



“THEIR SACRIFICE, OUR FREEDOM”

WORLD WAR II IN THE PACIFIC

War in the Pacific Lesson Plans

Recommended Level: **High School**

Time Required: **2 Days**

Introduction

This unit, lasting two days, covers the period from the attack on Pearl Harbor to Japan’s surrender on the U.S.S. Missouri. It is designed to accompany the video, *“Their Sacrifice, Our Freedom: World War II in the Pacific”*, an excellent review of this same time period. A detailed account on the attack on Pearl Harbor and its effect on our veterans and the American public then moves into a description of the fall of the Philippines and the Bataan Death March. Our policy of island hopping is examined showing our movement against Guadalcanal, Saipan and Tinian, the Philippines and Iwo Jima. An outstanding value in the video is the dialogue of our veterans who relate their first-hand accounts of what it was like to lie through the harrowing events of Pearl Harbor; attacks by the kamikaze; the flag-raising at Iwo Jima; and the final surrender on the battleship, U.S.S. Missouri.

Materials

- Video - *“Their Sacrifice, Our Freedom: World War II in the Pacific”*
- Primary source document: Secretary of War Stimson’s diary entry

Unit Goals

1. Discuss eyewitness accounts of our veterans’ experiences in the Pacific.
2. Identify the leaders of Japan, Premier Tojo, Admirals Nagumo and Yamamoto, and their role in the war.
3. Identify U.S. leaders, Admirals Halsey and Nimitz, General MacArthur, and Presidents Roosevelt and Truman and their role in the war.
4. Review U.S. strategy of island hopping.
5. Examine effects of use of atomic bomb on Japan.
6. Analyze problems of Japanese surrender.

Day 1

Aim:

1. View video, “*Their Sacrifice, Our Freedom: World War II in the Pacific*” (40 minutes), to hear veterans’ perspectives on Pearl Harbor, details of battles in the Pacific, role of the kamikaze, and closing events of the war.

Procedure:

1. Introduce video on the Pacific. Stress value of comments of our veterans on various battles and events of the war.
2. Assign students to listen and record additional details on their charts.
3. Do questions for discussion after video either in groups or alone. See Student Handout #1.

Assessment

Complete Student Handout #1.

Day 2

Aim:

1. Examine impact of atomic bomb on Japanese surrender.
2. Review facts on the casualties and significance of the atomic bomb.
3. Examine the value of primary sources by analyzing the problems faced by our government concerning the Japanese surrender as found in Secretary of War Henry Stimson’s diary entry of August 10, 1945, the day after the second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

Procedure:

1. Brainstorm with students the impact of the atomic bomb on the Japanese population and her infrastructure.
2. Review the facts on the casualties and significance of atomic warfare.
3. Brainstorm with students what they think would be the chief issues that the Japanese would be concerned about in surrendering.

4. Introduce Stimson's diary from August 10, 1945, to find out the issues the President and his advisors faced in accepting the Japanese surrender. The chief point of concern for the Japanese was not the loss of life or possessions, but the status of the Emperor.
5. If time is a factor, the diary entry may be divided into sections with a group of students reading a particular section and answering the questions to that section.

See Student Handout #2 for diary entry. See Student Handout #3 for discussion questions.

Other possible points of discussion besides those on Handout #3:

1. Stimson's attitude toward Japan.
2. The process of decision making.
3. The desire to end the fighting.
4. McCloy's effort to impose free speech and American democracy and our efforts to do that today in Iraq.

Assessment:

Complete discussion questions.



Student Handout #1

Name _____

Date: _____

Points for Discussion

1. What were our veterans' first reactions to the attack on Pearl Harbor? _____

2. How did Pearl Harbor affect U.S. public opinion? _____

3. According to our veterans, what particular danger faced our Marines in Guadalcanal?

4. What were our veterans' reactions to the kamikaze? _____

5. According to our veterans, what particular dangers did they face on Iwo Jima?

6. What was the goal of island hopping up the Pacific Ocean? _____

7. Why did the Japanese fight so hard for Iwo Jima and Okinawa? _____

Answers to Student Handout #1:

1. Veterans' reactions included the observations that they had no idea what was happening; that we were unprepared, but the Japanese had failed to bomb our fuel and repair depots. (Significance of this is that we were able to repair our ships faster.)
2. Pearl Harbor affected public opinion because as a result of the attack, America came into the war totally unified. People who were isolationists now were ready to join the war.
3. At Guadalcanal, Mr. Mumma recounts how the Japanese soldiers pretended they were dead. When our troops went up to them, they would jump up and attack. Also, the enemy dead would be booby-trapped. Mr. Tallmadge mentions that we took few prisoners because the Japanese would rather die than be taken prisoner.
4. Mr. Buffman explains how the kamikazes went for the aircraft carriers first. He also mentions that since our destroyers were the farthest out (called "picket duty"), they really got hit and we lost a lot of sailors. He said the only way to stop a kamikaze was to hit them directly in the nose of the plane with a 5" gun.

Note: There were 7,000 estimated attacks by kamikazes, with more than 200 ships sunk or damaged, and casualties were estimated at 10,000 sailors killed or wounded.

5. Mr. Tallmadge describes the beaches of Iwo Jima. Made of volcanic ash, our Marines could not dig a pole for protection, so there was nowhere to hide from Japanese shelling. Also, all of their vehicles got stuck on the beach due to the ash. Mr. Mumma recounts how the Japanese mortars zeroed in on the beaches, and that is how he was wounded by shrapnel.

Mr. Del Grippo describes how they called the amtracks (amphibious tractors), "swiss cheese" because they were so full of bullet holes. All enemy guns were focused on these vehicles. He also mentions the 1,500 tunnels and caves occupied by the Japanese who would come out at night. When he saw the famous flag raising on Mt. Suribachi, he said, "The flag's up, we can go home." When the soldiers saw the flag on top of the mountain, he said it was quiet, then all hell broke loose and everyone started shooting.

6. U.S. strategy of island hopping was to work our way up the Pacific in order to get island bases from which we could bomb Japan. We would capture the most strategically important island and bypass the rest.
7. The U.S. fought so hard for Iwo Jima and Okinawa because these islands were closest to their homeland. Not mentioned in the film, Iwo Jima is considered part of Japan, so the enemy was on sacred Japanese soil, another reason to fight to the death.

Student Handout #2

Name _____

Date: _____

Secretary of War Henry Stimson's Diary

Account from the diary of Henry Stimson for August 10, 1945. It focuses on how to reply to the Japanese note of surrender and the Emperor's status after the war. Section 1 is a copy of the original transcript with his notes. Section 2 is an annotated version from Hiroshima: The Henry Stimson Diary and Papers, Part 10, as found in the following website: <http://www.douglong.com/stimsonx.htm>.

Section 1

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Japan Surrender

~~72~~ ~~73~~ ~~74~~ 72
Friday, August 10, 1945

Today was momentous. We had all packed up and the car was waiting to take us to the airport where we were headed for our vacation when word came from Colonel McCarthy at the Department that the Japanese had made an offer to surrender. Furthermore they had announced it in the clear. That busted our holiday for the present and I raced down to the office, getting there before half past eight. There I read the messages. Japan accepted the Potsdam list of terms put out by the President "with the understanding that the said declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of his majesty as a sovereign ruler". It is curious that this was the very single point that I feared would make trouble. When the Potsdam conditions were drawn and left my office where they originated, they contained a provision which permitted the continuance of the dynasty with certain conditions. The President and Byrnes struck that out. They were not obdurate on it but thought they could arrange it in the necessary secret negotiations which would take place after any armistice. There has been a good deal of uninformed agitation against the Emperor in this country mostly by people who know no more about Japan than has been given them by Gilbert and Sullivan's "Mikado", and I found today that curiously enough it had gotten deeply embedded in the minds of influential people in the State Department. Harry Hopkins is a strong anti-Emperor man in spite of his usual good sense and so are Archibald MacLeish and Dean Acheson - three very extraordinary men to take such a position.

As soon as I got to the Department I called up Connolly at the White House and notified him that I was not going away and would be standing by if he wanted me. Not more than ten minutes afterwards they called back to say that the President would like me to come right over, so I hurried around there and

Aug. 10, 1945 Diary Entry [*Japan's first surrender offer and the issue of the emperor*]:

"Today was momentous. We had all packed up and the car was waiting to take us to the airport where we were headed for our vacation when word came from Colonel [*Frank*] McCarthy [*one of Gen. George Marshall's aides*] at the [*War*] Department that the Japanese had made an offer to surrender. Furthermore they had announced it in the clear. That busted our holiday for the present and I raced down to the office, getting there before half past eight. There I read the messages. Japan accepted the Potsdam list of terms put out by the President 'with the understanding that the said declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of his majesty as a sovereign ruler'. It is curious that this was the very single point that I feared would make trouble. When the Potsdam conditions were drawn and left my office where they originated, they contained a provision which permitted the continuance of the dynasty with certain conditions. The President and [*Sec. of State*] Byrnes struck that out. They were not obdurate on it but thought they could arrange it in the necessary secret negotiations which would take place after any armistice. There has been a good deal of uninformed agitation against the Emperor in this country mostly by people who know no more about Japan than has been given them by Gilbert and Sullivan's 'Mikado', and I found today that curiously enough it had gotten deeply embedded in the minds of influential people in the State Department. Harry Hopkins [*special advisor to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman*] is a strong anti-Emperor man in spite of his usual good sense and so are Archibald MacLeish [*Assistant Sec. of State for Public and Cultural Relations*] and Dean Acheson [*Assistant Sec. of State for Congressional Relations*] - three very extraordinary men to take such a position."

Section 2

As soon as I got to the [*War*] Department I called up [*White House appointments secretary Matthew*] Connolly [*sic - Connelly*] at the White House and notified him that I was not going away and would be standing by if he wanted me. Not more than ten minutes afterwards they called back to say that the President would like me to come right over, so I hurried around there and joined in the conference consisting of the President, Byrnes, [*Sec. of the Navy James*] Forrestal, [*White House Chief of Staff*] Admiral [*William*] Leahy, and the President's aides [*according to Forrestal's diary, the Presidential aides present were Director of the Office of War Mobilization John Snyder, Naval Aide to the President Captain James Vardaman, and Military Aide to the President Gen. Harry Vaughan; Walter Millis, ed., "The Forrestal Diaries", pg. 83*]. Byrnes was troubled and anxious to find out whether we could accept this in the light of some of the public statements [*demanding "unconditional" surrender from Japan*] by Roosevelt and Truman. Of course during three years of a bitter war there have been bitter statements made about the Emperor. Now they come to plague us. Admiral Leahy took a good plain horse-sense position that the question of the Emperor was a minor matter compared with delaying a victory in the war which was now in our hands."

"The President then asked me what my opinion was and I told him that I thought that even if the question hadn't been raised by the Japanese we would have to continue the Emperor ourselves under our command and supervision in order to get into surrender the many scattered armies of the Japanese who would own no other authority and that something like this use of the Emperor must be made in order to save us from a score of bloody Iwo Jimas and Okinawas all over China and New Netherlands. He was the only source of authority in Japan under the Japanese theory of the State. I also suggested that something like an armistice over the settlement of the question was inevitable and that it would be a humane thing and the thing that might effect the settlement if we stopped the bombing during that time - stopped it immediately. My last suggestion was rejected on the ground that it couldn't be done at once because we had not yet received in official form the Japanese surrender, having nothing but the interception to give it to us, and that so far as we were concerned the war was still going on. This of course was a correct but narrow reason, for the Japanese had broadcast their offer of surrender through every country in the world. After considerable discussion we adjourned to await the arrival of the final notice."

When we adjourned Byrnes and I went into another room to discuss the form of the paper and I told him the desire of Marshall to have one of the conditions of our negotiations with Japan the surrender of the American prisoners in their hands to some accessible place where we could send planes to get them. By this time the news was out and the howling mob was in front of the White House, access to which by the public was blockaded on Pennsylvania Avenue."

I drove back to the *[War]* Department and entered into conference with Marshall and *[Assistant Sec. of War John]* McCloy who had just returned from his overseas trip *[McCloy had been inspecting the condition of Western Europe]* while I was at the White House. *[Special Assistant to Stimson Harvey]* Bundy, *[Assistant Sec. of War for Air Robert]* Lovett, and *[Special Consultant to Stimson George]* Harrison and I were together and I later called in *[Air Force]* Colonel *[de Forest]* Van Slyck who had written the intelligent article I had shown the President the other day on the form of a surrender; and also General *[John]* Weckerling *[Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff]* of G-2 *[Army Intelligence]* who has not been quite so intelligent on this matter as he might be, together with Mr. Robert A. Kinney and Mr. William R. Braisted who are acting as Japanese experts for the G-2 people. We started in in accordance with a request that Byrnes had made of me at our talk on the drafting of the whole terms of surrender including the answer to the present Japanese offer. On the latter I found for once that McCloy was rather divergent from me. He was intrigued with the idea that this was the opportunity to force upon Japan through the Emperor a program of free speech, etc. and all the elements of American free government. I regarded this as unreal and said that the thing to do was to get this surrender through as quickly as we can before Russia, who has begun invading Manchuria, should get down in reach of the Japanese homeland. I felt it was of great importance to get the homeland into our hands before the Russians could put in any substantial claim to occupy and help rule it. After all this discussion I called Byrnes on the telephone and discussed the matter with him. He told me he had drafted the answer to the Japanese notice and that he would like me to see

it. So I sent over *[Stimson's aide Colonel William] Kyle* to the Department and got it. While a compromise, it was much nearer my position than McCloy's and after a while McCloy agreed that it was good enough from his standpoint. I thought it was a pretty wise and careful statement and stood a better chance of being accepted than a more outspoken one. It asserted that the action of the Emperor must be dominated by the Allied Commander, using the singular in order to exclude any condominium such as we have in Poland *[i.e., there would be only one country in charge of Japan, and that would be the U.S.]*. He had asked me in the morning who was the commander that had been agreed upon among our forces and I told him I thought it was *[Commanding General of the U.S. Army in the Pacific Douglas] MacArthur* although there had been quite an issue between the Army and the Navy to have a dual command, MacArthur and *[U.S. Pacific Fleet Commander in Chief Admiral Chester] Nimitz*."

"During the morning Forrestal had called me up for the purpose of telling me he was heart and soul with me in regard to the proposition of shutting off attack and saving life during the time we discussed this. He told me that they were planning another big attack by *[Pacific Third Fleet Admiral William "Bull"] Halsey* and he was afraid this would go on."

After a fifteen or twenty minutes delay, which is unusual in this Administration, the President and Byrnes came in from a conference which had been going on in the other room and the President announced to the Cabinet that we had received official notice from Japan through the intermediary, Sweden, and that Byrnes had drawn a reply to it of which they thought they could get an acceptance from Great Britain, China, and perhaps Russia, with all of whom they were communicating. The paper was in the exact form that Byrnes had read me over the telephone and which I told him I approved."

"This has been a pretty heavy day."



Student Handout #3

Name _____

Date: _____

Questions for discussion:

The “single point” of contention between the U.S. and Japan that Stimson feared the most was the status of Emperor Hirohito after the war.

1. What were the views of President Truman and State Department officials such as Dean Acheson:

2. What was Stimson’s view?

3. What were Stimson’s reasons?

4. How did Stimson feel about some Americans’ knowledge of Japanese culture?

5. What other demand did he and General Marshall feel should be included in the negotiations?

6. What was Stimson’s fear concerning the Russians?

7. Did the U.S. act alone or with her allies? Give evidence to support your answer.

Answers to Student Handout #3:

1. The President and Mr. Acheson, as well as other State Department officials, were against including the continuing rule of the Emperor in post war Japan. They felt that it could be handled in secret negotiations later in the peace process.
2. Stimson felt that the Emperor should be included in the peace agreement. If not, the Japanese would refuse to sign.
3. His reasons were:
 - a. He felt we needed the Emperor to convince the scattered Japanese forces to surrender, or we would have more battles like Iwo Jima.
 - b. The Emperor was the only source of authority in the Japanese state.
 - c. It would bring peace quicker. Stimson wanted to stop the bombings during negotiations. This was rejected and the fighting continued.
4. Stimson felt that some of the people in the government, as well as the American public, knew little about Japanese culture. They only knew what they learned from watching Gilbert and Sullivan's popular operetta, *The Mikado*.
5. The surrender of American POW's in a place where we could readily get them.
6. The Russians were advancing through Manchuria and Stimson feared if Russia reached Japan, Russia would demand being part of the occupation and rule of Japan. Stimson wanted to avoid that by acting quickly toward surrender.
7. The U.S. acted in conjunction with her allies. The reply to the Japanese surrender was shown to the British, Chinese and Russians. Also, at the Potsdam Conference, Truman, Stalin and Churchill had talked about the surrender of Japan.



National Standards

History

- 5-12 Explain the major turning points of the war and contrast military campaigns in the European and Pacific Theaters. (Draw upon data in historical maps.)
- 7-12 Evaluate the decision to employ nuclear weapons against Japan and assess later controversies over the decision. (Evaluate major debates among historians.)
- 7-12 Describe military experiences and explain how they fostered American identity and interactions among people of diverse backgrounds. (Utilize literary sources including oral testimony.)

English Language Arts

- 8. Students use a variety of technological and informational resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

Pennsylvania Standards

Reading, Writing, and Listening – 1.2.11.8; 1.4.11.B; 1.5.11.B; 1.6.11.E, F; 1.8.11.A, B

Social Studies Standards – 8.3.12.A, D; 8.1.12.B, C; 8.2.12.8