

# INVADING JAPAN

By DONALD NUGENT Sp(X)3c

YANK Navy Editor

**W**HEN the Japs quit on Aug. 14, they had two million troops and 8,000 planes poised in a last desperate readiness to stem the impending invasion of their homeland. The Japs knew something big was coming. They did not know precisely what that big something was: two gigantic operations cooked up by Supreme Headquarters in the Pacific to end the war.

The code names for the operations were Olympic and Coronet. Olympic was already under way when Hirohito tossed in the towel. It had started early in July when the Third Fleet began its sweep along the eastern coast of Japan. Olympic's climax was scheduled for Nov. 1, when three amphibious landings would smash into Kyushu, southernmost of the three Japanese home islands. Olympic was intended to isolate and wipe out enemy forces on the island.

After a preliminary assault by the 40th Marine Division at Koshiki Retto, accompanied by a feint off Shikoku by the IX Army Corps (composed of the 98th, 81st and 77th Divisions), the three main assaults were to be made by the U. S. Sixth Army. The V Marine Corps (composed of the 2d, 23d and 5th Divisions) would hit the beaches west of Kagoshima, not far from Koshiki Retto. The Army's XI Corps (the 43d, 1st Cavalry and Americal Divisions) would land at Ariaka Wan. The Army's I Corps (the 25th, 33d and 41st Divisions) would attack at Miyazaki, and its IX Corps was scheduled to act as "floating reserve" after its feinting action.

Coronet was to come next. In early spring of 1946, after a four-month lapse, landings were to start on the Tokyo plain of Honshu, the main home island and very heart of the Jap empire. The Eighth and Tenth Armies (made up of nine Infantry divisions, two armored outfits and three Marine divisions) would be the main force. Ten Infantry divisions and one airborne division would be held as floating reserve.

The three armies had the mission of destroying the Japanese Army on the main home island and occupying the Tokyo-Yokohama area. Kyushu would have been held down by a one-corps reserve of three Infantry and one airborne divisions. A clean-up of the remaining islands to the north would come afterward, supported by an air garrison equivalent to 50 groups.

Olympic and Coronet would have utilized every ship and landing craft that could turn a propeller. In addition to numberless personnel-landing craft, 3,033 Navy ships were to be involved. They included 23 battleships, 90 carriers, 52 cruisers, 323 destroyers, 298 escort vessels, 181 submarines, 1,060 auxiliary vessels, 160 mine craft and 16,133 Navy planes.

The Fifth Fleet would handle amphibious landings, while the Third Fleet was to provide strategic cover and support. On July 10 the Third Fleet opened up along the entire eastern Jap coast. On July 16, a British task group joined in. Fleet big guns pummeled shore objectives. Fourteen carrier strikes were made, each with more than 1,500 planes. Between July 24 and 28, all ships remaining in the Jap Navy were either sunk or damaged. B-29s from the Marianas averaged 1,200 sorties a week. Whole cities were being levelled by Superfort raids. Railroad rolling stock, factories and power houses crumbled.

Then came the atomic bombs, Russia's declaration of war and Japan's surrender. Olympic and Coronet were washed out. Their success would have been assured by their size alone—but what they would have cost will occupy military and naval theorists for a long time to come.

**Hedgehog.** When, after the sinking of hundreds of thousands of tons of Allied shipping, the

## INVADING JAPAN

newspapers began to report a new high rate of success by our Navy in aborting attacks by U-boat wolf packs, the public was pleased but took it as a matter of course. Recently the Navy revealed that this success was due not only to the increased efficiency of antisubmarine operations in general, but particularly to a secret weapon, known as the Mark 10 and 11 antisubmarine projector, that stopped the U-boat attacks. The device was nicknamed the "hedgehog" and replaced "ash-can" depth charges in antisubmarine warfare.

The formerly secret weapon is an arrangement of 24 rocket projectiles mounted in a bank. Like most new Navy guns, it is designed to remain level while the ship is rolling in a rough sea. The projectiles are hurled in an elliptical pattern above the calculated position of the submarine under attack. The Mark 10 throws the 24 charges in two-and-one-half seconds. The Mark 11, an improved model, does it in 1.8 seconds. The big change over the old ash-cans, which were set to go off at a set depth, is that the Mark projectiles explode only upon contact with the target. The explosion thus gives sure evidence of a hit.

The hedgehog also eliminates the danger of running the ship over the submarine in order to drop depth charges from the stern.

Originally designed in Great Britain in early 1942, the hedgehog went into production in June at the Syracuse, N. Y., plant of the Carrier Corporation, peacetime makers of air-conditioners and refrigerators. Four months later, the company was delivering 80 per month. In all, Carrier produced 1,501 hedgehogs.

**The New Navy.** When projected changes in sailors' gear are completed, it will almost be a pleasure to belong to the Navy—well, anyway . . . The bloused and bell-bottomed gob, staggering under a huge sea bag and hammock, will soon be no more than an uncomfortable memory.

First to go was the hammock. Although almost never used by World War II sailors, the hammock stuck it out to the bitter end. From station to station, the sailor rolled and unrolled the blamed thing until he finally reached his ship—where the hammock was usually discarded.

Finally BuShips designed and began issuing a "clothes-bedding bag," and the hammock was officially discontinued. The new gear consists of two sea bags, one the regular size and the other smaller. These two sections can be lashed together to carry the complete standard outfit, or each section can be used separately, and without bedding the smaller one can be stowed in the larger.

The next weight to be removed from the enlisted man's shoulders was the mattress. Customarily this was rolled with the blankets inside the hammock and accounted for most of the bulk and much of the weight of the roll. From here on in, every ship and station will furnish mattresses as well as bunks. Those now owned by the men are being turned over to the Navy and will stay on the bunks.

And so the postwar swabbie's seabag will contain blankets, mattress covers, pillow slips, towels and clothing. Apparently he will still retain his pillow, to keep the rest of the bag's contents well sprinkled with feathers.

It is the sailor's uniform itself that will show the greatest change. A new outfit for enlisted men, not yet officially announced by the Navy, will make its appearance soon.

Chiefs are already authorized to wear a dress blue coat and an overcoat identical with those of commissioned officers.

# YANK

DECEMBER 7, 1945

p. 21

the greatest change. A new outfit for enlisted men, not yet officially announced by the Navy, will make its appearance soon.

Chiefs are already authorized to wear a dress blue coat and an overcoat identical with those of commissioned officers.

# YANK

December 7, 1945

page 21

[OldMagazineArticles.com](http://OldMagazineArticles.com)