

Chateau-Thierry

In the spring of 1918, the German army launched a massive offensive to defeat French and British forces before sufficient American troops could deploy to northern France and tip the balance of power. The Germans did not achieve that objective. U.S. Army troops and U.S. Marines of the 2nd Infantry Division beat back repeated German attempts to seize the town of Chateau-Thierry and to capture bridges over France's strategically vital Marne River.

Belleau Wood

During four weeks in June 1918, U.S. Marines of the 5th and 6th Regiments and 6th Machine Gun Battalion attached to the U.S. Army's 2nd Infantry Division fought strong German forces to control Belleau Wood, a one-mile square dense forest in northern France. On 6 June, the Marines launched an attack into well-fortified enemy positions in the town of Boureches and the surrounding woods, which cost nearly 5,000 casualties, or 50 percent of the men engaged. The Marines, however, drove the last German defenders from their trenches on the 26th. The Marines' victory at Belleau Wood marked a psychological turning point in the war. Both the allies and the Germans then recognized that America was on the Western Front to fight and win. By the end of the year, the increasing skill and growing size of the American Expeditionary Force of Marines and soldiers, under General John J. Pershing, helped persuade Germany to sue for peace. World War I ended on 11 November 1918.

Pearl Harbor

With the goal of destroying the U.S. Pacific Fleet, Imperial Japanese Navy forces carried out a surprise attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet base at Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, on the morning of 7 December 1941. In two waves, more than 350 fighters, attack planes, and torpedo planes focused on the American battleships moored off Ford Island. The attackers sank or heavily damaged Arizona (BB 39) and seven other battleships positioned there as well as a score of other naval vessels in the harbor. Enemy planes also destroyed 188 aircraft at military airfields on the island of Oahu and killed 2,403 American military personnel and civilians. The defending Navy, Marine, and Army forces sank or captured five Japanese midget submarines and shot down 29 aircraft. The attackers failed to sink the fleet's three aircraft carriers, out to sea that day on military missions, or destroy the base's fuel tank farm, and submarine base, and navy yard.

The brazen, surprise attack, which occurred even as Japanese diplomats negotiated in Washington, shocked and angered the American people and banished any talk of isolation from what had become a global conflict. On 8 December, President Franklin D. Roosevelt appeared before Congress during

which he characterized the 7 December 1941 Pearl Harbor attack as a "date which will live in infamy." Congress declared war on the Empire of Japan and days later on its Axis allies, Germany and Italy. The event marked America's entry into World War II.

Wake

Beginning on 8 December 1941, Japanese naval forces attacked Naval Air Station, Wake Island, defended by 388 Marines of the 1st Defense Battalion, a detachment from Marine Fighting Squadron 211, and a number of soldiers, sailors, and civilian contractors. The defenders sank two enemy destroyers and a transport and damaged four other ships. On 11 December Japanese surface and air forces pummeled Wake Island with bombs and shells. Bombing raids and anti-aircraft fire caused the destruction of all of the squadron's aircraft. Supported by a two-carrier task force, the Japanese then landed 1,000 men of a special naval landing force. Outnumbered and running low on ammunition, and before a relief force dispatched from Pearl Harbor could arrive, the garrison surrendered on the 23rd. The Japanese occupiers sent most of the men captured to prisoner of war camps in China and Japan but later executed 100 civilian contractors whom they kept on the island for construction work.

Java Sea

On 27 February 1942, a combined fleet of 16 Dutch, U.S., Australian, and British cruisers and destroyers, under the command of Dutch Rear Admiral Karel Doorman, attempted to thwart a Japanese amphibious invasion of the oil-producing island of Java in the Netherlands East Indies. The allied warships fought hard that day and on the 28th to defeat a Japanese force of 17 cruisers and destroyers but the latter's superior gunfire and especially lethal torpedoes won the battle. The Japanese fleet sank a pair of Dutch cruisers, one Dutch destroyer, and a British destroyer. Mines claimed another British destroyer. Later that night, enemy naval forces intercepted the ships that survived the battle and despite losing two troop transports to allied fire sank American heavy cruiser Houston (CA 30) and Australian cruiser Perth.

Coral Sea

Japan suffered its first strategic setback in the Pacific war when a U.S. fleet under Rear Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher turned back an enemy amphibious attack on New Guinea's Port Moresby, key to the allied defense of northern Australia. Alerted by code-breakers in Hawaii of Japanese offensive plans, on 7 and 8 May 1942, Fletcher's force of carriers Lexington (CV 2) and Yorktown (CV 5) and supporting warships intercepted Vice Admiral Takeo Takagi's fleet of three carriers as they entered the Coral Sea. For the first time in history, neither fleet

came in sight of the other to do battle, but both Japanese and U.S. carrier planes sank opposing ships. While the Americans lost Lexington, a destroyer, and an oiler, the Japanese sustained a heavy loss of aircraft and pilots and serious damage to carrier Shokaku. Defeat in the Battle of Coral Sea marked the end of Japan's seaborne attempt to seize New Guinea.

Aleutians

To divert American attention from Midway Island northwest of Hawaii, on 3 June 1942, Japanese carrier aircraft bombed Dutch Harbor in the Aleutian Islands of the North Pacific. Only four days later, Japanese troops occupied Attu and Kiska islands in this same island chain. In a running sea battle on 26 March 1943, Rear Admiral Charles H. McMorris' task group of light cruisers Richmond (CL 9) and Salt Lake City (CL 25) and four destroyers evaded interception by a more powerful force of Japanese heavy and light cruisers and destroyers near the North Pacific's Komandorski Islands. That May U.S. Navy and Army forces recaptured Attu, destroying the enemy garrison there. In August U.S. and Canadian forces occupied Kiska Island, evacuated by the Japanese garrison only the previous month.

Midway

To lure the U.S. Pacific Fleet into battle and then destroy it, Japanese navy forces under Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto bombed the U.S. airstrip on Midway Island west of Hawaii on 4 June 1942. Alerted by Commander Joseph J. Rochefort's Pearl Harbor-based code-breakers of the numerically superior enemy fleet steaming toward the island, Pacific Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz set a trap with carrier Yorktown (CV 5) under Rear Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher and carriers Enterprise (CV 6) and Hornet (CV 8) under Rear Admiral Raymond A. Spruance. Soon after discovering the Japanese fleet, U.S. torpedo bombers, dive bombers, and fighters pounced on and sank carriers Akagi, Kaga, and Soryu and later in the day Hiryu but not before the planes from the latter ship severely damaged Yorktown. On 6 June, a Japanese submarine torpedoed Hammann (DD 412) and Yorktown, ultimately resulting in their sinking.

Guadalcanal

The U.S. victory on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands of the South Pacific marked the beginning of the end for Japan's Asian empire. Following the 1st Marine Division's 7 August 1942 seizure of an airstrip, later named Henderson Field, U.S. and Japanese forces fought day and night engagements for the next six months to secure the island. Naval battles resulted in the loss of so many ships, both U.S. and Japanese, that the Americans labeled the waters off the island "Iron bottom Sound." Marine and Army units endured grueling conditions

ashore. Ultimately, the superior tactical skill and material strength of U.S. ground, air, and naval forces compelled surviving enemy units to withdraw. The Allied offensive in the Pacific begun at Guadalcanal would end only with the Japanese surrender on board battleship Missouri (BB 63) in Tokyo Bay on 2 September 1945.

Savo Island

The naval battle of Savo Island marked one of the greatest disasters in U.S. naval history. On the night of 9 August 1942, Japanese Admiral Gunichi Mikawa's task force of cruisers and destroyers approached Guadalcanal to destroy Allied supply ships and Marine forces there. Defending the sea approaches to Guadalcanal was a similar contingent of U.S. and Australian warships. Achieving complete tactical surprise, and making the best use of superior torpedoes and night-fighting skills, Mikawa's combatants sank U.S. heavy cruisers Astoria (CA 34), Quincy (CA 39), and Vincennes (CA 44) and Australian cruiser Canberra and killed close to 1,100 American and Australian sailors. Mikawa withdrew his force before destroying the unarmed ships off the beachhead but his victory did compel U.S. carriers and cargo ships to find safer havens far from Guadalcanal. The Japanese victory at Savo Island dealt a devastating blow to Allied fortunes in the early months of the Pacific offensive campaign.

Solomons

The first major World War II offensive mounted by the United States and its Pacific allies took place in this remote island chain. Beginning in August 1942 when the U.S. 1st Marine Division landed on Guadalcanal through late 1943 when the war moved on to the Central Pacific and New Guinea/Philippines campaigns, the Solomons witnessed some of the hardest fighting of the war. At heavy cost, U.S. Marine and Army forces destroyed Japanese garrisons on numerous islands, including Guadalcanal, New Georgia, and Bougainville. During the same period, the U.S. and Japanese fleets traded blows in major naval actions in the battles of the Eastern Solomons, Santa Cruz Islands, Guadalcanal, Kula Gulf, Kolombangara, Vella Gulf, Empress Augusta Bay, and Cape St. George. U.S. planes cleared the seas of enemy warships, troop transports, and supply vessels. After securing the Solomons, the Allies continued the drive to destroy the Japanese war machine.

New Guinea

Early in 1942, Allied leaders kicked off a two-pronged offensive in the South and Southwest Pacific. Under the command of Admiral William F. Halsey, U.S. forces formed the eastern wing of this offensive drive while U.S. and Australian forces

under American General Douglas MacArthur constituted the western arm. In the fall, MacArthur's ground troops fought their way over New Guinea's rugged Owen Stanley Range to the north coast and after bloody fighting destroyed the enemy garrisons at Buna and Gona. Throughout 1943 and into 1944, MacArthur's forces, including the U.S. Seventh Fleet under Vice Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, launched amphibious and air assault operations that bypassed enemy strongpoints at Hollandia and Noemfoor. However, it took hard fighting to defeat enemy forces on Biak Island before the New Guinea campaign came to a close in July 1944 and MacArthur set his sights on the Philippines.

Tarawa

The U.S. assault on Tarawa Atoll, at the start of the Central Pacific drive of World War II, developed into one of the bloodiest operations of the campaign but taught the victors valuable lessons in naval gunfire, close air support, and amphibious warfare. On 20 November 1943, Vice Admiral Raymond A. Spruance's U.S. Fifth Fleet bombed and shelled the enemy-held islands of Makin, Apamama, and Betio and elements of Major General Holland M. Smith's V Amphibious Corps landed on all three. Major General Julian C. Smith's 2d Marine Division had the hardest assignment--take heavily fortified Betio defended by 5,000 Japanese troops, including a special naval landing force. It took three days of heavy fighting, and almost 3,400 Marine casualties, to destroy the Japanese garrison which fought almost to the last man. Tarawa showed that the road to Tokyo would be long and hard.

Kwajalein

After U.S. forces secured Tarawa and the Gilbert Islands, Pacific Fleet commander Admiral Chester W. Nimitz focused on the Marshalls. As a preliminary to amphibious operations, Rear Admiral Marc A. Mitscher's Fast Carrier Task Force and land-based air units bombed enemy-held islands throughout the Marshalls during late January and early February 1943. In Operation Flintlock, Army troops then seized Kwajalein while Major General Harry Schmidt's 4th Marine Division stormed the islands of Roi and Namur. The Marines killed or captured these islands' 3,700 defenders. Having learned from the Tarawa experience, the U.S. armed services employed their weapons and tactics to much greater effect in these operations.

Marianas

In mid-1944 the Pacific Fleet focused on the Mariana Islands, vital to the defense of Japan itself. On 15 June ships under Rear Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner began bombing and shelling the large island of Saipan. Soon afterward Marine Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith's landing force, which included the 2d and

4th Marine divisions, stormed ashore. The Army's 27th Infantry Division joined them on the 17th. The American forces killed all but 1,800 of the enemy garrison but in the process lost 16,500 killed and wounded Marines and soldiers. The fighting was almost as brutal on Guam, seized by the 3d Marine Division, the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, and the Army's 77th Infantry Division between 21 July and 10 August. During late July the Marines stormed Tinian, last of the Marianas occupied by the Japanese. Soon afterward, American B-29 Super Fortress bombers began taking off from airfields on Tinian and bombing targets in the Japanese Home Islands.

Philippine Sea

On 19 June 1944, Japanese Vice Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa's 56 warships sortied from their bases in the Western Pacific to destroy the American invasion forces off Saipan in the Marianas. Determined to prevent that result, Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, Commander U.S. Fifth Fleet, deployed fifteen carriers, seven battleships, and ninety cruisers and destroyers. The Americans had another edge; 956 aircraft crewed by combat veterans to 473 Japanese planes flown by many inexperienced aviators. In the so-called "Marianas Turkey Shoot," U.S. carrier planes destroyed 346 enemy aircraft in air-to-air combat for the loss of 30 of their own. That same day, American submarines sank two enemy carriers. On the 20th, the Americans burnished their great victory with the downing of another 65 enemy planes and sinking of another carrier. Japanese naval aviation never recovered from its devastating defeat in the Battle of the Philippine Sea.

Peleliu

General Douglas MacArthur persuaded his superiors that neutralizing the island of Peleliu in the Palaus was critical to the support of his operations in the Philippines. Hence, on 15 September 1944 U.S. naval forces launched Operation Stalemate II, which fighters on the ground soon confirmed as aptly named. Major General William H. Rupertus, the 1st Marine Division commander, concluded that the operation would take less than a week, but the 10,700 Japanese defenders fought on for two months. The enemy, holed-up in fortified caves on Umurbrogol Ridge, caused so many Marine casualties that Rupertus withdrew Colonel Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller's 1st Marines after one week, during which time it had suffered 56 percent casualties. The rest of the division fought on and reduced enemy strength until relieved by the Army's 81st Infantry Division which finally eliminated all enemy resistance on 25 November.

Leyte Gulf

On 20 October 1944, U.S. Army troops under General Douglas MacArthur landed on Leyte Island as the first major step in the liberation of the Philippines. The

Japanese navy launched an all-out attack to destroy the American forces at Leyte. On the 24th, Vice Admiral Takeo Kurita's Central Force approached the Americans through San Bernardino Strait while a Southern Force moved through Surigao Strait. U.S. carrier planes temporarily turned back Kurita's force when they sank battleship Musashi. The Southern Force came to grief when it was set upon by U.S. PT boats, torpedo-firing destroyers, and six old but lethal battleships. Meanwhile, the Northern Force decoyed Admiral William F. Halsey's U.S. Third Fleet away from Leyte. On the 25th, once again heading into battle, Kurita's Central Force emerged from San Bernardino Strait and closed with the transports and supply ships off Leyte. While only six American escort carriers and seven destroyer types were there to protect the landing forces, they fought so ferociously that Kurita withdrew. The U.S. Navy sank 23 major enemy warships in the Battle of Leyte Gulf. The Japanese navy never again threatened America's control of the sea.

Lingayen Gulf

In early January 1945, a powerful force of U.S. and Australian battleships, cruisers, and destroyers under Rear Admiral Jesse B. Oldendorf entered Lingayen Gulf and began bombarding enemy positions near the town of Lingayen. This advanced force accomplished its mission, even in the face of furious enemy Kamikaze attacks that sank or heavily damaged twenty five ships. On the 9th, Vice Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, Commander Seventh Fleet and commander of the Luzon Attack Force (CTF 77), ordered Vice Admiral Daniel E. Barbey and Vice Admiral Theodore S. Wilkinson, amphibious task force commanders, to land four infantry divisions of Army Lieutenant General Walter Krueger's U.S. Sixth Army. The ground forces quickly moved ashore and established a secure beachhead. The liberation of the island of Luzon, last major refuge of the Japanese army in the Philippines had thus begun.

Iwo Jima

The February-March 1945 amphibious assault on the island of Iwo Jima proved to be one of the most bloody and drawn-out but memorable battles of World War II. Beginning on 19 February, naval forces under Vice Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner landed the 4th Marine Division and 5th Marine Division on the eight-square-mile volcanic island. A force of 21,000 Japanese soldiers under Lieutenant General Tadamichi Kuribayashi awaited them in heavily fortified positions on Mount Suribachi in the south and high ground to the north. The Marines stormed the mountain and raised "Old Glory" on the 23rd but the battle was far from over. Not until the troops, reinforced by the 6th Marine Division and supported by continuous naval and air support, had destroyed the enemy garrison did fighting cease. The battle that ended on 24 March cost the lives of

more than 6,000 American Marines and sailors but it established U.S. military power only 660 miles from Tokyo.

Okinawa

On 1 April 1945, the Pacific Fleet deployed thousands of U.S. and British naval vessels off the western coast of the large Japanese island of Okinawa. In Operation Iceberg, Admiral Raymond A. Spruance's U.S. Fifth Fleet landed a force that eventually totaled 183,000 men and consisted of the 1st Marine Division, 6th Marine Division, and four Army infantry divisions, all under Army Lieutenant General Simon Bolivar Buckner Jr. The landing force quickly and relatively bloodlessly secured all but the southern third of the island. On 6 April however, the Japanese command launched 700 conventional and Kamikaze suicide planes on the first of many assaults against the Allied fleet. The enemy eventually sank 34 U.S. naval vessels, severely damaged hundreds more, and killed 5,000 sailors. And after early April, the war ashore became just as bloody. The relentless Allied ground assault that took until 21 June to destroy the 100,000-man enemy army cost the lives of General Buckner and 7,600 Marines and soldiers. Fortunately for all, the bloodiest battle of the Pacific war was to be its last.

Battle of the Atlantic

In a titanic struggle that lasted from the outbreak of World War II in September 1939 to the defeat of Nazi Germany in May 1945, U.S., British, Canadian, and German naval and air forces battled for control of the sea lanes of the Atlantic. German land-based aircraft, surface warships, and U-boats, the latter often operating in "Wolf Packs," attempted to prevent merchant ships from delivering food and military cargoes to Great Britain and the Soviet Union. German Admiral Karl Doenitz's submarines sank 3,500 merchantmen and 175 warships but failed to starve Britain into submission or prevent U.S. and other Allied troops from reaching Europe. The Allies employed intelligence code-breaking and innovative tactics involving convoys, surface escorts and aerial patrols, advanced sonar equipment, and lethal antisubmarine weapons to defeat the enemy threat. By May 1945, Allied naval and air forces had sunk 783 U-boats, many of which went down with their entire crew.

North Africa

In Operation Torch, on 8 November 1942 the Allied nations carried out the first major amphibious assault in the European/Mediterranean theater of World War II. The object of the landing and later ground campaign was to free Vichy France's African territories from the German grip and to defeat General Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps. In separate operations, Allied naval task forces landed 107,000

American and British troops at Casablanca in French Morocco and at Oran and Algiers in Algeria. Because Vichy French forces resisted at Casablanca, American ships and aircraft were compelled to destroy a number of warships, submarines, and aircraft. Overcoming initial but scattered resistance from Vichy French forces ashore, Allied ground troops quickly secured Morocco and Algeria and launched an offensive against German and Italian forces holding Tunisia. On 13 May 1943, Allied commanders accepted the surrender of all German and Italian forces in North Africa.

Sicily

On 10 July 1943, 1,400 Allied ships and landing craft deployed eight American and British divisions on the Italian island of Sicily, defended by 350,000 Italian and German troops. Vice Admiral H. Kent Hewitt's Western Naval Task Force, a major component of the overall 470,000 Allied military host, deployed three divisions of General George S. Patton's Seventh Army at Gela. The amphibious contingent complemented units of paratroopers dropped behind the beaches the night before. Naval gunfire from light cruisers Boise (CL 47) and Savannah (CL 42) and eight destroyers helped turn back an attack on 11 July by German troops that threatened the American beachhead. By early August, Allied ground troops had driven enemy forces from the island and were preparing to invade Italy itself.

Salerno

The first major Allied amphibious assault against Hitler's "Fortress Europe" occurred at Salerno in southern Italy on 9 September 1943. Supported by Vice Admiral H. Kent Hewitt's Allied naval force, American General Mark Clark's Fifth Army quickly secured a beachhead. The Germans reacted just as quickly, reinforcing their defending units and deploying heavy artillery and armored vehicles to stop an Allied move inland. U.S. Navy warships were instrumental in defeating strong German attacks against beachhead forces. With the help of naval bombardment, Clark's army broke out of the confined coastal zone and linked up with British General Sir Bernard L. Montgomery's Eighth Army on the 16th.

Anzio

Hoping to outflank German forces that had delayed the Allied advance through southern Italy for much of late 1943, on 22 January 1944 Rear Admiral Frank J. Lowry's naval task force landed American and British troops at Anzio just southwest of Rome. The amphibious forces, however, proved unable to break through the increasingly strong German defenses that featured tank, artillery, and elite infantry units. In fact, only heavy and sustained naval gunfire and air support by U.S. and British warships prevented the enemy from overwhelming the Allied

ground troops. Finally, American General Mark Clark's 5th Army pushed up from the south and broke through to the beleaguered beachhead force on 25 May. The linkup enabled the Allied armies to proceed with the liberation of Rome on 4 June.

Normandy

The long anticipated liberation of German-occupied Western Europe began on 6 June 1944 when Allied ground, air, and naval forces under U.S. General Dwight D. Eisenhower assaulted Hitler's army on the beaches of France's Normandy peninsula. That day Allied naval forces transported invasion troops across the English Channel from Great Britain, kept German U-boats at bay, cleared safe lanes through enemy minefields, and blasted open breaches in coastal defenses. Supported by almost 7,000 Allied naval vessels, thousands of aircraft, and three airborne divisions, in Operation Overlord American, British, and Canadian troops stormed ashore. Helped by accurate and sustained naval gunfire, especially at Omaha Beach, by nightfall more than 130,000 ground troops had carved out a defensible beachhead. Artificial harbors and piers installed by Seabees and other support units facilitated an almost uninterrupted flow shoreward of tanks, trucks, supplies, ammunition, and reinforcements. The successful D-Day landing marked the beginning of the end for Nazi Germany.

Southern France

In Operation Dragoon, on 15 August 1944 Vice Admiral H. Kent Hewitt's Western Naval Task Force landed the 3rd, 36th, and 45th infantry divisions of General Lucian K. Truscott's U.S. VI Corps at several beaches in southern France. Free French troops reinforced the initial assault units. The object of the operation was to open up additional French ports for the logistic support of the ground offensive against Germany. By the end of August, U.S. and French forces under American Lieutenant General Jacob L. Devers, commander of the U.S. 6th Army Group, had broken through relatively weak enemy defenses, liberated Marseilles and Toulon, and pushed forward into central France to link up with the Allied armies advancing from Normandy.

Pusan Perimeter

Several weeks after the 25 June 1950 North Korean invasion of the Republic of (South) Korea, enemy tank and infantry forces pushed U.S. and South Korean ground troops into the southeast corner of the peninsula behind the Naktong River. To prevent the North Koreans from seizing the port of Pusan, vital to the continued defense of South Korea, the U.S. Navy transported the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade and Army infantry divisions to the "Pusan Perimeter." Cruisers and destroyers sank enemy combat and supply vessels and bombarded enemy

troops and transport vehicles using coastal roads. Navy carrier-based squadrons pummeled airfields and military depots in North Korea and naval aircraft provided allied troops with close air support. By mid-September, this naval support, along with hard fighting by allied ground troops, had stalled and indeed crippled the enemy offensive.

Inchon-Seoul

In one of the most dramatic amphibious assaults in military history, on 15 September 1950 the 230 ships of Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble's Joint Task Force 7/U.S. Seventh Fleet, under the overall command of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, deployed the 1st Marine Division, South Korean marines, and elements of the Army's 7th Infantry Division behind enemy lines at Inchon on Korea's west coast. With the naval gunfire support of U.S. and allied warships and the close air support of carrier squadrons, the ground forces in Operation Chromite seized the port, and by the end of September captured Seoul, the capital of South Korea. The Inchon assault and the breakout from the Pusan Perimeter of allied troops compelled the beaten enemy to flee in disorder to North Korea. The Inchon landing proved to be one of the war's key turning points and a classic demonstration of sea power.

Chosin Reservoir

On 27 November 1950, eight divisions of the Chinese People's Liberation Army launched an all-out attack on the 1st Marine Division and other allied troops deployed near the Chosin (Changjin) Reservoir in the snow-covered, frigid mountains of North Korea. Although heavily outnumbered, the Marines badly bloodied their Chinese attackers and fought their way out of the potential trap to reach Hungnam on the Sea of Japan. Helping them make that epic fighting withdrawal were Navy carrier and Marine shore-based aircraft, Seventh Fleet battleships, cruisers, and destroyers, and Royal Marine Commandoes. In a masterful operation, by 24 December Rear Admiral James H. Doyle's Task Force 90 had evacuated from Hungnam 105,000 allied troops, 91,000 civilian refugees, 350,000 tons of cargo, and 17,500 military vehicles. The troops were soon back in the fight to defend the Republic of Korea against its Communist attackers.

Wonsan Siege

From 16 February 1951 to the end of the Korean War on 27 July 1953, U.S. and allied naval forces mounted an 861-day operation to deny North Korea the use of its most important port and nearby coastal areas on the Sea of Japan. U.S. Seventh Fleet, South Korean, British, Canadian, Australian, and other warships, including battleships, cruisers, destroyers, and rocket ships, pounded enemy coastal batteries, supply depots, trains and tracks all along the coast. The naval

forces prevented the enemy from using offshore waters for their own military purposes. The United Nations' navies also landed commandoes and special forces troops on the enemy coastline for sabotage operations. South Korean marines occupied and held a number of islands in the harbor.

38th Parallel

Following China's intervention into the Korean War in late 1950, UN and Communist forces executed a number of offensives and counteroffensives, with the front lines eventually stabilizing near the 38th parallel between North and South Korea. From the summer of 1951 to the summer of 1953, the contending armies fought over key mountains, ridges, and valleys in the rugged region. The 1st Marine Division took part in many bloody operations with such names as "Killer" and "Ripper" and often served as the spearhead of allied offensives. Marines, along with their Navy doctors, corpsmen, and chaplains, would long remember the "Punchbowl," "Horseshoe Ridge," "Bunker Hill," and other sites because of the ferocity of the fighting there. Navy warships and carrier planes and Marine shore-based aviation squadrons routinely backed up their Marine and Navy comrades on the ground.

Lebanon

The July 1958 deployment of the U.S. Sixth Fleet and three Marine battalion landing teams to Lebanon in the Eastern Mediterranean was similar in many ways to naval contingency operations executed around the globe and throughout the late 20th and early 21st centuries. President Dwight D. Eisenhower ordered the operation because he was concerned that both external and internal forces threatened to destabilize the pro-American government of Lebanon. Army and Air Force units reinforced the naval contingent. Aircraft from carriers Essex (CV 9), Saratoga (CV 60), and Wasp (CV 18) overflew the country to protect the forces afloat and ashore. This visible U.S. support deterred further action by its foreign and domestic antagonists and promoted political stability in Lebanon.

Cuban Missile Crisis

During this crisis in the fall of 1962, when the United States and the Soviet Union came as close as they ever would to a nuclear conflict, the U.S. Navy demonstrated the value of sea power in settling international confrontations short of war. When President John F. Kennedy discovered that the Soviet Union had deployed nuclear-capable missiles and long-range bombers to Cuba in the Caribbean, he ordered the Navy to prevent further seaborne deliveries. The fleet's aircraft carriers, surface warships, attack submarines, and patrol aircraft deployed in force to the Atlantic and the Caribbean, highlighting U.S. strength and Soviet weakness. Recognizing this fact, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev

agreed to withdraw the offending weapons from Cuba. Thus, the Navy accomplished the President's goal of reducing the threat to America without having to order an invasion of Cuba and war.

Mekong Delta

U.S. and South Vietnamese forces fought Communist troops for control of this populace and vital region, the food-growing bread basket of the Republic of Vietnam. Naval forces were especially critical to allied success in the Mekong Delta, laced by many miles of rivers, streams, canals, and other waterways. In 1966 the U.S. Navy established the River Patrol Force to conduct Operation Game Warden and to complement the river assault groups of the Vietnam Navy. The following year saw the creation of the Mobile Riverine Force, a joint Army-Navy formation employing two infantry brigades and a flotilla of heavily armed and armored river craft. The MRF fought heavy battles with main-force enemy units and proved to be a valuable asset during the Tet Offensive of 1968. In the SEALORDS Campaign from 1968 to 1970, U.S. and South Vietnamese naval forces severely curtailed enemy operations in the Mekong Delta.

I Corps-DMZ

From the first deployment of major Marine forces to Danang in March 1965 to their withdrawal from the country in 1973, the 1st Marine Division, 3rd Marine Division, and Marine advisory teams operated in the I Corps military region of northern South Vietnam. Some of the heaviest battles occurred near the Demilitarized Zone that separated North Vietnam and South Vietnam. Marine infantry units, with their assigned Navy corpsmen, doctors, and chaplains, fought sometimes fleeting engagements with Viet Cong guerrillas in I Corps but just as often main-force North Vietnamese regulars armed with heavy artillery, advanced infantry weapons, and on occasion armored vehicles. Gunfire from battleship New Jersey (BB 62), heavy cruisers, and U.S. and Australian destroyers, and air support from carrier- and shore-based naval aircraft often made the difference between victory and defeat in this hotly contested region.

Khe Sanh

In early 1967, the U.S. commander in Vietnam, General William C. Westmoreland, deployed Marine combat forces to the rudimentary airstrip and combat outpost at Khe Sanh in the northwest corner of South Vietnam. His goal was to contest the strong enemy presence in the area and in nearby Laos, site of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. North Vietnamese forces responded by isolating the base from ground support, concentrating powerful infantry units around it, and bombarding it with artillery and rocket fire. While concerned that the enemy might try to overrun Khe Sanh, Westmoreland saw an opportunity to devastate the

massed enemy forces with air power. During the first months of 1968 Air Force B-52 bombers and Marine and Navy tactical aircraft took a huge toll of the attacking forces. With this support, the 26th Marines, a detachment of Navy Seabees, and South Vietnamese troops fought off all enemy ground assaults on Khe Sanh.

Hue

In the Tet Offensive, on 30 January 1968 Vietnamese Communist troops launched attacks on U.S., South Vietnamese, and allied forces in all but a few of the provinces and cities of the Republic of Vietnam. One of the enemy's prime targets was the old imperial capital of Hue in northern South Vietnam. In a surprise attack, enemy forces seized much of the city, including the thick-walled ancient citadel. Once in control, the Communists executed thousands of innocent civilians. Recovering from the initial shock, U.S. Marine and South Vietnamese forces launched a counterattack that the Navy reinforced with naval gunfire and logistic support. Bitter and bloody house-to-house fighting caused more than 1,000 American casualties. On 2 March, after three months of heavy combat, U.S. and South Vietnamese marines finally ejected enemy forces from the city.

Persian Gulf

Since 1949, U.S. naval forces have operated regularly in the Persian Gulf to defend U.S. interests. The work could be dangerous, as shown when an Iraqi jet mistook guided missile frigate Stark (FFG 31) for an enemy ship in 1987 and nearly sank her with air-to-surface missiles. The following year Iranian naval vessels harassed oil tankers in transit and laid mines in heavily traveled gulf waters. The severe damage to guided missile frigate Samuel B. Roberts (FFG 58) from an Iranian-laid sea mine prompted Operation Praying Mantis in April 1988 during which carrier aircraft, surface warships, and Marine units destroyed two Iranian military platforms in the gulf and sank a pair of naval vessels. From 1990 to 2003, U.S. naval forces enforced an embargo of Iraq's overseas trade to dampen Saddam Hussein's aggressive behavior. For the same reason, carrier aircraft flew patrols over Iraq in operations Southern Watch and Northern Watch.

Bosnia

With the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991, the Serb, Croat, and Muslim populations of Bosnia-Herzegovina fought to establish their own political entities. The Bosnian Serbs, militarily supported by Slobodan Milosevich's Serbia, engaged in the "ethnic cleansing" of areas they wanted to populate. Serbs, but also Croats and Muslims committed atrocities. To stop the killing, from 30 August to 20 September 1995 NATO carried out a sustained air campaign, under U.S. Admiral Leighton Smith, that involved forces from 15 nations, including carriers Theodore

Roosevelt (CVN 71) and America (CV 66) and their escorting cruisers and destroyers. U.S. and other NATO warships and submarines patrolled the Adriatic Sea. In one notable operation, elements of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit operating from amphibious assault ship Kearsarge (LHD 3) rescued downed Air Force pilot Scott O'Grady. The successful air campaign compelled Milosevich to sign the Dayton Accords ending the conflict in December 1995.

Kosovo

Atrocities committed by Serb forces under Serbia's Slobodan Milosevich against the Muslim citizens of Kosovo Province prompted the North American Treaty Organization to intervene in the conflict in Operation Allied Force. From 24 March to 10 June 1999, Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71), screened by cruisers and destroyers, as well as British, French, and Italian carriers struck targets in Belgrade and other sites in Serbia. NATO aircraft flew 38,000 combat missions during the conflict. U.S. and British submarines and surface ships operating in the Adriatic complemented the air campaign with Tomahawk cruise missile strikes. The military operation, led by U.S. Army General Wesley Clark, combined with diplomatic pressure, economic sanctions, and the threat of a ground intervention into Kosovo, compelled Milosevich to submit to NATO's requirements for a ceasefire.

Afghanistan

Less than one month after the 11 September 2001 Al-Qaeda terrorist attack on America, U.S. military forces deployed to Afghanistan to destroy Osama Bin Laden's organization and the Taliban government in Kabul supporting it. In Operation Enduring Freedom, U.S. and British cruisers, destroyers, and submarines operating in the North Arabian Sea fired Tomahawk cruise missiles and Kitty Hawk (CV 63) and other carriers launched air strikes and special forces units against targets in Afghanistan. Early in the war, naval aviation units carried out 85 percent of the U.S. strike operations. In November 2001 the 15th and 26th Marine Expeditionary Units deployed hundreds of miles inland from amphibious ships in the North Arabian Sea to Afghanistan's southern desert and shortly afterward captured Kandahar City, spiritual birthplace of the Taliban. In 2009 the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade led a surge of U.S. and NATO forces into southern Afghanistan and since that time Marine and Navy units have worked with the Afghan National Army to secure the country.

Iraq

When Saddam Hussein's Iraqi army invaded Kuwait in August 1990, President George H.W. Bush deployed U.S. military forces to defend Saudi Arabia and other friendly Persian Gulf countries. On 17 January 1991, when it was clear

Saddam would not withdraw his troops from Kuwait, U.S. and allied UN forces inaugurated Operation Desert Storm. During the next five weeks, Tomahawk cruise missiles launched from two battleships, other surface warships, and submarines, and aircraft from six carriers hit military targets in Kuwait and Iraq. U.S. and allied naval forces neutralized the Iraqi navy and cleared paths through enemy minefields. On 24 February, the UN coalition launched a ground assault into Kuwait and Iraq spearheaded by the 1st Marine Division and 2nd Marine Division under the I Marine Expeditionary Force. The Desert Storm campaign compelled the Iraqi dictator to sue for peace only four days later. Several years later, frustrated by Saddam Hussein's aggressive behavior and persuaded that his regime harbored weapons of mass destruction, on 20 March 2003 the United States and a "coalition of the willing" launched an invasion of Iraq, Operation Iraqi Freedom. Supported by U.S. Navy and other coalition warships, Marine, SEAL, and British ground combat units seized critical oil fields in southern Iraq and the port of Umm Qasr. Meanwhile Navy carriers, surface warships, and submarines launched aircraft and cruise missiles at military targets throughout the country. The I Marine Expeditionary Force then fought a major battle at Nasiriyah and along with U.S. Army divisions stormed Baghdad on 9 April. Despite this victory, it took another eleven years for the U.S. naval services and other allied units to defeat a bloody insurgency, reduce sectarian violence, and develop capable Iraqi military and police forces. By the end of 2011 President Barak Obama had withdrawn all U.S. forces from Iraq.