

Iwo Jima
13 March 1945.

The following is an exact copy taken from an unidentified Japanese soldier's diary beginning with D-day, 19 February 1945:

February 19th Enemy tanks finally landed. From now on I live on to fight. I have no hope of surviving. I shall lead my squad until the last moment. We will defend our positions to death. This is goodbye. I am praying for good luck for everybody. Long live the Emperor!

February 20th My comrades have fallen one by one. I have been fortunate enough to remain alive. Under artillery and air protection the enemy has landed and occupied the No. 1 Airfield. Our infiltration units are waging a bloody struggle. Not even one friendly plane can be seen. Today we will bravely attempt to destroy enemy tanks.

February 21st After six days of bloody combat the southern coast has been seized and the No. 1 Airfield is in the hands of the enemy. Our forces have been forced back. These are sad days. Our company will try to defend our defense perimeter to the death. The enemy first made use of a heavy naval bombardment and used tanks as the spearhead of his advance. He has already landed 15,000 men and 130 tanks. The courageous action of our infiltration units has prevented the enemy from advancing very far. Ah, but these men are brave. They will give their all for the Emperor in the defense of this island.

February 22nd Last night an infiltration unit left our cave but unfortunately they were unsuccessful. The enemy has 50 to 60 naval vessels nearby, firing continually. His airplanes skim the ground. We have not seen one friendly plane.

February 23rd Today our special attack units sunk some enemy ships. Supported by naval and aerial bombardment the enemy is gradually overrunning our prepared positions. It is sad to see one's comrades fall. Our brave men from KYOKU, fighting valiantly, have finally checked the enemy on the No. 1 Airfield.

February 24th Day after day we pit our flesh and our bullets against planes, tanks, and naval gunfire. We're not afraid of the enemy's infantry but it is certainly terrible that we do not have even one ship or plane. People of Japan, send us airplanes. If we had planes as the Americans and British do, our task would be easy. Tomorrow is our turn. We would enjoy fighting if the enemy were infantry but we are fighting planes, tanks, and naval guns. Tomorrow we'll attempt to destroy the enemy tanks at one blow. No matter what people say, war today is a question of ships and planes. Build planes as fast as you can, people of Japan, work vigorously.

February 26th 2000 hours. Today is my day. We will charge, shouting "Long live the Emperor." My friend today will lead six men in an infiltration attack against the enemy. I am writing this only 200 meters from the enemy positions.

February 27th Two of the six are dead. One is wounded. I am still unharmed. 1600 tomorrow will be my last day. People of Japan we need made no excuses to you, We have struggled as hard as we could, but unfortunately we cannot hold this island.