

Objectives:

Participants will:

1. Become familiar with the major nations involved in World War II
2. Learn to recognize the names of the leaders of the warring nations.
3. Read about the early war in the Pacific
4. Become familiar with the history of USS Lexington (CV-16)
5. Learn the ship numbering system for finding one's way about the ship

Materials (per participant):

1. Allied and Enemy nations in World War II
2. Important leaders of World War II
3. Early War in the Pacific
4. USS Lexington (CV-16)
5. Finding Your Way About The Ship

Procedure:

1. Participants should familiarize themselves with the major nations that participated in the war and the leaders of those nations. It is suggested that they use the enclosed maps and fill in the various countries mentioned with crayon or colored pencil.
2. Participants should read The Early War in the Pacific and use their maps to locate places described in the story.
3. Read the Lexington story to the students. It is suggested that they be given a copy to take home and read to their parents.
4. Just prior to visiting Lexington, have the children learn the number location system. The children will be given a list of questions about the ship and understanding the numbering system is vital to finding answers for the questions.

MAJOR NATIONS FIGHTING IN WORLD WAR II

Nations helping the United States:

Great Britain
China
USSR*
Australia

Nations fighting against the United States:

Japan
Germany
Italy
USSR*

EUROPE



Produced by the Cartographic Research Lab
University of Alabama

Note: The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics began the war helping Germany but switched sides after Germany invaded the USSR during the winter of 1941.

Pacific Theatre

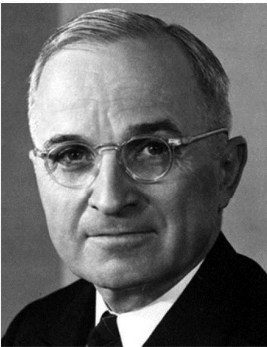


Note: At the time of World War II, Viet Nam was known as French Indo-China. The modern name Viet Nam has been used because it is more familiar.

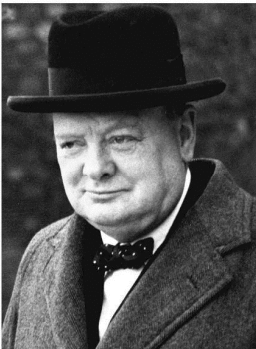
Important Leaders during World War II



Franklin D. Roosevelt
United States President
March 1933 - April 1945



Harry S. Truman
United States President
April 1945 - March 1953



Winston S. Churchill
Great Britain Prime Minister
May 1940 - July 1945

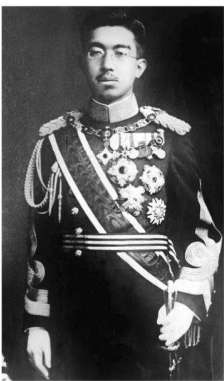


John J. Curtin
Australia Prime Minister
October 1941 - July 1945

Important Leaders during World War II



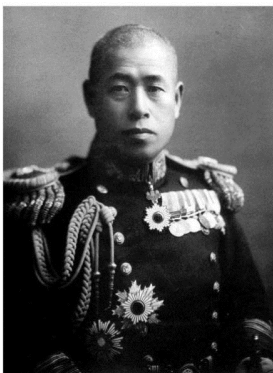
Chiang Kai-shek
Leader of the Republic of China
1928 - 1949



Hirohito - Emperor Showa
Emperor of Japan
1926 - 1989

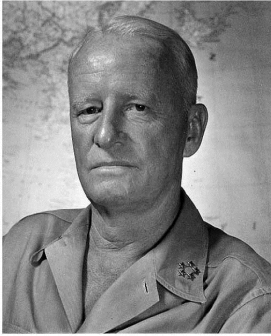


Hideki Tojo
Japanese Prime Minister
1941 - 1944

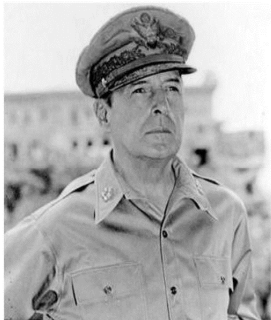


Yamomoto, Isoroku
Commander in Chief
Imperial Japanese Navy
1939 - 1943

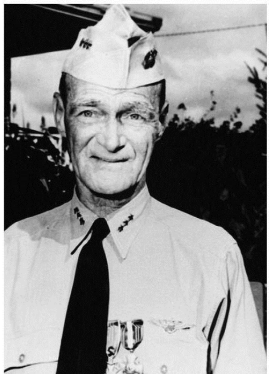
Important Leaders during World War II



Admiral Chester A. Nimitz
Commander in Chief
U.S. Pacific Fleet
1941 - 1945



General Douglas MacArthur
Commander in Chief
U.S. Army Forces in the Far East
1941 - 1945



Vice-Admiral Marc A. Mitscher
Commander Task Force 58
1944 - 1945

THE EARLY WAR IN THE PACIFIC

The war in the Pacific started for the United States on the morning of December 7, 1941 when six Japanese aircraft carriers used their aircraft to attack the United States Naval Base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. United States forces were caught by surprise and, in addition to destroying numerous aircraft on the ground, the Japanese sank or severely damaged nine battleships and six other warships. The Japanese intended the raid as a preventive action to keep the U.S. Pacific Fleet from interfering with military actions Japan was planning in South East Asia.

In one blow, the U.S. Battleship fleet had been neutralized. However, the Japanese had not been as successful as they supposed. By great good fortune, no American aircraft carriers were at Pearl Harbor at the time of the attack. The U.S. had three combat-ready aircraft carriers in the Pacific that had not been touched.

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japan moved swiftly to expand its empire. In February, 1942, Singapore was captured and the Japanese rapidly advanced through the Dutch East Indies. To the north, the Japanese invaded the Philippines and, by May 8, 1942, its surrender was complete.

On April 18, 1942, General Jimmy Doolittle launched a raid of 16 B-25 medium bombers against military targets in Tokyo, and other Japanese cities. The bombers were launched from USS Hornet (CV-8) about 650 nautical miles from the coast of Japan. While accomplishing little actual damage, the raid was a tremendous psychological blow to the Japanese government and military. Among other things, it convinced the Japanese that it would be necessary to invade Midway Island, located in the Hawaiian Islands, and establish an air base there to protect the Japanese Empire from further U.S. bombings.

First, however, the Japanese decided to invade Port Moresby on the South coast of New Guinea. In doing this, the Japanese high command had two major problems. First of all, they had not eliminated the U.S. carrier forces and secondly, unknown to them, U.S. had discovered how to read the secret Japanese military code used to send messages. This code breaking did not mean that Japanese messages were like an open book to the United States. Actually, only about 10 to 20 percent of what was sent could be deciphered. However, that was enough. Admiral Nimitz, the commander of U.S. Navy forces in the Pacific knew that the Japanese were headed for Port Moresby. He ordered USS Yorktown (CV-5) and USS Lexington (CV-2) to intercept the Japanese and this resulted in the Battle of the Coral Sea on 4 – 8 May 1942. It was the first battle in history in which the ships of opposing sides never saw each other. The battle was conducted entirely by aircraft attacking ships and other aircraft. In the battle, the Japanese lost one carrier and two more were so seriously damaged that they were sent back to Japan for repairs. The United States lost the carrier Lexington and Yorktown was seriously damaged.

Due to the damage to their carriers, the Japanese invasion fleet turned back and Port Moresby was saved. This battle marked the furthest southern expansion of Japanese influence during the war. Although the Japanese did not know it at the time, from this point forward, their new empire would be shrinking.

On June 4, 1942, the Japanese carrier force, attempted to conquer Midway. At the time of Pearl Harbor, it had been the largest carrier force in the world but, because of the Battle of the Coral sea, it was now reduced to four carriers instead of the original six. Also, the ability to read Japanese message traffic had again warned Admiral Nimitz that the Japanese were on the way. He had

managed to station three carriers, the USS Yorktown (CV-5), USS Enterprise (CV-6) and USS Hornet (CV-8) in an ambush position northeast of Midway. In a battle that was certainly one of the most heroic of the war, the U.S. Forces sank all four of the Japanese carriers while losing only USS Yorktown (CV-5). The result was a devastating defeat for the Japanese navy. The Japanese had not yet lost the war but now the United States and Japan were about evenly matched.

As part of their previous attack on Port Moresby, the Japanese had also captured the island of Tulagi in the Solomon Islands on 4 May 1942. Now, disturbing reports reached Admiral Nimitz that the Japanese were building an airfield on Guadalcanal, the Solomon island just a short distance south of Tulagi. With an airbase on Guadalcanal, the Japanese could cut the supply line between the United States and Australia. On August 7, 1942, the U.S. Marines invaded Guadalcanal in an attempt to capture the airfield. By February 7, 1943, after a long drawn out struggle, the Japanese were forced to leave the island.

By this time, the U.S. had decided upon a two-prong strategy in the Pacific. One prong would move up the Solomon Islands chain to New Guinea, then up the north coast of New Guinea. The other prong would be an island hopping campaign through the Gilbert Islands, to the Marshall Islands, the Caroline Islands, and the Mariana Islands. Both prongs would meet at the Philippines. At this point, we move on to the story of USS Lexington (CV-16).

Brief Story of USS Lexington (CV-16)

When the first carrier to be called Lexington, the CV-2, was sunk during the Battle of the Coral Sea, a new carrier was being built at the Fore River Shipbuilding Company in Quincy Massachusetts. Many of the workmen building the new ship had worked on the CV-2 which had also been built at Quincy. When they learned that the CV-2 had been sunk, they asked if their new ship could be named Lexington in honor of the CV-2. This is how the current Lexington got her name.

USS Lexington (CV-16) was commissioned on February 17, 1943. On September 18, 1943, she made air strikes against Tarawa atoll and Makin island in the Gilbert Islands. This was a preliminary strike leading up to the invasion of Tarawa which happened on November 20, 1943. Lexington also participated in this invasion.

On December 4, 1943, during an attack on Kwajalein atoll in the Marshall Islands, Lexington was struck by a torpedo dropped from a Japanese torpedo bomber. She returned to Pearl Harbor and eventually to Bremerton, Washington for repairs.

Lexington returned to the combat zone on February 28, 1944. At this time, she was selected by Vice-Admiral Marc Mitscher to be his flag ship. Mitscher was a very famous Admiral of the Second World War. From this point on, Lexington fought in many battles against the Japanese. She became the third most decorated aircraft carrier of the U.S. Navy. Notes on the two most famous battles in which she fought are below.

The Battle of the Philippine Sea happened on June 19th and 20th 1944 as a result of the U.S. invasion of Saipan in the Mariana Islands. The Japanese sent out a large naval force to fight this invasion. The result was the largest carrier battle of the war and, probably, the largest in history. The Japanese had nine carriers and the U.S. fifteen carriers in the battle. However, the Japanese had lost many experienced pilots in the battles for the Solomon Islands in 1942 and 1943. This greatly reduced the number of skilled carrier pilots available to fight the Battle of the Philippine Sea. Also, because of American submarines sinking their merchant ships, the Japanese did not have enough gasoline available in 1944 to be able to give new pilots proper flight training. As a result, the Japanese lost more than 400 aircraft in the two days of battle while the U.S. lost about 43. At the end of the battle, the Japanese carrier force no longer had the power to be a serious threat for the rest of the war. A pilot from Lexington remarked that the battle was just like a turkey shoot and "The Marianas Turkey Shoot" became this battle's nick name.

On the second day of the battle, with the Japanese fleet trying to get away, Vice-Admiral Mitscher launched an air strike hoping to finish off the Japanese ships. Unfortunately, the location of the Japanese ships was not found out until late in the afternoon. The ships were also at the extreme range of the American aircraft. The raid did manage to sink another Japanese aircraft carrier and shoot down more Japanese planes. Due to the extreme range, however, the American planes were forced to fly back to their carriers at night and night flying was not normally done by U.S. Navy pilots during the Second World War. Despite the danger of submarine attack, Admiral Mitscher, who was using Lexington as his flag ship and therefore was on Lexington at the time, ordered the entire American fleet to "Turn on the Lights". This courageous decision allowed the planes to find their carriers in an otherwise completely dark ocean.

The Battle of Leyte Gulf was the last effort of the Japanese Navy to gain a victory that might save the Japanese army occupying the Philippines. The focus of the battle was the American invasion of the Philippine island of Leyte but it was the largest and probably the most confused sea

battle of the Pacific war. The time period of this battle was October 24th to 25th, 1944. Entire books have been written about this battle and there is not enough space here to describe it properly. There were, basically, three major fire fights between the Japanese and American forces, one north of Leyte, a center one, and one south of Leyte. Lexington fought in the northern battle and her aircraft sank the Japanese carrier Zuikako. Zuikako was the last surviving carrier of the six Japanese carriers that had attacked Pearl Harbor at the start of the war.

Shortly after this battle, on November 5, 1944, while off the east coast of the Philippines and conducting air raids against airfields still in Japanese hands, Lexington was hit by a Japanese suicide aircraft. While the kamikaze killed 50 people and wounded many others, it did not seriously damage the ship. Lexington left the battle area to off-load her wounded and was repaired at the forward naval base of Ulithi in the Caroline Islands. By December 11, 1944, she was back in action.

When, the surrender of Japan was first announced on August 15, 1945, Lexington was off the coast of Japan conducting air raids against military installations. She had to call her pilots on the radio and tell them to come back to the ship because the war was over. She was not present in Tokyo Bay on September 2nd, 1945 for the actual signing of the surrender documents but, on September 5th, she became the first American heavy carrier to drop anchor in Tokyo Bay since the war had begun.

Lexington continued to serve with the Pacific Fleet until April 23, 1947 at which time she was decommissioned and placed in the reserve fleet at Bremerton, Washington. In September 1953, she entered the Bremerton shipyard for an extensive overhaul and, on August 15, 1955 she was recommissioned. Lexington again served with the Pacific Fleet until October 1962 at which time she was assigned to be the official training carrier for the U.S. Navy. She was home ported in Pensacola and worked in the Gulf of Mexico training pilots how to land and take off from a carrier. She continued this service until November 1991 when she was decommissioned for the last time.

Finding Your Way About The Ship

1 – 50 – 4
01 – 173 – 1

Throughout the ship, you will see a series of numbers painted on the partitions. These numbers help one determine where they are located on the ship. The numbers are like street signs.

The First Number Represents The Deck or Level

The deck you arrive on, called the Hanger Deck, is the main deck of the ship. It is deck 1. The next deck below the Hanger Deck is Deck 2 and the decks below that are numbered sequentially Deck 3, Deck 4, etc.

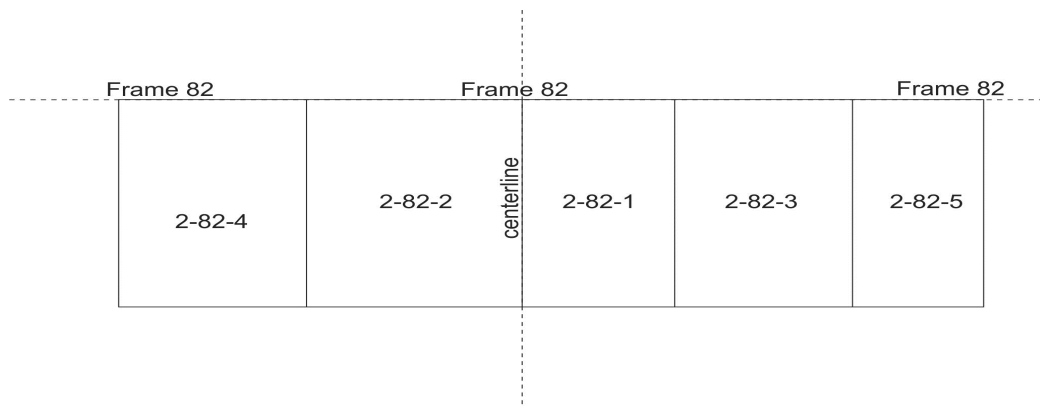
Decks above the Hanger Deck are called Levels and are numbered Level 01 for the first level (or deck) above the Hanger Deck and continue on up Level 02, Level 03, etc.

The Second Number Represents Your Distance From The Bow

USS Lexington is divided into 210 frames. Frame 1 is at the front of the ship and Frame 210 is at the back. There is four feet of space between each frame. By reading the frame number, you have a good idea of where you are located on the ship with respect to the bow or stern.

The Third Number Is The Compartment Number

Compartments are labeled by the frame number of their forward partition. There may be more than one compartment at the same frame number and the third number indicates which of these compartments is being indicated. Compartments are numbered starting at the centerline and counting outwards towards the side of the ship. Odd numbers are used for the right hand or starboard side and even numbers for the left or port side. An example is shown below for the first deck below the Hanger Deck.



Hunt for History

Tour Route 1 – Flight Deck, Bridge, Arresting Gear Room

- 1 What was the Flight Deck made of during World War II?
(03-92-1 port side) _____

- 2 How many arresting gear cables are there?
(After end of flight deck) _____

- 3 How many people manned each of the 40mm gun mounts?
(After end of flight deck, starboard catwalk) _____

- 4 What is a Chronometer?
(06-91-1) _____

- 5 For what purpose does one use a sextant?
(06-91-1) _____

- 6 Where does the Captain stay when the ship is at sea?
(06-88-1) _____

- 7 How many aircraft elevators does Lexington have?
(Flight deck) _____

How to Speak Sailor

Sailors have their own technical language. With this guide, you can amaze your friends with your expert knowledge of sailor talk.

- **Deck**-any floor at or below the designated “main deck” is called a level
- **Level**-any floor above the designated “main deck” is called a level
- **Bow**-the front of the ship
- **Stern**-the rear of the ship
- **Starboard**-the right side of the ship as you face the bow
- **Port**-the left side of the ship as you face the bow
- **Forward**-in the direction towards the bow (Such as “He went forward”)
- **Aft**-in the direction towards the stern (Such as “The galley is aft of the machine shop”)
- **Inboard**-in the direction from the side towards the center of the ship
- **Outboard**-in the direction away from the center of the ship towards the side
- **Below**-on or in the direction of a lower deck or interior deck
- **Topside**-on or in the direction of an exterior deck (one open to the outside)
- **Foc’sle**-the bow area of the ship (usually where the anchor equipment is)
- **Fantail**-the stern area of the ship

Hunt for History Answers

Tour Route 1 – Flight Deck, Bridge, and Arresting Gear Room

- 1 Wood
- 2 Four
- 3 Eleven
- 4 A very accurate clock
- 5 To determine the position of the ship
- 6 In a small cabin behind the pilot house
- 7 Three