

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

Activity Title: Geography of the Pacific War

Areas of the museum to visit for this lesson plan: The George H.W. Bush Gallery

Teacher Note: If you are bringing a large group you will want to split them up into groups of 10- 25 and have them start at different locations. These smaller sizes allow all to access the various areas at one time.

Activity Objectives: The student understands how geographic factors influence policies of societies and the impact of interactions between people and the physical environment.

TEKS:

6th Grade:

113.18(b)(3)(A), 113.18(b)(6)(A), 113.41(c)(7)(E),(F)

World History Studies:

113.42(c)(15)(B), 113.42(c)(16)(A),(B),(C)

World Geography Studies:

113.43(c)(4)(A),(B), 113.43(c)(14)(C)

Activity Description:

1. **Prior to the museum visit (Time Frame: 15 min.):** During World War II in the Pacific, the Americans invaded islands for a variety of reasons, but it was usually to capture an area to set up air or naval bases.

a. Man constantly modifies his environment. What major environmental modification was done that allowed the U.S. Navy to send ships from the Atlantic to the Pacific without having to go around South America?

b. The capture of the Mariana Islands in 1944 allowed our B-29 bombers to do what?

c. Both the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy had engineer units. The Navy engineer units were called Construction Battalions, they were better known by what name?

1. **During the museum visit (Time Frame: 2 hrs.):**

The Pacific Ocean area has a wide variety of geography and climate from the frozen tundra in the north to coral reefed islands to steamy jungle covered islands. You are going to follow the path of the U.S. Army's 7th Infantry Division as it fought its way across the Pacific during World War II. The 7th Infantry Division was activated in July 1940 at Fort Ord, California.

Use the attached map to plot the path of the 7th Infantry Division during its campaigns in the Pacific.

Aleutians (# 230 on the map)

The islands of Attu and Kiska in the Aleutians was seized by Japan in June 1942. They were American territory and we needed to take them back. The 7th Infantry Division landed on Attu on 11 May 1943.

a. Look at the photographs. What is your first impression of the weather?

b. Look at the small inset map on the large photo of the ship. The brown areas represent elevation, with the highest being over 2000 feet above sea level. Do you think these slopes were gentle or steep?

c. The average temperature on Attu in May is 38 degrees Fahrenheit and Attu averages 4.4 inches of rain in May. Look at the photo of the soldiers. Are they dressed for this kind of weather?

Marshall Islands (# 320 on the map)

The division moved to Hawaii in September 1943 and on 31 January 1944 assaulted Kwajalein Atoll (an atoll is an island consisting of a circular coral reef surrounding a lagoon).

- a. On the computer interactive select “Background”, then select “Geography”. When is the dry period in the Marshalls?

What are the average high and low temperatures?

- b. Kwajalein Atoll is the largest atoll in the world. Kwajalein Atoll is 40 miles long and has three major islands: Kwajalein, Roi and Namur. During the U.S. invasion the 4th Marine Division took Roi and Namur while the 7th Infantry Division took Kwajalein. On the computer interactive select “Maps”. Select the third map which shows the main islands of Kwajalein Atoll. The code names of the islands are in parenthesis. What was the code name for Kwajalein Island?

- c. In the artifact case to the right of the computer interactive there is a Proclamation to the People of the Marshall Islands. Which section deals with local laws and customs?

Why would we be concerned with local laws and customs?

Leyte (# 350 on the map)

- a. Look at the map on the first panel titled “Return to the Philippines”. At what town did the 7th Infantry Division land?

- b. Select an artifact on exhibit and describe it

- c. On the panel “Ground Battle for Leyte” (near the end of the exhibit just before the Propaganda exhibit), how many inches of rain fell in the month of November on Leyte?

Okinawa (# 430 on the map)

On 1 April 1945 the 7th and 96th Infantry Divisions and the 1st and 6th Marine Divisions assaulted the island of Okinawa. Okinawa was Japanese territory and part of the Ryukyu Islands.

- a. On the computer interactive select “Okinawa” then “Background” then “Geography”.

On page 1: The Ryukyu Islands separate what two bodies of water?

On page 1: Three quarters of the civilian population lived on what part of the island?

At the bottom of page 2: What is the average temperature range on Okinawa?

- b. Select any artifact on exhibit and describe it

3. After the museum visit (Time Frame: 40 min.): Geographic factors influence a nation's power or ability to control territory. The 7th Infantry Division in World War II experienced many different types of geographical factors as it fought its way across the Pacific.

- a. Compare the weather and terrain in the Aleutians to those of Kwajalein.
- b. Compare the weather and terrain on Leyte to those on Okinawa.

Vocabulary:

influence environment society terrain modify
exhibit dominate campaign adapt fortification

Resources: To locate the areas in the museum relevant to this lesson plan you will need to download the two maps from the TEKS Based Lesson Plans page of this website.

Materials: pencil, paper

Technology Utilization: Touchscreen interactive in exhibit area.

Accommodations: Students may require a printed copy of questions to answer during the museum visit.

