

Battle for the Pacific



Battle of Coral Sea

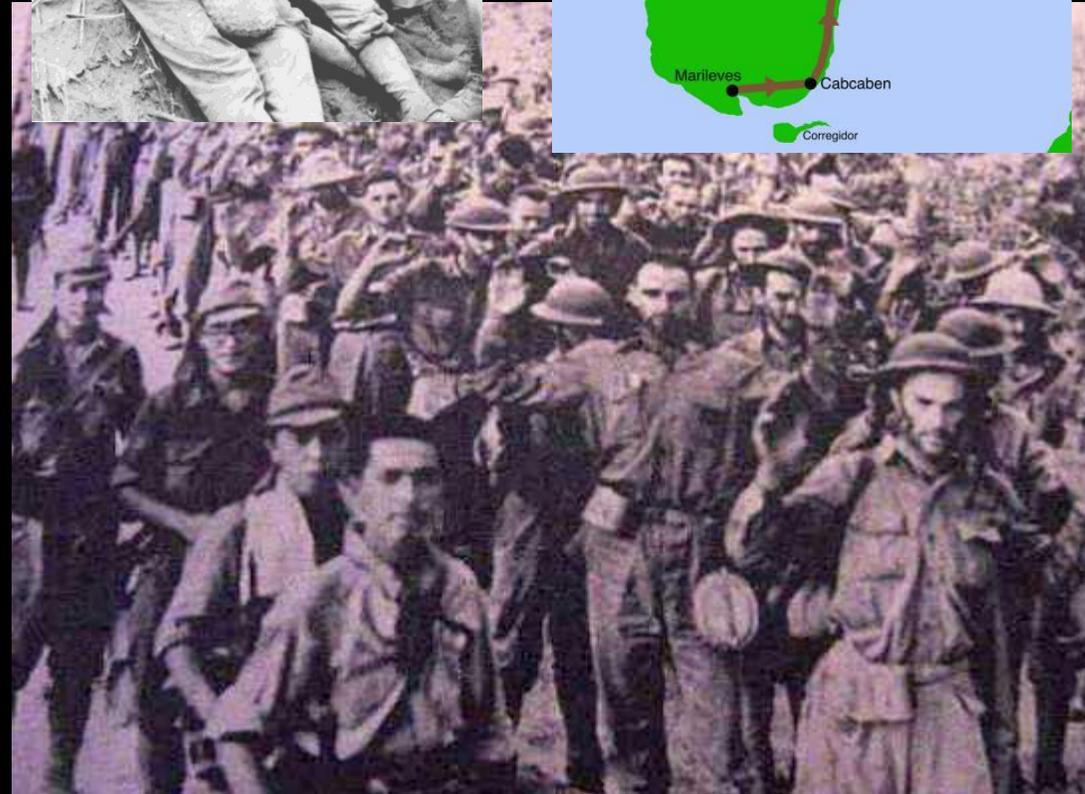
May 7-8, 1942

- First American Victory in the Pacific
- Fought only with planes flying from aircraft carriers
- NEW style of warfare
- Somewhat a draw, but it dashed Japanese hopes of taking Australia.



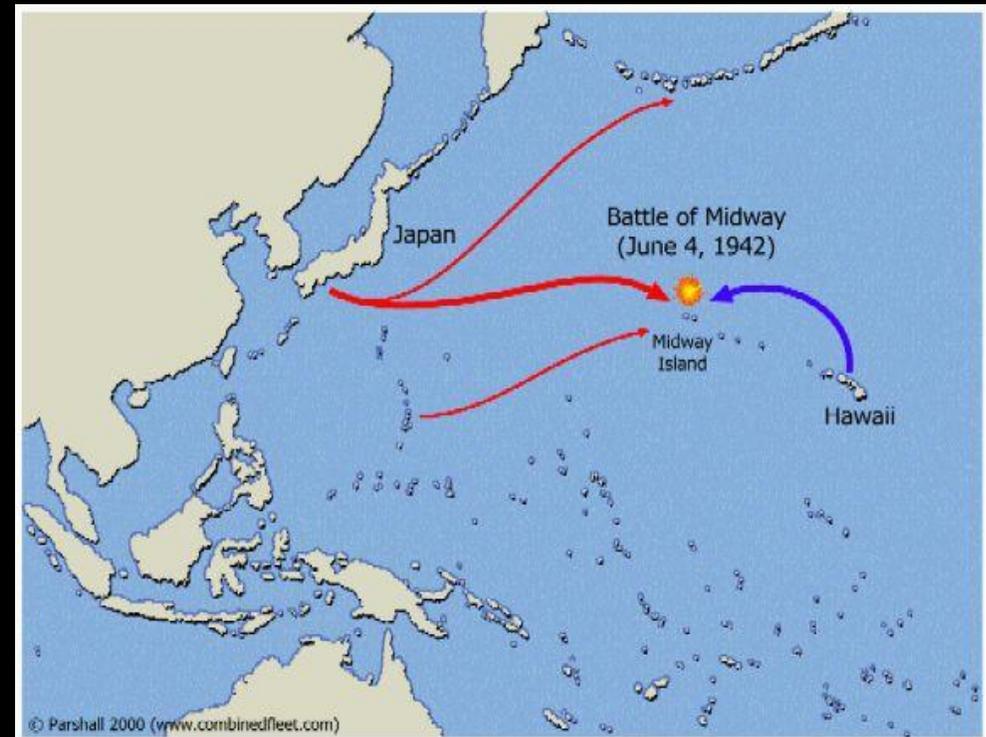
Bataan Death March

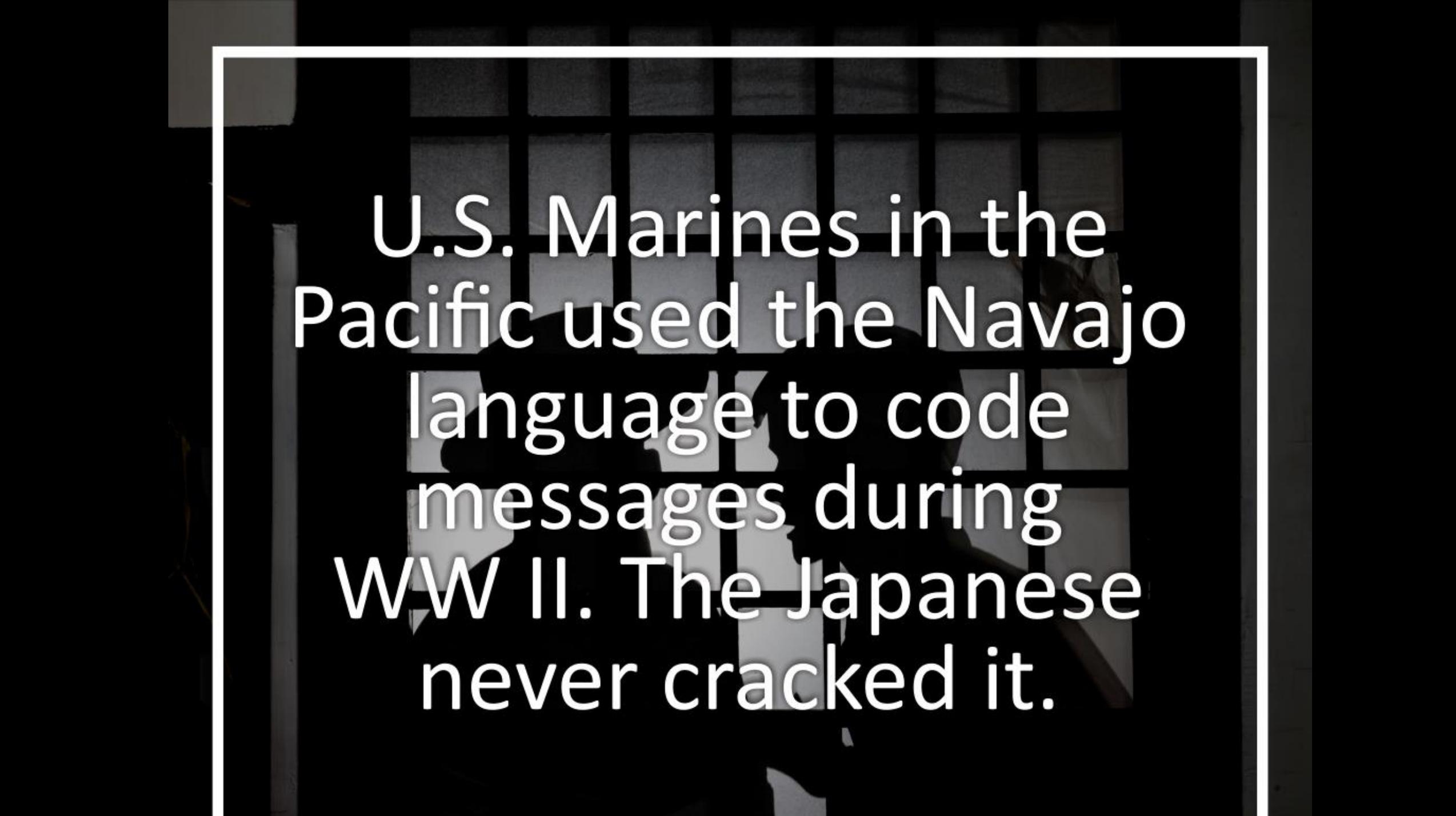
- Japanese soldiers captured the Philippines (Dec, 1941-May, 1942)
- 75,000 American and Filipino POWs forced to march up the Bataan Peninsula- terrible treatment by the Japanese and poor conditions killed 7,000 of the men
- Japanese continued to expand their control over Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific



Battle at Midway June, 1942

- Considered the Turning point for America in the War in the Pacific
- Huge Victory for American navy.
- US had the Japanese plans, but Japan couldn't break US coded communications (thanks codetalkers!)
- Sank 4 Japanese carriers
- Japanese lost most of their experienced pilots





U.S. Marines in the Pacific used the Navajo language to code messages during WW II. The Japanese never cracked it.



Navajo soldiers were some of the most highly decorated service members during WWII.

Despite this, many faced discrimination and racism upon their return home.





Island Hopping Strategy



After Midway, the US Navy went on the offensive in the Pacific, using a new strategy: Island Hopping - Capture some islands and ignore others on the way to Japan. Two of the last two Pacific Battles – Iwo Jima and Okinawa (March and April, 1945)- were some of the deadliest of the war.

The US fight to take Iwo Jima island was a brutal and deadly task.



An iconic photograph of US soldiers raising the flag after capturing Iwo Jima honors the 6,800 American lives lost in the battle.

Strategic Bombing

- From Okinawa, and other Pacific bases, the US could bomb Japanese home islands
- Goal: Destroy the enemy's ability to make war by bombing factories, bases, farms, shipyards, etc.



Amid the chaos of war, President Roosevelt dies from a brain hemorrhage. Vice President Truman becomes President of the United States and director of the US war effort in both Europe and the Pacific.



Manhattan Project

- Under the leadership of General Leslie Groves and physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, the Manhattan Project built the atomic bomb and tested it on July 16, 1945.
- As the Japanese would not surrender, President Truman would ultimately order that the atomic bombs be used against Japan – effectively ending the war.

