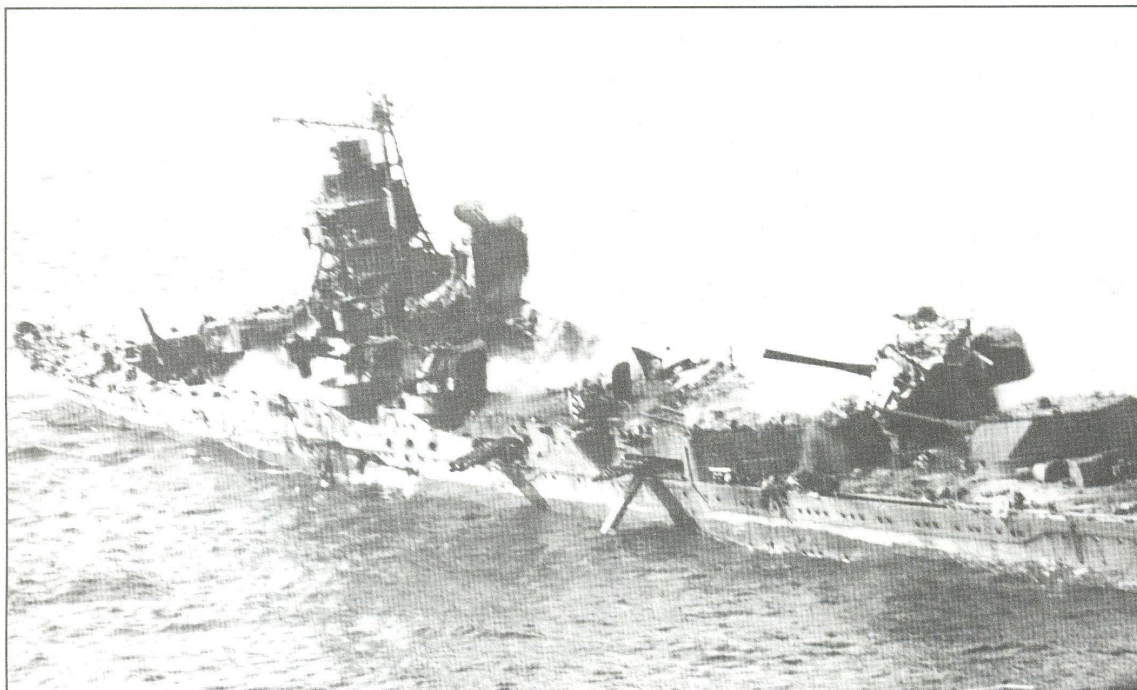


4. WORLD WAR II

Victory over Japan



After the United States entered World War II in late 1941, the Allies made plans for a united effort against the Axis powers. They decided to deal with Germany first and to make the fight against Japan a secondary effort. As a result, the war in the Pacific became a drawn-out affair which did not end until long after the European conflict was over.

In the months following the attack on Pearl Harbor in late 1941, Japan's expansion reached its greatest extent. Then United States forces, with the help of troops from Australia, Great Britain, China, and other Allied nations, dug in and worked to reverse the Japanese advance.

The Allies stopped the eastward expansion of the Japanese at the Battle of Midway Island in June 1942. The Japanese had confidently attacked at Midway, hop-

ing to knock out the relatively small part of the U.S. Pacific Fleet that had not been destroyed at Pearl Harbor. But U.S. naval officials had cracked Japan's secret codes and knew about the attack in advance. Japan lost four aircraft carriers and was forced to retreat.

Midway proved to be a decisive American victory. Japanese losses in the battle were heavy, and afterwards the Japanese could never again threaten the U.S. mainland.

After Midway, the United States embarked on a plan of "island-hopping" in the Central Pacific. This maneuver involved driving straight toward Japan by moving by air and sea through islands in the Central Pacific.

At the same time, the Allies also advanced in another theater of war: the South Pacific. It was here that the Allies first took the offensive against the Japanese, at the Battle of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands on August 7, 1942.

The war against Japan was primarily a naval and air war. Japan suffered its first major defeat at the Battle of Midway, June 1942. This mauled Japanese cruiser was sunk by carrier planes shortly after this photograph was taken.

Victory over Japan

In harsh jungle fighting that lasted six months, the U.S. Marines managed to wrestle the island away from Japanese forces.

After Guadalcanal, American and Australian forces began working their way through Japanese-held territory in the South Pacific. From the Solomon Islands, they moved toward New Guinea, preparing for an eventual attack on the Philippines.

Meanwhile, island-hopping in the Central Pacific proceeded according to plan. On November 20, 1943, U.S. troops landed on Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands. The Japanese had erected massive fortifications on the island, and they put up a




fierce fight. After many savage battles, however, the Allies took the island.

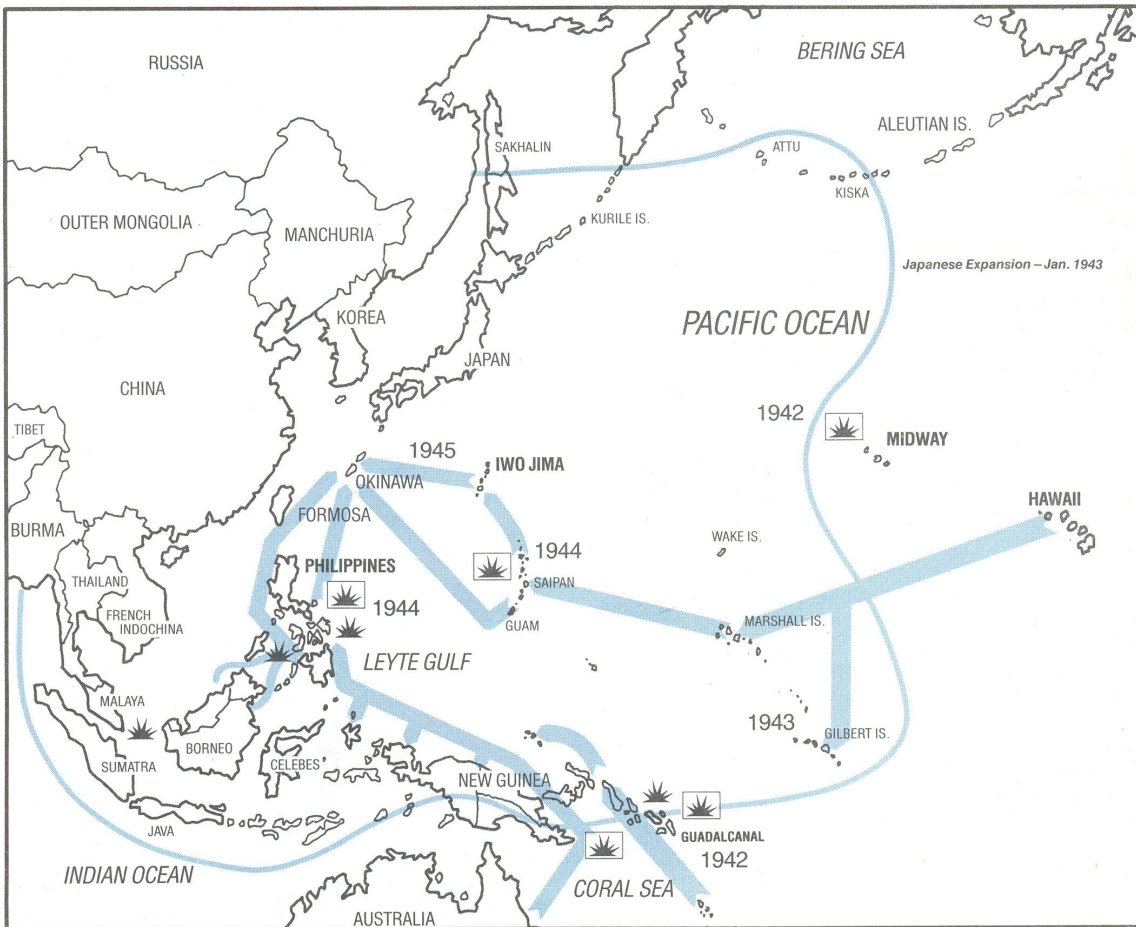
From Tarawa, the Allies hopped to the Marshall Islands. In January and February of 1944, the U.S. established control over the islands.

The Allies then set their sights on the Marianas Islands. From those islands, U.S. long-range bombers could reach Japan itself.

On June 15, 1944, American troops landed at Saipan in the Marianas. Once again, they faced fierce resistance from the Japanese. After more than 25,000 Japanese and more than 14,000 Americans had been killed, the Allies took control

World War II Battles in the Pacific

- American advances 
- Carrier engagements 
- Major surface fleet engagements 



4. WORLD WAR II

Victory over Japan



The American offensive strategy in the Pacific involved "island-hopping." This was a slow process of amphibious assaults on Japanese-controlled islands.

of Saipan.

In August 1944 the U.S. captured Guam, the largest island in the Marianas. Large air bases were built on the island for attacks against Japan.

The U.S. started air raids against Japanese targets in November 1944. The attacks devastated the Japanese. In one raid in March 1945, more than 80,000 people in Tokyo were killed and about 25% of all of the buildings in the city were destroyed by Allied fire bombs.

After their successes in both the Central and South Pacific, the Allies prepared for an invasion of the Philippines in the fall of 1944. In October, air, ground, and naval forces converged on the central Philippine island of Leyte.

The Japanese decided to use almost all of their remaining naval power to defend Leyte Gulf. In a massive naval battle, the Japanese navy was almost completely destroyed. In desperation, the Japanese sent suicide bombers called *kamikazes* to deliberately crash their planes into American ships. Despite those efforts, the U.S. captured the gulf. By March 1945 the Allies had taken Manila and controlled the Philippines.

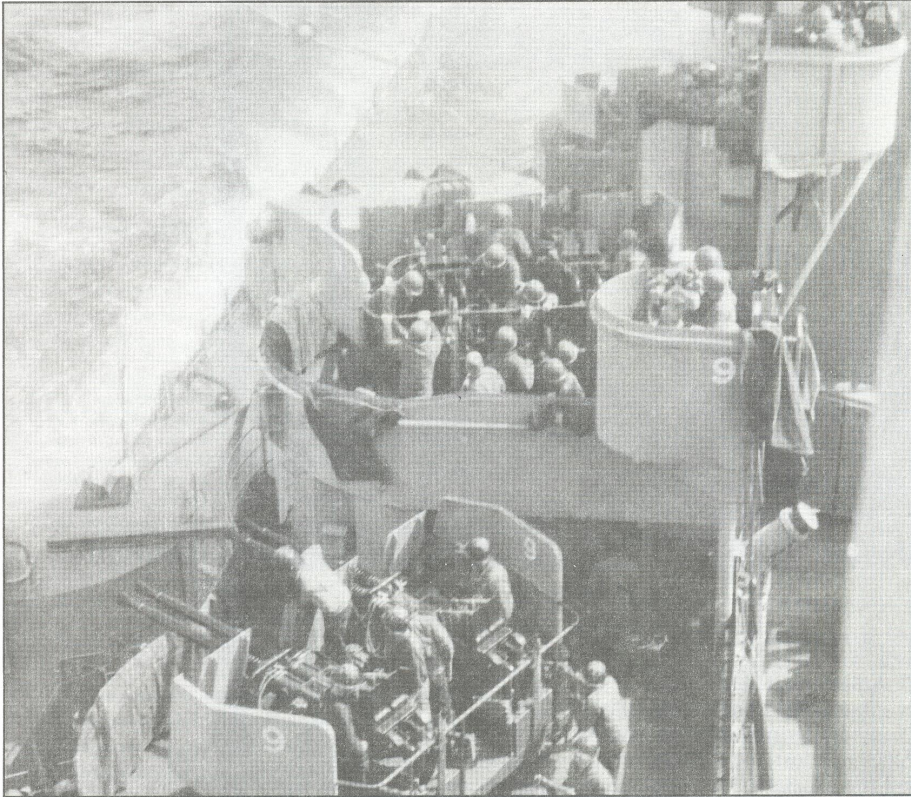
The Allies, with troops on the Marianas and the Philippines, were now poised to move against Japan itself. But they also wanted to help the Chinese, who were fighting Japanese forces in China, Burma, and India.

Since Japan held much of the Chinese mainland, the Chinese were isolated from

The fall of Kwajalein in February 1944, brought U.S. forces closer to Japan as U.S. infantrymen of the 7th Division closed in on Japanese snipers.



Victory over Japan

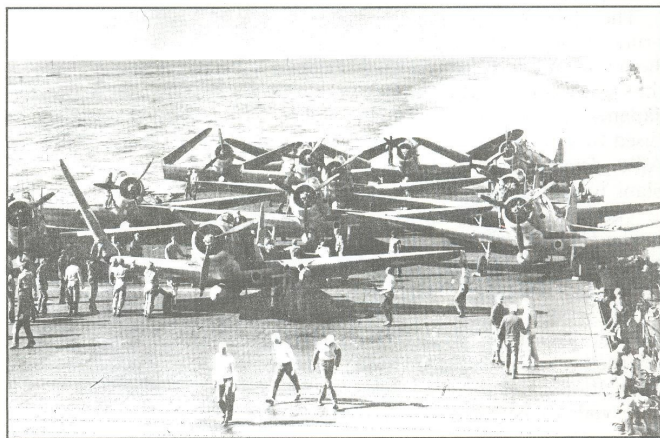


Japanese pilots sometimes crashed their airplanes into U.S. ships hoping to kill American soldiers and to damage the ships. The suicide plane (upper left-hand corner) is attempting to crash into the U.S.S. Missouri in May 1945.

the rest of the Allies and could only get supplies through the air. From 1943 to 1945, American, British, and Chinese forces fought to reopen a road between Burma and China that had been closed by the Japanese. That road, known as the Ledo Road and later as the Stilwell Road, was finally reopened in February 1945. With it the Allies kept China supplied so that the Chinese could continue to harass Japan until the end of the war.

Early in 1945 the Allies made plans for an attack on Japan. Air attacks on Japan were stepped up and the U.S. navy moved toward the country. The weakened Japanese navy could muster very little opposition to this advance.

On February 19, 1945, U.S. troops moved from the Marianas Islands to Iwo Jima, only 750 miles from Japan. Once more there were huge numbers of casualties, but the Allies captured the



Aircraft carriers were used extensively for the first time in warfare during World War II. These carriers were the heart of the U.S. naval force and were extremely effective in controlling both sea and airways.

4. WORLD WAR II

Victory over Japan



The first atomic bomb ever used against an enemy in battle was dropped by the United States on Hiroshima, Japan, on August 6, 1945. A second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki on August 9.

island by mid-March.

Next the Allies set their sights on Okinawa, which was within 350 miles of Japan. On April 1, 1945, Allied troops invaded Okinawa. Another massive land battle ensued. By the time Japanese resistance ended on June 21, the Allies had lost almost 50,000 soldiers and the Japanese almost 110,000.

The Allies were now in a position to bring the war to a close. The bombings of Japanese cities were intensified. Despite the destruction and death, however, the Japanese continued to fight on and refused to surrender unconditionally, as the Allies demanded. Allied leaders made plans to send troops into Japan itself.

The invasion proved to be unnecessary. In the United States, a team of scientists working around the clock had developed a deadly new weapon—the atomic bomb.

The atomic bomb proved to be the most devastating weapon ever created. Its destructive capacity far exceeded that of conventional weapons. It could kill many thousands of people and virtually destroy entire cities.

U.S. President Harry S. Truman faced a very difficult task in trying to decide whether to use the atomic bomb. Truman had a number of different options. He

could decide not to use the bomb at all, demonstrate its power to Japanese leaders in a test and then threaten to use it, or drop it on Japanese targets to show the futility of resistance.

Eventually Truman decided on the latter course. He believed that dropping the bomb would cause the Japanese to surrender quickly and would prevent the loss of American lives in an invasion of Japan.

On August 6, 1945, the U.S. dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. More than 70,000 people were killed instantly, and many thousands more died later from the effects of nuclear radiation.

On August 8 the Soviet Union declared war on Japan, as Soviet leaders had agreed to do after the war with Germany ended. The Japanese position was now completely hopeless.

On August 9 a second atomic bomb was dropped, this time on the city of Nagasaki. At least another 40,000 people were killed.

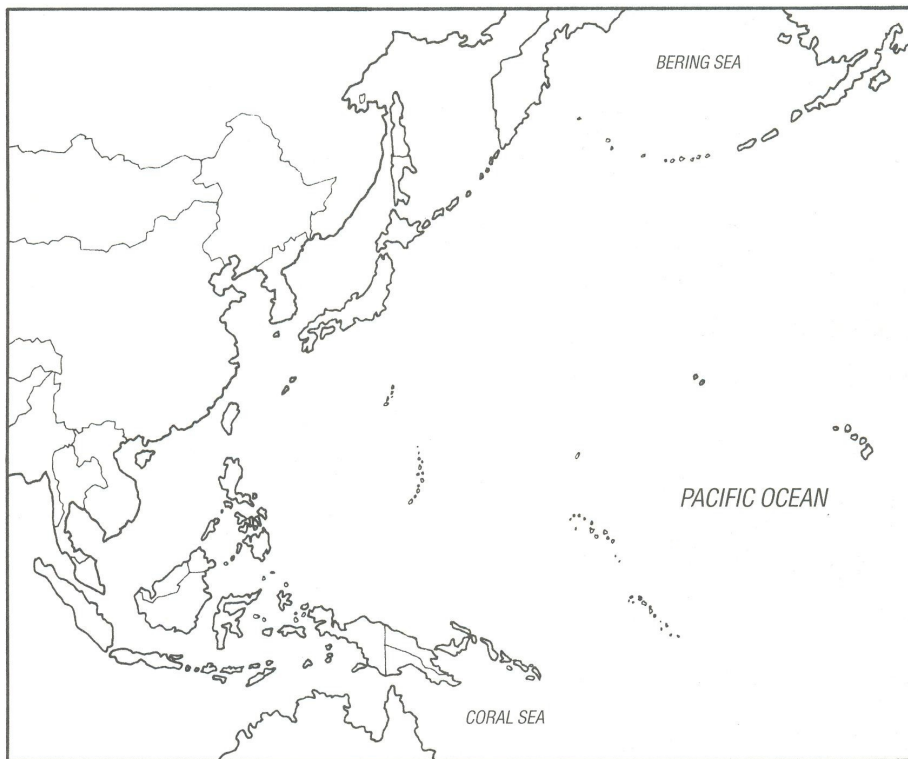
Within a week, Japan accepted Allied surrender terms. On September 2, 1945, they formally signed a surrender pact on the deck of the American battleship *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay. World War II was over.

4. WORLD WAR II: REVIEW

Victory over Japan

A. Battles

DIRECTIONS: Locate and label each of the following battles on the map below. Draw lines to show the progression of the war in those areas. Then match each phrase to the battle it describes.



- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| a. Midway | d. Leyte Gulf |
| b. Guadalcanal | e. Iwo Jima |
| c. Saipan | f. Okinawa |

- _____ 1. enabled the Allies to take control of the Philippines
- _____ 2. where the Allies first took the offensive against the Japanese
- _____ 3. moved the Allies within 350 miles of Japan
- _____ 4. stopped the eastward expansion of the Japanese
- _____ 5. helped the Allies win control of the Marianas Islands
- _____ 6. moved the Allies within 750 miles of Japan

4. WORLD WAR II: REVIEW

Victory over Japan

B. Categorize

DIRECTIONS: There were three theaters of war in the Pacific. Write the name of each theater on the line above each column below. Then place each of the battles listed in Part A in the correct column. Not all of the lines will be used.

7. _____	8. _____	9. _____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

C. Chronology

DIRECTIONS: Write each of the following events below the date on which they occurred.

U.S. drops an atomic bomb on Hiroshima

Battle of Guadalcanal starts

U.S. troops land on Tarawa

Japan officially surrenders

Aug. 7, 1942	Nov. 20, 1943	Aug. 6, 1945	Sept. 2, 1945
10. _____	11. _____	12. _____	13. _____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

4. WORLD WAR II: REVIEW

Victory over Japan

D. Short Answer

DIRECTIONS: Answer each question in the space provided.

14. Why was the Battle of Midway Island important to the United States?

15. Why did the Allies want to open the Stilwell Road?

16. What options did President Truman have in deciding whether to use the atomic bomb against Japan? Which option did he choose? Why?