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THE UNITED STATES MARINES in the OCCUPATION OF JAPAN



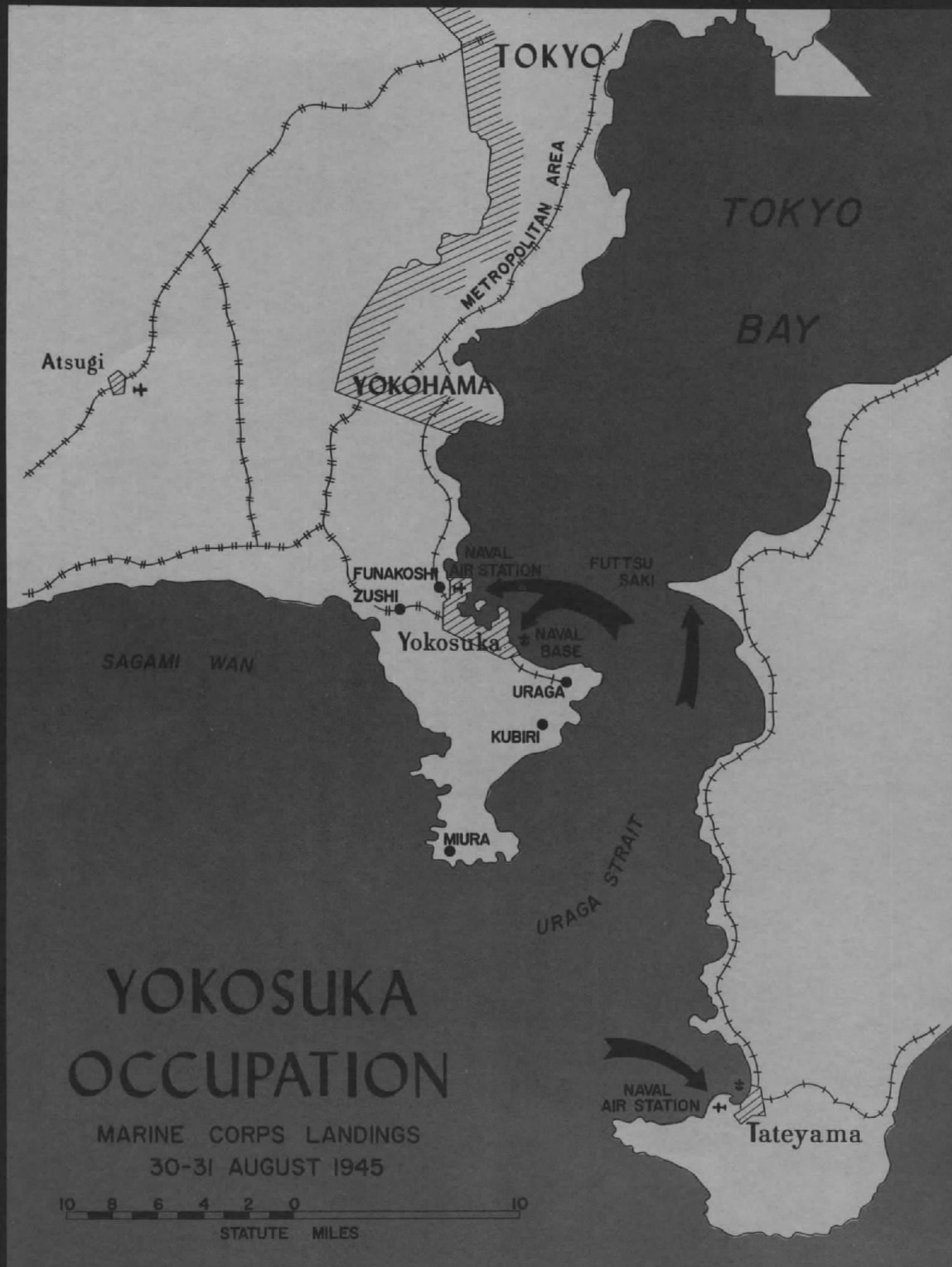
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YOKOSUKA OCCUPATION

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THE UNITED STATES MARINES
IN THE
OCCUPATION OF JAPAN

By

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PREFACE

The United States Marines in the Occupation of Japan is a concise narrative of the major events which took place when Marine air and ground units were deployed to the main islands of Japan at the close of World War II. The text is based on official records, interviews with participants in the operations described, and reliable secondary sources. The pamphlet is published for the information of Marines and others interested in this significant period of Marine Corps history.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "R. G. Owens, Jr.".

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Reviewed and approved: 12 February 1969

THE UNITED STATES MARINES IN THE
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by

Henry I. Shaw, Jr.

The war was over, but the victory was not yet secure. Foremost among the multitude of new and pressing problems confronting Allied planners was the question of how the Japanese military would react to the sudden peace. On bypassed islands throughout the Pacific, on the mainland of Asia, and in Japan itself, over four million fighting men were still armed and organized for combat. Would all these men, who had proven themselves to be bitter-end, fanatical enemies even when faced with certain destruction, accept their Emperor's order to lay down their weapons? Or would some of them fight on, refusing to accept or believe the decision of their government? Would the tradition of fealty to the wishes of the Emperor overbalance years of conditioning that held surrender to be a crushing personal and national disgrace?

Logically, the focal point of Japanese physical and moral strength was the seat of Imperial rule. If Tokyo were occupied without incident, the chances for a successful and bloodless occupation of Japan and the peaceful surrender of outlying garrisons would be greatly enhanced. Plans for seizure of ports of entry in the Tokyo Bay area for occupation forces received top priority. Speed was essential and the spearhead troops of the occupying forces were selected from those with high combat readiness.

General MacArthur's command contributed the 11th Airborne Division to stage from Luzon through Okinawa to an airfield outside Tokyo. Admiral Nimitz ordered the Third Fleet, cruising the waters off Japan, to form a landing force from ships' complements to seize Yokosuka Naval Base in Tokyo Bay. To augment this naval force, the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific (FMFPac) was directed to provide a regimental combat team (RCT) for immediate occupation duty. These Marines, and others that followed them, were destined to play an important part in the occupation of Japan.

The Yokosuka Operation⁽¹⁾

Months before the fighting ended, preliminary plans and concepts for the occupation of Japan had been formulated at the headquarters of MacArthur and Nimitz. Staff studies, based on the possibility of swift collapse of enemy resistance, were

prepared and distributed at army and fleet level for planning purposes. In early summer of 1945, as fighting raged on Okinawa and in the Philippines, dual planning went forward for both the assault on Japan (OLYMPIC and CORONET) and the occupation operation (BLACKLIST).

Many essential elements of the two plans were similar and the Sixth Army, which was slated to make the attack on Kyushu under OLYMPIC, was given the contingent task of occupying southern Japan under BLACKLIST.(2) In like manner, the Eighth Army, utilizing the wealth of information it had accumulated regarding Honshu in planning CORONET, was designated the occupying force for northern Japan. The Tenth Army, also scheduled for the Honshu assault by CORONET, was given the mission of occupying Korea in BLACKLIST plans.(3)

When the Japanese government made its momentous decision in the wake of atomic bombings and Russia's entry into the war, the "only military unit at hand with sufficient power to take Japan into custody at short notice and enforce the Allies' will until occupation troops arrived"(4) was Admiral William F. Halsey's Third Fleet, at sea off the enemy coast. Advance copies of Halsey's Operation Plan 10-45 for the occupation of Japan setting up Task Force 31 (TF 31), the Yokosuka Occupation Force, were distributed on 8 August. Two days later, Rear Admiral Oscar C. Badger (Commander, Battleship Division 7) was designated Commander, TF 31, and all ships were alerted to organize and equip blue-jacket and Marine landing forces. At the same time, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, directed the 6th Marine Division to furnish an RCT to the Third Fleet for possible early occupation duty in Japan.(5) Brigadier General William T. Clement, Assistant Division Commander, was named to head the Fleet Landing Force.

Preliminary plans for the activation of Task Force Able, consisting of a skeletal headquarters detachment, the 4th Marines, Reinforced, an amphibian tractor company, and a medical company, were prepared by III Amphibious Corps on 11 August. Concurrently, officers designated to form General Clement's staff were alerted and immediately began planning to load out the task force. Warning orders were passed to the staff directing that the RCT with attached units be ready to embark within 48 hours.

The curtain of secrecy surrounding the proposed operation was lifted at 0900 on 12 August so that task force units could deal directly with the necessary service and supply agencies without processing their requests through the corps staff. All elements of the task force were completely re-outfitted, and the 5th Field Service Depot and receiving units went on a 24-hour work day to complete the resupply task. The 4th Marines joined 600 replacements from the FMFPac Transient Center, Marianas, to fill the gaps in its ranks left by combat attrition and state-side rotation.

Dump areas and dock space were allotted by the Island Command to accommodate the five transports, a cargo ship, and a dock landing ship of Transport Division 60 assigned to transport Task Force Able. The mounting-out process was considerably aided by the announcement that all ships would arrive in port on 14 August, 24 hours later than they were originally scheduled. On the evening of the 14th, however, "all loading plans for supplies were thrown into chaos"(6) by news of the substitution of a smaller class transport for one of those of the original group. The resultant reduction of shipping space was partially made up by the assignment of a landing ship, tank (LST) to the transport force. Later, after the task force had departed Guam, a second LST was allotted to lift most of the remaining supplies, including the tractors of Company A, 4th Amphibian Tractor Battalion.

Loading began at 1600, 14 August and continued throughout the night. The troops boarded ship between 1000 and 1200 the following day, and that evening, the transport division sailed for its rendezvous at sea with the Third Fleet. "In a period of approximately 96 hours the Fourth Regimental Combat Team, Reinforced, had been completely reoutfitted, all equipment deficiencies corrected, all elements provided an initial allowance to bring them up to T/O Table of Organization and T/A Table of Allowance levels, and a thirty-day resupply procured for shipment."(7)

Two days prior to the departure of the main body of Task Force Able, General Clement and a nucleus of his headquarters personnel left Guam on the landing ship, vehicle Ozark to join the Third Fleet. There had been no opportunity for preliminary planning, and no definite mission had been received, so the time en route to the rendezvous was spent studying intelligence summaries of the Tokyo Bay area. Halsey's ships were sighted and joined on 18 August, and next morning, Clement and key members of his staff transferred to the battleship Missouri for the first of a round of conferences on the coming operation.

Admiral Badger formed the ships assigned to Task Force 31 into a separate tactical group on 19 August. The transfer of men and equipment to designated transports by means of breeches buoys and cargo slings began immediately. Carriers, battleships, and cruisers were brought along both sides of a transport to expedite the operation. In addition to the landing battalions of bluejackets and Marines, fleet units formed base maintenance companies, a naval air activities organization to operate Yokosuka airfield, and nucleus crews to take over captured Japanese vessels. Vice Admiral Sir Bernard Rawling's British Carrier Task Force contributed a landing force of seamen and Royal Marines. In less than three days, the task of transferring at sea some 3,500 men and hundreds of tons of weapons, equipment, and ammunition was accomplished. The newly formed units, as soon as they reported on board their transports, began an intensive program of training for ground combat operations and occupation duties.

On 20 August, the ships carrying the 4th RCT arrived and joined the burgeoning task force. General Clement's command now included the 5,400 men of the reinforced 4th Marines, a three-battalion regiment of approximately 2,000 Marines taken from 32 ships, a naval regiment of about 1,000 men organized from the crews of eight ships into two landing battalions and a battalion of nucleus crews for captured shipping, and a British battalion of 250 seamen and 200 Royal Marines. To act as a floating reserve for the landing force, five additional battalions of bluejackets were organized and appropriately equipped from within the carrier groups.

Halsey had assigned TF 31 a primary mission of seizing and occupying the Yokosuka Naval Base and its airfield. Initial collateral missions included the demilitarization of the entire Miura Peninsula, which formed the western arm of the headlands enclosing Tokyo Bay, and the seizure of the Zushi area, tentative headquarters for MacArthur, on the southwest coast of the peninsula. Two alternative schemes of maneuver were considered to accomplish these missions. The first contemplated a landing by assault troops on beaches near the town of Zushi, followed by an overland drive east across the peninsula to secure the naval base for the landing of supplies and reinforcements. The second plan involved a direct landing from within Tokyo Bay on the beaches and docks of Yokosuka naval base and air station, to be followed on order by the occupation of Zushi and the demilitarization of the entire peninsula. All planning by TF 31 was coordinated with that of the Eighth Army, whose commander, Lieutenant General Robert L. Eichelberger, had been appointed by MacArthur to command the forces ashore in the occupation of northern Japan.

On 21 August, General Eichelberger, who had been informed of the alternative plans formulated by TF 31, directed that the landing be made at the naval base rather than in the Zushi area. Admiral Halsey had recommended the adoption of the Zushi landing plan since it did not involve bringing shipping into restricted Tokyo Bay until assault troops had dealt with "the possibility of Japanese treachery." (8) The weight of evidence, however, was rapidly swinging in support of the theory that the enemy was going to cooperate fully with the occupying forces and that some of the precautions originally thought necessary could now be held in abeyance.

Eichelberger's message also included the information that the 11th Airborne Division was to establish its own airhead at Atsugi airfield a few miles northwest of the north end of the Miura Peninsula. The original plans of the Fleet Landing Force, which had been made on the assumption that General Clement's men would seize Yokosuka airfield for the airborne operation, had to be changed to provide for a simultaneous Army-Navy landing. A tentative area of responsibility including the cities of Uraga, Kubiri, Yokosuka, and Funakoshi was assigned to Clement's force, and the rest of the peninsula became the responsibility of the 11th Airborne Division.

To insure the safety of Allied warships entering Tokyo Bay, Clement's operation plan detailed the British Landing Force to occupy and demilitarize three small island forts in the Uraga strait at the entrance to Tokyo Bay. To erase the threat of shore batteries and coastal forts, the reserve battalion of the 4th Marines (2/4) was given the mission of landing on Futtsu Saki, a narrow point of land jutting into the eastern side of Uraga Strait. After completing its mission, 2/4 was to reembark in its landing craft and rejoin its regiment. Nucleus crews from the Fleet Naval Landing Force were to enter the inner Yokosuka Harbor prior to H-Hour and take over the damaged battleship Nagato, whose guns commanded the landing beaches.

The 4th Marines, with 1/4 and 3/4 in assault, was scheduled to make the initial landing at Yokosuka on L-Day. The battalions of the Fleet Marine and Naval Landing Forces were to land in reserve and take control of specific areas of the naval base and airfield, while the 4th Marines pushed inland to link up with elements of the 11th Airborne Division landing at Atsugi airfield. The cruiser San Diego, Admiral Badger's flagship, 4 destroyers, and 12 gunboats were to be prepared to furnish naval gunfire support on call. Although no direct support planes were assigned, approximately 1,000 armed planes would be airborne and available if needed. Although it was hoped that the Yokosuka landing would be uneventful, TF 31 was prepared to deal with either organized resistance or individual fanaticism on the part of the Japanese.

L-Day was originally scheduled for 25 August, but on 20 August, a threatening typhoon forced Admiral Halsey to postpone the landing date to the 28th. Ships were to enter Sagami Wan, the vast outer bay which led to Tokyo Bay, on L minus 2 day. On 25 August, word was received from MacArthur that the typhoon danger would delay Army air operations for 48 hours, and L-Day was consequently set for 30 August, with the Third Fleet entry into Sagami Wan on the 28th.

The Japanese had been warned as early as 15 August to begin mine sweeping in the waters off Tokyo to facilitate the operations of the Third Fleet. On the morning of the entrance into Sagami Wan, Japanese emissaries and pilots were to meet with Rear Admiral Robert B. Carney, Halsey's Chief of Staff, and Admiral Badger on board the Missouri to receive instructions relative to the surrender of the Yokosuka Naval Base and to guide the first Allied ships into anchorages. Halsey was not anxious to keep his ships, many of them small vessels crowded with troops, at sea in typhoon weather, and he asked and received permission from MacArthur to put into Sagami Wan one day early.(9)

The Japanese emissaries reported on board the Missouri early on 27 August. They said a lack of suitable mine sweepers had prevented them from clearing Sagami Wan and Tokyo Bay, but the movement of Allied shipping to safe berths in Sagami Wan

under the guidance of Japanese pilots was accomplished without incident. By late afternoon the Third Fleet was anchored at the entrance to Tokyo Bay. American mine sweepers checked the channel leading into the bay and reported it clear.

On 28 August the first American task force, consisting of combat ships of Task Force 31, entered Tokyo Bay and dropped anchor off Yokosuka at 1300. Vice Admiral Totsuka, Commandant of the First Naval District and the Yokosuka Naval Base, and his staff reported to Admiral Badger in the San Diego for further instructions regarding the surrender of his command. Only the absolute minimum of maintenance personnel, interpreters, guides, and guards were to remain in the naval base area; the guns of the forts, ships, and coastal batteries commanding the bay were to be rendered inoperative; the breechblocks were to be removed from all antiaircraft and dual-purpose guns.

As the naval commanders made arrangements for the Yokosuka landing, a reconnaissance party of Army troops landed at Atsugi airfield to prepare the way for the airborne operation on L-Day. Radio contact was established with Okinawa where the 11th Division was waiting to execute its part in BLACKLIST. The attitude of the Japanese officials, both at Yokosuka and Atsugi, was uniformly one of docility and cooperation, but bitter experience caused the Allied commanders and troops to view with a jaundiced eye the picture of the Japanese as meek and harmless.

There had been a fresh reminder of the ferocity and brutality with which the Japanese had waged war. On the evening of 27 August, two British prisoners of war hailed one of the Third Fleet's picket boats in Tokyo Bay and were taken on board the San Juan, command ship of a specially constituted Allied Prisoner of War Rescue Group. Their harrowing tales of life in the prison camps and of the extremely poor physical condition of many of the prisoners prompted Halsey to order the rescue group to stand by for action on short notice. On 29 August, the Missouri and the San Juan task group entered Tokyo Bay. At 1420, Admiral Nimitz arrived by seaplane and authorized Halsey to begin rescue operations immediately.(10) Special teams, guided and guarded by carrier planes overhead, immediately started the enormous task of bringing in the prisoners from the many large camps in the Tokyo-Yokohama area. By 1910 that evening, the first RAMP's (Rescued Allied Military Prisoners) arrived on board the hospital ship Benevolence, and at midnight 739 men had been brought out. (11)

Long before dawn on L-Day, the first group of transports of TF 31 carrying 2/4 began moving into Tokyo Bay. All the plans of the Yokosuka Occupation Force had been based on an H-Hour for the main landing of 1000, but last-minute word was received from MacArthur on 29 August that the first serials of the 11th Airborne Division would be landing at Atsugi airfield at 0600. Consequently, to preserve the value and impact of simultaneous Army-Navy operations, TF 31's plans were changed to allow for the earlier landing time.

The first landing craft carrying Marines of 2/4 touched the south shore of Futtsu Saki at 0558; two minutes later, the first transport plane rolled to a stop on the runway at Atsugi, and the occupation of Japan was underway. In both areas the Japanese had followed their instructions to the letter. On Futtsu Saki the coastal guns and mortars had been rendered useless, and only the bare minimum of maintenance personnel, 22 men, remained to make a peaceful turnover of the forts and batteries. By 0845, the battalion had accomplished its mission and was reembarking for the Yokosuka landing, now scheduled for 0930.

With first light came dramatic evidence that the Japanese would comply with the surrender terms. On every hand, lookouts on Task Force 31 ships could see white flags flying over abandoned and inoperative gun positions. Nucleus crews from the Fleet Naval Landing Force boarded the battleship Nagato at 0805 and received the surrender from a skeleton force of officers and technicians; the firing locks of the ship's main battery had been removed and all secondary and AA guns had been dismounted. On the island forts, occupied by the British Landing Force at 0900, the story was much the same; the coastal guns had been rendered ineffective, and the few Japanese remaining as guides and interpreters amazed the British with their cooperativeness.

The main landing of the 4th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Fred D. Beans, was almost anticlimactic. Exactly on schedule, the first waves of 1/4 and 3/4 crossed the line of departure and headed for their respective beaches. At 0930, men of the 1st Battalion landed on Red Beach southeast of Yokosuka airfield and those of the 3d Battalion on Green Beach in the heart of the Navy yard. There was no resistance. The Marines moved forward rapidly, noting that the few unarmed Japanese present wore white armbands, according to instructions, to signify that they were essential maintenance troops, officials, or interpreters. Leaving guards at warehouses, primary installations, and gun positions, the 4th Marines pushed on to reach the designated Initial Occupation Line.

General Clement and his staff landed at 1000 on Green Beach and were met by a party of Japanese officers who formally surrendered the naval base area. "They were informed that non-cooperation or opposition of any kind would be severely dealt with." (12) Clement then proceeded to the Japanese headquarters building where an American flag presented by the 6th Marine Division was officially raised. (13)

Vice Admiral Totsuka had been ordered to be present on the docks of the naval base to surrender the entire First Naval District to Admiral Carney, acting for Admiral Halsey, and Admiral Badger. The San Diego, with Carney and Badger on board, tied up at the dock at Yokosuka at 1030. The surrender took place shortly thereafter with appropriate ceremony, and Badger, accompanied by Clement, departed for the Japanese Naval Headquarters building to set up the headquarters of TF 31.

With operations proceeding satisfactorily at Yokosuka and in the occupation zone of the 11th Airborne Division, General Eichelberger took over operational control of the Fleet Landing Force from Halsey at 1200. Both of the top American commanders in the Allied drive across the Pacific set foot on Japanese soil on L-Day; General MacArthur landed at Atsugi Airfield at 1419 to begin more than five years as Japan's de facto ruler, and Admiral Nimitz, accompanied by Halsey, came ashore at Yokosuka at 1330 to make an inspection of the naval base.

Reserves and reinforcements landed at Yokosuka during the morning and early afternoon according to schedule. The Fleet Naval Landing Force took over the area secured by 3/4, and the Fleet Marine Landing Force occupied the airfield installations seized by 1/4. The British Landing Force, after evacuating all Japanese personnel from the island forts, landed at the navigation school in the naval base and took over the area between the sectors occupied by the Fleet Naval and Marine Landing Forces. Azuma Peninsula, a large hill mass extensively tunnelled as a small boat supply base, which was part of the British occupation area, was investigated by a force of Royal Marines and found deserted.

The 4th Marines, relieved by the other elements of the landing force, moved out to the Initial Occupation Line and set up a perimeter defense for the naval base and airfield. Patrol contact was made with the 11th Airborne Division which had landed 4,200 men during the day.

The first night ashore was uneventful, marked only by routine guard duty. General MacArthur's orders to disarm and demobilize had been carried out with amazing speed. There was no evidence that the Japanese would do anything but cooperate with the occupying troops. The Yokosuka area, for example, which had formerly been garrisoned by about 50,000 men, now held less than a tenth of that number in skeletal headquarters, processing, maintenance, police, and mine sweeping units. It was clear that militarily, at least, the occupation was slated for success.

On 31 August, the Fleet Landing Force continued to consolidate its hold on the naval base area. Company L of 3/4 sailed in two destroyer transports to Tateyama Naval Air Station on the northeastern shore of Sagami Wan to reconnoiter the beach approaches and cover the 3 September landing of the 112th Cavalry RCT. Here again the Japanese were waiting peacefully to carry out their surrender instructions.

Occupation operations continued to run smoothly as preparations were made to accept the surrender of Japan on board the Missouri. Leading Allied commanders gathered from every corner of the Pacific. At 0930 on 2 September, under the flag that Commodore Perry had flown in Tokyo Bay in 1854, the Japanese

representative of the Emperor, Foreign Minister Mamoru Shigemitsu, and of the Imperial General Staff, General Yoshijiro Umezu, signed the formal surrender documents.(14) General MacArthur then signed as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) and Admiral Nimitz for the United States, and they were followed in turn by the senior Allied representatives. The war that had started at Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 was officially ended.

Even as the surrender ceremony was taking place on the main deck of the Missouri, advance elements of the main body of the Eighth Army's occupation force were entering Tokyo harbor. Ships carrying the Headquarters of the XI Corps and the 1st Cavalry Division docked at Yokohama. Transports with 112th Cavalry RCT on board moved to Tateyama, and on 3 September the troopers landed and relieved Company L, 3/4, which then returned to Yokosuka.

As the occupation operation proceeded without any notable obstacles being discovered, plans were laid to dissolve the Fleet Landing Force and TF 31. The 4th Marines was selected to take over responsibility for the entire naval base area. By 6 September, ships' detachments of bluejackets and Marines had returned to parent vessels and the provisional landing units were deactivated.

While a large part of the strength of the Fleet Landing Force was returning to normal duties, a considerable augmentation to Marine strength in northern Honshu was being made. On 23 August, AirFMFPac had designated Marine Aircraft Group-31 (MAG-31), then at Chimu airfield on Okinawa, to move to Japan as a supporting air group for the northern occupation. Colonel John C. Munn, its commanding officer, had reconnoitered Yokosuka airfield soon after the initial landing, and on 7 September the first echelon of his headquarters and the planes of Marine Fighter Squadron 441 (VMF-441) flew in from Okinawa. Surveillance flights over the Tokyo Bay area began the following day as additional squadrons of the group continued to arrive. Initially, Munn's planes served under Third Fleet command, but on 16 September, MAG-31 came under operational control of Fifth Air Force.

Admiral Badger's TF 31 had been dissolved on 8 September when the Commander, Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, assumed responsibility to SCAP for the naval occupation area. General Clement's command continued to function for a short time thereafter while most of the reinforcing units of the 4th Marines loaded out for return to Guam. On 20 September, Lieutenant Colonel Beans relieved General Clement of his responsibilities at Yokosuka, and the general and his Task Force Able staff flew back to Guam to rejoin the 6th Division. Before he left, however, Clement was able to take part in a ceremony in which 120 RAMPs of the "Old" 4th Marines, captured at Corregidor, received the colors of the "New" 4th from the hands of the men who had carried on the regimental tradition in the Pacific War.(15)

After the initial major contribution of naval land forces to the occupation of northern Japan, the operation became more and more an Army task. As additional troops arrived, the Eighth Army's area of effective control grew to include all of northern Japan. In October, the occupation zone of the 4th Marines was reduced to include only the naval base, airfield, and town of Yokosuka. In effect, the regiment became a naval base guard detachment, and on 1 November, control of the 4th Marines passed from Eighth Army to the Commander, U. S. Fleet Activities, Yokosuka.

In addition to routine security and military police patrols, the Marines also carried out Eighth Army demilitarization directives, collecting and disposing of Japanese military and naval materiel. Patrols from the regiment supervised the unloading at Uraga of Japanese garrison troops returning from bypassed Pacific outposts.

On 20 November, the 4th Marines was removed from administrative control of the 6th Division and came directly under FMFPac. Orders were received directing that preparations be made for 3/4 to relieve the regiment of its duties in Japan, effective 31 December. In common with the rest of the Armed Forces, the Marine Corps faced great public and Congressional pressure to send its men home for discharge as rapidly as possible. Its world-wide commitments had to be examined with this in mind. The Japanese attitude of cooperation with occupation authorities fortunately permitted considerable reduction of troop strength.

In Yokosuka, Marines who did not meet the age, service, or dependency point totals necessary for discharge in December or January(16) were transferred to the 3d Battalion, while men with the requisite number of points were concentrated in the 1st and 2d Battalions. On 1 December, 1/4 completed loading out and sailed for the States to be disbanded. The 3d Battalion, reinforced by the regimental units and a casual company formed to provide replacements for ships' Marine detachments, relieved 2/4 of all guard responsibilities on 24 December. The 2d Battalion with Regimental Weapons and Headquarters and Service Companies loaded out between 27-30 December and sailed for the U. S. on New Year's Day.

The 3d Battalion, 4th Marines, assumed the duties of the regiment at midnight on 31 December, although a token regimental headquarters remained in Yokosuka to carry on the name of the 4th Marines. On FMFPac order, this headquarters detachment left Japan on 6 January to join the 6th Marine Division in Tsingtao, North China.

On 15 February, 3/4 was reorganized and redesignated the 2d Separate Guard Battalion (Provisional), FMFPac. Its military police and security duties in the naval base area remained the same. Most of the occupation tasks of demilitarization in

the limited area of the naval base had been completed, and the battalion settled into a routine of guard, ceremonies, and training little different than that of any Navy yard barracks detachment in the United States.

The continued cooperation of the Japanese with SCAP occupation directives and the lack of any overt signs of resistance considerably lessened the need for the fighter squadrons of MAG-31. On 7 October, it was returned to Navy control by Fifth Air Force. Regular reconnaissance flights in the Tokyo area were discontinued on 15 October, and the operations of the air group were confined largely to mail, courier, transport, and training flights. Personnel and unit reductions similar to those necessary in the 4th Marines also affected the air units. By spring of 1946, the need for Marine participation in the occupation of Japan had considerably lessened, and early in May, MAG-31 received orders to return as a unit to the United States. By 20 June, all serviceable aircraft had been shipped out and on that date the transport carrying the group's personnel left Japan.

The departure of MAG-31 marked the end of Marine occupation activities in northern Japan and closed the final chapter of the Yokosuka operation.

Sasebo-Nagasaki Landings (17)

The favorable reports of Japanese compliance with surrender terms in northern Japan allowed considerable changes to be made in the operation plans of Sixth Army and Fifth Fleet. Prisoner of war evacuation groups could be sent into ports of southern Honshu and Kyushu prior to the arrival of occupation troops, and the main landings could be made administratively without the show of force originally thought necessary. In fact, before the first troop echelon of Sixth Army arrived in Japan, almost all of the RAMPs and civilian internees had been released from their prisons and processed for evacuation by sea or air.

Japanese authorities received orders from SCAP to bring Allied prisoners into designated processing centers on Honshu and Kyushu. In the Eighth Army occupation zone Yokohama was the center of recovery activities, and by 21 September, 17,531 RAMPs and internees (including over 7,500 from the Sixth Army area) had been examined there and hospitalized or evacuated. (18) On 12 September, after Fifth Fleet mine sweepers had cleared the way, a prisoner recovery group put into Wakayama in western Honshu and began processing RAMPs. In less than three days, the remainder of the prisoners in the Sixth Army area on Honshu and those from Shikoku, in all 2,575 men, had been embarked in evacuation ships.

Atom-bombed Nagasaki, which has one of Japan's finest natural harbors, was chosen as the evacuation port for men imprisoned in Kyushu. Mine sweeping of the approaches to the port began on 8 September, and the RAMP evacuation group was able to enter on the 11th. The operation was essentially completed by the time occupation troops began landing in Nagasaki; over 9,000 prisoners were recovered.

While the Eighth Army was extending its hold over northern Japan, and recovery teams and evacuation groups were clearing the fetid prison compounds, preparations for the Sixth Army's occupation of western Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu continued. The occupation area contained 55 per cent of the total Japanese population, including half of the presurrender home garrison, three of Japan's four major naval bases, all but two of its principal ports, four of its six largest cities, and three of its four main transportation centers. Kyushu, which was destined to be largely a Marine occupation responsibility, supported a population of 10,000,000 in 15,000 square miles of precipitous terrain. Like all of Japan, every possible foot of the island was intensely cultivated, and enough rice and sweet potatoes were produced to allow inter-island export. The main value of Kyushu to the Japanese economy, however, was its industries. The northwest half of the island contains extensive coal fields, Japan's greatest pig iron and steel district, and many important shipyards, plus a host of smaller manufactories.

The V Amphibious Corps (VAC), initially composed of the 2d, 3d, and 5th Marine Divisions, had been given the task of occupying Kyushu and adjacent areas of western Honshu in Sixth Army plans, while the Army's I Corps and X Corps took control of the rest of western Honshu and Shikoku. The Fifth Fleet, under Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, was responsible for collecting, transporting, and landing the scattered elements of General Walter Kreuger's army.(19) Because of a lack of adequate shipping, the Marine amphibious corps was not able to move its major units to the target simultaneously. Therefore, it was necessary that the transport squadron which lifted the 5th Marine Division and VAC Headquarters from the Hawaiian Islands be then sent to the Philippines to load out the 32d Infantry Division, which was substituted on 6 September for the 3d Marine Division in the occupation force.(20)

The first objective to be secured in the VAC zone under Sixth Army's plans was the naval base at Sasebo in northwestern Kyushu. Its occupation by the 5th Marine Division was to be followed by the seizure by the 2d Marine Division of Nagasaki, 30 air miles to the south. When the turn-around shipping arrived, the 32d Infantry Division was to occupy the Fukuoka-Shimonoseki area, either by an overland move from Sasebo or a direct landing, if the mined waters of Fukuoka harbor allowed. Once effective control had been established over the entry port area, the subordinate units of VAC's divisions would gradually spread out over the entire island of Kyushu and the Yamaguchi Prefecture of Honshu to complete the occupation tasks assigned by SCAP.

Major General Harry Schmidt, VAC commander, opened his command post on board the Mt. McKinley off Maui in the Hawaiian Islands on 1 September and sailed to join the 5th Division convoy, already en route to Saipan. LST and LSM (Landing Ship, Medium) groups left the Hawaiian area on 3 September with corps troops and the numerous Army augmentation units necessary to make the combat units an effective occupation force. At Saipan, the various transport groups rendezvoused and units of the 2d Marine Division embarked. Conferences were held to clarify plans for the operations, and two advance reconnaissance parties were dispatched to Japan. One, led by Colonel Walter W. Wensinger, VAC Operations Officer, and consisting of key staff officers of corps and the 2d Division flew to Nagasaki, where they arrived on 16 September. The second party of similar composition, but with beachmaster representatives and 5th Division personnel included, left for Sasebo by high speed transport (APD) on 15 September. The mission of the advance parties was:

...to facilitate smooth and orderly entry of U. S. forces into the Corps zone of responsibility by making contact with key Japanese civil and military authorities; to execute advance spot checks on compliance with demilitarization orders and to ascertain such facilities for reception of our forces as condition and suitability of docks and harbors; adequacy of sites selected by map reconnaissance for Corps installations; condition of airfields, roads, and communications.(21)

After issuing instructions to Japanese officials at Nagasaki, Colonel Wensinger and the corps staff members proceeded by destroyer to Sasebo where preliminary arrangements were made for the arrival of the 5th Division. On 20 September, the second reconnaissance party arrived at Sasebo, contacted Wensinger, and completed preparations for the landing.

At dawn on 22 September (A-Day), the transport squadron carrying Major General Thomas E. Bourke's 5th Marine Division and corps headquarters troops arrived off Sasebo. Members of the advance party transferred from an APD which met the convoy and reported to their respective unit command ships. At 0859, after Japanese pilots had directed the transports to safe berths in Sasebo's inner harbor, the 26th Marines (less 3/26) began landing on beaches at the naval air station. As the men advanced rapidly inland, relieving Japanese guards on naval base installations and stores, ships carrying other elements of the division moved to the Sasebo docks to begin general unloading. The shore party, reinforced by the 2d Battalion, 28th Marines, was completely ashore by 1500 and had started cargo unloading operations which continued through the night.

The rest of the 28th Marines, in division reserve, remained on board ship on A-Day. The 1st Battalion of the 27th Marines landed on the docks in late afternoon and moved out to occupy

its regiment's assigned zone of responsibility. Before troop unloading was suspended at dusk, two artillery battalions of the 13th Marines and regimental headquarters had landed on beaches in the aircraft factory area, and the 5th Tank Battalion had come ashore at the air station. All units ashore established guard posts and security patrols, but the division's first night in Japan passed uneventfully.

On 23 September, as most of the remaining elements of the 5th Division landed and General Bourke set up his command post ashore, patrols started probing the immediate countryside. Company C (reinforced) of the 27th Marines was sent to Omura, about 22 miles southeast of Sasebo, to establish a security guard over the naval air training station there. Omura's airfield had been selected as the base of Marine air operations in southern Japan.

A reconnaissance party, led by Colonel Daniel W. Torrey, Commanding Officer of MAG-22, had landed and inspected the field on 14 September, and the advance flight echelon of his air group had flown in from Okinawa six days later. Corsairs of VMF-113 reached Omura on 23 September, and the rest of the group's flight echelon arrived before the month was over. MAG-22's primary mission was similar to that of MAG-31 at Yokosuka: surveillance flights in support of occupation operations.

As flight operations started at Omura and the 5th Division consolidated its hold on Sasebo, the second major element of VAC landed in Japan. The early arrival of the 2d Division's transports at Saipan, coupled with efficient staging and loading, had enabled planners to move its landing date forward two days. When reports were received that the approaches to the originally selected landing beaches were mined but that Nagasaki's harbor was clear, the decision was made to land directly into the harbor area. At 1300 on 23 September, the 2d and 6th Marines landed simultaneously on the east and west sides of the harbor.

The Marine detachments from the cruiser Biloxi and Wichita, which had been serving as security guards in Nagasaki for RAMP operations, were relieved by 3/2. The two regiments moved out swiftly to occupy the city and curtain off the atom-devastated area. Ships were brought alongside wharfs and docks to facilitate cargo handling, and unloading operations were well underway by nightfall. A quiet calm ruled the city to augur a peaceful occupation.

On 24 September, as the rest of Major General Leroy P. Hunt's 2d Division began landing, the corps commander arrived from Sasebo by destroyer to inspect the Nagasaki area. General Schmidt had established his CP ashore at Sasebo the previous day and taken command of the two Marine divisions. The only other major allied unit ashore in Kyushu, an Army task force that was occupying Kanoya airfield in the southernmost part of

the island, was transferred to General Schmidt's command from the Far Eastern Air Force on 1 October. This force, which was built around a reinforced battalion (1/127) of the 32d Infantry Division, had been flown into Kanoya on 3 September to secure an emergency field on the aerial route to Tokyo from Okinawa and the Philippines.

General Krueger, well satisfied with the progress of the occupation in the VAC zone, assumed command of all forces ashore at 1000 on 24 September. The first major elements of Sixth Army's other corps began landing at Wakayama the next day. On every hand, there was ample evidence that the occupation of southern Japan would be bloodless.

Among the troops of VAC, whose previous experience with the Japanese in surrender had been "necessarily meager," considerable speculation developed regarding:

...to what extent and how, if at all, the Japanese nation would comply with the terms of surrender imposed.... The only thing which could be predicted from the past was that the Japanese reaction would be unpredictable.(22)

And it was. In fact, the eventual key to the pattern and sequence of VAC occupation operations was "the single outstanding fact that Japanese compliance with the terms was as nearly correct as could humanly be expected."(23)

Kyushu Occupation(24)

Original plans for the occupation of Japan had contemplated an actual military government of the surrendered nation, coupled with close operational control over the disarmament and demobilization of the Japanese armed forces. During the course of conferences with enemy surrender emissaries at Manila, however, radical modifications of these plans were made "based on the full cooperation of the Japanese and including measures designed to avoid incidents which might result in renewed conflict." (25)

Instead of instituting direct military rule, the responsible occupation force commanders were to supervise the execution of SCAP directives to the Japanese government, keeping in mind MacArthur's policy of using, but not supporting, that government. (26) The military forces were to be disarmed and demobilized under their own supervision, and the progressive occupation of assigned areas by Allied Forces was to be accomplished as Japanese demobilization was completed.

The infantry regiment (and divisional artillery operating as infantry) was to be "the chief instrument of demilitarization and control. The entire plan for the imposition of the terms of

surrender was based upon the presence of infantry regiments in all the prefectures within the Japanese homeland."(27) In achieving this aim, a fairly standard pattern of occupational duties was established with the division of responsibilities based on the boundaries of the prefectures so that the existing Japanese governmental structure could be utilized. In some instances, especially in the 5th Marine Division zone, the vast size of certain prefectures, the density of civilian population, and the tactical necessities of troop deployment combined to force modifications of the general scheme of regimental responsibility for a single prefecture.

Generally speaking, the method of carrying out the regimental mission varied little between zones and units whether Army or Marine. After initial liaison was established with local Japanese authorities by picked advance parties of staff officers from higher headquarters and the unit concerned, the regiment moved into a bivouac area in or near the zone of responsibility. Reconnaissance patrols were sent out to verify the location of military installations and check inventories of war materiel submitted by the Japanese. With this information, the regimental commander was able to divide his zone into battalion areas, and the battalion commanders could, in turn, assign their companies specific sectors of responsibility. Billeting and sanitation details preceded the troops into these areas to oversee the preparation of barracks and similar quarters, since many of these buildings were in a deplorable state of repair and indescribably filthy.

The infantry company or artillery battery then became the working unit which actually accomplished the occupation duties. Company commanders were empowered to seize any military installations in their zone and to use Japanese military personnel not yet demobilized or laborers furnished by Home Ministry representatives to dispose of all materiel within the installations. SCAP directives governed disposition procedures and divided all materiel into the following categories:

1. That to be destroyed or scrapped (explosives and armaments not needed for souvenirs or training purposes).
2. That to be used for our operations (telephones, radios, and vehicles).
3. That to be returned to the Japanese Home Ministry (fuel, lumber, etc.).
4. That to be issued as trophies.
5. That to be shipped to the U. S. as trophies or training gear.(28)

The dangerous job of explosive ordnance disposal was handled by the Japanese with the bare minimum of American supervision. Explosives were either dumped at sea or burned in approved areas. Weapons and equipment declared surplus to the needs of occupation troops were converted into scrap, mainly by Japanese labor, and then turned over to the Home Ministry for use in essential civilian industries. Food stuffs and other non-military stocks were returned to the Japanese for distribution.

Although prefectural police maintained civil law and order and enforced democratization decrees issued at the instance of SCAP, constant surveillance was maintained over Japanese methods of government. Intelligence and military government personnel, working with the occupying troops, acted quickly to stamp out any suggestion of a return to militarism or evasion of the surrender terms. Known or suspected war criminals were apprehended and sent to Tokyo for processing and possible arraignment before an Allied tribunal.

In addition to exercising supervisory control of Japanese demobilization of the home garrison, occupation troops were responsible for insuring the smooth processing of hundreds of thousands of military personnel and civilians returning from the outposts of the now defunct Empire. At the same time, thousands of Korean, Formosan, and Chinese prisoners and "voluntary" laborers had to be collected, pacified, (29) housed and fed, and returned to their homelands. In all repatriation operations, Japanese vessels and crews were used to the fullest extent possible in order to conserve Allied manpower and allow for an accelerated program of postwar demobilization.

The pattern of progressive occupation called for in SCAP plans was quickly established in the VAC zone of responsibility:

After the 2d and 5th Marine Divisions had landed, VAC's general plan was for the 2d Marine Division to expand south of Nagasaki to assume control of the Nagasaki, Kumamoto, Miyazaki, and Kagoshima Prefectures. The 5th Marine Division in the meantime was to extend east to the prefectures of Saga, Fukuoka, Oita, and Yamaguchi. The latter division was to be relieved in the Fukuoka, Oita, and Yamaguchi areas upon the arrival of sufficient elements of the 32d Division.(30)

The decision to occupy Fukuoka, largest city in Kyushu and administrative center of the northwestern coal and steel region, was made almost immediately after the initial landings. Because the waters of Fukuoka harbor were liberally sown with mines, the movement to the city was made by rail and road from Sasebo. An advance party, headed by Colonel Wensinger, reached Fukuoka on 27 September, and the leading elements of the occupation force began arriving on 30 September. Brigadier General Ray A.

Robinson, Assistant Division Commander of the 5th Marine Division, was given command of the force which consisted of the 28th Marines (reinforced) and Army augmentation detachments.

The Fukuoka Occupation Force (FOF), which was placed directly under VAC command, began sending reconnaissance parties followed by company- and battalion-sized occupation forces to the major cities of northern Kyushu and Yamaguchi Prefecture. Because of the limited number of troops available to FOF, Japanese guards were left in charge of most military installations, and effective control of the zone was maintained through the use of motorized surveillance patrols.

In order to prevent possible outbreaks of mob violence, Marine guard detachments were set up to administer the Chinese labor camps found in the area, and Japanese Army supplies were requisitioned to feed and clothe the former POWs and laborers. Some of the supplies were also used to subside the swarms of Koreans who gathered in temporary camps near the principal repatriation ports of Fukuoka and Senzaki (Yamaguchi Prefecture) while they awaited shipping to return to their homeland. The Marines supervised the loading out of the Koreans and made continuous checks on the processing and discharge procedures used to handle the Japanese troops who returned with each incoming vessel. In addition to its repatriation activities, the FOF located and inventoried vast quantities of Japanese military materiel for later disposition by the 32d Infantry Division.

As General Robinson's force took control of Fukuoka and Yamaguchi Prefectures, the 5th Marine Division was expanding its hold on the area east of Sasebo. On 5 October, the division zone of responsibility was extended to include Saga Prefecture and the city of Kurume in the center of the island. The 2d Battalion, 27th Marines, moved to Saga city, operating for a short time as an independent occupation group until, on 24 October, the regiment (less 1/27) established its headquarters in Kurume and assumed responsibility for the central portion of the division zone, which now extended to the east coast (Oita Prefecture). Through all these troop movements, the maintenance of roads and bridges was a constant problem since the inadequate road net quickly disintegrated when punished by the combination of heavy rains and extensive military traffic. The burden of supplying and transporting the scattered elements of VAC was borne by the Japanese rail system.(31)

When it was decided to occupy Oita Prefecture, the entire 180-mile trip from Sasebo to Oita city was made by rail. The occupation force, Company A (reinforced) of the 5th Tank Battalion operating as infantry,(32) set up in the city on 15 October and conducted a reconnaissance of the military installations in the coastal prefecture by means of motorized patrols. Because of its size, the company served as an advance party for 32d Division troops, and it was forced to rely on Japanese labor for most of its materiel inventory work.

The 13th Marines, occupying the area to the south and east of Sasebo in Nagasaki and Saga Prefectures, supervised the processing of Japanese repatriates returning from China and Korea, and handled the disposition of the weapons, equipment, and ammunition which were stored in naval depots near Sasebo and Kawatana. The 1st Battalion, 27th Marines, which was detached from its regiment, was stationed in Sasebo under division control and furnished a portion of the city's garrison as well as detachments which investigated the island groups offshore.

The 26th Marines, whose patrols ranged the hinterland north and east of Sasebo, had a very short tour of duty in Japan. On 13 October, the regiment was alerted for transfer to the Palau Islands.(33) While it made preparations to move to Peleliu and supervise the repatriation of Japanese troops from the Western Carolines, the first elements of the 32d Division began landing at Sasebo. The 128th Infantry, followed by the 126th Infantry and division troops, moved straight on through the port and entrained for Fukuoka where the Army units came temporarily under the command of FOF. The V Amphibious Corps placed the 127th Infantry (less 1/127), which landed on 18-19 October, under operational control of the 5th Division to take over the 26th Marines' zone of responsibility.

The Marine regiment began boarding ship on 18 October and 127th Infantry units moved into the vacated billets. On 19 October, the 26th Marines was detached from the division and returned to FMFPac control as loading continued. Before the transports departed on 21 October, however, orders were received from FMFPac designating 2/26 for disbandment, and the battalion returned to the Marine Camp, Ainoura (5th Division Headquarters just outside of Sasebo). On 31 October, 2/26, the first of many war-born Marine infantry battalions to end its Pacific service, passed out of existence and its men were transferred to other units.

While Brigadier General Robert B. McBride, Jr.'s 32d Infantry Division was moving north to take over the area occupied by the Fukuoka and Oita Occupation Forces, the 2d Marine Division was gradually expanding its hold on southern Kyushu. The 2d and 6th Marines had moved into billets in the vicinity of Nagasaki immediately after landing with the mission of surveillance and disposition of enemy military materiel in the immediate countryside and on the many small islands nearby. The 8th and 10th Marines had gone directly from their transports to barracks at Isahaya (near Nagasaki) where patrolling was initiated in the peninsula to the south and the rest of Nagasaki Prefecture in the 2d Division zone.

On 4 October, VAC changed the boundary between divisions to include Omura in General Hunt's command. The 5th Division security detachment at the Marine air base was relieved by 3/10 and returned to parent control. Shortly thereafter, the 10th Marines also took over the whole of the 8th Marines' area in Nagasaki Prefecture.

The corps expanded the 2d Division zone on 5 October to include all of highly-industrialized Kumamoto Prefecture. An advance billeting, sanitation, and reconnaissance party of the 8th Marines travelled to Kumamoto city in the southwestern part of the island to contact Japanese authorities and pave the way for the regiment's assumption of control. By 18 October, all units of the 8th Marines had established themselves in and around Kumamoto and begun the by-now familiar process of inventory and disposition. In line with SCAP directives outlining measures to restore the civilian economy to a self-supporting level, the Marines assisted the local government wherever necessary to speed the conversion of war plants to essential peacetime production.

The remaining unoccupied portion of Kyushu was taken over by the 2d Division within the next month. Advance parties headed by senior field officers contacted civil and military officials in Kagoshima and Miyazaki Prefectures to insure compliance with surrender terms and adequate preparations for the reception of division troops. Miyazaki Prefecture and the half of Kagoshima east of Kagoshima Wan were assigned to the 2d Marines. The remaining half of Kagoshima Prefecture was added to the 8th Marines' zone; later, the regiment was also given responsibility for conducting occupation operations in the Osumi and Koshiki island groups which lay to the south and southwest of Kyushu.

On 29 October, a motor convoy carrying the major part of 1/8 moved from Kumamoto to Kagoshima city to assume control of western Kagoshima. The battalion had to start anew the routine of reconnaissance, inspection, inventory, and disposition that had occupied it twice before. The 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, assigned to the eastern half of Kagoshima, found much of its preliminary occupation spadework done for it. The Army task force at Kanoya had been actively patrolling the area since it had come under VAC command. When 2/2, loaded in four LSTs, arrived from Nagasaki on 27 October, it was relatively easy to effect a relief. The Marines landed at Takasu, port for Kanoya, and moved by rail and road to the airfield. On 30 October, 2/2 assumed from 1/127 the operational control of the Army Air Force detachment manning the emergency field, and the 32d Division battalion prepared to return to Sasebo to rejoin its regiment.

The remainder of the 2d Marines also moved by sea from Sasebo to Takasu and thence by rail to Miyazaki Prefecture in early November. Regimental Headquarters and 3/2 set up their base of operations at Miyakonojo, and the 1st Battalion moved into billets in Miyazaki city. By 14 November, with the occupation of Miyazaki, VAC had established effective control over its entire zone of responsibility.

The Fukuoka Occupation Force had been dissolved on 24 October when the 32d Infantry Division opened its command post in Fukuoka. A base command, comprising the service elements

that had been assigned to General Robinson's force, was set up to support the operations in Northern Kyushu and continued to function until 25 November when the 32d Division took over its duties. The 28th Marines and the 5th Tank Battalion occupation forces were relieved by Army units: the 128th RCT(34) took over Yamaguchi Prefecture, the 126th patrolled Fukuoka and Oita Prefectures, and the 127th, after its relief by the 28th Marines, occupied Fukuoka and the zone to the south.

By the end of November, VAC could report substantial progress in its major occupation tasks. Over 700,000 Japanese returning from overseas had been processed through ports and separation centers under corps control. The tide of humanity had not all flowed from one direction, since 273,276 Koreans, Chinese, and Okinawans had been sent back to their homelands. On 1 December, only about 20,000 Japanese Army and Navy personnel remained on duty, all employed in demobilization, repatriation, mine sweeping, and similar activities. On that date, in accordance with SCAP directives, these men were transferred to civilian status under newly created government ministries and bureaus. The destruction or other disposition of war materiel proceeded satisfactorily with surprisingly few mishaps(35) considering the enormous quantity of old and faulty munitions that had to be handled.

The need for large numbers of combat troops in Japan steadily lessened as the occupation wore on, and it became increasingly obvious that the Japanese intended to offer no resistance. The first major Marine unit to fulfill its mission in southern Japan and return to the United States was MAG-22.

On 14 October, Admiral Spruance, acting for CinCPac, had queried the Fifth Air Force as to whether the Marine fighter group was still considered necessary to the Sasebo area garrison. On 25 October, the Army replied that MAG-22 was no longer needed, and it was returned to operational control of the Navy. The group's service squadron and heavy equipment which had just arrived from Okinawa were kept on board ship, and in less than a week AirFMEFPac directed that the unit return to the States. Its planes were flown to an aircraft replacement pool on Okinawa, and low-point men were transferred to MAG-31 as replacements for men eligible for rotation or discharge. On 20 November, after picking up MAG-31's returnees at Yokosuka and similar Army troops at Yokohama, MAG-22 left for home. The Marine Air Base, Omura remained in operation, but its aircraft strength consisted mainly of light liaison and observation planes of the observation squadrons assigned to VAC divisions.(36)

The redeployment of MAG-22 was only a small part of the general pattern for withdrawing excess occupation forces. On 12 November, Sixth Army was informed by VAC that the 5th Marine Division would be released from its duties for return to the United States on 1 December. By the turn of the year, the 2d Marine Division would be the only major Marine unit remaining on occupation duty in southern Japan.

Marine Withdrawal (37)

Only about 10 percent of the Marines in VAC had been returned to the States by 30 November, although discharge and rotation directives had made more than 15,000 men eligible. Divisions were under orders to maintain their strength at 90 percent of T/O, and this severely curtailed the number of men who could be released. Replacements were almost nonexistent in this period of postwar reduction. Yet the 2d Division, which was to remain in Japan, had 7,653 officers and men who were entitled to a trip home. (38) To meet this problem, VAC ordered an interchange of personnel between the 2d and 5th Marine Divisions.

High-point men of the 2d Division would be transferred to units of the 5th Division, while men not yet eligible for discharge or rotation would move from the 5th to the 2d to take their places. Almost half of the 2d Division and 80 percent of the 5th Division, in all about 18,000 Marines and corpsmen, were slated for transfer. At the same time the personnel exchanges were taking place, elements of the 2d and 32d Divisions would occupy the 5th Division zone of responsibility so that the occupation missions of surveillance, disposition of materiel, and repatriation could continue without interruption.

On 24 November, control of Saga and Fukuoka Prefectures passed to the 2d and 32d Divisions, respectively. In the first of a series of comparable troop movements, 2/6 entrained for Saga to take over the duties and the low-point men of 2/27. The 6th and 10th Marines occupied the 5th Division zone, relieved units of the 13th, 27th, and 28th Marines, and effected the necessary personnel transfers. The 2d and 8th Marines sent their returnees to Sasebo, the 5th Division's port of embarkation, and joined new men from the 5th's infantry regiments. Separate battalions and division troops of both units exchanged men with their opposite numbers.

The 5th Division began loading out as soon as ships were available at Sasebo, and on 5 December, the first transports, carrying men of the 27th Marines, left for the States. The 2d Division assumed all of the 5th Division's remaining occupation responsibilities on 8 December, and the last elements of the 5th Division departed Sasebo 11 days later.

Starting on 20 December, with the arrival of the first troopships of the 27th Marines at San Diego, a steady stream of officers and men passed through reassignment and discharge centers at Camp Pendleton. During January, most of the component elements of the division were skeletonized and then disbanded. On 5 February 1946, the Headquarters Battalion followed suit "and the 5th Marine Division passed into history." (39)

On the same date that the 2d Marine Division took over the duties of the 5th, VAC received a dispatch directive from Sixth Army stating that the corps would be relieved of all occupation responsibilities on 31 December when the Eighth Army relieved the Sixth. The Eighth Army was to assume command of all Allied occupation troops in Japan, and plans were laid to reduce American strength to the point where only **those** units considered a part of the peacetime Armed Forces would remain. I Corps, with headquarters at Osaka (later Kyoto), would take over VAC's area and its troops.

The V Corps spent most of its remaining time in Japan completing its current occupation missions, supervising the transfer of low-point men to 2d Division units, and preparing to turn over its area to I Corps. The changeover took place as ordered on 31 December, and corps troops began loading out the following day, some units for return to the United States and others for duty with Marine supply activities on Guam. On 8 January, the last elements of VAC, including General Schmidt's headquarters, left Sasebo for San Diego. On 15 February 1946, the V Amphibious Corps was disbanded.(40)

Not long after the departure of VAC, the 2d Marine Division became responsible for the whole of what had been the corps zone. The 32d Infantry Division, a former Michigan-Wisconsin National Guard outfit, was one of those Army units slated for deactivation early in 1946. In preparation for taking over the 32d Division duties in Yamaguchi, Fukuoka, and Oita Prefectures, the 2d Division began moving units of the 6th Marines north to the Army zone and increasing the size of the areas assigned to its other regiments. On 31 January, when the 2d Division formally relieved the 32d, the prefectural responsibilities of the major Marine units were: 2d Marines, Oita and Miyazaki; 6th Marines, Yamaguchi, Fukuoka, and Oita; 8th Marines, Kumamoto and Kagoshima; 10th Marines, Nagasaki.

When Major General Roscoe B. Woodruff, Commanding I Corps, returned to the United States on temporary assignment on 8 February, the 2d Marine Division's Major General Leroy P. Hunt, Jr., as senior division commander, flew to Kyoto and assumed command of the Corps, a position he was to retain until General Woodruff's return on 5 April. The corps zone of responsibility underwent one more change during this period. Advance elements of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) began moving into Hiroshima Prefecture on 4 February and formally took control from the 24th Infantry Division on 7 March. Later that month (23 March), BCOF relieved the 6th Marines in Yamaguchi Prefecture, reducing the 2d Marine Division zone to the island of Kyushu.

By April, it seemed that the constant shifting of units was largely over and that the divisions of I Corps could concentrate mainly on reinstituting regular training schedules. The 2d Marine Division had been pared down to peacetime strength in February when the third battalion of each infantry regiment and the

last lettered battery of each artillery battalion were relieved of occupation duties, assembled at Sasebo, and then sent home for disbandment. Insofar as possible, the remaining units were assembled in battalion-sized camp areas which served as centers for necessary surveillance activity. Training in basic military subjects, firing of individual and crew-served weapons, and exercises in combat tactics filled increasing amounts of the Marines' time. An efficient air courier service of liaison planes and occasional transports, operating out of Omura Marine Air Base, connected the scattered battalions and enabled the division and regimental commanders to maintain effective control of their units. Most of the disposition work was completed, the tremendous repatriation flow of the first occupation months had slowed, and the Japanese, as well as their conquerors, had settled into a routine of mutual tolerance.

Soon after General Hunt returned from Kyoto, word was received from Eighth Army that the 2d Division would be returned to a permanent base in the United States. The 24th Infantry Division would move to Kyushu and take over the Marine zone. Preparations for the movement got underway before the end of April, as reconnaissance parties of the relieving Army regiments arrived to check their future billeting areas.

General Hunt planned to relieve his outlying units first and then gradually draw in his men upon Sasebo until the last unit had shipped out from the port. Oita and Miyazaki were the first prefectures to be handed over to the Army, and their former garrison, the 2d Marines, was the first unit to complete loading out. The regiment left Sasebo on 13 June bound for Norfolk and the 8th Marines followed soon after. General Hunt turned over his zone to the 24th Division on 15 June, and Marine responsibility for the occupation of Kyushu was ended.(41) Division headquarters left on 24 June, and with the exception of service troops and unit rear echelons which remained to load out heavy equipment, the major elements of the 2d Marine Division all had departed by 2 July.(42)

The first Marines to reach Japan after the war went into Yokosuka half expecting to meet the same implacable foe they had encountered in years of bitter fighting. Instead they were confronted with the astonishing sight of a docile people who were anxious to cooperate with their conquerors. As a result of this acceptance of defeat by the Japanese, it was never necessary to institute complete military rule. SCAP directives outlining its program of demilitarization and democratization were put into effect by the Japanese Government which disarmed and demobilized its own military forces and revamped its political structure without serious incident.

The Marines in Kyushu stood by as observers and policemen during many phases of the occupation operation but were directly concerned with others. They supervised the repatriation of thousands of foreign civilians and prisoners of war and handled

the flood of Japanese returning from the defunct overseas empire. Using local labor, they collected, inventoried, and disposed of the vast stockpile of munitions and other military materiel that had been accumulated on Kyushu in anticipation of Allied invasion. Where necessary they used their own men and equipment to effect emergency repairs of war damage and to help reestablish the Japanese civilian economy.

Within three months after its landing on Kyushu, the V Corps had established effective surveillance over the entire island and its ten million people and had set up smoothly functioning repatriation and disposition procedures. The task was so well along by the end of 1945 that responsibility for the whole island could be turned over to one division. Perhaps the most significant benefit to accrue to the Marine Corps in the Japanese occupation was the variegated experience gained by the small unit leaders in fields widely separated from their normal peacetime routine of training and guard duty. They faced heavy responsibilities, and it was largely their ability to adapt themselves to new situations and learn as they went along that made the occupation of Kyushu a success.

NOTES

- (1) Unless otherwise noted the material in this section is derived from: Eighth U. S. Army in Japan Occupational Monograph, Vol. I, Aug⁴⁵-Jan⁴⁶, n.d., hereafter Eighth Army Monograph I; CTF 31 AR, Occupation and Securing of the Yokosuka Naval Base and Airfield, 18Aug-8Sep⁴⁵, dtd 8Sep⁴⁵, hereafter Yokosuka Occupation Force AR; CTG 31.3 AR, Initial Occupation of Yokosuka Naval Base Area, Japan, dtd 7Sep⁴⁵, hereafter Fleet Landing Force AR; CTU 31.3.2. Record of Events, dtd 6Sep⁴⁵; CTU 31.3.3 AR, Initial Landings Incident to the Occupation of Tokyo, 20Aug-4Sep⁴⁵, dtd 5Sep⁴⁵; MAG-31 WarDs, Aug⁴⁵-Jun⁴⁶; 4th Mar WarDs, Sep-Dec⁴⁵; 3/4 WarD, Jan⁴⁶; 2d SepGdBn (Prov) WarDs, Feb-Jun⁴⁶. (Marine records are located in the Historical Archives, Historical Branch, G-3, HQMC; Navy records are held by the Operational Archives Branch, Naval History Division; and Army records are located in the Army Section, World War II Records Division, National Archives.
- (2) Sixth Army Rept of the Occupation of Japan, 22Sep-30Nov⁴⁵, n.d., p. 10, hereafter cited as Sixth Army Rept.
- (3) On 13 August 1945, MacArthur's headquarters substituted XXIV Corps for Tenth Army as the Korean Occupation Force. Ibid., p. 11.
- (4) FAdm William F. Halsey and LCdr J. Bryan, III, Admiral Halsey's Story (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1947) p. 247, hereafter Halsey's Story.
- (5) IIIAC WarD, Aug⁴⁵, p. 3.
- (6) Fleet Landing Force AR, p. 6.
- (7) Ibid.
- (8) Yokosuka Occupation Force AR, p. 12.
- (9) Halsey's Story, p. 275.
- (10) General MacArthur had directed that the Navy's part in the POW rescue operations be held up until it could be coordinated with the work of specially constituted Eighth Army rescue teams. However, Admiral Nimitz, realizing that MacArthur would understand the urgency of the situation, gave the go-ahead signal to Halsey. Ibid., p. 278.
- (11) Ibid.
- (12) Fleet Landing Force AR, p. 18.

- (13) This was the same flag raised by 1st Provisional Marine Brigade at Guam and the 6th Marine Division at Okinawa. Bevan G. Cass, ed., History of the Sixth Marine Division (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1948), p. 203.
- (14) Halsey's Story, p. 282.
- (15) Cass, op. cit., p. 205. This was an occasion of deep personal significance to General Clement, who had been present in Manila as Marine officer on the staff of the Commander, Asiatic Fleet, at the outbreak of the war. He had volunteered to serve with the 4th Marines on Corregidor when fleet headquarters withdrew from the area, but he was ordered to leave the island fortress by submarine just before its surrender.
- (16) The point discharge system used by the Marines and the Army allowed one point for each month of service up to September 1945, an additional point for each month of overseas service, five points for each battle participation star and combat decoration, and up to 12 points for dependents. In addition, certain men over 38, a figure which was lowered periodically, were also eligible for discharge. The Navy used a different point system based on the same factors of age, service, and dependency which covered corpsmen attached to Marine units.
- (17) Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: ComFifthFlt AR--The Occupation of Japan, 15Aug-8Nov45, n.d., hereafter ComFifthFlt AR; Sixth Army Rept; ComPhibGru 4 Rept of Occupation of Sasebo and Nagasaki and of Fukuoka-Shimonoseki Areas, dtd 11Nov45; VAC OpRept, Occupation of Japan, dtd 30Nov45, hereafter VAC OpRept; VAC WarD, Sep45; 2d MarDiv OpRept, Occupation of Japan, dtd 1Dec45, hereafter cited as 2d MarDiv OpRept; 5th MarDiv OpRept, Occupation of Japan, dtd 5Dec45, hereafter cited as 5th MarDiv OpRept; 5th MarDiv WarD, Sep45; MAG-22 WarD, Sep45.
- (18) Eighth Army Monograph I, pp. 23-28.
- (19) On 19 September, Admiral Spruance as Commander, Fifth Fleet relieved Admiral Halsey of his responsibilities in the occupation of Japan and assumed command of all naval operations in the Empire.
- (20) In order to guard against any possible treachery on the part of the thousands of Japanese troops on bypassed Central Pacific islands, the Navy "requested that one full Marine Division remain in the Marianas prepared for any eventuality." 1stLt Robert A. Aurthur and 1stLt Kenneth Cohlma, The Third Marine Division, LtCol Robert T. Vance, ed. (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1948), p. 331. The 3d Marine Division was given the stand-by job and consequently, the 32d Infantry Division was attached to VAC as a replacement unit.

- (21) VAC OpRept, p. 7.
- (22) Ibid., pp. 11-12.
- (23) Ibid.
- (24) Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: Sixth Army Rept; VAC OpRept; VAC WarDs, Sep-Nov45; 2d MarDiv OpRept; 5th MarDiv OpRept; 5th MarDiv WarDs, Sep-Nov45; Fukuoka Base Command OpRept, Occupation of Japan, dtd 25Nov45.
- (25) Eighth Army Monograph I, p. 12.
- (26) SCAP, Summation No. 1 of Non-Military Activities in Japan and Korea, Sep-Oct45, p. 3.
- (27) Sixth Army Rept, p. 35.
- (28) Ibid., p. 36.
- (29) Deep-rooted feelings of antipathy towards the Japanese among the Koreans and Chinese, coupled with delays in the repatriation program caused by lack of shipping, sometimes led to riots and disturbances. Most of these were handled by Japanese police, but American troops occasionally had to intervene to prevent serious trouble.
- (30) Sixth Army Rept, p. 26.
- (31) The state of the road net in Kyushu, much of which would not support even medium-sized vehicles, and the extensive rice paddy area contiguous to these roads would have constituted extremely serious obstacles to the prosecution of OLYMPIC, the projected invasion of Kyushu. Fortunately, the extensive Japanese rail network was capable of handling most of the supply requirements of the occupation forces.
- (32) "Tanks were never used even for show purposes because the soft roads would not bear their weight. The Iwo-scarred Shermans had been landed and parked at the Sasebo naval air station, and there they stayed." Howard M. Connor, The Spearhead: The World War II History of the 5th Marine Division (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1950), p. 155.
- (33) The 6th Marines was originally scheduled to answer this call from CinCPac, and when its Palau alert was cancelled, it was directed to stand by to move to Sasebo to replace the 26th Marines. On 17 October, this second alert was cancelled when VAC attached the 127th Infantry Regiment to the 5th Marine Division.

- (34) The infantry units of the 32d Infantry Division were organized as RCT's comprising an infantry regiment, an artillery battalion, and other attached division and corps troops to perform occupation duties. In the Marine Divisions, where the artillery regiment was an organic unit, it was reinforced and used as an occupation force in the same manner as the infantry regiments.
- (35) In November, several accidents in the VAC zone occurred during the munitions disposition program. At Kanoya, a dump of parachute flares was accidentally ignited and the resulting fire touched off a major explosion. At Soida in the 32d Infantry Division zone, a cave full of propellant charges and powder exploded in a devastating blast which spread death and destruction among nearby Japanese. No American personnel were injured in either accident.
- (36) MAG-22 WarDs, Oct-Nov45. A third Marine air base at Iwakuni to support operations in the Kure area had been a part of original occupation plans. It was not established, however, and the transport squadrons of MAG-21 intended for it were reassigned to Guam (VMR-353) and Yokosuka (VMR-952). ComFifthFlt AR, Part VI, Sect L, p. 2.
- (37) Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: Eighth Army Monograph I; Occupational Monograph of the Eighth U. S. Army in Japan, Vol. II, Jan-Aug46, n.d.; I Corps Histories of the Occupation of Japan, Dec45-Jun46; VAC OpRept; VAC WarDs, Nov45-Jan46; 2d MarDiv Occupational History Repts, 1Mar-15Jun46; 5th MarDiv Op Rept; 5th MarDiv WarDs, Nov-Dec45.
- (38) 2d MarDiv OpRept, Annex B, p. 4.
- (39) Connor, op. cit., p. 176. "Exactly one year after the Division had landed on Iwo Jima, Headquarters and the 3d Battalion, 26th Marines, arrived at San Diego from Peleliu. Disbandment came quickly for these units. The 1st Battalion completed its mission on Peleliu in March and moved to Guam where it, too, died an honorable death." Ibid.
- (40) H&S Bn, VAC, Muster Roll, Feb46.
- (41) On the same date, Marine Air Base, Omura, was deactivated.
- (42) Before the 2d Marine Division left Japan, it transferred 2,349 officers and men into a China draft which was used to furnish replacements for the last major Marine unit remaining in the Far East, the 1st Marine Division.

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