
Battle of Midway

The Battle of Midway: WWII The Midway Battle started in June 1942, six months after the Pearl Harbor attack. The United States broke Japan's codes and found out about their plan of ambush. The Battle of Midway was mostly fought with aircraft. The Battle of Guadalcanal and the Battle of Midway ended the threat of the Japanese invading in the Pacific. Midway was the turning point of the Pacific Campaign.

The attack of the Battle of Midway was a plan to trap the American carrier fleet. The Japanese had hoped to avenge the bombing that happened two months earlier during the Tokyo Air Raid. The Japanese wanted to get rid of the remaining U.S. Pacific Fleet. Yamamoto wanted to ambush any American carriers and ships that could interfere with the attack on Midway. "Nagumo and his staff proceeded to Yamato, here in the flagship's staff room they heard for the first time about the proposed Midway operation... the carrier men favored it... He always game for a good fight and yearned to clear the Pacific of the American fleet" (Dillon, Goldstein, and Prance 27). He was ambushed by three U.S. carriers, Yorktown, Enterprise, and Hornet. The Battle of Midway marked a turning point of the military struggle between the two countries.

Yamamoto felt that deception would lure the U.S fleet to end them. He scattered his forces so that they would be hidden and conceal them from the Americans before the battle. Yamamoto's supporting battleships followed Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo's carrier force by a few hundred miles. They were intended to destroy the remaining elements of the U.S fleet that might come to Midway's defense. Yamamoto did not know that the U.S had broken the main Japanese naval code, gaining knowledge of his plans. The Americans kept hearing that the location AF was the major point of attack. But, it was unclear where the location was. Some thought it was Midway but weren't sure. A suggestion by a young officer helped discover the Japanese plan. They asked the base commander at Midway to say that their drinking water was running low on the radio. Soon after, The Japanese code said AF was running low on water.

On June 4, Japanese carrier aircrafts bombed the base on Midway. Long range bombers attacked the Japanese and Midway base fighters defended Midway. When the Japanese returned to their carriers, Nagumo decided to re-arm them with bombs for another strike. The American ships were detected and Nagumo changed the arms and attacked the ships. The Japanese aircraft weren't able to attack the U.S fleet and the U.S. fleet attacked them. Spruance launched an attack against the Japanese carriers. Three Japanese carriers, the Akagi, Kaga, and Soryu were abandoned.

The remaining Japanese carriers struck Yorktown severely damaging it. "With Yorktown

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damaged and abandoned, full command of the battle — and ultimate credit for its victory — passed from Admiral Fletcher into the hands of Admiral Spruance. Aircraft from the Enterprise in turn attacked the Hiryu and set her ablaze, and damaged the destroyer Isokaze. After this, Spruance, in concert with the forces on Midway, launched attacks that crippled and destroyed the Japanese cruisers Mogami and Mikuma” (Naval Academy 1).

Torpedo bombers became separated from the American dive-bombers and were slaughtered 36 out of 42 by getting shot down. But, they diverted Japanese defenses just in time for the dive-bombers to arrive. The Japanese carriers were caught while refueling and rearming their planes, making them especially vulnerable. The Americans sank four fleet carriers: Akagi, Kaga, Soryu, and Hiryu, with 322 aircraft and over five thousand sailors. The Japanese also lost the heavy cruiser Mikuma. The Americans lost 147 aircraft and more than three hundred seamen. After their victory, American forces retired. The Japanese, however, distraught by the loss of their carriers, had also begun a general retirement around June 4. Torpedo bombers became separated from the American dive-bombers and were slaughtered 36 out of 42 by getting shot down. But, they diverted Japanese defenses just in time for the dive-bombers to arrive. The Japanese carriers were caught while refueling and rearming their planes, making them especially vulnerable. Analysts often point to Japanese aircraft losses at Midway as eliminating the power of the Imperial Navy’s air arm. About two-thirds of air crews survived. Some historians see Midway as the turning point in the Pacific theater of the war. Midway ranks as a truly decisive battle.

The Battle of Midway brought the Pacific naval forces of Japan and the United States to approximate parity and marked a turning point of the military struggle between the two countries. Japan was destroying the United States until the Battle of Midway gave them the upper hand on the Japanese forces. “Admiral Yamamoto had predicted to his superiors that Japan would prevail for only six months to a year against the United States, after which American resources would begin to overwhelm the Japanese Navy. He had been exactly correct.” (Naval Academy 1). Japan’s motives was to gain dominant power over the Pacific Ocean and to eliminate the United States Pacific Fleet for at least a year. The Battle of Midway was the most important naval engagement of World War II because it allowed the United States to be the dominant naval power in the Pacific and it marked a turning point in World War II for the United States.

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