



The Battle for Iwo Jima, 1945

By Derrick Wright

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Iwo Jima was the US Marine Corps's toughest battle. In February 1945, 3 Marine Divisions stormed the island's shores in what was supposed to be a 10-day battle, but they had reckoned without General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, the enemy commander. Do not plan for my return, he wrote in one of his letters to his wife. He knew that he and his garrison could not defeat the Marines, but he was determined to exact a fearful toll in American casualties. In the 36-day battle for Iwo Jima, the Marines lost nearly 6,000 men and the enemy garrison was virtually wiped out. This history draws upon letters, photographs and drawings by General Kuribayashi and is supported by many other eyewitness accounts and the true story, from Press photographer Joe Rosenthal, of the famous flag-raising on Mount Suribachi. The text is illustrated with over 80 photos and includes maps that show locations of defenses and the progress of the battle, drawings of the principal tanks and aircraft of the campaign.

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The Battle for Iwo Jima,1945 By Derrick Wright Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1614351 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Sutton Publishing
- Published on: 1999-09-25
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x 1.00" w x 6.00" l,
- Binding: Hardcover
- 244 pages

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Editorial Review

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"In the beginning, Iwo Jima was just an unknown island in the north Pacific Ocean. In the end, it was to become the island of death." That grim but accurate appraisal begins *The Battle for Iwo Jima: 1945*, a blow-by-blow eyewitness account of one of World War II's most critical--and bloody--conflicts, what author Derrick Wright (*A Hell of a Way to Die*) describes as "the greatest battle in Marine Corps history."

By 1945, Iwo Jima had become a linchpin of enormous tactical importance. Victory in Europe was all but assured, and the largest navy ever to set sail had chased Japan's Imperial fleet back to its native shores. But Iwo Jima remained a persistent thorn, giving Japan hours of warning for air raids and allowing Japanese fighters to harass B-29 bomber routes. The Americans were forced to take Iwo Jima, and the Japanese command knew it--and even though they couldn't hold the island, they were determined to make the U.S. pay dearly. "[F]orewarned of the American invasion and resigned to dying at their posts, [the Japanese] were determined to take as many Marines with them as possible. 'Do not plan for my return,' wrote the commander of the island, Lt. Gen. Kuribayashi, in one of his last letters to his wife."

Wright gets on the ground, down and dirty, covering both sides of the conflict, interviewing survivors from both sides, excerpting official documents and letters (including Kuribayashi's), digging up previously unpublished photos, and giving intimate tooth-and-nail (and often grisly) accounts of every engagement, from prelanding prep to D day to D+36. An excellent and engaging piece of work, with enough sketches, maps, photos, and command structure org charts to satisfy the most serious military history buff. --*Paul Hughes*

About the Author

Derrick Wright's interest in World War II was stimulated by the many Luftwaffe bombing raids on his native Teesside. He is the author of *Pacific Victory*, *Tarawa: A Hell of a Way to Die* and *Peleliu: To the Far Side of Hell*. Married, with four daughters, he lives on the edge of the North Yorkshire Moors.

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