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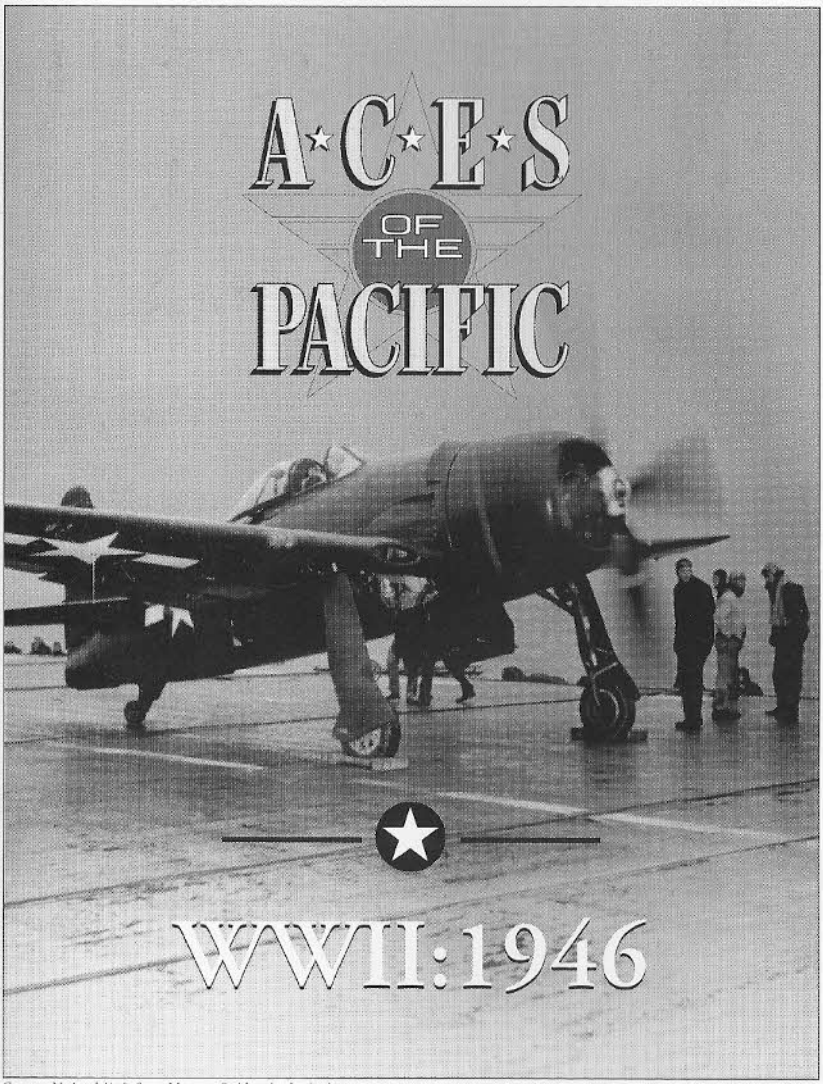

Courtesy National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution

CONTROL DOCUMENTATION

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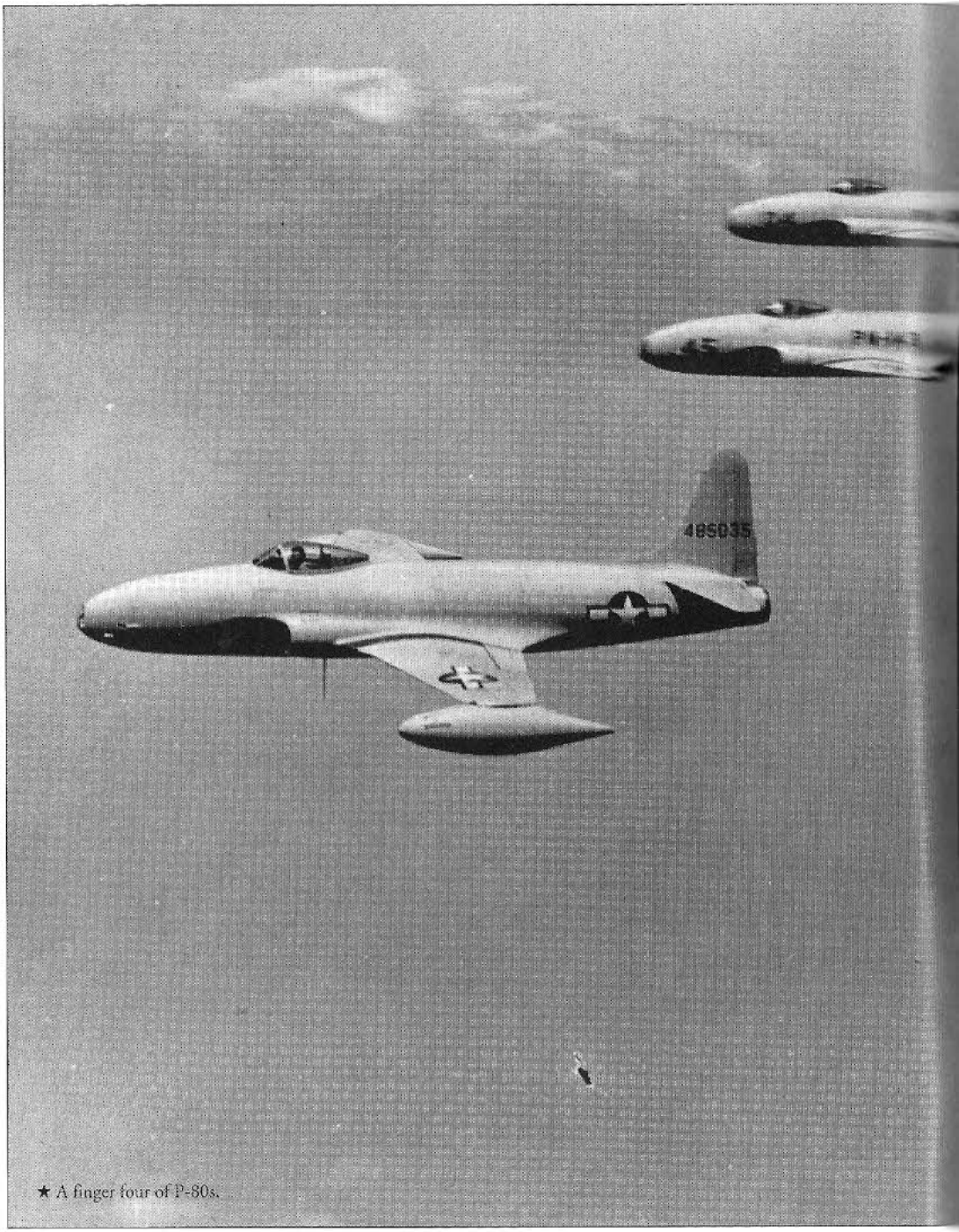
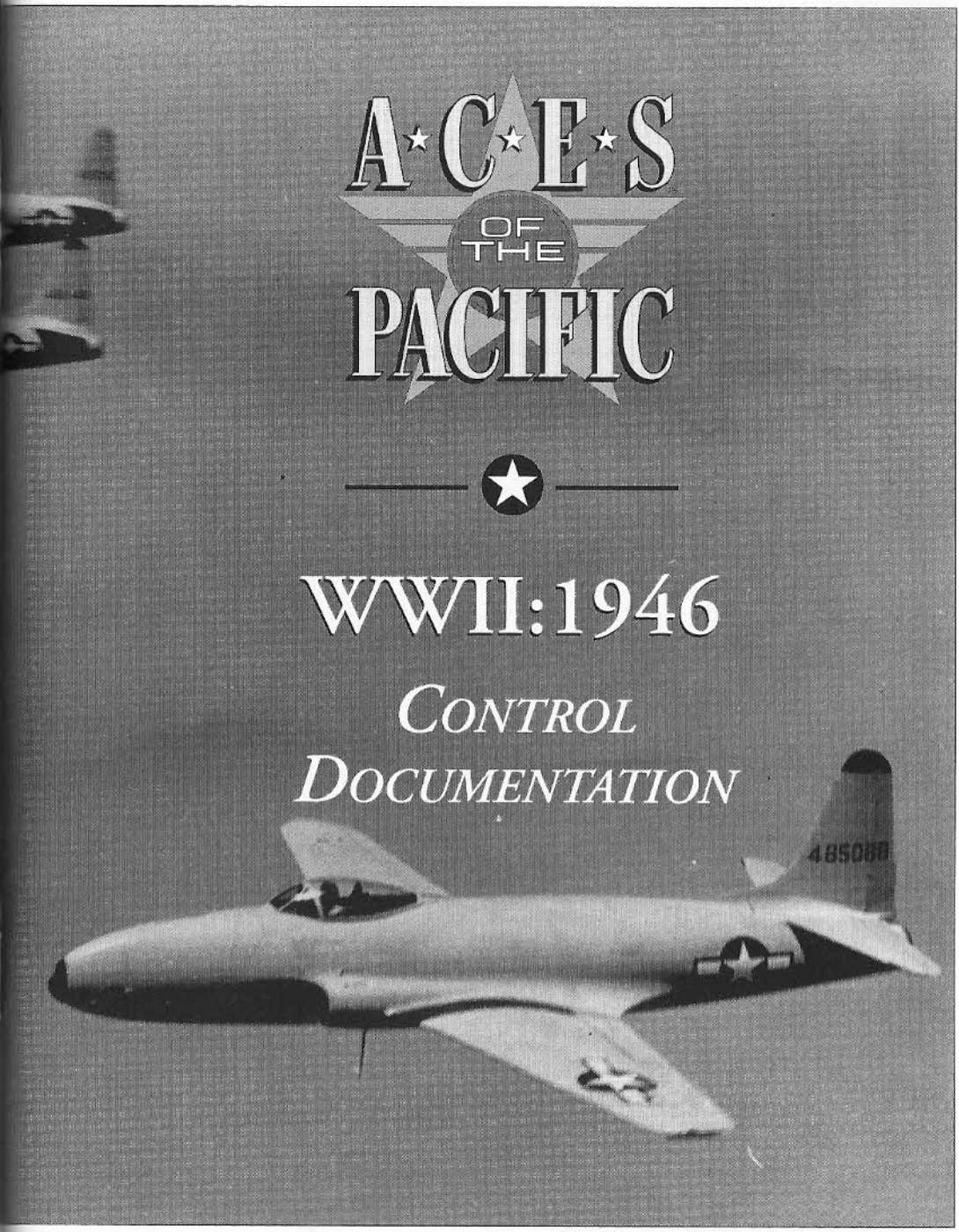


★ A finger four of P-80s.

Courtesy National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution


A·C·E·S
OF THE
PACIFIC
WWII:1946
CONTROL
DOCUMENTATION

CONTENTS

★ Cover photo: A Bearcat on a carrier deck. The F8F saw actual combat only once whe n the French Navy used the Bearcat against the Vietnamese in Indochina in the early 1950s.

Installation & New Features

Installing & Loading WWII:1946

In order to install *WWII:1946*, the original version of *Aces of the Pacific* must already be installed on your hard disk. The *1946* installation process will automatically update your *Aces* program to version 1.2 and install the new features of *WWII:1946*.

Note: During the version update process, "file not found" or "error" may appear on your screen. This is a normal function of the update software. The messages do not require any user response.

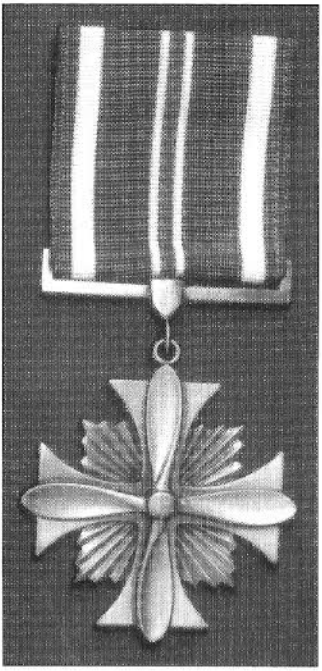
The installation procedure for *WWII:1946* requires that your hard disk have about 3.5 megabytes (MB) of available disk space. *WWII:1946* will only require about 770 kilobytes (K) more than the original version. If you are running *Aces* with disk-compression software such as Stacker™, the installation procedure will require about 7 MB of available hard disk space. Use the DOS command CHKDSK to determine how much hard disk space is available.

Important: You must use the provided installation program to install *WWII:1946* on your hard disk. The install program must decompress the files as it copies them onto your hard disk. It will not work to copy them using the DOS COPY command.

Installation

1. Insert the *WWII:1946* disk into a floppy disk drive.
2. Select the floppy drive containing the *WWII:1946* disk. For example, if it is in drive A, type:
   A: [Enter]
3. Type **INSTALL** followed by the drive on which you installed the original *Aces of the Pacific*. For example, type:
   INSTALL C: [Enter]
   if you previously installed *Aces of the Pacific* to your C: drive.

If you have moved your *Aces* files to a directory other than \DYNAMIX\ACES, type the new full directory path after the drive letter when you run install. For example, type:
INSTALL D:\GAMES\ACES [Enter]
if you have moved *Aces* to the directory \GAMES\ACES on your D: drive.



★ Created in 1926, the Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded for heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight.

Troubleshooting

If you encounter an error during installation (and are possibly returned to the DOS prompt), try running the installation program again. If you continue to encounter errors, you may need to re-install your original *Aces of the Pacific* program and then install *WWII:1946.*

Loading the Program

When you install *WWII:1946*, the new planes, features, missions and campaigns are automatically added to your original *Aces of the Pacific* program. To load *1946*, type **ACES [Enter]** from the directory where the program is located. No additional commands are necessary.

New Features

New Campaigns WWII:1946

The *WWII:1946* expansion disk for *Aces of the Pacific* contains fictional campaigns based on the premise that the Allies chose to conventionally invade Japan. The new campaigns can be played several different ways.

Starting a Career with a 1946 Campaign

When Starting a career, you may begin with a fictional *1946* campaign if you have chosen to fly for the U.S. Navy, the USAAF, or the Japanese Navy.

Continuing from an *Aces of the Pacific* Campaign

At the conclusion of an *Aces of the Pacific* campaign, you may continue with a *1946* campaign if you are flying for the U.S. Navy, the USAAF, or the Japanese Navy.

Coming out of Retirement to Fly in 1946

U.S. Navy, USAAF, or Japanese Navy pilots that have retired prior to the end of the *1946* campaigns can be brought out of retirement. From the Career Roster, select a retired pilot and confirm that you wish to bring that pilot out of retirement.

New Vehicles

When flying in the *1946* fictional campaigns, you will fly and encounter seven new planes. They can be selected for single missions in the same manner that original *Aces of the Pacific* planes are selected. In single missions, new planes can be flown at any date. You will also encounter the Midway class aircraft carriers in service in *WWII: 1946*.

Note: Jets require higher speeds for takeoff than prop planes. Using flaps will reduce the speed required for takeoff.

New Aces

New American aces from the European Theater will appear in the *1946* campaigns. They are also included in the aces available when you choose **Dogfight a Famous Ace**. The aces can be selected in the same manner that original *Aces of the Pacific* aces are selected.

New Historic Missions

New *fictional* historic missions now appear in the *1946* campaigns. They are also available individually when you choose **Fly a Historic Mission**. These new fictional historic missions are selected in the same manner that original *Aces of the Pacific* historic missions are selected.

VCR Compatibility

VCR tapes created with *WWII: 1946* can be viewed and edited in the same manner as original *Aces of the Pacific* tapes. However, if your tape includes new planes, ships or aces, it will be incompatible with the original *Aces of the Pacific* VCR.

INTRODUCTION

The two atomic bombs dropped on Japan at the end of World War II remain a source of unending controversy to this day. Some argue that the Japanese would have surrendered even without the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Others say that it was actually the Soviet invasion of Manchuria that forced the Japanese to end the war.

What if the atomic bombs were never dropped and the Soviets had remained steadfastly neutral? Undoubtedly, the Japanese government would have been overcome with factional fighting between those who wanted the war to end and those who did not.

Historically, the men who wanted peace ultimately outsmarted and outmaneuvered the diehard war fanatics and surrendered their prostrate country to the Allies. But, what if that faction had lost? Chances are, the war would have dragged on for many more months, forcing the Americans to invade the Japanese mainland.

WWII:1946 "simulates" a fictional scenario of what might have happened if the most cataclysmic military struggle of all time had been extended. We speculate on what might have transpired if the United States had been compelled to pursue an invasion of Japan. We suggest what the outcome of the war might have been without nuclear weaponry.

To maintain historical perspective on the final events of World War II, this manual traces two sets of historical events, one factual and one fictional.

The *first* section of our scenario, *WWII:1945 — As It Happened,* details the actual historical events that shaped the actions leading up to the factual end of WWII in 1945.

The *second* section, *WWII:1946 — What If?*, represents a historian's fictional interpretation of how the events leading to the end of WWII could have taken a different path. After exhaustive examination of the period, the Dynamix historical research staff developed an alternate reality based on how easily Japanese rebels could have sabotaged the peace process and prolonged the war. This would have been especially likely if the atomic bomb project had encountered serious delays and if the Russians had stayed out of the fight.

Both of these scenarios, real and fictional, stand as testaments to the tragedy of war. While the controversy surrounding the end of WWII will doubtlessly continue, our speculative version joins the opinions of many historians in concluding that alternative resolutions to WWII may have held even more dire consequences than the historical reality.

★ With its massive 3,000 hp. engine, the F2G Corsair was pure muscle. It reportedly could climb to 30,000 feet in less than five minutes.

Courtesy Robert L. Lawson

Courtesy National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution

★ The ruins of Japanese air power.

The Path to the Missouri

A twisted historical path led Japan and the Allies to the bleached deck of the battleship *Missouri* to end World War II with Japan's formal surrender on September 2, 1945. Japanese leaders walked a tightrope throughout 1945. They avoided assassination at the hands of the Japanese army by seeking peace in private and showing militancy in public.

The peace process began in Japan only a few days after the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941. In mid-December, Emperor Hirohito told his cabinet that he was not convinced the war was

wise. In fact, the emperor had grave reservations about going to war with both Britain and the U.S.

In January 1942, Foreign Minister Togo announced to Japan's assembly, the Diet, that it was time to seek peace. However, Japan's unbroken string of military victories silenced his desire for peace as his country celebrated each new conquest. After the fall of Singapore in February, Japan's leaders believed they had an excellent chance to win the war, instead of suing for a negotiated peace as was the original plan. For the next four months, talk of settlement with the Allies was put on hold.

In June 1942, about a week after Japan's disastrous losses at the Battle of Midway, a plan was proposed that would have sent Prince Konoye, a former premier, to Switzerland to establish contact with Allied operatives. There, Konoye was supposed to assess any peace offers. This proposal was never implemented, but it indicated that there was desire for peace in some high government circles, even in 1942.

After the collapse of the Guadalcanal campaign, small groups of Japanese statesmen and officials met to discuss ways to end the war. One idea was to remove Premier Hideki Tojo from office and install someone who would make peace. Nothing came of this scheme.

Meanwhile, Tojo and the Japanese army retained near-total control of the government. These men were willing to wage war to the last man, woman, and child in Japan. Tojo's military hold on the reigns of power would remain secure until the U.S. invasion of Saipan in June 1944.

Tojo's cabinet reeled from the invasion. As U.S. forces overwhelmed Saipan's defenders, it became clear that Tojo could not hold power. The final blow came when two of his cabinet members resigned in protest of Tojo's conduct of the war. After a heated political battle, the "Superior Private," as Tojo was derisively called, resigned on July 18, 1944. At this time, Kuniaki Koiso, known as the Tiger of Korea, relinquished his governorship of Korea and returned to Tokyo. He formed a cabinet and tried to foster cooperation between the army and navy.

A few months later, Koiso formed an advisory body of representatives from the army and navy general staffs and the most important cabinet members. Known as the Big Six, these men controlled Japan's destiny until the last days of the war.

Early in 1945, with the war drawing closer and closer to Japan, Emperor Hirohito summoned the six surviving former premiers, who formed an advisory body called the Jushin, to the palace. Each premier arrived and left the conference at different times lest the army's secret police, the Kempeitei, suspect discussions of surrender. The ruthless Kempeitei already had assassinated several government officials who opposed them and had attempted to kill many more. Those who did not conform to the will of the army lived in fear of the Kempeitei.

Prince Konoye was the most outspoken of the six premiers. He told Hirohito that the war was lost and Japan would have to face unconditional surrender to the U.S. and the British. He argued that the threat of communist revolution was dire if the war continued. The Soviets seemed bound to enter the fight against Japan and Konoye feared a Russian occupation much more than an American occupation.

Despite Konoye's pronouncements, nothing was done and the war seemed to rage on with a will of its own. Japan had lost control of the conflict it had unleashed.

On April 1, 1945, the U.S. invaded Okinawa, an island less than 400 miles from Japan. A new cabinet crisis arose and Koiso fell from power. Taking his place was 78-year-old Admiral Kantaro Suzuki.

A war hero from the 1905 Russo-Japanese War, Suzuki was senile and nearly deaf. He agreed with Koichi Kido, the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal (the personal advisor to the emperor), that the war must be ended. But Suzuki also knew he had to publicly vow to wage war to the end in order to appease the Army. Unfortunately, Suzuki often waffled on his decisions and the threat of assassination ultimately became his greatest concern.

After the Japanese defeat on Okinawa, Suzuki and his closest advisors asked the Soviets to mediate a peace between Japan, Great Britain and the U.S. The Soviets were not receptive and declared that their non-aggression pact with Japan would not be renewed after it expired in 1946. With this declaration, Suzuki's bid for peace was thwarted.

Courtesy National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution

★ Japan's industrial base was burned to ashes by summer, 1945.

In July 1945, Allied leadership met at Potsdam for the last of the wartime summits. While there, Truman received word of the successful atomic bomb test in New Mexico on July 16. He informed Stalin, who replied that he hoped it would be used on the Japanese. The Allied powers issued an ultimatum known as the Potsdam Proclamation. They warned Japan to surrender or face "complete and utter destruction."

In Japan, Suzuki and his cabinet greeted the Potsdam Proclamation with indecision. They could not agree on a course of action. Rather than reply immediately, they took a few days to think about the situation. Unfortunately, when he did reply, Suzuki made one of the most grievous semantic mistakes in diplomatic history. He used the word "mokusatsu" when describing his position on the Proclamation to the Japanese press. The word means either "to kill with silent contempt," or "to deliberate and give careful thought." The Japanese press used it in the former context, which played right into the army's position on the Potsdam issue.

In the U.S., the use of "mokusatsu" convinced Truman and his advisors that Suzuki scorned the ultimatum. While returning from Potsdam, Truman gave the green light to the 509th Composite Squadron and, a few hours later, Hiroshima lay in ruins.

The atomic blast at Hiroshima caused considerable confusion within the Japanese cabinet. The army argued that the threat of atomic bombs could be overcome by deploying more anti-aircraft guns. Others argued that the U.S. could only have one bomb and thus Japan need not fear another A-bomb attack.

The Jushin met on August 8 and 9 in a desperate attempt to bring about an end to the war. Unfortunately, the advisors and the cabinet were divided between those who wanted to accept the Potsdam Declaration, those who wanted a negotiated peace, and those who wanted to keep fighting. General Anami, the minister of the army, was one of the diehards who wanted to keep fighting, as were the navy admirals Yonai and Onishi.

Before a consensus was reached, the Soviet Union invaded Manchuria and declared war on Japan. The last vestiges of the empire were soon swallowed whole by the mighty Red Army. Emperor Hirohito and his advisor, Kido, decided that the war must be ended. At a cabinet meeting, Hirohito told the ministers to end the war.

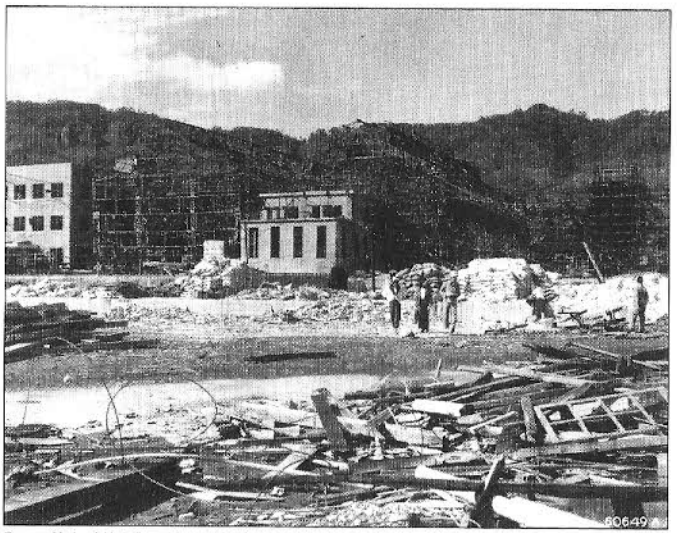
That same day, news reached Tokyo of an atomic bomb attack on Nagasaki. Again, the army brushed off the new weapon, calling it a "magnesium flashlight" that could be beaten if city dwellers wore white clothing.

Arguments on how to end the war raged within the Japanese cabinet. For several days, they debated surrender. The cabinet's major problem was that the U.S. had not guaranteed the survival of the emperor and the imperial throne. Nearly all the members of the cabinet agreed that the imperial household had to survive. When Tokyo received the first American response to their peace offerings, the cabinet viewed it as ambiguous and extended their internal disagreement.

Anami argued that Japan could negotiate a favorable settlement if Japan was invaded and the invaders were driven into the sea. Admiral Onishi said the war could be won if 20 million lives were expended in suicide attacks. Hirohito had to intervene. Shortly

before noon on August 14, 1945, the emperor addressed the Jushin and the rest of the cabinet to voice displeasure that his original pronouncements had not been realized. He stated that it was time to end the war. When the meeting ended, the peace faction within the cabinet sent radio messages to Switzerland and Sweden stating that Japan accepted the Allied surrender terms. The war, at last, was over.

Or was it?



Courtesy National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution

★ More devastation in Japan.

The Palace Coup

As rumors spread through the military that Suzuki planned to surrender, small bands of officers gathered to stop the premier. They argued it was better to die fighting than to bow one's head as a captive of the Allies. Most were junior officers fanatically devoted to the war effort and to final victory. Joseph Laurance Marx, author of *Nagasaki, The Necessary Bomb?,* wrote, "If they [the fanatical officers] had been able to get together with some of the more individualistic rebels at other headquarters and bases, they might have been able to stall or stop the peace negotiations and continue the war until they and their entire nation were crushed beyond any chance of short term revival."

Fortunately, the resistance to surrender was not unified or organized. The main conspirators were mostly army colonels and majors and a smattering of navy captains. But as the peace process drew to a conclusion, these few rebels reacted violently. The most threatening group of conspirators was led by General Anami's brother in law, Lt. Colonel Takeshita, Major Kenji Hatanaka, and Major Hidemasa Koga, ex-Premier Tojo's son in law. These men tried to get the approval of the Minister of the Army, General Anami; but he

committed suicide on the night of August 14 after deciding not to get involved in the conspiracy.

Failing to find allies in high places, the men tried to stop the peace proceedings themselves. Through a combination of bluffing and forged orders, they had the First Imperial Guard Division seal off the palace. The emperor and his aides were now totally cut-off from contact with the rest of the world.

While these events were underway, the emperor decided to announce news of the surrender to the Japanese people with a radio broadcast early on August 14. He and several of his aides spent the morning of August 13 recording the emperor's speech for broadcast the following day. The emperor's voice had been heard by his subjects only once before, due to a broadcasting error in 1928.

The rebels heard about the recording and, after they had the guards surround the palace, they spent the evening hunting for the recording. Determined to stop the broadcast at all costs, Major Hatanaka stormed into the imperial residence demanding to know where the recording was stored. He was rebuffed and headed off into the night, searching elsewhere for it.

At dawn on the 15th, following a night of extreme tension, a general arrived at the palace to disperse the guard division, essentially ending any hopes the rebels may have had left. Hatanaka, after spending the night fruitlessly searching for the recording, stormed into the NHK radio station and demanded an open mike. He held the station crew at gun point, demanding the opportunity to talk to the people and convince them that the war must continue. The station crew stalled Hatanaka until a superior officer ordered him to desist. Knowing that the rebellion had failed, a dejected Hatanaka committed suicide later that morning.

Small groups of rebels continued to cause trouble. That morning, Captain Sasaki, a navy air corps officer, led 36 men from Yokohama to the capital. They arrived at the official residence of Premier Suzuki and opened fire with machine guns and rifles. Fortunately, Suzuki had spent the night at his private home, so he and his family were not present. After trying in vain to burn the premier's

residence down, Sasaki and his conspirators headed towards Suzuki's private house. Meanwhile, seven additional army officers attacked the official residence and a squad of rebel Kempeitai officers tried to gun down the Keeper of the Privy Seal, Kido.

When Sasaki and his men reached Suzuki's home, they burned it down discovering to their dismay that the premier had already fled the scene. Suzuki and his family stayed one step ahead of Sasaki and other rebels throughout the day.

With the turmoil surrounding the palace, it was miraculous that the emperor's recording ever reached the radio station. But it did arrive, and at noon, August 15, Hirohito's speech was broadcast to the people. His high-pitched, nasal voice shocked the nation, as most had never heard it before. He spoke the official court Japanese, a hybrid of Chinese and Japanese that was unintelligible to the majority of the citizens. Still, the somber tone in the emperor's voice led people to understand his basic message. Japan, they realized, had lost the war and would be occupied by a foreign power for the first time in its history.

The war had ended at last. A few weeks later, with American troops on Honshu and the American Navy in Tokyo Bay, an official surrender delegation arrived aboard the battleship *U.S.S. Missouri* and signed the documents to officially stop the fighting. World War II was now a part of history.

American Invasion Plans For Japan

As early as the spring of 1945, American planners grappled with the possibility of an enormous amphibious invasion of Japan. As they developed their ideas, two specific campaign plans evolved.

Kyushu, the largest of the southern islands, would be attacked first. In Operation Olympic, as it was designated, almost 200,000 American troops would thrust ashore on three different beaches. After the beachheads were linked, the troops would advance north to Sendai, clearing the lower half of the island in the process. Not

Courtesy National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution

★ Vast destruction: most Japanese cities resembled this scene after August, 1945.

all of Kyushu was to be occupied, only enough to provide airbases for tactical air units to support the second campaign against Honshu.

Operation Coronet, scheduled for March 1946, would be the final hammer blow to the Japanese empire. U.S. forces would land north of Tokyo, then meet the Japanese in a gigantic battle on the Kanto plain as they pushed south toward the capital. With the capital in Allied hands, the Japanese certainly would opt for peace.

Casualties for both operations were projected at about one million Americans killed or wounded. In comparison, the U.S. suffered about 300,000 dead during the four previous years of fighting. This last invasion would be the bloodiest ever.

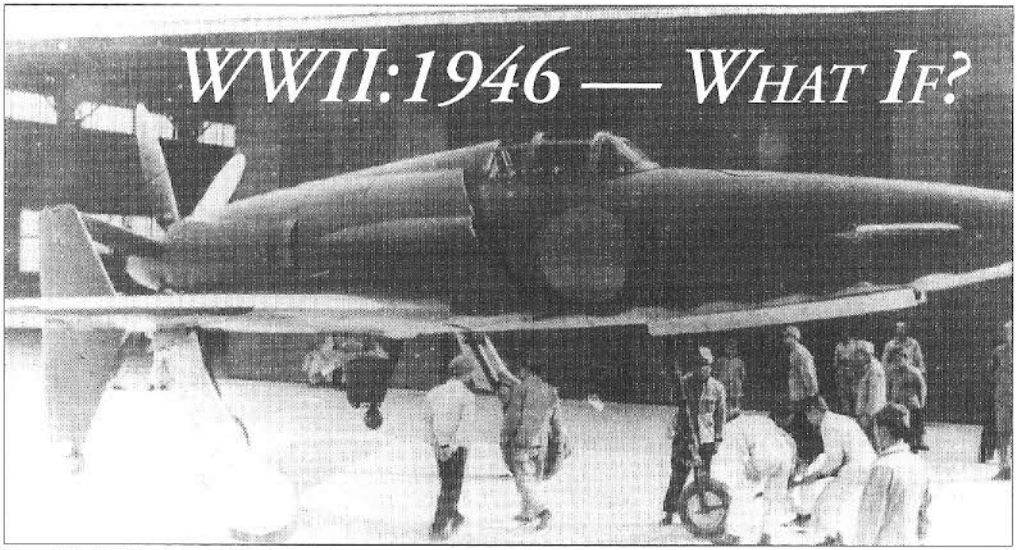
Within the Joint Chiefs of Staff, debate raged over whether the invasions were needed to defeat Japan. The Navy argued that the blockade they effected would starve the Japanese into submission. The Air Force declared that bombing alone would force the Japanese to concede. The Army and Marines, however, believed both these options were too time consuming. No one knew with certainty if Japan would surrender, even if their cities lay in ruins and their population suffered from famine. The alternatives offered by the Navy and Army Air Force, in short, were not a sure thing. Driving an armored division into the imperial palace grounds was a sure thing. Truman sided with the Army and ordered them to prepare for the invasion.

Meanwhile, work on the atomic bomb was proceeding surprisingly well. In the middle of July, the first bomb was tested in New Mexico at the Trinity site. Truman received notice of the test while at the Potsdam Conference. Days later, after the ambiguous Japanese response to the Potsdam ultimatum reached Truman, the president ordered the Army Air Force to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

The 509th Composite Squadron, a B-29 unit based out of Tinian, carried out the order. Two days later, another 509th B-29, Bock's Car, dropped a bomb on Nagasaki. It is estimated that approximately 200,000 people died as a result of the bombings. Between the two drops, Russia entered the war against Japan. A few days later, Japan surrendered unconditionally to the Allies.

In the end, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Russian declaration of war made the projected invasions of Japan unnecessary. Had the invasions taken place, casualty estimates for the United States ranged from 250,000 to one million. Estimates for Japanese losses varied between one and five million. Clearly, a land battle for Japan would have been a blood bath, but in the end, the results would have been the same. Japan would be defeated and the potential destruction would have been far worse than the historical reality.

WWII:1946 — What If?



Courtesy National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution

★ The J7W Shinden was a pure interceptor. Quick and fast-climbing, the Shinden's performance would have served it well against high altitude B-29 raids.

What Might Have Been

The following section represents a view of how World War II might have unfolded without the use of nuclear weapons in 1945. After examining the history of the period, our historians determined that the rebels could have succeeded in sabotaging the peace process. If that was the case, Suzuki and most of his cabinet ministers probably would have been executed.

From there, our research staff extrapolated who might have taken over the government. With militants still in control and Japan unwilling to surrender, the war certainly would have persisted for months. This would have been especially true if the atomic bomb project had encountered serious delays and if the Russians stayed out of the fight. This is the approach we've taken for our 1946 scenario.

THE WAR CONTINUES: ACES 1946

The Cabinet Crisis

Since his rise to the premiership in the spring of 1945, Admiral Kantaro Suzuki had been playing what he called the "stomach game" with his army rivals. Suzuki knew the war was lost and he wanted desperately to make peace with the Allied powers; but if he disclosed his belief in peace to the wrong people, the Kempeitei would most likely assassinate him. Because of this danger, he publicly stoked the flames of resistance, urging his country to prosecute the war to the last man. Privately however, he maneuvered behind the scenes, sending out peace feelers through surrogates in Moscow and the European neutrals.

His attempts at peace were rebuffed. The emperor dispatched Prince Konoye to Moscow in an effort to persuade Stalin to mediate a peace. The iron-fisted Soviet dictator refused even to grant an audience.

Within days of Stalin's rebuff, the radical elements in the Japanese army discerned what Suzuki was doing. General Anami, the war minister, joined a plot against Suzuki led by his brother in law, Lt. Colonel Takeshita and Admiral Takijiro Onishi, the founder of the Kamikaze Corps and a member of the navy staff.

First, Onishi was granted an interview with the emperor. He announced that the war could still be won if Japan sacrificed 20 million lives in special suicide missions. He argued that with such kamikaze attacks an American invasion of the homeland would be smashed on the beaches and the exhausted Yankees would beg for peace. Emperor Hirohito listened but offered no support.

Suzuki, unaware of the schemes against him, continued his peace offensive. Having failed to appeal to the emperor, Anami, Takeshita, and Onishi decided other measures would be needed to stop Suzuki.

Meanwhile, Suzuki made contact with the Americans through O.S.S. operatives in Switzerland. Through his agents, Suzuki

indicated that he was willing to negotiate a peace based on the Potsdam Declaration. The message passed through channels and eventually gained the ear of President Truman. By that time, however, Suzuki was dead.

On the morning of August 20, 1945, the premier and several of his closest advisors secretly met at the imperial palace to discuss the latest attempts at peace. Sequestered in a remote room of the palace, the men believed they were safe from the Kempeitei. They were wrong. The army leaders, along with Onishi, learned of the meeting and planned to destroy the peace faction once and for all.

Shortly before noon, just as the meeting was adjourned, six members of the Kempeitei burst into the room and opened fire on the premier. Suzuki fell dead, his body riddled with submachine gun fire. His confidantes tried to escape, but the Kempeitei murdered them too, including Foreign Minister Togo and Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, Kido. That afternoon, Tokyo radio reported that Admiral Onishi was installed as premier. Resolved to fight to the last, Onishi and the army mobilized the country for one last suicidal battle.

For the next three months, Japanese civilians received rudimentary military training, mostly with sharpened bamboo poles or bayonets. Old men and children were taught how to kill and were told how barbaric the Yankee Marines could be. It was better to die fighting than be hunted down or taken prisoner. For the emperor! For Japan! The invaders would be driven into the sea by the blood and determination of the Japanese people.

Throughout Japan, the army and navy girded their regular units for Allied invasion. The last stocks of fuel were distributed, the last reserves of food exhausted. Ammunition was scarce but individual units hoarded their supplies. The remaining aircraft were hidden in deep caves near superbly camouflaged airfields, ready for the day they would be used against the American invasion fleet. Some 15,000 planes remained and the army and navy planned to coordinate one massive suicide assault against the invading armada. It would be one hammer blow to cripple the Yankee Navy, coinciding with a great land-based counteroffensive that would drive the Marines into the sea.

Throughout Kyushu and Honshu, thousands of bunkers, pillboxes, gun emplacements and reinforced trenches were constructed to guard and protect potential invasion beaches. Tanks and special attack units were behind the fortifications, held in reserve, waiting to desperately charge the hated Americans. The Japanese were ready, their resolve to sacrifice themselves unwavering.

Truman's Dilemma

Harry Truman took a no-nonsense approach to government and politics. His policies were grounded in reality and he was not one to panic or make snap judgments. But what he saw at a Joint Chiefs of Staff meeting on August 22, 1945 made him shiver with dread. The planning stages for Operation Olympic were complete, yet a consensus could not be reached at the table. The Army projected that invasion casualties would range between 68,000 and 250,000 killed. Some concluded that the country would lose a million men taking Japan. The impending losses appalled Truman. He knew the American people were tiring of the war. The sacrifices made by families throughout the country were crushing morale. A sizable casualty list would certainly make things worse. Truman wondered if the country could survive it.

The atomic bomb project, the United States' secret strategic advantage, had been stalled. Repelled by the destructive potential of their device, the scientists in New Mexico had ceased work, demanding a presidential promise that the bomb would not be used on civilian centers.

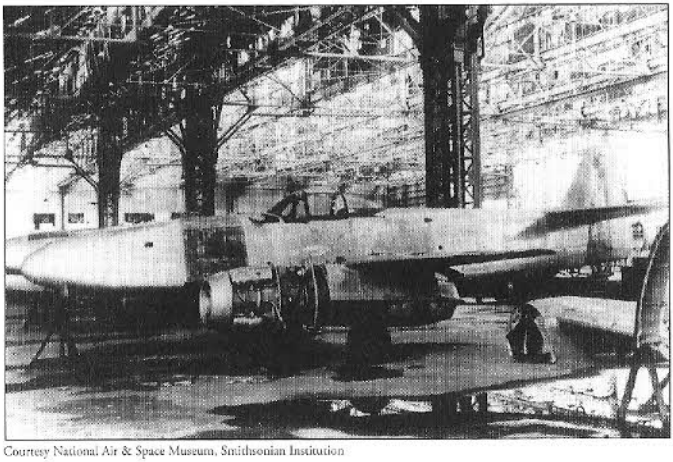
Now, the fate of thousands of GIs was to be decided. Hap Arnold and the Army Air Force were convinced that an invasion was not necessary. Hap argued that Japan could be forced to its knees by strategic bombing combined with a naval blockade. The Navy agreed. The Army, however, backed by General MacArthur, urged that Operation Olympic be launched. Japan could hold out for months, maybe even years, against an air-sea blockade, the Army argued. The American people could not tolerate an enduring war.

As arguments raged across the table and around the President, Truman made his decision. He cut short the heated debate and announced, "Gentlemen, the invasion is on. Get to it."

Countdown to Olympic

By September 1, 1945, the elements of the invasion were in place. Virtually all of the Eighth Air Force had arrived from Europe. Crammed into Okinawa, thousands of B-17s and B-24s now supported the Superfortresses in raids over the Japanese homeland. Hundreds of Navy fighter-bombers roamed the southern islands blasting every visible military target. Troop trains, gun emplacements, bunkers, bridges and pillboxes were hammered by the Allied air forces. The fast carrier task groups sailed up and down Japan's eastern seaboard raiding all targets of opportunity. The few Japanese planes encountered were knocked out of the sky by the American pilots.

During these preliminaries, the Japanese marshaled the remains of their air forces. Elite units, such as Air Group 343, were equipped with the best aircraft the crippled Japanese aerospace industry could produce. Hopes for the fighter squadrons rested on the Kikka, Japan's first jet airplane. The Ki-83 also bolstered the depleted ranks of the non-kamikaze units. Fast, maneuverable and capable of high altitude flight, the Ki-83 was seen as the perfect counter to the silver-wing B-29s. With fuel in short supply, however, few interceptions were attempted as the units hoarded their fuel stocks for use against the invasion armada.



Courtesy National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution

★ A view of a Kikka in a Nakajima plant.

The Conflict

On October 28, bombardment of the invasion beaches began. Battleships — including the *Iowa*, *Missouri*, and *Colorado* — pounded defense positions at Shibushi, Miyazaki and Kaminokawa. Swarms of Allied planes dropped thousands of napalm bombs and fired tens of thousands of rockets at emplacements behind the beaches. The Japanese took heavy losses and communications on Kyushu broke down completely by the third day of attack. Then, the invasion armada was spotted.

The Japanese launched the first mass suicide attack against a western task force carrying the V Marine Amphibious Corps. Escorted by some 200 Ki-83s and Kikkas, nearly a thousand kamikazes struck the slow transports. As they approached their targets, hundreds of Corsairs, Tigercats and Bearcats pounced on the inexperienced Japanese pilots. War-weary Zeros, Vals, Jills and Betties fell flaming from the sky.

Still, the attackers came on. Nearly 700 broke through the American air defenses to make runs at the transports. What followed was the most devastating kamikaze attack to date. One suicide plane struck the *U.S.S. President Jackson* causing a massive explosion that sank the ship in minutes and killed nearly a third of the 5th Marine Division. Some 100 attack transports, destroyers, LSTs and auxiliaries were sunk or severely damaged in all. The brand new battlecruiser, *U.S.S. Hawaii*, split in two and sank after three Betty bombers struck the ship simultaneously.

About 30 American fast carriers provided close air support and combat air patrols for the invasion armada. Throughout the day, though, the flattops became the target for several waves of suicide planes. While most of the attackers were flamed, the *U.S.S. Yorktown*, *Intrepid* and *Enterprise* were hit by kamikazes.

The venerable *Enterprise* took the worst beating. A shattered, smoking Kikka singled out the ship and plunged into the flight deck. Its fuel and bomb load exploded inside the hangar, which was loaded with fueled and bomb-equipped Corsairs. A volcano of flame and debris erupted in the *Big-E's* midsection, spewing

chunks of metal and wood planking onto the ship's unfortunate escorts. Immediately, the ship lost power and started to list. Belching acrid black smoke, the *Enterprise* came to a dead halt, floating aimlessly in its death throes. The cruiser *U.S.S. Houston* pulled alongside to help fight fires and evacuate the wounded. Suddenly, the *Enterprise* was torn by a tremendous explosion that blew out its hull amidships. The *Houston* caught the blast broadside causing extensive damage. Some 20 minutes later, as the *Houston* was limping away from the flattop, the *Enterprise* slipped beneath the waves. One of America's most famous and combat-hardened carriers was destroyed.

The landing near Kaminokawa was heavily disrupted as a result of the massive kamikaze onslaught. Marines waded ashore on the morning of the 1st and soon found themselves isolated, their reinforcements and supplies adrift amongst the wreckage of the liberty ships. Poor communications initially hampered Japanese efforts to counterattack the beachhead, but local commanders took the initiative and launched a series of piecemeal assaults that kept the Marines pinned to the beach. By mid-afternoon, much of the Marines' naval fire support was out of position or heavily damaged. Japanese artillery rained down on the Marines, who scrabbled across wide stretches of exposed beach. A seawall formed their only protection and the Americans fortunate enough to reach it quickly dug in. On the eastern side of the beachhead, all efforts to land additional troops failed, as the Japanese had several large caliber cannons that disabled the landing craft just offshore.

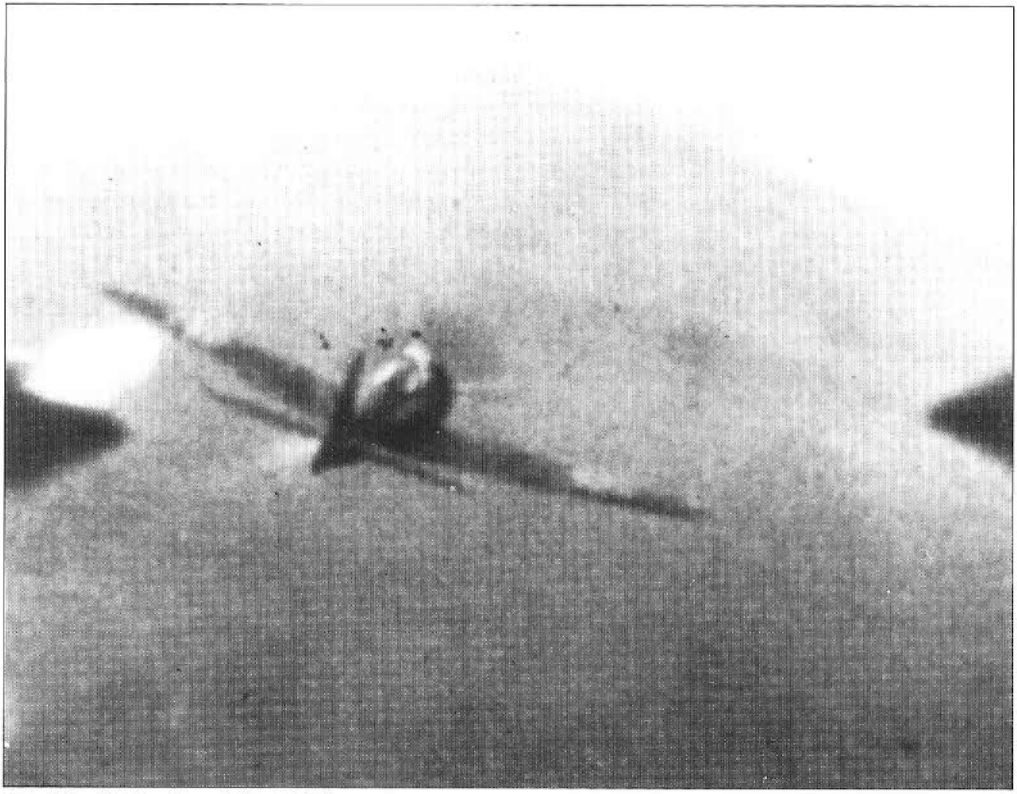
That evening, the Japanese formed ranks and charged en masse against the beachhead. Historians estimate there were at least 25,000 army and navy soldiers, plus an undetermined number of armed civilians involved in this tremendous counterattack.

The desperate Marines, silhouetted by burning U.S. ships offshore, rose to meet the Japanese, counting on superior weaponry to stop the attack. Thousands of Japanese were killed or wounded, but the Marine ranks were too depleted and too exhausted from the day's fighting to throw back their attackers. One group of Japanese, mainly composed of civilians with bamboo spears, broke through and reached the beach. They quickly fanned-out, impaling the

wounded Marines and medical corpsmen they found at the water's edge. A scratch force of Marines moved along the beach to stop them and a vicious firefight broke out.

Accompanied by a Sherman tank, the Marines decimated the Japanese, slowing the attack. Then, a young boy ran forward with a satchel charge on his back and flung himself under the Sherman. The detonation destroyed the tank and stunned the Marines. Spurred forward by the sight of the blazing tank, the remaining Japanese drove forward, their numbers overwhelming the Marine firepower. The scratch force was eliminated to a man in merciless hand to hand combat.

★ A Zeke caught in an American gun camera.



Courtesy National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution

Elsewhere along the Marine perimeter, similar scenes were played. Communication with offshore ships had broken down completely, so the high command had no idea what was happening onshore. No help arrived for the embattled Marines.

With dawn came a scene of unbelievable carnage. The seven-mile stretch of beach was littered with dead Americans and Japanese. Bodies lay side by side, fallen together in the midst of hand-to-hand combat. Bamboo poles and spears studded the beach like porcupine quills. Some 8000 Marines were lost in the night's fighting, virtually all of the 3rd Division that went ashore. Wrecked tanks and landing craft spewed curls of smoke. For the first time in the long trial of World War II, a major amphibious landing was annihilated.

The stunned Marine leadership would never forget the scene of that beach. With the surviving elements of the invasion fleet, the 5th and 2nd Marine Divisions were transferred off the Shibushi beachhead to form an operational reserve.

The Other Landings

Mercifully, the events that took place off Kaminokawa were not repeated at the other two landing sites. At Miyazaki, the American I Corps went ashore and faced minimal resistance. Most of the local units had been weakened by repeated air attack and were not capable of counterattacking. The Japanese reserve was already committed to the western beachhead, so the Americans did not face tremendous numbers. Offshore, the invasion fleet train, covered by land-based fighters from Okinawa, resisted repeated kamikaze attacks. Here, only about a dozen vessels were hit with two destroyers and an attack transport sinking.

The 9th Fighter Squadron — newly transitioned to P-80s, the first American fighter jets — saw much combat during the initial landings on Eastern Kyushu. On November 1, a flight of eight, led by Capt. Jim Watkins, intercepted a kamikaze strike escorted by a dozen Kikkas. Thus, the first jet-to-jet combat action in aviation history took place. The ensuing dogfight proved the superiority of

the P-80 as half the Kikkas fell in flames, while only a single Shooting Star was lost. The kamikazes, however, slipped through the 9th Fighter Squadron's cordon and attempted to hit the *U.S.S. California.* Three of the 20 suicide planes struck the *California,* forcing its return to Pearl Harbor for repairs.

Courtesy National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution

★ A P-80 at the top of a loop. The Shooting Star was America's first operational jet fighter.

Air battles over the beachheads raged throughout November, their intensity never flagging. On November 8, a massive strike hit the fast carriers. In a seven-hour battle that rivaled the Marianas Turkey Shoot in its ferocity, Bearcats and Corsairs flamed some 450 planes. The surviving Japanese still managed to cause extensive damage. Just before noon, as the *U.S.S. Essex* suffered a disastrous hit, a single Jill torpedo bomber, approaching from astern, plowed into a deckload of rearmed and refueled Bearcats. The Jill exploded just aft of the midships elevator, blasting men and planes overboard.

The flames quickly touched off the surviving Bearcats, creating an inferno in the aftersection of the ship. The fire crews rushed to extinguish the blaze, but discovered their pumps had failed. Without a means to fight the fire, the flames spread forward quickly.

An hour after the initial hit, another kamikaze picked the Essex as its target. A lone Zero appeared from the clouds and executed a perfect crash dive onto the deck of the crippled flattop. The Zero touched off a new fire that ignited an ammunition magazine. The *Essex* reeled. The last hit proved fatal.

As the afternoon wore on, it became clear that the ship could not be saved. At 15:45, the crew abandoned ship, forced to

leave some 800 of their fallen crewmates behind. The destroyer, *Halesworth*, delivered the coup de grace with four torpedo hits.

The Land Campaign

The first two weeks of fighting saw the Americans link the beachheads and thrust northward towards Central Kyushu. Just south of Miyazaki, the advance ran against a series of fortified positions. Ten days of heavy fighting failed to penetrate Japanese defenses. As the Americans prepared to ram their way past the Sendai-Miyazaki Line, as it was called, the weather deteriorated. Rain came down in torrents, turning the roads and battlefields into a trap of mud and muck. Thousands of GIs fell ill and were hospitalized. General MacArthur, realizing that it was futile to attack under such conditions, halted further operations against the Miyazaki Line until the weather cleared. Meanwhile, he concentrated vast numbers of artillery batteries at strategic points along the line.

For a month this stalemate continued. Finally, at the start of January 1946, the weather cleared and the troops looked up to a brilliant blue sky. Within days, the mud dried. MacArthur quickly capitalized on this opportunity. In the largest artillery bombardment in American history, some 3,000 guns pounded the Miyazaki Line. The rain of deadly shells continued for nearly 50 hours.

At dawn on January 8, the American attack began. The 41st Infantry Division, spearheading the assault near the city of Takazaki, ran into completely undamaged bunkers and pillboxes. Devastating as the pre-attack bombardment had been, many of the Japanese positions escaped harm. Throughout the 8th, the 41st Division worked their way towards Takazaki, blasting the Japanese defenders from their pillboxes. The fighting continued into the night and early next morning.

Finally, the Americans broke through the last ring of defensive positions and found the road to Takazaki open. General Kruger, commander of the 6th Army, rushed reinforcements into the 41st's breach. Over the next four days, the Americans fanned out

behind the Miyazaki Line, cutting off the entrenched Japanese from supply and communication lines.

The battle continued into early February as the Americans mopped up the Japanese resistance, then advanced north and westward. Sendai fell on the 25th of January and Nishikata fell three days later.

With the capture of Miyazaki and Takaoka on February 1, the campaign on Kyushu came to an end. The Japanese withdrew to the north, establishing another defensive line stretching between Nobeka and Yatsushiro. The Americans, content with their territorial gains, built dozens of airfields in preparation for Operation Coronet.

Now, both sides girded for the imminent invasion of Honshu. There, Japan would defend the Empire's capital with its last reserves.

Coronet: The Last Invasion

While fighting for Kyushu, Japan's 16th Army had lost 170,000 combat troops, plus an additional 10-15,000 armed civilians. On the ground, American losses totaled 65,000 killed, 100,000 wounded, and 7,000 missing. Some 9,400 sailors were killed or wounded during the kamikaze strikes on the fleet. Japan expended almost 7,000 planes on suicide missions. Virtually no experienced pilots remained and most of the famous aces were now long dead. Still, the JNAF and JAAF possessed about 8,000 planes, nearly 6,000 of which were configured for kamikaze missions. Based mainly around Tokyo, these planes would target the American Navy once it appeared off Honshu's eastern shore.

Throughout February, the American air forces pounded targets around Tokyo. The entire 8th Air Force had relocated from Okinawa to bases on Kyushu, as had the Far Eastern Air Force. The B-29s of the 20th Air Force had moved to Okinawa from the Marianas and were busy launching low-level fire raids on most of Japan's major cities. Hap Arnold still hoped to force the Japanese

to surrender before the second invasion took place, thus saving thousands of American lives.

The 8th Air Force also launched medium-altitude daylight raids, rooting out the last of Japan's devastated industrial base. The fighting groups roamed over Honshu attacking airfields, supply bases and moving vehicles, whittling down the enemy's last military supplies. Still, after Kyushu, the Americans knew that a mainland invasion would be no cakewalk.

Hitting the Beach

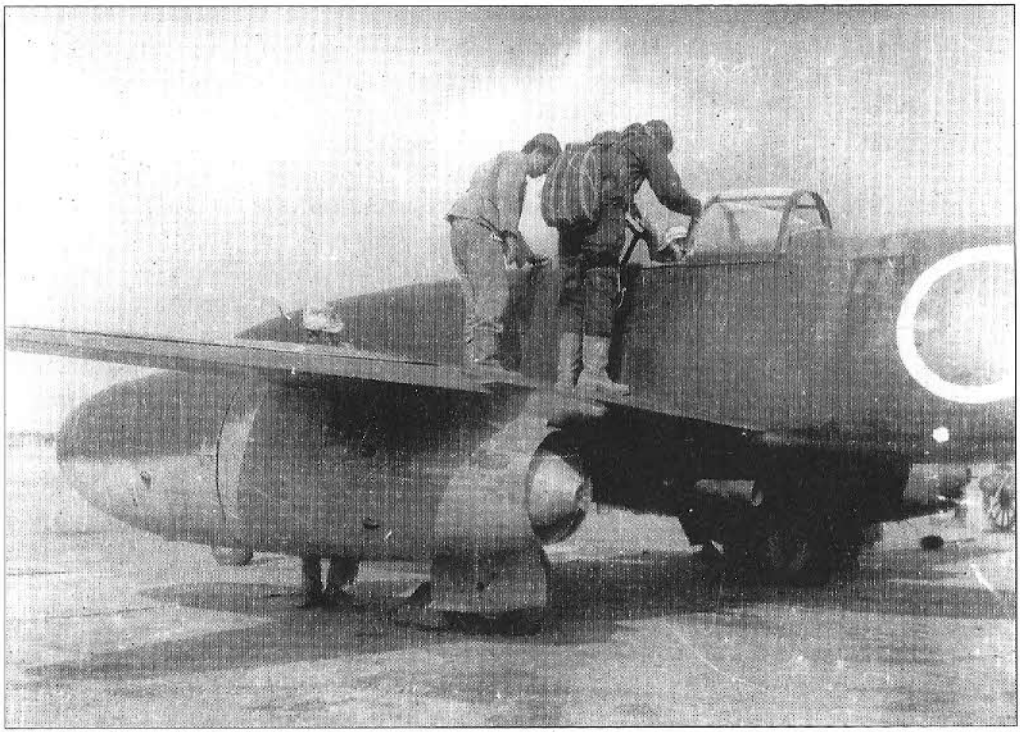
Delayed by poor weather and low tides, the invasion was rescheduled to March 20, 1946. The Americans used the extra 20 days to keep the airborne military pressure on the Japanese. On the evening of March 15, the bombardment forces stood off Choshi and Sagami Wan Bay and opened fire on Japanese beach defenses. For five days, the high explosive shells pummeled approaches to the invasion beaches, smashing bunkers, bridges, pillboxes, blockhouses, and other fortified positions. American fighter-bombers swept the rear areas, destroying any military target they discovered. The B-29s hit Tokyo again and again in massive fire raids, leveling virtually the entire city. B-24s, B-17s, and B-25s hit the remaining rail centers on Honshu, crippling Japan's transportation net. Still, despite all the firepower unleashed against them, most of the Japanese defenders remained unscathed in underground galleries.

On the morning of March 20, the bombardments ceased. From offshore, the men of Eichelberger's 8th Army and Hodge's 1st boarded their landing craft and headed for the beaches. Eichelberger's men suffered the worst at Sagami Bay. There, most of the anti-boat guns had survived the initial bombardments and, as the LCVPs and LCMs came into sight, they opened fire on the defenseless landing craft. Nearly the entire first wave of GIs were wiped out before they hit the beach. The few landing craft that got to shore were destroyed as they headed back to the fleet for another load of troops.

By 07:30, the American situation was critical. About 1000 men were ashore but none had advanced inland beyond 100 yards. None of the anti-boat guns had been knocked out, so all attempts to reinforce the beachhead took prohibitive losses. The initial reports painted such a grim picture that Eichelberger considered evacuating the beachhead, not wanting to repeat the disaster the Marines faced on Kyushu in November of 1945. He decided to wait a bit longer.

To support the GIs on the beach, two destroyers moved close to shore and began pummeling the anti-boat guns. Most of their five-inch shells did no damage to the Japanese steel and concrete fortifications, but they did force the Japanese forces into deeper cover. With the guns silenced for the moment, several waves of amphibious tractors and landing craft hit the beach, loaded to the

★ A test pilot preparing for a flight in the Kikka prototype. The Kikka flew briefly just before the end of the war.



Courtesy National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution

gunnels with men, ammunition and medical supplies. Several Sherman tanks also rumbled ashore and assaulted the pillboxes that were pinning the GIs down.

Battleships and cruisers opened fire on the Japanese rear areas, wreaking havoc on the Japanese army's counterattack plans. In fact, the bombardment so badly disrupted the Japanese communication lines that an en masse counterattack was impossible.

Ashore, the 1st Infantry Division landed almost intact. Along with the tattered survivors of the first waves, they pushed inland. Blasting the Japanese defenders from every bunker became a tedious, dangerous task. By the end of the day, Japan had suffered losses of nearly 40 percent. Along with the Americal Division, they forged a pocket in the Japanese defenses a mile wide and a half-mile deep. The Americans had a foothold; it was tenuous at best, but they were not going to give it up.

Throughout that day and evening, the Japanese launched spirited counterattacks too scattered and too uncoordinated to throw their attackers into the sea. That night in the darkness, the Japanese assembled 150 tanks and nearly 4,000 men on the right of the American perimeter. The attack was delayed until just after first light on the 21st, due to the confusion the American bombardment had generated.

At dawn, the Japanese drove straight at the beachhead, supported by the tanks and heavy artillery. The full force of the attack hit the Americal Division's survivors, who fought fiercely but were slowly overwhelmed.

Then, about two and a half hours into the attack, the 56th Fighter Group arrived on the scene and expertly assaulted the Japanese armor. Soon, over half the attacking tanks were nothing more than smoldering hunks of metal, victims of one of the 8th Air Force's top ground attack units.

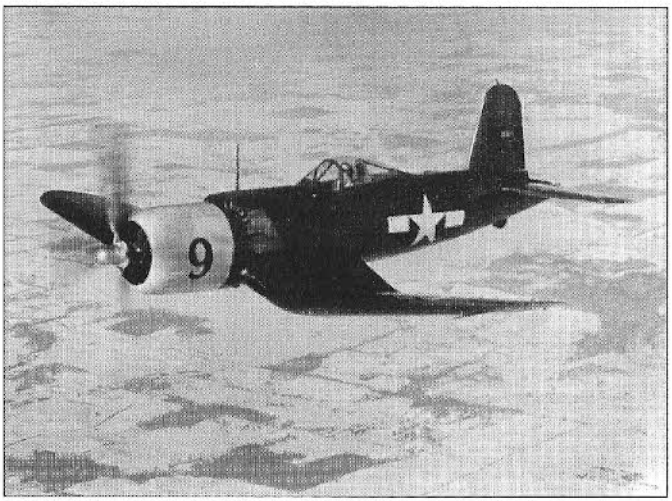
As the Americans P-80s were reforming to head for home, a flight of Kikkas from Air Group 343 surprised them. In the ensuing dogfight, America's top ace, Francis Gabreski, was shot down and

captured. Saburo Sakai, the great Japanese ace, had latched onto Gabreski's tail and flamed the American with a quick burst. Sakai soon had problems of his own when Gabreski's wingman knocked out one of the Kikka's turbojet engines. Sakai disengaged and limped back to base, nursing his smoking fan as best he could. As he approached the runway at Ozawa Field, he lost control of the Kikka. It slow-rolled onto its back and plunged straight into the ground, exploding on impact. Shocked observers soon learned that one of their greatest comrades had died in the crash.

The Japanese counterattack at Sagami Bay failed, costing Japan some 3,000 men and nearly 130 tanks. Further, the movement of all their armor reserves drained much of Japan's remaining gasoline stocks. The tanks, now bereft of fuel, were buried up to their turrets and used as pillboxes. The Americans, though badly battered, would not be driven into the sea.

Offshore, an air battle of epic proportions developed as the Japanese flung their last kamikazes at the U.S. fleet carriers. Admiral Spruance now had 26 fast carriers under his command and nearly 2000 aircraft. All through the 20th and 21st, suicide planes drove down on the American fleet. On one mission, Alexander Vraciu caught a flight of 10 bomb-laden Zeros 10 miles out from the carriers. Using his Bearcat's ammunition sparingly, he chopped nine of the Japanese fighters out of the air. For his action, he received the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Another CMH winner, Lt. Larry Cauble, scored well during the March 20 kamikaze attacks. Cauble's squadron, VF-19, was flying CAP 30 miles west of the fleet carriers when it received word of an approaching Japanese raid. As Fighting 19 was vectored toward the strike, a squadron of Kikkas surprised the Bearcat pilots from behind. Twelve of the 16 Bearcats were flamed with the loss of five pilots. Cauble, his wingman shot down, managed to get a quick burst into a passing Kikka and ignited its fuel tanks. As the Japanese jet spiraled down in flames, Cauble caught sight of the incoming kamikaze raid. Alone, the air around him swarming with Kikkas, he dove on the suicide planes. In four short passes, he flamed three Zeros, two Betties and a Willow biplane trainer.



Courtesy Robert L. Lawson

★ The XF2G in flight. Designed specifically as an anti-kamikaze fighter, the F2G initially carried only four 50 caliber machine guns.

With seven victories under his belt, Cauble reported the position of the incoming strike, then dove for safety. Unfortunately, a Kikka latched onto his Bearcat's tail and riddled the American with 30mm fire. The Bearcat burst into flames and Cauble was forced to bail out. He was later picked up by an American destroyer, wet but otherwise unharmed.

The two-day suicide assault on the American fleet cost the Japanese about 2,000 planes. The American losses, both Navy and Army Air Force, totaled nearly 500 planes. Three aircraft carriers — the *Boxer*, *Wasp* and *Independence* — were sunk with a loss of over 1,000 sailors. Six other carriers, including the *Cowpens*, *Bennington*, *Princeton* (the second one), *Lake Champlain*, *Tarawa*, *San Jacinto* and the *Bon Homme Richard* all suffered varying degrees of damage. It was a heavy blow to the American Navy, but the Japanese would be unable to maintain the pressure for long.

Following a three-day period of poor weather, the Japanese renewed their kamikaze attacks. Between March 24 and March 28, the suicide squadrons unleashed nearly 4000 planes against the American fleet. The Americans, however, were ready. Army Air Force Units based out of Kyushu helped supplant the carrier fighter squadrons in CAP missions over the fleet. The 8th Air Force turned its attention to the airbases on Honshu that were suspected to house the remaining special attack units. B-29s, flying in daylight, tried to divert Japan's air assets by striking at vital targets outside Tokyo.

The fighting over the fleet during the four days at the end of March represented the climax of the Pacific War. Altogether, post-war accounting estimated that nearly 5,000 Japanese planes were lost.

The Americans lost 455 Navy and 470 Army Air Force planes. Three more carriers, the *Ticonderoga, Cabot* and *Bataan,* were sunk, and five more damaged. The battleships *Missouri* and *Washington* were crippled, then scuttled. Three cruisers were lost as well.

Overall, Admiral Spruance lost six carriers during the great kamikaze raids at the end of March. Four more were so badly damaged that they had to return to Pearl Harbor for repairs. Altogether, almost 50 percent of U.S. carrier strength had been eliminated. Had the Japanese been able to exploit their success, the Americans would have been in serious trouble.

As it was, Japan had shot its aerial bolt. Fewer than a thousand planes remained in the home islands and, for those operational, there was no more fuel. The strikes in March were Japan's last gambit for victory. The gambit had failed.

Japan on its Knees

The American assault on Choshi by General Hodge's First Army suffered heavy casualties during the initial landings, just as had Eichelberger's assault at Sagami Bay. But, without a mobile reserve to throw the invaders back, the Japanese were unable to contain the beachhead. Within a week, the Americans advanced to Omigawa. There, the attack stalled in the face of violent resistance. In the south, the Eighth Army continued to expand its beachhead, driving for Yokosuka and the mouth of Tokyo Bay.

On April 12, the first elements of the 11th Armored Division entered the Yokosuka's western outskirts. The fighting raged house to house, street to street. Japanese civilians armed with grenades, bayonets, and knives formed human wave assaults and overwhelmed several small U.S. units. Nearly all of these unfortunate GIs were killed to the last man. For six weeks the fighting raged in the city and fully two-thirds of the population died. Finally, on May 18, 1946, the last resistance in Yokosuka came to an end. Yokohama would be the next target.

By the beginning of June, both sides were badly mauled. Americans had taken nearly 200,000 losses of which 97,000 were killed in action. The Japanese, it was estimated, took about 320,000 military and 250,000 civilian casualties. Japan could not replace such high losses and the Americans were struggling to replace theirs. For the next month, both sides replenished and reinforced their combat units in preparation for the next offensive.

Operation Megiddo

By the second week in July, the U.S. was ready to launch a new offensive to capture the approaches to Tokyo. The Eighth Army would push northwest from Yokosuka and take Yokohama, while the First Army would march west and take Kawaguchi, sealing off the Chiba peninsula. After another massive three-day bombardment, plus air strikes and B-29 attacks, the U.S. offensive began.

At first, both U.S. armies seemed to gain ground. The Eighth pushed 10 miles through the first line of Japanese defensive works before the attack bogged down. The First got all the way to Funabashi before vicious banzai attacks stopped the advancing troops cold. Within a week, the Americans found they could not move any farther. Still, MacArthur continued the offensive, hoping to achieve a decisive breakthrough. The Japanese would bend, but they would not break. At the end of July, the U.S. had lost another 50,000 men and gained less than 60 miles.

As casualties mounted, the American public became increasingly disgruntled. Talk of a negotiated peace was becoming more commonplace and acceptable. Truman was under political siege to end the war quickly. Newspapers openly criticized the way the war was proceeding. Japan's leaders watched these events with great interest, praying they could contain the Americans long enough to force their leaders to accept a negotiated peace.

MacArthur, however, was determined to crush the Japanese. After the failure of Operation Megiddo, he planned another offensive.

Throughout the summer, both sides built up their strength, racing to out-reinforce their enemy. It was a race the Japanese could not win.

On September 1, 1946, MacArthur launched his second major offensive, code-named Operation Morning Star. Once again, Hodge and Eichelberger pushed forward toward Tokyo. Hodges' men were stopped in their tracks when they advanced into a network of pillboxes and blockhouses. Within a week, the Allied offensive against Kawaguchi had broken down, suffering about 15,000 losses.

In the south, the offensive was much more successful. In brutal fighting, Yokohama finally was reached. Thousands of civilians banzai-charged the American lines, sacrificing themselves to Allied firepower. The Battle for Yokohama lasted until October 28, 1946. When it reached its bitter conclusion, the entire city lay in ruins. Almost 150,000 civilians had perished. The Americans now had a springboard to Tokyo.

Pausing briefly to replace his losses, MacArthur soon resumed the offensive against Tokyo, using Yokohama as base. In the first week of December, elements of the 11th Armored Division reached the southern part of the city. To the north, the tattered Japanese defenses gave way and Hodges' First Army poured westward and took Kawaguchi on December 16, 1946.

Tokyo, already blackened by fire raids, suffered immeasurably. The population was weakened by malnutrition, starvation and exposure to the elements. Now, the last major battle of the war was taking place on their doorstep. Many would join the surviving military units, but many others simply tried to escape the cauldron of flame. House to house, corner to corner, the battle raged. It was an epic fight that made the siege of Stalingrad look like a small unit action.

Over 650,000 U.S. troops squeezed the 300,000 Japanese defenders into a smaller and smaller perimeter in the heart of downtown Tokyo. The Japanese fought on, recklessly determined to hold to

the last. In many cases they did. Civilians threw themselves at the American GIs with fanatical desperation. On one occasion, some 6,000 men, women, and children rushed a regiment of the 41st Infantry Division. Initially surprised, the Americans were nearly overrun, many small groups of men escaping death only when they sought refuge in bombed-out buildings. The civilians pushed through the regimental lines and into the divisional headquarters area. Within an hour, the division's command structure had been wiped out. The situation was restored only when a combat team from the 1st Armored Division came to the rescue, regaining control with machine gun and heavy artillery fire.

No matter how hard the Japanese fought, though, it was clear that the end was in sight. At the end of December, 1946, the Allies controlled almost 80 percent of Tokyo. The shattered defenders took up final positions around the emperor's palace, hoping to stave off final defeat. Admiral Onishi and his cabinet realized that, if the fighting continued, the emperor would surely be killed. A day before MacArthur planned to take the Palace, Onishi, with the blessing of the emperor, opted for peace.

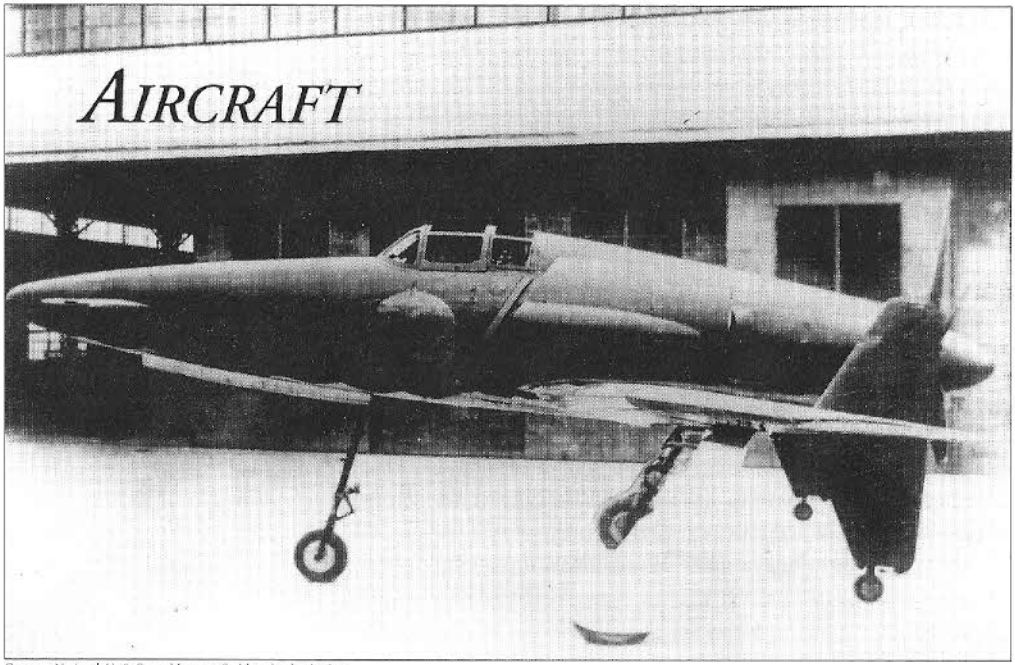
On January 5, 1947, the Second World War finally came to an end. Onishi and General Anami boarded the *U.S.S. Iowa* and signed a surrender agreement face to face with their nemesis, General Douglas MacArthur. The Empire lay in ruins, the capital was destroyed, and for the next 10 years Japan faced military occupation by U.S. troops.

Starting in early 1948, the Tokyo War Crimes Trials convened. Both Onishi and Anami were convicted of crimes against humanity and executed. Other top Japanese officials including Hideki Tojo, General Yamashita, and General Homma were executed as well. As one of his last active duties, MacArthur presided over the trials with a hawkish eye, ensuring that his old adversary, General Yamashita, was convicted.

The human cost of the two invasions, Olympic and Coronet, was staggering. Altogether, the United States suffered 295,125 killed in action, 789,250 wounded and 14,341 missing. The Japanese lost about 570,000 combat troops killed and at least 900,000 wounded. Nearly two million civilians were killed as a result of the land fighting, many in desperate human wave assaults. Another 1.5 million civilians died as a result of the aerial bombing campaign. The United States Navy lost a total of eight aircraft carriers, a battleship, 10 cruisers, and 38 destroyers. Scores of transports and assault ships were lost as well.

Harry Truman was politically destroyed by the tremendous losses the Americans suffered. Campaigning hard in 1948, he lost in the Democratic primaries to Senator Richard Russell of Georgia. Russell was roundly trounced in November by New York Governor Thomas Dewey in what was, at that point, the biggest presidential landslide victory in U.S. history. Only Georgia voted for Russell. Dewey and his running mate Earl Wallace won the other 47 states.

AIRCRAFT



Courtesy National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution

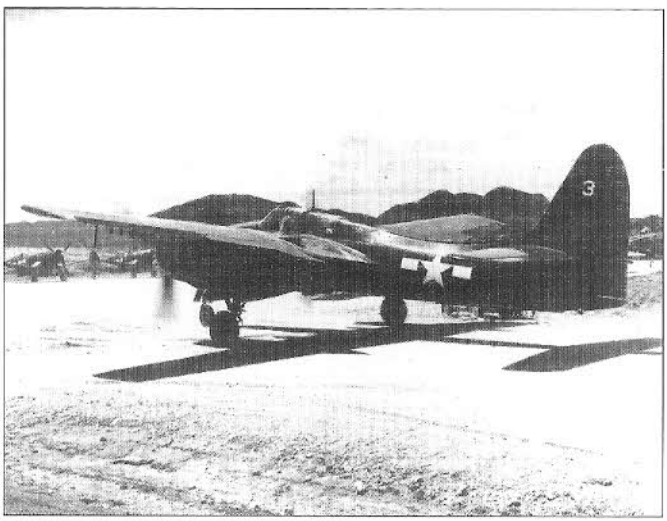
★ Another shot of the J7W Shinden. It was tested before the end of the war, but never put into production.

The planes in *WWII:1946* represent the best of the Japanese and U.S. designs under development at the end of WWII. With the Kikka and the Ki-83, the Japanese were finally poised to challenge the air superiority that America enjoyed throughout the war. The Americans, however, produced several superb new planes, including the Tigercat and the P-80 Shooting Star. The year 1946 saw the end of the piston engine era and the beginning of the jet age. The clash of these technologies, one in its waning days and one in its infancy, creates a fascinating period in aviation history. Though most of these planes saw little or no combat, they were the state of the art for their day — the best of the old and the best of the new.

GRUMMAN F7F TIGERCAT

USMC, USN Fighter

The Tigercat did not see much combat in World War II, as it arrived too late to be deployed in large numbers in the Pacific. Originally intended for carrier use, the F7F saw most of its service with shore-based Marine units. While it was a relatively easy and forgiving plane to fly, no Navy fighter could match the Tigercat's speed at low altitudes. It proved to be remarkably maneuverable for a twin-engined aircraft, much more so than the Nick or P-38. It was deployed in May 1945 to Guam and Okinawa and, while some operational sorties did take place, combat opportunities were few and far between. After the war, the F7F served in a variety of roles, most notably as a one- and two-seat night fighter in the early 1950s.



Courtesy National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution

★ The two-seat night-fighter version of the F7F which served the Marine Corps.

Specifications for the F7F

Type: Two-seat day and night fighter
Introduced: May 1945
Length: 45 ft. 4 in.
Wingspan: 51 ft. 6 in.
Crew: 1
Weight Empty: 15,943 lbs.
Weight Loaded: 21,425 lbs.

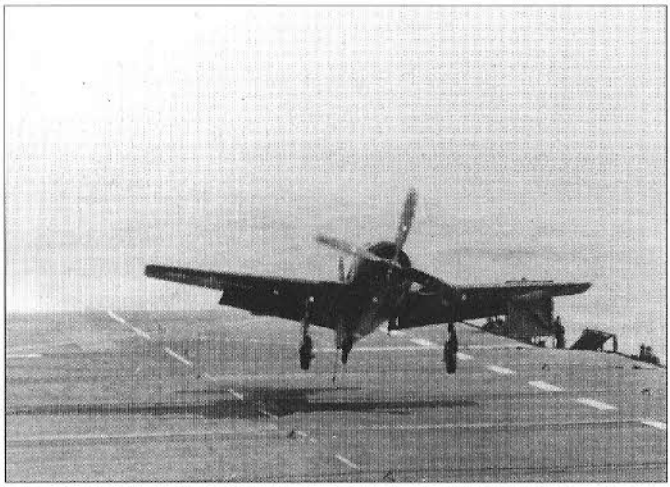
Power Plant: Two 2,200 hp Pratt & Whitney R-2800-22 air-cooled radials with 2-stage supercharger.
Armament: Four 20mm cannon and four 50 caliber machine guns.
Ordnance: 4,000 lbs. of bombs.

Top Speed: 445 mph at 16,000 ft.
Range: 1,485 miles
Ceiling: 36,200 ft.
Climb Rate: 0-10,000 ft.: 4,360 ft./min.
Maneuverability: Good
Firepower: Excellent
Durability: Excellent

GRUMMAN F8F BEARCAT

USN Fighter

The Bearcat was arguably one of the fastest and finest piston-engined aircraft ever made. Bearcats are still in use today on the race circuit, and a modified Bearcat holds the world's piston engine speed record at close to 480 mph. Designed to fit the largest possible engine into the smallest and lightest possible airframe, the Bearcat possesses incredible acceleration and maneuverability. In an unofficial contest, the F8F was flown in mock combat in 1945 against the latest and best American Army and Navy fighters. The Bearcat was the winner and judged to have the best performance below 20,000 feet. At the time of surrender, only one U.S. unit was equipped with this aircraft. It was en route to Japan aboard the *Langley* when the war ended, and as a result, never saw combat in WWII.



Courtesy National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution

★ A Bearcat trapping aboard an Essex class carrier. Grumman stuffed the largest engine into the smallest, lightest airframe possible to create a plane so powerful it had no peer.

Specifications for the F8F

Type: Carrier-based fighter
Introduced: Summer of 1945
Length: 27 ft. 8 in.
Wingspan: 35 ft. 6 in.
Crew: 1
Weight Empty: 3,207 lbs.
Weight Loaded: 4,257 lbs.

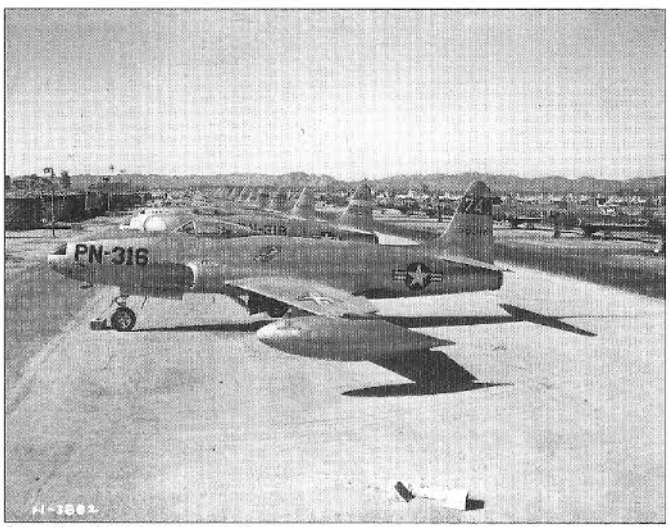
Power Plant: Pratt & Whitney R-2800 2,100 hp at sea level 2-stage supercharger.
Armament: Four 20mm cannon.
Ordnance: Glide Bombing: two 1,000 lb. bombs. Strike: 2,500 lb. bombs, four rockets. Long Range Strike: two 500 lb. bombs, one 125 gallon tank.

Top Speed: 434 mph at 19,800 ft.
Range: 1,105 miles
Ceiling: 38,900 ft.
Climb Rate: 0-5,000 ft.: 4,800 ft./min.
Maneuverability: Excellent
Firepower: Good
Durability: Good

Lockheed P-80 Shooting Star

USAAF Fighter-bomber

The P-80 was the first jet fighter to be deployed by the USAAF. It officially joined operational squadrons in the fall of 1945. Fast, maneuverable and capable of carrying a generous bomb load, the Shooting Star outclassed every piston-engined fighter then in service. It continued service until after the Korean War, but by then such new designs as the MiG-15, F-86 and F-84 had made the Shooting Star obsolete.



Courtesy National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution

★ A P-80 wing in the States. The P-80 was the first jet to shoot down another jet in air combat.

Specifications for the P-80

Type: Fighter-bomber
Introduced: April 1945
Length: 34 ft. 6 in.
Wingspan: 39 ft.
Crew: 1
Weight Empty: 7,920 lbs.
Weight Loaded: 14,500 lbs.

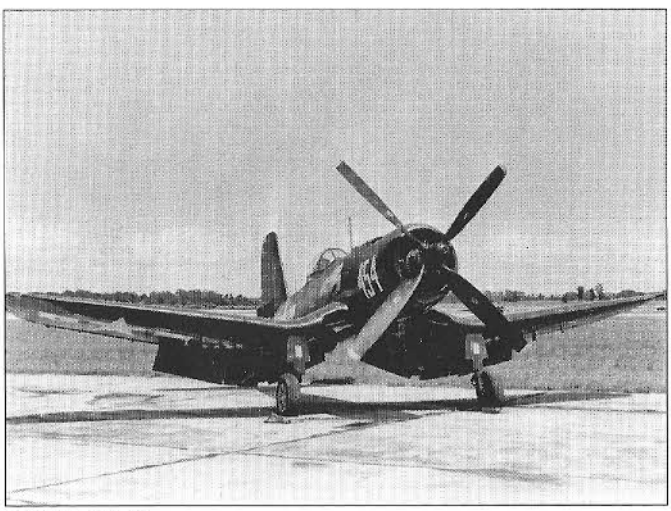
Power Plant: One J-33 A-21 Turbo Jet.
Armament: Six 50 caliber machine guns.
Ordnance: 3,000 lbs. of bombs.

Top Speed: 594 mph at sea level.
Range: 368 miles / 540 miles with drop tanks.
Ceiling: 45,000 ft.
Climb Rate: 0-5,000 ft.: 4,580 ft./ min.
Maneuverability: Excellent
Firepower: Good
Durability: Good

GOODYEAR F2G-2 CORSAIR

USN Fighter-bomber

The Goodyear F2G-2 was a re-engined Corsair designed exclusively to counter the kamikaze menace. Thanks to its 3,000 hp engine, its climb rate was probably the highest of any piston-engined fighter ever built. Its speed was also outstanding, making it capable of running away from most of its contemporaries. Originally slated for Marine units alone, the F2G-2 incorporated a tailhook and would probably have gone into service with Navy Corsair squadrons in September of 1945, had the war continued. With the surrender of Japan, the F2G program was cancelled, and the Navy chose to deploy other versions of the Corsair which were specialized for ground attack. Some preproduction F2G-2s were purchased by civilians and used as race craft. An F2G-2 won the Thompson Trophy in 1947, one of the last piston-engined aircraft to do so.



Courtesy Robert L. Lawson

★ After the war, several F2Gs were purchased by civilians, modified and turned into racers.

Specifications for the F2G-2

Type: Fighter Bomber
Introduced: September 1945
Length: 41 ft.
Wingspan: 33 ft. 9 in.
Crew: 1
Weight Empty: 10,249 lbs.
Weight Loaded: 13,346 lbs.

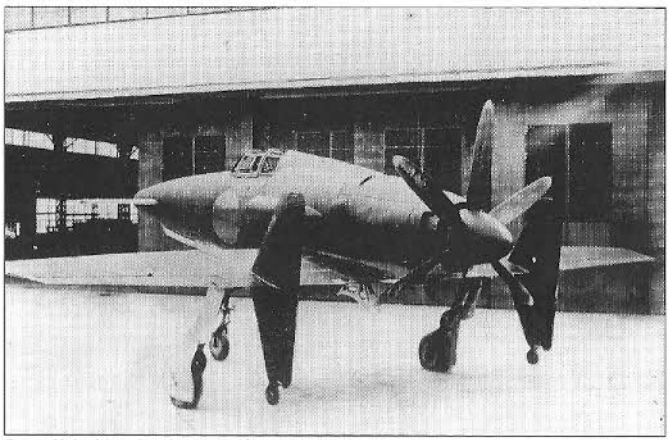
Power Plant: One Pratt & Whitney R-4350-4 3,000 hp radial.
Armament: Six 50 caliber machine guns (300 rpg).
Ordnance: Attack: up to 3,500 lbs. of bombs.

Top Speed: 450 mph
Range: 1,190 miles
Ceiling: 38,000 ft.
Climb Rate: 0-10,000 ft.: 4,400 ft./min., 10,000-20,000 ft.: 7,500 ft./min.
Maneuverability: Excellent
Firepower: Good
Durability: Excellent

KYUSHU J7W SHINDEN

JNAF Interceptor

The Shinden was a last ditch attempt to create a weapon that could catch the B-29 and deal with the huge American bomber on somewhat even odds. Like the Jack, the Shinden's design stressed climb rate over maneuverability so it was not a terribly nimble aircraft. Its armament of four 30mm cannons was probably the most powerful of any Japanese plane that saw service in the war. Due to the nature of its engine supercharger, its performance dropped off dramatically above 20,000 ft. It possessed a wicked torque to the right due to the immense power of its Mitsubishi engine. Just two were built and only one flew before the end of the war.



Courtesy National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution

★ The original design for the Shinden accommodated the later addition of a jet engine. This design option was never implemented.

Specifications for the Shinden

Type: Interceptor
Introduced: Not introduced. First prototype tested: August 3, 1945.
Length: 31 ft. 8 in.
Wingspan: 36 ft. 5 in.
Crew: 1
Weight Empty: 7,639 lbs.
Weight Loaded: 10,854 lbs.

Power Plant: One Mitsubishi air-cooled radial Ha-43 rated at 2,130 hp on take-off and 1,160 at 28,545 ft.
Armament: Four 30mm cannons with 60 rpg.
Ordnance: Strike: Two 132 lb. bombs.

Top Speed: 466 mph at 545 ft.
Range: 529 miles
Ceiling: 39,370 ft.
Climb Rate: 0-5,000 ft.: 2,890 ft./min.
Maneuverability: Good
Firepower: Excellent
Durability: Average

NAKAJIMA KIKKA

JNAF Fighter-bomber

The Kikka was originally conceived as a fast attack bomber. Later versions, however, were planned with mounted pairs of 30mm cannons and more powerful engines to make it a capable fighter-interceptor. Based loosely on the Messerschmitt 262, only two Kikka were completed before the end of the war. It was a fast, but sluggish aircraft, possessing an especially bad acceleration rate.

Courtesy National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution

★ A Kikka under construction at a Nakajima assembly plant.

Specifications for the Kikka

Type: Fighter-bomber
Introduced: Not during the war.
Date first prototype tested: August 7, 1945.
Length: 26 ft. 7 in.
Wingspan: 32 ft. 9 in.
Crew: 1
Weight Empty: 5,071 lbs.
Weight Loaded: 7,716 lbs.

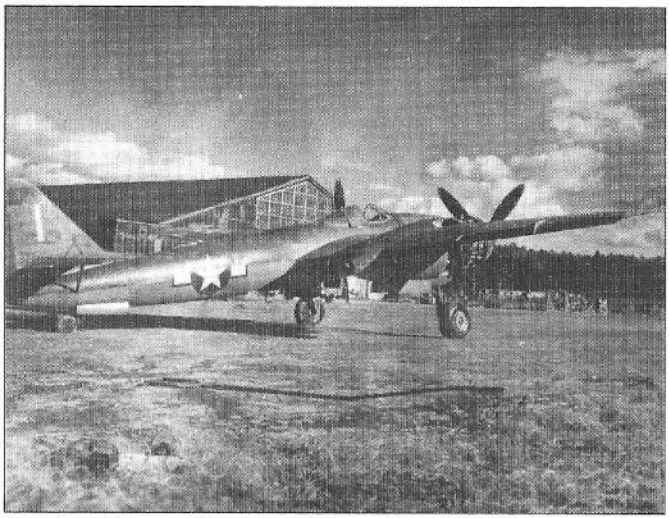
Power Plant: Two 1,984 lb. static thrust turbojets.
Armament: Two 30mm cannon, (100 rpg).
Ordnance: Attack: One 1,102 lb. bomb.

Top Speed: Estimated 525 mph at 20,000 ft.
Range: 509 miles
Ceiling: 39, 370 ft.
Climb Rate: 0-10,000 ft.: 3,950 ft./min.
Maneuverability: Average
Firepower: Good
Durability: Poor

Mitsubishi Ki-83

JAAF, JNAF Fighter

The Ki-83 was one of the truly superlative fighter designs the Japanese were working on at the end of the war. Originally designed for the JAAF, the JNAF expressed interest in the plane, and would have undoubtedly employed it in their own air units had the war continued. Fast, incredibly agile and responsive, the Ki-83 would have been more than a match for the latest Allied aircraft, such as the Bearcat and Tigercat.



Courtesy Robert C. Mikesh

★ A captured Ki-83 after the war. When tested by the U.S. Navy, the Ki-83's performance was comparable to the F7F Tigercat. Only four Ki-83s were ever produced.

Specifications for the Ki-83

Type: Fighter
Introduced: Not during the war.
Date first prototype tested: November 18, 1944.
Length: 41 ft. 12 in.
Wingspan: 50 ft. 10.25 in.
Crew: 1
Weight Empty: 13,184 lbs.
Weight Loaded: 19,390 lbs.

Power Plant: Two 2,200 hp radials Mitsubishi Ha-211 Ru.
Armament: Two 30mm cannon (100 rpg) and two 20mm cannon (150 rpg).
Ordnance: Attack: Two 110 lb. bombs.

Top Speed: 438 mph at 29,530 ft.
Range: 1,213 miles / 2,175 with drop tanks.
Ceiling: 41,535 ft.
Climb Rate: 0-10,000 ft.: 4,000 ft./min.
Maneuverability: Excellent
Firepower: Excellent
Durability: Good

APPENDIX

Courtesy National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution

★ A Superfortress and a P-80 testing an air-to-air refueling scheme after World War II.

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★ Some of the Dynamix flight crew. Keep 'em flying!

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