

Operation Olympic: Invasion of Kyushu November 1, 1944

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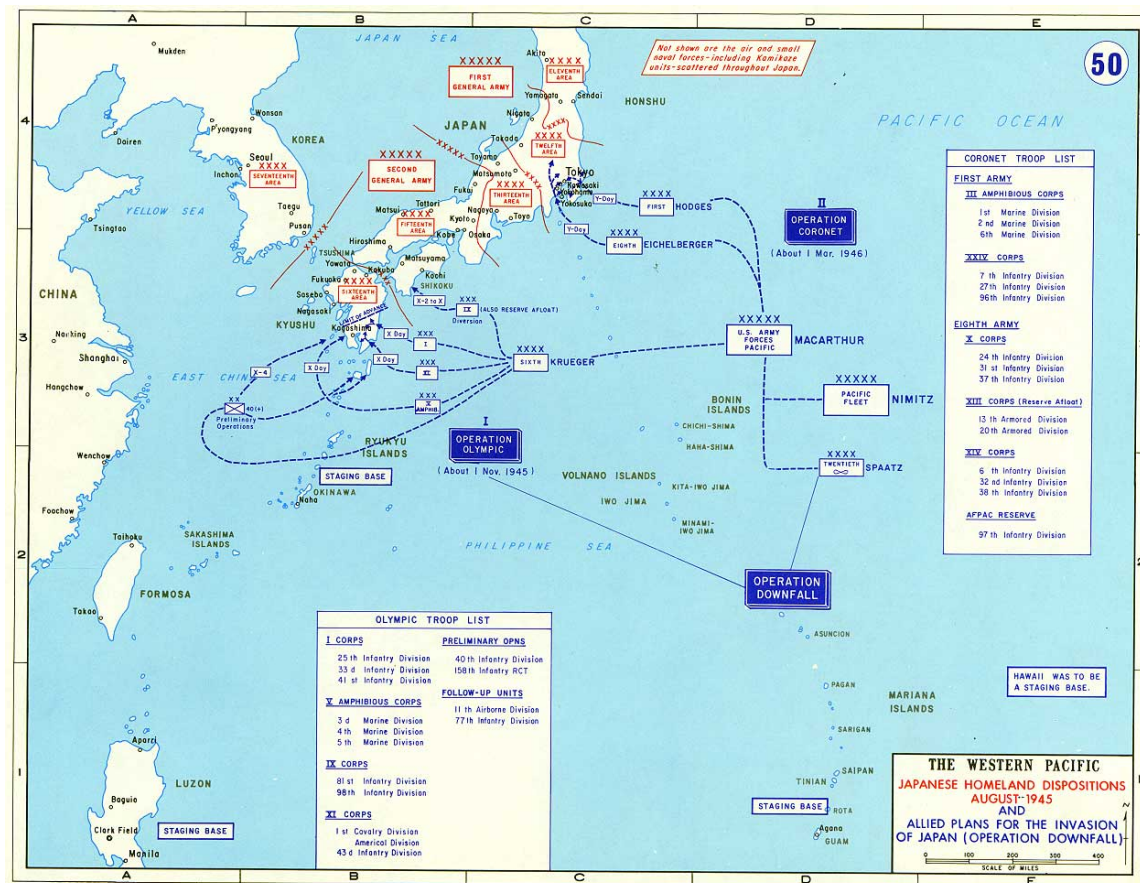
Ravi Rikhye

Operation *Downfall* was the code name for the invasion of the Japanese Home Islands. It was to progress in 2 stages: Operation *Olympic*, launched on November 1, 1944 against Japan's southernmost island, Kyushu, and *Coronet*, launched against Tokyo on March 1, 1946. This is the Order of Battle for Operation *Olympic*.

Coronet, the invasion of Honshu, an operation so large it would have made Normandy 1944 look like a sideshow. We will provide an orbat in a subsequent article.

<http://www.dean.usma.edu/history/web03/atlases/ww2%20pacific/ww2%20pacific%20%20pages/ww2%20pacific%20map%2050.htm>

We suggest you view the map at 200% to read the labels.



Summary of objectives, Kyushu:

...three corps would move north and establish a defensive line, stretching from Sendai in the west to Tsuno in the east, effectively blocking Japanese reinforcements from moving south through the central mountains. If needed, a fourth corps and two additional divisions would reinforce the three assault corps.¹

Olympic

HQ 6th US Army

XI CORPS

Lt.-General Hall

Southern Force: Land at Amake Bay

Objectives: Shibushi; Kanoya and airfield.

Beaches: Desoto, Dusenberg, Essex, Ford, and Franklin

- 1 Cavalry
- 43 Infantry
- Americal

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

(Landed by 3rd Amphibious Force)

I CORPS

Lt. General Swift

Eastern Force: Myasaki

Objective: City and airfield

Beaches: Austin, Buick, Cadillac, Chevrolet, Chrysler and Cord

- 25 Infantry Division
- 33 Infantry Division
- 41 Infantry Division

¹ Quotation sources missing.

(Landed by 7th Attack Force)

V AMPHIBIOUS CORPS
Major General Harry Schmidt

Western Force: West Kyushu

Objectives: Kagoshima and Sendai

Beaches: Pontiac, Reo, Rolls Royce, Saxon, Star, Studebaker, Stutz, Winton and Zephyr.

80,000 Marines and sailors

60,000 of which were in the 3 divisions

Corps artillery: 4 x 155mm battalions.

Air support: 8 escort carriers with 240 aircraft

1st Marine Air Wing

2nd Marine Air Wing

3rd Marine Air Wing

4th Marine Air Wing

Gunfire support

4 battleships

3 heavy cruisers

4 light cruisers

11 destroyers

2 Marine Division

3 Marine Division

5 Marine Division

(Landed by 5th Attack Force)

IX CORPS (DELAYED LANDING, NOVEMBER 4)

Major General C.W. Rider

Reserve Force: Feint at Shikoku, then land if not needed elsewhere near Kaimondake, at the southern end of Kagoshima Bay.

Beaches: Locomobile, Lincoln, LaSalle, Hupmobile, Moon, Mercedes, Maxwell, Overland, Oldsmobile, Packard and Plymouth.

- 77 Infantry Division²
- 81 Infantry Division

² Some accounts give 11th Airborne Division instead of 77th Division.

- 98 Infantry Division

(Landed by Reserve Force TF-43)

The source of the naval information is www.warships1.com/US_olympic.htm

OUTLINE TO 5TH FLEET³

Admiral Spruance

TF-40 Amphibious Force (Adm. R. K. Turner) consisting of

TF-43, Third Amphibious Force (Adm. T. S. Wilkinson);

TF-45, Fifth Amphibious Force (Vadm.. H. W. Hill); and

TF-47, Seventh Amphibious Force (Vadm.. D. E. Barbey);

TF-54 Gunfire and Covering Force (assigned to Vadm.. J. B. Oldendorf in the plans but he was hospitalized as a result of injuries

received in the 12 August torpedoing of USS *Pennsylvania*);

TF-55 Escort Carrier Force (Radm.. Calvin T. Durgin) for close air support;

TF-56 Mine Force (Radm.. Alexander Sharp);

TF-58 Fast Carrier Force (Vadm.. F. C. Sherman), two groups containing seven fleet and three light carriers.

We have so far been unable to get a proposed TO for TF-58, but the following from April-May 1945 gives an idea of the Fast Carrier Force's composition. Ships were constantly rotating in and out of the task force, the actual number of ships at a given time would have been less

CV

Bennington

Bunker Hill

Enterprise

Essex

Hancock

Hornet

Intrepid

Randolph

Shangri-La

Ticonderoga

Yorktown

CVL

Baatan

Belleau Wood

³ <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/war.term/olympic.html>

Bennington
Cabot
Independence
Langley
Monterey

BB

Alabama
Indiana
Iowa
Massachusetts
Missouri
New Jersey
North Carolina
South Dakota
Wisconsin
Washington

CA/CB/CL

3 CA/CB
14 CL

DD

~ 30

US ARMY AIR FORCES

Kyushu was to become the base from which the USAAF was to operate. The requirement was for 51 air groups – the equivalent of today's wings – and, of course, the engineers required to repair/build/maintain the necessary airfields.