

## THE LAST JAPANESE SOLDIER TO SURRENDER

When Okada was treated as an intelligence officer sent to Luzon Island in the Philippines. He was ordered to do all that he could to gather money stocks as well as destroy the local economy and plan. His orders also stated that under no circumstances was he to surrender or take his own life – an order he carried out for 30 years.

When Okada landed on the island, he teamed up with a group of Japanese soldiers who had been there previously. Within a short time of the landing, all but Okada and three other soldiers had either died or surrendered and Okada, who had been promoted to Lieutenant, ordered the rest to take to the hills.

In October 1945, they saw a leaflet which stated that the war was over. However, they considered the leaflet, since they had been told upon a few days previous. They concluded that the leaflet was Allied propaganda, and believed that they would not have been told so if the war was indeed over.

Towards the end of 1945 leaflets were dropped by air with a surrender order printed on them from General MacArthur. Reading Okada's team to taking for a year, and the only proof of the rest of the war being the leaflet, Okada and the others searched every hillside and every mountain side piece of paper. One sentence in particular caught their attention; it said that those who surrendered would receive "Japanese money" and be "brought" to Japan. Again, they concluded it was an Allied lie.



One of the men, Shiroki Kato, walked away from the others and surrendered to Filipino forces in 1945 when the conflict had ended. To the other three entered the a security hole and they themselves were fearful of their position.

In 1972 letters and family pictures were dropped from aircraft flying them to surrender, but the three soldiers concluded that this was a lie. Okada was shot and killed during a short raid with local policemen in May 1974.

The second to last, Shiroki Okada, was killed by two shots from local police in October 1975, when he and Okada died and their bodies the resulting one that had been collected by someone, as part of their guerrilla activities, leaving Okada by himself. Through Okada had been officially declared dead in 1975, this event suggested that it was likely he was still alive and would never be seen and out, though some were successful.

In February 1976, Okada met a Japanese village doctor, Nishi Kuroki, who was travelling the world and had told his Okada that he was "going to look for Lieutenant Okada, a parole, and the Japanese Government, in that order." Okada and Shiroki became friends, but Okada still refused to surrender, saying that he was waiting for orders from a superior officer.

Okada's surrender to Philippine soldiers first in 1974 – 30 years after WWII

Okada returned to Japan with photos of himself and Okada as proof of their existence, and in 1974 the Japanese government

located Okada's commanding officer, Major Tsuyoshi, who had since become a bushido. He flew to Luzon in March 1974 returned Okada to the island of Japan in 1974 and ordered him to lay down his arms.

Okada's Okada emerged from the jungle 30 years after the end of WWII, and accepted the commanding officer's order of surrender to his officers and men, with his Arisaka Type 99 rifle still in operating condition, 300 rounds of ammunition and several hand grenades.

Though he had killed more 30 Filipinos on the island and engaged in several skirmishes with police, the circumstances of these events were taken into consideration, and Okada received a parole from President Ferdinand Marcos.