

The Invasion of Japan

In WWII, when Germany formally surrendered on May 8, 1945, the thousands of 16 to 18 year old boys who were still being recruited and trained by the Maritime Commission to serve as seamen in the Merchant Marine, thought they might be released early. They didn't know the largest invasion of the entire war, the one on Japan, was in the final planning stage. It was going to require millions of soldiers, marines, sailors, airmen and thousands of ships manned by Merchant Mariners.

The Allied planners thought the invasion of Japan would be tough but doable and could be accomplished in a reasonable amount of time. To the average GI not acquainted with the Japanese, it was just one more battleground. "We'll whip them in jig time, go home and raise babies." But the planners were not overestimating the potential for human life losses. Nor were they unaware of the Japanese and Emperor Hirohito's determination to win. Experience in Saipan and the Pacific clearly had taught us that.

An invasion of Japan would have affected almost every family in America. And this was after the U.S. had already lost 400,000 troops killed in combat fighting Germany. The invasion would

have required 1.5 million Allied soldiers with 3 million more in support for the invasion. It was estimated 1000 combatants would die every hour and casualties could reach one million. 500,000 purple hearts had already been stockpiled in warehouses.

The planners for this invasion understood how the Japanese would fight for their homeland and would not hesitate to die for their country. In Japan, preparations

for an invasion were being implemented. Schools had closed and the children and 28 million Japanese civilians were mobilized into a National Volunteer

Combat Force. The civilians were armed and given training to fight Americans. Japanese school children had the religious fervor to kill every American possible who would invade their sacred land. They would be wrapped in explosives and blow up advancing Americans. The national slogan would be "One hundred million will die for the Emperor and the nation". In the end Japan would have been decimated.

President Truman had approved the plans for the invasion, but he was also weighing the use of the Atomic bomb, believing the damage would be far less for both sides. When he

decided on the use of the bomb, he verbally gave the order to General Thomas C. Handy who wrote the orders to drop the atomic bombs on Japan. General Handy was asked later if he had any regrets about dropping the bombs. He said "Certainly not, it saved a million lives on either side". Should their casualty prediction of up to a million American lives lost in the invasion be true it would be reflected later in the United States because millions of cousins, aunts, uncles, grandchild-

ren, brothers and sisters we love and cherish today would not exist.

After the hostilities ceased and Japan surrendered the American Merchant Marine began work with the operation "Magic Carpet" bringing troops and equipment back to the United States. This was followed by delivering the Marshall plan to rebuild the towns and cities of our Allies.

The American Merchant Marine takes pride in serving their country in "Peace and War." In wartime they have courageously pursued their mission to deliver the goods to the battlefronts, despite the vicious efforts of the enemy to sink and destroy them and their cargoes. Their casualties were amongst the highest in ratio to the other services. In peacetime their mission is to deliver American goods and bring \$\$\$ dollars back to our shores. The American Merchant Marine has been essential to the financial stability and the security of our nation since the days of the Revolution.

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