

Debarking from landing craft, reserve troops of 96th Infantry Division seek shelter from Japanese fire behind vehicles on beach at Leyte Island —20 Oct, 1944



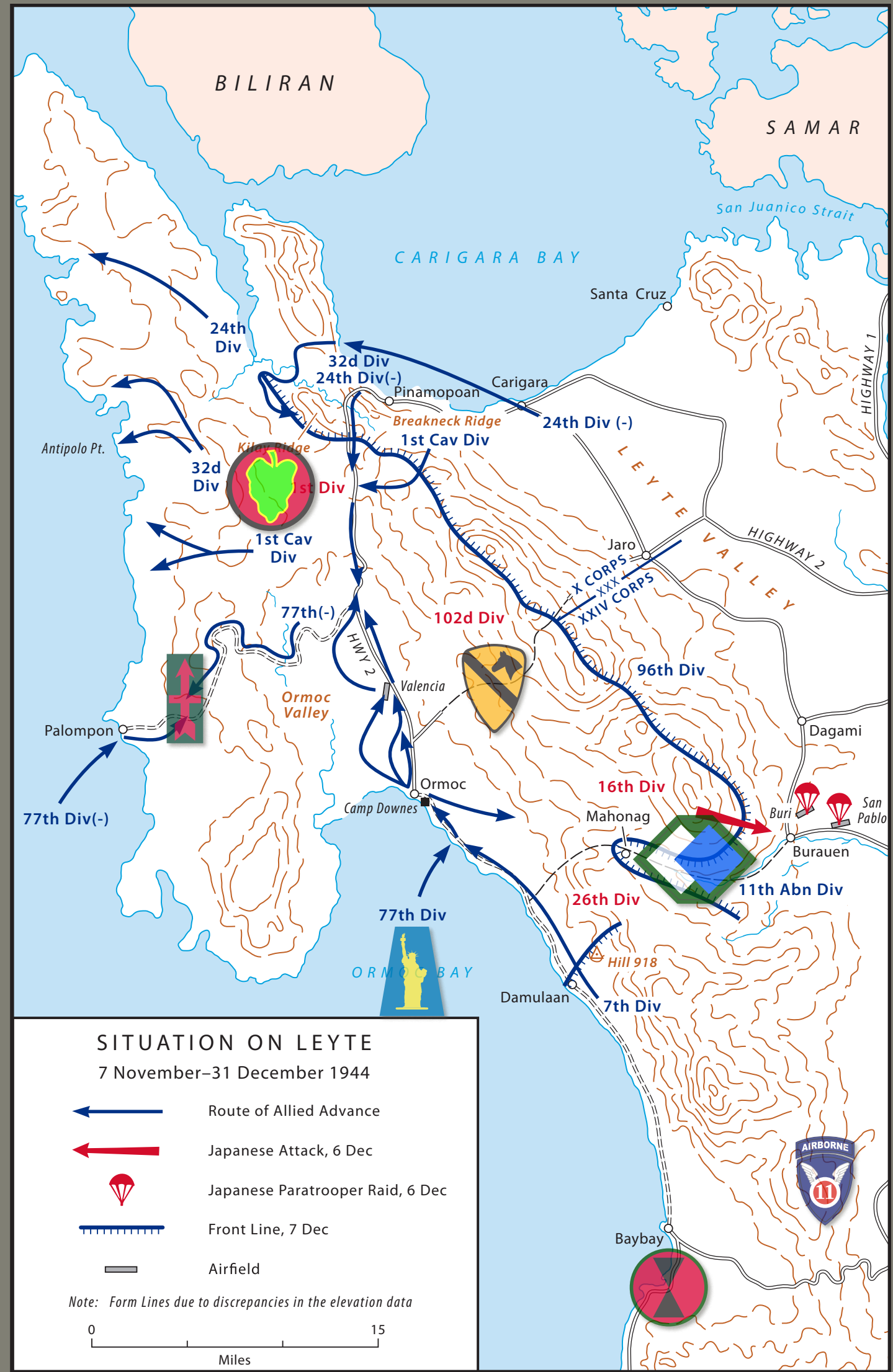
U.S. Soldiers from the 77th Infantry Division enter Ormoc, Leyte —16 Dec, 1944



77th Infantry Division proceeds onward in northwest Leyte —1945



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BATTLE OF LEYTE

The invasion of Leyte began on 17 October 1944 when the 6th Ranger Battalion assaulted and destroyed the Japanese garrisons and a radio station on the small islands of Suluan, Dinaget, and Homonhon. After the Rangers positioned navigation lights, U.S. Navy mine sweepers and underwater demolition teams entered Leyte Gulf to clear the approaches to the main invasion area. On 19 October, the armada of warships, transports, and amphibious assault vessels assembled offshore and commenced naval gunfire and carrier-based air strikes against the east coast of Leyte. At 1000 on A-Day, 20 October, after an intense air and naval bombardment, the Sixth Army, commanded by Lt. Gen. Walter Krueger, began the amphibious assault along two separate beachheads. The X Corps landed on a four-mile stretch of beach between the airfield at Tacloban and the Palo River, with the 1st Cavalry and the 24th Infantry Divisions in the north. The XXIV Corps landed 15 miles to the south and came ashore across a three-mile strand between San Jose and the Daguitan River with the 7th and 96th Infantry Divisions. Within an hour of landing, the assault units had secured beachheads deep enough to receive heavy vehicles and large amounts of supplies. By 1330, Japanese resistance had been reduced enough to allow the supreme Allied commander, General Douglas MacArthur, to come ashore and announce to the people of the Philippines the beginning of their liberation. The Sixth Army and Filipino guerrillas made steady progress against often tenacious enemy resistance. By late December, the Sixth Army had secured the northern sectors sufficiently to turn the battle over to the Eighth Army, which continued mopping-up operations in the south until May 1945.

All photos courtesy of National Archives.
 Cover illustration – “Follow Me!,” World War II, Leyte,
 H. Charles McBarron, c. 1948, oil on illustration board.
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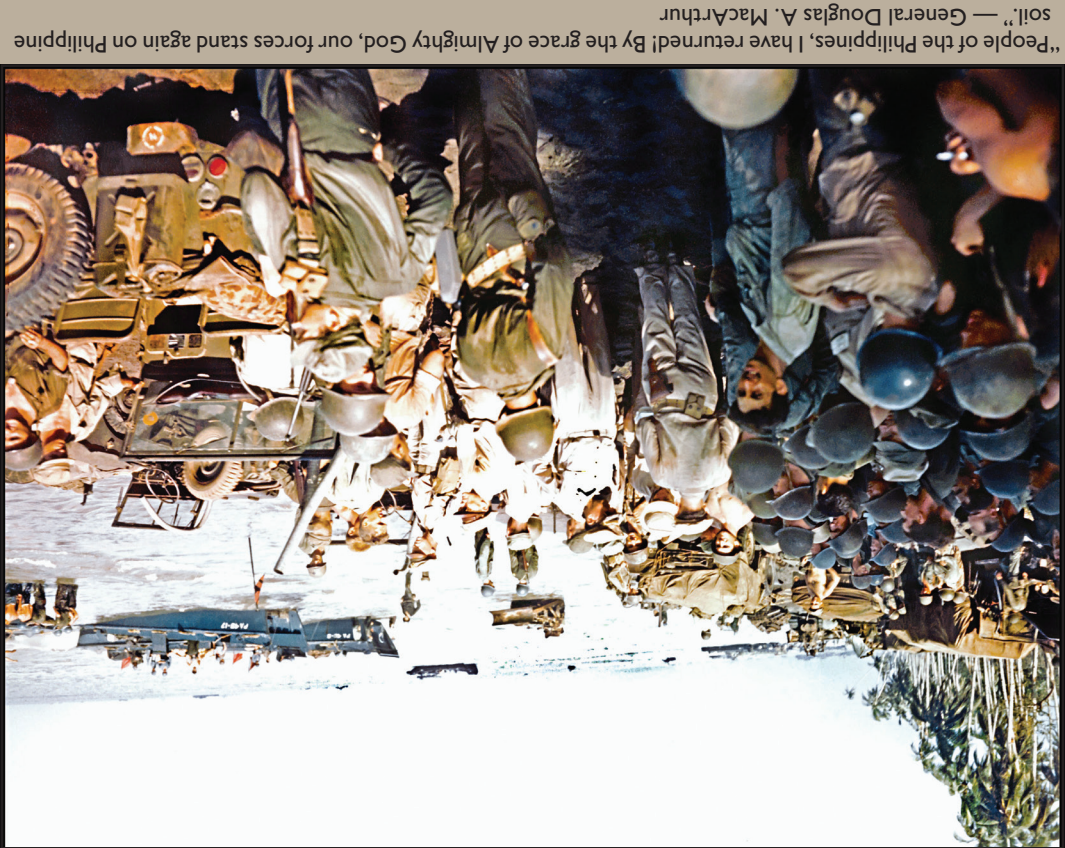
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BATTLE OF LEYTE



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Facts:
The Leyte invasion was the largest American and Allied amphibious operation to that date in the Pacific Theater.
202,500 ground troops were involved in the campaign.
 The Joint Chiefs of Staff had designated **General MacArthur** supreme commander of sea, air, and land forces drawn from both the Southwest Pacific and Central Pacific Area Commands.
 General MacArthur’s staff in the Southwest Pacific Area Command used **“A-Day”** (for Attack) in lieu of “D-Day” for the start of the invasion.



“People of the Philippines, I have returned! By the grace of Almighty God, our forces stand again on Philippine soil.” — General Douglas A. MacArthur

