

the AMERICAN



£7.50

Fly Fishing & Fish Eagles
in Hampshire

Is It Chips or Fries?

'Thanksgiving' Festivals
Around The World

Peleliu: The Pacific War's
Forgotten Campaign

Christmas Gift Guide

School Shootings Made Me
Leave America

Gorby's Object Lesson

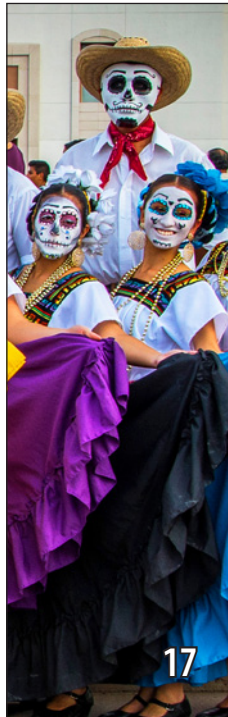
American Sports:
College Basketball
College Football
NFL in London
USMNT
MLS

Interview with

MARCUS KING



12



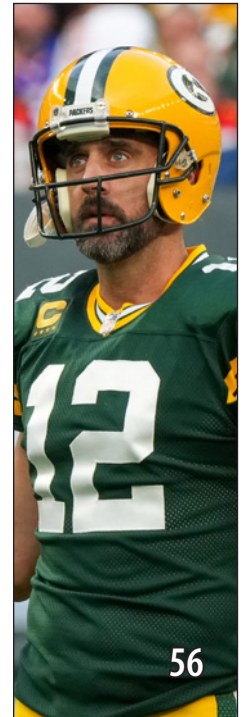
17



18



28



56

IN THIS ISSUE...

- 9 Arts: Winslow Homer, Force of Nature
- 10 Chips or Fries? US and UK English for kids
- 12 From Fishing to Fish Eagles in
Hampshire's Test Valley
- 17 'Thanksgiving' Around The World
- 18 Marcus King Interview:
Young Blood from American Roots
- 23 The Battle of Peleliu - The Pacific War's Most
Underrated Campaign
- 37 Spice Up The Holidays - Ideas for Foodies
- 40 School Shootings Made Me Leave America

- 42 Gorby's Object Lesson: Why Gorbachev is Revered
in the West and Reviled in the East
- 44 Wealth: Inherited IRA Distribution Rules
- 46 Charitable Giving: Making Giving Simple
- 47 Tax: Developments for US Expats
- 48 The Rise and Rise of The MLS in the Heart
of a Young Londoner
- 50 New Kids in the World Cup: Dawn of the USMNT
- 52 Elite College Basketball Hits London
- 53 The Sun Belt Gets Its Day In The Sun
- 56 Fall Magic: The NFL in London

2 Welcome

4 The A-List

26 Reviews

36 Food, Drink & Travel

59 US Social Groups

64 Coffee Break



Marines armed with a .30-caliber machine gun and a Browning automatic rifle battle entrenched Japanese

PHOTO: USMC

Bitter Peleliu - The Battle of Peleliu 1944

In the period of Thanksgiving and Christmas, and as war rages in Ukraine, Joseph Wheelan looks back to the sacrifices made by thousands of US Marines 78 years ago

As a 4,000-foot plume of black smoke billowed over Peleliu early September 15, 1944, spirits rose among the 9,000 Marine infantrymen poised to storm its beaches.

"We thought the landing would be a piece of cake," said Lieutenant Clifford West, a forward observer. "Nobody on shore could have survived all that shelling and bombing."

Days earlier, General William Rupertus had confidently predicted that his vaunted 1st Marine Division would secure Peleliu in four days or less. The massive pre-landing bombardment and air strikes supplied further proof to Marines eager to believe that Operation Stalemate would be an easy one.

It was the first of many misapprehensions about Peleliu.

On some of the landing vehicles approaching Peleliu's 500-yard-wide reef, Marines belted out popular songs such as 'Give My Regards to Broadway' and 'Beer Barrel Polka'. At the reef, the singing stopped.

Pre-registered Japanese artillery and mortar fire suddenly rained down on the flotilla of small craft jammed with Marines, and 26 of them instantly became blazing torches. 35 more were damaged or destroyed over the next 90 minutes.

The shelling also killed and wounded Marines on the four landing beaches. From nearby bunkers, enemy machine-gunners toppled laden Marines in the shallows like dominoes. Soon, the bloody surf was a carpet of bodies.

Landing with the First Marines, Private First Class Robert Leckie, a Guadalcanal veteran, beheld "a litter of burning, blackened amphibian tractors, of dead and wounded, a mortal garden of exploding mortar shells."

On D-Day alone, the 1st Division reported 1,148 casualties.

The Pacific war's most under-reported campaign

Few newspaper correspondents witnessed the amphibious assault because Rupertus's prediction of a short campaign had prompted 30 of the 36 accredited reporters to seek better assignments elsewhere. Consequently, Peleliu became the Pacific war's most under-reported campaign.



A US Marines Vought F4U Corsair bombs Peleliu's highlands

PHOTO: USMC

Reporters missed a donnybrook of a battle lasting 74 days - not 4 - and what the National Museum of the Marine Corps describes as "the bitterest battle of the war for the Marines." They also missed the debut of the Japanese Army's radically new defensive strategy.

Nothing was quite what it seemed, beginning with the aerial reconnaissance photographs of Peleliu showing a long, commanding ridge swathed in lush jungle, trees and undergrowth. When gunfire stripped the vegetation from the highlands,

their true contours appeared - a twisted landscape of knife-edge ridges, heart-stopping cliffs, and steep, rock-lined gullies.

Here, Japanese engineers and miners had fashioned a diabolical network of mutually supporting fortified positions. Attack one and gunfire would erupt from unseen positions nearby. Heavy guns and mortars were concealed in caves behind sliding steel doors.

All but impervious to artillery fire and air strikes, the enemy strongholds would have to be destroyed by infantrymen armed with rifles, machine guns, mortars, grenades, satchel charges, and, with terrible effectiveness, flamethrowers.

An unnecessary battle

Tragically, it was a battle that needn't have been fought at all, to neutralize an airfield that had already been neutralized. Air strikes by carrier-based fighter-bombers in March and August had destroyed hundreds of enemy planes and made the airstrip unusable.

Two days before D-Day on September 15, Admiral William Halsey recommended canceling the operation. Peleliu's airstrip, he said, no longer threatened General Douglas MacArthur's imminent

invasion of the Philippines. But the amphibious assault force was already at sea, and Admiral Chester Nimitz, the commander of Pacific naval operations, ordered Stalemate to proceed.

Late D-Day afternoon, more than a dozen small, lightly armored Japanese tanks suddenly stormed across Peleliu's airfield. It was a terrible mistake; four heavily armed Marine battalions easily crushed the attackers. The Marines captured the airfield the next day, and within a week, airfield sorties were hitting the central highlands, a mere 15-second flight away.

On the third day, the Marines began assaulting the highlands, known as the Umurbrogol. Riddled with 500 natural and man-made caves, the Umurbrogol was where Colonel Kunio Nakagawa's reinforced 2nd Infantry Regiment, among the elite of the Imperial Japanese Army with 10,600 men, intended to wage its attritional battle.

Time magazine correspondent Robert "Pepper" Martin was appalled by Peleliu's miserable climate. Located 500 miles east of the Philippines and 7 degrees north of the equator, 6-mile-long Peleliu sweltered in 110-degree heat and high humidity. Its coral-and-limestone rock afforded little respite from the scorching sun.

The fighting, wrote Martin, was "incomparably worse than Guam in its bloodiness [and] terror ... For sheer brutality and fatigue, I think it surpasses anything yet seen in the Pacific."

It was nearly impossible to even dig a foxhole in the tough rock. Unburied Japanese dead lay everywhere, rapidly decomposing in the intensive heat. The stench of



PHOTO: USMC

Marines fight in the rubble of smashed buildings on Peleliu airfield's northern perimeter

PHOTO: USMC



putrefaction and body waste was pervasive.

Two days after Peleliu's D-Day, the Army's 81st Infantry Division - Stalemate's reserve force - invaded the smaller, nearby island of Angaur. Angaur's 1,400 soldiers, and its engineers and laborers, resisted the 81st fiercely until they were overwhelmed on October 23.

Japanese blueprint for Iwo Jima

Nakagawa's skillful defensive preparations on Peleliu represented a paradigm shift that became the blueprint for defending Iwo Jima and Okinawa in 1945.

After the loss of the Mariana Islands during the summer of 1944, senior Japanese officers, convinced that the war was lost, drafted a document titled "Defense Guidance on Islands." Henceforth, the Japanese would wage attritional battles from underground defenses, eschew massive banzai attacks, and wait for the invaders to come to them.

Making every island battle a bloodbath, the Japanese reasoned, would force the Allies to negotiate rather than insist upon Japan's unconditional surrender. A negotiated peace might preserve Emperor Hirohito's prerogatives and some of Japan's conquests.

General Rupertus, however, believed that the enemy would break under relentless pressure, and so Marines died by the scores in frontal assaults against the Japanese bastions.

Over Rupertus's strenuous objections - he obsessively wanted Peleliu to be an all-Marine victory - the 81st Division's 321st Regimental Combat Team relieved the dec-

imated First Marines on September 21.

During six days of fierce combat, 311 of the 3,252 First Marines that landed on D-Day were dead and 1,438 were wounded. The 56 percent casualty rate surpassed any recorded by a Marine Corps regiment until that time.

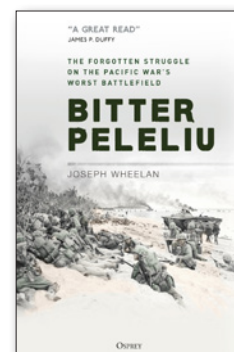
When they left the highlands, the First Marines' appearance reflected what they had endured. "Their uniforms were torn, filthy, and bloodstained in many cases, and their faces were blank and hollow-eyed. They shambled along like walking dead men," one observer wrote.

Three weeks later, the 81st relieved the rest of the depleted 1st Marine Division, and the Army began six weeks of siege operations against Japanese soldiers in the so-called Umurbrogol Pocket.

The battle ended November 27 after the suicides of Colonel Nakagawa and his co-commander, General Kenjiro Murai. "Our sword is broken and we have run out of spears," said one of their final communiqués.

The toll was 14,338 enemy soldiers killed on Peleliu and Angaur, including nearly all of Nakagawa's veterans. Of the 28,000 combat Marines and soldiers engaged on the two islands, 10,786 became casualties, with 2,336 men killed in action.

Three months after Stalemate ended, another island campaign commenced - the invasion of Iwo Jima. Tragically, the lessons learned on Peleliu were not conveyed to those Marines. "They paid in blood for this mistake," said Lieutenant Colonel Ray Davis, whose 1st Marines battalion sustained 71 percent casualties on Peleliu. ★



Joseph Wheelan is the author of *Bitter Peleliu: The Forgotten Struggle on the Pacific War's Worst Battlefield*, which was released in October. He is also the author of two other books about the Pacific war: *Midnight in the Pacific: Guadalcanal, the World War II Battle That Turned the Tide of War* and *Bloody Okinawa: The Last Great Battle of World War II*.