

The Pacific Front

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese were able to expand their control by taking Wake Island, the Dutch East Indies, Hong Kong, Malaya, Singapore, and Burma. By June of 1942, the Japanese had overcome American and Filipino troops on the Philippine Islands and forced captive soldiers on the Bataan Death March.

The Americans won a naval victory at the Battle of Midway in June 1942. In August 1942, U.S. troops attacked the Solomon Islands, winning a victory at Guadalcanal. The troops then began an island hopping campaign leapfrogging every other island, and beating back the Japanese in hard fought battles.

In 1944, U.S. forces were able to retake the Philippine Islands. In 1945, American troops invaded Iwo Jima and Okinawa. They were able to take the islands, but only after hard fighting and suffering severe casualties. At Okinawa, Kamikaze pilots had a devastating impact.

On August 6, 1945 the U.S. B-29 super fortress "Enola Gay" dropped the uranium atomic bomb nicknamed "Little Boy" on Hiroshima. Japan was then warned that if they did not surrender, another bomb would be dropped. On August 9, 1945 the B-29 "Bockscar" dropped the plutonium atomic bomb "Fat Man" on Nagasaki. The emperor then agreed to surrender. An unconditional surrender was signed aboard the *SS Missouri* on September 2, 1945.

Battles in the Pacific were always extremely hard. Japanese culture promoted fighting to the death, and often to avoid capture Japanese troops would fight on without hope of victory, or commit suicide.