

Process Paper

For my first National History Day competition, I wanted to study something that I had been passionate about my whole life: aviation and military history. In a book about WWII, I found the Battle of the Philippine Sea. After starting the project, I learned that the Battle of Leyte Gulf was also pivotal. The Battles of the Philippine Sea and Leyte Gulf in 1944 destroyed the Imperial Japanese Navy, cut Japanese supply lines, and allowed for bomber operations against the Japanese homeland that would lead to the end of World War II.

First, I found websites and books to familiarize myself with the battles, and general World War II history. My interviews with veterans really helped me learn about the war from the perspective of the men who fought. Some of my favorite books were Clash of the Carriers by Barrett Tillman, The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors by James D. Hornfischer, and The Last Zero Fighter by Dan King. I visited archives at Stanford and Stockton to look at important primary documents. I also went to the National Museum of the Pacific, and National World War II Museum, and the U.S.S. Hornet to gain information. Of everything I did, the reenactment of the Battle of Tarawa at the Museum of the Pacific was by far the best and most interesting thing I did for my research.

I chose to do a website for my project because I like to work with computers. I felt that I could best get my information and knowledge to the reader with a website. By starting out by making a rough draft, I broke the word limit. With video, maps, headlines, and quotes, I was able to bring across what I wanted to say and stay under the word limit. The

blue, simple theme was chosen because these two battles were naval engagements. The simplicity helped people focus on the real text and information and ideas.

The Battles of the Philippine Sea and Leyte Gulf caused the the Japanese Navy to quickly disintegrate under American Naval power. These battles were crucial to America's victory over Japan. The first kamikaze attacks happened during the Battle of Leyte Gulf. These had a huge moral effect on American sailors. The Americans also learned at Saipan that Japanese civilians were committing suicide rather than surrender to the Americans. The Japanese propaganda had made them scared of the Americans. It would take a huge blow like the atomic bombs to convince the Japanese that they weren't going to win the war. The Battles of the Philippine Sea and Leyte Gulf in 1944 were a turning point in history leading to American victory in the Pacific. Ultimately, this victory saved many Japanese and American lives by avoiding an American invasion of Japan, and it set Japan on a path to become one of the most successful economies in the later 20th century.