

Kamikaze Japanese Special Attack Weapons 1944-45 New Vanguard 180: Unlocking the Secrets of Japan's Deadly World War II Arsenal



KAMIKAZE

Japanese Special Attack Weapons 1944-45



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ILLUSTRATED BY IAN PALMER

When we think of World War II, several images come to mind: soldiers storming Omaha Beach, dogfights in the skies over Europe, and the mushroom clouds rising over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, one aspect of the war that often goes overlooked is the Kamikaze phenomenon, which saw Japanese pilots using specially designed aircraft as weapons of self-destruction. In this article, we will delve into the secrets of these deadly weapons and explore their significance in Japan's war efforts during 1944-45.

The Birth of Kamikaze - A Desperate Strategy

As Japan faced increasingly dire circumstances towards the end of World War II, it became clear to military strategists that conventional tactics alone might not be enough to push back the Allied forces. In response to this, the idea of utilizing suicide attacks began to gain traction. The Japanese coined the term "Kamikaze," meaning "divine wind," drawing inspiration from a previous failed Mongol invasion thwarted by typhoons.



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The Kamikaze program, which primarily involved the use of aircraft, started in earnest in 1944. These specialized planes, known as "Special Attack Units," were equipped with explosives and piloted by young men willing to give their lives for their country. Kamikaze pilots believed that their sacrifice would bring honor to their families and ensure the defense of Japan.

Unlocking the Secrets of Kamikaze Weapons

The Kamikaze phenomenon employed various types of aircraft as part of the Special Attack Units. One of the most renowned was the Zero fighter plane, a symbol of Japanese aerial power during the early years of the war. However, as the war progressed and resources became scarce, Japan had to develop more cost-effective methods of achieving the same destructive results.

Some of the lesser-known Kamikaze weapons include the Ohka rocket-propelled glider and the Kaiten human torpedo. These weapons represented the pinnacle of Japan's desperation and showcased their determination to stop the Allied forces at any cost.

The Ohka was essentially a manned missile, launched from bombers towards enemy ships. It could reach immense speeds, making it virtually unstoppable once released. The pilot inside the Ohka had one objective – crashing into an enemy vessel, inflicting maximum damage.

The Kaiten, on the other hand, was a human-driven torpedo designed to be launched from submarines. It had limited mobility compared to the Ohka, but its power to sink enemy vessels was no less significant. Kaiten pilots embarked on one-way missions, fully aware that they were unlikely to return home.

The Effectiveness of Kamikaze Attacks

Despite the high casualty rates among Kamikaze pilots, their attacks took a toll on the Allied forces, both physically and psychologically. The Kamikaze strategy infused a sense of fear among the enemy ranks, as soldiers knew that at any moment, a blazing plane could be heading directly towards their ships.

One of the key factors contributing to the effectiveness of Kamikaze attacks was their unpredictability. The element of surprise played a crucial role in the success of these suicidal missions. Kamikaze pilots struck fear into the hearts of Allied sailors, who constantly had to be on high alert, watching the skies and waiting for impending doom.

The destruction caused by Kamikaze attacks was significant. Numerous Allied vessels were sunk or severely damaged, and the loss of lives was devastating. The psychological impact cannot be understated, as the threat of Kamikaze assaults created a constant state of unease among the Allied troops.

Legacy and Controversy Surrounding Kamikaze Tactics

Following Japan's surrender and the end of World War II, the Kamikaze phenomenon has been a subject of much debate and controversy. To some, the actions of the Kamikaze pilots exemplify unwavering loyalty and unwavering dedication to their country, while others see them as victims of extreme militarism and brainwashing.

However, regardless of opinions about the morality or effectiveness of the Kamikaze tactics, it is undeniable that they played a significant role in shaping the outcome of the war in the Pacific. By utilizing these weapons, Japan demonstrated a level of desperation and determination rarely seen in conflicts.

, the Kamikaze Japanese Special Attack Weapons of 1944-45, as featured in Osprey Publishing's New Vanguard 180, were a testament to the extreme

measures Japan took to defend itself during World War II. These weapons symbolized the fierce resolve of the Japanese people and their willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice in the face of defeat.



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The destruction of much of the remainder of the Japanese fleet and its air arm in the later half of 1944 left the Japanese Home Islands vulnerable to attack by US naval and air forces. In desperation, the Imperial Japanese Navy proposed using “special attack” formations, or suicide attacks. These initially consisted of crude improvisations of conventional aircraft fitted with high-explosive bombs that could be crashed into US warships. Called “Divine Wind” (Kamikaze), the special attack formations first saw action in 1944, and became the scourge of the US fleet in the battles for Iwo Jima and Okinawa in 1945. In view of the success of these attacks, the Japanese armed forces began to develop an entire range of new special attack weapons. This book will begin by examining the initial kamikaze aircraft attacks, but the focus of the book will be on the dedicated special attack weapons developed in 1944. It also covers specialized suicide attack weapons such as anti-tank lunge mines.



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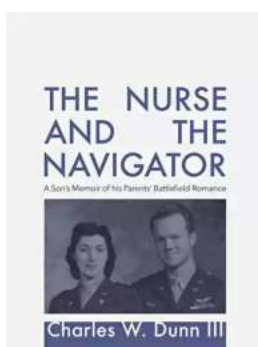
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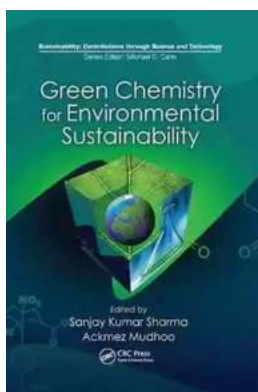
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