



Kamikazes, Corsairs, and Picket Ships: Okinawa, 1945

Robin L. Rielly

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“To any who want to learn more about the age of the Kamikaze at Okinawa, this book is to be desired. For the serious historian who wants a “blow by blow” coverage of the US defense against the Japanese airpower portion of the battle for Okinawa, it is a must. And for the casual reader...you’ll gain insight even if you just peruse this book.” —Airborne Quarterly

“... crisp, engrossing narrative . . . puts the reader right onto the blazing decks and into the cockpits of the attackers and defenders during one of the most hard-fought engagements of the entire war.”—World War II History

This is the previously untold story of one of the most ferocious and prolonged air/naval battles in history: the battle at the radar picket stations during the American assault on Okinawa in the spring of 1945. The US fleet and its accompanying airpower that took station off Okinawa was of gigantic proportions, such that the Japanese could only rely on suicide attacks to inflict critical damage. While losses in the main fleet, including damage to ships such as the Enterprise and Intrepid, have been well covered, less known is the terrific battle waged on the radar picket line, the fleet’s outer defense against Japanese marauders. Of the 206 ships that served on radar picket duty, nearly 30 percent were sunk or damaged by Japanese air attacks, making theirs the most hazardous naval surface duty in World War II. The great losses were largely due to the relentless nature of the kamikaze attacks, but also the improper use of support gunboats, failure to establish land-based radar at the earliest possible time, the assignment of ships ill-equipped for picket duty, and, as time went on, crew fatigue. The nature of the US air cover is also described in full, as squadrons dashed from their carriers and land bases to intercept the Japanese swarms, resulting in constant melees over the fleet. Toward the end of the battle, the radar picket ships became the prime kamikaze targets as Japanese pilots despaired of getting through the “big blue blanket” of American fighter planes to reach larger prey. Robin L. Rielly has written an engrossing narrative of air/naval combat, combining firsthand action with astute tactical and strategic analysis.

Kamikazes, Corsairs, and Picket Ships: Okinawa, 1945 Details

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From Reader Review Kamikazes, Corsairs, and Picket Ships: Okinawa, 1945 for online ebook

Marc says

A very detailed book about the extremely hazardous duty endured by the various picket ships during the battle for Okinawa. Virtually every attack made on the picket ships is covered and there are many excellent drawings and photographs of the effects of Japanese attacks. I wish there had been more personal stories and reports, but that didn't seem to be the author's intent. If you love reading about tin cans or know someone who was a tin can sailor, this is the book for you.

Matt says

Rielly's book is a great study of the kamikaze attacks during the Okinawa campaign. While nothing is gleaned from the Japanese side for motivation other than that the Japanese pilots felt that they were a weapon not committing suicide. His recounting of attacks was good but often suffered with vernacular like "splashed". It was overdone. I was hoping that he might address the psychological affects on the US sailors and he neglects that factor in his book.

The best part of the book is a recounting of each attack and how the Okinawa campaign progressed. I volunteer on the USS Cassin Young which was a major part of the Kamikaze attacks and this book helped me understand the campaign better. I just wish Rielly used the Cassin Young after action reports and damage diagrams since she was the last destroyer damaged in the Okinawa campaign.

Randy Kirkbride says

Thoroughly researched account of radar picket duty at Okinawa.

I was looking for information on a specific destroyer escort stationed at Okinawa, the USS Gendreau (DE-639); the ship on which my father-in-law served as a gunners mate. I didn't find any information on the Gendreau, but I did find a thorough account of the hell endured by the radar picket ships guarding the approaches to Okinawa. My father-in-law said he thought his ship had a target painted on it. Being protected by the radar pickets must have meant that the radar pickets had multiple targets painted on them.

Hud (Bob) Huddleston says

Well, interesting as far as the combatants, but found it to be very tedious reading
