

Okinawa 1945: Operation ICEBERG Virtual Staff Ride

1. This Combat Studies Institute-Army University Press virtual staff ride (VSR) is a one-day study that examines the Tenth Army's operations in the Ryukyus Campaign from 1 APR to 2 JUL 1945. The study examines the field army as a joint force headquarters, corps-level forcible entry amphibious operations, sustainment, and stability operations. The staff ride focuses on Large-scale combat operations at corps and division levels in the battles and engagements on Okinawa Island. The VSR uses the same methodology as any other staff ride, consisting of preliminary study, field study, and integration. In a VSR, the field study occurs in a classroom environment using 3D software to simulate standing on the battlefield.
2. Primary themes for discussion:
 - a. Joint operations planning, including echelonment of forces, task organization, joint functions and joint phases.
 - b. The corps as a field headquarters for amphibious operations.
 - c. Division-level multi-domain operations.
 - d. Offensive and defensive operations, with examples of strongpoint employment and reverse-slope area defense.
 - e. Military deception and operational security.
 - f. Subterranean operations.
 - g. Mission command and the exercise of disciplined initiative at all levels of leadership.
3. Preliminary Study. A Preliminary Study Packet is available from the staff ride team and consists of excerpts taken from the secondary sources listed below. The packet provides guidance on dividing the participants into small groups for "role playing" one of six US Army senior leaders or five Japanese senior leaders. Additional readings are provided for participants who wish to study the aspects of individual elements of combat power, warfighting functions, or branch-specific subjects.
 - a. *Okinawa: The Last Battle* is an official history of the Ryukyus Campaign that the US Army Center for Military History first published in 1949. The work still serves as a solid history for any study of the US Army's role in Operation ICEBERG. It is available for download at no cost to the user at this link: <https://history.army.mil/html/books/005/5-11-1/index.html>
 - b. *Japan's Battle of Okinawa, April-June 1945* (Leavenworth Papers No. 18) by Thomas Huber, provides additional materials on the Japanese defense of Okinawa. It is available at no cost to the user at this link: <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Books/CSI-Press-Publications/World-War-II/#World-War-II> (scroll down the page to find it.)

4. Field Study.
 - a. Field study occurs in a classroom environment. It requires at least one instructor and one virtual terrain technician. The Staff Ride Team can conduct the VSR in any conference room, classroom, or auditorium/lecture hall facility. All materials are unclassified. Units are responsible for TDY expenses.
 - b. Time requirements are 6-8 hours but can be adjusted to suit unit training calendars. A minimum of four hours is required.
5. Integration. An integration period is conducted immediately following the field study and is an informal opportunity for participants to articulate the insights gained and personal impressions on the conduct of the Ryukyus Campaign.
6. Equipment requirements:
 - a. Two projectors and two screens.
 - b. One computer for a PowerPoint presentation to synchronize movements over the virtual terrain.