

EG:030-L27  
Subtitle

**NEW GUINEA**

#

EG:030-L28  
Text

**MacARTHUR BEGINS HIS RETURN TO THE  
PHILIPPINES**

Gen. Douglas MacArthur, leading the Allied effort in the southwest Pacific, began his offensive on New Guinea in January 1943. The world's second largest island, New Guinea became the scene of ferocious battles. Dense tracts of rain forest and mangrove swamps made troop movements extremely difficult, and the Allies had to battle tropical diseases and dysentery while fighting the Japanese.

By February 1944, the Allies had bypassed and isolated the Japanese stronghold at Rabaul, and the Japanese fleet had withdrawn to the Philippines. With the capture of the Admiralty Islands, the U.S. Fifth Air Force had a forward air base that extended their fighter range and allowed them to carry out bombing raids against Japanese bases on New Guinea.

By May 1944, a series of unprecedented "island-hopping" maneuvers involving seaborne envelopments and amphibious landings had enabled the Allies to advance 2,100 kilometers (1,300 miles) in only 100 days, bringing MacArthur ever

closer to his goal of retaking the  
Philippines.

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EG:030-L29-P29

Australian soldiers land at Lae, New  
Guinea, September 5, 1943. During 1943,  
the Allies suffered more than 24,000  
casualties on New Guinea, of which nearly  
70 percent were Australian.

Courtesy of the National Archives

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EG:030-L30-P30

Australian troops are airlifted into New  
Guinea aboard a Douglas C-47, September  
11, 1943.

Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

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EG:030-L31-P31

Members of the Women's Army Corps  
disembark from their plane on New Guinea,  
1944.

Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force photo

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EG:030-L32-P32

North American B-25 Mitchell bombers  
attack a Japanese air strip on New Guinea  
with fragmentation bombs dropped by  
parachute, February 3, 1944.

Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

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EG:030-L33-P33a,b,c

During an attack on Japanese fortifications in New Guinea, a Douglas A-20 Havoc is hit by flak, swerves out of control, and falls from the sky.

Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

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EG:030-L34-P34

Apprehensive Army troops in a Coast Guard landing craft, moments before hitting the beach at Aitape, New Guinea, April 1944.

Courtesy of the U.S. Coast Guard

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EG:030-L35-P35

Army troops under fire as they come ashore at Wakde Island, New Guinea, May 16, 1944. During the latter phase of the battle for New Guinea, the Americans suffered 9,500 casualties.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:030-L36-P36

Soldiers wade knee-deep in water near Hollandia, New Guinea, April 1944.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:030-L37-P37

A B-25 Mitchell bombs a Japanese ship at Wewak, New Guinea, April 1944.

Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

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EG:030-L38-P38

A Coast Guard photographer captures stretcher bearers heading down the ramps and into the surf during the invasion of Sarmi, New Guinea, May 1944.

Courtesy of the U.S. Coast Guard

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EG:030-L39-P39

Wounded soldiers being moved back to their ships during the invasion of Dutch New Guinea, May 1944.

Courtesy of the National Archives

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EG:030-L40-P40

B-25s bomb Japanese fortifications at Dobo, Dutch New Guinea, May 26, 1944.

Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

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EG:030-L41-P41a,b,c

U.S. Army paratroopers ready to jump and descending over Noemfoor Island, New Guinea, July 1944. Everything did not always go as planned.

Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

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EG:030-L42-P42

Columns of Coast Guard landing craft packed with troops head for Cape Sansapor, New Guinea, July 1944.

Courtesy of the U.S. Coast Guard

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EG:040-L1  
Main Title

**THE CENTRAL PACIFIC DRIVE**

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EG:040-L2  
Main Text

**THE DUAL ADVANCE TOWARD THE PHILIPPINES**

The Allied plan for defeating Japan developed in May 1943 called for ejecting Japanese forces from the Aleutian Islands in Alaska (occupied during the Midway campaign) and executing a two-pronged campaign through the Pacific.

One force, commanded by Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, would advance westward from Pearl Harbor through the central Pacific. Another, led by Gen. Douglas MacArthur, would continue its offensive through the south and southwest Pacific and drive westward along the coast of New Guinea. The two forces would join in the western Pacific in 1944 for an invasion of the Philippines.

The drive through the hundreds of small islands and atolls of the central Pacific was considered vital to the plan for defeating Japan. The main combat arm of the central Pacific drive was the U.S. Fifth Fleet, spearheaded by the Fast Carrier Task Force, whose mission was to support amphibious operations with long-range strikes by carrier-based aircraft.

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EG:040-L3-P3  
Map of central and  
southwest Pacific.

[no caption]

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EG:040-L4 and L5

[not used]

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EG:040-L6-P6

Part of the U.S. Pacific Fleet at rest,  
Ulithi anchorage, Caroline Islands. The  
Allied military offensives that began in  
1943 were made possible by the unmatched  
productive might of U.S. industry. The  
delivery of fleets of new ships, thousands  
of new and improved aircraft, vitually  
unlimited amounts of munitions, and a  
whole arsenal of new weapons continued  
without interruption until the end of the  
war.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:L7 through L20

[not used]

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EG:040-L21  
Subtitle

## **THE GILBERTS AND THE MARSHALLS**

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EG:040-L22  
Text

### **THE OPENING MOVES**

The invasion of the Gilbert Islands, the first objective of the central Pacific drive, began in November 1943 with an assault by Marines on the islands of Makin and heavily fortified Tarawa. The bloody attack on Tarawa revealed serious flaws in U.S. amphibious warfare planning.

Thereafter, prolonged aerial bombing and bombardment with armor-piercing shells would be used to knock out enemy positions before launching an amphibious assault.

After the Gilberts fell, U.S. forces focused on the Marshall Islands. Army and Marine troops invaded and secured Kwajalein and Eniwetok in February 1944. After the shock of Tarawa, the nearly perfect assault on Kwajalein set the pattern for the rest of the central Pacific invasions.

The Japanese withdrew, leaving as an outpost the island of Truk in the Carolines. The "Gibraltar of the Pacific" was supposedly impregnable to attack. But during two days in February 1944, carrier-based planes hit Truk repeatedly, destroying about 200 aircraft and sinking

or damaging many ships.

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EG:040-L23-P23  
Map.

[no caption]

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EG:040-L24-P24

The battleship USS Maryland shells the island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll during the pre-invasion bombardment, November 20, 1943.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L25-P25

Four U.S. Marines were awarded the Medal of Honor for valor during the fierce fighting for Tarawa, in which 1,100 Marines were killed and almost 2,300 wounded.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L26-P26

Despite fierce resistance and heavy casualties, Marines begin climbing the seawall at Betio to clean out enemy pillboxes and shelters.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L27-P27

Marines advance along the invasion beach on Betio.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L28-P28

A Marine takes a break during a lull in the fighting on Betio.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L29-P29

A Marine wounded on Namur Island, Kwajalein Atoll, February 1944.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L30-P30

Marines relax on a Coast Guard-manned transport after the February 1944 assault on Eniwetok, which cost the Americans 348 dead and 866 wounded. Coast Guardsmen manned all landing craft in the Pacific.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L31-P31

Japanese ships in Truk harbor trying to escape attack by U.S. warplanes, February 16, 1944.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L31a-P31a

Aircraft carrier crewmen take a swim in a lagoon in the Marshalls a few days after the battle for Kwajalein.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute -

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EG:040-L32  
Subtitle

**THE MARIANAS AND THE PALAUS**

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EG:040-L33  
Text

**THE THOUSAND-MILE LEAP**

With the Gilberts and Marshalls secure, the Allies bypassed Truk and the Carolines and converged on Saipan, Tinian, and Guam in the Marianas. Some 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) from the nearest U.S. anchorage, Allied forces stormed ashore on Saipan on June 15, 1944.

By mid-July organized resistance on Saipan had ended; Tinian and Guam soon fell as well. At the cost of more than 5,000 lives, the U.S. gained bases that would allow increased submarine operations against Japanese commerce and the launching of B-29 raids against Japan.

As a prelude to the invasion of the Philippines, Adm. William F. Halsey's Third Fleet assaulted the islands of Morotai and Peleliu in the Palaus. The assault on 6.5-kilometer (4-mile) long Peleliu, heavily fortified and honeycombed with hundreds of caves, cost the U.S. the highest combat casualty rate of any amphibious assault in American history.

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EG:040-L34-P34  
Map.

[no caption]

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EG:040-L35  
Subtitle

### **THE JAPANESE ATTITUDE TOWARD SURRENDER**

The battle for Saipan marked the first time Americans invaded an island inhabited by Japanese civilians. During the bitter fighting, the refusal of enemy troops to surrender and mass suicides of civilians resulted in over 60,000 Japanese deaths.

The reasons for such behavior could be traced to the Japanese belief in the ideals of Bushido, an ancient code of conduct that Prime Minister Hideki Tojo had incorporated into the Japanese military code in 1941. The new code stated that Japanese should resist being taken prisoner and should kill themselves if captured. As the tide of the war turned against Japan, Tojo commanded Japanese troops to "die but never surrender," and to accept "death before dishonor." Wounded Japanese soldiers often killed themselves and the Allies who tried to help them.

This code of conduct made it difficult for the Japanese to understand the more lenient American attitude toward surrender and affected how they treated prisoners of war. It also explains why so few Japanese were captured during the war.

EG:040-L36

[not used]

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EG:040-L37-P37

The Japanese fleet under attack by dive bombers and torpedo planes of the Fifth Fleet during the Battle of the Philippine Sea, June 20, 1944.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L38-P38

After two days of intense bombardment and air strikes against Saipan, landing craft full of U.S. Marines head for the beach, June 15, 1944.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L39-P39

The first wave of Marines storm the beach on Saipan under intense enemy fire.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L40-P40

A Marine rifleman shakes the sand from his shoes during a lull in the fighting on Saipan, June 1944.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L41-P41

The invasion of Saipan cost 16,500 American casualties, including 3,400 killed.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L42-P42

Survivors of the fighting on Saipan, June 1944.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L43-P43

Supported by Admiral Halsey's Third Fleet, waves of amphibious landing craft begin the assault on Peleliu, September 15, 1944.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L44-P44

This bandaged Marine demolition man was hit by Japanese sniper fire while trying to blow up a pillbox on Peleliu.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L45-P45

American dead, Peleliu, September 1944. The Marines and Army suffered 9,804 casualties, including 1,794 dead. Only 301 of 10,695 Japanese surrendered.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L46-P46

This Marine fought in the battle for Peleliu, during which eight of his comrades were awarded the Medal of Honor.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L47  
Subtitle

**THE PHILIPPINES**

#

EG:040-L48  
Text

**"OUR FORCES STAND AGAIN ON PHILIPPINE  
SOIL"**

**--Gen. Douglas MacArthur**

By the end of summer 1944, with General MacArthur's conquest of New Guinea and Admiral Nimitz's central Pacific drive essentially complete, the two forces prepared for the long-awaited invasion of the Philippines. From air bases in the south and central Pacific, western China, and New Guinea, and from the Third Fleet at sea, Allied air and sea power pounded Japanese installations and shipping to isolate the island of Leyte in the central Philippines. On October 20, 1944, 60,000 Allied troops landed on the beaches of Leyte.

Meanwhile at sea, four separate Japanese naval forces converged on the area, and in October 1944 the largest sea battle of all time ensued--the Battle of Leyte Gulf. The Japanese suffered a crushing defeat.

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EG:040-L49-P49  
Map of Philippines.

[no caption]

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EG:040-L49a-P49a

Key to the mobility of the carrier task forces was the periodic replenishment of fuel, supplies, and ordnance at sea.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L50-P50

President Franklin D. Roosevelt discusses the forthcoming invasion of the Philippines with (left to right) Gen. Douglas MacArthur, Commander, Allied Forces, Southwest Pacific; Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet; and Adm. William D. Leahy, Chief of Staff to the President; Hawaii, July 27, 1944.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L51-P51

On October 20, 1944, Gen. Douglas MacArthur waded ashore on Leyte to announce to the people of the Philippines, "By the grace of Almighty God, our forces stand again on Philippine soil--soil consecrated in the blood of our two peoples."

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L52-P52

An Army truck rolls down the ramp of a Coast Guard-manned landing ship onto Leyte.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute



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EG:040-L53-P53

Three Japanese soldiers killed in the fighting for Leyte.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L54-P54

A Coast Guardsman attends to a soldier wounded by shrapnel on Leyte.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L55-P55, P55a

Adm. William F. "Bull" Halsey Jr., Commander, Third Fleet (left), and Vice Adm. Marc A. Mitscher, Commander, Task Force 38 (right), victors of the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L56-P56

The Japanese aircraft carrier Zuiho, sunk by Third Fleet carrier planes on October 25, 1944, during the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L57-P57

A U.S. escort carrier is shelled by enemy cruisers and battleships in Leyte Gulf, October 25, 1994.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L57a-P57a

During action off the coast of Japan, the crew of an aircraft carrier uses foamite to prevent fire from spreading on the hangar deck.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L57b-P57b

Fighter pilots relax in a ready room before flight operations aboard an aircraft carrier.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L58-P58

The first wave of American troops sweep through the waters of Lingayen Gulf towards the beaches of Luzon in the Philippines, January 9, 1945.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:040-L59-P59

Army Air Forces B-25s attack Clark Field on Luzon, 1945.

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EG:040-L60-P60

Army Air Forces P-38 fighter-bombers napalm Japanese installations near Ipo Dam, Luzon, 1945.

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EG:040-L61-P61a,b

While the Allies lay siege to Manila from February 3 to March 3, Japanese troops systematically destroyed the city and slaughtered about 100,000 civilians out of a population of 1 million. Men, women, and children alike were burned to death, blown up, bayoneted, shot, or beheaded in their homes, hospitals, churches, schools, and streets.

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EG:040-L63  
Subtitle

### **THE LIBERATION OF THE PHILIPPINES**

The defeat of the Japanese navy in the Battle of Leyte Gulf did not alter the basic Japanese plan to fight to the finish in the Philippines. Despite fierce resistance on land, and the onslaught of kamikazes against U.S. warships at sea, General MacArthur was able to declare on Christmas day 1944 that all organized resistance on Leyte had ended.

Within months, Luzon was invaded, Corregidor was back in Allied hands, and Manila had fallen. Still ahead lay the bitterly fought campaigns for Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Meanwhile in Europe, the British, American, and French drove into Germany from the west, while the Soviets closed in from the east. Finally, on May 8, 1945, as the Pacific war entered its final phases, World War II officially ended in Europe.

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EG:050-L1  
Main Title

**THE GRUMMAN F6F HELLCAT**

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EG:050-L2  
Text

On August 31, 1943, the Hellcat flew in combat for the first time, operating from the deck of the USS Yorktown with Fighter Squadron 9 in attacks against Japanese installations on Marcus Island in the Pacific. During the next two years, it became the premier carrier-based fighter of the war, destroying over 5,100 enemy aircraft in aerial combat. Almost 75 percent of all the U.S. Navy's air-to-air victories were achieved by the F6F, which attained an unsurpassed record of 19 enemy aircraft destroyed for each F6F lost.

In just three years of production 12,275 Hellcats were built, with the basic model undergoing remarkably few design changes. The F6F-3 and -5 models were the principal combat versions, with radar-equipped F6F-3E, -3N, and -5N models also flown in the Pacific by U.S. Navy and Marine Corps night-fighter squadrons.

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EG:050-L3  
Specifications block

**GRUMMAN F6F-5 HELLCAT**

Wingspan: 13.0 m (42 ft 10 in)  
Length: 10.2 m (33 ft 7 in)  
Height: 4.4 m (14 ft 5 in)  
Weight, empty: 4,182 kg (9,212 lb)  
Weight, gross: 5,780 kg (12,730 lb)  
Armament: Six 12.7 mm (.50 cal)  
machine guns  
Top speed: 594 km/h (371 mph) at  
6,000 m (20,000 ft)  
Ceiling: 11,190 m (36,700 ft)  
Engine: Pratt & Whitney 2,000-  
hp R-2800-10W  
Manufacturer: Grumman Aircraft  
Engineering Corp,  
Bethpage, Long Island,  
N.Y.

#

EG:050-L4

### **A RUGGED, VERSATILE COMBAT AIRCRAFT**

The Hellcat bore a family resemblance to its predecessor, the Grumman F4F Wildcat, one of which is in Sea-Air Operations (Gallery 203). However, the Hellcat was bigger and heavier, and its more powerful engine allowed it to outperform its main adversary, the Mitsubishi Zero. The Hellcat provided excellent visibility and armor protection for its pilot. Its self-sealing fuel tanks and rugged construction enabled it to withstand considerable damage and still bring its pilot safely back to his ship.

To combat the kamikaze threat in 1944-45, carriers began carrying more fighters and fewer bombers. The Hellcat helped offset the decrease in bombers, since it could carry 900 kilograms (2,000 pounds) of bombs under its fuselage and six air-to-ground rockets under its wings.

In the air the Hellcat was a stable, "forgiving," and dependable airplane. Aboard ship, it was relatively easy to maintain--it consistently had a 90 percent in-service rate. Its unique folding wing design almost doubled the number of Hellcats that could be stored on board a carrier.

EG:050-L5-P5

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A Hellcat pilot moments away from a ride down the starboard catapult. Two hydraulic catapults on the bow of the aircraft carrier could accelerate heavily loaded aircraft to speeds of up to 160 kilometers (100 miles) per hour.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

EG:050-L6-P6

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The arresting hook of a Hellcat snags one of the many steel arresting wires on the aft end of the ship.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

EG:050-L7-P7

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Immediately after the pilot taxied clear of the landing area, the wings were unlocked, and flight deck crewmen helped fold them back.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

EG:050-L8-P8

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The external fuel tank of this F6F-3 ruptured on landing aboard the USS Lexington, and flames engulfed the aircraft. The pilot released his safety belt and escaped over the wing.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:050-L9-P9

Accidents during carrier landings, often due to a wounded pilot or a damaged aircraft, were not unusual. The Hellcat was remarkably rugged, often making it back aboard ship despite extensive damage.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:050-L10

### THE HELLCAT IN COMBAT

Although shooting down enemy airplanes was the Hellcat's principal mission, other duties evolved as its capabilities were tested in battle and Japanese aerial warfare tactics changed. Hellcat pilots escorted mass formations of carrier bombers in attacks against targets heavily defended by enemy fighters, often without losing a single bomber.

Other missions included fighter sweeps to catch enemy aircraft on the ground, patrols to spot approaching enemy aircraft, long-range searches for Japanese ships, ground-support operations against invasion beaches, and night fighting and photo reconnaissance.

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EG:050-L11-P11

The Mitsubishi A6M Reisen (Zero) was the main fighter of the Japanese navy. The Zero, or "Zeke," outperformed all types of Allied fighters early in the war. But it was no match for newer fighters, such as the Hellcat and Corsair, which were numerically and technologically superior and flown by better-trained pilots. A Zero is displayed in World War II Aviation (Gallery 205) upstairs.

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EG:050-L12

[not used]

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EG:050-L13-P13

An F6F-3 pilot launches from the USS Yorktown on June 19, 1944, on his way to what was later dubbed the "Marianas turkey shoot," the biggest one-day air battle in history.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:050-L14-P14

With idle Hellcats on its deck, the light carrier Monterey (foreground) and the Wasp (background) come under attack by Japanese aircraft during the U.S. invasion of Saipan, Guam, and Tinian, June 1944.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:050-L15-P15

A jubilant Alex Vraciu destroyed six Japanese dive bombers in eight minutes during the "Marianas turkey shoot" to become the highest ranking Navy ace at the time with 18 victories. The Japanese lost about 325 aircraft that day.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:050-L16-P16

Part of a U.S Navy task force of 116 warships, including 16 carriers, steams towards a position 96 kilometers (60 miles) off the coast of Honshu, the largest island of Japan, February 16-17, 1945. During two days of combat off Japan, Hellcats destroyed over 300 enemy planes. Not one U.S. ship was attacked.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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EG:050-L17-P17

The super-dreadnought Yamato was intercepted on April 7, 1945, by Navy Hellcats and carrier bombers as it headed for a one-way suicide mission against the U.S armada at Okinawa. After many bomb and torpedo hits, the giant battleship listed heavily and sank, carrying with it almost 2,500 officers and men.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Institute

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