

IE SHIMA DIARY

- 24 January Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Army Garrison Force APO 245, was organized this date and assigned to Tenth Army with initial station at APO 957.
- 30 January Army Garrison Force, APO 245, was this date assigned to Army Garrison Force, APO 331.
Brigadier General Charles E Thomas Jr., USA, reported for duty and assumed Command of AGF, APO 245. On active duty since 11 October 1917, General Thomas arrived in the Pacific May 1944, and served successively as Commanding General, Advance Echelon, 21st Bomber Command, Deputy Commander of Operations, Army Air Forces, Pacific Ocean Area, and AAFPOA representative in the forward areas. Earlier, for his outstanding service in initiating and building up the Warner Robins Air Service Command at Robins Field, Macon, Ga., General Thomas was awarded the Legion of Merit.
- 5 March Lt Col J A Muller, A-3, and Major J D Fleming, A-2, were ordered on detached service to join the 77th Division at Leyte, P.I. as Liaison Officers representing the Commanding General during the assault phases of Ie Shima landings.
- 20 March First echelon, with Lt Col B F Modisett as troop commander, leaves Oahu for target aboard USS Clearfield, APO 142.
- 26 March Convoy arrives at Eniwetok. Clearfield at anchorage there for four days, proceeding Easter Sunday for Ulithi.
- 1 April Easter services held aboard ship shortly after news was received of the Tenth Army landing on Okinawa.
- 4 April Clearfield arrives at Ulithi. General Thomas, Col L J Greeley Chief of Staff, Lt Col W L Gramer, A-1, and Captain R Nesbit join party.
- 5 April Sixth Marine Division moves onto Motobu peninsula, 4000 yards off Ie Shima, thereby denying the peninsula as a support position for Ie Shima resistance.
- 13 April Minna Shima, small islet off SE coast of Ie Shima, was seized without resistance, and 77th Division artillery emplaced there to support landing operations.
- 16 April Terrific aerial and naval bombardment was laid on Ie Shima for 0730 to 0800. At 0801 the 305th and 306th US Infantry Regiments landed on Green and on Red One and Two beaches. Only a few riflemen and minefields opposed attacking forces until the advance reached Japanese fortified areas. From scattered pillboxes, caves and emplacements the Japs opened fire with rifles and machine-guns causing heavy casualties. By 1700, however, the western half of Ie Shima, including the airfield was secure. Small patrols and suicide raiding parties attempted to infiltrate positions during the night, many Japs using pole charges and satchel charges strapped to their bodies. Two hundred and fifteen Japs were killed during the night and one prisoner of war was taken. Coming in with the assault this morning was the 36th Field Hospital. A field hospital was set up near the beach to handle all evacuation of the assault phases. Meanwhile, the Clearfield and convoy had arrived in vicinity of the target and remained in anchorage off Okinawa for four days. Troops were in general quarters every night because of enemy aerial activity.

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- 17 April The 307th Infantry landed on Red Beach Three and attacked Ie town. The advance into the town was delayed by mortar fire from Igusugu Yama mountain and bitter house-to-house defenses. Enemy killed today numbered 419. Col Muller and Major Fleming landed this day with Co B, 724th Military Police Battalion, as first members of the Army Garrison Force to land on Ie Shima.
- 18 April Savage fighting continued all day, the Japs fighting fiercely from house to house and cave to cave. Enemy killed during the day totalled 516, while ten were taken prisoner. It was on this date that Ernie Pyle, famed Scripps-Howard columnist, was killed on the south central plateau near the western approaches to the town. Riding in a jeep with Lt Col J B Coolidge, commanding officer of the 305th Infantry, and two enlisted men on a reconnaissance of forward positions, the party was forced to get out of the jeep and take cover when a Jap machine gunner opened fire. Pyle was shot through the head while trying to ascertain the safety of other members of the party. 77th Division boys erected a memorial marker at the place of his death. Paying simple yet stirring tribute to the beloved columnist, the inscription reads:
- "AT THIS SPOT THE 77TH DIVISION LOST A BUDDY,
ERNIE PYLE, APRIL 18, 1945."
- 19 April There was less enemy activity than usual during the night, but during the day American attacks on the town were met with stiff enemy resistance. Many deep caves, tunnels and mutually-supporting pillboxes were taken near Igusugu Yama. Hand to hand fighting occurred on the north and northeast slopes as the Japs resisted all the way up to a final stand in a cave 20 feet below the summit of the mountain. In Ie town Jap machine-guns and riflemen in and under concrete buildings slowed but failed to halt the advance of the 305th and 307th Infantry troops. On Minna Shima, two Jap soldiers and six civilian destroyed themselves with grenades when challenged by artillery sentinels. The Jap toll for the day was 1006 killed and three taken prisoner. On this date the 1902d and 1903d Engineer Aviation Battalions landed on Ie Shima and started repair work on Ie Shima's air strips. At this date the main Jap strip was approximately 75 feet by 5000 feet. Beach development and road construction, as well as mine clearance, were continued by the 1118th Engineer Group, which landed with the assault troops. Liaison planes based at Yontan Field, Okinawa, commenced operating to Ie Shima this date, using undamaged taxicabs. These were the first American planes to use Ie Shima Field. Certain elements attached to the 77th Division were released by formal order to the Island Command as the first Garrison Force installations were instituted. These included a Garrison Force Information Center on Red Beach T-3, traffic control stations throughout the captured areas, PW camp and civilian stockade. Advance party of Army Garrison Force went ashore this date and assumed control of unloading and island development operations. Included in the party going ashore were: Lt Col R H Fraser, Staff Artillery Officer, Lt Col K T Klock Jr., Island Engineer; Major R L Gray, Assistant A-4; Major O E Esplin, Assistant A-3; Capt A E Arledge, Assistant Island Engineer; Capt V J Gilroy, Asst Transportation Officer; Capt R H Evans, Provost Marshal; and Lt R H Westfall, Assistant A-3.

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- 20 April Fighting continued heavy during the day as troops closed in on the mountain and mopped up caves and pillboxes manned by the desperate Jap. The enemy toll this day was the highest during the entire fighting, 1512 being killed by our troops. Memorial services were held for Ernie Pyle today at the Island Cemetery within sound of the continuing combat. The 77th Division Chaplain officiated while Major General Andrew Bruce, Commanding General of the 77th Infantry Division, newspaperman, newsreel cameramen and high ranking officers and scores of GI's attended the simple services.
- 21 April After hours of the bitterest fighting of the entire week, the American flag was placed atop Igusugu Yama mountain and the island was declared secure, as mopping-up operations continued. Col L J Greeley, Chief of Staff, assumed control of all Garrison activities this date.
- 23 April The Clearfield this date arrived on the target, anchoring about 2 miles off the island. The remainder of the first echelon debarked and ISCOM Headquarters was set up on the side of a hill about 700 yards from the beach, the site of the former 77th Division Command Post. Supplies immediately started coming ashore.
- 25 April Lt General Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., Commanding General, Tenth Army, arrived for his first inspection of the island.
- 26 April The 77th Division withdrew to Okinawa, and Brigadier General Thomas assumed formal command of Ie Shima. During the fighting, the bitterest in which the 77th had yet participated in during the war, 172 77th Division troops were killed in action, 46 were listed as missing and 901 were wounded in action. The Japs suffered 4706 killed and 50 taken prisoner. Some 1700 civilians were brought under control.
- 27 April Scattered groups of snipers and raiders, hiding in caves and tunnels in the vicinity of Ie town, made sporadic small raids. Considerable danger still existed on the island from mines and booby traps. It was the consensus of high Army officials that the island had been heavier mined than any island taken thus far in the Pacific, thereby occasioning serious obstacles in the speedy development of necessary installations.
- 28 April Two enemy aerial raids were staged during the night. One plane was destroyed, four reported damaged. Food stores and blankets found in caves were being utilized by the Military Government for use of captured civilians. Live stock, consisting principally of horses, chickens and goats, were being picked up and corralled by the MG.
- 29 April Information gleaned today confirmed that the Jap island commander for Ie Shima was Major Igawa Todashi who was killed in action during fighting on Igusugu Yama. First church services were conducted outdoors near ISCOM Headquarters.

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- 1 May First cargo plane landed at 1200: C-46, piloted by a Marine. Daily round trips started between IE and Yontan Air Strip on Okinawa.
- 2 May C-47 of MAG 43 arrived as first plane assigned and based on IE. Island's water supply reported pure and plentiful. Anopheles mosquitoes were found, but in less numbers than expected. First snake (Habu) killed.
- 3 May Jap casualties being buried by POW's. Japs using livestock to carry explosives into camp areas.
- 4 May First evacuation of wounded to Okinawa by LST. Gen Buckner pays second visit to IE SHIMA. Red Cross arrives and is set up.
- 6 May Jap plane made gliding attack at 0800 on shipping, but was shot down 500 yards from shore.
- 7 May 119 Jap POW's sent to Okinawa. 25 tons of Jap mines have been dug out to date. 45 miles of roads are now usable.
- 8 May 20 Jap soldiers and women, latter armed with grenades, were killed in caves, biggest bag of daily roundup.
- 9 May First evacuation of wounded by air to Okinawa.
- 10 May 156th Station Hospital landed. Dengue Fever present in 27 cases. To date, 4820 Jap soldiers killed, 120 prisoner, 2033 civilians interned. 56 miles of roads usable.
- 11 May Two Jap planes swooped in without warning in the morning and attempted suicide dives. One Dutch ship with hospital supplies hit but not sunk. Both planes shot down.
- 12 May Hospital area infiltrated and wounded EM. Main water point is yielding 30,000 gallons fresh water daily. Eventual output estimated at 120,000 gals daily. Planes start spraying DDT.
- 13 May First fighters based on IE arrived, 333rd Sq of 318th Fighter Group flew in from Saipan, led by a B-29.
- 14 May 19th Fighter Sq, 318th Fighter Gp arrived, also 11 nurses for hospital.
- 16 May 28th Photo Recon Sq arrived.
- 17 May Six air raids starting at 1945, lasting until 0300. At least 15 bombs were dropped. 2 killed, 12 wounded. One Jap plane destroyed. The 318th flew its first mission from IE today: night heckler mission by Maj Rasmussen and one other to Kyushu, Japan.
- 18 May Four air raids on the harbor: LST 808 hit and 10 killed. 318th flew night heckler to Tanega Shima and 8 plane raid on Kure Shima (day).
- 19 May 337th Air Service Group landed.
- 20 May Remarkd that supply situation is unsatisfactory with shortages on some cases and classes of supplies. 4 Jap planes shot down over island.

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- 22 May MAG 22 arrived. Several air raids on shipping. Four Jap planes shot down and one "Betty" suicided into beached LST 808. Near suicide misses on ships.
- 24 May 318th knocked down first plane over Kyushu. The heaviest Jap air attack on IE started and lasted 24 hours, despite heavy rains which drenched the isle.
- 25 May Japs gave island a pasting from the air. 200 Jap planes left the Jap homeland for the raid with only 34 returning, the rest shot down by fighters and AA. 70 bombs hit IE, one landing in an dispensary and killing 24, wounding 21, most of these had been on the LST 808. One gas dump destroyed, 14 vehicles destroyed. 318th destroyed 34 Jap planes in 4 hours between Kyushu and Okinawa when scheduled attack on Kyushu was turned back by weather. 9 delayed action bombs found, later, and destroyed.
- 28 May Long alert but no planes over island until morning. Jap "Betty" suicided into a Victory ship, with heavy casualties. 318th got 18 18 and 4 probs over Kyushu. Some areas on island still to be demined.
- 1 June Check on activity on Minna Shima found 119 civilians had infiltrated in small boats. Progress on strips slow because of rains. Jap strips were merely flat surfaces of earth and had to be reworked.
- 2 June Rain and clouds prevented Japs making full use of the full moon this time. 9 Japs killed on a raft at the east end of the island. Blood smears of natives show no activity of Malaria or Filariasis.
- 3 June 11 more picked up on Minna Shima. Also Jap gunner from a "Betty" shot down May 28th.
- 5 June Japanese cables from IE to Okinawa were found serviceable and were put to use.
- 6 June Jap ambush party wounded 2, but 2 of the Japs were killed and found to be very well equipped and stocked with food. Burial parties are still finding and burying Japanese bodies. Snipers still active.
- 8 June Six alerts, totalling 11 hours. No damage, AA shot one down.
- 9 June 4 alerts, totalling 5 hours: 7 bombs dropped and did considerable damage to the 1903rd gas and oil dump and water point equipment.
- 10 June Jap plane sneaked in, showing friendly IFF, for one bomb on MAG 22 area, killing 14, wounding 41.
- 12 June Jap cave explored, found to contain hospital equipment and bodies of dead patients. Hospital well equipped.
- 13 June 12 P-61's arrived and went into action that night. Plum strip is now 5300 feet, all weather operational, and 100% complete. Has 27,000 feet of taxiways and 106 hardstands (77% complete). Birch Strip 5100 feet long (100% complete), 25,000 feet taxiways and 100 hardstands (82% complete). Already 36,000 cubic yards of coral have been used on the airfield, 50,000 for the roads. Most Japanese roads were of clay, and during the rainy season just passed, barely usable, being a mass of mud.

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- 15 June During the last 30 days: 104 alerts, with 109 Jap planes actually over the island, to drop at least 111 bombs. Jap planes came in groups of from 1 to 12 ships. 52 killed, 111 wounded. 318th record, 102 destroyed (Japs) 6 probs, 5 damaged: MAG record: 40 destroyed, 1 prob. AA record: 36 Jap planes destroyed, 5 prob, 2 damaged.
- 16 June No evidence of Malaria on IE, but natives have been found to have Filariasis.
- 17 June 413th Fighter Group arrived.
- 18 June General Buckner killed on Okinawa.
- 19 June BG Thomas White, CG 7th AF visited island today.
- 21 June Okinawa campaign announced officially over. Heavy air attack on IE. More than 60 Jap planes caused 5 alerts, totalling 7 hours and 9 minutes, one "Betty" got inside night cap and it was shot down. Night fighters got 14 and 6 probs, MAG knocked down 22, 7 more on CAP next morning.
- 23 June 9665 tons crossed beach for new record in last 24 hours. Two Japs got thru, one shot down, but the other one dropped 12 bombs, making a direct hit on an AA Gun position, killed 20, wounded 17, considerable damage to equipment.
- 24 June 507th Fighter Group arrived today. Heavy rains, still the air raids came.
- 28 June 4 Japs surrendered to 413th Fighter Group, 2 surrendered to 507th Ftr Gp claiming they had been living in caves on NW shore.
- 30 June During last 15 days of June, 23 alerts, during which 28 Jap planes crossed the island to drop at least 20 bombs. MAG record: 23 destroyed, 6 damaged. 318th destroyed 6 and AA 4 more.
- 1 July Sniper fire decreased during last two weeks and Jap remnants are weak and poorly equipped. Five water points producing 150,000 gals daily. 318th made first attack on China coast.
- 2 July Ernie Pyles's monument dedicated. First finance service arrived on the island today.
- 3 July 22,826 military personnel now on IE SHIMA. 2 more air strips have been started, to make total of 4.
- 5 July First B-24 raid on Jap homeland escorted by 102 P-47's of the 301st Ftr Wg.
- 6 July Lt Gen Barney Giles visited the island.
- 7 July Fire and explosions of ISCOM bomb dump at 0745, started by Jap snipers. 500 90 mm AA shells destroyed.
- 8 July Gen Stillwell, CG 10th Army visited in an L-5 (cub)
- 13 July More than 400 planes now based on IE.

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- 14 July First PX open on island -- one in all.
- 15 July Jap activity reduced during last 15 days. Alerted 7 times and 4 planes got over island, little damage. 507th Gp destroyed 10 planes, other units not known.
- 16 July Some concern over out-break of Jap Bencephalitis on Okinawa. 40% fatalities. None on IE.
- 22 July 65 Phillipines based B-24's arrived and were bombed and gassed by Ftr Gp and Service Group personnel for huge raid planned on Japan. As usual, plans were changed. 144 301st Ftr Wg planes attacked Shanghai area.
- 24 July First raid by IE based Liberators hit China Coast.
- 28 July 301st Fighters hit Kyushu with no aerial opposition. Roy Howard of Scripps-Howard visited Pyle's grave. B-25's arrived.
- 29 July Jap plane followed friendly plane in, escaped detection, and torpedoed a victory ship at anchor. 1 missing and 13 wounded. P-47's carried Napalm to Kyushu for first time.
- 30 July Censorship relaxed, and we can say we are in the Ryukyus, also can take pictures.
- 2 August IESHIMA fighters escort B-29's in attacks on Jap homeland. Big Three Meeting ends.
- 5 August First Jap city disappears under Atomic bomb: HIROSHIMA.
- 6 August PresTruman announces what happend to HIROSHIMA.
- 7 August Newhigh of 10,689 tons crossing beach. Alert of 2 1/2 hours -- one Jap plane got thru and dropped 11 bombs.
- 8 August Jap answer to the Atomic Bomb? Two Jap planes eluded night defenses and dropped one bomb, destroyed 8 P-51's and damaged 6 others.
- 9 August NAGASAKE joins HIROSHIMA's fame. Russians declared war on Japan and started military action in Manchuria.
- 10 August Japs started surrender message via SwissGovt. 3rd air strip completed. 4 alerts, no planes over island.
- 11 August Japs willing to surrender -- IF. US replies "No IF's".
- 12 August 15 soldiers died with alcohol poisoning, 45 others in critical condition. IE based fighters attacked Kumamoto, Kyushu, in 500 plane attack with bombers.
- 14 August Domei says surrender has been agreed to, but -- YET, special word warns IE and Okinawa to prepare for a heavy attack tonight with gas.
- 16 August McArthur tells Japs how to send emissaries to Manila via IE SHIMA.
- 19 August At 1247 & 1250 2 Jap Betties landed on IE with surrender envoys.
- 21 August Envoys stopped on Ie on return trip to Japan.