



THE FALLEN OF OPERATION ICEBERG: U.S. Graves Registration Efforts and the Battle of Okinawa

Author(s): Ian Michael Spurgeon

Source: *Army History*, No. 102 (Winter 2017), pp. 6-21

Published by: U.S. Army Center of Military History

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26300939>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>

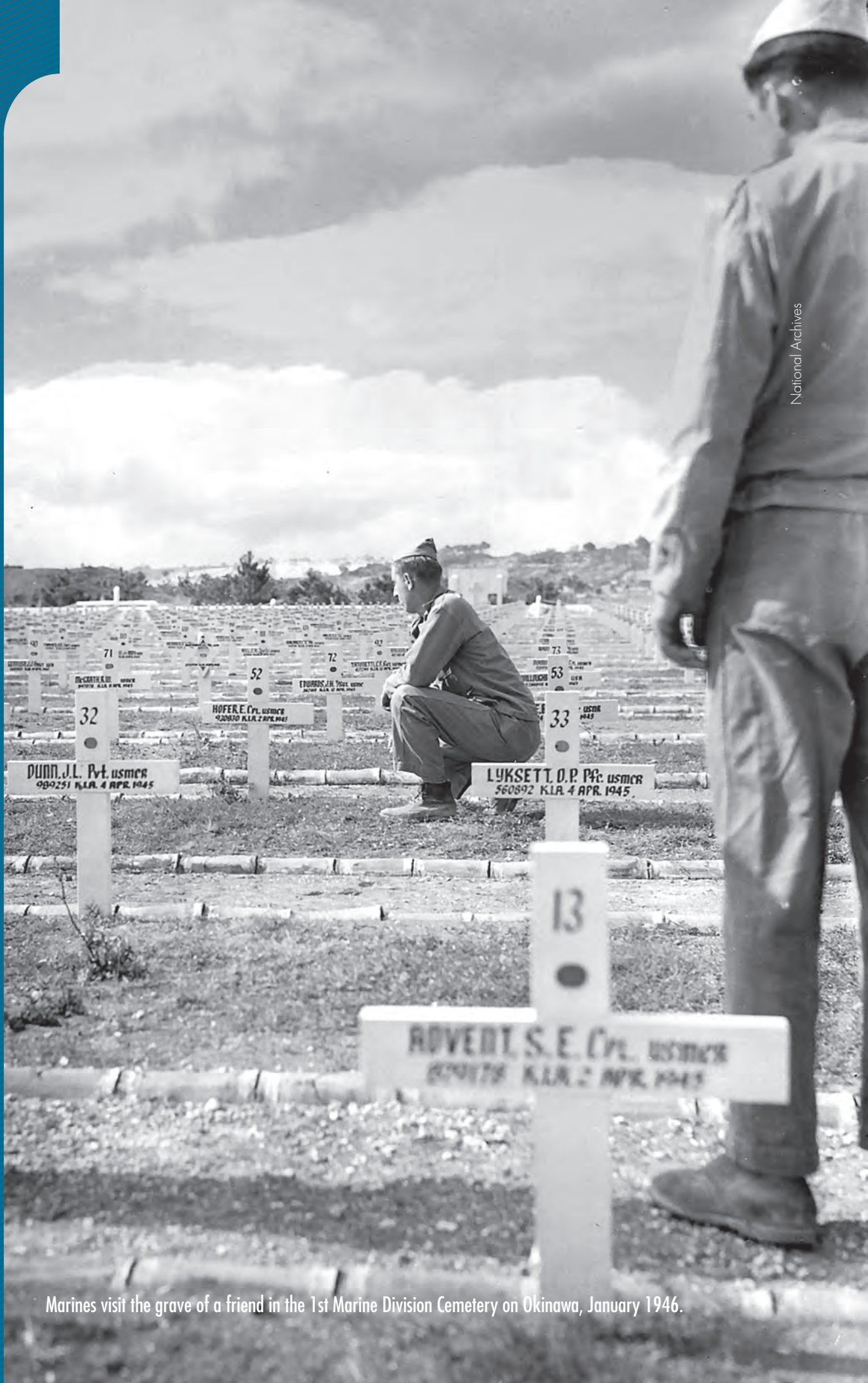


U.S. Army Center of Military History is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Army History*

JSTOR

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Ian Michael Spurgeon is a historian for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) in Washington, D.C. He conducts archival research and provides historical analysis for cases involving Americans missing from World War II, and has conducted field investigations for missing service members in Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Okinawa, Japan. Prior to joining DPAA, he was a historian for the U.S. Air Force in Okinawa. Dr. Spurgeon received his bachelor's and master's degrees in history from Kansas State University in 1998 and 2000, respectively. He worked on Capitol Hill as a staff member to a U.S. senator from 2000 to 2003, before completing his Ph.D. in U.S. and military history from the University of Southern Mississippi in 2007.



National Archives

Marines visit the grave of a friend in the 1st Marine Division Cemetery on Okinawa, January 1946.

THE FALLEN OF

OPERATION ICEBERG

U.S. GRAVES REGISTRATION EFFORTS AND THE BATTLE OF OKINAWA

BY IAN MICHAEL SPURGEON



On 1 April 1945, American forces moved against the island of Okinawa beginning Operation ICEBERG, the first major ground campaign on a Japanese home island. Over the course of three months, U.S. Army and Marine Corps units moved across Okinawa in a steady, but bloody, march, methodically eliminating Japanese defenders. Though successful, the campaign cost the lives of more than 12,000 Americans. By 1945, after nearly four years of operational experience in the Pacific, the U.S. efforts to recover those killed in action (KIA)—called graves registration activities—were at their wartime peak. Usually, American forces rapidly evacuated most casualties for treatment or burial behind the front lines. As a result, over 95 percent of those killed in the ground fighting were recovered and identified.¹ However, the intensity of the fighting on Okinawa, as well as the poor weather, resulted in the loss of identification material for many remains. These became the unknown soldiers of Operation ICEBERG. Today,

Department of Defense historians dedicated to recovering these missing servicemen face a particularly difficult task with the unidentified remains from Okinawa. Because their burials occurred almost immediately (in many cases), and because military authorities still allowed variations in graves registration recordkeeping late in the war, limited contextual and circumstantial details survive for these individuals. Paradoxically, graves registration operations during Operation ICEBERG succeeded in returning most of the KIAs, but have handicapped modern analysts' efforts to recover and identify those left behind.

Preparations for Operation ICEBERG began in late 1944. Running sixty miles long and ranging from two to eighteen miles wide, Okinawa boasted a civilian population of over 435,000 inhabitants. It also contained several airfields, ports, and space for supply depots that offered U.S. forces a valuable base of operations for the expected invasion of mainland Japan.²

Lt. Gen. Simon B. Buckner Jr. and his Tenth Army were tasked with

capturing the island. Buckner commanded 183,000 troops, from seven divisions: the 7th, 27th, 77th, and 96th Infantry Divisions (the XXIV Army Corps), and the 1st, 2d, and 6th Marine Divisions (the III Marine Amphibious Corps). All of these divisions included battle-tested regiments, some with experience dating back to 1942 and the Guadalcanal campaign. The troops slated for Okinawa represented the peak of readiness and planning for U.S. operations in the Pacific.³ That included graves registration activities. Falling under the authority of the Army's quartermaster general, graves registration operations during the first campaigns of World War II had been woefully undermanned. Individual enlisted graves registration personnel had been parceled out to combat units in order to organize volunteers or manage temporarily assigned soldiers to recover the dead, with minimal facilitation by higher authorities.⁴ It was not a desirable assignment.

By early 1945, graves registration activities had better oversight. On 1 January 1945, the Tenth Army head

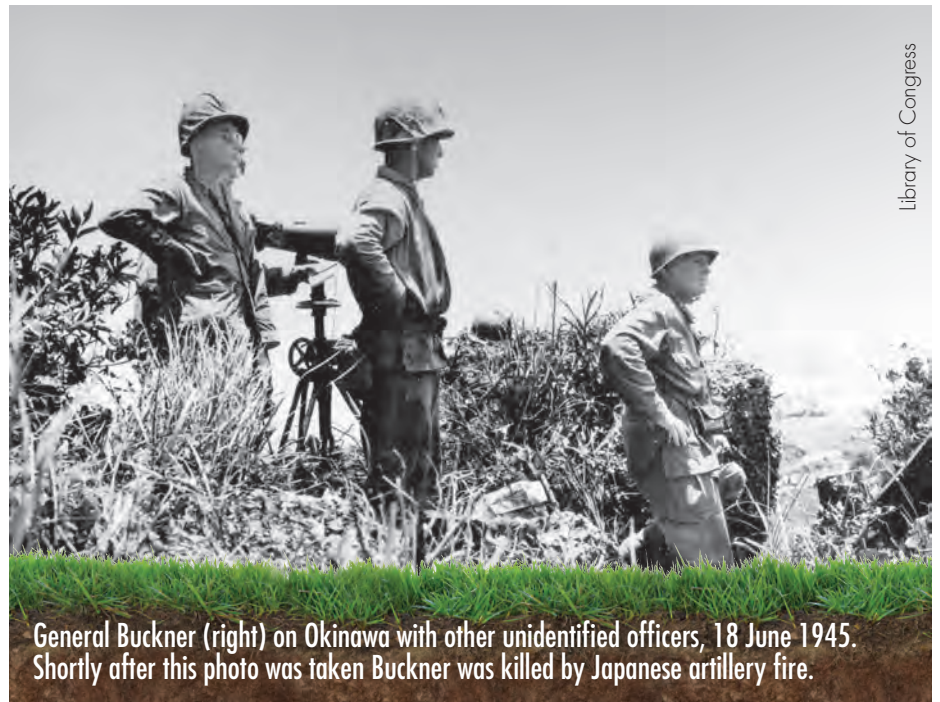
Composite Image: Cemetery plans and construction instructions from FM 10-63, *Graves Registration*

quarters established the staff quartermaster as the technical coordinator of graves registration activities during the Okinawa campaign. Yet, field operations still involved delegating responsibilities and labor. The January directive stated that “Army, Navy and Marine corps units will be governed in general by the publications and directives of their own service.” In short, Army and Marine Corps graves registration units serviced their own respective divisions.⁵

The Tenth Army’s orders gave only broad guidelines for burial standards as well. Internments were to be “at inland sites where practicable.” If Japanese resistance on the landing beaches prohibited constructing cemeteries inland, burials could take place on existing beaches, or graves registration teams could evacuate the dead to a “nearby land mass under friendly control.” Burials at sea were restricted. All instances were to be justified in writing and filed with geographic coordinate information. Finally, the directive declared that “isolated burials will be kept to a minimum.”⁶

To conduct the field work, the Tenth Army received seven platoons from two Army graves registration units—the 3008th and 3063d Quartermaster Graves Registration Companies. The headquarters detachments from each company, along with the 3d and 4th Platoons of the 3063d, fell under the Army’s XXIV Corps. The remaining five platoons (consisting of approximately twenty-five soldiers each) were dispersed among the five Army divisions.⁷ Marine Corps graves registration units were more organic. Each combat division was responsible for establishing its own cemetery. However, remains did not have to be separated by unit. The Tenth Army directive instructed recovery teams to deliver the fallen “to the nearest cemetery of the service concerned.”⁸

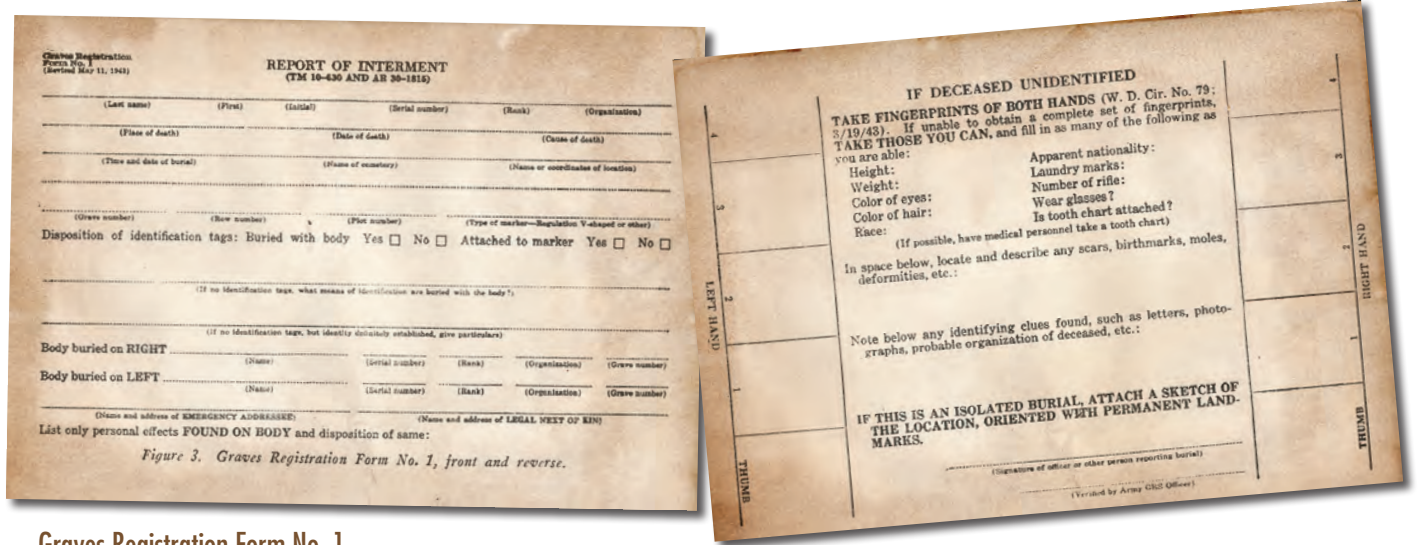
Because of the broad guidelines, and the relative autonomy among the field recovery teams, paperwork filed by graves registration units varied as well. Army personnel used Graves Registration Service (GRS) Form No. 1 to record each interment. Marine Corps cemetery personnel were instructed to



General Buckner (right) on Okinawa with other unidentified officers, 18 June 1945. Shortly after this photo was taken Buckner was killed by Japanese artillery fire.

Library of Congress





Graves Registration Form No. 1

use whatever reports were prescribed in Marine Corps regulations. Overall, the Tenth Army headquarters allowed a great deal of flexibility for graves registration practices among the services and divisions, but expected to be kept informed of the overall results.⁹

In February 1945, to assist the small graves registration teams with the expected high numbers of casualties during the campaign, the XXIV Corps headquarters instructed that division and regimental commanders should “provide the necessary labor troops for the prompt removal of all bodies to readily distinguishable collecting points near trails or roads, taking care to remove bodies found in pill boxes or covered by debris and rubble.”¹⁰ In response, the 27th Infantry Division authorized its Quartermaster to use heavy equipment from shore party engineers to construct cemeteries, while personnel from the Salvage Collecting Company would make up the cemetery labor force until enough civilian laborers (or prisoners) could be acquired. Supply trucks and tracked vehicles returning from the front were expected to assist graves registration personnel by transporting remains from the field to the cemeteries.¹¹

On 1 April 1945, the Tenth Army hit the beaches of Okinawa. The Japanese commander, Lt. Gen. Mitsu Ushijima, had withdrawn most of his forces from the landing zone. Instead of the massive casualties expected by military planners, the surprised U.S. marines

and soldiers advanced onto the island almost unopposed. Graves registration teams rapidly established cemeteries inland. The 3d Platoon of the 3008th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company was ashore and working by 1900 that first day. By 3 April, the platoon interred its first set of remains at the new 96th Infantry Division Cemetery. Similarly, the 2d Platoon of the 3008th Company, attached to the 7th Infantry Division, buried its first set of remains on 3 April.¹²

Upon landing and extending eastward to divide Okinawa in half, the Tenth Army sent its marines north

and the Army forces south for the overall conquest of the island. Relatively few Japanese soldiers occupied the mountainous jungle region that is the northern two-thirds of Okinawa. Marines secured most of the north by the end of April. The Japanese main line of resistance lay to the south, near the capital city of Naha. Army forces struck the first elements of that within a few days of landing. Though much of the southern part of Okinawa was farmland, the landscape was studded with imposing ridgelines and coral limestone hills teeming with tunnels, pill boxes, machine gun nests, and mortar emplacements. By late April, with American casualties mounting, the true cost of Operation ICEBERG was becoming apparent.

To handle the increasing number of fallen Americans, graves registration personnel divided their responsibilities. For instance, a portion of the 3d Platoon, 3008th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company, attached to the 96th Infantry Division, traveled with service companies to recover the dead from the battlefield and collection points for transportation back to the cemetery, where the balance of the platoon processed the remains.¹³ Those conducting recoveries frequently found themselves in the midst of combat. Pfc. John L. Nigro received the Bronze Star medal for actions performed while retrieving the bodies of two soldiers of the 96th Infantry Division. On 10 April, during



General Ushijima



Limestone hills on Okinawa honeycombed with caves and dugouts and other Japanese defensive emplacements

his search, Private Nigro saw a Japanese soldier emerge from a cave to attack a nearby American officer. According to his citation, “Without regard to his own safety and in the face of certain enemy fire, Private Nigro rushed to the side of the officer and fired into the cave from the hip.” Later that day, he led another patrol to the cave area, killed two more enemy soldiers, and gathered valuable intelligence.¹⁴ Sgt. Harmon Whiteman similarly received multiple decorations for his efforts to recover dead from the front lines of the 96th Infantry Division. One notable example occurred on 21 April, as Sergeant Whiteman supervised three men removing American remains in full view of an enemy position. A Japanese machine gun opened fire, killing the three soldiers and wounding Sergeant Whiteman.¹⁵

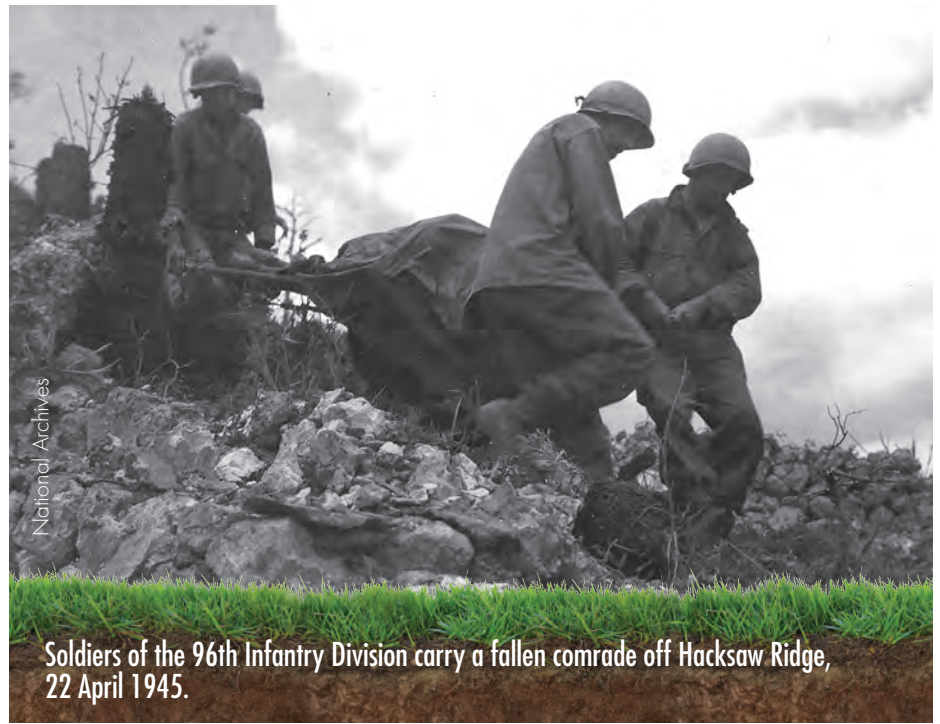
Most battlefield recoveries, however, were conducted by infantrymen on the frontline. Pfc. Nils Andersen, of the 29th Marine Regiment, 6th Marine



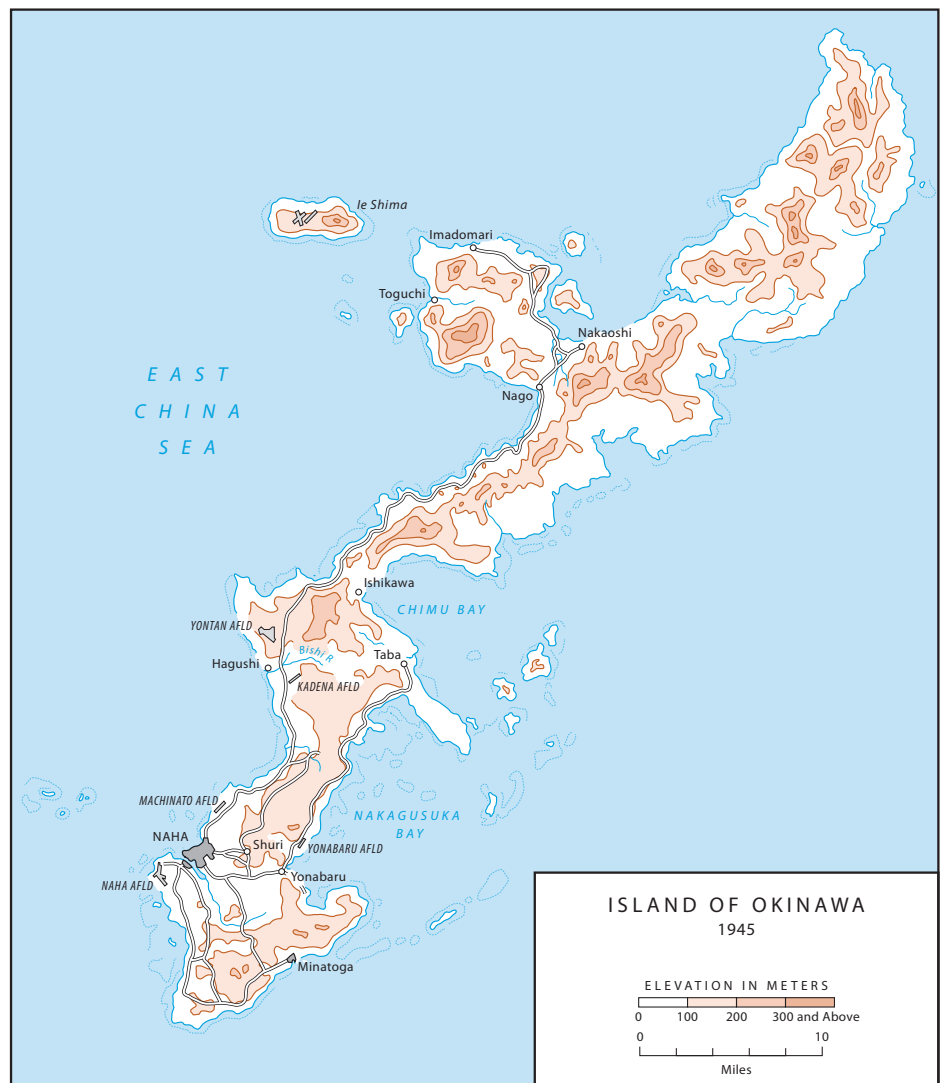
The 4th Platoon, 3008th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company, poses at the entrance to the 96th Infantry Division Cemetery, 8 June 1945.

Division, was among four marines ordered to remove American dead from Sugar Loaf, a nondescript mud hill that had proven to be one of the fiercest battle sites of the campaign. From 12–19 May, the 6th Marine Division fought for Sugar Loaf and its neighboring heights, suffering more than 2,500 casualties.¹⁶ Many of the dead remained on the field, in the subtropical sun and mud, for several days before Andersen and three other marines recovered them. They used stretchers and even ponchos to carry or drag the bodies to a collection point. Enemy mortars and gunfire raked the area occasionally, forcing the marines to run. The condition of the remains made the job physically and psychologically difficult. When one of Andersen's colleagues lifted the hand of a casualty and pulled, the entire arm separated from the body. The stunned marine collapsed and vomited.¹⁷

The ferocity of the battle had broken many of the bodies before recovery. Andersen later explained that “we suggested before we started that we put a body onto the litter, or canvas, or poncho that we were using, and it consisted of a head, torso, two arms, two legs. If they didn't match we'd do that anyway, and Graves Registration could sort out the pieces later.” The marines placed the parts into small piles for transport by vehicle. They worked in total silence. After several hours, an amphibious tractor (Landing Vehicle Tracked [LVT]) arrived and the four marines loaded as many as twenty bodies into the well of the LVT. Three marines jumped into the cab, leaving Andersen alone in the back with the pile of remains. What followed haunted him for several decades. As the LVT drove down a hill, the bodies, several inches of water, maggots, blood, and other fluids, sloshed forward. When the LVT drove up a steep incline, gravity pushed the remains toward the rear of the vehicle and toward Andersen. He yelled for the driver to stop, but the deafening roar of the engine drowned his cries. Within moments, as he later described, “the water is around my neck, and the fellows are bumping into me and starting to climb up on top of me. Now some of them, rolling . . . the guts stay like that . . . the heads start coming off,



Soldiers of the 96th Infantry Division carry a fallen comrade off Hacksaw Ridge, 22 April 1945.





Marine LVTs on the beach of Iheya Island, north of Okinawa, 16 July 1945

some of the arms start coming off, and now they are becoming a jumbled mess.” Back and forth, this occurred, as the LVT trudded its way to the Marine cemetery. At one point, Andersen lost his footing and fell to the floor of the tractor bed. The vehicle began a steep incline and he was covered. “One of my thoughts, believe it or not,” he later explained, “was for them, those guys, that they were being so mutilated after death.” He cried for help, but then blacked out. Andersen awoke near the command post after he had been pulled from the back of the LVT. Other marines recoiled at the sight and smell of him and the other men detailed for body recovery. The four were given a bucket of water to bathe with—two-and-a-half gallons to share. Their clothes were unsalvageable, so they scrounged whatever was available and returned to their unit.¹⁸

Despite the dangers and associated horrors, battlefield recoveries on Okinawa proved effective in removing most of the bodies of those killed during the ground campaign. Japanese defenders rarely launched counterattacks sufficient to overwhelm companies or platoons; thus there are few examples of large numbers of men reported missing in action at a



A truck loaded with remains of fallen soldiers of the 77th Infantry Division drives through thick mud on Okinawa, 31 May 1945.

single time. Remains could only not be recovered when they became isolated within heavy vegetation or rocky terrain, or were totally inaccessible. Japanese forces utilized thousands of natural caves and hand-dug tunnels across southern Okinawa. Occasionally, American infantrymen entered

caves to help Okinawan civilians, gather Japanese documents, or simply collect souvenirs. Sometimes, these incidents turned deadly. Private Andersen recalled an incident in which two marines entered a cave, only to be wounded by at least one Japanese soldier hidden in its darker recesses.

Enemy fire subsequently killed or wounded all who tried to rescue the wounded marines. A Marine captain assessed the situation and issued a simple order: “BLOW ‘EM UP!” Another marine protested, arguing that wounded men were still in the cave. According to Andersen, the captain responded firmly, “We can’t get ‘em out. Blow ‘em up.” As instructed, a Marine squad threw an explosive charge into the opening of the cave, entombing the marines and the Japanese within.¹⁹

The campaign for Okinawa continued into late June as American troops eliminated Japanese resistance in a methodical advance to the island’s southern tip. At its farthest, the front lines were located twenty miles from the cemeteries near the landing beaches. This negated the practice of temporary battlefield burials and allowed graves registration personnel to rapidly transfer remains to processing centers—sometimes on the very day of death.²⁰ All remains were to be buried with a report of interment. However, the failure of the Tenth Army’s headquarters to standardize graves registration forms and practices led to inconsistent recordkeeping. For instance, 7th Infantry Division Cemetery reports consistently recorded vital information (such as the individual’s name, general location of death, date of death, cause of death, and date of burial) and took fingerprints of the deceased when possible.²¹ The 6th Marine Division reports of interment, on the other hand, did not include an entry for date of death or date of burial. And, frequently, the 6th Marine Division reports listed place of death simply as “Okinawa.”²²

Combat operations on Okinawa came to an end in late June 1945. However, some of the division cemeteries reached capacity before then. The 96th Infantry Division Cemetery closed on 13 May with its 875th burial, only forty days after it had been established and only half-way through the campaign. After that, another 768 sets of remains were routed to the 96th Infantry Division plot at the Island Command Cemetery. The 77th Infantry Division Cemetery concluded interments on 27 June, with its 770th burial. The



Troops from the 27th Infantry Division work to clear caves on Okinawa.



The entrance to the 96th Infantry Division Cemetery on Okinawa

7th Infantry Division recorded its 1,451st—and final—burial on 9 July. The Island Command Cemetery remained open the longest and became the largest. Originally this cemetery was the location for soldiers’ remains of the 27th Infantry Division, but it eventually contained remains from all units after other cemeteries reached capacity. Some of those buried at the Island Command Cemetery were not casualties of the fighting on Okinawa. Hundreds of individuals who died in

accidents during and after the battle (including victims of a typhoon on 9 October 1945), or were recovered in the immediate months after the fighting, were interred there until it closed in June 1946.²³

Throughout the campaign for Okinawa, American forces sustained approximately 12,300 killed or missing. Of those, over 4,500 were from the Army, roughly 2,800 were from the Marine Corps, and nearly 5,000 were Navy personnel.²⁴ Graves registration

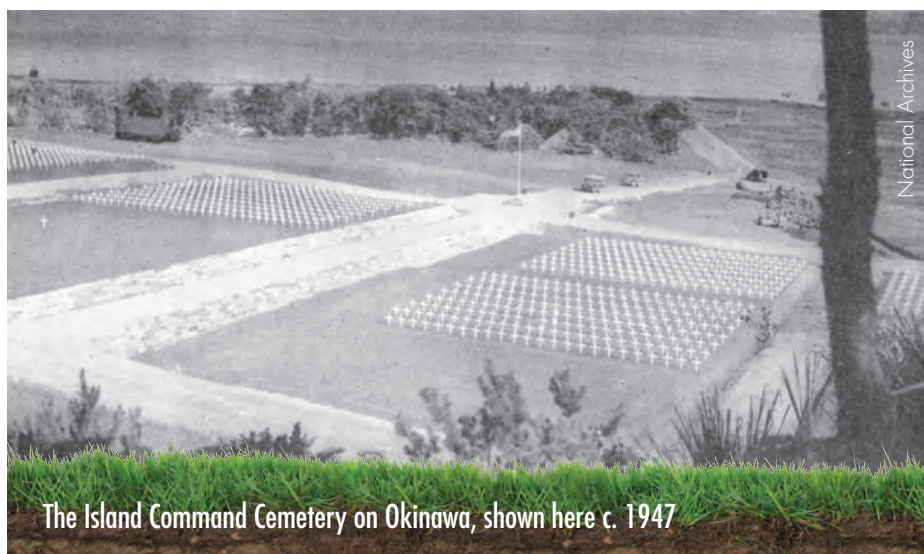


The 7th Infantry Division Cemetery on Okinawa, 8 June 1945

National Archives

teams constructed eight cemeteries to handle 9,225 remains recovered from Okinawa, the surrounding islands, and from the ocean.²⁵ Most of the unrecovered were sailors killed aboard the thirty-six American ships sunk and 368 ships damaged, primarily by Japanese air attacks.²⁶

The division cemeteries on Okinawa were intended to be temporary. In December 1945, the War Department began a process to remove and return fallen Americans from battlefields across the world. The responsibility in the Pacific fell to the American Graves Registration Service (AGRS).²⁷ Unlike field recovery operations in other parts of the Pacific—such as the Philippines, Solomon Islands, and New Guinea—where the remains of thousands of American service members were scattered over rough terrain and isolated areas, AGRS investigation teams recovered few remains from the battlefields of Okinawa, since recovery operations during the battle had already removed most of the fallen. Furthermore, due to the dense population of Okinawa, Japanese civilians frequently found accessible American remains before AGRS investigation teams arrived.²⁸



The Island Command Cemetery on Okinawa, shown here c. 1947

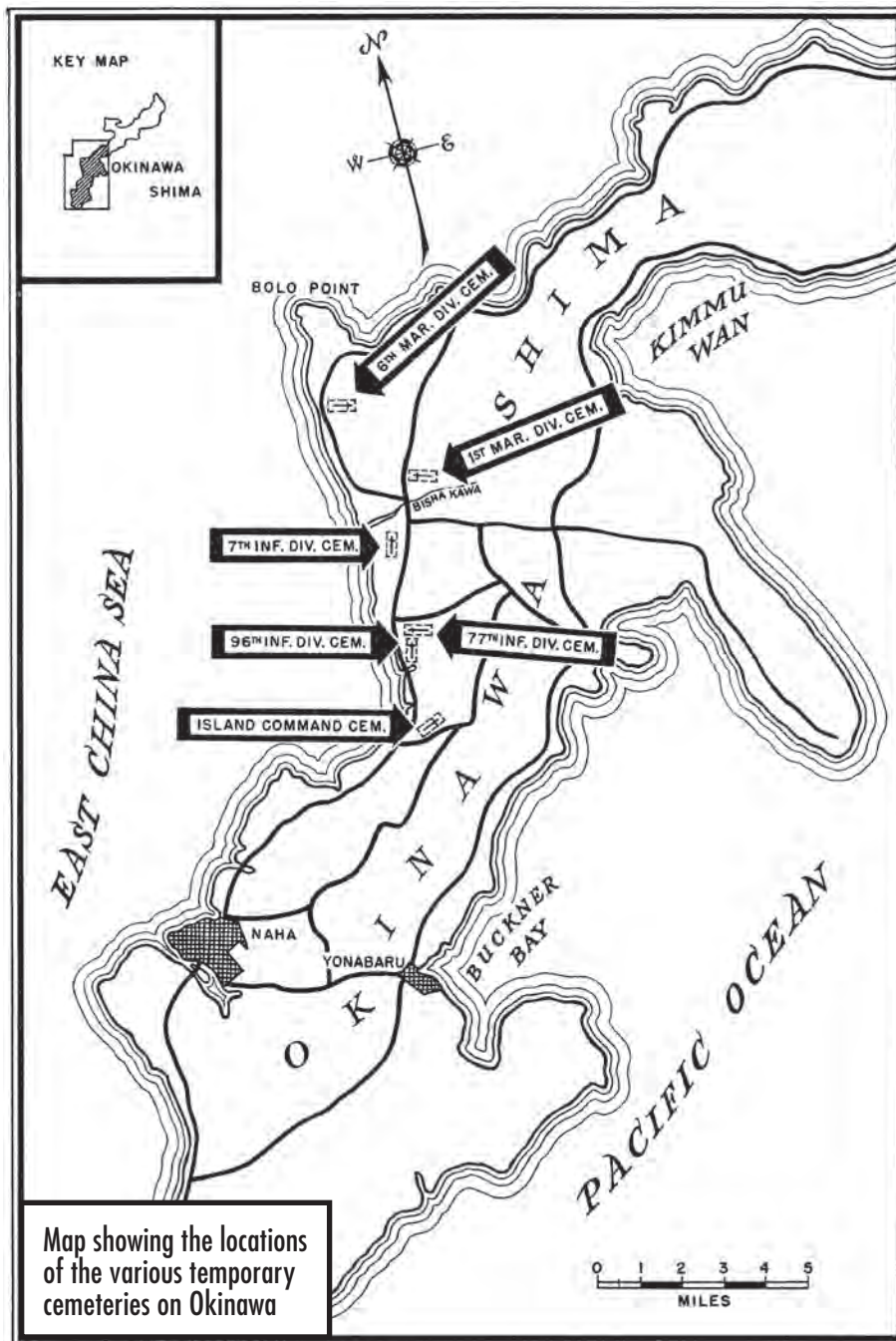
National Archives

Most AGRS operations on Okinawa involved the processing of remains buried in the wartime cemeteries. In July 1947, the AGRS established a mobile identification laboratory at Okinawa. Disinterment teams removed the remains and all identification material buried with them. They first looked for the original report of interment buried alongside the remains, in a bottle or other weatherproof vessel, and compared it with cemetery records.²⁹ According to regulations, the remains were then to be transferred to tables at a mobile laboratory. It is unclear how many examinations on Okinawa actually took place in a laboratory. Inspections of remains at other Pacific cemeteries, such as at Iwo Jima, were done graveside on canvas shelter halves.³⁰ Nonetheless, the prescribed procedure involved a table supervisor and two assistants to process each set of remains. These individuals were technically classified by military regulations as embalmers, but the AGRS



Graves Registration Service (GRS) personnel work to properly document the remains of soldiers recently killed in battle.

U.S. Army Quartermaster Museum



considered them “identification analysts.” They were expected to have “a thorough knowledge of anatomy” and be able to easily identify bones, recognize physical abnormalities useful for identification, create an accurate tooth chart, and take fingerprints.³¹

During the examination, technicians estimated the percentage of decomposition, completed a chart showing which bones were present, and noted any significant damage to the remains. Dental information served as the most important means of identification, so technicians completed dental charts indicating the location of fillings and which teeth had been extracted, or had fallen out posthumously. The analysts removed clothing and recorded any personal effects, identification tags, and other material evidence that aided, or confirmed, identification.³²

Upon completion of the inspection, the remains were reinterred for later transfer. In March 1948, the AGRS formally ordered the relocation of more than 9,000 remains from Okinawa to a processing laboratory on Saipan. Graves registration personnel were ordered to bundle each set of remains with the material evidence and store them in a temporary mausoleum at Naha. From there, the AGRS planned to ship the remains to Saipan.³³ This operation began on 15 March, at the 7th Infantry Division Cemetery.³⁴ By 15 May, graves registration personnel had cleared that cemetery as well as the 1st Marine Division Cemetery. The first shipment to Saipan, aboard Landing Ship, Tank (LST) 916, departed on 7 May 1948, carrying 2,026 sets of remains.³⁵ Exhumations at the





National Archives

A GRS soldier fills out a dental record while examining the teeth from an unidentified set of remains.

6th Marine Division Cemetery proved more difficult, as the diggers found some remains buried as far as twelve feet deep and under coral rock. Worse, some graves had not been marked properly, and disinterring teams were forced to dig in several areas before locating the expected set of remains. In one extreme instance, graves registration teams opened eighty-four graves to find one individual.³⁶

The final set of remains arrived at Saipan on 24 August 1948. Once there, AGRS analysts reprocessed the remains for their final disposition.³⁷ Technicians completed new dental charts, new skeletal charts, and new reports verifying identifications, or suggesting leads for unknown remains. If the individual's identity was well established, the examination concluded quickly and the remains were stored at a mausoleum on Saipan until they could be transferred to a final resting place requested by the next of kin—a stateside or permanent overseas military cemetery.³⁸

For unidentified remains, analysts pursued potential leads, based on material evidence found with the remains, such as names found on letters or envelopes, laundry marks inscribed on clothing, jewelry, or unique personal effects. Unidentified remains frequently were examined two or three different times.³⁹ Of the approximately 10,000 sets of remains recovered from Okinawa and its surrounding islands, only 203 are still unidentified.⁴⁰ They are currently buried as unknown service members at the Manila American Cemetery in the Philippines.

Considering the tremendous size of the Tenth Army and the large number of casualties, graves registration activities on Okinawa were remarkably successful. This has left modern analysts with relatively few unresolved ground loss cases from Okinawa. However, the identification of those unidentified remains is particularly difficult because of the aforementioned Tenth Army headquarters' failure to standardize graves registration practices and reports. When fallen Americans arrived at their respective division cemeteries with their identification intact, the variations in interment reports mat-



National Archives

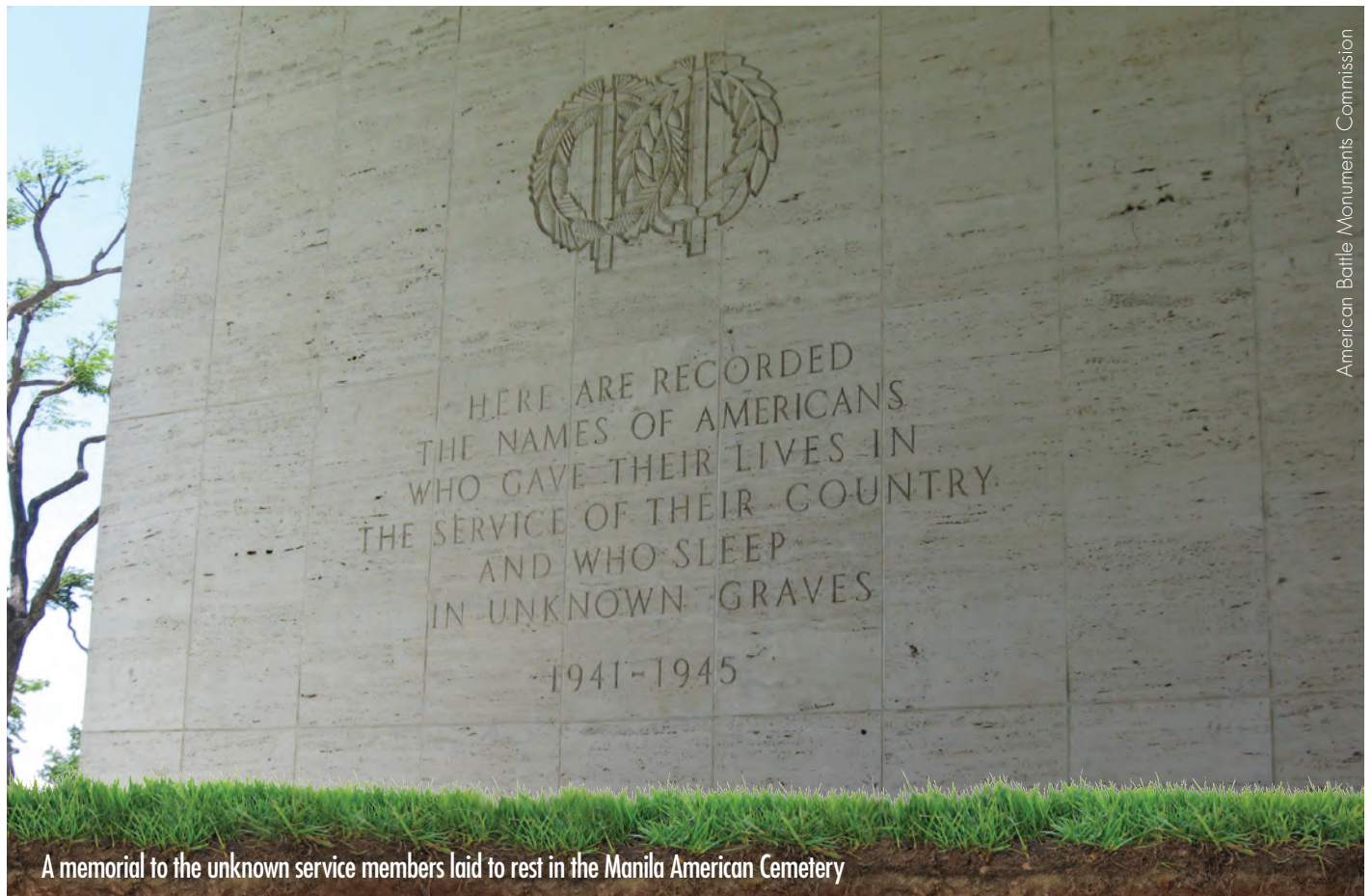
The 7th Infantry Division Cemetery on Okinawa, 8 June 1945

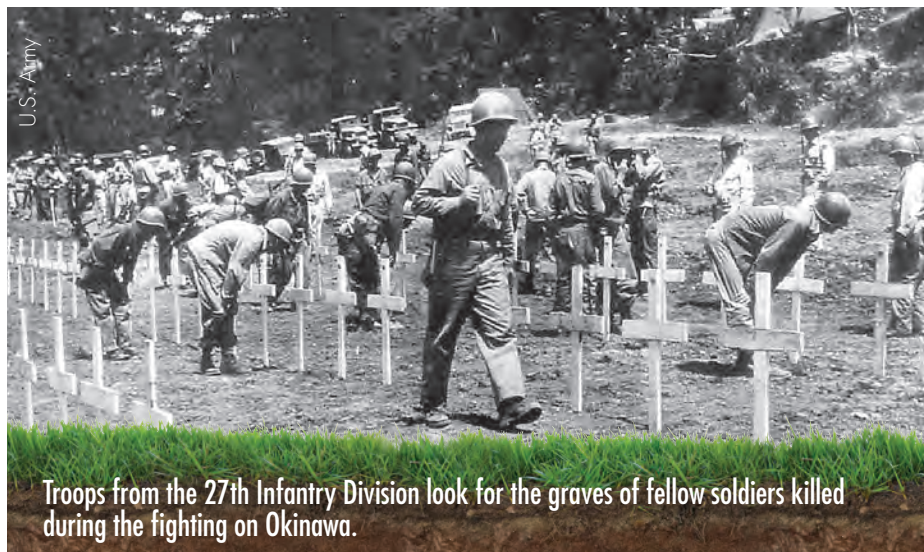
tered little. But, for remains delivered to cemeteries without identification, the inconsistency in recordkeeping of even basic circumstantial information—such as date of burial, condition of remains, identifying features, uniform or other contextual service details, and cause of death—leaves modern investigators few clues to reconstruct the identity of the unknown soldier or marine.

Perhaps the greatest irony is that the efficiency of the recovery and burial of unidentified remains by wartime graves registration teams decreased the likelihood of identification through historical analysis compared to remains recovered by immediate postwar AGRS investigation teams, or modern investigation teams. Unidentified remains rushed to cemeteries during the battle were separated from one of the most important details used by modern investigators—location of death. Army and Marine Corps regimental records of the fighting on Okinawa are among the most detailed documents

available to historians studying the campaigns of the Pacific. Because the fighting on Okinawa followed relatively well-established battle lines, remains found at a particular site on Okinawa can be associated to a handful of units through a rather simple analysis of unit documents. For instance, after a set of unidentified

remains were recovered in 1987 on Kunishi Ridge, Department of Defense historians excluded all but two Marine regiments from consideration based on the location of death, and then narrowed down the list of associated individuals based on casualties from those regiments lost during the fighting





Troops from the 27th Infantry Division look for the graves of fellow soldiers killed during the fighting on Okinawa.

in that area.⁴¹ The files of hundreds of unidentified remains recovered from other battlefields by AGRS field investigation teams after the war frequently have maps, eyewitness statements, and descriptions of material evidence found nearby. This information can be crucial for identification.

This type of analysis is impossible for most unidentified remains from

Okinawa because they were removed from their loss site and placed in a cemetery with little information. While scientific developments, such as DNA testing, allow new means of identification, the process still relies on historical analysis to narrow down the pool of possible associations for genetic comparison. In other words, DNA analysis is most effective when used as a process of

elimination. Without circumstantial information about where or when an unknown set of remains was recovered, or even branch of service, analysts would need to compare the remains to the physical and genetic information of all of those missing in action from Operation ICEBERG, a daunting task even with the advantages of modern techniques and technology.

Despite these complications, Defense Department historians working on cases from Operation ICEBERG still benefit from the overall efficiency of the Tenth Army's graves registration operations. The percentage of service members still unaccounted for from the ground campaign compared to the overall number of those killed is particularly small. The unresolved cases truly represent the anomalies of the recovery effort and the relatively few instances in which circumstances of a horrendous battle overcame the best efforts of the soldiers and marines who struggled to recover the fallen.



A graveyard detail comes ashore in Okinawa from the hospital ship *USS Solace* (AH-5) with the flag-draped coffins of troops who died of their wounds aboard the ship, 31 July 1945.

NOTES

1. Total American ground losses on Okinawa reached approximately 7,300. Today there are roughly 205 unaccounted for soldiers and marines from the campaign.

2. Roy E. Appleman et al., *Okinawa: The Last Battle* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2005), pp. 4–7.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

4. Edward Steere, *The Graves Registration Service in World War II* (Washington, D.C.: Historical Section, Office of the Quartermaster General, 1951), p. 40.

5. Headquarters Tenth Army, Operational Directive Logistics no. 5, 1 Jan 1945, Folder “110-3.15 10th Army Directives 1-6 (Log) 10-18 20-34 7(MG)48 1945,” box 2479, 10th Army, Record Group (RG) 407, National Archives, College Park, Md. (NACP).

6. *Ibid.*

7. Steere, *The Graves Registration Service in World War II*, pp. 158–59.

8. Headquarters Tenth Army, Operational Directive Logistics, no. 5, 1 Jan 1945, NACP.

9. *Ibid.*

10. Steere, *The Graves Registration Service in World War II*, p. 159.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 159–60.

12. Rpt, 1st Lt Knapp A. Tomberlin, “Historical Narrative Report of American Graves Registration Service Activities, Ryukyus Command,” 23 Oct 1947, pp. 1–2, Folder “314.7 GRS – Far East (Historical Narrative) Feb 46 – Oct 47,” box 417, RG 92, Office of the Quartermaster General, Entry 1894A, “Miscellaneous Files,” NACP.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

14. Col C. H. White Jr., Headquarters 96th Infantry Division, “Award of the Bronze Star Medal,” Pfc John L. Nigro, 30 Jun 1945, Folder “314.7 GRS – Far East (Historical Narrative) Feb 46 – Oct 47,” box 417, RG 92, Office of the Quartermaster General, Entry 1894A, “Miscellaneous Files,” NACP.

15. Col C. H. White Jr., Headquarters 96th Infantry Division, “Award of the Bronze Star Medal,” and “Award of the Oak Leaf Cluster,” 30 Jun 1945, Sgt Harmon O. Whiteman, Folder “314.7 GRS – Far East (Historical Narrative) Feb 46 – Oct 47,” box 417, RG 92, Office of the Quartermaster General, Entry 1894A, “Miscellaneous Files,” NACP.

16. Appleman et al., *Okinawa: The Last Battle*, pp. 322–23.

17. Laura Homan Lacey, *Stay Off the Skyline: The Sixth Marine Division on Okinawa* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, Inc., 2007), p. 121.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 122–24.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

20. For instance, Cpl. Joseph Cascone of Company E, 1st Marine Regiment, was killed at Kunishi Ridge south of Itoman, Okinawa, on 14 June 1945. He was buried in the 1st Marine Division Cemetery on 15 June 1945, eighteen miles from his location of death. Report of Interment, Individual Deceased Personnel File for Joseph Daniel Cascone, Corporal, 863718, RG 92, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington National Records Center (WNRC), Suitland, Md.

21. For instance, see Report of Interment, 7th Infantry Division Cemetery Unidentified X-35, WNRC.

22. For instance, see Report of Interment, 6th Marine Division Cemetery Unidentified X-39, WNRC.

23. Rpt, 1st Lt Knapp A. Tomberlin, “Historical Narrative Report of American Graves Registration Service Activities, Ryukyus Command,” 23 Oct 1947, pp. 8–11, NACP.

24. Total numbers of casualties for Operation ICEBERG vary among sources. The numbers presented in this paper represent an approximate average. See Tenth Army Action Report, “Report of Operations in the Rykyus Campaign,” ch. 11, fig. 9, 11-1-12, Folder “110-0. Action Rpt Ryukyus Opn III Amphibious corps (Phase I–II Okinawa) Okinawa 1944–45,” 10th Army Records, box 2439, RG 407, NACP; and Appleman et al., *Okinawa: The Last Battle*, p. 473.

25. The eight cemeteries were the 1st Marine Division Cemetery, the 6th Marine Division Cemetery, the 7th Infantry Division Cemetery, the 77th Infantry Division Cemetery, the 96th Infantry Division Cemetery, Island Command Cemetery on Ie Shima, Island Command Cemetery on Okinawa (which was an incorporation of the 96th Infantry Division #2 and the 27th Infantry Division Cemetery), and the Armed Forces Cemetery on Zamami Shima. Steere, *The Graves Registration Service in World War II*, p. 162.

26. Appleman et al., *Okinawa: The Last Battle*, p. 473.

27. Maj Gen Edward F. Witsell, War Department Technical Manual TM 10-281, “Permanent Interment of World War II Dead,” (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1947), p. 1.

28. For instance, see Report of Interment, 21 Mar 1947, Okinawa Island Command Cemetery Unidentified X-136, WNRC.

29. For instance, see Capt Thomas E. Cox, “SUBJECT: Reprocessing of Remains,” 27 Jul

1950, 6th Marine Division Cemetery Unidentified X-25, WNRC.

30. See photo labeled “AGRS-48-203 McEwen 17 Aug 47,” with caption: “Pfc F J Payton, 8246th Field Operation Section, prepares dental chart at Third and Fourth Marine Cemetery, (Iwo Jima, Bonin Islands),” Folder “314.7 GRS – Far East (Historical Narrative) Feb 46 – Oct 47,” box 417, RG 92, Office of the Quartermaster General, Entry 1894A, “Miscellaneous Files,” NACP.

31. Lt Col L. D. Lott, Headquarters Philippines-Ryukyus Command, “SUBJECT: Identification Procedures,” 15 May 1947, pp. 1-2, Folder “314.7 GRS – Far East (Historical Narrative) Feb 46 – Oct 47,” box 417, RG 92, Office of the Quartermaster General, Entry 1894A, “Miscellaneous Files,” NACP.

32. Technicians occasionally fluoroscoped the remains—a type of X-ray that indicated the presence of metal (such as identification tags, bracelets, or jewelry) not easily accessible or observable during a traditional examination. *Ibid.*, pp. 2–4.

33. Col James A. Murphey, Operational Order, no. 1: Concentration-Okinawa, 3 Mar 1948, Folder “314.7 GRS Far East (History AGRS – FEZ) (Part Three),” box 416, RG 92, Office of the Quartermaster General, Entry 1894A, “Miscellaneous Files,” NACP.

34. Headquarters American Graves Registration Service, Ryukyus Command [Report of Okinawa disinterments], 15 May 1948, Folder “Graves Regis – Far East Jul 48,” box 401, RG 92, Office of the Quartermaster General, Entry 1894A, “Miscellaneous Files,” NACP.

35. *Ibid.*

36. Edward Steere and Thayer M. Boardman, *Final Disposition of World War II Dead, 1945–51*, QMC Historical Studies, Series II, no. 4 (Washington, D.C.: Historical Branch, Office of the Quartermaster General, 1957), pp. 425–26.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 426.

38. For instance, the identified remains of Pvt. Bruce Mitchell of the 1st Marine Division were placed in the Saipan mausoleum on 9 July 1948 and transferred to Hawaii for permanent interment at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in January 1949. Disinterment Directive, Individual Deceased Personnel File for Bruce Allen Mitchell, Private, 561720, RG 92, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, WNRC.

39. For instance, a set of remains labeled Unknown X-21 of the Island Command Cemetery was examined in November 1947, May 1948, and September 1949, before it was declared unidentifiable by the AGRS. Island

Command Cemetery, Okinawa, Unidentified X-21, WNRC.

40. Information about Saipan identifications can be found in Steere and Boardman, *Final Disposition of World War II Dead, 1945-51*, p. 426. The number of current unidentified remains from Okinawa is the sum of existing X-files from the eight temporary cemeteries of the Ryukyu Islands, compiled at the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). Today, just over 200 marines and soldiers are still unaccounted

for from the ground campaign. At least 649 sailors are still missing and there are over 450 Army Air Force airmen unaccounted for from missions over the Ryukyu Island chain. These latter losses, though, primarily took place over water and were inaccessible to graves registration teams. The numbers of unaccounted for were tabulated from the DPAA's World War II Individual Loss Database according to loss locations listed as "Okinawa," "Ryukyu Islands," "Ie Shima," "Miyako," and "Kerama Rhetto." Some Navy

losses were listed geographically as both "Pacific Ocean" and "Ryukyus Islands." The numbers listed above may not be the definitive count of individuals still unaccounted for from Okinawa or the Ryukyua Island chain. The numbers are based on data of each individual loss as recorded by officials during World War II and available to current DPAA analysts.

41. Dr. Ian Spurgeon, "JPAC CASE OKINAWA CIL accession 1987-127," 4 Jan 2012, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency File.

ARMYHISTORY

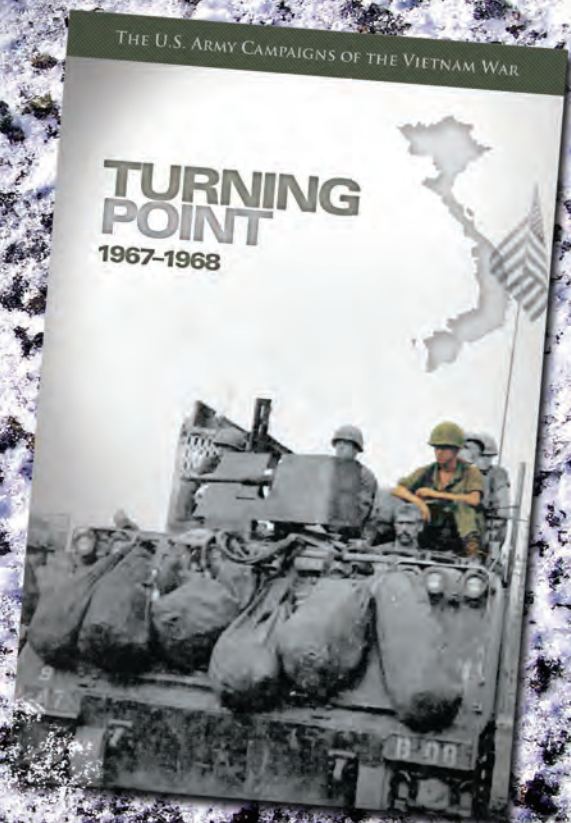
CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

A *Army History* welcomes articles, essays, and commentaries of between 2,000 and 12,000 words on any topic relating to the history of the U.S. Army or to wars and conflicts in which the U.S. Army participated or by which it was substantially influenced. The Army's history extends to the present day, and *Army History* seeks accounts of the Army's actions in ongoing conflicts as well as those of earlier years. The bulletin particularly seeks writing that presents new approaches to historical issues. It encourages readers to submit responses to essays or commentaries that have appeared in its pages and to present cogent arguments on any question (controversial or otherwise) relating to the history of the Army. Such contributions need not be lengthy. Essays and commentaries should be annotated with endnotes, which should be embedded, to indicate the sources relied on to support factual assertions. A manuscript, preferably in Microsoft Word format, should be submitted as an attachment to an e-mail sent to the managing editor at usarmy.mcnair.cmh.mbx.armyhistory@mail.mil.

Army History encourages authors to recommend or provide illustrations to accompany submissions. If authors wish to supply photographs, they may provide them in a digital format with a minimum resolution of 300 dots per inch or as photo prints sent by mail. Authors should provide captions and credits with all images. When furnishing photographs that they did not take, or any photos of art, authors must identify the owners of the photographs and artworks to enable *Army History* to obtain permission to reproduce the images, if necessary.

Although contributions by e-mail are preferred, authors may submit articles, essays, commentaries, and images on readable electronic media (DVD, CD, USB flash drive) by mail to Bryan Hockensmith, Managing Editor, *Army History*, U.S. Army Center of Military History, 102 Fourth Ave., Collins Hall, Bldg. 35, Fort Lesley J. McNair, D.C. 20319-5060.

Forthcoming from CMH...



ARMY HISTORY OnLine

The Center of Military History now makes all issues of *Army History* available to the public on its Web site. Each new publication will appear shortly after the issue is printed. Issues may be viewed or downloaded at no cost in Adobe® PDF format. An index page of the issues may be found at www.history.army.mil/armyhistory.