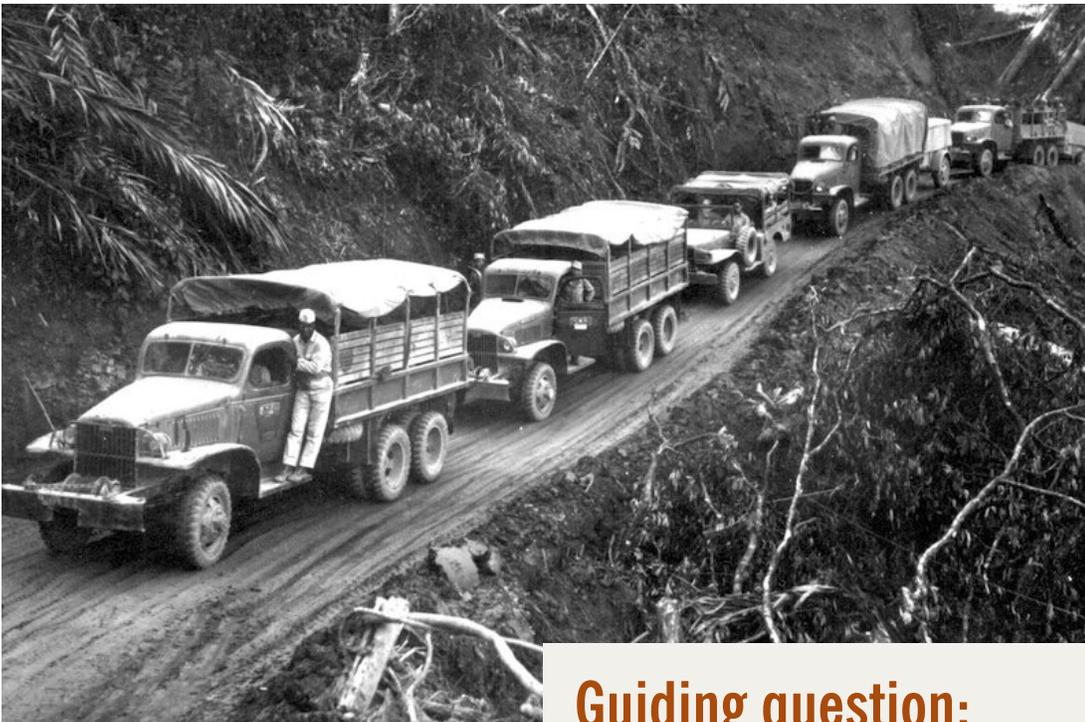




UNDERSTANDING  
SACRIFICE

# Activity: Supplies and Logistics: Problem Solving Alternatives to Japanese Occupation of the Burma Road



## Guiding question:

How did the Allies develop an alternative access route to supply airfields in southern China once the Japanese occupied the Burma Road?

**DEVELOPED BY RYAN KAISER**

**Grade Level(s):** 6-8, 9-12

**Subject(s):** Social Studies

**Cemetery Connection:** Manila American Cemetery

**Fallen Hero Connection:** First Lieutenant Frederick W. Langhorst



**NHD**  
NATIONAL  
HISTORY DAY

**ROY ROSENZWEIG**  
Center FOR  
History AND  
New Media

## Overview

Using the interactive timeline from the American Battle Monuments Commission, original maps, and primary and secondary source resources, students will identify a solution to supplying airfields in southern China after the Burma Road was taken over by the Japanese.

## Historical Context

The Burma Road was originally constructed by the British in 1938 to help supply the Chinese battle against the Japanese. In 1942, the Japanese took control of the Burma Road and shut down this vital supply route to the Chinese and American airfields in southern China. The Americans were forced to find a more dangerous alternative, flying “The Hump.” The Tenth Air Force, operating out of India, organized an active airlift. Crews flew over the Himalayan Mountains to bases in China to keep the supply chain intact. Long flights, unpredictable weather, extreme turbulence, lack of radio navigation and reliable charts, and unforgiving terrain made this a treacherous undertaking. Despite the dangers, the crews flew from April 1942 to August 1945. Over 1,500 Americans died in this effort.

## Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to

- Describe the role of the Burma Road;
- Understand the difficult task it was to find an alternative to the Burma Road and how dangerous it was for those who kept the supplies coming to China without modern technology; and
- Recommend an alternative route to supply the Chinese Army.



*“World War II in China, Burma, and India (CBI) is an aspect of the war not highlighted in many textbooks. Most studies of the Pacific Theater focus on the brutal nature of the fighting across the Pacific islands. However, the CBI theater provides a case study of the importance of logistics and supplies. My fallen hero, Frederick W. Langhorst, was one of the many daring aviators who risked flying the treacherous air routes to supply forces in southern China.”*

— Ryan Kaiser

Kaiser teaches history at The Mt. Washington Middle School in Baltimore, MD.

# Standards Connections

## Connections to Common Core

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.2** Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.

## Connections to C3 Framework

**D2.Geo.11.9-12** Evaluate how economic globalization and the expanding use of scarce resources contribute to conflict and cooperation within and among countries.

## Documents Used ★ indicates an ABMC source

### Primary Sources

Map, *Airfields in occupied & unoccupied China (Feb 1943)*

United States Embassy in China

Library of Congress (2007627806)

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2007627806/>

Trace Christenson, "Funeral for Missing World War II Flyer," November 25, 2016

*Battle Creek Enquirer*

<http://www.battlecreekenquirer.com/story/news/local/2016/11/25/>

[funeral-saturday-missing-wwii-flyer/94432232/](http://www.battlecreekenquirer.com/story/news/local/2016/11/25/funeral-saturday-missing-wwii-flyer/94432232/)

### Secondary Sources

Fallen Hero Profile, Frederick W. Langhorst ★

American Battle Monuments Commission

<http://abmceducation.org/understandingsacrifice/soldier/frederick-langhorst>

Map, *Japanese Occupation 1940*

United States Military Academy at West Point

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Japanese\\_Occupation\\_of\\_China\\_1940.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Japanese_Occupation_of_China_1940.svg)

Map, *Southern Asia, Japanese Centrifugal Offensive, January-May 1942*

United States Military Academy at West Point

<http://www.westpoint.edu/history/SiteAssets/SitePages/World%20War%20II%20Pacific/ww2%20asia%20map%2011.jpg>

Map, *Summary of Allied Pacific Campaigns and Status of Japanese Forces, 1 February 1945*

United States Military Academy at West Point

<http://www.westpoint.edu/history/SiteAssets/SitePages/World%20War%20II%20Pacific/ww2%20asia%20map%2046.jpg>

*World War II: A Visual History* ★

American Battle Monuments Commission

[https://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive\\_files/WW2/index.html](https://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive_files/WW2/index.html)

## Materials

- China-Burma-India Outline Map
- China-Burma-India Map Instruction Sheet
- Finding an Alternative Route Assessment and Rubric
- China-Burma-India Map Answer Key (for teacher use)
- Computer with internet capability, projector, and speakers to access *World War II: A Visual History*
- Markers, colored pencils, or crayons (blue, green, black, brown, red)

## Lesson Preparation

- Arrange students into groups of three or four students each.
- Make one copy of each of the following maps for each group of three to four students. Print in color if possible.
  - *Airfields in occupied & unoccupied China (Feb 1943)*
  - *Japanese Occupation 1940*
  - *Southern Asia, Japanese Centrifugal Offensive, January-May 1942*
  - *Summary of Allied Pacific Campaigns about Status of Japanese Forces, 1 February 1945*
- Make one copy of the China-Burma-India Outline Map and China-Burma-India Map Instruction Sheet for each student. Make extra copies if needed.
- Set up classroom technology and preview video clips.
- Gather colored pencils for each group.

## Procedure

### Activity One: Mapping the China-Burma-India Theater (45 minutes)

- Project *World War II: A Visual History* in the front of the room. Enter the timeline, click on “1941” and select “Burma Road.”
- Watch the video with the students and discuss the main events.
  - Ask the students,
    - *Why was the road built in the first place?*
    - *What were some challenges the Allies had in maintaining the road?*
    - *How did the road finally fall into enemy hands?*
- Arrange students into groups of three to four students each.
- Give each group a set of maps, colored pencils, and maps to share.
- Give each student his or her own copy of the the China-Burma-India Outline Map and China-Burma-India Map Instruction Sheet to complete.
- Review instructions and tell students to begin.
  - Walk around the room to monitor and assist as needed. The China-Burma-India Map Answer Key is available to assist.
- Instruct all groups to really consider the final step (the alternative route), discuss, and come to a consensus before the end of class.

## Assessment

### Finding an Alternative (45 minutes)

- Challenge students to defend the alternative route that they selected on their map.
- Ask each group to present their route using a format of the teacher’s or students’ choice (PowerPoint, Prezi, oral presentation, or short essay). Required components:
  - Explain the route you chose, using correct geographical terms (the names of countries, oceans, etc.);
  - Explain why you chose this route, giving at least three reasons to support your choice; and
  - List three potential challenges to this route and how you would overcome them.
- Allow students to present their work to their peers. Presentations can be assessed using the Finding an Alternative Route Assessment Rubric.
- Project the *World War II: A Visual History* Interactive Timeline. Enter the timeline, click on “1943” and select “India Burma Campaign” Ask the students:
  - *What were the main reasons military planners chose the route over the Himalayas?*
  - *Why do you think this route was different than the one you chose?*

- Remind students of the dangers of flying the Hump. Project the Fallen Hero Profile of Frederick W. Langhorst and play the eulogy video. Project the article from the *Battle Creek Enquirer* showing the return of Langhorst's remains in 2016.

## Methods for Extension

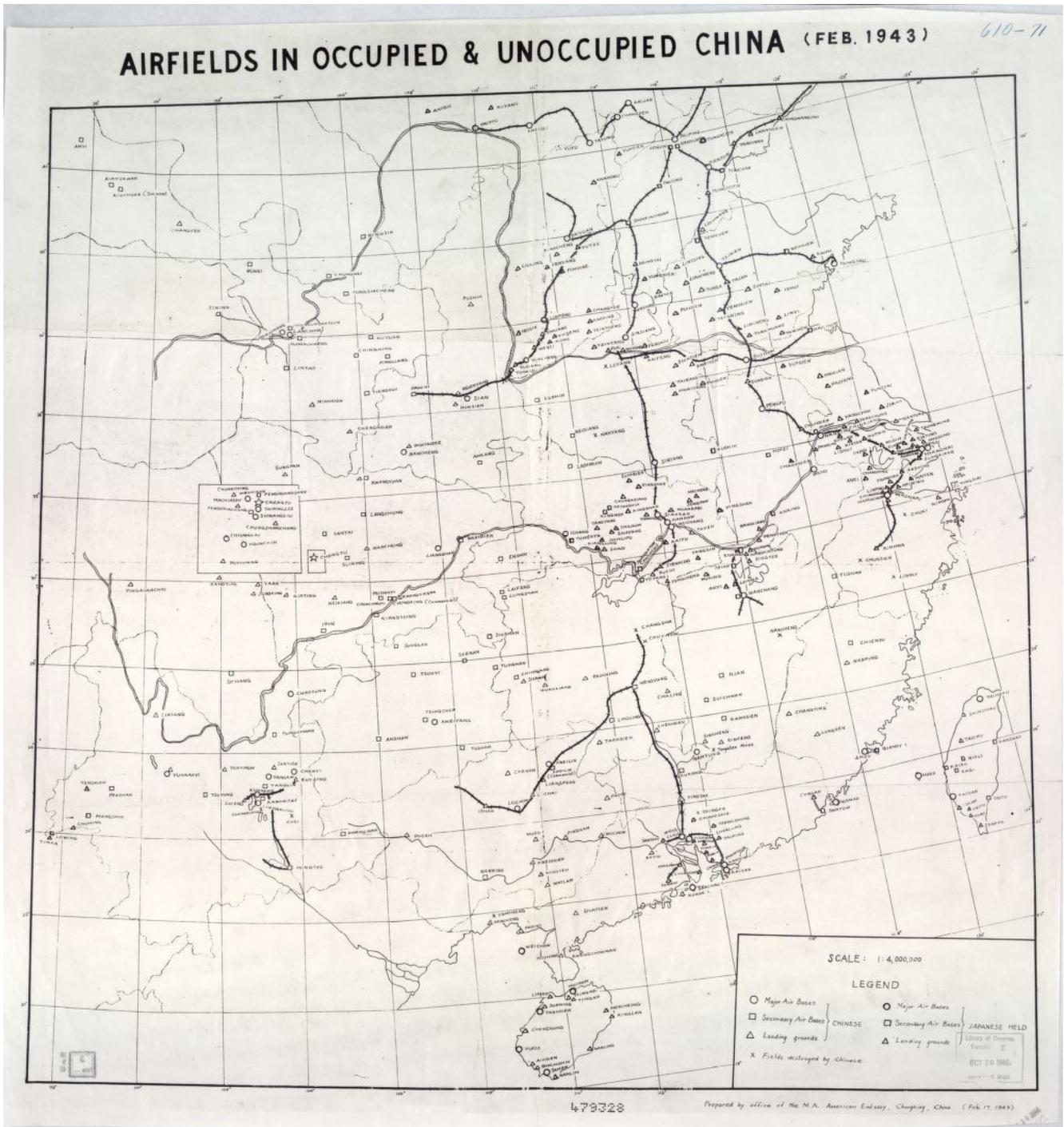
- Students who want to extend their knowledge of the Burma Road can explore the book, *The Burma Road: The Epic Story of the China-Burma-India Theatre of WWII*.
- Teachers can enhance students' interest in the impact of transportation and supply lines in World War II by exploring these related lesson plans on ABMCEducation.org:
  - [20,000 Miles a Month - To Ensure Victory](#)
  - [Riding Along the Red Ball Express](#)

## Adaptations

- Teachers can adapt the project to younger learners by bringing in more modern maps or even accessing Google Earth to see the natural barriers a little more clearly.
- Teachers can edit the map instructions or partially complete the map before giving it to students as needed.

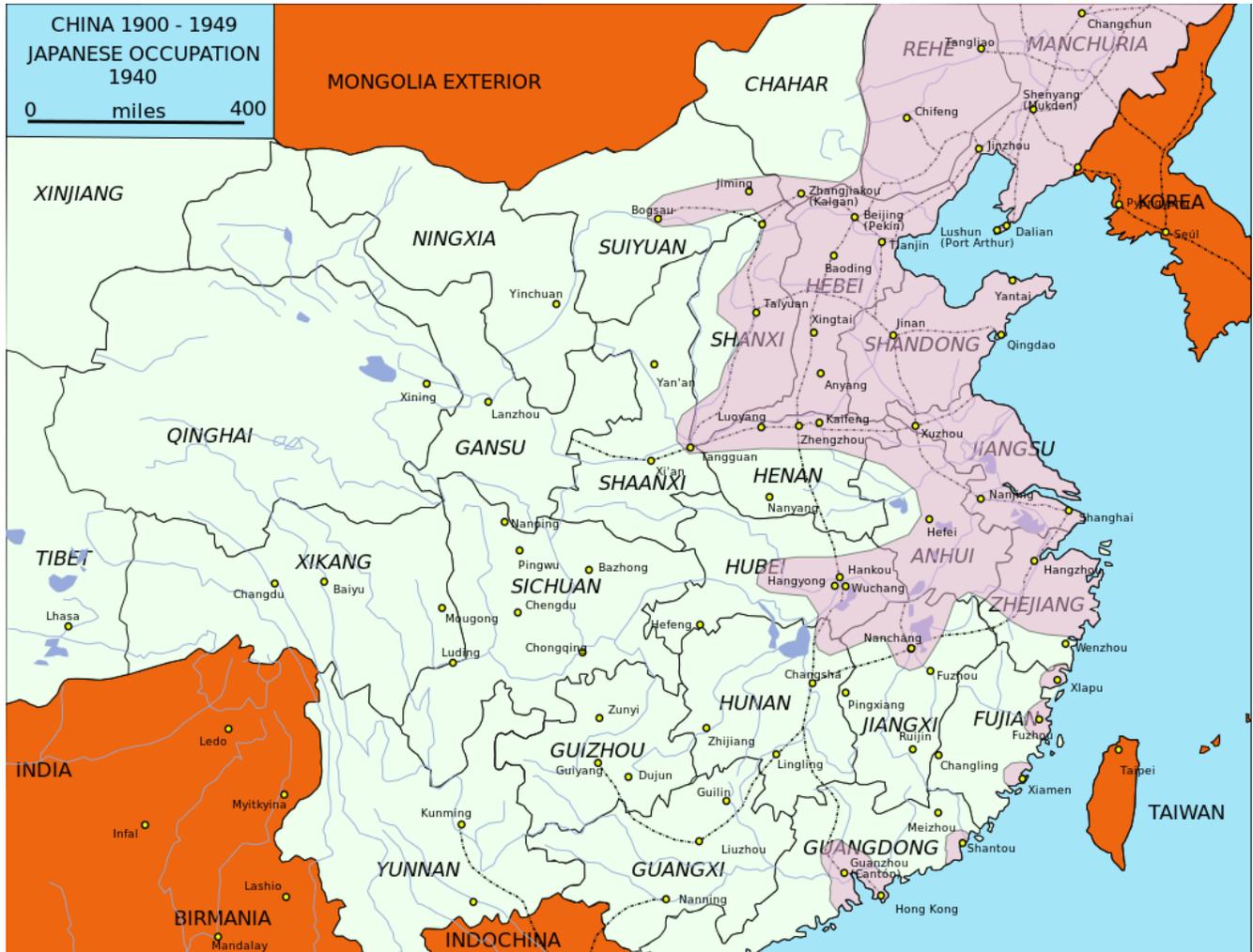
# Map, *Airfields in occupied & unoccupied China (Feb 1943)*

United States Embassy in China  
Library of Congress (2007627806)



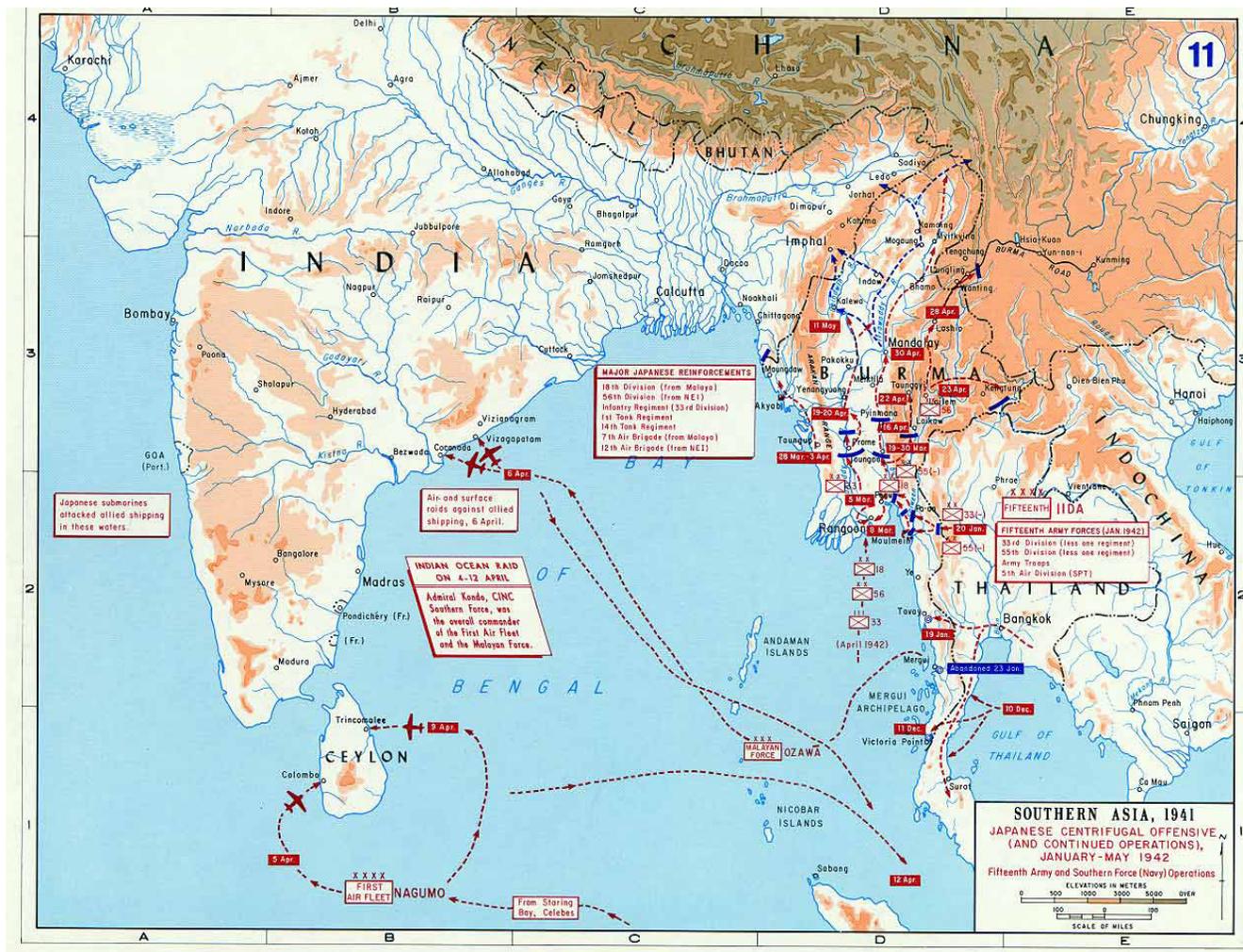
# Map, Japanese Occupation 1940

United States Military Academy at West Point



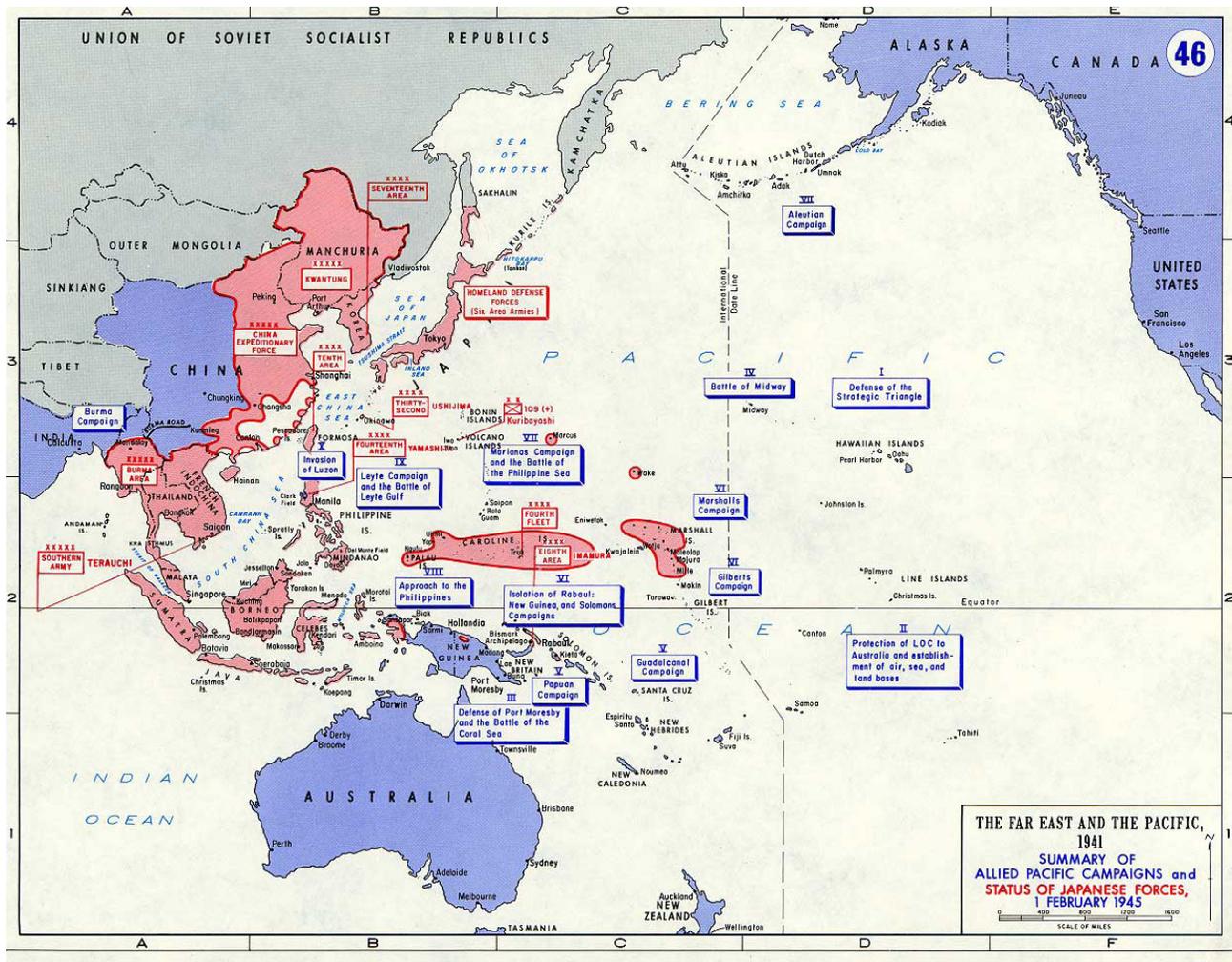
# Map, Southern Asia, Japanese Centrifugal Offensive, January-May 1942

United States Military Academy at West Point



# Map, Summary of Allied Pacific Campaigns and Status of Japanese Forces, 1 February 1945

United States Military Academy at West Point



# China-Burma-India Outline Map



# China-Burma-India Map Instruction Sheet

Today you will need to map out the China-Burma-India Theater of World War II. Take your time to label (and spell) every location correctly. Work first in pencil, and then in colored pencil. You may collaborate, but each student needs to submit his or her own map.

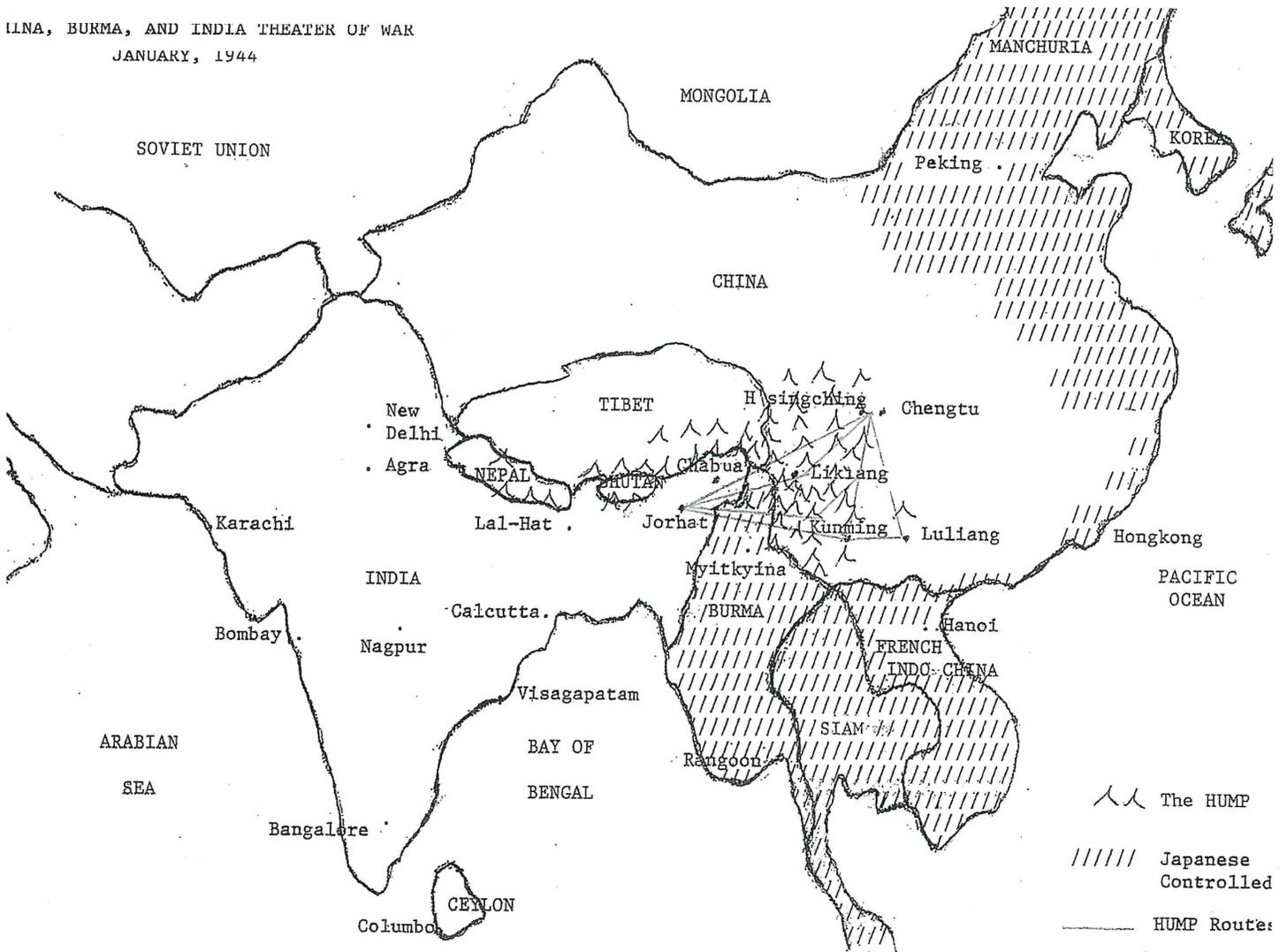
Using the maps provided to the group, label the following:

1. Label the Pacific Ocean, the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea, and the Indian Ocean and shade in blue.
2. In black, label the following countries: China, Tibet (now a part of China), Nepal, Soviet Union, Mongolia, Korea, India, Burma, Siam (now Thailand) and French Indo-China (now Vietnam and Laos).
3. In red, shade in the area that was Japanese controlled territory.
4. In green, draw the Burma Road. Add this to your key.
5. In brown, draw in small triangles representing the Himalayan Mountain Range.
6. In black, label the air bases in southern China with an "x." Add this to your key.

Once your maps are complete, you need to work as a group to solve the problem the Allies had in 1942. The Burma Road has been captured by the Axis Powers. Discuss the best alternative to supply the air bases in southern China. Once you have determined the best possible route, draw it in blue.

# China-Burma-India Outline Map Answer Key

CHINA, BURMA, AND INDIA THEATER OF WAR  
JANUARY, 1944



## Finding an Alternative Route Assessment

Today you will need to justify the alternative route you selected and drew on your map. Be prepared to present your group's plan to the class. You will need to explain:

- The route you chose using correct geographical terms (the names of countries, oceans, etc.);
- Why you chose this route giving at least three reasons to support your choice; and
- A list of three potential challenges to this route and how you would overcome them.

## Finding an Alternative Route Rubric

	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Emerging
<b>Geographical Terminology</b>	The students explained their intended route using correct geographical terms (countries, oceans, etc.)	The students explained their intended route using mostly correct geographical terms (countries, oceans, etc.)	The students explained their intended route using some correct geographical terms (countries, oceans, etc.)	The students explained their intended route using few or no correct geographical terms (countries, oceans, etc.)
<b>Geographical and Political Understanding</b>	The students demonstrated an advanced knowledge of the geography and political territories held by the Allies and the Japanese in this theater.	The students demonstrated a proficient knowledge of the geography and political territories held by the Allies and the Japanese in this theater.	The students demonstrated an some knowledge of the geography and political territories held by the Allies and the Japanese in this theater.	The students demonstrated little or no knowledge of the geography and political territories held by the Allies and the Japanese in this theater.
<b>Justification</b>	The students offered three clear reasons justifying their selection.	The students offered two clear reasons justifying their selection.	The students offered one clear reasons justifying their selection.	The students offered no clear reasons justifying their selection.
<b>Challenges</b>	The students offered three clear challenges to their selection and explained how to offset them.	The students offered three clear challenges to their selection and somewhat explained how to offset them.	The students offered one or two clear challenges to their selection or made little attempt to explain how to offset them.	The students offered no clear challenges to their selection or made no attempt to explain how to offset them.