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WWII Pacific Theatre Maps

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I recently graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor’s Degree in Geography. The emphases of my studies included Human Geography and Cartography. I also had a strong interest in Women’s Studies. Currently, I am working as an intern with the Kentucky Transportation Center. My future plans include a return visit to Brazil and possibly pursuing a Master’s Degree.

This project was given to me while I was taking a practicum in cartography during the summer of 2001. The source maps were provided by Prof. P. P. Karan. My finished maps will be published in his forthcoming textbook entitled A Geography of Japan. They will appear in the Historical/Cultural chapter of the book. The maps will be utilized in his GEO 334, “Geography of Japan,” course both on-campus and via distance learning.

The first step in creating the maps was to scan the source maps Prof. Karan provided using a color flatbed scanner linked to Photoshop 4.0 software. After processing the images in Photoshop, I exported them as .tiff files. Then I imported the .tiff images into FreeHand 9.0 running on a Macintosh iMac computer. Starting from the .tiff images as guides, I digitized each image and replicated all the boundaries and physical features. I also chose the appropriate fill, line, and text specifications for all of the features and calculated the scale (which was not provided on the source maps). The maps were output using a 1200 dpi grayscale laser printer as well as a 1200 dpi color laser printer.
Jackie Goins prepared maps of Japan's theatre of occupation and subsequent sites of conflict in the western Pacific during World War II for me to fulfill three different applications. First, she prepared color maps for a PowerPoint lecture in my Geo 334, "Geography of Japan" course. A second version of the maps was required for the Geo 334 distance learning class. And third, she changed the map scale and altered the color into a black and white gray scale and added more detailed information for a textbook entitled A Geography of Japan that I am writing. The maps were compiled from a variety of historical sources into a standardized style for publication such that all type faces, line weights, and colors will match for all maps throughout the publication.

Special compilation problems included event date verification and calculation of a standard bar scale.

These two maps depict the extent of Japanese expansion in the Pacific Theatre of World War II. Map 1 indicates Japanese-controlled territory prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and the limits of Japanese conquest as of June, 1942 (prior to the commencement of significant offensive actions by the United States in the war in the Pacific). Map 2 shows the limits of Japan's conquest as of June, 1942, and the territory Japan controlled at the end of the war. The boundaries of Japanese-controlled territory are indicated by the dotted line. Key battle sites, such as the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Battle of Midway, and the Battle for Guadalcanal, are represented by exploding stars.