

THE PLANS TO INVADE JAPAN IN WORLD WAR II
AN INSTRUCTIONAL UNIT

A Project
Presented to
the Division of Social Sciences
EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Teaching

by
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July 1995

Thesis
1995
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank all my family and friends who have supported me in obtaining my Master of Arts in Teaching Degree. It was with all of their encouragement that I saw this project through to the end.

I wish to also thank Susan Duncan, my mother, for her many hours of proofreading and editing, and Stephen Schoonover, my uncle, for his expertise with computers.

A very special thank you goes to all of my past teachers who have made it possible for me to achieve all of my goals. In particular, Pam Taverner (Miss J.), for teaching me how to do a project of this magnitude, and Dr. Anderson, for all of his wisdom and advice in teaching the social sciences.

Finally, I wish to thank my husband, Danny Helmer, whose patience and love helped me complete this project.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

World War II claimed more lives and property than any other war. The consequences of World War II still affect our everyday lives fifty years later. With this being the fiftieth anniversary of the conclusion of World War II perhaps now is the time to re-evaluate the decisions that were made. The war in the Pacific theater ushered in the Nuclear Age with the first and only atomic bombs to be used. What were America's alternatives to the atomic bombs? What events led to a show of such devastating power? Although most history books at the senior-high level tend to retell events that actually took place (after all that is what makes it "history"), it is equally important to examine the "other paths" our historical leaders chose not to take. This critical perspective must be revealed to students of history if the teacher expects higher level thinking to occur. To predict, analyze, and evaluate the decisions made in the Pacific theater, students must have available to them the alternatives.

THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this project is to provide senior-high social studies teachers with an instructional unit on the plans for the invasion of Japan during World War II, so that they might be more adequately prepared to teach students about this most significant watershed period in American history.

MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF THIS UNIT

At the completion of this unit on the invasion plans of Japan during World War II,

The learner will

- identify the major figures of the island-hopping campaigns discussed in this unit, and in oral or written form, outline the significant role each played.

- identify and evaluate, by oral and written means, the effectiveness of the island-hopping campaigns that are covered in this unit.

- analyze, by oral or written means, the military tactics and psychological warfare used by the Japanese in World War II.

- identify and outline, by oral or written means, the United States military's plan of operation to be used to invade the home islands of Japan in World War II.

-make predictions about the use of the invasion plans of Japan in World War II, by oral or written means.

-evaluate, by oral or written means, President Truman's decision to drop the atomic bombs to end World War II.

PROCEDURE AND SOURCES

This study cannot be considered a complete evaluation of the military strategies used or considered to be used in the war against Japan. Rather, an attempt was made to provide teachers with the basic outline of the strategies used and proposed in defeating Japan in the Second World War. Therefore, I relied on a variety of selected comprehensive sources.

The project is organized chronologically. It is divided into chapters of major turning points in the offensive battle to gain control of Japan. The appendix of this study contains a variety of teacher and student oriented activities. These activities were made by myself reflecting my experience as a history student and teacher. The student activities are only suggestions to the classroom teacher. As in any circumstance the teacher must make additions and deletions to fit the curriculum.

The major sources for this project include The Invasion of Japan: Alternative to the Bomb by John Ray Skates, Pearl

Harbor and the War in the Pacific by Tony Hall, Iwo Jima: Legacy of Valor by Bill D. Ross, and Island Fighting by Rafael Steinberg.

CHAPTER 2. This chapter discusses two of the first major offensive action the United States took in the Pacific, Guadalcanal and the Marianas. The first section of chapter two describes the initial American conquest of the island-hopping campaign. Guadalcanal saw some of the heaviest fighting in the Pacific. For six months the Americans struggled slowly through dense jungles. For the first time the Americans saw strong Japanese resistance and that they were ready to die to the last man for their country. Section two looks at the three campaigns that took place in the Marianas: Saipan, Guam, and Tinian. It outlines the significance and moral victory it brought to America.

CHAPTER 3. Chapter three looks at the last two campaigns fought in the Pacific. The Allies needed Iwo Jima and Okinawa for secure bases for the invasion of Japan. Section one examines the "uncommon valor" that was found among the Marines that took the small island of Iwo Jima in February 1945. Section two discusses the battle of Okinawa and the great many

lives that were lost. This section also looks at the kamikaze and the effects it had on the United States Navy.

CHAPTER 4. Chapter four recreates the invasion plans that never happened. Section one lays the background information that military strategists would have known in 1945. Section two specifically outlines the Operation Downfall's objectives in the Olympic and the Coronet. Section three looks at the reasons why the invasion never took place.

CHAPTER 2

AMERICA ON OFFENSE: ISLAND-HOPPING

GUADALCANAL

In 1943 the Japanese Empire found itself at its height. The Japanese had taken over all the willing and not so willing members of its Co-Prosperity Sphere. The ball was now in the American court. What was the United States going to do about Japan? Pearl Harbor? An Allied victory in the Pacific war was not a set objective in 1942.¹ America's "Europe-first" policy had taken the steam out of a quick American offensive policy towards Japan. Since most American materiel and men were being sent to Europe to fight Hitler, only a limited offensive action could take place in the Pacific theater.

The American planners of the offensive action were put on a strict budget. All planners aimed their sites at a small island name Guadalcanal, in a chain of islands called the Solomons. The Solomons were important to America and Australia. If the Japanese would continue their eastward thrust the American and Australian supply lines would be in danger. Without American assistance of planes, tanks, arms, and troops Australia would not be able to defend itself, and

without Australia, America would lose its buffer zone. That is without Australia the line of defense against Japan would have to be moved backed to the North America continent.²

The Royal Australian Navy had set up a unique intelligence network of volunteers called "coastwatchers".³ Coastwatchers were to report any suspicious or unusual happenings. Especially the sighting of strange ships or planes in the area. These coastwatchers, whose daytime jobs included civil servants, coconut planters, missionaries and traders were the first to report Japan's "over keen" interest in the area. In light of this new information, the intent of the Japanese became clear. The Japanese were in the process of building airfields that would put them in striking range of the American-Australian supply lines. Guadalcanal would have to be retaken, and quickly, before the Japanese finished building the airfield.

The Allied offensive campaign's first phase was code named "Watchtower."⁴ Watchtower called for the seizure of the small islands of Guadalcanal and Tulagi. But before Watchtower could begin, it had to be decided who would have ultimate authority over the operation. Geographically, General Douglas MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Area Command included the Solomons, but the Chiefs of Staff decided that the Pacific Ocean Areas Command assigned to Admiral Chester W.

Nimitz would be better equipped to take Guadalcanal.⁵ After all it was Nimitz that handed the Japanese Navy its first taste of defeat at Midway. The operation was set to begin in August 1942. The United States would be hosting the event without any help from the Allies. America's Navy ships and planes would provide cover to the Marines who were seizing and securing beachheads. The Army's infantry would then come in as relief. The invasion forces would attack Tulagi and Guadalcanal at the same time. At Iron Bottom Bay they split into two forces. The Tulagi force went to the north and the Guadalcanal force to the South.

The assault on Guadalcanal and Tulagi caught the Japanese by surprise. The morning light revealed the American armada had crept in overnight. Japanese radio messages were sent out to the islands of Rabual in hopes of help. Guadalcanal reported: "Encountered American landing forces and we are retreating into the jungle." Tulagi cried: "The enemy force is overwhelming. We will defend our positions to the death, praying for everlasting victory."⁶ The Japanese Army was ignorant of the fact that the Japanese Navy had begun to build an airfield on Guadalcanal. The Japanese Army did not even know of the disastrous defeat at Midway. The Navy had falsified claims of victory. They were not expecting a sizable counterattack from the Americans.

The Japanese military knew that there was no hope that they could defeat the United States by direct means--that is by invasion. But they might be able to use the resources from the Co-Prosperity Sphere to build up defenses so strong that the American people would refuse to pay with the lives of their young boys that would be necessary to retake the land. This would therefore cause a stalemate, and in short, a Japanese victory. If this plan was to work, Guadalcanal would be the first step.

After landing on Guadalcanal, the Marines moved west through the coconut plantations and after a few brief skirmishes they captured the airfield.⁷ The 2,600 foot runway was almost complete. In a few days the Japanese would have been bringing in their airplanes. The Japanese abandoned their gas, oil, kerosene, cement, and machinery. They even left behind hundreds of cases of meat, fish, fruit, tons of rice, and an ice machine. The ice machine turned out to be a real treasure. Guadalcanal may have looked like a tropical paradise on the surface, but it was very hot and humid. The soldiers had to fight off snakes, spiders, centipedes, leeches, rats, bats, and insects that live off human blood.

Although the initial landings on Guadalcanal were unopposed and the Marines were able to quickly form a perimeter, the Japanese did retaliate. The Japanese responded

with both air and naval assaults which forced the American naval force to withdraw.⁸ The Marines were at the mercy of the enemy's air and naval forces.

The Japanese showed great strength in the sea. Allied cruisers and destroyers whose function was to protect the invasion armada from attack by sea were attacked. In forty minutes two Allied cruisers were sunk and another two were so badly damaged that they had to be abandoned. The fifth cruiser was put out of action with extensive repairs. One destroyer was also damaged. A total of 1,023 American sailors were dead.⁹ (A loss greater than the total number of Marines that died on Guadalcanal.) Another 709 wounded, swimming around in the shark infested waters of Iron Bottom Sound.¹⁰ Now the Marines were alone. Without air cover from the carriers, Japanese planes raided everyday around noon or, as the Marines called it, "Tojo Time", named after the Japanese Prime Minister.

The destruction of the American naval support gave the Japanese an open "slot" which they could use to supplement their reinforcements and supplies. Most of these mad dashes were at night. The Marines nicknamed the runs as the "Tokyo Express". The "Tokyo Express" became less effective after two weeks, when the Marines completed the airfield.¹¹ The Marines named the airstrip Henderson Field after Lofton Henderson, an

officer who was killed leading Marine aircraft in the Battle of Midway.

Although the seizure of the airstrip went rather smoothly, Major General Alexander A. Vandegift, whose 1st Marine Division was to lead the assault, the odds looked far from promising. He said he could have listed "a hundred reasons why this operation would fail."¹² It was on Guadalcanal that the Marines got their first taste of the ferocity of the Japanese soldier. On August 12, the Marine Intelligence decided to follow up on a Japanese prisoner's story that some other Japanese soldiers down the beach may want to surrender. Twenty-six Marines took a patrol boat to go investigate. The patrol was virtually destroyed, only three members returned swimming.¹³ One news correspondent wrote:

. . . we have not yet taken a single officer alive on Guadalcanal, although we have tried in every way we know how . . . everyday I was there, the Jap gave new evidence of his intense willingness to go to any lengths to win, or if unable to win, to go on fighting until his breath stopped.¹⁴

With the help of Henderson Field being deployed and the American Navy able to lick its wounds, the Marines were able to stop the Japanese at "Bloody Ridge". As many as six-thousand Japanese troops attacked a thin perimeter on Guadalcanal at a point then named Bloody Ridge. The enemy

failed to break through the Marine lines. The Japanese lost many men. However, the Americans did suffer great losses to Japanese submarines that sank the Wasp and damaged the Saratoga.¹⁵

The Allied forces learned many lessons at Guadalcanal. Lessons that they would perfect into an art form on their way to Japan. Naval battles were very crucial and air superiority was vital. The Marines left Guadalcanal on December 9, 1942. The Army took over and sought out any left over faction that did not use "the slot" as escape. Early in February 1943 the Japanese abandoned Guadalcanal and moved to a new defensive line in the central Solomons. President Franklin Roosevelt radioed Josef Stalin and told him:

. . . We have gained, I believe, a toehold in the Southwest Pacific from which the Japanese will find it very difficult to dislodge us. We have substantial naval losses there, but the advantage gained was worth the sacrifice and we are going to maintain hard pressure on the enemy.¹⁶

The significance of the Guadalcanal campaign was seen in future conferences that planned strategy for the Allies. Based on the results of Guadalcanal it was decided that the Allies would exploit Japan's vulnerability to blockade and start sustained strategic bombing as soon as possible. The planners of Guadalcanal did not know they would start the policy of island-hopping, where important consecutive islands

were seized and used as bases. These island stepping stones put the United States on the road to Tokyo and ultimate victory on the war in the Pacific.

MARIANAS

The Marianas are a string of islands that lead to Japan's doorstep. America needed to have control of the islands so that they could be used as bases for the B-29s. It was the B-29 bombers that would force Japan to their knees when they delivered the atomic bombs.

On June 15, 1944, just nine days after the D-day landings in Normandy, the largest invasion force that the Japanese had seen at that time invaded the Marianas. The invasion forces included some 127,500 troops and 535 vessels of all types.¹⁷ The Marines had a clear cut mission. They were to seize the islands of Saipan, Guam, and Tinian in the Marianas. The Marianas lie about 1,500 miles east of Manila Bay and 1,300 miles southeast of Tokyo. They were the next logical step in the island-hopping campaign. By controlling the Marianas, America could cut the enemies supply lines, which were so vital to the non-resourceful Japan. America would also gain the airfield in the Marianas which would allow them to use the new B-29 bomber against Japan. The island of Guam would be a primary objective of the Americans. For more

than 40 years Guam had been an United States possession. American lost that possession two days after Pearl Harbor. Recapturing Guam would be a symbolic effort as well as a strategic one. It would be the first American held territory to be recovered. This would boost morale of both the American soldiers and civilians. Strategically, Guam had excellent airfields and the best deep water harbor in the Marianas.

The campaign in the Marianas, code name Operation Forager, was a joint one involving troops from both the Marines and the Army.¹⁸ Saipan was to be taken first, with a target date of June 15, 1944. Because Saipan was one-hundred miles closer to Japan, it was more practical as a base for bombing runs. It would cut off Japanese air support to Guam and make that invasion less costly.¹⁹ The invasion of Guam a few days later would follow and Tinian would be taken last. The invasion of Tinian would not begin until Saipan had succumb to American forces.

The Japanese were also looking forward to the Marianas. They saw it as an ideal opportunity for the decisive fleet action they had been waiting for. It was their last chance to stop the American force before they became too close to Japan.

The U.S. plan of attack called for the Marines to assault the beaches on the southwest coast of Saipan. They would push inward until they were established on the high

ground and captured the Japanese airfield. The invasion got off to a bad start. Unfortunately, the Japanese strength on the island was seriously underestimated and the landings proved to be difficult.²⁰ To make matters worse the gunnery officers on the battleships had not been trained in shore bombardment techniques and much of their fire was wasted. The more experienced gunnery officers were only given one day to fire. Saipan had too many targets over too large an area for the shelling to be effective. As a result the Marines had a difficult time avoiding Japanese fire as they came ashore and an unanticipated current carried many Marines to the wrong beaches.²¹ The landing on Saipan proved to be very costly in Marine lives. A total of 553 were dead or missing and 1,022 were wounded. Still 20,000 Marines had made it ashore on that first day. That night the Japanese gave the Americans two suicidal counterattacks. Luckily the Marines were well enough established to throw back both attacks and they found 700 Japanese bodies in the morning.²²

The Americans were not the only ones to suffer the consequences of inexperienced soldiers. June 19, 1944, in naval history, is known as the "Great Marianas Turkey Shoot". The Japanese had sent up 373 of their aircraft. American radar had picked up the attack way in advance. The Japanese attackers were no match for the well-trained American pilots.

The Americans also had the advantage of superior aircraft. By the time the "turkey shoot" was over 240 enemy planes had been shot down, only 130 returned. The F6F Hellcat was responsible for most of the Japanese loss. In comparison, the Americans lost just thirty-one planes, and some of those were operational accidents. This day would go down in Japanese history as the day the Japanese carrier force was shattered forever.²³ The Japanese losses were not just limited to aircraft. Their carriers were also torpedoed by submarine.

The American not only showed their strength in the sky but also underneath the sea. With the United States code-breaking techniques and Atlantic tested antisubmarine warfare systems, the Allies had a great advantage. Seventeen of some twenty-five Japanese submarines deployed to the Marianas were lost.

The Army and Marines advances on Saipan were off to a better start than the landing had been. But trouble was about to hit again, this time with the Americans being their own worst enemy. The Marines took the left and right sides of the movement. The Marines believed in moving fast, despite high casualties, to obtain their objective. The Army had the middle ground. The Army got off to a late start and were very slow. The Marines were forced to dig in and wait for the Army. The Army was used to cautious advances that kept

casualties low. Marine Lieutenant General Holland Smith (nicknamed Howlin' Mad Smith) was "highly displeased" with the Army's performance.²⁴ The Army's commanding officer was later sent to the European theater. The Army and Navy worked together much better.

The seventh of July brought the last attempt by the Japanese to save Saipan. An estimated three-thousand enemy troops, some armed only with rocks or spears, launched the largest banzai attack of the war. Two Army battalions were almost wiped out by the charge. The slaughter was stopped. In some places the Japanese soldiers were forced to climb over piles of their own dead to get to the Marines. Despite loud speaker assurances that the Americans would treat prisoners well, they were horrified to see thousands of Japanese civilians throwing themselves off cliffs into the sea, drowning themselves and their children, or blowing themselves up with grenades. American soldiers had seen enemy soldiers deliberately seek death, but they were sickened by the needless sacrifice by women and children.²⁵

Saipan was not cheap. A total of 16,525 Americans were killed or wounded and some 29,000 Japanese were dead.²⁶ The Americans were now within striking distance of Japan. With this news, the Japanese Prime Minister Hideki Tojo resigned.

Prime Minister Kuniaki Koiso would have to decide whether or not to continue the war.

Guam also proved to be very costly to the Marines. Guam was the largest on the Marianas. It is a rugged, thirty mile long island made of limestone. The surface of Guam has ridges and ravines amidst its jungles. Despite the fact that America had occupied Guam for 43 years, they had amazingly inaccurate topographical maps. The Marines assault forces would suffer from this fact. Anything on Guam of military value lay in a short coastline on a heavily fortified rocky ridge on which the main airfield was situated. The assault on Guam took place on July 21, 1944. The high ridges above the beaches made the first few days of battle difficult. The American advances were incredibly slow and marked by high casualties. This was even after a thirteen-day delay in the landing so continuous naval and air bombardment could occur. When the attack landing was over, 3,500 Japanese were dead and the Americans held the beachhead.²⁷

The battle for Guam continued on for two weeks. A last-ditch suicide effort was once again made. Japanese officials realized that Guam was lost, all they could do now was inflict as many casualties on the Americans as possible. Armed with pitchforks, bottles, and baseball bats the entire Japanese garrison of about 18,500 was eventually killed or captured.²⁸

Small numbers of Japanese held out in the hills fighting guerrilla style for months and, in some cases, even years.

Tinian was the last of the Mariana islands to be assaulted, but it was the quickest taken. Tinian had very few mountains in comparison to the other islands which made it very well suited for use by the B-29s. Four airfields occupied the island.

American forces planned a surprise attack for Tinian to lessen casualties. Tinian had only two beaches that were fit for a landing and the Japanese had concentrated their forces there. But the Americans chose to land between tiny gaps of sand between the cliffs on the other side of the island so they would encounter very little opposition. The American forces played out a phony landing to occupy Japanese attention away from the Marines setting up a tough defense on the back side. Almost two-thousand Americans were killed or wounded in comparison to eight-thousand Japanese. Some consider Tinian the "perfect" amphibious operation.²⁹

The long expected and decisive battle for the Marianas had ended in a devastating defeat for Japan. It saw the Japanese return to their ancient traditions of self sacrifice. The Marianas played an important role in the end of the war. It was from the Mariana islands that the Enola Gay made her departure on August 6, 1945, to stop the unstoppable.

CHAPTER 3

THE LAST CAMPAIGNS

IWO JIMA

The first stepping stone to the invasion of the home islands of Japan was Iwo Jima. Although Japan's defeat was inevitable they were not yet ready to surrender. The battle staged on Iwo Jima was the epitome of the Japanese love of their Emperor. It was on this island that almost thirty-thousand men would die for their cause.

Iwo Jima is a tiny island. It is only eight square miles in the shape of a pork chop.¹ It lies about seven-hundred miles from Tokyo. Located on a line straight north the Marianas, almost exactly halfway between Saipan and Tokyo. This minute island was capturing the attention of the Americans for several reasons. The Japanese operated a radar station and two airfields on the island. This kept them aware of the American movement of its B-29 Superfortresses on bombing missions over Japan.² Iwo Jima was becoming a nasty obstacle for American pilots. The Americans also needed to capture Iwo Jima in order to protect the flank of their attack on the upcoming invasion of Okinawa. Lastly, Iwo Jima with

its relative closeness to Japan could provide a base for U.S. fighter escorts for the bombers.

The Japanese were very aware that the Americans had the island of Iwo Jima in their sites, but there was little the Japanese High Command could do except wait for the American attack to begin. In the summer of 1944 the Japanese entertained the idea of "sinking" the tiny island made of sulfuric sand and volcanic ash or at least cutting it in half, rather than let it fall into American hands.³ Japan's only hope was to "sell" the island to the Americans with the precious blood of the young Marine Corps. Hopefully the Americans would find this too high of a price to pay and would offer suitable surrender terms.

With this plan in mind the Japanese garrisoned Iwo Jima with 21,000 troops under General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, and these troops built some of the largest defense works of the entire war--1,500 pillboxes, miles of trenches, hundreds of connecting tunnels.⁴ The highest point on the southern end of the island, Mount Suribachi (an inactive volcano), was thoroughly honeycombed. There would be no return for the Japanese soldiers who would take these hiding places. Months before the American invasion General Kuribayashi motivated his men for the upcoming battle by posting the following

proclamation in the caves, tunnels, pillboxes, and bunkers from which the Japanese would die fighting:

Above all else we shall dedicate ourselves and our entire strength to the defense of the island. We shall grasp bombs, charge the enemy tanks, and destroy them. We shall infiltrate into the midst of the enemy and annihilate them. With every salvo we will, without fail, kill the enemy. Each man will make it his duty to kill ten enemy before dying. Until we are destroyed to the last man, we shall harass the enemy by guerrilla tactics.⁵

General Kuribayashi's assignment was to give up the island at the greatest cost to the enemy. Kuribayashi based his strategy on the effectiveness of the American assaults on Saipan and Normandy. Heavy beach defense would not work, he must allow the Americans to come ashore and then try annihilation. Kuribayashi's outlined plans were:

1. The Japanese forces would not open fire against enemy landing vessels.
2. No opposition to enemy troops would be made at the beaches.
3. When the enemy had penetrated 500 yards the Japanese would open fire near Chidori Airfield supported by artillery in Suribachi from the south and on Motoyama plateau on the north.
4. The main defense would be made from the underground installations in the north. After the initial fire those at Chidori Airfield would join their partners in the north.⁶

Food supplies were to be built up to a reserve of seventy-five days. Allowing for casualties it could be estimated that it might stretch up to 150 days. Weapons and ammunition were to

be conserved. Unlike the Tokyo Express on Guadalcanal, no resupply could be expected.

On the American side, a strong offense was made up of the very men who had perfected the amphibious techniques from Guadalcanal to Guam. These men had seen the jungles of Guadalcanal and had come up through the Solomons. They had crossed the Central Pacific from the bloody reefs of Tarawa to the mountains of the Marianas. Although this experience would be valuable, Iwo Jima would be different. Iwo Jima had no jungles, no mountains, or coral reefs. It was exactly as its ugly name suggests, "Sulfur Island". Water was even a concern. There was not a single stream and the ground was so porous (volcanic) it would not hold water.⁷ It was obvious to the Marines that the battle would be a frontal assault.

"Operation Detachment" began seventy-five days before the American assault on Iwo Jima. B-24, B-25, and B-29 Superfortress bombers from Saipan, along with naval guns, "softened up" the tiny island. For fifty-four consecutive days the Pacific Strategic Air Force bombed Iwo Jima. On the fifty-fifth day reconnaissance showed that at least sixteen new big guns had been brought up to strategic locations. The daily bombing continued for another twenty days. On February 1, the Army assigned every available aircraft in the Pacific to the Iwo Jima mission. On the final three days before the

landing, the Americans "punished the island with the longest and heaviest bombardment of the entire war." Guns alone fired almost forty-thousand shells.⁸

As far as the press was concerned, this was the biggest show of the war. Almost one-hundred newsmen and photographers were present representing wire services, major American magazines, radio networks, and even British and Australian publications. The landing, an open secret for more than a week before D-day, held the eyes and heart of a nation, and the world. The first penetration into the Japanese homeland promised to be bloody.

With General Holland M. Smith in charge, the 4th and 5th Marine Divisions made the initial assault. It was twenty minutes after the first American hit the beach below the 550 foot peak of Mount Suribachi that the Japanese opened up with all their artillery and mortars. The Marines had only made it 200-300 yards inland when they found themselves trapped.⁹ Many died right there. There was no protection for the Marines as gunfire found them from the camouflaged pillboxes. On that first day over two-thousand Americans lost their lives. Frontal assault was the only way to overrun the Japanese positions. Every approach was covered by rockets, artillery, and mortars. Highly dedicated Japanese riflemen, machine gunners, and snipers were there to make sure the

Americans paid the full price for the island. The 28th Marines targeted their goal as Suribachi, while the others went north in the main thrust of the assault. For those Marines heading north were to see the next five days of massacre unmatched in Marine Corps history.¹⁰

Lieutenant Colonel Charles E. Shepard, Jr. gave his men two objectives:

1. To secure this lousy piece of real estate so we can get the hell off it.
2. To help as many Japs as possible fulfill their oath to die for the Emperor.¹¹

The Marines were trying hard to achieve their objectives despite the fierce Japanese resistance they met on February 19, 1945. By late morning on landing day they had crossed the island, cutting off Suribachi. The climb up Suribachi took three painstaking days. But Suribachi did proudly bear the Stars and Stripes to stand as a symbol of encouragement for the Marines fighting below. Three hours after raising the original flag it was replaced by a larger one. This is when Joe Rosenthal, an Associated Press photographer, took the celebrated picture that became a model for the U.S. Marine Corps Memorial in Arlington, Virginia.¹² To add to the Marines' emotional attachment to Old Glory, a Marine priest kept his promise, "You get it up and I'll say Mass under it."¹³

With all of America anxiously awaiting the news from Iwo Jima, the press released on February 21, that 644 were killed, 4,801 were wounded, and 506 were missing after three days of fighting.¹⁴ The Japanese losses seemed to be minimal at this time. Americans on the home front were horrified by the high number of casualties. This also spurred those who favored MacArthur over Nimitz as chief commander in the Pacific. Under strict orders from the White House no further mention of American losses were to be made in communication.¹⁵ This was done not only to stop dissent at home, but also it is dangerous to let the enemy know the price the Marines were paying for Iwo Jima.

Americans had estimated that it would take five days to secure the island; instead it took a month. Many Marines including "Howlin' Mad" Smith blamed top Navy officials for not softening up Iwo Jima enough before the first assault waves hit the beach, despite the fact it was the heaviest prelanding bombardment in history. However, this is not to say that the Marines did not have respect for the common man of the Navy. Naval officers and sailors landed on the beaches along side the Marines. They protected them from enemy air attacks and bombardment from the sea. The Navy treated their wounded and supplied the Marines with what was needed to wage war. Although the Marines were taking the headlines, nearly

ten-thousand Navy men were also ashore standing shoulder to shoulder with the Marines. As many as 150,000 naval men were circling Iwo Jima. All were vulnerable to Japanese coastal defenses, heavy artillery, and kamikaze air attacks. Kamikazes did attack on February 21. The attack sank the escort carrier Bismarck Sea, killing 350 of her crew, and suicide planes hit the carrier Saratoga putting her out of action for the rest of the war.¹⁶

On February 24, the Americans turned north where it seemed that the Japanese had been untouched by the most intense bombardment in amphibious history. Sherman tanks and artillery supported the Marines, but still each fierce attack was a bloody frontal assault. At the end of the sixth day of invasion, more than nine-thousand men had been killed or wounded or were missing in action. Since the first wave of troops had hit the beaches, a Marine had fallen every fifty seconds.¹⁷ The battles were so intense that the Americans began to nickname the terrain on Iwo Jima with names such as "Bloody Gorge" and "The Meat Grinder". Despite the hardships, by the end of the next day they had captured about a third of the island, including the major airfield. Meanwhile, an additional Marine division landed and captured the island's second airfield. On March 1, the Marines reached the

construction site of the third airfield. More than 82,000 men were now ashore.¹⁸

As the invasion bled into the second week, the outcome of the battle was apparent. The American troops now outnumbered Kuribayashi's troops, and any hope the enemy had of driving the Americans into the sea had disappeared. But still to be debated was how many more men would have to die. General Kuribayashi had expected that his troops would have held out longer on Suribachi. Since that had failed, he planned to slaughter the enemy as the Americans drove up the high ground in the center of the island. It was here he placed his main line of resistance. Kuribayashi was aware that unless he was able to stop the Marines on the beaches and drive them back into the ocean, Japan would lose.

American airmen began using Iwo Jima before it was officially secured. On March 4, the first American bombers made emergency landings on the main airstrip. Iwo Jima would be the landing site of over 2,250 damaged Superfortresses in five months, saving the lives of nearly 25,000 American airmen.¹⁹ Although Iwo Jima may have been a beautiful spot in the eyes of American pilots, it was an ugly place to most Marines. On March 8, the Marines faced a suicidal bonsai charge at Tachiwa point on the southeast corner of the island.

When all was said and done about eight-hundred Japanese bodies were found.

On March 17 (D-day plus 26), Admiral Nimitz issued the last and special communication announcing that Iwo Jima had been "officially secured" and that organized resistance had ended. His announcement praised all the branches of the Armed Forces for their roles in the terrible fighting, particularly the Marines. He reported that 24,127 had fallen; 4,189 were killed in action; and 19,938 were wounded during the twenty-six days and nine hours of combat, the costliest battle in 168 years of Marine Corps history.²⁰ Nimitz concluded: "Among the Americans who served on Iwo island, uncommon valor was a common virtue."²¹

Unfortunately "officially secured" and secured are not the same thing. On March 26, exactly five weeks after D-day, between 200-300 Japanese launched a final suicidal attack. When it was all over the last hundred or so Americans lay dead with 262 Japanese bodies. Eighteen were taken prisoner, the last of the fewer than two-hundred captured by Marines.

As with most bloody military operations, questions persist about the human cost of Iwo Jima and its strategic worth to the downfall of Japan. In only 36 days 25,851 Americans, most in their teens or early twenties, were casualties. A total of 6,821 were killed or died of their

wounds or were missing in action.²² The Japanese had 22,000 plus dead. The Secretary of War wrote this message to the Marines, "The price has been heavy, but the military value of Iwo Jima is inestimable. Its conquest has brought closer the day of our final victory in the Pacific."²³

A distinguished twenty-seven Marines who fought on Iwo Jima won the nations highest decoration for valor "above and beyond the call of duty". Thirteen were given posthumously.²⁴ Meanwhile, on Japan's home island people were preparing to resist the now inevitable invasion. Air and naval kamikazes prepared to bombard the invasion fleet, while citizens were preparing to back up the army. All seemed ready to die in defense of the "sacred soil" of Japan and the "sacred person" the Emperor.

OKINAWA

It was apparent to the Japanese command that if the Americans continued their progress towards Japan one of their main objectives must be the Ryukyus. The Ryukyus consist of 140 islands, the largest being Okinawa at 485 square miles. It is sixty miles long and from two to eighteen miles wide. Of all the islands, Okinawa had the best sites for airfields, two good bays on the east coast we ideal for a naval base, with all the necessary room to build warehouses and repair

shops that would be needed to invade Japan. Strategically, Okinawa was perfect. Formosa was three-hundred miles to the southwest, China was the same distance to the northwest. The Americans could use their advantage as a springboard for an assault on Japan, 340 miles to the northeast. A senior Japanese officer stated:

The Americans are trying to reach Japan by a hop to Kerama, a skip to Okinawa and a jump to Kyushu. The Yankees cannot make it. Their supply line is stretched to the limit. We will break his leg in the Ryukyus. His days of hopping, skipping and jumping are drawing to an end.²⁵

Army Air Force B-29s had begun bombing Japan on a regular basis in November 1944 and Navy carrier planes joined in with heavy attacks on the home islands in February and March 1945. With Iwo Jima already under American control it was obvious that Americans would need to take one more objective before launching a final assault on Japan. U.S. forces would need air bases and land to store huge amounts of supplies that would need to be close by to support the invasion of Japan.

In early October 1944, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed Admiral Chester W. Nimitz to seize an island in the Ryukyus by March 1, 1945, later postponed to April 1.²⁶ Planning for the invasion, code name Operation Iceberg, began immediately.

Although Okinawa seems to fit into the American island-hopping campaign perfectly, there were some negative aspects. The climate was miserable all year around. The constant, stifling, humidity and torrential rainfalls that sometimes reached eleven inches in a single day also proved to a determined enemy for the Americans. Okinawa was also an inhabited island, unlike Iwo Jima. The civilians of Okinawa practiced ancestor worship. The bones of ancestors were placed in urns and kept within mound shaped tombs scattered across lowlands and hillsides.²⁷ The Japanese made use of these tombs as machine gun nest and bunkers. Japan began to deploy their men in fortified positions that were located mainly in the southern third of Okinawa's 485 square miles. The terrain was carved by ridges, cliffs, and caves that made formidable natural defenses. Troops could long hold out in this rocky cover against a numerically superior enemy and make him pay a high price for every inch of ground. Japan had 100,000 troops, 20,000 of those were native Okinawans.

During the almost three-thousand years of Japanese history only one enemy has attempted to invade their home islands. In 1570 a Mongol ruler of China organized a huge fleet to attack Japan. Thousands of superior armed soldiers set sail from China's ports in hundreds of ships. The poorly armed Japanese looked like defenseless prey to the Mongol

army. However fate was on the side of the Japanese. As the armada approached Kyushu so did a powerful typhoon. The winds from the storm sank the Chinese fleet and drowned the invaders. The Japanese people felt that their prayers had been answered. Japanese came to call this "divine wind" kamikaze.²⁸ Kamikaze was the focus for a new military strategy to protect the home land once again. Kamikazes or suicide missions brought a whole new mind set to the war.

As American forces advanced on Okinawa, and with Iwo Jima won, it was evident that the Japanese either had to sink the Allied naval power or lose the war. Desperate times call for desperate measures. One type of desperate measure was the kamikaze. It was any kind of airplane rigged with a tremendous explosive charge set to go off on contact. The aircraft had no landing gear. The pilot had no chance of escape. Most attacks were made in the daylight. General Mitsuru Ushijima of Japan's Imperial Army had based his defense plan on three major objectives:

1. one kamikaze plane for one warship
2. one kamikaze boat for one warship
3. one man for ten of the enemy or one tank²⁹

Ushijima Line, as it began to be called, was a complex network of pillboxes, foxholes, caves, and strong bunkers. Naval bombardment and aerial artillery would have little

effect on the formidable defenses. Ushijima confidently reported to his superiors:

I am convinced that the enemy will regret the sacrifice entailed in breaking through the . . . positions. It will take many thousands of men many weeks, even months to breach our defenses. . . I can promise that the Americans will suffer tremendous losses in men and material on Okinawa. . . It will truly become a vast American graveyard.³⁰

The week previous to the invasion, air and naval bombardment had pounded Okinawa to soften up the defenses. Carrier-based planes hit the kamikaze bases on the southernmost Japanese home island of Kyushu. On March 27, the 77th Infantry Division had gone ashore on the Kerama island, off Okinawa's southwest coast, to secure a supply and repair base for the 1,500 ships of Operation Iceberg.

On April Fools' Day 1945, also Easter Sunday, began as a bright sunny day in the East China Sea as the invasion force began to assemble around Okinawa. The invasion armada included 430 landing craft and assault ships, 40 carriers, 18 battleships, 200 destroyers, and 172,000 soldiers and Marines led by Simon Bolivar Buckner.³¹

Of course, the Japanese were ready with their defensive plan, Operation Ten-Go. Ten-Go would focus on a massive air attack on the American amphibious forces invading Okinawa.³² The kamikazes of Ten-Go were called kikusei--floating

chrysanthemums. While the 2,000 kamikazes kept the Americans busy at sea, the 100,000 men were ready to defend the land to their death. Unknown to the Americans, the Japanese were not intending to fight for the best landing zones.³³ In fact Ushijima was willing to give up the entire northern half of the island. Even the two airfields--Kadena and Yontan--were to be abandoned after being blown up by demolition teams the moment the Americans put in an appearance. The Japanese wanted the Americans to land and then waste their strength against "the line". This would cause a prolonged stay of the U.S. Navy and create an opportunity for airborne and seaborne kamikazes to reek havoc on the American fleet.

The Army and Marine commanders anticipated heavy casualties. They had no idea that General Ushijima would not contest the beaches. They ordered the strongest bombardment force ever put together in the Pacific to cover the landing. Bombs and shells might destroy everything on the surface, but it would not affect the disciplined men in deep dugouts. Occasionally a direct hit demolished such a refuge, but that type of pin point accuracy was rare.

The initial landings on Okinawa went surprisingly and exceptionally well for the Marines. "All ashore. No losses. No sign of the enemy."³⁴ The Americans even went through the trouble of staging a fake landing to confuse the enemy,

although it was the Americans that were confused by little resistance. By the fifth day of the invasion the two airfields were secured and the island had been cut in two. Both airfields were usable. The Japanese had failed to blow them up.

Despite misgivings and a growing belief among the Americans that the Japanese were playing possum, the advance continued without encountering any difficulties. However, Americans did finally hit the first of the Japanese defense lines. Progress was slowing and casualties began to mount. At the same time, kamikaze attacks had begun to take their toll on the invasion fleet. The only way to overcome an enemy so entrenched was with tanks, bayonets, grenades, and flame-throwers. To win this victory American blood and guts were needed.

Japan's surviving sea strength was centered around the battleship Yamato. At 68,000 tons it was the biggest and most powerful warship afloat. But the giant battleship went down on her own suicide mission thanks to American submarines. The Japanese had planned to use Yamato with other cruisers and destroyers in conjunction with the first kikusui attacks on April 6-7. With just enough fuel for a one way trip, the battleship was to beach herself on Okinawa and use her huge 18-inch guns on the invasion fleet and troops on the island.³⁵

The loss of Yamato gave the U.S. total supremacy at sea. Now Okinawa's defense rested solely upon the kamikazes and General Mitsuru Ushijima's troops. They would receive no help of any kind from their homeland, no supplies; no reinforcements. The fact that Ushijima meant to fight to the last man was becoming more apparent to the Americans.

Buckner sent the Marines northward over the narrow neck of the island. The Americans met up with stubborn resistance. Two Japanese battalions were well entrenched. The bloody assault cost 970 Americans their lives.³⁶ Despite pressure from top Marine officials to make an amphibious landing behind the Japanese lines to lessen the casualties on the front line, Buckner chose to continue the bitter, bloody forward push, at a great cost of life.

As a preliminary to the Americans overtaking the Ushijima Line, the Americans organized an amphibious assault against the offshore island of Ie Shima which had an excellent airfield. According to aerial reconnaissance, Ie Shima appeared to be deserted, or at the most, lightly defended. This information proved to be false. A three day naval and air bombardment preceded the actual invasion. The Americans advanced rapidly without opposition and quickly overran the airfield. The center of the island was dominated by a 607 foot tall dead volcano which was extremely fortified, a fact

that somehow was overlooked by reconnaissance pilots. In fighting comparable to that on Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima, 170 Americans were killed (900 wounded) including Ernie Pyle, a beloved war correspondent.³⁷

The three-month Okinawa campaign started in good weather, but torrential rain soon blew in from the East China Sea, turning the ground into mud. The mud made the guns, jeeps, and even bulldozers unusable. Soldiers found themselves permanently sodden while the Japanese emerged from their hideouts dry.

Enemy tactics began to follow a pattern. Each defense line was stubbornly held until they found themselves almost overwhelmed, then the Japanese soldiers would withdraw to a new prepared position. Japanese snipers would stay behind to "pick off" the advancing Americans. In dealing with the pockets of Japanese defense, the U.S. troops found what General Buckner called the "blowtorch and corkscrew" the most effective method of eliminating the Japanese strong hold. A cave or dugout entrance would be blasted by a flame-thrower, and then sealed with a grenade of some other explosive.

Sugar Loaf, Half Moon, and Horseshoe were some of the U.S. named landforms on Okinawa where U.S. soldiers met the worst Japanese resistance. One soldier explained that the only way they could take Sugar Loaf ". . . is to make a Jap

bonsai charge ourselves." Some three-thousand Marines lost their lives claiming these landforms.³⁸

The Japanese High Command ordered a coordinated attack called Operation Ten-ichi (Heaven 1). On April 7, seven-hundred aircraft, many obsolete and at least half of them suicide bombers, threw themselves at the American fleet. Of that aircraft the Japanese lost 335, but they did manage to sink three destroyers, a tank landing ship and two ammunition ships, as well as damaging twenty-four other vessels. The kamikazes were virtually unstoppable with their two tons of explosives. The only way to stop them was to shoot them down before their final dive, or for shipboard guns to blow them apart with large caliber shells. The Japanese also sent in speedboats packed with high explosives, which damaged two destroyers and a few merchant ships. For the Japanese sacrifice of half of their total kamikaze force of 1,815 planes at Okinawa, they sank 32 American ships, killing 5,000 seamen and wounding 4,800. A total of 368 ships were damaged. This made Okinawa the bloodiest battle in U.S. Navy history.³⁹

Heavy artillery was used as an integral part of the Japanese weaponry, and all bodies on the beaches of Iwo Jima and Okinawa showed the Americans that the Japanese did not intend to give up. The last-ditch strategy to end the American island-hopping campaign included kamikazes at maximum

strength. Ushijima would use the kamikazes to end the seemingly endless supply of manpower and materiel the U.S. Navy brought ashore. If the kamikazes could do this, the Japanese would have a crushing victory. If they failed, Ushijima was as good as dead.

It had become apparent that the kamikazes failed to annihilate the American forces. In early May the question was being asked was "How long will the Japs hold out?". This question became a particularly hot topic on V-E Day (Victory in Europe), May 8, 1945. With our victory in Europe secured, the American public turned their complete attention to Japan. Ernie Pyle, war correspondent, summed up many American opinions when he wrote:

. . . We don't know [how long the Japanese would hold out] because no one in his right mind can pretend to understand the Oriental manner of thinking. As one officer said, "They are uncannily smart one day, and dumb as hell the next. Their values are so different from ours."⁴⁰

In early May, no Japanese believed they would win. Instead of surrender, the Japanese resigned themselves to the ultimate fate--zemmetsu--death in battle. If the Japanese were to die on Okinawa, they would take as many Americans with them as possible.

On June 22, Ishijima carried out hara-kiri. He sliced himself in the stomach and someone else cut off his head.⁴¹

Ishijima had died exactly how he had lived, by the Samurai code.

Back in April, no one would have realized how difficult the next 83 days would be. The military experts would not have believed the battle would have lasted so long. The overwhelming forces mobilized for Operation Iceberg seemed great enough to crush the enemy in no time. The experts had learned from previous island-hopping campaigns to expect heavy losses and a bloody struggle, yet all were surprised by the degree of stubbornness displayed by the Japanese. No American was prepared for the toll the kamikazes took on the U.S. Navy. The cost was high: nearly 50,000 American and Allied casualties, more than 12,000 of them killed. Japanese casualties were even higher: 117,000 of whom 110,000 were killed. Nearly 8,000 (7,800 Japanese; 783 American) aircraft were lost.⁴² If the Japanese still wanted to fight, they would find it hard to get materiel with which to do it.

The land on Okinawa was terrain that resembled Japan itself. The American Armed Forces were ready to take what it had learned to Japan's homeland. All elements of the U.S. Army, Navy, and Air Force were getting ready for the assault on Japan under its new Commander-in-Chief, President Truman, following Roosevelt's death. The American fleet was still

powerful as it set its sites on the invasion of Kyushu in the fall of 1945.

CHAPTER 4

PLANNING FOR THE ATTACK

THE FORMATION OF THE PLAN

The moment of truth had arrived. The long, bloody island-hopping campaign had come to an end. With Guadalcanal, Saipan, Guam, Tinian, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa under the American's belt, it was time for the Pacific theater soldiers to stand up to the challenge. The challenge being the invasion of Japan.

Since 1943, Japanese aircraft and pilots had been outclassed by the Americans. Japan's shipping lanes were now controlled by U.S. submarines. In losing their air superiority, Japan's also lost their ability to supply and reinforce their overseas armies. Regardless of Japan's military weakness and America's overpowering strength, the last and largest campaign of Okinawa proved to be the most costly of the Pacific war. American Army officials began to wonder if this was a premonition of what would be if Japan's homeland was invaded.

Even before Okinawa was invaded, America began to "soften up" the homeland. On the night of March 9, 1945, more than two-hundred Superfortresses dropped 1,600 ton of

incendiaries and burned out the center of Tokyo; the morning revealed sixteen square miles of the city were gone.¹ Yokohama, Nagoya, Kobe, and Osaka were cities that also bombed night and day. In two short months the Iwo Jima based airplanes eliminated any home defense the Japanese could muster up, as they destroyed the five major cities of Japan. More than three-million people found themselves homeless in Tokyo alone. By late July and early August the Americans were sending over eight-hundred bombers at a time, while Army and Navy planners were working on the invasion of the home islands.²

Although the "Europe-first" policy influenced Pacific strategy for the first two years of the war, Franklin Delano Roosevelt gave the Pacific strategist a new goal at the 1943 Casablanca Conference with the British.:

Peace can come to the world only by the total elimination of German and Japanese war power. The elimination of German, Japanese, and Italian war power means the unconditional surrender by Germany, Italy, and Japan. . . It does not mean the destruction of the population of Germany, Italy, or Japan, but it does mean the destruction of the philosophies in those countries which are based on conquest and the subjugation of other peoples.³

Although America's policy could be easily stated, how to achieve an unconditional surrender was debated. Admiral Ernest King and his Navy planners preferred a Pacific strategy

of surrounding and bombardment (very similar to Churchill's European strategy of edging back Hitler's empire). General George Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff, on the other hand, leaned towards a direct thrust into the Japanese homeland. The U.S. Army Air Corps also wanted to show its independence from the Army and Navy and proved how air power could be used to dominate. It was in the process of developing a long-range heavy bomber to carry out that mission.

Even decades before World War II, prewar planners were at work analyzing the best way to defeat Japan. They believed that Japan could be defeated with naval blockade and air bombardment. Although all of Japan's communications would have to be cut off by seizing the bases across the Sea of Japan. Navy strategist feared that a naval blockade alone would not bring a defeat, so beginning in the 1920's the plans for Japan's demise also included an intense bombing schedule. Under this plan it could take two or more years to claim a limited victory over Japan. Yet even under these circumstances an invasion of Japan was thought as "mission impossible". Prewar Army and Navy planners alike pointed to the ferocity of the Japanese Army, the rugged terrain, the poor roads, the heavily defended ports, and the scarcity of good landing beaches. All of the factors should force the strategy of an invasion as a last resort. However if push

came to shove, the prewar planners saw southern Kyushu and Tokyo Bay as the most likely invasion sites.⁴

Admiral William D. Leahy, Truman's military advisor, and Admiral King twenty years later did not agree that an invasion of Japan would be necessary, but by 1944 new developments had begun to question the strategy of blockade. First, the Allied goal was not only to defeat Japan, but to force an unconditional surrender. Many wondered if a blockade alone would produce this result. Second, the Americans had set the goal of defeating Japan within twelve months of the surrender of Germany. A blockade alone would almost certainly fail to meet that deadline. Third, large ground forces had been built up in the Pacific. Although the Americans faced fanatical Japanese resistance, MacArthur's and Nimitz's amphibious forces seemed invincible and had made beach landing look like an art form. It would seem wasteful to politicians and the American public to have those well-trained men standing idle while the Navy and Air Force carried out a blockade. In light of these developments in September 1944 the Americans expanded their strategic goals to include "invading and seizing objectives in the industrial heart of Japan."⁵ Two months later the U.S. Joint Chiefs approved a plan for the invasion of Kyushu with a target date of September 1945.

The battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa sobered the planners. Were the Americans going to face the same effective and fanatical resistance only on a much larger scale if they went ahead with the invasion of Kyushu? In four short months a blood bath of unparalleled scale would be taking place. As the invasion date grew nearer, the planners, decision makers, and participants from the President to the lowliest infantry man were becoming fearful about the possibility of extremely high casualties. Iwo Jima had shown the deadliness of bunker defenses and suicidal caves. Okinawa proved the last ditch ground defense mixed with kamikazes could raise casualty numbers high enough to raise concern with everyone, including the American public.

Everyone was very concerned over the casualties that would be sustained in an invasion. There were many estimates the President Truman saw from various experts. MacArthur estimated that:

D-Day to D-Day plus 30 days:	50,800 casualties
D-Day plus 30 days to D-Day plus 60 days:	27,150
D-day plus 60 days to D-Day plus 90 days:	27,000 ⁶

These estimates had been calculated from experiences at Normandy and Okinawa, the highest casualty rates experienced by Americans in any campaign of the war. Other estimates anticipated Allied casualties of over a million for the first stage of the invasion.⁷ Admiral Leahy estimated that the U.S.

could expect 250,000 dead in an invasion of Japan based on casualties at Okinawa. These thoughts offered the Japanese some hope that Washington would seek peace instead of invading.⁸

Regardless of which estimates Truman believed, he was aware of the cost of Okinawa and reluctant to repeat those losses. Even the thought that the invasion might cost no more than Normandy or Okinawa was of little comfort. America did not want to lose anymore of its boys to the fanatical and suicidal defenses in the last "jumps" of island-hopping. This sent military scientists on a search for new weapons that could save American lives and break the Japanese will. Chemical and biological warfare were considered. President Roosevelt was dead set against any use of these weapons for fear the Germans would retaliate in Europe.⁹ The Germans had already used gas against France.

Although Roosevelt would not give the Army permission to use gas warfare, it was clear that some targets in the island-hopping campaign were ideally suited for gas warfare. These would be Pacific islands strongly held by Japanese troops but with few or no civilians present.¹⁰ Some feel that it is ironic that a nation that ruled out gas warfare against an exclusively military target, used fire bombs and two atomic bombs that wiped out whole cities of civilians.

In the fall of 1944 and the spring of 1945, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff developed the basic concept and outline for the invasion of Japan. The plan was presented to President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill at the Yalta Conference on February 9, 1945.¹¹ The President and Prime Minister were told that the plan would call for the greatest amphibious operation of the war. Following the seizure of Okinawa, tentatively set in April, the Allies would use this Japanese island only 300 miles from Kyushu to further their operation of blockade and air bombardment of Japan. Then in the winter of 1945-46, U.S. forces would assault Kyushu to further weaken Japan's ability to make war before the invasion of Japan's industrial heart through the Tokyo Plain.

OPERATION DOWNFALL

On May 28, 1945, a document titled: Downfall, Strategic Plan began to circulate among the senior officers of the United States Army in the Pacific. It was a blueprint for the invasion of the Japanese home islands.¹² Downfall's goals were boldly stated:

1. To force the unconditional surrender of Japan by lowering the Japanese ability and will to resist by establishing sea and air blockades, conducting intensive air bombardment and destroying Japanese naval and air strength.

2. To invade and seize objectives in the industrial heart of Japan.¹³

Responsibility for more detailed plans within this framework fell upon the able shoulders of General Douglas MacArthur and Admiral Chester Nimitz. The invasion of Japan was to be conducted in two distinct phases. Operation Olympic would begin in November 1945 to secure the southern one-third of Kyushu. It would furnish air and naval bases to intensify the bombardment and blockade of the home islands. If Olympic failed to produce an unconditional surrender, Operation Coronet would go into effect in March of 1946. Coronet would conduct a massive assault on the Tokyo (Kanto) Plain to occupy the industrial and political heart of Japan.¹⁴

The numbers for Downfall were huge, far beyond comparison with any previous operation of the war. Olympic required the simultaneous lift of 12 divisions comprising of 427,400 troops and 626,800 tons of supplies and equipment. This movement would require 1,318 transports and landing craft. Coronet would require 14 divisions of 462,000 troops and 609,000 tons of supplies and equipment.¹⁵ The Allies assaulted Normandy with five divisions and dropped three airborne divisions behind the beaches to secure critical areas. The initial Downfall plan left unspecified additional

hundreds of direct support ships including: minesweepers, battleships, cruisers, destroyers, and rocket ships.

Downfall also had logistical consideration that had to be dealt with. Allied forces would be located in several distant locations: the Philippines, Ryukyus, and Marianas. All the locations were over one-thousand miles away. Ships had a long turnaround time. There was also a need to build facilities from air bases to ports to housing.¹⁶ Although this would be the first time in the war all the resources in the Pacific would be devoted to one objective, there was not enough shipping, service troops, and engineers to go around. In 1942-43 the Solomon and New Guinea campaigns competed. In 1944 Nimitz's Central Pacific operations in the Marshalls and Marianas competed with MacArthur's drive toward the Philippines. In 1945 Iwo Jima and Okinawa competed with Luzon. Being short on men and materiel had been a continuing problem in the Pacific. Downfall would make them greater, in spite of the fact that for Olympic the offensive powers would consolidate. Unification of these two great offenses would have made naval, air, and ground forces of such awesome size and strength that some military leaders hoped that their very existence would persuade Japan to end the war.¹⁷

Other logistical problems, such as beach congestion, had been solved by trial and error through the numerous amphibious

operations. By 1945, the techniques and organization for amphibious operations were well developed and proven in combat. With a relatively short lead time, awesome power could be brought to bear on a specific target.

The fundamental concept of Operation Olympic was to seize southern Kyushu for its wealth of airfields and bays. These airfields and bays would be used as bases and become a gigantic launching area for the Coronet. Kyushu would serve Coronet like Okinawa would serve Olympic--as a base area for another leap forward. Olympic was designed to land fourteen divisions in three to four widely separated areas of southern Kyushu, after heavy and long attacks by aircraft. These planes would be carrier based and land based from Guam, Tinian, and Saipan in the Marianas and from Okinawa and other islands in the Ryukyus. Kyushu was also important because ground and air congestion were a problem on Okinawa. Bases on Kyushu could handle forty additional air groups, almost three-thousand planes, and provide the space required for all the men that would be needed to carry out this invasion.¹⁸

Manpower created another problem for the planners of Downfall. Though the need was immense, all of the fighting divisions scheduled for Olympic were already in the Pacific. Redeployment combat units from Europe would not be needed until Coronet, the invasion of the Tokyo Plain, in March

1946.¹⁹ Even before Germany was defeated, military planners knew they would face heavy public and political pressures to "bring the boys home". The Joint Chiefs knew the American people would insist that the Pacific war had to end no later than twelve months after V-E Day (Victory in Europe). The issue of redeployment would have to be handled delicately as to not destroy morale at home or abroad. Ground combat forces from Europe scheduled for redeployment would travel the U.S. for leave, and an eight week retraining session. The U.S. men would be inexperienced in fighting in the Pacific. However, Japanese leaders planned to defend their homeland with newly raised ground forces as well.²⁰

The Kanto Plain was the key to the Coronet operation. The Kanto Plain is the largest level area in Japan, measuring 70 miles north to south and 90 miles from east to west. At least 50 percent of the Japanese war industry was on the Kanto Plain with the population of almost eighteen-million in 1945.²¹ To provide quick and efficient movement over the plain, Coronet would have required twenty-two million barrels (924 million gallons) of fuel in the first thirty days. To meet that demand it would have taken all the tanks under American control at that time. It was on the Kanto Plain that the American leaders hope to have a decisive defeat over Japan, or at the very least a good position for the Allies to

continue their conquest. The exact plans for Coronet were still "sketchy" at the end of the war. As a matter of fact, on the same day that Japan surrendered, MacArthur's command published the first draft of the still incomplete Coronet study ". . . as a matter of interest only. . .".²²

The chief assumption about the enemy was that they would continue to wage war to the best of their ability, and they would defend their homeland with everything they had available to them. Unlike the D-Day invasion at Normandy where the Germans were divided to fight on several fronts, most of the Japanese Army was in the homeland by the summer of 1945.²³ There was going to be very little surprise to the American attack. The Japanese were simply waiting for the invasion. All four major landing beaches in southern Kyushu appeared to be ideal for amphibious operations. The beaches were long, open, flat, and made of hard sand. It was behind the beaches that an invader could confront danger. They were all backed by rugged, easily defensible hills. There was very little hope that the Americans could avoid heavy casualties on landing.

The American planners believed that only three divisions would be defending southern Kyushu at the beginning of Olympic. The number would increase to eight, nine, or ten divisions shortly after Olympic started. They also presumed

that fourteen division would oppose Coronet. The Japanese could also hide their planes on the Asia mainland to protect them from American bombardment. Planners feared they could assemble 2,000-2,500 planes to oppose Olympic.²⁴ By using Ultra (the ability to decipher German and Japanese Army, Navy, and Air Force codes) and Magic (the ability to decipher Japanese diplomatic codes), the United States knew that the Japanese were preparing for our mission. It is assumed that the Japanese knew about our invasion plan because it was "strategic common sense".²⁵ The Ketsu-Go, the defense plan of the Japanese homeland, showed that they had properly assessed the U.S. invasion plans. The Japanese were planning to move into fortified holding positions behind the beaches and be ready to counterattack the landing force. They would force a close and direct fight on the beaches making the battle so crowded and chaotic that the American advantages of naval gun and air power would be useless. The Japanese did make one miscalculation, they underestimated how quickly redeployment would occur.²⁶

American planners also developed a deception plan that would be leaked out to the Japanese to confuse them as to exactly where the Americans would attack. Olympic planners worried that even with a naval and air blockade that Japan would still be able to move materiel and men from the Asia

mainland. Materiel and men that would be used to resist Olympic. So to keep Japanese ground forces on the continent, while Olympic was being launched, became a major goal of Pastel, the deception plan for Olympic. As the invasion neared, the invasion site could no longer be hidden from the Japanese, but perhaps a strategic deception could buy some time until it was too late for the Japanese to redeploy from the continent. Pastel would need to deceive the Japanese leaders to the American's true invasion site. This uncertainty would force the Japanese to keep their defenses widespread. Deception planners hoped to convince the Japanese leaders that the American strategist had rejected the idea of an immediate invasion based on the Okinawa casualties and morale problems caused by the redeployment of forces from Europe. According to the story, American strategy would be encirclement, blockade, and bombardment. If an invasion would prove necessary it would be much easier and cost less American lives after a long campaign of blockade and bombing.²⁷ The greatest emphasis of Pastel went to the probable usage of large U.S. airborne forces in the invasion of Japan. This would force the Japanese to hold their defensive forces in the interior of Japan. This way the invasion beaches would not be so heavily defended. On the night before the scheduled Olympic assault, airborne diversions would be flown in to

support each of the three landings. Three planes in each landing would drop sixty parachute dummies. Hopefully this would confuse the Japanese and they would hold their forces in the interior as the Olympic forces came ashore. Although Pastel seemed militarily logical, there is no evidence that the Japanese were fooled at all. The only thing the Japanese seemed to be in the dark about was whether the U.S. would invade southern or northern Kyushu, and by June they knew the answer to that question. Everything the Japanese had went pouring into southern Kyushu.²⁸ The Japanese meant to use every weapon left in their arsenal. The Japanese had saved planes, boats, bullets, and guns for one great last battle. Over five-thousand aircraft were to be used as suicide planes. Their gas tanks held just enough fuel for a one-way trip to the invasion beach.²⁹

The Japanese were behaving as if almost the entire world was going to take the on. In some aspects it was true. It would not only be the United States forces fighting the Japanese. On March 1, 1946, more than a million men--including British, Australian, and Canadian divisions--would land on the largest island, Honshu, in Operation Coronet.³⁰ The role of the Soviets was still up in the air. In 1943 the Joint Chiefs had insisted that the Soviets declare war on Japan and actively fight the Japanese in Manchuria. The U.S.

felt this would be necessary to have a full victory over Japan.³¹ In early 1945 this view point still prevailed among the Joint Chiefs as America gave into Soviet wishes concerning territory to be divided up in Europe after the war. However by summer things were beginning to look differently. The U.S. bombing campaign was working effectively. Everyday air raids over Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, and Kobe were stepped up. On March 9, 1945, the deadliest conventional air attack in history took place when several hundred Superfortresses flew over Tokyo at 6,000 feet. This Massive firebomb attack destroyed 250,000 homes leaving 1,000,000 homeless and killed more than 80,000 men, women, and children.³² Not even the atomic bombs did that much damage.

Russian behavior had caused American planners to re-evaluate their alliance with Russia. Their recent actions in Germany made many wonder if they would behave the same way after the war in Asia was over. Yet, despite these reservations there was still the estimate of over one-million casualties to conquer the home islands; it was hoped that at least some of the casualties be incurred by Russians, not just Americans.³³ At the beginning of August it was still unclear what the Russians would do.³⁴

TIME FOR TRUMAN'S DECISION

This is the situation that faced Harry S Truman as President. He also learned of something that he had been totally ignorant of as Vice President. American scientist had produced a new and terrible weapon, the atomic bomb, based on ideas submitted to President Roosevelt by Albert Einstein. American scientists had been working on the top secret Manhattan Project in a race with the Germans since 1939. Almost six years and two and a half billion dollars later on July 16, 1945, the first test atomic bomb in history was detonated in Los Alamos, New Mexico. Ten days later at the Potsdam Conference in the ruins of Berlin, Truman and the other Allied leaders issued an ultimatum. Japan must surrender unconditionally and immediately or suffer the consequences of a new and terrible weapon.³⁵

Truman's ultimatum did not clearly explain what the new weapon was that the Americans possessed. The Japanese thought that they had seen all the terrible weapons, called the American's bluff and announced they would continue to fight on.³⁶

On August 6, 1945, an American bomber dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, a city of 344,000. In an instant 75,000 people died with 100,000 injured. When the Japanese

still hesitated to surrender, another atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Nagasaki. The Japanese surrendered on September 2, 1945, V-J Day. Victory in Japan, World War II was over.

The invasion could have indeed happened for "Little Boy" and "Fat Man", code names for the atomic bombs, were part of an American bluff. America had no more atomic bombs available. The earliest a third bomb could have been dropped was August 24, 1945.³⁷ If Japan would have held out, how would history be written?

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

SUMMARY

On December 7, 1941, America was violently thrown into the middle of the Second World War. Japan had attacked the United States. Although America's war policy took a "Europe-first" approach, Japan would be held responsible for its aggressive acts. Guadalcanal would be the first stepping stone used to reach Japan. Guadalcanal was America's first opportunity to begin pushing the Japanese Co-Prosperity Sphere back to Japan. If the Japanese were not checked here, they could destroy the American-Australian supply lines and push the United States back to North America. It was due to coastwatchers, an intelligence network, that reported Japan's movements toward Guadalcanal. For the first time America went on the offense. It was the first amphibious landing of many. The Japanese showed the Americans what it would take to win the precious islands outside of Japan. Americans experienced fierce fighting and jungle warfare. After six months Guadalcanal was secured by the Americans in February 1943, twenty-thousand Japanese were killed.

The Solomons were used as a base to reach the Marianas. The Marianas had three distinct battles; Saipan, Guam, and Tinian. It was in the Marianas that American soldiers saw the Japanese dedication demonstrated as soldiers and civilians refused to surrender to the overpowering American forces. Thousands of Japanese civilians threw themselves off cliffs or drowned themselves so they would not be captured by the United States. Heavy fighting once again occurred on each island, especially Saipan and Guam. Amphibious landings were becoming more perfected as the Americans continued their drive towards Japan.

The last two campaigns of America's island-hopping strategy proved to be the most deadly. It seemed the closer the Americans got to Japan the more obstinate the Japanese became. It was quite obvious that Japan was going to lose the war. The issue became "how long would the Japanese hold out?". The Japanese seemed to answer until every last Japanese was dead. Bonsai and Kamikaze attacks became common place on the battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. These islands would cost a tremendous amount of human life, but they were necessary to have as the Americans began their invasion of the Japanese homeland.

The United States military had planned to invade Japan in two phases. First, seize the southern part of Kyushu.

Second, invade the Kanto/Tokyo Plain. Plans had been made involving landing sites, dates, redeployment, and Allied participation. These plans, of course, never materialized as President Truman chose to use the atomic bombs to force Japan's unconditional surrender.

CONCLUSION

The loss of life in the Pacific theater during the Second World War is staggering. In 1945 our new President, Harry S Truman, found this nation in a difficult situation. America had set a firm policy of unconditional surrender for a country that had first attacked our homeland. The United States wanted to end the war quickly, sparing as many American lives as possible. Based on my research of the invasion plans, I believe that an invasion of Japan's homeland would have been a long, bloody battle ending in the inevitable defeat of Japan. The demonstration of the horrors of atomic warfare were needed to bring Japan to the realization that they must surrender. I have found nothing to support the recent revisionist historians' claims that the decision to drop the bomb was motivated by American racism or some other factor. I believe that Truman made the right decision based on what he knew in 1945. This decision not only saved American lives but probably Japanese lives as well. The final judgment on

Truman's decision lies in the future. It was hoped that a display of such awesome power would make future generations think twice about using atomic warfare. Let's hope that studying the short and long term implications of atomic warfare will deter its use in the future. So far, no atomic weapons have been used since Nagasaki.

It is only through a comprehensive study of this era that students of American history can properly evaluate the decisions made that impact our lives today. This study was prepared to assist social studies teachers in developing lessons that included critical thinking and analysis of decisions that were made during this most significant time period.

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³Ibid.

⁴Marolda, 115.

⁵Steinberg, 22.

⁶Robert Leckie, Challenge for the Pacific: Guadalcanal--The Turning Point of the War (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1965), 65.

⁷Marolda, 117.

⁸Ibid., 120.

⁹Steinberg, 28.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Marolda, 116.

¹²Steinberg, 22.

¹³Ibid., 28.

¹⁴Ira Wolfert, Masterpieces of War Reporting: Great Moments of World War II, ed. Louis L. Snyder (New York: Julian Messner, 1962), 190.

¹⁵Richard Holmes, The World Atlas of Warfare: Military Innovations that Changed the Course of History (New York: Viking Penguin, 1988), 216.

¹⁶Leckie, 115.

¹⁷William T. Y'Blood, Pearl Harbor and War in the Pacific, ed. Tony Hall (New York: Smithmark, 1991), 163-166.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Steinberg, 167.

²⁰Y'Blood, 172.

²¹Steinberg, 167.

²²Ibid., 167.

²³Y'Blood, 169.

²⁴Steinberg, 170.

²⁵Y'Blood, 173.

²⁶Ibid., 171.

²⁷Steinberg, 174.

²⁸Y'Blood, 177.

²⁹Steinberg, 177.

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¹ Micheal Wright, ed. The Reader's Digest Illustrated History of World War II: The World at Arms (London: Reader's Digest, 1989), 428-430.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴James L. Stokesburg, A Short History of World War II (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1980), 367.

⁵Bill D. Ross, Iwo Jima: Legacy of Valor (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1985), 150.

⁶Richard F. Newcomb, Iwo Jima (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1965), 2-22.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Wright, 428.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ross, 133.

¹¹Newcomb, 117.

¹²Wright, 430.

¹³Newcomb, 104.

¹⁴Ross, 172.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Stokesburg, 368.

¹⁷Ross, 173.

¹⁸Wright, 430.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ross, 173.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., 1.

²³Ibid., 332.

²⁴Ibid., 1.

²⁵Irving Werstein, Okinawa: The Last Ordeal (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968), 12-14.

²⁶William T. Y'Blood, Pearl Harbor and War in the Pacific (New York: Smithmark, 1991), 241.

²⁷Werstein, 14.

²⁸Ibid., 5.

²⁹Ibid., 19.

³⁰Ibid., 22.

³¹Wright, 431.

³²Werstein, 31.

³³Ibid., 23.

³⁴Ibid., 69.

³⁵Y'Blood, 251.

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²Ibid.

³John Ray Skates, The Invasion of Japan: Alternative to the Bomb (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1944), 15.

⁴Ibid., 43.

⁵Ibid., 44.

⁶Ibid., 81.

⁷John Winton, War in the Pacific: Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Bay (New York: Mayflower Book, 1978), 186.

⁸Micheal Wright, ed., The Reader's Digest Illustrated History of World War II: The World at Arms (London: Reader's Digest, 1989), 434.

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¹⁰Richard F. Newcomb, Iwo Jima (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1965), 239-240.

¹¹Skates, 2.

¹²William Craig, The Fall of Japan (New York: The Dial Press, 1967), 14.

¹³Ibid.

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¹⁵Skates, 5.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., 148.

¹⁸Ibid., 49.

¹⁹Ibid., 62.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., 199-200.

²²Ibid.

²³Edwin P. Hoyt, Closing the Circle: War in the Pacific, 1945 (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1982), 66.

²⁴Skates, 3.

²⁵Ibid., 144.

²⁶Ibid., 101.

²⁷Ibid., 160.

²⁸Ibid., 163.

²⁹Craig, 42.

³⁰Wright, 442.

³¹Stokesburg, 374.

³²Irving Werstein, Okinawa: The Last Ordeal (New York: Thomas Y. Cromwell Company, 1968), 29.

³³Stokesburg, 374.

³⁴Ibid.

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³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Wright, 442.

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VOCABULARY

MATERIEL

PACIFIC THEATER

EUROPEAN THEATER

BUFFER ZONE

COASTWATCHERS

OPERATION WATCHTOWER

ARMADA

CO-PROSPERITY SPHERE

AXIS

ISLAND-HOPPING

ALLIES

D-DAY

OPERATION FORAGER

THE GREAT MARIANAS TURKEY SHOOT

ENOLA GAY

BONSAI CHARGE

SALVO

OPERATION DETACHMENT

JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

OPERATION ICEBERG

OPERATION TEN-GO

KAMIKAZE
OPERATION TEN-ICHI
GUERRILLA WARFARE
YALTA CONFERENCE
CASABLANCA CONFERENCE
OPERATION DOWNFALL
OPERATION OLYMPIC
OPERATION CORONET
KANTO/TOKYO PLAIN
ULTRA
KETSU-GO
PASTEL
MANHATTAN PROJECT
POTSDAM CONFERENCE
V-J DAY
V-E DAY
LITTLE BOY/FAT MAN
MAGIC
ZEMMETSU
B-29 SUPERFORTRESS
BLOCKADE
UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER
ULTIMATUM

PEOPLE

HIDEKI TOJO

LOFTON HENDERSON

DOUGLAS MACARTHUR

CHESTER NIMITZ

ALEXANDER VANDEGIFT

FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT

HOLLAND SMITH

RALPH SMITH

KUNIAKI KOISO

TADAMICHI KURIBAYASHI

CHARLES SHEPARD

MITSURU USHIJIMA

SIMON BOLIVAR BUCKNER

HARRY TRUMAN

JOE ROSENTHAL

WILLIAM LEAHY

ERNEST KING

WINSTON CHURCHILL

JOSEF STALIN

TRUE / FALSE QUIZ

- _____ 1. Guadalcanal was a key strategic location because it was only 250 miles southwest of Japan.
- _____ 2. Douglas MacArthur was assigned command of the Guadalcanal campaign.
- _____ 3. Japan was not prepared to defend Guadalcanal because they had false information.
- _____ 4. The Japanese were building nuclear weapons on Guadalcanal.
- _____ 5. Island-hopping refers to the U.S. military strategy used against Japan in World War II.
- _____ 6. The B-29 airplane used the Marianas as a home base.
- _____ 7. Guam was an important victory for America because it was a previous American territory.
- _____ 8. The Enola Gay took off from the Philippines to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.
- _____ 9. Japan's Prime Minister, Hideki Tojo, resigned after the battle of Okinawa.
- _____ 10. The battle for Iwo Jima was considered to be the perfect amphibious operation.
- _____ 11. The Japanese used Iwo Jima as part of a naval blockade.
- _____ 12. Iwo Jima means small Japan.
- _____ 13. The natural resource of sulfur is found on Iwo Jima.
- _____ 14. The Marines raised the American flag on Mount Suribachi on the island of Iwo Jima.
- _____ 15. Iwo Jima is only 8 square miles in area.
- _____ 16. Over 25,000 Americans died on Iwo Jima.

- _____17. Kamikaze literally means "suicide mission".
- _____18. In the battle of Okinawa the Americans met with little resistance on landing day.
- _____19. America lost the most men in the battle of Guadalcanal.
- _____20. Japan had slightly less than 50,000 casualties in the battle of Okinawa.
- _____21. Americans were victims of the heaviest attack of kamikazes in the battle of Guam.
- _____22. Operation Olympic involved the U.S. boycott of the Olympic Games of 1944.
- _____23. Operation Coronet was the proposed invasion of the Tokyo Plain.
- _____24. V-J Day is the proposed date for the Japanese invasion.
- _____25. Over one million people were estimated to be casualties in the invasion of Japan.
- _____26. Pastel was a deception plan aimed at deceiving the Japanese on the Allied invasion location.
- _____27. The policy of "unconditional surrender" was set at the Casablanca Conference.
- _____28. The invasion site of Operation Olympic was the Tokyo/Kanto Plain.
- _____29. The secret development of the atomic bomb was known as the Manhattan Project.
- _____30. The Soviet Union did not commit to support Operation Downfall.

TIME LINE

DEC. 7, 1945--

DEC. 8, 1945--The U.S./Great Britain declare war on Japan

FEB. 15, 1945--

FEB. 26-28, 1942--

APR. 9, 1942--U.S. and Philippine troops on Bataan peninsula
surrender

APR. 18, 1942--

MAY 4-8, 1942--

JUN. 4-6, 1942--

AUG. 7, 1942--

NOV. 20, 1943--

JUN. 19-20, 1944--U.S. naval force defeated the Japanese in
the Battle of the Philippine Sea

JUL. 18, 1944--

OCT. 20, 1944--

OCT. 23-26, 1944--

MAR. 16, 1945--

JUN. 21, 1945--Allied forces captured Okinawa

AUG. 6, 1945--

AUG. 8, 1945--

AUG. 9, 1945--

AUG. 14, 1945--

SEP. 2, 1945--

NOV. 1, 1945--

MAR. 1, 1946--Proposed date for the invasion of the Tokyo Plain--Operation Coronet

*The Allies defeat Japan in the Battle of Midway

*Singapore fell to the Japanese

*Japan's Prime Minister Tojo resigned

*U.S. Marines captured Iwo Jima

*The Allies began landing in the Philippines

*U.S. bombers hit Tokyo in the Doolittle raid

*U.S. forces invaded Tarawa

*Japan bombed U.S. military bases at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii

*The Soviet Union declared war on Japan

*Japan signed surrender terms aboard the battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay

*Allies defeat Japan's Navy in the Battle of Leyte Gulf in the Philippines

*The atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki

*Allies checked a Japanese assault in the Battle of the Coral Sea

*U.S. Marines landed on Guadalcanal

*Planned date for the invasion of southern Kyushu--Operation Olympic

*Japan agreed to surrender unconditionally

*An atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima

*Japan defeated an Allied naval force in the Battle of the Java Sea

MATCHING

WORD BANK:

ISLAND HOPPING PROJECT	GUADALCANAL	MANHATTAN
ATOMIC BOMB	GUAM	MATERIEL
ALLIES	HIROSHIMA	NAGASAKI
AXIS	IWO JIMA	OKINAWA
STRATEGY	PEARL HARBOR	KAMIKAZE
D-DAY	SECOND WORLD WAR	ULTIMATUM
UNCONDITIONALLY	V-E DAY	V-J DAY
BLOCKADE		

DIRECTIONS: In the space provided, write the word best identified by each description. Choose your answer from the list above. There are two extra word.

1 _____ Code name for the top-secret plan to develop the atom bomb.

2 _____ The last Japanese island captured by American forces in World War II after heavy losses on both side.

3 _____ Military strategy used in World War II where important consecutive islands were seized and used as bases.

4 _____ Nations which fought together in World War II including the U.S., Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union.

5 _____ A military strategy where a location is shut off by troops or ships to prevent passage.

6 _____ Allied victory in World War II when Germany surrendered to the Allies on May 8, 1945.

7 _____ Final offer or demand.

8 _____ Japanese city that was the site of the first atomic bombing by the U.S. in August 1945.

9 _____ Pacific island that became a U.S. territory after the Spanish-American War.

10 _____ Small Pacific island captured by the American in World War II after heavy fighting with the Japanese.

11 _____ Japanese pilots who committed suicide with honor by crashing their planes into enemy targets.

12 _____ Japanese city, site of the second atomic bombing by the U.S. in 1945 which ended the war.

13 _____ Nations that formed an alliance of mutual defense in World War II, including Germany, Italy, and Japan.

14 _____ Military plan to gain advantage over the enemy.

15 _____ Powerful explosive used by the United States to destroy two Japanese cities during World War II.

16 _____ Allied victory in the South Pacific in World War II when Japan surrendered to the U.S. on August 14, 1945.

17 _____ Pacific island that was the scene of heavy fighting during World War II.

18 _____ Absolutely, without any reservations or restrictions.

19 _____ Equipment and supplies used by a military force.

20 _____ Conflict provoked in 1939 by Germany's invasion of Poland and Japan's invasion of Manchuria.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUIZ

1. Was Guadalcanal canal a key strategic location?
 - A. able to defend key American-Australian supply lines
 - B. excellent bays for naval ports
 - C. only 250 miles southwest of Japan

2. Who was assigned command of the Guadalcanal campaign?
 - A. Douglas MacArthur
 - B. Chester Nimitz
 - C. Holland Smith

3. What most influenced the lack of Japanese preparedness in defending Guadalcanal?
 - A. Japanese soldier were not properly trained
 - B. inadequate supply lines
 - C. false and lack of information

4. What were the Japanese building on Guadalcanal that was so important to America?
 - A. nuclear weapons
 - B. shipyards
 - C. airfields

5. Island-hopping refers to:
 - A. Japanese defense of their homeland.
 - B. U.S. military strategy used against Japan.
 - C. troop transportation throughout the Pacific islands.

6. What specific aircraft used the Marianas as a home base?
 - A. B-29
 - B. F6F Hellcat
 - C. Spitfire

7. Why was Guam an important victory for America?
 - A. previous American territory
 - B. turned the tide of the Pacific war
 - C. America had very few casualties

8. From what islands did the Enola Gay take off?
 - A. Solomons
 - B. Marianas
 - C. Philippines

9. The Prime Minister of Japan, Hideki Tojo, resigned after which battle?

- A. Marianas
- B. Iwo Jima
- C. Okinawa

10. Which battle in the Marianas was considered the perfect amphibious operation?

- A. Guam
- B. Saipan
- C. Tinian

11. What was the strategic use of Iwo Jima by the Japanese?

- A. island-hopping
- B. naval blockade
- C. military airbases

12. Iwo Jima means:

- A. small Japan.
- B. phosphorus deposit.
- C. sulfur island.

13. What natural resource is found on Iwo Jima?
- A. fresh spring water
 - B. gold
 - C. sulfur
14. At what location did the Marines raise the U.S. flag on Iwo Jima?
- A. Kanto Plain
 - B. Mount Suribachi
 - C. Mount Fuji
15. What is the size of Iwo Jima?
- A. 8 square miles
 - B. 80 square miles
 - C. 800 square miles
16. How many Marines died on Iwo Jima?
- A. 5,000
 - B. 25,000
 - C. 50,000

17. What does the word kamikaze mean?

- A. suicide mission
- B. Divine Wind
- C. killer pilot

18. In which campaign did the American's meet with little resistance on landing day?

- A. Saipan
- B. Okinawa
- C. Iwo Jima

19. In which campaign did the American's lose the most men?

- A. Guadalcanal
- B. Midway
- C. Okinawa

20. How many casualties did Japan incur at the battle of Okinawa?

- A. 5,000
- B. 50,000
- C. 110,00

21. As a result of kamikaze attacks, which battle is known as the "Bloodiest Battle in Naval History"?

- A. Okinawa
- B. Iwo Jima
- C. Guam

22. What was Operation Olympic?

- A. the first objective of the invasion plans
- B. U.S. boycott of the Olympic Games of 1944
- C. the defense plan for Guadalcanal

23. What was Operation Coronet?

- A. the naval blockade of Japan
- B. America's secret weapon
- C. the proposed invasion of the Tokyo Plain

24. What was V-J day?

- A. the day the Japanese surrendered to Allied Forces
- B. the day victory was achieved in the Guadalcanal jungles
- C. the proposed date for the Japanese invasion

25. What were the casualty estimates of Operation Olympic?

A. 1,000,000

B. 2,000,000

C. 3,000,000

26. What was Pastel's purpose?

A. to train redeployed troops in island fighting techniques

B. to increase morale and troop support at home

C. to deceive the Japanese on the Allied invasion location

27. What was the policy set at the Casablanca Conference?

A. The atomic bomb would be dropped on Japan to end the war.

B. The Allies would accept only an unconditional surrender from Japan.

C. The Soviet Union would attack Manchuria to bring Japan's defeat.

28. Where was the invasion site of Operation Olympic?
- A. Okinawa
 - B. Kyushu
 - C. Kanto
29. The secret development of the atomic bomb was known as:
- A. The Manhattan Project.
 - B. Operation Forager.
 - C. Operation Coronet.
30. Which Allied country did not commit to support Operation Downfall?
- A. China
 - B. England
 - C. Soviet Union

DISCUSSION--ESSAY--DEBATE

TOPICS

1. Did President Truman make the right decision by using the atomic bombs? Could the situation of been handled differently?
2. Should atomic weapons be used in the future or banned?
3. Do you think it was necessary for the United States to demand an unconditional surrender from Japan? What role do think this policy played in Truman's decision to drop the bombs? If the United States would have been more lenient with our unconditional surrender policy would Japan have surrendered earlier saving thousands of American and Japanese lives?
4. Discuss the American losses from the attack on Pearl Harbor from various perspectives: monetary, military, strategically, humanity, morally, psychologically, motivational, etc.

5. Analyze the importance of Iwo Jima and Okinawa in the war against Japan.

6. Determine how the fighting was different in the European theater from the Pacific theater. Examine climate, landforms, cultures, civilians, transportation, intensity of fighting, etc. If you had to choose where to fight which theater would you choose and why?

7. When FDR died suddenly on April 12, 1945 Harry S Truman became President. Truman told reporters "I felt like the moon, the stars, and all the planet had fallen on me." Imagine you could interview Truman after his first few days in the White House. Write an article based on your discussion with him on what he thinks some major decisions are that he must make, such as how he plans to end the war.

8. Roosevelt was the chief opponent of gas warfare. Yet many believed the suicidal defenders of Iwo Jima and Okinawa, especially the kamikazes, seemed to justify the use of weapons that would otherwise have seemed cruel and immoral. Do you think America made the right decision not to use gas and chemical warfare against the Japanese? Why or why not? What would be the consequences of using gas or chemical warfare?

9. If Operations Olympic and Coronet would went as planned, what would have been the publics reaction to the redeployment of troops from Europe to the Pacific? Would the public support it? Would morale suffer at home/abroad?

10. Predict what would have happened if Truman would have chosen not to use the atomic bombs and went ahead with Operation Downfall. How would it change the end of World War II? the Cold War? the New World Order?



WORLD WAR I: 1914-1918; WORLD WAR II: 1939-1945; KOREAN WAR: 1950-1953; VIETNAM WAR: 1955-1975; PERSIAN GULF WAR: 1990-1991; IRAQI INVASION OF KUWAIT: 1990-1991; BOSNIA WAR: 1992-1995; CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS: 1962; INDIAN WARS: 18th-19th

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OPERATION CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

- 18 Japanese plan of defense of the home islands
- 28 Plan for the invasion of Tokyo Plain, March 1, 1946
- 43 Aircraft that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima
- 46 U.S. ability to decipher Japanese diplomatic codes
- 53 Code name for the campaign in the Marianas
- 60 U.S./British ability to decipher Japanese and German army, navy and air force codes
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- 70 Nickname for when Japan bombed Guadalcanal
- 79 Plan for the invasion of Japan that included Operations Olympic and Coronet
- 82 Plan for the

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| <p>invasion of southern Kyushu, November 1, 1945</p> <p>DOWN</p> <p>19 Massive air attack on American amphibious forces invading Okinawa</p> <p>22 Code name for</p> | <p>the invasion of Okinawa and the Ryukyu Islands</p> <p>29 A slot Japanese used to send reinforcements to soldiers on Guadalcanal</p> <p>31 Code name for the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki</p> <p>40 Code name for the campaign for the assault</p> | <p>on Guadalcanal</p> <p>41 "Divine Wind"</p> <p>45 death in battle</p> <p>51 Codename for operations on Iwo Jima</p> <p>56 Code name for the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima</p> <p>59 Deception plans for the invasion of Japan</p> |
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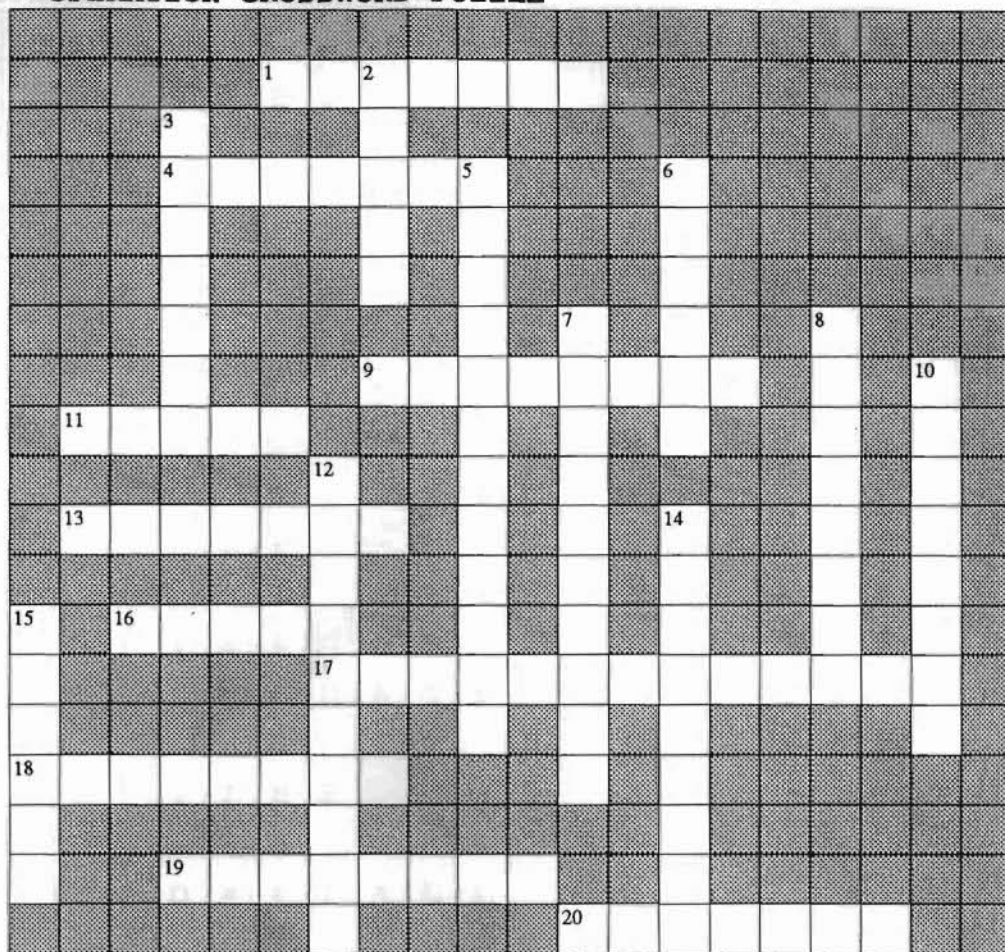
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AUSTRALIA, CHINA, GUAM, HALFMOON, HENDERSON, HONSHU, IESHIMA, IRONBOTTOMBAY, IWOJIMA, JAPAN, KERAMA, KOBE, KYUSHU, LUZON, MIDWAY, NAGOYA, OKINAWA, OSAKA, RABUAL, RYUKYUS, SAIPAN, SUICIDECLIFFS, TINIAN, TOKYO, TULAGI

OPERATION CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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DOWN

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Amur River

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Huang He

SOUTH KOREA

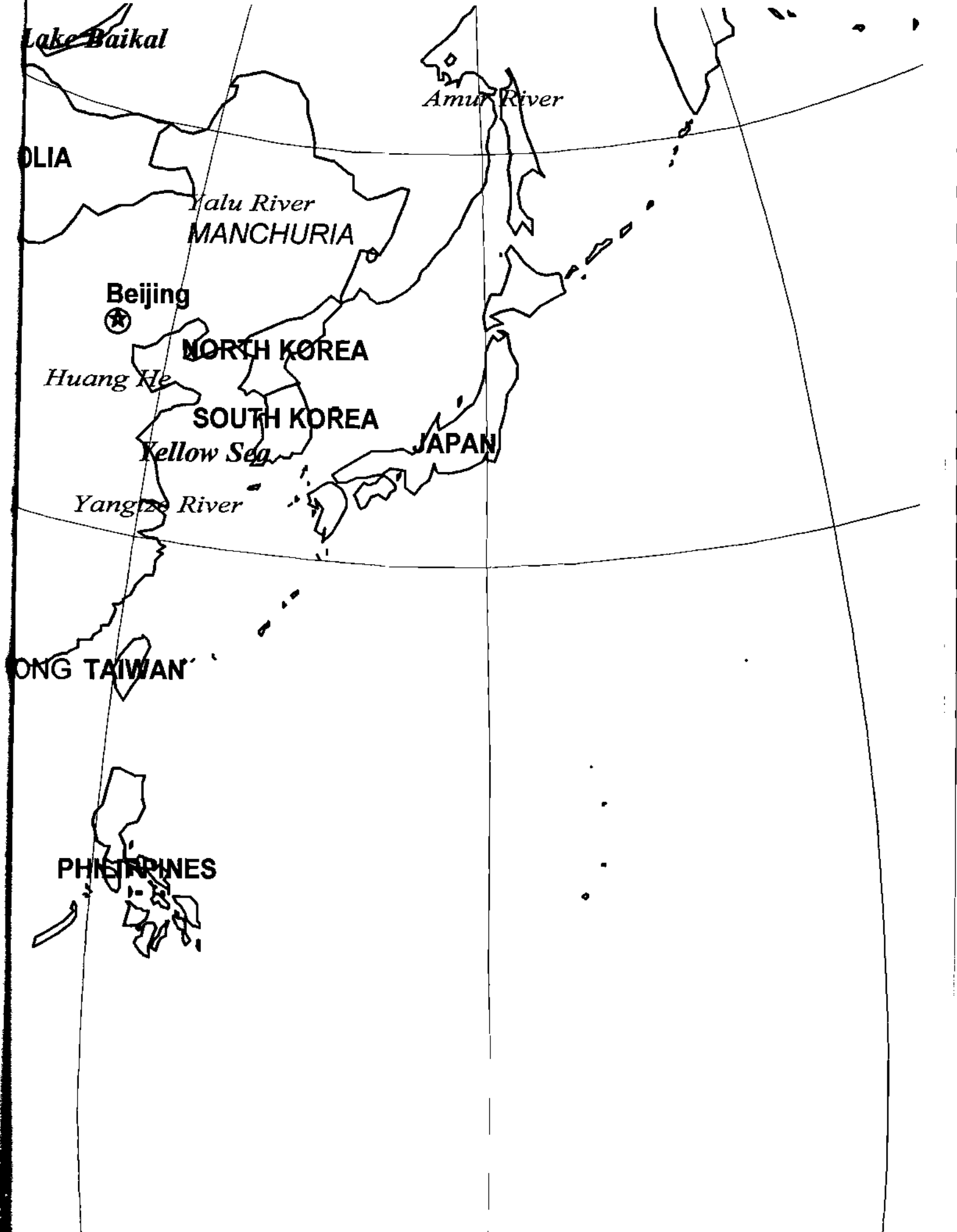
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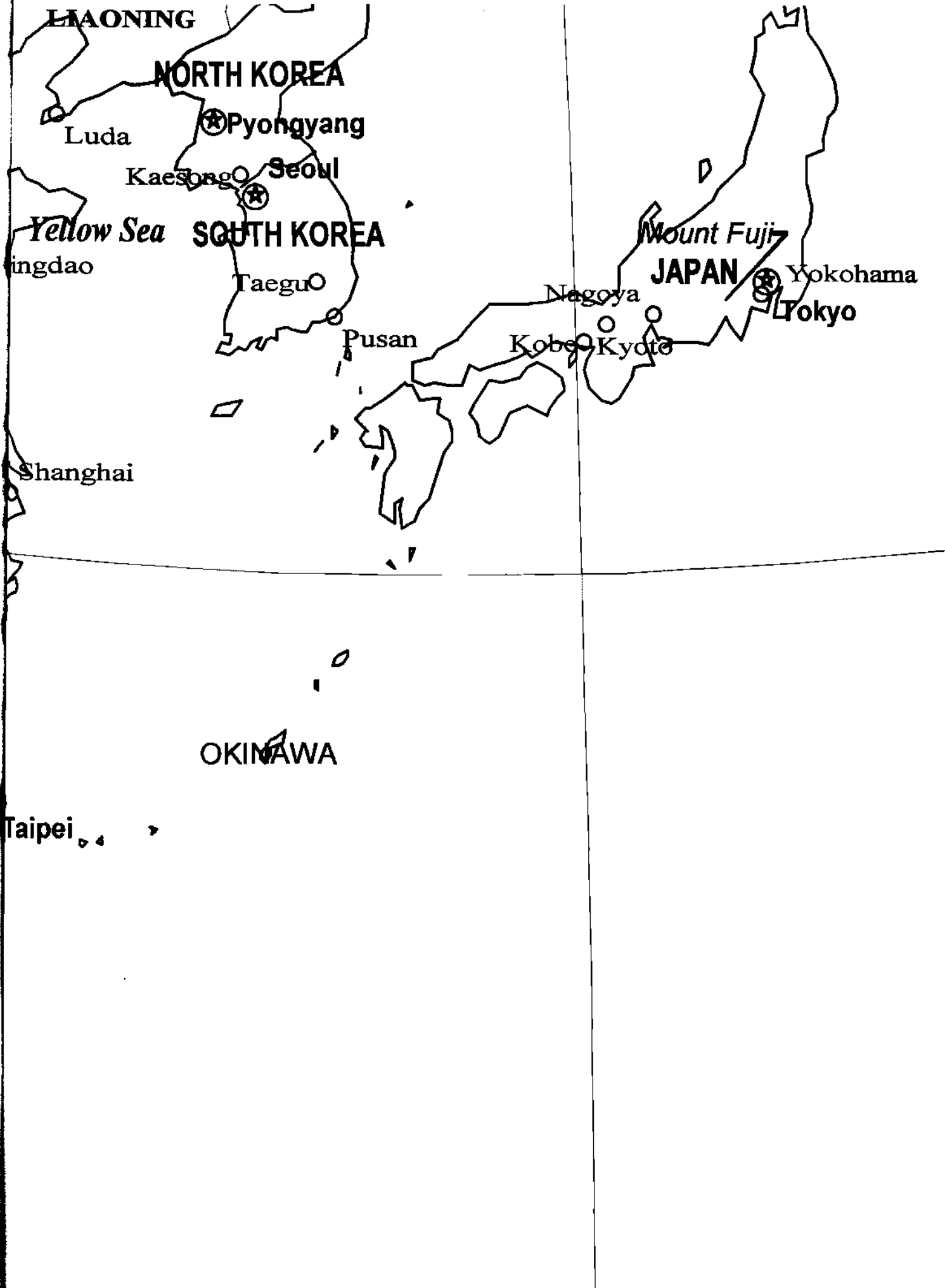
JAPAN

Yangtze River

ONG TAIWAN

PHILIPPINES





LIAONING

NORTH KOREA

Luda

Pyongyang

Kaesong

Seoul

Yellow Sea

SOUTH KOREA

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Taegu

Pusan

Mount Fuji

JAPAN

Yokohama

Nagoya

Tokyo

Kobe

Kyoto

Shanghai

OKINAWA

Taipei