

THE MARCHER

VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE
OFFICIAL PUBLICATION THE MARYLAND-DC CHAPTER

John D. Bowen Editor

ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

Jul/Aug 2015

GET WELL SOON

Earle O. Edmunds

Joe Patucci

Neil Thompson

Please keep them in your prayers.

DECEASED MEMBERS

Please remember those who gave their
all to keep us free and all our Bulge
Veterans who have answered the call
for their last assignment in Post Ever-
lasting.

May they rest in Peace!

AUGUST MEETING

Sunday

09 August 2015

BASTA PASTA

Timonium MD

11:00-2:00

Business Meeting

at 1:00 PM

Future Meetings

11 Oct 2015

06 Dec 2015

OFFICERS

Pres.

John R. Schaffner

1 VP

Mike J. Levin

Treasurer

Marcy Schuerholz

Secretary

John D Bowen

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Travis Aldous

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+Dee Paris

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+Syd Lawrence

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+Ed Radzwich

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+Grover Twiner

PPres

+Woody Purcell

PPres

+Darrell Kuhn

PPres

+CA Blaquie Culp

PPres

+Clancy Lyle

PPres

Neil B Thompson

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

AUGUST 2015

0805 LEVIN, Mike J 7 ArmdD

0811 CUNNINGHAM, Louis E 106InfD106 Recn

SEPTEMBER 2015

0901 HEFFNER, Jr, Stephen L87 InfD 345

0910 BRYANT, Madeleine Daug Fritz G A

***0912 BOWEN, John D Associate 31 InfD

AUGUST 2015

0811 SCHAFFNER, John R 106 InfD

0814 MILLER, Ralph C.

SEPTEMBER 2015

0912 NASH, Lewis W. Associate

0912 PATUCCI, Joseph 44th

0914 DILLARD, Douglas 82

AUGUST 2015

0826 MC KINLEY, John D.

40, 65, 70, **75, ***80,

SEPTEMBER 2015

0914 SMITH, Elizabeth Associate

0916 HARDY, Charles J. 1053 Engr

0918 SHEHAB, Alfred H M 38 Cav

Summer Luncheon, Sunday August 9th 2015
BASTA PASTA
60 West Timonium Road, Timonium MD 21093
11:00 AM

Bring your family to our MD/DC August Luncheon/Meeting. Your children and grandchildren are welcomed also. We will be commemorated the 70th Anniversary of the end of World War II. We will have another outstanding speaker, Milt Dierker, US Navy, World War II veteran, who served as an "Armed Guard" on Merchant ships.

We will have a choice of one of four entrée items which includes salad dessert, beverage and coffee.

Chicken Umbertina, w/asparagus spears, artichokes, cherry tomatoes sautéed in EVOO garlic wine sauce
 & side of pasta

Orange Roughy Francaise, egg dipped, pan seared, finished w/lemon sauce and side of pasta

Shrimp Scampi, sautéed shrimp in their scampi sauce and tossed with linguine

Veal Parmigiana, breaded, topped with marinara, mozzarella and side of pasta

Dessert — Choice of Strawberry Cheesecake, Tiramisu or Sorbet

Alcoholic Drinks are available at addition cost to the individual.

Reservations: Please make your Luncheon reservations by **Wednesday, 05 August 2015** by calling **John Schaffner** at **410-584-2754** or by e-mail to **pumexim2@verizon.net**. John Schaffner has an answering system so if he is not at home leave a message with your name and phone number. A menu will be distributed by the server to make your choice from the four entrees above at the luncheon. **The luncheon will be \$30 payable on the day of the event.** Luncheon guests should plan to arrive by 11:00 AM. For those wishing to attend the meeting only, please plan to be there before 12:30 PM.

DIRECTIONS: BASTA Pasta is at 60 West Timonium Road, Timonium MD 21093. It is just off Interstate 83 N Exit #16A, at Timonium Rd East and **quickly** move into the leftmost lane. Cross Deerco Road and the restaurant will be on your immediate LEFT, adjacent to the SUNOCO station. Access to parking is in front, side and rear. See you there! Bring the family!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Is it me, or time seem to fly for you as well? Our Chapter is going to meet again on Aug 9th, 2015 and I am looking forward to being with you all. And don't be shy, bring a friend.

Our entertainment for this meeting will be one of our newest members, Milton Dierker. Milt was nowhere near the Battle of the Bulge, but, was very much in harm's way nonetheless. His experience was at sea as a member of the "Armed Guard" aboard a merchant ship. If you are curious about what his post was like you can visit the Liberty Ship, John W. Brown, berthed in Baltimore Harbor. I feel honored that Milt accepted the invitation and I am sure that you all will enjoy hearing about a different adventure of WWII.

On July 4th 2015, I watched the celebration of our nation's birth performed in Washington DC in front of the Capitol. The program, the performers, and marching music were terrific and the overall talent was indeed outstanding. I am proud to be an American. How could we be so lucky to be able to live in this country? Having said that, I want to share with you something that has been a burr under my saddle for a long time.

I discovered this piece quite by accident, but it says what I have been thinking for a longer time. The title is, "Our National Anthem," and the author is unknown. "So with all the kindness I can muster, I give this one piece of advise to the pop star is asked to sing the National Anthem, at a sporting event: Save the vocal gymnastics and the physical gyrations for your concerts. Just sing the song the way you were taught to sing it in school—straight up, no styling. Sing it with the constant awareness that there are soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines watching you from bases and outposts all over the world. Don't make them cringe with your self-centered ego gratification. Sing it as if you are standing before a row of 89/90year old vets wearing their Purple Hearts, Silver Stars, and the flag pins on their cardigans and you want them to be proud of you for honoring them and the country they love, not because you want them to think you are a superstar. Sing the 'star Spangled Banner,' with the courtesy and humility that tells the audience that it is about America, not you."

JRS

❖ WWII MUSINGS ❖

Volume 23 Issue 4

John D. Bowen, Editor

Jul/Aug 2015



V-J Day 70th Anniversary 14 August 2015



This August we remember the end of the war in the Pacific, 70 years ago on 14 August 1945, when Japan surrendered and on 2 September 1945, when the formal signing of the document of unconditional surrender on the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay. This was the formal end of World War II and this surrender saved a tremendous number of lives both Allied and Japanese. Many of our Battle of the Bulge Divisions were slated to be part of the invasion of the Japanese in what was planned as Operation Downfall. Of course, this planning had been taking place long before the surrender and at the time when the planners not even President Harry S Truman knew that there were atomic bombs, being developed under the Manhattan Project. As with V-E Day in May 1945, V-J day (August 14th) was also a momentous Day for all. The war was over and the sons and daughters and husbands would soon be coming home. As I said in the May Marcher, my thanks to all of you, my heroes and inspiration, for your service and the sacrifices you made to protect our nation and the freedoms that we hold dear. You are truly the greatest generation!

This day was also most memorable in my life, as my hometown of New Bedford, Mass again came unglued in celebration. Everybody headed to the center of town walking because the buses & trolleys couldn't get through the crowds.

Again, we loads of Sailors from Newport Naval Base and Sailors from ships docked at our piers and Soldiers from Camp Edwards both about thirty miles away. This day neither the Soldiers nor the Sailors could buy a drink for themselves and most of them had a girl on each arm. Open drinking outside of the bars and taverns was something never allowed before nor after. Everybody was kissing the servicemen in thanks. Our boys would soon be home!

JDB



Editor's Corner

Our President, John Schaffner's message in this Marcher about the singing of the Star Spangled Banner is something that has bugged me also for many years. As I have stood there during their singing, I ask myself, what do they think gives them the liberty to change the tune to our National Anthem and why do they think that their version is better than the original. It always strikes me as a bit of arrogance and a "hey, look at me," attitude. I often wonder why there isn't a law against altering the tune as well as the words. Now I know that there is someone else that objects.

BATTLE OF THE BULGE DECEMBER EVENT

We will be holding the annual commemoration of the Battle of the Bulge this December from 14-18 December 2015. Details are in the current Bulge Bugle as well as a registration form. Our Host hotel will be the DoubleTree Hilton Crystal City again.

The night of the 14th of Dec we will be the guests of the Luxembourg Ambassador at Luxembourg Embassy. The morning of the 15th of Dec we will visit the Rotunda of the National Archives and view our Charters of Freedom, the Magna Carta and the archives Museum.

The evening of the 15th of Dec we will have our annual Commemoration Banquet at the Double-Tree Hilton Hotel Washington Ballroom.

The morning of the 16th the Veterans of the battle of the Bulge will have wreath layings at the World War II Memorial, our VBOB Monuments in Arlington Cemetery and Wreath laying at the Tombs of the Unknowns in Arlington Cemetery

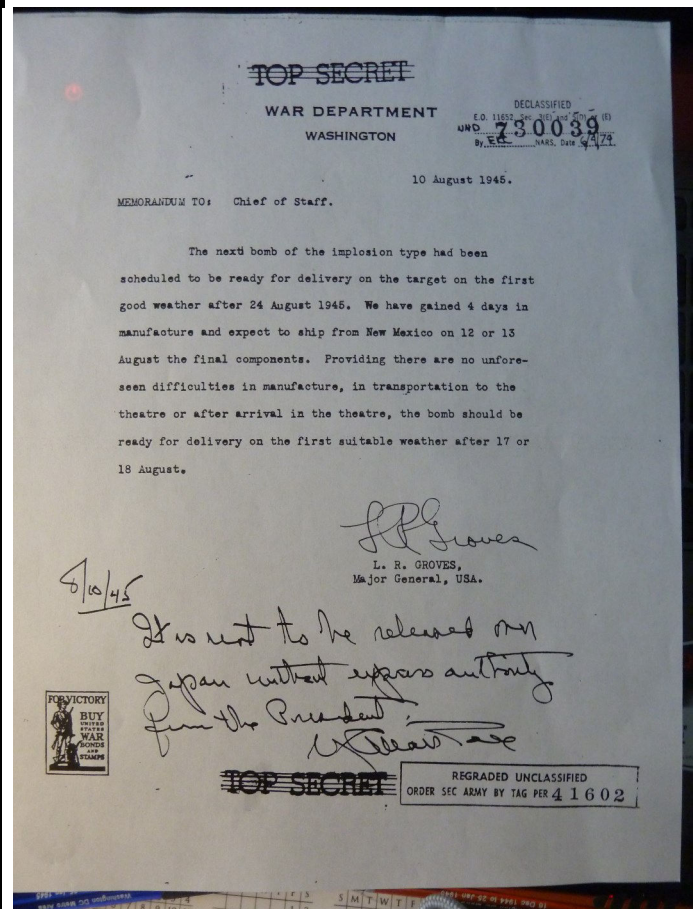
Following the wreath layings we will return to the Hotel for lunch in their Windows over Washington followed by the Installation of VBOB Officers for the 2017 Year.

The evening of the 16th of December we will be the guests of the Belgium Ambassador at his residence on Foxhall Road.

Plan to join us.

WWII Musings is published for the enjoyment of WWII Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. It is based on the research of John D. Bowen, 613 Chichester Ln, Silver Spring MD 20904 -3331 in the Unit Records maintained at the National Archives and Records Administration. Proper credit should be given both to the researcher and to the National Archives. Your comments are welcome. 301-384-6533
E-mail johndbowen@earthlink.net

A THIRD A-BOMB ON THE WAY



V — J Day

1945 — 2015

70th Anniversary

WWII ENDS

Thanks for doing Your part!

OPERATION DOWNFALL

Was your unit destined for this Operation?

After conquer ring the Nazis in Europe, on 8 May 1945, various units were selected to return home early to the states for retraining and then be shipped to the Far East as part of this Operation Downfall.

Operation Downfall was the operation to invade the Japanese home islands, defeat the Japanese and bring World War II to an end. It was to be done in two sub-operations: *Operation Olympic* and *Operation Coronet*. *Operation Olympic* was to cover the invasion of the southern island of Kyushu, to use it as a base for planes to provide support for the second *Operation Coronet*, which was to invade Japan to the south of Tokyo and the taking of Tokyo.

Operation Downfall is explained on the following pages in detail thanks to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

After the war in Europe ended, a number of divisions were starting to be returned early as a unit, For instance, the 87th Infantry "Acorn" Division was on early alert to return to Fort Benning GA for retraining in amphibious operations which it did . The first thing that they did was to take a well deserved 30 Day leave and then return to Benning to start retraining.

This they did and during this thirty Day leave President Truman had authorized the dropping of the atomic bombs on 6 August on Hiroshima and 9 August on Nagasaki local time. On 14 August 1945, the Emperor of Japan, Hirohito, recorded his capitulation announcement which was broadcast to the Japanese nation the next day (August 15) despite a short rebellion by militarists opposed to the surrender. President Truman announced the good news on August 14th and cities and towns took to the streets in joy and celebration. The 87th could really relax now, on the remainder of their leave, knowing that they would not be hitting the beaches in Japan.

Listed below is the Allied Order of Battle for *Operation Olympic*:

US Sixth Army

40th InfD (22,000 Men)

158th Inf Regt (7,600)

US I Corps (95,000)

25th InfD

33rd InfD

41st InfD

US XI Corps (113,000)

1st Cav

43rd InfD

Americal Div

112th Cavalry Regt

US V Amphib Corps (99,000)

2nd, 3rd and 5th Marine Divisions

US Sixth Army reserves (79,000)

77th InfD, 81st InfD, 98th InfD

11th Airborne Div (15,000)

US Third Fleet (Adm. William F. Halsey)

20 CV & CVL

09 BB

26, CB, CA, CL, CLAA

75 DD

US Fifth Fleet

36 CVE

11 BB

26 CA & CL

387 DD & DE

394 AKA, AP, APA, APD, APH

977 LSD, LSM, LST & LSV

Fifth, Seventh & Thirteenth Air Force

14 Bomber Grps. 10 Fighter Grps

Twentieth Air Force (77,000 Men) (1,000 B-29s)

Eighth Air Fore

Listed below is the Allied Order of Battle for *Operation Coronet*: **Bold Items are Bulge Units**

US First Army (Gen Courtney H Hodges)

US III Amphibious Corps

1st, 4th, and 6th Marine Divs

US XIV Corps

7th InfD, 27th InfD, 96th InfD

Follow-on Corps

5th InfD, 44th InfD, 86th InfD

US Eighth Army (Lt Gen Robert L Eichelberger)

US X Corps

24th InfD, 31st InfD, 37th InfD

US XIII Corps

13 ArmdD, 20th ArmdD

US XIV Corps

6th InfD, 32nd InfD, 38th InfD

Follow-on Corps

4th InfD, 8th InfD, 87th InfD

97th InfD

Follow-on Corps

2nd InfD, 28th InfD, 35th InfD

Follow-on Corps

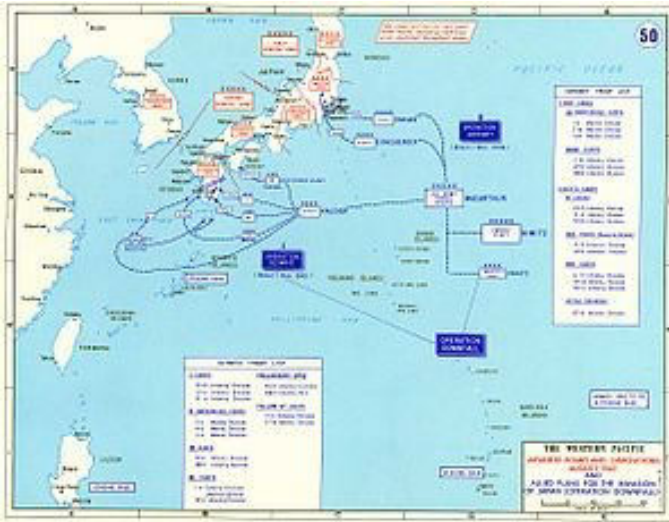
91st InfD, 95th InfD, 104th InfD

11th Abn Div

OPERATION DOWNFALL

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Operation Downfall was the codename for the Allied plan for the invasion of Japan near the end of World War II. The planned operation was abandoned when Japan surrendered following the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The operation had two parts: *Operation Olympic* and *Operation Coronet*. Set to begin in October 1945, *Operation Olympic* was intended to capture the southern third of the southernmost main Japanese



island of Kyushu, with the recently captured island of Okinawa to be used as a staging area. Later, in spring 1946, Operation Coronet was the planned invasion of the Kanto Plain, near Tokyo, on the Japanese island of Honshu. Airbases on Kyushu captured in *Operation Olympic* would allow land-based air support for *Operation Coronet*. If Downfall had taken place, it would have been the largest amphibious operation in history.

Japan's geography made this invasion plan quite obvious to the Japanese as well; they were able to predict the Allied invasion plans accurately and thus adjust their defensive plan, operation Ketsugo, accordingly. The Japanese planned an all-out defense of Kyushu, with little left in reserve for any subsequent defense operations. Casualty predictions varied widely but were extremely high. Depending on the degree to which Japanese civilians resisted the invasion, estimates ran into the millions for Allied casualties.

Planning: Responsibility for planning *Operation Downfall* fell to the US Commanders: Fleet admiral Chester Nimitz, General of the army Douglas MacArthur and the Joint Chiefs of Staff — Fleet Admirals Ernest King and William D. Leahy, and Generals of the Army George Marshall and Hap Arnold (the later was commander of the US Army Air Forces). Douglas MacArthur at the time was also being considered for promotion to a special "super rank" of General of the Armies, so as to be granted operational authority over other five star officers. However, the proposal to promote MacArthur was only at the level of informal discussion by the time World War II ended.

At the time, the development of the atomic bomb was a very closely guarded secret (not even then Vice-President Harry Truman knew of its existence until he later became President),

known only to a few top officials outside the Manhattan Project and the initial planning for the invasion of Japan did not take its existence into consideration. Once the atomic bomb became available, General Marshall envisioned using it to support the invasion, if sufficient numbers could be produced in time.

Throughout the Pacific War, the Allies were unable to agree on a single Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C). Allied command was divided into regions: by 1945, for example, Chester Nimitz was *Allied C-in-C Pacific Ocean Areas*, while Douglas MacArthur was *Supreme Allied Commander, South West Pacific Area (SWPA)*, and Admiral Louis Mountbatten was *Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia Command*. A unified command was deemed necessary for an invasion of Japan. Interservice rivalry over who should be (the US Navy wanted Nimitz, but the US Army wanted MacArthur) was so serious that it threatened to derail planning. Ultimately, the Navy partially conceded, and MacArthur was to have total command of all forces, if circumstances made it necessary.

Considerations: The primary considerations that the planners had to deal with were time and casualties — how they could force Japan's surrender as quickly as possible, with as few Allied casualties as possible. Prior to the Quebec Conference, 1943, a joint British-American planning team produced a plan ("Appreciation and Plan for the Defeat of Japan") which did not call for an invasion of the Japanese home islands until 1947/48. The American Joint Chiefs of Staff believed that prolonging the war to such an extent was dangerous for national morale. Instead, at the Quebec Conference, the Combined Chiefs of Staff agreed that Japan should be forced to surrender not more than one year after Germany's surrender.

The US Navy urged the use of blockade and airpower to bring about Japan's capitulation. They proposed operations to capture airbases in nearby Shanghai, China and Korea, which would give the US Army Air Forces a series of forward airbases from which to bombard Japan into submission. The US Army, on the other hand, argued that such a strategy could "prolong the war indefinitely" and expend lives needlessly, and therefore that an invasion was necessary. They supported mounting a large-scale thrust directly against the Japanese homeland, with none of the side operations that the Navy had suggested. Ultimately, the Army's viewpoint won.

Physically, Japan made an imposing target, distant from other landmasses and with very few beaches geographically suitable for a sea-borne invasion. Only Kyushu (the southernmost island of Japan) and the beaches of the Kanto plain (both southwest and southeast of Tokyo) were realistic invasion zones. The Allies decided to launch a two-stage invasion. *Operation Olympic* would attack southern Kyushu. Airbases would be established, which would give cover for *Operation Coronet*, the attack on Tokyo Bay.

Assumptions: While the geography of Japan was known, the US military planners had to estimate the defending forces that they would face. Based on intelligence available early in 1945, their assumptions included the following:

- ◆ "That operations in this area would be opposed not only by the available organized military forces of the Empire, but also by a fanatically hostile population."
- ◆ "That approximately three (3) hostile divisions will be disposed in Southern Kyushu and an additional three (3) in Northern Kyushu at initiation of the *Olympic* operation."

(Continued from page 6 Operation Downfall)

- ◆ “That total hostile forces committed against Kyushu operations will not exceed eight (8) to ten (10) divisions and that this level will be speedily attained.”
- ◆ “That approximately twenty-one (21) hostile divisions, including depot divisions, will be on Honshu at initiation of [*Coronet*] and that fourteen (14) of these divisions may be employed in the Kanto Plain area.”
- ◆ “That the enemy may withdraw his land-based air forces to the Asiatic Mainland for protection from our neutralizing attacks. That under such circumstance he can possibly amass from 2,000 to 2,500 planes in that area by exercise of rigid economy, and that this force can operate against Kyushu landings by staging through homeland field.”

Olympic: Operation Olympic. The invasion of Kyushu. Was to begin on “X Day,” which was scheduled for 1 Nov 1945. The combined Allied naval armada would have been the largest ever assembled, including 42 aircraft carriers, 24 battleships, and 400 destroyers and destroyer escorts. Fourteen US divisions were scheduled to take place in the initial landings. Using Okinawa as a staging base, the objective would have been to seize the southern portion of Kyushu. This area would then be used as a further staging point to attack Honshu in *Operation Coronet*.

Olympic, was also to include a deception plan, known as *Operation Pastel*. *Pastel* was designed to convince the Japanese that the Joint Chiefs had rejected the notion of a direct invasion and instead were going to attempt to encircle and bombard Japan. This would require capturing bases in Formosa, along the Chinese coast, and in the Yellow Sea area.

The Twentieth Air Force was to have continued its role as the main Allied strategic bomber force used against the Japanese home islands, operating from airfields in the Mariana Islands. Following the end of the war in Europe in May 1945, plans were also made to transfer some of the heavy bomber groups of veteran Eighth Air Force to airbases on Okinawa to conduct strategic bombing raids in coordination with the twentieth. The Eighth was to upgrade their famed B-17 Flying Fortresses and B-24 Liberators to B-29 Superfortresses (the group received its first B-29 on 8 August 1945).

Tactical air support was to be the responsibility of the US Far East Air Forces (FEAF) — a formation which comprised the Fifth, Seventh and Thirteenth Air Forces — during the preparation for the invasion. FEAF was responsible for attacking Japanese airfields and transportation arteries on Kyushu and Southern Honshu (e.g. the Kanmon Tunnel) and for attaining and maintaining air superiority over the beaches.

Before the main invasion. The offshore islands of Tanegashima, Yakushima and the Koshijima Islands were to be taken starting on X-5. The invasion of Okinawa had demonstrated the value of establishing secure anchorages close at hand, for ships not needed off the landing beaches and for ships damaged by air attack.

Kyushu was to be invaded by US Sixth Army at three points: Miyazaki, Ariake, and Kushikino. If a clock were drawn on a map of Kyushu, these points would roughly correspond to 4, 5 and 7 o'clock, respectively. The 35 landing beaches were all named for automobiles: Austin, Buick, Cadillac through Stutz, Winston and Zephyr. With one corps assigned to each

landing, the invasion planners assumed that the Americans would outnumber the Japanese by roughly three to one. In early 1945, Miyazaki was virtually undefended, while Ariake with its nearby good harbor was heavily defended.

The invasion was not supposed to conquer the whole island, just the southernmost third of it. Southern Kyushu would offer a staging ground and a valuable airbase for *Operation Coronet*.

Coronet: *Operation Coronet*, the invasion of Honshu at the Kanto Plain south of the capital, was to begin on “Y-Day,” which was scheduled for 1 Mar 1946. *Coronet* would have been even larger than *Olympic*, with 25 divisions, including the floating reserve, earmarked for the initial ops. (The *Overload* invasion of Normandy, by comparison, had 12 divisions in the initial landings). The US First Army would have invaded at Kujukuri Beach, on the Boso Peninsula, while the US Eighth Army invaded at Hiratsuka, on Sagami Bay. Both armies would then drive north and inland, meeting at Tokyo.

Redeployment: *Olympic* was to be mounted with resources already in the Pacific, including the British Fleet, a Commonwealth formation that included at least eighteen aircraft carriers (and providing 23% of the Allied air power) and four Battleships. The Australian First Tactical Air Force took part in the campaign to retake the Philippines. These would likely have augmented US close air support units over Japan. The only major re-deployment for *Olympic* was Tiger Force, a Commonwealth long Range heavy bomber unit, made up of 10 squadrons scheduled to be transferred from RAF Bomber Command control in Europe to airbases on Okinawa. This would have included 617 Squadron, the specialist ‘Dam Busters’ who were armed with the massive ground penetrator ‘Grand Slams.’ In 1944, British plans had allowed for 500—1,000 heavy bombers, this had been reduced to 22 squadrons of RAF, RCAF and other nations and by 1945 to 10 from the RAF, RCAF, RNZAF and RAAF.

If reinforcements had been needed for *Olympic*, they could have been provided from force being assembled for *Coronet*, which would have needed the redeployment of substantial Allied forces from Europe, South Asia, Australia, and elsewhere. These would have included the US First Army (15 divisions) and the Eighth Air Force, which were in Europe. The redeployment was complicated by the simultaneous partial demobilization of the US Army, which drastically reduced the divisions’ combat effectiveness, by stripping them of their most experienced officers and men.

According to US historian John Ray Skates:

American planners took no note [initially] of the possibility that [non-US] allied ground troops might participate in the invasion of the Kanto Plain. The published plans indicated that the assault, follow-up, and reserve units would all come from US forces. [However, as] the *Coronet* plans were being refined during the [northern] summer of 1945, all the major Allied countries offered ground forces, and a debate developed at the highest levels of command over the size, mission, equipment, and support of these contingents.

The Australian government requested the inclusion of Australian Army units in the first wave of *Olympic*, but this was rejected by US Commanders. Following negotiations among the

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7, *Operation Downfall*)

western Allied powers, it was decided that a Commonwealth Corps, initially made up of infantry divisions from the Australian, British and Canadian armies would be used in Coronet. Reinforcements would have been available from these countries, as well as other parts of the Commonwealth. MacArthur blocked proposal to include an Indian Army division, because of differences in language, organization, composition, equipment, training, and doctrine. He also recommended that the corps should be organized along the lines of a US corps, should use only US equipment and logistics, and should train in the US for 6 months before deployment; these suggestions were accepted. A British officer, Lt Gen Sir Charles Keightley, had been nominated to lead the Commonwealth Corps. The Australian government questioned the appointment of an officer with no experience fighting the Japanese, and suggested that Lt Gen Leslie Morshead, an Australian who had been carrying out the New Guinea and Borneo campaigns, should be appointed. The war ended before the details of the Corps were finalized.

Operation Ketsugo: Meanwhile, the Japanese had their own plans. Initially, they were concerned about an invasion during the summer of 1945. However, the Battle of Okinawa went on for so long that they concluded the Allies would not be able to launch another operation before the typhoon season, during which the weather would be too risky for amphibious operations. Japanese intelligence predicted fairly closely where the invasion would take place: southern Kyushu at Miyazaki, Ariake Bay, and/or the Satsuma Peninsula.

While Japan no longer had a realistic prospect of winning the war, Japan's leaders believed they could make the cost of conquering Japan too high for the Allies to accept, which would lead to some sort of armistice rather than total defeat. The Japanese plan for defeating the invasion was called *Operation Ketsugo* (*Operation Codename Decisive*). The Japanese were secretly constructing an underground headquarters in Matsu-shiro, Nagano Prefecture, which could be used in the event of Allied invasion to shelter the Emperor and the Imperial General Staff.

Kamikaze: Admiral Matome Ugaki was recalled to Japan in Feb 1945 and given command of the Fifth Air Fleet on Kyushu. The Fifth Air Fleet was assigned the task of kamikaze attacks against ships involved in the invasion of Okinawa, **Operation Ten-go** and began training pilots and assembling aircraft for the defense of Kyushu where the Allies were likely to invade next.

The Japanese defense relied heavily on kamikaze planes. In addition to fighters and bombers, they reassigned almost all of their trainers for the mission, trying to make up in quantity what they lacked in quality. Their army and navy had more than 10,000 aircraft ready for use in July (and would have had somewhat more by October) and were planning to use almost all that could reach the invasion fleets. Ugaki also oversaw building hundreds of small suicide boats that would also be used to attack any Allied ship that came near the shores of Kyushu.

Fewer than 2,000 kamikaze planes launched attacks during the battle of Okinawa, achieving approximately one hit per nine attacks. At Kyushu, because of the more favorable circumstances (such as terrain that would reduce the Allies radar advantage), they hoped to get one for six by overwhelming the

US defenses with large numbers of kamikaze attacks in a period of hours. The Japanese estimated that the planes would sink more than 400 ships; since they were training the pilots to target transports rather than carriers and destroyers, the casualties would be disproportionately greater than at Okinawa. One staff study estimated that the kamikazes could destroy a third to half of the invasion force before its landings.

Naval Forces: By August 1945, the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) had ceased to be an effective fighting force. The only major Japanese warships in fighting order were six aircraft carriers, four cruisers and one battleship, none of which could be adequately fueled: while the Japanese still had a sizeable number of minor warships their use would also have been limited by lack of fuel. The Japanese could "sustain a force of twenty operational destroyers and perhaps forty submarines for a few days at sea. The IJN also had about 100 Koryu-class midget submarines, 250 smaller Kairyu-Class midget submarines, 400 Kaiten manned torpedoes and 800 Shin'yo suicide boats.

Ground Forces: In any amphibious operation, the defender has two options for defensive strategy: strong defense of the beaches or defense in depth. Early in the war (such as Tarawa), the Japanese employed strong defenses on the beaches with little or no manpower in reserve. This tactic proved to be very vulnerable to pre-invasion shore bombardment. Later in the war, at Peleliu, Iwo Jima and Okinawa, the Japanese switched strategy and dug in their forces in the most defensible terrain.

For the defense of Kyushu, the Japanese took an intermediate posture, with the bulk of their defensive forces a few kilometers inland from the shore: back far enough to avoid complete exposure to naval gunnery but close enough that the Americans could not establish a secure foothold before engaging them. The counteroffensive forces were still farther back, prepared to move against whichever landing seemed to be the main effort.

In March 1945, there was only one combat division in Kyushu. Over the next four months, the Imperial Japanese Army transferred forces from Manchuria, Korea and northern Japan, while raising other forces in place. By August, they had 14 divisions and various smaller formations, including three tank brigades, for a total of 900,000 men. Although the Japanese were able to raise large numbers of new soldiers, equipping them was more difficult. By August, the Japanese Army had the equivalent of 65 divisions in the homeland but only enough equipment for 40 and only enough ammunition for 30.

The Japanese did not formally decide to stake everything on the outcome of the Battle of Kyushu, but they concentrated their assets to such a degree that there would be little left in reserve. By one estimate, the forces in Kyushu had 40% of all the ammunition in the Home Islands.

In addition, the Japanese had organized the Patriotic Citizens fighting Corps, which included all healthy men aged 15 to 60 and women 17 to 40 for a total of 28 million people, for combat support and, later, combat jobs. Weapons, training and uniforms were generally lacking: some men were armed with nothing better than muzzle-loading muskets, longbows, or bamboo spears; nevertheless, they were expected to make due with what they had. One mobilized high school girl, Yukiko Kasai, found herself issued an awl and told, "Even killing one American soldier will do. You must aim for the abdomen."

(Continued from page 8, *Operation Downfall*)

ALLIED RE-EVALUATION OF *OLYMPIC*

Air Threat: US Military intelligence initially estimated the number of Japanese aircraft to be around 2,500. The Okinawa experience was bad: almost two fatalities and a similar number wounded per sortie — and Kyushu were likely to be worse. To attack the ships off Okinawa, Japanese planes had to fly long distances over open water; to attack the ships off Kyushu, they could fly overland and then short distances out to the landing fleets. Gradually, intelligence learned that the Japanese were devoting all their aircraft to the kamikaze mission and taking effective measures to conserve them until the battle. An Army estimate in May was 3,391 planes; in June, 4862; in August 5911. A Navy estimate, abandoning any distinction between training and combat aircraft, in July 8750; in August 10,290.

The Allies made counter-kamikaze preparations, known as the Bib Blue Blanket. This involved adding more fighter squadrons to carriers in place of torpedo and dive bomber, and converting B-17s into airborne radar pickets in manner similar to modern-day AWACs. Nimitz came up with a plan for a pre-invasion feint, sending a fleet to the invasion beaches a couple of weeks before the real invasion, to lure out the Japanese on their one-way flights, who would then find — instead of the valuable, vulnerable transports — ships loaded with anti-aircraft guns from bow to stern,

The main defense against Japanese air attacks would have come from the massive fighter forces that were being assembled in the Ryukyu Islands. US Army Fifth and Seventh Air Force and US Marine air units had moved into the islands immediately after the invasion, and air strength has been increasing in preparation for an all out assault on Japan. In preparation for the invasion, an air campaign against Japanese airfields and transportation arteries had commenced before the Japanese surrender.

Ground Threat: Through April, May and June, Allied intelligence followed the buildup of Japanese ground forces, including five divisions added to Kyushu, with great interest but some complacency, still protecting that in November the total for Kyushu would be about 350,000 servicemen. That changed in July, with the discovery of four new divisions and indications of more to come. By August, the count was up to 600,000 and Magic cryptanalysis had identified nine divisions in southern Kyushu — three times the expected number and still a serious underestimate of actual Japanese strength.

The intelligence revelations about Japanese preparations on Kyushu emerging in mid-July transmitted powerful shock waves both in the Pacific and in Washington. On 29 July, [MacArthur's intelligence chief, Major General Charles A.] Willoghby . . . Noted first that the April estimate allowed for the Japanese capability to deploy six divisions on Kyushu, with the potential to deploy ten. "The [six] divisions have since made their appearance, as predicted," he observed, "and the end is not in sight." If not checked, this threatened "to grow to [the] point where we attack on a ratio of one (1) to one (1) which is not the recipe for victory."

By the time of surrender, the Japanese had 916,828 military personnel either in position or in various stages of deployment on Kyushu Alone. Total strength of the Japanese military in the Home Islands amounted 4,335,500, of whom 2,372,700 were in

the Army and 1,962,800 were in the Navy. The build-up of Japanese troops and Kyushu led American war planners, most importantly General George C. Marshall, to consider drastic changes to *Olympic*, or replacing it with a different plan for invasion.

Chemical Weapons: Because of its predictable wind patterns and several other factors, Japan was particularly vulnerable to gas attacks. Such attacks would neutralize the Japanese tendency to fight from caves, which would increase the soldier's to gas.

Although chemical warfare had been outlawed by the Geneva Protocol, neither the US nor Japan were signatories at the time. While the US had promised never to initiate gas warfare, Japan had used gas against the Chinese earlier in the war.

Fear of Japanese retaliation [to chemical weapon use] lessened because by the end of the war Japan's ability to deliver gas by air or long-range guns had all but disappeared. In 1944 Ultra revealed that the Japanese doubted their ability to retaliate against United States use of gas. "Every precaution must be taken to give the enemy cause for a pretext to use gas," the commanders were warned. So fearful were the Japanese leaders that they planned to ignore isolated tactical use of gas in the home islands by the US forces because they feared escalation.

Nuclear Weapons: On Marshall's orders, Major General John E. Hull looked into the tactical use of nuclear weapons for the invasion of the Japanese home islands (even after the dropping of two strategic atomic bombs on Japan, Marshall did not think that the Japanese would capitulate immediately). Colonel Lyle Esteeming reported that at least seven Fat Man type plutonium implosion bombs would be available by X-Day, which could be dropped on defending forces. Seeman advised that American troops not enter an area hit by a bomb for "at least 48 hours;" the risk of nuclear fallout was not well understood, and such a short amount of time after detonation would have resulted in substantial radiation exposure for the American troops.

Ken Nichols, the District Engineer of the Manhattan Engineer District, wrote at the beginning of August 1945, "[p]lanning for the invasion of the main Japanese home islands had reach its final stages, and if the landings actually took place, we might supply about fifteen atomic bombs to support the troops." An air burst 1,800-2,000 ft above the ground had been chosen for the (Hiroshima) bomb to achieve maximum blast effects, and to minimize residual radiation on the ground as it was hoped that American troops would soon occupy the city.

Alternative Targets: The Joint Staff planners, taking note of the extent to which the Japanese had concentrated on Kyushu at the expense of the rest of Japan, considered alternate places to invade such as the island of Shikoku, northern Honshu at Sendai, or Ominato. They also considered skipping the preliminary invasion and going directly at Tokyo. Attacking northern Honshu would have the advantage of a much weaker defense but had the disadvantage of giving up land-based air support (except the B-29s) from Okinawa.

Prospects for *Olympic*: General Douglas MacArthur dismissed any need to change his plans:

I am certain that the Japanese air potential reported to

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9, Operation Downfall)

you as accumulating to counter our *Olympic* operation is greatly exaggerated. [. . .] As to the movement of ground forces [. . .] I do not credit [. . .] the heavy strengths reported to you in southern Kyushu. [. . .] In my opinion, there should not be the slightest thought of changing the *Olympic* operation.

However, Admiral Ernest King, the Chief of Naval Operations, was prepared to oppose proceeding with the invasion, with Admiral Nimitz. Concurrence, which would have set off a major dispute within the US government.

At this juncture, the key interaction would likely have been between Marshall and Truman. There is strong evidence that Marshall remained committed to an invasion as late as 15 August. [. . .] But tempering Marshall's personal commitment to invasion would have been his comprehension that civilian sanction in general and Truman's in particular, was unlikely for a costly invasion that no longer enjoyed support from the armed services.

Soviet Intentions: Unknown to the Americans, the Soviets also considered invading a major Japanese island—Hokkaido—by the end of August 1945, which would have put pressure on the Allies to act sooner than November.

In the early years of WWII, the Soviets had planned on building a huge navy in order to catch up with the Western World. However, the German invasion of the Soviet Union, in June 1941, forced the suspension of this plan: the Soviets had to divert most of their resources to fighting the Germans—primarily on land—throughout most of the war, leaving their navy relatively poorly equipped. As a result, in Project Hula (1945), the United States transferred about 100 naval vessels (out of 180 planned) to the Soviet Union in preparation for the planned Soviet entry into the war against Japan. The transferred vessels included amphibious assault ships.

At the Yalta Conference (Feb 1945), the Allies had agreed that the USSR would take the southern part of the island of Sakhalin (the Soviets already controlled the northern part of the island pursuant to the Treaty of Portsmouth of 1905) which the Russian Empire had relinquished to Japan after the 1904-

1905 Russo-Japanese War; and the Kuril Islands, which the settlement of the borders between Russia and Japan made in the 1875 Treaty of St Petersburg had assigned to Japan. On the other hand, no agreement envisaged Soviet participation in the invasion of Japan itself.

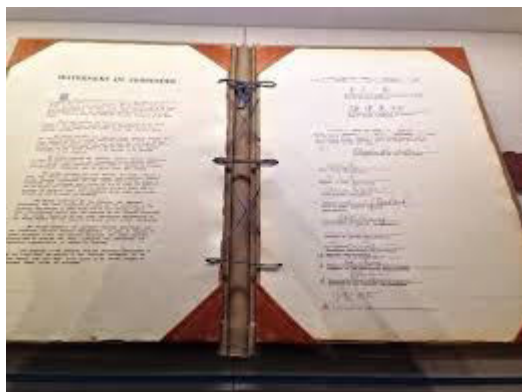
The Japanese had kamikaze aircraft in southern Honshu and Kyushu which would have opposed *Operations Olympic and Coronet*. It is unknown to what extent they could oppose Soviet landings in the far north of Japan. For comparative purposes: approximately 1,300 Western Allied ships deployed during the Battle of Okinawa (Apr-Jun 45). In total, 368 ships—including 128 amphibious craft—were badly damaged while another 28—including 15 landing ships and 12 destroyers—were sunk; mostly by kamikazes. The Soviets, however, had fewer than 400 ships (most of them not equipped for amphibious assault) by the time they declared war on Japan on 8 August 1945.

For Operation Downfall, the US military envisaged requiring more than 30 divisions for a successful invasion of the Japanese home islands. In comparison, the Soviet Union had about 11 divisions available, comparable to the 14 divisions the US estimated it would require to invade southern Kyushu. The Soviet invasion of the Kuril Islands (18 Aug—1 Sep 45) took place after Japan's capitulation on 14 August; despite this, the Japanese forces in these islands resisted quite fiercely (although some of them proved unwilling to fight due to Japan's surrender on 14 August) In the Battle of Shumshu (18-23 Aug 45), the Soviets had 8,500 troops unsupported by tanks and without larger warships. The well-established Japanese garrison had 8,500 troops and fielded around 77 tanks. The Battle of Shumshu lasted for five days in which the Soviets lost over 516 troops and five of the 16 landing ships (most of these ships ex-US Navy) to Japanese coastal artillery while the Japanese lost over 256 troops. Soviet casualties during the Battle of Shumshu totaled up to 1,567 while the Japanese suffered 1,018 casualties, making Shumshu the only battle in the 1945 Soviet-Japanese War where Russian losses exceeded the Japanese, in stark contrast to overall Soviet-Japanese casualty rates in land-based fighting in Manchuria.

During WWII the Japanese had a naval base at Para-

(Continued on page 11)

Surrender Document and Picture of the Signing



(Continued from page 10, *Operation Downfall*)

mushiro in the Kuril Islands and several bases in Hokkaido. Since Japan and the Soviet Union maintained a state of wary neutrality until the Soviets' declaration of war on Japan in August 1945, Japanese observers based in Japanese-held territories in Manchuria, Korea, Sakhalin, and the Kuril Islands constantly watched the port of Vladivostok and other seaports in the Soviet Union.

According to Thomas B. Allen and Norman Polmar, the Soviets had carefully drawn up detailed plans for the far East invasions, except that the landing for Hokkaido "existed in detail" only in Stalin's mind and that it was "unlikely that Stalin had interests in taking Manchuria and even taking on Hokkaido. Even if he wanted to grab as much territory in Asia as possible, he was too much focused on establishing a blockhead in Europe more so than Asia."

ESTIMATED CASUALTIES:

Because the US military planners assumed "that operations in this area will be opposed not only by the available organized military forces of the Empire, but also by a fanatical hostile population," high casualties were thought to be inevitable, but nobody knew with certainty how high. Several people made estimates, but they varied widely in numbers, assumptions and purposes, which included advocating for and against invasion. Afterwards, they were reused in the debate over the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Casualty estimates were based on the experience of the preceding campaigns, drawing different lessons:

- ◆ In a letter sent to Gen Curtis LeMay from Gen Lauris Norstad, when LeMay assumed command of the B-29 force on Guam, Norstad told LeMay that if an invasion took place, it would cost the US "half a million" dead.
- ◆ In a study done by the joint Chiefs of Staff in April, the figures of 7.45 casualties/1,000 man-days and 1.78 fatalities/1,000 man days were developed. This implied that a 90-day *Olympic* campaign would cost 456,000 casualties, including 109,000 dead or missing. If *Coronet* took another 90 days, the combined cost would be 1,200,000 casualties with 267,000 fatalities.
- ◆ A study done by Admiral Nimitz's staff in May estimated 49,000 US casualties in the first 30 days, including 5,000 at sea. A study done by General MacArthur's staff in June estimated 23,000 US casualties in the first 30 days and 125,000 after 120 days. When these figures were questioned by General Marshall, MacArthur submitted a revised estimate of 105,000 in part by deducting wounded men able to return to duty.
- ◆ In a conference with President Truman on June 18, Marshall, taking the Battle of Luzon as the best model for *Olympic*, thought that the Americans would suffer 31,000 casualties in the first 30 days (and ultimately 20% of Japanese casualties, which implied a total of 70,000 casualties). Admiral Leahy, more impressed by the battle of Okinawa, thought the American forces would suffer a 35% casualty rate (implying an ultimate toll of 268,000). Admiral King thought that casualties in the first 30 days would fall between Luzon and Okinawa, i.e., between 31,000 and

41,000. Of these estimates, only Nimitz's included losses of the forces at sea., though kamikazes had inflicted 1.78 fatalities per kamikaze pilot in the Battle of Okinawa, and troop transports off Kyushu would have been much more exposed.

- ◆ A study done for the Secretary of War Henry Stimson's staff by William Shockley estimated that conquering Japan would cost 1.7 to 4 million American casualties, including 400,000—800,000 fatalities, and five to ten million Japanese fatalities. The key assumption was large-scale participation by civilians in the defense of Japan.

Outside the government, well-informed civilians were also making guesses. Kyle Palmer, war correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times*, said half a million to a million Americans would die by the end of the war. Herbert Hoover, in a memorandum submitted to Truman and Stimson, also estimated 500,000 to 1,000,000 fatalities, and those were believed to be conservative estimates; but it is not known if Hoover discussed these specific figures in his message with Truman. The chief of the Army Operations Division thought them "entirely too high" under "our present plan of campaign.

The Battle of Okinawa ran up 72,000 US casualties in 82 Days, of whom 12,510 were killed or missing (this is conservative, because it excludes several thousand US soldiers who died after the battle indirectly, from their wounds). The entire island of Okinawa is 464 square miles. If the US casualty rate during the invasion of Japan had been only 5% as high per unit area as it was at Okinawa, the US would still have lost 297,000 soldiers (killed or missing).

Nearly 500,000 Purple Heart medals (awarded for combat casualties were manufactured in anticipation of the casualties resulting from the invasion of Japan; the number exceeded that of all American military casualties of the 65 years following the end of World War II, including the Korean and Vietnam Wars. In 2003, there were still 120,000 of these Purple Heart medals in stock. There were so many in surplus that combat units in Iraq and Afghanistan were able to keep Purple Hearts on-hand for immediate award to soldiers wounded on the field.



V-J Day 70th Anniversary Commemoration

You Are Invited

***V-J Day 70th Anniversary Commemoration
Wednesday, 2 September 2015 ~ 10:30 a.m.
World War II Memorial
17th Street SW
Washington, DC.***

RSVP NOW for seating at <http://www.wwiimemorialfriends.org>

Nearly 70 years ago the Empire of Japan formerly surrendered to the Allied Powers during a ceremony aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay bringing the world closer to the end of the deadliet conflict in human history.

During a radio address to the American people, President Harry S Truman declared September 2nd as V-J day stating "this is a victory of more than arms alone. This is a victory of liberty over tyranny." and asking Americans to "set aside V-J Day as one of renewed consecration to the principles which have made us the strongest nation on earth and which, in this war, we have striven so mightily to preserve."

To commemorate the Allied Forces Victory in the Pacific and the end of World War II, the Friends of the National World War II Memorial and the national Park Service will co-host a very special V-J Day 70th Anniversary Commemoration on September 2nd at 10:30 am at the World War II Memorial.

As part of the ceremony, World War II Veterans and representatives of the United States and the Pacific Theater Allies will lay wreaths at the "Freedom Wall" of the national World War II Memorial.

Renowned military historian Richard B. Frank, author of Guadalcanal: The Definitive Account of the Landmark Battle, Downfall: The end of the Imperial Japanese Empire and MacArthur (great General Series) will serve as the event's Master of Ceremonies and Expert Historian

Seating is First Come—First served so please arrive early if you have a large group
Parking is very limited near the WWII Memorial & on the National Mall so, please consider alternative transportation

Options. <<http://www.nps.gov/wwii/planyourvisit/direction.html>> The METRO Smithsonian Subway stop is about five blocks (3/4 mile) away. Head west toward the Washington Monument.

Rain or shine the ceremony will take place. Please make note of the weather and prepare accordingly (sunblock, hats, water raincoats, rain ponchos, etc)

Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, MD/DC

John D. Bowen, Editor

613 Chichester Lane

Silver Spring MD 20904-3331

MARCHER & WWII MUSINGS

Inside This Issue:

<i>Page</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>President's Message</i>
<i>Page</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>V-J Day</i>
<i>Page</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Editor's Corner</i>
<i>Page</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Was Your Unit Assigned?</i>
<i>Page</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>Operation Downfall</i>
<i>Page</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>Jap Surrender</i>
<i>Page</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>V-J at WWII Memorial</i>

**National VBOB Reunion, 2015
will be in Williamsburg, VA
14-18 Aug 2015**

**BATTLE OF THE BULGE
COMMEMORATION
14-18 December 2015
Embassy Receptions
Banquet
Wreath Layings**

**NEXT CHAPTER MEETING
Sunday 09 August 2015
BASTA PASTA
Timonium MD
Call John R. Schaffner
410-584-2754
By Wed 05 August**