



RHUMB LINES

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The Battle of Midway – A Glorious Page In Our History

"I think everyone in the Navy should understand what the Battle of Midway meant to us in World War II as the unquestionable turning point of war in the Pacific. On opportunities where the Battle of Midway is being celebrated near you, take the time to attend, take the time to seek out the veterans and take the time to learn a bit of the very best of our naval history."

– Adm. Robert F. Willard, Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet

Regarded as the turning point in the Pacific during World War II, the Battle of Midway took place June 4-7, 1942. During the battle, an American carrier striking force, augmented by shore-based patrol bombers, decisively defeated an Imperial Japanese navy carrier task force. These actions prevented Japanese forces from capturing Midway Island. An important marker in the naval heritage of our nation, the Battle of Midway changed the course of the war in the Pacific within just a few short days.

Guts, Grit and Bravery

- Thanks to American code breakers, judicious aircraft carrier tactics and providential timing, the U.S. Navy inflicted a devastating defeat on the Japanese navy at Midway.
- American courage, determination, heroic sacrifice and training proved equal to the task of drawing the Japanese carriers into battle and destroying them.
- In a larger strategic sense, the Japanese offensive in the Pacific was derailed and their plans to advance on New Caledonia, Fiji and Samoa postponed.
- The balance of sea power in the Pacific shifted from Japan to parity between America and Japan. Soon after the Battle of Midway the U.S. and its allies would take the offensive at Guadalcanal.

A Surprised, Demoralized Enemy

- The Japanese lost four large carriers – four of the six that had attacked Oahu on December 7, 1941. The Americans lost USS Yorktown (CV 5) after she contributed heavily to the enemy's defeat and USS Hammann (DD 412), which sunk while assisting in Yorktown's attempted salvage.
- The Japanese lost more than 100 trained pilots and more than 700 trained aircraft mechanics whose technical expertise could not be easily replaced.

The Battle of Midway Buys Time

- The victory at Midway derailed the Japanese plan to extend their defensive perimeter eastward across the Pacific and the enemy fleet turned back toward their home islands.
- The Japanese opportunity for victory was forever lost and bought time for the Allied Forces to execute what was termed the Grand Strategy, to win the war in Europe before returning to the Philippines as Gen. MacArthur had promised.

Key Messages

- Adm. Chester Nimitz advanced the importance of carriers at Midway as the capital ship of the fleet to be operated as a calculated projection of American power.
- The Battle of Midway applied joint American resources on land and sea in a calculated effort to achieve victory in a joint operation.
- Midway clearly demonstrated the value of communications intelligence and the ability of cryptology professionals to function successfully under wartime conditions.

Facts & Figures

- Battle of Midway commemoration events include:
 - Symposium: "A Critical Review of Myths and Myth-Makers" and 67th Anniversary Wreath Laying Ceremony at the [U.S. Navy Memorial](http://www.usnavymemorial.org) on June 4, 2009.
 - Annual San Diego celebration commemorating the Battle of Midway, honoring Midway veterans at USS Midway Museum on June 6, 2009. Additional information is available from Commander, Naval Air Forces: Ms. Melissa Hawley, 619-545-1133 or cnaf-pao@navy.mil.