

## Part C: World War II in the Pacific

Vocabulary: extreme poverty, colonies, influence, natural resources, expand territory, territorial expansion, embargo, American Pacific fleet, naval base, barrage, assault, reciprocated

The Great Depression began in the United States in 1929. It spread to Europe and Asia. Like the rest of the world, Japan had a very weak economy. Many young men joined the army to escape the **extreme poverty** of their villages in rural Japan. The army was strong and gained power during the 1930s. It established **colonies** in Korea, Taiwan, and northwest China to expand Japanese **influence** in Asia and to use the **natural resources** of the colonies to make Japan's economy strong. Japan had to go to war with China to keep its colonies in northwest China. Japan also started buying steel and oil from the United States. The United States did not want Japan to **expand its territory**. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the President of the United States, placed an **embargo** of steel and oil exports to Japan to persuade Japan to stop the **territorial expansion**.



In this map there is a clear outline to identify the countries of China, South Korea and Japan. In the second map we can see in more detail and also identify Taiwan, the Pacific Ocean and all of Korea.



By 1939, most of the countries in the world were at war with each other. But the people in the U.S. were still suffering from the Great Depression. The countries fighting each other were far away in Europe and Asia. So the United States stayed out of the war.

Japan had to protect its supply of steel and oil. If it lost these two resources, its army and economy would collapse. Japan decided to continue its territorial expansion to countries that could supply Japan with steel and oil. Japan was sure this plan would be successful because it knew three important things about the world situation. One, it knew Germany and Italy were too busy invading the countries of Europe to stop Japan. Two, it knew the American people did not want to go to war. And, three, it knew the only force that could stop the Japanese from territorial expansion was the **American Pacific fleet** in Hawaii. Japan did not want to start a long war with the United States. But it believed that if it destroyed this important **naval base** in the Pacific Ocean, the people of the United States would not be able to fight back; but, most importantly, they would not want to fight back. The Japanese were right that it could destroy the American Pacific fleet. But the Japanese were wrong about the American people.

Read the quoted material below to understand more about the attack on Pearl Harbor and how the United States entered the war. The quoted material is from "Pearl Harbor," History.com Staff, History.com, 2009.

*"Just before 8 a.m. on December 7, 1941, hundreds of Japanese fighter planes attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbor near Honolulu, Hawaii. The **barrage** lasted just two hours, but it was devastating: The Japanese managed to destroy nearly 20 American naval vessels, including eight enormous battleships and more than 300 airplanes. More than 2,000 American soldiers and sailors died in the attack, and another 1,000 were wounded. The day after the **assault**, President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked Congress to declare war on Japan. Congress approved his declaration with just one dissenting vote. Three days later, Japanese allies Germany and Italy also declared war on the United States, and again Congress **reciprocated**. More than two years into the conflict, American had finally joined World War II."*

Video "Attack on Pearl Harbor": <http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/pearl-harbor>

Follow the link below to see a clear map of the countries that touch the Pacific Ocean. Why is this part of World War Two called the War in the Pacific?

<http://www.mapsofworld.com/geography-map/pacific-centric-world-map.html>

Look at the map and find

1. Japan
2. Hawaiian Islands (Pearl Harbor is there)
3. The United States
4. What states in the United States are on the Pacific Ocean?
5. Why do you think Japan would be so worried about the ships in Pearl Harbor enough to bomb them?



The battleship USS *Alabama* (BB-60) is seen anchored in Casco Bay, Maine, in December 1942, where its crew trained. *Picture courtesy of Encyclopedia Britannica and the U. S. Navy.*

“The USS *Alabama* (BB-60) is a World War II-era battleship and the fifth ship named after the state of Alabama. It is... best known for its role in helping to take Japanese-held islands in the Pacific from 1943 to 1945, earning numerous citations. It is now the centerpiece of USS *Alabama* Battleship Memorial Park on the Mobile River, in Mobile, Mobile County, and one of the state's most visited attractions.”

*Information from Encyclopedia of Alabama*



Japanese bombing at Pearl Harbor near Honolulu, Hawaii; *picture courtesy of Encyclopedia Britannica*



Pearl Harbor bombing: *picture*  
*Courtesy of Encyclopedia of Alabama*

## Vocabulary Words

1. Extreme poverty: the condition of someone who does not have enough money, clothes, food, or possessions to live a normal life.  
**In the Story:** The people who lived in rural Japan lived in extreme poverty.
2. Colonies: areas of land that are controlled by a country that is usually far away.  
**In the Story:** Japan took areas of Korea to colonize or control.
3. Influence: the power to change or affect someone or something.  
**In the Story:** Japan wanted to have a wider influence in Asia.
4. Natural resources: industrial materials and capacities (such as mineral deposits and waterpower) supplied by nature.  
**In the Story:** Japan doesn't have many natural resources.
5. Expand territory; territorial expansion: usually said about a country that takes land from another country and adds it to its own country.  
**In the Story:** Japan expanded its own territory to China.
6. Embargo: a government order that limits trade.  
**In the Story:** The United States embargoed the trade of oil and steel with Japan.
7. American Pacific fleet: a group of military ships controlled by one United States leader and located in a port city in the Pacific Ocean.  
**In the Story:** The ships at Pearl Harbor made up America's Pacific fleet.
8. Naval base: a military location, usually a seaport, used by the United States Navy that provides services for the ships and sailors.  
**In the Story:** Pearl Harbor was the main Naval base in the Pacific.
9. Barrage: a heavy and continuous amount of gunfire or bombs over a wide area to stop the enemy or protect the allies.  
**In the Story:** During the two-hour attack, the gunfire and sounds of bombs exploding never stopped.

10. Assault: a physical attack.

**In the Story:** The attack on Pearl Harbor was an assault.

11. Reciprocated: responded to an action by making a similar one.

**In the Story:** Germany declared war on the United States and the U.S. reciprocated by declaring war on Germany.