part, CinCPac was responsible for the conduct of the naval and amphibious phases of OLYMPIC, subject to the JCS-imposed provision concerning exigencies. Nimitz was required to correlate with and assist MacArthur in the preparation and planning for the campaign in Japan and its conduct. The JCS directive of 25 May enjoined both senior commanders to remember that "The land campaign and requirements . . . are primary in the OLYMPIC Operation. Account of this will be taken in the preparation, coordination and execution of plans."<sup>31</sup>

Prior to publication of this JCS order, representatives of MacArthur and Nimitz had met in Manila on 16 May 1945 to

<sup>30</sup> On 11 December 1944, Congress had authorized President Roosevelt to appoint four Fleet Admirals and four Generals of the Army. The President immediately named King, Leahy, and Nimitz to the naval five-star rank, and Marshall, MacArthur, Eisenhower, and Arnold to the corresponding Army grade. Halsey was named later as the fourth fleet admiral. *Ibid.*, p. 582.

<sup>31</sup> JCS 1331/3, dtd 25May45, cited in Craven and Cate, *Matterhorn to Nagasaki*, p. 686.

discuss OLYMPIC plans and preparations. Especially, they were to establish for the record a set of principles or division of responsibilities that would govern whatever action would be taken by either commander or his deputies in organizing for the invasion of Japan. Primarily, these principles concerned impending and future deployments, attachments and detachments from both commands, and logistical plans and troop buildup tasks charged to each commander.<sup>32</sup> Upon mutual agreement of these coordinating decisions and after the publication of the JCS implementing order for OLYMPIC, the stage was fairly well set for the moves that would lead to the invasion itself.

Assigned to conduct the Kyushu landings was General Walter Krueger, USA, and his Sixth Army. The following units comprised the OLYMPIC assault force: I Corps, V Amphibious Corps, IX Corps, XI Corps, 40th Infantry Division, 11th Airborne Division, 158th Regimental Combat Team, Sixth Army Troops, and Army Service Command OLYMPIC. Including the personnel in aviation and follow-up echelons, a total of 815,548 troops was to participate in the operation.<sup>33</sup>

The fast carrier task groups of Admiral Halsey's Third Fleet were to provide strategic support for the landings while Admiral Spruance's Fifth Fleet conducted the operations immediately concerned with the seizure and occupa-

tion of beaches in southern Kyushu.<sup>34</sup> Quite simply, the overall OLYMPIC scheme of maneuver called for three of the four corps assigned to the Sixth Army to make separate landings on the east and west coasts of the southern tip of Kyushu on 1 November, X-Day. (See Map 24.) The fourth corps would not land until at least X plus 3; it was to prepare to make a contingent landing or to reinforce other landing forces on order. After they had captured the beachheads, the landing forces were to fan out, link up, and drive northward to form a line from Sendai to Tsuno. After this deployment had been accomplished, further operations were to be based on expediency influenced by the course of events.<sup>35</sup> Because the primary objectives of OLYMPIC forces were airfields and sites for the establishment of bases to be used for staging and mounting CORONET, the conquest of the entire island of Kyushu did not appear necessary. On the other hand, because plans for the conduct of the campaign after the establishment of the Sendai-Tsuno line were fluid, the possibility that all of Kyushu could or should be captured was not excluded.

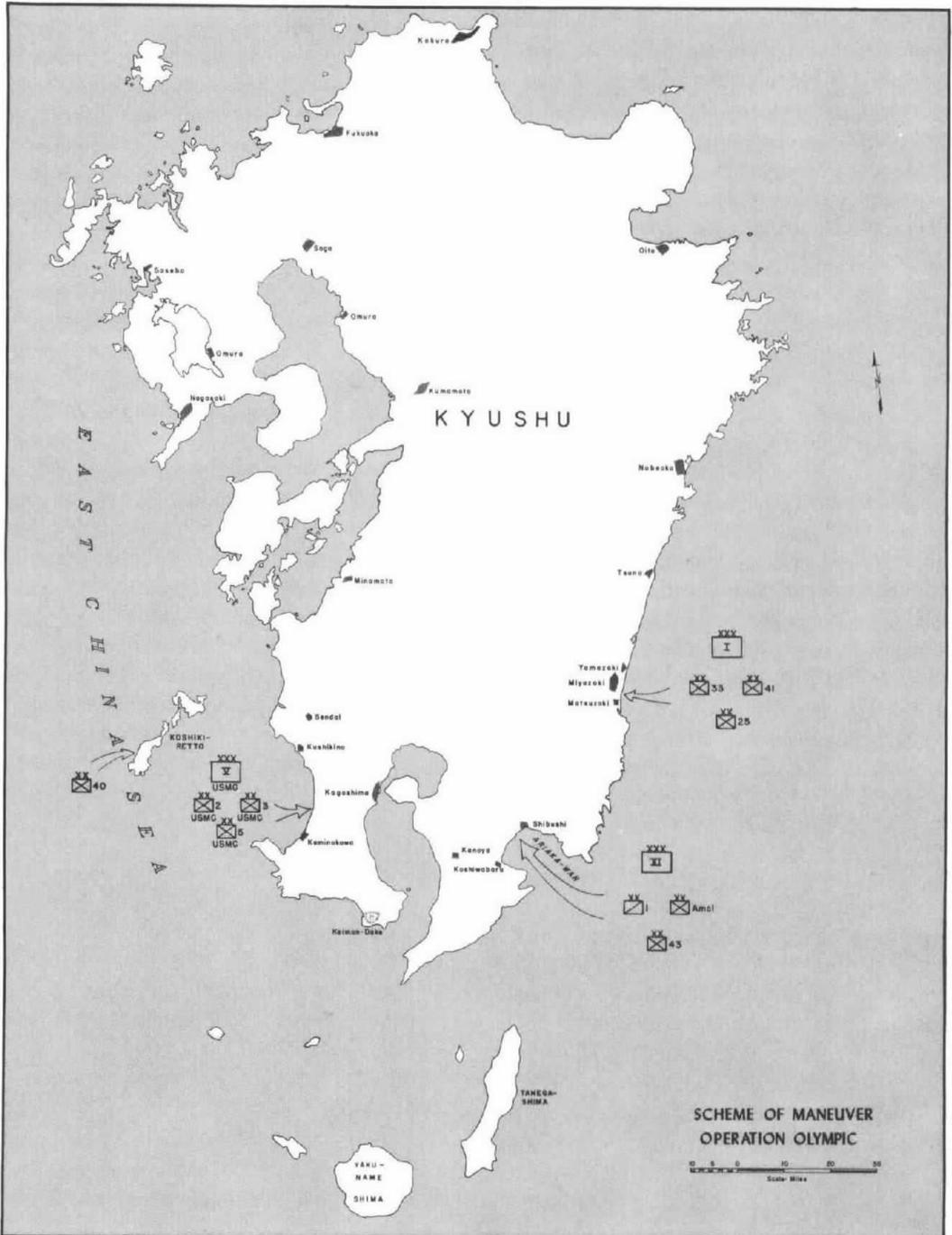
The most critical part of the amphibious phase of OLYMPIC, aside from the

<sup>34</sup> CinCPac-CinCPOA Joint Staff Study Kyushu Island for OLYMPIC, Ser 0005081, dtd 18Jun45, App C. For OLYMPIC, the Third and Fifth Fleets, which previously had been alternative organizational titles for much the same groupment of ships, became separate entities.

<sup>35</sup> A chief source, in addition to the OLYMPIC plan and the operation orders based on this plan, has been Drs. K. Jack Bauer and Alvin D. Coox, "Olympic vs Ketsu-Go," *Marine Corps Gazette*, v. 49, no. 8 (Aug65), p. 32 ff.

<sup>32</sup> CinCPac WarD, May45.

<sup>33</sup> Sixth Army FldO 74, dtd 28May45, Anx 3; CinCAFPac Staff Study—OLYMPIC Operations—Southern Kyushu, dtd 28May45.



MAP 24

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assault itself, was thought to be the capture of Kagoshima, near the southwestern tip of Kyushu. The importance of this objective lay in the fact that the American planners had selected enormous Kagoshima Bay to become the primary port through which troops and supplies intended for the buildup of CORONET would pass. In addition, Kagoshima and its landlocked bay were to serve as an advanced naval base.

The Kyushu landings were not expected to be easy, for all intelligence estimates had predicted that the island would be heavily defended. Japanese strength on Kyushu was placed at 450,000 troops, of whom nearly half were deployed south of a line between Minamata and Nobeoka. Intelligence agencies believed that another three or four divisions were in the northernmost portion of the island and available as reinforcements, and that other troops could be brought over from Honshu. OLYMPIC planners did not expect that this reinforcement would be a factor to be concerned with, since the enemy would undoubtedly be reluctant to release any of the forces needed on Honshu to defend against future landings there. The Americans also expected that the Japanese would exploit the complex mountainous terrain inland of Kyushu and build formidable defenses to be held by the existing garrison force.

Besides the resistance anticipated from Japanese ground forces, OLYMPIC intelligence estimates indicated that the enemy had approximately 5,000 *Kamikaze* planes and pilots available with which to attack the landing forces. Although most of the *Special Attack* squadrons, like a portion of the ground

units, would be withheld for the defense of Honshu, 60 airfields—and 5 more under construction—had been spotted on Kyushu; 22 of these were located south of the Sendai-Tsuno line. The Japanese response to American air attacks on the Home Islands in the latter period of the Okinawa campaign and following its conclusion indicated that the enemy either did not have the available air strength or the will to fight, or that he lacked both. Another possibility was that Japan was husbanding its resources for a massive air attack on the anticipated American invasion forces. The reported Japanese air strength and the number of fields on which it was based led OLYMPIC planners to believe that enemy air posed a real threat to the landings. Reports of the presence of numerous suicide submarine and boat bases on the coasts of Kyushu led the Americans to expect trouble from these craft during the assault phase of the operation.

Admiral Spruance's Fifth Fleet, as composed for OLYMPIC, was the largest and most formidable array of its kind yet to appear in the Pacific war. It contained two groups of fast carriers, a gunfire support and covering force, an escort carrier force, and a composite force containing the Third, Fifth, and Seventh Amphibious Forces. This was the first time in the war that three amphibious forces had been assigned to a single operation. The Fifth Fleet also contained a mincraft group and a large assortment of service units.

Admiral Halsey's Third Fleet was comprised of the Second Carrier Task Force and the British Carrier Task Force as well as numerous supporting elements. First of the OLYMPIC forces

to go into action before the invasion, the Third Fleet was to make widespread attacks on all of the Home Islands in the period between 28 July and 23 October to destroy the Japanese air potential, interdict communications between Kyushu and Honshu, and to sink anything that was afloat. For 10 days in this preinvasion period, the British contingent would strike at the Hong Kong-Canton area. From X minus 14 to X minus 8, the Third Fleet would concentrate on targets in and around Honshu, Kyushu, and Shikoku to create a diversion and to isolate the scene of the impending invasion. On 23 October, aircraft from two of Halsey's carrier task groups were to join Fifth Fleet planes in a series of last-minute strikes against targets in the landing zone while the rest of the Third Fleet would continue to pound installations and targets of opportunity along the Japanese coastlines. When directed by CinCPac after X-Day, Halsey's two groups would be returned to the Third Fleet.<sup>36</sup>

Third Fleet aircraft were to operate generally east of a boundary drawn down Honshu to the eastern tip of Shikoku. Attacks west of that line and diversionary strikes along the China coast would be flown by the Far East Air Forces (which included the Fifth, Seventh, and Thirteenth Air Forces and the 2d Marine Aircraft Wing) commanded by General George C. Kenney from a forward CP established on Okinawa. In the period following X minus 10, FEAF was to cut communications between the target area and northern Kyushu. When the ground forces had

seized the beachhead and had seized or built airfields inland, and when a sufficiently large garrison force had landed and was ready to maintain airfields and aircraft, Kenney would take over air support of the ground forces from the Navy.

Differing only in the size of the forces and the area involved, preinvasion operations would be conducted along the same successful patterns that had evolved from other Marine and Army landings in the Pacific. Because the invasion of Kerama Retto prior to that of Okinawa had demonstrated the value of obtaining a base on islands that were offshore of the major target, OLYMPIC plans provided for the seizure of Koshiki Retto and other small islands west of Kyushu on X minus 5 by the 40th Infantry Division. The OLYMPIC directive provided also for the capture of the northern portion of Tanegashima—south of Kyushu—by the 158th RCT on or after X minus 5 if Japanese guns on the island threatened minesweeping operations. If they did not, the RCT would land as a reinforcing element on X plus 3.

Most of the Army troops assigned to land on X-Day would mount out of, rehearse, and stage in the Philippines; the Marines would hold rehearsals in the Marianas after their units mounted out of that area and the Hawaiian Islands. Because the assault forces were to land on three different and widely separated beaches, there were to be three different H-Hours.

At 0600 on X-Day, Admiral Turner's advance force, after conducting preinvasion operations was to be absorbed by Task Force 40, OLYMPIC Amphib-

<sup>36</sup> CinCPac OPlan 1E-45, dtd 8Aug45, p. 8 (OAB, NHD).

ious Force, also commanded by Turner. At some time shortly thereafter,<sup>37</sup> the three attack forces would land their landing forces.

The Third Attack Force (Third Amphibious Force, Vice Admiral Theodore S. Wilkinson) was to land XI Corps (1st Cavalry, 43d Infantry, and Americal Divisions) on the east coast of Kyushu on the beaches at the head of Ariake Wan in the Shibushi-Koshiwabarū area. After the consolidation of the beachhead and the capture of Shibushi and its airfield, XI Corps was to drive inland and to the north to make contact with I Corps. Upon establishing contact, the two corps, and VAC also, would form a line and advance northwards to establish the Sendai-Tsuno line. (See Map 24.)

North of the XI Corps beachhead, I Corps (25th, 33d, and 41st Infantry Divisions) was to be landed by the Seventh Attack Force (Seventh Amphibious Force, Vice Admiral Daniel E. Barbey) on beaches in the vicinity of Miyazaki to secure a beachhead in the Yamazaki-Matsuzaki area. I Corps was then to push inland and to the north together with XI Corps.

The third OLYMPIC landing, and the only one to be conducted on the west coast, was that of General Schmidt's VAC (2d, 3d, and 5th Marine Divisions), which was to be lifted to the target by the Fifth Attack Force (Fifth Amphibious Force, Vice Admiral Harry W. Hill). Following its seizure of the Kushikino-Kaminokawa beaches, the assault Marines would fan out to extend

the beachhead to Sendai. In addition, VAC forces were to set up a line between Sendai and Kagoshima to block any Japanese drive down the west coast and the southwestern leg of Kyushu. After consolidating the beachhead, VAC would join the other two corps in the general drive to the north.

Besides the X-Day landings, OLYMPIC plans called for the reserve force, IX Corps (77th, 81st, and 98th Infantry Divisions), to land in the vicinity of Kaimon-Dake on X plus 3 or later, depending on the situation ashore. Once the whole of IX Corps had landed, it would clear the southwestern shore of Kagoshima Wan and prepare FEAF facilities and installations for other OLYMPIC garrison units.

The 13 assault divisions of the OLYMPIC force would carry the full burden of the fighting until on or after X plus 22 (23 November), when the 11th Airborne Division, Sixth Army reserve afloat, was scheduled to be off Kyushu and ready to land. General Krueger's planners believed that, based on intelligence estimates of the size of the Japanese defense forces, Sixth Army combat strength would be superior to that of the enemy and would be able to advance to the Sendai-Tsuno line.

The war ended while CORONET was still in the planning stages and there was little material distributed on that operation. A broad outline had been drawn, however, which established that two armies, the Eighth and Tenth, numbering nine infantry and two armored divisions and three Marine Divisions of IIIAC, would land on the Pacific beaches of Honshu leading to the Kanto Plain—between Choshi and Ichinomaya—in

<sup>37</sup> The exact time for the three major landings had not yet been determined when OLYMPIC planning ended.

March 1946. Immediately following the assault armies ashore would be the First Army, redeployed from Europe, with one airborne and ten infantry divisions. The primary objectives of CORONET were to crush Japanese resistance on the plain and to occupy the Tokyo-Yokohama area. If the accomplishment of these objectives did not force the enemy to surrender, the three armies were to fan out and secure the rest of the Home Islands. Ultimately, an air garrison equalling 50 groups was to support these final operations.

On 2 June 1945, shortly after receipt of the OLYMPIC plan, VAC reported to the commander of the Sixth Army for further orders in the impending Kyushu operation.<sup>38</sup> Even before the actual operation order had been published, enough of the proposed plan had been known and made available to the assault forces to permit them to begin preparations for the landings. Planning and training for OLYMPIC on a division level continued through June and July. Because the tentative mission of the 5th

Marine Division, for instance, originally called for it to be in either the assault or the reserve, General Bourke formed nine BLTs in his division and prepared each one to land at any stage of OLYMPIC. Division artillery and tanks also trained to land on short notice on any designated beach in the VAC target area and to operate under division control. During the summer, 5th Division BLTs rehearsed intensively and made many practice landings. Their training for operations inland stressed the assault of fortified positions, village and street fighting, and the removal of mines and demolitions.<sup>39</sup>

The 2d and 3d Marine Divisions also prepared vigorously, and like the 5th, rotated their combat veterans home when due, brought their regiments up to strength as they received replacement drafts, including many second-timers, and refurbished their equipment for OLYMPIC. While VAC prepared for this operation and IIIAC awaited its further orders, Marine carrier planes and pilots, along with the Third Fleet and FEAF squadrons, carried the war straight to the heart of the Empire.

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<sup>38</sup> CG, FMFPac ltr to CMC, dtd 13May46, encl A, Administrative History of FMFPac, p. 7.

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<sup>39</sup> Conner, *5th MarDiv Hist*, p. 130.

# The Closing Days

## MARINE AIR ON CARRIERS<sup>1</sup>

On 18 January 1939, the Secretary of the Navy approved the following mission and organization of Marine Corps aviation:

Marine Corps aviation is to be equipped, organized and trained primarily for the support of the Fleet Marine Force in landing operations and in support of troop activities in the field; and secondarily as replacement squadrons for carrier-based naval aircraft;

The organization, personnel complements, and other details of Marine Corps aviation are to conform as closely as practicable to similar naval aviation organizations;

The Bureau of Aeronautics is to exercise supervision over their respective activities connected with Marine Corps aviation in the manner provided for similar naval aviation units.<sup>2</sup>

Until carrier-based Marine squadrons supported Tenth Army landings on Okinawa in 1945, Leatherneck pilots had been in a position to support an amphibious assault from its beginning only twice in World War II: at New Georgia and Bougainville. And not until the latter part of 1944, when a few squadrons were assigned to carriers did Marine aviation fulfill its secondary mission.

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *AirIntelBul*, Aug-Sep45; Isely and Crowl, *Marines and Amphibious War*; Sherrod, *Marine Air Hist.*

<sup>2</sup> *DivAvn OpD*, dtd 1Jun45.

In all other operations, landings were made so far away from the nearest air base that Marine squadrons had to wait for an airstrip to be completed or a captured one to be put into operation again before they could fly in to begin supporting the ground troops. Assignment to carriers was the only solution by which Marine aviation could carry out the principal missions assigned to it. As soon as it was feasible, Marine squadrons landed on Henderson Field on Guadalcanal, but their basic role was in the air defense of the island, with a secondary emphasis placed on air support. When the American offensive began climbing up the Solomons ladder, Marine pilots flew missions under the control of the Strike Command, Commander Air Solomons.

With the beginning of the Central Pacific campaigns in late 1943, Marine ground commanders became increasingly dissatisfied with the type and amount of air support they received. At Tarawa, defense against air attack and the close support of ground troops were both entrusted to carrier planes flown by Navy pilots. In the opinion of both Navy and Marine officers, the air support at Tarawa left much to be desired in the way of accomplishment. Many apparent shortcomings in this operation indicated that, among other things, truly effective air support was impossible unless the pilots and ground troops had trained as a team.

After the operation General Holland M. Smith recommended that Marine aviators, thoroughly schooled in the principles of direct air support, should be assigned to escort carriers and included in any future amphibious operation undertaken by a Marine division. If this request could not be granted, he continued, the Navy airmen selected for the task should be carefully indoctrinated in the tactics they would employ.<sup>3</sup>

Granting the validity of General Smith's recommendations concerning the assignment of Marine squadrons to carriers, no one else in the Marine Corps seemed disposed to push for such a program at that time. Earlier in the war, many factors, such as the shortage of manpower and the need to send increasing numbers of air units to inland bases in the Solomons, militated against the employment of Marine air in support of ground operations. The pressure for the employment of Marine Corps planes and pilots in ground support operations increased as the war progressed and the need for such support became apparent.

The criticism of the conduct of air support at Tarawa was later echoed following the end of the Marianas campaign, where Marines believed that the Navy system of controlling close air support missions was too rigid and time consuming. This matter was made an agenda item to be discussed during one of the King-Nimitz Pacific conferences. The item noted that:

During the Saipan operation T.F. 58 was necessarily withdrawn from the immediate area, leaving 8 CVE's to perform a multiplicity of missions, including direct support of ground troops. What are

CinCPac's views as to the following plan to avoid this situation in the future:

(a) Embark in CVE's Marine aircraft squadrons whose sole duty will be direct support of ground troops.

(Training in carrier operations will obviously be a preliminary requisite.)

(b) As soon as airfields are available ashore, transfer those same squadrons ashore to continue direct support of ground troops.<sup>4</sup>

During the 13-22 July 1944 conference, Admiral Nimitz addressed the question of assigning Marines to carriers. In essence, he did not consider the proposal desirable because he believed that "it would require a great deal of extra training and equipping of Marine squadrons for carrier operations, anti-submarine warfare, navigation, etc."<sup>5</sup> In addition, Nimitz believed that the personnel and equipment of the squadrons would have to be revised considerably to make the Marine units suited for both ship-based and advance base operations. He also believed that, if Marines were to be assigned to carriers, there would be a surplus of Navy CVE squadrons. As a final thought, CinCPac stated that the Navy CVE pilots were rapidly gaining experience in ground support operations, and therefore, there was no real need for Marine CVE squadrons.

Admiral King then stated that, in his opinion, the Marine ground forces could be supported adequately without employing Marine aviation squadrons—and "thus prevent two air forces in the Navy."<sup>6</sup> For some time, CominCh had

<sup>4</sup> Item 68, CominCh Agenda for conference with Adm Nimitz, dtd 10Jul44 (OAB, NHD).

<sup>5</sup> *Minutes, CominCh-CinCPac Conference, 13-22Jul44.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> VAC AR GALVANIC, dtd 11Jan44, p. 16.

been concerned that the expansion of Marine Corps aviation strength had exceeded the point where it could be gainfully employed, because there were not that many missions available for Leatherneck pilots. In view of the location of Marine squadrons and the nature and location of U. S. operations in the Pacific, he was right. As of 30 June 1944, Marine Corps aviation strength consisted of 5 wings, 28 groups, 128 squadrons, and 108,578 personnel, of which slightly more than 10,000 were pilots.<sup>7</sup>

Lieutenant General Alexander A. Vandegrift, who became Commandant of the Marine Corps on 1 January 1944, also was concerned with the status of his air units and had consulted with Admiral King regarding the future employment of those squadrons and pilots sitting in the backwash of the war on South Pacific islands. He proposed that one of the five wings be eliminated, but also argued that to employ the fliers and planes based in the rear areas of the South and Central Pacific gainfully Marine pilots should be assigned to carriers. King agreed in principle to this compromise, but stated that Nimitz' approval had to be gained before any final action could be taken.<sup>8</sup>

A desire to visit his Marines in the Pacific as well as to determine at first hand the facts surrounding the Saipan command controversy<sup>9</sup> impelled Gen-

eral Vandegrift in late July 1944 to make an inspection trip, in which he covered:

. . . 22,000 miles in eighteen days, saw all the force, corps, and division commanders and practically all the regimental and battalion commanders in the field. I went to Saipan, Tinian, and Guam, getting to Guam just before the show was over. Our people did a superb job on all three of those islands, the fighting on all three of them being entirely different. . . .

I went from Guam to Kwajalein to Guadalcanal then up to the Russells to see my old division and to Bougainville to see Ralph Mitchell and his crowd. Then back to Pearl for a three-day session with Nimitz.<sup>10</sup>

Accompanying the Commandant were Brigadier Generals Field Harris—the newly appointed Director of Aviation—and Gerald C. Thomas, the Director, Division of Plans and Policies. Upon their return to Pearl, they went into conference with Nimitz, Vice Admiral John H. Tower, Deputy CinCPac–CinCPOA, Rear Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, Nimitz' deputy chief of staff and head of his War Plans Division, and Major General Ross E. Rowell, since 1941 head of MAWPac (the forerunner of AirFMFPac). The decisions they made in the course of these talks determined the course that Marine aviation was to take in the Pacific for the remainder of the war.

Vandegrift broached the subject of the future employment of Marine squadrons, and informed Nimitz of what had been said in the course of conversations

<sup>7</sup> *FMF Air Status Rpt*, 30Jun44.

<sup>8</sup> Gen Alexander A. Vandegrift comments to Robert Sherrod, dtd Sep49, cited in Sherrod, *Marine Air Hist*, p. 327.

<sup>9</sup> For the story of the relief of the 27th Infantry Division commander by Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith, see Shaw, Nalty, and Turnbladh, *The Central Pacific Drive*, pt IV, chap 5.

<sup>10</sup> LtGen Alexander A. Vandegrift ltr to Gen Thomas Holcomb dtd 5Sep44 (Vandegrift Personal Correspondence File, HistBr, HQ-MC).

about the matter with CominCh, especially the recommendation that Marines be assigned to carriers. Although Towers argued that there had been no indication in the past that Marines wanted to operate from carriers, Vandegrift and Harris persuaded him that times and attitudes had changed.

It was agreed at this conference that the primary mission of Marine Corps aviation was to support the Marine ground forces and to participate in amphibious assaults. Therefore, in order to focus the activities of Marine aviation on its mission more effectively, the following package of proposals submitted to Admiral King were concurred in by Nimitz with an endorsement stating that it would "more firmly integrate Marine Corps aviation within the Marine Corps and is therefore in the interest of the naval service."<sup>11</sup>

Essentially, it was recommended that a complement of Marine squadrons to be employed in the close support of amphibious operations be assigned to one CVE division of six *Commencement Bay*-class carriers. This complement was to consist of six 18-plane fighter (F4U or F6F aircraft) and six 12-plane torpedo bomber squadrons whose pilots were to be specially trained in the use of rockets with which their planes were to be armed. It was further recommended that a Marine aviator of suitable rank be directed to organize and prepare these squadrons for carrier operations. He later would be assigned to duty on the carrier division staff.

<sup>11</sup> CinCPac enforcement, ser 002567, dtd 22Aug44, on CMC secret memo to CominCh, Subj: Marine Aviation in the Pacific, n.d. (OAB, NHD).

Concerning another aspect of the Marine aviation problem, the conferees agreed that Marine aviation should gradually take over the responsibility for controlling aircraft in direct support of ground troops in amphibious operations. Gradually, and as practicably as possible without impairing the conduct of combat operations then in process, Marine Corps personnel would replace their Navy counterparts in the existing Air Support Control Unit organizations.

One other recommended change was to effect the reorganization of Marine aviation in the Pacific, wherein Marine Aircraft Wings, Pacific, would become Aircraft, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, in order to identify the Marine air components more closely with the ground elements. This proposal also established the relationship of AirFMFPac with ComAirPac and FMFPac under the overall command of CinCPac.

In addition, the strength and composition of Marine aviation forces in the Pacific was to undergo change. Hereafter, MAGs would be comprised of three 24-plane squadrons instead of four 18-plane squadrons, and the number of Air Warning Squadrons would be cut from 32 to 24 or less in view of the number of Army units of the same type that were scheduled to arrive in the Pacific for future operations.

General Vandegrift signed the basic memorandum listing the proposed recommendations and stated in the last paragraph of this report that "Every effort will be made to increase the mobility and effectiveness of marine aviation by accomplishing such readjustments of personnel and equipment among Headquarters, Service and Tac-

tical Squadrons as may be indicated.”<sup>12</sup> Admiral King approved the proposals on 10 September 1944 with the proviso that when Army Air Forces units were available in the Pacific to replace certain Marine Corps aviation squadrons, Marine Corps aviation strength would be reduced by or up to the equivalent of one wing.<sup>13</sup> In a bucktag comment on the conference proposals, Admiral King wrote: “Good, but does not go far enough towards reducing MarCorps aviation. K.”<sup>14</sup> In notifying General Holcomb of what had transpired regarding the future of Marine Corps aviation, General Vandegrift wrote:

Another thing we have done, which I pinch myself now and then to see if I am still awake, we have gotten both Nimitz and King to approve a division of the larger CVEs for use of Marines. That will give us four carriers with a carrier group of Marines aboard, and I can assure you that took some days of hard talking.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> CMC memo to CinCUS [CominCh], Subj: Marine Aviation in the Pacific, n.d. (OAB, NHD).

<sup>13</sup> CominCh ltr FF1/A4-3 serial 002624 to CinCPac and CMC, Subj: Marine Aviation in the Pacific, dtd 10Sep44 (OAB, NHD).

<sup>14</sup> CominCh bucktag comment dtd 10Sep44 on CinCPac End to *Ibid* (OAB, NHD).

<sup>15</sup> LtGen Alexander A. Vandegrift ltr to Gen Thomas Holcomb dtd 5Sep44 (Vandegrift Personal Correspondence File; HistBr, HQMC). General Vandegrift was perhaps, being unduly modest, for as General Gerald C. Thomas, former Director of the Division of Plans and Policies and later Assistant CMC, recalled: “General Vandegrift’s relations [with King] were pleasant, not familiar, but always on a really good sound basis, and never in my three and a half years with him there [Headquarters Marine Corps], did I see him lose a battle. He won every one of them.” Gen Gerald C. Thomas interview with HistBr, HQMC, dtd 26Sep66. (Oral History Collection, HistBr, HQMC).

Following up the approval of CominCh for placing Marine planes on carriers, on 28 October 1944, the Chief of Naval Operations directed the formation of the Marine Air Support Division.<sup>16</sup> To comprise this organization, the Commandant of the Marine Corps selected MAG-51, MBDAG-48, and the following squadrons: VMO-351,<sup>17</sup> VMF-112, -511, -512, -513, and -514, and VMTB-132, -143, -144, -233, -234, and -454. All of these units were attached to Marine Fleet Air, West Coast, (MarFAirWest) at San Diego and were redesignated as follows: MAG-51 became MASG-48 (Marine Air Support Group), and MBDAG-48 similarly became MASG-51. All of the squadrons attached to these groups were further identified with the following letters “CVS,” meaning Carrier Support, as VMF(CVS)-112.

The overall designation given to the all-Marine carrier force was Marine Carrier Groups, Aircraft, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific. The next subordinate echelon to this was the MASG, which was comprised of the fighter and torpedo bomber squadrons for a CVE division of six ships. Each of the escort carriers, in turn, was to have as its air complement a Marine Carrier Group (MCVG) consisting of a Marine Carrier Aircraft

<sup>16</sup> CNO ltr Op-37-C-fgd serial 08837 to ComAirPac, Chief BuAer, ComFairWest, CGAirFMFPac, and MarFAirWest, Subj: Marine Air Support Division, formation of, dtd 28Oct44 (OAB, NHD).

<sup>17</sup> Although VMO-351 was an observation squadron earlier in the war, its mission was changed later and it became a fighter squadron without a redesignation in its unit identification.

Service Detachment (MCASD), a VMF-(CVS), and a VMTB(CVS).

MASG-51 was given four VMFs and four VMTBs to form four active groups, and MASG-48 was given the VMO, a VMF, and two VMTBs, which were to comprise the two replacement groups. Marine Carrier Groups, AirFMFPac, was officially activated on 21 October 1944 at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS), Santa Barbara, California, with Colonel Albert D. Cooley as commanding officer.

For more than a month before the first MASG squadron went on board its CVE, however, other Marine squadrons had been flying combat missions from the decks of fast carriers on a temporary basis. The appearance of the *Kamikaze* menace during the Leyte operation in the fall of 1944 created the need for additional fighter-type aircraft aboard the carriers of the Third Fleet. Brigadier General Frank G. Dailey, then a colonel assigned to TF 58 as Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher's Marine Air Officer,<sup>18</sup> commented that in addition to the requirement for more fighters on the CVs:

. . . another primary consideration in putting Marine squadrons aboard with F4Us was due to the fact that the Navy squadrons with their F6Fs did not have the speed or altitude to intercept a Japanese light bomber designated 'Betty,' which appeared about this time. Consequently the Marine squadrons were also used as fleet combat air patrols; in fact, for a time, this was their primary duty. I think it should be emphasized that, prior to this time, the Navy did not consider the

F4U a suitable aircraft for carrier operations because of the known difficulty in take-offs and landings on CVs. When you consider that these [Marine] squadrons were literally picked off the beach with very little CV training to operate under war time conditions, our operational losses were expected and accepted. It is necessary to have experience in carrier operations to appreciate the magnitude of making this transition in such a short time and especially in this type aircraft. The plane crews should also be mentioned, as they were operating under conditions foreign to many of them and kept a high aircraft availability, even by Navy standards.

When the decision was made to put Marine squadrons with F4Us on board the CVEs, it was thought that the operational losses, in view of our experience on fast carriers, would be prohibitive. Here again, we were using aircraft which were not initially considered suitable for the large CVs. And now, we were expected to operate from CVEs. Colonel Albert Cooley was the officer responsible for the successful operations of this venture and proved it could be done.<sup>19</sup>

It was not until the end of 1944 that the first of the VMFs boarded a big carrier in the Pacific. Between January and June 1945, 10 Marine fighter squadrons flew from the decks of 5 CVs in major fast carrier task force operations. On 28 December 1944, VMF-124 (Lieutenant Colonel William A. Millington) and -213 (Major Donald P. Frame) boarded the *Essex* at Ulithi, "equipped with F4U-1D Corsair fighters, the initial introduction of this type aircraft in the Fleet."<sup>20</sup> Two days later, in company with the rest of the Third Fleet, the *Essex*

<sup>18</sup> BGen Frank G. Dailey ltr to Hd, HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, dtd 10Nov65, hereafter *Dailey ltr*.

<sup>20</sup> BGen William A. Millington ltr to Hd, HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, dtd 18Nov65.

<sup>18</sup> Col Frank G. Dailey ltr to Robert Sherrod, dtd 2Jun50, cited in Sherrod, *Marine Air Hist*, p. 343.

steamed out of the anchorage bound for a series of strikes on Formosa and Luzon in the period 3–9 January 1945.<sup>21</sup> The weather during that week of operations was foul and solidly overcast for the greater portion of the time. At the end of their first days aboard the *Essex*, 9 of which were spent at sea, the two Marine squadrons had lost 7 pilots and 13 F4Us solely as a result of operational accidents during instrument flight conditions. One Marine aviator stated: "We just can't learn navigation and carrier operations in a week as well as the Navy does it in six months."<sup>22</sup>

On 10 January, Admiral Halsey's Third Fleet entered the South China Sea to log 3,800 miles in an 11-day series of strikes against targets on the coast of Indochina and on Hong Kong and Formosa.<sup>23</sup> Both Marine squadrons on the *Essex* participated in the TF 38 raids on Saigon, Hainan, Hong Kong, Swatow, and Formosa. Lieutenant Colonel Millington, the VMF-124 commander, became the air group commander of the *Essex* on 15 January, when Commander Otto Kinsman, the naval officer holding that position, was killed in action.<sup>24</sup>

After a last series of strikes on Formosa, the Pescadores, and Sakishima Gunto on 21 January, and following a

<sup>21</sup> For Third Fleet operations in this period, see Samuel E. Morison, *The Liberation of the Philippines—History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*, v. XIII (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1959), pp. 87–92, hereafter Morison, *Liberation of the Philippines*.

<sup>22</sup> Sherrod, *Marine Air Hist*, p. 333.

<sup>23</sup> Morison, *Liberation of the Philippines*, pp. 164–174.

<sup>24</sup> VMF-124 WarD, Jan45.

photographic mission over Okinawa on the 22d, the Third Fleet retired from the South China Sea and set a course for Ulithi, arriving there on the 25th. At 0001, 27 January, the Third Fleet became the Fifth Fleet when Admiral Spruance assumed tactical command from Halsey.

In their first month of carrier operations, the two Marine squadrons claimed a total of 10 Japanese planes destroyed in the air and 16 on the ground. Marine pilots flew 658 sorties. Operational losses of the squadrons, 7 pilots and 15 aircraft, were considerably greater than the 1 pilot and 2 planes lost in combat.

By 10 February, TF 38—now TF 58—was ready to sortie against the enemy once more. The target this time was Tokyo, some 1,500 miles due north of Ulithi. Joining the Fifth Fleet were three other large carriers, each with two Marine fighter squadrons in its complement. On the *Bennington* were VMF-112 (Major Herman Hansen, Jr.) and -123 (Major Everett V. Alward); the *Wasp* had VMF-216 (Major George E. Dooley) and -217 (Major Jack R. Amend, Jr.); and VMF-221 (Major Edwin S. Roberts, Jr.) and -451 (Major Henry A. Ellis, Jr.) were on the *Bunker Hill*. Admiral Spruance's fleet now had a total of eight VMFs on four large carriers. Based on the lessons learned in the January operations, all of the Marine pilots "had received intensive navigational training at Ulithi" before boarding the carriers "and would get more en route to Japan 'in weather not previously considered suitable for CV operations.'" <sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Col Frank G. Dailey ltr to Robert Sherrod, dtd 2Jun50, *op. cit.*

After the task force had departed Ulithi, all hands learned that their target was to be Tokyo, and that these first carrier-plane raids on the enemy capital were to precede by three days the 19 February invasion of Iwo Jima by VAC troops. It was also announced that the Marine squadrons in TF 58 would furnish air support for the Iwo landing forces beginning on D-Day.

On 16 February, Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher's carriers launched their planes to hit the airfields and aircraft factories around Tokyo Bay. Lieutenant Colonel Millington led the first fighter strike from the deck of the *Essex* as Major David E. Marshall, skipper of VMF-213, took off with his squadron from the same carrier to lead the escort for torpedo and photo-reconnaissance planes headed for the Tokyo area. The other Marine squadrons were given equally important missions. Although the weather on the 16th was abominable, the fifth air sweep of the area launched that day by the *Essex* and the *Bunker Hill* found clear weather over their target and had the honor of being "the first Navy [and Marine] fighter planes to arrive over Tokyo."<sup>26</sup> Additional strikes were launched before and shortly after dawn on the 17th, but with the weather worsening rapidly and restricting further flight operations, Admiral Mitscher cancelled the remaining planned strikes, recovered all of his airborne planes, and laid a course for Iwo Jima.

When, on the morning of 19 February, TF 58 was approximately 100 miles away from Iwo, its planes began a series

of prelanding strikes on the target. For 20 minutes, between H minus 55 and H minus 35, 120 fighters and bombers from the fast carriers hit the landing beaches and adjacent areas.<sup>27</sup> At 0642, Lieutenant Colonel Millington led a flight of two Marine and two Navy fighter squadrons—flying F4Us and F6Fs, respectively—on a mission to napalm, rocket, and strafe the flanks and high ground along the beaches.

The attacks were delivered from a double-column approach with the divisions of planes breaking to port and starboard, dropping napalm on the first run, pulling out to seaward and repeating attacks with rockets and .50-caliber bullets until the time limit expired. The 48-plane flight then rendezvoused for an H minus 5 strafing attack along the landing beach. These attacks were delivered from north to south in steep dives, all planes pulling out sharply to the right to rejoin the tail element for repeated runs. The attack was moved inland gradually as the landing craft approached the beach so that the bullet-impact area remained 200 yards ahead of the troops. As the troops hit the beach, the bullet-impact area was shifted 500 yards inland to smother the fire from that area against the shore line. Because of naval gunfire in the same area, pull-outs were ordered at 600 feet [altitude]. The flight was ready to stand by for close-support missions but none was immediately assigned.<sup>28</sup>

Millington and Marshall had worked out the plan for this low-level attack with the commander of the Landing Force Air Support Control Unit, Colonel Vernon E. Megee, who later said that this was "one of the outstanding examples of

<sup>27</sup> Bartley, *Iwo Jima*, p. 49.

<sup>28</sup> Sherrod, *Marine Air Hist*, p. 347.

<sup>26</sup> Morison, *Victory in the Pacific*, p. 22.

effective precision beach strafing seen during the Pacific War.”<sup>29</sup>

For several days following D-Day, Marine carrier pilots supported ground operations, and then TF 58 moved on to launch strikes at Chichi Jima. After one day at this target, the fast carriers set a northerly course for a high-speed run to Japan and another round of attacks on Tokyo. The first planes were launched on 25 February when the carriers were approximately 190 miles from the Japanese capital.<sup>30</sup> Again the weather was bad, even worse, as a matter of fact, than that which had been experienced during the attacks of 16–17 February. Most of the strikes were diverted to hit secondary targets or targets of opportunity. When flying conditions became impossible before noon, Admiral Mitscher cancelled other sweeps that had been scheduled for later that day. Because weather forecasts for the following day boded no better conditions, Mitscher decided to strike Nagoya and headed the task force in that direction. Early on the 26th, he realized that high winds and heavy seas would prohibit him from launching aircraft. The task force commander then cancelled the strikes, headed for a refueling area, refueled, and then steamed towards Okinawa for a series of attacks on that island on the 1st and 2d of March.

The weather over the Ryukyus was a considerable improvement over that experienced in the Home Islands, and all TF 58 pilots “accomplished the usual pattern of devastation, which now was

almost routine.”<sup>31</sup> Following the Okinawa strikes, the carriers returned to Ulithi, arriving there on 4 March, and refitted for an immediate return to sea. The destination of Mitscher’s carriers was Kyushu, where TF 58 pilots were to hit the airfields in a series of strikes prior to the invasion of Okinawa. At the Ulithi fleet anchorage, VFM-124 and -213 were detached from the *Essex* on 10 March and were returned to the United States in the escort carrier *Long Island*. Three days later, the entire *Wasp* air group—including VMF-216 and -217—was replaced by an all-Navy group. Upon their detachment, the two Marine squadrons were transferred stateside by way of Ewa.

The ground crewmen of the four VMFs remained on the *Wasp* and *Essex* to service the Navy Corsairs, primarily because the Navy crewmen were largely unfamiliar with that type of plane. With the exception of those in the carrier-based VMFs, there were no other F4Us in TF 58 fighter squadrons up to that time. The *Essex* Marines remained with the carrier until early June; the Marines in the *Wasp* retired from the fighting much earlier when that ship was hit off Shikoku on 19 March and returned to Ulithi, and then steamed to Bremerton, Washington, via Pearl Harbor, for repairs.<sup>32</sup>

Although two of Admiral Mitscher’s carriers lost their Marine squadrons before TF 58 steamed out of Ulithi on

<sup>29</sup> BGen Vernon E. Megee ltr to Dr. Jeter A. Isely, dtd 10Feb50, cited in Isely and Crowl, *Marines and Amphibious War*, p. 507.

<sup>30</sup> Morison, *Victory in the Pacific*, p. 57.

<sup>31</sup> Frederick C. Sherman, *Combat Command: The American Aircraft Carriers in the Pacific War* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, Inc., 1950), p. 342.

<sup>32</sup> USS *Wasp* (CV-18) WarDs, Mar, Apr45 (OAB, NHD).

14 March, the loss was made up when the *Franklin*, carrying VMF-214 (Major Stanley R. Bailey) and -452 (Major Charles P. Weiland), joined the Fifth Fleet. Following a refueling at sea on the 16th, Spruance's fleet began a high-speed run to its target, Kyushu.

The force was within 90 miles of the island when, just prior to dawn on the 18th, the first planes were launched against Kyushu airfields. The TF 58 pilots found few enemy planes on the ground at the target area, and none in the air, and so they bombed hangars and installations instead. Shortly after 0700, the missing Japanese aircraft appeared over the launching areas and began to attack the carriers. The *Yorktown*, *Enterprise*, and *Intrepid* were hit but not damaged badly enough to put them out of commission. The bomb that struck the *Enterprise* did not explode, and the *Intrepid* suffered only minor damage from a near miss when a Japanese plane crashed and exploded alongside. Seven crewmen were killed and 69 wounded in the *Kamikaze* attacks this day.<sup>33</sup>

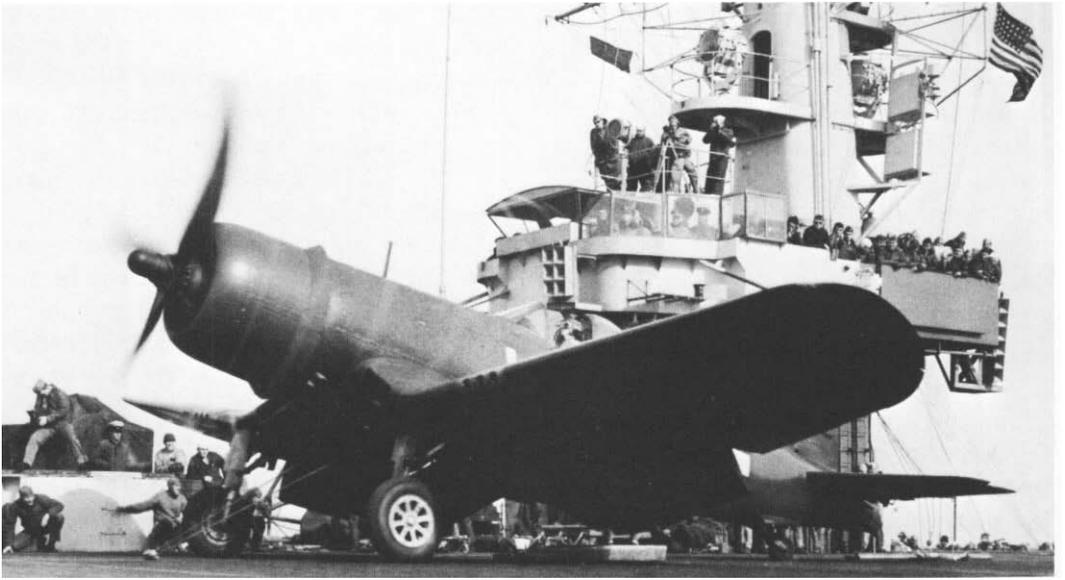
On the next day, Mitscher sent his planes against Japanese shipping in the Inland Sea and in the harbors of Kobe and Kure. A short time after the carriers had launched their sweeps, sneak raids began to punish the force. In the case of nearly every carrier that was hit, the damage was caused by a single suicide plane that approached undetected and dove out of the clouds in an attempt to destroy the flattop below. At 0709, a suicider suddenly appeared over the *Wasp* and landed a bomb which

penetrated the flight deck to the hangar deck, exploded a plane, and caused great damage and many casualties. Within 15 minutes after the attack, damage control parties had repaired vital facilities and put out the fires; by 0800, the *Wasp* was recovering her planes. A total of 101 men were killed or died of wounds, and 269 were wounded.<sup>34</sup> Despite her damage, the *Wasp* continued to operate with the fleet several more days before limping to Ulithi and on to the States for repair.

Just two minutes before the *Wasp* was attacked, the *Franklin* received two bombs from an enemy plane which had approached undetected. The "Big Ben," as she was called by her crewmen, was in the midst of launching her second strike of the morning, and her flight deck was studded with planes warming up and ready to take off. The aircraft were fully armed with bombs and rockets, and their fuel tanks loaded with highly flammable aviation gasoline. The first of the two bombs tore through the flight deck and exploded in the hangar deck, wrecking the forward ele-

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95. General Dailey commented on the carriers' Marine guard, "whose duties included manning the 40mm AA batteries, and at least on the *Bunker Hill* were given credit for several enemy aircraft shot down. They in turn had their casualties by bombings." He also noted that "it was SOP in the fleet that if an interception of an enemy aircraft was made but not completed before coming over the fleet, contact was to be broken and the ships AA fire would take over. At times, both Marine and Navy pilots would be so intent they would follow an enemy aircraft over the fleet regardless of the AA fire and if they didn't get a kill, follow right down until they (the enemy) splashed in the water." *Dailey ltr.*

<sup>33</sup> Morison, *Victory in the Pacific*, p. 94.



**VMF(CVS)-511 CORSAIR** ready to be launched by catapult from the deck of **USS Block Island**. (USMC 43750)



**AN EXPLOSION** rips the critically damaged **Franklin** as crewmen run for safety. (USN 80-G-237900)

vator; the second bomb hit the flight deck and immediately started fires that spread to the planes that were warming up. The bombs on the planes began exploding, and then the 11.75-inch rockets, "Tiny Tims," with which the aircraft were armed, began going off:

Some screamed by to starboard, some to port, and some straight up the flight deck. The weird aspect of this weapon whooshing by so close is one of the most awful spectacles a human has ever been privileged to see. Some went straight up and some tumbled end over end. Each time one went off the fire-fighting crews forward would instinctively hit the deck.<sup>35</sup>

Three hours after being hit, the *Franklin* had lost all way and lay dead in the water. By noon, most of the fires had been extinguished or brought under control and all of the wounded had been evacuated to other ships standing close by. The *Pittsburg* passed a towline to the carrier and gradually began towing the critically wounded vessel out of the danger area. By 0300 on 20 March, the *Franklin* had begun to work up her own power and nine hours later she slipped her tow and headed for Ulithi and eventually New York.

In the flaming and exploding inferno following the bombing, *Franklin* lost 724 killed or missing and 265 wounded.<sup>36</sup> In these casualty figures, 65 of the dead were pilots and ground crewmen from the two Marine squadrons. Airborne at the time of the attack on the *Franklin*, VMF-214 and -452 pilots landed later

either on the *Hancock* or the *Bennington*, from whose decks they continued attacks on Kyushu until 19 March, when the task force retired from the area. The two Marine squadrons were sent to Marine Corps Air Station, El Centro, California, where they remained until the war ended.

From 23 to 25 March, TF 58 began the last of the softening-up operations on Okinawa before the scheduled invasion. Together with the other squadrons of the *Bennington* air group, VMF-112 and -123 flew many sorties over the target area. On L-Day, only four Marine squadrons—VMF-112 and -123 in the *Bennington* and VMF-221 and -451 in the *Bunker Hill*—remained in the task force. All four squadrons together with the Navy pilots napalm bombed and strafed Hagushi beaches on 1 April, and then later in the day hit targets beyond the beachhead. Following the Okinawa ground support missions of the first few days of the operation, TF 58 planes, pilots, and ships were kept busy fending off the destructive *Kamikazes*. The battle against the Japanese suiciders was to keep the Fifth Fleet occupied for the rest of its stay in Okinawa waters. On 11 May, the *Bunker Hill* became the hapless target of a successful suicide attack, in which the carrier sustained such widespread damage that it was forced to limp to Bremerton for extensive repairs. After three months of almost continuous action, VMF-221 and -451 were out of the war. VMF-112 and -123, the last remaining Marine squadrons in TF 38 (the tactical designation changed again on 27 May, when Halsey replaced Spruance and the Fifth

<sup>35</sup> Report of the Executive Officer of the *Franklin* quoted in Morison, *Victory in the Pacific*, p. 96.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

once more became the Third Fleet),<sup>37</sup> operated from the carriers until 8 June, when, following strikes on Kyushu, the *Bennington* was detached from the force and headed for Leyte.

Even before the VMFs had begun operating from the decks of the large carriers with the fleet and the CVE program had gotten underway, other decisions affecting the future role of Marine Corps aviation were being made. Growing out of the deliberations of the Pearl Harbor conferees and the directives of Admiral King, the composition and strength of Marine aviation was to be adjusted.

On 2 November 1944, CominCh issued an order directing the decommissioning of four Marine medium bomber squadrons (VMBs). In reply, the Commandant pointed out that the Marine Corps had, at that time, 12 tactical VMBs and 4 in the replacement training program, and that CinCPac had indicated he needed 8 of these squadrons in the forward area. General Vandegrift further noted that, instead of the 11 agreed upon, 15 Marine squadrons had been recently decommissioned (11 in the 9th MAW and 4 in MarFAirWest)<sup>38</sup> in compliance with Admiral King's directive on 10 September. In view of these facts, the CMC recommended that no

<sup>37</sup> Regarding these changes in designations, Halsey commented, "Instead of the stagecoach system of keeping the drivers and changing the horses, we changed drivers and kept the horses. It was hard on the horses, but it was effective." Halsey and Bryan, *Halsey's Story*, p. 197.

<sup>38</sup> *FMF Air Status Rpts*, Oct–Nov44.

further Marine squadrons should be commissioned at that time.<sup>39</sup>

Admiral King's senior staff officers agreed with the Commandant's recommendations for several reasons. One was that it had become obvious that the decommissioning of the 15 squadrons had adversely affected the morale of Marine aviation personnel. King's Deputy CNO (Air) stated further that he did not believe it was the proper time to decommission four squadrons arbitrarily in view of the critical shortage of air support in the forward area and especially in the Philippines. He then recommended that no action be taken regarding the VMBs until future requirements for Marine and Army aircraft in the Pacific had been more firmly fixed, because the results of the Leyte campaign could be a determining factor.<sup>40</sup> The Deputy CominCh–CNO, Vice Admiral Richard S. Edwards, concurred in these recommendations and further recommended that the matter be studied before a final decision was made.<sup>41</sup> Admiral King agreed, directed that the Deputy CNO (Air) and the CMC appoint action officers to conduct the study, and ordered the decommissioning of the VMBs held in abeyance pending a report from these officers.<sup>42</sup>

A satisfactory solution to this problem, answering both the needs of Marine

<sup>39</sup> CMC memo serial 008A30844 to CominCh, dtd 2Nov44 (OAB, NHD).

<sup>40</sup> Capt Wallace M. Beakley, USN, memo for Adm Cooke, dtd 4Nov44 (OAB, NHD).

<sup>41</sup> Deputy CominCh–CNO memo to Adm King, dtd 7Nov44 (OAB, NHD).

<sup>42</sup> CominCh memo FF1/A16–3, serial 003246, to Vice CNO and CMC, Subj: Decommissioning of 4 Marine Bombing Squadrons, dtd 8Nov44 (OAB, NHD).

aviation and improving the morale of Marine pilots, was found in the requirements of the CVE program. On 31 January 1945, VMB-621 and -622 of MAG-62, 9th MAW, were redesignated VMTBs and assigned to escort carriers. The next month, on 15 February, VMB-623 and -624 of the same organization were similarly redesignated and re-assigned. At the same time, all four squadrons were transferred from the east to the west coast.<sup>43</sup>

As of 21 December 1944, Marine aviation was organized into 5 wings with 93 tactical squadrons, 29 replacement training squadrons, 3 operational training squadrons, and was assigned 2,342 aircraft as follows:

	CVE	Shore Based	Replacement Training	TOTAL
VMF				
VMFB	108	960	384	1452
VMTB	72	168	96	336
VMB		144	48	192
VMF (N)		72	24	96
VMR		120	45	165
VMD		36	12	48
MOTG-81			53	53
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>1500</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>2342<sup>44</sup></b>

<sup>43</sup> *DivAvn OpDs*, Jan-Feb45; *FMF Air Status Rpts*, Dec44-Feb45.

<sup>44</sup> Dir, DivAvn, HQMC, memo Op-37-C-fgd for F-15 [AvnSec, Planes Div, CominCh], Subj: Proposed Program of Marine Corps Aviation, dtd 21Dec44 (OAB, NHD).

	Proposed					
	CVE	Shore Based	Replacement Training	Fleet Training	TOTAL	Change
VMF						
VMFB	540	504	252	34	1330	-122
VMTB	360	72	36	20	488	+152
VMB		96			96	- 96
VMF (N)		72	30		102	+ 6
VMR		120	45		165	
VMD	12	24	12		48	
MOTG-81			65		65	+ 12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>912</b>	<b>888</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>2294</b>	<b>- 48<sup>45</sup></b>

Reflecting the increased emphasis on the Marine CVE program, the Marine Corps proposed an aviation structure which reduced the number of land-based tactical squadrons from 93 to 52 and the replacement and operational training squadrons from 32 to 20. It was also proposed that the squadrons in the CVE program should be increased from 12 to 61, and also that they should be augmented by 2 fleet training squadrons. In effect, while the total Marine aircraft requirement would be reduced by 48 planes, the table above indicates that the fighters and torpedo bombers assigned to the CVE program would be increased from 180 to 912 planes. Al-

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

though it was also proposed that the 9th Wing, a training unit, be decommissioned, and a Marine Air Training Command, East Coast, formed in its place, this change did not take place until after the war, in early 1946.

In approving the proposed changes, CominCh directed that, hereafter, the training program of Marine Corps squadrons was to emphasize close support of ground troops in amphibious operations. In addition, he stated that a sufficient number of squadrons were to be trained in carrier operations to permit an ultimate total of 16 CVE groups to be embarked simultaneously, and to furnish adequate spare groups."<sup>46</sup> February 1946 was the target date set for the completion of the carrier training program.

Concerning other aspects of the Marine aviation program, Admiral King stated that the remaining tactical squadrons were to be organized in two combat wings which would operate from shore bases; their primary mission was to be support of Marine ground troops and defense of bases to which they were assigned. He made it clear that the transition to the new program was not to interfere with the tactical employment of Marine squadrons in current and future operations. Finally, King stated that, when CinCPac so recommended, the 4th MAW was to be decommissioned and its squadrons gradually absorbed into the CVE program.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> CominCh-CNO memo FF1/A1, serial 00130, to CMC, Subj: Marine Corps Aviation Program, Revision of, dtd 15Jan45 (OAB, NHD).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* The 4th Wing was not disbanded until after the end of the war.

Immediately after the formation of Marine Carrier Groups, AirFMFPac, its squadrons began training at the Marine Corps air stations at Mojave and Santa Barbara, California. In accordance with CominCh instructions, a *Commencement Bay*-class CVE was made available on the west coast to permit the pilots to train for carrier qualification. Four CVEs were to be in operation by 15 February 1945. Each ship was to have an air complement consisting of a VMF(CVS) with 18 Corsairs and Hellcats, and a VMTB (CVS) with 12 Avengers.

This aircraft strength figure was not adhered to, however, for MCVG-1 on the *Block Island* had "12 TBM, 10 F4U, 8 F6F night fighters and 2 F6F planes, planes, "because the *Block Island* was equipped with an SP (height finder) radar suitable for night intercepts, hence the day-night character of her assigned air group."<sup>48</sup> The MCVG-4 air complement on the *Cape Gloucester* consisted of 12 TBMs, 16 F4Us, and 2 F6F photo planes. By careful spotting of the aircraft on the carrier deck, it was found that two additional F4Us could be added to the strength of the group, and when it passed through Hawaii en route to the West Pacific, the *Cape Gloucester* took on board these two extra planes to give it a total of 32 operating aircraft.<sup>49</sup>

Before going on board the carriers, the Marine fliers underwent the same

<sup>48</sup> BGen John F. Dobbin ltr to Hd, HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, dtd 3Nov65, hereafter *Dobbin ltr.*

<sup>49</sup> BGen Donald K. Yost ltr to Hd, HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, dtd 30Nov65, hereafter *Yost ltr.*

type of carrier training that Navy pilots experienced. The training of the Marines additionally emphasized the tactics and techniques to be employed during close support missions. Besides taking part in the regular squadron training program, the new carrier pilots had to learn or refresh their knowledge of the following subjects: communications and flight deck procedures; recognition, survival and first aid; map reading and navigation; ordnance and gunnery; and escape from submerged aircraft procedures effected from a training device called a "Dilbert Dunker." Subjects included in the flight training syllabus were air tactics, night flying, carrier landings, rocket firing, navigation, fixed and free gunnery, and bombing. The flight syllabus for VMTB pilots and crews also included radar search and torpedo drops.<sup>50</sup> Once the squadrons were assigned to the CVEs, as part of their shakedown preparations, the pilots had to make eight satisfactory carrier landings to become fully qualified. It was during this period, when the squadrons were training on the CVEs, that a considerable number of operational accidents occurred.

These were caused by a combination of pilot error and aircraft failure arising almost directly out of the design of the F4U-1s and F4U-1Ds, the Corsairs,<sup>51</sup> flown by Marine fighter squadrons and the flight deck characteristics of the carriers. In comparison with the

much larger and faster CVs, the *Commencement Bay*-class escort carriers made a top speed of only 19 knots, and had flight decks that were only 75 feet wide and 553 feet long.

The length of both Corsair models was slightly more than 33 feet and their wing span was nearly 41 feet. Both F4U types were powered by 2,000-horsepower Pratt and Whitney radial engines. Driving a three-bladed propeller slightly more than 13 feet in diameter, these powerful Corsairs were the first naval aircraft operating in the war with a speed capability in excess of 400 miles per hour. In the opinion of one Marine ace who flew the plane in the Pacific: "The Corsair was a fine carrier plane, and most of us preferred it to the F6F. It was always called 'The Bent Wing Widowmaker.'" <sup>52</sup>

The cockpit of the Corsair lay well back in the fuselage, behind a long nose, which severely limited the vision of the pilot while the plane was in a landing attitude. The inverted, low gull wing located forward of and below the pilot restricted his vision during the critical carrier landing approach. The high torque characteristics of the engine, that is, the tendency of the plane to roll to the left and sometimes out of control if power was applied when the plane was travelling at slow speeds, gave the pilot a very small margin of error.<sup>53</sup> In land-based operations, hard right rudder and judicious application of full throttle when the plane was taking off, landing, or being waved off were required; aboard the small carriers, these aircraft-han-

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> The F4U-1 was assigned to Marine aviation in 1942 and the F4U-1D in 1944. HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, *Marine Corps Aircraft, 1913-1960—Marine Corps Historical Reference Series*, No. 20, reprinted 1964 (Washington, 1962).

<sup>52</sup> *Dobbin ltr.*

<sup>53</sup> Capt Harvey D. Bradshaw comments to HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, dtd 26Apr65.

dling techniques became even more critical.

Despite the aversion of the Navy to use of Corsairs on carriers, many changes had been made in the plane which made it suitable for such employment. These included:

. . . raising the pilot's cabin to improve visibility (November 1942), improved aileron action (January 1943), larger bearings in the tail wheels (March 1943), installation of a spoiler on right wing to reduce violence of stalls when under acceleration and to provide new stall warning (November 1943), new oleo strut-filling procedure (May 1944).<sup>54</sup>

The relative inexperience of the new MCVG pilots in CVE landing operations and the inherent difficulty in flying the Corsair resulted in numerous other training and operational accidents. Although the average number of carrier landings required for pilot qualification was 8, a Corsair pilot had to make a minimum of 20–25 before he could attain a realistic proficiency level.<sup>55</sup>

Takeoffs from the carrier while at sea were the source of another major problem to the Corsair pilots. At best, the top speed of the CVE would provide only 19–19½ knots of headwind on a calm day. Under optimum takeoff conditions, the Corsairs required a minimum headwind of from 20 to 26 knots; a 30-knot headwind was ideal.<sup>56</sup> Unless optimum wind and speed conditions existed, a Corsair, heavily laden with bombs, rockets, armament, and fuel could not attain flying speed and would drop off the end

of the flight deck into the sea ahead of the carrier. For this reason, the F4Us were launched by catapult in almost every case.

Lieutenant Colonel Royce W. Coln's MCVG–3 pilots on USS *Vella Gulf*, soon found:

. . . that in practically any external load condition the risk was too unfavorable to try a fly away launch with the F4U. We therefore immediately adopted a SOP that all F4Us and F6Fs [launched] would be catapult shots rather than fly aways. TBMs which were usually spotted all the way aft and under 28–30 knots relative wind with a 2000 pound internal load could fly off with reasonable safety. We also found that with this system we could do a total launch of all aircraft in much less time.<sup>57</sup>

MCVG–1 Corsairs on the *Block Island* were “almost always catapulted,” for the carrier “had two Cats. An H4 on the Port and an H2 on the Starboard bow. The H4 gave you a 4G slam and was the greatest feeling a pilot ever had, especially on a black night. You knew you were going all the way the minute you felt it.”<sup>58</sup>

Sometimes the hydraulic-powered catapults failed to accelerate the aircraft to flying speed by the time the Corsair left the flight deck—a “cold-cat shot” in carrier pilot's parlance. In those cases, the pilot often was unable to keep the tail of his plane from dragging. If he could not gain the required flying speed, the plane would “mush” right into the water directly in the path of the sharp-prowed carrier before the

<sup>54</sup> Sherrod, *Marine Air Hist*, p. 330.

<sup>55</sup> Col Louis H. Steman comments to HistBr, G–3 Div, HQMC, dtd 26Apr65.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Col Royce W. Coln ltr to CMC dtd 16Nov65, hereafter *Coln ltr.*

<sup>58</sup> *Dobbins ltr.*

pilot could extricate himself from his Corsair. It was in these cases that Dilbert Dunker training proved its worth. More often than not, however, pilot and plane were lost. Despite the occurrence of these shake-down problems, the CVE program was soundly launched.<sup>59</sup>

The first of the Marine escort carriers commissioned was the USS *Block Island*, which embarked Lieutenant Colonel John F. Dobbin's MCVG-1 (VMF (CVS)-511, VMTB (CVS)-233, and CASD-1) at San Diego on 19 March and then headed for Pearl Harbor and duty with the fleet.<sup>60</sup>

On 29 April, the *Block Island* arrived at Ulithi and was ordered to support the Okinawa operation. From 10 May to 19 June, as a component of Task Unit 32.1.3 the carrier alternated between targets in the Sakishima Islands and on Okinawa itself. MCVG-1 planes helped reduce Shuri Castle with 2,000-pound bombs, "and did some close air support work with the Marine Divisions on Okinawa." ("Not as much as we would have liked," Dobbin noted.)<sup>61</sup>

In the six-week period of operations in the vicinity of Okinawa, the task unit sortied northward, where its planes

conducted strikes against Kagoshima, and as an alternate target when it was weathered in, Amami O Shima. At no time did *Block Island* aircraft encounter opposition over their targets, nor was the carrier itself subject to *Kamikaze* attacks.

Following these operations, the CVE went to Leyte for replenishment. On 25 June, it went to sea again to participate in a three-day series of strikes in support of the landings at Balikpapan, Borneo. Immediately after Japan's surrender, in company with another Marine CVE, the *Gilbert Islands*, and five destroyer escorts, *Block Island* participated in a POW rescue operation. These ships steamed to Formosa before the island commander had formally capitulated, and took on board approximately 1,000 Allied POWs who had been imprisoned there.

The USS *Gilbert Islands*, the second Marine CVE commissioned, embarked Lieutenant Colonel William R. Campbell's MCVG-2 (VMF (CVS)-512, VMTB (CVS)-143, and CASD-2) on 6 March at San Diego, and left for the Pacific the following month.<sup>62</sup> On 25 May, the carrier arrived off Okinawa and flew its first CAP and close air support strikes. On 1 June, the *Gilbert Islands* joined the *Block Island* in TU 32.1.3, then neutralizing enemy installations in the Sakishima Gunto, and later participated in the Balikpapan preinvasion strikes.

Two more Marine CVEs arrived in the Pacific before the end of the war. The *Cape Gloucester*, with Lieutenant Colonel Donald K. Yost's MCVG-4

<sup>59</sup> Not all Marine aviators were enthused about being stationed aboard carriers, for as General Rogers recalled, he "despised them more than anything in the world. I was scared of them, actually. Well . . . I'd been flying so much longer than almost anyone else, and I would not trust myself to a [landing] signal officer. I couldn't believe that the signal officer was correct. I knew that I was correct." *Rogers interview*.

<sup>60</sup> USS *Block Island* (CVE-105) WarDs, Mar-Apr45 (OAB, NHD).

<sup>61</sup> *Dobbin ltr*.

<sup>62</sup> USS *Gilbert Islands* (CVE-107) WarDs, Mar-Apr45 (OAB, NHD).

(VMF(CVS)-351, VMTB(CVS)-132, and CASD-4) embarked, arrived at Okinawa on 4 July and was attached to Task Group 31.2 for duty.<sup>63</sup> After spending a few days covering mine-sweeping operations, the Marine CVE joined three other carriers, and steamed from Okinawa on 1 August to conduct antishipping operations in the East China Sea and to launch strikes against shipping in the Saddle and Parker Island groups near Shanghai at the mouth of Hangchow Bay.

The fighter complements on the Navy CVEs in the task group consisted primarily of FM-2s (the General Motors "Wildcat," a single engine fighter), which did not have the high-altitude performance characteristics of the Marine Corsair. The performance of the Corsair was improved by removal of its rocket rails and one pylon, permitting "VMF-351 pilots to bag four fast high-flying Japanese reconnaissance planes in addition to the one transport they caught on a course between Shanghai and the Japanese homeland."<sup>64</sup>

Following the surrender of Japan, the *Cape Gloucester* debarked its Marine aircraft group at Okinawa and proceeded to Nagasaki where it took on board and transported to Okinawa 260 liberated Australian POWs. MCVG-4 then reboarded the carrier which returned to Japanese waters, over which the Marine pilots provided an air cover for Fifth Fleet minesweeping and occupation forces en route to Sasebo.

<sup>63</sup> USS *Cape Gloucester* (CVE-109) WarD, Jul45 (OAB, NHD).

<sup>64</sup> *Yost ltr.*

While flying a reconnaissance mission over Kyushu, the MCVG commander, Lieutenant Colonel Yost, flew his aircraft into high tension power lines strung across a valley which, because of rain and a low ceiling, he was following back to the coast and the carrier. The engine of his Corsair failed and he was forced to make a wheels-up landing at Omura airfield, "and he became a one-man premature 'invasion' force"<sup>65</sup> which preceded the occupation of Kyushu by approximately a week.

The fourth Marine CVE commissioned was the *Vella Gulf*, which had Lieutenant Colonel Royce W. Coln's MCVG-3 (VMF(CVS)-513, VMTB(CVS)-234, and CASD-3) on board. It sailed from San Diego on 17 June for Pearl Harbor, where it conducted further training. On 9 July, the carrier left for Saipan by way of Eniwetok and Guam. On 24 and 26 July, the Marine pilots flew strikes north of Guam against Pagan and Rota, two islands which Allied fliers had attacked many times before. The *Vella Gulf* then proceeded to Okinawa, where it arrived on 9 August, the day that the second atomic bomb was dropped. Following

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* Soon after he landed, a Japanese staff car drove up and an officer notified the Marine that the commanding general of the district wished to see him. The Japanese were very amicable and set up a guard around the plane upon request. At the Japanese headquarters, Lieutenant Colonel Yost was able to send a message to the American forces in Tokyo and to the Fleet notifying them of his whereabouts. Although the airfield was in poor shape a TBM from the *Cape Gloucester* was able to land and pick him up the next day. BGen Donald K. Yost comments to HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, dtd 14Mar67.

the surrender of Japan, the CVE was assigned to participate in the occupation.

The *Salerno Bay*, carrying MCVG-5 (VMF(CVS)-514, VMTB(CVS)-144, and CASD-5), and the *Puget Sound*, carrying MCVG-6 (VMF(CVS)-321, VMTB(CVS)-454, and CASD-6), had not yet arrived in the war zone when the conflict with Japan ended.<sup>66</sup> Thus, only four Marine CVEs saw any action in the Pacific. Although the Marine CVE project had been established to provide Marine fliers for close support of amphibious landings and ground operations, except for a few instances at Okinawa and Balikpapan, the carriers did not fulfill their intended functions.

The Marine CVE program was conceived and activated too late in the war to do more than just begin to prove itself. On the other hand, the *Block Island* and *Gilbert Islands* Marine pilots could probably have been employed to a greater extent in support of ground operations at Okinawa, for both CVEs were in the combat area for a long enough period.

As one of the carrier group commanders observed, the significant aspect of the carrier program was:

The fact that, for the first time, Marine aviation would operate within its ideal 'conceptual' role. This being that Marine Air would perform pre-D-Day operations from carriers, then participate in the amphibious phase. . . .<sup>67</sup>

<sup>66</sup> In addition to those operating squadrons already assigned to carriers, a number of other squadrons, destined for carrier assignment were undergoing training in California at El Toro, Santa Barbara, and Mojave.

<sup>67</sup> *Coln ltr.*

Like many other projects that were born during the last stages of World War II, the concept underlying the program was soundly enough organized and firmly enough established, however, to become an important and integral facet of post-war Marine Corps amphibious warfare doctrine.

#### FINAL OPERATIONS <sup>68</sup>

Allied air and naval pressure on Japan continued unremitting following the fall of Okinawa and in the period that the ground and amphibious forces of both the Central Pacific and Southwest Pacific commands prepared for OLYMPIC. At the 29 June meeting of the JCS, when 1 November was confirmed as the date for the invasion of Kyushu,<sup>69</sup> the service chiefs also determined that the blockade from air bases not only on Okinawa and Iwo Jima but also in the Marianas and Philippines was to be intensified. They also agreed upon the following courses of action in the Pacific: defeat of enemy units in all of the Philippines; alloca-

<sup>68</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *CinCPac Ops*, Jun-Aug45; *CinCPac WarDs*, Jun-Aug 45 (OAB, NHD); *USAFMidPac G-5 Hist*; *USSBS, Japan's Struggle*; *Butow, Japan's Decision*; *Herbert Feis, Japan Subdued* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), hereafter *Feis, Japan Subdued*; *Halsey and Bryan, Halsey's Story*; *King and Whitehill, King's Naval Record*; *Leahy, I Was There*; *Harry S. Truman, Year of Decisions—Memoirs*, v. I (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1955), hereafter *Truman, Memoirs*; *War Reports*.

<sup>69</sup> On 30 June, CinCPac sent out a warning order for OLYMPIC to his entire command. *CinCPac WarD*, Jun45 (OAB, NHD).

tion of all of the forces necessary to guarantee the security of Western Pacific sea lanes prior to OLYMPIC; and acquisition of a sea route to Russian Pacific ports,<sup>70</sup> very likely a preparatory measure for the impending entry of Russia into the war with Japan.

During July, further steps were taken to revise and strengthen the preparations and forces for the final operation against Japan. On the 10th, the JCS ordered the China-based XX and XXI Bomber Commands deactivated. The personnel and planes of the former were transferred to Lieutenant General James H. Doolittle's Eighth Air Force, which had deployed from Europe to Okinawa. XXI Bomber Command squadrons were transferred to Lieutenant General Nathan F. Twining's<sup>71</sup> Twentieth Air Force, which was based in the Marianas. The Eighth and Twentieth together would comprise the United States Army Strategic Air Force in the Pacific (USASTAF), commanded by General Carl A. Spaatz. Strategic control of USASTAF would remain with the JCS in the same manner as it had controlled Twentieth Air Force, and similarly General Arnold would be its executive agent.

On 10 July, Nimitz turned over the Seventh Air Force, which had squadrons on Iwo, in the Marianas, and in the Ryukyus, to the commander of the Far East Air Forces (FEAF), General George C. Kenney, who had been air chief of the SWPA throughout the Pacific war. CinCPac also ordered Major General Louis E. Woods' Tactical Air

Force on Okinawa to conduct operations in conjunction with the Eighth Air Force. Kenney's FEAF was expanded on 13 July, and was composed at this time of the Fifth Air Force, which was, for the most part, based in the Ryukyus, and the Thirteenth Air Force, which was based in the Philippines. For OLYMPIC, FEAF was to conduct tactical operations in support of the invasion, and USASTAF was to conduct the strategic bombing of the Home Islands.

Based on the JCS directive of 3 April to Nimitz and MacArthur, on 19 July CinCPOA transferred to CinCAFPac the control of U. S.-held areas in the Ryukyus. In turn, Nimitz retained responsibility for the operations of naval units and installations in this area. On 26 July, General Stilwell was ordered to report to MacArthur with the Army forces under his command at 1200 on 31 July, at which time control of the Ryukyus passed from CinCPac-CinCPOA to CinCAFPac.<sup>72</sup>

While these administrative and command changes were taking place, aircraft from carrier task forces and land-based commands embarked upon an accelerated program of attacks designed to weaken Japan before the invasions of Kyushu and Honshu. From bases in the Marianas, B-29s averaged 1,200 sorties a week in July. These large bombers dropped 42,711 tons of explosives on 39 Japanese industrial centers during the month; a large percentage of the missions were mass incendiary raids.<sup>73</sup>

Okinawa airfields captured during the campaign, and others constructed later

<sup>70</sup> Leahy, *I Was There*, p. 385.

<sup>71</sup> General Twining is the brother of retired Marine General Merrill B. Twining.

<sup>72</sup> CinCPac WarD, Jul45 (OAB, NHD).

<sup>73</sup> *CinCPac Ops*, Jul45, p. 16.

on almost all of the suitable space on the island, were filled to overflowing with aircraft of all types by July. Bombers taking off from Okinawa to hit Japanese targets were often covered by Iwo Jima-based AAF fighters, which also flew fighter-bomber sweeps over the Empire. Kenney's fighters and medium bombers, and Marine F4Us and TBMs (operating with, but not under, the AAF) struck Japan day and night in July, hitting a wide assortment of vital targets on Kyushu, Shikoku, and Honshu in accordance with OLYMPIC preinvasion plans. In completion of the transfer of Okinawa forces from CinCPac to CinCAFPac, on 31 July the Seventh Air Force assumed operational control of the 2d MAW and ADC.

For the Navy, the final phase of the war against Japan opened at dawn on 1 July, when the Third Fleet, stated Halsey:

. . . sortied from Leyte under a broad directive: we would attack the enemy's home islands, destroy the remnants of his navy, merchant marine, and air power, and cripple his factories and communications. Our planes would strike inland; our big guns would bombard coastal targets; together they would literally bring the war home to the average Japanese citizen.<sup>74</sup>

Halsey's Third Fleet accomplished what it set out to do. Strike day was 10 July, when the fast carrier task force arrived at launching positions and fighter sweeps were sent over Tokyo. Not a single enemy interceptor was in the air; two snooper planes, which investigated the American ships from beyond the ships' AA range, were quickly

shot down by carrier aircraft circling overhead. For the rest of the month in company with TF 37, the fast carrier task force of the British Pacific Fleet which joined on 16 July, TF 38 ranged up and down the Pacific coast of the Japanese islands, maintaining a series of heavy air strikes and surface bombardments against selected targets. "The enemy's failure to hit us implied that he was hoarding his air power against an expected invasion, but most of us believed that he had little air power to hoard."<sup>75</sup>

As soon as possible after he had assumed office following the death of President Roosevelt, Truman concentrated his efforts on finding a way to end the war in the Pacific. As the American Commander in Chief, he was kept abreast by his military and civilian advisers of all developments in the war and briefed on plans proposed for future operations. He also faced the problem of getting to know the two other major Allied heads of state and establishing a rapport with them. Truman's heavy workload and the necessity of finding immediate solutions to pressing problems prevented him from leaving Washington for a Big Three meeting. Instead, as an interim measure, he sent Harry L. Hopkins and W. Averell Harriman, the Ambassador to the Soviet Union, to meet with Stalin and his advisers in May.<sup>76</sup> Basically, their assignment was to inform Stalin that "we wanted to carry

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 260.

<sup>76</sup> Hopkins was sent because, as Roosevelt's trusted advisor, he had met Stalin earlier in the war, when he had made several trips to Moscow to carry out missions for the President.

<sup>74</sup> Halsey and Bryan, *Halsey's Story*, p. 257.

out the Roosevelt policies.”<sup>77</sup> Additionally, Harriman and Hopkins were to try to get Stalin to commit himself to Russia’s early entry into the war against Japan and to obtain from him a firm date for that event. On 28 May, the two diplomats advised Truman that Stalin had set 8 August as the date he would declare war on Japan.

Stalin also told the Americans that, while he would remain a party to the policy of unconditional surrender, he believed that Japan would not surrender easily if the Allies insisted upon enforcing the provisions of this policy. Stalin concluded that if Japan sued for peace in hopes of obtaining terms that might possibly be less stringent than those implied in an unconditional surrender, the Allies should accept the offer and enforce their will upon the defeated enemy by occupying his homeland.

Truman stated later that he was:

. . . reassured to learn from Hopkins that Stalin had confirmed the understanding reached at Yalta about Russia’s entry into the war against Japan. Our military experts had estimated that an invasion of Japan would cost at least five hundred thousand American casualties even if the Japanese forces then in Asia were held on the Chinese mainland. Russian entry into the war was highly important to us.<sup>78</sup>

As the Allies drew closer to the heart of the Empire, Truman believed that this Russian action “. . . would mean the saving of hundreds of thousands of American casualties.”<sup>79</sup> With further discussion of this matter as one of his more compelling reasons for attending

a conference with Stalin and Churchill, Truman agreed to meet with them on 15 July at Potsdam, a suburb of Berlin.

On the day after the meeting had convened, Truman was informed that the first atomic bomb had been successfully exploded in a test on 16 July at Alamogordo, New Mexico. The next day, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson flew to Potsdam to give the President the full details of the test. Truman recalled that:

We were not ready to make use of this weapon against the Japanese, although we did not know as yet what effect the new weapon might have physically or psychologically, when used against the enemy. For that reason the military advised that we go ahead with the existing military plans for the invasion of the Japanese home islands.<sup>80</sup>

The atomic bomb project had been kept so secret that the JCS first learned of it as a group only after completion of the test. Marshall, however, had kept King abreast of the progress of the project.<sup>81</sup> On 24 July, Truman casually mentioned to Stalin that the United States had “a new weapon of unusual destructive force. The Russian Premier showed no special interest. All he said was that he was glad to hear of it and hoped that we would make ‘good use of it against the Japanese.’”<sup>82</sup>

Despite the vast potential suspected of the new weapon—and all the possible implications inherent in its use—and the fact that OLYMPIC preparations and preinvasion operations were well

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 415.

<sup>81</sup> King and Whitehill, *King’s Naval Record*, p. 621.

<sup>82</sup> Truman, *Memoirs*, p. 416.

<sup>77</sup> Truman, *Memoirs*, p. 258.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 265.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

under way, Admirals Leahy and King and proponents of strategic bombing still held reservations about the need for invading Japan. They were even less in favor of dropping an atomic bomb on that country. They believed that Japan had already been defeated and was ready to surrender. King felt that the President gave his approval for the bomb to be dropped because the Chief Executive feared that too many American troops would be killed in an invasion. King agreed with this estimate, but he thought that:

. . . had we been willing to wait, the effective naval blockade would, in the course of time, have starved the Japanese into submission through lack of oil, rice, medicines, and other essential materials. The Army, however, with its underestimation of sea power, had insisted upon a direct invasion and an occupational conquest of Japan.<sup>83</sup>

Faced with the prospect of either invading Japan or destroying that country with atomic bombs, Truman was presented with the suggestion that Japan might choose or even be induced to surrender and end the war sooner than expected. Late in May, Acting Secretary of State Joseph C. Grew, a veteran diplomat who had been American Ambassador to Japan for a 10-year period before the war, suggested that Truman issue a proclamation which called upon the Japanese to submit and guaranteed the continuation of the Emperor as head of state. The President favored the idea and instructed Grew to send his recommendation through regular channels for consideration by the JCS and the State-

War-Navy Coordinating Committee. The latter was a group of senior State, War, and Navy Department officials who assisted their chiefs in handling politico-military matters. When Grew's recommendation was approved in principle, he further recommended that the President's message to the Japanese people be issued at once to coincide with the fall of Okinawa. The JCS demurred, for they wanted to wait until the United States was ready to follow up a Japanese refusal of the peace offer with an actual invasion. Truman then decided not to publish the proclamation until after the Potsdam Conference had begun in order to give his declaration greater weight by including Great Britain and China,<sup>84</sup> two of our cobelligerents in the war against Japan, as the joint issuing powers, and by issuing it from the scene of a conference of victorious Allies.

After he had become President, and when he first learned of the development of the atomic bomb, Truman determined that the bomb was to be employed strictly as a weapon of war against purely military targets. The final decision to drop the bomb was to be his alone. Before the Potsdam Conference, he had been given a list of suggested targets and the choice was finally narrowed to four cities in which were located important industrial and military complexes, according to intelligence reports. Hiroshima, Kokura, Niigata, and Nagasaki were chosen in that order, and on 24 July, General Spaatz was directed to send the B-29s of his USASTAF against one of the

<sup>83</sup> King and Whitehill, *King's Naval Record*, p. 621.

<sup>84</sup> China was neither a party to nor present at the Potsdam Conference.

targets on the first day after 3 August 1945 that weather conditions would permit visual bombing.

On 26 July, the United States, in company with the United Kingdom and the Republic of China, issued what has come to be known as the Potsdam Declaration.<sup>85</sup> This surrender ultimatum gave Japan the opportunity to end the war voluntarily or to face utter destruction. The terms offered the Japanese government included assurances that its people would not be enslaved by the victors. On the other hand, Japan's leaders were told that their country was to be disarmed, shorn of its conquests of 50-years' standing, and deprived of its war-making potential in all sectors. The authority and influence of the militarists were to be eliminated, and "until a new order is established and until there is conclusive proof that Japan's war-making power is destroyed, Japan shall be occupied by the Allies."<sup>86</sup> Further, the enemy was told that his countrymen would be permitted access to sources of raw materials and be given an opportunity to develop their own form of democratic self-government. Upon receipt of the Potsdam Declaration, Japan could choose to surrender unconditionally or face complete annihilation. Disregarding all reality by not accepting the terms of the declaration, Japan chose the suicidal course. On 28 July, Radio Tokyo broadcast Prime Minister Suzuki's statement that he believed:

. . . the Joint Proclamation by the three countries is nothing but a rehash of the

<sup>85</sup> See Butow, *Japan's Decision to Surrender* pp. 243-244, for full text.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 3 (b) of the Potsdam Declaration.

Cairo Declaration. As for the Government, it does not find any important value in it, and there is no other recourse but to ignore it entirely and resolutely fight for the successful conclusion of this war.<sup>87</sup>

With this tacit rejection, Truman decided that the fastest way of ending the war with a minimum of U. S. casualties was to drop the bomb.

The Potsdam Conference was recessed briefly from 26 to 28 July, while Prime Minister Churchill left for London to learn that, following the counting of the absentee ballots holding the vote of British servicemen, he had been defeated in the general elections and had been replaced by Clement Atlee. At the first evening session following the end of this recess, Stalin stated that on 13 July, Japan had approached the Soviet Union with a request that it mediate an end to the Pacific War, but that Russia would refuse to do so. Truman thanked him in the name of the signatories to the Potsdam Declaration, and restated their determination to hew to the ultimatum delivered in that document.

This was not the first time that Japan made peace overtures. In September 1944, the Swedish Minister in Tokyo had been approached by an unnamed high-level Japanese official, who said that, in order to obtain peace, Japan was prepared to surrender territories that were taken from Great Britain and would recognize all former British investments in East Asia. The Tokyo-based Swedish foreign officer passed word of this encounter to his seniors in Stockholm, ending his report with the comment: "Behind the man who gave me this message there stands one of the

<sup>87</sup> Quoted in Feis, *Japan Subdued*, p. 97.

best known statesmen in Japan and there is no doubt that this attempt must be considered as a serious one.”<sup>88</sup> Stockholm passed the information on to London, which had Lord Halifax, the British Ambassador to the United States, notify Secretary of State Cordell Hull of the conversation.

Hull concurred both with a British proposal to make no reply to the indirect Japanese approach and with London’s suggestion to the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs that he “reply, if he so wishes, that the Swedish Government considered it useless to deliver such a message to His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom.”<sup>89</sup> Although nothing further came from this attempt of the Japanese another message was received in Stockholm from its Minister in Tokyo to the effect “that he had been advised that the Japanese Foreign Minister was himself preparing to approach the British Government.”<sup>90</sup> Despite the fact that no additional material on this matter has appeared, it is safe to assume that the reaction of the Allies to this second approach would have been the same as it was to the first.

On 6 August, the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. When the apparently heavy loss of life and wide-

spread damage caused by this bombing did not impel the Japanese government to take any steps to end the war, General Spaatz was ordered to continue operations as planned. A second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki on 9 August. During the interval between these atomic attacks, 550 B-29s and carrier aircraft struck at Japan in day and night raids, and on 8 August the Soviet Union delivered a declaration of war on Japan, effective the next day. On 10 August, Japan sued for peace on the basis of the terms enunciated in the Potsdam Declaration.

The next day, in reply to the Japanese suit, President Truman told the defeated power that a supreme commander would accept its surrender. In addition, Japan was told that the Emperor and the Japanese High Command would have to issue a cease fire to all Japanese armed forces before the Allies could accept its capitulation. Three days of frantic discussions ensued in Tokyo before the Mikado’s government could agree on how best to accept Potsdam terms and what reply to give to Truman’s note of the 11th.

Meanwhile, on 13-14 August, B-29s dropped 5½ million leaflets, printed in Japanese, which contained a text of the Japanese surrender offer, the American reply, and the terms of the Potsdam Declaration. Other leaflet drops were scheduled for 15 and 16 August.

Up to 13 August, the Japanese people were only vaguely aware of the fact that their country was losing the war, and had no idea that the government was suing for peace. Now that this was common knowledge, the Emperor’s hand was strengthened and he could take final

<sup>88</sup> Paraphrase of a telegram from the Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs to the British Foreign Office, dtd 24Sep44, quoted in Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1944. The Near East, South Asia, and Africa. The Far East*, v. V (Washington: GPO, 1965), p. 1184.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Chief, Div of British Commonwealth Affairs, U. S. Department of State, memo to Adm William D. Leahy, CofS, U. S. Army and Navy, dtd 10Oct44, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 1186.

action without worrying about extremists, who might have otherwise attempted to keep Japan in the war. Further strengthening the Emperor's position was the fact that Japan was to be permitted a conditional surrender, the condition being that the institution of the Emperor would be retained.

On 14 August, Hirohito asked the Swiss government to relay to the Allies a message stating that he had issued an Imperial Rescript that denoted Japanese acceptance of the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration. The message also stated that he was ordering his commanders to cease fire and to surrender their forces to, and to issue such orders as might be required by, representatives of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, General MacArthur.

President Truman then notified the Japanese government that he regarded this message as a full acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration and ordered the Emperor to command all Japanese forces everywhere to cease fire immediately. The Japanese were ordered also to send envoys to Manila to discuss arrangements for the formal surrender with MacArthur and his aides. On 14 August, CinCPOA issued the following message to all of his forces in the Pacific Ocean Areas: "OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS AGAINST JAPANESE FORCES WILL CEASE AT ONCE X CONTINUE SEARCHES AND PATROLS X MAINTAIN DEFENSIVE AND INTERNAL SECURITY MEASURES AT HIGHEST LEVEL AND BEWARE OF TREACHERY."<sup>91</sup> At

<sup>91</sup> Quoted in Halsey and Bryan, *Halsey's Story*, p. 272.

1900 that same day, President Truman announced that a cease fire was in effect, and that the war was over.

### *THE SILENT GUNS*<sup>92</sup>

Almost immediately after announcing the capitulation of Japan, President Truman issued a directive to General MacArthur, designating him Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) and giving him the power to accept the surrender of Japan for the governments of the United States, Republic of China, United Kingdom, and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Each of the heads of state of these governments was to designate a representative to be with MacArthur at the surrender ceremony and to sign the instrument of surrender for his country; Truman chose Admiral Nimitz as the American signatory. From the moment that the Japanese signed the surrender document, the authority of the Emperor and Japanese government to rule was subject to MacArthur, who, as SCAP, had supreme command over all Allied land, sea, and air forces that were to be allocated for employment on occupation duty in Japan.

On 20 August, when the Japanese emissaries arrived in Manila to review the instructions relating to the surrender, they received MacArthur's General Order No. 1, which had been prepared earlier in expectation of the end

<sup>92</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *CinCPac Ops*, Aug-Sep45; *CinCPac WarDs*, Aug-Sep45; *USAFMidPac G-5 Hist*; Butow, *Japan's Decision*; Feis, *Japan Subdued*; Halsey and Bryan, *Halsey's Story*; Truman, *Memoirs*; *War Reports*.

of the war. Under the terms of this document, Japanese commanders of forces in the Pacific islands south of Japan were to surrender to Nimitz or his representatives, and commanders of forces in Japan proper, the Philippines, and the southern section of Korea were to surrender to MacArthur or to his representatives. On 15 August, the JCS amplified General Order No. 1 by directing the occupation of the key areas of Japan, Korea, and the China coast. Under a system of priorities, the swift occupation of Japan was to be regarded as the supreme operation and would have first call on all available resources. Next in order was the early occupation of Seoul and acceptance of the surrender of Japanese forces in that area. Operations to be undertaken on the coast of China and on Formosa were to follow when forces and transport were available.

The immediate purpose of occupying the China coast by gaining control of key ports and communications centers was to extend such assistance to Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist forces in China as was practicable without American involvement in a major land campaign. As the first of the Allies to go to war against Japan, the Chinese government was expected to accept the surrender of the Japanese on the mainland. The situation on Chinese soil, and especially in those great sections of the nation under Japanese control, was so confused, however, that it appeared impracticable, if not altogether impossible, for the Nationalist Government to fulfill its function as stated in MacArthur's General Order No. 1, *viz.*, to take the Japanese surrender. Although the Chinese Com-

munists had fought the Japanese, they had been fighting the Nationalists as well, and were in fact, still trying to gain the upper hand in China when the war against Japan ended. To prevent large stores of Japanese arms and equipment from falling into the hands of the Communists, the Japanese forces in China were instructed to surrender only to Chiang Kai-shek or his representatives.

The conflict between the Communists and the Nationalists had been going on for many years before and slackened only slightly during World War II, when in the interests of national unity, both parties turned their attention to ousting the Japanese from the country. With the end of the war and the impending surrender of large Japanese forces, the Chinese civil war threatened to break out anew and on a larger scale than before, but this time with international implications which threatened the newly won peace. This, then, was what faced the Allies in China.

When Lieutenant General Albert C. Wedemeyer, commander of U.S. forces in China, apprised Washington of the explosive situation then existing in China and of the need to take vigorous action there to assist Chiang Kai-shek in re-establishing the authority of his government, he was directed to arrange for the movement of Chinese troops on American transport planes and ships into all areas in China and Formosa held by the Japanese in order to disarm and repatriate the defeated enemy. Previously prepared plans were then approved for sending in Marines and soldiers to help Nationalist forces secure key Chinese ports and communi-

cation centers.<sup>93</sup> At this time, while attention was focused on the situation in China briefly, MacArthur's headquarters in Manila prepared for the surrender ceremony in Tokyo Bay and prepared to implement plans approved earlier for the occupation of Japan.

At Manila, the Japanese delegation was informed that MacArthur would formally accept the surrender of Japan in Tokyo Bay on 31 August on board the USS *Missouri*. According to the preliminary plans, 150 AAF technicians were to land on 26 August at Atsugi Airdrome, 14 miles southwest of Tokyo, to prepare the way for a subsequent large-scale landing two days later by the 11th Airborne Division and advance headquarters of the Eighth Army, FEAF, and Army Forces, Pacific—a total of approximately 7,500 men in all.

Elements of the Third Fleet were to enter Sagami Bay on the 26th also, while Japanese harbor pilots were to maneuver other naval units directly into Tokyo Bay on the same day.

Two days later, the Fleet Landing Force (TG 31.3), comprised of the 4th Marines (Reinforced) and commanded by Brigadier General William T. Clement, ADC of the 6th Marine Division, was to go ashore on Miura Peninsula, 30 miles southwest of Tokyo, and take over the Yokosuka Naval Base.<sup>94</sup> On the same day, MacArthur was to land at Atsugi to discuss the conduct of the full occupation with mem-

bers of the IGHQ. Further airborne and naval landings were to continue on the 29th and 30th, and on the 31st, as additional occupation forces landed, the surrender ceremony was to take place on the *Missouri*. Because a typhoon struck the Home Islands during the latter part of August, the entire schedule for the occupation was postponed two days, and the surrender ceremony was rescheduled for 2 September.

On 27 August, however, the transports carrying the Fleet Landing Force and its components had already arrived in Sagami Bay to find it congested with the warships making up the Fleet Flagship Group, which was waiting to enter Tokyo Bay for the surrender ceremonies. To relieve the congestion, *Missouri* and three destroyers steamed towards the channel leading to Tokyo Bay in order to pick up the Japanese pilots who would navigate the ships to their anchorages in the bay. After the Fleet Flagship Group had entered the bay, TG 30.2 (British Flagship Group), TF 35 (including TG 35.90 (Support Force), TF 37 (British Support Force), and TF 31 (Yokosuka Occupation Force) followed in that order. While an air umbrella of hundreds of planes from TF 38 carriers covered the task forces and groups slowly moving in Sagami Wan, many more land-based fighters and bombers from Okinawa and Iwo Jima patrolled the skies over Japan proper.

The 150 technicians from the Fifth Air Force landed at Atsugi on the 28th with their emergency communications and airfield engineering equipment and began operations preparatory to subsequent landings. On the 30th, the 11th Airborne Division and the various ad-

<sup>93</sup> See pt V below, "North China Marines," for a continuation and fuller exposition of this story.

<sup>94</sup> The occupation of Yokosuka by the 4th Marines will be treated in fuller detail in pt IV, "Occupation of Japan," below.

vance headquarters staffs arrived at Atsugi from Okinawa. Meanwhile, in conjunction with the arrival of the airborne division, an amphibious landing force comprising U. S. Marines and sailors, British sailors, and Royal Marines went ashore at Yokosuka and occupied the harbor forts off Miura Peninsula.

During the last day of the month, Fleet Landing Force troops consolidated their hold on the occupied naval base and prepared to send patrols down the peninsula to demilitarize outlying installations. By the close of 1 September, as the hour for the Japanese surrender approached, Allied troops had gained control of most of the strategic area along the shores of Tokyo Bay, excepting Tokyo itself.

At 0908, the instrument of surrender was signed on board the *Missouri*. Signing first for Japan on behalf of the Emperor and the Japanese Government was Foreign Minister Mamouri Shigemitsu. Next was General Yoshijiro Umezu, Chief of Staff of the Army, who signed for the *Imperial General Headquarters*. General MacArthur then signed as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. Flanking him were two officers who had been recently released from a prison camp near Mukden and invited by him to witness the surrender: Lieutenant General Jonathan M. Wainwright, the defender of Bataan and Corregidor, and Lieutenant General Arthur E. Percival, the British commander of Singapore at the time of its capture. Following his signing, MacArthur called upon the representatives of the Allied Powers to sign in the following order: the United States, the Republic

of China, the United Kingdom, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of Canada, the Provisional Government of the French Republic, the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the Dominion of New Zealand. As these signatories fixed their names to the two documents—one for the Allies, and a duplicate for Japan—a mass flight of 450 aircraft from TF 38 “roared over the *Missouri* masthigh.”<sup>95</sup> After all had signed, General MacArthur ended the ceremonies, saying: “Let us pray that peace be now restored to the world and that God will preserve it always. These proceedings are now closed.”<sup>96</sup>

In addition to the principals and the signatories present at the signing many Allied flag and general officers who had participated in the war against Japan were witnesses. Ship’s personnel from the *Missouri* and Marines from her detachment manned every possible vantage point. The Marine officers present were Lieutenant General Roy S. Geiger and his aide, Major Roy Owsley from FMFPac; Brigadier General William T. Clement, commander of the Fleet Landing Force; Brigadier General Joseph H. Fellows, from the staff of CinCPac-CinCPOA; and the officers of the Marine detachment of the *Missouri*, Captain John W. Kelley, and First Lieutenants Francis I. Fenton, Jr., Alfred E. W. Kelley, and Josiah W. Bill.<sup>97</sup>

Although the signing of the surrender document formally ended the war in the

<sup>95</sup> Halsey and Bryan, *Halsey’s Story*, p. 283.

<sup>96</sup> Morison, *Victory in the Pacific*, p. 366.

<sup>97</sup> Records Group 24, Records of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, Log of USS *Missouri*, entry of 2Sep45 (National Archives).



AMONG THE FEW MARINES *present at the surrender ceremony on USS Missouri are (1) Lieutenant General Roy S. Geiger and (2) Brigadier General Joseph H. Fellows. (USA SC211066)*



CORSAIRS AND HELLCATS *fly in formation over Tokyo Bay during the surrender ceremonies. In the left foreground is the Missouri. (USN 80-G-421130)*

Pacific, it did not mean that the world would return to normalcy or that all Marines would once again take up peacetime types of duty. A drastic reduction in Marine Corps strength in the immediate postwar era did not necessarily mean a commensurate reduction in the number and types of responsible missions assigned the Corps, for the increased role of the United States in international affairs after the war had a direct bearing on what Marines were to do and where they were to do it. In addition to the assignment of part of the VAC to occupation duty in Japan and the deployment of IIIAC troops to China, some Marines participated in the surrender of Japanese-held islands and their later occupation, other Marines were assigned to reactivated peacetime garrisons in the Pacific Ocean Areas, and the majority was rotated back to the United States and released or discharged from active duty.

### *THE MARINE CORPS AT THE END OF THE WAR*<sup>98</sup>

By V-J Day, the day that the surrender was signed, the Marine Corps had reached a peak strength of 485,833. Of this figure, 242,043 Marines were

serving overseas. The major portion of the overseas figure—190,945—consisted of ground forces in six Marine divisions, a Fleet Marine Force headquarters, three amphibious force headquarters, and supporting service and tactical units. Total Marine Corps aviation strength on 31 August 1945 was 101,182; 61,098 Marines in this figure were serving overseas in four Marine aircraft wings, an Air, Fleet Marine Force headquarters, and supporting service and headquarters squadrons.

The major Marine ground commands in the Pacific at this time consisted of FMFPac at Oahu, IIIAC on Guam, and VAC on Maui. The Marine divisions were located as follows: 1st on Okinawa, 2d on Saipan, 3d on Guam, 4th on Maui, the 5th at sea en route to Japan, and the 6th, less the 4th RCT at Yokosuka, on Guam. Of the Marine aviation organizations, AirFMFPac was based at Ewa, the 1st MAW was at Mindanao, the 2d on Okinawa, the 3d at Ewa, and the 4th on Majuro. The groups and squadrons of these four wings were based either with the wing headquarters or on various islands throughout the Pacific. Attached to the 3d Wing was a Marine carrier group in four escort carriers that were under the operational control of Carrier Division 27.

Fleet Marine Force ground and training-replacement activities on the east coast of the United States in August 1945 consisted of the Marine Training Command and the 7th Separate Infantry Battalion at Camp Lejeune, the Marine Corps Base Depot at Norfolk, and the Training Battalion and the Field Artillery Training Battalion at the Marine Corps Schools, Quantico. On the west

<sup>98</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *CMC Rpt*, 1946; *FMFPac Hist*; *FMF Grd and Air Status Rpts*, Aug45; USMC HistDiv, Administrative History of the United States Marine Corps in the Post-war Period (1Sep45-1Oct46), dtd 19Aug-47, hereafter *USMC Admin Hist*; CG, FMFPac, Administrative Activities of the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, 1Sep45-1Oct46, encl A to CG, FMFPac ltr to CMC, ser 2863, dtd 24May47, hereafter *FMFPac Admin Hist*, 1945-1946.

coast, the Marine Training and Replacement Command, San Diego Area, was responsible for training and replacement functions at Camps Pendleton and Elliott.

Marine aviation operations in the United States were under the control of two commands. The 9th MAW, with headquarters at the Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point, N.C., was responsible for aviation training and replacement activities on the east coast. Marine Fleet Air, West Coast, with headquarters at the Marine Corps Air Station, Miramar, Calif., held similar responsibilities on the west coast.

Besides these Marine air and ground training and replacement commands in the United States were Marine Corps recruit depots at Parris Island, S. C., and San Diego, California, and numerous posts, stations, and independent guard detachments attached to various naval facilities. All of these, as well as the FMF organizations, were to face drastic revision as the Marine Corps began to revert to a peacetime status.

Four major personnel problem areas facing the Marine Corps, like the other Services at the beginning of the postwar period, concerned demobilization, disbandment of activities and suspension program; personnel procurement; and postwar, fiscal, and mobilization planning. The most immediate problem facing the Commandant in the period 1 September 1945 to 1 October 1946—when wartime and immediate postwar exigencies had eased—was the rapid demobilization of his Corps, for, in effect, all of the personnel problems of the Marine Corps related in one way or another to demobilization.

On 11 August 1945, the Commandant submitted to the Secretary of the Navy a general plan, commonly known later as the Point System, which governed the discharge and separation of enlisted Marines.<sup>99</sup> Approved on the 15th, this plan was intended to supplement, but not replace, existing Marine Corps policy and directives concerning discharges and releases. It also provided the most equitable means of establishing the priority in which Marines<sup>100</sup> were to be released by computing their service credits. Each Marine received 1 point for each month of service from 16 September 1940; 1 point for each month overseas or on duty afloat from 16 September 1940; 5 points for each decoration and for each campaign or engagement for which a battle star was awarded; and 12 points for each child under 18 years of age, but not more than 36 points for children. With 12 May 1945 as the cutoff date for computations, the critical score to be used when the plan first went into effect on 1 September was 85 points for male Marines and 25 points for Women Reservists. The original plan provided that the critical scores would be reduced to reflect changes in the missions, and therefore the personnel requirements, of the Marine Corps. The plan also provided that enlisted personnel with sufficient discharge points could remain on active duty for as long as they wanted to, and for the time that their services were required, without their having to sign an enlistment contract. Conversely, the Marine Corps found it necessary to

<sup>99</sup> *G-1 OpD*, Aug45; *USMC Admin Hist*, p. 2.

<sup>100</sup> The provisions of this plan did not apply to regular enlisted Marines serving under a four-year contract or the extension thereof.

retain on active duty, until their reliefs were procured and trained, certain key personnel who otherwise had amassed the required score for release and discharge.

Since the number of officers to be released was relatively smaller than the number of enlisted men involved, the Marine Corps gave individual consideration to the case of each officer. Because it had obtained its officers from various sources during the war, the Corps had to provide for either the demobilization, integration into the regular component, or return to enlisted ranks of each officer concerned.

On 10 October 1945, Marine Separation Centers were activated at the United States Naval Training Centers at Bainbridge, Maryland, and Great Lakes, Illinois. Initially, the Bainbridge center was set up to handle a maximum of 400 discharges a day, but by 19 November its quota had been exceeded, and two months later the center was processing 500 discharges a day.<sup>101</sup>

From time to time, as the current situation permitted, the Marine Corps demobilization plan was revised to increase the flow of discharges. In effect, the speed-up was accelerated by reducing the number of points required for separation. On 8 October, barely more than a month after the program had begun, the critical score was lowered to 60 points and all enlisted personnel with three or more dependent children under 18 years of age could request discharge. The point score was further reduced to 50 on 1 November and 45 on 1 February 1946. By 1 July 1946, the Marine Corps

made it possible for inductees or reservists with 30 months of active duty to become eligible for discharge, regardless of the number of points each of them had acquired. The required discharge score for Women Reservists was comparably reduced each time that the score for male Marines was revised. Finally on 1 October, all reservists and selectees became eligible for discharge regardless of length of service time.<sup>102</sup>

By the end of June 1946, the Marine Corps demobilization program was entering its final stages and the strength of the Corps had been reduced to 155,592 Marines. This was a decrease of 68 percent from the September 1945 figure and 87 percent of the entire net decrease required to bring the Corps to the planned postwar limit of 108,200. The Fleet Marine Force, which had carried the offensive combat burden of the Corps during the war, was the hardest hit of all Marine activities during the demobilization. At the end of the fighting, FMFPac immediately took steps to begin reducing the strength of its forces commensurate with its commitments. On 1 October 1946, FMFPac was approximately 8 percent of its 1 September 1945 size, or to put it another way, there was a total of 21,343 Marines in air and ground units in the Pacific in late 1946.<sup>103</sup>

During the 13-month period from 1 September 1945 to 1 October 1946, FMFPac received 30,071 replacements. In turn, 102,115 Marines were returned to the United States from the Pacific

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<sup>102</sup> ALMAR 117, dtd 16Aug46.

<sup>103</sup> *FMF Air and Grd Status Rpts*, Aug45, Sep46.

<sup>101</sup> *USMC Admin Hist*, p. 4.

and Far East. This unusually rapid rate of demobilization stripped FMFPac units of the majority of their experienced personnel—officer and enlisted—and caused a situation in which an insufficient number of trained regulars remained overseas to perform specialist duties properly. On-the-job training of remaining Marines and the arrival of replacement drafts containing some experienced personnel partially, but not sufficiently, alleviated the situation.

Nonetheless, FMFPac faced a particularly acute situation in this period because it was heavily committed with units carrying out either occupation, garrison, or repatriation duties in China and Japan, and on many of the Pacific islands, such as Truk, Guam, Kwajalein, and Eniwetok. During the immediate postwar months, many Marine units had been disbanded, some new ones activated on either a temporary or a permanent basis, and some garrison detachments formed and transferred to island and area commanders for operational control.<sup>104</sup> All units under FMFPac were reorganized to reflect currently effective tables of organization and prescribed personnel ceiling strengths. In the face of the various administrative and organizational changes occurring during this time, all units found it most difficult

to perform their missions properly because of the excessive personnel turnover. Moreover, insufficient transportation to rotate home eligible Marines, who were scattered throughout the Pacific, created additional problems. Instances occurred when the return home of many of these Marines, whose early discharge was desired by the Marine Corps because of existing postwar plans, was delayed because troop transports were not immediately available.

The second major problem facing the Marine Corps in the postwar era was to convert a greatly expanded wartime organization into a competent peacetime instrument of national security. This changeover resulted ultimately in the consolidation or disbandment of many Marine activities, and a reduction in the mission of others to reflect their lessened size. From 1 September 1945 to 30 September 1946, 368 Marine organizations were disbanded and 104 activated. A majority of the latter, such as replacement or rotation drafts, had been activated on a temporary basis only, and some of the others actually were redesignated rather than activated. One of the most important aspects of the disbandment of activities and suspension program was its sensitivity to the progress of the de-

<sup>104</sup> As an example, appearing in FMF ground status reports for the first time in April 1946 are the following units: Marine Detachment (Provisional), Headquarters, Commander, Philippine Sea Frontier, which was attached to the FMFPac Representative, Marianas Area for operations; Marine Detachment (Provisional), Eniwetok, attached to Atoll Commander, Eniwetok, for operations; and Marine Detachment (Provisional), Samar, attached to FMFPac for operations. The last

two detachments named were to revert to the Post-War Shore Establishment upon order. *FMF Grd Status Rpt*, Apr46. Appearing in the May status report was a provisional detachment on Bikini. By October, only the Kwajalein, Truk, and Eniwetok detachments remained, and the time left to them was limited. A more complete review of the organization and deployment of Marine security forces in the Pacific will be found in the next chapter, "Back to the Islands."

mobilization program. Because of this, close coordination in the conduct of both programs was essential, and Marine Corps personnel allowances had to be constantly revised in order to maintain a proper balance between Marine Corps missions and the number of Marines available to conduct those missions successfully.

An example of how one program affected the other may be seen in the close relationship of demobilization with the base roll-up program in FMFPac. That headquarters held the mission of closing down Marine supply installations and bases in the Pacific, and of disposing of millions of dollars of surplus property and goods therein. The early loss of large numbers of experienced supply, service, and clerical personnel from FMFPac logistics agencies imposed a particular hardship on those units which had the actual duty of closing out scattered bases and receiving from disbanding line organizations vast quantities of material which had to be stored, maintained, safeguarded, and finally disposed of.<sup>105</sup> Attesting to the enormity of the task is the fact that on 1 July 1945, the Marine Corps had on hand in the Pacific property valued in excess of \$400 million at cost. In the following year, Marine Corps supply activities had disposed of some \$207 million worth of items. At the end of the fiscal year, on 1 July 1946, the Marine Corps still had \$68 million of surplus property to dispose of, but fewer Marines were available to do the job.<sup>106</sup>

Personnel procurement was the third problem to confront the Marine Corps at the end of the war. Even with a massive separation and discharge program underway, the Corps had to return to a peacetime status almost immediately, and to reach its required manning level of 108,200 Marines. The officer procurement program in the postwar period featured the cessation of the mass officer candidate programs of the war years and the return to peacetime methods for the recruitment and training of regular personnel. The huge task of selecting 4,400 outstanding reserve and temporary officers for transfer to the regular establishment began after V-J Day, and was in its final stages by 30 September 1946.

One of the important sources for Marine Corps officers had been the Navy V-12 College Program, which provided a number of billets for Marines. At the end of the war, approximately 1,900 men remained on active duty in the Marine Corps portion of the V-12 program. The Corps, however, had no desire to bear the expense of educating officer candidates who would not be part of the peacetime establishment. Finally, after considerable study, the Marine Corps offered individuals who had completed seven or eight semesters of study an opportunity to accept reserve commissions and choose between immediate release to inactive duty or a brief tour of active service. Those who chose the latter might apply for a regular commission if they so desired. Undergraduates not eligible for a commission were permitted either to resign, transfer to general duty, or transfer to an NROTC unit. On 30 June 1946, the Marine Corps

<sup>105</sup> *FMFPac Admin Hist*, p. 5.

<sup>106</sup> *CMC Rpt*, 1946.

phase of the V-12 program was deactivated.<sup>107</sup>

Another source for officers along with the V-12 program was the wartime officer candidate course at Quantico. This, too, was allowed to lapse and so the principal postwar sources of permanent Marine officers were both the vast number of men who had been temporarily commissioned during the war and reservists mobilized at its beginning.

One important goal in the postwar period was to build up enlisted strength by recruiting as many enlisted regular Marines as possible and by reenlisting all of the regulars whose enlistment contracts had been or were about to be completed. On V-J Day, 72,843 Marines were serving on regular enlistment contracts; by 30 June 1946, however, 60 percent of these contracts were scheduled to expire. Since a postwar level of 100,000 male regular Marines had already been established, the Marine Corps found it necessary to initiate an intensive procurement program to recruit replacements for men scheduled for discharge and to acquire an additional number so that the postwar manning level could be achieved. By 1 October 1946, this goal had nearly been reached with a total of 95,000 regulars on active duty, and very few of them due for discharge until 1948. As a result of all of this sound planning, the Marine Corps personnel picture was consonant with postwar plans that had been developed.

The establishment of postwar, fiscal, and mobilization plans was the fourth

major problem with which the Marine Corps had to contend. There were two distinctive phases in this planning—the recession phase and the postwar developmental phase. The first of these concerned the period September 1945–March 1946, when most of the measures adopted for expediency during the war by the Marine Corps expired. The second phase was a period in which the entire Marine Corps began to function in accordance with its established postwar roles and missions. The most important event of 1946 insofar as those objectives were concerned was the publication of the Navy Basic Post-War Plan No. 2.<sup>108</sup> This plan was to be used for planning purposes only, but Admiral Nimitz, who replaced Admiral King as CNO on 15 December 1945, indicated in his covering letter that, the Marine Corps would be fairly well established along the lines of the plan as it then stood. A note of the future was sounded in the final paragraph of CNO's covering letter, which read: "In all planning, it is essential that an effective, balanced, mobile fleet, including air components, have first priority. Economy in men, money, and materials is mandatory."<sup>109</sup>

General Vandegrift, Commandant of the Marine Corps since 1 January 1944, determined from this plan that the general task of the Marine Corps would be to perform the following functions:

- (a) To provide a balanced Fleet Marine Force, including its supporting air com-

<sup>107</sup> For a fuller story on the Marine Corps V-12 program, See Condit, Diamond, and Turnblad, *Marine Corps Training*, chap 15, pp. 288–316.

<sup>108</sup> CNO ltr to distr list, dtd 21Mar46, Op-001/mac, (SC) A16-3/EN, Ser: 051P001, Subj: Basic Post-War Plan No. 2 (OAB, NHD).

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

ponent, for service with the Fleet in the seizure or defense of advanced Naval Bases or for the conduct of such limited land operations as are essential to the prosecution of a Naval campaign.

(b) To continue the development of those aspects of amphibious operations which pertain to the tactics, technique, and equipment employed by landing forces.

(c) To provide detachments and organizations for service on armed vessels of the Navy.

(d) To provide security detachments for protection of Naval property at Naval stations and bases.<sup>110</sup>

To ensure that the Marine Corps would adequately perform these functions, it was determined that the strength of the Corps would be 108,200, or approximately 22 percent of the overall Navy postwar strength of 487,700. With this number, the Marine Corps was to maintain the Fleet Marine Force, ships' detachments, security forces for the naval establishment, Headquarters Marine Corps, and Marine supporting activities.

In his annual report for the fiscal year 1946 to the Secretary of the Navy, the Commandant expounded on the functioning of these four tasks as follows:

(a) *Fleet Marine Force:*

Experience in the war gives incontrovertible evidence that amphibious warfare is an essential adjunct of naval warfare. . . . In the war in the Pacific, the Fleet was able to play its historic role . . . only because of the existence of the Fleet Marine Force. . . .

The Fleet Marine Force, in conjunction with Headquarters Marine Corps and the Marine Corps Schools, will continue its role in the development of these aspects of amphibious operations which pertain to the tactics, techniques, and equipment employed by landing forces.

(b) *Detachments Afloat:*

On carriers, battleships, and cruisers, Marine detachments will provide a trained nucleus for the ship's landing force, gun crews as required, and local security for the vessels. On amphibious command ships, Marines will perform duty on staffs under the direction of amphibious force commanders, and communications duties as directed by the commanding officer of the vessel. Marine detachments on transports will perform transport quartermaster functions and provide local security as directed.

(c) *Security Forces:*

Marine Corps personnel will be assigned the task of providing necessary internal security for Naval Shore Establishments within and beyond the continental limits of the United States, and of providing external security in accordance with specifically assigned missions in such establishments outside the United States.

(d) *Supporting Activities:*

In order to maintain the Corps, it will be necessary to procure, equip, train, and administer Marine personnel in such a manner that assigned missions can be accomplished. Marines within supporting activities will therefore be serving at Logistic Establishments, Recruit Training Depots, Personnel Procurement offices, Headquarters establishments, training activities, and in non-available duty status.<sup>111</sup>

According to Basic Post-War Plan No. 2, the Fleet Marine Force was to consist of two Marine divisions and one Marine brigade, reinforced, and supporting naval units when and as re-

<sup>110</sup> *CMC Rpt*, 1946. Also see Col Thomas G. Roe, et. al. *A History of Marine Corps Roles and Missions: 1775-1962*—Marine Corps Historical Reference Series, No. 30 (Washington: HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, 1962) for a survey of these functions during the period indicated in the title.

<sup>111</sup> *CMC Rpt*, 1946.

quired. Normal locations would be: one division at Camp Lejeune and one at Guam, and the brigade on the west coast at Camp Pendleton. Marine aviation was to consist of two aircraft commands: one, AirFMFPac, with responsibility in the West Coast-Hawaii-Marianas area; and the other in overall command of six Marine carrier groups aboard as many escort carriers. The final components of the FMF were to be Headquarters, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, and Headquarters, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic (FMFLant), with Force Troops assigned to each command.

Ships' detachments were to consist of Marine detachments assigned to the larger combatant naval vessels, amphibious command ships, transports of the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets, and transports of the Naval Transportation Service. Small Marine aviation service detachments were to be assigned to the CVEs that had Marine carrier squadrons in their air complements. The security forces would consist of interior guards for naval establishments within and outside of the continental United States, and air warning and anti-aircraft artillery units. Headquarters

Marine Corps and supporting establishments were to be composed of the Marine headquarters at Washington, the recruit depots at Parris Island and San Diego, school activities, logistics activities, Marine barracks and camps located outside of naval establishments, Marine air stations in the continental United States, and Marine air stations in the Hawaiian area and the Marine Air Facility (in caretaker status) at St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.

These then, were the first postwar plans of the Marine Corps, and the forces with which they were to be accomplished. In the months immediately following V-J Day, Marine plans had frequently been revised to reflect new requirements, and the plans were changed even more drastically as each postwar year passed. Necessary steps were taken to reorganize the Marine Corps each time that the need arose. As the situation changed, the continuing reduction in the strength of the Corps overall had to be considered before new missions were assigned. As best it could, the Marine Corps built up its forces in the Pacific, the area where new peacetime responsibilities were waiting.

# Return to the Islands

At war's end, Marine units not destined for an occupation assignment or deactivation went ashore to accept the surrender of Japanese forces on islands throughout the Pacific. After supervising the demilitarization and repatriation of the former enemy, the Marine units involved in these activities either were returned to the control of parent organizations, redesignated to reflect new duties as barracks or guard detachments, or deactivated.

Primarily, the story of the Marine Corps in the Pacific following the end of the war concerns Marine surrender and occupation duty, the activation of postwar garrison forces, and the many changes that the FMF underwent before the Marine Corps attained a peacetime stance.

## *SURRENDER AND OCCUPATION DUTY*<sup>1</sup>

Long before Japan had indicated a willingness to sue for peace, staffs in

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: CinCPac Rpt of Surrender and Occupation of Japan, dtd 11Feb46, hereafter *CinCPac Surrender and Occupation Rpt* (OAB, NHD); *FMF Grd Status Rpts*; Guam Island Comd WarDs, Aug45-May46; Peleliu Island Comd WarDs, Sep44-Feb46; Occupation For, Truk and Central Caroline Islands, WarDs, Dec46-Apr46, hereafter *Truk WarD*, with date; MarDet, Truk and Eastern Caroline Islands, AnnRpt of Activities, 1946.

Washington and at Pearl Harbor were specially constituted to work on plans for implementing the surrender of isolated Japanese garrisons on the many islands and occupied areas in the Pacific. The question facing these staff planners was whether the Japanese island and area commanders would follow the lead of their government and surrender or whether they would put up fanatic resistance that could continue long after V-J Day. On 14 August, the Emperor had issued an Imperial Rescript calling upon his commanders to surrender and cooperate with the victors. After they had received their Emperor's orders and were convinced of their authenticity, the outlying garrison commanders were more than willing to comply with them.

To provide for an orderly and systematic program of accepting the surrender of Japanese island garrisons and later occupying the islands, CinCPOA organized two task forces from the Marianas and Marshalls-Gilberts Area commands. These were: TF 94 (Commander, Marianas), established to operate the bases of that area and to occupy the East, Central, and Western Carolines (notably Truk, Yap, the Palaus, and the Bonins), and to evacuate enemy nationals from the Marianas; and TF 96 (Commander, Marshalls-Gilberts), organized for the same pur-

poses as TF 94, but scheduled to operate in the Marshalls-Gilberts Area.<sup>2</sup>

Prior to V-J Day, American forces in the Marshalls and Gilberts had gained control of Eniwetok, Kwajalein, Majuro, and Tarawa Atolls. After Japan surrendered, Task Force 96 units had to set up occupation forces on such bypassed atolls and islands as Mille, Jaluit, and Wake, following the capitulation of the former enemy garrisons located there. In the Carolines, Ulithi, Peleliu, and Angaur had been in American hands since late 1944. Facing CinCPac elsewhere in the Pacific at the beginning of September 1945 was the surrender of Japanese forces in the Bonins, the rest of the Marianas and Palaus, and the formerly important strongholds of Yap, Truk, and Woleai, and their lesser satellite island garrisons. The occupation of some of these places, their demilitarization, and the evacuation of Japanese nationals was the responsibility of units of the Fleet Marine Force and small naval surface forces assigned to support them. As their tasks were accomplished, the Marine units either were gradually reduced in size until disbanded, withdrawn, or eventually replaced by small naval and Marine garrison forces. (See Map 25.)

The job of evacuating and repatriating Japanese military personnel and civilians was almost overwhelming. The enormity of the problem is best de-

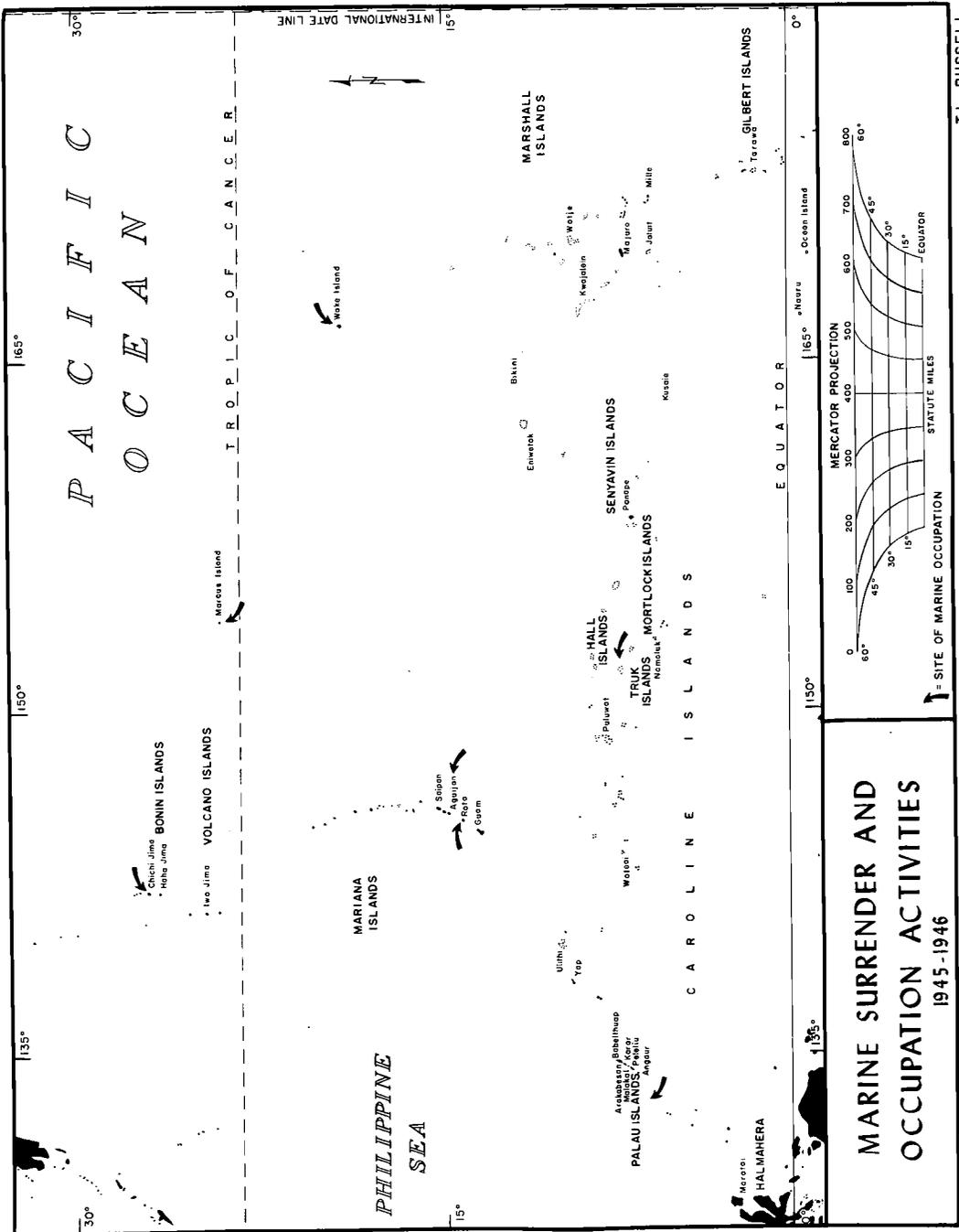
<sup>2</sup> On 5 January, Task Force 96 was dissolved as a separate command under CinCPOA. The subordinate commands formerly under TF 96 were absorbed by the Marianas command.

scribed by the numbers involved—100,000 military and 50,000 civilians. Aggravating the situation was the fact that most American and other shipping was employed to return home liberated Allied POWs and veterans scheduled for demobilization, and to carry back to the Far East replacement drafts and material required by the occupation forces in Japan and China. The solution to the shipping problem was eventually found in the employment of war-weary LSTs and demilitarized Japanese ships, none of which were suitable for other transportation requirements.

The vast majority of the island garrisons that were to surrender were in the area under the control of Vice Admiral George D. Murray, Commander, Marianas. To standardize the conduct of the surrender and occupation program, on 20 August he organized from within his force the Marianas Surrender Acceptance and Occupation Command (TG 94.3). Comprising this group were the following task units and their commanders: Truk Occupation Unit, Brigadier General Robert Blake; Bonins Occupation Unit, Colonel Presley M. Rixey; Palau Occupation Unit, Brigadier General Ford O. Rogers; Guam Evacuation Unit, Major General Henry L. Larsen; and three other units commanded by naval officers.<sup>3</sup>

A plan was devised standardizing the operations of these units and standardizing such specifics as the format of the

<sup>3</sup> ComMarianas OPln 4-45, dtd 20Aug45 (OAB, NHD).



**MARINE SURRENDER AND  
OCCUPATION ACTIVITIES  
1945-1946**

MAP 25

T. L. RUSSELL

surrender document<sup>4</sup> and the conduct of the surrender ceremony, the American flag raising, and the demilitarization of enemy forces, which were to be called thereafter "disarmed military personnel." In addition, the directive ordered each task unit commander to determine whether any Allied or American prisoners were present on the island being surrendered or if any had been kept there. The commanders also were to conduct spot interrogations and investigations to determine whether any war crimes or atrocities had been committed during the Japanese occupation.

According to the task force directive, relations between the victors and the vanquished were to be properly conducted at all times and all military

courtesies were to be observed both before and after each surrender and flag-raising ceremony had been completed. Japanese interpretation of these orders often resulted in more than one enlisted Marine or sailor being saluted by all Japanese ranks.

The garrison on Mille Atoll, southwest of Majuro in the Marshalls, surrendered on 22 August—11 days before the Japanese government signed the surrender on the *Missouri*—and thus became the first enemy group in the Pacific Ocean Areas to do so. On the same day that Mille gave in, the garrison commander on Aka Shima in the Ryukyus surrendered to elements of the Tenth Army, which also accepted the surrender of the forces on Tokashiki Shima in the same island group the next day. On 29 August, the Japanese commander on Morotai, who controlled the garrisons of the entire Halmahera group, capitulated to the commander of the 93d Infantry Division.

Two days later, the garrison on Marcus Island, located between Wake and the Bonins, was the next major Japanese group to give up. Marcus figured prominently in Navy postwar plans. It was estimated that when the naval air base and terminal proposed for the island began operations, it would shorten the Honolulu-Tokyo air route by 1,049 miles. To administer the air base, CinCPac planned to establish a Marcus Island Command, but the numerous Japanese on the island had to be repatriated before the island could be developed. At the time of the surrender, there were 2,542 Japanese Army and Navy personnel and a number of Japanese civilians remaining—the majority suffering from all forms of tropical maladies and most of them severe malnutrition cases.

<sup>4</sup> Brigadier General Ford O. Rogers became Peleliu Island Commander on 7 August 1945, the day after the first atomic bomb was dropped on Japan. He recalled that his first conclusion after hearing of this bombing was that the war was all but over. Because he had not at that time received instructions from ComMarianas regarding how he was to conduct the surrender of Japanese forces in the Palaus, General Rogers directed his Chief of Staff, Colonel Charles L. Fike, and his Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations, Captain Melvin H. Bassett, USN, to prepare a surrender document to be used for that purpose. When the end of the war was announced, Rogers flew to Guam and submitted to Admiral Murray for approval the document his staff had prepared. "He took my surrender procedure word for word, and used it in all the other surrenders conducted under his command." *Rogers interview*. After ComMarianas had approved this document, Colonel Fike flew a spotter-type plane over Babelthuap, the headquarters of the Japanese Palaus command, and dropped a copy of the surrender terms to the enemy below. Fortunately, he was not shot at, although he had expected to receive ground fire. RAdm Melvin H. Bassett, USN, comments to HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, dtd 27Oct66.

Not only were they unfit as laborers, their continued presence on the island presented a threat to the health of the occupation forces.

In order to evacuate the Japanese garrison as quickly and expeditiously as possible, the Marine 11th Military Police Company (Provisional), of the 5th Military Police Battalion, Island Command, Saipan, was sent to Marcus on 2 September. Arriving two days later, the unit remained on Marcus as the island guard until it was disbanded on 16 April 1946.<sup>5</sup> Two months earlier, on 18 February, the Heavy Antiaircraft Artillery Battery (Provisional) had been formed on the island. It was redesignated Marine Barracks, Marcus, on 10 April and passed to the administrative control of the Department of the Pacific (MarPac) that same day.<sup>6</sup> On 12 May, the Marine Barracks was disbanded, the same day that the Naval Air Base, Marcus, was deactivated.

The next Japanese area commander to yield was Lieutenant General Sadae Inoue, who surrendered on 2 September 1945 the entire Palau Group and all forces under his command, including those on Yap, to Brigadier General Ford O. Rogers, island commander on Peleliu.<sup>7</sup> The Peleliu Island Command had been organized on 16 July 1944, as the 3d Island Base Headquarters under the

<sup>5</sup> *FMFPac Admin Hist*, pt I, encl A, Schedule of Demobilization of FMFPac, 1Aug45-1Oct46, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> See section, "Peacetime Garrison Forces," below for further information concerning this and other provisional and barracks detachments in 1946 and later.

<sup>7</sup> See also Garand and Strobridge, "Western Pacific Operations," pt III, "The Peleliu Campaign."

command of Brigadier General Harold D. Campbell; it was redesignated Island Command, Peleliu, on 16 November. Brigadier General Christian F. Schilt relieved General Campbell as Island Commander on 19 March 1945, and he was in turn relieved on 7 August by General Rogers.

Beginning 15 September, elements of the 111th Infantry occupied Koror, Malakal, and Arakabesan, and liberated 539 Indian and Javanese POWs, most of them suffering from marked malnutrition and beri-beri. By 5 October, all Japanese had been removed to Babelthuap, the largest island of the Palau group. A month later, the Indian and Javanese troops were repatriated. At the end of September, General Rogers sent a small force to reconnoiter islands and atolls in the vicinity of the Palaus to search for missing Allied personnel; none was found.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> General Rogers knew that the Japanese had taken one prisoner, the member of a B-24 crew which had been shot down. This man had jumped and crewmen of another plane in the raid had observed a Japanese boat picking up the American, who appeared alive and well. Rogers' first question to General Inoue after the surrender had been signed was: "You have one prisoner, where is he?" The Marine general was told that the prisoner had been killed by a Japanese officer, the commander of an antiaircraft battery, who had been given custody of the flyer in order to practice his English in conversations with him. The Japanese took the American "out to where our bombers had killed almost his entire antiaircraft command, began to brood over that, decided to punish him, and he shot him, buried him on the spot, and prayed over him." General Rogers ordered Inoue to produce the officer, but on the next day all he received was a picture of that individual laying on the ground with a hole in his head. He had committed suicide. *Rogers interview*.

On 26 October, less its 2d Battalion which had been disbanded, the 26th Marines arrived to relieve the 111th Infantry as the Peleliu garrison force. The following March, the Marine Detachment (Provisional), Peleliu, was activated and on the 15th, the 26th Marines was disbanded. The provisional force was redesignated Marine Barracks, Peleliu, on 15 April 1946, when administrative control of the unit passed to the Department of the Pacific.

On the same day that the Palaus surrendered, the commander of Japanese forces on Rota, located northeast of Guam, capitulated to Colonel Howard N. Stent, the representative of the Island Commander of Guam, Major General Henry L. Larsen. Rota was formally occupied on the 4th, and shortly thereafter all of the 2,651 disarmed Japanese military personnel, except for 5 patients, were transferred to POW stockades on Guam. Colonel Gale T. Cummings was appointed the temporary island commander of Rota, and Marine and Seabee forces under his command immediately began to repair the airstrip on the island, completing the task by the 1st of October.

The largest enemy force in the Central Pacific submitted on 2 September, when senior Japanese Army and Navy officers on Truk signed the instrument of surrender. Preparations for this act and the occupation of the former enemy territory were initiated on 30 August, when Brigadier General Leo D. Hermle, Deputy Island Commander, Guam, discussed with Vice Admiral Chuichi Hara, commander of the *Fourth Fleet*, and Lieutenant General Shunsaburo Mugikura, the *Thirty-first Army* commander,

the steps to be taken for the surrender of all personnel and areas under their command.

Regarding his part in the presurrender discussions with the Japanese, General Hermle recalled:

I carried out this mission under the orders of Vice Admiral Murray who furnished me a staff of about 12 officers, mostly technicians such as aviators, harbor defense [experts], engineers and two interpreters, etc. Contact with the Japanese on Truk was made from Guam via radio. We left Guam in the evening, one half the staff with me aboard a destroyer and the other half aboard a D.E. [destroyer escort]. We anchored off Dublon, Truk, the next morning.

Japanese officials had been instructed, via radio, to approach the destroyer aboard a small boat displaying a white flag. An admiral and a general came aboard accompanied by a small staff. None of the Japanese would admit that they understood English, so all negotiations were conducted through the interpreters. I informed the Japanese that Vice Admiral Murray would take their formal surrender aboard his flagship and that they would receive further instructions concerning this matter by radio. They were informed that at the surrender they would be required to furnish lists of personnel, ships, planes, harbor defenses, etc. . . . At all times, they were very cooperative and the conference proceeded to a satisfactory conclusion in a few hours. During the conference, the captain of the destroyer gave them a light lunch for which they expressed great satisfaction.<sup>9</sup>

By signing the terms of surrender on 2 September on board USS *Portland*, Admiral Murray's flagship, General Mugikura committed the troops on the following islands under his control to

<sup>9</sup> LtGen Leo D. Hermle ltr to Hd, HistBr, HQMC, dtd 1Nov65.

lay down their arms and await American occupation: Truk, Wake, the Palaus, Mortlake (Nomoi), Ponape, Kusaie, Jaluit, Maloelap, Wotje, Puluwat, and Woleai, and Mille, Rota, and Pagan, which had already capitulated. In addition to these Army-controlled islands, the following bases under the control of the Navy were pledged to surrender at the same time by the signature of Admiral Hara: Namoluk, Nauru, and Ocean. When the military capitulated, Rear Admiral Aritaka Aihara, *IJN* (Retired), head of the Eastern Branch of the South Seas Government—a Japanese agency with headquarters on Truk—signed for the 9,000 civilians there and for those on the other islands within his jurisdiction.<sup>10</sup>

When an actual survey of the forces on Truk was made later, a total of 38,355 soldiers and sailors—including 3,345 Korean military personnel—was counted. In addition, a census of the civilians in the islands totalled 11,486, of which 1,338 were Japanese, 252 Korean, 9,082 native Caroline Islanders, 793 natives of Nauru, 8 Germans, 7 Spaniards, and 6 Chinese.

On the larger islands of Truk were such major Japanese military installations as bomber and fighter strips, seadromes, submarine and torpedo boat bases, ammunition magazines for weapons of all calibers and types, coast artillery defense installations, and other military facilities. All of these had to be demilitarized, dismantled, or destroyed. But first, the many sick Japanese on

them had to be either treated and repatriated or evacuated.

Except for receipt of their regular share of American naval and air bombardments, some of the bypassed Japanese island garrisons did not fare too badly, especially if they had been based on one of the lush and fertile Pacific islands where they could raise their own food. There are some cases on record where Japanese commanders upon surrendering refused offers of food from the Americans because the garrison had a supply that was sufficient to maintain its members until they were embarked for return to the Home Islands.

Moen, one of the chief islands of Truk, was not a tropical paradise. When the occupation forces went ashore there, they found that bugs and worms had so ravaged the sweet potato crop, on which the Japanese garrison had so largely depended for subsistence, that all of the troops were suffering from malnutrition.

Rank upon rank of 'living scarecrows lined up along the route of the inspecting party—men with ankles as thin as skinny wrists, with sunken cheeks, and with every rib showing sharply.'<sup>11</sup>

Three days before the surrender date, Brigadier General Robert Blake was designated Prospective Island Commander, Truk, a designation which was changed on 27 September to Prospective Commanding General, Occupation Forces, Truk and Central Carolines. The mission of his command was to occupy and develop Truk "as a fleet anchorage with facilities ashore limited to recreational purposes and for the support of

<sup>10</sup> *CinCPac Surrender and Occupation Rpt.*, pp. 180-181.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

assigned aircraft and the servicing of transient aircraft.”<sup>12</sup> With the aid of a small staff under the jurisdiction of the Island Commander, Guam, General Blake organized the unit that was to comprise the Truk Occupation Force. Because of the urgency of the Marine Corps demobilization program, the unit was formed slowly. Initial administrative duties were undertaken by the staff of the 2d Provisional Antiaircraft Artillery Group before it was disbanded. The headquarters of this group, however, provided the nucleus for the staff of the occupation force. The first detail of the new force to report in was the military government unit. A Base Headquarters Company (Provisional), was activated on 1 October 1945. It was formed according to the T/O of a Provisional Brigade Headquarters Company, and did not reach full strength until shortly before it departed for Truk.

In keeping with the future tasks of the force, elements of the 29th Naval Construction Battalion and Acorn 52<sup>13</sup> were assembled from bases all over the western Pacific. Both of these units also suffered from the loss of skilled and experienced artisans.

On 14 November, the 2d Battalion, 21st Marines, 3d Marine Division (then still on Guam), came under the control of the occupation force. The commander of 2/21, Lieutenant Colonel Lyman D. Spurlock, and a small detachment of Marines from the battalion had been sent

<sup>12</sup> G-3 WarD, encl (B) to Truk WarD, Dec45.

<sup>13</sup> An acorn was a naval unit designed to construct, operate, and maintain an advanced landplane and seaplane base and to provide facilities for operations.

to Truk in September to supervise the evacuation of Japanese personnel and Koreans, Okinawans, and Formosans, who had been members of Japanese-controlled forces. On 28 October, Spurlock was relieved by his executive officer, Major Robert J. Picardi, who remained in charge of the evacuation program until Lieutenant Colonel Spurlock returned to Truk on 25 November with the rest of 2/21 and the occupation force.

To that date, 6,696 Japanese civilian and military and Japanese-controlled forces, and their wives and children, had been repatriated; by December, this number had risen to 20,410, leaving 19,575 remaining in the islands. In January, 14,298 more evacuees left Truk, and in February, 1,426. At the end of April 1946, only 3,811 disarmed military personnel and their families remained, most of them working as laborers and assisting in the destruction of Japanese arms, fortifications, and munitions. The remarkable factor in the history of all of the former Japanese possessions in the Pacific that were surrendered to and occupied by American forces is the high degree of cooperation, docility, and lack of rancor on the part of the losers. There were few incidents of Japanese intransigence; those that did occur took place among the accused war criminals, who were usually more confused and contrite than sullen and unremitting.

One mission common to all Allied occupation and surrender groups was to investigate alleged Japanese war crimes and atrocities, and hunt down and imprison until their trial those accused of such acts.<sup>14</sup> By the time that war crimes

<sup>14</sup> See below, this chapter, for Marine involvement in the conduct of war crimes trials.

tribunals had been convened, a considerable number of accused Japanese were being held in stockades on the various islands under Allied control throughout the Pacific. If evidence of an alleged crime was discovered after the accused had been repatriated to Japan, depositions were taken and presented to Allied tribunals convened in that country. During the first few months of the Truk occupation, General Blake's investigators had uncovered evidence sufficiently damning to warrant apprehension and detention of 42 individuals. Since no tribunals were held on Truk, the detainees were tried elsewhere, depending upon which of the Allied governments had paramount jurisdiction.<sup>15</sup>

Following the raising of the American flag on 25 November over the island group formerly held by the Japanese, General Blake's forces conducted a search of Truk and its neighboring islets for missing Allied personnel; none were found.

On 26 February 1946, the Base Headquarters Company, Occupation Forces, Truk and Central Caroline Islands, was redesignated the Marine Detachment (Provisional), Truk. Personnel to expand the new detachment to its authorized strength were low-point personnel transferred from 2/21. The next day, the battalion was detached from General Blake's command and returned to Guam, where it was disbanded on 5 March. On 15 April, the occupation forces command designation was changed to Commander, Truk and Central Caroline Islands. Exactly one month later, General Blake was relieved by a naval officer, who had

the additional duties and title of Commander, Naval Air Base, Truk. In July 1946, the complement of the provisional Marine detachment was reduced from a strength of 256 to 42 men. On 12 October, administrative control of the detachment passed to MarPac.

Wake Island, which had been captured by the Japanese on 24 December 1941, was regained by the Americans on 4 September 1945, when Rear Admiral Shigematsu Sakaibara surrendered the forces under his command to the commander of the 4th MAW, Brigadier General Lawson H. M. Sanderson, who was the representative of the Commander, Marshalls-Gilberts Area, for the ceremony.<sup>16</sup>

Following his appearance on the *Levy* (DE-162) on 4 September to receive and sign the surrender documents, Admiral Sakaibara departed from the ship to make preparations ashore for the American flag to be raised that same afternoon. The first American again to set foot on Wake when General Sanderson's party arrived was Colonel Walter L. J. Bayler, famed as the "last man off Wake Island."<sup>17</sup> At 1330:

<sup>16</sup> This narrative of the Wake surrender and occupation is derived from: Comdr, Wake Island Surrender Acceptance Unit, ltr to CTG 96.14, dtd 7Sep45, Subj: Surrender Acceptance of Wake Atoll on 4Sep45, Narrative of (OAB, NHD), hereafter *Wake Island Surrender Rpt; CinCPac Surrender and Occupation Rpt*, pp. 186-187; ComMarianas ltr to Dir, Naval History, dtd 1Jan47, Subj: Narrative of the Marshalls Area Comd, 1Sep45-1Oct46, Anx V, Wake Island Comd Rpt for same period, hereafter *Marshalls Area Comd Hist* (OAB, NHD).

<sup>17</sup> See LtCol Walter L. J. Bayler, *Last Man Off Wake Island* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1943).

<sup>15</sup> *Truk WarDs*, Dec45, Jan-Apr46.



*TO THE COLORS* sounds as the American flag is raised over Wake Island for the first time since December 1941. (USMC 133686)

With the platoon at 'Present Arms,' with both American and Japanese saluting, the Colors were then hoisted and two-blocked while the notes of 'To the Colors' were sounded on the bugle. As the Colors reached the peak of the flag pole, the Levy commenced and completed firing a twenty-one gun salute.<sup>18</sup>

Although a Japanese garrison of 609 Army and 653 naval personnel had surrendered, this total was only a small fraction of the total number of Japanese that were isolated on the island from the time it was first bypassed by the Americans. Since that time, American bombs and shells had killed 600 of the enemy, 1,288 had died of malnutrition and disease, and 974 had been evacuated to the Home Islands as hospital cases. Of those remaining when the Americans arrived, 405 were ill—200 of these bedridden. Immediately upon occupying the island, American authorities sent food and medical supplies to succor the garrison.

In accordance with CinCPac plans, Wake was designated a Naval Air Facility on 4 September. Occupation forces arrived beginning the 7th, including a Marine detachment consisting of 2 officers and 54 enlisted from Engebi. These forces at once concentrated on repairing the airstrip, disposing of mines, destroying Japanese ammunition and bombs, and establishing a shore-based communication establishment. An inspection of existing air facilities disclosed that the east-west strip of the airfield was in good condition and capable of landing planes of any type or size. The seaplane lane formerly used by Pan American Air-

ways flying clippers was re-marked during the first few weeks of the reoccupation, and mooring buoys for seaplanes were also placed during this period.

By the middle of September, all Japanese had been removed from Wake, the chief island of the atoll, to Peale and Wilkes Islands.<sup>19</sup> All Japanese, with the exception of Admiral Sakaibara and 16 commissioned and noncommissioned officers, were repatriated by 1 November 1945. The admiral and the others were temporarily detained before their transfer to Kwajalein for further investigation in their responsibility in the alleged execution of approximately 100 American civilian workers in October 1943.

Wake was officially commissioned as an Island Command and a Naval Air Base on 1 November, with a naval officer installed as the commander of both the island and the air base. On 14 January 1946, the Marine Detachment (Provisional), Wake, consisting of 5 officers and 110 enlisted was established. Less than a month later, on 10 February, the unit was redesignated Marine Detachment (Provisional), Eniwetok, and transferred there with orders to disband on conclusion of Operation CROSSROADS, the atomic bomb tests at Bikini Atoll. On 10 December, the detachment was disbanded.

Eight days after the provisional detachment left Wake, a Marine Heavy Antiaircraft Artillery Battery (Provisional), Wake, was activated. Like other provisional units formed in this period, the strength of the battery was 5 officers and 110 enlisted Marines. In

<sup>18</sup> *Wake Island Surrender Rpt*, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> See Hough, Ludwig, and Shaw, *Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal*, map on p. 97.

view of the decreasing importance of Wake in postwar plans, the battery was disbanded on 19 August 1946.

Another important Japanese capitulation occurred on 3 September 1945, when Lieutenant General Yosio Tachibana, senior commander of the Japanese forces in the Ogasawara Gunto (Bonin Islands) surrendered to Commodore John H. Magruder, Jr. aboard USS *Dunlap*, outside the harbor of Chichi Jima. Until the fall of Iwo Jima and his death, the former commander of the Bonins forces, Lieutenant General Tadamichi Kuribayashi had made his headquarters on that volcanic island. After Kuribayashi's death, the sub-commander of the Bonins succeeded to command and moved the headquarters to Chichi Jima.

Approximately 140 nautical miles northeast of Iwo Jima, Chichi Jima was seriously considered by American planners as a potential target for an amphibious landing.<sup>20</sup> Chichi Jima was dropped in favor of Iwo Jima, because, although it had a good protected harbor, its terrain was too rugged to permit the rapid construction of airfields. Even more condemning were the results of photo-reconnaissance missions which showed Chichi Jima to have been more heavily fortified than Iwo.<sup>21</sup> Confirming this evaluation after the war was the report of the Bonin Occupation Forces Commander. Following some preliminary comments, Colonel Rixey wrote:

This writer has seen Jap defenses from Tarawa to Iwo. Nothing previously seen can compare with coast and artillery defenses . . . surrounding Chichi harbor.

<sup>20</sup> See pt I, chap 1, *supra*.

<sup>21</sup> Morison, *Victory in the Pacific*, pp. 5-6.

Concrete emplacements, high in the mountains with steel door openings are too numerous to count. Artillery and machine gun fire which could have been placed on the airfield would have prevented *any* [force commander's italics] attempt at a landing there. With camouflage, as practiced by the Japs, in place, NGF spotters would have had a very difficult time locating these cleverly placed positions. . . . The location of many of the emplacements, which have to be seen to be appreciated indicate that the Jap plan was to permit an entrance into the harbor or onto the airfield, then to give us the 'works.' Most of these positions are inaccessible and many could not have been reached by NGF as they are situated on reverse slopes facing east.<sup>22</sup>

Survivors of the Japanese garrison on Chichi and Haha Jimas comprised 20,656 Army and Navy personnel and 2,285 civilian laborers who had been transported to and employed in the islands by the military. Additional Japanese garrison troops located on other islands near the Bonin group were evacuated by the U. S. Navy.

In mid-September 1945, at the same time that 2/21 was designated as the military element of the Truk Occupation Force, the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines, 3d Marine Division, was designated the military element of the Bonins Occupation Force. Immediately upon receipt of the orders detaching them from parent organizations, both battalions began reorganizing for the move and filling their ranks with volunteers, regulars, and low-point Marines.

On 10 October, the advance echelon of 1/3, consisting of Rixey's small staff

<sup>22</sup> Bonins EvacRpt of Inspection 10-11Oct45, by Col Presley M. Rixey, encl (A) to Com-Marianas ltr to CinCPac-CinCPOA, dtd 6Nov-45, subj: Bonins EvacRpt (OAB, NHD).

and 20 military policemen, landed and met the Japanese liaison group headed by Major Yoshitaka Horie. When Colonel Rixey discovered that General Tachibana and Vice Admiral Kunizo Mori, the senior officer in tactical command at Chichi Jima, were not present in the group, he "sent for them to report to me at the dock, which they, of course, complied with."<sup>23</sup>

The Marines were the first American troops to set foot in the Bonins since Commodore Perry's expedition there in 1853.<sup>24</sup> Rixey's group had a primary mission of evacuating and repatriating the Japanese. A secondary task was to destroy the extensive Japanese defenses existing on the island. When the remainder of the battalion arrived on 13 December, it carried with it a large supply of explosives with which to accomplish this mission.

This main body had been designated the Bonins Occupation Force at Guam on 1 December. When it landed on Chichi Jima 12 days later, Colonel Rixey ordered the American flag raised over the former Japanese stronghold. After he had originally landed on 10 October, Colonel Rixey determined that the entire 1st Battalion, 3d Marines, would not be required to garrison the island, to supervise repatriation, and to demilitarize the defenses. He therefore recommended that the Occupation Forces be reduced in strength to 400 men only. He later found that even less troops could

have been used because the Japanese were most cooperative and willing to please. It was not necessary to establish a manned boundary between the American and Japanese zones on the island; "A drawn line on a map was sufficient."<sup>25</sup> On 1 June 1946, after fulfilling its assigned mission, 1/3 was disbanded on Chichi Jima, and its Marines were transferred to other FMFPac units in the Pacific and the Far East.

During the several visits to the Bonins by American fast carrier task forces in 1944 and 1945 and the subsequent air and naval gunfire bombardments of those islands, one Marine and several Navy aviators were shot down and listed as missing in action. After Colonel Rixey had assumed his role as the commander of the Bonins, he instituted an investigation to determine the fate of these downed pilots. Soon, Rixey began hearing rumors and receiving anonymous reports concerning the inhumane and barbaric treatment American POWs had received at the hands of their Japanese captors.

Shortly after Colonel Rixey's arrival on Chichi Jima, a Japanese Coast Guard cutter entered the harbor. On board were Frederick Arthur Savory and his three uncles, all of whom were descendants of Nathaniel Savory, a Massachusetts whaler who had settled in the Bonin Islands in the 1830s. After the fall of Saipan, the Japanese had evacuated the American-Chamorro-Hawaiian family to the Home Islands. While in Japan, Fred Savory had heard rumors spread by soldiers repatriated from Chichi Jima regarding cannibalism on

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<sup>23</sup> BGen Presley M. Rixey ltr to Hd, HistBr, HQMC, dtd 10Nov65, hereafter *Rixey ltr*.

<sup>24</sup> Aurthur and Cohlma, *3d MarDiv Hist*, p. 334. It should be noted that Iwo Jima is in the Volcano Islands.

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<sup>25</sup> *Rixey ltr*.

that island. He passed these stories on to Colonel Rixey.

The morbid story of the Chichi Jima garrison was related in full at the war-crimes trials held later at Guam. Two naval aviators—one captured in March 1944 and the other in August after they had parachuted from their disabled aircraft—were bayoneted to death at General Tachibana's orders following their interrogation. Five more American airmen, one a Marine, were executed after they, too, had been captured when they bailed out of their aircraft. Three were beheaded, one was bayoneted, and another beaten to death. It was upon the flesh of these five that certain members of the Japanese garrison fed. Testimony exonerated the majority of the Chichi Jima command from having been involved in this disgusting incident, and indicated that with the exception of the perpetrators of this foul deed, those who ate the flesh did not know what they were eating.

Reporting his reaction upon learning of the uncivilized actions of the guilty parties, Colonel Rixey wrote: "We were flabbergasted at first. We had expected beheadings, of course. But never cannibalism! What manner of men were these?"<sup>26</sup> The war crimes trials of 21 Chichi Jima officers and men were held on Guam during the fall of 1946, and entailed more than 1,000 pages of testimony and exhibits. Of the 21 accused, one officer who had no knowledge of the cannibalism was acquitted. The other 20 were found guilty and given various sentences ranging from death by hanging to life imprisonment and lesser

penalties. One was hanged in June; General Tachibana and three of his other officers were executed at Guam on 24 September 1947.<sup>27</sup>

In quick profusion, the following former Japanese-garrisoned islands in the Central and Western Pacific islands were surrendered to CinCPac representatives in September 1945: Aguijan, Jaluit, Yap, Wotje, Maloelap, the Ryukyus, Kusaie, Ponape, Nauru, Lamotrek, Woleai;<sup>28</sup> and in October, Ocean. Some of these little-known islands with unfamiliar names were small and held nothing but a weather station manned by a few Japanese civilians and a slightly larger native population. Military garrisons of various sizes were on some of the larger islands, the size of the force determined by the strategic value that the Japanese had given the island. Regardless of the location or size of the former enemy garrison, the terms of the Potsdam Declaration bound the Allied Powers to permit, and by inference to assist, all Japanese military personnel to return to their homes after they and their organizations had been completely demilitarized. Because American shipping

<sup>27</sup> CO, MarBks, Guam, ltr to CMC, dtd 27May 48, Subj: Hist Narrative of Special War Crimes duties performed by personnel of the MarBks, Guam, hereafter, *MarBks, Guam, Hist Narrative*.

<sup>28</sup> Representing the Island Commander, Guam, Lieutenant Colonel Parker R. Colmer accepted the surrender of the Woleai Atoll Commander, Major General Kitamura, on 19 September. Two days earlier, a small Marine detachment under Lieutenant Colonel Colmer had landed on this tiny atoll in the Central Carolines to arrange for the demilitarization of the islet and the evacuation of its personnel. Island Comd, Guam, WarD, Sep45.

<sup>26</sup> Cited in Sherrod, *Marine Air Hist*, p. 352.

was fully committed to the support of MacArthur's occupation and surrender forces and in the return of U. S. servicemen to the States, until they could be repatriated, the disarmed enemy garrisons on the various atolls were supervised, but generally left undisturbed. The Japanese were allowed to fend for themselves from their own gardens until such time that Japanese shipping could be made available to transport them home.

Although American shipping was thoroughly involved in "Magic Carpet," the return home of combat veterans from the Pacific, and in operations in the Far East, the Japanese had 21 tankers, 101 transports, and 211 freighters still in operating condition after the war. General MacArthur said, however, that there was a more pressing need for these vessels to ship food and clothing to the Home Islands than to repatriate troops from outlying islands. "As of 7 October, according to *Domei* [the Japanese news agency], only 38,645 troops had been returned from overseas, including the continent of Asia, which meant that some 3,320,000 Japanese Army and 300,000 Navy personnel still remained outside the home islands."<sup>29</sup> CinCPac alleviated the situation somewhat in November, when it began to use amphibious vessels not suited for "Magic Carpet" in the repatriation of Japanese from the Marshalls-Gilberts and Marianas Areas. Liberty ships and LSTs in Philippines ports and at others in the Pacific were assigned to duty as Japanese repatri-

ation vessels. By the end of December 1945, all Japanese military personnel had been evacuated from the Marshalls-Gilberts Area. By 10 January 1946, 73.9 percent of the Japanese nationals, military and civilian, on the islands in the Marianas had been evacuated to Japan. Not included in these groups were the Japanese who had been detained on either Guam or Kwajalein awaiting trial as war criminals or waiting to appear as witnesses at these trials. Nonetheless, before the middle of 1946, most disarmed military personnel had been returned to their homes in Japan, Korea, Okinawa, or Formosa, and thus many of the provisional Marine detachments that had been formed to supervise their repatriation could be deactivated. The Marine forces in the Pacific were ready then to phase into their postwar garrison programs.

#### PEACETIME GARRISON FORCES<sup>30</sup>

By 1 October 1946, of the 10 provisional Marine detachments and the military elements of occupation forces that

<sup>30</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *CMC Rpts*, 1946-1948; *USMC Admin Hist*; *G-1* and *G-3 OpDs*, 1Aug45-31Dec47; *FMF Air* and *Grd Status Rpts*, Aug45-Dec47; *FMFPac Admin Hist*, 1945-1947; CofS, MarPac, ltr to CG, MarPac, dtd 5Mar46, Subj: Hist of Hq, MarPac, During World War II, hereafter *MarPac WW II Hist*; CG, MarPac, ltr to CMC, dtd 20Mar47, Subj: Narrative of MarPac 1Sep45-1Oct46; CG, MarPac, ltr to CMC, dtd 15Apr47, Quarterly Summary of MarPac, 1Oct46-1Apr47; CG, MarPac ltr to CMC, dtd 10Jul47, same subject, period 1Apr-1Jul47, all hereafter *MarPac Hist*, with inclusive dates; *MarGarForPac OpDs*, for periods 1Sep45-1Oct46, 1Oct46-1Apr47, and 1Apr-1Jul47, all hereafter *MarGarForPac OpD*, with inclusive dates.

<sup>29</sup> *CinCPac Surrender and Occupation Rpt*, p. 168.

had been formed since the end of the war,<sup>31</sup> all except the ones on Wake, Kwajalein, and Eniwetok were disbanded, redesignated a Marine Barracks, or made a permanent Marine detachment.<sup>32</sup> Between April and July 1946, the following redesignations took place on the dates noted: 15 April, Marine Detachment (Provisional), Peleliu, became the Marine Barracks, Peleliu; 20 May, 8th Military Police Battalion (Provisional), became the Marine Barracks, Guam; 10 June, 5th Military Police Battalion (Provisional), became the Marine Barracks, Saipan; 20 June, Marine Detachment (Provisional), Samar, became the Marine Barracks, Samar; and 4 July, Marine Detachment (Provisional), Headquarters, Commander, Philippine Sea Frontier, became the Marine Detachment, Commander, Naval Forces, Philippines. The last-named organization was reorganized on 1 January 1947 as the Marine Barracks, Sangley Point, Philippine Islands.

The realignment and reduction of FMF units in the Far East also affected the organization of the garrison forces in the Pacific. For instance, in January 1946, CinCPac notified CNO that he anticipated a drastic reduction in the size and scope of fleet activities at Yoko-

suka for the remainder of the American occupation of Japan, and recommended that the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines—part of the Yokosuka Occupation Force—be redesignated as the 2d Separate Guard Battalion (Provisional), FMF, and remain there for interior guard duty. The change in title took place on 15 February 1946. Five months later, the size of the provisional battalion was reduced and on 15 June it became Marine Detachment, Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, and was placed under the administrative control of MarPac.

Based on the provisions of the post-war plans, all of these Marine units were given missions consisting of maintaining internal security and standing interior guard duty at the naval activities to which they had been assigned. In addition, the Marines on Truk, Marcus, and Peleliu islands manned anti-aircraft artillery positions, while the garrisons on Guam, Saipan, and Truk had the important and difficult task of guarding and supervising nearly 7,000 Japanese war crimes prisoners and disarmed military personnel.

From 1 June 1946 until 5 May 1949, when the War Criminal Stockade was closed, the Guam garrison was responsible for the custody, discipline, feeding, clothing, and, in some cases, execution of Japanese war criminals confined in its custody. A total of 13 inmates was executed by hanging following their trial and conviction by the War Crimes Commission convened on Guam. Eleven executions were conducted by an Army Officer, a member of the Military Police Corps, who was an official hangman.

<sup>31</sup> See previous chapter, section entitled "The Marine Corps at the End of the War," p. 444*n*.

<sup>32</sup> On 10 December 1946, the provisional detachments on Wake and Eniwetok were disbanded. The Kwajalein unit was redesignated Marine Barracks, Kwajalein, and came under the administrative control of Marine Garrison Forces, Pacific. *FMFPac Admin Hist*, 10Oct46-1Apr47.

During the period he was attached to the Marine Barracks in order to carry out his duties, he trained two enlisted Marines "in the technique of execution by hanging." They executed the last two war criminals condemned to die after he left.<sup>33</sup>

On the date that the designations of the various garrisons changed, they were detached from FMFPac and placed under the administrative control of the Department of Pacific, or MarPac as it was both officially and familiarly abbreviated. Operational control of the Pacific garrisons was vested either with the naval activity or the senior naval command on the island to which the Marine unit was assigned.

On the effective date of attachment of the barracks and detachments, MarPac in turn placed them under the control of Marine Garrison Forces (MarGarFor), 14th Naval District, in Honolulu. MarGarFor had been formed on 13 December 1941 in order that all of the various Marine garrison forces in the 14th Naval District could be centrally administered.

Headquarters Marine Corps directed Brigadier General Harry K. Pickett to assume command as Commanding General, MarGarFor, 14th Naval District. Although General Pickett and subsequent commanders functioned as deputies of the commanding general of MarPac, they did not carry the title. At the end of the war, because of the increasing importance of the Honolulu-based command and to ensure an effi-

cient administrative control of the widely separated Marine Corps posts in the Pacific, the MarPac commander recommended that the title of the MarGarFor commander be changed to Commanding General, Pacific Ocean Marine Garrison Force, and that he be assigned as the deputy commander of MarPac.<sup>34</sup> The Commandant approved the redesignation, and it became effective on 15 October 1946, when the new title, Commanding General, Marine Garrison Forces, Pacific, appeared.<sup>35</sup> The first officer assigned to this command was Brigadier General William A. Worton, who established his headquarters at the Marine Barracks, Pearl Harbor, T.H., and reported his assumption of command on the 15th to both CinCPac and MarPac.<sup>36</sup>

When the Marine Garrison Forces was first organized in 1941, there were only a few barracks and detachments under its command, and all of these were in the Hawaiian Islands and on Johnston and Palmyra Islands. At the end of the war, the number of subordinate units increased considerably; the mission assigned MarGarForPac at the time of its redesignation in 1946 made it responsible for all posts, detachments, offices, and other Marine Corps organizations in the Pacific Ocean Areas with the exception of FMF units, Marine Corps air stations, and shore-based air warning

<sup>34</sup> *MarPac WW II Hist*, p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> CMC Spdltr ser MC-819560, dtd 27Sep46; MarGarForPac GenO 2-46.

<sup>36</sup> MajGen William A. Worton ltr to Hd, HistBr, HQMC, dtd 25Oct65.

<sup>33</sup> *MarBks, Guam, Hist Narrative*.

units.<sup>37</sup> On 23 May 1947, MarGarForPac became an administrative command directly under the control of Headquarters Marine Corps. As before, CinCPac had operational control of the Marine posts and stations in the Pacific. The Marine Garrison Forces, Pacific, command was deactivated on 31 August 1948, and the Commanding General, FMFPac, assumed administrative control of all Marine security forces and supporting establishments in the Pacific formerly under the control of MarGarForPac.<sup>38</sup>

Although it was purely an administrative command throughout seven years of existence, MarGarForPac played an increasingly important role in supervising the constant change in the composition, designation, and number of Marine garrisons in the Pacific during the period 1945–1948. The assumption of control over these Marine outposts by FMFPac meant that the Marine Corps transition to peacetime status had been accomplished and security forces and

supporting establishments in the Pacific were stabilized—for the time being, at any rate. Closely paralleling the steps leading to stabilization of these non-Fleet Marine Force organizations were the day-to-day changes that carried FMF units from a war to peacetime character.

#### *STABILIZATION OF THE FMF*<sup>39</sup>

By the beginning of 1947, the Marine Corps had adjusted to operating on a peacetime level with a complement drastically reduced from a peak strength; there were 92,222 Marines on active duty on 30 June 1947.<sup>40</sup> Because of major organizational changes and the constant turnover of personnel in activities where trained and experienced Marines were needed, the retention of key Marines was especially critical in Marine logistical, aviation, and recruit training units. The problem was all the more grave in face of the missions assigned to the Marine Corps for Fiscal Year 1947.<sup>41</sup> These missions were a combination of those previously assigned in accordance with the postwar program of the Corps and those foreshadowing what the National Security Act of 1947 and later amendments would assign.

<sup>37</sup> MarGarForPac consisted of the following in October 1946: H&S Co, MarGarForPac; MB, USNB, Pearl Harbor, T.H.; MB, NAD, Oahu, T.H.; MB, NAS, Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, T.H.; MB, NAS, Barber's Point, Oahu, T.H.; MB, NAF, Honolulu, Oahu, T.H.; MB, NAS, Kaneohe Bay, Oahu, T.H.; MB, NAS, Kahului, Maui, T.H.; MB, NOB, Midway Island; MB, NAS, Johnston Island; MB, Guam; MB, Saipan; MB, NOB, Okinawa; MB, NOB, Subic Bay, P.I.; MB, Peleliu, Palau Islands; MD, (Prov), USNBS, Marcus Island; MD, Truk; MD, Fleet Activities, Yokosuka; MD, Commander, Naval Forces, Philippines; MB, Kwajalein; MD, Fita-Fita Guard, Samoa. *Muster Rolls*, MarGarForPac, Oct46 (Diary Unit, Files Sec, Pers Dept, HQMC).

<sup>38</sup> CMC Spdltr ser MC-1034430, dtd 19Aug48, cited in *Ibid.*, Aug48.

<sup>39</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *CMC Rpts*, 1946–1949; *USMC Admin Hist*; *G-1*, *G-3*, and *Div-Avn OpDs*; *FMF Air and Grd Status Rpts*; *FMFPac Admin Hist*.

<sup>40</sup> *CMC Rpt*, 1947.

<sup>41</sup> As other agencies of the Federal government do, the Marine Corps operates on a fiscal rather than a calendar year, or from 1 July of one year to 30 June of the following year. Fiscal year 1947 then would have been from 1 July 1946 to 30 June 1947.

In essence, the Marine Corps was:

(a) To provide fleet marine forces of combined arms, together with supporting air components for service with the fleet in the seizure or defense of advance naval bases and for the conduct of such land operations as may be essential to the prosecution of naval campaigns.

(b) To develop in coordination with other armed services, those phases of amphibious operations which pertain to the tactics, techniques and equipment employed by landing forces.

(c) To provide detachments and organizations for service on armed vessels of the Navy.

(d) To provide security detachments for the protection of naval property at naval stations and bases.

(e) To be prepared in accordance with integrated joint mobilization plans for the expansion of the peacetime components to meet the needs of war.

(f) In addition, to maintain such activities as necessary to insure the adequate administration, supply, training and technical directions of personnel and units engaged in accomplishment of the basic missions.<sup>42</sup>

To meet the challenges engendered by these missions and at the same time to reduce its size to reflect peacetime tasks, the Marine Corps reviewed and re-vamped the assignments given to its major components. In conjunction with Headquarters Marine Corps and the Marine Corps Schools, the Fleet Marine Force was to continue its role as stated in paragraph (b) quoted above. Marine detachments afloat on carriers, battle-ships, and cruisers were to provide a trained nucleus for the ships' landing forces, gun crews as required, and local security for the vessels. Marine detachments on transports would perform the

functions of transport quartermasters and local security as directed. Marines in security forces assigned to naval shore establishments within and outside of the continental limits of the United States would provide necessary internal security; those detachments assigned to such establishments outside of the United States would provide external security in accordance with specifically assigned missions. In order to maintain the Marine Corps and to assist it in accomplishing its missions, Marine supporting activities, such as logistic establishments, recruit training depots, personnel procurement offices, headquarters establishments, and training activities, would procure, equip, train, and administer Marine personnel.<sup>43</sup>

During the last two war years, the FMF had been organized in accordance with the F-Series Tables of Organization, by which a Marine division consisted of a headquarters battalion, tank, engineer, and pioneer battalions, service troops, an artillery regiment, and three infantry regiments, totalling 843 officers and 15,548 enlisted, or 16,391 Marines overall. A reinforced regiment, or RCT, consisted of the infantry regiment itself, an artillery battalion, engineer, pioneer, transportation, ordnance, service and supply, medical, and tank companies, a reconnaissance platoon, and a band section, all totalling 4,585 Marines. Under the G-Series T/O (peace),<sup>44</sup> approved 4 September 1945, the Marine Corps reorganized to reflect its postwar size and conditions at that time. A Marine division consisted of the same components

<sup>43</sup> *CMC Rpt*, 1946.

<sup>44</sup> See App H for this T/O.

<sup>42</sup> *CMC Rpt*, 1947.

as before, but its strength was increased to 962 officers and 17,182 enlisted Marines, or a total of 18,144. While the size of the division was increased, the number of Marine divisions scheduled for active service according to postwar plans had dropped to two. As soon as the G-Series T/O was authorized, all Marine organizations affected by it were reconstituted. Many units, because of their missions as well as their depleted states, could be reorganized at only 90 percent of their authorized strength. During the period February-April 1946, the 1st Marine Division in China and a few other units had dropped down to 80 percent of authorized strength. To rectify the situation, the Commandant ordered them to organize on the basis of the prevailing G-Series T/O, and beefed up their strengths slightly to reflect their current assignments.

In late 1945, two of the Marine divisions that had served so spectacularly in the Pacific during their tours in combat were disbanded. The 4th Marine Division, which had been formally activated on 16 August 1943 at Camp Pendleton, returned to the United States from Maui on 3 November 1945 and its units disbanded that month, again at Camp Pendleton. Following the earlier formation of some of its organic units, the 3d Division had been activated on 16 September 1942, also at Camp Pendleton like the 4th Division. A little more than three years later, on 28 December 1945, the 3d—less 1/3 in the Bonins and 2/21 on Truk—was disbanded on Guam. Replacement drafts consisting of low-point men boarded CVEs for the trip to China, where they were to join the 1st Marine Division; high-point Marines

scheduled for discharge or reassignment were transferred to a transient center on Guam, where they awaited transportation to the States.

From September 1945 to June 1947, FMFPac was reduced in size until it approached the postwar form it would take. Many changes in the composition and designation of FMFPac units occurring in this period will be discussed later when the occupations of Japan and North China are considered. On 30 June 1947, FMFPac strength was 19,125 Marines in units at Camp Pendleton, the Hawaiian Islands, China, and Guam. In the months leading to this date, other major Marine commands, FMF and non-FMF, were formed.

On 22 January 1946, the Commandant directed the Commanding General, Marine Barracks, Quantico, to form a special infantry brigade to be prepared for expeditionary service and maintained in a state of readiness. The headquarters and two battalions of the 1st Special Marine Brigade was formed at Quantico, and the 3d Battalion was formed at Camp Lejeune. The following month, on 4 February, administrative and operational control of the brigade passed to the brigade commander, Brigadier General Oliver P. Smith. Four days later, General Smith was directed to maintain his command on two weeks readiness, and to report to the Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet (CinCLant), for planning purposes. Although organized along the basic lines of a FMF team, the brigade was not part of the Fleet Marine Force. In May 1946, it conducted the only major Marine Corps training mission undertaken during that fiscal year, a joint amphibious

exercise in the Caribbean area. At the end of July, General Smith was directed to disband the 1st Battalion at Quantico on 10 August. The brigade headquarters and the 2d Battalion, which had joined the 3d Battalion at Camp Lejeune in March, were disbanded on 31 August.<sup>45</sup>

Another significant event occurring in 1946 was the activation on 16 December of Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic (FMFLant), under the operational control of CinCLant. Three days before its formation, the Commanding General, 2d Marine Division, at Camp Lejeune, was directed to activate FMFLant and to act as its commanding general in addition to his duties as head of the 2d Division. He was to assume command of the ground units comprising the force on the 16th, and to take over the aviation units on 2 January 1947.

In December 1946, Marine aviation commands in the Atlantic and Pacific areas were designated as subordinate units of the Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic and Pacific, respectively. In the process of this change, the 2d Marine Aircraft Wing at Cherry Point was redesignated Aircraft, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic.

Marine aviation went through as many changes as the ground component following the end of hostilities, and was likewise concerned with reaching its postwar level as quickly as possible. These transitions required the rapid but controlled demobilization of personnel and deactivation of units and stations without the loss of a high state of combat readiness. The first phase of the

program relating to the withdrawal of overseas units depended on future requirements of Marine aviation in the Pacific.

The deployments of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and its four groups to China and MAG-31 to Japan were the last World War II tactical operations of AirFMFPac. It then became possible for the aviation command to plan for the rotation of excess units and personnel to the States, and the redeployment began when transportation became available. The strength of AirFMFPac on 1 September 1945 totalled 43,819 Marines; 13 months later, this force had been reduced 90 percent to a total of 4,693. The loss of experienced personnel created as much of a problem in the air units as it had in the ground organizations. As demobilization progressed, approximately 80 percent of the replacements sent to AirFMFPac to fill in the gaps were inexperienced and untrained insofar as the technical requirements of that command were concerned. As a result, the squadrons and groups soon reached the point where they had insufficient numbers of experienced key personnel, not only for maintaining operational functions but also for training the inexperienced Marines. This situation was eased somewhat when the Commandant immediately ordered overseas a large number of fully qualified noncommissioned officers. As a result, AirFMFPac was able to continue essential operations with some degree of efficiency and, in effect, improve them as the new personnel were trained and became more fully qualified.

A second personnel problem engendered by demobilization was the

<sup>45</sup> The material concerning the formation and disbandment of the 1st Special Marine Brigade was derived from *CMC Rpts*, 1946 and 1947; *G-3 OpDs*, Jan-Jul46.

acute shortage of personnel to fill the jobs formerly held by aviation ground officers. During the war, most aviation ground billets were filled by non-flying officers specifically trained for those positions which could be filled by a ground officer. This practice permitted the full-time assignment of pilots to flying duties. Since the postwar aviation T/Os did not include provisions for the assignment of ground officers to the wings and their subordinate commands, those organizations had to set up extensive training programs to requalify pilots for the ground billets. Once they were trained in and fulfilling the functions of communications, ordnance, engineering, and air combat intelligence officers, the pilots continued regular flight duties in order to maintain proficiency in their primary assignment.

Owing to the constant transfer of pilots and skilled maintenance personnel, the operations of the fighter squadrons were reduced to a bare minimum. Even harder hit were the transport squadrons, whose pilots were released faster than those of the other tactical squadrons. When the workloads of the transport squadrons increased greatly because they were employed to carry supplies to the units in the Western Pacific and the Far East—and to transfer personnel scheduled for discharge back to the States—the demand for the services of transport pilots increased accordingly. To meet the demand, pilots qualified to fly other types of aircraft were transferred from overseas and Stateside tactical squadrons to the transport units for immediate retraining.

Concurrent with the release and transfer of aviation personnel were the deactivation and transfer of many major and subordinate aircraft organizations. On 31 December 1945, the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing was decommissioned at Ewa. The 2d MAW transferred from Okinawa to Cherry Point, where it was to be based, on 15 February 1946. The next month, on 13 March, the 4th MAW closed its headquarters on Guam and departed for the west coast, where it was to be based. The units attached to these Stateside-bound wings were transferred to the headquarters of other Marine organizations in the islands, and returned to the United States when transportation became available for their redeployment.

Completing the postwar roll-up of Marine aviation in the Pacific was the departure of MAG-31 from Yokosuka for the United States on 20 June. The 1st MAW remained in China with one transport and two observation squadrons and MAG-24, which was composed of three VMFs and one VMF(N). MAG-15, the only Marine aviation command remaining in the Hawaiian Islands, was based at Ewa with two VMRs; the group also had a fighter squadron based at Midway. With its peacetime functions stabilized by October 1946, AirFMFPac operations in the latter part of the year consisted mainly of training replacements and routing trans-Pacific supply and replacement personnel passenger flights.

In the 22 months following the signing of the Japanese surrender at Tokyo Bay, the strength of the Marine Corps was reduced from a peak of 485,837 on 1 September 1945 to a low of 92,222 on

30 June 1947. While this decrease represented a drop of 82 percent, the 1947 figure was considerably greater than 28,277, the size of the Corps on 1 July 1940. Although some problems occurred

during the transition from war to peace, Marine units adjusted to the various situations with which they were confronted and continued to operate on a relatively high level of efficiency.



**PART IV**

***Occupation of Japan***



# Initial Planning and Operations

The war was over, but the victory was not yet secure. Foremost among the multitude of new and pressing problems confronting Allied planners was the question of how the Japanese military would react to the sudden peace. On bypassed islands throughout the Pacific, on the mainland of Asia, and in Japan itself, over four million fighting men were still armed and organized for combat. Would all of these men, who had proven themselves to be bitter-end, fanatical enemies even when faced with certain destruction, accept the Emperor's order to lay down their weapons? Or would some of them fight on, refusing to accept or believe in the decision of their government? Would the tradition of fealty to the wishes of the Emperor overbalance years of conditioning that held surrender to be a crushing personal and national disgrace?

Logically, the focal point of Japanese physical and moral strength was the seat of Imperial rule. If Tokyo could be occupied without incident, the chances for a successful and bloodless occupation of Japan and the peaceful surrender of outlying garrisons would be greatly enhanced. Plans for seizure of ports of entry in the Tokyo Bay area by occupation forces received top priority. Speed was essential and the spearhead troops of the occupying forces were selected from those units with the highest state of combat readiness.

From General MacArthur's command, the 11th Airborne Division was to stage from Luzon through Okinawa

to an airfield outside of Tokyo. Admiral Nimitz ordered the Third Fleet, cruising the waters off Japan, to form a landing force from ships' complements to supplement the force that was to seize Yokosuka Naval Base in Tokyo Bay. To augment this naval force, FMFPac was directed to provide a regimental combat team for immediate occupation duty. These Marines, and others who followed them, were destined to play an important role in the occupation of Japan.

## THE YOKOSUKA OPERATION<sup>1</sup>

Months before the fighting ended, preliminary plans and concepts for the

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: Eighth U. S. Army in Japan Occupational Monograph, v. I, Aug45-Jan46, n.d., hereafter *Eighth Army Monograph I* (Army Sec, WWII RecDiv, NA); CinCPac WarDs, Aug-Sep45; *CinCPac Surrender and Occupation Rpt*; CTF 31 AR, Occupation and Securing of the Yokosuka Naval Base and Airfield, 18Aug-8Sep45, dtd 8Sep45, hereafter *Yokosuka Occupation Force AR*; CTG 31.3 AR, Initial Occupation of Yokosuka Naval Base Area, Japan dtd 7Sep45, hereafter *Fleet Landing Force AR* (OAB, NHD); CTU 31.3.2 Record of Events, dtd 6Sep45; CTU 31.3.3 AR, Initial Landings Incident to the Occupation of Tokyo, 20Aug-4Sep45, dtd 5Sep45; MAG-31 WarDs, Sep-Dec45; 3/4 WarD, Jan46; 2d SepGdBn (Prov) WarDs, Feb-Jun46; Kenneth W. Condit and Edwin T. Turnbladh, *Hold High The Torch: A History of the 4th Marines* (Washington: HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, 1960); Henry I. Shaw, Jr., *The United States Marines in the Occupation of Japan—Marine Corps Historical Reference Series No. 24* (Washington: HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, 1961), hereafter Shaw, *Marine Occupation of Japan*.

occupation of Japan had been formulated at the headquarters of MacArthur and Nimitz. Staff studies, based on the possibility of swift collapse of enemy resistance, were prepared and distributed at army and fleet level for planning purposes. In the early summer of 1945, as fighting raged on Okinawa and in the Philippines, dual planning went forward for both the assault on Japan (OLYMPIC and CORONET) and the occupation operation (BLACKLIST). (See Map 26.)

Many essential elements of the two plans were similar, and the Sixth Army, which had been slated to make the attack on Kyushu under OLYMPIC, was given the contingent task of occupying southern Japan under BLACKLIST.<sup>2</sup> In like manner, the Eighth Army, utilizing the wealth of information it had accumulated regarding Honshu in planning CORONET, was designated the occupying force for northern Japan. The Tenth Army, also scheduled for the Honshu assault by CORONET, was given the mission of occupying Korea in BLACKLIST plans.<sup>3</sup>

When, in the wake of atomic bombings and Russian entry into the war, the Japanese government made its momentous decision to surrender, the "only military unit at hand with sufficient power to take Japan into custody at

<sup>2</sup> Sixth Army Rpt of the Occupation of Japan, 22Sep-30Nov45, n.d., p. 10, hereafter *Sixth Army Rpt* (Army Sec, WWII RecDiv, NA).

<sup>3</sup> On 13 August 1945, MacArthur's headquarters substituted XXIV Corps for Tenth Army as the Korean Occupation Force. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

short notice and enforce the Allies' will until occupation troops arrived"<sup>4</sup> was Admiral William F. Halsey's Third Fleet, at sea off the enemy coast. Advance copies of Halsey's Operation Plan 10-45 for the occupation of Japan, which set up Task Force 31, the Yokosuka Occupation Force, were distributed on 8 August. Two days later, Rear Admiral Oscar C. Badger (Commander, Battleship Division 7) was designated the commander of TF 31, and all commanders of carriers, battleships, and cruisers in the Third Fleet were alerted to organize and equip bluejacket and Marine landing forces from amongst their crews. At the same time, FMFPac directed the 6th Marine Division to furnish one RCT to the Third Fleet for possible early occupation duty in Japan.<sup>5</sup>

General Shepherd, the division commander, without hesitation selected the 4th Marines. This was a symbolic gesture on his part, as the old 4th Marine Regiment had participated in the Philippine Campaign in 1942 and had been captured with other U. S. forces in the Philippines. Now the new 4th Marines would be the main combat formation taking part in the initial landing and occupation of Japan.<sup>6</sup>

Brigadier General William T. Clement, Assistant Division Commander, was named to head the Fleet Landing Force.

On 11 August, IIIAC prepared preliminary plans for the activation of Task Force Able, which consisted of a skeletal headquarters detachment, the

<sup>4</sup> Halsey and Bryan, *Halsey's Story*, p. 247.

<sup>5</sup> IIIAC WarD, Aug45, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> BGen Louis Metzger ltr to Hd, HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, dtd 6Jan66, hereafter *Metzger ltr*.



4th Marines, Reinforced,<sup>7</sup> an amphibian tractor company, and a medical company. Concurrently, officers designated to form General Clement's staff were alerted and immediately began planning to load out the task force. Warning orders, directing that the RCT with attached units be ready to embark within 48 hours, were passed to the staff.

The curtain of secrecy surrounding the proposed operation was lifted at 0900 on 12 August so that task force units could deal directly with the necessary service and supply agencies without processing their requests through the corps staff. All elements of the task force were completely reoutfitted, and the 5th Field Service Depot and receiving units went on a 24-hour day to complete the resupply task. The 4th Marines joined 600 replacements from the FMFPac Transient Center, Marianas, to fill the gaps in its ranks left by combat attrition and stateside rotation.

Dump areas and dock space were allotted by the Island Commander, Guam, to accommodate the five transports, a cargo ship, and an LSD of

<sup>7</sup> The 4th Marines was reinforced by the following units: 1st Battalion, 15th Marines; Company C, 6th Tank Battalion; Tank Maintenance Section, 6th Service Battalion; Company A, 6th Engineer Battalion; Company A, 6th Pioneer Battalion; Company A, 6th Medical Battalion; Truck Company, 6th Motor Transport Battalion; 1st Platoon, Ordnance Company, 6th Service Battalion; Service Platoon, 6th Service Battalion; Supply Platoon, 6th Service Battalion; Band Section, 6th Marine Division Band; and a Shore Party Communication Team, Ships Fire Control Party, and Air-Ground Liaison Team of the 6th Assault Signal Company. *Fleet Landing Force AR*, p. 2.

Transport Division 60 assigned to lift Task Force Able. The mounting-out process was considerably aided by the announcement that all ships would arrive in port on 13 August, 24 hours later than they were originally scheduled. On the evening of the 14th, however, "all loading plans for supplies were thrown into chaos"<sup>8</sup> by news of the substitution of a smaller type of transport for one of those of the original group. The resultant reduction of shipping space was partially made up by the assignment of an LST to the transport force. Later, after the task force had departed Guam, a second LST was allotted to lift most of the remaining supplies, including the tractors of Company A, 4th Amphibian Tractor Battalion.

Loading began at 1600, 14 August, and continued throughout the night. The troops boarded ship between 1000 and 1200 the following day, and that evening, the transport division sailed for its rendezvous at sea with the Third Fleet. "In a period of approximately 96 hours the Fourth Regimental Combat Team, Reinforced, had been completely re-outfitted, all equipment deficiencies corrected, all elements provided an initial allowance to bring them up to T/O and T/A [Table of Allowance] levels, and a thirty-day re-supply procured for shipment."<sup>9</sup>

Two days prior to the departure of the main body of Task Force Able, General Clement and a nucleus of his headquarters personnel left Guam on the LSV (landing ship, vehicle) USS *Ozark* to join the Third Fleet. There had been

<sup>8</sup> *Fleet Landing Force AR*, p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

no opportunity for preliminary planning, and no definite mission had been received, so the time en route to the rendezvous was spent studying intelligence summaries of the Tokyo Bay area. Halsey's ships were sighted and joined on 18 August. The next morning, Clement and key members of his staff transferred to the battleship *Missouri* for the first of a round of conferences on the coming operation.<sup>10</sup>

Admiral Badger formed TF 31 on 19 August from the ships assigned to him from the Third Fleet. The transfer of men and equipment to designated transports by means of breeches buoys and cargo slings began immediately. Carriers, battleships, or cruisers were brought along both sides of a transport to expedite the operation.<sup>11</sup> In addition to the landing battalions of bluejackets and Marines, Third Fleet units formed base maintenance companies, a naval air activities organization to operate a Yokosuka airfield, and nucleus crews to take over captured Japanese vessels. Vice Admiral Sir Bernard Rawlings' British Carrier Task Force contributed a landing force of seamen and Royal

Marines. In less than three days, the task of transferring at sea some 3,500 men and hundreds of tons of weapons, equipment, and ammunition was accomplished. The newly formed units, as soon as they reported on board their transports, began an intensive program of training for ground combat operations and occupation duties.

On 20 August, the ships carrying the 4th RCT arrived and joined the burgeoning task force. General Clement's command now included the 5,400 men of the reinforced 4th Marines, a three-battalion regiment of approximately 2,000 Marines taken from 33 ships' detachments,<sup>12</sup> a naval regiment of 956 men organized from the crews of 10 ships into a regimental headquarters, landing battalions, and 8 nucleus crew units to handle captured shipping,<sup>13</sup> and a British battalion of 250 seamen and 200 Royal Marines. To act as a floating reserve for the landing force, five additional battalions of bluejackets were organized and appropriately equipped from within the carrier groups.

<sup>10</sup> Upon arrival at Tokyo Bay, "General Clement and his small staff were assigned a destroyer escort for several days" to be used as a "taxicab" for visiting and holding conferences on the flagships of the key commanders involved in the landing. "Transfers of the General and staff were made in breeches buoys ranging in quality from mail pouches to Admiral Halsey's fancy fringed model." Col Orville V. Bergren ltr to Hd, HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, dtd 14May66, hereafter *Bergren* ltr.

<sup>11</sup> "It was quite a sight to see a transport ship under way in open sea with an aircraft carrier on one side and a battleship or cruiser on the other transferring their Marine detachments or bluejackets to the transport." *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> This regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William T. Lantz, came from the Marine Detachments of the following Third Fleet ships: USS *Alabama*, *Indiana*, *Massachusetts*, *Missouri*, *North Carolina*, *South Dakota*, *Wisconsin*, *Bataan*, *Belleau Wood*, *Bennington*, *Bon Homme Richard*, *Cowpens*, *Hancock*, *Independence*, *Lexington*, *Monterey*, *Randolph*, *San Jacinto*, *Ticonderoga*, *Wasp*, *Yorktown*, *Amsterdam*, *Atlanta*, *Boston*, *Chicago*, *Dayton*, *Duluth*, *Oklahoma City*, *Pasadena*, *Quincy*, *Springfield*, *Topeka*, and *Wilkes Barre*. CTU 31.3.2 Rec of Events, dtd 6Sep45, *passim*.

<sup>13</sup> CTU 31.3.3 AR—Initial Landings Incident to the Occupation of Tokyo—Period 20Aug-4Sep45, dtd 5Sep45, pp. 3, 6 (OAB, NHD).



*FLEET LANDING FORCE personnel are transferred from USS Missouri to USS Iowa somewhere at sea off the coast of Japan prior to the initial occupation landings. (USN 80-G-332826)*

Halsey had assigned TF 31 a primary mission of seizing and occupying the Yokosuka Naval Base and its airfield. (See Map 27.) Initial collateral missions included the demilitarization of the entire Miura Peninsula, which formed the western arm of the headlands enclosing Tokyo Bay, and the seizure of the Zushi area, tentative headquarters for MacArthur, on the southwest coast of the peninsula. To accomplish these missions two alternative schemes of maneuver were considered. The first contemplated a landing by assault troops on beaches near the town of Zushi, followed by an overland drive east across the peninsula to secure the naval base for the landing of supplies and reinforcements. The second plan involved a direct landing from within Tokyo Bay on the beaches and docks of Yokosuka Naval Base and Air Station, followed on order by the occupation of Zushi and the demilitarization of the entire peninsula. All planning by TF 31 was coordinated with that of the Eighth Army, whose commander, Lieutenant General Robert L. Eichelberger, had been appointed by MacArthur to command the forces ashore in the occupation of northern Japan.

On 21 August, General Eichelberger, who had been informed of the alternative plans formulated by TF 31, directed that the landing be made at the naval base rather than in the Zushi area. Admiral Halsey had recommended the adoption of the Zushi landing plan since it did not involve bringing shipping into restricted Tokyo Bay until assault troops had dealt with "the pos-

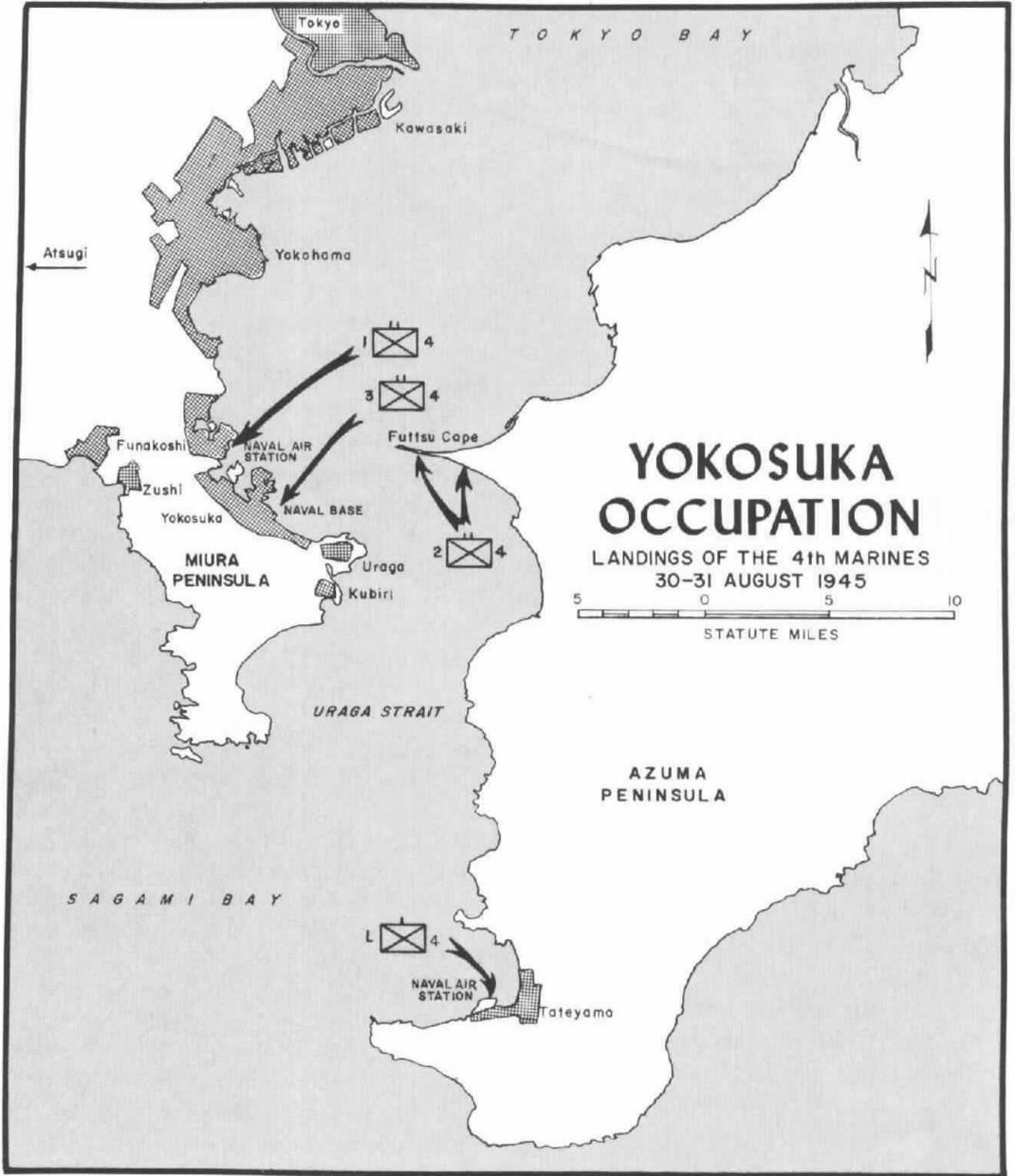
sibility of Japanese treachery."<sup>14</sup> The weight of evidence, however, was rapidly swinging in support of the theory that the enemy was going to cooperate fully with the occupying forces and that some of the precautions originally thought necessary could now be held in abeyance. But the primary reason for the selection of Yokosuka rather than Zushi for the landing area was the problems that would arise in moving the landing force overland from Zushi to Yokosuka. "This overland movement would have exposed the landing force to possible enemy attack while its movement was restricted over narrow roads and through a series of tunnels which were easily susceptible to sabotage. Further, it would have delayed the early seizure of the major Japanese naval base."<sup>15</sup>

Eichelberger's directive also included the information that the 11th Airborne Division was to establish its own airhead at Atsugi airfield a few miles northwest of the north end of the Miura Peninsula. The original plans of the Fleet Landing Force, which had been made on the assumption that General Clement's men would seize Yokosuka Air Station for the airborne operation, had to be changed to provide for a simultaneous Army-Navy landing. A tentative area of responsibility including the cities of Uruga, Kubiri, Yokosuka, and Funakoshi was assigned to Clement's force, and the rest of the peninsula became the responsibility of the 11th Airborne Division.

To ensure the safety of Allied warships entering Tokyo Bay, Clement's

<sup>14</sup> Halsey and Bryan, *Halsey's Story*, p. 275.

<sup>15</sup> Metzger *ltr.*



MAP 27

T. L. RUSSELL

operation plan detailed the British Landing Force to land on and demilitarize four small island forts in the Uraga Strait at the entrance to Tokyo Bay. To erase the threat of shore batteries and coastal forts, the reserve battalion of the 4th Marines (2/4) was given the mission of landing on Futtsu Saki, a narrow point of land jutting into the eastern side of Uraga Strait. After completing its mission, 2/4 was to reembark in its landing craft and rejoin its regiment. Nucleus crews from the Fleet Naval Landing Force were to enter the inner Yokosuka Harbor prior to the designated H-Hour and take over the damaged battleship *Nagato*, whose guns commanded the landing beaches.

The 4th Marines, with 1/4 and 3/4 in assault, were scheduled to make the initial landing at Yokosuka on L-Day. The battalions of the Fleet Marine and Naval Landing Forces were to land in reserve and take control of specific areas of the naval base and air station, while the 4th Marines pushed inland to link up with elements of the 11th Airborne Division landing at Atsugi airfield. The cruiser *San Diego*, Admiral Badger's flagship, 4 destroyers, and 12 gunboats were to be prepared to furnish naval gunfire support on call. Although no direct support planes were assigned, approximately 1,000 fully armed aircraft would be airborne and available if needed. Despite the hope that the Yokosuka landing would be uneventful, TF 31 was prepared to deal with either organized resistance or individual acts of fanaticism on the part of the Japanese.

L-Day had been originally scheduled for 26 August, but on 20 August, a

threatening typhoon forced Admiral Halsey to postpone the landing date to the 28th. Ships were to enter Sagami Wan, the vast outer bay, on L minus 2. On 25 August, word was received from MacArthur that the anticipated typhoon would delay Army air operations for 48 hours, and L-Day was consequently set for 30 August and the entry of the Sagami Wan ordered for the 28th.

The Japanese had been warned as early as 15 August to begin minesweeping in the waters off Tokyo to facilitate the operations of the Third Fleet. On the morning of the day stipulated for American entry into Sagami Wan, Japanese emissaries and pilots were to meet with Rear Admiral Robert B. Carney, Halsey's Chief of Staff, and Admiral Badger on board the *Missouri* to receive instructions relative to the surrender of the Yokosuka Naval Base and to guide the first Allied ships into anchorages. Halsey was not anxious to keep his ships, many of them small vessels crowded with troops, at sea in typhoon weather, and he asked and received permission from MacArthur to put into Sagami Wan one day early.<sup>16</sup>

The Japanese emissaries reported on board the *Missouri* early on 27 August. They said a lack of suitable minesweepers had prevented them from clearing Sagami Wan and Tokyo Bay, but the movement of Allied shipping to safe berths in Sagami Wan under the guidance of Japanese pilots was accomplished nonetheless without incident. By late afternoon, the Third Fleet was anchored at the entrance of Tokyo Bay. American minesweepers checked the

<sup>16</sup> Halsey and Bryan, *Halsey's Story*, p. 275.

channel leading into the bay and reported it clear.

On 28 August, the first American task force, consisting of combat ships of Task Force 31, entered Tokyo Bay and dropped anchor off Yokosuka at 1300. Vice Admiral Totsuka, Commandant of the *First Naval District* and the Yokosuka Naval Base, and his staff reported to Admiral Badger in the *San Diego* for further instructions regarding the surrender of his command. Only the absolute minimum of maintenance personnel, interpreters, guides, and guards were to remain in the naval base area; the guns of the forts, ships, and coastal batteries commanding the bay were to be rendered inoperative; the breechblocks were to be removed from all anti-aircraft and dual-purpose guns. Additionally, the Japanese were told to fly a white flag over every gun position and to station at each warehouse and building an individual who had a complete inventory of the building and keys to all the spaces. "Both of the above were meticulously carried out."<sup>17</sup>

As the naval commanders made arrangements for the Yokosuka landing, a reconnaissance party of Army troops landed at Atsugi airfield to prepare the way for the airborne operation on L-Day. Radio contact was established with Okinawa, where the 11th Division was waiting to execute its part in BLACKLIST. The attitude of the Japanese officials, both at Yokosuka and Atsugi, was uniformly one of docility and cooperation, but bitter experience caused the Allied commanders and troops to view with a jaundiced eye the

picture of the Japanese as meek and harmless.

On the evening of 27 August appeared a reminder of another aspect of the war. At that time, two British prisoners of war hailed one of the Third Fleet picket boats in Tokyo Bay and were taken on board the *San Juan*, command ship of a specially constituted Allied Prisoner of War Rescue Group. Their harrowing tales of life in the prison camps and of the extremely poor physical condition of many of the prisoners prompted Halsey to order the rescue group to stand by for action on short notice. On 29 August, the *Missouri* and the *San Juan* task group entered Tokyo Bay. At 1420, Admiral Nimitz arrived by seaplane and authorized Halsey to begin rescue operations immediately.<sup>18</sup> Special teams, guided and guarded by carrier planes overhead, immediately started the enormous task of bringing in the prisoners from the many large camps in the Tokyo-Yokohama area. By 1910 that evening, the first RAMPs (Recovered Allied Military Personnel) arrived on board the hospital ship *Benevolence*, and at midnight 739 men had been brought out.<sup>19</sup>

Long before dawn on L-Day, the first group of transports of TF 31 carrying 2/4 began moving into Tokyo Bay. All

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<sup>18</sup> General MacArthur had directed that the Navy role in the POW rescue operations be held up until it could be coordinated with the work of specially constituted Eighth Army rescue teams. Admiral Nimitz, however, realized that MacArthur would understand the urgency of the situation, and gave the go-ahead signal to Halsey. Halsey and Bryan, *Halsey's Story*, p. 278.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Metzger *ltr.*

the plans of the Yokosuka Occupation Force had been based on an H-Hour of 1000 for the main landing, but last-minute word was received from MacArthur on 29 August that the first serials of the 11th Airborne Division would be landing at Atsugi airfield at 0600. Consequently, to preserve the value and impact of simultaneous Army-Navy operations, TF 31 plans were changed to allow for the earlier landing time.

The first landing craft carrying Marines of 2/4 touched the south shore of Futtsu Saki at 0558; two minutes later, the first transport plane rolled to a stop on the runway at Atsugi, and the occupation of Japan was underway. In both areas, the Japanese had followed their instructions to the letter. On Futtsu Saki the coastal guns and mortars had been rendered useless, and only the bare minimum of maintenance personnel, 22 men, remained to make a peaceful turnover of the forts and batteries. By 0845, the battalion had accomplished its mission and was reembarking for the Yokosuka landing, now scheduled for 0930.

With first light came dramatic evidence that the Japanese would comply with the surrender terms. On every hand, lookouts on TF 31 ships could see white flags flying over abandoned and inoperative gun positions. Nucleus crews from the Fleet Naval Landing Force boarded the battleship *Nagato* at 0805 and received the surrender from a skeleton force of officers and technicians; the firing locks of the ship's main battery had been removed and all secondary and AA guns had been dismounted. On the island forts, occupied by the British Landing Force at 0900,

the story was much the same—the coastal guns had been rendered ineffective, and the few Japanese remaining as guides and interpreters amazed the British with their cooperativeness.

The Japanese had not only cleared the naval yard and the airfield areas as directed, but had removed from the immediate area all Japanese whom they considered 'hot-headed' or whom they believed would not abide by the Emperor's decree. Additionally, uniformed police from Tokyo had been brought down and were stationed outside of the Initial Occupation Line which effectively cordoned the occupation forces from the Japanese population. It was obvious that the Japanese fully intended to carry out the terms of the surrender.<sup>20</sup>

The main landing of the 4th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Fred D. Beans, was almost anticlimactic. Exactly on schedule, the first waves of 1/4 and 3/4 crossed the line of departure and headed for their respective beaches. At 0930, men of the 1st Battalion landed on Red Beach southeast of Yokosuka airfield and those of the 3d Battalion on Green Beach in the heart of the Navy yard. There was no resistance. The Marines moved forward rapidly, noting that the few unarmed Japanese present wore white armbands, according to instructions, to signify that they were essential maintenance troops, officials, or interpreters. Leaving guards at warehouses, primary installations, and gun positions, the 4th Marines pushed on to reach the designated Initial Occupation Line.

General Clement and his staff landed at 1000 on Green Beach and were met by a party of Japanese officers, who

<sup>20</sup> Metzger ltr.



*MEMBERS of the Yokosuka Occupation Force inspect a Japanese fortification on Futtsu Saki. (USMC 134741)*



*GENERAL CLEMENT looks over Yokosuka Naval Base after its surrender by the former commander (r.). (USMC 133863)*

formally surrendered the naval base area. "They were informed that non-cooperation or opposition of any kind would be severely dealt with."<sup>21</sup> Clement then proceeded to the Japanese headquarters building, where an American flag presented by the 6th Marine Division was officially raised.<sup>22</sup>

Vice Admiral Totsuka had been ordered to be present on the docks of the naval base to surrender the entire *First Naval District* to Admiral Carney, acting for Admiral Halsey, and Admiral Badger. The *San Diego*, with Carney and Badger on board, tied up at the dock at Yokosuka at 1030. The surrender took place shortly thereafter with appropriate ceremony, and Badger, accompanied by Clement, departed for the Japanese Naval Headquarters building to set up the headquarters of TF 31.

With operations proceeding satisfactorily at Yokosuka and in the occupation zone of the 11th Airborne Division, General Eichelberger took over operational control of the Fleet Landing Force from Halsey at 1200. Both of the top American commanders in the Allied drive across the Pacific set foot on Japanese soil on L-Day; General MacArthur landed at Atsugi airfield at 1419 to begin *de facto* rule of Japan, which was to last more than five years, and Admiral Nimitz, accompanied by Halsey,

came ashore at Yokosuka at 1330 to make an inspection of the naval base.

Reserves and reinforcements landed at Yokosuka during the morning and early afternoon according to schedule. The Fleet Naval Landing Force took over the area that had been secured by 3/4, and the Fleet Marine Landing Force occupied the airfield installations seized earlier by 1/4. The British Landing Force, after evacuating all Japanese personnel from the island forts, landed at the navigation school in the naval base and took over the area between the sectors occupied by the Fleet Naval and Marine Landing Forces. Azuma, a large island hill mass, which had been extensively tunnelled for use as a small boat supply base, was part of the British occupation area. It was investigated by a force of Royal Marines and found deserted.

The 4th Marines, relieved by the other elements of the landing force, moved out to the Initial Occupation Line and set up a perimeter defense for the naval base and airfield. Patrol contact was made with the 11th Airborne Division, which had landed 4,200 men during the day.

The first night ashore was uneventful, marked only by routine guard duty. General MacArthur's orders to disarm and demobilize had been carried out with amazing speed. There was no evidence that the Japanese would do anything but cooperate with the occupying troops. The Yokosuka area, for example, which had formerly been garrisoned by about 50,000 men, now held less than a tenth of that number in skeletal head-

<sup>21</sup> *Fleet Landing Force AR*, p. 18.

<sup>22</sup> This was the same flag that had been raised by the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade at Guam and the 6th Marine Division at Okinawa. Cass, *6th MarDiv Hist*, p. 203.

quarters, processing, maintenance, police, and minesweeping units. It was clear that, militarily at least, the occupation was slated for success.

On 31 August, the Fleet Landing Force continued to consolidate its hold on the naval base area. Company L of 3/4 sailed in two destroyer transports to Tateyama Naval Air Station on the northeastern shores of Sagami Wan to reconnoiter the beach approaches and to cover the 3 September landing of the 112th Cavalry RCT. Here again, the Japanese were waiting peacefully to carry out their surrender instructions.

Occupation operations continued to run smoothly as preparations were made to accept the surrender of Japan on board the *Missouri*. Even as the surrender ceremony was taking place, advance elements of the main body of the Eighth Army occupation force were entering Tokyo harbor. Ships carrying the headquarters of the XI Corps and the 1st Cavalry Division docked at Yokohama. Transports with the 112th Cavalry RCT on board moved to Tateyama, and on 3 September, the troopers landed and relieved Company L of 3/4, which then returned to Yokosuka.

As the occupation operation proceeded without the discovery of any notable obstacles, plans were laid to dissolve the Fleet Landing Force and TF 31. The 4th Marines was selected to take over responsibility for the entire naval base area. By 6 September, ships' detachments of bluejackets and Marines had returned to parent vessels and the provisional landing units were disbanded.

While a large part of the strength of the Fleet Landing Force was returning to normal duties, a considerable augmentation to Marine strength in northern Honshu was being made. On 23 August, AirFMFPac had designated Marine Aircraft Group 31, then at Chimu airfield on Okinawa, to move to Japan as a supporting air group for the northern occupation. Colonel John C. Munn, its commanding officer, had reconnoitered Yokosuka airfield soon after the initial landing, and on 7 September the first echelon of his headquarters and the planes of Marine Fighter Squadron 441 flew in from Okinawa. Surveillance flights over the Tokyo Bay area began the following day as additional squadrons of the group continued to arrive. Initially, Munn's planes served under Third Fleet command, but on 16 September, MAG-31 came under operational control of Fifth Air Force.

Admiral Badger's TF 31 had been dissolved on 8 September when the Commander, Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, assumed responsibility to SCAP for the naval occupation area. General Clement's command continued to function for a short time thereafter while most of the reinforcing units of the 4th Marines loaded out for return to Guam. On 20 September, Lieutenant Colonel Beans relieved General Clement of his responsibilities at Yokosuka, and the general and his Task Force Able staff flew back to Guam to rejoin the 6th Division. Before he left, however, Clement was able to take part in a ceremony in which 120 RAMPs of the "old" 4th Marines captured at Corregidor, received the colors of the "new" 4th from the hands of the men who had carried on the regi-

mental tradition in the Pacific war.<sup>23</sup>

After the initial major contribution of naval land forces to the occupation of northern Japan, the operation became more and more an Army task. As additional troops arrived, the Eighth Army area of effective control was enlarged to include all of northern Japan. In October, the occupation zone of the 4th Marines was reduced to include only the naval base, airfield, and town of Yokosuka. In effect, the regiment became a naval base guard detachment, and on 1 November, control of the 4th Marines passed from Eighth Army to the Commander, U. S. Fleet Activities, Yokosuka.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to routine security and military police patrols, the Marines also carried out Eighth Army demilitarization directives, and collected and disposed of Japanese military and naval material. Detachments from the regiment supervised the unloading at Uraga of Japanese garrison troops returning from bypassed Pacific outposts.

On 20 November, the 4th Marines was detached from the administrative control of the 6th Division and placed

directly under FMFPac. Orders were received directing that preparations be made for 3/4 to relieve the regiment of its duties in Japan, effective 31 December. In common with the rest of the Armed Forces, the Marine Corps faced great public and Congressional pressure to send its men home for discharge as rapidly as possible. Its world-wide commitments had to be examined with this in mind. The Japanese attitude of cooperation with occupation authorities fortunately permitted considerable reduction of troop strength.

In Yokosuka, Marines who did not meet the age, service, or dependency point total necessary for discharge in December or January were transferred to the 3d Battalion, and men with the requisite number of points were concentrated in the 1st and 2d Battalions. On 1 December, 1/4 completed loading out and sailed for the States to be disbanded. The 3d Battalion, reinforced by the regimental units and a casual company formed to provide replacements for ships' Marine detachments, relieved 2/4 of all guard responsibilities on 24 December. The 2d Battalion, with the

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205. This was an occasion of deep personal significance to General Clement, who had been present in Manila as Marine officer on the staff of the Commander, Asiatic Fleet, at the outbreak of the war. He had volunteered to serve with the 4th Marines on Corregidor when fleet headquarters withdrew from the area, but he was ordered to leave the island fortress by submarine just before the American surrender.

<sup>24</sup> Shortly after the 4th Marines occupied the Yokosuka naval base, the small Japanese naval garrison there entertained a group of officers from the regiment. During the course of the gathering, "it developed that a Japanese Lieutenant Commander present had been in the

garrison at New Georgia Island and had headed the SNLP [Special Naval Landing Party] that was occupied, among other things, in trying to locate and capture the Marine Coast-Watcher who had been providing intelligence from New Georgia Island for some time. The Coast-Watcher happened to be Major Clay Boyd, who was present at the party. It was interesting to hear these two former enemies describing their experiences and exchanging questions regarding their New Georgia activities. It provided an interesting [situation] whereby two officers of different countries could exchange such friendly conversation after having been such deadly enemies only months before." *Bergren ltr.*

Regimental Weapons and the Headquarters and Service Companies, loaded out between 27–30 December and sailed for the United States on New Year's Day.

The 3d Battalion, 4th Marines, assumed the duties of the regiment at midnight on 31 December, although a token regimental headquarters remained in Yokosuka to carry on in the name of the 4th Marines. On FMFPac order, this headquarters detachment left Japan on 6 January to join the 6th Marine Division at Tsingtao, in North China.

On 15 February 1946, 3/4 was reorganized and redesignated the 2d Separate Guard Battalion (Provisional), FMFPac. Its military police and security duties in the naval base area remained the same. Most of the occupation tasks of demilitarization in the limited area of the naval base had been completed, and the battalion settled into a routine of guard, ceremonies, and training that was little different from that of any Navy yard barracks detachment in the United States.

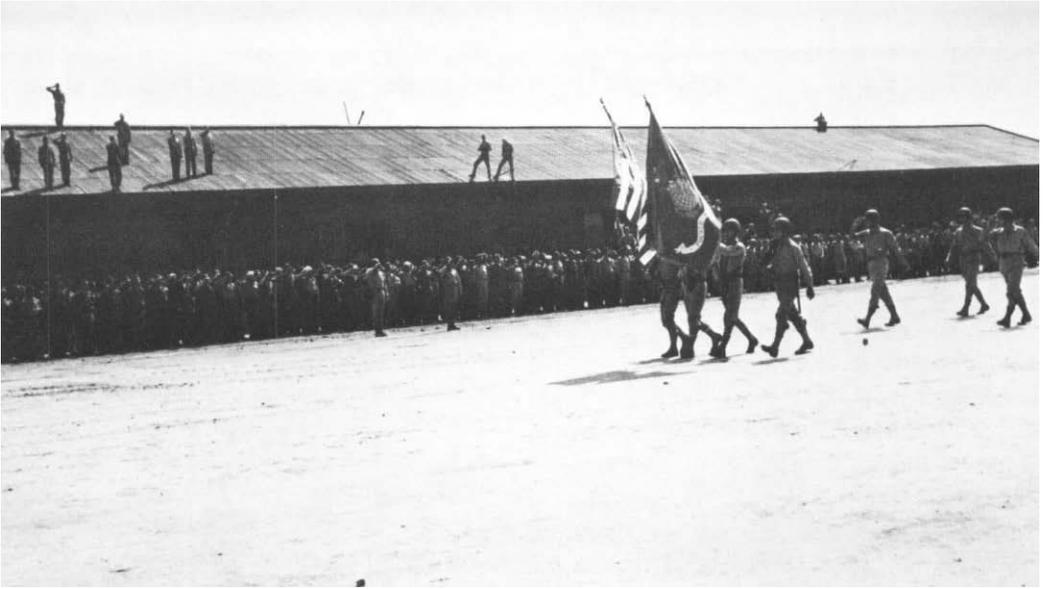
The continued cooperation of the Japanese with SCAP occupation directives and the lack of any overt signs of resistance considerably lessened the need for the fighter squadrons of MAG-31. On 7 October, Fifth Air Force returned control of the group to the Navy. Regular reconnaissance flights in the Tokyo area were discontinued on 15 October, and the operations of MAG-31 were confined largely to mail, courier, transport, and training flights. Personnel and unit reductions similar to those imposed on the 4th Marines also occurred in the air units. By the spring of 1946, the need for Marine participation in the occupation of Japan had

diminished, and early in May, MAG-31 received orders to return to the United States. By 20 June, all serviceable aircraft had been shipped out and on that date, all group personnel were flown out of Japan. The departure of MAG-31 marked the end of Marine occupation activities in northern Japan and closed the final chapter of the Yokosuka operation.

#### SASEBO-NAGASAKI LANDINGS <sup>25</sup>

The favorable reports of Japanese compliance with surrender terms in northern Japan allowed a considerable number of changes to be made in the operation plans of Sixth Army and Fifth Fleet. Prisoner of war evacuation groups could be sent into ports of southern Honshu and Kyushu prior to the arrival of occupation troops, and the main landings could be made administratively without the show of force originally thought necessary. In fact, before the first troop echelon of Sixth Army arrived in Japan, almost all of the RAMPs and civilian internees had been

<sup>25</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: CinCPac WarDs, Sep-Oct45; *CinCPac Surrender and Occupation Rpt*; ComFifthFlt AR—The Occupation of Japan, 15Aug–8Nov45, n.d., hereafter *ComFifthFlt AR*; *Sixth Army Rpt*; ComPhibGru 4 Rpt of Occupation of Sasebo and Nagasaki and of Fukuoka-Shimonseki Areas, dtd 11Nov-45; VAC OpRpt, Occupation of Japan, dtd 30Nov45, hereafter *VAC OpRpt*; VAC WarD, Sep45; 2d MarDiv OpRpt, Occupation of Japan, dtd 1Dec45, hereafter *2d MarDiv OpRpt*; 5th MarDiv OpRpt, Occupation of Japan, dtd 5Dec45, hereafter *5th MarDiv OpRpt*; 5th MarDiv WarD, Sep45; MAG-22 WarD, Sep45; Shaw, *Marine Occupation of Japan*.



*THE "NEW" 4TH MARINES passes in review for members of the "old" 4th, recently liberated from prison camps. (USMC 135287)*



*26TH MARINES moves into Sasebo. (USMC 139128)*

released from their prisons and processed for evacuation by sea or air.

Japanese authorities received orders from SCAP to bring Allied prisoners into designated processing centers on Honshu and Kyushu. In the Eighth Army occupation zone, Yokohama was the center of recovery activities, and by 21 September, 17,531 RAMPs and internees (including over 7,500 from the Sixth Army area) had been examined there and hospitalized or evacuated.<sup>26</sup> On 12 September, after Fifth Fleet minesweepers had cleared the way, a prisoner recovery group put into Wakayama in western Honshu and began processing RAMPs. In less than three days, the remainder of the prisoners in the Sixth Army area on Honshu and those from Shikoku—in all 2,575 men—had been embarked in evacuation ships.

Atom-bombed Nagasaki, which has one of the finest natural harbors in Japan, was chosen as the evacuation port for men imprisoned in Kyushu. Minesweeping of the approaches to the port began on 8 September, and the RAMP evacuation group was able to enter on the 11th. The operation was essentially completed by the time occupation troops began landing in Nagasaki; over 9,000 prisoners were recovered.

At the time that the Eighth Army was extending its hold over northern Japan, and the recovery teams and evacuation groups were clearing the fetid prison compounds, preparations for the Sixth Army occupation of western Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu continued. The occupation area contained 55 percent of

the total Japanese population, including half of the presurrender home garrisons, three of the four major naval bases in Japan, all but two of its principal ports, four of its six largest cities, and three of its four main transportation centers. Kyushu, which was destined to be largely a Marine occupation responsibility, supported a population of 10 million in 15,000 square miles of precipitous terrain. Like all of Japan, every possible foot of the island was intensively cultivated, and enough rice and sweet potatoes were produced to allow inter-island export. The main value of Kyushu to the Japanese economy, however, was its industries. The northwest half of the island contains extensive coal fields, the greatest pig iron and steel producing district in Japan, and most important shipyards, plus a host of smaller industrial facilities.

The V Amphibious Corps, initially composed of the 2d, 3d, and 5th Marine Divisions, had been given the task of occupying Kyushu and adjacent areas of western Honshu and Shikoku in Sixth Army plans, at the same time that the I and X Corps of the Eighth Army took control of the rest of western Honshu and Shikoku. The Fifth Fleet, under Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, was responsible for collecting, transporting, and landing the scattered elements of General Walter Krueger's army.<sup>27</sup> Because of a lack of adequate shipping, the Marine amphibious corps was not able to

<sup>27</sup> On 19 September, Admiral Spruance as Commander, Fifth Fleet, relieved Admiral Halsey of his responsibilities in the occupation of Japan and assumed command of all naval operations in the Empire.

<sup>26</sup> *Eighth Army Monograph I*, pp. 23–28.

move its major units to the target simultaneously.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, it was necessary that the transport squadron that lifted the 5th Marine Division and VAC Headquarters from the Hawaiian Islands be sent to the Philippines to load out the 32d Infantry Division, which was substituted on 6 September for the 3d Marine Division in the occupation force.<sup>29</sup>

The first objective to be secured in the VAC zone under Sixth Army plans was the naval base at Sasebo in northwestern Kyushu. (See Map 28.) Its occupation by the 5th Marine Division was to be followed by the seizure of Nagasaki 30 air miles to the south by the 2d Marine Division. When the turn-around shipping arrived, the 32d Infantry Division was to occupy the Fukuoka-Shimonoseki area, either by an overland move from Sasebo or a direct landing, if the mined waters of Fukuoka harbor permitted. Once effective control had been established over the entry port area, the subordinate units of VAC divisions would gradually spread out over

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<sup>28</sup> Had there been sufficient shipping, other problems would have arisen, for unloading facilities were either primitive or badly damaged by bombing. At Sasebo, there were only two or three docks available, no unloading equipment, and inefficient loading crews. MajGen William W. Rogers ltr to Hd, HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, dtd 12Jan66, hereafter *Rogers ltr*.

<sup>29</sup> In order to guard against any possible treachery on the part of the thousands of Japanese troops on bypassed Central Pacific islands, the Navy "requested that one full Marine Division remain in the Marianas prepared for any eventuality." Aurther and Cohlma, *3d MarDiv Hist*, p. 331. The 3d Marine Division was given the stand-by job, and consequently the 32d Infantry Division was attached to VAC as a replacement unit.

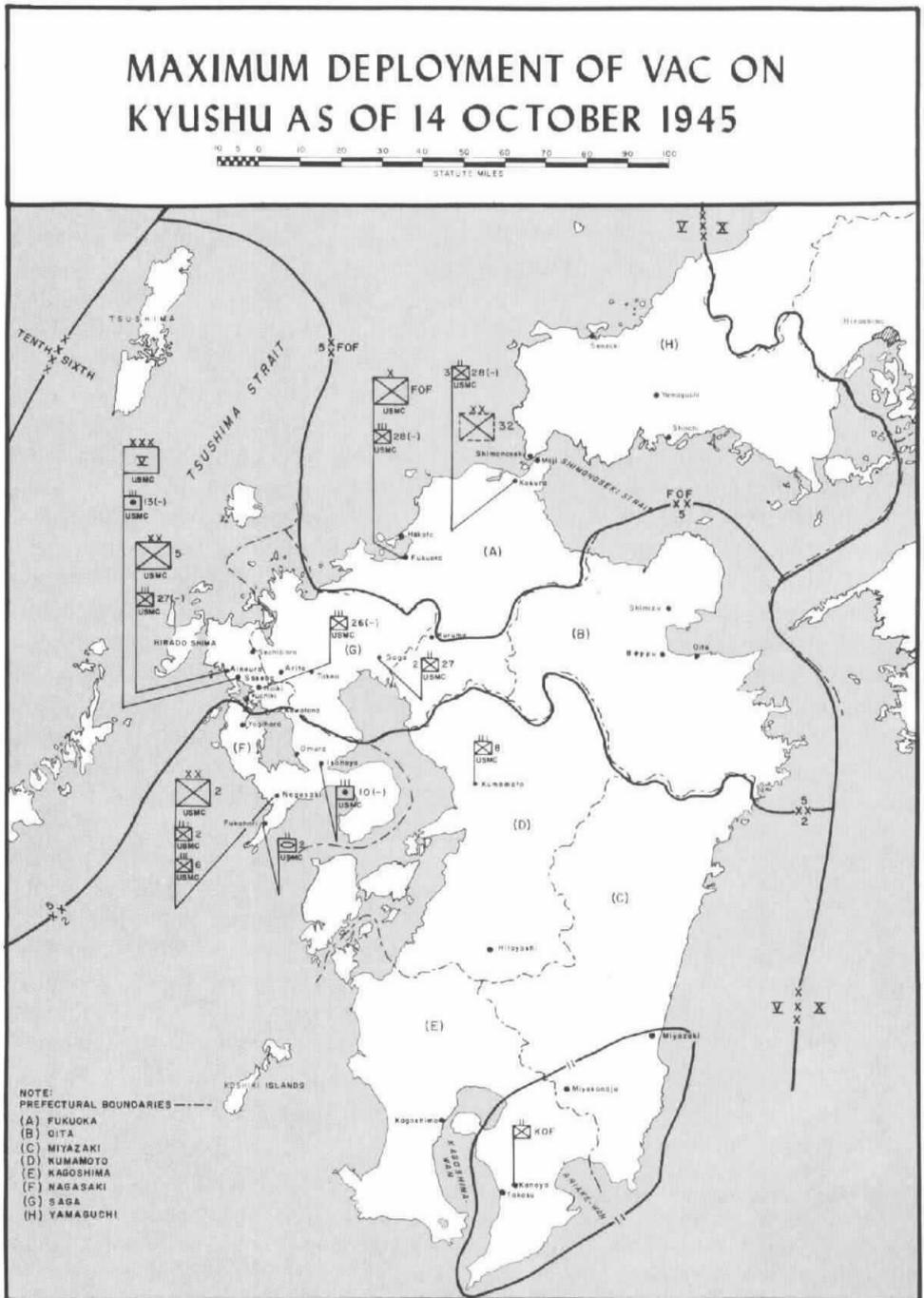
the entire island of Kyushu and across the Shimonoseki straits to the Yamaguchi Prefecture of Honshu to complete the occupation tasks assigned by SCAP.<sup>30</sup>

Major General Harry Schmidt, VAC commander, opened his command post on board the *Mt. McKinley* off Maui in the Hawaiian Islands on 1 September and sailed to join the 5th Division convoy, already en route to Saipan. LST and LSM groups left the Hawaiian area on 3 September with corps troops and the numerous Army augmentation units necessary to make the combat units an effective occupation force. At Saipan, the various transport groups rendezvoused and units of the 2d Marine Division embarked. Conferences were held to clarify plans for the operations, and two advance reconnaissance parties were dispatched to Japan. One, led by Colonel Walter W. Wensinger, VAC Operations Officer, and consisting of key staff officers of both the corps and the 2d Division, flew to Nagasaki, where it arrived on 16 September. The second party of similar composition, but with beachmaster representatives and 5th Division personnel included, left for Sasebo by high speed transport (APD) on 15 September. The mission of the parties was:

. . . to facilitate smooth and orderly entry of U. S. forces into the Corps zone of responsibility by making contact with

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<sup>30</sup> There are seven prefectures or *kens* on Kyushu: Fukuoka, Oita, Miyazaki, Kagoshima, Kumamoto, Nagasaki, and Saga. The prefecture very much resembles the American county in political form. Each of the seven takes its name from the largest city in the *ken*, the location of the prefectural headquarters.



MAP 28

T. L. RUSSELL

key Japanese civil and military authorities; to execute advance spot checks on compliance with demilitarization orders; and to ascertain such facilities for reception of our forces as condition and suitability of docks and harbors, adequacy of sites selected by map reconnaissance for Corps installations, condition of airfields, roads, and communications.<sup>31</sup>

After issuing instructions to Japanese officials at Nagasaki, Colonel Wensinger and the corps staff members proceeded by destroyer to Sasebo where preliminary arrangements were made for the arrival of the 5th Division. On 20 September, the second reconnaissance party arrived at Sasebo, contacted Wensinger, and completed preparations for the landing.

At dawn on 22 September (A-Day), the transport squadron carrying Major General Thomas E. Bourke's 5th Marine Division and corps headquarters troops arrived off Sasebo. Members of the advance party transferred from an APD which had met the convoy, and reported to their respective unit command ships. At 0859, after Japanese pilots had directed the transports to safe berths in the inner harbor of Sasebo, the 26th Marines (less 3/26) began landing on beaches at the naval air station. As the men advanced rapidly inland, relieving Japanese guards on naval base installations and stores, ships carrying other elements of the division moved to the Sasebo docks to begin general unloading. The shore party, reinforced by the 2d Battalion, 28th Marines, was completely ashore by 1500 and started cargo unloading operations which continued through the night.

The rest of the 28th Marines, in division reserve, remained on board ship on A-Day. The 1st Battalion of the 27th Marines landed on the docks in late afternoon and moved out to occupy the zone of responsibility assigned its regiment. Before troop unloading was suspended at dusk, two artillery battalions of the 13th Marines and regimental headquarters had landed on beaches in the aircraft factory area, and the 5th Tank Battalion had disembarked at the air station. All units ashore established guard posts and security patrols, but the first night of the division in Japan passed without any noticeable event.

On 23 September, as most of the remaining elements of the 5th Division landed and General Bourke set up his command post ashore, patrols started probing the immediate countryside. Company C (reinforced) of the 27th Marines was sent to Omura, about 22 miles southeast of Sasebo, to establish a security guard over the naval air training station there. Omura airfield had been selected as the base of Marine air operations in southern Japan.

A reconnaissance party, led by Colonel Daniel W. Torrey, Jr., commanding officer of MAG-22, had landed and inspected the field on 14 September, and the advance flight echelon of his air group had flown in from Okinawa six days later. Corsairs of VMF-113 reached Omura on 23 September, and the rest of the group flight echelon arrived before the month was over. The primary mission of MAG-22 was similar to that of MAG-31 at Yokosuka: surveillance flights in support of occupation operations.

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<sup>31</sup> VAC *OpRpt*, p. 7.

As flight operations commenced at Omura and the 5th Division consolidated its hold on Sasebo, the second major element of VAC landed in Japan. The early arrival at Saipan of the transports assigned to lift the 2d Division, coupled with efficient staging and loading, had enabled planners to move the division landing date ahead two days. When reports were received that the approaches to the originally selected landing beaches were mined but that the harbor at Nagasaki was clear, the decision was made to land directly in the harbor area. At 1300 on 23 September, the 2d and 6th Marines landed simultaneously on the east and west sides of the harbor.

The two regiments moved out swiftly to occupy the city and curtain off the atom-bomb-devastated area. The Marine detachments from the cruisers *Biloxi* and *Wichita* were relieved by 3/2, which took up the duty of providing security guards in Nagasaki for RAMP operations. Ships were brought alongside of wharfs and docks to facilitate cargo handling, and unloading operations were well underway by nightfall. A quiet calm ruled the city to augur a peaceful occupation.

On 24 September, as the rest of Major General LeRoy P. Hunt's 2d Division began landing, the corps commander arrived from Sasebo by destroyer to inspect the Nagasaki area. General Schmidt had established his CP ashore at Sasebo the previous day and taken command of the two Marine divisions. The only other major Allied unit ashore in Kyushu, an Army task force that was occupying Kanoya airfield in the south-

ernmost part of the island, was transferred to General Schmidt's command from the Far East Air Forces on 1 October. This unit, which was built around a reinforced battalion (1/127) of the 32d Infantry Division, had been flown into Kanoya on 3 September to secure an emergency field on the aerial route to Tokyo from Okinawa and the Philippines.

General Krueger, well satisfied with the progress of the occupation in the VAC zone, assumed command of all forces ashore at 1000 on 24 September. The first major elements of the other corps of the Sixth Army began landing at Wakayama the next day. On every hand, there was ample evidence that the occupation of southern Japan would be bloodless.

Among the VAC troops, whose previous experience with the Japanese in surrender had been "necessarily meager," considerable speculation developed regarding:

. . . to what extent and how, if at all, the Japanese nation would comply with the terms of surrender imposed. . . . The only thing which could be predicted from the past was that the Japanese reaction would be unpredictable.<sup>32</sup>

And it was. In fact, the eventual key to the pattern and sequence of VAC occupation operations was "the single outstanding fact that Japanese compliance with the terms was as nearly correct as could be humanly expected."<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

# Kyushu Deployment to December 1945

## KYUSHU OCCUPATION<sup>1</sup>

Original plans for the occupation of Japan had contemplated military government of the surrendered nation, coupled with close operational control over the disarmament and demobilization of the Japanese armed forces. During the course of conferences with enemy surrender emissaries at Manila, radical modifications of these plans were made, however, "based on the full cooperation of the Japanese and [including] measures designed to avoid incidents which might result in renewed conflict."<sup>2</sup>

Instead of instituting direct military rule, the responsible occupation force commanders were to supervise the execution of SCAP directives to the Japanese government, keeping in mind MacArthur's policy of using, but not supporting, that government.<sup>3</sup> An important element of the surrender was the clear statement by the Allied powers that from the moment of capitulation,

the Emperor and the Japanese Government would be under the absolute authority of SCAP. The Japanese military forces were to disarm and demobilize under their own supervision, and the Allied forces were to occupy assigned areas at the same time that Japanese demobilization was underway.

The infantry regiment (and divisional artillery operating as infantry) was to be "the chief instrument of demilitarization and control. The entire plan for the imposition of the terms of surrender was based upon the presence of infantry regiments in all the prefectures within the Japanese homeland."<sup>4</sup> In achieving this aim, a fairly standard pattern of occupational duties was established with the division of responsibilities based on the boundaries of the prefectures so that the existing Japanese government structure could be utilized. In some instances, especially in the 5th Marine Division zone, the vast size of certain prefectures, the density of civilian population, and the tactical necessities of troop deployment combined to force modifications of the general scheme of regimental responsibility for a single prefecture.

Generally speaking, the method of carrying out the regimental mission varied little between zones and units, whether Army or Marine. After selected advance parties of staff officers from higher headquarters and the unit con-

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: CinCPac WarDs, Sep-Nov45; *Sixth Army Rpt*; *VAC OpRpt*; *VAC WarDs*, Sep-Nov45; *2d MarDiv OpRpt*; *5th MarDiv OpRpt*; *5th MarDiv WarDs*, Sep-Nov45; *Fukuoka Base Comd OpRpt*, Occupation of Japan, dtd 25Nov45; Conner, *5th MarDiv Hist*; Shaw, *Marine Occupation of Japan*.

<sup>2</sup> *Eighth Army Monograph I*, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> SCAP, Summation No. 1 of Non-Military Activities in Japan and Korea, Sep-Oct45, p. 3 (Army Sec, WWII RecDiv, NA).

<sup>4</sup> *Sixth Army Rpt*, p. 35.

cerned had established initial liaison with local Japanese authorities, the regiment moved into a bivouac area in or near the zone of responsibility. Reconnaissance patrols were sent out to verify the location of military installations and check inventories of war material submitted by the Japanese. With this information, the regimental commander was able to divide his zone into battalion areas, and the battalion commanders could, in turn, assign their companies specific sectors of responsibility. Billeting and sanitation details preceded the troops into these areas to oversee the preparation of barracks and similar quarters, since many of these buildings were in a deplorable state of repair and rather filthy.

The infantry company or artillery battery then became the working unit that actually accomplished the occupation duties. Company commanders were empowered to seize any military installations in their zone and to use Japanese military personnel not yet demobilized or laborers furnished by Home Ministry representatives to dispose of all material within the installations. SCAP directives governed disposition procedures and divided all material into the following categories:

1. That to be destroyed or scrapped (explosives and armaments not needed for souvenirs or training purposes).
2. That to be used for our operations (telephones, radios, and vehicles).
3. That to be returned to the Japanese Home Ministry (fuel, lumber, etc.).
4. That to be issued as trophies.
5. That to be shipped to the U. S. as trophies or training gear.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

The dangerous job of explosive ordnance disposal was handled by the Japanese with a bare minimum of American supervision. Some explosives were either dumped at sea or burned in approved areas, some were exploded in underground sites; and because it was too dangerous to enter certain explosives storage tunnels, these were sealed and the contents left buried.<sup>6</sup> Weapons and equipment declared surplus to the needs of occupation troops were converted into scrap, mainly by Japanese labor, and then turned over to the Home Ministry for use in essential civilian industries. Foodstuffs and other nonmilitary stocks were returned to the Japanese for distribution.

Although prefectural police maintained civil law and order and enforced democratization decrees issued at the instance of SCAP, constant surveillance was maintained over Japanese methods of government. American intelligence and military government personnel, working with the occupying troops, acted quickly to stamp out any suggestion of a return to militarism or evasion of the surrender terms. Regarding the handling of war criminals, the JCS, on 14 September, had directed MacArthur to "proceed without avoidable delay with the trial before appropriate military courts or tribunals and the punishment of Japanese war criminals as have been or may be apprehended, in accordance with the desire of the President."<sup>7</sup> Known or suspected war criminals were therefore apprehended and sent to Tokyo for processing and possible arraignment before an Allied tribunal.

<sup>6</sup> Col Saville T. Clark ltr to Hd, HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, dtd 8Dec65.

<sup>7</sup> CinCPac WarD, Sep45.

In addition to the apprehension of war criminals and the exercise of supervisory control of Japanese demobilization of the home garrison, occupation troops were responsible for ensuring the smooth processing of hundreds of thousands of military personnel and civilians returning from the outposts of the now defunct Empire. At the same time, thousands of Korean, Formosan, and Chinese prisoners and "voluntary" laborers had to be collected, pacified at times,<sup>8</sup> housed and fed, and returned to their homelands. In all repatriation operations, Japanese vessels and crews were used to the fullest extent possible in order to conserve Allied manpower and allow for an accelerated program of postwar demobilization.

Soon after the initial VAC landings on Kyushu, investigation disclosed that the Japanese had begun repatriation of their own people from Korea and were returning Koreans home from Japan. The port of Hakata, a short distance up the coast from Fukuoka, was being utilized as an embarkation point, and Moji and Shimonoseki were employed as receiving and holding areas. The Japanese used small craft for the repatriation program, "and processing centers, records, sanitation, etc., were conspicuous by their absence."<sup>9</sup> Confronted by the first groups of incoming Japanese, the 5th Marine Division set

up a repatriation center at Uragashira, which shortly after 26 September was receiving and processing nearly 3,000 repatriated and demobilized Japanese troops a day. Soon after, Hakata and its receiving area were operating under occupation supervision. The ports of Moji and Shimonoseki were closed down and not authorized for purposes of repatriation because the harbor approaches were still heavily mined and had not yet been cleared.

According to reliable information available to the occupation authorities, there were well over a million Koreans to be repatriated from Japan, and additional ports and receiving centers were set up immediately. Following their inspection, Sensaki, Hakata, Sasebo, and Kagoshima were authorized as VAC zone ports of embarkation and the Japanese were instructed to improve and expand facilities there. Available Japanese shipping, however, fell far short of port capacity.

In addition to the Koreans discovered in the zone, the Americans found that some 40,000 Chinese had to be repatriated; 6,000 of these were in the VAC zone of responsibility along with approximately 7,000 Formosans and 15,000 Ryukyu Islanders. Higher headquarters advised VAC that the Ryukyuan and Formosan—half of whom were demobilized soldiers—could not be repatriated yet, but the Chinese could. The return home of the Chinese on Japanese shipping began early in October from Hakata, and it was found necessary to place U. S. guard detachments on many ships to prevent disorder because the Japanese crews could not control the returnees. The Koreans,

<sup>8</sup> Deep-rooted feelings of antipathy towards the Japanese among the Koreans and Chinese, coupled with delays in the repatriation program caused by lack of shipping, sometimes led to riots and disturbances. Most of these were handled by Japanese police, but American troops occasionally had to intervene to prevent serious trouble.

<sup>9</sup> VAC OpRpt, Anx D, App 3, pp. 1-2.

on the other hand, were relatively docile.

With "their constant drift out of nowhere"<sup>10</sup> into repatriation centers, the Koreans soon clogged these points beyond the capacity of available shipping. SCAP authorized the use of 80 LSTs for a China-to-Sasebo run for the repatriation of Japanese, and a Sasebo-to-Korea or -China run for others. After 30 November, the port of Kagoshima was used as a repatriation center. The first Chinese repatriates, a total of 2,800, left Sasebo on 24 November under this system.

The pattern of progressive occupation called for in SCAP plans was quickly established by VAC:

After the 2d and 5th Marine Divisions had landed, VAC's general plan was for the 2d Marine Division to expand south of Nagasaki to assume control of the Nagasaki, Kumamoto, Miyazaki, and Kagoshima Prefectures. The 5th Marine Division in the meantime was to extend east to the prefectures of Saga, Fukuoka, Oita, and Yamaguchi. The latter division was to be relieved in the Fukuoka, Oita, and Yamaguchi areas upon the arrival of sufficient elements of the 32d Division.<sup>11</sup>

Troops occupying Sasebo found a serious breakdown in those sanitary and public services<sup>12</sup> ordinarily rendered by

<sup>10</sup> *VAC OpRpt*, Anx D, App 3, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> *Sixth Army Rpt*, p. 26.

<sup>12</sup> For example, the telephone service in Sasebo, and western Japan as well, was atrocious. "A telephone call to a point 50 miles away often took many hours for a connection and then [one was able to get] only an unintelligible response." To improve these conditions, VAC established a line of sight system similar to that used in Hawaii, where there was a scrambler unit at the origin and an automatic unscrambler at the receiver. "An

the city. Containing the third largest naval base in Japan, Sasebo was a city whose normal population was approximately 300,000 until 29 June 1945. On that day, Sasebo suffered its only B-29 raid of the war which destroyed a large portion of the city, but left the Navy yard area relatively undamaged. This raid made over 60,000 Japanese homeless and killed 1,000.

On 27 September, four days after he had first landed at Sasebo, General Bourke moved his CP to the naval recruit training center at Ainoura, seven miles to the west of Sasebo.<sup>13</sup> The 5th Pioneer Battalion, with military police and motor transport units attached, garrisoned Sasebo. This reinforced battalion furnished working parties for the 5th Division quartermaster, unloaded ships, provided guards for supply dumps and water points, and established military police patrols for the city.

As the 5th Marine Division established order in the Sasebo area, it began preparations to extend the occupation throughout the northern area of Kyushu and onto nearby islands, including southern Honshu. A reinforced company of the division was established at Omura almost immediately after landing, and motorized patrols reconnoitered the approaches to Sasebo. Very poor road conditions existing along the route from Sasebo to Omura were particularly bad on the outskirts of the

unsung triumph of the communicators," this system was used throughout the VAC area and was "finally extended to Tokyo" with excellent results. *Rogers ltr.*

<sup>13</sup> It was later discovered that the defenders of Tarawa had trained at Ainoura. BGen Clarence R. Wallace ltr to CMC, dtd 4Jan66.

former city. The many narrow bridges encountered were often in poor repair or entirely impassable. Japanese males met by the patrols were usually friendly, but the woman and children appeared frightened. As the Japanese populace grew more accustomed to the presence of the Marines and became assured that the occupation forces would not harm them, their shyness and fear disappeared.

During the latter part of the first week of occupation, VAC continued to extend its zone of occupation operations, guarded Japanese military installations and arms and supply dumps, and began to inventory and dispose of the material in these dumps in line with prescribed regulations. The 2d Marine Division established detachments at Isahaya (northeast of Nagasaki) and Kawatana at the same time that patrols exercised surveillance over all roads and strategic areas.

One week after the initial landings, the 5th Division zone of responsibility (Z/R) was extended to include Yagihara, Miyazaki, Arita, Takeo, Sechihara, and other small towns to the north and west of Sasebo. The normal occupation missions of the division continued to proceed in a satisfactory manner. Japanese equipment was inventoried rapidly and Japanese guards were relieved by Marine sentries as soon as the inventories were completed. On 29 September, VAC published an operation order for the occupation of Fukuoka. (See Map 28.)

### *FUKUOKA OCCUPATION*

The decision to occupy Fukuoka, largest city in Kyushu and administra-

tive center of the northwestern coal and steel region, was made almost immediately after the initial landings. Because the waters of Fukuoka harbor were liberally sown with mines, the movement to the city was made by rail and road from Sasebo. An advance party, consisting of officers from VAC and the 5th Division, reached Fukuoka on 27 September and began making preliminary arrangements for the entry of the troops. Meetings were held with Japanese military and civilian authorities regarding the conduct of the occupation. Leading elements of the occupation force began arriving on 30 September. Brigadier General Ray A. Robinson, Assistant Division Commander of the 5th Marine Division, was given command of the Fukuoka force which consisted of the 28th Marines (Reinforced) and Army augmentation detachments.

The Fukuoka Occupation Force (FOF), which was placed directly under VAC command, began sending reconnaissance parties followed by company- and battalion-sized occupation forces to the major cities of northern Kyushu and across the Straits of Shimonoseki to Yamaguchi Prefecture in southwestern Honshu. Because of the limited number of troops available to FOF, Japanese guards were left in charge of most military installations, and effective control of the zone was maintained through the use of motorized surveillance patrols.

In order to prevent possible outbreaks of mob violence, Marine guard detachments were set up to administer the Chinese labor camps found in the area, and Japanese Army supplies were

requisitioned to feed and clothe the former POWs and laborers. Some of the supplies were also used to sustain the swarms of Koreans who gathered in temporary camps near the principal repatriation ports of Fukuoka and Senzaki (Yamaguchi Prefecture) while they awaited shipping to return to their homeland. The Marines supervised the loading out of the Koreans and made continuous checks on the processing and discharge procedures used to handle the Japanese troops who returned with each incoming vessel. In addition to its repatriation activities, the FOF located and inventoried vast quantities of Japanese military material for later disposition by the 32d Infantry Division.

On 1 October, General Robinson conferred with ranking Japanese officers concerning orders and instructions pertaining to the occupation. At the direction of higher authority, the FOF commander ordered sentries posted at the more important buildings and dock facilities, and in a swift move to crush a suspected black market operation in foreign exchange, he immediately closed the branches of the Bank of Chosen throughout the FOF zone, posted guards at these branches, sealed their safes and vaults, and impounded the records of the bank.

Further establishment of occupation forces throughout the zone began on 4 October with the movement of a reinforced company from 3/28 into Shimonoseki as the Shimonoseki Occupation Group. On 6 October, another reinforced company of the battalion was sent into the Moji area. The rest of the battalion moved into Moji on 10 October, the day that the Shimonoseki-

Moji Occupation Group was formed. A detachment was sent from Shimonoseki to Yamaguchi the next day, and eight days later, occupation forces were set up at Senzaki.

As General Robinson's force took control of Fukuoka and Yamaguchi Prefectures, the 5th Marine Division expanded its hold on the area east of Sasebo. On 5 October, the division Z/R was extended to include Saga Prefecture and the city of Kurume in the center of the island. The 2d Battalion, 27th Marines, moved to Saga city, operating for a short time as an independent occupation group. On 24 October, the regiment (less 1/27) established its headquarters in Kurume and assumed responsibility for the central portion of the division zone, which now extended to the east coast (Oita Prefecture). Through all of these troop movements, the maintenance of roads and bridges was a constant problem since the inadequate road net quickly disintegrated when punished by the combination of heavy rains and extensive military traffic. The burden of supplying and transporting the scattered elements of VAC was borne by the Japanese rail system.<sup>14</sup>

After it had moved to Saga, 2/27 discovered on the airfield there 178 Japanese fighter planes, all but 8 of which

<sup>14</sup> The state of the Kyushu road net, much of which would not support even medium-sized vehicles, and the extensive rice paddy areas contiguous to these roads would have constituted extremely serious obstacles to the prosecution of OLYMPIC, the projected invasion of Kyushu. Fortunately, the extensive Japanese rail network was capable of handling most of the supply requirements of the occupation forces.

had been damaged by typhoons. The battalion also uncovered a vast "ammunition dump where the Japanese had stored approximately one-fifth of the country's ammunition for home defense."<sup>15</sup> A battalion patrol located an internment camp at Shimizu, where Dutch, British, Italian, Portuguese, Swiss, and Belgian nationals had been confined during the war. Upon entering the camp, the Marines found that:

The only remaining internee was an 82-year old Swiss who amazed everyone by proving that he was an ex-U. S. Marine. Edward Zillig had enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1888 in Philadelphia, had been discharged in 1893, and then had reenlisted during the Spanish-American War. He produced a letter from the Veterans Administration showing that he had received a pension. From 1936 until his house was blown to bits, he had lived in Nagasaki with his Japanese wife. Zillig turned over two items to the patrol: (1) a statement of the kind treatment he had received from a Japanese police sergeant, and (2) a request for renewal of his \$60-a-month pension.<sup>16</sup>

Zillig also had a request for the "one more thing I want to see in life," a full-dress Marine Corps parade.<sup>17</sup> The old man received his wish shortly thereafter, when he stood beside Lieutenant Colonel John W. A. Antonelli 2/27 commander, and "watched the modern Leathernecks swing by—and he remembered to salute at the right time."<sup>18</sup> The former Marine's pension was renewed, for as soon as the Veterans Ad-

ministration received evidence of Zillig's existence, it began sending him a check again. Veterans legislation that had been passed in Congress during the war years had increased Zillig's pension to \$75 a month. Unfortunately, he did not live long enough to cash more than a few checks, for he committed suicide on 9 March 1946.

#### FURTHER EXPANSION

When it was decided to occupy Oita Prefecture, the entire 180-mile trip from Sasebo to Oita city was made by rail. The occupation force, Company A (Reinforced) of the 5th Tank Battalion, operating as infantry,<sup>19</sup> set up in the city on 15 October and conducted a reconnaissance of the military installations in the coastal prefecture by means of motorized patrols. The company served as an advance party for 32d Infantry Division troops, and because of its small size, was forced to rely on Japanese labor for most of its material inventory work.

The Marines found that the naval air station at Oita had been almost completely destroyed by American bombs, although nearly 100 dispersed Japanese planes remained in semi-operable condition. Despite the fact that Oita had never been singled out as a primary target for AAF raids, approximately 40 percent of the city had been razed because B-29s

<sup>15</sup> Conner, *5th MarDiv Hist*, p. 153.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Washington Star*, 3Dec45.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> "Tanks were never used even for show purposes because the soft roads would not bear their weight. The Iwo-scarred Shermans had been landed and parked at the Sasebo naval air station, and there they stayed." Conner, *5th MarDiv Hist*, p. 155.



**BATTERED BUDDHIST FIGURES** *symbolize the atomic destruction suffered at Nagasaki. (USMC 136176)*



**MORE THAN 200 Japanese planes** *are destroyed at Omura as part of the Allied disarmament program. (USMC 139991)*

had been diverted there when their primary target could not be hit or when the a bomb load left over from those dropped on the initial target. From Oita, the occupation spread northwest along the east coast of Kyushu to Beppu, where the most famous beaches and shore resorts of Japan are located.

The 13th Marines, occupying the area to the south and east of Sasebo in Nagasaki and Saga Prefectures, supervised the processing of Japanese repatriates returning from China and Korea, and handled the disposition of the weapons, equipment, and ammunition that were stored in naval depots near Sasebo and Kawatana. The 1st Battalion, 27th Marines, which was detached from its regiment, was stationed in Sasebo under division control, and furnished a portion of the garrison for the city as well as detachments that investigated the island groups offshore. The division reconnaissance company was sent in DUKWs to Hirado Shima, north of Sasebo, on 2 October. Finding everything in order, the company returned to Sasebo on the 4th.

The 26th Marines, whose patrols ranged the hinterland north and east of Sasebo, had a very short tour of duty in Japan. On 13 October, the regiment was alerted for transfer to the Palau Islands.<sup>20</sup> While the 26th was making

<sup>20</sup> The 6th Marines of the 2d Marine Division was originally scheduled to answer this call from CinCPac, and when its Palau alert was cancelled, it was directed to stand by to move to Sasebo to replace the 26th Marines. On 17 October, this second alert was cancelled when VAC attached the 127th Infantry Regiment to the 5th Marine Division.

preparations to move to Peleliu and supervise the repatriation of Japanese troops from the Western Carolines,<sup>21</sup> the first elements of the 32d Division began landing at Sasebo. An advance party of the division had arrived in Fukuoka earlier, on 3 October. The 128th Infantry, followed by the 126th Infantry and division troops, moved straight on through the port and entrained for Fukuoka, where the Army units came temporarily under the control of FOF. The V Amphibious Corps placed the 127th Infantry (less 1/127), which landed on 18–19 October, under the operational control of the 5th Division to take over the zone of responsibility of the 26th Marines.

The Fukuoka Occupation Force was dissolved on 24 October when it was relieved by the 32d Division, which opened its command post in Fukuoka on the same day.<sup>22</sup> At this time, the Fukuoka Base Command, composed of the service elements that had been assigned to General Robinson's force, was set up to support the operations in northern Kyushu and continued to function until 25 November, when the Army division took over its duties. The 28th Marines

<sup>21</sup> See pt III, chap 3, "Return to the Islands," above.

<sup>22</sup> "The movement of the 32d Army Division to the Fukuoka area created a problem. It was unsafe to send [it] by sea because of the remaining harbor mines. Overland was almost impossible because of the narrow bridges and turns" facing the division's heavy equipment, and surmounting all of this was the impossible loading situation in Sasebo. The 32d "finally went overland in what was a really remarkable logistic feat." *Rogers ltr.*

and the 5th Tank Battalion occupation forces were relieved by Army units: the 128th RCT<sup>23</sup> took over Yamaguchi Prefecture, the 126th patrolled Fukuoka and Oita Prefectures, and the 127th, after it was relieved by the 28th Marines in the zone formerly occupied by the 26th Marines, occupied Fukuoka and the zone to the north.

The 26th Marines began boarding ship on 18 October and 127th Infantry units moved into the vacated billets. On 19 October, the Marine regiment was detached from the division and returned to FMFPac control as loading continued. Before the transports departed on 21 October, orders were received from FMFPac designating 2/26 for disbandment, and the battalion returned to the Marine Camp, Ainoura—the 5th Division headquarters outside of Sasebo. On 31 October, 2/26, the first of many war-born Marine infantry battalions to end its Pacific service passed out of existence and its men were transferred to other units.

While Brigadier General Robert B. McBride, Jr.'s 32d Infantry Division moved north to take over the area occupied by the Fukuoka and Oita Occupation Forces, the 2d Marine Division gradually expanded its hold on southern Kyushu. Immediately after landing, the

2d and 6th Marines moved into billets in the vicinity of Nagasaki, with the missions of surveillance in their assigned areas and of disposition of enemy military material in the nearby countryside and on the many small islands in the vicinity of the coast. The 8th and 10th Marines went directly from their transports to barracks at Isahaya, where they began patrolling the peninsula to the south and the rest of Nagasaki Prefecture in the 2d Division zone.

On 4 October, VAC changed the boundary between divisions to include Omura in General Hunt's zone. The 5th Division security detachment at the Marine air base was relieved by 3/10 and returned to parent control. Shortly thereafter, the 10th Marines took over the whole of the 8th Marines area in Nagasaki Prefecture.

The corps expanded the 2d Division zone on 5 October to include all of highly industrialized Kumamoto Prefecture. An advance billeting, sanitation, and reconnaissance party of the 8th Marines travelled to Kumamoto city in the southwestern part of the island to make contact with the Japanese authorities and pave the way for regimental assumption of control. By 18 October, all units of the 8th Marines established themselves in and around Kumamoto and began the by-now familiar process of inventory and disposition. In line with SCAP directives outlining measures to restore the civilian economy to a self-supporting level, the Marines assisted the local government wherever necessary to speed the

<sup>23</sup> The infantry units of the 32d Infantry Division were organized as RCTs comprising an infantry regiment, an artillery battalion, and other attached division and corps troops to perform occupation duties. In the Marine divisions, where the artillery regiment was an organic unit, it was reinforced and used as an occupation force in the same manner as the infantry regiments.

conversion of war plants to essential peacetime production.<sup>24</sup>

The remaining unoccupied portion of Kyushu was taken over by the 2d Division within the next month. Advance parties headed by senior field grade officers contacted civil and military officials in Kagoshima and Miyazaki Prefectures to ensure compliance with surrender terms and adequate preparations for the reception of division troops.<sup>25</sup> Miyazaki Prefecture and the half of Kagoshima east of Kagoshima Wan were assigned to the 2d Marines. The remaining half of Kagoshima Prefecture was added to the zone of the 8th Marines; later, the regiment was also given responsibility for conducting occupation operations in the Osumi and Koshiki island groups, which lay to the

<sup>24</sup> A military government team, composed primarily of Army and Navy officers, was assigned to each regimental headquarters and performed a valuable liaison function between the Marine commanders and local government agencies. LtCol Duncan H. Jewell ltr to Hd, HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, dtd 3Jan66.

<sup>25</sup> Colonel Samuel G. Taxis, the G-3 of the division, headed up the team which went to southern Kyushu to meet with the commanders of the *Forty-seventh* and *Fiftieth Armies* and the head of the *Naval Base Force* at Kagoshima to explain the provisions of the surrender. When Colonel Taxis compared the strength of the Japanese forces with that of the occupation forces, he came to the conclusion that "a boy was sent to do a man's job." BGen Samuel G. Taxis comments to HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, dtd 28Dec65. General Taxis also recalled that his team was purposely composed of only a few Marines in the belief that if a show of force had been made in the south, the Japanese armed forces there would react. *Ibid.*

south and southwest respectively of Kyushu.

On 29 October, a motor convoy carrying the major part of 1/8 moved from Kumamoto to Kagoshima city to assume control of western Kagoshima. The battalion had to start anew the routine of reconnaissance, inspection, inventory, and disposition that had occupied it twice before. The 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, assigned to the eastern half of Kagoshima, found much of its preliminary occupation spadework already done. The Army task force at Kanoya had been actively patrolling the area since it had come under VAC command. When 2/2, loaded in four LSTs, arrived from Nagasaki on 27 October, it was relatively easy to effect a relief. The Marines landed at Takasu, port for Kanoya, and moved by rail and road to the airfield. On 30 October, 2/2 assumed from 1/127 operational control of the Army Air Force detachment manning the emergency field, and the 32d Division battalion prepared to return to Sasebo to rejoin its regiment.

The remainder of the 2d Marines also moved by sea from Sasebo to Takasu and thence by rail to Miyazaki Prefecture in early November. Regimental headquarters and 3/2 set up their bases of operations at Miyakonojo, and the 1st Battalion moved into billets in the city of Miyazaki.<sup>26</sup> By 14 November, with the occupation of Miyazaki complete,

<sup>26</sup> Subsequently, one reinforced company was deployed to a small coastal town half-way between Miyazaki and Oita, and remained there until the entire regiment was withdrawn. *Ibid.*

VAC had established effective control over its entire zone of responsibility.<sup>27</sup>

At the end of November, VAC could report substantial progress in its major occupation tasks. Over 700,000 Japanese returning from overseas had been processed through ports and separation

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<sup>27</sup> In late November, in order to determine whether the VAC plan for OLYMPIC was valid and feasible, Brigadier General William W. Rogers, VAC chief of staff, called into Sasebo for a three-day war games session the commanders, chiefs of staff, and principal staff officers of the Japanese forces which were to have defended Kyushu. In the course of these sessions, the play of the games was based on the VAC plan and the defense orders and plans which the Japanese participants brought with them, after some initial reluctance to do so on their part. Questions were asked at random, capabilities and reaction times were measured, and all conceivable factors were taken into consideration. The Japanese were asked how long it would have taken them to move one division. Instead of the 36 hours that the Marines had expected, the answer was 9 days. The reason was that the former enemy commanders could only move their troops at night, and by foot, because of the complete American air superiority over the target by day. At the completion of the war games, it was decisively proven that U. S. air superiority had in fact guaranteed success to the VAC plan. In addition, although the strength of Japanese forces in the south of Kyushu was great, many soldiers were armed with spears only. The more than 2,000 aircraft on Kyushu posed a threat to the American landing, but these planes were held back to be employed in a mass *Kamikaze* attack which was never ordered. The entire three days of sessions were conducted on a thoroughly professional basis with attention paid to mutual courtesy and respect. In the end, General Rogers was satisfied that the VAC plan would have been valid, if OLYMPIC had been consummated. Col Robert D. Heinl, Jr., comments to HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, dtd 19Aug66.

centers under corps control. The tide of humanity had not all flowed from one direction, since 273,276 Koreans, Chinese, and Okinawans had been sent back to their homelands. On 1 December, only about 20,000 Japanese Army and Navy personnel remained on duty, all employed in demobilization, repatriation, minesweeping, and similar activities. On that date, in accordance with SCAP directives, these men were transferred to civilian status under newly created government ministries and bureaus. The destruction or other disposition of war material in the Corps area proceeded satisfactorily with surprisingly few mishaps,<sup>28</sup> considering the enormous quantity of old and faulty munitions that had to be handled.

The need for large numbers of combat troops in Japan steadily lessened as the occupation wore on, and it became increasingly obvious that the Japanese intended to offer no resistance. Reporting to Washington in September, General MacArthur told General Marshall that he had inspected the occupied areas about Tokyo Bay, and that he believed that Japan was very near to economic and industrial collapse. MacArthur went on to say: "It appears the fire raids have so destroyed the integrity of the industrial establishment as to prevent con-

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<sup>28</sup> In November, several accidents in the VAC zone occurred during the munitions disposition program. At Kanoya, a dump of parachute flares was accidentally ignited and the resulting fire touched off a major explosion. At Soida, in the 32d Infantry Division zone, a cave full of propellant charges and powder exploded in a devastating blast, which spread death and destruction among nearby Japanese. No American personnel were injured in either accident.

tinuance of modern war.”<sup>29</sup> MacArthur continued:

Manpower alone is the only warlike resource available or potential. The Japanese Imperial Government and the Japanese Imperial General Staff are fully cognizant of these conditions and as near as can be judged are completely through with this war. Their attitude encourages the strong belief that these agencies are striving to their utmost to effect rapid disarmament and demobilization. They are submissive and apparently sincere. . . . I feel confident that the strength of occupation forces may be cut and retrograde movement of units to the United States well under-way by the 1st of the year or shortly thereafter.<sup>30</sup>

The first major Marine unit to fulfill its mission in southern Japan and return to the United States was MAG-22. On 14 October, Admiral Spruance, acting for CinCPac, had queried the Fifth Air Force if the Marine fighter group was still considered necessary to the Sasebo area garrison. On 25 October, the Army replied that MAG-22 was no longer needed, and it was returned to the operational control of the Navy. Both the group service squadron and its heavy equipment, which had just arrived from Okinawa, remained on board

<sup>29</sup> CinCAFPac Adv 041207Z of Sep45 to WARCOS in CinCPac WarD, Sep45 (OAB, NHD).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

ship, and in less than a week AirFMFPac directed that the unit return to the United States. Its planes were flown to an aircraft replacement pool on Okinawa, and low-point men were transferred to MAG-31 as replacements for men eligible for rotation or discharge. On 20 November, after picking up MAG-31 returnees at Yokosuka and similar Army troops at Yokohama, MAG-22 left for home. The Marine Air Base, Omura, remained in operation, but its aircraft strength consisted mainly of light liaison and observation planes of the observation squadrons assigned to VAC divisions.<sup>31</sup>

The redeployment of MAG-22 was only a small part of the general pattern for withdrawing excess occupation forces. On 12 November, VAC informed the Sixth Army that the 5th Marine Division would be released from its duties on 1 December for return to the United States. By the turn of the year, the 2d Marine Division would be the only major Marine unit remaining on occupation duty in southern Japan.

<sup>31</sup> MAG-22 WarDs, Oct-Nov45. A third Marine air base at Iwakuni to support operations in the Kure area had been a part of original occupation plans. It was not established, however, and the transport squadrons of MAG-21 intended for it were reassigned, VMR-353 to Guam and VMR-952 to Yokosuka. *ComFifthFlt AR*, pt VI, sec L, p. 2.