



# THIS MONTH in MILITARY HISTORY

- 1777 U.S. Forces defeat British forces at the Battle of Princeton.
- 1781 Richmond, Virginia is burned by British forces under the command of Benedict Arnold.
- 1815 Battle of New Orleans ends in U.S. victory.
- 1847 U.S. forces retake Los Angeles in the last California battle of the Mexican-American war.
- 1887 U.S. Senate allows the Navy to lease Pearl Harbor as a naval base.
- 1918 President Wilson announces his "Fourteen Points" during WWI.
- 1942 The War Production Board orders the temporary end of all civilian automobile sales.
- 1943 The Pentagon is officially dedicated.
- 1966 U.S. forces move into the Mekong Delta for the first time.
- 1990 U.S. Invasion of Panama *Operation Just Cause* officially concludes.

## TRIVIA

- 1 What was MG Wainwright's nick name that he embraced prior to the war?
- 2 GEN MacArthur protested against the awarding of the Medal of Honor to which Soldier after the fall of Luzon in 1942?
- 3 On average how many support personnel were needed for every front line fighter in WWII?

### ANSWERS FOR December 2019 QUESTIONS

- 1 What was the lowest temperature that was reached during the Battle of the Bulge?  
➤ **Approximately 0 F**
- 2 Who coined the term "Battle of the Bulge?"  
➤ **United Press International reporter Larry Newman**
- 3 What term did BG McAuliffe use to respond to the German request for surrender during the siege of Bastogne?  
➤ **"Nuts"**



As a result of the battle, Manila was completely destroyed as seen in this photo from mid 1945. Most of the city was razed and then rebuilt after the war. (U.S. Army photo, 1945)

For answers to trivia, information on this month's artifact spotlight, digital copies of old newsletters and more, visit the ASC History Office website at:

<https://aschq.army.mil/About-Us/History>



# THE ASC HISTORY NEWSLETTER

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Presented to you by your friendly ASC History Office. Feel free to call or stop by our office for any of your history needs.

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## The Battle of Luzon

GEN Douglas MacArthur's words "I shall return" were initially realized in October 1944 when American forces landed on Leyte. However, it was not until after the reconquest of Manila in March 1945 that his promise was fully realized. An intermediary step was the American landing on Luzon on the morning of 9 January 1945 after more than two and a half long years of Japanese occupation. The Japanese had controlled Luzon since May 1942, when the defeat of American forces led to GEN MacArthur's departure and MG Jonathan Wainwright's surrender.

In the intervening years Japanese fortunes in the Philippines had completely changed. Beginning in October 1944, more than 100,000 American soldiers landed on Leyte Island, to the south of Luzon. Signal Corps cameras captured the pivotal moment as MacArthur waded ashore on Leyte exclaiming that he had returned to the Philippines as he had famously promised he would after the initial defeat of American forces in 1942. By the time the Battle of Leyte was over in December the Japanese had lost over 50,000 men. The U.S. forces lost about 3,500 Soldiers.

The concurrent sea battle of Leyte Gulf was a similar story. The loss of ships and sailors was taxing for both sides. The Japanese lost 28 war ships, 300 planes, and over 12,000 Sailors. The Allies lost 6 ships, 200 planes, and some 3,000 Sailors, including the first warship sunk by a *Kamikaze* pilot. In both the Battle for Leyte and the Battle of Leyte Gulf the Japanese took heavier losses, and they were losses that, late in the war, they could never make up.

These American victories wearing down the Japanese on land and sea led to the way for the invasion of Luzon to take place at Lingayen Gulf on 9 January 1945. Once again, cameras recorded MacArthur walking ashore once again on Luzon, this time to greet cheering Filipinos. The initial landings were carried out by the 6th Army under the command of GEN Walter Krueger with approximately

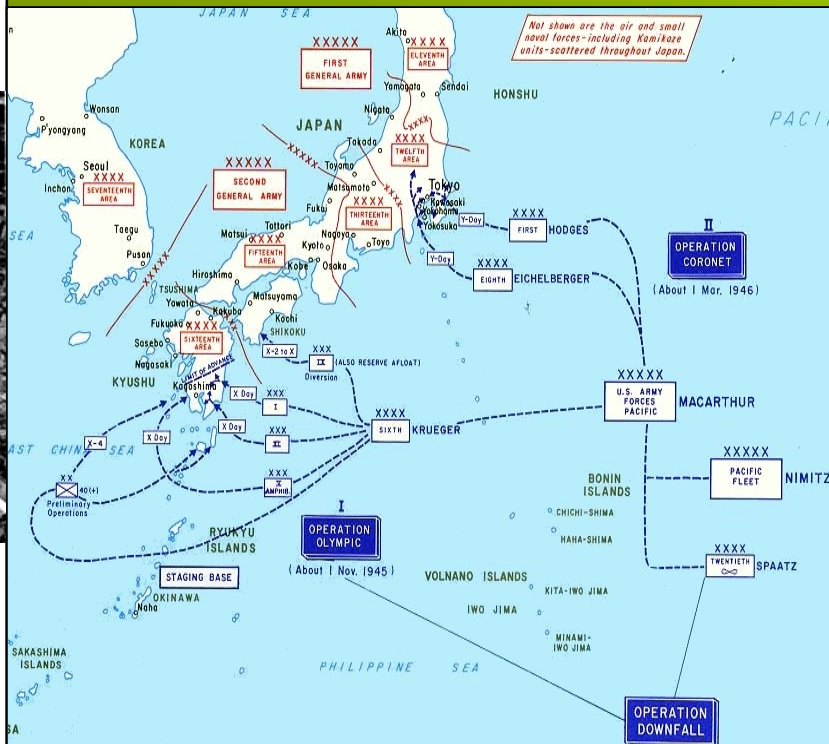
175,000 troops landing along the 20-mile wide beachhead. The U.S. forces did not meet much resistance until they reached Clark Air Base on 23 January. The battle there lasted until the end of the month, at which time U.S. forces advanced toward Manila.

A second amphibious landing took place on 15 January, forty-five miles southwest of Manila. On 31 January, two regiments of the 11th Airborne Division made an airborne assault and later advanced toward the southern edge of Manila. On 3 February a combat team from the 1st Cavalry Division was the first American unit to enter the city. On the same day MacArthur announced the capture of Manila, entered but the battle for Manila was just beginning. GEN Yamashita, Japanese commander, had ordered his troops to evacuate the city, but Japanese naval units chose to stay and fight. They entrenched and fought building to building while also massacring Filipino civilians. A month later, when Japanese resistance ended, Manila was destroyed, the victim of the only urban battle in the Pacific theater. The Japanese had over 17,000 men in the city. Over 16,000 were killed. The Americans lost 1,000 men, while between 100,000 and 240,000 Filipino civilians died.

Battle continued throughout the island of Luzon in the following weeks, with more U.S. troops landing on the island. The Allies had taken control of all strategically and economically important locations of Luzon by mid March but significant Japanese resistance continued until August. Pockets of Japanese soldiers held out in the mountains with a scattered few holding out for many years afterwards.

Casualties for the campaign were stunningly high for the Japanese. Japanese losses were 205,535 dead, with 9,050 taken prisoners. U.S. losses were far lower, with 10,640 dead and 36,550 wounded. Civilian casualties outside of Manila are estimated at another 120,000.

## Operation Downfall



Operation Downfall was the Allied plan for the invasion of the Japanese home islands. If executed it would have been the largest amphibious operation in history. 6th Army, after completing their portion of the Battle of Manila shifted focus to prepare for their portion of Downfall. The liberation of the Philippines was an important preparatory step to the invasion of Japan. The Japanese fleet destroyed sea lanes of communication interdicted. The Allies now a safe base for full preparation and staging.

The planned invasion, scheduled for early November 1945, never took place due to dropping the atomic bombs. In an interesting September tour 6th Army planners were able walk the beaches and assess the Japanese defenses they had not been forced to test. The analysis sobered the Americans when they contemplated the potential losses on the beach.

"History is a relentless master. It has no present, only the past rushing into the future." — John F. Kennedy