

“THE MOST VITAL QUESTION”: RACE AND IDENTITY IN OCCUPATION POLICY
CONSTRUCTION AND PRACTICE, OKINAWA, 1945-1946

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ABSTRACT

Courtney A. Short: "The Most Vital Question": Race and Identity in Occupation Policy
Construction and Practice, Okinawa, 1945-1946.
(Under the direction of Joseph Glatthaar)

This study explores the planning considerations of the United States military in formulating and implementing policy for the occupation of Okinawa from April 1945 to July 1946. American soldiers, Marines, and sailors on Okinawa encountered not only a Japanese enemy but a large local population. The Okinawans were ethnically different from the Japanese yet Okinawa shared politics with Japan as a legal prefecture. When devising occupation policies, the United States military analyzed practical military considerations such as resources, weapons capability, and terrain as well as attempted to ascertain a conclusive definition of Okinawa's relation to Japan through conscious, open, rational analysis of racial and ethnic identity. Unable to definitively determine the depth of Okinawan loyalty to Japan, American planners opted for caution and advised military forces to expect the people to act like enemy. While the Marines held steadfast to the image of the enemy civilian, soldiers' ideas about the race, ethnicity, and identity of the Okinawans evolved through interactions with the civilians throughout the battle. Seen as obedient, docile, and cooperative, the Army expressed feelings of kinship towards the civilians and reshaped its military government policies towards leniency. The Navy, upon taking control of the military government program following the war, likewise adapted its view of the ethnicity of the Okinawans and recognized them as competent and civilized: a group that formed a distinct, separate, unique ethnic community that was neither American nor Japanese in its likeness. For all services, assignments of identity influenced the parameters of occupation policy

- whether by retaining tight restrictions like the Marines or by allowing the Okinawans ownership in the design of their community like the Navy. Okinawans themselves also actively chose and promoted a self-identity that gained them the advantage of good treatment by the American victors. Considerations of race, ethnicity, and identity by the Americans deeply influenced the conduct of the occupation beyond practical concerns of resources and battlefield conditions. The mercurial nature of the identity of the Okinawans displays both the malleability of race and ethnicity and its centrality in occupation planning.

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INTRODUCTION

The attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 catapulted America into a world war with battlefields across an ocean. Despite poor diplomatic relations between the United States and Japan over the previous twenty years, the raid on the Hawaiian base shocked Americans and dislodged any hopes they had of remaining isolated from the international war that brewed in Europe. Japan stood as a formidable foe that had both tactical skill and intelligent military leaders. In quick secession, Japan followed the Pearl Harbor strike with attacks on Allied possessions in Singapore, the Philippines, Borneo, and Java. By 1942, the Japanese fought at sea and on land as they aimed for Port Moresby, New Guinea, and the American fleet at Midway.¹

American military strategy focused on the ultimate objective of invading the Japanese home islands. Japan, however, established a defensive perimeter around its mainland by occupying numerous islands throughout the Pacific. Confronted by Japanese aggression at the edge of this boundary, the United States military embarked on a multiservice island campaign in 1943 that featured two simultaneous approaches – one along the South Pacific led by the Army under General Douglas MacArthur and one in the Central Pacific led by the Navy under Admiral Chester Nimitz. American forces progressed north towards Japan by selectively assaulting islands that had the greatest strategic value and bypassing those that lacked Japanese troops or could offer the advantage of cutting off Japanese forces from supplies. Captured islands served

¹Christopher J. Anderson *The Marines in World War II: from Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Bay* (London: Stackpole Books, 2006); Michael J. Lyons, *World War II: A Short History* (Cambridge: Pearson Publishing, 2009), 142-150; Max Hastings, *Inferno: The World at War, 1939-1945* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012), 198-263.

as refit outposts and staging bases for further operations. The campaign demonstrated immense American industrial and military power. Supported by the strength of its production and mobilization, the United States fought in the air, on land, and at sea with a large and capable military; operations highlighted the innovative use of aircraft and sea vessels in amphibious campaigns, naval battles, and jungle land warfare. Naval bombardments coupled with amphibious landings secured islands such as Tarawa, Eniwetok, and Saipan and allowed U.S. air forces to move within bombing distance of the home islands. Under MacArthur in the South Pacific, the Army secured Biak and Wakde, both of which provided completed airfields.²

Okinawa sat at the culmination point of the two drives; MacArthur and Nimitz's separate campaigns merged into one joint mission to invade the island located only 360 nautical miles from Kyushu, the southernmost home island. Okinawa would serve as a staging area for the planned invasion of mainland Japan and also support operations as a supply depot; possession of the island finally gave the Americans the necessary proximity to their intended target, for invasion as well as bombing.

Okinawa, however, differed from all other islands that the Americans had landed on; it was a prefecture of Japan and housed half a million residents that held status as subjects of the Emperor.³ Okinawa's relationship with Japan over the centuries had developed a unique trajectory unlike other Asian countries in the region. Once ruled by royalty, the Ryukyuan Kingdom prided itself on a commitment to peaceful international relations that ultimately led to the end of the Kingdom with the quiet usurpation of King Sho Tai in 1879 by the Japanese and the establishment of Okinawa Prefecture. Ethnically, Okinawans were Ryukyuan and not

²Ibid; Hastings, *Inferno*, 419-426.

³Ibid; CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, RG 407, Box 2502, NARA, 5.

Yamato Japanese, a difference that led to the relegation of Okinawa to a less desirable and secondary prefecture in politics and social constructs. The ease of dismantling the Ryukyuan Kingdom, however, meant that Japan never treated Okinawa as a colony nor its people as the conquered. The key distinction meant that Okinawans considered themselves subjects of the Emperor and a part of the nation of Japan despite the prejudices and disadvantages that the Japanese government waged against them. At the same time, however, Okinawans also remained very aware of their second class status and harbored a certain amount of bitterness towards Japan because of the inequality.⁴

When Brigadier General William E. Crist, the Tenth Army Deputy Commander for Military Government, identified the problem of discerning the loyalty of the Okinawan population as “the most vital question” in planning military government and operations on Okinawa, he had witnessed almost forty-five days of armed conflict on the island. Throughout the Pacific, wartime occupation received little attention from operational military planners. U.S. occupation policy generally focused on removing civilians from the battlefield by corralling them into encampments. While the use of military government camps still provided the foundation for occupation policies on Okinawa, the ethnicity and massive population posed a brand new challenge for the American military in the Pacific. At a size of approximately 463,000, the people of Okinawa, intermingled with Japan’s military, made a significant impact on operations and forced the Americans to deal with the pervasive integration on the battlefield of children, families, and the elderly. Crist recognized the complications posed by the population and correctly assessed that a complete analysis of the potential effects of the people on combat and military government operations stood as a crucial step in the planning of

⁴George H. Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People* (Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2000), 156-166, 381-383.

Operation ICEBERG (the Battle of Okinawa) – one that if miscalculated could result in the failure of the invasion.⁵

Race and ethnicity sat at the center of such a study. Crist correctly looked at the large size of the population and the close yet strained association between the people and Japan and assessed how fundamental an educated understanding of the ethnic and racial dynamics was to conducting military operations of all types on the island of Okinawa. Gauging the reaction of the population to a foreign invasion held paramount importance to the success of the mission. As Japanese subjects, the Okinawans could significantly increase the size of the enemy force by fighting. The people's bitterness towards Japan, however, could inspire them to see the Americans as a liberating force. The safety and security of the American troops depended on a sophisticated attempt at determining the allegiance and identity of the Okinawans.⁶ Only through comprehension of the complex ethnic, racial, and historical background of the Okinawans in relation to Japan could American planners make informed decisions about military government practices and the proper employment of troops. Crist's comment reflects the open, analytical role of race and identity in military decision-making. Neither practical military considerations nor deliberations on race could accurately inform military policy alone.

Within the greater context of the war with Japan, Crist's comment about the importance of decoding the Okinawan's sense of identity when conducting military planning points to an

⁵History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, 1 April-30 April 1945 [L Day to L+29] by BG William E. Crist, May 10, 1945, RG 407, Box 2487, file 110-5.0, NARA; Robert B. Sheeks, Lieutenant, USMCR, "Civilians on Saipan," *Far Eastern Survey*, May 9, 1945, 109; Military Government, General Order No.2-44, Tinian, September 2, 1944, RG 389, Box 844, NARA, Training Syllabus, Charlottesville, VA, October 21, 1944, RG 496, Box 351, NARA, 1; Military Government, General Order No. 1-44, Tinian, August 26, 1944, RG 389, Box 844, NARA; Plan for the Naval Military Government of the Marianas, RG 398, Box 844, NARA; Political Directive for the Military Government of the Caroline Islands in the Central Pacific, Appendix D, March 1944, RG 389, Box 844, NARA; Plan for the Naval Military Government of the East Caroline Islands, RG 389, Box 844, NARA.

⁶ History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 17; Okinawa Diary, March 21, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns.

issue of intellectual discourse among scholars of the Pacific War. Noting the brutal nature of combat between Japan and the United States, historians have dissected the relations between the two nations and the possible role of racism in shaping the nature of the fighting. Most notably, John Dower's *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* argued that negative racial feelings drove policy makers and individual actors within the military to interact with the Japanese in a darker, more vicious manner that pushed the boundaries of acceptable violence in war. Craig Cameron followed Dower's influential work by examining the details of one unit's actions on Okinawa in *American Samurai: Myth, Imagination, and the Conduct of Battle in the First Marine Division, 1941-1951*. Cameron reinforced Dower's thesis that racism defined action by depicting gruesome deeds the American military committed against their enemy and arguing that negative racial stereotypes served as the primary motivator. John Lynn, however, has countered both Cameron and Dower in his work *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture*. Lynn asserts that military organizations shape policy and strategy around practical military considerations such as troop strength, resource allocation, and enemy disposition. Military leaders make balanced tactical and strategic decisions based on mission needs, not fueled by irrational, emotionally charged racism.⁷

Military planners for the invasion of Okinawa, both Army and Marine, defied the arguments of Dower, Cameron, and Lynn. While not disregarding the importance of calculating the strength of supply lines that stretched from the Pacific back to the United States or the dynamics of terrain on the tactics employed, military leaders embraced what Crist promoted –

⁷John W. Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986); Craig M. Cameron, *American Samurai: Myth, Imagination, and the Conduct of Battle in First Marine Division, 1941-1951* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); John A. Lynn, *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2003).

complex, educated, sophisticated, mindful consideration of identity, race, and ethnicity during planning and execution of the mission.

Chapter one examines the Army. Under the direction of Crist, the Army developed a document, called the GOPER, that provided a general plan for military government. The GOPER offered little guidance on how to treat the civilians and instead gave the subordinate commanders authority to run military government within the perimeters of how they perceived the situation. Planners acknowledged that they could not accurately predict the reaction of the Okinawans to the invasion and therefore urged the soldiers to approach the civilians with caution. Through training, the soldiers understood the ambiguity of the Okinawan identity. Full awareness of the uncertainty of Okinawan loyalty allowed the soldiers to reassess the intentions of the people based on what they encountered on the island. As a result, the Army loosened restrictions within military government camps as the Okinawans acted obedient and cooperative.

In Chapter two, the Marines also examined the complex historical and political relationship between Japan and Okinawa through intelligence studies and reached the same conclusion as the Army in regards to the uncertainty of the Okinawans' loyalty. Like the Army, the Marine planners could not determine with confidence whether or not the population would fight in support of the Japanese Emperor or feel liberated by the American forces. Unlike the Army, however, the Marines gave little priority to such studies. Lacking a high-ranking officer like Crist to oversee the development of military government plans, the Marines assigned the duty as an ancillary task to a logistics Colonel. Officers trained at the Civil Affairs schools did not receive permission to attend planning meetings. While the military government plan produced by the Marines, called Annex "Able," copied the GOPER in many ways, Marine leaders added unambiguous statements that identified the Okinawans as Japanese and therefore

as enemy. As the Marines landed, they considered the population unwaveringly hostile and constructed military government policy that handled the civilians harshly.

Chapter three deals with the assumption of military government by the Navy following the surrender of Japan. The Navy inherited a dislocated population suffering from the impact of war with urgent needs for medical assistance, food, clothing, shelter, and reunification with their families. Unprepared partly because of the immediacy of the situation and partly because of the exodus of qualified seaman whose war commitment expired, the Navy spent the first months issuing ad hoc orders that reached the field officers at the camps too slowly. Innovative and motivated young officers worked hard to convince unimaginative superiors that the solution to the ineffectiveness of Naval military government lay with granting the Okinawans greater leadership in the development of their community. The transition towards peace improved the relationship between the sailors and the Okinawans and higher leadership published directives that reinforced the ideas of the young officers. Okinawan leadership not only eased the burden of running military government from the dwindling American forces but also allowed the creation of a government structure that sat on a foundation of culturally familiar practices. The Navy now saw the Okinawans as a civilized and competent people, unique in their own ethnicity.

Chapter four examines the Okinawans and their own awareness of identity. Japanese indoctrination sought to align the Okinawans with Japan despite relegating them to a secondary status. Before the battle, most Okinawans did associate themselves with Japan. The horrific conditions of war, however, combined with cruel acts inflicted upon the population by the Japanese Army shocked the people and made them reevaluate their loyalties. Realigning their identity with Okinawa rather than Japan served a practical purpose of providing them protection and improved conditions under U.S. military government programs by disassociating themselves

with the enemy. Okinawan identity also allowed the people to grapple with the mental anguish caused by the betrayal of the Japanese. The ability of the people to consciously determine their own identity demonstrates the malleability of race and ethnicity and places the perceptions of the American military government within context.

This study examines the wartime occupation of Okinawa from the planning stages in late 1944/early 1945 through the end of the Navy's responsibility for occupation duties in July 1946. In entering the historical discourse about the role of race in the Pacific War, two analytical choices drive the structure of this work. First, civilians that ethnically bear more resemblance with the enemy than the American invading forces serve as the focal point of American racial interaction. By examining the contact between a population and the U.S. military rather than between two militaries, the study eliminates the confusion of the misleading argument that issues of race in the Pacific War stemmed only from dehumanizing an enemy. A large, mostly docile civilian population complicates the term "enemy" and allows for the exploration of American racism in the Pacific outside of the confines of force-on-force conventional war. Second, the environment of combat, central to the historical debate, also features predominantly in this work. The confusion, energy, heightened emotions, drastic situations, and trauma of combat pushed the actors into dramatic decision-making. During the battle, soldiers, sailors, and Marines made quick, weighty decisions that carried grave consequences. Within the intensity of hostilities, the complexity and magnitude of determining the identity of the civilians increased. This study purposefully ends at the termination of the Navy led occupation in July 1946 when the Americans stored their weapons and armed the Okinawans as local police - the point at which the occupiers finally created enough space between themselves and the end of the war that they no longer had to contemplate the possibility of the population acting as enemy.

The Battle of Okinawa marked the beginning of a long United States presence on the island that continues to this day. Throughout the decades, treatment of the population by both the Americans and Japanese varied from congenial to cruel. In reaction, Okinawan allegiance adjusted as the residents continually sought out the best situation. This study does not seek to explain the entire Okinawan experience under U.S. occupation, which continued until 1972, or the period of sustained American troop presence following the reversion of Okinawa back to Japan. Okinawan occupation lacks both linear logic and simplicity. The fluctuations in the interactions between the Americans, the Okinawans, and the Japanese prevent the entirety of the occupation (1945-1972) or the years following from falling into a broad category. This study limits itself to examining race and identity as it influenced policy making during the Pacific War. A sweeping overview of American and Okinawan relations throughout the years reaches beyond the scope of this work.

In addition to historical relevance, studying the impact of race and identity on military planning carries great significance for future military operations and occupations in particular. As the United States continues long term commitments in regions with populations of varying ethnicities, a closer look at historical examples of wartime occupations provides insights into the potential of American policy to positively handle complex ethnic interactions. Much like in Okinawa in 1945, troops working today in volatile areas in Iraq and Afghanistan must differentiate between enemy and civilian in order to fulfill their duties. As the wartime occupation of Okinawa reveals, a deliberate, contemplative, analytical approach to ethnicity and identity opens up the possibility for positive and therefore productive interactions between soldiers and populations that allow for a greater chance of accomplishing military objectives.

On the island of Okinawa in 1945, American soldiers, sailors, and Marines encountered a large population that lived as subjects of the Emperor but suffered under discriminatory Japanese policies that relegated them to second class status. Through deliberate, conscious consideration of Okinawan ethnic heritage and the island's political relationship with Japan, American military planners made determinations about Okinawan allegiance that shaped occupation policies that the soldiers, sailors, and Marines then executed. Assessments of identity informed interactions between the troops and the people in an open-minded manner that allowed for the promotion of the military government's goals. In the few instances where contact with the population carried negative consequences, the troops disregarded the malleability of race and clung to preconceived definitions of identity that did not reflect the circumstances. Alongside the analysis of race and ethnicity, the American military did not discount the importance of practical military considerations such as supply lines, enemy disposition, and the security of troops and information. Military leaders ensured the success of operations on Okinawa by not only evaluating the pragmatic military aspects of the mission but having the acumen to assess the ethnic dynamics as well.

IDENTIFYING THE ENEMY: ARMY WARTIME OCCUPATION POLICY

On May 31, 1945, two American soldiers sat cross-legged on the floor of a small hut in the gutted village of Nodake on the island of Okinawa. Their hostess, a middle-aged Okinawan woman, stooped down over them as she poured hot tea into small round clay cups. Many different families shared the hut with the woman and some of them crowded into the main room to join in the tea ceremony with the Americans.¹ The bombings, begun in October, 1944 preparatory to the America invasion, had destroyed numerous homes in the village. Under the direction of the United States Army, several families now lived together in the homes that survived.

Military Government Detachment B-5 had operated Camp Nodake for two months. Outside its perimeter, the Battle of Okinawa (Operation ICEBERG) that began with the invasion of the Kerama Islands on March 26, 1945 still raged as the Japanese prepared to fall back to their second line of defense and the Americans seized Shuri Castle, the headquarters of the Japanese 32nd Imperial Army.²

Okinawa, because of its proximity to mainland Japan and the political position of its people as subjects of the Emperor, provided a unique battleground in a brutal war. The graphic nature of the fighting in the Pacific War combined with racist epithets proffered by both the

¹United States Military Government, Detachment B-5, Diary, April 30, 1945, Western Manuscript Collection, CO445, Folders 1-4, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO, 33.

²Benis M. Frank, *Okinawa: Touchstone to Victory* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1970); Masahide Ota, *The Battle of Okinawa: The Typhoon of Steel and Bombs* (Tokyo: Kume Publishing Company, 1984); E.B. Sledge, *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1996); Bill Sloan, *The Ultimate Battle: Okinawa 1945 – The Last Epic Struggle of World War II* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007).

Americans and the Japanese has caused some scholars, like John W. Dower, to believe that race dominated wartime conduct. Dower's seminal work *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* correctly details the intense racial hatred that both Americans and Japanese felt towards each other. His conclusion, however, that such hatred drove tactical decisions has sparked a debate among historians. Craig Cameron in *American Samurai: Myth, Imagination, and the Conduct of Battle* continues Dower's thesis and asserts that American racism towards the Japanese significantly influenced the tactical decisions of the First Marine Division. In response to Cameron, John Lynn's *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture* argues that military considerations overrode cultural bias and racism. American forces planned their battles by assessing terrain, determining resources, and calculating weapons capability, not by planning brutal missions to avenge Pearl Harbor.³

The Battle of Okinawa complicates Dower, Cameron, and Lynn's arguments. As a prefecture of Japan, Okinawa was not a colony; yet, its people were not ethnically Japanese. In rebuttal to Lynn's argument, the complexities of race could not be ignored in favor of practical military evaluation because of the overwhelming number of unpredictable civilians on the battlefield. Dower's and Cameron's arguments about racism, however, also are insufficient because the Okinawans were not Japanese. Their ethnicity confused Americans and forced American planners to confront race and ethnicity in their policy making in a contemplative way that was more sophisticated, calculated, and conscious than blind racism. Rather than devising

³John W. Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986); Craig M. Cameron, *American Samurai: Myth, Imagination, and the Conduct of Battle in First Marine Division, 1941-1951* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); John A. Lynn, *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2003).

plans from intense feelings of racial hatred, planners considered race logically while constructing their policy and retained the paramount importance of practical military considerations as well.

In the quiet hut, over a steaming cup of traditional tea, the mood was welcoming and congenial; the Okinawans and Americans exchanged peaceful gestures and expressed kinship.⁴ Months before, during the planning of Operation ICEBERG, the Americans did not foresee such a friendly exchange. They viewed the Okinawan population as potentially hostile. The American commanders and planners who devised the military government plan, concerned with successfully completing the mission of securing the island of Okinawa with the smallest amount of American casualties possible, focused on issues of supply and security. The planners, however, also had to gauge the reaction of the Okinawan population to a foreign force invading their land. Related to the practical military planning considerations of supply and security, assessing the temperament of a civilian population of a prefecture of Japan required the planners to attempt to define the level of allegiance that the Okinawans felt towards Japan. The Americans, therefore, made determinations about the Okinawans' identity that influenced the construction of military government policy.

Exercising caution in order to minimize unnecessary risks to operational secrets and American lives, military government units worked under guidance that resulted in intense security measures that firmly controlled civilian movement. As the soldiers continually dealt with the civilians, however, they encountered a population that was cooperative, obedient, and perceived as more akin to the Americans than to the Japanese. Gradually, the separate military government units relaxed their strict measures. First hand experience with the Okinawans

⁴Diary, April 3, 1945, Detachment B-5, 25.

caused the Americans to reevaluate the Okinawans' potential loyalty to Japan and their identity as a group. The conclusions reached by the military government units about Okinawan identity caused the modification of military government policy.

The American planners who devised military government policy and the commanders and soldiers who executed that policy carefully considered practical military matters in their decision making; however, contemplating the complex ethnic and political situation of Okinawa as a prefecture of Japan also contributed to the construction of policy.

On January 6, 1945, Lieutenant General Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr. sat at a desk in Washington D.C. reviewing the final version of his "Operational Directive #7 from the Commanding General of Tenth Army" (GOPER).⁵ For the past three years, the United States had been engaged in world war. American troops invaded North Africa and Sicily, fought in Tunisia and Italy, destroyed German submarines in the Atlantic Ocean, liberated France, combated subversion in Latin America, sent supplies to the Soviets through the Middle East, and provided mortars and artillery to the Chinese. In the Pacific, American forces proved victorious in battles fought from aircraft carriers at sea and amphibious landings at various islands and

⁵The GOPER was the primary document for military government operations on Okinawa; it was the document briefed to all military government units. Its contents were repeated in Annex 15 to Operations Plan 1-45. Two military government appendices were completed two months after the GOPER and covered command responsibility issues following the battle. Appendix E, Annex 1 to Operation Plan No.1., called "Tentative Military Government Plan for Phase II" mentioned without details how military government would fall under Island Command (IsCom) after the completion of the battle. Appendix A, Annex X, "Civil Censorship Plan" was completed by IsCom. (Annex 15, Tentative Operations Plan No. 1-45, January 6, 1945, RG 407, Box 2487, file 110-5.5, NARA; Appendix E, Annex 1 to Operation Plan No.1, "Tentative Military Government Plan for Phase II," RG 389, Box 704, NARA; Appendix A, Annex X, "Civil Censorship Plan," March 11, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA; History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, 1 April-30 April 1945 [L Day to L+29] by BG William E. Crist, May 10, 1945, RG 407, Box 2487, file 110-5.0, NARA.) The short title "GOPER" is not an acronym and its origin is not known. (Arnold Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands, 1945-1950* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1988).

increasingly drew closer to Japan for the inevitable invasion seizing islands like Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Kwajalein, Saipan, Leyte and part of New Guinea.

In June 1944, Buckner traveled to Washington to take command of Tenth Army and participate in the planning for the unit's first mission. Originally identified as the seizure of Taiwan, the objective shifted to the island of Okinawa in October. As American military progress in the Pacific moved closer to mainland Japan, military planners viewed Operation ICEBERG as a crucial preliminary step in the plan to invade mainland Japan. Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, and Vice Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner believed the successful capture of Okinawa would prevent the war from lasting another year.⁶ Located 360 nautical miles from Kyushu and equally as close to Formosa and China, Okinawa was situated in a militarily advantageous position to Japan, its occupied lands and its deployed troops. Capture of Okinawa would jeopardize Japan's ability to send supplies to Southeast Asia and allow the Allies to launch missions against multiple Japanese possessions.⁷ As a staging ground for the proposed attack on mainland Japan, Okinawa offered airstrips, harbors, and troop-staging areas. The island could also operate as a supply depot and help alleviate the increasingly difficult task of transporting resources from the United States to the Western Pacific.

Buckner spent months in Washington planning the details of the upcoming Okinawa mission with top military leaders from both the Army and the Navy while Brigadier General William E. Crist, his Deputy Commander for Military Government, worked from Schofield Barracks in Oahu, Hawaii with the rest of Buckner's staff.⁸ Admiral Nimitz, Admiral Spruance,

⁶Nicolas Evan Sarantakes, ed, *Seven Stars: The Okinawa Battle Diaries of Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr. and Joseph Stilwell* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 17. Buckner received official orders assigning him as the Commanding General of Tenth Army on September 4, 1944.

⁷CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, RG 407, Box 2502, NARA, 5.

⁸Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 17-21; Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, 18.

General of the Army George C. Marshall, Lieutenant General Robert C. Richardson, and Rear Admiral Forrest P. Sherman all participated in the planning of Operation ICEBERG. The planners, from the beginning, recognized that this would be a joint operation of the Army, Navy, and Marines to include amphibious landings, heavy shelling from ground based artillery, warships, and carriers and an aggressive infantry landing force. Buckner offered his combat plans for Admiral Spruance's review on the morning of November 1, 1944. Buckner had only one voice in the joint planning. On January 8, 1945 he submitted alternative combat plans to Vice Admiral Turner that were then accepted. Separated from his staff in Hawaii, all his plans – combat plans, military government plans, operational annexes – were written at separate intervals, submitted, revised, and approved at different times.

The GOPER, approved on January 6, was the plan for handling the large civilian population on Okinawa through the use of military government units attached to Marine and Army combat divisions. Based on training manuals used in the Army's Civil Affairs schools and CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44 produced from intelligence summaries, the plan provided a general outline of the initial tasks of the military government units.⁹ It began with the mission of military government: to "assist military operations by maintaining order, promoting security, preventing interference, reducing active and passive sabotage, relieving combat troops

⁹The GOPER was not directly based on previous military government policies created for other theaters of battles; the GOPER did not arise from a template. The planners considered the Okinawan population to be unique because they considered them to be possibly similar to the Japanese in culture and allegiance. The GOPER followed the Army standard operations order format and covered typical topics taught in the Civil Affairs schools – local government, medical care, supply, finance etc. – but the contents of the GOPER varied from previous military government policies created for areas like the Philippines, Guadalcanal, Saipan, and the Marianas. (Military Government, General Order No.2-44, Tinian, September 2, 1944, RG 389, Box 844, NARA, Training Syllabus, Charlottesville, VA, October 21, 1944, RG 496, Box 351, NARA, 1; Military Government, General Order No. 1-44, Tinian, August 26, 1944, RG 389, Box 844, NARA; Plan for the Naval Military Government of the Marianas, RG 398, Box 844, NARA; Political Directive for the Military Government of the Caroline Islands in the Central Pacific, Appendix D, March 1944, RG 389, Box 844, NARA; Plan for the Naval Military Government of the East Caroline Islands, RG 389, Box 844, NARA.)

of local administration, and mobilizing local resources in the aid of military objective.”¹⁰ The GOPER explained how military government units would be structured and how they would function. It also gave general directions on the proper conduct of the units under the immediate conditions of battle. Primarily, the document established short term policies aimed to provide the units with just enough information to establish rudimentary camps immediately upon landing.

In the appendices, Buckner and his staff detailed the structure and composition, to include personnel and equipment, of the military government units. During the combat phase, he specified that the units would fall under the combat commander and unit to which they were attached.¹¹ The Headquarters element for all military government activities on the island lay at Tenth Army level. The separate military government units attached to the combat divisions each consisted of four detachments with different individual missions. “A” detachments were to move forward with the combat units and seek out dislocated civilians for evacuation. The civilians would then move away from the frontlines towards the “B” detachments which were to follow closely behind the “A” detachments and establish temporary camps that processed civilians. Further back, the “C” detachments were to build more stable camp environments that

¹⁰Operational Directive #7 from the Commanding General of Tenth Army, January 6, 1945, RG 290, Box 2196, NARA, 1.

¹¹Upon completion of the assault, the military government teams were to be reassigned to Island Command (IsCom) under Major General Fred C. Wallace, USMC. This transition was originally planned to begin once camps were set up in the rear areas. By the end of the battle (the garrison phase), all military government units were to be under IsCom. In actuality, however, the transition to IsCom took much longer and was not completed until July 2, 1945. The military government units remained under the control of the combat divisions, XXIV Corps and Tenth Army military government staffs. IsCom existed as primarily a staff section for the majority of the battle. (Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, 18, 27; Captain Roy E. Appleman, notes, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA, p.2; CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944; XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Military Government Operations in the Ryukyu Area, Appendix V, Part I-IV, August 2, 1945, RG 407, Box 2487, File 110-5, NARA; LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns, Okinawa Diary, April 30, 1945, RG 407, Box 2441, NARA).

had the capacity to sustain a large civilian population for an extended period of time. Lastly, the “D” detachments would process even larger populations – 60,000-100,000 – and had the potential for permanency.¹² The basic concept funneled civilians gradually from the dangerous battlefield to the relatively safe rear areas through a series of detachments and camps that increasingly became more established and larger in size.

Buckner gave little guidance about the personal conduct of his troops towards civilians.¹³ He only addressed their relationship in one statement. Under the title of “Degree of Control,” he ordered the commanders to “demand and enforce obedience,” and thus directed that civilians could earn back their freedom only by following the instructions of the occupiers. He delegated to his subordinate commanders the “powers of government as international law and military necessity may require.”¹⁴ The GOPER was a flexible document that allowed for interpretation by subordinate commanders as conditions warranted.¹⁵ As the battle changed, commanders on all levels had the freedom to decide based on their own judgment. With language like “to the extent required” and “take necessary action,” Buckner made the GOPER as useable a document as subordinate commanders could desire. It clearly stated, however, that “rigid control of civilians will be exercised.”¹⁶

¹²Operational Directive #7, January 6, 1945, Commanding General, Tenth Army, 2-4.

¹³Details about specific treatment of and interaction between civilians and American forces were not included in most literature about military government, civil affairs, and occupation. Only training materials used at the Civil Affairs training schools for officers briefly instructed that all cultural and religious customs be maintained and civilians be treated with respect. All other information distributed to the soldiers eliminated the topic, stating only that it would be addressed as required. (Training Syllabus, Charlottesville, VA, October 21, 1944, RG 496, Box 351, NARA, 1; Tenth Army Pamphlet – Information on Military Government, February 13, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA, 7).

¹⁴Operational Directive #7, January 6, 1945, Commanding General, Tenth Army, 1.

¹⁵Interview with LTG Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., Okinawa Diary, March 21, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns.

¹⁶Ibid.; Operational Directive #7, January 6, 1945, Commanding General, Tenth Army, 2, 9.

Policies for the immediate occupation outlined in the GOPER addressed supply, medical needs, and civilian labor forces for use both within camps and with tactical units. An initial supply of food for the civilian population was planned to arrive with the assault divisions. Amounts of foods typical of an Okinawan diet, such as rice, beans, and fish, were calculated per individual and per 1,000 civilians. After the initial supplies brought ashore by the Americans were depleted, the policy called for soldiers to shift to captured local island resources. Policies for clothing and transportation were similar – an initial stock would land with the assault and resupply became the responsibility of military government by means of reconnaissance and capture of local items. The policy forbade the issuing of United States military rations except in cases of undefined emergency. The GOPER emphasized the ingenuity of the soldiers to procure the necessary supplies while at the same time planning for an adequate initial stock. The policy designated the requirements of food and clothing as those “minim[ally] essential.”¹⁷

Medical policy involved treating casualties, containing contagious disease, and creating a sanitary environment. The guidance directed American military medical personnel to dispense care only “to the extent required to prevent interference with military operations and meet humanitarian needs.”¹⁸ Guidance dictated that medical personnel transport the urgently sick or wounded patients to hospitals, quarantine those with contagious ailments, and maintain strict supervision over conditions to ensure proper cleanliness. The order also stated that Okinawan medical doctors and nurses, local facilities, and local equipment should be used only for civilian patients.¹⁹

¹⁷Ibid., 5.

¹⁸Ibid., 9.

¹⁹Ibid., 10.

Buckner and his staff viewed the Okinawans as a potential source of labor that the combat units could use if provided food, water, and transportation. Civilians would not be paid. The policy also directed the combat units to guard civilians while they worked. The responsibility of organizing the labor fell to the military government commander of each camp whose duty it was to coordinate the labor assignments.²⁰ Civilians would not have a choice about participating in the labor program.

The GOPER included a section that briefly mentioned locally-run government as an eventual goal but an impractical reality in the initial occupation. The majority of the government section dealt with censorship and Okinawan cultural institutions. Civilians residing in camps were prohibited communication with those outside the camp. The policy denied the use and/or creation of a postal service and empowered military government personnel to “take necessary action to prevent communication with enemy civilians.”²¹ Policies regarding cultural arts and monuments ordered their protection and suggested the option of instituting educational programs for civilians.²²

Buckner thus laid a base for military government operations. Naturally, his policy emphasized the primacy of the tactical military mission over the comfort of the civilians, establishing the standard for the needs of the civilians at the lowest level possible to meet the minimal essential requirements for sustaining life. Buckner and his staff included few details in the GOPER and neglected any discussion of interaction between soldiers and civilians. What

²⁰Ibid., 11.

²¹Ibid., 9.

²²Ibid., 9.

details were included contributed unrelated, ancillary information that did not address the conduct of American soldiers.

As the Commanding General of Tenth Army, General Buckner wanted first to secure the island in order to sever Japanese supply lines and organize and launch the final attack on the mainland. In the GOPER, the mission of the military government included a statement about “preventing interference with military operations.”²³ He ordered the military government to remove the civilians from the battlefield because their presence could jeopardize the tactical mission; he did not order their evacuation out of a concern for their safety. “As for the civilians, the main idea is to keep them out of the way,” he told an interviewer on March 21, 1945, “and to minimize difficulties for our own forces.”²⁴ While he and his staff worked on the GOPER, he worked simultaneously with his staff on the invasion plans. They focused on balance of fires through the combined use of artillery and infantry, decided where to land, and analyzed intelligence reports and maps in an attempt to identify the location of the Japanese forces. Buckner based his choices on an assessment of the potential combat situation and how that situation could produce American victory. The GOPER did not in actuality focus on the conduct of military government. Instead, it focused on how to minimize the impact of civilians on the battle.

Buckner’s command emphasis on the battle shaped military government policy completely. He directed the “A” detachments to conduct reconnaissance and locate civilians in forward areas where they might be hiding out of fear. Tactically, however, Buckner’s battle plans did not take into account stray civilians mixed in with Japanese troops. He required the

²³Ibid., 1.

²⁴Interview with LTG Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr.; Okinawa Diary, March 21, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns.

military government detachments to support the battle by removing civilians as quickly as possible. Buckner's tactics included using flamethrowers to kill Japanese troops in caves; Okinawans hiding in those caves would also die. His priorities lay with the safety of his soldiers in combat. He aimed to obtain his objective with the smallest amount of American casualties as possible.

Supply also concerned Buckner deeply. The distance between Okinawa, the Philippines, where the invasion force assembled, and the United States, coupled with the complication of the continuation of a two-front war challenged supply operations.²⁵ Buckner and his staff actively manipulated loading doctrine and managed initial supply and resupply in order to stretch Tenth Army's assets. His emphasis on supply carried over to his guidance for military government. The detailed supply section in the GOPER, which included extensive appendices about specific food ration amounts and equipment allocation, demonstrated his preoccupation with resources. The document repeatedly ordered soldiers to salvage local property for additional food, clothing, and transportation, and assigned a non-commissioned officer to handle the salvage effort.²⁶ The directive banned giving United States military rations to civilians because Buckner lacked the provisions beyond those needed for American troops. Proper control and rationing of all types of supply occupied a central component of mission success. Buckner emphasized supply conservation in the mission statement to military government: the "mobilizing [of] local resources [is] in the aid of military objective."²⁷

²⁵Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 5. The Americans landed 548,000 troops and docked 1,300 ships. (Frank, *Okinawa*, 50; Ota, *The Battle of Okinawa*, x; Sledge, *With the Old Breed*, 192; Sloan, *The Ultimate Battle*, 96).

²⁶Operational Directive #7, January 6, 1945, Commanding General, Tenth Army, 7.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 1.

Buckner's strict, yet sparse procedural guidance on medical aid also demonstrated his fear of a supply shortage. He approved the limitation of medical care to the bare necessities and assumed the cooperation of Okinawan medical doctors and nurses.²⁸ His staff included medical supplies on a list of salvage items and the GOPER proclaimed that "maximum utilization of local resources and salvaged equipment [was] essential."²⁹

In addition to legitimate command concerns about mission success, minimizing casualties and adequate resources, Buckner, Crist, and his staff faced a unique demographic on Okinawa. Unlike previous campaigns in the Pacific Theater, Okinawa's status as a prefecture of Japan meant that Allied forces would confront civilians who were subjects of the Emperor and who the American planners categorized as "essentially Japanese people, of partly Japanese stock."³⁰ With an Okinawan population estimated at 463,000, military planners had to consider possible reactions of the inhabitants to the invasion. Crist regarded the issue of the mind-set of the Okinawans as "the most vital question in connection with military government."³¹ In devising policy, Buckner, Crist and his staff assessed the temperament and loyalty of the Okinawans to the Japanese in an effort to determine the civilian response to the American presence.

All commanders, planners, and most soldiers had access to a number of resources that addressed the cultural background of the Okinawans and their historic ties to Japan. Intelligence produced the CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, and the Civil Affairs schools distributed the Ryukyu Handbook. Popular magazines and books about Japan, its prefectures, and its

²⁸Ibid., 10.

²⁹Ibid., 7.

³⁰Captain Roy E. Appleman, notes, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA, 1. In reality, the Okinawans were of a different ethnicity completely – Ryukyuan - from the mainland Yamato Japanese.

³¹History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist.

colonies also were available. *Fortune* magazine, for example, devoted their entire April issue in 1944 to the population, politics, economics, and militarism of Japan.

Each publication had a different intended audience. The wide readership of *Fortune* included everyone from Buckner, Crist and other staff members to ordinary soldiers waiting for transport ships to families back in the United States.³² Fairfield Osborn wrote his book, *The Pacific World: its vast distances, its lands and the life upon them and its people*, specifically for American service members and their families with duty in the Pacific.³³ Osborn called Okinawa a “province” of Japan and *Fortune* magazine emphasized that “Japan coveted not only pieces of the continent but islands, and from China she wrung Formosa and the Ryukyus.”³⁴ *Fortune* also asserted that the people of Japan had different ethnicities, stating that “the Japanese people are not a homogeneous race. They are a mixture of half a dozen distinct Asiatic and South Sea peoples of different physical and cultural characteristics.”³⁵

The Army’s Civil Affairs schools issued the Ryukyu Handbook to its officers slated for assignment in the Pacific. In three hundred pages, the handbook, covered geography, agriculture, economics, culture, and history. Like the popular publications, the handbook attempted to understand the complicated political situation of Okinawa and the ethnic background of its people. It acknowledged the Japanese invasion and conquest of the island by the Satsuma clan in 1609 and described the current position of Okinawa “as an integral part of

³²Sarantakes, ed, *Seven Stars*, 22.

³³Osborn’s book was not sponsored by the United States War Department and its readership can only be assumed.

³⁴“The Geography of Conquest,” *Fortune* (April 1944): 161; Fairfield Osborn, *The Pacific World: Its vast distances, its lands and the life upon them, and its people* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1944), 184. These publications portrayed Okinawa as a colony which it was not.

³⁵“The Citizens,” *Fortune* (April 1944):149.

the [Japanese] state.”³⁶ It depicted the Okinawans as a racially mixed subordinate group who spoke both Japanese and the local dialect Luchuan. Japan, according to the handbook, had successfully integrated Okinawa into its own government as a prefecture.³⁷ Okinawa housed four branch prefectural offices and its men voted for representatives who served both locally and in the Imperial Diet in Tokyo.³⁸

Along with the Ryukyu Handbook, Tenth Army staff studied the CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, which served as the “enemy situation” supplement to intelligence summaries.³⁹ Like the handbook, the publication acknowledged the ethnic difference between the Okinawans and the Japanese while simultaneously linking the two groups based on “similar characteristics.”⁴⁰ It also recognized the fact that Okinawans spoke the Luchuan dialect in rural areas and schools instructed the Japanese language. Politically, the bulletin explained the historical relationship of Okinawa and Japan and addressed Japan’s invasion of the island and Okinawa’s current status as a legitimate prefecture of the Empire. Unlike the handbook, however, the bulletin alluded to a tension between the Okinawans and the Japanese. Despite the current incorporation of Okinawa into the Japanese government, the differences between the two groups in practiced customs and religion as well as their shared history of Okinawa’s invasion

³⁶*The Ryukyus Handbook*, Department of the Army, Civil Affairs Handbook, 1944, RG 290, Box 3199, NARA, VII.

³⁷This assessment was slightly incorrect and misleading. While Okinawa was legally a prefecture of Japan, Japan maintained a higher level of control over Okinawa than its other prefectures. For example, all high prefectural positions in Okinawa were held by the Japanese rather than locals. The government structure in Okinawa was the same as other prefectures but it was dominated by the Japanese. (Yenob –PW-188, POW interrogation, May 16, 1945, RG 389, Box 844, NARA; Masamichi S. Inoue, *Okinawa and the U.S. Military: Identity Making in the Age of Globalization* [New York: Columbia University Press, 2007] 55-62).

³⁸*The Ryukyus Handbook*, 1944, Department of the Army, VIII.

³⁹History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 17.

⁴⁰CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, 5, 10.

complicated the political relationship. The bulletin fully concluded that the Japanese considered the Okinawans more like the Chinese than themselves and mentioned the Japanese indoctrination program created to integrate Okinawa into the Empire culturally.⁴¹ The document also more accurately explained how much influence Okinawa prefecture truly had in the Imperial Diet. Okinawa's government did fall within the Japanese system and had representatives and voting districts as the Ryukyu Handbook explained. Japanese subjects from mainland, however, served in the most important government positions in Okinawa and thereby prevented the Okinawans from participating fully in their own governance, creating resentment towards the Japanese among the Okinawans and contributing to oppressive feelings of inferiority.⁴²

Intelligence summaries of Okinawan culture, geography, politics, and history made the task of predicting the disposition of the civilians complicated. The Okinawans had lost their independent kingdom to an invading force that viewed them as ethnically different and inferior; yet, the incorporation of Okinawa as a prefecture and integral part of the Empire meant the island was not a colony. An invading foreign country could either inspire the Okinawans to support Japan or ignite long repressed feelings of resentment towards the Japanese. Crist lamented that the intelligence studies of Okinawa yielded “no satisfactory answer [about] the attitude of the Okinawans.”⁴³

CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44 offered a recommendation. “It would be dangerous,” stated the bulletin, “to conclude that anything less than active resistance to invasion can be expected from the population.” With time and an extensive propaganda campaign, the

⁴¹Ibid., 10, 11.

⁴²Ibid., 12; POW interrogation, May 16, 1945, Yenob-PW-188; Inoue, *Okinawa and the U.S. Military*, 55-62.

⁴³History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 17; Okinawa Diary, March 21, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns.

bulletin suggested, the Okinawans would succumb peacefully to American authority.⁴⁴ The recommendation made sense to Buckner, Crist and the subordinate commanders. “At worst,” Crist thought, “military government expected to find a fanatical population, typically Japanese in attitude, which would resist to the death and commit mass suicide rather than surrender.”⁴⁵ Soon to confront a population that politically may have allegiance to Japan but ethnically was alienated, Buckner acted responsibly as a commander and approved a military government policy that best supported the combat mission. Despite his Southern upbringing and racist tendencies, he planned for the worst case scenario in order to best prepare his troops for unpredictable situations on the battlefield and to minimize American casualties.⁴⁶ Throughout the GOPER, he instructed the military government units to proceed carefully with the civilians and safeguard not only themselves but also secret information. His order for the “rigid control of civilians” served the dual purpose of eliminating them as battlefield obstacles and preventing them from acting as enemies once inside the camps. His orders prohibiting a postal system,

⁴⁴CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, 13; Report of Psychological Warfare Activities Okinawa Operation, September 15, 1945, RG 407, Box 2502, File 110-39, NARA, 20; Interview with 2LT Alfred S. Youkoff, Psychological Warfare - Combat Propaganda Team, Okinawa Diary, March 21, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns.

⁴⁵History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 17.

⁴⁶Buckner was the son of a Confederate General and shared similar beliefs with his father on race and the South. He lamented the South’s loss of the Civil War and considered Southerners’ cause noble. He studied Douglass Southall Freeman’s *Lee’s Lieutenants* as a guidebook to leadership and command and felt that the incorporation of different races into the fabric of American citizenry further complicated America’s race problem. Should the United States forces be success in taking the island of Okinawa, he felt strongly that the Okinawans should never have rights to American citizenship because their Asian heritage would taint American demography. (Sarantakes, ed, *Seven Stars*, 28, 45; Associated Press. 1945. *Anchorage Times*, June 19; Interview with LTG Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., Okinawa Diary, March 21, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns; Nicolas Evan Sarantakes, *Keystone: The American Occupation of Okinawa and U.S. Japanese Relations*, [College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000.] 28-29). Despite his personal feelings towards other ethnicities and races, however, Buckner’s decision to view the Okinawan civilian population as enemy was widely accepted and shared by his fellow commanders and staff planners. In the interest of successfully securing Okinawa and safeguarding the lives of the troops, all American commanders approached the unpredictable Okinawans with caution.

ordering censorship and forbidding the communication of civilians with any person outside the camps were designed to prevent access to and distribution of information to Japanese troops.⁴⁷

Buckner's combatant commanders, who had access to the same intelligence summaries, also concluded that preparing for the possibility of hostile civilians was the best course of action. Major General John Hodge, XXIV Corps Commander, who considered the Okinawans to be similar to the Japanese in perceived cunning, "anticipated great trouble with civilians and soldiers dressed as civilians on target." He wanted the Okinawans kept behind barriers away from the American soldiers. He warned that fraternization could put valuable information, and subsequently soldiers' lives, at risk.⁴⁸

In line with the recommendations in the bulletin and staff intelligence estimates, Tenth Army launched an intensive propaganda campaign. In hopes of exploiting the ethnic differences between the Okinawans and the Japanese, propaganda aimed at Okinawans emphasized the inequalities that the Japanese imposed on them. Leaflet 527 asked the civilians: "What obligations have you to the Japanese? Is this your war? Or is it really the war of Japanese leaders who have dominated you for many decades?"⁴⁹ American forces, therefore, attempted to capitalize on the ethnic tension between the Okinawans and the Japanese and to turn the Okinawans into amicable friends.

American planners, therefore, used cultural information about the Okinawans to shape military government policies. They actively assessed the complicated relationship between Japan and Okinawa and thus attempted to predict the civilian reaction to the Americans. The

⁴⁷Operational Directive #7, January 6, 1945, Commanding General, Tenth Army, 2, 9; Interview with LTG Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., Okinawa Diary, March 21, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns.

⁴⁸Interview with MG John Hodge, Okinawa Diary, March 12, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns.

⁴⁹Leaflet 527, X-1, X-10, 521, X-12, 530, RG 407, Box 2502, NARA; Report of Psychological Warfare Activities Okinawa Operation, September 15, 1945, RG 407, Box 2502, File 110-39, NARA.

policies took seriously Okinawa's status as a prefecture but also sought to exploit Okinawan feelings of disadvantage and inferiority. The Americans' understanding of the identity of the Okinawans, whether as Japanese subjects or as conquered people with a separate ethnicity, contributed greatly to how they devised military government policy and how they envisioned the conduct of the military government units.

While Buckner attended meetings and developed plans in Washington, his forces were spread across the globe in various states of preparation. Crist and his staff continued to produce materials from Hawaii. His Army combat divisions waited on Leyte after successfully securing the island under the leadership of General MacArthur. His military government officers arrived at Fort Ord, California from the Civil Affairs training schools at Princeton and Columbia University on December 28, 1944 and, once there, received their assignments to specific military government units with an undisclosed overseas mission. Enlisted soldiers for the military government units also arrived at Fort Ord between late December and early January from various other units and as draftees. They had not received training at the military schools in New Jersey and New York because those institutions existed for officer education only. Their arrival in California marked the first time that the enlisted men learned that they would work in civil affairs and thus, they began their first classes on what their jobs would entail.⁵⁰

Within four days of their arrival, the soldiers boarded their transport ships and headed across the Pacific. Over the two month voyage, the units received their mission, instructed the soldiers in the basics of their duties, and conducted preparations ranging from equipment issue

⁵⁰Diary, December 29, 1944 – January 3, 1945, Detachment B-5, 3.

and task training to tracking soldier's pay. The absence of any previous civil affairs training for the enlisted soldiers challenged the unprepared officers.

Officers drafted the onboard training plan at Fort Ord. In addition to generic Army topics such as rifle familiarization and disease prevention, they taught the basics of civil affairs using the Ryukyu Handbook, CINCPAC-CINCPOA bulletin #161-44, the Tenth Army Pamphlet – Information on Military Government, and the Tenth Army Technical Bulletin on Military Government approved by Crist.⁵¹ Officers with experience in Japanese language and culture, like Captain E.H. Horn of Detachment B-5, Company A, who had spent nineteen years in Japan, instructed all soldiers in Japanese language and “characteristics.”⁵²

The enlisted soldiers, therefore, received the same information about Okinawa as the officers who planned the operation. The Tenth Army Pamphlet, written specifically for the troops and approved on February 13, 1945, further enforced the idea that the Okinawans could act in dangerous ways towards American forces. The pamphlet emphasized the threat of civilians, calling them “weapons of war” and “enemy civilians.” It warned that Japanese soldiers might insert themselves into the population in order to spy.⁵³ The document also advised against soldiers interacting with civilians for fear of catching diseases that infected people “regardless of color or race.”⁵⁴ In its conclusion, it instructed soldiers to report suspicious civilians to their superiors.⁵⁵ Training onboard the ships described the population as “proper prisoners of war [or]

⁵¹Approved on February 25, 1945, the Technical Bulletin duplicated the contents of the GOPER with slight elaboration and presented the information in the format of an Army manual.

⁵²Diary, December 29, 1944 – January 12, 1945, Detachment B-5, 2,4,5.

⁵³Tenth Army Pamphlet – Information on Military Government, February 13, 1945, 4-5, 8.

⁵⁴Ibid., 5.

⁵⁵Ibid., 9.

war criminals, or they can be civilians, depending on how they act . . . [but they] cannot pose as civilians and still try to help the enemy, either acting as spies, blowing up stuff, or anything like that.”⁵⁶

Soldiers, therefore, were taught to be cautious of the civilians and to view them as enemies and, in an effort to clearly communicate this directive, the pamphlet purposefully avoided calling the civilians Okinawans. Despite receiving the CINCPAC-CINCPOA bulletin and the Ryukyu Handbook, the training consistently referred to the Okinawans as Japanese civilians or enemy civilians.⁵⁷ As a result, soldiers did not always feel as if they received training that clearly differentiated between the two groups and each soldier interpreted the ethnicity of the Okinawans in his own way. One explained that while he realized that the civilians were of Ryukyuan descent, he viewed Okinawa as Japanese land peopled by Japanese. “You have so many walking on two different cultures that, gosh, it’s hard to explain,” he remembered, “And that’s what we were all taught, you know, in the military that, hey, they’re all Japanese so there’s no need to separate them.”⁵⁸ Another soldier stated that “no one had heard of Okinawa . . . [only] that the island was infected with poisonous snakes . . . [and that] the natives were not Japanese but a more primitive people called Hairy Anus.”⁵⁹ The complicated situation of Okinawa’s relationship with Japan perplexed the soldiers just as it did the planners. The

⁵⁶7th division, speech transcript, Inclosure 2, Civil Affairs, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

⁵⁷One such example: the label under a diagram of a proposed camp restroom facility in the Technical Bulletin said “Jap squatter.” (Technical Bulletin, Military Government, February 25, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA).

⁵⁸Robert L. Hostetler, interview by author, Okinawa, Japan, Dec.27, 2007. Hostetler was a Corporal in 1945 assigned to the Statistical Section Task Force.

⁵⁹See also George Feifer, *The Battle of Okinawa: The Blood and the Bomb* (Connecticut: The Lyons Press, 1992, 2001), 126. In the CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, the ethnicity of the Okinawans is described as “a branch of the hairy Ainu and Kumaso peoples who inhabited Kyushu and other islands of Japan.” This is most likely where the soldier derived the term “Hairy Anus.” (CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, 10).

training did, however, communicate one thing clearly; regardless of whether the soldiers fully understood Okinawan culture and ethnicity, they did not trust the civilians and remained fully aware of their potential for sabotage.⁶⁰

On January 13, 1945, the troop ships stopped at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii to allow the detachment commanders to confer with the military government staff of Tenth Army. Only commanders attended the four day meeting; all other soldiers – officer and enlisted – remained onboard. Crist distributed the finalized GOPER during the meeting. Additionally, he defined the mission of the “A” and “B” detachments as “confined almost entirely to providing suitable concentration and assembly areas.”⁶¹ Crist’s verbal guidance contradicted the GOPER. The document specified that “A” detachments collect civilians and “B” detachments construct temporary camps as assembly points for evacuating civilians. Crist’s input narrowly defined the duty of the “A” and “B” detachments to reconnoitering space for and establishing more permanent camps. The contradiction caused major confusion for the military government commanders, particularly because Crist delivered both conflicting missions at the same meeting. The distribution of the GOPER should have clarified duties for the commanders and their men and provided much desired insight into their overseas mission and new civil affairs duties. Crist’s brief instead raised more questions. The soldiers – commanders, officers, and enlisted - all arrived at their new units with no previous experience in conducting the actual duties of military government. Now they faced their mission with limited time to train and only a vague notion as to how the different detachments should function and connect with the combat units.

⁶⁰Hostetler, interview; Feifer, *The Battle of Okinawa*, 127.

⁶¹Diary, January 13, 1945, Detachment B-5, 6.

Four days later, on January 17, the troop transport ships left Honolulu for the Philippines with liaison officers from the Tenth Army Military Government Staff aboard. These men led and supervised instruction on the mission and military government duties using the GOPER. In accordance with the GOPER and Buckner's intent, "anticipation of more complex and elaborate civil administration was discouraged."⁶² While the addition of these officers aboard the ships made the document accessible to the soldiers, the officers also further modified the duties of the "A" and "B" detachments. The officers decided to consolidate "the effort of the 'A' and 'B' teams toward taking care of displaced persons and paving the way for camp teams."⁶³ Although slight, the varied descriptions of the detachments' duties made the conduct of the operation unclear to the soldiers and commanders.

The arrival of the liaison officers also marked a shift in the command structure for the training program; instruction was now consolidated under a single commander on each ship. Previously each detachment team had conducted its own training which meant that the soldiers received the instruction in small groups from their own superiors. The new plan combined all the enlisted soldiers on the ship into one large training group. The focus of the training also shifted; Japanese culture and language were replaced by rudimentary subjects such as Army organization and map reading. The officers who had previously taught the material were now assigned to duties specified in the GOPER. Captain Horn, for example, no longer conducted language training because he served on the censorship board. As L-Day neared, all soldiers found themselves busy with important preparatory tasks and the training program dwindled.⁶⁴

⁶²Ibid, 8.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid.,7-8. The term "L-Day" means the same as "D-Day"; the designated start day for a combat attack. Following the pivotal Normandy landings on June 6, 1944, planners chose to preserve the term "D-Day" in honor of that assault. Another example: The beginning of the Battle of Leyte – October 20, 1944 – was called "A-Day."

On February 19, when the transport ships reached Leyte and the military government units joined up with their combat divisions, Japanese language training resumed. Only five enlisted men per detachment, however, participated in the training. Throughout their time in the Philippines, the debate about the mission and purpose of the detachments continued in addition to new talk of how the combat divisions would function with the military government units. Officers discussed issues of supply support and the scope of the units' responsibilities on the actual battlefield. Out of these discussions developed a new directive addressing the interaction of the soldiers with the civilian populace, a subject that the GOPER did not address. The detachment commanders ordered the separation of civilians and soldiers into fenced enclosures constructed by Army engineer units to prevent fraternization and to restrict civilian access to military information.⁶⁵ These regulations were based on the governing view of Okinawans as the enemy.

By the time Buckner joined his troops in the Philippines, the training program for the treatment of civilians had been going for a month. Supported by testimony that Japanese paratroopers in civilian clothing had been used in the fighting on Leyte, the training program enforced the notion that Okinawans must be treated as enemy. The instruction informed soldiers that civilians on Okinawa were not from the Japanese islands but "will be regarded as enemies and as likely to do us harm whenever opportunity offers, and would treat accordingly."⁶⁶ The soldiers continued to acknowledge the cultural differences of the Okinawans but identified them with the Japanese.

⁶⁵Ibid., 13, 17. The detachment commanders' expansion of the GOPER was consistent with the flexible nature of the plan and Buckner's desire that his subordinate commanders exercise their own initiative.

⁶⁶Ibid., 17.

By February 28, the mission of the ‘A’ and ‘B’ detachments had diverged so far from the original instructions in the GOPER that the detachment commanders began to speak of their task in loose, assumptive terms. E.R. Mosman, commander of B-5 attached to 96th division, wrote that “it *appeared* that the function of the ‘B’ teams in this operation would be concerned almost entirely with internal administration of civilian collection stockades and providing labor. No other duties outside the collection areas were contemplated.”⁶⁷ The “B” detachments received formal and informal instruction describing a wide range of duties as varied as locating camps, establishing both temporary and permanent camps, and searching for misplaced civilians in an effort to prepare them for any task that may ultimately be assigned.

On March 31, the eve of the landings on Okinawa, Mosman expressed exasperation about the uncertainty of his unit’s mission and recorded yet a different version of their possible duties in his command notes: “experiencing considerable difficulty in appraising position in the coming operation as related to Division plans regarding civilians but it appears this unit will serve as an ‘Advanced Team.’”⁶⁸ With those words, Mosman went to bed, only to wake the next day and send his men into combat with no clarity on the particulars of their duties.

The main assault began on April 1, with the landing of combat units and the “A” detachments, followed by the landing of the “B” and “C” Detachments. The teams began setting up processing centers and registering retreating civilians in areas like Sunabe, Chatan, and Nugun.⁶⁹ Army Engineers attached to the military government units quickly constructed barb

⁶⁷Ibid., 15, emphasis added.

⁶⁸Ibid., 18.

⁶⁹Figure 23: Disposition of Corps and Division Military Government Detachments, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

wire fences and Military Police acted as guards in order to separate the civilians from the prisoners of war and the American soldiers.⁷⁰

American bombs and naval gunfire carpeted Okinawa prior to troops landing in order to minimize Japanese resistance, destroying seventy-five percent of the homes and forcing the civilian population to retreat to lime rock caves. In shock, starving, lice ridden, disease stricken, and suffering injuries from bullets and shelling, civilians needed the temporary camps for preliminary medical care, and food. In letters to family members that had evacuated the island under Japanese direction in 1944, the civilians cried out that “everything is so totally different from how it was before the war. We think about nothing other than finding enough food to stay alive.”⁷¹

The battle flattened most of Okinawa’s structures and cities. Private E.B. Sledge described the landscape as “shell blasted . . . treeless and increasingly low and flat.” Buckner described large cities such as Naha as “deserted ruins . . . most of it burned out . . . of no value except as a port.” As the fighting continued and rain fell steadily, the destruction grew exponentially. Okinawa, once considered “picturesquely beautiful,” now sat bogged down in mud so thick that vehicles couldn’t move through it. The mud and knee-deep water hindered soldiers’ efforts to distribute ammunition and evacuate the wounded. Eventually, Naha’s last purpose as a port diminished as sunken ships blocked the harbor. Total shells expended by the Americans on Okinawa equaled nearly two and three quarters million. These shells flattened homes, burned out fields and crops, and killed civilians and Japanese soldiers alike. The loss of

⁷⁰Diary, April 1- April 3, 1945, Detachment B-5, 19.

⁷¹Ibid., 20; Hamamatsu Shigeru, letter, in Mark Ealey and Alastair McLauchlan, translators, *Descent into Hell: Civilian Memories of the Battle of Okinawa*, originally published in *Ryukyu Shimpo* (Portland, Merwin Asia, 2014), 295.

their homes emotionally crushed the Okinawans. “As I walk among what are literally the ruins of our hometown, I am overcome with emotion,” one Okinawan man cried, “but if there was even a single wall left of that house we all loved, I saw no sign of it.” Over a million shells lay unexploded on the roadways and throughout the countryside; civilians retreating from the frontlines risked detonating these charges as they walked. An estimated 200,000 people – Okinawan, Japanese, and American – died, most of their bodies rotting in the humid air. A young Okinawan girl observed, “Here and there were rotten parts of bodies, and the mud-covered corpses were so grotesque you couldn’t tell the men from the women. Somehow they reminded me of sweet potato tempura covered with kneaded flour.” As part of the clean up effort following the hostilities, American troops dug mass graves in the once productive fields and thus limited farming possibilities.⁷²

In the few areas that did not suffer much bomb damage, sturdy homes and healthy crops lay abandoned. With limited American supplies at the camps, such wasted resources contributed to tight rationing of food and a communal living environment. Close accommodations combined with the Okinawan custom of saving human feces for use as pig feed increased the likelihood of disease and the presence of rodents, flies, and mosquitoes.⁷³ The abundance of casualties overwhelmed the early temporary camps and caused the “relative absence of public health and

⁷²Report of Psychological Warfare Activities Okinawa Operation, September 15, 1945, RG 407, Box 2502, File 110-39, NARA, 10; CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, 1; Japanese Imperial Army Statistics, Japanese Naval Underground Museum, Document Exhibit Room; *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa, Survivor's Testimonies* (Okinawa: Relief Section, Welfare Department, Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), 4; Sarantakes ed., *Seven Stars*, 61, 74; LTC Luker, Army Air Corps, C-54 pilot, head of Air Transport Command out of Yomitan, speech June 23, 1995, Active 7(7-2-C) archives K-L, “Kadena Base History,” Kadena Air Base, Kadena Air Base Archives; Sledge, *With the Old Breed*, 248-249; Sloan, *The Ultimate Battle*, photos 25-27; Shigeru, letter, *Ryukyu Shimpo*, 296; Kyoko Uehara in *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa, Survivor's Testimonies* (Okinawa: Relief Section, Welfare Department, Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), 18.

⁷³Diary, April 30, 1945, May 31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 34, 54.

sanitation measures.”⁷⁴ Staff Sergeant A.G. Karpen wrote a poem titled *Japanese Garden* describing the desecration of Okinawa. In it, he juxtaposed beautiful imagery of Okinawa as an exotic Asian island next to the brutality and carnage of the war. “Come walk with me in gardens of the dead,” he wrote, “What lily-beds, the skulls, and yellow gentians the old unburied bones, what sacred odor of disintegrated flesh, what ample altars for glad offering to kind divinity are tanks shattered midst the garden’s carnage. Naha’s rubble, all so delicate; and Itoman, sequestered, proudest bed of roses, red with blood and piles of roof slate.”⁷⁵ Seizen Nakasone, a Professor at the University of the Ryukyus, lamented, “I thought that this land, soaked with the blood of countless people would never be fit for human habitation again.”⁷⁶

Within the desolation and total decimation, the military government units had to create living conditions that would preserve and protect life. Camp conditions varied depending upon what each location had available for salvage and how much time the Americans spent on each site to work continually on improvement. The camp at Sunabe, for example, lasted for only five days. Described as “rigorous,” the camp held 2,039 civilians but only had two tarpaulins for shelter and no blankets for cooler night temperatures. Given the size of the population, the tarpaulins covered only the elderly.⁷⁷ In contrast, the camp at Nodake, set up within a village, had the advantage of one-hundred-sixty-seven houses available for use (only twenty-two houses had burned down).⁷⁸ With Nodake’s population at 6,000, civilians lived crowded together in the

⁷⁴Ibid., 27.

⁷⁵War Department. 1945. *Yank* magazine. Nov. 30.

⁷⁶Ota, *The Battle of Okinawa*, x.

⁷⁷Diary, April 3, 1945, Detachment B-5, 22-23.

⁷⁸Ibid., 28.

remaining structures. The “C” detachment camp at Shimabuku created ten districts fifteen days into the battle while at the same time struggling to secure an adequate water supply.⁷⁹

Despite the variation in the conditions, all camps operated under the basic principles outlined in the GOPER as further modified by detachment commanders. Every camp kept meticulous headcounts and filled out daily reports signed by the detachment commander who sent them through the division and XXIV Corps to the Tenth Army Military Government Staff.⁸⁰ The staff then combined the data into a memo addressed to Crist, the Deputy Commander for Military Government. By requesting specific data, the reports laid out Tenth Army’s priorities for the detachment – maintain an accurate headcount, control disease, provide basic needs through local salvage and organize the civilians into an Army wide beneficial labor force. The reports included a demographic tally of the civilians by gender, location, and medical status and also a brief citation on sanitation and an extended paragraph on communicable diseases.⁸¹ Instances of typhus, meningitis, and skin conditions appeared most frequently but only as isolated cases.⁸² Two reported cases of leprosy at the field hospital in Koza prompted discussions of evacuation and command involvement from Tenth Army.⁸³

The reports also dealt with supply and the status of salvage. Buckner’s concerns about supply were warranted; the military government units saved their initial stock of food and

⁷⁹XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

⁸⁰Detachment Daily Report, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Division report to XXIV Corps, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

⁸¹Status of Civilians Report, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

⁸²XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Report to Tenth Army, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

⁸³XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Technical Bulletin, Military Government, February 25, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Annex 15, Tentative Operations Plan No. 1-45, January 6, 1945, RG 407, Box 2487, file 110-5.5, NARA.

construction material for use as emergency rations and focused on local salvage immediately.⁸⁴

As the war continued and local resources were slowly consumed, the failure of the promised resupply to arrive worried Americans and Okinawans alike.⁸⁵ Tenth Army recognized the effect the availability of local materials had on the living conditions of the camps and tracked salvage efforts closely.⁸⁶

The reports provided information on the labor projects of the civilians as well. The GOPER directed that civilian labor be available to any unit, including combat units, and the military government designed its program around the intent of the GOPER. Most combat units, however, did not request the additional labor; civilians worked almost exclusively within the camps doing cooking, laundry, nursing, construction and, if available, farming.⁸⁷

American soldiers interacted with both the Japanese and the Okinawan civilians immediately upon landing. Information received during training combined with hasty observations caused most soldiers to be able to differentiate between the Okinawans and the Japanese through simplistic, inaccurate methods.⁸⁸ The ability of the soldiers to distinguish between the two ethnic groups was not based on an acute awareness of the intricacies of culture and race. Instead, the soldiers separated the groups based on elemental visual differences. The Okinawans, rendered homeless by the intense shelling and fighting, walked in the muddy roads

⁸⁴Diary, April 3, 1945, Detachment B-5, 22; 7th division, speech transcript, Inclosure 2, Civil Affairs, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA, p.2; XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

⁸⁵Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 48.

⁸⁶Detachment Daily Report, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Division report to XXIV Corps, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Status of Civilians Report, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

⁸⁷Detachment Daily Report, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Status of Civilians Report, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

⁸⁸Sarantakes ed., *Seven Stars*, 34; Diary, 1944-1945, Detachment B-5, 23, 27; Hostetler, interview; Sledge, *With the Old Breed*, 192; History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 17-18.

looking for shelter and carrying all their possessions. They were filthy, scared, and unarmed. Japanese soldiers wore military uniforms, carried weapons, and organized attacks against the Americans. As American soldiers encountered tired, weary, weak, scared, grimy local people not wearing the Japanese uniform or carrying weapons, they assumed they were Okinawan and categorized the Okinawans as “pathetic . . . pitiful . . . totally bewildered by the shock of [the] invasion . . . and scared to death of [the Americans].”⁸⁹ Soldiers noted the “debilitated condition physically and mentally” of the local civilians.⁹⁰ Wrote one soldier from Camp Sunabe: “The attitude of the natives toward the American forces at this early stage can be described as one of passivity resulting from great shock and fright . . . completely docile.”⁹¹

The American soldiers thus differentiated the Okinawans based on superficial, general, imprecise, and not always accurate assumptions.⁹² Okinawans did wear soiled, threadbare, dishelved clothing and were fearful, sick and injured, but these attributes were products of a destructive battle. To the soldiers, however, the destitute state of the Okinawans invoked a paternalistic feeling of superiority. The soldiers saw them as uncivilized, primitive and unintelligent rather than as war victims.⁹³ Soldiers denigrated the condition of the locals by describing their belongings as “pitifully few and pathetically poor.”⁹⁴ The training they received

⁸⁹Sledge, *With the Old Breed*, 192.

⁹⁰Diary, April 3- April 8, 1945, Detachment B-5, 27.

⁹¹Ibid., 23; History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 17; Okinawa Diary, April 11, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns.

⁹²The Americans were aware that separating the Okinawans from the Japanese by visual cues such as demeanor and clothing had its flaws. Propaganda leaflets distributed to the Okinawans warned them against wearing Japanese military clothing for warmth because the Americans would classify them as enemy soldiers. The content of the leaflets demonstrated that the Americans felt apprehension towards all non-Americans and could not identify cultural differences between the two groups; their reliance on superficial means of separation, therefore, was heavy. (Leaflet 531, 563, Active 7(7-2-C) archive P, Kadena Air Base, KAB Archives).

⁹³History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 19-20.

about Okinawa supported their paternalistic views. The Ryukyu Handbook, for example, described the Okinawans as “mild-mannered, courteous, and subservient” people who “do not value orderliness and cleanliness.”⁹⁵ Despite the devastation of war causing the grimy look of the civilians, such training instilled a belief in the Americans that filth was intrinsic to Okinawan culture. “They violate sanitary regulations,” explained Crist, “Because they have no real knowledge of sanitation.”⁹⁶ Local practices, such as using human excrement as fertilizer, contributed to the Americans’ false assumptions about Okinawans as unclean. Military government soldiers said the civilians “carefully hoarded” the excrement; soldiers worried that the sanitation situation, “including the odor, would probably deteriorate.”⁹⁷ Adherence to their own Western notions made the military government units emphasize a few unfamiliar farming practices as exemplary of the nature of the Okinawans as a group.

While the American observation of the distressed Okinawans as docile and weak translated into paternalistic feelings, the majority of the Okinawans did, in fact, conduct themselves in a friendly manner. To the surprise of the Americans, few civilians under the custody of the United States troops in the camps carried out subversive acts or committed suicide. Frightened at such close interaction with the American enemy, Okinawans complied with the directions of the military government officers. Obediently transferring between locations by truck or by foot, the civilians calculated their chance of survival in the camps by observing the number of people the Americans processed. “I thought that we were probably

⁹⁴7th division, speech transcript, Inclosure 2, Civil Affairs, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA, 3.

⁹⁵*The Ryukyus Handbook*, 1994, Department of the Army, VII.

⁹⁶History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 20.

⁹⁷Diary, April 1 – 30, 1945, Detachment B-5, 37.

going to be killed because there were too many POWs for them to handle,” a middle school boy at Sunabe thought. When the Americans handed him shorts, a shirt and eating utensils, he relaxed.⁹⁸ A XXIV Corps report stated that “the processing of civs [*sic*] posed no problems during the first months of the operation.”⁹⁹ Captain R.W. Appleman, XXIV Corps historian, recorded that “the civilians presented no difficult problem and took care of themselves by and large, no serious difficulty developed.”¹⁰⁰ Military government units observed no aggressive actions against Americans by civilians during the first eight days.¹⁰¹

Yet, even while noting the harmless nature of the Okinawans, the soldiers did not disregard the potential of the civilians to incite violent chaos or spy.¹⁰² Corporal Robert L. Hostetler, Statistical Section Task Force, observed many years later that “every culture has their good people and their bad people.”¹⁰³ Heeding the horror stories told on the transport ships about Japanese soldiers disguised as civilians, the Americans still viewed the Okinawans with suspicion, despite their helpless appearance.¹⁰⁴ New rumors and stories about the covert actions of civilians against American forces circulated once the soldiers landed and, while these reports were not verified, they did fuel distrust.¹⁰⁵ Consistent with the soldiers’ training and orders, a

⁹⁸Ibid, 23, XXIV Corps After Action Review, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Captain Roy E. Appleman, notes, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

⁹⁹XXIV Corps After Action Review #125, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Mark Ealey and Alastair McLauchlan, translators, *Descent into Hell: Civilian Memories of the Battle of Okinawa*, originally published in *Ryukyu Shimpo* (Portland, Merwin Asia, 2014), 151.

¹⁰⁰Captain Roy E. Appleman, notes, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA, 3.

¹⁰¹Diary, April 3-8, 1945, Detachment B-5, 27.

¹⁰²Leaflet X-7, RG 407, Box 2502, NARA.

¹⁰³Hostetler, interview.

¹⁰⁴Tenth Army Pamphlet – Information on Military Government, February 13, 1945; Okinawa Diary, April 11, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns; CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, 10.

generally wary attitude towards the locals worked in harmony with the soldiers' vigilant efforts at self-preservation in a wartime environment. Soldiers worried that "intelligence was getting to the enemy forces via itinerant civilians" who had run away from the military government camps. When Americans saw civilians wearing United States military uniforms given to them out of charity, the image heightened fear of espionage because it blurred the informally established visual identification lines.¹⁰⁶ In both official and unofficial written correspondence, the term "enemy civilian" continued to appear as a reference to the Okinawans.¹⁰⁷ Displaying the unease with which military government units approached civilians, XXIV Corps identified the "doubtful attitude" of "240,000 Ok[inawans]" to be "one of the major problems" that military government personnel sections had to contend with.¹⁰⁸

In the initial confrontation of Americans and Okinawans, the Americans found a destitute, poor civilian population that might do violence to the foreigners whose bombs and shells had rendered them homeless. American soldiers used the same simplistic method to identify hostile Okinawans that they used to distinguish the Okinawans from the Japanese – how they looked. As one soldier explained, "you could tell by their eyes."¹⁰⁹ Ultimately, they

¹⁰⁵Diary, April 3-8, 1945, Detachment B-5, 27.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 31. Although it did happen, giving Okinawans United States military uniforms for warmth was against official policy. (Operational Directive #7, January 6, 1945, Commanding General, Tenth Army, 7; Hostetler interview).

¹⁰⁷Diary, December 28, 1944- May 31, 1945, Detachment B-5; 7th division, speech transcript, Inclosure 2, Civil Affairs, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; XXIV Corps Military Government Preliminary Planning, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

¹⁰⁸XXIV Corps Military Government Preliminary Planning, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; XXIV Corps After Action Review, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

¹⁰⁹Hostetler, interview.

recognized that there existed no way to accurately sort out who was enemy and who was not. In the first month of battle, sheer survival suggested that caution be the ruling principle.¹¹⁰

The majority of the Okinawans living in the military government camps complied with American authority and posed no threat, but not all Okinawans on the island were non-combatants. In addition to the few civilians that did spy from within the camps, a large portion of the Okinawan population served in military units on the side of the Japanese.¹¹¹ American forces keenly noticed that “the middle aged group of men were missing” from the evacuation camps.¹¹² Out of a population of several thousands at Camp Tobaru, military government officials reported only 50 men aged 17-45 years.¹¹³

¹¹⁰The priority of survival remained a consistent theme with all soldiers. As one Non-Commissioned Officer expressed it, “We were just happy it was them and not us . . . hey, that’s the breaks. You live, you die. You couldn’t let it get to you very much.” He offered a similar response to American dead as well as Japanese dead. He described a fellow American’s dead body in terms of his own survival. “I remember this one dude,” he said, “but as bad as this was to look at all night, our big concern was that we were being silhouetted.” (Gerald A. Meehl and Rex Alan Smith, *Pacific War Stories: In the Words of Those who Survived*. [New York: Abbeville Press, 2004.] 142).

¹¹¹XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Inoue, *Okinawa and the U.S. Military*, 61; Frank, *Okinawa*, 19; *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa*, 4-5; XXIV Corps After Action Review, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; George H. Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People* (Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2000); Walter LeFeber, *The Clash: U.S. – Japanese Relations through History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997); Ruth Ann Keyso, *Women of Okinawa: Nine Voices from a Garrison Island* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); Testimony 5, Kama Matsumura, testimony 10, Oral History Collection manuscript room, Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum, English book 1; Testimony 16, Oral History Collection manuscript room, Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum, English book 1; Site map, Maya Cave, Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum; Shitsuko Oshiro, Oral History Collection, Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum; Oto Nagamine, Oral History Collection, Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum; Setsuko Inafuku, speech, July 16, 2007. While isolated, the military governments camps experienced infiltration from Japanese soldiers as well as acts of conspiracy by Okinawan civilians. Outside a camp in Shimbuku, one Japanese soldier wearing civilians clothes was shot on April 15, 1945 while another was shot in the same area the following day. On April 18th, 1945, a Japanese sniper was shot and held for questioning by military government personnel from Shimabuku. In camps Shimabaru and Tobaru-Maebaru, civilians were caught speaking with a Japanese soldier on April 20th, 1945 and held for questioning.

¹¹²Diary, April 3-8, 1945, Detachment B-5, 23; Okinawa Diary, April 11, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns; XXIV Corps After Action Review #125, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; 27th Infantry Division letter to Commanding General, RG 389 Box 704, NARA; History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 17.

¹¹³XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

In anticipation of the attack, the 32nd Imperial Army had arrived on Okinawa in March 1944. Under the National Mobilization Act of 1944, the Japanese Army launched a campaign to prepare the island for the impending invasion. The plan included construction projects, like building air strips and defenses, and mobilization programs to rally every Okinawan to the Japanese national cause.¹¹⁴ Okinawans participated in the war effort through farming, conscription, and nursing. Young female students aged fourteen and older joined student nursing corps while young boys joined military fighting units.¹¹⁵ Organized by schools like the Okinawa Normal School and the Prefectural First Middle School, The Blood and Iron Corps (Tekketsu Kinnotai) - under the supervision of the Japanese Imperial Forces - employed young boys as “suicidal attack corps.”¹¹⁶ Okinawan adult men also fought for Japan as soldiers, either as augmentees to Japanese units or in Okinawan units called the Okinawan Home Guard (Boei Tai).¹¹⁷ Conscription often times pulled the men from their occupations. Teruya Eihan left his job as a math teacher at the Shuri Girls’ School in March 1945 to fight with the Boei Tai. His duties included food and message delivery to the Japanese troops. As Senior Operations Officer of the 32nd Imperial Army Hiromachi Yahara explained, “All people young and old, men and women, along with military forces devoted themselves to protecting the imperial motherland. This was the guiding principle that our military leaders had been emphasizing.”¹¹⁸ In preparation

¹¹⁴*An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa*, 4.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹⁶Ota, *The Battle Of Okinawa*, 197.

¹¹⁷Roy E. Appleman, James M. Burns, Russell A. Gugeler, and John Stevens, *Okinawa: The Last Battle*. (Washington D.C.: Historical Division, Department of the Army, 1948); *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa*, 4-5; Inoue, *Okinawa and the U.S. Military*, 59-61; Frank, *Okinawa*, 19.

¹¹⁸As quoted in Colonel Hiromachi Yahara, *The Battle of Okinawa: A Japanese Officer’s Account of the Last Great Campaign* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Incorporated, 1995); Ota, *The Battle of Okinawa*, 196.

for the invasion, most civilians felt pride in their duties for the Emperor. Eihan told his school principal that he intended to “do [his] bit for the country.”¹¹⁹

Okinawan mobilization contributed significantly to Japanese fighting strength. Between December 1944 and March 1945, Japanese troop strength increased by 16,000 because of the incorporation of the Okinawan Home Guard.¹²⁰ While accommodating the possibility that Okinawans as individuals might act as spies, American forces underestimated their participation in actual combat units. Only when realizing the inconsistency between their calculations of the number of enemy casualties and the number of enemy troops did the Americans notice the active combatant role of the Okinawans. Earlier instruction emphasizing the rural background and cultural differences of the Okinawans from the Yamato Japanese of the mainland contributed to this miscalculation. Stated one officer, “[The] advanced propaganda [campaign] about an enchained race seeking liberation has perhaps clouded appreciation of the full extent of Ok [*sic*] contribution to the defense of their native land.”¹²¹ The consideration of the Okinawans’ relationship with Japan influenced American thinking when contemplating the enemy’s fighting ability and strength. Of 1,113 prisoners of war tallied over a three-week period, 424 were Boei Tai and 121 were military civilian employees.¹²²

Identifying the Okinawans from the Japanese was not a scientific process with foolproof results. American soldiers tried their best to separate the innocuous civilians from those civilians

¹¹⁹Teruya Masako, newspaper interview, *Ryukyu Shimpō*, in Mark Ealey and Alastair McLauchlan, translators, *Descent into Hell: Civilian Memories of the Battle of Okinawa*, originally published in *Ryukyu Shimpō* (Portland, Merwin Asia, 2014), 295.

¹²⁰XXIV Corps After Action Review #122, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

¹²¹XXIV Corps After Action Review #122. CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, 12-13; Strategic Estimate of the Enemy Situation: Iceberg, March 4, 1945, RG 407, Box 2455, file 110-2.15, NARA.

¹²²*Ibid.*

who intended to harm them. Forming assumptions based off of training material and observation, the Americans recognized not only passivity and compliance but the potential for infiltration and deceit among the Okinawans. For soldiers fighting in combat units, the intricate process of separating the Okinawans from the Japanese was less important; as combatants themselves, their concern was only with those who actively fought against them, regardless of ethnicity.¹²³ Crowds of dislocated civilians along the roads were ignored or swiftly transferred to the military government units attached to the divisions. For the military government soldiers administrating the camps, however, identifying Okinawans and Japanese as separate groups required extensive care and carried real consequences if done incorrectly. Military government personnel slept in the same camps, mere yards away from the local residents. To them, separating Japanese soldiers and Okinawans loyal to Japan from the majority of Okinawan refugees seeking relief was of paramount importance. Their personal security depended upon it.

The detachment commanders' orders, issued on the transport ships, for rigid security measures were "for their protection and ours." Each civilian arriving to the camp underwent a screening process in order to discover any dangerous intentions and to find and remove any threatening weapon-like object. Civilian men aged 17-45 were kept in stockades overnight. Perimeter fences encased the camps and internal fencing separated American and Okinawan living areas. No civilians could leave the camp without an American soldier escort. Labor parties worked under guard. Military police, when available, augmented some camps, conducted

¹²³One soldier explained it this way, "When we got over here it was just, get 'em! Anybody gets in your way..." Hostetler, interview; 1LT Jesse C. Rogers, Jr., Infantry, Psychological Warfare on Okinawa, RG 407, Box 2502, File 110-39, NARA, 2-3.

patrols, and enforced anti-fraternization rules. Dog patrols consisting of 12 men and 13 dogs guarded the camps while the military police rested in the evenings.¹²⁴

XXIV Corps ordered strict security measures and each camp implemented them with as much rigor as their resources allowed. Nodake, for example, did not have a perimeter fence because both military and local materials necessary for construction were not present in adequate amounts in the area.¹²⁵ Personnel shortages posed the greatest difficulties; B-5, for example, consisted of only 23 soldiers and yet processed thousands of civilians, reaching a resident population of 6,999 by mid-April.¹²⁶ Units short on people sent requests for Military Police augmentees to XXIV Corps regularly.¹²⁷

In order to ensure that the civilians followed the directives of the Americans, military government units devised a set of punishments for rule breakers. In the first few days of the battle, the soldiers only issued warnings to those civilians who disregarded the camp regulations.¹²⁸ Before a week had passed, however, they realized that penalties needed to be increased. Punishments included placing offenders in the stockades or denying the daily rice ration.¹²⁹

¹²⁴Diary, April 1-30, 1945, Detachment B-5, 31; 7th division, speech transcript, Inclosure 2, Civil Affairs, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA, 1; Control of Civilians, XXIV Corps ltr, April 24, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA, XXIV Corps After Action Review #125, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Wiley S. Iscom, *Diary of a Wardog Platoon* (Tennessee: Bible and Literature Missionary Foundation, 1997).

¹²⁵Diary, April 1-30, 1945, Detachment B-5, 31.

¹²⁶Ibid, 36, 51; Military Government Action Report, 1 April – 30 June 1945, XXIV Corps, RG 407, Box 2153, NARA.

¹²⁷XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Diary, 1944-1945, Detachment B-5, 31.

¹²⁸Diary, April 3-8, 1945, Detachment B-5, 23.

¹²⁹Ibid, 33.

Civilians committed infractions out of their own need for survival, not a desire for deviance. Still anxious and uneasy from fleeing throughout the battlefield, the civilians were accustomed to tending to themselves and scavenged for food remnants found in garbage, like empty fish cans discarded by the Japanese army. They left the camps searching for family members or some salvageable food in abandoned fields. American forces knew why the civilians escaped and organized salvage parties to procure food and supplies for all camp residents. They lacked the manpower, however, to escort every forlorn Okinawan and denied most requests. The urgency of the civilians to leave the camps combined with shortages of material and personnel resulted in “numerous problems [with] civilian control.”¹³⁰

XXIV Corps issued an order in response to this lack of control. By April 11, eleven days after the initial landings, any resident found leaving the camps or stealing food was to be shot.¹³¹ The order unambiguously directed perimeter guards to “stop all civilians leaving the village for crops or any reason, and upon failure to stop when ordered back, to fire at such civilians.”¹³² Each individual camp displayed standardized warning signs issued from XXIV Corps to alert the residents about the punishment of death.¹³³ The public notices were written in Japanese, however, and thus disregarded the fact that older Okinawans only spoke and read Luchuan.¹³⁴ American forces not only knew that the Okinawans spoke a different language than Japanese but

¹³⁰Ibid, 23,31; History of Military Government Operations, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 20; Leaflet X-7, RG 407, Box 2502, NARA; Ealey and McLauchlan, translators, *Descent into Hell*, 409.

¹³¹Diary, April 3-8, 1945, Detachment B-5, 31-32; XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

¹³²Diary, April 1-30, 1945, Detachment B-5, 31.

¹³³Ibid, 32.

¹³⁴Ibid., 32; Leaflet Survey Civilians, XXIV Corps ltr, April 13, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

also acknowledged that “sentences may be translated [between the two languages] word for word without comprehension” and that the two languages were “mutually unintelligible.”¹³⁵ Lack of training in Luchuan and its five dialects limited the language options for the bulletins but the Americans knew that “standard [Tokyo] Japanese [was] understood by many in the cities and towns.”¹³⁶ The posted bulletins, while still unintelligible to some of the camp population, signified an honest effort by military government officials to communicate with the population and, while not always able to accommodate it, an awareness of the distinction between Okinawans and Japanese.

Unfortunately, the threats in the postings coupled with the limits of language meant that some camp residents understood the penalty only by witnessing firsthand the consequences. In Nodake, seven civilians were shot. One civilian was shot at Chatan, Maebaru, and Tobaru. Two were shot at Shimabuku.¹³⁷ When guards fired at fleeing civilians, they rarely, if ever, delivered less than a death blow, proving that the intent of the order was to kill rather than maim. Though the number of civilians killed remained low in comparison with the thousands residing in the camps, military government units followed the XXIV Corps order universally.¹³⁸

The civilians shot had not threatened American soldiers or disclosed American secrets to the Japanese. They had attempted to leave camp unaccompanied, had stolen food, or lingered

¹³⁵CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, 10; History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist; *The Ryukyus Handbook*, 1944, Department of the Army, VII.

¹³⁶CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, 10.

¹³⁷XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Diary, April 1-30, 1945, Detachment B-5, 31.

¹³⁸Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 41; Okinawa Diary, April 17, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns; Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, 45.

around the ration dump.¹³⁹ While the Americans had a real fear that Okinawans could potentially retreat back towards Japanese lines after they had lived in close proximity with American military information, such fears only partially explained the extreme punishment of death. Notably, the American forces knew that most fleeing Okinawans intended to locate lost family members and left over food. While death stood as a drastic consequence against crimes unrelated to enemy acts, civilian freedom of movement threatened security within the camps by diminishing the control of the undermanned military government units. Severely outnumbered, the soldiers needed to enforce discipline to reduce the possibility of organized civilian treachery. XXIV Corps issued the order in response to the military government units' loosening grip on control of their camps. The American knowledge of the Okinawans' motivations for escaping meant that they did not shoot civilians because they considered them enemy combatants yet neither did they considered them harmless.

The last shooting of a fleeing civilian occurred on April 26 at the Shimabaru camp when a civilian attempted to leave after sunset.¹⁴⁰ For the remainder of the wartime occupation, ending with the surrender of the Ryukyus on September 7, Army military government units did not shoot any more civilians.¹⁴¹ Throughout the last four months of intense fighting, the military government units no longer saw a need for strict, deadly control over their camp populations. As soldiers recognized the Okinawans' quick obedience to the regulations and close living increased

¹³⁹XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, April 18, 1945, April 26, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

¹⁴⁰Ibid.

¹⁴¹Surrender of the Ryukyus, Active 7(7-2-C) Archives A-D, Kadena Air Base, KAB Archives, XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Diary, December 28, 1944 -May 31, 1945, Detachment B-5.

familiarity between foreigner and local, individual military government units began to loosen the rigid restrictions.

Punishment programs -whether stockades, food denial, or death- alerted the Okinawan camp populations to the seriousness with which the Americans dealt with violations. While the Okinawans discovered to their relief and surprise that the Americans did not intend to harm them, Japanese horror stories about American torture made the Okinawans mindful of the structure imposed on them.¹⁴² As soon as they witnessed the consequences of disobedience, they complied.

Military government soldiers quickly noticed the effectiveness of their punishment policies in restoring order and maintaining control over thousands. With the inclusion of death as a punishment, they observed the “virtually complete solution of the problem” of civilians leaving the camps on their own. A stockade constructed at Nodake for escapees who turned back before the military police could fire “was seldom required after the first few days.” Within a month, “the penalty of cancelling the rice ration was threatened but not found necessary to be used.”¹⁴³

Not only did the Okinawans choose cooperation over rebellion but they readily participated in the daily operations of the camps and assisted the Americans in camp administration. One Okinawan man made additional leaflets about the consequence of death and posted them on paths that led away from Nodake. Regardless of the likelihood that the motivation of the man linked primarily to protecting his fellow Okinawans than working with the

¹⁴²Keyso, *Women of Okinawa*, 37, told by Fumiko Nakamura; Ota, *The Battle of Okinawa*, 223; History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 19; Captain Roy E. Appleman, notes, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA, 2.

¹⁴³Diary, April 1-30, 1945, Detachment B-5, 31-33; XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

Americans, the soldiers viewed such actions as signs of not only compliance but team work towards a common goal.¹⁴⁴

During the month of April, American soldiers began to link Okinawan obedience and cooperation in camp life to Okinawan culture and identity. Soldiers compared Okinawans to other cultural groups like Filipinos and Japanese and used these comparisons in their favorable assessments of Okinawan behavior. They viewed the Okinawans as “a lot more amenable to discipline than Filipinos and [with a] better standard of living.”¹⁴⁵ They observed that “the rigid and arbitrary Japanese authoritarian disposition appeared strangely absent” in the work demeanor of the Okinawans.¹⁴⁶ In observing the civilians’ compliant attitude during his visits to the camps, Buckner also compared their behavior to that of the Japanese. He called Okinawan women meek and claimed that Japanese women attempted to destroy American equipment with explosives during night attacks. Buckner’s replacement, General Joseph Stilwell, similarly described the Japanese as ferocious, brutal, and animal-like and the Okinawans as beautiful people.¹⁴⁷ The Americans even compared the Okinawans to themselves and found that the way they took initiative in camp life resembled an American leadership style characterized by compromise and rationality.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴Diary, April 1-30, 1945, Detachment B-5, 27, 32. Camp Sunabe recorded that the civilians participated freely. Camps Heinza and Tsumia also had men in labor battalions exercising initiative and offering to assume positions of local leadership by May 13, 1945. (XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; 27th Infantry Division memorandum to Commanding General, RG 389, Box 704, NARA; History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 17-19).

¹⁴⁵Okinawa Diary, April 30, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns.

¹⁴⁶Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 48. Okinawans “display almost none of the Japanese fanaticism.” (History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 18).

¹⁴⁷Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 35, 90.

¹⁴⁸“The general attitude of [Okinawan] men were largely similar to the give and take common sense approach to situations which one would expect of American village leaders.” (Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 48).

The military government units made special note of Okinawans that had spent time in the United States and, rather than inspiring sentiments of fear, close ties to America emphasized commonalities between the soldiers and civilians. In contrast to the apprehension felt towards Japanese American citizens back home, connections that the Okinawans had with America encouraged understanding between the interned civilians and the American camp administrators. Okinawans' personal associations with America also further estranged the Okinawans from the Japanese in the minds of the Americans. More than just visitors to places like Hawaii and Los Angeles, California, some Okinawans had children stationed in Hawaii serving in the United States Army. In comparison with the large camp populations, very few Okinawans had associations with America.¹⁴⁹ The soldiers, however, gravitated towards the shared experience, giving the commonality great import in the formation of their opinions. Soldiers began to view the Okinawans as on the American side and described civilians that aided camp activities as "responsible."¹⁵⁰

With such familial ties to America, the soldiers interpreted Okinawan efforts towards cooperation as larger gestures in support of the American viewpoint of the war. "Indeed," wrote one soldier, "the fact that some of them had lived in the United States undoubted ameliorated there [*sic*] attitudes."¹⁵¹ By April 30, soldiers recognized a trend in the attitude of the civilians; most expressed a preference for the influence of the United States government on Okinawa over

¹⁴⁹Ibid., 41. Roughly 7-10% of Okinawan camp residents had associations with America. Out of those, the American connections varied greatly, ranging from a basic knowledge of the country and the English language to having lived in places along the Pacific Ocean like San Francisco, Hawaii and Los Angeles, sometimes for as much as twenty five years.

¹⁵⁰Ibid.; Captain Roy E. Appleman, notes, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA, 2. "They exhibit no animosity toward Americans [and] declare their gratitude. They do not exhibit any noticeable resentment against the American soldier." (History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 19).

¹⁵¹Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 48.

the Japanese government.¹⁵² In Nodake, questioning exposed that “civilians generally refrained from expressing views hostile to Japan, but did state they would prefer the rule of the United States.”¹⁵³ Though the military government soldiers who queried the civilians at Nodake considered the pro-American response to be linked to Okinawan concerns about economic distress, the sentiment nonetheless contributed to an increasing comfort felt by the Americans towards the Okinawans. The local people, initially viewed with suspicion and dismissed with insulting assumptions about their child-like nature, gradually represented a cooperative populace that might share principles with their foreigner invaders.

By the end of April, obedience, cooperation and a feeling of kinship resulted in adjustment in policy at the individual camps.¹⁵⁴ The loosened restrictions did not originate from XXIV Corps or Tenth Army. Instead, they grew gradually as each camp commander assessed the situation through careful consideration of the improvement in overall control, the positive contributions of the civilians and the perceived growing rift between the Okinawans and the Japanese.¹⁵⁵ The situations each commander encountered by late April and early May were the same as they had dealt with in early April at the outbreak of the battle. How they chose to

¹⁵²Okinawa Diary, April 30, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns; Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 34; Diary, 1944-1945, Detachment B-5, 48; XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

¹⁵³Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 47.

¹⁵⁴Every military government camp, in varying degrees, relaxed their strict guidelines around the end of April/early May. (Diary, April 1 – May 31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 40-55; XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 17-20).

¹⁵⁵This exercise of authority was consistent with the guidance in the GOPER. General Buckner encouraged his subordinate leaders to make decisions at their level based on the circumstances they encountered. The GOPER also stated that the civilians could earn back their freedom by behaving favorable. Even though the camp commanders lacked an explicit order from XXIV Corps or Tenth Army directing the shift in policy, their adjustment of policy based on perceived changes in the Okinawans' behavior fell within the general parameters laid out in the GOPER. (Operational Directive #7, January 6, 1945, Commanding General, Tenth Army, 2).

handle the incidents, however, was quite different. When confronted with possible espionage more than a month into the battle, camp commanders displayed more trust towards the Okinawans and favored their innocence.

American suspicion and paternalism towards the Okinawans, however, did not disappear. The battle still waged fiercely and the possibility of treachery was still present. The military government units, for example, continued to record the names of civilians who had relatives in the Japanese Army.¹⁵⁶ The Americans, however, trusted the Okinawans to collect this information themselves and the list did not inspire additional vigilance by the military government. Despite being still cognizant of their vulnerability living closely with the Okinawans, the Americans trusted the camp residents on a level unseen earlier in the battle. Compared to decisions made soon after the landing when suspicion quickly turned into accusation, the leniency signified a change in the Americans' view of the Okinawans and their identity as a people.

In Nodake, for example, precise shelling of a nearby American gun position alerted the military government soldiers of B-5 of a possible breach of security. After the 96th Division Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) detachment finished interviews with the civilian camp population and submitted them for review, the camp commander decided that no evidence existed against any Okinawans and no disciplinary action of any type was appropriate. He cited as reasons for his decision the cooperation and usefulness of the Okinawans in camp productivity and their identity as Okinawans, not as Japanese. "It may be noted," he wrote, "that while a number of Japanese flags were taken from arriving civilians, the inhabitants on questions as to

¹⁵⁶Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 47

being ‘Japanese’ asserted themselves to be ‘Okinawan,’ not Japanese.”¹⁵⁷ A similar situation during the first month of battle would probably have caused the suspected offenders to spend at least one night in the stockade. By April 30, the military government soldiers disassociated the Okinawans from the Japanese; the Okinawans were no longer viewed as enemy civilians.

This realignment of identity altered military government policy within the individual camps.¹⁵⁸ In addition to ending the use of death as a consequence after April 26, military-aged men no longer spent their evenings in guarded barbed wire enclosures in the center of the camps.¹⁵⁹ At Shimabaru, the value of the Okinawans as workers outweighed any fears of organized rebellion. Military government soldiers found it important to send the civilians to work some of the few surviving crops and increase the food supply. While a few soldiers still guarded work parties that grew food outside of the camp, civilians conducted their work within camp under little to no supervision. From the beginning of the battle, civilians had received job tasks from the military government; by late in the month, civilians completed those daily tasks with a greatly increased level of independence.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷Diary, April 1-30, 1945, Detachment B-5, 32. “The people call themselves Okinawans rather than Japanese.” (History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 18).

¹⁵⁸For more examples of lesser punishments for similar crimes see XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA. On April 20th at Maebaru, two civilians seen with a Japanese soldier were only arrested by the military police. (The Japanese soldier was shot). A similar incident occurring earlier in the month may have resulted in the shootings of the civilians as well.

¹⁵⁹The barbed wire stockades still existed as punishment but their use was far less frequent. One camp, for example, only used them four days out of the entire month of May. The offenders had roamed into off-limits areas and refused to answer questions linked to espionage. Similar crimes had warranted the death penalty a month earlier. (Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 47).

¹⁶⁰Okinawa Diary, April 30, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns. The change in military government policy based on Okinawan cooperation and obedience and the American perception that the Okinawans were not Japanese and had loyalty and kinship towards the United States did not erase all security measures. Inbound civilians still underwent a screening process, living quarters for Americans and Okinawans remained separate, and rule infractions still warranted punishment (although infrequently and on a less severe scale). (Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 45-47; XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA).

Okinawans held camp leadership positions by April 30. The Americans divided up the living sectors and assigned locals to oversee them. They interviewed each candidate about their previous experience with government, their social and economic status within their village, and their attitude towards the United States.¹⁶¹ Chosen leaders had some English language skills, ties to America, and credibility within their community. One man chosen as the Civilian Public Safety Headman in Nodake had served as the Mayor of Ginowan for 15 years. Another named Kamajo had lived in California for 27 years.¹⁶²

The selected local leaders underwent a three-week trial period and, upon assuming their positions, possessed only limited authority. Local leaders oversaw food ration distribution and assisted in rule enforcement by communicating the regulations to the population.¹⁶³ They also served on firefighting teams and recommended other civilians who they believed deserved positions of responsibility. The soldiers retained the right to dismiss locals from management roles who they believed had failed in their duties; however, the use of civilians as organizers increased the stability and control of camp life.¹⁶⁴ The decision by Americans to identify civilian leaders demonstrated confidence, reliance, and some degree of trust in the Okinawans. The rapid

¹⁶¹Interview Sheet for Prospective Local Leaders, Appendix to Military Government Operations Report – Ryukyus, August 2, 1945, RG 407 Box 2487, file 110-5, NARA.

¹⁶²Diary, April 1–May 31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 36, 41, 48; Eikichi Shiroma in *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa, Survivor's Testimonies* (Okinawa: Relief Section, Welfare Department, Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), 9; Okinawa Diary, April 30, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns; 27th Infantry division memorandum to the Commanding General, RG 389, Box 704, NARA.

¹⁶³History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, May 10, 1945, 18. No local leaders had the authority to prosecute or punish rule breakers. In many ways, the power of the local leaders lay with easing cultural conflict and language translation. (Diary, April 1-May 31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 42, 35).

¹⁶⁴Captain Roy E. Appleman, notes, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA, 2-3; Local Government Situation Report, Appendix, RG 398, Box 704, NARA; Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 47-48.

emergence of local leadership in the midst of battle, although rudimentary, signified progress on the part of the Americans towards reevaluating the Okinawans and their identity.¹⁶⁵

Military government units now diverted the low supply of salvaged construction materials to projects unrelated to security.¹⁶⁶ Camps became more permanent communities; Americans constructed playgrounds, schools, orphanages, and nursing homes with materials that had once built stockades.¹⁶⁷ Soldiers also began to share their military rations and old uniforms with cold and hungry civilians despite previous regulations forbidding such actions.¹⁶⁸ By May 31, military government supply officers sought out discarded American uniforms from salvage dumps and issued them to civilians. To dispel any apprehension when viewed by tactical units, the military government supply sections painted the word “civilian” in white on each shirt.¹⁶⁹ The relaxed restrictions fostered an environment of friendship and encouraged the soldiers to interact with the civilians in casual, social settings; the people had access to more intimate views of the soldiers. A young Okinawan boy observed soldiers shaving and drinking coffee. “I couldn’t believe it,” he exclaimed, “It was a completely different world from what I was used to. They even had toilet paper.” Two soldiers enjoyed tea with a family and several local nurses

¹⁶⁵Local government at the initial stage of the occupation was considered a lofty goal and was not a priority for the planners. The GOPER laid out guidance for a hasty occupation under wartime conditions that corralled civilians and herded them away from hostile fires. Local government after the surrender carried greater importance as occupation goals transitioned towards economic stability and the reestablishment of villages. (Operational Directive #7, January 6, 1945, Commanding General, Tenth Army, 9).

¹⁶⁶Military Government Action Report, 1 April–30 June 1945, XXIV Corps, RG 407, Box 2153, NARA, 5.

¹⁶⁷Diary, April 1- May 31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 40, 49; *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa*, 5.

¹⁶⁸Detachment Daily Report, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; 7th division, speech transcript, Inclosure 2, Civil Affairs, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA, 2; XXIV Corps After Action Review #125, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Diary, 1944-1945, Detachment B-5, 22, 28,31,51; Inafuku, speech; XXIV Corps Military Government Preliminary Planning, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Mike Daly, “irei-no-hi: A Day of Remembrance,” *Okinawa Living* (June 2007): 75; Hostetler, interview.

¹⁶⁹Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 52.

had to be moved away from Nodake to the camp in Koza after beginning romantic relationships with American soldiers.¹⁷⁰

The mission of military government to remove the civilians from the battlefield and support the main combat mission of securing the island never changed throughout the battle. Likewise, the priorities of safeguarding American lives and maximizing resources also continued to drive policy. American perceptions of Okinawan identity, however, changed as the battle progressed. Continual interaction with the Okinawans showed the population to be obedient and cooperative. American military government soldiers found similarities between themselves and the Okinawans that promoted a degree of trust. Contrasting sharply with pre-battle assumptions of the Okinawan disposition, Okinawan behavior caused American military government personnel to reassess their perception of Okinawan identity which in turn modified policy. American planners, commanders, and soldiers continually evaluated the culture and ethnicity of Okinawa as well as its political connections to Japan when making decisions about how the American forces would conduct the occupation.

Inside the military government camps on the Okinawan battlefield the soldiers encountered the complexities of race when faced with two ethnic groups – Okinawans and Japanese - that appeared to them to be racially alike. As military government soldiers, their job required them to not only safeguard their fellow American soldiers but to sustain the lives of thousands of civilians who appeared more similar to the enemy than themselves. Broad generalizations of the racial and ethnic character of the enemy promoted by combat planners to

¹⁷⁰Ibid., 33; NakoYoshio, newspaper interview, *Ryukyu Shimpō*, in Mark Ealey and Alastair McLauchlan, translators, *Descent into Hell: Civilian Memories of the Battle of Okinawa*, originally published in *Ryukyu Shimpō* (Portland, Merwin Asia, 2014), 410.

protect American soldiers' lives conflicted with the war experience of the military government soldier. Within the camps, the military government soldiers had to make a sophisticated distinction between two ethnic groups from the same country.

The initial Okinawa experience weakens Dower's thesis of crude racial stereotyping. Racial hostility between the Japanese and the Americans did not translate into unorthodox and unnecessarily cruel policies or behavior. American planners for the occupation of Okinawa instituted policy that lacked bitter race hate. Despite following such violent engagements as Peleileu and Iwo Jima, occupation policy for Okinawa did not contain overtly harsh procedures. American planners' consideration of race and ethnicity produced logically reasoned policies instituted to ensure the success of the combat mission.

Dower correctly argues for strong racism expressed by both sides, yet the planning and conduct of military government in Okinawa demonstrates that racial confrontation did not always dissolve into ill-informed generalizations and assumptions. American soldiers challenged the negative images of the Japanese by embracing the Okinawans; they responded to people of a different ethnicity through conscious evaluation based on interactions with them. Dower's thesis limits such an open analysis and, instead, determines that race carried an overriding negativity. While Dower is correct that the confrontation of the Americans and the Japanese on the battlefields of the Pacific was brutal and that Americans expressed an awareness of race, the diverse ethnicities encountered on Okinawa and how the American military government dealt with those ethnicities dispels the idea that racial confrontation dominated American behavior. Military government planners, commanders, and soldiers' contemplation of race in policy making in the early occupation of Okinawa resulted in the implementation of policy that was characterized by constant and open evaluation of ethnically different people.

MARINE COWBOYS: STRICT DIRECTIVES IN WARTIME MARINE MILITARY GOVERNMENT

A large crowd, visibly old men, children, and women, walked casually down the road running lengthwise in front of Marine Private Joe Drago. It was late May 1945, around one in the morning, near Sugar Loaf Hill. Drago, a combat novice from Boston, and his squad had prepared an attack position overlooking the road with hopes of trapping Japanese soldiers. Despite the dark, Drago could see the approaching group clearly; these were civilians.

Drago and his squad leader, Corporal Ed Yahara, jumped into the middle of the road and, facing the oncoming crowd, drew their .45 caliber pistols, and fired continuously until they depleted all their ammunition. In the melee, the rest of the squad, observing from along the side of the road, reactively opened fire. As the crowd fled, Yahara and Drago ran back to their positions, grabbed the machine gun, and sprayed the civilians with bullets, slowly sweeping from left to right and back again.¹

The Battle of Okinawa had been ravaging the island for forty-six days. Destruction had forced hundreds of thousands of Okinawans seeking shelter, food, and relative safety into American military government camps and thus stabilized the movement of civilians on the battlefield. Within the camps, the Okinawans were obedient and cooperative, traits acknowledged by all American troops. To the Marines, however, any Okinawan compliance with American military directives was seen as responsible behavior for prisoners of war, not as characteristic of innocent refugees. To Drago, Yahara, and the rest of their squad, the people that

¹Laura Homan Lacey, *Stay Off the Skyline: The Sixth Marine Division on Okinawa, An Oral History* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, 2005), 73-75, told by Private Joe Drago.

lay dying on the road were no different than the Japanese soldiers they had been waiting for; those old men, children, and women were enemy.

III Amphibious Corps, like XXIV Corps, agonized over the depth of their supply and prioritized the lives of their Marines and the successful execution of the mission above all else. Okinawa, however, housed not only a large civilian population but also a population that had a strained, complicated, unpredictable relationship with its own country. Unlike other Japanese holdings, Okinawa had never been a colony. In 1879, Okinawa transitioned from a quasi-independent country into a political prefecture of Japan. As ethnic Ryukyans, however, Okinawans suffered prejudice from the mainland Yamato Japanese and did not enjoy full benefits as subjects of the Emperor. American military planners needed to deduce the allegiance of the Okinawan population and attempt to predict their reaction to an American assault in order to safeguard their own troops and ensure the success of the mission.

The Marines conducted intensive intelligence investigations into the cultural background and disposition of the Okinawans.² Despite collecting the same data and falling under the same Tenth Army guidance from Buckner, the Marines reached a different conclusion about the identity of the Okinawans and unequivocally stated in their military government plans that Okinawans, despite a cultural background that differed from the Japanese, devoted themselves to the Japanese empire as loyal citizens. While recognizing the complicated relationship the Okinawans had with Japan, the Marines erased any ambiguity for its troops by authoritatively

²D-2 Study of Theater of Operations Okinawa Jima, Part I, 6th Marine Division, February 8, 1945, WWII, Okinawa, 6th Marine Division Collection, Box 7, Folder 2/7, United States Marine Corps Archives and Special Collections, Alfred M. Gray Research Center, Quantico, VA, p. 2- 3, 5; LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns, Okinawa Diary, April 30, 1945, RG 407, Box 2441, NARA; CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, RG 407, Box 2502, NARA, 13; Report of Psychological Warfare Activities Okinawa Operation, September 15, 1945, RG 407, Box 2502, File 110-39, NARA, 20.

assigning an identity to the Okinawans that predicted a hostile response. Unlike the Army's preparations that considered the possibility of a dangerous population, the Marines did not leave any analytical room for its troops to reassess the actions of the civilians upon landing. Marines and those assigned to Marine units were unquestioningly to process the local population as enemy civilians, thereby eliminating the danger of miscalculating civilian intent on the battlefield. Marine leadership, therefore, prohibited the practice of any activities they considered linked to nationalistic spirit, such as religious gatherings, and prepared to execute an aggressive and intimidating occupation.³ The Marines deliberately closed any further interpretation of the civilian reaction to an American military presence; as vehement nationalists, the Okinawans would greet the landing American troops with antagonism.

III Amphibious Corps briefed its troops with definitive clarity: all troops were to regard the Okinawans suspiciously; as loyal Japanese, they posed a real threat that overrode their civilian status.⁴ Stating that the population would resolutely defend themselves and their country, the orders rallied the men and encouraged them to approach the civilians aggressively. Instruction for the troops devalued the culture of Okinawa and its communities by calling it an insignificant, useless island.⁵

³Annex Fox to Administrative Plan 1-45, 1st Marine Division, February 10, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA 5, 14; Procedure for handling enemy nationals, 1st Marine Division, Detachment B-10, May 2, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA; Annex "Able" to Administrative Plan No. 1-45, January 16, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA, 5-6, 8-9; Appendix No. 3 to Annex "Able" to Administrative Plan No.1-45, January 16, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA; Military Government Plan, 6th Marine Division, February 8, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA, 3, 6; Propaganda for use against the Japanese, 2nd Marine Division, December 29, 1944, WWII, Marine Corps Various, 1941-1945, Box, 1, Folder 24/1, United States Marine Corps Archives and Special Collections, Alfred M. Gray Research Center, Quantico, 1, 3.

⁴Annex "Able," January 16, 1945, 5; Military Government Plan, February 8, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 2-3; Proclamations, 1st Marine Division, February 13, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA; Commander's Estimate of the Situation, Okinawa Island (Operation Iceberg), WWII, Okinawa, 6th Marine Division Collection, Box 7, Folder 1/7, United States Marine Corps Archives and Special Collections, Alfred M. Gray Research Center, Quantico, p. 15.

⁵Captain's Message to All Hands, U.S.S. Panamint, March 31, 1945, Major General Roy S. Geiger papers, Box 6, Folder 106, Alfred M. Gray Research Center, Quantico, VA; Executive Officer's Memorandum No. 94-45, March

In the confusion and tension of combat, the Marines concentrated on the mission objectives: the cohesion of their teams, the effectiveness of their weapons, and the strength of their resupply. As the unarmed Okinawans cluttered the beaches, the assaulting Marines haphazardly grouped them into clusters and pushed inland. In the first days after landing, Marine military government retained the unstructured clusters so as to speed the attack. Undermanned and short on resources, the military government units ignored the nourishment needs of the growing number of relatively free roaming civilians. Additionally, the Marines categorized the Okinawans as vile, inhuman, and inadequate. Troops found the sight of the war ravaged people offensive.⁶ Based on the composition of the groups of Okinawans they encountered on the beaches (children, old men, and women), they assessed the initial threat as low. Never wavering in their belief that the Okinawans were definitive enemy, disgusted by the population that they encountered, and naively disregarding the strength of the too young and too old, the Marines were reluctant to devote the massive effort necessary to establish functioning refugee camps. Negative attitudes combined with a lack of adequate personnel and supplies, and

21, 1945, Major General Roy S. Geiger papers, Box 6, Folder 106, Alfred M. Gray Research Center, Quantico, VA; Ernie Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, (New York: H Holt Company, 1946), 107. In addition to the operational orders, the Marines wrote and distributed Corps General Order Number 33, Executive Officer's Memorandum No. 94-45 and a memorandum from Geiger entitled, "Additional instructions relating to Military Government." Meant for distribution twice, Corps General Order Number 33 gave specific instructions to the troops concerning the civilian population. Ultimately, these documents promoted the policy of suspicion towards the civilians and annunciated the idea that the Okinawans posed a threat. The Marines never received the Tenth Army Pamphlet, written specifically for troops and containing information about the Okinawans. Lacking detailed guidance for the conduct of military government from the Army, they wrote their own guidelines knowing that Tenth Army could change their plans. Created without a model from Tenth Army to use as a guide, these documents further demarcated a point of deviance between Army orders and conduct and that of the Marines. Receiving the orders immediately prior to disembarking on hostile land, the troops had little time to analyze the reasoning behind the orders, if they had wanted to at all. Comments on Military Government Operation, OKINAWA, 1st Marine Division, 1 April to 26 June, 1945, July 6, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA, 1; Corps General Order Number 33: Instructions to Troops concerning Military Government, III Amphibious Corps, February 27, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA.

⁶Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, 107-108, 130; James W. Johnston, *The Long Road of War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 126; Eugene B. Sledge, *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1996), 192-193.

therefore ability, contributed to the lack of formal military government procedures. Civilians, therefore, traveled unfettered throughout the battlefield obstructing both the operational and military government missions.⁷

Unstructured, disorganized military government hampered aid distribution and increased accidental civilian casualties. The ability of the Okinawans to wander anywhere within American lines also increased the likelihood of exposing military secrets and compromising security. By mid-April, attacks against American troops occurred from within the local populations of the Marine military government areas. The Marines, however, did not take the time to identify the ethnicity of the attackers. Reports about the incidents only briefly mentioned the cultural origins of the aggressors and dismissively stated that the offenders could have been either Japanese or Okinawan.⁸ The shock of the attacks caused the Marines to reassess the level of control they exercised over the population; established camps with restrictive regulations, as originally planned, would minimize the threat of hostile acts against American troops. While the absence of a military government structure at the onset of the invasion resulted from the apathy

⁷Comments on Military Government, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 6-9, 14; Teruto Tsubota Collection (AFC/2001/001/30918), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress; Comments on Military Government Operation, OKINAWA, 6th Marine Division Sector, 1 April to 29 June, 1945, July 6, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA, 2, 5; XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Lacey, *Stay Off the Skyline*, 68, 70, told by Private Thomas McKinney and Lance Corporal Tom Baird; Spot Promotion for Captain Wynne L. Van Schiak, (014812), U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, recommendation for, November 11, 1944, United States Marine Corps Personnel Records, St. Louis, MO; 6th Marine Division Special Action Report – Okinawa Operation, Phase III, Section 11-Military Government, RG 389, Box 879, NARA, 50; Operational Report on Military Government, OKINAWA, Phase I and II, May 1, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA, 1-2, 4; Action Report Nansei Shoto Operation 1 April – 30 June 45 – 1st Marine Division Military Government, RG 389, Box 879, NARA; Military Government Activities (From 011400 may to 020001 July), Detachment B-10, July 6, 1945, RG 389, Box 879, NARA, 10; Operation Report on Military Government, OKINAWA, Southern Phase, July 1, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA, 4; Tony Fileff Collection (AFC/2001/001/3045), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress; Martin Kujala Collection (AFC/2001/001/5556), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress; John David Jackson Collection (AFC/2001/001/38452), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress.

⁸Comments on Military Government, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division 4, 9; 6th Marine Division Special Action Report, 52.

and inability of an overstressed, undermanned work force, the transition toward firmer controls stemmed from concerns about troop safety and extreme misgivings about the Okinawans that reinforced the original assessment of the population as “nationals of unquestionable loyalty.”⁹ The Marines, despite neglecting to ascertain the ethnicity of the attackers, believed that the incidents proved the Okinawans to be combative and unquestionably allied with the Japanese. With the attacks considered evidence of hostility and resolute cooperation with the Japanese, the Marines’ adverse feelings towards the Okinawans increased. Identifying the Okinawans as Japanese combined with agitation caused by the attacks translated into occasional aggressive action from the Marines towards the civilian population.¹⁰

By mid-April, operations in Marine military government camps resembled the Army camps far more than they had earlier during the landing. The Marines had learned from their own experiences that loose policies and absent systems made their mission of controlling the population and providing for basic humanitarian needs much more difficult. Despite maintaining their distrust of the Okinawans, the Marines had exposed themselves unnecessarily to danger by executing their duties with minimal effort. Now hardened in their conviction of the malicious nature of the Okinawans despite never verifying the veracity of the claim, the Marines began establishing a camp system that promoted security. The barbed wire, guards, accountability, rations, and movement restrictions looked similar to those used by the Army detachments. By basing those similar measures on an unwavering belief in the aggressive intentions of the

⁹Comments on Military Government, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 5, 14; Proclamations, February 13, 1945, 1st Marine Division; Military Government Plan, February 8, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 3.

¹⁰Lacey, *Stay Off the Skyline*, 73-76, told by Marine Private Joe Drago.

Okinawans, however, the Marines carried out their military government duties with an element of harshness that was absent from the Army camps from their very inception.¹¹

The disparity between the Marines and the Army in expectations and conduct of military government displays the contested nature of the American definition of Okinawan identity and the malleable nature of race and ethnicity. It also demonstrates the great extent to which the assignment of identity shaped the actions of the troops. Regardless of what specific conclusions were reached through cultural examination, scrutiny along lines of ethnicity proved pivotal in mission planning and execution. The American military acknowledged the complexities of each cultural group, assigned a well-researched, purposeful identity, and molded policy around this assignment. The emphasis on cultural analysis did not undermine the centrality of military concerns such as security and supply demands. Considerations based on military factors and battlefield analysis continued to drive the planning and executing of military government operations. Together, military and cultural factors combined to provide the Americans with a robust picture of the battlefield and allowed them to make decisions that evaluated all aspects of the enemy and environment.

On Dec. 7, 1944, at Admiral Nimitz's Headquarters in Hawaii, Major General Roy S. Geiger, Commanding General of III Amphibious Corps, listened intently to preliminary briefings about upcoming operations in the Pacific. General Buckner's staff officers briefed developing

¹¹Ibid, 67, 69, 74-75; Military Government Activities, July 6, 1945, Detachment B-10, 3-4, 8; Comments on Military Government, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 10-11, 13; Tsubota Collection, Veterans History Project; Administrative Order Number 4-45, 1st Marine Division, April 11, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA; Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, 108, Comments on Military Government, July 6, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 4; Fileff Collection, Veterans History Project; Ken Hatfield, *Heartland Heroes: Remembering World War II* (Columbia: University of Missouri, 2003) 253; Administrative Order Number 5-45, April 22, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA; Memorandum 010923/1, May 1, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA.

plans for future operations in Iwo Jima and Okinawa to the senior commanding officers of all services that would execute the missions. Geiger, a combat veteran who had already commanded at Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Guam, and Peleilu, realized the importance of a mission conducted so close to the home islands of Japan. A man who spent his combat time far forward with his troops, Geiger fully immersed himself in every aspect of war fighting. From December 7 to December 20, Geiger and his staff of Marines worked closely with the Army and the Navy as they began planning Operation ICEBERG.¹²

On December 21, armed with preliminary plans and prepared to translate corps priorities down to division missions, Geiger and his staff flew from Hawaii to Guadalcanal and Guam to meet with the commanders of the assault divisions. As L-day drew nearer, refinement and distribution of the plans became paramount. By March 16, 1945, his staff conferred in his office aboard the *U.S.S. Panamint* at 0830 every day. Geiger believed in open discussions among his staff members and each major staff section attended the meetings and presented their work on designated days. In the months prior, Geiger's staff and subordinate commanders had worked tirelessly to intricately plan the mission and prepare their Marines. They trained on amphibious operations, street fighting techniques and mock-ups of Japanese-style fortifications. Geiger heard plans from the Corps Surgeon, Engineers, Signal, Artillery, and Ordnance elements. His staff considered the complications and benefits of air support, naval gunfire, and debarkation. They carefully thought out the actions of the Shore Party. Geiger, a persistent, determined, decisive yet fair-minded man, insisted his staff and commanders address every component of the mission.¹³

¹²Roger Willock, *Unaccustomed to Fear: A Biography of the Late General Roy S. Geiger* (Quantico: The Marine Corps Association, 1983), 284.

¹³Ibid, 289; Memorandum by BG M.H. Silverthorn, March 10, 1945, Major General Roy S. Geiger papers, Box 6, Folder 106, Alfred M. Gray Marine Corps Research Center, Quantico.

Marine Colonel F. B. Loomis, Assistant Chief of Staff of the logistics section, wrote a small annex to Administrative Plan 1-45 on January 16, 1945. Annex “Able,” based off of Tenth Army’s GOPER, covered the procedures and the responsibilities of military government for III Amphibious Corps. Loomis, with the assistance of two additional field grade officers and a team of enlisted men, handled all aspects of the Marine logistical plan. The section focused on supply, transport, and debarkation for a mission that demanded detailed logistical coordination in order to support fighting forces out on Pacific islands.¹⁴ Geiger, similar to Buckner, wanted to ensure that his troops had enough food, clothing, and ammunition to sustain a fight at such a great distance from the United States. Although the troops would use the Philippines as a logistical base, goods still needed to travel across the ocean. Under Geiger’s watchful eye, Loomis and his staff focused intently on the movement of supplies. Military government procedures, normally tasked under a civil affairs section, held little interest for Loomis among his many responsibilities. At the morning meetings in Geiger’s office, Loomis briefed the major components of the supply plan; he did not brief military government. In fact, when Brigadier General M.H. Silverthorn, Geiger’s Chief of Staff, set the agenda for the meetings, he did not allot a time for issues with military government nor did he invite school trained military government Marine officers to attend.¹⁵ While Geiger did pay attention to the fact that a large civilian population resided on Okinawa, he saw only how that population would complicate combat operations. He did not overly concern himself with the survival needs of the civilians or the further issues of rehabilitating a war torn community.

¹⁴Annex “Able,” January 16, 1945; Memorandum, March 10, 1945, BG Silverthorn.

¹⁵Memorandum, March 10, 1945, BG Silverthorn.

On December 13, 1944, three Marine officers, specially trained in military government, were assigned to III Amphibious Corps to serve as advisors and liaisons. Lieutenant Colonel Donald Winder, Captain Wynne L. Van Schiak and Captain Hector C. Prud'homme Jr., along with three Privates First Class, transferred from Fleet Marine Forces, Pacific. Each of them had extensive experience in civil affairs. Winder and Van Schiak had already served in Saipan and Prud'homme had worked with V Amphibious Corps. None of these officers, however, attended any planning meetings for Operation ICEBERG with either the Army or the Marines. Army Brigadier General William E. Crist, Deputy Commander for Military Government, invited the Marines Civil Affairs section to participate in Tenth Army planning in Hawaii before their departure to the staging area at Guadalcanal. Civil Affairs policy required Marine officers to attend interservice planning meetings prior to operations.¹⁶ Despite the policy, however, III Amphibious Corps had no military government officers available to Crist in December 1944 and early January 1945. Prud'homme returned to the United States on emergency leave from October to early December 1944 and only worked three days in November at the Department of the Pacific in San Francisco.¹⁷ Van Schiak and Winder did not arrive to III Amphibious Corps until February 2, 1945. Winder's experience and rank awarded him the position of Officer-in-Charge. Since no military government section was formed until after February 2, however, Winder worked as a Special Staff Officer, as a lawyer in the Disciplinary Section of the

¹⁶Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 2; Operational Report on Military Government, OKINAWA, Phase I and II, May 1, 1945; U.S. Marine Corps Civil Affairs Officers, Memorandum, April 13, 1944, RG 127, Box 13, NARA, 3; Major Garnelle G. Wheeler, Activities of the Marine Corps In Civil Affairs in World War II, critical study of, March 1946, Montgomery papers.

¹⁷Major Hector Charles Prud'homme Jr, Record (Personnel Files), January 1946, 000019042, NPRC, 3.

Headquarters of the Marine Corps and as the Acting Director of the Army JAG War Crimes desk, Navy division.¹⁸

The Marines created military government liaison positions because joint military government teams consisted of only Army and Navy officers and enlisted men.¹⁹ Despite its close organizational relationship to the Navy, the United States Marine Corps retained an independent identity. Since 1942, rivalry between all services complicated planning and execution of campaigns in the Pacific Theater. By 1945, jurisdictional disputes continued to hinder true cooperation. Buckner, in naming Geiger as his successor, sparked controversy with key commanders, such as Admiral Nimitz, who “mortally fear[ed] and distrust[ed] the Marines.” General Douglas MacArthur, Commander in Chief, U.S. Army Forces Pacific (AFPAC), felt irritated that Admiral Nimitz had any opinion over what an Army commander decided yet also was dismayed at Buckner’s choice of Geiger and believed that Buckner had “sold out to one of our sister services.” On an inspection visit of Tenth Army, General Joseph Stilwell found the genial way in which the Army handled interservice relations “nauseating.”²⁰ Brigadier General Oliver P. Smith, Marine deputy chief of staff for Tenth Army, commented that “if you are going to conduct joint operations successfully you have to tread softly.” Smith ensured that planning

¹⁸Temporary duty, case of Lieutenant Colonel Donald T. Winder, July 13, 1945, Floor 3, Module 5, Row 44, NPRC; Legal Qualifications, First Endorsement on LtCol. Donald T. Winder, December 11, 1950, Floor 3, Module 5, Row 44; Performance of Temporary Duty, report on, case of Captain Wynne L. Van Schiak, July 2, 1945, 000014812; Operational Report on Military Government, OKINAWA, Phase I and II, May 1, 1945.

¹⁹U.S. Marine Corps Civil Affairs Officers, Memorandum, April 13, 1944; Annex “Able,” January 16, 1945, 4; 6th Marine Division Special Action Report, Section 11-Military Government, 50.

²⁰Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars: The Okinawan Battle Diaries of Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., and Joseph Stilwell*, 17, 19, 57, 75. Buckner served as the head of the Army commission that investigated the relief of MG Ralph Smith, 27th Infantry Division by LTG Holland Smith, V Amphibious Corps, for actions on Saipan. Buckner’s experience with the case made him cognizant of how unproductive the interservice rivalry could be. As commander of Tenth Army, Buckner tried to negate the rivalry the best that he could. Naming Geiger as his replacement should he become a casualty was a part of this effort.

done by the Marines aligned as cleanly with Army plans as possible in order to avoid undue criticism. Army planners still censored their speech around Smith.²¹ Buckner and Geiger, friends since their time together at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff School, tried to minimize conflict. Besides choosing Geiger as his replacement, Buckner tried to ensure that news media gave credit to all services involved. He publically announced that “the Marines form a powerful and essential part of Tenth Army...it is most desirable that the Marines...be not ignored in any publication relative to the composition of Tenth Army. The cordial relations existing among elements of various services...are always menaced by...partiality in matters of publicity.”²² Perceptions of unequal treatment plagued interservice team work. Rumors of better living conditions and privileges given to other services added to the friction. The Navy supposedly “lived well ashore. They made themselves far more comfortable than the Army.” Marines ridiculed each other, calling each other “crazy,” if they expressed any small amount of respect for the combat performance of another service.²³ Buckner penned a memo directly to Geiger insisting that he and his commanders enforce punishments for wayward Marines that were consistent with Army justice policies to ensure the “unity of the Task Force.”²⁴ As his subordinate, Geiger respected Buckner as the commander of Tenth Army and attempted to model a positive interservice working relationship to his subordinates and superiors. When Buckner

²¹BG Oliver P. Smith, “The Tenth Army and Okinawa,” Brigadier General Oliver P. Smith papers, Box 22, Folder 8, United States Marine Corps Historical Division, Quantico, VA, 46.

²²LTG Simon B. Buckner, Jr. to CG, United State Army Forces, Pacific Ocean Areas, “Newsmap of Okinawa,” April 24, 1945, Major General Roy S. Geiger papers, Box 5, Alfred M. Gray Marine Corps Research Center, Quantico.

²³Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 20; Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, 138-139.

²⁴LTG Simon B. Buckner, Jr to MG Roy S. Geiger, “Discipline,” February 12, 1945, Major General Roy S. Geiger papers, Box 6, Folder 105, Alfred M. Gray Marine Corps Research Center, Quantico, VA.

visited III Amphibious Corps in late January 1945, Geiger found it important that his unit present a clean and orderly appearance. In his report to Headquarters, he expressed the worth of pleasing his Army commander and also emphasized the attention and care that Buckner devoted to the Marine units.²⁵

Despite Geiger and Buckner's efforts, rivalry continued to underscore the mission. Each service, therefore, created programs and policies to prevent other services from usurping their control or resources. To counter other services distorting Marine prerogative, the Marines sent a few officers to Army and Navy Civil Affairs schools to train for positions as military government liaisons. Schools in Charlottesville, Virginia and at Columbia University, New York trained officers in a country's culture and language and in military tasks such as cargo ship loading. Graduates from the program at Columbia even earned Masters degrees. Prud'homme and Winder entered the same class at the Naval School of Military Government and Administration at Columbia University on April 1, 1943 and Van Schiak graduated from the United States Army School of Military Government at Charlottesville, Virginia on May 6, 1943.²⁶

Less than twenty Marines served as military government liaisons in the Pacific. The absence of Winder, Prud'homme and Van Schiak from planning meant minimal input from

²⁵MG Roy S. Geiger to LTG A.A. Vandergrift, letter, February 2, 1945, Major General Roy S. Geiger papers, Box 6, Folder 105, Alfred M. Gray Marine Corps Research Center, Quantico; MG Roy S. Geiger to Admiral R.H. Jackson, letter, May 20, 1945, Major General Roy S. Geiger papers, Box 6, Folder 108, Alfred M. Gray Marine Corps Research Center, Quantico.

²⁶Captain Wynne L. Van Schiak, School of Military Government Graduation certificate, May 6, 1943, Major Wynne L. Van Schiak, Record (Personnel Files), 000014812, NPRC; "Military Government School: Its Alumni Face a Big Test in the Marshalls," *Bureau of Naval Personnel Training Bulletin* 14916 (March 1944): 2, 7-8; The Naval School of Military Government and Administration, *The Luluai* (New York: Naval School of Military Government and Administration); Spot Promotion, November 11, 1944, Captain Wynne L. Van Schiak; Operation Report on Military Government, OKINAWA, Southern Phase, July 1, 1945, 3; Prud'homme Jr, Record (Personnel Files), January 1946, 1, 3.

specialized Marines in an environment where other services jockeyed for overall control and resources. The slow arrival of Winder, Prud'homme and Van Schiak, who were then misdirected to other unrelated duties, wasted their field expertise and school training. Tenth Army, therefore, produced the GOPER with nominal input from the Marines that would execute it. Loomis, lacking a sufficient military government background, produced the Corps level order as an ancillary task.

Based on the GOPER, the Joint Army-Navy Manual of Military Government and Civil Affairs (Navy Department OpNav 50E-3, War Department Field Manual 27-5), and intelligence summaries, Annex "Able" outlined the mission and responsibilities of military government units attached to combat Marine units.²⁷ Despite the inexperience of Loomis or the low priority of military government, as with all III Amphibious Corps orders, Annex "Able" reflected Geiger's intent. Indicative of Buckner's concerns and priorities, Geiger placed the combat mission above the welfare of the civilians. Minimizing American casualties and preserving operational secrets outweighed the comfort of the foreign population. Mission success meant defeating the Japanese and gaining unfettered access to Okinawa for launching subsequent operations towards the mainland, not constructing a new society for the Okinawan population after battle destruction.

Just as Buckner had done, Geiger molded his military government policies around combat mission priorities. With limited resources, the needs of the American troops took precedence. Marines would receive priority to food, water, shelter and medical care; civilians would receive such life sustaining items "to the extent necessary to comply with the minimum standards of humanitarian treatment and to the extent that the same can be done without neglect

²⁷Annex "Able," January 16, 1945, 10-11; Joint Army-Navy Manual of Military Government and Civil Affairs, War Department Field Manual 27-5, November 4, 1943, RG 389, Box 879, NARA.

of, or detriment to, our own personnel.”²⁸ While each division would travel with 70,000 rations intended for the civilians, Geiger and his staff planned for units to salvage local foods first. Building materials, clothing, fishing equipment, stray animals, vehicles, cooking ware and any possible medical provisions found were also to be salvaged. Geiger expected the military government units to accomplish their tasks with the most minimal of resources. While he did authorize his Division commanders to issue military rations to civilians in an emergency, he did not intend to expend vital military resources on a possibly hostile local population.²⁹

Through Annex “Able,” Geiger also directed his Marines to execute a certain level of control. Using the exact rhetoric of the GOPER, Geiger directed his Marine commanders to “demand and enforce obedience” and to use “such powers of government as international law and military necessity may require.” Civilians could earn their freedom back only through compliance with military government orders. Geiger and his staff also quoted the GOPER and authorized “rigid control of civilians” while also allowing for commanders to exercise their own discretion dependent on the conditions they encountered. With priority on the combat mission, Geiger directed his Marines to displace civilians away from the fighting and contain them in separated areas. He intended to prevent civilians from “jeopardize[ing] public order” by restricting their movement and limiting their responsibility for their own lives. He banned religious practices in an effort to prevent the mass organizing of people. In the interest of safeguarding secret operational information, he stopped the mail and thus limited the abilities of

²⁸Annex “Able,” January 16, 1945, 6; Annex Fox, February 10, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 3; Appendix No. 1 to Annex Fox to Administrative Plan 1-45, 1st Marine Division, February 10, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA.

²⁹Annex “Able,” January 16, 1945, 1,5-9; Military Government Plan, February 8, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 2, 4, 6; War Department Field Manual 27-5, November 4, 1943, 4, 9-10. III Amphibious Corps was expected to conduct military government operations to the same extent as XXIV Corps despite having less equipment and people. Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 8; Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 6th Marine Division; Operation Report on Military Government, OKINAWA, Southern Phase, July 1, 1945, 2.

the population to maintain communication outside their encampment. Consistent to that of Tenth Army, Geiger's purpose for military government was "to control the civil population...in order to facilitate military [operations and] to relieve combat troops of civilian problems."³⁰ Military government was not a humanitarian mission. The tasks of civil affairs officers directly supported the objective of the fighting forces to overtake the island.

Beyond stating the mission, Annex "Able," in eleven pages, covered organization, command and control, food allocation, labor, shelter, civilian estimates and handling procedures, and daily reports. Expecting a maximum 60,000 civilians to appear during the combat phase, Geiger and his staff issued a thorough Annex. While not a primary concern, Geiger recognized that the movement of thousands of displaced civilians, if handled poorly, had the potential to disrupt combat seriously. He thus expected Loomis and his staff, despite their specialty in logistics, to write as robust an Annex as they could.

Annex "Able" detailed the composition of the military government teams. Joint military government teams were attached directly to Marine combat units throughout the assault phase and answered to the combat commander.³¹ Four levels of detachments, titled with letters of the alphabet to designate size, processed the civilians from the battlefield to high functioning rear encampments. "A" and "B" detachments joined the Marines at the mounting area. "A" detachments stayed with the division throughout combat and "establish[ed] civilian collection points separate from but adjacent to prisoner of war collection points; posting proclamations and

³⁰Annex Fox, February 10, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 1; Annex "Able," January 16, 1945, 1, 5-8, 9; Military Government Plan, February 8, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 1-2, 4, 6; War Department Field Manual 27-5, November 4, 1943, 4, 7, 10.

³¹Annex "Able," January 16, 1945, 1, U.S. Marine Corps Civil Affairs Officers, Memorandum, April 13, 1944, 2; Annex Fox, February 10, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 1; Military Government Plan, February 8, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 1-2, 4, 6. Under the Army, military government detachments had the same organizational structure.

issuing civilian relief supplies.” As the “A” detachments advanced with the attacking forces, the “B” detachments continued screening Okinawans, issuing basic supplies and containing civilian movement. In concept, “A” and “B” detachments with the Marines had the same mission as the “A” and “B” detachments attached to Army units.³² Larger “C” and “D” detachments attached to corps level. In addition to the civil affairs teams, Geiger authorized two Military Police Companies – one Marine and one Army – to assist in military government duties throughout the Corps.³³

Civilian labor policy within Annex “Able” aligned with the GOPER; the Marines viewed healthy male Okinawans as a labor pool for various physical military tasks such as graves burial and light construction. Similar to Tenth Army, the Marines mandated that all able Okinawan males must participate. Labor requests from the combat units were coordinated through the military government commander. The combat units then needed to supply guards, lunch, and water for the laborers. Labor parties originating from military government units attached to the Marines required payment, submitted to Military Government Headquarters, for their work.³⁴

Tenth Army required each military government unit commander to submit a daily report containing data about the number of civilians collected, any deaths or births from within the camp, communicable diseases encountered, location of the camp, military rations used, labor requests, and on hand salvageable materials.³⁵ These detailed reports were to be submitted

³²Annex “Able,” January 16, 1945, 2-3; Operational Report on Military Government, OKINAWA, Phase I and II, May 1, 1945, 1; 6th Marine Division Special Action Report, Section 11-Military Government, 50-52.

³³Annex “Able,” January 16, 1945, 4.

³⁴Ibid, 10.

³⁵Annex “Able,” January 16, 1945, 11-12; Military Government Plan, February 8, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 6-7; Annex “C” to accompany Division Administrative Order #50, 2nd Marine Division, February 15, 1945, Box 6, Folder 5/6, United States Marine Corps Archives and Special Collections, Alfred M. Gray Research Center, Quantico, VA; Annex Fox, February 10, 1945, 1st Marine Division; Appendix No. 1 to Annex Fox, February 10,

through division and Corps to the Tenth Army Military Government Staff where they were to be compiled into an inclusive report for Crist. Tenth Army and Crist tracked data on all military government units in an effort to manage limited resources and volume of civilian movement.

In most ways, the Marine orders for military government at corps and division level reflected the intent of Buckner and Tenth Army. The documents that the Marines produced used the same format and rhetoric and shared the same mission and tasks as Tenth Army's GOPER.³⁶ Unlike the Army, however, the Marines included definitive information about the assumed race and identity of the Okinawans and provided directives on how they should be treated.

The Army and the Marines both researched the culture and characteristics of the Okinawan population extensively.³⁷ Military planners needed to predict, as best they could with the available information, how the Okinawans would react to an armed American presence. Okinawa and Japan had a complicated relationship that made the question of Okinawan loyalty difficult to discern. Japan had never held Okinawa as a colony. In 1609, the Satsuma clan, interested in exercising its militarism and looking to Okinawa for economic profit, landed hundreds of war-junks on the shores of the Ryukyu Kingdom. The Satsuma clan preserved a slight level of self-governance for the kingdom by allowing traditional customs to continue and by retaining the Ryukyuan king. Satsuma, however, strongly influenced the kingdom through governmental and financial posts. Following the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the Japanese government began to transition from the Tokugawa feudal system to the prefectural system. By

1945, 1st Marine Division, 1-2; Annex 15 to Tentative Operations Plan No. 1-45, Headquarters, Tenth Army, January 6, 1945, RG 407, Box 2487, NARA 5.

³⁶U.S. Marine Corps Civil Affairs Officers, Memorandum, April 13, 1944, 3.

³⁷D-2 Study of Theater of Operations Okinawa Jima, Part I, February 8, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 2- 3, 5; Okinawa Diary, April 30, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns; CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, 13; Report of Psychological Warfare Activities Okinawa Operation, September 15, 1945, 20.

1879, the Ryukyu Kingdom stood as one of the last remaining *hans*. On March 27, 1879, King Sho Tai abdicated his throne and Ryukyu *Han*, which had preserved a certain degree of independence in spite of the arrival of the Satsuma clan two centuries prior, became Okinawa-*Ken*. Representatives of the Japanese government escorted Sho Tai from Shuri Castle to Japan and the Ryukyu Kingdom came to an end without violence.³⁸

Despite lack of bloodshed, the Okinawans lost their kingdom, traditions, and independence. Under the prefectural government, Okinawans did not share the same privileges as the mainland Japanese. Okinawa sent representatives, elected by Okinawan men, to the Imperial Diet but only Japanese men from the mainland held the high prefectural positions; Okinawans could not run for office themselves. The Japanese treated the Okinawans as inferior because of differences in language, ethnicity, culture, and religion. Indoctrination programs sought to assimilate the Okinawans to Japanese custom and thus caused the elimination of their own ethnic practices. Okinawans resented the Japanese because of such treatment. As one Okinawan war publication expressed it, “Under Japanese rule, it’s kind of tough to be an Okinawan.”³⁹

While Okinawa had a comparatively better relationship with Japan than countries Japan colonized such as Formosa or Korea, Okinawans felt oppressed and threatened by the Japanese

³⁸ George H. Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People* (Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2000), 156-166, 381-383; D-2 Study of Theater of Operations Okinawa Jima, Part I, February 8, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 2; Marine report, “General Information,” Subject File: O, United State Marine Corps Historical Division, Quantico, VA, 14. A *han* was a feudal district or clan in Japan under Tokugawa rule. As a *han*, the Ryukyu Kingdom retained much of its previous way of life before the Satsuma invasion.

³⁹ Nansei Shoto, Japanese Naval Underground Museum, Document Exhibit Room, Okinawa, Japan; Yenob –PW-188, POW interrogation, May 16, 1945, RG 389, Box 844, NARA; Masamichi S. Inoue, *Okinawa and the U.S. Military: Identity Making in the Age of Globalization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 55-62; *The Ryukyus Handbook*, Department of the Army, Civil Affairs Handbook, 1944, RG 290, Box 3199, NARA, VIII; D-2 Study of Theater of Operations Okinawa Jima, Part I, February 8, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 3; CINCPAC-CINCPAC Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, 12.

government.⁴⁰ Okinawans could either view the arrival of American troops as an opportunity to separate themselves from Japan or they could feel threatened by a foreign invader and resist.

Army and Marine planners acknowledged that they lacked sufficient information to predict the actions of the Okinawans. Crist recognized that the intelligence summaries did not definitively determine a probable Okinawan reaction.⁴¹ Colonel John McQueen, the Chief of Staff of the 6th Marine Division whose staff wrote the 6th Marine Division Military Government Plan and Special Order 124-45, applauded the work of the intelligence staff but also knew that the information lacked clear conclusions. McQueen felt that intelligence estimates for earlier operations gave “pretty accurate accounts...more so than [the estimates for Okinawa] did [about] Okinawa.”⁴²

For the Army, such uncertainty underwrote a combat policy that urged caution and prepared for the most threatening possibility. The Army informed soldiers about the potential of civilians to attack American units and referred to Okinawans as “enemy civilians.”⁴³ Soldiers received the CINCPAC-CINCPOA bulletin #161-44, the Ryukyu Handbook, and the Tenth Army Technical Bulletin on Military Government approved by Crist, documents that detailed cultural information, but the Army did not ensure the soldiers fully comprehended the material and the intricacies of the Okinawan -Japanese relationship. For their purposes, the soldiers

⁴⁰POW interrogation, May 16, 1945, Yenob-PW-188; Inoue, *Okinawa and the U.S. Military*, 55-62; CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, 12.

⁴¹History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, 1 April-30 April 1945 [L Day to L+29] by BG William E. Crist, May 10, 1945, RG 407, Box 2487, file 110-5.0, NARA, 17; Okinawa Diary, March 21, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns.

⁴²LTG John C. McQueen, USMC, Oral History Transcript, 1973, Headquarters, United States Marine Corps Historical Division, Quantico, VA, 94; COL John C. McQueen, Special Order 124-45, 6th Marine Division, May 19, 1945, Box 704, RG 389, NARA.

⁴³Tenth Army Pamphlet – Information on Military Government, February 13, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA, 7.

received a message that made them wary of the population based on the potential of the Okinawans to react with violence to foreign invasion. The policy of caution, however, was defined by the mercurial nature of civilian behavior. Soldiers needed to gauge how they should approach civilians “depending on how [the civilians] act.”⁴⁴ Army planners did not feel that they needed to definitively align the Okinawans with the Japanese to ensure their soldiers safeguarded themselves against possible civilian sabotage.

The Marines, however, under Geiger’s direction, clearly and absolutely stated in their military government plans that Okinawans, “while ...not of native Japanese stock, are Japanese nationals of unquestionable loyalty” and referred to them as “enemy nationals” and “national loyalists.” Orders about religion banned “nationalistic practices.” Local goods procured for community use were to be “captured,” a term indicating acts against an enemy, rather than “salvaged.” Military government teams would execute a “hostile occupation.” “Inmates,” “refugees,” and “civilian POWs” lived in military government camps. Propaganda campaigns “for use against Japs,” referred to the Okinawans as “Japanese civilians” and constructed messages enunciating the ties of the civilians to Japan and discrediting the Japanese military.⁴⁵ Marine planners assigned a fixed Japanese identity to Okinawans which implied a solidly predictable reaction to American troops. The Marines’ categorization of the population as fervently loyal predetermined their interpretation of the motives and actions of the Okinawans as unchangeably hostile.

⁴⁴7th division, speech transcript, Inclosure 2, Civil Affairs, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

⁴⁵Propaganda for use against the Japanese, December 29, 1944, 2nd Marine Division, December 29, 1944, 1, 3; Military Government Plan, February 8, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 3, 6; Comments on Military Government, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 5, 14; Procedure for handling enemy nationals, May 2, 1945, 1st Marine Division, Detachment B-10; Annex “Able,” January 16, 1945, 5-6, 8-9; Appendix No. 3 to Annex “Able,” January 16, 1945, 1.

Aligning Okinawan allegiance with Japan stemmed in part from small methodological and analytical differences between Marine and Army intelligence summaries. While both services agreed that they could not positively ascertain the disposition of the Okinawans to an invasion of their homes, the Marines compared Okinawa to previous engagements in the Mariana and Marshall Islands and Palau where American forces had also encountered civilian populations. Marine intelligence used these combat examples as predictors of Okinawan response to Americans. Unfortunately, conclusions based off previous combat areas lacked veracity. Okinawans that lived on Saipan, for example, were geographically removed from the immediate discomfort of inferiority imposed by the Japanese upon those who lived in Okinawa Prefecture. Marines that observed the invasion and occupation of Saipan surveyed the actions of Okinawans that had a different connection to the Japanese government. Saipan, as an outer island rather than a prefecture, did not threaten to disrupt the ethnic balance within Japan in the way that Okinawa Prefecture did. Okinawans living on Saipan, therefore, had a less contentious relationship with Japan. The Marines, however, regarded their observations of Saipan's population seriously and applied their conclusions universally. Examining the behavior of local units on Peleliu and Saipan that lacked weapons and never fought, Marine intelligence concluded, without reducing their potential for lethality, that "civilian resistance [on Okinawa] will probably not be organized [in actual military units] to any great extent." Assessing the loyalty displayed by the civilians on outer islands, Marine intelligence summaries produced for the Okinawa mission stated that "the Okinawans...in general regarded themselves as completely Japanese." In explaining the history of the Ryukyus, Marines drew upon information from previous operations and assumed incorrectly that "the natives [of Okinawa] were Japanese in race, language, and tradition. They differed...only in being more primitive and less affected by

western civilization.”⁴⁶ Assigning a Japanese identity to the Okinawans resulted in postulations about possible action. The “toughness and independence” of Okinawan fisherman combined with their ability to swim, prompted the Marines to assume the fisherman trained as suicide swimmers. By wrongly categorizing Okinawa as the Japanese homeland and improperly identifying the island as “Japanese soil,” analysts predicted “that fanatical as his resistance has been...his efforts will be redoubled in defense of his home islands.”⁴⁷ Marine intelligence described an enthusiastic, nationalistic populace that differed greatly from the character of the inhabitants of Okinawa. Okinawans that fought did so because of conscription laws under the Nationalization Act in 1944, not because of spirit and nationally driven motivation. Marine estimates underplayed conscription policies as well as the percentage of Okinawans that spoke English, had lived in Hawaii, or had relatives serving in American units.⁴⁸

Intelligence summaries formed the foundation for operational orders; planners used the summaries to determine how the enemy would fight so their forces could ascertain how to ensure victory. For military government, intelligence determined the needs and temperament of a civilian population that required handling and herding. Accurate understanding of the cultural leanings of a populace assisted military government in administration and helped to avert forms

⁴⁶Marine report, “Okinawa,” Subject File: O, United State Marine Corps Historical Division, Quantico, VA, 1; D-2 Study of Theater of Operations Okinawa Jima, Part I, February 8, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 6-7; Robert B. Sheeks, Lieutenant, USMCR, “Civilians on Saipan,” *Far Eastern Survey*, May 9, 1945, 109.

⁴⁷Major General Lemuel Shepherd, Jr., 6th Marine Division, Commander’s Estimate of the Situation, Subject File: O, Box 7, Folder 1/7, United States Marine Corps Historical Division, Quantico, VA, 15; Marine report, “Okinawa,” 1; D-2 Study of Theater of Operations Okinawa Jima, Part I, February 8, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 7; D-2 Estimate of enemy situation – Okinawa Jima, Annex Able – Intelligence to Operation Plan No. 1-45, 6th Marine Division, February 7, 1945, Subject File: O, Box 7, Folder 1/7, United States Marine Corps Historical Division, Quantico, VA, 7.

⁴⁸D-2 Study of Theater of Operations Okinawa Jima, Part I, February 8, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 5,7; United States Military Government, Detachment B-5, Diary, April 30, 1945, Western Manuscript Collection, CO445, Folders 1-4, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO, 41.

of resistance and acts of sabotage.⁴⁹ Intelligence estimates, therefore, were relied upon for their accuracy. The estimates the Marines produced, however, established an explicit yet erroneous kinship between the Okinawans and the Japanese. Despite acknowledging that they lacked enough information to make a confident, clear assessment of potential Okinawan behavior, Marine leaders largely accepted the conclusions that Marine intelligence reached. Published military government plans duplicated the cultural content of the estimates. Both the orders and the estimates, with their unambiguous declarations of loyal Okinawans, left no room for reassessment by the ground forces.

Marine military government plans gave specific guidance to the ground forces about how to treat the Okinawans. Directly connected to the assertion of Okinawan loyalty to Japan, military government personnel were to collect civilians by “searching out every ravine and village,” search them for weapons and important enemy documents, and process them as prisoners of war, following the procedural guidelines put forth in the enemy situation annex. In addition to living in camps, the orders prohibited civilians free movement within the enclosure unless “under close surveillance of properly armed personnel.” Military government personnel were not to evacuate wounded civilians to facilities outside camp boundaries. Corps issued military proclamations that set curfew times and established punishments for disobedience.⁵⁰

Geiger’s directives for treatment of civilians generally aligned with mission priorities of safeguarding American lives and secrets. Military government rightfully needed to conduct initial screenings of the population and restrict their movement so as to prevent the infiltration of

⁴⁹War Department Field Manual 27-5, November 4, 1943, 12.

⁵⁰Annex “Able,” January 16, 1945, 5; Military Government Plan, February 8, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 2-3; Proclamations, February 13, 1945, 1st Marine Division; Commander’s Estimate of the Situation, Major General Lemuel Shepherd, Jr., 6th Marine Division, 15.

Japanese troops and the interference of civilians on the battlefield. In comparison to Army orders for military government, however, Geiger's restrictions for civilians were excessive. Marine orders regulated camp life so tightly that every civilian remained an adversary regardless of conduct or mutable situation. Geiger and his staff prevented civilians not only from leaving the camps but from unsupervised movement within them. Based on the assumption of Okinawans' Japanese loyalty, the Marines viewed Okinawans as permanently hostile combatants, not as victims of war.

Geiger and his staff laid the groundwork for possible catastrophic interaction between Marine military government units and civilians. The orders described a warlike populace and guided American troops to sternly handle the people. Geiger envisioned Marine military government camps that herded the Okinawans like prisoners but he did not want harsh treatment to cause deaths. Tenth Army's mission for military government provided for only the minimum humanitarian needs, but it also urged humane treatment of the Okinawans. Despite their potential for sabotage, civilians were to be moved away from the battlefield to reduce interference, and not unnecessarily harmed. Since Marine orders described the Okinawans as loyal Japanese willing to disrupt American operations, Geiger had to set boundaries for his troops. He "indoctrinated [his Marines] against wanton destruction... looting." He made it "expressly forbidden to kill, injure, or mistreat any persons acting in good faith...Rape [would] be severely and quickly punished. The clothing of captured civilians [would] not be removed. Troops that damaged enemy supplies or equipment or participated in the "willful killing or mistreating of civilians" would be tried by courts martial. He ordered his Marines to give "particular care...not to fire on innocent civilians while mopping up villages." Civilian labor

parties working in support of combat units “must not be fired upon.”⁵¹ Geiger devoted significant time to setting guidelines for the treatment of civilians, a topic never addressed in Army military government orders. He felt strongly that the parameters of Marine behavior needed clarification. While he viewed the Okinawans as enemy and purposefully communicated this to his subordinates, he feared that the hostility felt by his troops might lead them towards destructive, dishonorable behavior. Buckner echoed the same concern. He produced a memorandum for the Marines on discipline that authorized the death penalty for acts of violence against civilians.⁵²

Geiger recognized the power of the assumption of Okinawan identity on the conduct of his Marines. While the Marines’ analysis of the cultural and historical relationship between Japan and Okinawa led them to an inaccurate conclusion, the analysis nevertheless influenced operational orders. Once again, American planners processed cultural information when they devised their military government plans. While practical considerations of geography, resources, and military personnel availability contributed heavily, cultural considerations and identity assignment shaped military government policy just as dramatically.

On March 21, 1945, an estimated 1,400 ships left Ulithi and streamed across the Pacific Ocean towards Okinawa. The convoy stretched for miles and, to men who chose to find a vantage point to appreciate the enormous trail of steel, it made the impending mission quite real. Raymond Johnson, an electrician who traveled on the heavy cruiser U.S.S. San Francisco, called

⁵¹Annex “Able,” January 16, 1945, 5-6, 10; Annex Fox, February 10, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 3; Military Government Plan, February 8, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 7; Corps General Order Number 33, February 27, 1945, III Amphibious Corps; Annex “C,” February 15, 1945, 2nd Marine Division.

⁵²Buckner to Geiger, “Discipline,” February 12, 1945, Geiger papers.

it a “spectacle.” Most men, however, slept all day and all evening. They debated the ability of the body to store sleep for increased energy and stamina to use on L-Day.⁵³ Such arguments were justification for troops who were actually trying to fight the evil demons of boredom and fear.

Despite the sleep patterns of the troops aboard, life on the ships enroute to the landing zone was busy with activity. Each day, they trained on the detailed tasks related to their specific job. Since most enlisted men had never heard of civil affairs before boarding, the training served as an introduction. Those few who had received prior training found that it was limited. Interpreters, for example, received language instruction specifically tailored to interaction with civilians but no additional military training in civil administration. Military Police assigned to military government received hasty lectures onboard about public safety, the law of belligerent occupation, and the treatment of property. Others traveled on the wrong transports and missed all instruction. As a result, with the exception of Prud’homme, Winder, Van Schiak, and three Private First Classes, the majority of the teams had no prior military government experience and began their training enroute to the battlefield.⁵⁴

Besides technical expertise, military government personnel also lacked basic military skills. Most had no weapons training, had never driven a military vehicle and had never endured

⁵³Hatfield, *Heartland Heroes*, 242; Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, 95-96; Willock, *Unaccustomed to Fear*, 290; CINCPAC COMMUNIQUE NO. 317, Navy Daily Reports, April 1, 1945, Subject File: O, United States Marine Corps Historical Division.

⁵⁴6th Marine Division Special Action Report, Section 11-Military Government, 50; Operational Report on Military Government, OKINAWA, Phase I and II, May 1, 1945, 1; Daniel D. Karasik, “Okinawa: A Problem in Administration and Reconstruction,” *Far Eastern Quarterly*, 1948, 254-267; Roger V. Dingman, “Language at War: U.S. Marine Corps Japanese Language Officers in the Pacific War,” *Journal of Military History*, July 2004, 876; Comments on Military Government, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 5, 7; Tsubota Collection, Veterans History Project. Immediately upon landing in Okinawa, Tsubota linked up with his unit and received his orders. He never received the training and briefings that soldiers received on board.

the hardships of field duty. Officers that had attended the military government schools at Charlottesville and Columbia took a familiarization pistol course that made the officers amateurs at weapons handling. Those who shot well, like Prud'homme, acquired those skills through their own endeavors, not from military training.⁵⁵ Under the cramped conditions on the ships, the troops did not receive training on these tasks sufficient enough to resolve the individual deficiencies.

In addition to training, planners and commanders held daily meetings and continually refined their plans. This, in turn, meant that leaders passed new information to the troops daily.⁵⁶ The Marines circulated the division level military government plans, based on Annex Able, to their troops onboard. Mere days before debarkation, Tenth Army distributed additional military government materials to the Marines that were incomplete and of questionable value. The Tenth Army Technical Bulletin offered no additional information beyond division plans and simply presented the orders in the format of an Army manual. The Marines never received the Tenth Army Pamphlet, written specifically for troops and containing information about the Okinawans. Military government officers felt they worked in “an atmosphere of uncertainty.” They had no information about the rate at which the rations were to arrive, the protocol for posting proclamations or where to acquire equipment.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Prud'homme Jr, Record (Personnel Files), January 1946, 1; “Military Government School: Its Alumni Face a Big Test in the Marshalls,” *Bureau of Naval Personnel Training Bulletin*, March 15, 1944, WWII Collection, 1933-1956, Box 48, Folder 4, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York, NY, 1-9; Activities of the Marine Corps In Civil Affairs in World War II, critical study of, March 1946, Major Garnelle G. Wheeler, 2. One of Prud'homme's hobbies was pistol shooting.

⁵⁶Memorandum, March 10, 1945, BG Silverthorn; Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, 96.

⁵⁷Comments on Military Government, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 5-7, Proclamations, February 13, 1945, 1st Marine Division.

Lacking detailed guidance for the conduct of military government from the Army and having only the instructions from Annex “Able,” they wrote their own guidelines knowing that Tenth Army could change their plans. With a dearth of input from Tenth Army, Geiger’s assumption of Okinawan identity and correlating orders for action filled the void. In addition to the operational orders and Annex “Able,” the Marines wrote and distributed Corps General Order Number 33, Executive Officer’s Memorandum No. 94-45 and a memorandum from Geiger entitled, “Additional instructions relating to Military Government.”⁵⁸ Corps General Order Number 33 gave specific instructions to the troops concerning the civilian population and included Geiger’s warnings to Marines about excessively confrontational behavior. The order declared local buildings inaccessible, limited the destruction of religious sites to those impeding military operations, and urged the use of receipts when acquiring local property.⁵⁹ Geiger’s memorandum forbade his troops from making any statements about the future of the Emperor and ordered the protection of previous prisoners of the Japanese associated with the United Nations.⁶⁰ Ultimately, these documents promoted the policy of suspicion towards the civilians and annunciated the idea that the Okinawans posed a threat. In efforts to rally the men, the documents stated that “no holds are barred...Let’s give it to them.” They also taught the Marines that Okinawa bore no value and discredited it as a “worthless place.”⁶¹ Created without

⁵⁸Comments on Military Government, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 1.

⁵⁹Corps General Order Number 33, February 27, 1945, III Amphibious Corps, 1-2.

⁶⁰The term “United Nations” refers to the 26 Allied countries that signed the Atlantic Charter on January 1, 1942 to show their support for war. The term was first used by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The official United Nations charter was signed on June 26, 1945.

⁶¹Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, 107; Executive Officer’s Memorandum No. 94-45, March 21, 1945, Major General Roy S. Geiger papers.

a model from Tenth Army to use as a guide, these documents further demarcated a point of deviance between Army orders and conduct and that of the Marines.

As the ships traveled closer to the target area, Japanese planes attacked the convoy. As earlier as March 26, kamikazes, along with suicide boats and swimmers, dove towards the massive ships. For those on board, the battle of Okinawa had, in some ways, already begun. The troops began to harden their concepts of the identity of the enemy. Raymond Johnson found relief in watching the Marines blow up suicide swimmers on their rafts. In a display of survival instinct, Johnson “was sure glad to see [a kamikaze pilot] hit the water and not us.”⁶² Geiger’s orders to regard civilians as enemy fed into the natural human reaction of the Marines to value themselves over their foe. Further compounding this tendency was the apparent lack of civilians along the shore. Troops observed that they could not “see any other life.” Bombarded by a plethora of rumors about what they might encounter upon landing, troops sought what was tangible.⁶³ The early assaults on the convoy combined with the visual absence of meek civilians added strength to Geiger’s assessment of the Okinawans in the troops’ eyes. The troops knew they were already under attack and they did not see anything or anyone that acted otherwise. Under these circumstances, Geiger’s assumption that the Okinawans posed a threat seemed valid, unquestionable, and finite to them.

The planners carefully considered the meanings of Okinawan allegiance and its impact on combat operations, yet the documents finalized Okinawan identity and left no room for debate or reconsideration. Receiving the orders immediately prior to disembarking on hostile land, the troops had little time to analyze the reasoning behind the orders, if they had wanted to at all. As

⁶²Hatfield, *Heartland Heroes*, 245.

⁶³Ibid; Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, 96.

the bombardment roared and the Marines saw no civilians on shore, they accepted the statement that Okinawans were enemy and charged forth without asking questions or processing the cultural nuances of the Okinawans on their own.

As the ships neared Okinawa, the magnitude of pre-invasion bombardment echoed for six days.⁶⁴ Hours before the troops landed, the bombardment increased in magnitude. War correspondent Ernie Pyle, watching from one of the ships, described it as “ghastly. Great sheets of flame flashed out...gray-brownish smoke puffed up...then the crash of sound and concussion carried across the water and hit you...Smoke and dust rose up...the land was completely veiled.” The combined noise from carrier planes, naval guns, and machine guns deafened the incoming troops.⁶⁵

The night before L-Day, the message from each ship’s Captain attempted to inspire and motivate the troops. They applauded American strength and instilled faith by pronouncing that the operation was already running smoothly. Within this grandeur, the Captains made one last mention of the civilian population and restated the predicted reaction of the populace. The population, some half million strong, would display “determined resistance.”⁶⁶

The troops saw no civilians on shore because an Okinawan District order on February 25, 1945 followed by an order from the Japanese military on March 23 evacuated thousands of the population out of the central area around Naha towards the rough northern wilderness.⁶⁷ By the

⁶⁴Hatfield, *Heartland Heroes*, 255.

⁶⁵ Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, 98-99; Johnston, *The Long Road of War*, 124.

⁶⁶Captain’s Message to All Hands, U.S.S. Panamint, March 31, 1945, Major General Roy S. Geiger papers.

⁶⁷Operational Report on Military Government, OKINAWA, Phase I and II, May 1, 1945, 3.

time the American forces landed on April 1, war had darkened the beauty of the warm island of Okinawa. The bombardment burned houses, gutted crops and gardens and split open ceremonial urns filled with the ashes of the Okinawans' descendants. The pressure of military vehicles and marching men on the ground wet from the rainy season churned out a muddy paste. One hospital corpsman described the mud in a letter to his parents as "so deep it's like getting a perpetual enema. And I mean a high colonic."⁶⁸

Just back off the beach, Marines encountered scattered civilians who neither followed the Japanese and District orders, nor paid attention to preliminary instructions dropped from American B-29s during the bombardment and in the first days after the landing. Meant to minimize initial confusion by instructing the civilians how to react to the battle, the air dropped pamphlets "discouraged [civilians] from coming through [American] lines." Proclamations of authority also were distributed upon landing.⁶⁹ Geiger hoped that such information would encourage Okinawans to follow American direction, thus alleviating disorder and establishing control sooner.

Military Government Detachments A-1 and B-1 attached to the 1st Marine Division found seventy-five Okinawans in their sector. The group, consisting primarily of old men, women and children in poor health, lived on the beach, having lost their homes in the bombardment. Further off the beach, elderly Okinawans, having already abandoned their homes during the initial bombardment, crouched in crumbling soft earth hand-dug caves. Military government personnel searched for standing structures further inland in Sobe but found only skeletons of buildings still

⁶⁸Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, 104, 108, 124-125; Edward L. Smith, 2d Comdr, Marine Corps, USNR, "The Navy Hospital Corpsmen," *Hospital Corps Quarterly*, March 1946, 2.

⁶⁹Annex "Able," January 16, 1945, 2-4; Propaganda for use against the Japanese, December 29, 1944, 2nd Marine Division, December 29, 1944, 1, 3;.

standing. The first evening, they simply held the people on the beach without shelter or any enclosure.⁷⁰

The next day, five hundred Okinawans had turned up homeless. With the increase, military government personnel attempted to use the shells of the buildings for containment. Military Police units attached to the divisions guarded the civilians but civil affairs still did not erect any type of enclosures to hold the growing population. Food was limited; on L-Day Marines offered their own rations to the Okinawans; military government could only provide each person one meal a day.⁷¹

Quickly, the number of civilians grew to proportions larger than estimated by Tenth Army planners. Some 9,000 Okinawans had wandered into American occupied territory by April 5, 1945.⁷² Most lacked shelter or food and those that came from villages that withstood the bombardment often needed some sort of medical care or assistance with basic sanitation. The rapid advance of combat troops caused the needs of the population to grow and soon the loose plans created on board the ships fell apart. Teruto Tsubota, an interpreter assigned to the 6th Marine Division, described the situation as a “madhouse, no control, no nothing.”⁷³ Contrary to the orders stating that the Okinawans should be treated as prisoners of war and restricted, the rapid influx of civilians caused the military government soldiers attached to the Marines to reluctantly allow a permissive environment. Short on personnel and resources, units that

⁷⁰Comments on Military Government, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 7-8; Mark Ealey and Alastair McLauchlan, translators, *Descent into Hell: Civilian Memories of the Battle of Okinawa*, originally published in *Ryukyu Shimpo* (Portland, Merwin Asia, 2014), 182.

⁷¹Ibid, 7.

⁷²CINCPOA COMMUNIQUE NO. 322, Navy Daily Reports, April 5, 1945, Subject File: O, United States Marine Corps Historical Division; Comments on Military Government, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 7-10.

⁷³Tsubota Collection, Veterans History Project.

encountered villages chose to leave them alone. Without enough troops to assist, civilians were not searched for weapons or documents. Except for appointing a local as an overseer, they allowed the civilians to stay in their homes, salvage through what remained of flattened crops, and roam freely throughout the area.⁷⁴

Supply shortfalls, particularly in transportation and equipment, contributed to an inadequate military government system by severely restricting what programs could actually accomplish. In order to transport and house thousands of dislocated civilians, many of whom were wounded, units required transportation and ample tarpaulin and tents.⁷⁵ Two vehicles per detachment was an inadequate amount for the volume of civilians that the military government needed to transport. As for shelter, tentage for each detachment was allotted based on the predicted size of the civilian population to be processed. “C” detachments, which also owned 110 sleeping cots, were allotted sufficient tents. “A” and “B” detachments, however, having only one small command tent and two tarpaulins, left many civilians exposed to the Okinawan spring rainstorms and defeated any efforts to contain the crowds. While the idea of separating the civilians from the Americans was thought necessary to mitigate fraternization and prevent exposure of American military secrets, in the first week of April, such defensive concerns proved impossible to address. Shortages in equipment prevented the detachments from providing basic

⁷⁴ Interview Sheet for Prospective Local Leaders, Appendix to Military Government Operations Report–Ryukyus, August 2, 1945, RG 407, Box 2487, file 110-5, NARA; Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 9; Lacey, *Stay Off the Skyline*, 68, told by Private Thomas McKinney; Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 2, 5; XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

⁷⁵ Military Government Activities, July 6, 1945, Detachment B-10, 11; Appendix No. 3 to Annex “Able,” January 16, 1945, 1; Appendix No. 1 to Annex “Able” to Administrative Plan No. 1-45, January 16, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA Appendix No. 2 to Annex “Able” to Administrative Plan No. 1-45, January 16, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA. According to the prescribed composition, each detachment should have received one quarter ton truck, one three-quarter ton truck, two trailers, two 20 by 40 foot tarpaulins and one small command post tent. The “C” detachments were also allocated an additional one and a quarter ton truck, nine more tarpaulins and 45 more tents.

humanitarian needs and precluded the development of established systems for long term or advanced care. Winder argued that the detachments needed “heavy trucks [2 ½ ton]...Three-quarter ton weapon carriers and jeep trailers are not sufficient...[the “A” and “B” teams need] hundreds of 20 x 40 foot tarpaulins for emergency shelter...an absolute necessity for assault shipping.” The two tarpaulins organic to the teams did not even arrive on time. “Practically no equipment had been landed...for two or three days” for teams A-3 and B-3.⁷⁶

Overwhelmed, inexperienced troops saw the villages as an opportunity to ease their workload and used the village structure to provide for the population.⁷⁷ From shelter to local government, the quasi-stability of the village community made the overworked military government units assign much of the responsibility for the civilian’s well-being to the civilians themselves. Use of such villages was temporary; their size could not sufficiently support large groups of homeless Okinawans. The troops’ acceptance of the temporary nature of the situation, however, inspired them to ignore their responsibility to enact any policies of their own.

Identifying local leaders among the village residents did not signify a heightened trust between

⁷⁶Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 2; Operational Report on Military Government, OKINAWA, Phase I and II, May 1, 1945, 4; Operation Report on Military Government, OKINAWA, Southern Phase, July 1, 1945, 2; Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 3-4, 9.

⁷⁷ The military government units severely lacked personnel; the few soldiers they did have lacked training and field experience. Each civil affairs unit required nineteen Majors; the units that landed had one Lieutenant and seven Captains. Some consisted of only one officer and a few Military Police enlisted soldiers. Others had too few Military Police to control any type of perimeter on an encampment. Besides lacking trained specialists like interpreters, medics and cooks, they lacked general soldiers that could assist with tasks such as controlling civilian movement, building structures and serving food. Without such manpower, those tasks were unable to be completed. (Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 2, 5; Spot Promotion, November 11, 1944, Captain Wynne L. Van Schiak; Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 6, 9, 14; 6th Marine Division Special Action Report, Section 11-Military Government, 50; Activities of the Marine Corps in Civil Affairs in World War II, critical study of, March 1946, Major Garnelle G. Wheeler, 1-2; Action Report Nansei Shoto Operation, June 30 1945, 1st Marine Division; Military Government Activities, July 6, 1945, Detachment B-10, 10; Operational Report on Military Government, OKINAWA, Phase I and II, May 1, 1945, 4; Operation Report on Military Government, OKINAWA, Southern Phase, July 1, 1945, 4).

the Americans and the Okinawans; military government personnel simply needed more people to work for them.

Beyond using the village structure, the units improvised in other ways. Military Government Detachment B-10, attached to the 1st Marine Division, salvaged building materials, clothing and food from the local population. They used discarded American rations and acquired household goods from abandoned homes such as cooking pots and sleeping mats. They obtained four Japanese trucks and used them to move civilians from forward collecting points to rear areas for medical assistance. Most detachments forced all but the non-ambulatory to march towards collection areas miles away. Others asked for assistance either by loading Okinawans on empty American military trucks driving by or by augmenting their organic trucks and acquired Japanese trucks with vehicles and Marines from combat units.⁷⁸ Such cooperation caused tension between the operational units and the military government units. The mission of civil affairs was to alleviate the intrusion of civilians into front line operations; borrowing combat resources for military government contradicted its purpose. In essence, civil affairs became a burden upon the frontline fighters. Empty military vehicles accosted for civilian transport and combat Marines that ferried Okinawans back to rear areas diverted from their combat missions. Winder quickly realized that his efforts at civilian control, rather than providing support, became a “burden” and “retard[ed] the combat effort.”⁷⁹ The divisions, which tended to retain interpreters and military police for use by the intelligence staff for interrogations, showed increased reluctance towards offering support to the military government agenda as civil affairs tasks strained combat assets.

⁷⁸Military Government Activities, July 6, 1945, Detachment B-10, 1-3; 6th Marine Division Special Action Report, Section 11-Military Government, 51; Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 9.

⁷⁹Operation Report on Military Government, OKINAWA, Southern Phase, July 1, 1945, 2, 4.

While Marine military government plans, conceived late and without input from Tenth Army, crumbled upon landing, the belief that the troops held about the Okinawans as fervent nationalists, loyal to Japan, stood strong. The majority of the Okinawans that streamed into American lines within the first week of the battle displayed docile behavior, posed no threat to the troops and only desired assistance in the form of food or medical procedure. Despite meeting thousands of disheveled Okinawans on the beaches and throughout the island that appeared meek and helpless, the Marines still considered the local people as Japanese civilian enemy. To the troops, Japan and Okinawa were the same. Anything encountered culturally was assigned to the Japanese heritage. In letters sent home, troops inaccurately described Ryukyuan handicrafts, clothing and cookware found in abandoned Okinawan homes as traditional Japanese items.⁸⁰ Despite behavioral evidence to the contrary, the Marines' association of the Okinawans with the Japanese remained immutable. Hatred towards the fighting Japanese enemy translated into repugnance for the weak Okinawans suffering the byproducts of war. The Marines categorized the Okinawans as less than human; Corporal James Johnston, while bemoaning the size of the population, viewed them collectively as an overgrown pest infestation.⁸¹ Troops lamented that "the worst crosses to bear [as part of overseas duty in the Pacific] were the mosquitoes, the fleas, and the sight of the pathetic people."⁸² By not differentiating between the effects of war and characteristics of culture, dismal living conditions were seen as indicative of the population's way of life rather than the results of heavy bombardment and fire-fights. They saw the Okinawans as "not very clean personally...their homes were utterly filthy." One Marine

⁸⁰Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, 126; Robert Lynn Maurer Collection (AFC/2001/001/10466), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress.

⁸¹Johnston, *The Long Road of War*, 126.

⁸²Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, 130; Sledge, *With the Old Breed*, 192-193.

remarked, “This would be a nice country if the people weren’t so dirty.” Private First Class John David Jackson called them, “nasty...nasty people.”⁸³ Such categorization spurred no ingenuity from the men to devise creative programs and systems to improve the Okinawans’ circumstances.

Considered as an enemy, overexertion to improve upon the Okinawan situation seemed unsavory. The Marines, seeing the Okinawans as adversaries and subhuman, dirty, vermin, were loath to contribute the herculean-sized effort needed to establish functional camps for the refugees. To justify the desire for lack of action further, the Marines identified the particular Okinawans they encountered as physical incapable of causing harm; they described them as “so old and decrepit or young and harmless-looking that the best thing was to leave them alone and let them stay in their homes, tilling their fields, provided they did not get in the way of troops, keeping only the homeless ones in camps.”⁸⁴ The troops’ disgust at the appearance of the Okinawans also translated to assumptions about their intelligence, demeanor, and worth. The Marines thought of the Okinawans as naïve and simple, people to pity and mock rather than help. In the opinion of the Marines, the Okinawans seemed scared, shocked, and unable to comprehend the battle around them.⁸⁵ Told through jokes among themselves, the troops ridiculed the civilians like children. One Marine jested that the Okinawans were “poor devils” whose primitive comprehension caused them to think the war was apocalyptic prophesy.⁸⁶

⁸³Jackson Collection, Veterans History Project oral history; Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, 107-108, 130; Fileff Collection, Veterans History Project.

⁸⁴Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 9.

⁸⁵Lacey, *Stay Off the Skyline*, 70, told by Lance Corporal Tom Baird; Fileff Collection, Veterans History Project; Kujala Collection, Veterans History Project.

⁸⁶Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, 108.

The Marines' unwavering belief of the Okinawans as dirty enemy, along with the limitations caused by inadequate resources, stunted the implementation of Marine policy to force the population into restrictive, guarded camps. In the opening days of the battle, an undertrained, overstretched military government chose the easiest option to deal with the growing number of homeless Okinawans – ignore them. The demographics of the population they encountered, predominately groups perceived as weaker (old men, children and women), eased their fears of attack. Regardless of the fact that the Okinawans found on the beach were not assessed as a threat themselves, they still belonged to the enemy, in the viewpoint of the Marines. As a result, the troops detested offering them any assistance.

Civilians, therefore, roamed haphazardly throughout American owned territory creating problems with both the operational and military government mission. The detachments had no control over the massive number of Okinawans and this impeded their ability to provide rations, clothing, or medical care. Without a system of distribution, the troops parceled out goods to those eager civilians that requested them. Okinawans that avoided the Americans received none; those who asked received as much as the Americans could offer. For the combat troops, the Okinawan civilian population intermixed with the Japanese troops made it difficult to differentiate fighter from farmer. Units with previous battle experience in the Pacific Theater, such as the 1st Marine Division, found that the indiscriminate shooting, while also done in other island campaigns, resulted in an inordinate amount of dead civilians on Okinawa.⁸⁷

Exacerbating the problem, the number of Okinawans that found their way behind American lines continued to increase. Detachments A-1 and B-1 encountered 12,000 civilians in

⁸⁷Ibid, 125; Johnston, *The Long Road of War*, 131.

Chibana alone by April 6.⁸⁸ Placing further strain on the disorganized detachments, the C camps, designed to handle larger numbers of dislocated civilians, did not receive them because the lack of control that the A and B detachments had over the population prevented the detachments from uniformly processing and moving groups of people.⁸⁹ Buckner observed with consternation 40,000 civilians moving around the 1st Marine Division area of Chimu and Nakagusuku Wan. The military government units lacked control to such a degree that civilians were “left practically to their own devices.”⁹⁰

Loose military government practices hindered aid distribution and increased accidental civilian casualties. The freedom of the Okinawans to wander anywhere within American lines also increased the likelihood of exposing military secrets and compromising security. On April 5, in the area of Chibana, an attack by two armed men resulted in casualties on both sides. Similar incidents of attacks from within the local populations occurred at Taira, Zahana and Itoman.⁹¹ The attackers could have been armed Okinawans or Japanese troops. In March 1944, Japanese officials traveled to Okinawa to enforce the Nationalization Act of 1944 that dictated that every Okinawan, regardless of age or gender, assist in the effort to defend the Home Islands. Whether conscripted as actual soldiers serving in the Okinawan Home Guard (Boei Tai) or the Blood and Iron Corps, or working as youth nurses or building fortifications as cave construction

⁸⁸Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 8; Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, 125.

⁸⁹Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 8; Lacey, *Stay Off the Skyline*, 72, told by Private First Class Richard Whitaker.

⁹⁰Sarantakes, ed, *Seven Stars*, 41.

⁹¹Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 4; 6th Marine Division Special Action Report, 52.

crews, Okinawans did assist with the war effort.⁹² Just as likely, however, the attackers could also have been Japanese troops disguised as civilians. Military Government Detachments loosely estimated that there were “hundreds of military personnel disguised as civilians” and had difficulty with prisoners of war infiltrating the civilian population.⁹³

The Marines, however, did not generally care to investigate the ethnic background of the instigators of the incidents. Most often, their reports indicated that the offenders could have been either Okinawan or Japanese and did not spend time determining the difference.⁹⁴ Trying to separate an aggressive Okinawan from a Japanese soldier disguised as a civilian proved difficult. Marine interpreter Teruto Tsubota acknowledged the presence of Japanese soldiers among the population but felt it was pointless to determine the attackers’ origins. “Yeah. Some of them [are Japanese soldiers],” he said, “But we don’t know who they are. Because they all look alike to us; they dress alike. They try to look as much like the Okinawans as possible.”⁹⁵ One Marine found it humorous that the “Japs and Okinawans and kids and old people and ducks and dogs

⁹²POW Interrogation Report Number 52, Nishiyama Sakae, June 25, 1945, Box 7, Folder 11, United States Marine Corps Historical Division, Quantico, VA, 1; Reservist and Civilian Conscription on OKINAWA ISLAND, 2nd Marine Division, June 9, 1945, Box 1, Folder 33/1, United States Marine Corps Archives and Special Collections, Alfred M. Gray Research Center, Quantico, VA; Major General Lemuel C. Shepard, 6th Marine Division, Military account, June 8, 1945, Subject File: O, Box 7, Folder 10/7, United States Marine Corps Historical Division, Quantico, VA, 4; Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 9-10; Report of Japanese casualties, Office of Public Information, Navy Department, July 24, 1945, WWII: Okinawa: Original Records, Subject File: O, United States Marine Corps Historical Division, Quantico, VA; Patrick K. O’Donnell, *Into the Rising Sun: In Their Own Words, World War II’s Pacific Veterans Reveal the Heart of Combat* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002), 266, told by Patrick Almond.

⁹³6th Marine Division Special Action Report, 52; Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 4.

⁹⁴Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 9; O’Donnell, *Into the Rising Sun*, 264, told by Joe McNamara and Elmer Mapes.

⁹⁵Tsubota Collection, Veterans History Project. Young Japanese men would grow beards to look old, harmless and more like the dislocated Okinawan population.

and cats...everything was being smashed together. And it's hard to sort them out.”⁹⁶ The Marines also imposed their own American brand of patriotic national pride on the Okinawans and assumed that the sole reason an Okinawan would attack American troops was in faithful allegiance to country. In the minds of the Marines, the violent acts served as tangible evidence to solidify the already absolute notion that the Okinawans displayed loyalty to Japan at such an intense level as to spur violence.⁹⁷

The incidents inspired a stark realization; tight restrictions, as originally planned, needed to be implemented to protect American lives from hostile actions staged in areas under American control. By mid-April, the military government detachments began formally establishing controls and imposing restrictions upon the population whose numbers had made them difficult to manage. The new policies expanded on the original pre-invasion plans and limited the access of Okinawans to American personnel and military secrets, thus increasing the security of both, and monitored the movement of the Okinawans in order to maintain better awareness of the residents of the camps. In compliance with orders from the Marine division commanders to detain all civilians, the military government detachments erected barbed wire enclosures to cordon off areas and thus created decisive boundaries and definitive camps. In some areas, like Berger Beach, the troops added fences around groups of people who had already formed themselves into informal communities. With larger, less organized populations, military government personnel consolidated the civilians and transported them to predetermined locations away from the frontlines. Detachments working in the 1st Marine Division area cordoned off the

⁹⁶Lacey, *Stay Off the Skyline*, 72, told by Private First Class Richard Whitaker; O'Donnell, *Into the Rising Sun*, 264, 266, told by Patrick Almond and Elmer Mapes.

⁹⁷Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 9.

entire Katchin Peninsula and moved 30,000 civilians to within its boundaries. Separate inner enclosures contained men ranging in age from 16 to 45, a demographic that mimicked the composition of American forces.⁹⁸ Marines screened the male population in an attempt to identify any potential adversaries and did not allow them to reintegrate with the women, children and old men regardless of the results of the screenings. Men considered of military age were guarded and questioned like captured Japanese soldiers. The intense questioning infuriated the men since the tactics used by the Marines made the Okinawans appear untrustworthy to their fellow villagers, as if they served as spies. Military police and military government soldiers guarded both the all-male inner enclosures and the outside perimeter camp enclosures. No Okinawan could travel outside the designated camp area unless they were with an American guard and in a group no larger than five people.⁹⁹

As an unintended secondary consequence, measures emplaced to safeguard the troops also greatly improved the efficiency of the camps and therefore, ironically, allowed the detachments to organizationally render more aid. Programs that dealt with supply distribution and personnel accountability stemmed from the need to maintain control and restrict the population. Each Okinawan received a rations tag that allowed the detachments to track both the

⁹⁸Ibid, 9; Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 4; Military Government Activities, July 6, 1945, Detachment B-10, 4; Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, 108; Administrative Order Number 4-45, April 11, 1945, 1st Marine Division. The Japanese military employed school aged children, sometimes as young as 13. (Mark Ealey and Alastair McLauchlan, translators, *Descent into Hell: Civilian Memories of the Battle of Okinawa*, originally published in *Ryukyu Shimpo* [Portland, Merwin Asia, 2014], 46).

⁹⁹Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 9; Administrative Order Number 5-45, April 22, 1945, 1; Major General John Hodge to Major General Pedro del Valle, Authority for Okinawan Labor in XXIV Corps area, May 1, 1945, Box 704, RG 389, NARA; Military Government Activities, July 6, 1945, Detachment B-10, 3. Initially, the detachments issued a small number of passes that allowed some of the local population to enter and exit the camps freely. Within forty eight hours, however, Okinawans with passes had traveled into combat areas and caused such confusion that the detachments stopped the use of the passes. XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA, 1; Tenth Army to 1st Marine Division, Memorandum: Denying Passes to Civilians, Box 704, RG 389, NARA; Jim Lea, "The War Is Not Over on Okinawa Isle," *Stars and Stripes*, April 22, 1972, 2.

amount of food consumed and the number of people present. Detachment soldiers guarded towers of military ration cans in efforts to subvert thieves.¹⁰⁰ Every Okinawan had to register when they arrived so all residents were properly documented. To minimize movement within the camps, families were kept together within shelter compounds as much as feasible.¹⁰¹ With such programs in place, the detachments could accomplish more tasks without additional troops.

In order to encourage compliance with the new regulations, the detachment soldiers wore armbands designating them as Military Police. The troops did not fulfill any police functions, but the armbands gave them a certain authority that allowed them to corral the Okinawans.¹⁰² The troops also identified Okinawans that carried prestige within the community and had them assume informal leadership roles. These local leaders either had already held prominent positions within their villages in politics or education or could speak English and had relatives living in the United States. For the Marines, the use of local leaders helped dissolve language barriers and eased the caginess of the population. They were not viewed as equals in terms of authority but as workhorses to aid the outnumbered Marines, who remained very suspicious of them and kept them under close observation.¹⁰³

The Marines had learned from their own experiences that loose policies and absent systems made their mission of controlling the population much more difficult and exposed

¹⁰⁰Tsubota Collection, Veterans History Project.

¹⁰¹Military Government Activities, July 6, 1945, Detachment B-10, 2.

¹⁰²Tsubota Collection, Veterans History Project.

¹⁰³Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, 108, 125; "The Navy Hospital Corpsmen," March 1946, Edward L. Smith, 2d Comdr, Marine Corps, USNR, 4-5, 11; Shige Ginoza in *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa, Survivor's Testimonies* (Okinawa: Relief Section, Welfare Department, Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), 34; Eikichi Shiroma in *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa, Survivor's Testimonies* (Okinawa: Relief Section, Welfare Department, Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), 9; Dingman, *Language at War*, 853-883; Military Government Activities, July 6, 1945, Detachment B-10, 8.

themselves unnecessarily to danger. While the idea for minimal restrictions had stemmed from the apathy that grew out of a work force inundated with more tasks than men to complete them, the move toward stricter controls grounded itself in the concept of self-survival and deep distrust towards the Okinawans. Despite neglecting to identify the ethnicity of the attackers, the Marines believed that the Okinawans had proven themselves combative and had aligned themselves squarely with the Japanese. Homeless Okinawan women were now viewed as combatants and captured as prisoners of war. New regulations barred military government troops from sharing transport vehicles with the civilian population. Dubbed “enemy aliens,” the Marines feared that troops would get killed if they traveled too close to the Okinawans.¹⁰⁴

With the attacks seen as proof of hostile intent and concerted coordination with the Japanese, the Marines’ adverse feelings towards the Okinawans increased and aligned even more squarely with negative racial assumptions. Following the attacks, Private Charles Miller, 6th Marine Division, directed his hostility towards the Okinawans because “they had slant eyes. We [are] very anti-slant eyes. Guys [say], ‘There goes a slant-eyed chink, pow-pow.’”¹⁰⁵ Intense racist feelings combined with agitation over the attacks translated into occasional aggressive action towards the civilian population. The 6th Marine Division knowingly opened fire on large groups of civilians traversing the roads and, when observing the damage, felt no empathy and refused to respectfully care for the bodies. One group of Marines kidnapped and took turns raping Okinawan women in their tents for days. After they lost interest, they obscured their debauchery by presenting the women to their commanding officer as captured Japanese nurses. Those who did not participate in the sexual assaults chose not to because they categorized the

¹⁰⁴Tsubota Collection, Veterans History Project; Lacey, *Stay Off the Skyline*, 75, told by Corporal William Pierce; O’Donnell, *Into the Rising Sun*, 264, told by Joe McNamara.

¹⁰⁵Lacey, *Stay Off the Skyline*, 73, told by Private Charles Miller.

Okinawan women as subhuman and inferior, not because they found the acts morally reprehensible. Okinawan women “represented filth,” they stated, “God, who would want to go into the tent with that thing?”¹⁰⁶

The sudden imposition of structure and the threat of harm did not mean that the Okinawans immediately became willing participants in camp life. The abrupt move towards managing the population came with distinct limitations and consequences. In the confusion of war, the Okinawans distrusted the Americans as much as the Americans distrusted them. Japanese propaganda told embellished horror stories about how the Americans treated prisoners and portrayed the Americans as racially biased and viciously cruel.¹⁰⁷ The Okinawans, while desperate for help, remained wary of the actions of the Americans, particularly when the actions of the Marines in and out of the camps tended to lean towards violence. Some Okinawans resisted the Marines by avoiding the camps and, once in the camps, purposefully moved slowly through processing. Some even spat on the Marines. One Okinawan wrote furiously in a letter

¹⁰⁶Lacey, *Stay Off the Skyline*, 74-76, told by Corporal William Pierce and Private Joe Drago.

¹⁰⁷Tsubota Collection, Veterans History Project; Junko Isa, “Junko Isa,” in Ruth Ann Keyso, *Women of Okinawa: Nine Voices from a Garrison Island* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 6; Fumiko Nakamura, “Fumiko Nakamura,” in Ruth Ann Keyso, *Women of Okinawa: Nine Voices from a Garrison Island* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 37; Masahide Ota, *The Battle of Okinawa: The Typhoon of Steel and Bombs* (Tokyo: Kume Publishing Company, 1984), 223; History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, 1 April-30 April 1945 [L Day to L+29] by BG William E. Crist, May 10, 1945, RG 407, Box 2487, file 110-5.0, NARA, 19; Captain Roy E. Appleman, notes, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA, 2; LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns, Okinawa Diary, April 30, 1945, RG 407, Box 2441, NARA; Mitsutoshi Nakajo in *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa, Survivor's Testimonies* (Okinawa: Relief Section, Welfare Department, Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), 27; John W. Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 191, 196, 250; Nagamine in *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa, Survivor's Testimonies* (Okinawa: Relief Section, Welfare Department, Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), 32; Tomiko Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag: a spellbinding account of love and courage in wartime Okinawa* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1989), 110; Miyagi Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps,’” in Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History*, (New York: The New Press, 1992), 361; Shigeaki, “Now they call it ‘Group Suicide,’” Kinjo Shigeaki, “Now they call it ‘Group Suicide’” in Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History*, (New York: The New Press, 1992), 365; Takejiro Nakamura, interview in James Brooke, “Okinawa Suicides and Japan’s Army: Burying the Truth?,” *New York Times*, June 21, 2005.

about how his “blood boiled over with uncontrolled hatred for the American bastards.”¹⁰⁸ The Marines processed the civilians as captured enemy combatants and such classification resulted in an environment that lent itself to prison-like standards; but the level of treachery that the Japanese attributed to the Americans remained false. Barbed wire enclosures, guards, regulations, and screenings did not compare to the Japanese accusation that the Americans “would chop [the Okinawans’] legs off; would ship them to Frisco to be used as dog meat” or “slice [them] up like a piece of vegetable.”¹⁰⁹ Measures such as enclosures and guards allowed the detachments to maintain accountability of the residents of the camps and while the civilians could expect an austere environment with minimal room for independent action and occasional outbursts of violence in the form of rape or abuse, they also found that the extreme horror stories of grotesque mutilation proved inaccurate and the camps provided a steady source of food and refuge from the rampages of the battlefield.¹¹⁰

The barbed wire, guards, accountability, rations, and movement restrictions of the Marine security system may have appeared similar to those used by the Army detachments. The camp standards, however, were notably harsher and more stringent than those of the Army. By basing

¹⁰⁸Tsubota Collection, Veterans History Project; O'Donnell, *Into the Rising Sun*, 264, told to as Joe McNamara. Hamamatsu Shigeru, letter, in Mark Ealey and Alastair McLauchlan, translators, *Descent into Hell: Civilian Memories of the Battle of Okinawa*, originally published in *Ryukyu Shimpō* (Portland, Merwin Asia, 2014), 296.

¹⁰⁹ Okinawa Diary, April 30, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns; Nako Yoshi, interview, in Mark Ealey and Alastair McLauchlan, translators, *Descent into Hell: Civilian Memories of the Battle of Okinawa*, originally published in *Ryukyu Shimpō* [Portland, Merwin Asia, 2014], 296).

¹¹⁰There were examples of exemplary behavior from Marines. For example, a group of Marines found two 75 year old Okinawan women and a paralyzed girl in a cave who, frightened, offered them money as a way to avoid what they believed was certain death. Refusing the money, the Marines gave the women and young girl food and medical care. One young Okinawan woman recalled how her father was revived by an American after his failed suicide attempt. (Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, 109; O'Donnell, *Into the Rising Sun*, 280-281, told by Jerry Beau; Hisada Tamiko, interview, in Mark Ealey and Alastair McLauchlan, translators, *Descent into Hell: Civilian Memories of the Battle of Okinawa*, originally published in *Ryukyu Shimpō* [Portland, Merwin Asia, 2014], 296).

the design for security measures on an unwavering belief in the aggressive intentions of the Okinawans, the Marines carried out their military government duties with an element of harshness that was absent from the Army camps from their very inception. Upon reception in Marine camps, Okinawans received an identifying number which hung crudely around their necks at all times. Military government soldiers bartered with the civilians as they entered camp by withholding certain amenities until the civilians agreed to the policies governing the camp. Newly arriving Okinawans did not receive any bed or shelter until the military government soldiers running the camps felt confident in their obedience. Men separated for screening were “thoroughly grilled” through a series of questions that turned to fierce interrogations.¹¹¹ Those deemed strong enough to work were housed in prisoner of war camps so they could be used as labor. Called “civilian prisoners,” the men were forced to work, suffered stringent discipline and were closely guarded. While working in forward areas doing tasks such as filling sandbags, some men died from misdirected fire. Those who did stay in male only enclosures in the military government camps lived in quarters that were so cramped and overpopulated that the men stood shoulder to shoulder with no room to sit down. Marines argued that the overcrowded population that occupied Katchin Peninsula “lived in freedom” and did not deserve their own homes. They proclaimed that “Japanese Army camp followers and prostitutes [were] uniformly superior in intelligence, cleanliness and discipline to the run of refugees.”¹¹² They unsympathetically viewed the Okinawans as useless because they disassociated them from humanity. Even

¹¹¹Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 4; Fileff Collection, Veterans History Project. Military Government Activities, July 6, 1945, Detachment B-10, 2-3, 8.

¹¹²Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 10-11, 13; Comments on Military Government Operations, July 6, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 4. 90% of the inmates at the POW camp near Detachment A-1 were Okinawan civilians used for labor. Such practices by the Provost Marshall and Military government were heavily supported and endorsed by the Division.

Okinawans who spoke English or had ties to America and who were designated as interpreters and informal liaisons to the populations were considered forced labor with no authority over other civilians.¹¹³

The attacks on the camps put all the detachment soldiers on edge. Following the incidents, any movement of unknown people along the outskirts of the gathered populations caused the troops to fire their weapons indiscriminately and resulted in the deaths of innocent civilians. Begun by individual soldiers independent of orders, shooting civilians that traversed unauthorized gradually became a common and accepted practice. The Marines placed the responsibility of the shootings on what they considered the careless actions of the civilians. They reasoned that civilians who wandered in and out of territory held by armed Americans, sometimes at night, placed themselves in certain danger. “Of course they were fired upon,” the Marines rationalized.¹¹⁴

The first shooting of a civilian by Marine military government on Okinawa occurred at dusk on April 6 in Chibana, the day after the attack against the 1st Marine Division by a person within the population. Civilians moving in the dim hours caused anxious troops from Detachment B-1 to open fire.¹¹⁵ The shooting occurred five days prior to the first shooting of a disobedient civilian by Army military government and, unlike the Army whose soldiers acted in accordance with an issued XXIV Corps order, the Marines as a whole adopted the practice on their own by accepting the behavior of their troops. Despite not having an explicit order

¹¹³Military Government Activities, July 6, 1945, Detachment B-10, 8.

¹¹⁴Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 9; Johnston, *The Long Road to War*, 131-132; Sergeant Frank Acosta, Marine Combat Correspondent, Comments on Marine Military Government, July 25, 1945, Box 844, RG 389, NARA.

¹¹⁵Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 9.

authorizing civilian shootings, however, aggression towards the population was consistent with the Marines' association of the Okinawans with the Japanese enemy.

In Marine military government camps, the shooting of civilians who wandered without authorization in and out of the perimeter devolved into a cold ritual that extended beyond boundary infractions. Marines knowingly shot civilians, at times without a clear purpose, and justified their actions by arguments of "survival of the fittest" and the complacent attitude that the civilians were guaranteed to get shot anyway. Said one Marine, "There's always somebody who would shoot them."¹¹⁶ Shooting civilians became so commonplace and so obligatory that that Marines felt they "had to shoot [the Okinawans]." The sight of wounded children and women failed to cause guttural reactions of remorse or disturbance.¹¹⁷

Hostility continued through interactions with civilians outside of the camps as well. Military government soldiers both passively received Okinawans that made their own way into the camps and traveled forward into combat areas to collect those hiding in fear. Limestone caves that littered the landscape of Okinawa housed Japanese fighting troops that fled the advancing Americans along with refugee civilians. Marine military government units used dynamite to clear the caves or seal them shut without first allowing the civilians to exit. Those few soldiers that disagreed with the practice and actively sought to secure the civilians before the explosives ignited were often disciplined by their commanding officers. One officer placed a

¹¹⁶Lacey, *Stay Off the Skyline*, 69, 74-75, told by Private First Class James Chaisson, Lance Corporal Don Honis, Private Joe Drago and Corporal William Pierce.

¹¹⁷Ibid, 67, 69, told by Private First Class James Chaisson, Lance Corporal Don Honis and Private Norris Buchter; Fileff Collection, Veterans History Project.

pistol to the temple of an American interpreter whose efforts to evacuate a cave delayed a dynamite charge.¹¹⁸

On April 11, Major General Pedro del Valle, the commander of the 1st Marine Division, repeated to his troops in an official order that all “civilians and prisoners of war will be treated with humanity and their persons and honor respected” and restated that troops that disobeyed the directive would receive “severe and quick punishment.”¹¹⁹ Del Valle opposed any treatment of civilians that would constitute a war crime and felt it necessary, in observing the conduct of his troops towards civilians and prisoners of war alike, to reiterate in a threatening manner the limitations of their roles as prison guards and keepers of the people. His words, however, betrayed the distinct difference between the development of the Army military government camps and that of the Marines. Grouping civilians and prisoners of war together in both speech and identity, del Valle insisted on keeping both groups detained involuntarily.

The Marines disagreed with the Army on the precise parameters of humane treatment and the disagreement played itself out at all levels of command. A product of rivalry and the poor working relationship between the services, some orders Buckner issued were broken by the Marine commands under him. One directive that prohibited all soldiers under Tenth Army from consuming local livestock and its byproducts was routinely broken by the Marines. Issued with detailed guidance that specified the prioritized use of dairy and meat products for the Okinawan population, Buckner believed the preservation of local assets for local populations safeguarded military rations exclusively for troops. By protecting the resources of the island, a basic food

¹¹⁸Tsubota Collection, Veterans History Project; Hatfield, *Heartland Heroes*, 253; O'Donnell, *Into the Rising Sun*, 264, told by Joe McNamara.

¹¹⁹Administrative Order Number 4-45, April 11, 1945, 1st Marine Division.

supply could be provided to the Okinawans that would thus minimize the amount of American rations consumed by the locals. Consumption of local farm goods by American troops also increased the likelihood of contracting food borne diseases and conflicted with the standing order against looting and pilfering the population unnecessarily.¹²⁰ Marine troops, however, milked goats and butchered pigs. While some livestock roamed away from their original pens unaccounted for, Marines also stole pigs and goats from struggling families in villages and abandoned farms that were frequently revisited by their starving owners. While the Marines enjoyed the milk and roast pork as a welcome delicacy after many meals of military rations, the local population became desperate to recover their livestock as the battle left them in disarray.¹²¹

Lower-ranking enlisted Marines were not alone in their wrangling of local livestock. The Marine division commanders brazenly disobeyed the order as well. In an ostentatious show of defiance, del Valle served Buckner fresh pork chops when the Tenth Army commander visited the operating area of the 1st Marine Division. After awkwardly eating the meal Buckner announced, “Now, General, this is a disobedience to my orders. You have evidently killed one of the local animals.” Del Valle beckoned to the mess sergeant who then explained that an attack last night had claimed the life of the local pig. Cocky, del Valle proclaimed after Buckner left, “I don’t think the General swallowed it, but he couldn’t say ‘no’ because he [doesn’t] know the local situation [has] been perfectly calm for days and we [haven’t] had any shooting around here.”¹²² Buckner’s order prohibiting farm theft originated with his concern for the health and sustainment of American troops but it also had the secondary effect of protecting the scarce

¹²⁰Corps Special Order 7-45, III Amphibious Corps, April 27, 1945, Box 704, RG 389, NARA.

¹²¹Johnston, *The Long Road to War*, 134-135; Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, 116; Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 40.

¹²²Major General Pedro Del Valle, USMC, Oral History Transcript, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York, NY, 185-187.

resources of the local population. Del Valle's smug disregard for the authority of Buckner, an Army commander, also had the consequence of endorsing poor treatment of the local population. Del Valle's attitude towards both the Army and the Okinawans spread infectiously among the Marines.¹²³

In efforts to assert their authority and as a display of the adversarial relationship between the services, the Marines took further control over the military government units assigned to them by reorganizing the composition and command structure of the detachments. Frustration mounted as the detachments, mixed teams of Army and Navy personnel, proved less efficient. Conflict arose largely due to duplications of effort and strains on resources. Confusion over responsibilities between the services caused four different officers to attempt to draw the same supplies for one detachment. It also complicated food distribution, salvage operations and contributed to overseas pay problems for Navy enlisted men. Tensions among the team members increased as annoyances developed into mission impeding issues. Navy officers brought heavy "A" boxes filled with extraneous comfort items, such as mattresses and rain boots, that bogged down transportation and infuriated the Army officers who had no such items. Army military police prohibited the commander of A-1, a Navy Lieutenant Commander, from transporting civilians on his truck without Army guards despite the presence of Navy shore patrol. The Army military government commander of A-5 "belittled navy personnel" and used "extremely offensive language and epithets." Interservice conflicts delayed essential mission tasks and tied up higher officers in dispute resolution.¹²⁴

¹²³Lacey, *Stay Off the Skyline*, 69, 74-75, told by Private First Class James Chaisson, Lance Corporal Don Honis, Private Joe Drago and Corporal William Pierce; Captain Roy E. Appleman, notes, 2-3. Civilians became pawns in tense disagreements about battlespace between the Army and the Marines. As the population roamed the island in search of family members and food, the services disregarded movement restrictions put in place by the other service. (XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA).

To fix the issues, the Marines wanted to assert greater influence. Organically, Marines did not compose any part of the detachment teams and only served as liaisons with limited authority and scope.¹²⁵ The Marine commanders, as well as the liaisons, believed that continuity and efficiency could be improved by making a Marine officer overall in charge of the detachment. They favored an all-Marine detachment or, at least, a “nucleus of Marine personnel” to merge the other two services into a workable team. Furthermore, they recommended that any non-Marine personnel should be Navy, not Army.¹²⁶

Marine division commanders reorganized the detachments to resolve immediate conflicts. Shepherd, for example, combined detachments A-3 and B-3, attached to the 6th Marine Division, and merged them into one team, placing Army Lieutenant Colonel M.A. May, the B-3 commander and most senior officer, overall in charge. Del Valle and the 1st Marine Division placed all military police under the direct supervision of the B Teams. B Teams were typically headed by an Army officer and, since Army military police were more prevalent than Navy shore patrol, the consolidation was consistent with separating the services.¹²⁷ Despite placing Army officers into positions of higher authority within the modified military government structure

¹²⁴Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 3, 6, 12-13; Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 1; Memorandum to G-1: Status and Responsibilities of the MG within the Division, clarification of, June 1, 1945, Box 704, RG 389, NARA; Operational Report on Military Government, OKINAWA, Phase I and II, May 1, 1945, 2-4; Activities of the Marine Corps in Civil Affairs in World War II, critical study of, March 1946, Major Garnelle G. Wheeler, 2; Diary, February 28, 1945, Detachment B-5, 13-15.

¹²⁵Activities of the Marine Corps in Civil Affairs in World War II, critical study of, March 1946, Major Garnelle G. Wheeler, 2; U.S. Marine Corps Civil Affairs Officers, Memorandum, April 13, 1944; Annex “Able,” January 16, 1945, 4; 6th Marine Division Special Action Report, Section 11-Military Government, 50.

¹²⁶Operation Report on Military Government, OKINAWA, Southern Phase, July 1, 1945, 3, 4; Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 5.

¹²⁷Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 6, 12; Special Order 124-45, May 19, 1945, COL John C. McQueen; Performance of Temporary Duty, report on, case of Captain Wynne L. Van Schiak, July 2, 1945, 000014812.

because of seniority, the moves both Shepherd and del Valle made shifted control of military government more firmly over to the Marines. Shepherd and del Valle kept a Marine in the position of Division Military Government Officer, a key billet that served as a link between the detachment commander and the division commander, and empowered him to impose directives upon the detachments. More importantly, both division commanders exercised initiative to change the organization to their liking without requesting or securing approval from Tenth Army. In this way, the modification of military government structure flaunted their disregard for Army rules and authority and served as a gateway to further deviation – from simple daily procedures to the demonstration of new standards of conduct.

The violent attacks internal to the camps confirmed to the Marines their concept of Okinawan identity formulated during pre-invasion training; in the minds of the Marines, Okinawans were akin to their sadistic foes, the Japanese. Growing from this belief, the necessary security environment of the Marine military government camps turned severe in comparison to the Army camps. Compounding the tendency towards ruthless conditions, interservice rivalry prompted the Marines to resist some Army directives and act counter to Army policy, thus further solidifying trends of callous treatment towards the Okinawans.

With the internment of civilians in camps now governed by stricter regulations, aggressive actions against the camp populations decreased. Whether such a result signified an actual confirmation of the resistance of the civilians or of lessened opportunities for Japanese soldiers to infiltrate the populations was unconfirmed by the Marines. It did, however, demonstrate that, regardless of the exact source of the hostilities, greater American control over the area created a safer environment for the troops. In most areas, acts of belligerence “ceased almost entirely” and detachment soldiers faced massive populations that generally displayed

good will and acted meekly to avoid interactions with the Marines. The most contentious confrontations were initiated by civilians who sought informal leadership positions or attempted to maintain their role as the head of a household. Even these Okinawans, though, were eager not belligerents.¹²⁸ The Marines acknowledged the behavior of the Okinawans and reported that “civilians of the occupied zones submitted to new rule with equanimity.” They characterized the Okinawan manner as “co-operative, docile” and also noted that there were “no suspected cases involving sabotage, espionage, or subversive activities.”¹²⁹ For the Okinawans, they recognized both the futility of acting independently and the benefit of remaining in the camps. They had risked getting shot while attempting to secure their own individual food at nearby farms. Labor parties, however, traveling under guard, procured the same food and distributed it to all camp residents. It became apparent that patience and cooperation sustained them and their families struggling under the rough conditions of war.

The Marines were cognizant of the cooperative nature of the Okinawans but did not modify their own behavior in response.¹³⁰ Instead, counter to the reality of the situation, military government leaders saw the accommodating Okinawans as the exception to the general attitude of the masses. In selecting local leaders, they chose from a batch of what they considered “the most intelligent and cooperative internees;” men viewed as rare and yet still categorized as

¹²⁸Action Report Nansei Shoto Operation, June 30 1945, 1st Marine Division; Military Government Activities, July 6, 1945, Detachment B-10, 3, 5; 6th Marine Division Special Action Report, Section 11-Military Government, 52.

¹²⁹Military Government Activities, July 6, 1945, Detachment B-10, 3; Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 3; “Okinawa,” Culture report, WWII: Okinawa: Original Records: Subject File O, United States Marine Corps Archives and Special Collections, Alfred M. Gray Research Center, Quantico, VA, 2.

¹³⁰A small minority of Marines and attached military government soldiers felt kindly towards the Okinawans. They were criticized for such feelings. (Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, 109, 129; O’Donnell, *Into the Rising Sun*, 280-281, told by Jerry Beau).

prisoners.¹³¹ Feelings of distrust persisted and restrictions remained in place well into July and August. As late as July 2, B-10, despite acknowledging that “there was no problem of discipline either within the stockade or on work parties in the field,” still assigned guards to supervise the involuntary work parties closely. Local men still received intense screenings and separate enclosures, the Katchin Peninsula was still considered a holding area for “enemy nationals,” and able-bodied civilians continued to form out the ranks of a forced labor pool.¹³²

As the Okinawans not only resigned themselves to Marine regulations but also relied upon them for sustenance and survival, the Marines exploited the weakened state of the population both in and outside of the camps by destroying or personally using what little shelter or food that they had. Throughout the summer, the Marines continued to kill livestock for sport and food, and forcefully took up residence in any Okinawan structures that still stood, often rendering any remaining occupants homeless.¹³³ As the battlefield gave way to American success, the way in which some restrictions were conceived and implemented, and the Marines’ treatment of the population appeared increasingly out of place, their functionality stretching beyond the necessity of the mission. The 6th Marine Division herded civilians as livestock and tagged them like cattle.¹³⁴ Camp shootings in Marine military government camps continued excessively into late June, well past the initial confusion of the battle and the noticed shift in Okinawan behavior and thus beyond any reasonable concerns or uncertainties with perimeter

¹³¹6th Marine Division Special Action Report, Section 11-Military Government, 52; Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 6th Marine Division, 4.

¹³²Ibid, 4; Military Government Activities, July 6, 1945, Detachment B-10, 9.

¹³³Operation Report on Military Government, OKINAWA, Southern Phase, July 1, 1945, 4.

¹³⁴6th Marine Division Special Action Report, Section 11-Military Government, 52.

security or Okinawan motivation.¹³⁵ Despite an end to hostilities in late June, Marine violence towards Okinawan property and people continued. Throughout the months of July and August, a group of Marines routinely traveled into an Okinawan containment that retained its village structure and kidnapped women for afternoons of forced group sex and sodomy. As late as June 22, 1st Marine Division soldiers burned down village structures that still housed civilians.¹³⁶

Infuriated Army leaders described such actions as “wanton destruction” and measured the personal cruelty and property devastation as outpacing the actions of other services on Okinawa and in previous operations. After spending the day with military government units attached to the 6th Marine Division, Buckner reprimanded both Shepherd and Geiger for excessive damage to both the environment and the populace.¹³⁷ In a visit to the 1st Marine Division moments before his death on June 18, Buckner further chastised the division leadership about the predicament of the Okinawans and the division’s lack of involvement in improving the situation. Such acute observations by the Tenth Army commander were truly extraordinary. Buckner’s focus stayed primarily on the maneuver and fires of the battle that he orchestrated and the logistical challenges that it presented; consistent with his opinions towards Asian people, he did not display any overly charitable sentiments about the Okinawans. His continual distress about the Okinawan condition, therefore, demonstrated an acknowledgement of notably inappropriate

¹³⁵William Baumgartner Collection, (AFC/2001/001/16149), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress; Comments on Military Government Operation, July 6, 1945, 1st Marine Division, 9-11.

¹³⁶ Hatfield, *Heartland Heroes*, 254; Operation Report on Military Government, OKINAWA, Southern Phase, July 1, 1945, 4; Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands, 1945-1960*, 85; MSgt Daniel Wheaton message to Public Affairs, April 27, Kadena Air Base History, KAB Active 7(7-2-C), Archives K-L, Kadena Air Base Archives; Calvin Sims, “3 Dead Marines and a Secret of Wartime Okinawa,” *New York Times International*, June 1, 2000, A8.

¹³⁷Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars: The Okinawa Battle Diaries of Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr. and Joseph Stilwell*, 40; Operation Report on Military Government, OKINAWA, Southern Phase, July 1, 1945, 4.

behavior on the part of the Marines.¹³⁸ Military government leadership attempted to underplay the severity of the mistreatment of people and property. Winder argued that “military necessity has been confused with military convenience,” thus meaning to minimize the motivations behind the damage to simple soldiers seeking the comforts of home.¹³⁹ Geiger’s response, however, harshly exposed the deeper driving forces behind the actions of his Marines and the units operating under him. In a letter to Admiral R.H. Jackson dated May 20, Geiger described the Okinawans as “a very backward type of humanity;” they lacked “anything of value.”¹⁴⁰

Geiger, like his soldiers, separated the positive behavioral changes from his assessment of Okinawan loyalty. For the Marines, the new demeanor of the Okinawans did not signify a shift in their allegiance and certainly did not lead the Marines towards drawing comparisons between themselves and the population. They continued to identify the Okinawans as Japanese and the whole hearted acceptance of this identity molded Marine behavior towards the civilians and prevented them from constantly reassessing the dynamics of the relationship between the Okinawans and the Japanese. This conclusion varied greatly from the one reached by the Army. By late April, an overwhelming majority of the population was docile and complied with American directives in both Marine and Army areas of responsibility. The Army found that the obedience forged a kinship between the Okinawans and themselves; the Marines downplayed

¹³⁸Operational Directive #7 from the Commanding General of Tenth Army, January 6, 1945, RG 290, Box 2196, NARA; Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars: The Okinawa Battle Diaries of Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr. and Joseph Stilwell*, 40, 45; Interview with MG John Hodge, Okinawa Diary, March 12, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns.

¹³⁹Operation Report on Military Government, OKINAWA, Southern Phase, July 1, 1945, 4.

¹⁴⁰Geiger to Jackson, letter, May 20, 1945, Geiger papers. Shepherd also preached racism to his Marines as a command philosophy. He stated he “didn’t always feel that way in Europe about some poor, German family man, but [he] felt with a Jap it was like killing rattlesnakes.” (MG Lemuel Shepherd, USMC, Oral History Transcript, Headquarters, United States Marine Corps Historical Division, Quantico, VA).

any similarities. Okinawans were “tiny oriental creatures...who could speak a little English” and ate in areas referred to as “gook-galleys.” The Marines took advantage of Okinawan submission and opted to further subordinate and disrespect the native population as a function of paternalism. The better the Okinawans communicated, the more the Marines used them as “office boys,” calling them Western names like “Clarence” and dubbing themselves their “masters.”¹⁴¹ In contrast, Army paternalism dissipated and morphed into a relatable bond between the two cultures; by late April the Army identified the Okinawans as more akin to Americans than the Japanese and used their limited resources to build extraneous recreational structures, such as playgrounds. Engineer units attached to Marine Military Government units restricted their work to jobs associated with security and life sustainment even if they had extra salvage materials. Official Marine documents published in May and June still referred to Okinawans as “Japanese civilians” and “enemy nationals.”¹⁴² The Marines, in continually viewing the Okinawans as a less sophisticated subset of the enemy, attributed the new, openly positive attitude of the population to a sudden disillusionment with the cause and a sense of defeat. “Apparently aware of the hopelessness of the enemy’s cause,” the Marines reasoned, “[the civilians] began surrendering in overwhelming numbers.”¹⁴³

¹⁴¹“The Navy Hospital Corpsmen,” March 1946, Edward L. Smith, 2d Comdr, Marine Corps, USNR, 5,7, 9.

¹⁴²Reservist and Civilian Conscription on OKINAWA ISLAND, June 9, 1945, 2nd Marine Division; Procedure for handling enemy nationals, May 2, 1945, 1st Marine Division, Detachment B-10; Military Government Activities, July 6, 1945, Detachment B-10. B-10 had six additional men assigned specifically for engineer duties – one officer and five Seabees - and extra salvage materials yet no construction projects beyond shelter and camp boundaries were completed.

¹⁴³ 6th Marine Division Special Action Report, 51.

Both the Marines and the Army conducted the wartime occupation of Okinawa based on practical wartime concerns such as security and mission accomplishment as well as on determinations of Okinawan identity and allegiance. The Marines, however, never adapted their initial determination of Okinawan identity despite the changing combat environment and true combat posture of the populations. The Marines continued to perceive the Okinawans as fiercely loyal Japanese subjects. In late June, a published Marine report described the actions of Operation Iceberg as the “first conquest of Japanese soil” and further identified the local inhabitants as “Japanese in race.”¹⁴⁴ The continual misunderstanding of the Okinawan disposition caused the Marines to implement policy that was harsher and more restrictive than that practiced by the Army and remained so months after the completion of the battle. The inability of the Marines to revise their original assessments of the Okinawans stunted the growth and development of their military government program and limited its ability to establish programs for sustained support. The disparity between the Marines and the Army in expectations and conduct of military government displays the contested nature of the American definition of Okinawan identity and the malleable nature of race and ethnicity.

Like their Army counterparts, the Marines researched and analyzed pre-battle the complex cultural foundations of Okinawa and its political connection with mainland Japan. They considered the differences between the Okinawans and the Japanese and also attempted to categorize the relationship between the country and its farthest outlying prefecture. Despite obtaining and processing the same information, the Marines’ conclusions did not match those of the Army. Whereas the Army determined that the disposition of the Okinawan people was inconclusive, the Marines declared definitively and without question that the Okinawans felt

¹⁴⁴“Okinawa,” Culture report, 1, 5.

strong nationalistic bonds to Japan. As a result, the Army units were afforded more freedom to allow situational encounters to provide any missing information and analysis; a combination of intelligence data in history, culture, language and government structure supplemented by interaction with the local people would yield the most accurate representation of the Okinawan disposition. As the Okinawans acquiesced to American military demands, the Army recognized this cooperation and modified their cautious stance towards an unknown population into congenial, welcome relations. The Marines, on the other hand, by stating as a definitive, unarguable fact that the Okinawans were loyal Japanese, closed all discussion and further analysis of the situation from all levels. Marines and military government soldiers attached to the Marines were instructed to be cautious of the volatile nature of the locals not because of the instability of the unknown but because of the hostility of positively identified enemy combatants. Such a label bred a level of distrust that was unshakable within the context of battle. The capitulation of the population was seen as a white flag of surrender rather than proof of a large body of bystanding victims.

Interservice rivalry worked to push the Marines further towards their already unbreakable conviction of Okinawan loyalty to Japan. Antagonism between the services compounded by the subordinated position of the Marines under Tenth Army led to rebuffing and sometimes blatantly defiant actions on the part of the Marines. The Army's shift towards empathy in its actions towards the civilians moved the Marines in the opposite direction. Okinawans became pawns in an authority struggle between the American services indicative of the Pacific Theater; Shepherd and del Valle applauded actions from their troops that countered Buckner's policies, as long as such actions retained the integrity of the operation. Policies that indirectly affected the civilian population presented the perfect opportunity to display non-cooperation without endangering the

overall mission. Lower-ranking enlisted soldiers from both services judged the others' opportunities, privileges, conditions, and exploits. In their jealous quest to validate the superiority of their own affiliation, they often times embraced actions that contradicted the goals of the other services. As the soldiers of the Army acknowledged the amenable attitude of the Okinawans, the Marines fixed tighter to their notion that the civilians completely embodied the Japanese ideology; they took action against the civilians to prove the veracity of their claim and the erroneous ways of the Army.¹⁴⁵

Regardless of what specific conclusions were reached through cultural examination, scrutiny along lines of ethnicity proved pivotal in mission planning and execution. The American military acknowledged the complexities of each cultural group, assigned a well-researched, purposeful identity and molded policy around this assignment. The emphasis on cultural analysis did not undermine the centrality of military concerns such as security and supply demands. Considerations based on military factors and battlefield analysis continued to drive the planning and executing of military government operations. Together, however, military and cultural factors combined to provide the American military with a robust picture of the battlefield and allowed the military to make decisions that evaluated all aspects of the enemy and environment.

¹⁴⁵The GOPER, for example, stated that civilians would earn back their freedom through obedience and cooperation. Despite acknowledging this directive, the Marines never instituted it. Displays of obedience did not earn Okinawans in Marine military government camps any return of their freedoms. Even those few selected as informal leaders had similar limitations to the regular camp population and only enjoyed a slightly elevated degree of freedom when executing tasks related to their assigned duties. (Operational Directive #7, January 6, 1945, Commanding General, Tenth Army, 1; War Department Field Manual 27-5, November 4, 1943, 4, 7, 10; Pyle, *The Last Chapter*, 138-139; Captain Roy E. Appleman, notes, 2-3).

THE NAVY PERIOD: NAVIGATING THE TRANSITION TO PEACE

On April 24, 1946, Mr. Koshin Shikiya stood in front of a small crowd crammed into the office of Colonel Charles I. Murray, the Deputy Commander for Military Government. Dressed simply in American casual clothes, slacks and a shirt, he had a kind face and a reassuring smile. Well known in the Okinawan community, Shikiya had extensive experience as an educator; he served as a middle school principal and founded a secondary school in Naha. Selected by a group of Okinawan peers, Shikiya accepted the office of Chiji, or Okinawan Governor in front of officers of Naval Military Government and members of the Okinawan Advisory Council. Lieutenant Commander John Tyler Caldwell, Director of the Civilian Affairs, stood in the audience. Caldwell, who had pushed for Okinawan ownership in military government and whose plans had created the position of Chiji, felt an immense sense of accomplishment and pride. He described Shikiya's inauguration as "the most satisfying moment of my adult career of service to my fellow man."¹

War between Japan and the United States of America ended in September 1945. As the countries transitioned to peace, the responsibility for military government on Okinawa transferred to the Navy. American combat troops on Okinawa adjusted their priority from enemy engagement to demobilization and military government changed its mission from amassing the population to full occupation of a prefecture of a defeated country. The Navy took

¹Report of Government Section for April 1946, May 4, 1946, RG 200, Folder 3-V-7, Reel 5, NARA; Lieutenant Commander John T. Caldwell, Okinawa, 1945-46, 93085, 10.V, Hoover Institute Archives, 13-14; Arnold Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyus Islands, 1945-1950* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1988), 109; Edward G. Sward, Diary, April, 1946, personal collection; Report of Military Government Activities for Period From 1 April 1945 to 1 July 1946, July 1, 1946, RG 200, Reel 2, Folder V1-3, NARA, 63-64.

control of a program in progress; unlike the Army or Marines that planned their military government operations prior to encountering the people, the Navy immediately assumed responsibility for a large, dislocated population that had urgent needs of basic sustenance and medical treatment. Overwhelmed by the immediacy of the situation, the Navy issued ad hoc directives while simultaneously handling existing concerns and thus did not build strategically towards a defined, long term goal. The loss of dedicated planning time stunted the Navy's ability to analyze the changes brought on by the termination of the war and the impact the end of hostilities had on the Okinawan people. As a result, many of the Navy's policies reiterated practices adopted from the Army and grounded in battlefield realities. Early Naval military government failed to adapt to the new peacetime environment; it did not attempt to rebuild and its assumptions of Okinawan identity sat stagnated in a wartime state. Furthermore, the attrition of troops whose service contracts had expired stripped military government of leaders and sailors alike that had expert knowledge of military government operations.

Navy leadership expressed concern for the malaise of military government and solicited input from their officers to reform the program. With a military manpower shortage, the new concept aimed to place administrative control of local government in the hands of the Okinawans. Through intricate analysis of the history and traditions of the Okinawan people, the Navy constructed a feasible and sustainable local government structure dependent on Okinawan custom and participation.

Okinawans serving in positions of administrative influence demonstrated their ability to govern, the power of their leadership, and the sophistication of their intellect. Seaman, no longer under the stress and fear of combat conditions, formed both formal and personal relationships with the Okinawans within the context of their duties. Through close, meaningful interactions,

Naval troops reassessed Okinawan identity as not only separate from Japan but also free from congenial comparisons with America. Naval Military Government identified Okinawans as competent and civilized: a group that formed a distinct, separate, unique ethnic community that was neither American nor Japanese in its likeness. The Navy recognized the intelligence and aptitude of the local people and, along with practically considering its own shortfalls in personnel and resources, devised military government policy that led to Okinawan influence in government, medical structure, education, and crime management.

On June 21, 1945, Major General Geiger declared the end of the battle of Okinawa.² To the soldiers and the Marines fighting on the island, Geiger's statement seemed premature. Despite the suicides of the defeated senior Japanese military leaders, Japanese soldiers continued to resist. Continuing through August, Americans lost their lives in Okinawa, with casualty rates reaching well into the hundreds. American bombs harassed small groups of enemy troops moving in the early morning hours and Japanese planes continued to fly menacingly overhead. The tenacity of the Japanese fighter made mopping up operations dangerous and unpredictable; hundreds of Japanese barricaded in caves and thousands mounted offensives.³ General Joseph Stilwell, appointed by General Douglas MacArthur to replace Geiger as commander of Tenth

²Nicolas Evan Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars: The Okinawa Battle Diaries of Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr. and Joseph Stilwell* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 88; Nicolas Evan Sarantakes, *Keystone: The American Occupation of Okinawa and U.S. Japanese Relations* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 21. Lieutenant General Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr. died on June 18, 1945 during the Battle of Okinawa. He was killed by a ricocheted bullet while visiting a Marine outpost. Buckner had identified Major General Geiger, commander of the III Amphibious Corps as his successor but his appointment was controversial because he was a Marine. Geiger held the position of Tenth Army commander for only four days and was replaced by General Joseph Stilwell on June 23rd, 1945. (Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 17, 19, 57, 75).

³U.S. forces on Okinawa transitioned to mopping up operations following the end of the battle. The objective of mopping up operations was to locate and destroy pockets of enemy resistance and enforce the surrender. (Military Government Plan, 6th Marine Division, February 8, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA).

Army, arrived on Okinawa at 0730 on June 23. Two days after Geiger's announcement, Stilwell wrote, "Operations about over," and gave credence to the idea that American troops would encounter more armed conflict on Okinawa, no matter how sporadic. Stilwell viewed the persistent enemy action as a "bad set back;" only 5-10 Japanese troops surrendered a day.⁴

As commander of Tenth Army, Stilwell immediately focused on preparations for the next stage of the war. With the end of the battle, Okinawa began to transform into a garrison for approximately 90,000 troops and a staging area for an attack on the mainland. Observing the devastation left by the long battle, Stilwell prioritized engineering projects. He ordered the creation of three engineer battalions to include one for construction. The battle had destroyed many key infrastructures necessary to support an attack. Submerged ships obstructed ports and unlevelled land hindered airstrip construction. The grim task of burying the approximately 12,000 American dead also impacted the use of the ground. In his reports, Stilwell repeatedly described areas around the island – Naha Harbor, Naha city, Shuri - as a "mess," and equated the condition of the land to the bombed out craters of World War I's No Man's Land. "We have *got to get tough*," he lamented. Tenth Army started rebuilding ports, constructing airstrips and erecting barracks buildings on makeshift bases. In addition to rooting out Japanese troops that continued to resist, combat units trained and refined military plans for future battles.⁵

⁴Ibid; Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 89-96, 98-100, 102-103; Island Command, Unit Report No.1, June 20, 1945, Fred C. Wallace papers, Box 1, Folder 7, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA; Island Command, Unit Report No. 2, July 6, 1945, Fred C. Wallace papers, Box 1, Folder 7, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA; Island Command, Unit Report No.3, July 23, 1945, Fred C. Wallace papers, Box 1, Folder 7, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA; Island Command, Unit Report No.4, August 9, 1945, Fred C. Wallace papers, Box 1, Folder 7, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

⁵John Dorfman Collection (AFC/2001/001/64154), Part I, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress; Report of Psychological Warfare Activities Okinawa Operation, September 15, 1945, RG 407, Box 2502, File 110-39, NARA, 10; CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, RG 407, Box 2502, NARA, 1; Japanese Naval Underground Museum, Document Exhibit Room, Japanese Imperial Army Statistics; *The Battle of Okinawa: Oral Histories*, (Okinawa: Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum, 1990), 4; Sarantakes ed., *Seven Stars*, 61, 74, 89-90; LTC Luker, Army Air Corps, C-54 pilot, head of Air Transport Command out of Yomitan, speech June 23, 1995, Active 7(7-2-C) archives K-L, "Kadena Base History," Kadena

Within the harsh environment of decimated farmland, cratered ground, and unexploded minefields, nearly 320,000 Okinawans lived as refugees. The battle left an estimated 75% of the people dislocated by destroying nearly 90% of structures and associated household items. By late June, most Okinawans resided in temporary American military government camps. During the fighting, military government detachments herded the people into controlled areas to prevent interference with military operations. The camps provided a limited amount of resources and relative stability in a battlefield environment. The few Okinawans who still struggled outside the camp environment scavenged for food and ran from combat troops. Despite the contributions of the camps to the survival of the people, the population still required more than the camps could adequately provide. The Okinawans suffered from war wounds caused by stray munitions or direct exchanges of fire. They wore clothes, covered in dirt and lice, which loosely hung off their emaciated bodies. The people needed medical care, adequate food, and water. Separated from their families as they fled, the Okinawans anxiously wanted to return to their now uninhabitable home areas or reunite with lost loved ones.⁶

The pressing needs of the Okinawans did not derail Tenth Army from their operational missions aimed at the defeat of Japan. Stilwell did not commit additional leadership, manpower or material resources into solving the problem of the large, dislocated local population. Similar to Buckner's concern during the battle, Stilwell only required that the population not interfere

Air Base, Kadena Air Base Archives; Sledge, *With the Old Breed*, 248-249; Sloan, *The Ultimate Battle*, photos 25-27.

⁶Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 5; Demobilization Planning-Assumptions for, July 28, 1945, RG 38, Box 170, NARA; Dorfman Collection, Part I, Veterans History Project; Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 5; Speech by Paul Skuse, American Legion, November 21, 1947, Paul Skuse papers, Hoover Institute; Tomiko Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag: a spellbinding account of love and courage in wartime Okinawa* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1989), 60.

with military operations. Island Command (IsCom), an organization originally conceived in early 1945 to manage the military government detachments - a task it never fully assumed, acquired responsibility for military government in late June 1945.⁷ Its authority for the program, though, only accounted for a small portion of the command's obligations. The command handled logistics, administration, base development and base defense in addition to military government. It tracked enemy aggression, pacification, surrender, resources and morale; it accounted for Prisoners of War, recorded building progress of airfields, runways, and work structures, calculated requests for troop replacements and managed supply. IsCom also handled the entirety of garrison operations.⁸ Day to day tasks of military government, a small piece within a vast scope of responsibility, received negligible consideration.

IsCom did produce a nine-page cultural study about Okinawa intended to analyze the potential of Okinawa to house semi-permanent military facilities in support of IsCom's mission of base development. Along with topics such as geography, climate and resources, the study explored the people of Okinawa and the historical question of sovereignty.⁹ Major General Fred C. Wallace, commander of IsCom, directed the study as a tool to further plans for base development, not to construct a robust plan for military government. IsCom's analysis of the

⁷Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 56.

⁸Unit Report 1, June 20, 1945, Island Command; Unit Report 2, July 6, 1945, Island Command; Unit Report 3, July 23, 1945, Island Command; Unit Report 4, August 9, 1945, Island Command; Chas S. Nichols, Jr and Henry L. Shaw, Jr, *Okinawa Victory in The Pacific* (Washington D.C.: Historical Branch, U.S. Marine Corp, 1955), 266; Island Command, Action Report, Okinawa, 13 Dec 44 – 30 Jun 45, Fred C. Wallace papers, Box 1, Folder 7, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA; Major General Pedro del Valle, Rehabilitation Area memorandum, June 21, 1945, Major General Roy S. Geiger papers, Box 6, Folder 109, Alfred M. Gray Research Center, Quantico, Virginia, 1; Island Command Memorandum to James Watkins, Report on General Conduct of Military Government, July 14 1945, Ryukyus papers: Okinawan History: Tenth Army Phase, Box 3, Folder 5, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA, 1; Island Command Military Government newsletter, July 30, 1945, Ryukyus papers: Okinawan History: Tenth Army Phase, Box 3, Folder 5, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA, 1; Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 76, 89, 95-96.

⁹Study of the Ryukyus Islands, Island Command, July 20, 1945, RG 407, Entry 427, NARA.

temperament of the Okinawan people and the state of their society provided data that was useful for determining the feasibility of longer term American military presence on the island.

Although not the purpose of the study, it also presented information important for military government program building and post battle planning; no matter the project type or length, no plans for the island of Okinawa could exclude even the most cursory acknowledgement of the 320,000 Okinawans struggling to reconstruct their life.

Consideration of the Okinawan population slightly improved when military responsibility for the Ryukyu Islands shifted to the Army on July 31 to align with the Army's status as the primary service proponent for the attack on Japan. Meant as a temporary transfer, it served the sole purpose "to facilitate preparation and execution of Olympic."¹⁰ Stilwell, as Tenth Army Commander, became the Military Governor of the Ryukyus and Island Command was renamed Army Service Command I (ASCOM I).¹¹

ASCOM received a new mission that expanded its role in military government. While simultaneously building Okinawa as a base for a final attack against Japan, ASCOM sought to relocate the "population into the Okinawan hinterland and to adjust the people to new and greatly restricted ways of life."¹² The command's mission of resettlement signified a change in military

¹⁰Memorandum for Admiral Nimitz, August 13, 1945, RG 38, Box 157, NARA. Operation Olympic was the first part of Operation Downfall, the plan to invade mainland Japan. Operation Olympic consisted of landings on the prefecture of Kyushu.

¹¹Ibid; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 56-57,65; Special Proclamation 1, July 30, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Military Government Headquarters Memorandum Number 27, June 29, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA, 2; Appendix D, CINCAFPAC 230455, August 1945, RG 38, Box 157, NARA; United States Naval Military Government Special Proclamation Number 2, September 25, 1945, RG 200, Reel 8, Folder 2-VIII-2, NARA; Summary of Directives (Including Dispatches) and Proclamations which Military Government, Okinawa, is Now being Exercised, January 15, 1946, RG 200, Reel 8, Folder 2-VIII-2, NARA; Appendix B, v73, July 18, 1945, RG 38, Box 157, NARA; Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 106, 108; William Baumgartner Collection, (AFC/2001/001/16149), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress.

¹²Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 1. Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, 72-73; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval

government thought; whereas early military government efforts during the battle had focused on temporary answers to an immediate concern, post battle resettlement plans sought to lay foundations for more solid communities. ASCOM defined resettlement as the return of Okinawans to their home areas, a necessary objective to set the stage for longer lasting and better functioning villages. Resettlement planning began by first asking the military government detachments to submit recommendations.¹³ The submissions included proposed timelines, transportation concepts and suggested methods of identifying village areas. Plans included information on providing basic needs such as a decent water supply, adequate food and inhabitable structures.¹⁴

Within the camps, the Okinawans demonstrated docile behavior and acted as a people who “passively accept...change.” Consistent with the Okinawan village tradition of community cooperation, they contributed to camp life by harvesting food, laundering, and caring for patients. Informally, they designated leaders, distributed tasks among themselves, and contributed to policing. Such group involvement demonstrated their desire and aptitude to live in functioning communities. Not only did the cooperation improve camp life but it also inspired military government to add the establishment of social structures to the resettlement agenda.¹⁵

Military Government, 1, 57; Special Proclamation 1, July 30, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Memorandum Number 27, June 29, 1945, Military Government Headquarters, 2.

¹³Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 7; Dorfman Collection, Part I, Veterans History Project; Administrative and Economic Measures for Okinawa, ASCOM, September 19, 1945, Ryukyus Papers, Okinawan History: Tenth Army Phase, Box 3, Folder 5, U.S. Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA, 2; Rehabilitation Area memorandum, June 21, 1945, Major General Pedro del Valle, 1; Oto Nagamine, Oral History Collection, Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum.

¹⁴Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 7; Administrative and Economic Measures for Okinawa, September 19, 1945, ASCOM, 2.

¹⁵Study of the Ryukyus Islands, July 20, 1945, Island Command, 1.

Japan surrendered on September 2 to General Douglas MacArthur aboard the U.S.S. Missouri. Five days later, on September 7, Stilwell accepted the Japanese surrender of the Ryukyu Islands on Kadena Airfield. The Japanese delegation waited, rigidly standing at attention for ten minutes, until Stilwell walked out towards the surrender table to the tune of the general's march played by an Army band. The Japanese signed first, followed by Stilwell who then ordered the delegation to leave. "We threw the hooks into them," Stilwell said, "Just cold, hard, business."¹⁶

Following the surrender, the War Department prioritized the demobilization of combat units and the return of war weary troops back to the United States. Swiftly returning the fighting men back to civilian life appeased Congress and the public but also aligned with military commander's concerns for the well-being of their troops. In a memorandum to Geiger, Major General Pedro del Valle, commander of the 1st Marine Division, explained with empathy that his division fought "on the front line continuously for the past fifty five days...sustained 1200 dead and 6200 wounded...[and had] not seen civilization or lived in a prepared camp for over twenty two months."¹⁷ Movement of troops began within a few days of the surrender; Navy ships transitioned from combat roles to transports for military personnel returning to the United

¹⁶CINCAFPAC, Admin, Naval Dispatch Message CX 36856, August 26, 1945, RG 38, Box 170, NARA; John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1999); Sarantakes, *Keystone*, 21; Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 108, 114, 119-120; Edward Drea, *In Service of the Emperor: Essays on the Imperial Japanese Army* (Nebraska: the University of Nebraska Press, 1998); Michael Schaller, *The Origins of the Cold War in Asia: The American Occupation of Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); Naoko Shibusawa, *America's Geisha Ally: Reimagining the Japanese Enemy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); Memorandum for F-1:Acceptance of the Surrender in the Ryukyus, United States Fleet, Headquarters of the Commander in Chief, Navy Department, August 26, 1945, RG 38, Box 170, NARA.

¹⁷Rehabilitation Area memorandum, June 21, 1945, Major General Pedro del Valle, 2; SGT Oliphant, H.N., "The answer to the biggest question on any GI's mind is still iffy. YANK assembles here the best dope at the time of going to press on what the WD plans," *Yank* magazine, September 7, 1945, File Y, Kadena Archives, Kadena AB; Demobilization planning, July 28, 1945, United States Fleet Headquarters, Commander in Chief, 1.

States.¹⁸ A system where each man earned points based on time overseas, months in service, medals earned, number of campaigns participated in and number of children allowed the men to qualify for release from the service. For the Army and Marines, eighty points earned a discharge, sixty points disqualified them from overseas duty. For the Navy, forty-four points allowed men to return to civilian life. Men short on points watched others quickly return home while they stayed overseas.¹⁹

Yet, the War Department also considered the “job of [occupation to] take priority over everything...Therefore, [the] No.1 task [was] to get enough men on the spot as soon as possible and in the right places to insure a real peace.” The mission of combat forces adjusted to “consolidat[e]...victory [through] occupation, disarmament, and enforcement of surrender policies,” tasks that required an estimated 2.5 million men.²⁰ Since occupation duties naturally occurred alongside demobilization, the War Department’s personnel policy for post war Okinawa contradicted itself. Occupation required manpower yet demobilization necessitated the return home of American troops. The point system did not make special consideration for military occupational specialties and failed to effectively retain troops skilled for occupation

¹⁸Demobilization planning, July 28, 1945, United States Fleet Headquarters, Commander in Chief, 2-3; Kujala Collection, Veterans History Project; SGT Oliphant, H.N., “The answer to the biggest question,” *Yank*, Sept. 7, 1945.

¹⁹Martin Kujala Collection, (AFC/2001/001/5556), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress; “Army reveals plans for vast reduction of its strength,” *The Hourglass*, Vol II, No. 30, August 30, 1945, Fred C. Wallace papers, Box 1, Folder 8, U.S. Army Heritage Center, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 1-2; Baumgartner Collection, Veterans History Project; SGT Oliphant, H.N., “The answer to the biggest question,” *Yank*, Sept. 7, 1945.

²⁰Post war missions of Pacific Naval Bases, Group IV, Ryukus Area, RG 38, Box 170, NARA; Demobilization planning, July 28, 1945, United States Fleet Headquarters, Commander in Chief, 1; SGT Oliphant, H.N., “The answer to the biggest question,” *Yank*, Sept. 7, 1945; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 65.

duties.²¹ Many trained military government personnel, to include those educated at the university Civil Affairs schools in New York City and Charlottesville, were released from service once they reached the appropriate points thresholds.²²

September 21 marked the transfer of military government to the Navy despite the Army retaining operational control of Okinawa. Rear Admiral John D. Price, the Commandant of Naval Operating Base, Okinawa (NOB) became Chief Military Government Officer and Colonel Charles I. Murray, United States Marine Corps, continued as the Deputy Commander of Military Government. Murray held most of the responsibility for the planning and execution of Okinawan military government. With the exception of approximately 100 enlisted Army translators, the transfer of Army civil affairs officers to Korea and mainland Japan caused the composition of military government on Okinawa to become almost entirely Navy.²³

²¹A freeze order was put in place for military government personnel that prevented them from leaving the service and returning home. The order, however, was quickly rescinded and had little impact on the exodus of trained military government soldiers and sailors. (Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 65; SGT Oliphant, H.N., "The answer to the biggest question," *Yank*, Sept. 7, 1945.)

²²Temporary duty, case of Lieutenant Colonel Donald T. Winder, July 13, 1945, Floor 3, Module 5, Row 44, NPREC; Legal Qualifications, First Endorsement on LtCol. Donald T. Winder, December 11, 1950, Floor 3, Module 5, Row 44; Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, 69; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 73; Major Hector Charles Prud'homme Jr, Record (Personnel Files), January 1946, 000019042, NPREC, 3; Organization of Division Civil Affairs Section and Provision of Civil Affairs Handbook of Reference and Indoctrination Material, Headquarters, Fleet Marine Force, July 17, 1945, RG 127, Box 13.

²³Memorandum Number 7, Dispatch, U.S. Naval Military Government Unit, Okinawa, Sept. 29, 1945, RG 200, Reel 8, Folder 2-VIII-2, NARA; Special Proclamation Number 2, September 25, 1945, United States Naval Military Government; Directive Number 129: Organization and Operating Procedure for Military Government, Ryukyus, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, March 18, 1946, RG 200, Reel 8, Folder 2-VIII-2, NARA; Memorandum Number 27, June 29, 1945, Military Government Headquarters, 2; Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 3; Directive Number 11: Organization and Operating Procedure for Military Government, Okinawa, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, September 29, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; NOB Order No. 18-45: Military Personnel and Civilians – Unauthorized Circulation of, Office of the Commandant, Naval Operating Base, November 5, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 56, 64; CINCPAC/POA, Dispatch 212057 to MGHQ Okinawa and NOB, September 21, 1945, RG 200, Box 1, Folder 2-VIII-2, Reel 8, NARA. Due to the large expanse of Japan's Empire, the Army's occupation duties stretched across numerous countries and islands. To fulfill the geographic requirements, the Army redistributed their civil affairs soldiers to Korea and mainland Japan. (Appendix D, August 1945, CINCPAC 230455; Appendix B, v73, July 18, 1945; Memorandum for Admiral Nimitz, August 13, 1945;

A modest group of devoted, college-educated Lieutenant Commanders and Ensigns with military government experience opted to stay in the service and overseas, an available option once they had accumulated enough points.²⁴ After spending years away from their families, the officers and ensigns that chose to continue their military service in the Pacific did so with great gravity. Navy Lieutenant John Tyler Caldwell, a Labor Officer, originally had no intention of staying past his obligation. He wrote to his parents, “I’m resolved not to volunteer to hang around here when my points mature...I feel no compunction to stay on the job...So, boy, I’m pulling out when the day permits.” Caldwell did chose to stay but not because of the offer of promotion; he stayed because he believed in the mission of military government, sought to improve it and was granted a position with authority to create change. “The extra half stripe in rank to Lieutenant Commander was not important,” he wrote. Most who extended their overseas service shared an enthusiasm and devotion to military governance.²⁵

Officers like Caldwell were the exceptions; few troops chose to stay. To compensate for the exodus of experience, replacement troops came in slowly from deactivated units on Okinawa. A lack of formal military government training limited the usefulness of the replacements and their accumulation of points made their contribution temporary. Although grateful for the extensions of officers such as Caldwell, Murray still complained that the “trouble with [the] outfit [was] we’ve got too many damn college professors.”²⁶ The Navy sought to adjust its

Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyus Islands*, 73-74; U.S. Naval Summary of Directives, January 15, 1946; Memorandum for Rear Admiral McCrea, August 9, 1945).

²⁴Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 65; SGT Oliphant, H.N., “The answer to the biggest question,” *Yank*, Sept. 7, 1945; Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 12.

²⁵Dorfman Collection, Part II, Veteran’s History Project; Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 9-10, 12-13; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 73.

²⁶Naval military government operations were run primarily by military government officers trained at the Civil Affairs schools based out of universities, such as Columbia University. These men contributed as planners. Col

personnel requirements, both along lines of skill level and rank, in coordination with the Navy's assumption of full responsibility for military government. Redesigning the requirements, however, did not result in their fulfillment. Even combined, the volunteers that extended their overseas service and the replacements could not offset, either numerically or by skill set, the personnel shortfalls created by demobilization. Unfortunately, the military government mission expanded just as trained personnel departed. Occupation duties encompassed programs for rebuilding and rehabilitating the island. In addition to the immediate humanitarian concerns of food, clean clothing and sanitary conditions for the dislocated population, Naval military government's mission called for programs to restore farmland and reconstitute community structure. With only 2,700 men, the Navy faced a gap in manpower that leaders sought solutions for with increasing urgency.²⁷

The Navy's military government program, titled "United States Naval Military Government, Okinawa," separated from ASCOM. Three organizations now handled operations on post war Okinawa: ASCOM, U.S. Naval Military Government, Okinawa and NOB. The responsibilities of each differed greatly. ASCOM focused on tasks necessary to enforce the surrender such as disarmament and demobilization since the Navy now handled civilians through military government programs. NOB completed missions congruent to Naval base operations

Murray found that he lacked lower skilled ensigns to carry out daily duties. (Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 9, 16).

²⁷Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands, 1945-1950*, 73; The United States Navy on Okinawa, CDR Paul Skuse, December 31, 1959, Paul Skuse papers, Hoover Institute; Directive Number 11, September 29, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, 1; Directive Number 7: Diversion of Native Resources to Non-Essential Purposes, United States Military Government Headquarters, September 26, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Administrative and Economic Measures for Okinawa, September 19, 1945, ASCOM, 2; History of Operations on Okinawa by 2LT P.J. Conti, Historical officer, OBASCOM, November, 1945, RG 407, Entry 427, NARA, 8; Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 9, 16; Memorandum, Navy Subsidiary Demobilization Plan – Naval Governments, September 5, 1945, RG 38, Box 1, NARA; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 65.

such as providing sea and air transportation. All three organizations' duties overlapped in some ways. ASCOM, for example, handled opening ports which required coordination with NOB. To combat any confusion over priorities or resource allocation, both NOB and Naval Military Government assigned a liaison officer to each other's Headquarters.²⁸

The Navy grew the military government program into a large, centrally run organization by dissolving all field detachments teams and reorganizing the island into sixteen districts. Naval Military Government had a headquarters, and various departments, operational units, and institutions such as a port and a bank.²⁹ The Navy combined multiple departments created under ASCOM into one Civilian Affairs Department which served as the planning cell for resettlement, economic development and education.³⁰

The Navy did not have the indulgence of a protected planning period to devise and refine policy before implementation. As naval military government officers and seamen assumed duties at the camps, they soon discovered they could not wait for higher guidance before distributing food or erecting medical facilities. Mopping up operations and the declaration of surrender caused camp sizes to swell as captured Okinawan men that had fought in Japanese units and in the Boei Tai were quickly released from prisoner of war camps and reunited with

²⁸History of Operations on Okinawa, November, 1945, 2LT P.J. Conti; History of Operations on Okinawa by 2LT P.J. Conti, Historical officer, OBASCOM, January, 1946, RG 407, Entry 427, NARA; History of Operations on Okinawa by 2LT P.J. Conti, Historical officer, OBASCOM, February, 1946, RG 407, Entry 427, NARA; Post war missions of Pacific Naval Bases, Group IV, Ryukus Area; Permanent Bases in the Pacific, March 31, 1946, RG 38, Box 170; Directive Number 11, September 29, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, 2.

²⁹Directive Number 11, September 29, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, 2.

³⁰The other Departments were Public Health, Public Works and Supply. Ibid, 3-5. Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 59; Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 6; Directive Number 12: Military Government Districts—Establishments of, United States Military Government Headquarters, October 2, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

their families.³¹ Massive destruction to structures and the land remained even though the bombings and carnage had stopped three months prior. The Okinawans, having lost their homes, belongings and ability to farm in early April, lacked the capacity to rebuild or recover on their own. Naval Military Government Headquarters relied on operating parameters established by ASCOM to provide continuity and initial direction. Research into resettlement and land viability continued. Labor tasks assigned to the population served the purpose of keeping the people occupied and content. Adherence to the standard of providing “minimum humanitarian needs ...[that] include basically food, clothing, housing, and medical care” also derived from ASCOM.³²

Building on ASCOM’s resettlement initiatives, the Navy expanded the mission of military government to include “actively and materially...encourage[ing] the rehabilitation of the island socially, economically, and politically” but “within the limits of military demand.” By aiming to develop the foundations of an Okinawan society, the Navy hoped to strengthen the Okinawan community and improve its agility and responsiveness for whatever unknown purpose Okinawa may serve to the United States government and military in the future. Resettlement

³¹Directive Number 9, September 28, 1945, United States Military Government Headquarters; Directive Number 33, November 15, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters; Limits of Cognizance, January 15, 1946, United States Naval Military Government; Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 89; Memorandum Number 27, June 29, 1945, Military Government Headquarters, 2; Special Proclamation No. 3, November 29, 1945, United States Naval Military Government; Special Proclamation No.4, November 29, 1945, United States Naval Military Government; History of Operations on Okinawa, November, 1945, 2LT P.J. Conti, 8; Directive Number 47: Weapons and Ammunition, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, November 15, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 56; History of Operations on Okinawa by 2LT Johnson, Historical officer, OBASCOM, June, 1946, RG 407, Entry 427, NARA; Historical report, OBASCOM, July 1946, RG 407, Box 2, File 98-BC6-0.2, NARA, 2; Speech, November 21, 1947, Paul Skuse; Occupation timeline, June 8, 1979, Ed Freimuth.

³²Directive Number 11, September 29, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, 1; Directive Number 7: Diversion of Native Resources to Non-Essential Purposes, United States Military Government Headquarters, September 26, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Administrative and Economic Measures for Okinawa, September 19, 1945, ASCOM, 2.

became identified as the necessary first step that, once accomplished, would better facilitate the growth of societal institutions.³³

The Navy also sought to “admini[strate] the civilian population.”³⁴ Such language signified further commitment to an American attitude in favor of the Okinawan people. During early combat, U.S. military personnel had referred to the Okinawans as “enemy civilians.” In use only a few months after the end of organized combat and several weeks following the surrender, the term “civilians” without the qualifier of “enemy” became the norm, indicating a more widespread acceptance of a fundamentally different interpretation of the relationship of the Okinawans to the Japanese and the Okinawan disposition towards the Americans.

Despite a noteworthy expansion of the mission, Navy military government headquarters did little in its early directives to define any achievable goals or provide any framework to build towards long term accomplishments. In published orders, the Navy carefully used words that allowed the seaman to exercise their own initiative. They directed sailors to “supervise” the reestablishment of societal constructs without explaining how to reconstruct economic or political institutions. The orders assigned military government personnel to supervisory roles yet did not define who they would supervise. Non-descript, general definitions of duties allowed the Navy to react and adapt to ever-changing conditions. Conversely, the lack of any goals, procedures, or standards left sailors and troops working with civilians in camps and makeshift

³³Navy Military Government defined the time as a “new and fluid period of resettlement” with a proposed completion date of January 1, 1946. (Directive Number 11, September 29, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, 1, 4-5; Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 7 stars, 31-32; Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 6; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 2; Directive Number 29, October 23, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, 1; Directive 28: Reuniting Families-Procedures for, United States Military Government Headquarters, October 20, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Directive 58: Township (Mura) Administration – Organization of, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, December 4, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA, 1).

³⁴Directive Number 11, September 29, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, 1.

villages with little day to day direction and no tangible targets to strive for.³⁵ Planning efforts by headquarters moved slower than the urgency the situation demanded and, since planning and execution happened concurrently, directives often arrived at the camps far after field actions occurred. Military government officers felt uninformed and critical of higher headquarters. Caldwell “felt the Military Government was not moving, was sort of in the doldrums, and did not have its sights set either high enough for full realization of its possibilities and responsibilities...most action we take is based upon decisions dictated by circumstances, not imagination or planning ability.”³⁶ Field officers, however, contributed to the disconnection by failing to report their projects or results to headquarters.³⁷

Disagreement about occupation policy also occurred at the strategic levels of the Navy. Naval Affairs Committee hearings addressed the precise locations of future Naval bases in the Pacific and debated the details of a strategic military government plan for the region. The “Plan for Post-War Civil Government,” written by the Office of Island Governments, was a generic policy meant to apply to all Pacific Islands under naval jurisdiction. Immediately, it created friction. As the Plan moved slowly among differing levels of approving authorities, the comments it received varied widely. Captain L.S. Sabin, an author of the Plan, diligently incorporated the input only to discover that, as the document continued to circulate, concepts

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 6, 9. Emphasis in the original.

³⁷The Headquarters required a mandatory weekly report, the FORM MG IND-1, every Monday morning. (Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 74-75; Directive Number 5: Industrial Production Report – Submission of, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, September 23, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA).

deleted to appease one authority reappeared when another high official offered their contribution.³⁸

Two issues created the widest fissures: authority to oversee military government activities and removal of the resident populations from the islands. Admiral Richard S. Edwards, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, issued a directive in early September in response to the Plan. He instructed the Office of Island Governments to keep the civil administration independent from the military administration. Military government, when dealing with camp and village residents, did not require a military command chain. Edwards' concern lay with public perception of undue military control and influence outside the bounds of declared war. "It must be made clear to the public," Edwards wrote, "that we propose to set up a system of civil administration separate and distinct from the chain of military command."³⁹ Military authority would control military compounds only, a viewpoint that was consistent with the Navy. Admiral Nimitz, the Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, disagreed with Edwards. While Nimitz agreed that "civilian commissioners from other Federal agencies" should head the administration of the islands, he strongly felt that a military command chain, with himself as Governor General, would improve the efficiency of the operation.⁴⁰

Clashes over policies regarding the removal of certain groups from Navy administered Pacific Islands revealed unresolved misconceptions about local ethnicities. Without question, both Edwards and Nimitz agreed that the return of the Japanese to mainland Japan was consistent with strategic efforts to dismantle the Japanese Empire and its holdings. For Edwards, such a

³⁸Memorandum, Post-War Plan for Civil Administration Under Jurisdiction of the Navy, September 17, 1945, RG 38, Box 1, NARA; Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, 74-77.

³⁹Memorandum, Post-War Plan for Civil Administration Under Jurisdiction of the Navy, September 17, 1945, 2.

⁴⁰Memorandum, Post-War Civil Government: Comments by CINCPAC, October 4, 1945, RG 38, Box 1, NARA, 2.

removal sufficiently met the objective. “We will kick out the Japs,” he stated, “Others, including Okinawans, should be left.” Removal of other groups, he reasoned, would make America appear as a victorious conqueror. He clearly identified Okinawans as a distinct ethnic group from the Japanese and as bystanders to the violence of war.⁴¹ Nimitz, however, desired the removal of all groups to even include those residing on the islands whose ethnic roots tied them to Spain and Germany.⁴² Edwards’ view of the Okinawans and others who had served the Empire as distinctly different from the Japanese was consistent with the Navy. Nimitz’ favor for complete removal grew from his desire for clear command in the region, not from deep adversarial sentiments. His call for the disposal of Spanish priests and nuns and the appointment of American clergy, for example, streamlined American authority and funneled an approved message to the local populations.⁴³

Sabin appealed to both viewpoints and highlighted the benefits of each side when presenting the conflict to higher Admirals. Sabin suggested the submission of a previous version of the Plan that contained the military oversight that Nimitz required.⁴⁴ Sabin’s willingness to adjust the document so readily to an earlier draft demonstrated the fluidity of the directive and the lack of urgency on the part of Naval leadership to act directly and decisively in the execution of military government. The Plan lagged through revisions and approvals for months while Navy men solved military government problems in the camps and villages daily. Sabin made his offer of resurrecting an older version of the document, an act that undoubtedly would require

⁴¹Ibid, 1-2.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Although, he was not particularly religious himself, Nimitz’ daughter Mary became a Dominican nun. (Brayton Harris, *Admiral Nimitz: The Commander of the Pacific Ocean Theater* [New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2012], 219).

⁴⁴Memorandum, Post-War Civil Government: Comments by CINCPAC, October 4, 1945, 2.

additional processing time, in October. Such variability at the strategic level made it difficult for Naval Military Government Headquarters in Okinawa to set definitive guidance for their military government officers to follow.

Naval military government continued to operate with few trained military government officers and ensigns. American military presence on the island decreased by approximately 2,000 troops per a month. As the weather cooled, some units fell to as low as six officers and twenty enlisted men. Murray saw his roster reduced by more than 71%.⁴⁵ The exodus of qualified military personnel placed an increasing amount of strain on military government operations. As expectations of projects expanded from providing basic humanitarian needs to full resettlement, repatriation and society construction, naval military government was pushed to the edges of its capability. Military government policy-makers sought more viable solutions to the manpower shortage than the temporary assignment of soldiers borrowed from demobilizing combat units.

One contested option was to increase the involvement of the Okinawans in administering the camps and districts. In varying forms, Okinawans had participated in American controlled military government since the first soldiers landed on the island in early April. During the battle, however, the Army and the Marines had used Okinawans in administrative positions only as a temporary and limited measure with no intent to build an Okinawan owned community. The Army entrusted only select individuals with ties to the United States to serve in limited capacity as informal leaders in the camps. The Marines' lack of interest and commitment to Civil Affairs

⁴⁵Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 65; Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 9; Administrative and Economic Measures for Okinawa, September 19, 1945, ASCOM; Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands, 1945-1950*, 78; Sarantakes, *Keystone*, 33.

caused them to divert aspects of military government to the Okinawans in order to avoid conducting such tasks themselves.⁴⁶

In July, ASCOM devised a group of Okinawan advisors that, by August, evolved into the Okinawan Advisory Council. Fifteen Okinawan men, recommended by one hundred of their peers, served as advisors to the Deputy Commander for Military Government. ASCOM described the assembly as a “permanent advisory group of Okinawans as a communication device to assist the [military government] authorities in planning and decision-making.”⁴⁷ The creation of the Okinawan Advisory Council marked a significant development in the American military’s assessment of the capability of the Okinawans. The establishment of the council demonstrated American confidence in the intellect, maturity and overall competence of the Okinawan people. ASCOM selected each member of the council based on both exhibited informal leadership and credentials of higher education and superior business sense.⁴⁸ Selected councilmembers had experience as journalists, police commissioners and businessmen, positions consistent with American definitions of prominence. The formation of the council provided the Okinawans with an opportunity to shape their own society, to contribute to the trajectory of their

⁴⁶Administrative and Economic Measures for Okinawa, September 19, 1945, ASCOM, 3; Island Command military government newsletter, Lieutenant Commander Watkins, May 9, 1945, Ryukyus Papers; Okinawan History: Tenth Army Phase, Box 3, Folder 5, U.S. Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA, 1; Technical Bulletin, Military Government, February 25, 1945, 48-49; Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 41; Interview Sheet for Prospective Local Leaders, Appendix to Military Government Operations Report – Ryukyus, August 2, 1945, RG 407, Box 2487, file 110-5, NARA; Comments on Military Government Operation, OKINAWA, 1st Marine Division, 1 April to 26 June, 1945, July 6, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA, 9; Laura Homan Lacey, *Stay Off the Skyline: The Sixth Marine Division on Okinawa* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, 2005), 68; Comments on Military Government Operation, OKINAWA, 6th Marine Division Sector, 1 April to 29 June, 1945, July 6, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA, 2, 5; XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

⁴⁷Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 3, 5; Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyus*, 105; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 62; Administrative and Economic Measures for Okinawa, September 19, 1945, ASCOM, 3.

⁴⁸The Government Program for Okinawa, Colonel Charles I. Murray, January 15, 1946, RG 200, Reel 5, Folder 3-V-7, NARA, 2; Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands, 1945-1950*, 105.

lives and to demonstrate to the Americans that they could govern themselves.⁴⁹ The organization elevated Okinawan influence above the rigors of daily village life and broke them out of the constraints of minor leadership roles within the camps, such as laundry supervision or food rationing.

The full launching of the council moved slowly. By mid-September, the men had only received orientations but not yet offered advice on any issue. By design, the council did not transfer any responsibility to the Okinawans. As mere advisors, the men provided input to Murray who retained sole decision-making authority.⁵⁰ While the formation of the council signified a marked departure from early opinions of the Okinawans as helpless and weak, military government still remained an endeavor strongly held and controlled by the Americans. Military government officials consistently placed themselves in positions to dictate action and control direction.⁵¹ Okinawan councilmembers could only offer advice not devise or lead a project. Practically, the disorganization of Naval military government precluded the option of releasing any control from American authorities.

While still limited, Okinawans exercised slightly more influence within the sixteen newly formed districts and at camp level than at the higher levels of military government administration. In efforts to build the economy, local industries such as handicrafts, laundry, carpentry and tea and tobacco production stayed under the auspices of the Okinawan population.

⁴⁹Naval military government officers like Caldwell witnessed the Okinawans' leadership and organizational skills. Later, Caldwell would use such demonstrations of ability to convince higher level leaders to give more responsibility to the Okinawans. (Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 7; A Political and Economic Plan for the Rehabilitation of Okinawa, Lieutenant John T. Caldwell, September 12, 1945, RG 200, Reel 8, Folder 2-VIII-2, NARA).

⁵⁰Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 3, 5; Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyus*, 105; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 62; Administrative and Economic Measures for Okinawa, September 19, 1945, ASCOM, 3.

⁵¹Administrative and Economic Measures for Okinawa, September 19, 1945, ASCOM, 2.

Naval military government directed that “the leadership and management of various industries should be placed in the hands of skilled native leaders.” District commanders supervised the work, albeit with directorial responsibilities. In addition to economic benefits, the Navy encouraged Okinawan efforts in sewing, cutting hair and peanut farming because it “aid[ed] in the health and comfort” of the population. While Okinawans gained more ownership over daily community routines, their contributions to the commerce of their district were restricted to manufacturing. Few, if any, Okinawans oversaw mass production of a local industry and services rarely grew beyond the individual district; the products almost exclusively benefitted the district residents. Military government cultivated local industry projects to assist in the establishment of the community but also to occupy its residents. By retaining a supervisory role, district commanders contained Okinawan local leadership initiatives and regulated the direction of economic growth.⁵²

The involvement of Okinawans in both goods production at the district level and the Okinawan Advisory Council helped alleviate some of the strain on military government operations caused by a lack of military manpower. Okinawan participation in military government programs, however, served a greater purpose than simply offsetting personnel shortages. The Navy sought to establish economic, political, and social structures that reflected Okinawan customs and traditions, a task that they could not complete without the contribution of the Okinawan people. Practically, a shortage of sailors made reconstructing the Okinawan community in an American image an impossibility. Okinawa bore no resemblance to America; creating institutions based on American principles required work beginning at the most

⁵²Directive Number 7, September 23, 1945, United States Military Government Headquarters; Directive 5, September 23, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters.

rudimentary level and a greater level of expertise in complicated areas such as law and democratic government. An Okinawan society built on a foundation of its own traditions and customs presented many advantages: with a limited work force, the Navy could build off of the basics that already existed and the Okinawans readily accepted the improvements because of the cultural familiarity. Participation of the population became a key component; the Navy lacked the in-depth cultural knowledge to restore a viable Okinawan community. For the civilians, military government programs now presented more opportunities for involvement and leadership. Okinawans played a role in resettlement; elected local mayors called “shicho” organized the people by their former villages or “muras” and compiled manifests for movement.⁵³ Committees of Okinawans mediated conflicts among the civilians. “Okinawans themselves managed the details of the resettlement,” military government reports acknowledged, “[they] determined the location and layout of the new settlement...the allocation of land for farming purposes, the establishment of community projects such as schools.”⁵⁴ An Okinawan police force augmented the military police and assisted with escorting the resettlement movements and handling local disputes as well.⁵⁵

⁵³Directive Number 6: Former Residence of Civilians, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, September 27, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 6-7, 44, 65; Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 9; Administrative and Economic Measures for Okinawa, September 19, 1945, ASCOM; Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands, 1945-1950*, 78; Directive Number 129, March 18, 1946, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters; History of Operations on Okinawa, November, 1945, 2LT P.J. Conti, 5; Dorfman Collection, Part II, Veterans History Project.

⁵⁴Directive Number 29, October 23, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, 1; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 8.

⁵⁵Directive Number 9, September 28, 1945, United States Military Government Headquarters; Directive Number 6, September 27, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters; Directive Number 19, October 23, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 11.

While the Navy's decision to base economic and political institution building on Okinawan practices stemmed from practical considerations such as a lack of personnel and resources, the emphasis on Okinawan tradition forced the Navy to consider the differences between Okinawan and Japanese customs and to commit to the conclusion that the Okinawans were ethnically distinct. Enthusiastic young officers like Caldwell began laying the foundations for programs that greatly increased the role of the Okinawans beyond participation and toward ownership. Their work rested on the belief that the Okinawans had the intellectual capacity to handle the intricacies of government and the leadership abilities to form strong, united communities. "The Okinawans have demonstrated convincingly that they possess sufficient indigenous leadership to manage their own affairs in much larger degree than is allowed them at present," they wrote.⁵⁶

The plans championed a new view of the Okinawans as a civilized group rather than as docile, obedient people. Ideas such as the creation of a Chiji or Okinawan Governor went beyond an advisory body of local men; the Chiji held responsibility for the design of the government. The military government officers did recognize the ethnic differences between the Okinawans and the Japanese but, in keeping with the simplicity of using structures already in place, the plan proposed the continuation of the Japanese prefectural system.⁵⁷ The Chiji, however, could shape the substance of the government in the model of his own traditions and customs; he would "develop and appoint a central administration and would propose local units

⁵⁶Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 7; A Political and Economic Plan for the Rehabilitation of Okinawa, Lieutenant John T. Caldwell, September 12, 1945, RG 200, Reel 8, Folder 2-VIII-2, NARA.

⁵⁷Okinawa, despite American occupation, remained a part of Japan as a prefecture. (Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands, 1945-1960*, 89-120).

of government.”⁵⁸ The Okinawan Advisory Council, also referred to as the Civilian Advisory Council, would remain as an advisory body to the Deputy Commander. Consistent with the Navy’s requirement to ensure military government development remained within the boundaries of the budget and political interest of the United States, the military still retained some oversight; the Deputy Commander appointed the Chiji and the Civilian Affairs Department “supervised [the] activities” of the Civilian Advisory Council.⁵⁹ The plan included a “competent [military government] inspection system” as a mechanism to monitor the work of the Okinawans and safeguard the evolving government from drifting outside of what the United States could support.⁶⁰ Despite naval oversight, the proposed plan greatly increased the influence of the Okinawans; it even assigned authority for establishing civilian conduct regulations to a civilian administration.⁶¹

The plan circulated through higher levels of military government leadership throughout the fall to generally positive responses and, by late October, the Commandant of Naval Operating Base granted Murray authority to enact any changes he desired. Thorough planning did not translate into immediate implementation. Despite his enthusiasm for the plan, Murray remained bogged down in immediate emergencies and daily decisions. Even though he complained of a small staff, he failed to manage them efficiently. The plan stayed with Murray for months; he did not distribute responsibility for projects among his staff.⁶² From November to

⁵⁸Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 7; A Political and Economic Plan for the Rehabilitation of Okinawa, September 12, 1945, Lieutenant Caldwell.

⁵⁹Ibid; Directive Number 11, September 29, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters.

⁶⁰Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 7.

⁶¹Ibid; A Political and Economic Plan for the Rehabilitation of Okinawa, September 12, 1946, Lieutenant Caldwell.

⁶²Caldwell was not the only military government officer to submit a proposal for the operation of military government. Navy Lieutenant Fred Bartlett, a Government Officer, submitted a proposal to Government Officer

mid-December, Navy military government continued to operate in an ad hoc, disorganized manner. Innovations stalled and military government officers at the districts continued to solve immediate problems within their areas on a day to day or month to month rate. While the Navy did begin to rely on civilian participation to round out military government programs, disenchanted officers that worked in the districts described the use of the local population as “clumsy and inadequate.”⁶³

As fall transitioned into winter, the island began to settle into a peacetime pace. Engineer units built clubs, messes and living quarters while more officers traveled freely in military jeeps for personal use.⁶⁴ The absence of a threat relaxed the troops and gave them opportunities for individual activities. Sailors could visit movie houses and enjoy beer. Planning for family housing began. John Dorfman, a Navy military government officer who managed the distribution of civilian labor, taught high school mathematics to fellow seamen and learned how to type.⁶⁵ Okinawa Base Command (OBASCOM) started a University Study Center for the soldiers, sailors, and Marines. By late November, the United States raised a flag over the newly

Commander Murdock. It argued for the re-establishment of the prefecture but not for high levels of Okinawan responsibility. Bartlett’s plan was better received by Murdock partly because the plan originated from Murdock’s office. Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 8-9, 16; Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, 105; Directive Number 18: Memoranda on the mission and procedure of Military Government, Okinawa, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, October 11, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Directive Number 11, September 29, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters.

⁶³Military Government Mission on Okinawa and Recommended Measures, October 18, 1945, Lieutenant Caldwell, 2-3.

⁶⁴Directive Number 7, September 23, 1945, United States Military Government Headquarters; Dorfman Collection, Part II, Veterans History Project.

⁶⁵Dorfman Collection, Part III, Veterans History Project; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 66, 71-73.

established Okinawan Base and slightly lifted the restrictions on late night movement for both civilians and the military. In response to the calm, troops turned in their weapons.⁶⁶

Occupation duties still required seaman to work every day from early morning to late night. The island lay in ruin from destruction caused by the battle, its land, riddled with half buried unexploded munitions, unable to support sufficient farming. Tactical military units still dominated routes.⁶⁷ Typhoons ripped through the island destroying construction projects, living areas and ports. Stilwell complained that typhoons made it “a struggle to get to the mess hall.” He described damage caused by the storms with one simple word, “Bad.”⁶⁸ The high winds and rains destroyed 15% of the few crops that could be planted and forced the civilians to continue to rely on military government support for food. Some civilians resorted to foraging outside of the districts.⁶⁹

⁶⁶Directive Number 33: Okinawan POWs—Reception and Processing of, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, November 15, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Limits of Cognizance and Relations with Army Commands, United States Naval Military Government, January 15, 1946, RG 200, Box 1, Folder 2-VII-2, Reel 3, NARA; Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 89; Memorandum Number 27, June 29, 1945, Military Government Headquarters, 2; Special Proclamation No. 3, November 29, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Special Proclamation No.4, November 29, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; History of Operations on Okinawa, November, 1945, 2LT P.J. Conti, 8; Directive Number 47: Weapons and Ammunition, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, November 15, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA. OBASCOM was formerly known as ASCOM. (Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 56; Occupation timeline, Ed Freimuth, June 8, 1979, Paul Skuse papers, Hoover Institution).

⁶⁷Directive Number 29: Resettlement Plan and Policy, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, October 23, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA, 3; Dorfman Collection, Part III, Veterans History Project.

⁶⁸Sward, Diary, April, 1946; Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 116, 124; Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, 88; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 56.

⁶⁹Directive Number 19: Control of Civilian Movements, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, October 23, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, 87-88. Military government food arrived by ship. Typhoon damage to ports delayed food distribution. (Directive Number 9: Civilian Rations Issue, Reduction of, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, September 28, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 45; Dorfman Collection, Part II, Veterans History Project).

Devastating typhoons and the prioritization of mainland's occupation caused delays in supply shipments. Navy military government's tendency to operate with temporary programs and its failure to have foresight or patience caused many initiatives to fall short of completion as well. Mismanagement by the Navy placed strain on the Okinawan people; poorly planned relocation movements forced civilians to walk long distances to destinations that ended only at another district, rather than an established mura and uneven food distribution caused a cut in rations by half. Despite some military government officers setting aside excess food without adding it to the quota, Okinawans still rummaged through dumps and refrigerated vans for spoiled food.⁷⁰ Above all, the Okinawans longed to return home and reunite with family members. Relocation moved slowly; months passed and the population continued to reside in districts and camps. Even Okinawan participation in organizing resettlement did little to increase the efficiency.⁷¹

Dissatisfied with the unsuccessful efforts of the Navy, some Okinawans abandoned the camps to search for homes and food by themselves. Most of their efforts only caused additional hardship. Those that left the camps and districts abandoned what support the military government did provide. The civilian population depended on military government for 75% of their food supply. "If [the Okinawans] had anything, it was from the military," explained one

⁷⁰Directive Number 27: Available items for use of civilians, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, October 18, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Dorfman Collection, Part II, Veterans History Project; Diary, April, 1946, Sward; Rex H. Conley Collection, Veterans History Project, Jackson County Historical Society. Calorie counts reduced from 1990 calories per day to 1530 calories per day in August 1945. This was later reduced by half in late September 1945. Military government units were highly encouraged to salvage for food to make up for the lost calories. (Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 45; Directive Number 9: Civilian Rations Issue, Reduction of, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, September 28, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA).

⁷¹Directive Number 29, October 23, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, 3; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 45; Dorfman Collection, Part II, Veterans History Project.

military government officer.⁷² Okinawans that trekked out on their own encountered unspent munitions and barren land that prevented farming. Rarely did they locate family members.⁷³

Okinawans that wandered outside designated military government areas encountered American combat troops but those that stayed within the districts did as well. With most significant mopping-up missions culminating by early winter, approximately 30,000 tactical troops found themselves less engaged in military work. Looking to unwind from the tension of combat, troops roamed into areas heavily inhabited by civilians. As a result, two sizeable groups interfered with military government operations by circulating “unauthorized [and] uncontrolled” around the island. Free movement and co-mingling among the military and civilians outside the parameters of official duties ignited fears of fraternization and disrupted resettlement. Without proper accountability of the Okinawans, the Navy could not accurately send the people to the right villages and homes. NOB, OBASCOM, and Naval military government worked together to enforce measures to separate the military from the civilians. Regulations prevented combat troops from entering civilian districts and camps; the Okinawans reserved exclusive access to the area north of Route 6 and military traffic outside of military government required a pass issued from either Naval Military Government Headquarters or the Provost Marshall.⁷⁴ As a control measure, the Navy continued the wartime practice of requiring all civilians to move under guard;

⁷²Dorfman Collection, Part II, Veterans History Project.

⁷³Directive Number 9, September 28, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 45.

⁷⁴Directive Number 19, October 23, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters; NOB Order No. 18-45, November 5, 1945, Office of the Commandant, Naval Operating Base; Memorandum Number 50: Off Limits Areas, Okinawa Base Command, November 20, 1945 RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 6-7, 72; Directive Number 13: Area Assignment; United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, October 2, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Directive Number 12, October 2, 1945, United States Military Government Headquarters.

no civilian could attempt relocation by themselves. Military police delegated some of the guard duty to Okinawan police. Police returned civilians moving freely “at large” back to camps for punishment under a military government court system.⁷⁵ Unlike control measures implemented by the Army and the Marines during the war, Navy military government had no concerns with safety; it did not control Okinawan movement to protect American military secrets or troops from armed civilians. The military no longer viewed Okinawans as possible enemy; combatant Okinawans had returned to their families from Prisoner of War camps and U.S. soldiers had turned in and locked up their weapons.⁷⁶

Close living with the Okinawans encouraged congenial feelings between the Navy military government personnel and the civilians. The change happened gradually as the days moved farther away from the end of the war. Sailors emphasized with the tragic circumstances of the civilians and acknowledged “their difficult time.” With sympathy came a desire to help and a belief in the nobility of their work. Lauding their accomplishments, they saw the camps as a place of great benefit; the population “could get whatever they needed. It really helped their lives.” Within the districts, military government personnel related to Okinawans on a human level; they knew them, they learned about their families, they connected with their personalities and they cared about them. They formed relationships. “[Okinawans were] very friendly, you know – just good,” a labor officer stated, “Good people.”⁷⁷

⁷⁵Directive Number 19, October 23, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters; NOB Order No. 18-45, November 5, 1945, Office of the Commandant, Naval Operating Base; Memorandum Number 50, November 20, 1945, Okinawa Base Command; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 72.

⁷⁶Directive Number 33, November 15, 1945, United States Military Government Headquarters.

⁷⁷ Dorfman Collection, Part III, Veterans History Project; Diary, April, 1946, Sward; Rex H. Conley Collection, Veterans History Project, Jackson County Historical Society.

As military government built rapport with the population, the idea of Okinawans as competent contributors became less controversial. Americans began to attribute more characteristics of intelligence and cultural sophistication to the population. References to Okinawans in official documents used the words “the people,” a term that implies humanity and civic responsibility, rather than the previously used “natives,” a term that implies savagery and basic living. Military government policy created regulations for Okinawans that differed from regulations devised for the Japanese as fears of an Okinawan enemy disappeared. American troops continued to patrol for Japanese Prisoners of War and, once found, still detained them in Prisoner of War camps. Okinawans that fought alongside the Japanese left Prisoner of War camps for military government camps and reunited with their families as quickly as practicable. Re-categorized as Okinawan civilians, each former Prisoner of War had only one minor accountability task to “report to [the] Chief of Police of [the] district once each week.”⁷⁸

On November 24, Admiral Raymond A. Spruance replaced Admiral Nimitz as the Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas (CINCPAC-CINCPAC). A United States Naval Academy graduate, Spruance had performed brilliantly in the Battle of Midway and earned a reputation through his years of service for high intelligence, modesty,

⁷⁸Directive Number 9, September 28, 1945, United States Military Government Headquarters; Directive Number 33, November 15, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters; Limits of Cognizance, January 15, 1946, United States Naval Military Government; Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 89; Memorandum Number 27, June 29, 1945, Military Government Headquarters, 2; Special Proclamation No. 3, November 29, 1945, United States Naval Military Government; Special Proclamation No.4, November 29, 1945, United States Naval Military Government; History of Operations on Okinawa, November, 1945, 2LT P.J. Conti, 8; Directive Number 47: Weapons and Ammunition, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, November 15, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 56; History of Operations on Okinawa by 2LT Johnson, Historical officer, OBASCOM, June, 1946, RG 407, Entry 427, NARA; Historical report, OBASCOM, July 1946, RG 407, Box 2, File 98-BC6-0.2, NARA, 2; Speech, November 21, 1947, Paul Skuse; Occupation timeline, June 8, 1979, Ed Freimuth.

composure, decisiveness, yet also a willingness to listen to the contributions of others.⁷⁹

Spruance's methodical approach to military challenges made him well-suited to face the malaise of Naval military government. He published two orders related to military government operations. One announced an incentive program designed to retain skilled military government officers and the other detailed Spruance's policy for military government procedures throughout the Pacific, to include the Marianas and Marshall Islands as well as Okinawa. He issued comprehensive guidance that included a clearly defined mission with five sub points and identified mission completion criteria. He greatly expanded upon the idea of setting up Okinawa economically and socially, and centralized the development of education programs. Spruance's directive contributed far more than simple clarity and defined direction. The directive changed the core program of Naval military government and moved it towards a new intention. Spruance ordered Naval military government to assist in establishing "self-governing communities" that, once firmly formed, would serve as the basis of a permanent structure with appropriate authority to regulate itself. The directive took the current program of building communities based on Okinawan traditions and expanded it by minimizing and gradually eliminating the role of the American forces in the construction and sustainment of Okinawan society. Spruance saw the Okinawans as full leaders, administrators, and officials.⁸⁰

Self-sufficient Okinawan communities would allow for the termination of American occupational responsibility. Strategically, Washington, D.C. recognized the geographic and

⁷⁹Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II: Victory in the Pacific, 1945* (New Jersey: Castle Books, 1960), 103; *United States Naval Administration in World War II, Volume 149* (Washington DC: Director of Naval History).

⁸⁰U.S. Naval Military Government, Pacific Ocean Areas, Serial 52855, Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, CINCPAC, December 12, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA, 1; Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 33; Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands, 1945-1950*, 121-122; Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 9-13.

political advantage of Okinawa; the island extended the influence of the U.S. out into the Pacific Ocean without offending the amiable development of Japan's occupation under MacArthur. Okinawan air bases could serve as strategic deterrence platforms against the questionable intentions of former Allies. Okinawa needed a self-reliant population, functional institutions, and adequate sustenance in order for the island to support multiple American air strips, bases, and military platforms. A lengthy commitment to humanitarian assistance would bog down military manpower and delay Okinawa from transitioning to its long term role. Spruance understood the strategic interests of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and modified his military government program to support their intent months before they published an order directing him to do so.⁸¹

The success of Spruance's directive rested on the intelligence and competence of Okinawans to administer their own government. While driven by strategic military plans, the investment in Okinawan capability signified Navy military government's greatest departure from previous underestimations of the worth of the Okinawans as a people. The directive called for structures built on Okinawan organizational and cultural principles and run exclusively by Okinawan leadership. "Local governments," Spruance wrote, "should be patterned on the politico-social institutions which the inhabitants evolved for themselves...ultimate ownership and management can be transferred." Education programs "fostered and encouraged instruction in the native language and history and...arts and crafts" and, although instruction in English was

⁸¹Ibid.

“a prime necessity,” Spruance specifically made note that this reversion to American references was “not to be construed as discouraging instruction in native language.”⁸²

The fundamental driving principle behind the directive was to swiftly eradicate the need for naval personnel in occupation duties. Rooting the society in Okinawan practices eased implementation and thus supported a quicker withdrawal. Spruance fully recognized the practical military reasons for increasing Okinawan authority but he also had confidence in the Okinawan ability to govern themselves to the extent necessary for American release from the military government mission. He authorized the use of training centers on Guam for educating Okinawans “who demonstrate a capability and adaptability for advanced work and who should be considered as a potential source of teachers and government officials” and he approved the Medical Training Center on Guam to train Okinawan doctors and nurses. He condemned cheap labor practices so that the Okinawans could “enjoy the full benefits of their own labor and enterprise.” To ensure Okinawan autonomy, Spruance moved officers and ensigns to an ancillary role and ordered the placement of Okinawans at the forefront of military government operations.⁸³

Under the incentive program, Murray appointed Caldwell as Director of the Civilian Affairs Department, endorsed his plan for increased Okinawan responsibility and allowed him to select his own team of officers.⁸⁴ Caldwell took over his new position with full support for his

⁸²Serial 52855, December 12, 1945, CINCPAC, Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, 3-4; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 62; LCDR James Watkins, Later Phases: Public Safety, RG 200, Reel 8, Folder 3-V-7, NARA, 13-14.

⁸³Serial 52855, December 12, 1945, CINCPAC, Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, 3-5; CINCPAC/POA Pearl, Dispatch 10196/NCR 2698 to NOB, April 12, 1946, RG 38, Box 170, NARA.

⁸⁴Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 9-13; Memorandum Number 154: U.S. Naval Military Government, Pacific Ocean Areas, Deputy Commander for Military Government, December 12, 1945, RG 200, Box 1, Folder 2-VII-2, Reel 3, NARA.

ideas from not only Murray but the CINCPAC as well. In Caldwell, U.S. Naval Military Government had a leader who strongly believed in the intellectual and managerial competence of the Okinawans and in the Navy's support role of assisting them. "Our job," he stated, "[is] to take care of these people, to get our feet muddy."⁸⁵ With a crew of like-minded officers and an approved plan that now corresponded with the intent of his higher headquarters, Caldwell had full power to create dramatic change. Spruance's vision not only laid out a comprehensive new approach to military government but his personnel policies allowed the right officers and ensigns to implement it. As a result, December marked a spectacular shift in military government policy that wholly embraced the already growing acknowledgement of the Okinawans as a sophisticated people with skills and acumen akin to those found in developed societies.

The Navy began an overhaul of existing programs. Starting with resettlement, military government dissolved and merged districts in order to reconstitute the mura in its correct form, complete with settlement sub-divisions called azas. The construction of the muras gave the civilians a place to relocate to and camps closed in the late spring and early summer as their usefulness as holding areas expired. To aid in the development of the villages, the American military returned unused land. Within five months, over half of the dislocated population arrived at close approximations of their home villages.⁸⁶

⁸⁵Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 8.

⁸⁶By May 31, 1946, 138,000 Okinawans had arrived at close approximations of their home villages. (Directive Number 58: Township (Mura) Administration – Organization of, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, December 4, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Directive Number 84: Administrative reorganization for Military Government, United States Naval Military Government, January 2, 1946, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Occupation timeline, June 8, 1979, Ed Freimuth, 4; Directive Number 129, March 18, 1946, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, 9; Directive Number 96: Mura Administration – control of, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, January 12, 1946, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Memorandum Number 27, June 29, 1945, Military Government Headquarters, 2; Directive Number 24: Revision of Districts and District Boundaries United States Naval Military Government, October 21, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 8, 62; Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 13).

Within the azas and muras, Okinawans served as headman (soncho), assistant headman (joyaku) and chief (shunin). By April 1946, the Okinawan Advisory Council along with mura leaders, selected Koshin Shikiya as the Chiji, governor of Okinawa. The Chiji's responsibilities included following directives outlined by the Navy, submitting mandatory monthly reports, working directly with the newly formed Central Okinawan Administration and expanding the accountabilities of the Okinawan committees and organizations. Shikiya also managed councils at all levels and supplied men to fill vacancies in the interim between elections.⁸⁷

A pleasant man, with a long career as a principal and educator, Shikiya approached his duties as Chiji with the utmost seriousness. He fully exercised the power granted to him by representing the concerns of the population, pushing for changes and working on equal footing with the military government officers. His well-presented speeches and eloquently written letters served as vehicles to inspire confidence in the civilians, establish the legitimacy of his administration and mollify the Americans. His message to his people emphasized that the government belonged to them and urged them to actively shape their own communities. He issued proclamations written by the Navy to the population; his image and title allowed him to influence the people through positional and charismatic leadership, and thus inspire Okinawan agreement under empowered conditions. Shikiya's ownership of the only Okinawan newspaper, "Uruma Shimpo," offered him an outlet for further control. Through the command of information distribution, he affected the population and garnered their support for all military

⁸⁷Military Government Directive 156, April 22, 1946 RG 407, File 227-12, NARA Report of Government Section for April 1946, May 4, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 1-2 Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 63-64; Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 11-14; Memorandum Number 27, June 29, 1945, Military Government Headquarters; Military Government Directive Number 2, April 30, 1946, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Directive Number 96, January 12, 1946, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters; Military Government Directive Number 5, May 4, 1946 RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, 85, 109-110; Military Government Directive Number 3, May 3, 1946, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

government programs as he saw fit. Most Okinawans recognized the fundamental shift in military government and readily embraced their newfound ownership in government and society. Shikiya embodied the physical example of Okinawan rule; his policies and programs further increased the involvement of Okinawans in administration from small, informal actions like voting to larger leadership in councils and in villages.⁸⁸

To ensure a successful transition from American oversight to Okinawan governance, Navy military government instituted a process of sequential steps that sought to gradually relinquish control. Each administrative department had an assigned military government officer that would develop his department on the Okinawan model, staffed by Okinawans. Once the department appeared ready for independent operations, the military government officer would assume an advisory role only.⁸⁹ Ultimately, the process would reap a complete transfer of military government over to the Okinawans by means of a structured timetable that ensured the Okinawans assumed control only when ready. Establishing sturdy, permanent Okinawan institutions required time as the Okinawans recovered from the damages of the war. Steady,

⁸⁸Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 11-14; Diary, April, 1946, Sward; Report of Government Section for April 1946, May 4, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 1-2; Directive Number 58, December 4, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters; Directive Number 84, January 2, 1946, United States Naval Military Government; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 63-64; Speech, November 21, 1947, Paul Skuse; Sarantakes, *Keystone*, 34, 36; Military Government Directive Number 20, June 25, 1946, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Military Government Directive Number 11, May 22, 1946, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Memorandum Number 27, June 29, 1945, Military Government Headquarters, 5-6; Directive Number 129, March 18, 1946, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, 6, 11; Speech by Koshin Shikiya, July 1, 1946, RG 200, Box 1, Folder 2-VIII-2, Reel 8, NARA; Koshin Shikiya letter to Paul Skuse, May 3, 1948, Paul Skuse papers, Hoover Institute.

⁸⁹The Civilian Affairs Department was abolished and replaced with the General Affairs Department. Legal, Labor, Public Health and Agricultural/Industry Departments were also added. The new structure was complete by April, 1946. (Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 11, 13; Directive Number 95: Civilian Affairs Staff Functions – Reorganization of, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, January 12, 1946, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; U.S. Naval Military Government Administration in the Ryukyu Islands, Serial 0048, Admiral J.H. Towers, February 8, 1946, RG 38, Box 157, NARA; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 11, 63; Directive Number 58, December 4, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters; Directive Number 84, January 2, 1946, United States Naval Military Government).

slow implementation safeguarded against failure. American oversight continued as a stabilizing force that aided Okinawan recuperation while paving the way for their inheritance.⁹⁰

Military government worked meticulously to reconstitute an amenable Okinawan society based on accurate Okinawan traditions and practices. Only authentic structures had any chance of gaining permanence. The men that Caldwell chose as his top advisors had backgrounds in political science and extensive knowledge of Okinawan culture. In building the framework for the Okinawan run programs, they carefully analyzed Okinawan customs and history, and separated Japanese practices from Ryukyuan tradition. Caldwell's men had an elevated understanding of the ethnic differences and political strain between Japan and Okinawa. They acknowledged not only Okinawan competence for leadership but also the civilians' identity as a disparate group from the Japanese; military government efforts did not rehabilitate an enemy but rather revitalized a victimized island people. Lieutenant Commander James Watkins believed that laws firmly grounded within the cultural beliefs of a society built a strong foundation for civil order. Economist Henry Lawrence "advance[ed] any way possible the human welfare of the people" and championed initiatives that worked within the framework of the present Okinawan economy. Willard "Red" Hanna, described as "absolutely determined," worked to restart schools and invigorate the handicraft industry; he empowered Okinawans by assigning them the responsibility of beginning and managing community projects. School subjects included Okinawan History and Geography taught by Okinawan teachers. The reorganized Okinawan Public Works designed homes with traditional Okinawan style porticos. "The

⁹⁰The Government Program for Okinawa, United States Naval Military Government, January 15, 1946, RG 200, Folder 3-V-7, Reel 5; The Mission of US Naval Military Government, Okinawa, United States Naval Military Government, January 15, 1946, RG 200, Box 1, Folder 2-VII-2, Reel 3; Directive Number 129, March 18, 1946, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, 6-8; Directive Number 84, January 2, 1946, United States Naval Military Government; Serial 0048, February 8, 1946, Admiral J.H. Towers, 2-3; CINCPAC, Dispatch 110206/NCR 2590 to NOB, April 11, 1946, RG 38, Box 157, NARA.

attitudes and characteristics of the Okinawans,” stated Murray, “in great measure conditioned all Military Government.”⁹¹

As they fulfilled their military government duties in accordance with Spruance’s directive, most soldiers and seaman felt they had gained a basic understanding of Okinawan ethnicity and how it differed from that of the Japanese. By January, 1946 they visually differentiated between Okinawan and Japanese people with a discerning eye that noticed more than just filthy clothing and states of duress. Sailors noticed distinct physical characteristics that they attributed to ethnic lineages. They classified the Okinawans as “really, really tiny people” with mixed roots from New Guinea, China, and Japan. Seamen explained that “you could tell [who the Japanese were] because they were generally taller. And their heads were a different shape; their heads were slightly pointed.”⁹² The ability to differentiate between the Japanese and the Okinawans during peacetime military government under the Navy did not hold the deadly consequences that it did during wartime for soldiers and Marines. Under battle conditions, accurately separating friendly from enemy was vital to survival. In contrast, military government sailors needed clarity between the two ethnicities to properly distribute benefits and correctly execute repatriation and community building. Dorfman, as labor paymaster, relied on his ability to visually discern the Japanese that waited hopefully in line for pay or work. Like all its benefits and programs, military government reserved the opportunity for work for the

⁹¹Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 4, 8, 13, 49-50; Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 15-16; Later Phases: Public Safety, LCDR Watkins, 13-14; Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, 100; Directive Number 129, March 18, 1946, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, 6-8; Military Government Headquarters Memorandum No.23, June 22, 1946, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

⁹²Dorfman Collection, Part III, Veterans History Project; Directive 70: Officer-of-the-Day and Guard, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, December 13, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

Okinawans. The Japanese scared Dorfman but he related to the Okinawans who he called “the nicest people.”⁹³

Navy military government officers like Dorfman viewed Okinawans as a people ravaged by war and exploited by Japan.⁹⁴ Navy men correctly attributed the impoverished lives of the Okinawans to devastation caused by the battle and not to an absence of civilization. Sailors, noticing the pride with which the Okinawans recounted their Ryukyuan Kingdom history, referred to the population as “independent operators,” despite accepting their status as imperial subjects. Repatriation initiatives transferred 105,000 Okinawans away from Japan and back to Okinawa. Several military government officials sought the restoration of an independent mail service and international trade. Okinawan theatrical performers entertained American troops in military base theaters; museums in the United States exhibited Okinawan oil paintings and water colors. The Navy even went so far as to call Okinawa a former prefecture. To the Americans, Okinawa held all the charm, sophistication, and autonomy of a civilized nation.⁹⁵

Esteem for the Okinawans did not mean the Americans accepted the people as cultural equals. Instead, the Americans believed in an ethnic hierarchy. The Japanese, assessed as inferior and animal-like, and blamed for extinguishing the comfortable, flourishing rural life Okinawa enjoyed previously to war, held the bottom rung of development. America naturally

⁹³Dorfman Collection, Part III, Veterans History Project; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 47, 73; History of Operations on Okinawa, March, 1946, 2LT P.J. Conti, 3, 6-7; Directive 70, December 13, 1945, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, 2.

⁹⁴Dorfman Collection, Part III, Veterans History Project.

⁹⁵Directive Number 129, March 18, 1946, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, 7-8; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 4-5, 16-15, 75-76. The repatriated Okinawans were mostly conscripts and those transferred to mainland because the Japanese government assessed them to have only a marginal ability to contribute to the war effort. (CINCAFPAC, Dispatch 221255/NCR 4424 to CINCPAC, April 24, 1946, RG 38, Box 157, NARA; CINCPAC/CINCPAC Pearl, Dispatch 040316/NCR 8081 to NOB Okinawa, January 4, 1946, RG 38, Box 157, NARA; Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands, 1945-1950*, 91).

placed itself, with its deemed superior Western way, on the civilized top. The Okinawans, categorized as “oriental,” remained relegated to a middle space, the benchmark for civilized success set at a much lower standard than that of Western nations.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, the ethnic hierarchy elevated Okinawa above Japan in terms of societal progress. Marking a development far beyond the initial impression of the Okinawans as a subservient, ingenuous group, Americans now viewed Okinawans as a sophisticated people with an identity independent from Japan.

Pleasant interactions between Okinawans and Americans led to increased incidents of fraternization. As military government sailors began to value Okinawans as intelligent people, their curiosity and desire for interaction grew. Not all contact linked to sex and love; some sailors found themselves fascinated with the lifestyle of the islanders. Fraternization, however, signified a massive nightmare in order, discipline, and control. Overly friendly encounters disrupted operations since they threatened the sailors’ ability to remain unbiased and distracted them from their duties. Pregnancies and births also strained the medical and supply systems. Despite regulations restricting intermingling, Military Police arrested 904 soldiers and sailors for trespassing into off limits areas.⁹⁷

Okinawans expressed conflicting feelings about the American interest in building personal relationships. They recognized the advantages to closer associations with Americans; even though the island remained a prefecture of Japan, the political and economic future of Okinawa did best on a global stage if closely bonded in positive diplomacy with America. Some Okinawans even genuinely fell in love and married. Most military government personnel held the Okinawans in high regard and co-mingled peacefully with the population in business and

⁹⁶Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 5.

⁹⁷Directive Number 129, March 18, 1946, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, 8,11; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 66, 71-73.

romance. Unfortunately, some American troops committed crimes against the population that included rapes and assaults. The incidents of poor conduct happened at such a frequency that military government officials felt they needed to minimize the appearance of the misconduct; Lieutenant Commander Paul Skuse, the Chief of Police, tore up most reports of American criminal wrongdoing and Murray wrote in his closeout report on July 1, 1946 that Naval military government had no court martials, its members exercised high discipline. The willful destruction of the reports called into question law enforcement's ability to protect civilians from troops; it also clearly signified a failing by senior military government officers in their "responsibility for discipline of [their] officers and men."⁹⁸ The Okinawans did not accept the inappropriate behavior and, empowered by their increased ownership in their communities, took a stance against fraternization. As their leader, Shikiya spearheaded a campaign to remove offenders by methodically cataloging the crimes committed against his people. Some Okinawans acted within their communities; residents of one mura alleged killed three Americans for repeatedly raping the women. The civilians demanded to keep anti-fraternization laws in place well past most other post war occupied territories.⁹⁹

By the spring of 1946, the Okinawans began to move into roles of greater responsibility within the government. Work in textiles, pottery, lacquerware and woodworking blossomed into full industries that benefitted beyond the immediate village. Common elections for local

⁹⁸Directive Number 129, March 18, 1946, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, 8,11; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 66, 70-73; Memorandum Number 6: Transportation of Civilians, Army Service Command I, August 22, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Paul Skuse letter to Ed Freimuth, June 15, 1979, Paul Skuse papers, Hoover Institute, 2.

⁹⁹Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 66, 70-73; Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands, 1945-1960*, 85; MSgt Daniel Wheaton message to Public Affairs, April 27, Kadena Air Base History, KAB Active 7(7-2-C), Archives K-L, Kadena Air Base Archives; Calvin Sims, "3 Dead Marines and a Secret of Wartime Okinawa," *New York Times International*, June 1, 2000, A8.

government positions happened as early as July. Okinawan doctors and nurses took over primary responsibility for treatment and care of patients. With the exception of U.S. supplies and cadaver disposal which the Navy regulated within American health and sanitation regulations, Okinawans ran their own hospitals and clinics with minimal interference from the Navy. Okinawan doctors numbered in the sixties and handled patients in over 120 dispensaries. An additional workforce of 1,100 people handled administration, supplies, nursing and cleanliness. The local police established a Police Department with a commissioner who reorganized and expanded his forces to over 1,000 men. At the forefront of local dispute resolution, local police served as first responders for civilian matters while military police provided back-up as needed. Once relegated to augmenting the military police and handling only the civilians, Okinawan police expanded their authority to arrests of American military. Okinawans presided over legal actions as well. Effective April 15, low jurisdiction civilian courts ran by Okinawan court officials backed up police action.¹⁰⁰

Okinawan life in the muras improved throughout 1946. With Okinawans at the helm of government, the people felt industrious, useful and galvanized. They lived in rebuilt houses in areas relatively close to their original homes. As much as feasible, they reunited with family members that had survived. They healed from war wounds and ate more regular meals. They attended councils meetings, farmed collectively on healing land and created wares that aided the

¹⁰⁰Memorandum Number 27, June 29, 1945, Military Government Headquarters; Memorandum Number 5, May 4, 1946, 2-3; Legal Administrative Order #2, April 15, 1946, Military Government Headquarters, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Directive Number 95, January 12, 1946, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters; Paul Skuse letter to Ed Freimuth, June 15, 1979, Paul Skuse papers, Hoover Institute; Funakoshi Police Report No. 23: Death of a Policeman in the Line of Duty – Report of, Chinen Police Headquarters, November 1945, Paul Skuse papers, Hoover Institute; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 11, 71,73; Directive Number 129, March 18, 1946, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, 7-9; Limits of Cognizance, January 15, 1946, United States Naval Military Government; Speech, November 21, 1947, Paul Skuse, 5; List of Police Stations and Number of Police Officers Assigned to Each Station on Okinawa, June 3, 1946, Paul Skuse papers, Hoover Institute, 1.

economy. As the Okinawans returned to a life of routine and productivity, frivolous and relaxing tasks found a place. One man spent his time sculpting. Within a budding political, economic and social structure, the Okinawan people found a way to reconstruct their lives. While the muras did not yet resemble pre-war conditions, comparatively they represented a great improvement from tent living in the districts. Mura construction moved slowly and gradually. Repeated storms combined with the low priority of Okinawa's rehabilitation from Washington D.C., caused the restoration of Okinawa to lag behind that of Japan. Spruance's policy, invigorated by passionate men like Caldwell and executed by the dedicated Okinawans had, though, pushed the civilians out of a state of urgent distress. Okinawans still lived on meager resources but, with the bones of society in place and the facilities to foster growth established, the Okinawan people moved beyond the critical poverty brought on by the war.¹⁰¹

The Navy officially retained responsibility for military government for only a short duration. The Army, who still held the battlespace, started sending military government personnel back to Okinawa as early as May. On July 1, 1946, military government officially transitioned from the Navy back to the Army.¹⁰²

In a short ten months, the Navy made tremendous progress towards rehabilitating a war torn community. Recognizing the impossibility of constructing a community based on American laws and regulations, the Navy restored Okinawan society by laying a foundation based on

¹⁰¹Photo collection, 1946, Fred C. Wallace papers, Box 1, Folder 7, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA; Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands, 1945-1950*, 138-139.

¹⁰²Speech, July 1, 1946, Koshin Shikiya; Historical report, July 1946, OBASCOM, 1; Serial 0048, February 8, 1946, Admiral J.H. Towers; History of Operations on Okinawa, June 1946, 2LT Johnson; Memorandum Number 27, June 29, 1945, Military Government Headquarters, 1; NOB Okinawa, Dispatch 010125Z/NCR 3217 to CINCPAC, July 2, 1946, RG 38, Box 157, NARA; CINCPFPAC, Dispatch 221255/NCR 4424 to CINCPAC, April 24, 1946, RG 38, Box 157, NARA; Memorandum to OBASCOM, June 1946, Deputy Commander for Military Government.

Okinawan tradition. Okinawan ownership and leadership in government allowed for the Navy's release from the military government mission by not only providing manpower to take the places of seamen returning home but by entrenching the society in practices familiar to the people. Firmly cementing the military government design in common Okinawan practices and customs led by the Okinawans themselves ensured the permanence of the emerging society and increased the rate of demobilization.

As Okinawans served in the forefront of military government operations, they demonstrated their competence and intelligence to the Americans. Under peacetime conditions, the proven ability of the Okinawans combined with the amiable relationships formed between the population and sailors yielded a new interpretation of Okinawan identity that further severed the cultural correlation between Japan and Okinawa. Naval military government viewed Okinawans as competent and civilized: a group that formed a distinct, separate, unique ethnic community that was neither American nor Japanese in its likeness. Assessed above the intelligence of the Japanese, the Okinawans were categorized as an advanced Asian people in the eyes of the Americans. Okinawans fundamentally shaped the execution of Naval military government. The practical military requirement to offset the loss of demobilized troops and build Okinawa as a strategic base placed the Okinawans at the head of constructing their society; once the people sat in positions of influence, the gradual acknowledgment of the population's capable, intelligent, independence by the Americans led to a reassessment of Okinawan identity.

HAVING A SAY: OKINAWAN MANIPULATION OF IDENTITY

In early summer, outside the village of Maehira, a small Okinawan family huddled inside a limestone cave to protect themselves from a recent barrage of bombs. The family – two young children, a teenage girl, a middle-aged woman, and an elderly woman – had survived over two months of battle conditions. They had cowered in numerous caves, abandoned houses and under rock overhangs. They had scavenged through old crops and slurped from drying creeks for nourishment. Now, with momentary silence signaling a pause in the onslaught of ammunition, the teenage girl ran from the cave in search of water. The quiet served both as a relief and a new source of tension, as the Japanese military also saw the stillness as an opportunity to move. One Japanese soldier, looming in the entrance of the cave, cast a dark shadow over the faces of the Okinawan family inside. Blocking the sunlight, he stood still and peered into the blackness in front of him. Abruptly, he asked the family if any other people lived in the cave. The old woman, fluent only in Luchuan, the Okinawan dialect, attempted to answer. Her Japanese, laced with traces of Okinawan parlance, came out incoherently. A flash of anger and frustration ignited within the soldier. Swiftly, he severed the head of the old woman with his sword, causing the head to thud into the lap of the other woman. After a moment's pause in horror, the two children scrambled past the soldier and rushed towards the cave's entrance. They did not travel far; the soldier doggedly pursued the young ones and, upon catching them, disemboweled them.¹

¹Haru Maeda in *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa, Survivor's Testimonies* (Okinawa: Relief Section, Welfare Department, Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), 29.

The nightmare continued for the rest of the cave's residents. Retreating from American troops that surrounded them, the Japanese soldiers of the 24th Division systematically executed almost twenty civilians in order to occupy the cave themselves.² The killings in Maehira and other similar incidents around the island jarred the Okinawans, who had identified as Japanese subjects. The violence ignited feelings of betrayal, confusion, and insecurity. Most of all, the brutal episodes conflicted with the lessons the Okinawans had learned through indoctrination programs aimed to align their loyalty with Japan.

Inculcated on their responsibilities as Japanese subjects since the acquisition of Okinawa as a prefecture in 1879, the Okinawan population adopted a belief system that hinged on loyalty to the Emperor and allegiance to the nation; every Okinawan dutifully fulfilled prescribed roles as dictated by Japan. The population served the Emperor through military service, supported government offices, and displayed a level of commitment to Japan similar to that of a soldier. Enthusiastic mobilization programs enforced service to the nation for the entire Okinawan population.

The chaos of battle created insufferable conditions for the people. Hundreds of thousands of Okinawans fled their homes and struggled without adequate food, water, or shelter. In their desperate travels, the Okinawans had numerous encounters with the Japanese military, sometimes seeking out the troops for protection. Most encounters, however, ended in violence and brutality. Shaken by the dissonance between the rhetoric of indoctrination and the acts of cruelty that demonstrated an abandonment of the preached ideals of shared nationhood, the Okinawans processed the duplicity of the Japanese by practically pursuing methods to ensure survival and by reevaluating their own identity. The severity of the Okinawans' experiences

²*An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa*, 28; Thomas M. Huber, *Japan's Battle of Okinawa, April-June 1945* (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2005), 112-118.

with the Japanese military during the war derailed years of teachings and propaganda.

Okinawans felt discord both physically from clear threats to their safety and mentally as they suffered from feelings of betrayal and the dissolution of their sense of self. The population began to question their loyalty to Japan and their identity as Japanese subjects.

The Okinawans actively reconstructed an identity to improve their situation, whether that meant protecting themselves from physical harm, gaining better access to nutrients, or alleviating the mental anguish of contradiction and duplicity. The population formed their identity through conscious process and interaction with both the Japanese and the Americans and thus came to a collective understanding of the meaning of themselves that they then branded and distributed. The process of identity reconstruction, however, presented difficulties. Each individual Okinawan wrestled personally with the harsh conditions of the battle and the treachery of the Japanese. Molded by the particular confrontations they experienced and their own perceptions previous to the conflict, each Okinawan followed his or her own path at their own pace towards identity reevaluation. Young Okinawans, who idolized the Japanese soldiers and aspired to battlefield glory, suffered from the abrupt destruction of their idealized fantasy and the sting of disillusionment learned painfully through violent acts against them. Adult Okinawans, already maturely aware of their second rate status within Japan, capitalized on the benevolence of the American troops as a catalyst to reject Japanese association and responsibility. Okinawans who fought alongside the Japanese in official military units as soldiers recoiled at battle's end as their combat brethren deserted them and left them to question their own decency after their willful participation in cruel acts sponsored by their units.

All paths, however, eventually led to a collective identity as Okinawan. Not chosen as a default because of historical or ethnic familiarity, an Okinawan identity provided the people with

a distinct advantage – whether that meant food, shelter, protection, or relief from the psychological discord that resulted from Japanese deceit – that increased the likelihood of survival. A strong identity as Okinawan, forged out of deliberate choice, built a collective community of sameness, gained the advantage of good treatment by the American victors through disassociation with the enemy and quieted the cacophony of the mental trauma of betrayal. Through deliberate choice, the population elected an Okinawan identity in a conscious effort to improve their situation. The active participation of the population in forming their own identity demonstrates the malleability of race and ethnicity.

Since Okinawa's integration into the Japanese nation as a prefecture in 1879, Japan embarked on a program of propaganda and indoctrination to impart loyalty in their new Okinawan subjects. Unlike the indoctrination practices used by the Japanese towards the colonies that dissolved existing traditions, manipulated work conditions, and enslaved the population, propaganda for the Okinawans sought to assimilate the people to shared Japanese custom and nationhood. In practice, indoctrination caused the Okinawans to compromise their ethnic distinctiveness as the Japanese directed them towards the national cultural consensus. Japan expected the Okinawans, as subjects of the Emperor, to conform to national policies and support the principles of the nation. Japan, however, excluded the Okinawans from full participation in government and politics because of their Ryukyuan heritage. Okinawa held a position as a demoted minority within the Japanese family. While regulated by the same rules as the mainland population, the Okinawans lacked full privileges as their people.³

³“Asia for the Japanese” *Fortune* (April, 1944); Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 313; CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, RG 407, Box 2502, NARA, 5, 10-12; Masamichi S. Inoue, *Okinawa and the U.S. Military: Identity Making in the Age of Globalization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 55-62; Yenob –PW-

War waged by Japan against the Allies throughout the Pacific did little to hamper the daily lives of the Okinawans in the early 1940s. Families tended their small plots and children spent their days outside at play and at work.⁴ No military infrastructure existed on the island with the exception of a small submarine base at the port of Unten in northern Okinawa. Small islands within the Ryukyu archipelago, such as Miyako and Yaeyama, provided air strips and barracks to a few Japanese divisions. The primarily rural central island, Okinawa itself, provided little economic or technological advantage. Okinawans contributed to the war effort through conscription; sons served in the Japanese military on the mainland or fought in China or on one of the Pacific islands.⁵

The trajectory of the war, however, aimed northward towards the island of Okinawa as the southernmost prefecture of Japan. Successful combat operations of Okinawa would provide the Americans bases and airstrips from which to stage an invasion of the Japanese mainland. Recognition of the looming danger of American invasion from the south led to the arrival of the 32nd Imperial Army on Okinawa in March 1944 and the enactment of the National Mobilization Act of 1944 that enlisted all able-bodied Okinawans in the war effort. Japan's mobilization plan had a broad scope that encompassed the skills of all fit people and capitalized on the strengths of Okinawa's environment. In addition to building infrastructure and standing up military organizations composed of Okinawans of all ages, the Act mobilized farming assets. Ordered by

188, POW interrogation, May 16, 1945, RG 389, Box 844, NARA; Marine report, "Government," Subject File: O, United State Marine Corps Historical Division, Quantico, VA, 1-3; George H. Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People* (Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2000), 467.

⁴Tomiko Higa, a young child during the Battle of Okinawa, recalls a peaceful life on Okinawa prior to the battle. "I led a happy outdoor life at our farm and was as brown as a berry," she recalled. (Tomiko Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag: a spellbinding account of love and courage in wartime Okinawa* [Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1989], 16).

⁵Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 16-17; *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa*, 4; Kerr, *Okinawa*, 463.

the government, local families provided food from their small farms to arriving Japanese units. An Okinawan man who raised his four children alone provided sweet potatoes to a Signal Corps unit training near his home. His responsibility to feed the Signal Corps soldiers exempted him from Civilian Defense Force duty. Women and children also worked for the war cause. Children enlisted in youth corps as soldiers and nurses and Japan encouraged Okinawan women to reproduce for the war effort. Japan published an eleven point edict to encourage population growth. It banned birth control, modified taxes, encouraged marriage and established employment policies that kept women of child bearing years out of work. Japanese war slogans circulated around Okinawa proclaiming, “Umeyo fuyaseyo (Reproduce and multiply)!” The Prime Minister distributed personal congratulatory letters to Okinawan women who had over ten children. Despite a perceived racial difference, Okinawan women still carried an acceptable albeit secondary biology to the Japanese; their offspring could further the advancement of the Japanese Empire as rightful subjects.⁶

Japan mandated that all civilians resist and fight if the battle came to their village.

Colonel Hiromachi Yahara, Senior Operations Officer of the 32nd Imperial Army, stated that “any person who can be of help must march under the battle flag in time of war...for Japan,

⁶Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 36-38, 42; *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa*, 4-5, Kerr, *Okinawa*, 466; Fumiko Nakamura, “Fumiko Nakamura,” in Ruth Ann Keyso, *Women of Okinawa: Nine Voices from a Garrison Island* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 37; Masahide Ota, *The Battle of Okinawa: The Typhoon of Steel and Bombs* (Tokyo: Kume Publishing Company, 1984), 196-197; Roy E. Appleman, James M. Burns, Russell A. Gugeler, and John Stevens, *Okinawa: The Last Battle*. (Washington D.C.: Historical Division, Department of the Army, 1948); Inoue, *Okinawa and the U.S. Military*, 59; Colonel Hiromachi Yahara, *The Battle of Okinawa: A Japanese Officer's Account of the Last Great Campaign* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Incorporated, 1995), 8; Benis M. Frank, *Okinawa: Touchstone to Victory* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1970), 19; Miyagi Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps,’” in Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History*, (New York: The New Press, 1992), 354-363; POW Interrogation Report Number 52, Nishiyama Sakae, June 25, 1945, Box 7, Folder 11, United States Marine Corps Historical Division, Quantico, VA, 1; Rodo, ed. *Nihon fujin mondai shiryō shusei*, vol.3 (Domesu Shuppan, 1977), Library of Congress, 478-480. Large families diminished after the war as a result of the high civilian casualties during the battle. (Japanese Imperial Army Statistics, Japanese Naval Underground Museum, Document Exhibit Room).

survival as a nation is hanging in the balance.”⁷ Resistance required civilians to engage in martial activities outside the scope of traditional military actions. Civilians received orders to “infiltrate deep into enemy territory” as spies, “assassinate enemy leaders, destroy army barracks.”⁸ Japan demanded the same steadfast endurance from the population that it did of its trained soldiers; assaults against the enemy could only end in victory or death by either the enemies’ actions or by self-infliction.⁹

Japan invoked images of civic duty and obligation to the nation in their appeals to the civilians for guerilla tactics. Soldiers, ordered that “indoctrination [towards the population] must be thoroughly carried out,” tied the civilians to the Empire through an onus of civic honor by rhetorically including Okinawans in the central ethnic structure. Mobilization slogans referred to the Okinawans as Japanese to create one like group against a common threat, mutual nationhood and a collective commitment to defense. The soldiers gave “thorough instructions [to the civilians]...to the effect that the embodiment of the characteristics of the Japanese [people] is to fight the enemy without regard to the danger of your own life” and called for “civilians [to] demonstrate this spirit and...fight for glory as Japanese.”¹⁰

The National Mobilization Act made Okinawa a military campus; every resource supported the war effort and every person prepared for war. Under total mobilization, little tolerance existed for those who could not contribute because of a lack of self-sufficiency. Japan published a civilian evacuation order to remove Okinawans who required care or who had

⁷Ota, *The Battle of Okinawa*, 196; Yahara, *The Battle of Okinawa*, 8, 59-60.

⁸Japanese military instructions, translated, June 21, 1945, Fred C. Wallace papers, Box 1, Folder 8, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA; Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 16-17.

⁹Japanese military instructions, translated, June 21, 1945, 1-4; Kerr, *Okinawa*, 466-467.

¹⁰Japanese military instructions, translated, June 21, 1945, 1.

impairments. Although many stayed in Okinawa out of fear of Allied torpedoes aimed at the ships, 80,000 infants, elderly, sick, handicapped, and their caregivers traveled to Formosa and the mainland under the order. Japan capitalized on the evacuations as an opportunity to further inspire Okinawan loyalty by explaining the passage of the ships as benevolent acts. Japan used identity rhetoric as propaganda to disguise the evacuations' true purpose of discarding the useless. Japanese government officials serving in Okinawa also used the ships to transport their families to temporary safety, an option found too expensive for most Okinawan families. Instead, healthy, strong, able-bodied Okinawan children received orders to serve in military corps.¹¹

The residents of Okinawa stood by their role in the upcoming fight. While most Okinawans recognized the entitlements they lacked under the Japanese, they also felt that the Americans had no claim on their island. Mobilization policy, supported by propaganda rhetoric in use for years, did not hit a discord with the population. Okinawan schools had followed curriculum regulations from the Japanese government for decades. Called Tennoist education, instruction centered on obedience and veneration for the Emperor. Teachers recited sayings in the classroom such as "out with the enemy!" Children learned "to respect and honor the country and the Emperor" at an early age.¹² Parents expressed pride in their sons' service in the Japanese military. Although Okinawans felt bitter about filling a disproportionate percentage of the conscripted Army, families respected the bravery of their sons and fathers and framed their

¹¹*An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa*, 4; Kerr, *Okinawa*, 466; Kikuko, "Student Nurses of the 'Lily Corps,'" 354; United States Military Government, Detachment B-5, Diary, April 30, 1945, Western Manuscript Collection, CO445, Folders 1-4, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO, 30.

¹²Nakamura, "Fumiko Nakamura," 39; Kikuko, "Student Nurses of the 'Lily Corps,'" 355, 371; Masahide Ota, "Straggler," in Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History*, (New York: The New Press, 1992), 371; Higa, *the Girl with the White Flag*, 36-40, 42.

feelings in expressions of national pride. One sister articulated her reverence by saying that her brother “fought for his country.”¹³ Before the battle touched the shores of Okinawa, most Okinawans saw themselves as Japanese subjects working hard to protect the Empire.

Young Okinawans rallied to nationalism with innocent fervor unmatched by their elders. Since children learned propaganda as curriculum in school, it penetrated deeply in their minds.¹⁴ Nationalistic ideas looked exciting to young Okinawans whose age lent them an amount of naivety, a certain lack of experience and little understanding of the weight of responsibility and hardship. Playing into a child’s need to belong and to form peer bonds, patriotic youth organizations served as delivery mechanisms of the national pride message. Okinawan boys and girls readily joined the groups as thrilling outlets and opportunities to build friendships. Fumiko Nakamura, a young Okinawan girl, led the Girls’ Youth Organization. The group supported Okinawan military men serving overseas. Girls stood on the docks of Naha Port and waved farewell to soldiers sailing off to war; the girls attended funerals and sent packages and letters. The organization supported Japan’s military conquests and practiced Japanese customs. The girls’ proclaimed mantras of Japanese solidarity like “Kyokoku icchi (National Unity)” and “Jinchu hokoku (Do your best for your country)!” They stitched senninbari belts for soldiers to wear in battle under their uniforms. Belts provided luck and protection on the battlefield. Each belt had one thousand red stitches, each stitch completed by a different woman.¹⁵

¹³Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 17, 96; Chiyomi Sumida and David Allen, “Prayer for the Past: Thousands recall Battle of Okinawa,” *Stars and Stripes*, June 25, 2007.

¹⁴Nakamura, “Fumiko Nakamura,” 37.

¹⁵Ibid; William B. Hauser, “Women and War: The Japanese Film Image,” in Gail Lee Bernstein, ed., *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 302-303.

Juvenile Okinawans shocked their parents with their hasty eagerness to die for the Emperor. As children filled the membership of the newly formed military organizations such as the Blood and Iron Corps, they quickly vowed to die with honor. Miyagi Kikuko, a nurse in the Himeyuri Student Corps, (also called Lily Student Corps), sought approval from her parents for her forthcoming glorified end when she told them she “would win the Imperial Order of the Rising Sun, eighth class, and be enshrined at Yasukuni.” Kikuko so strongly believed in the virtue of death for Japan that her father’s disgust with her desire to die repulsed her. She “thought he was a traitor to say such a thing.”¹⁶

Japanese soldiers, prevalent on the island by spring, emerged as heroic figures for imaginative Okinawan children. During mobilization, Japanese soldiers readily offered their companionship to the young, eager Okinawans that brought supplies or lingered curiously close to the encampments. Children saw the newly arrived soldiers as their friends, protectors and countrymen. One young Okinawan girl became close with the troops while delivering sweet potato crops to their unit. The soldiers “thank[ed her] heartily, and [gave her] sweets.” In return, she built a special relationship with them and called them “good friend[s]”; she enjoyed piggyback rides and shared stories.¹⁷ The kindness that the soldiers showed the children built trust and comfort; the compassion affirmed feelings of sameness between the young Okinawans and the Japanese and confirmed for the children their own Japanese identity as taught to them in school. The soldiers looked strong, mysterious and safe; emblems of national pride. Playful

¹⁶Okinawan children did not aspire to die by suicide. The pre-battle propaganda inspired a glorified death by the hands of the enemy as the expression of ultimate devotion to the Emperor. (Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps,’ 355; *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa*, 4; Ota, *The Battle of Okinawa*, 197; Japanese military instructions, translated, June 21, 1945, 1-4).

¹⁷Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 37-38, 40.

interactions with the soldiers convinced the children that the Army arrived on Okinawa as their protector. Children loved the soldiers as their nation's military and aspired to join them.¹⁸

The older population did not share the intensity of the young's nationalism nor did they have the innocent ability to accept all arriving Japanese troops as saviors and equals. While all Okinawans identified as Japanese subjects before the battle, maturity and a closer connection to the former Ryukyuan Kingdom separated older Okinawans from the enthusiasm of the young. Japan's cultural impact on the Ryukyu Islands started in 1609 with the invasion of the Satsuma clan, but Okinawa's definitive transition into a Japanese prefecture occurred during the lifetime of the elderly; the independent Ryukyuan Kingdom under King Sho Tai ended only sixty-five years earlier. Older Okinawans still practiced distinctly Ryukyuan traditions in their homes. They played Okinawan instruments such as the sanshin and sang early Ryukyuan songs. They spoke fluent Luchuan, an Okinawan dialect not compatible with the Japanese language. The structure of village life honored the Okinawan practice of collective community support. At harvest, villagers pooled efforts to help each other with the crops. The leaders of the villages established *moai*, a customary way of collecting communal money for loans among the villagers.¹⁹

Practicing Ryukyuan customs in the home, however, did not derail older Okinawans' commitment to serving the Japanese Empire as loyal subjects. Okinawans identified as Japanese with a Ryukyuan heritage and, despite discontent with unequal treatment, claimed the nation of

¹⁸Ibid; Kikuko, "Student Nurses of the Lily Corps," 354-363.

¹⁹The sanshin is a three stringed instrument that originated in Okinawa. The practice of Ryukyuan rituals became sources of comfort following the war. (Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 19, 23, 26; Christopher Nelson, *Dancing with the Dead: Memory, Performance and Everyday Life in Postwar Okinawa*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 39-40; Norma Field, *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor: Japan at Century's End*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 65; Haru Maeda, oral history, 29).

Japan as their own. Okinawa's status as a prefecture, rather than a colony, attributed to a greater sense of belonging because the people felt like marginalized second classmen, not powerless captives.²⁰ Adult Okinawans accepted Japanese propaganda messages of shared nationhood even if they lacked the youthful spirit of younger generations.

As parents, however, older Okinawans at times retained a relatively cautious view towards the most extreme messages of Japanese propaganda, especially in regards to their children. Parents expressed distress at their children's passionate and earnest proclamations of loyalty to the Emperor until death. One parent exclaimed in horror, "I didn't bring you up to the age of sixteen to die!"²¹ To the young, the wholesale acceptance of all propaganda by their classmates proved its veracity. Adults had the mature ability to process the details of the messaging and to contextualize it within their roles as a subject of the Emperor. Parents imparted values of Japanese loyalty to their children but also introduced Ryukyuan customs and instructed offspring about the importance of fitting their vernacular into the Japanese message. "It doesn't matter what you hear or who tells you," one father told his children, "you mustn't ever say that Japan is losing, even if you're wrong."²²

Adult Okinawans prepared their families for the rough conditions that may result from a battle waged on their land. As early as 1944, mothers and fathers talked to their children frankly about the hardships to come. One father explained that, "Okinawa may soon become a battlefield, and when that happens there may be terrible confusion and families may become

²⁰Marine report, "Government," 3.

²¹Pre-battle zeal for death as expressed by young Okinawans did not mean a commitment to suicide. The youth looked forward to the revered honor that came with dying in battle at the hands of the enemy. (Kikuko, "Student Nurses of the 'Lily Corps,' 355; *An Oral history of the Battle of Okinawa*, 4; Ota, *The Battle of Okinawa*, 197; Japanese military instructions, translated, June 21, 1945, 1-4).

²²Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 56.

separated.”²³ The warnings parents issued to their children grew more serious and urgent by early 1945 as Okinawans overheard military information from Japanese troops stationed throughout the island. Parents tried to teach their young children survival but offered mostly general advice such as “keep your head” or “decide for yourself what to do.” Children struggled to comprehend as they listened to warnings from their parents that did not explain war in the glamorous terms used by the schools. One young girl recalled, “I looked at [my siblings’] faces and at my father’s face in turn, for I had no way of knowing how to react on my own.”²⁴

Parents directed their children towards Japanese values as a guiding source of protection and stood by their identity as Japanese subjects. Having lived long lives under the Japanese flag in relative peace, indoctrination played no less of a role in defining their sense of self than it did for the young. On the brink of a battle, Okinawans saw Japan as their country and felt compelled to protect it along with their families. Adult Okinawans took very seriously the civil defense roles dictated to them by the Japanese government.²⁵

As American naval bombardments hit the shores of the Kerama Islands just south of Okinawa in March 1945, the last civil defense measures and student military corps activated.²⁶ The concussions of the artillery also popped the building pressure of anticipation that had lingered for the past year. Okinawans acted relieved, happy, thrilled; the feelings of glee came

²³Ibid, 18.

²⁴Ibid, 18, 36-37, 42.

²⁵Field, *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor*, 101; Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps,’” 355; Kinjo Shigeaki, “Now they call it ‘Group Suicide’ in Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History*, (New York: The New Press, 1992), 364.

²⁶Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps,’” 355; Shigeaki, “Now they call it ‘Group Suicide,’” 364.

from a release of “indecisive gloom” and “the constraints of deadlock.”²⁷ The opening of the battle had arrived and, with it, all anxious, tense waiting disappeared as focus turned towards both the execution of their emergency plans and standing in defense of their land and villages. The First Okinawa Prefectural Girls’ High School became the Himeyuri Student Corps as the “loud thunder of the guns” prompted the students to “mobilize straight from the school dormitory to Haeburu Army Hospital,” which consisted of bunks in numerous caves. The children had not yet graduated; the ceremony occurred in a barracks building, lit only by candlelight, while the cacophony of guns echoed outside. The children sang, “Give your life for the sake of the Emperor, wherever you may go” and one young girl “went to the battlefield feeling proud of [her]self.”²⁸

Thunderous impacts of almost three million shells gutted fields and crops. Artillery destroyed homes and displaced hundreds of families. Dead bodies, floating in wells and streams, contaminated the water supply. The people experienced such severe dehydration, they went days without urinating. Unable to wash, lice and fleas covered their bodies. Makeshift shelters built of soft earth caved in at the slightest tremor. Numerous shells did not detonate; their weight pushed them deep into the sucking mud created by the rains of the monsoons where they waited for a misstep by a civilian.²⁹

²⁷Yokoyama Ryuichi, “Cartoons for the War,” in Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History*, (New York: The New Press, 1992), 96; Nogi Harumichi, “I wanted to build Greater East Asia,” in Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History*, (New York: The New Press, 1992), 55.

²⁸Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps,’ 355.

²⁹Diary, April 3-8, 1945, Detachment B-5, 27; Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 41-46; Japanese Imperial Army Statistics, Japanese Naval Underground Museum, Document Exhibit Room; Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps,’ 358; E.B. Sledge, *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1996), 192; Bill Sloan, *The Ultimate Battle: Okinawa 1945 – The Last Epic Struggle of World War II* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007) photos 25-27.

Many Okinawan men ran towards the battle as part of organized military units such as the Boei Tai (Okinawan Home Guard).³⁰ Work as farmers, fisherman and schoolmasters also forced men away from their families. One farmer traveled to Makabe to collect meat, milk, fruits and vegetables for the Japanese soldiers. The trips, which took days, separated him from his family as the battle made any passage impossible to complete. He left behind four children, the eldest girl 17 years old.³¹ With most men gone, young children and women, along with elderly family members who had refused passage on ships to Formosa and mainland, searched for safety by themselves. One woman traveled with her five-year-old son, five-month old baby and her mother-in-law who suffered from asthma. The old woman needed to rest often; the younger woman carried both the elderly woman and her baby on her back.³²

The Japanese allowed the Americans to land on the shores of Okinawa with little confrontation. Deep inland, 117,000 men of the Imperial Army waited for the invaders from strong, deliberate positions.³³ Along with the mainland born, Okinawan men built defenses, shouldered weapons, and secured terrain.³⁴ Committed to combat against the Americans,

³⁰Diary, April 3-8, 1945, Detachment B-5, 23; LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns, Okinawa Diary, April 30, 1945, RG 407, Box 2441, NARA; XXIV Corps After Action Review #125, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; 27th Infantry Division letter to Commanding General, RG 389 Box 704, NARA; History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, 1April-30 April 1945 [L Day to L+29] by BG William E. Crist, May 10, 1945, RG 407, Box 2487, file 110-5.0, NARA, 17; XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Inoue, *Okinawa and the U.S. Military*, 59; Frank, *Okinawa*, 19; *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa*, 4; POW Interrogation Report Number 52, June 25, 1945, Nishiyama Sakae, 1; Major General Lemuel C. Shepard, 6th Marine Division, Military account, June 8, 1945, Subject File: O, Box 7, Folder 10/7, United States Marine Corps Historical Division, Quantico, VA, 4.

³¹Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 42.

³²Field, *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor*, 101.

³³Yahara, *The Battle of Okinawa*, 211; Huber, *Japan's Battle of Okinawa, April-June 1945*, 27-29.

³⁴*An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa*, 4; Inoue, *Okinawa and the U.S. Military*, 59; Frank, *Okinawa*, 19; XXIV Corps After Action Review #122, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 94, 96,

conscripted men lived, trained, and waged battle as soldiers. Maintaining cohesion within their units, they set up defensive perimeters, kept guard, ate collective meals, and occupied key ground. Fighting under the flag of Japan, they shared the hardships of war with the Japanese. The two ethnic groups worked together, protected each other and formed a bond against the common American enemy.³⁵ Even those that fought in ethnically pure formations, like the 16,000 Okinawan men of the Boei Tai, unified with the Japanese against a mutual foe. As the treachery of battle began, the Okinawan soldiers strengthened their sense of Japanese identity through shared mortality. One badly wounded Okinawan explained in his final hours with pride that he had “fought hard for the Emperor and the country.” Okinawan soldiers noted similarities between themselves and the Japanese. One observed, “Yamatunchu [mainland] soldiers were no different.” Dying in the caves alongside Okinawans, Japanese soldiers cried for their wives and mothers rather than shouting, “Banzai” or “Long live the Emperor.” Okinawans found surprising comfort in shared raw human experiences. “We thought we were just the same as the Japanese,” one local soldier believed, “that we fought together as one.”³⁶

As a part of martial units, Okinawan soldiers absorbed the military cultural beliefs of the Japanese. Soldiers from Okinawa viewed hara-kiri as an accepted practice and, even though difficult, some did complete the act on their own initiative. Those who did carry out the ritual suicide tended to do so in dire situations where death loomed certain. Severely wounded soldiers

110; Ota, “Straggler,” 371; Testimony 10, Oral History collection manuscript room, Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum, English Book 1; Testimony 16, Oral History collection manuscript room, Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum, English Book 1.

³⁵POW Interrogation Report Number 52, June 25, 1945, Nishiyama Sakae, 1; Tokimasa Yokota in *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa, Survivor's Testimonies* (Okinawa: Relief Section, Welfare Department, Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), 25.

³⁶Yukoh Tamaki in *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa, Survivor's Testimonies* (Okinawa: Relief Section, Welfare Department, Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), 21; Ota, “Straggler,” 371.

in intense pain willingly chose hara-kiri over slowly succumbing to wounds. The drastic nature of the practice, though, caused shocked outcries from fellow soldiers that witnessed the act.³⁷ Hara-kiri remained a controversial practice for Okinawan soldiers, entered into with hesitation and rarely executed under a cry of glorified sacrifice to country. Although the conscripts would dutifully execute hara-kiri if ordered to do so, retreat remained the favored option for able-bodied Okinawans facing a military defeat. Okinawan soldiers' view of ritualized suicide did not deviate greatly from the feelings of Japanese soldiers towards self-harm. Even the Japanese responded to hara-kiri with a natural human trepidation despite their belief in the honor of the act.³⁸

The benefits of serving in a military unit extended beyond emotional support. Despite expectations placed upon the civilians to resist the invading foreigners, the people had little means to defend themselves or their homes. They lacked adequate weapons, training, and organization beyond the village leadership. Japanese troops briefly organized some of the population from villages into groups and armed each with two grenades – one to throw at the Americans and one to use against themselves – but the military offered only limited instruction on what to do against the advancing forces.³⁹ The civilians did not have surpluses of food, clothing, or medical supplies in the amount needed to handle damage caused by shells, bombs, and bullets. Okinawan soldiers received basic rations, uniforms, weapons, and military training. The units took over homes, villages, and caves as military leadership positioned their troops and planned attacks and counterattacks.⁴⁰ Civilians faced displacement from deadly artillery,

³⁷Tamaki, Oral History Collection, 21; Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 74.

³⁸Yokota, Oral History Collection, 25; Shigeaki, "Now they call it 'Group Suicide,' 364.

³⁹Japanese military instructions, translated, June 21, 1945, 1-4; Shigeaki, "Now they call it 'Group Suicide,' 364.

⁴⁰Cook, *Japan at War*, 363.

unexploded shells on the ground, advancing foreign troops, and the conflicting needs of their own military that they had thought would protect them.

The shock of war immediately impacted the population but it stunned the once energetic and innocent youth. Within the opening days of the battle, young, enthusiastic nurses saw Japanese soldiers missing entire faces, arms, and legs. Child nurses fainted at pools of blood in hospital caves. Children watched their school friends attempt to stuff their intestines back into their wide open stomachs. Some young boys, misled into thinking that service in the girls' nurse corps provided safety, modeled their hair in feminine styles to avoid fighting and death in the boys' Blood and Iron Corps. Of the 2,000 students mobilized as nurses or soldiers, 1,050 died.⁴¹

Working in hospital caves or traveling through fields in search of safety, children's observations of war rattled their concepts of the reward of battle. Witness to the extreme violence of war-caused injuries, many insufficiently trained student nurses responded clumsily to emergency trauma. The Japanese met the young girls' hesitation by screaming at them and calling them names. "You idiot!," they would chastise, "You think you can act like that on the battlefield?...Fools! Idiots! Dummies!"⁴² Frustrated with the inadequacies of the nurses in urgent, life-threatening situations, the soldiers' demeaning treatment was reasonable. It did, however, awaken the girls' to their own "naïve and unrealistic" fantasies about the glory of war. "Victorious battle! Our army is always superior! That was all we knew," one young girl proclaimed, "We were so gullible, so innocent."⁴³

⁴¹Kikuko, "Student Nurses of the 'Lily Corps,' 354-355, 358; Setsuko Inafuku, speech, July 16, 2007; *Okinawan Documentary 6 14 0470*, Masayuki Hayashi, director, June 14, 2003, Naha City Historical Association Archives, Naha City.

⁴²Kikuko, "Student Nurses of the 'Lily Corps,' 355.

⁴³The training that the student nurses received was rudimentary. They were taught to wrap bandages and give medicine and water. (Kikuko, "Student Nurses of the 'Lily Corps,' 355, 359).

As the fighting spread throughout the island, children witnessed behavior by the Japanese military towards the population that contradicted indoctrination principles. Propaganda convinced the Okinawan people that they stood as contributing subjects of the Emperor and shared a stake in the battle and the future of the nation; Okinawans augmented troops and fulfilled distinct roles, from child-rearing to farming, in preparation for war. Once the battle began, however, the tactical usefulness of the large population waned. Soldiers found the mass of civilians onerous and a hindrance to battlefield activities. The Japanese troops had a certain level of control to loosely consolidate civilians that still lived in villages yet the destruction of war forced many civilians to abandon their damaged homes. Roaming the island haphazardly in disjointed, small groups, the people inadvertently interrupted combat operations with no intention of engaging in the fighting. A group of soldiers pushed along a small band of people found sleeping in makeshift divots in the ground by screaming, “Move off, move off! There’s going to be fighting here soon. Go somewhere else!”⁴⁴ Where the family went, did not matter. The Okinawans soon discovered that the military they supported and called their own exposed them to danger rather than safeguarding them; children watched in confusion as the Japanese denied them protection. Battle damage destroyed natural food sources on the island and the Japanese forcefully took food from the civilians by pistol, knife point, or overbearing physical strength.⁴⁵ With bombardments raining down and close fire pressing in, soldiers claimed some

⁴⁴Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 49, 52, 60, 73-74, 92, 94; Oto Nagamine in *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa, Survivor’s Testimonies* (Okinawa: Relief Section, Welfare Department, Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), 32; Jim Lea, “Okinawa remembers when war passed its way,” *Stars and Stripes*, June 26, 1985, 14. Before combat operations, interactions between Japanese troops and Okinawans were relatively peaceful. Okinawans fulfilled their Civil Defense roles and Japanese troops accepted their services with few incidents of abuse.

⁴⁵Mitsutoshi Nakajo in *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa, Survivor’s Testimonies* (Okinawa: Relief Section, Welfare Department, Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), 27; Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 42; Nagamine, Oral History Collection, 32; Kiyo Matayoshi, in *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa, Survivor’s Testimonies* (Okinawa: Relief Section, Welfare Department, Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), 19; Field, *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor*, 64.

caves for exclusive military use and refused civilians entrance. Outside the caves, the people faced an unsure fate with no shelter from the monsoon rains and uncertain nutrition. Most concerning, the Okinawans feared possible deadly confrontation with the Americans.⁴⁶ A young mother, whose infant's constant shrieks led to her exile from a cave, soon met death through a torrid round of machine gun fire. The people in her cave, to include young children, watched Japanese soldiers forcefully pull the woman out of the shelter only to see her die moments later. They then listened to the baby's continued cries as he lay strapped to his dead mother's back.⁴⁷

In their efforts to conceal their positions, the Japanese military also directly killed civilians and children.⁴⁸ One abandoned girl searched numerous caves for her lost sisters. She made excessive noise calling out their names and caused a soldier to charge out of his cave with a sword, intent on killing her. Terrified for her life, the girl also "was flabbergasted" that her assailant was a Japanese soldier. "My father and the soldiers at the Signal Corp unit had always told me that soldiers were there to protect us, and here was one raising a sword to kill me!," she lamented. Another teenage girl watched in stunned silence as a group of soldiers strangled a crying four- or five-year-old boy with a medical bandage. According to one eyewitness, some soldiers threw babies up in the air and speared them with their bayonets. The Japanese also

⁴⁶Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 48; Shitsuko Oshiro in *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa, Survivor's Testimonies* (Okinawa: Relief Section, Welfare Department, Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), 12-13; Koei Kinjo in *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa, Survivor's Testimonies* (Okinawa: Relief Section, Welfare Department, Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), 15; Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 73, 92; Nakajo, oral history, 27.

⁴⁷Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 92-93.

⁴⁸Masako "Iha" Sunabe, interview by Lisa Tourtelot, Chatan, Okinawa, *Stars and Stripes*, Feb. 11, 2014; Shitsuko Oshiro, Oral History Collection, 12-13; Nakajo, Oral History Collection, 27; Toyo Gima in *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa, Survivor's Testimonies* (Okinawa: Relief Section, Welfare Department, Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), 23; Nagamine, Oral History Collection, 32; Testimony 10, Oral History Collection manuscript room; Testimony 16, Oral History Collection manuscript room; Shigeaki, "Now they call it 'Group Suicide,'" 366; Ota, "Straggler," 367; Maeda, Oral History Collection, 25; Field, *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor*, 64; "Okinawa remembers when war passed its way," June 26, 1985, Jim Lea, 14.

ordered Okinawans to kill themselves. Instructions distributed with grenades to the population stated that, “in defending the Imperial soil not only soldiers are obliged to give their lives but all.”⁴⁹ While the population did not carry any military status, civilians felt obligated to obey military orders as if they served as soldiers themselves and followed troops’ instructions from relocation edicts to executing violence. Many Okinawans committed suicide out of feelings of obligation to Japan and commitment to the Emperor. Several student nurses killed themselves at Arasaki. One boy explained with exasperation, “you have to grasp here the relationship between the military and the residents as a whole or you’ll never understand...we...await[ed] orders from the military.”⁵⁰ Trust, built on the foundation of propaganda that rallied all Okinawans together with the Japanese under a fabricated shared sense of nationhood, compelled the young to follow the orders of the Japanese military.

Japanese soldiers also killed members of their own ranks who threatened the security of their unit. Under sobs and apologies, soldiers stabbed their injured friends to death to silence their painful cries or as a part of their duty to protect pertinent military information. Soldiers offered milk laced with cyanide to the badly wounded and nobly instructed their victims to “achieve your glorious end like a Japanese soldier.” Surrender, an unacceptable compromise to the Japanese, also caused soldiers to shoot each other.⁵¹

⁴⁹John David Jackson Collection (AFC/2001/001/38452), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, 2; Japanese military instructions, translated, June 21, 1945, 1-2; Shigeaki, “Now they call it ‘Group Suicide,’ 364-366; Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 73-74; Gima, Oral History Collection, 23.

⁵⁰The Japanese used the same formula of indoctrination they had used for years on the Okinawans as reasoning to support the call for suicide. The call for suicide, however, appeared after the battle began. (*An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa*, 4, 48; Site map, Maya Cave, Oral History Collection manuscript room, Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum; Nagamine, Oral History Collection, 32; Edward Drea, *In Service of the Emperor: Essays on the Imperial Japanese Army*, (Nebraska: University of Nebraska, 2003), 57-58; Japanese military instructions, translated, June 21, 1945, 1-4; Ota, “Straggler,” 367-372; Shigeaki, “Now they call it “Group Suicide,” 364).

⁵¹Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 94; Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps,’ 357, 359, 361; *Okinawan Documentary 6 14 0470*, June 14, 2003, Masayuki Hayashi, director.

Children watched killings occur right outside the caves and young nurses participated by poisoning their patients. The experiences of war weighed heavily on the light, motivated hearts of the youth who earlier spoke of willingly sacrificing their lives in defense of the nation. The heroes that they strived to emulate now threatened their families and neighbors; soldiers that had once given them piggy back rides now tried to kill them.⁵²

The nationalistic pride of the young, however, was grounded in peer pressure, respect for figures of authority, and desire for self-discovery and independence. Moreover, its core was fueled by an indoctrination system so strong that it held captive the minds of the adult population as well. Shock at watching grotesque displays of brutality did not automatically transform young Okinawans once fiercely loyal to Japan into those who denounced the nation. Children excused much of the cruelty by the soldiers, especially when the violence did not cause immediate death. They rationalized their suffering as vital to the success of the military mission and the troops in battle. The youth considered it “unthinkable...that one of [their] own soldiers could kill a defenseless mother, a small child like [them], or a baby, just to save his own skin.” They justified such devastating acts as essential for military victory.⁵³ Within the unsafe turmoil of battle, the children sought security through stable consistency. Okinawan youth contrived reasons to cling to a Japanese identity and to validate the teachings of honor in the military. Solidifying this identity, the young used the pronouns “we” and “our” in reference to Japan, its soldiers and the battle; they practiced Japanese courtesies and called themselves subjects of the Emperor, “we Okinawans, Great Japanese all.”⁵⁴ As the Japanese delivered commands to the

⁵²Nakajo, Oral History Collection, 27; Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 73-74.

⁵³Ibid, 92-94.

⁵⁴The Okinawans said grace in the same tradition as the Japanese; Okinawans would say, “Itadakimasu,” which meant “I gratefully partake.” (Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 55-56, 60, 73, 94; Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps, 361; Shigeaki, “Now they call it “Group Suicide,” 363, 365).

population, the youth followed the orders under the duty bound teachings of commitment to the Emperor.⁵⁵ Memories of pleasant interactions with the Japanese in 1944 sustained the children's convictions even in the face of violence. One young girl still referred to a soldier friend of hers as "young, and gentle, and kind" and comforted dying soldiers with assurances of national victory.⁵⁶ The Japanese, despite their behavior towards the population, represented the familiar and therefore, ably kept the trust of the eager youth, who had so willingly accepted the ideals of nationhood and military might during preparations, through the opening of the battle.

Fear also drove the young to hold on to the illusion of safety with the Japanese throughout the beginnings of the battle. The Japanese told explicit and grotesquely detailed stories of what the Americans would do to the Okinawans if captured. The stories exaggerated Japanese stereotypes of Americans to mythical proportions and exploited the darkest fears of the Okinawans. Grandiose U.S. tanks, products of industrial production and material extravagance, would crush the Okinawans effortlessly. The unclean, demonic Americans would sexually violate young girls to satisfy their brutish desires and hedonistic ways. "We knew that if we were captured we'd be chopped to pieces," one teenager explained, "They'd cut off our noses, our ears, chop off our fingers, and then run over our bodies with their tanks. Women would be raped." One story threatened children: "[the Americans] were killing children by ripping them apart from the crotch."⁵⁷ Terror at the possibility of death or torture ignited hatred. One five-

⁵⁵Kikuko, "Student Nurses of the 'Lily Corps, 359; Shigeaki, "Now they call it "Group Suicide," 364.

⁵⁶Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 40. In rare instances, some Japanese soldiers responded to the amicable manners of the devoted young Okinawans with benevolence; they ignored groups of civilians, allowed privacy during mourning rituals or hesitated when ordered to kill the people. (Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 52; Maeda, Oral History Collection, 29). Such infrequent instances of compassion served as further justification for Okinawans to retain their Japanese identity through the beginning of the battle.

⁵⁷The Japanese considered themselves pure and the Americans as demonic. Junko Isa, "Junko Isa," in Ruth Ann Keyso, *Women of Okinawa: Nine Voices from a Garrison Island* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 6; Nakamura, "Fumiko Nakamura," 37; Ota, *The Battle of Okinawa*, 223; History of Military Government Operations

year-boy wanted to survive the battle so that, once grown, he could avenge the havoc brought to his home by killing the Americans himself.⁵⁸ During the early weeks of battle, propaganda taught the young Okinawans to seek some sort of refuge with the Japanese and avoid the Americans.⁵⁹

The conflict, however, lasted far longer than weeks. As the battle stretched into months, more people died and children, left alone, scavenged for scarcer amounts of food. As the situation for the civilians grew more desperate, it became more difficult to ignore the actual brutality and death that the Japanese inflicted on the population. Repeatedly, children fell victim to cruel acts by the Japanese. Troops killed their family members and stole their food. While the young Okinawans feared the possibility of American aggression, the Japanese harmed the population during most interactions with them. The more frequent and severe the encounters with the Japanese, the more difficult it became to fabricate reasons to justify the cruelty; the children started to lose confidence in the indoctrinated teachings about the might of Japan and the loyal role of Okinawans. Japanese cruelty devastated the young's understanding of themselves and their world because it betrayed an alleged kinship that propaganda had ensured existed.⁶⁰ Continued exposure to recurrent acts of betrayal eroded the strong patriotic feelings of

on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 19; Captain Roy E. Appleman, notes, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA, 2; Okinawa Diary, April 30, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns; Nakajo, Oral History Collection, 27; John W. Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 191, 196, 250; Nagamine, Oral History Collection, 32; Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 110; Kikuko, "Student Nurses of the 'Lily Corps," 361; Shigeaki, "Now they call it "Group Suicide," 365; Takejiro Nakamura, interview in James Brooke, "Okinawa Suicides and Japan's Army: Burying the Truth?," *New York Times*, June 21, 2005.

⁵⁸Field, *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor*, 101.

⁵⁹Shigeaki, "Now they call it "Group Suicide," 365; Memorandum for Major General Pedro del Valle, 1st Marine Division, Original Records, Subject File:O, United States Marine Corps Historical Division, Quantico, VA, 4.

⁶⁰Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 73; Nakajo, Oral history Collection, 27.

the young over time. Many reluctantly recognized the duplicity of the Japanese, sometimes holding tight to the illusion of protection despite many months of intense fighting, death, hardship, and atrocities until the aggregate of their experiences made ignorance impossible.⁶¹ For others, a single act of cruelty of an intensely devastating or personal nature propelled them towards disillusionment. One sixteen-year-old boy watched his brother and niece, both under three years old, die when Japanese troops injected the children with a lethal substance. The soldiers believed the children's noise would alert the Americans to their location in the shared cave. The Japanese refused the boy's offer to leave the cave with the small children and, by the next morning, attempted to kill the boy as well. Previously, the boy had justified minor acts of cruelty; when soldiers' stole his family's food, he reasoned that "it was the soldiers who had to do the fighting." The deaths of his brother and niece, however, caused the boy to feel "so shocked [he] didn't know what to say." The event stripped away the illusions he had clung to and broke down his gallant convictions of patriotism. He now saw the food pilfering as a selfish act to ensure the soldiers' own survival.⁶²

Weak devotion by some soldiers to national standards of honor dismantled trust between the young and the Japanese as much as acts of violence. Young Okinawans committed themselves as warriors for Japan; they fought in child military units, served as nurses or protected their families as loyal subjects. Living the Japanese ethos of valuing nation over life, some youth even harmed weaker civilians under the auspices of honor or in support of alleged battlefield necessity.⁶³ While Japanese soldiers did support the same principles, Okinawans met

⁶¹Kikuko, "Student Nurses of the 'Lily Corps,'" 361, 363.

⁶²Nakajo, Oral History Collection, 27; Field, *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor*, 64.

⁶³Kinjo, Oral History Collection, 15; Shitsuko Oshiro, Oral History Collection; 12-13; Shigeaki, "Now they call it "Group Suicide," 365; Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 73, 93.

any deviation from complete commitment with disdain and distress. The realization that some Japanese troops committed atrocities to preserve their own survival shocked and enraged young Okinawans who dedicated themselves to the principle of self-sacrifice for the advancement of the nation. Two teenage boys, watching the horror of mass suicide and murder among Okinawans at the demand of the Japanese, delayed their own suicide out of a desire to kill one enemy before they died. As they left the cave to join the fight, surrendering Japanese troops ran past them, clearly alive and avoiding death. The experience caused instantaneous fury in the boys: “We felt...anger and distrust, boiling up in us. Could it be possible that we, alone, had gone through this horror? Our sense of unity with the military – that we would be forever tied together in death, which had reached its peak in those deaths – dissolved completely.”⁶⁴ A young nurse, who may have euthanized the wounded with cyanide as a part of her dictated duties, watched a Japanese soldier climb down a cliff towards the Americans in capitulation. She felt stunned, “A Japanese soldier raising his hands in surrender? Impossible! Traitor!”⁶⁵

Betrayal, whether by harming the population or by failing to equal the commitment to national beliefs of sacrifice that the Okinawans still upheld, undermined the trust in the Japanese soldiers to which the young clung so desperately at the onset of the battle. The actions of the Japanese contradicted the propaganda campaign of unity and created an environment of instability and unpredictability for the children. When the mounting death toll denied rationalization to explain away the dissonance between the actions and the rhetoric, the young Okinawans became fearful of the Japanese troops. The youth could no longer deny that the

⁶⁴Shigeaki, “Now they call it “Group Suicide,” 365-366; Japanese military instructions, translated, June 21, 1945, 1-4.

⁶⁵Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps,” 361; *Okinawan Documentary 6 14 0470*, June 14, 2003, Masayuki Hayashi, director.

Japanese took their lives, shelter, and food and, in efforts to avoid the treachery of the Japanese, some jumped off cliffs to their death. “Now,” said one teenage boy, “the Japanese more than the Americans became the object of our fears.”⁶⁶ The children’s fear demarcated along atypical lines of the living and the dead. Abandoned children, roaming the island by themselves, found dead soldiers useful since their carcasses tended to carry uneaten food in their satchels. Inanimate dead soldiers posed no harm to the children but instead offered a chance at survival. Living soldiers, on the other hand, chased the children and threatened to kill them. “I always felt that dead soldiers were my friends, providing me with things to eat, and was no longer afraid of them, but I was really afraid of the live soldiers,” explained one girl.⁶⁷

The erosion of patriotism in the young realigned their sense of identity. As the battle progressed, the young pulled away from a shared Japanese identity and started to see themselves as separate from Japan, as innocent victims of propaganda lies. Burning under the slap of betrayal and seeing clearly where the responsibility for the atrocities lay, the young chose to disassociate with the Japanese and define the military as an organization with loyalty outside of and at odds with Okinawa. The young quipped that what motivated the Japanese troops was a desire to “get back to the mainland” and spoke about the home islands as an alien place to which they did not belong.⁶⁸ By stating the troops’ desire to return home, they implied that the Japanese in Okinawa stood on foreign land. As the battle grew progressively worse for the Japanese, young Okinawans witnessed soldiers shouting statements of devotion to the Emperor during final stands. Amid the constant violence, destruction, and carnage that wore down their

⁶⁶*An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa*, 4; Shigeaki, “Now they call it “Group Suicide,” 366. Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 70, 73, 80.

⁶⁷Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 60.

⁶⁸Nakajo, Oral History Collection, 27; Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps,” 359.

own resolve, the Okinawan children could no longer understand how some Japanese troops still proclaimed faith in the Japanese nation and its future nor did they share those ideas of nation any longer. The confusion the children felt signified a growing chasm between the Japanese and the young Okinawans; any statement of nation by the Japanese now seemed unconnected to the young's experiences and lives. The youth referred to themselves as "we islanders," which referenced the geographic relation of Okinawa as an island separate from Japan's mainland; they consciously moved towards an Okinawan identity that provided them a defining source of strength from which to combat the mental and physical anguish of Japan's betrayal.⁶⁹

Children comprised only one part of the refugee population that crowded into caves and walked on thin shoes along water logged roads. Although many of the young traveled only with other children, such as their siblings, the Okinawan refugee population also consisted of many women and elderly as well. Older Okinawans, who bore responsibility as providers and caregivers, instinctively protected their wards above all else. With bombardments raining down and cratering rooftops, they scrambled to pack food, spare clothes, and a few cooking utensils, hopefully enough supplies to sustain the lives of their entire traveling party for as long as possible. They fled their homes in attempts to outrun the battle and find makeshift shelter. Some hoarded ammunition and weapons they found along their route to protect their families. Others, struggling with a lack of water because of contaminated streams, drank their own urine.

⁶⁹Shigeaki, "Now they call it "Group Suicide," 364; Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 56. The Ryukyuan teachings they received in their homes from their parents and grandparents before the war provided them with a foundation upon which to find their Okinawan identity.

Traveling families started out as large groups; one woman had ten people under her care even with all the men gone to fighting units or Civil Defense duties.⁷⁰

Before the battle began, the adult Okinawans unquestionably considered themselves Japanese yet concern for family overtook any temptation they may have had for political or patriotic gallantry. Under the stress of combat and the struggle for survival, adult Okinawans found it difficult to abide by the Japanese state ideology that linked the integrity, stability, and growth of the family to national strength. With bombs leveling their homes and gutting their fields and errant bullets threatening their lives, they found it impossible to maintain the housekeeping projects and childrearing expected of them by Japanese propaganda. No longer receiving congratulatory letters from the Prime Minister for pregnancies, women now gave birth on the side of the street without medical help.⁷¹ Absconding among cratered, empty homes and unattended fields, they felt an eerie sense of abandonment despite walking among the shots on an active battlefield.

Unlike the youth, the older Okinawans held no lofty ambitions crafted in school classrooms and refined during mobilization for glory, nor did they idealize the Japanese soldier as hero. They had maturity and wisdom that came with age and a realistic viewpoint that drove their priorities towards survival of loved ones rather than towards promotion of patriotic

⁷⁰Field, *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor*, 101; Inafuku, speech; Diary, April 30, 1945, Detachment, 30; Testimony 5, Oral History collection manuscript room, Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum, English Book 1; Isa, "Junko Isa," 7; Testimony 3, Oral History collection manuscript room, Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum, English Book 1.

⁷¹The severe conditions of war tainted the Japanese' opinion of Okinawan women as mothers. In contrast to the Prime Minister's letters before the battle urging Okinawan women to procreate as a part of their duty to the Empire, the Japanese now viewed the bodies of Okinawan women and their offspring in grotesque ways. The Japanese found the dirty, lice-ridden and starving women repulsive and saw their child-rearing as crude, vulgar and immodest. Japanese soldiers reported with distaste that Okinawan women breast fed publicly and squirted their older children in the face with breast milk. (Military government report, James Watkins papers, Folder 5, Local Materials Reading Room, Ryukyu University Library, Okinawa, Japan; Japanese letter, translated, Active 7(7-2-C), Archives: J, Folder: Japanese, Kadena Airbase Archives, Kadena, Okinawa, Japan; Japanese diary, translated, Active 7(7-2-C), Archives: J, Folder: Japanese, Kadena Airbase Archives, Kadena, Okinawa, Japan. Isa, "Junko Isa," 7).

nationhood, as the children did. The opening of the battle shook the comfort they once felt in their homes but, without preconceived convictions of patriotic grandeur, the harsh conditions did not dismantle any pre-battle concepts they held about their relationship with Japan. As they rushed to protect their charges in the immediate opening shots, they acknowledged only that they were Japanese subjects and their homes were under fire.

Defenseless infants and slow-moving grandparents relied upon the able-bodied women for their survival. The women, as caregivers, remained wary towards all who carried weapons. To the best of their ability, they challenged any acts by the Japanese military that placed their families in further jeopardy; if they noticed the potential for harm, they pushed back against the troops in any way possible. One woman had only a tea kettle filled with boiled sweet potato vine to nourish her family. When Japanese soldiers took it from her, she grabbed it back. “My children would have starved to death without it,” she retorted. Differing from the young who attempted to justify theft in favor of the troops, the adult Okinawans immediately reviled such crimes and countered against them. Adults did not make excuses or offer understanding for the cruelty. When they watched Japanese troops in shared caves strangle noisy children to death, they called the murders “unbelievable...so horrible [they] couldn’t watch to the end.” Yet despite their strength to retaliate against the Japanese at times, horrific violence triggered fear in the adults. Some did not even need to witness the brutality to feel dread and anxiety towards the Japanese military; simple talk of troops killing children caused fear to build. Threats proved just as powerful. “They would demand food from us,” one woman lamented, “rattling their bayonets and saying they’d been ordered to kill any civilians who’d become a nuisance to military operations.”⁷²

⁷²Nagamine, Oral History Collection, 32; Site map, Maya Cave, Oral History Collection manuscript room; Testimony 16, Oral History Collection manuscript room; Shige Ginoza in *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa*,

Survival drove the actions of the adult Okinawans. Preserving a kettle of sweet potato water meant a few more days of life. Fleeing from destroyed communities offered a chance of finding water, food, or refuge.⁷³ Aware of the vicious deeds committed against them by the Japanese, older Okinawans knew that avoiding the army offered their family the best protection from harm. The trajectory of the battle, however, made circumventing the military a near impossible task. Civilians and soldiers both flowed into caves. Soldiers passed through areas with large congregated civilian populations with the intent of commandeering resources and organizing the communities into fighting forces. Facing the demands of the armed military, some adult Okinawans believed that compliance gave them the best chance of preserving their family and dutifully accepted grenades for suicide. Coerced by the threat of punishment, women silenced their smaller children, sometimes by abandonment, in hopes of protecting their older children.⁷⁴

While horrified by the behavior of the Japanese troops, the atrocities did not immediately alter the adult Okinawan's sense of identity. Amid growing fright, full awareness of the brutalities, and the mettle to stand up to the troops in small ways, the adult Okinawans still unquestionably classified the Japanese troops as friendly forces. "I was most afraid of friendly troops," one woman said as she described her feelings towards the Japanese.⁷⁵ As before the

Survivor's Testimonies (Okinawa: Relief Section, Welfare Department, Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), 34; Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 48; Gima, Oral History Collection, 23; Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 92-93; Sunabe, interview, *Stars and Stripes*.

⁷³Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 48.

⁷⁴Shitsuko Oshiro, Oral History Collection, 12-13; Japanese military instructions, translated, June 21, 1945, 1-2; Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 55; Shigeaki, "Now they call it 'Group Suicide,'" 364; *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa*, 4.

⁷⁵Nagamine, Oral History Collection, 32; Site map, Maya Cave, Oral History Collection manuscript room; Testimony 16, Oral History Collection manuscript room; Ginoza, Oral History Collection, 34; Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 48; Gima, Oral History Collection, 23; Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 92-93; Sunabe, interview, *Stars and Stripes*.

battle, the older Okinawans saw themselves as subjects of Japan with a unique Ryukyuan heritage that set them apart from the mainland and, at times, politically disadvantaged them. The acknowledgment of their ethnic background did not divorce the Okinawans from their belief in their place in the Japanese Empire and their role as subjects; they thought of Japan as their nation. While the battle brought unheard of brutalities, the older Okinawans had come to accept the inequalities and disadvantages they experienced at the hands of the Japanese over the years.⁷⁶ For over sixty years, Japan had limited the rights of the Okinawans. Unlike the young who had bolstered the image of the troops to romanticized epic myth, the adults maintained a more grounded view of Japan and their relationship with the mainland. A more levelheaded and realistic perspective better prepared the older Okinawans to absorb the horrific events without immediately dismantling their sense of self. They saw Japanese brutality during the battle as another instance, albeit extreme in nature, of the unfairness with which Japan treated their Okinawan subjects.⁷⁷ Older Okinawans immediately abhorred the Japanese for the cruelty that served as the latest offense against them but, already fully acclimated to the tense relationship between Ryukyuans and Yamato Japanese over the years, the violence of the battle did not rattle their identity as Japanese.⁷⁸

By the end of April, the Japanese forces had fallen back from their defensive position along a ridgeline south of Machinato and Kakazu towards Shuri Castle, the symbolic seat of the

⁷⁶Marine report, "Government," 3.

⁷⁷Study of the Ryukyus Islands, Island Command, July 20, 1945, RG 407, Entry 427, NARA, 2.

⁷⁸ Eishun Higa, in *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa, Survivor's Testimonies* (Okinawa: Relief Section, Welfare Department, Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), 17; Nagamine, Oral History Collection, 32.

once Ryukyuan Kingdom. The new Japanese defenses along Shuri Line held for only a few weeks before American forces took both Conical Hill and Sugar Loaf Hill. Situated on the east and west ends of the line, the capture of the high terrain enabled the Americans to outflank the Japanese. By May 29, the Americans easily captured the nearly abandoned Shuri Castle as the Japanese retreated towards Kyan Peninsula. On the northern part of the island, the Americans quickly sealed off the Motobu Peninsula as early as April 7; by April 13, they reached Hedo Point, the northernmost area of Okinawa.⁷⁹ As the battle advanced up and down the island with the American forces aggressively uprooting both northern and southern Japanese strongholds, the Okinawan population came face to face with the feared foreign invaders.

For Okinawan men and boys who fought with the Japanese units, interaction with the Americans occurred through exchanges of fire. Side by side with the Japanese soldiers, the Okinawans that fought saw a hardened, hated, and faceless enemy on the other side of the battlefield. Loyalty to their unit, the country of Japan, their fellow soldiers, their homes and their families compelled them to fight the enemy. An Okinawan soldier who found himself separated from his unit knew he “had to get back to [his] company, and that determination kept [him] going.” Encountering the Americans in battle spurred even more commitment to propaganda ideals than military training had inspired during mobilization. Feeling the emotionally heightened sensation of bullets shooting past them, the Okinawans who fought as official soldiers reviled the foreign invaders. Americans, engaged in direct combat with them, stood as a well-defined enemy. Hard fighting also drew the Okinawans closer to the Japanese with whom they fought; they shared a survival mentality and lacked concern for the population. One Okinawan soldier dismissed the needs of civilians he encountered out of concern for his own

⁷⁹Huber, *Japan's Battle of Okinawa, April-June, 1945*, 82-103; Sloan, *The Ultimate Battle*, 179-194, 255-273.

necessities. Although he realized he had no means to offer medical help to badly wounded civilians he encountered, he also refused water to people who begged for a simple drink.⁸⁰

The collapse of the Japanese defensive lines brought the Americans cascading into all areas of the island. Civilians in both the northern and southern portions of the island found themselves pushed to the edges of the land, trapped on peninsulas and cornered in caves. In all these areas, the civilian population sat deeply intermingled with the Japanese military, a situation that placed them in serious danger of getting caught in an attack. American troops rooted out pockets of Japanese resistance – inflicting casualties among Okinawans. Into the openings of even the smallest caves, Americans threw charges, ignited gasoline and aimed flamethrowers. As they closed in on the caves, they attacked from a position above the opening to prevent the escape of anyone inside. The method, called “blowtorch and corkscrew” or straddling a cave (Umanori by the Japanese), killed thousands of civilians and military. One student nurse recalled the devastating effects of a gas bomb sent into a hospital cave. The bomb was “thrown into the cave with the – fifteen-year-olds!,” she recalled, “The way they died! Their bodies swelled up and turned purple...It was like they suffocated to death...Forty-six of fifty-one perished there.” While the Americans did not target the population, they also did not make special consideration for the Okinawans at the risk of allowing the Japanese to escape. In caves that housed an inordinate number of military compared to a few civilians, the risk for the Okinawans increased. A teenage girl found temporary refuge in a cave in Makabe called Sennin-Go or A Thousand People Cave. The cavern held mostly Japanese military and only a few civilians. The Americans mortared the entrance, sealing it and trapping everyone inside. Deaths of civilians

⁸⁰Yokota, Oral History Collection, 25; Ota, “Straggler,” 367-370; Huber, *Japan's Battle of Okinawa, April-June 1945*, 105-118.

also occurred outside of caves. Rifle fire decimated groups of Okinawans hiding in foliage or moving on roads if the people intermixed too densely with Japanese troops. In one episode, an American rifleman opened fire on a Japanese soldier and, in the same burst, also killed three Okinawan students. In most instances, U.S. troops did not intend to kill the population directly. If a cave appeared to house civilians, they would bring an interpreter to coax the people out. Firing on the students stopped once the teacher, carrying the dead body of one of the students, stood upright in front of the rifleman. An observing student commented, “Random firing stopped. The American, who had been firing wildly, must have noticed he was shooting girls.”⁸¹

Children encountered Americans in sizeable numbers after the momentum of the battle favored the foreign invaders. Battle interactions between the population and the Japanese military, however, had occurred at the very opening of the conflict. The young, therefore, had already lost their trust in the Japanese military before facing the Americans. Experiences with the Japanese taught the youth to remain wary towards any soldier. For the young, safety only existed among themselves. Knowing nothing about the Americans outside the propaganda stories that described them as vicious animals, the young Okinawans felt threatened, convinced that the foreign troops intended harm. Most children lacked the clarity to understand why their family perished by cross-fire and instead believed that the Americans purposefully aimed their rifles and flamethrowers at them in the same manner that they engaged with the military. Smoked out of the depths of a cave by a charge singeing the entrance, young Okinawans crawled

⁸¹Gima, Oral History Collection, 23; Teruto Tsubota Collection (AFC/2001/001/30918), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress; Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps,’” 357, 360-362; *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa*, 25; Huber, *Japan’s Battle of Okinawa, April-June, 1945*, 103-115; Nakajo, Oral History Collection; 27; Associated Press, Charles P. Gorry, 27th Infantry Division, photograph, May 16, 1945, No. 19380C, New York World-Telegram and the Sun Newspaper Photograph Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C; Ota, “Straggler,” 367. An estimated 4000 civilians died by “bombardment or battle cause...starvation or asphyxiation in caves...the majority had died in caves.” (Diary, April 30, 1945, Detachment B-5, 30).

out to face armed Americans who herded them with the barrels of their rifles. “If we stand up, they’ll shoot us,” the children thought. As they saw ships offshore, they believed the Americans would use naval guns against them as well. “We were in full view of the ships at sea. If they wanted to...they could kill us with a single salvo,” one youth imagined, “I shuddered. I was completely exposed.” As mortars rained down near a village, a teenage boy remarked, “I guess the killing had already started,” as he assumed that the Americans dropped the mortars intentionally on the population with the simplistic purpose of mass slaughter.⁸²

The young gripped tightly to the image of the Americans created by the Japanese. Tragically, fear of torture prevented the children from accepting earnest offers of safety from the U.S. troops. Using translators to persuade civilians away from cliffs, beaches, and out of caves, Americans corralled the people into military government camps that provided food, shelter, clothing, and medical help to the limits of what U.S. resources could support.⁸³ The Okinawans, however, had no way to know the sincerity of the offers. Hundreds of civilians died because of American rifle fire and incendiaries thrown into caves. The Japanese warned of rape, mutilation, and torture by the hands of the foreigners. The young, who still reeled from the betrayal of the Japanese, presented the stiffest resistance to the coaxing words of the Americans. The children recoiled and called the rescue pleas from the U.S. translators the “voice of the enemy...the voices of demons.”⁸⁴ As the interpreters declared, “We’ll save you...We have food! We will rescue you!,” the young Okinawans stubbornly ignored the offers and ran away. As one girl explained, “We’d only been educated to hate them...we didn’t answer that voice but continued

⁸² Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps,” 360-362; Shigeaki, “Now they call it ‘Group Suicide,” 365; Memorandum for Major General Pedro del Valle, 1st Marine Division, 4.

⁸³Memorandum for Major General Pedro del Valle, 1st Marine Division, 4. 8-9, 12.

⁸⁴Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps,” 360; Dower, *War without Mercy*, 191, 196, 250.

our flight...we were simply too terrified...we never dreamt the enemy would rescue us.”⁸⁵

Resistance and hesitation placed the young in danger. Without hearing any responses from fearful youth huddled silently in caverns, the interpreters considered the caves empty of civilians and, therefore, clear for engagements with the enemy. U.S. troops would then fill the cave with gasoline and light it with a tracer round.⁸⁶ With the American military domination, few routes existed without soldiers. Young Okinawans that fled from the Americans found themselves in dire situations such as cornered on the edges of cliffs or facing desperate and deadly Japanese troops. Losing whatever hope they once had, the young resorted to suicide. Bands of students cried in despair, “We can’t take it anymore. Teacher, please kill us. Kill us with a grenade!”⁸⁷

Regardless of their attempts at evasion, the children did interact with the Americans. Ever observant, the young deeply considered what they experienced. In the same way they recognized insincerity and discord between the promises and behavior of the Japanese military, they noticed dissonance between the actions of the Americans and the fabricated stories. Despite the apprehension with which the young approached all militaries, the Americans provided tangible evidence of their sincerity. The stunned youth watched the U.S. troops fulfill promises of safety and nourishment. The Americans administered medicine and bandaged the wounds of their classmates. “Until that moment, I could think of the Americans only as devils and demons,” one girl thought, “I was simply frozen. I couldn’t believe what I saw.”⁸⁸ An injured

⁸⁵Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps,” 360-361.

⁸⁶Tsubota Collection, Veterans History Project.

⁸⁷Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps,” 361; Takejiro Nakamura, interview; Yasutaka Aza in *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa, Survivor’s Testimonies* (Okinawa: Relief Section, Welfare Department, Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), 35; Memorandum for Major General Pedro del Valle, 1st Marine Division, 4, 7.

⁸⁸Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps,” 362.

girl, after watching Japanese soldiers kill their wounded with cyanide, crawled away as best she could. U.S. forces picked her up near Haeburu and took to a medical dispensary. She survived, later saying that she “hated and feared these Americans, but they treated me with great care and kindness, while my classmates, my teachers left me behind.”⁸⁹ A child, choking on smoke as she exited a burning cave, caught her breath because of a piece of sugarcane stuck into her mouth by a U.S. soldier. Her two sisters, unconscious from blood loss, survived after they received aid from the Americans. Just as the continually aggressive actions of the Japanese towards the population drove the youth towards distrust, the persistent acts of humanity by the Americans left an indelible impression on the young that inevitably drove away their fear of the foreigners.⁹⁰ While shocked by the positive interactions in contrast to the threatening, mythical stories of torture fabricated by the Japanese, the consistency of charitable acts by the foreigners caused the intelligent youth to rethink their definition of enemy. American encounters also made the perceptive youth realize additional advantages to an Okinawan identity beyond the relief of the mental and physical anguish brought on by Japanese duplicity. Identified as Okinawans, the children received treatment as innocent refugees and found themselves herded into military government camps that offered relative protection, food and shelter.⁹¹ The young’s ability to analyze their circumstances, purposely adjust their conduct and redefine their identity created conditions that increased their chances of living.

Adults, influenced by the same storytelling about the evil Americans as the young, reacted with similar initial hesitancy towards the foreigners. A twenty-one-year-old woman

⁸⁹Ibid, 359.

⁹⁰Study of the Ryukyu Islands, July 20, 1945, Island Command, 1; Field, *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor*, 101, 103; Takejiro Nakamura, interview.

⁹¹Diary, April 3-8, 1945, Detachment B-5, 23.

“never thought of surrendering [to the Americans].” Instead, she and her grandmother chose to follow a Japanese military unit which exposed them to sparring between the two forces. Hiding among the Japanese soldiers under a cliff overhang, she watched American grenades kill one man and injure her grandmother. From this experience, she believed that the U.S. targeted civilians and represented a great threat to her family.⁹² Trapped between the reality of Japanese cruelty and the assumption of American torture, several adult Okinawans hopelessly opted to end their own lives. One woman tried to strangle herself with her obi. Another woman gave detailed instructions to the civilians with her on when and under what circumstances they should kill themselves. “If the Americans kill men only,” she advised, “then we women should kill ourselves.” She also instructed her group against fleeing from the Americans because “they would shoot anybody who would try to escape.” Death by the foreigners seemed guaranteed; far better to end their own lives as they saw fit.⁹³

Adults reacted with pleased bewilderment when the Americans unexpectedly offered their hands in assistance or carried the weaker civilians to safety. Older Okinawans felt surprised relief when they discovered the benevolence of the U.S. troops.⁹⁴ Dismayed at the ill behavior of

⁹²Ginoza, Oral History Collection, 34; Memorandum for Major General Pedro del Valle, 1st Marine Division, 4; Jim Lea, “The War Is Not Over on Okinawa Isle,” *Stars and Stripes*, April 22, 1972; Nagamine, Oral History Collection, 32; Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps,’” 360.

⁹³Memorandum for Major General Pedro del Valle, 1st Marine Division, 4; “The War Is Not Over on Okinawa Isle,” April 22, 1972, Jim Lea; Nagamine, Oral History Collection, 32; Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps,’” 360, 365; Ginoza, Oral History Collection, 34; Sumie Oshiro, interview in James Brooke, “Okinawa Suicides and Japan’s Army: Burying the Truth?,” *New York Times*, June 21, 2005.

⁹⁴Nakamura, “Fumiko Nakamura,” 37; Ota, *The Battle of Okinawa*, 223; History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 19; Captain Roy E. Appleman, notes, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA, 2; Okinawa Diary, April 30, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns; Study of the Ryukyus Islands, July 20, 1945, Island Command, 1; Nagamine, Oral History Collection, 32; Report of Military Government Activities for Period From 1 April 1945 to 1 July 1946, July 1, 1946, RG 200, Reel 2, Folder V1-3, NARA, 71; Memoir, Okinawa 1945-46, LCDR Caldwell, 16; Edward L. Smith, 2d Comdr, Marine Corps, USNR, “The Navy Hospital Corpsmen,” *Hospital Corps Quarterly*, March 1946, 11; Diary, April 3-8, 1945, Detachment B-5, 23.

the Japanese, American kindness created an opportunity for the adult Okinawans to seek benefits that did not exist before the U.S. military advancement. With survival and caring for their families still priorities, the adults actively sought advantages that might bring comfort or safety; the Americans presented such possibilities. Deliberately, the older Okinawans appealed to and allied themselves with the Americans to gain favor with the foreigners. A group of fifty Okinawans from the village of Aragaki approached the Americans with a white flag, seeking refuge. Adults highlighted any associations they had to America, such as any ability to speak English or relatives living in Hawaii or California. Locals who had medical skills worked as doctors and nurses in U.S. military hospitals, their efforts described by the Navy as a “willingness...to cooperate with American authorities.”⁹⁵ Whereas the young stumbled upon the benefits of military government camps, the adults purposely positioned themselves with the Americans as counterparts; they built kinship and actively sought treatment as equals.

Ingratiating themselves to the Americans, however, required a departure from the Japanese. Unlike the young who wrestled emotionally with betrayal and broken trust, many of the adults weathered the discord between the expectations and the reality of the behavior of the Japanese and the Americans with more resilience. Older Okinawans remained more cognizant of Japanese inconsistencies and the inherent disadvantages of membership in the Okinawan prefecture throughout their lives. Their mature awareness allowed them to transition away from a Japanese identity when the opportunity for improved conditions required such a shift. Much like preserving sweet potato water, making a deliberate choice about their identity protected

⁹⁵“The Navy Hospital Corpsmen,” March 1946, Edward L. Smith, 2d Comdr, Marine Corps, USNR, 4-5, 11; Report of Military Government Activities, July 1, 1946, U.S. Naval Military Government, 11, 71; Study of the Ryukyus Islands, July 20, 1945, Island Command, 1; Ginoza, Oral History Collection, 34; Diary, April 3-8, 1945, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 23, 48; Ernie Pyle, *Last Chapter*, (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1946), 125.

themselves and their families. Informal, collective communities, under the extreme duress of war, used comparisons of sameness and distinctiveness to consciously select the Okinawan identity.⁹⁶ In dialogue with the Americans, the people purposely redefined themselves as exclusively ethnic Okinawans and disassociated themselves from the Japanese.⁹⁷ The conscious realignment of their identity earned them relaxed security in the U.S. military government camps and was so effective that U.S. troops believed that the population supported the American way of life and governance.⁹⁸ Recognizing the benefits of American benevolence, adult civilians fully committed to their new identity as full Okinawans and dismissed their civil obligations as subjects of the Emperor. Not only did they draw similarities between themselves and the Americans, they actively fought against the Japanese. They helped locate and capture over 200 resisting Japanese soldiers and, at times, beat up any Japanese that attempted to hide among them.⁹⁹ The strained historical relationship between the two ethnic groups allowed the Okinawan's close interaction with the Americans to spawn a drastic divergence from their previous sense of Japanese identity. While the abuses at the hands of the Japanese had not turned away adult loyalty as sharply as it did with the young, the older Okinawans nonetheless always recognized the disadvantages they faced in the Empire. The Americans offered a chance to improve their lives not only in the immediate situation but potentially in a larger, more

⁹⁶Jacqueline van Stekelenburg, "Collective Identity" in David A. Snow, Donatella della Porta, Bert Klandermans and Doug McAdam, eds., *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements* (Hoboken: Blackwell Publishing, 2013), vol.1, 1-7; Leonie Huddy, "Group Identity and political cohesion," in Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears and Robert Jervis, eds., *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2003), 511-546.

⁹⁷Diary, April 1-30, 1945, Detachment B-5, 32; History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 18.

⁹⁸Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 48.

⁹⁹Study of the Ryukyus Islands, July 20, 1945, Island Command, 1; Pyle, *Last Chapter*, 125; Speech by Paul Skuse, American Legion, November 21, 1947, Paul Skuse papers, Hoover Institute; Yahara, *The Battle of Okinawa*, 207.

fundamental way. While motivated by present concerns of safety and survival, Okinawan abandonment of their dedication to Japan was not temporary nor meant to only ease their present hardship; adults fully internalized a shift in their identity that redefined their views and actions. The Okinawans now stood by the Americans as opposed to the Japanese; they blamed civilian deaths caused by errant U.S. fire on Japanese troops intermixed with the population.¹⁰⁰

As the days pushed into late June, the weather on the island of Okinawa turned to heat and sunshine. The hot sun dried up the wet of the rainy season. Throughout the fighting, mud had sucked on feet, stealing shoes with its grip and standing water had made waist deep ponds out of fields and roadways. As full summer arrived on the island, however, the ground cracked from the dryness.¹⁰¹ Official military and political dialogue announced the conclusion of hostilities in favor of the American on June 21, 1945.¹⁰² To the Okinawan people, the shift in weather marked a distinction in their environment more clearly than a high level declaration. In the months following the end of the battle, much stayed the same for the civilian population. Americans and Japanese still engaged each other in firefights that placed civilians in danger. The population still scurried around for food and shelter in a setting where none existed. In what officials called mopping up operations, the Americans often encountered sizable resistance in their efforts to bring the Japanese in compliance with the surrender.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰Nagamine, Oral History Collection, 32.

¹⁰¹Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 107; Study of the Ryukyus Islands, July 20, 1945, Island Command, 4.

¹⁰²Nicolas Evan Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars: The Okinawa Battle Diaries of Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr. and Joseph Stilwell* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 88; Nicolas Evan Sarantakes, *Keystone: The American Occupation of Okinawa and U.S. Japanese Relations* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 21.

¹⁰³*Ibid*; Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 89-96, 98-100, 102-103; Island Command, Unit Report No.1, June 20, 1945, Fred C. Wallace papers, Box 1, Folder 7, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA; Island Command,

Despite their considerable size, the post-battle engagements took on a different fighting quality. With the punishment of the American military momentum, the Japanese forces began to disintegrate. Days before the Americans claimed victory, Japan dissolved several units heavily manned by Okinawans. The Blood and Iron Corps, for example, disbanded on June 19, 1945.¹⁰⁴ As their last defensive lines fell and defeat loomed, many senior officers committed suicide, including General Mitsuru Ushijima, commander of the 32nd Army, and his second in command, General Isamu Cho.¹⁰⁵ The lack of leadership on multiple levels led to sporadic resistance fighting. Weakly organized and lacking structure, the post-battle clashes changed much of the camaraderie that fueled the Okinawan fighters' sense of Japanese loyalty. The Okinawans that fought in the battle, therefore, were the first civilians to experience the impact of the cessation of formal fighting. Much of the security that they experienced by their inclusion in the Japanese military fell apart as the units resorted to individual survival.

In the disorder of a crumbling army, the fighting Okinawans splintered off in the same way as the Japanese; they dodged the enemy and fought with the same devotion to principles that inspired their organized fighting. Each soldier strived to return to the normalcy that had provided them comfort over the past few months by continuing their wartime duties or by tirelessly seeking full reunion with their unit.¹⁰⁶ As the Americans sought to eradicate pockets of opposition that still waged battle, Okinawan soldiers felt hunted in an unrelenting predator-prey

Unit Report No. 2, July 6, 1945, Fred C. Wallace papers, Box 1, Folder 7, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA; Island Command, Unit Report No.3, July 23, 1945, Fred C. Wallace papers, Box 1, Folder 7, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA; Island Command, Unit Report No.4, August 9, 1945, Fred C. Wallace papers, Box 1, Folder 7, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

¹⁰⁴Ota, "Straggler," 368.

¹⁰⁵Yahara, *The Battle of Okinawa*, 153-156; Huber, *Japan's Battle of Okinawa, April-June 1945*, 114-118.

¹⁰⁶Ota, "Straggler," 369-370; Yokota, Oral History Collection, 25.

game. “The hunting for us stragglers was severe,” one Okinawan soldier said, “Every day Americans came to the heights of Mabuni with automatic rifles, stripped to their bare chests...When we went looking for food along the beaches, they would shoot at us from the heights, as if it were sport.” While some Okinawan soldiers did surrender in the chaos of defeat, many of the military Okinawans continued to define the Americans as a dangerous enemy worth fighting. Actions by the American forces aimed at the opposing military, such as puncturing food cans to cause rot so the stragglers could not eat the food and writing profanities on Japanese graves, ignited anger within the hearts of Japanese and Okinawans alike who faced them in armed conflict.¹⁰⁷

In fractured units, however, Okinawan fighters saw the first displays of Japanese indifference and bias against them. While the rest of the population had months earlier processed the shock of Japanese cruelty, the Okinawans fighters realized such duplicity only with the onset of military defeat.¹⁰⁸ Okinawans who worked actively as spies, for example, tasted bitter betrayal as the Japanese became wary of the close relationships that espionage necessitated between the infiltrators and their subjects. Despite units like the Okinawan populated Chihaya Unit, a spy organization under the intelligence section of the 32nd Army Headquarters, the Japanese published secret orders that called for the “investigation of the [Okinawan] men who are in the enemy occupied area.”¹⁰⁹ Japanese suspicions of cooperation between the Okinawans and the Americans ran high and bore a deadly penalty. Conscripted

¹⁰⁷Ota, “Straggler,” 368-370; Laura Homan Lacey, *Stay Off the Skyline: The Sixth Marine Division on Okinawa* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, 2005), 74, told by Marine Private Joe Drago.

¹⁰⁸One Okinawan soldier recalled that his devotion to Japan still held strong until late October, the time at which he finally found himself in a Prisoner of War camp, his methods of evasion having failed. (Ota, “Straggler,” 372).

¹⁰⁹Japanese military instructions, translated, June 21, 1945, 2.

Okinawan spies along with civilians, both innocent and guilty, suffered death because of accusations of such collaboration.¹¹⁰

Okinawan fighters that lost the evasive game with the Americans found themselves in Prisoner of War camps. U.S. troops separated the Okinawans from the Japanese in these camps and thus allowed the people to talk among each other and share their experiences.¹¹¹ Under tolerant prison conditions, the Okinawans questioned the teachings of the Japanese and re-evaluated what they had witnessed and participated in as soldiers of the Imperial Army; they found themselves reflecting on the violence that their units had administered to the population. Caught in the hypocrisy, the Okinawan soldiers placed blame on the coercive Japanese. Islanders who carried out violent acts against the population under military orders disclaimed responsibility by attributing their actions to a temporary, uncharacteristically confused state. “I was in a sort of daze myself,” reasoned one Okinawan soldier, “I could hardly care for other people.”¹¹² They also disassociated their actions from the outcome, often times claiming that they did not know what happened after they fired their weapons, thrust their swords, stole food or pulled people from caves. Some Okinawan soldiers only admitted to bearing witness to such events and denied any participation at all.¹¹³ The prisoners commiserated and tried to understand

¹¹⁰Ota, *Battle of Okinawa*, xi; Takejiro Nakamura, interview; *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa*, 4-5; “The War Is Not Over on Okinawa Isle,” April 22, 1972, Jim Lea; Japanese military instructions, translated, June 21, 1945, 2; “Okinawa remembers when war passed its way,” June 26, 1985, Jim Lea, 14; Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps,’” 358; Yahara, *The Battle of Okinawa*, 216. Japanese soldiers speared a mentally ill woman found stumbling outside Shuri Castle when it served as the 32nd Army headquarters. The soldiers found her incoherent rants fearful and killed her as a potential spy.

¹¹¹Ota, “Straggler,” 371-372; Directive Number 33: Okinawan POWs—Reception and Processing of, United States Naval Military Government Headquarters, November 15, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

¹¹²Yokota, Oral History Collection, 25.

¹¹³*Ibid*; Ota, “Straggler,” 372.

why such events had occurred. In their efforts to deny any active role they may have played, they accused the Japanese of acting like “bullies” to the population and to them as soldiers.¹¹⁴

Okinawans in the Prisoner of War camps arrived there by the help of fellow soldiers that had surrendered. While not an accepted practice, several soldiers did chose to submit to the military victors. Okinawans did so in groups along with the Japanese or when unit disintegration left them with a low chance of survival on their own. Some surrenders also began as unsuccessful suicide attempts. One Okinawan, crouched in hiding with fellow soldiers for months, offered the remainder of his food ration to his comrades before he rushed towards the enemy.¹¹⁵ Okinawans that capitulated worked for the Americans; they coaxed soldiers and civilians out of hiding. Called placation squads, the small groups stood outside known refuges and shouted messages that broadcast the Japanese defeat. “We’ve lost. We were defeated,” they called, “Your friends and teachers are all in a camp.”¹¹⁶

Placation squad missions exposed the Okinawans to the different ways the two countries treated the population; where the Americans expressed empathy, the Japanese conveyed contempt. Despite noticing the different behaviors, Okinawan fighters, both those in Prisoner of War camps and on placation squads, did not attempt to ingratiate themselves with the Americans. The experience of engaging with the foreigners in deadly, armed conflict for months barred the Okinawan soldiers from viewing the U.S. troops as anything but an enemy; they continued to see the Americans as a force that had fired at them with malice and desecrated the graves of their dead. Rejecting the notion of appeals to the Americans and reeling under the splintered military

¹¹⁴Ibid, 371.

¹¹⁵Ibid, 368; Aza, Oral History Collection, 35.

¹¹⁶Ota, “Straggler,” 370—371.

units' exposure of the falsehood of Japanese brotherhood, the islands soldiers awakened to a newfound sense of being Okinawan. Bolstered by a collective share of the combat trauma, the imprisoned Okinawan fighters questioned the order of the Empire, both verbally and physically.¹¹⁷ Nightly, they rose in anger and violence against those who they believed had subjugated them or those Okinawans who moved too slowly towards the group consensus. As they watched or participated in the beatings, they thought, "What's the difference between Okinawans and people from outside the prefecture?"¹¹⁸ The revelations profoundly resonated with the Okinawan soldiers and brought them to a definitive conclusion. "For the first time I began to be awakened to differences in our cultures," one soldier said, "I began to see that I was an Okinawan."¹¹⁹

On June 21, the American forces transitioned to a new phase of military operations on Okinawa, the central tasks of which focused on rooting out Japanese resistance and corralling all civilians into military government camps. From the military standpoint, June 21 designated a definite shift in priorities and operations. For the civilian population, some of whom had already found their way to U.S. military government camps during the battle, the transition appeared gradual, if not invisible, throughout June and early July. During heavy fighting, American military success had already placed the civilians face to face with the foreigners and greatly increased the resident numbers in the camps. Under the official declaration of the end of the

¹¹⁷ The group environment of the POW camps gave the Okinawan fighters the opportunity to collectively shape an identity through shared traumatic experience and group comparison. This process of collective identity building is called *consciousness*. (Van Stekelenburg, "Collective Identity," 2; Huddy, "Group Identity and political cohesion," 511-546).

¹¹⁸Ota, "Straggler," 372.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

battle, civilians continued to see more and more Americans and to fill the rosters of camps at a greater rate.¹²⁰

The end of the battle did not bring a grand departure from camp practices during the fighting. By the end of April 1945, restrictive policies and strict punishments in the camps relaxed as the Okinawans demonstrated cooperative and obedient behavior that contributed to the effective control and management of large camp populations and built kinship between themselves and the Americans. The end of the battle only helped to further enforce an amiable camp environment that had already cultivated for months.¹²¹

The population continued to have complicated feelings towards the Japanese, however. One boy found a pair of Japanese officer leather leggings in the bushes while gathering sannin ginger leaves and recoiled in fear while one young girl attributed her resilience during the fighting to the Japanese teachings she received in school before the war.¹²² The Japanese military still waged a propaganda campaign for Okinawan inclusion. Rear Admiral Minoru Ota, commanding officer of the Japanese Navy Underground Headquarters, described Okinawan actions during the battle as those of allegiance with the Empire. “In their heart,” he telegrammed, “they wish only to serve as loyal Japanese.”¹²³ The experience of the battle, however, had altered the population’s acuity about the Japanese to such a great extent that

¹²⁰Memorandum for Major General Pedro del Valle, 1st Marine Division, 4.

¹²¹Diary, April 1 – May 31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 23, 40-55; XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 17-20; Kikuko, “Student Nurses of the ‘Lily Corps,” 362.

¹²²Touroko Oshiro in *An Oral History of the Battle of Okinawa, Survivor’s Testimonies* (Okinawa: Relief Section, Welfare Department, Okinawa Prefectural Government, 1985), 37; Shigeaki, “Now they call it ‘Group Suicide,” 363-364; Higa, *The Girl with the White Flag*, 116.

¹²³Rear Admiral Minoru Ota to Navy Vice Admiral, Telegram message 062016, Document Exhibit Room, Japanese Naval Underground Headquarters.

rhetoric alone, particularly contradictory rhetoric, could no longer significantly influence the people. The Okinawans witnessed actions by both militaries that derailed years of Japanese propaganda designed to inspire loyalty under claims of national inclusion. As munitions cratered land, singed crops, flattened homes, and pulverized people, the Okinawans faced violence at the hands of the Japanese rather than safety. Stunned by the dissonance between promises of nationhood and violent behavior, the population distrusted and rejected the Japanese by battle's end.

In their denial of a Japanese heritage, however, the Okinawans did not adopt the American culture. Okinawans that did appeal to Japan's foe did so seeking refuge, not assimilation. The dismissal of their Japanese association resulted in a full embrace and elevation of their already recognized Okinawan roots. Each Okinawan – young, old, fighter or refugee - processed the severe experience of war at their own pace and in a unique way; yet all demographic groups ultimately re-established a definitive connection to an Okinawan identity. The trauma of the war forged shared experiences of hardship that promoted solidarity built around experience. Mutual destitution drawn along lines of similar ethnicity led to a renewed embrace of their likeness as they sought reason and reassurance within the chaos of war. Gravitating towards others that shared the traits that made them outsiders, collectively the people found strength in understanding themselves in terms that not only led to communal comfort but also shunned the oppressor; they were Okinawan above all else.¹²⁴ As more of the population pooled together in military government and Prisoner of War camps, relatively safe environments

¹²⁴ This is consistent with the sociology definition of collective identity: “the shared definition of a group that derives from members’ common interests, experiences, and solidarity.” (Verta Taylor and Nancy E. Whittier, “Collective Identity in Social Movement Communities: Lesbian Feminist Mobilization,” in Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds., *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992], 104).

with possibilities of resources, their conversations led to *consciousness* - a sociological process of realizing a group exists and understanding its position in relation to other groups - which further united the people in a collective Okinawan identity.¹²⁵

The Okinawans reached determinations about identity through active and deliberate consideration of the conditions of their environment. Okinawans fully participated in the formation of and a commitment to an identity that brought safety, reassurance, and comfort and gained them an advantage, no matter how small, in a grave situation. A strong Okinawan identity worked to secure relative physical safety and satisfied mental discord brought on by Japanese duplicity and war. Okinawans participated as full actors in their identity formation and thus helped shape their own fate during the volatile conditions of war.

¹²⁵Ibid, 104.

CONCLUSION

War, as an instrument of political will, begets destruction.¹ War kills people, levels buildings, and burns crops; it dismantles economies, destroys political bodies, and places social constructs in peril. Successful war, despite its purpose to forcibly impose an alternate political will, erases the offending way of life; war does not transform the losing country or belligerent group into a less vile yet functioning entity. War consists of blood, weapons, disease, and fire. War brings ruin; it does not create.

War, therefore, serves as only one step towards achieving political objectives. Following a resounding defeat of an enemy, a victorious country or governing body must face the perplexing question of what to do with the carcass of their foe. Leaving the enemy in a distressed state may be an option but long term political stability often times requires the victor to rebuild their devastated opponent towards at least a minimal level of steadiness. Occupation and reconstruction gives the conqueror a say in the future development of the defeated nation and allows the victor to mold the vanquished into a body that poses minimal threat. Militarily, an occupation ensures the security of the winning state and is a necessary step to establishing peace. In practice, however, an occupation requires the disruption of a foreign culture by the heavy hand of a military organization that rarely is equipped for gubernatorial duties. The requirement to eradicate elements of the offending society believed to have caused the war results in deep culture clashes often to the detriment of the occupied people. Reconstruction in

¹Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), 109-110.

the American South following the Civil War serves as such an example. The imposition of blacks' rights caused such a disruption in the racial hierarchy that it provoked Southern white violence.² U.S. Marine occupation in Haiti from 1915-1934 devolved into a "police state" punctuated by massacres of the civilian population.³ Occupation duty compels military officers into unfamiliar government roles that further create tension between the population and the military who enforces the policies. Dissatisfied with the selection of the Haitian President and the earlier establishment of a U.S. High Commissioner, violent protests erupted in Haiti in 1929.⁴ During American Reconstruction, General Philip Sheridan asserted his military authority by removing civilian government officials. President Andrew Johnson fired him.⁵ Occupations carry weighty consequences for the longevity of the country that prevailed in war; yet, they are complicated undertakings that stretch the capabilities of their military executors and unavoidably disturb the cultural fabric of a society. Miscalculations of the situation or a dismissal of gubernatorial responsibilities can place a hard earned victory in jeopardy or ensnare a country into an undesired prolonged commitment in an area.

The roots of reconstruction start within the violent conflict itself. Wartime occupation occurs alongside the opening percussions of combat since battle commences among the population. Initial contact between foreign army and local population builds the groundwork for military government operations following the end of hostilities. An army that fails to consider the interruption to military operations caused by local infrastructure puts its campaigns at risk.

²Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 225.

³Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 11, 15, 33-34.

⁴Ibid, 33-34.

⁵Sheridan removed multiple governors and the New Orleans Board of Aldermen. (Foner, *Reconstruction*, 307-308).

Local communities pose logistical challenges: they stand in the way of linear battlefields, redefine routes, disrupt supply distribution, obscure targets, and hide the enemy. Practically, military commanders must consider how to preserve the integrity of their mission while minimizing the amount of interference caused by the population.

Focusing only on military tactics on the battlefield and how to reduce challenges to military maneuvers, however, ignores the inherent cultural nature of occupation and reduces the understanding of the local people to two-dimensions. Occupations born out of strictly military considerations struggle to find commonality with the population and thus impose regulations that consequently fail because they lack the ability to adapt to the environment. Ultimately, such militaries impede the population from regaining control over their community following the conflict and thus extend the commitment of the foreign government in administering the occupied land.

The wartime occupation of Okinawa demonstrates the crucial role that considerations of race and ethnicity must have on the conduct of military government. American military government planners recognized both the possible threat a population of 463,000 civilians posed and the complexities of the relationship between Okinawa and Japan. Without losing sight of the impact that the civilians would have on military operations, planners from all services, to include the Marines, analyzed the ethnicity of the Okinawans and how their cultural distinctiveness informed their behavior. While the Marines' policy prohibited further assessment of the population upon landing on the island, preliminary analysis provided the military leadership of all services with a more robust understanding of the battlefield that they faced and thus better prepared them to preserve military lives, safeguard American secrets, and win the battle.

Planning for the Battle of Okinawa began in the fall of 1944 as American military leadership recognized the strategic importance of Okinawa in relation to mainland Japan. Buckner, as the Commanding General of Tenth Army, primarily concerned himself with the tactical and operational plans of the invasion yet empowered his subordinate staff to analyze carefully the impact of the sizeable population on the mission. As Crist identified, the determination of Okinawan allegiance to Japan held crucial importance in the conduct of the battle. Balancing operational concerns about supply, mission accomplishment, and minimizing casualties with the potential of the civilians to form a fighting force, Army planners opted for a strategy that prepared the soldiers for the most dangerous outcome: assume the Okinawans would honor their prefectural status with Japan and engage in combat. In execution, the plan called for the removal of the civilians from the battlefield so they did not interfere with the mission. Soldiers learned to approach civilians with caution as potential spies and enemies. Consistent with Buckner's priority on mission success, the policy meant to preserve the safety of tactical military secrets and minimize the loss of American soldiers' lives. Training for the soldiers, however, also acknowledged that the true disposition of the Okinawans remained unknown. Once ashore, the recognition of the conjecture involved with assigning an Okinawan identity allowed the soldiers to fully interpret what they encountered and modify their judgements. Through increased interaction with the Okinawans, the military government units attached to the Army gradually viewed the civilians more positively and as less of a threat. The soldiers began to give the civilians more independence within the military government camps and provide them with extra facilities beyond their basic needs. They identified the civilians as Okinawans, separate from the Japanese and independent in their motivations and loyalties but akin to the Americans in sensibilities and beliefs.

The analytical studies conducted during planning did not lack complications, however, and conclusions drawn by different services caused somewhat uneven results on the battlefield. The Marines reached the same answer about Okinawan loyalty as the Army and also devised a policy that rested on the supposition that the Okinawans would rally to the Japanese side. Unlike the Army, however, the Marines' strict adherence to the assignment of a Japanese identity to the Okinawans prohibited their men on the ground from continually reassessing the behavior of the people they encountered. As a result, the Marines held on to the idea of the Okinawan enemy longer than practical which resulted in harsher, sometimes brutal treatment. Joint operations in the Pacific carried many complications despite the conscious efforts of Buckner to seamlessly amalgamate XXIV Corps and III Amphibious Corps under his Tenth Army and monitor interservice discontent. Unfortunately, the population at times became game pieces in the contest of wills between the services.

Following combat operations, the mission of military government on Okinawa changed from wartime occupation to the occupation of a defeated country. As Army forces were diverted to perform occupation duties in Japan and Korea, the Navy assumed responsibility for military government on Okinawa. In the chaotic aftermath of the battle, the Navy handled the displacement of civilians by dictating military government activities on an ad hoc basis through directives issued simultaneously throughout operations. The Navy failed to analyze the changed environment as the island transitioned to peace and continued battlefield practices, such as guarding civilians during movement, which lacked appropriateness under the current situation. Naval military government settled into a malaise that accomplished little more than temporary fixes to the most conspicuous problems.

Inspired new Naval leadership placed emphasis on rectifying the troubles that afflicted military government. Spruance recognized the importance of Okinawan participation in the emerging government structure and wrote a directive that, along with plans from junior officers, placed administrative control of local government with the Okinawans. Meant to address the practical problem of troop attrition due to expired military service commitments, the plan also created a place for the people to shape their own community. Spruance and the ingenuity of key officers working directly in military government recognized that only through meticulous analysis of the history and customs of the Okinawans could the Navy construct a viable and durable government organization. Just as the Army experienced during the war, sailors found their views of the Okinawans evolving from increased interaction with them; they now viewed Okinawans as competent and civilized: a group that formed a distinct, separate, unique ethnic community that was neither American nor Japanese in its likeness.

In post war operations, correctly comprehending the intent of the population and the nature of their loyalty allowed the occupying forces to grant the civilians increased liberties and ownership over the re-establishment of their government. Under the progressive thinking and superior direction of Spruance and young, imaginative leaders such as Caldwell, occupation during the transition to peace focused on the utility of the population in achieving U.S. military goals. Even with the strategic role of Okinawa following the war as an American base and a geographic presence in the Pacific, Okinawan involvement in the shaping of their society ensured the long term viability of their community programs and allowed the U.S. military to reduce its manpower overseas to minimal levels.

Acknowledgment of race and ethnicity does not always ignite emotionally charged racism. In contrast to Dower's argument that negative racial sentiments towards the Japanese

deeply motivated the actions of the American forces at war in the Pacific Theater, contemplating ethnic differences did not always result in racist assumptions.⁶ Detailed study about the Ryukyus produced a deeper appreciation for the Okinawans in 1944-1946 and a better understanding of their unique place within the Japanese Empire. This knowledge then allowed the military planners to grapple with the complex question about the disposition of the population. Well aware of the importance of positive control of Okinawa in the overall strategic campaign for the invasion of Japan, planners handled the problem of the civilian population with seriousness. The conclusion they reached – to prepare for Okinawan loyalty to the Emperor and therefore, a legitimate fight – lay on a foundation of solid and reliable information despite it only carrying the weight of a best guess. The Okinawans, however, experienced conflicted sentiments about the nation of Japan and could only speculate on how they would react under the strain of violent conflict. Military planners recognized the dichotomy between governing nation and peoples subjugated to second class and knew no simple or guaranteed answer about Okinawan temperament existed. Cultural studies of an area of occupation expand the image of the occupied population into three-dimensions and prompt policy makers to ask questions about the impact of their decisions. Military governments that provide a small amount of cultural continuity in their policies also increase the likelihood of acceptance by the occupied population.

Cultural analysis acknowledges the ability of a population to think and contribute to the outcome of their own situation. Thoughtful analysis of the complexities of race and ethnicity reveals its malleability and, thus, exposes the ability of the people to adapt and modify their identity to gain advantage. As evidenced by the U.S. Army and Navy in Okinawa, military and government officials need to both understand the historic foundation of ethnic traditions and

⁶John Dower, *War Without Mercy, Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 3-14.

loyalties yet also fully comprehend the contested nature of ethnicity and identity. Successful military government is flexible in its cultural analysis to properly account for the adaptive nature of the occupied people as they struggle under the stress of the newly imposed government.

Nations and belligerents will continue to fight wars and face occupation responsibilities in communities whose cultures, traditions, and beliefs differ or conflict with theirs. Race and ethnicity cannot be ignored in occupations because the very nature of an occupation is the imposition of one set of cultural beliefs upon another in order to accomplish a military objective of stability. In 2013, as the United States transitioned from Brigade Combat Team operations to advisor roles in Afghanistan, the need for positive and effective interaction with the local population became paramount. In combating a terrorist enemy that embeds itself among the people, soldiers in Afghanistan, much like the American forces on Okinawa, must differentiate between the enemy and the citizens. Thorough, open-minded evaluation of race and ethnicity executed as an active and evolving analysis provides the military with the ability to fully engage in their environment and flex their policy to suit the ever-changing circumstances.

Acknowledgement of ethnic differences, done in a manner that seeks common understanding, will not harbor racism but, rather grow progressive policy that still supports military goals. An examination of the wartime occupation of Okinawa provides an example for effective military government programs now and in the future.

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