



**SUGAR LOAF HILL  
BATTLE OF OKINAWA  
by Jon B. Kawaguchi**

Sugar Loaf Hill was a small insignificant mound barely 15 meters high (50 feet) and about 100 meters (350 feet) wide located in the northern part of Naha between Asato and Makabe on the southern end of the Island of Okinawa. During the Battle of Okinawa (which began on April 1, 1945), this hill was part of a triangle of strong points set up by the Japanese 32<sup>nd</sup> Army which was designed to delay and attack the American forces. Sugar Loaf Hill anchored the western end of General USHIJIMA Masuru's Shuri Defense Line.

**Shortly After the Devastation of the Battle  
May 12 to 18, 1945**



**Sugar Loaf Hill - Vicinity of Naha - Grogan No. 4-8**

**Oblique View from the North-Northwest. This card is from a Picture Post Card published by the Grogan Company of Danville, Illinois, ca. 1950.**

The other two strong points of this triangle were the high terrain of Shuri Heights and the hills that the Marines called the Half Moon. Sugar Loaf Hill was the key to breaking the Shuri Defense Line that would expose the Japanese flank. The fighting there was probably the most intense of the entire campaign. The Marines had to take that hill to go further south.

## **SUGAR LOAF HILL BATTLE OF OKINAWA**

On April 1, 1945, the 6<sup>th</sup> Marine Division (an infantry division that was formed in September 1944 specifically for the Battle of Okinawa and disbanded on March 31, 1946) consisted of 23,832 men who had taken the Northern part of Okinawa and had suffered losses of 236 killed, 1,601 wounded, and 7 missing. On May 2, the 6<sup>th</sup> Division was ordered south to replace the U.S. Army 27<sup>th</sup> Division. By May 6, this Division was quartered around Chibana less than ten miles north of the front lines.

### **Shortly After the Devastation of the Battle May 12 to 18, 1945**



**Sugar Loaf Hill - Grogan No. 6-9**

**This card is from a Picture Post Card (Viewed from the North) published by the Grogan Company ca. 1950. The charred remains of a few blackened trunks are all that remains of the large of beautiful trees that forested the slopes of this hill before the flame-throwers and artillery arrived. In this image individuals can be seen silhouetted along the ridge line.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> The Grogan Photo Company of Danville, Illinois, produced real picture post cards relating to WWII Okinawa. These were produced from the late 40's to early 50's. The picture post cards were made from photographs, thus the description "real picture post cards" applies, and came in at least 7 different series. Each card had a printed caption and a number for that particular image.

**SUGAR LOAF HILL**  
**BATTLE OF OKINAWA**  
**May 12 to 18, 1945**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Marine Division was organized under the established U.S. Marine Corps table of organizations at the time. Along with supporting units, it contained three infantry regiments (4<sup>th</sup> Marines, 22<sup>nd</sup> Marines and 29<sup>th</sup> Marines). Each infantry regiment contained three or more battalions (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, etc). Each battalion contained three or more rifle companies designated in Alpha order across the battalions (ie. A, B, and C Companies, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 22<sup>nd</sup> Marines, E, F, G Companies, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 22<sup>nd</sup> Marines). Each rifle company contained three rifle platoons (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>) of 42 men each and a headquarters element. The headquarters element of the rifle company also had mortar and machine gun sections. Historical accounts regarding the battle of Sugar Loaf Hill usually speak in terms of U.S. battle action at company level and below. In this regard, initial (pre-battle) company strength is most often given as 243 men (7 officers and 236 enlisted). The primary units that saw action at Sugar Loaf Hill were companies of the 22nd and 29th Marines.

Sugar Loaf Hill was so small that it did not show up on the standard military maps. This hill was in the Target Area 7672G, a stark hill barren except for a few stunted trees and described by one soldier as a "watermelon cut in half." The Japanese Army officially referred to this hill as Hill 51.2, while their soldiers unofficially referred to it as "Grinding Bowl Hill" -- *Suribachi Oka* in Japanese. This descriptive image of a flipped-over *suribachi* bowl -- a kitchen implement whose purpose was to grind to a pulp whatever was tossed into it -- was the same name given Mt. Suribachi of "The Battle of Iwo Jima" fame. However, before the two opposing forces bestowed the names "Sugar Loaf" and "Grinding Bowl" to the hill, it had always been known to the local Okinawans as Mt. Kirama. Under normal conditions, a military objective of this size would be assigned to a single U.S. Marine Corps rifle company. G Company, one of nine rifle companies in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Marine Regiment, was assigned to take this hill. It was initially thought that G Company would not have much trouble taking this hill. When G Company started its advance south starting on May 6, G Company originally had 7 officers and 236 enlisted men but by May 12, this company was down to 6 officers and 151 men, when it attempted the first assault on the hill. By the end of the day, after the first assault by this rifle company with tank support, G Company had taken a terrible beat down where it lost four officers and 81 enlisted men and three out of the four tanks that provided support.

On May 14, Lieutenant Colonel Horatio C. Woodhouse, Jr., commanding officer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Marines, designated E, F, and G Companies to continue the attack to the south toward Naha. Before they could proceed to Naha they had to take three small hills that had held up the battalion on May 12 and 13. Woodhouse designated the hills as Hills 1, 2, and 3 from right to left. Woodhouse assigned F Company to make the attack with one platoon to capture Hill 1 on the right and one platoon to capture Hill 3 on the left. E Company would relieve the other F Company platoon on Hill 1 and G Company would relieve the other F Company platoon on Hill 3. Then F Company, with all three of its platoons would continue the attack on Hill 2 which was the largest of the three hills. One of the company commanders asked why the hills were not numbered in the sequence that they would be attacked. Woodhouse decided to call Hill 2 "Sugar Loaf" as a nickname on the spur of the moment and the name stuck.

**SUGAR LOAF HILL  
BATTLE OF OKINAWA  
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The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion's assault on these three hills was just one small part of an attack by the 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Marine Divisions to clear the eastern and western approaches to Shuri to take General USHIJIMA's flank. Assistant 6<sup>th</sup> Division Commander Brigadier General William Clement arrived at Woodhouse's battalion command post and issued a written field order to Woodhouse directing that his battalion move into attack as soon as possible and continue the attack at all costs.

On May 14, Lieutenant Gaumnitz's 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of F Company stormed up Hill 1 and later in the afternoon, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon and three other platoons along with five tanks were assigned to take Sugar Loaf Hill. F Company made it to the top of the hill. By dusk, Major Henry C. Courtney was ordered to relieve F Company leading his men comprised of 45 men (15 enlisted men and two officers of F Company and 1 officer and 26 enlisted men from George Company). When Courtney's men reached Sugar Loaf Hill, they found no evidence of Lieutenant Gaumnitz or his men. Major Courtney and his men were taking fire and dug in for the night.



**Tanks and soldiers attacking Sugar Loaf Hill**

(Photograph taken from the Northwest)

By 1:00 am of May 15, Colonel Woodhouse was given K Company of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 22<sup>nd</sup> Marines and ordered K Company to prepare to move out to reinforce Sugar Loaf Hill. An hour later, they moved up the hill as the situation was critical as only eight men were left. Woodhouse told Lieutenant Reginald Fincke, commander of K Company, to hold the hill at all costs. K Company was able to reach the hill with reinforcements of 4 officers and 99 enlisted men. K Company had arrived and realized that they were in the middle of a big mess. Fighting for the hill was fierce. By early morning, one officer reported by the radio that K Company was finished and only a handful of men had survived. By dawn, there were less than two dozen Marines, many of them wounded, clinging to their positions on the hill.

**SUGAR LOAF HILL  
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At 8:00 am, Colonel Woodhouse ordered the seven survivors of Major Courtney's original group (F Company), off the hill. Both Major Courtney of F Company and Lieutenant Fincke of K Company were killed during the night. Major Henry A. Courtney was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his exploits on Sugar Loaf Hill.

D Company of the 29<sup>th</sup> Marines (60 men) was ordered to relieve the few survivors of K Company. Of the 4 officers and 99 enlisted men of K Company who participated in the assault, only 3 officers and 30 enlisted men came off the hill unharmed. By 7:30 am, the Japanese counterattacked the few Marines left on the hill. By early afternoon, only one Marine had survived the counterattack. During the battle up to this point, the marines described that they felt a detached numbness as the battle continued. The fighting around Sugar Loaf Hill was an endless blur of moments of extreme horrors where exhausted men performed like robots.



**Amtracs were used to resupply the Marines and Sugar Loaf Hill and to evacuate wounded**  
(USMC National Archives)

By May 16, the Marines finally began to understand the importance of the Sugar Loaf Hill complex that had decimated G Company on May 12. It was discovered that the hill was heavily fortified with caves and tunnels and formed one corner of the triangle defense system anchoring the western end of the Shuri Defense Line. The hilly terrain greatly favored the Japanese defenders. Eventually it was discovered that this hill had an extensive interlocking system of caves and tunnels with firing ports cleverly disguised to be virtually undetectable.

On May 16, Lieutenant Colonel Malcolm O. Donohoo, commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, planned to have the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoons of I Company of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Marines make the main push on Sugar Loaf with support from L Company of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Marines. Like most of the companies in the regiment, I Company was well below strength.

**SUGAR LOAF HILL  
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Of the 243 Marines, the company was down to between 80 to 100 men. I Company was to circle and assault the hill from the left while L Company was supposed to advance on the western and southern slopes of the hill. L Company was never able to get into position to support the attack on Sugar Loaf Hill. By 3:00 pm, L Company was pinned down and experiencing heavy casualties from the enemy on both flanks and forcing the company to back away from the hill.



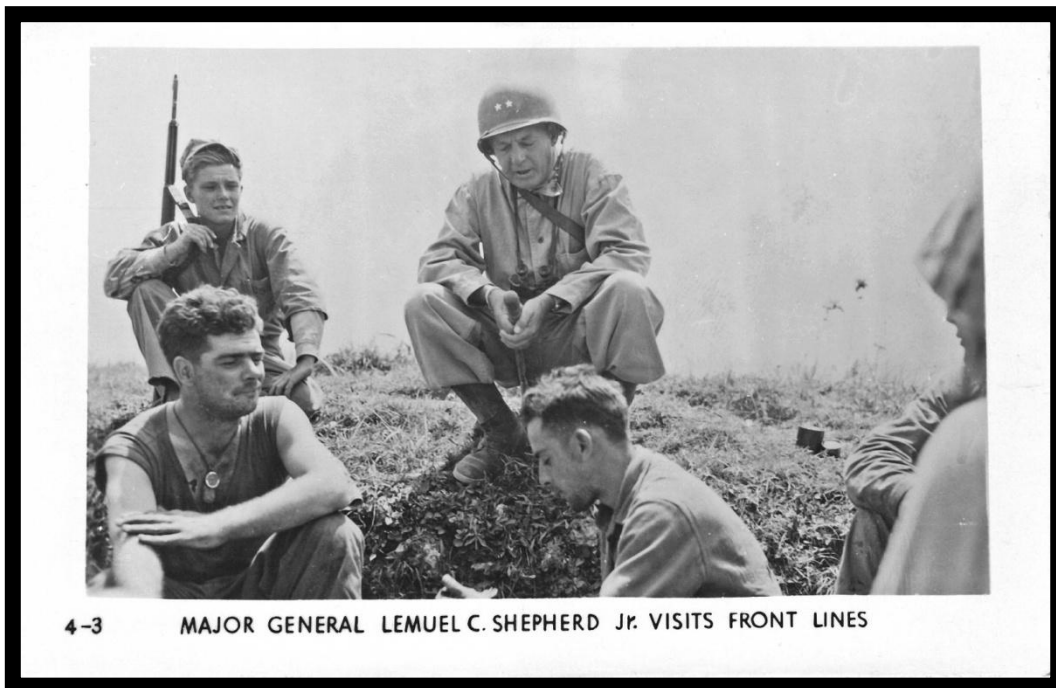
**Major General Lemuel Shepherd, Jr. Grogan No. 3-4  
Commanding Officer of the 6<sup>th</sup> Marine Division**

I Company was able to reach the base of the hill and by 5:10 pm, I Company's assault platoons fought to the top of the hill and started to dig in. With the inability of L Company to get into position to deliver supporting fire on the right, I Company's position on Sugar Loaf Hill was untenable as both flanks were unprotected and the Japanese soldiers forced I Company back down the hill. As nightfall approached, the battle area was littered with dead Marines and a few Japanese. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Marines Regiment's combat efficiency was down to 40 percent and the offensive capabilities had been reduced to such a point that any offensive push was inadvisable. Commanding General USHIMIMA of the Japanese 32<sup>nd</sup> Army was also feeling the pressure and on May 16 he had committed his last reserves to the battle.

Major General Lemuel C. Shepherd Jr., commanding officer for the 6<sup>th</sup> Marine Division came forward in the late afternoon of May 16 for his daily visit to the front. He knew that the day's attack had not been successful. The Sugar Loaf defenses had been reinforced and strengthened during the past 24 hours.

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On May 17 (the fifth day of the battle), Shepherd decided that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 29<sup>th</sup> Marines would assault Sugar Loaf from the east. The push on Sugar Loaf was led by Easy Company of the 29<sup>th</sup> Marines. E Company first attempt on the hill failed due to heavy enemy artillery fire. A second attempt was stopped due to the steepness of the southeastern face of the hill. Late in the afternoon, F Company's 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon was sent over to climb the western nose of the hill. The third attempt also failed.



**Major General Lemuel C. Shepherd Jr. Visits Front Lines Grogan 4-3**

Just before dusk, E Company of the 29<sup>th</sup> Marines mounted another attack on the hill. They made it to the top and managed to hold their ground but in the end they could not as the company was down to a handful of men. The prevailing fighting was with bayonets, knives, and bare hands against a Japanese counterattack, and with little remaining ammo, E Company could not hold their position and had to withdraw. No unit displayed more valor than E Company of the 29<sup>th</sup> Marines with four separate assaults during this day but fared little better than their many predecessors. After the final failed attempt, E Company had 160 men killed and wounded.

During the night of May 17, after the survivors were pulled back from the hill, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 29<sup>th</sup> Marines commander Lieutenant Colonel William G. Robb remained optimistic. He sensed that the Japanese soldiers were weakening. On May 18, He wanted the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of D Company of the 29<sup>th</sup> Marines to flank Sugar Loaf and go up the western nose of the hill, pulling enemy fire to his side and 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon would go to the left part of the hill.

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The key part of this plan were the tanks. Since the Japanese would emerge from the caves on the southern slope to contest the hill, the tanks would sweep around the flanks and catch the emerging enemy troops in the open. If this maneuver worked, the 29<sup>th</sup> Marines would take the hill. At 8:30 am, the assault platoons (80 men) started their assault. 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of D Company led the initial assault and the 6<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion was able to sweep the flanks of the enemy. After an hour of fierce fighting, D Company was dug in all around Sugar Loaf Hill. Japanese resistance was quickly weakening. At 9:46 am, it was reported that the Marines were on Sugar Loaf.



**Marines on the Northeastern Slope of Sugar Loaf Hill after Seizing Control**

(USMC National Archives)

Even though, Sugar Loaf was in United States control, it was not completely secured. Fighting continued throughout the day. Eventually, the fighting lessened and D Company settled on Sugar Loaf Hill. At the end of the day of May 18, the bitterly contested Sugar Loaf Hill had been seized and under the control of the 6<sup>th</sup> Marine Division.

It took eleven attempts within a seven day period which decimated most of three regiments before the hill was taken. Tanks that were used for supporting the assaults often were destroyed by land mines, artillery, and anti-tank fire. Any tanks getting through the enemy fire were ineffective in taking out the enemy bunkers due to the camouflage. The Japanese soldiers were so entrenched that many of the Marines who fought never caught sight of the enemy.



**SUGAR LOAF HILL  
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May 12 to 18, 1945**



**A M4 Sherman Tank of the 6<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion evacuating a wounded soldier from the 29<sup>th</sup> Marines during the fighting near Sugar Loaf Hill.**

(USMC National Archives)

By May 18, this area was deemed secure, the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiments lost nearly 3,000 men killed or seriously wounded. Another 1,289 men were lost to sickness and combat fatigue. Some regiments were reduced to company strength (consisting of between 80 to 240 soldiers) and companies reduced to platoon size (consisting of between 26 to 64 soldiers). Two companies ceased to exist, not a single officer or enlisted remained. Also many platoons and squads (consisting of between 8 to 13 soldiers) simply ceased to exist. It is estimated that 2,500 Japanese soldiers were killed. The combat efficiency of the 29<sup>th</sup> Marines had been greatly diminished by the week long battle for Sugar Loaf Hill. A fresh unit was needed if fighting continued on Sugar Loaf and Major General Roy S. Geiger released the 4<sup>th</sup> Marines to relieve the 29<sup>th</sup> Marines. The battle for Sugar Loaf Hill was one of the bloodiest encounters of the Pacific War.

## SUGAR LOAF HILL

### Sugar Loaf Hill and the United States Army Machinato Housing Area

Sometime after the war, the top of Sugar Loaf was bulldozed flat and a water tank was constructed to accommodate a large United States military housing complex called the Machinato Housing Area (MHA).



**This is a view of the southern portion of the U.S. Army Machinato Housing Area (MHA).<sup>2</sup>**

**This photograph was taken in 1964 - 1965**

Sugar Loaf Hill was located within the Machinato Housing Area (MHA). It was a sprawling low density Army facility north of the Naha City area comprising 410 acres. Sugar Loaf Hill is noted on the photograph (upper left corner). The view is to the west. Sugar Loaf Hill is seen nestled between military housing units at the southern perimeter of the Machinato Housing Area. The closest large base support facility to the hill was the Shuri Hills Club. One member who was stationed on Okinawa in the 1980s wrote that Sugar Loaf Hill was about two blocks from where he lived in the Machinato Housing Area (just south of the Shuri Hills Club). A water tank is seen on the hill. That water tank was accessed by a road entirely within the Machinato Housing Area. The Machinato Housing Area was closed and formally released by the U.S. Government to Japan on May 31, 1987 but took a decade for land ownership to be clarified and a basic plan of redevelopment was agreed upon.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Aerial View Courtesy of Donn Cuson. Remembering Okinawa History (<http://www.rememberingokinawa.com>)

<sup>3</sup> Robert D. Eldridge, *U.S. - Japan Alliance Affairs Series, No. 1, May 2004, Post-Reversion Okinawa and U.S.-Japan Relations, A Preliminary Survey of Local Politics and the Bases, 1972-2002*, May 2004, Toyonaka City, Japan, U.S. - Japan Alliance Affairs Division Center for International Security Studies and Policy (CISSP), School of International Public Policy, Osaka University, 312 pages, footnote No. 251 at pages 60-1.

## **SUGAR LOAF HILL**

### **Sugar Loaf Hill and the United States Army Machinato Housing Area**

Sugar Loaf Hill has steadily shrunk in size over the years. Both flanks were reduced to accommodate family housing and the Shuri Hills Club on the Army's Machinato Housing Area. The height was also reduced, probably for the water tank the Army built on the top. Sugar Loaf Hill probably lost 1/3 to 1/2 of its size between 1945 and ca. 1995 when it was once again given a new shape, and surrounded by a concrete retaining wall.



### **Aerial View of Sugar Loaf Hill and the U.S. Army Machinato Housing Area**

*Photograph taken in ca. 1977*

In 1997, a new water storage tank was constructed on the top of the hill. The current Google map shows the tank and the surrounding structures. The general development of this area blossomed after the release of the 410 acre US Army's Machinato Housing Area which formally took place on May 31, 1987. Because of legal complexities, the land was tied up for 10 years and then development rapidly followed. Even after construction on the new Sugar Loaf Hill water tank began, it was halted for a full year to allow forensic archaeologists to identify and remove all human remains from the tunnel networks that were inadvertently re-opened during the early stages of the work.

To see the current Google Maps view of the Sugar Loaf Hill area, URL Link at

<https://www.google.com/maps/@26.2221211,127.6961891,483m/data=!3m1!1e3?hl=en.jpg>

Earth view, URL Link at

<https://www.google.com/maps/@26.2221211,127.6961891,505m/data=!3m1!1e3?hl=en.jpg>

## SUGAR LOAF HILL

### Sugar Loaf Hill and the United States Army Machinato Housing Area

Although the death and destruction that happened on this hill in 1945 has overshadowed anything else about its written history, in the broader view of time, it was quite a different place for the Okinawans over the long centuries before World War II arrived. This hill was called Kirama Chiji (Mt. Kerama) in the local language, the Okinawan name derives from the beautiful views it offered of the Kerama Islands, the closest of them being 15 miles away to the west. From here, under the shade of beautiful Ryukyu pine trees (琉球列松) [*Pinus luchuensis*] the locals could picnic, and watch the distant islands transform into silhouettes under the setting sun.

Unfortunately, those sweeping vistas of the East China Sea and the distant islands all but disappeared in 2013, when a twin-tower condominium complex was completed. Only a small gap remains between the two buildings to preserve a sliver of the original view, and allow the hill to barely hang on to the reason for its name.

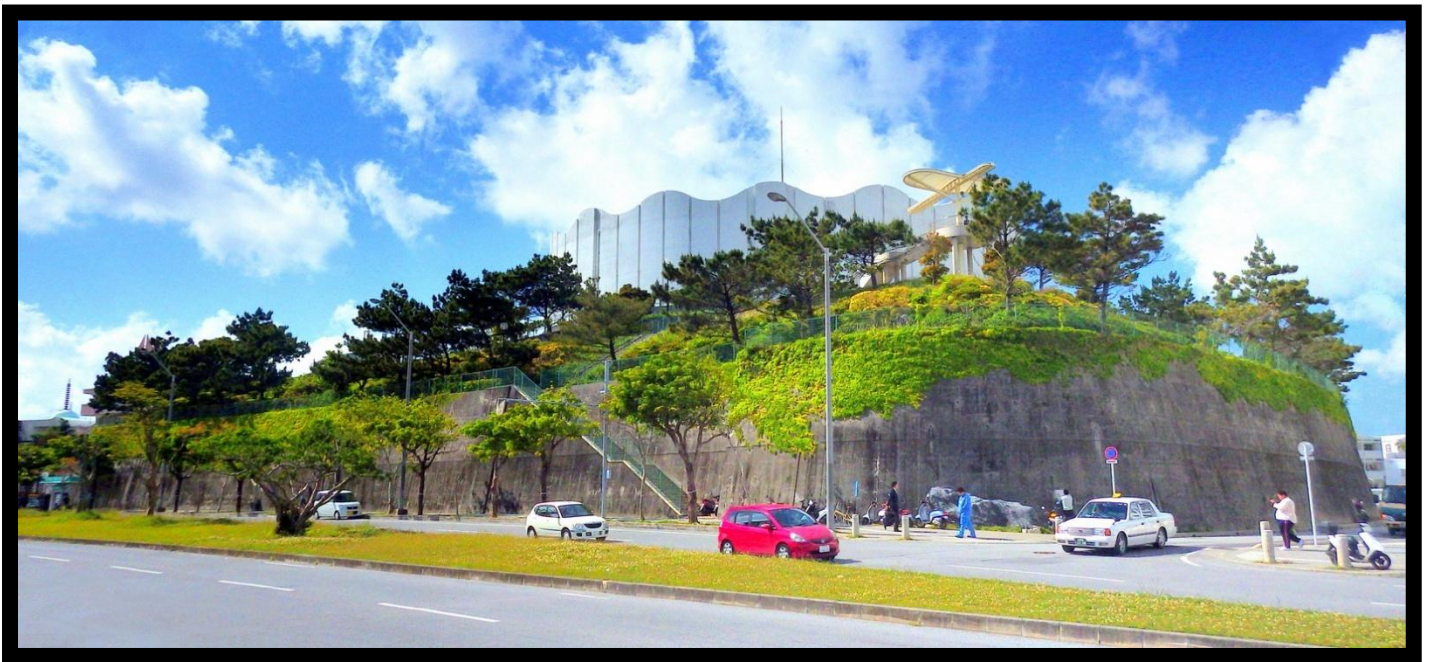
The romantic nature of the place was dampened only temporarily by the horrors of war. While the current pictures were being taken for this Gorgan postcard page, an elderly woman wistfully related the following words to Rob Oechsle, the photographer supplying the photographs in the following pages.

*"At night, we all used to sneak in through a hole in the fence that surrounded the [military] housing area, and make our way to the top of the hill. The night-time views over Naha City were so nice, and the sky full of stars overhead was beautiful and romantic. I had my first date here when I was 15 years old, and I still remember holding the hand of my boyfriend while looking at the stars. Those times on Sugar Loaf Hill are some of the best memories of my life."*

There is public access where anyone can walk around the water tower. Also, there is a stairway leading to the top of the hill where a plaque has been placed which gives a brief history of the significance of this hill and located on a small green grassy area with a few benches and a little lookout tower. The Machinato Housing Area and all United States Army structures were razed and nothing remains of this housing area. Sugar Loaf Hill is located only 200 yards west of the Okinawa Monorail's Omoromachi Station, which serves the Omoromachi Shintoshin (New City Center), now filled with major shopping complexes, museums, small business, government buildings, a large Cineplex, and numerous residential apartment buildings. The entire area surrounding the old Sugar Loaf is now crowded with people who live, shop, eat, and go to the theater, almost all of them oblivious to the fact that, nearly seventy years earlier, this area was the site of one of the fiercest fighting during the Battle of Okinawa between the Japanese Army and the United States Marines.

**SUGAR LOAF HILL**  
**Current Views of Sugar Loaf Hill**  
**April 2014**

Though Sugar Loaf Hill is completely unrecognizable now as to its original form seen in the two Grogan postcards, after seven decades of extreme earth moving to conform it to the needs of both U.S. Military and civilian city planning, the images below show what the totally transformed location looks like today.



**Sugar Loaf Hill View from the North**

© Rob Oechsle, Yomitan, Okinawa, Japan 2014

View of the hill from the same angle and line of sight as seen in Grogan No. 6-9. However, due to buildings that now block the original standpoint, the camera here has been moved closer to the hill along the same line of sight. The reason for the long face of the hill now being skewed in a new direction is due to extreme earth-moving modifications over the years. The original north-facing slope of Sugar Loaf Hill that once presented its flush, straight-on appearance to the Marines fighting to take the hill in 1945, has been "rotated" a full 45 degrees to the northeast, and now faces away at this oblique angle.

**Note:** The camera standpoint for Grogan No. 4-8 would be farther off to the right, and like the above, would result in a modern-day photograph that looks nothing like the original seen in the postcard.]

**SUGAR LOAF HILL**  
**Current Views of Sugar Loaf Hill**  
**April 2014**

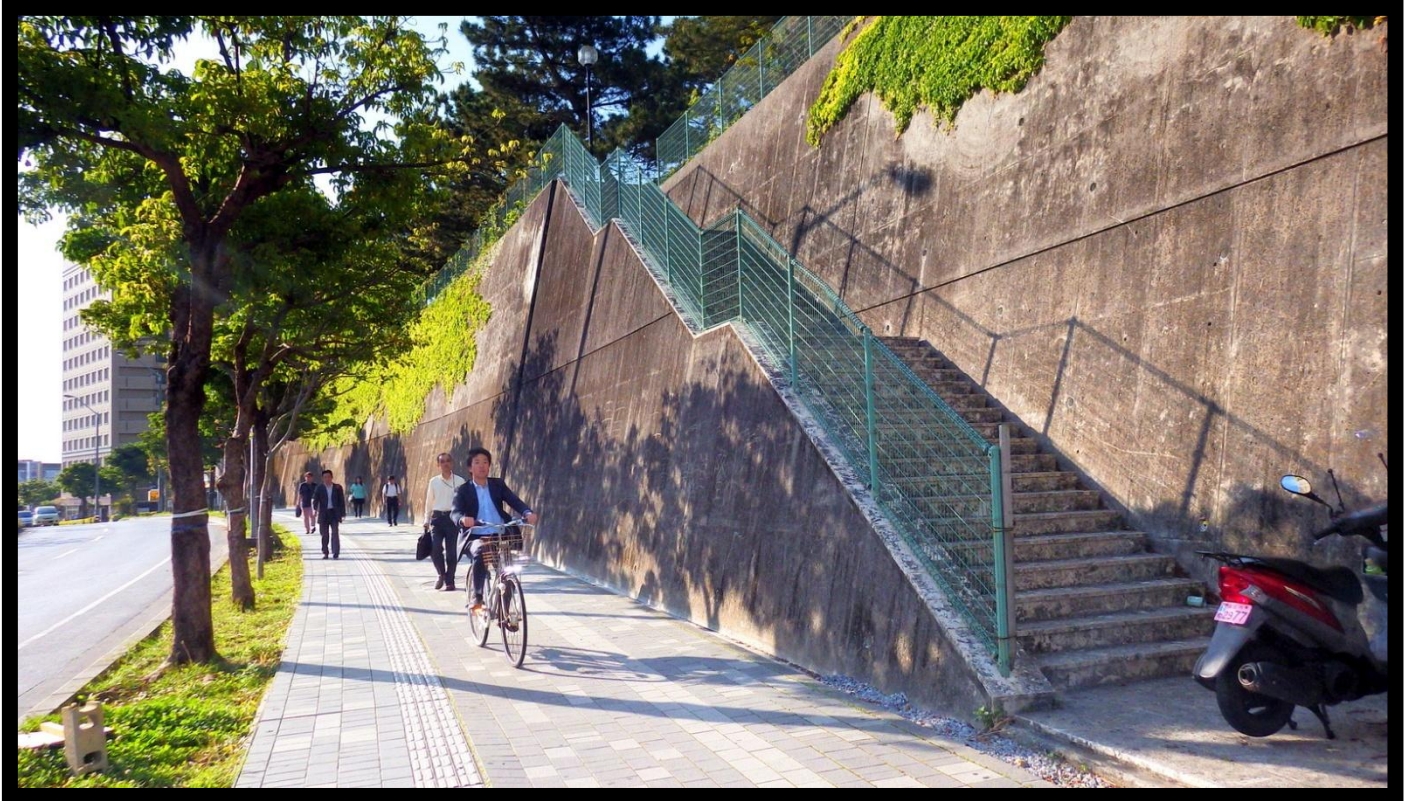


**Sugar Loaf Hill View from the East**

© Rob Oechsle, Yomitan, Okinawa, Japan 2014

View of the hill from the street. The east end has been lopped off to make room for the apartment building and small white structure on the left foreground of the photo. The original north-facing slope has been re-worked to follow the new road beneath it, and now faces the northeast. The high-rise condominiums seen behind the hill were constructed during 2012-13. The concrete retaining wall seen in these two pictures extends entirely around the hill. It was constructed ca. 1995.

**SUGAR LOAF HILL**  
**Current Views of Sugar Loaf Hill**  
**April 2014**



**Sugar Loaf Hill View from the Northwest**

© Rob Oechsle, Yomitan, Okinawa, Japan 2014

Viewed from the Northwest. The towering concrete retaining wall extends entirely around the hill, broken only by these 100 steps which provide access to the historical marker the top, and an access road at the back. General construction to reshape the hill was completed ca. 1995. The water tank on top was completed in 1997.

**SUGAR LOAF HILL**  
**Current Views of Sugar Loaf Hill**  
**April 2014**



**View at Southwest Corner**

**Water Tank Dedication Plaque by entrance to access road.  
Dedication plaque on the new water tank. Dedicated Heisei 9 (1997), July.**

© Rob Oechsle, Yomitan, Okinawa, Japan 2014

In the late 1990s, there was suggested that a park like setting for a peace monument and a historic display at Sugar Loaf Hill. The Sugar Loaf Peace Memorial Park / Water Pond Friendship Association was founded to persuade the prefectural government that a memorial park would be an asset to Naha. A small park with plaque, Display area and lookout tower were dedicated on July 9, 1997.



# SUGAR LOAF HILL

## Current Views of Sugar Loaf Hill

### April 2014



View at the Top of the Historical Marker

**SUGAR LOAF HILL**  
**Current Views of Sugar Loaf Hill**  
**April 2014**

**キラマ  
慶良間チージ (シュガーローフ)**

沖縄戦の激戦地。字安里<sup>あさと</sup>の北に位置する丘陵地帯に築かれた日本軍の陣地の一つ。日本軍は「すりばち丘」、米軍は「シュガーローフ」と呼んだ。一帯の丘陵地は日本軍の首里防衛の西の要衝<sup>ようしゅう</sup>で、米第6海兵師団と激しい攻防戦が展開された。

とくにここ慶良間チージの攻防は、1945年5月12日から1週間に及び、1日のうち4度も頂上の争奪戦がくりかえされるという激戦の末、18日に至り米軍が制圧した。

米軍は死傷者2,662人と1,289人の極度の精神疲労者を出し、日本軍も学徒隊・住民を含め多数の死傷者を出した。

それ以後、米軍は首里への攻勢を強め、5月27日、首里の第32軍指令部は南部へ撤退した。沖縄戦は、首里攻防戦で事実上決着していたが、多くの住民をまきこんだ南部戦線の悲劇は6月末まで続いた。

**Sugar Loaf (locally, Kiramachiji)**

On this site occurred some of the bitterest action in the Battle of Okinawa. The Japanese had fortified their defense on the northern hills of Asato. The Japanese soldiers called the outcrop *suribachi*, or "cone hill". The battle raged between elements of the Japanese 32nd Army and forces of the 6th Marine Division. Beginning on May 12, the fighting at Sugar Loaf lasted for a week including one day with four charges on the peak. The Americans prevailed on May 18, with 2,662 casualties, and another 1,289 suffered battle fatigue. The Japanese forces, students and civilians, also suffered devastating casualties.

On May 27, the Command Post at Shuri was withdrawn to the southern end of the island.

Although the battle for Okinawa was effectively over, the tragedy of the civilians caught in the southern battles was prolonged until the end of June.



米軍進攻の一場面  
(浦添前田高地から天久高台にかけての戦闘)

**View at the Top, Close-up of the Historical Marker**

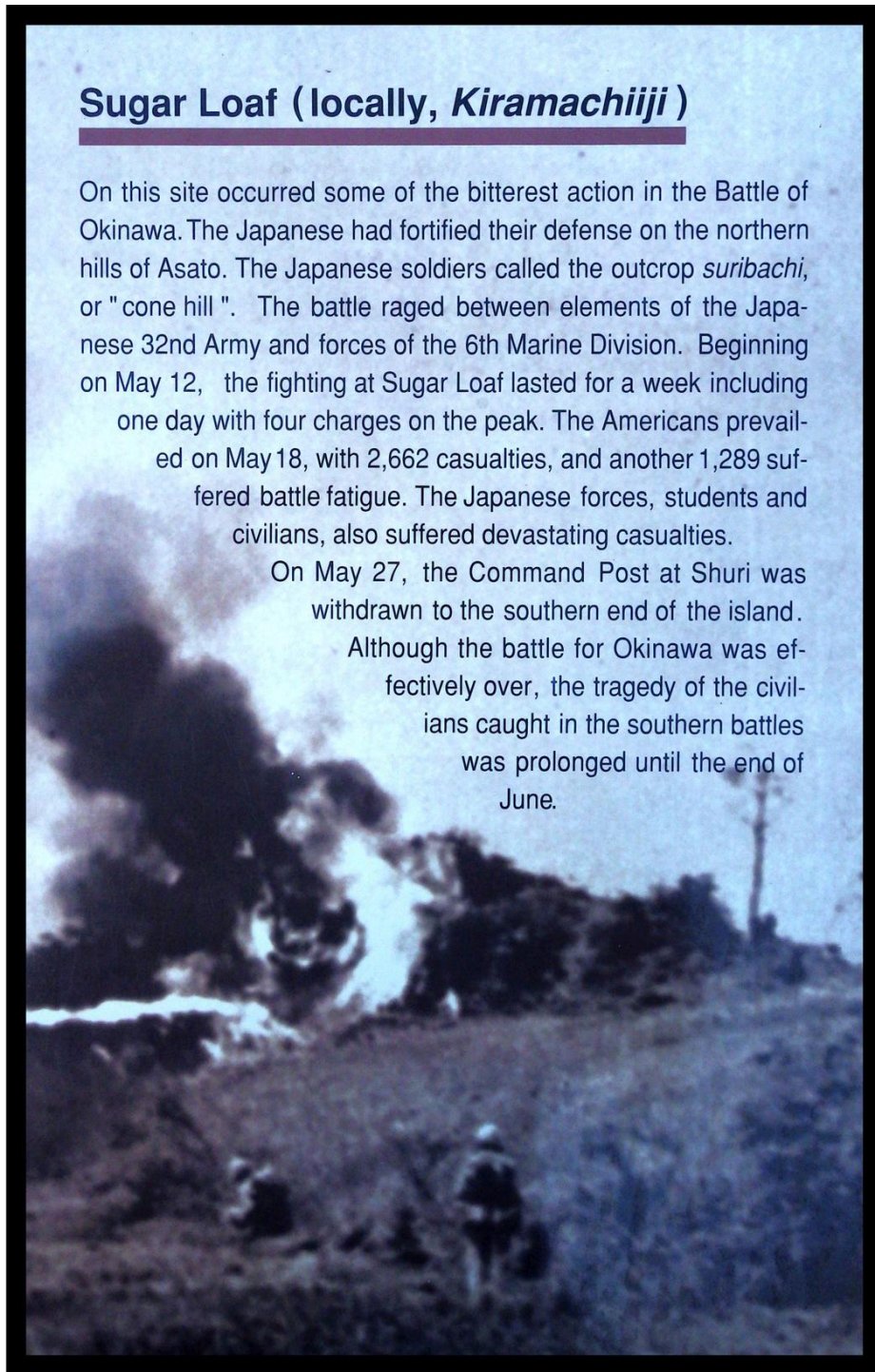
**SUGAR LOAF HILL**  
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**Close-up of the English Language Portion of the Historical Marker.**

**SUGAR LOAF HILL**  
**Current Views of Sugar Loaf Hill**  
**April 2014**



**An observation tower is located at the top of the hill. The historical marker is adjacent to the observation platform. The hill is flanked by several high rise buildings. The Historical Marker (shown in the previous three pages) is in the lower right corner of the photograph.**

**SUGAR LOAF HILL**  
**Current Views of Sugar Loaf Hill**  
**April 2014**



**Telephoto View to the East Showing the Shuri Castle Complex**

**The roof of the reconstructed Shuri Castle and portions of the rebuilt stone walls are visible in this picture. The Castle is a mile and a half from the hill.**

**SUGAR LOAF HILL**  
**Current Views of Sugar Loaf Hill**  
**April 2014**



**A Late Afternoon View to the Southeast Showing Part of Naha City.**

**The structure that looks like an elevated roadway is a monorail running from Naha International Airport to the old town of Shuri high above Naha. The final station is less than half a mile from Shuri Castle.**

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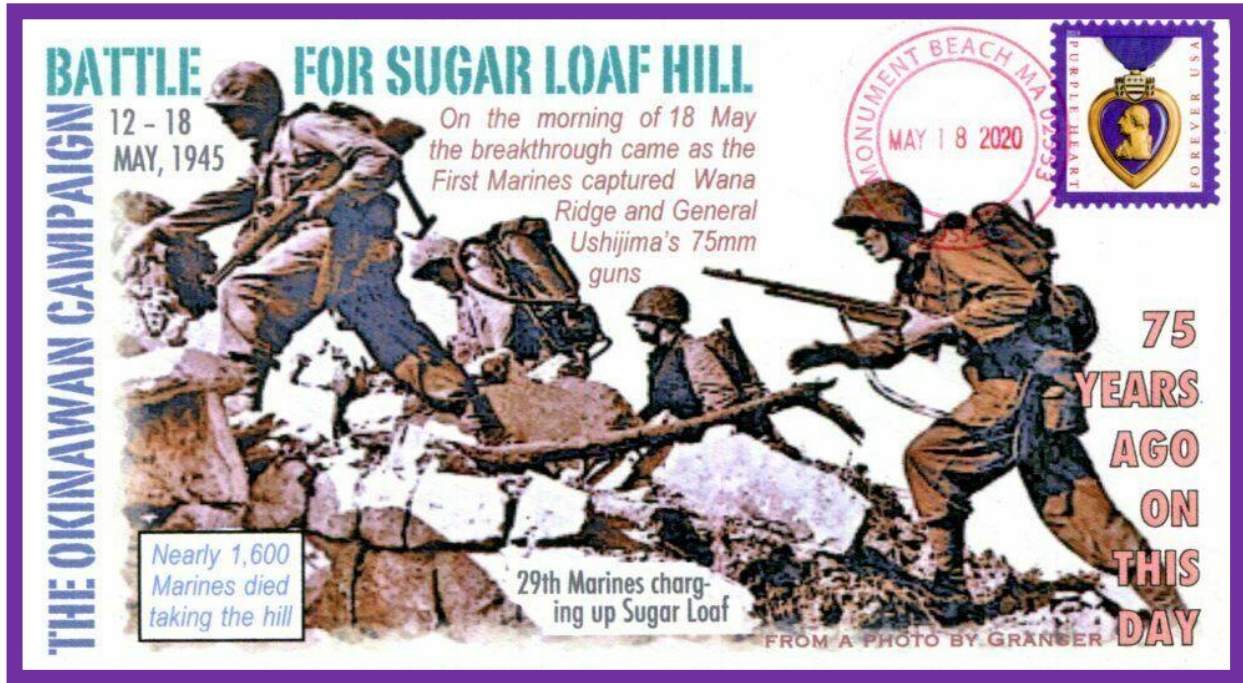
**SUGAR LOAF HILL**  
**Current Views of Sugar Loaf Hill**  
**April 2014**



**A View of a Part of the Southeast Slope of the Hill**  
**The Southeast slope of the hill remains relatively undisturbed.**

© Rob Oechsle, Yomitan, Okinawa, Japan 2014

**SUGAR LOAF HILL**  
**Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Battle of Sugar Loaf Hill**



**Printed Cachet**  
**May 18, 2020**

On May 18, 1945, this Sugar Loaf Hill area was deemed secure and nearly 1,600 men died and 1,400 were wounded during the battle to secure this hill.



**Marines approaching the top of Sugar Loaf Hill**



## SUGAR LOAF HILL Credits

We would like to express our deep gratitude to Rob Oechsle, Yomitan, Okinawa, Japan for providing the current (April 2014) views on this page relating to Sugar Loaf Hill and collaborating in the explanatory comments provided with them. Rob was formerly a professional photographer who continues to maintain a deep interest in Okinawan history and photography in Meiji era Japan. He has captured these images of Sugar Loaf Hill as only someone with a deep understanding of the historical significance of this important landmark could do. Rob has also provided invaluable insight and reference material relating to Sugar Loaf Hill.

Rob is the co-author of *Great Lew Chew Discovered: 19th Century Ryukyu in Western Art and Illustration* (more information below) which presents an amazing representation of 19th Century Western art and illustration pertaining to Lew Chew (Ryukyu Islands). He also is the author of a comprehensive index of Japan related stereoview photographers and publishers during the period of 1859-1912 which is contained in *Old Japanese Photographs Collectors' Data Guide* by Terry Bennett (more information below). Rob is a foremost expert on the work of T. Enami, the noted Japanese photographer, and shares this expertise on his web site titled "IMAGES OF LOTUS LAND: THE LIFE and CAMERA WORK OF T. ENAMI, JAPAN'S ENIGMATIC PHOTOGRAPHER of the MEIJI and TAISHO ERAS" ([T-Enami.org](http://www.t-enami.org) web page [ <http://www.t-enami.org/home> ]).

Oechsle, Rob & Uehara, Masatoshi, *Great Lew Chew Discovered: 19th Century Ryukyu in Western Art and Illustration or Aoime Ga Mita Dai Ryukyu* (Japanese Title - "Great Ryukyu (as) Seen by Blue Eyes"), Shimonoseki, Japan by Shunposha Shashin Insatsu (Printer), Nirai Sha (Publisher - Naha-shi, Okinawa, Japan), 2000 (4th printing), copyright 1987, white boards, square format (8 x 8 1/2 in - 21 x 20.7 cm), 240 pp.

Bennett, Terry, *Old Japanese Photographs Collectors' Data Guide*, London, Bernard Quaritch Ltd., 2006, © Terry Bennett, 8vo, navy blue cloth with gilt title on spine, dust jacket, 308 pp. This book contains a comprehensive index of Japan related stereoview photographers and publishers (350+) during the period of 1859-1912 by Rob Oechsle.

Current Photographs and Information on Sugar Loaf Hill Courtesy of Bob Oechsle.

Current (April 2014) URL for Google Maps View of Sugar Loaf Hill.  
<https://www.google.com/maps/@26.2221211,127.6961891,483m/data=!3m1!1e3?hl=en.jpg>

Hallas, James H., *Killing Ground on Okinawa - The Battle for Sugar Loaf Hill*, Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, 1996.