

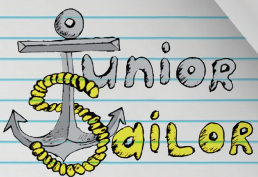


NATIONAL MUSEUM *of the*  
UNITED STATES NAVY

## **Damage Control**

### **(Green Navy):**

**A Study Based on the Battle of Okinawa**



# Damage Control Mission Brief: A Study Based on the Battle of Okinawa (April – 22 June, 1945):

DECLASSIFIED

One major characteristic of battles and combat is that it causes damage to people, equipment, and even the landscape. There are many different ways to limit the amount of damage. For the purposes of this lesson, you will learn about training used to **prevent damage** from occurring, training to **control damage** while it is occurring, and **rehabilitation** after the damage has occurred. You will also learn about sailors whose entire job is to deal with damage to people, equipment and landscape. As with everything in the National Museum of the United States Navy, history will be your guide. Examples from the Battle of Okinawa are used because the Battle of Okinawa was the bloodiest battle in the Pacific Theater.

Look for these three steps as you read!

- 1 Prevent Damage**
- 2 Damage Control in Combat**
- 3 Rehabilitation**

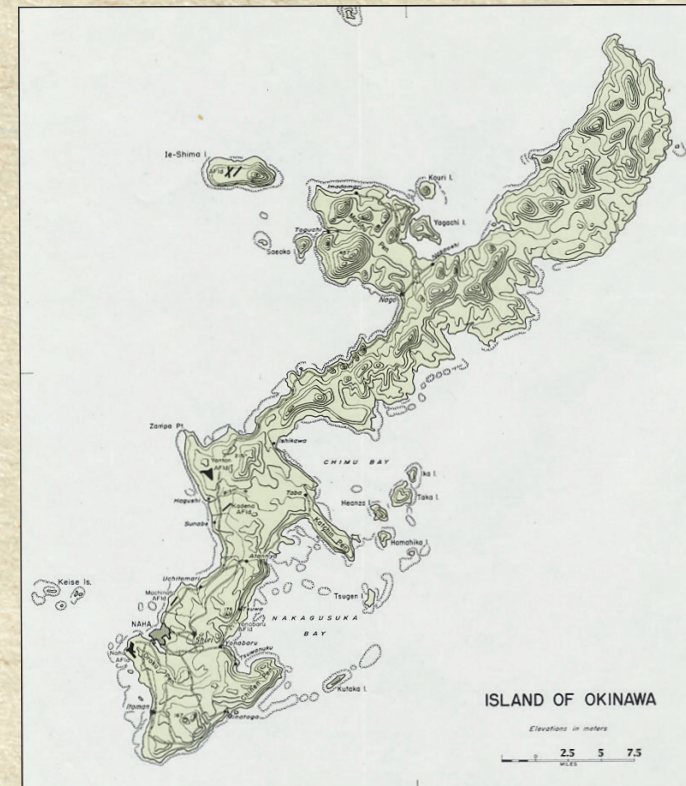
## The Battle of Okinawa on Land

On April 1, 1945, the United States Navy landed a force of **Soldiers, Marines** and **Sailors** on the Japanese held island of Okinawa. That landing was the beginning of months of hard fighting in the bloodiest battle of the war in the Pacific. The American forces landed in the center of the island before splitting up. A force of Marines went north and cleared up Japanese forces in that area relatively quickly. The Soldiers and Marines that went south ran into most of the Japanese forces on the island. The Japanese built field fortifications in places that would become famous, such as the Shuri Line and Sugarloaf Hill. American forces from the north came down to aid in the south and over weeks of bloody combat the last major Japanese resistance fell on Okinawa.

Through the blood and chaos of the Battle of Okinawa, come lessons in **emergency management and damage control**. The United States Navy provided support to aid in the damage that occurred to people, equipment and the island of Okinawa.



Through these pages you will learn how just a few of these Sailors and officers dealt with common problems during the battle and learn some lessons about what to do in case of an emergency!



# i

## Prevent Damage

### Life Saving Equipment

Do you play or watch sports? Throughout different sports you will notice **safety equipment**. In baseball, batters wear helmets to protect their heads. In gymnastics, there are mats on the ground to protect against falls. In football, players wear pads to protect their shoulders and chest. The military does the same thing. Soldiers, Sailors and Marines wear equipment to help protect them from possible harm.



Medical personnel on the USS Solace AH-5 redress a soldier's wound.

### Kapok:

Kapok vests, like the one this sailor wears in the photo below, are floatation devices to keep a sailor from drowning. Its name comes from the Kapok plant fiber it is filled with. The fiber is light, buoyant, resilient and water-resistant.

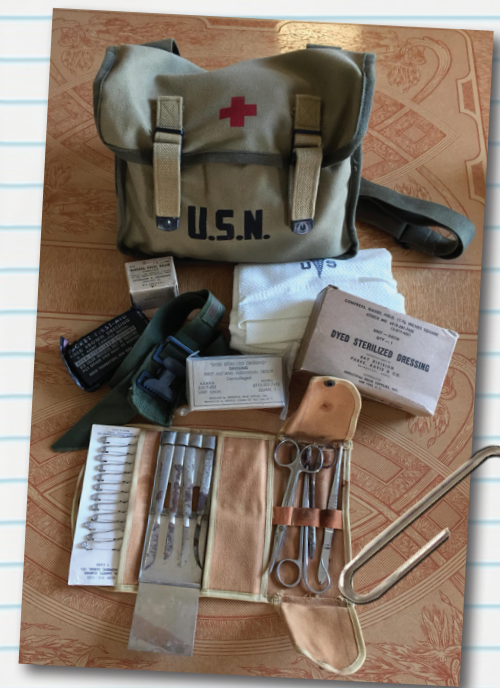


### Helmet:

The sailor in the photo is also wearing a steel helmet. Helmets are meant to protect the head from fragments of explosives, bullets and other flying debris.

### First Aid Kit:

First aid kits were carried by each Soldier, Sailor and Marine so others can treat a wound before a Navy Corpsman or Army Medic arrived to treat them. This is like a person performing CPR while they wait for an ambulance.





Those are just few pieces of equipment that help keep a service member alive. Service members are also trained to some degree in first aid and in how to spot dangerous places before they move in.

### Training

A Marine wounded in combat could have several different experiences. It took a team of well-trained medical professionals to keep him alive. There is a process called casualty evacuation which is the order of events from just after a service member is injured to their recovery in a hospital. Can you figure out the order of events following an injury?

### Activity #1

Can you figure out the order of events following a wounding?

- \_\_\_ Evacuation to a Hospital Ship.                      Navy Corpsmen in Training
- \_\_\_ Treatment in the field by a trained Navy Corpsman.
- \_\_\_ Self-aid/buddy aid by another Marine with a first aid kit trying to stop bleeding.
- \_\_\_ Evacuation to a field hospital on Okinawa.
- \_\_\_ Sent back to the United States or to the Marine Corps.

Answer key located at the back of the packet!



### Activity #2

You are a U.S. Navy Corpsman helping at an aid station. What order would you prioritize these wounded for a surgeon?



Aid stations like this one at Tarawa in 1943 were one of the early stops for the wounded.

- \_\_\_ A Marine walks into the aid station with an arm broken by a bullet. He is aware of his surroundings and the bleeding is under control.
- \_\_\_ A Marine is stretchered in with a chest wound. His lungs seem to function, however his breathing is labored and the bleeding is serious.
- \_\_\_ A Marine is stretchered in with a nearly severed leg. There is a tourniquet on his leg but the Marine has lost a lot of blood.

Answer key located at the back of the packet!

## Damage Control in Combat

### Evacuation

After the Marine is seen by a field surgeon and is stable enough to move, he will be put on a transport like this one to be taken to a hospital ship.



This transport just finished delivering wounded to the USS SOLACE AH-5.

### Care

The ambulances on the island of Guam were waiting for the wounded from the USS *Solace* AH-5 June 4, 1945. The wounded would be taken to more permanent hospital facilities on the island.

Nurses like these at Tulagi would aid this wounded Marine for the rest of his time at Okinawa.

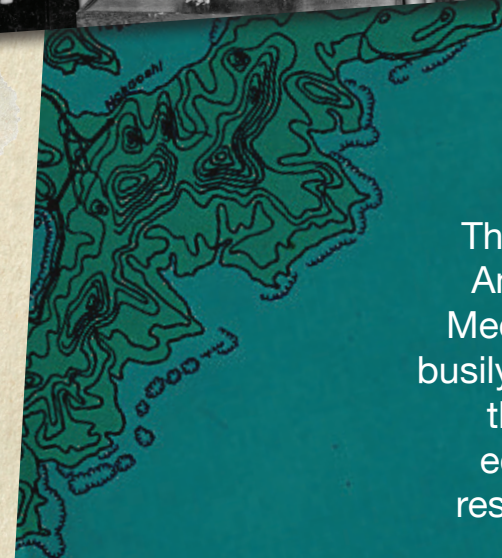


The USS *Solace* AH-5 is a hospital ship that was off Okinawa during the battle. Wounded service members were transported to hospital ships for more advanced care and to be moved to safer facilities elsewhere.

Keeping even one service member alive was a team effort.

The Battle of Okinawa saw at least 75,000 Americans killed, wounded, and missing. Medical services of the U.S. Army and Navy busily did their best for the 38-50,000 wounded the battle saw. They did it with training, equipment and courage still seen in first responders both military and civilian today.

The USS SOLACE AH-5



3

## Rehabilitation



### Damage on the Island

The island and facilities and roads on the island of Okinawa took a great deal of damage.

Picture from a Navy carrier plane showing damage to an airfield on Okinawa.



A Seaplane base on Okinawa under construction by Seabees.

Because of the damage, U.S. Navy Seabees (construction battalions) were sent to rebuild the infrastructure and even add new features. Seabees worked on roads, airstrips, buildings and other important features.

While Seabees were repairing the island, Navy minesweepers cleared sea mines just off the coast. The island was made livable again and an American presence was established. To this day, the U.S. military maintains bases on the island of Okinawa. The island itself is still part of Japan.

Okinawa is the largest of the Ryuku Islands. At one point the Japanese owned the island, and the Japanese have been in control since the 1600s. When the American forces landed on April 1, 1945, Okinawa became the first sovereign Japanese territory to be landed on. There were some roads and airfields located on the island. This infrastructure would be useful to American forces possibly invading mainland Japan next. That never happened due to the surrender of Japan following the atomic bomb strikes at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



What's a "Seabee?"  
"Seabee" is slang for the letters "C.B.", which stands for Construction Battalion!

WWII Seabee patch



# Answer Key

## Activity #1

4 Evacuation to a hospital ship.

This is the second to last step. A hospital ship can provide better care and cleaner conditions than a field hospital, but is not as good as a hospital on a secure island.

2 Treatment in the field by a trained Navy Corpsman.

Navy Corpsmen are well trained in basic battlefield medicine. Their job is to keep the wounded person alive and stable enough to transport to a doctor. Think of an EMT in an ambulance. It would be better if the Corpsman was first, but there are limited numbers of these specialists.

1 Self-aid/buddy aid by another Marine with a first aid kit trying to stop bleeding.

If no Corpsman is available right away, it all starts with every individual's first aid training. Keep the wounded man alive while waiting for more experienced medical technicians.

3 Evacuation to a field hospital on Okinawa.

Field hospitals are usually the first place where the wounded were seen by a surgeon. More advanced medicine and surgery would be performed to stabilize a person enough to either be moved to a hospital ship, or go back to their original unit if they are well enough.

5 Sent back to the United States or to their original unit.

After multiple doctors treat the wounded service member and their wound is as healed as it will get, there are a few options. If the wounded individual is healthy enough to continue serving, then they will be sent back to their unit to keep fighting. If they are not healthy enough to continue serving then they will go to a hospital on a secured island, eventually sent back to the United States, and medically discharged (released) from the military.

# Answer Key

## Activity #2

3 A Marine walks into the aid station with an arm broken by a bullet. He is aware of his surroundings and the bleeding is under control.

This wound is the least life threatening, so this Marine should be seen last.

1 or 2 A Marine is stretchered in with a chest wound. His lungs seem to function, however his breathing is labored and the bleeding is serious.

Chest wounds are extremely serious and life threatening. Since this Marine is getting air, the surgeon may be able to save him if they act quickly. This case could also be taken 2nd due to the severity of the next injury.

2 or 1 A Marine is stretchered in with a nearly severed leg. There is a tourniquet on his leg but the Marine has lost a lot of blood.

A tourniquet with severe blood loss means that an artery was most likely severed. This case could also be taken 1st due to the severity of this injury.





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