

# Pacific Theatre

## Part 18: Okinawa & the Yamato

*In which we inspect the “violent wind of steel” only to find so much hot air.*

by Lestrade aka Unpopular Opinion



*American troops goofing around on the beaches of Okinawa in the early stages of the campaign - from “World War 2 in Colour: Road to Victory” on Netflix.*

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*My unpopular opinion, from internet research anyone can do.*

I know, I know, I should be doing Iwo Jima first. I’m awkward like that. From [Wikipedia](#):

*“The Battle of Okinawa, codenamed Operation Iceberg, was a battle of the Pacific War fought on the island of Okinawa by United States Army and United States Marine Corps forces against the Imperial Japanese Army. The initial invasion of Okinawa on 1 April 1945 was the largest amphibious assault in the Pacific Theatre of World War II. The Kerama Islands surrounding Okinawa were pre-emptively captured on 26 March by the 77th Infantry Division. **The 82-day battle lasted from 1 April until 22 June 1945.** After a long campaign of island hopping, **the Allies were planning to use Kadena Air Base on the large island of Okinawa as a base for Operation Downfall, the planned invasion of the Japanese home islands, 340 mi (550 km) away.**”*

You see reader, by 1945 the US didn’t have aircraft carriers to enable them to perform bombing runs while docked just off the coast of Honshu and multiple Japanese cities weren’t already reduced to a smouldering pile of rubble by months of B-29 raids. Because of this the Americans had no choice but to capture Okinawa from the Japanese and convert the Kadena Air Base into the launch pad for future bombing runs on (checks notes)... Kyushu. Ah, Kyushu – truly the beating heart of the imperial war machine.

To make the following more coherent I'll state my conclusion first: the point of Okinawa was to stage a "last big blow out battle" to justify the nuclear weapons strike on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They needed something suitably bloody and apocalyptic so that when the newspapers reported on the atomic detonations people didn't think "oh how awful". Instead they went "hooray, this has actually saved lives because of how crazy those Japanese were". It's a PR flip.

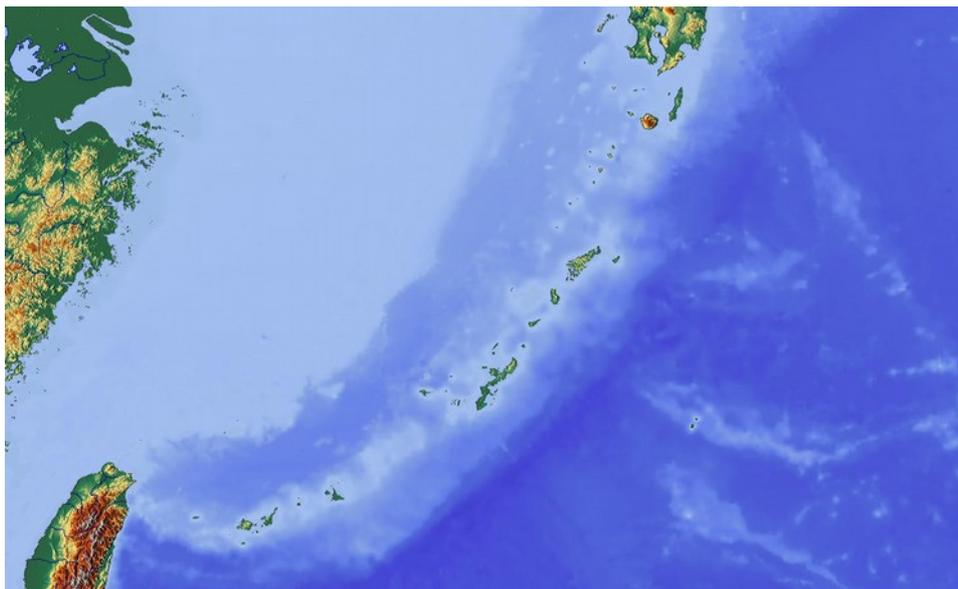
Before I get punched in the neck by Miles: nuclear weapons are not a physical weapon. They are a psychological weapon, a bigger scale version of me robbing a convenience store by pretending I have a pistol in my pocket when it's just a banana. I did a series about this on [Bitchute](#) & [YouTube](#) which nobody watched as either a) the general public are ungrateful swine who would rather watch e-girls make NPC-fetish TikTok videos (if you know you know) than learn about true history or b) I need to get better at making videos and my audio quality wasn't great as I recorded it in my kitchen under a flight path and freestyled it with no script.

Could be either.

I digress: the Phoenixians were wrapping up World War 2 and needed to bring things to a close with the Japanese. The ONI writing team are sat around a conference table looking at the Pacific Theatre script and the next page says: "Climax of Act 3, we drop The Bomb, Japan surrenders, big party in Times Square". They consider this and realise that incinerating millions of civvies probably looks a bit harsh. Almost like America is the bad guy. They know they can retroactively (i.e. during the East Asia War Crimes Tribunal) make up a load of nonsense about cannibalism, mass rape, death camps and Unit 731 (etc. etc.) but it would help an awful lot for public perception if they show that a direct invasion of Japan is just too risky to American troops. For that they'll need a battle that (supposedly) really grinds the soldiers down.

Thus: Okinawa. Another pointless island invasion full of ridiculous plot beats. The Muses have slapped me awake and hidden the rum and chocolate biscuits until I write this so: onwards.

If you've kept your Pacific Theatre bingo scorecard from previous papers you'll immediately check off: "Remote Atoll".



(It's the main Y-shaped island in the lower centre the battle takes place on)

Okinawa is in the middle of nowhere and the native population are kind of Japanese-by-proxy. The mainland Japanese see them as a separate people under their sphere of influence. If you goof around with Google Maps for a minute you'll note there's a bunch of islands north of Okinawa, much closer to Kyushu. A Proper Historian™ wouldn't bother to talk about this - but thankfully their conventions don't apply to me.



The Wikipedia page for [Amami](#) tells us:

*“During World War II, more than 20,000 Japanese soldiers were garrisoned in the Amami Islands, although **the islands were never invaded, and experienced only small scale airstrikes.**”*

I strongly suspect there were no Japanese soldiers garrisoned there and there were no airstrikes whatsoever but I can't prove that so instead I'll just point out that nobody bothers to invade Amami despite being closer to Kyushu and having fewer enemy troops to engage. To the east of Amami we have [Kikaijima](#), on which Wikipedia again confirms no activity:

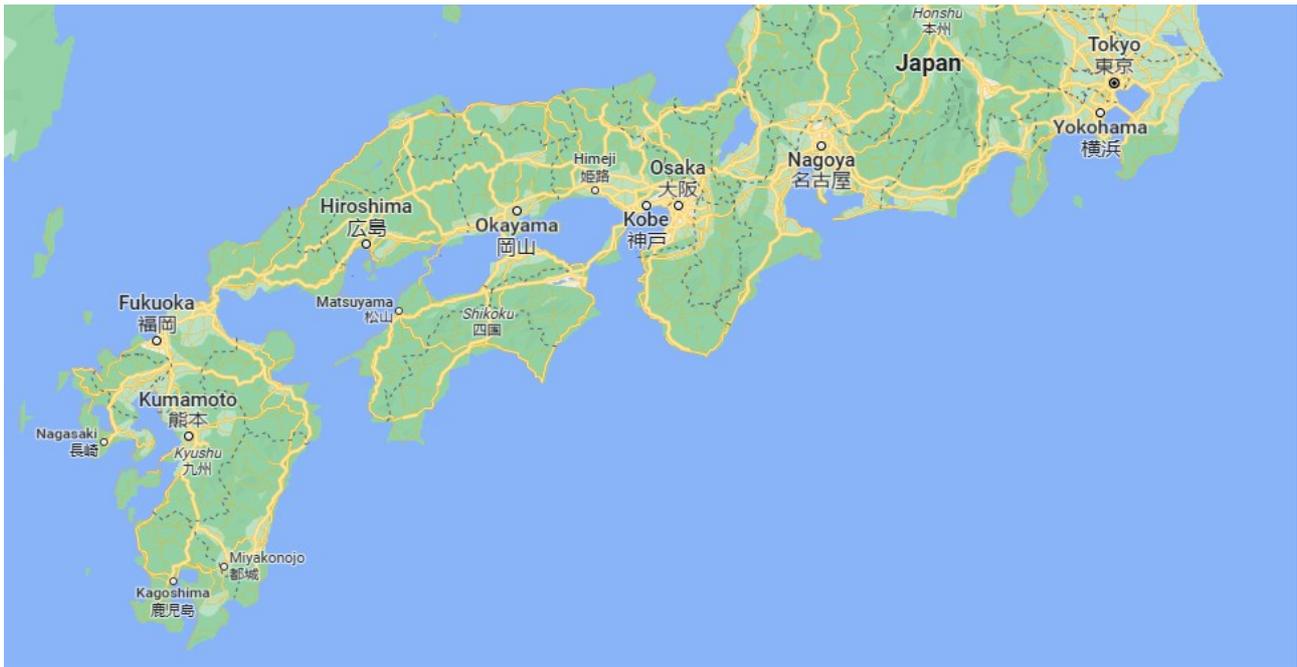
*“As a result of Satsuma Domain's conquest of the Ryūkyū Kingdom of 1609, **Kikaijima fell under the direct control of Satsuma.** After the Meiji Restoration it was incorporated into Ōsumi Province and later became part of Kagoshima Prefecture. Following World War II, **although** with the other Amami Islands, it was occupied by the United States until 1953, at which time it reverted to the control of Japan.”*

I assume they meant “along with”. The Americans lay claim to the place after the surrender, but there's no description/evidence of any invasion or battle here during the war.

If you sail much closer to Kyushu there are a whole constellation of islands – some quite sizeable given what the Americans were making do with in the south Pacific – of the [Osumi Islands](#).



Again, these are all much closer to mainland Japan and especially Kyushu... not that I understand the logic of invading Kyushu in the first place. It's not the capital, the government aren't located there, the military commanders aren't based there, you're not going to capture or kill the Emperor and it doesn't let you divide the main island in half like you would if you struck at Tokyo.



Or you know, feign an invasion of Kyushu and invade Shikoku instead. Much easier to take and gives you more options to invade Honshu.

The reader may want to google some of the Osumi islands and note how on their Wiki pages there is a lack of any Japanese troop presence or American invasion, as with for example [Yakushima](#) or [Tanegashima](#) or [Tokunoshima](#). If you've followed my ramblings from the start you may spot that these (very nice, untouched by war) islands are all part of the [Satsuma Domain](#), which takes us back to the [Boshin War](#) (i.e. the Phoenician invasion of Japan) where the Satsuma collaborated with the Chōshū clan and others to get the Meiji "Restoration" and a new government.

So the point is, there's a bunch of islands that are much closer to the mainland which would be perfectly feasible for the Seabees to get to work on constructing airfields or ports. They are also apparently unguarded. There's no reason to treat Okinawa as a prime target for invasion when the Americans have this enormous naval / air advantage over the Japanese. If we can sail around Rabaul, why not Okinawa? Why not dig in just off of Kyushu?

Now, quite amusingly, when you dig around a bit you can tell the British were feeling left out (I guess they needed some kind of plot arc to go from "lose all your colonies immediately" to "heroic fightback"). Thus we get a [stub reference](#) to "[the invasion](#)" of Sakishima:

*"The British Pacific Fleet, taking part as Task Force 57, was assigned the task of neutralizing the Japanese airfields in the **Sakishima Islands**, which it did successfully from **March 26 to April 10**. **On April 10, its attention was shifted to airfields in northern Formosa**. The force withdrew to San Pedro Bay on April 23. On May 1, the British Pacific Fleet returned to action, subduing the airfields as before, this time with naval bombardment as well as aircraft. Several kamikaze attacks caused significant damage, **but as the Royal Navy carriers had armoured flight decks, they experienced only a brief interruption to their force's operations.**"*

Later on they'll tell you that the kamikaze planes that attack the US fleet off Okinawa come from Formosa/Sakishima. Odd, as the Brits had already smashed the airfields there. [Sakishima](#) is even more remote than Okinawa and the history of the island chain gives us this:

*“During World War II, there was an air battle waged against the Sakishima Islands' two largest islands that lasted for **82 days in order to neutralize Kamikaze airfields**. Twenty-five US escort carriers, five larger fast carriers with their air groups consisting of fighters and torpedo bombers along with heavy naval patrol bombers and an assortment of DD-Destroyers and DE-Destroyer Escorts along with the British Pacific Fleet bombed, rocketed and fired their guns at runways and other targets daily while the land battle raged on Okinawa 175 miles away. **This was the least publicized battle for its size that took place involving the Americans and British during the war.** The **thirty-two thousand seasoned Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) and Naval (IJN) troops on Miyako did not surrender until 27 days after Japan formally surrendered.** The amount of ordnance expended against the Sakishima Islands may have exceeded the ordnance spent on the island of Iwo Jima. **The Sakishima Islands did not suffer a ground invasion during World War II**, although a great deal of anti-submarine warfare and convoy battles took place in the waters immediately surrounding the archipelago in the years leading up to the Okinawa campaign. A number of American and Japanese submarines were lost on the approaches to these islands as they formed a vital outlying defence to the Empire's shipping bottlenecks in the Formosa (Taiwan) and Luzon Straits.”*

There you go: a longer campaign than Okinawa (which was 11 weeks), against 32,000 Japanese troops on this tiny island in the middle of nowhere, with possibly more ordnance dropped than at Iwo Jima. I reckon you'll have never heard of Sakishima. Your mate down the pub who likes World War 2 probably has never heard of Sakishima. Funny how this works, right? Tiny little islands, tens of thousands of troops. No information.

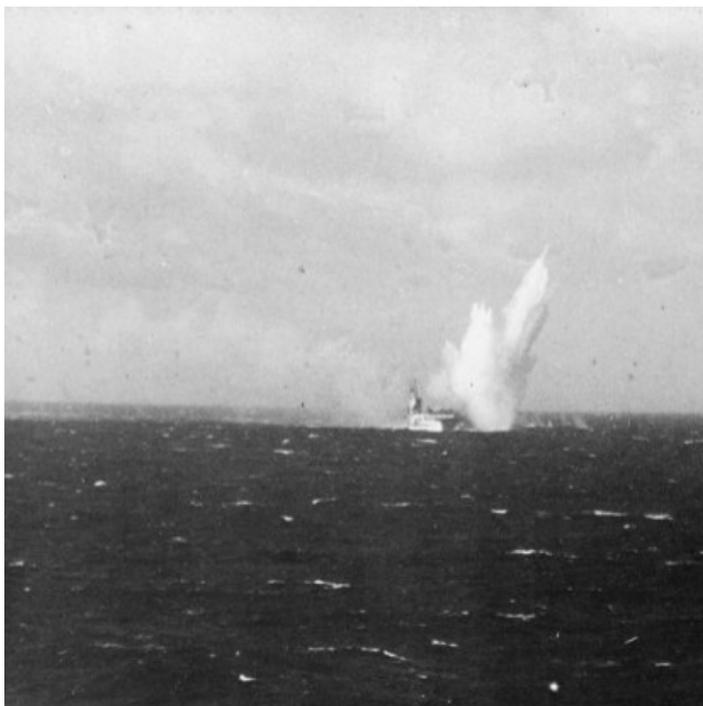
*“In June 1945, the Japanese government ordered locals to evacuate to northern Ishigaki and Iriomote, where 3,647 of them lost their lives to malaria. In contrast, air raids killed much fewer: 174. After the Imperial Japanese Army was defeated on Okinawa later that month, there was a vacuum of military and government control in the Sakishima Islands. **Some garrison troops robbed crops from farms or engaged in violence against locals.** To counter them, the residents of Ishigaki formed the Yaeyama Community Association (八重山自治会). Since it acted as a temporary local government, some historians later described the association as the Yaeyama Republic (八重山共和国).”*

So this is pretty crazy to learn about. We've also got the reveal that Royal Navy ships have armoured flight decks that negate kamikaze impact. [As per this article](#):

*“But the **ships' armoured decks** prevented them from sustaining critical damage and all were able to remain in action. In the Indefatigable's case, **the kamikaze crash dented the armoured deck by about three inches**”*

Three inch dent. From a plane, carrying a bomb, impacting at speed. Bear this in mind when we're talking about the battleship Yamato later, which was supposedly much bigger and much more heavily armoured than anything the Allies had. Or the idea that the Americans (who obviously had a much better funded and more sophisticated war machine than the British) couldn't make battleships as strong as the British had.

The book “Wings over Sakishima” appears to be the main source of information about the Sakishima campaign. [This article reviews it](#) and points out it is written in an awkward, jargon heavy style (translation: it's written by a military guy and it's going to be pure hearsay). Online resources provide us some photography of this 3 month campaign:



*"A Japanese suicide plane crashing into the sea very close to another British carrier after failing to hit the flight deck. The enemy aircraft was crippled by the ILLUSTRIOUS's anti aircraft defences."*  
- original [here](#).

Yep, another day another piece of Terrible Naval Photography. White plume does not mean a kamikaze strike. Also there are no other planes visible in the sky, or signs of flak fire as you'd expect for a dramatic air battle. Was he the only kamikaze hanging around? Did he just zoom straight into the ocean? I'm pretty sure that ship is pasted in given the light of it vs. the ocean.

We also have this:



*“Bombs from British Fleet Avengers bursting on the runway of a Sakishima airfield.”* - original [here](#).

A photograph of an empty airfield with no Japanese planes visible and some smoke / clouds – possibly from dropping bombs, maybe, that could be taken literally anywhere in the US or UK. What do we reckon, an Air Force training centre?

That’s pretty much it. That’s your three month battle and 32,000 Japanese troops getting wiped out. You don’t even get a proper “order of battle” page with Allied / Japanese casualties. Someone could easily read about the Pacific war and never even hear of Sakishima. I would argue this is because it’s an invention of military intelligence to give the British “something to do”. Maybe at this point in the war they couldn’t be bothered to stage a land battle there hence just the naval/air bombardment? With the fake photos and general lack of supporting evidence did anything even happen at Sakishima? The ONI knew all they needed to do was tell people it happened and that’d be good enough.

You get even less to go on (if that’s possible) with the Kerama islands invasion. These are just to the west of Okinawa. [The Wikipedia page on the islands tells us:](#)

*“During World War II and preliminary to the Battle of Okinawa, soldiers of the 77th Infantry Division landed in the Kerama Islands on March 26, 1945. Further landings followed, and the Kerama group was secured over the next five days. Kerama was used as a staging area for the assault on Okinawa. **During the battle the first civilian mass suicides that later marked the Battle of Okinawa took place.**[citation needed] The first US Navy ship to anchor in the harbour was USS Makin Island, a small "jeep" carrier.[citation needed] Thereafter, the archipelago, like the rest of the Ryukyu Islands, was **under US military administration before being returned to Japan in 1972.**”*

Citation needed, indeed. Any photographs of the 77<sup>th</sup> attacking Kerama?



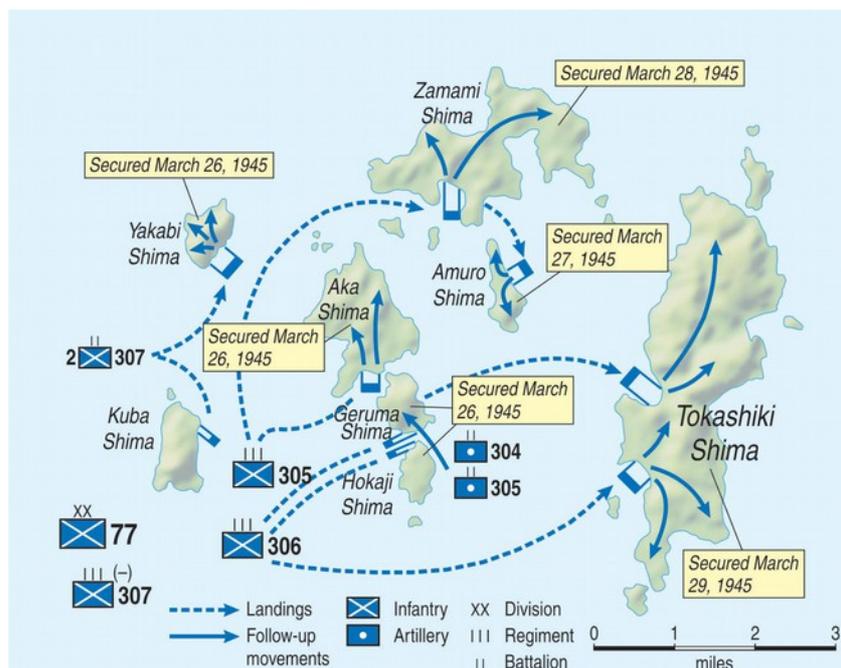
*“The 77th Infantry Division on Zamami Island during World War II.”* - original [here](#).

What is going on here? Look at the weird background, or the bleached-out white balance. Look at the cardboard tank (that gun turret is particularly bad). All the troops squatting in the foreground are obvious, terrible inserts.



“Aerial view invasion in Kerama Retto Battle of Okinawa 1945” – original [here](#).

I bet they had a lot of fun here. Amphibious landing practice, in what was presumably a bunch of empty tropical islands with the odd farming settlement. Lovely weather for a hike.



All this to deal with... how many troops were stationed here? Let's recap:

*“...the Kerama group was secured over the next five days. In these preliminary operations, the 77th Infantry Division suffered 27 dead and 81 wounded, while the Japanese dead and captured numbered over 650. The operation provided a protected anchorage for the fleet and eliminated the threat from suicide boats.”*

81. I assume it's  $6 + 5 + 0$  to equal 11. They don't need a protected anchorage, there's basically nothing left of the Japanese navy at this point. Also: what suicide boats? From where? This is an aerial photograph of the biggest island in the chain, Tokashiki:



*“Aerial view of Tokashiki Island, Okinawa, Japan, 1945” – original [here](#).*

I mean aside from that looking like a drawing of an island that is floating through space, you can see there's absolutely no settlements let alone military facilities or ports from which to launch suicide bomber boats. What is Wikipedia talking about?

You can [read more about the Kerama campaign in this long article](#) which clarifies that I am a miserable cynic, the Japanese were abundant but lurking in caves (naturally) and used nefarious suicide bombing vests to wreak havoc. Look at the photos to see proof positive of the campaign there and do not under any circumstances think the sentence “training exercise”:



Anyway, we've established there are blatant shenanigans going on with the Sakishima and Kerama islands. So what was going on in Okinawa then?



Terrain map of Okinawa – original [here](#).

First off let's look at the Japanese commanders:

| Commanders and leaders   |  |
|--|--|
|  Simon B. Buckner Jr. † |  Mitsuru Ushijima †     |
|  Roy Geiger             |  Isamu Chō †            |
|  Chester W. Nimitz      |  Hiromichi Yahara (POW) |
|  Raymond A. Spruance    |  Minoru Ōta †           |
|  William Halsey Jr.     |  Seiichi Itō †          |

General [Mitsuru Ushijima](#) is the son of a **Satsuma** Domain samurai, because of course he was. He's involved in the [Battle of Wuhan](#) which I won't dive into but have a look at the Strength / Casualties and Losses stats when you get a moment. He commits suicide in a cave, obviously, but we'll get to that.

Lt. General [Isamu Cho](#) we've seen before at the Rape of Nanjing/Nanking (the aide-de-camp of Prince Asaka). This was of course where I ended up doing the "rape math" and pointed out various aspects of the alleged abuse of Nanjing and how it's another load of cobblers made up to demonise the Japanese post war. We [learn](#) that at Okinawa:

*"He was Chief of Staff of the 32nd Army during the Battle of Okinawa. **He masterminded the elaborate underground fortifications around Shuri Castle, but favoured a highly aggressive response to the American invasion rather than a passive defence. He persuaded General Mitsuru Ushijima to launch the disastrous 5 May 1945 counteroffensive.**"*

Yes reader, there's going to be elaborate underground tunnels. It wouldn't be a proper battle without them. He bows out with suicide-in-a-cave along with Ushijima.

[Hiromichi Yahara](#) was the senior staff officer in charge of operations of the 32nd Japanese Army at Okinawa. The idea was that while Cho kept having his men run at the enemy machine guns in a futile "samurai charge" tactic Yahara was actually competent and advised on a defensive, fall-back-to-the-next-cave approach of attrition.

You can read about the deaths of Ushijima and Cho [here](#) and [here](#). Ushijima gives the orders to his troops to fall back and fend for themselves on... June 18<sup>th</sup>, obviously. They commit seppuku (supposedly) in the suitably dramatic location of a ledge overlooking the ocean in the early hours of the morning:

*"Later in the early hours of 22 June the staff in the command post lined up to pay their respects to Ushijima who was attired in his full dress uniform and Cho who wore a white kimono. Cho volunteered to go first and lead the way, "as the way may be dark," but Ushijima insisted on going first. The men made their way onto an outside ledge overlooking the ocean, on which a white cloth had been laid over a quilt. Handed a knife by an aide Ushijima shouted and made a deep vertical cut in his bared abdomen before Captain Sakaguchi (who was regarded as a master swordsman) decapitated him with his sword. Cho followed Ushijima and **the bodies of both men were buried by three orderlies in shallow graves. Their bodies were then buried under U.S. military auspices on 27 June 1945, near the cave where they died. "The bodies of the two Japanese generals were lowered into graves almost above their cave headquarters which was sealed during the American flag service."***

So I thought that last bit was quite interesting, in that the Americans give them a proper burial. You can count on one hand how many times a senior Japanese commander has been located and buried properly. How do we know what befell the duo? Where to look for the bodies and so on? Well, it's all because of Yahara:

*"When Lieutenant General Cho and Lieutenant General Mitsuru Ushijima decided to commit ritualistic suicide in Mabuni caves, **Yahara requested permission to commit seppuku alongside them, but Ushijima refused, telling him "If you die there will be no one left who knows the truth about the battle of Okinawa. Bear the temporary shame but endure it. This is an order from your army commander."** Cho instructed Yahara to make his way through the American lines to northern Okinawa and report to Tokyo on what had happened, and gave him 500 yen for the journey."*

I love that. Get to Tokyo lad, here's some pocket money. It now gets more ridiculous:

*"After the two generals had committed suicide, Yahara hid with several other staff officers in a small cave whose entrance they had blocked with stone and waited for the opportunity to escape.*

*After hearing American troops drilling into the rock above them **they relocated to another cave** before deciding to split up. **Disguising himself as a civilian**, he made his way down Mahuni Hill and eventually joined two other soldiers, the three of them joining a large group of approximately 50 civilians sheltering in a cave. The group was discovered by the Americans who following an air attack on the cave convinced the group to surrender. **Yahara led them out and was mistakenly judged to be a Japanese English teacher**. He was taken to a holding camp before being taken to a house on Chinen Peninsula which he shared with 30 other civilian refugees. **He later joined a work detail** before eventually three weeks after his escape from the 32nd Army headquarters **his true identity was discovered by the U.S. military**. Now a prisoner of war **with privileges due to his rank** as having been the third highest ranked Japanese officer on the island, he was transferred to 10th Army headquarters **where he was interrogated.**”*

Right. Sure. He ducks in and out of caves like a ghost, gets a disguise, then when caught is bizarrely assumed to be an English teacher (why!?) and after being found out weeks later is given an upgrade in his accommodation. Presumably the Americans are going to kill him after torture?

*“Following the end of the war Yahara was repatriated back home to Japan in January 1946.”*

In my mind, this translates as: to justify how we know where Ushijima and Cho went, we have this Yahara guy be the plot device to tell us which cliff-side ledge to dig on. In return, he gets off scot-free a mere handful of months after capture and lives the rest of his life in peace. No prison for him, no hanging, no firing squad!

Of course, if the story of Yahara is bullshit then it follows that Ushijima and Cho quite possibly didn't commit suicide and that's just their cover as they exit stage left to retire from the acting gig. I suspect this is the reality, and explains why the Americans bother to do a big burial ceremony for them (i.e. as the usual Phoenician theatrical inversion of the truth, you do a big elaborate burial to convince everyone someone actually died).

Admiral [Minoru Ōta](#) is involved in Midway, which we've previously looked at. What follows on Okinawa is the most awful, ridiculous farce:

*“In Okinawa, **Ōta commanded a force with a nominal strength of 10,000 men**. However, **half were civilian labourers conscripted into service with minimal training, and the remainder were gunners from various naval vessels with little experience in fighting on land**. Allied sources are **contradictory on his role as commander of the naval elements in Okinawa**. **Some cite Ōta as able to organize and lead them into an effective force, which fought aggressively against the Allied forces, "withdrawing slowly back to the fortified Oroku Peninsula."** But Naval elements, except for outlying islands were headquartered on the Oroku peninsula from the beginning of the battle.”*

Whoops! ONI scriptwriters can't track where the baddies are and what they're doing. It gets worse:

*“Operations Planning Colonel Hiromichi Yahara of the Japanese 32nd Army describes a **miscommunication occurring in the order for Ota's Naval elements to withdraw from the Oroku Peninsula to support the army further south**. What actually happened is clear: Ōta began preparations on or around 24 May, for the withdrawal of all Naval elements to the south in support of the Army. **He destroyed most heavy equipment, stocks of ammunition and even personal weapons**. While in mid-march to the south, 32nd Army HQ ordered Ōta back into the Oroku peninsula citing that a mistake had been made in timing (explanations vary). **Naval elements returned to their former positions with no heavy weapons and about half the troops had no rifles**. The Americans, **who had not noticed the initial withdrawal** attacked and cut off the peninsula by*

attacks from the north on land, and one last seaborne landing behind the Navy's positions. **Naval elements then committed suicide with whatever weapons possible**, with some leading a last charge out of the cave entrances. According to the museum for the underground Naval Headquarters in Okinawa, **"many soldiers committed suicide" inside the command bunker, including Ōta.**"

And:

"On **13** June, Ōta committed suicide with a handgun. He was posthumously promoted to vice admiral."

Incredible. So that's your 10,000 Naval troops: completely unprepared to fight the Americans, half of them are just civilian labourers, they march away from their position after destroying their weapons and ammunition and then get told to go back to their original position by which point they've alerted the enemy and commit suicide rather than be captured. If it was real, this would be a monumental tragedy. Fortunately, it's fiction written by the ONI so we can just laugh at it.

[Seiichi Itō](#) is the Admiral commanding the Yamato, so we'll need to cover that in more detail in a moment.

So those are the Japanese commanders. What about the troop numbers and casualties?

| Strength                               |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| ~541,000 in Tenth Army                 | ~76,000+ Japanese soldiers, |
| ~183,000 combat troops <sup>[3]</sup>  | ~40,000+ Okinawan           |
| rising to ~250,000 <sup>[4]: 567</sup> | conscripts <sup>[5]</sup>   |

You've spotted the **183,000** but the Funny Numbers goes into overdrive here. [From Wikipedia](#):

"In all, the US Army had over **103,000** soldiers (of these, **38,000+** were non-divisional artillery, combat support and HQ troops), over **88,000** Marines and **18,000** Navy personnel (mostly Seabees and medical personnel)."

How many [Japanese](#) were there defending Okinawa?

"The Japanese land campaign (mainly defensive) **was conducted by the 67,000-strong (77,000 according to some sources) regular 32nd Army and some 9,000 Imperial Japanese Navy troops at Oroku Naval Base (only a few hundred of whom had been trained and equipped for ground combat), supported by 39,000 drafted local Ryukyuan people (including 24,000 hastily drafted rear militia called Boeitai and 15,000 non-uniformed laborers).**"

There we go: the Japanese have **67,000 troops**, backed up by about 9,000 seamen only "a few hundred" of which are actually trained to operate as land infantry. Right. That would be the 10,000 or so men under Admiral Ōta, the absurd story of which we just learned about. Then we have 39,000 locals hustled into acting as a militia, a big chunk of which are just manual labourers. Most likely these were just used to build trenches and dugouts and whatnot. They're not going to be much use, especially in comparison to the US Marines. As if the Americans needed half a million men to tackle roughly 70,000 guys with swords and rifles! So what were the casualties I wonder?

| Casualties and losses  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>American personnel:</b><br/> ~50,000 combat casualties,<sup>[6]</sup> includes 12,500 killed and missing, 36,122 wounded <sup>[7]</sup> (excludes the several thousand soldiers who died after the battle indirectly, from their wounds)<br/> <b>Army:</b> 4,412 killed 17,689 wounded<br/> <b>Navy:</b> 4,907 sailors killed and 4,824 wounded<br/> <b>Marines:</b> 2,779 killed 13,609 wounded<br/> <b>Non-battle casualties :</b> 33,000 (psychiatric, injuries, illnesses)<sup>[8]</sup><br/> <b>Materiel:</b><br/> 153 tanks destroyed<sup>[9]</sup><br/> 13 destroyers sunk<br/> 15 amphibious ships sunk<br/> 8 other ships sunk<br/> 386 ships damaged<br/> 763 aircraft lost<sup>[4]</sup>; 573<sup>[10]</sup>; 473</p> | <p><b>Japanese personnel:</b><br/> 77,166 Japanese soldiers dead<sup>[11]</sup><br/> over ~30,000 Okinawan conscripts killed<br/> ~110,000 killed total (U.S. estimate)<sup>[12]</sup><br/> More than ~7,000–15,000 captured<sup>[12]</sup><br/> <b>Materiel:</b><br/> 1 battleship sunk<br/> 1 light cruiser sunk<br/> 5 destroyers sunk<br/> 9 other warships sunk<br/> 1,430 aircraft lost<sup>[13]</sup><br/> 27 tanks destroyed<br/> 743–1,712 artillery pieces, anti-tank guns, mortars and anti-aircraft guns<sup>[10]</sup>; 91–92</p> |
| 40,000–150,000 civilians killed <sup>[12]</sup> <sup>[14]</sup>  |  |

American side: 12,500 killed “and missing” (so padded numbers there then). Army: 4 + 4 + 1 + 2 = 11. Navy: 4 + 8 + 2 + 4 = 18. Marines: 13,609. Non-battle casualties: 33,000. 13 destroyers. 8 other ships.

Japanese side: 77,166 troops killed which is impressive given that it sounds like they barely had 70,000 troops including the naval guys. US estimate of 110,000 killed. Somewhere from 7,000 to 15,000 captured or more (that’s a pretty broad range after all this time).

Another very broad range: somewhere between 40,000 and 150,000 civilians killed.

So this immediately stinks. Before we look into the stages of the battle, we cannot forget that while the Japanese held out on Okinawa, the Japanese military decided it was time... to unleash their Ultimate Weapon. A battleship like no other. A weapon of war designed to strike terror in the hearts of the Allies, with cannon bigger than any other battleship. Armoured hulls! Anti air! Thousands of elite naval troops! They were going to sail this super-weapon straight at the Allies and go down in a blaze of glory, a suicide charge if you will.

Ladies and gentleman... the [IJN Battleship Yamato!](#)



*The Yamato, on its way to Okinawa.*

[The Yamato was also equipped with an incredibly powerful weapon called the “Wave Motion Gun”.](#) As per Wikipedia:

*“The Wave Motion Gun (波動砲, hadō hō), also called the Dimensional Wave Motion Explosive Compression Emitter, is the “trump card” of the Yamato that functions by connecting the Wave Motion Engine to the enormous firing gate at the ship's bow, enabling the tachyon energy power of the engine to be fired in a stream directly forwards. Enormously powerful, it can vaporize a fleet of enemy ships—or a small continent (as seen in the first season, fifth episode)—with one shot; however, it takes a brief but critical period to charge before firing.”*

Hang on.

Wait.

No, I’m sorry, my mistake, that’s the Battleship Yamato from “[Star Blazers](#)”. The actual Yamato is this:



*The actual Yamato.*

You can read on the [Wikipedia page](#) about how the Yamato is barely used during the war. If I had a monster battleship I would want to use it aggressively and wreck the enemy fleet. The Japanese just sort of... bench it.

They don't use it to attack Pearl Harbour, despite how presumably effective it would have been to have sailed it right into the middle of the docked American fleet. During the Battle of Midway we read:

*“Yamamoto exercised overall command from Yamato's bridge,[21] but his battle plan had widely dispersed his forces to lure the Americans into a trap, and **the battleship group was too far away to take part in the engagement.**[13] On 5 June, Yamamoto ordered the remaining ships to return to Japan, so Yamato withdrew with the main battleship force to Hashirajima, before making her way back to Kure.”*

Citation 13 for that beat you'll note. Sail your monster battleship to Midway... don't actually take part... then sail away. OK. We then see good old Truk make a reappearance:

*“Yamato left Kure for Truk on 17 August 1942. After **11** days at sea, she was sighted by the American submarine USS **Flying Fish**, which **fired four torpedoes, all of which missed**; Yamato arrived safely at Truk later that day.”*

Imagine missing a ship that size. Why only four torpedoes? Did they run out? No matter.

We would expect the Japanese deploy her for Guadalcanal, right? To beat the crap out of the Americans and dominate the area?

*“She remained there throughout the Guadalcanal campaign because of a **lack of 46 cm ammunition** suitable for shore bombardment, **uncharted seas around Guadalcanal**, and her high fuel consumption.”*

She... sat at Truk. For Guadalcanal. OK. Guadalcanal was kind of a big deal guys, you might have wanted to have made more of an effort for that. What did they use her for instead? It must have been more important than securing Guadalcanal. Do they get the Yamato to... attack Australia? Wipe out the Dutch fleet remnants? Blow up Singapore? Attack India? Sri Lanka?

*“The battleship spent only a single day away from Truk between her arrival in **August 1942** and her departure on **8 May 1943.**[13][23] On that day, she set sail for Yokosuka and from there for Kure, arriving on 14 May.[13][23] She spent nine days in dry dock for inspection and general repairs,[22] and after sailing to Japan's western Inland Sea she was again dry-docked in late July for significant refitting and upgrades.”*

Has the Yamato actually done anything yet? Other than “be near Midway”?

*“On 16 August, Yamato began her return to Truk, where she joined a large task force formed in response to American raids on the Tarawa and Makin atolls.”*

Aha, here we go! She's going to attack the Marines at Tarawa/Makin and start sinking ships left and right!

“She sortied in late September with Nagato, three carriers, and smaller warships to intercept US Task Force 15, and again a month later with six battleships, three carriers, and **eleven** cruisers. Intelligence had reported that the United States Naval Base at Pearl Harbor was nearly empty of

ships,[13] which the Japanese interpreted to mean that an American naval force would strike at Wake Island.[13] But **there were no radar contacts for six days, and the fleet returned to Truk,** arriving on 26 October.”

...they just sailed around, didn't do anything to the Americans and went home. OK. Let's be patient reader I'm sure the Yamato will do something eventually...

*“Yamato escorted Transport Operation BO-1 from Truk to Yokosuka during 12 – 17 December. Subsequently, because of their extensive storage capacity and thick armour protection, **Yamato and Musashi were pressed into service as transport vessels.**”*

The Yamato is now a ferry.

*“On 25 December, while ferrying troops and equipment – which were wanted as reinforcements for the garrisons at Kavieng and the Admiralty Islands – from Yokosuka to Truk, Yamato and her task group were intercepted by **the American submarine Skate** about 180 miles (290 km) out at sea.[13] Skate fired a spread of four torpedoes at Yamato; one struck the battleship's starboard side toward the stern.[13] A hole 5 metres (16 ft) below the top of her anti-torpedo bulge and measuring some 25 metres (82 ft) across was ripped open in the hull, and a joint between the upper and lower armoured belts failed, causing the rear turret's upper magazine to flood. Yamato took on about 3,000 tons of water, but reached Truk later that day. The repair ship Akashi effected temporary repairs, and Yamato departed on 10 January for Kure. On 16 January 1944, Yamato arrived at Kure for repairs of the torpedo damage and was dry-docked until 3 February.”*

It's a massive and well armoured battleship you see, except for when you hit it with a regular torpedo and it immediately is heavily damaged and needs several weeks to be repaired. It also doesn't appear to have any anti-submarine measures. Maybe the Americans got lucky?

The next bit is important given what eventually happens:

*“Yamato was again dry-docked at Kure for further upgrades to all her radar and anti-aircraft systems from 25 February to 18 March 1944. **Each of the two beam-mounted 6.1 inch (155-mm) triple turrets was removed and replaced by three pairs of 5-inch (127-mm) AA guns in double mounts. In addition, 8 triple and 26 single 25mm AA mounts were added, increasing the total number of 127 mm and 25 mm anti-aircraft guns to 24 and 162, respectively.[18] Shelters were also added on the upper deck for the increased AA crews. A Type 13 air search and Type 22, Mod 4, surface search/gunnery control radar were installed, and the main mast was altered. Her radar suite was also upgraded to include infrared identification systems and aircraft search and gunnery control radars. She left the dry dock on 18 March and went through several trials beginning on 11 April.**”*

If you can overlook how the story of the Yamato is soaked in Funny Numbers for a moment, you'll appreciate how they have specifically refitted the battleship to field substantial anti-air firepower, plus defensive shelters for the AA gunnery crews. I don't know why they aren't rounding it out by installing anti-submarine tech, given what's happened to it so far, but clearly this thing is now a giant floating gun platform for both Anti-Air and Anti-Sea warfare.

If you watch some of the dramatisations of the sinking of the Yamato ([for example this 2005 movie clip](#)) it has the Japanese troops standing around in the open with no cover firing from two or three anti-air emplacements. People won't read the history, but they will watch a movie and come away thinking “ah well, they only had a few sandbags to crouch behind”.

What about during the Battle of the Philippines Sea?

*“From 19 to 23 June 1944, Yamato escorted forces of Ozawa's Mobile Fleet during the Battle of the Philippine Sea, dubbed by American pilots "The Great Marianas Turkey Shoot". The Japanese lost three aircraft carriers and 426 aircraft; **Yamato's only significant contribution was mistakenly opening fire on returning Japanese aircraft.**”*

Right. Pride of the fleet, for sure. Then we have another interesting passage:

*“**Following the battle, Yamato withdrew with the Mobile Fleet to the Hashirajima staging area near Kure to refuel and rearm. With Musashi she left the fleet on 24 June for the short journey to Kure, where she received five more triple 25 mm anti-aircraft mounts. The opportunity was taken to put in place "emergency buoyancy keeping procedures". These resulted in the removal of almost every flammable item from the battleship, including linoleum, bedding, and mattresses. In place of the latter, men slept on planks which could be used to repair damage. Flammable paints received a new silicone based overcoat, and additional portable pumps and fire fighting apparatus were installed. Leaving Japan on 8 July, Yamato—accompanied by the battleships Musashi, Kongō, Nagato, and 11 cruisers and destroyers—sailed south. Yamato and Musashi headed for the Lingga Islands, arriving on 16–17 July. By this stage of the war, Japan's tanker fleet had been much reduced by marauding American submarines, so major fleet units were stationed in the East Indies to be near the source of their fuel supply. The battleships remained at the islands for the next three months.**”*

So again, parked up, hidden away, contributes nothing, even more anti-air added and now it's been stripped internally of anything flammable, including bedding. Or possibly hollowed out entirely and is now a prop ship but we'll get to what I mean by that in a second. The Yamato then grapples with the Americans at Leyte after painting itself black:

*“Between 22 and 25 October 1944, as part of Admiral Takeo Kurita's Center Force (also known as Force A or First Striking Force), **Yamato took part in one of the largest naval engagements in history—the Battle of Leyte Gulf. In response to the American invasion of the Philippines, Operation Shō-Gō called for a number of Japanese groups to converge on the island of Leyte, where American troops were landing. On 18 October, Yamato was given a coating of black camouflage in preparation for her nighttime transit of the San Bernardino Strait; the main ingredient was soot taken from her smokestack.**”*

And, during the Sibuyan Sea:

*“The following day the Battle of the Sibuyan Sea **hurt the Center Force badly with the loss of one more heavy cruiser, eliminating a substantial part of the fleet's anti-aircraft defence.**”*

I would have thought that the Yamato would be the main anti-air platform in the fleet by this point, but they're building to a climax here with a pre-written conclusion and need to start planting seeds. At Samar the Yamato finally does something and immediately gets scared and runs away. No, really:

*“In the initial stages of this battle, **Yamato engaged enemy surface targets for the only time in her career, hitting several American ships.**[32][33][34] After Yamato confirmed primary battery hits on the escort carrier USS Gambier Bay, **a spread of torpedoes heading for Yamato was spotted; the battleship was forced to steer away from the fighting to avoid them and was unable to rejoin the battle.** Although armed only with torpedoes and 5 inch guns and under attack by large calibre cannons, the light American surface combatants, supported by FM-2 Wildcats and TBM Avengers*

*from Taffy 3's escort carriers, **attacked so ferociously that Kurita believed his ships were engaging a full American task force of fleet carriers. A mistaken report that he was facing six fleet carriers, three cruisers, and two destroyers led Kurita to order his task force to turn and disengage. Yamato emerged from the battle without serious damage; only three near misses from bombs and 17 casualties from strafing were suffered during the battle itself, while carrier strikes during the retreat caused light damage to the ship and injured or killed 21 crewmen.***

This leads to more downtime for repairs and even more anti-air being stacked on:

*“Following the engagement, Yamato and the remnants of Kurita's force returned to Brunei. On 15 November 1944, the 1st Battleship Division was disbanded and Yamato became the flagship of the Second Fleet. On 21 November, while transiting the East China Sea in a withdrawal to Kure Naval Base, Yamato's battle group was attacked by the submarine USS Sealion. The battleship Kongō and destroyer Urakaze were lost. **Yamato was immediately dry docked for repairs and anti-aircraft upgrades on reaching Kure, where several of the battleship's older anti-aircraft guns were replaced.***”

Given that the biggest issue the Yamato has dealt with throughout its service is dealing with submarines you would think they'd relax about the anti-air and now focus on giving it a backup cluster of Destroyer escorts or suchlike.

This brings us to [Ten-Go](#), the operation that sinks the Yamato.

As per Wikipedia:

*“Operation Ten-Go (天号作戦, Ten-gō Sakusen), also known as Operation Heaven One (or Ten-ichi-gō 天一号), was the last major Japanese naval operation in the Pacific Theater of World War II. The resulting engagement is also known as the Battle of the East China Sea.*

***In April 1945, the Japanese battleship Yamato, the largest battleship in the world, and nine other Japanese warships, embarked from Japan for a suicide attack on Allied forces engaged in the Battle of Okinawa. The Japanese force was attacked by U.S. carrier-borne aircraft before it could reach Okinawa; Yamato and five other Japanese warships were sunk.***

*The battle demonstrated U.S. air supremacy in the Asiatic-Pacific Theatre and the **vulnerability of surface ships without air cover from aerial attack.** The battle also exhibited Japan's willingness to make extreme sacrifices in kamikaze attacks aimed at slowing the Allied advance on the Japanese home islands.”*

The idea is the Japanese wanted to give the Yamato just enough fuel for a one-way trip to Okinawa. Its orders were to beach itself just off of Okinawa's main island and then act as a sort of gun platform (presumably tilted on its side, on a sandbank) to give extra defensive firepower to the island. This makes no sense for various reasons (e.g. why not retain the power of the ship to defend Tokyo or Kyushu, why not give it extra fuel to manoeuvre more, why would it be deemed sensible to waste the entire battleship and its crew on making one single defensive gun battery which would obviously be unable to move or resupply and be a sitting duck for the Americans and so on and so on).

Spot the Funny Numbers:

| Units involved  |   |
|---|---|
|  Fifth Fleet |  2nd Fleet |
| • Task Force 58   |   |
| Strength  |   |
| 8 aircraft carriers   | 1 battleship  |
| 6 battleships   | 1 light cruiser   |
| 11 cruisers   | 8 destroyers  |
| 30+ destroyers  | 115 aircraft, mostly  |
| 386 aircraft  | <i>kamikaze</i>   |
| Casualties and losses   |   |
| 97 killed   | 4,137 killed <sup>[1]</sup>   |
| 122 wounded   | 1 battleship sunk   |
| 10 aircraft destroyed   | 1 light cruiser sunk  |
| 1 aircraft carrier damaged  | 4 destroyers sunk   |
| 1 battleship damaged  | 1 destroyer severely  |
| 1 destroyer damaged   | damaged   |
|   | ~100 aircraft destroyed   |

8 aircraft carriers, 11 cruisers. 8 destroyers. So many vertical 1's! Ace's and eights. 13 between a 4 and a 7 (to make 11). Also note how many aircraft the US lost. Only ten!

*“The resulting plan, drafted under the direction of the Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Fleet, Admiral Soemu Toyoda, called for Yamato and her escorts to attack the U.S. fleet supporting the U.S. troops landing on the western coast of Okinawa. **Yamato and her escorts were to fight their way to Okinawa and then beach themselves between Higashi and Yomitan and fight as shore batteries until they were destroyed. Once the ships were destroyed, their surviving crew members were supposed to abandon ship and fight U.S. forces on land.** Very little, if any, air cover could be provided for the ships, which would render them almost helpless to concentrated attacks from U.S. carrier-based aircraft.”*

If only the Yamato had some kind of anti-air defence. Or had been hardened against fire.

The Japanese fleet, alas, [was spotted almost immediately](#) as it set sail:

*“At 16:00 on 6 April, Yamato (with Admiral Itō on board), the light cruiser Yahagi, and **eight** destroyers (Asashimo, Hamakaze, Isokaze, Suzutsuki, Hatsushimo, Yukikaze, Fuyutsuki, and Kasumi) departed Tokuyama to begin the mission. Two American submarines, Threadfin and Hackleback, sighted the Japanese force as it proceeded south through the Bungo Channel. **Although they were unable to attack due to the ships' speed, they did spend several hours shadowing the Japanese sortie and sending updates on its course to the U.S. fleet. The submarines' messages, which were reportedly sent uncoded, were also picked up by radio operators on the Japanese ships.**”*

I would imagine that's a rather big breach of security to send unencrypted messages from a submarine while shadowing an enemy fleet, but hey. Nice of the Japanese to ignore them and continue on their mission.

*“...at **11**:30, after being detected by two American PBM Mariner flying boats, the Yamato fired a salvo with her 460 mm (**18.1** in) bow guns using special "beehive shells", but could not prevent the two planes from shadowing the Japanese force. Then they turned back towards Okinawa.”*

The anti-air was switched off or something. They had to use the bow guns to shoot at boat-planes.

*“Upon receiving contact reports early on 7 April, Spruance ordered Task Force 54, which consisted mostly of modernized Standard-type battleships under the command of Rear Admiral Morton Deyo (which were engaged in shore bombardment), to intercept and destroy the Japanese sortie. Deyo moved to execute his orders, **but Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher, who commanded Task Force 58, pre-empted Spruance and Deyo by launching a massive air strike from his carriers, without informing Spruance until after the launches were completed.** [17][18] As a senior naval aviation officer, Mitscher had spent a career fighting the battleship admirals who had steered the navy’s thinking for most of the current century. One of those was his immediate superior, Raymond Spruance. Mitscher felt **a stirring of battleship versus aircraft carrier rivalry.** Though the carriers had mostly fought the great battles of the Pacific, whether air power alone could prevail over a surface force had not been proven beyond all doubt. **Here was an opportunity to end the debate forever**.”*

Oh, I get it. This is going to be a staged battle where the Yamato is sunk in a way to prove a point about carriers.

*“Around noon, the first American aircraft arrived over Yamato; these were F6F Hellcat and F4U Corsair fighters conducting a fighter sweep of any Japanese aircraft defending the battle group; however, the severely depleted Japanese air force could muster no opposition, which allowed U.S. dive-bomber and torpedo aircraft to set up for their attacks unmolested. These aircraft – after a two-hour flight from Okinawa – arrived over the Yamato battle group and circled the Japanese ship formation just out of anti-aircraft range; the lack of Japanese fighter resistance provided ample breathing room for American crews to methodically plan and coordinate their attack runs.”*

I mean “severely depleted” is one thing but having zero air cover is quite another. The Japanese hadn’t got a single plane left to defend the fleet? Really!? What about the 115 aircraft the Japanese are supposed to have lost? Oh that was all “kamikaze” aircraft. Right. I guess they needed a minute to get psyched up enough to take off.

You might expect the Americans to show a shred of humility when writing their fake battle plot-lines and say something like “hundreds of brave US pilots gave their lives to take down the Yamato, but the losses were worth it in the end”. Something to make the Yamato seem like a threat. Make the heroes work for the win.

Nah. The Japanese were just rubbish at shooting and missed every shot from all their Anti-Air positions for two hours straight. No, really:

*“The first wave of U.S. carrier planes was spotted by a Japanese lookout on the bridge at 12:32. Two minutes later, at 12:34, Yamato opened fire with her 460 mm main batteries. The Japanese ships stopped zigzagging and increased speed to 24 kn (28 mph; 44 km/h), began taking evasive manoeuvres, and opened fire with their anti-aircraft guns. Yamato carried almost 150 anti-aircraft guns, including her massive 460 mm main guns that fired San Shiki anti-aircraft shells. **The U.S. pilots deduced that the use of San Shiki and colored gunfire meant that Yamato’s gunners relied on visual aiming and range, rather than being radar directed, and as a result “were missing with great consistency” despite the storm of fire that they put up.**”*

I see. Remember that earlier quote - “Her radar suite was also upgraded to include infrared identification systems and aircraft search and gunnery control radars.”? I guess that didn’t count for anything. Or I’m not meant to actually read the story.

You can read the [whole order of battle here](#).

“At **13:33**, in a desperate attempt to keep the ship from capsizing, Yamato's damage control team counter-flooded both starboard engine and boiler rooms. **This mitigated the danger but also drowned the several hundred crew members crewing those stations, who were given no notice that their compartments were about to fill with water.**[33][34] The loss of the starboard engines, plus the weight of the water, caused Yamato to slow to about **10** kn (12 mph; 19 km/h).[35] At that same moment, the Americans launched another **110** aircraft from Task Group 58. Twenty Avengers made a new torpedo run from 60 degrees to port. Yamato started a sharp turn to port, but **three** torpedoes ripped into her port side amidships, jamming her auxiliary rudder in position hard port.”

They drowned their own engine crew. Of course they did. Absolutely saturated with Funny Numbers this article.

“With Yamato proceeding more slowly and therefore being more accessible to target, U.S. torpedo aircraft concentrated on hitting her rudder and stern with torpedoes to affect her steering ability, which they succeeded in doing. At 14:02, **after being informed that the ship could no longer steer and was sinking, Admiral Itō ordered the mission cancelled, the crew to abandon the ship and the remaining ships to begin rescuing survivors. Yamato communicated this message to the other surviving ships by signal flag because her radios had been destroyed.**”

All of the radios were destroyed. Of course they were. Imagine sending some bloke up on deck in the middle of that to wave signal flags around. As if anyone would have time to read that.

“Admiral Itō, along with Captain Kōsaku Aruga, who commanded Yamato for the battle, refused to abandon ship, with **Itō retiring to the flag cabin while Aruga tied himself to the binnacle. As the order to abandon the ship was issued after the ship began to capsize, many of her crew were trapped.**”

Thus allowing everyone to drown and not have survivors/witnesses as you would expect...

“American aircraft **continued to attack Yamato during this period**, and she suffered several more torpedo hits. At 14:20, Yamato capsized completely and began to sink (30°22'N 128°04'E). At 14:23, **she suddenly blew up with an explosion so large that it was reportedly heard and seen 200 km (110 nmi; 120 mi) away in Kagoshima and sent up a mushroom-shaped cloud almost 20,000 ft (6,100 m) into the air. Japanese survivor Mitsuru Yoshida said that her large explosion downed several U.S. planes observing her end. The explosion is believed to have occurred when the fires ignited by bomb hits reached the main magazines.**”

So of those ten planes lost in the battle, a big chunk were downed due to the Yamato exploding.

Check out the number of victims on the Japanese side:

“Yamato sank rapidly, losing an estimated 3,055 of her **3,332** crew, including fleet commander Vice-Admiral Seiichi Itō. The few survivors were recovered by the four surviving destroyers, which withdrew to Japan.”

3,055 would be 3 + 5 + 5 = **13**. 3,**332** would be 3 + 3 + 3 + 2 = **11**. You just can't stop seeing it after a while...

The rest of the fleet deals with merciless bombardment and is suitably ridiculous when read with the understanding that this is merely another fake naval battle:

*“Attempting to make it back to port, Japanese destroyer Asashimo was bombed and sunk **with no survivors** by U.S. aircraft. The Japanese destroyer Kasumi was also crippled by a U.S. carrier aircraft attack during the battle and **had to be scuttled** by other, relatively undamaged Japanese destroyers. Suzutsuki was able to make it to Sasebo, Japan, **despite her bow being blown off by steaming in reverse the entire way.**”*

(Lestrade takes a break from writing until he’s finished laughing)

Of course it did. Using the Bugs Bunny school of naval warfare.

*“A total of 10 U.S. aircraft were shot down by anti-aircraft fire from the Japanese ships; some aircrews were rescued by seaplane or submarine. In total, the U.S. lost 12 men. Some of the Japanese survivors reported that U.S. fighter aircraft strafed Japanese survivors floating in the water. Japanese survivors also reported that U.S. aircraft temporarily halted their attacks on the Japanese destroyers during the time that the destroyers were busy picking up survivors from the water.”*

There you go, so ten of the planes were shot down (we’re not mentioning the detonation of the ship killing anyone now), in a two hour aerial bombardment. You can imagine the amount of flak the Yamato would have been putting out during that time. It’s just silly.

So what photography do we have of this apocalyptic showdown? I mean, remember the quality of aircraft photography from Pearl Harbour?



Not too shabby, right? Reasonable quality of imagery.

OK, so now four years later we have the Yamato:



*“Aircraft such as this SB2C Helldiver begin their attacks on Yamato”* - original [here](#).

Step one: insert cardboard cut-out plane silhouette. Then mess with the gamma to make the sea grey and jet black in the same picture. Add pure white clouds and wake spume. Then dab about half a dozen bits of ink (which are suspiciously exactly the same shade of black as the black water) and call that flak. Job done, time to clock off and head home.

Then we get this:



*“Yamato listing to port and on fire”* - original [here](#).

Is that the Yamato? Or a silhouette? Why is the ship pure black and the wake directly below the hull neon white? There's a lack of any visible battle, other ships, any planes attacking it, any of its

cannons firing, black smoke from the burning deck... anything at all really. I guess that white cloud towards the rear of the ship is meant to be fire?

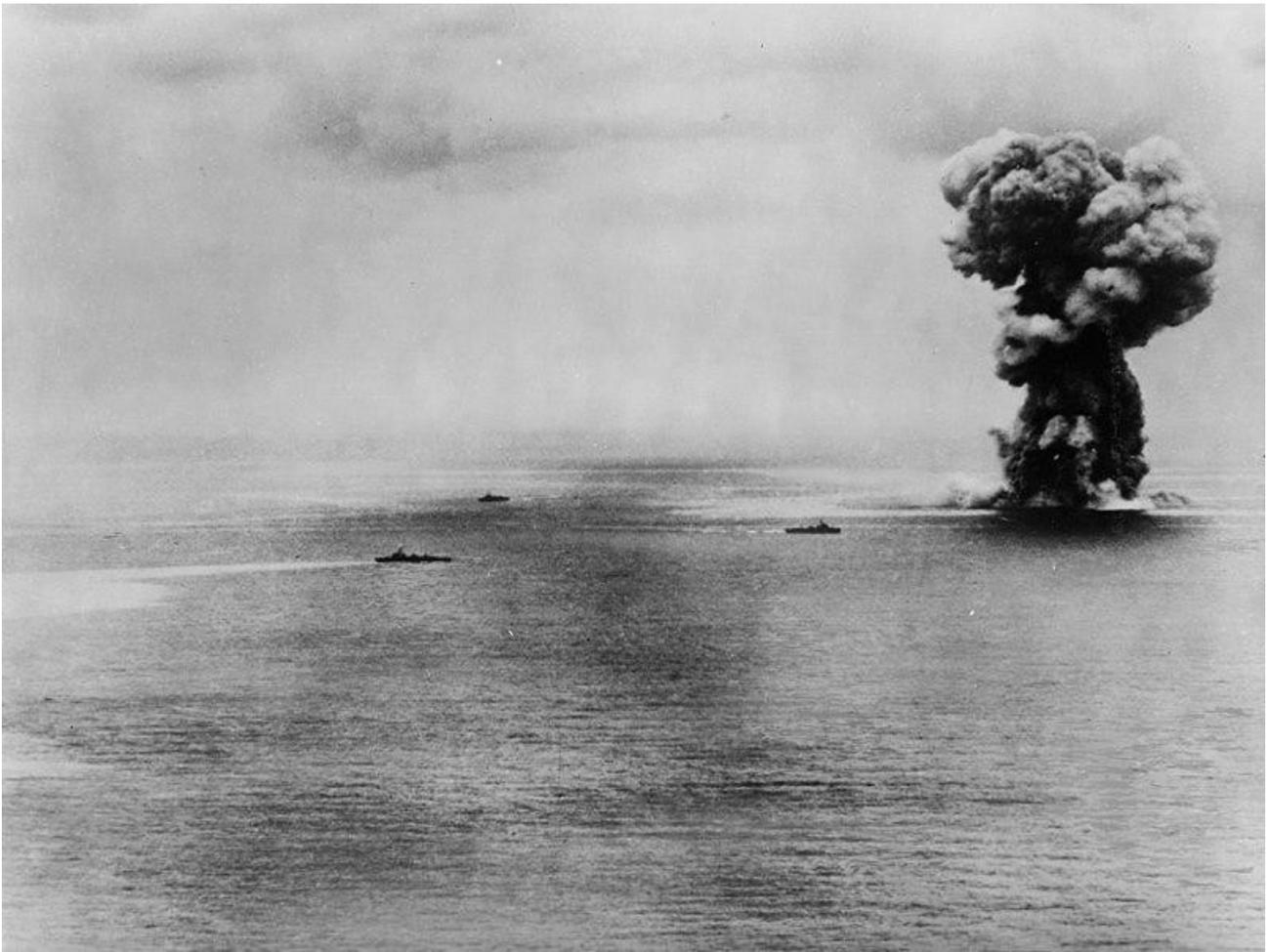
It gets better:



*“Only known photo of Yamato exploding”* - original [here](#).

I think those... four... black dots are supposed to be ships circling the Yamato. Very poor quality but at least they bothered to have some kind of wake pattern on the water, although that could just as easily be painted in I suppose – given the awful resolution and messed up gamma it’s fairly likely this is a doctored photo. Is it an explosion we’re looking at? Or a white splodge? There are no planes or flak in the sky, no other vessels supporting the Yamato, or any sign the circling vessels are firing on it. There’s no black smoke trailing off the vessel (as they’ve been bombing the Yamato for two hours now and its deck is supposed to already be on fire). This is giving me the vibe that they had a vessel, possibly the Yamato, possibly not, filled with some explosives and they blow it sky high for the camera crews stationed on the logistics vessels encircling it.

Well let’s check out the last photo:



*“Yamato, moments after the explosion” – original [here](#).*



*My honest reaction*

Well that sinks it, no pun intended. That’s three black silhouettes inserted onto a deliberately washed out photo (see how the sky and the water and horizon just fade into each other) and they drop a big old mushroom cloud cropped in, wildly out of scale. Compare it to the size of those (presumably American) ships. Rather glaring absence of any American planes also.

OK, so, I know as always this will annoy people (probably a bunch of Japanese people as well this time due to the prestige associated with the ship over time) but you have to ask the obvious question: why was it that the Americans decided to release a bunch of doctored photographs of the

sinking of the Yamato? Why did they not have a single real photo they could show? Did they all forget to have their cameras on that day? Why do this? Then you have the collusion/enabling of this fakery by Proper Historians(TM). What, nobody else saw this? For 70+ years?

Come on.

[This video on YouTube from BalticSeaBoats](#) entitled “Rare WW2 Footage - The end of the Yamato” is interesting because it seems to imply we had footage filmed on the deck of the Yamato itself, during the battle that sank it. This reminds us of what we saw in chapter 16 of this series “Kokoda to Leyte Gulf”, where we looked at how the OSS staged footage of naval battles with the IJN – including the Yamato. We were supposed to be seeing footage of troops on deck or officers on the mess deck / canteen drinking sake and so on. So this footage from the sinking of the Yamato is more of the same – staged footage, filmed “on deck”, somehow. You’re just not meant to think about it properly. You’re supposed to watch the newsreel with shots from the Japanese decks, cannons blasting, never pausing to wonder how we have this or who was holding the camera.

We also get some strange images such as this:



This section around the 2 minute mark gives us a sort of slowed down frame-by-frame view of the Yamato, presumably filmed from an American bomber as it flew overhead. It’s a weird one (you need to see it in motion) but there’s no visible life on deck, no naval personnel running around or fighting fires etc. A drifting target hulk perhaps? Interestingly, at the 2:50 mark you get the Yamato... exploding? But the explosion is going to be way too small to make the mushroom cloud in the doctored photo it then cuts to immediately after.



The whole video is worth a watch to see the various clips stuck together. It's very jarring.

So what are we looking at here? I'm going to go with: the Yamato was a prop ship, probably a US Navy target ship used in practice drills for their carrier pilots. Alternatively, possibly the Yamato was used but only after being completely stripped down internally, sailed out into the middle of nowhere (remember this took place away from both Japan and Okinawa) and then after the 300-odd mini-crew decamp onto a US ship it's then sunk "for camera". I also suspect part of the purpose of this happening at this stage in the war is the symbolism of the name. [As per Wikipedia:](#)

*"Yamato remains fairly prominent in modern Japanese culture, where she is often portrayed as a symbol of Japanese nationalism. The academic Robert Farley has written that popular depictions of the battleship portray her destruction as a "heroic, but also pointless and futile, sacrifice". One of the reasons the event may have such significance in Japanese culture is that the word Yamato was often used as a poetic name for Japan. Thus, the end of the battleship Yamato could serve as a metaphor for the end of the Japanese empire."*

I think that's too on the nose. They're destroying the Yamato in the final battle of Okinawa which leads to the open defeat of Japan.

"But what about the wreck, Lestrade!" I hear you cry.

Well reader, it's probably going to be found by Paul Allen, as is the law.

In fact [he did find the Musashi](#) (of course he did) but the Yamato was actually discovered by a Japanese expedition:

*"Due to often confused circumstances and incomplete information regarding their sinkings, **it took until 2019 to discover and identify most wrecks of Japanese capital ships** lost in World War II. Drawing on US wartime records, an expedition to the East China Sea in **1982** produced some results, but the wreckage discovered could not be clearly identified. **A second expedition returned to the site two years later**, and the team's photographic and video records were later **confirmed** by one of the battleship's designers, **Shigeru Makino**, to show the Yamato's last resting place. The wreck lies 290 kilometres (**180** mi) southwest of Kyushu under 340 metres (**1,120** ft) of water in two main pieces; a bow section comprising the front two thirds of the ship, and a separate stern section."*

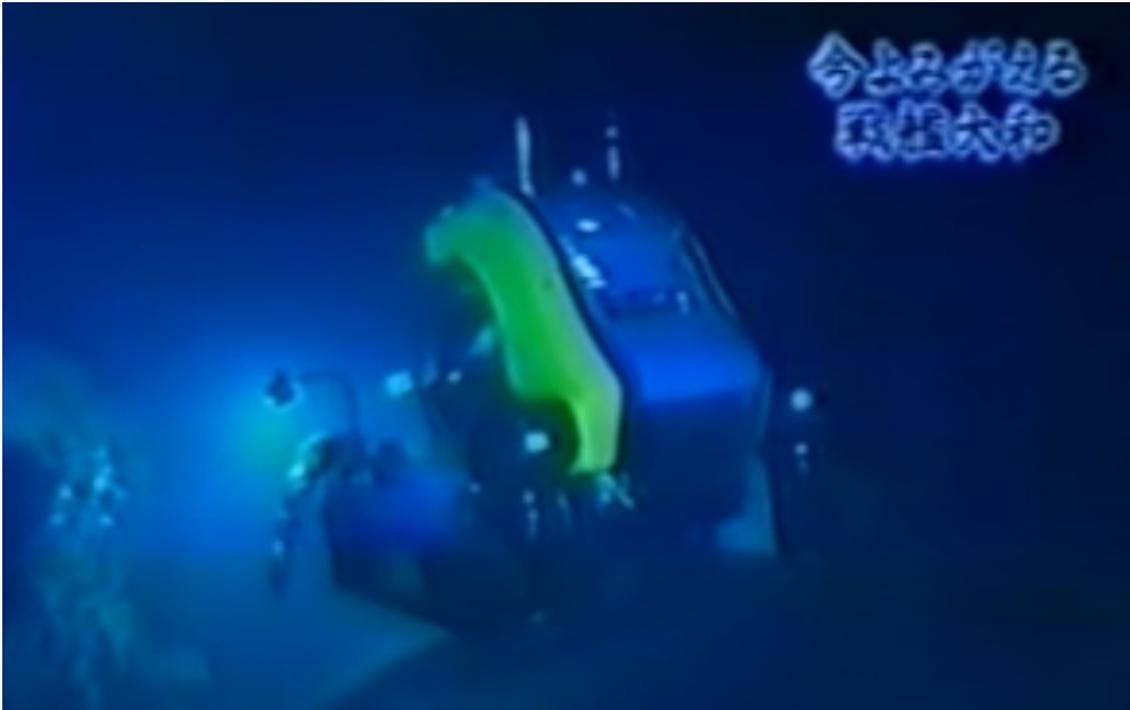
As per the [LA Times article from 1985:](#)

*“The Japan Broadcasting Corp. televised pictures of twisted and rusted metal canisters for large-calibre guns and the imperial chrysanthemum crest on the prow. **It said the pictures were taken under water by a camera in a special deep-sea diving apparatus.***

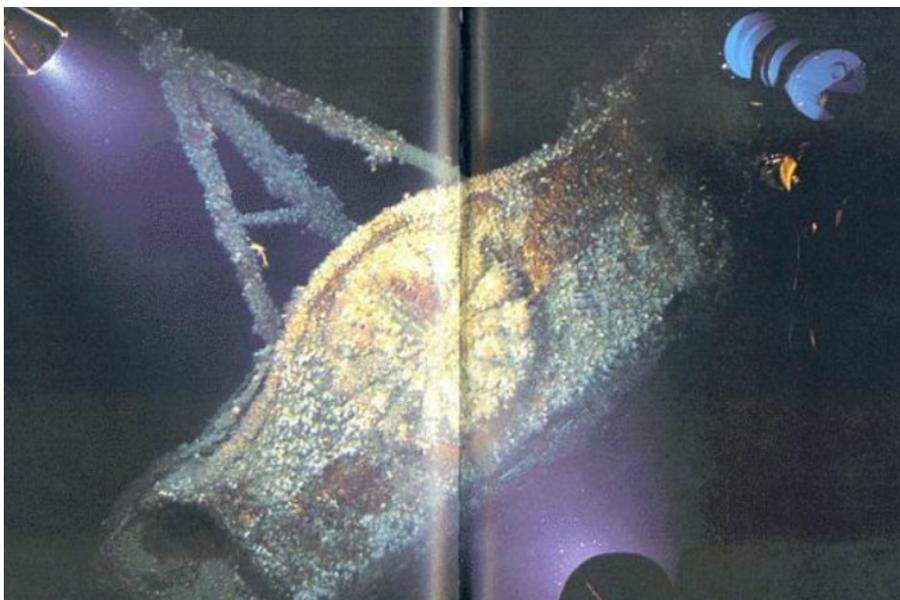
*Shigeru Makino, one of the vessel’s designers, confirmed that it was the Yamato after viewing photos and videotapes, the newspaper Yomiuri reported. Details of the find are to be announced by **the private search team today.**”*

Ah OK so it was a private search team. But, like, divers would have visited the wreck, right?

Nope: *“The Yamato has been surveyed three times by the Kure city government. In the survey, unmanned submersibles with hi-definition cameras captured the ship.”*



A private salvage group, with private funding, using a robot. They then show this sort of imagery to Mr. Makino:



Which looks too small to be the Yamato but whatever. From this glorious image Makino essentially goes “Yep, has to be the Yamato as this wreck has the chrysanthemum on it”. Case closed.

So I’m just saying.

You know.

Sorry Japan. You know what I’m saying.

Let’s move on: back to Okinawa, the land battle side of things. A few amusing things to chew on here. Now you are in for a treat reader, because if you ~~torrent~~ watch the Netflix series “World War 2 in Color: Road to Victory” it has an entire episode dedicated to Okinawa.

I very much enjoyed watching it and would like you guys to watch along at home, possibly pausing to read this article for the full experience.



Also now you’re not going to have to listen to my wild disinformation (probably Russian bot generated). You can listen to the soothing scholarship of Proper Historians(™). These guys are the real deal and they’re going to give you the hard truths. Behold:





**DR NORIKO KAWAMURA**  
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY  
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

00:02:17 00:48:35



**SAUL DAVID**  
AUTHOR, 'CRUCIBLE OF HELL: OKINAWA'

00:02:31 00:48:21



**GEOFFREY WAWRO**  
PROFESSOR OF MILITARY HISTORY  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

00:04:13 00:46:39



**CRAIG L. SYMONDS**  
EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF MARITIME HISTORY  
U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY

00:05:08 00:45:44



This bunch are going to be our guide to the Okinawa campaign. I expect if Mathis does his six degrees of Kevin Bacon magic he'll find they're all related, cousins of Admiral Perry or something. Or gay Jewish actors.

The first few minutes (2:20 onwards for example) are quite useful in establishing that the US has Japan completely cut off, sinking their merchant vessels that are needed to feed the civilian population. Combined with a ruthless incendiary bombing campaign the population are dressed in tatters and starving to death:





Saul David (could he be Jewish?), for example, tells us that by March of '45 80,000 Japanese had been killed and 40,000 wounded from the Americans firebombing Tokyo with thousands of tons of incendiary bombs. Their capital city is smashed. It's done. They're not fighting an organised enemy at this point.

At 4:45 we have Craig Symonds explain that the number of battleships, destroyers etc. committed to taking Okinawa is twice that used in D-Day! This seems wildly over the top to take a small island cluster with cut off defenders. It also starts to cast a bad light on D-Day. But we'll look at that another time, perhaps.

At 5:29 the Americans arrive and film themselves bravely firing naval cannon at empty beaches.





Not pictured: any Japanese whatsoever. As we've seen before, there's a lot of dramatic footage of warships blasting sand and bombers dropping bombs on empty fields. Nobody is resisting. There are no enemy positions visible. No anti-air fire, let alone enemy planes or attack craft. This is an empty island (fishing villages aside I mean).

From about 6:40 the Marines are deployed for amphibious landing and, quite interestingly, we get footage of their extremely smooth arrival (i.e. no enemy fire, they can sail up to the beach in broad daylight no trouble whatsoever) and a blatant lie from the historians.

At 6:53 Richard B Frank tells us *"Every time we land on a beach that the Japanese are defending we've normally encountered a ferocious death struggle"*.

Now, if you cast your mind back to all of the battles we've covered in this series where Americans have landed on islands, atolls and sandbanks to fight the Japanese have we ever encountered a "ferocious death struggle"?

They always just walk up the beach. Usually in broad daylight and not wearing any body armour. As with every other battle in the Pacific Theatre, so too in Okinawa:



It's a struggle to walk through wet sand in all that kit I suppose.



At 7:08 Naval War College lecturer Jonathan Parshall tells us: *“The Americans pile out of their vehicles and onto the beach and are ready to be shot at... and there’s nothing!”*

Saul David weighs in that *“there’s just an eerie silence and it must have been the oddest feeling mixed in of course with huge relief”*.

The smug British narrator lady then tells us: *“For the first time during the Pacific campaign, an invasion beach isn’t drenched in blood.”*

So again, very strange: the absolutely standard Japanese combat doctrine of “hide inland in caves and allow the enemy to land unopposed” is being painted as an anomaly. It’s so blatant a lie I spat my coffee out. How can they tell you this with a straight face? I guess they aren’t expecting the audience to know anything or to have read anything.

Parshall again: *“The American top commanders can’t believe that this thing has gone as smoothly as it has and with as few casualties.”*

I mean they should probably have expected that, Jonathan, given that every single time they fight the Japanese they get a free pass to sail up to the shore and unpack their kit. The point you have to worry is supposed to be when you go inland and they’re sniping you from underground tunnels.

The reader may have noticed we’ve skipped over Sakishima completely. I guess the historians forgot about that.

Another interesting point: the main settlement on Okinawa is to the south of where the Americans land. The main castle there, Shuri Castle, is the Japanese headquarters. It’s strange to me that the castle wasn’t bombed flat prior to the landing given that it’s so obviously a target. I mean if you had to guess where the Japanese commander was, you’d probably say “Surely not the big medieval castle on the hill overlooking the main settlement? That’s too obvious, right?”



But no, that's exactly where he (supposedly) was. Absurdly, we're told at 10:05 that "the Americans have no idea where the Japanese are". Really? Did you not bother to get in a jeep and drive south to the port of Naha? That's the main settlement on Okinawa. Maybe, and this is just a hunch, check out the big hilltop castle along the way?

Anyway, the Americans land in the narrow middle bit of the island, unpack their sandwiches, put on some sun tan lotion and split up to search for the elusive enemy. They send two Army divisions south (to the more populated part of the island) and the Marines are sent north. We get some footage of the Americans walking around, again in broad daylight, no problems, through fields and down empty roads looking for some Japanese to fight.

Saul tells us: *"There's almost a carnival atmosphere among some of the American soldiers. It's very much a sense they are almost on holiday"*.

As you would expect for an apocalyptic battle between military powers. We see the troops messing around with donkey rides on the beach to illustrate this. Not joking.

At 12:18 we get the discovery of a Super Duper Secret Jet Plane.





A “chilling discovery”. Experimental plane number I-13, in English numerals.

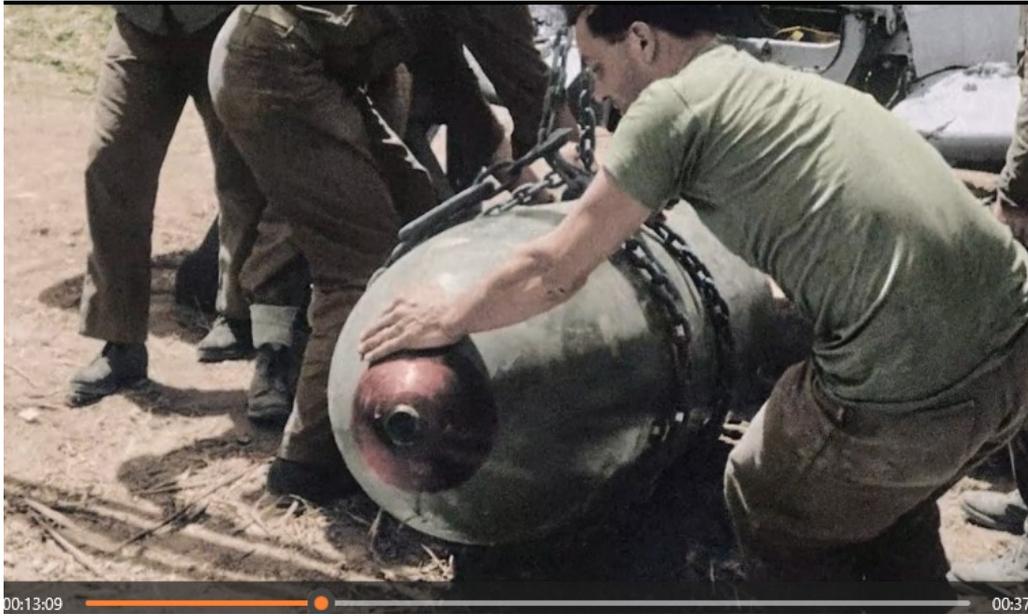


Another unidentified, revolutionary aircraft. Number I-18 this time.

We’re told the Japanese had secretly constructed jet fighters, with no undercarriage to allow it to land (or take off), capable of flying around 500mph. Removal of the nose cone reveals “a huge bomb”.

So these are kamikaze jet fighters with giant bombs built into the nose section, stacked in a field in Okinawa unguarded and unfuelled.

OK.



You can see why I wanted you to watch this. It's so unbelievably dumb.

At **13:33** (appropriately) we get the Japanese Special Kamikaze Death Strike. The historians explain that the plan all along was to lull the Americans into a false sense of security, wait until they started walking around the island and then spring a trap: deploy kamikazes to sink the entire fleet.



The reality of this plot twist is that the Japanese sending roughly 350 planes at the American fleet in the middle of the day and they get shot down. The ambush lasts for five hours, which would mean 70 planes an hour...? Note that in the footage of planes getting shot down you only see one plane in the sky at a time. It's not a wild dogfight of dozens of plans like you'd expect.

At 14:40 Richard B Frank tells us "*They start dividing their attacks not in mass waves but into lots of smaller packages*". Kind of the opposite tactic to use if you're trying to overwhelm the enemy. Why make it easier for the fleet to shoot down a few planes at a time? Frank tries to say that because the small groups of planes being drip-fed at the American fleet come from different angles and altitudes this is very difficult to defend against.



Watch the entire sequence, see how it's just one plane at a time, flying politely at an angle that usually passes over the American ship that the footage is being filmed from. Some of the planes do explode or get shot into pieces, a couple crash into American ships. I assume this is staged. The planes getting shot down are presumably empty – did they have the capacity to remote-control planes back then I wonder? Or at least have the pilots bail out prior to the shooting.



The narrator tells us that 22 kamikazes hit, sinking six American ships and damaging 18 others. They should have taken notes from the British on how to build a ship. This kills 350 US crewmen, weird it was the same number of crewmen killed as Japanese planes.

At the 24 minute mark we get confirmation that not only are the Japanese leaders located in the so-obvious-it-is-surely-a-ruse Shuri Castle, but the defensive lines that they've meticulously constructed to defend Shuri are specifically between them and the area the Americans landed in.



You should consider the odds of this. The Americans land in the bay to the north, putting themselves in exactly the right place for the Japanese. But they could just as easily have landed at the port of Naha to the south west. Or any other bay or inlet around the island. If the Japanese had spent time and money building defensive lines between, say, Shuri and Naha, or between Shuri and the eastern coast, the Americans could have immediately advanced to take the castle. Was this just pure luck on the Japanese part?

Saul reiterates that the Japanese have divided the island in half with a series of defensive, interlocking lines... which you could immediately unravel by taking a ship around the coast. Or using paratroopers. Or the advantages the Americans had over the defenders in terms of being able to call in battleship cannon bombardment, air support from carriers and deploy heavy field artillery.

The show then blames what happens next on Lieutenant General Simon Bolivar Buckner Jr.. The idea is that Buckner is an imbecile who (upon seeing a short stretch of a small island with a series of well defended trenches/bunkers) decides not to circumvent the defensive lines or fly over them etc. but instead to simply smash his infantrymen directly into the lines until enough Japanese die that he can advance directly on Shuri castle. I guess they've now figured out where Ushijima is, that's never really explained.

As per Wikipedia:

*"Buckner attended the Virginia Military Institute. When he turned 18 in the summer of 1904, his father asked President Theodore Roosevelt to grant him an appointment to West Point. Roosevelt granted this request and Buckner graduated in the class of 1908. He served two military tours in the Philippines."*

Appointed by the President. As you do. Strong echoes of Kennedy, in my paper on Guadalcanal.

During World War 2 he is involved in the Aleutian Islands campaign (which kicked off this series and means he's absolutely involved in Navy fakery). We also learn he was the prick who evicted the natives of the Aleutians:

*“Buckner gave orders in June 1942 for the indigenous Aleut people to be evacuated and for their villages to be burned. The Aleut people were not allowed to return until 1945, after the war was over.”*

Wikipedia again confirms Buckner was unable to figure out how to tackle a defensive line, on an isolated island, with complete naval and air superiority:

*“Despite historic amphibious assets, **Buckner insisted on a frontal assault on the dug-in Japanese, although extremely costly in American lives**, his strategy was ultimately successful. Late in the battle, Buckner **failed to realize that the Japanese were pulling back to a secondary defensive line, allowing the Japanese to avoid destruction and escape with a significant force**. Reducing this force in the southern part of the island cost enormous casualties, especially among the civilian population, who were trapped in the battle zone.”*

One wonders how many American troops died on Okinawa specifically because they were ordered to run directly at machine gun nests by Buckner. It's a controlled skirmish, but a lethal one. As for the civilians, the Phoenicians wouldn't give a hoot about any natives on the Okinawan islands getting hurt. Their cosy deal is with high ranking Japanese, mostly Chōshū and Satsuma Domain members.

We then get very weird photographs like this:



*“Buckner (foreground, holding camera), photographed with Major General Lemuel C. Shepherd Jr., USMC, on Okinawa.” - original [here](#).*

Blow up the pic via the link to the original to see it more clearly. Those faces are either pasted in and/or drawn in (the curling line on his jaw for example). Note also the weird white balance/gamma screw-up bleaching out the details.

We then read about Buckner's death:

*“On June 18, Buckner arrived in his command jeep which was flying its standard 3-star flag to visit a forward observation post on a ridge approximately 300 yards (270 m) behind the front lines, as Marine infantry advanced on the Japanese-held Ibaru Ridge. Visits from the general were not always welcome as his presence frequently drew enemy fire, usually as he was departing. **Buckner had arrived with his standard three stars showing on the front of his steel helmet** and a nearby Marine outpost sent a signal to Buckner's position **stating that they could clearly see the general's three stars on his helmet**. Told of this, Buckner replaced his own helmet with an unmarked one.*

*As Buckner stood at the outpost, a small flat-trajectory Japanese artillery shell of unknown calibre (estimated to have been 47mm) **struck a coral rock outcrop** near him, and fragments **pierced his chest.**[13][14] Buckner was carried by stretcher to a nearby aid station, where he died on the operating table. He was succeeded in command by Marine General Roy Geiger. Total American deaths during the battle of Okinawa were 12,513.”*

Yep. He drives up to the front lines, wearing a special helmet that tells the enemy he's a priority target and then gets hit by an artillery shell fragment that bounced off coral. Sure.

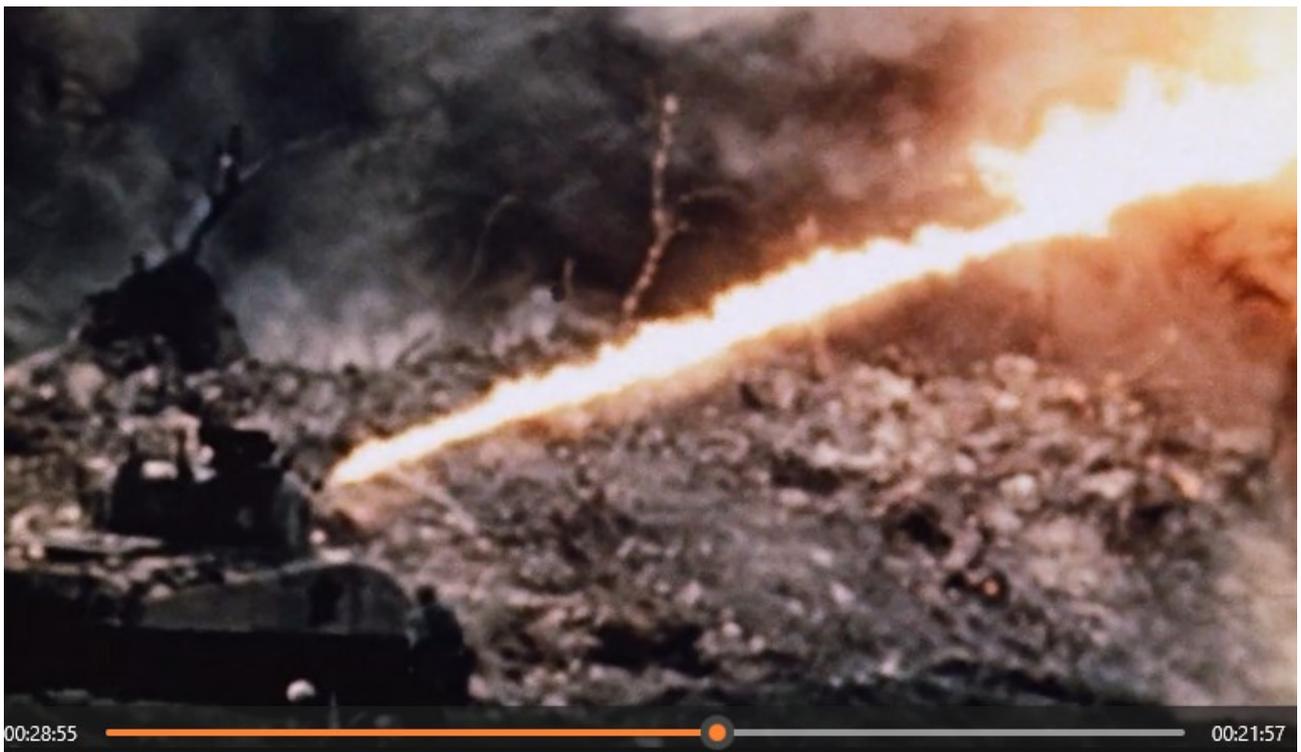
So that's Buckner. Weird, right? On with Netflix: you'll note that throughout the show the combat footage on land is purely of troops walking around and occasionally shooting shrubs and trees. There's no actual contact with the Japanese troops on record. Also no footage of the (supposedly vast and complex) Shuri Line defensive system.



Setting fire to a bush with a flamethrower does not convince me of anything.



Or firing artillery at a hillside.



Or flame tanks shooting dirt.

It's at this point that the narrator starts talking about "subterranean defences" and I rolled my eyes.

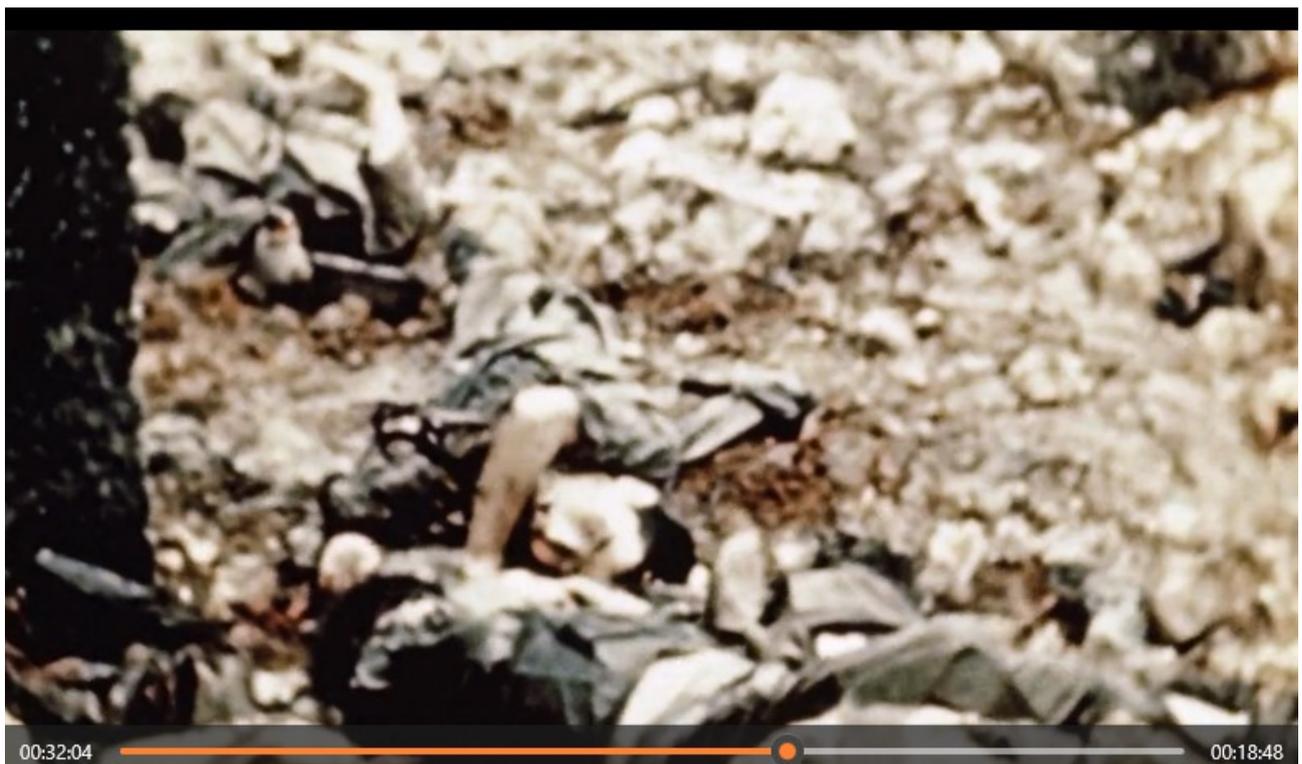
Saul David tells us at 29:00 – "*Sixty miles of underground bunkers and tunnels and interlocking systems of defences are constructed*".



Example given of an underground tunnel system.

We're told that the Americans are now suggesting to Buckner to simply use the navy to sail around the coast and drop off troops behind the Shuri Line... but Buckner "refuses to listen". I don't know what this is supposed to mean – what, he literally just goes "nah"? Does no-one else have any say in this? Even after weeks go by and the casualties stack up?

They then talk about how, what with seasonal rains and all the artillery the island becomes a big muddy swamp that is reminiscent of World War 1 trench fighting. It's at this point we get this:



...these are mannequins. You can see the face. Also the arm on the “corpse” on the left.



No no no, come on now, Netflix... what is this? Is this from footage from the OSS?



It's US Newsreel footage? Amazing. Incredible. Let me see it again.



OK so, to recap, when the military was recording footage of this enormous months-long battle against thousands of Japanese troops (hiding in several miles of underground tunnels, naturally) they had no opportunity to film anything... y'know... **real** so as a compromise they decided to place some shop window mannequins they had in storage on the ground to pose as corpses and film that for the newsreels back home. Then, decades later, for Netflix, they re-use this footage and at no point did anyone point out that these are plastic mannequin models.



So that's a thing now. Mannequins.

Saul tells us about how 20,000 American troops were pulled out of combat on Okinawa for treatment of shell shock, which is interesting. Pure speculation, but: they've filled these men's heads with propaganda to be afraid of psycho cannibals hiding in a cave over the next ridge, dragged them half-way around the world and stuck them next to artillery cannon firing night and day for two months. Guys will crack under enough pressure. So then you wonder how many casualties of the shell-shock / psychological variety are essentially self-inflicted by the Army and the conditions the troops are in.

At 33:33 we have claims made about child soldiers (it seems mainly that they drafted in high school girls to act as nursing assistants, accusations of little boys with rifles is inferred but there's nothing concrete to demonstrate it). We don't have any photos or video or anecdotes of boy soldiers from troops at Okinawa. Maybe there were, maybe not.

At 34:23 Geoffrey Wawro tells us that American troops, fearful of fanatical Japanese troops would wipe out entire houses of Okinawan civilians because of the possibility of troops hiding amongst them. See a house with people cowering inside? Flame it. What with all the jokes and sarcasm you probably think I don't take this topic seriously. I actually do, I just need to keep up some distance from the monstrosity of it all. What's worse than innocent people being butchered by soldiers in a war? People being butchered as collateral in a fake production stage managed by psychopaths.

Saul David then tells us about how a criticism of the Japanese troops is that they used the Okinawan citizens as human shields. No real evidence of this is presented, if he means that the civilians (after what is admitted to be indiscriminate bombardment from the US fleet) ran to the hills and hid in caves... which were also used by the Japanese troops... then that isn't really fair. What did they expect? For the civvies to sit in their homes? You've just told us that the Marines were killing households. They then suggest that Japanese civilians were equipped with "explosive vests" like a Palestinian suicide bomber or something. There is no footage, photographic evidence, testimonials or body count of troops killed by these suicide bombers so... again... what are we talking about here?

At 35:00 we have Dr Noriko Kawamura explain that the Americans "had no choice" but to burn out entire caves full of Okinawan civilians. Because? Maybe a Japanese soldier was sat among them? Or something? I don't know. Just prior to this she talks about how mothers hiding out in caves were told to kill their babies, to prevent the babies cries alerting the Americans to their location. This is presented as "ooh what a bunch of bastards those Japanese were". Let's recap: you're sat at home in your village on Okinawa. You're a civilian. The Americans turn up and use their battleships and aircraft to bomb you. It's indiscriminate. Massive destruction. If you survive that and stay in your house reading a book you get shot to death when the American infantry arrive because they think you might be a Japanese soldier in disguise. So as you don't want to get shot you pack up your stuff and run away and hide in the jungle or cavern systems. If the Americans find you, they throw satchel charges and incendiaries into the cave and incinerate you.

In that context Noriko, do gone on about how mean the Japanese were.



*Another high tech Japanese underground base is located.*



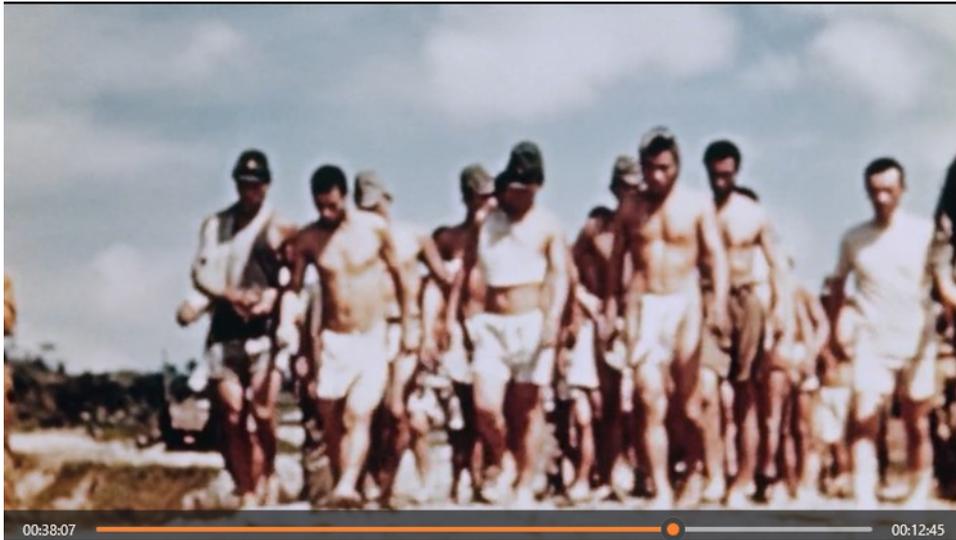
*Possible elite Japanese shock troops. That “baby” might be disguised plastic explosive.*

The last 15 minutes of Netflix (which in retrospect I now see is full-blooded psycho Pentagon propaganda) is about the Proper Historians™ building a case that because the casualties were so high fighting in Okinawa it showed that if they attacked Japan proper it would be far too violent for John and Jane back in New York or Delaware to stomach. People would revolt against this... or something. There's lots of newsreel(?) footage of concerned looking New Yorkers reading the newspaper with an “ooh how awful” face.

Perhaps if Buckner et al used slightly more intelligent tactics than “run at them head on” the casualty rate might have been reduced.

Anyway, I don't really believe the elite were worried about public opinion. They would lie to their troops until their heads were so stirred they'd be prepared to systematically slaughter every last man woman and child with the misfortune to cross their path. It wouldn't matter how high the body count was. What are you going to do, Private? Quit? Swim home? Vote against it?

There's some heavy metal music set to a montage of Americans flamethrowing trees and shrubs, artillery blasting muddy hillsides and so on. Noriko Kawamura explains that the Japanese were such fanatics they just won't quite and would fight happily to the bitter end (i.e. pushing “this is why we had to nuke 'em”). The show then swiftly contradicts itself and has Craig L Symonds admit that “*Here for the first time, out of those roughly 100,000 Japanese soldiers, including a number of militia on Okinawa, 10,000 or so actually do surrender*”.



*All looking rather clean and healthy considering what they've just gone through.*

Wikipedia puts that figure at between 7 and 15,000, which if it were Japanese troops (and not Okinawan conscripts) would make that a substantial chunk of the Japanese surrendering.

Anyway, that's the Netflix show. They paint a picture, it's like World War 1 on a tropical island against evil alien fanatics. They talk about sixty miles of underground tunnels, no footage, no evidence presented, the civilians are suicide bombers, no evidence of that presented, we had to incinerate a bunch of people cowering in caves so we could build an airfield to help invade... Kyushu... and hey then we realised actually it was going to be too much hassle. Those kamikazes (which the show admits only hit target 10% of the time) do a lot of damage to the fleet and people reading newspapers in New York would be upset about those ~~mannequins~~ dead soldiers. So Truman called the whole invasion off and used the gun type Little Boy bomb invented five minutes prior to incinerate Hiroshima. Roll credits.

There's quite a bit that Netflix doesn't bother to talk about with Okinawa so I'll go over that now. We return to when the Americans first landed on Okinawa proper and split into two teams – one to push north, the other to push south.

From Wikipedia:

*“Tenth Army swept across the south-central part of the island **with relative ease, capturing the Kadena and the Yomitan airbases within hours of the landing. In light of the weak opposition, General Buckner decided to proceed immediately with Phase II of his plan, the seizure of northern Okinawa. The 6th Marine Division headed up the Ishikawa Isthmus and by 7 April had sealed off the Motobu Peninsula.**”*

So realise that not only were the Americans able to land essentially unopposed, they were also able to take the airbases in the space of a few hours. To emphasise: these are the ever-so-important airbases that justify the entire invasion. Where did that Kamikaze ambush come from I wonder?

From Wikipedia's page on Kadena Airbase:

*“What the Americans captured was a **4,600 feet (1,400 m) strip of badly-damaged coral runway.** “The initial work at Kadena was accomplished by the 1901st Aviation Engineer Battalion 7th U.S. Infantry Division and Naval Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit CBMU 624 on 4 April”, by nightfall the same day, the runway could accept emergency landings. **Eight** days later, and after*

*some 6 inches (150 mm) of coral were added, the airfield was declared operational and put into immediate service by artillery spotting aircraft.”*

Check for yourself but there’s no mention of any kind of confrontation with Japanese troops to take Kadena. No significant loss of life, no “battle of Kadena” wiki page. The impression given is that the Americans show up to a crappy coral runway and spend... 8... days fixing it up. Or perhaps constructing it from scratch? Hmm.

From [Wikipedia’s page on Yomitan Airbase](#):

*“Yomitan was the initial site of fighting on Okinawa Island during World War II. Zakimi Castle was used as a gun emplacement by the Japanese military. The Hija River, between Yomitan and then-Chatan (Kadena area), was the site of the initial landing of the Allied forces in the Battle of Okinawa. The United States Marine Corps landed on the Yomitan-side of the river, while the United States Army landed on the Chatan side. **The village is known for one of the most devastating examples of mass suicide during World War II. Villagers took refuge in Chibichiri Cave during the Battle of Okinawa. Faced with the rapid advance of American troops, approximately 140 men, women, and children were convinced or ordered by the Japanese military to commit mass suicide (shūdan jiketsu) on April 2, 1945.**<sup>[8]</sup> After the war, the village was renamed Yomitan.”*

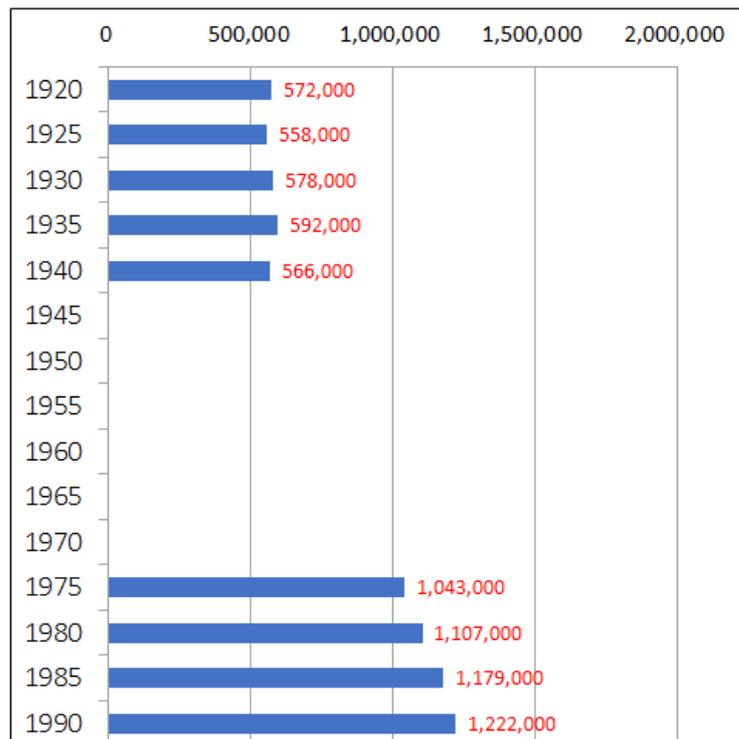
Now this is interesting. First because it doesn’t give any insight into an airfield being taken, so that’s two for two of the main tactical POINT of the invasion causing no substantial conflict and leaves me with the impression there was possibly one (dishevelled) airstrip at Kadena. There are no planes to take off and harass the Americans with (were they all sacrificed in the kamikaze runs? I thought that occurred a bit later?), certainly no Super Duper Jet/Missile Planes laughably presented in the Netflix special. There are no troops guarding the airfields. The Americans can just waltz in and take them. Their engineers can then spend a good week setting things up and they aren’t impeded by counter-attack or enemy artillery and so on. Taking the airfields of Okinawa should have been a big deal – rather like the supposedly important airfield at Guadalcanal. It should be the core location of the campaign. Instead it’s glossed over by everyone and we end up talking about the Shuri line and kamikaze planes appearing out of... where? It can’t be Sakishima, that was bombed flat. Formosa? Mainland Japan? What about the lack of fuel? They can’t fuel the Yamato properly or give it an air escort but they can fly a couple hundred planes from...? So the whole issue of the airfields really starts to unravel things.

The second reason this is interesting is what they’re saying about the mass suicide in Chibichiri Cave, because this shouldn’t be one of the most devastating examples of mass suicide on Okinawa, let alone the whole war. 140 people kill themselves in Chibichiri Cave is peanuts compared to... how many Okinawan civilians were supposed to be killed again?



Yeah. So that makes 140, what, 0.093% of the total? But they’re flagging it as a big deal? Interesting. So now I have to ask: what was the impact of World War 2 on the population of Okinawa? Well, [check this out](#):

*“The following data show the changes in population of Okinawa prefecture, from 1920 to 2015. No data is available between 1945 and 1970.”*



This isn't some random guys opinion, either. He's quoting the Japanese Statistics Bureau. Or you can check out the Wikipedia page "[List of Japanese prefectures by population](#)". You will see in the chart for 1920-1947 that the population of Okinawa is 590,480 as of February of 1944. After that it's blank sections on the chart, reason given in the footnote 14: "*Okinawa-ken was occupied and became subject to the United States Military Government at the end of the World War II.*"

So to put it another way, from the point the Americans arrive to the point they finish occupation in the 70's, there isn't a proper headcount of civilians in Okinawa. Which means we can't see how many people died and have to take the ONI's word for it (as they ultimately provide the official "Combat Narrative" and tell you what's what). 150,000 dead would be a significant chunk of the pre-war population. All we know is, come '75 it's over a million people – arguably as if the pre-war population had naturally increased over the intervening period.

Based on what we've seen so far that would imply that there isn't a major loss of civilian life on Okinawa and the American military cover that up through censoring the population stats because it would be too obvious to show that 150,000 people aren't dead. That's too large a section of the population to fudge if you can see there's X number of people alive in 1946.

This would fit with the idea that casualties in this theatre are collateral (rather like the Filipino guerillas killed in the handover battle of Manila from the Spanish or the Indian regiment troops getting a bit too stuck in during the handover battle for Hong Kong). It would explain the need for stupid bullshit involving mannequins, the visible absence of any Japanese troops at the naval landings or in any of the newsreel footage where the Americans are hiking around the island. It explains the (predictable) assertion of vast "underground tunnel systems" for them to hide in, justifying why you can't see them. Or how the troops "didn't know" where the enemy was when they were sat in a literal hilltop castle south-east of the beachhead.

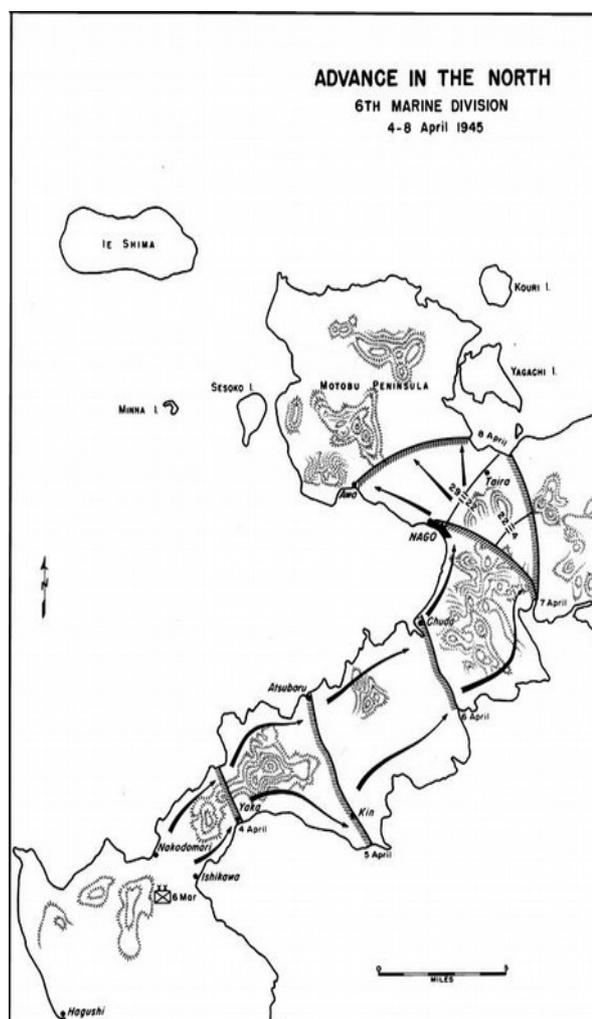
Why lie about the civilian casualties? Because it would lend itself to the narrative being pushed (as reiterated in the Netflix special): this was such a brutal fight. So many civilian deaths! So many dead troops. If it's like this here, imagine what Kyushu would be like. We just *had* to nuke them.

We read on:

“Six days later on **13** April, the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Marine Regiment, reached Hedo Point at the northernmost tip of the island. **By this point, the bulk of the Japanese forces in the north (codenamed Udo Force) were cornered on the Motobu Peninsula.** The terrain was mountainous and wooded, with the **Japanese defences concentrated on Mount Yaedake, a twisted mass of rocky ridges and ravines on the centre of the peninsula.** **There was heavy fighting before the Marines finally cleared Yaedake on **18** April.** However, this was not the end of ground combat in northern Okinawa. On 24 May, the Japanese mounted Operation Gi-gou: **a company of Giretsu Kuteitai commandos were airlifted in a suicide attack on Yomitan.** They destroyed 70,000 US gallons (260,000 L) of fuel and nine planes before **being killed by the defenders, who lost two men.**”

Meanwhile, the 77th Infantry Division **assaulted Ie Shima**, a small island off the western end of the peninsula, on 16 April. In addition to conventional hazards, the 77th Infantry Division encountered kamikaze attacks and **even local women armed with spears.** There was heavy fighting before the area was declared secured on 21 April and became another airbase for operations against Japan.”

Airlifted commandos. Using... what planes? From which airfield? Asking for a friend. I would recommend reading [this page about the northern push on Okinawa](#). It provides some useful images such as this:



Yep, it's a peninsula (i.e. a nice closed off, controlled space to lie about). Pretty much the entirety of northern Okinawa is devoid of Japanese resistance (honestly, read the account, the Marines basically hike up to Cape Hedo over a couple of days and there's nothing). For some reason we have a bunch of Japanese troops lurking on Mount Yae. The Marines account is a lot of fan fiction running up and down mountains fighting several thousand Japanese. You would expect the Americans (being American) to simply obliterate the mountain artillery / gun positions with bombers from the nearby fleet or captured airfields but no.

*“In its special action report the division summarized its experience in the campaign in northern Okinawa as follows: During that period the Division had moved 84 miles, seized 436 square miles of enemy territory, **counted over 2,500 enemy bodies and captured 46 prisoners**. Our losses during the period were **236 killed, 1,061 wounded, and 7 missing**. During the rapid advance of the Division from Yontan Airdrome to the northern tip of Okinawa practically every type of manoeuvre was employed and all types of supply problems encountered. **The successful execution of the mission assigned gives conclusive evidence that a Marine Division is capable of extended operations ashore.**”*

Like Iwo Jima, northern Okinawa was a way for the Marines to prove their usefulness. But we'll get to that.

The article also gives us some great photographs of this step of the campaign:



*“FIRE BOMBING aided the advance in northern Okinawa. A Marine fighter plane (F4U) has flown low and dropped its fire bomb on an enemy-held slope in the rugged north.” - original [here](#).*

It’s nice that the bomber had a backup plane to photograph it’s bombing run for posterity. You might notice the plane is pasted in, also that the “explosion” is blurred to hell in comparison to the focus on the surrounding foliage (this is most obvious if you look at the black cloud section in the middle), due to being inserted into the shot.



*“PUSHING TO YAE-TAKE, infantrymen of the 6th Marine Division pause on a mountain top while artillery shells a Japanese position. Meanwhile another group of marines (below) makes its way up a hillside, probing cave openings and watching for Japanese to show themselves.” - original [here](#).*

These soldiers are drawn in. That’s a pencil sketch on top of a landscape photograph. Most obvious is if you look at the guy standing, his helmet, his shoulders. All of them are flat, black + white sketches or inserts into the picture.



Another terrible paste-up (the bottom-left foliage compared to the gun barrel resolution).

Yeah. So you'll forgive me for concluding there were no random Japanese hiding on a mountain in northern Okinawa, completely cut off from the rest of Ushijima's forces and being attacked by 2D cartoon Marines.

Then they get to Ie Shima / Iejima, an island off the coast of the peninsula. Again, well worth reading the official narrative of the assault. Pay attention to how the island is visibly devoid of cover (it's agricultural with a small town) and how the author cannot get it straight if the airfield on Ie Jima (why is there an airfield out here?) is destroyed pre-invasion or not.



*"IE SHIMA looking east over 77th Division landing beaches, toward the Pinnacle. Marked are Green Beach 1, where the 1st and 2d Battalions, 306th landed, and Red 1 and Red 2, landing beaches of the 3d and 1st Battalions, 305th, respectively. Heaviest fighting took place on the eastern end of the island (below), where the town of Ie can be seen between southern beaches and the Pinnacle."*



You might think this island would be very, very easy to isolate / bomb using the fleet and air support the Americans had but no, they needed to send in the troops to fight the Japanese. That worked for Sakishima, but not here.

Some great quotes:

*“On the plateau the Japanese had established three landing strips, **which together formed the pattern of the Roman numeral XI**. No obstructions interfered with the approaches to these mile-long strips; aircraft had unlimited expanses of open water over which to gain altitude. With its pinnacle and oval plateau, Ie Shima resembled a huge, immovable aircraft carrier.”*

The number... **11**.

*“The airfield battalion had originally been scheduled to return to Okinawa to work there after helping to destroy the Ie strips, but it was caught on Ie Shima by the invasion and took part in its defence. Likewise, only 3,000 of the **8,000** civilians were evacuated to Okinawa, Allied air attacks having destroyed nearly all the shipping in the Okinawa group of islands.*

*These forces, approximately 2,000 in number and aided by hundreds of civilians, spent the first quarter of 1945 fortifying Ie Shima. **Expending human labour on a vast scale, they made pillboxes out of houses and tombs, honeycombed ridges and reverse slopes with trenches, tunnels, and emplacements, and concealed rifle pits and machine-gun and mortar positions in hedgerows. The numerous natural caves were strengthened by tunnels and holes dug into the limestone rock. Some caves were three stories deep and had outlets for firing positions on each level. Mortar emplacements were made twenty feet deep; cave mouths were fitted with sliding steel doors.**”*

I wonder how you can make a cave bunker three stories deep and still be able to shoot from each level. What, like there's a big well and it goes down three stories and if I'm standing on the lowest level I can look up the shaft and fire my rifle into the sky? Or hope an American peers over the edge and looks down? Also: very disappointed we never got ONI fan fiction about fighting in an ancient Japanese tomb. That sounds amazing.

They then confirm the airfields were destroyed pre-emptively by the Japanese:

*“**Early in March** the Japanese command on Okinawa, believing that Ie Shima could not be held for more than a few days, **ordered that all airfields on the island be destroyed** by the end of the month *“because of tactical requirements.”**

If the airfields are destroyed... why are they still visible in the aerial photos? Why even bother capturing the island? You have them bottled up. You control the sea lanes, there is no shipping for supplies. There can be no reinforcements.



*“Eight hundred yards inland from Red Beach 2 were these cave positions, around which the 305th RCT, 77th Division, was engaged in an infantry-demolition fight until nightfall of 16 April.” - original [here](#).*

They've literally blobbed white on the photo and added in little mouse-holes to depict the Secret Underground Tunnel Complex.



*“FIGHTING TOWARD IE, American troops were held up close to the town by strong Japanese positions. The morning of 17 April the 305th Infantry, 77th Division, paused while artillery pounded Japanese positions in the western outskirts (smoke-covered area).”*

Those are pencil drawings of troops pasted into a landscape photo.



“At the same time the right flank of the 305th was attempting to reduce these enemy pillboxes along the road parallel to Red Beaches 3 and 4.”

Again, you’ve drawn in / pasted in pillbox windows on a photo of a beach.

We’re also gifted this marvellous sketch of what a Japanese tunnel system is like:



“This diagram of a typical defence system on the face of Iegusugu Pinnacle was adapted from a sketch appearing in CINCPAC-CINCPOA Weekly Intelligence, Volume 2, Number 5, 13 August 1945. The diagram does not show all the defensive positions in the area depicted and is designed only to indicate the method by which the enemy attained mobility even in fighting from positions underground. In describing this position the bulletin states: About 50 yards south of the approach road was the camouflaged entrance to a typical tunnel system within the hill. The entrance was a square log-shored shaft 30 feet deep. A smaller curved shaft which came to the surface about 15

feet away was probably designed for ventilation purposes . The main tunnel to the hill installations ran from this shaft, under the road to the first of a series of caves approximately 100 feet from the shaft entrance. **This tunnel was from four to five feet high and three feet wide. Walls were reinforced with logs six to eight inches in diameter, Loose coral rock on the ceilings was held in place by logs.** The tunnel apparently was used for ammunition storage as well as communication.”

So there you go, the Japanese dig out tunnels five feet high, three feet high and reinforce them with... logs. So miles and miles of tunnels (presumably the same construction method on mainland Okinawa where Saul David spoke about 60-odd miles of these tunnels) all timber lined. That’s a lot of wood!

*“During the 6-day battle on Ie Shima the Americans **killed 4,706 Japanese and took 149 prisoners. Many of the dead were civilians; it was extremely hard to distinguish** between soldiers and civilians during the fighting or when inspecting the bodies afterwards. It was estimated that 1,500 civilians had been armed and supplied with Japanese Army uniforms. **Some others were in American uniforms. The amount of enemy materiel destroyed will never be known, since so much of it was buried by gunfire, sealed up in caves, or simply blown to pieces.** Among the destroyed or captured materiel actually counted were 34 mortars, 44 light machine guns, 8 heavy machine guns, 4 antitank guns, 5 anti-aircraft guns, more than 5,000 mines of assorted types, and **several crates of parts for suicide rocket planes.** American casualties through 24 April were reported as 172 killed in action, 902 wounded, and 46 missing-a total of **1,120.**”*

Japanese dead wearing American uniforms, the enemy materiel sealed up in underground tunnels never to see the light of day and crates of Super Duper Jet Plane parts found on this remote island. Of course.

We have Ernie Pyle, journalist, killed on Ie Shima which my boy Coyote Weeds has already looked at it in this paper. I just wanted to add to that here by focusing on the section of his death:

*“**On more than one occasion, Pyle was noted for having premonitions of his own death.** Before landing he wrote letters to his friend Paige Cavanaugh, as well as playwright Robert E. Sherwood, **predicting that he might not survive the war.**”*

Translation: he knew what was scripted to happen. Playing his part.

*“**On April 17, 1945, Pyle came ashore with the U.S. Army's 305th Infantry Regiment, 77th Infantry Division, on Ie Shima (now known as Iejima), a small island north-west of Okinawa that Allied forces had captured, but had not yet cleared of enemy soldiers. The following day, after local enemy opposition had supposedly been neutralized, Pyle was travelling by jeep with Lieutenant Colonel Joseph B. Coolidge, the commanding officer of the 305th and three additional officers toward Coolidge's new command post when the vehicle came under fire from a Japanese machine gun. The men immediately took cover in a nearby ditch. "A little later Pyle and I raised up to look around," Coolidge reported. "Another burst hit the road over our heads... I looked at Ernie and saw he had been hit." A machine-gun bullet had entered Pyle's left temple just under his helmet, killing him instantly.**”*

He lands on the 17<sup>th</sup> and gets killed the following day = the 18<sup>th</sup>. Hey, want to see the damage that a machine gun did to Pyle? His head probably split like a watermelon, right? Here we go:



*“Ernie Pyle shortly after being killed on Iejima, April 18, 1945” - original [here](#).*

The impact didn't even shatter the glass in his glasses.

So yeah, that's just Ernie playing possum, lying down on the ground, little dab of moulage on the cheek and snap: a hero is martyred on Ie Jima.

You should also check out the [Farmers Movement section on Wikipedia](#), which explains how the Americans screwed over the locals post-war:

*“In 1955, the United States military embarked upon a wide-scale campaign to seize land from the farmers of Iejima. The campaign began in 1954 with a so-called survey project. **After the island's farmers signed the papers, they realized that in fact they had agreed to their voluntary evacuation. In 1955, the American military landed on Iejima's southern beaches and seized the farmers' lands by force.**”*

And:

*“Following this seizure, the residents of Iejima began a five decade campaign to oppose the American military. Led by Shoko Ahagon, they travelled throughout the Okinawan islands garnering support for their campaign. This Beggars' March took the islanders all over the prefecture where they were treated hospitably by their fellow Okinawans, but when they returned to Iejima and started to farm their land once more, **the American military razed their crops and arrested the islanders.**”*

And:

*“In the late 1950s, many residents of Iejima resorted to collecting scrap metal from the military bombing range. **This was dangerous work resulting in the deaths or disfigurement of local men.**”*

So glad the good guys won. This is something I’ll cover more in the summary paper for this series but essentially “justifying the takeover of land” is a major reason for the fake war.

Anyway, that was a brisk overview of the Northern Okinawa push and you can see how ridiculous all of that was. Meanwhile the Army groups are pushing south via the Shuri Line to Shuri Castle.

I won’t do a blow-by-blow, [you can read the Wikipedia section](#), but we get great prose like this:

*“By the end of May, monsoon rains which had turned contested hills and roads into a morass exacerbated both the tactical and medical situations. The ground advance began to resemble a World War I battlefield, as troops became mired in mud, and flooded roads greatly inhibited evacuation of wounded to the rear. Troops lived on a field sodden by rain, part garbage dump and part graveyard. Unburied Japanese and American bodies decayed, sank in the mud and became part of a noxious stew. Anyone sliding down the greasy slopes could easily find their pockets full of maggots at the end of the journey.”*

Great stuff. Vivid imagery. Wikipedia then lets slip that the port of Naha is found to be empty:

*“From 24 to 27 May the 6th Marine Division cautiously occupied the ruins of Naha, the largest city on the island, finding it largely deserted.”*

You’d think that with the naval/air superiority and having... y’know... Marines... that they’d do an amphibious landing on Naha early on instead of this “push through the Shuri Line” nonsense but hey, details. Empty port, echoes of Rangoon.

Then you find photos of Naha during the conflict via google image and understand why it might be “largely deserted” – it’s been obliterated:





Bit suspicious about the Marine in this one. Pasted in? Or just backlit because the photo being taken inside a ruin and it's bright outside? I thought the latter, but then saw he's got no shadow. This is weird because you'd expect the light outside to cast a shadow of the man into the interior.

We then learn that the Japanese (despite being psycho cannibal fanatics who were doing a pretty good job holding their interlocking defensive line trench system) decide to abandon the Shuri Line completely:

*“On 26 May aerial observers saw large troop movements just below Shuri. On 28 May Marine patrols found recently abandoned positions west of Shuri. By 30 May the consensus among Army and Marine intelligence was that the majority of Japanese forces had withdrawn from the Shuri Line.”*

That was nice of them. They also abandon their headquarters at Shuri Castle. The Americans walk right in and raise the flag. No, I'm not joking:

*“On 29 May the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines (1/5 Marines) occupied high ground 700 yards (640 m) east of Shuri Castle and **reported that the castle appeared undefended.** At 10:15 Company A, 1/5 Marines occupied the castle. **Shuri Castle had been shelled by the battleship USS Mississippi for three days before this advance. The 32nd Army withdrew to the south and thus the Marines had an easy task of securing Shuri Castle.** On 29 May a **Confederate flag** was raised over Shuri Castle, before being removed and replaced by a US flag three days later on orders of General Simon B. Buckner Jr.”*

There's probably a reason why it's a Confederate flag, but the symbolism escapes me.

So that's something that the Proper Historians™ neglected to tell you. The Japanese abandon all their positions and run away! Does this sound plausible? Why did they do this? No idea. Nobody cares. Surely the historians would have made a bigger deal of the topic? Nope.

You might say "OK but there is an explanation, they shelled the castle with the Mississippi". Yes, I appreciate that. You might want to recall what Saul David and the Wikipedia narrative said about how Shuri Castle sat on top of a vast web of underground tunnels stretching out over sixty miles. You could bomb the place, sure, but they would still be operational underneath the castle.

*"The Japanese retreat, although harassed by artillery fire, was conducted with great skill at night and aided by the monsoon storms. The 32nd Army was able to move nearly 30,000 personnel into its last defence line on the Kiyau Peninsula, which ultimately led to the greatest slaughter on Okinawa in the latter stages of the battle, including the deaths of thousands of civilians. In addition, there were 9,000 IJN troops supported by 1,100 militia, with approximately 4,000 holed up at the underground headquarters on the hillside overlooking the Okinawa Naval Base in the Oroku Peninsula, east of the airfield."*

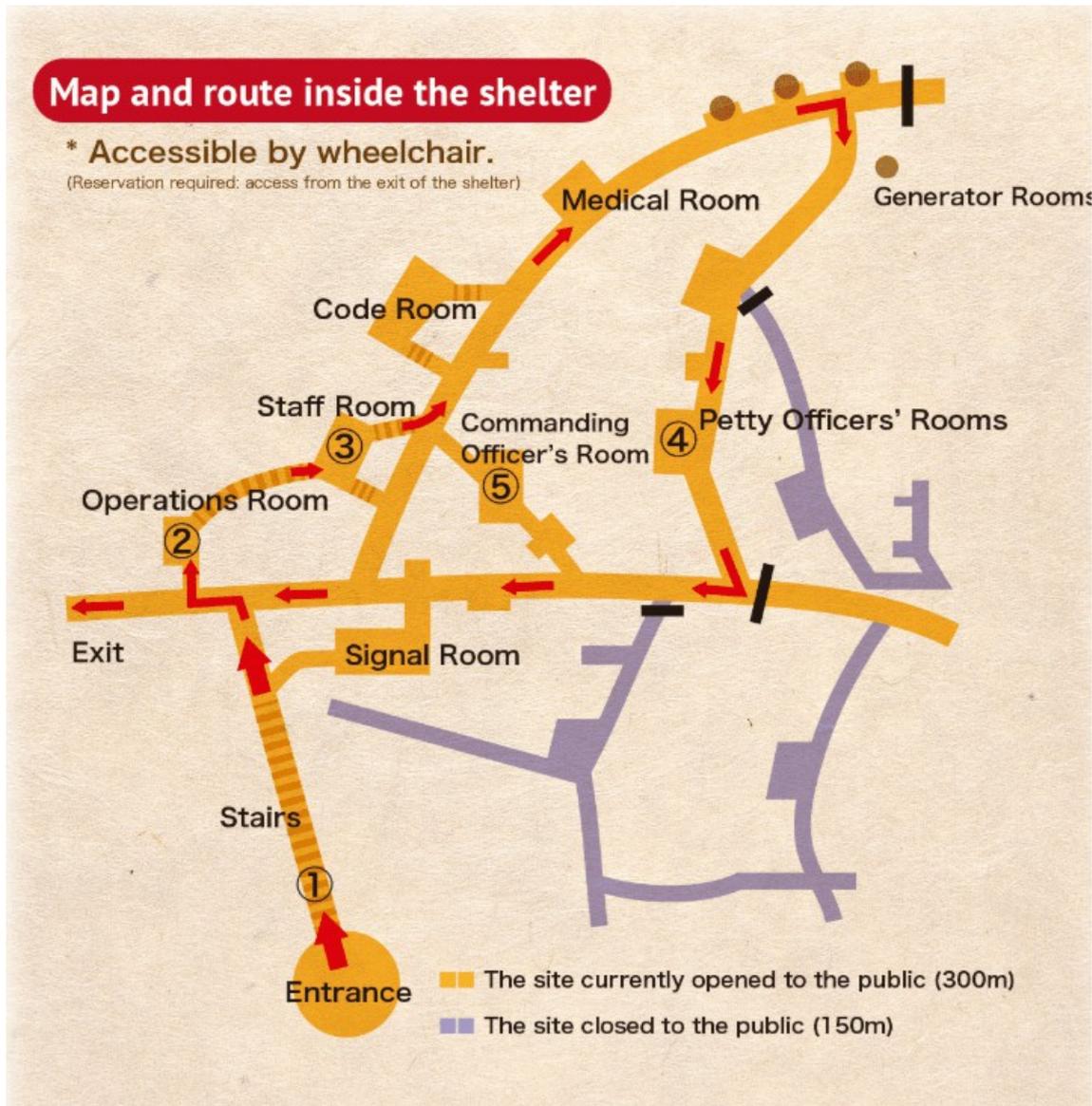
Yes, they run away in the night and 4,000 of them are hiding in an underground base on the Oroku Peninsula. Now, this underground base can actually be visited, which is excellent – let us see [here](#) and [here](#) for example. You can just google "Japanese Underground Base Oroku" if you like.



Photograph of the bunker corridor. This is concrete lined, which is interesting in that's very different to the log-based tunnels on Ie Shima made by the same army in the same time period. No concrete for Ie Shima. Just lumber.

*"Dug 20 meters deep and 450 meters in length in a semi-circular shape, this underground air-raid shelter was solidly built with concrete and pit props to endure the violent bombardments of the US armed forces and to allow long-drawn-out fighting."*

A 450m long curved corridor as in the photo above would be pretty cramped to hold 4,000 men (along with all the supplies the men would need, e.g. food, water, bedding etc.). Here's a useful map from [this website](#):



Here are some more photographs because, in all the time covering the Pacific Theatre this would seem to be the first opportunity we've had to see an actual Japanese underground tunnel system. Upon inspection, we see that this is a normal bomb shelter that is clearly designed for a small command staff / officer team – not a functioning base for thousands of men to eat / sleep / go to the bathroom in. It's not large enough for the men it claimed to hold):



“Admiral Ota’s Command Center”

I guess you could sit at the table and give orders or look at a chart or something. Again, not exactly what we’d expect for a command centre. Quite spartan.



Wikipedia tells us:

*“On 4 June, elements of the 6th Marine Division launched an amphibious assault on the peninsula. The 4,000 Japanese sailors, including **Admiral Ōta**, all committed suicide within the hand-built tunnels of the underground naval headquarters on 13 June. By 17 June, the remnants of Ushijima's shattered 32nd Army were pushed into a small pocket in the far south of the island to the southeast of Itoman.”*

That was Ota who we looked at earlier, who was ordered to leave his base, then walk to a different part of the island... but then this was a miscommunication and had to turn around and go back to base, after having destroyed his heavy weapons and ammunition.

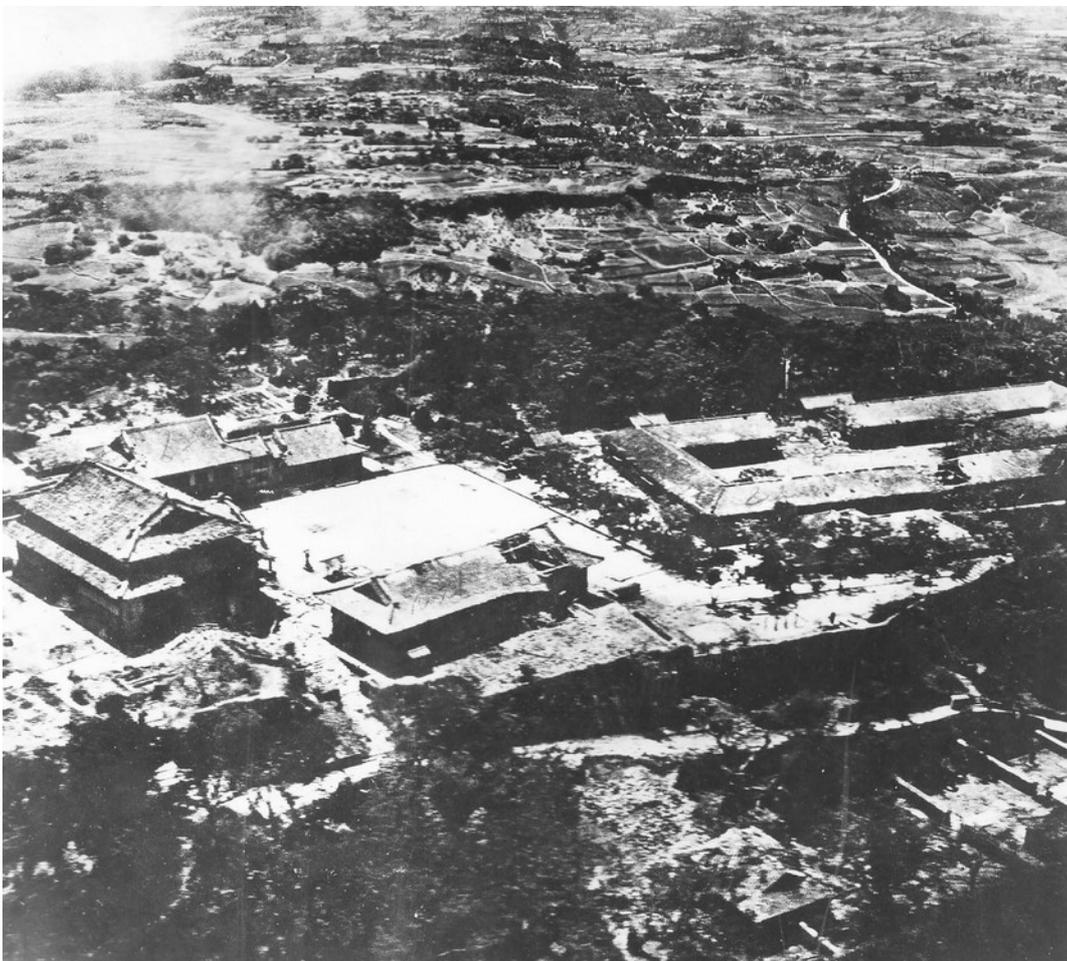
*“The last remnants of Japanese resistance ended on 21 June, although some Japanese continued hiding, including the future governor of Okinawa Prefecture, **Masahide Ōta**. Ushijima and Chō committed suicide by seppuku in their command headquarters on Hill 89 in the closing hours of the battle.”*

I'm sure this Ota was a completely different Ota and not related to the first Ota. And:

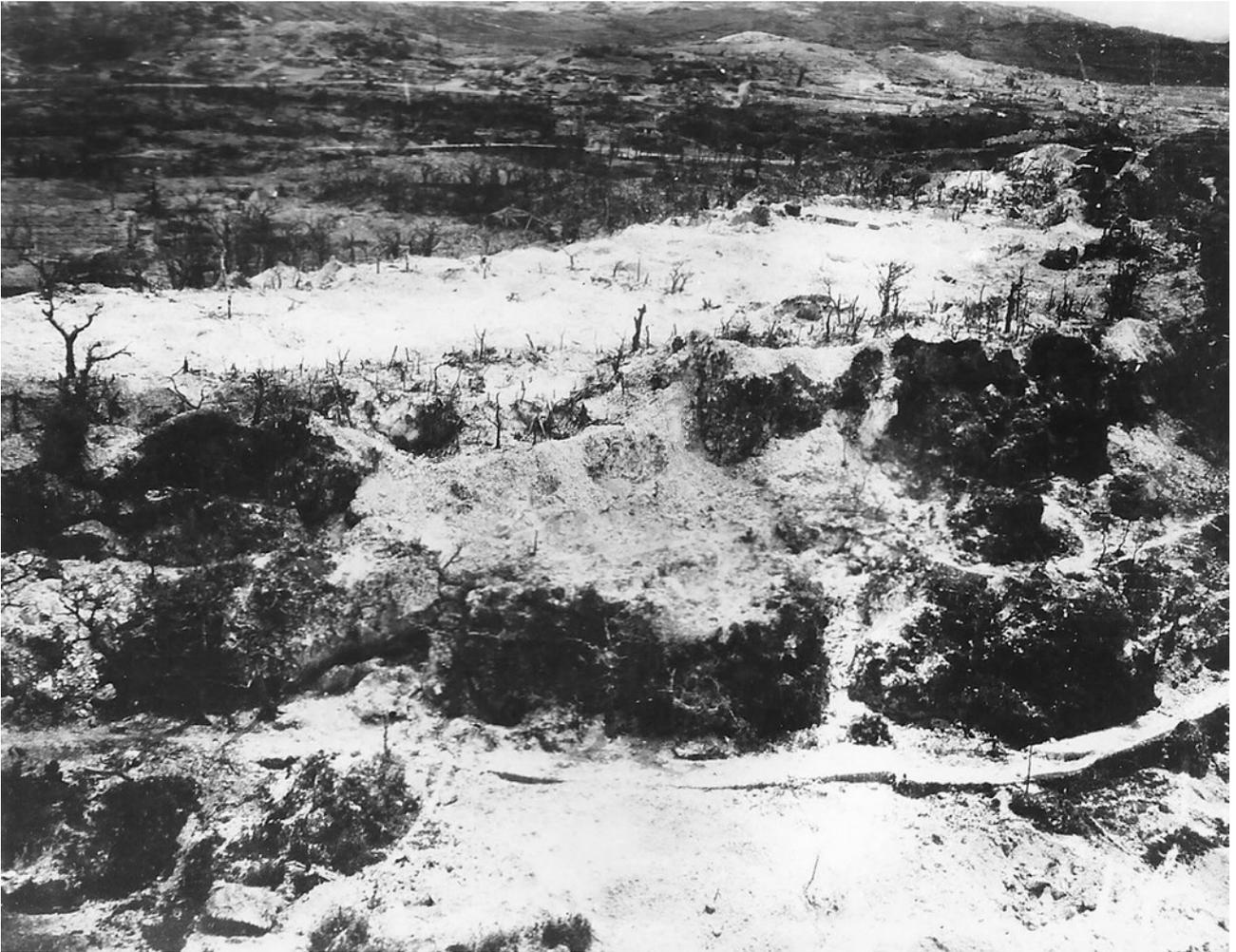
*“On 15 August 1945, Admiral Matome Ugaki was killed while part of a kamikaze raid on Iheyajima island. The official surrender ceremony was held on 7 September, near the Kadena Airfield.”*

That would be Kadena back up in the central part of the island where the Americans landed, the airbase which was taken essentially without resistance. I wonder who they had left to surrender?

With Shuri Castle, interestingly, I [found this blog](#) which has some photos of Shuri Castle before and after the bombardment:



*“Photo of the castle after L-day (landing day), 1 April 1945, showing the first signs of the bombing that would eventually destroy the entire structure.”*



*“The hilltop where the castle stood is now completely bare of buildings and the destruction complete in this photo and the next two photos taken in late May or early June 1945.”*





Now I don't know for sure, but if these photos are accurate then it begs the question: what castle did the American troops raise a flag in? Do they mean they walked onto that blasted-flat hilltop and wave a Confederate flag? Where are the defensive positions around the castle? There's nothing there! If the castle was wiped out like that, wouldn't you then see the upper levels of the (presumably multi-storey) base directly below the castle that all those tunnels linked up to? Instead we just see a bare dirt hilltop. Weird.



*“Lt. Col. Richard P. Ross Jr., commander of 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines braves sniper fire to place the United States' colours over the parapets of Shuri Castle on 30 May. This flag was first raised over Cape Gloucester and then Peleliu.” - original [here](#).*

I wonder what parapet they're talking about? Isn't the castle blasted into smithereens? Even more bizarre is this photo:



*“Marines Hunt Japanese Sniper Shuri Castle Okinawa 1945” – original [here](#).*

Shuri castle now has a Christian church in it. With some 2D marines pasted in in the foreground. This all seems legit.

Anyway I won't go into much detail as this paper is long enough as it is but there's a plot line in the Southern Okinawa Push about how after the loss of the Shuri line (or abandonment we should say) the Japanese retreat into various small groups to defensive hillocks and so on. The Americans then spend time knocking these out one by one. One being Hacksaw Ridge, which Coyote has already talked about, as well as Desmond Doss, whose tale is obviously fictional when seen in clear context. All that running around under fire and fake photos of the Maeda escarpment!



“Doss on top of the Maeda Escarpment, May 4, 1945” – original [here](#).

Follow the link to the original, blow it up big and zoom in. Notice how the brightness level of each of the three soldiers in the photo is completely different and how Doss has the “white glow/halo” effect. It’s a collage.

Wikipedia rounds things off on Okinawa with an [enormous casualties section](#), designed to make me feel bad for all the jokes and memes. What can I say to this? It’s a long list of numbers. So many dead sailors and soldiers. Awful.

I mean it would be more convincing if every single aspect of the campaign wasn’t demonstrably fake in multiple, interlocking ways as demonstrated in this 70+ page deconstruction. But yeah. I appreciate a lot of ships were sunk and bodies shipped back home.

I’ll need to kick around the whole “You limey son-of-a-bitch my Granddad lost a limb fighting those Japs on X” rebuttal when I wrap the series up. As a stub note for the reader and myself, the Pacific Theatre would involve the following reasons for casualties and/or deaths:

- 1) Controlled small-scale Skirmishes, carefully managed, for narrative-critical events.
- 2) Deliberate Sinking/Scuttling of ships / Crashing of planes.
- 3) Genuine Accidents that injure or kill someone (“whoops my grenade went off”)
- 4) “Ghost Army” / “Paper Army” padding troop numbers.
- 5) Psychological breakdown from the stress of the situation (shell shock / psychosis / suicide).
- 6) Environmental: disease / bad drinking water / heat exhaustion deaths.

On that latter point, I would refer out this choice quote:

*“The Japanese lost 16 combat vessels, including the super battleship Yamato. **Early claims of Japanese aircraft losses put the total at 7,800, however later examination of Japanese records revealed that Japanese aircraft losses at Okinawa were far below often-repeated US estimates for the campaign.**[13] The number of conventional and kamikaze aircraft actually lost or expended by the 3rd, 5th, and 10th Air Fleets, combined with about 500 lost or expended by the Imperial Army at Okinawa, was roughly 1,430.”*

This is an example of what they do. The Americans (and the Chinese to be fair) give a really high number of losses / enemy kills. This is taken as gospel. Later, perhaps, sometimes, the numbers get looked at and cross-checked against Imperial Army records (which of course you’d want to look at if you were being serious, that would be the official breakdown of Japanese troop strength). You then find out it’s, what, five and a half times less than the estimate. How do you over-estimate the strength of force by this amount? It’s not “a little bit off”, it’s wildly off road.

Anyway, I’m pretty wiped now that I’ve written all of this. This feels like all I need to say about the Battle of Okinawa, I’m sure there’s more I could have covered but this was a fair swing at it. I hope you found it interesting. If you’ve made it this far, I’ll leave you with one last tale from the Pacific.

The capture of Okinawa lead to the construction of the vast [Naval Base Okinawa](#) (really a whole cluster of facilities for the Americans at various points around the island). This in turn lead to the Americans going “Hey, you know what would be a really good idea? [Let’s store nuclear weapons at our base in Japan](#). If we don’t tell anyone, they’ll never find out and get upset”.

Obviously, nuclear weapons are fake, but even at higher levels in the military they don't know this. You can read about how they were using Okinawa in Vietnam and considering using nuclear weaponry on the Vietnamese:

*"By the 1960s Okinawa was known as "The Keystone of the Pacific" to U.S. strategists and as "The Rock" to U.S. servicemen. Okinawa was critical to America's Vietnam war effort where commanders reasoned that, "without Okinawa, we cannot carry on the Vietnam war." **During U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War the use of nuclear weapons was suggested in order to "defoliate forests, destroy bridges, roads, and railroad lines." In addition, the use of nuclear weapons was suggested during the planning for the bombing of Vietnam's dikes in order to flood rice paddies, disrupt the North Vietnamese food supply, and leverage Hanoi during negotiations. Each of the cold war plans employing a U.S. launched nuclear first strike were ultimately rejected.**"*

Imagine being such a prick you'd want to use nuclear weapons as a defoliant. At least when these nutbars suggested such tactics their superiors (who were aware of what the nukes actually were) just shook their heads and said "Nah mate, that's going too far. Just use Agent Orange instead".

You can also read about how while the Japanese government were (understandably) firmly against the idea of nuclear weaponry being stored in Japan the US were using various legalese loopholes to get around storing them anyway.

Obviously, I know the nukes are not real, the point is that if you have a US/Phoenician base in your country be under no illusion that they will store absolutely anything there, they won't give a fig about your national stance on what's being stored. If nuclear, then why not chemical weapons? Or bioweapons? Or anything else they can come up with?

Anyway: the year was 1959 and on Okinawa's Naha Airbase there was an accidental launch of a nuclear missile.

*"In June or July 1959, a MIM-14 Nike-Hercules anti-aircraft missile was accidentally fired from the Nike site 8 battery at Naha Air Base on Okinawa which according to some witnesses, **was complete with a nuclear warhead.** While the missile was undergoing continuity testing of the firing circuit, known as a squib test, **stray voltage** caused a short circuit in a faulty cable that was lying in a puddle and **allowed the missile's rocket engines to ignite with the launcher still in a horizontal position.** The Nike missile left the launcher and **smashed through a fence and down into a beach area skipping the warhead out across the water "like a stone."** The rocket's exhaust blast killed two Army technicians and injured one."*

Whoops! I like the mental image of the missile skipping over the waters and sinking and there being an awful, stomach-churning beat for all the men witnessing it going "Is it about to explode? Am I a dead man?" But then nothing happens, someone cracks a joke and everyone relaxes.

Also:

*"Next, on December 5, 1965, in an incident at sea near Okinawa, **an A-4 Skyhawk attack aircraft rolled off of an elevator of the aircraft carrier the USS Ticonderoga (CV-14) into 16,000 feet of water resulting in the loss of the pilot, the aircraft, and the B43 nuclear bomb it was carrying, all of which were too deep for recovery.** Since the ship was travelling to Japan from duty in the Vietnam war zone, no public mention was made of the incident at the time and it would not come to light until 1981 when a Pentagon report revealed that **a one-megaton bomb had been lost.** Japan then formally asked for details of the incident."*

Incredible. Good thing atomic bombs are fake, eh?

More to come.

**Outro Music**

