

While the Allies agreed that the defeat of the Nazis was their first priority, the United States did not wait until V-E Day to move against Japan. Fortunately, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 had missed the Pacific Fleet's submarines. Even more importantly, the attack had missed the fleet's aircraft carriers, which were out at sea at the time.	
Main Idea:	

In the first six months after Pearl Harbor, the Japanese conquered an empire that dwarfed Hitler's Third Reich. On the Asian mainland, Japanese troops overran Hong Kong, French Indochina, Malaya, Burma, Thailand, and much of China. They also swept south and east across the Pacific, conquering the Dutch East Indies, Guam, Wake Island, the Solomon Islands, and countless other outposts in the ocean, including two islands in the Aleutian chain, which were part of Alaska.	battled the Japanese for control. At the time of the Japanese invasion in December 1941, General Douglas MacArthur was in command of Allied forces on the islands. When American and Filipino forces found themselves with their backs to the wall on Bataan, President Roosevelt ordered MacArthur to leave. On March 11, 1942, MacArthur left the Philippines with his wife, his son, and his staff. As he left, he pledged to the many thousands of men who did not make it out, "I shall return."
Main Idea:	

In the spring of 1942, the Allies began to turn the tide against the Japanese. The push began on April 18 with a daring raid on Tokyo and other Japanese cities. Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle led 16 bombers in the attack. The next day, Americans	awoke to headlines that read "Tokyo Bombed! Doolittle Do'od It." Pulling off a Pearl Harbor-style air raid over Japan lifted America's sunken spirits. At the same time, it dampened spirits in Japan.
Main Idea:	

The main Allied forces in the Pacific were Americans and Australians. In May 1942 they succeeded in stopping the Japanese drive toward Australia in the five-day Battle of the Coral Sea. During this battle, the fighting was done by airplanes	that took off from enormous aircraft carriers. Not a single shot was fired by surface ships. For the first time since Pearl Harbor, a Japanese invasion had been stopped and turned back.
Main Idea:	

Japan's next thrust was toward Midway, a strategic island which lies north- west of Hawaii. Here again the Allies succeeded in stopping the Japanese. Americans had broken the	Japanese code and knew that Midway was to be their next target. Admiral Chester Nimitz , the commander of American

<p>naval forces in the Pacific, moved to defend the island. On June 3, 1942, his scout planes found the Japanese fleet. The Americans sent torpedo planes and dive bombers to the attack. The Japanese were caught with their planes still on the decks of their carriers. The results were devastating. By the end of the Battle of Midway, the Japanese had lost four aircraft carriers, a</p>	<p>cruiser, and 250 planes. In the words of a Japanese official, at Midway the Americans had “avenged Pearl Harbor.” The Battle of Midway was a turning point in the Pacific War. Soon the Allies began “island hopping.” Island by island they won territory back from the Japanese. With each island, Allied forces moved closer to Japan.</p>
Main Idea:	

<p>The first Allied offensive began in August 1942 when 19,000 troops stormed Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. By the time the Japanese abandoned Guadalcanal six months later, they called it the Island of Death. To war correspondent Ralph Martin and the troops who fought there, it was simply “hell.”</p> <p>“Hell was red furry spiders as big as your fist, giant lizards as long as your leg, leeches falling from trees to suck blood, armies of white ants with a bite of fire, scurrying scorpions inflaming any flesh they touched, enormous rats and bats everywhere, and rivers with waiting crocodiles. Hell was the sour, foul smell of</p>	<p>the squishy jungle, humidity that rotted a body within hours, . . . stinking wet heat of dripping rain forests that sapped the strength of any man.” — Ralph G. Martin, <i>The GI War</i></p> <p>Guadalcanal marked Japan’s first defeat on land, but not its last. The Americans continued leapfrogging across the Pacific toward Japan, and in October 1944, some 178,000 Allied troops and 738 ships converged on Leyte Island in the Philippines. General MacArthur, who had left the Philippines two years earlier, waded ashore and announced, “People of the Philippines: I have returned.”</p>
Main Idea:	

<p>The Japanese threw their entire fleet into the Battle of Leyte Gulf. They also tested a new tactic, the kamikaze, or suicide-plane, attack in which Japanese pilots crashed their bomb-laden planes into Allied ships. (<i>Kamikaze</i> means “divine wind” and refers to a legendary typhoon that saved Japan in 1281 by destroying</p> <p>a Mongol invasion.) In the Philippines, 424 kamikaze pilots embarked on suicide missions, sinking 16 ships and damaging another 80.</p> <p>Americans watched these terrifying attacks with “a strange mixture of respect and pity” according to Vice Admiral Charles</p>	<p>Brown. “You have to admire the devotion to country demonstrated by those pilots,” recalled Seaman George Marse. “Yet, when they were shot down, rescued and brought aboard our ship, we were surprised to find the pilots looked like ordinary, scared young men, not the wide-eyed fanatical ‘devils’ we imagined them to be.”</p> <p>Despite the damage done by the kamikazes, the Battle of Leyte Gulf was a disaster for Japan. In three days of battle, it lost 3 battleships, 4 aircraft carriers, 13 cruisers, and almost 500 planes. From then on, the Imperial Navy played only a minor role in the defense of Japan.</p>
Main Idea:	

<p>After retaking much of the Philippines and liberating the American prisoners of war there, MacArthur and the Allies turned to Iwo Jima, an island that writer William Manchester later described as “an ugly, smelly glob of cold lava squatting in a surly ocean.” Iwo Jima (which means “sulfur island” in Japanese) was critical to the United States as a base from which</p>	<p>heavily loaded bombers might reach Japan. It was also perhaps the most heavily defended spot on earth, with 20,700 Japanese troops entrenched in tunnels and caves. More than 6,000 marines died taking this desolate island, the greatest number in any battle in the Pacific to that point. Only 200 Japanese survived. Just one obstacle now stood between the Allies and a final assault on Japan—the island of Okinawa.</p>
Main Idea:	