



RHUMB LINES

Straight Lines to Navigate By



May 21, 2008

Battle of Midway 66th Anniversary – June 4-7 1942

"They had no right to win. Yet they did, and in doing so they changed the course of a war ... Even against the greatest of odds, there is something in the human spirit -- a magic blend of skill, faith and valor -- that can lift men from certain defeat to incredible victory."

-- Walter Lord, author, from Battle of Midway inscription on World War II Memorial, Washington, DC.

Each year the Navy commemorates the nation's victory at the Battle of Midway – a victory which not only turned the tide of the war in the Pacific, but also marked the dawn of the U.S. Navy's global prominence and the coming of age of carrier aviation. For more on events leading up to and including the historic battle, visit www.navy.mil/midway/

Midway's Place in History

- America needed to win – just six months after the attack at Pearl Harbor, Midway stood between our enemies and Hawaii, home of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. The Japanese were poised to press their advantage, intent on destroying the Pacific Fleet and threatening the west coast of the United States.
- Midway was a dramatic victory against a greater force. Facing Japan's 11 battleships and four carriers, the U.S. came to the fight with no battleships and just three carriers...Enterprise, Hornet and Yorktown.
- During the battle, Japan lost four carriers, a heavy cruiser, three destroyers, and some 291 planes. The U.S. lost the Yorktown, a destroyer and 145 planes. Japan's losses, both at Midway and at Coral Sea, did much to restore the balance of naval power in the Pacific, and Japan was never able to recover from the loss of many of her best aviators during the two battles. For more information, please visit http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=36401

Carrier Aviation Today

- More than half of the nation's 11 aircraft carriers are currently deployed: USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63), USS Nimitz (CVN 68), USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), USS George Washington (CVN 73), USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75), and USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76).
- Navy and Marine Corps aircraft flying from the decks of aircraft carriers, often conducting missions hundreds of miles inland, continue to provide critical support to troops on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq.
- Aircraft carriers are an important element of the nation's Maritime Strategy – from the Middle East to South America to the Mediterranean to the Western Pacific, carriers and their embarked air wings are building confidence and trust among nations through collective security efforts that focus on common threats and mutual interests in an open, multipolar world.
- The deployment of aircraft carriers to troubled regions sends a strong message of support to our friends and dispels in no uncertain terms any question by potential adversaries about our resolve.

Key Messages	Facts & Figures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lessons of the Battle of Midway endure – we are a maritime nation, and our security will always be tied to the sea. • Aircraft carriers and carrier strike groups continue to be the centerpieces of our ability to project power. • Aircraft carriers also play a key role in our nation's ability to project the compassion of our citizens – carrier strike groups support humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts, participate in cooperative exercises, and help build strategic relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USS Harry S. Truman launched 2,577 sorties totaling nearly 13,000 flight hours in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom during the ship's current deployment. • USS Nimitz has been deployed 10 of the past 14 months. • USS George Washington has conducted exercises with Argentina, Brazil and Chile during the current Partnership of the Americas 2008, and will relieve USS Kitty Hawk this summer as the forward deployed carrier in Japan.