

Part I: Pacific Theater Overview

1. Students will understand the significance of the Pacific Theater in World War II.

Resources: Contextual essay and Alan J. Levine's *The Pacific War: Japan Versus the Allies*.

2. Students will learn about the major battles of the Pacific Theater through class discussion and a PowerPoint presentation.

3. Students will become familiar with primary sources by listening to a clip from the Paul McGilvra Oral History. Students will evaluate the clip by filling out the sound analysis worksheet available from the National Archives. **Note** the Paul McGilvra interview was conducted on June 13, 1990 and the interview took place at the home of McGilvra's sister-in-law. Click here for the sound analysis worksheet. <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/sound.html>

Play Clip A [2:35 minutes]

4. Students will determine the five most significant events in the Pacific theater in World War II based on information discussed in class. The students will then give a five minute presentation in which they discuss why they think that these events were important in to the Pacific War.

Timeline for Pacific Theater

1941

- ◆ December 7: Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
- ◆ December 8: U.S. and Britain declare war on Japan.
- ◆ December 9: China declares war on Japan.
- ◆ December 10: Japanese invade the Philippines and seize Guam.
- ◆ December 11: Japanese invade Burma.
- ◆ December 22: Japanese invade Luzon in the Philippines.
- ◆ December 23: General Douglas MacArthur withdraws U.S. troops from Manila to Bataan and the Japanese take Wake Island.

1942

- ◆ January 7: Japanese attack Bataan in the Philippines.
- ◆ January 16: Japanese advance into Burma.
- ◆ January 23: Japanese take Rabaul on New Britain in the Solomon Islands. This was a key victory for the Japanese because they were able to launch subsequent air attacks from Rabaul after taking possession of the island.
- ◆ February 22: President Franklin D. Roosevelt orders General MacArthur out of the Philippines.
- ◆ March 11: General MacArthur leaves Corregidor, Philippines for Australia. General Jonathan Wainwright becomes the new U.S. commander.
- ◆ April 3: Japanese attack U.S. and Filipino troops at Bataan.
- ◆ April 9: U.S. forces surrender on Bataan unconditionally to the Japanese.
- ◆ April 18: U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel James H. Doolittle leads a surprise attack against Tokyo, Japan that boosts Allied morale.
- ◆ May 6: Japanese take Corregidor as General Wainwright surrenders U.S. and Filipino forces in the Philippines.
- ◆ May 8: United States defeats Japanese for the first time in the war at the Battle of the Coral Sea.

- ◆ June 4: Turning point in the Pacific theater when U.S. forces defeat Japanese forces and destroy four Japanese carriers, a cruiser, and kill or injure five thousand Japanese military personnel.
- ◆ August 7: The first amphibious landing of the Pacific theater occurs as 1st Marine Division invades Tulagi and Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands.
- ◆ August 21: U.S. Marines repulse first major Japanese ground attack on Guadalcanal.
- ◆ Emperor Hirohito of Japan gives permission to his troops to withdraw from Guadalcanal.

1943

- ◆ January 2: Allies take Buna in New Guinea.
- ◆ January 22: Allies defeat Japanese at Sanananda on New Guinea.
- ◆ February 9: Japanese resistance on Guadalcanal ends.
- ◆ April 18: Japanese General Yamamoto is killed when his plane is shot down by U.S. pilots in the Solomon Islands.
- ◆ June 1: U.S. begins submarine warfare against Japanese shipping.
- ◆ December 26: Allies launch full-scale assault on New Britain.

1944

- ◆ February 1-7: U.S. troops capture Kwajalein and Majura Atolls in the Marshall Islands.
- ◆ February 20: U.S. Carrier-based and land-based planes destroy the Japanese base at Rabaul.
- ◆ July 19: U.S. Marines invade Guam in the Marianas.
- ◆ July 27: U.S. troops complete liberation of Guam.
- ◆ October 11: U.S. launches air raids over Okinawa, Japan.
- ◆ October 25: The first Kamikaze attacks occur against U.S. warships in Leyte Gulf.
- ◆ November 11: Iwo Jima, Japan bombarded by the U.S. Navy.

1945

- ◆ January 3: General MacArthur is placed in command of all U.S. ground forces and Fleet Admiral Chester William Nimitz in command of all naval forces in preparation for planned assaults against Iwo Jima, Okinawa and Japan itself.
- ◆ January 9: U.S. 6th Army invades Lingayen Gulf on Luzon in the Philippines.
- ◆ March 2: U.S. airborne troops recapture Corregidor in the Philippines.
- ◆ April 1: Final Amphibious landing of the war occurs as the U.S. Tenth Army invades Okinawa.
- ◆ April 12: President Franklin D. Roosevelt dies, succeeded by Harry S. Truman.
- ◆ July 5: Liberation of Philippines declared.
- ◆ August 6: First atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima from a B-29 flown by Colonel Paul Tibbets.
- ◆ August 8: U.S.S.R. declares war on Japan then invades Manchuria.
- ◆ August 9: Second atomic bomb is dropped on Nagasaki which persuades the Japanese to seek peace with the Allies.
- ◆ August 14: Japanese accept unconditional surrender.
- ◆ September 2: Formal Japanese surrender ceremony on board the *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay. President Truman declares VJ (Victory Japan) Day.