

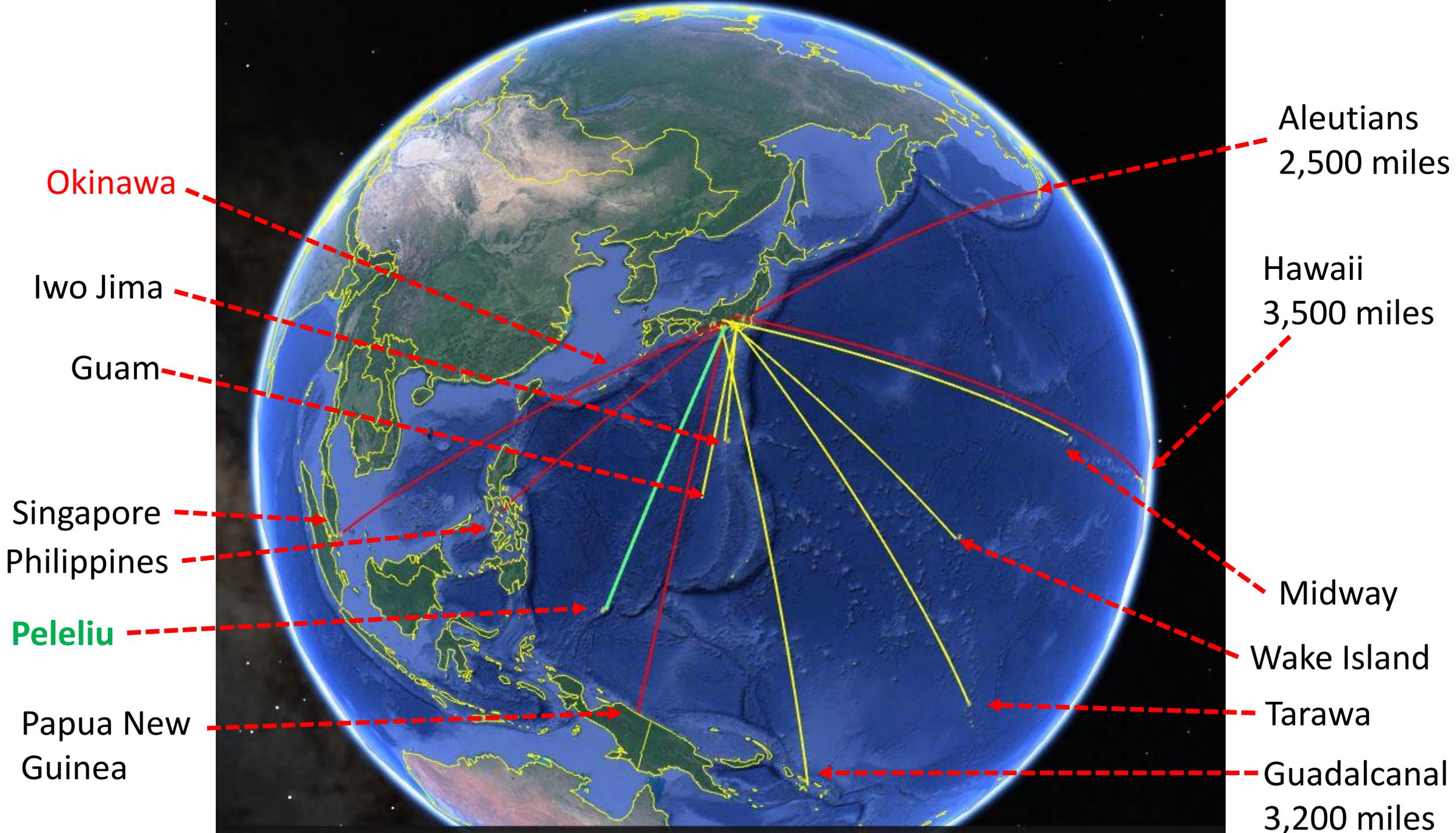
1. *Why WWII?*
2. *The Doolittle Raiders*
3. ***Marching Across the Pacific***
4. *The Battle of Peleliu*

(The story of U.S. soldiers in the Pacific theater during WWII)

Darrel VanDyke, PhD

Why were island outposts so important to Japan?

1. Psychological – they (Japan) chose where to fight and when
2. Japan is a group of islands with little natural resources for steel, concrete, and oil/gas to grow their influence in Asia
3. Runways - Protection for shipping
 1. Ships are always thirsty for fuel
 2. Japan wants its nation to grow to be a global power
 3. Ships transport troops
 4. A runway was essentially an aircraft carrier
4. Japan had built up incredible naval force; accuracy unparalleled from years of practice, practice, practice



https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/a_people_at_war/prelude_to_war/articles_prelude_to_war/news_editorial.html

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CAN PLANES RUIN OUR CITIES?

Newspaper and magazine commentators anxious to persuade the United States to put most of its defense money into airplanes have often horrified their readers with word and pencil pictures of airplanes leveling our cities in the next war. Subways gashed open, the Empire State Building beheaded, Brooklyn Bridge chopped neatly in two, thousands of people crushed like ants in toppling skyscrapers—remember the stories and the pictures that went with them?



Lieut. Commander Logan C. Ramsey, U. S. N.

These fears have been deflated somewhat by the fact that life goes on in Madrid after more than a year of persistent air raids by the Rebels, though Madrid has been punctured in many places. Shanghai has suffered more in a shorter time than Madrid has; but the bulk of Shanghai's population is still holding on, and swearing vengeance against the Japanese airmen some day, somehow.

1937 Lt. Commander Ramsey published article on how silly it was to park battleships next to each other, as aircraft could sink two ships with one shot

December 7, 1941 "AIR RAID PEARL HARBOR . . . This is no drill."



Ensign Kazuo Sakamaki

Pearl Harbor losses: 2,403 killed
Japan: ~10

December 8, 1941

- U.S. Immediately starts thinking about controlling Japan's aggression
- But how? Land? Sea? Air?

Honest to goodness true ideas bantered within U.S. government (Dec 1941):
(from the book *Nuking The Moon*, by Vince Houghton)

1. Project Fantasia – painting foxes fluorescent and dropping them on Japan
2. Project X-Ray – drop bats with small bombs

With Jimmy Doolittle at the controls of Plane #1 lifting off first; his co-pilot was Dick Cole.



Main Players for U.S. (in South Pacific theater)

President Roosevelt

General Douglas MacArthur

Admiral Chester Nimitz

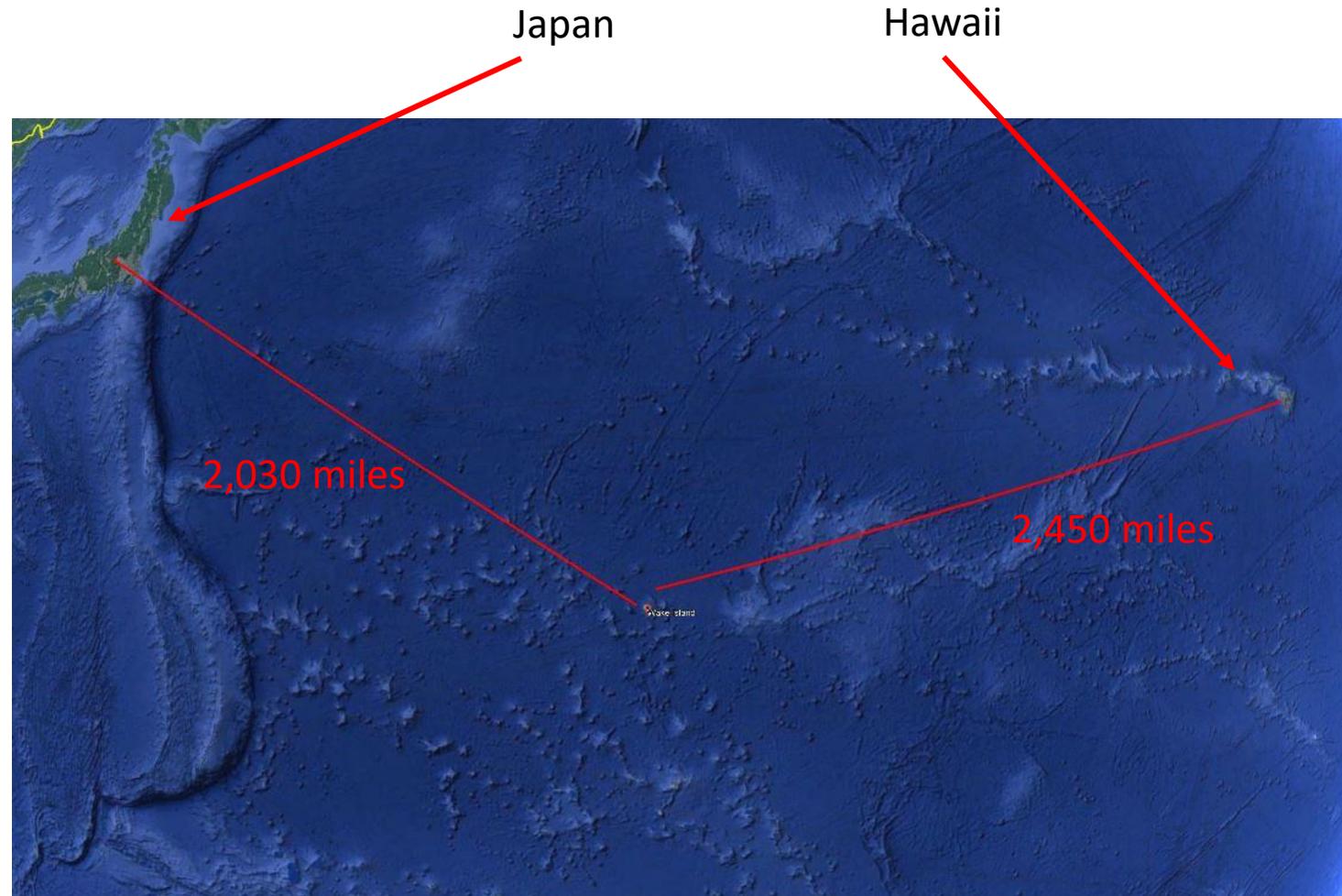
Admiral William Frederick "Bull" Halsey

- Primarily going to be a Navy war with support from Marines
- U.S. shipyards would turn out a destroyer in 5 months (instead of normal 12 months)
- A “Big” aircraft carrier would be built within 15 months (instead of normal 3 years)
- Once Singapore fell (on Dec 8, 1941) Churchill thought South Pacific was lost and wanted all U.S. resources thrown to Europe
- U.S. knew Australia was strategic, and had to save it

- General Douglas MacArthur was the smartest, brightest, and best leader the army ever had – according to MacArthur
- MacArthur originally moved out of Philippines to Melbourne, AU
- MacArthur blamed U.S. Navy for fall of Philippines; ranked Japan the best navy in the world, followed by GB, Italy, and U.S. – in that order
- Nimitz was trying to run a war, and flew 4,000 miles to meet MacArthur, but MacArthur said he was too busy and instead dispatched an aide
- Nimitz was asked after the war what scared him the most during the war, “The first six months dealing with MacArthur.”

Wake Island

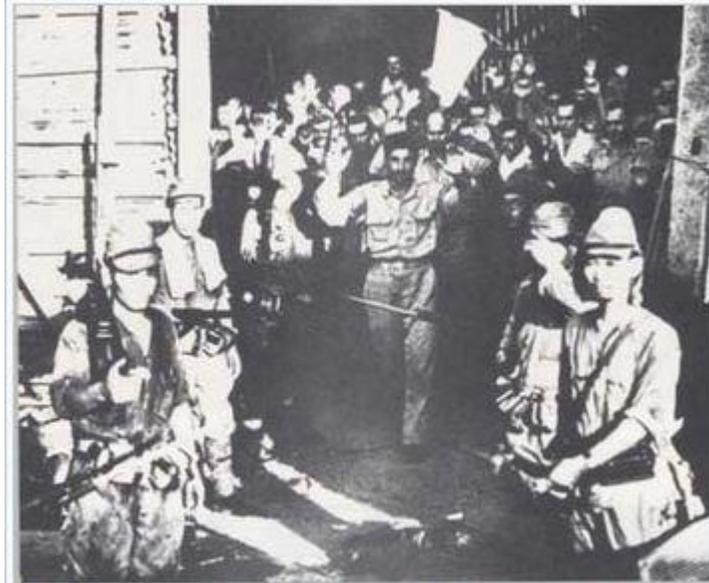
- Attacked on Dec 8, 1941 by Japan
- U.S. defenders sank 2 Japan fleet, and shot down 24 aircraft
- Japan 2,000 army/navy seized island and executed 98 survivors*
- Wake constant bombardment by U.S. over next 4 years; Japanese had no supplies
- Sept 4, 1945 U.S. forced surrender of all Japanese troops



*Col. Sakaibara was hung on Guam

First “battles” of the Philippines

- Japanese attacked the Philippines in early December 1941
- MacArthur caught by surprise*
- Regiments left to fend for themselves and to hold off Japanese as long as they can (i.e. Until MacArthur gets away)



The surrender of U.S. forces at the Malinta Tunnel on May 6, 1942.

U.S. – 800 killed
1,000 wounded
11,000 captured

Japan – 900 killed
1,200 wounded

* Almost all aircraft was on the ground and destroyed by Japanese bombing runs

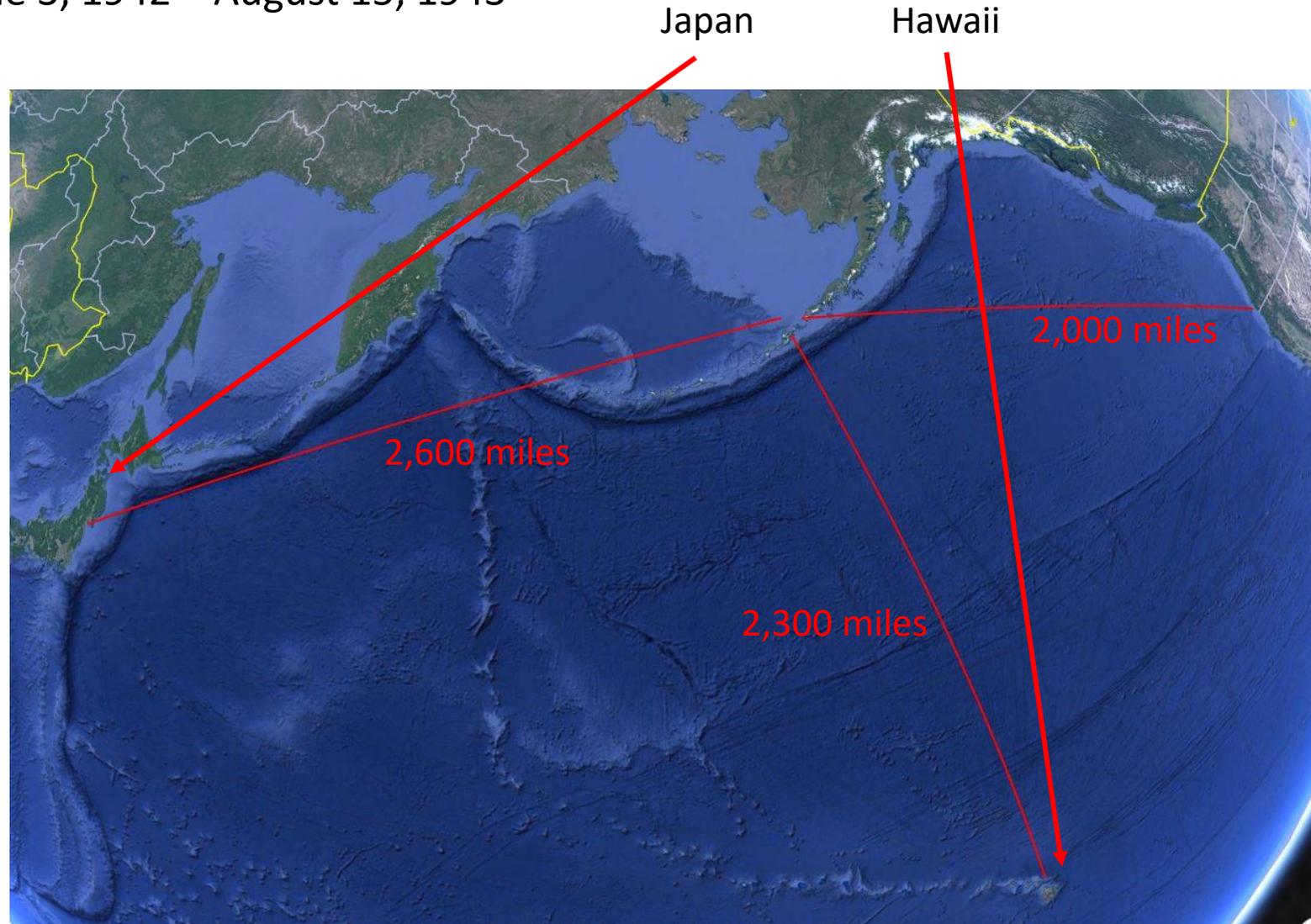
Aleutians

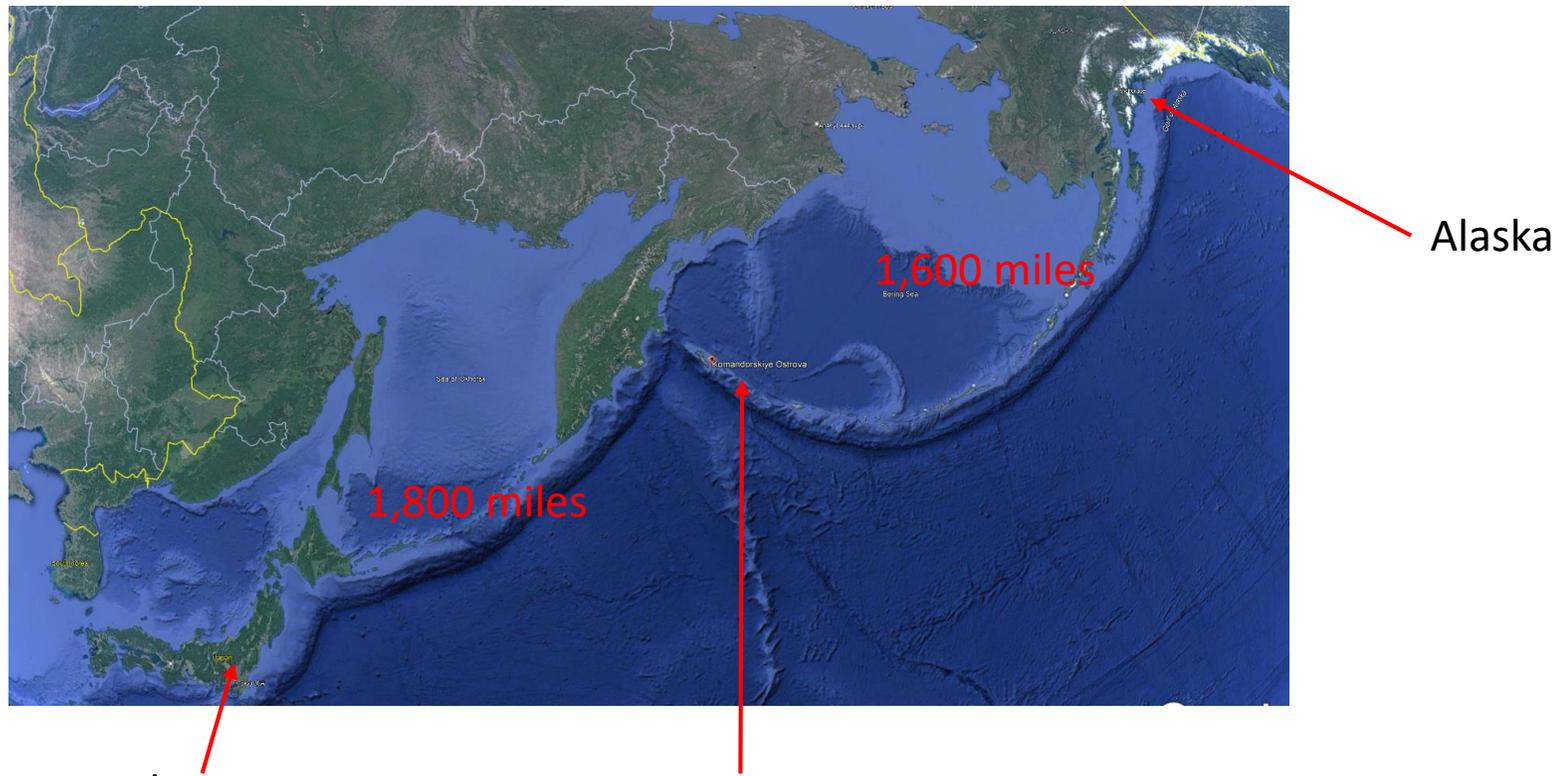
June 3, 1942 – August 15, 1943

- Two primary islands: Attu and Kiska
- Attu had a landing strip
- Battles and landings started May 1943
- Japan outnumbered 5 to 1
- U.S. kept repelling attacks, and finally decided to make an all out assault on Kiska
- Japanese had left two weeks earlier
- U.S. lost 313 soldiers to booby-traps, friendly fire, and frost-bite

U.S.: 1,481 killed, 640 missing, 8 captured, 225 aircraft lost, 3 ships sunk

Japan: 4,350 killed, 28 captured, 7 warships sunk





Japan

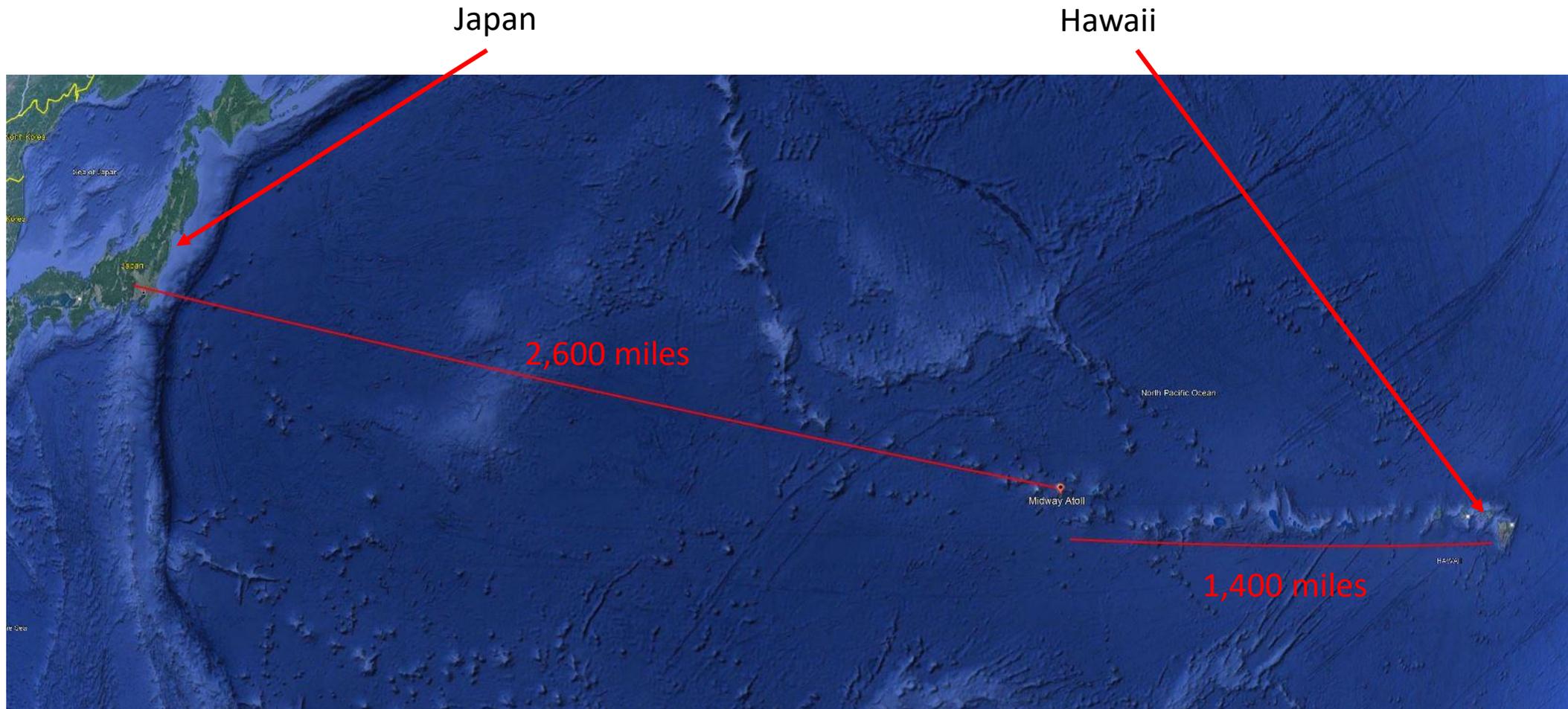
Battle of Komandorski Islands
March 26, 1943

Naval battle only; moderate damages to both sides' cruisers

U.S. 7 killed, 20 wounded
Japan 14 killed, 26 wounded

Midway – June 4-7, 1942

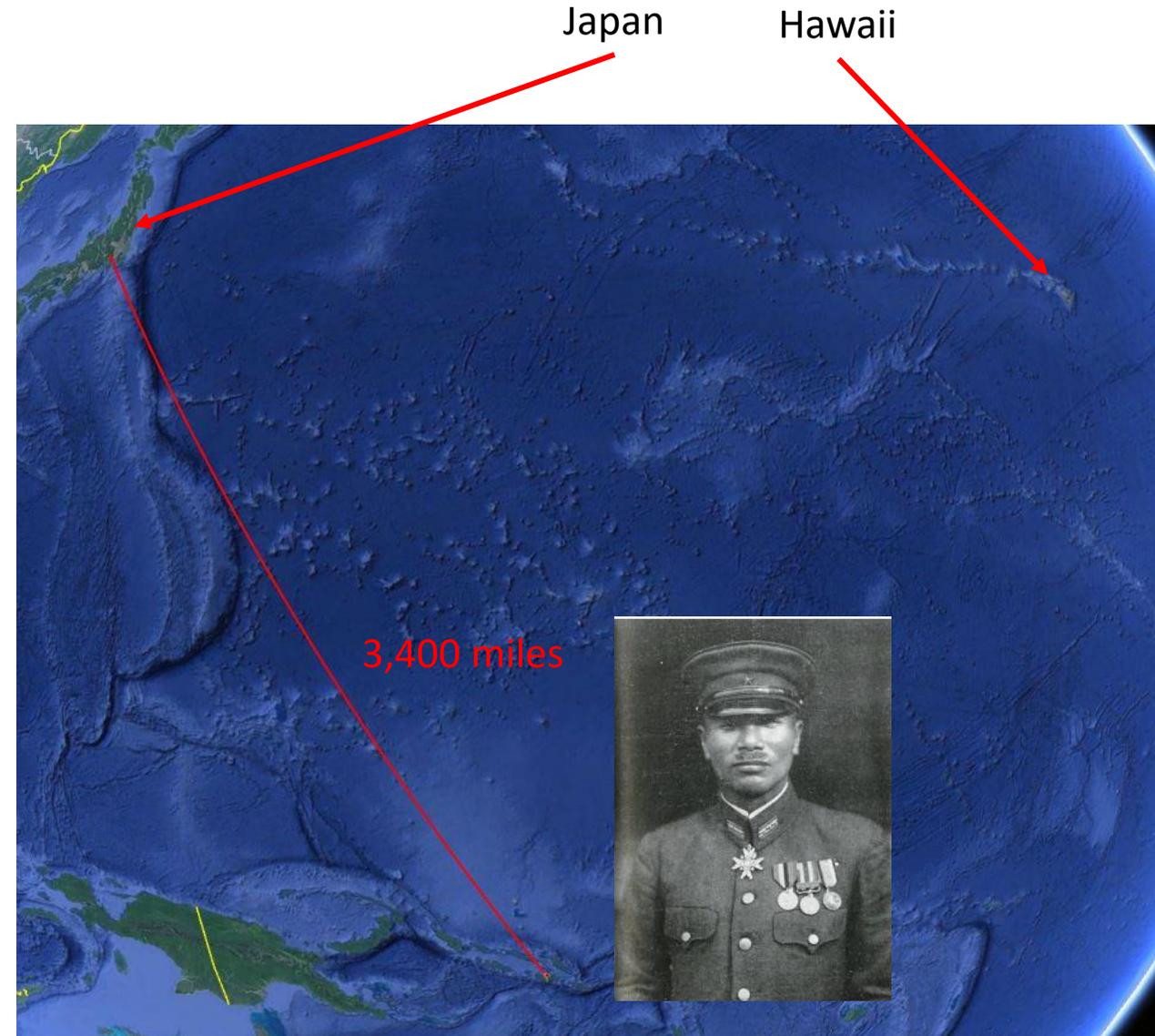
- U.S. lost carrier Yorktown, 1 destroyer sunk, 150 aircraft lost, 307 killed
- Japan lost 4 carriers, 1 cruiser, 248 aircraft lost, 3,057 killed, 37 captured





Solomon Islands

- **Guadacanal** – Aug 7, 1942; U.S: 1,732 killed, 9 fleet ships sunk, 5 fleet damaged, 36 aircraft lost; Japan: 1,900 killed, 5 fleet ships sunk, 7 fleet damaged, 7 transports sunk, 64 aircraft lost
- **Eastern Solomons** – Aug 24-25, 1942; U.S: 90 killed, carrier damaged, 20 aircraft lost; Japan: ~300 killed, 3 ships sunk, 75 aircraft lost
- **Santa Cruz** – Oct 26, 1942; U.S: 266 killed, carrier sunk, 81 aircraft lost, damage to other fleet ships; Japan: 400-500 killed, damage to two carriers, 99 aircraft lost
- **Kula Gulf** – July 5-6, 1943; U.S: 168 killed, 1 cruiser sunk; Japan 324 killed, 2 cruisers sunk, 2 damaged
- **Vella Gulf** – Aug 6-7, 1943; U.S. 67 killed, 47 wounded, 36 missing, 1 destroyer sunk, 2 fleet damaged; Japan: 138 killed, 108 captured, 1 destroyer sunk
- **Bougainville** – Feb 15, 1944; U.S: 727 killed (516 Australians killed), **land battle, 144,000 troops committed**; Japan; ~19,000 killed



Colonel Kiyonao Ichiki (aka “Mr. Banzai”)
Commanded 7,000 troops, August 21, almost all decimated

Gilbert Islands

- **Makin**
- **Tarawa** – Nov 1943

Japanese commander, *“A million men cannot take Tarawa in a hundred years.”*

Marines took it in 3 days.

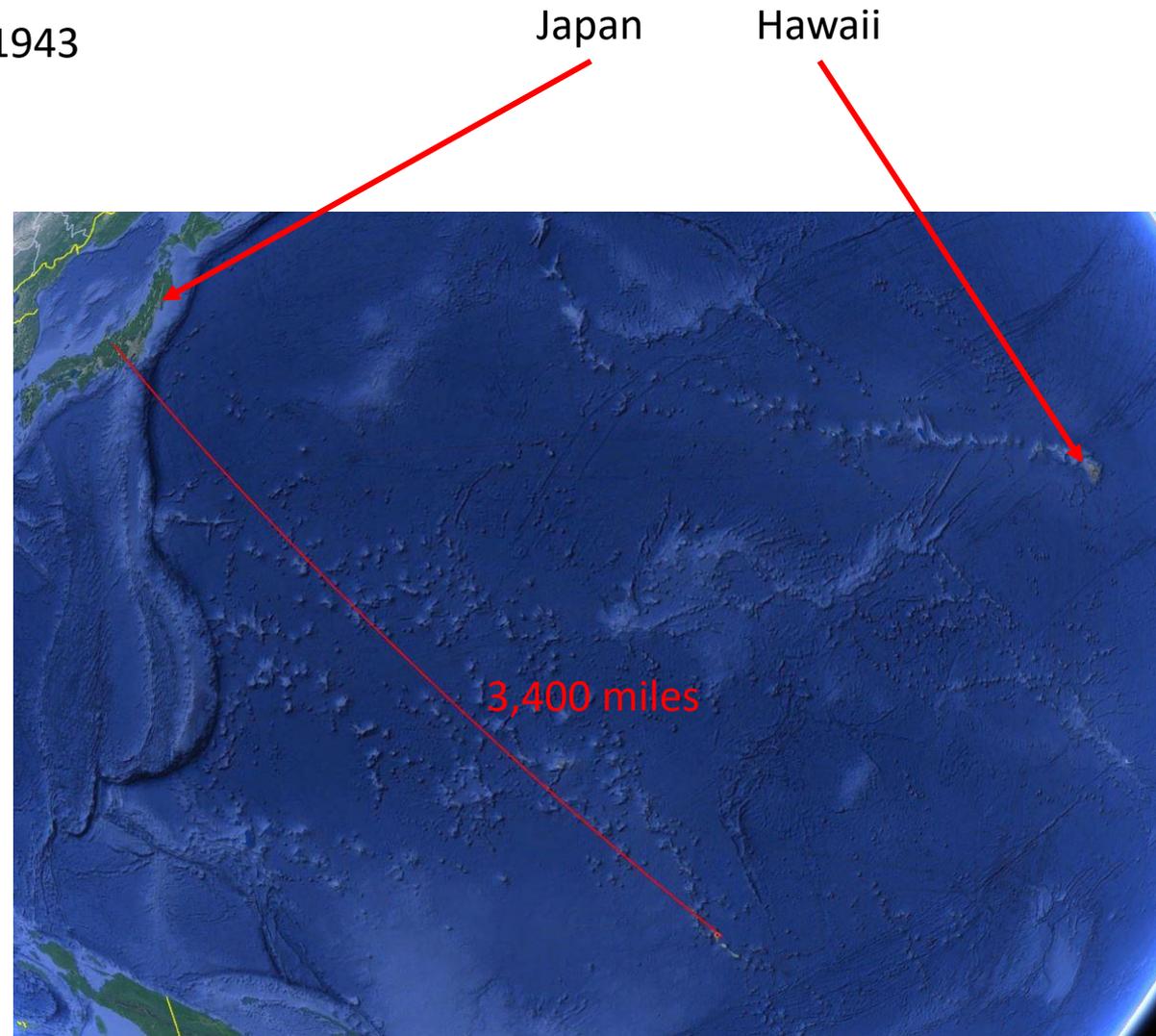
Makin occupied by Japanese Dec 1941, no runway, atoll only (tough duty for Japanese!)

Makin battle 1: Aug, 1942, U.S. raid to gather intelligence

- U.S.: 19 killed, 17 wounded, 9 captured and executed, 2 missing
- Japan: 48 killed
- Japan worried – added more soldiers

Makin battle 2: Nov 1943

- U.S.: 66 Marines killed, 152 wounded
- Japan: 395 killed
- U.S.S. Liscome sunk by Japanese sub; ~690 killed
- U.S.S. Mississippi turret fire kills 43





Last known picture of Yamamoto hours before he was killed; taken at Rabaul while on an inspection/moral boosting tour of Pacific

G4M



A Mitsubishi G4M1; with a non-standard roundel - a white square instead of the white circle surrounding the hinomaru.

- U.S. had broken Japanese code
- Knew where he was headed next
- U.S. Navy launched P-38 long range attack planes
- Calculated exactly when he would be approaching next island, Bougainville
- Attacked both bombers (one was a decoy) and fighter escorts – all shot down
- Yamamoto killed on April 18, 1943



Gilbert Islands

- Makin
 - **Tarawa** – Nov 1943
-
- Had a runway; just a 10 acre atoll
 - U.S. : 1,009 Marines killed, 2,101 wounded
 - Japan: 4,690 killed (including Korean forced labor)
 - 17 Japanese captured



Tarawa sacrifices



Marshall Islands

Eniwetok – Feb 1944

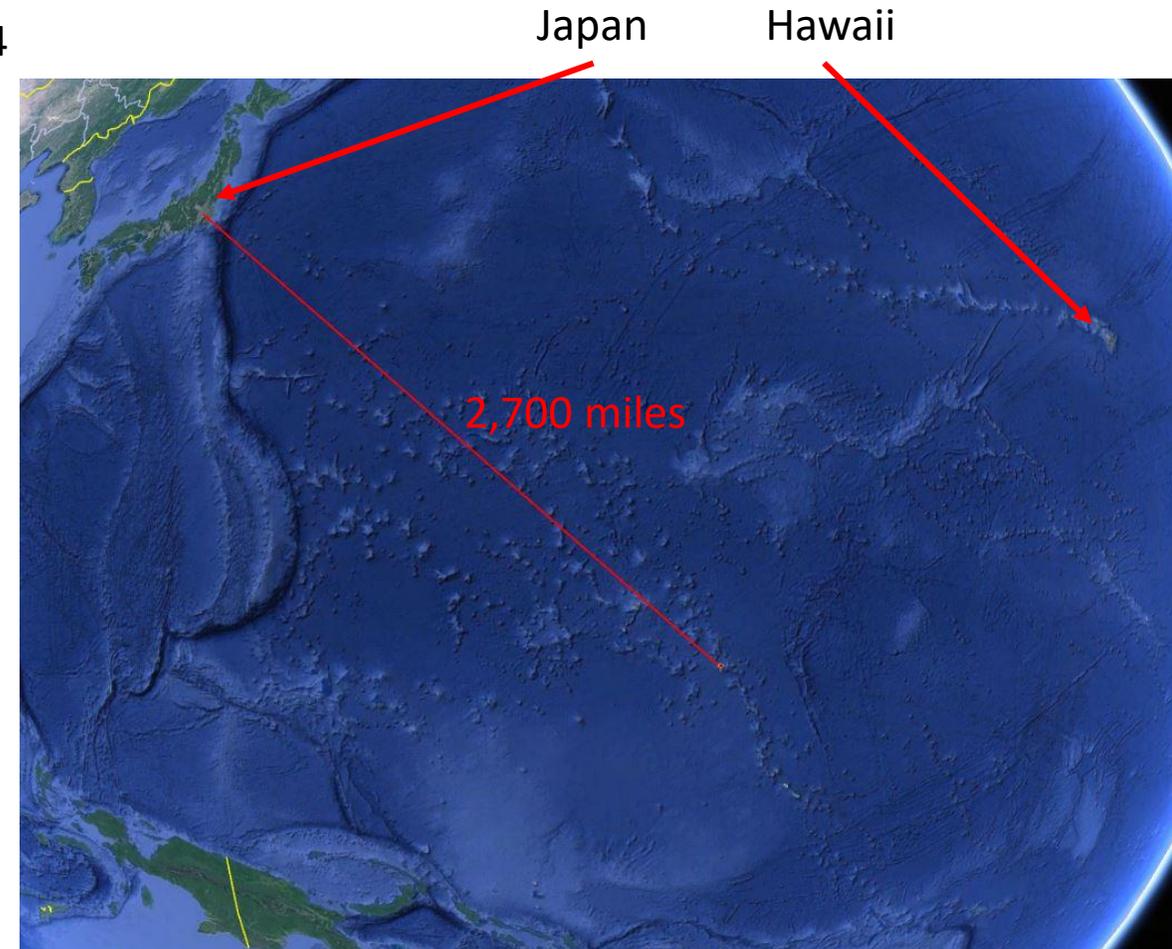
Kwajalein – Jan 1944

Eniwetok:

- Nov 1942, Japanese built runway
- Became MAJOR shipping/supply “anchorage” for U.S. (average 300 ships a week here)
- U.S. 313 killed, 77 missing, 879 wounded
- Japan 3,380 killed, 144 captured
- Marine 22nd regiment and Army National Guard from NY

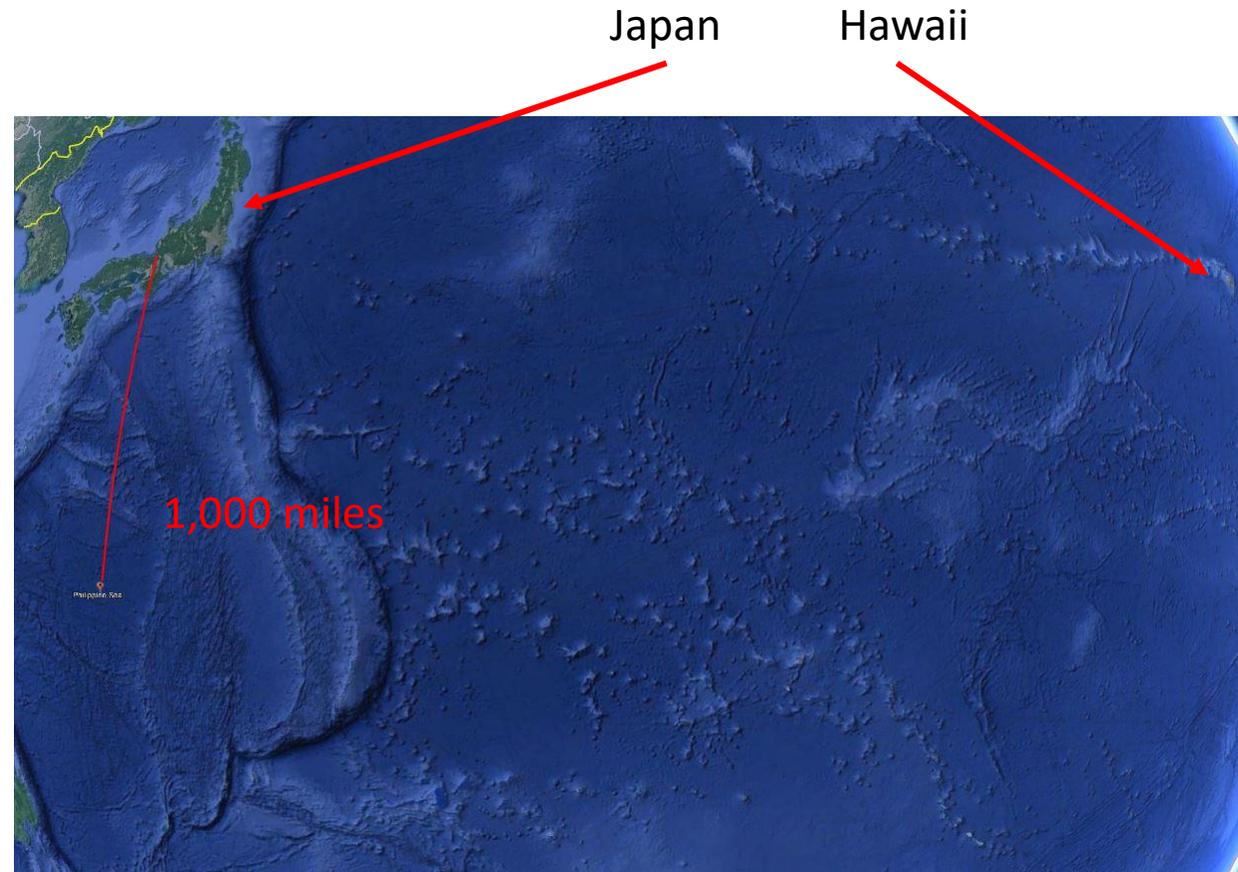
Kwajalein (and Roi-Namur):

- Nov 1942, Japanese built runway
- U.S. 348 killed, 1,462 wounded, 183 missing
- Japan 7,800 killed, 253 captured
- Marine 4th Division, **Army** 7th, 111th, 106th

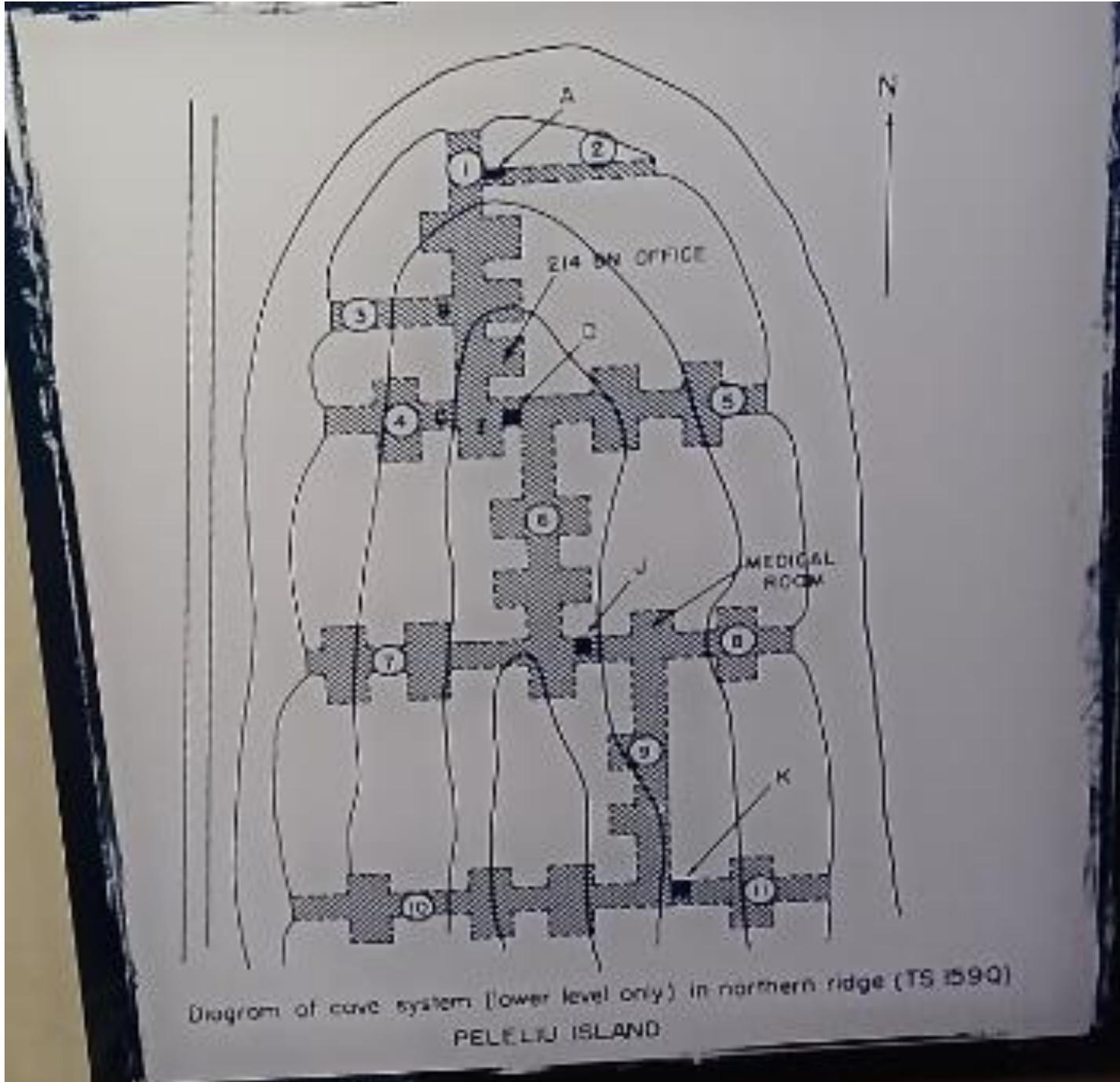


Philippine Sea Area

- **Battle of Philippine Sea** – June 19-20, 1944; U.S.: 1 battleship damaged, 123 aircraft lost, 109 killed; Japan: 3 carriers sunk, 2 oilers sunk, ~600 aircraft lost, ~3,000 killed
- **Saipan** – June 15, 1944; U.S.: 3,426 killed, 10,364 wounded; Japan: 24,000 KIA, 5,000 suicides
- **Guam** – July 21, 1944; U.S.: 1,783 killed, 6,010 wounded; Japan: 18,337 killed, 1,250 captured
- **Tinian*** – July 24, 1944; U.S. 14,000 (Marines and Army) troops; 326 killed, 1,593 wounded; ignored by Japanese until end of war – they realized how strategic the airport was for U.S.; Japan rushed 8,500 troops, out of which 313 survived
- **Ngulu/Yap** – Oct 16, 1944; occupied by 4,400 Japanese army and 1,500 Japanese navy; bypassed by U.S. – but bombed regularly



* Tinian would be airstrip that Enola Gay would use for Hiroshima bombing



Tunnel system Marines and Army encountered on Peleliu

Japanese general on Peleliu changed tactics; instead of consolidating troops, he dispatched them in small groups to confound U.S. ; U.S. would bomb an area, only to have Japanese poke out close to shoot Americans from behind

- Admiral Halsey told Nimitz to bypass Anguar and Peleliu – as they posed no threat
- MacArthur was planning his “I shall return” on certain date; demanded that the runway on Peleliu be taken as he didn’t want to be surprised by Japanese aircraft
- Anguar and Peleliu battle plans drawn up; Halsey, Nimitz, MacArthur agreed that both islands can fall in 3 days; took 32 days
- October 13, 1944 - Battle of Anguar considered over
- November 27, 1944 - Battle of Peleliu considered over
- **Anguar** – Sept 14, 1944; U.S: 264 81st Army killed; Japan 1,338 killed
- **Peleliu** – Sep 15, 1944; U.S: killed 843 1st Marines, 282 81st Army; Japan: 11,000, plus unknown forced laborers





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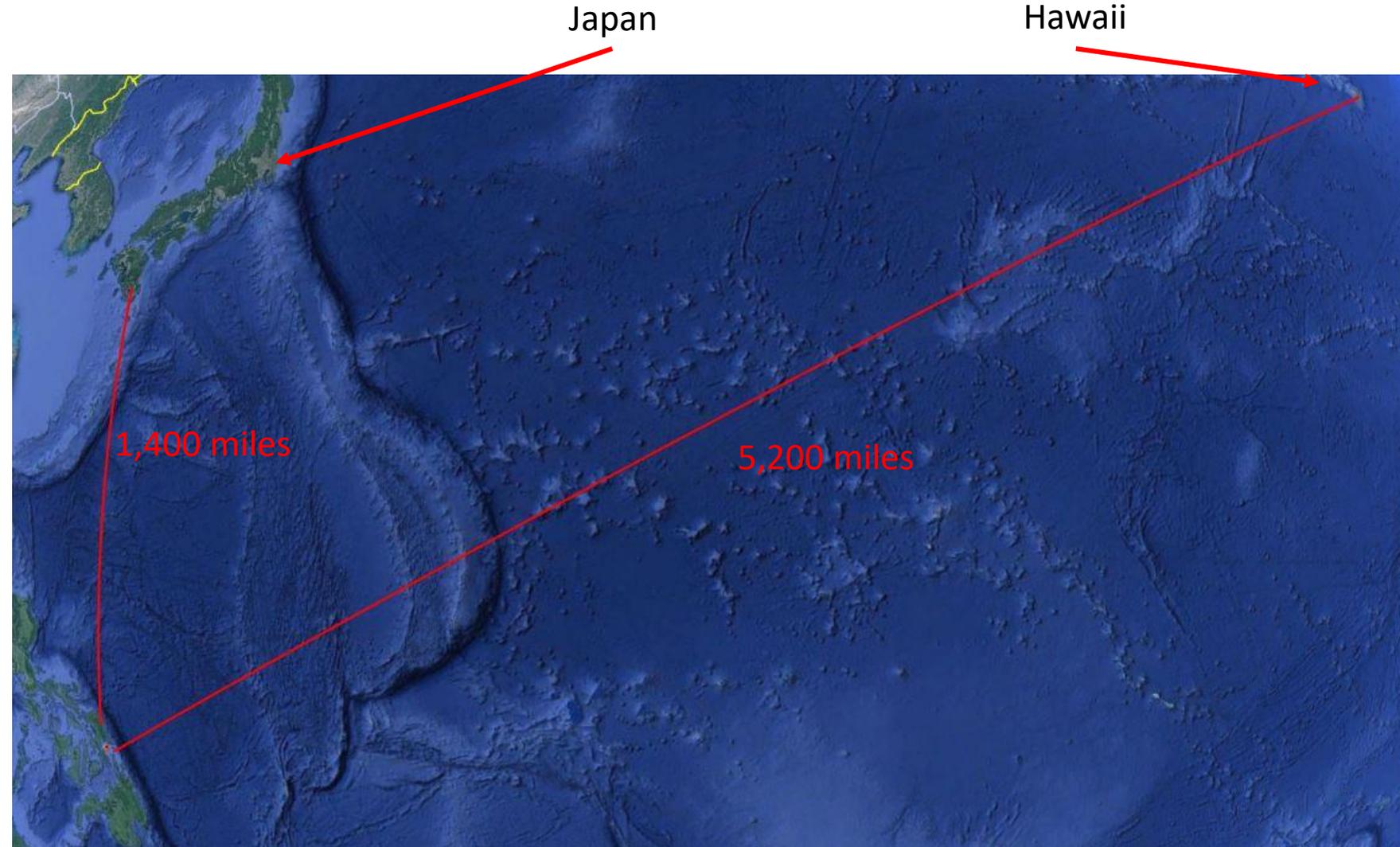
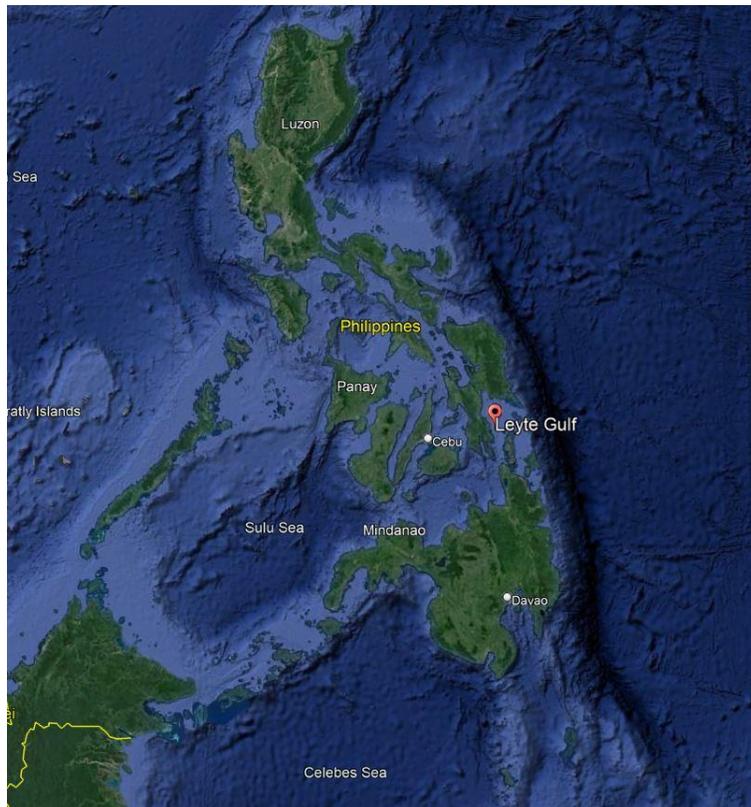
- Marines 1st Division sent to Philippines
- Army 81st Division sent to Leyte on May 3, 1945 to clean up last resistance
- Both divisions given R&R, and then landing briefings on what to expect on Japan main island
- **Landing in Japan scheduled for September 1945**

Battle of Leyte Gulf (Philippines)

October 23-26, 1944

U.S.: 1 carrier sunk, 4 other ships sunk, 255 aircraft lost, ~3,000 killed

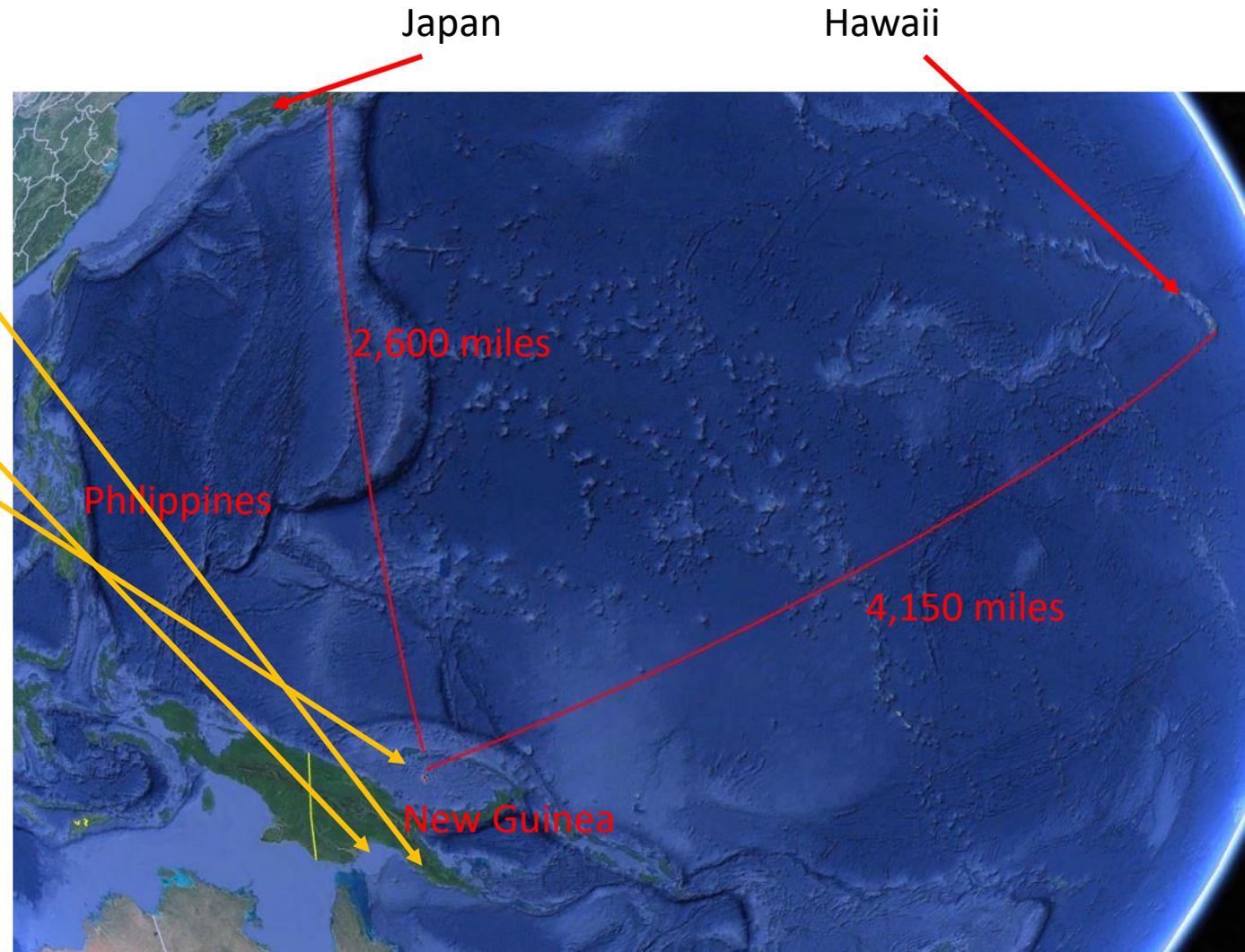
Japan: 4 carriers sunk, 24 other ships sunk, 300 aircraft lost, ~12,500 killed



Bismarck Sea

March 1943 (3 day battle)

- New Guinea is 2nd largest island in the world
- MacArthur establishes headquarters in Port Moresby
- Japan lands large force with goal Rabul harbor
- MacArthur turns back Japanese army
- Japan rushes relief troops and fleet
- Japan lost/severely damaged 10 warships, 12 army transport ships; 102 aircraft lost; ~3,000+ killed
- The last time Japan would attempt ship troop movement
- U.S. lost 2 bombers, 4 fighter aircraft; 13 killed



Iwo Jima

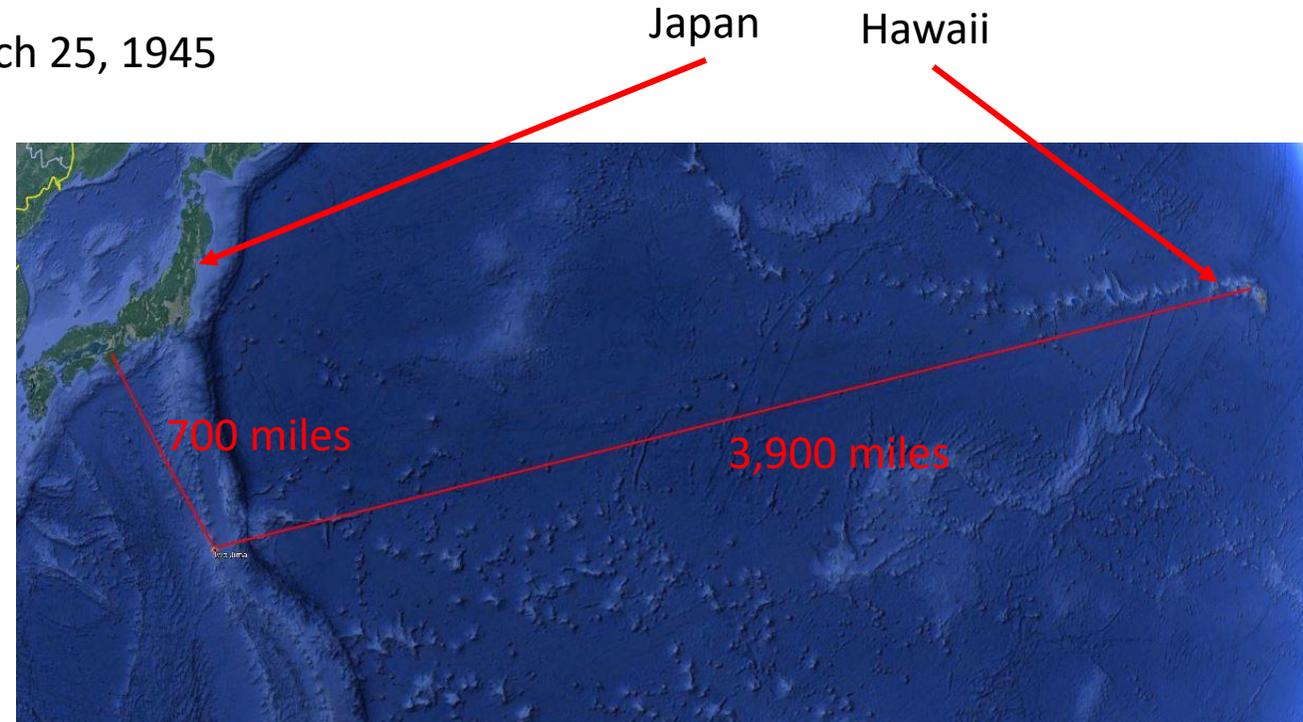
February 19 – March 25, 1945

U.S.

- *committed 110,000 troops*
- *Joint Navy and Land force program*
- *Killed 27,071, including 6,102 Marines*
- *1 Carrier sunk*
- *1 Carrier severely damaged*
- *153 aircraft lost*

Japan

- ~21,000 troops
- **216** taken as prisoners



- D-Day + 34
- General Kuribayashi, “... every man will resist to the end, making his position his tomb.”
- Captain Samaji Inouye (samurai family ties), ignored orders and led 1,000 man charge banzai charge during a night; **784** were killed
- During fighting, a B-29 made an emergency landing on Iwo
- Over 2,400 emergency landings would total on Iwo



Sgt Michael Strank;
Immigrant from
Czechoslovakia killed
in action 2 weeks
later



Cpl Harlon Block;
Weslaco, Texas, killed
same day as Sgt
Strank



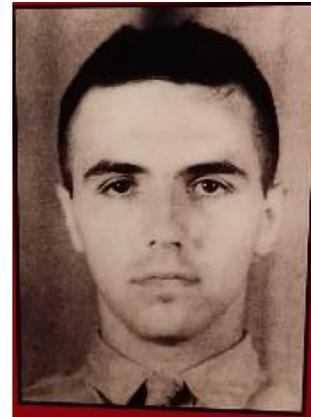
Pfc Harold Shultz;
badly wounded later
in continuing battle of
Iwo Jima



Pfc Ira Hayes; Pima
Native American,
shipped stateside to
help sell war bonds



Pfc Franklin Sousley;
Kentucky, killed by
sniper March 21,
1945



Pfc Rene Gagnon;
shipped stateside to
help sell war bonds

From National Archives

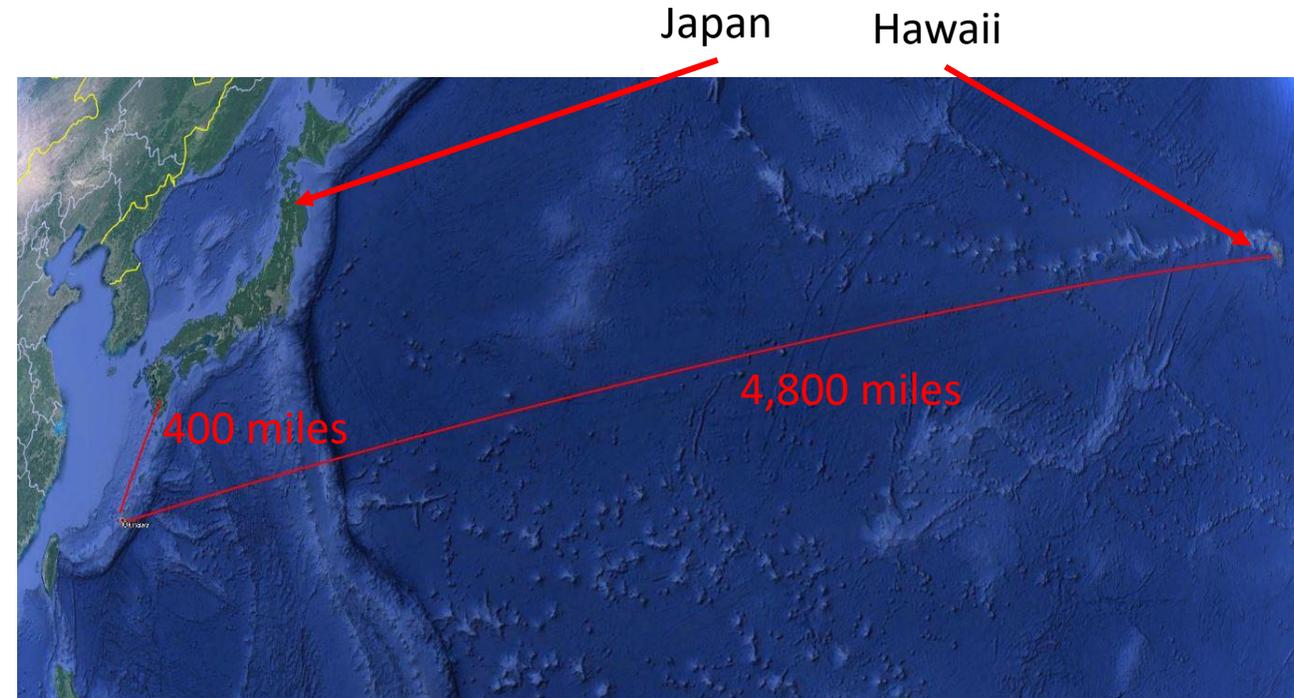
Private First Class Russell Werts

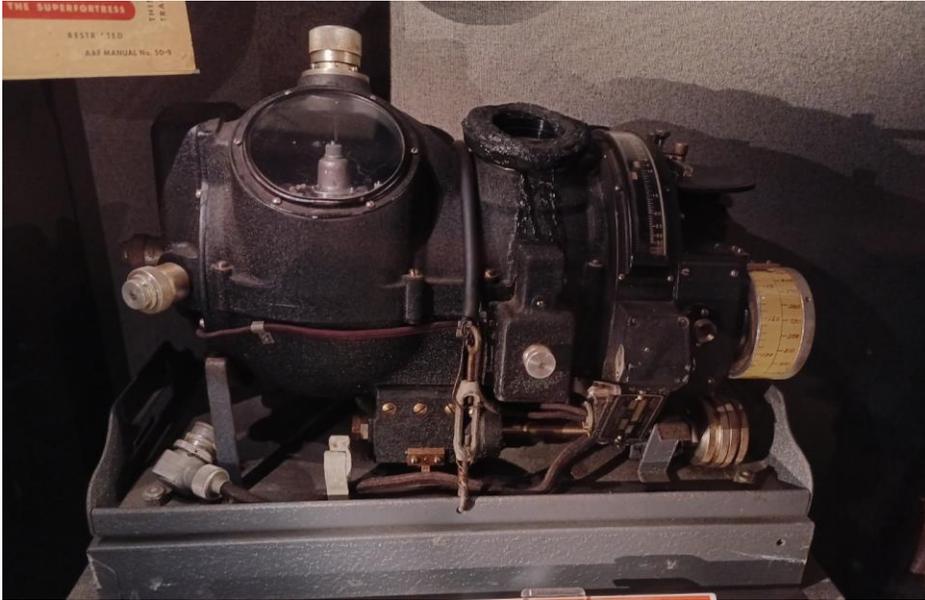
“ . . . our troopship started to pull away from Iwo and head for Guam. As I stood by the rail and watched the little island fade in the distance, a feeling of loneliness came over me. It was as if a part of me was left behind, as if an Iowa farm boy was waving goodbye. We would never meet again. Somewhere in that jagged jungle of rocks, he forever walked with the ghosts of Iwo. . . .”

Okinawa

Okinawa Island

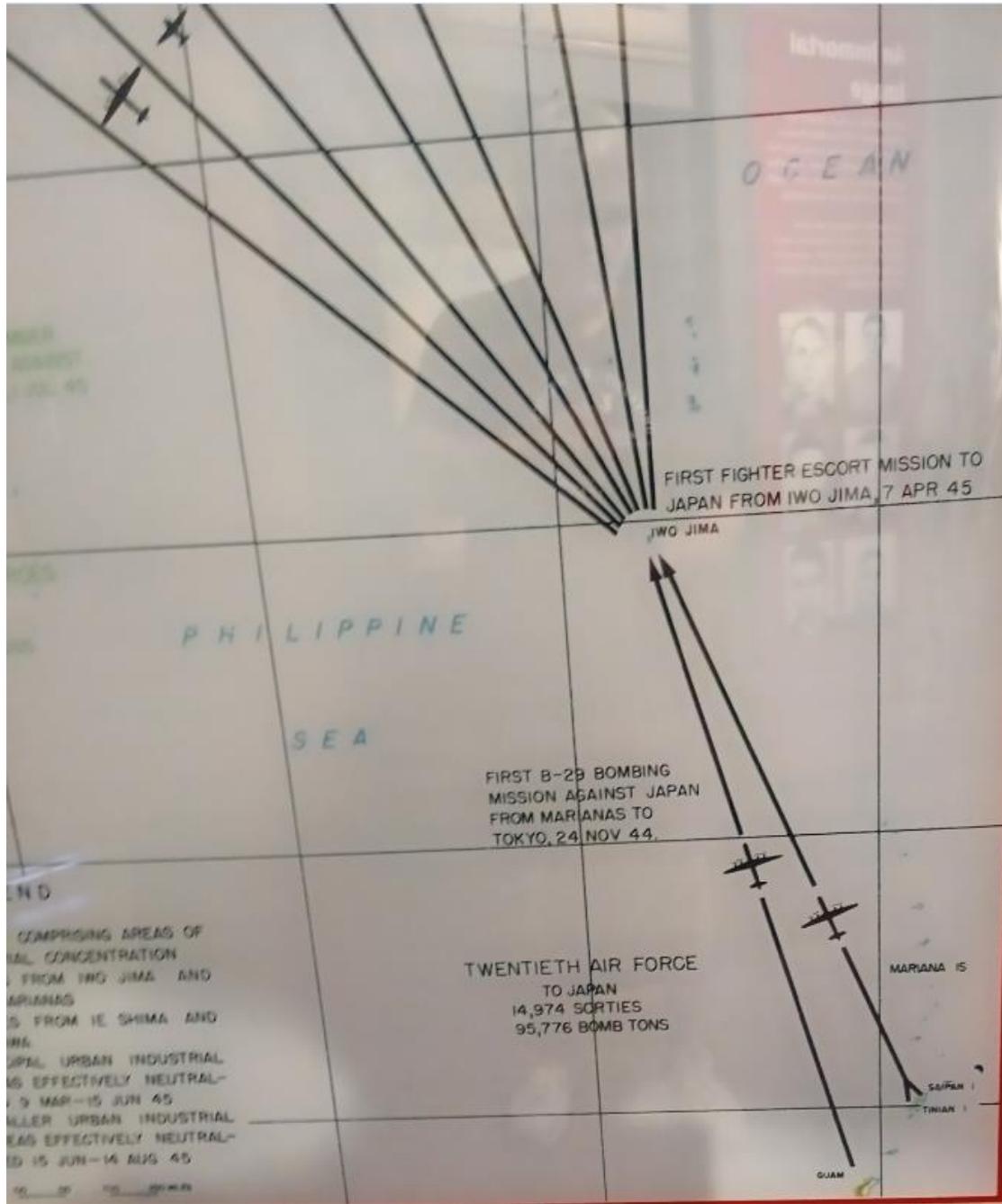
- Japanese Island
- Last stronghold before mainland Japan
- April 1 – June 22, 1945
- Estimated 110,000+ Japanese soldiers died
- **7,000+ Japanese and 3,000+ Okinawans surrendered**
- ~12,000 American's killed in combat, plus another ~5,000 died overall
- Marine 1st Division (from Peleliu)
- **Army 7th, 27th, 77th, and 96th**





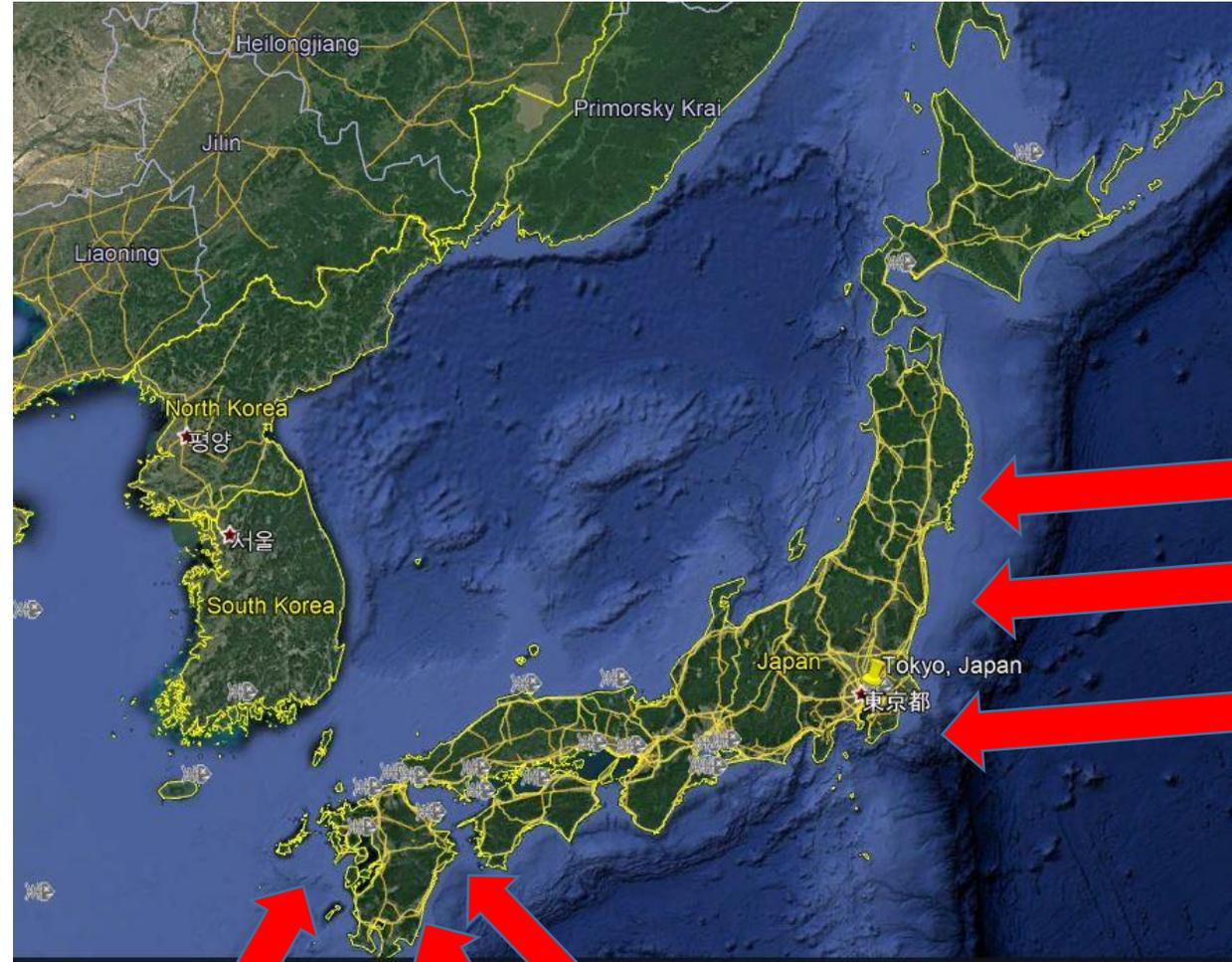
Norden bomb sight – once pilot found target area, control of aircraft was given to bombardier

- July 1944, Saipan fell; from here American B-29's rained bombing raid after bombing raid on Tokyo and mainland Japan; America ruled the skies over Japan
- General LeMay, now in charge of all allied air forces in South Pacific, could bomb Japan at will; questioned why H-bombs were needed
- B-29's* equipped with napalm**
- *American bombers would approach Japan from west and kept missing at high level bombing runs (no Japanese aircraft could fly that high) even though they had very accurate Norton Bombsight. They had discovered the "Jetstream" by accident! Since Japan had no aircraft and little anti-aircraft weapons left, he altered his bombing runs to low-level – and they had devastating effect.*
- *** discovered by accident at a paint factory in New Jersey when a new paint they were working on caught fire; unlike a "normal" bomb that explodes, napalm is a bomb with jel – that sticks on a surface and then burns*



Operation Downfall

- Estimated up to 2 million U.S. military might be needed
- Estimated might take to end of 1947 to finish war



32 Army Divisions
(81st was to be first,
followed by other
divisions sailing from
Europe)

Phase 2

Phase 1

6 Marine Divisions

John Mitchell, Company K, 323rd Infantry, Army 81st

“I shall never forget the night of 10th of August. We had spent the night preparing our packs and equipment and were to leave at 3:00 A.M. to embark on boats heading for outlying areas where we would once again face the Japanese. We would be at sea for 10 days. We began to hear shouting. When the news reached us, we learned that the war had, in fact, ended. There was no place to go to celebrate in the dark jungles.”

Japan formally surrenders*

September 2, 1945

500 U.S. aircraft flew over the U.S.S. Missouri, anchored in Tokyo Bay, at the moment all documents were signed

****As of today, Japan and Russia have never signed a peace treaty ending WWII hostilities between them***

September 3, Japanese commander Yamashita surrenders Philippines

September 4, Japanese on Wake Island surrender

September 9, Japanese in Korea surrender

September 13, Japanese in Burma surrender

Deaths*

U.S. – 52,659

Japan – 200,000

* No submarine numbers, wounded who died later, smaller battles not included herein

Estimated 7,000,000 Japanese were captured and surrendered and brought back to Japan

“I experienced the shock of surrender – it was worse than dying.”
Unknown returning Japanese soldier



Richard (Dick) Cole

Born 1916

Used to watch bi-planes land
at local airport – he knew he
wanted to be a pilot





U.S.S. Enterprise Epilog

- Sister ship to U.S.S. Hornet
- Participated in battles of
 - Midway
 - Solomon Islands
 - Santa Cruz Islands
 - Guadalcanal
 - Philippine Sea
 - Leyte Gulf
 - Most decorated combat ship maybe ever
- Scrap yard 1960

U.S.S. Hornet Epilog

- Sister ship to U.S.S. Enterprise
- Participated in battles of
 - Midway
 - Solomon Islands
 - Santa Cruz Islands
 - Guadalcanal
- Sunk 0135, October 27, 1942

Further reading:

- *“The Pacific War 1941-1945”*, John Costello
- *“Stalin: Waiting for Hitler 1929-1941”*, Stephen Kotkin
- *“Lords of Finance”*, Liaquat Ahamed
- *“Flyboys”*, James Bradley
- *“The First Heroes”*, Craig Nelson
- *“I Could Never Be So Lucky Again”* An Autobiography of James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle”
- *“The Jersey Brothers”*, Sally Mott Freeman
- *“American Caesar”*, William Manchester
- *“The Admirals”*, Walter Borneman
- *“Japan 1941”*, Eri Hotta

Archives.gov has a wealth of movies, pictures, battle plans – e.g. regarding Peleliu I found 1,577 documents

Thank you

Please go OLLI online and leave comments

<https://olli.unt.edu/evaluations>