Following is a preview of the book X-Day: Japan. Most of the book is in journal format. Portions of selected journal entries are presented here.

More information, including other samples, references, and the full table of contents may be seen at the project web site, xdayjapan.com.

*People have a funny way of thinking about history as a string of inevitable outcomes*

– Commander Cecil Lambert

## Guide for the Modern Reader

The book Kyushu Diary was originally published in 1946, in which Walter F. Tuttle combined his own columns and other notes into an edited compilation. The second edition of 1952 was also by Tuttle's own hand, with added footnotes, a map, some previously censored sections, and a post-script from the author. We are not calling this new book a 3rd edition. We have left Tuttle's own 2nd edition of his compilation intact. X-Day: Japan starts with the second edition of Kyushu Diary and expands on it with extra features for a 21st century presentation.

The target audience of Walter F. Tuttle's original Kyushu Diary is a newspaper reader of 1945. That person speaks a slightly different language from someone in the 21st century. That reader was persistently exposed to an argot of military affairs during six years of global war. Some of the words and concepts novel to that reader are mundane to us now, and many common phrases or jargon of that fast-changing time quickly became anachronistic or forgotten.

Tuttle wrote that "logistics" was a new word to many people then, as fielding a large army into undeveloped territory across a vast ocean was an unprecedented concept. In our modern post-jet-age economy, "logistics" is found in perky ad slogans of major companies.

Our modern world has been shaped by things we call "low intensity conflicts", "limited war", and "counter-terrorism operations". These are all terms that would have been completely unknowable to a reader of the pre-nuclear 1940s. To help the modern reader bridge those gaps of time and language, we have included a section of brief historical context, and a small glossary.

Histories are generally either top-down views, summarizing the whole situation, or narratives from an individual perspective. Tuttle's Kyushu Diary is at its heart a personal narrative. But Tuttle went to some trouble to paint a complete picture of the scene in the Pacific, from the home front all the way across to the battlefields in Japan, for the benefit of American readers who had been shown

mostly news from Europe in the preceding years. Toward that effort we add this guide, additional maps, a list of further reading, and a judicious few additions to the text footnotes. The format of any notes added in 2015 will be as below* on this page.

Tuttle believed in the spontaneous uncertainly of momentous events, which could turn out vastly different from changes in decision making or from natural flukes, and he was keen to communicate this to readers. In that spirit we also include a list of books of alternate histories or historical fiction novels, fantastic explorations of entirely possible what-ifs in this part of history. Popular topics in this genre are 'What if we forced Japanese surrender by dropping atomic bombs on cities instead of military targets?' and 'What if we dropped atomic bombs on cities and they kept on fighting anyway?'

The book is not a parade of military hardware or a treatise on combined arms tactics. It does not get into any high level politics or command decisions. As before the war, Tuttle wrote about people and how they over came their own local problems. As a reporter he provided regular updates about the progress of each battle and the larger situation, but his real interest was in setting the stage for human stories to play out.

The text of Kyushu Diary varies considerably from the columns that were published under Tuttle's byline during the war. The columns were worked over by many editors, and parsed out to fill some number of column-inches three days a week. Tuttle did not actually write to a format or deadline; he submitted when he could. The book was written directly from Tuttle's own notes and original submissions. Many boring days are skipped, and some busy days have a dozen pages of dense material. That's war for you.

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* [Editor's note, 2015: This is how foot notes added for a 21st century reader will appear. – sdm]

## July 16, 1945 : San Diego, California

They made me a corporal today. It's completely ceremonial, of course. Civilian war correspondents do not have a rank. While normally billeted[*] with the officers, and wearing the same uniform, the uniform has no insignia and we are outranked in the field by the lowest one stripe private. Still, they for some reason thought I had done enough to merit some sort of recognition[†], so there was a slightly farcical "ceremony" in the corner of the HQ office courtyard.

Commander Samuel "Sammy" Adelanto, XO of the sprawling and ever growing naval base, pinned an oversize medal on my chest that one of the mess cooks had fashioned from a large can lid . A few words were said half in jest about getting me out of their hair. A couple veterans from remote islands in the central Pacific earnestly wished me luck – they said I hadn't seen the worst of anything yet. Two young recruits about to deploy chatted me up, probably hoping to get their names in the paper (Marine Corps 2nd Lieutenant Victor Saldano of east Queens, New York, and Marine Private Smithy Batson, of Knoxville, Tennessee).

I was writing dispatches from the field in Europe for three years more or less non-stop. Two weeks here in the ever-expanding Navy base is the longest I've been in one spot since 1942. Here the world has sped by me instead. There are so many bodies and ships moving through San Diego it's dizzying trying to keep up.

My first job here was to pick up a fresh military ID card and get my "orders". Each correspondent is always assigned to a particular unit and commanding officer. They gave me a temporary assignment attaching me to the naval base when I got here. I can go

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[*] A billet in formal usage is a description of the details of a military posting, down to what special (e.g. cold weather) equipment will be issued, rules of the local base, and how many pair of socks a soldier is expected to keep in his locker. It is often used to mean just the room one is assigned to sleep in.

[†] [Editor's note: Walt Tuttle's reporting under fire through the European campaign is already a growing legend, as readers of our previous compilation of his work can see through his stubbornly modest accounts.]

anywhere I like, but technically have to check in with the senior officer of the command to go outside its area of responsibility. That wasn't a concern here in a U.S. city.

I expect to head across the Pacific soon. My time off in the States has been refreshing, if surprisingly hectic with planned and impromptu public appearances, but now I will head west. I plan to tell you about what I see out there, on those dots in the middle of the great ocean, and how different they are from dots on the maps of Europe. Men and machines are being prepared on those islands for the next big action. I plan to be with them when it comes.

## July 19, 1945 : San Diego, California

"We weren't expecting that plane," he told me over dinner, "not until it made radio contact from a few hours out. They came in all the way from Johnston Atoll, skipping Hawaii entirely. They were in a really big hurry, flying all night at maximum range. I can tell you everything that anybody who was there on the ramp saw for themselves. And honestly I don't know much else."

"The second guy off the plane was Major General Richard Sutherland, General MacArthur's own chief of staff. The first guy off I think was Colonel Charles Willoughby, head of intelligence for MacArthur, which is why I know of him. The plane was the Bataan, MacArthur's own plane, so his guys aren't here on leave."

"They went to the radio room to try to get a private phone line to Washington [D.C.], and to put a stack of coded dispatches into the operator's hand. They left after more than an hour on the phone and took off again east bound with a full fuel load."

"From there I can only speculate." I naturally encouraged his speculation. "MacArthur wants something, and is going to the highest levels to get it. Truman is away, still on a boat heading to Europe[*]." Commander Lambert poked the air with his fork to

[*] President Truman was traveling for the Potsdam Conference for most of late July and early August, 1945. His ship the USS Augusta was outfitted with the

emphasize the next point, “It would be just like MacArthur to make an end-around play and put his guys in front of the real decision makers while the President is away.”

I asked rhetorically if they would be in such a hurry if it was a scheme planned in advance. The Potsdam conference was scheduled months before. It looked to me more like something had come up suddenly, and they wanted a quick decision, before some other impending thing happened.

Commander Lambert considered it a moment and agreed. “It’s one of those things we’ll probably never know about. Things will just happen one way, and we’ll never even think about how it could have been done differently, with who knows how different a result. People have a funny way of thinking about history as a string of inevitable outcomes.”

## July 29, 1945 : Guam, Marianas

One can hardly say enough about the Seabees and what they’ve done out here. Graded land and hard surfaced roads are placed almost as if the Seabees have them in suitcases ready to fold out when they check in to each tropical hostelry they visit. I understand a great deal of dynamite was actually involved.

If you’ve ever complained about the quality and condition of roads in your home county, instead of writing letters to the local newspaper editor, I suggest you write to some ambitious foreign power asking to be invaded. With any luck, the Navy will have a hand in taking your town back, and will bring the Seabees with them.

I am housed in the bachelor officer’s quarters of the Navy base. While technically Quonset huts of pre-fabricated design, these are two-story buildings with every detail thought of. Housing for all the military personnel here was built from scratch, and also for

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latest communications equipment and could receive dispatches at sea anywhere in range of radio relays.

thousands of natives who were left with nothing after the back-and-forth fighting. Beside the other obvious building types, we have constructed here warehouses, ammunition bunkers, hospitals, radio studios, tank farms, and maintenance shops for everything from typewriters to heavy trucks. I took advantage of the typewriter shop services myself.

## August 10, 1945 : Okinawa, Ryukus

I talked my way into the air control room for Kadena. It was busy, as expected, and the atmosphere was tense. Bad weather was moving in earlier than predicted. They would need to recover planes under thick clouds bearing heavy rain. Radar screens and radio stations received the keen focus of the controllers' attention.

Added to the mix was a flight of new B-29 bombers coming in for deployment at Bolo point to the northwest. Those pilots would likely be unfamiliar with the airfields and landmarks around them. Most of the landing strips here are parallel to each other, running with the prevailing winds. Controllers don't need to give multiple headings and control crossing flight paths, if they can get each plane into the right corridor. They have a system for it, but sometimes it's not enough.

Late in the day, with minimal sunlight pushing through the low rain clouds, a B-29 came down in front of me, right on top of a smaller plane. The A-20 "Havoc" had just landed, gun belts and bomb racks emptied, coming to a slow roll only halfway down the generous runway. It was completely demolished. The pilot of the B-29 probably lined up on the wrong runway. We'll never get the chance to ask him or his co-pilot. The nose of their bomber broke off cleanly and bounded down the runway in a violent twisting tumble. It remained intact but their bodies were shattered.

I stood at the window watching ground crews scramble to put out fires and clear debris from the wet coral pavement. Calm but forceful voices behind me issued rapid instructions to dozens of inbound planes, diverting them to other fields. The rain kept coming

into the night so I found a quiet corner of the base office block to camp in.

## October 10, 1945 : Okinawa, Ryukus

I am writing this on what may be the last piece of dry paper on Okinawa. It was found under a truck that rolled over into a small supply tent. That truck was the only thing which kept the tent in place yesterday. Hurricane force winds ripped up every other tent in sight.

We were told to expect significant rain two days ago, but it turned into an epic windstorm, much worse than what we saw last month. Whole camps are totally wiped out. Ocean going vessels of many sizes are stranded in mud a hundred feet in from the normal shore line. Many ships were moved out into deep water, and they are still being counted. Some of them will never return.

The Navy weather station here had little to tell me. I didn't bother them too long, because like many here their office is now mixed into a field of rubble. Some information has come in by radio from Guam, where weather observing B-29s are based. They knew a typhoon was running through to the south of us. But for no reason, perhaps the whim of a bored Greek god, it stopped and turned north, growing stronger by the hour as it was nudged along by that neglected ancient immortal.

Anyone who was living in a tent, without exception so far as I have seen, is now homeless. Torn patches of wet green canvas littered the adjacent hillsides this morning. Now many of the larger pieces are laid out over stacks of junk, in the hope they will dry when the sun comes out again. Men spent all day salvaging personal gear and essential equipment, those who were healthy that is. Medics are scrambling to care for the injured, using what supplies they can scrounge.

The weather guys told me that officially winds got up to 130 miles an hour. They admitted that their instruments only go up to

130 miles an hour, not that I could check them on it as their wooden building is gone and their instrument tower is a twisted wreck.

The able bodied are working desperately to claw back their home from nature. Plenty of people here are not able bodied, so repairing the hospital for this part of the island is a top priority. It has some intact buildings left, but storage tents around it are shredded, leaving most of our medical supplies to the ravenous appetites of the wind and rain.

For the time being I am camped in the one masonry building in our area, the photo lab. Wet bed rolls are spread over the floor of this building, wall-to-wall. Power is still out so we will have limited light after the 6 pm sunset. Some groups of men have fashioned shelters under jury-rigged pieces of torn tents, with scraps of wood laid out to make an approximately level floor.

This corner of the giant Boy Scout camp that is Okinawa is at least stabilized by now. As groups each get their own situation under control, they are getting back to the jobs they do for other units. A crated field kitchen, earmarked for the upcoming assault, was uncrated and we even have hot coffee and warm food from cans. With my current situation up to tolerable, I too plan to get back to my job, moving around to see the situation at other camps. I suspect our field kitchen was not the only thing un-earmarked for the invasion.

## November 11, 1945 : X-4

So far as I am told, until recently it was U.S. military practice to always call the day of an invasion, amphibious or otherwise, “D-day.” (They also call the hour that it starts “H-hour.”) Something changed in the last year, now that “D-day” has become something of a brand name.

Newspapers take D-Day to mean specifically the June, 1944 expansion of the war against Germany with landings on the Normandy coast of France. They already forget about the other fights which raged even then in all corners of Europe.

If they do that much in a year, I have to wonder what people will be told of this war fifty years from now. There might be just one D-day, which decided the whole fight in Europe. Never mind the massive land war in Russia, the back-and-forth turf wars in north Africa, or the painful struggle through Italy. In a hundred years they may just call it "The D-Day War"*.

Anyway, since Normandy and "D-Day" are forever linked in the public mind, the military had to get more creative. For the invasion of Luzon in the Philippines they called it "S-day." At Okinawa, April 1st, which happened to also be Easter Sunday, was called "Love Day," much to the chagrin of superstitious or wry-witted soldiers and Marines who saw the setup of a bemusing but possibly bitter irony.

This time around our invasion of the island of Kyushu, set for November 15th, 1945, will begin on "X-day." That makes today X-4. I for one am glad we are back to a simple single letter.

If you've never seen a map with a whole modern amphibious invasion drawn on it, and I showed it to you, we would agree that it is a thing of beauty. It is practically a geometric work of art, and as such it is far removed from the messy brutal actuality of the thing it represents. I have seen a few invasions now and will testify to that.

On the map there are neat columns of small symbols, representing the AMTRACs and Higgins boats in their lanes of travel, with wide open lanes for vessels returning from unloading their precious deadly cargo. The columns are in staggered rows, each row representing an assault wave, each wave with a departure time known to the minute.

Crossing the many columns are open rows for fire support ships to cross back and forth, small rocket ships up front, destroyers farther back, and lastly big cruisers and battleships. There are lines of control, at which signal boats will organize the assault boats, form up rows, and send each wave at the appointed minute. Of course all of the lines are imaginary. And all of the close order is subject to

* [Editor's note, 2015: Not if we can help it! – sdm]

compounding chaos once the enemy, and implacable nature, play their hands.

The columns are packed tightly and sent forward in rapid succession, to maximize the flow of forces onto the beach. In simple cold arithmetic, the more targets an attacker presents for a fixed number of enemy guns and troops to fire at, the more will survive to advance and reduce enemy positions. But when a boat in a tight column, between two other columns, is hit and disabled, those behind it are stuck. There is nowhere to go until boats running parallel get by. Of course enemy gunners know this.

## November 16, 1945 : X+1 – off Kyushu

Radio calls picked up urgency as two radar pickets ships saw a swarm of objects at the same time. A loose mass of objects came at cloud level from the direction of Nagasaki[*]. Dozens more stragglers spanned fifty miles behind the main body. It was just at first light, so our radar equipped night fighters were still on station. One at a time they braved the cloud layer to hunt by glowing scope. Flying singly in strict zones to avoid collisions, they would do little to reduce the pack.

Close flying through clouds is no picnic, even for veteran pilots. Our second line of picket ships reported at least one pair of wrecked planes tumbling down out of the clouds, probably after a mid-air collision. Minutes later the outer ring of destroyers in our invasion fleet opened up with radar-directed flak[†] at the approaching mob. Other ships joined in before I heard excited Japanese from one of the radios which had been silent.

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[*] Just off the provided map to the northwest, Nagasaki was a substantial naval and industrial city which had not been hit by American bombing until late August, 1945.

[†] By that time in 1945 many American ships' guns, down to heavy anti-aircraft pieces, were tied into radar systems which automatically aimed the shots.

I ran outside to look, brushing aside a scolding ensign, who shut the hatch behind me. Scores of Japanese planes dropped down out of the clouds. Two dozen Navy fighters, up and ready from the early radar picket alert, were inbound from the west to meet them. Once the forces merged it would be impossible for the ships' gunners to target Japanese planes without endangering American pilots. This rarely stopped American gunners under *kamikaze* attack.

One Japanese plane broke out, faster than the others, directly at my ship. I didn't run or even flinch. Its approach did not look like an attack run. The Jap plane streaked along low and level, shifting sideways just enough to be difficult to hit. The pilot was cool and experienced. I could see that his plane had no bomb. He did have two U.S. Navy "Hellcats" on his tail. The Japanese plane tore over my ship and I recognized it as one of the newest types, a Shinden, faster and stronger than the famous Reisen "Zero" that gave the world so much trouble through 1942[*].

Behind the Shinden were the two American fighters, and behind those three older Japanese Navy planes were coming into view, each with an oversize bomb slung below. Our F6s were almost upon the dodging Shinden, and the lead Hellcat tore into it, throwing .50-caliber slugs through its structure and making the engine smoke. The Jap pilot pulled up into a full 180 degree reversal, adding a half barrel roll near the top, keeping up airspeed along the way.

The surprised American fighters started a long level turn to come around and finish their prey. But the lead Japanese pilot had done his job. His three followers stormed ahead free of opposing fighters. They weaved near wave top, daring Navy gunners to shoot so low they could hit other ships. Gunners did fire, from every angle, and shortly the left plane erupted into a shower of debris which scattered over the water. The other two bore on, absorbing minor hits, engines screaming.

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[*] One could hardly avoid learning to spot planes and ships. Recognition charts were pasted everywhere, and decks of playing cards were handed out with aircraft profiles on them.

Just 300 yards forward and to port of my ship was the transport USS Montrose, also carrying elements of the 5th Marine Division. Like us she was still full, waiting for the division to get orders ashore. With barely a dozen yards to spare, gunners on the Montrose found the right plane in the remaining suicide pair, causing it to break apart, but it was too late.

Most of both planes plowed into the side of the lightly armored transport, the bomb from the damaged plane impacting somewhere below the water line. In a dramatic flourish the injured Shinden pilot finished his flaming dive directly into the superstructure of the rapidly listing transport.

The Montrose sank in eight minutes. The Third Battalion of the 28th Marines ceased to exist.

## November 18, 1945 : X+3 – Kushikino, Kyushu

Captain Clifford showed me some of the things of interest which had been brought back from the local area. Clerks were typing up reports on them tonight, for courier and radio relay to the other corps. “The town behind us was totally deserted, and I mean completely. This was no last-minute evacuation. It was long planned.”

I asked how he could be sure. The locals could simply be ordered and obedient people, as we’ve been told.

“We don’t have the actual plan, but we found this.” He put an empty brown cloth satchel on the folding table next to me. It was torn along one edge and dirty with dark earth all over the outside. “The owner of this is dead, one of the last to leave apparently. Our artillery caught up with him. Here is some of what we found in the bag.” He picked up an unmarked folder from next to an analyst who had moved on to type about something else in the pile. Tipping the folder open with one finger, he snapped up the first three sheets of paper from within, then closed the folder and set it back. “This is a fighting manual, with pictures and instructions for various home-made weapons.”

I held the first two double-sided pages, which were run on a production press. Simple silhouette figures held clubs and spears and small bombs in various poses, next to blocks of Japanese text. The last page showed groups of people working together, bombing then stabbing then bludgeoning other hapless faceless rifle-toting figures.

"This last page is just a list of names, with a few dates." He handed me the handwritten sheet. "The names are in groups, each next to a larger name, which is written in more formal address, a group leader we think. A character next to each group corresponds to one of the weapons in the other instructions." He sat back for a second to let me digest the connection.
"The people here, the civilians, they're not just told to not trust us, or to resist us however they can. They've been trained and organized." Captain Clifford added, almost under his breath, "The enemy army here has grown by two million."

## November 19, 1945 : X+4 – Kushikino, Kyushu

With good sight lines across the relatively wide open mud flat, the armor column moved quickly around the bend, almost ahead of its scouts. A jeep mounted machine gun fired into a suspected enemy position to the inside, and that was the cue for all the Japanese guns to open up. It was also the cue for a squadron of Japanese tanks to charge into the flat from the east.

Stationary guns cut into the American column behind its tanks. Some AMTRACs exploded in place, others took multiple lesser hits as they sped off the road toward the bluffs and trees, shedding Marines as men scattered away from the tracked targets. Our tanks turned toward to the Japanese positions, to put rounds on them and to present their thickest armor to the enemy. But there were no safe lanes. Multiple positions with Japanese heavy anti-tank guns were spread out on either side of the river valley. Two of the lead six tanks took disabling hits through the side, and more small caliber fire as Marine tankers tried to moved their injured mates out through escape hatches.

By that time the Japanese tanks were spotted, at least a dozen. Or two dozen, depending on who you ask. Our armored squadron turned back up the road to face them with the remaining four Shermans. So far in this war the Japanese have not fielded a tank equal to even our medium weight Sherman M4. Today was no exception. The American tankers met their counterparts head-on in open tank-on-tank battle, which they could hardly have expected on any other Pacific island before now.

The Japanese machines screamed forward to close distance and fight the American steel at point blank range, the only way their smaller guns stood a chance. Half of their number were destroyed before closing within 400 yards, but they still outnumbered the American quartet. In an exhibition of old-fashioned jousting, tanks ripping past each other just inches away, whole strips of sod and clouds of dirt were slung skyward by the desperately turning machines.

Two more American brutes were disabled, one losing a track and another burning from a round that punched through from behind into the engine compartment. Still, by plain count they had the best of the stubby Japanese mules, making scrap of most of them.

With four or five running tanks left, the Japanese turned to withdraw. They were chased by our last two stallions, who gunned down another two enemy vehicles before the Japs slipped into the next narrow chasm and turned out of sight. The Marine tanks held back, stopping momentarily to decide the next move. A tanker from the one which lost its track described the scene to me, Sergeant Cliff Buckley. He and his driver had found cover under a small river bridge a quarter mile from the last healthy tanks.

“From a hut beside the road on the left, and out of some trees on the right, eight or ten guys came charging out. Four of them had thick satchels hung across one shoulder. The others fired rifles from the hip back toward us, drawing fire away from the satchel guys I guess. By this time we had a couple machine guns set up and plenty of Marines lined up along the riverbank like cord wood. They cut down all the Jap rifle men and dropped two of the satchel guys. But the last two got right up to the side of each of our tanks.”

"Both charges went off almost at the same time. They sent bits of tread three hundred feet. One guy got his charge under the tank enough that it was tossed up and almost flipped over." That tank had one survivor, if he wakes up again.

The Marines took a beating today, rolling the dice on a quick thrust. But that first deep drive into enemy territory had one sure bright spot. We picked up a flyer who had gone missing. He was taken prisoner by the Japs just yesterday. They hadn't decided where to send him yet, so he was still near the front, and got away during the initial confusion of our attacks.

This afternoon our intel guys debriefed the young photo recon officer, Lieutenant Jorg 'Georgie' Gjerde of Duluth, Minnesota, who had been in the back seat of a twin engine plane that went down with mechanical trouble just short of our lines. He managed to escape, but only after being interrogated by a Japanese officer and his translator. Our instructions to any captured pilots have for some time been to cooperate fully and tell their captors everything they know. They'd talk eventually and the guys we send forward aren't told much to start with.

The interrogator had asked, 'Just how many soldiers will the Americans attempt to land on the Japanese home islands?' Georgie says he answered immediately, without a blink,

"All of them."

## November 21, 1945 : X+6 – Ariake Bay

Sailors on the Athene ran all directions toward battle stations. Soldiers moved down into the holds, where they were instructed to wait out any attack. I ran, field glasses in hand, toward any ladder I could find that took me up higher for a better sightseeing location.

I got to my best vantage point, forward and several decks up on the superstructure, just as the medium anti-aircraft pieces across the invasion fleet came alive. All guns were firing to the northwest,

over land. Whatever the threat was, it was coming from the interior of the island. In my binoculars I could just make out flaming planes falling out of the sky, one and two at a time. A few flew down out of the clouds under power, still over land – over our lines. Pulling up and turning clumsily, surprised at the lack of water and naval targets, each was chewed up by ground fire shortly after coming into view.

Ships in the fleet began to slew their AA batteries different directions, as the radar targets came almost directly overhead. Some guns were at maximum elevation before the first live planes came diving out of the sky. Just as those planes came diving, more planes, slow and low flying, were spotted coming out over land at tree top. Patrolling Navy fighters, helpless to intercept the cloud-covered waves, shot out to intercept those low flying bogies while they had a chance.

Planes diving out of the clouds had a short window in time to find a target. They had no fighter escorts, all were suicide bombers. Most were probably inexperienced pilots flying old planes, but there were hundreds of them, and they were right on top of the fleet.

*Kamikazes* came down so thick that for a time it looked more like part of the weather than a contrivance of man. American gunners kept up a furious pace of firing. The hardest part of their job was choosing which target to work on, out of so many deadly options. Airplane wreckage and small oil slicks littered half the bay before the first of the suicide planes found success.

I watched myself as the destroyer USS Kidd was hit twice. The old cruiser USS Chester took three impacts amidships and was still burning at noon when she was abandoned. But the focus of the onslaught was clearly the transports. Most of the troops were already ashore, but our heavy support equipment was largely still waiting on the water. In close sequence I saw a heavily laden cargo ship and two tank landing ships next to her put down with multiple impacts from one well-disciplined formation of suicide planes. Behind them the tanker USS Kishwaukee, loaded with aviation fuel, lit up the eastern sky brighter than the sun after just one near vertical impact drove straight through the ship, flooding the sea with burning fuel.

After an intense few dozen minutes, the assault from above and over land was down to a few stragglers, aircraft which got up late or got lost. One at a time they were easy prey for fighters and Navy guns. Then an alert went out about more planes coming from land to the northeast. Practically out of the ground around Takahata-yama another thirty-some planes launched toward the rear of our fleet.

## November 23, 1945 : X+8 – inland from Ariake Bay

Our Lieutenant Cooper, having learned much in the previous 36 hours, quietly gave instructions to get our machine guns set up and assigned rifle teams to support them in sectors. The platoon faced open farm plots, where fresh water crops were grown between the dikes, and had excellent fields of fire over the barren wintertime plots.

Aircraft which had been flying everywhere overhead became more focused over our area. By early afternoon we had an air show just for us. Single engine Navy fighters and twin engine Army bombers flew in a parade from over the bay, past us on the left and on to targets directly inland.

We could follow the battle just by timing the passage of aircraft and the explosions of their bombs or rockets. The interval between the two got smaller and smaller, until it was under a minute. Then the planes stopped coming.

Motion was seen in the brush across one of our assigned farm fields and a machine gun on that side let loose a burst of five or six rounds before a sergeant yanked the gunner back. “Mellow Mellow, or whatever the hell! It’s us!!” the brush called out. A mixed group of about two dozen dirty American G.I.s emerged and hustled over the flat under an all clear sign from that squad sergeant.

With just a few words shared about the situation, they settled in with us, some taking firing positions, others collapsing into shapeless heaps of whatever makes up an exhausted American

soldier. The next disturbance in the brush would not get a warning shot.

I am sure that there were deafening sounds of war from all around us, but as we waited for the enemy to approach, focused intently on the open space immediately in front of us, I can't recall anything but cemetery-grade silence. That silence deteriorated slowly. A cyclic mechanical squeak grew louder over the span of a minute and was joined by the grumble of a badly muffled engine. A Japanese tank, surely one of the last, breached the tree line and rolled down off the road into a soft farm field just 150 yards west of my platoon's left end.

We had no heavy weapons to deal with the tank but had plenty of softer targets in short order. First walking, then running, thirty or forty Japanese infantry came out from the brush into our field. Other groups of men made better speed running down elevated roads that broke up the fields every quarter mile. Riflemen and machine gunners from our side fired wildly into the approaching infantry. They were still green and our non-coms had their hands full keeping young machine gunners from melting their barrels.

There were no friendly troops to our left for a good gap, farther than I could see. We were it. The tank on that side noticed the same thing and sized up my platoon as a target. It turned toward our flank, churning up dark brown earth as its gun came around toward one of our newly dug gun pits. Japanese soldiers crowded behind the tank, covered from our rifle fire.

I ducked into my hole, as did everyone around me, expecting the tank to fire. A loud noise came from that direction, but it was not the sound of a Jap tank gun. I popped up to get a look, just in time to see a second round from the USS Heerman crush the far side of the Japanese tracked gun. The tank was a flaming ruin, and its escorting infantry took cover behind the next raised road behind the tank.

In the distance I saw tracers from another distant American machine gun, firing back toward us. The Japanese had found a place of no refuge, so they ran, in all directions. Our rifle men picked off many of them on the run. One young Japanese solider chose to run directly toward the water. He had only fifty yards left to go. No one

fired at him, maybe because it would mean firing straight down our own lines, maybe because he was a singular poetic sight.

The young son of Yamato, just 200 yards from me, was certainly a teenager. His plain uniform was ill-fitting but new and barely dirty. He ran toward the water single-mindedly, oblivious to the presence of hundreds of enemy soldiers. Lieutenant Cooper jumped out of our hole and ran toward him, pistol in hand.

The Japanese soldier reached the waters' edge and dropped to his knees. He reached out with his right hand into the water, catching his weight on his rifle, butt in the sand, with his left. He closed his hand upon a fist full of Ariake Bay, that one fist full being all of what he and his comrades had reclaimed for his country and his emperor.

At once the sea reached out and swallowed up the man. Heavy machine gun rounds from the Heerman splashed in front of the loyal soldier in a line of boiling craters which was walked into the shore. The man was obliterated, his body torn to shreds by multiple .50 caliber slugs. The butt half of his rifle was thrown directly at Lieutenant Buck Cooper, hitting him broadside. Our "looey" got a broken arm from the impact and has a souvenir to take back with him to the hospital ship.

## November 28, 1945 : X+13 – Kanoya, Kyushu

A bit after noon I was directed to division headquarters, in the former town post office and shown to the office of Brigadier General Connor Colt, currently XO of the 1st Cavalry Division. General Colt was on a wired telephone as I came into his otherwise empty office. He motioned for me to take a seat without breaking his sentence.

"I know the Air Corps is nervous about sneak attacks, but that's why they're supposed to bring along security men." He listened for a moment, while smashing his half done cigarette into a brass ashtray with stout fingers, crushing it with much more force than necessary. "You're damn right, we'll get it done! If that's what

Corps says needs to be done. But you tell that pinhead flyboy – I'm going to put the division cemetery right between his runways!"

General Colt caught himself about to slam down the handset, set it down easily instead, and stood up. His broad 6'2" frame made the modest Japanese bureaucrat's desk look like a scale model. He reached out his hand and with half a smile welcomed me*. His thick black hair did not betray his fifty-something years.

"What you just heard was probably the last 'discussion' about what this division does next. Though I'd hardly call it a discussion. The decision was made in Guam weeks ago, I'm sure." He sat down again and lit another cigarette. "The Air Corps, they want a big air base in Kanoya, sure. They want to be certain the base is secure, I get that. But to make sure, they want us to make it happen, by clearing out every nook and cranny of all the mountains south of here."

I recalled how other air fields, like at Iwo, had been overrun long after combat troops had 'cleared' the area. I asked what was so hard about it, as I pulled out my pad and started taking notes. "When we landed, someone had to push up into these mountains," the general pointed behind him with a fist and thumb, "so the Japs couldn't put spotted fire on to the beach. That job fell to us. Then they put random fire on the beach and we had to drive in even further. Then we got hit from behind (because nobody at Corps knows what they're doing!) and we had to turn around and clear the beach – again."

He leaned forward more, pointing a finger at nothing for emphasis, "Now they've taken away a regiment, told us to reorganize on the fly, and stuck us with a big dirty job. They've always been out to get us! They always said the First was oversize, and top heavy [with senior officers], but this division has had the flexibility to split off units of any size, send them out for every other dirty job, and always got it done." His pointing finger thumped the desk for emphasis of every phrase. I was starting to understand why I was invited to this interview, instead of the other way around.

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* He also cleared me to repeat the conversation I had overheard.

General Colt sat back in his chair, hands folded across his sternum. He paused to draw an easy breath. "We've already broken the back of the resistance here and soaked up troops and artillery rounds that they can't possibly replace. If Jap stragglers ever did manage to hit the airfield, they'd only do it once. They'd be mowed down in the open, damaging a few planes at most." He sat up again and continued gesturing, pointing loosely back toward Kanoya. "We offered to set up a mobile ready response unit, regiment size, who would patrol to defend the base. But no, they insisted on a whole division to lock it up airtight, or we go in and clear it out. Corps sure as hell is not going to leave a division sitting here, so we're going in to take the next however goddamned many mountains."

He leaned forward and thumped the loose stack of maps in front of him. "It took us two weeks and several thousand casualties[*] to get five miles in. Now there are twenty miles to go." General Colt got up and paced across the small room as he finished his cigarette. "They offered us the 112th and 158th RCTs [off Tanega-shima], to land inside Kagoshima Bay. We can't support them there, but the Navy is supposed to come in and blast the place."

He crushed out the cigarette then apologized for not offering me one. I accepted and lit it as he asked, "So where are you going? What would you like to see next?" I said I'd like to see a warm fireplace and a cold glass of bourbon some time soon. With a hearty chuckle he moved to the far back corner of the room to light a small gasoline heater.

## November 30, 1945 : X+15 – Uchinoura, Kyushu

The official Army map clearly showed a trail continuing on out to the tip. Every person in the column wondered aloud, in a colorful palette of language, just what the map makers had seen that we couldn't. We had assumed they used aerial photos and perhaps

[*] 3,342

old file maps made by locals before the war. The analyst who drew this map may have used old horoscopes.

We formed up again and continued before anyone could get too comfortable. The point narrowed, so we had less area to cover, but it also got more steep. Men were walking sideways on steep slopes, ducking under branches, wary of both twisting an ankle and of being shot at from some anonymous tree top. In several places ropes were tied to make hand holds. In another two hours we were near the end and closed in on the last high spot, at the very tip of the bony peninsula.

The entire lead squad stopped, knelt down, and waved for an officer to come forward. I followed. They had come to the edge of a U-shaped clearing. The open end of the U had a clear view of the ocean. At the center was a short rectangular concrete building. It was clear even from directly behind that the front side of this reinforced pillbox had been smashed by very heavy artillery or bombs.

Supporting squads were moved out along the sides of the clearing. From the closed end the first squad advanced in line toward the wrecked fortification. A few of them had rifles shouldered, ready for trouble. Others were mostly casual, sure that the emplacement was long abandoned.

A shot rang out and an American soldier in the center of the line was down. With a bloody shriek the first Japanese soldier anyone had seen up close in days ran out the back of the bunker directly toward the American line. He fired a rifle from the hip, and got off two more wild shots before return fire cut him down. In a few seconds at least twenty American .30 caliber cartridges were snapped off toward him.

The Japanese soldier, an older corporal, fell first to his knees. He reached into a jacket pocket, which drew three more shots into his abdomen. Before he died he drew out a small crumpled rising sun flag. It fluttered open freely as he fell forward. By chance his hand caught it again on the way down. His lifeless fingers involuntarily clutched the flag, its bright red streamers flowing out across the ground next to the bleeding body.

Our man who was hit by the first shot was back up, a corpsman dressing his right shoulder. The rest of the American squad inched closer to the pillbox, ready for more trouble. There was one opening in the back of the squat twenty foot wide structure. A call went back for a flame thrower and extra grenades. Then voices were heard from inside, calling out in Japanese. It did not sound aggressive.

No one on the American side paid the voices any attention, but shortly a stick appeared with a dingy white strip of cloth on it. Next to the strip was fastened a piece of paper – one of our flyers with instructions for peaceful civilians. A call went back for an interpreter. The flame thrower man came up and got his tools ready at the same time.

The interpreter who came up happened to be my acquaintance from earlier, Captain Dugger. He moved up ahead of the lead squad, insisted that the flame thrower be taken back out of sight, and got to work.

We took three prisoners, one Japanese Army regular and two conscripted locals, and they readily shared their story. The dead corporal with them had been in charge of the gun they were there to man. It was a coastal defense gun, which could fire out into Ariake Bay. It was an old gun, but it could do serious damage to our fleet and was not hard to spot in a concrete bunker with no cover. So of course the American Navy destroyed it long before entering the bay.

The gun crew was camped away from the gun, as instructed, before the invasion. They had no other instructions, and no one communicated with them as the invasion took place. The Japanese corporal insisted, violently, that they stay and do their duty. He was not shy of berating or even beating his subordinates. They had no supplies, but for what food the young army private had gone down into town to forage from abandoned homes.

I walked out to where their wrecked gun had once had a magnificent view of our magnificent fleet. It had a postcard perfect view across the wide bay. The fleet in front of me, and all around me, was even larger than when the invasion started. The men here, cut off from any friendly forces, must have been intractably

depressed, at best resigned to their fate. The American fleet had to be bigger than anything any of them could imagine – because it was bigger than anything in all of history – and it was here for them.

## December 15, 1945 : X+30 – east of Miyakonojo, Kyushu

Up to now, here and on most Pacific islands, the Japanese have owned the night. They either infiltrate and sneak attack or make big rushes. American tactics have usually been to hunker down at night and let the Japs come. But some American divisions in Europe had success attacking at night. It's already been seen that someone high up in First Corps would like to demonstrate the same success.

Captain Leonard took up the radio handset to be sure HQ knew just where we were, and that we were ready for anything. Before he got in a word, the call came down – everyone was to be ready to move in 90 minutes.

Ten minutes later, at minute M-80, a spectacular light show took over the entire horizon in front of us. Near simultaneous dull booms from behind us were followed seconds later by bright flashes and much louder noises in front of us. We had a good viewing spot, up on a clear hill top about 600 feet higher than the valley target. We couldn't see the explosions directly, but could locate each flash in the building smoke and mark it on the map. The captain helped me follow along, as each battery laid in a blind pattern across its assigned grid square.

The barrage of small and large Army shells was well under way when the Navy joined in. We were over 15 miles inland, up in the mountains. The Navy salvos would be 14 and 16 inch monsters from their battleships. Some of the one ton shells could be followed well into their high arc, as a loose trail of burning propellant and powder bag followed them. At the end of that rainbow would appear a phosphorescent white dome, lighting ten times as much sky as the smaller explosions.

The end of our wait was a nervous twenty minutes, as the barrage line walked out of the valley, right up towards us. With ten minutes to go we could see the explosions directly, and the noise was becoming uncomfortably loud. Most men gave up spectating for a place back in their foxholes.

With two minutes to go the world again fell silent. The appointed minute came, and we moved out.

The instructions for us, and every other company on the line, were dead simple. We were to advance due south, strictly in an assigned lane. Everyone was to keep the same pace, crossing each imaginary line on the map at the same time. We would move into the valley, each unit clearing out what section of the winding valley road it came across in turn.

Captain Leonard figured we could mange the terrain ahead with modest difficulty. He was worried about men to our left, where three severe peaks broke up the landscape. It would be impossible for them to move in clean lines at any speed. And if they tried to work around the mountains, they would have to navigate in the dark to regain their place in the larger line.

We made our way down the face of our hill and picked through the forest below for a quarter mile before heading up again. It was relatively easy going under the mature forest canopy, where even the dense evergreens had thin lower limbs. Progress slowed in patches of shorter brush and was dead slow where our artillery had made a quick demonstration.

Felled limbs and shattered trunks littered the woods. In the harsh light of our star shells broken trees were levered aside or simply climbed over. Some weren't stable and shifted or rolled under the weight of a scrambling GI. We suffered a casualty when one man had his leg broken under a falling twisting log. It cost us two men when his lieutenant detailed another man to wait with him until first light when he could be safely moved.

A distant rumble suggested that an American armored column was moving down to our right, out of the forest hills, into the outskirts of the city. It was confirmed by the sound of a series of

small cannon shots from the same direction. Division was pulling out all stops to trap the Japs ahead of us this time.

We had started about 10 pm. It was just after midnight that we ran head on into the company to our right. That wasn't supposed to happen, so another fifteen minutes were spent going over maps, arguing about which wavy contour line was which by artificial star light. The line got squared away, and we were off again, moving due south with only the near ends of our units in earshot of each other. We had only a mile to go to be at the road on our left (it ran northeast to southwest in our assigned zone).

With a half mile left we found our first band of Japanese, holed up behind a small knob, about 200 feet in elevation above the road bed. They had sentries up, but were still surprised to see us. A few shots rang out in either direction as everyone got down and took positions. The firefight was brief but fierce. A dozen Japanese rifles and one light machine gun fired non stop toward where we had first made contact.

Our captain moved a whole platoon quietly around them, and the position was pummeled with grenades. We wound up with prisoners, though some of our men wanted nothing to do with them. Up close in the bad light I could see only two uniformed Japanese soldiers. With them were ten or fifteen frightened civilians, most of them women.*

We continued through toward the road as trees and brush thinned, partly due to our artillery and partly due to the farmers of the river valley. Impressive swaths of land were cleared and terraced for farm plots. Three to five foot stone berm walls divide and define the land, and make good firing lines. Distant artillery to our left signaled some trouble that way, as no shells were coming unless requested.

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* Later inspection of the site turned up eight dead Japanese soldiers and twenty to twenty three dead civilians. Counting of the bodies where grenades had gone right into their huddle was difficult. The remaining rifles had been manned by local civilian boys.

The platoons broke lines to work with the terrain overlooking the road. The map showed clusters of small buildings along the road in front of us. There were none. There was barely a road. Everything was rubble and craters. A few small fires glowed sourly, their light somehow a different color from the happy campfires of our youth.

## December 23, 1945 : X+38 – Kanoya, Kyushu

Sakura-jima is a castle. Kagoshima-wan is its moat. There is one drawbridge, a narrow causeway to the southeast corner of the fortress island. Jagged mountains at the center command a view over lumpy lava fields that slope down to the water for a mile or more to east, north, and west. Short needly pine trees and thin brush cover patches not as recently thrown under searing liquid rock*.

Minami-dake, the dominant peak, rises steeply from the south to a volcanic crater 3600 feet high at the rim. Lesser peaks and craters step down from Minami to the north. The approaches from shore are generally rolling gentle grades at first, but at the base of the mountains proper the land shoots up in crooked knife-edge ridges. Hot steam and ash rise frequently from vents in the active crater. It all looks exactly like some ancient dragon built this place for her keep, then abandoned it for us puny mortals to squabble over.

In the next day or two we will assault Sakura-jima. Our units who venture too close to it, be they Army, Marine Corps, or wandering Navy ships, have been set upon by artillery hidden in the rocky heights. Our airplanes have taken out many of the guns, but sometimes only temporarily. The dense volcanic rock is a natural cover deeper and harder than any of the concrete shapes we destroyed close to the invasion beaches.

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* The island is an active volcano. It only became connected to the mainland during a giant eruption in 1914. In 1946 another large eruption covered over much of the eastern sector.

Some number of very large guns on the island have brought trouble for us more than ten miles away. They never fire a great many rounds, but they are deadly accurate. Since we still do not control the bay, not coincidentally because of the island mountain guns, Japanese spotters have slipped out by small boat to observe our camps.

After Marine guards found and shot up one Japanese scouting party with a precious radio, two others have been captured with nothing but note paper. Once American camps are made before dusk, they can note locations of the more important looking tents and have plenty of time to get coordinates back to the gunners before dawn.

This morning I checked out of the floating hospital and was shuttled by three different boats over to the docks in Ariake Bay. The Army has regular land transport running now, like the Navy set up at sea. I took a scheduled green canvas topped 'bus' west to where units are camped around Kanoya.

Incidentally, on my way in I made a point of touring the big air base at Kanoya. My guide told me all about how much American engineers have already built up and expanded the facility and how many cargo flights and attack runs we can make out of it every day. He pointed out some of the new aircraft types and their latest weapon upgrades. I was there looking for one thing.

I didn't see any cemetery in the infield, as promised by General Connor Colt. I did see a prominent sign, posted between the first main runway and a parallel taxiway. An arrow under its words pointed to the southeast. "Courtesy of the 1st Cavalry Division. First Team Cemetery, 3000 yds."

*Yesterday a sand snake crawled by just outside my tent door, and for the first time in my life I looked upon a snake not with a creeping phobia but with a sudden and surprising feeling of compassion. Somehow I pitied him, because he was a snake instead of man. And I don't know why I felt that way, for I pity for all men too, because they are men.*

Ernie Pyle, June, 1943

## January 14, 1946 : X+60 – north of Miyakonojo

A shock wave greater than that from any explosive shell ripped through American lines just after noon. All forward units, everywhere on Kyushu, got orders to pull up and move back to the previous good fighting line, not less than one half mile back – immediately.

The move had to be completed by nightfall. Also, every man was to check the state of his gas mask. Officers were to plan inspections of masks by no later than 9 am the next morning.

Whatever sort of uncomfortable shell-wracked muddy crap holes those men were in, they had fought for them. They were offended at the idea of pulling back. They did so anyway, but complained loudly to the wind, which should have turned red at the profanity it heard.

Field kitchens served men where they could before packing up, but some simply dumped a whole hot meal. Junior staff officers scrambled to figure out where people were, or were going to be, or simply to find room for everyone when units suddenly wound up on top of each other.

Still, the men assumed there was some marginally rational reason for the order (despite all previous experience with Army orders). Suppositions started with some use of chemical shells by the

Japanese elsewhere on Kyushu, to wild stories of plague infested rats being loosed by the OSS.

I fell in with a heavy weapons platoon, making instant friends by offering to haul two cans of machine gun rounds. Once back to roughly where they would wind up, everyone sat down waiting for final orders from the battalion. Their commander, Utahan Lieutenant Levi Pace, took stock of the gas mask situation. Of 47 men active in the unit, ten had a mask with them. Six of those had a good filter canister.

A gas mask was on the fingers of every soldier on the morning of the initial landing. No one knew what to expect of Japanese tactics when Americans first invaded their homeland. Two months later, after zero need for them, most gas masks had been 'misplaced' as men lightened their combat load. The changeable filter canisters could be hollowed out to make cooking vessels or many other handy things.

The lieutenant tasked three men with running, as fast as they could, back to division depots for more masks. They were too late. Rear units had been there first, leaving only what supply men kept in reserve for barter. As night fell the platoon counted a lucky thirteen working gas masks, and had IOUs to fill with several division quartermasters.

## January 16, 1946 : X+62 – north of Miyakonojo

I had completely forgotten what silence sounds like. In the last two months the sounds of combat had been a steady constant. The intensity varied only between loud and ear-splitting. From any position one heard artillery shells either being fired or exploding on impact – or both. Engines of trucks and aircraft filled the air between every echo of every distant rifle crack.

This morning I heard a bird. All of the mechanical noises were temporarily muted. Sounds of combat were not heard anywhere on Kyushu in those few hours. Lastly I noticed that there weren't even any distant aircraft engines.

Without fail since before X-day American fighter planes had been flying long figure eights high over a line well to the north. Even in bad weather at least a few planes did combat air patrol up there, to detect and impede any Japanese air attack. Their constant drone was the last steady lullaby for sleeping soldiers on the quietest nights before today.

A second bird answered the first. I listened to their conversation as my current camp woke up. The sounds of clanging canteen cups were eventually joined by the first mechanical sound of the day. A jeep, driven fast and hard, stopped at the edge of our camp. It gave instructions to the nearest man and sped off again.

"If something big happens, don't look at it! Stay low, keep ready, and wait for instructions. Pass it on!" Some men wondered aloud what it meant. Some asked why it wasn't simply radioed out. Those who had gas masks double checked them. Many moved their foxholes to spots with a better view of the Jap lines.

A little before nine am the fighter planes came back, in force. Three broad waves came in from the south, at three different altitudes. They continued many miles north, to at least their old regular patrol line, then turned east or west out to sea. The lowest group took some anti-aircraft fire, at least one plane going down deep in the Japanese held forest.

About 15 minutes later the soundscape changed again. Twelve B-29s came in high from the southeast. They were almost over Kyushu when the formation broke up into five pairs and two lone sentries. The pairs each turned level toward a target location. The solo observer planes corkscrewed up even higher. I noticed another pair of bombers trailing the twelve, coming in a few minutes late behind them.

I stole a glance around and saw that everyone, to a man, was watching the unusual bomb run with me.

They say it was 9:12 am local time when the first bomber released its load and triggered the others to follow suit immediately after. Some men say they saw all five bombs in the air. I for one caught only a glimpse of the first giant steel ball just after it was released. I watched that pair of B-29s turn and dive steeply, right

toward my vantage point. The other pairs pulled the same maneuver, leaving in whichever different direction would keep them best clear of the coming blasts. The first pair passed back overhead still diving, engines ripping madly at the air to pull the bombers away from danger. The high flying sentries continued to orbit over the area, a little to the south.

I was eyeballing the two laggards, which had passed the first pair on their way out. A great flash lit them up, brighter than a clear noon sun. Instinctively, though against instructions, I turned north toward the source of the light. In close succession, above the hills and trees in between, another four flashes lit up across the horizon. Each was similar to how the blast from a big navy 16 inch shell lights up the night, but this was in broad daylight.

An ethereal dome formed and spread out around each blast site, visible only by its effects. Cloud layers alternately formed or vanished as the dome passed. Walls of dust and smoke pushed out along the ground around each blast, quickly visible over the near faces of the mountains north of us. A flattened ball of burning air raised up over each of the sites I could see, shedding and re-swallowing smoky clouds as it roiled up through the hole each bomb had made in the atmosphere.

I remembered the late pair of bombers and picked them up again roughly over Karakuni-dake. The laden one had released its bomb and they had turned together to the east. Due north of my location they caught the first blast wave. Both planes suddenly jumped forward and up, while banked into a right turn. With their full profile facing the shock, they were hopelessly damaged instantly. Closer observers say one plane lost most of the right wing before being sucked directly into its partner. Debris rained over the 11$^{th}$ Airborne Division's former staging area.

## Scuttlebutt

X-Day: Japan and Kyushu Diary are works of fiction, though based on substantial research into historical facts and documented plans. All characters outside of prominent historical figures and celebrities are fictitious. All actions and statements by the characters are fabricated for purposes of the story. Most ships mentioned in the book are permanent museum ships.

It is explicitly *not* the point of this work to predict the path of history given one change in the timeline. If anything it is to tear up the notion of a "timeline." Events in human affairs are highly volatile and sensitive to subtle influences. The only thing which is inevitable is that surprises will happen. History is a tree, not a vine.

Alternative histories are usually presented with a 'hook,' right up front on the cover. This story is presented from the perspective of individuals who have no access to high level decisions or plans. They are oblivious to the hook. Make what you will of the suppositions that support this alternative history. The contrived result is that the invasion of Kyushu went forward roughly as it was planned by the beginning of August, 1945.

Both sides had much time to adjust between the historical fork of August 6, 1945 and the invasion start. The Japanese could make deeper and different fortifications on Kyushu. The Americans would have had to deal with setbacks from the string of typhoons that hit the southwest Pacific. Assumptions about those actions and responses were made to support the fiction, not to advance any historical theory.

The 'additional reading' section of this book may serve as an actual bibliography. Other resources such as helpful web sites and forums are listed on the project web site at www.xdayjapan.com. Readers are encouraged to join the author and the community there.

When he was ten years old, Shawn D. Mahaney found Guadalcanal Diary in his grade school library. History branched that day.