



RHUMB LINES

Straight Lines to Navigate By



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The Battle of Midway – A Turning Point In Our History

"The Battle of Midway was the turning point for World War II in the Pacific. This magnificent victory at sea cemented the role of Naval Aviation in combat, and this celebration affords us the opportunity to commemorate the heroic actions of the fighting men of the Pacific Fleet. Celebrating the hard-earned victory at Midway gives all of us in uniform an opportunity to learn more about this pivotal battle and the brave veterans who fought there and to remind us of what makes our Navy great."

– Vice Adm. Thomas J. Kilcline, Commander, Naval Air Forces

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, U.S. Navy carrier strike forces, augmented by shore-based bombers and torpedo planes, 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.

Code Breaking, Carrier and Courage

- 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. Two months after the Battle of Midway, the U.S. and its allies would take the offensive at Guadalcanal.

An Ambushed, 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 her extensive contribution to the enemy's defeat. USS Hammann (DD 412) also 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 defeated the Japanese attempt to draw the U.S. carriers into decisive battle.
- The Japanese opportunity for victory was forever lost and bought time for the Allies to execute what was termed the Grand Strategy, to give priority to defeating Nazi Germany before applying the full force of the war effort to defeat Japan.

Key Messages

- Adm. Chester Nimitz skillfully deployed the Navy's available aircraft carriers based on intelligence to meet the enemy and destroy their carriers.
- The Battle of Midway applied joint service resources in a calculated effort to meet the Japanese thrust at Midway and destroy the enemy's most potent form of naval power.
- Midway demonstrated the value of communications intelligence and the employment of combat assets to take advantage of possessing such information.

Facts & Figures

- Commemorations around the fleet on June 4, 2010:
 - Commemoration and history symposium at the U.S. Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C.
 - U.S. Fleet Forces commemoration onboard USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) in Norfolk, Va.
 - Naval Station Great Lakes, Ill., commemoration on Ross Field.
- For Midway resources visit:
 - The Course to Midway resources page <http://www.navy.mil/midway/resources.html>
 - [Naval History and Heritage Command](http://www.history.navy.mil) Midway page available at www.history.navy.mil