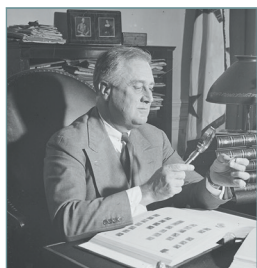


WHO'S WHO in the War in the Pacific

(From the Collection of The National WWII Museum, 2002.069.144.)

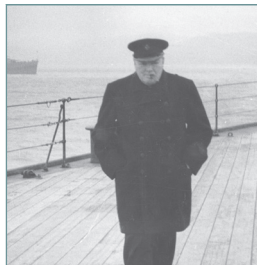
POLITICAL LEADERS

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT



President Franklin Delano Roosevelt publicly committed to maintaining American neutrality in the 1930s but became gravely concerned about Japanese expansion. He supported China in its daunting fight against Japan by providing limited aid, expanding the US naval presence in the Pacific, and imposing economic sanctions on Japan. When the Japanese launched a surprise attack on Hawaii without any declaration of war, Roosevelt led an outraged and unified nation into the global fight. (Image: Library of Congress, LC-DIG-hec-40758.)

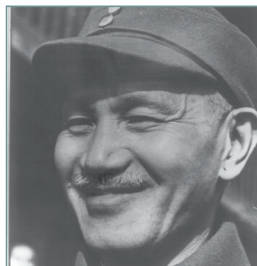
WINSTON CHURCHILL



British Prime Minister Winston Churchill solidified a “Grand Alliance” with the United States and Soviet Union following the attack on Pearl Harbor. In the Pacific, the British Empire suffered catastrophic defeats in Hong Kong, Malaya, Singapore, and Burma, and Japanese forces threatened India, Australia, and New Zealand. Although eager to counter the Japanese, Churchill remained steadfastly committed to the strategy of defeating Germany first.

(Image: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-19266.)

CHIANG KAI-SHEK



After Japan invaded China in 1937, Chiang Kai-shek led a sustained and desperate resistance despite devastating losses. After Pearl Harbor, Japan militarily isolated China and increased the suffering of its people. The United States recognized Chiang's China as a key strategic ally that simultaneously tied down massive numbers of Japanese troops and refuted Japan's claim to be the authentic force for Asian liberation. (Image: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-39907.)

EMPEROR HIROHITO



Japanese Emperor Hirohito ascended to the throne in 1926, assuming the role of God Emperor. He presided over a period of internal tumult, violence, and aggressive expansion. Hirohito did not object as Japan's military invaded China, allied Japan with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, and prepared for war with the United States. In November 1941, Hirohito personally approved military plans for a sweeping assault on the Allied powers to establish an empire in Asia and the Pacific. (Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 208-PU-93S.)

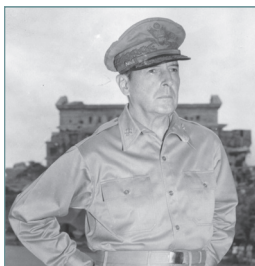
MILITARY LEADERS Allies

CHESTER NIMITZ



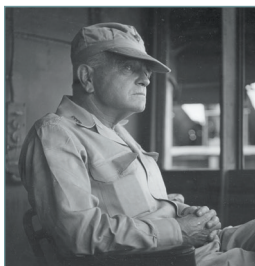
President Roosevelt elevated Admiral Chester W. Nimitz to the post of commander in chief, Pacific Fleet, after Pearl Harbor, in the process ignoring the advice of many senior US Navy officials. Nimitz confirmed Roosevelt's faith in him by immediately planning to strike back at the enemy, turning to carrier task forces and submarines as his primary weapons. He boldly orchestrated the surprise attack on the Japanese Imperial Navy at Midway and then led American forces across the central Pacific. *(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 80-G-490293.)*

DOUGLAS MACARTHUR



General Douglas MacArthur commanded American and Filipino forces in the Philippines when the Japanese attacked on December 8, 1941. After MacArthur led a desperate losing struggle against Japanese air and ground units, Roosevelt ordered him to escape capture and withdraw to Australia in March 1942. Appointed supreme commander of the Southwest Pacific Area, MacArthur mobilized Allied forces to first stop the Japanese advance in New Guinea and then begin a long campaign to liberate the Philippines from Japanese occupation. *(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 111-SC-211633.)*

WILLIAM HALSEY JR.



An aggressive and charismatic leader, Admiral Bill Halsey led a series of bold hit-and-run American carrier strikes against Japanese forces during the first months of the war and oversaw the first bombing assault on Tokyo, the Doolittle Raid. In October 1942, Halsey assumed command of Allied forces in the South Pacific and launched a series of offensives that severely depleted Japan's air and naval strength. *(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 80-G-471108.)*

RAYMOND A. SPRUANCE



The quiet and modest Admiral Raymond Spruance commanded naval escorts for his old friend Admiral Halsey's carrier task force after Pearl Harbor. When Halsey became ill, he secured Spruance's appointment to command Halsey's carriers at the Battle of Midway. Although Spruance lacked any background in carrier aviation, his brilliant leadership played a crucial role in the battle and secured senior commands for Spruance from 1943 to 1945.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 80-G-225341.)

LORD LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN



A member of the British royal family, Lord Louis Mountbatten embarked on an illustrious career with the Royal Navy. He served with distinction in the Mediterranean in 1940–41, surviving a devastating attack by German dive-bombers that sunk his flagship. After serving as chief of combined operations in Europe in 1942, Admiral Mountbatten was appointed supreme allied commander, South East Asia Command, in 1943. There, he played a key role fighting the Japanese in India and Burma.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 208-PU-141Q)

MILITARY LEADERS Allies

JOSEPH W. STILWELL



General Joseph W. Stilwell commanded Allied forces in the China-Burma-India theater and later served as deputy supreme commander, South East Asia Command, under Lord Mountbatten. His abrasive personality and single-minded determination to avenge defeat in Burma won him public popularity, but frequently led to clashes with other Allied political and military leaders. His brash effort to compel Chiang Kai-shek to turn over command of Chinese armies to him backfired, and Stilwell was dismissed in October 1944.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 111-SC-134624.)

CLAIRE LEE CHENNAULT



A skilled and outspoken air-power tactician, Major General Claire Chennault retired from the US Army to become Chiang Kai-shek's air force advisor in the late 1930s. In 1941, with President Roosevelt's blessing, the Louisiana native covertly recruited volunteer US Army and Navy pilots—the famous “Flying Tigers”—to fight with the Chinese air force. He returned to active duty after Pearl Harbor, becoming commander of the Fourteenth Air Force in the China-Burma-India theater. *(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 306-NT-31B-6.)*

MILITARY LEADERS Japan

TOJO HIDEKI



Tojo Hideki became army minister in July 1940 and pushed Japan into an alliance with Germany and Italy. When Emperor Hirohito appointed Tojo prime minister in October 1941, he instructed Tojo to conduct a careful review of Japan's growing conflict with the United States. Despite private reservations, Tojo did little to question Japanese military plans, making war with America all but inevitable. Convicted of war crimes by the International Military Tribunal, he was executed in 1948. *(Image: US Army Military History Institute.)*

YAMAMOTO ISOROKU



Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku, a far-sighted naval strategist with a gambler's instincts, studied at Harvard and served as Japan's naval attaché in Washington, DC, before the war. Convinced that Japan could not win a protracted war against the United States, he planned the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor to devastate the Pacific Fleet and American morale. Afterward, when the United States refused to negotiate, he sought a decisive naval victory before Japan faced the full might of American mobilization. *(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 80-70-63430.)*

Note: Japanese names are written in Japanese style, with family name preceding given name.

MILITARY LEADERS Japan

COUNT TERAUCHI HISAICHI



The son of an Imperial Army marshal who later became prime minister, Terauchi Hisaichi commanded Japanese forces in China during the Second Sino-Japanese War in the 1930s. He served as leader of the Southern Army, cooperating with Admiral Yamamoto to plan and execute Japan's stunning offensives across Southeast Asia and the Pacific in late 1941 and early 1942. He would oversee Japan's defense of the Philippines in 1944.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 80-G-242105.)

YAMASHITA TOMOYUKI



Gifted with an imposing bearing and a sharp mind, Yamashita saw his military career suffer when he clashed with Tojo Hideki by aligning with a rival faction within the Imperial Army. After serving in China, he led the Twenty-Fifth Army during the lightning conquest of Malaya and Singapore beginning in December 1941. His forces defeated a British Commonwealth force twice as large, but Yamashita nevertheless was reassigned to China. Recalled in 1944–45, he directed the protracted defense of Luzon in the Philippines. *(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 242-GAP-32W-14.)*

NAGUMO CHUICHI



Vice Admiral Nagumo Chuichi commanded Japan's formidable First Air Fleet of carriers in the Pearl Harbor attack despite his lack of experience with naval aviation. Relying heavily on his staff of aviation specialists, Nagumo presided over subsequent operations, culminating in the effort to smash American carriers at Midway in mid-1942. He was eventually assigned to Saipan, where he chose suicide over surrender when faced with defeat following the American landings in 1944.

(Image: National Archives and Records Administration, 80-JO-63423.)

HOMMA MASAHARU



Fluent in English and a former aide to Hirohito's brother, Homma Masaharu commanded the Japanese Fourteenth Army in the Philippines. He was disgraced when the campaign bogged down due to a vigorous Philippine-American defense and Japanese errors. Homma never exercised command again. After the war, he faced charges of war crimes before the International Military Tribunal. He was executed for the brutal treatment of Filipino and American soldiers in the infamous "Bataan Death March."

(Image: Hijiima Dispatch Military News Department via Wikimedia Commons.)