

The Enemy of My Enemy is My Friend: Okinawan Identity and Military Government
Policy in Occupied Okinawa, April 1945

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ABSTRACT

COURTNEY A. SHORT: The Enemy of My Enemy is My Friend: Okinawan Identity and Military Government Policy in Occupied Okinawa, April 1945
(Under the direction of Dr. Richard Kohn)

This thesis explores the planning considerations of the United States Army in formulating and implementing policy for the occupation of Okinawa in April 1945. American soldiers 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 Army 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. American planners determined that the Okinawans would act loyally towards Japan and should thus be treated like enemy civilians. As military government soldiers interacted with the civilians during the battle, however, ideas about race, ethnicity, and identity evolved; soldiers began to view the Okinawans as sensitive to the American cause. The modification of Okinawan identity from a Japanese enemy to an American friend displayed both the mutable nature of racial notions as well as their centrality in occupation planning.

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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.

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

The graphic nature of the fighting in the Pacific War combined with racist epithets proffered by both the 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

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).

ethnicity in their policy-making in a contemplative way that was more sophisticated, calculated and conscious than blind racism. Rather than devising 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

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

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 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,

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, 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.) 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).

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 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, General Buckner became Commanding General of Tenth Army and traveled to Washington to participate in the planning for Tenth Army's first mission: the seizure of Okinawa. 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.

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.

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

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, 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, 1945, 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

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

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

operations by maintaining order, promoting security, preventing interference, reducing active and passive sabotage, relieving combat troops 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

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 Phillipines, 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, p.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.)

¹⁰Operational Directive #7 from the Commanding General of Tenth Army, January 6, 1945, RG 290, Box 2196, NARA, p.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, RG 407, Box 2502, NARA; 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).

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 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

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, p.1; Tenth Army Pamphlet – Information on Military Government, February 13, 1945, RG 389, Box 704, NARA, p.7).

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

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

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

¹⁵Interview with LTG Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns, Okinawa Diary, March 21, 1945, RG 407, Box 2441, NARA.

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

¹⁷Ibid., 5.

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

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

¹⁸Ibid., 9.

¹⁹Ibid., 10.

²⁰Ibid., 11.

²¹Ibid., 9.

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 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

²²Ibid., 9.

²³Ibid., 1.

²⁴Interview with LTG Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns, Okinawa Diary, March 21, 1945, RG 407, Box 2441, NARA.

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 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

²⁵Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 5. The Americans landed 548,000 servicemembers 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).

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

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 a population estimated at 463,000, military planners had to consider possible reactions of the Okinawans to the invasion. Crist regarded the issue of the mind-set of the Okinawans as “the most vital question in

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

²⁷Ibid., 1.

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.

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 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

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

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.

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 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

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

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

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

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 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

⁴⁰CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, RG 407, Box 2502, NARA, 5, 10.

⁴¹Ibid., 10, 11.

⁴²Ibid., 12; Yenob –PW-188, POW interrogation, May 16, 1945, RG 389, Box 844, NARA; Inoue, *Okinawa and the U.S. Military*, 55-62.

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 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

⁴³History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, May 10, 1945, 17; LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns, Okinawa Diary, RG 407, Box 2441, NARA.

⁴⁴CINCPAC-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; Interview with 2LT Alfred S. Youkoff, Psychological Warfare - Combat Propaganda Team, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns, Okinawa Diary, RG 407, Box 2441, NARA.

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

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, 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. Considering the Okinawans to be similar to the Japanese in perceived cunning, Major General John Hodge, XXIV Corps commander, “anticipated great trouble with civilians and soldiers dressed as civilians on target.” He wanted the

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., LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns, Okinawa Diary, March 21, 1945, RG 407, Box 2441, NARA; 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.

⁴⁷Operational Directive #7, January 6, 1945, Commanding General, Tenth Army, 2, 9; Interview with LTG Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns, Okinawa Diary, March 21, 1945, RG 407, Box 2441, NARA.

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 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.

⁴⁸Interview with MG John Hodge, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns, Okinawa Diary, March 12, 1945, RG 407, Box 2441, NARA.

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.

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 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

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

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] 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

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, RG 389, Box 704, NARA, 4-5, 8.

⁵⁴Ibid., 5.

⁵⁵Ibid., 9.

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.

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 training did, however, communicate one thing clearly; regardless of whether the soldiers fully

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, interviewed by author, Dec.27, 2007, Okinawa, Japan. 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, RG 407, Box 2502, NARA, 10).

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, 1945, 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

⁶²Ibid, 8.

⁶³Ibid.

the censorship board. As L-Day neared, all soldiers found themselves busy with important preparatory tasks and the training program dwindled.⁶⁴

On February 19, 1945, 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

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."

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.

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.

By February 28, 1945, 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. Lieutenant Colonel 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, 1945, the eve of the landings on Okinawa, Lieutenant Colonel 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, Lieutenant Colonel 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.

⁶⁶Ibid., 17.

⁶⁷Ibid., 15, emphasis added.

The main assault began on April 1, 1945, with the landing of combat units and the “A” detachments, followed by the landing of the “B” and “C” Detachments.

Immediately 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 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.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

⁶⁸Ibid., 18.

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

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

⁷¹Ibid., 20.

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 2 and three quarters million. These shells flattened homes, burned out fields and crops, and killed civilians and Japanese soldiers alike. 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. 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 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

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, RG 407, Box 2502, NARA, 1; Japanese Naval Underground Museum, Document Exhibit Room; *The Battle of Okinawa: Oral Histories*, (Okinawa: Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum, 1990), 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.

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

⁷⁴Ibid., 27.

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 remaining structures. The “C” detachment camp at Shimabuku created ten districts

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

⁷⁶Ota, *The Battle of Okinawa*, x.

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

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 28.

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

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.

food and 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

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.

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 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

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).

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 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

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

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.

committed suicide.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 generally wary attitude towards the

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.

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, RG 389, Box 704, NARA; Okinawa Diary, April 11, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns; CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, RG 407, Box 2502, NARA, 10.

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

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 recognized that there existed no way to accurately sort out who

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.

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; *The Battle of Okinawa: Oral Histories*, (Okinawa: Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum, 1990); 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 LeFerber, *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 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

¹¹⁴*The Battle of Okinawa: Oral Histories*, 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); *The Battle of Okinawa: Oral Histories*, (Okinawa: Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum, 1990); 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.

Okinawan mobilization contributed significantly to Japanese fighting strength. Between December of 1944 and March of 1945, Japanese troop strength increased by 16,000 because of the incorporation of the Okinawan Home Guard.¹¹⁹ While accommodating the possibility that Okinawans as individuals might act as spies, American forces underestimated their participation in actual combat units.¹²⁰ 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.¹²¹ Earlier instruction emphasizing the rural background and cultural differences of the Okinawans from the Yamato Japanese of the mainland contributed to this miscalculation.¹²² 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.”¹²³ 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.¹²⁴

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

¹¹⁹XXIV Corps After Action Review #122, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

¹²⁰CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, RG 407, Box 2502, NARA, 12-13; Strategic Estimate of the Enemy Situation: Iceberg, March 4, 1945, RG 407, Box 2455, file 110-2.15, NARA.

¹²¹XXIV Corps After Action Review #122, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

¹²²CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, RG 407, Box 2502, NARA, 12-13; Strategic Estimate of the Enemy Situation: Iceberg, March 4, 1945, RG 407, Box 2455, file 110-2.15, NARA.

¹²³XXIV Corps After Action Review #122, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

¹²⁴XXIV Corps After Action Review #125, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

from those civilians 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.¹²⁵ 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 patrols and enforced anti-

¹²⁵One 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.

fraternization rules. Dog patrols consisting of 12 men and 13 dogs guarded the camps while the military police rested in the evenings.¹²⁶

XXIV Corps ordered the 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.¹²⁷ 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.¹²⁸ Units short on people sent requests for Military Police augmentees to XXIV Corps regularly.¹²⁹

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.¹³⁰ 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.¹³¹

¹²⁶Diary, 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).

¹²⁷Diary, April 1-30, 1945, Detachment B-5, 31.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, 36, 51; Military Government Action Report, 1 April – 30 June 1945, XXIV Corps, RG 407, Box 2153, NARA.

¹²⁹XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA; Diary, 1944-1945, Detachment B-5, 31.

¹³⁰Diary, April 3-8, 1945, Detachment B-5, 23.

¹³¹*Ibid.*, 33.

Civilians committed infractions out of their own need for survival, not a desire for deviance. They left the camp 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.¹³² They lacked the manpower, however, to escort every forlorn Okinawan and denied most requests.¹³³ The urgency of the civilians to leave the camps combined with shortages of material and personnel resulted in “numerous problems [with] civilian control.”¹³⁴

XXIV Corps issued an order in response to this lack of control. By April 11, 1945, eleven days after the initial landings, any resident found leaving the camps or stealing food was to be shot.¹³⁵ 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.”¹³⁶ Each individual camp displayed standardized warning signs issued from XXIV Corps to alert the residents about the punishment of death.¹³⁷ The public notices were written in Japanese, however, and thus disregarded the fact that older Okinawans only spoke and read Luchuan.¹³⁸ American forces not only knew that the Okinawans spoke a different language than Japanese but also acknowledged that “sentences may be translated [between the two languages] word

¹³²Ibid., 31; History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 20; Leaflet X-7, RG 407, Box 2502, NARA.

¹³³Diary, April 1-30, 1945, Detachment B-5, 23, 31.

¹³⁴Ibid., 31.

¹³⁵Ibid., 31-32; XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

¹³⁶Diary, April 1-30, 1945, Detachment B-5, 31.

¹³⁷Ibid., 32.

¹³⁸Ibid., 32; Leaflet Survey Civilians, XXIV Corps ltr, April 13, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

for word without comprehension” and that the two languages were “mutually unintelligible.”¹³⁹ 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.”¹⁴⁰ 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.¹⁴¹ One civilian was shot at Chatan, Maebaru, Shimabuku, and Tobaru. Three were shot at Shimabaru.¹⁴² 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. Buckner, upon visiting C-3 at Shimabuku, applauded the camp as “well organized and doing useful work.”¹⁴³

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

¹³⁹CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, RG 407, Box 2502, NARA, 10, History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist; *The Ryukyus Handbook*, 1944, Department of the Army, VII.

¹⁴⁰CINCPAC-CINCPOA Bulletin #161-44, November 15, 1944, RG 407, Box 2502, NARA, 10.

¹⁴¹Diary, April 1-30, 1945, Detachment B-5, 31.

¹⁴²XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

¹⁴³Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 41; LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns, Okinawa Diary, April 17, 1945, RG 407, Box 2441, NARA; Fisch, *Military Government in the Ryukyu Islands*, 45.

lingered around the ration dump.¹⁴⁴ 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, 1945 at the Shimabaru camp when a civilian attempted to leave after sunset.¹⁴⁵ For the remainder of the wartime occupation, ending with the surrender of the Ryukyus on September 7, 1945, no military government units shot any more civilians.¹⁴⁶ 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

¹⁴⁴XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, April 18, 1945, April 26, 1945, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

¹⁴⁵Ibid.

¹⁴⁶Surrender 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.

obedience to the regulations and close living increased 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. Contrary to what the Japanese had told them, the Okinawans discovered to their relief and surprise that the Americans did not intend to harm them.¹⁴⁷ The Japanese horror stories about American torture, however, made the Okinawans mindful of the structure imposed on them. 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.¹⁴⁸ A stockade constructed at Nodake for escapees who turned back before the Military Police could fire “was seldom required after the first few days.”¹⁴⁹ Within a month, “the penalty of cancelling the rice ration was threatened but not found necessary to be used.”¹⁵⁰

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

¹⁴⁷Keyso, *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. The Japanese had told the Okinawans that they Americans “would chop their legs off; would ship them to Frisco to be used as dog meat.” (Okinawa Diary, April 30, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns).

¹⁴⁸Diary, April 1-30, 1945, Detachment B-5, 31.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., 32; XXIV Corps Military Government Daily Operations Log, RG 407, File 224-12, NARA.

¹⁵⁰Diary, April 1-30, 1945, Detachment B-5, 33.

administration.¹⁵¹ One Okinawan man made additional leaflets about the consequence of death and posted them on paths that led away from Nodake.¹⁵² Regardless of the likelihood that the motivation of the man was more related to protecting his fellow Okinawans than working with the Americans, the soldiers viewed such actions as signs of not only compliance but team work towards a common goal.

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.”¹⁵³ They observed that “the rigid and arbitrary Japanese authoritarian disposition appeared strangely absent” in the work demeanor of the Okinawans.¹⁵⁴ In observing the civilians’ compliant attitude during his visits to the camps, General 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

¹⁵¹Ibid., 27. 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).

¹⁵²Diary, April 1-30, 1945, Detachment B-5, 32.

¹⁵³Okinawa Diary, April 30, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns.

¹⁵⁴Diary, 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).

Okinawans as beautiful people.¹⁵⁵ 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.¹⁵⁶

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 worked to further estrange 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.¹⁵⁷ 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."¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵Sarantakes, ed., *Seven Stars*, 35, 90.

¹⁵⁶"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).

¹⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 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.

¹⁵⁸*Ibid.*; 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

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 undoubtedly ameliorated there [*sic*] attitudes.”¹⁵⁹ By April 30, 1945, 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 the Japanese government.¹⁶⁰ 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.”¹⁶¹ 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.¹⁶² The loosened restrictions did not originate from XXIV Corps or Tenth Army. Instead, they grew gradually as each camp

American soldier.” (History of Military Government Operations on Okinawa, May 10, 1945, BG William E. Crist, 19).

¹⁵⁹Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 48.

¹⁶⁰Okinawa Diary, April 30, 1945, LTC John Stevens and MSG James M. Burns, Okinawa Diary; 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.

¹⁶¹Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 47.

¹⁶²Every 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).

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.¹⁶³ 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 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.¹⁶⁴ 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.

¹⁶³This 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).

¹⁶⁴Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 47.

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 being ‘Japanese’ asserted themselves to be ‘Okinawan,’ not Japanese.”¹⁶⁵ 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, 1945, 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.¹⁶⁶ In addition to ending the use of death as a consequence after April 25, 1945, military-aged men no longer spent their evenings in guarded barbed wire enclosures in the center of the camps.¹⁶⁷ At Shimabaru, the value of the Okinawans as workers outweighed any fears of organized rebellion. Military government soldiers

¹⁶⁵Diary, 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).

¹⁶⁶For 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.

¹⁶⁷The 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. Similiar crimes had warranted the death penalty a month earlier. (Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 47).

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, however, civilians completed those daily tasks with a greatly increased level of independence.¹⁶⁸

By April 30, 1945, Okinawans held camp leadership positions. 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.¹⁶⁹ 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 Major of Ginowan for 15 years.¹⁷⁰ Another named Kamajo had lived in California for 27 years.¹⁷¹

The selected local leaders underwent a three week trial period and, upon assuming their positions, possessed only limited authority. Local leaders oversaw food ration

¹⁶⁸Okinawa 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).

¹⁶⁹Interview Sheet for Prospective Local Leaders, Appendix to Military Government Operations Report – Ryukyus, August 2, 1945, RG 407 Box 2487, file 110-5, NARA.

¹⁷⁰Diary, April 1 – May 31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 41.

¹⁷¹Ibid., 36, 41, 48; *The Battle of Okinawa: Oral Histories*, (Okinawa: Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum, 1990) as told by Eikichi Shiroma, 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.

distribution and assisted in rule enforcement by communicating the regulations to the population.¹⁷² They also served on firefighting teams and recommended other civilians who they believed deserved positions of responsibility. The soldiers retained the right to dismiss local leaders that they believed had failed in their duties; however, the use of local leaders increased the stability and control of camp life.¹⁷³ The decision by Americans to establish local government demonstrated confidence, reliance, and some degree of trust in the Okinawans. The rapid emergence of local government in the midst of battle, although rudimentary, signified progress on the part of the Americans towards reevaluating the Okinawans and their identity.¹⁷⁴

Military government units now diverted the low supply of salvaged construction materials to projects unrelated to security.¹⁷⁵ Camps grew into more permanent communities and the Americans added playgrounds, schools, orphanages, and nursing homes with materials that had once built stockades.¹⁷⁶ Soldiers also began to share their military rations and old uniforms with cold and hungry civilians despite previous

¹⁷²History 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).

¹⁷³Captain 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.

¹⁷⁴Local 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).

¹⁷⁵Military Government Action Report, 1 April–30 June 1945, XXIV Corps, RG 407, Box 2153, NARA, 5.

¹⁷⁶Diary, April 1- May 31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 40, 49; *The Battle of Okinawa: Oral Histories*, (Okinawa: Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum, 1990).

regulations forbidding such actions.¹⁷⁷ By May 31, 1945 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.¹⁷⁸ The relaxed restrictions fostered an environment of friendship and encouraged the soldiers to interact with the civilians in casual, social settings. Two soldiers enjoyed tea with a family and several local nurses had to be moved away from Nodake to the camp in Koza after beginning romantic relationships with American soldiers.¹⁷⁹

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

¹⁷⁷Detachment 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.

¹⁷⁸Diary, May 1-31, 1945, Detachment B-5, 52.

¹⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 33.

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 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 notions of race were present, 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.

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