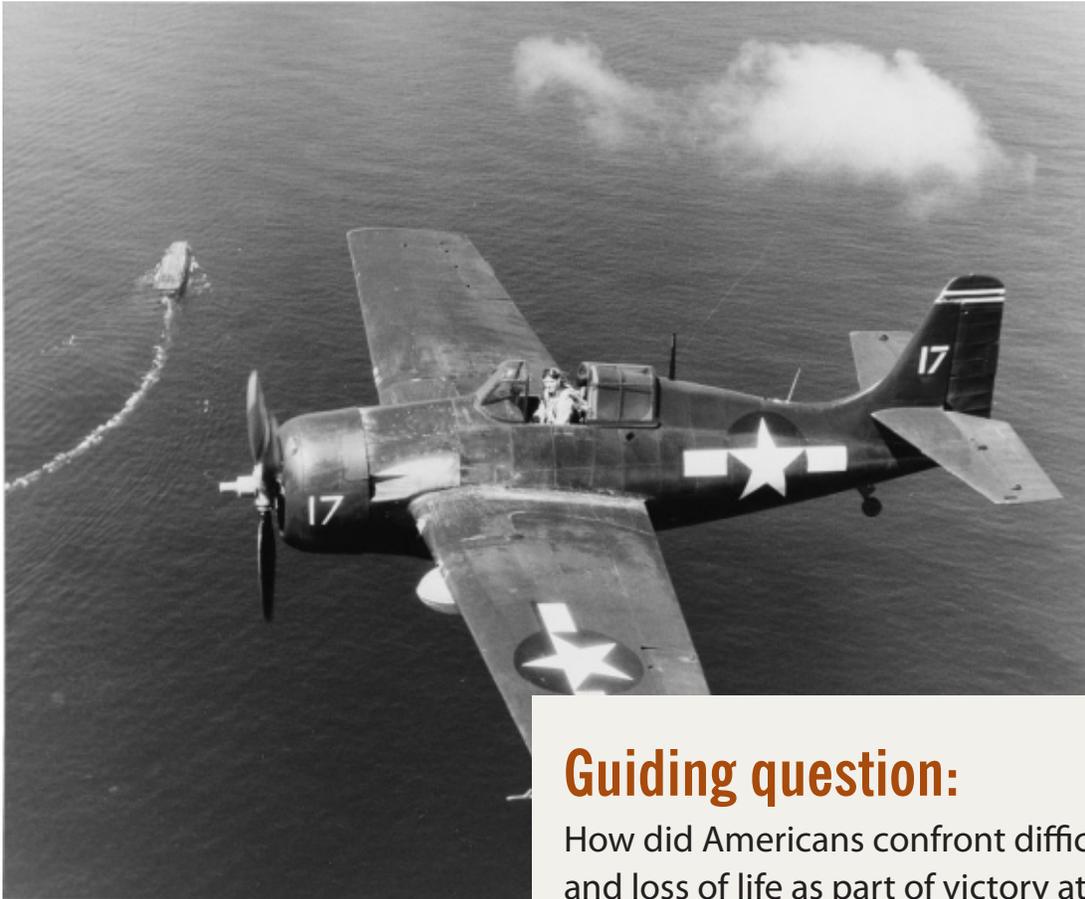




UNDERSTANDING  
SACRIFICE

# Activity: Making A Difference: Service & Sacrifice At The Battle Of Midway



## Guiding question:

How did Americans confront difficulty, danger, and loss of life as part of victory at the Battle of Midway?

### DEVELOPED BY LEIF LIBERG

**Grade Level(s):** 6-8

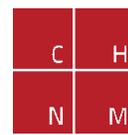
**Subject(s):** Social Studies

**Cemetery Connection:** Honolulu Memorial, located within the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific

**Fallen Hero Connection:** Ensign George A. Hopper, Jr.



**NHD**  
NATIONAL  
HISTORY DAY



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## Overview

Using materials from the American Battle Monuments Commission and primary and secondary source documents, students will determine how U.S. forces discovered Japanese intentions before the Battle of Midway, identify the risks taken by those who fought in the battle, and assess how the U.S. victory gave the Americans an advantage in the Pacific Theater. Throughout the lesson, students will consider the impact of these events on Ensign George A. Hopper, Jr., a naval aviator who fought in the battle.

## Historical Context

The Battle of Midway is often described as the turning point of World War II in the Pacific. Here, American forces dealt a decisive blow to the Japanese Navy, sinking four of its aircraft carriers, downing over 200 aircraft, and inflicting more than 3,000 casualties. These Japanese losses could not easily be replaced, and allowed the U.S. to take the offensive in the Pacific. Knowing the story of how U.S. forces used radio intelligence, air power, and individual daring to achieve victory in this battle is crucial to understanding later events in the Pacific Theatre.

*“The Battle of Midway was fought and won by ordinary people. My hope is that by studying the battle and its impact on one of these people, students will understand World War II as a human endeavor with real consequences, not just something seen in movies or played in video games.”*

— Leif Liberg

Liberg is a teacher at James Monroe Middle School in Ridgcrest, CA.

## Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to

- Describe the role of radio intelligence in helping American planners prepare for the Battle of Midway;
- Describe the perils faced by servicemen fighting at Midway;
- Analyze the losses suffered by American and Japanese forces at the Battle of Midway; and
- Assess the consequences of the battle for Japanese forces, U.S. forces, and servicemen like Ensign George A. Hopper, Jr.

# Standards Connections

## Connections to Common Core

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions;

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5** Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally);

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7** Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts;

## Connections to C3 Framework

**D2.His.1.6-8.** Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts;

**D2.His.14.6-8.** Explain multiple causes and effects of events and developments in the past;

## Documents Used ★ indicates an ABMC source

### Primary Sources

Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Fleet, Battle of Midway Memorandum, 1942 (excerpt)

Naval History and Heritage Command

<https://www.history.navy.mil/research/archives/digitized-collections/action-reports/wwii-battle-of-midway/04-07-jun-1942.html>

Message, Chester Nimitz to Task Force Commanders, Midway, June 6, 1942 (excerpt)

American Naval Records Society

[http://www.ibiblio.org/anrs/docs/Volumes/Nimitz\\_Graybook%20Volume%208.pdf](http://www.ibiblio.org/anrs/docs/Volumes/Nimitz_Graybook%20Volume%208.pdf)

Office of Chief Of Naval Operations, File of Memoranda and Reports Relating to the Battle of Midway, 1946 (excerpt)

National Museum of the Pacific War

<http://digitalarchive.pacificwarmuseum.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p16769coll3/id/4/rec/1>

Photograph, *A Japanese Type 97 shipboard attack aircraft is shot down while attempting to deliver a torpedo attack on USS Yorktown (CV-5)...*, June 4, 1942

Naval History and Heritage Command (80-G-17051)

<https://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/photography/wars-and-events/world-war-ii/midway/80-G-17051.html>

Photograph, *Aviation Cadet George A. Hopper, Jr.*, 1941

National Naval Aviation Museum

Photograph, *...FM-2 Wildcat fighter on combat air patrol...*, October 20, 1944

Naval History and Heritage Command (80-G-287594)

<https://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nara-series/80-g/80-G-280000/80-G-287594.html>

Photograph, *Japanese aircraft carrier Hiryu burning, shortly after sunrise on 5 June 1942, a few hours before she sank...*, June 5, 1942

Naval History and Heritage Command (NH 73064)

<https://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/photography/wars-and-events/world-war-ii/midway/NH-73064.html>

Photograph, *Japanese heavy cruiser Mikuma, photographed from a USS Enterprise (CV-6) SBD aircraft during the afternoon of 6 June 1942, after she had been bombed by planes from Enterprise and USS Hornet (CV-8)*, June 6, 1942

Naval History and Heritage Command (80-G-414422)

<https://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/photography/wars-and-events/world-war-ii/midway/80-G-414422.html>

Photograph, *Scene on board USS Yorktown (CV-5), shortly after she was hit by three Japanese bombs...*, June 4, 1942

Naval History and Heritage Command (80-G-312018)

<https://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/photography/wars-and-events/world-war-ii/midway/80-G-312018.html>

Photograph, *Two Type 97 shipboard attack aircraft from the Japanese carrier Hiryu fly past USS Yorktown (CV-5), amid heavy anti-aircraft fire, after dropping their torpedoes during the mid-afternoon attack...*, June 4, 1942

Naval History and Heritage Command (80-G-32242)

<https://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/photography/wars-and-events/world-war-ii/midway/80-G-32242.html>

## Secondary Sources

Ensign George A. Hopper, Jr. Fallen Hero Profile ★  
American Battle Monuments Commission

Map, *The Pacific Areas*, August 1, 1942

National Park Service

<https://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/90midway/90locate1.htm>

*World War II: A Visual History Interactive Timeline* ★

American Battle Monuments Commission

[https://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive\\_files/WW2/index.html](https://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive_files/WW2/index.html)

## Materials

- Documents Packet
- Battle of Midway: Graphic Organizer
- Grading Rubric: Note to the Family of a Fallen Hero
- World War II Vocabulary Cheat Sheet
- Excerpt: Ensign George A. Hopper, Jr. Fallen Hero Profile
- Picture of Ensign Hopper
- Computer with projector and speakers
- Rulers
- Colored Pencils

## Lesson Preparation

- Make one copy of Documents Packet and World War II Vocabulary Cheat Sheet for each group of students.
- Make one copy of the Battle of Midway: Graphic Organizer and Grading Rubric: Note to the Family of a Fallen Hero for each student.
- Make one copy of the Excerpt: Ensign George A. Hopper, Jr. Fallen Hero Profile for the teacher's use.
- Make one copy of the picture of Ensign Hopper for the teacher's use.
- Divide the class into partners or groups of three.
- Set up classroom technology.
- Gather enough rulers and colored pencils for each student in the class.

# Procedure

## Activity One: Setting the Stage (15 minutes)

- Project *World War II: A Visual History Interactive Timeline*. Click “enter,” then click “1942” on the bottom of the page. Then click “Central Pacific Campaign” on the left side of the screen.
- Read the first page of text aloud.
  - **Teacher Tip:** Do not go beyond the first page of the written portion because it will give away information that students should discover later in the lesson.
  - Ask students:
    - Since Pearl Harbor, who seemed to be having more success in the Pacific Theater, the Japanese or the Americans?
    - What did you read in the interactive that led you to your conclusion?
    - Based on what you read, what was the goal of the Japanese military in 1942?
- Inform students that today they will be learning about the Battle of Midway. As they learn about the battle, they will think about how some of the most important aspects of the battle affected one of the men who fought there, Ensign George A. Hopper, Jr.
- Project the picture of Ensign Hopper and read the Excerpt: Ensign George A. Hopper, Jr. Fallen Hero profile aloud.
  - Ask students, *Why do you think Ensign Hopper joined the U.S. Navy? What risks was Ensign Hopper taking by becoming a Navy fighter pilot during World War II?*

## Activity Two: Document Analysis (60 minutes)

- Move students into groups of two or three students each.
- Distribute materials to each group:
  - One Battle of Midway: Graphic Organizer for each student;
  - One Documents Packet for each group;
  - One World War II Vocabulary Cheat Sheet for each group; and
  - Colored pencils and rulers for each group.
- Assign students to complete the Battle of Midway: Graphic Organizer by using the documents located in the Documents Packet.
  - Describe the documents in Document Group A in the first row of the Battle of Midway: Graphic Organizer.
  - Divide the questions from the second row of the Battle of Midway: Graphic Organizer among group members and answer them independently. Take turns discussing and explaining answers with partner(s). All group members should record an answer for each question before moving on to the next row.

- Discuss the impact of what they just learned on Ensign Hopper and the other servicemen who were involved in the battle by collaborating to answer the question in the third row.
- Repeat the process described above until all three Document Groups have been analyzed.

### Activity Three: Drawing Conclusions (15 minutes)

- Complete the following tasks as a class:
  - Discuss the meaning of the sacrifice made by Ensign Hopper and the other servicemen killed at Midway by relating their deaths to the aftermath of the battle.
  - Ask students:
    - *Think about all of the Americans whose contributions to the Battle of Midway we learned about in these documents: the codebreakers who intercepted Japanese radio communications, the pilots who flew combat missions, and the sailors on the ships at sea. How did their actions help the U.S. win the battle?*
    - *In his message to the U.S. troops involved in the battle, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz said, “If you follow up your success vigorously [the Japanese] will be so crushed that [their] defeat will be inevitable.” Although the U.S. had won the battle, the map in Document Group A shows that Japan still controlled many parts of the Pacific. Brainstorm what the U.S. military would need to do to build on their victory at Midway, defeat the Japanese, and end the war.*
  - Record student responses on the board.

## Assessment

- Assign the final activity of the Battle of Midway: Graphic Organizer (paragraph-length note to Ensign Hopper’s family).
- The Grading Rubric: Note to the Family of a Fallen Hero may be used to assess this assignment.

## Methods for Extension

- Students with more interest in the Battle of Midway and World War II in the Pacific may want to visit the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredricksburg, Texas, or read books such as *Miracle at Midway*, or *A Dawn Like Thunder*.
- Students with more interest in naval aviation may want to visit the National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, Florida, or read books such as *The First Team*, or *A Dawn Like Thunder*.
- Students with more interest in cryptology and signals intelligence may want to read books such as *Joe Rochefort’s War*.
- Teachers can enhance students’ interest in women in World War II by exploring these related lesson plans on ABMCEducation.org:

- [\*The Calculus of War: Tactics, Technology, and the Battle of the Atlantic\*](#)
- [\*“I’ll Huff and Puff and Blow Your Ships Up”: The Impact of the German Wolf Pack During the Battle of the Atlantic\*](#)
- [\*The Math of War: The Numbers Behind Minesweeping the Mediterranean\*](#)

## Adaptations

- Teachers can group students in several ways. One option is to have similar ability partners or groups work their way through all of the documents. Another option is to create three larger heterogeneous groups that will deal with one document each, each group reporting back on their document to the other groups. Students can also switch partners or groups after each document analysis is complete by using an “appointment clock” to facilitate multiple partner pairs or groups.

# World War II Vocabulary Cheat Sheet

**Aircraft Carrier:** a ship with a flat deck that planes can take off from and land on. Widely considered to be one of the most important types of ships used during World War II.

**Atoll:** a ring of land that partially encircles a lagoon.

**Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet:** refers to Admiral Ernest King, the admiral in charge of the entire U.S. Navy, worldwide.

**Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Fleet:** refers to Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the admiral in charge of U.S. Navy commands in the Pacific Fleet.

**Cryptologist:** analysts who try to break codes.

**Dive Bombers:** planes that dropped bombs directly onto ships to damage and/or sink them.

**OP-20-G:** U.S. Navy radio intelligence unit responsible for decoding and translating Japanese radio communications.

**Ship Acronyms:** abbreviations used by the U.S. Navy to refer to different types of ships.

- **CV:** aircraft carrier
- **BB:** battleship
- **CA:** heavy cruiser
- **CL:** light cruiser
- **DD:** destroyer
- **AP:** transport ship
- **AK:** cargo ship

**Signals Intelligence:** the gathering of information using intercepted communications (e.g. radio messages).

**Squadron:** a group of pilots who conduct military operations together under the direction of their commander.

**Torpedo Bombers:** planes that dropped torpedoes to damage and/or sink ships.

**VF:** Abbreviation used by the U.S. Navy for a unit made up of fighter planes, whose job it was to shoot down enemy aircraft and defend American ships and planes.

## Excerpt: Ensign George A. Hopper, Jr. Fallen Hero Profile

George A. Hopper, Jr. was born on January 30, 1919, in Torrance, California. His parents, George A. Hopper, Sr. and Ruth Davis Hopper, owned a cafe in Banning, California. Hopper grew up in Banning, along with his younger sister, Kathryn, in the family home at 217 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street.

Hopper attended grammar school and high school in Banning. He was an average student, and competed on his school's basketball team. He also learned to love golf. He spent his summers cooking in his parents' cafe.

Following his 1936 graduation from Banning High School, Hopper borrowed some money from his parents and enrolled at San Bernardino Valley Union Junior College (SBVUJC). He continued to be an average student, but stood out in sports. He was named captain of the SBVUJC gymnastics team. Hopper usually stayed out of trouble, but was arrested once and fined for disturbing the peace after getting into an argument over gambling with some locals in Crestline, California. Despite this, Hopper's friends and family considered him a model citizen. The local undersheriff of Banning even wrote him a letter of recommendation when he decided to join the U.S. Navy.

Every summer between 1936 and 1939 Hopper took part in the Citizens' Military Training Camp in Monterey, California. There he gained military training without actually joining the service. In his spare time he learned how to fly and earned a civilian pilot's license. These experiences may have played a role in Hopper's decision to become a military pilot.

Hopper enlisted in the U.S. Navy on March 27, 1941, almost nine months before the U.S. entered World War II. Hopper was transferred to Pensacola, Florida, where he became an Aviation Cadet and began flight training. By October, he had earned his wings as a naval aviator and was commissioned as an ensign.

When Pearl Harbor was attacked on December 7, 1941, Hopper was training with the Advanced Carrier Training Group, Pacific Fleet. With the U.S. now at war, Hopper quickly finished his training, and prepared to leave for his next assignment as a fighter pilot with the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet.

# Battle of Midway: Graphic Organizer

## Document Group A

<p><b>Describe the Document</b></p>	<p>What kind of documents are in this group? How do these documents present information about the Battle of Midway?</p>
<p><b>Analyze the Document</b></p>	<p><i>Directions: Complete the following Agree / Disagree statements based on the information in the documents. Provide evidence from the documents to support your answer.</i></p> <p>1) American and Japanese forces both worked to intercept and interpret each other's radio messages.              a. Agree / Disagree (circle one)              b. Evidence:</p> <p>2) U.S. military planners had no clear proof that the Japanese were going to attack Midway.              a. Agree / Disagree (circle one)              b. Evidence:</p>
<p><b>Making Connections</b></p> <p>Consider how events at each stage of the battle would have affected Ensign Hopper by answering the question on the right.</p>	<p>3) How would the information gathered by U.S. codebreakers have made a difference in Ensign Hopper's preparation level for battle?</p>

# Battle of Midway: Graphic Organizer

## Document Group B

<p><b>Describe the Document</b></p>	<p>What kind of documents are in this group? How do these documents present information about the Battle of Midway?</p>
<p><b>Analyze the Document</b></p>	<p><i>Directions: Answer each of the following questions using complete sentences.</i></p> <p>4) Look closely at the photographs in Document Group B. What were three dangers that were faced by servicemen on both sides as they fought the battle?</p> <p>5) How would each Japanese airplane shot down and ship damaged or sunk by the Americans have affected Japanese plans to invade Midway and destroy the American fleet?</p>
<p><b>Making Connections</b></p> <p>Consider how events at each stage of the battle would have affected Ensign Hopper by answering the question on the right.</p>	<p>6) How did Ensign Hopper try to make a difference in how the Battle of Midway turned out?</p>

# Battle of Midway: Graphic Organizer

## Document Group C

<p><b>Describe the Document</b></p>	<p>What kind of documents are in this group? How do these documents present information about the Battle of Midway?</p>												
<p><b>Analyze the Document</b></p>	<p><i>Using the information available in the document, create a bar graph comparing U.S. and Japanese losses at the time of the battle. One set of bars should be for ships, a second set should be for airplanes, and the third should be for personnel.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Battle of Midway Casualties</b></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Japanese</th> <th>U.S.</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Ships</td> <td>Japanese Ships</td> <td>U.S. Ships</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Planes</td> <td>Japanese Planes</td> <td>U.S. Planes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Personnel</td> <td>Japanese Personnel</td> <td>U.S. Personnel</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Category	Japanese	U.S.	Ships	Japanese Ships	U.S. Ships	Planes	Japanese Planes	U.S. Planes	Personnel	Japanese Personnel	U.S. Personnel
Category	Japanese	U.S.											
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<p><b>Making Connections</b></p> <p>Consider how events at each stage of the battle would have affected Ensign Hopper by answering the question on the right.</p>	<p>8) Many servicemen were wounded or killed at the Battle of Midway. Which side would you say won the battle? Was the sacrifice of servicemen like Ensign Hopper worthwhile? Use evidence from the documents to support your answer.</p>												

# Battle of Midway: Graphic Organizer

## Document Group C cont.

9) Think about all of the Americans whose contributions to the Battle of Midway are described in these documents: the codebreakers who intercepted Japanese radio communications, the pilots who flew combat missions, and the sailors on the ships at sea. How did their actions help the U.S. win the battle?

10) In his message to the U.S. troops involved in the battle, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz said, "If you follow up your success vigorously [the Japanese] will be so crushed that [their] defeat will be inevitable." Although the U.S. had won the battle, the map in Document Group A shows that Japan still controlled many parts of the Pacific. Brainstorm what the U.S. military would need to do to build on their victory at Midway, defeat the Japanese, and end the war.

### Final Assessment: A Letter to the Family of a Fallen Hero

*Directions: You are the commanding officer of Fighting Squadron THREE after the Battle of Midway. You must write a one-paragraph note home to the family of one of the squadron's pilots who was killed in the battle, Ensign George A. Hopper, Jr. Explain to Ensign Hopper's family what happened at the Battle of Midway, why it was an important victory for the Americans, and how their loved one helped make that victory possible.*

# Note To The Family Of A Fallen Hero Grading Rubric

	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Emerging
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing clearly addresses the prompt.</li> <li>• Provides at least three pieces of evidence from documents to support ideas.</li> <li>• Evidence is drawn from all three documents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing addresses the prompt.</li> <li>• Provides at least two pieces of evidence from documents to support ideas.</li> <li>• Evidence is drawn from two to three documents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing addresses the prompt.</li> <li>• Provides at least one piece of evidence from documents to support ideas.</li> <li>• Evidence is drawn from one to two documents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing does not adequately address the prompt.</li> <li>• Provides no clear evidence to support ideas.</li> <li>• Evidence is not drawn from the documents.</li> </ul>
<b>Organization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note begins with an appropriate salutation.</li> <li>• Paragraph length note includes a clear introduction sentence, well-organized body sentences, and a conclusion sentence.</li> <li>• Note ends with a complimentary close.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note begins with a salutation.</li> <li>• Paragraph length note includes an introduction sentence, body sentences, and a conclusion sentence.</li> <li>• Note ends with a complimentary close.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note begins with a salutation.</li> <li>• Paragraph length note is missing one of the following: an introductory sentence, body sentences, and a conclusion sentence.</li> <li>• Note ends with a complimentary close.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note lacks a salutation.</li> <li>• Note is not paragraph length.</li> <li>• No clear introduction sentence, body sentences, and/or conclusion sentence.</li> <li>• Note lacks a complimentary close.</li> </ul>
<b>Conventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage, and sentence formation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage, and sentence formation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage, and sentence formation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage, and sentence formation.</li> </ul>

Note: In early 1942, the Japanese began planning an offensive that would destroy the remainder of the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet, threaten Hawaii, and stop the U.S. from interfering in Japan's conquests. Part of this involved attacking a U.S. Navy outpost that they codenamed AF. Japanese commanders began sending orders by radio to the units that would be involved in the operation.

## Map, *The Pacific Areas, August 1, 1942*

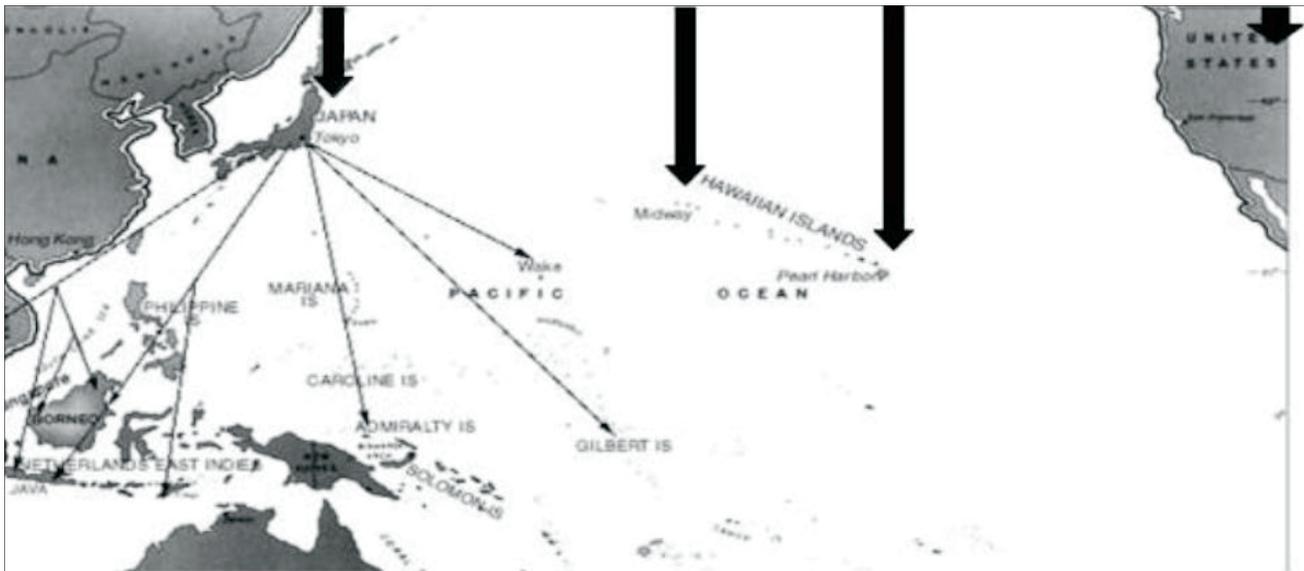
National Park Service

Japan & Japanese  
Conquests

Midway Atoll

Hawaiian Islands  
(Pearl Harbor)

United States



This map shows the locations of Japan and many of the areas that it had taken over in relation to Midway Atoll, Hawaii, and the United States. Although these locations are separated by thousands of miles of ocean, each played an important role as a place to build bases from which to attack the enemy.

# Office of Chief Of Naval Operations, File of Memoranda and Reports Relating to the Battle of Midway, 1946 (excerpt)

National Museum of the Pacific War

## May 19, 1942

Midway Atoll Radio Communication (Not Coded) to U.S. Navy Headquarters, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

*"...at present time we have only enough water for two weeks. Please supply us immediately."*

## May 21, 1942

Japanese Radio Communication (Coded) from Tokyo, Japan.

*"Tokyo Naval Intelligence sent the following message which they had previously intercepted from us: "The AF Air Unit sent following radio message to Commandant 14<sup>th</sup> Naval District: '...with reference to this Units [sic] report dated 19<sup>th</sup> at the present time we have only enough water for two weeks. Please supply us immediately.'"*

## May 22, 1942

U.S. Navy Report on Japanese Naval Activity

*"The identity of the Area Designator 'AF' was confirmed as Midway."*

This report shows some of the information that U.S. Navy cryptologists and signals intelligence personnel used to determine the location where the Japanese would strike.

### What Was Ensign Hopper Doing?

While the plans for the Battle of Midway were being made, Ensign Hopper was busy searching for the Japanese fleet in the South Pacific and flying combat missions against their ships and bases. Unfortunately, at the Battle of the Coral Sea, Ensign Hopper's ship was sunk by Japanese forces, and he and surviving fellow pilots were reassigned to other units.

Note: The Battle of Midway was largely fought from the air. Pilots on both sides tracked down each other's fleets, and attacked using bombs, torpedoes, and machine guns. Sailors onboard those ships fought back by trying to shoot the airborne planes, meanwhile trying to stop flooding and fires from sinking damaged ships.

**Photograph, *Two Type 97 shipboard attack aircraft from the Japanese carrier Hiryu fly past USS Yorktown (CV-5), amid heavy anti-aircraft fire, after dropping their torpedoes during the mid-afternoon attack..., June 4, 1942***

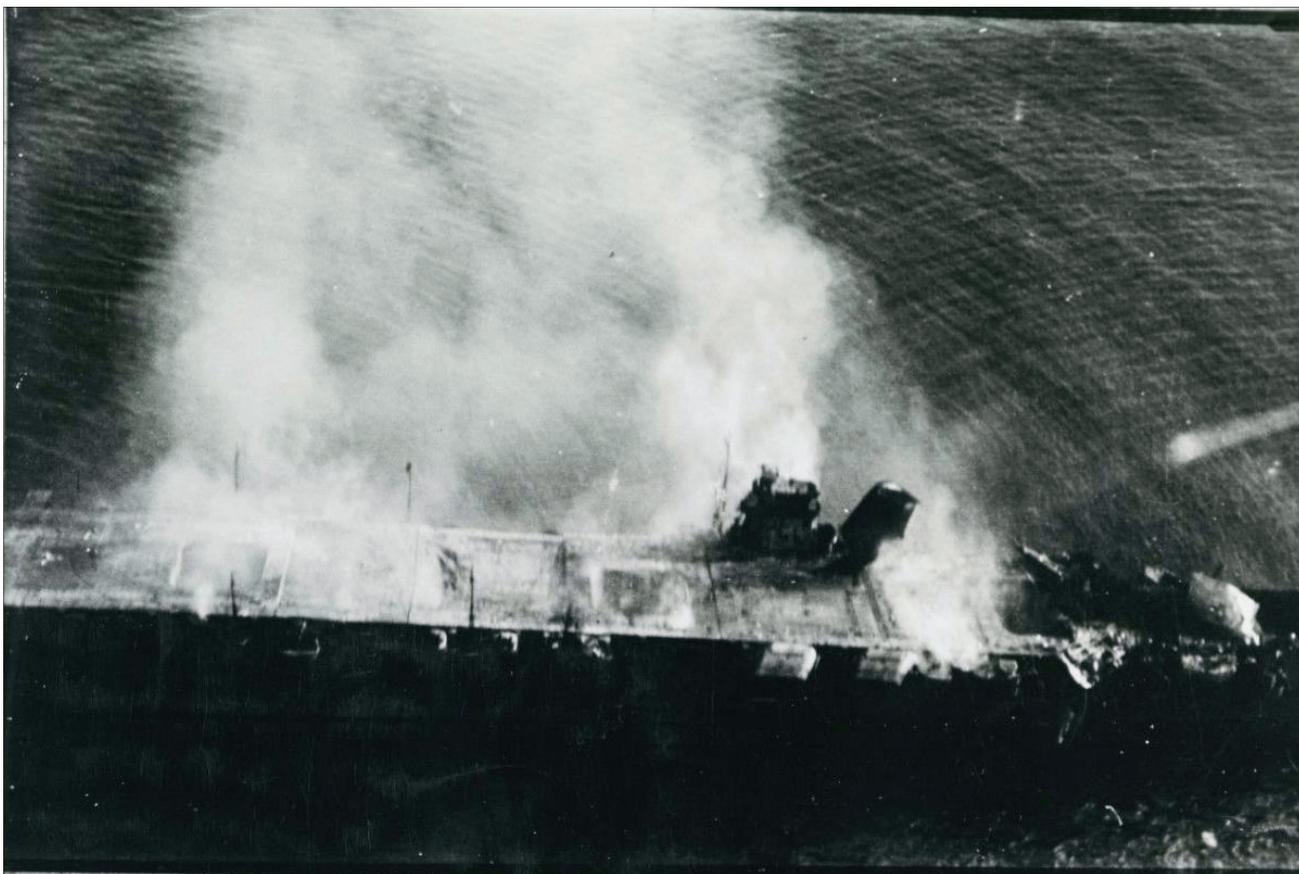
Naval History and Heritage Command (80-G-32242)



Japanese aircraft attack U.S. Navy ship *USS Yorktown* on the first day of the battle.

## Photograph, *Japanese aircraft carrier Hiryu burning, shortly after sunrise on 5 June 1942, a few hours before she sank...*, June 5, 1942

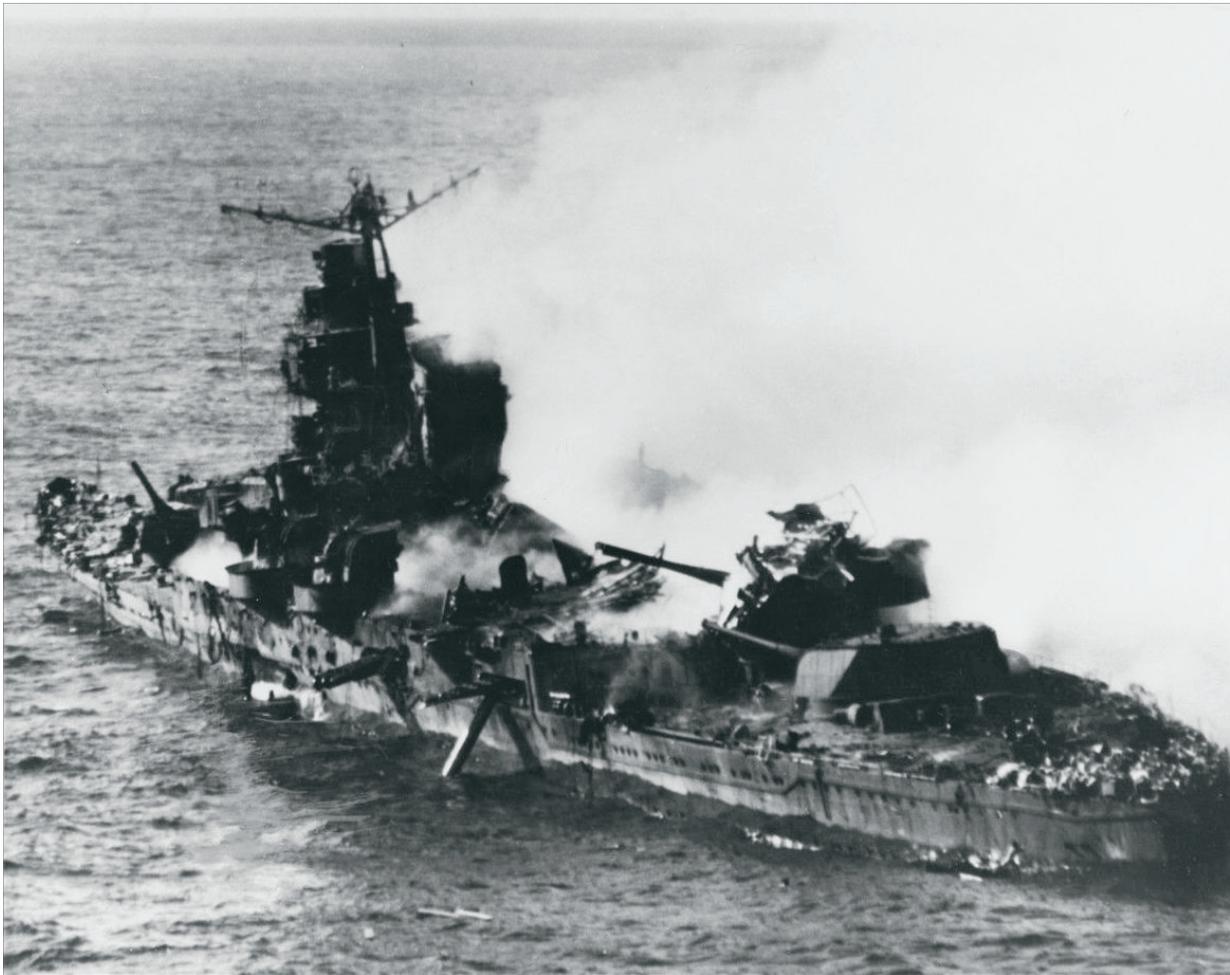
Naval History and Heritage Command (NH 73064)



The Japanese ship *Hiryu* burning after being bombed by U.S. Navy aircraft.

**Photograph, *Japanese heavy cruiser Mikuma, photographed from a USS Enterprise (CV-6) SBD aircraft during the afternoon of 6 June 1942, after she had been bombed by planes from Enterprise and USS Hornet (CV-8), June 6, 1942***

Naval History and Heritage Command (80-G-414422)



Japanese ship *Mikuma* burning after being bombed by U.S. Navy planes.

## Photograph, *Scene on board USS Yorktown (CV-5), shortly after she was hit by three Japanese bombs...*, June 4, 1942

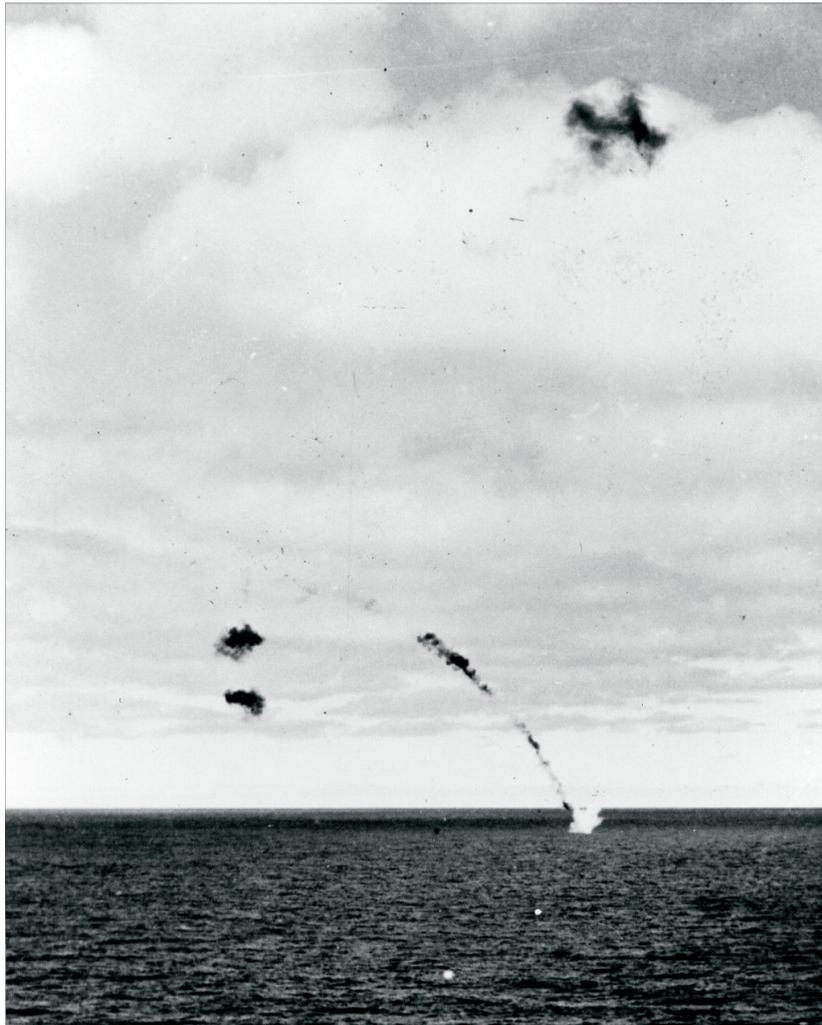
United Service Organizations (80-G-312018)



Crewmen of the U.S. Navy ship *USS Yorktown* scramble to put out fires after being hit by a Japanese torpedo.

## Photograph, *A Japanese Type 97 shipboard attack aircraft is shot down while attempting to deliver a torpedo attack on USS Yorktown (CV-5)...*, June 4, 1942

Naval History and Heritage Command (80-G-32242)



Plane crashing into the ocean after being hit by enemy fire.

### What Was Ensign Hopper Doing?

Ensign Hopper's fighter squadron, VF-3, was assigned the job of protecting U.S. Navy ships, and planes such as torpedo and dive bombers, from Japanese attacks. When Japanese planes assaulted the U.S. fleet on the afternoon of June 4, 1942, Ensign Hopper took off from the deck of the USS *Yorktown* to fend them off. His plane was hit by enemy fire and crashed into the ocean. Since he was not immediately rescued, the Navy listed him as Missing in Action.

Note: After a battle, it was common for commanders to write after action reports that summarized the losses of both sides. After a great victory, commanders often sent their troops a message congratulating them on their effort.

## Office of Chief Of Naval Operations, File of Memoranda and Reports Relating to the Battle of Midway, 1946 (excerpt)

National Museum of the Pacific War

From: Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Fleet.  
To: Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet.  
Subject: Battle of Midway.

1. In numerous and widespread engagements lasting from the 3rd to 6th of June, with carrier based planes as the spearhead of the attack, combined forces of the Navy, Marine Corps and Army in the Hawaiian Area defeated a large part of the Japanese fleet and frustrated the enemy's powerful move against Midway that was undoubtedly the keystone of larger plans. All participating personnel, without exception, displayed unhesitating devotion to duty, loyalty and courage. This superb spirit in all three services made possible the application of the destructive power that routed the enemy and inflicted these losses:

- (a) 4 CV sunk -- *Akagi, Kaga, Soryu, Hiryu* -- with the loss of all their planes and many of their personnel. Estimated 275 planes, 2400 men.
- (b) 2 probably 3 BB damaged, 1 severely.
- (c) 2 CA sunk -- *Mogami, Mikuma* -- 3 or more others damaged, some severely.
- (d) 1 CL damaged.
- (e) 3 DD sunk, 1 other possibly sunk.
- (f) 4 AP and AK hit, 1 or more possibly sunk.
- (g) Estimated total number of personnel lost 4800.

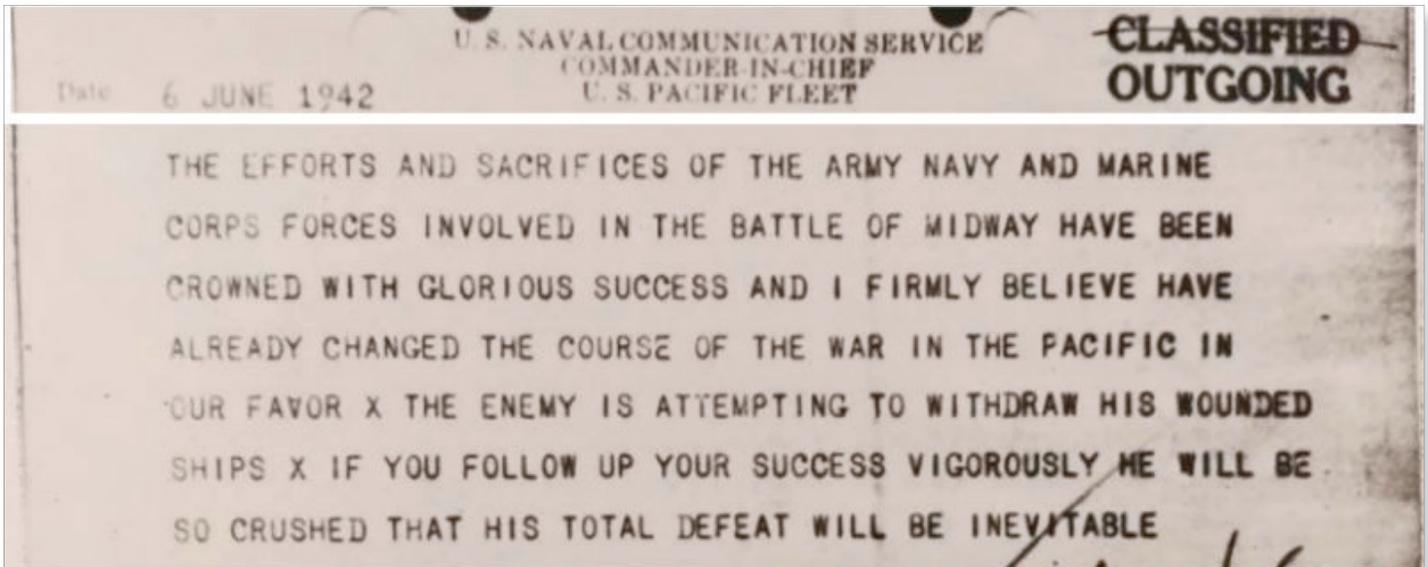
2. These results were achieved at the cost of the *Yorktown* and *Hamman* sunk and about 150 planes lost in action or damaged beyond repair. Our total personnel losses were about ninety-two (92) officers and two hundred and fifteen (215) men.

This report from the headquarters of the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet to the headquarters of the U.S. Navy's top admiral compared the estimated losses of the Japanese with those of the Americans.

\*Some of the estimates in this report later proved inaccurate. In reality, U.S. forces did not damage any Japanese battleships (BB), and total Japanese losses were closer to 3,000 personnel.

# Message, Chester Nimitz to Task Force Commanders, Midway, June 6, 1942 (excerpt)

American Naval Records Society



This note of congratulations and encouragement was one of many messages sent by the head of the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, to the units that participated in the Battle of Midway.

## What Was Ensign Hopper Doing?

When the battle was over, the Navy searched for survivors who had been in the water since their planes crashed or ships sank. Ensign Hopper was never recovered. The U.S. Navy later declared him Killed in Action.