

"LIFE IS AS THE WEIGHT OF A FEATHER COMPARED TO ONE'S DUTY" - JAPANESE PROVERB

# KAMIKAZE PILOTS



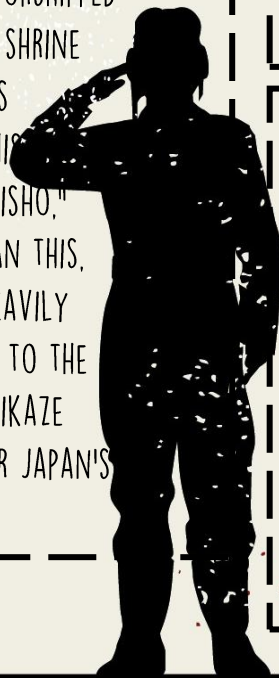
KAMIKAZE: 'DIVINE WIND'

## FIVE POINT OATH:

- 1) A SOLDIER MUST MAKE LOYALTY HIS OBLIGATION
- 2) A SOLDIER MUST MAKE PROPRIETY HIS WAY OF LIFE
- 3) A SOLDIER MUST HIGHLY ESTEEM MILITARY VALOR
- 4) A SOLDIER MUST HAVE A HIGH REGARD FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS
- 5) A SOLDIER MUST LIVE A SIMPLE LIFE

## WHY?

THE REASONS FOR BECOMING A KAMIKAZE PILOT STEM FROM THE JAPANESE HERITAGE. FROM THE TIME THAT THEY WERE YOUNG, JAPANESE CHILDREN WERE TAUGHT TO ACCEPT THE FACT THAT THEIR LIVES BELONGED TO THE EMPEROR. AS A RESULT, IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF JAPAN, CHILDREN WERE TAUGHT THAT "DYING FOR THE EMPEROR WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO AND THAT, THOSE WHO DO, WILL BE WORSHIPPED "AFTER DEATH AT THE "YAKUSUNI SHRINE": A SHRINE ERECTED TO COMMEMORATE ANYONE WHO HAS DIED IN SERVICE OF THE EMPIRE OF JAPAN. THIS LEAD TO THE JAPANESE MOTTO OF "JUSHI REISHO," (SACRIFICE LIFE) BEING TAUGHT AROUND JAPAN THIS, ALONG WITH THE FACT THAT THE MILITARY HEAVILY CENSORED INFORMATION ABOUT DEFEATS, LED TO THE BELIEF THAT IF ONE WERE TO BECOME A KAMIKAZE PILOT, HE WOULD BE SACRIFICING HIS LIFE FOR JAPAN'S ULTIMATE VICTORY..



## WHO?

KAMIKAZE WAS A SPECIAL ATTACK UNIT OF THE JAPANESE MILITARY WHO SPECIALISED IN SUICIDE ATTACKS ON ALLIED NAVAL VESSELS DURING THE CLOSING STAGES OF WORLD WAR II. THE ATTACKS BEGAN IN OCTOBER 1944 FOLLOWING SEVERAL CRIPPLING MILITARY DEFEATS HOWEVER, THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT REFUSED TO SURRENDER. THE INTRODUCTION OF KAMIKAZE PILOTS WERE USED AS A LAST ATTEMPT DEFENCE MECHANISM TO HALT ADVANCING ALLIED FORCES WHO WERE MOVING TOWARDS THE JAPANESE HOME ISLANDS.

## RECRUITMENT:

IN ORDER TO BE CHOSEN FOR SUCH AN "HONOUR," A PILOT HAD TO FIRST FILL OUT AN APPLICATION. PILOTS CHOSEN WERE USUALLY UNEDUCATED MEN AND WERE THE SECOND OR THIRD SONS OF A FAMILY. IT WAS THE BELIEF THAT THE EDUCATED MEN WERE NEEDED TO WIN THE WAR AND COULD NOT BE SACRIFICED. ALSO, THE FIRST BORN SON WAS RARELY CHOSEN BECAUSE THEY WERE TO INHERIT THE FAMILY BUSINESS AND THUS COULD NOT BE SACRIFICED. PRIOR TO TAKING OFF, EACH PILOT WOULD WRITE A FAREWELL LETTER TO HIS FAMILY. IT WOULD BE SENT AFTER THERE WAS CONFIRMATION OF HIS DEATH.

## KAMIKAZE AND THE SAMURAI

LIKE SAMURAI, THE KAMIKAZE VIEWED DEATH AS PART OF LIFE, THEY CONDITIONED THEMSELVES TO ACCEPT DEATH, NOT FEAR IT. LIKE THEIR SAMURAI PREDECESSORS, THE KAMIKAZE WORE A 'HACHIMAKI', A HEADBAND MADE OF A FOLDED PIECE OF WHITE CLOTH WHICH SIGNIFIED COURAGE AND CALM. AS KAMIKAZE WOULD VOLUNTEER FOR SUCH MISSIONS, IT SHOWED THAT THEY WOULD RATHER DIE THAN BE DEFEATED. IN DYING THEY, LIKE THE SAMURAI, WOULD BRING HONOUR TO THEMSELVES, THEIR FAMILY AND THEIR COUNTRY.

DURING WORLD WAR II, APPROXIMATELY 3860 KAMIKAZE PILOTS DIED.  
ROUGHLY 19% OF KAMIKAZE ATTACKS MANAGED TO HIT A SHIP.