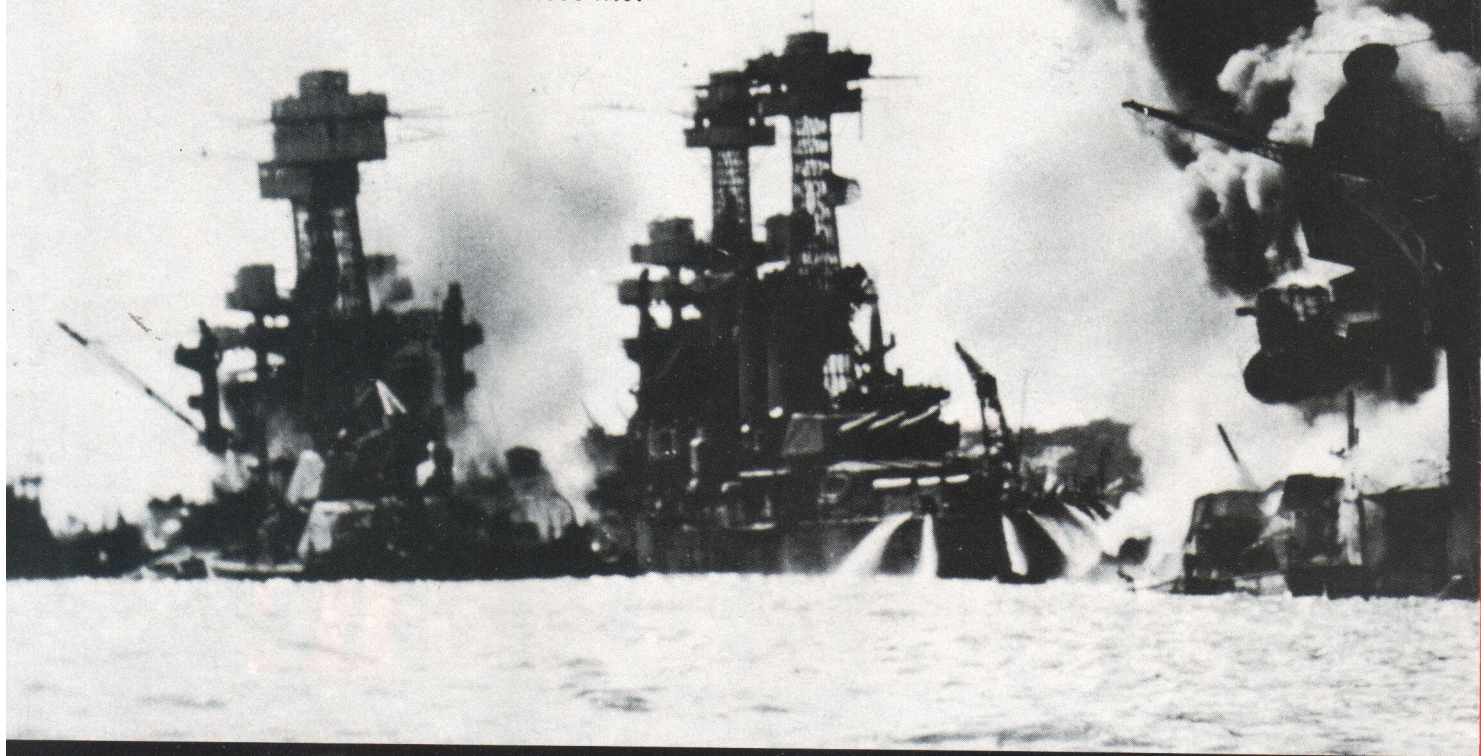


ATTACK!

Psychologists have a word: denial. The mind's refusal to accept what the eyes behold. A radio announcer had to plead: "Pearl Harbor is under attack. This is no drill... Those are real planes up there with red spots on them. Please believe me!"



It came 50 years ago December 7 as Honolulu drowed under the morning dew. The Waikiki surf was tamē, the beach unusually empty for a Sunday. Doves cooed, mynas chattered; otherwise, all was quiet in the city's neighborhoods. At Pearl Harbor, to the west, color guards prepared to hoist the Stars and

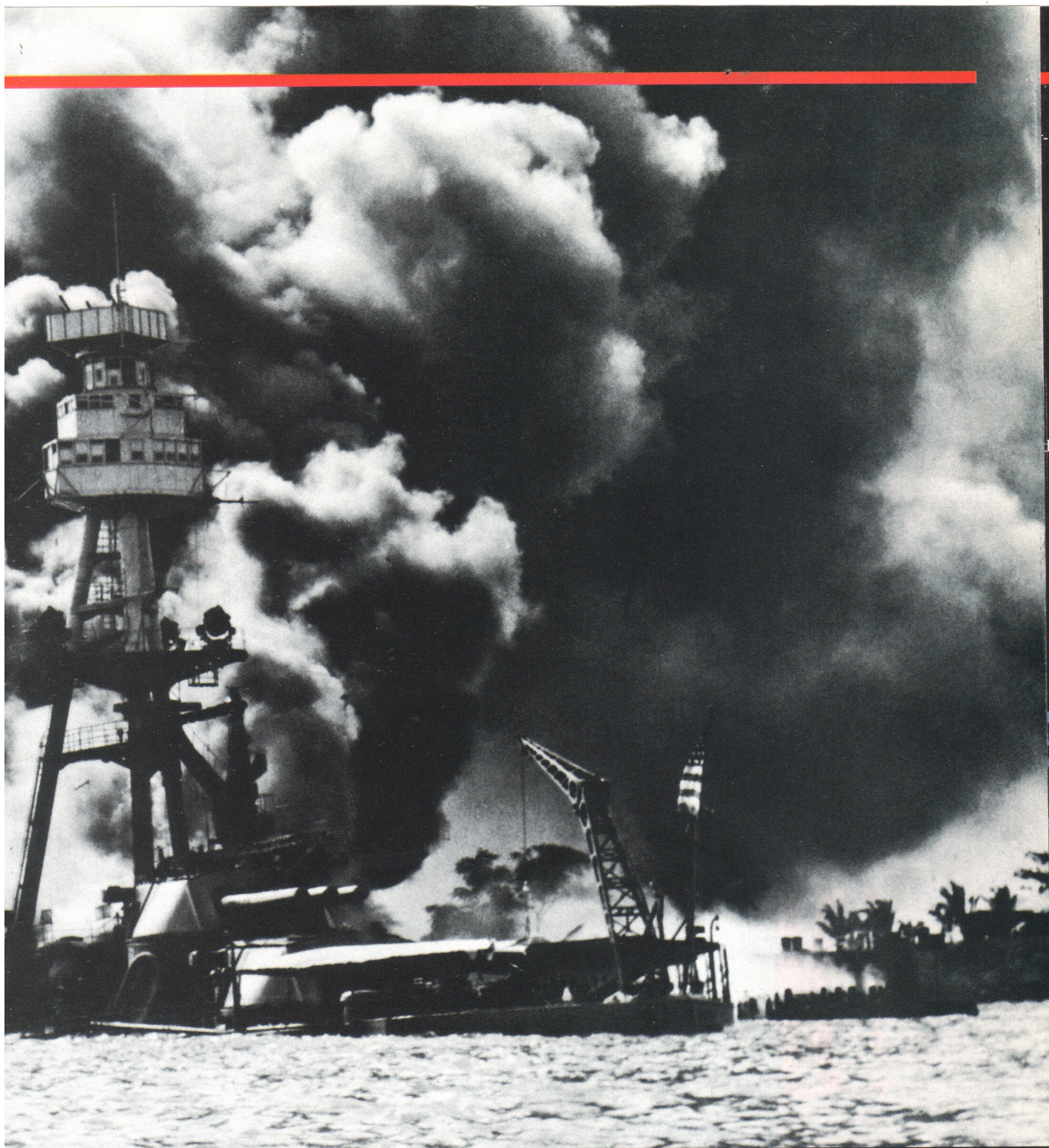
Stripes on more than 90 ships of the Pacific Fleet. The inferno fell from an azure sky just before 8 o'clock, delivered by Japanese fighters, dive bombers and torpedo planes that swept in from the north over saw-toothed mountains and fields of pineapple and sugar cane. Arriving in two waves, the 350 planes sank or seriously maimed six battle-

ships and 10 other big vessels, destroyed 162 aircraft and left 2,403 Americans dead or dying and 1,178 wounded, inflicting most of the havoc in the first 20 minutes of a two-hour attack.

The debate over how the United States could let itself be caught so disastrously off guard (a Roosevelt plot to get the country into the war?) began

almost immediately and continues today, fed by 50th-anniversary monographs. But most Americans at the time wanted a witch hunt much less than vengeance on the Japanese aggressors.

The humiliation of December 7 was eased by many reports of heroism. Reports of scalded sailors who repeatedly swam



CULVER PICTURES

between pools of burning oil to rescue bleeding buddies floundering in the harbor. Of men who plunged below deck in sinking, smoke-filled ships to save crewmates. Of two peach-fuzz-faced fliers, one with wounds in an arm and a leg, who were responsible for eight of the 29 Japanese planes shot down that day. Of GIs who died

pumping bullets into the sky at strafing Zeros.

Inevitably, some men froze with fear. There were instances of panic that cost lives, of misdirected defensive fire that killed Americans. Most of the 68 civilians killed were at first thought to be the victims of Japanese bombs. In fact, nearly all of the many explosions in Honolulu

were caused by naval anti-aircraft shells with malfunctioning or improperly set time fuses, shells that detonated only when they fell to earth—a snafu Congress's Pearl Harbor investigators would learn of from the Army, not the Navy, in a closed-door hearing in 1943.

When the sun set at the end of the "day of infamy," the

Above: The Arizona (right) and two other battleships sizzle.

blackness of the sky over Honolulu was softened by a red glow as if someone had switched on a huge night light against the terrors to come. The glow emanated from great battleships that were still burning at Pearl Harbor.

U.S. News

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U.S. NAVY

THE FINGER OF FATE

Of the soldiers and marines who served in the Pacific during World War II, 1 out of 40 died in battle and 1 in 14 was wounded. Only a minority saw combat as opposed to playing supporting roles but, of these men, more than 40 percent were killed or wounded.

GOD AND MAN

In combat, one survey found, prayer comforted 70 percent of enlisted men (as against 62 percent of officers) and was no help at all to 17 percent.

DISEASE

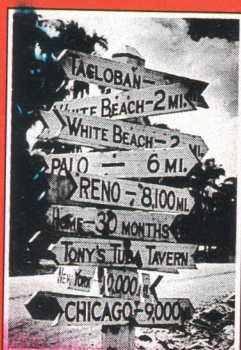
For every man injured in battle, 20 were sidelined by malaria or other diseases, twice the ratio in Europe. Dysentery was so common on some islands that many sufferers had to stay on duty.

CHOW

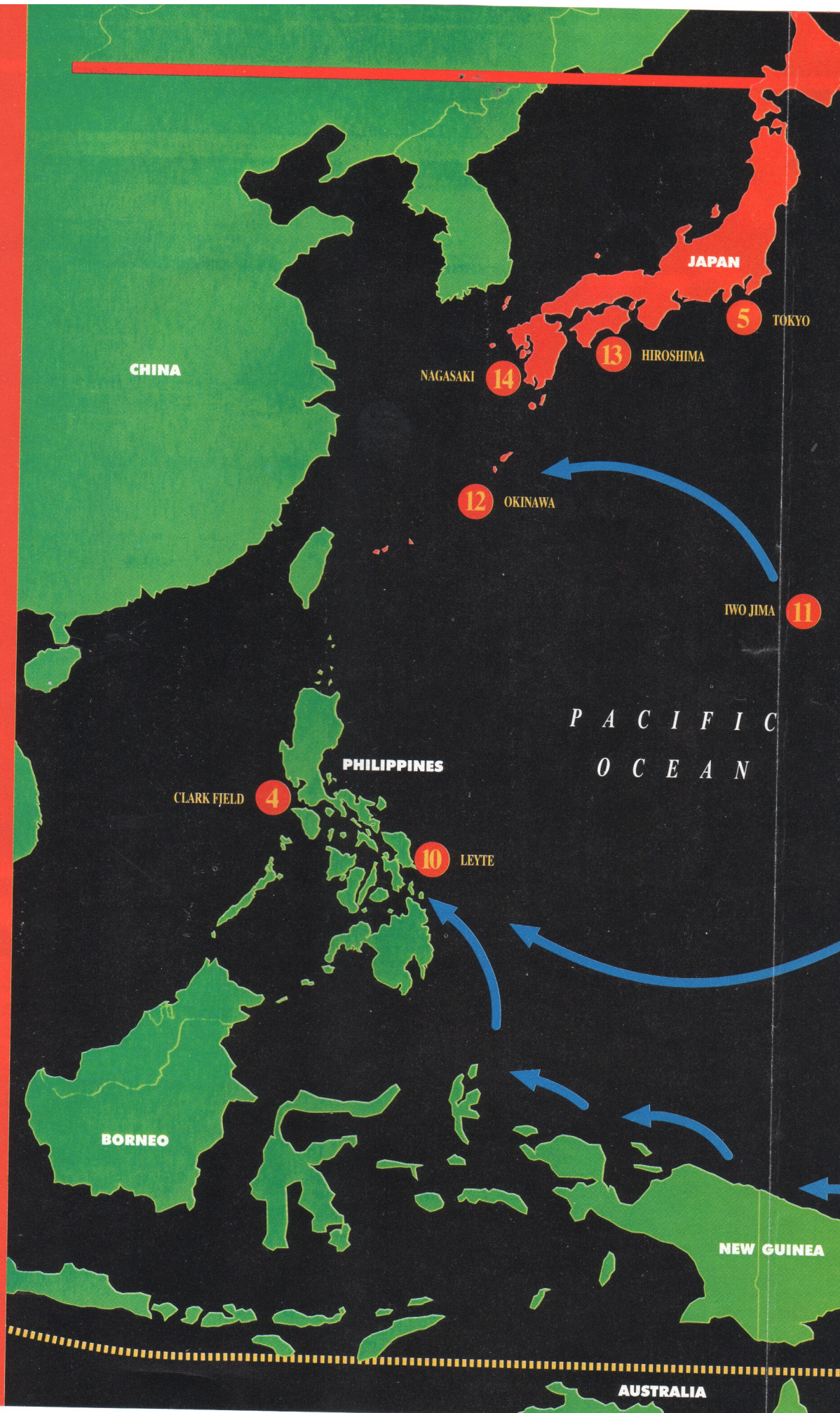
Advancing troops often went for long periods without hot meals, growing thin in their foxholes on C rations or D rations (cocoa cakes) that left them 400 calories or more short of daily needs.

FRENCH LESSONS

Paperback bestsellers included a dictionary, a book of cartoons and Emile Zola's "Nana," a classic rumored to be hot stuff à la française.



U.S. COAST GUARD



Surviving defeat can be difficult; surviving victory can be impossible. So it was with Japan. The attack on Pearl Harbor [1 on map] was flawed in its basic premise: that the most powerful country in the world would be too busy fighting Europe's strutting fascists to give the lesser imperialists in Tokyo their comeuppance. The attack also missed America's aircraft carriers, which happened to be at sea on December 7. And by failing to bomb the oil tanks and docking facilities at Pearl

Harbor as well, Japan left an enraged giant with an invaluable Pacific foothold for its inevitable counteroffensive. But whatever lessons history would teach, the immediate advantage lay with Tokyo.

THE FALL OF THE PHILIPPINES

DECEMBER 1941–MAY 1942

● Japan's forces were quickly in motion in the western Pacific, moving against the British in Malaya, Burma, Borneo and Hong Kong and overpowering U.S. outposts on Guam [2] and on Wake [3]. But for America, the greatest humiliation was what happened in the Philippines, a U.S. colonial

inheritance from the Spanish-American War guarded by 16,000 GIs. Clark Field [4] was caught in a bombardment that destroyed more than 100 planes. When Japanese troops landed on the main island of Luzon late in December, U.S. forces retreated onto the Bataan peninsula, there to be savaged not only by the enemy but by malaria, beriberi, dysentery and dwindling supplies.

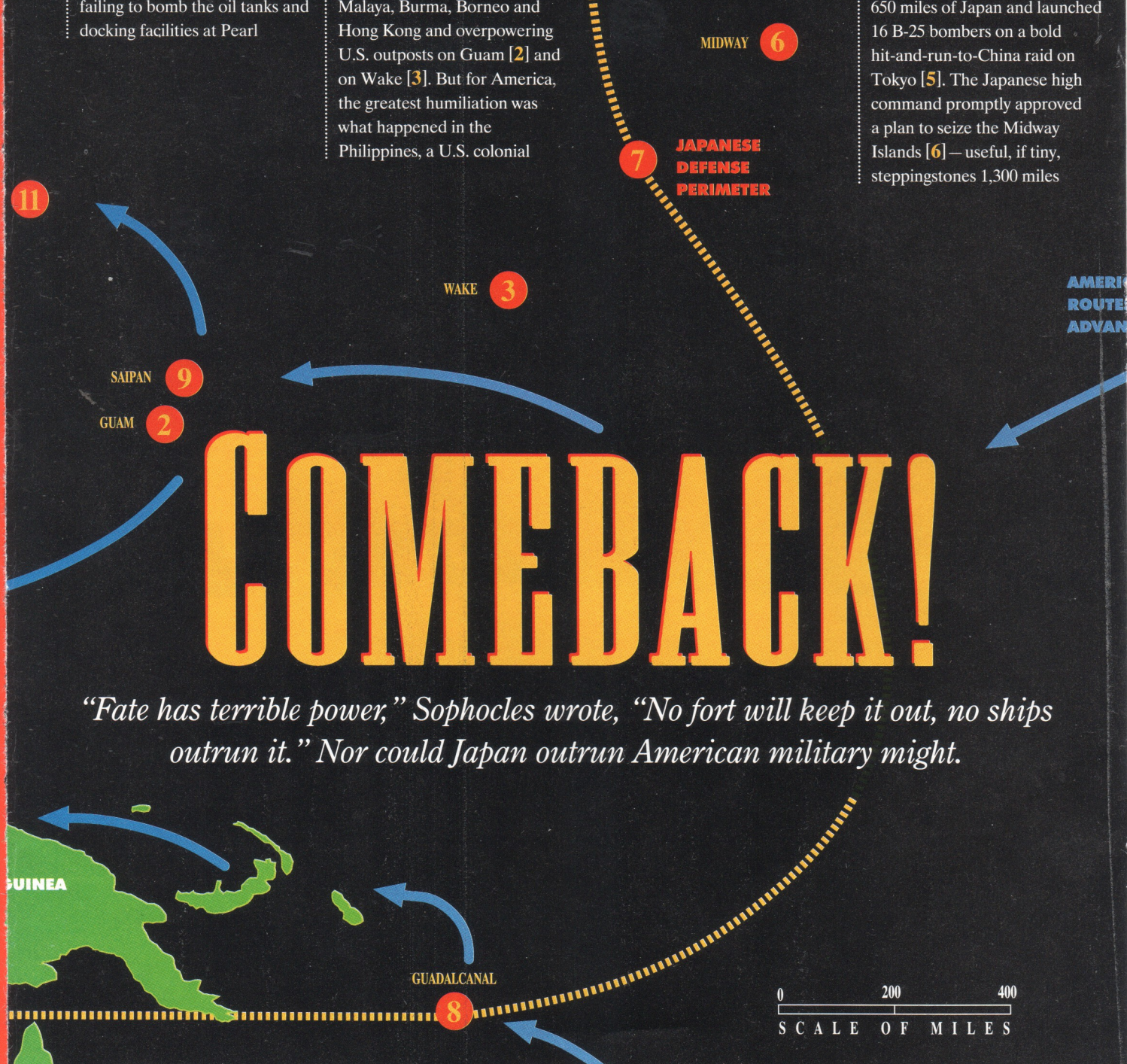
In May, for the only time in its history, the United States surrendered an army in the field to a foreign foe. Some 9,300 Americans and 45,000 Filipinos survived a "death march" to prison camp. No one had any inkling that the turnaround of the war was only weeks away.

BATTLE OF MIDWAY

JUNE 3–4, 1942

● In early April, the carrier Hornet quietly cruised to within 650 miles of Japan and launched 16 B-25 bombers on a bold hit-and-run-to-China raid on Tokyo [5]. The Japanese high command promptly approved a plan to seize the Midway Islands [6]—useful, if tiny, steppingstones 1,300 miles

KYO



"Fate has terrible power," Sophocles wrote, "No fort will keep it out, no ships outrun it." Nor could Japan outrun American military might.

northwest of Honolulu—with the aim of luring the Americans into a devastating naval battle and then imposing a truce.

The attack by most of the Japanese Navy was meant to be a surprise—à la Pearl Harbor and Clark Field. But the United States' Magic code breakers had pieced together the plan. A U.S. reception party met the fleets and drew them into punishing thrusts and counterthrusts over hundreds of square miles of ocean. America lost one destroyer and one of three carriers. Japan lost all four of its carriers on the scene. Three of them were hit by dive bombers in a scant five minutes, a fluke of aerial combat that wiped out Tokyo's advantage in carrier strength.

BATTLE OF LEYTE GULF

OCTOBER 22–27, 1944

● With new carriers, cruisers, destroyers and battleships rapidly coming off U.S. slipways, the Allies had island-hopped toward Japan from two directions: coming up from the southeast via the Solomons, New Britain and New Guinea; and from the east via the Gilberts, the Marshalls and the Marianas, where the bloody fall of Saipan [9] caused the resignation of Japan's Prime Minister Tojo.

The 6th U.S. Army provoked the biggest naval battle of the war when it finally splashed ashore in the Philippines on the island of Leyte [10]. The Japanese Navy, hard hit by sinkings and over-

flamethrowers on a murderous series of ravines, tunnels, pill-boxes and bunkers. Some 21,000 Japanese were prepared to die for their emperor, and the fighting didn't end until nearly all had succeeded. More than 6,800 marines died and fully 20,000 were wounded—one third of all Marine casualties in World War II.

OKINAWA

APRIL 1–JUNE 21, 1945

● Okinawa [12] looked prophetically like a crooked finger pointed at Tokyo. The invasion of the skinny, 60-mile-long island was on a scale reminiscent of Normandy. Ten battleships, among them two rebuilt survivors of Pearl Harbor, bombarded the island before 182,000 marines and soldiers hit the beach and quickly grabbed Okinawa's low-lying middle. The struggle to defend the rest—high ground to the north and south—was protracted and fierce, with a numbing death toll: 75,000 Japanese and 80,000 Okinawans; U.S. losses on land exceeded 7,000 dead and 32,000 wounded. At sea, kamikaze suicide planes swarmed the U.S. fleet day after day, sinking 34 ships and inflicting on the Navy its worst losses in any one campaign—5,000 sailors dead, another 5,000 injured.

HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

AUGUST 1945

● With Okinawa secured, the Allies now had a staging area for an invasion of Japan itself—a task greatly dreaded. The U.S. military calculated that an invasion might produce 1 million American casualties. Tokyo officials had scarcely flinched when the firebombing of Japanese cities in the spring had slaughtered one-quarter-million civilians. Then, on August 6, came the annihilation of Hiroshima [13] and, three days later, Nagasaki [14]. Unconditional surrender soon followed.

U.S. News



whelmed by the breakneck pace of U.S. war production, sent 64 vessels against an armada of 218. Its admirals maneuvered desperately—and brilliantly. But America lost only six ships while sinking 28 of Japan's, including four carriers and three battleships. By January, U.S. troops had won control of Leyte, and by March, had retaken Manila.

IWO JIMA

FEBRUARY 19–MARCH 16, 1945

● When the Allies looked for close-in bases to support air attacks on Japan, a heavily fortified 4½-mile-long slab of rock called Iwo Jima [11] beckoned from the sea 660 miles south of Tokyo. The Marines endured their worst landing of the war, a horror show of mangled corpses bouncing with every artillery blast, dazed men prostrate with gaping wounds, burning vehicles mired in volcanic ash. They then advanced slowly behind tanks and belching

GUADALCANAL

AUGUST 7, 1942 –
FEBRUARY 9, 1943

● The task of pushing back Japan's huge defense perimeter [7] began two months after Midway. The Japanese Army, so adept at grinding Asia under its heels, was now to feel Marine field boots on its toes in the Solomons. Leathernecks scrambled onto Guadalcanal [8] and swiftly overran its 2,200 defenders. The Japanese poured in reinforcements and withdrew only after a horrendous five-month struggle. Each side lost 24 ships contesting the sea lanes, but the losses on land were lopsided—25,000 Japanese died in battle or from illness bred in the island's steamy swamps and fetid jungles, 16 for every dead American.

BRASS QUARTET

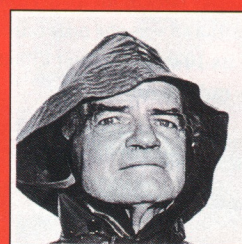
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UPI/RETMANN

DOUGLAS MACARTHUR

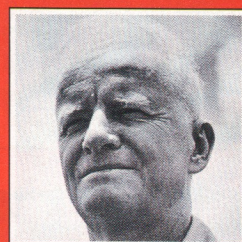
The top general in the Pacific was also the most PR conscious, a concoction of guile and gall wreathed in pipe smoke from an ever present outsized corncob.



LOS/ANAP

WILLIAM HALSEY

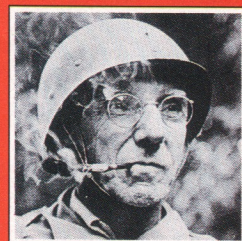
Dubbed "Bull," America's most bellicose admiral called the Japanese "yellow-bellied sons of bitches" and fought them fiercely, if not always with great strategic finesse.



LOS/ANAP

CHESTER NIMITZ

A white-thatched tower of civility, the commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet let off steam in letters to his wife but was so self-effacing that he later refused to write his memoirs.



LOS/ANAP

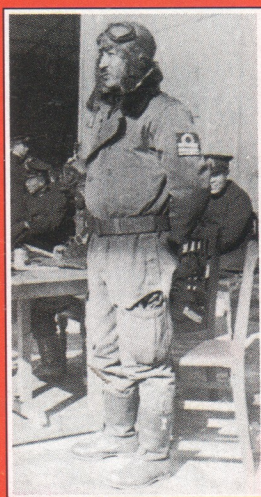
JOSEPH STILWELL

Blind in one eye, jaundiced and profane, "Vinegar Joe" tried to mobilize China's troops against the Japanese but was undercut by Chiang Kai-shek.

A TIGER'S 9 LIVES



CAPT. MITSUA FUCHIDA, the lead pilot, started the bombs falling on Pearl Harbor by signaling "To, to, to" ("Charge, charge, charge") and then radioed "Tora, tora, tora" ("Tiger, tiger, tiger") to indicate that surprise had been achieved. Close escapes from death were Fuchida's specialty: He visited Hiroshima one day before the A-bomb, then went back after the explosion as part of an inspection team and was the only one of its 10 members not killed by radiation.



MAXWELL MACMILLAN PUBLICATIONS CORP.

Fuchida became a farmer, yet the lot of a Nipponese Cincinnatus was dull. He found his peacetime niche at last in 1950 as a convert to evangelical Christianity. The rest of his life he divided between preaching (he modeled himself on his friend Billy Graham) and dining out on his recollections of Pearl Harbor. He made many trips to the United States, where a son and daughter pursued careers, lived on the West Coast for some years and filed papers to become an American citizen. In his last decade, he returned to a long-neglected wife in Japan and died there at age 73 in 1976.

WAR STORIES

Drastically foreshortened futures awaited most of the attackers of Pearl Harbor. Of the 60 warships, submarines and support vessels that took part, Japan could surrender only three at the war's end. The other 57, along with a large portion of their crews, slept at sunless depths beneath the Pacific. The losses were even higher among the 609 airmen who flew the mission. By one count, only 14 were still alive in 1966 to ponder their brush with history on its 25th anniversary.

AN ADMIRAL'S NOVEL

Among the early casualties was Adm. Isoroku Yamamoto, commander in chief of Japan's Combined Fleet. Yamamoto masterminded the attack but did not originate the strategy it embodied. In a new book, "Visions of Infamy," William Honan makes a strong case that Yamamoto's plan was inspired by a 1925 novel, "The Great Pacific War," which anticipated the course of World War II in the Pacific with uncanny accuracy — down to the exact routes of advance. The fictional war starts with a surprise attack by Japan on U.S. outposts in the Philippines and Guam (Pearl Harbor was not yet a major base) and ends with Japan's defeat by an industrially superior United States after an island-hopping counteroffensive. Yamamoto read the book, met its author, Hector Bywater, a British journalist and naval expert, and spouted Bywater's strategic insights thereafter.

Unlike the claque of jingoists in Prime Minister Tojo's cabinet, Yamamoto viewed a Japan-U.S. war as "a major calamity for the world," muttering when among aides that it would be "outrageous." But if there were



UPI/BETTMANN

Shorn of his divinity, Hirohito remained a potent symbol for his people.

to be a war, he believed, the Pearl Harbor plan offered the only chance of success. Japan was doomed unless a crippling attack on the U.S. Navy could induce Washington to dicker for an early peace rather than mobilize for a long struggle. America, hating Yamamoto as a super-rogue among rogues, spared him the pain of seeing his expectations borne out. In April 1943, intercepted messages alerted U.S. forces to the admiral's movements in the northern Solomons. P-38 fighters shot his plane from the sky.

AN EMPEROR'S FICTION

Tojo and six other top militarists survived the war — but not the peace. An Allied tribunal hanged them in 1948 as war

criminals. All but one went to his death saluting Emperor Hirohito ("Banzai!"). Hirohito was forced to renounce his divinity but was spared the dock on the theory that he had been a captive of ruthless advisers, a naïf shielded from knowledge of the crimes committed in his name. Hirohito cultivated that idea in his first meeting with Gen. Douglas MacArthur, Japan's postwar shogun, saying he "would have been put in an insane asylum or even assassinated" if he had balked. The emperor surely *looked* vulnerable and benign with his thick glasses, ancient suits and congenital shuffle.

By the time Hirohito died in 1989, at age 87, the myth of his war innocence was fraying like an old tapestry. Surveys showed that less than half of the Japanese public absolved the emperor of guilt. Although palace papers were rapidly sanitized after the war, diaries and other revealing documents inevitably emerged. They portray a Hirohito who was in sympathy with his cabinet's war aims and able to influence events when he chose to do so. Hirohito now faces a new captivity, at the hands of revisionist historians, one he will be truly powerless to steer.



GORDON PRANGE COLLECTION

Sneak-attack strategist Yamamoto