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**“Corpses in the Grass”: Strategic Culture and Combat Effectiveness  
in the Pacific War; A Case Study of the U.S. Seventh Infantry Division**

by

**RICHARD ALLAN BURKLUND**

**Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army (Retired)**

**B.A., University of Colorado, 1983**

**M.A. Southern New Hampshire University, 2015**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the

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School of Humanities

College of Arts

University of Glasgow

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## **Abstract.**

Rather than accepting the premise that American industrial capacity and the sheer quantitative advantage that it produced were the only reasons that the U.S. was able to prevail over its qualitatively superior foes during the Second World War, I will demonstrate through the four different Pacific theater campaigns of the 7th Infantry Division the decisive importance of willpower and the less explored influence of strategic culture on the outcome of the war. I will challenge the theory of the supposedly inexorable triumph of American military mass as opposed to its superior combat effectiveness through a case study exploring the performance of the 7th U.S. Infantry Division in the Pacific. This case study contains two principal elements: the first is an analysis of the battles of Attu, Kwajalein, Leyte, and Okinawa and the second is a comparison of the strategic/tactical cultures of Japan and the United States and how they contributed to and influenced the relative combat effectiveness of the opposing forces. My hypothesis is that the 7th Division was comparatively more combat-efficient than its Japanese opponents because of an American “tactical culture” characterized by superior leadership that embodied adaptability and flexibility, informed by continuous learning that resulted in realistic training and highly effective tactical performance. The inspiration for this thesis began with the author’s Master of Arts dissertation, “Hell in the Mist: The Seventh Infantry Division and the Battle of Attu” completed for Southern New Hampshire University in 2015. Significant portions of this thesis borrow from and incorporate elements of that study. By extending the combat effectiveness debate from the European theater to the Pacific theater, I challenge the deterministic assumptions made by other historians about American industrial superiority over Japan by taking a cultural approach to provide new possible explanations of historical events. In this way, the competing hypotheses of how and why one force was more combat effective can be further explored. I will contrast and compare the American and Japanese strategic, operational, tactical, and human dimensions of the Pacific War.

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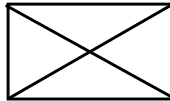
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## Military Map Symbology.

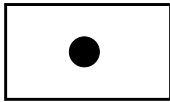
### Military Map Symbology:

- U.S. Infantry:



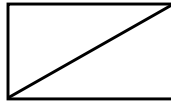
Infantry

- U.S. Artillery:



Artillery

- U.S. Cavalry/Reconnaissance:



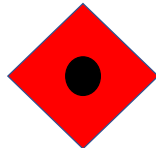
Reconnaissance  
(Scout)

### Military Map Symbology:

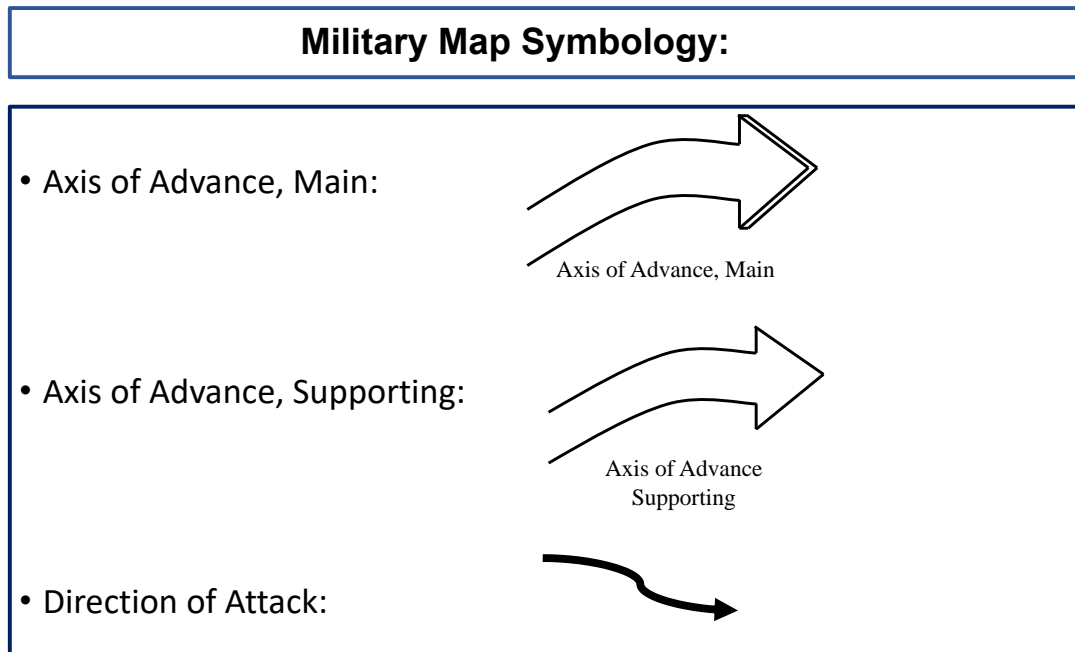
- IJA Infantry:



- IJA Artillery:







Source: Commander, US Army Combined Arms Center, FM 101-5-1, Operational Terms and Graphics, Headquarters, Department of the Army, Washington D.C., 1985/1997/2004.

## Dedication.

To the United States Army:

“I have eaten your bread and salt.  
I have drunk your water and wine.  
The deaths ye died I have watched beside  
And the lives ye led were mine.”

Rudyard Kipling, *Prelude*, Stanza 1.

With love, admiration, and gratitude to: W5, LKV, RMC, CCP, RLJ, LWB, CBJ, RCB, my mother and father, my sister, and brother, and especially VSB, and KLB!

## Acknowledgement.

I extend my deep appreciation, respect, and gratitude to Dr. Tony Pollard, Dr. Alex Marshall, and Dr. Mathilde von Bülow for their mentoring and support throughout the course of this project.

## Author's Declaration.

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Richard Allan Burklund  
Lieutenant Colonel  
United States Army, Retired

## Conventions/Definitions/Abbreviations.

Japanese names are given in the order Last Name, First Name. The transliteration of Japanese into written English has changed over the last hundred years. This work uses the Revised Hepburn system. Older transliterations such as *jiujitsu*, vice *jujutsu*, etc. are used only in direct quotations.

## Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Initialisms.

AAA	Antiaircraft artillery
AAF	Army Air Forces
ACofS	Assistant chief of staff
AGCT	Army General Classification Test
AGF	Army Ground Forces
ANC	Army Nurse Corps
ANG	Army National Guard

AR	Army regulation
ASU	Army service unit
AUS	Army of the United States
Bn	Battalion

CG	Commanding general
CINC	Commander in chief
CMH	Center of Military History
CNO	Chief of naval operations
CofS	Chief of staff
Comdr	Commander
COL	Colonel
CONUS	Continental United States
CPL	Corporal
CPT	Captain
DA	Department of the Army
DA GO	Department of the Army general order
DCS	Deputy chief of staff
Div	Division

DSC	Distinguished Service Cross
DSM	Distinguished Service Medal
ETO	European Theater of Operations
ETS	Expiration of time in service

FM	Field Manual
G-1	Assistant chief of staff, Personnel
G-2	Assistant chief of staff, Intelligence
G-3	Assistant chief of staff, Operations; Assistant chief of staff, Organization and Training
G-4	Assistant chief of staff, Logistics
GHQ	General headquarters
GO	General order
IJA	Imperial Japanese Army
IGHQ	Imperial General Headquarters
IJN	Imperial Japanese Navy
JAG	Judge advocate general
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff

LT	Lieutenant
LTC	Lieutenant Colonel
MAJ	Major
MOS	Military occupational specialty
MG	Machine gun
MP	Military Police
MTR	Mortar
MSC	Medical Service Corps
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NCO	Noncommissioned officer
OCS	Officer Candidate School

OPLAN	Operations plan
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense

PTO	Pacific Theater of Operations
RA	Regular Army
Regt	Regiment
Ret	Retired
RG	Record group
ROTC	Reserve Officers' Training Corps
Rpt	Report
S-1	Personnel officer
S-2	Intelligence officer
S-3	Operations/training officer
S-4	Supply officer
SGT	Sergeant
SOS	Services of Supply
SWPA	Southwest Pacific Area
TM	Training Manual/Technical Manual
TO	Table of Organization
TOE	Table of Organization and Equipment

USAF	U.S. Air Force
USAFFE	U.S. Army Forces, Far East

USAFPAC	U.S. Army Forces, Pacific
USAR	U.S. Army Reserve
USMC	U.S. Marine Corps
USMCR	U.S. Marine Corps Reserve
USN	U.S. Navy
WCOC	WAC Company Officers Course
WD	War Department
WD GO	War Department general order
WO	Warrant officer



## Chapter One: Introduction.

“Military History, accompanied by sound criticism, is indeed the true school of War.”<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Introduction.

Modern war studies have frequently featured debates on the events and actions that led to either victory or defeat. Shortly after the Second World War and continuing for the next seven decades, some historians trumpeted the tactical superiority of the Axis forces (particularly the German Wehrmacht) over the American army. Their contention, supported by quantitative analysis and mathematical models, was that the Axis forces were much more competent and combat effective than their adversaries and that the Allies won only because of their overwhelming resources and superior firepower.<sup>2</sup> Other historians have responded to this claim by countering that the American army was successful in the Second World War because of its mastery of combined arms warfare and its ability to quickly adapt to new and unanticipated conditions and environments.<sup>3</sup> Although this debate has been imaginative and vigorous a similar academic comparative analysis of combat effectiveness has not been conducted for the Pacific War. This Eurocentric prominence in the historiography has been attributed to the influence of the ‘Germany first’ strategy, the maritime nature of the Pacific theater which lends itself to a predominantly naval-centric narrative, that the greater weight of press coverage went to the easier to reach European theater, and the avoidance of the troubling issue of the racially inspired atrocities committed by both sides in the war.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Antoine de Jomini. *Précis de l'art de la guerre*, 1838; *Summary of the Art of War: Restored Edition*. (Kingston: Legacy Press Books, 2008), 324.

<sup>2</sup> Michael D. Doubler, *Closing With The Enemy: How GIs Fought the War in Europe, 1944-1945* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994), 6; Peter R. Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions, 1941-1945*, (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 1994), 8.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Peter R. Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions, 1941-1945*, (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 1994), 7-8. John C. McManus, *Fire and Fortitude, The U.S. Army in the Pacific War, 1941-1943*, (New York: Dutton Caliber, 2019), 50.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Cole Kingseed, “The Pacific War: The U.S. Army’s Forgotten Theater of World War II”, *Army* 63, no. 4 (April 2013): 50-56; Louis Morton, *Strategy and Command: The First Two Years. The United States Army in World War II*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1962), 88.



Military history is no longer very popular in American academia. There are very few universities that sponsor programs that explore the subject.<sup>5</sup> This is unfortunate since the premier works of history were written specifically to improve our understanding of war.<sup>6</sup> Over 75 years have passed since the events detailed here but they still have great relevance. This is because the Second World War was probably the most significant event of the twentieth century, and it continues to resonate onward into the twenty-first century. As contemporary adversaries and allies formulate goals and objectives to address the current strategic environment, particularly in the Indo-Pacific area the study of the Second World War offers significant insights in the competitive arenas of diplomacy, information, the military, and economics.

I intend to take a cultural approach to the interpretation of military history to deepen our understanding of American and Japanese strategic culture in the Second World War. I will challenge the theory of the supposedly inexorable triumph of American military mass as opposed to its superior combat effectiveness. Rather than accepting the premise that American industrial capacity and the sheer numerical superiority that it produced were the only reasons that the U.S. was able to prevail over its allegedly qualitatively superior foes, I will demonstrate through the four different Pacific theater campaigns of the 7th Infantry Division the decisive importance of willpower and the less explored influence of strategic culture on the outcome of the war.<sup>7</sup> This will offer insights into how this largely overlooked element might influence current and future perspectives on the critical issues of strategy, military power, and trans-cultural conflict. In so doing, I intend to demonstrate how the contrasting strategic cultures of the adversaries in the Second World War influenced the course and consequences of the war. I will explore the questions of relative combat effectiveness with a different focus, by examining the influence of strategic culture and the power of elusive concepts like the 'will to fight' and the 'will to sacrifice'.

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<sup>5</sup> According to the Society for Military History there were only eighteen American universities that offered master's degrees in the subject as of November 2020. <https://www.smh-hq.org/grad/gradguide/degree.html>

<sup>6</sup> E.g., Herodotus', *The Histories*, and Thucydides', *History of the Peloponnesian War*.

<sup>7</sup> Richard A. Burkland. "Hell in the Mists", *The U.S. Seventh Infantry Division and the Forgotten Battle of Attu*". Unpublished Master's thesis, Southern New Hampshire University, Manchester, New Hampshire, 2015, 10-11.

This study will be composed of two principal elements: (1) an analysis of the battles of the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in the Pacific theater during the Second World War and (2) a comparison of the strategic cultures of Japan and the United States as a backdrop to those battles. I will follow the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division through the Battles of Attu (11-30 May 1943), Kwajalein (30 January – 4 February 1944), Leyte (20 October 1944 – 1 February 1945), and Okinawa (1 April – 21 June 1945). In following the campaigns of a single division, the thesis will explore the ways in which American strategic and tactical culture allowed U.S. forces to overcome the challenges of adverse weather, terrain, and a tenacious enemy. By tracing combative effectiveness over several engagements, I intend to use this smaller scale collective case study of the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Division to contribute to the wider debates on the role of American and Japanese strategic culture in the Pacific theatre as well as the aspects of tactical culture represented by the will to win, and the variable adaptability and capacity to learn from combat exhibited by the U.S. and the Imperial Japanese forces. By focusing on the Seventh Infantry Division specifically we can trace learning and adaptation throughout the course of the war.

In the fight against Japan, pre-war American hubris quickly gave way to alarm and embarrassment as the highly effective Japanese land, air, and naval forces won decisive victories in Singapore, the Philippines, and Burma.<sup>8</sup> The shock of these defeats earned the Japanese a grudging respect from their American opponents, however this seems to have been forgotten in the seventy-five years since the war. The prevailing attitude now is that the American victory was inevitable, and that the Japanese were always doomed to failure because they could never match the industrial might of the United States.<sup>9</sup> While the Americans did eventually enjoy superiority in firepower and logistics, this view unfairly dismisses the fighting abilities of the Japanese forces and ignores the fact that over three and half years of vicious fighting were required to earn this victory.<sup>10</sup> In contrast to this belief in the inevitability of American victory

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<sup>8</sup> Robert W. Coakley, Chapter 23: “World War II: The War Against Japan,” *Army Historical Series, American Military History* (Washington D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1989), 503; John T. Kuehn, “The War in the Pacific, 1941–1945.” Chapter 15, *The Cambridge History of the Second World War*, Edited by John Ferris, University of Calgary, Evan Mawdsley, University of Glasgow, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025 ) 420-454. doi:10.1017/CHO9781139855969.019.

<sup>9</sup> Ronald Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 560; Phillips Payson O’Brien, *How the War was Won: Air-Sea Power and Allied Victory in World War II*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 3, 5, 11, 13.

<sup>10</sup> McManus, *Fire and Fortitude*, 50.

we are presented with the epic saga of the United States Marine Corps in the Pacific. This narrative enshrines the courage and sacrifice of the Marines in their gallant struggle against their implacable Japanese foes forgetting the seeming ineluctable defeat that awaited them. As one Army commander remarked at the time, “Out here, mention is seldom seen of the achievements of the Army ground troops whereas the Marines are blown up to the skies.”<sup>11</sup> Despite the fact that the Army contributed three field armies and twenty-one divisions to the Pacific Theater and suffered 41,592 ground troops killed or missing in action and 145,706 wounded (not counting the additional 24,230 casualties suffered by the Army Air Forces), appreciation of the Army’s contribution was diminished by unbalanced press coverage that favored the depiction of the Marine Corps as a glamorous and elite force, propagandizing their epic feats of arms.<sup>12</sup> Paradoxically, in this telling, American victory is not assured or assumed, nor should it be and success is not attributed to mere numerical superiority but instead to valor and fighting spirit.<sup>13</sup>

## 1.1. Review of the Literature.

For the professional soldier, military history serves as the laboratory of warfare, allowing for the study of both the application of theory and doctrine and as the venue for the extrapolation of method.<sup>14</sup> Like the two-headed Roman god, Janus, we search the past to see what we can learn while simultaneously looking toward the future to see how we might use this knowledge. One of the most popular historical debates about the Second World War has been about the relative combat effectiveness of the belligerents in the European Theater and how this affected the outcome of the war. Peter Mansoor underscored the imbalance in the study of the military history by the lack of similar discussion of the Pacific War when he related this story about D. Clayton James, formerly Professor of Military History at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff

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<sup>11</sup> Major General Oscar Griswold, letter to Lieutenant General Lesley McNair, November 30, 1943, Record Group 337, Entry 58A, Box 9, National Archives.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Frank, *Guadalcanal: The Definitive Account of the Landmark Battle*, (New York: Random House, 1990), 595-596.

<sup>13</sup> Kingseed, 50.

<sup>14</sup>“The Role and Use of Military History”, Army Study Guide, On Line, [https://www.armystudyguide.com/content/powerpoint/History\\_Presentations/the-role-and-use-of-milit-2.shtml](https://www.armystudyguide.com/content/powerpoint/History_Presentations/the-role-and-use-of-milit-2.shtml), accessed 20 September 2018.

College and the U.S. Army War College. Mansoor said that James often expressed his surprise that the U.S. Army's official history neglected its many campaigns in the Pacific theater. James suggested that the exclusive focus on the conflict in Europe overlooked not only the global scope of Army operations in the Second World War (which continues to this day) but also the Army's demonstrated adaptability to fight and win in the diverse conditions of the Second World War.<sup>15</sup>

### 1.1.1. The Orthodoxy.

During the Second World War the American Army sought to answer the question of how to consistently achieve victory in battle using combat historians. They were dispatched directly to the battlefields to conduct extensive after-action data collection and participant interviews. Prominent among them was S. L. A. Marshall. He developed and used the after-action small group review, whereby he chronologically traced the actions of a unit through interviews with the participants as soon as possible after the action was over. He subsequently published, "Men Against Fire", his best-known and most controversial work, in 1947. He addresses infantry combat effectiveness in the Second World War stating: "In an average experienced infantry company...the number engaging with any and all weapons was approximately 15 per cent...In the most aggressive companies...the figure rarely rose above 25 percent..."<sup>16</sup> In his subsequent books and articles Marshall argued that the United States Army should devote significant training resources to increase the "ratio of fire"; that is the percentage of soldiers who actually engage the enemy with direct fire.

Most American Army officers are exposed to Marshall early in their careers. I was an avid reader of his works beginning from my days as a cadet. This continued into my early professional training as the Army developed and refined the new organization and doctrine for light infantry. Marshall's "The Soldier's Load and the Mobility of a Nation" were closely studied for applicable insights into our concepts for maneuver and sustainment. So too, were his claims

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<sup>15</sup> Peter R. Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions, 1941-1945*, (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 1994), 8.

<sup>16</sup> S. L. A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War* (Washington: Infantry Journal; New York: William Morrow, 1947), 22-23, 55-57.

in “Men Against Fire” studied in efforts to improve the lethality of the light infantry. Subsequently, it was hard to reconcile the stirring tales of American infantry in action in books like “Island Victory” and “Night Drop” with the picture painted in “Men Against Fire” that few soldiers fought at all, let alone with such valor and bravado as was depicted in his other books.<sup>17</sup>

Marshall’s work engendered a vigorous historical debate over the relative combat effectiveness of the opposing forces, which lasts even today. While he was acknowledged as a military historian, war correspondent, and military critic Marshall’s theories were highly controversial. His claims for the ratio of fire while influential, were never universally accepted.<sup>18</sup> It is significant that his “ratio of fire” theory does not appear in the official history series, “The United States in World War II”.<sup>19</sup> In 1988 a scholarly review of his work appeared in the British journal, “The Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies”. The author, Dr. Roger J. Spiller, while seeking to prove Marshall’s ideas on ground combat, came instead to the discovery that there was no evidence to support Marshall’s claims.<sup>20</sup> Spiller writes:

This calculation assumes, however, that of all the questions Marshall might ask the soldiers of a rifle company during his interviews, he would unfailingly want to know who had fired his weapon and who had not. Such a question, posed interview after interview, would have signaled that Marshall was on a particular line of inquiry, and that regardless of the other information Marshall might discover, he was devoted to investigating this facet of combat performance. John Westover, usually in attendance during Marshall’s sessions with the troops, does not recall Marshall’s *ever* asking this question. Nor does Westover recall Marshall ever talking about ratios of weapons usage in their many private conversations. Marshall’s own personal correspondence leaves no hint that he was ever collecting statistics. His surviving field notebooks show no signs of statistical compilations that would have been necessary to deduce a ratio as precise as Marshall reported later in “Men Against Fire.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Examples include “Island Victory” (1944), “Night Drop” (1962), “Bastogne” (1946), “The River and the Gauntlet” (1951), “Pork Chop Hill” (1956).

<sup>18</sup> Martin Blumenson, “Did ‘Slam’ Guess at Fire Ratio? Probably: A Legend Remembered,” *Army* (June 1989): p. 16.

<sup>19</sup> The *United States Army in World War II* is the official history of the ground forces of the United States Army during the Second World War. This 78-volume work was originally published beginning in 1946.

<sup>20</sup> Roger J. Spiller, *S. L. A. Marshall and the Ratio of Fire*, The Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies, RUSI Journal (Winter 1988), 68.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

Marshall claimed to have interviewed over 400 infantry companies in Europe, spending two or three days with each which means that he would have taken from June 1944 to October 1946 to accomplish the task. Thus, the "systematic collection of data" that made Marshall's ratio of fire so authoritative appears to have been an invention.<sup>22</sup> Spiller explains that the military nevertheless accepted Marshall's theory because he was sympathetic to professional soldiers, and that they reciprocated that feeling. Why, however, did professional historians accept Marshall's claims? "Intellectual sloth," says Spiller. "The ratio of fire was an easy answer, one that seemed to promise entree into the hidden world of combat."<sup>23</sup> Marshall was a newspaperman by trade, and he had a great talent for getting a sensational story through interviews with the witnesses to the story. He seems to have done so here. Spiller explains that because few primary sources or authoritative works existed below the regimental level during the Second World War and that, "Most people who are writing the histories now have never been on a battlefield...so historians had to rely on Marshall."<sup>24</sup> However, men who had been on the battlefield emerged to challenge Marshall. Harold R. Leinbaugh, who served as a rifle company commander during the Second World War, and who co-authored *The Men of Company K: The Autobiography of a World War II Rifle Company* characterized Marshall's assertions as "absurd, ridiculous and totally nonsensical."<sup>25</sup> Drawing on his own combat experiences he could find no such reluctance to fire among combat infantrymen. Leinbaugh was reportedly personally offended by Marshall's charges. Leinbaugh felt that Marshall criticized "not only our efforts at Geilenkirchen (a town in Germany and the scene of a battle) but the performance of every American rifle company that did battle in the Second World War."<sup>26</sup>

Nevertheless, Marshall's work set the stage for other historians to advance the theory that American forces (especially their infantry) were qualitatively inferior, achieving victory only because they enjoyed quantitative superiority. Despite the flaws in his data collection and analytical conclusions, Marshall's claims were assumed to be uniform for the Army as a whole

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<sup>22</sup> Captain John G. Westover. See Dr. Westover's published recollections, including "The Colonel Goes Interviewing," *Newsletter of the S. L. A. Marshall Military History Collection*, No. 12 (Winter 1985-1986), 1-3; and Westover's 15 June 1987 interview with Roger J. Spiller quoted in Spiller, "S. L. A. Marshall and the Ratio of Fire," 68.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 63-71.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

and few attempts were made to test the validity of the theory against opponents other than the Wehrmacht. Furthermore, Marshall's judgments were used by other historians like Russell Weigley, Trevor N. Dupuy, and Martin van Creveld in their subsequent works to advance the school of thought that superior logistics and overwhelming firepower were responsible for American battlefield success.

Russell F. Weigley used Marshall's ratio of fire theory to buttress the assertion that American combat soldiers lacked aggressiveness and that their leaders lacked audacity and imagination.<sup>27</sup> In, *The American Way of War*, Weigley contended that the American war strategy evolved from a strategy of attrition to one of annihilation and that this goal of the complete destruction of the enemy through industrial and military power expressed American strategic culture.<sup>28</sup> Weigley argued that the U.S. Army was intellectually and physically oriented on mobile combat and limited expeditionary operations such as those it had experienced in the Indian Wars and the Spanish-American War. Despite the experience of World War I, he felt that the Army was incapable of generating sustained combat power, even though its strategic concept called for the application of decisive attacking power against German defenses.<sup>29</sup> He contended that American infantry units were inferior in quality to the Germans and that they could not close with and destroy the enemy, instead relying on artillery fire for success.<sup>30</sup> Weigley believed that this was because the Army was confused about its approach to warfare, not being able to decide whether to employ a doctrine based on the use of firepower or on one of maneuver and mobility.<sup>31</sup> Weigley concluded that access to greater material resources had allowed the American Army to "rumble to victory" over its German opponents and yet he chastised even that positive outcome because the war dragged on longer than it should have "because American military skills were not as formidable as they should have been."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Russell F. Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaigns of France and Germany, 1944-45*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 727-30; John C. McManus, *The Deadly Brotherhood: The American Combat Soldier in World War II* (Novato.: Presidio Press, 1998), 120.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.; Brian M. Linn, "The American Way of War Revisited," *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 66, no. 2, April 2002: 502.

<sup>29</sup> Russell F. Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaigns of France and Germany, 1944-45*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 727-30.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Russell F. Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, Epilogue.

The combat effectiveness debate was subsequently and most deeply influenced by Trevor N. Dupuy who questioned the quality of the American soldier in direct comparison to his German counterpart. In his work, "Numbers, Predictions, and War" he applied mathematical and statistical analysis to the reported results of eighty-one combat engagements in 1943 and 1944, using a method that he called the "Quantified Judgment Model," (QJM) whereby he attempted to isolate the variables of tactical engagements by developing parameters for weather, terrain, ammunition, fuel, and the quantity of troops available, etc. He assigned numerical values to these variables and entered them into the QJM equation. In Dupuy's words, the QJM is:

...a method of comparing two opposing forces in historical combat, by determining the influence of environmental and operational variables upon the forces strengths of the two opponents. ...The model is applied to statistics of selected historical engagements and produces values ...to ascertain which of the opposing sides - on the basis of data available in the records - should theoretically have been successful in the engagement.<sup>33</sup>

Dupuy concluded that German units were usually 20 percent more effective than their American adversaries and that the Germans were therefore only defeated by the superiority that the Allies held in numbers.<sup>34</sup>

While these criteria were comprehensive and technically well-conceived there are two problems with this approach. The first was that none of these parameters existed as such at the time that these battles were being fought. While technically comprehensive these parameters were an artificial *ex post facto* application. They reflect the thoughts of the 1980s when they were conceived and were thus influenced by ideas about potential future conflicts between NATO and the Warsaw Pact and not necessarily by the conditions of the Second World War. This methodology and the combat effectiveness factors that it uses also suffers from the logic error caused by the attempt to tie temporal sequence to causality.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>34</sup> Trevor N. Dupuy, *Numbers, Prediction, and War: Using History to Evaluate Combat Factors and Predict the Outcome of Battles*, (Boston: Bobbs-Merrill, 1979) 62-3.

<sup>35</sup> Edward J. Filiberti, *Developing a Theory for Dynamic Campaign Planning*, (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1988, 48.



Dupuy incorporated subjective values that he called “intangible variables” which he admitted are “almost impossible to assess in absolute terms with complete objectivity”.<sup>36</sup> QJM is a static model representing the average effects of historical combat. It does not reflect the dynamic decisions made by commanders; their “action-reaction-counter-action” behaviors. Although Dupuy felt that the Germans’ performance demonstrated that the quality of their combat troops enabled them to consistently overcome Allied materiel superiority there is some problem with this conclusion because although the iterated model eventually fits the data this did not constitute a definitive conclusion. Thus, the attempt to provide absolute objectivity through a quantitative historical approach is not completely objective. Dupuy’s quantitative analysis model does not seem to fully account for such battlefield intangibles as leadership, training, morale, innovation, will, and just plain luck.<sup>37</sup>

Nevertheless, Dupuy’s conclusions were accepted by many historians. Building upon Dupuy’s work, Martin van Creveld took a comparative approach to studying combat effectiveness because he claimed that “it alone allows the facts to speak for themselves.”<sup>38</sup> Creveld asked, “In what lies the secret of fighting power?” He believed that the Germans in the Second World War “developed fighting power to an almost awesome degree” and he argued that the German Army completely outclassed the Americans because of the Americans’ managerial approach to warfare and their tendency to treat their organizations as mere parts in a huge machine.<sup>39</sup> He argued that the American Army regarded war not as a struggle between opposing human forces but rather as a contest between machines and firepower. Creveld directly used Dupuy’s previous analysis of 78 tactical engagements in 1943-44 to derive his conclusions on the superiority of the German army based upon the outcome of 1.5 Allied casualties for every one German casualty. For him the higher ratio in favor of the German forces proves their superiority. Despite his focus being on an analysis of the Germans vs. the Americans, Creveld failed to note (or excluded the fact) that 28 of the 78 engagements were British vs. Germans.

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<sup>36</sup> Dupuy, 37-39.

<sup>37</sup> Christopher A. Lawrence, "Measuring Human Factors in Combat: Modern Wars." *War by Numbers: Understanding Conventional Combat*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 21; Mansoor, 8.

<sup>38</sup> Martin Van Creveld, *Fighting Power: German and US Army Performance, 1939-1945*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1982), 177.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

Creveld extended Dupuy's work by examining the German army from the perspective of its social status, structure and administration, system of rewards, punishments, and replacement, and the role of its non-commissioned officers. In comparison, Creveld was particularly critical of the American personnel replacement policy, which operated under an individual versus unit replacement system, which he felt was most responsible for the weaknesses in the American Army.<sup>40</sup> Creveld also dismissed the American officer corps as "less than mediocre."<sup>41</sup> Creveld concluded that the Germans' organization, training and staff was responsible for their tactical excellence and was a model to be emulated by the U.S. Army in its post-Vietnam transformation.

Nevertheless, Creveld's criticism of the American Army as inferior to the Wehrmacht because of its mechanistic approach to warfare has some critical flaws. There are many factual inaccuracies and groundless allegations made in support of his claims about comparative fighting power and combat effectiveness. For example, at one point he claims that American troops were embarrassed by the adoption of "whimsical" emblems such as dogs, monkeys, centipedes, pigs, or bees as distinguishing unit insignia. The divisional unit insignia of the U.S. Army of today originated in the First World War and became famous in the Second World War. They include such instantly recognized icons as the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division's "Screaming Eagle" emblem, the "Big Red One" of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division, and the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division's "Tropic Lightning" shoulder insignia. There were not then, nor have there ever been, insects, primates, or domesticated ungulates used as unit insignia. The designs that were used were great sources of pride to unit members and did not adversely affect morale as Creveld claims.<sup>42</sup> Such historical inaccuracies bespeak both an *a priori* bias and superficial research.

Ultimately, Creveld's work reflected the time in which he wrote, as much as the time about which he was writing. Just as Dupuy's work was intended to inform and influence a post-Vietnam U.S. Army's doctrinal and operational response to the Soviet threat of the late 1970s and 1980s by holding up the German Wehrmacht as a paradigm, so, too, did Creveld suggest that

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 79. During the Second World War, the American Army used a system of sending individual soldiers to replace unit casualties rather than replacing the entire unit when it became depleted in combat. The individual soldiers were treated as interchangeable parts of a larger machine, to be replaced as needed.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>42</sup> Martin van Creveld, *Fighting Power: German and U.S. Army Performance, 1939-1945* (Westport: Greenwood, 1982), 46.

the Second World War German doctrine represented an answer to the flaws he saw in the post-Vietnam era American doctrine and command procedures.<sup>43</sup> He argued that even a tactically superior military with superior leadership, weapons, and organization can lose, as evidenced by the Germans experience in the Second World War. He felt that these Second World War American deficiencies in their managerial and mechanistic approach to warfare caused them to lose in Vietnam and he implied that they would do so again in any clash with the Soviets.

In the last two decades a new consensus has emerged among historians that seems to be an evolved variation of the orthodox argument in favor of the triumph of Allied industrial might over Axis military skill. In recognition of the tremendous human sacrifices made by the Soviet Union, many historians have claimed that the Second World War was truly won by the enormous sacrifices of Soviet tank and infantry forces on the Eastern Front.<sup>44</sup> This belief that Allied victory was principally achieved by the soldiers of the Red Army also implies that the immense scope and scale of the fighting on the Eastern Front made this effort intrinsically more consequential than all other war efforts. The larger the battle, it seems, the greater its importance. The idea that the Soviet Union made the decisive contribution to Allied victory in the great land battles fought on the Eastern Front and that this contribution has been misunderstood or deliberately obscured owes its popularity in part to historians like David Glantz', *Colossus Reborn: The Red Army at War* and David Stahel's, *Operation Barbarossa and Germany's Defeat in the East*.<sup>45</sup> However, Phillips O'Brien instead argues that the war was decided by something more than the titanic clash of manpower on the steppes of Russia. As a supporter of the school of thought that massed power mattered more to Allied victory, O'Brien claims that there were no decisive battles in the Second World War and that while combat was a crucial human experience in the war it was not important in understanding victory and defeat.<sup>46</sup> He argues that Allied industrial production and

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 5,9. "Like their German counterparts, American units were known by either roman or Arabic numbers. Most also had nicknames, though the enormous variety of whimsical designs---belligerent dogs, ducks, centipedes, spiders, bees, bulls, birds, monkeys, wolves, bears, horses, pigs, and cats, among others---that accompanied American units into combat suggests that these meant little to the troops."

<sup>44</sup> Jean Beaumont in "The General History of the Second World War," *International History Review*, vol.14, 4 (Nov. 1992, 758) claims that this view is universally held by historians.

<sup>45</sup> David Glantz, *Colossus Reborn: The Red Army at War, 1941-1943* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press 2005), xv; David Stahel, *Operation Barbarossa, and Germany's Defeat in the East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2005), 21.

<sup>46</sup> Phillips O'Brien, *How the War Was Won: Air-Sea Power and Allied Victory in World War II*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2015), 1,16.

economic power produced a decisive dominance in air and sea power that dwarfed the land war in its reach and in its systematic destruction of the Axis military power and industrial capacity. O'Brien cites a mass of statistical evidence to take the position that land warfare in any theater was less important than air and sea power and that Allied victory was dependent upon their superiority in the manufacturing of ships and aircraft and their resulting impact in effectively damaging the industrial production of the Axis powers and interdicting the deployment of arms and materiel to the battlefield.

Despite this impressive body of quantitative analysis, these theories of victory through mass have been questioned and other scholars have offered counterarguments that acknowledge American superiority in some technologies and weapons, but which contend that the Germans also held distinct advantages and that American victory was due as much to the combination of good leadership and sound combined arms doctrine and tactics and not merely to overwhelming mass. These will be considered in the following section.

### **1.1.2. The Iconoclasts.**

“In all matters which pertain to an army, organization, discipline and tactics, the human heart in the supreme moment of battle is the basic factor. It is rarely taken into account; and often strange errors are the result... We must consider it!”<sup>47</sup>

Despite the popularity of “firepower theory”, a second group of scholars heeded the call to study the human factors that du Picq spoke of and they challenged the dogma that the Germans were more competent and more combat effective than their Allied counterparts.<sup>48</sup> Collectively, they took a less quantitative approach, attempting to explore the more intangible qualitative factors that they felt had been ignored in favor of the theoretically more objective empirical approach espoused by Dupuy, et. al.

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<sup>47</sup> Ardant du Picq, *Battle Studies: Ancient and Modern Battle, 1921 (1870)* (Kingston: Legacy Press Books, 2008), 40-41, 324. Ardant du Picq felt that placing emphasis on “mathematical and material dynamics” and ignoring the intangible factors in war like will to fight led to illusions about the real nature of war.

<sup>48</sup> Peter R. Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions, 1941-1945*, (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 1994), 8.

Among the first to push back on the accepted wisdom of German military supremacy was John Sloan Brown. Brown is a retired Brigadier General who was the Chief of Military History at the United States Army Center of Military History from December 1998 to October 2005. His book, *Draftee Division* published in 1986 deals with the concerns of senior U.S. Army leaders like Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall when faced with the dilemma of sending the involuntary soldiers of a capitalist democracy against the hardened veterans of a militaristic totalitarian regime. American isolationism and unpreparedness meant that whole divisions of inexperienced draftees would go to war led by a small cadre of professional soldiers. Brown contends that through "rigorous, demanding and instructive" training, taking advantage of every opportunity, never letting the soldiers become stale or complacent, that the 88th Infantry Division eventually "fought like wildcats" because their intense training had created a disciplined and proficient fighting force.<sup>49</sup> The training continued even after the division deployed overseas. After their arrival in North Africa the division used a former French Foreign Legion base in the Atlas Mountains to revitalize skills made rusty by the long transit from America. Training did not stop when the division was finally committed to the field of battle in Italy. In the seven weeks prior to taking the offensive the division conducted further intensive training in marksmanship, small unit tactics, combined arms maneuver, and attacking fortifications.<sup>50</sup> Brown's conclusion is that the 88th Infantry Division's superior training and not any reliance on numerical or logistic superiority were responsible for its battlefield successes.<sup>51</sup> In his view, devoted leadership and realistic training had overcome the supposedly greater combat effectiveness and allegedly higher level of professionalism of the German Army.

The belief that statistics and formulae do not tell the whole story has continued to grow. More recent scholarship has explored the non-materiel elements in the history of combat effectiveness in World War Two. In "When the Odds Were Even" (1994), Keith Bonn compared the strengths and weaknesses of the German and American armies in a battle analysis of the American attack in the Vosges Mountains of France from October 1944 to January 1945. His

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<sup>49</sup> John S. Brown, *Draftee Division: The 88<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in World War II*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 36-37.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-84, 101-104.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 120-121.

intent was to challenge the long-held belief of many historians that German combat units were qualitatively superior to their American opponents, by examining the tactics, leadership, doctrine, and logistics of each of the opposing forces. Because he compared German and American fighting formations in a situation where both sides were evenly matched in the numbers of troops, weapons, supplies, and fire support he forces us to examine how the allegedly inferior American forces won without overwhelming numerical and/or materiel superiority. Bonn's conclusion was that superior training, sound tactical doctrine, and flexibility were the keys to American success.<sup>52</sup> As a then serving Army officer who was not a specialist in systems analysis and quantitative methodology, he was biased more toward a description of how the other intangible elements on the battlefield contributed to the American victory. Bonn consulted both German and American operations and intelligence journals and reports, manuscripts, and interviews to develop a detailed account of the operational and tactical actions to illustrate that American doctrine and training were in fact equal to that of the Wehrmacht and that the Americans were able to achieve victory without the supposed overwhelming air and artillery support which other critics claimed were responsible for their success.<sup>53</sup>

While Bonn focused on a single campaign and the tactical engagements that comprised it to conduct his analysis, other historians have addressed the larger picture. Michael Doubler also reassessed many previous conclusions on the capability and success of the American Army in Europe. In doing so he took a new approach by going beyond looking at a specific campaign or battle to study key systemic aspects of combat effectiveness like tactical adaptability, innovation, and flexibility. Doubler addressed the contention that the American forces were inferior to their German opponents because of their mindset of bureaucratic logistics management. He describes how, despite having to build, train, and equip an army in months versus the Germans' several years of preparation for the war, the Americans quickly improvised, adapted, and overcame their opponents with ingenuity and innovation particularly in their development of combined arms warfare. He illustrated in his work how the American Army in the Second World War was in fact very effective in the essential task of ground forces which is to close with the enemy and engage

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<sup>52</sup> Keith Bonn, *When the Odds were Even: The Vosges Mountains Campaign, October 1944-January 1945*, (Novato: Presidio Press, 2006), ii-vii.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

them in decisive combat, in contradiction to the claims of timidity levelled by others. Doubler agreed that van Creveld's criticisms of the management of the individual replacement have merit but that they fail to recognize that by using that system America was thus able to field a global Army, a two-ocean Navy, and multiple strategic and tactical air forces, an accomplishment no other nation was able to achieve.<sup>54</sup> His analysis of historical battle data revealed that the American Army quickly developed combined arms maneuver with its air-artillery-ground integration, and synchronized attacks in a qualitatively superior tactical method rather than by applying a simple quantitative superiority. He points out that the Germans thus consistently sought to negate superior American mobility by fighting on difficult terrain and that the overarching American objective of destroying the enemy forces compelled them to attack with firepower but did not preclude maneuver when the opportunity presented itself.<sup>55</sup>

Peter Mansoor, a retired U.S. Army colonel, approached the subject from the perspective of the individual American infantry division. He takes the position that, rather than being inferior to the Germans, American divisions were, unit for unit, more effective. Mansoor points out that a re-evaluation of Dupuy's statistics revealed that Dupuy compared average American divisions against elite German panzer and panzer-grenadier units and that he further skewed the results of his analysis by underestimating the advantages possessed by the defender.<sup>56</sup> Mansoor points out a critical flaw in the interpretation of the results of Dupuy's QJM (especially in its application by van Creveld) that despite the fact that in over two thirds of the 78 engagements that were studied the Allies were attacking, Dupuy does not address the axiom that the attacker requires a 3 to 1 correlation of forces in order to be successful. Therefore, the Allies numerical superiority in these engagements was only common sense. To attack without a numerical advantage would have been the height of folly, and in the absence of an overwhelming numerical superiority of 5:1 or 6:1, combined arms firepower thus adds to the correlation of forces and means. One of the most interesting points of Mansoor's work is his use of German sources to provide their view of American combat effectiveness, something not presented by Marshall or Dupuy. At the end of

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<sup>54</sup> Michael Doubler. *Closing With the Enemy: How GIs Fought the War in Europe, 1944-1945* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, December 22, 1994) 288.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

<sup>56</sup> Peter Mansoor. *The GI Offensive in Europe: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions, 1941-1945*, (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 1994), 8.

1944 the German Army published a series called “Battle Experiences” which outlined their views of their American opponents. Although filled with Nazi propaganda, it nevertheless praised American tactical leadership, their coordination of infantry, tanks, and planes, and the superiority of American artillery.<sup>57</sup>

### 1.1.3. The Revisionists.

Other historians have recently sought to further rebalance the historiography with new interpretations. Moving beyond the deterministic view of American logistical and firepower superiority and the counterargument that irrespective of force ratios, the Americans displayed superior qualitative intangibles that tipped the scales in their favor, especially when numerical and firepower factors were equal, some new arguments and ideas have been put forth.

Scholars like Robert Citino have offered the argument that the German defeat was due as much to their strategic culture and their supporting doctrinal concepts as it was to any material inferiority to the Allies. Citino argues that the Prussian thought tradition that dominated German military doctrine dictated that wars be short, sharp, and decisive.<sup>58</sup> German military doctrine focused on elegant operational maneuver to achieve success, with less consideration being given to materiel and logistical planning.<sup>59</sup> This was an inherent weakness that had important consequences. Citino contends that German strategic culture was focused on tactical action and campaign maneuver planning. However, this short-sighted approach led the Germans to ensuring that their scheme of maneuver could be sustained with the necessary resources to achieve the decisive victory that they pursued.

Brian McAlister Linn has explored the subject of America’s strategic culture and the ways that the U.S. Army has developed its doctrine, strategy, leaders, and weapons to fight future wars based on the lessons of past conflict. In *The Echo of Battle*, Linn finds that faulty assumptions

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 263.

<sup>58</sup> Robert M. Citino. *Death of the Wehrmacht: The German Campaigns of 1942*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 33-34.

<sup>59</sup> Citino, 157-158, 306.



and past mistakes have continually characterized the American Army's efforts at transformation and its approach to combat. He demonstrates that the Army has habitually prepared for wars that didn't occur while ignoring conflicts that it ended up fighting. The American strategic culture that emerged after the War of 1812 concluded that a defense against the trans-oceanic invasion by European powers, especially Great Britain, was the greatest threat. Consequently, a strategy of permanent coastal defense fortifications manned by a small professional force and backed by a force of hastily assembled volunteer citizen-soldiers was adopted.<sup>60</sup> These played no role in the Army's subsequent offensive wars both at home and abroad or in the long counter-insurgency campaigns in the American West. When considering the enormous destructive power offered by machine guns and rapid firing artillery at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the Army again drew the wrong conclusion that future conflict would be so destructive and expensive that it would be short and decisive in nature. Linn demonstrates that visionary leadership and an extraordinary capacity for agility and adaptation have characterized American strategic culture when faced with the need to alter the Army's approach to conflict.<sup>61</sup> While the capabilities and methods of employment of weaponry have always influenced American military planning, intangible factors of leadership, imagination, intuition, and will have provided the U.S. Army its battlefield triumphs.

Stephen Biddle's, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle* explores the impact of modern force employment and tactics. Biddle tackles the question of whether mass and force matter most in war. Must the biggest battalions always win? He counters the prevailing argument that the largest and best-equipped force will dominate with the theory that how a force is used, in conjunction with the weapons it employs is what produces positive outcomes in combat. Biddle argues that since 1900 victory has gone to the side that has mastered the 'modern system of tactics'.<sup>62</sup> Biddle says that "the modern system' of tactics, the essence of which is (in the offense) 'cover, concealment, dispersion, small-unit independent maneuver, suppression and combined arms integration' and (in the defense) a similarly complex

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<sup>60</sup> Brian McAllister Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army's Way of War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 11-15.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 235-240.

<sup>62</sup> Stephen Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 35, 44-48.

use of ground, deep positions, reserves and counterattack” is why some forces win and others do not.<sup>63</sup> In doing so he advances the concept that the modern system represents a distinctive military culture and he directly contradicts the theory that mere numerical/logistical and/or technological superiority are the ultimate driving forces of combat effectiveness and victory.

Overall, the prevailing historiography from the end of the Second World War until the mid-1990s was dominated by the view, based on statistical modelling, that German tactical excellence was overcome only by Allied firepower superiority and logistical excess. Other scholars have previously offered challenges to this interpretation, contending that there are other intangible factors to consider. These more recent interpretations have examined how other factors may have influenced performance and have explored combat effectiveness from a broader perspective than the prevailing focus on materiel.

## **1.2. Aims and Methodology.**

The design of this research project is to combine historical analysis of the American and Japanese strategic, operational, tactical, and human dimensions of combat in the Pacific. My work is intended to employ the power of an inter-disciplinary approach that touches on language, customs, philosophies, and psychology to discover new insights and meanings. In taking up this debate, I contend that culture does indeed affect the ways that a nation’s military defines its objectives, methods, and the best use of its available resources and that a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach to the analysis of doctrine, strategy, and tactics will reveal that strategic culture was of equal importance to the outcomes of the Pacific War as the imbalance of power calculus. In Japan’s case, its martial culture contributed to both its initial successes and its eventual failure.

The most important aspect to emerge from the historiography is that no commonly accepted definition of evaluating historical combat effectiveness has yet emerged. Even though

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 35, 44-48.

there is general agreement among both scholars and military professionals that the study of combat effectiveness is a worthy subject for historical analysis there is no consensus on how to define combat effectiveness. Some have claimed that unit combat effectiveness is mathematically represented by the attritional effects of its offensive/defensive firepower, some by the ability of a unit to accomplish its mission to advance or to deny the enemy's advance and to cause casualties greater than its own losses, while others judge by the willingness to engage the enemy.<sup>64</sup> It has been conceded that overall studies so far "have been based on a measurement of casualty effectiveness, but casualty effectiveness is an outcome...we have no means of directly measuring combat effectiveness."<sup>65</sup>

Peter Mansoor has made a powerful philosophical argument when he says: "since war involves the vagaries of human behavior under extreme stress, accurate quantification of combat effectiveness is not possible, but it is possible to examine successful military organizations to determine what makes them work, for in the end, success in war is the only standard by which to judge military organizations." He goes on to offer a forthright definition of combat effectiveness as the "ability of a military organization to achieve its assigned missions with the least expenditure of resources...in the shortest amount of time."<sup>66</sup> This argument that war is more "art" than "science" and that the historical analysis of mission accomplishment is arguably the most straightforward and objective evaluation of a force's effectiveness forms the foundation of this paper's purpose and methodology.

During the Second World War no other Army or Marine division saw more combat in the Pacific than the 7th Infantry Division. The division displayed great *esprit de corps* and it serves as an excellent model of the will to fight at both the unit and individual levels.<sup>67</sup> The 7th Infantry Division's experience in the Pacific provides a unique opportunity for a combat case study of the

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<sup>64</sup> Kirstin Braithwaite, "Effective in battle: conceptualizing soldiers' combat effectiveness", *Defence Studies*. 2018. 1-18; Christopher A. Lawrence, "Measuring Human Factors in Combat: Modern Wars." *War by Numbers: Understanding Conventional Combat*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 49-59.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>66</sup> Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe*, 2-3.

<sup>67</sup> Division level *esprit de corps* is an essential element of combat effectiveness. GEN Eisenhower wrote: "...the Army esprit de corps centers around a division much more than it does any other echelon." (Alfred D. Chandler Jr. and Louis Galambos, eds. *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, Occupation, 1945*, vol. 6, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, entry 107).

Second World War; a tactical-level perspective of combat performance and mission accomplishment over an extended period and across changing battlefield conditions and environments, derived from official unit histories, participants' war diaries, doctrinal manuals, and reference works, including an analysis of the operational environment, the weather, the effects of weapons, unit organization, and the condition of the units involved. While no single unit can exemplify an entire army, by studying the 7<sup>th</sup> Division as it fought from the North Pacific to the Central Pacific, to the Philippines, and finally to Okinawa, it serves as an excellent point of reference to examine both American and Japanese combat effectiveness and their relative strategic/tactical cultures. This approach will allow for the examination of the various parts to better understand the whole.<sup>68</sup>

### **1.2.1. Research Approach/Methodology:**

Operating at times without the support of their usual combat multipliers of close air support, armor, and artillery, the 7<sup>th</sup> Division's successes in battle illustrate the importance of understanding both quantifiable, technical combat force factors and the intangible cultural elements that also influence combat effectiveness, like the will to fight. Recent research has identified many variables that can help us to understand the complex and amorphous nature of the human will to fight. The framework of the simplified model that I will use to measure the will to fight includes political, economic, and military factors such as technology, industrial capacity, political-military relations, and popular support; relevant contexts like government type, national identity, and conflict duration; and mechanisms that influence will to fight such as indoctrination, social pressures, and casualties.<sup>69</sup> Also drawn from recent research are the metrics that populate a simplified model of the disposition to fight from the individual soldier to the society. These factors that influence the soldier, the organization, and the society include, but are not limited to identity, leadership, training, support, doctrine, strategy, motivations, and expectations.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 101.

<sup>69</sup> Ben Connable, Michael J. McNerney, William Marcellino, Aaron Frank, Henry Hargrove, Marek N. Posard, S. Rebecca Zimmerman, Natasha Lander, Jasen J. Castillo, Dan Madden, Ilana Blum, Aaron Frank, Benjamin J. Fernandes, In Hyo Seol, Christopher Paul, Andrew Parasiliti, *National Will to Fight: Why Some States Keep Fighting and Others Don't*, (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-2477-A, 2018), xii.

<sup>70</sup> Ben Connable, Michael J. McNerney, William Marcellino, Aaron Frank, Henry Hargrove, Marek N. Posard, S. Rebecca Zimmerman, Natasha Lander, Jasen J. Castillo, and James Sladden, *Will to Fight: Analyzing, Modeling,*

Despite drawing on concepts that originate outside military history, this thesis uses traditional historical research methods initially, evolving thereafter to offer new interpretations of the relationships between combat effectiveness and strategic culture.<sup>71</sup> Specifically, this thesis will adopt a two-fold approach to the Battles of Attu, Kwajalein, Leyte, and Okinawa to provide both a ‘top-down’ and a ‘bottom-up’ perspective. In the first part, I will briefly examine the strategic and operational levels of each battle particularly command decision-making and its relationship to the strategic culture. I will use a slightly modified version of the U.S. Army War College *Six Steps of Basic Battle Analysis* methodology to address five key areas: doctrine and tactics, logistics, intelligence, training, and battle command.<sup>72</sup> I will then shift the focus to small unit tactics, at the company level and below, because the effects of the terrain and weather (varying from the bitter arctic environment of Attu to the dense and hilly jungle of Leyte and Okinawa) isolated and compartmentalized unit operations at that level. Most importantly, the experiences of the troops who fought at this echelon in such a challenging environment are central to an understanding of the battle from the small unit perspective where tactical culture operates.

This effort will include the cross-referenced analysis of orders, maps, unit journals, after action reports, and photos, with the personal notes of those who served in these battles. Their oral histories and personal narratives, collected immediately after the battle, are invaluable because they add a human dimension to the official accounts and fill in the gaps in the historical record. In examining the personal accounts of American and Japanese veterans I hope to thus better explore the intangible factors that are so essential to understanding culture, such as psychology, identity, and morale and I believe that I will also gain an appreciation of their respective strategic cultures. The contemporary military reports and war diaries will make it possible to understand the infantry fire and maneuver that occurred and to describe the course of the fighting as it progressed. I will use my personal combat experience and military professional analysis of the orders, maps, unit journals, after action reports, and intelligence imagery and

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*and Simulating the Will to Fight of Military Units*, (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-2341-A, 2018), xi, xxi.

<sup>71</sup> Leedy, Paul D., and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod. *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, (Boston: Pearson, 2013), 134-135.

<sup>72</sup> Student Handout #1, U.S. Army War College and U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (Carlisle: USAWC, 2007; Leavenworth: UASACGSC, 1996).

analytical products to research and make judgments on such basic questions as the effectiveness of unit training, what created and sustained combat motivation, and the effects of cultural ideas and values on unit cohesion. This will contribute to analytical context and allow me to derive information and insights about why the events turned out the way they did and what may be relevant to the thesis. Where possible, I will explore cause and effect relationships that affected the outcomes.

Against that backdrop I will then compare the American will to win at any cost even if it meant genocide, to the Japanese will to sacrifice, even if that meant self-extermination, and the related themes of the ideologies represented by *gyokusai*, *bushido*, *the Senjinkun* and *yamato damashii*. I will be asking Applied Questions as part of a synthetic approach that is neither purely practical nor purely conceptual. I intend to evolve beyond a surface analysis of battle events (the measures of performance) to a “deep dive” into the linkages between strategic culture and its influence and consequences (the measures of effectiveness). The overarching intent of this approach is to explore questions like why do some units have greater combat effectiveness? How do strategic culture and the elusive concepts of ‘will to fight’/‘will to sacrifice’, contribute to combat effectiveness? What role does tactical culture play?

Clausewitz wrote that the art of war ‘deals with living and with moral forces’ and therefore the personal experiences of the combatants can offer insights into their motivations.<sup>73</sup> To assist in achieving analytical depth, I will conduct a comparative content analysis of diaries, letters, and interview statements made by the Japanese and American battle participants to discover patterns or biases which explore these questions and themes.<sup>74</sup> Some of the many first-person narratives and diaries (too numerous to list here) that have emerged in the last twenty-five to seventy-five years will be studied to incorporate the observations and beliefs of the ordinary soldiers involved in these battles. Critical discourse analysis can be a lens through which we can gain depth and deepen our understanding of the power of will and the influence of strategic culture.

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<sup>73</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 86.

<sup>74</sup> Leedy, 142-143.

John Shy and Thomas W. Collier, in *The Makers of Modern Strategy* explain that the language that people use in describing the experience and events of war is significant as it can not only express their emotions and opinions about war, but it can also help to shape and explain their actions.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, my discourse analysis will focus on how the differing cultural values, beliefs, and themes may have contributed to the historical outcomes. I will analyze how ideas and emotions such as ‘sacrifice’, ‘determination’, and ‘will’ are internalized, expressed, and shared amongst the participants of the conflict. In this way these characteristics or qualities may be identified and subjectively measured and will build our understanding of how strategic culture and the power of will were constructed and viewed by the soldiers.

Some of these diaries and letters have only recently been discovered or have been previously ignored or undervalued. These records of lived experiences are testimonial documents that represent and explain the cultural, political, and sociological perspectives of the participants. By interweaving the views of both antagonists, synthesized with the official reports and historical accounts the quality of the analysis of both strategic and tactical culture will be deepened. This will also result in a “braided narrative” as David Hackett Fischer has called it that supplements traditional sources with personal perspectives to establish the broader context because to paraphrase Fischer, people make choices, and those choices make history.<sup>76</sup> Relying on historical or personal experience has limitations because it is difficult to objectively evaluate how our own or another’s culture shapes our perceptions and actions.<sup>77</sup>

Nevertheless, despite the danger that cultural biases will adversely influence the analysis, I will use this inductive method to analyze the specific questions and to draw larger conclusions. I will draw on some previously published scholarship, particularly that of James MacPherson, William Darryl Henderson, and Anthony Kellett, in adapting their general analytical

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<sup>75</sup> Shy, John, and Thomas W. Collier. "Revolutionary War." In *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, edited by Paret Peter, by Craig Gordon A. and Gilbert Felix, 817. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986). 31.

<sup>76</sup> David Hackett Fischer first advanced the construct of the "braided narrative" in *Albion's Seed*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>77</sup> See John Keegan, *History of Warfare* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 22-23. “We all find it difficult to stand far enough outside our own culture to perceive how it makes us, as individuals, what we are.”

methodology of combining individual, organizational and social factors to create groupings of motivators to study the data and identify trends.<sup>78</sup>

The sources will also be analyzed to evaluate their currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose, and to assess their quality with respect to their content, bias, and intent. As with any translation of a foreign language, care will be taken to understand the problematic nature of the translation regarding discourse analysis since cultural nuance and linguistic meaning may be lost or misunderstood. It is understood that language is more than just a tool for communication. It expresses how a culture views and expresses the realities of the world. For example, Western languages are heavily influenced by Judeo-Christian values and Aristotelian logic. The Japanese language reflects the influence of Shinto and Buddhism, and its form and content are further influenced by its use of ideographic symbols to express thought.<sup>79</sup>

No theory of strategic culture is without flaws, but the use of the concept as an interpretive lens to explain historical events remains compelling. All previous attempts to determine the effect of culture on strategic behavior suffered from the methodological shortcoming of treating strategic culture as an independent variable. This is flawed because culture does not act of its own accord. It may influence human behavior but it does not motivate it.<sup>80</sup> Culture cannot cause anything to happen, however, if one knows the culture of a society, one can understand much about the possibilities, probabilities, and variations of action within that society.<sup>81</sup> A culture-based analysis of historical events offers richer sources of explanation for an adversary's behaviors if one can ascertain how cultural values, symbols, and beliefs influence the decision-making process.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> James MacPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 12. William Darryl Henderson, *Cohesion: The Human Element in Combat*, (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 1985), 6, 9-11.

<sup>79</sup> Paul S. Dull, *A Battle History of the Imperial Japanese Navy (1941-1945)* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press 1978), xiv.

<sup>80</sup> Forrest E. Morgan, *Compellence and the Strategic Culture of Imperial Japan: Implications for Coercive Diplomacy in the Twenty-First Century*, (Westport and London: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 8.

<sup>81</sup> Marion J. Levy, Jr., *The Structure of Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1952), 147-148.

<sup>82</sup> Morgan, 8-9.



To examine the strategic culture of the American and Japanese forces in the Pacific War, I will also consider the following overarching elements: Ideas, Symbols, Values, and Behaviors. Within a given culture, the symbolic experiences, ritual practices, patterns of behavior, and cultural meanings are the cultural products that influence and provide the resources for the construction of strategies of action. Culture influences strategies and tactics by providing values, habits, skills, and ideologies towards which actions are oriented.<sup>83</sup> I will draw from the deductive analytical framework developed by Forrest Morgan which develops a conceptual model of strategic culture by linking the fundamental elements of strategic decision-making – perception, preference, and process – to the cultural factors of symbols, values, and behaviors.<sup>84</sup> A more detailed discussion of the theories of strategic culture will be provided in Chapter Two.

Finally, I will employ text boxes to strengthen the analytical meta-narrative without interfering with main body of the text. I will compare Japanese and American leadership, discipline, unit cohesion, operations, logistics, fire support, intelligence, and the strengths and weaknesses of their respective approaches to doctrine, organization, and training. This is intended to provide width, depth, and context by analysis of related military factors like the supply of food, clean, dry clothing, mail from home, and the effectiveness of propaganda, for their impact on morale and will to fight.<sup>85</sup> This holistic approach to an extraordinarily complex subject will provide a deeper understanding of the interplay of force and firepower; maneuver and mass; passion and faith, and what these factors might reveal about the demands of future war.

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<sup>83</sup> Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies." *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 2 (1986): 273-86.

<sup>84</sup> Morgan, 10.

<sup>85</sup> Michael Howard, "The Use and Abuse of Military History"; Royal United Services Institution, *Journal*, Vol. 107, Issue 625, 1962, based on a lecture by Professor Sir Michael Howard to the Royal United Service Institute on 18 October 1961 and published in their journal, No. 107 in February 1962, pp. 4-8.; reprinted in *Parameters*, *Journal of the US Army War College*, Vol XI, No. 1, pp. 9-14.

### 1.3. Sources.

This thesis draws upon a wide variety of primary and secondary sources. The extensive official Army, Navy, and Air Force histories published after the war, beginning with *The United States Army in World War II Series*, are all now available online. These official campaign and battle studies, after-action reviews, and the original operational plans, orders, and directives were accessed at the National Archives, College Park, Maryland, the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center at the U.S. Army War College, the Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library at the U.S. Army Command and Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and the Donovan Library at the U.S. Army Maneuver Center of Excellence, Fort Benning, Georgia. These and other archives have yielded many online division and regimental histories, papers, memoirs, diaries, and related articles.

In 1992 I obtained copies of the primary source documents relating to the the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division's premiere Second World War combat operation, the Battle of Attu. This declassified archive contained the original unit after action reports, the division's Intelligence Summary and Enemy Prisoner of War Interrogation reports including the translation of a captured diary of a Japanese officer who died in the battle, Dr. Tatsuguchi Nobuo, and the eyewitness combat accounts of several U.S. soldiers who had been wounded in the battle. I continued to build upon this foundation with other qualitative archival evidence. Subsequently, I have also collected all the official operations orders for the 7<sup>th</sup> Division's Second World War battles, the battalion and regimental daily diaries, the official message records, after action reports, and other eyewitness accounts in the form of post battle interviews, and participant diaries and letters.

An example of the detailed evidence available are the entire collection of the Unit Journals of the American battalions that took part in the Attu invasion obtained from the Fort Benning archives. These journals record all the official message traffic sent by radio and/or in paper form to and from the various commanders, headquarters, and command posts. Numbering some 800 pages, these journals depict the moment-by-moment and day-by-day conduct of the battle, providing the trained and experienced researcher great insights into operations, logistics, intelligence, and most importantly leadership.

Among the other materials for analysis include interviews with American commanders and soldiers, which were conducted immediately after the battles. Using multiple participant interviews and perspectives of the same action and/or time frame I will cross check the accuracy and reduce possible bias. As an example of these sources, *The Capture Of Attu: As Told By The Men Who Fought There* written by Sewell Tyng, includes “Personal Narratives” compiled immediately after the fight by Lieutenant Robert J. Mitchell, an infantry officer who served in the 7th Infantry Division during the Battle of Attu. He conducted 66 interviews, capturing the reminiscences of 75 men, and arranged them in a chronological narrative that begins with the initial beach landings and continues through to the end of the battle. His narrative has contributions from the infantry, artillery, and medical soldiers involved in the fight and thus gives us a cross section of the actions and perspectives of the combined arms team.

On the Japanese side there are many challenges involved in achieving detailed analysis because of the loss of so much of the primary source data. Because almost every battle fought in the Pacific War was fought to annihilation, the corresponding Japanese sources are inevitably more atomized and fragmentary. There are three main categories of Imperial Japanese military documents. First, there are those that were captured by the Allies during combat operations. These provide a very incomplete mosaic of Japanese military history because most documents were destroyed either accidentally by the Americans or deliberately by the Japanese and because Japanese staff officers were notoriously poor at creating and preserving detailed records of operational activities the surviving documents are often unhelpful.<sup>86</sup> Sifting through the remaining post-battle fragments usually yielded little with the notable exception of the capture of the records of the 31st Army on Saipan, which had not suffered as much degradation. The second major source for documents were the orders and directives issued by the Army Section of the Imperial General Headquarters which were the result of a post-war occupation effort to reconstruct the record of Japan’s war activities by combining the surviving documents with the recollections of Japanese officers who had participated in the operations. The result was a collection of 185 monographs that dealt with specific operations or campaigns. These Japanese

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<sup>86</sup> Alvin D. Coox, *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985). This has been noted by Coox and other scholars like Edward Drea who have extensively researched and translated Japanese archives.

Monographs, the various interrogations, and the surviving plans, orders, and directives are available from the U.S. Army's Office of the Chief of Military History. Several of the most interesting studies were also published in 1980 in the fifteen volume *War in Asia and the Pacific* series. I will be using these translated documents primarily rather than undertaking my own translation.

The translated interrogations of Japanese prisoners of war exist as military documents of a sort. These and captured Japanese personal war diaries can also be considered as a third source of Imperial Japanese Army soldiers' perspectives. One of the most notable among these is the Tatsuguchi diary from the battle of Attu. The lack of many Japanese survivors and the destruction of most of the documentary evidence may thus limit our insights.

#### **1.4. *Dramatis Personae.***

When human voices are overlaid onto current scholarship we may find links between perceptions, decisions, and actions and gain new understanding of war through the explanatory power of culture. Here are brief biographical sketches of some of the soldiers who we will meet:

Ralph Eyde provides an insightful personal perspective to these events in the collection of the hand-written letters of the Eyde family of Rockford, Illinois. This collection, only recently discovered in a storage facility in Arizona, was written by three brothers who served in the war; one in the Marine Corps, one in the Army Air Force, and Ralph Eyde who fought on Attu and Kwajalein with the 7th Infantry Division. Through their letters to their family and each other they captured the horrors of combat across four years of war and beyond.<sup>87</sup>

Tatsuguchi Nobuo (Paul) was an American-educated Japanese doctor who served in the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) in the Second World War and was subsequently killed during the Battle of Attu. In his diary, which was captured by the 7th Infantry Division at the end of the

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<sup>87</sup> Ralph Eyde, "*Brothers in Arms: Letters from War*", The Washington Post, Dan Lamothe, Dec. 6, 2017, accessed January 2018. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/podcasts/letters-from-war/>

battle, he carefully recorded his observations and experiences throughout the battle. He documents the preparations for the Japanese counterattack, which was the most notorious “banzai charge” executed by Japanese troops during the war.<sup>88</sup>

Dean E. Galles was commissioned an officer in the U.S. Army in June 1941, and served in the 7th Division, 32nd Infantry Regiment. He was awarded the Silver Star, the nation’s third highest honour; two Bronze Stars, one for valour; three Purple Hearts for wounds in battle and the Combat Infantry Badge for his service on Attu, Kwajalein, the Philippines, and Okinawa.<sup>89</sup>

Albert V. Hartl was a reserve officer who rose from the rank of lieutenant to colonel and command at both Battalion and Regimental levels. He was twice awarded the Silver Star, and three Bronze Stars in actions from Attu to Okinawa.<sup>90</sup>

Wayne C. Zimmerman graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1919. He retired as a U.S. Army Major General. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism on Attu Island while commanding a regiment.<sup>91</sup>

Francis T. Pachler was also a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy who retired as a Major General. He rose from lieutenant to colonel in the 7<sup>th</sup> Division and served successively as a company, battalion, and regimental commander at Attu, Kwajalein, Leyte, and Okinawa.<sup>92</sup>

Dick Laird was a company first sergeant who fought on Attu, Kwajalein, Leyte, and Okinawa. He was awarded the Silver Star and Bronze Star Medal but suffered nightmares for

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<sup>88</sup> Mark Obmascik, *The Storm on Our Shores: One Island, Two Soldiers, and the Forgotten Battle of World War II*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2019), 5, 10, 36.

<sup>89</sup> Dean E. Galles Collection, (AFC/2001/001/88536), interviewed by Christine Seifert, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress.

<sup>90</sup> Albert V. Hartl, “Hartl still remembered as United States war hero”, Tom Hintgen Jul 25, 2011 [https://www.fergusfallsjournal.com/opinion/columnists/hartl-still-remembered-as-united-states-war-hero/article\\_3d80da72-5037-534c-b920-620297c48591.html/?utm\\_medium=internal&utm\\_source=readerShare&utm\\_campaign=bButton](https://www.fergusfallsjournal.com/opinion/columnists/hartl-still-remembered-as-united-states-war-hero/article_3d80da72-5037-534c-b920-620297c48591.html/?utm_medium=internal&utm_source=readerShare&utm_campaign=bButton)

<sup>91</sup> General Orders Number 31: Headquarters, U.S. Army Troops, APO 726 (Attu Landing Force), 1943. Citation to accompany the Award of the Distinguished Service Cross to Lieutenant Colonel Wayne C. Zimmerman.

<sup>92</sup> The Hourglass Newsletter, December 1990, Special Announcement: Major General Francis Pachler, [https://www.7ida.us/documents/Hourglass%20NL%27s/HG\\_1990.pdf](https://www.7ida.us/documents/Hourglass%20NL%27s/HG_1990.pdf)

years after the war, thinking that that he had killed Paul Tatsuguchi on Attu, “a guy that should not have been there.”<sup>93</sup>

Yahara Hiromichi was a colonel in the IJA, who espoused the tactics of attrition rather than the usual IJA hand-to-hand frontal attack. As chief planner for the *32d Army* staff on Okinawa he was the architect of their defensive plan.<sup>94</sup>

## 1.5. Scope and Structure.

Overall, the thesis examines the performance of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division during four key battles and discusses the factors that influence combat effectiveness and strategic culture. The organizing principle includes a critical analysis of each of the main engagements and the themes under discussion, followed by a concluding chapter linking back to the wider questions and summarizing the findings.

Chapter Two discusses Strategic and Tactical Culture and their influence on Combat Effectiveness. It also frames the hybrid approach to tactics and the warrior ethos.

Chapter Three considers the battle of Attu, which was the 7<sup>th</sup> Division’s first experience of combat and how effective training, and leadership imbued the unit with the will to fight under such adverse conditions. This action laid the foundation for the tactical culture that came to characterize the division throughout the rest of the war. I discuss the Japanese concept of *Gyokusai*, or collective suicide which came to characterize Japanese tactical culture.

Chapter Four considers the battle for Kwajalein. Here the division’s competence, leadership, cohesion, esprit de corps and will to fight were amply displayed. Its skilful

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<sup>93</sup> Mark Obmascik, *The Storm on Our Shores: One Island, Two Soldiers, and the Forgotten Battle of World War II*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2019), 137-138.

<sup>94</sup> Yahara, Hiromichi, *The Battle for Okinawa*, translated by Roger Pineau and Uehara Masatoshi, with an introduction and commentary by Frank B. Gibney, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1995), 49.

application of fire support in conjunction with tactical maneuver in constricted terrain was exemplary. I discuss the effect of the *samurai* legacy and the modern myth of *Bushido* on Japanese strategic and tactical culture.

Chapters Five and Six focus respectively on the battles of Leyte and Okinawa, which demonstrated the division's enduring identity as a fighting unit with excellent leadership and an indomitable will to win. In these battles the division demonstrated the mastery of doctrine and tactics that enabled it to adapt to new operational environments and new enemy tactics quickly and effectively. I also discuss the influence of the *Senjinkun*, "The Imperial Rescript Granted to Soldiers and Sailors" on Japanese strategic culture and how *Yamato damashii* (or *gokoro*), the "Japanese spirit/heart/mind" came to affect Japanese strategy and tactics.

Chapter Seven concludes by discussing the nexus of strategic culture, combat effectiveness, and the will to sacrifice versus the will to win.

## Chapter Two: Strategic Culture and the Will to Win in the Pacific War.

### 2.1. Strategy, Tactics, and Doctrine.

Before launching into a discussion of strategic culture and the importance of the human factor of the will to win we must first define and describe the overarching framework of the field. When referring to a general plan of action, a concept, or an organizational “vision” many people use the term strategy to describe what is no more than an outline of the current idea(s) that will become future actions. This is inappropriate because it fails to recognize the complexity of true strategy and strategic thinking.<sup>95</sup> This section will provide an examination of strategic theory and its applicability and relationship to strategic culture.

Military theorists have categorized warfare into three broad levels: strategic, operational, and tactical. These divisions were first developed during the Napoleonic Wars and were further refined during the American Civil War and the Franco-Prussian War. Although many use these terms, few really understand their distinct meanings and proper applications. They will have an important influence on the rest of the study therefore it is essential to recognize that there are differences between tactics and strategy.

Carl von Clausewitz distinguished the levels by their relationships to one another in time, space, and mass. He developed the traditional view that tactics concerned what happened on the battlefield while strategy involved the events that led to and from the battlefield.<sup>96</sup> Clausewitz further concluded that tactical victories were meaningless if they were not the means to obtain a political end that would result in peace.<sup>97</sup> He theorized a link (*Verbindung*) between strategy and tactics along a continuum of effort for the purposes of achieving political objectives.<sup>98</sup> The proper tactical objective to be attained could only be determined by a study of national strategy.

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<sup>95</sup> Harry R. Yarger, “*Strategic Theory For the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Little Book on Big Strategy*”, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, February 2006, v.

<sup>96</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 128.

<sup>97</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 142-143.

<sup>98</sup> Michael Howard, Clausewitz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986),16; Clausewitz, *On War*, 127-132.



"To bring a war, or any one of its campaigns to a successful close requires a thorough grasp of national policy. On that level strategy and policy coalesce."<sup>99</sup>

It is thus a premise that political purposes guide strategic objectives to provide the purpose, focus, and justification for strategic and tactical actions.<sup>100</sup> It has been said that “strategy is the art of the possible” but it is difficult to know what really is possible.<sup>101</sup> It is nevertheless assumed that the future can be studied if not predicted, and that current choices can influence the future environment. Strategists study the environment and develop a strategy that identifies possibilities and then provides direction for future action.<sup>102</sup> In seeking to create both synergy and symmetry of the political, economic, and military power available, strategy follows a linear process considering objectives (ends), ways (concepts), and means (resources), expressing a calculated and logical relationship between the concepts, capabilities, and resources that will create desired outcomes with acceptable levels of risk.

Tactics and strategy both consider ends, ways, and means as courses of action are developed, and they both are bounded by the criteria of suitability, feasibility, and acceptability; however, they differ in their scope, assumptions, and premises.<sup>103</sup> Strategy is constrained by the environment within which it operates, bounded and defined by the physical geography, the international and domestic political system, and by the cultures and beliefs of the many actors who live in the environment. This environment is a complex interactive system, where institutions, organizations, and differing beliefs and worldviews challenge, contradict, and collide. Finally, as an inherently human process, strategy is influenced by human passions, values, and cultural perceptions.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 111. "In the highest realms of strategy . . . there is little or no difference between strategy, policy and statesmanship." Ibid., 178. Winston Churchill reaffirms this point: "The distinction between politics and strategy, diminishes as the point of view is raised. At the Summit true politics and strategy are one." Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis 1915* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), 6.

<sup>100</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard, and Peter Paret, eds., and trans., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 87, 141.

<sup>101</sup> Williamson Murray and Mark Grimsley, "Introduction: On Strategy," *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994; 1997), 22.

<sup>102</sup> Yarger, 3,5.

<sup>103</sup> Arthur F. Lykke, Jr., "Toward an Understanding of Military Strategy," chap. in *Military Strategy: Theory and Application*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Department of National Security and Strategy, U.S. Army War College, 1989), 3-8.

<sup>104</sup> Murray and Grimsley, *The Making of Strategy*, 1, 13; Clausewitz, *On War*, 86, 89.

As modern military theory evolved the operational level was seen as a link between the strategic and tactical levels of war designed to achieve the optimal mix of ends, ways, and means. The operational level of war resides between the vertical hierarchy of strategy and tactics and has been attributed to Helmuth von Moltke, as demonstrated by the “operational art” that he employed in leading Prussian forces in the 1860s and 1870s.<sup>105</sup> In actual practice these three levels of war tend to be blurred, each involving planning, analysis, preparation, and execution functions.

Throughout the twentieth century these concepts matured into a paradigm that depicts national strategy along a horizontal plane of political, economic, psychological, and military elements and military strategy in a vertical continuum of strategic, operational, and tactical levels. In this continuum, military strategy occupies the top tier of a hierarchical structure that includes tactics and operations. They are distinguished from one another by differing functional, temporal, and geographic aspects. Functionally and temporally, tactics is the domain of battles, which can range from a firefight between two platoons or involve a battle between two corps and is measured in minutes, days, or weeks. Operational art encompasses the spectrum of the campaign, a series of battles linked together in task and purpose, taking place over a longer period. Strategy occupies the domain of conflict between nations and other international actors with an even greater time horizon. Tactics plays out on a narrow geography, operations occur on a broader regional playing field and strategy can be theater-wide, intercontinental, or global.<sup>106</sup> This then represents the modern continuum of strategy to tactics.

I will turn now to examining the relationship between doctrine, strategy, and tactics. Doctrine is essential to military organizations both as the method whereby timeless principles of combat and lessons learned are disseminated to the force as well as the expression of how that force conceptualizes warfare. Doctrine is both a process and a method that encompasses organizing, manning, equipping, modernizing, training, deploying, and employing the force.

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<sup>105</sup> Michael D. Krause, "Moltke and the Origins of the Operational Art," in *Military Review*. Vol lxx, No 9, September 1990, 28-44; and Douglas A. MacGregor, "Future Battle: The Merging Levels of War," in *Parameters*, Vol. xxii, No 4, Winter 1992-93, 33-47.

<sup>106</sup> Gregory D. Foster, "A Conceptual Foundation for a Theory of Strategy," *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 1990, 43, 56-56; Lykke, 38.

Doctrine reflects a military institutions' preparations for combat and represents its understanding of the strategic and tactical realities that it faces.<sup>107</sup> Finally, doctrine represents a military's institutional belief system about its duties, roles, and relationships within society. This belief system determines the way the military fights, the relationship it has with the state and society, and its military culture. These are the products of the broader cultural, political, social, and environmental domains in which this belief system and military culture developed. Military doctrinal ontology follows a hierarchy of technical manuals, tactical manuals, operational treatises, and strategic policies. The full spectrum of strategic and operational concepts is delineated in doctrine. Doctrine is thus a tangible expression of strategic and tactical culture.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, there is a relationship to be explored between doctrine, strategic culture, and tactical culture.

## 2.2. The Cultural Roots of Warfare.

Scholars have taken a cultural approach to the interpretation of military history for as long as history has been studied. In his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides describes the political and cultural differences between the warring city-states as a way of explaining their relative behaviors.<sup>109</sup> In 1937 Alfred Vagts began to explore the cultural roots of warfare in his *A History of Militarism*.<sup>110</sup> The concept that there are national "ways of war" was further advanced in the early twentieth century by military theorists like Julian Corbett.<sup>111</sup> He made a distinction between the continental national strategy of Germany and the maritime national strategy of Great Britain that was based on the differing geographic influences on the respective national

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<sup>107</sup> Aaron P. Jackson, "The Roots of Military Doctrine: Change and Continuity in Understanding the Practice of Warfare", Combat Studies Institute Press, US Army Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2013, 3.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 6, 11.

<sup>109</sup> Laurie M. Johnson Bagby, "The Use and Abuse of Thucydides in International Relations," *International Organization*, vol. 48, no. 1, Winter 1994: 133. Rashed Uz Zaman, "Strategic Culture: A Cultural Understanding of War," *Comparative Strategy*, February 10, 2009: 70-72.

<sup>110</sup> Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism* (New York: Scribners & Sons, 1937; rev. ed. 1959).

<sup>111</sup> There have subsequently been many treatments on national ways of war. See Antulio Etchevarria II, *Toward an American Way of War* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, 2003); Robert M. Citino, *The German Way of War: From the Thirty Years' War to the Third Reich* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005); Victor Davis Hanson, *The Western Way of War: Infantry in Battle in Classical Greece*, 2d ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Richard M. Harrison, *The Russian Way of War: Operational Art, 1904-1940* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001).

characters, the Germans being influenced by their central European location to focus on land warfare and the British as an island nation focusing on sea power.<sup>112</sup> This argument was refined by Basil H. Liddell Hart when he advocated the “indirect approach” as the proper, traditional “British Way in Warfare”; avoiding large-scale land warfare and leveraging sea power for economic gain.<sup>113</sup>

However, it can be exceedingly difficult to define and understand strategic culture. Any definition of culture is liable to suffer from vague boundaries owing to the complexity involved with deciding what elements to include and what to exclude.<sup>114</sup> The primary difference rests on whether to include human behavior within the definition or whether to exclude it.<sup>115</sup> Thus, scholars do not agree on how to define strategic culture or on a precise methodology to study it. There is also a great deal of confusion over what strategic culture can explain, how it is supposed to explain it, and how much it will explain.<sup>116</sup> Nevertheless, some analysts have said that while culture “may be vague... it is not mysterious,” and that it is possible to identify its fundamental characteristics.<sup>117</sup>

Clifford Geertz defined culture as “an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life.”<sup>118</sup> This has provided a useful model to historians to use in understanding how patterns of meanings could lead to distinct behaviors.<sup>119</sup> One prominent theory on strategic culture was first developed during the Second World War and then was further defined during the Cold War by

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<sup>112</sup> Thomas Mahnken, “United States Strategic Culture,” Defense Threat Reduction Agency Advanced Systems and Concepts Office, November 13, 2006, 1; See also: Julian S. Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* (London: Longmans Green and Co., 1911), 38.

<sup>113</sup> Liddell Hart, *The British Way in Warfare* (London: Faber & Faber Limited, 1932), pp. 25–38; and Lawrence Sondhaus, *Strategic Culture and Ways of War* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), p. 1.

<sup>114</sup> Valerie M. Hudson, “Culture and Foreign Policy: Developing a Research Agenda,” in Valerie M. Hudson (ed.), *Culture and Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO, and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997), p. 2.

<sup>115</sup> Colin S. Gray, *Out of the Wilderness: Prime-time for Strategic Culture*, National Institute for Public Policy, United States Nuclear Strategy Forum, National Institute Press, October 2006, iii.

<sup>116</sup> Alastair Iain Johnston, “Thinking About Strategic Culture” *International Security*, vol. 19.4, Spring 1995: 50.

<sup>117</sup> Forrest E. Morgan, *Compellence and the Strategic Culture of Imperial Japan: Implications for Coercive Diplomacy in the Twenty-First Century* (Westport and London: Praeger, 2003), pp. 19–20.

<sup>118</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 33.

<sup>119</sup> Jeffrey S. Lantis, “Strategic Culture: From Clausewitz to Constructivism,” *Strategic Insights*, vol. IV, no. 10, October 2005, 2, 5.

sociologists and anthropologists. It posited that distinctive cultural patterns could be detected and that they shaped both individual personalities and the society. This school produced a wide range of “national character studies” of both Germany and Japan. Particularly revelatory were the insights into the contradictory national character of Japan and the duality of Japanese culture.<sup>120</sup> These studies explored national culture in terms of its language, religion, and customs as a way of finding connections between a nation’s character or culture and its patterns of behavior and actions. They revealed links between Japan’s strategic choices and their important underlying cultural factors.<sup>121</sup>

Drawing on the work of Ruth Benedict and others, the current concept of strategic culture is a direct descendant of political culture and of the idea that a particular national character or style can be discerned which drives strategic thought and action.<sup>122</sup> It seems obvious that culture clearly influenced the outcomes of the Second World War in part by conditioning American and Japanese perceptions, strategic preferences, and governmental processes. Despite criticisms about the potential for stereotyping and the reification of culture other anthropologists and sociologists have continued with this approach to strategic culture.

### **2.3. From Strategy to Strategic Culture.**

The analytic construct of strategic culture emerged during the Cold War to assess the differences American and Soviet nuclear weapons strategy and arms control negotiations. Theories arose that were based on the belief that culture influences the ways that nation states view and respond to the strategic environment.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), 1,2, 18-19, 49.

<sup>121</sup> Jeffrey S. Lantis, “Strategic Culture: From Clausewitz to Constructivism”, Comparative Strategic Cultures Curriculum, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, 31 October 2006, 3.

<sup>122</sup> Colin S. Gray, “Comparative Strategic Culture,” *Parameters*, vol. 14, no. 4, Winter 1984: 27.

<sup>123</sup> Ken Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers Inc., 1979), 5.

The genesis of this approach was the concern among analysts and policymakers that the “mirror-imaging” of Western values and ideas were not allowed to creep into assessments of Soviet strategies and intentions.<sup>124</sup> Jack Snyder, the man who coined the term strategic culture, was attempting to answer the question, "Can cultural analysis tell us anything significant about strategic outcomes?". Snyder described it as a “body of attitudes and beliefs that guides...thoughts on strategic questions and influences the way strategic issues are formulated...”. He believed that over time certain ideas, beliefs, historical legacies, and attitudes about military power and the use of force, were socialized until they, "achieve[d] a state of semi-permanence."<sup>125</sup> Another pioneer in the field of using strategic culture to analyze an opponent was Colin Gray who asserted that the differences in strategic cultures stemmed from differences in history and geography, providing the background to strategy and policy choices and were strategic predispositions that were always influential on decision-making, and international behaviors.<sup>126</sup> He felt that strategic culture represents a history of ideas; a "nation's way of war flows from its geography and society and reflects its competitive advantage. It represents an approach that a given state has found successful in the past."<sup>127</sup> These scholars led a methodological approach that was descriptive of broad historical patterns of strategic behavior that were attributed to cultural causes. It suffered from the tendency to stereotype behaviors and from the expectation that an adversary would always behave in the same way.

A more analytical approach was subsequently offered that used narrower definitions of what was meant by culture and that sought more rigorous testing methods. One example of this approach was that of Elizabeth Kier, who contended that organizational culture rather than shared cultural values, has a greater effect on strategic behavior due to the bias in the decision-making process that resulted from the way that the organization was structured.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Ken Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers Inc., 1979), 5.

<sup>125</sup> Jack Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Options* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1977), pp. 6-9.

<sup>126</sup> Colin Gray, "National Style in Strategy, *International Security* (Fall 1981); "Out of the Wilderness: Prime Time for Strategic Culture," paper prepared for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Advanced Systems and Concepts Office's Comparative Strategic Cultures Curriculum (2006), 8-14.

<sup>127</sup> C. Gray, *Modern Strategy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 138.

<sup>128</sup> Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine Between the Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 7.

There is a third generation of work on strategic culture, with Alastair Iain Johnston's, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* often being cited as the best example of this methodological approach. Johnston investigated the character of Chinese strategic culture and possible causal links to Chinese military actions during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644 CE) and concluded that strategic culture exists as an "ideational milieu that limits behavioral choices," and from which "one could derive specific predictions about strategic choice."<sup>129</sup> He defined strategic culture as "an integrated system of symbols (i.e. argumentation structures, languages, analogies, metaphors, etc.) that acts to establish pervasive and long lasting grand strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the strategic preferences seem uniquely realistic and efficacious."<sup>130</sup> Rather than defining strategic culture as a pattern of behavior, Johnston described it as the pervasive and long-lasting attitudes exhibited by a nation and that culture shapes behavior but does not cause it.<sup>131</sup>

Cultural interpretations of history and the concept of strategic culture experienced a revitalization with the rise of constructivism in the 1990s. This concept proposes that shared norms and identities shape behavior in ways that contradict other paradigms. With the argument that "national identities are social-structural phenomena" the constructivist paradigm offers an approach that shows connections between the formation of national identity and national traditions, culture, and history.<sup>132</sup> The foundations of these beliefs and values rest on shared language and common values. This social identity shapes both short term and long-term strategic culture and resulting national strategic actions.<sup>133</sup>

Most scholars nevertheless agree that all strategy unfolds within a cultural context and that strategic culture is a social construct that includes key assumptions, preferred methods of

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<sup>129</sup> Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995): 1,7-8, 36.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-48.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-22.

<sup>132</sup> Jacques E.C. Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.17; See also Stephen Saideman, "Thinking Theoretically about Identity and Foreign Policy," in Shibley Telhami and Michael Barnett, eds., *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 169-170.

<sup>133</sup> Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations," *International Security* 23, no.1 (Summer 1998), p.914; Valerie M. Hudson, ed. *Culture and Foreign Policy* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1997): 28-29.

operation, traditions, and habits of thinking and behavior.<sup>134</sup> Strategic culture is developed through an internal process wherein significant issues concerning doctrine, strategy, and operational art are debated, refined, and eventually executed.<sup>135</sup> This conceptualization of a national way of war is influenced by the existing perception of national martial traditions, the interpretation of lessons learned from recent military conflicts, an understanding of current threats, and a vision of future conflicts.<sup>136</sup> This vision of the future combat environment is often assumed to be consistent and predictable, and in accordance with national hopes, plans, and preconceived ideas.<sup>137</sup> Additionally, developing a successful strategic culture requires a thorough analysis and understanding of anthropology and sociology in order for the belligerents to approach these clashes of culture with confidence in their cultural supremacy and therefore in their military culture.<sup>138</sup> Once established, a strategic culture tends to remain fixed unless forced to change by “dramatic events or traumatic experiences” that invalidate these core values and beliefs.<sup>139</sup>

The historiography of strategic culture has moved from describing the history of ideas on warfare to an amorphous cultural analysis and thus the definitions of national ways of war have expanded from military patterns to customs and practices, and then to beliefs.<sup>140</sup> Some scholars feel that strategic culture is better defined as belief in the efficacy of experience and experience-based intuition, taken together with improvisation, material strength, and technology. Others feel that a way of war is merely a set of practices, rather than a history of ideas. Thus, the cultural approach to interpreting military history and in particular, the debate over strategic culture has experienced a dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, yet the question remains unresolved.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> C. Gray, *Modern Strategy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 138 and A. Johnson, ‘Thinking About Strategic Culture’ in *International Security*, 19 (4) 1995, 28.

<sup>135</sup> Richard H. Shultz, *Strategic Culture and Strategic Studies: An Alternative Framework for Assessing al-Qaeda and the Global Jihad Movement*, JSOU Report 12-4, 3, The JSOU Press, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida 2012.

<sup>136</sup> Linn, *The Echo of Battle*, 4.

<sup>137</sup> John R. Galvin, “Uncomfortable Wars: Toward a New Paradigm,” *Parameters* 16 (Winter 1986): 2.

<sup>138</sup> Bernard Brodie, *War and Politics*, (New York: Pearson, 1973), 332. “good strategy presumes good anthropology and sociology. Some of the greatest military blunders of all time have resulted from juvenile evaluations in this department.”

<sup>139</sup> Jeffrey S. Lantis, “Strategic Culture and National Security Policy,” *International Studies Review* (No. 3, 2003), 11.

<sup>140</sup> Antulio J. Etchevarria II, *Reconsidering the American Way of War: U.S. Military Practice from the Revolution to Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2014), 27.

<sup>141</sup> A. Johnson, ‘Thinking About Strategic Culture’ in *International Security*, 19 (4) 1995, 46-48; Etchevarria, 27.



Taking a cultural approach to the history of war runs the risk of criticism for its seeming lack of theoretical and methodological rigor or for the possibility of reductionism and determinism that lurk in a cultural account of war. It has been said that current theoretical approaches should include the scope and content, the objects under analysis, and the historical circumstances that existed to identify the relationship between strategic culture and its historical effects. The approaches that have been used have been unable to offer a convincing research design because it is not clear how strong a deterministic effect strategic culture has on behavior and because of the wide range of variables that can contribute to or compete with it.<sup>142</sup> I will attempt to gauge this through discourse analysis of a range of different sources.

For the purposes of this study, I will use Miriam Becker's definition of strategic culture: "a nation's traditions, values, attitudes, patterns of behavior, habits, symbols, achievements, and particular ways of adapting to the environment and solving problems with respect to the threat or use of force."<sup>143</sup> I find this definition appealingly succinct and concise. Its relative simplicity offers a good foundation for exploration of the meaning and importance of many of the relevant factors.

A specific premise that I will follow in this case study is that strategic culture exists as an integrated system of shared symbols, values, behaviors, and traditions that works through commonly understood decision-making processes that are shaped or influenced by societal perceptions and preferences, which thereby inform and influence how decision-makers envision and respond to the strategic environment.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995): 1.

<sup>143</sup> Miriam D. Becker, "Strategic Culture and Missile Ballistic Defense," *Air and Space Power Journal* (Special Edition, 1994). A postulate to my study is that previous country-specific historical studies have established that a unique and specific strategic culture does exist for both Japan and the U.S.

<sup>144</sup> Forrest E. Morgan, *Compellence and the Strategic Culture of Imperial Japan: Implications for Coercive Diplomacy in the Twenty-First Century*, (Westport and London: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 28.

## 2.4. From Strategic Culture to Tactical Culture.

There is a joke about the national characteristics of the adversaries in the Second World War. I have not researched its provenance, but I use it to introduce the concept of “tactical culture”. It goes roughly as follows: If you encounter a unit you can't identify, fire a shot above their heads so it won't hit anyone. If they respond to with precise rifle shots, they're British. If they respond with a torrent of machine gun fire, they're German. If they retreat, they're French. If they switch to your side, they're Italian. If they shoot back but apologize, they're Canadians. If nothing happens for five minutes and then your position is suddenly and absolutely obliterated by field artillery and air strikes, they're American.<sup>145</sup>

In a non-serious way this describes the popular perceptions of each nations' military. I think that it also represents the concept of “tactical culture”. Just as there is an epistemological or ontological hierarchy that extends from strategy to tactics, I believe that there is a supporting concept to strategic culture which is that of tactical culture which really represents the place where military doctrine and military organizational culture combine. I propose this term as a foil to strategic culture to explain the interplay between the echelons.

There is a relationship between a nation's “way of war” and its “way of warfare”.<sup>146</sup> Strategic culture (the way of war) is implemented through a tactical culture (the way of warfare) that expresses prevailing military attitudes and beliefs through actions taken on the battlefield. There is an intersectionality between tactical culture and military organizational culture and the way that they define and shape how an organization functions as expressed through the “habitual practices, default programs, hidden assumptions, and unreflected cognitive frames” that support its actions.<sup>147</sup> Many studies of cultural, behavioral, and identity science have shown how culture can influence individual and organizational performance.<sup>148</sup> Every unit; every squad, platoon,

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<sup>145</sup> A corollary: "When the Germans shoot, the British duck. When the British shoot, the Germans duck. When the Americans shoot, everybody ducks."

<sup>146</sup> Michael A. Bonura, *Under the Shadow of Napoleon: French Influence on the American Way of Warfare from Independence to the Eve of World War II*. (New York: NYU Press, 2012), 3-4.

<sup>147</sup> Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 2.

<sup>148</sup> Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 3-11.

company and battalion, has a unique personality and a distinctive character. Each has a collective set of beliefs and customs that are the result of that cohort's training and experiences. These distinctive traits and this persistent, pattern of thought, attitudes, actions, or set of practices becomes the tactical culture. This is itself a synthesis of a unit's past experiences, lessons learned and group beliefs that influence each unit's collective belief in themselves and is the foundation of their methods of warfighting and their confidence in their success on the battlefield.

Tactical culture specifically reflects the preferred military techniques and operational style used by a force. Just as strategic culture flows from a nations' geography, history, and competitive advantages so too does tactical culture derive from the choice of technologies and weapons used, how they have been employed in the past, with what effect, and with what expectations.<sup>149</sup> This tactical culture is more likely to influence how a unit performs on the battlefield than higher policies or directives.<sup>150</sup>

The characteristics of tactical culture include elements like *esprit de corps*, pride, cohesion, loyalty, and will power. It also includes capabilities like leadership, and individual and collective training. Doctrine also represents part of tactical culture by expressing an organization's beliefs about the best methods to conduct military operations. As the military's institutional belief system about its duties, roles, and relationships and the guide for how it will fight, doctrine combined with military organizational culture forms the tactical culture that guides unit actions. Tactical culture is thus rooted in the traditions and customs of the service and the unit, and it reflects the goals and objectives, beliefs and values, and behaviors of that unit. It is an expression of how the unit views itself and the battlefield and how they intend to meet current and future challenges. For example, the tactical culture of Germans in the Second World War, could be characterized by a pattern of vigorous tactical movement, a preference to attack despite the odds, and a flexible system of command that gave officers the freedom to act in the absence of orders from higher authorities.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Thomas Mahnken, *Technology and the American Way of War since 1945*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 3, 4-6, 223-225.

<sup>150</sup> Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 92.

<sup>151</sup> Robert M. Citino, *The German Way of War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), xiv.

I contend that historical analysis of the strategic and tactical culture of the American and Japanese forces in the Second World War, comparing their respective beliefs and modes of behavior will illustrate how it shaped their objectives, means, organization, and actions.<sup>152</sup> I further contend that the causes of success and/or failure were deeply rooted in intrinsic American and Japanese values. What then are the body of attitudes and beliefs that guided and circumscribed Japanese and American thought on strategic questions, that influenced the way strategic issues were formulated, and that set the vocabulary and the perceptual parameters of their respective strategic debates?<sup>153</sup>

American strategic culture developed similarly to its European contemporaries as a response to the Industrial Revolution by emphasizing tactics that massed firepower and maneuver to achieve superiority at the decisive point. It is *sui generis* however, in its expression of beliefs and habits found in American culture such as showing respect for human life and individual political rights, equal opportunity and equal burden sharing, the defense of free market capitalism, isolationism, and unilateralism. American strategic culture also exhibits almost naive optimism, strategic impatience, deep faith in technology and a tendency to view every conflict as an existential crusade in defense of democracy, motivated by the will to win to overthrow tyranny.<sup>154</sup>

These unique cultural determinants have influenced American strategy and military operations. Russell Weigley interpreted American strategic thought as following two basic types of strategy: annihilation and attrition.<sup>155</sup> Weigley characterized American strategy as using overwhelming force to “grind down opponents with firepower and mass.”<sup>156</sup> His *American Way of War* was considered the definitive work on the subject for thirty years however, there have been newer interpretations that challenge his conclusions. His definitions of attrition and annihilation have been objected to as confusing and simplistic (for example: at what point does

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<sup>152</sup> H. Shultz, Jr.'s, *Adapting America's Security Paradigm and Security Agenda* (Washington, DC: National Strategy Information Center, 2010), p. 35.

<sup>153</sup> Jack Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Nuclear Options* (RAND R-2154-AF, 1977).

<sup>154</sup> Adrian Lewis, *The American Culture of War: The History of U.S. Military Force from World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom*, (New York: Routledge, 2018), xvii, 34-35; Echevarria, 16, 23.

<sup>155</sup> Weigley, *American Way of War*, 6-7, 467-477.

<sup>156</sup> F.G Hoffman, *Decisive Force: The New American Way of War*, (Westport: Praeger, 1996), xii.

continual attrition result in inevitable annihilation?). It has also been pointed out that the crucial period from the American Civil War to the Second World War was less strategically ambivalent than he had portrayed it and that this interpretation gives too little attention to alternative strategies that arose in American thought.<sup>157</sup> Brian Linn has instead discovered several schools of strategic thought woven through over 200 years of American military history. He summarized them and their most famous American exponents as: attrition (Washington), Napoleonic (Lee), annihilation (Grant), partisan war (Greene), sea-power (Mahan), and air power (Mitchell).<sup>158</sup> Another suggested historical pattern of American strategic culture is that of punishment, pacification, protection, and profit as traditional goals.<sup>159</sup> The continuing study of American strategic culture may yield further insights. If we can say anything with certainty it may be that the American strategic culture and the American way of war has been as subject to change as the new weapons and tactics that were introduced to the fight.

Japan too, has a very distinctive culture and one can see the effects of cultural conditioning in many aspects of Japanese society. Throughout its history, Japanese society has experienced tremendous transformation in religion and social systems ranging from feudalism, to nationalism, modernization, and militarism. Yet throughout these vicissitudes Japan developed a unique cultural identity which adapted to these changes and emerged intact. By being physically separated from the rest of Asia and through its deliberate isolation from Western influences for almost three hundred years, Japan developed an unusually homogenous society and culture. One of the most distinctive elements of Japanese society is its strategic culture.

Japan has been viewed as a “warrior nation” with an ancient martial culture. The *bakufu* military government that ruled the country from 1185 CE to 1868 CE set a martial tone by its very name, meaning a “field headquarters”. Ruled by the *Sei-i-tai Shogun*, the “great general who subdues the eastern barbarians”, the country developed a social caste system wherein the military became a hereditary nobility. Eventually, as Japan moved towards becoming a modern

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<sup>157</sup> Brian M. Linn, “The American Way of War Revisited,” *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 66, no. 2, April 2002: 502.

<sup>158</sup> Linn, “American Way of War Revisited”, 502-503, 530.

<sup>159</sup> Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*, (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 287, 352.

nation-state it came to be guided by a warrior ethic called *bushido*. We shall explore this in greater detail later. For now, we will only note that a specific feature of Japanese culture is its proud tradition of military virtue that extolled the preference for death in battle over the humiliation of surrender or defeat.<sup>160</sup>

During the Second World War the Japanese government mounted a concerted effort to motivate the Japanese public to endure extraordinary sacrifice throughout the imperial era by elevating, intensifying, and in some cases, distorting or reinterpreting several traditional values and symbols.<sup>161</sup> Did this deliberate manipulation of the culture reveal a hidden, fatal flaw in their strategic and tactical approaches? Did the Japanese fail in the Second World War as a warring nation *because* of their strategic culture? If so, why?

Some have attributed Japan's defeat to being "out-gunned" and "out-produced" by the Americans and their allies. This imbalance of power was widely acknowledged before the war, yet the Japanese appear to have ignored it. While they understood that the U.S. had the potential for massive firepower because of its material resources the Japanese felt that the Americans lacked fighting spirit, tactical finesse, and operational skill. Japanese strategic culture conditioned the way Imperial Japan viewed conflict with the Americans. Their belief in Japan's unique martial culture, its proud tradition of military virtue and preference for death over humiliation or defeat led them to war and eventual defeat.<sup>162</sup>

This tendency to glorify idealized warrior virtues has been cited by many historians to explain Japanese fanaticism, but less remarked upon is how Japanese strategic and tactical culture were affected by this cultural conditioning that also inculcated the belief that Japan was a unique and special nation with a divine mission to rule the world.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Forrest Morgan, *Compellence and the Strategic Culture of Japan*, 10, 37.

<sup>161</sup> Benedict, 117, 133, 136-137; Morgan, 63-64, 75.

<sup>162</sup> Morgan, 1.

<sup>163</sup> Edward J. Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army: Its Rise and Fall, 1853-1945*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009), 320, 593; Allison B. Gilmore, *You Can't Fight Tanks with Bayonets: Psychological Warfare against the Japanese Army in the South West Pacific*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 87.

Arguably, this strategic culture drove Japan as it modernized and militarized in the early twentieth century. This culture produced a proficient imperial army and navy that burst onto the world stage, ready to compete with other great powers. Eventually, the Imperial Japanese Army seized control of the state and the nation went to war with America and her allies. Japan's strategic culture had led it to victory previously, but it was flawed, unable to deal with defeats, valuing its reputation and judgment over public honesty, and being deeply imbued with the glorification of ritualized death.<sup>164</sup>

My hypothesis is that certain relevant Japanese cultural traits such as the symbolism of the emperor, the core values like *Wa* (Harmony), with its ingrained social behaviors such as the seeking of consensus contributed to the creation of an idiosyncratic Japanese strategic culture that in turn had the unintended but consequential outcome of adhering to stoicism, conformity, conservatism, and blind obedience to the point of defeat. Japanese warrior virtues glorified courage, loyalty, and sacrifice, and made any other course of action seem dishonorable; The Japanese veneration of stoicism further strengthened their belief in their ability to triumph through sacrifice.<sup>165</sup>

## 2.5. Will to Fight.

War is a human endeavor—a fundamentally human clash of wills often fought among populations. It is not a mechanical process that can be controlled precisely, or even mostly, by machines, statistics, or laws that cover operations in carefully controlled and predictable environments. Fundamentally, all war is about changing human behavior.<sup>166</sup>

What is will to fight and why does it matter? The will to fight is an essential element of combat effectiveness and a keystone of tactical culture because willpower determines how well a

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<sup>164</sup> David Hunter-Chester, "Imperial Japanese Army Culture, 1918-1945: Duty Heavier than a Mountain, Death Lighter than a Feather." Chapter 9, in *The Culture of Military Organizations*, edited by Peter R. Mansoor and Williamson Murray, 208-25. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 208-225.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 11, 227, 228; Thomas Cleary, *The Japanese Art of War: Understanding the Culture of Strategy*, (Boston and London: Shambhala, 1991), 1-2.

<sup>166</sup> U.S. Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, 2017.

unit fights and whether it succeeds in the fight.<sup>167</sup> Willpower gives a force a capability to succeed in combat that is greater than just materiel superiority or overwhelming firepower.<sup>168</sup>

American doctrine has alternatively embraced and ignored the concept of will to fight for over a century. Current U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps doctrine state that the will to fight is the single most important factor in war.<sup>169</sup> However, it has had no stable, central place in American doctrine or practice, and it is often defined in vague and impractical terms. Perhaps, this is because it is so poorly understood as an emotional/psychological human condition.<sup>170</sup> The pattern amongst Western militaries has been that after a major war some aspects of will to fight are incorporated into doctrine but the lessons fade, emphasis shifts again to a focus on employing materiel capabilities and achieving physical effects. The importance of viewing war as the clash of opposing and irreconcilable wills must then be hastily re-learned.<sup>171</sup>

Exploring tactical culture and the will to fight are important to improving our understanding of the outcome of the Pacific War as a contrast to the linear, deterministic view that “superior technology plus economic power” yielded American victory. I believe that Japanese strategic and tactical culture was based on the *will to sacrifice* in contrast to the American strategic and tactical culture of the *will to win*, and that this difference strongly determined the outcome.<sup>172</sup> In subsequent chapters I will compare the nature and power of the respective Japanese and American motivations, capabilities, perseverance, determination, sacrifice, and passion.

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<sup>167</sup> Ben Connable, Michael J. McNerney, William Marcellino, Aaron Frank, Henry Hargrove, Marek N. Posard, S. Rebecca Zimmerman, Natasha Lander, Jasen J. Castillo, and James Sladden, *Will to Fight: Analyzing, Modeling, and Simulating the Will to Fight of Military Units*, (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-2341-A, 2018), xi.

<sup>168</sup> Wayne M. Hall, *The Power of Will in International Conflict: How to Think Critically in Complex Environments*, (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2018), xxi.

<sup>169</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 75; Ben Connable, et. al *Will to Fight: Analyzing, Modeling, and Simulating the Will to Fight of Military Units*.

<sup>170</sup> Connable, et. al., *Will to Fight*, 34.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>172</sup> Ben Connable, Michael J. McNerney, William Marcellino, Aaron Frank, Henry Hargrove, Marek N. Posard, S. Rebecca Zimmerman, Natasha Lander, Jasen J. Castillo, and James Sladden, *Will to Fight: Analyzing, Modeling, and Simulating the Will to Fight of Military Units*, (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-2341-A, 2018), xi.



## 2.6. A Model of Will to Fight.

“In war the chief incalculable is the human will.”<sup>173</sup>

The will to fight represents the ineffably human nature of combat. Every element from strategic culture to leadership to doctrine and training combine to influence the will to fight. Without it, any technological advantage is useless if soldiers lack the determination to use it.<sup>174</sup> Integral to a successful tactical culture is the inherent desire to close with and destroy the enemy. Individual soldiers and small units are the intrinsic agents of tactical culture and the critical nodes for will to fight.<sup>175</sup> This is because at the unit level small group cohesion, organizational capabilities, and unit leadership come together.<sup>176</sup>

In 2018 RAND published two reports that defined the will to fight as, “the determination to conduct sustained military and other operations for some objective even when the expectation of success decreases or the need for significant political, economic, and military sacrifices increases”.<sup>177</sup> It declared that breaking the enemy's will to fight while sustaining one's own will to fight is the key to success in battle and went on to ask:

Why does an individual soldier, a military unit, a military organization, a national leader, or an entire nation fight or not fight?

What is the value of will in comparison to the quantity and quality of military equipment, or the application of tactics or strategy?<sup>178</sup>

Currently most military historians treat war and the analysis of combat effectiveness primarily as a contest of opposing equipment and methods. War is a fundamentally human endeavor; thus, we should focus as much on the human elements. Because war is not a

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<sup>173</sup> B. H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, (New York: New American Library, 1974), 323.

<sup>174</sup> James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 46.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>176</sup> William Darryl Henderson, *Cohesion: The Human Element in Combat*, (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1985), 9.

<sup>177</sup> Connable, et. al., *Will to Fight*, 3. Note: RAND is a name, not an acronym.

<sup>178</sup> Connable, et. al., *Will to Fight*, xi.

mechanical process that can be controlled precisely by laws, statistics, or machines we should also avoid assumptions about controlled and predictable environments and outcomes.<sup>179</sup>

The Key Findings of their “National Will-to-Fight Model” that relate to strategic culture are that will to fight is the least understood aspect of war; fully totalitarian or democratic governments often show the strongest will to fight, and national identity can have strong influence but can also be manipulated; and the effective use of engagement and indoctrination/messaging improves chances of victory.<sup>180</sup>

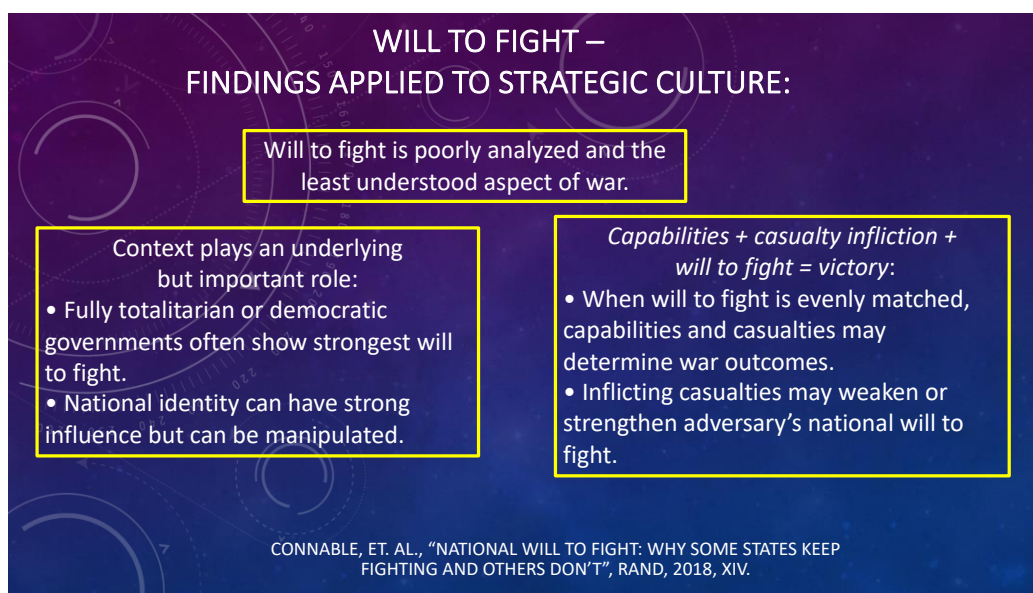


Figure 2-1: National Will to Fight Summary of Findings.

The Key Findings of the “Unit Will-to-Fight Model” were that, although much of the discussion focuses on terms like morale, cohesion, and discipline there are no commonly accepted definitions or explanations of these key terms.<sup>181</sup> This study concluded that will to fight can be assessed but not measured: There is no way to accurately quantify will to fight or delineate its precise value. At the tactical level will to fight it is a fundamental of warfare, yet it defies accurate and precise quantification.<sup>182</sup>

<sup>179</sup> U.S. Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Operations*, 2017.

<sup>180</sup> Connable, et. al., *National Will To Fight*, xiii-xvi.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, xii.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

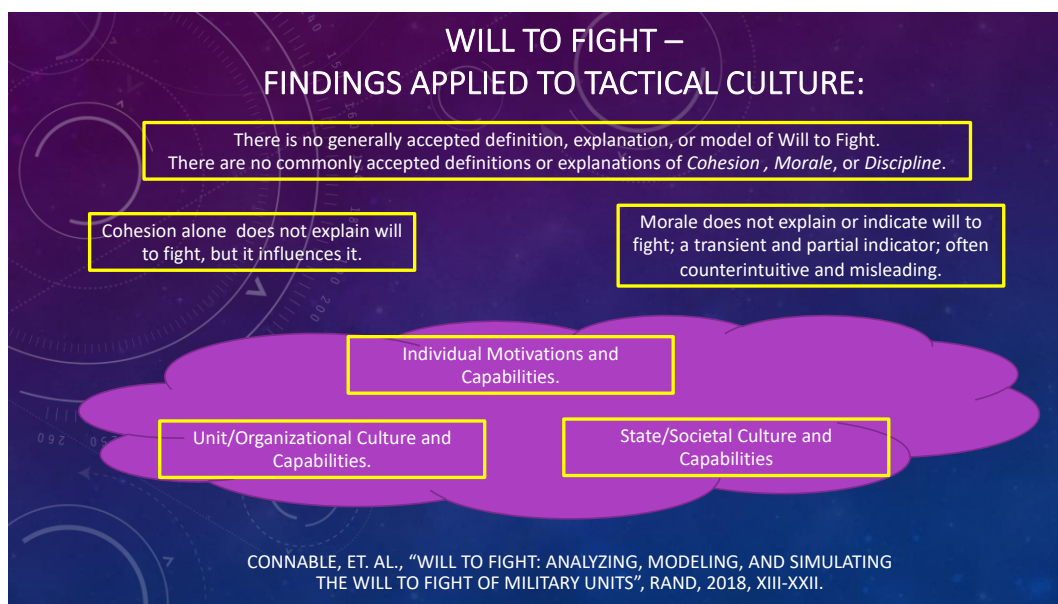


Figure 2-2: Unit Will to Fight Summary of Findings.

According to the 2018 RAND study, “Will to Fight: Returning to the Human Fundamentals of War”, there are several influential variables.<sup>183</sup> These include: Identity which is multi-faceted, culturally obtained, unique, and dynamic; Desperation, involving fear of death, the need for self-preservation, and when no other options exist; Revenge, which can have historical roots or more immediate, personal motivations; Economical, arising from fulfilling the basic need for subsistence to the desire for socioeconomic advancement; Ideological, reflecting commitment to a cause or belief system; Cohesion, when as a member of a group one adheres to the vertical and horizontal bonds of association and to the tasks and social structures of the group;<sup>184</sup> Leadership, which involves directing and encouraging combative behavior; And finally, Morale which is a transient, partial indicator of will to fight, expressing the individual and collective feelings about the current situation.<sup>185</sup> (The Oxford English Dictionary defines “morale” as “the confidence, enthusiasm, and discipline,” of an individual or group of people).<sup>186</sup>

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 13, 38. Note: RAND is not an acronym.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., xiv. Note: Connable et. al. points out that cohesion is an important factor that influences will to fight but there is no accepted empirical proof that it is the most important factor in every case.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>186</sup> Oxford English Dictionary Online. January 2021. Oxford University Press.  
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/122088?redirectedFrom=morale>.



Figure 2-3: Variables Influencing the Will to Fight; Connable, et. al., “Will to Fight: Returning to the Human Fundamentals of War”, RAND, 2019, xiv, 13, 19.

Their findings declared that when will to fight is evenly matched the side with superior capabilities and which inflicts greater casualties on the other should win...except when it doesn't. They also found that a nation with high will to fight can nevertheless overcome capability shortfalls and high casualties to outlast their opponent (e.g., North Vietnam) and that a nation's high will to fight could fade as their opponent's will grows while attrition degrades their previously greater capabilities and resolve (e.g., Nazi Germany).<sup>187</sup>

The unit will to fight model contains analytical factors that influence the will to fight, categorized as: Motivations: the drivers of will to fight that help form individual disposition; Capabilities: the competencies and physical assets available to soldiers and the support they receive from the unit level through the societal level of assessment; and Culture: which includes behavioral norms, control measures, and influences that affect individual and unit disposition and

<sup>187</sup> Connable, et. al., 13. “Combat almost always ends when one side quits. Even total annihilation suggests extraordinary will on the part of the defeated foe. Will to fight always matters in combat. Winning at the tactical level hinges on will to fight.” They represent this with an equation: Capabilities + Casualty infliction + Will to Fight = Victory/Stalemate.

decisions to fight.<sup>188</sup> RAND's findings suggest that when will to fight is evenly matched, differing capabilities and heavy casualties may weaken or strengthen an adversary's national will to fight, but this does not account for every instance and thus is not predictive.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, xvii.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

## Chapter Three. The Battle of Attu: Tactical Culture and *Gyokusai*.

"I will become a deity with a smile in the heavy fog. I am only waiting for the day of death."<sup>190</sup>

### 3.1. Introduction.

When one imagines the Pacific War of 1941-1945, the images that come to mind are of azure waters, sparkling beaches, and lush rain forests. We do not envision a climate of freezing temperatures, snow, rain, fog, and gale force winds lashing rocky coastlines and barren mountains. Yet these were the battlefield conditions that confronted the Japanese and American adversaries who fought on the Aleutian Islands in May 1943. The battle of Attu was the only ground offensive battle fought on U.S. territory during the Second World War. It was planned to be a three-day operation, but it turned into a bloody three-week ordeal in the jagged mountains of the Aleutian Island that could have been won by either side.<sup>191</sup>

This chapter will explore the tactical culture of the two adversaries. Tactical culture is the nexus of a units' preferred methods of warfighting, and operational style. In this case the comparison of Japanese and American tactical culture throws into stark relief the differing principles, techniques, and procedures, institutionalized as the overarching framework for action that the two adversaries felt would result in combat effectiveness and mission accomplishment.<sup>192</sup> American tactical culture demonstrated a will to win; to overcome obstacles, kill the enemy, and fight as a team of teams to victory, whereas Japanese tactical culture demonstrated the will to sacrifice; to kill the enemy and if that was not possible then to die instead.

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<sup>190</sup> John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race & Power in the Pacific War*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 231: Translation of a poem found on the body of one of the Japanese casualties on Attu, May 1943.

<sup>191</sup> Richard A. Burklund. "Hell in the Mists", *The U.S. Seventh Infantry Division and the Forgotten Battle of Attu*. Unpublished Master's thesis, Southern New Hampshire University, Manchester, New Hampshire, 2015, 1-4, 15-18.

<sup>192</sup> Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 1, 7-8.



Figure 3-1: The Aleutian Islands. (Public domain. Accessed February 14, 2021. [https://www.bluebird-electric.net/oceanography/bering\\_sea\\_aleutian\\_islands\\_arctic\\_region.htm](https://www.bluebird-electric.net/oceanography/bering_sea_aleutian_islands_arctic_region.htm)).

The Japanese had identified the Russians as their primary hypothetical enemy since 1907 and considered the Bering Sea and the Aleutians part of their sphere of influence.<sup>193</sup> American strategic planners had identified Japan as a likely enemy in the Pacific several years before the attack on Pearl Harbor, and they took the threat most seriously. General Mitchell had considered a northern war with Japan as early as 1923, as he stated in his official testimony to Congress:

I am thinking of Alaska. In an air war, if we were unprepared Japan could take it away from us, first by dominating the sky and creeping up the Aleutians...Japan might well seize enough of Alaska to creep down the western coast of Canada. Then we would be in for it.<sup>194</sup>

<sup>193</sup> Alvin D. Coox, *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939*, (Stanford: Stanford university Press, 1985), 2-3.

<sup>194</sup> Brigadier General Billy Mitchell, official testimony to the U.S. Congress; *Air Defense Bases*, Hearings before the Committee on Military Affairs, House of Representatives, Seventy-Fourth Congress, First Session on H.R. 6621 and H.R. 4130, February 11, 12, 13, 1935. Washington, DC: U. S. Government Printing Office, 51-52.

The Japanese had specifically demonstrated their interest in the Aleutians as early as 1931 when their fishing ships visited the area. Both the Americans and the Japanese viewed the Aleutians as a strategic avenue of approach to attack the other from the north across the Bering Sea and Japanese advance parties were sent to the area to conduct surveys of the area before Pearl Harbor.<sup>195</sup>

### **3.1.1. The Operational Environment: The Battle of Komandorski Islands.**

Deeply indoctrinated with the Mahanian doctrine of winning a decisive sea battle that would destroy the U.S. Pacific Fleet and quickly end the conflict, in May 1942 the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters (IGHQ) ordered an attack on the Midway Islands.<sup>196</sup> Simultaneous with their attack on Midway, the Japanese launched air and amphibious attacks on the Aleutian Islands. This was intended to divert American forces from the main effort at Midway, protect the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) from an attack from the north, and obstruct communications between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. They also intended to construct advanced airbases for future offensive action.<sup>197</sup> In concert with an air attack on Dutch Harbor the Japanese conducted landings on Kiska and Attu on 7 June 1942. Although they had only planned to hold the islands until December 1942, the Japanese later decided to remain, and they reinforced and repositioned their forces to defend against anticipated American attacks.<sup>198</sup> The continuing occupation of the islands prompted an American counterattack to retake the lost territory.

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<sup>195</sup> John Haile Cloe, *Attu: The Forgotten Battle*, National Park Service, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 2017), 19.

<sup>196</sup> Paul S. Dull, *A Battle History of the Imperial Japanese Navy (1941-1945)* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press 1978), 157.

<sup>197</sup> Japanese Monograph 46, Aleutians Operations Record, June 1942-July 1943, 8-5.1 AC46, CMH, 111-118; Japanese Monograph 88, Aleutian Naval Operations, March 1942-February 1943, not dated, HQ Army Forces Far East, Mil Hist Section, Japanese Research Division; Sewell Tyng. "The Capture Of Attu: As Told By The Men Who Fought There". United States War Department, (Washington DC: The Infantry Journal, October 1944), 2.

<sup>198</sup> James, D. Clayton. "American and Japanese Strategies in the Pacific War." in *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, edited by Peter Paret, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), 703-732.



The American's first step was to interrupt the Japanese re-supply efforts to their Aleutians garrisons. On 26 March 1943, a naval task force, led by the heavy cruiser USS *Salt Lake City*, patrolling off the Komandorski Islands west of Attu, detected a force of eight Japanese warships escorting two transports bound for Attu with supplies and troops. A confused and chaotic four hour long naval battle ensued which was characterized as "an old-fashioned long-range ship-to-ship duel".<sup>199</sup> Each side maneuvered in the fog and scored hits on each other, but the battle was inconclusive; no ships were sunk and both forces withdrew. Nevertheless, the Americans had succeeded in disrupting the Japanese re-supply mission and the Japanese made no further attempts to reinforce or resupply the Aleutians with surface vessels. Afterwards, no more troops and only a trickle of supplies were delivered by IJN submarines to Attu and Kiska before the American attack in May 1943. Rations were restricted in April and by 16 May the Japanese were subsisting on one meal per day.<sup>200</sup>

### **3.1.2. Terrain and Weather.**

The Aleutian Island chain extends westward from Alaska 900 nautical miles. It ends at Attu, the westernmost island which is only 650 miles from what was then Japan's northernmost naval base at Paramushiro in the Kurile Islands. Devoid of trees but covered with grasses and snow, the island lies roughly 1,100 miles from the Alaskan mainland. The Aleutians were formed by geologic action, and the chain features forty-six volcanoes. The topography of Attu is characterized by numerous mountains, sharp cliffs, knife-edged ridges with fifty-to-sixty-degree slopes, and elevations running between two thousand and three thousand feet above sea level. These descend to wind swept valleys with little vegetation other than the swampy muskeg, which quickly turns to thick, clinging mud when walked or driven over. Finally, comes the steep, rocky shoreline with its numerous obstacles and dangerous approaches.<sup>201</sup> The steep, rugged terrain is accentuated by glacier-like fields of ice in the passes, and permanent fields of snow on the slopes

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<sup>199</sup> Paul S. Dull, *A Battle History of the Imperial Japanese Navy (1941-1945)* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press 1978), 261.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*; William J. Verbeck, "Action on Attu: A Summary of Information of the Enemy Obtained During the Operations of the Force on Attu", (G-2 Alaska Defense Command, 30 July 1943), 35.

<sup>201</sup> Stan Cohen, *The Forgotten War: A Pictorial History of World War II in Alaska and Northeastern Canada*, (Missoula: Pictorial Histories, 1981), 110.

of the higher elevations. On Attu the snow line begins at approximately an elevation of 300 feet above sea level as does the fog line. The weather is typically, snow, sleet, and rain with gale force winds. Despite these high winds, the fog is persistent with only eight to ten clear days per year.<sup>202</sup> The ferocious winds that swept the island and the impenetrable fog that shrouded its formidable terrain severely limited the use and effectiveness of air power and artillery. The steep ridgelines and the boggy muskeg eliminated the use of vehicles. The burden of the fight thus fell squarely on the shoulders of individual American infantry soldiers, armed only with the weapons that they could carry, inexperienced in combat, and short of food, water, and ammunition to overcome a fanatical enemy defending well-prepared positions.

### **3.1.3. “Operation Land Crab”: The American Attack Plan.**

By the end of January 1943, the U.S. can be said to have gained the strategic initiative in the Pacific with its victories at the Coral Sea, Midway, and Guadalcanal, but it wasn't until May 1943 that the U.S. could muster the force necessary to achieve the superiority at the operational echelon of war to counterattack in the Aleutians.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division was activated for service in the Second World War on 1 July 1940 at Fort Ord, California, based on a core of prewar enlisted men and officers organized into two Regular Army infantry regiments and one National Guard infantry regiment. Most of the soldiers assigned had been recently inducted in the nation's first peacetime draft.<sup>203</sup> Just as most of the selective service soldiers were anticipating the end of their two-year tour of duty the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred. The soldiers were elated when the division's designation was changed to the 7th Motorized Division. They were going to be a modern, motorized force preparing to fight the Afrika Korps in Tunisia.<sup>204</sup> Manning, equipping, and training activities to become a fully ready combat division were accelerated and they commenced six months of arduous

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<sup>202</sup> Western Regional Climate Center. <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/6715/attu-island-alaska>;  
<https://www.britannica.com/place/Aleutian-Islands>

<sup>203</sup> John B. Wilson, *Armies, Corps, Divisions, And Separate Brigades*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Army Center for Military History, 1999), 217.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 10. Wilson, *Armies, Corps, Divisions, And Separate Brigades*, 217.

training in the Mojave Desert in April 1942.<sup>205</sup> However, just over two months prior to conducting the invasion of Attu, they were surprised to be redesignated as a light infantry division. The vehicles and anti-tank guns were turned in and they began sixty days of intense amphibious assault training before sailing north from San Francisco in late March 1943. Little did they know that their mission had been changed to an invasion of the Aleutian Islands in May 1943.<sup>206</sup>

**The Foundation of Tactical Culture – Training:** The 7<sup>th</sup> Motorized Division had spent the spring and summer of 1942 training at Ford Ord, California in individual and small unit tasks under General Joseph Stilwell. They then moved to the Mojave Desert to train for three months under General George S. Patton on how to fight as a tank-infantry strike force. Mounted in armored halftracks and jeeps with towed antitank guns they practiced how to move rapidly across the desert to seize and defend hills, ridgelines, and defiles. They trained alongside tanks to conduct fast flanking attacks and deep envelopments of enemy forces in a desert environment.<sup>207</sup> Thus, there was no specific training regime for Attu. They would rely on the basic squad and platoon training that they had conducted at Ford Ord and on the individual and collective confidence and cohesion that they had earned in the inferno of the Mojave Desert to accomplish this new mission.

Their Japanese opponents on Attu were busy preparing the island's defenses with deeply buried bomb shelters, machine gun positions, rifle trenches, hidden supply caches, and barracks all meticulously camouflaged to blend into the natural terrain of rocks and tundra. Their additional training consisted of drills to quickly respond to the expected American attack from whatever direction it might come.<sup>208</sup>

The plan directed Regimental Landing Group 17 minus Battalion Combat Team 17-1 with Battalion Combat Team 32-2 attached to land on Beaches Yellow and Blue in Massacre Bay on 10 May 43 to destroy the enemy in the Holtz Bay-Chichagof area. This Southern Landing Force would be the division's main effort. A Provisional Battalion composed of the 7<sup>th</sup> Scout Company and the 7<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Troop was to land on Beach Scarlet (Blind Cove)

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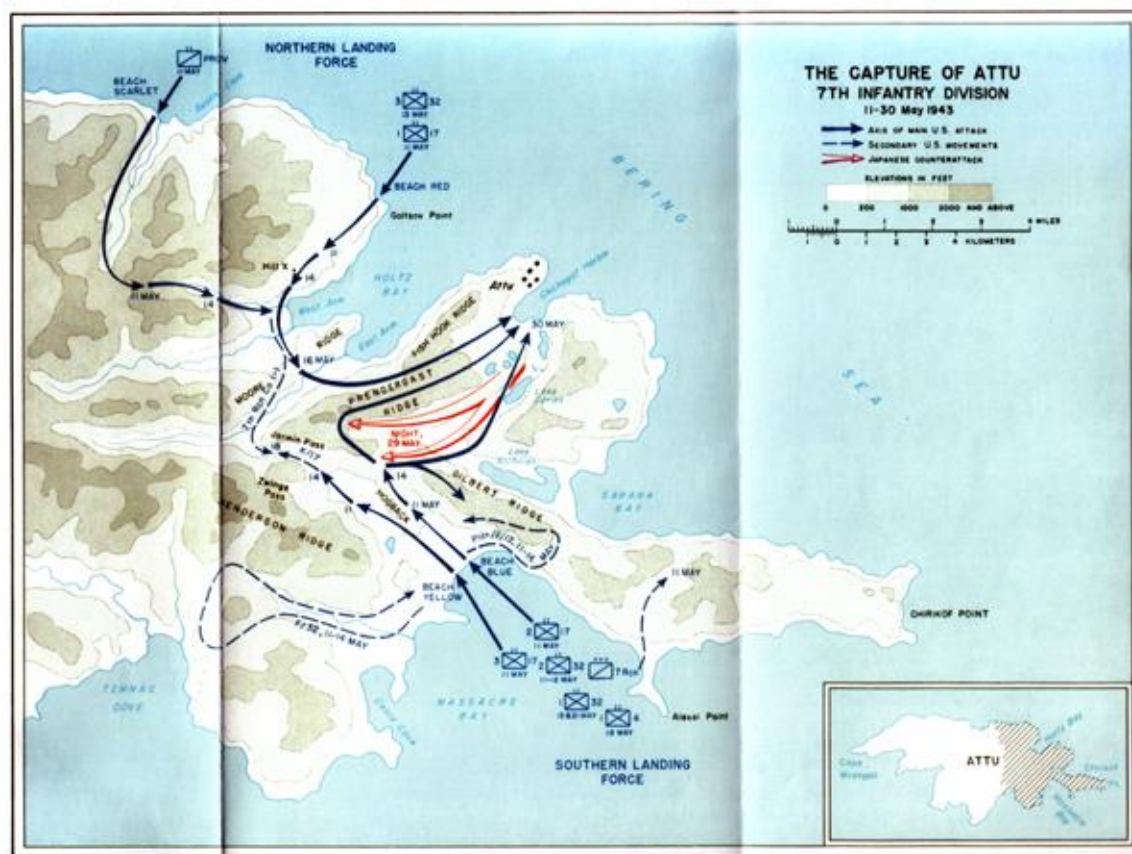
<sup>205</sup> Bruce Gardener, Barbara Stahura, *Seventh Infantry Division: 1917-1992, World War I, World War II, Korea, and Panamanian Invasion*, (Nashville: Turner Publishing Company, 1997), 10.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 10, 112.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>208</sup> Stetson Conn, Rose C. Engelman and Byron Fairchild, *The United States Army in World War II: The Western Hemisphere, Guarding the United States and its Outposts, U.S. Army in World War II*, (Washington D.C.: United States Army, Center of Military History, 2000), 16-17, 223-270.

from the submarines USS *Narwhal* and USS *Nautilus*, and the destroyer USS *Kane*. Battalion Combat Team 17-1, together with the Provisional Battalion would form the Northern Landing Force and be the division's supporting effort. It was intended that from these positions they could attack the Japanese from the rear. The Southern Force was to "advance rapidly" up Massacre Valley, seize the passes leading to Holtz and Sarana Bays, and then move into the Holtz Bay area where it was to join the Northern Force and destroy the enemy there. Upon completion of that task, they were to advance against Chichagof Harbor, while the Northern Force secured the valley running west from Holtz Bay. Fire support was to be provided by both naval gunfire and field artillery ashore. Naval aviation was to conduct long-range searches for Japanese naval forces bringing reinforcements. The 11<sup>th</sup> Army Air Force was to maintain a strike force of one-third of its heavy and medium bombers to attack any such forces discovered.<sup>209</sup>



MAP III

Figure 3-2: The Capture of Attu. (Stetson Conn, Rose C. Engelman and Byron Fairchild, *Guarding the*

<sup>209</sup> Stetson Conn, Rose C. Engelman and Byron Fairchild, *The United States Army in World War II: The Western Hemisphere, Guarding the United States and its Outposts, U.S. Army in World War II*, (Washington D.C.: United States Army, Center of Military History, 2000), 16-17, 223-270.

*United States and its Outposts. "Chapters IX/X/XI". The U.S. Army in World War II. Washington: Center for Military History, 2000.).*

### 3.1.4. The Japanese Defensive Plan.

The initial Japanese defensive positions were established at Chichigof Harbor, Holtz Bay, Massacre Bay, and Sarana Bay. The Japanese commander, Colonel Yamasaki Yasuyo, was an experienced veteran of service in Siberia and China who understood how to best use the rugged high ground as natural fortification.<sup>210</sup> At Holtz Bay, beach defenses were established to thwart any American assault on the harbor with each arm of the bay defended by a four-gun anti-aircraft battery. The concept of the operation in this sector was based upon four successive battle positions with a final position at the head of the valley.<sup>211</sup>

The Japanese intent was to conduct their main defensive effort in Massacre Valley in successive battle positions from the beach to the high ground, yielding in the center in order to draw the American forces into a kill zone in Jarmin Pass.<sup>212</sup> There, key defensive positions were established on Cold Mountain and Black Mountain as well as at the Holtz-Massacre Pass (later renamed Jarmin Pass), which was further supported by a battery of mountain artillery.<sup>213</sup> In addition, Chichigof Harbor was defended by another four-gun anti-aircraft battery and beach positions. The defenses of Sarana Valley followed this pattern with battle positions on Buffalo Ridge, Gilbert Ridge, Sarana Nose, and Point "A". The final battle position was established on Fish Hook Ridge.<sup>214</sup> All these defensive positions were well camouflaged, anchored on rugged terrain that gave excellent observation of the enemy below, and which offered no high-speed avenues of approach and little cover or concealment. Weapons, ammunition, and supplies were cached in large quantities throughout the defensive sector to reduce reliance on re-supply efforts across the rough terrain, which could be interdicted.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 277-280.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> William J. Verbeck, *"Action on Attu: A Summary of Information of the Enemy Obtained During the Operations of the Force on Attu"*, (G-2 Alaska Defense Command, 30 July 1943), 99.

This was a hybrid of their doctrine of defense *at* the shoreline with a defense *from* the shoreline, taking full advantage of the Aleutian terrain and weather.<sup>216</sup> Deception was a key element of their plan so numerous dummy positions were built elsewhere on the island to make a landing at Massacre Bay appear to be a more attractive course of action for the Americans. In fact, American photoreconnaissance efforts failed to detect any positions on the south side of the island and most of those on the high ground.<sup>217</sup> From hard-won experience, the Japanese knew that supplies, vehicles, and heavy artillery would not be able to move off the beaches because of the swampy tundra and steep, mountainous terrain and this factored into their plan.<sup>218</sup>



*Figure 3-3: Japanese forces occupy Attu, 7 June 1942. Photo captured 29 May 1943. (U.S. Army. Accessed March 19, 2016.*

<http://vilda.alaska.edu/cdm/search/searchterm/Battle%20of%20Attu/order/nosort> ).

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 21-23; 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, G2 Estimate of Enemy Situation, April 26, 1943, Robert Fergusson Collection, Box 1.

<sup>218</sup> Japanese Monograph 46, Aleutians Operations Record, June 1942-July 1943, 8-5.1 AC46, CMH, 111-118; Conn, et.al., *Guarding the United States and Its Outposts*, 268-275; Mitchell, et.al., *Capture of Attu*, 2-6; Garfield, *The Thousand Mile War*, 217-219.

The specific IJA units that defended Attu were identified as: the *HQ Second Sector Unit*, the *Yonegawa Independent Infantry Battalion*, the *303d Independent Infantry Battalion*, the *33d Independent Anti-Aircraft Battalion*, the *6<sup>th</sup> Mountain Gun Battery*, the *302d Engineer Company*, the *6<sup>th</sup> Shipping Engineer Company*, a Signal Unit, an Airfield Construction Detachment, a Naval Anchorage Detachment, a Field Hospital Section, and a Machinegun Cannon Company.<sup>219</sup> This task organization is typical of the Japanese “Independent Mixed Brigade” numbering approximately 4,700 soldiers, deployed for garrison duty, although it included units like the shipping engineers, anti-aircraft, machine gun, airfield and naval detachments that were not standard to other independent mixed brigades.<sup>220</sup> The Japanese first occupied Attu in June 1942. They briefly shifted their forces to Kiska but then returned to Attu in October 1942.<sup>221</sup>

While it might appear that the Japanese force that defended Attu was a largely *ad hoc* force, it was organized in accordance with IJA doctrine. Imperial Japanese Army units were classified as “standard”, “strengthened”, or “modified/special” and were specifically organized for varying roles and different types of terrain. While there were no hard and fast rules for numbers of personnel assigned or types of equipment issued, the forces that were sent to Attu and Kiska came from Hokkaido. They were led by officers and sergeants who had combat experience in China and were equipped with the best cold weather gear available in the Japanese inventory.<sup>222</sup> Their two years of thorough training had inculcated an aggressive, self-reliant spirit, emphasizing rapid encirclements and night attacks in order to conduct close combat.<sup>223</sup> Above all, Japanese training stressed the indoctrination of an almost fanatical spirit of self-sacrifice. This sentence from a letter found on a dead Japanese soldier exemplifies this spirit of

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<sup>219</sup> William J. Verbeck, “*Action on Attu: A Summary of Information of the Enemy Obtained During the Operations of the Force on Attu*”, (G-2 Alaska Defense Command, 30 July 1943), 99. These unit identifications and their estimated strengths were developed after the battle from the analysis of the few surviving documents and interviews with the eleven enemy prisoners of war that were captured. This primary source places the total estimated strength at 2,359 and the total number of enemies killed as 2,350. Secondary sources conclude that Yamasaki had 2,650 men.

<sup>220</sup> Leland Ness, *Rikugun: Guide to Japanese Ground Forces, 1937-1945*, (Solihull: Helion and Company, 2014), 174-180; 327-328. The machine cannon units were equipped with both dual purpose 20mm cannons and 13.2mm guns capable of engaging air and ground targets with great effect.

<sup>221</sup> Japanese Monograph 46, Aleutians Operations Record, June 1942-July 1943, 8-5.1 AC46, CMH, 111-118; Conn, et.al., *Guarding the United States and Its Outposts*, 268-275.

<sup>222</sup> TM-E-30-480, “Technical Manual: Handbook on Japanese Military Forces, War Department: Washington DC, 15 September 1944, 19; Cloe, 41.

<sup>223</sup> Japanese Monograph No. 45, 22-23.

the readiness to fight to the last round and the last man: "When I received my mobilization orders, I had already sacrificed my life for my country you must not expect me to return alive."<sup>224</sup>



*Figure 3-4: Japanese troops on Attu, well equipped for the Aleutians, winter of 1943. Photograph was captured by US forces. (U.S. Army. Public Domain.).*

The IJA principle of organizing units to fit operational conditions and requirements led to a common practice of creating “independent mixed” units of various sizes which consisted of infantry units into which artillery, engineers, medical elements have been incorporated.<sup>225</sup> This seems to have been the case at Attu. The IJA practice stands in contrast to the US Army doctrine of organizing and training regimental and battalion combat teams from a standardized base of organic units.

**Will to Fight - Morale:** *“Whether the soldier has physical comforts or suffers physical hardships may be a factor but is seldom the determining factor in making or unmaking his morale. A cause known and believed in... the individual’s confidence and pride in himself, his comrades, his leaders; the unit’s pride in its own will...combine to weld a seasoned fighting force capable of defending the nation.”* <sup>226</sup>

<sup>224</sup> *Tactical and Technical Trends*, Number 33, 9 Sep 1943, Military Intelligence Service, War Department, Washington D.C. 25-27.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>226</sup> James A. Ulio, “Military Morale,” *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 47, no. 3 (1941): 321.



Throughout history, both military theorists and historians have recognized the importance of morale to combat effectiveness. Nevertheless, a definition of morale useful for analysis of tactical culture is hindered by the complexities and ambiguities of human psychology. Whether you define morale as “the confidence, enthusiasm, and discipline,” of an individual or group of people or as “willing and dependable performance, steady self-control, and courageous, determined conduct despite danger and privations...zeal, self-sacrifice, or indomitableness.”, there are several factors found in combat that can contribute to our understanding of morale’s impact on combat effectiveness and tactical culture.<sup>227</sup> We will explore these throughout this study.

## 3.2. Massacre Valley and Holtz Bay.

Poor weather had frustrated both the reconnaissance and aerial bombing campaigns from January through March and right up to the planned invasion date in May 1943. Storms and poor visibility continued to impede the invasion, forcing yet a delay of the attack until 11 May 43. The bad weather gave an unexpected advantage to the Americans, however. Japanese submarines had observed the convoy depart from Cold Bay, Alaska and had reported the information to the forces on Attu and Kiska. The garrison on Attu went on alert on 3 May 43 in expectation of an attack. However, after six days of waiting the alert was called off. The very next day, the American forces arrived offshore of Attu, unaware of how the weather delay had allowed them to surprise the Japanese.<sup>228</sup>

### 3.2.1. Ralph Eyde: The Letters.

In my effort to re-construct the transnational story of the will to win versus the will to sacrifice and the influence that culture exerted on the Second World War, I will use a few personal accounts from both the American and Japanese participants. These letters, diaries, and memoirs reflect the authors personal experiences and unique viewpoints. Consideration will be

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<sup>227</sup> Oxford English Dictionary Online. Accessed June 2021. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/122088?redirectedFrom=morale>; Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 144.

<sup>228</sup> Craven and Cate, eds., *The Pacific--Guadalcanal to Saipan*, 380-383.

given to their personal biases and prejudices and why the items they remarked upon were important to them. The first of these comes from the letters of Ralph Eyde.

Ralph Eyde had quit his factory job in early 1941 to enlist in the U.S. Army. Assigned to the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, he wrote to his brother John in April 1943 that he was preparing to deploy, as part of "one of these outfits who make beach landings in the middle of the night on the roughest coastlines possible and seize airports, railroads, cities, and enemy coast defenses." He was wounded on the first day of fighting on Attu but refused to be evacuated, fighting until the battle's end. He was wounded again on Kwajalein, blown 20 feet out of his foxhole by a Japanese shell, with shrapnel wounds to the lung. Ralph was dizzy from his concussion and wounds but continued to throw hand grenades. Ralph's machine-gunner lost an eye, but both men survived. Discharged from the service after the war, Ralph worked for the CIA from the 1950s to the 1970s in clandestine operations all over the world, dying at the age of 85 in 2003.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Ralph Eyde, "*Brothers in Arms: Letters from War*", The Washington Post, Dan Lamothe, Dec. 6, 2017, accessed January 2018. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/podcasts/letters-from-war/>

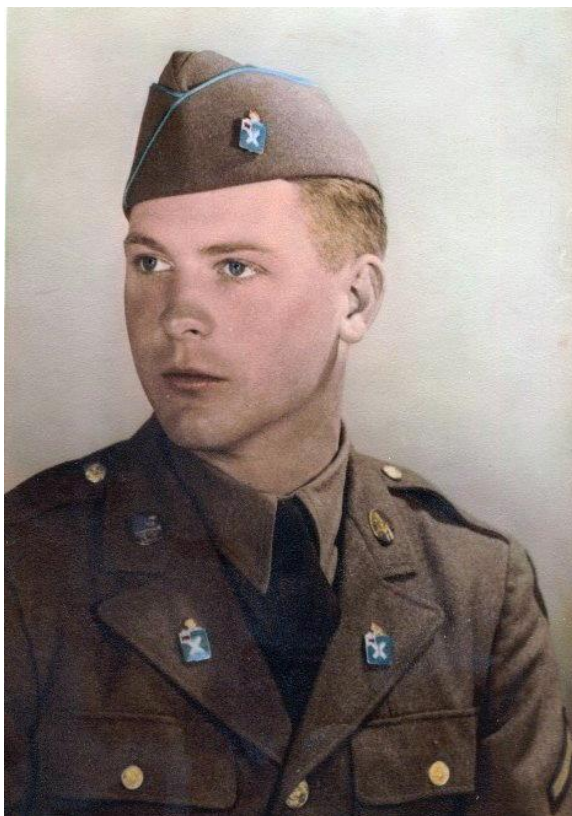


Figure 3-5: Ralph Eyde of the 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. (“*Brothers in Arms*”, *The Washington Post*, Dan Lamothe, Dec. 6, 2017, accessed January 2018.).

He warned his brother not to "tell anyone out of family what our outfit has been doing cause all this training could be worthless if a pack of subs got ahold of us and all were sent to the bottom in Mid-Ocean."<sup>230</sup> Ralph Eyde encapsulated the spirit of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division and its' will to win when he wrote, about Attu: "It was plenty tough + rugged going with the weather against us + Jap snipers harassing us all the time, but we blew them from their foxholes + they all ended up 6 foot under."<sup>231</sup>

**Sustaining Morale - Mail:** For the American combat soldier, mail to and from home represented a welcome distraction from the harsh realities of combat and a reminder of the lives and loved ones that they had left behind and yearned to return to. One soldier wrote to his sister that, "Any little thing we do to divert our

<sup>230</sup> Ralph Eyde, personal letter dated April 15, 1943; “*Brothers in Arms: Letters from War*”, *The Washington Post*, Dan Lamothe, Dec. 6, 2017, accessed January 2018. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/podcasts/letters-from-war/>

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*

mind and keep us busy when the fighting comes to a temporary halt, relaxes the nerves and rests our bodies. That's why receiving mail from home is so important."<sup>232</sup> The comforting psychological space that was created by sending and receiving words and mementos was essential to morale.<sup>233</sup>

Mail was equally important to the Japanese soldier. A letter written by First Class Private Tsukiji of the 303d Independent Infantry Battalion on Attu illustrates his activities and his desire for mail from home: "After leaving a harbor in Japan on November 3rd...correspondence is delayed or else they are sinking to the bottom of the sea before reaching the mainland. The octopus are probably reading and laughing right this moment. Well, where am I located at the present time? Landed at Attu Island of the Aleutians on the 2nd of February (1943). I am to defend this island and construct an air port, (sic) and make it an advance base of Japan. There is constant bombing by enemy planes day after day. We are helpless to plane attacks, we run to our fox-holes, (sic) but don't know when we'll be bombed to bits. Please send me a watch, a pocket watch, if I'm not asking too much. There is no ink either. Please send me a safety razor. Living in isolation is an extreme hardship and there are a great deal of shortages. Also send some thread and needles. There is a shortage of cigarettes among my buddies, if you can spare some, please do so. Received your package, and it came just in time to help me out of my shortages. I shall end my letter now. Please take care of yourself. My regards to everybody."<sup>234</sup> From the content of this letter it appears that censorship to protect operational security was not applied by the Japanese.

Shrouded from their enemy by heavy fog, the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division landed on Attu late on the afternoon of 11 May 43. To retain the element of surprise no pre-invasion naval bombardment was conducted. At Massacre Bay in the south the Southern Force landed elements of four battalions and attacked up the valley, climbing the steeply rising terrain towards the ridges 1,500 to 2,000 feet high, slogging through the boggy turf against the highly camouflaged, well prepared Japanese defense. The Northern Force, with elements of two battalions, landed at Holtz Bay on narrow, rocky beaches that merged with tundra and mud so deep that not even tracked vehicles could move through the landing sites or the terrain beyond the beach.

<sup>232</sup> PFC Ernest Uno letter to his sister Mae, Andrew Carroll, *War Letters: Extraordinary Correspondence from American Wars*, (New York: Scribner, 2001), 225.

<sup>233</sup> Frank Walker, "The Postal Service at War," United States at War, December 7, 1942 – December 7, 1943 (Washington: Army & Navy Journal, 1943), as reproduced by Kurt Greenbaum in "Wartime Postmaster Details the Work of Mail Delivery in WWII,"; Monica Cronin, "U.S. Combat Morale in the World Wars: The European Theater of Operations" (2017). Undergraduate Honors Thesis Paper, College of William and Mary. <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/honorsthesis/1104> 49-50.

<sup>234</sup> Excerpts from the diary/letter of an unknown Japanese private found on Attu. The translation was done by 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division G-2. <http://aleutians.hlswilliwaw.com/Attu/html/attu-tsukiji-diary-translation.htm> (Tokai University Peace and War On Line, Torikai Lab Network web site. Accessed March 20, 2016.) <http://torikai.starfree.jp/1943/attu.html>

Before dawn, the 7<sup>th</sup> Scout Company and the 7<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Troop paddled small rubber boats ashore commando-style from two submarines onto Beach Scarlet, nine miles northwest of Chichagof Harbor. They met no opposition and moved inland. The fact that the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division had two reconnaissance units was a result of its rapid and incomplete transition from motorized to light infantry. The 7<sup>th</sup> Scout Company was the type of unit that a light division would have to infiltrate enemy lines to perform dismounted reconnaissance and surveillance missions. The 7<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Troop was a holdover from the motorized division structure; a cavalry unit designed to perform the traditional mounted missions of reconnaissance, screen, flank, and guard. In addition to their initial mission of reconnaissance of the landing beach and the enemy's defenses, the two units were to link-up and move to occupy positions at the head of one of the valleys running back from Holtz Bay.



*Figure 3-6: Massacre Bay, Attu, 11 May 1943. The first wave penetrates the fog on its way to the beach. The destroyer USS Pruitt tries to guide infantry landing craft moving toward Massacre Bay. (U.S. Navy, Accessed March 19, 2016. <http://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2011/08/world-war-ii-battle-of-midway-and-the-aleutian-campaign/100137/>).*

Meanwhile, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry landed at Beach Red as the nucleus of the Northern Force.<sup>235</sup> They faced a daunting task; they had to surmount two formidable obstacles. First was to thread their landing craft through the rock-studded approach to the narrow, rocky beach, there to unload only two or three boats at a time. Then, after slowly building up combat power, they had to scale a steep escarpment just 75 feet from the water's edge and rising to 250 feet above the beach. Because of the dense fog, H-Hour had been postponed twice in the hope of better visibility, and the men had been in their boats on the choppy water for seven hours. Luckily, the fog that was preventing their landing also concealed them from the Japanese. Finally, at 1500 hours they were given the order to proceed. Once ashore they began to move down the west side of Holtz Bay. The landing had been unopposed, but the Japanese were waiting for them and just short of their initial objective Hill X, they were halted by heavy enemy fire.<sup>236</sup>

To the south, the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry, made the division's main attack in Massacre Bay. They landed unopposed on Beaches Blue and Yellow, approximately six miles south of Chichagof Harbor. Their landing had also been delayed because of high waves and dense fog, which caused the 2d Battalion, 32d Infantry Regiment, to have to wait aboard ship until the next day. This lessened the available attacking force by a third.<sup>237</sup>

As the Americans moved forward from Massacre Bay the boggy muskeg sagged under the weight of even a single man, slowing them to a snails' pace. They had to pause to rest every 300 to 400 yards. Trucks, jeeps, trailers, and towed artillery quickly sank up to the under carriage within 100 yards of the beaches. The supporting 105 mm artillery never got off the beach.<sup>238</sup> In fact, the problem of cross-country movement was so severe that in the first six days of the operation the Americans only gained 4,000 yards of ground in their advance up Massacre Bay, and some of the landing force had to be diverted to moving supplies and ammunition by hand as

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<sup>235</sup> From messages recorded in the G-3 Journal File, HQ TF 51.4, and G-3 Journal vouchers, 11 May 43, Maneuver Center of Excellence Libraries, HQ Donovan Research Library, Fort Benning, Georgia, author's collection; Smith, *Preliminary Report on Attu Landing*, 6-7; ONI Combat Narrative, *Aleutians Campaign*, 79-81; and *Attu Operations* (General Brown's report), 20.

<sup>236</sup> HQ TF 51.4, G-3 Journal File, 11 May 43; Smith, *Preliminary Report on Attu Landing*, 6-7; ONI Combat Narrative, *Aleutians Campaign*, 79-81.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Brian Garfield. *The Thousand-Mile War: World War II in Alaska and the Aleutians*. (Juneau: University of Alaska Press, 1995), 222; Boyes, 9. Eventually, two batteries (12 guns) of 75mm howitzers were laboriously moved 1000 yards inland by hand.

all other means were defeated by the muck.<sup>239</sup>

Although the fog had initially concealed the attackers from the Japanese, by 1000 hours on 11 May 43, Colonel Yamasaki received the news that the American invasion force had finally arrived. Yamasaki responded by strengthening the defensive positions that guarded the passes leading out of Massacre Valley. Then, in the late afternoon he ordered his men to emerge from the protection of their caves to occupy the prepared outer defenses surrounding Chichagof Harbor. Overall, their perimeter extended from Hill X on the west arm of Holtz Bay, southward to Jarmin Pass, and then eastward to Sarana Bay.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Brian Garfield. *The Thousand-Mile War: World War II in Alaska and the Aleutians*. (Juneau: University of Alaska Press, 1995), 224. At times, almost half of the attacking force was instead occupied with moving supplies by hand onto the island and up to the forward line of troops.

<sup>240</sup> Japanese Monograph 46, 111-18; Morison, *Aleutians, Gilberts Marshalls*, 43.



*Figure 3-7: Artillery tractor mired in muskeg, Massacre Bay, Attu, 11 May 1943. (U.S. Army Signal Corps. NARA 2, RG111-147-171524. Accessed March 19, 2016.).*

The Japanese defensive positions overlooked the valley from high ridgelines that were obscured in the mist. From these trenches they could see the attacking Americans without being seen and could pin them down in the waterlogged muskeg with mortars and mountain artillery joining the rifle and machine gun fire to stop the attackers.<sup>241</sup>

The Americans found themselves unable to maneuver in any direction, having advanced just 3,000 yards from the beach that they had landed upon five hours earlier.<sup>242</sup> To break the stalemate, they requested fire support from the 105mm. howitzers back on the beachhead. The artillery fired at a target on the high ground at the head of the valley. The recoil from the gun

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<sup>241</sup> U.S. Army Medical Department, Office of Medical History, Chapter V, “The Aleutians”, <http://history.amedd.army.mil/booksdocs/wwii/ColdInjury/Chapter05.htm>

<sup>242</sup> BCT 17-2, After Action Report and Unit Journal (11 May 43); RLG 17, After Action Report (11 May 43).



jammed its trails 18 inches into the tundra. As soon as the American artillery fire ended, the Japanese opened fire again and the American advance once more stalled. Neither battalion was to receive effective fire support from the field artillery, or from naval gunfire in the first few days because the thick fog made accurate, observed fires impossible.<sup>243</sup> One officer recorded that: “Fired on call target... Visibility nil. Cannot contact spotter on radio. May have hit him instead of target.”<sup>244</sup>

While the main effort had been attacking up Massacre Valley, other small units had been sent out to reconnoiter and provide flank security under circumstances that would severely test their skill and tenacity. One platoon from Company F, 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry had been reinforced with a light machine gun section and a 60 mm mortar squad, with the mission of seizing a steep pass leading over Gilbert Ridge to Sarana Beach and the "high ground along right flank" (i.e., Gilbert Ridge), to establish defensive positions in the Sarana end of the pass from which Sarana Beach and Lake Nicholas could be fired upon, and to "clear the ridge of enemy".<sup>245</sup> The force of fifty men had moved east along the shore of Massacre Bay and up into a steep pass leading over Gilbert Ridge to Sarana Beach. They were now out of contact with the main assault force and could not expect help.<sup>246</sup>

After climbing all night, the platoon found itself on the morning after D-day on the Sarana Beach side of the mountains. They also found themselves with unexpected guests. Lieutenant Colonel William J. Verbeck, the G-2 of the Alaska Defense Command, was conducting a daring reconnaissance mission of his own with two Alaska Scouts. He spent the night with the platoon and provided them with insights into Japanese tactics and the Japanese language, which the platoon leader later used to his advantage to surprise the enemy during a later chance encounter in the fog.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> BCT 17-3, After Action Report and Unit Journal (11 May 43).

<sup>244</sup> Garfield, 230. From Colonel William Alexander's operations log, 13 May 1943. The observer was not hit.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> BCT 17-2, Action Report and Unit Journal (11 May 43); RLG 17, Action Rpt (11 May 43).

<sup>247</sup> Tyng, *The Capture of Attu*, 31-32; U.S. Army Infantry Combat Lessons Learned: Attu, 11-12. Verbeck, "on his own initiative... personally led a reconnaissance party over the island... greatly assisted by the advance information he obtained... used his knowledge and familiarity with the language and customs of the Japanese to trick and outwit the enemy." William Jordan Verbeck Obituary, *The Taro Leaf*, Vol 19(4) 1965-1966, The 24th Infantry Division Association; "General Verbeck War Hero Dies, Post Standard of Syracuse, N.Y. undated"

The next day, the Japanese discovered the platoon and for three days the Americans fought off strong enemy attacks while they struggled to move westward along Gilbert Ridge. They observed several hundred Japanese troops improving defensive positions on Sarana Nose but were unable to communicate with higher headquarters due to faulty radios. They continued to move along the ridge in the dense fog while fighting off superior enemy forces to physically link up with other American forces. For four long, cold, and sleepless days, and nights they persevered without food or water. They were finally able to link-up with the main force in Massacre Valley on 15 May 43. They were all suffering from exposure, several were wounded and two had been killed in action, but they had accomplished their mission.<sup>248</sup>

By 2130 hours 11 May 43, five hours after the main landings had begun, the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division had a total of 3,500 men ashore. As the long day ended, the gathering darkness and the thick fog merged to obscure the terrain completely.<sup>249</sup> The Provisional Battalion had spent most of the day climbing up a steep valley leading away from Beach Scarlet. They reached what appeared to be the summit of the pass at an elevation of nearly 2,500 feet by midafternoon. From that point onward they found that their already sketchy maps were simply blank.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> RLG 17 Action Report, Overlay, 11-14 May; Personal Narratives by Lt Charles K. Paulson, Corporal Mike M. Brusuelas, and Corporal Paul H. Doty, in *The Capture of Attu*, 27-31. The quotations are from Field Order No. 1, Plan E (corrected copy), 2 May 43, in Landing Force (Task Force 51.4) G-3 Journal Vouchers (2 May).

<sup>249</sup> BCT 17-1, Unit journal for 11 May; Smith, *Preliminary Report on Attu Landing*, 6-7; ONI Combat Narrative, *Aleutians Campaign*, 81 The Smith report places the first encounter with the Japanese at 1900, which does not quite correspond with the unit journal.

<sup>250</sup> Maj Gen Eugene M. Landrum, CG Landing Force, "Report of Operations-Attu, 22 Jun 43", 3-4; ONI Combat Narrative, *Aleutians Campaign*, 78-79; Drummond, *Attu Operation*, 1, 99-102; Personal Narrative by 1st Sgt. Fenton Hamlin, in the War Department's *The Capture of Attu: As Told by the Men Who Fought There* (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1944), 64-68.

### 3.2.1. Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi: The Diary.

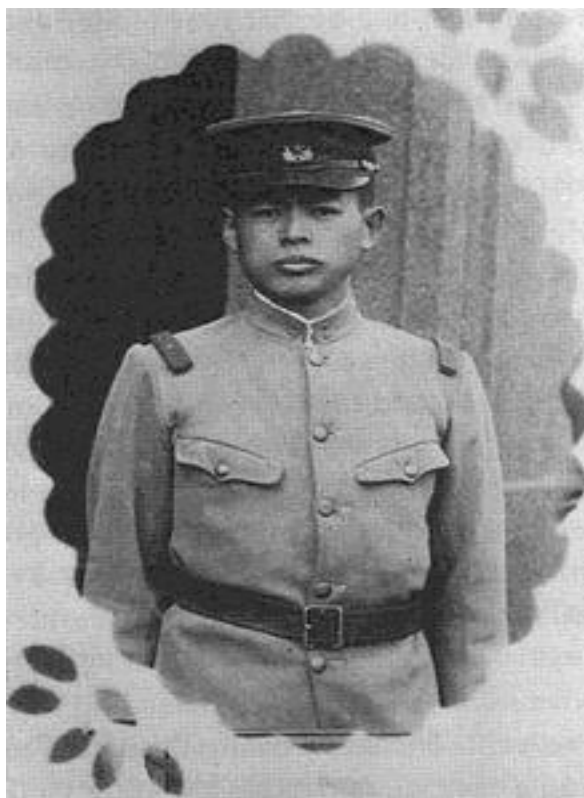


Figure 3-8: Dr. Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi after his induction into the Imperial Japanese Army in 1941. (Accessed March 16, 2016. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul\\_Nobuo\\_Tatsuguchi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Nobuo_Tatsuguchi) ).

Dr. Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi, was assigned to the Northern 5216 Detachment, North Sea Defense Field Hospital of the Imperial Japanese Army on Attu. Raised in the Christian Seventh-day Adventist faith, Tatsuguchi had immigrated from Hiroshima, Japan to Los Angeles, California in 1926 to attend college. He graduated from medical school there in 1937 and returned to Japan to work in the sanitarium founded by his father in 1939. He was conscripted into the Imperial Japanese Army in January 1942.<sup>251</sup> His personal diary, which was captured by the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division at the end of the battle, recorded his observations and experiences throughout the battle. There he quietly recorded the tragedies of the war, his own suffering, his struggle to care for the wounded in his field hospital, and the last moments of Japanese troops on

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<sup>251</sup> Mark Obmascik, *The Storm on Our Shores: One Island, Two Soldiers, and the Forgotten Battle of World War II*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2019), 5, 10, 36.

Attu. The diary is riddled with misspellings and grammatical errors induced in the process of its repeated translation and reproduction, until eventually the original version was lost altogether. Nevertheless, it offers a unique window into the Japanese perspective of the battle. His diary entry for May 12, 1943, reads, “Carrier based plane flew over, fired at it...Air raids carried out frequently...Infantry, American transports, about 41, began landing at Massacre Bay.”<sup>252</sup>

### 3.3. Sarana Ridge to Jarmin Pass.

The next day, 12 May 43, the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division continued its two-pronged attack toward Jarmin Pass. Although supported by naval gunfire and air support, the frontal assaults of the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry failed to gain any ground. Because neither Gilbert Ridge nor Henderson Ridge had been cleared, both battalions came under fire from each flank as well as from the front. The 2d Battalion, 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry, which had been ordered to hold its position to block the Sarana-Massacre pass, instead found it necessary to move forward over very rough terrain in the face of heavy fire. Valiant attempts by the 3d Battalion, 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry on the southwest side of Massacre Valley to reach the pass, which was the regimental objective, failed with heavy losses. Among the casualties was Colonel Edward P. Earle, the Regimental Commander, who was killed by machine gun fire while moving with one of his forward elements. His death was a severe blow to the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry and to the division as well, as General Brown was then forced to place Colonel Wayne C. Zimmerman in command of the regiment, thereby depriving himself of an extremely capable chief of staff just when he needed him the most to make sense of an increasingly complicated battle.<sup>253</sup> Both battalions sent patrols forward to probe the enemy positions in hopes of finding a way to outflank the Japanese defenses. At that time, the 2d Battalion, 32d Infantry finally came ashore at Massacre Bay. This was a critical improvement in the tactical situation for

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<sup>252</sup> Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi, “Diary”, Captured, 29 May 1943. Historians have discovered as many as ten differing translations of the diary. I have used the one found in Verbeck, “*Action on Attu: A Summary of Information of the Enemy Obtained During the Operations of the Force on Attu*”, G-2 Alaska Defense Command, 30 July 1943. I think it is the most accurate translation, because it was done soon after it was obtained. A Japanese language version from the Tokai University, Peace and War On Line, Torikai Lab Network web site was also consulted. <http://torikai.starfree.jp/1943/attu.html>

<sup>253</sup> Brian Garfield. *The Thousand-Mile War: World War II in Alaska and the Aleutians*. (Juneau: University of Alaska Press, 1995), 228.

the Americans, as they needed more combat power to overcome both the Japanese and the inertia induced by the terrain and weather.

Meanwhile, in the northern sector, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry had found that they had lost the initiative overnight. The high ground that the battalion had reached on the night of D-day was 900 yards short of their initial objective, Hill X and that the enemy was now dug in on Hill X. The battalion conducted a double envelopment attack which succeeded in gaining a foothold on the crest of the hill, however the Japanese held firm on the reverse slope. It took another two days before they were able to force the Japanese off the reverse slope of the hill. As they attempted to do so, one company that was moving south, down the western arm of Holtz Bay, began to climb up the nearby ridge. Upon entering a gully, they were attacked by enemy troops who had occupied the position only the night before. For 12 long hours, the company was pinned down by Japanese machine guns, mortars, and artillery. Two other companies, supported by artillery and close air support, tried in vain to dislodge the Japanese. It was not until 1700 hours, that the Americans slowly began to gain ground. Eventually, they took the ridge only to confront a violent Japanese counterattack. As the Japanese charged, their poorly aimed artillery fire fell indiscriminately on friend and foe alike. The fierce firefight lasted 20 minutes, but finally the Americans were able to stave off the Japanese counterattack and retain control of the ridge that they then named Bloody Point. At the end of D plus 3, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry, was only 300 yards closer to Holtz Bay.<sup>254</sup>

In Massacre Valley, the continuing efforts of the Southern Force to take Jarmin Pass failed, even though the 2d Battalion, 32d Infantry was now reinforcing the 3d Battalion, 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry. American casualties mounted and the front-line positions remained almost in the same place as they were on D-day. Naval gunfire and air support continued whenever weather conditions allowed, but the results were insubstantial. By D plus 3 (14 May 43), the main effort assault in Massacre Valley appeared to be completely stalled.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> BCT 17-1 Unit Journal and Overlays; Smith, *Preliminary Report on Attu Landing*.

<sup>255</sup> RLG 17, Action Report and Overlays (11-14 May); BCT 17-2, Unit Journal; and BCT 17-3, Unit Journal.

The terrible Aleutian weather had frustrated the American advance almost as much as the Japanese defenders. Although naval gunfire continued to attack reported enemy positions it did so without the benefit of observation to adjust the fires, and the American ships expended their ammunition without achieving measurable effects. The fog that obscured the targets was an even greater hindrance to close air support.

There were only eight days out of the nineteen in combat that even allowed for air support. Only two days of clear weather occurred.<sup>256</sup> When air and artillery support were available, gains were made as on 15-16 May 43. However, most of the time the results were negligible and often had tragic costs. On 14 May 43 two F4F Wildcat fighter-bombers crashed due to the high winds and one B24 Liberator bomber crashed into a ridgeline shrouded in the fog. A total of eleven U.S. airmen were killed.<sup>257</sup>



*Figure 3-9: 14 May 43. One of two F4F Wildcat aircraft crashes in Massacre Valley, 14 May 43. (U.S. Navy. Public domain. Accessed March 2, 2021.).*

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<sup>256</sup> Cloe, 118,

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 83-84.

The Americans attempted to hasten the capture of Jarmin Pass with a coordinated simultaneous attack by both the Southern and Northern Landing Forces. While the Southern Landing Force would continue to be the main effort in its continued attack up Massacre Valley, the Northern Landing Force would drive the enemy off the reverse slope of Hill X, seize Moore Ridge, and attack the defenders of Jarmin Pass from the rear. With three battalions now ashore in each landing force it was felt that sufficient combat power could be brought to bear, even though several hundred men were still dedicated to the task of moving ammunition forward, and the casualties, rearward by hand.

It was now Day Five of the planned three-day operation. The stress of the battle was felt all the way to the topmost leaders. The men were freezing, hungry, and frustrated. In the 3d Battalion 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry all but one company commander had been killed or wounded and the battalion commander had been relieved.<sup>258</sup> Nevertheless, the situation was not as stalemated as it appeared. At 1100 hours on 15 May 43, the fog lifted in the northern sector to reveal that the Japanese had withdrawn to the center of Holtz Valley. They shortened their defensive perimeter to accommodate their reduced strength, but left behind caches of food and ammunition that apparently could not be removed.<sup>259</sup> This withdrawal allowed the Provisional Battalion to break out of its positions, no longer being under fire from above, and to link up with the two other battalions of the Northern Landing Force near Hill X. The Northern Landing Force now entered Holtz Valley to chase the retreating Japanese only to find that the clear skies also benefitted the Japanese who could fire more accurately at them from their positions on Moore Ridge. Although slowed by this fire, the Americans continued to press their attack until the lead company was mistakenly hit by a friendly air strike that ended the pursuit.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Edmund G. Love, *The Hourglass, A History of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in World War II*, (Washington, D.C.: Infantry Journal Press, 1950), 50-54.

<sup>259</sup> *Combat Lessons No. 2, "Rank and File in Combat: What They're Doing; How They Do It."*, (Washington D.C.: Operations Division of the War Department General Staff, 1943), 4.

<sup>260</sup> BCT 17-3, After Action Report and Unit Journal (15-16 May); RLG 17, After Action Report (17 May 43).



*Figure 3-10: American infantry fighting in the Jarmin Pass area, Attu, 26-27 May 1943. (U.S. Army Signal Corps photograph. (Accessed March 19, 2016.*

<http://vilda.alaska.edu/cdm/search/searchterm/Battle%20of%20Attu/order/nosort> ).

The Northern Force captured Moore Ridge itself during the night of 16 May 43. This placed 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry and 2d Battalion, 32d Infantry directly in the rear of the Japanese defending the Massacre Valley pass, and on the morning of 17 May, the Japanese began to withdraw toward Chichagof Harbor.<sup>261</sup> With the east arm of Holtz Bay now free of the enemy, American resupply by the sea was possible. This greatly lessened the logistical strain on the Northern Force. In the southern sector, the other two battalions of the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry also found that the Japanese positions in Jarmin Pass had been abandoned, and the Southern Landing Force moved to occupy the pass that had been their original D-day objective.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> BCT 17-3, After Action Report and Unit Journal (17-18 May); RLG 17, After Action Report (18 May 43).

<sup>262</sup> RLG 17, After Action Report (19-21 May 43).



Dr. Tatsuguchi provides a contrasting glimpse of the Japanese perspective of the battle at this point. On May 13, 1943, Tatsuguchi wrote: “The enemy has advanced to the bottom of *Misuma Yama* ...Have engaged them...upon the unexpected attack the AA Machine Cannon was destroyed and we have withdrawn. In the night attack we have captured 20 enemy rifles.”<sup>263</sup> Tatsuguchi continues his narrative:

May 14, 1943. Battle. Our two subs from Kiska assisted us greatly...damaged two enemy ships. Lieutenant Sueyuki died by shot from rifle. Continuous flow of wounded in the hospital. In the evening the U.S. forces used gas, but no damage was done because of strong winds...Our desperate defense is holding up well.<sup>264</sup>

On 15 May 1943, Tatsuguchi wrote: “Continuous flow of casualties into our field hospital caused by the fierce bombardment of enemy land and naval forces...In a raid, I was ordered to the West Arm, but it was called off.”<sup>265</sup> Tatsuguchi next recorded this:

May 16, 1943. Battle. If *Shitagata Dai* is occupied by the enemy the fate of the East Arm is decided, so burn all documents and prepare to destroy patients. (sic) At that time, there was an order from headquarters of sect. unit. Proceeded to Chichagof Harbor by way of the *Umanose*. 0100 in the morning, patients from Ind. Inf. Was lost (sic) so accompanied with patient I started. (sic) There was an air raid so took refuge in the former field hospital cave. The guns of a Lockheed spitted fire (sic) and flew past our cave.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>263</sup> Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi, 1; The Americans referred to *Misuma Yama* as “Hill X”.

<sup>264</sup> Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi, 1; The claim of the American use of gas was carefully investigated at the direction of LTG Simon B. Buckner. It is probable that smoke rounds were fired by the Americans to visually mark targets or to obscure friendly movements in the valley below were misidentified by the Japanese as chemical munitions.

<sup>265</sup> Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi, “Diary”, 1; Captured.

<sup>266</sup> Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi, “Diary”, 1; Captured; the “*Umanose*” or the Horse’s Back referred to is Jarmin Pass. *Shitagata Dai* or *Shiba Dai* (“Grassy Knoll” in Japanese) was known as Hill X to the Americans.



Figure 3-11: 7<sup>th</sup> Division troops after taking a Japanese trench in the snow and ice on Attu. May 1943. (U.S. Army Signal Corps. Public domain.).

**Sustaining Morale - Food:** “Nothing undermines morale more decisively than hunger,” wrote Sir Basil Liddell Hart in his book, *Thoughts on War*. Lack of food, loss of sleep and being cold are stressors that can erode fighting spirit. Maslow’s hierarchy lists physiological needs as the foundation for behavioral motivation.<sup>267</sup> The conditions of modern combat directly attack the attainment of these needs, threatening accomplishment of the mission unless the individual soldier and the unit can overcome these obstacles.

On Attu both sides had to surmount these challenges. Both adversaries faced shortages of food. The Americans suffered high casualties from exposure to the weather. They had failed to understand the adverse effects that the terrain and weather would have on their forces and thus were insufficiently supplied with food and appropriate clothing. The Japanese positions on the other hand were “well supplied with ammunition and rations”, however, it seemed that they “never conceded that he would not regain lost terrain... (and thus) did not destroy his stores in retreat...expected to recapture them...or, decimated had neither time nor manpower to destroy, hide, remove ammo, food, guns, *sake*, medicine...”<sup>268</sup>

When discussing the 7<sup>th</sup> Division’s will to fight, it is important to recognize what was their greatest challenge in this, their first fight. Four days into the operation, the combined effect

<sup>267</sup> Abraham H. Maslow, *A Theory of Human Motivation*, *Psychological Review*, (1943), 50, 370-396.

<sup>268</sup> Tyng, et.al. *Action on Attu*, 3, 15.

of mistakes in logistical planning had reached a critical point, and the invasion almost foundered at this point solely on account of the logistical failures. By 14 May 43 many soldiers were suffering from exposure, several had not eaten in days, and many of the key leaders were out of action.<sup>269</sup> Replacements or reinforcements were not available because the troops that might have fulfilled that role were fully employed performing logistical tasks like carrying ammunition, food, and supplies to the front lines.<sup>270</sup> The planners had not understood that vehicles and artillery could not be moved over the muskeg. Nor did they anticipate that food, ammunition, and casualties would then have to be carried by hand, by the infantry as they climbed the wind swept, icy ridges in slow movements of only a few yards per hour, often being forced to hold on to the man in front in order not to become separated in the wind and fog or fall down the steep slopes.<sup>271</sup> At this point in the fight, both the Japanese and the Americans were grimly hanging on.

**Sustaining Morale – Logistical Planning:** “It was difficult to furnish hot meals to the troops due to the demand for ammunition...on this terrain...It takes hours to move a Battalion or at times even a company...500 additional troops were used to hand-carry to the battalion in one day.”<sup>272</sup> The troops’ bulky rucksacks and sleeping bags were landed after the initial force went ashore. The sleeping bags which were difficult to carry nevertheless could have helped prevent many exposure casualties but these did not reach them until the fourth or fifth day of the operation. There is no indication that the Japanese suffered as much as the Americans because they had clothing better suited to the environment and they occupied the high ground and thus were not stuck in the icy water and slush in the valleys.<sup>273</sup>

Despite their change of operational area from the North African desert, the 7<sup>th</sup> Division did not receive a complete refit of equipment for the cold, wet, and windy Aleutian environment. The most egregious lapse of judgment by the logistics planners was the failure to issue waterproof boots to all the troops which contributed to some 1,200 cold weather casualties that

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<sup>269</sup> Lynn D. Smith, *Preliminary Report On Attu Landings*. (Presidio of San Francisco: Headquarters, Western Defense Command and Fourth Army, 30 May 1943), 20.

<sup>270</sup> Lynn D. Smith, *Preliminary Report On Attu Landings*. (Presidio of San Francisco: Headquarters, Western Defense Command and Fourth Army, 30 May 1943), 20.

<sup>271</sup> Garfield, 201-202. Friction between the 7<sup>th</sup> Division staff and the Alaskan Defense Force staff caused logistical admonitions and advice given to go unheeded.

<sup>272</sup> BCT 17-2, Observations made during and prior to operations on ATTU ISLAND, 13 June 43, 3-4.

<sup>273</sup> R. D. Orr, “Report on Attu Operations, May 11-June 16, 1943”, 30 July 1943, 84-86, 91-92.

resulted from frostbitten feet.<sup>274</sup> The items that were subsequently issued did not sufficiently counter the special cold weather environment that the troops encountered.<sup>275</sup> Because of the lack of time to fully equip and train the force, the division went with what it had and did without the cold weather gear.



*Figure 3-12: American troops hauling supplies forward to units fighting the Japanese in the Jarmin Pass-Chichagof area, May 1943. (U.S. Army Signal Corps photograph. (Accessed March 19, 2016. <http://vilda.alaska.edu/cdm/search/searchterm/Battle%20of%20Attu/order/nosort> ).*

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<sup>274</sup> R. D. Orr, "Report on Attu Operations, May 11-June 16, 1943", dated 30 July 1943, 84-86. U.S. Army Medical Department, Office of Medical History, Chapter V," The Aleutians", <http://history.amedd.army.mil/booksdocs/wwii/ColdInjury/Chapter05.htm>

<sup>275</sup> Walter Karig and Eric Purdon, "Battle Report, Pacific War: Middle Phase", New York, Rinehart, 1977, 317. OCMH Collection World War II Pacific, File Folder – Aleutians Campaign.

**Sustaining Morale - Food:** 1SG Hamlin, of the 7th Scout Company recounted the challenges to maintaining the will to fight and win during this period: "Fatigue, rations almost gone, cold, wet, the thick fog defeated the aerial resupply efforts...Fourth day without food, LT Stott found two old dirty pieces of candy in his pocket and shared them with SGT Petruska who affirmed, "That was one of the best things that ever happened to me."<sup>276</sup>

Several troops vomited green bile after several days without food while fighting the terrain, the weather, and the Japanese.<sup>277</sup> The failure to supply proper cold weather gear and food both threatened combat effectiveness from cold weather injuries as well as from the adverse psychological effect of such sustained discomfort and deprivation. To have food was a comfort. To have hot food was a luxury in such circumstances.

Not only were the physical needs of the troops not properly addressed, the combined effects of the terrain and weather on the plan to logistically sustain the scheme of maneuver were not properly foreseen. In the first six days of the operation, a significant number of the American landing force had to be diverted to moving supplies and ammunition by hand to overcome the inertia of the muskeg. Fuel, food, and water would need to be transported by hand over the muskeg, with two men devoted to that effort for every man engaged in combat operations.<sup>278</sup> A battalion sized force of 400 infantry soldiers was soon engaged in this non-combat mission, reducing the available frontline combat power by one third.<sup>279</sup> This was the only method capable of resupplying the division. This method was slow and cumbersome and, owing to its *ad hoc* nature, keeping it running required immense tenacity and hands on leadership.

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<sup>276</sup> Sewell Tyng, "The Capture of Attu: As Told by the Men Who Fought There" (The Infantry Journal, Washington DC: War Department, October 1944, First Edition), Part Two: Interviews, 67-68.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> Garfield, 201-202.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.



*Figure 3-13: Soldiers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division conduct logistics operations. (U.S. Army Signal Corps, National Archives 2, Record Group 111-175-179468. Accessed March 19, 2016. <http://vilda.alaska.edu/cdm/search/searchterm/Battle%20of%20Attu/order/nosort> ).*

The carrying parties were initially organized by randomly assigning individual soldiers to the task, without consideration of maintaining unit organization. They were forced to pass ammunition, food, and supplies up a steep mountain pass by hand. Later, they ingeniously rigged a pulley system to winch a jeep up over another steep escarpment.<sup>280</sup> They required strong leadership and lacked cohesion, and morale suffered as the men quickly tired of the tedious and difficult task that required hours of effort to complete. Despite this prodigious effort, it took twenty-four to forty-eight hours for some forward infantry platoons to receive a re-supply of food, water, and ammunition.<sup>281</sup>

The evacuation of non-ambulatory casualties took about two days and up to 8 litter bearers. Many patients had to be carried a mile or so from the front over very rough terrain. There was no other means of transportation.<sup>282</sup> Nevertheless, many prodigious feats of

<sup>280</sup> John Haile Cloe, *Attu: The Forgotten Battle*, (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2017), 80.

<sup>281</sup> Lynn D. Smith, *Preliminary Report On Attu Landings*. (Presidio of San Francisco: Headquarters, Western Defense Command and Fourth Army, 30 May 1943), 20.

<sup>282</sup> Garfield, 225, 232-233.

improvisation and ingenuity were accomplished in overcoming the challenges of sustaining the fight and overall, the 7<sup>th</sup> Division's will to fight and to win did not waver.



Archives, University of Alaska, Fairbanks

Figure 3-14: Evacuating an American casualty, May 1943, Massacre Valley, Attu, (U.S. Army Signal Corps. Accessed March 19, 2016. <http://www.nps.gov/places/attu-battlefield-and-us-army-and-naval-airfields.htm> ).

**Sustaining Morale – American Medical Care:** An important factor in maintaining will to fight is medical support. “*The object of an army, of course, is the defeat of the enemy, and to this everything else must give way... The modern soldier is believed to fight better if he knows that in case of being wounded, he will receive prompt attention...*”<sup>283</sup> Knowing that competent and caring medical personnel would spare no effort and undertake enormous risk to treat and evacuate them gave soldiers courage and motivation to fight. American medics were heralded because they would go anywhere, at any time to rescue and treat the wounded. On average, 1 in 29 wounded Americans died in the Second World War, a significant improvement from the First World War average of 1 in 12.<sup>284</sup> On Attu, cold weather injuries accounted for 31% of the Americans’ total losses. One thousand, two hundred troops suffered trench-foot, frostbite, or hypothermia versus one thousand, one hundred forty-eight who suffered wounds from small arms and artillery. In 22 days of action there occurred a ratio of cold injuries to wounded in action of 1:1.<sup>285</sup>

<sup>283</sup> Charles Lynch, Frank Weed, and Loy McAfee, *The Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War. Vol. 1* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923), 87.

<sup>284</sup> McManus, *Grunts*, 120.

<sup>285</sup> R. D. Orr, “Report on Attu Operations, May 11-June 16, 1943”, 30 July 1943, 84, 86.

Beyond the obvious practical purpose of restoring wounded fighting men to duty, medical care enhanced the soldiers mental and emotional well-being by showing them that they would not be abandoned and forgotten.

### 3.1.4. Clevesy Pass and Holtz Bay.

The link-up of the northern and southern American forces at the pass between Massacre Bay and Holtz Bay on 18 May 43 that followed the Japanese withdrawal to Chichagof Harbor marked the turning point of the battle. Seizing Clevesy Pass was an essential objective for the Southern Landing Force to gain access to Chichagof Harbor. The western side of the pass was dominated by Cold Mountain. Overlooking the eastern side of the pass was an escarpment named Point Able. With slow but steady resolution, the American infantry attacked and destroyed the Japanese machine gun nests and mortar pits on the frozen heights one by one, gradually tightening the noose around Chichagof Harbor.<sup>286</sup>

The initial attacks by the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry and the 32d Infantry ran into heavy machine gun fire that brought them to a halt. A second attack employed artillery firing smoke rounds, which allowed the Americans to defeat several Japanese positions on the lower edges of Cold Mountain and Point Able, but it was once again stopped by heavy Japanese fire.<sup>287</sup> However, thanks to the cover of the smoke and the fact that some of the Japanese fled their positions thinking that it was poison gas, one company of the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry had managed to take a point of high ground within Clevesy Pass.<sup>288</sup> Colonel Zimmerman's inspiring leadership and aggressive spirit were instrumental to success. He directed his troops from front line positions while under enemy artillery, machine gun, and small arms fire. He fully understood the challenges faced by his

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<sup>286</sup> RLG 17, Action Report (29-31 May) and overlays, and Report of Operations-Attu (Gen Landrum's Report), 12-13.

<sup>287</sup> Sewell Tyng, *The Capture Of Attu: As Told By The Men Who Fought There*, (Washington DC: The Infantry Journal, United States War Department, 1944), 40.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.



soldiers and he reported these forthrightly to higher headquarters, saying: "...I found most of a platoon - all dead - and identified Captain Jarmin's body..."<sup>289</sup>



*Figure 3-15: Colonel Zimmerman and Captain Mapes, Attu, May 1943. (U.S. Army Signal Corps photograph, National Archives 2, Record Group 111-156-174146. Accessed March 19, 2016.).*

Disregarding the danger, although assistants were wounded near him, his personal bravery and leadership restored confidence and aggressiveness to the soldiers, which had been badly shaken by battle casualties and exposure to the severe weather. He, himself, suffered from frostbite and swollen feet, but he concealed that fact from his men.<sup>290</sup>

<sup>289</sup> Wayne C. Zimmerman World War II papers, 1942-1944, (Archives and Special Collections, Consortium Library, University of Alaska Anchorage). Colonel Zimmerman describing the situation that he found on a leaders' reconnaissance on 17 May 1943.

<sup>290</sup> General Orders Number 31: Headquarters, U.S. Army Troops, APO 726 (Attu Landing Force), 1943. Citation to accompany the Award of the Distinguished Service Cross to Lieutenant Colonel Wayne C. Zimmerman.

**Will to Fight – Leadership:** Dr. Tatsuguchi recorded an evocative account involving Japanese leadership in his diary on May 21, 1943: “Nervousness of our Commander is severe, and he said his last words to his officers and men. He will die tomorrow. Gave all of his articles away. Hasty chap this fellow. Everyone who heard this became desperate and things became disorderly.”<sup>291</sup> When Tatsuguchi writes of the “nervous C.O.”, it is unclear whom this refers to, but it makes clear the importance of steady leadership. Leaders set the tone for morale and motivation in their units. Will to fight crumbles quickly when leaders lose confidence.<sup>292</sup> For the troops all that remains then is surrender or death.

Colonel Yamasaki recognized that his force was severely threatened now from both north and south by the converging American forces. He quietly withdrew his forces that were defending Jarmin Pass to new defensive positions on the ridgelines directly above Chichigof Harbor and the two American forces linked up at Jarmin Pass on 18 May.<sup>293</sup> Tatsuguchi now describes what must have been a Herculean effort to move the Japanese field hospital:

May 17, 1943. Battle. At night, under cover of darkness, left the cave. The stretcher went over muddy road, steep hills of no man’s land. No matter how far or how much we went, we did not get to the pass. Was rather irritated in the fog by the thought of getting lost. Sat down every 20 or 30 steps. Would sleep, dream, wake up again. ...The patient on the stretcher, who does not move is frostbitten. After all the effort, met with sector commander Col. Yamasaki. The pass is a straight line without any width and a steep line towards Chichagof Harbor. Sitting on my butt and lifting the feet, I slide very smoothly and changed directions with the sword. Slid down in about 20 min. After that arrived at Chichagoff (sic) Harbor after straggling. Time expended was 9 hours for all this, without leaving any patients.<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi, “Diary”, Captured, 2.

<sup>292</sup> Kenneth E. Hamburger, et. al. “Leadership in Combat: An Historical Appraisal.” (Unpublished Manuscript, Department of History, U.S. Military Academy, January 1, 1984; accessed from Defense Technical Information Center), 10.

<sup>293</sup> Garfield, 245.

<sup>294</sup> Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi, “Diary”, Captured, 2.

**Sustaining Morale – Japanese Medical Care:** Examining the medical care provided to the Japanese soldier presents us with a paradox. During the Russo-Japanese War, the IJA had perhaps the most efficient and sophisticated military medical system in the world. The IJA led the way in military medical planning, requiring medical support to be included in operations orders and their supply system provided the highest quality equipment and supplies to the front lines. This contributed the unprecedented result of there being fewer Japanese deaths from disease than those suffered from enemy fire.<sup>295</sup> An American doctor wrote admiringly after the war, "The supreme test of an army's medical organization comes...in time of battle...the best record ever made in that direction...was that of the Japanese in the war with Russia."<sup>296</sup> However, preserving the force merely for desperate sacrifice in battle seems to negate these accomplishments. The fact that they were willing to absorb enormous casualties, losing 18,000 soldiers during the final assault of Port Arthur hints at future sacrifice.<sup>297</sup>

Tatsuguchi's diary entry for this date also records the report that the IJN had sunk an American battleship, three destroyers, and six troop transports. However, no American ships were lost. The Tatsuguchi diary continues:

May 18. Battle. The yonegawa (sic) Det. abandoned East and West Arms and withdrew to Umanose. About 60 wounded came to the hospital. I had to care for them all by myself all through the night. Heard that the enemy carried out a landing in Chicagof (sic) Harbor...Had two grenades ready.<sup>298</sup>

From the position in Clevesy Pass that they had taken on 18 May, two American platoons were able to seize another enemy position on Engineer Hill. On the afternoon of 19 May, companies from both the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry and the 32d Infantry began to climb the snow-covered slopes of Cold Mountain. At this stage of the campaign, the infantry companies of the battalions were each reporting an average of fifty men available for duty.<sup>299</sup>

<sup>295</sup> Louis J. Seaman, *The Real Triumph of Japan*, (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1909); 120-12.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid.; Richard Gabriel and Karen Metz, *A History of Military Medicine, Vol II, From the Renaissance through Modern Times*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 225-226.

<sup>297</sup> Sakurai, Tadayoshi, *Human bullets, a soldier's story of Port Arthur*, translated by Masajiro Honda and edited by Alice Mabel Bacon, (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1907), 125, 215-226; Richard Connaughton, *Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear*, (London: Cassell, 2007), 230-246; Michael Clodfelter, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts, A Statistical Reference, Volume II: 1900-91*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 1992), 648.

<sup>298</sup> Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi, "Diary", Captured, 2.

<sup>299</sup> Tyng, *The Capture Of Attu*, 43-44.



*Figure 3-16: American 60mm mortar firing in support of riflemen, May 1943, Chichagof Ridge, Attu. (U.S. Army Signal Corps. National Archives 2, Record Group 111-157-174502. Accessed March 19, 2016. <http://vilda.alaska.edu/cdm/search/searchterm/Battle%20of%20Attu/order/nosort> ).*

Advancing against heavy fire, they used hand grenades and bayonets to oust the Japanese from their defenses. As the Americans tried to reach the north side of the mountain high explosive and smoke rounds were fired onto the enemy. Once again, the Japanese were frightened into thinking that they were under attack by chemical munitions which caused some to flee and others to don gas masks.<sup>300</sup> The Americans on Engineer Hill who were able to directly assault the northern slopes took the summit of Cold Mountain on the morning of 20 May.<sup>301</sup>

From the Tatsuguchi diary:

May 19. Battle. At night there was a phone call from section unit headquarters. Was told to translate a field order presumed to have been dropped by an enemy officer in Massacre Bay. Was ordered to draw a detail map sketch of Massacre and Holtz Bay which was in possession of Capt. Robert Edwards, Adj. of Col. Smith.<sup>302</sup>

<sup>300</sup> Ibid., 44-45. It is unclear why there was such great fear of gas attack.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid., 46-47.

<sup>302</sup> Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi, "Diary", Captured, 2. Apparently, this refers to MAJ Edward Smith and CPT Robert Edwards of 2d Bn, 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry. It is unclear how the Japanese came into possession of this document, but it demonstrates the value of exploiting combat intelligence.

Tatsuguchi continues: “May 20. Battle. The hard fighting of our 303 Bn. in Massacre Bay is fierce and to our advantage. Have captured enemy weapon and used that to fight. Mowed down 10 enemy closing in under fog. Five of our men and one medical N.C.O. died.”<sup>303</sup>

The Americans now turned to the final obstacle, Point Able. On the night of 21 May, the 32d Infantry attacked through the thick snow and bitter cold. Despite the darkness, the soldiers could be seen from 200 yards away, silhouetted against the white backdrop.<sup>304</sup> Led by an officer who was yelling insults in English at the Americans, the Japanese lobbed hand grenades down on their attackers. In the chaos, the Americans sought cover in the rocks and returned fire.



*Figure 3-17: American soldiers fighting along a ridgeline, May 1943, Holtz Bay, Attu. (U.S. Army Signal Corps. Accessed March 19, 2016. <http://vilda.alaska.edu/cdm/search/searchterm/Battle%20of%20Attu/order/nosort> ).*

In ones and twos, they began to maneuver to get a better shot at the machine guns that had them pinned down. When they pinpointed the location, a 60mm mortar was brought up to fire and it dropped six shells right into the Japanese position. A lieutenant then led a squad of

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<sup>303</sup> Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi, “Diary”, Captured, 2.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

infantry in a bayonet and grenade attack that captured the strongpoint. While this was going on, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry and the 3d Battalion, 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry cleared the remaining ridges surrounding the entrance to Chichigof Valley on the morning of 22 May.<sup>305</sup>

**Will to Fight - Leadership:** Character and competence were found to be the hallmarks of effective combat leaders. In combat, American soldiers followed officers and sergeants as much because of confidence in their leadership as because of their rank.<sup>306</sup> Infantry soldiers held those leaders who were distant from the front line and out of touch with the reality of combat in contempt, but they absolutely respected leaders who, proven in times of crisis had given the unit confidence, cohesion, and morale at a critical moment.<sup>307</sup> An imperturbable leader, cool and calm under fire, and undaunted by adversity, had the unqualified respect of the troops and was a substantial positive factor in a units' will to fight.<sup>308</sup>

Contemporary studies continue to find that strong leadership buoys the fighting spirit of men in combat. As recently as 2013 interviews with soldiers in Afghanistan found that when they were confident in the competence and caring of their leadership their individual morale and collective confidence in their unit effectiveness was equally high. Faith in competent leadership correlates across wars and is essential in soldiers having the will to fight.<sup>309</sup>

### 3.5. The Battle for Chichagof Valley.

The way was now open for the drive against Sarana Valley and Chichigof Harbor. The Americans began to push against the two ridges that lead to the harbor, named Fish Hook and Buffalo Ridge. They were both heavily defended with numerous machine gun positions. The American advance was slow as the lengthening hand-carried supply lines were ever more challenged to keep up with the demand for ammunition, food, and water. Casualties from enemy fire and the cold weather mounted. At this point, the intrepidity and tenacity of individual

<sup>305</sup> Ibid., 50-52.

<sup>306</sup> Stouffer, S. A., Lumsdaine, A. A., Lumsdaine, M. H., Williams, R. M., Jr., Smith, M. B., Janis, I. L., Star, S. A., & Cottrell, L. S., Jr., *The American Soldier: Combat and its Aftermath. (Studies in Social Psychology in World War II)*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), 126.

<sup>307</sup> McManus, *Grunts*, 114.

<sup>308</sup> Kenneth E. Hamburger, et. al. "Leadership in Combat: An Historical Appraisal." (Unpublished Manuscript, Department of History, U.S. Military Academy, January 1, 1984; accessed from Defense Technical Information Center), 10.

<sup>309</sup> "Mental Health Advisory Team 9 (MHAT 9) Report, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) 2013, Afghanistan.", Office of The Surgeon General United States Army Medical Command and Office of the Command Surgeon Headquarters, US Army Central Command (USCENTCOM), and Office of the Command Surgeon, US Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A).

American soldiers sustained the attack. One such leader was Private First-Class Fred M. Barnett of Company A, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry. On 22 May his company was pinned down by heavy machine gun fire while attempting to cross a rocky, open mountainside on Fish Hook Ridge. Suddenly, Barnett jumped up and ran toward the nearest Japanese machine gun nest. Armed with a rifle and hand grenades he attacked nine different positions alone, shooting and tossing grenades as he went. The rest of the company began to follow him but by the time they caught up with him, Barnett had killed forty-seven enemy soldiers on his own.<sup>310</sup> When later asked why he had acted so boldly, all he had to say was, “Hell, I dunno. Just got all fed up and disgusted and decided I’d get the damned thing over with, I guess.”<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> Ibid., 78-79.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

At this point Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi's description of the battle begins to reflect the mounting pressure on the Japanese defenders:

May 21. "Was strafed (sic) when amputating a patient's arm..."<sup>312</sup>

**Will to Sacrifice – Belief in Immortality:** The episode highlights a feature of the Japanese tactical culture and the willingness to sacrifice. "80 amputated arms found on ground outside of what was discovered to be hospital; **no indication of wounds to these extremities** (emphasis added) ...such high mystical patriotic fervor...so great as to banish all thought of surrender...ready to die, hoping for immortality their thoughts fixed on the Yasukuni Shrine; "EPW interrogation indicated that the Attu force believed that a submarine was tasked to take severed arms back to Japan for cremation."<sup>313</sup> Japanese soldiers believed that their sacrifices would be immortalized. Then and now, most Japanese observe a mixture of Shinto and Buddhist funeral customs which involve a meticulously planned and executed ritual of cremation and inurnment.<sup>314</sup>

May 22. 0600 air raid again. Strafing killed one medical man...May 23. Friendly naval bomber destroyed an enemy cruiser off shore (sic)...a hit was scored on tents for patients...two died instantly...Days ration 1 *go*, 5 *shaku*. Nothing else. Everybody looked around for food and stole everything they could find..."

May 24. It sleeted and was extremely cold...a medical man died instantly by penetration of shrapnel through his heart...May 25. The worst is yet to come...Bn. Commander died at Umanose...They cannot fully accommodate all the patients...Am suffering from diarrhea and am dizzy.<sup>315</sup>

**Will to Sacrifice - Enduring Privation:** Ironically, for the Japanese this morale damaging hunger might have been avoided: "For two months...the Japs had been on half rations because of the American air and Naval blockade...Hunger and food were beginning to be major preoccupations of the... garrison...in particular, the enemy was suffering a shortage of rice...nevertheless, dried foods were found in abundance...potato chips, squash chips,

<sup>312</sup> Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi, "Diary", Captured, 2.

<sup>313</sup> *Action On Attu*, G2 Alaskan Defense Command, 30 July 43, W.J. Verbeck, 20; (S-2 Journal, Headquarters RLG 17, 11 May – 31 May 43).

<sup>314</sup> Mark Rowe, "Stickers for Nails: The Ongoing Transformation of Roles, Rites, and Symbols in Japanese Funerals", (Japanese Journal of Religious Studies, Nagoya, Japan: Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, 2000) 27 (3-4): 353-378. Retrieved 13 Sep 2021.

<sup>315</sup> Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi, "Diary", Captured. (Translators note: 1 *go*, 5 *shaku* is a measurement that equals 1.5 lbs.), 2.



onions, kelp, and mushrooms. Dried flounder and dried salmon were also found...canned tuna, cod, and salmon...canned beef...canned peas, pickled carrots, mixed vegetables...some canned pineapple and large stores of tangerines."<sup>316</sup> It is unclear why so much food went unused.

The advances along Buffalo Ridge and Fish Hook Ridge were time consuming and difficult. Artillery and mortars were firing in support of the American attack with some success, but it ultimately took individual infantrymen armed with carbines, Browning Automatic Rifles (BAR), and hand grenades to assault each Japanese foxhole. The further the Americans advanced, the tougher the resistance became. The Japanese were dug in on high ground over watching every major avenue of approach from well-prepared defensive positions. Most importantly, they were properly dressed and equipped mountain troops, trained in Hokkaido and north Manchukuo.<sup>317</sup> Having lived and trained in such an environment and being acclimatized to their conditions, these mountain troops would lay motionless for hours in camouflaged positions to ambush U.S. soldiers as they passed by.

Once again, an individual soldier exemplified the heroism and fortitude of many. Private First-Class Joe P. Martinez of Company K, 32d Infantry helped break the stalemate twice when his battalion was pinned down on 26 May. He advanced alone with his BAR, firing into Japanese foxholes, and calmly reloading as he went. At the crest of cliff, he stood in the open, firing into an enemy trench until he was fatally wounded. "...He stood there it seemed like an hour, exposed wide open and ...fired until the magazine was empty." When the action was over his platoon consisted of six BAR men and 18 riflemen. They counted forty dead Japanese in the positions that they had won. Martinez was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> *Action on Attu*, 70.

<sup>317</sup> *Japanese Monograph No. 45: History of Imperial General Headquarters, Army Section (Revised Edition)*. Headquarters, United States Army, Japan, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, 1959, 22-23, 82-86; William J. Verbeck, "Action on Attu: A Summary of Information of the Enemy Obtained During the Operations of the Force on Attu", (G-2 Alaska Defense Command, 30 July 1943), 45-51.

<sup>318</sup> Sewell Tyng, "The Capture Of Attu: As Told By The Men Who Fought There: Advancing on the Fish Hook-2", Sergeant Glenn E. Swearingen and Sergeant Earl L. Marks describe the heroism of Private First-Class Joe P. Martinez, Medal of Honor recipient. (Washington D.C.: The Infantry Journal, October 1944), 89.

It took six days for the Americans to advance just 4,000 yards in their attack up Massacre Bay. The steep, icy slopes were exceedingly dangerous. During one patrol on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May, five soldiers went out but only two returned. Three men had fallen to their deaths.<sup>319</sup>



*Figure 3-18: Attu, May 1943: Aerial photograph of American troops moving into the attack single file across the steep slope of Fish Hook Ridge. Here the number of men in the fight was less important than the amount of fight in the men. (U.S. Navy, National Archives 2, Record Group 208).*

Lacking the advantage of firepower, it thus fell to the initiative of individual riflemen and aggressive maneuver by well-led fire teams and squads to take the attack to the enemy. The Unit Report of BCT 32-2 for 28 May 43 reads simply: "...Cos C and F assaulted Buffalo Ridge and

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<sup>319</sup> Richard E. Matthews, *Attu Combat Diary*, Personal diary written while the author was in hospital in summer 1943, updated in September 1980, published April 23, 1981, author's collection, 12.

seized their objective.”<sup>320</sup> This terse report belies the extraordinary valor of the men who accomplished this task. The unit had been attacking the ridge since 26 May, and the Japanese had lashed them with machine gun fire from rocks and crags all along the slope.<sup>321</sup> Repulsed with heavy losses, the Americans attacked again on 27 May. Once again, they took serious casualties and the attack stopped. As darkness fell, Company G found itself pinned down 200 yards from the rock ledge that Companies F and C occupied. The battalion commander urged them to withdraw, but the lieutenant in command advised him that, although they were beaten up, they were alright. They were right in the Japanese laps and if they pulled back, they would have to retake the ground all over again in the morning. Thus, the seventy tired and frozen fighters scratched out holes between the rocks to rest before resuming the attack in the morning.<sup>322</sup> Before daylight, the senior officer in charge, Lieutenant Stice, conducted a leader’s reconnaissance to find a new route of advance. Finding a Japanese soldier asleep in a foxhole, the lieutenant tried to take him prisoner. The Japanese soldier fought and was killed by the lieutenant’s .45 caliber M1911A1 Colt pistol.<sup>323</sup> Instantly, the fight was on as the Americans found themselves in a close-range melee with the Japanese. Grenades, bayonets, and rifle fire were exchanged in the furious charge as the rest of the battalion tried to support the hasty attack. Lieutenant Stice and Sergeant Ruiz led the way. When the fighting was over, they were both found dead just below a ledge. Their quiet epitaph: “...Cos C and F assaulted Buffalo Ridge and seized their objective.”<sup>324</sup>

During the attack on what the soldiers called, “Bloody Point” a sergeant led his squad right into the enemy command post and an artillery emplacement. In the ensuing bayonet fighting with the enemy, he was proud to see that his men did not hesitate and were doing their jobs well. He was particularly thankful that their hand-to-hand combat training had been so thorough and felt the 7<sup>th</sup> Division had the mark of confidence typical of a great unit.<sup>325</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> Sewell Tyng, “The Capture Of Attu: As Told By The Men Who Fought There: The Attack on Buffalo Ridge”, 97.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>325</sup> Richard E. Matthews, *Attu Combat Diary*, 9, 11-12. SGT Matthews personally emerged successfully from a bayonet fight against two Japanese soldiers. Unpublished memoir, Author’s collection.

### 3.6. Tenno Heika Banzai! – “Long Live the Emperor!”<sup>326</sup>

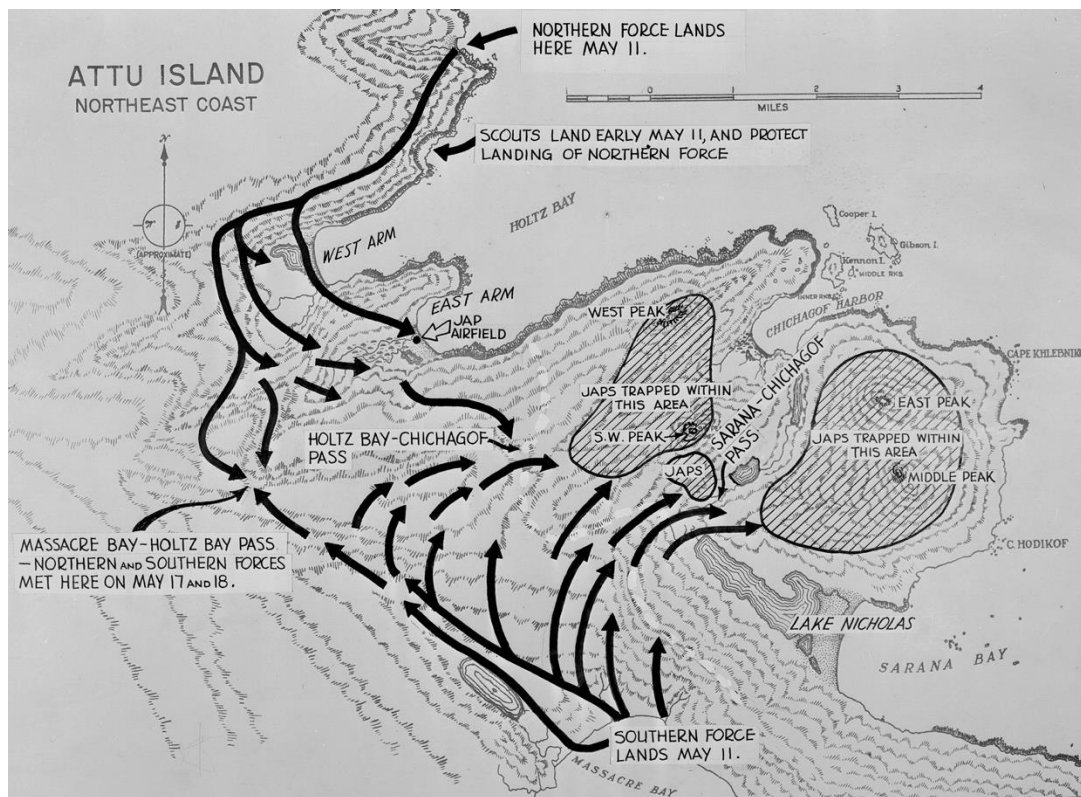


Figure 3-19: Tactical Situation, 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division on Attu, 28 May 1943. (U.S. Army, Library of Congress. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8e01339>. Public Domain.)

The Japanese were now pushed back into a couple of isolated areas near Chichagof Harbor. The Americans were positioned on the ridgelines to prevent any retreat through the various passes into one of the other valleys, however their lines in Chichagof Valley and the Sarana-Chichagof (Clevesy) Pass were thinly manned. The tragically apocalyptic denouement of the Japanese garrison was unforeseen. Dr. Tatsuguchi described the final days events from the Japanese perspective thus:

May 26...it felt like the Misumi Barracks had blown up...Consciousness became vague...One tent burned down. Hirose, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. of Medical Corps is also wounded...The last line of Umanose was broken through. No hope for reinforcement. Will die for the cause of Imperial Edict.... May 27. Diarrhea continues, pain is severe. Took everything from pills, opium, morphine, then slept

<sup>326</sup> Literal meaning: “Ten Thousand Years for His Majesty!”.

pretty well. There is less than 1000 left from 2000 troops. Wounded from coast defense unit, field hospital headquarters, field post office, the rest are on front lines.<sup>327</sup>



Figure 3-20: American soldiers advancing on the Japanese in the Chichagof Valley, 27-28 May 1943. (U.S. Army Signal Corps. National Archives 2, Record Group 111-157-174503. Accessed March 19, 2016.).

On 28 May 43, all American commanders were notified that the entire force was to attack no later than 0500 hours on 29 May 43.<sup>328</sup> On the Japanese side, Colonel Yamasaki's men had fought valiantly, but when all hope success or rescue was gone, he ordered a suicide attack for 29 May 1943. Knowing that he would never receive reinforcements and under threat of attack from his rear, he chose the destruction of his force over surrender. His order was simple but precise: "We will attack and annihilate the United States Forces...I, in the advance for the attack, will be in the center rear of the front lines."<sup>329</sup> Every remaining unit would participate, and each had a specific mission and terrain objective. From Chichagof Harbor, the 1,000 remaining Japanese

<sup>327</sup> Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi, "Diary", Captured, 3. The "Edict" referred to is probably the *Senjinkun*, the Imperial Rescript to Soldiers, etc.

<sup>328</sup> W.H. Mapes, "Action of BCT 17-2 on Attu Island, June 9, 1943", 6-7, Maneuver Center of Excellence Libraries, HQ Donovan Research Library, Fort Benning, Georgia.

<sup>329</sup> Boyes, 9-10.

would sweep down the lightly defended valley, retake Point Able and Clevesy Pass, and then seize the American artillery in Massacre Valley. It was hoped that they could then await reinforcements from Japan. Even the wounded and sick in the hospital would join in the attack if able. If they were not able, a doctor would execute them or give them a hand grenade to commit suicide with.<sup>330</sup>

**Sustaining Morale – Japanese Medical Care:** Japan entered the war with a well-equipped and well-organized medical system, but it quickly broke down in combat. From New Britain to Holtz Bay, suffering abounded for the wounded Japanese soldier with numerous instances of the being abandoned or euthanized: *"We medics truly tried to save men's lives. Gangrene set in unless an amputation was performed quickly, so the doctor's operated on men using only partial anesthesia... We left an enormous number of them behind. There weren't any stretchers, so the more or less mobile ones were given a few days' rations and told to take off... get lost. The immobile ones, they were left behind. We had only a few hand grenades and a little medicine. Soon this was used not to cure but to kill our own men. We were five or six medics with one to two hundred patients to care for. What could we do with those without arms or legs? Carry them on our backs? Instead, we'd give them a shot of opium and then inject a 20cc solution of corrosive sublimate into a vein. It took only seconds to die. I could tell from their eyes that they knew what we were doing."*<sup>331</sup>

The Japanese medical system was rife with contradictions: each soldier's blood was typed but it was not then recorded on dog tags; surgical instrument kits were exquisitely furnished and packed but haphazardly transported and distributed; sophisticated trauma surgery was done but convalescent care thereafter was lacking; finally, there was no comprehensive system for evacuating the wounded from the battlefield to the homeland. This seemingly paradoxical system that both treated and neglected the wounded may be attributed to the deeply embedded attitude expressed by a Japanese medical officer who told his interrogator that *"He could not return to his home or his parents, as all expect the soldiers to die at the front. When a soldier leaves home, he is not expected back anymore."*<sup>332</sup>

<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

<sup>331</sup> Private Second-Class Ogawa Tamotsu, Allied Translator and Interpreter Section (ATIS), South West Pacific Area, "ATIS Serial 545, Interrogation Report 395", 17.

<sup>332</sup> Meiron and Susie Harries, *Soldiers of the Sun, The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army*, (New York: Random House, 1991), 324-325.

As the battle reached its terrible conclusion, Dr. Tatsuguchi reported that:

May 28. The remaining rations is only for two days. Our artillery has been completely destroyed...The companys (sic) on the bottom of Attu Fuji (*Cold Mountain*) have been completely annihilated, except one...303 Bn. has been defeated...Continuous cases of suicide. Half of sector unit headquarters was blown away. Heard that they gave 400 shots of morphine to severely wounded and killed them.<sup>333</sup>

While certainly reflecting the dire conditions that the Japanese faced at this point, Tatsuguchi's account cannot be taken as literal fact. His description and perception of the tactical situation and unit strength would lead one to the conclusion that the *banzai* attack could never have even been mounted due the complete lack of unit cohesion, to say nothing of having insufficient numerical strength. Notwithstanding the *in-extremis* nature of the attack, sufficient armed and healthy Japanese forces remained to commit to the operation. By physically massing his forces for the charge up the valley, Colonel Yamasaki was able to pit a phalanx of perhaps 800 soldiers against approximately 300 Americans spread across the valley and up onto Buffalo and Fish Hook Ridges. The surprise, shock, and speed of the charge gave the Japanese an even greater advantage.

**Will to Sacrifice - *Sutegamari*:** Yamasaki's attack plan had precedent in feudal Japanese history and culture. At the Battle of Sekigahara, 21 October 1600, *Shimazu Yoshihiro* decided to retreat, ironically in the only direction available by directly counterattacking the enemy headquarters, thus pushing through the opponent's lines to escape. They used a specific tactic called *Sutegamari*, a fighting retreat that required the commitment of a sacrificial force that would fight to the death to allow the escape of the leader. In execution, the samurai would delay pursuers by fighting from seated positions even at the risk of being overrun. This embodies a concept found in the *budo* and *bugei* of *sutemi*: to sacrifice or throw away oneself by physically yielding a defensible physical position to unbalance the opponent's attack; mentally it displays total commitment to the action without regard for the consequences.<sup>334</sup>

<sup>333</sup> Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi, "Diary", Captured, 4. If this was accurate, there would have been nobody remaining to conduct the *gyokusai*.

<sup>334</sup> Anthony Bryant *Sekigahara 1600: The Final Struggle For Power*, Osprey Campaign Series #40. (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 79); Author's personal experience and understanding of the concept in *Judo* and *Nihon jujutsu* training.

Dr. Tatsuguchi's final diary entry reads:

May 29. Battle. Today at 2000 we assembled in front of headquarters. The field hospital took part too. The last assault is to be carried out. All the patients in the hospital are to commit suicide. Only 33 years of living and I am to die here. I have no regrets. *Banzai* to the Emperor. I am grateful I have kept the peace in my soul which Ehkist (sic) bestowed on me. At 1800 took care of all the patients with grenades. Goodbye, Taeko, my beloved wife, who loved me to the last. Until we meet again, greet you God-speed. Misaka, who just became 4 years old, will grow up unhindered. I feel sorry for you Takiko, born Feb. of this year and gone without seeing your father. Well be good. (sic) Matsuo, Ko-chan, Sake-chan, Massa-chan, Mitti-chan, Good-bye. The number participating in the attack is a little over 1000 to take enemy artillery positions. It seems that the enemy is expecting an all out (sic) attack tomorrow.<sup>335</sup>

On the night preceding the American attack scheduled for 29 May, Company B, 32d Infantry had been ordered to move forward into Chichagof Valley through a gap between Companies K and L of the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry to establish a screen line across the valley. Having only fifty riflemen, this was to be a very thin line.<sup>336</sup> However, as the company pushed forward in the darkness, they suddenly found themselves in close combat with the Japanese. The company launched a hasty attack across the entire valley, but as they moved rapidly forward, the platoons began to get strung out. They felt that they were moving too fast; they first lost contact with the company command post, and then the individual soldiers began to lose contact with each other. Casualties were mounting, and as the company consolidated its position to reorganize and evacuate the wounded, they received orders to withdraw.<sup>337</sup> The order seemed strange to the leaders and soldiers of the company and, because they didn't understand the reason for it, was passed on more as though it was a rumor than an actual order.<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi, "Diary", Captured, 4. Original translators note: "Enkist probably means Christ, since Dr. Tatsuguchi returned to Japan as a Christian missionary." *Chan* is an honorific term of endearment for children.

<sup>336</sup> Sewell Tyng, *The Capture Of Attu: As Told By The Men Who Fought There: "The Breakthrough"*, 102.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, 103, 105. Garfield claims that the company received an order at 0300 hours, 29 May 43 to *march* (emphasis added) back to the battalion field kitchen for a hot meal, leaving only a few sentries behind. The Japanese attack subsequently blew through this undefended gap in the American lines. The eyewitness accounts in Tyng's book make no mention of why the withdrawal was ordered and do not characterize the company as marching back; they claim that they were making a tactical movement when the Japanese onslaught crashed into them.



**Will to Fight – When Morale and Tactics Conflict:** Both the 3d Battalion, 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry and the attached B Company, 2d Battalion, 32d Infantry were assigned positions for the night on the floor of the valley near the southern end of Lake Cories. The reasons for the order to withdraw are obscure but there was no expectation of enemy action. "It is said that the purpose was to permit the men to go back to the battalion kitchen...so that they could get a hot breakfast...At 0330 while the company was withdrawing, they were attacked and taken by surprise."<sup>339</sup> This decision had an unintended impact. The battalion staff were not fully aware of the tactical situation faced by B Company and seemingly did not consider the fact that they were creating a vulnerability in the battalion battle position by ordering the withdrawal. This was an arguably poor decision and resultant tactical error undertaken in the sincere belief that it would improve the fighting spirit of the unit. Leaders must strike a balance between achieving the mission and looking after the welfare of their men. The willingness of men to trust and follow their leaders reflected the leaders' ability to strike this balance. Men felt they could trust a leader who was calm during crisis, who would not ask them to do anything that he would not do himself, and who genuinely cared for his men. One officer reflected, "people are really looking for an opportunity to have confidence in others... once [that] happens you have the troops in the palm of your hand."<sup>340</sup> This incident on Attu illustrates both the nature of American leadership in its concern for the welfare of the troops as well as the resilience of these American soldiers who demonstrated the will to fight on without the hot food.

Nevertheless, while still in contact with the enemy, the company began a fighting withdrawal. Burdened with the wounded they moved back up the valley towards the aid station and the command post of the 3d Battalion, 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry. The disorganized company was staggering back up the valley, shooting at small groups of the enemy, when red flares, grenade explosions, and machine guns firing ahead of them heralded the *banzai* attack. Hundreds of Japanese troops charged through the company, breaking them into small, disconnected groups fighting from whatever cover they could find. The fight spread across the valley and up the ridgelines to the positions occupied by the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry. Still, the main body of the Japanese attack hurtled onward towards the headquarters and support units in the American rear area.<sup>341</sup>

<sup>339</sup> Tyng, *Action on Attu*, 21.

<sup>340</sup> George S. Blanchard, transcript of an oral history conducted by Lieutenant Colonel James Longhofer for "Senior Officer Oral History Program," Box 1A of 9, George S. Blanchard Papers, (The United States Army War College Archives, Carlisle Barracks), 78-79.

<sup>341</sup> Sewell Tyng, *The Capture Of Attu: As Told By The Men Who Fought There*: "The Breakthrough", 104-107.

The charging mass of Japanese troops soon reached the command post of the 3d Battalion, 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry where a desperate hand-to-hand fight ensued. The battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel James Fish was killed in the melee, and the battalion headquarters was left in a shambles.<sup>342</sup> Captain Albert Pence was caught up in the swirling violence, first throwing hand grenades at the enemy and then physically grabbing one assailant, he plunged his knife into the man repeatedly until he finally realized that the blade had broken off inside the dead opponent's spine.<sup>343</sup> Lieutenant Dean Galles had been expecting replacements to arrive. Seeing the approaching forms of men in parkas in the misty darkness, he went to meet them only to be attacked by five Japanese soldiers. He was bayoneted four times but subdued one of his attackers with a headlock as his men up on the ridge killed the rest of the enemy.<sup>344</sup> Galles was left for dead by the enemy. Nevertheless, he dragged himself two miles to get medical care and alert other Americans of the danger.<sup>345</sup> The battalion aid station was stormed next; the medics and the wounded were trapped in their tent, and many were killed. The rest feigned death for hours as the enemy attack continued around them.<sup>346</sup> The battalion surgeon, Captain Buehler described it as "... a nightmare, a madness of noise and confusion and deadliness."<sup>347</sup>

The Japanese main body continued through Clevesy Pass to attack the American artillery batteries on Engineer Hill at about 0500 hours. There they were met by a hastily assembled defense force composed mostly of the 50<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion along with the gunners of the 49<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery, and the medics of the 7<sup>th</sup> Medical Battalion. The Japanese made several direct attacks on the position only to be repulsed time after time by this force of American support troops that included cooks, drivers, and headquarters staff.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> Ibid., 104. As a result of the deaths of key personnel and the loss or destruction of the official battalion headquarters records, much confusion over these events remains.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>344</sup> Dean E. Galles Collection, (AFC/2001/001/88536), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid.

<sup>346</sup> Tyng, 108-116.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>348</sup> Boyes, *Short History of the Battle of Attu*, 10.

Somewhere in this maelstrom Dr. Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi was killed. There are conflicting stories of how he died. One claims that he was shot during the mopping up operation on 30 May by two American soldiers who were approaching a cave from which he emerged, yelling in English, “Don’t shoot! I am a Christian!”<sup>349</sup> The most plausible account was told by Dick Laird, who was a first sergeant in Dean Galles’ unit. In 1984 he told his story to Tatsuguchi’s surviving daughter. Laird was asleep in a tent on the morning when Yamasaki’s troops attacked. He was awakened by the noise of the attack and had just emerged from his tent when the howling mob descended upon him.

Laird saw that a group of eight Japanese had captured an American mortar and were preparing to use it. Laird attacked them first with hand grenades and rifle fire and he eliminated the threat. Afterwards he examined the bodies for documents, and he found Tatsuguchi’s diary and Bible. He was astonished to discover that Tatsuguchi was a physician and a father; a man that he felt should not have even been on Attu. Laird was awarded the Silver Star for his actions. However, the guilt of killing Tatsuguchi haunted Laird for the rest of his life.<sup>350</sup>

As their losses mounted, the Japanese lost momentum and became confused and disorganized. Daylight exposed them to effective counterattack by the now alerted American forces. Some began to run back down the valley toward Chichigof Harbor. Others stopped fighting altogether and began to commit suicide with hand grenades. By nightfall of the 29<sup>th</sup> of May the majority had been annihilated. The few remaining pockets of Japanese forces were hunted down throughout the valley on the 30<sup>th</sup>.<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>349</sup> Mark Obmascik, *The Storm on Our Shores: One Island, Two Soldiers, and the Forgotten Battle of World War II*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2019), 137-138.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, 139-151. He felt the tragedy that he had killed a man who never should have been in the fight at all.

<sup>351</sup> Boyes, *Short History of the Battle of Attu*, 12.



Archives, University of Alaska, Fairbanks

*Figure 3-21: Attu, 29 May 1943 – The Japanese dead. (U.S. Army Signal Corps. Accessed March 19, 2016 <http://vilda.alaska.edu/cdm/search/searchterm/Battle%20of%20Attu/order/nosort> ).*

As the Americans moved forward to retake their overrun positions and mop up the remaining resistance, they were confronted with a ghastly sight at the base of Engineer Hill. The dead and wounded of both sides were heaped in piles and scattered everywhere like the fallen cherry blossoms so beloved in Japanese culture. This horrific sight caused a chaplain of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division to exclaim, “I am glad they’re dead, really glad...How can I go back to my church when I’ve got it in me to be glad men are dead?”<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> Sewell Tyng, *The Capture Of Attu: As Told By The Men Who Fought There*: “The Aftermath”, 139.



Figure 3-22: The Japanese dead, 29 May 1943, at the base of Engineer Hill, Attu. (U.S. Army Signal Corps. Accessed March 19, 2016. <http://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2011/08/world-war-ii-battle-of-midway-and-the-aleutian-campaign/100137/> ).

### 3.7. The Foundations of Tactical Culture: The Fighting Spirit of the Seventh Infantry Division.

Attu was the 7<sup>th</sup> Division's first experience of combat and showcased that the division was imbued with the will to fight and win under the most unexpected and adverse conditions. Intense unit training and dynamic leadership laid the foundation for the tactical culture that came to characterize the division throughout the rest of the war. The battle was extremely bloody; for every 100 Japanese killed on Attu, about 71 Americans were killed or wounded, making Attu second only to Iwo Jima in cost ratios.<sup>353</sup> The Americans suffered 3,829 casualties overall. In addition to the 549 who were killed in action and the 1,148 who were wounded, another 1,200 soldiers succumbed to frostbite and trench foot. Exposure to the cold and wet weather caused 614 more soldiers to be afflicted with pneumonia. Finally, accidents and injuries accounted for the loss of another 318 soldiers.<sup>354</sup> Cold weather injuries exceeded the number of casualties

<sup>353</sup> Stetson Conn, Rose C. Engelman and Byron Fairchild, *The United States Army in World War II: The Western Hemisphere, Guarding the United States and its Outposts, U.S. Army in World War II*, (Washington D.C.: United States Army, Center of Military History, 2000), 295; George L. MacGarrigle, "Aleutian Islands: The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II", CMH Pub 72-6, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1983), 24-25.

<sup>354</sup> Garfield, 266-267.

caused by wounds (1,148) and accounted for more than 31 percent of all casualties from all causes.<sup>355</sup> The victors counted 2,351 Japanese dead and they had taken only twenty-eight prisoners of war. The Americans estimated that another 300 to 500 Japanese had been buried in the mountain caves during the battle.<sup>356</sup> A soldier who fought at Attu summed up his experience of trying to retake that frozen terrain:

It maybe wasn't such a big battle as battles go nowadays, but, brother, everything about it was done in a big way, including the way them Japs knocked themselves off. Believe me, that was the biggest, awfulest damned (sic) mess I ever saw in my life, so help me.<sup>357</sup>

The effects of the mountainous arctic terrain, bitter cold, and dense foggy weather isolated and compartmentalized operations to small unit actions at the company level and below, while also denying the Americans the advantage of indirect fire support and close air support. While the Americans outnumbered the Japanese 5 to 1 overall, at the tactical level, the Americans could never bring the full division-sized force of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division eventually numbering some 11,000 (having initially embarked with only two infantry regiments) to bear on the Japanese all at the same time.

Furthermore, not all the soldiers of the division were combat infantry; the total strength of a U.S. Infantry regiment in 1943 was 3118 soldiers.<sup>358</sup> In fact, about 50 percent of the manpower in a U.S. infantry division was in headquarters, artillery, engineers, military police, medical, and quartermaster units. The infantry companies account for only about one half of a division's strength.<sup>359</sup> Therefore, from D-Day to D+6 the Americans on Attu numbered approximately 3,500 against some 2,900 defending Japanese; at the actual point of attack the Americans enjoyed a correlation of forces of only 1.21:1.

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<sup>355</sup> Gordon H. McNeil, *History of the Medical Department in Alaska in World War II*, Chapter V, "The Aleutians", (U.S. Army Medical Department, Office of Medical History), 84, 401-407.

<sup>356</sup> Brian Garfield. *The Thousand-Mile War: World War II in Alaska and the Aleutians*. (Juneau: University of Alaska Press, 1995), 266.

<sup>357</sup> Sewell Tyng, "The Capture Of Attu: As Told By The Men Who Fought There: (Washington DC: The Infantry Journal, United States War Department, 1944), 139.

<sup>358</sup> Robert S. Rush. *GI: The US Infantryman in World War II*. (Osceola: Osprey Publishing Ltd., 2003), 20.

<sup>359</sup> John C. McManus, *The Deadly Brotherhood: The American Combat Soldier in World War II*. (New York: Presidio Press, 1988), 4.

### 3.8. Developing the Characteristics of Tactical Culture.

Attu was the 7<sup>th</sup> Division's first experience of combat and showcased that the division was imbued with the will to fight and win under the most unexpected and adverse conditions. The Chief of Staff of the Army, General George C. Marshall, personally selected the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division as one of three units fighting in the Pacific theater for inclusion in the study on "Willingness for Combat". The opinions of the troops in the study, quantitatively analyzed, represented their attitudes and motivation in relation to their past and subsequent combat performance.<sup>360</sup>

In this study the 7th Division veterans gave high post-combat marks to their officers for leading by example, having personal interest in their men, and wanting to serve under them in combat again.<sup>361</sup> Cited by the study as having "seen combat under the most arduous conditions" it was found that most of the soldiers of the 7th Division were proud of their unit and felt that the war was worth fighting. Their positive attitudes towards Officer and NCO leadership were indicative of "good combat motivation".<sup>362</sup> It was further found that these soldiers who were very proud of their unit were also "more confident in themselves the more times they went into combat." Furthermore, "combat became less frightening the more they saw of it."<sup>363</sup>

**Characteristics of Tactical Culture:** Certain traits and characteristics appear common to successful combat units and leaders: They have an intuitive tactical and technical appreciation that allows them to judge terrain and visualize how to expertly employ their weapons and maneuver effectively; they are tenacious, displaying an imaginative intensity to win; they are imbued with a certitude about themselves and their mission that allows them to be audacious. The acme of tactical culture is expressed by a unit that promotes taking calculated risks and operates with controlled aggressiveness.<sup>364</sup> One interesting observation of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division on Attu illustrates their tactical culture. In contradiction to S.L.A. Marshall's contention that few American soldiers fired their weapons in combat it was reported that by the fifth day of the battle the troops had already fired 1,024,000 rounds of rifle and carbine ammunition and

<sup>360</sup> Stouffer, S. A., Lumsdaine, A. A., Lumsdaine, M. H., Williams, R. M., Jr., Smith, M. B., Janis, I. L., Star, S. A., & Cottrell, L. S., Jr., *The American Soldier: Combat and its Aftermath. (Studies in Social Psychology in World War II)*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), 3-4.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, Table 7, 126.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, 127, 180.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*, 142, 156.

<sup>364</sup> Kenneth E. Hamburger, et. al. "Leadership in Combat: An Historical Appraisal." (Unpublished Manuscript, Department of History, U.S. Military Academy, January 1, 1984; accessed from Defense Technical Information Center), 1-2, 8-10.

2,442,000 rounds of machine gun ammunition.<sup>365</sup> Other studies have shown that units commanded by successful leaders take on the leaders' confidence and will to win. The leader is often the decisive factor in building a unit that displays audacity, aggressiveness, overcomes obstacles, and refuses to accept defeat. Such units develop a unique cohesion largely brought about by good leadership.<sup>366</sup> Dynamic leadership laid the foundation for the 7<sup>th</sup> Divisions' high unit and task cohesion.

The fighting spirit of the American troops is exemplified by this excerpt from a letter written by Ralph Eyde of the 32nd Infantry Regiment. Eyde suffered a head wound early in the battle, but he shrugged it off and continued to fight:

...it was only a slight head wound + nothing more it's okay by me. It was plenty close (sic) but I was never out of the 18 straight days of action nor in any hospital or rest camp. Too many fellows worse off than myself at the time so I had it dressed the following day while eating my field ration (was hit the same day I landed – shell landing 15 feet away while pushing ahead). But all this a thousand times over never held up this outfit. Had plenty of calls as close + closer...If the people back home ever have any doubts about the fighting caliber of its soldiers, they want to see this outfit in action (sic) and I can assure you that all their doubts would be erased. It was a rugged struggle and all the weather in the world couldn't hold us back.<sup>367</sup>

The tactical culture of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division was characterized by this type of grim, workman-like determination to accomplish the task; that embraced maneuver tactics as being more important than sheer firepower; that displayed individual stamina and tenacity, small unit cohesion, and competent and aggressive leadership.<sup>368</sup> These military strengths became unit traits and formed the foundations of the division's growing tactical culture.

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<sup>365</sup> Keith Ewbank, "Observer Report on Attu Action", August 14, 1943, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland, 7; S. L. A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War* (Washington: Infantry Journal; New York: William Morrow, 1947), 22-23, 55-57.

<sup>366</sup> Kenneth E. Hamburger, et. al. "Leadership in Combat: An Historical Appraisal." (Unpublished Manuscript, Department of History, U.S. Military Academy, January 1, 1984; accessed from Defense Technical Information Center), 8,9.

<sup>367</sup> Ralph Eyde, personal letter dated Sep. 28, 1943; "*Brothers in Arms*" The Washington Post, Dan Lamothe, Dec. 6, 2017, accessed January 2018.

<sup>368</sup> *Combat Lessons No. 2, "Rank and File in Combat: What They're Doing; How They Do It."*, Operations Division of the War Department General Staff, Washington D.C., 1943, 5-8; Verbeck, *Action on Attu*, 30 July 1943, 4, 11, 13; English, 16-18; M. Hamlin Cannon, *Leyte: The Return to the Philippines*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1954), 211.



### 3.9. *Gyokusai*.

Attu established a paradigm for Japanese operations throughout the war; to endure horrific casualties and great privation, in steadfast perseverance and tenacious loyalty to the emperor. On 30 May 43, the *Daihon'ei* (Imperial General Headquarters) addressed the defeat by announcing that the Attu force had accomplished a *gyokusai*, a phrase taken from classical Chinese literature. The earliest use of the word is found in a biography from the sixth century that expressed the desire to be “a broken jewel rather than a whole tile”, meaning that one should prefer to die gloriously rather than to live an inglorious life.<sup>369</sup>

*Gyokusai* is a poetic term, denoting a beautiful death in battle for a higher purpose. This was an electrifying concept for the Japanese, inspiring both the home front and other defending garrisons to see fighting to the death as entirely acceptable and it conveyed the feeling of “the transcendent moral quality of such sacrifice”.<sup>370</sup> The men defending Attu became the first Japanese force to be destroyed during the war, but they would not be the last.

In Japan, their sacrifice was eulogized, and these “shattered jewels” became the paragon of the will to sacrifice.<sup>371</sup> They were immortalized in a booklet titled *Yamasaki: God of Forces*, published in 1944 that lists the name, rank, hometown and a photograph of every soldier killed on Attu.<sup>372</sup> In this depiction, the dead had not suffered a defeat. Rather, their spirits had been purified by their self-sacrifice. *Gyokusai* became synonymous in the Japanese lexicon for choosing death over dishonor and it thereby became a central feature of their tactical culture.<sup>373</sup>

Why did the Japanese soldiers choose death rather than accepting surrender? Why would the tragic and futile *gyokusai* be considered acceptable and even praiseworthy rather than being seen as an abject military failure? The answer lies in the Japanese national and cultural identity. The Japanese embarked on the war with a will to fight for glory in the service of the Emperor

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<sup>369</sup> Keene, Donald. "Foreword." *In The Breaking Jewel*, Oda Makoto, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003). VII-XIV. The term comes from an ancient Chinese text, *The History of North Qi*; “A great man might as well die as a jewel shatters; he cannot be like a tile left untouched.” Accessed January 6, 2021. doi:10.7312/oda-12612.3.

<sup>370</sup> Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 231; John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, (New York: Pantheon, 1986), 231.

<sup>371</sup> John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race & Power in the Pacific War*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 184, 231.

<sup>372</sup> Cloe, 160.

<sup>373</sup> John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race & Power in the Pacific War*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 231-232.

and the Nation. But this will to win was subverted by the tactical culture which emphasized the will to sacrifice as the paramount virtue of the soldier. In his final communique with headquarters, Yamasaki reported his situation and intended course of action:

Under ferocious attack by enemy land, sea, and air, the two battalions to the fore were both almost smashed...I arranged so the wounded and the ill in the field hospital were disposed of, the light ones by themselves, the serious ones by the medics... *We had them make a resolve [to die], lest we together suffer the shame of being taken prisoner while alive. It is not that there is no other way; I simply did not wish to sully the soldiers' last moments. We will carry out a charge with the heroic spirits [of those killed in battle].*<sup>374</sup>



Figure 3-23: Colonel Yamasaki Yasuyo, Commander of the Japanese garrison on Attu. (Accessed March 19, 2016, Public domain. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yasuyo\\_Yamasaki](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yasuyo_Yamasaki) .).

As Yamasaki indicates, surrender was viewed as shameful, the ultimate dishonor that could befall a soldier. Avoiding shame and displaying stoicism in the fulfilment of the debt owed to the Nation and the Emperor was deeply important.<sup>375</sup> Few Japanese were therefore taken as prisoners of war and the great majority of those who were told their captors that their greatest motivation for not surrendering was the shame, and humiliation that they and their families

<sup>374</sup> The Imperial General Headquarters official announcement of the Attu *gyokusai*. (<http://www.asahi-net.or.jp/~un3k-mn/gyoku-at.tu.htm>). Emphasis added.

<sup>375</sup> Benedict, 121-125.

would endure.<sup>376</sup> This belief derived from the *Senjinkun*, the Imperial Rescript to Japanese Soldiers and Sailors, first issued in 1882 that established a code of conduct on the battlefield. With the injunction, “Die, rather than become a prisoner” the notion of honorable death in battle was embedded in the tactical culture of the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy.

In conjunction with the powerful compulsion to discharge the burden of obligation was the Japanese attitude toward death. In the Japanese cultural world view, death was accepted as a tragic but inevitable consequence of life. Within Japanese society there is a strong sense of sorrow at the transient and impermanent nature of human life. This is expressed by the phrase *mono no aware* (“things of sadness”), and it embraces the sorrow that nothing will remain, that even the most glorious beauty will decay and disappear.<sup>377</sup> This Japanese resignation to ephemerality seems to have arisen from popular reaction to ancient feudal warfare. The epic *Heike Monogatari* (Tale of the Heike), believed to have compiled before 1330 CE, recounts the Genpei War (1180-1185 CE) fought between the Taira and Minamoto clans for control of Japan. The theme of impermanence is presented in the opening passage: “The proud do not endure, they are like a dream on a spring night; the mighty fall at last, they are as dust before the wind.”<sup>378</sup>

This aesthetic of the sad beauty of life and death resonates throughout Japanese history in reaction to its’ many, long periods of near constant civil war and social upheaval and was deeply important in shaping Japanese culture. In the Second World War acceptance of the inevitability of death in combat was a commonly expressed theme. One IJA lieutenant serving on Guadalcanal wrote in his diary, ‘if we do not succeed (sic) in the occupation of these islands, no one should expect to return alive to Japan’.<sup>379</sup>

Contrast this view with the common American sentiment that the war was an unpleasant but necessary job to be accomplished before one could return home.<sup>380</sup> For the Japanese however,

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<sup>376</sup> United States National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, RG 165, War Department, ‘P’ File, Box 2313, MIS, *Tactical and Technical Trends*, No.10, ‘Japanese Prisoners of War’, 22 October 1942; U. Straus, *The Anguish of Surrender: Japanese POWs of World War II* (Seattle: Washington UP, 2003), 51-52; RG 165, War Department, ‘P’ File, Box 321, ATIS, POW Interrogation Report No.29, M. Yamaguchi, 1 February 1943; RG 165, War Department, ‘P’ File, Box 321, ATIS, POW Interrogation Report No.54, R. Inagaki, 14 April 1943.

<sup>377</sup> Yamakuse Yoji, *Japaneseness: A Guide to Virtues and Values*, Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 2016), 89-91.

<sup>378</sup> Helen Craig McCullough, *The Tale of the Heike*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 21.

<sup>379</sup> RG 165, War Department, ‘P’ File, Box 403, Combat Intelligence Center South Pacific Area, Item No.239, Supplement No.1, War Diary Captured at Guadalcanal, Owner: 2nd Lieutenant Hiroshi Yokota (*Inouye* Unit), 18 February to 22 October 1942

<sup>380</sup> Stouffer, et. al., 107.

going to war was strangely celebrated for the certainty of death. One of the most important Japanese patriotic songs of the time was *Umi Yukaba* ('When Seagoing') which expressed it thus:

If I go away to the sea,  
I shall be a corpse washed up.  
If I go away to the mountain,  
I shall be a corpse in the grass  
But if I die for the Emperor,  
It will not be a regret.

This song, which became a semi-official national anthem during the war, invoked these ancient samurai attitudes and imagery about death.<sup>381</sup> In further affirmation of this sentiment was the immensely popular imagery of the *sakura*, the cherry blossom. The cherry blossom is a highly significant symbol in Japan, as it represents the evanescent nature of life, blooming for a short time and then dying at the height of its beauty.<sup>382</sup> The sad beauty represented by this transition from fullness to non-existence was viewed as the ideal philosophical approach to combat and death.<sup>383</sup> In this manner, the transcendence of life was confronted and accepted, as the soldier adopted a poetic cultural tradition to help him to confront the anxiety of death and the conflicting desire for immortality.<sup>384</sup>

**Will to Sacrifice – Obedience:** The keystone to *Gyokusai* was strict obedience to orders. When ordered to commit mass suicide rather than surrender, Japanese soldiers obeyed unflinchingly. This stems from a common Japanese belief in the nobility of the act as demonstrated in the story of the *Chushingura*, an internationally known story in Japanese history. A group of forty-seven samurai, made indignant by the death of their master who committed ritual suicide as punishment for a transgression of the peace, waited for over a year to enact revenge on the man responsible.<sup>385</sup> It has become a legend and offers great insights

<sup>381</sup> Otomo no Yakamochi (716-785 CE), poem 4094 in the *Man'yōshū* ('Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves'), the oldest extant anthology of Japanese poetry, quoted in Hiroaki Sato, *Legends of the Samurai* (New York: Overlook Press, 1995), 17-18.

<sup>382</sup> Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), Plate 7.

<sup>383</sup> Yamakuse, 90.

<sup>384</sup> Emanuele Castano & Mark Dechesne, "On Defeating Death: Group Reification and Social Identification as Immortality Strategies", *European Review of Social Psychology*, 16:1, 2005, 221-255, DOI: [10.1080/10463280500436024](https://doi.org/10.1080/10463280500436024)

<sup>385</sup> Algernon Bertram Freeman-Mitford, Lord Redesdale, *Tales of Old Japan*, (London: University of Michigan, 1871), 5-6, 28-34.

into the national character highlighting the Japanese traits of loyalty, silent endurance, sacrifice, and noble suffering.<sup>386</sup> The story idealizes devotion to duty even unto death as the only correct choice for the *samurai*.

This fatalistic acceptance of death was nevertheless infused with a positive tone through the Japanese soldier's *seishin* ("spirit, soul, intention, will") which always stressed the active attitude of the attack.<sup>387</sup> As soldiers killed in battle, they believed that they would be elevated to *kami* (a Shinto deity; a sacred spirit), and thus be venerated at the Yasukuni Shrine.<sup>388</sup> This aesthetic influenced Japanese tactical culture, and *gyokusai* became the norm: 4,600 dying on Tarawa (17 surviving); 7,900 dying on Kwajalein (105 surviving); over 10,000 dying on Biak (520 surviving); and 29,000 to 32,000 dying on Saipan (921 surviving).<sup>389</sup> By declaring the martyrdom of the Attu garrison as an event to be revered, the Japanese leaders were able to ignore the reality of their failure and mobilize more men to sacrifice themselves. *Gyokusai* was the effect, but what was the cause of this trait of Imperial Japanese Army tactical culture? Part of the answer lies in *Bushido*. This will be further explored in Chapter Four.

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<sup>386</sup> Eiko Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan*, (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1997), 223; James Murdoch, *A History of Japan: Volume III - The Tokugawa Epoch (1652-1868)*, (New York: Greenberg, 1926), 218; Hiroaki Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*, (Woodstock: Overlook, 1995), 17-18.

<sup>387</sup> RG 165, War Department, G-2 Regional File, Box 2147, File 6675, Far Eastern Branch, MIS, *Training in the Japanese Army*, 30 September 1942; RomajiDesu: Japanese Language Dictionary and Translator, s.v. "seishin" accessed March 2, 2021, <http://www.romajidesu.com>.

<sup>388</sup> Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. "kami," accessed March 2, 2021, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/kami>.

<sup>389</sup> Sato Hiroaki, "Gyokusai or "Shattering like a Jewel": Reflection on the Pacific War", *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, February 1, 2008, Volume 6, Issue 2.

## Chapter Four: The Battle of Kwajalein; The Samurai Legacy and the Myth of *Bushido*.

“As on Attu we lost some gallant young fellows whose heroic deeds against harassing snipers, pillboxes + blockhouses will never be forgotten. The Jap is a tough little fighter + no one in this outfit underestimates their fanatics (*sic*) fighting ability.”<sup>390</sup>

### 4.1. Introduction.

Moving forward from victories in the Solomons and Gilbert Islands in 1943, Allied forces sought to penetrate the next ring of Japanese defenses in the central Pacific. Attacking into the Marshall Islands, the Allies occupied Majuro and then commenced operations against Kwajalein. The Battle of Kwajalein occurred January 31 to February 3, 1944. Striking at both ends of the atoll, they succeeded in eliminating the Japanese opposition after brief but fierce battles. The triumph opened the way for the subsequent capture of Eniwetok and the campaign against the Marianas. This chapter will further explore how the respective American and Japanese tactical cultures evolved and what impact they had on combat.

#### 4.1.1. The Operational Environment: The American’s Central Pacific Advance.

The over-all American objective to their attack of the Gilbert, Marshall, and Caroline islands in the Western Pacific was to seize key positions that could be used to blockade Japan by air and sea and to provide launching points for an invasion of the Japanese home islands. When combined with the American advance through the Solomons and New Guinea, the Japanese were uncertain about which line of effort should be countered first.<sup>391</sup>

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<sup>390</sup> Ralph Eyde, personal letter dated Feb. 28, 1944; “*Brothers in Arms*” The Washington Post, Dan Lamothe, Dec. 6, 2017, accessed January 2018.

<sup>391</sup> Philip A. Crowl, Edmund G. Love, *Seizure of the Gilberts and Marshalls: United States Army in World War II, The War in the Pacific*, CMH Pub 5-6, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1955), 210.

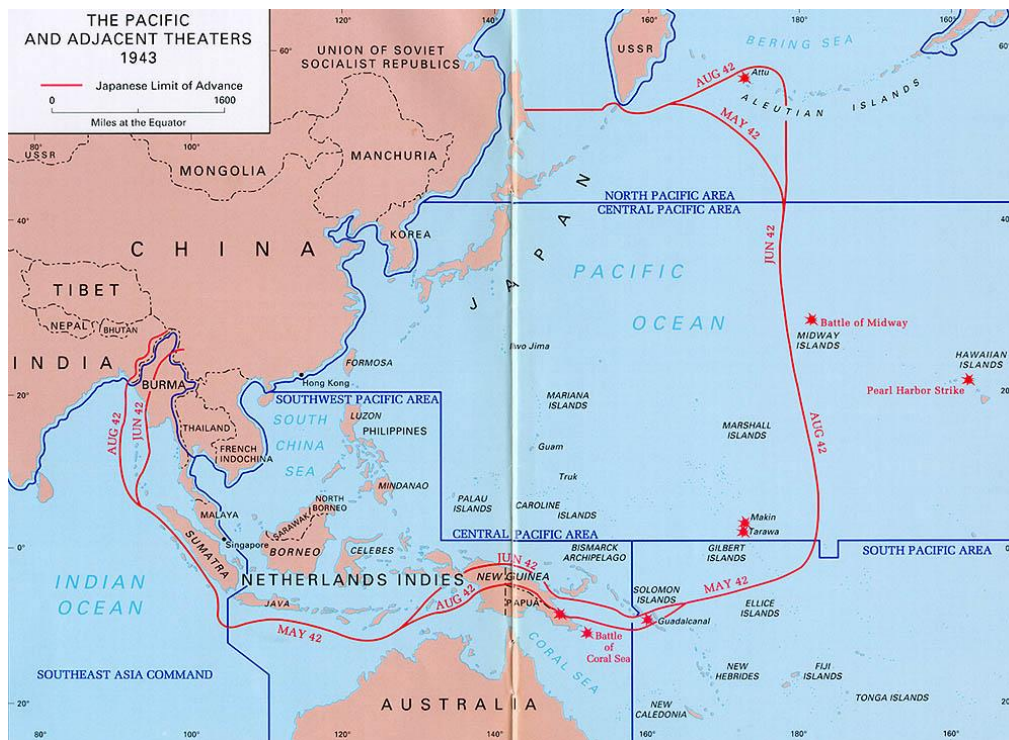


Figure 4-1: The Pacific Theater situation as of December 1943. (The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II: Eastern Mandates, U.S. Army Center of Military History, brochure prepared by Burton Wright III, 1993.).

#### 4.1.2. Terrain and Weather.

Kwajalein is one of the world's largest coral atolls, being comprised of ninety-seven islands enclosing a lagoon with an area of 839 square miles of water. It has a total land area of just over six square miles and an average height above sea level of five feet, eleven inches.<sup>392</sup> The main southern island is about two and a half miles long and averages 800 yards wide.<sup>393</sup> Lying about 500 miles north of the equator, the atoll is 2,440 miles from Hawaii, 2,000 miles from

<sup>392</sup> Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II: Aleutians, Gilberts and Marshalls, June 1942-April 1944*, (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 236.

<sup>393</sup> Kent G. Budge, "[Kwajalein](http://www.pwencycl.kgbudge.com)". *pwencycl.kgbudge.com*. The Pacific War Online Encyclopedia. Retrieved 19 March 2021.

Australia, and 2,447 miles from Japan.<sup>394</sup> It has a tropical rainforest environment with average high temperatures of 85 degrees Fahrenheit during the month of January.<sup>395</sup>

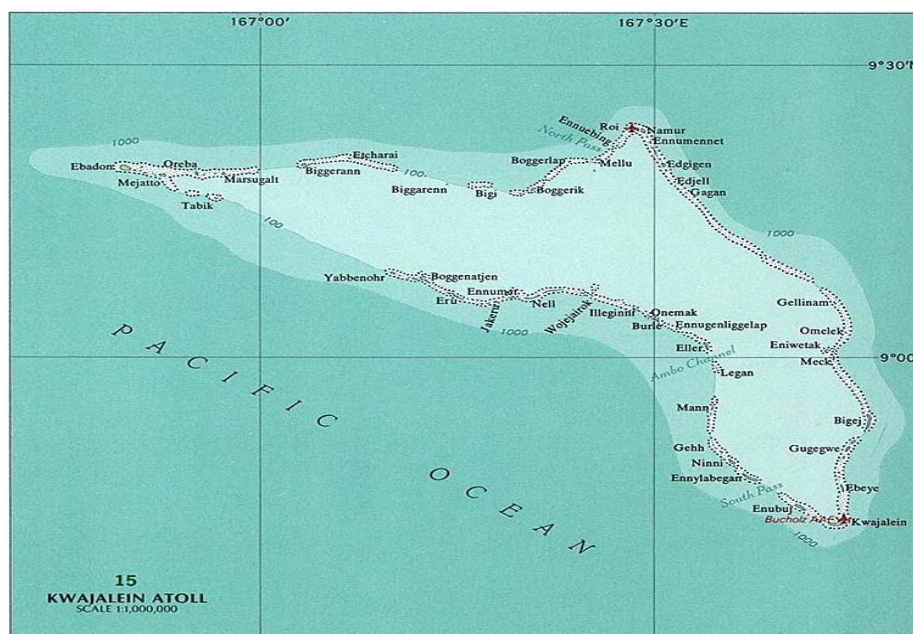


Figure 4-2: Kwajalein Atoll, "National Atlas of the United States: Pacific Outlying Areas", (U.S. Department of the Interior, [https://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/national\\_atlas\\_1970/ca000040.jpg](https://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/national_atlas_1970/ca000040.jpg)).

### 4.1.3. The Air Campaign.

Between 1932 and 1941 the Japanese had constructed several bases in the Marshall Islands, with Kwajalein as their principal base.<sup>396</sup> A prerequisite to seizure of these strategic points in the Gilbert and Marshall Islands was gaining air superiority. These island chains generally lay beyond the range of land-based aircraft. However, the Americans believed that their new Essex-class carriers could provide enough air power to isolate the islands from

<sup>394</sup> G. Rottman, *The Marshall Islands 1944: "Operation Flintlock, The Capture of Kwajalein and Eniwetok"*, (Oxford: Osprey Publishing Ltd, 2004), 7, 11; John C. McManus, *Island Infernos: The U.S. Army's Pacific War Odyssey, 1944*, (New York: Dutton Caliber, 2021), 35.

<sup>395</sup> "Where is Kwajalein?". *Global Associates Welcomes You to Kwajalein Marshall Islands*. (Kwajalein: Marshall Islands, 1968), 5.

<sup>396</sup> Love, 106.



reinforcement or counterattack by the Japanese, and once occupied would then extend the range of land-based bombers.<sup>397</sup>

An air campaign against the Japanese forces in the Marshalls was conducted between November 1943 and January 1944 to destroy the Japanese air forces and defenses. Both aircraft carrier-based airstrikes and long-range bombing raids were conducted against the numerous facilities and airfields of the Kwajalein Atoll.<sup>398</sup> The campaign was highly effective, costing the Japanese approximately 71 aircraft and rendering them unable to launch air attacks against the coming amphibious invasion.<sup>399</sup> Additionally, extensive air reconnaissance was conducted to develop intelligence on the objectives.<sup>400</sup>

#### **4.1.4. “Operation Flintlock”: The American Attack Plan.**

On 4 September 1943 the 7<sup>th</sup> Division assembled on ships and prepared to leave the Aleutians. There was great speculation as to where they were going, but no specific target was revealed. The staff was only told to prepare plans for landings on coral atolls.<sup>401</sup> Their eventual target was the “Eastern Mandates”, the former German colonial possessions in the Pacific that had been mandated to Japan after World War I. They included the Marianas, the Palaus, the Carolines, and the Marshalls. Under Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, Japan was prevented from establishing fortifications on the islands, however after withdrawing from the League in 1935 the Japanese conducted extensive clandestine military construction efforts in the islands to include naval support facilities and runways for aircraft.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>397</sup> Ibid.; James A. Walker, Lewis Bernstein, Sharon Lang, *The Eastern Mandates Campaign: A Staff Ride Guide for Operation Flintlock, The Seizure of Kwajalein*, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, Huntsville, AL, 2004, 25, 34.

<sup>398</sup> Philip A. Crowl, Edmund G. Love, *Seizure of the Gilberts and Marshalls: United States Army in World War II, The War in the Pacific*, CMH Pub 5-6, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1955), 210; Walker, *Staff Ride Guide*, 37-39.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid., 212; US Strategic Bombing Survey (USSBS), *The Campaigns of the Pacific War*, 201-202.

<sup>400</sup> McManus, *Island Infernos*, 35.

<sup>401</sup> Love, 106.

<sup>402</sup> Myers, *Handbook of the League of Nations*, 378; IPS Document 6257, 13; IMTFE Defense Document 1518, 4-5.

Dubbed Operation Flintlock, the American plan called for the U.S. Navy's 5th Amphibious Force to deliver the V Amphibious Corps to the Kwajalein atoll where the 4th Marine Division would assault the linked islands of Roi-Namur in the north while the 7th Infantry Division attacked Kwajalein Island in the south. Once they moved from Attu to the island of Oahu in the Hawaiian Islands the staff of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division began to plan for attacks specifically on Wotje and Maloelap in the Marshalls. However, only six weeks before the landing the target was changed to the Kwajalein Atoll.<sup>403</sup>

The Japanese had held the Marshall Islands for 25 years and it was assumed that elaborate defenses were in place.<sup>404</sup> Kwajalein Island had heavy beach fortifications and a defense line of pillboxes, trenches and gun emplacement running lengthwise down the island. The Americans expected a bitter fight just to gain the beach, followed by a fight to the death once on the island. American intelligence estimates were that between 8,000 to 9,600 Japanese troops were spread throughout Kwajalein Atoll in addition to a force of 1,200 to 1,600 Korean laborers.<sup>405</sup>

**Intelligence Preparation:** Preliminary intelligence assessments, supported by submarine reconnaissance and aerial photography had accurately located all beach defensive positions of significance. Before embarkation an amphitheatre at Schofield Barracks was used for intelligence briefings and map studies. Once underway specific mission briefings were delivered to each battalion commander containing plans, orders, and maps.<sup>406</sup> Detailed terrain models and photographs were used for planning and rehearsals while enroute. "We could see each wave and wash, each frond of the palm trees, tire tracks on the road... We talked about the steep rise up the surf... the supporting fires... and how that would change the landscape."<sup>407</sup> Updated photos taken on D Minus 2 were delivered to the task force commanders on D Minus 1 which were used to confirm final details of the landing beaches and air and naval gunfire targets.<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>403</sup> Love, 106.

<sup>404</sup> Love, 106.

<sup>405</sup> James A. Walker, Lewis Bernstein, Sharon Lang, *The Eastern Mandates Campaign: A Staff Ride Guide for Operation Flintlock, The Seizure of Kwajalein*, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, Huntsville, AL, 2004, 32-34.

<sup>406</sup> McManus, *Island Infernos*, 7, 40.

<sup>407</sup> McManus, 40-41, quoting Ernest Bears, personal account of a battalion commander, *Hourglass Newsletter*, 1993, 12, US Army Military History Institute (USAMHI).

<sup>408</sup> Commander, Joint Expeditionary Force Report of FLINTLOCK Operation, Enclosure (B), Intelligence Report, 2; Morison, *History*, vol 7: *Aleutians, Gilberts, and Marshalls*, 343-351.

As they studied the terrain, and photographs of the enemy dispositions on Kwajalein Atoll the 7<sup>th</sup> Division's planners realized that most of the Japanese defenses faced either the ocean or the lagoon.<sup>409</sup> While there were gun positions constructed at each end of the island, the planners felt that a landing on the island's western extremity and a subsequent advance along the axis of the island would catch the main defenses from the flank and ease their task.<sup>410</sup> However, because the crescent of land is only 800 yards wide at the most, only two battalions or four rifle companies could be doctrinally employed together at any one time and maintaining unit boundaries and alignment would be challenging.<sup>411</sup> The division's new commander, Major General C. H. Corlett explained his decision in the after-action report:

The controlling reasons for the selection of the landing beaches...was that the ones [eventually] selected were in the lee of the atoll from the prevailing wind, and the long axis of the island provided an ideal situation for a very strong attack with two regiments abreast in column of battalions, the narrowing dimension of the island to the northeast contributing to the strength of the attack.<sup>412</sup>

**The Tyranny of Tropical Island Terrain:** The topography of a Pacific atoll severely limits offensive maneuver options. There is no room for wide enveloping attacks and the small scale means that both friendly and enemy forces are all always within small arms range (zero to 500 meters) and mortar fire range (100 to 1200 meters). Friendly units were often separated by a few yards, with only a building, trees, or vegetation to identify a unit boundary. Indiscriminate firing to the flanks will cause friendly casualties because of the close proximities of the adjacent forces. Attacking down the long axis as the terrain curves presents further challenges to maintaining proper weapons alignment towards the enemy. Neither force can retreat without risk of annihilation and repositioning is difficult.

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<sup>409</sup> Commander, Joint Expeditionary Force Report of FLINTLOCK Operation, Enclosure (B), Intelligence Report, 15-18; Love, *Seizure of the Gilberts and Marshalls*, 187-189.

<sup>410</sup> Love, 107; Walker, *Staff Ride Guide*, 34.

<sup>411</sup> Marshall, *Island Victory*, 138.

<sup>412</sup> McManus, *Island Infernos*, 41, quoting from a letter, MG Charles H. Corlett to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, 14 Jan 53, Record Group 319, Entry 62, Box 1, Charles Corlett Papers, Records of the Office of the Chief of Military History, "Seizure of the Gilberts and Marshalls, 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Participation in Flintlock Operation", U.S. Army Military History Institute (USAMHI), Carlisle PA.



Figure 4-3: Kwajalein Island on Kwajalein Atoll, (U.S. Geological Survey, WorldView-2 Satellite, DigitalGlobe, Inc., Public domain. <https://www.usgs.gov/media/images/kwajalein-island-kwajalein-atoll-republic-marshall-islands> ).

The operation was to be conducted in four phases. Phase I was the capture of Carlson Island and the adjacent islets that guarded the best entrance channel into the lagoon. Phase II was the capture of Kwajalein itself as the main effort. Phase III was the capture of Burton Island, and Phase IV was the mop-up phase.<sup>413</sup> Fire support was a matter of concern, based on the experience at Tarawa that naval gunfire preparation had been inadequate to destroy Japanese fortifications and that, once the ground force was ashore, naval gunfire was no longer safe to employ.<sup>414</sup> The solution devised was to seize one or more of the adjacent, smaller islands to serve as firing positions for the division's artillery battalions. The two best nearby islands were the sites of a large Japanese communication facility on Carlson (Enubuj) and submarine and seaplane repair

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<sup>413</sup> Love, 108.

<sup>414</sup> Ibid., 107.

facilities on Burton (Ebeye). Carlson was chosen to be taken and used as the base for artillery support to the rest of the force landing on the western end of Kwajalein.<sup>415</sup>

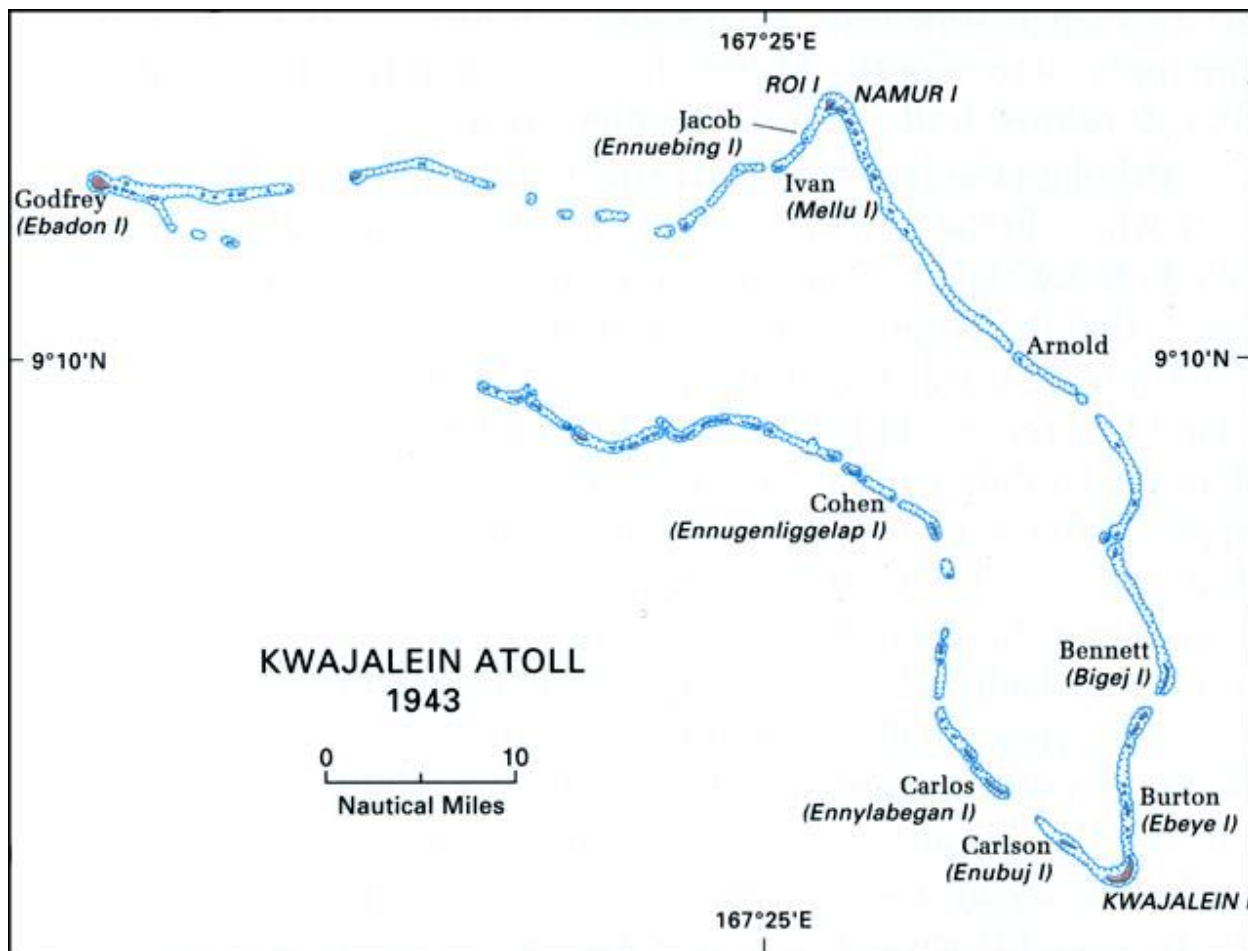


Figure 4-4: Operation Flintlock, Area of Operations, 31 Jan – 4 Feb 44. (*The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II: Eastern Mandates*, CMH Pub 72-23; downloaded 15 Feb 2022.

<https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USA/USA-C-EMandates/maps/USA-C-Mandates-3.jpg>).

<sup>415</sup> Ibid., 108.

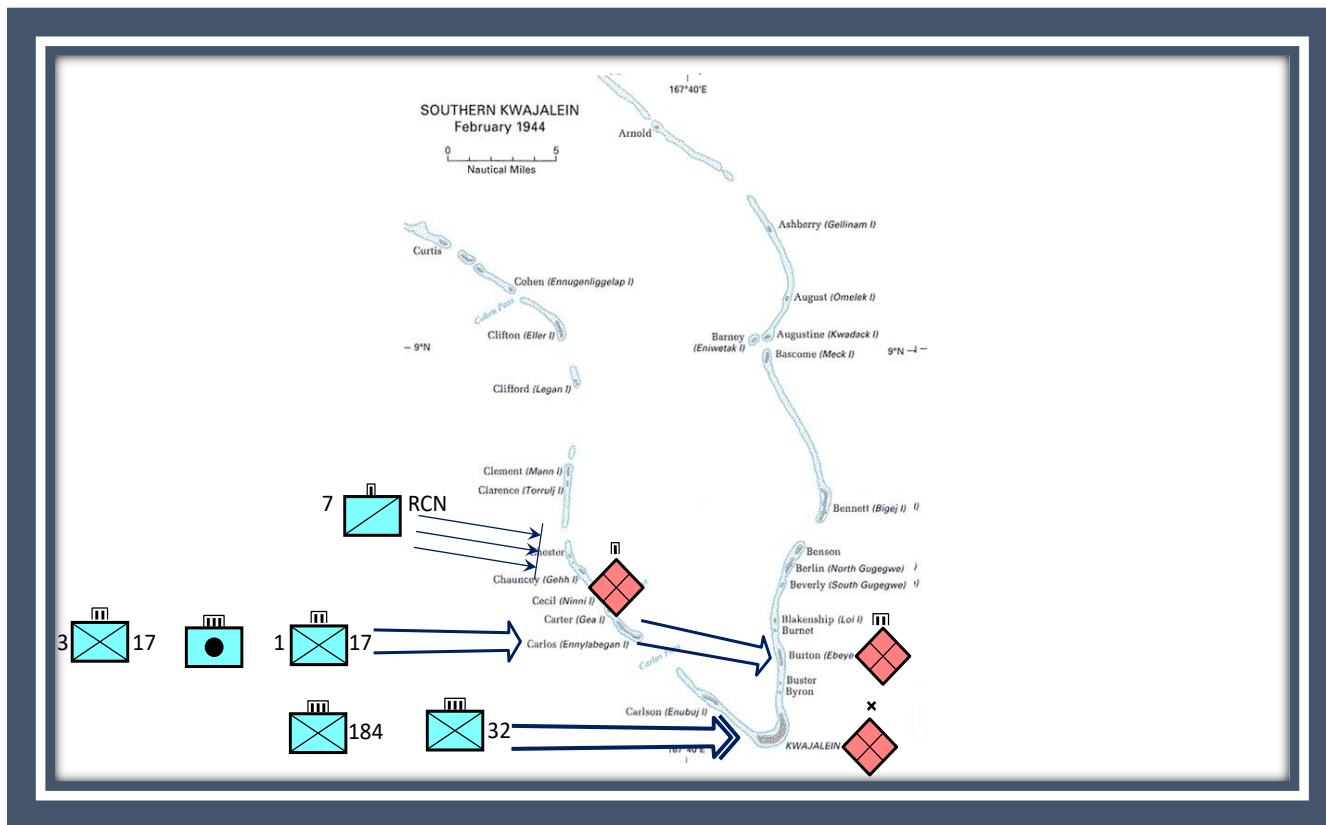


Figure 4-5: Operation Flintlock, Scheme of Maneuver, 31 Jan – 4 Feb 44. (The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II: Eastern Mandates, CMH Pub 72-23 downloaded and converted to PNG by US government, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=47139000> ;Key to military map symbology in References.).

#### 4.1.4.1. The Training Plan.

While the staff was planning the operation the troops were undergoing a four-month training program at Schofield Barracks. Leaders vowed to provide more mission focused training than was available before Attu. They reviewed the unit's performance at Attu and worked hard to perfect the latest techniques in jungle warfare, amphibious landings, and fire and maneuver at the newly established Unit Jungle Training Center. The mission of this center was to prepare troops

for combat against the Japanese in difficult terrain, by day or night, under various weather conditions.<sup>416</sup>

They had many resources to draw upon. One of the characteristics of American tactical culture in the Second World War was seeking continuous improvement through the creation of a collective learning environment. All aspects of modern combat were studied, and relevant information and knowledge was disseminated to the force. The 7<sup>th</sup> Division's performance at the battle of Attu was carefully studied by the War Department through numerous after-action reports, and the lessons that were learned were widely disseminated to the Army's training bases and headquarters staffs and incorporated into doctrinal and technical publications. Improvements in amphibious cargo handling, training, and equipping troops for harsh weather and mountainous terrain, and the use of forward air controllers in support of ground troops were carefully developed and applied successfully elsewhere.<sup>417</sup> The 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division emerged victorious from the battle of Attu, but they did so without having been trained for that environment. Nevertheless, they were specifically commended for their initiative, agility, and adaptability to successfully close with and destroy the enemy under adverse conditions:

...success depends more upon proper adaptation of available means to the terrain than upon their power. Maneuver of small units and the initiative and leadership of subordinate commanders are of the highest importance...<sup>418</sup>

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<sup>416</sup> Kent Roberts Greenfield (Editor), *United States Army in World War II, Pictorial Record: The War Against Japan*, (Washington, D.C.: The U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1952), 220-222.

<sup>417</sup> See among others *U.S. Army Infantry Combat Pamphlet – Part Two: Attu, Tactical and Technical Trends No. 31, 12 August 1943; No. 32, 26 August 1943; No. 33, 9 September 1943*. Military Intelligence Services, War Department, Washington D.C., 1943.

<sup>418</sup> *Combat Lessons No. 2, "Rank and File in Combat: What They're Doing; How They Do It."*, Operations Division of the War Department General Staff, Washington D.C., 1943.



Figure 4-6: 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division training at the Jungle Training Center, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, 1943. (*United States Army in World War II, Pictorial Record: The War Against Japan*, The U.S. Army Center of Military History, 220.).

This desire for continuous improvement was reflected in the 7<sup>th</sup> Division's subsequent training regimen. To prepare for Operation Flintlock the divisional training program first emphasized the physical conditioning of the troops through cross-country marches over the jungle terrain, low-level mountain climbing, and the completion of challenging obstacle courses. They advanced to specialized training in close-in fighting and "hip-shooting", judo, map reading, and land navigation through dense undergrowth, patrolling, ambushing, stream-crossing, and jungle living. Training was also given in the assault of fortified positions, and the use of demolitions.<sup>419</sup> Every non-commissioned officer received instruction in coordinated infantry-artillery operations in order that fire support missions could be planned and directed at the platoon and company level. Combined tank-infantry operations were also studied with an emphasis on improved communications to facilitate mutual support. New equipment in the form of the DUKW (the standard Army six-wheel drive, two-and-a-half-ton truck modified for

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<sup>419</sup> United States Army in World War II, *Pictorial Record: The War Against Japan*, (Washington D.C.: The U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1952), 220-222.



amphibious operations) and the LVT (Landing Vehicle, Tracked) were integrated into the units and ingenious methods of using them for moving supplies and artillery were discovered and validated during the operation.<sup>420</sup>



*Figure 4-7: 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division training at the Jungle Training Center, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, 1943. (United States Army in World War II, Pictorial Record: The War Against Japan, The U.S. Army Center of Military History, 224.).*

Collective training built on these foundations. One officer recalled that “The infantry battalions rotated through a round robin of specialized training. They had a week on the beach learning to swim, another week in a jungle training center, next a week in an amphibious center where they went out to sea on landing craft and then returned, making full live ammunition landings. Next a week of intensive training in the use of explosives and the reduction of pillboxes and finally a week of practicing the exact tactics for this type of attack.”<sup>421</sup> Their

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<sup>420</sup> Edmund G. Love, *The Hourglass: A History of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in World War II*, (Washington D.C.: Infantry Journal Press, 1950), 110-112.

<sup>421</sup> Dean Galles, oral history interview, August 12, 2007, AFC/2001/001/76663, Veterans History Project, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

training culminated with a week-long division level amphibious exercise on the island of Maui, 11-18 January 1944, before returning to Oahu for final preparations for the assault.<sup>422</sup>

**Creation of Tactical Culture – Leadership and Training:** How a unit trains contributes greatly to the development of its tactical culture. One of the quickest and most effective ways for a leader at any level to establish his organizational vision and performance standards is through his guidance of and direction for training. Leaders can use training to initiate or change tactical culture by emphasizing how the organization should operate, and how subordinate leaders are expected to plan, prepare, and execute, and with this approach to thus build a cohesive team of teams. This gives the unit a definition of who they are, and that will in turn help them understand what to do and how to do it.<sup>423</sup> The 7<sup>th</sup> Division's Attu veteran officers and sergeants were promoted to positions of increased responsibility, and they undertook the task of training the unit for Operation Flintlock. The new commanding general was a passionate advocate of tough physical training and combined arms maneuver, telling his commanders' "Our men are willing and enthusiastic if their orders are clear, definite, and based on common sense. In order to be worthy of the men we command, every leader must get in and push with all his might until victory is won."<sup>424</sup> Leader focus on building both group cohesion and task cohesion developed the units' tactical culture.

#### 4.1.5. The Japanese Plan.

The Japanese had closed the Eastern Mandates off from the rest of the world in the 1930s. Authorized by the League of Nations mandate, they considered these newly acquired islands as vital Japanese territory. Their efforts to build visible facilities such as lighthouses were accompanied by clandestine projects to construct fuel oil and coal storage facilities to extend the effective range of the Japanese fleet into the Central Pacific.<sup>425</sup> Once the war with the United States began their previous efforts to secretly build infrastructure were accelerated to create an

<sup>422</sup> Philip A. Crowl, Edmund G. Love, *Seizure of the Gilberts and Marshalls: United States Army in World War II The War in the Pacific*, CMH Pub 5-6, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1955), 219.

<sup>423</sup> Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 225, 245, 291-292.

<sup>424</sup> McManus, *Island Infernos*, 40-42; quoting Charles H. Corlett memo, 9 Jan 42, Box 1, Charles Corlett Papers, Records of the Office of the Chief of Military History, "Seizure of the Gilberts and Marshalls, 7th Infantry Division, Participation in Flintlock Operation", U.S. Army Military History Institute (USAMHI), Carlisle PA.

<sup>425</sup> McManus, *Island Infernos*, 36; James A. Walker, Lewis Bernstein, Sharon Lang, *The Eastern Mandates Campaign: A Staff Ride Guide for Operation Flintlock, The Seizure of Kwajalein*, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, Huntsville, AL, 2004, 32-34; G. Rottman, *The Marshall Islands 1944: "Operation Flintlock, The Capture of Kwajalein and Eniwetok"*, (Oxford: Osprey Publishing Ltd, 2004), 7, 9-11.

integrated defensive zone that included airfields, docks, military barracks, generators, ammunition storage buildings, command posts, roads, and water storage facilities.<sup>426</sup>

Imperial Japanese Army doctrine for island defense mandated defending at the shoreline. The intent was to annihilate the enemy before they could get fully ashore, and if an enemy were successful in landing on the beaches, the Japanese were to counterattack before the enemy could become firmly established.<sup>427</sup> Because of this orientation to defend at the shoreline and destroy the enemy on the beach, Japanese defenses behind the beaches were not usually planned in depth. This approach melded the offensive-minded character of Japanese doctrine with the limited topography of the coral atolls of the Pacific. Such thin, flat islands offered little terrain to provide physical depth to any defense.<sup>428</sup> At the time of the Kwajalein invasion, the Japanese had however begun to adjust their defensive strategy. On Kwajalein initially, the Japanese defenses indicated that they assumed that any attack would come from the ocean side. They apparently felt that the lagoon shore side of the island was inherently more defensible because its wide, shallow reef would preclude landings on the beach.<sup>429</sup> Their assumptions were revised after the American attacks on Makin and Tarawa in November 1943 made it clear that attacks could be made from the lagoon.<sup>430</sup> The Japanese seemed to recognize that they needed to create defenses in depth and be able respond to attacks from unexpected directions and so they began to shift their defensive preparations to include the lagoon beaches, building trenches, gun positions, and antitank obstacles, but these were not complete by the time of the American attack.<sup>431</sup> Most notably, though the passages into the lagoon were not mined, nor were supporting defensive positions emplaced on the adjacent islets.<sup>432</sup> The American threat was recognized but it was ambiguous because, as one Japanese naval commander put it: "There was divided opinion as to

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<sup>426</sup> McManus, *Island Infernos*, 36.

<sup>427</sup> War Department Technical Manual E 30-480, "Handbook on Japanese Military Forces", 1 Jun 45, Ch. VII, Part III, 64-68.

<sup>428</sup> Crowl and Love, *Gilberts and Marshalls*, CMH Pub 5-6-1, 212.

<sup>429</sup> Commander, Joint Expeditionary Force Report of FLINTLOCK Operation, February 25, 1944, Enclosure (B), Intelligence Report, 15-18.

<sup>430</sup> Love, 107.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>432</sup> Commander, Joint Expeditionary Force Report of FLINTLOCK Operation, Enclosure (B), Intelligence Report, 16-17.

whether you would land at Jaluit or Mille. Some thought you would land on Wotje but there were few who thought you would go right to the heart of the Marshalls and take Kwajalein."<sup>433</sup>

Kwajalein Atoll was defended mainly by the Imperial Japanese Navy's *6<sup>th</sup> Base Force* and the *Yokosuka 4<sup>th</sup> Special Naval Landing Force* numbering approximately 8,100 men and 110 aircraft under the command of Akiyama Monzo, Rear Admiral IJN. The major IJA combat unit was the *1<sup>st</sup> Amphibious Brigade*, reinforced by the *2d Mobile Battalion*, totaling approximately 4,000 men. The other troops were electricians, mechanics, and communications specialists. This force also included many Korean laborers.<sup>434</sup> The defenses on Kwajalein featured many bunkers and pillboxes, machine gun positions and rifle pits, oriented mostly towards the ocean side beaches. The Japanese had installed 80 mm dual purpose guns on both the ocean and lagoon sides of the island, 12.7 cm guns on each end of the island, a 20 mm antiaircraft gun at the base of the seaplane ramp, and nearby two 13-mm single-mount machine guns, three 7.7-mm machine guns. Pre-invasion training was focused on repelling an attack on the beach with cannon and machine gun fire followed by bayonet charges to destroy the survivors.<sup>435</sup>

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<sup>433</sup> Crowl and Love, *Gilberts and Marshalls*, CMH Pub 5-6-1, 212, quoted in US Strategic Bombing Survey (USSBS), Naval Analysis Division, "Interrogations of Japanese Officials, Vol. I, Interrogation of Commander Nakajima Chikataka, IJN", (Washington, 1946), 143-44.

<sup>434</sup> James A. Walker, Lewis Bernstein, Sharon Lang, *The Eastern Mandates Campaign: A Staff Ride Guide for Operation Flintlock, The Seizure of Kwajalein*, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, Huntsville, AL, 2004, 32-34.

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid.*, 34; Commander, Joint Expeditionary Force Report of FLINTLOCK Operation, Enclosure (B), Intelligence Report, 16.



*Figure 4-8: Typical Japanese Beach Defensive Fortification, Kwajalein, 1944. (“The Eastern Mandates Campaign: A Staff Ride Guide for Operation FLINTLOCK; The Seizure of Kwajalein Atoll”, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command Historical Office, 2004, National Archives.).*

This photograph displays an example of one type of Japanese fighting position which includes an ammunition storage area and firing pit for a single machine gunner. A small window allowed an assistant gunner to pass ammunition to the firing position. The 7th Division soldiers faced approximately fifteen of these positions on Kwajalein.<sup>436</sup>

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<sup>436</sup> Commander, Joint Expeditionary Force Report of FLINTLOCK Operation, Enclosure (B), Intelligence Report, 16.



Figure 4-9: 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division landing on Kwajalein Island, 31 Jan 44. (*United States Army in World War II, Pictorial Record: The War Against Japan, The U.S. Army Center of Military History.*)

#### 4.1. H-Hour Again for the “Hourglass” Division.

On 22 January 1944 the invasion force left Pearl Harbor enroute to Kwajalein, to seize the first Japanese-owned territory in the Pacific.<sup>437</sup> The 7th Reconnaissance Troop once again led the division onto Kwajalein with a pre-dawn assault against several of the smaller islands on 31 January 1944. They also boarded a beached Japanese vessel and there found a trove of 75 secret charts of lagoons and harbors across the Pacific, which provided extremely valuable intelligence for future operations.<sup>438</sup> At the end of the day, they had killed 106 Japanese, and had taken three prisoners. Their losses were two killed, 22 wounded. Here, as at Attu, the 7th Recon was highly effective in fixing the enemy, preventing surprise, and collecting intelligence.<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>437</sup> Love, 112.

<sup>438</sup> Commander, Joint Expeditionary Force Report of FLINTLOCK Operation, Enclosure (B), Intelligence Report, 15, 18.

<sup>439</sup> Love, 113-118.

**Intelligence Exploitation:** Among the Japanese documents captured on Kwajalein was a complete set of secret maps and charts for Truk, the Imperial Japanese Navy’s principal anchorage in the central Pacific. These were used in the planning for an aircraft carrier strike against that on 17-18 Feb 1944.<sup>440</sup> During that strike about 250 Japanese aircraft and 17,000 tons of fuel were destroyed and the dockyards, communications facilities, and supply points revealed on the captured charts were attacked. Within the lagoon, two light cruisers, four destroyers, nine auxiliary ships, and approximately two dozen cargo vessels were sunk. As a result, Truk was neutralized as a base of operations and rendered ineffective and isolated for the remainder of the war.<sup>441</sup> Quickly processing and exploiting such intelligence finds, helped the Americans to retain the strategic initiative over the Japanese.



*Figure 4-10: Kwajalein Island, 0830 hours, 31 Jan 44. Photograph taken as the bombardment was beginning and before the buildings and jungle were destroyed. The airfield is at the upper left, the anti-tank ditch runs diagonally beyond it, and the Admiralty Area is at the lower center of the photograph. (“The Eastern Mandates Campaign: A Staff Ride Guide for Operation FLINTLOCK; The Seizure of Kwajalein Atoll”, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command Historical Office, 2004, National Archives.).*

<sup>440</sup> Commander, Joint Expeditionary Force Report of FLINTLOCK Operation, Enclosure (B), Intelligence Report, 2, 15-18.

<sup>441</sup> James Hornfischer, *The Fleet at Flood Tide: America at Total War in the Pacific, 1944–1945*, (New York: Random House, 2016), 18; Ian Toll, *The Conquering Tide: War in the Pacific Islands, 1942–1944*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 2015), 413-414.

Preliminary naval operations began early in the morning of 30-31 Jan 1944 when the battleships Massachusetts, Indiana, and Washington bombarded the island followed by the Pennsylvania, Mississippi, New Mexico, Idaho, and three heavy cruisers. At 0618 on 1 February 1944, covered by fire from the battleships, the destroyers Ringgold and Sigsbee entered the lagoon to protect the amphibious ships and landing craft.<sup>442</sup> The naval bombardment was thorough and intense. One observer, Commander Anthony Kimmins of the Royal Navy remarked:

Nothing could have lived through that sea and air bombardment. [The bombardment] was the most damaging thing I have ever seen. [Ashore] I have never seen such a shambles in my life. As you got ashore the beach was a mass of highly colored fish that had been thrown up there by nearby explosions." He commented that the bombardment was "the most brilliant success" he ever witnessed.<sup>443</sup>



*Figure 4-11: The effects of the bombardment of Japanese defenses on Kwajalein atoll. (United States Army in World War II, Pictorial Record: The War Against Japan, The U.S. Army Center of Military History.).*

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<sup>442</sup> Morison, *History of U.S. Naval Operations in World War II*, vol. VII, *Aleutians, Gilberts and Marshalls*, 237.

<sup>443</sup> Morison, *History of U.S. Naval Operations in World War II*, vol. VII, *Aleutians, Gilberts and Marshalls*, 238.



In addition to the main assault on Kwajalein Island, the 7th Infantry Division landed on several small nearby islands. The 2d Battalion, 17th Infantry seized Carlson Island to establish artillery firing positions in support of the main assault. Despite taking fire from the Japanese batteries on Kwajalein, they cleared the way for the artillery to land and soon several batteries were in position to fire.<sup>444</sup>



*Figure 4-12: 75mm Pack Howitzer Giving Fire Support from Carlos Island. (United States Army in World War II, Pictorial Record: The War Against Japan, The U.S. Army Center of Military History.).*

The main assault force of 800 infantry landed on the western tip of Kwajalein at 0930 on 1 February. Within fifteen minutes an additional 1200 soldiers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division landed to support the advance. The 184<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment led the assault along the lagoon side of the island with the airfield on their right flank, while the 32d Infantry Regiment had the ocean to their right and the airfield on their left.<sup>445</sup>

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<sup>444</sup> Love, *The Hourglass*, 119-120.

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

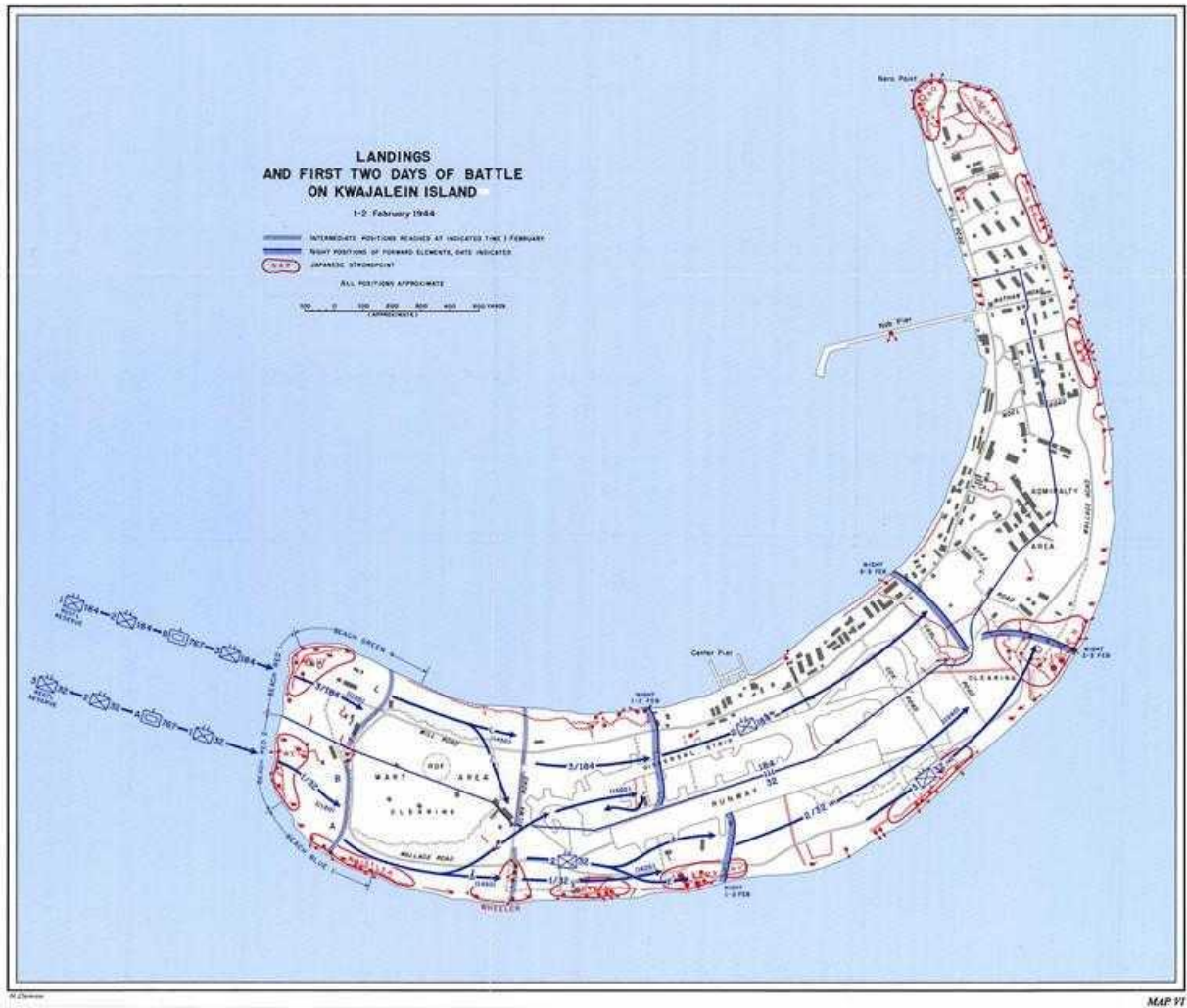


Figure 4-13: Assault Landings, Kwajalein, 1944. Map of the battle of Kwajalein, February 1944. (Downloaded from *The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II: Eastern Mandates* and converted to PNG by US government, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=47139000> ).

By the end of the first day the Americans had landed elements of six infantry battalions, four artillery battalions, and one engineer battalion on the islands of the atoll, but the real fight was just beginning. Despite the impressive bombardment, the Japanese garrison had survived, and they fought from inside their bunkers, pillboxes, and the many ruined buildings. As the Americans advanced, they found themselves pitted against a vast array of Japanese defensive structures situated both to their front and flanks. Concrete bunkers and pillboxes built to employ several machine guns were emplaced along the shoreline and throughout the interior of the

island. The entire area was so littered with destroyed foliage and shattered buildings that the Japanese defenders were often concealed until a surprise close range encounter yielded their location at the cost of another casualty. It became “house-to-house” combat in the ruins on a tropical atoll. Throughout the day the Japanese mounted stiff resistance from these positions and the American infantrymen were required to reduce each pillbox and strong point along the way.<sup>446</sup> After night fell, the Japanese fully emerged from their positions to counterattack with snipers, grenades, and mortars.<sup>447</sup>

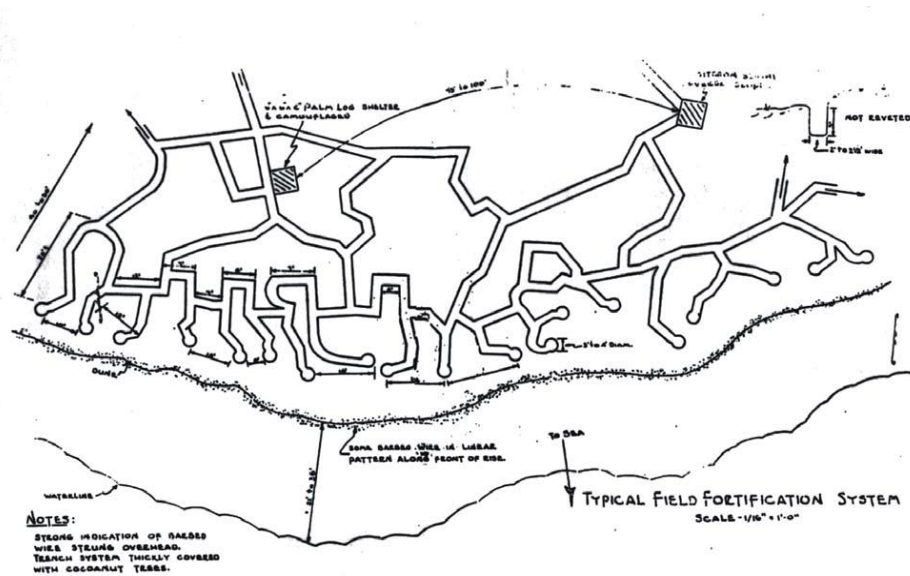


Figure 4-14: Typical Japanese Beach Defensive System, Kwajalein, 1944. (“The Eastern Mandates Campaign: A Staff Ride Guide for Operation FLINTLOCK; The Seizure of Kwajalein Atoll”, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command Historical Office, 2004, National Archives.).

<sup>446</sup> Marshall, *Island Victory*, 103, 127-129; Love, *The Hourglass*, 128-131.

<sup>447</sup> Love, *The Hourglass*, 131-136.



Figure 4-15: Japanese trench and bunker. (*“The Eastern Mandates Campaign: A Staff Ride Guide for Operation FLINTLOCK; The Seizure of Kwajalein Atoll”*, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command Historical Office, 2004, National Archives.).

Beginning the morning of February 2, 1944, both regiments continued their attack toward the north end of the island, coordinated with naval gunfire and air and artillery support. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 184th Infantry advanced along the lagoon side of the island while the 2nd Battalion, 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry continued to attack on the ocean side, overwhelming enemy strong points as they advanced. The Japanese responded with artillery and mortar fire, including white phosphorus shells which burned twenty men.<sup>448</sup>

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<sup>448</sup> Love, *The Hourglass*, 138.



Figure 4-16: 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division fighting on Kwajalein Island, January 1944. (*United States Army in World War II, Pictorial Record: The War Against Japan, The U.S. Army Center of Military History.*)

Both assault forces soon crossed the eastern end of the airfield. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, advanced across an antitank ditch and cleared a strong point with two rifle companies, supported by tanks. They methodically attacked this maze of trenches and pillboxes, killing over a hundred enemy soldiers without losing any Americans.<sup>449</sup> Having thus secured the Japanese airfield the attackers halted for the night. Elsewhere during the day, elements of the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop had landed on Chauncey Island and cleared it killing 125 Japanese. Japanese prisoners captured during the day said that their ammunition, food, and water were gone and that over 1200 of the garrison had been killed. With Attu still fresh in their minds, the men of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division were wary of a night attack from their desperate and trapped enemy. They warned one another, “It’s bound to come. The Jap makes his suicide counterattack at dawn on the day his cause becomes hopeless.” However, the night passed quietly.<sup>450</sup>

<sup>449</sup> Love, *The Hourglass*, 138-139.

<sup>450</sup> Love, *The Hourglass*, 139-140; Walker, Bernstein, Lang, *The Eastern Mandates Campaign: A Staff Ride Guide for Operation FLINTLOCK; The Seizure of Kwajalein Atoll*, 72.

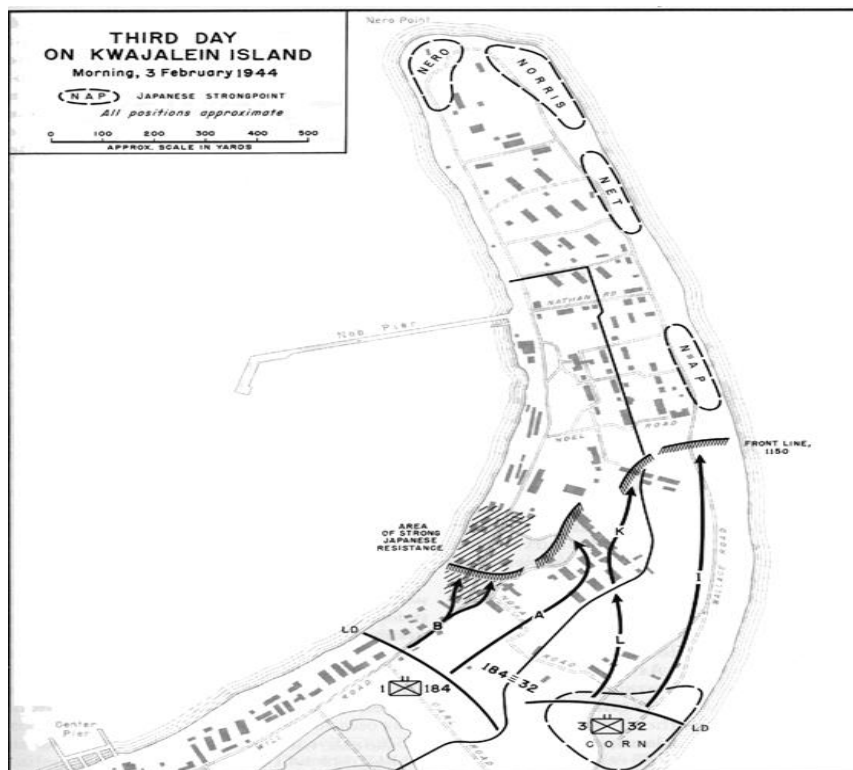


Figure 4-17: Third Day, Kwajalein, 1944. Map of the battle of Kwajalein, February 1944 (Downloaded from The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II: Eastern Mandates and converted to PNG by US government, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=47139000> ).

American expectations that final victory would be achieved on 3 February 1944, were not met. Instead, the Japanese resistance was stiffening as the defenders took full advantage of the cluttered battlefield environment. Specifically, their defense of the “Admiralty Area” proved to be much more formidable than expected. This area was so called because it was the suspected location of the Japanese headquarters and its many administrative offices and warehouses had been reduced to rubble by American gunfire and bombing, ironically providing excellent cover for the Japanese defenders.<sup>451</sup>

The Admiralty area was by this time an almost hopeless maze of rubble, in which demolished wooden buildings, deeply revetted air-raid shelters and the mounds of still operative blockhouses and pillboxes were practically indistinguishable. Gunfire had torn and shredded the once thickly built-up area almost beyond recognition, and the litter of wreckage was a stumbling mass of splintered coral sand, blasted concrete, and the ever-present drying palm fronds. Added

<sup>451</sup> Love, 141.

to the continuous cloud of gunfire and rising dust was the smoke from fires which broke out in the rubble. The Japanese continued to fight without pause: “The mere fact that a position was being flanked or enveloped meant nothing to the Jap soldier. His psychology of fanaticism (sic) dictated that he kill as many Americans as possible before dying a ‘glorious death’ ”.<sup>452</sup>

General Corlett called for a vigorous and speedy attack with the desire to “finish the job at 1500.” The assault forces encountered both piles of wreckage and undamaged pillboxes and concrete blockhouses that required destruction in a zone of one mile in depth and three hundred to five hundred yards width.<sup>453</sup> Maneuvering through this narrow, curved, tangled nest of hornets revealed challenges to command and control. So dense was the wreckage and smoke that units lost contact with each other and their headquarters. Even though only located fifty yards apart, two platoons were unaware that they were attacking simultaneously toward each other from different sides of a Japanese position.<sup>454</sup>

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<sup>452</sup> McManus, *Island Infernos*, 52; Major Clark Campbell, “The Operations of the First Battalion (Reinforced) 184<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in the Capture of Kwajalein Atoll, 31 January-6 February 1944 (Personal experiences of a Battalion Operations Officer), 6-8, 17-18, 26; Advanced Infantry Officers Course, 1947-1948, The Infantry School, Donovan Research Library, Fort Benning, GA.

<sup>453</sup> Love, 141-142.

<sup>454</sup> Marshall, 21, 140; Love, 145-149, McManus, 51.



*Figure 4-18: 7th Infantry Division soldiers use flamethrowers to drive Japanese soldiers from a blockhouse on Kwajalein atoll. (United States Army in World War II, Pictorial Record: The War Against Japan, The U.S. Army Center of Military History.)*

Numerous pockets of Japanese had been bypassed. Although outflanked these enemy forces would not surrender. The tactical cohesion of the Japanese defense was shattered, their communications and artillery destroyed, yet they stayed in the fight. Being outflanked or surrounded had no effect on the defenders. Even though the Americans had established a “front line” of troops the follow-on echelon often found themselves fighting for ground already taken. Nominal “mopping up” missions became full scale fire fights at one point even involving a battalion headquarters and the unit’s support troops.<sup>455</sup> Hidden under the rubble piles and downed palm trees the Japanese survivors were fighting to the death at every point and thus the American advance was required to slowly destroy each position in turn as they moved forward. Some rifle companies were making progress, but others were bogged down and became isolated, receiving both friendly and enemy fire from all sides. Finally, the division ordered its units to halt and regroup to regain their momentum and finish the attack in the morning.<sup>456</sup> That night they faced

<sup>455</sup> Marshall, *Island Victory*, 141; Love, *The Hourglass*, 151.

<sup>456</sup> Love, *The Hourglass*, 145-155.



small but fierce counterattacks as the Japanese emerged from their places of concealment. Heavy Japanese mortar and artillery fire from the far end of the island supported these infiltration attacks throughout the night.<sup>457</sup>

The sun rose on 4 February 1944, D + 3, to find the Americans still encountering stiff resistance from the Japanese. Nevertheless, the Japanese defense was crumbling. As the 2nd Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment mounted an assault against the remaining Japanese 5-inch dual purpose gun, the 184<sup>th</sup> Infantry was collecting some 90 prisoners, among them Petty Officer Fujita Minoru, who had been on Rear Admiral Akiyama's staff and he reported to them that Akiyama had died two days earlier when he had ventured out of his bunker to watch the American bombardment, thus decapitating the Japanese command structure. A high number of the surrenders were by Korean laborers who had been hiding in the rubble, merely hoping to survive.<sup>458</sup>

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<sup>457</sup> Love, *The Hourglass*, 157-159,161-163; Marshall, *Island Victory*, 163.

<sup>458</sup> G-2 Periodic Report 5, 4 Feb 44, G-2 Report of Operations (7th Inf Div FLINTLOCK Report, Vol IV). Detailed reports from the Japanese records on Kwajalein from 31 Jan-4 Feb 44 are virtually nonexistent. The only information found dealing with Akiyama's death is given above. He was reported as having been killed by the bombardment on 31 Jan 44.

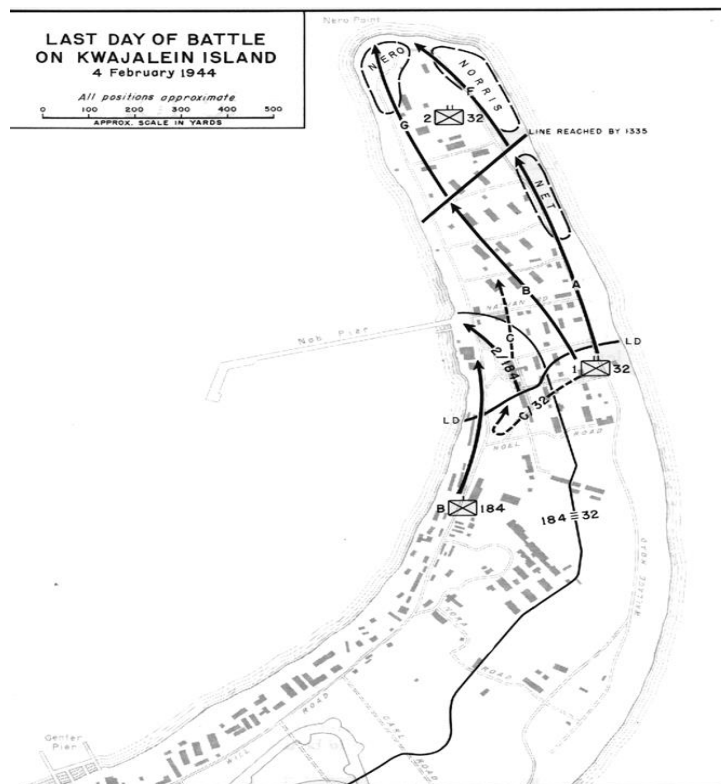


Figure 4-19: Last Day. Map of the battle of Kwajalein, February 1944. (Downloaded from *The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II: Eastern Mandates* and converted to PNG by US government, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=47139000> ).

By the end of the 4th, another 317 Americans would be killed or wounded from the stubborn but forlorn Japanese resistance. Attu veteran, Captain Albert L. Pence would become one of the last American casualties when he was wounded at about 1900 hours while leading the destruction of enemy bunkers in the final 150 yards of enemy fortifications.<sup>459</sup> Although smaller scale operations occurred on the adjacent islands for the next three days, the main objective was secured by 2100 hours. Various figures are given for the final costs of the operation, owing again to there being both few Japanese survivors and the destruction wrought by the Americans. The 7<sup>th</sup> Division had suffered 176 killed in battle, and 767 wounded. Estimates of Japanese casualties vary greatly. According to the most authoritative sources, of the 5,112 Japanese defending Kwajalein Island 4,938 were killed, 79 were taken prisoner and with them 125 Koreans

<sup>459</sup> Love, *The Hourglass*, 172; Marshall, *Island Victory*, 189.

surrendered.<sup>460</sup> The grisly task of burying the dead revealed both the horror of modern war and a surprising facet of Japanese tactical culture. So many bodies were burned, mutilated, and dismembered that there was little left to be interred: "We'd pick up feet and arms and stuff, and it wasn't good and it all smelled...horrible."<sup>461</sup> The bodies and body parts were dumped into communal graves but there was no way to identify the individual soldiers; identification tags only revealed the name of the unit that the soldier had belonged to.<sup>462</sup> Their individual identities were of less value than their collective sacrifice as Japanese soldiers.



*Figure 4-20: The aftermath on Kwajalein atoll. (United States Army in World War II, Pictorial Record: The War Against Japan, The U.S. Army Center of Military History.).*

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<sup>460</sup> Love, *The Hourglass*, 194; Morison, *History of U.S. Naval Operations in World War II*, vol. VII, *Aleutians, Gilberts and Marshalls*, 256.

<sup>461</sup> McManus, *Island Infernos*, 54, quoting Dean Galles, oral history interview, August 12, 2007, AFC/2001/001/76663, Veterans History Project, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

<sup>462</sup> McManus, *Island Infernos*, 55, quoting Franklin Shermer III, Oral History, June 2, 1944, Record Group 112, Entry 302, Surgeon General, inspections Branch, Box 219, Interview 74.

## 4.2. The Elements of Tactical Culture.

Tactical culture includes characteristics like pride, cohesion, loyalty, and initiative. It also includes capabilities like leadership, planning, and individual and collective skills. Tactical culture expresses an organization's beliefs about its duties, roles, and relationships, its preferred operational style, and the guidelines for how it will fight.

### 4.3.1. Imperial Japan: The Samurai Legacy and the Myth of *Bushidō*.

*“Bushidō can be seen as expressing the most remarkable feature of our national morality . . . To embrace life and death as one, to fulfill the Way of Loyalty [to the Emperor], that is our bushidō.”*<sup>463</sup>

The ideology of the “way of the samurai” or *bushidō*. has been the subject of much debate in terms of its connections to and influence on Japanese thought and identity.<sup>464</sup> Many have claimed that it represents the very ‘soul’ of the Japanese people, and that its motivating tenets of courage, selflessness, and loyalty represent the best characteristics of the samurai class long after they had ceased to exist.<sup>465</sup> Although both popular culture and some scholarly works have portrayed *bushidō* as a traditional system of ethics bequeathed from the samurai, its historical pedigree shows it to be a modern invention originating in the confluence of cultural, social, and political trends beginning in the late 1880s.<sup>466</sup> The *bushidō* that had such profound effects on Japanese attitudes and actions during the Pacific War sprung from Meiji era efforts to create a national ethos that would blend personal sacrifice and martial virtues with State Shinto.<sup>467</sup> Their exploration of a quasi-feudal code of ethics arose in response to the need to define the national identity and character during Japan’s rapid period of societal change and modernization.

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<sup>463</sup> Christopher Goto-Jones, “The Way of Revering the Emperor: Imperial Philosophy and Bushido in Modern Japan”, *The Emperors of Modern Japan*, edited by Ben-Ami Shilony, (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 23; quoting Itō Enkichi, *Kokutai no hongī* (Tokyo: Mombushō, 1937), 110–111.

<sup>464</sup> *Bushidō*. is frequently translated as the “way of the warrior” or “the way of the samurai”.

<sup>465</sup> Nitobe Inazo, *Bushidō: The Soul of Japan*, (Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1939), 98.

<sup>466</sup> Oleg Benesch, *Inventing the Way of the Samurai: Nationalism, Internationalism, and Bushido in Modern Japan*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1-3, 5.

<sup>467</sup> Morgan, 64; Friday, 340.

Influenced by contemporary English discourse on European chivalry *bushidō* was intended to provide Japanese society with new moral guidelines to mobilize the populace in service of the state as Japan leapt into the modern world.<sup>468</sup> The most influential work on the subject remains Nitobe Inazo's *Bushidō: The Soul of Japan* (1899). Historians have not found evidence of medieval samurai ethical thought that connect to modern *bushidō* or of historical conduct that reflects this.<sup>469</sup> The ideology seems to have first originated in the 1880s in “a confluence of intellectual and social trends... of journalist and politician Ozaki Yukio,” who developed the concept as a “potential counterpart to English chivalry and the English ‘gentlemanship’ that he idealized”.<sup>470</sup>

Rather than a classical system of ethics, imperial *bushidō* should be understood as a modern ideology, deliberately invented to indoctrinate the theory of Japanese nationalism as “a traditional samurai ethic and/or defining trait of the Japanese ‘national character’”.<sup>471</sup> Tokugawa era *bushidō* had been a transactional feudal system in which the samurai received benefits from his lord in return for his services. Imperial *bushidō* demanded that soldiers were to give their all, in service to the emperor because it was a duty of birth. This theory of Japanese nationalism was consistent with the overall Meiji approach of cosmopolitan chauvinism and radical nostalgia that shaped much of the restoration through a synthesis of adopting or emulating a foreign trait, policy, or philosophy and yet adapting it to become Japanese in nature.<sup>472</sup>

This was also a response to the unique circumstances of the formation of the modern Japanese state from the ‘compound state’ that existed in which the *daimyo* were semi-independent states under Tokugawa authority. Tokugawa Japan was not a fully unified nation-state in the modern sense, and Meiji Japan needed *bushidō* to create both a national identity and modern statehood.<sup>473</sup> In the process of creating the modern Japanese state and its military often one tradition was shattered while another was restored. The samurai class was abolished, and the

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<sup>468</sup> Friday, 340.

<sup>469</sup> Cameron Hurst III, “Death, Honor, and Loyalty: The Bushidō Ideal”, in *Philosophy East & West*, 40:4 (1990), 511–527; Karl Friday, “Bushidō or Bull? A Medieval Historian’s Perspective on the Imperial Army and the Japanese Warrior Tradition”, in *The History Teacher*, 27:3 (1994), 339–349.

<sup>470</sup> Benesch, 5.

<sup>471</sup> Benesch, 8, 247. Basil Hall Chamberlain referred to it in 1912 as an example of the ‘invention of a religion.’

<sup>472</sup> Mark Ravina, *To Stand with the Nations of the World: Japan's Meiji Restoration in World History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 6-12.

<sup>473</sup> Ronald Toby, “Rescuing the Nation from History: The State of the State in Early Modern Japan.” *Monumenta Nipponica* 56:2 (2001), 201.

wearing of swords outlawed but the sword remained an essential talisman for the Japanese soldier. Commoners were conscripted to form the new Imperial Japanese Army, but they were inculcated with the purported traditions of the hereditary warrior elite.<sup>474</sup> The strategy of the Meiji state for integration into the modern world was to emulate what they saw as best practices in the West but create Japanese analogues and rituals to claim legitimacy as a Japanese version of the thing.<sup>475</sup> *Bushidō* became a part of the process of asserting an essential cultural identity for the Japanese nation-state with the ruler and the ruled bound together by a common language, culture, and heritage. Portrayals of the ideology were easily blended with contemporary theories on what constituted Japanese spirit and identity and many in academia and the government worked diligently to give *bushidō* widespread acceptance through the education system, military training, and government policy. From 1901 to 1945 the discourse laid out the foundational principles of “government-sanctioned and emperor-focused ‘imperial bushidō’...as a uniquely Japanese ethic with no equivalents in other cultures or nations,” that “most importantly, ... called for absolute loyalty to the sovereign and nation and sought to instill a willingness to die for these causes”.<sup>476</sup>

**Imperial Bushido and National Identity:** *Bushidō* has been called an ‘invented religion’; a Meiji interpretation that did not reflect the ideals or the conduct of samurai in the historical record. It was a simplification of the values of the samurai intentionally manipulated to strengthen the “fighting spirit” of the Japanese soldier particularly in its emphasis on loyalty and self-sacrifice centered on the emperor.<sup>477</sup> The soldiers of the Imperial Japanese Army in the Second World War nevertheless revelled in the myth that they were now members of the modern samurai class; elevated to a status that their ancestors could never have achieved.<sup>478</sup> As a racist and militaristic code of conduct it thus facilitated some of the atrocities perpetrated by the Japanese imperial army during the Pacific War.<sup>479</sup>

<sup>474</sup> Mark Ravina, *To Stand with the Nations of the World: Japan's Meiji Restoration in World History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 5-11, 13.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.

<sup>476</sup> Benesch, 12, 148.

<sup>477</sup> Ikegami Eiko, *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 111.

<sup>478</sup> Karl Friday, “Bushido or Bull: A Medieval Historian’s Perspective on the Imperial Army and the Japanese Warrior Tradition,” *Society for History Education* Vol. 27 Issue. 3 (May 1994): 339-349.

<sup>479</sup> Cameron Hurst III, “Death, Honor, and Loyalty: The Bushidō Ideal”, in *Philosophy East & West*, 40:4 (1990), 511–527; Karl Friday, “Bushidō or Bull? A Medieval Historian’s Perspective on the Imperial Army and the Japanese Warrior Tradition”, in *The History Teacher*, 27:3 (1994), 339–349.

The invention and adoption of *bushidō* thus mirrored the processes found in other societies that also grappled with the processes of modernization, nationalism, and imperialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Modern invented traditions seek to synthesize modernization, tradition, and national identity to establish social cohesion, legitimize institutions and authorities, and inculcate beliefs and conventions of behavior.<sup>480</sup> Imperial *Bushidō* (the form conceived during the Meiji era and refined during the Showa era) served all three functions in the modernization of Japan, being presented as the unifying expression of the unique Japanese national character, and used as an ideological tool of the Japanese government to inculcate national identity and unity. Furthermore, its philosophically strident nationalism and militarism came to be a form of spiritual guidance for the Japanese people.<sup>481</sup>

Of note was its emphasis on loyalty as it sought to change the traditional culture of allegiance to feudal clan to devotion to the emperor. It built on the legend of the founding of the empire by the sun-goddess and the mythical intervention of divine winds that saved the nation from the Mongol invasions to craft a narrative of a polity whose core goal was to repay the debt owed by the people to the nation for being so blessed.<sup>482</sup> Imperial *bushidō* gave loyalty a special meaning of being an absolute duty and it established a direct relationship between the people and the imperial state. This created a value system intended to motivate the Japanese people to selfless devotion to duty and to endure extraordinary sacrifice for the emperor by elevating, intensifying, and in some cases, distorting or reinterpreting these traditional values and symbols.<sup>483</sup> A remarkable feature of the adoption and dissemination of *bushidō* was that well over ninety percent of the population were descendants of classes that had generally resented the samurai. Yet this residual class consciousness was broken down gradually through public education and military training which encouraged identification with the martial ethic associated with the former samurai elite.<sup>484</sup>

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<sup>480</sup> Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, "Mass Producing Traditions: Europe 1870-1914", *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 9, 263-307.

<sup>481</sup> Bonner F. Fellers, *Psychology of the Japanese Soldier, Part 1* (Washington D.C.: BiblioGov Project, 2012.) Originally Published 1936, 22.

<sup>482</sup> Morgan, 65; Robert N. Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion: The Values of Pre-Industrial Japan*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), 87, 155.

<sup>483</sup> Benesch, 7; Forrest E. Morgan, *Compellence and the Strategic Culture of Imperial Japan: Implications for Coercive Diplomacy in the Twenty-First Century*, (Westport and London: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 69.

<sup>484</sup> Benesch, 87.

**The Forty-seven Rōnin:** The widely held Japanese cultural belief that the fullest expression of loyalty is in self-sacrifice was foregrounded in the famous *Akō* Incident of the Forty-seven Masterless Samurai (*Rōnin*). The story tells of a group of samurai who were left indigent after their feudal lord was compelled to perform ritual suicide (*seppuku*) for assaulting a court official. After a year of planning, the rōnin avenged their master by killing the official. They were then obliged to commit *seppuku* for the crime of murder. They were subsequently immortalized in Japanese culture as paragons of the warrior virtues of loyalty and sacrifice.<sup>485</sup> Throughout the Meiji and Showa periods their personal fealty and self-sacrifice was venerated as being central to Japanese national identity and political morality.

The degree of acceptance of *bushidō* by the general populace was expressed by claims that “to insult *bushidō* is to insult all Japanese”, and that “*bushidō* did not die with the samurai...it entered all Japanese and is especially pronounced in the soldier spirit.”<sup>486</sup>

#### **4.3.2. Japanese Tactical Culture: A Cult of Loyalty, Obedience, Self-Sacrifice, and Self-Destruction.**

“*Bushido* is a single straight way to death, practicing over and over again every day and night how to die a *samurai*’s death on every possible occasion and every possible cause...Readiness to die at the call of one’s duty should be kept ever fresh and alive by repeating the vow every day and every moment.”<sup>487</sup>

Extolled as the great classic of imperial *bushidō*, 'Hagakure' (“Hidden Leaves” or “Hidden by the leaves”) was however written in the early 18th century. A previously obscure collection of maxims, *Hagakure* glorifies the warrior virtues in a distinctively Japanese way that reflects both Japan’s long history of feudal warfare and its 300 years of peace and deliberate isolation from Western influences.<sup>488</sup> Its central theme is that only the warrior who is prepared and willing to die at any moment for his lord is worthy of the title. Beginning with the sentence that, 'Bushido is a

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<sup>485</sup> Sato Hiroaki, *Legends of the Samurai*, (New York: Overlook Press, 1995), 322-325.

<sup>486</sup> Benesch, 87.

<sup>487</sup> Yamamoto Tsunetomo, translated by William Scott Wilson, *Hagakure*, (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1979), 30.

<sup>488</sup> Forrest E. Morgan, *Compellence and the Strategic Culture of Imperial Japan: Implications for Coercive Diplomacy in the Twenty-First Century*, (Westport and London: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 10.



way of dying', it asserts that one should live as though one is already dead, free from attachment to worldly things and thus being fully capable of the ultimate sacrifice that feudal loyalty demanded.<sup>489</sup>

*Hagakure* came to be viewed by the Imperial Japanese Army as canonical samurai behavior and *bushidō* was the basis for the ideology of the emperor-centric militarism held as the national spirit.<sup>490</sup> The *bushidō* that was invented in the Meiji era and evolved during the Showa period was a hybrid ideology that successfully merged the concept of the national warrior identity with the central theme that the values and spirit of the samurai were the ethnic birthright of all Japanese.<sup>491</sup>

The ultranationalist ideologue and theorist, Yasuoka Masahiro identified *bushidō* as the ultimate expression of the 'Japanese spirit' (*Nihon seishin*) and promoted it as the Japanese nationalist ideology. He wrote and lectured extensively on this theme by citing from *Hagakure*, exhorting Japanese men to embrace a self-sacrificial 'samurai spirit' and to act as exemplary 'men of character' (*jinkakusha*), loyal to the emperor-centered state. Yasuoka believed that *Hagakure* expressed the spirit of the ideal Japanese warrior and claimed that by following this example modern Japanese soldiers could demonstrate the selfless spirit of fidelity and sacrifice needed for Japan to be victorious.<sup>492</sup> Yasuoka further asserted that Japanese soldiers should feel no regret in dying. He referenced the famous 8th-century poem '*Umiyukaba*' ('If I Go to Sea'), to argue that the true goal of a Japanese soldier was to serve loyally and to die well:

It is most regrettable for a person to live idly and end their days having achieved nothing of value. Truly, what is a life without deep passion?...The desire to die a hero is the passionate spirit of the people: If at sea, a watery corpse, if in the

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<sup>489</sup> Meirion and Susie Harries, *Soldiers of the Sun: The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army*, 7

<sup>490</sup> Benesch, 244-245; Ravina, *To Stand with the Nations of the World: Japan's Meiji Restoration in World History*, 13.

<sup>491</sup> Roger H. Brown, "Yasuoka Masahiro's 'New Discourse on Bushidō Philosophy': Cultivating Samurai Spirit and Men of Character for Imperial Japan", *Social Science Japan Journal* Vol. 16, No. 1, 115, 2013; Advance Access publication December 6, 2012, doi:10.1093/ssjj/jys021.

<sup>492</sup> Roger H. Brown, "Yasuoka Masahiro's 'New Discourse on Bushidō Philosophy': Cultivating Samurai Spirit and Men of Character for Imperial Japan", *Social Science Japan Journal* Vol. 16, No. 1, 107–129, 2013; Advance Access publication December 6, 2012, doi:10.1093/ssjj/jys021.

mountains, a verdant corpse, to die at the side of our lord—this is the oath of the Japanese subject.<sup>493</sup>

As the ideology of *bushidō* developed there were heated debates amongst Japanese thinkers concerning combat effectiveness and how to win against more militarily advanced European nations. An army composed of conscripts needs a motivation to fight. *Bushidō* was used for the ideological indoctrination of these conscripts, and this helped to shape the national character that began to emerge in this period. The predominant view developed that while other nations fought with technology, Japan fought with a unique spirit, inspired not only by their sense of duty but also with the honor of their ancestors in mind.

The battle cry of the Japanese pierced the heart of the Russians and filled them with terror...Several sudden assaults, throwing one human bullet after another against the enemy's defenses, ended with the blood of heroes spattered, their bones shattered...I must admit that the first attack ended in failure, but those human bullets who had been used to this end became integral initial stepping stones for smashing the enemy's battlements...<sup>494</sup>

This officer, Sakurai Tadayoshi stressed that such defeats were not needless tragedies. They were the first necessary steps towards victory.<sup>495</sup> He expressed what would become the common belief that by serving as loyal subjects of their divine emperor and placing their faith in the power of 'spirit over matter' the Japanese would eventually triumph.<sup>496</sup> Victory over the Russians seemed to vindicate the theory that despite their materiel and technological deficiencies, Japan would always triumph because of its superior *bushidō* 'spirit and the self-sacrifice of the 'human bullets'.<sup>497</sup>

Despite the great number of projectiles and the large quantity of human bullets that were spent, the storming of the forts...ended in utter failure... however, this apparently useless sacrifice of a large number of lives was not without its effect. Strategically we needed to reduce the great fortress as quickly as possible, however great the damage to our army might be; so, therefore, the commanding general resolved with tears to offer the necessary sacrifice, and his subordinates

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<sup>493</sup> Brown, 116.

<sup>494</sup> Sakurai, Tadayoshi, *Human bullets, a soldier's story of Port Arthur*, translated by Masajiro Honda and edited by Alice Mabel Bacon, (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1907), 214-215.

<sup>495</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>496</sup> Morgan, 65; Benedict, 22-23.

<sup>497</sup> Benesch, 76.

willingly offered their lives and stormed the enemy with bullets of their own flesh. And these first fruitless assaults proved the necessary first step and a valuable preparation for our final success.<sup>498</sup>

**Human Bullets:** Considered by some to be the defining work of Russo-Japanese era war literature, Sakurai Tadatoshi's *Human Bullets* described the emotions of the Japanese soldiers in vivid and lyrical language that stressed the nobility of suffering and the superior élan of the Japanese soldiers. The work was immensely popular in Japan and was translated into English for a wider audience.

“This battle is our great chance of serving our country. To-night we must strike at the vitals of Port Arthur. Our brave assaulting column must be not simply a forlorn-hope (‘resolved-to-die’), but a ‘sure-death’ detachment...Do your best, all of you.” Yes, we were all ready for death when leaving Japan. Men going to battle of course cannot expect to come back alive. But in this battle to be ready for death was not enough; what was required of us was a determination not to fail to die. Indeed, we were “sure-death” men, and this new appellation gave us a great stimulus.”<sup>499</sup>

This spirit of self-sacrifice was pervasive and carried the highest endorsement. In his introduction to Sakurai's book, former prime minister Okuma Shigenobu wrote: “[Our] soldiers vie with each other in offering themselves on the altar of their country, (sic) the spirit of sacrifice prevails to a marked degree. This is the true characteristic of the race of Yamato”.<sup>500</sup>

The war with Russia caused the Japanese to consider the technological advances in warfare that they experienced.<sup>501</sup> Despite revising their large unit doctrine they maintained their belief in the power of individual devotion to duty, and self-sacrifice to achieve victory.<sup>502</sup> Paramount to Japanese military thought was their steadfast belief in the power of offensive action to quickly overwhelm an enemy. The success of their attacks against the Russians was attributed to their intangible and unique *samurai* ethos and a tactical bias for attack. This led to a doctrine built on

<sup>498</sup> Sakurai, 216.

<sup>499</sup> Sakurai, Tadayoshi, *Human bullets, a soldier's story of Port Arthur*, translated by Masajiro Honda and edited by Alice Mabel Bacon, (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1907), 232.

<sup>500</sup> *Ibid.*, x.

<sup>501</sup> Edward J. Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army: Its Rise and Fall, 1853-1945*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009), 156-157.

<sup>502</sup> *Ibid.*

the idea of close quarters combat characterized by overwhelming speed and violence conducted by elite infantry shock troops supported by mobile artillery.<sup>503</sup>

While acknowledging the advances that had taken place in arms and materiel because of the First World War, Imperial Japanese Army nevertheless maintained the view that victory was dependent on the intangible factors of patriotism, devotion, and self-sacrifice. Still, the Japanese did strive to develop a doctrine that would encompass the advances in technology, mobility, and firepower while maintaining the philosophy of the innate power of spiritual training. As a result, subsequent doctrine advocated offensive mobile warfare exemplified by envelopments but maintaining the dogma that the bayonet in the hands of a soldier imbued with the intangible and indomitable powers of the fighting spirit would overcome any shortcomings or disadvantages in materiel and firepower.<sup>504</sup>

**Creation of Tactical Culture – IJA Training and Indoctrination:** “The Japanese...relied on the gruelling training that produced quality infantrymen to compensate for the inferior material and technological support...It was this combination of obedience and ferocity that made the Japanese Army...so formidable.”<sup>505</sup> IJA doctrine and training revolved around the infantry with all other elements in support. Training and exercises emphasized flanking movements, night attacks, and bayonet charges by small units.<sup>506</sup> IJA training for both soldiers and officers focused on the Red Army rather than the Americans or British who were seen as far lesser threats. The core curriculum from basic training to the Imperial Army War College centred on tactics and battle drill which produced instinctive tactical actions but stifled operational level innovation and creativity.<sup>507</sup> The basic traits that permeated IJA “tactical” culture were strict obedience, and their faith in victory based on the belief in their “fighting spirit”. They considered the Japanese soldier ideal because he had mastered Western technology and melded it with the unique martial spirit of the Japanese people.<sup>508</sup> All military training was linked to *bushidō*, yet it was not mentioned in the Army Regulations because it existed on a higher plane – as a creed, a faith, and an existential guide to life and death.<sup>509</sup>

<sup>503</sup> Leland Ness, *Rikugun: Guide to Japanese Ground Forces, 1937-1945*, (Solihull: Helion and Company, 2014), 14-15.

<sup>504</sup> Edward J. Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army: Its Rise and Fall, 1853-1945*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009), 156-157.

<sup>505</sup> Drea, *In Service of the Emperor*, 73, 120.

<sup>506</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>507</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-71.

<sup>508</sup> Aaron William Moore, *Writing War: Soldiers Record the Japanese Empire*, (Cambridge Mass. And London, England: Harvard University Press, 2013), 31.

<sup>509</sup> Arthur Swinson, *Four Samurai: A Quartet of Japanese Army Commanders in the Second World War*, (London: Hutchinson, 1968), 15.

This approach fully manifested itself with the publication in 1928 of the *Infantry Manual*. Here the German infiltration tactics of World War I were revised to incorporate the Japanese infantry-centric style of warfare that emphasized destroying the enemy with “cold steel” utilizing speed, surprise, and the cover of night. Combined arms maneuver was not practiced. Instead, the concentration of attacking manpower and firepower on a narrow front was favored to achieve a breakthrough. All of this was based on an ideology and tradition that allowed for no retreat and no surrender.<sup>510</sup> Any reference to surrender, retreat, or defense had been removed from the regulation as unauthorized maneuvers.<sup>511</sup> They instead emphasized mobile combat tactics by dismounted infantry against Soviet forces; encircling attacks, night attacks, and close combat. Lessons learned from the difficult battles against the Soviets at Changkufeng in 1938 and Nomonhan in 1939, were also eventually incorporated into their combat training.<sup>512</sup> However, it wasn't until much later in 1943 that the Army General Staff directed that there be training to counter American and British tactics, which led several instructors to lament the fact that they didn't even know what those tactics were!<sup>513</sup>

**Influence on Tactical Culture - IJA Anti-Intelligence Bias:** Throughout the war Allied intelligence collection and analysis consistently outperformed the Japanese system. The greatest reason for this seems to have been enculturated biases. There was a marked propensity by the Japanese to underestimate their opponents and overrate themselves. An example from a captured Japanese document entitled "Land Warfare Tactics to Use against U.S. and British Forces." states that: “because the character of the American is simple and lacking in tenacity, in their tactics and battle leadership they also lack tenacity; and if they meet with one setback, they have a tendency to abandon one plan for another. For this reason, we must not fail to hammer at this weakness.” The prevailing theme was that “lack of equipment gave us Japanese a chance to demonstrate our superior spirit and valor.”. When paired with a bias in their tactical culture that subordinated intelligence and its practitioners as an inferior warfighting function, Japanese intelligence suffered from the effects of flawed assessments that spiritual superiority would triumph (confirmation bias) and from poor intelligence security and sharing.<sup>514</sup>

<sup>510</sup> Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 158.

<sup>511</sup> Edward J. Drea, *In Service of the Emperor: Essays on the Imperial Japanese Army*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1998), 13.

<sup>512</sup> *Japanese Monograph No. 45: History of Imperial General Headquarters, Army Section (Revised Edition)*. Headquarters, United States Army, Japan, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, 1959, 22-23.

<sup>513</sup> Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 158.

<sup>514</sup> Kotani Ken, “Japanese Intelligence in WWII: Successes and Failures”, 10, 19, 22; "American and British Tactics--As Viewed by the Japanese" from *Tactical and Technical Trends*, No. 14, Dec. 17, 1942. U.S. Military

The IJA came to rely on surprise, speed, and aggressive infantry tactics to attack and seize terrain in the Pacific, but in the defense its neglect of fully developing a modern combined arms doctrine and organization made the IJA very ineffective. Japanese tactical doctrine always emphasized offensive action characterized by speed, surprise, and mobility. Japanese doctrine for defensive operations was less well developed.<sup>515</sup> Their reverence of rank and the hierarchy of command, suppressed initiative, and stifled low-level decision making. The machine gun, supported by grenade launchers, was the primary weapon for the defense. Snipers augmented defensive positions, and counterattacks were quickly launched to regain lost positions or to repulse the attackers. Artillery was generally less used in the defense, with the individual field guns being tunneled into hillsides or emplaced in fortified positions. When deployed in this manner and under the tactical control of infantry commanders, they were unable to mass the effects of their indirect fires.<sup>516</sup> When on the defensive the Japanese strove to surprise the attacker by remaining silent and concealed. This was achieved by their highly skilled camouflaging of their battle positions and their effective deception measures like using decoy positions. They also made extensive use of snipers to disrupt the American advance.<sup>517</sup>

The Japanese displayed no innovations in tactics on Kwajalein. In general, their defense amounted to a slow retreat through a maze of previously prepared positions--pillboxes, trenches, air-raid shelters, blockhouses, log emplacements and building ruins. It was, in effect, a static defense with short periods of active operations as evidenced in nightly limited counterattacks by small units and attempts at infiltration.<sup>518</sup> For the Japanese, the battle should have demonstrated that beachline defenses were too vulnerable to attack and that defense in-depth was necessary if they hoped to stop Allied assaults.

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Intelligence Service; Edward J. Drea, *In Service of the Emperor: Essays on the Imperial Japanese Army* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1998), 1, 13, 18.

<sup>515</sup> *Tactical and Technical Trends, Number 32, 26 August 1943*, Military Intelligence Service, War Department, Washington D.C. 26-28.

<sup>516</sup> *U.S. Army Infantry Combat Pamphlet – Part Two: Attu, Tactical and Technical Trends No. 31, 12 August 1943*, (Washington DC: Military Intelligence Service, War Department, 1943), 25-26.

<sup>517</sup> *Tactical and Technical Trends, Number 31, 12 Aug 1943*, 26-27.

<sup>518</sup> G-2 Report of Operations, (7th Inf Division FLINTLOCK Report, Vol IV), 6.

The Japanese drive to modernize their weapons, doctrine, and training was contrasted with the antithetical belief that success in future battle was primarily reliant on non-materiel means. They believed that victory would be assured if *bushidō* was fully inculcated into the Japanese soldier.<sup>519</sup> Japanese tactical culture thus focused on the legacy of samurai identity and the values of discipline, obligation or duty, martial spirit, loyalty, and a willingness to sacrifice one's own life. *Bushidō* had an essential effect on influencing Japanese will to fight and will to sacrifice because it portrayed the quintessential trait of the Japanese soldier as his self-effacing and even self-destructive loyalty to the nation.<sup>520</sup> Their tactical culture embraced the belief that death in man-to-man combat was glorious because of the importance placed on honor and reputation codified by *bushidō*.<sup>521</sup> In his widely published interpretation of *Hagakure*, Watsuji Tetsuro contended that the Japanese have historically valued purity of intent more highly than effective outcomes. He argued that exhibiting *seimyōshin* (a pure spirited heart/mind) in the execution of the task is more important than whether one is successful. Thus, the failed *gyokusai* at Attu was heavily romanticized as an inspirational example of the fighting spirit of the nation.<sup>522</sup> The public was manipulated into believing that suicidal acts like this were the ultimate proof of loyalty and devotion to duty.<sup>523</sup>

**IJA Tactical Culture and *Bushidō*:** The warrior ethos of loyalty and self-sacrifice was thoroughly enculturated in Japanese society and the people fully believed that obedience, service, and sacrifice were their debt to society.<sup>524</sup> "Victory and defeat are matters of the temporary force of circumstances. The way of avoiding shame is different. It is simply in death. Even if it seems certain that you will lose, retaliate... A real man does not think of victory or defeat. He plunges recklessly towards an irrational death. By doing this, you will awaken from your dreams."<sup>525</sup> Because the most vital and expected quality of the Japanese soldier was his

<sup>519</sup> Fred L. Borch, *Military Trials of War Criminals in the Netherlands East Indies, 1946–1949*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 31–32.

<sup>520</sup> Benesch, 7.

<sup>521</sup> Meirion and Susie Harries, *Soldiers of the Sun: The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army*, 7.

<sup>522</sup> Benesch, 193; John Toland, *The Rising Sun: The Decline and Fall of the Japanese Empire 1936-1945*, (New York: Random House, 1970), 444.

<sup>523</sup> Sato Hiroaki, "Gyokusai or "Shattering like a Jewel": Reflection on the Pacific War", *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, February 1, 2008, Volume 6, Issue 2, 1,5.

<sup>524</sup> Forrest E. Morgan, *Compellence and the Strategic Culture of Imperial Japan: Implications for Coercive Diplomacy in the Twenty-First Century*, (Westport and London: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 235.

<sup>525</sup> Yamamoto Tsunetomo, *Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai*, translated by William Scott Wilson (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1992), 29-30.

willingness to die, this removed all limits on what his leaders could demand. As the war worsened the acceptance of death became essential.<sup>526</sup> For the IJA it seemed that there were no unacceptable losses.

Imperial *bushidō* forbade surrender or retreat as incompatible with the Japanese martial spirit. Obeying this spirit included the obligation to ‘giving one’s most valuable life for the imperial nation (as) a duty’ even in the case of committing suicide rather than being captured.<sup>527</sup> This attitude was strongly tempered by the Japanese aesthetic of *wabi-sabi* and *mono no aware* with their fatalistic and melancholic view of the beauty of impermanence and loss, as well as the Zen influenced beliefs on transcendence and nothingness.<sup>528</sup> In 1943, Lieutenant General Ryotaro Nagai described this philosophy of stoicism and fatalism: "It is a fact that victory or defeat in warfare is ascribable to something transcending logic, fate or the grace of heaven. I presume there is hardly a commander who, being responsible for many lives does not fall into the idea of doing his best, then praying for the grace of heaven."<sup>529</sup>

This spiritual indoctrination was not the only factor that kept Japanese soldiers from surrendering when the situation was clearly hopeless. Peer pressure and group think were also highly influential factors with many Japanese soldiers fearing that their comrades would kill them if they attempted to surrender.<sup>530</sup> Because of IJA indoctrination eighty-four percent of one group of Japanese prisoners interviewed thought that they would be executed or tortured by their captors; seventy-six percent thought that they would be executed or punished by Japanese authorities.<sup>531</sup> It appears that while many Japanese soldiers refused to surrender because they believed in *bushidō* others feared being killed by the Americans or their own side for

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<sup>526</sup> Harries, *Soldiers*, 323.

<sup>527</sup> Benesch, 107-109.

<sup>528</sup> Nishida Kitaro, *Intelligibility, and the Philosophy of Nothingness: Three Philosophical Essays*, translated by Robert Shinzinger, (Honolulu: East-West Press, 1958), 34-36. Nishida discusses the death of the ego-self.

<sup>529</sup> Harries, *Soldiers of the Sun, The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army*, 336.

<sup>530</sup> David C. Earhart, *Certain Victory: Images of World War II in the Japanese Media*, (London: Routledge, 2008), 400-401; Maynard, S. K., *Japanese Communication: Language and Thought in Context*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 30, 37, 43; Morgan, 61, 63, 227-228.

<sup>531</sup> John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, (New York: Pantheon, 1987), 68; Beatrice Trefalt, *Japanese Army Stragglers and Memories of the War in Japan, 1950-1975*, (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 21.



surrendering. For the Japanese soldier group cohesion was a coercive force for collective sacrifice.

We see that the manipulative indoctrination of *bushidō* reinforced values already accepted throughout Japanese society.<sup>532</sup> Imperial *bushidō* evolved into an ideology that inspired loyalty, obedience, and self-sacrifice for the nation. It endured as an accepted ideology for the Japanese people despite its demand for their suicidal sacrifice because it was interwoven with traditional cultural values and popular nationalism, each promoting the other in terms of goals and ideals.<sup>533</sup> The result was the creation of a tactical culture that believed and operated as though victory could be attained through sufficient sacrifice.

#### **4.3.3. American Tactical Culture: Inculcated with a Will to Win.**

As we examine the variables affecting combat motivation, especially in comparing the American and Japanese forces in the Pacific War we must consider the political context. In this case we find a democracy opposing a totalitarian empire. Research indicates that when faced with an existential threat strong democracies demonstrate a powerful will to fight. (e.g., France in the First World War).<sup>534</sup> When combined with a strong national identity and will to fight nations can endure high casualties. (e.g., France in the First World War; the Soviet Union in the Second World War).<sup>535</sup> Having a strong will to fight increases the chances of victory and fully totalitarian and democratic governments show the strongest will to fight. (e.g., the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union in the Second World War).<sup>536</sup>

After the trauma of the First World War, the failure of the League of Nations, and the debilitating effects of the Great Depression America chose neutrality and nonintervention. Despite strong public opinion against involvement in foreign conflicts this isolationist approach to foreign policy was gradually eroded as rising tensions and open conflict in both Europe and Asia caused the United States to become an undeclared participant through the Lend Lease Act

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<sup>532</sup> Morgan, 69, 232, 235.

<sup>533</sup> Benesch, 242-243.

<sup>534</sup> Connable, et. al., "Will to Fight: Returning to the Human Fundamentals of War", RAND, 2019, xiii-xvi, 13.

<sup>535</sup> Ibid.

<sup>536</sup> Connable, et. al., "Will to Fight: Returning to the Human Fundamentals of War", RAND, 2019, xiv, xvi, 13.

and the Atlantic Charter.<sup>537</sup> The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent declaration of war by Nazi Germany eradicated any remaining isolationist sentiment. Nevertheless, many soldiers still felt great disillusion and frustration with war as evidenced by this reflection on the twenty-fourth anniversary of Armistice Day: “Well, it is hard to sit here + (sic) think that World War I was to end all wars. What am I doing here?”<sup>538</sup>

Recognizing the potential impact on combat effectiveness of the previous anti-war mood of the country American sociologists conducted detailed studies of the attitudes, motivations, and combat performance of American soldiers during the Second World War. Based primarily on these contemporary research surveys the prevalent theory has since been that ideology plays little role in modern combat motivation and that it is generally accepted that the cohesive primary social group that is the combat unit provides the key motivation and support for the combat soldier.<sup>539</sup> Numerous historians have also affirmed the pivotal role played by primary group dynamics on combat performance. The fulfillment of basic physiological needs followed by unit cohesion and teamwork were generally seen as more important to the soldiers of the Second World War than ideology and patriotism.<sup>540</sup>

**Will to Fight - Fundamental Influences:** The existence of a strong national identity is a foundational element of will to fight. Because it permeates almost every other aspect of will to fight governments will frequently try to strengthen or, if necessary, create a national identity through indoctrination and propaganda.<sup>541</sup> In status-based Japanese society, belonging to the group, maintaining loyalty to the group, and conforming to group expectations is essential. Group orientation governs individual behaviour and group cohesiveness is a core value.<sup>542</sup> This identity structure extends vertically to embrace the Japanese national polity. Showa era *bushidō* was intended to

<sup>537</sup> Warren F. Kimball, “Franklin D. Roosevelt and World War II.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (2004): 83–99. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27552565>; Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*, Second Edition. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 259, 284-285, 541, 545.

<sup>538</sup> Moore, *Writing War*, 207. Observation in the diary of an American officer on 11 November 1942.

<sup>539</sup> Stouffer, S. A., Lumsdaine, A. A., Lumsdaine, M. H., Williams, R. M., Jr., Smith, M. B., Janis, I. L., Star, S. A., & Cottrell, L. S., Jr., *The American Soldier: Combat and its Aftermath*, (Studies in Social Psychology in World War II), (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), 108-112.

<sup>540</sup> See Abraham H. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1968); John Ellis, *The Sharp End: The Fighting Man in World War II*, (New York: Scribner’s, 1980), 282, 315-316; Michael Doubler, *Closing with the Enemy*, and John McManus, *The Deadly Brotherhood*; Stephen E. Ambrose, *Citizen Soldiers: The US Army from the Normandy Battlefields to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany, June 7, 1944-May 7, 1945*, (New York: Touchstone, Simon and Schuster, 1997), 14, 473; see also on primary group cohesion theory, Primary Group Cohesion theory, Edward Shils and Morris Janowitz “Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in WWII” *POQ* 12 (1948), 280-315.

<sup>541</sup> Connable, et. al., *Will to Fight: Returning to the Human Fundamentals of War*, RAND Research Brief 10040-A, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2019), xvii, xiii-xvi. <https://doi.org/10.7249/RB10040>.

<sup>542</sup> Morgan, 61, 63, 227-228.

provide the needed Japanese national identity.<sup>543</sup> Many consider the American Creed, first formulated by Thomas Jefferson, as the core of American national identity. Its principles of liberty, equality, justice, representative government, and humanity represent the uniquely American interpretation of the Enlightenment and the Reformation.<sup>544</sup> Its tenets were summarized in 1917 by William Tyler Page:

I believe in the United States of America, as a government of the people, by the people, for the people; whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; a democracy in a republic; a sovereign Nation of many sovereign States; a perfect union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes. I therefore believe it is my duty to my country to love it, to support its Constitution, to obey its laws, to respect its flag, and to defend it against all enemies.<sup>545</sup>

Despite these observations an alternative hypothesis exists that proposes there is a deeper foundational element involved. Charles Moskos proposed that the strength and effectiveness of the primary group is reliant on a latent ideology, the shared values of the group. There is an underlying commitment to the societal values that the soldier brings to the unit and thus to the fight. In these surveys, American soldiers expressed a common belief in American war aims and in American ideology and ‘the cause’. Generally, speaking, America’s war goals and national philosophy were perhaps best expressed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s speech to the nation of the Four Freedoms. The ideas of freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear symbolized both Americas’ foundational principles and its national identity as defenders of universal human rights.<sup>546</sup>

While the link between beliefs and combat motivation is uncertain it seems to be affirmed in studies that found that when asked questions about their ideological motivations, “majorities in the neighborhood of 90 per cent said that they felt that the United States was fighting for things they personally felt were worth fighting for.”<sup>547</sup> The cohesion concept explains soldier

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<sup>543</sup> Ikegami Eiko. *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 111.

<sup>544</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America’s National Identity*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), xv, 41, 60-61, 68.

<sup>545</sup> William Tyler Page, “The American’s Creed”, accepted as a resolution by the United States House of Representatives on April 3, 1918. UShistory.org, Historic Documents, “The Americans Creed”, <https://www.ushistory.org/documents/creed.htm>, retrieved September 18, 2022.

<sup>546</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, Annual Message to Congress (State of the Union Address), January 6, 1941.

<sup>547</sup> Charles A. Moskos, *The American Enlisted Man: The Rank and File in Today’s Military*, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1970), 147; Stouffer *et. al.* Vol. I, 437.

motivation very well, but we should not overlook the explanatory power of latent ideology and commitment to national goals in our understanding of what gives soldiers the will to win.<sup>548</sup>

A holistic interpretation of will to fight seems to indicate that ideology and belief in the cause will get soldiers to the battlefield, and then their commitment to each other sustains them through combat. This was best expressed for me in a lecture by Lieutenant General Hal Moore: “American soldiers fight for each other... We discovered in that depressing, hellish place, where death was our constant companion, that we loved each other. We killed for each other, we died for each other, and we wept for each other. And in time we came to love each other as brothers.”<sup>549</sup>

To further illuminate the questions of will fight and will to win, I will examine one of Ralph Eyde’s letters to his brother written after the battle. By drawing on this personal account I hope to reveal his underlying attitudes, emotions, and beliefs. I will highlight the variables of will to fight that I think are revealed within the original text. Having recovered from his wounding on Attu, Eyde fought again on Kwajalein. On the last night of the operation, he was hit by a Japanese mortar round suffering shrapnel wounds to his lung:

*“You already know we’ve been in action again + we really gave ‘em hell on Kwajalein island in the Marshalls + though it was taken in only a few days there were still plenty of those yellow b---- giving us a bad time even after all the bombarding our navy + air corps gave them. Things were going along in good shape in the early stages of the campaign and then we pushed the Japs in one corner of the island. This was the scene of close in fighting on the last night of hell. Believe me, it was a regular nightmare!! My job in this operation was a heavy machine gun squad leader, as it was on Attu. I was in a foxhole with a buddy + the machine gun was well concealed. Wham! Shell just missed us. Wham! Another right behind us. The machine gun lets go with a roar mowing down some Japs several yards away. My machine gun keeps mowing ‘em down all night. It’s getting near dawn now. We let go with hand grenades to wipe out a bunch of Japs in a trench just in front of us. What’s this? The Japs are throwing everything they’ve got at*

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<sup>548</sup> Tania M. Chacho, *Why Did They Fight? American Airborne Units in World War II*, Defence Studies, Fall 2001, 1:3, 86, DOI: 10.1080/714000045.

<sup>549</sup> Harold G. Moore, *We Were Soldiers Once . . . and Young: Ia Drang-The Battle That Changed the War in Vietnam*, (New York: Random House, 1992), ii. Quoted from memory, speech to officers at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1995.

*us and they're on both sides of us and closing in! Shells landing all around my gun. Looks like they've found my position. Some of the fellows are getting their knives ready. The machine gun is still barking. (Here his narrative reveals the variable of desperation in the moments of fearing death during this night of combat.) Then wham!! A shell lands right in my foxhole, blowing us both up in the air. Don't know how high I went and I guess it doesn't make much difference as I got up and made my way to a nearby shellhole as best I could cussing. There a medic fixed the shrapnel wound in my left side as best he could. Just then the Japs were rushing screaming wildly and our gunners were just pouring it into them. (Eyde stays in the fight despite his wounds, providing leadership to his team.) I guess I'll never know the many of those slant-eyed heathens my gun mowed down all that night."*



*Figure 4-22: 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division soldier eating lunch behind a destroyed Japanese pillbox, Kwajalein. Note: dead Japanese soldiers to his right. ("The Eastern Mandates Campaign: A Staff Ride Guide for Operation FLINTLOCK; The Seizure of Kwajalein Atoll", U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command Historical Office, 2004, National Archives.).*

*"But when dawn came and the tropical sun was shining brightly, the Japs were piled in lines near our position and it would have taken an adding machine to total them up. My gunner was shaken up + lost one eye, but he's in good shape now + in high spirits. I'm laid up in a*

*hospital somewhere in the Hawaiian Islands now & getting along fine + eating the best of chow. (Both Eyde and his gunner show good morale despite their wounds, the natural result of having survived.) So don't worry about me Johnny, cause everything will be okay with me. Don't know how long I'll be here + the rest is a bit of okay. This is sure different than my foxhole with its rain + mud, lizards, land crabs, + insects, with no sleep + little food in 4 days. (The level of a soldiers' morale is relative to his changing circumstances and conditions. He appreciates the rest and food because he has endured the privations of combat.) Glad it's over + it's a great bunch of fighters — these American lads and we bested the smart, tricky, + cunning Japs at his own game-night close in fighting.” (Here he demonstrates his sense of pride in his identity as an American soldier in the 7<sup>th</sup> Division and their fighting skills.)*

*“Boy, it was a beautiful operation, Johnny, and we had the best support an outfit could get — the navy, air corps, + artillery (sic). (Again, he expresses his feelings of pride, identity, and cohesion with the larger American force and its accomplishments.) And believe me they did a great job of bombarding. As on Attu we lost some gallant young fellows whose heroic deeds against harassing snipers, pillboxes + blockhouses will never be forgotten. (This is an example of the quality of cohesion that Lieutenant General (Retired) Moore spoke of when he cited the power of love for one's fellow soldiers.) The Jap is a tough little fighter + no one in this outfit underestimates their fanatics (sic) fighting ability. Every man in my company is receiving a citation for breaking up the enemy's last big counterattack on that last night which meant saving our already hard-earned gains. (Here he reveals both social and task cohesion and pride in unit identity.)*

*The General was here yesterday + pinned an Oak Leaf Cluster on me which is an addition to my previously earned Purple Heart. But I'll never forget that last night in the Marshalls. Those medics on the battlefield are a great bunch + deserve all the praise in the world. Scared? There's too much going on to be scared. There were no atheists in the foxholes on Kwajalein + somehow a fellow can feel God is close in combat + in tight spots it's good to know He's there. (Eyde's religious beliefs helped sustain his will to fight.) One Jap yelled “Cease Firing” in good*

*English. He popped up again + was about to yell something when a hail of lead brought him down. We kept firing.*” Ralph Eyde, M/3-32 IN <sup>550</sup>

For the men of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division their tactical culture and will to win seemed to reflect a synthesis of identity, ideology, and cohesion. Shared values and the desire for revenge propelled the soldiers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry to the battlefields of the Pacific. The foundation of their combat effectiveness and group and task cohesion was established in training. Their will to win was tempered to a razor’s edge in combat. Their actions expressed the shared conviction that, “...we all know that the quickest way home is to put a bullet between the eyes of every (enemy) we can find.”<sup>551</sup>

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<sup>550</sup> Ralph Eyde, personal letter dated, Feb. 24, 1944; “Brothers in Arms” The Washington Post, Dan Lamothe, Dec. 6, 2017, accessed January 2018.

<sup>551</sup> Robert S. Rush, *Hell in Hürtgen Forest: The Ordeal and Triumph of an American Infantry Regiment*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 310.

## Chapter Five: The Battle of Leyte and the Influence of the *Senjinkun* on Japanese Strategic Culture.

“My father, appearing in a dream, urged me, “Come home in death.”<sup>552</sup>

### 5.1. Introduction.

The battle for Leyte Island, fought from October 1944 to January 1945 was one of the largest and most difficult ground campaigns of the Second World War. The Americans assembled a force of over 700 warships to carry some 150,000 soldiers of the U.S. Sixth Army to Leyte. Although Leyte had been an “advanced depot” area for the Japanese, defended by only 23,000 troops of the IJA *16<sup>th</sup> Division*, they quickly committed a force that would grow to over a quarter million soldiers.<sup>553</sup> The Imperial General Headquarters had correctly anticipated that the Americans would take offensive action in the Philippines and decided to make Leyte the “decisive battle” for the Pacific with land and naval counteroffensives supported by all available air power.<sup>554</sup>

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<sup>552</sup> “Come home in death” (*Shinde kaere*) paraphrased means to, “Fight with resolve to die on the battlefield and come home only as a soul.” From “The Song of Bivouac” (*Roei no Uta*), Shigure Otowa, *Nihon Kayoshu* (Shakai Shiso Sha, 1963), 295. Quoted by Sato Hiroaki in “Gyokusai or “Shattering like a Jewel”: Reflection on the Pacific War”, *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, February 1, 2008, Volume 6, Issue 2.

<sup>553</sup> Japanese Monograph #4, Philippine Operations Record, Phase III, July-November 1944, Preparations made by the 14th Area Army for the Military Operations in the Philippine Islands, 50 pages, unpaginated, Historical Section, G2, FEC, Office of the Chief of Military History, Oct 1946; John C. McManus, *Island Infernos: The U.S. Army’s Pacific War Odyssey, 1944*, (New York: Dutton Caliber, 2021), 467-468, 471.

<sup>554</sup> Nathan N. Prefer, *Leyte, 1944: The Soldier’s Battle*, (Havertown: CASEMATE PUBLISHERS, 2019),1-3; McManus, 470-471.



### 5.1.1. The Operational Environment.

After their victory at Kwajalein the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division returned to Hawaii. There they integrated replacements, repaired, and replaced equipment, and made personnel changes. Leadership skill and success in combat were recognized with promotions and transfers to positions of increased responsibility.

**Combat Leadership:** Will to fight is the combination of morale, cohesion, ethics, and leadership. The commanders of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division recognized the skills and superior performance of its key leaders and consistently elevated the best for their character and competence. Attu and Kwajalein veterans like Lieutenant Colonel John Finn had risen from battalion to regimental command, Lieutenant Colonel Francis Pachler had risen from company to regimental command, and Lieutenant Colonel Delbert Bjork had risen from company command to battalion command, to name just a few.

From February to September 1944 the division again conducted intensified training at the Unit Jungle Training Center while higher headquarters planned for their next mission.<sup>555</sup> Between June and August several options were considered and finally on 11 September 1944 the division embarked for an invasion of Yap Island. While underway however the target was changed to Leyte. The division was now to spearhead General Douglas MacArthur's return to the Philippines.<sup>556</sup> For the Americans, the Philippines were the ultimate objective of both the Central and Southwest Pacific offensives. Taking Leyte offered the Americans a central launching point to invade both Luzon and Mindanao and a base for American air power.<sup>557</sup> For the Japanese, controlling Leyte was essential to protect vital supply lines from Southeast Asia and to maintain the lines of communication with their isolated forces further south. In response, the Imperial Army rushed their best available units from Manchuria, Korea, and Japan itself to conduct a

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<sup>555</sup> Edmund G. Love, *The Hourglass: A History of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in World War II*, 204-205.

<sup>556</sup> Ibid.

<sup>557</sup> Love, *The Hourglass*, 200-201.

counteroffensive so ambitious that they envisioned capturing General MacArthur and achieving a decisive victory that would salvage their hope for a negotiated peace.<sup>558</sup>

**Sustaining Morale – The Impact of Training on Unit Cohesion:** Studies conducted during the war suggested that the two biggest factors in lowering morale were the American individual replacement system and the lack of rotation from frontline duty. Replacements joining a group of strangers and lacking their sense of unit pride and cohesion had a tougher time becoming fully integrated than soldiers who entered combat with men they had known through prior service and training. The replacements felt isolated and often needed orientation and additional training before entering combat. Those that didn't get this opportunity generally suffered higher casualty rates when they entered combat.<sup>559</sup> However, many soldiers who successfully endured combat felt that the bonds of loyalty, feelings of security, and sense of unit pride that had been instilled in them by previous service and training in a cohesive unit had sustained them in combat. When given additional training and mentoring by veteran unit members, replacements performed better.<sup>560</sup>

Prolonged combat operations also undermined morale. When soldiers experienced long periods of danger, mental/physical stress, emotional anxiety, food, and sleep deprivation combat effectiveness was degraded. In divisions that were able to rotate units or even just individual soldiers off the line morale was boosted.<sup>561</sup>

Because the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division was able to rest, integrate replacements, and conduct individual and collective training in Hawai'i before both Kwajalein and Leyte they enjoyed better morale and combat effectiveness. The division sought to maintain these practices on Leyte and Okinawa although there was less time and fewer opportunities for integration training or rest and relief during combat.

<sup>558</sup> McManus, 471, 498; Prefer, 2, 73; Japanese Monograph #4, Philippine Operations Record, Phase III, July-November 1944, Preparations made by the 14th Area Army for the Military Operations in the Philippine Islands, Historical Section, G2, FEC, Office of the Chief of Military History, Oct 1946, 11-12.

<sup>559</sup> Francis C. Steckel, "Morale Problems in Combat: American Soldiers in Europe in World War II *Army History*, Summer 1994, No. 31 (Summer 1994), U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1-8. URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26304183> ; William J. McConnell, WWII Survey; United States Forces, European Theater, Reports of the General Board, no. 3, "Reinforcement System and Reinforcement Procedures in the European Theater of Operations," 18.

<sup>560</sup> Samuel E. Stouffer, et al., *Studies in the Social Psychology in World War II*, vol.2: The American Soldier: Combat and Its After math (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), 130-149; Steckel, 4.

<sup>561</sup> William J. McConnell, WWII Survey; United States Forces, European Theater, Reports of the General Board (Hereafter GB Report), no. 4, "Leaves." 1-2, 7-8, 9; Steckel, 6.

### 5.1.2. Terrain and Weather.

The island of Leyte is the third largest in the Philippine Archipelago. Its land mass is 115 miles long and 45 miles at its widest point. A tropical island with profuse swamps and rainforest, Leyte is dominated by a mountain range that rises to 4500 feet above sea level along its west coast. The valleys to the east are rich agricultural areas crossed by streams descending from the mountains. Heavy rains are common, especially from October to December. Its capitol, Tacloban is a hundred miles to the southwest of Luzon and 350 miles from Manila. It had been a territory of the United States for forty-three years, with a population of 916,000 according to the 1940 census, yet little was known about it owing to general neglect. The only real contributions by the American authorities were an improved road system with one paved highway and a modern water reservoir. As a result of this administrative apathy the invasion forces had no accurate maps of the island.<sup>562</sup>

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<sup>562</sup> Love, *The Hourglass*, 197-198.



Figure 5-1: The Philippine Islands, 1944. (Charles R. Anderson, *Leyte: The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II*, CMH Pub. 72-27, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington DC, 1984. Accessed 3 March 2022. <https://history.army.mil/brochures/leyte/leyte.html> ).

### 5.1.3. “Operation King II”: The American Attack Plan.

The American plan for the invasion of Leyte was straightforward; the U.S. Sixth Army, consisting of four divisions would land on the eastern beaches of the island, seizing the capital city of Tacloban and the key terrain of four Japanese airfields.<sup>563</sup> In roughly the same manner as they had on Kwajalein, the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division would land four battalions abreast, capture the airfield at Dulag and push inland to the town of Dagami.<sup>564</sup>

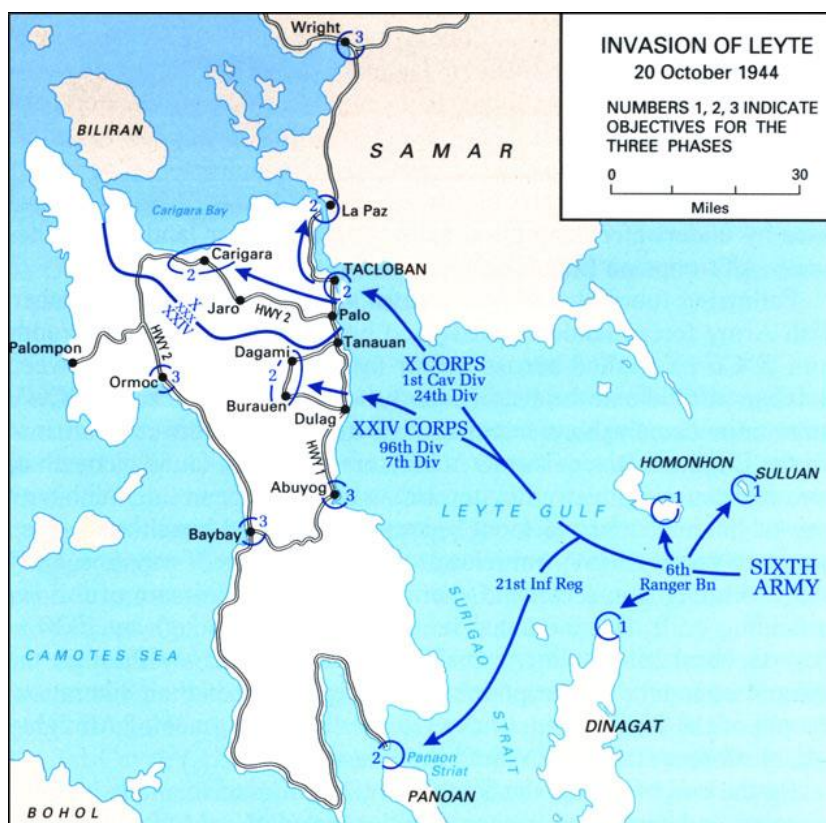


Figure 5-2: Invasion of Leyte, 20 October 1944, ("US Army Campaigns of World War II", via [ibiblio.org](http://www.ibiblio.org). Downloaded from [<http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USA/USA-C-Leyte/maps/USA-C-Leyte-3.jpg>] accessed 19 Nov 2021.).

<sup>563</sup> Sixth Army, Report of Leyte Operation, 20 October-25 December 1944, 24-25 (AAR), Record Group 407, Entry 1113, Philippines Archive Collection, Box 1478, National Archives; Operation Report, 7th Infantry Division, King II, MCoE HQ Donovan Research Library, Fort Benning, GA. Documents collection. Call #: D793.32 .U307, 3.

<sup>564</sup> Operation Report, 7th Infantry Division, King II, 3; Prefer, 207.

**Reinforcing Success - Training for Combat Effectiveness:** Building on their experiences at Attu and Kwajalein, the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division conducted training that focused on further development of tank-infantry team tactics, and the control and massing of indirect fire by forward observers. Showing excellent forethought, they also trained on tactics in tropical mountain terrain, cane fields, and swamps and in the conduct of aerial re-supply to isolated infantry units. Replacements who had missed Attu and Kwajalein were given special amphibious training and all personnel attended training at the Unit Jungle Training Center. Just as they did prior to Kwajalein division training culminated with a full-dress rehearsal amphibious landing in August 1944.<sup>565</sup>

In contrast the education and training of the IJA forces defending Leyte and Luzon was assessed by the Japanese as “poor”. Unit inspectors judged that the “combat method was not taught satisfactorily” because “each unit was so busily engaged in constructing positions, maintaining peace and order...that they were in no position to improve their training program”.<sup>566</sup> Experts from Japan were dispatched to the various units to teach “fortification, communication, anti-tank fighting” but lack of time meant that not all troops received the training and thus “were compelled to commence fighting without the proper training.” This deficiency was particularly acute for the IJA reserve forces sent as replacements.<sup>567</sup> At this point in the war IJA reserve forces were being pushed into the fight. They were often a mix of ages ranging from twenty-one-year-old recruits to thirty-five-year-old family men recalled to active duty. They had completed just three months of basic training before being sent to Leyte and it was expected that their fighting spirit would compensate for their inexperience and lack of competence.<sup>568</sup>

#### **5.1.4. “Operation *Sho Ichi Go* (Victory Plan 1)”: The Japanese Counterattack Plan.**

The Japanese had 432,000 soldiers in the Philippines, most of them on Luzon. Because of the successful American offensives in New Guinea and the Marshall Islands as well as increasing air strikes on Leyte the need for additional air bases was recognized and construction on these began in March 1944. From May through July the *14<sup>th</sup> Army Group* established its headquarters

<sup>565</sup> Operation Report, 7th Infantry Division, King II, MCoE HQ Donovan Research Library, Fort Benning, GA. Documents collection. Call #: D793.32. U307, 1.

<sup>566</sup> Japanese Monograph #4, Philippine Operations Record, Phase III, July-November 1944, Preparations made by the 14th Area Army for the Military Operations in the Philippine Islands, Historical Section, G2, FEC, Office of the Chief of Military History, Oct 1946, 45-46.

<sup>567</sup> Ibid.

<sup>568</sup> Ooka Shohei, *Taken Captive: A Japanese POW's Story*, Translated and edited by Wayne P. Lammers, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1996), 136, 149.

in Manila and began to prepare defenses oriented on protection of the airfields with enough ammunition to supply ten divisions.<sup>569</sup> When the Americans invaded Leyte General Yamashita decided to shift the main effort there and he directed the IJA 35<sup>th</sup> Army to coordinate its efforts with the Imperial Japanese Navy in what was intended to be the decisive battle against the Americans.<sup>570</sup> Japanese preparations for defensive operations in the Philippines were practically nil and the strength of the garrisons were relatively low, being defended by only two divisions until June 1944.<sup>571</sup> Between 23 October and 11 December 1944 the Japanese reinforced Leyte with five divisions, three independent mixed brigades, and one regimental sized infantry unit.<sup>572</sup> Three lines of defensive positions were constructed along the seashore by the IJA 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, but these were incomplete. Few other defensive positions were completed before the invasion because the priority of effort was given to airfield construction.<sup>573</sup>

## 5.2. The American Landings and the Battle of the Stone Bridge.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division made its third amphibious assault of the Second World War at 1000 hours on 20 October 1944. Upon landing the leading battalions fought through moderate resistance to secure a beachhead deep enough to receive vehicles and supplies. The division had secured both the town of Dulag and its airstrip and was poised to attack to seize the next four airfields at San Pablo, Bayug, and Buri.<sup>574</sup> The division was to continue the attack west along the Dulag-Burauen road in a zone bounded by the Calbasag and Daguitan rivers. The 184<sup>th</sup> Infantry would be south of the road, the 32d Infantry would be north of the road, and the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry with tanks attached would attack along the road. At Burauen the road turned north towards Dagami which was the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry's next objective.<sup>575</sup> The greatest obstacles to their progress had come from the tall, thick cogon grass, the numerous streams and the large swamps in the

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<sup>569</sup> Ibid.

<sup>570</sup> Prefer, 64, 73.

<sup>571</sup> Japanese Monograph #4, Philippine Operations Record, Phase III, July-November 1944, Preparations made by the 14th Area Army for the Military Operations in the Philippine Islands, Historical Section, G2, FEC, Office of the Chief of Military History, Oct 1946, 1-6.

<sup>572</sup> McManus, 499; Prefer, 64, 73.

<sup>573</sup> Japanese Monograph #4, 22.

<sup>574</sup> Prefer, 51-52.

<sup>575</sup> King II, 3.

area that had stymied an entire battalion for a time.<sup>576</sup> The IJA *Southern Leyte Defense Force*, based on the *16<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division*, was composed of the *20th Infantry Regiment*, less one battalion, the *2d Battalion of the 33d Infantry Regiment*, the *7th Independent Tank Company*, and two platoons of the *16th Engineer Regiment* had established a loose system of strongpoints composed of log pillboxes, machine guns, and 70mm mountain howitzers with radiating trenches and spider holes similar to those used at Kwajalein.<sup>577</sup> They had also destroyed many of the bridges on Route 1, the main highway between Tacloban in the north and Abuyog in the south.<sup>578</sup> Well hidden in the tall grasses and situated to take advantage of the swamps' restriction on mobility, several sharp fights ensued as the Americans moved forward to eliminate these battle positions. Rather than chronicle the entire operation I will synopsise the battle narrative, highlighting a few significant actions.

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<sup>576</sup> Prefer, *Leyte*, 41, 54, 80-82.

<sup>577</sup> Love, 213.

<sup>578</sup> *Ibid.*



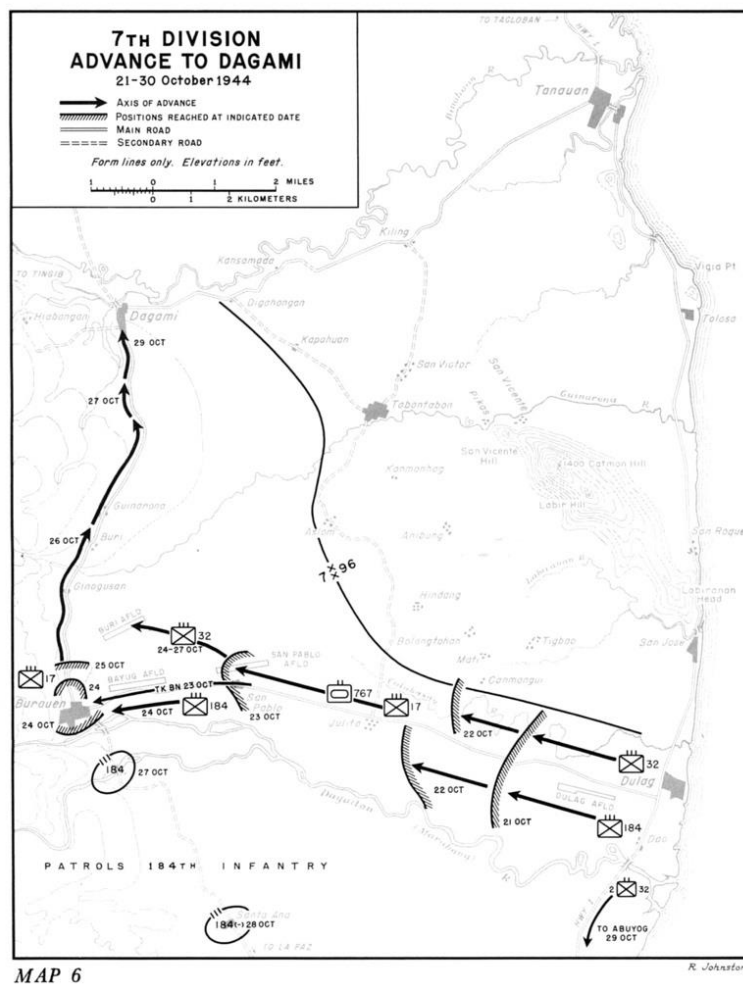


Figure 5-3: The 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division's Advance to Dagami; Leyte: The Return to the Philippines, U.S. Army in World War II, The War in the Pacific, via [ibiblio.org](https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USA/USA-P-Return/maps/USA-P-Return-6.jpg). Downloaded from [https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USA/USA-P-Return/maps/USA-P-Return-6.jpg] accessed 19 Nov 2021.

As night fell on 20 October 44, the Japanese counterattacked. They launched their only tank unit, the IJA 7<sup>th</sup> Independent Tank Company equipped with obsolete Type 89B tanks in three piecemeal attacks that the Americans quickly defeated. Of the eleven tanks available, eight were destroyed and three broke down without causing any damage to their opponents.<sup>579</sup> For the next two days the 32d Infantry and the 184<sup>th</sup> Infantry ground their way forward through the

<sup>579</sup> King II Report, 4; Love, 215. M. Hamlin Cannon, *Leyte: The Return to the Philippines*, U.S. Army in World War II, "The War in the Pacific, Chapter VIII, Southern Leyte Valley: Part II", 128, 135; Interrogation of Private Nakamura Isamu, Attachment to 7th Div G-2 Periodic Report 5, 24 Oct 44.

swamps around Dulag destroying enemy positions, and an armored strike force of tanks and infantry under the command of LTC Frances T. Pachler of the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry attacked west along the Dulag-Burauen-Dagami road. The “flying wedge” of tanks advanced rapidly, often outrunning the infantry which had to contend with the swamps and dense undergrowth closely lining the road, seizing San Pablo Airfield #1 by nightfall.<sup>580</sup> Together, all three regiments continued their attack, with the tanks reaching Burauen and the adjacent airfield the next day. The Japanese were hard pressed to stop them, and the commander of the IJA *20th Infantry Regiment* was killed during the day.<sup>581</sup>

**Devotion to Death:** On 21 October 1944 an unidentified Japanese soldier on Leyte wrote in his diary: “Finally the enemy’s gunfire and bombardment has reached our field and road area (except the runway). Gunfire seems to fade to Dulag area during the night. It seems that enemy tanks are approaching San Pablo vicinity. We are preparing for them...Barracks and fuel dumps are to be burned. I am awaiting the opportune moment...I feel alive during the night and dead during the day. Though life and death are separated by a thin sheet of paper I will not die until I see a face of a Yankee.”<sup>582</sup>

After capturing Burauen and San Pablo Airfield #2 and the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry turned north. As night approached on 23 October 44 the task force confronted a heavily wooded ridge, fifty-feet high and 700-yards-long that paralleled the road 250 yards away. A platoon sent to investigate was hit by fire from several machine guns, wounding eleven men. As they sought to remove the wounded the Japanese counterattacked getting close enough to bayonet the wounded. They were driven off and the Americans withdrew to their perimeter.<sup>583</sup> Defensive positions were carefully prepared for the night with concertina, trip wires, and flares positioned, and artillery fires planned. As enemy mortar and machine gun fire began hitting the American positions, patrols of twenty to thirty Japanese began to probe the perimeter. The well trained and experienced veterans of Attu and Kwajalein held their fire, using only grenades and close in artillery to deter and disorganize these probes. After midnight, the Japanese made a head-long company sized

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<sup>580</sup> Prefer, 80; Love, 218-219.

<sup>581</sup> King II Report, 6; Quoted in Cannon, *Leyte: The Return to the Philippines*, 133; IJA *35th Army Operations Report*, 28.

<sup>582</sup> Quoted in Cannon, *Leyte: The Return to the Philippines*, 130; 7th Inf Div Operations Report, Leyte, App. C to Annex 2.

<sup>583</sup> Love, 220; Cannon, 137.

charge which was met with an awe-inspiring spectacle of defensive fire that shattered the attack. The enthusiastic volume of fire was so great that it took fifteen minutes for the American leaders to bring it to an end. Fifty Japanese were killed, and no further attacks were attempted.<sup>584</sup>



*Figure 5-4: American infantrymen in cautious advance against enemy machine gun nest, Leyte, 21 Oct 1944. (U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II: Leyte. National Archives. Public Domain. <https://history.army.mil/brochures/leyte/leyte.htm> ).*

While the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry was driving toward Dagami, the 32d Infantry was attacking cross-country. Moving through the swamps on 24 October they deployed to attack Buri airfield. At the edge of the airfield, they surprised a Japanese company digging defensive positions. As the Americans organized a hasty attack the Japanese commander ordered his own immediate attack. There ensued a hand-to-hand melee with some units moving forward, others moving back, and officers trying to find and direct their forces. Heavy casualties were suffered by both sides including the American battalion commander and both opponents withdrew to reorganize during the night.<sup>585</sup> Continuing the attack on 25 October, the Americans faced twenty strongly constructed pillboxes, well manned by 1000 infantry and engineers, and found the airfield mined

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<sup>584</sup> Love, 221-222; 17th Inf Operations Report, Leyte, Annex A, The Battle for Dagami, 1-9.

<sup>585</sup> Love, 237-238; Cannon, 135.

with 100-pound bombs buried in the runway and fused for remote detonation.<sup>586</sup> The fight went on from 0800 to 1700 with 2d Battalion 32d Infantry had gained 800 yards but were unable to take all the enemy bunkers that defended the airstrip.<sup>587</sup> 3d Battalion maneuvered to the flank to capture the airfield but was stopped by heavy machine gun fire. As they established a night defensive position they were attacked by a company of Japanese charging through the gap between the battalions. In five minutes of combat the Japanese lost 75 men in a futile effort that inflicted no casualties on the Americans.<sup>588</sup> At 0810 on 26 October the 32d Infantry continued its attack now with two battalions against the trenches and pill boxes. An attempt to send tank support via a detour around the swamps had begun at 0630 but they did not arrive until 1400 at which time the enemy positions were swiftly destroyed. The defense of Buri airfield had cost an estimated 400 Japanese lives.<sup>589</sup>

**The Japanese Scheme of Maneuver:** Although characterized by some contemporary observers as an “Organized withdrawal covered by suicide units...”, it appears more like the Japanese were conducting a delay on successive positions.<sup>590</sup> In this type of defense, the unit fights rearward defending and then moving from one prepared position to the next, holding for as long as possible or until a specified time or until ordered to withdraw. A delay trades space for time, making best use of the terrain and obstacles, inflicting maximum damage on the enemy, and avoiding decisive engagement. A withdrawal breaks contact to free the unit for another mission.<sup>591</sup> The IJA *2d Battalion 33d Infantry* had been successfully withdrawn from Dulag to a position 1000 yards south of Dagami where they had established well prepared defense in depth with elements of the *16<sup>th</sup> Engineers, 9<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry* also committed giving a total strength of 2500 to fight a delaying action from Burauen to Dagami.<sup>592</sup> On 27 October 44, Lt. Col. Kakuda, the commander of the Japanese *Central Area Unit* ordered the *20<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment* to take a position southwest of Dagami and annihilate the Americans.<sup>593</sup> Another group of approximately 600 soldiers composed of the *98<sup>th</sup> Airfield Battalion, the 54<sup>th</sup> Airfield Company,* and air-ground service units were given the mission to defend key positions of the high ground west and south of Burauen, and the Buri airfield. The engineers were to demolish road bridges between Dagami and Burauen and between

<sup>586</sup> King II Report, 7; Love, 237-241.

<sup>587</sup> King II Report, 7.

<sup>588</sup> Love, 239-240.

<sup>589</sup> *Ibid.*, 340-241; King II Report, 8; Cannon, 137; 32d Inf Operations Report, Leyte, 9.

<sup>590</sup> King Report II, 4. This appears to reflect the initial estimate. The Intelligence annex doesn't describe it as a withdrawal.

<sup>591</sup> FM 7-20, *The Infantry Battalion, Chapter Five: Retrograde Operations*, U.S. Army, 5-1, 5-5, 5-7, author's collection.

<sup>592</sup> King II Report, 9; 17th Infantry Operations Report, Leyte, Annex A, *The Battle for Dagami*, 1-9.

<sup>593</sup> Cannon, 141; *Central Area Unit Operations Order 2, 27 Oct 44*, translated in App. C to Annex 2, 7th Division Operations Report, Leyte.

Dagami and Tanauan.<sup>594</sup> The Japanese were successful in their mission because they gained time for reinforcements from two new brigades to arrive by 25 October 44 which made up for their losses at the beachheads.<sup>595</sup> However, the Japanese tactical culture of being willing to sacrifice themselves in combat influenced their chosen method of defending each strongpoint without planning for withdrawal; allowing only a counterattack directly at the enemy without supporting fires which generally caused the final destruction of the force.

### 5.3. The Capture of Dagami.

The 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry continued its drive along the road toward Dagami. The narrow corridor formed by the swamps and rice paddies restricted both freedom of maneuver and the size of the force that could be brought to bear.<sup>596</sup> On the morning of 28 October, the Americans approached a swamp a hundred yards across. The road crossed the swamp on a causeway with a stone bridge in the center. On the far shore of the swamp lay a cocoon grove. The Americans first tried to wade through the swamp but could not push through. They were forced to risk an advance along the narrow bottleneck formed by the causeway.<sup>597</sup> The company commander recalled:

The Japs had destroyed all he bridges between Burauen and Dagami. Engineers worked under fire to rebuild the bridges...The Japs figured they had us where they wanted us. They had 42 pillboxes in the area on both sides of the road. Between the road and their positions on either side were 400-yard stretches of waist deep swamp.<sup>598</sup>

Upon reaching the far side of the causeway the Americans were met by a hail of fire. They attacked the bunkers, pillboxes, and spider holes in small teams, taking casualties as they went but moving continuously forward. At 1045 a second infantry company crossed the causeway and entered the fight and were immediately hit by heavy rifle and machine gun fire

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<sup>594</sup> Quoted in Cannon, 131; 96th Infantry Division Operations Report, Leyte, Annex C, Part III, Translated, KAKI Operational Order A-837, 22 Oct 44.

<sup>595</sup> Prefer, 73.

<sup>596</sup> Love, 227.

<sup>597</sup> Ibid.

<sup>598</sup> Captain Mervin Elliott, quoted in YANK, The Army Weekly Magazine, Branch Office, Information and Education Division, War Department, New York, December 22, 1944, 2-3.

from previously unknown positions.<sup>599</sup> At 1130 three light tanks joined the fight and from 1315 to 1700 fought through the swamp and grove meticulously searching and destroying fourteen strongpoints. A third company was sent on a flanking movement around the swamp which eventually achieved the effect of causing the enemy to abandon their protective positions to face this threat.<sup>600</sup> By 1730 all resistance ended. It was estimated that two full companies of Japanese had died defending the stone bridge and a prisoner informed the Americans that the Japanese forces were being reinforced by troops landing at Ormoc.<sup>601</sup> Two posthumous Medals of Honor were awarded because of this fight.<sup>602</sup>



*Figure 5-5: Mortarmen fire 60mm mortar in attack, Leyte, 1944. (U.S. Army. Public Domain). [https://www.army.mil/article/252972/christmas\\_day\\_1944\\_7id\\_u\\_s\\_forces\\_secure\\_leyte\\_philippines](https://www.army.mil/article/252972/christmas_day_1944_7id_u_s_forces_secure_leyte_philippines) ).*

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<sup>599</sup> Love, 228-229.

<sup>600</sup> Love, 230-231.

<sup>601</sup> Ibid., 230, 232.

<sup>602</sup> Private First-Class Leonard C. Brostrom, War Department General Orders Number 104, 15 November 1945; Private First-Class John F. Thorson, War Department General Orders Number 58, 19 July 1945. PFC Brostrom singlehandedly destroyed a pillbox and killed six Japanese before collapsing from his wounds. PFC Thorson sacrificed his life to save his comrades by throwing himself upon an enemy grenade.

At 0800, 29 October the 1st and 3d Battalions, 17th Infantry, passed through the 2d Battalion to seize Dagami. With artillery support, they destroyed the Japanese force on their left flank, killing more than 120 and entered the southern section of Dagami.<sup>603</sup> By 1040 the town was in American hands, but sweeps continued for the rest of the day. 3d Battalion encountered no opposition until it had passed halfway through a cemetery. There, amongst the derelict graves and seven- to ten-foot-tall weeds awaited a Japanese company. As the unit was establishing night positions within and beyond the cemetery they were surprised by the enemy, literally rising from the graves.<sup>604</sup> A headstone tilted back, and four Japanese soldiers opened fire. Others quickly joined in from graves that had been converted to fighting positions. The battalion commander later said, "They opened the graves...and made each one a pillbox...We didn't know where the Japs were until one jumped out of his grave, swinging a sword."<sup>605</sup> The Americans broke into small teams to hunt down and eliminate the enemy. Because they were protected from gunfire by the stone crypts, the Americans brought forward flame throwers to drive the Japanese out.<sup>606</sup> One Japanese officer charged three Americans, firing his pistol and wounding two before his weapon jammed. Drawing his sword, he wounded the third American before he was himself killed.<sup>607</sup> At the apex of the fight regimental headquarters, hearing the noise, called to ask for a situation report. Unable to reach the beleaguered battalion commander, they called a company commander to ask whether the Japanese had broken through the American lines. The company radio operator's laconic reply was, "Hell no. We're just fighting for a bivouac area."<sup>608</sup>

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<sup>603</sup> Cannon, 143.

<sup>604</sup> Ibid.

<sup>605</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Francis T. Pachler, interview, YANK, The Army Weekly Magazine, Branch Office, Information and Education Division, War Department, New York, December 22, 1944, 3-4.

<sup>606</sup> Cannon, 144.

<sup>607</sup> Ibid.; Prefer, 95-96.

<sup>608</sup> Prefer, 96; Love, 235; 17th Inf Operations Report, Battle for Dagami, App.,9.

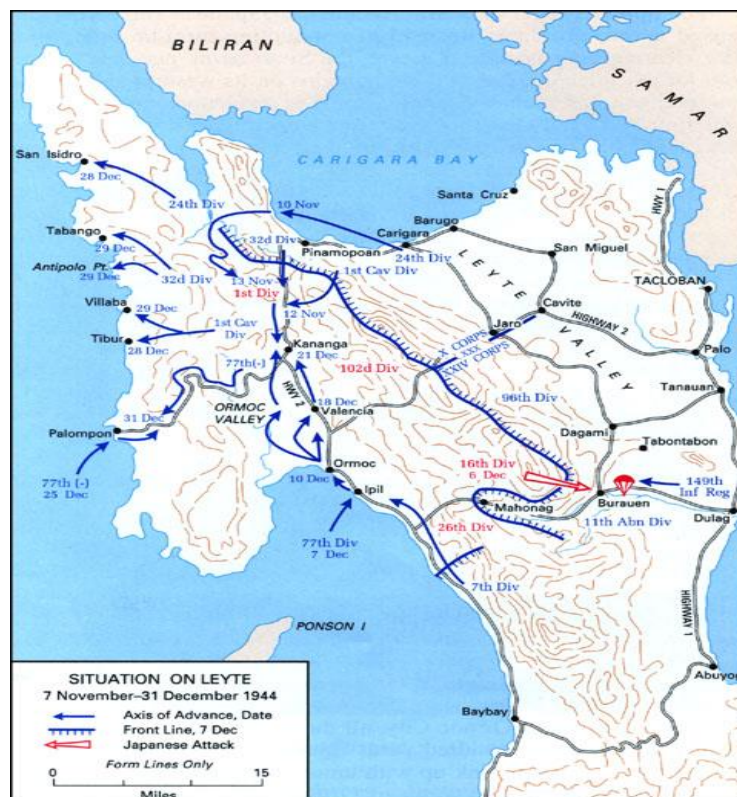


Figure 5-6: Tactical Situation on Leyte, 7 Nov – 31 Dec 44. (U.S. Army).

#### 5.4. The Battle of Shoestring Ridge.

In mid-November 1944 the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division moved to the west coast of Leyte to confront the fresh Japanese forces that had been sent into the battle.<sup>609</sup> The elite IJA 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry and 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry divisions had landed at the port of Ormoc to counterattack the Americans. The 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division responded by moving to stop them in the mountains and valleys of west Leyte. The poor, single-lane roads and torrential rains of October 1944 had created such constraints on the logistical system that the battle became known as ‘Shoestring Ridge’ to reflect the limited supplies and forces available.<sup>610</sup>

<sup>609</sup> Prefer, 182.

<sup>610</sup> Ibid., 185.



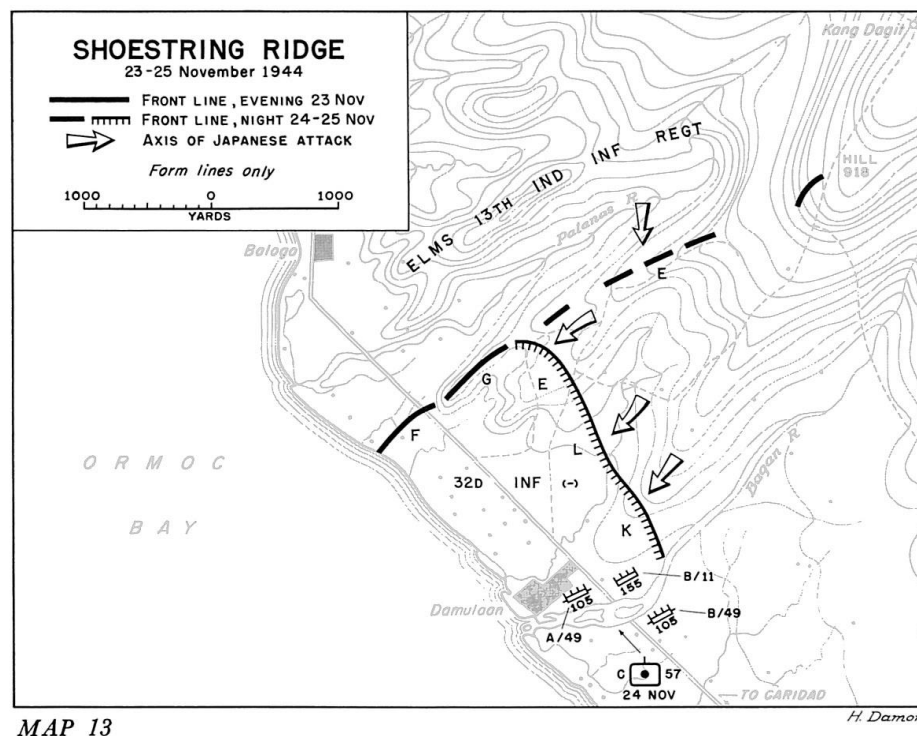


Figure 5-7: Battle of Shoestring Ridge. (M. Hamlin Cannon, *Leyte: The Return to the Philippines*, U.S. Army in World War II, The War in the Pacific, Chapter XV, Battle of the Ridges; <https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USA/USA-P-Return/maps/USA-P-Return-13.jpg> ).

By 23 November 44 the 32d Infantry having seen 35 days of hard combat without replacements had only two understrength battalions. They were defending a ridgeline on the south side of the Palanas River valley and the town of Damulaan, astride the road between Ormoc and Baybay.<sup>611</sup> From there they could see enemy ships and barges in Ormoc Bay. On the night of 23-24 November 44, the IJA 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division attacked with four infantry battalions supported by three artillery battalions to seize the airfields near Burauen.<sup>612</sup> The Japanese seized the high ground of Hill 918 but had not pierced the American lines. The Americans counterattacked on 24 November 44, regaining most of Hill 918.<sup>613</sup> A battle rhythm was established for the next four days and nights: By day, they would toil to dig fighting positions and bring up ammunition, food, and water. By night they would defend against strong Japanese

<sup>611</sup> Love, 249; Prefer, 185-186.

<sup>612</sup> King II Report, 13; Prefer, 186; Love, 251.

<sup>613</sup> Prefer, 189, 192.

infantry attacks supported by heavy artillery fire. Ground was gained and lost by both sides as the Japanese first sought to overwhelm and then to outflank the Americans. For the Americans, ammunition resupply became a critical since there were no fresh troops available. They were indeed ‘operating on a shoestring’. The 32d Infantry commander observed, “The old slogan, ‘too little and too late’ became ‘Just enough and just in time’ for us.”<sup>614</sup>

The battle reached a crescendo on the night of 26 – 27 November 44 when Companies E, G, and H of 2d Battalion, having thirty men altogether, faced an assault by two fresh Japanese battalions. Preceded by artillery fire the Japanese advanced against heavy fire to engage in hand-to-hand fighting. Just when it appeared they would succeed, they withdrew. The Americans filled the gaps in their lines and with all officers wounded Technical Sergeant Melvin H. Raabe took command. Skillfully directing his men’s fires and moving forces to thwart any penetration he managed to hold the line. He led a bayonet attack down the hill to sweep the enemy from their positions. Meanwhile, when the critical left flank machine gun became jammed with mud, Staff Sergeant Lewis V. Pulver and Private First-Class Dee Taylor took it apart, cleaned it, and resumed firing while Private First-Class Rufus F. Pate stood over them throwing grenades.<sup>615</sup>

**Combat Effectiveness – Maintenance Under Fire:** Weapons require constant cleaning and lubrication in a tropical environment. Doing so successfully during a firefight, in the pitch darkness is an emergency event, but it speaks well of the training, competence, and self-confidence of the American soldiers.

They thwarted Japanese attempts to infiltrate the rest of the night. For his leadership Raabe was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and promoted to Second Lieutenant.<sup>616</sup> Both sides were exhausted, but the Americans held the key terrain and the Japanese had lost an estimated 75% of the six battalions that attacked.<sup>617</sup> From 20 Oct 44 to 10 Feb 45 the 7<sup>th</sup> Division had fought through 37 miles of swamps, jungles, and mountains against enemy fortifications operating over 105 square miles of Leyte, Panoan Island, and the Camotes Islands. A total of 16,559 Japanese were killed by the 7<sup>th</sup> Division and 233 were taken prisoner at the loss of 582

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<sup>614</sup> Prefer, 190, 192; quoted from Colonel John M. Finn, “Shoestring Ridge”, *Infantry Journal*, LVII, 3 (September 1945), 47.

<sup>615</sup> Love, 260-261; Prefer, 194-196.

<sup>616</sup> Love, 261.

<sup>617</sup> Prefer, 199.

killed in action and 2102 wounded or 18.85% of the division's total strength.<sup>618</sup> Overall, the Battle of Leyte was tragically costly for the Japanese, losing four IJA divisions and several separate combat units.<sup>619</sup> With them the Japanese also lost any real hope of retaining the Philippines and General Yamashita realized that "...the decisive battle was impossible".<sup>620</sup>

**Combat Effectiveness -Mastering Force Employment:** Returning to the premise that explaining success in battle cannot be reduced to technological asymmetry and/or industrial overmatch, but that non-material factors must also be considered we examine the Japanese doctrine and tactics used on Leyte.<sup>621</sup> American observations were that the Japanese made skillful use of terrain in defensive positions with positions dug in deeply and expertly camouflaged. Frequently they would sacrifice observation and fields of fire for cover and concealment, making it difficult to locate their positions.<sup>622</sup> The Japanese pillboxes weren't as solid as those on Kwajalein which were made of concrete rather than logs. "They are all connected by deep trenches so the Japs can run back and forth, concentrating firepower where they need it the most. But once a pillbox falls, the whole damned system seems to break down."<sup>623</sup> Their use of wire obstacles to deter, delay, or disrupt attackers was almost non-existent. Mines were poorly used, usually being surface laid and thus easy to detect and remove. Japanese artillery was used in high volume in several attacks but not to best effect. Their guns fired singly or in pairs and fires were not massed.<sup>624</sup> Japanese troops were highly motivated and well led by officers extremely devoted to duty. Consequently, "as long as any officers remain alive, the remnants of a . . . force are capable of determined action." Sometimes they fought fiercely, other times they gave up as soon as the first pillbox fell, or the last officer died. "I've seen Japs throw down their rifles and run, but I've only seen one actually surrender on Leyte."<sup>625</sup>

To win, any force that is fighting outnumbered must exhibit mastery of the interrelated battlefield operating systems of command and control, maneuver, fires, protection, mobility and counter mobility, depth, and reserves in a synchronized and synergistic manner.<sup>626</sup> An effective defense is characterized by best use of terrain to protect the force and maximize observation and fields of fire. Obstacles, mines, and barriers are employed to slow the

<sup>618</sup> King II Report, 21, 22, 34.

<sup>619</sup> Prefer, 324.

<sup>620</sup> Ibid., 325, quoting General Yamashita.

<sup>621</sup> Stephen D. Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), ix.

<sup>622</sup> Cannon, *Leyte: The Return to the Philippines, Chapter XIV, Measure of the Fighting*, 251—252.

<sup>623</sup> Staff Sergeant James Madison, quoted in YANK, The Army Weekly Magazine, Branch Office, Information and Education Division, War Department, New York, December 22, 1944, 4.

<sup>624</sup> Cannon, *Leyte: The Return to the Philippines, Chapter XIV, Measure of the Fighting*, 251—252.

<sup>625</sup> Staff Sergeant Leland Larson, quoted in YANK, The Army Weekly Magazine, Branch Office, Information and Education Division, War Department, New York, December 22, 1944, 4.

<sup>626</sup> Biddle, 3.

attacker, and break up his formations. They deny his mobility, preventing him from moving on the defender's positions, and they fix him in place to destroy him with massed fires and counterattacks. A reserve force is always provided to repel any penetrations and reinforce as needed. The Japanese defenses on Leyte lacked these essential features and thus they were less combat effective than the Americans because of their ineffective force employment, and not just from an unfavorable correlation of forces ratio.

## 5.5. Imperial Army Ideological Indoctrination.

“We vow to be first to die.  
We vow to be first to achieve glorious deeds.  
We vow to be first to follow orders.”<sup>627</sup>

In just 77 years the Imperial Japanese Army grew from a handful of royalist samurai to an army of 5.9 million soldiers. During this time, both it and Japanese society underwent radical change and explosive growth and it fought three successful conflicts but ended in ashes.<sup>628</sup> I will examine the crucial connections between IJA ideological indoctrination, and strategic/tactical culture. The IJA adopted the modern methods, uniforms, and weapons used by Western armies, but they adapted centuries old traditional Japanese values of obedience, loyalty, discipline to create an army that would fight to the death...uselessly.

Yamagata Aritomo, father of the Imperial Japanese Army, was tasked to quickly create a national army from a force of undereducated conscripts. The primary goal was a force that would be loyal to the emperor and embody the romanticized warrior values of the former samurai class. To accomplish this great emphasis was placed on establishing an ethos that espoused loyalty, bravery, and obedience.<sup>629</sup> The method chosen was intense indoctrination via the *Gunjin Chokuyu* (The Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors). Issued on January 4, 1882 by Emperor Meiji, the *Gunjin Chokuyu* declared the Emperor as the Japanese military's supreme

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<sup>627</sup> Straus, *The Anguish of Surrender: Japanese POWs of World War II*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 44.

<sup>628</sup> Drea, 75.

<sup>629</sup> Drea, 75-76; Coox, “Japanese Army Experience”, 133.

commander and commanded complete loyalty to him.<sup>630</sup> The Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors was the foundational doctrine on loyalty to the Emperor, obedience to superiors, esprit de corps, filial piety, and veneration of Shinto *kami* and the *kokutai*.<sup>631</sup> A long and complex document, written in obscure *kanji*, it was studied daily by recruits who were required to recite it aloud. As reinforcement, the entire document was read to the troops on several special occasions during the year. All soldiers memorized the short version of the Imperial Rescript which contained these five principles:<sup>632</sup>

1. The soldier and sailor should consider loyalty their essential duty. Bear in mind that duty is weightier than a mountain, while death is lighter than a feather.
2. Inferiors should regard the orders of their superiors as issuing directly from Us.
3. The soldier and the sailor should esteem valor.
4. The soldier and the sailor should highly value faithfulness and righteousness. Faithfulness implies the keeping of one's word, and righteousness the fulfillment of one's duty.
5. The soldier and the sailor should make simplicity their aim.

The indoctrination of the troops was further enhanced by a parallel effort that began in the school system. The Imperial Rescript on Education of 1890 (*Kyōiku ni Kansuru Chokugo*) designated the emperor as the “father” of all Japanese children, explained the mythical origins of the Japanese polity, and stressed the importance of obedience to parents and loyalty to emperor. To prepare these children for a life of service to the nation it was stressed that it was a duty to give one's life for country and emperor, and that even as children they should not fear sacrificing themselves.<sup>633</sup> Japanese society was carefully shaped to adopt these values by government

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<sup>630</sup> Drea, 82; “Imperial Rescript to the Army and Navy,” quoted in Tadayoshi Sakurai, translated by Masujiro Honda, edited by Alice Mabel Bacon, and Bruce Rogers, *Human Bullets: A Soldier's Story of Port Arthur*, (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Company, 1907), 264.

<sup>631</sup> John Toland, *The Rising Sun: The Decline and Fall of the Japanese Empire, 1936-1945*, (New York: Random House, 1970), 512

<sup>632</sup> “Imperial Precepts to Soldiers and Sailors, 1882,” quoted in Ryusaku Tsunoda, William Theodore De Bary, and Donald Keene, comps., *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 199–200; “Imperial Precepts to Soldiers and Sailors,” quoted in Paul Robinson, Nigel De Lee, and Don Carrick, eds., *Ethics Education in the Military* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008), 153–155.

<sup>633</sup> Strauss, 34.

propaganda, and they were institutionalized in the mandatory national educational curriculum for school children called National Morality from 1910 onward.<sup>634</sup> Through the school system, government propaganda, and adherence to cultural norms the Imperial Japanese Army was thus imbued with standards and values falsely claimed to be derived from the ancient warrior traditions of the samurai that were then held as a faith and a creed.<sup>635</sup> This was further reinforced by the mandate for preparatory military training in the secondary schools beginning in 1925. This promoted the importance of the military and its high place in Japanese society. Absolute obedience to military superiors as direct representatives of the emperor, and the importance of the polity (*kokutai*) over the individual were key elements of this indoctrination.<sup>636</sup>

This indoctrination was solidified once the Japanese boy entered the military. The strict hierarchy of military life became accepted as a natural extension of that of family and society. Soldiers were required to serve those soldiers senior to them by preparing their food, caring for their bedding, rifle, and boots, and even washing their NCO's underwear. At the same time, they were frequently beaten for any mistake or error as a means of instilling blind discipline and loyalty.<sup>637</sup>

By characterizing the Army unit as another family, situated within the larger hierarchy of family relationships in Japanese society, with the emperor as the ultimate head of family, the Imperial Rescripts codified the chain of special relationships and loyalty to higher authority extending from the individual to the emperor.<sup>638</sup> By using the ancient cultural norms of the agrarian feudal Japan, Meiji leaders developed support for a new nationalistic system of behavior.<sup>639</sup> Loyalty, obligation, and obedience were ideas central to all Japanese people and by interpreting all these smaller loyalties as leading to one enormous loyalty to the emperor it allowed them to demand and expect enormous acts of self-sacrifice, loyalty and obedience from the Japanese people.<sup>640</sup>

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<sup>634</sup> Thomas Kasulis, "Japanese Philosophy", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2019 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2019/entries/japanese-philosophy/>>.

<sup>635</sup> Arthur Swinson, *Four Samurai: A Quartet of Japanese Army Commanders in the Second World War*, (London: Hutchinson, 1968), 15.

<sup>636</sup> Straus, *The Anguish of Surrender: Japanese POWs of World War II*, 34-37.

<sup>637</sup> Straus, *The Anguish of Surrender: Japanese POWs of World War II*, 36.

<sup>638</sup> Drea, 81-82.

<sup>639</sup> Thomas C. Smith, *The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), 205-206.

<sup>640</sup> Ibid.

...they drove loyalty and patriotism, that sort of ideology home...the country of Japan is, well, the country of God. It is the absolute best country in the world—that idea was thoroughly planted into us...it means to despise other races...Another reason is, like I said before, to give your life to the leader, His Majesty the Emperor, of what is absolutely the greatest country in the world, Japan, is a sacred duty and the highest honor. And this ideology, when you go into the military, is strengthened more and more, and your personality is taken away...When it's time to go to battle—at those times, when you were ordered by a superior, you couldn't resist. So, the humanitarian ideology I learned about in college just couldn't win out over the ideology of "loyalty and patriotism" that had been drilled into me from the time I was small.<sup>641</sup>

The *Senjinkun*, Instructions for the Battlefield first issued on 8 January 1941 was regarded as a supplement to the Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors.<sup>642</sup> The *Senjinkun* was both a code of conduct and a field manual with sections devoted to Reverence for the Spirits; Salutes and Manners; Duty; Outlook on Life and Death; The Maintenance of One's Honor; and Gallant Behavior. The *Senjinkun* gave official approval to the belief in "death before dishonor" by proclaiming that it was impermissible for Japanese soldiers to become prisoners of war. "Never live to experience shame as a prisoner. By dying you will avoid leaving behind the crime of a stain on your honor."<sup>643</sup> The *Senjinkun* is known mostly for this one sentence. It has been interpreted to describe capture as both a shameful act and a crime, but is ambiguous on how one should die to atone for this.<sup>644</sup> Nevertheless, for the Japanese soldier the *Senjinkun* made it clear that there was no middle ground between victory and death; therefore, they believed that it was "critical for us to die manfully on the battlefield."<sup>645</sup> The indoctrination of the Imperial Rescripts made respect for the chain of command and the orders of superiors, even orders to commit suicide, fully accepted. When faced with such a preposterous dilemma the response was found in a Japanese cultural predisposition to resign themselves to fate. This fatalistic attitude, shared by

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<sup>641</sup> James Dawes, *Evil Men*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 49.

<sup>642</sup> John Toland, *The Rising Sun: The Decline and Fall of the Japanese Empire, 1936-1945*, (New York: Random House, 1970), 512

<sup>643</sup> Strauss, 38-39.

<sup>644</sup> Also translated as "Die rather than become a POW" or "Do not live in shame as a prisoner. Die, and leave no ignominious crime behind you." Part II, Article 8, *Senjinkun*; Sato Hiroaki, "Gyokusai or "Shattering like a Jewel": Reflection on the Pacific War, *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Japan Focus, February 1, 2008, Volume 6, Issue 2, Article ID 2662; <https://apjif.org/-Hiroaki-Sato/2662/article.html>

<sup>645</sup> Ulrich Straus, *The Anguish of Surrender: Japanese POWs of World War II*, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2003), 8.

most Japanese was that “*shikata ga nai*” (it can’t be helped), encouraged stoicism and acceptance.<sup>646</sup> This attitude may be shocking, but many cultural studies have noted that suicide was widely seen in Japanese arts and literature as an acceptable response to the irreconcilable conflict between personal desires and societal demands to the extent that it was codified in ritual form as *seppuku*.<sup>647</sup> But, these were just documents. How could a piece of paper, no matter who signed it, have had such compelling force? Group culture is one of the most powerful forces in human history. When people are working toward a shared goal their actions can become not just something that they are doing together but something that they are. The bonds of belonging, and the shared burdens and risks, create both group values and purpose as well as individual identity.<sup>648</sup> Group membership and action in Japanese society governs individual behavior. Since cohesiveness is a core value consensus is essential and the individual’s needs, and desires are minimized.<sup>649</sup>

**The Japanese Cultural Matrix; Social Debts and Obligatory Behavior:** The *Kokutai* (national essence), is an ideology that defined the State as the extended family to which Japanese people are indebted. “This is our eternal and immutable national entity...all the people, united as one great family nation in heart and obeying the Imperial Will...”<sup>650</sup>

The *Senjinkun* carried more than the insuperable weight of the divine majesty’s command. It was supplemented by the inexorable power of the unique Japanese social traits of *giri* and *on*. Japanese society is built on a foundation of social debts. *Giri* means ‘duty’, ‘responsibility’, or ‘obligation’, and carries with it a sense of honor in the performance. A debt of loyalty becomes a duty to be re-paid and that duty includes self-sacrifice on behalf of others.<sup>651</sup> *Giri* is one of the most fundamental values in Japanese society and the sense of responsibility and effort that are required to fulfil this obligation are immense.<sup>652</sup> *On* is the corresponding burden of the obligation, a debt of gratitude and the further honorable duty to repay that debt. It exists in the complex, Confucian maze of hierarchical societal relationships which are given coherence through the deep responsibility each person has, to

<sup>646</sup> Strauss, 35; Edward O. Reischauer, *The Japanese*, (Cambridge: Belknap, 1977), 15, 162-166.

<sup>647</sup> Strauss, 43.

<sup>648</sup> Daniel Coyle, *The Culture Code: The Secrets of Highly Successful Groups*, (New York: Bantam, 2018), 10.

<sup>649</sup> Forrest Morgan, 227-228.

<sup>650</sup> Imperial Ministry of Education, 1937 (Monbusho), *Kokutai no Hongi: Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*, ed. Robert K. Hall, trans. John Owen Gauntlett (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), 59.

<sup>651</sup> Benedict, 117, 133, 136-137; Curtis H. Martin and Bruce Stronach, *Politics East and West: A Comparison of Japanese and British Political Culture*, (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1992), 16

<sup>652</sup> Yamakuse Yoji, *Nihonjin no kokoro (Heart and Soul of the Japanese)*, (Tokyo: IBC Publishing, 2014) revised English text translated by Michael A. Cooney, *Japaneseness: A Guide to Values and Virtues*, (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 2016), 63-64.



maintain order and harmony (*wa*). Recognizing both one's place and one's obligations in this network is essential.<sup>653</sup>

This complex construct subsumes all human relationships in Japan. Serving one's superiors with self-effacing devotion was ingrained in Japanese culture from its feudal era.<sup>654</sup> *On* and *giri* attach to a relationship, whether between individuals or to society as a whole and are authoritarian in nature. There is an ethical requirement to be aware of the *on/giri* one has incurred and to repay the debt which is carried in one's heart and is not fully discharged short of death.<sup>655</sup> There were three principal *on* in Shōwa Japanese culture: to the emperor, to one's parents, and to one's teacher. These *on* were viewed as immeasurable and limitless; "higher than a mountain, and deeper than the sea."<sup>656</sup> The relationship between people and these values is also seen as being enduring and cyclical. If one has received an *on*, *giri* demands that it be repaid. And in the example of the ultimate *on/giri* relationships, those with teachers, parents, or the emperor the magnitude is that of a lifelong, and endless debt.<sup>657</sup> These social values are integral to Japanese society and are thought by some sociologists to be rooted in the static agrarian culture of feudal Japan. (A hunter-gatherer culture may tolerate a higher degree of individualism than one wherein the cultivation of rice requires the mutual dedication and shared commitment of the entire community to succeed).<sup>658</sup>

To fulfill such an all-encompassing debt requires enormous devotion and self-sacrifice.<sup>659</sup> Their personal beliefs, and society's affirmation of their duty to sacrifice themselves held enormous motivational and coercive power over the Japanese soldier. "Those who consider the great principles of sincerity, self-sacrifice, and martyrdom to country as mere slogans...who disgrace the absolute trust of the Emperor, are the pinnacle of unfaithfulness...if this fact be known by the parents, brothers and relatives...their condemnation and long hatred will be extremely regrettable."<sup>660</sup> The effect was to urge the Japanese masses to sacrifice. *Giri* and *on* prescribe individual behaviors and have an enormous impact on group dynamics and decision-making, even today.<sup>661</sup>

<sup>653</sup> Benedict, 98, 121-125.

<sup>654</sup> Roger J. Davies, Osamu Ikeno, "Giri: Japanese Social Obligations", *The Japanese Mind: Understanding Contemporary Japanese Culture*, (Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2002), 95–101.

<sup>655</sup> *Ibid.*, 65-66; Forrest E. Morgan, *Compellence and the Strategic Culture of Imperial Japan: Implications for Coercive Diplomacy in the Twenty-First Century*, (Westport and London: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 57.

<sup>656</sup> Benedict, 133-134, 137-138. Much of this section is based on the author's fifty years of personal experience and study of the Japanese *budo* which is deeply inculcated with this Japanese aesthetic.

<sup>657</sup> *Ibid.*, 121-125; Morgan, 57.

<sup>658</sup> Roger J. Davies, Osamu Ikeno, "Giri: Japanese Social Obligations", *The Japanese Mind: Understanding Contemporary Japanese Culture*, (Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 2002), 95–101.

<sup>659</sup> Abe, Namiko. "Giri: Moral Obligation." ThoughtCo. <https://www.thoughtco.com/giri-moral-obligation-2028017> (accessed February 7, 2021).

<sup>660</sup> McManus, 46.

<sup>661</sup> Morgan, 57, 74.

It has been argued that Japanese wartime aggression was caused by the exaggeration of many “national characteristics” especially the importance of societal cohesion.<sup>662</sup> Despite having developed a modern economy and polity since the Meiji Restoration primary personal relationships in Japanese society have remained quite traditional. To be Japanese is to be involved in close, complex, and enduring personal relationships in an expanding matrix beginning with the family and extending to other primary groups. Traditionally each member subordinates his personal desires to the requirements of the group. Group identity and cohesion is an essential element of Japanese society. Group values supersede personal values and group loyalty and rigid vertical hierarchy predominate. Correct behavior is viewed in context of fulfilling one’s obligations to the group.<sup>663</sup> The strictly hierarchal Imperial Japanese Army relied on top-down decision-making and centralized command and control. The culture of traditional group orientation supported consensus-based decision-making. This enhanced vertical cohesion, but innovation and initiative were subordinated to group thinking and the desire to avoid the shame and embarrassment of reporting bad news ultimately undermined combat effectiveness.<sup>664</sup> Modernization did not alter the fact that the Imperial Japanese Army was ritually bound in hierarchical relationships in which the appropriate responses were grateful dependency and loyalty.<sup>665</sup>

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<sup>662</sup> Iritani, Toshio, *Group Psychology of the Japanese in Wartime* (New York: Kegan Paul International, 1991), x.

<sup>663</sup> Robert Lee, “The Individuation of the Self in Japanese History”, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, Mar., 1977, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Mar., 1977), Nanzan University Stable, 5, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30233128>; Forrest E. Morgan, *Compellence and the Strategic Culture of Imperial Japan: Implications for Coercive Diplomacy in the Twenty-First Century*, (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 61, 63, 227-229, 235.

<sup>664</sup> Morgan, *Compellence and the Strategic Culture of Imperial Japan*, 235.

<sup>665</sup> Robert Lee, “The Individuation of the Self in Japanese History”, 7.

## 5.6. The Dilemma: Die with Honor or Live in Shame?

“I wanted to die in the action of the battle. I cannot apologize to my fellow soldiers who have died in action, when I am captured and nursed here. I do not feel like living now.”<sup>666</sup>

The *Senjinkun* exerted a powerful effect on Japanese soldiers’ actions throughout the war. Fighting to the death remained a common outcome. The Imperial Japanese Army routinely fought and died, believing this to be the honorable choice. But what of those initial few, growing over time, who chose a life of shame? What caused them to go against their training?

Japanese survivors and the diaries of those who died, revealed that their motivations to sacrifice their lives were not as simple as believed. On one level, their unquestioning obedience and loyalty to the emperor reflected *tatemaie*, (a façade; the behavior and feelings one presents in public) in accordance with the group orthodoxy. Public disapproval and shame are scrupulously avoided and hiding one’s true feelings in the presence of the group is common.<sup>667</sup> On another level their *honne*, (the true, inner feelings of each individual) were focused on the avoidance of shame, dishonor, and punishment for their families. Due to their ideological indoctrination meant that Japanese soldiers believed that they would be executed or banished if they returned from war after committing the crime of being captured.<sup>668</sup> Their strong identification with the group and fear of letting others down or appearing cowardly ultimately propelled them toward sacrifice more than dedication to a distant imperial deity.<sup>669</sup> A summary of the personal accounts of some Japanese prisoners provides some insights on unit cohesion, leadership, and cultural attitudes:

Matsubara Shunji: An NCO in a maintenance unit fighting as infantry, surrendered on Leyte. When other nearby units conducted *gyokusai*, he and his colleagues sought a way to avoid

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<sup>666</sup> Aaron William Moore, *Writing War: Soldiers Record the Japanese Empire*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 233; USMHI: “Confidential: Statement of Prisoner of War Concerning Attitude of Japanese on Capture and Future Return Home to Japan,” January 1943.

<sup>667</sup> Benedict, 153; Doi Takeo, *The Anatomy of Dependence: Exploring an area of the Japanese psyche: feelings of indulgence*, (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1973), 35, 53.

<sup>668</sup> Ooka Shohei, *Taken Captive: A Japanese POW's Story*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1996), 54.

<sup>669</sup> Strauss, 50-51.

throwing their lives away. Finally, they surrendered, and he was amazed at the kind treatment that he received and the feeling that he could become friends with the Americans. Still, when asked which country would win the war he replied, “As a Japanese noncommissioned officer, I must believe that in the end Japan will win.” Despite this, he felt utterly powerless and fell into a deep depression.<sup>670</sup>

Kojima Kiyofumi: A naval officer, transferred to Clark Field after the Japanese defeat at the Battle of Leyte Gulf. He was ordered to lead a platoon of sailors fighting as infantry after the unit had already been decimated by combat and malaria.<sup>671</sup> He received an order to withdraw, with the directive to kill the wounded who could not be moved. Kojima escaped this moral dilemma because the wounded sailor committed suicide, leaving Kojima a cigarette case upon which was written “Long Live the Emperor” and “I pray for the platoon leader’s eternal military good fortune.”<sup>672</sup> Kojima was struck by the sailors’ generosity and his devotion to the *Senjinkun*, but he concluded that the war was lost and that he had to survive in order to inform the Japanese people that their leaders were to blame. After weeks of evading the enemy without food he surrendered himself and his few remaining men.<sup>673</sup>

Ooka Shohei: A reservist and university graduate. Ooka was one of the few POWs who confessed to having questioned the *Senjinkun*. “To arrogantly choose a needless death” seemed delusional and he concluded that “sacrificing one’s life in pursuit of absurd tactics was simply insignificant, nothing more.”<sup>674</sup> Nevertheless, he followed orders, moving with his unit as they tried to avoid the Americans until he was too sick from malaria to proceed. He tried and failed to commit suicide due to faulty weapons and was discovered unconscious by the Americans.<sup>675</sup> Even though he questioned the *Senjinkun* he had been sufficiently indoctrinated that he proudly said that he had not surrendered, rather he had been taken prisoner when he could not resist. “My

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<sup>670</sup> Strauss, 64-67.

<sup>671</sup> Strauss, 77.

<sup>672</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>673</sup> Ibid., 78-79.

<sup>674</sup> Ooka Shohei, *Taken Captive: A Japanese POW's Story*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1996), 5, 48.

<sup>675</sup> Ibid., 27.

personal pride did not permit me to submit in such a way to the enemy.” Still, he felt shame at being alive when his brothers in arms had died.<sup>676</sup>

Kobayashi Shigehiko: Surrendered on Saipan after coming to the inescapable conclusion that Japan would lose the war and rather than commit suicide, he could do more for his country by remaining alive. Nevertheless, in doing so he, “lost his life, his homeland, his race, his honor and knew shame. I had lost everything.”<sup>677</sup>

## 5.7. Strategic Culture and Path Dependence.

The strategic culture of the Imperial Japanese Army was succinctly expressed by the *Gunjin Chokuyu*: “Duty is heavier than a mountain (and so to be much regarded), while death is lighter than a feather (and therefore to be despised).”<sup>678</sup> Orders will be followed; sacrifice is expected. Their societal adoption of this explicit philosophy suggests that later outcomes were influenced by it. Historical outcomes are rarely determined by pre-existing conditions; however, some social structures exert substantial resistance to contingency and once a long-term institutional pattern is set into effect inertia takes hold and causal processes result.<sup>679</sup> The indoctrination of the Imperial Rescripts and the *Senjinkun* had the intended effect of inculcating unquestioning obedience and unassailable loyalty to the Emperor and the Japanese nation. However, they also had the unanticipated consequence of encouraging the self-destruction of the Imperial Japanese Army. When faced with defeat, rather than surviving to fight and win on another day, they chose to “Die, and leave no ignominious crime behind you.”<sup>680</sup> Whether sacrificing their lives in units committing *gyokusai* or as individuals committing suicide, the IJA followed this injunction to its eventual doom. Even when units withdrew, they lost cohesion,

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<sup>676</sup> Ibid., 28, 31, 37.

<sup>677</sup> Strauss, 60-61.

<sup>678</sup> “Imperial Rescript to the Army and Navy,” quoted in Tadayoshi Sakurai, Masujiro Honda, Alice Mabel Bacon, and Bruce Rogers, *Human Bullets: A Soldier’s Story of Port Arthur* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Company, 1907), 264.

<sup>679</sup> Mahoney, James. “Path Dependence in Historical Sociology.” *Theory and Society* 29, no. 4 (2000): 507–48. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3108585>.

<sup>680</sup> Sato Hiroaki, “Gyokusai or “Shattering like a Jewel”: Reflection on the Pacific War, *The Asia-Pacific Journal, Japan Focus*, February 1, 2008, Volume 6, Issue 2, Article ID 2662; <https://apjif.org/-Hiroaki-Sato/2662/article.html>

killing the wounded and abandoning equipment becoming combat ineffective. Soon there remained only individuals seeking to evade and escape, tormented by the shame of having survived. The Imperial Japanese soldier did not merely accept his obligations within the hierarchical social structure but obsessively demonstrated the need to define and validate oneself in accordance with that structure, identifying so strongly with its mandates of its tactical culture to respond reflexively with a willingness to fight to the death. Japanese strategic culture was heavily based on their reliance on the “spiritual superiority” of the Japanese soldier and sailor, particularly their spirit of selflessness. The glorification of death in service to the emperor was an integral element of their strategic culture.<sup>681</sup> In a prolonged war they would ultimately wear down the Americans who lacked this “spiritual quality” to sacrifice all for the cause. Their strategic force assessments assumed that the Americans had a “simplistic belief in weaponry and materiel superiority”. In response the Japanese would rely on the Japanese soldier’s readiness to endure any hardship and fight to the death to ultimately wear down the Americans.<sup>682</sup>

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<sup>681</sup> Straus, 34.

<sup>682</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-33.

## Chapter Six: The Battle of Okinawa; Strategic Culture and “*Yamato damashii*”.

"The only course left is for Japan's one hundred million people to sacrifice their lives by charging the enemy to make them lose the will to fight."<sup>683</sup>

### 6.1. Introduction.

In early January 1945 the 7<sup>th</sup> Division was alerted of its new mission, the invasion of Okinawa. By 12 February 45, all elements were relieved of tactical missions on Leyte and began to plan, train, and organize for the new operation.<sup>684</sup> Just as before Attu, the lack of time given and competing deployment tasks prevented the execution of a tailored training plan. Nevertheless, in just one month the Division trained replacements, repaired, or replaced equipment, gathered supplies, and conducted rehearsals. Using their past training regime at the Unit Training Center in Hawai'i as a guide as well as recent combat experience they focused on individual and small unit tasks. Lacking port facilities, they loaded out across the same Leyte beaches that they had assaulted in October of 1944, in a reverse movement of troops and vehicles to the beaches and landing craft to the transports. Embarkation began on 12 March 45 and the Division then conducted two practice beach landings with the Navy before getting underway for Okinawa on 27 March 45.<sup>685</sup>

#### 6.1.2. The Operational Environment.

In late October 1944, the Americans were faced with several choices of where to strike the Japanese next. Should they attack Luzon or invade Formosa? General MacArthur favored Luzon. Admiral King argued for Formosa. Admiral Nimitz endorsed Luzon. The decision was made to

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<sup>683</sup> Richard Frank, *Downfall*, quoted from Imperial Japanese Headquarters War Journal, 1945, 89.

<sup>684</sup> Edmund G. Love, *The Hourglass: A History of the 7th Infantry Division in World War II*, (Washington D.C.: Infantry Journal Press, 1950), 283-284, 287.

<sup>685</sup> *Ibid.*, 288-290.

conduct a three-pronged campaign, attacking Luzon on 9 January 45, Iwo Jima on 19 February 45, and Okinawa on 1 April 45. All told, the Americans would send a land, sea, and air armada of some five hundred thousand troops against the Japanese at Okinawa.<sup>686</sup>

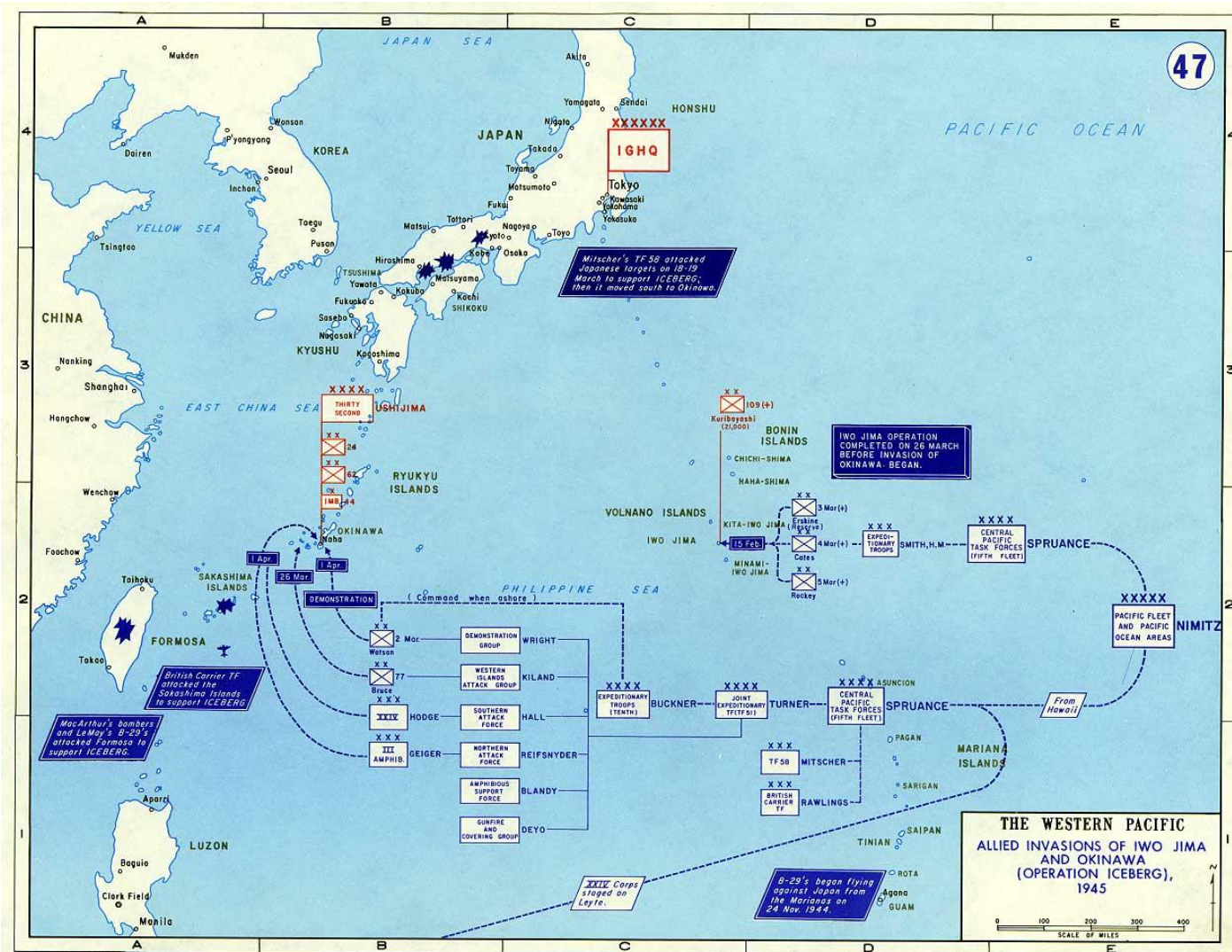


Figure 6-1: The Strategic Situation in the Pacific, March 1945. (*The Western Pacific: Allied Invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa (Operation Iceberg)*, 194, (United States Marine Corps, History Division, Archives Branch: Campaign Collections/United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, Department of History, [https://www.westpoint.edu/sites/default/files/inline-images/academics/academic\\_departments/history/WWII%20Asia/ww2%2520asia%2520map%252047.jpg](https://www.westpoint.edu/sites/default/files/inline-images/academics/academic_departments/history/WWII%20Asia/ww2%2520asia%2520map%252047.jpg) Accessed 8 June 2022.)

<sup>686</sup> Joseph Wheelan, *Bloody Okinawa: The Last Great Battle of World War II*, (New York: Hachette Books, 2021), 7-9; Thomas N. Huber, *Japan's Battle of Okinawa, April-June 1945*, Leavenworth Papers Number 18, Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1990, 5.



The Japanese, meanwhile, were uncertain of the Americans' next move and wavered between preparing for attacks on Formosa and Okinawa. The capture of either island would put American bombers within 350 miles of Kyushu. Thus, both islands were strategic key terrain. While Formosa gave the Americans a stepping-stone to China, the Japanese recognized that with its multiple airfields and excellent anchorages for an invasion fleet Okinawa was ideal for an invasion of the home islands. In the end, the Imperial General Staff directed that both be defended equally, diverting their best infantry division, the *9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division*, previously in Manchukuo and thus fresh and fully equipped, from Okinawa to Formosa which they considered to be the more likely American target.<sup>687</sup>

### **6.1.3. Terrain and Weather.**

Okinawa is a rugged and mountainous island, sixty miles long and ranging from two to sixteen miles wide. The island is heavily vegetated and narrows at the middle to a central plateau. From there the land rises in the south towards a series of hills, ridges, ravines, and steep escarpments. The ridges are ideal for defense and generally run east to west, with no north to south avenues of approach, thus providing successive natural lines of defense. Numerous caves of natural rock and coral provide the defender with ready-made fortifications. The climate is subtropical and humid with frequent, heavy rains in the spring and summer.<sup>688</sup>

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<sup>687</sup> Huber, 5-6; Wheelan, 31; Japanese Monograph Number 135 (JM 135), U.S. Army Forces Far East, Military History Section, *Okinawa Operations Record*, Number Book 1, "Okinawa Operations Record of 32d Army" (Washington, D.C., 1949), 11.

<sup>688</sup> Arnold G. Fisch, *Ryukyus: 26 March-2 July 1945*, CMH Pub 72-35, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1993.), 3-5.

### 6.1.4. “Operation Iceberg”: The American Attack Plan.

The American plan for the invasion of Okinawa built on the successful practices, training, and experiences of Kwajalein and Leyte. The U.S. Tenth Army, initially consisting of four divisions would land on the eastern beaches at Hagushi, seizing the key terrain of the four Japanese airfields. Reminiscent of the plan they had executed on Leyte, the 7th Infantry Division would land four battalions abreast, capture the airfield at Kadena and then attack south towards the towns of Yonabaru and Shuri.

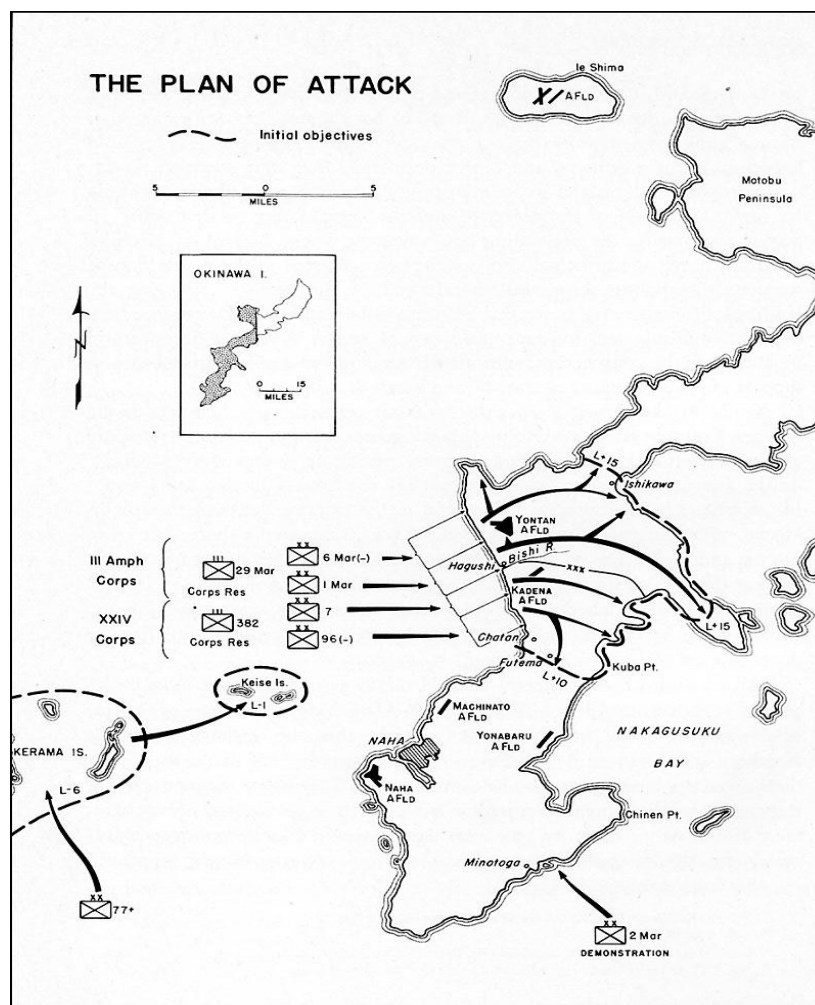


Figure 6-2: Tenth Army Invasion Plan, Okinawa, April 1945. ((Roy Appleman, James M. Burns, Russel A. Gugeler, John Stevens, *Okinawa: The Last Battle, The U.S. Army in World War II*, Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1948, 2000,30.)

### 6.1.5. “Operation *Sho Ni Go* (Victory Plan 2)”: The Japanese Defense Plan.

The Imperial General Headquarters (IGHQ) strategy for the defense of Okinawa envisioned air power as the mechanism to defeat the Americans with ground forces in the supporting role of building and protecting the airfields. However, the IJA *32d Army* staff recognized that the ends, ways, and means of this strategy were incompatible; severe shortages of aircraft and pilots made this air strategy infeasible.<sup>689</sup> Instead, they undertook an approach that ignored both IGHQ orders and the IJA doctrine and tradition of seeking a “decisive battle” in favor of a battle of attrition.<sup>690</sup> The *32d Army* had carefully considered their defensive options: they could defend at the shoreline as normal and be overwhelmed; they could retreat to the north and be passively contained; or they could defend strongpoints in the central and southern parts of the island, yielding two of the airfields but allowing them to engage the enemy in a protracted fight intended to inflict the highest casualties on the Americans. They chose the latter defensive plan.<sup>691</sup> The architect of this strategy was Colonel Yahara Hiromichi. He described his thoughts later, “Japan was frantically preparing for a final decisive battle on the home islands, leaving Okinawa to face a totally hopeless situation. From the beginning I had insisted that our proper strategy was to hold the enemy as long as possible, drain off his troops and supplies, and thus contribute our utmost to the final decisive battle for Japan proper.”<sup>692</sup> They would conduct a fluid defense-in-depth using the pre-eminent defensive feature of the terrain, the cave system. Cave fortifications had been a feature of the Japanese defenses at Attu and Kiska, Biak and Peleliu, Saipan and Leyte but on Okinawa they reached their deepest level of sophistication with 60 miles of connecting tunnels and their integration into the undulating ridge lines to create a series of reverse slope and strongpoint defenses. The planned intent was to dig deep, contest every foot of ground, and only counterattack selectively. They hoped thus to impose unacceptable costs on

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<sup>689</sup> Japanese Monograph Number 135 (JM 135), U.S. Army Forces Far East, Military History Section, *Okinawa Operations Record*, Book Number 1, “Okinawa Operations Record of 32d Army” (Washington, D.C., 1949), 1-3, 4, 9-10, 11-18.

<sup>690</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10, 18-19, 45-46.

<sup>691</sup> Roy E. Appleman, James M. Burns, Russell A. Gugeler, John Stevens, *Okinawa: The Last Battle*, United States Army in World War II, The War in the Pacific, (Washington D: War Department, Historical Division, 1947), 30; Huber, 6-8; Fisch, CMH Pub 72-35, *Ryukyus: 26 March-2 July 1945*, 11.

<sup>692</sup> Yahara, Hiromichi, *The Battle for Okinawa*, translated by Roger Pineau and Uehara Masatoshi, with an introduction and commentary by Frank B. Gibney, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1995), 49.

the Americans. They would trade human treasure for time and the hope that the Americans would lose the will to continue the fight.<sup>693</sup>

**Combat Effectiveness – The Integration and Training of Replacements:** The 7<sup>th</sup> Division had only a month to plan, equip, and load aboard ships for the movement from Leyte to Okinawa. This resulted in a scramble to provide limited post-battle rest and rehabilitation to the veterans of the unit as well as to receive, stage, and integrate replacements arriving fresh from the United States. The short training period focused on eliminating faults and deficiencies identified during the Leyte campaign by educating the non-commissioned officers on the needed corrections and training the replacements and veterans alike on demolitions, night perimeter defense, and new weapons like the infra-red sniper scope.<sup>694</sup>

In contrast, the IJA 32<sup>d</sup> Army had been activated on Okinawa on 1 April 1944 and over the next twelve months it had received a steady stream of reinforcements eventually numbering over 77,000 troops. In addition, there were an estimated 20, 000 Okinawan Home Guards present. They were primarily devoted to the construction of elaborate fortifications including concrete pillboxes, tank traps, tunnels, and other positions.<sup>695</sup> The training that they conducted when not otherwise engaged in building defensive positions included practicing unit counterattacks against amphibious landings, and artillery live fire exercises on the expected beachheads.<sup>696</sup>

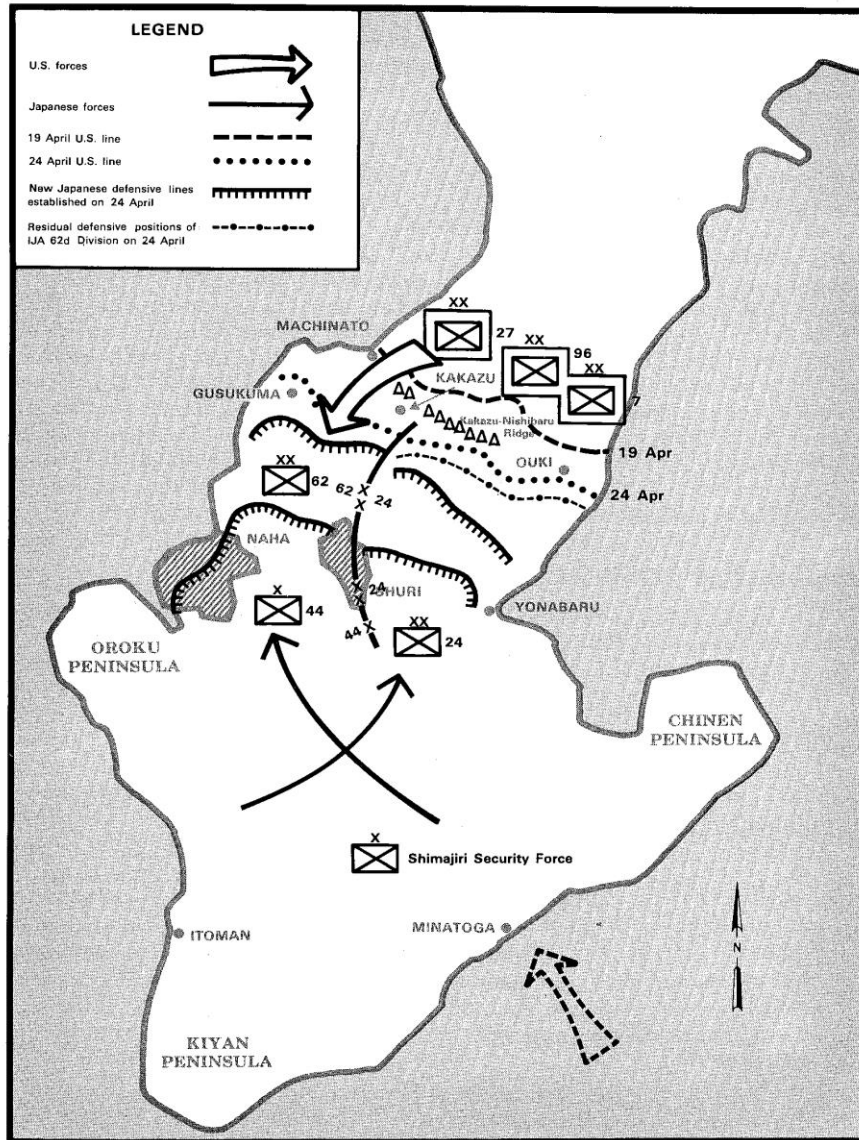
Lacking time and resources for a full-scale training program, the veteran American units heading to Okinawa had to rely on the knowledge and expertise of the old soldiers in the ranks to teach and guide the new men while enroute to battle. In these exigent circumstances tactical culture comes to the fore. Tactical culture is built on pride, cohesion, and loyalty, and reflects the goals and objectives, beliefs and values, and expected behaviors of the unit. Capable leaders at all levels can bridge the gaps in training by communicating the standards and explaining how the unit intends to meet current and future challenges. On Okinawa the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division skillfully displayed the tactical culture that first emerged on Attu.

<sup>693</sup> Huber, *Japan's Battle of Okinawa, April-June 1945*, 2, 7, 47-51.

<sup>694</sup> Edmond G. Love, *The Hourglass: A History of the 7th Infantry Division in World War II*, (Washington D.C.: Infantry Journal Press, 1950), 289.

<sup>695</sup> Fisch, Jr. *Ryukyus: The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II*, CMH Pub 72-35, 6.

<sup>696</sup> Huber, *Japan's Battle of Okinawa, April-June 1945*, 6.



Map 6. The IJA positions as of 25 April 1945

Figure 6-3: The Japanese 32d Army Defensive Plan. (Thomas Huber, *Japan's Battle of Okinawa, April-June 1945*, Leavenworth Papers Number 18, Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1990, 36.)

From April 1944 to March 1945 the *32d Army* devoted immense effort to the construction of elaborate defensive positions using the extensive natural cave system as a starting point. They built concrete pillboxes, gun emplacements, headquarters, and dormitories underground with ventilation shafts, connecting tunnels, and electrical power. Tank traps and minefields were constructed along avenues of approach.<sup>697</sup> The defense was centered on the town of Shuri, a cultural center and site of the ancient royal palace. Although the *32d Army* protested doing so they complied with IGHQ orders to also complete the airfields, even though there were no aircraft to use them.

The Japanese force consisted of the *24th Division*, a heavy division with artillery and three infantry regiments; the *62d Division*, a light division with two brigades, each with five infantry battalions, each with five rifle companies per battalion, but with no artillery; the *44th Independent Mixed Brigade*; and the *27th Tank Regiment*. Additional forces such as naval personnel, engineers, communications troops, and other miscellaneous units brought the estimated strength of the *32d Army* to over 77,000 Imperial troops. In addition, there were about 20,000 Okinawa Home Guards (*Boeitai*), and even 750 male Okinawan middle-school students who were organized into "Blood and Iron for the Emperor" (*Tekketsu*) volunteer units and trained for combat. Many thousands of other Okinawan civilians were conscripted for construction and logistical duties. Because of inaccurate data and destruction of the records the exact IJA strength is not known, but it probably exceeded 100,000 men.<sup>698</sup>

## **6.2. The American Landings and the Outposts of the Shuri Defenses.**

The 7th Infantry Division made its final amphibious assault of the Second World War at 0800 hours on 1 April 1945. For the first time in the war, they landed without significant opposition. The 7<sup>th</sup> Division quickly moved inland, seizing the Kadena airfield many hours ahead of schedule, and continued to the east coast 14 miles away on the second day. The ease of this phase of the operation surprised the Americans. One soldier from the Division, expressed what

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<sup>697</sup> Fisch, CMH Pub 72-35, *Ryukyus: 26 March-2 July 1945*, 6-7.

<sup>698</sup> Fisch, CMH Pub 72-35, *Ryukyus: 26 March-2 July 1945*, 7.

many might have felt, saying: "I've already lived longer than I thought I would."<sup>699</sup> At this point, rather than chronicle the entire eighty-two-day operation I will synopsize the battle narrative, highlighting a few significant actions.

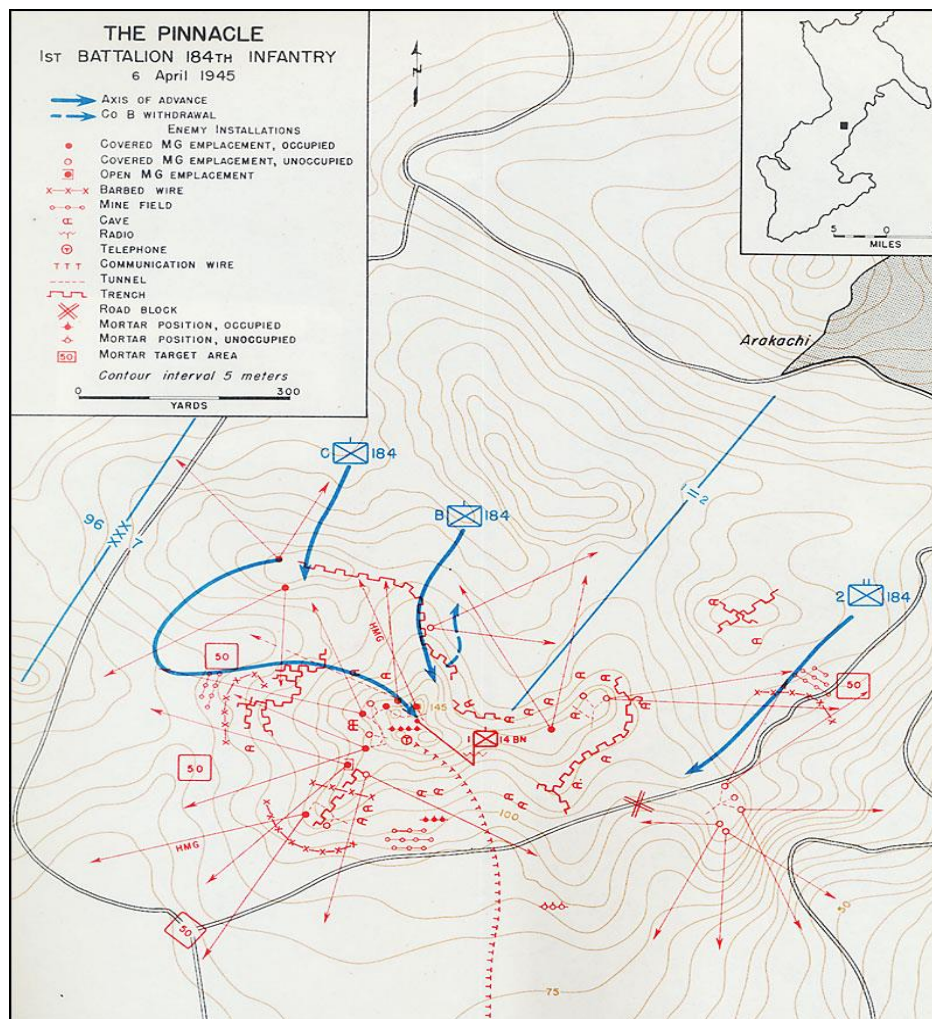


Figure 6-4: *The Pinnacle: Fighting through the outposts to the Shuri Line, 4-6 April 1945.* (Roy Appleman, James M. Burns, Russel A. Gugeler, John Stevens, *Okinawa: The Last Battle, The U.S. Army in World War II*, Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1948/2000, 107-109. [United States Army Center of Military History](#).)

<sup>699</sup> Love, 294.

### 6.2.1. Assaulting the Shuri Line.

Located just two miles from the town of Naha and the western coast of Okinawa is the site of the ancient castle of Shuri. It is surrounded by the most rugged terrain in the southern half of the island, offering excellent observation both north and south down to the coasts. It is ideal for defensive operations due to the steep slopes, abrupt ravines, and sharp escarpments. The *32d Army* would make this area the keystone of their defensive effort by constructing a network of pillboxes, tunnels, caves, and fortified tombs. The Americans called it the “Shuri Line”.<sup>700</sup>

The initial attempts to pierce the outposts of the Shuri Line served as preview to the bitter struggle to come. On 5-6 April 45 the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 184<sup>th</sup> Infantry attacked “The Pinnacle”, a 30-foot-tall spire atop a 100-yard-long coral ridge that was defended by Lieutenant Tanaka Seiji’s *1<sup>st</sup> Company, 14<sup>th</sup> Independent Infantry Battalion* of 110 men, eight light and two heavy machine guns, and seven 50mm mortars.<sup>701</sup>



Figure 6-5: *The Pinnacle*, 5-6 April 1945. (Roy Appleman, James M. Burns, Russel A. Gugeler, John Stevens, *Okinawa: The Last Battle, The U.S. Army in World War II*, Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1948/2000.).

<sup>700</sup> Fisch, CMH Pub 72-35, *Ryukyus: 26 March-2 July 1945*, 6.

<sup>701</sup> Roy Appleman, James M. Burns, Russel A. Gugeler, John Stevens, *Okinawa: The Last Battle*, 107-109.



Fighting from trenches and gun pits, and protective caves, interconnected by tunnels, and strengthened by barbed wire and mines, the defenders were able to repulse three attacks until the Americans used a difficult route to surprise the Japanese in a flanking maneuver. Of the 110 defenders only 20 escaped. The Americans lost one killed and ten wounded including a company commander.<sup>702</sup> The Pinnacle had been a difficult position to take but it was only one of several outposts in front of the main defense. Similar fights ensued at Red Hill, Triangulation Hill, Hill 178, and Tomb Hill from 6 to 10 April 45 involving intense Japanese artillery and machine gun fire and mines which disabled several American tanks and frustrated both frontal attacks and flanking maneuvers.



*Figure 6-6: A 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division rifleman examines a firing position on the Pinnacle. (United States Army in World War II, Pictorial Record, The War Against Japan, U.S. Army Center of Military History, 402.).*

On April 7, 1945, for Captain Dean Galles, who had served with the 7<sup>th</sup> Division from Attu to Okinawa, the war came to an end. Ignoring personal hazards, he moved across open, fire-swept terrain directing the successful attack of his company. During the fight, Galles was wounded by machine-gun fire that nearly killed him. The first bullet hit his left shoulder joint. The next four bullets went into his left shoulder, chest, and stomach. Another bullet pierced his helmet and grazed his skull and neck. Galles spent a year recuperating in hospitals. Sixty years

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<sup>702</sup> Love, 310.

later, when reflecting on why he persevered he said, “I just served my country and did the best job I could. What about all the others, particularly those who gave their lives?”<sup>703</sup>

Overall, the *62d Division* outposts had successfully delayed the Americans for eight days at the cost of 4489 killed and 13 captured.<sup>704</sup> In the first ten days of the battle the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division had taken twenty thousand yards of terrain and suffered 120 killed, 696 injured, and 13 missing, most in the last three days of the period.<sup>705</sup> Between 10 April and 19 April there began a cold and steady rain which turned the primitive roads and trails to slick mud and made any movement very difficult. Constant Japanese shelling helped create a quagmire that made resupply and medical evacuation herculean tasks. The 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry was now directly up against the Japanese main line of resistance.<sup>706</sup>



*Figure 6-7: A typical Japanese defensive position on Okinawa. On this ridgeline there are thirty-two separate firing positions. (United States Army in World War II, Pictorial Record, The War Against Japan, U.S. Army Center of Military History, 403.).*

<sup>703</sup> Dean E. Galles Collection, (AFC/2001/001/88536), interviewed by Christine Seifert, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress.

<sup>704</sup> Roy Appleman, James M. Burns, Russel A. Gugeler, John Stevens, *Okinawa: The Last Battle*, 111-113.

<sup>705</sup> Love, 322-323.

<sup>706</sup> *Ibid.*, 320, 323.

From 19 to 24 April 45 the Division fought to take the Rocky Crags and Skyline Ridge. Attacking with two battalions, the Americans faced a Japanese force of 1000 men, fortified in caves, tombs, and tunnels.<sup>707</sup> Attacks with artillery, mortars, flame-throwers, and hand grenades were met with fierce counterattacks. The Japanese did not give up a single foot of ground, fighting until they were killed. On just the 19<sup>th</sup> of April the 3d Battalion, 32d Infantry had lost about one hundred men on Skyline Ridge. Two companies of the IJA 11<sup>th</sup> *Independent Infantry Battalion* had been annihilated and a Japanese company commander had committed suicide.<sup>708</sup>

**Combat Effectiveness - Intelligence Successes and Failures; Processing, Exploitation, Dissemination:** The Americans had very few detailed maps of the rugged terrain on Okinawa. Most were based on photography from aerial reconnaissance which often failed to reveal terrain features hidden under the clouds and foliage. The extent of the cave defensive system was therefore completely unknown until they encountered the Shuri outposts. On the evening of 17-18 April 45 the XXIV Corps Military Intelligence Service (MIS) team received a detailed topographical map found on the body of a dead Japanese artillery forward observer that showed all Japanese artillery and heavy mortar positions in their sector. Knowing that an American attack was planned for the next morning, the Nisei MIS interpreters worked straight through the night to translate the chart, finishing just two hours before the attack. The translated document was delivered to the corps assistant G-2 but the attack went on as scheduled. The attack failed; at no point did the Americans break through. The corps lost 720 dead, wounded, and missing in a single day. While this map was not exploited in time to affect the attack on the Shuri Line it was still valuable. It was quickly sent to Hawai'i where 12,000 copies were printed for issue to every unit on Okinawa and the information it provided may have contributed to the successful American counter-battery fires during the Japanese counterattack of 4-5 May 45.<sup>709</sup>

<sup>707</sup> Roy Appleman, James M. Burns, Russel A. Gugeler, John Stevens, *Okinawa: The Last Battle*, 220.

<sup>708</sup> *Ibid.*, 220, 224.

<sup>709</sup> James C. McNaughton, *Nisei Linguists: Japanese Americans in the Military Intelligence Service in World War II*, Center of Military History Publication 70-99-1, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2006), 359-361; Appleman et al., *Okinawa: The Last Battle*, 184-207; Stanley L. Falk, and Warren M. Tsuneishi, *MIS in the War against Japan: Personal Experiences Related at the 1993 MIS Capital Reunion*, "The Nisei Veteran: An American Patriot", (Vienna, VA: Japanese American Veterans Association of Washington, D.C., 1995), 54-57; Ted Tsukiyama, "The Battle of Okinawa", Hawaii Nisei Project, University of Hawaii, [nisei.hawaii.edu](http://nisei.hawaii.edu); Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces Pacific Ocean Areas, Observers Report: The Okinawa Operation, 15 Jun 45, Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 23-24.



*Figure 6-8: Attacking the Rocky Crags. (U.S. Army. United States Army in World War II, Pictorial Record: The War Against Japan, The U.S. Army Center of Military History, 322.).*

On 21 April 45 Sergeant Theodore Roosevelt MacDonnell, infuriated by the losses attacked three times up a twenty-foot embankment alone armed only with grenades. He then borrowed an automatic rifle to attack an enemy machine gun, but the weapon jammed. Returning to attack a fifth time with a carbine, he fired point-blank into a machine-gun position, killing the gunner and two enemy riflemen. He then hurled the machine gun and a captured mortar down the hillside. His actions inspired others to advance, and he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.<sup>710</sup> After four days of heroic effort, the first ring of the Shuri defense was broken. On the night of 23-24 April 45, the Japanese fired 4500 rounds of artillery as the remnants of the *11<sup>th</sup> Battalion* withdrew under the cover of fog. Within the maze of tunnels under Skyline Ridge the Americans found 500 dead Japanese and 250 rifles, 4 heavy machine guns, 19 light machine guns, 20 mortars, a 20-mm antiaircraft gun, and a 75-mm field gun.<sup>711</sup>

<sup>710</sup> *Ibid.*, 226, 248; Love, 351; Citation to accompany the award of the Distinguished Service Cross, Headquarters, Tenth U.S. Army, Headquarters, Tenth U.S. Army, General Orders No. 141 (1945).

<sup>711</sup> *Ibid.*, 227; Love, 352.



*Figure 6-9: A tank-infantry team breach a minefield as the approach enemy defenses, Okinawa, April 1945, (United States Army in World War II, Pictorial Record: The War Against Japan, The U.S. Army Center of Military History, 403.).*

### **6.2.2. Assaulting the Second Shuri Line.**

After penetrating the first ring of the Shuri defenses the 7<sup>th</sup> Division encountered the 500-yard-long Kochi Ridge. There they fought the fresh IJA 22<sup>d</sup> Regiment in what they regarded as the most resolute defense they faced on Okinawa. The masterfully emplaced reverse-slope defense was well integrated with nearby supporting positions and the excellent unit leaders kept the Japanese spirit high.<sup>712</sup> From 25 April to 10 May 45 elements of all three of the Division's regiments attacked Kochi Ridge without the usual artillery, tank, and air support. Rain had reduced tank mobility by turning the poor, narrow roads into slippery bogs and the opposing forces were too close to one another to avoid fratricide from indirect fire. The terrain limited the fighting to close range rifle and grenade battles with more hand-to-hand combat than the men of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division had seen in their three previous campaigns.<sup>713</sup>

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<sup>712</sup> Love, 360-361.

<sup>713</sup> Ibid., 368.

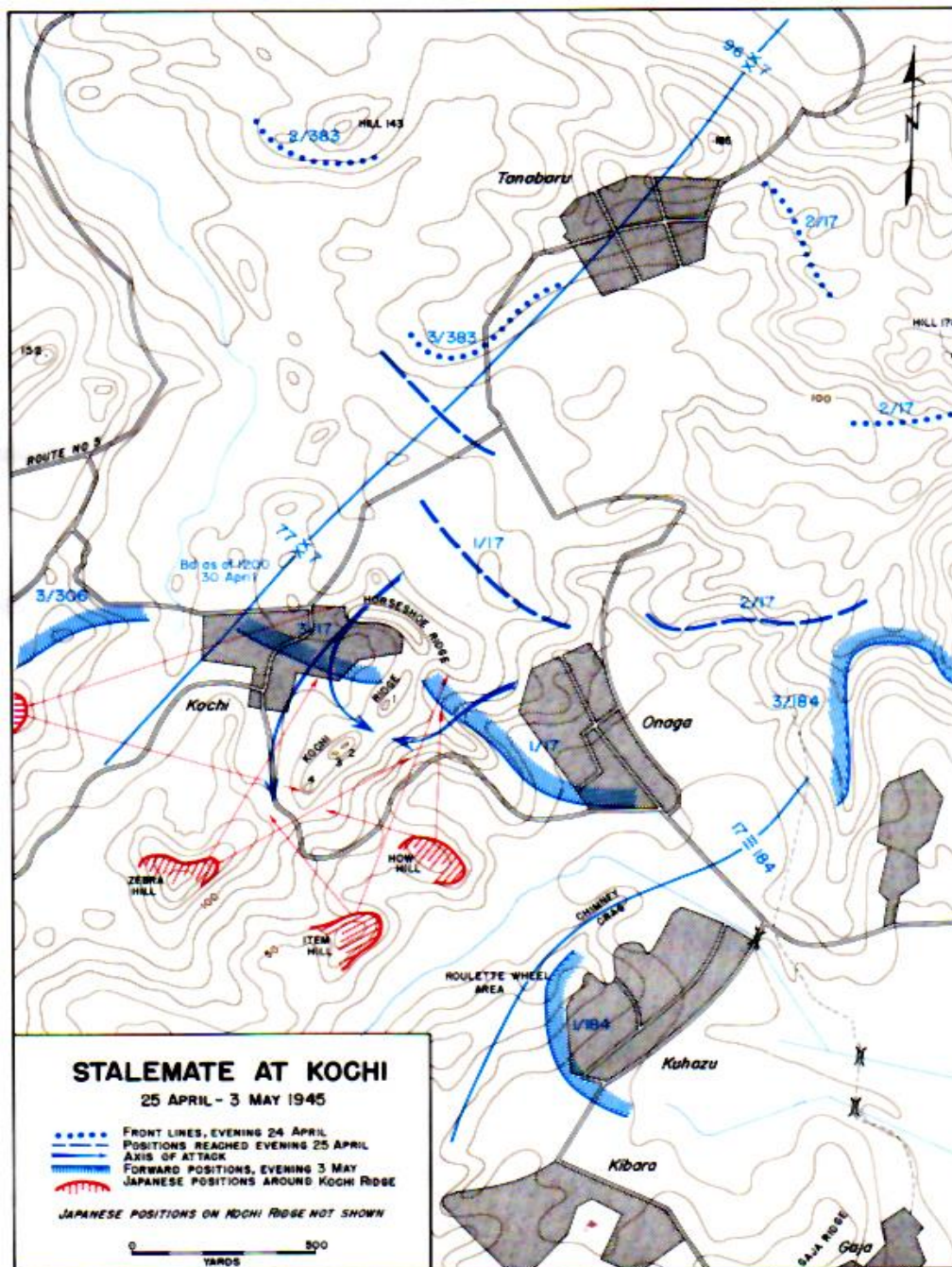


Figure 6-10: Stalemate at Kochi Ridge, 25 April – 3 May 45. ((Roy Appleman, James M. Burns, Russel A. Gugeler, John Stevens, *Okinawa: The Last Battle, The U.S. Army in World War II*, Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1948, 2000,).

**Combat Effectiveness - Caves versus Tanks:** Okinawa represents an interesting study in the role, influence, and adaptation of doctrine. Japanese island defense doctrine in previous campaigns mandated the annihilation of the attacker before he got ashore, and counterattacks to eliminate his toeholds. IJA units had used natural caves as supplemental defenses at Attu, Biak, Peleliu, Saipan, and Leyte but on Okinawa their cave warfare doctrine came into full maturity.<sup>714</sup> The Japanese built strong points to take full advantage of the rugged terrain creating a series of mutually supporting, concentric positions that fortified both the forward and reverse slopes of hills. Pillboxes and gun emplacements were built into the hills, escarpments, and caves, connected with elaborate tunnels, and skillfully camouflaged. The ancient Okinawan castles and tombs were also incorporated into the defenses. Overall, the *32d Army* built sixty miles of underground formations.<sup>715</sup>

When they landed the Americans did not know that the cave pillbox defense system existed, nor did they have doctrine for how to attack them.<sup>716</sup> Learning on the ground how to infiltrate small teams of men into the “dead spaces” between caves took a couple of weeks at a high cost in casualties. The American answer to these defenses was the tank-infantry team, using flame thrower tanks, supported by artillery. Mortars and artillery would suppress or obscure the Japanese fighting positions so that assault groups of tanks, riflemen, and demolition squads could creep up to point-blank range to attack the position with flame and explosives while fighting off the Japanese “close-quarters attack troops” who sought to destroy the tanks with their own demolitions, and drive off the American infantry with their machine guns and mortars.<sup>717</sup> The fighting became a duel between American infantry with a mobile, but vulnerable fortress (the tank) versus Japanese infantry within an immobile but nearly impregnable fortress (the cave).<sup>718</sup> This kind of toe-to-toe fighting requires indomitable courage to achieve victory. The side that yields first, even for a moment, usually loses.

On 30 April 45, while one platoon was preparing to advance, a Japanese counterattack killed two machine gunners, destroyed the gun, and wounded the platoon leader and most of the riflemen. Although himself wounded, Sergeant Alois Mand took command and killed eight enemy infiltrators with carbine fire. Out of ammunition, Sergeant Mand recovered a BAR from a wounded comrade and fought until the weapon jammed. He then reorganized the remainder of the section and with the few remaining riflemen held off the foe while the wounded were evacuated, and another platoon helped secure the hill.<sup>719</sup> Attempts to use supporting fires led to two friendly fire mishaps with artillery fire striking one company

<sup>714</sup> Appleman, et.al., *Okinawa: The Last Battle*, 64-68.

<sup>715</sup> Huber, 13; *Japanese Memorandum No. 135*, 49-50; Appleman et al., *Okinawa: The Last Battle*, 92-96.

<sup>716</sup> Huber, 65.

<sup>717</sup> Appleman, et.al., *Okinawa: The Last Battle*, 255-256; Huber, 41, 66, 68, 71-74.

<sup>718</sup> Huber, 66, 68.

<sup>719</sup> Citation to accompany the award of the Distinguished Service Cross, Headquarters, Tenth U.S. Army, General Orders No. 170 (1945).

and a Marine Corsair fighter plane attacking another unit. As a result, the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry suffered sixty casualties from friendly fire.<sup>720</sup>

### 6.2.3. The Japanese Counterattack, 4-5 May.

Meeting on the night of 2 May 45, General Ushijima's staff debated their defensive strategy. General Cho, the chief of staff, who was never in support of the chosen defensive course of action argued for the traditional IJA solution: an immediate counterattack, saying that it was time for a decisive blow against the Americans. The chief architect of the defensive strategy, Colonel Yahara, had faith in the defensive tactics and opposed the counter-offensive as premature. Most of the subordinate Japanese commanders were impatient with defensive fighting, seeing it as a battle of attrition that they were doomed to lose. Colonel Yahara was overruled, and General Ushijima ordered a full offensive on 4 May 45.<sup>721</sup> The IJA 24<sup>th</sup> Division was to make the main attack with 15,000 soldiers. This would be supported by all available artillery and coordinated with amphibious attacks on the beaches of both coasts behind American lines by several hundred men who were detached from their shipping engineer regiments and ordered not to return. Finally, the Japanese assault was to coincide with an attack by *kamikaze* aircraft and suicide boats against the American fleet.<sup>722</sup>

This was not to be a simple but desperate *banzai* charge as on Attu. The attacking units were given precise instructions with clear objectives. The efforts of the supporting artillery were planned to be well integrated with the infantry. Better knowledge of the terrain and accurate locations of the American units should allow the attackers to exploit weak points, especially that of the seam between the 7<sup>th</sup> Division and the 77<sup>th</sup> Division.<sup>723</sup>

The details of the maneuver and fires planning reflect that some IJA officers, like Colonel Yahara, were willing to recognize past mistakes and employ better methods and more sophisticated approaches but the overall strategic/tactical cultural bias to attack undermined both

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<sup>720</sup> Appleman, et.al., 269-272; Love, 368-369, 372.

<sup>721</sup> Appleman, et.al., 283.

<sup>722</sup> Appleman, et.al., 284.

<sup>723</sup> Appleman, et.al., 284; Wheelan, 162.



the overarching defensive strategy and the operational approach meant to ensure that tactical actions are not random in nature but united in the pursuit of the strategic objective.<sup>724</sup> The result was an ambivalent response to the attack order: "The time of the attack has finally come. I have my doubts as to whether this all-out offensive will succeed, but I will fight fiercely with the thought in mind that this war for the Empire will last 100 years."<sup>725</sup> The Japanese will to sacrifice soldiers in yet another risky attack represented a "romantic aspiration against reality and rosy doctrine against harsh fact".<sup>726</sup>

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<sup>724</sup> James Schneider, introduction to *The Evolution of Operational Art*, by Georgii Samoilovich Isserson, trans. Bruce Menning (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2013), XII; Thomas Brusino, "The Theory of Operational Art and Unified Land Operations," School of Advanced Military Studies Theoretical Paper, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, Summer 2012), 21.

Operational approach ensures that

<sup>725</sup> Appleman, et.al., 287; From a Japanese infantryman's diary, 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division G-2, Periodic Report Number 38, 8 May 45.

<sup>726</sup> Huber, *Japan's Battle of Okinawa*, 31, 83.

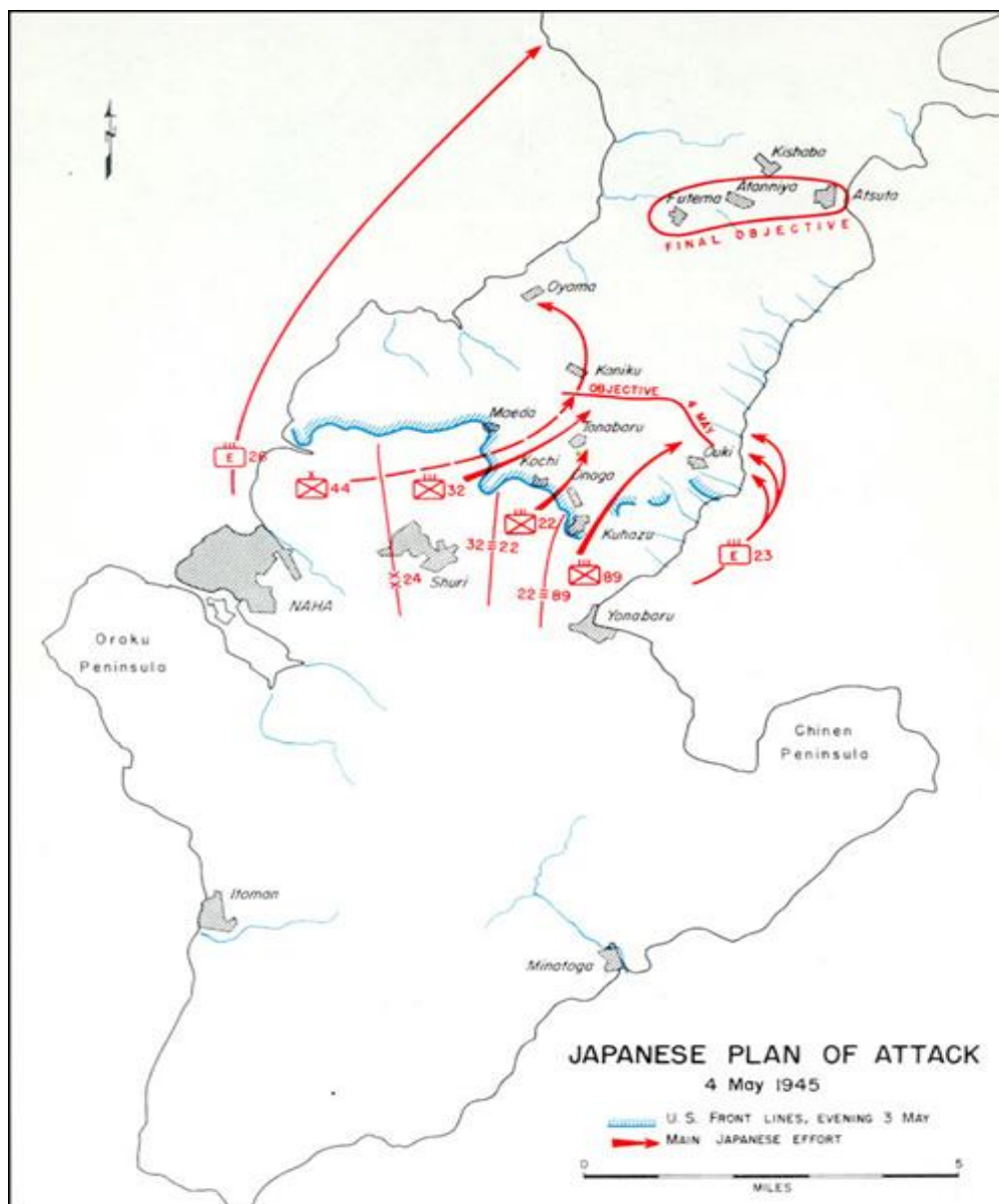


Figure 6-11: The Japanese Counteroffensive. (John Stevens, "Map No.37," last modified 2012, accessed 27 May 2022 at <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USA/USA-P-Okinawa/maps/USA-P-Okinawa-37.jpg>.)

**Combat Effectiveness – Battle Command and Group Psychology:** General Ushijima’s defense of Okinawa was predicated on the assumption that the Japanese could not defeat the Americans. The most that could be done was to delay the enemy and inflict the maximum number of casualties on him. Ironically, this course of action was taken in the context of the larger strategic culture that remained focused on achieving victory in one decisive offensive battle that would establish the conditions for a favorable peace settlement.<sup>727</sup> These conflicting goals resulted in the operational and tactical decisions that directed the Japanese troops to give the ultimate sacrifice of their lives to outlast the American’s will to fight. Making such pivotal decisions based on counterfactual thinking and biases seems like an example of cognitive dissonance. In 1959 Leon Festinger described this unique pathology as a situation involving conflicting attitudes, beliefs or behaviors which often gives rise to irrational and sometimes maladaptive behavior.<sup>728</sup>

The decision-making process whereby the *32d Army* chose to conduct their counteroffensive is a tableau of cognitive dissonance and group think. Seemingly forgetting that their strategy was to delay the Americans for as long as possible at the highest cost, the *32d Army* staff advocated for a counteroffensive. “Each soldier will kill at least one American devil...Advance even to the last man”<sup>729</sup> Even though their defense was succeeding as envisioned, General Cho argued that the Americans had the upper hand and the *32d Army* would eventually be destroyed. He felt they should wage an offensive while they still could. But their eventual defeat had been tacitly acknowledged all along. Nevertheless, Cho’s forceful personality overwhelmed the younger officers who enthusiastically agreed, especially since a superior was goading them to this response. It was rationalized that this was supported by IJA doctrine that “one Japanese division with a robust spirit of attack could defeat three Soviet divisions with superior equipment”.<sup>730</sup> There was an ingrained belief that aggressive attack would catch the enemy off guard, offset his advantage in fire power, and win the battle. This exaggerated belief in the effectiveness of the attack was in stark contrast to all experience, but most IJA officers lacked the intellectual framework to think about alternatives and implications; they were instead biased for action not analysis.<sup>731</sup>

Colonel Yahara argued for continuing the war of attrition and avoiding an offensive. Yahara pointed out that in modern warfare a force ratio of 3 to 1 was usually needed for successful attack. "To take the offensive with inferior forces ...is reckless and would lead to certain defeat," In that case, *32d Army's* reduced forces would be unable to hold Okinawa for a long period and thus delay the U.S. invasion of Japan. Ultimately, Cho declared that the consensus was in favor of the attacks and Ushijima gave his tacit approval. Yahara was coerced into ending his dissent. This example of Japanese battle command represented the Japanese societal characteristic of

<sup>727</sup> Appleman et al., 92–96.

<sup>728</sup> Leon Festinger, *An Introduction to the Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957), Retrieved 18 Jan 2022 from <https://www.panarchy.org/festinger/dissonance.html> .

<sup>729</sup> Appleman, et al., 286, 291; 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division G-2, Periodic Report Number 36, 6 May 45.

<sup>730</sup> Huber, 29-31.

<sup>731</sup> Ibid.; Edward Drea, *In the Service of the Emperor: Essays on the Imperial Japanese Army*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 70-74.

consensus-based decision making and submission to group think because maintaining group solidarity was considered a virtue.<sup>732</sup>

The Japanese fired more than 5000 artillery rounds against the 7<sup>th</sup> Division on the night of 3 - 4 May 45.<sup>733</sup> Nowhere else in the Pacific had the Division experienced such artillery and mortar fire. In the darkness the Japanese infantry crept forward to attack from close range, but the initial surprise that they achieved was short-lived. The veterans of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division had been anticipating a *banzai* charge for several days, in some cases quite eagerly. They knew that in such past events loss ratios heavily favored the Americans. In this case they would be fighting from protected positions while the enemy exposed themselves to advance.<sup>734</sup>



Figure 6-12: Japanese rocket fire in support of the 4-5 May 45 counteroffensive. (U.S. Army. Roy Appleman, James M. Burns, Russel A. Gugeler, John Stevens, *Okinawa: The Last Battle, The U.S. Army in World War II*, Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1948, 2000, 293.).

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<sup>732</sup> Huber, 29-31, 81-83.

<sup>733</sup> Appleman, et.al., 289.

<sup>734</sup> Love, 325.

**Combat Effectiveness – Integration of Fires:** A crucial element of the *32d Army's* defense was the integration of both artillery and mortars emplaced in the caves and tunnels.<sup>735</sup> The Japanese had three artillery regiments, a separate artillery battalion, one mortar regiment, and two light mortar battalions, comprising a force of 287 guns and 30 mortars of 75mm to 150mm caliber together with hundreds of 60mm mortars. This allowed the *32d Army* to bring to bear a volume of defensive fires never seen before in the Pacific War. On 23 April 45 the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division alone received more than 4500 rounds of high explosive shells in just six hours.<sup>736</sup>

Yet, despite this formidable force, well protected in their fortifications, the Japanese artillery could not bring decisive indirect fire to the fight. This was chiefly because their communications system did not enable responsive and agile fire support. Fire requests were sent by telephone and runners. Telephone wire was vulnerable to damage and runners could take up to six hours to deliver a fire request. The IJA did not employ a centralized fire direction center or use forward observers attached to infantry units and therefore could not start, stop, and shift fires in minutes like the Americans did.<sup>737</sup> The best that they could provide was pre-planned bombardments in support of either attack or defense that were unobserved or unobservable and could not be adjusted. And although many rounds were fired over time, they were not truly massed fires because of the fear of American counterbattery fire. Typically, a gun would fire a few rounds and then withdraw into a cave for safety before firing again. When they did remain exposed, the Japanese artillery suffered. During the 4 - 5 May counteroffensive 78 artillery pieces were destroyed by American counterbattery fire.<sup>738</sup>

Thus, night after night the Japanese fired harassing fire against the Americans. Day after day they sought to support the defending infantry, but they could not stop the American advance. Although they produced a high volume of fire on occasions like on the 23d of April, the Japanese generally achieved only light casualties and little damage, thus often inadvertently boosting American morale with their ineffective fire.<sup>739</sup>

Advancing stealthily under the cover of darkness and the supporting artillery barrage some units attacked the American positions directly and were driven off. Others moved around the American positions, avoiding, or missing them, but were then spotted in the open. A group of two thousand was observed by one American company commander who tried to call artillery on the enemy. When he reported the target to the 184<sup>th</sup> Infantry regimental command post, the response was one of elation, but he pointed out that there were two hundred Japanese just a hundred yards from the colonel's observation point aiming two 75mm howitzers at him at that very moment. Within a few moments' artillery, tank and machine gun fire rained down and the

<sup>735</sup> Appleman et al., *Okinawa: The Last Battle*, 92–96.

<sup>736</sup> Huber, 74-80; Love, 355.

<sup>737</sup> Huber, 77-79.

<sup>738</sup> Ibid.

<sup>739</sup> Love, 355.

Japanese scattered.<sup>740</sup> On the east coast the 7<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Troop spotted enemy boats offshore and fired on them. Only the broken remains of eight boats were found on the reef at dawn.

Other units were not attacked at all. The battalions on Kochi and Horseshoe Ridges and Hill 178 saw no action until daylight. Overall, the Japanese were driven back but remained in the open, flat ground exposed to mortar and machine gun fire.<sup>741</sup> At one point, carnival atmosphere developed as artillery and infantry attacked the broken and disorganized Japanese who reluctantly abandoned the attack. In the same way that the heavy but ineffective Japanese artillery barrages had boosted American morale, so too did the experience of having decimated this night attack with little loss strengthen American confidence and sustain their will to fight. By nightfall, the 7<sup>th</sup> Division's casualties were 26 killed against 1051 Japanese killed.<sup>742</sup>

The only bright spot for the Japanese was found by the *1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 32d Regiment* that had infiltrated through the gap on the 7<sup>th</sup> Division's flank. They were unseen at first, but as they progressed the Americans reported their movement but could not fire on them without endangering friendly forces. The Japanese attacked the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry's supply dump and motor pool at the base of the Tanabaru escarpment, mined the road and took up positions in the caves on the escarpment.<sup>743</sup>

This success owed largely to the decision of the battalion commander, Captain Ito Koichi to abandon the frontal attack he had been ordered to make in favor of infiltration into the American rear area. Ito had carefully reconnoitered the American positions at night and adjusted his orders in response.<sup>744</sup> Thus they had successfully penetrated 1500 meters but now they were isolated and unsupported. At dawn on 5 May 45 the 2d Battalion 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry counterattacked, first with just one company and then with a second company waging a furious two-day fight against Ito's 600 men.<sup>745</sup> On the night of 6 - 7 May 45, the 200 Japanese survivors were ordered

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<sup>740</sup> Love, 389.

<sup>741</sup> Ibid., 388-390.

<sup>742</sup> Ibid., 391-392.

<sup>743</sup> Love, 393; Appleman, et.al., 297.

<sup>744</sup> Huber, *Japan's Battle of Okinawa, April-June 1945*, 88-90.

<sup>745</sup> Wheelan, *Bloody Okinawa*, 165; Love, 393-396.

to slip away, taking refuge for the remainder of the battle in the caves of an isolated valley.<sup>746</sup> The 17th Infantry resumed the attack on Kochi Ridge from 7 to 10 May 45, at which time the 7<sup>th</sup> Division was sent into corps reserve after 40 days of continuous combat in which it had suffered more casualties than in the entire 110-day campaign on Leyte.<sup>747</sup>

**Combat Effectiveness and Battle Fatigue: "...flung into hell's own cesspool."<sup>748</sup>**

"Stress was the essential factor we had to cope with in combat, under small-arms fire, and in warding off infiltrators and raiders during sleepless, rainy nights for prolonged periods; but being shelled so frequently...seemed to increase the strain beyond that which many otherwise stable and hardened Marines could endure without mental or physical collapse. From my experience, of all the hardships and hazards the troops had to suffer, prolonged shell fire was more apt to break a man psychologically than anything else."<sup>749</sup>

The battle for Okinawa produced the heaviest American casualties of the Pacific war. By the end of May 1945, the two Marine divisions had suffered 1,718 killed, 8,852 wounded, and 101 missing in action. The four Army divisions fighting for two months on the Shuri front suffered 2,871 killed, 12,319 wounded, and 183 missing. Altogether, the XXIV Corps and the III Amphibious Corps had lost a total of 26,044 killed, wounded, or missing. This amounted to approximately one American killed for every ten Japanese killed.<sup>750</sup> Nonbattle or neuropsychiatric casualties were occurring at a higher rate on Okinawa than in any previous operation in the Pacific. Again, the two Marine divisions had 6,315 nonbattle casualties by the end of May 1945; the four Army divisions had 7,762 nonbattle casualties.<sup>751</sup> Overall, nonbattle casualties occurred at a higher level in the Pacific than in Europe because of the higher stresses of living in isolated, tropical environments for long periods.<sup>752</sup> The increase in "combat fatigue" cases on Okinawa was attributed to the rain and mud from which there was no protection or relief and the high volume of Japanese artillery and mortar fire. The fighting on Okinawa represented the first time that the Americans in the Pacific had experienced the quantity of artillery fire that was characteristic of the fighting in Europe. The stress of fighting a close-in battle with a fanatical foe all day in the rain and mud and then being shelled all night while maintaining constant vigilance against infiltrators and counterattacks placed the soldiers and Marines under enormous stress.

<sup>746</sup> Ibid.; Huber, 88-90.

<sup>747</sup> Love, 406-409; Appleman, et.al., 307-309.

<sup>748</sup> Eugene B. Sledge, *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa*. (Novato: Presidio Press, 2010), 278.

<sup>749</sup> Sledge, *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa*, 292.

<sup>750</sup> Appleman, et. al. *Okinawa: The Last Battle*, Chapter XV: The Fall of Shuri, 384; Tenth Army G-2 Periodic Report No. 67, 1 Jun 45; G-2 Summary, 1 Jun 45, in Tenth Army G-3 Journal, Message No. 5, 2 Jun 45; Tenth Army G-3 Periodic Report No. 67, 1 Jun 45.

<sup>751</sup> Appleman, et. al. *Okinawa: The Last Battle*, Chapter XV: The Fall of Shuri, 384-386.

<sup>752</sup> Stouffer, et. al., "Psychoneurotic Symptoms in the Army" *The American Soldier: Combat and Its Aftermath*, (John Wiley and Sons, 1965), 439-440, 444-445.

“The bodies lay pathetically just as they had been killed, half submerged in muck and water, rusting weapons still in hand. Everywhere lay Japanese corpses, killed in the fighting. Swarms of big flies hovered above them...For several feet around every corpse, maggots crawled about in the muck... To be under a barrage of prolonged shelling simply magnified all the terrible physical and emotional effects of one shell. To me, artillery was an invention of hell...To be killed by a bullet seemed so clean and surgical. But shells would not only tear and rip the body, they tortured one’s mind almost beyond the brink of sanity...I found it more difficult to go back each time we squared away our gear to move forward into the zone of terror... And it wasn’t just dread of death or pain, because most men felt somehow, they wouldn’t be killed... Each time we went up, I felt the sickening dread of fear itself and the revulsion at the ghastly scenes of pain and suffering among comrades that a survivor must witness. The increasing dread of going back into action obsessed me. It became the subject of the most tortuous and persistent of all the ghastly war nightmares that have haunted me for many, many years. The dream is always the same, going back up to the lines during the bloody month of May on Okinawa.”<sup>753</sup>

Three factors that bear on the causation of battle fatigue have been attributed to retaining the will to win in these situations. These are faith and trust in the command, self confidence in the soldiers’ training and readiness for combat, and unit and task cohesion.<sup>754</sup> Well trained units with high military knowledge, skills, and abilities, deep trust in the competence and capabilities of their leaders, and sincere affection and respect for their comrades combined with pride in the units’ accomplishments and their own individual contributions to the success of the mission show far greater resilience against battle fatigue.<sup>755</sup> Such units fight *for* each other as much as *against* the enemy. The 7<sup>th</sup> Division displayed such comradeship, and they had a conviction in victory born of each soldiers’ belief in his own competence, trust in his peers, and collective pride in the unit’s effectiveness. This is expressed in the comments of several veterans during interviews about Okinawa: “The willingness to keep fighting (was from) training, experience, and anxious to get the job done and go home.” Another who had previously fought on Guadalcanal and Bougainville, rising from private to lieutenant believed his personal training and experience helped him to survive and lead and that the soldiers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division who he joined as a replacement officer “were a sound, well trained and experienced group...(they) had the ability to fight all day and take heavy artillery fire at night.”<sup>756</sup>

<sup>753</sup> Eugene B. Sledge, *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa*, (Novato: Presidio Press, 2010), 94, 263, 277-278.

<sup>754</sup> Todd C. Helmus and Russell W. Glenn, “The Lessons of War: The Causations of Battle Fatigue”, *Steeling the Mind: Combat Stress Reactions and Their Implications for Urban Warfare*, (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2005), 26-28.

<sup>755</sup> Ibid.

<sup>756</sup> Robert McArthur, “Correspondence from Gerald Astor Regarding Experiences During the Fight for Okinawa”, Digital Archives, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center (USAHEC digital archives, 2), August 20, 1994, <https://emu.usahec.org/alma/multimedia/623943/20181527MNBT989106711F099341I004.pdf>; John Fitzgerald, “Correspondence from Gerald Astor Regarding Experiences During the Fight for Okinawa”, Digital Archives, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center (USAHEC digital archives, 3-4), August 24, 1994, <https://emu.usahec.org/alma/multimedia/967717/20181527MN000444.pdf>



#### 6.2.4. Conquest of the Shuri Line.

Beginning 12 May 45 replacements joined the division and thereafter they conducted weapons firing, combat lessons training, and patrolling to orient and integrate the new men.<sup>757</sup> On 21-22 May the 7<sup>th</sup> Division conducted a night attack towards Yonabaru by the 184<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. They completely surprised the Japanese who had not expected a night attack and in two rainy days they gained over 2000 yards.<sup>758</sup> The 32d Infantry Regiment joined in the action on 23 May to conduct an envelopment of the Japanese right flank, but the constant rain slowed progress and the supporting tanks were immobilized in the mud. The Japanese counterattacked at night to re-take Yonabaru but failed and were forced to withdraw.<sup>759</sup>

The last 10 days of May 1945 saw a torrential downpour. Over an inch of rain fell each day with three and a half inches on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May alone. The narrow dirt roads and trails turned into impassable quagmires and the American tanks continued to be neutralized. The 32d Infantry tried to break the enemy resistance without them, but in a fierce encounter it was thrown back with heavy casualties. The fighting became so intense and confused that at one point five Japanese soldiers broke through the American lines and attacked the only remaining medic in one company as he was treating wounded men in an exposed forward area. Sergeant William Goodman killed all five Japanese with a pistol and then protected the wounded until they were evacuated.<sup>760</sup> Finally, from 28 - 31 May the American attack gained two more miles and Shuri was almost enveloped. At this point the *32d Army* decided to retreat south.<sup>761</sup>

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<sup>757</sup> Love, 410.

<sup>758</sup> *Ibid.*, 411.

<sup>759</sup> Appleman, et.al., 379, 381.

<sup>760</sup> *Ibid.*, 381-382.

<sup>761</sup> *Ibid.*, 382, 393.

### 6.2.5. Night Infiltration Attack of Yaeju Dake.

The Japanese assessment of the Americans was, “The enemy generally fires (its guns) during the night, but very seldom takes offensive action.”<sup>762</sup> This was accurate but it was about to change. The Americans were adapting and evolving their tactics. In mid-April 45 the 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division surprised the Japanese with a successful night attack. These were followed by others by the 77<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, the 96<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, and the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in May 45 with mixed successes.<sup>763</sup> As the rainy weather had slowed advances to a mere 300 yards per day, the 7<sup>th</sup> Division decided to take the Yaeju Dake escarpment in a daring night infiltration attack. The Yaeju Dake was a cliff and ridgeline that anchored the Kiyon defensive line from which any American movement below was easily observed and quickly fired upon.<sup>764</sup>

The regimental commander, Colonel Pachler sought to negate the Japanese observation and fields of fire from the 170-foot-tall coral escarpment by infiltrating at night to take the high ground while the enemy was sheltering in his protective caves. Extensive reconnaissance of the trails, minefields, and known cave positions was followed by meticulous planning, and coordination of the scheme of maneuver. The attack emphasized stealth and surprise, with no artillery preparation. Company A took a path directly up the face of the cliff. Company B had to travel south to a break in the escarpment face and then, once on the high ground, turn right. The 3d Battalion was to support by attacking the southeast end of the escarpment.<sup>765</sup>

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<sup>762</sup> Wheelan, *Bloody Okinawa*, 128.

<sup>763</sup> Appleman, et.al., 333-338.

<sup>764</sup> Appleman, et.al., 445.

<sup>765</sup> Appleman, et.al., 445-446.



*Figure 6-13: Night attack on Yaeju Dake by the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry on 12 June 45. Company A went up the path in the center and occupied the coral ridges in center. Company B moved up the slope to the left and swung back to the right to take the top of the escarpment. Note the lack of cover and concealment and the deceptively benign appearance of the heavily defended hill. (Roy Appleman, James M. Burns, Russel A. Gugeler, John Stevens, Okinawa: The Last Battle, The U.S. Army in World War II, Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1948, 2000, 448.).*

Ever mindful of the possibility of confusion and disarray in the dark, Colonel Pachler ensured that all the troops were briefed on the details. There was some apprehension the night before the attack when the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division G-2 reported interception of an enemy radio message which said, "Prepare to support the attack at 2300." and another which said, "If there are any volunteers for the suicide penetration, report them before the contact which is to be made one hour from now." That night the Japanese fired an extremely heavy artillery concentration in support of an attack which was stopped by the 32d Infantry.<sup>766</sup>

The 17th Infantry moved out silently at 0400 hours, 12 June 45 and, as if it had been planned, a heavy fog settled over southern Okinawa, providing extra concealment without obscuring their route. Unobserved, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was in place by 0530 hours without a shot being fired. The 3d Battalion also reached its' objective without a fight and taking further

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<sup>766</sup> Ibid.

advantage of the fog, took another nearby small hill. As the sun rose, the Japanese started to move back into positions now occupied by the Americans. Between 0600 and 0800 hours both battalions easily fought off the Japanese in the culmination of a masterfully executed night attack. The Japanese defenders were taken completely by surprise and a significant terrain feature had been captured with minimal loss to the attacking force.<sup>767</sup> Private First-Class Roland Lea, a new replacement described his experience thus:

...In the later hours of darkness my company and others crossed the valley...The escarpment was scaled with such stealth that not a shot was fired. The Japs awakened with dawn's light (sic) and we had a day in killing a surprised enemy. A real turkey shoot. This firefight will always remain vividly in my mind.<sup>768</sup>

**Sustaining the Will to Fight – American Technological Improvements:** The tank-infantry team that was the American answer to the Japanese cave and tunnel defense system found success in the use of a new weapon, the armored flame thrower; an M4 Sherman tank fitted to shoot napalm up to 125 yards. Using flames and demolitions to assault and seal the caves in a “blowtorch and corkscrew” method boosted U.S. morale because of its effectiveness and its psychological effect on the enemy. A captured Japanese commander of an antitank battalion stated that he did not see how any defense line could not be penetrated with this combination of weapon and tactics.<sup>769</sup>

Another weapon introduced on Okinawa in limited numbers was the infrared-sight equipped T3 carbine. Developed for the sole-purpose of thwarting Japanese night infiltration a soldier could see in the dark to a range of about 70 yards. Although heavy and bulky, when used in a defensive position, the Americans could see and engage Japanese soldiers creeping forward in the dark. These carbines were a welcome tool to counter the danger of the legendary Japanese night attack, and some credited that up to thirty percent of the total Japanese casualties inflicted in the first weeks of action on Okinawa were due to the infrared scopes.<sup>770</sup>

<sup>767</sup> Appleman, et.al.; 447-449.

<sup>768</sup> PFC Roland Lea, B/1-17IN, “Correspondence from Gerald Astor Regarding Experiences During the Fight for Okinawa”, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, undated, (USAHEC digital archives, 5).  
<https://emu.usahec.org/alma/multimedia/623930/20181527MNBT989106711F099340I003.pdf>

<sup>769</sup> Appleman, et. al.; 255-256.

<sup>770</sup> Robert Rush, *GI: The U.S. Infantryman In World War II*, (Wellingborough: Osprey Publishing Ltd, 2003), 86-87.

### 6.3. The Death of the IJA 32d Army.

From 12 to 21 June 45 the American forces steadily compressed the remaining Japanese defenders, collapsing the flanks of the overall defense. The depleted Japanese fought on bravely with fewer weapons and ammunition now being wielded by combat support and service troops.<sup>771</sup> On 21 June 45 the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division found and attacked the guard posts of the 32d Army headquarters hidden inside Hill 89. With no forces left to command the brigade and division staff officers were ordered to conduct “honorably death” attacks. General Cho however ordered that the 32d Army staff was to refrain from suicidal actions. Instead, they should escape and wage guerilla warfare. Some did so while others remained out of loyalty to the commanders. Thus, it was that the ritual suicides of General Ushijima and General Cho were witnessed by these survivors and later reported to the Americans.<sup>772</sup> Colonel Yahara summarized the situation thus: “Our 32nd Army was now faced with this situation. Must one hundred thousand soldiers die because of tradition? From this point on it was but a battle to kill the remaining Japanese soldiers for nothing. We could cause the enemy little damage; they could walk freely on the field of battle. The war of attrition was over, and we would simply be asking the enemy to use this formidable power to kill us all.”<sup>773</sup>

The reason that we have so much detail on the Japanese side of the Okinawa battle is because Colonel Yahara obeyed his final orders from General Cho to escape and convey to IGHQ the lessons learned to prepare for what they presumed would be a fight to the death on the home islands. After the war, an embittered Yahara, having borne the brunt of postwar contempt from other IJA veterans for not having committed *seppuku*, wrote that the Japanese thus lacked a consistent war plan, “tormented by the strategic thinkers who dreamed of air war priorities – not to mention absurd suicide tactics...a futile illusion as the war drew to a close.”<sup>774</sup>

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<sup>771</sup> Huber, 109-111.

<sup>772</sup> Huber, 112-115.

<sup>773</sup> Yahara, Hiromichi, *The Battle for Okinawa*, translated by Roger Pineau and Uehara Masatoshi, with an introduction and commentary by Frank B. Gibney, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1995), 137-138.

<sup>774</sup> Thomas N. Huber, *Japan's Battle of Okinawa, April-June 1945*, Leavenworth Papers Number 18, Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1990, 112-115; Yahara, Hiromichi, *The Battle for Okinawa*, translated by Roger Pineau and Uehara Masatoshi, with an introduction and commentary by Frank B. Gibney, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1995), 192-192, 196-197.

The 7th Division searched for Japanese and Okinawans in hiding and made direct appeals for their surrender using leaflets, loudspeakers, and other surrendered soldiers. Many committed suicides but increasingly, surrender became the chosen course. During the first seventy days of the battle Tenth Army captured only four Japanese per day on average. On 19 June 45, 343 surrendered and on 20 June 45, 977 Japanese surrendered. Eventually, the number reached 7400.<sup>775</sup>



*Figure 6-14: Japanese soldiers emerge from a cave to surrender to the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. (U.S. Army. United States Army in World War II, Pictorial Record, The War Against Japan, U.S. Army Center of Military History, 405.).*

Captain Ito, who had led the only successful action of the 4 - 5 May counteroffensive, held out in caves until 22 Aug 45 when he responded to an approach by a Japanese linguist officer from the 7th Division who told him the war was over. He then listened to Emperor Hirohito's radio message and spoke directly with Colonel Yahara Hiromichi, the 32d Army chief of operations who confirmed to him that the war was over. Ito then surrendered 400 soldiers and 105 civilians on 29 Aug 45 and convinced another 300 troops to surrender as well.<sup>776</sup>

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<sup>775</sup> Appleman, et.al., 465; Huber, 116.

<sup>776</sup> Wheelan, 339.

#### 6.4. Strategic Culture and “*Yamato damashii*”.

“I wondered whether the army's leaders really understood the importance of modern weapons. They thought Japan could win a war solely by reliance on spiritual strength.”<sup>777</sup>

The term *yamato-damashii* (sometimes also expressed as, *yamato-gokoro* or “Japanese heart/mind”) is a compound of the ancient word for the Japanese people and the word for “spirit” and/or “heart” ergo, the Japanese spirit. Its genesis was a Heian era (794 CE-1185 CE) philosophical effort to describe and assert a superior “Japanese Way” as distinct from Chinese culture and the influences of Confucianism and Buddhism.<sup>778</sup> *Yamato-damashii* extols certain qualities and virtues held to be unique to the Japanese people. These national spiritual qualities included being brave, loyal, industrious, and obedient. As nationalism and militarism rose in Japan in the 1920s and 1930s *yamato-damashii* expressed a specific nationalistic ideology that propagandists used to build and strengthen national identity in the assertion of imperialism.<sup>779</sup>

The Japanese obsession to dominate Asia began in the early years of the Meiji Restoration. The dogma that Japanese military and technological superiority was a natural consequence of their innate spiritual and racial superiority contributed to the belief that they stood at the apex of the hierarchy of Asian nations and peoples and were thus entitled to rule them all. This became a core element of their strategic culture.<sup>780</sup> A secret Japanese government report created in 1943 outlines the theories, themes, and rationale for Imperial Japan’s policy of racial superiority. Titled, “*An Investigation of Global Policy with the Yamato Race as Nucleus*” (*Yamato Minzoku wo Chūkaku to suru Sekai Seisaku no Kentō*), the document mirrored contemporary Nazi theories on race but took a Confucian approach to its themes on colonization

<sup>777</sup> Alvin D. Coox, *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, Volume II*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 1025.

<sup>778</sup> David Dilworth, *Guiding Principles of Interpretation in Watsuji Tetsuro's 'History of Japanese Ethical Thought': With Particular Reference to the Tension between the Sonno and Bushido Traditions*, 102-109, <https://nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/nfile/2066>

<sup>779</sup> Yonezawa Miyuki; edited by Paul Spickard, *Race and Nation: Ethnic Systems in the Modern World*, (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), 126-127.

<sup>780</sup> Forrest E. Morgan, *Compellence and the Strategic Culture of Imperial Japan: Implications for Coercive Diplomacy in the Twenty-First Century*, (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 174.

and imperialism by stressing that the other peoples of Asia should naturally conform to a hierarchy that placed the Japanese at the top with all others in their “proper place”.<sup>781</sup> In this patriarchal family metaphor, other Asians were the “children” of the Japanese, who as the racially superior people were destined to rule. Nationalists syncretized the *yamato-damashii* philosophy with the myth of the founding of the nation and the prestige of the emperor to create the national identity of Japan as a sacred land, and a special people with a special spirit. This was the ideological and psychological motivation for the Japanese in the Pacific War; a racially motivated war to ensure “living space” for the Japanese and to secure their political, economic, and cultural dominance.<sup>782</sup>

*Yamato-damashii* expressed a strong consciousness of how special it was to be Japanese, having 'superior Japanese spirituality unequaled in any other country', that thus required 'a pure mind to render good service to the Japanese nation'.<sup>783</sup> Philosophically, *yamato-damashii* encouraged belief in Japanese racial superiority to mobilize support for Japan's ultra-nationalist ideology and to justify its purported destiny to rule Asia.<sup>784</sup> Knowing that Japan's success as an empire required the absolute commitment of the people, the Imperial Army sponsored a series of pamphlets promoting the concepts of *kokutai* (the national polity), *kogun* (the emperor's army), and *yamato-damashii*. They persuaded soldiers and civilians alike to place unquestioning faith in their leaders and to trust in the invincibility of the army and navy, inspiring greater levels of devotion and sacrifice as the Pacific War expanded.<sup>785</sup> Thus, *yamato-damashii* weaponized racism and a sacrificial spirit for the sake of the nation as the essential spiritual weapon wielded by the Imperial Japanese Army.<sup>786</sup>

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<sup>781</sup> John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986). 263-264.

<sup>782</sup> Dower, 266-268; Yonezawa, 126-127.

<sup>783</sup> Robert Lee, “The Individuation of the Self in Japanese History.” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 4, no. 1 (1977): 5–39. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30233128>.

<sup>784</sup> Gideon Fujiwara, and Peter Nosco, "The Kokugaku (Native Japan Studies) School", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/kokugaku-school/>.  
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kokugaku-school/>

<sup>785</sup> Forrest E. Morgan, *Compellence and the Strategic Culture of Imperial Japan*, 129; James B. Crowley, *Japan's Quest for Autonomy: National Security and Foreign Policy, 1930-1938*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 202.

<sup>786</sup> Meirion and Susie Harris. *Soldiers of the Sun. The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army*. (New York: Random House, Inc., 1991), 325.



## 6.5. The Power and Limitations of Fighting Spirit.

The Imperial Japanese Army wrestled with a dilemma throughout the Pacific War: how to overcome their deficient military capability? Their answer was that their spiritual superiority was a power that would overcome the modern firepower and mechanization that they lacked. Despite the mounting evidence to the contrary this dogma was perpetuated until the end of the war. One Japanese reservist was astonished by the sentiment, “that lack of equipment gave us Japanese a chance to demonstrate our superior spirit and valor...Leaders totally ignorant of the scientific and mechanical excellence of the enemy and their weapons praised the waste of priceless human lives for the sake of the cause.”<sup>787</sup>

Nevertheless, both the Japanese and the Americans believed in the potential power of elusive concepts like the ‘will to fight’ and the ‘will to win’. The Americans never assumed that victory would come from mere numerical superiority, knowing that valor and fighting spirit were also essential. The Japanese denied that there was an American fighting spirit and believed they lacked the will to win. Americans were believed to be “selfish and egoistic”, and they regarded America as “a decadent nation in which pacifism and isolationism practically ruled...”<sup>788</sup> The Japanese fervently believed that the unique national qualities expressed in *yamato-damashii* would defeat the technologically strong but spiritually soft Americans.<sup>789</sup>

The soldiers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division consistently repudiated this ethnocentric contempt. The Division approached Okinawa with mixed feelings. For the new soldiers there was eagerness to get into the fight. For the veterans of Attu, Kwajalein, and Leyte there was sober acceptance of what they knew would be a tough fight but an essential step on the way to the final victory. They knew that they could handle the job and were determined to win.<sup>790</sup> This prompts the question: Is there an American fighting spirit? If there is, how would one describe it? I believe that the following is a good expression of the American fighting spirit:

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<sup>787</sup> Coox, 1082-1083.

<sup>788</sup> Dower, 260; Gordon W. Prange, *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981), 517.

<sup>789</sup> Jeffrey Record, “*Japan’s Decision for War in 1941: Some Enduring Lessons*”, U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle, PA February 2009, viii.

<sup>790</sup> Love, 290-291.

*Americans love to fight. All real Americans love the sting and clash of battle...Americans play to win all the time...The very thought of losing is hateful to Americans. Battle is the most significant competition in which a man can indulge. It brings out all that is best and it removes all that is base...An army is a team. It lives, eats, sleeps, and fights as a team. This individual hero stuff is bullshit. The bilious bastards who write that stuff for the Saturday Evening Post don't know any more about real battle than they do about fucking. And we have the best team...the best spirit and the best men in the world...Sure, we all want to go home. We want to get this war over with...The quickest way to get it over with is to get the bastards who started it...The quicker they are whipped, the quicker we go home. The shortest way home is through Berlin and Tokyo.<sup>791</sup>*

Patton described an American fighting spirit characterized by aggressiveness, team action, and selfless service. He affirmed the collective American faith in the righteousness of their cause, the soldier's conviction that his job was worthwhile, and their confidence in eventual victory.<sup>792</sup> Philosophically, he acknowledged that the romantic notion of "*Dulce et decorum est, Pro patria mori*" no longer motivated American soldiers. Instead, they recognized the bitter truth of what Wilfrid Owen, called "The old Lie" when he said:

"My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est."<sup>793</sup>

For the Japanese, fighting a hemispheric war of attrition but thinking that a single decisive battle would result in victory because their innate "spiritual superiority" would compensate for their materiel inferiority, represents a profound conflict in beliefs and behaviors juxtaposed with flawed interpretation of the evidence to justify seemingly irrational decisions. The Americans had a will to fight and a will to win, but they rejected needless human sacrifice as a substitute for competent doctrine, logical strategy, effective leadership, and modern firepower.

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<sup>791</sup> Terry Brighton, *Patton, Montgomery, Rommel: Masters of War*, (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2009), 262-265. "Patton's Speech to the Third Army" was a series of speeches given to the divisions of 3d Army between February and June 1944.

<sup>792</sup> Rose, Arnold. "Bases of American Military Morale in World War II." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (1945): 412-413. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2745554>.

<sup>793</sup> Wilfrid Owen, "Dulce Et Decorum Est", Viking Press, 1921.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46560/dulce-et-decorum-est>. The Latin phrase is from the Roman poet Horace, The Odes, III.2.13: "It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country."

The Americans did not start the war with all these advantages but their will to win motivated the creation of a force that fully embodied these attributes.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion.

“In the changing of the times, they were like autumn lightning, a thing out of season, an empty promise of rain that would fall unheeded on fields already bare.”<sup>794</sup>

### 7.1. Introduction.

As historians have explored the question of how nations field and operate effective fighting forces there has been a bias towards technology and mechanization as the chief explanatory factors in modern warfare. The predominant focus of military history in the last 250 years has been on the military capabilities and technologies of the great powers of Western Europe and North America.<sup>795</sup> This military power analysis approach is perhaps best epitomized by John Keegan’s *The Face of Battle* where he analyzed the fighting at Agincourt (1415), Waterloo (1815), and the Somme (1916) to study the battles through the effects of the weaponry. Keegan showed us the soldiers “faces” as they reacted in battle to various weapons, the lance and the long bow, the sword and musket, and poison gas and machine guns. Keegan said that it was, “...my purpose to demonstrate...what warfare...of hand, single-missile, and multiple-missile weapons was (and is) like and to suggest how and why men...face these weapons...”<sup>796</sup>

Other examples include Theodore Ropp’s *War in the Modern World* (1962), Michael Howard’s *Studies in War and Peace* (1970), and Gordon Turner’s *A History of Military Affairs in Western Society Since the Eighteenth Century* (1956). Some historians have focused specifically on the weapons, organization, and technology of war to argue that operational history reflects the clear influence of technological determinants, particularly in the twentieth century.<sup>797</sup> For instances of this interpretation there are, S.T. Possony and J.E. Pournelle’s, *The Strategy of Technology: Winning the Decisive War* (1970), and Martin van Creveld’s,

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<sup>794</sup> Dave Lowry, *Autumn Lightning: The Education of an American Samurai*, (Boston and London: Shambhala, 1985), 201. Quoting Abe Shosaburo, a teacher of the *Yagyū Shinkage* school of swordsmanship, reflecting on the melancholy of the fate of the swordsmen who met their deaths in the Meiji Restoration.

<sup>795</sup> Jeremy Black, *Rethinking Military History*, (New York: Routledge, 2004), ix, x, xi, 4, 8-9; Jeffrey J. Clarke, Chapter 6, “World Military History, 1786-1945”, “A Guide to the Study and Use of Military History”, John Jessup, Jr. and Robert W. Coakley, editors, Center of Military History, Washington D.C., 1988, 117-138.

<sup>796</sup> John Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, (New York: The Viking Press, 1976), 78.

<sup>797</sup> Jeremy Black, *Rethinking Military History*, 8-9, 11.

*Technology and War: From 2000 BC to the Present* (1989), wherein he declares, “every part of technology affects war.”<sup>798</sup> This approach becomes more pronounced when discussing the technological advances in air and naval warfare and the countermeasures developed against them during the Second World War, such as in Lee Kennett’s, *A History of Strategic Bombing* (1982), V. E. Tarrant’s, *The U-Boat Offensive, 1914-1945* (1989), and Ian Hogg’s, *The Weapons That Changed the World*, (1986). These authors have strongly influenced military professional thinking that weapons alone can decide the course of battle or create war-winning breakthroughs. “From ancient times when the Bronze Age superseded the copper only to fall to the iron, technological superiority has most often provided the margin for victory.”<sup>799</sup>

This focus on the operational history of military technology ignores the fact that war is a human activity, saturated with social, political, and psychological influences that intertwine with technology.<sup>800</sup> The narrow, weapon and battle centered approach that dominates misses an opportunity for more complex interpretations and thus a more profound understanding of warfare.<sup>801</sup> Beliefs and behaviors concerning violence and war are culturally constructed, and the meanings of victory, defeat, and suffering vary considerably. Norms concerning the appropriate use of force, acceptable levels of risk, and the willingness to accept casualties differ between cultures. Comparing the strategic and tactical cultures of competing states and their militaries, especially their goals, social contexts, ethos, and practices reveals a more nuanced view of combat effectiveness than a straightforward correlation of forces and means formula alone.<sup>802</sup>

It is relatively easier, and has been far more common, to assess historical combat effectiveness by taking a functional/technological approach that measures the relative capabilities of warring nations and militaries by comparing the quantity and quality of their weapons, and their proficiency in their use. The simple belief is that the side that can launch the greatest number of projectiles has the best chance of winning. However, this assumes that there

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<sup>798</sup> Barton C. Hacker, "Military Institutions, Weapons, and Social Change: Toward a New History of Military Technology." *Technology and Culture* 35.4 (1994): 768–834; Jeffrey J. Clarke, “World Military History”, 117, 129-130; Marin van Creveld, *Technology and War: From 2000 BC to the Present* (New York: Free Press, 1989), 311.

<sup>799</sup> Hacker, 129-130; Alan L. Gropman, "Analysis by Hyperbole," *Air University Quarterly Review*, September-October 1983, 91.

<sup>800</sup> Hacker, 774.

<sup>801</sup> Jeremy Black, *Rethinking Military History*, (New York: Routledge, 2004), ix, x, xi, 4, 8-9.

<sup>802</sup> *Ibid.*

is a universal scale of technological capacity or proficiency that can be quantified, and that combat effectiveness is not affected by any other factors.<sup>803</sup>

There is no consensus on how to define combat effectiveness nor of how to evaluate historical examples of combat effectiveness. Some have claimed that unit combat effectiveness can be mathematically represented by the attritional effects of its offensive firepower, some by the ability of a unit to accomplish its mission to advance or to deny the enemy's advance and to cause casualties greater than its own losses, while others judge by their willingness to engage the enemy.<sup>804</sup> It has been conceded that overall studies so far "have been based on a measurement of casualty effectiveness, but casualty effectiveness is an outcome...we have no means of directly measuring combat effectiveness."<sup>805</sup>

Peter Mansoor has offered a forthright definition of combat effectiveness as the "ability of a military organization to achieve its assigned missions with the least expenditure of resources...in the shortest amount of time."<sup>806</sup> He explains: "since war involves the vagaries of human behavior under extreme stress, accurate quantification of combat effectiveness is not possible, but it is possible to examine successful military organizations to determine what makes them work, for in the end, success in war is the only standard by which to judge military organizations."<sup>807</sup> This argument that warfare is more "art" than "science" and that the historical analysis of mission accomplishment is arguably the most straightforward and objective evaluation of a force's effectiveness forms the foundation of this paper's purpose and methodology.

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<sup>803</sup> Jeremy Black, *Rethinking Military History*, (New York: Routledge, 2004) 232-235. Jeremy Black, *War and the Cultural Turn*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), 43; H. Löfstedt, 'Duels of Systems and Forces' in B. Boos-Bavnbek and J. Høystrup (eds), *Mathematics and War* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2003), 252; J.F.C. Fuller, 1915 letter to his mother, 18 Aug. 1915, Fuller papers, IV/3/155., quoted by Jeremy Black, *Rethinking Military History*, 104.

<sup>804</sup> Kirstin Braithwaite, "Effective in battle: conceptualizing soldiers' combat effectiveness", *Defence Studies*, (Oxfordshire: Routledge), 18 (1) 2018. 1-18; Christopher A. Lawrence, "Measuring Human Factors in Combat: Modern Wars.", *War by Numbers: Understanding Conventional Combat*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 49-59.

<sup>805</sup> Lawrence, 22.

<sup>806</sup> Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe*, 2-3.

<sup>807</sup> Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe*, 2-3.

I contend that strategic culture was as important to the outcomes of the Pacific War as the imbalance of power. American industrial capacity and sheer numerical superiority were not solely responsible for the triumph of the American military over its allegedly qualitatively superior Axis foes. The battle performance of 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division illustrates the decisive importance of willpower. Will to win is the bedrock upon which military success is founded. Effective weapons and equipment are vital to success, but they are only one element of combat effectiveness. American forces, fighting as cohesive teams, were driven by a fierce will to win that gave them immense combat effectiveness.

## 7.2. Strategic Culture.

The use of culture as a lens through which to view war has a long lineage. Thucydides recorded that both the Athenians and the Spartans linked the capabilities of their militaries to the character of their state.<sup>808</sup> In choosing the concept of culture as an analytical approach I recognize that many definitions contend and that inferring or even implying connections or causation with historical events is challenging. I approach it from the belief that war is a form of cultural activity and that as such, culture can shape how militaries develop a command structure, adopt technologies, or implement their strategy and tactics. Even if you cannot make a case for a causal relationship between concepts and phenomena, being aware of cultural values provides greater historical context.<sup>809</sup>

For this work I accept the definition that “strategic culture exists as an integrated system of shared symbols, values, behaviors, and traditions that works through commonly understood decision-making processes that are shaped or influenced by societal perceptions and preferences, which thus informs and influences how decision-makers envision and respond to the strategic environment.”<sup>810</sup>

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<sup>808</sup> Robert B. Strassler. Ed., *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to The Peloponnesian War*, (New York: Free Press, 1996), 45-46, 81-82.

<sup>809</sup> James W. Cook, Lawrence B. Glickman, *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History: Past, Present, and Future*, edited by: James W. Cook, Lawrence B. Glickman, Michael O'Malley (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 16-21, 30-38; Jeremy Black, *War and the Cultural Turn*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), vii, 53, 141).

<sup>810</sup> Forrest E. Morgan, *Compellence and the Strategic Culture of Imperial Japan: Implications for Coercive Diplomacy in the Twenty-First Century*, (Westport and London: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 28; See also Miriam

Taking strategic culture as both a descriptive and analytic term for historical analysis of the combat effectiveness of American and Japanese forces in World War II, comparing their respective beliefs and modes of behavior will illustrate how it shaped their objectives, means, organization, and actions.<sup>811</sup> I contend that the causes of success and/or failure were deeply rooted in intrinsic American and Japanese values. A summary of the attitudes and beliefs that guided and circumscribed Japanese and American strategic thought follows.

### 7.2.1. The Strategic Culture of Imperial Japan.

Overall, Japanese strategic and tactical culture was affected by pervasive cultural conditioning that inculcated the belief that Japan was a unique and special nation with a divine mission to rule the world.<sup>812</sup> While the Japanese understood that the U.S. had tremendous material resources that could produce massive firepower they felt that the Americans lacked fighting spirit, tactical finesse, and operational skill.<sup>813</sup> Their belief in Japan's unique martial culture, its proud tradition of military virtue and preference for death over humiliation or defeat led them to believe they could win the war despite the mismatch in capabilities.<sup>814</sup>

Japan's physical separation from the rest of Asia and its deliberate isolation from Western influences for almost three hundred years, helped to create an unusually homogenous society and culture. Many different elements have interacted to define Japanese culture. The themes and events that were most formative in their strategic culture are:

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Becker's definition of strategic culture: "a nation's traditions, values, attitudes, patterns of behavior, habits, symbols, achievements, and particular ways of adapting to the environment and solving problems with respect to the threat or use of force."

<sup>811</sup> H. Shultz, Jr., *Adapting America's Security Paradigm and Security Agenda*, (Washington, DC: National Strategy Information Center, 2010), 35.

<sup>812</sup> Edward J. Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army: Its Rise and Fall, 1853–1945*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009), 320, 593; Allison B. Gilmore, *You Can't Fight Tanks with Bayonets: Psychological Warfare against the Japanese Army in the South West Pacific*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 87.

<sup>813</sup> Jeffrey Record, "Japan's Decision for War in 1941", viii.

<sup>814</sup> Morgan, *Compellence and the Strategic Culture of Imperial Japan*, 1.



1) The cosmogonic myth that the Japanese people are descended from the sun goddess, Amaterasu, and as a divine race they were specially favored by the gods. When the very survival of the Japanese people was threatened by the Mongols the spiritual power of their living god, the emperor had saved them. This led to their belief in having a divine right to rule others.<sup>815</sup>

2) The Japanese developed a reverence for imperial authority and a belief in the Confucian tenets that emphasized law, ritual, and hierarchy as essential to maintaining social order. This melded well with native Japanese concepts of loyalty to family and clan.<sup>816</sup>

3) The turmoil, intrigue, and military rule of the seven-hundred-year Japanese feudal era gave rise to the unique samurai warrior class that promoted the qualities of loyalty, bravery, and selfless sacrifice as the supreme virtues in society. Every vassal was expected to give his life freely in service to his lord, even if the sacrifice was futile.<sup>817</sup>

4) The Tokugawa Shogunate provided the longest period of peace and stability in Japanese history, but it did so by the imposition of a rigid police state that isolated Japan from the rest of the world. As a result, the nation failed to modernize in step with the rest of the world. The samurai became a legally defined hereditary class and Japanese society became accustomed to obedience to central authority and strict adherence to norms of social behavior. Within this closed society the Japanese sense of nationhood was awakened, and veneration of the emperor began to supersede loyalty to clan or *shogun*.<sup>818</sup>

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<sup>815</sup> Morgan, *Compellence and the Strategic Culture of Imperial Japan*, 38-39, 46-47; Delmer M. Brown, *Nationalism in Japan: An Introductory Historical Analysis*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1955), 7-11; David A. Dilworth, "Guiding Principles of Interpretation in Watsuji Tetsurō's History of Japanese Ethical Thought: With Particular Reference to the Tension between the Sonnō and Bushidō Traditions", in Victor Sogen Hori & Melissa Anne-Marie Curley (eds.), *Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy: Neglected Themes and Hidden Variations*. (Nagoya: Nanzan Institute for Religion & Culture, 2008), 104.

<sup>816</sup> Dilworth, 39-41; Brown, 11-13; Benedict, 117.

<sup>817</sup> Benedict, 42-44; George B. Sansom, *A History of Japan to 1334*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), 311.

<sup>818</sup> Sansom, *A History of Japan to 1334*, 49-53; Lawrence E. Grinter, "Cultural and Historical Influences in Sinic Asia: China, Japan, and Vietnam", in Stephen J. Blank, et. al. *Conflict, Culture, and History: Regional Dimensions*, (Maxwell, AFB AL: Air University Press, 1993), 154-155.

5) The Meiji Restoration caused massive social upheaval as the nation rushed to transform itself from a feudal society with seventeenth-century technology into a modern industrial nation. Japan underwent rapid modernization in its industry, technology, and institutions to match the Western liberal democracies, but it tried to preserve the traditional values and behaviors of their hierarchical society. The pace and scale of Japan's modernization was astounding, but it rested on shaky foundations. In particular, the samurai had reached a crisis point as an effete caste of feudal warrior-bureaucrats struggling to remain relevant, while the masses beneath them chafed at having to support an unproductive hereditary aristocracy that had outlived its function.<sup>819</sup>

Victory over Russia in 1905 led the Japanese to embrace several fallacious ideas that shaped their doctrine and organization for the next forty years.<sup>820</sup> The most significant legacy of this experience was the absolute belief in the value of the offensive as the way to quick and decisive victory. The Imperial Japanese Army was conceived, trained, and equipped as a light force that used bold maneuver to close with and attack its enemies in hand-to-hand combat with the bayonet.<sup>821</sup> This faith in the ineluctable power of offensive operations was only exceeded by the deeply rooted belief that the Japanese people were uniquely gifted with a singular warrior ethos that gave their attacks an awe-inspiring and devastating power that could cause opponents willpower to falter. The Japanese military's emphasis on the power of spiritual superiority was both simplistic and complacent, callously ignoring the realities of modern firepower.<sup>822</sup>

### **7.2.2. The Strategic Culture of the United States.**

Having its foundations in the Enlightenment and the Reformation, American philosophy and culture expressed a world view that was skeptical of orthodoxies, rebelled against authority, celebrated individual autonomy, and was confident in the power of human intellect and technology. American culture envisioned a new form of society, based on self-evident truths of

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<sup>819</sup> Ibid., 52-57; Peter R. Moody, Jr., *Tradition and Modernization in China and Japan*, (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1995), 92, 97; E. Herbert Norman, *Japan's Emergence as a Modern State: Political and Economic Problems of the Meiji Period*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1940), 19-25.

<sup>820</sup> Ness, *Rikugun*, 14.

<sup>821</sup> R.H.P. Mason and J.G. Caiger, *A History of Japan*, (Rutland: Tuttle Publishing, 1997), 264.

<sup>822</sup> Coox, *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939*, 1082, 1085; Edward J. Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army: Its Rise and Fall, 1853-1945*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009), 162, 171-173.

individual liberty and of a government that replaced monarchical power, rejecting collectivism with the duty to secure the rights of the people and to bring an end to oppression.<sup>823</sup>

American strategic culture exhibits an almost which optimism, strategic impatience, a deep faith in technology as a solution and a tendency to view every conflict as an existential crusade in defense of democracy, motivated by the need to overthrow foreign tyranny.<sup>824</sup> It is *sui generis* however, in its reflection of certain beliefs and habits found in American culture such as showing respect for human life and individual political rights, equal opportunity and equal burden sharing, the defense of free market capitalism, isolationism, and unilateralism.<sup>825</sup> A particularly American strategic view is that war represents the failure of policy rather than its continuation as held by Clausewitz.<sup>826</sup> This translated to the American strategic military philosophy that, “Politics and strategy are radically and fundamentally things apart. Strategy begins where politics end. All that soldiers ask is that once the policy is settled, strategy and command shall be regarded as being in a sphere apart from politics.”<sup>827</sup> These unique cultural determinants have influenced American strategy and military operations.

Russell Weigley interpreted American strategic thought as following two basic types of strategy: attrition and annihilation. He characterized early American strategy as relying on attrition over time to exhaust stronger opponents, as in the 1781 campaign of General Nathaniel Greene.<sup>828</sup> Weigley portrayed the strategy of the American Civil War as one of overwhelming force to “grind down opponents with firepower and mass.”<sup>829</sup> Brian Linn has challenged his

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<sup>823</sup> Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991), 282-283, 290.

<sup>824</sup> Lewis, xvii, 34-35; Echevarria, 16, 23.

<sup>825</sup> Adrian Lewis, *The American Culture of War: The History of U.S. Military Force from World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom*, (New York: Routledge, 2018), xvii, 34-35; Antulio J. Etchevarria II, *Reconsidering the American Way of War: U.S. Military Practice from the Revolution to Afghanistan*, (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2014), 16, 23; John A. Lynn, *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 2003), 321.

<sup>826</sup> J.C. Wylie, *Military Strategy: A General Theory of Power Control*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1967), 80.

<sup>827</sup> *The Principles of Strategy for An Independent Corps or Army in a Theater of Operations*, (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff School Press, 1936), 19.

<sup>828</sup> Terry Golway, *Washington's General: Nathanael Greene and the Triumph of the American Revolution*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), 238-242, 248-249.

<sup>829</sup> Weigley, *American Way of War*, xxii, 6-7, 467-477; F.G Hoffman, *Decisive Force: The New American Way of War*, (Westport: Praeger, 1996), xii.

definitions of attrition and annihilation as being confusing and simplistic (for example: at what point does continual attrition result in inevitable annihilation?).<sup>830</sup> Linn has described other schools of American strategic thought as: attrition, Napoleonic, annihilation, partisan war, sea-power, and air power.<sup>831</sup> John Lynn has also suggested that there are “three related tendencies: 1) abhorrence of U.S. casualties, 2) confidence in military technology to minimize U.S. losses, and 3) concern with exit strategies.”, as historical characteristics of American strategic culture.<sup>832</sup>

While a nation’s strategic culture may exhibit certain fixed preferences, in the larger historical context there does appear the ability to evolve in response to geo-political, technological, and societal change.<sup>833</sup> American strategic culture has certainly changed as new weapons and tactics were introduced. We can see that there is an existential danger when this does not happen or when such evolution is too slow to respond effectively to external threats. The ability to change from obsolete concepts of operation to overcome unforeseen battlefield challenges and asymmetric adaptability, or the lack thereof, in strategic culture explains much of the disparity between the Japanese and American forces in the war.<sup>834</sup>

### 7.3. Tactical Culture.

Just as there is an ontological hierarchy that extends from strategy to operations to tactics, I believe that there is a supporting concept to strategic culture which is that of tactical culture. There is a relationship between a nation’s “way of war” and its “way of warfare”. The former reflects a nation’s values regarding the proper use of force. The latter represents how a nation’s military wants to fight wars.<sup>835</sup> Strategic culture (the way of war) is implemented through a

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<sup>830</sup> Brian M. Linn, “The American Way of War Revisited,” *The Journal of Military History*, vol. 66, no. 2, April 2002: 502.

<sup>831</sup> Brian M. Linn, “‘The American Way of War’ Revisited,” *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 66, No.2 (April 2002), 502-503, 530.

<sup>832</sup> John A. Lynn, *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 2003), 321.

<sup>833</sup> Jacob H. Miller, "Strategic Culture as the Basis for Military Adaptive Capacity: Overcoming battlefield technological surprises" 01 April 2014. CUREJ: College Undergraduate Research Electronic Journal, University of Pennsylvania, <https://repository.upenn.edu/curej/173>

<sup>834</sup> Ibid.

<sup>835</sup> Michael A. Bonura, *Under the Shadow of Napoleon: French Influence on the American Way of Warfare from Independence to the Eve of World War II*, (New York: NYU Press, 2012), 3-4.

tactical culture (the way of warfare) that expresses prevailing military attitudes and beliefs through actions taken on the battlefield. Many studies of cultural, behavioral, and identity science have shown how culture can influence individual and organizational performance.<sup>836</sup> There is an intersectionality between tactical culture and military organizational culture and the way that it defines and shapes how an organization functions as expressed through the “habitual practices...hidden assumptions, and unreflected cognitive frames” that support its actions.<sup>837</sup>

Every military unit: every squad, platoon, company, and battalion, has a unique personality and a distinctive character that are the result of that cohort’s training and experiences. Tactical culture is rooted in the history, traditions, and customs of the service and the unit, and it reflects the goals and objectives, values, and behaviors of that unit. These distinctive traits and accompanying patterns of thought, actions, or set of practices become the units’ tactical culture, which in turn provide the foundation for planning, training, and operations.<sup>838</sup> Tactical culture is a synthesis of a unit’s past experiences, lessons learned, and shared beliefs that becomes the foundation of their methods of warfighting and establishes their confidence of success on the battlefield. It is an expression of how the unit views itself and the battlefield and how they intend to meet current and future challenges.<sup>839</sup>

As strategic culture flows from a nations’ geography, history, and competitive advantages so then does tactical culture derive from the choice of tactics and technologies used, how they have been employed in the past, how they will be employed in the present, to achieve what effects, and with what expectations.<sup>840</sup> The military techniques, procedures, and operational style used by a unit are the artifacts of its tactical culture. These values, missions, and preferred technologies are carefully taught to new members of the organization.<sup>841</sup> Military doctrine,

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<sup>836</sup> Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 7-8.

<sup>837</sup> Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 2.

<sup>838</sup> Leonard Wong and Stephen J. Gerras, “Culture and Military Organizations”, Chapter 1 in *The Culture of Military Organizations*, edited by Peter R. Mansoor and Williamson Murray, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 17-20.

<sup>839</sup> Ibid.

<sup>840</sup> Thomas Mahnken, *Technology and the American Way of War since 1945*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 3, 4-6, 223-225; Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 25-35.

<sup>841</sup> Edgar H. Schein, “Coming to a New Awareness of Organizational Culture,” *Sloan Management Review* 25, no. 2 (Winter 1984), 3.

organization, and technological strengths and limitations are tangible elements of tactical culture. Doctrine is the military's institutional belief system about its duties, roles, and relationships and the guide for how it will fight. It influences tactical culture in concert with the unit's organizational scheme by providing the framework for action. Some characteristics of tactical culture include intangible elements like esprit de corps, pride, cohesion, loyalty, morale, and will power. It also includes capabilities like leadership, and proficiency in individual and collective tasks. Tactical culture reflects the philosophy and ethos of the unit and is more likely to influence how a unit acts on the battlefield than any policies or directives from higher headquarters.<sup>842</sup>

### 7.3.1. Japanese Tactical Culture.

“Duty is heavier than a mountain; death is lighter than a feather.”<sup>843</sup>

Japan adopted Western weapons, military organization, and strategy but not Western concepts of discipline and motivation.<sup>844</sup> The Imperial Japanese Army was deeply imbued with the glorification of ritualized death, and Japanese culture was manipulated to create what was essentially a state-sponsored death cult.<sup>845</sup> The result was a paradoxical hybrid tactical culture that sought to compensate for disadvantages in modern firepower by applying an ancient approach of substituting humans for weapons, in the belief that the power of the superior Japanese spirit would prevail by simply persevering.<sup>846</sup>

The Imperial Japanese Army was an infantry-centric force that emphasized offensive action as the keystone of its doctrine. IJA tactics called for flanking or enveloping attacks that relied on massed, mobile light infantry attacking under the cover of darkness. Decisive effects

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<sup>842</sup> Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 92.

<sup>843</sup> William Theodore de Bary, Donald Keene, and Ryusaku Tsunoda, eds., *The Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors, Sources of Japanese Tradition II, 1600-2000*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 198-200.

<sup>844</sup> Drea, *In the Service of the Emperor*, 73, 120.

<sup>845</sup> David Hunter-Chester, "Imperial Japanese Army Culture, 1918-1945: Duty Heavier than a Mountain, Death Lighter than a Feather." Chapter 9, in *The Culture of Military Organizations*, edited by Peter R. Mansoor and Williamson Murray, 208-25. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 208-225; Francis Pike, "The Development of a Death Cult in 1930s Japan and the Decision to Drop the Atom Bomb", *Asian Affairs*, 47:1, 1-31, (2016), DOI:10.1080/03068374.2015.1128682.

<sup>846</sup> Stephen Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 190-191.

were to be achieved through close quarters battle with the bayonet. Surrender was prohibited and counterattacks were launched whether there were sufficient forces available or not. IJA tactical culture idealized the samurai warrior virtues of courage, loyalty, and self-sacrifice and embraced hand-to-hand combat in an age of mechanized warfare.

One of the most notable characteristics of IJA tactical culture was its tenacious adherence to doctrine, especially its bias for the attack. The Japanese soldier was believed to be uniquely effective in “always attacking, courageous, selfless, and victorious”.<sup>847</sup> Despite constant defeats Japanese officers refused to change doctrine. Even though they suffered defensive defeat from late 1942 onward, it was not until August 1944 that IGHQ issued a tactical manual that rescinded the counter-amphibious doctrine that invaders would be stopped at the waterline, and then counterattacked and destroyed.<sup>848</sup> Generally, however, defensive doctrine was never enthusiastically embraced; officers at all echelons looked for opportunities to attack even when insufficient forces were available, thus reinforcing defeat, and ultimately squandering lives in hopeless efforts.<sup>849</sup>

The most striking element of Japanese tactical culture was how it extolled the preference for death in battle over the humiliation of surrender or defeat.<sup>850</sup> The avoidance of the shame of surrender overruled the need for preserving the force for future battles.<sup>851</sup> The Field Service Code or *Senjinkun* issued in 1941 put it explicitly: “Do not live in shame as a prisoner. Die, and leave no ignominious crime behind you.”<sup>852</sup> The *Senjinkun* was intended to indoctrinate the IJA soldier with the unique spiritual attributes of Japanese tactical culture whereby: “death in battle became the standard by which to measure fighting spirit.”<sup>853</sup>

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<sup>847</sup> Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 107-121.

<sup>848</sup> Hunter-Chester, David. 2019. “Imperial Japanese Army Culture, 1918–1945: Duty Heavier than a Mountain, Death Lighter than a Feather.” Chapter 9 in *The Culture of Military Organizations*, edited by Peter R. Mansoor and Williamson Murray, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 222-223.

<sup>849</sup> A.D. Coox, “The Effectiveness of the Japanese Military Establishment in the Second World War”, in A.R. Millett and W. Murray (eds), *Military Effectiveness, Volume III: the Second World War*, (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1988), 1-44.

<sup>850</sup> A.J. Barker, *Japanese Army Handbook, 1939-1945*, (London: Ian Allan, 1979), 118-120; A.D. Coox, “The Effectiveness of the Japanese Military Establishment in the Second World War”, in A.R. Millett and W. Murray (eds), *Military Effectiveness, Volume III: the Second World War*, (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1988), 1-44.

<sup>851</sup> Forrest Morgan, *Compellence and the Strategic Culture of Japan*, 66-67.

<sup>852</sup> Op. cit.

<sup>853</sup> Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, viii, 46.

“The Japanese tended to regard “spirit” as their main strength, with almost mystical potency—an amulet, whose loss would be fatal. Beyond doubt it carried them to some startling early victories; but at the same time, it carried within Japan’s undoing.”<sup>854</sup> *Seishin* (spirit/mind/soul/heart) was viewed as being unyielding and resilient; the belief in the ability to succeed or survive through sheer will alone. The Japanese sincerely believed that this unique cultural value was the answer to their qualitative and quantitative inferiority in the face of more modern forces.<sup>855</sup> Stoicism was encouraged to motivate both unit and individual resistance past the point where it might have been of any tactical benefit or in the best interest of the individual, the unit, or the nation.

The basic characteristics that permeated Japanese tactical culture; strict obedience, endurance of hardship, faith in their “fighting spirit”, their innate racial superiority, and the morality of honorable death to repay the debt owed for being Japanese underscored everything with the paramount importance and nobility of sacrifice, even in failure.<sup>856</sup> Japanese tactical culture demonstrated the will to sacrifice; to kill the enemy and if that was not possible then to die instead. A commonly expressed sentiment illustrates this: “Come home in death.” (*Shinde kaere*), meaning, “Fight with resolve to die on the battlefield and come home only as a soul.”<sup>857</sup>

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<sup>854</sup> Meirion and Susie Harris. *Soldiers of the Sun. The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army*. (New York: Random House, Inc., 1991), 325.

<sup>855</sup> Edward J. Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army: Its Rise and Fall, 1853-1945* (Modern War Studies Series) (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas; 1st edition, 2009), 162.

<sup>856</sup> Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 119; Hunter-Chester, David. 2019. “Imperial Japanese Army Culture, 1918–1945: Duty Heavier than a Mountain, Death Lighter than a Feather.” Chapter 9 in *The Culture of Military Organizations*, edited by Peter R. Mansoor and Williamson Murray, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 211; Ford, *Assessments*, 329; Ivan I. Morris, *The Nobility of Failure: Tragic Heroes in the History of Japan*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1975), 120.

<sup>857</sup> Op. cit. Chapter Five: from “The Song of Bivouac” (*Roei no Uta*), Shigure Otowa, *Nihon Kayoshu* (Shakai Shiso Sha, 1963), 295. Quoted by Sato Hiroaki, “Gyokusai or “Shattering like a Jewel”: Reflection on the Pacific War”, *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, February 1, 2008, Volume 6, Issue 2.



### 7.3.2. American Tactical Culture.

“It was plenty tough + rugged going with the weather against us + Jap snipers harassing us all the time, but we blew them from their foxholes + they all ended up 6 foot under.”<sup>858</sup>

In the course of its history the American army has had a long and often acrimonious debate over its self-identity and vision of warfare. Through this process three traditions of thought have developed.<sup>859</sup> One of these philosophies holds that war is both an art and a science and that with mastery of the science one could practice it as an art. In this view, war is a project in which skilled technicians, applying the scientific principles of warfare, are guaranteed success.<sup>860</sup>

The second philosophical tradition emphasizes the human element in war and espouses the critical importance of intangible factors like courage, discipline, morale, and experience gained in training. This tradition encourages adaptability and innovation to cope with the chaos and violence of an ever-changing battlefield. This concept of war holds that “Wars are fought with men, not weapons. It is the spirit of the men who fights, and of the men who leads which gains the victory (sic).”<sup>861</sup>

The third tradition sees modern warfare as the result international rivalry over political and economic issues that require full national mobilization of a mass army to conduct large-unit operations. It is a Clausewitzian view of industrial scale war that requires skilled managers to organize the force, create the weapons, and direct the operations of this juggernaut. To achieve success requires rational coordination of both human and materiel resources on a large scale.<sup>862</sup>

These three martial philosophies combine to provide an intellectual and practical framework for American tactical culture, weaving together a belief in precise planning, superior administration, applying all available resources, while embracing the romanticism of heroic

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<sup>858</sup> Ralph Eyde, op. cit.

<sup>859</sup> Linn, 4-5.

<sup>860</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>861</sup> Linn, 6; George S. Patton, “The Effect of Weapons on War” *The Cavalry Journal*, #37, (November 1930), Fort Benning, GA: 483-488. <http://www.pattonhq.com/textfiles/effect.html>

<sup>862</sup> Linn, 7-8.

human virtues as the keys to victory.<sup>863</sup> American tactical culture favored aggressive action, combining firepower and maneuver to overwhelm and destroy the enemy to achieve a quick and decisive victory with the least casualties.<sup>864</sup> This approach was a practical combination of operational art, supported by technology and logistics to project power over long distances, and sustained by its belief in a righteous cause.<sup>865</sup>

American tactical culture in the Second World War focused on definite and tangible goals and held that “the battle is the ultimate payoff”.<sup>866</sup> The attitude that all actions should be directed toward a clear task and purpose permeated the Army, and soldier and unit morale suffered when it was perceived that they did not. Loyalty to comrades/group solidarity, prestige/pride in unit, and working to end the task and get home were broad characteristics of American tactical culture. Both primary group cohesion and task cohesion were essential elements of American tactical culture that contributed to individual survival and unit success in combat.<sup>867</sup> The shared experiences of training and combat created peer (horizontal), leader (vertical), and cross-organizational bonds that focused on the capability and capacity for teamwork in the accomplishment of the common task.<sup>868</sup> This task cohesion was as much a driving force for the American soldier as social cohesion, allowing them to maintain their combat effectiveness and the will to win. When asked, “What was most important to you in making you want to keep going?” 39 percent of soldiers said, “ending the task” while 14 percent said, “solidarity with the group”.<sup>869</sup>

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<sup>863</sup> Ibid., 8-9.

<sup>864</sup> Antulio J. Etchevarria II, *Reconsidering the American Way of War: U.S. Military Practice from the Revolution to Afghanistan*, (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2014), 13, 16; Linn, "American Way of War Revisited", 502-503, 530.

<sup>865</sup> Williamson Murray, “Why Did It Take the North So Long?”, *Military History Quarterly*, Summer 1989, 24-33.

<sup>866</sup> Stouffer, S. A., Lumsdaine, A. A., Lumsdaine, M. H., Williams, R. M., Jr., Smith, M. B., Janis, I. L., Star, S. A., & Cottrell, L. S., Jr., *The American Soldier: Combat and its Aftermath. (Studies in Social Psychology in World War II)*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), 96-97.

<sup>867</sup> Stephen E. Ambrose, *Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Battlefields to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany, June 7, 1944-May 7, 1945*, (New York: Touchstone, Simon and Schuster, 1997), 14; Christopher H. Hamner, *Enduring Battle: American Soldiers in Three Wars, 1776-1945*, (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2011), 3.

<sup>868</sup> Guy L. Siebold, “The Essence of Military Group Cohesion,” *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 33, No. 2, (2007): 288-289, 292.

<sup>869</sup> Samuel A. Stouffer, et. al., *The American Soldier: Combat and Its Aftermath, Vol. II*, “Combat Incentives”, (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1949), 108.

Another facet of American tactical culture is the ferocity that America brings to war. “The American tends to be an extremist on the subject of war: he either embraces war wholeheartedly or rejects it completely...For the American a war is not a war unless it is a crusade.”<sup>870</sup> Once engaged, Americans prefer a fight to the finish. Thus, feelings of hatred, vindictiveness, and revenge towards the Japanese were notable elements of the tactical culture of units in the Pacific area.<sup>871</sup>

**Unit Will to Fight – Assessing the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division:** Returning to *The American Soldier: Combat and its Aftermath*, we see many of these will to fight variables quantified by the soldiers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division themselves in a contemporary survey of their attitudes. Sixty percent were “very proud” of their company. Fifty-four percent thought their unit teamwork was “very good”; Forty percent thought it was “fairly good”. Eighty-one percent expressed confidence in their leaders. On the question of supplies, 68 percent felt that they “usually got” what they needed. On the question of mail delivery, 44 percent felt that the Army tried “hard enough” to get mail to the battle front; 29 percent did not. Sixty-four percent of the soldiers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division thought that the Army tried “hard enough” to get them good food; 24 percent did not. When asked: “When the going was tough, how much did it help you to think that you had to finish the job in order to get home again?”, their answers were: “Helped a lot=45%; Helped some=21%; Helped a little= 9%; Didn’t think of it=21%.”. When the soldiers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division were asked: “When the going was tough, how much did it help you to think that you couldn't let the other men down?”, their answers were: “A lot=64%; Some=19%; A little=5%; Didn’t think of it=10%.” Less importance was given to thinking of “what we’re fighting for”: (A lot=35%; Some=20%; a little=8%; Didn’t think of it=28%); and to hatred for the enemy: (A lot=39%; Some=23%; a little=11%; Didn’t think of it=19%).<sup>872</sup> Overall, task and group cohesion, leadership, and morale were the highest rated variables in the will to fight model for the 7<sup>th</sup> Division in the Second World War.

Will to fight and winning always matter in combat. Soldiers and the units they are members of develop a tactical culture that includes the disposition to fight or not fight, when faced with imminent death. Combat almost always ends when one opponent loses the will to fight. With these evaluative criteria as a guide, not a model nor a formula, to compare the

<sup>870</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Practice of Civil-Military Relations*, (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1957), 151-152.

<sup>871</sup> Stouffer, et. al., 106-111.

<sup>872</sup> Stouffer, S. A., Lumsdaine, A. A., Lumsdaine, M. H., Williams, R. M., Jr., Smith, M. B., Janis, I. L., Star, S. A., & Cottrell, L. S., Jr., *The American Soldier: Combat and its Aftermath*, (Studies in Social Psychology in World War II). (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), AMS-100, S-100D. <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/7062681>

belligerents in the Pacific War, it is apparent that both sides had a tremendous will to fight. However, there seems to be an ironic disparity in how that will fight was translated into action. In the case of the Japanese during the Pacific War, their fighting until total annihilation suggests an extraordinary will, but what motivated this requires cultural analysis.<sup>873</sup>

## 7.5. Strategic Culture: Will to Win Versus Will to Sacrifice.

### 7.5.1. Will to Sacrifice.

We recognize that individual nations have distinct cultures with respect to religion, the arts, and literature. These are expressions of their shared traditions and their common ways of life.<sup>874</sup> Strategic behavior should also be approached in the context of the culture that has shaped it.<sup>875</sup> To fully understand a nation's "way of warfare" requires looking beyond battle narratives, or debates on the merits of firepower, mass, or mobility to examine how a nation perceives and interprets its military traditions; how it views strengths and weaknesses, and threats and opportunities.

The Japanese failed in the Second World War because of their strategic culture. Why? There were hidden, fatal flaws in Japanese strategic culture that emanated from specific cultural values and social behaviors. The Japanese chose an anachronistic approach to the war that was rooted in their cultural values of unquestioning obedience, group loyalty, and self-sacrifice. In the face of unanticipated and changing operational conditions the Japanese were unable to make effective changes in doctrine, technology, and tactics because of their dependence on a strategic

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<sup>873</sup> Ben Connable, Michael J. McNerney, William Marcellino, Aaron Frank, Henry Hargrove, Marek N. Posard, S. Rebecca Zimmerman, Natasha Lander, Jasen J. Castillo, James Sladden, Anika Binnendijk, Elizabeth M. Bartels, Abby Doll, Rachel Tecott, Benjamin J. Fernandes, Niklas Helwig, Giacomo Persi Paoli, Krystyna Marcinek, Paul Cornish, *Will to Fight: Returning to the Human Fundamentals of War*, RAND Research Brief 10040-A, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.7249/RB10040>.

<sup>874</sup> A. MacMillan, K. Booth, and R. Trood, *Strategic Cultures in the Asia-Pacific Region*, (Hampshire: Palgrave, 1999), 8.

<sup>875</sup> Rashed Uz Zaman, "Strategic Culture: A "Cultural" Understanding of War", *Comparative Strategy*, 28:1, 68-88, 2009. DOI: 10.1080/01495930802679785, 81.

path that assumed American willingness to accept defeat and to seek a negotiated outcome. Perceiving the Americans to be a racially and spiritually inferior people, the Japanese underestimated their will to fight and overestimated their own military prowess and capabilities with tragic consequences.<sup>876</sup> Adapting their strategy and tactics to address their faulty assumptions was obstructed by the very core beliefs in Japanese cultural superiority upon which they stood. I further believe that Japanese strategic and tactical culture reflected a deeply ingrained *will to sacrifice* which unintentionally undermined their will to fight, in contrast to the American strategic and tactical culture of the *will to win*, and that this difference strongly determined the outcomes of the war.<sup>877</sup>

Ultimately, Japanese strategic culture caused them to be mesmerized by short-term operational opportunities but blind to the long-term strategic consequences. They acknowledged American materiel superiority but failed to recognize that they were not the only people with willpower and courage. Their “theory of victory” (or more appropriately hope of victory) was based on their faith that spiritual superiority would neutralize materiel superiority. They were confident that the unique Japanese qualities of national will, discipline, and sacrifice would defeat the Americans. Japan’s failure in this regard was because their strategy implicitly accepted annihilation of their tactical forces as a substitute for victory. The Japanese government motivated the people to endure extraordinary sacrifice by elevating, distorting or reinterpreting core Japanese values of loyalty, obedience, stoicism, and fatalism, to create an idiosyncratic Japanese strategic culture with the unintended outcome of consistently and blindly adhering to failed courses of action to the point of defeat.<sup>878</sup> This may be the ultimate failure of Japanese strategic thinking which doomed their soldiers and led to the crushing defeat of the nation.

Legendary historical acts of sacrifice in battle like Thermopylae, the Alamo, Balaclava, and Camarón still resonate across cultures precisely because they are so uncommon. The

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<sup>876</sup> Ibid., 3, 6-7.

<sup>877</sup> Ben Connable, Michael J. McNerney, William Marcellino, Aaron Frank, Henry Hargrove, Marek N. Posard, S. Rebecca Zimmerman, Natasha Lander, Jasen J. Castillo, and James Sladden, *Will to Fight: Analyzing, Modeling, and Simulating the Will to Fight of Military Units*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-2341-A, 2018), xi.

<sup>878</sup> Benedict, 117, 133, 136-137; Morgan, 63-64, 69, 75. Morgan, 11, 66-67, 227, 228; Thomas Cleary, *The Japanese Art of War: Understanding the Culture of Strategy*, (Boston and London: Shambhala, 1991), 1-2.

Japanese converted suicidal battlefield sacrifice into a religious and ideological keystone of both their strategic and tactical culture.<sup>879</sup> The leaders of the Meiji and Showa eras invoked the precept that “duty is heavier than a mountain; death is lighter than a feather.” and promoted the myth of imperial divinity and the sacred origins of their land and people.<sup>880</sup> In support of this the philosophy of *bushido* was carefully shaped and manipulated to represent the “national essence” of the Japanese to help build a unified, modern national army from the conscripts of a fundamentally feudal society.<sup>881</sup> Japanese soldiers were taught that “the essence of *bushido* was that the young warrior *should aim at dying*.”<sup>882</sup> Inculcated with this mythological belief in their racial superiority, and a social-Darwinist influenced philosophy of manifest destiny, the Japanese believed that the ultimate expression of devotion to the emperor was to seek honorable death in battle.<sup>883</sup> Imperial soldiers, sailors, and airmen understood the preciousness of life and the gravity of their choice to die but they were nevertheless motivated by their sense of duty and the traditional aesthetic of *mono no aware* (“the poignant beauty of things”) which expressed the melancholic beauty of life’s evanescence.<sup>884</sup> The few Japanese survivors shared a profound, lifelong sense of loss and pity.<sup>885</sup> “It cannot end in our favour, we have been defeated...I find myself thinking these thoughts often. Death...How easy is it...how disappointing...It is not especially dreadful or tragic...death compared to life is peaceful and simple...”<sup>886</sup>

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<sup>879</sup> Francis Pike, “The Development of a Death Cult in 1930s Japan and the Decision to Drop the Atom Bomb”, *Asian Affairs*, 47:1, 1-31, (2016) DOI:10.1080/03068374.2015.1128682, 20.

<sup>880</sup> Robert Lee, “The Individuation of the Self in Japanese History”, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, Mar. 1977, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Mar. 1977), Nanzan University Stable, 7, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30233128>

<sup>881</sup> Karl Friday, “Bushido or Bull: A Medieval Historian’s Perspective on the Imperial Army and the Japanese Warrior Tradition,” *Society for History Education* Vol. 27 Issue 3 (May 1994): 339-349.

<sup>882</sup> Arthur Swinson, *Four Samurai: A Quartet of Japanese Army Commanders in the Second World War* (London: Hutchinson, 1968), 15-18.

<sup>883</sup> Francis Pike, “The Development of a Death Cult in 1930s Japan and the Decision to Drop the Atom Bomb”, *Asian Affairs*, 47:1, 1-31, (2016) DOI:10.1080/03068374.2015.1128682, 15-16.

<sup>884</sup> Ivan I. Morris, *The Nobility of Failure: Tragic Heroes in the History of Japan*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1975), 17.

<sup>885</sup> Japanese historian Hosaka Masakazu at the Sixth Forum (2007) of the International Forum on War History entitled “New Perspectives on the War in the Pacific: Grand Strategies, Military Governments and POWs”, Japanese National Institute for Defense Studies at the Japanese Defense Ministry. He shared the recollections of Northern Army Commander, Major General Higuchi Kiichiro about Attu. Translated by Rodney J. Szasz, 2014.

<sup>886</sup> Post war reminiscences of Corporal Asatake, a member of the Attu garrison who was wounded and captured. Brian Lane Herder, “The Aleutians, 1942-43: Struggle for the North Pacific, Campaign 333, Series editor, Marcus Cowper, (Oxford/New York: Osprey Publishing/Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 75, 80; originally from Sato Kazumasa, *Gyokusai no Shima (The Island of Honorable Death)*, (Tokyo: Kojinsha Press, 2008); Translation by Rodney J. Szasz, 2013.

As the war continued to turn against Japan, more contrived and desperate rationales for giving the ultimate sacrifice began to arise:

...we are turning the disaster into a fortunate event. We are now searching for something like a phoenix which rises out of ashes. Even if Japan gets defeated once or twice, as long as the Japanese survive, Japan will not be destroyed.<sup>887</sup>

Paradoxically, there was an ancient tradition that venerated the struggle of such “failed heroes” who died nobly in crushing defeat yet achieved a transcendent form of death. Japanese had traditionally viewed such acts of individual voluntary death as honorable acts of supreme agency and the assertion of control over one’s destiny. In consequence, encouraged by the belief that their deaths were transcendent because of the deep nobility of their martyrdom, Japanese officers often seemed more obsessed with demonstrating the proper way of dying in combat than they did for winning the battle.<sup>888</sup> The Imperial General Headquarters eventually acknowledged the constant succession of sacrificial defeats by merely announcing that “all achieved a heroic death in battle”.<sup>889</sup>

The awful consequences of this “death cult” are reflected in the death rates of Japanese soldiers in the Pacific War. An analysis of the eleven primary island battles of the Pacific Ocean reveals that the average loss ratio of the Japanese forces was ninety-seven percent.<sup>890</sup> These death ratios were consistent across differing terrain whether sandy atolls or mountainous jungle covered island or sub-arctic muskeg. Even had retreat been permitted (which it was not) on most islands there was nowhere to go; stand and die was the order. For comparison, in North Africa the British defeated a force of approximately 100,000 Germans and Italians of whom about 5,000 were killed. At the Battles of Imphal and Kohima the British faced a 100,000-man Japanese

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<sup>887</sup> Quoted in Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 197.

<sup>888</sup> Ivan Morris, *The Nobility of Failure: Tragic Heroes in the History of Japan*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1975), xiii, 12, 82, 137, 196; Coox, *Nomonhan*, 1082-1083.

<sup>889</sup> Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 231.

<sup>890</sup> Pike, 19, 24. Japanese death rates: Attu, May 43 (99%), Tarawa, Nov 43 (99.4%), Kwajalein, Feb 44 (96.7%), Roi-Namur, Feb 44 (97.5%), Los Negros, Feb 44 (98.1%), Biak, May 44 (95.7%), Saipan, Jun 44 (97.1%), Tinian, Jul 44 (97%), Peleliu, Sep 44 (98.1%), Iwo Jima, Feb 45 (99%), Okinawa, Apr-Jul 45 (92.8%).

army of whom about 70,000 died. As General Slim observed, “Everyone talks about fighting to the last man and last round, but only the Japanese actually do it”.<sup>891</sup>

Despite the supporting cultural foundation, and government indoctrination, by 1945 support for the war was eroding. The Japanese soldier found himself in a double bind; vitally dependent on his culture and society as the source of his identity and social support but receiving false and contradictory information from them with respect to the wartime situation and his existence. His inner psychological and spiritual sense of what was correct was incompatible with the scientific metacommunication he received from the physical world. Thus, he was placed into an impossible situation by the Japanese government wherein they could not win the war, nor could they end it. Trapped in a mutually enforced prison of alienation, unable to escape their dilemma, self-sacrifice seemed the only answer.<sup>892</sup>

### 7.5.2. Will to Win.

The Americans succeeded in the Second World War because of their strategic culture. Why? America of the Great Depression and the Second World War had evolved from an eighteenth-century agrarian society with a small republican government into a modern industrial giant with a large and efficient central government capable of organizing and directing the economy in full mobilization. The United States had historically chosen to avoid the political and economic costs of maintaining a large standing army instead relying upon its large population and industrial capacity respond to the crisis in the moment. The struggle against tyranny of the

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<sup>891</sup> Pike, 21, 24; William J. Slim, *Defeat Into Victory: Battling Japan in Burma and India, 1942-1945*, (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000), 538.

<sup>892</sup> Wartime diaries reveal the growing disillusion, as demonstrated by Samuel Yamashita, *Leaves from an Autumn of Emergencies: Selections from the Wartime Diaries of Ordinary Japanese*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 27; Aaron William Moore, *Writing War: Soldiers Record the Japanese Empire*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 216; Gregory Bateson, et. al., “Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia,” in Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, (New York: Ballentine, 1972), 201-227; Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View*. (New York: Ballantine, 1991), 419-420.



1940s was seen as an existential threat to the American ideals of freedom, equality, democracy, and reason.<sup>893</sup>

Just as the American economy and government evolved and matured over time so did its strategic culture. The insistence on unconditional surrender of the Axis powers as a strategic goal led to the historically dominant American operational approach of massing forces and means for a direct assault on enemy centers of gravity. The American frontier constabulary experience of managing logistics and providing engineering support across continental distances put a premium on the use of machines and abundant natural resources to surmount obstacles. This in turn inspired the American approach to expeditionary warfare support and sustainment, particularly in the Pacific theater where moving mountains of supplies to the far-flung battlefields was a massive undertaking.<sup>894</sup> Perhaps the best contemporary expression of this strategic culture is this:

America, as a nation, has the greatest ability for mass production of machines. It therefore behooves us to devise methods of war which exploit our inherent superiority. We must fight the war by machines on the ground, and in the air, to the maximum of our ability, particularly in view of the fact that the two races left which we may have to fight are both poor mechanics but have ample manpower. While we have ample manpower, it is too valuable to be thrown away.<sup>895</sup>

Much has been made of the overwhelming industrial superiority that the Americans enjoyed over the Japanese, and rightly so. Many historians have assumed that American industrial power made their victory inevitable.<sup>896</sup> The deterministic supposition that mere numerical preponderance assures victory is false. To bring superior numbers to bear a force must survive long enough to make their numbers tell. A force that is poorly managed, maneuvered, or employed will not be able to take full advantage of its greater numbers and/or superior weapons.<sup>897</sup> Materiel factors are only part of the story of victory and defeat.

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<sup>893</sup> Allan R. Millet "The United States Armed Forces in the Second World War." Chapter Two. In *Military Effectiveness*, edited by Allan R. Millet and Williamson Murray, 2nd ed., 3:45–89. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511762970.004.

<sup>894</sup> Colin S. Gray, "U.S. Strategic Culture: Implications for Defense Technology," In *Defense Technology*. Eds. Asa A. Clark IV and John F. Lilley, (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1989), 31-45.

<sup>895</sup> George S. Patton, Jr., *War As I Knew It*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), 366.

<sup>896</sup> Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 560.

<sup>897</sup> Biddle, *Military Power*, 2-4.

This is not to deny the dominance of American military industry, and its resultant staggering air and sea power but the many transport ships produced only delivered troops *to* the fight, they did not *win* the fight for them. Tanks, bombers, and warships are the tools of war, but to be effective they must be properly wielded by trained and dedicated soldiers.<sup>898</sup> Alone, they have no power. The will to win the fight displayed by the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines enabled them to turn raw American industrial power into successful combat performance.

Furthermore, despite assumptions on the qualitative superiority of their technology, American weaponry, particularly that of the ground forces was not markedly superior in all respects to that of the Japanese. Japanese machine guns and grenade launchers were deadly. The Zero fighter plane and the Type 99 torpedo were highly effective and feared. The ubiquitous M4 Sherman tank with its low velocity, short-ranged gun and light armor was rugged, reliable, and maneuverable but still suffered numerous losses against simple Japanese defenses like mines and demolition charges. The Americans responded differently to their equipment deficiencies than did the Japanese. The Americans overcame their capability shortcomings not by relying on “spiritual power” or by massing forces but by creating massed effects; “we compensate for our inferior equipment by the most efficient use of artillery, air support, and maneuver...”<sup>899</sup>

## 7.6. A Subjective Evaluation of Combat Effectiveness.

“More than most professions, the military is forced to depend upon intelligent interpretation of the past for signposts charting the future....”<sup>900</sup>

At the beginning of the war the Allies were stunned by the speed and effectiveness of Japanese forces and the advanced technology of many Japanese weapons. Yet, the prevailing

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<sup>898</sup> McManus, *Island Infernos*, 11; Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe*, 7.

<sup>899</sup> Phillips P. O’Brien, *How the War was Won: Air-Sea Power and Allied Victory in World War II*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 17, 449-451; quoting Major General Maurice Rose in *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years*, vol. IV, Eisenhower letter to Marshall, March 26, 1945, 2543-2545.

<sup>900</sup> General Douglas MacArthur, quoted in “Why Read Military History?”, Center for Military History Journal, September 1989, (Carlisle: U.S. Army War College).

[http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/dnss/history/why\\_read.htm](http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/dnss/history/why_read.htm)

belief among historians is that the Japanese were always doomed to failure because they could never match the industrial might of the United States.<sup>901</sup>

**Was Japan's Defeat Inevitable?** Most historians of the Pacific War have expressed a teleological approach to the war's outcome, e.g., John Toland, *The Rising Sun: The Decline and Fall of the Japanese Empire, 1936-1945*, Dan van der Vat, *The Pacific Campaign: World War II, the U.S.-Japanese Naval War, 1941-1945*, and Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle against the Sun: The American War with Japan*. However, as Richard Overy points out: "Why did the Allies win World War II? This is such a straightforward question that we assume it has an obvious answer... Allied victory is taken for granted... Explanations of Allied success contain a strong element of determinism... To ask why the Allies won is to presuppose that they might have lost or, for understandable reasons, that they would have accepted an outcome short of total victory. These were in fact strong possibilities. There was nothing preordained about Allied success."<sup>902</sup> The common belief holds that the outcome of the war was predetermined simply because Japan lacked the resources to win, discounting their strategic plan to attack, occupy, and defend a resource rich enclave that consisted of Thailand, Sumatra, Borneo, Malaya, and Java.<sup>903</sup> Their stunning success in this plan gave them a small window of opportunity in 1941 to accomplish their strategic goals. However, overconfidence encouraged them to expand beyond this planned perimeter in 1942-1943, motivated chiefly by the Imperial Japanese Navy's desire to fight and win a decisive battle with the U.S. Navy.<sup>904</sup> This deviation from the basic plan was demanded by Admiral Yamamoto and he specifically altered the plan to include the strike on Pearl Harbor and the invasion of the Philippines.<sup>905</sup> To have been successful the Japanese needed better integrated planning, communication, and cooperation between the IJA and IJN, earlier and greater repositioning of ground and air assets from China to the Pacific Ocean areas, and a submarine warfare campaign to attack America's long and vulnerable sea lines of supply while protecting their own sea lanes against American submarines.<sup>906</sup> This did not happen and the Imperial Navy's ambitions to expand the perimeter into the Southwest

<sup>901</sup> See Van Creveld, Hastings, O'Brien, et. al.

<sup>902</sup> Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995), 15.

<sup>903</sup> Ronald Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 560; Phillips Payson O'Brien, *How the War was Won: Air-Sea Power and Allied Victory in World War II*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 3, 5, 11, 13; Dan van der Vat, *The Pacific Campaign: World War II, the U.S.-Japanese Naval War, 1941-1945*, 121.

<sup>904</sup> James B. Wood, *Japanese Military Strategy in the Pacific War: Was Defeat Inevitable?* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007) 79; Michael Myers, *The Pacific War and Contingent Victory: Why Japanese Defeat Was Not Inevitable*, (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 2015), 2,3, 5.

<sup>905</sup> Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 33; Agawa, Hiroyuki *The Reluctant Admiral: Yamamoto and the Imperial Navy*, trans. John Bester, (Tokyo; New York: Kodansha International, 1982), 219-20; Michael Myers, *The Pacific War and Contingent Victory: Why Japanese Defeat Was Not Inevitable*, 40.

<sup>906</sup> Michael Myers, *The Pacific War and Contingent Victory: Why Japanese Defeat Was Not Inevitable*, (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 2015), 2, 3, 22-26.

and Central Pacific exceeded the Imperial Army's resources requiring the diversion of resources from China.<sup>907</sup> Finally, the surprise attacks on the American forces ignited an unquenchable thirst for revenge that drove their will to win the war. The great irony of the Pacific War is that the virtually flawless execution of Japan's initial strategic plans resulted within less than a year not in victory but in a series of significant defeats that left the strategic initiative in the hands of the enemy...The fact that this dramatic reversal took place even before the balance of power had tipped in favor of the Allies might appear to be evidence that Japan's entry into the war had indeed been a terrible mistake...Not only could the outcome have been different, it was within the power of the Japanese to have made it different.<sup>908</sup>

I contend that the Japanese lost the war not merely because of their materiel disadvantages but in part because they never fully mastered the "modern way of warfare", which Stephen Biddle defines as the method of force employment that maximizes friendly firepower while shielding one's own forces from the enemy's lethal capabilities.<sup>909</sup> At the tactical level, independent small unit maneuver and combined arms operations that maximize cover, concealment, and dispersion allow mission success in the face of modern lethality. Close and deep fires shape the battle by providing both suppressive and destructive effects and depth and reserves provide flexibility at the operational level of war.<sup>910</sup> Superior numbers and technological advantages are nullified if the force cannot be brought to bear or if they are ineptly led. Thus, in modern battle, both materiel and nonmaterial factors interact to influence battle outcomes, but neither is predominant. In this view doctrine and tactics are just as important as industrial production and technological innovation because they shape how those factors are used.<sup>911</sup>

Combat effectiveness is the subjective measure of the ability of a military force to accomplish its mission based on assessments of its behavioral, operational, and leadership qualities. To be effective a military unit must have proper equipment and personnel

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<sup>907</sup> James B. Wood, *Japanese Military Strategy in the Pacific War: Was Defeat Inevitable?* (New York: Roman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 7, 19; Far East Command, "Japanese Monograph No. 45: Imperial General Headquarters Army High Command Record, Mid 41- Aug 45," 48, 50.

<sup>908</sup> James B. Wood, *Japanese Military Strategy in the Pacific War: Was Defeat Inevitable?* (New York: Roman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 7, 19.

<sup>909</sup> Stephen Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), ix-x, 2-3.

<sup>910</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

<sup>911</sup> Biddle, 4-5.

who are trained to follow orders, make full use of their weapons and equipment, and be able to execute the battlefield tactics as a coordinated team. Simply having a large or well-equipped force does not guarantee success on the battlefield.<sup>912</sup>

In making a subjective evaluation of combat effectiveness I acknowledge that by focusing on a single U.S. infantry division as I have done the scope is narrow and thus may not be fully representative of the rest of the U.S. Army. Nevertheless, I believe that the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division was highly representative of the U.S. Army as a whole and that their actions demonstrate the importance of the human factors of tactical culture: personality, character, and emotions.<sup>913</sup> I have organized this qualitative comparison of the American and Japanese forces by using a few of the major battlefield operating functions as a framework to evaluate and assess their relative combat effectiveness.

### **7.6.2. Battle Command and Leadership.**

Leadership is crucial to combat effectiveness. The leaders of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division established the vision, values, and standards that built the division's shared identity and cohesion. In battle their personal example provided the inspiration to overcome the inevitable fear, uncertainty, and confusion that comes with combat.<sup>914</sup>

Battle command and staff planning were not strong points for the Japanese. Based on their belief in the spiritual and racial superiority of the Japanese soldier, Japanese operational thinking was essentially unscientific, narrow, simplistic, and arrogantly complacent. Throughout the war they pursued unimaginative, counterproductive, and ultimately suicidal policies.<sup>915</sup> Both Japanese

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<sup>912</sup> Editors, "combat effectiveness." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, December 12, 2013.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/combat-effectiveness>. Accessed 21 March 2022.

<sup>913</sup> James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrade: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), x, 13, 27.

<sup>914</sup> Trevor N. Dupuy and Gay M. Hammerman, "Soldier Capability – Army Combat Effectiveness (SCACE)", Volume III, Historical Combat Data and Analysis, December 1980, United States Army, Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Monroe, Virginia, 6-8.

<sup>915</sup> Coox, *Nomonhan*, 1080.

historians and generals later admitted that there was a qualitative failure in IJA leadership with its repetitive use of failed tactics and slavish devotion to faulty plans and that ultimately it was their deficient strategy rather than inferior arms that explained Japanese defeat.<sup>916</sup>

For Japanese officers an assignment to a headquarters staff lacked the prestige of other assignments and most avoided staff duty, therefore very few were experienced or more importantly talented as staff officers.<sup>917</sup> IJA headquarters and planning staffs were smaller than their American counterparts and their contributions were severely denigrated by commanders and line officers, and they were not seen as adding value to the effort.<sup>918</sup> Lacking skilled planners, Japanese headquarters staffs were frequently unable to synchronize logistics, communications, and fire support as force multipliers and thus were unable to positively influence combat outcomes.<sup>919</sup>

The senior American commanders and staff, the generals, and colonels, had served as junior officers in World War I, but they lacked experience in the command and control of large units because of the small size and limited resources of the Army during the interwar era. In this regard, the Japanese had an advantage having gained command experience in combat against both the Chinese and the Soviet Union since 1937. The Americans relied on the intensive staff planning problems and lessons learned studies they had undergone in the Army's professional education program to bridge the gap. For the most part, American commanders at the division level and below displayed great ability, and the citizen soldiers who filled the ranks as sergeants, captains, and majors demonstrated an unparalleled ability to quickly learn, adapt, improve, and innovate to accomplish any mission that they faced. They combined units and used weapons in inventive ways, devising ingenious tactics and techniques to defeat the enemy on various battlefields and under extremely diverse and challenging conditions.<sup>920</sup> The expertise in planning,

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<sup>916</sup> Ibid.

<sup>917</sup> Ibid.; Thomas N. Huber, *Japan's Battle of Okinawa, April-June 1945*, Leavenworth Papers Number 18, Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1990, 29-31; Drea, *In the Service of the Emperor: Essays on the Imperial Japanese Army*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 70-74.

<sup>918</sup> Coox, *Nomonhan*, 1086-1087.

<sup>919</sup> Leland Ness, *Rikugun*, 51.

<sup>920</sup> Peter Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions, 1941-1945*. (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1999), 2-5.

coordination, and leadership displayed by the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division's battalion and company commanders was exemplary. Despite having no previous combat experience, when leaders were lost in battle, sergeants took over platoons, lieutenants stepped forward to command rifle companies. The 7<sup>th</sup> Division served as a crucible for Army leaders, with five of the generals who served with the division going on to higher commands, three colonels becoming generals, and nine lieutenant colonels and fourteen majors moving to command other units to spread their experience.<sup>921</sup>

In contrast, when faced with unexpected circumstances or the loss of leadership, the Japanese soldier displayed admirable tenacity and a willingness to die but rarely the capacity to take independent action to change the situation or to alter their plans or methods to achieve success.<sup>922</sup> For example, numerous U.S. after-action reports reflect the finding that suppressive fires kept Japanese forces pinned in their bunkers and “spider holes/octopus pots” (*takotsubo*) so effectively that American troops could maneuver on top of them and fire right down into them to finish the assault. “If you get their heads down...suppress by fire... they stay down; if there are no officers present/alive, they don't know what to do...(they) take no action...”<sup>923</sup> Their tactical culture inhibited initiative and innovation. Junior officers were trained to follow orders and execute the chosen plan without deviation. For IJA company and battalion commanders “the appreciation of a new and sudden situation seems to be beyond the ability of junior commanders.”<sup>924</sup>

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<sup>921</sup> *Combat Lessons No. 2, “Rank and File in Combat: What They're Doing; How They Do It.”*, (Operations Division of the War Department General Staff, Washington D.C., 1943), 31.

<sup>922</sup> United States National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (NARA 2): Combined Operations Headquarters, Bulletin No. Y17, ‘Lessons Learned from the Guadalcanal Operations’, (Summary of the Final Report by the Commanding General, 1 US Marine Division), 15 December 1943; RG 165, War Department, ‘P’ File, Box 1203, MIS, Intelligence Bulletin, Volume 1, No.9, May 1943; RG 226, OSS, Research and Analysis Branch Divisions, Intelligence Reports, Box 936; War Department Technical Manual 30-480, *Handbook on Japanese Military Forces*, 21 September 1942.

<sup>923</sup> Verbeck, *Action on Attu*, 30 July 1943, 4, 11, 13; English, 16-18; M. Hamlin Cannon, *Leyte: The Return to the Philippines*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1954), 211.

<sup>924</sup> Coox, 1081-1082.

The American superiority in battle command was even more clear at the higher operational and strategic echelons. The U.S. was much more successful than Japan in operational command and control, campaign planning, and joint operations. Frequently, the Imperial Japanese Army did not know what the Imperial Japanese Navy was planning or doing so any attempts at synchronization or synergy were fruitless. This was in part because the autonomy of each service was firmly established in their relative perspectives of the operational environment. Japanese strategy envisioned three enemies: China, Russia, and America. The former two were the responsibility of the IJA, the latter the responsibility of the IJN. Although each service had its own air arm the IJN had insufficient ground forces to control all the land in the Pacific Ocean area that they had invaded to create the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere, thus the Navy had to borrow forces from the Army. There were no fully integrated joint campaign plans. Each service prepared separate plans, coordinating with each other only when needed. Although the Imperial General Headquarters was established in response to the 1937 Marco Polo Bridge incident to control strategy and operations, there were no joint intelligence or logistical relationships and the Japanese never established geographic joint commands or a unified command structure to prioritize and de-conflict competing demands.<sup>925</sup> As their defeats continued the IJA and the IJN expressed disappointment in each other's performance. "There is no doubt that a major portion of the responsibility for Japan's failure at Guadalcanal, Bougainville, the Gilbert Islands, and later at all-important Saipan may be traced to the failure of the Army and Navy to set aside their differences when the future of the nation was at stake."<sup>926</sup> They sought refuge in their enculturated values of loyalty to the group, obedience to the emperor, and collective self-sacrifice to stay the course.<sup>927</sup>

The Americans were consistently able to achieve complementary effects through coordinated campaign planning. As an example, while the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division was attacking Kwajalein in January-February 1944, the 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division was simultaneously assaulting Roi-

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<sup>925</sup> Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army: Its Rise and Fall, 1853-1945*, 191-192; Naval Analysis Division, *United States Strategic Bombing Survey: The Campaigns of the Pacific War*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1946), 1-2.

<sup>926</sup> Kato, Masuo, *The Lost War: A Japanese Reporter's inside Story*, (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1946), 107.

<sup>927</sup> Morgan, *Compellence and the Strategic Culture of Imperial Japan*, 230-235.



Namur to the north.<sup>928</sup> Most significantly, the Japanese never resolved the differing strategic views of the IJA which favored the initial plan for a smaller, shorter fortified perimeter to parry American counterattacks and the IJN desire to push out farther, seeking a decisive fleet engagement. After the war Admiral Fukudome explained this divergence:

From the very beginning there were two divergent views: (1) holding a long line; (2) the other, compact...the Navy favoring the former and the Army the latter...with the Navy's view prevailing...with the hope of getting a chance to strike a heavy blow against your fleet from one of the outlying bases...and through that line we intended to gain time. Time, we felt, was very important. If the war could be continued long enough, we expected there might be slips on your side of which we could take advantage.<sup>929</sup>

Despite inevitable interservice friction, disagreements, and misunderstandings, the Americans avoided the consequences that result from uncoordinated operations of the magnitude that the Japanese did.<sup>930</sup> The Army, Navy, Army Air Forces, and Marine Corps were able to transform the individual services into a joint force that could bring all the elements of combat power to bear in a synchronized and synergistic effort. This "...revolution in joint operations" provided logical and flexible planning.<sup>931</sup> Complex compromises were adopted to address command and control, supported, and supporting relationships, and doctrinal differences over the employment of mechanized and light amphibious forces during joint operations evolved continually from Guadalcanal to Okinawa.<sup>932</sup> The Battle of Okinawa marked the full maturation of joint force doctrine and the apex of cooperation, confidence, and trust, particularly between the Marines and the Army. This transformation of the American joint force, perhaps more than the mobilization of America's industrial capacity, provided the overmatching power that resulted

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<sup>928</sup> James A. Walker, Lewis Bernstein, Sharon Lang, *The Eastern Mandates Campaign: A Staff Ride Guide for Operation Flintlock, The Seizure of Kwajalein*, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, Huntsville, AL, 2004, 25, 32-34.

Philip A. Crowl, Edmund G. Love, *Seizure of the Gilberts and Marshalls: United States Army in World War II, The War in the Pacific*, CMH Pub 5-6, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1955), 210.

<sup>929</sup> USSBS Interrogations: No. 524: Admiral Shigeru Fukudome, IJN; Subject: War in the Pacific; Date: 12 December 1945, Tokyo; Microfilm Publication M1654, Reel #9, 10-11.

<sup>930</sup> Coox, 1080.

<sup>931</sup> Sharon Tosi Lacey, *Pacific Blitzkrieg: World War II in the Central Pacific*, (Denton: North Texas University Press, 2013), xvi.

<sup>932</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

in victory.<sup>933</sup> The result was a “team of teams” that had an advantage in lethality and operational effectiveness because it had mastered modern warfare.<sup>934</sup>

Leadership is crucial to combat effectiveness. The leaders of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division established the vision, values, and standards that built the division’s shared identity and cohesion. In battle their personal example provided the inspiration to overcome the inevitable fear, uncertainty, and confusion that comes with combat. Furthermore, the 7<sup>th</sup> Division served as a crucible for Army leaders, with five of the generals who served with the division going on to higher commands, three colonels becoming generals, and nine lieutenant colonels and fourteen majors moving to command other units to spread their experience.<sup>935</sup>

### 7.6.3. Maneuver and Fire Support.

In battle after battle and campaign after campaign American combined fires and maneuver were successful, but the IJA response was to rely on fighting spirit and close-quarter battle. Their tactical culture was based on the spirit of offensive action and the belief in their superiority in man-to-man combat in the age of mechanized warfare.<sup>936</sup> Japanese combined arms actions were rare, with tanks generally providing fire support to the infantry but not operating with them as a well-coordinated team. Their belief was that aggressive infantry maneuver would infiltrate, envelop, and outflank the enemy where close combat with rifles, machine guns, and hand grenades would prevail.<sup>937</sup>

The Japanese took steps to strengthen their infantry capabilities but improvements in supporting arms firepower remained unaddressed. This is not because Japanese military

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<sup>933</sup> Lacey, xiv.

<sup>934</sup> Stephen Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), ix-x, 2-3, 4-5.

<sup>935</sup> Trevor N. Dupuy and Gay M. Hammerman, “Soldier Capability – Army Combat Effectiveness (SCACE)”, Volume III, Historical Combat Data and Analysis, December 1980, United States Army, Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Monroe, Virginia, 6-8.

<sup>936</sup> Coox, *Nomonhan*, 1082; Drea, *Japan’s Imperial Army*, 222, 226, 230-231, 246; Richard K. Betts, *Surprise Attack: Lessons for Defense Planning*, (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 1982), 134.; Ness, *Rikugun*, 14-16; US War Department, Technical Manual, TM-E 30-480, 1 October 1944, 85.

<sup>937</sup> Ness, *Rikugun*, 14-16; Coox, *Nomonhan: Japan against Russia, 1939* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 1009-1032; A.J. Barker, *Japanese Army Handbook, 1939-1945* (London: Ian Allan, 1979), 7, 115.

technology was incapable of producing new, better weapons. Throughout the war Japanese fighter aircraft continued to evolve and improve, but little was done to improve tanks, and artillery. Ironically, Japanese army officers are recorded as having said that “lack of equipment gave us Japanese a chance to demonstrate our superior spirit and valor.”<sup>938</sup> Thus they paid less attention to the development and employment of modern supporting weapons in a combined arms team than did the Americans.<sup>939</sup>

Japanese employment of artillery was generally poor due to an inadequate supply of ammunition and the failure to coordinate and deliver massed destructive fire.<sup>940</sup> In contrast, the United States Army enjoyed an enormous advantage in indirect fire support to infantry operations. American advances in fire support coordination, through centralized fire direction centers and forward observation teams, made field artillery support rapid, flexible, and responsive. Well trained American tank-infantry teams supported by accurate and fast artillery fire, integrated maneuver tactics with protection and firepower to win.<sup>941</sup>

IJA tactical doctrine and culture considered night attacks a more important force multiplier than artillery. “The night is worth a million reinforcements”, but they squandered the effectiveness of this tactic by their disjointed commitment of forces, adhering to a practice of: “commit ten soldiers when one was killed; and another 100 when those ten were wiped out.”<sup>942</sup> They thus reinforced failure rather than created success. When this operational approach was combined with their no surrender policy and their abhorrence of defensive operations, they were doomed to be less effective than the Americans irrespective of their materiel disadvantages.<sup>943</sup> By habitually conducting operations without concern for casualties, fighting to the death could actually play into the hands of American troops if they were well trained and skillfully led to be

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<sup>938</sup> Drea, 174.

<sup>939</sup> Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army*, 171-173.

<sup>940</sup> Douglas Ford, “US Assessments of Japanese Ground Warfare Tactics and the Army's Campaigns in the Pacific Theatres, 1943-1945: Lessons Learned and Methods Applied”, *War in History*, Vol. 16, No. 3, (July 2009), 342.

<sup>941</sup> Bonn, 221-223.

<sup>942</sup> Coox, quoting Nishiura Susumu, a senior IJA staff officer, 1081, 1083.

<sup>943</sup> *Ibid.*, 1084.

confident in their abilities to outthink and outfight their opponents.<sup>944</sup>

#### 7.6.4. Intelligence.

At the very heart of Japanese operations and planning was a flawed intelligence system that was unable to provide a comprehensive picture of American capabilities and intentions. This resulted in the continuous underestimation of their enemy's will to fight and the belief that their own spiritual power was a greater asset than any technological advantage possessed by the Americans.<sup>945</sup>

Strategic analysis and threat estimates on both sides were influenced by racist stereotypes, flawed assumptions, and faulty research which contributed to poor planning.<sup>946</sup> Estimates of enemy capabilities and skills and willpower were often inaccurate. Racial biases adversely influenced planning and unreasonable expectations led to overconfidence and hubris.<sup>947</sup> The Americans underestimated the Japanese Army and Navy as second-rate forces. This view quickly changed: “with more than a year of war behind us and with experience gained in fighting ... we can begin to see how much we have misunderstood the [Japanese]”.<sup>948</sup> A similar contemporary Japanese assessment of American tactics reveals both insight and prejudice:

...because U.S. tactical ideas are simple, deceptive displays of force are one of the most valuable of all anti-U.S. strategic weapons... because the character of the American is simple and lacking in tenacity, in their tactics and battle leadership they also lack tenacity; and if they meet with one setback, they...abandon one plan for another. We must search for ways of attack and defense against the

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<sup>944</sup> Ford, “US Assessments of Japanese Ground Warfare Tactics and the Army's Campaigns in the Pacific Theatres, 1943-1945: Lessons Learned and Methods Applied”, 340.

<sup>945</sup> Coox, 'Flawed Perception and Its Effect upon Operational Thinking: The Case of the Japanese Army, 1937-41', in M. Handel, ed., *Intelligence and Military Operations*, (London: Routledge, 1990), 252-53; Hayashi Saburo, in collaboration with A.D. Coox, *Kogun: The Japanese Army in the Pacific War* (Quantico: The Marine Corps Association, 1959), 23-27.

<sup>946</sup> John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), x.

<sup>947</sup> Saburo. Ienaga, *The Pacific War: World War II and the Japanese, 1931-1945*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 141.

<sup>948</sup> United States National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (NARA 2), RG 165, War Department, Security Classified Publications, box 472, JICPOA, Bulletin 12-43, 'Japanese Land Forces, no. 6', 18 February 1943, quoted by Douglas Ford, “US Assessments of Japanese Ground Warfare Tactics and the Army's Campaigns in the Pacific Theatres, 1943-1945: Lessons Learned and Methods Applied”, *War in History*, July 2009, Vol. 16, No. 3, 325-358.

Americans with their superior firepower...we must avoid a stationary defense as much as possible. The Americans make much of firepower, especially the power of artillery, and lay small stress on bayonet charges....<sup>949</sup>

The Japanese generally suffered from selective perceptions of reality, only seeing, and accepting information about the enemy and the operational environment that met their expectations and desired outcomes. Intelligence was undervalued and usually inaccurate, which hindered planning and operations.<sup>950</sup> Intelligence was considered a secondary function and Japanese operations officers distrusted intelligence officers as untrained, second-rate men, relegated to the background, except when their estimates agreed with the chosen course of action.<sup>951</sup> One Japanese general summarized the situation by saying, "Operations had no confidence in intelligence and until that was changed there would be little use in assigning good men."<sup>952</sup>

Although Japanese intelligence collection was good, dissemination was poor, and their analysis was often superficial, with the underestimation of the effects of terrain and weather and potential enemy capabilities and intentions being common.<sup>953</sup> Japanese decisionmakers belittled contradictory information and rejected evidence and opinions that did not conform to their expectations or intended plans.

... the Japanese military mentality tended to nullify the work of intelligence. Corrupted by their own propaganda, military planners...bestowed (with) Japanese invincibility, overemphasized the importance of the attack...suppressing information...bending it to serve political ends...and they became blind to objective intelligence.<sup>954</sup>

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<sup>949</sup> "American and British Tactics--As Viewed by the Japanese", *Tactical and Technical Trends*, No. 14, Dec. 17, 1942. U.S. Military Intelligence Service, 52-53, 56. Translation of a captured document, "Land Warfare Tactics to Use Against U.S. and British Forces", (Selections from the text compiled by the Staff of the Army in China), Part I: U.S. Army Methods and Japanese Countermeasures", not dated.

<sup>950</sup> Kotani Ken, "Japanese Intelligence in WWII: Successes and Failures", (Oxford: Osprey, 2009), 11-12, 24, 26.

<sup>951</sup> Coox, *Nomonhan*, 1086.

<sup>952</sup> United States Strategic Bombing Survey (USSBS) Interrogations: No. 343: General Kawabe, Masakazu, IJA; Subject: Intelligence Operations at Air General Headquarters (KOKU SOGUN SHIRIEBU); Date: 13 November 1945, Tokyo; Microfilm Publication M1654, Reel #8, 343-3.

<sup>953</sup> Kotani, 24-26; Coox, 1086; Drea, 178.

<sup>954</sup> United States Strategic Bombing Survey (USSBS), "Japanese Military and Naval Intelligence," 3.

The Japanese Army and Navy did not merely ignore the intelligence that was provided, they chose to twist the information to fit their preconceptions and refused to allow negative views to alter decision-making.<sup>955</sup> Their intelligence apparatus was as disjointed as their command structure as Ken Kotani notes:

In addition, there was no communication between the Army and Navy Intelligence Departments...although the codebreaking section of the IJA succeeded in breaking the Strip Ciphers, they did not share the method of deciphering with the IJN...the Army General Staff were angry when the Army codebreaking section provided the method of breaking the US mechanical codes to the NID [Naval Intelligence]...it was difficult for the Intelligence Departments...to cooperate with each other.<sup>956</sup>

Overall, they showed a lack of ability to conduct comprehensive strategic thinking.<sup>957</sup> IJA officers persisted in forlorn operations attacks long after it was clear that the effort would fail, instead desperately seeking an opportunity to "deliver the enemy a decisive blow by attacking."<sup>958</sup> Wishful thinking and deliberate misperceptions of reality led to easy acceptance of beliefs that met desires.

Much like their Japanese opponents, The U.S. Army and U.S. Navy had separate intelligence services and differing geographic foci, the Army concentrating on Europe and the Navy on the Pacific. The critical difference with the Japanese system was the deliberate effort to synthesize and share intelligence. The Americans full-spectrum intelligence effort provided tactical intelligence in support of battlefield missions as well as strategic indications and warnings to inform planning.<sup>959</sup> In addition to their superiority in signals intelligence, having broken several Japanese radio codes, human intelligence gained from the interrogation of prisoners often yielded good intelligence.<sup>960</sup> On Leyte an artillery observer from the IJA *26th*

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<sup>955</sup> Coox, 1086.

<sup>956</sup> Kotani, "Japanese Intelligence in World War II: Successes and Failures", 108.

<sup>957</sup> Coox, 1086-1087.

<sup>958</sup> Edward Drea, *Nomonhan: Japanese-Soviet Tactical Combat, 1939*, Combat Studies Institute: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, January 1981, 17-19, 87, 90.

<sup>959</sup> Louis Morton, *Strategy and Command: The First Two Years*, 232; Jeffrey Moore, *Spies for Nimitz: Joint Military Intelligence in the Pacific War*, xiii.

<sup>960</sup> NARA 127: Lt. Col. Warren J. Clear, "Problems of Taking Jap Prisoners," 2-3. Considering themselves to be disgraced by capture, Japanese servicemen were willing to divulge information.

*Division* provided immediately exploitable information on Japanese artillery methods of reconnaissance, observation, and fire control.<sup>961</sup> Captured documents were equally useful because the IJA depended heavily on written plans that described every aspect of their operations in detail. “The Japanese...disposition of troops, distribution of artillery units, casualties following engagements, hospital records, and numerous other points were found in large numbers.”<sup>962</sup>

**Cultural Intelligence and the Military Intelligence Service (MIS):** During the Second World War, the U.S. Army recognized the need for soldiers with foreign-language proficiency and quickly took steps to address its deficiencies through the creation of the Military Intelligence Service (MIS), an intelligence-gathering unit composed of a German-speaking section and a Japanese-speaking section primarily made up of second-generation Japanese Americans (Nisei).<sup>963</sup> The Nisei soldiers translated intercepted Japanese communications and captured documents, and interrogated prisoners of war but their greatest contribution to intelligence analysis was their ability to place the information in its cultural context. By September 1945, they had translated 18,000 captured enemy documents, printed 16,000 propaganda leaflets, and interrogated more than 10,000 Japanese prisoners of war.<sup>964</sup> MIS personnel served with the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division with distinction, earning the respect and admiration of their fellow American soldiers. On Attu, Staff Sergeant George T. Hayashida crawled alone into a cave to induce ten Japanese soldiers to surrender.<sup>965</sup> A 7<sup>th</sup> Division soldier on Kwajalein wrote to the *San Francisco Chronicle* in praise of a Nisei MIS soldier who entered an enemy position armed only with a trench knife, “The enemy immediately started popping out of the other entrance with no desire to fight. From these prisoners our interpreter learned of more...Just take it from this G.I. that our interpreters have plenty of nerve and their services are invaluable.”<sup>966</sup>

<sup>961</sup> Douglas Ford, “US Assessments of Japanese Ground Warfare Tactics and the Army's Campaigns in the Pacific Theatres, 1943-1945: Lessons Learned and Methods Applied”, *War in History*, Vol. 16, No. 3, (July 2009), 334; *National Archives and Records Administration: Record Group 337: Records of Headquarters Army Ground Forces, 1916 - 1956* (Hereafter NARA 337); Series: Intelligence Reports, compiled 1943 – 1946: Box 51, Folder 10. Colonel Gordon B. Rogers, “MEMORANDUM FOR GROUND GENERAL AND SPECIAL STAFF SECTIONS, HEADQUARTERS, ARMY GROUND FORCES, Subject: Observations in Southwest and South Pacific Theaters during the period 5 April, 1943 to 14 July, 1943,” (Headquarters, Army Ground Forces, 25 August 1943), 4.

<sup>962</sup> James C. McNaughton, *Nisei Linguists: Japanese Americans in the Military Intelligence Service in World War II*, Center of Military History Publication 70-99-1, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2006), 72.

<sup>963</sup> James C. McNaughton, *Nisei Linguists: Japanese Americans in the Military Intelligence Service in World War II*, Center of Military History Publication 70-99-1, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2006), v, 6, 15-28.

<sup>964</sup> Ichinokuchi and Aiso, eds., *John Aiso and the M.I.S.*, 177.

<sup>965</sup> McNaughton, *Nisei Linguists*, 169.

<sup>966</sup> McNaughton, *Nisei Linguists*, 263, quoting Glenn W. McDonald, Letter to the Editor, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 16 Sep 44, reprinted in WRA, *What We're Fighting For*, 20-21.

### 7.6.5. Training and Education.

After the Japanese-Soviet clash at Nomonhan in 1939 the Japanese high command saw that they were not prepared for enemies that had both superior technology and modern tactics, but their strategic culture obstructed changes in training to meet these threats.<sup>967</sup> Instead, they overestimated their own effectiveness and underestimated the effectiveness of potential enemy forces, continuing to rely on outdated tactics and outmatched forces hoping for successful outcomes.<sup>968</sup>

As the war progressed, the education and training of the IJA forces was not entirely ignored but various efforts to improve tactical effectiveness were thwarted by circumstance and culture. Instructors sent from Japan to teach “fortification, communication, anti-tank fighting” assessed that the “combat method was not taught satisfactorily” because “each unit was so busily engaged in constructing positions, maintaining peace and order...that they were in no position to improve their training program”. The lack of time meant that not all troops received the training and thus “were compelled to commence fighting without the proper training.”<sup>969</sup> This deficiency was particularly acute for the IJA reserve forces sent as replacements.<sup>970</sup>

Tragically, Japanese attempts to gather, analyze, and disseminate lessons from battle were defeated by fact that so few survived the battles to provide information; most senior Japanese officers committed suicide to atone for defeat. Nobody returned from Tarawa and Kwajalein to warn those at Leyte and Luzon against defending on the beaches. However, some information

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<sup>967</sup> Coox, *Nomonhan*, 1009-32.; Coox, ‘Flawed Perception and its Effect Upon Operational Thinking: The Case of the Japanese Army, 1937-41’, in M. Handel (ed.), *Intelligence and Military Operations*, (London: Frank Cass, 1990), 239-254.

<sup>968</sup> Ibid.; A.D. Coox, ‘The Effectiveness of the Japanese Military Establishment in the Second World War’, in A.R. Millett and W. Murray, eds, *Military Effectiveness, vol. 3, The Second World War*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 34-38; Drea, *In the Service of the Emperor: Essays on the Imperial Japanese Army*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 7; S. Hayashi, in collaboration with Alvin D. Coox, *Kogun: The Japanese Army in the Pacific War*, (Quantico: Marine Corps Association, 1959), 23-27.

<sup>969</sup> Japanese Monograph #4, Philippine Operations Record, Phase III, July-November 1944, Preparations made by the 14th Area Army for the Military Operations in the Philippine Islands, Historical Section, G2, FEC, Office of the Chief of Military History, Oct 1946, 45-46.

<sup>970</sup> Ibid.; Ooka Shohei, *Taken Captive: A Japanese POW's Story*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1996), 5.



was received at higher headquarters allowing some IJA officers to seek lessons from their past defeats and to attempt to develop new doctrine and tactics as demonstrated at Okinawa by the decision not to defend at the shoreline. The Japanese did learn from combat and eventually adjusted their tactics, techniques, and procedures to confront the Americans, but they did so at a pace too slow to regain the initiative.<sup>971</sup>

Early American after-action studies quickly concluded that to achieve success against the IJA would require the U.S. ground forces to rely less on fire power and more on the efficient maneuver of infantry units in coordination with their supporting arms.<sup>972</sup> The American system of “Unit Interviews After Combat” drew on the shared experiences of soldiers to rapidly reinforce learning in combat, bolster unit cohesion, and share best practices. This method found its way into widely distributed training pamphlets such as the series, *Combat Lessons “Rank and File in Combat: What They’re Doing; How They Do It.”*, and the *U.S. Army Infantry Combat Pamphlet -Tactical and Technical Trends*.<sup>973</sup>

The 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division conducted training that built on their previous battle experiences, new developments in enemy systems and trends in enemy operations, further development of tank-infantry team tactics, and special amphibious training.<sup>974</sup> Between campaigns units conducted orientation programs to sustain morale and the will to fight with, “training about U.S. and... Japan (history)...military strategy; duty, honor, and country; patriotism; current events; the role of the different services in the Pacific; battle tactics of the enemy; and postwar goals...when faced with the rigors of battle they could reach into their innermost being and find the wellsprings of dedication and conviction that would enable them to carry on.”<sup>975</sup>

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<sup>971</sup> Coox, 1009-1011, 1023, 1078-1085; L.A. Humphreys, *The Way of the Heavenly Sword: The Japanese Army in the 1920s*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 15.

<sup>972</sup> Douglas Ford, “US Assessments of Japanese Ground Warfare Tactics and the Army's Campaigns in the Pacific Theatres, 1943-1945: Lessons Learned and Methods Applied”, *War in History*, Vol. 16, No. 3, (July 2009), 340.

<sup>973</sup> Mansoor, 9; Doubler, 1-9; Marshall, *Island Victory*, 201-213

<sup>974</sup> Operation Report, 7th Infantry Division, King II, MCoE HQ Donovan Research Library, Fort Benning, GA. Documents collection. Call #: D793.32. U307, 1.; Ford, 339; John F. Shortal, *Forged by Fire: General Robert L. Eichelberger and the Pacific War*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press. 1987), 61, 69-71.; Edmund G. Love, *The Hourglass Division*, 410.

<sup>975</sup> Floyd. W. Radike, *Across The Dark Islands: The War in the Pacific*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1984, 2003), 191-192.

### 7.6.6. Logistics and Sustainment.

“In war there are two factors—human beings and weapons. Ultimately, though, human beings are the decisive factor.”<sup>976</sup>

The Japanese could not afford the modernized land, sea, and air forces needed to achieve their strategy of hemispheric supremacy. The debate over modernization and reform centered on whether Japan should plan for a short decisive war or mobilize for a long total war raged throughout the 1920s and was never fully resolved.<sup>977</sup> They chose to prioritize production of aircraft and warships and to bridge the quantitative and technological gap in ground forces with the only resource that remained: manpower and spiritual strength.<sup>978</sup>

The Japanese army’s main preoccupations were not in the Pacific, but on the mainland... The war contemplated in the Pacific was... on a larger scale than the Japanese economy could support, and it required resources that Japan simply did not have.<sup>979</sup>

Japanese operational planning was impatient with the cautious, deliberate, and detailed work involved in logistics. The IJA philosophy was that “Logistics follows operations.”<sup>980</sup> However, Japanese industry was incapable of producing the quantity of ammunition, armor, and artillery that could sustain a modernized army fighting throughout Asia and the Pacific.<sup>981</sup> As a result logistical planning and preparations were seriously deficient most of the time. Even if IJA logistics had been a higher priority and better planned by the Japanese, they could not move the quantities of weapons, equipment, food, and supplies needed to sustain their forces. This was a perpetual problem for the IJA and a strategic weakness that was continually exploited by the Americans.<sup>982</sup> One American officer described the emaciated few Japanese survivors of one battle thus: “...disorganized, demoralized and starved... Malnutrition had weakened the average

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<sup>976</sup> Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), 21, quoting Võ Nguyên Giáp, commander, People’s Army of Vietnam.

<sup>977</sup> Drea, *Japan’s Imperial Army*, 162.

<sup>978</sup> Coox, 1091.

<sup>979</sup> Meiron and Susie Harris, *Soldiers of the Sun, the Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army*, (New York: Random House, 1991), 393-395.

<sup>980</sup> Coox, 1085.

<sup>981</sup> Humphreys, *The Way of the Heavenly Sword: The Japanese Army in the 1920s*, 79-83.

<sup>982</sup> Philips P. O’Brien, *How the War Was Won: Air-Sea Power and Allied Victory in World War II*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 481-483; A.J. Barker, *Japanese Army Handbook, 1939-1945* (London: Ian Allan, 1979), 7, 115.

Jap to the point of death. Many had died in their shelters. Bodies without visible wounds were found by the hundreds. When approached by our men, many of the surviving Japs could be counted on to make a feeble grab at a weapon. Some offered no resistance at all—they simply remained sitting or lying, looking glassy-eyed.”<sup>983</sup>

The Americans placed heavy emphasis on logistics. Influenced by geography as a continental nation protected by two oceans and by the experiences of past warfare such as the First World War and the Civil War, that required the supply and movement of forces on a scale equal to the distance from Paris to Moscow, the projection and sustainment of men and materiel across oceans was a part of American strategic culture.<sup>984</sup>

## 7.7. Conclusion.

Rather than accepting the premise that American industrial capacity and the sheer numerical superiority that it produced were the only reasons that the U.S. was able to prevail over its allegedly qualitatively superior foes during the Second World War, this study sought to discover new insights and meanings by employing an inter-disciplinary approach that touched on language, customs, philosophies, and psychology; attempting a dialectic of military history that synthesizes the traditional focus on tactics, battles, and campaigns with a wider discussion of how the sociological structure of the two nations and their unique patterns of social and political history affected their respective performances and the ultimate outcomes of the war.

The success of the American military in the Second World War came from its systematic preparation via doctrine and education, its demanding field training, and competent leadership that inspired their men to fight and win as a team. Both sides underestimated their opponents at the beginning of the conflict, but the Japanese continued to manifest this fatal mistake. The Americans responded to their initial surprise at Japanese success by overestimating their

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<sup>983</sup> John B. George, *Shots Fired in Anger: A Rifleman's View of Battle*, (Plantersville: Small Arms Technical Publishing Company, 1947) (National Rifle Association, 2d Edition, 1981), 170.

<sup>984</sup> Williamson Murray, “Why Did It Take the North So Long?” *Military History Quarterly*, Summer 1989, 24-33.

opponents' capabilities and subsequently elevated their own efforts to achieve victory. They soon recognized that superior arms and equipment would have to be matched with ferocity, tenacity, and human will to triumph in this fight to the finish.<sup>985</sup> The Japanese, however continued to underestimate the Americans will power and denigrated American fighting spirit as being inferior to their own.<sup>986</sup> The Americans maintained the force of will to skillfully use their capabilities wisely to destroy the enemy's capacity and will to fight.

The Second World War was perceived by those who fought it as the ultimate moral and ideological crusade. The Allies regarded it as the defense of freedom and democracy against fascism and militarism. The Axis partners saw it as a righteous struggle for the national destiny that their racial and cultural superiority entitled them to.<sup>987</sup> My hypothesis was that the 7th Division was comparatively more combat-efficient than its Japanese opponents because of an American "tactical culture" characterized by superior leadership and tough, realistic training, that resulted in highly effective tactical performance. Both the Japanese and the Americans displayed the will to fight. Both sides wanted to win. Both sides believed in the ineffable power of their unique fighting spirit as an asymmetrical advantage. The Americans' will to win was centered in the belief that they were fighting for a profoundly moral cause and was exemplified by a grim determination to accomplish the job and return home while the Japanese will to win was subverted by a strategic/tactical culture that promoted a will to sacrifice which became popularly misconstrued by Japanese soldiers and leaders alike that their death in battle was the method of winning.<sup>988</sup>

The 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division displayed a strong sense of shared identity and a determined purpose that gives a force the will to fight and succeed. They had excellent organizational cohesion with strong horizontal bonds within squads, platoons, and companies that was

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<sup>985</sup> McManus, *Island Infernos*, 11.

<sup>986</sup> Coox, Alvin D. "The Effectiveness of the Japanese Military Establishment in the Second World War." Chapter One. In *Military Effectiveness*, edited by Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray, 2nd ed., 3:1–44. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511762970.003.

<sup>987</sup> Earl F. Ziemke, "Military Effectiveness in the Second World War." Chapter Eight. In *Military Effectiveness*, edited by Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray, 2nd ed., 3:277–319. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511762970.010.

<sup>988</sup> Edward J. Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army: Its Rise and Fall, 1853-1945*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009), vii-viii.

consistently demonstrated as individual soldiers integrated as teams, and the teams operated as effective fighting forces. This team of teams fought with the goal of winning not by dying for America but rather by making their enemy die for his country. The American individuality thought by the Japanese to be a weakness was harnessed to serve the goals of the team yet still allowing the innovation and initiative that finds new ways to succeed.<sup>989</sup>

The 7<sup>th</sup> Division's distinctive unit identity arose from their common experiences and became a foundational element of their tactical culture. Their shared battle history strengthened their comradeship and pride. Before Okinawa, forty percent of the division's original Attu 1943 component was still present. After Okinawa, only twenty percent remained. Nevertheless, Attu was the yardstick by which all other campaigns were measured.<sup>990</sup> That legendary performance had passed into the division's tactical culture and supported each soldier's belief in his own competence, his trust in his peers, and the collective pride and conviction in the unit's effectiveness. They had high confidence in their combat skills and were driven to accomplish the mission and "end the task" before them.<sup>991</sup>

This extended beyond the unit. The 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division was widely known as a "*Fighting Division*". It was respected for its high morale and combat performance throughout the Pacific, including by the Marines. During an anti-Army diatribe at the end of the war a Marine was asked, "Well, what about the Seventh Division?" The response: "Well, I guess the Seventh is kind of different. They're almost like Marines."<sup>992</sup>

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<sup>989</sup> Record, "Japan's Decision for War in 1941", viii, 29-31; Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 260; Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe*, 3.

<sup>990</sup> William L. Worden, "The 7th Made It the Hard Way", Saturday Evening Post, September 22, 1945, 18, Division Newsletter, author's collection

<sup>991</sup> Stouffer, et. al. Soldier survey responses on their attitudes, behavior, and ratings of combat performance. Questions were about combat stamina; are you tough enough? Combat skill; are you well trained? Can you lead others? How do you feel about going into combat? Specifically included the 7<sup>th</sup> Division, 3-5, 23, 108, 111, 124. Note: revenge and vindictiveness were noted as higher factors in will to fight for American soldiers in the Pacific.

<sup>992</sup> Love, *The Hourglass*, 3-5; William L. Worden, "The 7th Made It the Hard Way", Saturday Evening Post, September 22, 1945, 2, Division Newsletter, author's collection.

The Japanese believed that they would win because their unique fighting spirit, which mandated the sacrifice of their lives, would overcome the forces and technology arrayed against them. General of the Army George C. Marshall summarized the superior effectiveness of the American will to win thus:

It is not enough to fight. It is the spirit which we bring to the fight that decides the issue...The soldier's heart, the soldier's spirit, the soldier's soul, are everything. ...not in reliance on things of steel and the super-excellence of guns and planes and bombsights...We are building it *on belief*, for it is what men *believe* that makes them invincible. We have sought for something more than enthusiasm, something finer and higher than optimism or self-confidence, something not merely of the intellect or the emotions but rather something in the spirit of the man, something encompassed only by the soul. This army of ours already possesses a morale based on what we allude to as the noblest aspirations of mankind – on the spiritual forces which rule the world and will continue to do so...With your endorsement and support this omnipotent morale will be sustained as long as the things of the spirit are stronger than the things of earth.<sup>993</sup>

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<sup>993</sup> George C. Marshall, *Selected Speeches and Statements of General of the Army George C. Marshall*, edited by Harvey Arthur de Weerd, (Washington, D.C.: The Infantry Journal, 1945), 121-125.

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