

War in the Pacific

MAIN IDEA

After early losses, the Allies defeated the Japanese in the Pacific.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Since the war, the United States has continued to play a major role in Asia.

TERMS & NAMES

Bataan Death March
Battle of Midway
island hopping
Manhattan Project
Hiroshima

ONE AMERICAN'S STORY

In April 1942, more than 70,000 Filipino and American troops surrendered to the Japanese on the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines. From there, the Japanese marched the soldiers about 60 miles to a prison camp. On the way, about 10,000 prisoners died from shootings, beatings, or starvation. Sidney Stewart was a U.S. soldier in the **Bataan Death March**.



Thousands of American prisoners endure the Bataan Death March.

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

The sun beat down on my throbbing head. I thought only of bringing my feet up, putting them down, bringing them up. . . .

A great many of the prisoners reached the end of their endurance. The drop-outs . . . fell by the hundreds in the road. . . .

There was a crack of a pistol. . . . There was another shot, and more shots, and I knew that, straggling along behind us, was a clean-up squad of Japanese, killing their helpless victims. . . . I gritted my teeth. "Oh, God, I've got to keep going. I can't stop. I can't die like that."

Sidney Stewart, *Give Us This Day*

As you will read in this section, the fighting was brutal before the Allies emerged victorious.



Taking Notes

Use your chart to take notes about battles in the Pacific.

IMPORTANT BATTLES IN EUROPE, AFRICA, AND THE PACIFIC

September 1, 1939—Germany invades Poland → →

Japan Expands Its Empire

At the same time as the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese forces launched attacks throughout the Pacific. By Christmas, Japan controlled Hong Kong, Thailand, and the U.S. islands of Guam and Wake.

The Japanese also pushed further into Southeast Asia, attacking Malaya and Burma. Great Britain, which ruled these lands and Hong Kong, fought back. But British forces proved to be no match for the Japanese invaders. Japan conquered the region within a few months.

But it took Japan longer to conquer the Philippines. They invaded the islands in December 1941 and pushed the Allied forces from the capital city of Manila onto the Bataan Peninsula. American and Filipino troops, led by U.S. General Douglas MacArthur, then fought the Japanese to a standstill for several months.

As fighting raged in the Philippines, the Allies feared that the Japanese might invade Australia. President Roosevelt ordered MacArthur to withdraw to Australia in March 1942. But MacArthur promised, on reaching Australia, “I shall return.” Shortly after MacArthur left, the Japanese mounted an offensive. The U.S. troops on Bataan surrendered and endured the brutal Bataan Death March. The situation looked bleak for the Allies. But the momentum would soon turn.

“I shall return.”

Gen. Douglas MacArthur

The Allies Turn the Tide at Midway

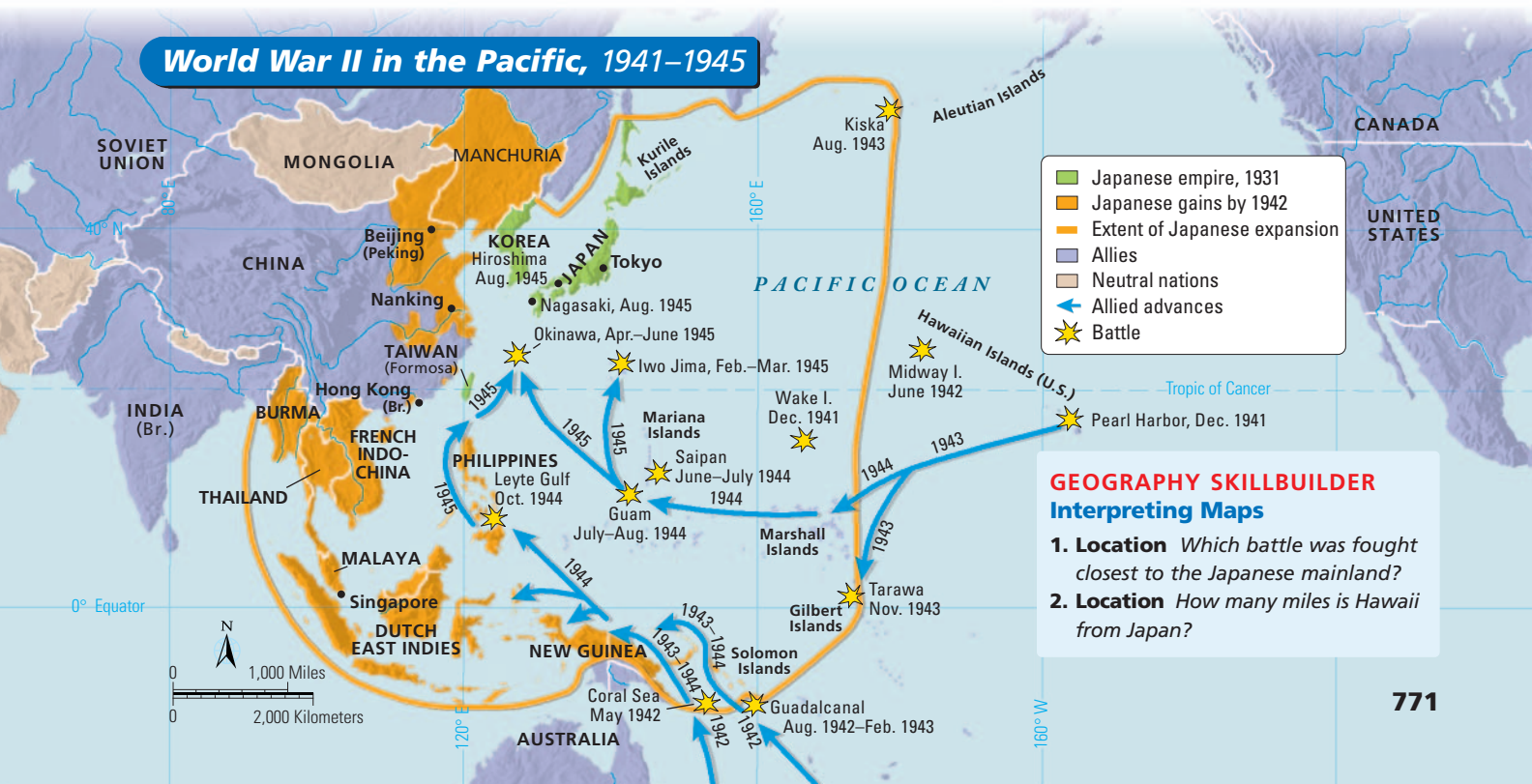
In the spring of 1942, the Allies began to turn the tide against the Japanese. The push began in April, with a daring air raid on Japanese cities, including Tokyo. Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle led 16 bombers in the attack. Doolittle’s raid caused little damage. But it shocked Japan’s leaders and boosted the Allies’ morale.

In May, the U.S. Navy clashed with Japanese forces in the Coral Sea off Australia. For the first time in naval history, enemy ships fought a battle without seeing each other. Instead, war planes launched from aircraft carriers fought the battle. Neither side won a clear victory in the Battle of the Coral Sea. However, the Americans had successfully blocked Japan’s push toward Australia.

The opposing navies clashed again in June off the island of Midway in the central Pacific. The U.S. Navy destroyed four Japanese carriers and at least 250 planes. America lost one carrier and about 150 planes. The **Battle of Midway**, in June 1942, was a turning point in the war.

ReadingHistory

A. Evaluating
What was the significance of the Battle of the Coral Sea?



The Allies Advance

After the Battle of Midway, the Allies went on the attack to liberate the lands Japan had conquered. Rather than attempt to retake every Japanese-held island, the Allies decided to invade islands that were not heavily defended by the Japanese. The Allies could then use the captured islands to stage further attacks. This strategy was known as **island hopping**.

The two sides fought an important battle on the island of Guadalcanal. U.S. Marines marched ashore in August 1942. Six months of bitter fighting followed. In February 1943, the Allies finally won. They had gained their first major land victory against the Japanese.

Playing a role in this victory—and many others throughout the Pacific—was a group of Navajo Indians. To keep Japanese intelligence from breaking its codes, the U.S. military had begun using the Navajo language to transmit important messages. The marines recruited about 400 Navajos to serve as Code Talkers. They accompanied troops into battle and helped them communicate safely.

In October 1944, Allied forces invaded the Philippines. The effort included a massive naval battle off the Philippine island Leyte (LAY•tee). About 280 ships participated. The Allies won the three-day battle. Japan's navy was so badly damaged that it was no longer a threat. Allied forces came ashore. They liberated Manila in March 1945. General MacArthur, three years after leaving the Philippines, had returned.

Although they lost the fight in the Philippines, the Japanese increased their use of a new weapon—the *kamikaze* (KAH•mih• KAH•zee), or suicide pilot. *Kamikazes* filled their planes with explosives and crashed them into Allied warships. Japanese pilots volunteered for these suicide missions. But they couldn't stop Allied advances.

Iwo Jima and Okinawa

By early 1945, with Japan's defenses weakened, the Allies began bombing Japan. To step up the campaign, however, they had to establish bases closer to the mainland. They chose the Japanese-held islands of Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

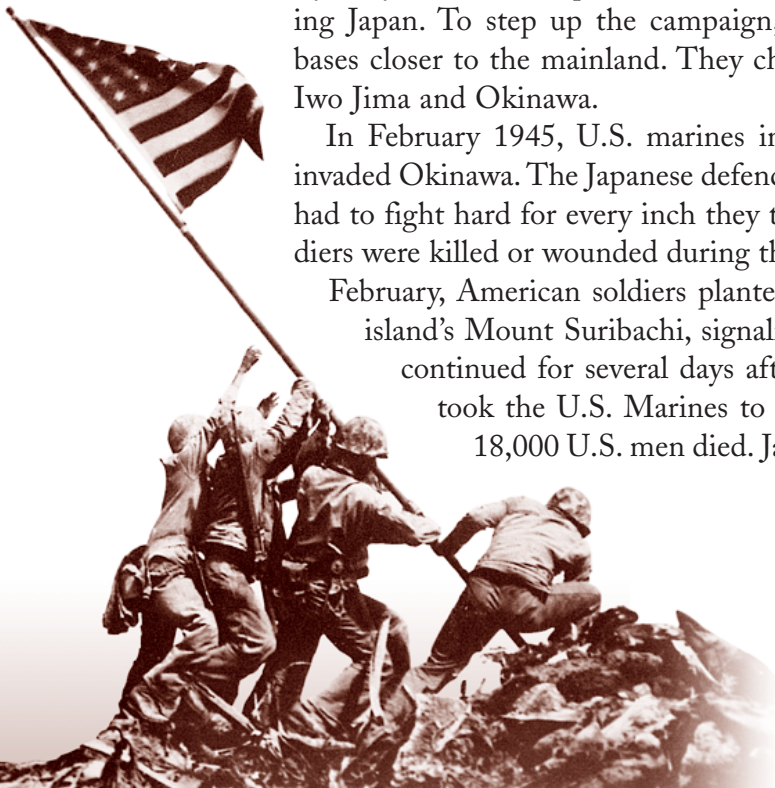
In February 1945, U.S. marines invaded Iwo Jima. In April, they invaded Okinawa. The Japanese defended the islands fiercely. The Allies had to fight hard for every inch they took. More than 23,000 U.S. soldiers were killed or wounded during the campaign for Iwo Jima. In late

February, American soldiers planted the U.S. flag at the top of the island's Mount Suribachi, signaling their victory, though fighting continued for several days afterward. In the several months it took the U.S. Marines to conquer both islands, more than 18,000 U.S. men died. Japanese deaths exceeded 120,000.

ReadingHistory

B. Finding Main Ideas What was the Allies' strategy in the Pacific?

U.S. Marines raise a flag atop Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima.



ReadingHistory

C. Summarizing What happened during the battles for Iwo Jima and Okinawa?

Atomic Weapons End the War

In the summer of 1945, Japan continued to fight. The Allies planned to invade Japan in November 1945. American military leaders feared that an invasion of mainland Japan might cost 200,000 American casualties. Therefore, American officials considered the use of an atomic bomb.

Shortly after entering the war, the United States set up the **Manhattan Project** in 1942. This was a top-secret program to build an atomic bomb. Led by American scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer, the project team worked for three years to construct the weapon.

Soon after officials successfully tested the bomb, Truman told Japan that if it did not surrender, it faced destruction. The Japanese refused to give in. On August 6, 1945, the B-29 bomber *Enola Gay* dropped an atomic bomb on the city of **Hiroshima**. The explosion killed more than 70,000 people and turned five square miles into a wasteland. Still, the Japanese refused to surrender. On August 9, the United States dropped a second atomic bomb on Nagasaki, killing another 40,000. On August 14, Japan surrendered.

On September 2, 1945, Japanese and Allied leaders met aboard the U.S. battleship *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay. There, Japanese officials signed an official letter of surrender.

The war changed forever the lives of the soldiers who fought in it. In the next section, you will learn about how the war affected Americans back home.



The Japanese city of Hiroshima was leveled by the atomic bomb.

For an activity about the decision to drop the atomic bomb . . .



Background

By the end of 1945, another 70,000 people had died due to injuries and radiation caused by the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

Section 3 Assessment

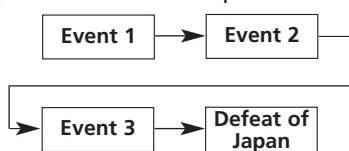
1. Terms & Names

Explain the significance of:

- Bataan Death March
- Battle of Midway
- island hopping
- Manhattan Project
- Hiroshima

2. Using Graphics

Use a diagram like the one shown to list events that led to the defeat of Japan.



Which event do you think was most important, and why?

3. Main Ideas

- Why was the Battle of Midway considered such an important victory for the Allies?
- Why did the Allies want to conquer the islands of Iwo Jima and Okinawa?
- What event finally prompted Japan to surrender?

4. Critical Thinking

Forming Opinions What might be the arguments for and against using the atomic bomb on Japan?

THINK ABOUT

- the consequences of invading Japan
- the bomb's destructive power

ACTIVITY OPTIONS

LANGUAGE ARTS

SCIENCE

Research the Manhattan Project. Write a **biography** of one of the scientists on the project or draw a **diagram** explaining how the atomic bomb worked.