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The Battle Of Midway: How It Saved The United States And The World

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Disclosure:
IF I DISCLOSED AND TOLD YOU,
I WOULD HAVE TO KILL YOU.....

Vice Admiral William Halsey, Jr.

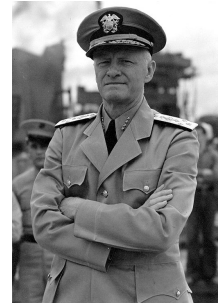
The smoke had barely cleared at Pearl Harbor when Adm. Chester A. Nimitz replaced Kimmel. The new Pacific Fleet commander quickly learned who was motivated. When a difficult job popped up, it often went Halsey's way. If he was not the brightest admiral in the Pacific Fleet, he was eager to fight—an attitude that endeared him to Nimitz, whose own job was on the line.

In April 1942 he was designated Commander Task Force Sixteen, in Enterprise to escort the carrier USS Hornet to within 800 miles of Tokyo to launch the Army planes for the initial bombing of Japan.



Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz

In December 1941, however, he was designated as Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas, where he served throughout the war. On 19 December 1944, he was advanced to the newly created rank of Fleet Admiral, and on 2 September 1945, was the United States signatory to the surrender terms aboard the battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.



Rear Admiral Raymond Spruance

He was Junior Task Force Commander during the Battle of Midway in June 1942, when his force assisted in inflicting on the Japanese Navy its first decisive defeat in three hundred and fifty years.

He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and cited as follows: "For exceptionally meritorious service... as Task Force Commander, United States Pacific Fleet. During the Midway engagement which resulted in the defeat of and heavy losses to the enemy fleet, his seamanship, endurance, and tenacity in handling his task force were of the highest quality."



Rear Admiral Frank Fletcher

He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal by the War Department, and cited in part as follows: "...In the highly responsible position of Commander of the United States Naval North Pacific Force and Area from October 1943 to August 1945, (he) displayed broad vision, tireless energy, and an unusually complete grasp of Army Air Force tactics and capabilities in expertly solving the many problems involved in combined Army-Navy air operations. His professional ability and able leadership in the vast wartime expansion and organization of naval installations in the North Pacific Area contributed much to the smooth and efficient accomplishment of the over-all mission of the United States Forces."



**Marshal Admiral,
Commander-in-Chief Isoroku Yamamoto**

Yamamoto's plan for Midway Island was an extension of his efforts to knock the US Pacific Fleet out of action long enough for Japan to fortify its defensive perimeter in the Pacific island chain. Yamamoto felt it necessary to seek an early, offensive decisive battle.

This plan was long believed to have been to draw American attention—and possibly carrier forces—north from Pearl Harbor by sending his Fifth Fleet (two light carriers, five cruisers, 14 destroyers, and four transports) against the Aleutians, raising Dutch Harbor on Unalaska Island and invading the more distant islands of Kiska and Attu.

While Fifth Fleet attacked the Aleutians, First Mobile Force (four carriers, two battleships, three cruisers, and 12 destroyers) would raid Midway and destroy its air force. Once this was neutralized, Second Fleet (one light carrier, two battleships, 10 cruisers, 21 destroyers, and 11 transports) would land 5,000 troops to seize the atoll from the US Marines.

The seizure of Midway was expected to draw the US carriers west into a trap where the First Mobile Force would engage and destroy them. Afterwards, First Fleet (one light carrier, seven battleships, three cruisers and 13 destroyers), in conjunction with elements of Second Fleet, would mop up remaining US surface forces and complete the destruction of the US Pacific Fleet.



**Vice Admiral Chuichi
Nagumo**

Nagumo launched a raid on Midway Island at first light and had been attacked by planes from the island later in the morning. While his aircraft were preparing for a second attack on Midway, Japanese scout aircraft spotted an American carrier force. Nagumo was faced with the decision he dreaded: to rearm the planes already prepared to attack Midway, or to send them on their way and fail to respond to the challenge posed by the presence of the American carrier force. He chose to rearm his planes. While this process was underway, and his carriers' decks were loaded with aircraft, fuel lines, and armaments, he was attacked by American carrier-based planes. In a matter of minutes, three of Nagumo's four carriers, including his flagship, were in sinking condition.

Nagumo at first refused to leave his stricken ship, but was physically dragged to safety by his staff. The battle continued throughout the day, resulting in the eventual loss of one U.S. fleet carrier, and the fourth and last of Nagumo's fleet carriers. Yamamoto called off the Midway operation, with Nagumo's agreement, in the early morning hours of June 5. The Japanese defeat was total, and the initiative in the Pacific War would soon turn to the Allies.



Battle of Midway, June 1942. Torpedo Squadron Six (VT-6) TBD-1 aircraft are prepared for launching on USS Enterprise at about 0730-0740 hrs, 4 June 1942. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.

**US Intelligence Detected That An
Attack Was Coming**

Japan's Naval General Operational Code used book ciphers, making it significantly easier to break than the Germans' Enigma and Lorenz codes. As a result, US troops had been alerted earlier in the year that Japan was planning an attack.

**The Midway Attack Was Commanded By
The Same Man Who Oversaw Pearl Harbor**

Chuichi Nagumo was the vice admiral of the Japanese Navy and commander of the Japanese First Air Fleet. Following his successful attack on Pearl Harbor, he commanded all attacks in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

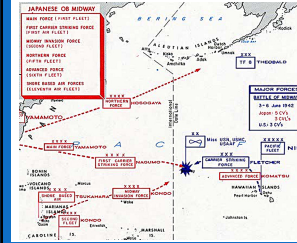
**It Was One Of Two Simultaneous
Attacks Launched By Japan**

At the beginning of the Battle of Midway, the Japanese Army was also attempting to invade the Aleutian Islands. Some believe the Aleutian attack was launched to draw US forces away from Midway, making the latter invasion easier for the Japanese.

The US Was Still Recovering From Pearl Harbor

The US Air Force and Navy were majorly depleted in the surprise 1941 attack. All eight of the navy's battleships were damaged, with two lost completely and the rest taken out of commission. This meant that the US had none available to fight in the Battle of Midway.

American Vessels Were Seriously Outnumbered



The Japanese attack on Midway involved four aircraft carriers, seven battleships, 150 support ships, 248 carrier aircraft and 15 submarines. The US defense, meanwhile, was made up of just three aircraft carriers, 50 support ships, 233 carrier aircraft, 127 land-based aircraft on Midway and eight submarines.

The Japanese Were Expected To Win

Considering the numbers, many thought the Japanese would win the battle and invade Midway. It had been more than 50 years since the Japanese Navy had lost a battle.

Yet The US Won

Despite their vessels being vastly outnumbered, successful US intelligence and careful planning led to a decisive victory for the Americans.

The Japanese Suffered Major Losses

After four days of battle, Japan withdrew from Midway on 7 June. In their attempt to invade the US territory, the Japanese lost nearly 300 aircraft, all four of its aircraft carriers and 3,500 men.

But They Did Sink A US Aircraft Carrier

Despite its ultimate failure at Midway, Japan did destroy a number of US aircraft and naval vessels, including one destroyer and the aircraft carrier USS Yorktown.





It Was A Turning Point In The Pacific

The US had been on the defense in the Pacific theatre since the attack on Pearl Harbor. But after the Battle of Midway, Japan and the US more or less switched roles, with the former spending much of the rest of the war defending – rather than attacking – territories in the Pacific.