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REPORT OF RECONNAISSANCE SOUTHERN KYUSHU

IX Corps Zone of Operation
Olympic (Majestic)
Operation

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HEADQUARTERS IX CORPS
APO 309

15 December 1945

At the direction of the Commanding General IX Corps, a terrain reconnaissance and survey of Japanese dispositions was made during period 3 - 5 December 1945 within the IX Corps Zone for Operation Olympic (Majestic) on Southern Kyushu.

The purpose of this mission was to determine the practicability of FO 1, Hq IX Corps, 12 August 1945, and the conditions of terrain which would have influenced the execution thereof.

The findings of this study are contained herein.

Albert A. Horner

ALBERT A. HORNER
Colonel, G. S. C.
AC of S, G-3

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REPORT OF RECONNAISSANCE AND SURVEY OF JAPANESE DISPOSITIONS
IN IX CORPS ZONE OF OPERATIONS ON SOUTHERN KYUSHU
OPERATION OLYMPIC (MAJESTIC)

(Reconnaissance Made 3-5 December 1945)

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INCLOSURES:

- 1 OVERLAY: DISPOSITION OF JAPANESE TROOPS
 - 2 LIST OF JAPANESE TROOPS IN IX CORPS ZONE
 - 3 LIST OF JAPANESE WEAPONS IN IX CORPS ZONE
 - 4 PHOTOGRAPH ALBUM -- IX CORPS ZONE
- [REDACTED]

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I - SOURCES OF INFORMATION

1. Information contained in this report was obtained from the following sources:

a. Conversations with staff officers of the V Amphibious Corps who had made a partial reconnaissance of the area.

b. Record of interviews with the Chief of Staff, 16th Area Army and staff officers of the Japanese 40th and 57th Armies.

c. Ground reconnaissance of the IX Corps zone of operations including interrogation of local inhabitants.

II - JAPANESE PLAN OF OPERATIONS

2. Intelligence.

The Japanese had anticipated American landings on Kyushu and had formulated general plans for defense of the Island. Fourteen divisions and five brigades were allocated for the defense of Kyushu. See Inclosure No. 1, for disposition of troops in Sixth Army Zone. If the invasion occurred in 1945 it was expected that it would occur about 1 November but that we would be capable of one landing only and that it would be made in the Miyazaki Area, Ariake Wan or Fukiage Hama Area, in that priority of selection. (Note: The Fukiage Hama Area is about twenty miles south of the Kushikino Area designated for the landing of the V Amphibious Corps.) If the invasion did not occur until 1946 it was expected in the Fukuoka Area to isolate Kyushu from Honshu.

3. Operational Plan.

a. Air Defense - Special attack planes.

The invasion fleet would first be attacked by the Japanese Army and Naval Air Forces using "Kamikaze" tactics. For this the Army and Navy each had from four to five thousand planes which would be committed in waves of from three to four hundred planes at hourly intervals. The Japanese estimated that one out of four planes thus committed would sink or damage an allied ship.

b. Naval Defense - Special attack units.

The elements of the invasion fleet which survived the "Kamikaze" attacks would be met by human torpedo units and suicide

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boat squadrons. Some of these craft had a range (one way) of 170 miles. It was estimated that these weapons would account for as many as two hundred and fifty more ships. Practice runs from Makurasaki had actually been made during July 1945.

c. Beach Defense.

- (1) All units assigned to beach defense were to hold to the last man, counter-attacking in small local thrusts and using infiltration tactics. Up to 50% of all personnel were assigned duties of making "close quarter attacks" against tanks, utilizing hand placed demolition charges. Tank mines were not to be used extensively due to lack of material. Plans called for normal but not extensive use of mines to deny normal routes of approach to tanks.
- (2) There was no plan for the construction of obstacles or deliberate mine fields. All such installations were to be constructed hastily by engineers when the situation indicated that they were needed at a given point. Antitank guns and self-propelled artillery were to be used, but the primary defense against mechanized vehicles was to have been the use of hand placed charges by suicide troops.
- (3) No withdrawal from beach positions was contemplated and no defense of inland positions on successive lines was planned.

d. Use of Reserves.

Reserve divisions would be moved, largely on foot, to critical areas as developed by the assault and employed in all out counter-attacks to drive the invasion forces off the beaches. These large scale counter-attacks would occur within the first two weeks. No cross island defense lines or defenses in depth were planned. The back-bone of resistance would be counter-attacks.

e. Estimate of American Capabilities.

The Japanese estimated that it would have required at least two years for American forces to reach a line roughly corresponding to the northern limit of the Olympic (Majestic) Operation.

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III JAPANESE ORDER OF BATTLE AND EQUIPMENT

4. Troops.

a. General.

The land defense of Kyushu was assigned to the 16th Area Army consisting of the 40th, 56th and 57th Armies (groups which correspond to US corps). The 40th Army and 57th Army were assigned the defense of South Kyushu; the 40th Army Zone extended west of Kagoshima Wan and south of the 32d parallel; the 57th Army Zone ran from Kagoshima Wan northeast as far as Nobeoka. The 56th Army Zone was the lowland area in Northwest Kyushu. See Inclosure No. 1 for the disposition of troops in South Kyushu.

b. The troops in the IX Corps Landing Area were as follows:

- (1) 146th Infantry Division: This was one of the four regiment divisions that the Japanese had designed as a special defense unit for the home islands. The tactical employment of these divisions called for them to be placed along the strategic beaches of Japan with each division assigned the defense of a 12 kilometer front by using three regiments on line and one in reserve. The regiments on line were designated as fixed forces equipped with field and coast artillery, anti-tank guns and fixed turreted tank guns emplaced as anti-boat weapons. The fourth regiment was a highly mobile unit equipped almost exclusively with automatic weapons intended to be employed as a reserve or counter-attacking force. Although this division had been activated only a few months, it was considered adequately trained for defensive warfare and as of 15 August was in an assembly area in the vicinity of Kawanabe.
- (2) 125th Independent Mixed Brigade: This unit was constituted from the 3d Amphibious Brigade of three battalions augmented by three infantry battalions. The 3d Amphibious Brigade was considered a well trained outfit. As of 15 August the brigade had not moved into its assigned defensive area.
- (3) One Tank Brigade (less one regiment) was assigned to the 40th Army and information received indicated that the Japanese contemplated using this unit in

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the vicinity of Kaimon-Dake. However, as of the date of the surrender 63 of the tanks were located at Shigetomi, north of Kagoshima, and 9 of the tanks were in the vicinity of Yanakawa, east of Kaimon-Dake.

- (4) In addition to the above troops there were 2000 air corps and 2000 ground troops at Chiran, and 1500 navy troops of the 32d Special Attack Division (suicide unit) in various localities in and contiguous to the area assigned to IX Corps.
- (5) See Inclosure No. 2 for the complete troop list.

5. Arms and Equipment.

a. The 146th Division had 10% of its rifles, 70% of its mortars and 100% of the regimental and battalion AT guns. Three of the infantry battalions of the 125th Independent Mixed Brigade had not received their small arms as of 15 August. For large caliber weapons in this area see Inclosure No. 3.

b. The ammunition supply on hand was estimated to be sufficient for 250 rounds per small arm and 500 rounds per larger caliber weapon.

c. The motor transportation available to the 40th Army consisted of 136 trucks, 46 armored cars, and 64 other vehicles. Over 50% of the vehicles on hand were inoperative due to lack of maintenance. Fuel supply on hand was low and resupply was definitely limited.

d. There were 45 planes and an assortment of bombs on the Chiran Airfield. The planes consisted of 43 fighters, 1 reconnaissance plane and 1 trainer and were to be used as "Kamikaze" planes. No planes were at Ryu as this airfield had not been completed.

e. There were no suicide boats, mines, torpedoes or 2 and 5 man submarines in this area as of 15 August.

IV - TERRAIN RECONNAISSANCE

6. Dominant Features.

The IX Corps Beaches extending from Waki to Ishigaki are dominated by Kaimon-Dake on the right, Yahazu-Dake in the right center and Ono-Dake on the left. Kaimon-Dake, 924 meters high, is

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an extinct volcanic cone, heavily wooded from the upper limit of cultivation to about the 700 meter line and bare rock to the summit. At the foot of the cone toward the beach a shelf about 500 yards wide extends to ragged lava cliffs which rise fifty to sixty feet above the water. Fire from these cliffs would have enfiladed the whole length of Yellow Beach from the right, Yellow Beach is equally dominated from the left by the rocky headland of Yahazu-Dake which also dominates Blue Beach from the right. Ono-Dake is centered about 2½ miles behind Blue, Red, and Green Beaches and overlooks all three. Its lower slopes are terraced and cultivated and its upper slopes vary from fairly heavy forest growth to bare rock.

7. Beaches.

The beach approaches are excellent and the estimated gradient would have permitted dry landings from LCMs and possibly LSTs. A surf approximately three feet high was running on 5 December. The beach itself is of coarse black sand and rises quite sharply from the high water line. Extreme difficulty would have been encountered in moving vehicles on the beach and matting would have been necessary for all wheeled traffic. The sand beach varies in width from thirty to forty yards. The beach is backed by a steep bluff from twenty to forty feet high. There are no exits from the beach other than narrow foot paths. The bluff is covered with a thick growth of pine up to three feet in diameter and on the rear slope by a dense growth of underbrush. It would have required a major engineer effort to cut through the bluff and gain egress from the beaches. Behind the bluff the ground drops to a low level cultivated area broken up into small fields enclosed by embankments characteristic of rice paddies. However, most are used for dry grains and vegetables as sufficient water is not available for rice cultivation except behind Green and part of Red Beaches. Exit from Yellow Beach is the most feasible due to the proximity of the coastal road, narrower cultivated belt and firmer ground. However, the village of Waki on the right extremity and a maze of walled lanes extending all along the rear of the bluff would have presented serious obstacles to road construction. Construction of exits from Blue Beach would have been made difficult by the spur ridges running down into the cultivated lowland from Yahazu-Dake on the right, the width of cultivated area at this point (much of which is terraced in stone) and the deep gully of the stream draining through the left center of the beach. The area behind Red Beach is low, wet and closed on the right by a blind, stagnant drainage canal. Green Beach is closed by a deep, sluggish drainage canal, in rear of the coastal bluff, which empties into the stream at the left flank of the beach. The coastline west of Green Beach is of ragged lava rock precluding any landings.

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8. General Topography.

The Corps Beachhead Area is characterized by an intricate pattern of terraces extending from the lowland behind the coastal bluff to as high on the mountain masses as soil permits cultivation. The terrace embankments are all reveted with stone and vary from three to five feet high. Most are overgrown with grass. Deep gullies, finger ridges, foothills, and congested villages all contribute toward effecting strong natural defense works requiring little more than occupation by troops and emplacement of weapons to make the area a fortress.

9. Roads.

There are no two-way roads in this area. All roads pass through defiles, over fills or are cut into precipitous slopes, where construction of two-way passage would require weeks of engineer effort. None of the roads are metal surfaced and it is doubtful if they would have withstood military traffic beyond the first rain. Bridges are what could be expected in an area of such elementary roads; they are narrow and of low capacity.

10. Kainon-Dake - Yahazu-Dake Corridor.

Yellow Beach is approximately 2500 yards in length but egress from the beach area is limited on the left to a narrow road cut into the precipitous promontory of Yahazu-Dake and on the right to a narrow corridor between Kainon-Dake and the southern spur of Yahazu-Dake. About one mile east of Waki the corridor opens out into a cultivated and terraced plateau. Several isolated hills within this plateau area are capable of being organized into formidable strong points. Ikeda-Ko (lake), north of the plateau, lies in a deep depression characteristic of an extinct volcanic crater. A fairly good one-way road leads down to lake level, skirts the west shore and joins the road from Torigoe Tunnel north of the lake. South and east of the lake the mountains close in again with only a narrow exit to Kagoshima Wan at Yaakawa.

11. Torigoe Tunnel Pass.

Inland from Blue Beach the coastal road divides at the village of Ei where road junction is critically constricted by the village. The right fork leads up a narrow valley between Ono-Dake on the left and the Yahazu-Dake Ridge on the right. The road is capable of sustaining one way traffic only and cannot be widened except by a major engineering effort. The valley is broken by spur ridges from both sides and is terraced to the upper limit of cultivation. Torigoe Tunnel at the top of the pass is about 90 yards long and 18 feet wide. East of the tunnel the narrow road winds down the side of

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the mountain to meet the road coming up from Ikeda-Ko and then through narrow defiles to Miyagahama on Kagoshima Wan.

12. Aoto - Chiran Area.

a. The coastline from Ishigaki to Makurasaki is of ragged lava rock. Occasional narrow breaks in the coastline lead into small secluded coves with sandy beaches but too small and constricted for landing an attacking force. These coves provide havens for small fishing boats and might have been used as hideouts for hostile suicide craft. From the coast the ground rises gradually and is comparatively open as far north as the Chiran Airfield. It is broken by ravines, low hills and the characteristic net work of terraces.

b. Byu Airfield at Aoto was never completed or used. Several concrete floors indicate plans for hangers and shops though no structures had been erected and no structural materials were present. Numerous airplane bunkers, some completed and some under construction, indicated an extensive dispersal area. No paved runways exist. The field is sod and does not appear to have been adequately leveled for operational use. It is large enough to accommodate all type of aircraft, except possibly heavy bombers, if adequate runways were provided.

c. Chiran Airfield was used by the Japanese and is alleged to have accommodated at one time, 200 aircraft, 2000 air troops and 2000 ground troops. At the end of hostilities 45 planes were at the field. Wreckage of approximately that number is now scattered around the field. A large quantity of bombs, ranging from 35 to 100 kilograms, are at the field awaiting destruction. The one hangar and several small buildings were completely destroyed by bombing. The field is sod, appeared in good condition and adequate to take all types of craft except very heavy bombers and might take them if runways were provided.

13. East Coast Area.

The road along the west coast of Kagoshima Wan from Yamakawa to Kagoshima was badly damaged by the October typhoon. In places the sea wall had been washed out by the typhoon and the existing road is barely passable by a 3/4 ton truck. The seaplane base at Ibusuki was completely demolished in an air raid alleged to have occurred 5 May 1945.

14. Static Defenses.

a. There is essentially no evidence of military defensive preparations in this area. The details noted are as follows:

- [REDACTED]
- (1) Shallow trenches on the bluff about 400 yards west of Waki adequate for about one squad.
 - (2) Three excavations on the low slope of Kaimon-Dake over-looking Yellow Beach. The one investigated was a dugout 6 feet high, 3 feet wide and 20 feet deep shored up with timber but apparently not completed as the rear end was caved in. There was no attempt at concealment of the entrance and civilians in the area claimed it was an air raid shelter.
 - (3) Two caves, just about water level, in the cliff at the left of Yellow Beach, which faced south across the seaward approach to the beach. One had a slit opening about 3 inches high and three feet long.
 - (4) Two possible fox-holes in the bluff near the left end of Blue Beach.
 - (5) Two excavations high up on the southwest slope on Ono-Dake which were judged to be possible OP's. They were at too high an altitude to be logical gun emplacements.
 - (6) Several tunnels in the face of a bluff inside a narrow inlet about five miles west of Green Beach. A partially demolished concrete ramp led down the bluff to the water and several shallow excavations were found at the top of the bluff. Civilians in the vicinity stated that a year ago about 100 soldiers were employed in digging installations. They disclaimed any knowledge of the purpose and no equipment was brought into the area. It is suspected that it might have been the beginning of a suicide boat base but had obviously been abandoned before completion.

15. See Inclosure No. 4 - Photograph Album.

V - CONCLUSIONS

16. The IX Corps Estimate of the Situation, dated 10 August 1945, was essentially correct. Kaimon-Dake, the dominant terrain feature which commanded the entire Corps Landing Area, was totally barren of defense installations and none had been contemplated by the Japanese Army. There was no indication of prepared Japanese positions anywhere in the Corps Zone of Operations. All Japanese units in the

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Corps Zone of Operations were in assembly areas on 15 August 1945 and were not to be deployed until 1 October 1945. The survey disclosed that the Japanese Troops were poorly armed and equipped, lacking small arms, and ammunition therefor, clothing and food. Their communications were wholly inadequate which would have necessitated decentralized operations by the smaller units.

17. The maps available for planning Olympic (Majestic) Operation were surprisingly accurate in detail.

18. Summarily, the soundness of the Operation Plan IX Corps, dated 12 August 1945, was confirmed.



LEGEND

- Proposed Deployment Areas
- Army Airfields
- Navy Airfields
- Coast Defense Guns (Letter 'H' indicates Howitzer)
- Sub Base (5 man sub)
- Sub Base (2 man sub)
- Divisional Operational Boundaries
- Regimental Operational Boundaries
- Army Operational Boundaries
- Human Torpedo Base
- Torpedo Boat Base
- Crash Boat Base

Map: Central Japan, 1:250,000
 Information from interview with Chief of Staff
 Imperial Japanese 16th Army Army, Col Akita

Inclosure No 1 to Report of Reconnaissance
 IX Corps Zone, Operation OLYMPIC (MAJESTIC)

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Inclosure No. 2
to Report of Reconnaissance
IX Corps Zone - Operation Olympic

List of Japanese Troops in IX Corps Landing Area

<u>Units</u>	<u>No. of Troops</u>
146th Inf Div:	
Headquarters	294
421st Inf Regt	3307
422d Inf Regt	3307
423d Inf Regt	3307
424th Inf Regt	2638
28th Med Fld Arty Bn	750
24th Bombardment Arty	650
146th Arty Bn	508
146th AT Co	402
146th Transportation Co	360
146th Communications Co	235
146th Arms - Sv Co	108
146th Hosp	<u>280</u>
TOTAL 146th Inf Div	16,146
125th Independent Mixed Brigade:	
Headquarters	240
749th Independent Inf Bn	1006
750th Independent Inf Bn	935
751st Independent Inf Bn	1033
752d Independent Inf Bn	972
753d Independent Inf Bn	970
754th Independent Inf Bn	956
125th Independent Cannon Co	250
125th Engr Bn	554
125th Communications Co	196
125th Hygiene Co	177
Arty Bn	<u>521</u>
TOTAL 125th IMB	7,880
*Tank Brigade (less 1 Regt):	
Headquarters	200
Tank Regt	1200
Machine Cannon Unit	500
Maintenance Train	200
Transportation Co	<u>350</u>
TOTAL Tk Brig (-)	2450

[REDACTED]

List of Japanese Troops in IX Corps Landing Area (cont'd)

<u>Units</u>	<u>No. of Troops</u>
Air Corps Troops	2000
32d Special Attack Division (Navy)	<u>1500</u>
TOTAL TROOPS	29,976

* Not definitely determined that this unit was to be in this area.

[REDACTED]

Inclosure No. 3
to Report of Reconnaissance
IX Corps Zone - Operation Olympic.

Weapons

1. The following weapons, other than individual arms, were in the hands of troops of 146th Infantry Division and 125th Independent Mixed Brigade as of 15 August 1945:

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>
75mm Mtn Guns	156
47mm AT Guns	14
39mm AT Guns	32
37mm AT Guns	27
HMG	383
LMG	856
Mortars (up to 90mm)	16
23cm Hows	1
15cm Hows	16
10cm Hows	2
12cm Guns	1

2. For seacoast defense guns see Inclosure No. 1.

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Photograph Album - - IX Corps Zone

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2 - KAIMON-DAKE, looking south.



3 - KAIMON-DAKE, photo taken from YELLOW BEACH.



4 - Promontory on right flank YELLOW BEACH.



5 - Shallow trenches on promontory on right flank YELLOW BEACH.



6 - WAKI VILLAGE - photo taken from right flank YELLOW BEACH.



7 - YELLOW BEACH - photo taken from promontory on right flank.



8 - Right flank YELLOW BEACH, looking inland.



9 - Top of bluff behind right flank YELLOW BEACH.



10 - YELLOW BEACH, looking inland - photo taken 500 yards from right flank of beach.



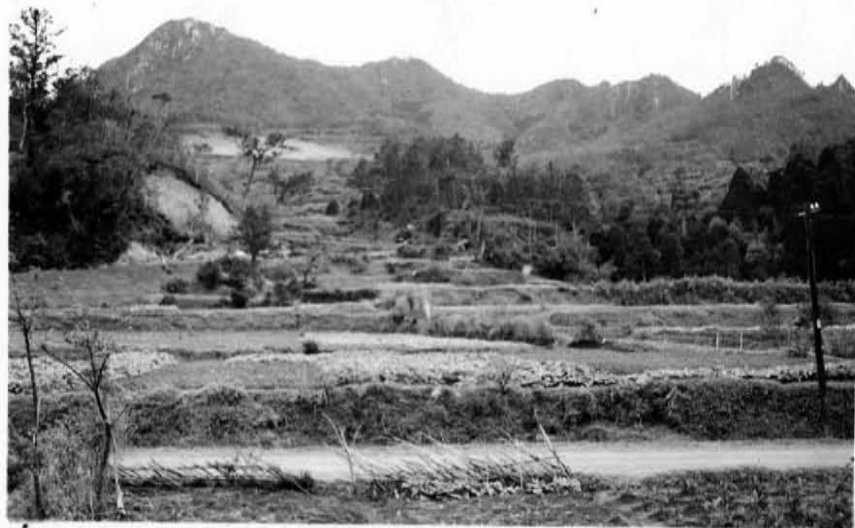
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12 - Center of YELLOW BEACH, looking inland.



13 - Exit from center YELLOW BEACH.



14 - Looking inland from center of YELLOW BEACH.



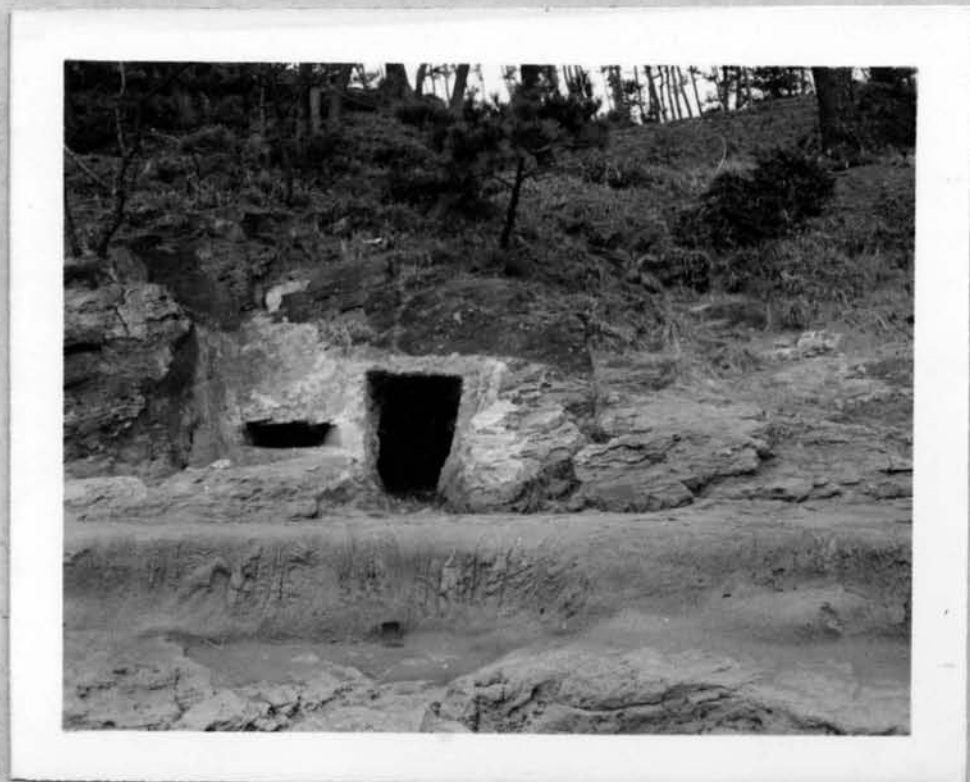
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18 - Emplacement left flank of YELLOW BEACH.



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23 - Looking east along WAKI-YAMAKAWA road - photo taken $\frac{1}{2}$ mile east of WAKI.



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28 - Promontory between YELLOW and BLUE BEACHES.



29 - Right flank of BLUE BEACH, looking SSE.



30 - KAIMON-DAKE- photo taken from right flank of BLUE BEACH.



31 - Exit from right flank of BLUE BEACH.



32 - Looking inland from right flank of BLUE BEACH.



33 - BLUE BEACH - photo taken from right flank.



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35 - Terrain behind center of BLUE BEACH.



36 - Looking inland from behind center of BLUE BEACH - ONO-DAKE
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37 - Looking towards center of BLUE BEACH from 100 yards inland.



38 - Looking up valley inland from behind center of BLUE BEACH.



39 - Looking towards BLUE BEACH from 75 yards inland.



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41 - Looking inland from behind left flank of BLUE BEACH -
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42 - Looking west - photo taken 75 yards inland from left
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43 - BLUE BEACH - photo taken from left flank of beach.



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45 - Looking towards TORIGOE TUNNEL - photo taken 75 yards inland from left flank BLUE BEACH.



46 - ONO-DAKE - photo taken inland from left flank of BLUE BEACH.



47 - Road leading to TORIGOE TUNNEL - photo taken 1 mile east of EI.



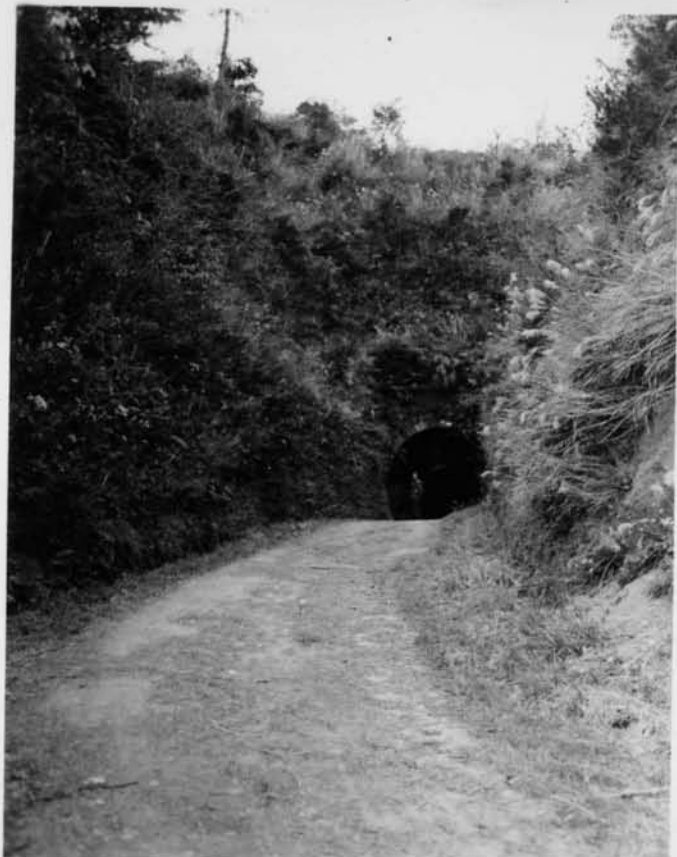
48 - Terraced hillside, looking northeast towards TORIGOE TUNNEL.



49 - ONO-DAKE, looking NNW - photo taken from road to TORIGOE TUNNEL.



50 - BLUE, RED and GREEN BEACHES in the distance - photo taken near western entrance of TORIGOE TUNNEL.



51 - TORIGOE TUNNEL, east entrance - height approximately 18 feet, width 15 feet, length 270 feet.



52 - IKEDA-KO, and KAIMON-DAKE - photo taken approximately 200 yards below east entrance to TORIGOE TUNNEL.



53 - West edge of IKEDA-KO with KAIMON-DAKE in the background.



54 - IKEDA-KO, looking southeast.



55 - RED and GREEN BEACHES - photo taken from right flank
of RED BEACH.



56 - MAKURASAKI - photo taken from road leading into
MAKURASAKI from the east.



57 - MAKURASAKI, showing complete destruction.



58 - Looking ESE towards KAIMON-DAKE from MAKURASAKI.



59 - Typical road in this area.



60 - ONO-DAKE, looking northeast - photo taken from vicinity of BYU AIRFIELD.



61 - CHIRAN AIRFIELD.



62 - Wrecked planes on CHIRAN AIRFIELD.



63 - CHIRAN AIRFIELD showing hangar area.



64 - Japanese bombs at CHIRAN AIRFIELD.



65 - Hangar at CHIRAN AIRFIELD with stocks of Japanese arms, ammunition and equipment.



66 - Japanese amphibious car - located at YAMAKAWA.