



# GHOSTS — OF — HONOLULU

A JAPANESE SPY, A JAPANESE  
AMERICAN SPY HUNTER, AND THE  
UNTOLD STORY OF PEARL HARBOR

MARK HARMON

LEON CARROLL, JR.

NCIS SPECIAL AGENT (RETIRED)

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Harper Select



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*Ghosts of Honolulu*

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# INTRODUCTION

The Naval Criminal Investigative Service is close to our hearts, and we've always felt an obligation to represent the NCIS in a realistic way. It's sobering to google "NCIS" and see that the first dozen returns are about our shows. The casts and crews bend over backward to get procedural details correct, from uniforms to weapons to lingo. It's one way we pay respect to the real NCIS agents, analysts and support staff who work there.

In the years ahead, we plan on using that same dedication to explore the roots of NCIS and the forgotten players who made the service what it is today. There are many stories to be told, true tales of the men and women who drove great events from their shadowy positions. This book is the first step in the journey through the *sub-rosa* history of people who value stealth over glory.

Combine our fascination with Hawaii and our love of NCIS history, and you get *Ghosts of Honolulu*. This true story covers the city's clandestine history before, during and after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, seen mostly through the eyes of a naval intelligence special agent named Douglas Wada.

You may wonder how NCIS is related since it wasn't created until the 1990s, but it's fitting that we begin with a World War II story. In 1939, President Franklin Roosevelt ordered the Navy to investigate domestic threats of espionage and sabotage, sowing the seeds of what would eventually grow to become NCIS.

Some readers will recognize that NCIS can trace its roots deeper than that. Navy Department General Order 292 established the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) in 1882 to collect information on foreign vessels, chart foreign bodies of water and tour overseas defense and industrial facilities. ONI expanded into spy cases during World War I and covert operations (in

New York) in 1916. But these efforts were largely dismantled after the Great War ended. With the rise of the Japanese Empire and looming war, the Navy rediscovered the value of counterespionage operations.

When FDR directed that the ONI handle the investigation of Navy cases relating to sabotage, espionage and subversive activities in '39, he put criminal investigations back on the menu. And civilians would be at the heart of the effort—in 1940 reservists started to be called up for duty with the Naval Intelligence Service. (“NIS” is a term that included a cadre of agents in naval stations and ships at sea, along with the entire ONI and a division within the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations.) They proved their worth: in 1943 alone, NIS personnel investigated 97,000 cases.

NCIS sprung from the NIS, as we’ll explain at the book’s conclusion (see [Appendix A](#)). That places the World War II experiences of naval counterintelligence agents firmly at the very foundations of the modern NCIS. And no one may have a more unique perspective on the war and its aftermath than Douglas Wada, the son of a Honolulu Shinto shrine builder, a naval reservist and the only Asian American who worked inside the ONI in Hawaii or anywhere else during the war.

The television franchise focuses on death investigations—perfect for a procedural drama—but the agency is about much more than that, including counterintelligence and counterespionage, which are the focus of this book. The answer to how NCIS became involved with domestic counterespionage usually comes in just two words: “Pearl Harbor.” The true story, only told in the shadows, is more complex.

And for the current generation of NCIS agents facing their own unique challenges, we can only hope this story serves them as an entertaining morale boost with a reminder attached: your quiet work matters and is not forgotten.

**MARK HARMON AND LEON CARROLL**  
**APRIL 2023**



# PROLOGUE

## DIAMOND HEAD BEACH, HONOLULU DECEMBER 7, 1941

“What the hell is that?” asks Douglas Wada, spotting smoke curling into the sky behind the bluff above. “That’s too dark to be a cane field fire, isn’t it?”

It’s Sunday morning, and for Wada that means fishing. The thirty-one-year-old usually goes with his wife, Helen, but today he’s recruited two friends from his Japanese-dominated Kapalama neighborhood instead. The trio are ready to cast into the surf of Diamond Head Beach, on the rock-strewn southern edge of Oahu. There’s hardly a beach here to speak of, just an irregular ribbon of sand deposited on top of water-pitted sandstone. The shore ends in sheer cliffs, lush with overgrowth and the occasional intrepid palm tree. There’s been a lighthouse atop those heights since 1899, and the beach affords a full picturesque view of the Coast Guard’s tower, Fresnel beacon and keeper’s residence.<sup>1</sup>

As a lifelong resident of Honolulu, Wada knows all the best fishing spots. It was an easy drive in his Chevrolet from his home downtown to this remote spot, a paradise seemingly created for fishermen on bright Sunday mornings.

But now the three men pause baiting their hooks to gaze at the mysterious plume. “Some kind of training thing, maybe?” one of Wada’s friends asks. “Shooting real stuff.”

The nearest military facility is the airfield at Bellows Field. Perhaps a plane crashed? But Wada remains doubtful, watching mutely as the smoke continues to thicken.

A voice from the bluffs suddenly commands their attention. It’s the

keeper of the Diamond Head Lighthouse, racing down to the beach in a near panic. (Inside, Coast Guard radio operator Melvin Bell is frantically warning civilian vessels to steer clear of Oahu's ports.)

"Don't you people know we're at war?" the lighthouse keeper cries when he gets close enough. It's clear that he wasn't expecting to confront three Japanese men near his lighthouse mere minutes into a shooting war.

Wada withdraws his US Navy identification and shows it to the man. The badge doesn't say so, but he works with the Office of Naval Intelligence in downtown Honolulu. He cut his teeth on undercover work, including surveilling Japanese ships coming into the harbor, but Wada's forte these days is translation and analysis. That puts him into contact with tapped phone conversations, local Japanese language newspapers, intercepted radio transmissions, purloined documents and subjects in interrogation rooms.

"What war?" he asks the lightkeeper. "No one told me about it."

The man points northwest. "The base is under attack," he says. "You better get back, right away."

That's how Douglas Wada, America's only Japanese American naval intelligence agent, found out that Japan launched a surprise air raid on Pearl Harbor Naval Base.<sup>2</sup>

## PART 1

### THE BOY FROM HONOLULU

# THE BOY FROM HONOLULU

MAUNAKEA STREET, HONOLULU  
DECEMBER 5, 1922

Kazumasa Wada pumps the bicycle pedals in a steady rhythm, coaxing as much horsepower as possible from his fourteen-year-old legs. In Honolulu, bike rides can become passports to tropical vistas and favorite ocean fishing spots. Today, he hopes the bike can deliver him to his three o'clock class at the nearby Japanese language school. He's still building speed as he crosses Beretania Street.<sup>1</sup>

J. W. Lamb, behind the wheel of an oil truck, is turning onto Beretania from Maunakea Street when his passenger, Clinton Carroll, screams, "Look out!"

There's a small form on a bike entering the intersection, with seemingly no intention of slowing down. Lamb blares the horn and will later recall seeing the kid's feet working the pedals right up until the moment the truck's grill hit him.<sup>2</sup>

Kazumasa lies injured in the street and is taken to the hospital by a stranger in a nearby car. The child dies later that day, leaving his family bereaved. His younger brother, eleven-year-old Douglas Toshio Wada, falls physically ill for days. The pair had been steady companions, partners in exploring their island home, especially on bicycles.<sup>3</sup>

It's also a staggering blow to the child's parents, Hisakichi and Chiyo Wada. Unlike most of the hundred thousand Japanese immigrants who came to Hawaii, the family doesn't work in sugar plantations.<sup>4</sup> The pair

came to Hawaii from Yamaguchi Prefecture in 1902, when Hisakichi was hired by banker Samuel Mills Damon to build a Shinto shrine and two-story traditional Japanese tea house in Moanalua Gardens.<sup>5</sup>

Hisakichi is a *miyadaiku* carpenter, one who specializes in building and repairing Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples. The islands of Japan lack iron, so architects and artisans devised ways to construct buildings without using any metal, including nails.

A *miyadaiku* carpenter uses tools developed thousands of years ago: thin-bladed saws that cut on the pull stroke, rather than a push; planes shaped with tapering blades and an array of chisels designed by long-dead masters. The sole use of wood, the reliance on ancient tools and the spiritual, nearly ceremonial ways of working makes such carpenters revered in Japan and a rare commodity among the tens of thousands of pious Buddhist and Shinto Japanese in Hawaii.<sup>6</sup>

Hisakichi Wada also worked as contract carpenter for the city's public transportation system—there was a lot of woodworking involved in a network that depended on mule-drawn cars. The Wadas' home on Robello Lane has a livery barn; Hisakichi still makes money servicing the animals. Chiyo works as a dressmaker, aided by her daughter Itoyo, nineteen. The youngest member of the family is daughter Hanako, age nine.

Kazumasa's death changes the trajectory of the Wada family. They sue for damages and receive a \$10,000 award the next year.<sup>7</sup> (Adjusted for inflation, that's equal to about \$175,000 in 2023.) Hisakichi Wada moves the family to a plot of land on Kama Lane, a Japanese-dominated street in the Kapalama district of Honolulu, adjacent to Chinatown.

The neighborhood is an enclave for working-class Chinese, rural Hawaiian, Korean and—above all—Japanese residents. There is poverty and desperation, but also well-tended home gardens, businesses, dance halls and health-care services. “The whites neither conduct business nor live in this district,” reads one survey of Kapalama.<sup>8</sup> The exceptions are occasional groups of *haoles*<sup>9</sup> who haunt the speakeasies and gambling dens.

The elder Wada is joining the handful of other Japanese families who are building on the undeveloped land on Kama Lane, each plot built with main homes flanked by separate *ohana* buildings. These properties are known as “camps,” making the family move the founding of the “Wada Camp” on Kama Lane. The family opens a store, run by Chiyo, catering to Japanese customers in Kapalama.

Douglas Wada grows up in Honolulu, steadily Americanized by the allure of his bicycle, fishing and sports. It's easy to be an active youth on

Oahu, but he's also a social one. He's an enthusiastic Cub Scout, well-liked by his fellows in Den 13. He enjoys football despite his small size but discovers a true aptitude for baseball.

The sport anchors his identity when he is old enough to attend McKinley High School. The school's predominantly Japanese student body earns it the moniker, inside and out, of "Tokyo High." His interest in studying fades before the appeal of playing second base and a new obsession with cars.

His parents are doing their best to keep him tied to the family's culture and Shinto religion.<sup>10</sup> The children of Japanese immigrants born in the United States are called *Nisei*; their parents are called *Issei*. *Nisei* make up three-fourths of the Japanese population in Hawaii, and they're adopting American ways with a passion that disturbs many *Issei*, including Hisakichi Wada.

Like many *Nisei* in Hawaii, Douglas Wada attends Japanese language school classes a couple times a week after public school ends. His is run by a Shin Buddhist association called the West Hongwanji. They teach him more than just idioms and syntax—students study subjects from Japan's national curriculum to its culture.

For many outsiders, these schools look like indoctrination centers for the Empire of Japan. However, most teachers were born in America and studied in Japan, a group known as the *Kibei*. Those who attend classes know better than most that these are not havens of nationalism, but traditionalism.<sup>11</sup>

The language classes do little to stem the tide of Americanization of the *Nisei*, certainly not Douglas Wada. The older he gets, the more his strict parents fret over his seeming lack of direction. By the time he's a senior at McKinley in 1928, they're ready to intervene with some help from the West Hongwanji.

Chiyo Wada lures him in with an early graduation present: two steamship tickets to Japan. "I am taking you to see the coronation," she says.

She doesn't have to explain further. Emperor Taisho died in 1926, passing the throne to his son, Shōwa. Now after two years of preparatory rites, he's finally ready to be officially enthroned in a Shinto ceremony at the Imperial Palace in Kyoto.

Japan's new Emperor may be Shōwa, but English speakers more often refer to him by his personal name: Hirohito.

Shinto predates the formation of even the earliest Japanese state, but emperor worship has become a potent political force in Japan since the

government adopted the religion in the late 1800s. Since then, emperor veneration has become more than the formality of Shinto ceremonies at state functions. Now the government glorifies traditional Japanese virtues to the violent exclusion of Western influences, while neighbors in Asia are labeled as equally inferior. Under State Shinto, expansionist foreign policy has the fervor of a crusade, and a coronation doubles as an ascension to government-mandated godhood.

For the Wada family, venturing to see Hirohito enthroned is not a political act but a religious pilgrimage. This is a major moment for Shintoists, given the divine nature of the emperor's position. The new Emperor's birthday, April 29, will now be celebrated across the world, and crowds will flock to Shinto shrines to post their hopes for the next year on paper notes.

On April 6, 1928, Douglas and Chiyo Wada wave from the deck of the *Shinyo Maru*, receiving cheers from fifty of his fellow Scouts gathered at the pier to send him off.<sup>12</sup> He's nearly bursting with pride, but the teenager is oblivious to what's really happening. The Emperor won't be crowned until November; Douglas's parents have arranged for him to study abroad at a school run by the West Hongwanji. He isn't heading to Japan as a tourist, but as an unwitting transplant.<sup>13</sup>

Despite Douglas's shock and eventual realization that he's meant to stay there, Kyoto proves a marvel for the young man. He has endless curiosity for the city, impressed with its sheer size—more than double Honolulu's population—and its dogged retention of traditional religion, architecture and culture.<sup>14</sup> With no port, it's been spared from the blights of modern industry. There are Buddhist temples that leave him awestruck, winding streets lined with the shops of master artisans, the splendors of the Shogun-haunted Nijo Palace and public parks clustered with people meditating and practicing martial arts. Apprentice carpenters and craftsmen from across Japan maintain religious buildings or build new ones and return home to use the techniques.

Kyoto is a massive medieval Japanese city, preserved in time, except for one modern fascination: baseball.

Missionaries and language teachers from America introduced the sport to Japan in 1872, and the first organized team, the Shimbashi Athletic Club, formed in 1878. Since then, baseball has become Japan's undisputed favorite pastime, its public fixated on the pros, regional leagues, university tournaments and even high-school rivalries.<sup>15</sup>

As a baseball powerhouse in Kyoto, Heian Middle School welcomed Wada's infielder skills (and advanced age) on the roster. His skills

developed and his nerves hardened during high-pressure games. He spent a month in 1932 on a playing tour of Formosa and even took the field in an exhibition game in Kyoto against some retired American players, including Ty Cobb.<sup>16</sup>

Wada envisions staying in Japan after graduation from Heian and playing ball for Waseda University. He is even accepted by the school, and the team's coach has agreed to play him. But one threat clouds that future: the fear of being conscripted into the Japanese Army.

Since 1927, all Japanese men were required to report for examination at age twenty. Those selected for military duty were obliged to serve for two years and remained eligible for active duty until age forty.

Being drafted these days likely means going overseas. In September 1931, Japanese forces invaded Manchuria, hypocritically citing "more than 120 cases of infringement of rights and interests" of Japanese and Korean residents there. After five months of fighting, Japan established the puppet state of Manchukuo. The reaction from Russia, Britain, France and the United States is unsurprisingly bellicose.

Wada had renounced his dual citizenship in 1928 before leaving Hawaii, thinking this would clear up his legal status.<sup>17</sup> But as the Imperial Army scooped up his friends and teammates, he sensed they wouldn't care about technicalities. Even getting paperwork to return to Hawaii could invite what recipients call the *akagami*, a red-colored paper delivered overnight, ordering him to serve.<sup>18</sup>

Baseball becomes his way out. When ballplayers from the United States visit Kyoto and play Heian Middle School, Wada is delighted to see McKinley High School graduates among them. They create a "vacancy" on the team.<sup>19</sup>

When the McKinley team leaves Kyoto, they have Douglas Wada with them to help with the gear. It was an easy escape, except Wada isn't able to recover his travel documents, including his passport and certificate of citizenship (required of all Japanese Americans travelling abroad). He doesn't return to Hawaii with the team but instead stays in Yokohama with his uncle, Iwaichi Wada, until securing passage home and making his escape back to the land of his birth and away from the rapidly expanding Imperial Army.

## CHICHIBU MARU

## HONOLULU HARBOR

APRIL 27, 1933

Wada takes in the skyline of Honolulu from the deck of the 560-foot passenger liner *Chichibu Maru*, feeling overwhelming relief.<sup>20</sup> The city's welcome, familiar terrain is marked with a new skyline; there are new hotels on the oceanfront and tall office buildings downtown. There are also more berths for cruise ships in the harbor than he's even seen before, especially beneath the welcoming Aloha Tower at Pier 9.<sup>21</sup>

The twenty-two-year-old has spent the last five years in Japan, with only one trip back to Hawaii in 1930. During his visit, his family seemed impressed by his language skills and, back then, he was eager to return to Japan. If he only knew then how his next trip would end—by slipping the Japanese government authorities to escape back to the United States.

The *Chichibu Maru* sidles up next to its pier and Wada prepares to disembark. He's anticipating a cold homecoming—he tells teammates that his parents will be “mad as hell.”<sup>22</sup>

Before he can worry about the reunion, though, he must face American immigration officials without his documents. It takes until the next day, after an uncomfortable night in a detention cell, for the issue to be sorted out. Douglas Wada then heads to Kama Lane, where his family is waiting.

The Wada Camp is busier than ever. Chiyo manages the store, while fourteen-year-old Hanako helps out. The Americanization of the youngest Wada child is undeniable; she's started to sometimes go by the names “Hannah” and “Edith.”

The family's eldest daughter, twenty-five-year-old Itoyo, was also born in Hawaii but is not quite as enamored of it as her sister. The diminutive woman, standing just five foot tall, left school after sixth grade and can't read or write in English. She married salesman and legal Japanese alien Katsuke Yamamoto in 1924, which forced Itoyo to renounce her US citizenship. The couple has two daughters, Katsuko at age eight and Takeko at age five, all living with the family in one crowded Kama Lane house; the property's *ohana* home is being rented to two young, single boarders.<sup>23</sup>

The biggest change on Kama Lane is the Shinto shrine that's opened next door to the Wada Camp. In 1931, the Kotohira Jinsha bought more than 57,000 square feet of land at 1045 Kama Lane for their third, and grandest, Shinto complex in Honolulu. The bulk of the money came from



fundraisers like movie viewings organized by volunteers. Hisakichi Wada donated his skills to carve a Kompira shrine, dedicated to sailors and seafaring, now prominently displayed.

The plans for the grounds are not solely cosmetic—construction of a community center, a *kyudo* archery range, an outdoor theater, a *renbujo* for the martial art *kendo* and a *sumo* ring is even now underway. When fully completed, it'll be able to host events involving hundreds of participants and spectators.<sup>24</sup>

Shinto is an ancient religion that can be traced back to the Yayoi culture from the third or second century BCE. The earliest writings about Shinto appear from the eighth century. It's a polytheistic religion that revolves around the worship of spirits called *kami*, which inhabit all things and are worshiped within households and public shrines called *jinsha*. The religion has no single doctrine, but the ceremonies center on purity rituals meant to appease various local *kami*. Shinto is often lumped in with Buddhism, but the basic tenants are very different. Buddhists don't worship *kami* and aspire to transcend the suffering cosmos, while Shintoists more pragmatically adapt to the world around them.

The Kotohira Jinsha was started under the auspices of another Japanese Shinto shrine by Rev. Hitoshi Hirota, who moved to Hawaii with his wife and daughter in 1917. The thirty-six-year-old cleaved off his own sect just two years after his arrival, establishing a new shrine with him as its head *guji*, or chief priest. The shrine is sort of an umbrella of worship to several spirits, each with a separate reverence club attached, but the one *kami* that all Kotohira members share is Kompira, the god of merchant sailors. The broad code of ethics at the core of Kompira worship makes worship easy common ground.

Kotohira is sanctioned in Japan as a legitimate branch of a famous shrine in Kagawa-ken. As of 1924, the Kotohira Jinsha has also been acknowledged by the Hawaiian territorial government as a nonprofit church.

Ties between the Wada family and the shrine go deep. On June 24, 1924, the influential Reverend Hirota performed the marriage ceremony for Itoyo Wada despite his suffering from an advancing illness. He died the next year at age forty-two. The Rev. Misao Isobe is now in charge, and he's leading the shrine to new heights in Honolulu.

One ancient celebration that the Kotohira Shrine no longer commemorates is the Japanese emperor's birthday. Kama Lane used to be the epicenter of these activities in Hawaii, but in 1930, the Japanese Consulate insisted on taking over. Hardly anyone even stops by the

Kotohira Shrine on April 29 to venerate Hirohito.<sup>25</sup> A flight from the authorities was certainly not the kind of immersive experience Hisakichi Wada envisioned when he sent his son to Japan. Yet the overall purpose of the trip is a success. Douglas Wada is now steeped in Japanese traditions and the Shinto religion. He also now speaks fluent Japanese, something that eludes even those Hawaiian Nisei who study at local language schools.

Most importantly, there's a new worldliness and sense of purpose that travel has imbued into his previously frivolous son. He's been seasoned by his experiences abroad, sobered by the world beyond Hawaii. If Hisakichi's goal was to have Japan shape Douglas as he became a man, it's an absolute victory.

## **HONOLULU STADIUM**

**HONOLULU  
APRIL 13, 1936**

Douglas Wada steps to the plate and takes a moment to stare down the opposing pitcher, Ray Uchimura. He tries to tune out the noise of the two thousand spectators in the stands at Honolulu Stadium, his teammates watching from the dugout, as well as the runners standing on each base. There's only the next pitch.

It's the second inning of the scoreless Americans of Japanese Ancestry championship game, played before a packed house. AJA games have been a staple of Hawaiian sports since 1909, and starting for a team is a high-profile position for the university student. Sunday games are major events in Honolulu; most draw about a thousand fans who pay a quarter each to watch. Since the stadium costs just one hundred dollars to rent, profits are guaranteed. There's even more action to be found in the illegal (but tolerated) betting pools that spring up in and around the stadium.

Today's game is more than a typical matchup. Wada plays for the Wahias, who haven't won a championship in the twelve years of the league's existence, and today they're squaring off against their rivals, the Palamas.

The AJA League is a very public, popular expression of Nisei pride.

There's an outcry in 1936 when the Japanese American owner of the Asahis team appoints Neal "Rusty" Blaisdell as coach. "The Asahis have always been the only strictly one-race team," writes *Hawaii Hochi* sports reporter Percy Koizumi. "The Asahis have a tradition to uphold. You might pass this up as a lot of hocus-pocus entertained by fossil-headed fans, but you'd be surprised to see how empty the stands will be if these fossil-heads decide to keep away."<sup>26</sup> (Blaisdell kept the job.)

Behind the Wahiawas-Palamas rivalry is intra-Nisei racial tension. After some hand-wringing, the AJA League leadership allowed mixed-race players, provided that they have the proper Japanese surnames of their fathers. Not every team holds to the same rules: the Palamas are a mixed-race team, while the Wahiawas are not.<sup>27</sup>

Uchimura settles into his posture on the mound, and Wada crouches in anticipation. The pitcher seems rattled, and now he's got no room for a mistake after giving up a single to start the inning and then walking two hitters. Wada swings, feeling the satisfying, solid impact of the bat on the ball. He's already moving toward first as the ball streaks into left field, the men on base rushing into motion as the ball plunks into the grass. The Wahiawas on second and third race home—two RBIs for Wada—and the last man scores when the leftfielder bobbles the ball.

The Palamas won't fill this deficit, and the Wahiawas win the championship, 8 to 4. The *Honolulu Star Bulletin* reporter John Fukao writes that the team "finally realized their dream" when they "drubbed the Palamas" in the championship. The victorious team receives a massive silver trophy donated by Genbei Watanabe, owner of the local Seikosha watch store.<sup>28</sup>

Amid the celebration is worry for the twenty-two-year-old Wada. He's currently in the final semester of his senior year at the University of Hawaii, where he also plays baseball, but he doesn't see a future for himself on the field. He's already dropped his demanding major in agricultural science and switched to physical administration—a "duck soup" business and economics major, Wada admits—that enables him to focus on sports.

With an easier major, his grades improve. Wada's even a participating member of the H Club, restricted to accomplished students who have earned athletic awards. He's also the one-time winner of the Know Your University trivia contest and its reward of tickets to the King Theater to see the play *Richard of Bordeaux*.

Playing baseball for the university team is true to his American roots, but by taking the field with the AJA he's also able to use baseball to

showcase his Japanese identity. It's been a tug-of-war throughout his college years at the University of Hawaii, and he finds himself accruing many names. He uses the name "Toisho" in yearbooks and public records. Most haole students and professors, like the sport press covering AJA League, call him "Douglas." Some of his teammates call him "Chicken" or its derivative, "Chick."

Graduation is looming this May, and the only thing he can think to do is go to graduate school. But those plans are about to change.

## KAGAWA PREFECTURE

SHIKOKU, JAPAN  
NOVEMBER 10, 1936

Ensign Takeo Yoshikawa steps out of the Imperial Navy's Regional Headquarters and takes the first deep breath of his new life. His old one, so full of promise, ended in disappointment. Now he's being given a second chance to fulfill what he always felt was an important destiny.

Yoshikawa's youth on Shikoku Island was defined by the pursuit of excellence, as demanded by his physically abusive father. Learning to swim in a river encapsulated the relationship, as the man dragged the boy to deep water and pushed him away to sink or swim. Now that he's older, Takeo recognizes the cruelty but also appreciates the results. He's an excellent, fearless open-water swimmer and has tested himself along miles of Shikoku's ragged coast.<sup>29</sup>

Yoshikawa was an active youth but had a scare when he lost the tip of his middle finger in an "accident." He never discloses how. Despite the injury, during high school he became a champion at *kendo*, the martial art of bamboo armor (*bōgu*) and swords (*shinai*).

Yoshikawa was being primed for a military career, replacing the firm hand of his father with that of the Japanese Empire. He's been instilled with what he calls a "firm and abiding belief in *bushido*—the unquestioning and absolute loyalty of the samurai." He's also a Zen Buddhist. He admires the faith because its "teachings center around the single concept of self-discipline evolving into loyalty and devotion beyond self." It's no bad philosophy for a soldier, he figured.