A Teacher's Guide for *Wings of Defeat*, a film by Risa Morimoto and Linda Hoaglund

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Dear Educators and Students:

Our young students live in a world of violence and dehumanization of others—and also openness to new understandings and unprecedented receptiveness to the visual image. Although war will shape the world they live in for the rest of their lives, they do not comprehend it. "9-11" is not part of their vivid personal experience. The Vietnam War lies in the distant past, and World War II is ancient history. Critical awareness of the contemporary uses and abuses of memories of history in general—and war and conflict in particular—is largely alien to them.

World War II in Asia can be a particularly powerful teaching and learning experience. We have not only the perspective of time—over a half century now—but also the element of hope: of ferocious hatreds dissipating once the killing stopped. In its day, the war between the United States and Japan was presented by both sides as a "clash of civilizations" pitting race against race, culture against culture. *Wings of Defeat* undermines such thinking. Hand in hand with a critique of the fanaticism of Japan’s leaders, beginning with the Emperor, this remarkable documentary indicts the madness of war itself.

*Wings of Defeat* succeeds brilliantly by going beyond the words of war leaders and propagandists to place viewers face to face with elderly Japanese who as young men in their late teens and early twenties—not much older than our students today—were prepared to die as Kamikaze “suicide pilots.” They survived by chance, and the personal stories they tell confound expectations and are profoundly humanizing.

During the Pacific War and for decades after, the Kamikaze were commonly presented as true believers who embraced death without qualm or question. Wartime Japanese propagandists pumped up this myth; present-day nationalists labor to perpetuate it; and most foreigners still take it at face value. *Wings of Defeat* punctures the myth. Take, for example, the haunting words of one of the pilots who survived: “I wanted to live. I didn’t want to die.” Or take, again, the on-camera reflections of now elderly American sailors who survived the Kamikaze attack that sank their warship in 1945. Had war fortunes been reversed and the Japanese enemy poised to invade the United States, they muse, Americans too might have offered their lives in like manner.

The human and moral dimensions of these subjects are best taught “in depth,” of course, and we have other recent visual materials that can be used to complement *Wings of Defeat*. Clint Eastwood’s *Flags of Our Fathers* and *Letters from Iwo Jima*, for example, depict the battle of Iwo Jima in early 1945 from the perspectives of American and Japanese fighting men on the ground. What might students make of the latter film when set against *Wings of Defeat*’s participant testimony and original film footage from that same horrific final year of the Pacific War? Expanding further, what deeper understandings emerge when written texts by Japanese as well as American participants are introduced—translated letters and accounts by other Kamikaze, for example, or searing recollections like E.B. Sledge’s *With the Old Breed: At Pelelui and Okinawa*, or fictionalized classics like Shohei Ooka’s *Fires on the Plain* and Norman Mailer’s *The Naked and the Dead?*

When Islamist suicide bombers destroyed the World Trade Center towers on September 11, 2001, the media was quick to make reference to “Kamikaze tactics." Students are likely to bring up this resonance, and teachers must be prepared to point out the differences. The Kamikaze were “volunteers” only in a limited sense, and their targets were exclusively military. At the same time, however, in both cases we find self-sacrifice for a greater cause rationalized as noble—young men motivated in considerable part less by fanaticism than by commitment to protect homeland and family, and hopeful of attaining a kind of immortality by living on in memory as martyrs. In both cases, we encounter young recruits manipulated by others and socialized for death in a ghastly cause.

Obviously, teaching *Wings of Defeat* can be an extended exercise. The great challenge is to make clear this is not just an exercise in knowing the enemy. It is also an entrée into knowing ourselves, and the cultures and horrors of our modern wars.

Sincerely,

John Dower, Ph.D.
Ford International Professor of History, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
Recipient of the Pulitzer Prize in Letters and Nonfiction for *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*  

### Questions to Consider

- How does *Wings of Defeat* help us understand the human and moral dimensions of war?
- How are contemporary terrorists or suicide bombers and Kamikaze similar and different?
Dear Educators and Students:

Wings of Defeat shares several fundamental goals with the two books I have written about the Kamikaze. First, each strives to present the Kamikaze (known in Japan as Tokkotai, meaning Special Attack Forces) for who they really were, challenging stereotypes of them as the unthinking patriotic zealots. Second, each project aims to spotlight the terrible human cost of war, encouraging audiences to imagine alternatives to violence in resolving conflicts.

Wings of Defeat also confirms the most significant conclusion I reached as I researched my books: the Kamikaze did not volunteer to commit suicide for the Emperor. The film and my books reveal that like so many soldiers in so many wars, the Kamikaze were drafted and sent off to battlefronts where death, often at a young age, was all too predictable. Many were highly educated students who agonized over how to carry out orders to take their own lives attacking American ships.

As I state in the film, of the approximately 4,000 Kamikaze who died, about 3,000 were so-called “boy pilots,” drawn from a pool of newly conscripted and enlisted soldiers and enrolled in a special pilot training program for teenage boys. The majority of the remaining 1,000 were “student soldiers,” university students whom the government graduated early in order to draft. Unfortunately, the “boy pilots” left almost no written records of their experiences but many student soldiers wrote letters and kept diaries. Their words provide invaluable insight into their struggle to sustain their humanity amid the wrenching conditions of war and to find some meaning in a death they felt they could not escape. Many of the student soldiers held liberal political beliefs. Some were self-professed Marxists and “radicals.” Whatever their personal beliefs, these young men were extraordinarily well-educated, thoughtful, and cosmopolitan. Well-versed in both the Japanese classics and the literatures and philosophies of Germany, France, and Russia, some were multi-lingual, able to read the international texts in their original language. Reviewing their diary entries today, we can only marvel at how they drew on their knowledge of philosophy and world history in their attempts to grapple with why they had been ordered to cut short their own lives.

Sincerely,

Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, Ph.D.
William F. Vilas Professor of Anthropology, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin

Questions to Consider

What are some alternatives to violence in resolving conflicts?
How can primary sources such as diary entries help us understand the situation of the Kamikaze?
Dear Educators and Students:

Between the establishment of Japan’s Imperial military forces in 1867 and their defeat in 1945, Japan was constantly at war. However, when it was confronted with the prospect of crushing defeat in the Pacific War, it implemented a “suicidal tactic” unprecedented in military history, which systematically guaranteed the death of its own soldiers. They called it Tokko (an abbreviation of Tokubetsu Kogekitai, Special Attack Forces). It was a perverted, heretical military strategy stemming from a combination of Japan’s Achilles heel—its lack of natural resources and its industrial underdevelopment—and Japan’s peculiar metaphysical militarist ideology. Ultimately, the strategy only served to accelerate the exhaustion of its military power.

During the Pacific War there was a 1:12 ratio of GNP between Japan and its principal enemy, the United States. By the end of the war, the same ratio had deteriorated to 1:19. Within this context, even if the “suicidal tactic” had only been implemented as a temporary strategy with appreciable results, it was obvious that it would become a totally self-defeating tactic should it become permanent. Hobbled by its inability to sustain its own military capacity in war, it was apparent that it was only a matter of time before the country would run out of military options. The writing was on the wall. Drained of its military might, Japan would self-destruct.

Nevertheless, with the overall war effort mired in an abysmal state and defeat inevitable, the military commanders chose a heretical tactic, an appalling strategy reflecting the Japanese axiom that despair makes heroes out of cowards. Realizing that their strategy violated every convention and rule of war, the military commanders simply set reason aside, falling back on the power of national myth.

They called their tactic of crashing planes carrying bombs, pilot and all, directly into its targets, Kamikaze, meaning “divine wind.” When typhoons obliterated the Mongolian armada, poised to invade Japan in 1281, they were dubbed divine wind, based on the supposition that “god’s will” had whipped up the calamitous storms protecting their nation. Ever since, wishful thinking has co-existed with reality in Japan, giving rise to a mystical belief that a divine intervention will rescue the country from any crisis. The state reinforced its deception, buttressing the myth of the divine winds by asserting that those who sacrificed their lives to the war would become gods. But even after over four thousand Japanese youths were sacrificed to the seas as Kamikaze, no “divine winds” blew to save Japan.

The other lever used to buttress the Japanese power structure was the obfuscatory gap in military command created by the Imperial system.

After the premiere screening of Wings of Defeat in Tokyo, a former Kamikaze pilot featured in the film freely spoke words which would have been punishable by death during the war, profoundly moving this author, who also remembers that war as one of its Imperial soldiers. When the reports of the impressive results of the first Kamikaze attacks launched from the Philippines against an unsuspecting U.S. Navy reached the Emperor, he is quoted as saying, “Did they have to sacrifice so much?” But then he continued, “But they did a fine job.” Referring to the Emperor’s reaction, the former Kamikaze featured in the film said, “But the Emperor did not order the Kamikaze attacks to end.” These words, spoken by an extremely rare Kamikaze who took off on a mission but miraculously made it home alive, clearly expressed a deeply-held conviction he had kept to himself for decades after the war. They were also a potent accusation. I reiterate that during the war, no Japanese could have dared utter those words. On the other hand, as long as the Emperor was the constitutional monarch, he was not in a position to give an order for the Kamikaze to stop their attacks, no matter how much he might have wished. Although the war was fought in his name, military orders could only be issued by the supreme military command, not by the Emperor. Wings of Defeat, and its heartbreaking reflections will engage Japanese history for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Tadao Morimoto, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus, Ryukoku University, Kyoto

Questions to Consider
What factors led to the establishment of the Kamikaze?
What views did the Japanese Emperor have of the Kamikaze?
Dear Educators and Students,

Thank you for your interest in Wings of Defeat and the stories of four former Kamikaze. This journey began in the Spring of 2005. At a family gathering, my cousin told me that our uncle trained to be a Kamikaze. Born and raised in the United States, I assumed that the Kamikaze were crazy. After all, Kamikaze is an adjective describing something “wildly reckless or destructive.” My first reaction to my uncle training to be a Kamikaze was confusion and disappointment. How could that be? Our uncle was such a funny, kind, and gentle man. How could he be a crazy lunatic Kamikaze? But then, how could I, as an adult, still believe these one-dimensional stereotypes? Like many Westerners, I thought the Kamikaze were fanatics jumping at the chance to die for their Emperor. And like many Westerners, I was so wrong.

I began my research on the Internet, read books, watched films, and saw an opportunity to make a documentary that told the true story of the Kamikaze. I had to talk to those who experienced the war first-hand.

I bought a plane ticket to Japan, excited and anxious to discover the truth about my uncle’s past. My uncle passed away in the mid-1980s so I looked to interview his immediate family members. Like so many other veterans, he died not telling a soul what happened to him during the war.

I was invited to a reunion of the Kamikaze corps who had sortied from Hyakuri in southern Japan. This is where I first met Ena-san and Ueshima-san. Ena-san was my tour guide as he patiently took me to places that hold great significance for the Kamikaze. Ena-san introduced me to ace pilot Hamazono-san. Once we returned to the States, producer Linda Hoaglund read a passage that gunner Nakajima-san wrote and realized he was another person whom we needed to interview. Many other interviewees didn’t make it into the final film but made huge contributions to my research and overall understanding of the Kamikaze history. I am truly grateful for their generosity.

This film is not an attempt to be the ultimate comprehensive film on the Kamikaze. Rather, Wings of Defeat looks into the lives of four young Imperial Navy men who were forced to sacrifice their lives for their country, yet because of specific circumstances, they miraculously survived. Thus today, we are fortunate to have the opportunity to hear their stories first-hand. My hope is that viewers will become curious about other aspects of the Pacific War, the Kamikaze, and their own family history. I suspect others will find parallels between that war and wars that are fought today just as we did while creating the film.

Thank you Gary Mukai and SPICE for your dedication and support over the last year. I am deeply grateful to all those whom we interviewed for the film and all those who gave their time and energy to help create this story.

Thank you for watching.

Peace,

Risa Morimoto
Director/Producer
Wings of Defeat

Questions to Consider
What were some American and Japanese perceptions of one another during World War II?
What are some parallels between World War II and contemporary wars?
Dear Educators and Students:

I was born and raised in Japan, the daughter of American missionary parents. I learned about the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in my Japanese elementary school. I will never forget how the Japanese kids turned around to stare at me, the only American in the room, horrified by what my country had done.

Although my parents also taught me English and history at home, I mostly learned about the Pacific War from the Japanese. I heard about the terrible suffering from the atomic bombs, the firebombing of Japan’s major cities and the severe shortages of food and materials. I also learned that the Kamikaze had been brave, innocent young men, who had willingly given their lives to their country. Like many Japanese, I became weepy when I heard the Kamikaze anthem that appears in our film.

When I came to the United States for college, I was dismayed to learn that many believed the United States had been right to drop the atomic bombs. Many more believed in our country’s entitlement to thousands of nuclear weapons. Some Americans still jokingly called the Japanese “Japs” or “Nips.” None of them knew about our B-29s firebombing Japan. I realized there was a huge gap underlying our contradictory understandings of the war. I was raised in Japan, the country that had lost. They were raised in United States, the country that had won. Wanting to learn what had really happened, I began to delve into the history of that war but wasn’t satisfied with what I could find in books.

Then, I stumbled on Nagasaki 11:02 (1966), Tomatsu Shomei’s book of photographs and oral histories of Nagasaki survivors (hibakusha). His images of Nagasaki hibakusha, taken more than 15 years after the war, compel us to see them as humans, just like us. He also wrote down their stories of unimaginable pain and endless suffering. Wanting to convey the terrible wisdom of those who had seen the end of the world, I instinctively began translating them.

Several years later, I saw the documentary, Japanese Devils, a grim record of the Pacific War, told by low-ranking Japanese war criminals. The litany of crimes they confess to committing against Chinese civilians is relentless: torture, murder, arson, rape, and vivisection, even cannibalism. And yet once again, something moved me to translate their words. I promised the producer I would write English subtitles accurately reflecting the brutal, all too human, language of the Japanese men.

When Risa Morimoto approached me three years ago to help her make a film about Kamikaze pilots who survived the war, I readily agreed. By then I knew that translating the words of those who had lived through that war, whether as victim or perpetrator, or like the Kamikaze, would-be perpetrators who survived to reveal their victimization, is as close as I will come to understanding what really happened. As the writer of the film, I also finally had an opportunity to portray the Pacific War, balancing American and Japanese perspectives. Our goal is to challenge the conventional historical narratives of the war on both sides, through the testimony of a few Kamikaze who took off for death but bravely flew back to live.

Sincerely,

Linda Hoaglund
Producer/Writer
Wings of Defeat

Questions to Consider

- How can first-hand accounts help us better understand or question conventional historical narratives of World War II?
- How does Wings of Defeat challenge the conventional historical narratives of the war on both sides?
SYNOPSIS

International, Kamikaze pilots remain a potent metaphor for fanaticism. In Japan, they are largely revered for their selfless sacrifice. Yet few outside Japan know that hundreds of Kamikaze pilots survived the war. By the spring of 1945, when all Japanese planes were reassigned to Kamikaze (Tokkotai) attacks, Japan could no longer defend its airspace and its naval fleet was demolished. Old airplanes and inadequate training resulted in many failed engines, leaving scores of pilots stranded. When Japan surrendered, hundreds of Kamikaze trainees were awaiting sortie orders that never arrived.

Through rare interviews with surviving Kamikaze pilots, we learn that the military demanded pilots to volunteer to give up their lives. Retracing their journeys from teenagers to doomed pilots, a complex history of brutal training and ambivalent sacrifice is revealed. As U.S. firebombs incinerated its major cities and the country ran out of weapons and fuel, Japan’s military government refused to accept the reality that it could no longer fight. Instead they sent thousands of pilots off to targets nearly impossible to reach. Sixty years later, survivors in their eighties tell us about their training, their mindsets, their experiences in a Kamikaze cockpit and what it meant to survive when thousands of their fellow pilots had died. Their stories insist we set aside our preconceptions to relive their all too human experiences with them. Ultimately, they help us question what responsibilities a government at war has to its soldiers and to its people.
SUBJECTS, GRADE LEVELS, AND TERMINOLOGY

*Wings of Defeat* is recommended for use in world history and U.S. history classes. In particular, it is recommended for use during the teaching of World War II.

*Wings of Defeat* is highly recommended for college students. Many teachers have successfully used the film in high schools. However, teachers should preview the film before making a decision to use the film in high schools. There are many graphic scenes in the film and also use of terms such as “Jap.” Teachers should point out that the term, “Jap,” was commonly used by Americans and by the U.S. media during World War II to refer to the Japanese. The term is derogatory.

The information in the previous paragraph is also true for *Another Journey*, an optional film.

CONNECTIONS TO NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS

*Wings of Defeat* helps to address the following National History Standards.

**STANDARD 4B: WORLD HISTORY**
The student understands the global scope, outcome, and human costs of the war.

Grade Level: 5–12
Explain the major turning points of the war, and describe the principal theaters of conflict in Western Europe, Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, North Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. [Interrogate historical data]

Grade Level: 9–12
Assess the consequences of World War II as a total war. [Formulate historical questions]

**STANDARD 3: U.S. HISTORY**
The causes and course of World War II, the character of the war at home and abroad, and its reshaping of the U.S. role in world affairs.

Standard 3A: The student understands the international background of World War II.

Standard 3B: The student understands World War II and how the Allies prevailed.

Grade Level: 5–12
Explain the major turning points of the war and contrast military campaigns in the European and Pacific theaters. [Draw upon data in historical maps]

Grade Level: 7–12
Evaluate the decision to employ nuclear weapons against Japan and assess later controversies over the decision. [Evaluate major debates among historians]

Grade Level: 5–12
Explain the financial, material, and human costs of the war and analyze its economic consequences for the Allies and the Axis powers. [Utilize visual and quantitative data]
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

The following essential questions for Wings of Defeat were developed based on the “Letters to Educators and Students.”

• How does Wings of Defeat help us understand the human and moral dimensions of war?
• How are contemporary terrorists or suicide bombers and Kamikaze similar and different?
• What are some alternatives to violence in resolving conflicts?
• How can primary sources such as diary entries help us understand the situation of the Kamikaze?
• What factors led to the establishment of the Kamikaze?
• What views did the Japanese Emperor have of the Kamikaze?
• What were some American and Japanese perceptions of one another during World War II?
• What are some parallels between World War II and contemporary wars?
• How can first-hand accounts help us better understand or question conventional historical narratives of World War II?
• How does Wings of Defeat challenge the conventional historical narratives of the war on both sides?

Other important essential questions for Wings of Defeat are:

• How do you define the word “enemy”?
• What is the role of the media during war?
• What is patriotism?
• What is nationalism?
• How do you decide just how far you are willing to go to prove your loyalty?
• What are the responsibilities of a government to its citizens and soldiers in time of war?

Essential questions for Another Journey:

• What is reconciliation?
• What are some ways to honor the memory of someone?
• What do religions teach their followers about forgiveness?
• What does it mean to forgive?
• What is hate?
• How are deceased soldiers honored?
• Have you ever overcome hate or anger toward someone?
OBJECTIVES

Through *Wings of Defeat* and the activities in this teacher’s guide, students will:

- consider the human and moral dimensions of war;
- consider how contemporary terrorists or suicide bombers and Kamikaze are similar and different;
- consider alternatives to violence in resolving conflicts;
- examine primary sources such as diary entries to gain a better understanding of the situation of the Kamikaze;
- learn about the factors that led to the establishment of the Kamikaze;
- learn about the views of the Japanese Emperor regarding the Kamikaze;
- analyze some American and Japanese perceptions of one another during World War II;
- learn about the importance of first-hand perspectives in examining historical events such as World War II;
- consider some parallels between World War II and contemporary wars;
- discuss how *Wings of Defeat* challenges the conventional historical narratives of the war on both sides;
- consider how to define the word “enemy”;
- examine the role of the media during war;
- consider the meaning of patriotism and nationalism;
- consider just how far they are willing to go to prove their loyalty; and
- discuss the responsibilities of a government to its citizens and soldiers in time of war.

Through *Another Journey* and the activities in this teacher’s guide, students will:

- consider the meaning of reconciliation;
- discuss ways to honor the memory of someone;
- discuss what religions teach their followers about forgiveness;
- consider what it means to forgive;
- consider the meaning of hate;
- discuss how deceased soldiers are honored; and
- reflect on how hate or anger toward someone can be overcome.
MATERIALS

Wings of Defeat film [89 minutes]
“Letter to Educators and Students” by Professor John Dower, p. 4
“Letter to Educators and Students” by Professor Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, p. 5
“Letter to Educators and Students” by Professor Tadao Morimoto, p. 6
“Letter to Educators and Students” by Wings of Defeat Director/Producer Risa Morimoto, p. 7
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  • Nationalism and Patriotism, p. 40
  • Surviving Kamikaze and the Aftermath of War, p. 41
Professor John Dower Interview Transcript Excerpts [DVD extra], pp. 43–46
Questions Based on Professor John Dower’s Interview, p. 47
Activity Based on Professor John Dower’s Interview, p. 48

Another Journey film [39 minutes]
Veterans’ Cards for Another Journey, p. 42
TEACHER PREPARATION

1. Make copies of “Multiple Choice/True-False Quiz,” “Map of the Asia/Pacific Region,” “Maps of Japan,” and “Terminology” for each student. In addition, there are eight small-group activities for *Wings of Defeat*. Make one copy of each of the eight small-group activities. There are also six small-group activities that involve the examination of quotes from *Wings of Defeat*. Make one copy of each of the six small-group activities.

2. There are five “Letters to Educators and Students” included in the teacher’s guide. Make a copy of one of the letters for each student in the class, making sure that there are approximately equal numbers of each letter distributed in the class.

3. Preview *Wings of Defeat* and *Another Journey* [optional]. Determine if one or both films are appropriate for your students.

4. Become familiar with the information contained in this teacher’s guide. A list of the people who appear in *Wings of Defeat* is included in this guide.

5. Information on the website, *Wings of Defeat*, is highly recommended.
   http://www.wingsofdefeat.com

6. Information on the website, *Kamikaze Images*, created by Bill Gordon, is also highly recommended.
   http://wgordon.web.wesleyan.edu/Kamikaze/index.htm

7. The following books are highly recommended:
PROCEDURES | DAYS ONE AND TWO

1. Ask students if they have heard of the Kamikaze. If so, ask them what images or terms come to mind when they think of Kamikaze. Write student responses on the whiteboard or on butcher paper.

2. Inform students that they will be watching a film called Wings of Defeat, which is about Kamikaze. Images and terms that are associated with Kamikaze are discussed in the film extensively.

3. Before showing the film, distribute a copy of the “Multiple Choice/True-False Quiz” to students. Allow students five minutes to take the quiz. Announce to students that the quiz will not be graded. It is simply a pre-assessment of students’ knowledge of the topic of the film.

4. As a class, review the answers to the “Multiple Choice/True-False Quiz,” using “Answers to Multiple Choice/True-False Quiz.”

5. Have students form five small groups. Distribute copies of one of the “Letters to Educators and Students” to each small group. Point out that the five writers of the letters appear in Wings of Defeat. Mention the following:

   • Professor John Dower is professor of history at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).
   • Professor Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney is professor of anthropology at the University of Madison, Wisconsin.
   • Professor Tadao Morimoto is professor emeritus, Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan.
   • Risa Morimoto is the director and producer of Wings of Defeat.
   • Linda Hoaglund is the producer and writer of Wings of Defeat. Linda also serves as the subtitler.

6. Ask students to spend ten minutes reading their “Letters to Educators and Students” and briefly discussing the two key questions that were developed from the content of the letters. The following questions are also included on the letters.

   Professor John Dower
   • How does Wings of Defeat help us understand the human and moral dimensions of war?
   • How are contemporary terrorists or suicide bombers and Kamikaze similar and different?

   Professor Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney
   • What are some alternatives to violence in resolving conflicts?
   • How can primary sources such as diary entries help us understand the situation of the Kamikaze?

   Professor Tadao Morimoto
   • What factors led to the establishment of the Kamikaze?
   • What views did the Japanese Emperor have of the Kamikaze?

   Risa Morimoto
   • What were some American and Japanese perceptions of one another during World War II?
   • What are some parallels between World War II and contemporary wars?

   Linda Hoaglund
   • How can first-hand accounts help us better understand or question conventional historical narratives of World War II?
   • How does Wings of Defeat challenge the conventional historical narratives of the war on both sides?

7. Ask students to further consider their two questions while viewing Wings of Defeat. Distribute the “Maps of Japan,” “Map of the Asia/Pacific Region,” and “Terminology” to the students. Point out that the “Map of the Asia/Pacific Region” includes countries and places mentioned in the film; the “Maps of Japan” includes cities and places mentioned in the film; and “Terminology” includes terms that are used in the film. These can serve as references to students. Teachers may want to spend some time reviewing the handouts with students.

8. Show Wings of Defeat. The film may need to be shown over two class periods.
PROCEDURES | DAYS THREE AND FOUR

1. To debrief Wings of Defeat, ask the students in their small groups to prepare short two-minute summaries of responses to the questions. Groups should select presenters.

2. Ask each presenter to give a two-minute summary of his/her group’s discussion of the questions.

3. Divide the class into eight small groups and distribute one of the small-group activities (listed below) to each group. Mention that the activities were developed to encourage each group to carefully consider an important aspect of the film. Allow students the rest of the class period to work on their activities.
   - Personal Objects
   - Slogans
   - Diaries
   - U.S. and Japanese Newsreels
   - Music
   - Graphic Images
   - Memorials
   - Film Reviews

4. Ask each group to present a two- to three-minute summary of its work.

PROCEDURES | DAY FIVE

1. If time allows, you may want to engage students in the small-group activities that focus on the examination of quotes from the film.

2. Divide the class into six groups and distribute one of the six small-group activities for “Examination of Quotes” to each group. Inform students that important quotes from the film were grouped into six categories. Please note that some quotes could have been placed in two or more categories. These categories are:
   - Perspectives of the Kamikaze Strategy and Death
   - Veterans’ Emotions in the Face of Death
   - Perceptions of Kamikaze
   - Recruitment and Kamikaze Training Camps
   - Nationalism and Patriotism
   - Surviving Kamikaze and the Aftermath of War

3. Point out that each small-group activity has a “For Discussion” section for students to consider while examining the quotes, and an activity. Allow students the rest of the class period to discuss the questions and to work on their activities.

4. Ask each group to present a summary of its work.

5. Review students’ initial perceptions of the Kamikaze by examining their responses to the class discussion on Day One, which were written on the whiteboard or on butcher paper prior to showing Wings of Defeat. Ask students to comment on their responses. Have their perspectives of the Kamikaze stayed the same? Have their perspectives of the Kamikaze changed? If so, how?
OPTIONAL

1. Following the production of Wings of Defeat, two American survivors of the USS Drexler, which was sunk by Kamikaze attacks, asked filmmakers Risa Morimoto and Linda Hoaglund if they could meet former Kamikaze. The meeting of former enemies of World War II was captured in a sequel documentary, Another Journey. Discuss the following essential questions before showing the film.
   • What is reconciliation?
   • What are some ways to honor the memory of someone?
   • What do religions teach their followers about forgiveness?
   • What does it mean to forgive?
   • What is hate?
   • How are deceased soldiers honored?
   • Have you ever overcome hate or anger toward someone?

2. Inform students that two U.S. veterans, Gene Brick and Fred Mitchell, went to Japan in 2007 to meet three former Kamikaze, Takeo Ueshima, Takehiko Ena, and Shigeyoshi Hamazono.

3. Make copies of “Veterans’ Cards for Another Journey” and cut the sheets into strips along the dotted lines. Distribute one of the veterans’ cards to each student. Ask each student to focus his/her viewing of Another Journey through the perspective of this veteran. Review the questions on the cards with the students.

4. Show Another Journey.

5. Have students with the same veteran’s card meet together (five small groups) and discuss the questions on their veteran’s card. Show students the movie poster image (cover of this teacher’s guide) for Wings of Defeat. Ask each group of students to create a movie poster for Another Journey. The images and text on the poster should capture the essence of the film and highlight the veteran on the students’ veteran’s card.

OPTIONAL

1. The DVD extra on the Wings of Defeat DVD includes an interview with Professor John Dower. His interview transcript is included in this teacher’s guide for your reference. Distribute “Questions Based on Professor John Dower’s Interview” to small groups of students and have the students review these questions before showing his interview.

2. Show Professor John Dower’s interview.

3. Have students discuss the questions after watching his interview.

4. Make copies of “Activity Based on Professor John Dower’s Interview” for each group. Allow students a class period to work on the activity or assign the activity as homework.

OTHER PERSPECTIVES

1. Have students research non-Japanese Kamikaze. Suggested sources are listed below:

   American Kamikaze:

   Korean Kamikaze:
MULTIPLE CHOICE / TRUE-FALSE QUIZ

MULTIPLE CHOICE: [Circle the correct answer.]

1. The word, “Kamikaze,” in Japanese means:
   a. divine wind; b. Japanese fighter pilot; c. Japanese Zero; d. cherry blossom

2. The origin of the word, “Kamikaze,” dates back to:
   a. 1941; b. 1944; c. 13th century; d. 1942

3. Kamikaze were formed on the following date:
   a. December 7, 1941; b. October 20, 1944; c. August 6, 1945; d. September 2, 1945

4. There were approximately ________ Kamikaze who died during World War II.
   a. 10,000; b. 1,000,000; c. 4,000; d. 100,000

5. Of this number, there were approximately ______“student soldiers” (university students) who were Kamikaze and died during World War II.
   a. 4,000; b. 500,000; c. 1,000; d. 40,000

TRUE-FALSE: [Circle “True” or “False.”]

6. All Kamikaze willingly volunteered to die for their country. True or False

7. All Kamikaze died during World War II. True or False

8. Kamikaze are commonly known in Japan as Tokkotai, meaning “Special Attack Forces.” True or False

9. Approximately three-fourths of all Kamikaze were “boy pilots.” True or False

10. Kamikaze were given orders to crash their bomb-laden planes into U.S. ships. True or False
ANSWERS TO MULTIPLE CHOICE/TRUE-FALSE QUIZ

MULTIPLE CHOICE: [Circle the correct answer.]

1. The word, "Kamikaze," in Japanese means:
   a. DIVINE WIND; b. Japanese fighter pilot; c. Japanese Zero; d. cherry blossom

   The Japanese word, kami, is often translated as "god, deity, or divine." Kami are important in the Shinto religion. The Japanese word, kaze, means "wind."

2. The origin of the word, "Kamikaze," dates back to:
   a. 1941; b. 1944; c. 13th CENTURY; d. 1942

   It is believed that Kamikaze, a "divine wind," saved Japan from Mongolian invasions in the 13th century. Typhoons were believed to have miraculously sunk the Mongolian ships that were approaching Japan.

3. Kamikaze were formed on the following date:
   a. December 7, 1941; b. OCTOBER 20, 1944; c. August 6, 1945; d. September 2, 1945

   December 7, 1941: the date of the attack on Pearl Harbor against the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, by the Japanese navy, resulting in the United States entering World War II.
   October 20, 1944: According to Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, “Toward the end of World War II, when an American invasion of Japan’s homeland seemed imminent, Ohnishi Takijiro, a navy vice-admiral, invented the Tokkotai (“Special Attack Force”) operation...” The operation was instituted on October 20, 1944.
   August 6, 1945: the date of the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima.
   September 2, 1945: the formal date of the Japanese surrender in World War II.

4. There were approximately ________ Kamikaze who died during World War II.
   a. 10,000; b. 1,000,000; c. 4,000; d. 100,000

5. Of this number, there were approximately ________ “student soldiers” [university students] who were Kamikaze and died during World War II.
   a. 4,000; b. 500,000; c. 1,000; d. 40,000

TRUE-FALSE: [Circle “True” or “False.”]

6. All Kamikaze willingly volunteered to die for their country. True or FALSE

7. All Kamikaze died during World War II. True or FALSE

8. Kamikaze are commonly known in Japan as Tokkotai, meaning “Special Attack Forces.” TRUE or False

9. Approximately three-fourths of all Kamikaze were “boy pilots.” TRUE or False

10. Kamikaze were given orders to crash their bomb-laden planes into U.S. ships. TRUE or False
MAPS OF JAPAN

This map includes the cities and places mentioned in *Wings of Defeat*. There are four main islands in Japan: Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. Many of the places mentioned in the film are located in Kyushu, especially one of the prefectures (Kagoshima) on Kyushu. Close-up maps of Kyushu and Kagoshima Prefecture are included as well.

Chiran, Hyakuri, Kokubu, Kanoya, Usa, and Yokosuka are locations of military bases. Kuroshima is an island in Kagoshima Prefecture where one of the Kamikaze in the film survived after a crash landing.

You may use these maps as a reference while watching the film and during your small-group work.
This map includes the countries and places mentioned in Wings of Defeat. You may use it as a reference while watching the film and during your small-group work.
PEOPLE IN WINGS OF DEFEAT

Producers
Risa Morimoto, director/producer
Linda Hoaglund, producer/writer

Risa Morimoto’s family in Japan
Uncle Toshio Sunada
Uncle Kazutsugu Araki
Aunt Kimiko Sunada
Aunt Teruko Sugai
Cousin Hiroshi Sunada
Cousin Kazuhito Miura
Cousin Tamano Sasaki
Cousin Toshimi Miura

American Soldiers
General Douglas MacArthur
Eugene Brick, USS Drexler survivor
Henry Christensen, USS Drexler survivor
Joseph Haas, USS Drexler survivor
Fred Mitchell, USS Drexler survivor
Duke Payne, USS Drexler survivor

Japanese Civilian
Kumi Watanabe

Museum Historians
Souei Hirata, Usa Airbase historian
Kaseda Museum director [no name]
Tachiarai Museum docent [no name]
Akihisa Torihama, Director, Hotaru Museum
Fukuo Sato, docent, Kanoya Naval Airbase Museum

Author
Koutarou Hidaka, Crashland

Professors
John Dower, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Tadao Morimoto, Ryukoku University
Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, University of Wisconsin, Madison

Japanese Soldiers
Vice Admiral Ohnishi, “Father” of Kamikaze operations
Lieutenant Fujii, former flight instructor
Lieutenant Seki, first official Kamikaze
Takehiko Ena, former Kamikaze
Shigeyoshi Hamazono, former Kamikaze
Jungo Kaku, former flight instructor
Kazuo Nakajima, former Kamikaze
Takeo Ueshima, former Kamikaze
TERMINOLOGY

ALLIED POWERS—The Allies of World War II were the countries officially opposed to the Axis powers during World War II. The major Axis powers were Germany, Italy, and Japan. The British Empire, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the United States of America were known as "The Big Three" Allied powers.

ANNEXATION—the incorporation of territory into an existing political unit such as a country, state, county, or city.

ATOMIC BOMB—a type of bomb in which the energy is provided by nuclear fission; two atomic bombs were dropped by the United States on Japan during World War II.

AXIS POWERS—alliance of Germany, Italy, and Japan during World War II.

B-29—The Boeing B-29 Superfortress was a four-engine heavy bomber propeller aircraft flown by the U.S. military during World War II.

BANZAI—Japanese exclamation or battle cry meaning "10,000 years."

CADET—military trainee.

CHERRY BLOSSOMS—In her book, Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History, page 3, Professor Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney notes the following: "... the symbolism of cherry blossoms, which became the master trope [a figure of speech using words in nonliteral ways] of Japan's imperial nationalism at the beginning of the Meiji period [1868]—'You shall die like beautiful falling cherry petals for the emperor.' Many Tokkotai pilots flew to their deaths with blooming cherry branches adorning their uniforms." Cherry blossoms are short-lived and are often used as symbols of the impermanence of life.

COCKPIT—the space in the body of a small airplane containing seats for the pilot, copilot, and sometimes passengers.

COURT MARTIAL—a court where cases of military law are heard.

DE FACTO—in reality or fact; exercising power or serving a function without being legally or officially established.

DEFERMENT [MILITARY]—officially sanctioned postponement of compulsory military service.

DOGFIGHT—a battle in the air at close quarters between fighter planes.

FIREBOMB—incendiary bomb; a bomb that is designed to start fires.

GREATER EAST ASIA CO-PROSPERITY SPHERE—a slogan used by the Japanese government during World War II to express the idea of a politically and economically integrated Asia free from Western domination and under Japanese leadership, but also used to rationalize Japan’s expansionist ambitions on the continent. [definition taken from Japan: An Illustrated Encyclopedia, New York: Kodansha, 1993, p. 475]

HIBAKUSHA—atomic bomb survivors.

HOMELAND DEFENSE OPERATION—strategic term for defending Japan.

JAP—a derogatory term used during World War II in reference to Japanese soldiers and other Japanese.

KAMIKAZE—a Japanese Navy or Army soldier trained in World War II to make a suicidal crash attack, especially upon a ship; often translated as "divine wind," the legendary wind that saved Japan from Mongol invasions in the 13th century.

KEMPEITAI—military police arm of the Imperial Japanese Army from 1881 to 1945.

NIPS—a derogatory term used during World War II in reference to Japanese soldiers and other Japanese.

NOSEDIVE—a very steep dive of an aircraft.

SAKE—Japanese rice wine.

SAMURAI—Japanese feudal military aristocracy; a warrior belonging to this class.

-SAN—commonly used term of respect. It can stand for Mr. or Ms., and is attached to first or last names, for example, Yamada-san. It can also be attached to names of occupations such as omawari-san (Mr. Policeman).

SHOWA—the name of the era that corresponded with Emperor Hirohito’s reign; was made the Emperor’s own name posthumously.

SORTIE—a mission flown by military aircraft.

TOKKOTAI—an abbreviation of Tokubetsu Kogekitai, meaning “Special Attack Forces”; word commonly used in Japan for Kamikaze.

YAMATO [BATTLESHIP]—battleship of the Imperial Japanese Navy; symbol of the nation’s naval power; the largest battleship in the world at the time.

ZERO FIGHTER—Japanese fighter aircraft.
ACTIVITY: PERSONAL OBJECTS

American and Japanese soldiers often carried amulets, good luck charms, religious items, photographs, letters, and other personal objects into war. Some typical items are listed below.

Japanese:
- Senninbari
- Cherry blossom
- Dolls
- Photographs

*Senninbari*: A Japanese soldier’s mother, sister, fiancé, or wife would weave *senninbari* (“thousand-person-stitches”), a strip of white cloth onto which red stitches were sewn, in order to confer courage and protection from the hazards of battle upon the wearer. The cloth would usually be worn around the waist of a soldier going into battle. Most are believed to have worn *senninbari*.

In many photographs, Kamikaze are pictured with dolls and/or cherry blossoms. As mentioned in *Wings of Defeat*, many Kamikaze carried dolls. In the film, Kumi Watanabe mentioned that dolls symbolized the following: “Take me along. I want to go with you. Our prayer sewn into the dolls was ‘Hang in there, please succeed.’”

American:
- Religious artifacts
- Photos, letters
- Four-leaf clover
- Rabbit’s foot
- Bible

**Task**
Imagine that you are about to embark on a risky or uncertain mission. Each person in your group is allowed to bring only one personal object. What object would you choose and why? What does your object represent and/or symbolize? Draw a sketch of your object.
ACTIVITY: SLOGANS

In *Wings of Defeat*, many Japanese slogans were depicted. These are listed below as well as some of the slogans used in the United States.

**WORLD WAR II SLOGANS: JAPAN**
- Until We Win, I Will Not Want
- Luxury Is Our Enemy
- Grow; Don't Buy [above, top right]
- The Sky Is Our Battlefield [third from left]
- Time for Students to Arise
- Get Right Back Up and Get Your Revenge [above, bottom right]
- All Planes Now Kamikaze [far left]
- Kamikaze Spirit: My Sacrifice Will Save the Country [second from left]
- Every Citizen Now Kamikaze

**WORLD WAR II SLOGANS: UNITED STATES**
- United We Stand
- Remember Pearl Harbor
- Avenge Pearl Harbor
- I Want You for the U.S. Army
- Till We Meet Again Buy War Bonds
- Every Man, Woman, and Child Is a Partner [Franklin Roosevelt]
- Women Join the Marines
- Where Our Men Are Fighting Our Food Is Fighting
- The Marines Have Landed

**Task**
Discuss how these slogans are similar and different. In addition, discuss the following: What are the purposes of slogans? Can they be considered examples of propaganda? Research slogans that are used today (in the context of war or in other contexts such as advertisement). Prepare a PowerPoint presentation or other visual presentation that highlights slogans used in a specific war or advertisement.
ACTIVITY: DIARIES

The following diary entries were provided by Professor Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, the author of Kamikaze Diaries: Reflections of Japanese Student Soldiers. She selected them from hundreds of pages of diaries that she has translated into English.

**Task**

Choose one of the following activities:

1. Read each diary entry and develop a graphic image that captures the essence of the entry.

2. Write a poem, a piece of lyrical prose, or an internal monologue of a Kamikaze in the final hours before his flight. What might he be thinking about? What might he be feeling? What might he notice/observe about the world around him?

**DIARY ENTRIES:**

Now it is before dawn. It is 3 o’clock at night. 3:00 a.m. I do not want to die! I will try to live a full life.... I want to live. No, I don't want to die.... I feel lonely.

Dusk, that most beautiful moment...
With no pattern
Appear and disappear
Millions of images
Beloved people.
How unbearable to die in the sky.

—Written July 27, 1945, the night before Hayashi Tadao, a graduate of the Imperial University of Kyoto, died at age 24.

The sound of the clock brings back fond memories of my childhood
Remembering those sleepless nights
Unable to sleep for loneliness
Many thoughts come to my mind as rain falls outside.

I, who have come to know the depth of life and live that life, must sacrifice my life for our country since my life is destined to be given for the nation... I painfully struggle in pursuit of truth.

—Nakao Takenori, graduate of the Imperial University of Tokyo, died at age 22.
It is easy to talk about death in the abstract, as the ancient philosophers discussed. But it is real death I fear, and I don’t know if I can overcome the fear.

To be honest, I cannot say that the wish to die for the Emperor is genuine, coming from my heart. However, it is decided for me that I die for the Emperor...

[Letter to his mother] I wish I could see you once more. I want to be held in your arms and sleep.... I am writing this letter when my final flight is the day after tomorrow.

—Hayashi Ichizo, graduate of the Imperial University of Kyoto, died at age 23.

What is patriotism? ...How can we tolerate the killing of millions of people and depriving billions of people of basic human freedom under the banner of such abstract notions [as patriotism and homeland]...? The military—A Big Fool!

If the power of old capitalism is something we cannot get rid of easily but if it can be crushed by defeat in war, we are turning the disaster into a fortunate event.

—Sasaki Hachiro, graduate of the Imperial University of Tokyo, died at age 22.

The Night Before the Final Flight

Despite the numerous published testaments, photographs, and films that show smiling pilots saluting or waving goodbye as they take off on their final mission, Kasuga Takeo reports what really took place. Kasuga looked after the Kamikaze by providing meal, laundry, room cleaning, and other daily tasks for the student soldiers at the Tsuchiura Navy Airbase.

"At the hall where their farewell parties were held, the young student officers drank cold sake the night before their flight. Some gulped the sake in one swallow, others kept gulping down [a large amount]. The whole place turned into a mayhem. Some broke hanging light bulbs with their swords. Some lifted chairs to break the windows and tore white tablecloths. A mixture of military songs and curses filled the air. While some shouted in rage, others cried aloud. It was their last night of life. They thought of their parents, their faces and images, lovers’ faces and their smiles, a sad farewell to their fiancées—all went through their minds like a running horse lantern [a rapidly revolving lantern with many pictures on it]. Although they were supposedly ready to sacrifice their precious youth the next morning for Imperial Japan and for the Emperor, they were torn beyond what words can express—some putting their heads on the table, some writing their wills, some folding their hands in meditation, some leaving the hall, and some dancing in frenzy while breaking flower vases. They all took off wearing the rising sun headband the next morning. But this scene of utter desperation has hardly been reported. I observed it with my own eyes, as I took care of their daily life, which consisted of incredibly strenuous training, coupled with cruel and torturous corporal punishment as a daily routine."
ACTIVITY: U.S. AND JAPANESE NEWSREELS

Many U.S. and Japanese newsreels are interspersed in Wings of Defeat. During World War II, newsreels greatly influenced public perceptions of the war.

Task
Below are the narratives from the U.S. and Japanese newsreels used in Wings of Defeat. Read them and research and discuss the following questions:

• What were the purposes of World War II-focused [or any war-focused] newsreels?
• Where and when were they shown?
• What are some similarities and differences between the U.S. and Japanese newsreels?
• Would you consider any of the newsreels to be examples of propaganda?
• What effects might they have had on the U.S. and Japanese public?
• What should the role of the media be during time of war?

Develop a poster that includes a summary of your research and discussion.

Optional: If you have access to a video camera, develop a one- or two-minute newsreel about a current event. The perspective presented in the newsreel can be of your own choosing.

SELECT NARRATION FROM U.S. NEWSREELS

Specially trained Kamikaze units and pilots strike at the fleet with a reckless spirit defined as typical of the Japanese mind applying itself to military problems. To these enemy flyers there can be no more honorable death than self-immolation and crashing a plane on the deck of one of our warships.


Airborne, the B-29s head for Tokyo. The giant bombers equipped to range over 5,000 miles to open the full-fledged air war against Japan.

Okinawa, Japanese island dominating the approach to the enemy homeland. United States Navy hurls thousands of shells into the enemy position. At sea, off Okinawa, a furious naval battle rages. The United States Navy fleet is attacked full strength by the Kamikaze corps. Navy gun side camera shows Japanese ships under attack.

Only one out of ten Kamikaze penetrates outer Navy defenses. One out of hundreds reaches the core of the fleet and few of those hit their targets.
This was the island that the Japanese simply could not afford to lose. For four months they fought a
desperate battle that cost them 90,000 lives. The island was safe in U.S. hands in July [1945].

Every major city of Japan was bombed and re-bombed by the B-29s. Entire cities were destroyed while
others were left smoking and paralyzed. Millions of Japanese were forced to flee.

In these final days of the war, air power and air power alone is bringing a nation to its knees.

One day, August 5, 1945, one B-29 left on a special mission. One airplane that represented millions of
man-hours of labor and billions of dollars of American money. That airplane carried the atomic bomb.
Its destination: Hiroshima.

SELECT NARRATION FROM JAPANESE NEWSREELS

They have all gathered on the deck, bearing the mission to liberate Asia and to create a new world
order. Under the Navy flag, tears rose in every man’s eyes. Victory in the surprise attack. Everyone
attack! The Imperial Navy has finally risen, at war against Hawaii.

They all make their farewell toasts. They pray every plane will make a direct hit.

We are honored to receive the following message from the Emperor: The planes crashing into enemy
ships performed brilliantly with excellent results. When their country asked of them the ultimate
sacrifice, they rose to the occasion.

You and I are cherry blossoms in season. Blooming in the garden of the Navy Officers Academy. Once
blossomed, every flower knows it must die. We will die gloriously, then, for our homeland.
ACTIVITY: MUSIC

Following the production of *Wings of Defeat*, filmmakers Risa Morimoto and Linda Hoaglund arranged for U.S. survivors of the USS Drexler, which was sunk by Kamikaze attacks, to meet former Kamikaze. The film, *Another Journey*, captures the meeting of these former enemies of World War II. In *Another Journey*, Shigeyoshi Hamazono, who was interviewed in *Wings of Defeat*, sings a song, “Furusato,” (meaning “hometown”) for two U.S. survivors of the USS Drexler.

**Task**

Choose one of the following activities:

1. Below are the lyrics for “Furusato,” which were translated from Japanese by Linda Hoaglund, producer/writer of *Wings of Defeat*. Compare the lyrics with the lyrics for “America the Beautiful.” How are they similar and different? Develop lyrics for a song about some aspect of *Wings of Defeat*. Prepare to perform the song a cappella.

   *Furusato*
   The hills where I once chased rabbits
   The stream where I once fished
   In my dreams I still turn
   To my unforgettable hometown
   With my dreams fulfilled
   Someday I will return
   To the green hills, to the clear waters
   Of my hometown

   *America the Beautiful*
   O beautiful for spacious skies,
   For amber waves of grain,
   For purple mountain majesties
   Above the fruited plain!
   America! America!
   God shed his grace on thee
   And crown thy good with brotherhood
   From sea to shining sea!

2. If you play an instrument, compose a short tune that expresses the situation/feelings of a Kamikaze. Try to use dynamics, rhythm, and articulation that express the different aspects of the Kamikaze’s plight (e.g., a fast-paced section may symbolize the fear and pounding heart of a fighter; a slow mournful melodic section may bring images of nostalgia and sadness for the fighter’s loss of family, hometown, and life).
ACTIVITY: GRAPHIC IMAGES

In *Wings of Defeat*, the animated scene recreates the experience of Shigeyoshi Hamazono as he flew on a Kamikaze mission. Compare that animation with the following scenes from the 1967 comic book, *The Last Kamikaze*, published by Ripley’s Believe It or Not! ®. Ripley’s Believe It or Not! ® is a franchise, founded by Robert Ripley, which deals in events and items that are strange or unusual. According to Bill Gordon, *Kamikaze Images*, “The truth is that although Ugaki did send a radio message, there was no mention that he had sighted the American fleet. The location of Ugaki’s death never has been determined with certainty, but he most likely crashed without finding any ships or was shot down by American night fighters near Okinawa.”

© 1967, by Ripley Enterprises, Inc.

Task
Research graphic images used in a war, past or present. Develop one page of a newspaper about the war. Make sure that your newspaper page includes some graphic images that were used during the war.
**ACTIVITY: MEMORIALS**

Risa Morimoto, director/producer of *Wings of Defeat*, says the following near the end of the film:

I came here to honor the memory of my uncle  
Not the man I knew as a child  
Not the man I feared had been a fanatic  
But the man whose stories I wish I could have heard

**Task**

In many ways, *Wings of Defeat* serves as a memorial to Risa’s uncle, Toshio Sunada. Think about something you have done to honor someone. Write a poem about this experience or about the person. The person can be a relative, friend, or anyone else whom you respect or admire.
**ACTIVITY: FILM REVIEWS**

Film reviews help people determine whether or not to go to see a film. They can encourage people to see a film or discourage them. *Wings of Defeat* has received many film reviews such as the two below.

**Task**

Write your own film review for *Wings of Defeat*. Your review should aim to describe concisely the content and nature of the film and analyze the techniques the producers used to communicate this content. Also, your review should include outside knowledge from this area of history and maybe a modern-day parallel to give the reader a frame of reference for the film. Finally, your review should judge the film’s effectiveness in communicating its points and give the reader advice on whether or not it is worthwhile to see.
EXAMINATION OF QUOTES:
PERSPECTIVES OF THE KAMIKAZE STRATEGY AND DEATH

For Discussion
How did the perspective of the Kamikaze strategy vary when thinking about it as a military strategy versus from a human perspective?

Activity
Develop a three-minute role play that captures your thoughts on the discussion, or draw a political cartoon that illustrates the Kamikaze [as a military strategy] versus the Kamikaze [from a human perspective].

Takehiko Ena: It’s difficult to explain in words. After all, I’m a human being so it was impossible to think about my death in a casual way.

Takehiko Ena: You can see the shadow of death on my face. You see, it’s my funeral portrait. So you see, it might seem that the Kamikaze attacks were very bold and courageous but for the individual pilots it was a very grim and painful order. It was an order that we followed out of a sense of responsibility that we had to sacrifice our lives for our country.

Takeo Ueshima: They were all in my same class. They all died in Kamikaze attacks. I collected all their photographs and made it into an album 50 years ago. When the Kamikaze pilots were taking off from Hyakuri, we all sent them off. It was so sad. But each of us is thinking, "It’s my turn next." We’re all in the same boat.

Professor John Dower: This becomes an example for the people back home and so you will find Japanese officers or militarists or ideologues of one sort or another saying, “You must be ready to die like the Kamikaze pilots.” And you will find squad leaders speaking to the Kamikaze pilots attempting to inspire them saying, “You will become a model for all of the people of Japan. You will be an inspiration.”

Professor John Dower: By this time of the war, the question was not, “Do I choose life or do I choose death?” The question was, “How will I die?”

Shigeyoshi Hamazono: From the moment I enlisted to be a pilot, before there were Kamikaze, I knew that, at any moment I might have to happily accept death. But once the Kamikaze began, I knew that unless we died, no one else could save Japan.

Kazuo Nakajima: Before my Kamikaze mission, I flew from Hyakuri to Kokubu, and I looked down and everything was bombed out from the firebombing. I thought at this rate Japan will never last. I was positive we would lose.

Professor Tadao Morimoto: When the battleship Yamato sank in early April 1945, the Japanese naval fleet was completely demolished. In reality, Japan had completely collapsed. But no matter how desperate the situation, no one could advise the Emperor to end the war.

Takehiko Ena: When the leaders decided that the Kamikaze attacks would become the central military strategy, I couldn’t accept it. But I also knew Japan could no longer muster a conventional attack.
EXAMINATION OF QUOTES:
VETERANS’ EMOTIONS IN THE FACE OF DEATH

For Discussion
In *Wings of Defeat*, Professor Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney mentions the enormously strong camaraderie formed by Kamikaze at the base. Consider how this was similar to or different from U.S. veterans who were on the same battleship such as the USS Drexler.

Activity
The quotes below illustrate the deeply painful, fearful, and conflicting emotions the Kamikaze and Americans endured. *Tanka* is a form of poetry similar to *haiku*, except it follows a 5-7-5-7-7 syllable pattern. Read the quotes about soldiers and then write your own *tanka* from the perspective of a Kamikaze or an American.

Kazuo Nakajima: I only have a few more days left to live.

Takehiko Ena: It’s difficult to explain in words. After all, I’m a human being so it was impossible to think about my death in a casual way.

Takeo Ueshima: I just waved them goodbye, thinking, “Next it’s me.” Watching my friends take off ahead of me, I just kept wondering if I’d be able to take off like they did.

Takehiko Ena: We would board the planes and, smiling, wave our final farewell to those who were seeing us off. But the reality was, when you’re about to go off to die, you hardly feel like smiling.

Takehiko Ena: First light
After a final toast at the command post, I encounter my final hours
My doom looms, wretched and unjust
I turn towards my family’s home, bidding a silent farewell
I step off this earth
Betraying no uncertainty
And climb into the cockpit, soon to be my casket
A desperate warrior’s will rousing my body
I entrust my pitiful fate
To a 800 kilo bomb
Then ascend, leaving only a wake of dust
I will plunge headlong into a fiery hell
An abyss of carnage
Professor Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney:
At the time, it’s very difficult for them to say that “I am going to save my life.” Because what happened on the base is that everyone knew that they were going to die. So they built an enormously strong comradeship. Most of them...knew that not volunteering does not necessarily save their lives. The others were too proud to say, “I’m going to save my life. You guys can go.”

Fred Mitchell: Anyone saying they weren’t afraid is lying.

Kazuo Nakajima: Not that I had any special goal in life, but I wanted to live, I didn’t want to die.

Aunt Kimiko: I know it sounds ridiculous but we made bamboo spears. When an enemy soldier came, we were supposed to spear and kill him.

Koutarou Hidaka: The message of these desperate defense tactics was, “Let’s all die together.”

Vice Admiral Ohnishi [addressing first Kamikaze pilots]: Because you are already gods, you have no human desires. If you did, it would be to know you crashed your target.

Eugene Brick: It was strange. I mean, to have somebody who was diving into you knowing he was going to get killed. He wasn’t fighting for his life, but we were.
EXAMINATION OF QUOTES:  
PERCEPTIONS OF KAMIKAZE

For Discussion  
One important theme throughout the film is the struggle of the director and producer, Risa Morimoto, coming to terms with her uncle as a Kamikaze. Why did Risa feel conflicted about this?

Activity  
The U.S. newsreel seems to blame the Kamikaze’s actions on the Kamikaze themselves, whereas Takeo Ueshima claims no Kamikaze would boast about his position. Create two political cartoons portraying Kamikaze from the U.S. and Japanese perspectives.

U.S. newsreel: Specially trained Kamikaze units and pilots strike at the fleet with reckless spirit defined as typical of the Japanese mind applying itself to military problems. To these enemy flyers there can be no more honorable death than self-immolation and crashing a plane on the deck of one of our warships.

Risa Morimoto: Growing up in America, I never questioned that Kamikaze were fanatics. “Suicide attack,” “self-immolation,” words I associated with terrorists, now applied to my own family.

Risa Morimoto: I can’t imagine why my good-natured uncle wanted to become Kamikaze.

Risa Morimoto: I thought all the Kamikaze died during the war diving into American ships.

Cousin Kazuhito [when asked, “Does Japanese society have a positive image of them [Kamikaze]?”]: Sometimes it’s positive, sometimes it’s negative. But in our generation we have a more positive image of the actions they took.

Cousin Hiroshi: I’m the complete opposite. I have a negative image. Why did they have to go to such lengths? Why were they backed into such a desperate corner? What was the point? Making them fly such little planes into the enemy. How much damage could they really inflict?

Takeo Ueshima: No one is going to boast, “I was a pilot and I was a Kamikaze.”

Kazuo Nakajima: It’s nothing to boast about. It would be one thing if the Kamikaze strategy had been effective, but mostly they died in vain.
EXAMINATION OF QUOTES:
RECRUITMENT AND KAMIKAZE TRAINING CAMPS

For Discussion
Japan’s dearth of natural resources compared to the United States seemed to be a big military concern to the Japanese. How—if at all—do you think this played into Japan’s decision to launch the Kamikaze strategy?

Activity
The Japanese military painted the Kamikaze’s job as heroic, one of martyrdom, and the ultimate show of patriotism. Keeping this in mind and Japan’s need for natural resources during World War II, write a letter to an editor of a newspaper that focuses on one of the following questions: What are the responsibilities of a government to its citizens and soldiers in time of war? How do you decide just how far you are willing to go to prove your loyalty?

Kazuo Nakajima: They treated people’s lives like waste paper.

Uncle Araki: In order to make young boys want to join the Pilot Cadet Academy, the Navy used to have long parades all around town. It was a form of advertising. Everyone was really impressed with how cool the Navy uniforms were.

Shigeyoshi Hamazono: Everyone from the commander on down thought only a third of us needed to graduate. That was their challenge. The other two-thirds they could beat to death. Those were the times. In order to bomb and sink an aircraft carrier, better to have one motivated pilot than three half-baked pilots.

Takeo Ueshima: There’s no way a country with no resources can win a war against a country with huge productivity. But we were ordered from above to go fight in that war. We couldn’t refuse. Our hearts were filled with sadness.

Takehiko Ena: There was a gigantic gap between America and Japan in terms of war material and in the performance of equipment. This was the time when I felt with my very skin that Japan’s defeat was drawing near.

Takehiko Ena: We were pilots with very little flight time or experience to begin with, but we trained ferociously day and night. We trained for actually crashing our torpedo plane into the target. Unfortunately, our plane was extremely antiquated, so even during training there were many breakdowns.

Shigeyoshi Hamazono: One time a housewives’ association came to watch us train. When we took off and when we came back, they surrounded the airfield. They were all weeping and I thought, “Oh they understand.” They were grateful to us for risking our lives.

Kumi Watanabe: The Usa Airbase asked local families to host pilots from the air squadrons on their days off, to help them relax. Usually they’d relax or lie around. I served them tea and things. We knew they were going to die soon. But they never said anything. They never said they were taking off because it was a secret, a military secret. We all made these dolls. I made close to 50. They were really simple dolls.
EXAMINATION OF QUOTES:
NATIONALISM AND PATRIOTISM

For Discussion
Webster’s Dictionary defines “nationalism” as “loyalty and devotion to a nation; especially a sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations or supranational groups”; and “patriotism” as “love for or devotion to one’s country.” Discuss the following: How are these terms similar and different? How do you decide just how far you are willing to go to prove your loyalty? What are the responsibilities of a government to its citizens and soldiers in time of war?

Activity
Use some form of art to symbolize the essence of one or more of the following quotes. You can choose to work together or individually.

Aunt Teruko: Back then, young people were all expected to dedicate themselves to the country [Japan]. Things with the war had become really tense. He [Teruko’s brother and Risa Morimoto’s uncle, Toshio Sunada] said, “I can’t wait until I’m 20 years old, with the way the war is going. In order to be of service, if I go to the Army Pilot Cadet Academy, they accept cadets who are 15 or 16 years old.”

Shigeyoshi Hamazono: I wanted to become a soldier because at the time, the whole character of the country, including our education, was focused on risking our lives to protect Japan.

Takehiko Ena: In those days we knew that it was our mission—that we must fight for our country. We were driven by a sense of mission. There’s no doubt that public opinion was politically manipulated. But there’s also no doubt that we were surrounded.

Kumi Watanabe [when asked, “What meaning did the dolls [that Kamikaze carried on their missions] have?”]: Take me along. I want to go with you. Our prayer sewn into the dolls was, “Hang in there, please succeed.”

Kazu Nakajima: The family that looked after me, poured their hearts into this doll, making it for me. So, I fastened it to my waist and took it with me.

Japanese newsreel: We are honored to receive the following message from the Emperor: The planes crashing into enemy ships performed brilliantly and with excellent results. When their country asked of them the ultimate sacrifice, they rose to the occasion.

Japanese newsreel: The mission we have been given is to kill ourselves and sink an enemy ship without fail. Successfully completing this mission will be extremely difficult. Nevertheless, we will nosedive attack, holding close our joy in being Japanese until our final moments and die gloriously.

Japanese newsreel: [lyrics from Doki no Sakura, Kamikaze anthem] You and I are cherry blossoms in season. Blooming in the garden of the Navy Officers Academy. Once blossomed, every flower knows it must die. We will die gloriously, then, for our homeland.
EXAMINATION OF QUOTES:
SURVIVING KAMIKAZE AND THE AFTERMATH OF WAR

For Discussion
Consider the following quote: “Memorials are about loss and sacrifice but also about perseverance and triumph. They are about making sense of what happened, and the impulse to send lessons into the future.” —Delia M. Rios, “Memorials, Like Memory Itself, Can Be Complex,” San Jose Mercury News, May 30, 2004, p. 3B. Do you agree or disagree with this quote?

Activity
Wars are often commemorated through memorials. Reflect on the quotes below, and design a memorial about the Kamikaze and the Americans who were victims of the Kamikaze. Draw the memorial on a large sheet of butcher paper. You might consider some of the following:

• Where would you build the memorial?
• Would you use audio-visual materials?
• Would you inscribe quotes on a memorial wall? If so, which quotes from Wings of Defeat might you include and why?
• Would you include memorabilia from World War II?
• What perspectives would you underscore at the memorial?

Risa Morimoto: Maybe as an American I can ask questions [of Kamikaze and World War II, in general] Japanese can’t.

Cousin Tamano: For the Kamikaze pilots, after the war, everything about their way of life was rejected. After that, I wonder, could they talk about what happened to them? I think they would just clam up. And we lack the opportunity and the courage to ask them about it.

Takehiko Ena: We were extremely anxious how the victors, the Allied Forces, would treat former Japanese soldiers. So we were instructed to hide the fact that we had been pilots.

Takehiko Ena: We had hoped that if we sacrificed our lives, somehow our imperiled country, Japan, could survive.

Kazuo Nakajima [when asked, “How were the Kamikaze treated right after the war?”]: We got nothing. Not even a thank you.

Takehiko Ena: We had hoped that if we sacrificed our lives, somehow our imperiled country, Japan, could survive.

Takehiko Ena: After the war, Japan has sworn never to engage in war again. This is why we believe we owe the peace we enjoy today to the enormous sacrifices of our fellow pilots who died in the war.

Shigeyoshi Hamazono: To die in an instant, in their youth, not knowing the bitter or sweet of life. I just feel so sorry for them. They were all so talented and so alive.

Takeo Ueshima: To this day, I feel bad towards those who died, that I survived. That’s true. But it’s also true, I couldn’t go with them.

Takehiko Ena: So I must continue to honor their memories to the end of my life.

Takehiko Ena: We have a responsibility to tell our stories. But we have to prevent what we lived through from happening again. So we have to speak about it with great humility.

Takehiko Ena: I feel a real urgency for human beings to create a way to resolve our conflicts other than through warfare. Unless we abolish war, I believe this planet is doomed.
Instructions to Teachers: Make copies of these veterans’ cards. Distribute one card to each student, making sure that approximately equal numbers of each card are distributed.

Gene Brick is one of the two U.S. veterans who went to Japan to meet former Kamikaze. While you are viewing Another Journey, try to focus on Mr. Brick’s comments and reactions.

How do Mr. Brick’s views change during the film?
What surprised you, if anything, about Mr. Brick?
How did Mr. Brick’s views (in Another Journey) change from his views expressed in Wings of Defeat?

Fred Mitchell is one of the two U.S. veterans who went to Japan to meet former Kamikaze. While you are viewing Another Journey, try to focus on Mr. Mitchell’s comments and reactions.

How do Mr. Mitchell’s views change during the film?
What surprised you, if anything, about Mr. Mitchell?
How did Mr. Mitchell’s views (in Another Journey) change from his views expressed in Wings of Defeat?

Takeo Ueshima is one of the Kamikaze who met with two U.S. veterans. While you are viewing Another Journey, try to focus on Mr. Ueshima’s comments and reactions.

How do Mr. Ueshima’s views change during the film?
What surprised you, if anything, about Mr. Ueshima?
How did Mr. Ueshima’s views (in Another Journey) change from his views expressed in Wings of Defeat?

Takehiko Ena is one of the Kamikaze who met with two U.S. veterans. While you are viewing Another Journey, try to focus on Mr. Ena’s comments and reactions.

How do Mr. Ena’s views change during the film?
What surprised you, if anything, about Mr. Ena?
How did Mr. Ena’s views (in Another Journey) change from his views expressed in Wings of Defeat?

Shigeyoshi Hamazono is one of the Kamikaze who met with two U.S. veterans. While you are viewing Another Journey, try to focus on Mr. Hamazono’s comments and reactions.

How do Mr. Hamazono’s views change during the film?
What surprised you, if anything, about Mr. Hamazono?
How did Mr. Hamazono’s views (in Another Journey) change from his views expressed in Wings of Defeat?
How did the Japanese government justify its imperialist ambitions?
Everyone that goes to war is usually engaged in a holy war for a noble cause, so a war that to Americans or
to the Chinese or to so many other people seemed to be and was, a war of aggression, was not that to the
Japanese people and for the Japanese it was seisen or holy war. It was a holy war to the Japanese and it was
defended in both what we might call negative and positive terms. The negative terms were, the country was
imperiled and so we must fight against this threat to our country from chaos in Asia and from Western
imperialism and Western encroachment and Western strangling of Japan, to prevent us from our destiny and
cut us off from our lifelines in Asia. The positive side was, and this is what Westerners find difficult to keep in
mind, is that Japan invaded China but it also invaded colonial Southeast Asia. So when Japan invaded what we
call Indonesia today, they were invading the Dutch East Indies. When before that, they took over what we call
Vietnam, or Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos today, they were actually moving into French Indochina. When they attack
Hong Kong, it’s a British colony. When they attack the Philippines, they’re attacking an American colony, so the
rhetoric was “We are liberating Asia from European and American and Western imperialism and colonialism.”

Who was the Emperor to the Japanese people?
The Emperor was the supreme commander. The Emperor was the single figure in power from 1926 to 1945.
The Emperor was the symbol around which everything was done and he actively played that role. He was the
man on the white horse—always in his military uniform.

Pearl Harbor
When we look back on Pearl Harbor, one of the things that always strikes us is what a brilliant, tactical opera-
tion it was. It really was, tactically, very very impressive and here is a huge armada. They take six carriers and
secretly cross the ocean and launch a successful attack on the Americans with very minimal loss on the
Japanese side. That the Americans were unprepared is pretty shocking. And that led to a period known in
Japan as the Victory Disease, in retrospect, where there was true euphoria, a true sense, “We did it.” Of
course that was an incredibly foolhardy, misbegotten idea because what it did was provoke a rage that carried
the Americans through the war—Remember Pearl Harbor.

Japanese Military Strength at the Beginning of World War II
At the beginning of the war they were in fact quite impressive in their naval strength vis-à-vis the Americans.
They had airplanes; their Zero was a very, very superior fighter, more maneuverable than the American
fighters at the beginning of the war. Their pilots were absolutely crackerjack pilots at the beginning of the war,
with hours and hours and hours of training and experience behind them, including experience fighting in China
but they weren’t prepared in the long run to keep that going, so very quickly America’s industrial capacity and
its greater rationalization in planning ahead led the Americans to have superior equipment, superior airplanes
and many more pilots, coming up.

The Battle of Midway Changes the Course of the War
For the first six months, the Japanese really are sort of caught up in this euphoria. By mid-1942, with the
Battle of Midway, it’s clear the Americans have turned the tide and will start to move out but it’s a long, long
process and the Japanese hope is always that the Americans will get weary of this war because the Americans
are concentrating on the war against Germany, concentrating on the European front. And the Japanese hope
is that the Americans will cut a deal and the Japanese can retreat but hold some of the resources that they
wanted and they can consolidate their position in Asia and be secure. That is their hope. Of course that’s a vain
hope. The Americans are never going to be satisfied with anything but thoroughgoing victory.
How did the Japanese government mobilize its people towards the end of the war?
As the war conditions really worsened and the Americans drew close to Japan and began bombing Japan in late 1944, you had a real sense that you had to really pull the country together psychologically and every other way. And by the spring of 1945, you have a country where the Americans are coming in and terror-bombing major cities beginning with Tokyo and eventually extending towards 60 cities throughout the country. Then they closed the schools and put out edicts that all adult men and all adult women are going to be part of a national sort of people’s militia to defend the country against any possible invasion. The schools are closed and children become mobilized to build firebreaks.

What slogans did the Japanese use to motivate their people?
You begin to hear slogans like “Hundred million ready to die like a shattered jewel,” ichioku gyokusai. Or the “hundred million as a special attack force,” meaning a hundred million as Kamikaze, ichioku tokkotai. And those kinds of slogans are that “we, the entire populace must be ready to work and struggle and die to defend the country,” just as the suicide pilots were doing.

How was the Kamikaze strategy rationalized?
The first Kamikaze pilots appear October of 1944, specifically to attack the Americans who are trying to re-take the Philippines, and it’s a very rational mission, that these will be a very efficient form of attack, which they were. They were way more efficient than just attempting to just attack and bomb the American fleet, so it was cost efficient. They will be a very effective form of psychological warfare, because it will show the Americans how determined we are to prevent an advance on Japan and hopefully that will deter the Americans from attempting to invade the home islands, because they will see how every man is willing to die for the country rather than let this happen. And that is not just the Kamikaze pilots but the suicide defenses and the banzai charges that are taking tens and hundreds of thousands of Japanese lives as the Americans try to recapture the Philippines and move on towards Japan.

Why did the Kamikaze continue, knowing their efforts were futile?
The Japanese are being killed wholesale and the pilots are just going out and they know they’re not going to stop this. I mean imagine, it’s hard for anyone to imagine, not just Americans but people this far away, what it must be like to go out in a small plane and look down and see an armada of hundreds and hundreds of warships. The Japanese navy is at the bottom of the ocean and the Americans have material might that’s beyond belief. And so you go out and you say, even if you say, I’m not going to make a difference, I can’t really stop them, you can say I’ve got to revenge the death of my comrades who went before me and that sense of camaraderie.

American B-29s Firebomb Japan
When the Americans move their attention from Europe and begin to concentrate on bombing Japan, one of the things is they’ve got the new airplane, which is the B-29, which was made exclusively for the war in Japan, the intercontinental bomber. The B-29 was never used in Europe. The B-29 comes over and is sent out by the very end of 1944 to bomb Japan and that’s when you move into the last death rattle of the Japanese military machine, in which you have the B-29s going in and deliberately doing what they call urban area incendiary bombing of what eventually comes to 64 major cities before Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Culture of War: The Universal Band of Brothers
Americans sometimes came in, flew low, and shot at anyone they saw. And he says, “Look at this atrocious behavior. We’re fighting a bestial enemy.” And his propaganda is that they are fighting the kichiku eibei, the devilish or demonic Americans and British, the Brits, or Anglo—the “demonic Anglos.” They demonized the westerner. He can see reasons why he can be persuaded that all those Americans are bestial too. So each side is coming at this and that’s war—that’s a cultural war, to me. I don’t think that’s a Japanese culture or an American culture, I think that’s the culture of the war. In those circumstances, you’re bound more and more with your buddies. You begin to move into very small, enclosed worlds. Your enclosed world is the band of
brothers, in English. Well, there’s a band of brothers in Japanese, too. We think this is something quite unique when the American says, “band of brothers.” We think it’s quintessentially American but it’s not; it’s quintessentially military. And this is the group you identify with and your socialization takes place in this world. What’s the alternative?

**Dispelling the Myth that the Kamikaze Took Off for the Emperor**

They don’t say I want to do this for the Emperor. They almost never say it, unless it’s some formal thing where they’re supposed to say “TENNO HEIKA BANZAI,” long live the Emperor. They always write, or when they reminisce, they almost always say, “I did this for my homeland, I did this for my mother and my father and my sisters and my brothers. I did this for my hometown, because I wanted to, people who would do this, I wanted to prevent an invasion that would leave my country a wasteland.” This is not a culture-bound sentiment, this is very understandable by young men.

**What motivates the Kamikaze?**

We’re now in the spring of 1945 and these young men were being wasted by the hundreds and eventually by the several thousands in the battle of Okinawa. And what are they doing? What makes them go up in the air? And they’re looking at their country being incinerated and that’s what they write; this is a crime. You look at the diary of a Kamikaze pilot from Nagoya. They had just taken out Nagoya. That’s where his parents are. That’s where we get the very interesting insights into why men do this. Some would say it’s futile, we should get out of this war and some would say we must do this, because if we show this determination to stop this assault, which is immoral in their eyes.

**The Fury of the Final Stages of the War**

You don’t fly up and say that you’re going to incinerate women and children today. You say you’re going to incinerate the ferocious and the atrocious enemy. And by the end of the war when Truman has bombed Hiroshima and has told people “keep bombing, keep bombing,” at one point, right in the middle of that he says, “Well, it’s unfortunate when you deal with a beast, you have to treat him like a beast.” Well, by that time, it’s every man, woman, and child in Japan that should be incinerated. And it’s that fury of the final stage of the war that the Kamikaze pilots are entering into it and they are seen by the Americans as simply one more part of these crazy, fanatical, alien peoples.

**The Guilt of the Survivor**

The guilt of survivor isn’t something about Japanese culture. The guilt of the survivor is something that human beings experience all the time. Why did I survive and not my comrade? And their identity is often, my impression is, if you try to reconstruct their lives, is to fight for the homeland and to fight for the family, and often the mother particularly is mentioned and the group. And their identity is with the unit and the units are very small. The Kamikaze have all these names; they have these glorious, romantic names; True Valor and Shining Sword and Virtue and whatever. Those are very small units, those are units of 8, 10, whatever men and these men have bonded. They’ve been trained together; they’ve been bonded together and when one goes out and doesn’t come back, you’ve got to follow. There’s a sense that you must be with them or you betray them. If you come back, or you should avenge them. I don’t see anything peculiarly Japanese about this.

**War Is Not the Answer**

In the case of Japan after World War II, there was a sense that war is a horror. Because they had had a long one—it began in 1931 when Japan invaded Manchuria. It was accelerated starting in 1937 when they invaded China. By 1945, this was an exhausted country with 66 cities (because Hiroshima and Nagasaki were added to the many others) pulverized. And that created in Japan, after the war and for a good many years a strong sense that war is not the answer and that anyone that calls for harsh, militant responses to situations cannot be trusted.
Contemporary Relevance: The Hero and the Martyr
A young man went out and he died in a suicide attack and his parents said that this is wonderful, I'm overjoyed, you know how he’s a hero and he’s a martyr, so on and so forth. And the Japanese were forced to do that too. There was enormous social pressure on parents and others to say, "Oh, congratulations, your son was made a hero." "Oh, thank you, I mean, he was a wonderful boy and he died for the country." They're torn apart, most of them. It’s outrageous to think that mothers aren’t torn apart.

Contemporary Relevance: Differences Between the Kamikaze and Today's Suicide Bombers
If you look at suicide bombers then, the Japanese Kamikaze and all the special attack forces, and the suicide bombers today, the differences are enormous. The differences are obvious. One is a form of military; the other is not military at all. One is not volunteer [in any real sense, they’re drafted young men], there’s a great deal more volunteerism in suicide bombers today. The religious aspect of Islamic militants doesn’t have an exact counterpart in the Japanese case and it really is very, very striking. The civilian targets of suicide bombers today are very different from military targets—they’re basically trying to sink American war ships in the Japanese case. And the Japanese always harp upon that. So the differences have to be emphasized but there are similarities as well. The similarities emerge in a variety of forms. It’s not easy to give your life.

Contemporary Relevance: The Emergence of the United States as a Great Power
If we look at the world today, one of the things that is very striking is the different consciousness of Americans concerning war when compared to people elsewhere in the world. I think that reflects the experience of the 20th century, which is that, in World War I but particularly in World War II, the whole world was practically devastated. War came home to Europe. War came home to the Soviet Union in ways we can't imagine. War came home to China in ways we can’t imagine and to all of Southeast Asia and to Japan. The total number of people killed in Japan during the war was probably around two million fighting men and another one million civilians. They had a population of 70 or 72 million to start with...that’s a very large number. There’s no one in Japan [and this can be said of China, Russia, and practically anywhere else] who came out of that war not knowing someone, having a close relationship, a family relationship with someone who was killed. But Americans didn’t and there was a sense of coming out of World War II—this is when America emerges as a great, great power.

Contemporary Relevance: Parallels Between the Pacific War and the Iraq War
If you read the Japanese record, the internal decision-making record of the top leaders before Pearl Harbor, they are always saying, "this is for the national defense; it’s essential for the security of the nation; this is a just war," and the language is very righteous. It is very similar to the notion and the language and the ideas behind the war of choice against Iraq. It’s very righteous. National defense demands this. This is a necessary war of choice. This is a just war. Our cause is moral. So the rhetoric and the delusions are very, very similar on both sides and this is a striking thing to contemplate, because we’re not simply talking about Japanese and a war of choice and Americans and a war of choice, we’re talking about an event that took place 60 years ago and an event that took place today and presumably we should have learned something, but we didn’t.

Looking Back at These Great Tragedies
I think as we look back as historians on some of these great tragedies, we certainly have just gone through a century, the 20th century, of extraordinary tragedy and extraordinary violence and we’ve entered the new century just the same way. It’s easy to become very pessimistic and to say there’s this inexorable dynamic that somehow people simply are caught in a whirlwind and it all becomes inevitable. It’s very hard to say at the time, how would you have stopped it? I think the best we can do is to look back and say how we should avoid doing what was done in the past, which is to allow yourself to get sucked into a war. While it is very easy to enter a war, it’s very difficult to conclude it and come out of it.
QUESTIONS BASED ON PROFESSOR JOHN DOWER’S INTERVIEW

1. How did the Japanese government view its imperialist actions in other parts of Asia?

2. How did the Japanese view the Emperor? What role did he play in the military psyche?

3. How was Pearl Harbor a brilliant war tactic from the Japanese perspective? How did it backfire?

4. During mid-1942 when the tide of the war started to turn, what were the Japanese hoping the United States would do?

5. Towards the end of the war, what methods did the Japanese government use to band the country together in its final attempts to win?

6. What reasons did the Japanese government give for why the Kamikaze strategy would work?

7. What drove the Kamikaze to continue their missions in spite of American military might?

8. What techniques did the Japanese use to “demonize” the westerner?

9. What effect does the B-29 have on the war?

10. How did the Kamikaze affect U.S. war tactics?

11. As a result of the war, how did the Japanese mentality about violence change?

12. What distinguishes Kamikaze from today’s suicide bombers?

13. How does the number of casualties in both countries affect Japan’s and the United States’ will to fight in the future?

14. What similarities does John Dower draw between Japanese justification for the Pacific War and U.S. justification for the war in Iraq?
ACTIVITY BASED ON
PROFESSOR JOHN DOWER’S INTERVIEW

Although the Kamikaze are unique to Japanese history, many of the important themes [concerning the experiences of the Kamikaze] in *Wings of Defeat* may be important to consider in the context of other societies, including the United States.

**Task**

Discuss the following question:
Can you think of any modern-day parallels to the following themes?

1. Emperor as a symbol
2. Image of martyr (Kamikaze) as hero
3. Demonizing the enemy—“demonic Anglos” (Japan), Japan as a “beast” (United States). President Truman said of Japan, “When you deal with a beast, you have to treat him like a beast.” The Japanese called Americans and British *kichiku eibei*, or “demonic Anglos.”
4. Propaganda slogans—*ichioku gyokusai*, or “Hundred million ready to die like a shattered jewel” (Japan); “Avenge Pearl Harbor” (United States)
5. Rhetoric used to justify war
6. Blurred line between war for liberation and war for imperialistic ambitions

Choose one of the following:

1. Develop a political cartoon that graphically shows a modern-day parallel of one of these themes. You may want to include a caption as well. The political cartoon does not have to represent your view.
2. Write an op-ed article about a modern-day parallel to one or more of these themes.