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BILL O'REILLY

& MARTIN DUGARD



Killing the Rising Sun

How America Vanquished World War II Japan

ALSO BY BILL O'REILLY AND MARTIN DUGARD

Killing Lincoln

Killing Kennedy

Killing Jesus

Killing Patton

Killing Reagan

Killing the Rising Sun

How America Vanquished World War II Japan

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and


MARTIN DUGARD

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*This book is dedicated to all World War II veterans.
Freedom rings because of you.*

The land of the rising sun

—ANCIENT CHINESE DESCRIPTION OF JAPAN,
REFERRING TO THE MORNING SUN'S REACHING
THE ISLANDS OF JAPAN BEFORE THE ASIAN MAINLAND

Map Legend

Allied



Advance



Retreat



Infantry

Japan



Military features



Front line



Clash/event

Combatant nationalities



United States



Soviet Union



Japan

Physical features



Major road



Minor road



Railroad



River



Terrain



Forest



City/town with
urban area



Nuclear detonation

Killing the Rising Sun

A NOTE TO READERS



On September 16, 2001, five days after the savage attack launched by Al Qaeda terrorists on the United States, Barack Obama's longtime Chicago pastor, Reverend Jeremiah Wright Jr., delivered a stunning anti-American diatribe in his church. Listing what he believed to be atrocities America had committed in the past that would explain or perhaps justify the 9/11 mass murder, Wright got around to condemning his country for dropping two atomic bombs on Japan in 1945.

“We bombed Hiroshima. We bombed Nagasaki. And we nuked far more than the thousands in New York and the Pentagon. . . . America's chickens are coming home to roost.”

Seven years later, Wright's explosive statements were uncovered by the media. Senator Obama, then campaigning to become president, quickly repudiated his pastor's assessment, distancing himself from the militant minister who officiated at his wedding and with whom he had a close relationship for about twenty years.

It is safe to say that many people around the world had little or no idea what Wright was talking about. Sure, most folks know that A-bombs were dropped and the carnage caused was catastrophic. But, sad to say, the events leading up to the end of World War II

are not that widely known anymore. Thus, statements like the one Wright made sometimes go unchallenged.

Every person on this planet lives with a common threat: nuclear annihilation. The nuclear weapons of today dwarf the first A-bombs in destructive power. Currently, the Iranian nuclear treaty has raised awareness of the threat, but still, the nuclear bomb's origins and the brutal world of the mid-1940s are no longer common knowledge.

Enter this book. It comes with a warning: the following pages contain some extremely troubling material. The violence the world witnessed in 1945 is unprecedented in history and will be chronicled on the following pages in detail.

What Martin Dugard and I are about to tell you is true and stark. The way the United States defeated the Japanese empire is vital to understand because the issues of that war are still being processed throughout the world today.

Killing the Rising Sun is the sixth in our series of history books. We believe you will know far more about America by the book's end. We also believe you will be very able to put the comments of people like Reverend Wright in their proper context.

We live in a time of spin and deception. It is important to know the truth.

Here it is.

BILL O'REILLY
Long Island, New York
March 2016

INTRODUCTION



OVAL OFFICE, THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, DC
OCTOBER 12, 1939
10:00 A.M.

The age of mass destruction is about to dawn.

“What bright idea do you have now?” an upbeat Franklin Delano Roosevelt asks Wall Street financier Alexander Sachs, one of his key advisers on the New Deal that lifted America out of the Great Depression. The forty-six-year-old economist sits on the opposite side of the president’s massive wooden desk. FDR was up past midnight, as is his custom. The deep circles under his eyes and his pale skin, resulting from constant exhaustion and too little time spent outdoors, make the president look far older than his fifty-seven years. His health is not enhanced by the Camel cigarette he now holds, one of the more than twenty he will smoke today.

Sachs chooses his reply carefully. This meeting is so top secret that it will not appear in the official daily log of presidential appointments. Sachs can only hope that it will go better than the hour he spent with Roosevelt yesterday, when he labored unsuccessfully to

find the right words to describe what could possibly be the greatest single threat to mankind.

It has been six weeks since Nazi Germany invaded Poland, beginning what will become known as the Second World War. One month prior, on August 2, theoretical physicist Albert Einstein wrote an urgent letter to President Roosevelt warning “that it may become possible to set up a nuclear chain reaction in a large mass of uranium . . . extremely powerful bombs of a new type may thus be constructed.”

Einstein is a longtime friend of Roosevelt’s, but he felt that sending Alexander Sachs to deliver the letter in person would be the most effective way of getting his point across. Yet when Sachs finally managed to get an audience with Roosevelt yesterday morning, the pompous financier was unable to articulate his case.

Rather than simply reading Einstein’s two-page letter aloud, he appeared in the Oval Office with a stack of technical papers detailing America’s uranium output and then read from an eight-hundred-word summary he had written. Sachs never mentioned that Einstein and other top American scientists believe that the new bombs could obliterate entire cities—or that Nazi Germany is currently racing to build such weapons. Roosevelt grew bored as Sachs droned on. With pressing business to address, the president dismissed Sachs, telling him to come back the next day.

That time is now. Realizing his mistake, Sachs gets right down to business. As Roosevelt listens attentively, the Wall Street leader reads Einstein’s letter aloud. The president may not have appeared to be listening yesterday, but some of the discussion seems to have sunk in. Roosevelt probes Sachs with questions about uranium, the Nazis, and this new bomb. Einstein’s letter makes it clear that the Germans have already taken control of a key uranium mine in Czechoslovakia and that scientists at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin are attempting to use this uranium to set up a nuclear chain reaction that could lead to the most lethal bomb in history.

Roosevelt has finally heard enough. “Alex,” he summarizes for

the financier, “what you are after is to see that the Nazis don’t blow us up.”

“Precisely,” a relieved Sachs answers.

Roosevelt immediately summons his personal secretary, retired US Army general Edwin “Pa” Watson, into the Oval Office.

“Pa,” Roosevelt orders, “this requires action.”

1



PELELIU, CAROLINE ISLANDS

PACIFIC OCEAN

SEPTEMBER 15, 1944

0832 HOURS

Destruction is near for the empire.

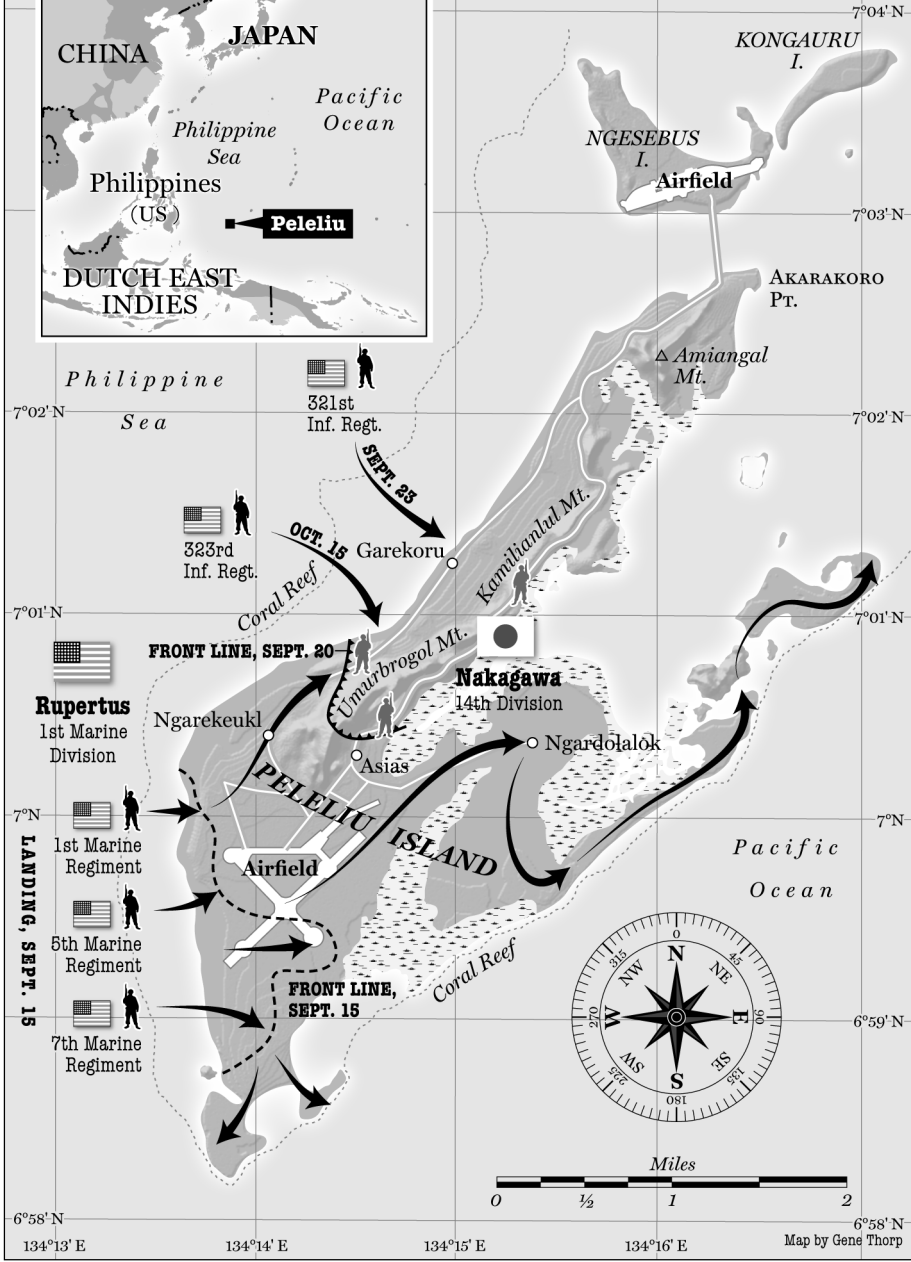
The morning heat is so unbearable that Corporal Lewis Kenneth Bausell, USMC, has trouble breathing. He is huddled inside an amphibious landing vehicle with a dozen other marines of the First Battalion, headed for the section of Japanese-held beach code-named Orange One. Even this early in the morning, the temperature hovers at 100 degrees. The Americans are sweating profusely as their armored craft brings them ever closer to the sand. But heat is not the only factor—some of the perspiration is from nerves. These marines understand that they may soon die or be maimed for life and few will ever know what happened to them.

Unlike in the much more publicized war in Europe, where reporters like Ernie Pyle and Edward R. Murrow are making names for themselves by covering every aspect of the fighting, there are no journalists or photographers hitting this remote beach today. The

134°13' E 134°14' E 134°15' E 134°16' E 134°17' E

Assault on Peleliu

September 15–October 15, 1944



crucial upcoming battle against the Japanese will be waged in near anonymity.

Peleliu is important because of its airstrip, a hard-surfaced field capable of launching long-range fighter-bombers. The island is just six miles long and two miles wide, but the terrain is exceptionally rugged, a film of thin soil laid atop coral and limestone. A thousand yards off the beach rise the jungle-covered Umurbrogol ridges, a series of low, jagged peaks forming the island's spine. The Japanese have long coveted tiny, remote Peleliu, first taking possession of the empty island in 1914. For two decades it remained basically unused, but with the war came renewed awareness of its tactical importance. Since this past summer, knowing that the Americans would soon attack, the Japanese have labored to transform Peleliu into a fortress.

Most American marines could not care less about the history of Peleliu. Each man approaches the coming battle in his own way. Some smoke to calm their fears, some vomit onto the steel deck, and others worry about wetting their pants. But there is one belief that every man shares: no matter what happens when they hit the beach, surrendering to the enemy will not be an option.

Lewis Bausell has been through this before. Only twenty years old, the apprentice bookbinder from Washington, DC, has an easy smile and a wide boxer's nose. His hair is cropped close to his skull. Bausell had a semester left at McKinley Technical High School when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in December 1941. He immediately dropped out of school and tried to enlist in the navy but was rejected. So instead, he enlisted in the Marine Corps. During his more than two years serving his country, Bausell has earned the respect of his peers, and although his rank is not yet official, just one month ago Bausell was selected for promotion to the rank of sergeant because of his heroic performance and leadership during invasions on Tulagi, Gavutu, Guadalcanal, and Cape Gloucester.*

*The American military campaign in the Pacific followed a strategy known as "island hopping." The US Navy, Army, and Marine Corps invaded Japanese island strongholds in the Pacific, slowly working their way north toward an eventual invasion of Japan. Islands not deemed vital to the advance were bypassed.

Now, as the amtrac churns forward through the flat surf toward Peleliu, Bausell buckles the chin strap of his steel helmet. The landing craft stalls momentarily on the coral reef one hundred yards offshore, then continues churning toward the landing zone. Bausell is tempted to peer up and over the side to glimpse the battlefield, but he keeps his head down. Japanese snipers are known to target the curious.

All at once, geysers of water erupt around the landing craft. Incoming Japanese 141-mm mortar rounds fill the air. Many find their mark, killing Bausell's fellow marines on other landing craft. The explosions and the roar of artillery are so loud that Bausell and his squadmates cannot hear one another without yelling. The smoke of battle has turned the blue morning sky black. On any other day, Peleliu is a tropical island paradise. Today it is a living hell.



Final moments before landing on Peleliu

“Hit the beach,” yells a sergeant as the amtrac’s steel treads reach the shore. Bausell vaults up and over the side, landing hard on the bone-white sand and coral. The staccato chatter of hidden Japanese machine guns forces Bausell to press his body flat against the earth. All around him, explosions bring flashes of light. The palm trees lining the beach are in flames. Crimson pools of American blood mingle with the yellow phosphorus of Japanese incendiary devices.

“All any man could do was sweat it out and pray for survival,” one marine will later write of his first moments on Peleliu. “It would have been sure suicide to stand up during that firestorm.”

Everything Bausell sees and hears gives the lie to what he and his fellow marines had been told about this tactically vital Japanese stronghold. In preparation for Operation Stalemate, the United States Navy bombarded Peleliu with ten days of aerial raids and two more days of naval shelling. It seemed impossible that anyone could have lived through such an intense barrage of napalm and artillery; “we have run out of targets,” a top naval officer complained. American intelligence supported this notion, suggesting that the enemy response would be minimal. The Marine Corps officer commanding the invasion, Major General William Rupertus, predicted a quick and easy battle—“a hard fought ‘quickie’ that will last for four days, five days at most.”

But as Corporal Lewis Bausell and his squad can now attest, Peleliu will not be taken easily. Its defenders have had months to prepare. Mortar launchers and artillery are concealed behind the 2,200-yard beachfront, targeted to strike the precise spots at which the Americans now race ashore. In addition, the Japanese have constructed antitank barriers, laid hundreds of mines, and lined the beach with every coil of barbed wire in the Caroline Islands. “Spider traps”—machine-gun nests made of coconut-tree logs—are camouflaged so well that they are almost invisible in the swampy landscape where jungle meets the sand.

Yet Japanese commander Colonel Kunio Nakagawa is a realist. He knows the Americans will eventually work their way ashore.

The US force is huge. So the wily colonel is employing a strategy tried just once before in the war.* Despite the horrific welcome the Americans are now receiving, it is not his goal to win this battle on the beaches. Just a fraction of his army now fights the marines, but thousands of other elite troops wait inland, in a network of five hundred hidden caves in the nearby Umurbrogol highlands.

These *fukkaku* defenses will allow Nakagawa and his men to counter the Americans, “bleeding them white” by coming out of hiding to attack when the marines least expect it.

The attacking Japanese soldiers’ ability to swarm out of nowhere led top British general William Slim to refer to them as “the most formidable fighting insect in history.” The men of Nakagawa’s Fourteenth Imperial Division embody that sentiment. Almost all are veteran warriors, hardened by years of battle. They have been living five stories underground, subsisting on a simple diet of rice and fish and enduring the beatings and harsh discipline from their officers that are typical of the Japanese army. “You could be beaten for anything,” one Japanese soldier later remembered. “Being too short or being too tall, even because somebody didn’t like the way you drank coffee. This was done to make each man respond instantly to orders, and it produced results. If you want soldiers who fight hard, they must train hard.”

These soldiers have been taught another crucial lesson: that the Japanese race is superior to all others, and that triumph over the inferior Americans is inevitable.

That is a lie.

But to soldiers of the Imperial Japanese Army, it doesn’t matter. Their strongest belief of all is in the samurai code of Bushido, which

*The concept of endurance engagements, as opposed to decisive engagements, as a means of fighting a protracted defensive battle to wear down the Americans was initially used on the small island of Biak, off the western coast of New Guinea. It was unsuccessful there; the Japanese were annihilated during the battle, losing 6,100 soldiers. The soldiers of the US Army’s Forty-First Division, most of whom hailed from Oregon and Montana, earned the nickname “The Jungleers” for their success in the dense rain forests. They lost fewer than five hundred men.

stipulates that surrender is a form of dishonor. “The man who would not disgrace himself must be strong,” reads a line from the Japanese army’s *Senjinkun*, a pocket-size code of behavior issued to all servicemen. “Do not survive in shame as a prisoner. Die, to ensure that you do not leave ignominy behind you.”

Therein lies the basis for Colonel Nakagawa’s trap.

There is no escape route for the Japanese, no evacuation plan. The forty-six-year-old Nakagawa, who was decorated nine times for his heroism during Japan’s earlier war with China, has already informed his wife that he will never see her again.

Soon, very soon, he will lure the unsuspecting Americans into the Umurbrogol highlands and slaughter them.

But in turn, he and his men will also be slaughtered.

Surrender is not an option.



Corporal Lewis Bausell rises up off the sand and sprints in a low crouch. His goal is the protective shelter of a small coral ridge a hundred yards inland. All around him as he runs, shouts of “Get the hell off the beach!” mingle with desperate pleas of “Corpsman!” Bausell has never seen such destruction. Two hundred marines will die today; hundreds more will be wounded. Terrified corporals and privates now watch the bodies of their brother marines torn apart as fire from Japanese heavy artillery crashes down.

“One figure seemed to fly to pieces,” a marine will recall of a particularly grisly death. “With terrible clarity I saw the head and one leg fly into the air.”

“I saw a wounded Marine near me staggering,” another American will remember. “His face was half bloody pulp and the mangled shreds of what was left of an arm hung down like a stick . . . he fell behind me, in a red puddle on the white sand.”

Every man here knows what the Japanese army does to prisoners of war. Rather than hold men captive, the Japanese murder them in the most heinous fashion. Veterans of previous battles with this enemy have seen the corpses of marines unlucky enough to be

taken alive. Some had their bodies roped to a tree and used for live bayonet practice. Some had their heads, arms, and legs chopped off; scores of US Marines were emasculated with bayonets as they lay dying on the ground.

“It was kill or be killed,” Marine Corps private Dan Lawler will later remember. “The Japs didn’t take prisoners so we didn’t take prisoners either.”

Or, as Marine Corps colonel Lewis “Chesty” Puller ordered his men before the Peleliu invasion: “You will take no prisoners. You will kill every yellow son-of-a-bitch, and that’s it.”



It seems an eternity, but it is only an hour before Corporal Bausell and a few of his fellow marines manage to get off the sand. Bausell’s smile has been replaced by a tight-lipped glare. His instincts sharpened by his many previous landings, Bausell searches the tree line for signs of hidden enemy machine-gun emplacements targeting the invasion force. Suddenly, a burst of light gets Corporal Bausell’s attention. The Japanese machine guns fire tracer bullets to help them zero in on a target, but these illuminated rounds can also help the marines pinpoint the shooter’s precise location. Bausell sees a stream of tracers emerging from a small cave with a commanding view of the beach. The entrance is concealed by scrub plants and thick brush.

Taking charge of the squad, he motions for his men to follow him toward the cave’s location. Reaching the cave first, he fires into a small opening. Lieutenant Jack Kimble of Greenville, Mississippi, arrives with a two-man flamethrower team; a stream of fire is launched into the Japanese position in the hope of forcing the enemy to come out. Corporal Bausell, meanwhile, stands ready to shoot them as they emerge.

The first Japanese to run screaming from the cave is carrying a grenade. He pulls the pin before Bausell can fire his M1 carbine. Not only does the explosion kill the Japanese soldier but shrapnel slices into several nearby marines.

More flame is shot into the cave. Another Japanese soldier emerges.

This time, Bausell shoots him dead.

Yet another Japanese soldier runs out of the cave, choosing the sure death by rifle fire to being roasted alive. He too carries a grenade, hurling it at the Americans as Bausell raises his weapon.

The grenade is launched before Bausell shoots; it lands near him and several other marines. The blast may kill them all.

Without hesitation, Corporal Bausell throws his body onto the grenade. His torso rises off the ground as it explodes, smothering the blast. None of his fellow marines is hurt.

“Get that Jap,” Bausell shouts. Somehow, he is still alive.

The flamethrower team shoots off a burst of flame, turning the Japanese soldier into a human torch.

Less than two hours after landing on Peleliu, Corporal Lewis Bausell is put on a stretcher and carried back down the beach. He is loaded aboard an amtrac, then ferried out to the hospital ship *Bountiful*, where he is immediately taken into surgery.

But doctors cannot stop the bleeding. The Japanese grenade has sent deadly shards of metal deep into Bausell’s internal organs. On September 18, 1944, three days after the invasion of Peleliu, Corporal Lewis Bausell dies.

Unlike those of soldiers fighting on World War II’s European front, his body will not be lowered into the ground and marked with a monument so that his family might someday visit. Instead, his corpse is wrapped in sailcloth, tethered to a spent artillery shell, and dropped at sea.

Corporal Lewis Bausell is the first United States Marine at the Battle of Peleliu whose death will see him awarded America’s highest award for valor, the Medal of Honor, for actions above and beyond the call of duty in combat.

He is not the last.