

EG:000-L1
Main Title

THE WAR IN THE PACIFIC

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EG:000-L2
Main Text

In the 1930s Japan launched a campaign to take control over East Asia and the western Pacific, creating a new empire which would later be called the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere." Japanese expansionism was marked by naked aggression and extreme brutality. The slaughter of 200,000 to 300,000 Chinese in Nanking in December 1937 shocked the world. Atrocities by Japanese troops included biological experiments on, and the brutal mistreatment and execution of, civilians, forced laborers, and prisoners of war.

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in an attempt to destroy the U.S. Pacific Fleet and open the road to further conquests. By spring 1942 the Japanese empire encompassed the Gilbert Islands to the east, most of New Guinea to the southeast, the Netherlands East Indies, Indochina, Thailand, and parts of Burma.

Following hard-fought battles in 1942 between Allied and Japanese naval forces, the Allies took the initiative and began a dual advance through the central and

southwest Pacific, converging on the Philippines. With the opening of the Philippine campaign in October 1944, the stage was set for two of the bloodiest battles of the Pacific war: the assaults on Iwo Jima and Okinawa in 1945.

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EG:000-L3-P3/P4

The USS Arizona is consumed by fire during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. The USS Arizona Memorial (inset) spans the sunken hull of the ship.

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EG:000-L4-P4

[label combined with L3]

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EG:010-L1
Main Title

JAPANESE EXPANSION

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EG:010-L2
Text

A NEW ORDER IN ASIA

Already in control of Manchuria, Japan in mid-1937 launched a full-scale attack on China. Japanese troops captured the capital of Nanking in December 1937, and by March 1940 they controlled most major Chinese cities.

Alarmed by this expansion, the United States warned Japan not to invade Indochina, and in July placed an embargo on the shipment of steel and oil to Japan. The Japanese ignored the warning and moved into Indochina in September. By early 1941 the military began to feel the embargo's effect and realized that to keep expanding they had to capture the oil fields of the East Indies. The stage was set for the start of the Pacific war.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor caught U.S. forces there and elsewhere in the Pacific unprepared. The Japanese army and navy swept through the Philippines, south Asia, and the Pacific, and it appeared that the Japanese empire might soon extend all the way to Australia.

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EG:010-L3-P3
Map of the Pacific
showing Japanese
expansion.

[no caption]

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EG:010-L4-P4

A Shanghai, China, railway station after a
Japanese air raid, 1937.

Courtesy of the National Archives

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EG:010-L5-P5

The gunboat USS Panay, part of an
international force patrolling the Yangtze
River, sinks near Nanking on December 12,
1937, after an unprovoked attack by
Japanese bombers.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:010-L6
Subtitle

NANKING

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EG:010-L7
Text

THE RAPE OF NANKING

The Chinese capital of Nanking fell on December 13, 1937. Surprised and irritated by the strong resistance of the Chinese, Japanese soldiers went on an unprecedented rampage. Some 200,000 to 300,000 Chinese were slaughtered, and 20,000 women of all ages were raped. The staff of the German Embassy in Nanking reported on the atrocities and described the Japanese army as "bestial machinery."

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EG:010-L8-P8

A December 1937 issue of the Tokyo Daily News reported that these two Japanese sergeants, competing in a contest, beheaded 105 and 106 Chinese civilians in Nanking.

Courtesy of the Alliance for Preserving the Truth of the Sino-Japanese War

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EG:010-L9-P9

Courtesy of the Alliance for Preserving the Truth of the Sino-Japanese War

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EG:010-L10-P10

Chinese being buried alive in Nanking.
Courtesy of the Alliance for Preserving the Truth of the Sino-Japanese War

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EG:010-L11-P11

Courtesy of the Alliance for Preserving
the Truth of the Sino-Japanese War

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EG:010-L12
Subtitle

PEARL HARBOR

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EG:010-L13
Text

"A DATE WHICH WILL LIVE IN INFAMY"

--President Franklin D. Roosevelt

At 7:55 a.m. in Hawaii, Sunday, December 7, 1941, while Japanese diplomats in Washington were negotiating with the State Department, the first planes from a Japanese carrier task force attacked the U.S. military bases at Pearl Harbor.

The 363 planes, flying in two waves, caught the Americans completely by surprise and inflicted severe damage. The Japanese sank two of eight battleships, the Arizona and Oklahoma, and severely damaged the others. Eleven other ships were also destroyed or damaged. The U.S. suffered heavy casualties--2,330 killed and 1,347 wounded--while the Japanese lost only 29 planes and about 100 men.

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EG:010-L14-P14

Only 289 of the 1,466 men aboard the USS Arizona survived the attack. Of the 1,104 Navy men and 73 Marines killed, only 150 bodies were recovered. More than 900 others remain entombed in the hull of the ship.

Courtesy of the National Archives

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EG:010-L15-P15

The U.S. fleet under attack.

Courtesy of the National Archives

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EG:010-L16-P16

The USS West Virginia settles to the bottom in flames, taking with her 105 men.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:010-L17-P17

A Japanese photograph showing "Battleship Row" in Pearl Harbor under attack.

Courtesy of the National Archives

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EG:010-L18-P18

A heap of demolished planes and a wrecked hangar at Wheeler Field, Hawaii, following the attack. The Japanese destroyed 188 Army and Navy planes and damaged 159 others.

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EG:020-L1
Main Title

THE UNITED STATES GOES TO WAR

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EG:020-L2
Text

THE WORLD AT WAR

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor drew the United States into a conflict that was to include nearly half the world's population. England joined the United States in declaring war on Japan, and on December 11, 1941, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States.

The U.S. leadership decided to give first priority to the war in Europe. In the Pacific, the Allies fought a delaying action until enough men and matériel became available for a limited offensive in the fall of 1942.

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EG:020-L3
Subtitle

JAPANESE AGGRESSION CONTINUES

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EG:020-L4
Text

WAR SPREADS THROUGHOUT ASIA

As Japan's navy attacked Pearl Harbor, its forces also began to overrun most of Southeast Asia. Thailand, Burma, Malaya, and the Philippines quickly fell. By January 2, 1942, Manila, the capital of the Philippines, had fallen. On February 15 the British surrendered Singapore in Malaya, the worst military disaster ever suffered by a European nation in the Far East. The Japanese continued moving through the Dutch East Indies toward Australia.

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EG:020-L5-P5

The crew of the British battleship HMS Prince of Wales transfers from their sinking ship to a destroyer. Japanese bombers sank the Prince of Wales and the cruiser HMS Repulse in the Gulf of Siam on December 10, 1941, causing a loss of 840 men.

Courtesy of the Imperial War Museum

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EG:020-L6-P6

Led by Lieutenant General Sakai and Vice Admiral Masaichi, Japanese troops enter Hong Kong, December 26, 1941. British troops surrendered the city after a 17-day siege.

Courtesy of the Imperial War Museum

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EG:020-L7-P7

Japanese forces land on the beach at Kavieng, New Ireland, January 1942.

Courtesy of the National Archives

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EG:020-L8-P8

Japanese troops march through Fullerton Square, Singapore, February 1942.

Courtesy of the Imperial War Museum

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EG:020-L9-P9

Lieutenant General Yamashita receives the British surrender from Lieutenant General Percival at Singapore, February 15, 1942.

Courtesy of the Imperial War Museum

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EG:020-L10-P10

U.S. soldiers instruct Filipino guardsmen prior to the fall of Corregidor, May 1942.

Courtesy of the National Archives

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EG:020-L11-P11

Japanese troops on the move. The caption reads, "Thrusting into enemy positions in the mountain fastness of Samat, in Bataan, our stalwart charge on."

Courtesy of the National Archives

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EG:020-L11c-P11c

Will replace or
supplement L11

Japanese army troops celebrate the capture of Mt. Limay on Bataan with a "Banzai" salute, April 1942.

Courtesy of the National Archives

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EG:020-L11a
Subtitle

THE BATAAN DEATH MARCH

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EG:020-L11b
Text

THE FALL OF THE PHILIPPINES

Almost simultaneously with the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese invaded the Philippine Islands. The American garrison and the Philippine army were woefully unprepared to defend against the Japanese onslaught. By January 2, 1942, Manila had fallen and the American and Philippine defenders were retreating to the Bataan Peninsula. By April 8, most of the Bataan defenders had surrendered, while some had retreated to the island fortress of Corregidor in Manila Bay. On May 6, Corregidor also surrendered.

The Japanese were callous toward the American and Filipino soldiers captured at Bataan. Already short of rations and given little or no food and water, the prisoners were forced to march 104 kilometers (65 miles) to an internment camp, a trip that took up to two weeks. Over 600 Americans and 5,000 to 10,000 Filipinos perished during what became known as the March of Death. Of almost 20,000 Americans captured during the fall of the Philippines, over 40 percent would never return.

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EG:020-L12-P12

Treated by their captors with a mixture of contempt and cruelty, American prisoners await their fate during the Bataan Death March.

Courtesy of the National Archives

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EG:020-L13-P13

American prisoners are guarded by a Japanese soldier during a rest break on the trek from Bataan, April 1942.

Courtesy of the National Archives

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EG:020-L14-P14

Some of the American and Filipino victims of the Bataan Death March.

Courtesy of the National Archives

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EG:020-L15
Subtitle

THE TIDE BEGINS TO TURN

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EG:020-L16
Text

THE ALLIES STRIKE BACK

Even the desperate early days of the Pacific war offered reasons for hope. A small group of American volunteer airmen under Col. Claire Chennault had formed to provide aerial support for the Chinese. Another group of Army Air Forces airmen, led by Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle, conducted a B-25 raid from the carrier Hornet and bombed Tokyo, demonstrating that the Japanese capital was not immune to attack.

While the Philippines and Burma were falling, a new era in naval warfare was beginning in the Coral Sea, where for the first time a sea battle was fought solely by aircraft. In June 1942 near Midway Island, Japanese naval forces, attempting to annihilate the U.S. Navy, suffered a major defeat that turned the tide of the war in the Pacific.

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EG:020-L17-P17

Maj. Gen. Claire L. Chennault, leader of the "Flying Tigers" of the American Volunteer Group and later of the 14th Air Force in China. An exhibit on the Flying Tigers can be found in World War II Aviation (Gallery 205) upstairs.

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EG:020-L18-P18

On April 18, 1942, 16 B-25 bombers led by Lt. Col. James H. Doolittle took off from the carrier USS Hornet to bomb the Japanese homeland for the first time.
Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

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EG:020-L19-P19

The Japanese captured eight of the Doolittle raiders and executed three. This pilot survived 40 months of solitary confinement.
Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

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EG:020-L20-P20

The Japanese aircraft carrier Shoho, after being torpedoed in the Battle of the Coral Sea, May 7, 1942.
Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

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EG:020-L21-P21

Attack aircraft land on the USS Lexington, which was severely damaged and eventually lost during the Battle of the Coral Sea, May 7, 1942.

Courtesy of the National Archives

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EG:020-L22-P22

A fire-fighting detail works through a pall of smoke aboard the USS Yorktown, which was lost at the Battle of Midway, June 1942.

Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

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EG:020-L23-P23

A memorial service held for U.S. servicemen killed during the Battle of Midway.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:030-L1
Title

THE ALLIES ON THE OFFENSE

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EG:030-L2
Text

THE APPROACHES TO RABAU

The U.S. victory at Midway in June 1942 gave the Allies the opportunity to launch a limited offensive aimed at blocking the Japanese advance in the south and southwest Pacific.. The growing Japanese base at Rabaul on New Britain, a likely starting point for future enemy offensives, became the objective.

The Allies advanced against Japanese positions along two lines converging at Rabaul. One offensive began at Guadalcanal and moved up the Solomon and Bismarck Islands. The other moved north up the Papuan peninsula and New Guinea.

The 20-month campaign decimated Japanese air and sea power in that part of the Pacific. The Allies bypassed and neutralized more than 125,000 enemy troops, and gained time for the United States to prepare for its central Pacific drive in 1944.

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EG:030-L3
Subtitle

THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

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EG:030-L4
Text

THE ISLAND WAR BEGINS

Alarmed by Japanese efforts to construct an airfield on Guadalcanal in the Solomons, Adm. Chester Nimitz and his staff accelerated plans for an offensive. The Marines landed on the island on August 7, 1942, ill-prepared to face a tenacious enemy whose tactics and battle ethics were utterly foreign to them. They fought fierce battles day and night in terrain ranging from rain forests and swamps to plains and mountains, and were subjected without relief to months of pounding by the enemy.

Meanwhile, a series of desperate air and naval battles ensued in the Solomons as the Allies fought for control of the sea and sky. Allied naval forces suffered a major defeat during the Battle of Savo Island on August 9, when four Allied heavy cruisers and a thousand men were lost.

But by February 9, 1943, Guadalcanal was in Allied hands. In the following months, the Allies moved steadily northward through the Solomons, seizing bases, bypassing or outflanking Japanese strong points, and building new airstrips

to extend the reach of Army Air Forces
bombers.

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EG:030-L4a-P4a
Map of Solomon Islands
and New Guinea.

[no caption]

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EG:030-L5-P5

A U.S. Navy warship approaches the beach
at Guadalcanal during an air attack by
Japanese bombers in the fall of 1942.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:030-L6-P6

A Marine scouting patrol wades across one
of the island's many shallow rivers, which
were often infested with mosquitoes. Most
of the Marines and soldiers contracted
malaria or other tropical diseases during
the months of fighting.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:030-L7-P7

[not used]

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EG:030-L8

"Too often his tenacity was without point, and his Banzai charges, which never in the course of the war achieved any results of importance, seemed plain silly. In his willingness to die, he frequently let death become an end in itself."

Frank O. Hough, The Island War: The United States Marine Corps in the Pacific

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EG:030-L9-P9

Under the watchful eye of a lookout, Marines enjoy a rare break in the daily routine of jungle fighting on Guadalcanal.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:030-L10-P10a,b

Crucial to the victory at Guadalcanal was the air superiority gained by Allied pilots flying from the island's Henderson Field (left). Invaluable assistance was also provided by heroic Australian "coastwatchers." Assisted by native islanders, they radioed information to the Allies on the movements of Japanese forces from hidden observation posts behind enemy lines throughout the Solomon Islands.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:030-L11-P11

Japanese bombers attack a U.S. carrier through a heavy barrage of antiaircraft fire during the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands, October 26, 1942. The two carrier battles of Santa Cruz and the Eastern Solomons proved critical to the Allied victory at Guadalcanal.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:030-L12-P12

Army Air Forces B-25 bombers destroy a Japanese convoy during the Battle of the Bismarck Sea, March 2-4, 1943.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:030-L13-P13

A camouflaged Japanese ship comes under attack by Allied bombers flying at masthead height during the Battle of the Bismarck Sea.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:030-L13a-P13a

Adm. Isoroku Yamamoto, commander-in-chief of the Japanese navy, planned the attack on Pearl Harbor and the Battle of Midway. He was killed when Army Air Forces P-38 Lightnings shot down the airplane he was aboard near Bougainville on April 18, 1943.

Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

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EG:030-L14-P14

A U.S. Army Air Forces P-40 flies at treetop level over American troops landing on Rendova Island in the central Solomons, June 30, 1943.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:030-L15-P15

American troops take cover during the landing on Rendova, June 1943. The Japanese defenders withdrew inland to harass the G.I.s from the hills and swamps.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:030-L16-P16

A valuable addition to the Allied forces in the Pacific, these Fijian soldiers from the First Fiji Infantry man a camouflaged machine gun emplacement on the island of New Georgia, July 1943.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:030-L17-P17

Fighter Squadron 17, known as "Blackburn's Irregulars," was the first operational F4U Corsair squadron. While based on New Georgia, the squadron destroyed 154 Japanese aircraft in 79 days of combat, producing 12 aces (pilots with five or more victories).

Courtesy of the National Archives

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EG:030-L18-P18

A U.S. Navy destroyer, its wake reflecting the firing of other ships astern, fires on Japanese aircraft during operations off Vella Lavella in the central Solomons, August 1943.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:030-L19-P19

A wounded airman is lifted from the turret of his Grumman TBF Avenger on the USS Saratoga following a raid on Rabaul, November 1943.

Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

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EG:030-L20-P20

B-26s bomb camouflaged Japanese barges on New Britain. The shadows of the attacking aircraft are visible on the thick jungle canopy.

Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

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EG:030-L21-P21

Japanese bombers and fighters are destroyed on the ground by white phosphorous incendiary bombs during an Army Air Forces raid on Lakunai Airfield, Rabaul.

Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

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EG:030-L22-P22

The U.S. Navy Seabees built the roads that enabled Allied ground forces to move on the battlefield and the runways that enabled Allied airpower to reach Japan.

Courtesy of the U.S.Navy

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EG:030-L23-P23

Landing operations during the attack on Mono Island in the Solomons.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:030-L24-P24

Two Marines at the grave of a fallen comrade during the heavy fighting in the jungles of the central Solomons.

Courtesy of the National Archives

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EG:030-L25-P25

A burial party prepares graves for fellow Marines who died during the battle on Bougainville. The fight cost the Marines 423 dead and 1,418 wounded.

Courtesy of the National Archives

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EG:030-L26-P26

[not used]

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