

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

Activity Title: Advancing Across the Pacific (High School)

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 will understand the geography of the Pacific Ocean as it relates to World War II and understand the strategy employed by the United States in crossing the Pacific to defeat Japan. The student will understand the impact of some of the prominent campaigns and battles fought in the Pacific during the war against Japan.

TEKS:

U.S. History Since 1877:

113.41(c)(2)(D), 113.41(c)(4)(A),(B), 113.41(c)(7)(A),(B)(E),(F)

World History Studies:

113.42(c)(1)(F), 113.42(c)(12)(A),(B),(C)

World Geography Studies:

113.42(c)(4)(A),(B),(C), 113.43(c)(8)(B)

113.43(c)(14)(C), 113.43(c)(19)(A),(B)

Activity Description:

1. Prior to the museum visit (Time Frame: 30 min.): This can either be a teacher led discussion or an individual exercise.

In order to understand the magnitude of the U.S. campaigns to cross the Pacific Ocean and defeat Japan you must first understand the geography of the Pacific. Two elements of this are size and distance. The Pacific Ocean is the largest

ocean on earth and occupies about one third of the earth's surface. Distance is another major factor. As a reference, it is 2443 miles from Los Angeles to New York. From Los Angeles it is 2551 miles to Honolulu, Hawaii; 5451 miles to Tokyo, Japan; 7295 miles to Manila, Philippines and 7918 miles to Melbourne, Australia.

Within this vast ocean are islands, some of which are strategically important. Those islands are ones which have deep water ports and/or usable land for building air bases. Many of these islands would have to be taken to build bases and provide support for the next jump forward.

Before the war began the United States controlled some of these strategic islands including the Philippines, Guam, Wake and Midway. **Locate these on a map of the Pacific.** The Japanese also controlled strategic islands in the Pacific before the war including the Marianas (except for Guam), the Palaus, the Carolines and the Marshalls. **Locate these on a map of the Pacific.**

The U.S. military in World War II consisted of the Army and the Navy. The Air Force was part of the Army during the war and did not become a separate service until 1947. The Marine Corps is part of the Navy and the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Merchant Marine were under Navy control during the war.

The Japanese military also consisted of an Army and Navy each with their own Air Force. The Imperial Japanese Navy was responsible for the majority of the Pacific Ocean. The Imperial Japanese Army's major focus was China and Manchuria but also had primary responsibility for New Guinea, the Philippines and the Dutch East Indies. The Japanese Army also provided garrisons for many of the islands in the Pacific.

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

World War II in the Pacific can be divided into three main phases: Japanese conquests, Turning points and the American counterattack towards Japan.

Seeds of Conflict (# 120 on the map)

This area sets the stage for the war in the Pacific. The Japanese lost respect for China when the Europeans began dominating China. Japan decided it could also benefit by seizing parts of China and went to war with them in 1894. Following their defeat of Russia in 1905 Japan felt cheated by the U.S. brokered peace treaty. They felt they had won the war and lost the peace. This caused resentment among the Japanese towards the United States.

Read the panels dealing with the Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War

The second half of this area deals with the Japanese war against China beginning with the conquest of Manchuria in 1931 and the invasion of China proper in 1937.

Watch the video program to hear eye witness accounts of the Japanese treatment of the Chinese.

Countdown to War (# 140 on the map)

c) On A Spreading Conflict who were the European democracies focused on instead of Japan?

d) Japan Moves into Indochina, what resources in Southeast Asia did Japan want?

Watch the program on the globe. Following the program enter the next gallery when the doors open.

Pearl Harbor (# 150 on the map)

On 7 December, 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Watch the program.

Shock and Anger (# 160 on the map)

Listen to the speech given by President Roosevelt on 8 December 1941. You can locate it near the panel A Date Which Will Live in Infamy.

Bataan and Corregidor (# 180 on the map)

On your left as you pass through the white gate marked 1942 look at the panel Situation Report 1942. The map at the top of the panel shows areas controlled by Japan on January 1st, 1942. This was a little over three weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Over the next seven months they would expand this perimeter greatly. In those seven months they would conquer the Philippines, Malaya, Singapore, the Dutch East Indies, Burma, most of New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Read the panel.

A famous U.S. Army general, Douglas MacArthur was in command of U.S. and Filipino troops in the Philippines in 1941. President Roosevelt ordered MacArthur to leave the Philippines before the Japanese conquered it so he would not be captured. General MacArthur later commanded one of the main thrusts against Japan.

Read the panel The Bataan Death March. When word of this brutal treatment of prisoners leaked out how do you think the American public felt about the Japanese?

h) On the panel Preparing to Counter Attack, two geological areas were critical to protecting Allied supply lines, what were those areas?

The Rising Sun (# 190 on the map)

This area shows the Japanese conquest of Malaya and the Dutch East Indies and the loss of the USS Houston. Watch the program about the Doolittle Raid on the monitor on the rail in front of the bomber.

On the panel Divided Command we come to one of the main elements of U.S. strategy in the Pacific. Read the panel. Do you think this was a good idea or do you think it would have been better to have the whole Pacific under one commander? Although you may not be able to answer the question right now, keep it in mind as you go through the rest of the gallery and see what happened.

Coral Sea (# 200 on the map)

At the Battle of the Coral Sea we see the prelude to the Turning Points. At Coral Sea the U.S. Navy stopped the Japanese attempt to invade southern New Guinea and take the Australian base at Port Moresby. Although the Japanese won a tactical victory, it was a strategic victory for the United States.

Midway (# 210 on the map)

The Battle of Midway is considered one of the major turning points of the war against Japan. Three things won the Battle of Midway: the breaking of the Japanese Naval code, Admiral Nimitz's leadership decisions and the bravery and dedication of the U.S. pilots during the battle.

Watch the program.

Guadalcanal (# 220 on the map)

Another major turning point occurred two months later when the 1st Marine Division landed on the island of Guadalcanal. This was the first U.S. offensive action in the Pacific. The battle lasted six months and ended in a U.S. victory.

Watch the program on the video table.

At the Oral History kiosk just past the airplane, listen to one or more of the oral histories told by the men who were there.

Just before you go through the white gate marked 1943 read the panel Situation Report 1943. Look at the map at the area controlled by Japan. This marks the outmost limits of Japanese expansion. The Allies would begin their counterattack in 1943 as more troops, ships and airplanes arrived in the Pacific theater.

New Guinea (# 240 on the map)

The early fighting on New Guinea marked another turning point as the Australians stopped the Japanese overland attack on Port Moresby. They then counterattacked and with American assistance captured the Japanese bases on the north shore.

Watch the video above the tank.

Go back to the initial panel of this area titled Operation Cartwheel. Operation Cartwheel was General MacArthur's plan to isolate the major Japanese base at Rabaul, find Rabaul on the map. Operation Cartwheel is covered in the remainder of the Solomon Islands and New Guinea sections.

The last part of Cartwheel was Operation Brewer to take the Admiralty Islands and Emirau, find them on the map.

Solomons (# 250 on the map)

Following the victory on Guadalcanal the United States and its Allies in the Pacific began the push across the Pacific towards Japan. The initial thrusts were in General MacArthur's area of responsibility in the Solomon Islands and on New Guinea.

Just before the mock landing craft at the end of the Solomon Islands is a panel titled Operation Galvanic. Read the panel to set the stage for the Battle of Tarawa, then go through the landing craft to enter Tarawa.

Tarawa (# 270 on the map)

The capture of the Gilbert Islands involved the 2nd Marine Division taking Tarawa atoll and the 27th Infantry Division taking Makin atoll. The hardest fighting was on Tarawa. Watch the audio/visual program mounted on the wall. Tarawa is important because it is Admiral Nimitz's first thrust into the Central Pacific.

Go left past the jeep to the gateway marked 1944. Read the panel Status Report 1944. Look at the map, you can begin to see both MacArthur's and Nimitz's main routes towards Japan forming. Go to the panel Island Hopping and read the panel. The next targets for Nimitz were the Marshalls and the Marianas, find them on the map. MacArthur's next target was the Philippines, find it on the map.

This panel also defines the term, "Island Hopping". Do you think this was a good strategy?

Marshall Islands (# 320 on the map)

This area is named after the war plan Rainbow 5 and covers the attack into the Marshall Islands. The major atoll seized here was Kwajalein, one of the largest atolls in the Pacific. Its seizure was important because it was to become a major naval anchorage for Nimitz's efforts in the Pacific as planned for in War Plan Rainbow 5. In the north, the 4th Marine Division took Roi-Namur while at the southern end of the atoll the Army's 7th Infantry Division took Kwajalein Island.

Look at the panels in this area. The touch screen interactive contains data for the Marshalls, Marianas, and the Palaus all of which were in Admiral Nimitz's area of responsibility.

Marianas (# 330 on the map)

One of the amazing concepts employed by Admiral Nimitz was the use of 3rd and 5th Fleets. These were, in essence, two headquarters that controlled the same ships. While one fleet was involved in an operation the other headquarters would be planning the follow-on operation. When the fleet returned the ships were repaired and restocked, the sailors rested for a few days then off they went again under a different commander and headquarters. As you go through the gallery identify the commanders of each fleet:

3rd Fleet: _____

5th Fleet: _____

Note: The 7th Fleet operated under General MacArthur in the Southwest Pacific Area.

Nimitz's forces invaded the Mariana Islands in the summer of 1944. The capture of Saipan and Tinian and the liberation of Guam required large forces and heavy fighting but were not very well known because of what was going on in Europe at the same time. On June 6th 1944 the Allies landed in Normandy to begin the liberation of France and this captured the attention of the world.

The fighting on Saipan and Tinian was the first time our forces encountered large numbers of Japanese civilians.

Peleliu (# 340 on the map)

In order to secure MacArthur's right flank in his move to the Philippines it was decided to capture the islands of Peleliu and Angaur in the Palaus. Here is a case of Nimitz and MacArthur working together. The Palau Islands were in Nimitz's area but taking them would assist MacArthur.

Watch the video program on the wall mounted screen.

Leyte (# 350 on the map)

Read the panel Return to the Philippines as you enter this area.

In the Southwest Pacific Area U.S. forces under General MacArthur landed on the island of Leyte in the central Philippines. This caused the Japanese to launch a major effort to throw them off the island and destroy the American invasion fleet. The Battle of Leyte Gulf was the largest naval battle in history. It was so large it is divided into four parts: the Sibuyan Sea, Surigao Strait, Cape Engaño and the Battle Off Samar This battle also saw the first use of kamikazes, the Japanese suicide planes.

Watch the program on the video table. This explains the battle very well.

Watch the program at the Light Cruiser bridge. This uses the actual logs from the Light Cruiser USS Denver to illustrate the night action at Surigao Strait.

Amphibious Forces in the Pacific, located just after Propaganda and Censorship (# 360 on the map)

Amphibious landings are one of the most difficult military operations because you must land military forces on a hostile shore without the use of traditional port facilities. This need created a demand for specialized ships. Each type of amphibious craft had a special purpose. There was a confusing array of vessels each with its own initials: LCVT, LST, LCI(L), LVT, etc.

All of these vessels were designed and built during the war. All were important and used by both Nimitz and MacArthur.

Undersea War (# 370 on the map)

Submarines were critical to our victory in the Pacific. They served throughout the war and sank half of all Japanese ships destroyed in the Pacific. Read the panels then go into the submarine mock-up and find the Japanese ship with the periscope.

Just before the 1945 gateway, look at the panel Situation Report 1945. You can see the effects of the two pronged strategy and the results of the island-hopping strategy as Japanese forces are being surrounded and left behind. Read the panel.

Strategic bombing (# 390 on the map)

With the capture of the Marianas we were able to build airfields for the new fleets of heavy bombers, the B-29s. These bombers could reach Japan and were able to destroy many Japanese cities and factories in support of the war effort.

Although the strategic bombers operated within Admiral Nimitz's area of operations they did not fall under his command.

Liberation of the Philippines (# 410 on the map)

The next major phase of MacArthur's dream of liberating the Philippines occurred on 9 January 1945 when American troops landed at Lingayen Gulf on the island of Luzon. They drove south to Manila to liberate interned American civilians and liberate the city. The Japanese decided to defend Manila and in a month long battle much of the city was destroyed and approximately 100,000 Filipinos died.

One of the Texans awarded the Medal of Honor received the award for actions during the fighting in Manila. At the touchscreen interactive select Medal of Honor then scroll down to Cleto Rodriguez. Touch his photo to bring up his citation. Read where he was from and what he did during the fighting in Manila.

The liberation of the Philippines continued until the end of the war and involved 18 of the 21 U.S. Army divisions in the Pacific.

Iwo Jima (# 420 on the map)

To provide an emergency airfield for the strategic bombers the decision was made for Nimitz's forces to capture the island of Iwo Jima. Iwo Jima was the first battle in which U.S. casualties were higher than the Japanese. Read the panels to find out why.

Watch the program on the video table.

Iwo Jima was also famous because of the photograph taken of the Marines raising the flag on top of Mount Suribachi.

Okinawa (# 430 on the map)

The last major battle in the Pacific was Okinawa, an island in the Ryukyus. Okinawa was needed as a base for the planned invasion of Japan. It was the bloodiest battle of the war for the United States.

Watch the program on the video table.

Listen to one of the oral histories.

Watch the program in the Combat Information Center to learn about the kamikaze attacks. These attacks sank many U.S. ships and killed over 5000 U.S. sailors.

A Terrible New Weapon (# 440 on the map)

We were planning an invasion of Japan scheduled for November 1945. As a prelude we would drop three of the new atomic bombs. If this did not cause a Japanese surrender, we were invading. We dropped the first bomb on Hiroshima on 6 August and the second on Nagasaki on 9 August. This caused the Japanese government to sue for peace.

The bomb casing on exhibit is the same type as the one used at Nagasaki.

Watch the video on the screen mounted on the wall behind the bomb.

Unconditional Surrender (# 450 on the map)

The panels in this area describe the confusion, infighting and the major figures involved in the Japanese government as the decision was made to surrender.

Look at the large map that shows the locations and manpower of the Japanese military on 15 August 1945, the day the decision was made to surrender. One of the greatest fears of the U.S. government was that the Japanese military would not accept the decision of the emperor and would continue to fight on. This would have meant invading Japan and continuing to fight on many other islands. This would have added millions to the casualty lists.

3. After the museum visit: (Time Frame: 30-90 min.): This can be assigned as an individual or group project or could be used as a topic for debate during class.

Using the information you learned during the museum visit, make the case for either the two pronged strategy as used historically in the Pacific or a single drive under one commander.

Some items to consider which might assist you are:

1. Unity of command (one person in charge instead of two).
2. Competition for resources (supplies, men, ships, aircraft, etc.).
3. Jealousy between commanders.
4. Coordination between commanders.
5. Opposing viewpoints or objectives.
6. Enemy reaction to one versus two major thrusts.
7. Enemy uncertainty of where the next blow will land.

Vocabulary:

Broker (verb) Perimeter

Division (military use) Prelude

Knot (distance) Strategic

Magnitude Tactical

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: A copy of this lesson plan, pencil and map of the gallery.

Technology Utilization: Touchscreen and oral history inter-actives within the gallery.

Accommodations: Students will require a printed copy of this lesson plan during the museum visit.