



STRAFER



498th SQUADRON

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345th Bomb Group Reunion Association

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Japan invasion: gone with the wind

Whether there was to be an invasion of Japan if we'd not dropped the atom bomb was widely debated a couple years ago on the bombing's 50th anniversary. But plans were already drawn, and certainly we all knew what all the activity was aimed at in July '45. You'll probably enjoy these, once Top Secret, facts.

This story is a tribute to those special men who fought and won a world war. It is not meant to be a history. It is a long-overdue salute to a remarkable group of Americans who, through their lifelong courage and perseverance before, during and after World War II, make this country what it is today.

Over 16 million of their generation had served in uniform and over 1 million of their numbers had been casualties; 400,000 had been killed and almost 700,000 had been wounded. Yet despite the cost to their generation, when they returned home, they did so without complaint.

Only a few Americans in 1945 and fewer Americans today are aware of the elaborate plans that had been prepared for the American invasion of the Japanese home islands. Even fewer are aware of how close America actually came to launching that invasion and of what the Japanese had in store for US had the invasion of Japan actually been launched.

"Operation Downfall" was prepared in its final form during the spring and summer of 1945. This plan called for two massive military undertakings to be carried out in succession and aimed at the very heart of the Japanese

Empire.

In the first invasion, in what was code named "Operation Olympic" American combat troops

would be landed by amphibious assault during the early morning hours of November 1, 1945, on Japan itself. After an unprecedented naval

(continued on page 4)



Holiday memory

The Season's Greetings produced by the late Cliff Hanna of Group Headquarters were sent home from the South Pacific by many members of the 345th. Now, Strafer sends one out every year. Cliff made four different scenes, each carrying the same greeting, "All the Way from the S.W.P.A. Season's Greetings from the 345th and me." Now it's a memory of those days, sent as a greeting from Strafer Publisher Ken McClure and Editor Mark Nordstrom.

Squadron Reports

498th Squadron

Frank Dillard

Asst. Gp. V.P. - 498th Sqd.

Well winter is upon us, at least, "us" in southern Illinois. We had our first snow November 3. It's holiday time, so let me wish you all good health, much love, wealth and time to enjoy them.

I received a note from the daughter of Julius Bokenyi, a former member of the 498th. She said he was in a Veteran's home in Sandusky, Ohio. She also said she would like to hear from anyone who knew her father. If you remember Julius, please drop her a line: Constance H. Juchem, Guardian for Julius F. Bokenyi, 2000 Arthur Ave., Westlake, OH 44145-3403.

I ordered a reprint of the original "Warpath" book. I have enjoyed it, and plan to donate a copy to the local library. The dedication in the front reads, "To the men of the 345th Bombardment Group who gave their lives for Victory and Peace, this record is humbly dedicated by us who remain to see the fruition of their sacrifices."

I have regular telephone "visits" with several 498th buddies, but the volume of my other correspondence has been quite small lately. I look forward to making new friends through "Mail Call," and picking up newsworthy items, so if you have anything you'd like to share, let me hear from you.



500th Squadron

Ken Stufflebeam

Asst. Gp. V.P. - 500th Sqd.

Now hear this, the 500th Rough Raiders made a raid on San Antonio, TX on the 1st of September, 1997. Headquarters was the Hyatt Regency Hotel, right downtown on the Riverwalk; in fact there was a stream of water with pools flowing right through the basement area. What an atmosphere that was, and right out the door was the Riverwalk and the touring boats. On the opposite side was a walkway with flowing water and two nice cascades of water.

A four-day reunion of reliving the good old days of the 500th participation in World War II in the SWPA and the joy of seeing old buddies and making new friends more than rewarded all for getting together. An evening boat tour and a Mexican fiesta with Mexican dancers made for a great time. A tour of Fredericksburg for shopping and museum visiting with a trip to an honest to goodness cattle ranch to see genuine cowboys rope and pretend to brand calves. Then on to a restored massive stone schoolhouse for a beefaroo meal and looking at some of the game heads and collections of the owners.

After supper a couple of dude cowboys played guitars and sang. One of them was a



left-handed guitar player and I took a picture of him to prove it. Finally, back to the city of San Antonio and a final trip to the hospitality room and then to bed for some rest and sleep.

Attendance was 122, including members and guests. A very special banquet guest was Nathan Gordon, who was the pilot of the PBV that pulled 12 men from the drink and saved them from certain death as the enemy was moving in with a patrol boat and strafing to kill. In spite of the danger and being heavily overloaded, Lt. Gordon put all of the men in the patrol plane and snatched them right out of the enemy's hands. Lt. Gordon received the medal of honor for his heroic deed. Our own secretary, Bill Cavoli, was one of the men rescued. He presented Mr. Gordon a beautiful plaque of thanks and gratitude. Fred Arnett of the 498th, also rescued that day, was present. Mr. Cavoli apologized for waiting 50 years to make the presentation.

Some of us had the privilege of meeting Mr. Gordon when he spoke at the dedication of the 5th Air Force monument in Dayton, OH several years ago.

Altogether it was a humdinger of a reunion for the 500th and because Bill Cavoli and his daughter Kathy live in San Antonio, we had the best contacts and arrangers possible. Thanks Bill and Kathy and all others who worked to make it a great reunion. Mission Accomplished.

499th Squadron

Ben F Miller

Asst. Gp. V.P. - 499th Sqd.

The 499th mini-reunion is now history. And we are looking forward to the big event in San Antonio in '98. We were delighted with our small reunion at Bearcreek in Sept. We had 25 people from 12 states. Thanks for coming.

Many of us missed the Group book, "Warpath," published shortly after the war. It's out again and can be ordered by calling or writing Ken Gastgeb. I'm very happy with mine.

In the June '97 issue I mentioned Squadron Photographer Fred Wilkens. If you ever saw him, you probably remember his handlebar moustache. He never carried a pistol. He had a large throwing knife in his belt and he was accurate with it. I think he passed on many years ago.

Newly found, or lost, sheep are always turning up, but we need more. Recently a former member of the 499th called and sent pictures. His name is Thomas Ginnelly. He was from Detroit and worked in our intelligence. If you were ever around him, you will not forget him... always on the move. He's planning to be in San Antonio next year and so should you.



501st Squadron

George Mordecai

Asst. Gp. V.P. - 501st Sqd.

The reunion of 1997 is over and for those who attended, it was a great time. The weather was great, the shows were the best and the camaraderie was what we went to Branson for.

There were four from the original cadre. That made for some great stories as these fellows were there from the beginning to the end. Vernon Broker, Henry Blackwell, Jim Caldwell and Harry Hull. They had a great time and enlightened the rest of us on how hard it was in the early days. Bob Anderson went on a fatcat trip with Lynn and myself and he will make the rest of his fatcat trips to Sidney as they were a lot safer. Ask him about Lynn's sudden left hand turns. Don Hardeman showed up and he promised that he will be fully recovered and walking when we get to San Antonio next September 9th, 1998. Remember Don, that's a promise. Bill Stone was missed as were the Valentines and Chet Burns. Chet better have some good stories to tell about Gay Pree and we know Bill Stone will have some good ones to tell for the sequel to We Band of Brothers. Get ready to go to print Peppy. Bill's stories of his trip to Sidney should be able to top whatever Peppy put out now that he has the format. John Davis was on his first reunion and was disappointed that Ed Bina did not make it. He will probably get in touch with you Ed so be prepared. Julius Fisher was missed as he had to cancel at the last minute.



Hope that Margaret is feeling better and we be looking forward to seeing Julius with the grand lady Margaret in September 1998. The Saturday night buffet was great with plenty of food for all. Lynn along with Melba made a great choice with the menu and there was plenty for all. Chester Lee Phillips saved the day with his camper and so all the food that was left over did not go to waste. I hope that he didn't get tired of ribs. Don't worry Lee I will try not to have ribs on the menu at San Antonio next year. Roman Ohnemus has a beautiful painting of a B-25 and he has the address of the person who can make an enlarged copy for anyone who might be interested. If interested give Ohnemus a call. The three M's got together again, Musket, Murphy and Mordecai. We met in Columbia over 53 years ago and became a crew. We were fortunate to survive the rigors of war and even more important the travails of civilian life. Good friends are the best things in life and I hope that as a group we have many more years together. This is what makes it so important to keep coming to these reunions. I suppose they have to come to an end someday but make sure you enjoy these gatherings while we are still able. Ageless Joe Zuber was the first one to respond to the letter on this trip to Branson. He finally retired and the state of Michigan will have to run their highways without Joe's assistance. We love you the best Joe and I know that you will be in San Antonio in 1998. Give our regards to Peppy when you visit him next month. Herbert Kraushaar and Francis Kreidler were new to the reunion bit, but they were able to add many stories about our visit to the Pacific proving that we all saw the war differently.



Fellowship & Fun: Reunion Planned

The reunion committee met all day, October in San Antonio and planned a Great Reunion for 1998. "Fellowship and Fun" is our theme. Enjoy meeting and talking with everyone you see. Fellowship and fun will begin on Wednesday evening at 6:00 with an ice breaker of snacks and drinks provided by the Hotel. On Thursday morning a riverboat ride and movie at the IMAX. Then fellowship time for a couple hours and on back to the hotel. In the evening will be a Great Western Bar-B-Q with everyone dressed Western style and some good Western Music. Friday morning it is off to Lackland AFB parade grounds to view the troops. Then lunch at the Officers Club. Also time to go see and kick the tires of the beautiful B-25 parked in the museum area. Of course, there are other planes there. Friday evening will be the Group Banquet at 6:00. Saturday morning at 9:00 will be the Ladies Breakfast, Squadron meetings, followed by Group meeting to elect officers and take care of business. The rest of the day will be fellowship time and shuttles will be available for shoppers. Sunday, fellowship and departure.

Committee members are: Lynn Lee, George Mordecai, Frank Dillard, Ben Miller, Gus Ouellette, Mary Elizabeth Gamble, Betty Hamner, Dee Musket, Bill Cavoli, Kathy Rubin and Aleece Zucker.

Headquarters Group

August Ouellette

Asst. Gp. V.P. - HQ Group

This will get to our buddies just in time to say "Happy Holidays" and may we all have many more of them.



Since our last issue of this letter we've had a very good and much accomplished meeting for our '98 reunion in San Antonio. We'll need a lot of help and the more, the merrier. Registration, the hospitality room are just two items among many needing attention. It's a great feeling to volunteer a couple hours or so and be able to say, "I had something to do with the reunion's success."

On November 8 I attended a "choral choir" tribute to all vets, with military songs old and new. Any can attend and at closing they sing the songs of the different branches of the armed forces. Vets stand to be recognized when their branch's song is sung. It's very much "goosebump" time and very inspiring. More on this is my upcoming squadron newsletter.

We also received a call to attend a methodist service. Apparently they are honoring a few vets at each service.

As I sign off, let me stress again the need for volunteers, so the reunion will be another "rousing success." Thank you for your attention and mark your calendars for September 1998.



President's Comments

Lynn Lee
President

Let's be sure we have mailed in our \$15 for the coming year's dues. If not \$15, then whatever you feel you can. The important thing is to stay in touch

and stay a part of the reunion association. We don't want to lose anyone.

The San Antonio reunion at Holiday Inn Northwest will be a great get together. Don't

miss it. Ken Gastgeb has done a lot of work and it looks like another winner. He's working with a great group that met recently in San Antonio to help with the planning. Thanks to them all for the extra effort in bringing it all together.

The next issue of Strafer will include the registration form with details on events, reservations and everything you need to know for the big event. It's amazing how the years melt away when you all get together and talk about the old times that seem like yesterday.

Group Bulletin Board

Reunion XII

September 9-13, 1998
San Antonio, Texas

1998 Dues Payable

Please send \$15 annual payment to
345th BG Reunion Assn.
DICK FEUCHT
12500 TOLLGATE RD
PICKERINGTON OH 43147-9161

Your next *Strafer* should arrive in March, 1998. Please submit all items for it by February 1.

The number next to your name on your address label shows the year through which your dues are current. 1998 dues must be paid by February 1 to receive the March *Strafer* on time.

You can still volunteer to help with reunion organization or to help make things happen during the reunion. Contact Ken Gastgeb. His address is listed in the officers register.

INFORMATION WANTED
Trying to learn about 345th missions to Hong Kong. Please contact: Ian Quinn, Hong Kong Historical Aircraft Assn., Apt. 4, The Elegance Bldg., 60 Thai Hang Road, Hong Kong

IN MEMORY OF

Evelyn Costa (wife of Michael J.)	499	6/8/97	Garland, TX
Yolanda Davison (wife of George)	498	8/31/97	Tucson, AZ

Please mail notices of deaths to Strafer. See next issue deadline on Bulletin board.

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"Invasion"

(continued from page 1)

and aerial bombardment, 14 combat divisions of American soldiers and marines would land on heavily fortified and defended Kyushu, the southernmost of the Japanese home islands.

On March 1, 1946, the second invasion, code named "Operation Coronet," would send at least 22 more American combat divisions against one million Japanese defenders to assault the main island of Honshu and the Tokyo Plain in a final effort to obtain the unconditional surrender of Japan.

With the exception of a part of the British Pacific Fleet, "Operation Downfall" was to be a strictly American operation. It called for the utilization of the entire United States Marine Corps, the employment of the entire United States Navy in the Pacific, and for the efforts of the 7th Air Force, the 8th Air Force recently developed from Europe, the 20th Air Force, and for the American Far Eastern Air Force. Over 1.5 million combat soldiers with millions more in support, would be directly involved in these two amphibious assaults. A total of 4.5 million American servicemen, over 40% of all servicemen still in uniform in 1945 were to be a part of "Operation Downfall."

The invasion of Japan was to be no easy military undertaking and casualties were expected to be extremely heavy. Admiral William Leahy estimated that there would be over 250,000 Americans killed or wounded on Kyushu alone. General Charles Willoughby, MacArthur's Chief of Intelligence, estimated that American casualties from the entire operation would be one million men by the fall of 1946. General Willoughby's own intelligence staff considered this to be a conservative estimate.

During the summer of 1945, America had little time to prepare for such a monumental endeavor, but our top military leaders were in almost unanimous agreement that such an invasion was necessary.

While a naval blockade and strategic bombing of Japan was considered to be useful. General Douglas MacArthur considered a naval blockade of Japan ineffective to bring about an unconditional surrender. General George C. Marshall was of the opinion that air power over Japan as it was over Germany, would not be sufficient to bring an end to the war. While most of our top military minds believed that a continued naval blockade and the strategic bombing campaign would further weaken Japan, few of them believed that the blockade or the bombing would bring about her unconditional surrender. The advocates for invasion agreed that while a naval blockade chokes, it does not kill. And though strategic bombing might destroy cities, it still leaves whole armies intact. Both General Eisenhower and General Ira C. Eaker, the Deputy Commander of the Army Air Force agreed. So on May 25, 1945 the Combined Chiefs of Staff, after extensive deliberation, issued to MacArthur, to Admiral Chester Nimitz and to Army Air Force General Henry "Hap" Arnold, the Top Secret directive to proceed with the invasion of Kyushu. The target date was set, for obvious reasons after the typhoon season, for November 1, 1945.

On July 24th President Harry Truman approved the report of the Combined Chiefs of

This article's origins

Editor's note: This article draws heavily on the 1994 book, "Top Secret: The Details of the Planned World War II Invasion of Japan and How the Japanese Would Have Met It - Documentary-" by James Martin Davis and Bert Webber. It was published by the Webb Research Group, P.O. Box 314, Medford, OR 97501. The book also describes a Japanese effort to develop an atomic bomb and goes into extensive descriptions of Japanese Kamikaze fighters. This article also draws on a Life magazine article from the Spring-Summer 1985 issue, Vol-

Staff, which called for the initiation of Operations "Olympic" and "Coronet." On July 27th, the United Nations issued the Potsdam Proclamation, which called upon Japan to surrender unconditionally or face "total destruction." Three days later, on July 29th, DOME 1, the Japanese governmental news agency, broadcast to the world that Japan would ignore the proclamation of Potsdam and would refuse to surrender.

During this same time period, the intelligence section of the Federal Communications Commission monitored internal Japanese radio broadcasts, which disclosed that Japan had closed all its schools to mobilize its school children. It was arming its civilian population and forming it into national civilian, defense units and it was turning Japan into a nation of fortified caves and underground defenses in preparation for the expected invasion of their homeland.

"Operation Olympic," the invasion of Kyushu, would come first. Olympic called for a four pronged assault from the sea on Kyushu. Its purpose was to seize and control the southern one-third of that island and to establish American naval and air bases there in order to effectively intensify the bombings of Japanese industry, to tighten the naval blockade of the home islands to destroy the units of the main - Japanese army, and to support "Coronet," the scheduled invasion of the Tokyo Plain, that was to come the following March.

On October 27th, the preliminary invasion would begin when the 40th Infantry Division would land on a series of small islands to the west and southwest of Kyushu. At the same time the 158th Regimental Combat Team would invade and occupy a small island 78 miles to the south of Kyushu. There, seaplane bases would be established and radar would be set up to provide an emergency anchorage for the invasion fleet, should things not go well on the day of the invasion.

As the invasion grew imminent, the massive power of the United States Navy would approach Japan. The naval forces scheduled to take part in the actual invasion consisted of two awesome fleets-the Third and the Fifth.

The Third Fleet, under Admiral "Bull" Halsey, with its big guns and naval aircraft, would provide strategic support for the operation against Honshu and Hokkaido in order to impede the movement of Japanese reinforcements south to Kyushu. The Third Fleet would be composed of a powerful group of battleships, heavy cruisers, destroyers, dozens of support ships, plus three fast carrier task

ume 8, page 105, by Edward Kerm. The final sections of this article, regarding the weather and its impact on invasion plans are based on a publication circulated among veterans' organization. "Top Secret: The GI Generation, The Soldiers of Yesterday A Keepsake Booklet." It does not cite an author or publisher. The article as it is published here comes from the Elsie Item, a newsletter of the reunion organization of navy landing craft crews of World War II.

groups. From these fast carriers, hundred of navy fighters, dive bombers and torpedo planes would hit targets all over the island of Honshu.

The Fifth Fleet, under Admiral Spruance, would carry our invasion troops. This Fleet would consist of almost 3,000 ships including fast carriers and fire support, and a joint expeditionary force. This expeditionary force would include thousands of additional landing craft of all types and sizes.

Several days before the invasion the battleships, heavy cruisers and destroyers would pour thousands of tons of high explosives into the target areas, and they would not cease the bombardment until after the landing forces had been launched.

During the early morning hours of November 1, 1945, the actual invasion would commence. Thousands of American soldiers and marines would pour ashore on beaches all along eastern, southeastern, southern and western shores. The Eastern Assault Force, consisting of the 25th, 33rd, and the 41st Infantry Divisions would land near Miyasaki, at beaches called Austin Buick, Cadillac, Chevrolet, Chrysler and Cord and move inland to attempt to capture this city and its nearby airfield.

The Southern Force consisting of the 1st Cavalry Division, the 43rd Division and American Division would land inside Ariake Bay at beaches labeled DeSoto, Duasenbergen, Essex, Ford and Franklin and attempt to capture Shibushi and to capture, further inland, the city of Kanoya and its surrounding airfield.

On the western shore of Kyushu, at beaches Pontiac, Reo, Rolls Royce, Saxon, Star, Studebaker, Stutz, Winston and Zephyr, the V Amphibious Corps would land the 2nd, 3rd and 5th Marine Divisions, sending half of its force inland to Sendai and the other half to the port city of Kagoshima.

On November 4th, the reserve force, consisting of the 81st and 98th Infantry Divisions and the 11th Airborne Division after feigning an attack off the island of Shikoku would be landed if not needed elsewhere, near Kaimondake, near the southernmost tip of Kagoshima Bay, at beaches designated Locomobile, Lincoln, LaSalle, Hupmobile, Moon, Mercedes, Maxwell, Overland Oldsmobile, Packard and Plymouth.

The objective of "Olympic" was to seize and control the island of Kyushu in order to use it for the launching platform for "Coronet," which was hoped to be a final knockout blow aimed at Tokyo and the Tokyo Plain. "Olympic" was not just a plan for invasion, but for conquest and occupation as well. It was expected to take

four months to achieve its objective, with three months to be spent in support of that operation if needed. These additional troops were to be taken from the units scheduled for "Coronet."

If all went well with "Olympic" on March 1, 1946, "Coronet" would be launched. "Coronet" would be twice the size of "Olympic" with as many as 28 American Divisions to be landed on Honshu, the main Japanese island.

On March 1, 1946, all along the coast east of Tokyo, the America 1st Army would land the 5th, 7th, 27th, 44th, 86th and 96th Infantry Divisions along with 1st, 4th, and 6th Marine Divisions.

At Sagami Bay just south of Tokyo, the entire 8th and 10th Armies would strike north and east to clear the long western shore of Tokyo Bay and attempt to go as far as Yokohama. The assault troops landing to the south of Tokyo would be the 4th, 6th, 8th, 24th, 31st, 32nd, 37th, 38th and 87th Infantry Divisions, along with the 13th and 20th Armored Divisions.

Following the initial assault, eight more Divisions - the 2nd, 28th, 35th, 91st, 96th, 97th and 104th Infantry Divisions and the 11th Airborne Division - would be landed. If additional troops were needed, as expected, other divisions redeployed from Europe and undergoing training in the United States would be shipped to Japan in what was hoped to be the final push.

The key to victory in Japan rested with success of the "Olympic" at Kyushu. Without the success of the Kyushu campaign, "Coronet" might never be launched. The day of victory in Kyushu rested with our firepower, much of which was to be delivered by carrier-launched aircraft.

At the outset of the invasion of Kyushu, waves of Hell Divers, Dauntless Dive Bombers, Avengers, Corsairs and Hellcats, would take off to bomb, rocket and strafe enemy defenses, gun emplacements and troop concentrations along the beaches. In all, there would be 66 aircraft carriers loaded with 2,649 naval and marine aircraft to be used for close-in air support for the soldiers hitting the beaches.

These planes were also the fleet's primary protection against Japanese attack from the air. Had "Olympic" begun, these planes would be needed to provide an umbrella of protection for the soldiers and sailors of the invasion. Captured Japanese documents and postwar interrogation of Japanese military leaders disclose that our intelligence concerning the number of Japanese planes available for the defense of the home islands was dangerously in error.

In the last months of the war, our military leaders were deathly afraid of the Japanese "Kamikaze" and with good cause. During Okinawa alone, Japanese aircraft sank 32 ships and damaged over 400 others. During the summer months - our top brass had concluded that the Japanese had spent their air force, since American bombers and fighters flew unmolested over the shores of Japan on a daily basis.

What our military leaders did not know was that by the end of July 1945, as part of the Japanese overall plan for the defense of their country, they had been saving all aircraft, fuel and pilots in reserve and had been feverishly building new planes for the decisive battle for

their homeland. The Japanese had abandoned, for the time, their suicide attacks in order to preserve their pilots and planes to hurl at our invasion fleets. The plan for the final defense of Japan was called "Ketsu-Go," and a large part of that plan called for the use of the Japanese Naval and Air Forces in defense. Japan had been divided into districts and in each of these districts hidden airfields were being built and hangers and aircraft were being dispersed and camouflaged in great numbers. Units were being trained, deployed and given final instructions. Still other suicide units were being scattered - throughout the islands of Kyushu and elsewhere and held in reserve. And for the first time in the war, the Army and Navy Air Forces would be operating under one single, unified command.

As a part of the "Ketsu-Go" the Japanese were building 20 suicide takeoff strips in southern Kyushu, with underground hangers for an all out offensive. In Kyushu alone the Japanese had 35 camouflaged airfields and 9 seaplane bases. As part of their overall plan these seaplanes were to be used in suicide missions as well.

On the night before the invasion, 50 seaplane bombers, along with 100 former carrier aircraft and 50 land-based army planes were to be launched in a direct suicide attack on the fleet.

The Japanese 5th Naval Air Fleet and the 6th Air Army had 58 more airfields in Korea, Western Honshu and Shikoku that also were to be used for massive suicide attacks. Allied intelligence had established that the Japanese had no more than 2,500 aircraft of which they guessed only 300 would be deployed in suicide attacks. However, in August of 1945, unknown to our intelligence, the Japanese still had 5,651 Army and 7,074 Navy aircraft for a total of 12,725 planes of all types. During July alone, 1,131 new planes were built and almost 100 new underground aircraft plants were in various stages of construction.

Every village had women involved in some type of aircraft manufacturing activity. Hidden in mines, railways tunnels, under viaducts and in basements of department stores, work was being done to construct new planes.

Additionally, the Japanese were building newer and more effective models of the "Okka" which was a rocket-propelled bomb, just like the German V-2, but piloted to its final destination by a suicide pilot. In March of 1945, the Japanese had ordered 750 of the earlier models of the "Okka" to be produced, these aircraft were to be launched from other aircraft. By the summer of 1945, the Japanese were building the newer models, which would be only minutes away.

At Okinawa, while almost 10,000 sailors died, as a result of Kamikaze attacks, the Kamikaze there had been relatively ineffective, primarily because of distance. Okinawa was located 350 miles from Kyushu and even experienced pilots flying from Japan became lost, ran out of fuel or did not have sufficient flying time to pick out a suitable target. Furthermore, early in the Okinawa campaign, the Americans had established a land-based fighter command which, together with the carrier aircraft, provided an effective umbrella of protection against Kamikaze attacks.

During "Olympic," the situation would be reversed. Kamikaze pilots would have little distance to travel, would have considerable staying time over the invasion fleet and would have little difficulty picking out suitable targets. Conversely, the American land-based aircraft would be able to provide only minimal protection against suicide attacks since these American aircraft would have little flying time over Japan before they would be forced to return to their bases on Okinawa and elsewhere to refuel.

Also different than Okinawa would be the Japanese choice of targets. At Okinawa aircraft carriers and destroyers were the principal targets of the Kamikaze. The targets for the "Olympic" invasion were to be transports carrying the American troops, who were to participate in the landing. The Japanese concluded they could kill far more Americans by sinking one troop ship than they could by sinking 30 destroyers. Their aim was to kill thousands of American troops at sea, thereby removing them from the actual landing. "Ketsu-Go" called for the destruction of 700 to 800 American ships.

When invasion became imminent, "Ketsu-Go" called for a fourfold aerial plan of attack. While American ships were approaching Japan, but still in the open seas, an initial force of 2,000 army and navy fighters were to fight to the death in order to control the skies over Kyushu. A second force of 330 specially trained Navy combat pilots were to take off and attack the main body of the task force to keep it from using its fire support and air cover to adequately protect the troop carrying transports. While these two forces were engaged, a third force of 825 suicide planes was to hit the American transports in the open seas.

As the convoys approached their anchorages, another 2,000 suicide planes were to be detailed in waves of 200 to 300, to be used in hour-by-hour attacks that would make Okinawa seem tame in comparison. American troops would be arriving in approximately 180 lightly armed transports and 70 cargo vessels. Given the number of Japanese planes and the short distance to target, certainly a number of the troop-carrying transports would have been hit.

By mid-morning of the first day of the invasion, most of the American land-based aircraft would be forced to return to their bases, leaving the defense against the suicide planes to the carrier pilots and the shipboard gunners. Initially, these pilots and gunners would have met with considerable success, but after the third, fourth and fifth waves of Japanese aircraft, a significant number of Kamikaze most certainly would have broken through.

Carrier pilots crippled by fatigue would have to land time and time again to rearm and refuel, navy fighters would break down from lack of needed maintenance. Guns would malfunction on both aircraft and combat vessels from the heat of continuous firing, and ammunition expended in such abundance would become scarce. Gun crews would be exhausted by nightfall, but still the waves of Kamikaze would continue. With our fleet hovering off the beaches, all remaining Japanese aircraft would be committed to nonstop mass suicide, which the Japanese hoped could be sustained for ten days.

The Japanese planned to coordinate their Kamikaze and conventional air strikes with attacks from the 40 remaining conventional submarines from the Japanese Imperial Navy, beginning, when the invasion fleet was within 180 miles off Kyushu. As our invasion armada grew nearer, the rate of submarine attacks would increase. In addition to attacks by the remaining fleet submarines, some of which were to be armed with "Long Lance" torpedoes with a range of 20 miles, the Japanese had more frightening plans for death from the sea.

By the end of the war, the Imperial Japanese Navy still had 23 destroyers and two cruisers which were operational. These ships were to be used to counterattack the American invasion and a number of the destroyers were to be beached along the invasion beaches at the last minute to be used as anti-invasion gun platforms.

As early as 1944, Japan had established a special naval attack unit, which was the counterpart of the special attack units of the air, to be used in the defense of the homeland. These units were to be saved for the invasion and would make widespread use of midget submarines, human torpedoes and exploding motor-boats against the Americans. Once offshore, the invasion fleet would be forced to defend not only against the suicide attacks from the air, but would also be confronted with suicide attacks from the sea.

Attempting to sink our troop-carrying transports would be almost 300 Kairyu suicide submarines. These two man subs carried a 1,320 pound bomb in their nose and were to be used in close-in ramming attacks. By the end of the war, the Japanese had 215 Kairyu available with 207 more under construction.

With a crew of five, the Japanese Koryu suicide submarine, carrying an even larger explosive charge, was also to be used against the American vessels. By August, the Japanese had 115 Koryu completed, with 496 under construction.

Especially feared by our Navy were the Kaitens, which were difficult to detect, and which were to be used against our invasion fleet just off the beaches. These Kaitens were human torpedoes over 60 feet long, each carried a warhead of over 3,500 pounds and each was capable of sinking the largest of American naval vessels. The Japanese had 120 shore-based Kaitens, 78 of which were in the Kyushu area as early as August.

Finally, the Japanese had almost 4,000 Navy Shinyo and Army Liaison motor boats, which were also armed with high explosive warheads, and which were to be used in nighttime attacks against our troop carrying ships.

The principal goal of the special attack units of the air and of the sea was to shatter the invasion before the landing. By killing the combat troops aboard ships and sinking the attack transports and cargo vessels, the Japanese were convinced the Americans would back off or become so demoralized that they would then accept a less than unconditional surrender and a more honorable and face-saving end for the Japanese.

In addition to destroying as many of the larger American ships as possible, "Ketsu-Go" also called for the annihilation of the smaller offshore landing craft carrying our GIs to the

invasion beaches.

The Japanese, had devised a network of beach defenses consisting of electronically detonated mines farthest offshore three lines of suicide divers, followed by magnetic mines and still other mines planted all over the beaches themselves.

A fanatical part of the last line of maritime defense was the Japanese suicide frogmen, called "Fukuryu." These crouching dragons, were divers armed with lunge mines, each capable of sinking a landing craft up to 950 tons. These divers, numbering in the thousands, could stay submerged for up to ten hours, and were to thrust their explosive charges into the bottom landing craft and, in effect, serve as human mines.

As horrible as the defense of Japan would be off the beaches, it would be on Japanese soil that the American armed forces would face the most rugged and fanatical defense that had ever been encountered in any of the theaters during the entire war.

Throughout the island-hopping Pacific campaign, our troops had always outnumbered the Japanese by two and sometimes three to one. In Japan it would be different. By virtue of a combination of cunning, guesswork and brilliant military reasoning a number of Japan's top military leaders astutely deduced, not only when, but where the United States would land its first invasion forces. The Japanese positioned their troops accordingly.

Facing the 14 American Divisions landing at Kyushu would be 14 Japanese Divisions, 7 independent mixed brigades, 3 tank brigades and thousands of specially-trained Naval Landing Forces. On Kyushu the odds would be three-to-two in favor of the Japanese, with 790,000 enemy defenders against 550,000 Americans. This time the bulk of the Japanese defenders would not be the poorly-trained and ill-equipped labor battalions that the Americans had faced in the earlier campaigns. The Japanese defenders would be the hardware of the Japanese Home Army. These troops were well fed and well equipped, and were linked together all over Kyushu by instantaneous communications. They were familiar with the terrain, had stockpiles of arms and ammunition and had developed an effective system of transportation and resupply almost invisible from the air. Many of these Japanese troops were the elite of the Japanese army and they were swollen with fanatical fighting spirit that convinced them that they could defeat these American invaders that had come to defile their homeland.

Coming shore, the American Eastern amphibious assault forces at Miyazaki would face the Japanese 154th Division, which straddled the city, the Japanese 212th Division on the coast immediately to the north, and the 156th Division on the coast immediately to the south. Also in place and prepared to launch a counterattack against our Eastern force were the Japanese 25th and 77th Divisions. Awaiting the Southeastern attack force at Ariake Bay was the entire Japanese 86th Division, and at least one independent mixed infantry brigade.

On the western shores at Kyushu, the Marines would face the most brutal opposition. Along the invasion beaches would be the 146th, 206th, and 303rd Japanese Divisions,

along with the 6th Tank Brigade, the 125th Mixed Infantry Brigade and the 4th Artillery Command. Additionally, components of the 25th and 77th Divisions would also be poised to launch counterattacks.

If not needed to reinforce the primary landing beaches, the American Reserve Force would be landed at the base of Kagoshima Bay on November 4th, where they would be immediately confronted by two mixed infantry brigades, parts of two infantry divisions and thousands of the naval landing forces who had undergone combat training to support ground troops in defense.

All along the invasion beaches, our troops would face coastal batteries, anti-landing obstacles, and an elaborate network of heavily fortified pill boxes, bunkers, strong points and underground fortresses.

As our soldiers waded ashore, they would do so through intense artillery and mortar fire from preregistered batteries as they worked their way through tetrahedral and barbed wire entanglements so arranged to funnel them into muzzles of these Japanese guns.

On the beaches and beyond would be hundreds of Japanese machine gun positions, beach mines, booby traps, trip-wire mines, and sniper units. Suicide units concealed in spider holes would meet the troops as they passed nearby. Just past the beaches and the sea walls would be hundreds of barricades, trail blocks, and concealed strong points.

In the heat of battle, Japanese special infiltration units would be sent to reap havoc in the American lines by cutting phone and communication lines, and by indiscriminately firing our troops attempting to establish a beachhead. Some of the troops would be in American uniform to confuse our troops, and English speaking Japanese officers were assigned to break in on American radio traffic to call off American artillery fire, to order retreats and to further confuse our troops.

Suicide troops with explosive charges strapped on their chests or backs would attempt to blow up American tanks, artillery pieces and ammunition stores as they were unloaded ashore.

Beyond the beaches were large artillery pieces situated at key points to bring down a devastating curtain of fire on the avenues of approach along the beach. Some of these large guns were mounted on railroad tracks running in and out of caves where they were protected by concrete and steel.

The battle of Japan, itself, would be won by what General Simon Bolivar Buckner had called on Okinawa "Prairie Dog Warfare." This type of fighting was almost unknown to the ground troops in Europe and the Mediterranean. It was peculiar only to the American Soldiers and marines whose responsibility it had been to fight and destroy the Japanese on islands all over the south and central Pacific. "Prairie Dog Warfare" had been the story of Tarawa, of Saipan, of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. "Prairie Dog Warfare" was a battle for yards, feet a sometimes even inches. It was a brutal, and dangerous form of combat aimed at an underground, heavily fortified, non retreating enemy. "Prairie Dog Warfare" would be what the invasion of Japan was all about.

In the mountains behind the beaches were

elaborate underground networks of caves, bunkers, command posts and hospitals connected by miles of tunnels with dozens of separate entrances and exits. Some of these complexes could hold up to 1,000 enemy ops.

A number of these caves were equipped with large steel doors that slid open to allow artillery fire and then would snap shut again.

The paths leading up to these underground fortresses were honeycombed with defensive positions, and all but a few of the trails would be booby-trapped. Along these manned defensive positions would be machine gun nests and air crafted and naval guns converted for anti-invasion fire.

In addition to the use of poison gas and bacteriological warfare (which the Japanese had experimented with) the most frightening of all was the prospect of meeting an entire civilian population that had been mobilized to meet our troops on the beaches.

Had "Olympic" come about, the Japanese civilian population inflamed by a national slogan, "One Hundred Million will die for the Emperor and Nation," was prepared to engage and fight the American invaders to the death.

Twenty-eight million Japanese had become a part of the "National Volunteer Combat Force" and had undergone training in the techniques of beach defense and guerrilla warfare. These civilians were armed with ancient rifles, lunge mines, satchel charges, Molotov cocktails and one-shot black powder mortars. Still others were armed with swords, long bows, axes and mboospears.

These special civilian units were to be tactically employed in nighttime attacks, hit and run maneuvers, delaying actions and massive suicide charges at the weaker American positions.

Even without the utilization of Japanese civilians in direct combat, the Japanese and American casualties during the campaign for Kyushu would have been staggering. At the early stage of the invasion, 1,000 Japanese and American soldiers would be dying every hour. The long and difficult task of conquering Kyushu would have made casualties on both sides enormous and one can only guess at how monumental the casualty figures would have been had the Americans had to repeat their invasion a second time when they landed at heavily fortified and defended Tokyo Plain the following March.

The invasion of Japan never became a reality because on August 6, 1945, the entire nature of war changed when the first atomic bomb was exploded over Hiroshima. On August 9, 1945, a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, and within days the war with Japan was at a close.

Had these bombs not been dropped and had the invasion been launched as scheduled, it is hard not to speculate as to the cost. Thousands of Japanese suicide sailors and airmen would have died in fiery deaths in the defense of their homeland. Thousands of American sailors and airmen defending against these attacks would have been killed with many more wounded.

On the Japanese home islands, the combat casualties would have been at a minimum in the tens of thousands. Every foot of Japanese soil would have been paid for, twice over, by

both Japanese and American lives.

One can only guess at how many civilians would have committed suicide in their homes or in futile mass military attacks.

In retrospect, the one million American men who were to be the casualties of the invasion, were instead lucky enough to survive the war, safe and unharmed.

Intelligence studies and realistic military estimates made over forty years ago, and not latter day speculation, show quite clearly that the battle for Japan might well have resulted in the biggest bloodbath in the history of modern warfare.

At best, the invasion of Japan would have resulted in a long and bloody siege. At worst, it could have been a battle of extermination between two different civilizations.

Far worse would be what might have happened to Japan as a nation and as a culture. When the invasion came, it would have come after several additional months of the continued fire-bombings on all of the rearming Japanese cities and population centers. The cost in human life that resulted from the two atomic blasts would be small in comparison to the total number of Japanese lives that would have been lost by this continued aerial devastation.

If the invasion had come in the fall of 1945, with the American forces locked in combat in the south of Japan, who or what could have prevented the Red Army from marching into the northern half of the Japanese home islands. If "Downfall" had been an operation necessity, the existence of a separate North and South Japan might be a modern-day reality. Japan today could be divided down its middle much like Korea and Germany. The world was spared the cost of "Downfall," however, because on September 2 1945, Japan formally surrendered to the United States and World War II was finally over.

Almost immediately, American soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines in for the duration were now discharged. The aircraft carriers, cruisers, transport ships and LST's scheduled to carry our invasion troops to Japan, now ferried home American troops in a gigantic troop-lift called "Magic Carpet."

The soldiers and marines who had been committed to invade Japan were now returned home where they were welcomed back to American shores. All over America celebrations were held and families everywhere gathered in Thanksgiving to honor these soldiers who had been miraculously spared from further combat and were now safely returning home.

In the fall of 1945, with the war now over, a few Americans would ever learn of the elaborate top secret plans that had been prepared in detail for the invasion of Japan. Those few military leaders who had known the details of "Operation Downfall" were now preoccupied with demobilization and other postwar matters, and were no longer concerned with this invasion that never came.

In the fall of 1945, in the aftermath of the two thermonuclear explosions that triggered the Japanese surrender, and with the war a fading memory, few people concerned themselves with the invasion plans for Japan that had been rendered obsolete by the atomic age. Following the surrender, the classified documents,

maps, diagrams and appendices for "Operation Downfall" were packed away in boxes and began the long circuitous route to the National Archives, where they still remain.

But even now, more than fifty years later, these plans that called for the invasion of Japan paint a vivid description of what might have been one of the most horrible campaigns in the history of modern man. The fact that "Operation Downfall," the story of the invasion of Japan, is locked up in our National Archives and not reflected in our history books is something for which all Americans can be thankful.

POSTSCRIPT

With the capture of Linawas during the summer of 1945 the Americans in the Pacific finally obtained what the allies in Europe had enjoyed all along- a larger island capable of being used as a launching platform for an invasion. Following the cessation of hostilities with Germany, millions of American soldiers, sailors and airmen were being redeployed to the Pacific for the anticipated invasion of Japan. The center of the immense military buildup, the primary staging area for the invasion, was the island of Okinawa.

American military planners knew that the invasion of Japan would be a difficult military undertaking. Japan had never been successfully invaded in its history.

Six and one-half centuries before, an invasion similar to the planned American invasion had been attempted and failed. That invasion had striking similarities to the one being planned by the Americans that summer of 1945.

In the year 1281 A.D. two magnificent Mongol fleets set sail for the Empire of Japan. Their purpose was to launch a massive invasion on the Japanese home islands and conquer Japan in the name of the Great Mongol Emperor, Kublai Khan.

Sailing from China was the main armament consisting of 3,500 ships and over 100,000 heavily armed troops. Sailing from Korea was a second impressive fleet of 1,000 ships containing 42,000 Mongol warriors.

In the summer of that year the invasion fleet sailing from Korea arrived off the western shores of the southernmost Japanese island of Kyushu. The Mongols maneuvered their ships into position and methodically launched their assault on the Japanese coast. Like a human surge, wave after wave of these mortal soldiers swept ashore at Hagata Bay, where they were met on the beaches by thousands of Japanese defenders who had never had their homeland successfully invaded.

The Mongol invasion force was a mighty army, and its arsenal of weapons was superior to that of the Japanese. Its soldiers were equipped with poisoned arrows, metal iron swords, metal javelins and even gunpowder. The Japanese were forced to defend themselves with bows and arrows, spears made from bamboo and shields made of wood.

The battle was fierce, with many soldiers killed or wounded on both sides. It raged on for days, but aided by the fortification along the beaches of which the Mongols had no advanced knowledge, and inspired by the sacred duty of the defense of their homeland, these ancient Japanese warriors pushed the more stronger Mongol invaders off the beaches.

back into their ships lying at anchor in the Bay.

This Mongol fleet then set back out to sea, where it rendezvoused with the main body of its army, which was arriving with the second fleet coming from China.

During the summer of 1281, this combined force of foreign invaders maneuvered off shore in preparation for the main assault on the western shores of Kyushu.

All over Japan elaborate Shinto ceremonies were performed at shrines in the cities and in the countryside. Hundreds of thousands of Japanese urged on by their Emperor, their warlords and other officials prayed to their Shinto gods for deliverance from these foreign invaders. A million Japanese voices called upward for divine intervention.

Miraculously, as if in answer to their prayers, from out of the south, a savage typhoon sprang up and headed toward Kyushu. Its powerful winds screamed up the coast where they struck the Mongols' invasion fleet with full fury wreaking havoc on the ships and on the men on board. The Mongol fleet was devastated. After the typhoon passed, over 4,000 invasion craft had been lost and the Mongol casualties exceeded 100,000 men.

All over Japan religious services and huge celebrations were held. Everywhere tumultuous gatherings were held in thanksgiving to pay homage to the "divine wind" that had saved their homeland from foreign invasion. At no time thereafter has Japan ever been successfully invaded. The Japanese fervently believed that it was this "divine wind" that would forever protect them.

During the summer of 1945 another powerful armada was being assembled to assault the same coastline on the island of Kyushu. Scheduled for November 1, 1945, a floating invasion force of 14 army and marine divisions, transported by ship, were to hit the western, eastern, and southern shoreline of Kyushu. This shipboard invasion force would consist of 550,000 combat soldiers, tens of thousands of sailors and hundreds of naval aviators.

The assault fleet would consist of thousands of ships of every shape, size, and description. Ranging from the mammoth battleships and aircraft carriers to the small amphibious craft, they would be sailing from Okinawa, the Philippines and the Marianas.

Crucial to the success of the invasion were nearly 4,000 army, navy, and marine aircraft that would be packed into the small island of Okinawa to be used as air support of our landing forces at the time of this invasion.

By July of 1945 the Japanese knew the Americans were planning to invade their homeland. Throughout the early summer, the Emperor and his government officials exhorted the military and civilian population to make preparations for the invasion.

Japanese radios throughout that summer cried out to the people to "form a wall of human flesh" and when the invasion began, to push the invaders back into the sea, and back onto their ships.

The Japanese people fervently believed that the American invaders would be repelled. They all seemed to share a mystical faith that their country could never be invaded successfully and that they again would be saved by the "divine wind."

The American invasion never came, however because the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as if by a miracle, ended the war.

Almost immediately American soldiers, sailors and airmen in for the duration, were being discharged and sent home. By the fall of 1945, there remained approximately 200,000 soldiers, sailors and airmen still on Okinawa. Okinawa, which would have been the major launching platform for the invasion of Japan, was now peaceful.

In October, Buckner Bay, on the east coast of the island, was still jammed with vessels of all kinds - from Victory ships to landing craft. On the island itself, 150,000 soldiers lived under miles of canvas, in what were referred to as "Tent Cities." All over the island, hundreds of tons of food, equipment and supplies, stacked in immense piles, laid out in the open.

During the early part of October, to the southwest of Okinawa, just northeast of the Marianas, the seas were growing restless and the winds began to blow. The ocean skies slowly turned black and the large swells that were developing began to turn the Pacific Ocean white with froth. In a matter of only a few days, a gigantic typhoon had somehow, out of season, sprung to life and began sweeping past Saipan and into the Philippine Sea.

As the storm grew more violent, it raced northward and kicked up 60 foot waves.

Navy meteorologists eventually became aware of the storm, but they expected it to pass well between Formosa and Okinawa, and to disappear into the East China Sea.

Inexplicably, on the evening of October 8th, the storm changed direction and abruptly veered to the east. When it did so, there was insufficient warning to allow the ships in the harbor to get under way in order to escape the typhoon's terrible violence. By late morning on the 9th, rain was coming down in torrents, the seas were rising and northeast, small crafts in Buckner Bay dragged their anchors.

By early afternoon the wind had risen to over 100 miles per hour. The rain, coming in horizontally now, was more salt than fresh. And even the larger vessels began dragging anchor under the pounding of 50 foot seas.

As the winds continued to increase and the storm unleashed its fury, the entire Bay became a scene of devastation. Ships dragging their anchors collided with one another, hundreds of vessels were blown ashore. Vessels in two's and three's were washed ashore into masses of wreckage that began to accumulate on the beaches. Numerous ships had to be abandoned, while their crews were precariously transferred between ships. By mid-afternoon the typhoon had reached its raging peak with winds now coming from the north and the northeast, blowing up to 150 miles per hour. Ships initially grounded by the storm were now blown onto the reefs and back across the bay onto the south shore, dragging their anchors the entire way. More collisions occurred between wind blown ships and shattered hulks. Gigantic waves swamped small vessels and engulfed larger ones. Liberty ships lost their propellers while men in transports, destroyers and Victory ships were swept off the decks by 60 foot waves that reached the tops of the masts of their vessels. On shore, the typhoon was devastating the island. Twenty hours of

torrential rain washed out roads and ruined island's stores of rations and supplies. Aircraft were picked up and catapulted off the air. The huge Quonset huts went sailing into the air. Metal hangars were ripped to shreds and "Tent Cities" housing 150,000 troops on the island ceased to exist. Almost the entire supply of the island was blown away. Americans on the island had nowhere to go, but the caves, trenches and ditches on the island in order to survive. All over the island were tents, boards and sections of galvanized iron being hurled through the air at 100 miles per hour. The storm raged over the island for hours, and then slowly headed out to sea. Then it doubled back and two days later headed in from the ocean to hit the island again. The following day, when the typhoon had passed, dazed men crawled out of holes and into caves to count the losses.

Countless aircraft had been destroyed. Radio power was gone, communications and supplies were nonexistent, B-29's were repositioned to rush in tons of rations and supplies to form the Marianas. General Joseph Stennis, the 10th Army Commander, asked for immediate plans to evacuate all hospital cases from the island. The harbor facilities were unusable.

After the typhoon roared out into the sea, Japan and started to die its slow death. Bodies began to wash ashore. The toll on the island was staggering. Almost 270 ships were grounded or damaged beyond repair. Only three ships were in too bad a shape to be restored to duty and were decommissioned, stripped and abandoned. Out of 90 ships that needed major repair, the Navy decided that only 10 were even worthy of complete salvage, and the remaining 80 were scrapped.

According to Samuel Eliot Morrison, famous Naval historian, "Typhoon Louise" was the most furious and lethal storm ever encountered by the United States Navy in its history. Hundreds of Americans were injured and missing, ships were sunk and the island of Okinawa was in havoc.

News accounts at the time disclose the storm and the public back home paid little attention to this storm that struck the island with such force. The very existence of this storm is still a little-known fact.

Surprisingly, few people then, or even now, have made the connection that an American invasion fleet of thousands of ships, transports and landing craft and a half million men would well have been in that exact place at that time, poised to invade Japan, when the typhoon enveloped Okinawa and its surrounding waters.

In the aftermath of this storm, with the passage of time, few people concerned themselves with the obsolete invasion plans for Japan.

However, had there been no bomb dropped on Hiroshima or had it been simply delayed for only a few moments, history might well have repeated itself. In the fall of 1945, in the aftermath of the typhoon, had things been different, a million Japanese religious services and huge celebrations would have been held. A million Japanese voices would have been raised upward in thanksgiving. Everywhere tumultuous gatherings would have gathered in delirious gratitude to pay homage to a "divine wind," which would have protected their country from foreign invaders once again, a "divine wind" that had named, centuries before, the "Kamikaze."