

## AMERICAN ASSAULT AND VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC 1942-1945

### THE UNITED STATES PLAN BEFORE PEARL HARBOR

Prior to Pearl Harbor, it had been decided that in the event of war Germany would have to be eliminated first and that our initial role in the Pacific would, in large measure, be defensive. It was thought possible to hold the Malaya barrier, successfully engage the Japanese fleet in the Central Pacific, and lay the foundations for an eventual advance against Japan itself. The United States plan had little basis in reality; Japan's offensive capabilities were underestimated. With the forces then available, no adequate plan of defense was possible. The loss of relatively antiquated battleships at Pearl Harbor did not substantially reduce the actual combat capabilities of our Navy at that time compared to the Japanese Navy, with its superiority in aircraft carriers and battleship speed. To have implemented an adequate plan in December 1941 would have required better intelligence regarding Japanese intentions and capabilities, an earlier understanding of the predominant and indispensable role of air strength, and full public support for the necessary appropriations well before the actual outbreak of war.

As it developed, all that the U.S. could do prior to May 1942, apart from the resistance of isolated forces in the Philippines and sporadic carrier and land-based air raids, was to build up American strength in Australia and the islands lying between Pearl Harbor and Australia, while bringing to fruition training and production programs.

The Battle of Midway was the turning point in the Pacific War. Before Midway, the Japanese strategists — Yamamoto in particular — had decided where and when the battles would be fought; the Americans had done little more than respond. At Midway the initiative shifted to the American side. The loss of four attack carriers at Midway left the Japanese

Combined Fleet with only three heavy carriers, and two of these were manned by inexperienced aircrews. With its carrier force so weakened, the Japanese fleet lost the ability to mount a sustained offensive; it was agreed in Tokyo that future open-sea battles with the US Pacific Fleet should be avoided. Henceforth the Combined Fleet was to stand on the defensive.

For the Japanese, the decision to fight a defensive war did not mean all was lost; rather, it was a reversion to the original war plan. The weakest point in Japan's military posture was her lack of essential raw materials, especially oil. She had gone to war to secure these, and with her occupation of Southeast Asia had assured herself of enough resources to fight a long defensive war. But before they could be used, the resources had to be shipped north to Japan; and the long vulnerable "oil line" became Japan's new military weak point. If that line were cut, Japan's war-making capability would be reduced to near zero. Her Pacific defense system was designed to protect that vital line.

The Pacific defense network extended out through the islands of the Pacific as far as the Gilberts and Wake. It depended on a combination of fortified islands and a mobile naval strike force. The islands, fortified to withstand major amphibious assaults, were to act as "unsinkable aircraft carriers" capable of giving mutual air support against the attacking Americans. Aircraft from the islands would sight the approaching American fleet, would harass it and keep it under fire, and would help defend any island under assault. The mobile naval strike force, hidden behind the screen of islands and aircraft, would know where the enemy was to be found and could venture out to strike at the critical moment. The Japanese High Command knew that eventually the Americans could smash their way through this system but it would only be at great cost. They



hoped that that cost would impel the American public to call for an end to the fighting and force the government to accept a negotiated peace that would leave Japan in possession of Southeast Asia.

## US STRATEGY

### The Approaches

American strategists understood the Japanese plan and were generally agreed that the "oil line" must be cut as part of any American strategy aimed at reducing the Japanese homeland. They were not agreed

about the best way to cut it. The Army — more specifically, General MacArthur, now in Australia — argued that the best approach would be from New Guinea, through the Bismarcks, and up to the Philippines. American and Allied forces were already building up in Australia in 1942, and in Port Moresby on New Guinea they had an advance base ready for use. It had the further advantage (from MacArthur's point of view) that it would be mainly an Army show and, therefore, that MacArthur would be the supreme commander for the operation.

Admiral Nimitz was strongly opposed to

MacArthur's plan. It would be playing the Japanese game, he said, and would be inordinately expensive in men. He argued for a thrust across the central Pacific where islands were fewer and where the rapidly rebuilding Pacific Fleet could operate in the open sea. The thrust was to go through the Marshalls and Marianas to the Philippines. While it would start later than MacArthur's planned southern Pacific thrust, it would go faster and so would reach the Philippines at about the same time. Besides saving men, it had the further advantage (from Nimitz's point of view) that it would be mainly a Navy show.

Both of these approaches could be supported with strong strategic arguments, and neither MacArthur nor Nimitz was willing to give way. In the end Washington compromised and adopted both. By late 1942 American strength was already so massive that both approaches could be used without seriously weakening either. Furthermore, a two-thrust strategy significantly weakened the Japanese defenses, since they had to divide their forces between the two. Unable to predict where the next blow might come, they could not confidently mass their forces to counter it.

### **The Tools**

Neither MacArthur nor Nimitz could use his forces in the traditional army or navy manner. In the roadless malarial jungles of New Guinea simple troop movement was tortuous and maneuver impossible, while in the central Pacific the Navy's targets were islands, not enemy fleets. For both areas amphibious warfare was essential. Fortunately, during the 1930s the necessary tools had been developed, and during late 1942 and early 1943 they were brought to perfection. These tools were the fast carrier task force and the amphibious assault group. Without them the American drive could not have penetrated the Japanese defenses.

### **Carrier Task Force**

The Fast Carrier Task Force, used primarily in the Central Pacific, normally operated in four groups, each consisting of two heavy attack carriers and two light carriers. Each group was surrounded by one or two new, fast battleships, three or four cruisers, and twelve to fifteen destroyers. Its basic job was to isolate the battle area. Japanese air bases within flying distance of the target area would be battered, the sea lanes dosed, and any Japanese surface vessels in the area attacked. If the Japanese naval strike force should appear, the Carrier Task Force could converge on it in overwhelming strength. Once the Task Force had done its job, the targeted island was no longer a part of the defense network; it was just an isolated fortified island, standing alone.

### **Amphibious Assault Group**

Once the battle area was isolated, the amphibious assault group moved in. A support force, consisting of older slow battleships, cruisers, rocket ships, etc., methodically bombarded the landing area. An air support force flew off small escort carriers to provide the essential air cover and close air support. An assault force of Marines (Army in the southern Pacific thrust) carried aboard transports made the actual landing from small amphibious assault craft.

### **The Method**

The Japanese had fortified literally hundreds of islands in the Pacific and manned them with troops determined to die in their defense. Even with the carriers and the amphibious assault groups, an island-by-island advance would be bloody and costly. Rather than assault them all, the American strategists chose to "island-hop." Japanese strong points, such as Truk and Rabaul, were by-passed. In the southern Pacific thrust

islands were taken at about 300 miles distance from each other. This was the effective radius of fighter aircraft, and it allowed fighter escort for bombers that were based on the newly won islands. The bombers would then ensure that the by-passed islands were isolated, kept unsupplied, and pounded into impotence. This technique was used not only in island warfare but also along the northern coast of New Guinea.

## **THE STRATEGY IN ACTION**

### **The Offensive-Defensive Phase (August 1942-January 1943)**

The main thrust of the American strategy was to cut the "oil line" from Southeast Asia to Japan. But in 1942, just after the Battle of Midway, that line lay a long way off. The Pacific Fleet needed at least eighteen months to build up enough strength to drive across the central Pacific. MacArthur's planned thrust in the southern Pacific was the only promising line for an immediate American offensive toward the Philippines and the "oil line." Even here, a full-scale offensive drive was not yet possible. Between the Solomons and the Philippines stood the Japanese bastion centered about Rabaul, a formidable complex of strong points which any Allied advance in the south would eventually have to conquer or circumvent — or else be blocked. Moreover, the demands of the impending invasion of North Africa (November 1942) left the Allied position in the Pacific woefully weak. Any aggressive action in the Pacific theater at this time would have to be in the nature of an offensive-defensive; that is an offensive with defensive intent, a move to counter an expected enemy advance. There was little danger that the Japanese would try another advance in the central Pacific; they were poorer by four carriers from the last attempt and had failed then. But in the south, in the Solomons, the Japanese could strengthen their position without directly challenging the

Pacific Fleet. The Solomons, lying across the northern edge of the Coral Sea, could be used as "unsinkable aircraft carriers" to harass Allied shipping, and to cut partially the US-Australia sea lanes.

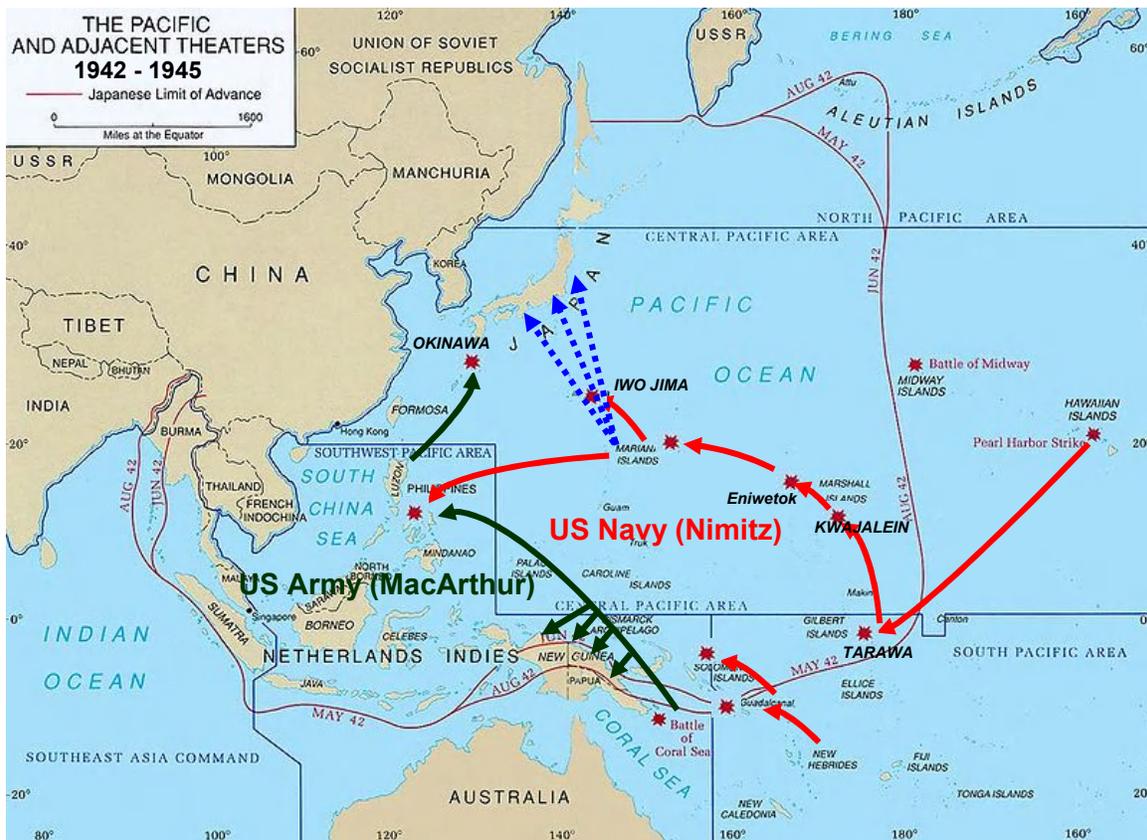
### **The Struggle for Guadalcanal**

The Japanese intent was foreshadowed by the establishment of an enemy seaplane base at Tulagi, across from Guadalcanal. It was doubly foreshadowed when in July 1942 the Japanese landed labor battalions on Guadalcanal and began to construct an airfield. This action set the date for the Allied invasion. Guadalcanal must be seized before the airfield could be finished. For once completed, this field would give the Japanese control of the air over the eastern Solomons to repulse any attempted Allied invasion or to support a further Japanese advance eastward.

On the morning of 7-August-1942, an Allied amphibious force began putting ashore on Guadalcanal and adjacent islands 16,000 US Marines, who quickly destroyed or scattered the small Japanese garrisons and labor battalions. The Americans now held the land around the unfinished airstrip and the sea around the islands. Three American carriers nearby gave them a tenuous command of the air over the invasion area.

On 8 August, because of heavy plane losses, the carriers withdrew; with them went American air control over Guadalcanal. After midnight on the 9th, seven Japanese cruisers came down "the Slot", the passage through the major Solomon Islands, and sank four US cruisers. This loss and the absence of the American carriers obliged all remaining American surface vessels to withdraw; control of the sea around Guadalcanal was lost. The newly-landed Marines were left without air or surface support.

Guadalcanal, the prize, now lay isolated between the major Japanese base at Rabaul, 600 miles to the northwest, and the American base at Espiritu Santo, 600 miles to the



southeast. The six-months campaign which followed may perhaps be most aptly described as a race by the opposing navies to supply and reinforce the opposing land forces abort on the island.

The US began the race with the considerable advantage of having more troops and more supplies on Guadalcanal than the Japanese had and of having physical possession of the unfinished airstrip. The Japanese had offsetting advantages, however, in that their communication line from Rabaul lay among islands with numerous coves affording concealment for their approaching surface craft. Moreover, they began the campaign with protected land plane bases at Gasmata and Buka and a seaplane base in the Shortland Islands. Later they were to build airstrips still closer to Guadalcanal on Kolombangara and New Georgia Islands. The Allied line, on the contrary, lay across

the open, submarine-infested Coral Sea, with the nearest bomber base at Espiritu Santo. Both sides were obliged to divert strength elsewhere, notably to the concurrent Aleutians and New Guinea campaigns; but the Allies had the additional heavy burden of the assault on North Africa, scheduled for early November.

The Japanese, despite their advantages, failed to recapture Guadalcanal because they did not at first realize the magnitude of the task. They greatly underestimated the number of Marines ashore on the island and retained the bulk of their available ground forces in New Guinea for a push over the mountains against their old objective of Port Moresby, which they considered the greater peril to their positions. When they at length diverted sufficient troops to Guadalcanal, it was already too late.

United States Marine Engineers completed

the unfinished Guadalcanal airstrip early, naming it Henderson Field, and on 20 August the first American planes were flown in and based there. From the beginning to the end of the campaign this strip was properly the focus of all land, sea, and air activity in the area. Henderson Field was correctly assessed by both contenders as the key to the Eastern Solomons.

Because the Americans held the air field, they could bring in supplies and reinforcements under land-based air protection and operate in the waters surrounding Guadalcanal during the day. But when evening came, all Allied surface craft were obliged to withdraw. Whereupon Japanese vessels, hovering up the Slot, would move in and take over Ironbottom Sound until near dawn. Rarely did the Japanese venture into these narrow waters during daylight, and every surface action around Guadalcanal resulted from contacts made when Allied vessels outstayed the sun.

The Japanese failed in four attempts at reoccupation because they never succeeded in capturing Henderson Field. In August (Battle of the Tenaru River, Battle of the Eastern Solomons), they landed insufficient troops to endanger American positions, and the carrier fleet which was to approach and fly in planes to the airstrip (had it been captured) timidly retired after an exchange of blows with American carrier forces. In September (Battle of Bloody Ridge), the Japanese failed again because there were still not enough of their troops on the island to wrest the airstrip from the Americans. In October (Battle for Henderson Field, Battle of Santa Cruz Islands), the Japanese repeated the tactics of the August attempt. By this time they had outsped the Allies in the race for reinforcement. There were by now about as many Japanese on Guadalcanal as there were Americans. But these proved not enough. The Americans retained the field; and the large Japanese battleship-carrier fleet, maneuvering to the

north awaiting word of victory on the island, was at last obliged to retire because of fuel shortage. It was while the enemy fleet was on this retirement course that it came under attack by planes from two small American carrier forces coming up from the southeast. The Americans lost a carrier in the ensuing battle; the Japanese, a hundred planes. In November (Naval Battle of Guadalcanal), the Japanese made their last attempt to recapture the island. This time they tried to bring in eleven transports full of troops to gain an overwhelming preponderance of power. But in a series of surface and air-sea actions they lost seven of the transports and two battleships and were thus obliged to abandon the attempt.

The Japanese now withdrew all capital ships from the area and did not employ them again in the South Pacific. During the following year the United States Navy likewise kept its major fighting vessels out of the Solomons area. American carriers and battleships and heavy new construction would be retained at Pearl Harbor until there could be assembled a fleet adequate for the great offensives to come.

By early 1943 Guadalcanal was secure in American hands. There followed the long drawn-out campaign of the Upper Solomons, in which the Japanese plane losses became increasingly heavy and disproportionate, while Allied naval forces moved steadily westward along the southern communication line. At the same time United States Army forces pushed northward across the eastern tip of New Guinea. Thus Army and Navy advanced on converging courses and in November came simultaneously against the barrier of Rabaul and the Bismarck Archipelago. Rabaul they soon neutralized in a series of stunning air blows and boxed it in by invading surrounding islands. The Army, assisted by the US Seventh Fleet, then continued to advance westward along the north New Guinea coast towards the Philippines.

## Offensive Phase (February 1943 - August 1945)

The war had reached another turning point. During the Solomon Campaign the Japanese Naval Air Force had lost 3,000 land- and carrier-based planes and 70 percent of the experienced pilots. The Imperial Navy was never to recover from this loss. The combined fleet was obliged to abandon the Central Pacific and withdraw behind a new defense line, the island chain running from Tokyo southeastward through the Marianas and Truk. The Japanese Army, meanwhile, had been taking heavy plane losses in New Guinea, where the US Fifth Air Force was to whittle enemy aircraft strength down to near zero within a few weeks of the Bismarck breakthrough. Clearly this absence of Japanese army and navy air power must be exploited. The Allied offensive-defensive was over.

### The Central Pacific

*Tarawa and the Gilberts (21-24 November 1943)*. When the Japanese fleet retreated to its inner defense line behind the Marianas, the old defense perimeter was not abandoned, and the garrisons were not withdrawn from the fortified islands. The Japanese naval mobile strike force was held back, but the network of "unsinkable aircraft carriers" remained intact.

In the central Pacific, the Japanese outer defense perimeter ran through the Gilbert Islands. Several of these small coral atolls had been fortified; Tarawa was the key position. By late 1943 Nimitz had enough strength to begin his advance; he started with Tarawa.

The assault, begun on 21 November, was one of the bloodiest landings of the war. The island was a mass of concrete pillboxes and fortifications manned by 3,000 Japanese Marines. All possible landing areas were covered with cross fire from concealed fortified positions. An assault from any direction was a frontal assault. The



### Landing at Tarawa

commander of the American support force feared an attack by submarines or aircraft; he kept his battleships and cruisers well offshore and maneuvered at high speed while they laid down the preparatory barrage. The barrage was short, inaccurate, and ineffective. Aircraft from the escort carriers were given area targets, not specific objectives. As a result, when the landing force of Marines hit the beaches, it faced the full force of the prepared Japanese defenses. Before Tarawa was secured, over 1,100 Americans died.

Tarawa taught the Navy and Marines how to make an amphibious assault on a small, well-fortified island. Henceforth, the support battleships, cruisers, etc., stood close inshore, stationary or nearly so, and kept up a continuous barrage. Aircraft were given specific targets to knock out. And Marines landing under fire learned to keep their heads down and unload tanks and artillery as fast as possible.

The lessons learned at Tarawa were put to good use in the following island hops. The Marshals came next, where Kwajalein was assaulted — but only after 15,000 tons of high explosives had ripped it to coral ribbons. Only 356 Marines were lost. A few weeks later, in February 1944, Eniwetok was taken in the same manner, with the loss of 339 men. The pattern of amphibious warfare in the Pacific was now set.

*The Marianas (June August 1944)*. The American attack on the Marianas opened a



**Yellow Beach, Makin Island (Tarawa)**

new phase of the American offensive. The Marianas were part of the Japanese inner defense ring. Both the "oil line" and Japan itself could be hit by forces stationed there, and the Marianas were the last step before the central Pacific and southern Pacific thrusts converged on the Philippines.

The assault on the Marianas in mid-1944 brought the reclusive Japanese Fleet out of the Java Sea area, where it had been desperately training pilots to replace the losses of the Solomons campaign. The hasty training proved inadequate, for in the Battle of the Philippine Sea (the sea fight that accompanied the invasion of Saipan in the Marianas), American pilots of the Fast Carrier Task Force shot them down by the hundreds — the "Marianas Turkey Shoot" they called it. In one day 315 Japanese planes were brought down, at the cost of 23 American aircraft.

The capture of the Marianas reopened an old debate among the American services over strategy. Both MacArthur and Nimitz had agreed that the Philippines and the "oil line" were proper targets for the American thrusts, but they did so for different reasons and in pursuit of different strategies. With the Philippines now within reach, attention shifted to the reduction of Japan itself, and here there was no agreement among the services on the proper strategy. Army leaders in general (including MacArthur) believed that Japan would have to be conquered by

invasion and occupation of the Japanese islands. Hence they considered it necessary to recapture Luzon as a rearward and Okinawa as an advanced staging base. Navy leaders in general (including Nimitz) believed that Japan could be conquered by defeating the enemy fleet, gaining control of the sea, starving the Japanese people and war machine into submission through blockade, — that is, by cutting all important lines of communication to the home islands. The vital line to be severed was of course the "oil line." This line could be cut by seizure of Luzon or Formosa, or by forces operating out of the captured Marianas. Leaders of the newly built-up Army Air Force also joined the debate; they believed that Japan was to be defeated by strategic bombing, through destruction of Japanese industrial centers in the home islands by air attack. This could be done by B-29s stationed in the Marianas and possibly also from Okinawa if it could be seized as a forward base.

No one single strategy was adopted. Once again, as in the earlier MacArthur-Nimitz debate, the Joint Chiefs compromised by adopting all strategies simultaneously. The Army was to prepare for an invasion while the Navy blockaded and the Air Force bombed.

Capture of the Marianas provided the US Fifth Air Force with the bases it needed to begin the bombing of the industrial centers in the Tokyo area. Also, from these islands, the Navy could step up the submarine campaign, which had already gone far towards choking off supplies to Japan and cutting down the Imperial Fleet. For by this time American submarines, lurking on the "oil line" and the Tokyo-Marianas line, had sunk more than 2,000,000 tons of enemy shipping and destroyed a disproportionate share of combat craft. It is fairly certain the United States surface fleets, submarines, and aircraft operating out of the Marianas could have gained control of the Philippine and East China seas.

By interdicting enemy shipping in these waters and mining all approaches to Japanese harbors, they unquestionably could in time have starved Japan into submission.

But it was considered necessary to recapture the Philippines to provide the Army its rearward staging base for invasion of the Empire. Thus the Southwest Pacific and the Central Pacific thrusts converged on the Philippines in the fall of 1944.

*Leyte and the Philippines (October 1944-February 1945)*. Luzon was the prize in the Philippines: to defend it the Japanese army had spread a quarter of a million troops throughout the archipelago. MacArthur was expected to land on Mindanao, the southernmost island, and slowly fight his way north to Luzon. Instead, the two main American thrusts across the Pacific converged on Leyte, midway between Mindanao and Luzon. This was "island hopping" on a grand scale; at one stroke the whole Japanese army south of Leyte was cut off and isolated. It could do nothing to interfere with the huge American invasion force.

The Japanese Navy was more dangerous. The landing in Leyte brought the Combined Fleet out in force. It descended on Leyte Gulf in four sections. One, a carrier force with no planes, was to act as a decoy to pull the US naval screen away from the landing force. The main battle forces were then to move in and smash the beachhead. The decoy worked, but US naval strength was so overwhelming that the remaining ships demolished two of the three attacking forces, while the third rapidly retired. At Leyte Gulf the Japanese lost three battleships, an attack carrier, three light carriers, ten cruisers and nine destroyers, without seriously interfering with the landing.

These losses broke its back; after Leyte Gulf the Japanese Combined Fleet no longer existed as an effective fighting force. Luzon — and the rest of the Philippines — lay open

to the American army.

In the operations in Philippine waters, the fast carrier task force demonstrated its usefulness in carrying out still another function, that of lending strategic support to troops. This it did by keeping on the move around the northern Philippines, making strikes on Japanese airstrips and shipping, not only in the Manila area but as far away as Okinawa, Formosa, Indochina, and the China coast.

The enemy thus was subject to continual surprise and found no way to concentrate against the fast-stepping carriers. To protect themselves against this shifting attack, the Japanese tried to be strong everywhere and ended by being strong nowhere. The Americans were achieving the tactical triumph of breaking up the enemy concentration while preserving their own. At the same time, they were cutting his communication lines everywhere and rendering his positions untenable. It was a battle of a mobile air field against immobile air fields in which mobility won hands down. Following this campaign, the Japanese air war was reduced strictly to suicide tactics.

With the recapture of Luzon, the oil from the East Indies, so vital to Japan's war machine, was of course cut off completely. The Japanese could not long continue fighting. Only once more would the small remnant of their once powerful fleet come out, a foolish suicide mission that accomplished nothing. ("Tradition," explained Admiral Toyoda.) The US Navy had accomplished its major objective. But the Army and the Air Force had not achieved theirs. The Army still wanted Okinawa as an advanced staging base for invasion. The Air Force needed Iwo Jima as an airdrome whence short-range fighters could accompany Mariana-based bombers in raids over the Tokyo area, and as an emergency recovery base for damaged B-29s.

It needed Okinawa to get at industrial centers in southern Japan. The last American campaign in the Pacific was directed against these two points.

### **Iwo Jima**



**Assault on Iwo Jima.**

Iwo Jima lay just 750 miles from Tokyo, near the half-way point between Japan and the B-29 bases on Guam, Tinian, and Saipan in the Marianas. A grim, barren volcanic island, it was defended by 23,000 Japanese soldiers sworn to die fighting and to kill ten Americans for every Japanese death. The Americans landed on 19 February 1945; it took nearly a month to secure the island. In the words of Lt



**Flag Raising on Mount Suribachi**

General "Howling Mad" Smith, US Marine commander in the Pacific, "The fighting was the toughest the Marines ran across in 168 years." The Marines suffered 20,196 casualties on Iwo, including 4,189 killed. But before the war was over, 2,251 B-29s had made emergency landings on Iwo, saving 24,761 crewmen. Iwo was expensive, but worth the cost.

### **Okinawa**

The assault on Okinawa was the largest made in the Pacific — 1,300 American warships of all sizes, carrying an invasion force of 100,000 men. The island was bombarded from close-in for ten days before the first assault wave went in. The initial landing, on 1 April 1945, was easy; once inland, the entrenched Japanese began to take their toll. The fighting continued for almost three months. Casualties were high — 12,520 Americans killed, 36,631 wounded. Over 100,000 Japanese soldiers fought to the death.

It was at Okinawa that kamikaze entered the American vocabulary. Without carriers, short of fuel, lacking experienced pilots, Japanese aircraft could not be used effectively in normal combat. But even an inexperienced pilot could dive into a ship, and a one-way mission needed only half the normal fuel load. Young Japanese pilots volunteered to fly suicide missions against the American fleet at Okinawa. Modern versions of the kamikaze—



**USS Bunker Hill hit by two kamikazes**

divine wind — that had destroyed Khublai Khan's invasion fleet in 1381, they were determined to destroy this American fleet. The kamikaze aircraft took off from fields in Kyushu; for 82 days they flew against the American fleet. Almost 2,600 aircraft were used for these missions. They sank a total of 45 American ships and damaged 288 more, including 12 carriers, 15 battleships and 87 destroyers. In the end, even this was not enough; Okinawa was taken, and by July 1945 Japan lay helpless under American guns.

Helpless, but not yet defeated. The stubborn resistance and tough, fanatical last-ditch defenses of the Japanese at Iwo Jima and Okinawa had a visibly sobering effect on the Americans. American submarines and carrier planes had reduced Japan's merchant fleet to a memory. American B-29s flying from the Marianas were methodically demolishing Japan's industries and burning out her major cities. Much of Tokyo itself lay in ashes, and yet there appeared to be no hint of surrender. On the basis of the Iwo Jima and Okinawa experiences, the Army estimated an invasion of Japan would cost at least one million American casualties and perhaps six times that to the Japanese.

Unknown to the Americans, there was a peace party in Japan, and influential people

were working toward an end to the war. They had forced Tojo out of office when the Marianas fell and by 1945 were actively seeking a way to surrender. Their one condition: the position of the Emperor must not be disturbed. Since Japan was at peace with the Soviet Union, the Russians were asked to convey the request to their American and British allies. Stalin agreed to do so, but said nothing to his allies; he had his own plans for the Pacific. While the surrender initiative gathered dust in Moscow, on 6 August 1945, the Enola Gay appeared over Hiroshima to

drop the atomic bomb. Three days later Nagasaki was incinerated by another atomic bomb; and on the same day Russian troops poured across the Manchurian border and swept toward Port Arthur and Darien. The Kwantung Army officers of the early 1930s had been right — Russia still wanted Manchuria. The next day the Emperor, in an unprecedented move, interfered in the Japanese political process and ordered surrender negotiations to begin. The Japanese people were notified of the surrender in a dramatic Imperial radio broadcast on 15 August. Official surrender ceremonies were conducted on 2 September 1945, aboard the US battleship Missouri, in Tokyo Bay. The Pacific War was over.

## RECOMMENDED READING

Philip Crowl and Jeter Isley, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*

Samuel E. Morison, *The Two-Ocean War* (pb)

Clark Reynolds, *The Fast Carriers*

Richard Tregaskis, *Guadalcanal Diary*

Barbara Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China. 1911-1945* (pb)