



Pearl Harbor during the Japanese aerial attack.

PACIFIC THEATER

In the 1920s, Japan began to see itself as destined to become the dominant force in East Asia and the Pacific. To realize this ambition, Japan had to secure natural resources to fuel its economy. Western countries objected to Japan’s aggression and placed embargoes on industrial supplies, especially oil. In retaliation, the Japanese navy launched a surprise attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor. During many fierce battles on islands scattered across thousands of miles of the Pacific, the United States slowly dismantled the Japanese Empire. Finally, in August 1945, President Harry S. Truman decided to use atomic bombs to end the war, rather than risk a costly invasion of the Japanese homeland.



U.S. Marine, July 1944

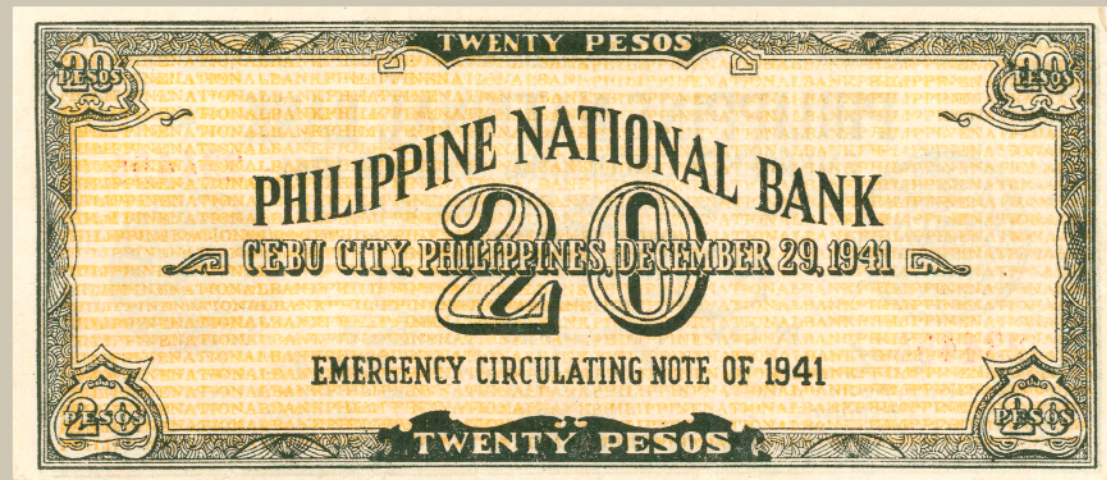


1945-S and 1944-S: Philippines, 50 Centavos

Before and during World War II the Philippines was a U.S. Commonwealth. The United States Mint struck all the coins for the Philippines during the war, including these from the San Francisco Mint.



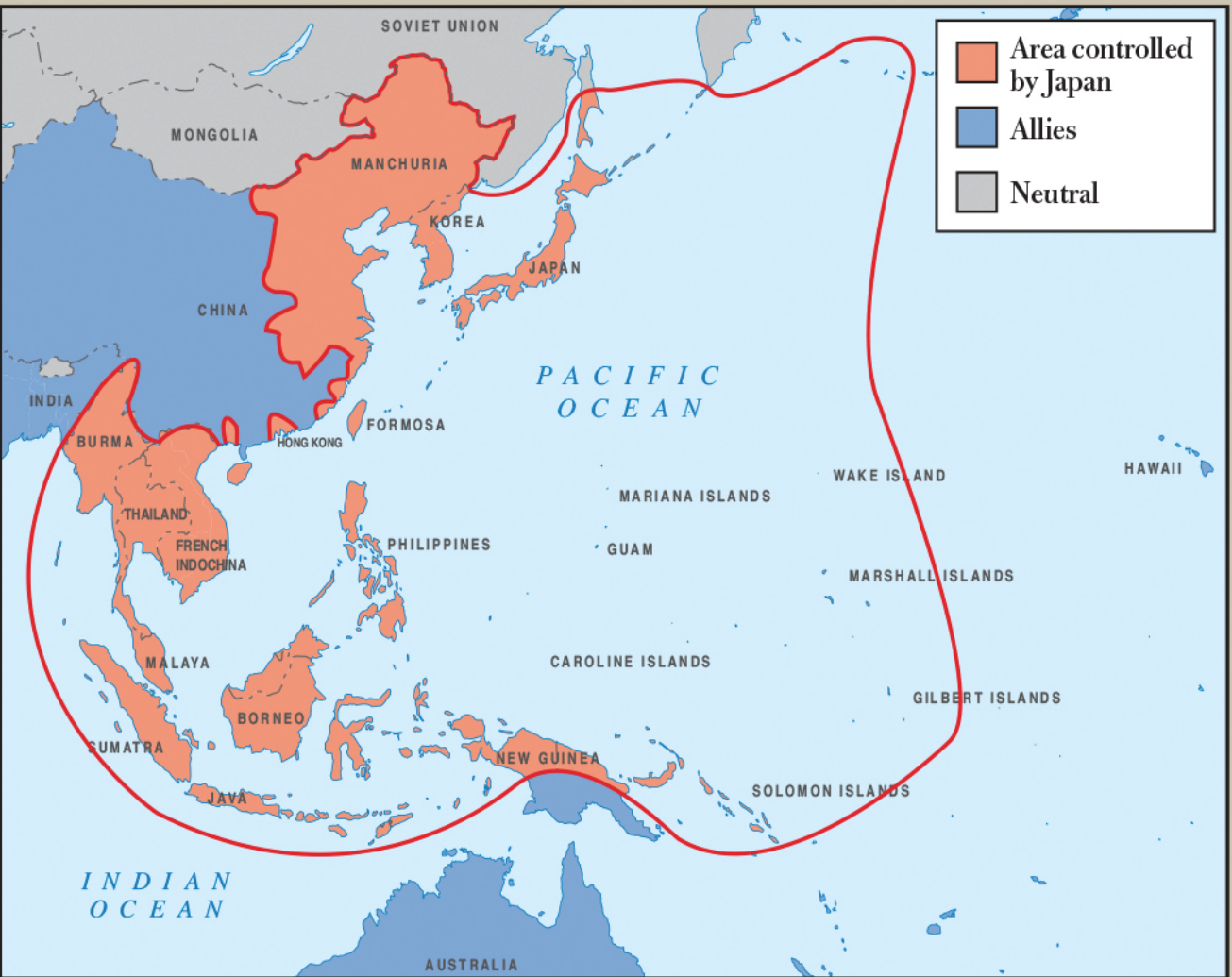
(1942): Philippines, 10 Pesos, Japanese Invasion Note



1941: Philippines, 20 Pesos, Emergency Circulating Note



(1945): Japan, 20 Yen, Allied Military Currency



HAWAII OVERPRINT NOTES

The threat of U.S. currency falling into the wrong hands was a major concern of U.S. military officials. In July 1942 the Federal Reserve Bank began issuing notes with brown Treasury seals instead of the standard blue and green seals and “HAWAII” overprinted on the backs to be used exclusively on the islands and in liberated areas of the Pacific. If the Japanese were to invade Hawaii or capture large quantities of U.S. currency, the United States could simply demonetize the Hawaii notes which were easily distinguishable from ordinary notes. This would prevent the Japanese from potentially disrupting the United States war economy with the captured money.



Series 1934-A: United States, 10 Dollars, HAWAII Overprint Notes

ALLIED MILITARY CURRENCY

Beginning in 1943, the U.S. and British governments printed Allied Military Currency (AMC) in anticipation of liberation and occupation of Europe and Japan. AMC either supplemented or replaced the currencies in use at the time of liberation or occupation. Because some soldiers participated in black markets for scarce commodities, they were able to exchange local currencies back into dollars for a profit. To suppress this activity, military payment certificates (MPC) were introduced. These could be used only by soldiers, not by local civilians, and after their introduction, local currencies could no longer be converted back into dollars.



United States Army, 5 Cents Military Payment Certificate, Series 461