

THE PACIFIC WAR



THE WRONG LESSONS

The Japanese believed that they had won the war because:

- Man for man, a Japanese soldier was better than any European (they had already proven better than the Chinese).**
- Ship for ship, the Japanese Navy was equal to any European navy and man for man it was better.**

The Treaty was a disrespectful effort by the West to deny Japan the fruits of victory.

- Within the military, there was the added thought that the treaty was to prevent them from being able to beat a future adversary.**

These attitudes would become increasingly ingrained as time went on.

Privately, Japan now saw the United States as its principal adversary as it was the United States that had seen to it that Japan did not gain at the bargaining table what it had won on the battlefield.

THE OTHER PACIFIC NAVY

Prior to 1890, the U.S. Navy was at best third rate. Boasting the most modern navy at the end of the Civil War, few new ships had been built in over a decade since and those were mostly obsolete in design or were obsolete upon commissioning.

The Congress saw no reason to provide funds for new warships until 1878 when a Spanish cruiser visited New York. It was new and better than any ship in the U.S. fleet (but hardly a threat to the French, Italian or British navies.)

Even then, Congress was reluctant to fund naval construction. While the Navy was in need of new ships – if only because most of their ships in commission were too worn out to leave port and others (monitors) were never meant operate beyond coastal waters – the Navy was unable to convince Congress there was a maritime threat justifying the expense.

By 1883, however, the U.S. Navy was behind and less capable than the navies of Brazil, Argentina and Chile and deemed barely if at all capable of defending its own ports much less the U.S. coast. Congress began funding a new fleet.

THE OTHER PACIFIC NAVY



In 1885, CAPT Alfred Thayer Mahan (much to his dismay) was assigned as a lecturer at the new Naval War College in Newport RI.

The College had few students and fewer who wanted to attend. Consequently, Mahan had time on his hands and was encouraged to write.

In 1890, he published “The Influence of Sea Power on History,” which was the most influential work on military and naval history ever published. It reshaped the thinking of all naval powers (and would be naval powers).

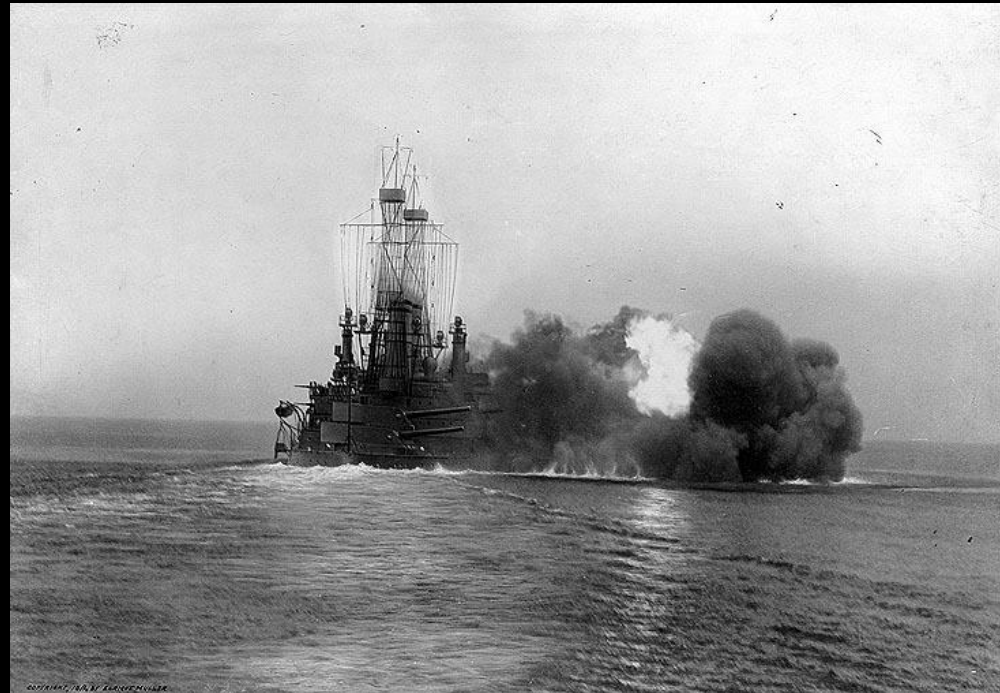
He wrote the book not to inspire other nations but to present a convincing argument to the reluctant congress to build a first class, modern navy.

THE OTHER PACIFIC NAVY

By 1898, the U.S. Navy was the most powerful in the Western Hemisphere and the 5th most powerful overall.

By 1905, it was second only to the Royal Navy. It was also more progressive, being the first to develop the submarine and (later) aircraft.

It was also the first to authorize construction of the new, all big gun battleship although Britain – as much as a stunt as for any strategic reason – was the first to complete one, the U.S. not seeing a rush.



USS Michigan – Dreadnought type battleship. (Gunnery exercise 1911)

Authorized: (funded) July 1904

Laid Down: December 1906 – just days before HMS Dreadnought was commissioned.

Commissioned: January 1910.

THE LESSONS

The U.S. Navy as early as 1906 reached different conclusions as to why Japan won and it had nothing to do with the superiority of Japanese manpower.

Russia lost because it was fighting a war at the far end of an inadequate supply line against a country fighting close to its supplies and practically on home ground.

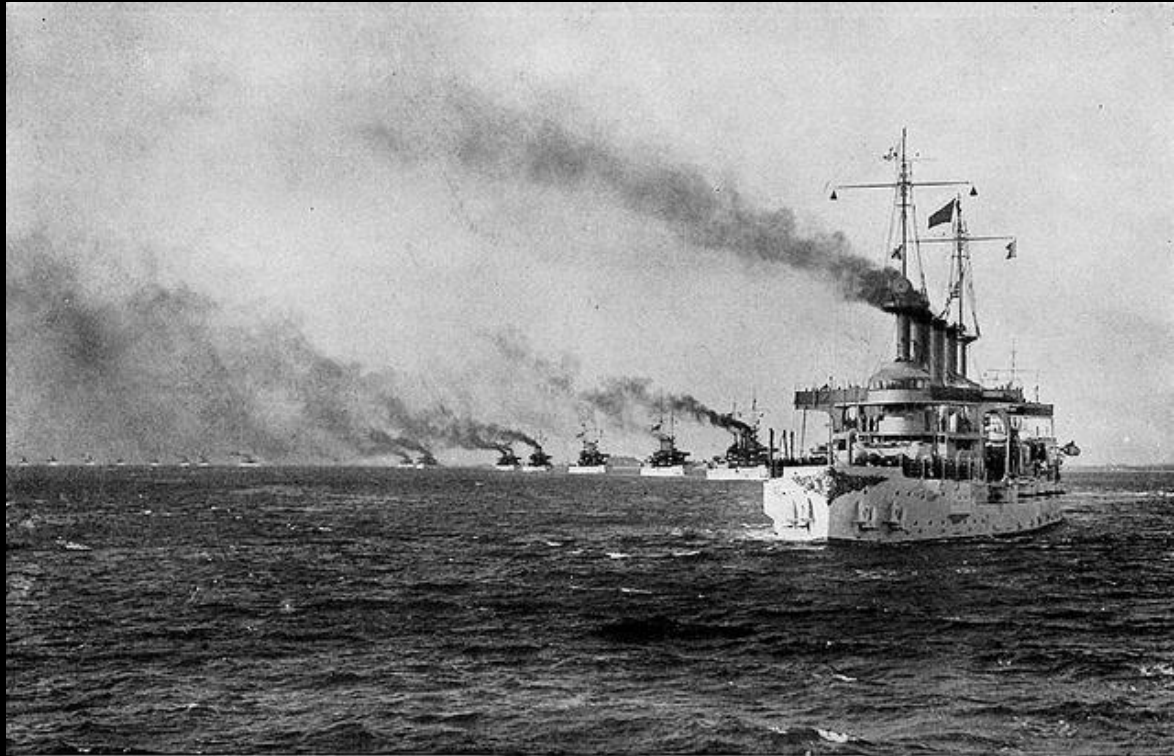
When the war broke out, the Trans-Siberian Railroad was still under construction. It was not open to traffic until July 21, 1904 and even then was inadequate for moving large numbers of troops and supplies quickly having but a single track and few rail yards east of the Urals. By then, Port Arthur was already under siege by land and the rail line south from Harbin cut.

The Russian Navy was not in a state to transfer ships ready to fight from one side of the country to the other nor to adequately supply or maintain them at battle readiness in route.

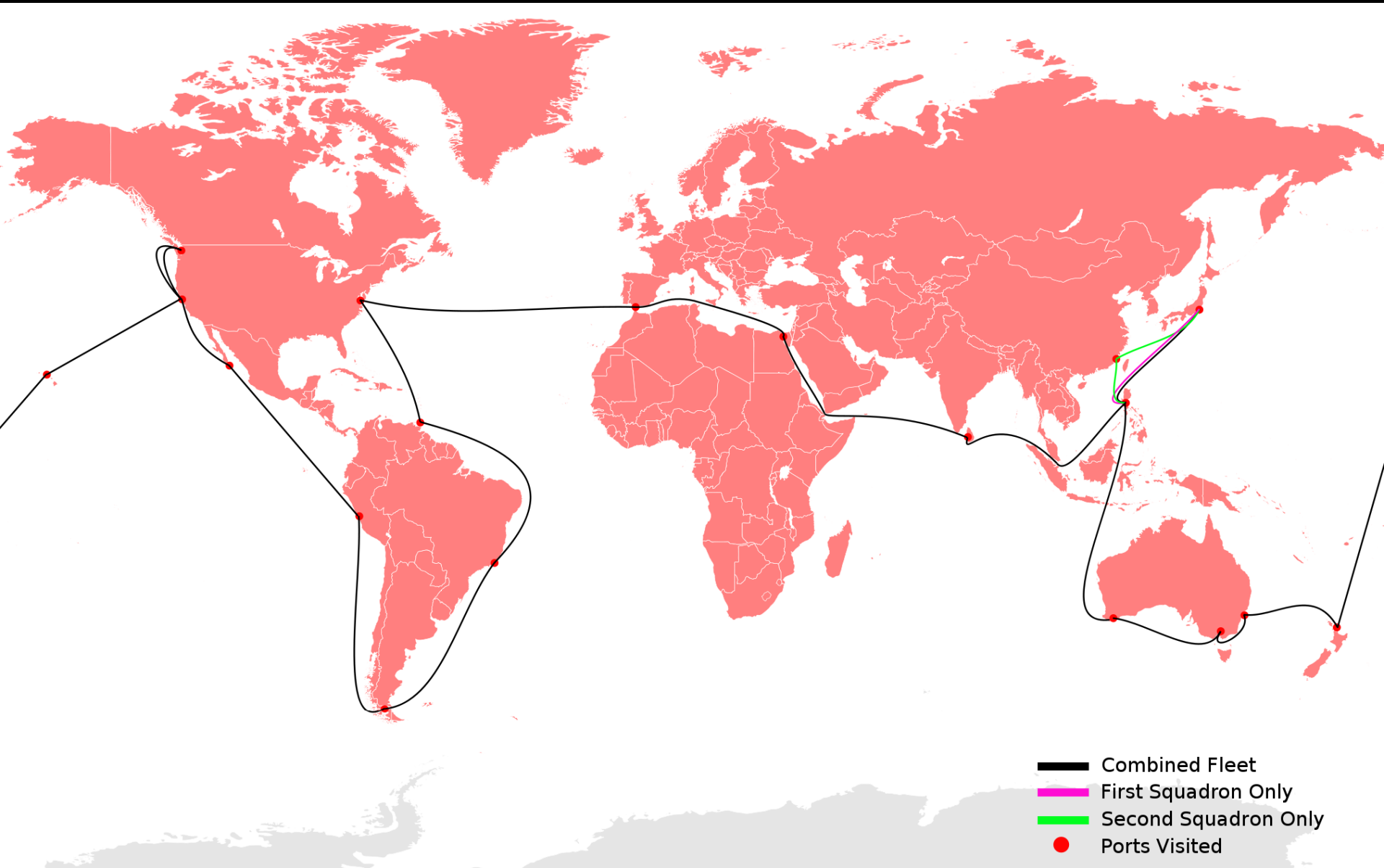
THE LESSONS

The Roosevelt administration saw Japan as possibly aggressive and expansionist, perhaps encouraged to further action by its victory.

The U.S. was then involved in the Philippines, which it had annexed and which was closer to Japan than Hawaii was to the United States and Hawaii was only one third of the distance to the Philippines. Japan, it was felt, needed to know that the Russian Navy was not the United States Navy.



The Great White Fleet: 16 new (but now obsolete) battleships sent on a “Good Will” world cruise from Dec 1907 to February 1909. It’s real purpose was to match or exceed the distance the Russians sailed to their doom and arrive in Japan ready to fight to keep the Japanese from believing they could act with impunity in the Far East.



POLITE ADVERSARIES

The U.S. Great White Fleet arrived in Yokohama Japan ten months after leaving Norfolk VA having steamed over 33,000 nautical miles without any mechanical breakdowns.

It's return to Norfolk would take four months and cover over 14,000 nautical miles, again without break down.

The visit left Japan convinced the U.S. was the greatest threat to their interests. Planning, training and procurement from then on assumed a war with the United States.

The United States officers were of mixed opinions. Ens. Ray Spruance and Chester Nimitz (with the Asiatic Squadron), were impressed with the Japanese in general and Admiral Togo in particular. Ens. Bill Halsey saw the Japanese as plotting and a threat.

In 1910, the U.S. Navy war planners rated Japan as the primary threat to U.S. interests in the Pacific with Great Britain second, and primary in the Atlantic...

FUTURE ADVERSARIES

From about 1906 Japanese planners assumed the U.S. would be an adversary but not specifically why or how beyond for some reason the U.S. Navy would show up.

From 1910, the U.S. Navy planners assumed war would break out over the Philippines or, less likely, Guam.

Japan's plans assumed sooner or later the U.S. Navy would show up off Japan after a long crossing and far from its supplies (like the Russians) and the Japanese Fleet would then sortie and fight the decisive battle (ala Tsushima). This would evolve after WWI.

The U.S. knew the problem was getting to the Far East. They had only two bases in the Pacific: Guam and Hawaii, and neither were adequate to support the fleet for any length of time nor close enough to anywhere to be of tactical use. They would need to bring their supplies with them.

(There were similar problems with the Atlantic beyond the Caribbean, thus the ability to sustain a fight across the sea was hampered by the lack of bases to supply the ships.)

FUTURE ADVERSARIES

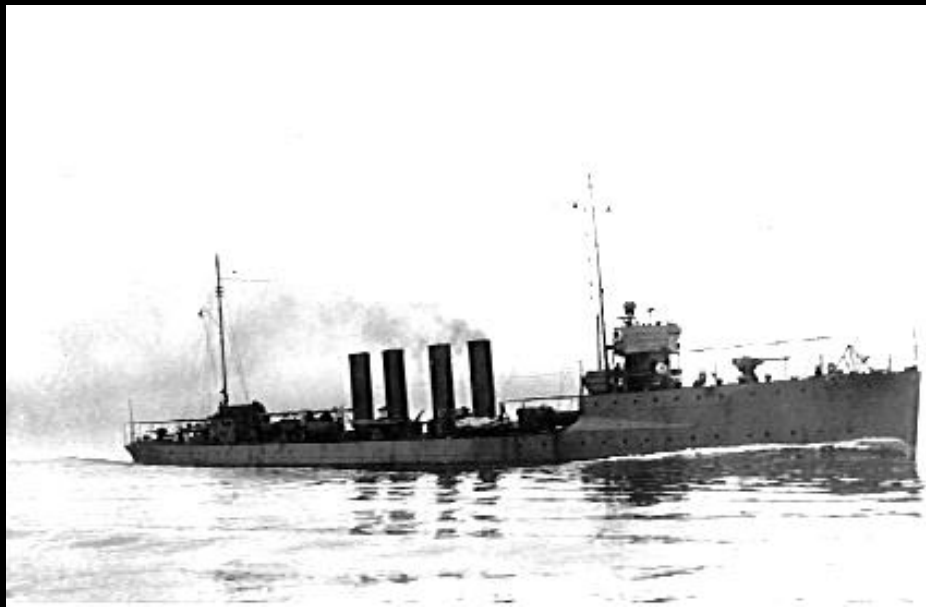
Early plans assumed either:

- The U.S. could seize bases ready for use, or**
- The U.S. would need the capability to remain at sea without bases.**

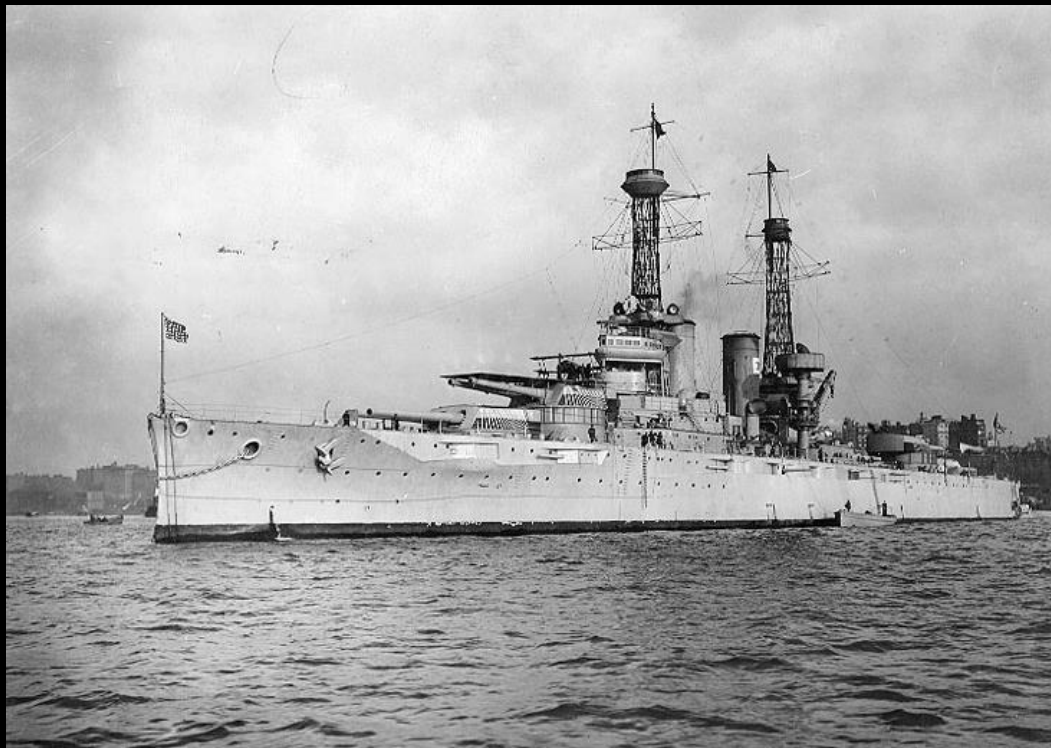
The latter was the preferred option but in 1910 the capability did not yet exist. It could be done in calm seas at a dead stop, but that was considered operationally useless. The Navy wanted an ability that could refuel and resupply underway at a speed of at least 12 knots without needing to slow down or stop.

This would be critical in ensuring destroyers could operated with the larger ships beyond their short fuel range from port.

No method proved practical while the ships still used coal for fuel so the first priority was to convert to oil. The first oil fired ships were the Paulding class destroyers (DD-22 – DD-42) which entered service beginning in 1910.

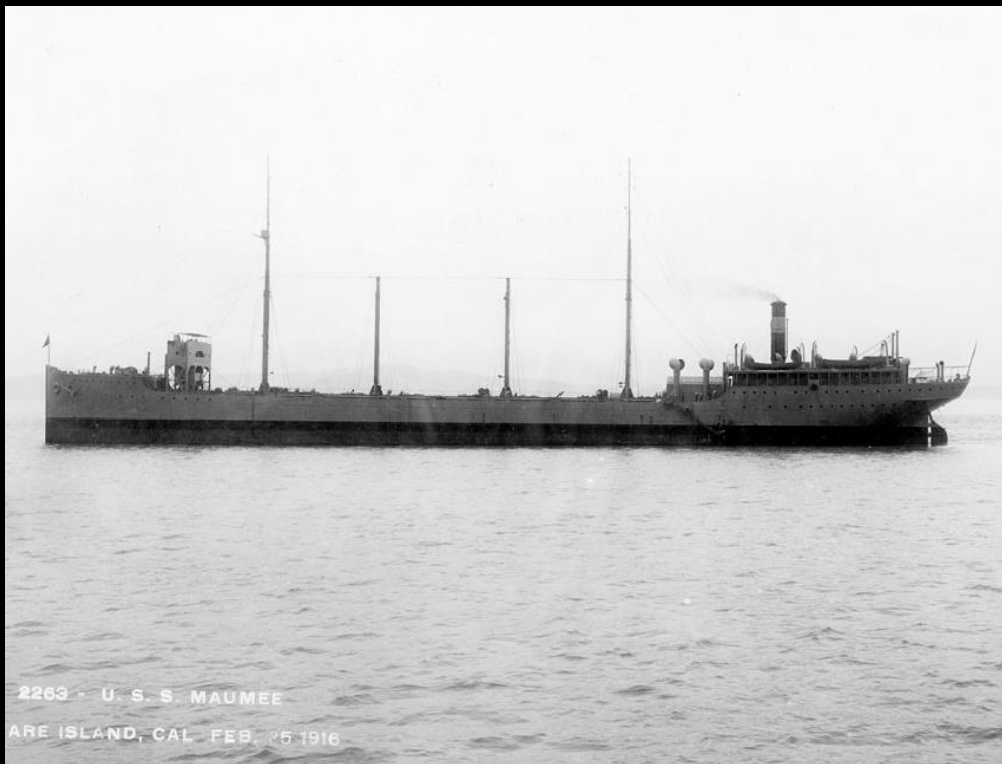


Top: A Paulding Class destroyer. In service from 1910 until 1919, these 20 ships were the first U.S. warships designed and built to run on oil instead of coal.

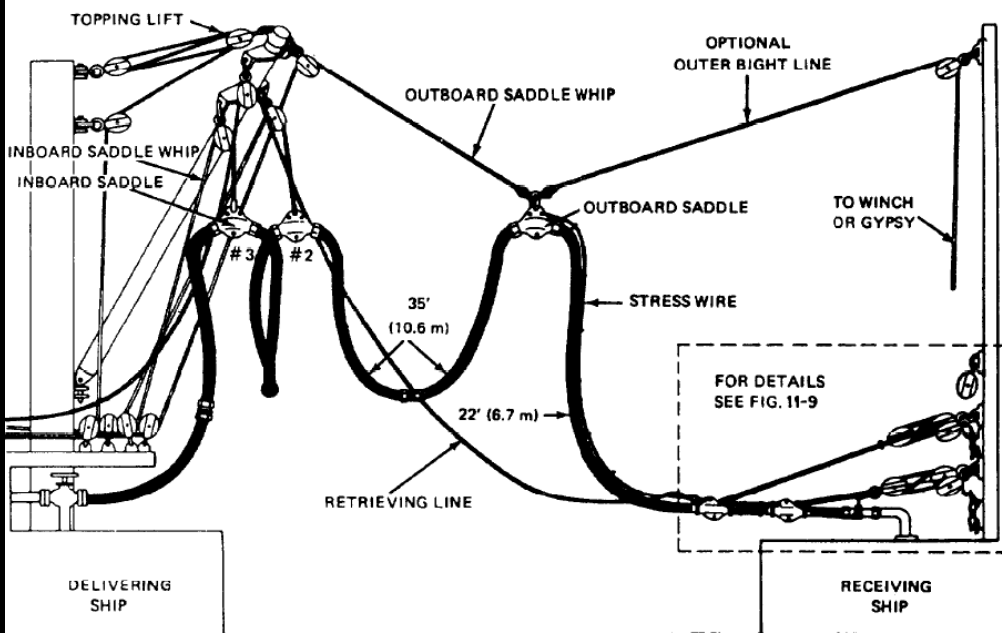


Left: USS Texas (BB-35) Commissioned in 1914, this was the last U.S. warship designed and built to run on coal. Its coal fired boilers were replaced with oil boilers in 1925.

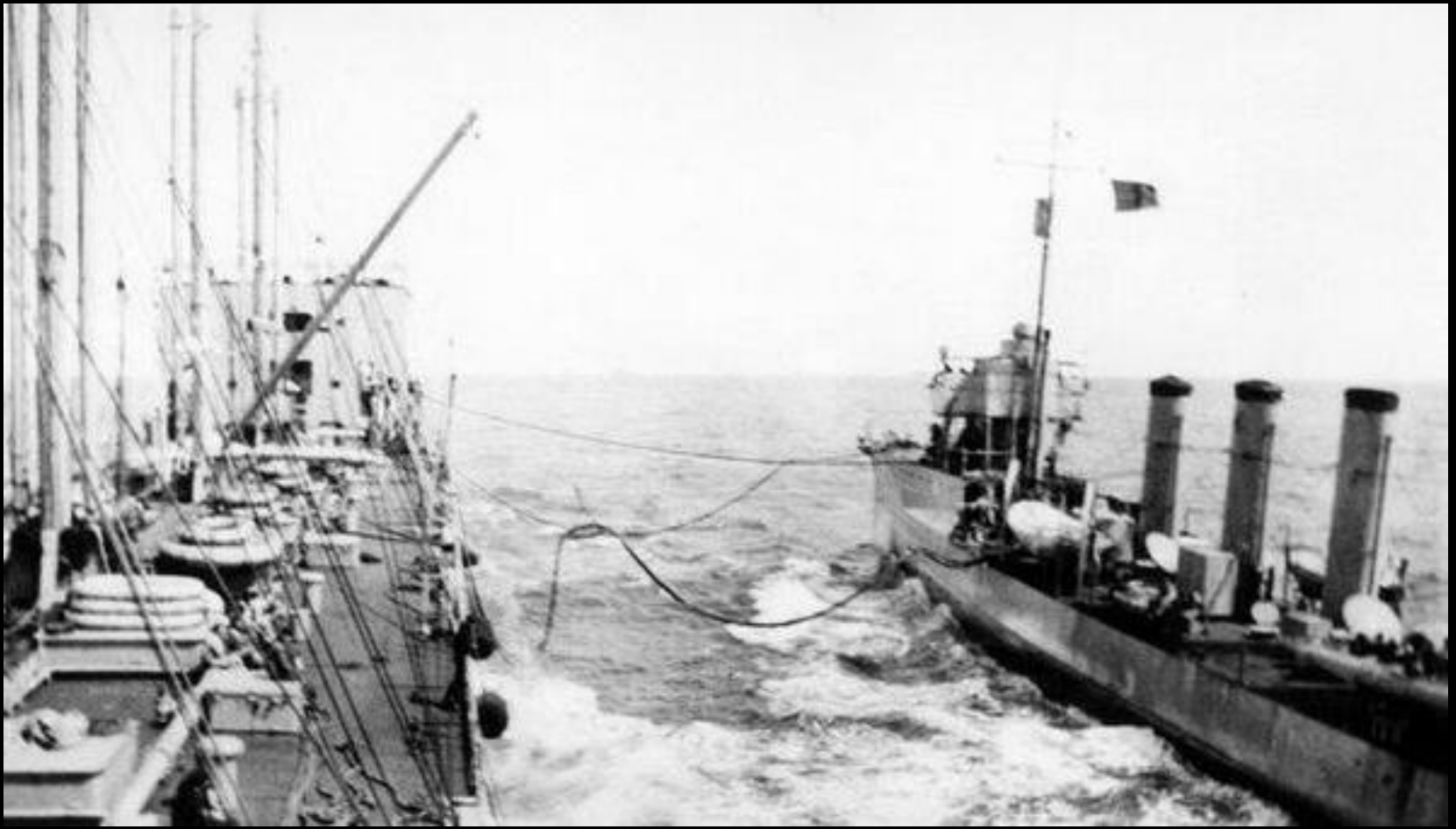
It is now a memorial at San Jacinto TX.



USS. Maumee (AO-2) was the second Fleet Oiler designed to fuel oil fired ships. It was also the first surface ship powered by diesel engines. It was commissioned in 1916. Its Chief Engineer was a LT who was the navy's expert on marine diesel technology. He was further tasked with developing a means to refuel destroyers at sea underway. (He did not design the system, but was asked to make it work both for the crew of the oiler and for the destroyers along side.)



His name was Chester Nimitz.



On April 6th, 1917, the USS Maumee engaged in the first operational refueling underway at sea when it refueled a squadron of destroyers in mid-Atlantic that were steaming to Queenstown (Cobh) Ireland for convoy escort duty. Without UNREP, the ships would have to refuel at Bermuda and the Azores, well south of the convoys and adding at least a week to the transit.

Until the late 1930's, while the U.S. Navy routinely refueled its "Small Boys" (destroyers and cruisers) at sea, they were reluctant to place an oiler alongside a larger ship (battleships and carriers). This was seen as a drawback.

In 1939, they asked a recently promoted Rear Admiral to determine whether battleships and carriers could be refueled at sea safely while underway like the smaller ships. They could.

The admiral's name was Chester Nimitz.



USS Hancock and USS Wisconsin refueling from USS Neches (AO-47). The Oiler allowed fleets to remain at sea and conduct operations for months at a time, only needing to enter port for major repairs. (As will be discussed) the lack of enough Oilers early in WWII was the most limiting factor to fleet operations.



Above: A Japanese destroyer refueling at sea during World War II.

This method did not work for battleships or aircraft carriers. They had to make it there and back on one tank of gas and could not remain at sea indefinitely. This would affect their naval strategy and war plans.

U.S. underway replenishment equipment and procedures remained classified into the 1970's. A U.S. task force could refuel without changing direction at speeds of up to 15 knots depending upon weather.

The Japanese and most navies used a less complicated and less risky method where the fuel hose was dragged behind the tanker to the ship to be fueled. This did not require specialized rigs.

It also meant the ships had to travel at low speeds and into the seas meaning it took much longer and could see the ships miles off course when done.



WORLD WAR I



WORLD WAR I PRELUDE

1902 Japan and Great Britain enter into a military alliance whereby each will support the other in the event either is attacked by a third party.

1904 Japan's attack on Russia at Port Arthur was not the sort of situation envisioned. Japan neither asked for British support nor did Britain offer such support.

While some of the destroyers and light cruisers in the Japanese Navy in 1904 were built in Japan, most all other ships were built in Europe or the U.S. All the battleships and all the newest cruisers (and most destroyers) were British built.

It was not in Japan's interests to unnecessarily antagonize the British.

WORLD WAR I PRELUDE

1908 Root-Takahira Agreement. Elihu Root (SecState under Roosevelt) and Kogoro Takahira (Japanese Ambassador to the U.S.)

Followed private discussions between Taft and the Japanese government regarding the situation in the Far East specifically U.S. annexation of the Philippines, Japan's interests in Korea and Manchuria and the situation in China.

Under this treaty, Japan recognized U.S. annexations of the Philippines and Hawaii.

The U.S. agreed to the Japanese annexation of Formosa and eventually Korea (which occurred in 1910). The U.S recognized Japan's interests in Manchuria in exchange for Japanese acceptance of Open Door trade policy in the rest of China.

But, Japan agreed upon strict emigration restrictions (not including Hawaii). This concession angered many Japanese.

WORLD WAR I PRELUDE



Japanese battleship Satsuma. It was the first capital ship (Battleship or similar) made in Japan. It was laid down 5 months before HMS Dreadnought but budget constraints arising from the costly Russo-Japanese War delayed construction. It entered service in 1910 and was sunk as an exercise target by the Japanese in the 1920's.

WORLD WAR I PRELUDE



Japanese Kongo Class Battlecruiser. The lead ship, commissioned in 1913, was the last built overseas. The three sister ships: Hiei, Kirishima and Haruna were built in Japan. Battlecruisers were as heavily armed as any battleship, but were designed to be several knots faster which was achieved by reducing the armor.

WORLD WAR I PRELUDE



**Taisho Empereor (Yoshihito)
1879-1926**

Only son of Emperor Meiji to survive infancy, and only barely. Born in poor health, he suffered from cerebral meningitis before he was three months old leaving him in poor physical and mental health for the rest of his life.

“Taisho” means “great righteousness.”

He succeeded his father upon his father’s death in 1912.

Until 1921 (when his son was named Regent), he was little involved in government. During this period, political power shifted from the Imperial Court to the Diet and, although not required under their constitution, for a time the Ministers listened to the elected officials.

WORLD WAR I PRELUDE

Specifically, within months of the new reign, the Prime Minister sought to cut the military budgets of the Army and Navy. While neither service was pleased, the War Minister resigned (at the request of the Army Chief of Staff) and no serving Army officer agreed to service a government under Kinmochi Saionji (who was generally highly regarded), causing the government to fail.

This established a disturbing precedent, namely that the military in general and the Army in particular could dictate terms to the government and force its resignation if it refused.

The new (actually third term) Prime Minister was an Army general Taro Katsura. His appointment in light of what the Army had done politically was so unpopular that he was forced to resign less than two months later. He was replaced by a known progressive: Admiral Gonohyoe Yamamoto.

No surprise that soon after the Navy was the beneficiary of a generous spending bill aimed at building more battleships.

WORLD WAR I PRELUDE

Yamamoto's government was to fall in the wake of an arms scandal, specifically bribery and corruption by European contractors for the Navy. The dispute broke when a German company (Siemens) was undercut by a British company (Vickers) and cried foul.

It was a case of the pot calling the kettle black, the result was neither got contracts and the Japanese government was forced to resign.

Yamamoto did, however briefly, change the rules and barred serving officers from attaining the posts as War and Navy Minister that precluded the military from forcing the government to do its bidding.



WORLD WAR I PRELUDE

The events of the summer of 1914 had little immediate impact in the Far East.

While the West became distracted with the events following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand (heir to the Austrian throne) in Sarajevo (June 28th, 1914), in the Far East the situation in China was more immediate.

China had been beset with internal problems for decades (namely famine, drugs and rebellion).

For decades, the Qing had managed (barely) to contain the problems. This began to unravel following the Sino-Japanese War.

Added to it was the growing knowledge that the Qing Emperor was emperor in name only, that he was but a puppet of Dowager Cixi, a mere concubine of a former emperor (who she allegedly had assassinated).

The Army became loyal to its generals and the generals to themselves.

WORLD WAR I PRELUDE

The failed Boxer Rebellions (an anti-foreigner uprising) had proven to be a boon to the then fledgling democracy movement among western educated Chinese notably Sun Yat-sen.

Japan considered chaos in China a boon to its interests and had covertly provided support to various factions opposed to the Qing.

In 1911, the Xinhai rebellion broke out throughout China. It was somewhat spontaneous in that no single group was in charge. Southern China proclaimed a republic in early 1912. Northern China was effectively under military control and the Army forced the abdication of the child Emperor and effective imprisonment of the Qing court in the imperial palace.

The republicans were then forced to cut a deal with the Army wherein the Army remained in control of the country. (Gen. Yuan Shikai as President vice “popularly elected” Sun Yat-Sen.)

In chaos, Japan saw opportunity... Then war broke out in Europe.

WORLD WAR I

June 28, 1914: Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Heir of the Austro-Hungarian throne is assassinated in Sarajevo by Serbian nationalists.

July 28, 1914: Austria declares war on Serbia. Russia begins mobilization the next day.

August 1, 1914: Germany declares war on Russia.

August 4, 1914: Germany invades Belgium as part of its long standing war plan to defeat the Franco-Russian alliance.

Britain declares war on Germany twelve hours later.

August 7, 1914: The British Ambassador to Japan offers Japan a deal to come into the war as an ally.

(The military alliance alone was not enough since Germany had not attacked Britain.)

WORLD WAR I

THE DEAL:

Japan would declare war on Germany.

Japan would have free reign to deal with Germany (and her allies) in the Pacific.

Upon final defeat of Germany, Britain would recognize Japanese control over all formerly German territory north of the equator. The British Empire would gain control of such former possessions south of the equator.

This included the German concession (from the Boxer Rebellion) in Shangdong Province (which Japan had briefly invaded during the Sino-Japanese War.)

Britain would not interfere with Japan in China. This included recognizing that Manchuria would be within Japan's sphere of influence.

WORLD WAR I

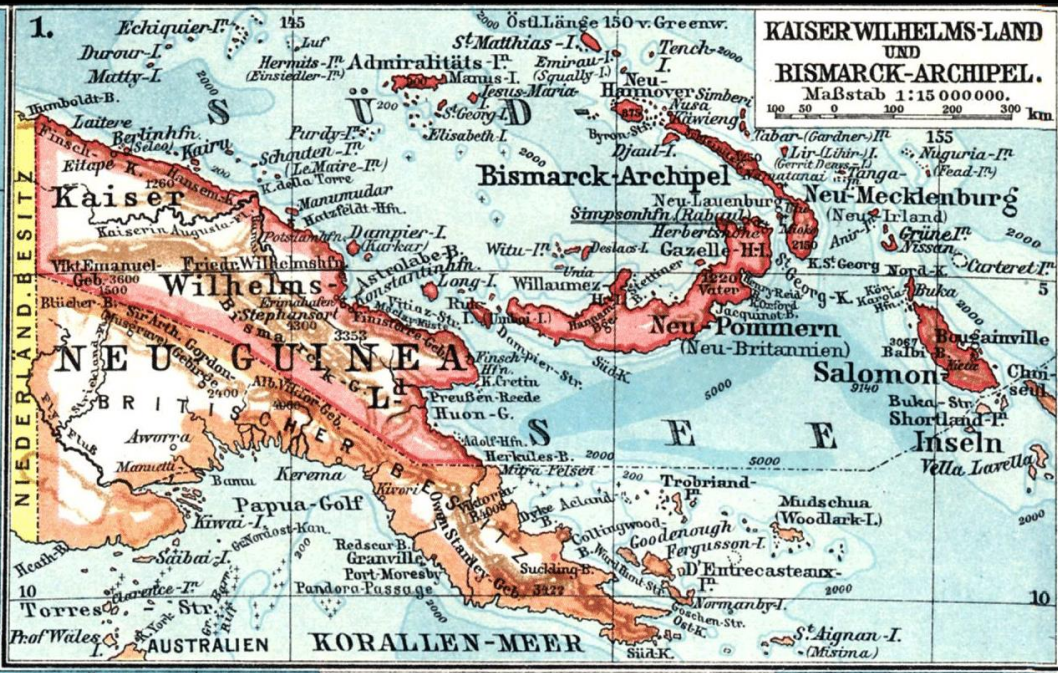
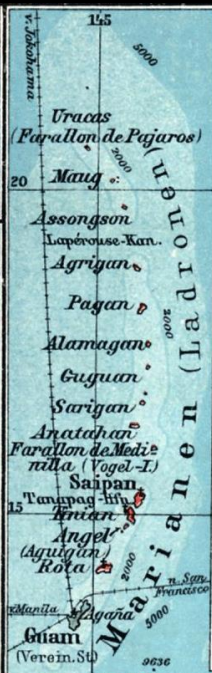
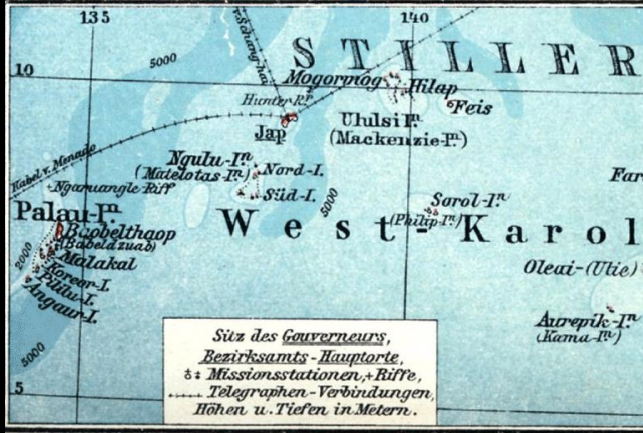
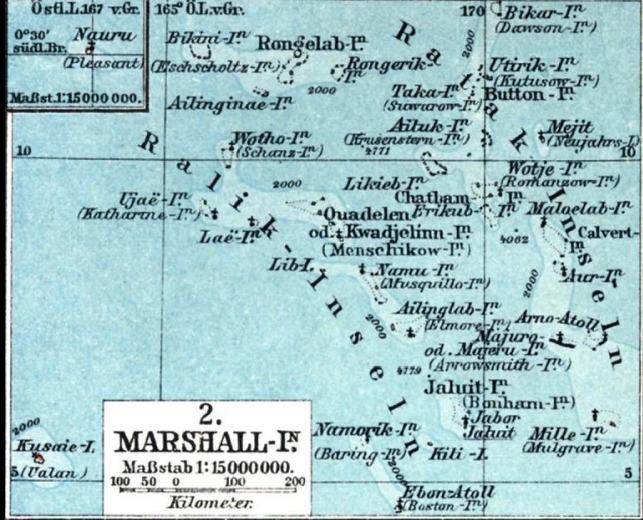


Map depicts approximate zones of influence in China by 1914.

Degree of influence varied. Japan was the defacto government in its exclusive zones as was Germany. France and Britain merely controlled trade.

The United States was bitterly opposed to any such zones. It had supported intervention during the Boxer Rebellion (1900), but enunciated an Open Door Policy, where trade with China would be open to all and not under control of any one power in any one location. The policy was generally ignored.

WORLD WAR I



WORLD WAR I

Japan accepted the British offer almost immediately

It sent an ultimatum to Germany August 14th, 1914 (basically telling Germany to get out of the Pacific).

It declared war on Germany August 23rd, 1914 when Germany failed to respond. At the time, the Austrian cruiser Keiserin Elisabeth was in Tsingtao (Qingdao) and the Japanese ordered it to leave. When it did not, Japan declared war on Austria on August 25th.

Japanese troops landed near the German garrison and naval port at Tsingtao on Sep. 2nd, 1914. German forces in the Pacific surrendered on Nov. 7th, 1914.

By then, the German Asiatic Squadron was far to the east raiding British shipping off Chile. (It had just destroyed a British squadron at the Battle of Coronel off Chile on Nov. 1st and would in turn be destroyed by another British squadron off the Falkland Islands on December 8th.)

WORLD WAR I

By November 9th, 1914 (with the sinking of the German cruiser Emden by the Australians), the war in the Pacific was over. Japanese ships would serve in the Mediterranean later as convoy escorts.

In January 1914, Japan submitted an ultimatum to China consisting of 21 demands or else Japan would invade. Generally, the demands required:

- That China effectively cede all interest in Manchuria to Japan,**
- That mining operations in central China, deeply in debt to Japan be turned over to Japan,**
- That China effectively cede Shandong to Japan.**
- That China would offer no new trade concessions to the European Powers and,**
- That Japan be given control over the Chinese economy and trade.**

WORLD WAR I

Britain and the United States objected but only to the final points regarding control of the Chinese economy and trade. China also refused to accept that demand. Under pressure from Britain, Japan dropped this demand and China signed the agreement.

The United States, however, was unsatisfied and began negotiations to “clarify” the terms.

As originally submitted, even without the control of economy and trade the U.S. felt the terms interfered with their own trade interests and violated their stated “Open Door” policy.

Lansing-Ishii Agreement (Nov. 2nd 1917). SecState Robert Lansing and Special Envoy Kikujiro Ishii signed an agreement generally continuing the Open Door policy in China except with respect to Shandong and Manchuria.

The U.S. effectively recognized these as Japanese protectorates.

WORLD WAR I

The Lansing-Ishii Agreement was seen as an insult by many Japanese. The terms were not as the Agreement affirmed what it had gained already as an ally of the British.

The fact they had to negotiate it at all with the U.S. was seen as insulting. In their view had they been Europeans such negotiations would never have been necessary.

The counter-argument would be that this Agreement flew in the face of some of Wilson's Fourteen Points. It was a secret agreement both in negotiation and in some of its terms. It violated the concept of self determination as the Japanese concessions in China and Manchuria would not have that right.

And yet Wilson backed the Japanese on these points at the Paris Armistice Talks in 1918-1919 and the concessions made to Japan were incorporated in the final Versailles Treaty.

WORLD WAR I

In November 1917, the Bolsheviks overthrew the Russian Tsar.

Churchill wanted to intervene to ensure Russia stayed in the war. Japan wanted to intervene to keep the communists out of eastern Russia.

Wilson would not agree except to the extent that forces deployed solely to protect munitions that had been sent to Russia to fight Germany.

The Czechs made things far more complicated.

A major Czech force had fought for Russia against the Central Powers with the added goal of attaining Czech independence. When the Bolsheviks took power, the Czech legion revolted and seized control of the Trans-siberian railway from the Urals to the Pacific. Eventually, the allies intervened in Siberia in part to keep it free of Communists but also to ensure the repatriation of the Czech legion.

The bulk of this intervention – over 70,000 troops – were Japanese. Their goal was to set up a separate (ideally pro-Japanese) Russian state in eastern Siberia to keep the Reds as far away as possible.

WORLD WAR I

The Trans-Siberian Railroad

- Trans-Siberian Line via China
- Southern Branch through Moscow
- Amur Line
- Ussuri Line



WORLD WAR I



Japan was not the only country to send troops into Siberia in early 1918. The Canadians, French (Indochina – Vietnam), British and United States also sent in troops. The U.S. contingent was the second largest at 8,000 men. They stayed until 1920. Japan stayed until they “voluntarily” withdrew in 1922.

Above: U.S. Troops arriving in Vladivostok, August 1918.

Right: Same. The troops lining the street are Japanese soldiers and sailors.



The Versailles Treaty, June 28th 1919

In the negotiations, when President Wilson pushed for self-determination – one of his 14 points which would allow local populations to affirm or establish their nations by popular vote – Britain and France objected, as such a provision threatened their Empires.

The U.S. was hostile to the maintenance of Empire.

Japan offered to support the U.S. on this provision provided that Wilson supported a human rights amendment that would require all signatories to provide equal protection of the law to all persons regardless of ethnicity or religion.

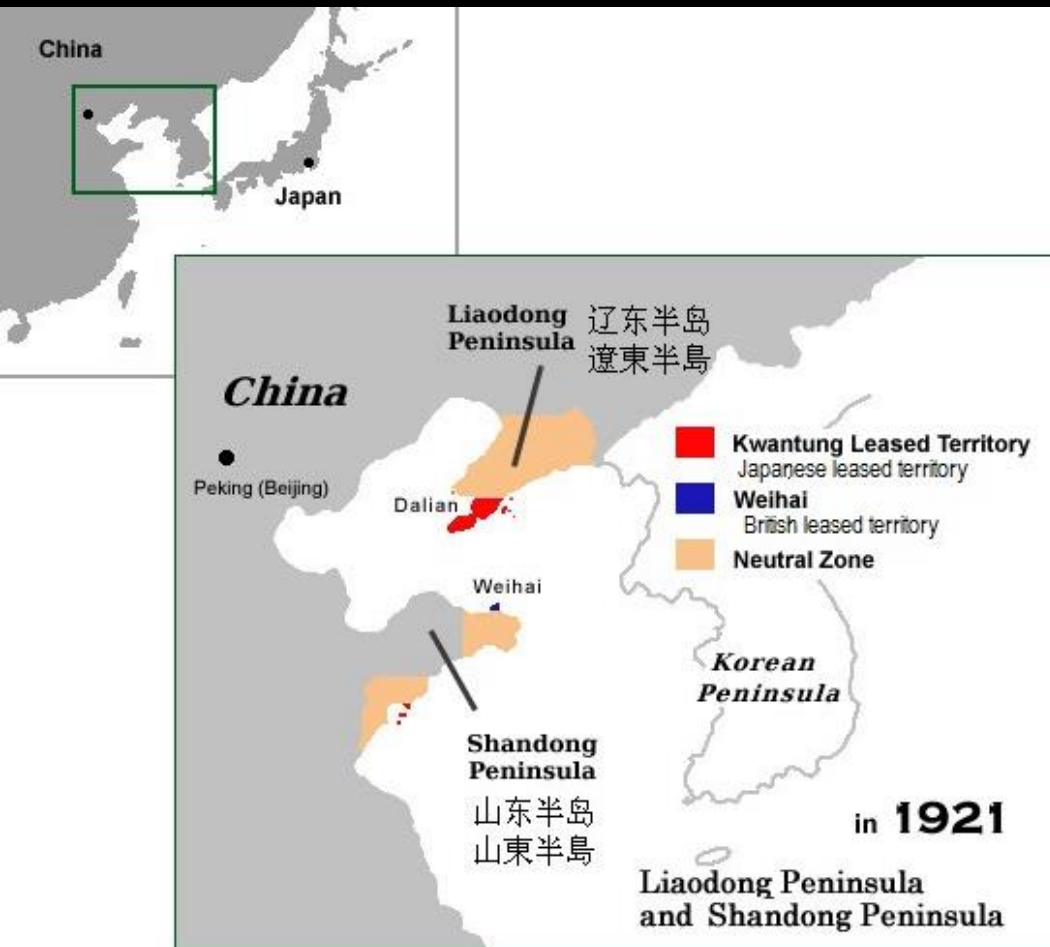
Wilson chose to forget he ever thought of self-determination. (A human rights provision would necessarily extend to minorities in the United States which meant blacks and in addition to guaranteeing failure in the Senate on that point alone, Wilson was personally not in favor of such a situation.)

This was seen as further proof that America was against Japan.

The Versailles Treaty, June 28th 1919

And yet America had supported its 1917 Agreement regarding Japan's gains in the Far East.

Japan was to have defacto protectorates and administrative control over Manchuria and Shandong with leaseholds on the Liaodong Peninsula. It also gained the right to maintain, operate and defend the railroads in Manchuria including the former Russian Manchurian spur of the Trans-Siberian Railroad.





THE WASHINGTON NAVAL CONFERENCE

In 1916, the Wilson Administration publically sought to mediate the dispute between the warring powers in Europe (who at best politely refused). The U.S. was allegedly neutral.

(It was already unofficially a major supplier of war material. It was only neutral in that it would sell to anyone who had the cash to buy and the means to carry away the goods which effectively meant it was supplying the Allies.)

While Wilson ran for re-election for having “kept us out of War,” in September at the request of his administration, Congress passed an amended Naval Act.

The Act called for the construction of 10 battleships, 6 battlecruisers, 30 submarines and 50 destroyers. (6 battleships, 273 destroyers and 78 submarines would be built.)

In 1918 the Act was amended to add 12 battleships and 16 battlecruisers which would have given the U.S. the largest navy in the world by 1925.

WASHINGTON NAVAL CONFERENCE

Actual Dreadnaught Types Constructed 1906 - 1923

	Japan	Britain	Germany	U.S.
1906	*	1 BB	*	*
1908	*	2 CC	*	*
1909	*	4 BB, 1 CC	2 BB	*
1910	1 BB	2 BB	2 BB, 1 CC	4 BB
1911	1 BB	3 BB, 2 CC	3 BB, 1 CC	2 BB
1912	2 BB	5 BB, 4 CC	3 BB, 1 CC	2 BB
1913	1 CC	3 BB, 2 CC	3 BB, 1 CC	*
1914	1 CC	6 BB, 1 CC	4 BB, 1 CC	2 BB
1915	1 BB, 2CC	4 BB	1 CC	*
1916	*	6 BB, 4 CC	1 BB	4 BB
1917	2 BB	1 BB	1 BB, 1 CC	1 BB
1918	1 BB	1 BB	*	1 BB
1919	*	*	*	1 BB
1920	1 BB	1 CC	*	1 BB
1921	1 BB	*	*	2 BB
1923	*	*	*	2 BB
	10/4	36/17	19/7	22/0

Effect of the 1916, 1918 Navy Bills

	Japan	Britain	U.S.
1906-18	8 BB, 4 CC 1 BB sunk (accident)	36 BB, 18 CC 2 BB sunk (war/accident) 3 CC sunk (war)	16 BB
1918	7 BB, 4 CC	34 BB, 15 CC	16 BB
1919-22	+2 BB	+ 1 CC 13 BB scrapped 2 CC scrapped 1 CC being converted.	+4 BB
1922	9 BB, 4 CC	21 BB, 13 CC	20 BB
Building	2 BB, 4 CC	0 BB, 0 CC	9 BB, 6 CC
Proposed	6 BB, 4 CC	4 BB, 4 CC	13 BB, 16 CC
1930	17 BB, 12 CC	25 BB, 17 CC	42 BB, 22 CC

**“Let us build a Navy bigger than hers (Britain’s) and do what we please.”
President Woodrow Wilson 1916**

THE WASHINGTON NAVAL CONFERENCE

In 1920, Warren G. Harding was elected President and isolationist Republicans gained the majority in both Houses of Congress.

Britain was broke. So broke, in fact, that it would send many of its dreadnoughts to the scrapper as it could no longer afford to maintain, operate or man them.

Japan, while not broke, was also not as flush with cash as the United States and could not truly afford a costly naval arms race. But neither were they truly willing not to build at all.

The British recommended a multi-national conference on naval arm limitations. The United States agreed. The proposed construction program would cost a substantial amount and if one had a large navy, they might be inclined to use it and the current mood was withdrawal from world affairs.

It should be noted the U.S. Navy was not ecstatic.

THE WASHINGTON NAVAL CONFERENCE

Britain's Position: Britain needed to avoid the cost of a second naval arms race (the first had been with Germany and had become a political liability in the end.) But, it would not cut costs if the global situation did not allow it to do so. It wanted a navy that could defend the Empire and basically wanted assurances that:

The U.S. would not be a threat.

The Royal Navy would be large enough to defend its Pacific interests against Japan.

No other power would have a Navy that threatened British interests. (This meant Italy and France in the Mediterranean.)

It further hoped to keep HMS Hood – a brand new battlecruiser and to be allowed to convert some of their battlecruisers to aircraft carriers.

THE WASHINGTON NAVAL CONFERENCE

Japan's Position: Japanese naval doctrine and war plans were based upon having a Navy 70% of the capability of the U.S. Navy. It calculated that it could win a naval war with the U.S. under such circumstances by defeating the divided U.S. Fleet in detail as the U.S. Fleet was divided between the Atlantic and Pacific.

It had already scrapped three outdated Dreadnought type Battleships and had converted a fourth into a target ship. It did not want to scrap any others and would prefer to complete the ships then under construction.

The Japanese would grudgingly accept a 60% capability with respect to the United States Navy, but would argue strenuously that its defense had to take other navies into account.

The French: Naturally they had an opinion. They wanted to be allowed a navy larger than Japan's.

THE WASHINGTON NAVAL CONFERENCE

The U.S. Position: It was completely willing to scrap its remaining Pre-Dreadnought Battleships (the Great White Fleet), as well as its four oldest Dreadnaught types as they were under-gunned in the Navy's opinion. (12" main guns vs. 14" to 16" in later classes). It was less willing to scrap newer Dreadnought types or its new class of battlecruisers but would if the numbers worked in its favor.

It would accept parity with the British.

It would demand limiting the Japanese to ½ the size of the U.S. Fleet but would accept a Japanese fleet 60% of its size.

(U.S. war plans envisioned ultimately a war of attrition against the Japanese with reliance upon new construction to tip any balance in favor of the U.S.)

THE WASHINGTON NAVAL CONFERENCE

The first point agreed upon was definitions.

Prior to the conference:

“Battleship” meant the old term ship of the line of battle meaning ships that could fight any other ship.

“Dreadnought” applied to most “Battleships” built after 1906 and meant one with several large caliber gun turrets (11” or greater although only the Germans deployed a Dreadnought with less than 12” guns.)

“Battlecruisers” were ships with the same guns as “Dreadnoughts” but were designed for higher speed and had far less armor protection. ADM Jackie Fisher (RN) who came up with the idea stated they were meant to outfight anything smaller and outrun anything else.

THE WASHINGTON NAVAL CONFERENCE

The distinction was not used at the Conference. They classified any ship with guns of 12" in caliber or greater as a "Capital Ship" subject to regulation. Alternatively, they used the term "Battleship."

They ultimately agreed on limits based on standard tons: meaning the displacement of a ship without ammunition. (With ammunition is Full Load.) With the exception of the HMS Hood that had just been commissioned and displaced 41,000 tons, no battleship could be built, completed or retained in excess of 36,000 tons.

They divined the 5:5:3:1.75:1.75 ratio for total number. It would not matter how many battleships any nation had provided that none were greater than 35,000 tons in displacement and the total tonnage of all battleships combined did not exceed:

**525,000 tons for the British and U.S. Navies,
315,000 tons for the Japanese Navy, and
175,000 tons for the French and Italian Navies.**

THE WASHINGTON NAVAL CONFERENCE

At the time of the Naval Conference, the Dreadnought type battleships and battlecruisers of the principal powers stood thusly:

Great Britain: 952,300 tons in service.
22,200 in reserve.
974,500 tons total – 449,500 tons over limit.

United States: 536,000 tons in service.
3 32,600 ton and 6 43,200 ton BB under construction, and
6 44,600 ton CC under construction.
624,600 total tons under construction.
1,160,600 tons total – 635,600 tons over limit.

Japan: 383,700 tons in service.
2 40,000 ton BB under construction, and
4 46,700 ton CC under construction.
266,800 total tons under construction.
650,500 tons total – 335,500 tons over limit.

THE WASHINGTON NAVAL CONFERENCE

The United States was allowed to complete two battleships then under construction (USS Colorado and USS West Virginia).

Britain would be allowed to build two new battleships subject to the treaty 36,000 ton limits. (HMS Nelson and HMS Rodney)

In both cases, existing Dreadnaught type ships had to be scrapped.

Japan: 2 BB (39,500 tons) scrapped.

1 BB (21,400 tons) disarmed and designated a target ship.

1 BB under construction (39,000 tons) scrapped.

1 BB under construction (39,000 tons) converted to CV.

3 CC under construction (138,000 tons) scrapped.

1 CC under construction (46,000 tons) converted to CV.

322,900 tons eliminated. 12,600 tons over limit.

10 older (“predreadnought type) battleships were also scrapped. Mikasa, Admiral Togo’s flagship at Tsushima was allowed to be kept as a memorial.

THE WASHINGTON NAVAL CONFERENCE

U.S. 4 BB (72,400 tons) scrapped.
7 BB under construction (291,800 tons) scrapped.
4 CC under construction (178,600 tons) scrapped.
2 CC under construction (89,200 tons) converted to CV.

2 BB under construction (65,200 tons) completed.

566,800 tons eliminated. 68,800 tons over limit.

15 older pre-dreadnought type battleships were also scrapped.

U.K. 10 BB (227,500) scrapped.
3 CC (84,000 tons) scrapped.
2 CC (45,100 tons) converted to CV.

356,600 tons eliminated. 92,900 tons over limit.

10 older pre-dreadnought type battleships were also scrapped.

THE WASHINGTON NAVAL CONFERENCE

The U.S. called for similar restrictions on smaller warships (cruisers and destroyers) but the parties would not agree to a limit on aggregate tonnage or a ratio of tonnage between nations.

The British, instead, suggested a qualitative limit per ship. Cruisers would be limited to no more than 10,000 tons displacement and armed with guns not greater than 8” caliber.

There was no limit on destroyers.

The British wanted to outlaw the submarine given their experiences with unrestricted submarine warfare in World War I. No one else would agree so no restrictions were imposed.

THE WASHINGTON NAVAL CONFERENCE

The fact that in the end all three powers were over their limit was not addressed until the London Naval Conference of 1930. After that, the U.S. had to eliminate two more battleships and the British 4 battleships and a battlecruiser.

The parties agreed to a 10 year ban on new battleship construction (with the exception of the HMS Nelson and Rodney). However, the over all tonnage restriction would remain such that the new ships had to displace under 36,000 tons and older ships would need to be scrapped to allow the new ones to enter service.

As it turned out, no signatory built battleships until after all such treaties were abrogated in 1936.

Another provision barred all parties from fortifying their Pacific Islands. (The Japanese would ignore this provision). The result would prove disastrous for the U.S. in the early weeks of WWII.

The U.S. required Japan and Britain to end their alliance as a condition to any agreement.

WASHINGTON NAVAL CONFERENCE

Aircraft Carriers

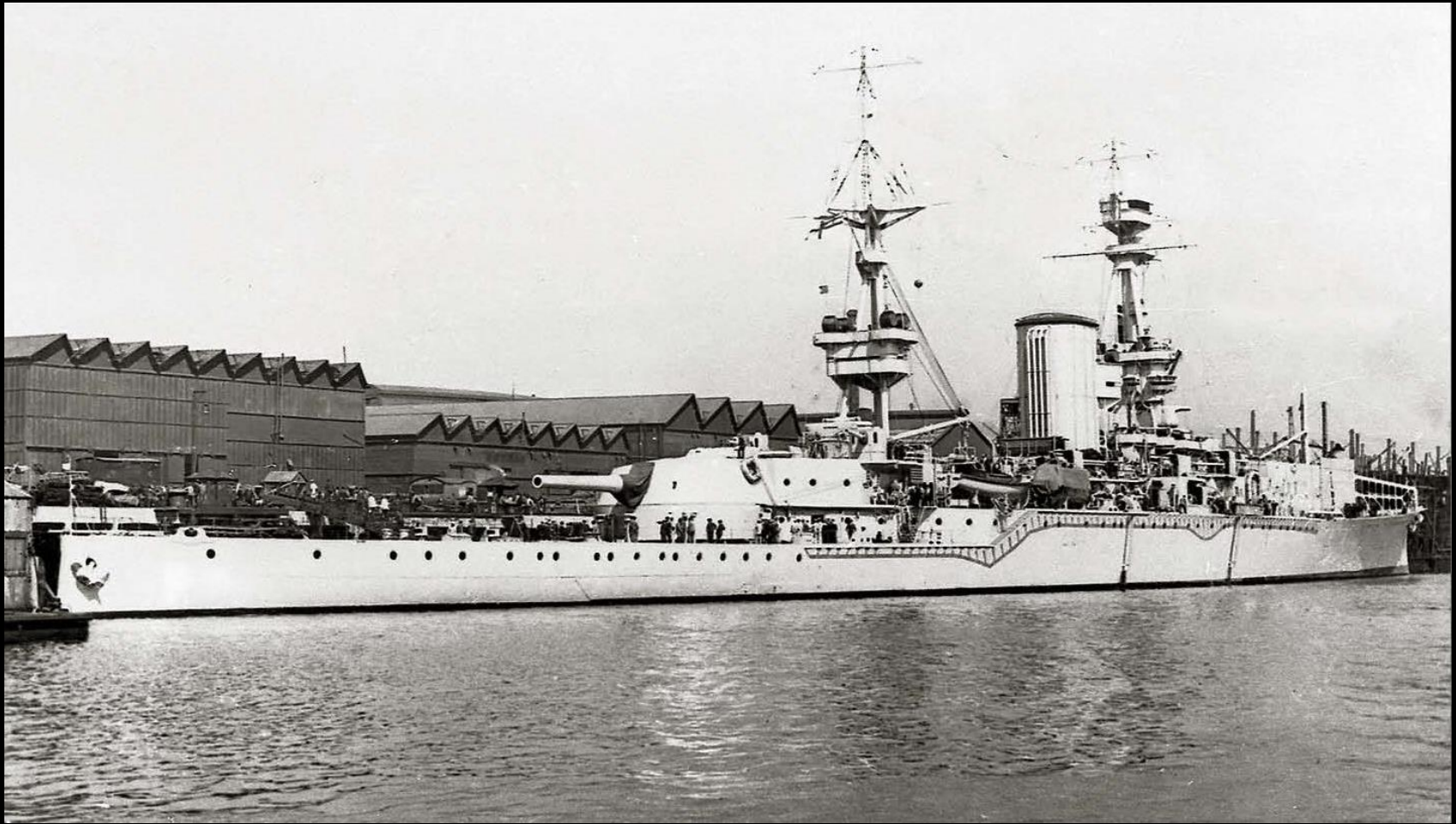
Aircraft Carriers were almost an afterthought. At the time of the treaty negotiations, there were only four in existence and only two had been in service for more than a month or two.



Left: HMS Arugus, the world's first true aircraft carrier. It was a converted ocean liner. It entered service in 1918.

WASHINGTON NAVAL CONFERENCE

Aircraft Carriers



HMS Furious 1917. This was a battlecruiser modified during construction and commissioned as above. The back end had an experimental 18" gun. The front end was a flight deck where Sopwith Pups were expected to take off and land. Turned out that was not a brilliant idea...

WASHINGTON NAVAL CONFERENCE



HMS Furious 1918. The ship was modified when it turned out landing on the front end was not good for pilots or planes. In this version, they land on the back end and take off on the front. How they get from the back to the front can be answered with the words “very carefully.” Again, not a bright idea.

WASHINGTON NAVAL CONFERENCE



HMS Furious 1924. While the Washington Conference was in session, Furious was in the shipyard for a major rethink and re-design. She rejoined the fleet in 1924 looking a little less dangerous as a mobile airfield for aviators.

WASHINGTON NAVAL CONFERENCE

Aircraft Carriers as of 1922

United States: 1 Aircraft Carrier in service – converted collier.

**Great Britain: 1 Aircraft Carrier in service – converted ocean liner
1 unfinished BB under conversion to aircraft carrier (CV).
1 partially converted CC under complete conversion to CV.
1 purpose built aircraft carrier under construction.**

Japan: 1 purpose built aircraft carrier in service.

France: 1 unfinished BB under conversion to aircraft carrier.

In 1922, Aircraft Carriers were considered little more than an experiment by the naval high commands. Aside from a few “crazy” visionaries, no one saw much use in such ships beyond providing scouting and spotting for the gunners of the battleships.

As such they were not considered Capital Ships subject to the tonnage restrictions. The HMS Argus (in service); HMS Furious, being further converted into a usable aircraft carrier, USS Langley and IJN Hosho (both recently commissioned) were considered purely experimental and not counted at all.

WASHINGTON NAVAL CONFERENCE

New Aircraft Carriers

The treaty placed no limit on overall numbers or tonnage.

An Aircraft Carrier was defined as any ship greater than 10,000 tons designed exclusively for launching and landing aircraft.

Carriers were restricted to no greater than 27,000 tons displacement. They could be armed with no greater than 10 8" guns.

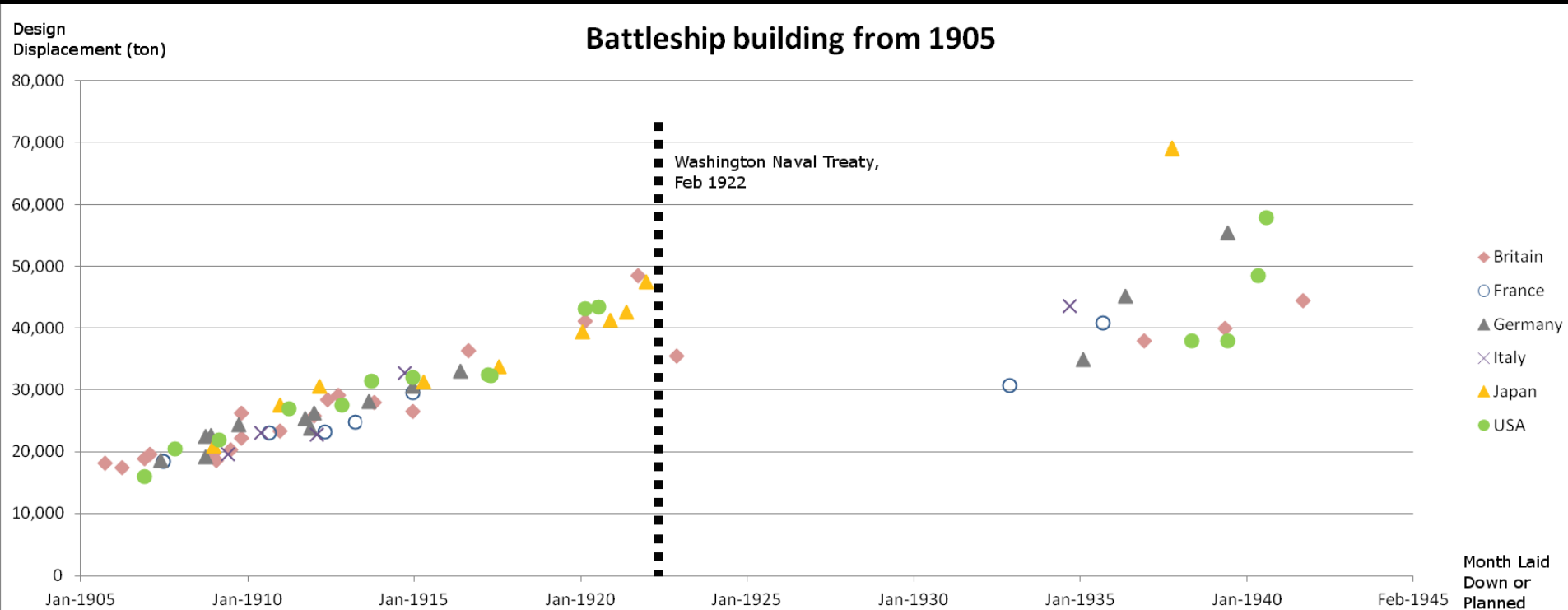
And exception allowed all signatories to convert 2 capital ship hulls in existence into aircraft carriers provided they did not displace more than 33,000 ton.

The United State would convert two of its Lexington Class battlecruisers into the aircraft carriers Lexington and Saratoga (37,000 tons)

Japan would convert 1 Tosa Class battleship and 1 Amagi class battlecruiser into the aircraft carriers Kaga (38,200 tons) and Akagi (36,500 tons)

Britain would convert 2 courageous class battlecruisers into the Aircraft Carriers Glorious and Courageous, a third being the Furious. (25,000 tons, 24,210 tons and 22,500 tons respectively).

WASHINGTON NAVAL CONFERENCE



The above graph demonstrates the immediate affect of the naval agreement. Most all of the ships planned after January 1920 were either never built or only as aircraft carrier conversion. The dot immediately after the treaty line is HMS Nelson and Rodney. Most of the later construction occurred after the Naval Treaty expired in 1936.

But it is also deceptive. First, in October 1929 the world economy collapsed. After that spending money on such ships only made sense in response to a threat.

WHAT ABOUT GERMANY?

The German Fleet size and composition was spelled out under Article V of the Versailles Treaty of 1919. Under that treaty, the Germany Navy was allowed:

6 Battleships of the Deutschland or “Lothringen Type” (pre-dreadnoughts).

6 Light Cruisers

12 Destroyers

12 Torpedo Boats.

No submarines were allowed and any ships in excess needed to be disarmed or scrapped.

Germany could only build replacement ships for those it retained and the only when such ships had been in service at least 20 years (battleships and cruisers) – 15 years for destroyers and torpedo boats.

Armored Ships (Heavy Cruisers) of no more than 10,000 tons.

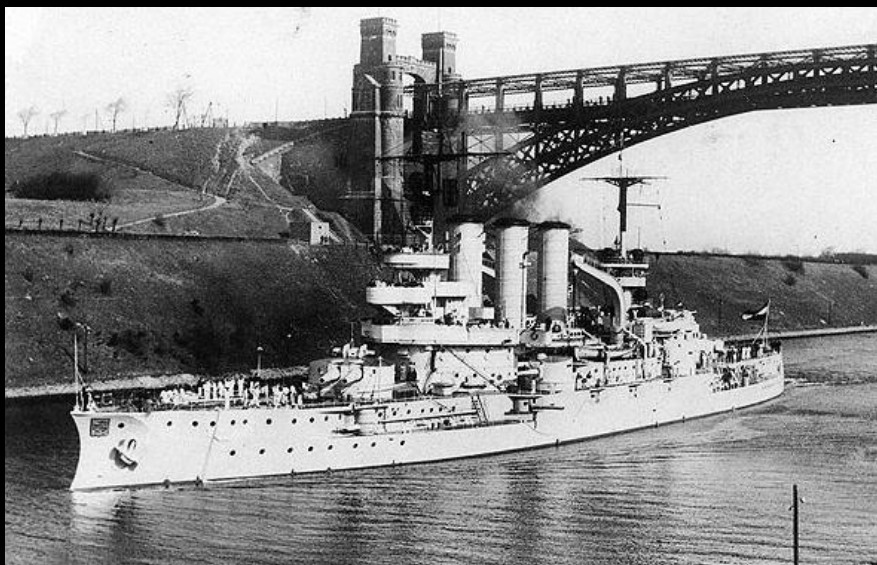
Light Cruisers limited to 6,000 tons.

Destroyers 800 tons.

Torpedo Boats 200 tons.

Germany was barred from having any military aircraft.

GERMANY

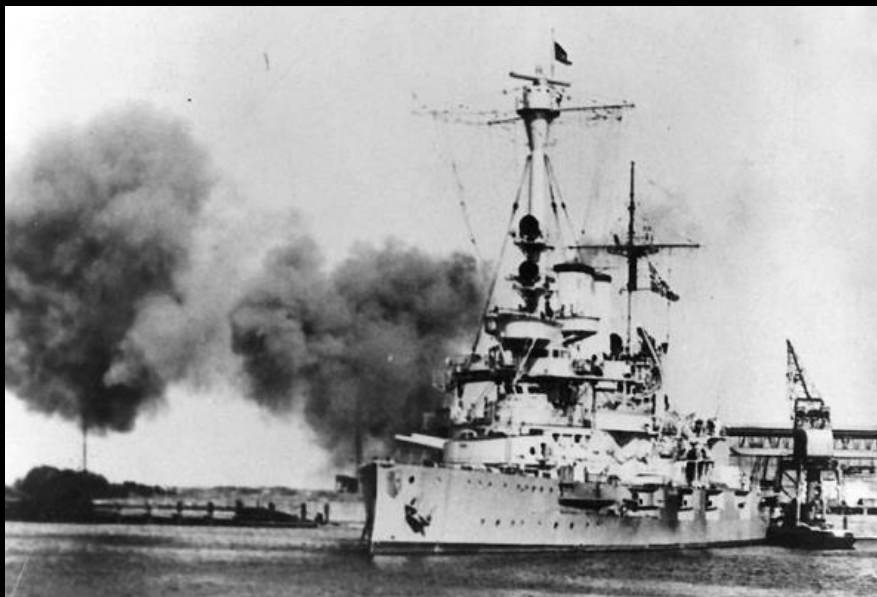


Germany retained:

3 Braunschweig Class Battleships
14,400 tons
2x2 11" main guns.

SMS Braunschweig (1904)
SMS Elsass (1904)
SMS Hessen (1905)

All three were retired around 1930



3 Deutschland Class Battleships

SMS Hannover (1907)
SMS Schlesien (1908)
SMS Schleswig-Holstein (1908)
14,200 tons
2 x 2 11" main guns.

GERMANY



**Deutschland Class
Armored Cruiser
(Pocket Battleship).**

**3 Ships replacing 3
retired battleships
under the treaty.**

**Rated at 10,000 tons
(actually around
12,000).**

**Armed with 11" guns
(same as ships
retired.)**

**Laid down between
1929 and 1932**

**Commissioned
between 1933 and
1936.**

Construction on all three began before Hitler came to power. While ... shocking, they were technically in compliance with the restriction of the Versailles Treaty.

THE NINE POWER TREATY

Negotiated and signed by all the participants of the Naval Conference, this treaty effectively eviscerated Japanese gains in China since 1895.

Japan had to evacuate and de-militarize their concessions and Tsingtao and the Liaodong Peninsula.

Japan and all signatories had to respect Chinese sovereignty.

Japan retained the right to operate, maintain and defend the Manchurian railroads but could not send in military patrol or guards without notice and approval from the League of Nations.

JAPANESE REACTION

The Japanese civilian government considered the treaties a resounding success as it would improve its standing in the world community and significantly reduce their military budget. For the next several years, Japan would be an admired diplomatic leader in the League of Nations and the World.

To the military, the treaties were seen by some as an unmitigated disaster, a concession of defeat.

One group – often referred to as Internationalists – supported the treaties believing that no real harm had been done given that their rivals were just as stuck. This group was led by officers who often spoke English and had lived in the United States or Great Britain.

Another group – often referred to as nationalists – believed their civilian leadership and the appeasers in their ranks (the Internationalists) had betrayed the Emperor to the West. Most were officers with little or no contact with the West but significant experience in and scorn for China. At first, aside from espousing a return to tradition, they kept quiet.

Partly because at first the general Japanese public did not see the treaties as a betrayal.

JAPANESE REACTION

The nationalists became champions of “traditional” Japanese values such as reverence for the Emperor and the Bushido Code.

Reverence for the Emperor was a political construct of the Meiji Restoration. “Traditional” Japanese had little regard for their Emperors.

“Traditionally,” the Bushido Code was analogous to the Western Code of Chivalry or rules of etiquette, ideal standards of conduct that were respected but never followed with anything approaching the religious fervor the nationalists espoused.

The nationalists would revile prisoners of war in time (more as a result of the later brutal war in China than any other reason as the Chinese were no better with their Japanese prisoners – they killed most all of them too.)

But, the 1907 Hague Convention cited the Japanese treatment of their Russian POW’s in the Russo-Japanese War as an example of how a country should treat POW’s.

Likewise, the notion that failure means suicide was a perversion of long outlawed practices (Sepuku). Under the old custom a subordinate could not do so without orders or permission from a superior. The superior could only do so to avoid execution.

WAR PLANS

The notion of war plans – pre-arranged concepts on how a future war would be fought was a product of the late nineteenth century and the birth of General Staffs – staffs dedicated to such planning.

The General Staff was actually an idea of the U.S. Army as a result of their experience in the Civil War. However, given that at the time (1870's) the Army had no credible threats, was small and engaged in operations on the western frontier, it was not adopted. It was, however, adopted in Europe and from the Europeans in Japan.

The U.S. would begin to adopt similar staffs following the Spanish-American War.

War planners must always assume war is possible (otherwise they are rather pointless).

Thus, there always must be some threat of war or reason to go to war. The threat need not be predictive or even accurate as the purpose is to determine what would be needed to prevail.

Such plans are not binding on the war-fighter. They are tools used to determine what sort of fleet or army will be needed in the event of war.

WAR PLANS

In naval planning, the oracle in the 1920's was the works of Alfred Thayer Mahan. One might argue he was a war planner as his works were written to justify a modern ocean going fleet in the absence of an immediate threat. Oddly, though, it was the Japanese more than the Americans who took his word as gospel.

Mahan wrote that the goal of a navy is to gain and sustain sea control – effectively uncontested control of the sea. The most efficient means to this end was the decisive battle. (Note, this was efficient but not necessary.) Given that he was writing a history of the Royal Navy through the Napoleonic Wars, and that the naval war was won in an afternoon at Trafalgar, this is not surprising.

Trafalgar was one of the few truly decisive battles in naval history. Most battles were tactical draws that might have had strategic implications.

What made Mahan seem more relevant were the subsequent battles of Manila Bay, Santiago (Spanish-American War) and Tsushima (Russo-Japanese War).

The battles were decisive. They were also fought by a well trained, well armed and well prepared naval force against a poorly trained, poorly prepared and largely antiquated naval force.

The odds were not close to being even.

WAR PLANS

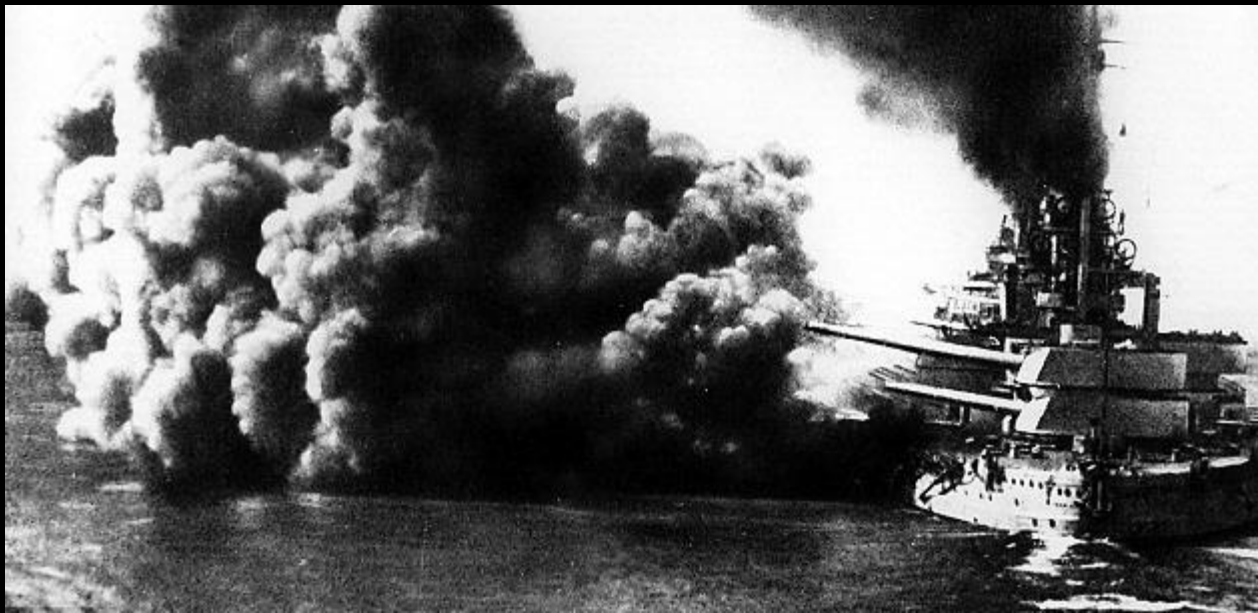
World War I saw the only modern naval battles between closely matched fleets.

The battles were far from the decisive battle Mahan advocated.

Moreover, tactical victory proved meaningless.

Jutland, the largest naval battle in history up to that point was a tactical and moral victory for the German High Seas Fleet.

Strategically, it was a crushing defeat for the German surface navy.



WAR PLANS

U.S. war plans were drawn up by the Army and Navy and then coordinated.

Through the late 1930's, they were color coded.

The two most detailed were War Plan Red (several versions) and War Plan Orange.

War Plan Red envisioned a war against the British Empire. (This plan fell into disuse by the 1930's.)

War Plan Orange envisioned a war against Japan in the Pacific.

In War Plan Orange, Japan was the aggressor and the Japanese had attacked the Philippines and, possibly, Guam. (Why? Who knew.)

U.S. forces in those places were to defend and await reinforcement and relief.

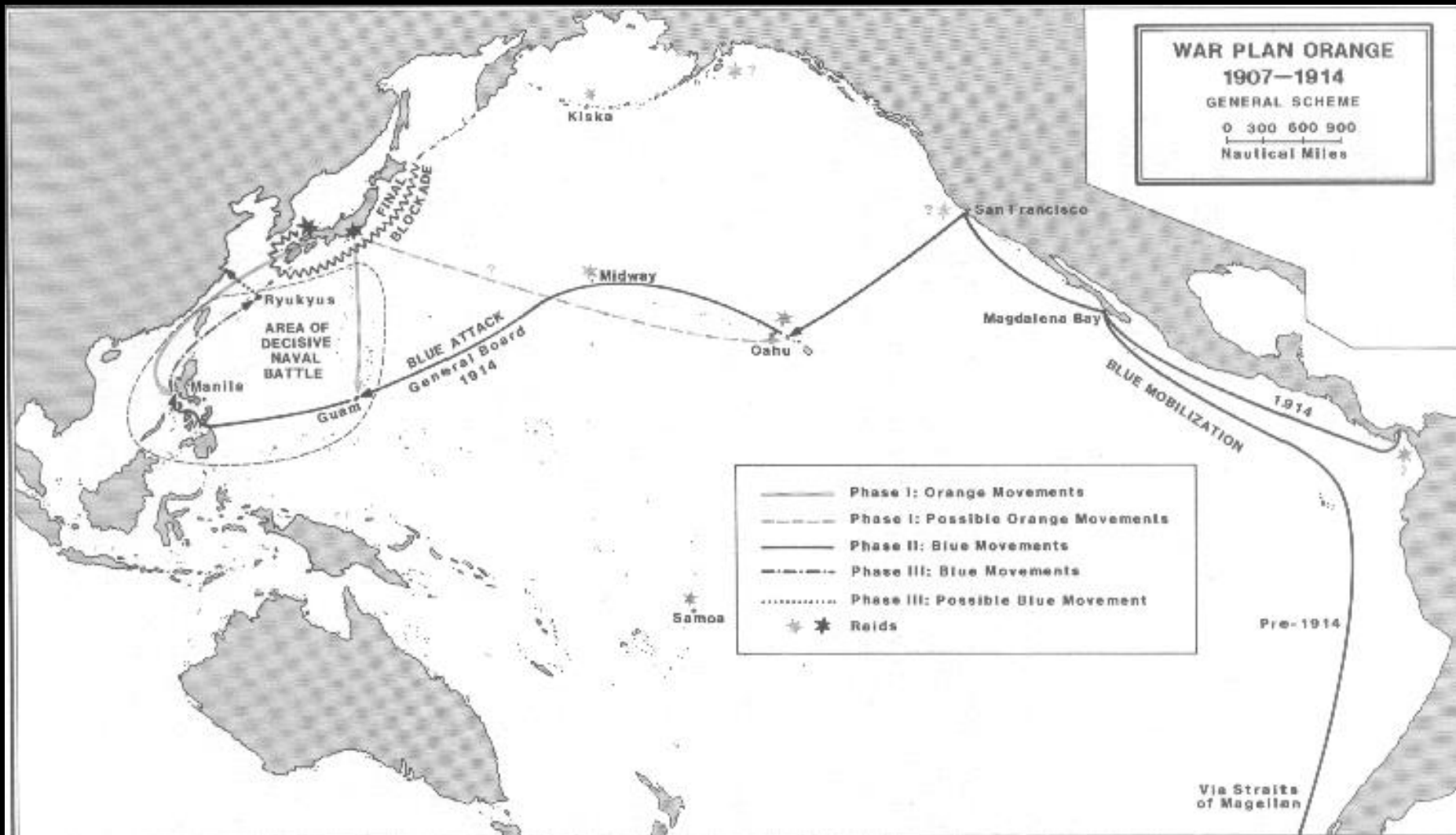
The Navy battle fleet would escort relief forces to the Far East.

“Decisive battle” would not be refused but it was not an objective.

Ultimately, war against Japan proper would be by blockade, not assault.

WAR PLANS

U.S. War Plan Orange (Japan)



WAR PLANS

Until 1940, Pearl Harbor was not a major naval installation. It was opened as a coaling station for the fleet in 1908. Before then, ships coaled from the port at Honolulu.

In 1916, after supply and maintenance shops were built, it became the headquarters for the 14th Naval District, responsible for naval activities regarding the U.S. Pacific island possessions. That would see a handful of light cruisers, destroyers and a repair ship based at Pearl.

In the 1920's, a major submarine base was built, one of two in the Pacific with the other at Cavite, Manila Bay in the Philippines.

The fleet visited Hawaii during exercises, but never stayed long and more often than not anchored off the coast of Maui.

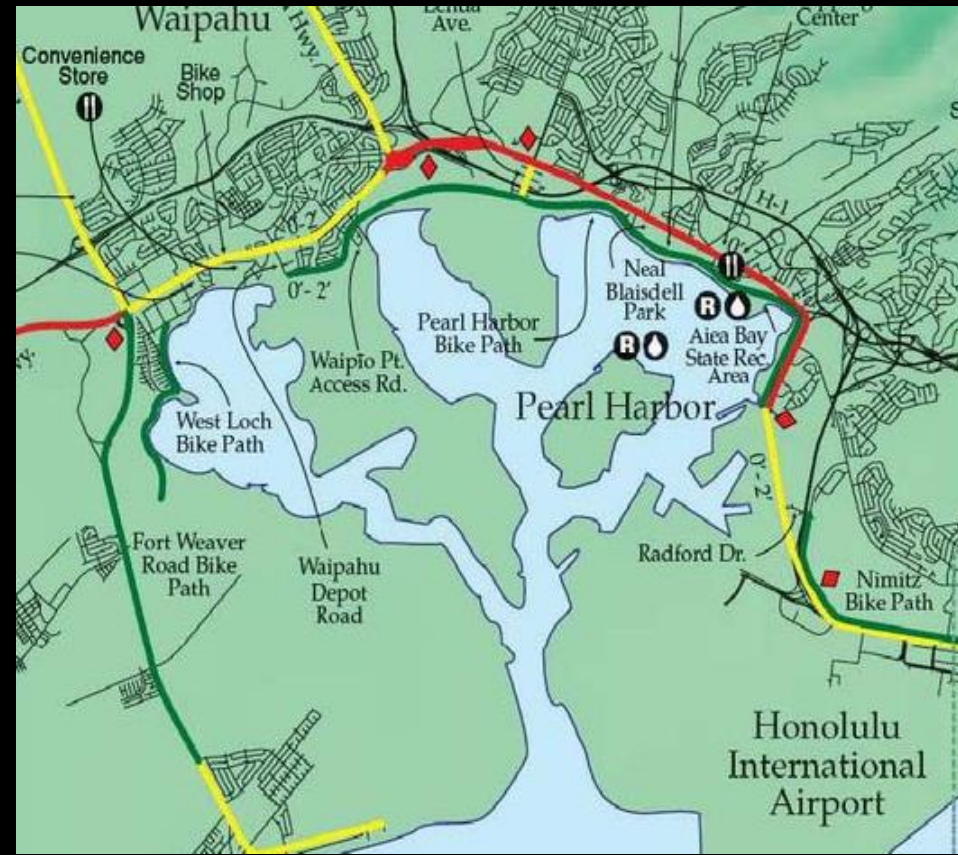


U.S. Fleet April 1938 Lahaina, Maui

WAR PLANS



Hawaii was not considered for a major base. The anchorage at Lahaina was too exposed for long term use. Pearl Harbor at Oahu was too confined and too easy to block.



WAR PLANS

The aftermath of World War I changed the seascape in the Pacific.

Japan now had control over the Marshall Islands, the Caroline Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands and the Palau Islands, all between Hawaii and the West Coast and the Philippines. Thus a relief of the Philippines had to traverse seas under enemy control.

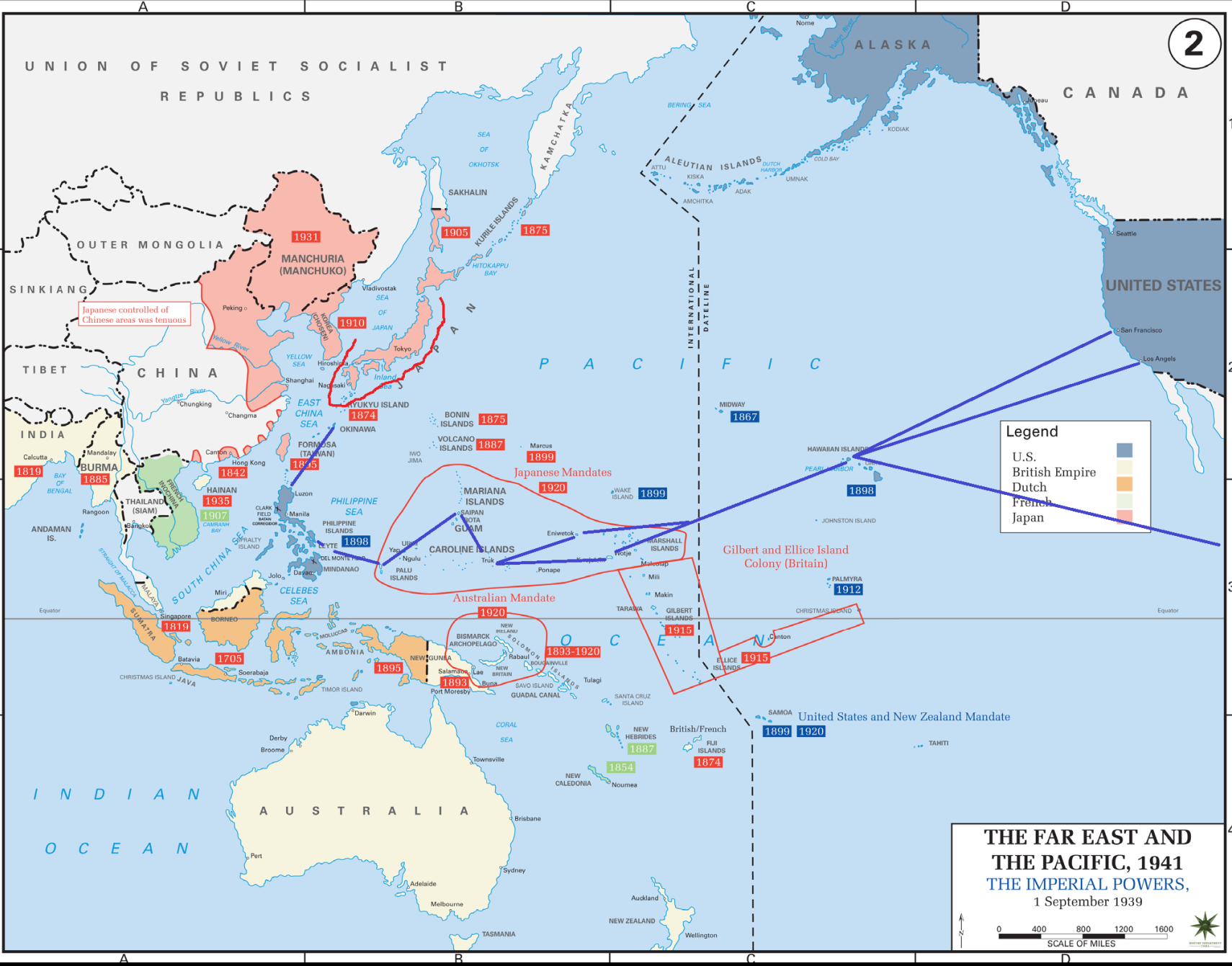
Guam was written off as indefensible.

Unlike the British, the Americans saw value in unrestricted submarine warfare. This would be the weapon of immediate choice in a war against Japan which was entirely dependent upon shipping for fuel, raw materials and food.

Again, decisive naval battle would not be refused but it was not an objective.

The objective was the relief of the Philippines and isolation of Japan.

The new version of the plan sought to isolate and suppress if not occupy the Japanese possessions between Hawaii and the Philippines.



Legend

- U.S.
- British Empire
- Dutch
- French
- Japan

THE FAR EAST AND THE PACIFIC, 1941
THE IMPERIAL POWERS,
 1 September 1939

0 400 800 1200 1600
 SCALE OF MILES



Sun Tzu

~ 544 – 496 BCE

Mercenary general during the Age of Warring States in China, he became commander of the army of the Kingdom of Wu...

On a bet...

Wherein he told the King of Wu he would accept execution (for his impertinence) should he prove himself less than the King's best general in battle, provided his army be manned solely by the concubines of the King and his court and pitched against the best of the King's commanders and soldiers.

Three guesses who won, and the first two don't count...

The work of Sun Tzu were introduced to the Japanese around the year 760.

The great unifiers of Japan were students of and users of the ancient warrior ethos to include:

Oda Nobunaga (1534 – 1582)

Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537 – 1589)

Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543 – 1616);

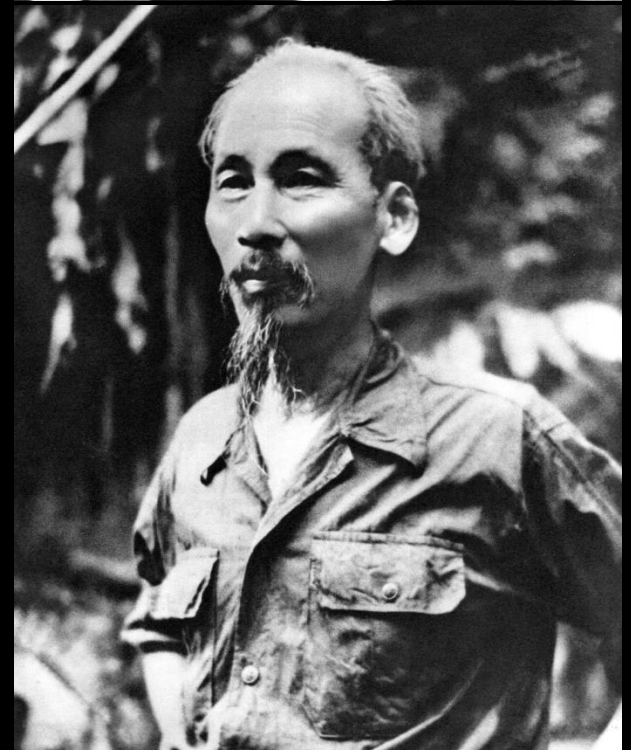
However, while the work was not forgotten it was not what made Europeans what they were and far too often the Japanese military looked to European or Western works for lessons on the Art of War.

The truth is, no work has ever discussed the Art of War as succinctly.

The Art of War was not translated into English until around 1920 and not truly available or published in the West until after 1970. General Douglas MacArthur *might* have read it.

Mao Zedong certainly did as one of the first translations of the work in the U.S. was a translation of his “Little Red Book,” much of which was a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist treatment of the subject. Ho Chi Minh was another noted devotee of the work along with Vo Nguyen Giap.

The work of Sun Tzu became required reading at the Military Academies in the United States and in their Command and Staff and War Colleges around 1992.



If you know yourself and your enemy, you need not fear the results of a hundred battles!

If you know yourself but not your enemy, for every victory, there shall be a defeat.

If you know not yourself, there shall be no victory.

**Sun Tzu
The Art of War
6th Century BCE**

Victorious warriors win first and then go to war while the defeated warriors go to war first and then seek to win.

**Sun Tzu
The Art of War
6th Century BCE**

**Supreme excellence consists of breaking the enemy's resistance
WITHOUT FIGHTING!**

Be extremely subtle, even to the point of formlessness. Be extremely mysterious, even to the point of soundlessness. Thereby you can be the director of your opponent's fate.

Pretend inferiority and encourage his arrogance.

If fighting is sure to result in victory, then you must fight even though the ruler forbids it; if fighting cannot result in victory then you must not fight even though the ruler commands it.

The general who advances without coveting fame and retreats without fearing disgrace, whose only thought is to protect his county and do good service for his sovereign; he is the jewel of the kingdom!

Sun Tsu

The Art of War

6th Century BCE

WAR PLANS

The Japanese War Plan prior to 1940 never defined why there would be a war beyond the assumption that for some reason the U.S. would attack.

Japan would use its naval forces to wear down the U.S. fleet as it crossed the Pacific and then engage the survivors in a decisive battle either in the Philippine Sea or off the coast of Japan.

The details changed as the orders of battle and technology evolved.

As early as 1916, the plan now envisioned U.S. forces needing or choosing to move through the central pacific islands gained by Japan from Germany. The Islands would provided bases for Japanese submarines, cruisers and destroyers to ambush the U.S. fleet.

Later, land based airpower would also factor into the plan.

The need to wage a war of ambush at sea also increased as a result of the Washington Naval Treaty which left the Japanese Navy less confident that it could deal with both the U.S. Pacific Fleet and follow on reinforcements from the Atlantic.

Japan never considered using submarines to attack supply lines.

WAR PLANS

The Americans exercised their war plans and noted flaws as part of the course of instruction at the Naval War College.

The War College did not prepare the plans, but often submitted critiques.

All of the Admirals who would lead the Pacific Fleet in World War II had been through the course as more junior officers.

Japanese exercises their plans with select senior officers of the Fleet and Naval Staff, many of whom had contributed to the development.

Up until the eve or outbreak of the war (depending on which side), neither side had a clear plan for the employment of aircraft carriers except as direct support for their battle fleet.

It was not a lack of imagination.

It was a lack of reality. For years even non-aviators could imagine what aviation could do if they had the right planes but those planes were beyond the ability of the industry to produce.

Then there were the old salts who could not believe anything would change...

Naval Aviation



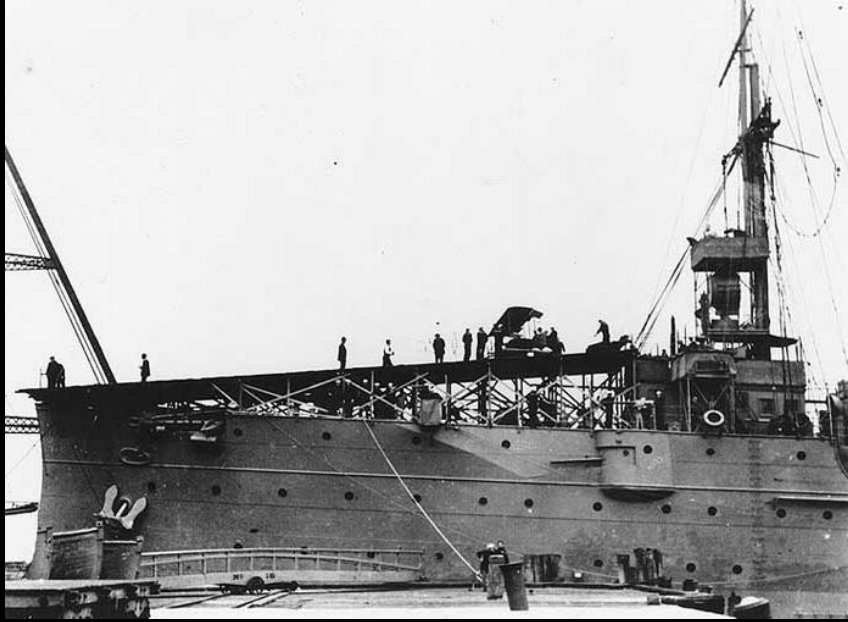
If there is one person who is the father of naval aviation (without which the Pacific War would have been very different) it is Glen Curtiss.

He was not nor ever was in the Navy.

He was an early airplane pioneer and in 1908 set up a company to build and sell airplanes ... and was promptly sued by the Wright brothers for patent infringement.

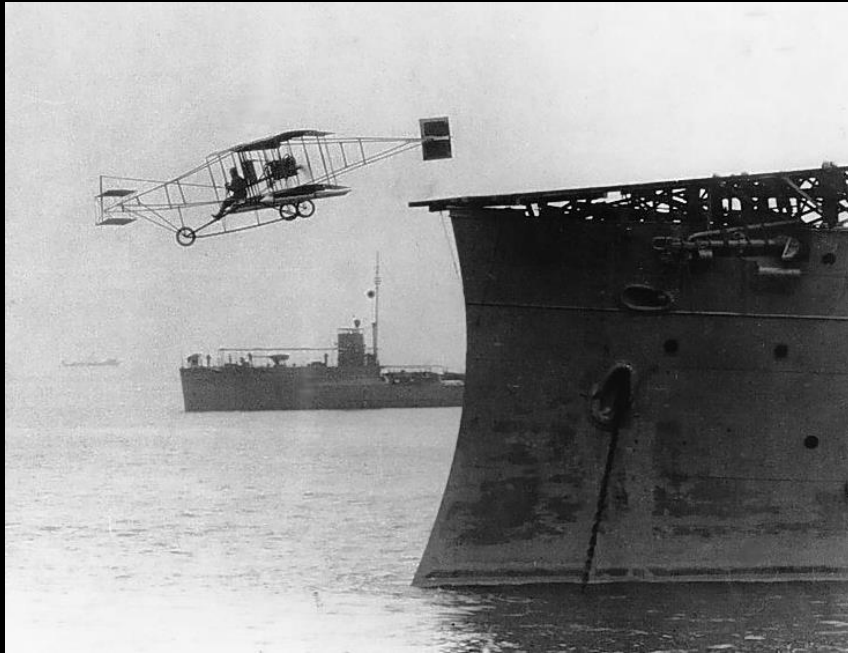
Undeterred – and as the Wrights had a contract with the Army – he approached the Navy.

Naval Aviation



In October 1910, Curtiss and his employee Eugene Ely met with a Captain Chambers USN who had been tasked by the Navy Department to investigate possible uses of aircraft. Curtiss had a few ideas...

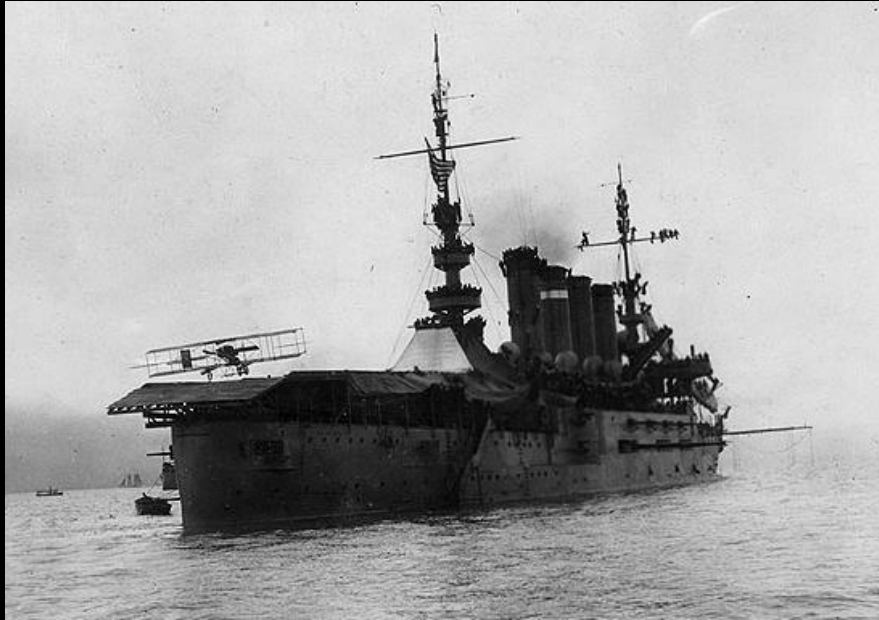
With the support of the Navy, within a month he had a wooden deck built on the forecastle of the cruiser USS Birmingham in Norfolk VA.



On Nov. 14th 1910, Eugene Ely successfully took off from the ship while it was at anchor in Hampton Roads.

But getting an airplane into the air is only half the game...

Naval Aviation



On January 18th, 1911, the same plane and pilot proved it was possible to land aboard a ship.

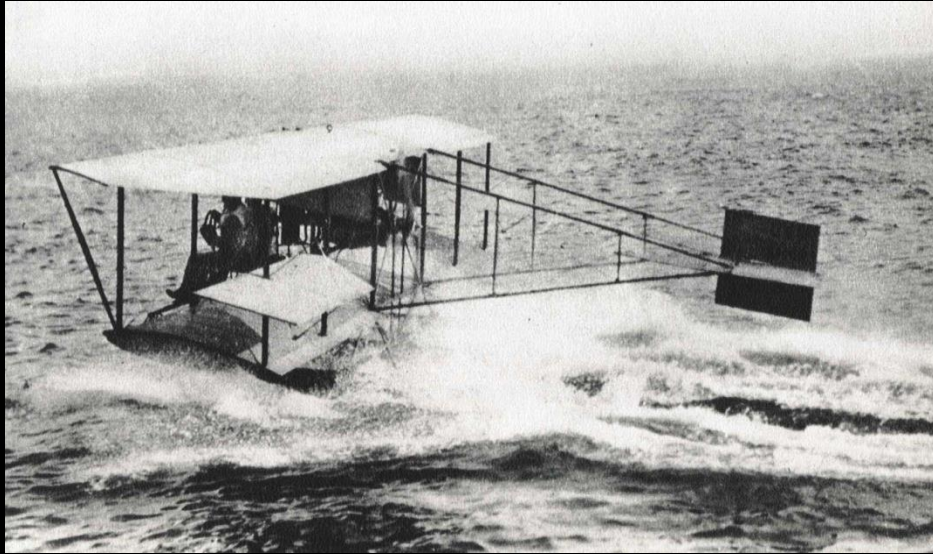
The ship was the predreadnought battleship USS Pennsylvania moored in San Francisco Bay. A temporary deck was installed over the stern and the first arresting gear was made out of ropes weighted with sand bags (below).



After landing safely, Ely then had the plane turned around on the deck and took off again.

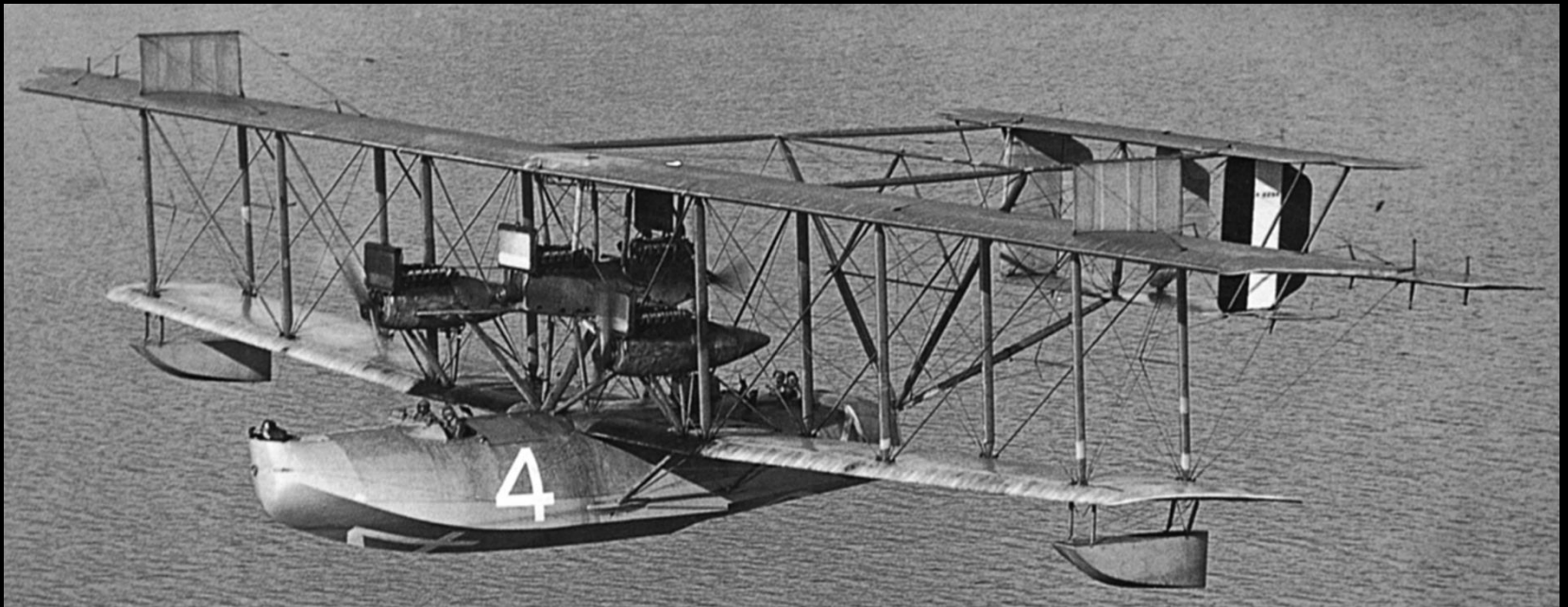
While it proved feasibility, the Navy was not yet convinced a ship with such planes (then about the limit of technology) was of immediate value. But...

Naval Aviation

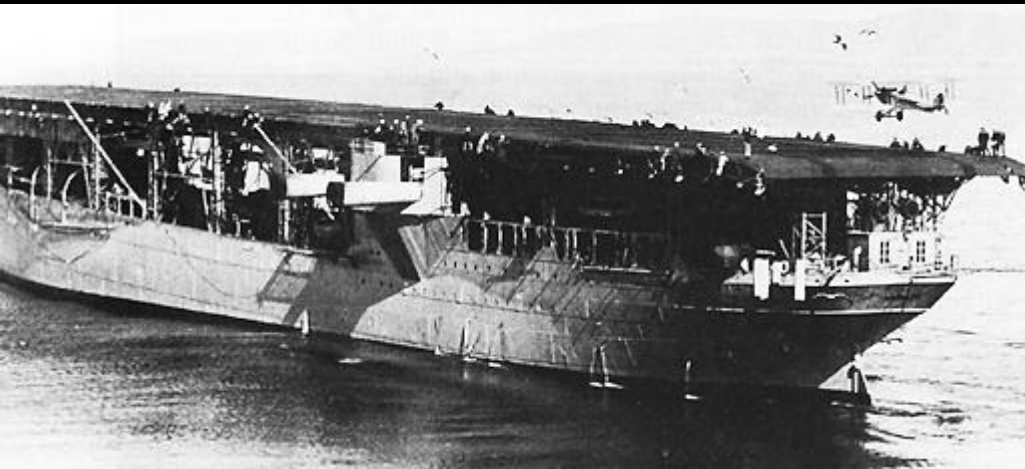


On January 19th, 1911, the next day, Glenn Curtiss demonstrated the first seaplane to the Navy at San Diego. (Above) The Navy issued contracts for seaplanes.

In May 1919, a group of Curtiss seaplanes made the first transatlantic flight. NC-4 (below was the plane that completed the mission).

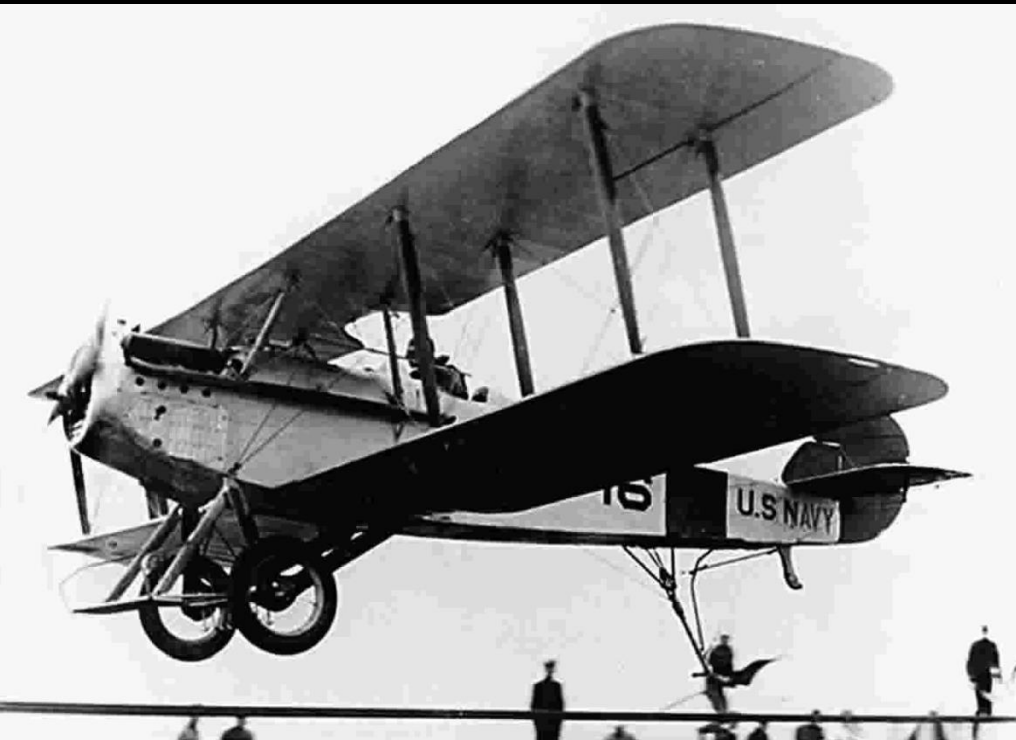


Naval Aviation



The U.S. Navy commissioned its first aircraft carrier USS Langley in 1922.

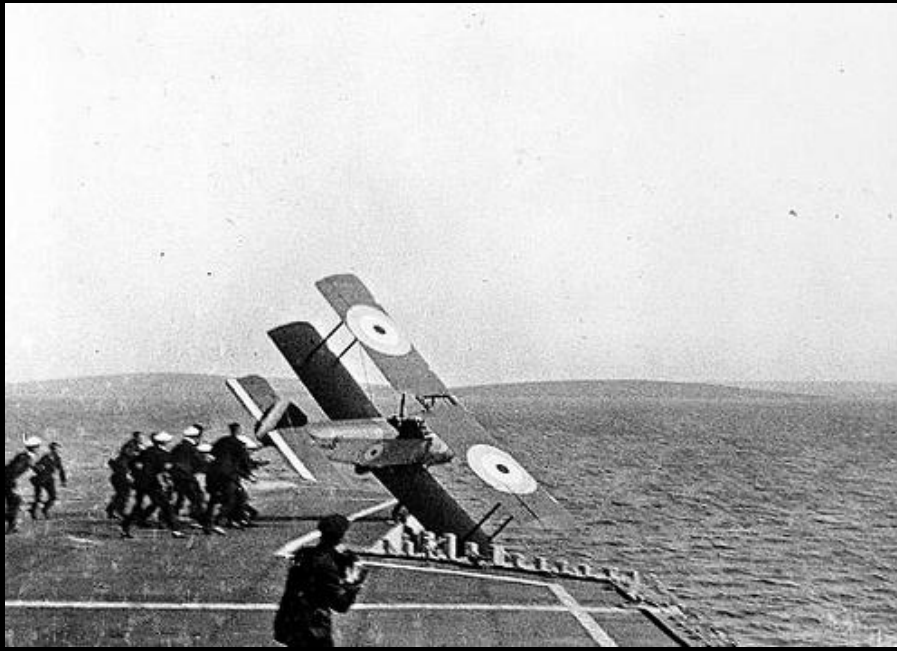
The Langley had been a collier – a ship that carried coal for refueling other ships in the fleet. By 1922, most ships either burned oil or were being converted to burn oil so there was no longer a need for colliers.



The Navy quickly learned that a lot of time was needed for pilots to learn to take off and land from a carrier. This was on top of simply learning how to do it at all as there was no real experience.

To this day, carrier pilots spend months just practicing “crash and dash.”

Naval Aviation



Early carrier operations were hardly safe. The first step was to learn how to operated airplanes from ships.

This was an era when airplanes were not particularly safe in any case. Smaller airplanes, such as those that necessarily had to be used on carriers, were even less so. An unexpected cross wind was a recipe for a really bad day.



And then there was navigation. There are no points of reference at sea and the base was always moving. In a fleet action, both the base and the target were moving and not necessarily at the same speed or in the same direction. Finding the ship was not easy and worse if the weather turned bad.

Naval Aviation



Not until the 1930's were naval aircraft equipped with the ability to fly on instruments and radio direction finders. In some cases, the equipment had not been developed until then, in others it was too large for use aboard small planes until then.

Navigation was by educated dead reckoning. Dead reckoning had been used for centuries at sea and was an estimate of a ship's position based on its course and speed. It was by no means a preferred method and was (and is) used only when it was not possible to fix the ship's position visually by landmarks on shore or by celestial means.

But it can result in disaster if the mariner lacks accurate information about the effects of currents.



Naval Aviation

Carrier aircraft planes were too small for celestial navigation – and this was not possible at all in a single seat plane. Pilots estimated their position based on airspeed and course (which depending on the wind was not truly accurate). Their ship's position was based upon what they were told the ship would do while they were away (which might not be the case.)

Pilots learned that even in clear weather, spotting a ship at a distance was by no means easy. Finding a ship under clouds or in worse conditions was almost impossible. In good conditions, carrier pilots could find their way to their targets and back to their ship.

In 1929, the Japanese carrier Akagi demonstrated the weaknesses with tragic results. In an exercise, it launched all its planes against an opposing force well over the horizon in deteriorating weather. The force found the target and made the attack and then the weather closed in – fog and low, thick clouds.

The entire force failed to find their ship and was lost.

The ship's Captain had argued conditions were too dangerous but was ordered to launch anyway. His name was Isoroku Yamamoto.

Naval Aviation



In 1920, while no one doubted the value of the airplane as a scouting tool, only the pilots believed it could be a true offensive weapon – and they were all junior officers in the Navy.

In 1920, the Navy brass conducted a test which they said proved the airplane was no real threat to the fleet.



Aviators disagreed and one – an Army BGEN Billy Mitchell – had support in congress. (He wanted to prove we only needed airplanes). In 1921 he conducted tests off of the east coast using army bombers and navy seaplanes.

His planes sunk a total of four battleships including one that had survived the Battle of Jutland.

Naval Aviation



**Top: Boeing F4B (1930 – 1934)
Carrier based fighter.**

**Left: Curtiss O2 Falcon (1925 – 1932) Carrier based
scout/bomber. Used as a
trainer through 1937**

**Bottom: Martin TM4 (1928 – 1937)
Carrier based torpedo bomber**



Naval Aviation



**Top: Grumman F4F Wildcat
(1940 – 1945)
Carrier based fighter.**

**Left: Douglas TBD Devastator
(1937 – 1942)
Carrier based torpedo bomber**

**Bottom: Douglas SDB Dauntless
(1940-1944)
Carrier based dive bomber**



FLEET PROBLEMS



USS Ranger (CV-4) [Bottom], USS Lexington (CV-2) [Middle], USS Saratoga (CV-3) [top], anchored at Lahina Roads off the island of Maui, Hawaii following Fleet Problem XIII in 1932.

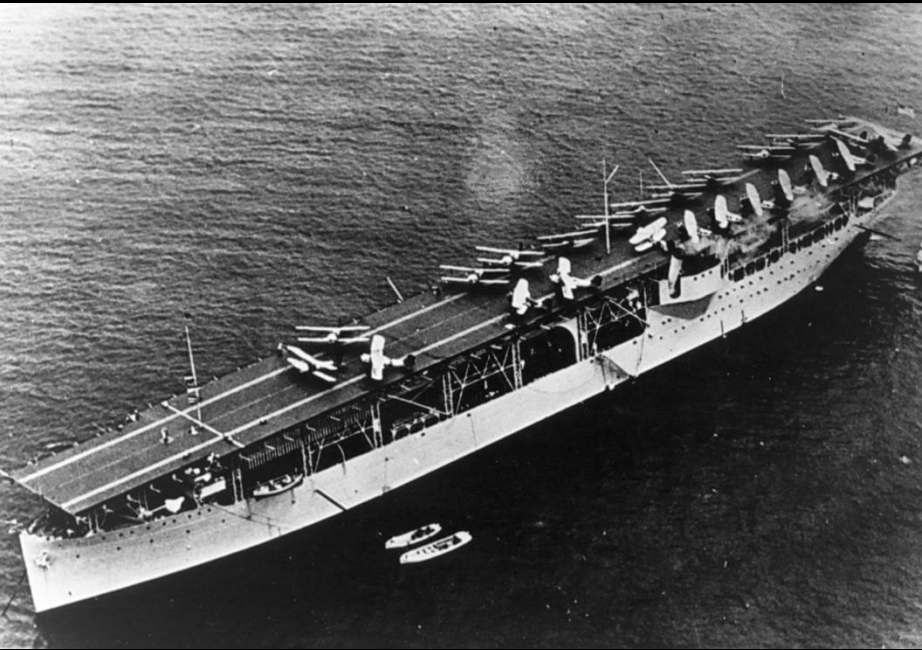
Fleet Problems were major fleet exercises conducted between 1923 and 1940.

They were done to evaluate under operational conditions the following:

- Fleet tactics and operational logistics,**
- The defense of the Panama Canal, and**
- Specific tactical and operational problems arising from the requirements set forth in the current version of War Plan Orange.**

This later included scouting, attacking enemy fleets, seizing island bases and so forth.

FLEET PROBLEMS



Fleet Problem V (1925). USS Langley simulated and attack on Hawaii. The attack was a success and sped up completion of two new carriers.



Fleet Problem XIII (1932). U.S. Fleet was tasked to defend Hawaii against a carrier attack. The carriers attacked on a Sunday, under radio silence from behind a storm front and achieved total surprise. The fleet failed to find them.

Fleet Problem XIX (1938). All out attempt to defend Hawaii against a carrier strike. Involved Army Air Corps for the first time for reconnaissance and fighter cover plus submarines.

The attack force under VADM Ernest King overwhelmed the defense.

HOW HAD IT COME TO THIS?

The Pacific War was both avoidable and inevitable.

Both the Japanese and the Americans saw it as being inevitable more so than the more recent Cold War. Both sides had planned for it. U.S. war plans date to 1907, Japan to 1906.

And yet both sides saw it as avoidable and to the end – to its ultimate outbreak – both sides sought to avoid it.

And both sides made mistakes that would make war unavoidable.

But only in the last few months if not weeks...

Neither side truly wanted war.

The Japanese in particular knew such a war could not be won if it wasn't won in the opening weeks. (And that was the minority opinion in the government and military as the majority felt it was a losing proposition regardless.)

HOW HAD IT COME TO THIS?

The war that would befall Europe was one of revenge and conquest.

In the Pacific, it would be a trade war. Japan sought to divorce itself from dependence upon the United States and would step by step make all the wrong decisions.

Japan was not a fascist State.

Japan was not a dictatorship.

Both ideas were the imaginations of the American propagandists.

But, the weaknesses of their governmental structure came to an ultimate head in the lead up to World War II.

It was a government demanding consensus to act. But headed by those who could not back down from any position, even when they knew it to be ridiculous.

HOW HAD IT COME TO THIS?

The United States was hardly an innocent victim.

It had failed to “read the tea leaves.” It never truly understood its adversary.

The lead up to the war is a case in point for the fallacy of “economic sanctions” as an effective tool of diplomacy.

The U.S. government was far more concerned with Europe and the war against Germany than the rising tensions with Japan.

It was fiercely isolationist, and politically uninterested in exerting its influence and power. (The 1940 election had seen major gains by the isolationist Republican Party).

While the Roosevelt Administration knew things were turning sour in the Pacific, their focus was on Europe and in finding a politically acceptable excuse to enter that war.

CHINA



The Chinese Nationalists (Kuomintang or KMT) was organized in some form in 1894 in Hawaii by Sun Yat-sen. Sun joined with others in Tokyo who were dedicated to the overthrow of the Qing dynasty which was accomplished in 1911. Although politically the leader, Sun lacked control over the military which took power.



In 1923, the KMT accepted aid from the Soviet Union and was organized along soviet lines and was allied with the Chinese Communists. Chiang Kai-shek trained in Moscow.

Chiang was unimpressed with the Russians. In 1925 Sun died and Chiang as leader of the KMT military took power. Sun had admired the western democracy. Chiang did not.

CHINA



In 1925, the KMT only controlled areas in southern China. The rest of the country was controlled by numerous independent generals with their armies. Internationally, the general who controlled Beijing (not a member of the KMT) was viewed as the legitimate government.

The KMT set out to conquer the rest of China.



In April of 1927, they took control of Shanghai which had been a center of communist control. The KMT then openly broke with the Soviets and Communists seeing the Soviets as imperialists and the Chinese Communists as their puppets. They proceeded to round up and kill all communists and anyone who looked like one. Ultimately 300,000 died.

CHINA



The violence affected foreign interests and the British landed troops without notifying the League of Nations in advance. Japan, the United States and France soon followed. A section of the city came under foreign control with foreign troops in garrison. All would remain until 1939. The KMT would take Beijing in 1928.



CHINA

Later, when the U.S. was allied with Chiang and the KMT, they were portrayed as being just like us – a liberal democracy led by devout Christians. (Chiang's wife was. Chiang and most of China were not.)

The KMT was a military dictatorship. It did not accept criticism or opposition. (Any who did either were likely to be executed.)

It favored State or military control of the economy.

It repressed ethnic minorities.

It was internally anti-western and anti-American. It was also anti-Japanese. (It saw those as imperialist powers bent on subjugating China.)

It was also violently anti-communist and anti-Soviet.

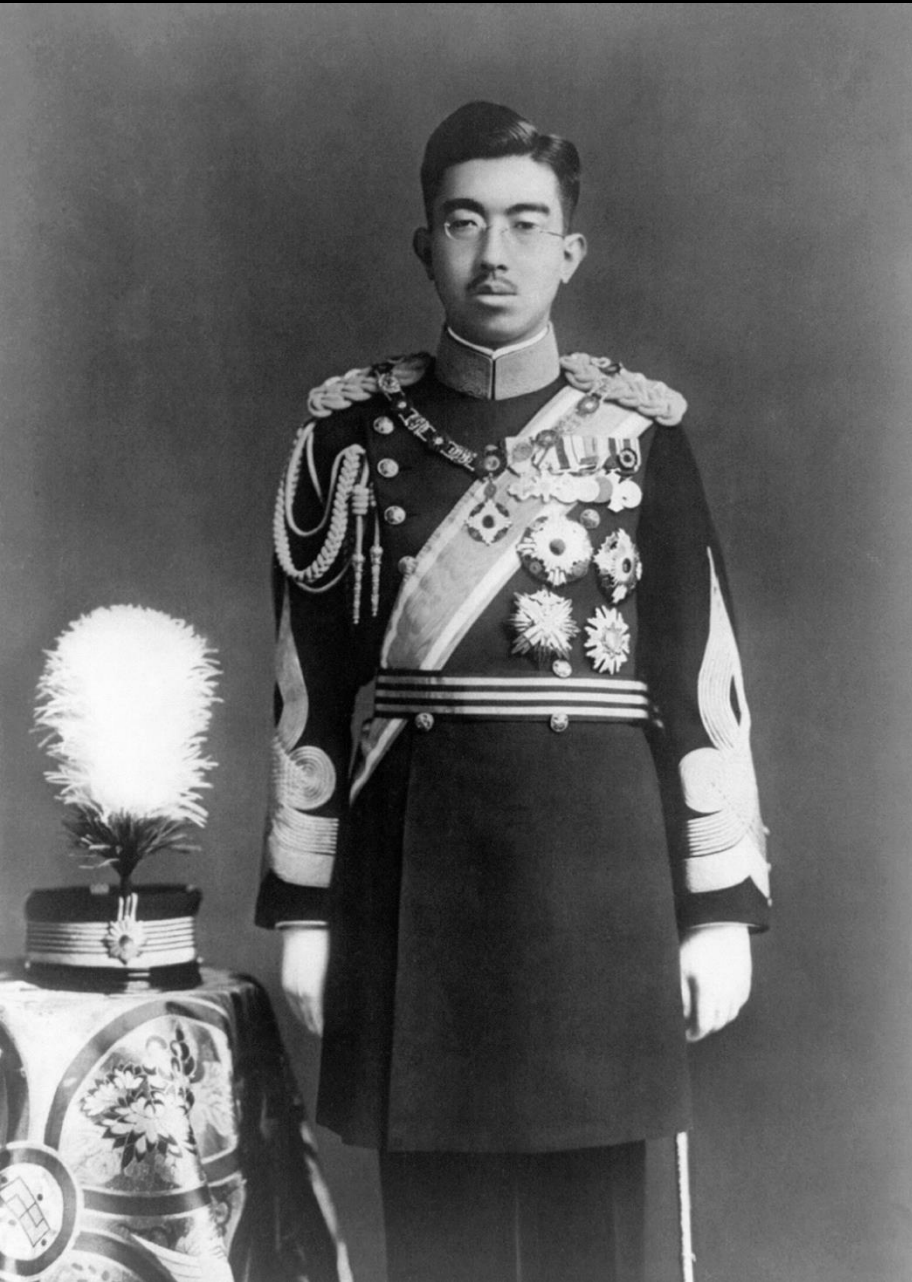
In 1934, it allied itself with the one country it felt was mostly likely to support it and politically the most similar in philosophy. That country would send arms, advisors, engineers and more. That country would be the KMT's most important ally until 1940.

That country was Nazi Germany.

CHINA



ROAD TO WAR



Showa Emperor (Hirohito) (1901 – 1989)

Showa meant “enlightened peace and harmony.”

Named Regent in 1921 to assume duties in place of his father. He became Emperor in 1926.

Intellectual and bright, he was a noted marine biologist (under an assumed name).

As Emperor, he admired the role of King George V, meaning he preferred to stay out of politics and government except to the very limited extent necessary under the Meiji Constitution. Prior to 1941, he never spoke at meetings with his government ministers.

ROAD TO WAR



Hirohito viewed his role as to provide moral support for his government, not to question it or its policies.

This would change in time but during the 1920's and 1930's, a time when intervention may have reigned in the militants in the military and preserved democracy, he remained aloof politically.



He would begin to question his government on the eve of war. He would continue to do so during the war with the result being his government would lie to him about the war until near the end.

In the end, Japan surrendered on his orders and against the wishes of the Army.

ROAD TO WAR

The Imperial Rescript for Soldiers and Sailors demanded loyalty to the Emperor (and not the government) but had proscribed the military from being involved in politics or policy.

That had worked ... until the 1920's. Many Japanese officers were increasingly disgusted with the concessions being made by their diplomats. Some began to argue that their civilian counterparts could not act in Japan's interest.

The Kodoha faction – mostly junior Army officers – believed it necessary for the Army to take over and form a military dictatorship. They favored military expansionist policies abroad particularly in China. Their leaders would be executed following a failed coup in 1934. 3,000 officers would be cashiered.

The Toseiha faction opposed them. While not democratic to any extent, they believed the internal politics must be left to civilians. They favored military opposition to the Soviet Union. One of their leaders was Hideiki Tojo.

The Navy had similar divisions although less politically motivated. The “Fleet Faction” opposed the Washington Naval Treaties and limitations on their fleet. The “Treaty Faction” supported the treaty in principal. This group was more international in its world outlook.

ROAD TO WAR

NAVAL CONFERENCES

The Japanese were never happy with the limitations of the Washington Naval Conference.

The British were unhappy that there had been no cap on cruisers or submarines. Specifically they were concerned that nothing limited the Americans or Japanese from building a huge force of either.

In 1927, there was an attempt to extend the naval arms limitations to cruisers and submarines. Japan hoped to reopen the question as to tonnage ratios (the 5:5:3 ratio). Japan wanted a 10:10:7 ratio. (They wanted more but would accept that ratio).

This conference held at Geneva died almost at inception as the Americans were not at all willing to accommodate the British on the issue of cruisers.

In 1929, the Great Depression changed the economic picture sufficiently that the naval powers were both willing to discuss extending the Washington Naval Treaty (set to expire in 1932) and expand upon its limitations as funding for armaments was not what it once was.

ROAD TO WAR

LONDON NAVAL CONFERENCE 1930

The only change to the original terms of the Washington Treaty was extending the prohibitions on new battleship construction through 1936 and that the British and Americans had to comply with the tonnage limits (they were both over by 2 – 5 battleships).

Japan again argued for the 10:10:7 ratio on tonnages but again failed to achieve a modification in terms.

The conference limited submarines to 2,000 tons (but could have up to 3 at 2,800 tons), with a maximum gun caliber of 6.1” (The British M-Class had a 12” gun).

Heavy cruisers (8” guns) were limited by numbers – 15 UK, 18 US, 12 JP.

Light cruisers (new concept) (155mm guns) had tonnage restrictions – 192k UK, 144k US, 100k JP. Destroyers were limited to 130mm guns, 1,850 tons max and 150k total for the U.S. and UK and 105.5K total for Japan.

Japan considered the Treaty a failure of their diplomacy and further proof that they were not equals.

ROAD TO WAR

The political wild-card in Japan was the Kwangtung Army. Originally this was the army of occupation in the Liaodong Peninsula that had been relocated to northern Korea following the Nine Power Agreement of 1922.

Its primary role was the defense of the Manchurian railroads under Japanese control. It grew increasingly independent, conducting limited operations when it felt the political chaos in Manchuria required action and such operations were not questioned either by their government or the international community.

At least not at first.

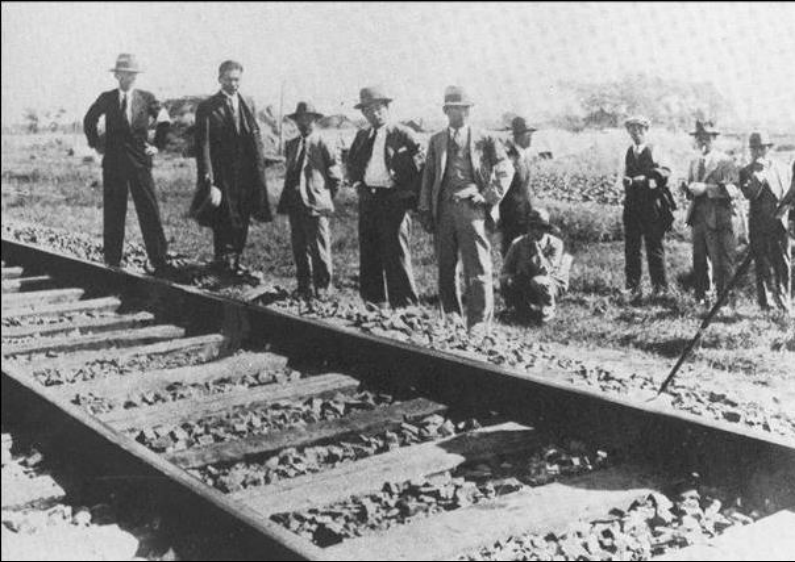
In 1929, the world economy collapsed. Some in the Kwangtung Army believed control of the north and its resources would revive the Japanese economy and they had support in the business Zaibatsu (consortiums – not unlike collective monopolies).

Political issues in Manchuria mounted. Manchuria did not recognize the authority of the Chinese Nationalist government and various independent generals ruled locally.

And they saw the railroad as a source of revenue – basically through extortion.

ROAD TO WAR

MUKDEN INCIDENT



On Sep. 18th, 1931, a bomb detonated on the Japanese railroad outside Mukden in Manchuria in front of an oncoming train. The rails were undamaged and the train did not stop. Japan blamed Chinese “bandits” as two were shot near the tracks.

In truth, a Japanese Army Lt. set off a single stick of dynamite in a way that was harmless but very visible while his squad found two Chinese peasants and shot them.

Tokyo suggested the Army to do nothing.

But the Kwangtung Army (which had ordered the operation) invaded instead rapidly moving to conquer Manchuria. Tokyo learned of this not from the Army, but from the glowing reports that were soon published in the Japanese press.



ROAD TO WAR - MANCHURIA

The Kwangtung Army acted not just without orders from Tokyo, but against them.

The Emperor and Prime Minister had both told the Army not to respond to the provocation without orders from Tokyo.

The Army General Staff had not issued any such orders or approved any such plans.

The Commander of the Kwangtung Army had. As noted the official provocation was entirely Japanese in origin.

That is not to say there had been no provocations.

The local Chinese generals were acting on their own authority without any direction from the Chinese Nationalist government and sought to extort “tribute” from the Japanese.

The Chinese Communists had engaged in actions that threatened the railroads as part of their ongoing (and brutal) war against the Chinese Nationalists.

But the Japanese intervention was entirely a product of the Kwangtung Army and a system that divorced the operating forces from the government in Tokyo.

ROAD TO WAR - MANCHURIA

Manchuria fell in days. It covered an area of about 500,000 Sq. Mi. and had a population of about 43,000,000 of which maybe 500,000 were Japanese.

The Nationalist Chinese Army responsible for Manchuria had around 250,000 troops against 11,000 Japanese.

But most of that army was deployed south of the Great Wall – and well south of the lands invaded. They were busy with the Chinese Communists. What was left was scattered in small garrisons and poorly trained and led.

China chose to end the invasion through diplomatic pressure given that militarily the communists posed a far greater and more immediate threat.

The League of Nations demanded Japan withdraw.

The United States protested (diplomatically) but stopped far short of making demands. Secretary of State Stimson declared merely that the United States would not recognize the Japanese claims (or anything that arose from such claims) as valid.

It should be restated that the U.S. had recognized Japan's interests in Manchuria since 1905.

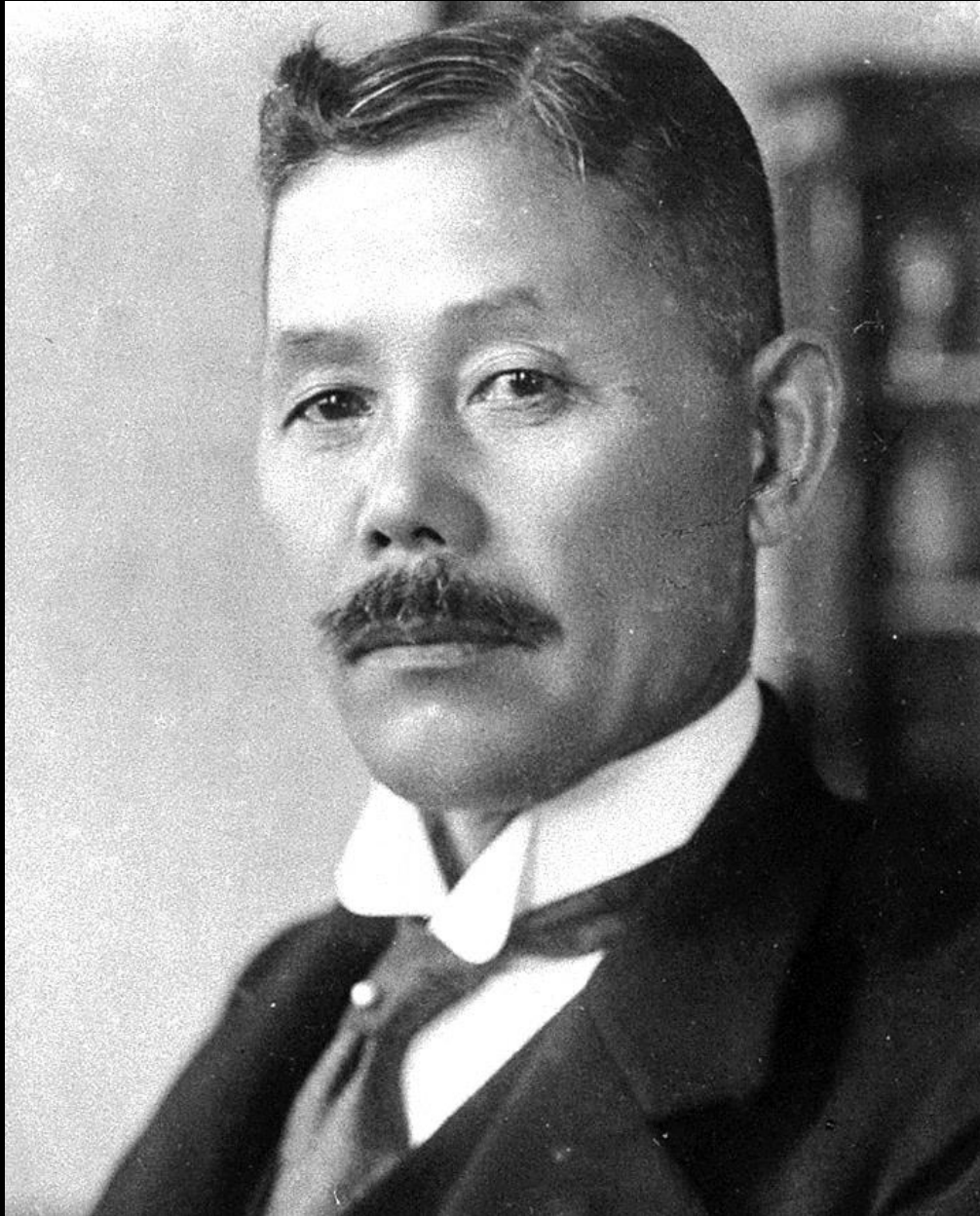
ROAD TO WAR - MANCHURIA



Osachi Hamaguchi (1870 – 1931)

Prime Minister from July 2nd 1929 to April 14th 1931. He had eagerly supported the Washington Naval Treaty in 1922 and as Prime Minister had insisted on extending and expanding the term of restriction on naval construction. After all, money was tight in 1930. He was shot in November 1930 by an ultranationalist for his support of the restrictions of the London Naval Conference. Although he survived his wounds, his health deteriorated and he chose to resign. He died four months after he resigned.

ROAD TO WAR - MANCHURIA



Reijiro Wakatsuki (1866-1949)

Prime Minister from April 14th 1931 to December 13th 1931. He was Japan's chief delegate to the London Naval Conference. As Prime Minister, he tried to gain control over the Army and initiate a withdrawal from Manchuria and was shot. He resigned following the failed assassination attempt. He would go on to oppose the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War (quietly). In May 1945, he ended his quiet opposition and openly urged the government to end the war and later to accept without conditions the Potsdam Declaration (unconditional surrender).

ROAD TO WAR - MANCHURIA



Tsuyoshi Inukai (1855-1932)

Prime Minister from December 13th 1931 to May 15th, 1932. He was an outspoken critic of the London Naval Treaty and supported the intervention in Manchuria. However he tried to prevent expansion and escalation and insisted upon civilian control of the military and government. He was assassinated by ultra-nationalist very junior naval officers who also hoped to kill Charlie Chaplin and provoke a war with the U.S. Chaplin was out on the town and they missed him completely.

He would be the last Prime Minister appointed without the prior concurrence of either the Japanese Army or Navy staffs until Prince Higashikuni (Hirohito's uncle by marriage) on August 16th, 1945.

ROAD TO WAR - MANCHUKUO



In February 1932, Manchurians who were loyal to the Japanese (and particularly their benefactors the Kwangtung Army) proclaimed a new country: Manchukuo. It was headed by the deposed last Qing Emperor (deposed in 1911 at the age of 6) Puyi who was dependent upon Japan for ... everything.

Japan was the first (and for over two years only) country to recognize the new state. China still considered it under its control and still appointed government ministers (who were not really expected to go there and take up their duties.)

ROAD TO WAR - MANCHUKUO

Manchukuo was a country in name only.

It had a government, a Prime Minister and cabinet and other officials.

All of whom did nothing without being told to do so by officers of the Japanese Kwangtung Army. (The few who attempted to act without such direction were ... dealt with.)

The only other countries to extend diplomatic recognition were: El Salvador and the Dominican Republic (1934); Italy (1937) and the countries it later controlled or conquered; Spain (1937), Germany (1938) and the countries it later controlled or conquered; the Soviet Union (1941) and the other countries Japan controlled or conquered after 1941.

It was not allowed a seat in the League of Nations and was deemed as part of China. The same applied to any hopes any residents had of competing in the Olympic Games.

The League of Nations set up a commission to determine whether the Japanese were justified in invading and whether this Manchukuo place was in any way legitimate. It was headed by the British Earl of Lytton with a member from the U.S., Germany, Italy and France. The goal was to prevent expanding war in Asia.

ROAD TO WAR - MANCHUKUO

The Commission decided not to place blame on Japan for the initial intervention as such blame might be inflammatory. (It suspected the bombing of the Railroad was a Japanese ruse, but said nothing.)

The report found that there was provocation by the local Chinese Warlords sufficient to support Japanese intervention – for about a week. Operations after the initial suppression of the local warlords could not be justified either as necessary for protection of Japanese interests nor as self-defense.

The commission found that this Manchukuo was entirely Japanese from inception. It had no local support whatsoever. Nor could it be tied to any indigenous independence movement – which was not the case with rebellions elsewhere in China at the time.

It found Japan had legitimate grievances but exercised highly ambiguous and questionable rights and that Japan obstructed China from the exercise of its undoubted rights.

It recommended return of Manchuria to Chinese control and the withdrawal of all Japanese troops.

Needless to say China was thrilled. Japan was not.

ROAD TO WAR



Yosuke Matsuoka (1880-1946)

If it is possible (and it's not) to blame the outbreak of war in the Pacific on any one person, this is the man.

Born in Japan, he was sent to the U.S. in 1890 when his father went bankrupt. He was educated there living with the family of a Methodist Minister. He ultimately received his law degree from the University of Oregon.

He returned to Japan in 1901 and tried to attend Tokyo University ... but he had no connections and was no longer considered truly Japanese.

He did manage to pass the Foreign Service Examinations – in no small part based on his language skills. That was 1904.

ROAD TO WAR

Matsuoka was a self-proclaimed expert on the United States and how to deal with Americans. He was an admirer of Theodore Roosevelt but ... not a follower.

If he had paraphrased Roosevelt, in regards to gaining respect (and concessions) from an American he would say that you need to get in their face, speak loudly and brashly and not let them think you worried about sticks.

In his view, Americans respected cowboy diplomacy and brinksmanship.

At the outbreak of WWI, he was assigned to the Japanese Embassy in Washington as a mid-level diplomat. He was the deputy to the Japanese Envoy at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 – which drafted the Versailles treaty.

In 1921, he was offered the post to the Chinese Consulate but turned it down to accept a position as an executive with the Japanese Manchurian Railroad.

After the Mukden Incident he quit and ultimately returned to the foreign service, office of the Foreign Ministry in Tokyo (after a failed bid for a seat in the Diet).

In December 1932, he was sent to Geneva as Special Envoy to the League of Nations for the formally presenting Japan's reply to the Lytton Report and rejecting any censure by the League regarding Japanese actions in Manchuria.

ROAD TO WAR



On February 24th, 1933, the League of Nations voted unanimously against Japan's actions in Manchuria declaring Japan an aggressor state and ordering Japan to vacate the territory and return it to Chinese control.

Matsuoka delivered his country's position – that the findings of the report were biased and unfounded.



Then he announced that since Japan could not accept the decision of the League, it had no choice but to leave the League altogether. (It was a political stunt, not a declaration of national intent.)

He had not been directed to do that. Tokyo had not ordered it. The Japanese with his delegation did not know he would make such a statement.

ROAD TO WAR

Tokyo was not willing to abandon its interests in Manchuria and trust the Chinese with the security of the region.

But they were at least as stunned by Matsuoka's demonstration of defiance and the idea that they could – much less had – left the League of Nations.

Japan had been a leader in that organization.

The Tokyo government could have overridden Matsuoka – and was inclined to do so at least insofar as leaving the League was concerned – but the word hit the Japanese press at about the same time and the press and public hailed Matsuoka as a national hero.

That and the Army had absolutely no problem with the situation. So Tokyo affirmed the action after the fact, closing its legation about a month later.

Matsuoka attempted to capitalize on his fame by starting an ultra-nationalist party, but that went nowhere fast.

He left the government and returned to his position with the Railroad – but he was not done playing the international cowboy...

ROAD TO WAR

Under the League of Nations Charter “Should any Member of the League resort to war in disregard to its covenants (requiring submission to the league stating why war is necessary unless clearly in self defense and then getting approval), it shall ipso fact be deemed to have committed and act of war against all other Members”.

Whether any League Member then goes so far as to actually send in troops is entirely at each members’ discretion.

Regardless, all Members were required to sever all trade and financial relations with the “covenant-breaking State”.

But, Japan’s primary trade partner was the U.S. (who was not at all bound by the League having never ratified the Treaty of Versailles) and the U.S. was not about to cut trade with the economy already in a shambles.

Britain refused to impose any sanctions as it might harm their trade in the East.

The other members saw no reason to do anything as neither the U.S. nor Britain were doing anything.

In other words, the League had failed completely.

ROAD TO WAR

THE 2nd SINO-JAPANESE WAR



In 1900, the Boxer Rebellion broke out in China aimed to get rid of all foreign influence. The U.S. and Japan were among the hated foreign influences and sent troops to protect their people and interests. In the end, they and other foreign powers were allowed to keep garrisons in and around Beijing and Shanghai. (The other powers were Britain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany and Russia, the latter two lost their rights to maintain a garrison following WWI.)

Following the invasion of Manchuria, Japan increased its garrison outside of Beijing from about 6,000 troops to 15,000. (It was already the largest of the garrisons. The U.S. (second) had an Army regiment and an Marine Battalion – about 4,000 total.

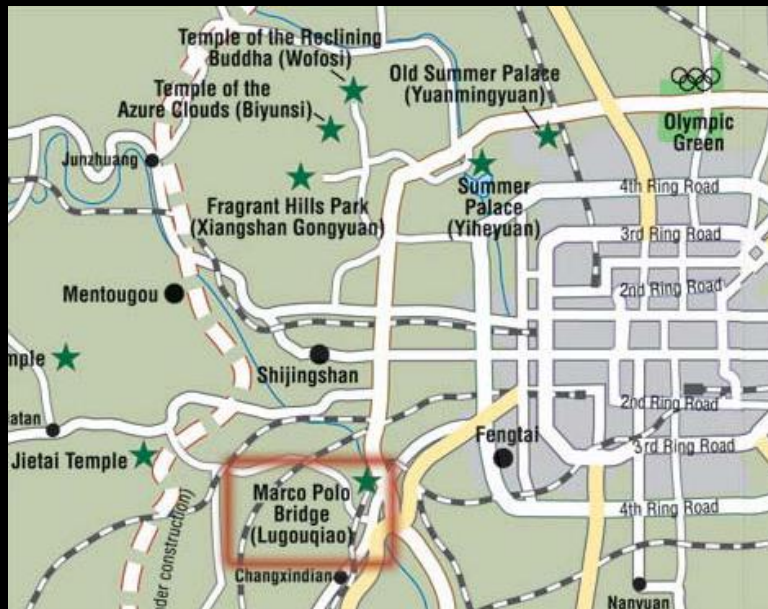
ROAD TO WAR

THE 2nd SINO-JAPANESE WAR



Under the treaties following the Boxer Rebellion, the Beijing garrisons were allowed to run independent maneuvers near Beijing without notice to the other garrisons or the Chinese.

On July 7th, 1937, a Japanese unit on such maneuvers engaged a Chinese unit across the river at the Marco Polo Bridge.



To this day, no one knows who fired the first shot but shots were fired and soldiers on both sides were casualties.

Most believe it was a Japanese provocation.

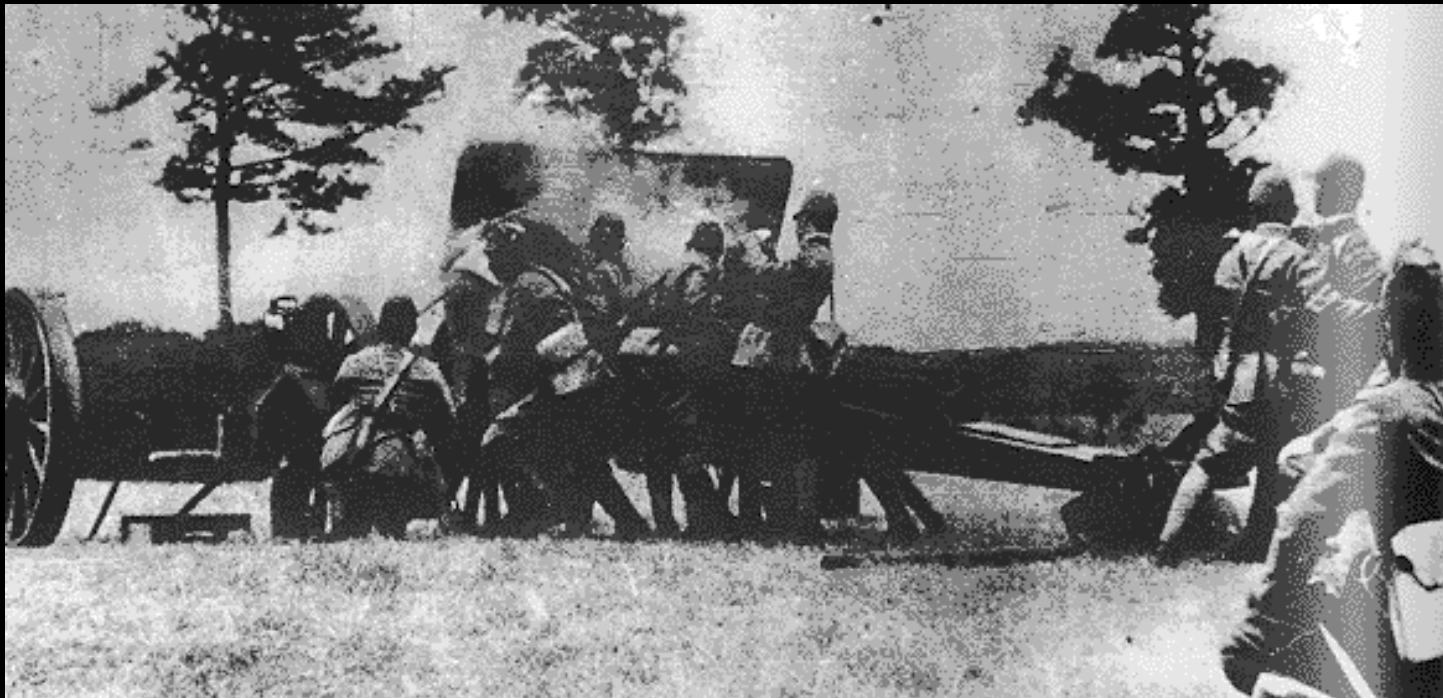
It does not truly matter as neither Japan nor the Chinese Nationalists cared. The game was on for both...

ROAD TO WAR

THE 2nd SINO-JAPANESE WAR

The initial fight was not authorized by the Japanese government, nor was the initial response which was an invasions south from Manchuria by the Kwangtung Army.

That being said, the Japanese Prime Minister, Prince Fimimoro Konoe, authorized the Army – per its request – to send three divisions from Japan to the Beijing Area to reinforce and protect the Japanese garrison. He issued specific instructions to avoid escalation of the war.



THE 2nd SINO-JAPANESE WAR

The Japanese quickly secured Beijing and the surrounding area. The government wished to avoid any expansion or escalation of the war. While both the government and the Army held the Chinese Nationalists in contempt, both realized that China was probably too large to control and the Chinese Army, while of questionable value, was still the largest in the world.

The Chinese Army was riddled with corrupt officers of dubious loyalty and poorly trained troops. But they were armed and could not be ignored.



THE 2nd SINO-JAPANESE WAR



On August 9th, 1937, a Japanese Officer in the Shanghai Legation tried to run a roadblock at a Chinese airfield outside of Shanghai. When the guards tried to stop him, he killed one of the guards before they killed him.

There was an uproar in the Japanese Press about the “insult” to Japanese “honor.” Konoe agreed that Japan had to act to deter similar acts and authorized the Army to send three divisions to Shanghai to suppress such activities.

Japan intended to occupy and “pacify” Shanghai.

What they got was Stalingrad...



THE 2nd SINO-JAPANESE WAR



The operation was expected to take a week. It lasted over three months. The Japanese sent in a total of almost 10 divisions and suffered over 98,000 casualties. They fought against some 700,00 Chinese who suffered 250,000 casualties and who only retreated when Japan bombed and shelled the city into useless ruins...



THE 2nd SINO-JAPANESE WAR



The number of civilian casualties at Shanghai has never been determined. Neither side engaged in deliberate attacks on civilians, but neither side refrained from shelling or bombing or fighting populated areas.

Most of the civilian population under fire who were not casualties left to the west, many settling in refugee camps in and around the Chinese capitol of Nanjing...

THE 2nd SINO-JAPANESE WAR



Both the government and Army staff in Tokyo wanted the Army in southern China to begin a withdrawal. Shanghai was a punitive expedition that had cost Japan far too much. The Army in Shanghai had other ideas and almost immediately set out to pursue the Chinese and destroy them once and for all...

(In the end, Tokyo was right.)



Above: Prince Fumimaro Konoe, Prime Minister from 1937 to 1939.
Right: Japanese advance to Nanking, late November 1937.

THE 2nd SINO-JAPANESE WAR



The war was brutal. Chinese routinely executed Japanese prisoners (below). The Chinese also employed suicide shock troops and suicide bombers against the Japanese. (left – communist infiltration troops armed with swords – their job was to find and hack to death as many Japanese as they could. Below left – Chinese suicide bomber typically used against tanks and machine gun nests...



THE 2nd SINO-JAPANESE WAR



The Japanese were just as brutal. They too executed prisoners routinely – and even had contests to see who could kill the most.

They also used poison gas against Chinese strongholds. The latter required permission from the Emperor, who did not deny such permission when asked.



THE 2nd SINO-JAPANESE WAR



Nanking (Nanjing) was the capitol of Nationalist China and only about 100 miles from Shanghai on the Yangtze River. The Army in China believed the Chinese would throw the bulk of their army into the defense of the city thus allowing the Japanese a chance to destroy them and quickly win the war.



China saw no reason to defend the city. The government moved up river to Wuhan and about half the population moved with it. A small force remained to fight a rear-guard action.

Also left behind were about 500,000 civilians, many were refugees from Shanghai.

The battle lasted 13 days. The Japanese lost about 7,000 men (2,000 KIA).

THE 2nd SINO-JAPANESE WAR



What happened next defies rational explanation. Denied their victory and having suffered heavy casualties for nothing, the Japanese troops ran amok. Once the few Chinese soldiers were dead, they turned upon the civilians.

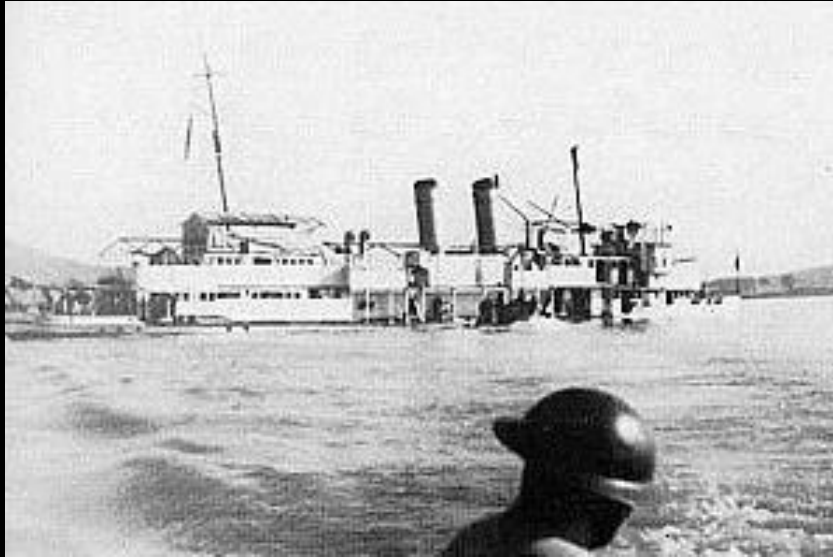
They were not acting on orders.

It was an orgy of rape and murder that lasted for at least six weeks (estimates vary). Anywhere from 40,000 to 300,000 civilians were killed.

The commander of the Japanese forces in Nanjing did nothing to stop it and his immediate superiors ignored it until the word broke in the international press.

When word reached Tokyo, the commanders were recalled and new ones sent to stop the violence although it took time.

THE 2nd SINO-JAPANESE WAR



On December 12th 1937, the day before the fall of Nanking, Japanese naval aircraft bombed and sank the U.S. gunboat USS Panay.

Panay was part of a U.S. river squadron that had been operating on the Yangtze River since 1854.

Neither China nor Japan were in favor of such a presence.

Japan at first blamed China, but unfortunately a U.S. newsreel crew was aboard and it was clear the planes were Japanese.

Japan claimed the attack had not been intentional; that they could not tell the Panay was a U.S. Naval vessel. The U.S. did not believe them but could not yet prove otherwise. Japan made a formal apology and paid reparations.

Later, signals intelligence revealed the attack had been deliberate, although one made on orders of local commanders in China, not from Tokyo. The intent was to force U.S. forces to leave China proper. It did not work and prompted the U.S. to begin to impose sanctions on Japan.

THE 2nd SINO-JAPANESE WAR

Under pressure from the Army, the Japanese government gave up trying to end the war in China short of victory.

In March 1938, Prime Minister Kono submitted the National Mobilization Law to the Japanese Diet.

The law would allow the government to control the economy, suppress opposition to the war, control the press and ended legislative oversight on budget and spending.

It introduced price controls and rationing of food and strategic materials (such as rubber and oil.)

In addition the law allowed for conscription into war related industries. The purpose was to ensure that war production would not suffer for want of workers. Those so conscripted could not be drafted into the armed forces nor could they volunteer for military service. They also could neither quit nor organize nor complain about wages.

By January 1941, Japan was at near full economic mobilization. Private cars could not buy gasoline. All food was rationed and most of the urban civilian population was at just above subsistence levels (unless they supplemented on the illegal black market.)

THE 2nd SINO-JAPANESE WAR



In the Spring of 1938, the Japanese resumed pursuit of the Chinese and attacked their new capitol at Wuhan. This time the Chinese stood and fought before again withdrawing both their government and their army to the west – the government moving to Chongqing.

The Battle of Wuhan lasted over four months (about as long as Stalingrad). Over 1 Million Chinese troops were involved and they suffered over 400,000 casualties.



The Japanese lost 140,000 – 40% of their Army.

Despite Wuhan falling to Japan, China saw it as a victory given they could afford to lose both ground and men and Japan could not sustain such losses. After Wuhan, the war became a bloody stalemate and Japan began to seek a way to turn the tide...



- Japanese Empire in 1870
- Acquisitions until 1932
- Additional Occupation by 1937
- Additional Occupation by 1938
- Additional Occupation by 1939
- Additional Occupation by 1940
- Additional Occupation by 1942
- Demilitarized Zone of the Tanfu Truce (1933)

