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HEADQUARTERS U. S. MARINE CORPS
HISTORICAL DIVISION

CHRONOLOGY
of
WORLD WAR II

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NOTE: This chronology, compiled from published material, includes all important dates pertinent to the activities of the United States Marine Corps in the present war. All dates are Greenwich Civil Time.

1933

January 30 Adolph Hitler became German Chancellor; Von Hindenburg relegated to the role of puppet President.

1934

July 25 Nazi putsch to overthrow Austrian Government of Chancellor Dollfuss checkmated by Italian mobilization at Brenner Pass.

1935

January 13 Plebiscite gave Saar Basin to Germany.

1936

March 7 Hitler's military forces took over Rhineland.

July 18 Spanish Civil War began (ended March 28, 1939).

October 27 Rome-Berlin Axis formed.

1937

July 7 Japan attacked China. Fourth Regiment, U. S. Marine Corps, at Shanghai, reinforced by additional U. S. Marines.

1938

March 12-13 Hitler's legions occupied Austria.

September 26-29 Munich crisis, when Hitler demanded the Sudeten area of Czecho-Slovakia.

1939

- March 10-16 Hitler took over the remainder of Czecho-Slovakia.
- March 23 Hitler annexed Memel, Lithuania.
- September 1 Germany marched on Poland.
- Strength of Marine Corps: 1,434 officers and 18,271 enlisted men.
- September 3 Britain and France declared war on Germany.

1940

- April 9 Germany invaded Denmark and Norway.
- May 10 Germany invaded Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg.
- May 14 Dutch army surrendered.
- May 26 Anglo-French troops began evacuation of Dunkerque.
- May 28 King Leopold surrendered Belgian army.
- June 4 Dunkerque evacuation completed; 242,585 British and French troops saved, but all equipment lost.
- June 10 Italy entered war as an ally of Germany.
- June 17 Petain became Premier of France, asked for armistice.
- June 21 Armistice signed between France and Germany.
- June 27 President Roosevelt proclaimed a limited national emergency.
- July 3 Britain immobilized large part of French fleet in Battle of Oran.
- July 19 Two-ocean Navy authorized.
- September 3 President Roosevelt informed Congress U.S. had traded 50 overage destroyers to Britain in exchange for naval and air bases in New World.
- September 27 Germany, Italy and Japan signed Triple Alliance.
- October 15 Major General Commandant issued Mobilization Orders to all Marine Corps Reserve units to begin mobilization on November 1, 1940.

1940 (Cont'd)

- October 16 All U.S. men between ages of 21-35 registered for Selective Service.
- October 28 Italy invaded Greece.
- November 9 23 Battalions of Marine Corps Reserve completed mobilization and took stations.
- December 16 All Aviation squadrons of Marine Corps Reserve mobilized at Reserve bases; East Coast Squadrons at Quantico, and West Coast squadrons at San Diego; squadrons were disbanded and personnel pooled with the various operating Air Groups.

1941

- January 16 A number of Provisional Companies organized at Quantico for duty in British West Indies.
- January 26 U.S. Marines arrived at Argentia, Newfoundland...
- March 11 President Roosevelt signed Lend-Lease Act.
- March 12 U.S. Marines arrived Jamaica, West Indies.
- March 14 U.S. Marines arrived at Bermuda.
- March 17 U.S. Marines arrived at Antigua, British West Indies.
- March 22 U.S. Marines arrived at St. Lucia, British West Indies.
- March 23 U.S. Marines arrived at Trinidad, British West Indies.
- April 6 Germany invaded Yugoslavia.
- April 9 U.S. Marines landed in Greenland.
- April 18 Yugoslavia army surrendered.
- May 1 Marine Barracks, New River, N. C. established.
- May 27 President Roosevelt proclaimed unlimited national emergency. Strength of USMC: 3,236 officers and 48,418 enlisted men.

1941 (Cont'd)

- June 22 Germany invaded Russia.
First Marine Provisional Brigade sailed for Iceland.
- July 7 First Marine Provisional Brigade landed in Iceland; held defensive sector in Western Iceland until relieved by U.S. Army, early in 1942.
- August 11 President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill met at sea; eight-point "Atlantic Charter" promulgated.
- October 4 U.S. Marines arrived at Georgetown, British Guiana.
- November 8 President Roosevelt approved the withdrawal of U.S. Marines from China.
- November 17 President Roosevelt conferred with Sanburo Kurusu, head of Jap peace (?) mission to U.S.
- November 27 Second Battalion, Fourth Marines, left Shanghai, China, for Philippines, on U.S.S. President Madison.
- November 28 First Battalion, Fourth Marines, left Shanghai, China, for Philippines, on U.S.S. President Harrison.
- November 29 Japanese closed Army office in U.S.
- December 1 Second Battalion, Fourth Marines arrived at Olongapo, Philippine Islands, from China.
- December 2 First Battalion, Fourth Marines arrived at Olongapo, Philippine Islands, from China.
- December 7 Japanese aircraft attacked Pearl Harbor. Midway shelled by enemy surface force. Wake attacked by enemy bombers. Guam and the Philippines attacked by enemy aircraft. U.S. Marines (16 officers and 178 enlisted men) at Tientsin and Peiping, China, interned by Japanese.
- Strength of U.S. Marine Corps: 70,425.
- December 8 27 Jap bombers hit Wake Island; 55 civilians killed and many others wounded.

1941 (Cont'd)

- December 8 First Battalion, Fourth Marines moved from Olongapo to Mariveles, Philippine Islands.
- Japanese surface forces appeared off Guam at about sunset.
- United States and Great Britain declared war on Japan.
- December 9 Japanese aircraft bombed Wake Island but accomplished very little damage.
- Navy Yard at Cavite, P.I., virtually destroyed by Japanese bombers; U.S. Marines evacuated.
- Guam captured by Japanese; U.S. Marines put up a gallant fight.
- December 10 Japanese ships moved in and shelled Wake Island; two Marine Corps fighter planes bombed and strafed an enemy cruiser leaving it ablaze from stem to stern; same planes and shore guns sank or damaged three additional vessels. Later, 27 Jap bombers attacked Wake; two bombers shot down by fighter plane and one by AA.
- December 11 30 Japanese bombers attacked Wake Island but resistance from AA guns and the three remaining fighter planes prevented a single bomb hit on the island.
- Second Lieutenant David M. Kliever, USMC, sank a Jap sub 12 miles south of Wake, bombing and strafing with his Wildcat.
- United States declared war on Germany and Italy.
- December 12 Olongapo, Philippine Islands, bombed causing some casualties in Second Battalion, Fourth Marines.
- December 13 32 Jap bombers hit Wake Island.
- December 14 27 Jap bombers attacked Wake.
- December 15 41 Jap bombers hit Wake in first attack; a second attack made that night.

1941 (Cont'd)

- December 16 Jap bombers attacked Wake. Johnston Island shelled by enemy submarine.
- December 18 Sangley Point Air Station (near Cavite, Philippine Islands) bombed; 12 Marines killed.
- December 19 27 Jap bombers hit Wake.
Sangley Point Air Station, Philippine Islands, bombed by Japs, 12 Marines of 1st Separate Battalion killed, and Battalion moved to Mariveles, on Bataan Peninsula.
- December 21 Marine Detachment, Olongapo, Philippine Islands, disbanded and personnel absorbed into Second Battalion, Fourth Marines.
- December 22 By sea and air the Japs overwhelmed Wake Island's defenders, but the Marines went down with guns flaming defiantly.
- December 25 First Separate Marine Battalion, moved from Mariveles to Corregidor, Philippine Islands.
- December 27 Fourth Marines moved to Corregidor and took over beach defenses.

1942

- January 1 First Separate Marine Battalion on Corregidor became the Third Battalion, Fourth Marines.
Fourth Marines sent machine gun detachments to Fort Hughes (Cabello Island) and Fort Drum (El Fraile Island).
- January 5 Special detachment from Fourth Marines organized as a guard for General MacArthur's advance headquarters on Bataan.
- January 6 Second Marine Brigade sailed from San Diego for Samoa.
- January 11 Naval Air Station, Samoa, shelled by Jap vessel.
- January 18 Japanese reported 1,235 Wake prisoners arrived in Yokohama.

1942 (Cont'd)

- January 22 Japs landed on southwest Bataan in rear of American-Filipino line and Naval Battalion (Navy-Marine-Army personnel) moved out to intercept.
- January 23 Australia reported Jap landings in New Britain, New Guinea and Solomons.
- January 26 Midway shelled by Japanese submarine.
- First American Expeditionary Force of World War II landed in Northern Ireland.
- January 28 Naval Battalion and Filipino scouts wiped out Jap landing force on southwest Bataan; remaining Japs committed suicide by jumping off the high cliffs.
- January 24-30 Battle of Macassar Strait.
- January 30 American forces sent to Sierra Leone, near Dakar, Africa.
- February 1 U.S. carrier planes raided Marshall and Gilbert Islands.
- February 9 Secretary of the Navy reported to President Roosevelt that 41,274 men had enlisted in Marine Corps since Pearl Harbor, giving a total strength of 98,074 and large numbers of applicants were still flowing into Marine Corps recruiting stations.
- February 15 Prime Minister Churchill announced fall of Singapore.
- February 20 Japs invaded Bali.
- February 24 U. S. carrier task force raided Wake and Marcus Island.
- February 27-
March 1 Battle of Java Sea. 12 Allied warships sunk among which was U.S.S. Houston; one damaged. Jap losses included 1 cruiser sunk.
- March 3 U. S. carrier planes raided Marcus Island.
- March 8 First Provisional Marine Brigade embarked at Iceland, returning to Navy jurisdiction.
- March 10 USMC airmen from Midway intercepted Jap bombers, shot down one and forced others to turn back.

1942 (Cont'd)

- March 10 U.S. carrier planes raided Lae and Salamaua, New Guinea.
- March 16 War Department announced units of U. S. Army were in Australia.
- March 17 General MacArthur assumed command of United Nations forces in Australia and Southwest Pacific. U. S. held third draft lottery.
- March 19 President Roosevelt ordered registration of all males between 45 and 64 on April 27.
- March 23 Secretary of the Navy announced that Marine base at Santa Margarita Ranch would be named Camp Pendleton in honor of Major General Joseph H. Pendleton, USMC.
- March 25 1st Marine Provisional Brigade arrived in the U.S. from Iceland and disembarked.
- March 28 Seventh Defense Battalion (Reinforced) moved to Apia, Island of Upolu, Western Samoa; New Zealand defense force reported to battalion for tactical duty - the first time in history that a New Zealand fighting force came under jurisdiction of a USMC commander.
- April 8 American-Filipino forces on Bataan (approximately 33,353) surrendered to Japanese including approximately 6 officers and 71 enlisted men, USMC, who were serving with U. S. Army on Bataan.
- April 10 Third Marine Brigade sailed from Norfolk, Virginia for Samoa.
- April 18 Tokyo bombed by Army B-25's, taking off from U.S.S. Hornet. Carrier Enterprise provided fighter-plane cover to take-off point.
- April 25 American troops arrived in New Caledonia.
- May 4 Beginning of Coral Sea Battle. Planes of Yorktown sank and damaged a number of Japanese vessels in Tulagi Harbor.
- May 6 Corregidor surrendered; approximately 17 officers and 1,474 enlisted men of the Fourth Marines captured.

1942 (Cont'd)

- May 8 Third Marine Brigade arrived at Samoa and took over defense of Upolu and Savaii (New Zealand mandate) and Wallis (French.)
- End of Coral Sea Battle. Japs lose two carriers and other ships. U.S. carrier Lexington sunk.
- May 11 Mindanao Island surrendered and Japanese claimed conquest of the Philippines complete.
- June The First Marine Division arrived in New Zealand.
- June 3 First day of the Battle of Midway.
- Japanese aircraft attacked Dutch Harbor, Alaska.
- June 4 U. S. aircraft carrier Yorktown sunk in Battle of Midway.
- Jap planes made a second attack on Dutch Harbor, Alaska.
- June 6 Last day of Battle of Midway. In this four-day battle the Japanese lost four aircraft carriers and other ships.
- August 7 The First Marine Division (Reinforced) landed on Tulagi, Gavutu, Florida, and Guadalcanal Islands, Solomons.
- August 8 First Marine Division units landed on Tanambogo Island, Solomon Islands.
- August 9 Battle of Savo Island fought off Guadalcanal's north shore; Allies lost the U. S. cruisers Astoria, Quincy, and Vincennes and the Australian cruiser Canberra.
- August 12 First plane to land on Henderson Field, Guadalcanal, was a U. S. Navy PB4Y, which evacuated two wounded men.
- August 17 The Second Marine Raider Battalion landed on Makin Island, Gilbert Group, just before dawn from the submarines Nautilus and Argonaut, and destroyed a seaplane base, supply warehouses and other installations as well as approximately 100 Japs before they were taken off the island ~~that~~ night. of Aug. 18

1942 (Cont'd)

- August 18 Large commando forces raided Dieppe, France.
- August 20 First Marine Corps planes arrived at Henderson Field, Guadalcanal - VMF-223 (Captain John L. Smith) and VMSB-232 (Major R. C. Mangrum).
- August 21 In the Battle of the Tenaru River, Marines killed 871 Japs while losing 28 killed and 72 wounded.
- August 23 First day of the Battle of the Eastern Solomons, in which Marine Corps air attack groups from Guadalcanal, planes of the Saratoga and Enterprise, and Army bombers smashed a Japanese attempt to reinforce their troops on Guadalcanal.
- August 24 Marine Corps Wildcat fighter planes from Guadalcanal downed 24 Japanese twin-engined bombers; Saratoga planes bombed a Jap carrier, a cruiser and a destroyer.
- August 25 Last day of the Battle of the Eastern Solomons; Enterprise damaged, but U. S. air and naval forces turned back the enemy air and sea armada.
- August 26 13 Jap planes shot down by Marine pilots in air battle over Guadalcanal.
- August 29 Captain John L. Smith, USMC, shot down his 4th and 5th enemy planes, to become the first "ACE" in the history of the U. S. Marine Corps. He later ran his total number of planes shot down to 19.
- August 30 14 enemy planes shot down over Guadalcanal by 7 Marine pilots with no losses to our own forces.
- September 3 The first SCAT (USMC) plane landed at Guadalcanal.
- September 5 Japanese destroyer force bombarded Marines' position and the airfield on Guadalcanal.
- September 7 Japs try to reinforce Guadalcanal forces, lost heavily in troops and small boats; 46 Jap planes raided island.
- September 13-14 Battle of Bloody Ridge on Guadalcanal, in which the Japs suffered heavy losses; Japanese battleships bombarded Guadalcanal.

1942 (Cont'd)

- September 15 U. S. aircraft carrier Wasp sunk in south Pacific by enemy submarine torpedo.
- September 18 Seventh Marines arrived on Guadalcanal as reinforcements.
- October 2 Marines from Samoa occupied Funafuti, Ellice Islands.
- October 3 Lt. Colonel Harold W. Bauer, USMC, shot down five Jap fighter planes, near Guadalcanal.
- October 5 U. S. carrier planes raided Jap bases in vicinity of Bougainville, Solomon Islands.
- October 6-7 More Jap reinforcements landed on Guadalcanal, pointing toward the battle for Henderson Field.
- October 8 Navy planes damaged five Jap ships, destroyed eight planes north of Solomons.
- October 10 Japs landed additional reinforcements on Guadalcanal.
- October 11-12 The Battle of Cape Esperence, off Guadalcanal. U. S. Naval forces balked Japanese attempt to land reinforcements on Guadalcanal, sank six warships and damaged others; lost one destroyer and suffered damage to two cruisers.
- October 13 164th Infantry, U. S. Army, ^{reinforced} ~~relieved a~~ Marines ~~regiment~~ on Guadalcanal.
- October 14 Jap warships shelled Guadalcanal and landed reinforcements.
- October 15 Five Jap transports unloaded few miles west of Marine position on Guadalcanal. Navy and Marine Corps planes attacked a Japanese surface force north of Guadalcanal, damaging a cruiser, and scoring hits on three transports which were beached. Japanese ships bombarded Henderson Field.
- October 16 Jap warships shelled Henderson Field, Guadalcanal.
- October 18 U. S. planes shot down 14 Jap bombers over Guadalcanal; scored hits on three cruisers and several other ships in harbor on Bougainville Island.

1942 (Cont'd)

- October 19 U. S. warships shelled Jap positions in northwest shore of Guadalcanal.
- October 22-23 Battle of the Matanikau River, Guadalcanal; Japs suffered heavy casualties in tanks and men.
- October 24-26 Three Japanese night attacks against Henderson Field repulsed with heavy Jap losses.
- October 24 British Eighth Army began El Alamein drive in Egypt.
- October 25 Captain Joseph J. Foss and three other members of his squadron flew their F4F Wildcats off the muddy fighter strip on Guadalcanal and knocked down seventeen Zeros and five bombers.
- October 26 Battle of Santa Cruz Island, Solomons; U. S. Carrier Hornet sunk by Japanese aircraft.
- November 2 Marines launch attack across Matanikau River. Japs land east of Marine positions.
- November 4 Eighth Marines arrived on Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.
Second Marine Raider Battalion landed at Aola, Guadalcanal.
- November 8 Allied forces landed on the north and west coasts of Africa; six U.S. Marines were assigned duty on HMS Hartland, whose mission was to crash the boom and open the way into Oran Harbor, and 24 U.S. Marines went ashore at Arzew and assisted in taking over the ships in the harbor.
- November 10 Jap beachhead east of Marine position wiped out after 7-day fight. Some Japs escape.
- November 11 Beginning of the Battle of Guadalcanal, heroic sea-air action off Guadalcanal's north shore.

Capt. Wm. E. Davis, USMC, and 5 Marines, captured the town of Mers-el-Kebir, in North Africa.
- November 15 End of the Battle of Guadalcanal; in a three-day running naval battle, the Japs lost two battleships, six heavy cruisers, two light cruisers, six destroyers and twelve transports sunk, and two battleships, one cruiser and seven destroyers damaged, while we lost two light cruisers and seven destroyers.

1942 (Cont'd)

- November 19 Marines resumed their land offensive to the west of the Matanikau River, Guadalcanal.
- November 30 Battle of Lunga Point; U.S.S. North Hampton sunk off northwest coast of Guadalcanal.
- December 4 Second Marine Raider Battalion returned to Marine defense perimeter on Guadalcanal after a month in jungle chasing Japs.
- December 9 First Marine Division relieved on Guadalcanal by Army troops reinforced by units of the 2d Marine Division.

1943

- January 4 U. S. warships bombarded Munda, New Georgia.
- January 15 Captain Joe Foss shot down three enemy planes to bring his score to 26.
- January 23 Tripoli fell to British 8th Army.
- January 29 U.S.S. Chicago sunk by Jap aerial torpedoes in Solomons.
- February 1 Voluntary enlistments of men 18 to 37 in Navy and Marine Corps terminated.
- February 9 Conquest of Guadalcanal completed.
- February 12 Colonel Littleton W. T. Waller, USMCR, promoted to Brigadier General to rank from September 25, 1942 - the first Marine Corps Reserve officer to be promoted to General rank.
- February 15 Enrollment of applicants for the Marine Corps Women's Reserve began.
- February 18 U.S. surface force bombarded Attu, Aleutian Islands.
- February 20 U.S. Army and Marine Corps units occupied Russell Islands, north of Guadalcanal; no enemy resistance.
- March 5-6 U.S. surface forces bombarded Vila-Munda area, Central Solomons.

1943 (Cont'd)

- April 7 1st Lt. James E. Swett led his four-plane division in a daring flight over the Solomon Islands to intercept 150 enemy bombers, in which he personally shot down seven enemy bombers.
- April 22 Funafuti, Ellice Islands, raided by Jap planes.
- May 11 Attu, Aleutian Islands, occupied by U.S. Army troops.
- May 12 U.S. surface force bombarded Munda-Vila area, Central Solomons.
- May 25 Act of Congress approved which abolished the time-honored office of the Adjutant & Inspector (established in 1798) and formed the new Personnel Department.
- June 11 Allied troops captured island of Pantelleria, off Italy.
- June 12 Lampedusa Island (Italian) surrendered to Allied troops.
- June 21 Marine Raider units landed at Segi Point, southeast corner of New Georgia Island, moved across the island and captured Viru Harbor several days later.
- June 30 Occupation of New Georgia Group began; U.S. Army and Marine Corps units landed on Rendova and Vangunu Islands.
- July 1 V-12 (Navy College training) program established.
- July 5 First Marine Raider Battalion and Army troops under Colonel Harry B. Liversedge, USMC, landed at Rice Anchorage on the north coast of New Georgia Island; by July 11 this force had killed all Japs on Enogai Point, while losing 47 killed and 78 wounded.
- July 6 U.S.S. Helena sunk in First Battle of Kula Gulf, naval action vicinity of Kilombangara, Solomons.
- U.S. surface force bombarded Kiska, Aleutians.
- July 10 Allies invaded Sicily.
- July 11-12 U.S. surface force bombarded Munda, New Georgia Island.

1943 (Cont'd)

- July 13 Second Battle of Kula Gulf. Three Allied cruisers damaged.
- July 17 Marine TBF's and SBD's and an Army force of B-17's and B-24's attacked airdromes and shipping in Central Solomons.
- August U.S. Marines occupied Nanumea and Nukufetau Islands, Ellice Group.
- August 6 Munda airfield on New Georgia Island captured.
- August 6-7 Battle of Vella Gulf, Central Solomon Islands. U.S. destroyers sank three Japanese destroyers.
- August 13 Major Richard M. Baker's Marine Fighter Squadron of Corsairs landed on Munda airfield.
- August 15 U.S. Army and Marine Corps units occupied Vella Lavella Island, New Georgia Group.
- August 27 Arundel Island, in the Central Solomons occupied by Allied troops.
- September 3 Allies invaded Italy.
- September 9 Allied troops landed at Salerno, Italy.
- September 14 Funafuti, Ellice Islands, bombed by 15 Jap planes.
- September 18 U.S. carrier aircraft bombed and strafed the Gilbert Islands.
- September 23 First Marine planes landed on newly-constructed airfield at Barakoma, Vella Lavella Island, Solomons.
- September 25 Entire New Georgia Islands secured by Allied troops.
- October 6 Allied troops occupied Kolombangara Island, Solomons.
U.S. destroyers Chevalier, Selfridge, and O'Bannon attack a Jap force of one light cruiser and eight destroyers south of Choiseul Island, Southern Solomons; inflict considerable damage, but Chevalier was torpedoed and sunk.
- October 6-7 Large carrier task force made two-day attack on Wake.

1943 (Cont'd)

- October 27 Allied troops occupied Mono and Stirling, in the Treasury Islands.
- October 28 Paramarines landed on west coast of Choiseul Island, Solomons, and raided Jap bases, as a diversion for Bougainville operation.
- October 30 Paramarines raided Sangigai, ^{Choiseul}~~Bougainville~~ Island.
- November 1 Third Marine Division landed at Empress Augusta Bay, Bougainville.
- November 2 U.S. carrier planes bombed and strafed Buka-Bonis area.
- November 5 U.S. carrier planes attacked Rabaul, New Britain.
- November 8 Army troops reinforced U.S. Marines in Bougainville.
- November 11 U.S. carrier and land aircraft bombed and strafed Rabaul, New Britain.
- November 13 Japanese bombers raided Funafuti, Ellice Islands. First Japanese plane to be shot down by a Marine night fighter, destroyed near Bougainville, Solomons.
- November 20 Second Marine Division landed on Tarawa and Army's 27th Division landed on Makin, Gilbert Islands.
- November 23 After four days of bloody fighting, the Second Marine Division completed the conquest of Tarawa.
- November 24 Battle of Piva Forks, on Bougainville; Third Marine Division inflicted heavy losses on Japs. Marine SBD was first allied plane to land on Bougainville.
- November 26 Total naval casualties (dead, wounded, missing and prisoners) reported to next of kin from December 7, 1941, was 31,768, which included 7,310 USMC.
- December 10 Planes of Major Rivers Morrell's "Bulldog" fighting squadron first to land at Torokina Field, Bougainville.
- December 15 Major General Roy S. Geiger, USMC, turned over command on Bougainville to the XIV Corps, U.S. Army, after Marines had taken all objectives.

1943 (Cont'd)

- December 15 An Army assault team, spearheaded by Marine Corps Buffalo and Alligator amphibian tractors, landed at Arawe, New Britain.
- December 17 First fighter sweep against Rabaul by Marine pilots, from the newly-completed Torokina airstrip on Bougainville. This was the beginning of the campaign to neutralize the Japanese stronghold.
- December 23 U.S. surface force bombarded Buka-Bonis Area.
B-24 bombers from Munda airfield and fighters from Torokina airstrip hit Rabaul, New Britain; the fighters, under Major Gregory Boyington, USMC, dived into a formation of 40 Japanese fighter planes; Score: 30 definitely destroyed and four probably destroyed; three American planes lost.
- December 25 U.S. carrier aircraft bombed and strafed Kavieng, New Ireland.
- December 26 First Marine Division, landed at Cape Gloucester, New Britain, and Long Island in the Vitiaz Straits, 80 miles west of Cape Gloucester.
- December 27 U.S. surface force bombarded eastern coast of Bougainville.
- December 29 Four strong Japanese counterattacks against Marines on Cape Gloucester, New Britain, repulsed.
- December 30 First Marine Division captured Cape Gloucester airfields. Battle of Coffin Corner, Cape Gloucester, New Britain, in which Marines killed hundreds of Japs.
- December 31 Strength of U.S. Marine Corps: 391,620 (including 609 officers and 12,592 enlisted women).

1944

- January 1 Lieutenant General A. A. Vandegrift appointed Commandant of the Marine Corps. Lieutenant General Thomas Holcomb retired as Commandant of the U. S. Marine Corps with the rank of full general, first Marine ever to hold that rank.
- January 3 Major Gregory Boyington, USMC, shot down his 26th enemy plane, then was reported missing over Rabaul.

1944 (Cont'd)

- January 7 First attack on Rabaul by Marine and Navy TBF's and SBD's from Munda airfield, New Georgia.
- January 12 The First Marine Division repulsed two Jap counter-attacks on Cape Gloucester air strips.
- January 13 General MacArthur's Headquarters announced that First Division Marines had killed six Japs for every American killed or wounded since the landing on December 26.
- January 14 First Marine Division captured Hill 660, Cape Gloucester, New Britain, in bloody and bitter fighting.
- Marine SBD's and TBF's damaged a light cruiser, a destroyer, and seven cargo ships in Rabaul Harbor. 1st Lt. Robert Hanson bags 5 Zeros in single scrap over Rabaul.
- January 17 Marine SBD's and TBF's returned to Rabaul Harbor and sank five Japanese cargo ships and damaged three.
- January 24 U.S. warships bombarded Kolombangara Island, Central Solomons.
- Marine TBF's sank seven Jap cargo ships and damaged two, in Rabaul Harbor.
- January 31 Amphibious Reconnaissance Company of Fifth Amphibious Corps (now Amphibious Reconnaissance Battalion of Fleet Marine Force, Pacific), landed on Majuro, first pre-war Japanese territory to fall to U.S. troops.
- Prior to the main assault on Roi and Namur Islands, Kwajalein Atoll, U.S. Marines landed on five smaller islets flanking Roi, meeting with little opposition.
- February First Defense Battalion, USMC, took over defense of Majuro, Marshall Islands.
- February 1 Fourth Marine Division landed on Roi and Namur Islands, Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands.
- 7th U. S. Army Division landed on Kwajalein Island, Kwajalein Atoll.
- February 3 1st Lieutenant Robert M. Hanson, USMC, reported missing after downing 25 enemy planes, 20 of them in six consecutive flying days.

1944 (Cont'd)

- February 4 First U.S. photographic reconnaissance of Jap base at Truk made by Marine Corps fliers.
- February 9 Pacific Fleet Headquarters announced that organized resistance had ended on Kwajalein Atoll, Marshalls, and that capture and occupation of 20 islands of the atoll had been completed.
- February 14 New Zealand troops and U.S. Marines landed on the Green Islands, South Pacific..
- Major R. G. Owens' "Fighting Corsair" squadron left combat zone after shooting down 135 Jap planes, all time Marine squadron record.
- February 17 22d Marines and 106th Infantry, commanded by Brigadier General T. E. Watson, USMC, began landing on Eniwetok Atoll, Marshalls.
- U.S. Naval forces attacked Truk.
- February 18 22d Marines captured Engebi Island, Eniwetok Atoll.
- February 19 106th U.S. Infantry and 3d Battalion, 22d Marines landed on Eniwetok Island, Eniwetok Atoll.
- Last Jap air opposition to Allied bombing of Rabaul, New Britain.
- February 22 22d Marines landed on Parry Island, Eniwetok Atoll, and within four days the scattered remnants of the Jap garrison had been wiped out.
- February 29 Army troops began occupying the Admiralty Islands.
- March 6 First Marine Division units landed on the west side of Willaumez Peninsula and advanced across the peninsula to Talasea.
- March 8 Japs launch ill-fated attempt to drive Allies off Bougainville.
- March 15 First Marine Corps medium bomber (PBJ) squadron to strike the enemy on New Britain, attacked Jap positions near Rabaul.
- Major General Ralph J. Mitchell, USMC, turned over Solomons Air Command to Army after neutralizing Rabaul.

1944 (Cont'd)

- March 20 The United States Senate confirmed the appointment of General Thomas Holcomb (retired) as Minister to the Union of South Africa.
- U.S. Marine raiders landed on Emirau, St. Matthias Islands.
- March 21 U.S. Marines occupied Ailinglapalap Atoll, Marshall Islands.
- April 3 Admiral Nimitz announced that nine more atolls Marshall Islands had been cleared of Japs.
- May 24 U.S. Marine Corps raider units on St. Matthias Islands relieved by the 147th Infantry Regiment, U.S. Army.
- June 6 Allies landed in Normandy section of France.
- June 14 Second and Fourth Marine Divisions landed on Saipan Island, Marianas Group.
- June 15 2d Lt. Roland B. Heilman, USMC, shot down last Jap plane to challenge Allied airmen in Rabaul-Kavieng area.
- June 24 Second Division Marines fought their way up Mt. Tapotchau, Saipan, and blasted the Japs out of their hiding places.
- June 25 Admiral Nimitz revealed that enemy aircraft losses since the beginning of the Marianas operation totaled about 750 planes.
- June 26 Second Marine Division mopped up Mt. Tapotchau, Saipan, and established positions near the summit.
- July 1 Second Marine Division captured heights overlooking Garapan and Tanapag Harbor, Saipan, against fierce resistance.
- July 8 After a bitter 25-day battle, the conquest of Saipan was virtually completed.
- July 14 Navy revealed that U.S. Marines had occupied Maniagassa Island, two miles north of Mutcho Point on Saipan.

1944 (Cont'd)

- July 20 Third Marine Division and First Marine Provisional Brigade began landing on Guam, Marianas Islands.
- July 21 Admiral Nimitz' communique listed a new strike by Navy land-based bombers on the Bonin Island.
Marines on Guam smashed two Jap counterattacks.
- July 22 American casualties for the first three days of the invasion of Guam were 348 killed, 1500 wounded and 110 missing.
- July 24 Second and Fourth Marine Divisions landed on Tinian.
- July 25 Marine Corps and Army troops gained control of the entire southern-half of Orote Peninsula, Guam.
- July 26 Marine Corps and Army troops complete the encirclement of Apra Harbor on Guam.
- July 27 U.S. Marines advanced more than 3½ miles along the west coast of Tinian.
- July 28 Admiral Nimitz announced that 21,036 Japanese had been buried on Saipan.
- July 29 First U.S. planes began operating from Orote airfield on Guam and U.S. ships began using Apra Harbor.
- July 30 Admiral Nimitz announced that 6,206 Japanese had been killed and 775 civilians interned on Guam through July 30.
- July 31 Organized resistance ended on Tinian; in the eight-day campaign, Second and Fourth Marine Divisions killed 5,544 Japs and captured 400, while losing 190 killed, 1,515 wounded and 24 missing.
- August 4 First Marine Squadrons (Fourth Marine Aircraft Wing) landed at Orote Field, newly captured airfield on Guam.
- August 10 Total U.S. casualties for the 21-day campaign on Guam totalled 1,214 killed, 5,704 wounded and 329 missing.
- August 11 Vice Admiral Richard K. Turner announced the establishment of his Pacific Fleet Amphibious Headquarters

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- August 11 on Saipan and said that his Headquarters would be maintained there "until I can move further forward".
- August 29 During the invasion of Southern France, the Marine detachments of two U.S. cruisers landed on three small islands near Marseille, France, captured Nazi installations and prevented demolitions being used.
- September 14 First Marine Division landed on Peleliu Island, Palau Group; captured the Peleliu airfield next day.
- September 16 81st Army Division landed on Angaur Island, which eliminated the threat of Jap artillery harrassment of Marines on Peleliu.
- September 17 First Marine Division captured town of Asias, Peleliu Island, and tiny Ngarmoked Island, off the southern end of Peleliu.
- September 20 Elements of the 81st Army Division occupied the principal islands of Ulithi Atoll in the Carolines.
- September 26 Admiral Nimitz announced that the 81st Army Division which had conquered nearby Angaur Island had joined the Marines on Peleliu.
- September 28 First Marine Division units secured Ngesebus Island airstrip and nearby Kongauru Island, in the Palau Group.
- September 30 American forces secured Peleliu; continued mopping up operations.
- October 2 Admiral Nimitz announced that 10,151 Japanese had been killed and 187 captured through September 30 in the fighting on Peleliu and Angaur Island which included 9,078 killed on Peleliu and 1,075 on Angaur.
- October 7 It was announced that the total enemy dead was 10,083 on Peleliu and 1,128 on Angaur.
- October 8 81st Army Division landed on Garakayo Island in the Southern Palau Group-the tenth island of the Palau Group captured by American forces.
- October 20 General Hodge's U.S. First Army troops captured Aachen, first major German city, after a 19-day seige
General MacArthur's troops landed on Leyte Island, Philippines.