

Strategic Value Cards for Plotting Team Activity

Strategic Value of Leyte

The Leyte operation was a critical battle of the war in the Pacific. Its outcome altered the future course of the war against Japan. Leyte, located in the heart of the Philippine archipelago, became the point where the Southwest Pacific and Central Pacific forces merged in an attempt to take the Philippines out of enemy hands. With Leyte under Allied control, the other islands would be within better striking distance of ground and air forces. The Allies needed a victory.

On October 20, 1944, United States troops invaded Leyte as part of a strategy aimed at isolating Japan from the countries it had occupied in Southeast Asia. This would deprive Japanese forces and industry of vital oil supplies necessary for their war effort. The battle lasted for a little more than two months and became known for the debut of Japanese kamikaze suicide pilots. The battle was a decisive victory for the Allies, allowing them to begin a full-scale liberation of the Philippines.

Strategic Value of Guam

In summer 1944, the United States sought to retake the Marianas Islands, which included Guam, Saipan, and Tinian. These islands were essential to the United States to end World War II in the Pacific. The Marianas could cut the strategic line of communication from Japan to islands in the South Pacific and isolate garrisons stationed there. Guam was particularly important in implementing a successful victory in World War II because it allowed the United States use of the airfields to launch their B-29 bombers to initiate raids on the islands of Japan. Guam would also served as a submarine refueling point closer to enemy territory. Finally, Apra Harbor offered a good naval base. In July 1944, Allied forces retook the island of Guam, following weeks of intense fighting, leading to more than 7,000 American casualties and over 18,000 Japanese killed.