

Douglas MacArthur

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[26 January 1880](#) - [5 April 1964](#)



Douglas MacArthur in [1945](#)

Place of birth: [Little Rock, Arkansas](#)

Years of service: [1903-1937](#), [1941-1951](#)

Rank: [General of the Army](#)

Douglas MacArthur ([January 26, 1880](#) — [April 5, 1964](#)) was a senior [American military](#) leader in the [Pacific Theater](#) who served in [World War II](#). MacArthur helped rebuild [Japan](#) after the war, and played a key role in limiting the [Communist](#) takeover of [Korea](#) with his daring [Inchon landing](#). MacArthur was dismissed by [President Truman](#) at the height of the Korean War for insubordination, but returned to the largest [ticker-tape parade](#) ever. Douglas MacArthur is the most highly-decorated officer in history.

General MacArthur took part in three major wars ([World War I](#), [World War II](#), [Korean War](#)) and rose to the [rank](#) of [General of the Army](#), one of only five people to hold that rank in [U.S. history](#). President [Manuel L. Quezon](#) of the [Philippines](#) made him a [Field Marshal](#) in 1937, the only American to ever hold such a rank; which MacArthur held until his death.

One of the most decorated soldiers in the history of the United States military, MacArthur became famous for both losing and re-taking the [Philippines](#) during World War II. He was appointed Supreme Allied Commander in the [South West Pacific Area](#), and led a series of military victories by Allied forces in the theatre. After [Imperial Japan surrendered](#) to the Allies in [1945](#), MacArthur became the [Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers](#), rebuilding Japan during the [Allied occupation](#). At the end of the war however, he secretly granted immunity to the physicians of [Unit 731](#) in exchange for providing America with their research on [biological weapons](#). During the Korean War, MacArthur was removed from command for [insubordination](#) to President [Harry S. Truman](#), causing a national stir.

MacArthur remains one of the most controversial figures in American history. While greatly-admired by many for his strategic and tactical brilliance, MacArthur was also criticized by many for his actions in command, such as his role in putting down the [Bonus Army](#), his command in the [Philippines](#) and New Guinea, and his challenge to Truman during the Cold War. MacArthur was also criticized as having egotistical attitude. Shortly before he died, he was given the nickname "[Gaijin Shogun](#)" ("foreign military leader") a title which former Honor Guard and author David Valley believed that MacArthur would have appreciated.

Early life and education

MacArthur was born in [Little Rock, Arkansas](#) to [Lieutenant General Arthur MacArthur Jr.](#), a recipient of the [Medal of Honor](#) during the [American Civil War](#), who was the son of jurist and politician [Arthur MacArthur, Sr.](#), and Mary Pinkney Hardy MacArthur of [Norfolk](#), Virginia. In his memoir *Reminiscences*, MacArthur wrote that his first memory was the sound of the bugle, and that he had learned to 'ride and shoot even before I could read or write--indeed, almost before I could walk and talk'.

When MacArthur was six years old, his father was reassigned to [Fort Leavenworth](#) in Kansas. Three years later, the MacArthur family moved to Washington, D.C. when Douglas's father took a post at the [War Department](#). There he spent time with his paternal grandfather, Judge Arthur MacArthur, a member of the high-profile Washington political scene that influenced Douglas.

MacArthur's father was posted to [San Antonio](#), Texas in 1893. There, Douglas attended the [T.M.I.: The Episcopal School of Texas](#), where he became an excellent student. MacArthur entered the [United States Military Academy](#) at West Point in 1898. An outstanding cadet, he graduated first in his 93-man class in 1903, with only two other students in the history of West Point surpassing his achievements. MacArthur became a [Second Lieutenant](#) in the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#). In the next decade MacArthur was assigned to engineering duties in the Philippines, Wisconsin, Kansas, Michigan, Texas, and Panama, He served as an aide to his father in Manila and to President Theodore Roosevelt. He attended the Engineer School of Application (1906-1907), receiving a degree in 1908, and worked in the Office of the Chief of Engineers. In 1913-1917, MacArthur served on the general staff of the War Department, with detached-duty

assignments on an intelligence mission to Veracruz, Mexico, in 1914. Under the command of General [Frederick Funston](#) MacArthur engaged in a long-range reconnaissance mission behind Mexican lines. Although cited for bravery and recommended for a Medal of Honor, his actions had clearly violated Funston's orders.

World War I

During [World War I](#) MacArthur served in [France](#), as chief of staff of the [42nd \("Rainbow"\) Division](#). Upon his promotion to Brigadier General (the youngest ever in the Army), he became the commander of the 84th Infantry Brigade. A few weeks before the war ended he became division commander. During the war, MacArthur received seven Silver Stars, a Distinguished Service Medal, and two Purple Hearts. By far the most decorated American soldier in World War I, Douglas MacArthur made it his policy to 'lead my men from the front'.

Inter-war years

MacArthur kept his star after the war primarily because of the support of General [Peyton March](#), the new chief of staff. In 1919 MacArthur became [superintendent](#) of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, which was old fashioned and in need of reform. MacArthur ordered radical changes in the tactical, athletic, and disciplinary systems; he modernized the curriculum, adding liberal arts courses. From 1922 to 1930, MacArthur served two tours of duty in the Philippines, the second as commander of the Philippine Department (1928-1930); he also served two tours as commander of corps areas in the states. In 1925 he was promoted to major general, the youngest officer of that rank at the time, and served on the court-martial that convicted Brigadier General [Billy Mitchell](#). In 1928 he headed the U.S. Olympic Committee for the Amsterdam games.

He married Henrietta Louise Cromwell Brooks, a wealthy divorcee, in 1922; they had no children and were divorced seven years later in 1929. President [Herbert Hoover](#) appointed MacArthur army chief of staff in November 1930, with the temporary rank of (four-star) general. He faced severe budget cuts, at the same time there was a surge in enrollments because of unemployment. President [Franklin D. Roosevelt](#) renewed his appointment. In October 1935, the army ranked sixteenth in size among the world's armies, with 13,000 officers and 126,000 enlisted men. MacArthur's main programs included new mobilization plans were developed; a mobile general headquarters air force was established; and a four-army reorganization improved administrative efficiency. He supported the [New Deal](#) by enthusiastically operating the [Civilian Conservation Corps](#). He brought along many talented mid-career officers, including [George C. Marshall](#), and [Dwight D. Eisenhower](#). His most controversial actions came in 1932, when Hoover ordered him to disperse the '[Bonus Army](#)' of veterans who were in the capital protesting against the government. MacArthur received negative publicity for using tear gas against the veterans. According to MacArthur, the demonstration had been taken over by Communists and pacifists by the time of his action, with, he claimed, only 'one man in

ten being veterans'. Hundreds of veterans were injured, two were killed, and other casualties including children were inflicted among the veterans' families.

When the [Commonwealth of the Philippines](#) achieved semi-independent status in 1935, with its own army, the [President of the Philippines Manuel L. Quezon](#) asked MacArthur to supervise the creation of a [Philippine Army](#). With Roosevelt's approval MacArthur accepted the assignment. Among MacArthur's assistants as Military Adviser to the Commonwealth of the Philippines was [Dwight D. Eisenhower](#).

When MacArthur retired from the U.S. Army in [1937](#), he was made a [Field Marshal](#) of the [Philippine Army](#), by President Quezon. In July, 1941 Roosevelt recalled him to active duty in the U.S. Army and named him commander of [United States Army Forces Far East](#) (USAFFE), based in Manila.

World War II

After the United States entered [World War II](#), MacArthur became Allied commander in the Philippines. He 'courted controversy' on several occasions, especially when he overruled his air commander, General [Lewis H. Brereton](#), who had requested permission to launch air attacks against [Japanese](#) bases on nearby [Taiwan](#), which MacArthur had labeled suicide. Consequently, much of the US [Far East Air Force](#) was destroyed on the ground in the Philippines, the prelude to a [Japanese invasion](#). (However, MacArthur had ordered the planes to be moved to safety before the attack; only half of them were.) MacArthur's headquarters during the period of defeat in the Philippines was in the island fortress of [Corregidor](#), while his making only one trip to the front lines in [Bataan](#) led to the disparaging moniker and ditty, "Dugout Doug." (However, MacArthur's fortress was clearly marked, and was subjected to Japanese air attack, until Manuel Quezon cautioned MacArthur 'not to subject himself to danger'.) In March 1942, as Japanese forces tightened their grip on the Philippines, MacArthur was ordered by US President [Franklin D. Roosevelt](#) to relocate to [Melbourne, Victoria, Australia](#), after Quezon and his wife had already left. With his wife and four-year-old son, and a select group of advisers and subordinate military commanders, MacArthur at last fled the Philippines on a patrol boat commanded by [John Bulkeley](#), who successfully evaded an intense Japanese search for the escaping American general.

MacArthur reached the island of [Mindanao](#) on March 13, and was picked up by B-17 Flying Fortresses three days later; on the [17th March](#), he arrived at Batchelor Airfield in Australia's [Northern Territory](#), and took [The Ghan railway](#) through the Australian outback to [Adelaide, South Australia](#). His famous speech, in which he said "I came out of [Bataan](#) and I shall return", was made at [Terowie, South Australia](#) on [March 20](#). During this period, President [Manuel L. Quezon](#) decorated MacArthur with the Philippine Distinguished Conduct Star.

MacArthur became Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in the [Southwest Pacific Area](#) (SWPA), and took command of [Australian](#), US, [Dutch](#) and other Allied forces defending [Australia](#), fighting mainly in and around [New Guinea](#) and the [Dutch East](#)

[Indies](#), refusing to fight defensively in Australia any longer. On [20th July, 1942](#) SWPA headquarters was moved to what is now the [MacArthur Central](#) building in [Brisbane, Queensland, Australia](#), where he stayed from [1942](#) to [1944](#). Australian and American forces under MacArthur's command eventually achieved success, overrunning [Japanese](#) resistance in [1943](#) and [1944](#), by over-coming a divided Pacific command and with an almost complete lack of naval resources, by utilizing the Australian soldiers, pilots and airplanes to unprecedented advantage. MacArthur's tremendously-successful strategy in the Southwest Pacific was to isolate Japanese forces, to take over strategic points in the Pacific and to build air-bases there; cutting off the much-larger Japanese land, sea and air forces out of supply, then by-passing them, to let them 'wither on the vine'. Relentlessly, MacArthur headed toward the Philippines and his own clearing of his reputation, and to free the captive American, Allied and Filipino soldiers and civilians, many of whom had been tortured and mis-treated by the victorious Japanese Army, which had subjected the survivors to the ['Bataan Death March'](#) and had kept the rest in [concentration camps](#).



"Coming ashore in 1944"


American and Australian forces under MacArthur's command [landed at Leyte Island](#) , on October 20th 1944, fulfilling MacArthur's vow to return to the Philippines and consolidating their hold on the archipelago in the [Battle of Luzon](#) after heavy fighting, and despite a Japanese Imperial naval counter-attack by an entire fleet of Japanese warships after MacArthur's invasion of [Leyte](#), and with the advent of Japanese ['kamikaze'](#) suicide attacks by his pilots. With the reconquest of the islands, he set up headquarters in Manila to plan the invasion of Japan in late 1945. In September, 1945 MacArthur received the [formal Japanese surrender](#) which ended World War II.

MacArthur was awarded and received the [Medal of Honor](#) for his leadership in the Southwest Pacific Theater. Philippine President [Sergio Osmeña](#) also decorated him with the Philippines' highest military award, the Medal of Valor.

Post-World War II

After World War II, MacArthur served as Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers ([SCAP](#)). His first responsibility was overseeing the reconstruction, re-organization and re-supply of the people (most of them were nearly starving) in Japan. Though it was officially an effort of the Allies, the US was firmly in control, and MacArthur was effectively the leader of Japan during this period. In 1946, MacArthur's staff created the [constitution](#) that is in use in Japan to this day and has greatly contributed to the stability and prosperity of the country. MacArthur handed over power to the newly-formed Japanese government in 1949, and remained in Japan until relieved by President Truman on April 11, 1951. Truman replaced SCAP leader MacArthur with General Ridgway of the Armed Forces.



 General MacArthur and Emperor [Hirohito](#)

After the surprise attack of the [North Korean](#) army in June 1950 started the [Korean War](#), the [United Nations General Assembly](#) authorized a [United Nations](#) (UN) force to help [South Korea](#). MacArthur led the UN coalition counter-offensive, noted for a daring and overwhelmingly successful [amphibious](#) landing behind North Korean lines in the [Battle of Inchon](#). The maneuver successfully out-flanked the North Korean army, which had been trying to annihilate the surrounded and cut-off American forces remaining in Korea. The North Korean forces, containing Chinese soldiers and Russian and Chinese pilots flying Russian-made jets, fled and retreated north, pursued by the Americans and their military allies. As MacArthur's forces approached the Korea-[China](#) border, the Chinese warned that they would become involved, rather than watch the North Koreans be defeated. During his trip to [Wake Island](#) to meet with [President Truman](#), MacArthur was specifically asked by President Truman about Chinese involvement in the war. MacArthur was dismissive of the danger, advising absolute defeat for the North Korean forces, and famously-advising, "There is no substitute for victory."

On October 25, 1950, the [People's Liberation Army](#) attacked across the [Yalu River](#), forcing the U.N forces to embark on a lengthy retreat. MacArthur sought an armed retaliation into Chinese territory, saying that the US should "Nuke China", but [President Truman](#) refused. MacArthur repeatedly requested authorization to strike Manchuria and major Chinese cities with thirty to fifty nuclear weapons, an action which Truman and the

State Department feared would draw China's ally, the [Soviet Union](#), into the conflict. Angered by Truman's desire to maintain a "limited war", MacArthur began issuing dire statements to the press, warning of imminent, crushing defeat.

In March of 1951, after a relentless U.N. counterattack commanded by [Matthew B. Ridgway](#) turned the tide of the war in the U.N.'s favor, Truman alerted MacArthur of his intention to initiate 'cease-fire' talks. Such news ended any hopes the general had retained of leading a full-scale war against China, and MacArthur quickly issued his own ultimatum to Red China. Mocking the Chinese lack of military power and industrial strength, MacArthur's declaration threatened the expansion of the war, and was by his own aide's later admission 'designed to undercut' Truman's negotiating position. Such an act unquestionably qualified as rank insubordination, and was so contrary to MacArthur's long and distinguished military service that [General Bradley](#) later speculated that MacArthur's disappointment over his inability to wage war on China had "snapped his brilliant but brittle mind."^[1] On [April 11, 1951](#) President Truman relieved General MacArthur of his military command. General [Matthew B. Ridgway](#) replaced MacArthur and stabilized the situation near the [38th parallel](#).

Post-dismissal

MacArthur returned to Washington (his first time in the continental US in 11 years), where he made his last public appearance in a farewell address to the [U.S. Congress](#), interrupted by thirty ovations. In his closing speech, he mused: "Old soldiers never die, they just fade away." 'And like the old soldier of that ballad, I now close my military career and just fade away--an old soldier who tried to do his duty as God gave him the light to see that duty. Good-bye.'

On his return from Korea, after his relief by Truman, MacArthur encountered massive public adulation, which aroused expectations that he would run for the US presidency as a [Republican](#) in the [1952 election](#). However, a [U.S. Senate](#) Committee investigation of his removal, chaired by [Richard Russell](#), contributed to a marked cooling of the public mood and MacArthur's presidential hopes died away. (MacArthur, in his *Reminiscences* repeatedly stated that he had no political aspirations.)

In the 1952 Republican presidential nomination contest, rumors were rife that Sen. [Robert Taft](#) of Ohio offered the vice presidential nomination to MacArthur. Had a Taft-MacArthur ticket defeated Democrat [Adlai Stevenson](#) in November, the general would have become President upon Taft's sudden death eight months later in July 1953. Taft, who was initially favored to win the GOP nomination, lost the nomination to [Dwight Eisenhower](#)

MacArthur spent the remainder of his life quietly in [New York](#), except for a spectacular "sentimental journey" to the Philippines in [1961](#), when he was decorated by President [Carlos P. Garcia](#) with the [Philippine Legion of Honor](#), rank of Chief Commander. During one of his visits, the Pan-Philippine Highway was renamed to MacArthur Highway in his honor.

President [John F. Kennedy](#) solicited MacArthur's counsel in 1961. The first of two meetings was shortly after the [Bay of Pigs](#) fiasco. According to White House staffer Kenneth P. O'Donnell, MacArthur was extremely critical of the Pentagon and its military advice to Kennedy. MacArthur also cautioned the young President to avoid a U.S. military build-up in Vietnam, pointing out that domestic problems should be given a much greater priority. Kennedy was said to have come out of the more than three-hour meeting 'stunned' and 'enormously impressed'.

MacArthur and his second wife, [Jean Faircloth](#), are buried together in downtown [Norfolk, Virginia](#); their burial site is in a small museum dedicated to his memory, and there is a major shopping mall named for him across the street from the burial site. The couple's son changed his surname and now lives anonymously as a [saxophonist](#) in the New York area.

MacArthur's nephew, [Douglas MacArthur II](#) (a son of his brother Arthur), served as a diplomat for several years, including the post of Ambassador to Japan and several other countries.

Philippines

MacArthur had a particular attachment to the Philippines. This began with his father's tenure as the military governor of the nation and later his own. His "I shall return" declaration as Allied troops left it to the conquering Japanese is famous. MacArthur appeared to have a genuine affection for the nation, having spent a good deal of his life there; his mother had died there. It was the only country he visited after his dismissal.

Summary of service

West Point

- [June 13, 1899](#) – appointed as a [Cadet](#) at the [United States Military Academy, West Point, New York](#)
- [1900](#): Is the victim of [hazing](#) and becomes involved in a serious scandal where one Cadet is left dead by upperclassman abuse. Maintains his honor, and does not appear as a snitch, by only naming cadets who hazed him who were already expelled from West Point or had previously confessed
- June 1903 – Graduates first in his class, commissioned as a [Second Lieutenant](#) in the [Corps of Engineers](#)

Early career

- June 1903: Serves with the 3rd Battalion of Engineers in the Philippine Islands.
- 1904: Assigned to the [California Debris Commission](#).
- April 1904: Promoted to [First Lieutenant](#), becomes acting Chief Engineering Officer for the Army Pacific Division based in [San Francisco, California](#)

- October 1904: Reports to Tokyo, Japan to serve as an aide to his father (Major General [Arthur MacArthur, Jr.](#)) in the [Far East](#)
- December 1906: Serves as [aide-de-camp](#) to [President Theodore Roosevelt](#)
- August 1907: Attends the "Engineering School of Application" in [Washington, DC](#)
- February 1908: Assigned as the Officer-in-Charge (OIC), Improvements Commission, [Milwaukee, Wisconsin](#)
- April 1908: Appointed as Commanding Officer, Company K, 3rd Battalion of Engineers. Later that year becomes an instructor at the Mounted Service School, [Fort Riley, Kansas](#)
- April 1909: Becomes Quartermaster for the 3rd Battalion of Engineers
- February 1911: Promoted to Captain and serves as the Officer-in-Charge of the Engineering Depot at [Fort Leavenworth, Kansas](#)
- November 1912: Assigned to the General Staff Corps, for duty as a Member and Recorder of the Board of Engineering Troops
- April 1913: Appointed as Superintendent of State, War, and Navy Buildings as a member of the General Staff
- April 1914: Becomes the Assistant Engineering Officer of the [military expedition to Veracruz, Mexico](#)
- December 1915: Promoted to Major, serves as an Engineering Officer on the Army General Staff
- August 1917: Advanced to the temporary rank of [Colonel](#) in the [National Army](#). Reports to Camp Mill, [Long Island, New York](#) to begin forming the 42nd Infantry Division.

World War I

- 1917 - [1918](#): Becomes Chief of Staff of the [42nd Infantry Division](#) and is credited with naming it the "Rainbow Division". Joins the [American Expeditionary Force](#) bound for [France](#)
- June 1918: Appointed a [Brigadier General](#) in the National Army and serves as Divisional Chief of Staff, [84th Infantry Brigade](#), and is later appointed as the Divisional Commander
- 1918 - [1919](#): Cited for extreme battlefield bravery and also is wounded in combat and gassed by the enemy. Was known for personally leading troops into battle, often without a weapon of his own. Begins to develop a negative relationship with [General of the Armies John Pershing](#), after feeling that Pershing is wasting the lives of his troops with bad military tactics.
- May 1919: Returns to the United States a hero, but is distraught over the lack of recognition his Rainbow Division receives for actions in France.

Inter-war years

- June 1919: Becomes the Superintendent of the US Military Academy, [West Point](#)
- February 1920: Reverts to peacetime rank, but is one of the few officers who does not lose his World War I position. Becomes a brigadier general in the [Regular](#)

- [Army](#). Receives a negative evaluation report from Pershing, now Chief of Staff, who ranks MacArthur 38 out of 45 generals and states that MacArthur has an "exalted view of himself and should remain in his present grade for several years".
- October [1922](#): Becomes Commanding General, District of Manila, in the [Philippines](#)
 - July [1923](#): While still serving as District of Manila Commander, also becomes Commanding of the 23rd Infantry Brigade
 - January [1925](#): Promoted to [Major General](#), becoming the youngest two-star general in the U.S. Army. Returns to the United States to become a Corps Commander
 - May 1925: Assigned as IVth Area Corps Commander, U.S. Army, encompassing areas of [Atlanta](#) and [Georgia](#)
 - 1926 - 1927: Serves as 3rd Corps Commander, based in [Baltimore, Maryland](#)
 - [1928](#): Leads the US [Olympic Team](#) to [Amsterdam](#) and is then assigned as the Commanding General, [Philippine Department](#), based in Manila.
 - October [1930](#): Becomes the commander of the Ninth Corps Area based in [San Francisco, California](#)
 - [November 21](#), 1930: Appointed as a full [General](#) and becomes [Chief of Staff of the United States Army](#)
 - June 1932: Presides over the destruction of the "[Bonus Army](#)", deemed a low point of his tenure as Army Chief of Staff
 - October 1935: Completes his tour as Chief of Staff and declines retirement from the Army. Per Army regulations, reverts to his permanent rank of [Major General](#) and becomes the [Chief Military Advisor](#) to the [Commonwealth Government of the Philippines](#)
 - [December 31](#), [1937](#): Decides to retire from the United States Army. Is advanced back to the rank of General for listing on the U.S. Army retired rolls
 - 1937 - 1941: Civilian advisor to the Philippine Government on military matters. Is appointed a [Field Marshal](#) in the Philippine Army, the only American officer in history accorded with that rank. Begins wearing the cap which is so often associated with him, that being a Field Marshal cover with U.S. Army crest
 - April 1937 - marries [Jean Faircloth](#)
 - February 21, [1938](#) - Arthur MacArthur IV is born

[World War II](#)

- [July 26](#), [1941](#): Recalled to active service in the United States Army as a Major General
- [July 27](#), [1941](#): Appointed a [Lieutenant General](#) in the [Army of the United States](#) and becomes Commanding General of [USAFFE](#) (United States Army Forces in the Far East)
- December 1941: Following the [attack on Pearl Harbor](#), is promoted to General in the Army of the United States and ordered to defend the Philippine islands from a Japanese invasion

- [February 22, 1942](#): [President Franklin Delano Roosevelt](#) orders MacArthur out of the Philippines as the American defense of the nation collapses. Upon leaving MacArthur says, "I shall return."
- 1942 - 1943: Begins the conquest of [New Guinea](#) and is generally credited with halting an invasion of [Australia](#) by Japanese forces
- 1943 - 1944: Begins a series of arguments with the [Joint Chiefs of Staff](#) regarding a return to the Philippine Islands. The majority of the Joint Chiefs want to bypass the Philippines and take Formosa. MacArthur makes a personal appeal to President Roosevelt that, should the Philippines be bypassed, he would publicly denounce the war effort as betraying captured U.S. soldiers and leaving a large enemy flank to the rear of U.S. forces attacking the Japanese home islands.
- December 1944: Becomes a [General of the Army](#) and is ranked the second highest ranking officer of the U.S. Army, second only to [George Marshall](#)
- 1944 - 1945: Due to logistics issues the Joint Chiefs decided to invade the Philippine Islands. MacArthur again must fight to convince his superiors to invade the entire Philippine Islands, whereas initial plans call for only an invasion of the south. The Joint Chiefs at last agreed that MacArthur is to invade the Philippine Islands at [Leyte Gulf](#) and strike towards Manila.
- [February 5, 1945](#): MacArthur fulfills his promise to return and liberates [Manila](#)
- August 1945: Is considered for promotion to Six Star General ([General of the Armies](#)) to lead to massive invasion force which will attack Japan in 1946. Is stunned when the [atomic bomb](#) ends the war abruptly, quoted that "this apparatus will make men like me obsolete".
- [September, 1945](#): Presides over the surrender of Japan and becomes military governor of Japanese home islands. Threatens the Soviet Union with armed conflict should [Red Army](#) soldiers attempt to occupy any part of Japan.

Occupation of Japan

- [December 15, 1945](#) - Orders the end of [Shinto](#) as the state religion of Japan
- 1945 - 1948: Begins sweeping reforms, drafts a new constitution for Japan, and puts an end to centuries of Emperor god-worship
- 1948 - 1950: Becomes second man in Japan to a new Ambassador-Extraordinary, appointed by President [Harry Truman](#). Attempts to run for President in 1948 but withdraws his candidacy after the news media states that MacArthur would be disloyal to his Commander-in-Chief if he ran against Harry Truman.

Korean War

- [July 8, 1950](#): Following the invasion of [North Korea](#) into [South Korea](#), MacArthur is named Commander of all [United Nations](#) forces in [Korea](#).
- [July 31, 1950](#): Travels to [Taiwan](#) and conducts diplomacy with [Chiang Kai-Shek](#)
- [September 15, 1950](#): Leads UN forces at the [Battle of Inchon](#), seen as one of the greatest military maneuvers in history
- [October 15, 1950](#): Meets with President Truman on [Wake Island](#) after heavy disagreements develop regarding the conduct of the [Korean War](#). When meeting

Truman, it is very noticeable that MacArthur does not salute his Commander-in-Chief but rather offers a handshake

- November - December 1950: With China committed to all-out war against the US on the Korean peninsula, MacArthur advocates for the same in return against China but is prohibited. He is outraged when military leaders in Washington restrict the war to only the Korean theater, meaning that he cannot bomb even the bridges of the Yalu river over which Chinese troops, supplies, and materiel are streaming across. He is further restricted from bombing their bases in Manchuria. MacArthur expressed his outrage later, saying that "The order not to bomb the Yalu bridges was the most indefensible and ill-conceived decision ever forced on a field commander in our nation's history."
- [April 11, 1951](#): After several public criticisms of White House policy in Korea, which were seen as undercutting the Commander-in-Chief's position, [Harry Truman](#) removes MacArthur from command and orders him to return to the United States. Truman put up with MacArthur's high profile for some time, however, and he may have in fact exchanged MacArthur for a sound nuclear policy in Korea since he did not trust the "Brass Hat MacArthur" with nuclear weapons.
- [April 19, 1951](#): At a farewell address before [Congress](#), MacArthur gives the famous *Old Soldiers Never Die* speech
- May 1951: Retires a second time from the U.S. Army, but is listed as permanently active duty due to the regulations regarding those who hold Five Star General rank. For administrative reasons, is assigned *in absentee* to the Office of the Army Chief of Staff

Later life

- 1951 - 1952: Loses a great deal of public support after Senate hearings investigate into why MacArthur was relieved and it is revealed MacArthur had advocated a full scale war with [China](#) and, if necessary, nuclear war in the Korean conflict. Historical documents revealed after the fact that MacArthur was right about the Soviet Union not being inclined to intervene in such an event, however, due in part to Stalin's precipitous health.
- 1952: Runs for President on the Republican platform. Is distraught when his former aide, [Dwight Eisenhower](#) secures the Republican nomination and later becomes [President of the United States](#). He could still have conceivably won nomination at the convention after he delivered the keynote address, except that Senator [Robert Taft](#) of Ohio would not transfer his delegates to him.
- January 1955: Is nominated by the [United States Congress](#) for promotion to [General of the Armies](#). Declines the promotion as it would have meant a loss of retirement pay and benefits associated with being a Five Star General.
- [May 12, 1962](#) - Gives famous [Duty, Honor, Country](#) valedictory speech at [West Point](#)
- [April 5, 1964](#): Douglas MacArthur dies at [Walter Reed Army Medical Center](#) in [Washington, DC](#).

Dates of rank

- [Second Lieutenant, United States Army: June 11, 1903](#)
- [First Lieutenant, United States Army: April 23, 1904](#)
- [Captain, United States Army: February 27, 1911](#)
- [Major, United States Army: December 11, 1915](#)
- [Colonel, National Army: August 5, 1917](#)
- [Brigadier General, National Army: June 26, 1918](#)
- Brigadier General rank made permanent in the [Regular Army: January 20, 1920](#)
- [Major General, Regular Army: January 17, 1925](#)
- [General](#) for temporary service as Army Chief of Staff: [November 21, 1930](#)
- Reverted to permanent rank of Major General, Regular Army: [October 1, 1935](#)
- Retired in grade as a General on Regular Army rolls: [December 31, 1937](#)
- Recalled to active service as a [Major General](#) in the Regular Army: [July 26, 1941](#)
- [Lieutenant General](#) in the [Army of the United States: July 27, 1941](#)
- [General](#), Army of the United States: [December 18, 1941](#)
- [General of the Army](#), Army of the United States: [December 18, 1944](#)
- General of the Army rank made permanent in the Regular Army: [March 23, 1946](#)


In [1955](#), a bill passed by the [United States Congress](#) authorized the [President of the United States](#) to promote Douglas MacArthur to the rank of [General of the Armies](#) (a similar measure had also been proposed unsuccessfully in [1945](#)). However, due to regulations involving retirement pay and benefits, as well as MacArthur being junior to [George C. Marshall](#) (who had not been recommended for the same promotion), MacArthur declined promotion to what many view would have been seen as a Six Star General.

Awards and decorations

During his military career, General MacArthur was awarded the following decorations from both the [United States](#) and other allied nations. The awards listed below are those which would have been worn on a military uniform and do not include commemorative medals, unofficial decorations, and non-portable awards.

United States



 Recreation of Douglas MacArthur's awards as they would today appear (does not include all foreign decorations)

- [Medal of Honor](#)
- [Distinguished Service Cross](#) with one [oak leaf cluster](#)
- [Army Distinguished Service Medal](#)
- [Navy Distinguished Service Medal](#)
- [Distinguished Flying Cross](#)
- [Silver Star](#) with one silver oak leaf cluster
- [Bronze Star Medal](#) with [Valor device](#)
- [Purple Heart](#) with one oak leaf cluster
- [Presidential Unit Citation](#) with 1 silver and 1 bronze oak leaf cluster
- [Air Medal](#)
- [Mexican Service Medal](#)
- [World War I Victory Medal](#) with five [battle clasps](#)
- [Army of Occupation of Germany Medal](#)
- [American Defense Service Medal](#) with “Foreign Service” clasp
- [Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal](#) with two silver [service stars](#) and [arrowhead device](#)

- [World War II Victory Medal](#)
- [Army of Occupation Medal](#) with “Japan”clasp
- [National Defense Service Medal](#)
- [Korean Service Medal](#) with three bronze service stars and arrowhead device
- [United Nations Service Medal](#)
- [Command Aviator Badge](#)
- [Combat Infantryman Badge](#)
- [Army General Staff Identification Badge](#)
- Fourteen [Overseas Service Bars](#)
- [Expert Badge](#) with Rifle and Pistol bars

Foreign awards

- [Knight Grand Cross of the Military Division of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath](#)
- [French Légion d'honneur](#)
- [French Croix de Guerre](#)
- [French Medaille Militaire](#)
- [Australian Pacific Star](#)
- [Philippine Medal of Valor](#)
- [Philippine Distinguished Service Star](#)
- [Philippine Legion of Honor, Degree of Chief Commander](#)
- [Philippine Defense Medal](#) with one [service star](#)
- [Philippine Liberation Medal](#) with four service stars
- [Republic of the Philippines Presidential Unit Citation](#)
- [Philippine Independence Medal](#)
- [Order of the Belgium Crown](#)
- [Belgian Croix de Guerre](#)
- [Belgian Order of the Cross](#)
- [Czechoslovakian Order of the White Lion](#)
- [Polish Virtuti Militari](#)
- [Polish Grand Cross of Polonia Restituta](#)
- [Grand Cross Netherlands Order of Orange-Nassau](#)
- [Yugoslavian Order of the White Eagle](#)
- [Japanese Order of the Rising Sun](#)
- [Republic of Korean Presidential Unit Citation](#)
- [Korean War Service Medal](#)
- [Korean Grand Cross of the Order of Military Valour and Merit](#)
- [Italian Grand Cross of the Military Order](#)
- [Italian War Cross](#)
- [Cuban Grand Cross of Military Merit](#)
- [Ecuadorian Grand Cross Order of Abdon Calderon](#)
- [Chinese Cordon of Pau Ting](#)
- [Greek Medal of Honor](#)
- [Guatemalan Cross of Military Merit](#)
- [Hungarian Grand Cross of Military Merit](#)

- [Order of Mexican Military Merit](#)
- [Grand Cross Order of Romanian Military Merit](#)

Trivia

- [MacArthur Park](#) located in western [Los Angeles, California](#) is named after General MacArthur. The park was also the basis of the [song of the same name](#) written by [Jimmy Webb](#).
- MacArthur had no middle name, though some Internet sources variously ascribe him a middle initial of "A", "B", "C", "D", "M", or "S". An archivist at the MacArthur Memorial asserts that MacArthur did wear a monogrammed handkerchief with a middle initial of "A", possibly chosen to indicate his father, but the general had no official middle name.
- Arthur and Douglas MacArthur were the first father and son to each be awarded a Medal of Honor. They remained the only pair until 2001 when [Theodore Roosevelt](#) was awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor for his service during the [Spanish American War](#). [Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.](#) had won one for his service during World War II.
- While MacArthur was famous for smoking a [corn cob pipe](#), in private he actually preferred cigars.
- MacArthur was considered a very good [bridge](#) player, and played often during his years in Australia.
- There are two bridges and one road named after MacArthur in [Taiwan](#), becoming one of the only three foreigners (to Taiwan) who has somewhere named after them. (The other two are [Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.](#) and [George Leslie Mackay](#)) The road is located in [Taipei](#), although it is renamed now. The two bridges remain fully functional to this day.
- In 1945, MacArthur gave his treasured [Gold Castles](#) insignia, a personal possession, to his chief engineer, Major General [Leif J. Sverdrup](#). They are currently worn by the Chief of Engineers as a tradition, and formed the basis for the "castle" logo of the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#).
- The large MacArthur Central plaza in downtown [Brisbane](#), Australia is named after MacArthur and has as its logo the five stars of his rank. His HQ was located on the site during WWII.
- Douglas MacArthur was dismissed in 1951 by [President Truman](#) in dispute over U.S. policy toward [China](#) during the [Korean War](#). Arthur MacArthur, Jr., who fought [Geronimo](#), was relieved of his command, by [President Taft](#), for insubordination.

- An episode of the television series [M*A*S*H](#) entitled "Big Mac" featured MacArthur as part of its storyline; MacArthur himself, being deceased at the time, did not appear. (While the show was about Korea, and while MacArthur died in 1964 - the same year as the [Gulf of Tonkin Incident](#) - the show's premiere was held in the early 1970s.)
- MacArthur's height was 6'5".

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- [MacArthur](#) - a site about MacArthur from [PBS](#).



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