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THE CONQUEST OF OKINAWA AT OKINAWA,
~~RYUKU ISLANDS~~, 1 APRIL - 21 JUNE 1945
(THE OKINAWA CAMPAIGN)

Type of operation described: JOINT OPERATIONS OF ARMY,
NAVY AND MARINE CORPS IN THE CAPTURE OF AN
ISLAND IN THE PACIFIC

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THE CONQUEST OF OKINAWA ~~AT OKINAWA,~~
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INTRODUCTION

This monograph is a story which describes the participation of the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps in the Conquest of Okinawa from 1 April 1945 to 21 June 1945.

In order for the reader to realize the necessity for this campaign, it is important to discuss the location of Okinawa with some of its characteristics, and to review, briefly, some of the past events of the war in the Pacific Theater.

Okinawa is the southernmost island in the chain of the Ryuku Islands which ^{is} ~~are~~ located just south of Kyushu (the main southeastern island of Japan) and northeast of the island of Formosa. (See Map A) The distance between Kyushu and Formosa is estimated to be about 700 miles by air. (See Map A) The Ryukus consist of a chain of islands which resulted from volcanic action. Many of these islands are small and, due to waves beating against them, they have crumbled away on the outer edges to form natural bluffs. Hence, most of the smaller islands are of no great value, militarily speaking. Some of the larger islands are the result of two closely located volcanoes which have connected with each other. Where the two volcanoes joined, there is usually a low area which is much like a plateau. The beaches at such points are smooth and the area is often good enough to permit the building of airfields. Okinawa is an island of this type and is suitable for military use. (1)

The island of Okinawa is approximately sixty-five miles in length and has an average width of about five miles. The northern and southern parts vary

(1) A-1, p. 44

somewhat in terrain conditions. The northern part is a heavily wooded, mountainous region and, for this reason, it is not suitable for military operations. The southern area is of a more rolling nature, but it does have deep gullies and ravines. It is here that the larger part of the population of 400,000 resides. It was only natural to assume that this portion of the island would be heavily defended. (2)

Naha, the most important city on the island, is located about eight miles north of the southern tip. It is on the western side of the island near the Hagushi Bay around which was once located a small Japanese naval base with aircraft. There are many villages up and down the coast which are linked by a very poor road net. The roads, in most cases, are extremely narrow and poorly maintained. (3)

Prior to the early part of 1944, the Japanese had paid little attention to fortifying Okinawa. There were two small naval bases and only one small army garrison occupying the entire island. These small forces were so inadequately equipped that their combat value was negligible. However, the Japanese began to strengthen the island in April 1944. By April 1945 it is estimated that the garrison was built to approximately 120,000 men. This did not include the naval force which consisted of about 10,000 personnel. By the middle of 1944 the Japanese were certain that invasion was imminent, so they hurriedly began to fortify the island. It so happened that the Commanding General of the Japanese forces highly favored cave warfare. (4)

THE PLANNING STAGE

Early in the planning stages, it was realized that the operations against Okinawa would probably be the most difficult ever encountered in the Pacific. The island was strongly defended with a garrison numbering 120,000 and reinforcements in the Nansei-Shoto chain amounted to around 60,000. Kyushu, Formosa, and Shanghai were close enough to furnish larger quotas, if the

(2) A-2, ^{OK}p. 36; (3) A-1, p. 44; (4) A-3, ^{OK}p. 2

Japanese Command desired to do so. The most dangerous aspect, however, was the fact that the Japanese homeland airbases were close enough to strike at us at their convenience. All these facts were taken into consideration before the decision was made to invade Okinawa, and it was anticipated that all losses would probably be high. (5)

Late in September 1944, the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Ocean Area (Admiral Nimitz), received a directive for "Operation Iceberg" (Okinawa Campaign) from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In turn, he issued a directive, to all units that were to participate, for planning purposes. L-Day was originally scheduled for 1 March 1945. However, this date was later changed to 1 April 1945. The Fifth Fleet Commander (Admiral Spruance) was given overall command for the entire operation. The Joint Expeditionary Commander (Admiral Turner) was to be in charge until the day the island was declared secure, and at such time control was to revert to the Commanding General of the Tenth Army (General Buckner). (6)

In the early stages of planning, the following assumptions were made and were later borne out:

a. That the Iwo Jima ~~Campaign~~^{OPERATION} would be far enough advanced to release its air support and fire support units at a date early enough to furnish air and fire support during the assault stage of Okinawa.

b. That our bombing and strafing missions on the Japanese homeland, Formosa, the Ryukus, and the enemy fleet prior to L-Day would guarantee us air superiority over the target area.

c. That ground elements, assault shipping and supporting naval forces would be released ^(PROMPTLY) immediately from the Philippine operations. (7)

The capture of Okinawa was desired for three main reasons:

a. To establish air bases so that air attacks could be launched at the Japanese mainland and to sever communication between China and Japan.

(5,6) A-2, ^{OK}p. 36; (7) A-2, ^{OK}p. 37

b. To establish secure sea and communication routes for ourselves through the East China Sea and the China coast.

c. To maintain a constant pressure and threat to the Japanese homeland. (8)

The Joint Expeditionary Forces were designated as Task Force 51 and had five subordinate forces as follows:

- TF 52 Amphibious Support Force
- TF 53 Northern Attack Force
- TF 54 Gunfire and Covering Force
- TF 55 Southern Attack Force
- TF 56 Expeditionary Troop

The Joint Expeditionary Forces were given several missions as follows:

- a. To capture, occupy and defend Okinawa.
- b. To destroy, or drive off enemy forces that attempted to interfere with the landing operations at the objective.
- c. To direct all aircraft operations of the Joint Expeditionary Forces and any other air units attached for support.
- d. To direct mine-sweeping operations.
- e. To initiate base development and establish military government.

~~The~~ primary mission of capturing, occupying and defending Okinawa was to begin on L-6. (9)

The Gunfire and Covering Force was charged with the responsibility of supporting all landings for the Ground Forces throughout the engagement. (10)

There were three requirements to be fulfilled by air support in the Okinawa operations. The first was the preliminary bombardment and reconnaissance of the operational and supporting enemy areas. The second was to direct preparation and support the assault. The third was to maintain air superiority, air defense, and to continue neutralization of enemy airbases during and after the

(8,9) A-2, p. 37; (10) A-2, p. 40

operation. Some of the tasks that were assigned to air support units were as follows:

- a. B-29's from the 20th Bomber Command, operating from the Marianas, were to bomb Formosa as often as possible, beginning on L-30. This action was to be coordinated with the Southwest Pacific Air Force and was to continue until the capture of Okinawa was completed.
- b. The 21st Bomber Command, also from the Marianas, was charged with making photo reconnaissance between 9-20 March 1945.
- c. The 14th Air Force, in China, was to bomb installations in Hong Kong and to mine the harbor, beginning 18 March 1945.
- d. The Strategic Air Force, Pacific Ocean Area, also in the Marianas, was responsible for neutralizing the Volcano and Bonin Islands and for bombing nearby air installations in Japan, when practicable. They were also to search ^{for} and destroy enemy picket boats.
- e. The Southeast Pacific Air Force, in coordination with the B-29's in the Marianas, was to attack air installations at Formosa and to cover water movement of our forces enroute to Okinawa.
- f. A carrier force, Task Force 58, was to attack air bases at Formosa on 14 March in coordination with the land-based B-24's and B-25's. Commencing on L-9, it was to strike Okinawa for two days and then move east of Okinawa to support the attack, if necessary. Without further orders it was, also, to neutralize the airfields of those small islands north of Okinawa.
- g. Escort carriers were to furnish air cover and support for the expeditionary forces during the approach and the assault. They were also to furnish air defense until such time as airfields were established and useable on Okinawa. Strikes were to begin on Okinawa on L-7. (11)

The Commanding General of the Tenth Army, General Buckner, was given command of the Expeditionary Troops, as well as the Tenth Army. The

(11) A-2, p. 41 44 ✓

Expeditionary Troops had an assault force (Tenth Army), a Tactical Air Force (Marine Corps and Army Air Units), and the Island Command (garrison, service, and military government forces). (12)

The Tenth Army was composed of two corps, the XXIV, which included the 7th, 77th, and 96th Infantry Divisions, and the III Amphibious Corps, which was made up of the 1st, 2d, and 6th Marine Divisions. The 27th and 81st Infantry Divisions were to be in area reserve. (13) The date selected for L-Day was 1 April 1945 and H-Hour was 0830. (14)

In planning, "Operation Iceberg" was divided into three phases. Phase I called for the capture of southern Okinawa. Phase II was to include the rest of Okinawa and the small island of Ie Shima. Phase III was to be the capture of adjacent islands needed to extend air and sea control of the Nansei-Shoto area. (This is the entire group of islands that lie between Formosa and Kyushu, of which Okinawa is the center.) (15)

(MAP 13) → After analyzing the objective, many plans were formulated. A complete staff study was made and it was decided that the landing would be made on the west coast of Okinawa along the Hagushi beaches. This spot was chosen for several reasons. First, this was the only suitable beach on which to land. (MAP C) Second, it was known that the Japanese had completed two airfields in this area, the ^NYontan and Kadena airfields. It was estimated that these fields would be easy to capture and were relatively close to the beaches. Third, they were the only beaches on the southern part of the island that were large enough to facilitate the landing of four divisions and permit resupply of sufficient tonnage to sustain them. Included in the plan was a pre-L-Day landing at Kerama in order to provide a fleet anchorage and repair base for naval units. (16)

The 77th Division, part of the army reserve, was given the task of capturing the Kerama and Keise groups. The capture of the latter group was (12) A-4, ^{oil} p. 54; (13) A-4, ^{oil} p. 55; (14) A-4, ^{oil} p. 56; (15) A-5, ^{oil} p. 43; (16) A-5, p. 46

desired so that our heavy artillery could be placed there to furnish support in the initial landing. The 2d Marine Division, also part of the army reserve, was given the mission of staging landing demonstrations on the southeastern part of the island on L-Day and L+1. (17)

MAP C
After invasion of Kerama Rhetto on 26 March 1945, the army plan called for the assault of Okinawa on 1 April 1945. It was planned to attack with two corps abreast, each corps to have two divisions in the assault, one Marine Division afloat in army reserve, and the general plan placed the XXIV Corps with the 7th and 96th Infantry Divisions on the right and the III Amphibious Corps with the 1st and 6th Marine Divisions on the left, in the assault. The 2d Marine Division in army reserve and the 27th Infantry Division in area reserve. (18)

It was planned to land each assault division on the Hagushi beaches with two Regimental Combat Teams abreast. The two corps, upon landing, were to make a drive from the western side to the east coast of the island. The XXIV Corps was to drive eastward until reaching the coast, then make a right flank movement, thus establishing an east-west line across the island, and facing to the south to renew the attack.

By doing this the Japanese would be unable to get reinforcements into the central portion of the island. By the same token, the III Amphibious Corps, on the left of the XXIV Corps, was to have its right division drive forward to the east coast while its left division pivoted to the left to cut off reinforcements from the Motobu Peninsula. Thus, the III Amphibious Corps would also establish an east-west line across the island and be in a position to continue its attack toward the north. As a result of these two maneuvers the central portion of the island would be set off by itself. This would permit the unloading of the ships in the Hagushi Bay and the landing of the huge lots of supplies that would be needed for the rest of the campaign. (19)

(17) A-4, p. 56; (18.19) A-6, p. 67

OPERATIONS

According to schedule, Task Force 58 pulled out of the battle of Iwo Jima and proceeded north to the Okinawa and Kerama area. Planes from this carrier force began making a photo reconnaissance of the islands. After completing the reconnaissance, the task force retired to Ulithi to reorganize and to replenish its depleted supplies. (20)

About 14 March 1945, the task force departed from Ulithi and moved northward toward Japan. It reached its destination, which was about 100 miles southeast of Kyushu, around the 18th or 19th of March. From this point repeated and vigorous air strikes were launched on the airfields of Kyushu. It was at this time that Task Force 58 encountered enemy fleet units at Kobe and Kure and inflicted severe damages. Within four days the task force destroyed 528 enemy planes, damaged 16 surface craft, and wrecked a score of air installations. Our losses amounted to 116 planes. The result of this short engagement was that the Japanese were unable to furnish air attacks, of any consequence, for the first week after our landings on Okinawa. (21)

On the 24th of March, Task Force 58 left this position and moved southward toward the Okinawa and Kerama area and bombed the southeastern coast of Okinawa as a diversionary effort to conceal the identity of the actual location of the beaches we had chosen to land on. (22)

On the 25th of March the task force continued to shell and bomb the (HAGUSHI) landing areas on Okinawa and Kerama, in what is believed to be an unparalleled naval shelling and air bombing. This task force consisted of ten battleships, fourteen cruisers, four divisions of gun-rocket and mortar equipped landing craft which were attempting to destroy all enemy fortifications and utilities. This harassing attack continued through 31 March. (23)

On the 28th of March the first elements of the 77th Division began landing on the Kerama islands which were defended by a garrison of about 900 men.

(20, 21, 22) A-2, p. 42; (23) A-4, p. 56

(See Map ^B ~~A~~) Three of these islands were taken very quickly and secured on the first day's operations. On the other two islands only slight resistance was encountered, and by 29 March the 77th Division announced that the Kerama group had been secured. By noon of 29 March an air base was established and a squadron of Marine planes were moved in to begin preparations for covering our attacking forces on Okinawa. (24)

On the 31st of March the other phase of pre-L-Day operations was completed when the Keise Islands were secured with no opposition. By evening the 420th Field Artillery Group, with 156mm batteries, was landed and prepared to furnish support for the main landings to be made on Okinawa. (See Map ^B ~~A~~) Enemy losses for this period were 514 dead and 119 prisoners of war. Our forces suffered 81 killed, 89 wounded and one missing in action. We had captured or destroyed 390 of the enemy in suicide boats. (25)

While these operations were going on, underwater reconnaissance and mine sweeping of the Hagushi Beach area had been accomplished. Also, deceptive reconnaissance and demolition missions had been carried out along the southeastern shores of Okinawa. So, with comparatively light losses, our preliminary operations before the main assault had been completed. (26)

THE ATTACK

L-Day, 1 April, Easter Sunday, was an ideal day for the attack. There were moderate easterly winds and the temperature was around 75°. During the night over 1300 naval vessels had ^{INDEFINITE} grouped around Okinawa. (See Map B ^{? WHY}) A transport squadron with the 2d Marine Division aboard was in position for the marines to begin feint landings on the southeastern shores. (27) Two groups of marine fighters, with 64 planes to each group, were orbiting over the two landing beaches, while carrier based aircraft covered the bay to intercept any enemy aircraft that attempted to interfere with the landings. Large fleet units moved back and forth along the beaches while smaller craft (24) A-1, p. 46; (25) A-6, p. 68; (26) A-4, p. ⁰¹⁶ 56; (27) A-4, p. ⁶¹⁴ 57

edged closer, all firing on pre-determined targets. These were part of the Gunfire and Covering Force, Task Force 54, which supported and reinforced the Ground Forces throughout the operations. Beginning on L-Day, target information centers were set up and maintained by the Tenth Army in coordination with the XXIV and III Amphibious Corps, and naval intelligence and gunnery officers. Targets located by ground or air observers were reported to the center which had that particular sector of responsibility. (28).

At 0815, H-Hour was announced for 0830 and at that time a continuous line of armored and troop carrying craft, about eight miles long, began to move in toward the beaches. The Tenth Army landed on the Hagushi beaches, as previously planned, with the XXIV Corps on the right (south) and the III Amphibious Corps on the left (north). The assault divisions from the right to left were the 96th Infantry Division, 7th Infantry Division, 1st Marine Division, and the 6th Marine Division. The troops of the first ^{LA AVES (?)} met with surprisingly light resistance. A little mortar and artillery fire, which caused no damage and only a few casualties, was encountered. The troops moved quickly toward the east and by 1230 they had captured Yontan and Kadena airfields. As a result of the first day's operations, the Tenth Army held a beach-head approximately eight miles long and from 3,000 to 5,000 yards in depth. About 50,000 troops had been put ashore which included eight Regimental Combat Teams, three Artillery Battalions and about 15,000 service troops. (29)

The absence of the enemy was attributed to the excellent naval gunfire and aerial support, and the fact that the Japanese Commander had withdrawn most of his troops to the southern part of the island. Since the southern beaches were not suitable for landings, the Japanese Commander had concentrated his forces throughout the southern half of the island and had left only a few troops along the western beaches to employ delaying and harassing action. (30)

(28) A-2, p. 40; (29) A-6, p. 69; (30) A-1, p. 46

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Both Corps took advantage of the light resistance and pushed vigorously toward the east. By 2 April, the 7th Division reached the east coast, and thus cut the north-south communications of the Japanese. While the 7th Division was reorganizing to begin its southward attack, the III Amphibious Corps continued its attack to the north and to the east, and by 4 April the 1st Marine Division had reached the east coast, and the 6th Marine Division had moved into the Ishikawa Isthmus. Thus Phase I was completed. Due to the light resistance encountered, it was determined that the 2d Marine Division would not be needed. So it was returned to its distant base of Saipan. (31)

On 4 April, the XXIV Corps attacked southward and was stopped on 6 April at the Machinato Line, which was the first of two important defense lines established by the enemy. (32) (See Map C)

Although the enemy had offered only slight resistance during the first six days on the ground, he certainly was offering plenty of resistance in the air. Suicide pilots began attacking our carriers and destroyers with great fury and they were many in numbers. On 6 April the Kamikaze Corps launched suicide attacks on a scale that had never before been encountered. The Japanese lost 383 planes, but many of them found their targets. The next day, nine fast enemy warships from the East China Sea were caught by planes of our Task Force 58, moving toward southern Okinawa. Five were sunk and the rest were damaged. (33)

The need for maintaining air patrols overhead reduced the number of planes that could be provided for the support of our ground forces. It was therefore decided to take Ie Shima at this time, so that its airfields would permit us to build up our number of land-based aircraft to compensate for the reduction of the naval air support. (34)

On 11 April, the Japanese Air Force attacked again in the Okinawa area and lost 211 planes. On 12 April it lost 212, many of which were "Baka" (31) A-6, p. 69; (32) A-4, p. 57; (33,34) A-4, p. 58

planes which appeared for the first time. ("The Baka plane was a small, short range plane, which had more than a ton of explosives in its warhead and was carried to its target, slung under a medium bomber. When released, its suicide pilot directed it at the target in a rocket-assisted dive.")

(35)

While the XXIV Corps was bogged down in the south, the III Amphibious Corps continued to push northward on the Motabu Peninsula and met with light resistance all the way. (See Map B) The biggest problem was transportation over the poor roads in the mountainous region and the limitation of physical endurance. By 21 April the Commanding General of the III Amphibious Corps announced that all organized resistance had ceased on the Motabu Peninsula and northern Okinawa, but that extensive patrolling would be required to clean up the enemy. (36)

On 15 April, artillery was emplaced on Minna Island to support the landing of the 77th Infantry Division on Ie Shima. (See Map B) The next day the 77th Division landed with slight opposition on the beaches, but the Japanese put up a stiff defense on this strongly fortified mountain position, east of the airfield. By 22 April all organized resistance was overcome and work began the next day to rush the airfields to completion. Thus Phase II of "Operation Iceberg" was brought to an end. (37)

By the end of April, the Japanese had inflicted heavy blows on our navy, but they could not keep up the pace. They had lost 1,700 planes, and in the meantime our American fighter strength had begun to increase as soon as the airfields at Ie Shima became operational. Then too, the Japanese High Command had to save some aircraft for its last line home defense. (38)

The XXIV Corps had reached the Machinato Line on 6 April to find that it was greatly organized in depth. (See Map C) The line ran from the town of Machinato, on the West Coast, to a point just north of Yonabaru airfield.

(35) A-4, p. 58; (36) A-6, p. 69; (37) A-6, p. 70; (38) A-4, p. 59

on the east coast. The defense line was organized in such a manner as to take full advantage of all the ridges and steep escarpments that were prevalent in that area. (39)

The enemy was so well entrenched that ^{our} air forces made little progress during the next few days. The 96th Division reached the Kakazu Ridge on 12 April, but the Japs retaliated with such a large concentration of artillery that our forces were forced to withdraw. That night a strong counterattack was launched by the enemy which was broken up with the aid of heavy fire from our naval vessels, and four battalions of artillery. It was about this time that General Hodge, the XXIV Corps Commander, wrote: "It is going to be really tough. There are 65,000 to 70,000 fighting Japs holed up in the south end of the island, and I see no way to get them out except to blast them out yard by yard. Our attack is set to go on soon, and I think we are ready.

The Japs have tremendous amounts of artillery and have used it far more intelligently than I have ever seen them use it to date. With best estimate, it shows around 500 or more individual weapons of 75mm or better, including some 175 of caliber 105 or better. The most powerful weapon of long range we have encountered to date is the 150 rifle with range of 27,000 yards, which fires occasionally upon the two airfields from the vicinity of Shuri. They are using quite a few of the Spigot 320mm mortars, 250mm mortars, and aerial bombs up to 250 kilograms fitted as rockets. They are also using large sized rockets-----

The terrain is decidedly rugged and cut up with many cliffs and natural and man-made limestone and coral caves, organized over long periods of time." (40)

The 27th Infantry Division which landed on Okinawa 9 April was committed to the right of the 96th Division on 15 April. The 96th Division was greatly reduced in strength and combat efficiency from the 2,700 casualties received. (41)

(39,40) A-4, p. 59; (41) A-4, p. 60

More detail needed

The XXIV Corps launched a coordinated attack on 19 April and managed to occupy the town of Machinato. During the next few days the strong defense line was penetrated and small gains were made along the entire front. Heavy air support, and artillery and naval gunfire contributed to this success. Planes dropping napalm bombs aided in destroying and removing camouflage to reveal the cave emplacements. On 30 April the XXIV Corps were in the position as indicated on Map C. (42)

The Shuri Line was the second of two defense lines that had been organized with great care. It, too, had considerable depth. Prior to attacking this line, it was decided that some of the division, that had been hardest hit should be relieved in order to provide for greater strength in the attack. On 30 April the 77th Division, which was brought from Ie Shima on 27 April, relieved the 96th Division. The 27th Division was relieved by the 1st Marine Division on 1 May and sent north to relieve the III Amphibious Corps of its security mission in northern Okinawa. The III Amphibious Corps was ordered south to reorganize prior to entering the battle on the right of the XXIV Corps. (43)

Reorganization was completed, and with General Buckner in command of operations in southern Okinawa, the XXIV Corps took the left side of the line and the III Amphibious Corps took over the right side. During the next few days the 6th Marine Division came up to the right of the 1st Marine Division and the 96th Division relieved the 7th. (See Map D) (44)

AGAINST SHURI LINE OR 30 APRIL LINE?

A new coordinated attack began on 11 May. The artillery preparation was intense. Artillery of all elements was used, including the artillery of those divisions that had been withdrawn. The fleet increased its heavy gunfire by firing 2,000 tons per day and our planes continuously supported the attack. Only 1,100 yards were gained that day. The 96th Division captured Conical Hill on 13 May and Yonabaru airfield the next day. The marines

(42,43,44) A-4, p. 60

reached Naha, but due to a coordinated attack launched by the enemy on the right side of the Amphibious Corps and an amphibious landing near Machinato airfield, their advance was stopped. Naval gunfire sank the landing craft but the Japs had pierced 600 yards into our lines, and only after an all night scrap was the situation restored. (45) During this six day battle, the enemy artillery was so accurate, and heavy, that it was practically impossible to resupply the organizations in the line except by air. Many of our tanks were lost in the action and our casualties were 4,425, or an average of 753 per day. (46)

Heavy rains began in mid-May and sorely disrupted our supply routes which, at best, were very poor roads. It was decided to continue the attacks in hopes that the enemy would lose so many men that his resistance would collapse. Naval gunfire, artillery, and air support, continued to support our advance. (47)

Tanks, employed with groups of infantry, pushed forward, using flame throwers against enemy caves. There was much fighting with bayonets, grenades, and small arms, but the enemy was dug in on the reverse slope and our guns could not drive him out. When our troops reached ridge crests, the Japs opened up with their artillery and we were forced to withdraw. In these few days, including 17 May, our casualties averaged 435 per day. (48)

On 21 May the 6th Marine Division was still fighting in Naha, the 1st Marine Division had cut the Naha-Shuri road and were in the northern outskirts of Shuri, alongside the 77th Division. The 96th Division seized ranges to the west of Shuri and opened a way for an advance to the south. The next day the 7th Division, with fresh troops, reentered the fight and occupied Ozato Hill. The gain for the day varied from a quarter of a mile to a mile along the front. Rains were heavy and continued daily. Therefore, the ground was so muddy that it was practically impossible for a tank to move. However, the 1st Marine, (45) A-4, p. 61; (46) A-1, p. 48; (47) A-4, p. 61; (48) A-1, p. 48

77th, and 96th Divisions continued their converging attacks on Shuri.

Our casualties for eleven days, ending 24 May, averaged 527 per day. (49)

On 30 and 31 May, the Tenth Army again began a drive on all fronts. The 96th Division, and the right regiment of the 77th Division succeeded in capturing high ground southeast of Shuri, after making a coordinated thrust on the rear of the Shuri position. Continuing its drive to the west, the 96th Division established contact with the 1st Marine Division on 31 May. Some of the 77th Division's units penetrated southward as far as Tswanuku and had patrols out as far as Sashuku. With a heavy drive, the 77th and 1st Marine Division finally pushed through and smashed the Shuri stronghold. The 6th Marine Division was still busy, mopping up in Naha, and on 31 May our troops were disposed as shown on Map D. (50)

During this one month approximately 14.6 inches of rain had drenched the island. Our jeeps, trucks, tractors, and weasels could not move. Supplies, food, and ammunition had to be carried to the front by foot, or dropped by air. (51)

After the fall of Shuri, the Japanese commander fell back to the south to a strongly fortified position on the southern tip of the island. His withdrawal was not coordinated and many of his troops were left behind on the Oroku Peninsula. (52)

The pursuit began on 2 June, and though the weather was clear, the deep mud held up its progress. The mopping up of the Shuri area was left to the 77th Division. The 6th Marine Division prepared for an amphibious assault on the Oroku Peninsula. They pushed off and landed on the Oroku Peninsula on 4 June, and by 7 June Naha airfield had fallen into their hands. The enemy retreated south of Oroku, only to find that he was surrounded. (53)

Meanwhile, the 1st Marine, 96th and 7th Divisions, hampered by only light resistance and muddy roads, vigorously pushed the enemy southward to (49,50) A-4, p. 62; (51) A-1, p. 48; (52) A-4, p. 63; (53) A-4, p. 62

his last line of defense on the southern tip of the island. The attack was launched before dawn on 12 June. The 1st Marine Division gained about 1,000 yards, and the 7th Division managed to break through into the enemy's position. The same stubborn resistance was found here that had been encountered in the Machinato and Shuri Lines. Artillery, warships, and planes supported the fighting that took place during the next few days. On 16 June the greatest ^{U.S.} artillery concentration of the campaign was ^{FIRED} experienced, when twenty-two artillery battalions massed ^{their?} their fires on the stubbornly held town of Makabe. On 18 June (the date on which General Buckner was killed) - ^{COMMANDER} ^{SPECIALIST} the III Amphibious Corps attacked southward and split the enemy forces into two pockets. The XXIV Corps advanced and the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Division established contact on 20 June just north of Komesu. The remaining Japanese forces were so disorganized that little resistance was offered. (54)

Okinawa was declared secure at 1305 on 21 June 1945. The results of the campaign were as follows:

Japanese - 107,500 known dead and 7,400 prisoners.

Tenth Army - 38,976 casualties, including 7,032 killed.

Navy - 10,000 casualties, including 4,907 killed or missing. (55)

During this campaign we lost 1,000 planes. The Japanese lost 3,400, which were shot down over Okinawa and Kyushu, and 800 more were destroyed on the ground. For a nation faced with invasion of her homeland this was a terrific blow. (56)

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

In reviewing the Campaign of Okinawa, it is readily apparent that, probably, more cooperation and coordination were required from all the military services than in any other campaign in the Pacific. This was achieved, primarily, by giving definite responsibilities to the individual
(54, 55, 56) A-4, p. 63

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commander concerned, and generally, by emphasis being placed on "Coordination" and "Cooperation" from the highest echelon to the lowest. Results show that these two factors were attained to a high degree. The story of teamwork speaks for itself, beginning with the timely, pre-L-Day bombings of Japanese bases during the latter part of March 1945, through the initial landings on Okinawa, to the last stages of the campaign on the southern tip of the island when naval gunfire with army artillery aided by army and navy planes, supported the final attacks that brought the battle to a successful end.

One of the most significant highlights of the campaign was the magnificent task accomplished by our navy in withstanding the sustained air attacks by the Japanese Air Forces and naval units. It was during this period that the Japanese force was ~~smashed to smithereens~~, and though many of the Japs found their targets, not one major vessel was lost by the navy.

It is questionable as to whether the price we paid, in casualties, to secure the southern part of Okinawa in such a short period of time was worth the gain. Our chief reason for the Okinawa Campaign was to establish air bases in that area so that we could maintain pressure on the Japanese homeland by consistently launching air attacks, and, simultaneously, to sever communications between China and Japan. With this idea in mind, it appears that most of our mission was accomplished during the first few days of fighting, and with comparatively few casualties. In reviewing the campaign we find that on 29 March the Kerama Islands were secured and marine planes began to operate from that base on that date. On 1 April, the first day of the assault, our forces captured Yontan and Kadena airfields in the northern sector. By 4 April the III Amphibious Corps and the XXIV Corps had driven from the west, to the east coast, with light resistance, and by doing so, they had isolated the main Japanese forces to the southern half of the island. Ie Shima was taken at our leisure, with few casualties, on 15 April, and work began at once to complete more airfields. Though the navy suffered heavy

losses from the Japanese air attacks, we had air superiority during the entire campaign. The navy, with its warships, destroyers, patrol boats, etc, definitely had control of the seas. The army had an abundance of men, firepower, and sufficient supplies.

On the other hand, we find that the Japanese occupying the southern part of the island had no air support, nor any naval support. They did have an appreciable quantity of supplies, a large force of personnel and a great deal of firepower, but they had no possibility for reinforcements or resupply. Besides having a fanatical desire to die for the Emperor, they were well entrenched in their fortified caves and holes, and were determined not to surrender. In the words of General Hodge, XXIV Corps Commander, "I see no way to get them out except to blast them out yard by yard." To put it another way, the problem that confronted our leaders at this stage was "How shall we break the enemy's will to resist?"

With the above factors in mind, it seems logical that our mission would have been accomplished with very few casualties if, instead of attacking, we had gone on the defensive on 6 April 1945 when we made contact with the Japanese at the Machinato Line. Our air forces could have continued their bombing and strafing. Our naval vessels could have shelled the entire southern portion of the island at their convenience. We had twenty-two battalions of artillery that could have consistently furnished concentration after concentration. Our planes could have dropped millions of propaganda leaflets to the Japanese troops. It seems that in this manner, we could have broken the will of the enemy to resist and in doing so, we would have achieved the maximum gain, with a minimum loss.

LESSONS

1. An accurate estimate of the enemy situation is of tremendous importance. / This was brought out when the 2d Marine Division was returned to Saipan after the first few days of the Campaign, only to be returned later because of necessity.

2. Aerial bombing and strafing, and artillery fire, are not too effective against fortified cave positions in rugged terrain. In most cases direct hits inside the caves were necessary to eliminate the enemy.

3. Weather and terrain are important factors in the employment of armor. All vehicles were at a standstill during the latter part of May 1945, as a result of drenching rains that created mud barriers on the hillsides.

4. An army can go only so far as its supplies will permit. Immobility of transportation during the rainy season verified this fact.

5. Coordination and cooperation are pre-requisites for an amphibious operation. Success in this campaign literally hinged on the two of them.