

# WWII PACIFIC THEATER OF OPERATIONS: WESTERN PACIFIC

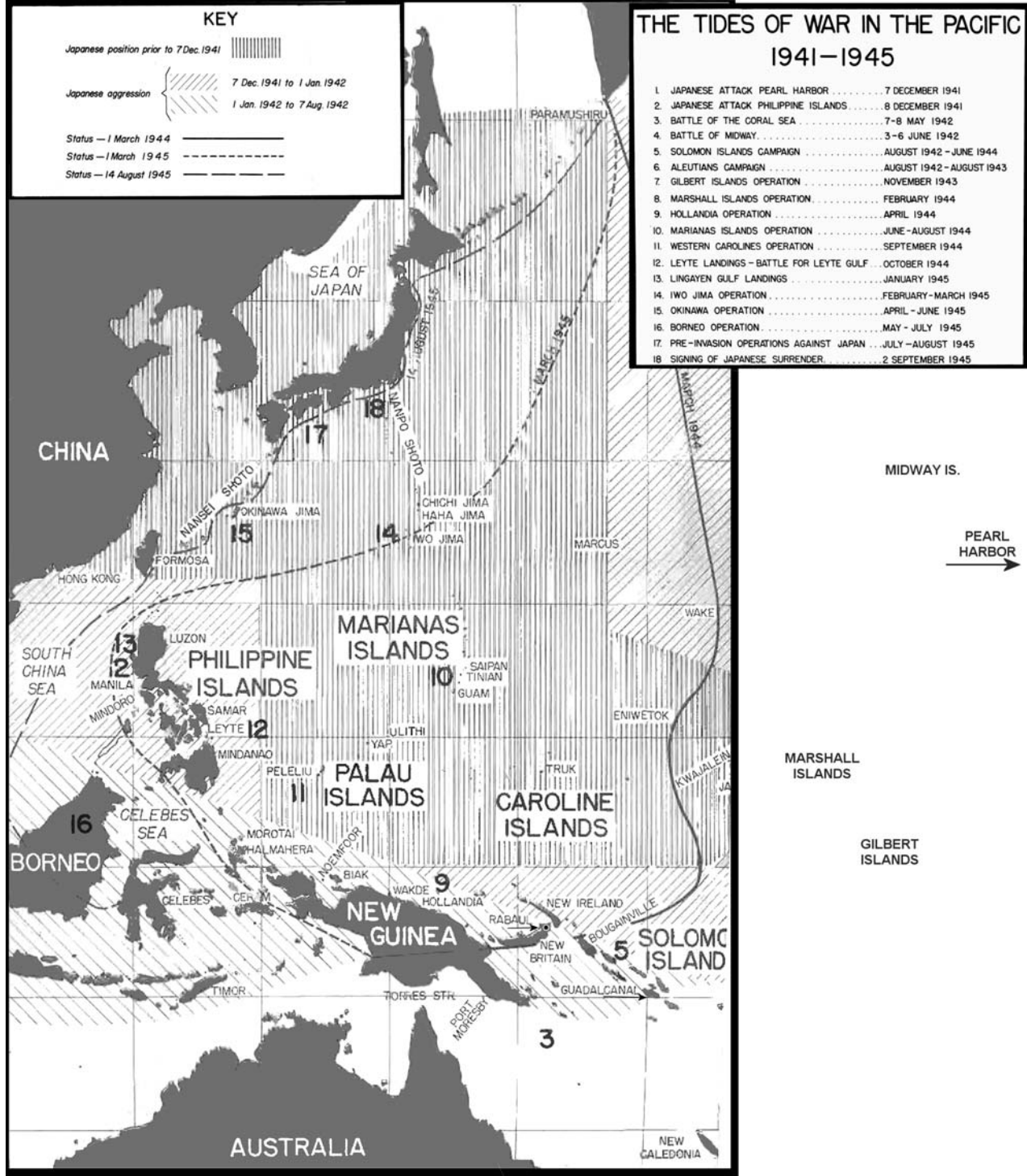


Fig. 17: The Pacific Theater of Operations from Fleet Admiral King's published report. Most of the numbers in the table of the numerical codes in the "The Tides of War" listed at right are included in this section, but those events in the central and eastern Pacific, Pearl Harbor, Midway, etc., are not on this section of the chart.

## GLOSSARY OF NAVAL TERMS USED

**Air wings:** the parent organization of the aviation units assigned to an aircraft carrier or station, comprised of a number of squadrons, usually fighter, bombing, torpedo, and attack squadrons. Each squadron was a separate "unit" or "command" with an individual commanding officer, executive officer, and administrative organization. The air wing, or carrier air wing, was the "unit" or "command" in overall charge of all the assigned squadrons. Again, an individual "unit" or "command" was commanded by "CAG" or Commander, Carrier Air Group. The term CAG remains in use even though the older term "Air Group" has been replaced by "Air Wing". Initially, Air Groups bore the names of their assigned ships, *i.e.* CHAG was Commander, Hornet Air Group; during World War II Carrier Air Groups were numbered, sometimes reflecting the hull number of the assigned carrier. Often there was a relationship between the numbers of the assigned squadrons and the air group numbers. Those attempts at numerical precision soon were abandoned. CAGs worked for the ships' commanding officers until the mid 1980s. Since then the Senior Air Wing Commander has been a more senior naval aviator (generally, a Captain) and more of an "equal" to the commanding officer of the carrier than a subordinate.

**CAP duty:** Combat Air Patrol duty. Aircraft assigned to defend against air attack, generally fighter aircraft (VF).

**"Flew their flags on":** Flag officers "break" their flags in their flag ships. Some ships are configured with additional space and equipment for an admiral's staff. When serving as the flag ship for the embarked admiral, the ship literally flies the admiral's personal flag from the yardarm. Admirals' flags display the same number of stars as his rank. For line officers the flag is a field of blue with white stars. Rear Admirals had two stars, Vice Admirals had three stars, Admirals four stars, and the Fleet Admiral had five stars. Commodores were one-star flag officers. The flag of only the senior flag officer was displayed. Thus, when both Admiral Halsey and his Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral Carney, were in USS *New Jersey* (BB-62) only the four star flag was at the truck.

**Gun Director:** the part of the ship used to control the fire of one or more of the ship's guns. It generally consists of space for an officer and enlisted men to operate optical and electronic equipment and data links to control the ship's guns by providing data as to range, speed, angle, etc. increasing the accuracy of the guns.

**Hull blisters:** additions to the hull of the ship, generally placed on both the port and starboard side to widen the beam. Blisters added stability and protection as well as additional space to load liquids. They also affect the ship's stability and roll.

**Laid down:** construction begun, from the term "keel laying" when the keel or main first part of the ship is placed on the building ways. Often marked by a ceremonial keel laying and initialing of the steel.

**Laid up:** taken out of active service, decommissioned and placed in reserve status.

**"Magic Carpet" fleet:** these were U.S. ships used to transport veterans back to the continental United States for separation in 1945 and 1946. The press release announcing the creation of Operation Magic Carpet explains this in greater detail. See [http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/NHC/MagicCarpet/mc\\_pr\\_451002.htm](http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/NHC/MagicCarpet/mc_pr_451002.htm)

**"Plank Owner:"** an individual who was a member of the crew of a ship when that ship was placed in commission. By tradition, plank owners were entitled, when that ship was decommissioned, to a piece of the wooden deck. In the modern days of steel ships, this is a now more a term of honor.

**Stood out:** departed, sailed from.

**TF 38 or 58: Task Force 58 and Task Force 38:** The striking arm of the U.S. fleet in the Pacific Theater of Operations was Task Force ("TF") 38 or 58, again the same ships with different designations depending on the fleet commander. TF 38 generally was commanded by Vice Admiral John S. McCain and TF 58 was commanded by Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher, both distinguished naval aviators. The Task Forces consisted of four Task Groups ("TG"), each of which generally was comprised of four or five fast carriers, three or four fleet carriers (*Essex*-class or the pre-war carrier *Enterprise*) plus one or two *Independence*-class carriers.

**Tombstone rear admiral:** an officer who served as Captain and, upon retirement, was given the title but not the retired pay of a Rear Admiral, then the next highest grade, based upon combat awards. The practice was ended in the late 1950s.

Map accompanying *NJPH* article, Nov. 2008 (Vol 33 , No. 4. Whole number 172):

NEW JERSEY-BUILT: 13 FAST AIRCRAFT CARRIERS THAT SERVED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY BETWEEN 1926 AND 2009: PART II: The Emergency Carriers: The First Three Of Nine *Independence*- Class Small Carriers Built During World War II, By Captain Lawrence B. Brennan, U.S. Navy (Ret.)



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<sup>i</sup> King, Fleet Admiral Ernest J., U.S.N., *U.S. Navy At War 1941-1945 Official Reports*, (Navy Department, Washington, 1946).