

THE PACIFIC WAR



“...LIVE IN INFAMY...”

While the efforts of the interwar years and the last year meant that the U.S. was far more prepared for war than it had been in April of 1917, it was not nearly as prepared as its commanders would have liked.

Remember, Hull had been directed to get a deal that would keep a lid on the Pacific until mid 1942 – that had been for a reason, namely the U.S. would not be ready until then.

In December 1941, the Army had 34 division in some form but only half were at or near full strength and those 17, while deemed adequate for defense (meaning they could defend successfully against an attack if they were not terribly outnumbered) they were not considered ready for offensive operations.

The Navy had been ready – and now it was not. But even before it had a critical shortage of oilers to refuel the ships at sea and construction priority had been for tankers which could not do so.

The plan was to hold in the Pacific. In other words, the plan was not to lose in 1942. (No plan survives first contact with the enemy – Clausewitz)

Despite the apparent hardship, there was no talk about negotiating with the Japanese.

MOBILIZATION

The peacetime draft that started in late 1940 had added almost 1,000,000 men to the Army. All of the draftees were either National Guard or Army Reserve. Their contract was for one year active duty with another seven in reserve.

(All modern enlistment contracts and officer commissions are for eight years with a specified portion on that active duty and the rest reserve or National Guard.)

Upon declaration of war, the reserves were called to active duty and the National Guard federalized. They were all now in for the duration plus six months (although it really would be for the duration and until we can get you back to the States and demobilized.)

Around 16,000,000 would enter the military before the end of the war, 14,000,000 would be serving when it ended with about 11,000,000 of those overseas.

(The difference reflects those killed, wounded or discharged for health or other reasons. This would include sole survivors and other hardship discharges although this was a small number.)

MOBILIZATION

The War Department's plan for mobilization went into implementation within days. (It would take some months to really get up and running.)

Overnight, several New Deal administrative boards and regulations were scrapped, most notably restrictions on industry and finance – unless they failed to play ball.

In place of several New Deal regulatory agencies, two remained, one brand new and the other reorganized.

The reorganized one was the Office of Price Administration (OPA). It would be in charge of rationing and price controls.

The new one – one recommended in the War Department's plan - was the War Production Board (WPB) which was under the Department of the Army. The board consisted of civilians, all presidents or CEO's of major corporations but much of the staff was military.

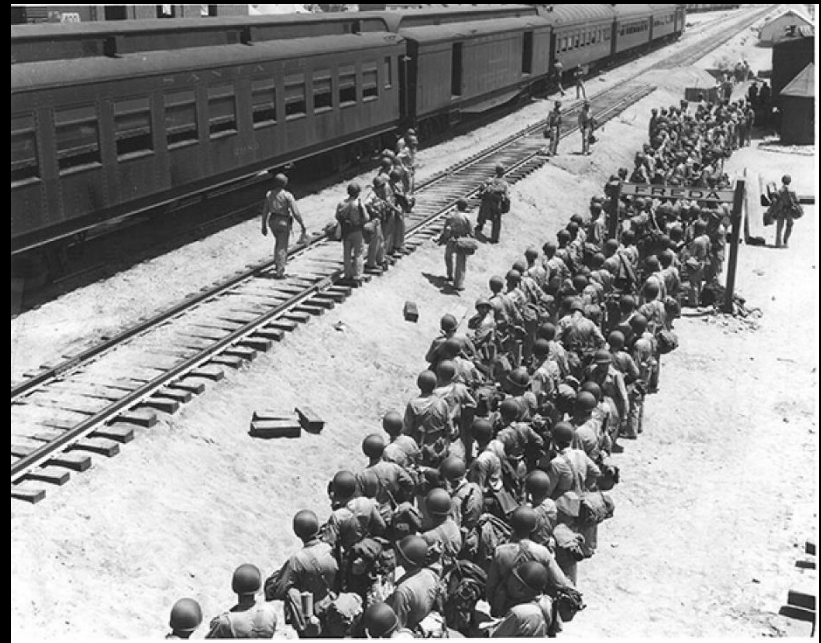
The OPA which had been under the Department of Commerce was now subordinate to the WPB. While largely able to act as it saw fit, the WPB could direct its actions as needed.

MOBILIZATION

The purpose of the War Production Board was to streamline war production. This included transitioning from consumer goods to war materiel. It also included transportation.

In more modern terms, its job was to manage supply chains. (It could not, for example, make a factory more efficient. It could determine whether that factory got the tools and materiel needed.) It was to identify supply chain bottlenecks and either resolve those bottlenecks or work around them.

The one bottleneck they had to work around was the railroad. Trucks were then only used for local hauls. Long distance for almost everything was railroad.



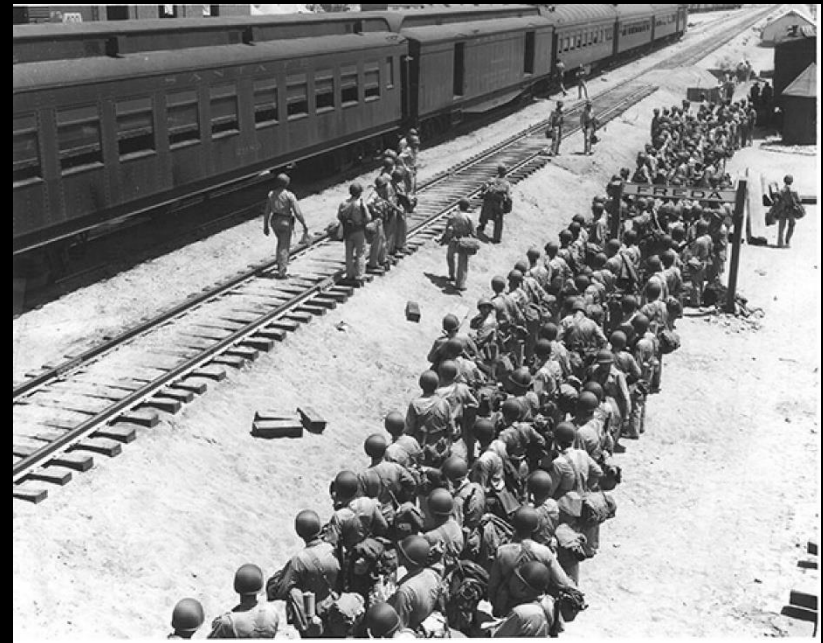
MOBILIZATION

While the railroads could be managed, the ability to significantly increase the amount of freight (or passengers) was limited.

Too many trains on a given line would wear out the tracks requiring substantial repairs.

Building new track while possible was not practical.

Time was the problem. The nation did not need a rail system three years from now, it needed what it had today to build the equipment and move the military around the country.



MOBILIZATION

The Army and WPB effectively took over the management of the rail system. While each railroad remained in operation, who and what used its trains and lines was up to the Army and the WPB. Shipping rates were largely standardized – but were such that all managed railroads remained profitable.

The OPA and rationing played a key role. Initial rationing was limited to shortages – namely rubber given that Japan was taking over the bulk of the world's rubber supply in Southeast Asia.

But it would expand, mainly to suppress the consumer economy. Every ton of consumer goods removed from the system meant a ton available for war production or military movement.



MOBILIZATION

In the days after Pearl Harbor, there was a run on the stores (not unlike early during Covid). To prevent hoarding and the resulting disruption of supply, rationing was imposed.

Aside from rubber, it was not truly a question of availability.

There was no shortage of food, for example.

Rationing was used to prevent hoarding and manage supplies. Likewise controlling the consumer economy reduced the probability of unacceptable price inflation.

Every member of a household would be issued a ration book regardless of age. The stamps + money allowed one to purchase rationed items.

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OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

WAR RATION BOOK FOUR

Issued to CECIL D ANDREWS
(Print first, middle, and last names)

Complete address Sandlay Del.

READ BEFORE SIGNING

In accepting this book, I recognize that it remains the property of the United States Government. I will use it only in the manner and for the purposes authorized by the Office of Price Administration.

Void if Altered _____
(Signature)

It is a criminal offense to violate rationing regulations.

OPA Form R-145 10-35570-1



MOBILIZATION

Rationing extended through most of the consumer economy. In many cases, like cars and radios, it was because the manufactures were now building jeeps, tanks and radars.

For food it was in part due to scarcity. Imported fruits were in short supply because the shipping was in short supply or their regions were now behind enemy lines. This would include sugar, coffee and chocolate. Other fruits were rationed to maintain availability to make up for the lack of imports.

Beef was rationed. Butter and sugar were rationed.

Chicken, bread and vegetables were not. Neither was liver or tongue...or Spam. Or alcohol or tobacco.

Still, for many Americans during the war, they actually ate better than they had before the war. Food was available if not in variety. Moreover, well paying jobs were available so most could afford food.

Basically, if you did not mind liver and chicken (almost all the time), you were not disappointed.

If you were a foodie, however...

MOBILIZATION

Gasoline was heavily rationed. But in this case there was no scarcity issue. There was a surplus.

The U.S. was the largest oil producer in the world before WWII and largest oil exporter. Shipping overseas proved difficult but not within the U.S.

The problem was cars need tires and maintenance. Rubber was not available and spare parts would become scarce. So, keep the cars in the garage and they won't need tires or repairs.

Rationing depended upon what the government saw as required. The A ration was the most common: 5 gallons of gasoline per car per week regardless.

And this was when fuel efficiency wasn't a thing...





“VICTORY DISEASE”

Dec 7 1941: (Dates US days).

Japanese invaded Malaya.

Japanese began attack on Hong Kong.

Philippines bombed.

Wake Island bombed.

Midway island shelled.

Dec 8 1941: Guam invaded (falls on 10th).

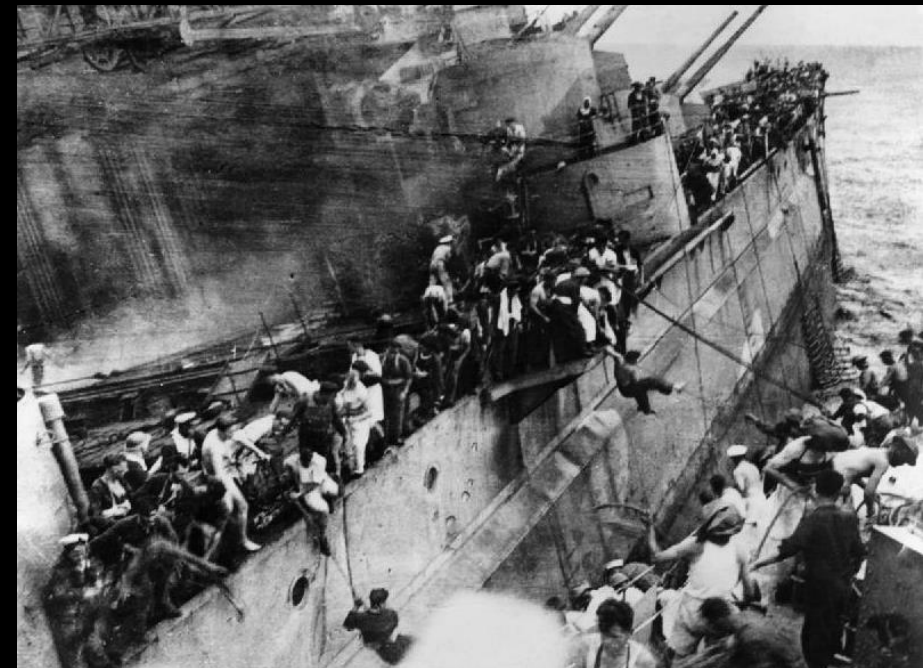
Japanese invaded islands north of Luzon, Philippines.

Dec 10 1941: Japanese invaded Aparri, Vidan and Gonzaga, north Luzon.

Japanese invaded Makin Atoll, Gilbert Islands.

Japanese aircraft from Indochina sank British battleships HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse off Malaya ending Royal Navy presence in Far East.

Dec 11 1941: Japanese tried to invade Wake Island and are driven away by Marine aviators.



FAILED FROM THE START

The U.S. began the war with a shortage of shipping. Merchant ship construction had been increased since early 1941, but most of that was for the British who had an issue with German submarines. The lack of adequate shipping would be a problem for most of the war but it would be a nightmare for the opening year.



But for Japan it was worse and arguably avoidable.

By December 8th 1941, over sixty percent of the merchant tonnage that supplied Japan with food, fuel and raw materials and supplied its military with supplies disappeared.

None of it was sunk.

The problem was all of that shipping was either British or American and ... well starting a war with your principal trade partners will come at a price in more than just the lost trade...

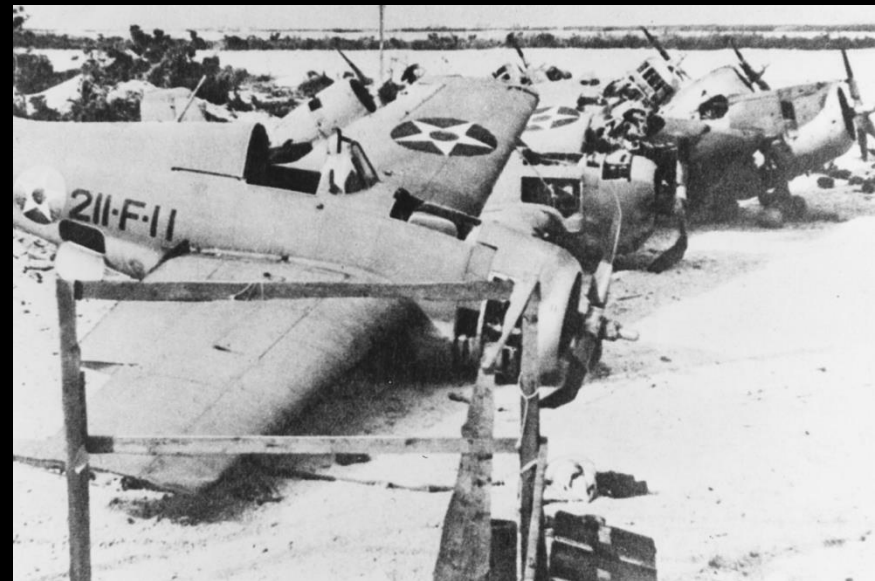
THE BATTLE THAT NEVER HAPPENED...

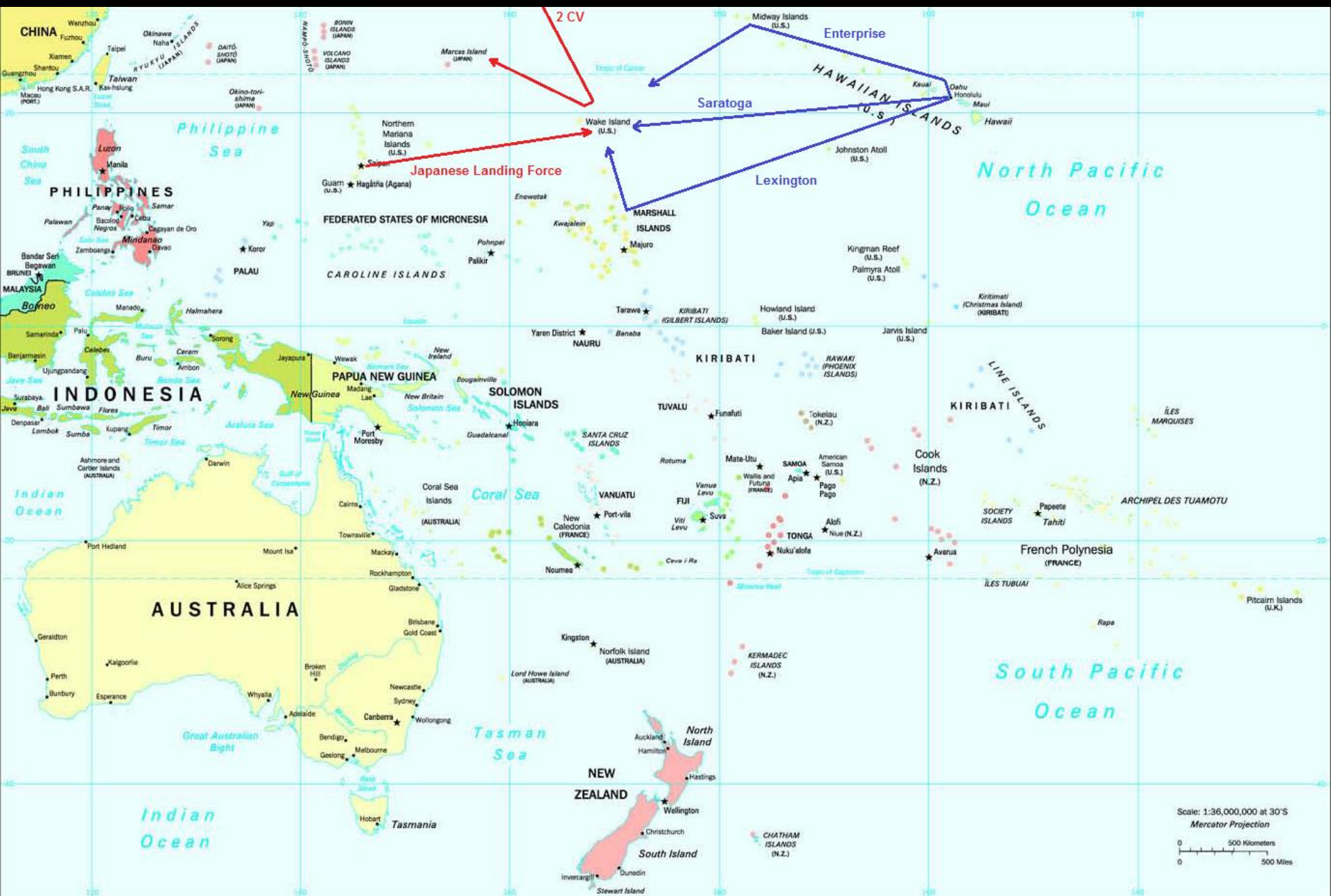
The Marines on Wake had thrown back a determined (and overconfident) invasion force with minimal loss and inflicting severe losses in return. But the U.S. Marines on Wake had lost all but two of their fighters defending the island.

ADM Kimmel (still in command of the Pacific Fleet) saw a chance to beat back part of the Japanese Pacific offensive and perhaps inflict even greater losses.

He now had three carrier task forces at his disposal and planned to use all three to crush the Japanese next attempted invasion and reinforce Wake Island.

Lexington would hit the Marshalls first as a diversion, Enterprise would cover Midway and then all three carrier groups would converge to defend Wake Island...





Scale: 1:36,000,000 at 30°S
 Mercator Projection
 0 500 Kilometers
 0 500 Miles

THE BATTLE THAT NEVER HAPPENED...

Between December 14th and 17th, all three carrier groups had received their orders and had sortied towards their objectives. On December 18th, Admiral Kimmel was fired and VADM William Pye was named interim commander pending the arrival of Kimmel's named successor, RADM Chester Nimitz. Pye was Battle Force Commander, in command of eight sunk or crippled battleships.



He recalled the counter attack.

Saratoga was a day away from Wake when the operation was cancelled. Lexington was behind schedule due in part to weather.

But most agree Pye was not a fan of the plan and certainly did not want it on his record should the plan miscarry.



“VICTORY DISEASE”

Dec 12 1941: Japanese invaded Legazpi in southern Luzon. U.S Asiatic squadron (less submarines) withdrew to Australia.

Dec 16 1941: Japanese invaded Borneo.

Dec 22 1941: Japanese main invasion force of 43,000 lands at Lingayen Gulf, Luzon.

Dec 23 1941: Japanese invaded and captured Wake Island.

Dec 24 1941: MacArthur ordered pre-planned withdrawal of all U.S./Filipino forces to Bataan.

Dec 25 1941: Hong Kong falls.

Jan 4 1942: Japanese Carriers attack Bismarck Islands and Rabaul.

Jan 18 1942: Japanese invaded southern Burma.

Jan 22 1942: Japanese invaded New Ireland near Kavieng.

Jan 23 1942: Japanese invaded New Britain near Rabaul.

Jan 30 1942: Japanese invaded Celebe Islands.

Feb 15, 1942: British forces in Singapore surrender.



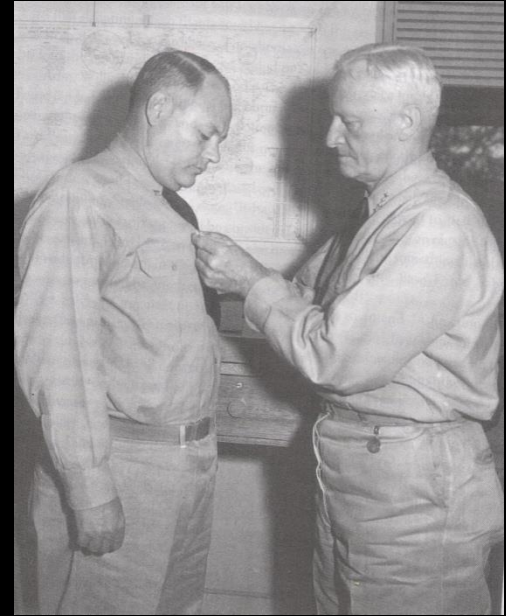
SALVAGE

Pearl Harbor was not nor ever intended to be a major fleet base. Its maintenance facilities were limited. Its salvage ability was even more so. The number of officers with any experience in actual salvage could be counted with one finger.

His name was CDR Charles "Swede" Monsen who pioneered submarine rescue and salvage in the 1930's. He commanded Submarine Squadron 2 at Pearl ... and still had a job.

Savage fell to men whose ships were at the bottom of the Harbor and were thus available. Few were specifically trained for these new duties. But they all had technical backgrounds and served in a job where one expects to face situations for which they had no specific training.

The first officer-in-charge was CDR James Steele who had commanded USS Utah. When the job became bigger it fell to CAPT Homer Wallin who was in charge of maintenance for the battleships...



SALVAGE

The effort began even as the bombs were falling. The job was to mitigate damage if possible and then to repair the ships sufficiently so that they could return to the major ship yards on the West Coast for complete restoration.

Use of the dry dock would be secondary to ships that were still in the fight.

Pearl Harbor lacked just about everything needed to deal with the most heavily damaged ships and particularly certified divers for underwater work.

But the harbor was shallow, the currents negligible, and the water was clear. They trained divers for the work on sight.

Most were actually welders and machinists by training as that was the underwater work most needed...



SALVAGE

It was quickly determined that two ships were total losses: Arizona and Utah. But it was not certain whether many if any of the others that had sunk could be recovered.

In the end, aside from Arizona and Utah, every ship was recovered and all but one would be repaired and serve in the war.

Even in the case of Utah and Arizona, anything that could be recovered for future use was removed. Guns were removed and often used in other ships or retained as spares if needed.

The heavy equipment (above) had been jury rigged at Pearl Harbor. The crane was made on two barges using the derrick from an old crane at the port. Such ingenuity was common.



PHOENIX FLEET

**USS Maryland: Departed Hawaii 20
DEC 1941 for repairs and
modernization in Bremerton WA.
Returned to service APR 1942.**

**R: Maryland, 7 Dec 1941.
R below: Maryland after overhaul.
Below: Maryland shelling Tarawa,
Nov 1943.**



PHOENIX FLEET

**USS Tennessee: Departed Hawaii 20
DEC 1941 for repairs and
modernization in Bremerton WA.
Returned to service APR 1942.**

**R on Left: Tennessee 10 Dec 1941.
R below: Tennessee after overhaul.
Below: Tennessee shelling Iwo
Jima, Feb 1945.**



PHOENIX FLEET

**USS Pennsylvania: Departed Hawaii
20 DEC 1941 for repairs and
modernization in Bremerton WA.
Returned to service APR 1942.**

**R: Pennsylvania 10 Dec 1941.
R below: After overhaul.
Below: Pennsylvania shelling Leyte,
Oct 1944.**



PHOENIX FLEET

USS Nevada (sunk): Departed Hawaii
APR 1942 for repairs and
modernization in Bremerton WA.
Returned to service OCT 1942.

R: Nevada 8 Dec 1941.

L below: After overhaul.

**R Below: Nevada shelling Utah
Beach, Normandy, 6 Jun 1944.**



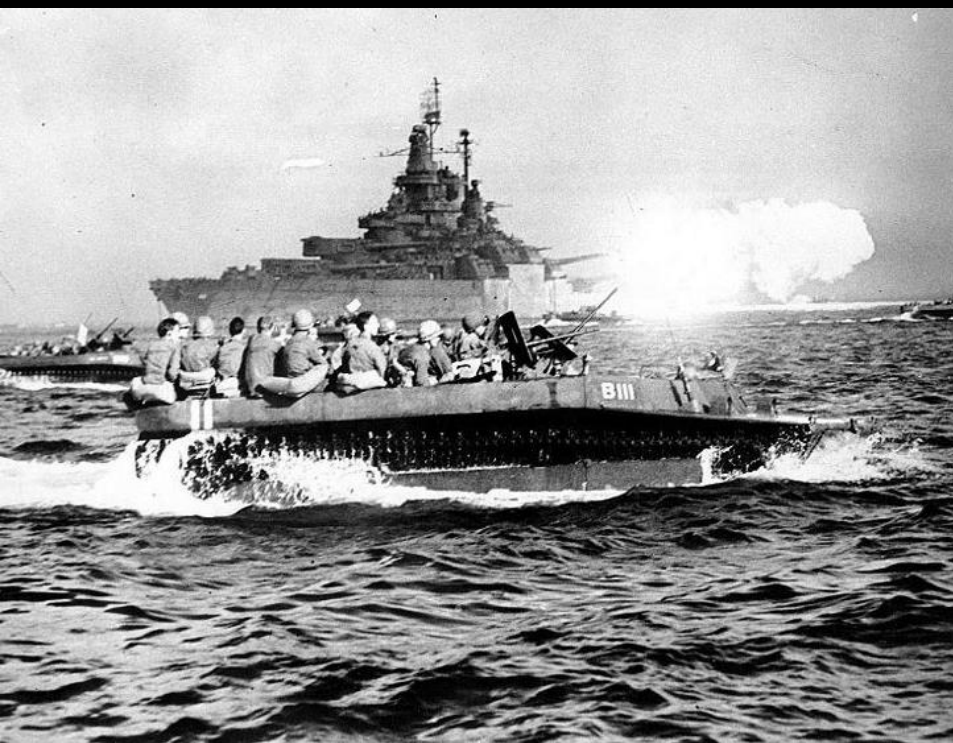
PHOENIX FLEET

USS California (sunk): Departed Hawaii 7 JUN 1942 for repairs and modernization in Bremerton WA. Returned to service JAN 1944.

R on Left: On 8 Dec 1941.

R below: After overhaul.

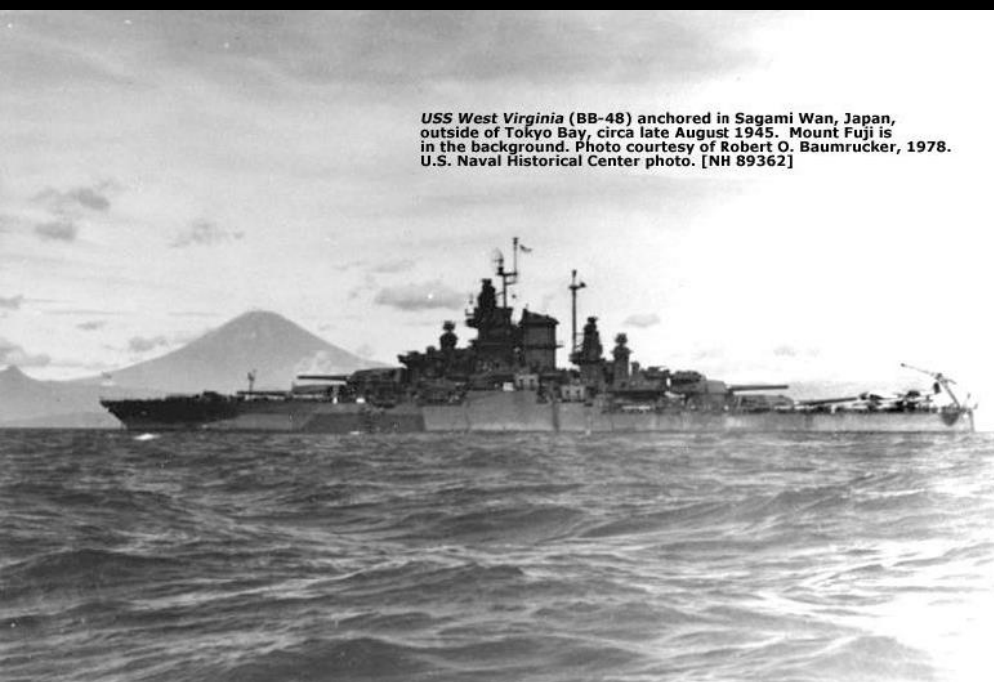
L Below: California shelling Okinawa April 1945.



PHOENIX FLEET

USS West Virginia (sunk): Departed Hawaii 7 May 1943 for repairs and modernization in Bremerton WA. Returned to service JUL 1944.

R on Right: West Virginia 8 Dec 1941.
R below: After overhaul.
L Below: West Virginia off Tokyo Japan, Aug 1945.



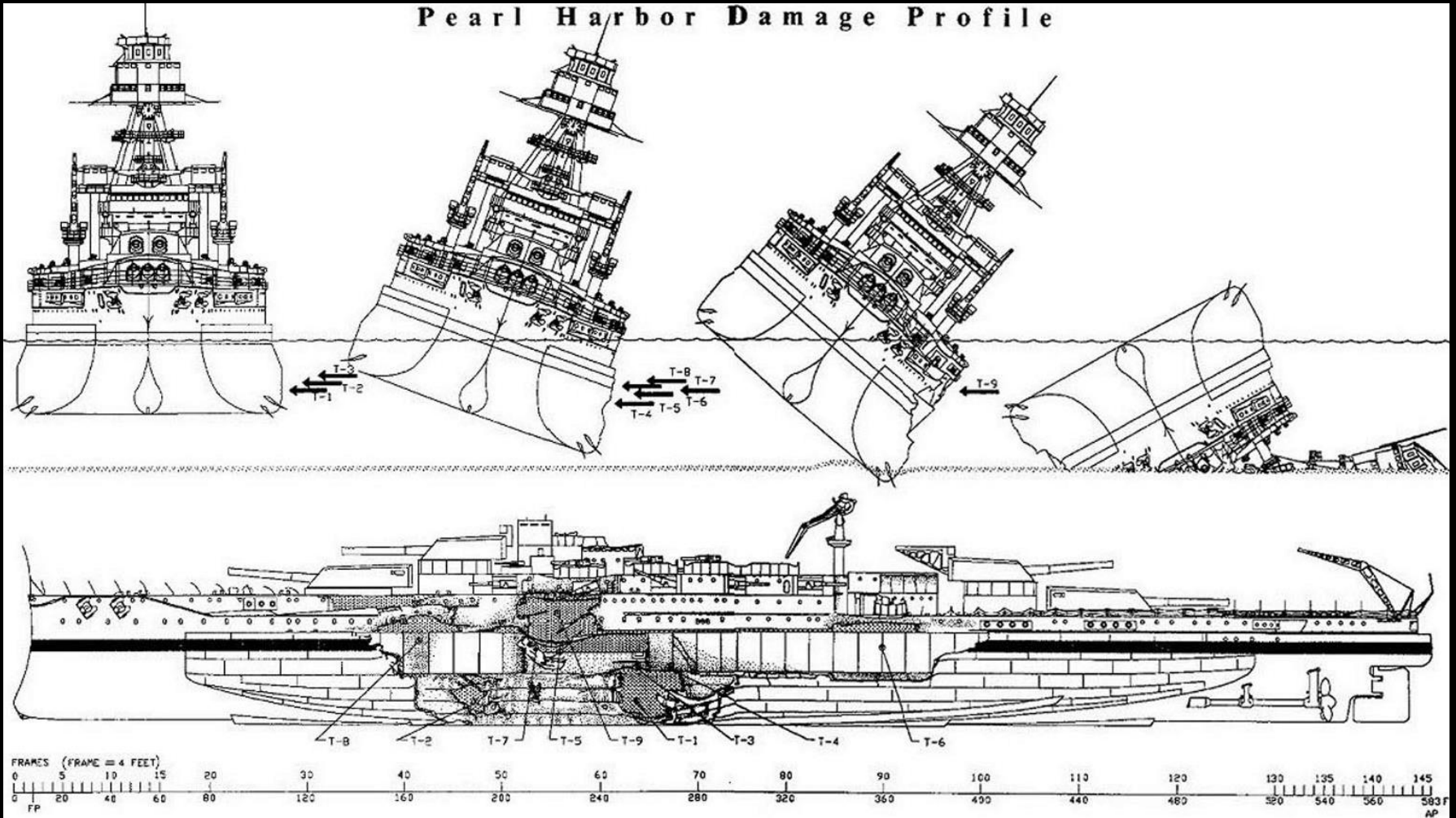
USS West Virginia (BB-48) anchored in Sagami Wan, Japan, outside of Tokyo Bay, circa late August 1945. Mount Fuji is in the background. Photo courtesy of Robert O. Baumrucker, 1978. U.S. Naval Historical Center photo. [NH 89362]



PHOENIX FLEET

They saved the toughest job for last. At first they were not even sure they could salvage the Oklahoma but after the work they had done in the months following the attack they became convinced it could be done. Work began in the fall of 1942, the first task being to try and turnover a 28,000 ton ship buried in the mud...

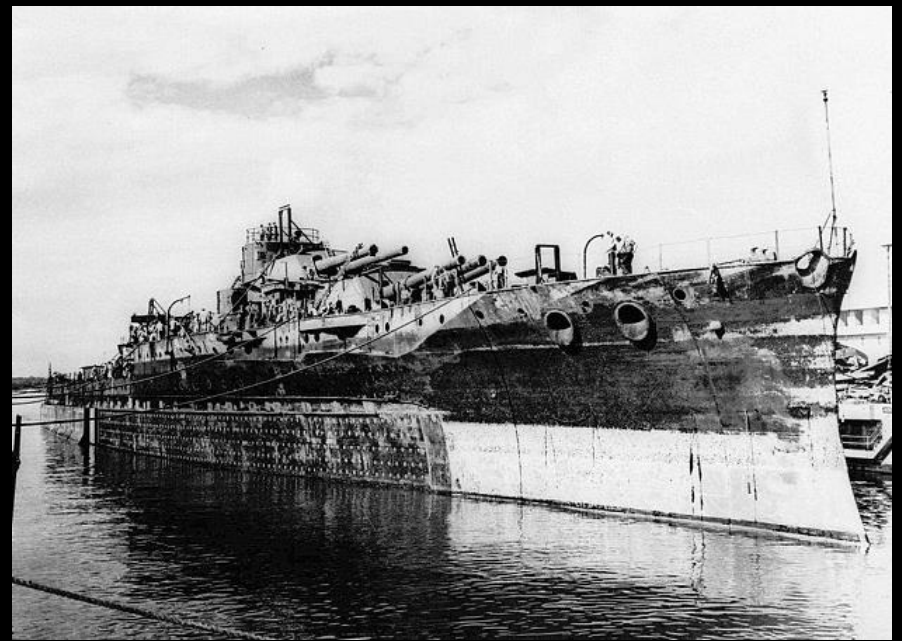
Pearl Harbor Damage Profile



PHOENIX FLEET



PHOENIX FLEET

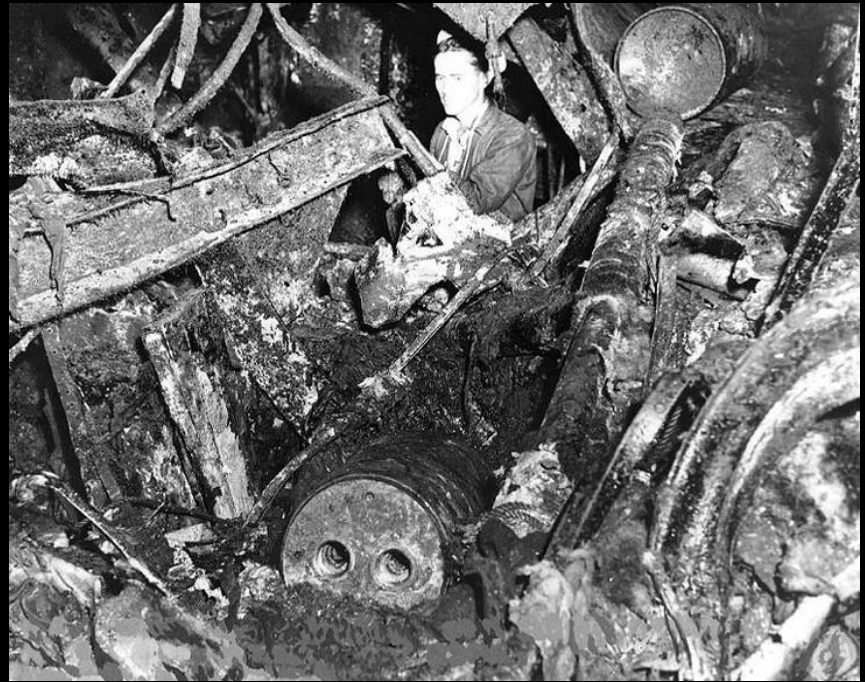


PHOENIX FLEET

It could have been much worse. Smoke and cloud cover meant much of the second wave could not find their targets or bombed without accuracy.

The number of hits in the first wave was less than the Japanese had expected.

The torpedo planes had to fly level at sixty feet and just above stall speed otherwise their torpedoes would bury themselves in the mud and the majority did just that. There are still several Japanese torpedoes at the bottom of Pearl Harbor.



The level bombers achieved a very high hit rate. Unfortunately, a large majority of their bombs failed to detonate. (These were battleship shells jury rigged as bombs). Only one is believed to have detonated properly – the one that blew up Arizona and even then that is just a guess.

(Photo is of one of the unexploded battleship shells found aboard West Virginia after the attack.)

NEW LEADERSHIP

On December 31st, 1941, Chester Nimitz assumed command of the Pacific Fleet aboard the submarine USS Grayling at Pearl Harbor.

He had been head of the Bureau of Navigation (soon to be renamed more appropriately Bureau of Naval Personnel) when the war started. He was told he was to be Pacific Fleet Commander on the 18th, the same day Kimmel was relieved of duty.

“Get out to Pearl and don’t come back ‘til the war’s won,” he had been told by Frank Knox, Sec. of the Navy.

“You always wanted Pacific Fleet,” his wife observed when he told her.

“Darling, the fleet is at the bottom of the sea,” he replied.



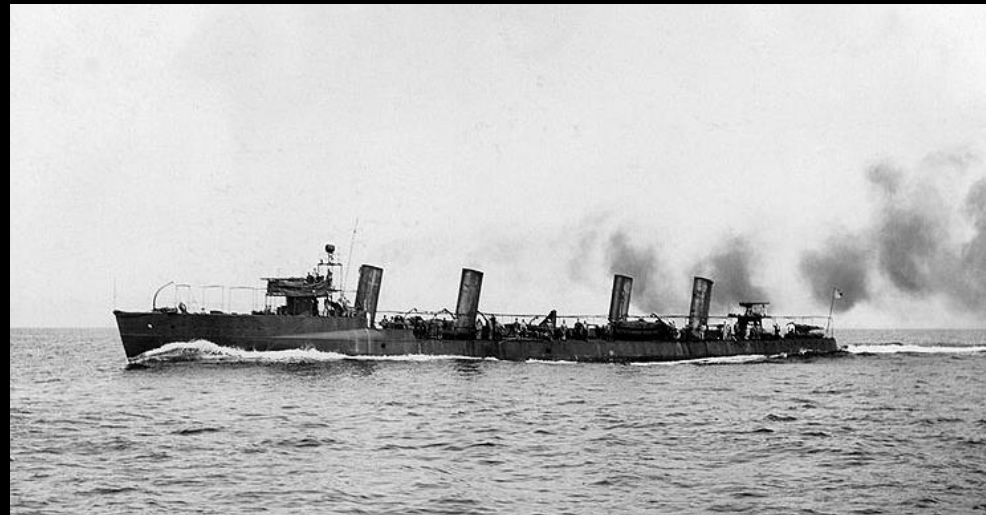
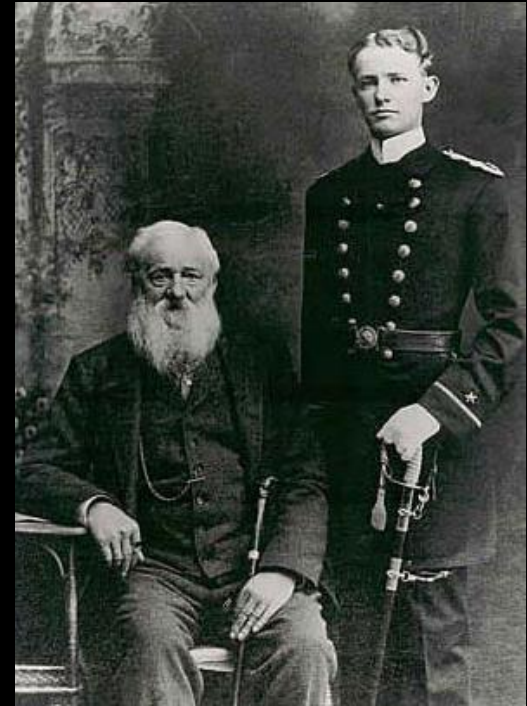
NEW LEADERSHIP

Nimitz applied to the Naval Academy because he could not afford to attend a college. He lived in Texas and had never seen the ocean. His father died when he was little and he was raised by his mother, her family and his grandfather who ran a saloon.

He graduated in 1905. He promoted to Ensign while assigned to the Asiatic Squadron in the Philippines, was assigned to command the destroyer USS Decatur which he promptly ran aground.

He was court-martialed and relieved.

His next assignment was to submarines which was not considered a specialization for those with ambitious hopes...

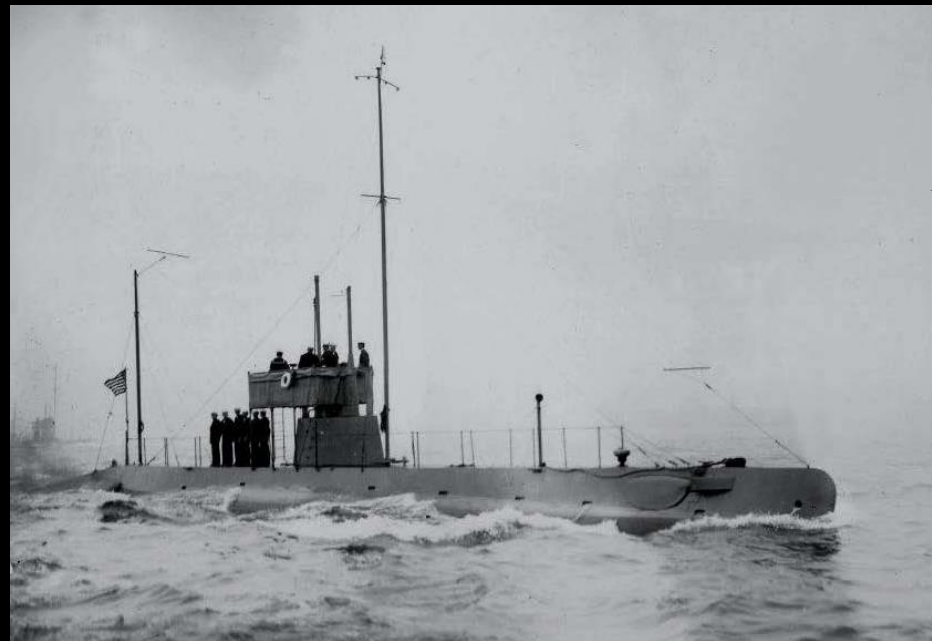


NEW LEADERSHIP

The U.S. Submarine Service has prided itself on being all volunteers. There is one notable exception: Chester Nimitz. He wanted posting to a battleship. He got submarines.

Where he excelled. He took over as commander of his first submarine (The Plunger, Top), weeks after assuming his first assignment as XO in 1901. By 1911, he had commanded two other submarines and was named as first CO of the newest E-1 (below) which was also the first U.S. submarine powered by diesel engines.

He would go on to study diesel technology in Germany becoming the Navy's expert in such engines by 1915.



NEW LEADERSHIP

As an Ensign, he had been in Japan when the Great White Fleet visited and met Admiral Togo who he came to admire.

As a Captain in command of the USS Augusta, flagship of the Asiatic Fleet, he attended Togo's funeral (where his oldest daughter just out of college met her future husband. "Never pass up a good funeral," she would later say.)

In the 1920's, Nimitz founded one of the first Naval ROTC units in the country at UC Berkeley. By the end of his tenure, he served on several faculty committees including the Search Committee. He would go on to serve on the Board of Trustees.

Berkley never did away with NROTC.



NEW LEADERSHIP

Before Berkeley, he had been assigned the task of building the submarine base at Pearl Harbor. He had next to no budget, but an eager staff who knew which Navy warehouses in the States had locks and which did not.



In the interwar years between 1920 and 1940 military budgets had gone from tight to almost non-existent. Some officers learned how to complain. Others learned how to thrive on pennies a day. Nimitz was in the latter group.

He made Rear Admiral in 1938 and took command of Battleship Division 1 with USS Arizona as his flagship. Here he developed more advances at sea replenishment techniques.



NEW LEADERSHIP

ADM Nimitz was a submarine officer in command of a fleet traditionally commanded by battleship officers. (Kimmel and Richardson both had extensive experience in battleships). It was also a fleet where all that was left as a striking force were aircraft carriers.

One could say he was chosen in part because he was not typical. He was taking over a fleet demoralized by what had happened (and what had not) and he was expected to fight a war in a manner the Navy had never envisioned much less planned to fight.

Perhaps because his career had been atypical, he was the best man for the job.

(That and his dog befouling the grounds of the Japanese Embassy in Washington on Dec 7th, 1941 shortly after the news was broadcast probably didn't hurt.)



NEW KIND OF WAR

On Dec 7th, 1941, less than six hours after the first bombs fell on Hawaii, ADM Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, ordered the Pacific Fleet commands to “execute unrestricted air and submarine warfare against Japan.”

The United States had been opposed to such a policy. It meant submarines could attack any enemy ship or neutral ship in enemy waters without warning. It was what had drawn the U.S. into WWI. Passenger ships were not to be excluded.

Japan was even more dependent upon shipping for survival than was Great Britain. But the U.S., despite starting the war with more submarines than the Germans (61-54), were nowhere near as effective in their first year at war. Some commanders were just not aggressive and were replaced. But this did not explain the number of torpedoes that were fired without a result. Tactics were blamed.

Merchant Shipping sunk per month

Subs	US	Germany	Germany
Dates	12/41-12/42	12/41-12/42	09/39-08/40
Ships	11	110	40
Tonnage	47,991	563,259	166,488

THE PHILIPPINES

Japan had allocated about 60,000 troops for the conquest of Luzon. Their plans needed the mission to be completed within 60 days as many of the units were earmarked for later operations in Java.

The main landings occurred at Lingayen Gulf on Dec 22 with a supporting landing south of Manila on the 24th. Resistance was heavier than expected but Manila fell without being defended on Jan 2, 1942. A few days later the Americans and Filipinos seemed to disappear.

Then the Japanese reached the outer defenses at Bataan and were driven back with heavy losses.

Worse, the fort on the Island of Corrigador and another, Ft. Drum in Manila Bay meant that the Bay and the port at Manila could not be used at all.



THE PHILIPPINES

MacArthur planned a grinding, fighting withdrawal down the peninsula to a prepared line of defense roughly half way to the south, the line being within range of the huge guns on Corregidor.

The Japanese reached the top of the Peninsula Jan 6th. It took them three bloody weeks to reach the main defensive line where they were stopped cold.

They made three attempts to move around the flank by sea. All three failed.

From about Jan 23rd until April 3rd, the line moved by yards if at all. Japanese assaults were piecemeal . Their successes were temporary as the American and Filipinos either never intended to hold that particular piece of ground or counter-attacked and retook it.



THE PHILIPPINES

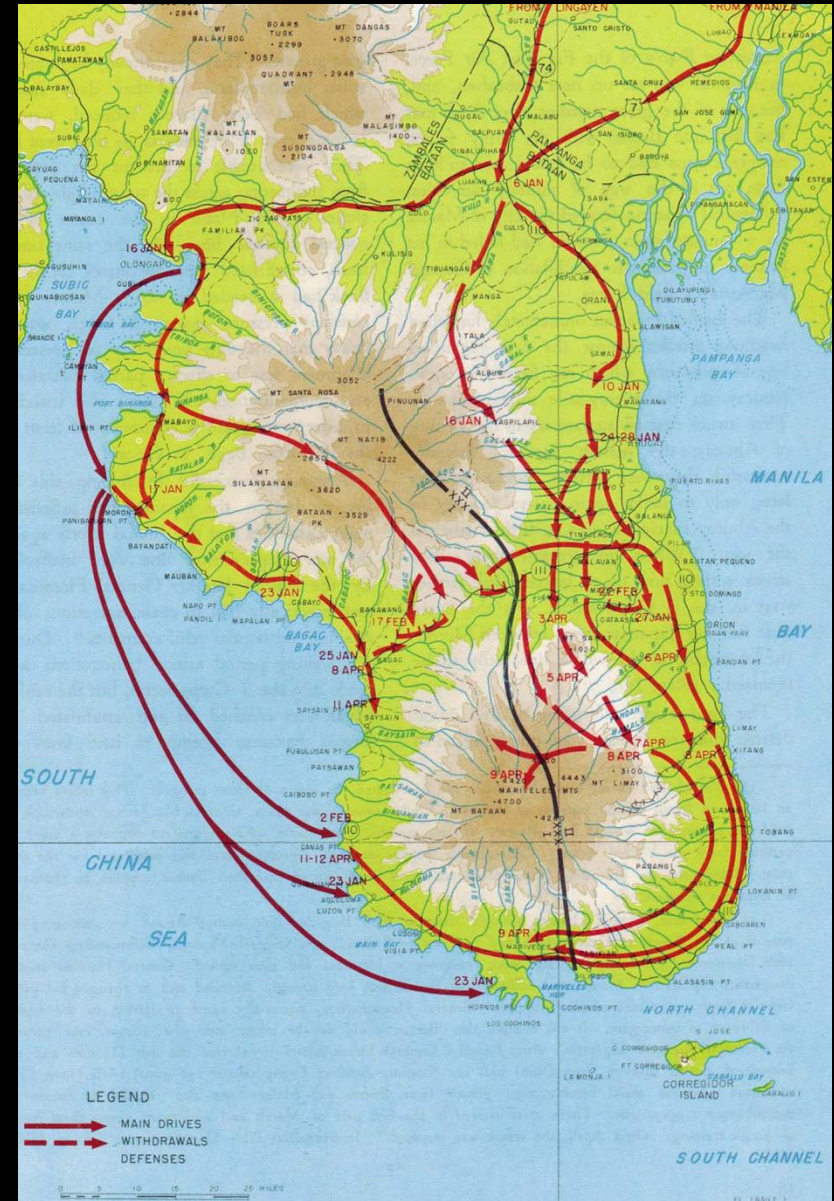
Under War Plan Orange, the U.S. Forces were to pull back to prepared defenses on the Bataan Peninsula if they faced a force roughly equal to or greater than their own and hold until relieved from the States.

They were to be prepared for a siege of at least six months.

The plan saw a relief force escorted by a Navy that no longer existed in the Pacific.

The plan did not foresee loss of the fleet. It also did not envision the Army at MacArthur's disposal. The Army was four times the size envisioned with the inclusion of the Philippine divisions MacArthur had trained over the preceding years.

It was also much larger than the Japanese were led to believe.



THE PHILIPPINES

The Battle of Bataan was a throw back to the Western Front of 1914 to 1918 rather than a preview of the land battles in the Pacific.

The senior American officers had served in that war and had done well. None of the Japanese had. They're experience was in China against an enemy with less artillery and substantially more options regarding withdrawal and maneuver.

By February, the front was still stalled. Japan's army had been ill prepared. Over half were unfit for combat. They were just as ridden with malaria. They were only marginally better fed than the Americans.

(The Japanese Army, to reduce supply problems, foraged in China. They tried to do so in the Philippines and were facing starvation...)

The Japanese timeline had been shattered...



THE PHILIPPINES



The Japanese had done what they would do for most of the war. They had grossly underestimated their enemy while similarly overestimating their own abilities.

The Americans only had to hold. The President assured them that the U.S. was doing everything it could to come to their relief.



He was not lying. There was nothing the U.S. could do to help the situation and that is exactly what the U.S. did.

THE PHILIPPINES

**We're the battling bastards
of Bataan;
No mama, no papa, no Uncle
Sam.
No aunts, no uncles, no
cousins, no nieces,
No pills, no planes, no
artillery pieces.
And nobody gives a damn.**



THE PHILIPPINES

On Bataan MacArthur would become known as “Dugout Doug,” a derisive name used by his critics for the rest of the War. He only visited Bataan once after the Japanese reached the main line of defense.



On Corregidor, most of the people lived in bunkers, protected against the constant bombing and, later, shelling.

MacArthur, however, was out and about most of the time and particularly when the bombs were falling. He never was hit. The same cannot be said for those who accompanied him...



THE PHILIPPINES

The Japanese commander in the Philippines was LGEN Masaharu Homma. Fluent in English, he had spent eight years in Britain as a military attache. He saw action on the Western Front in 1918 with the East Lancashire Regiment. He had opposed war with Britain and the United States.

He was an outlier in the Japanese Army.

In early February 1942 he reported his army was both stalled and unfit for combat and he needed substantial reinforcement.

Tokyo blamed him, not their plans. But divisions earmarked for later operations were sent to the Philippines delaying those operations by many weeks.



THE PHILIPPINES

In early February, efforts were made to evacuate civilians from Bataan and Corregidor by submarine. MacArthur was advised to send his wife and young son. His wife refused and that was the end of it. (Others were evacuated)

By the end of February, Washington knew the Philippines were lost. They suggested MacArthur leave but he refused. Gen Marshall saw it a waste as MacArthur was probably one of the best combat commanders then available.

On March 1st, 1942 the President ordered MacArthur to Australia to take command of the allied armies assembling to relieve the Philippines. MacArthur agreed but did not leave immediately lest his departure undermine the defense.



At Corregidor 1942: L-R Ah Cheu, Jean MacArthur, Col. Charles Willoughby (MacArthur's Intelligence Officer), Arthur MacArthur, unknown.

AUSTRALIA

Ordered to leave on March 1st, he planned to leave aboard a submarine USS Permit which was not expected to arrive before March 15th. When told its arrival was in question due to the tightening Japanese naval blockade, he asked if it would be possible to make it to Mindanao by PT Boat at night.

The boat commander, LT. John Buckeley, said it was if they left soon. 4 PT boats with MacArthur, his wife and son and staff, departed March 11th. Three of the boats made it to Mindanao on March 13th. (The other was abandoned.)

Fittingly, in March 1945, MacArthur returned to Corregidor on a (newer) PT Boat.



AUSTRALIA

MacArthur had to wait four days at a Del Monte plantation for further transport. Planes were supposed to be waiting for him, but as he was not scheduled to leave Corregidor until two days after he arrived at Mindanao, he was early. He did not see it that way and never forgave the Air Corps commander who had not had planes waiting.



Four planes were sent to bring him out, only two made it to Mindanao (the other two turned back with mechanical problems). He arrived at Darwin during a Japanese air raid. His wife wanted nothing to do with the airplane sent to fly them south so they drove 1000 miles to Alice Springs to catch a train which arrived at Terowie on the 20th.



AUSTRALIA

“The President of the United States ordered me to break through the Japanese lines and proceed from Corregidor to Australia for the purpose, as I understand it, of organizing the American offensive against Japan, a primary object of which is the relief of the Philippines.

“I came through and I shall return.”

Douglas MacArthur, at Terowie, March 20th, 1942.

He and his wife also came out with only the clothes on their backs. (They did have a few changes for their son.)

Somewhat symbolic of what MacArthur would find waiting for him in Australia...



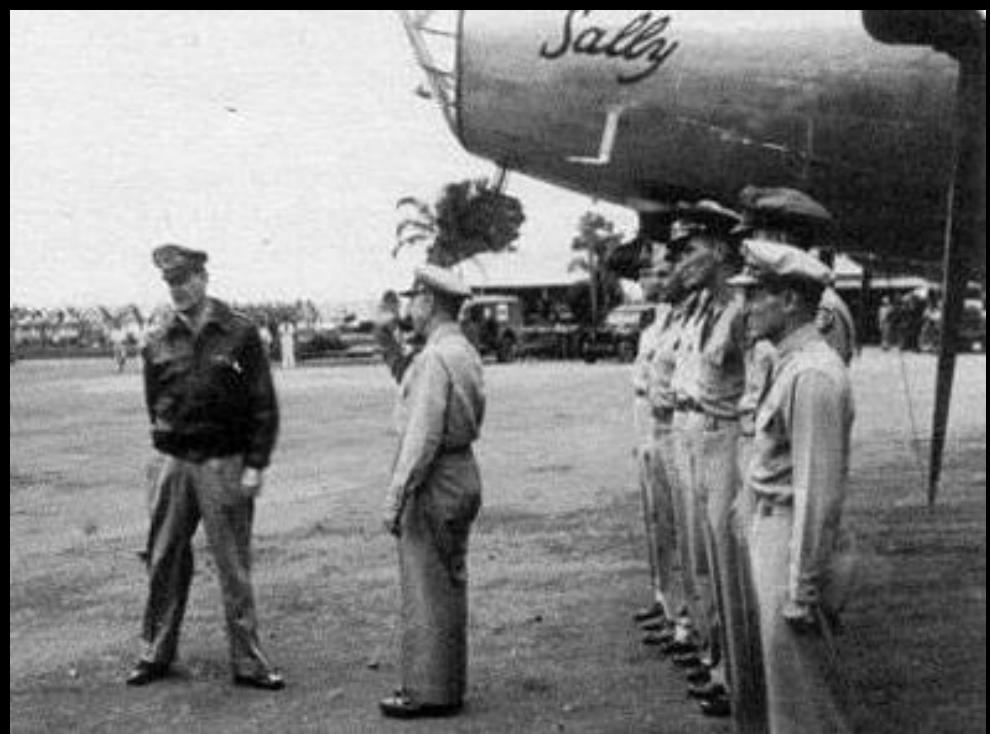
AUSTRALIA

Expecting an army, he found next to nothing. Australia had an untrained division still forming up. The U.S. had about 25,000 men – mostly support troops and some aviators.

Most of his air forces were antiquated U.S. surplus or were overworked and poorly maintained and little more than targets for the Japanese raids in the northwest or were still in pieces in boxes in eastern Australia.

There was not even a battalion of trained infantry.

Australia's trained army was either in North Africa (3 Divisions) or Japanese POW camps (1 Division).



AUSTRALIA

MacArthur was appalled and was certain Washington had lied to him. He would have to defend Australia with next to nothing or build an army from next to nothing.

He would do the latter.

Army combat troops would not arrive in units larger than separate battalions and often would arrive unorganized right out of boot camp. He would train them and form them into Divisions in Australia, as he would do with the Australians.

What he created was the only allied Army that truly worked anywhere in the War. His mix of American and Australian units worked together with surprising efficiency. But that was months into an uncertain future.



AUSTRALIA

MacArthur had an odd ally in Australian Prime Minister Curtin. Curtin was politically far to the left of Roosevelt and had no faith in Churchill after the fall of Singapore.

With his support, MacArthur “requested” return of all Australian troops. Churchill refused vehemently until Roosevelt said if the Aussies remained in North Africa, the Americans would go to Australia. Churchill compromised and released two divisions.

He then tried to send them to India instead until Roosevelt reminded him that India was not Australia and if he wanted American support, then the Australian divisions must go to Australia. Churchill was not happy.

MacArthur was and the Australians were ecstatic.



MEANWHILE, IN THE PHILIPPINES

By the beginning of April, conditions on Bataan were near collapse. The defenders were mostly out of food and ammunition but more critically were suffering from disease. Over 75% were not fit for duty, most due to diseases such as Malaria and as a result of malnutrition.

The Japanese were in better shape only because they had supplies and recent reinforcements. The troops who had been there from the beginning were not much better off.

In late March, LGEN Homma directed his staff to submit a plan for dealing with prisoners as he expected the Americans would surrender once they could no longer fight. The plan submitted expected 25,000 prisoners about 1/3 were sick or wounded. Homma rejected it as overly optimistic (meaning he expected far more). The revised plan submitted around Apr 1st doubled the estimate.

But they had only begun to order the necessary supplies and Tokyo was less than willing to meet the orders (mainly because it exceeded their capability but also because the arm chair officers held prisoners in contempt.)

As it turned out, the revised plan was yet another instance of the Japanese grossly underestimating the situation...

THE BATAAN DEATH MARCH

Japanese attacks on April 3rd broke through the American lines mainly for lack of fit troops to hold on.

On April 9th, MGEN Edward King, commander of the forces on Bataan met with the Japanese to surrender his forces. The Japanese demanded he surrender all the Philippines. He refused as it was beyond his authority.

Ultimately, Homma agreed (not in person) to the limited surrender.

The Japanese faced not 40,000 troops, 2/3 fit for duty as expected, but about 80,000 troops $\frac{3}{4}$ of whom were unfit for duty. They had no transport arranged.

(They were not even prepared for the lower estimate of 25,000)



THE BATAAN DEATH MARCH

It was a recipe for disaster, something the Japanese would prove unable to avoid even when trying.

Between 3,000 and 8,000 died marching 100 miles to the nearest railroad. (No more than 850 were American of some 15,000 U.S. prisoners. The rest were Filipino.) An unknown number (perhaps 20%) escaped into the hills.

The brutality was not systemic. A LTC Ishii tried to order it but few officers actually obeyed. Still, many units grew brutal faced with the overwhelming situation and their inability to meet any schedule.

The cause was a breakdown in discipline at the unit level and a failure of command to recognize and effectively deal with the problem.



THE SURRENDER MYTH

The “Death March” was not repeated when Corregidor fell on May 6, 1942.

In 1943, the U.S. Pacific Commands issued orders to the troops to stop shooting Japanese who tried to surrender. Japanese prisoners talked. The rule was not enforced.

The United States had almost 42,000 Japanese POWs in camps by the end of the war. An unknown number of possible prisoners had been shot trying to surrender.

The Japanese could not understand why U.S. prisoners did not talk. Not even under torture. Not even when facing execution.

The Japanese took about 27,000 U.S. prisoners during the entire war. Over ninety percent were taken between December 1941 and May of 1942 when the remaining U.S. forces in the Philippines surrendered. Most of the rest were either shipwrecked or downed pilots.

COUNTERATTACK

The first month of the war had been an absolute embarrassment for the Navy. The fleet was at the bottom of Pearl Harbor and the attempt at a counter-attack at Wake Island had failed through lack of will on the part of the admiral in temporary command.

The Navy could do little to help MacArthur in the Philippines but it had to do something. Even if it was only to keep busy.

Nimitz turned to both the Fleet Staff (which he had kept – to their surprise) and to his senior aviator VADM William Halsey for ideas.

(Nimitz knew Halsey from before the time when Halsey could even spell “Naval Aviation.”)



COUNTERATTACK

The Navy was rather short on heroes in early 1942. It had no “names.” The Army had MacArthur. The Air Corps had “Hap” Arnold and Jimmy Doolittle. They had been in the papers recently and not for bad reasons.

The Navy had no one – at least no one who got any favorable press.

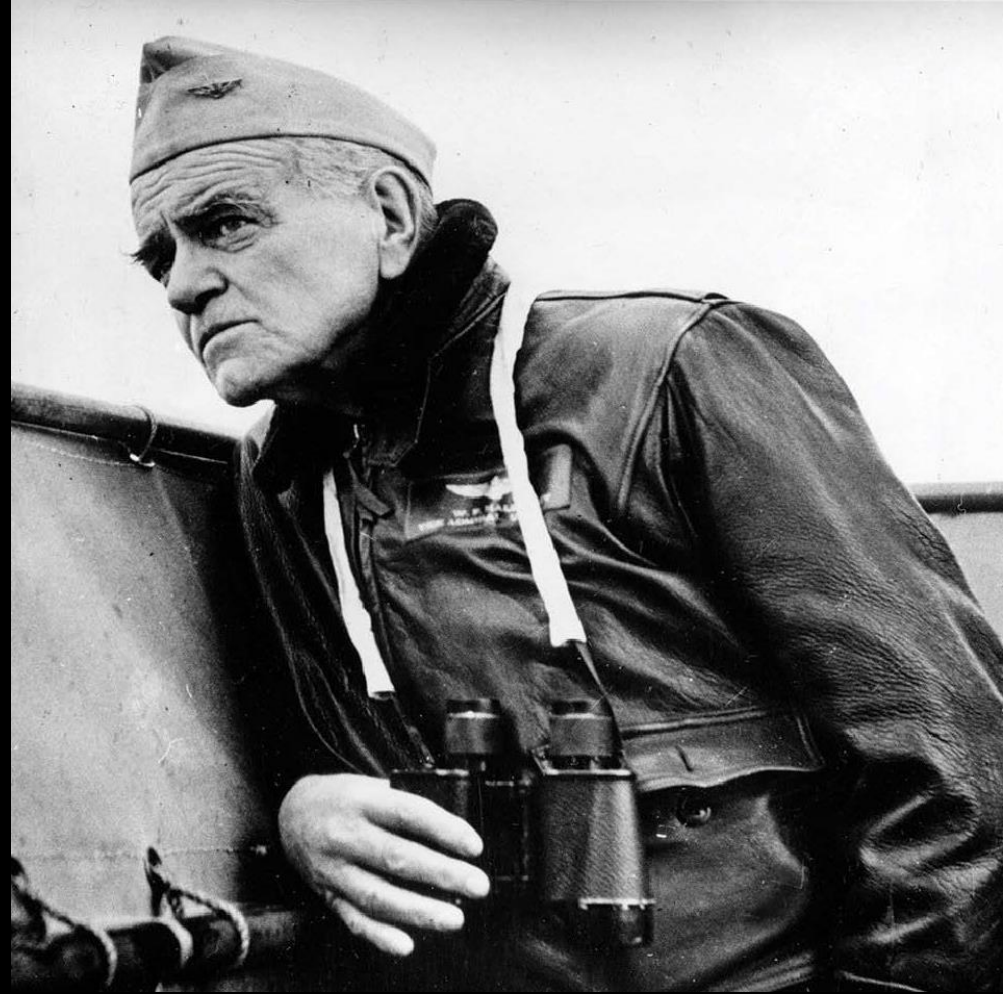
Bill Halsey would be the first and largely the only “name.”

He looked like he had been cast for the role.

He looked like a salty old sea dog.

He looked like a warrior.

He spoke in simple, quotable phrases on occasion.



COUNTERATTACK

General George Patton – who fought in a different war – had always been perfecting his image. He considered MacArthur a slob, feeling a commander must look better than anyone else.

He practiced his “war face” in the mirror regularly. He practiced his speeches.

General MacArthur was less concerned about looking “natty.” But he was even more conscious of his public image.

He had maintained a publicist on his staff since 1930. He had directions that a photographer had to follow and they would be gone if they did not.

Every word was calculated for maximum effect.

Patton was not easy to work for although most felt honored.

No one liked working for MacArthur.



COUNTERATTACK

Bill Halsey expected a lot from those who worked for him and he got it ... his entire career. People liked Bill. They liked working for Bill. Bill Halsey was fun.

He was a Navy Brat. His father had been a career Navy Officer and he grew up in the Navy. Denied an appointment to the Naval Academy at 16, he went to medical school at UVA.

He did not do well, except within his fraternity.

After a year, he managed an appointment and was off to Annapolis.

Where he played football on the worst teams in the history of the Academy and would admit he was not very good.

He graduated with the Class of 1904.



COUNTERATTACK

He served on the USS Missouri and USS Kansas, the later a part of the Great White Fleet. He did not trust the Japanese.

He was next posted to a destroyer and there he remained for the next 15 years (interspersed with shore tours). An avid student under CAPT Sims – a pioneer of destroyer tactics – he became the teacher. Aside from one year as XO of the battleship Wyoming, he was a destroyerman.

In 1919, he served a tour as Naval Attache in Germany and decided he couldn't trust them either.

After making Captain, another former destroyerman thought Bill would be an excellent choice to command an aircraft carrier. (It would otherwise have been a cruiser or battleship). That man was Ernest King.



COUNTERATTACK

But there was a catch. He had to qualify as some kind of aviator. Older men slated for carrier command at the time were ship-drivers, not pilots and there was a six week course for them that taught them how not to lose their lunch or touch anything they shouldn't or break anything after which they were rated and Aerial Observer.

Bill decided if he had to command pilots, he should be one. He changed to the pilot track without telling anyone (especially his wife). He managed to pass becoming at age 52 the oldest man to become rated as a naval aviator. (Decades later a Coast Guard Reserve officer broke his record at age 60.)

He had no delusions. He could safely fly a plane, but he was not about to try and land one on an aircraft carrier. He was then assigned command of the USS Lexington.



COUNTERATTACK

After Lexington he was sent to the Naval War College – the oldest in his class. After graduation, he was then sent to the Army War College for a year graduating with “Skinny” Wainwright and Omar Bradley.

In 1940, he took command of a Carrier Division (Carrier, it’s air wing and escorts), it was the USS Enterprise. He was probably nearing reassignment when the war broke out.

He was, by early 1942, the most aggressive Carrier Task Force commander and most respected.

Nimitz listened to him.

Nimitz had some ideas, Halsey was the one who could make them a reality...



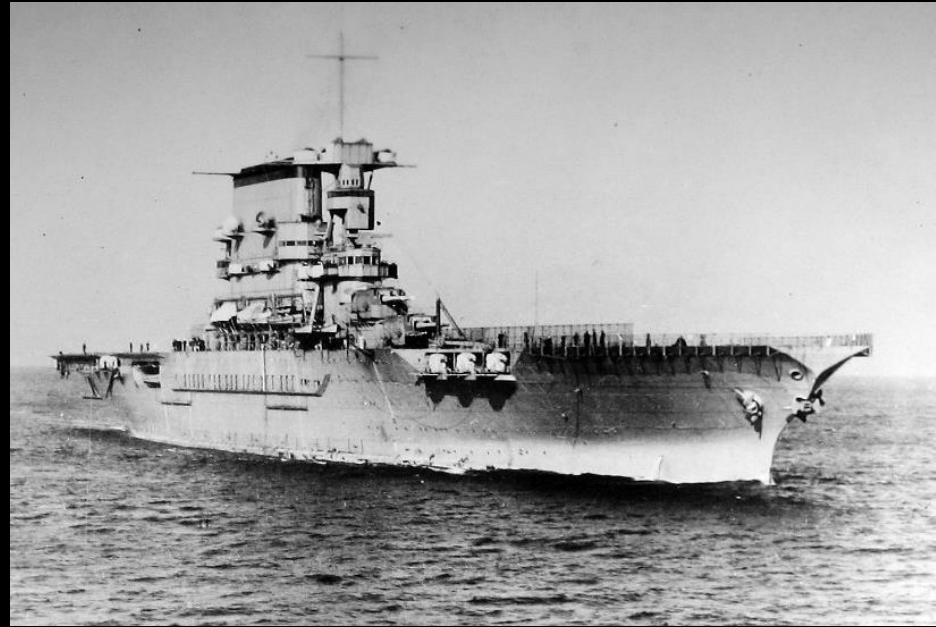
COUNTERATTACK

The plan was to conduct a series of strikes against the Japanese. It was hoped this would provoke the Japanese Navy to shift its effort away from supporting the operations in Southeast Asia.

It was not intended to provoke a major fleet engagement.

But successful raids would restore morale both in the Navy and with the general public. The first would be a two carrier force against the Gilbert and Marshall Islands.

The force would be comprised of the USS Enterprise and USS Saratoga – which was operating off of Johnston Atoll. But “Sara” was torpedoed by a Japanese sub on Jan 11th and in need of repairs.



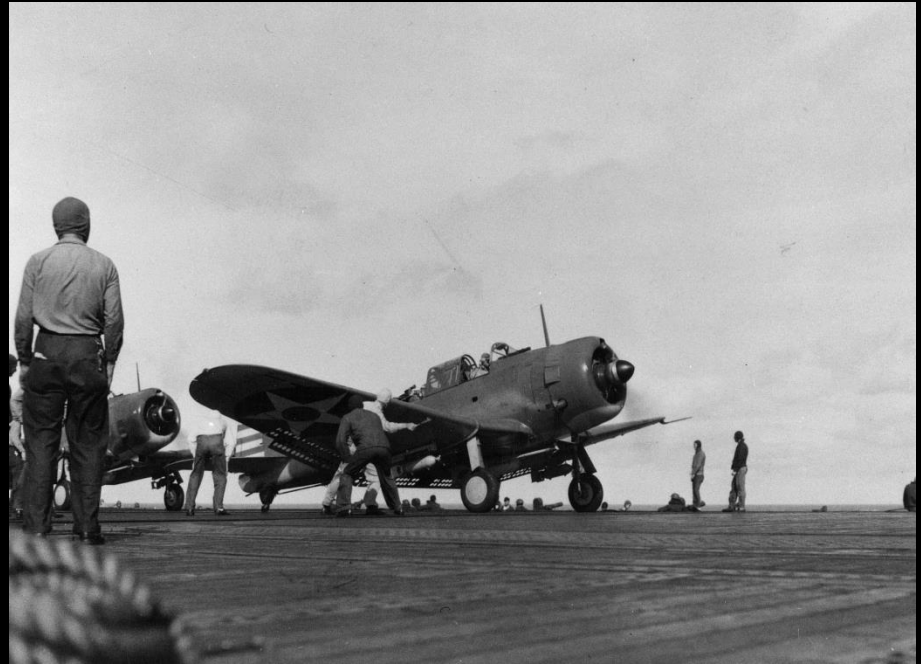
COUNTERATTACK

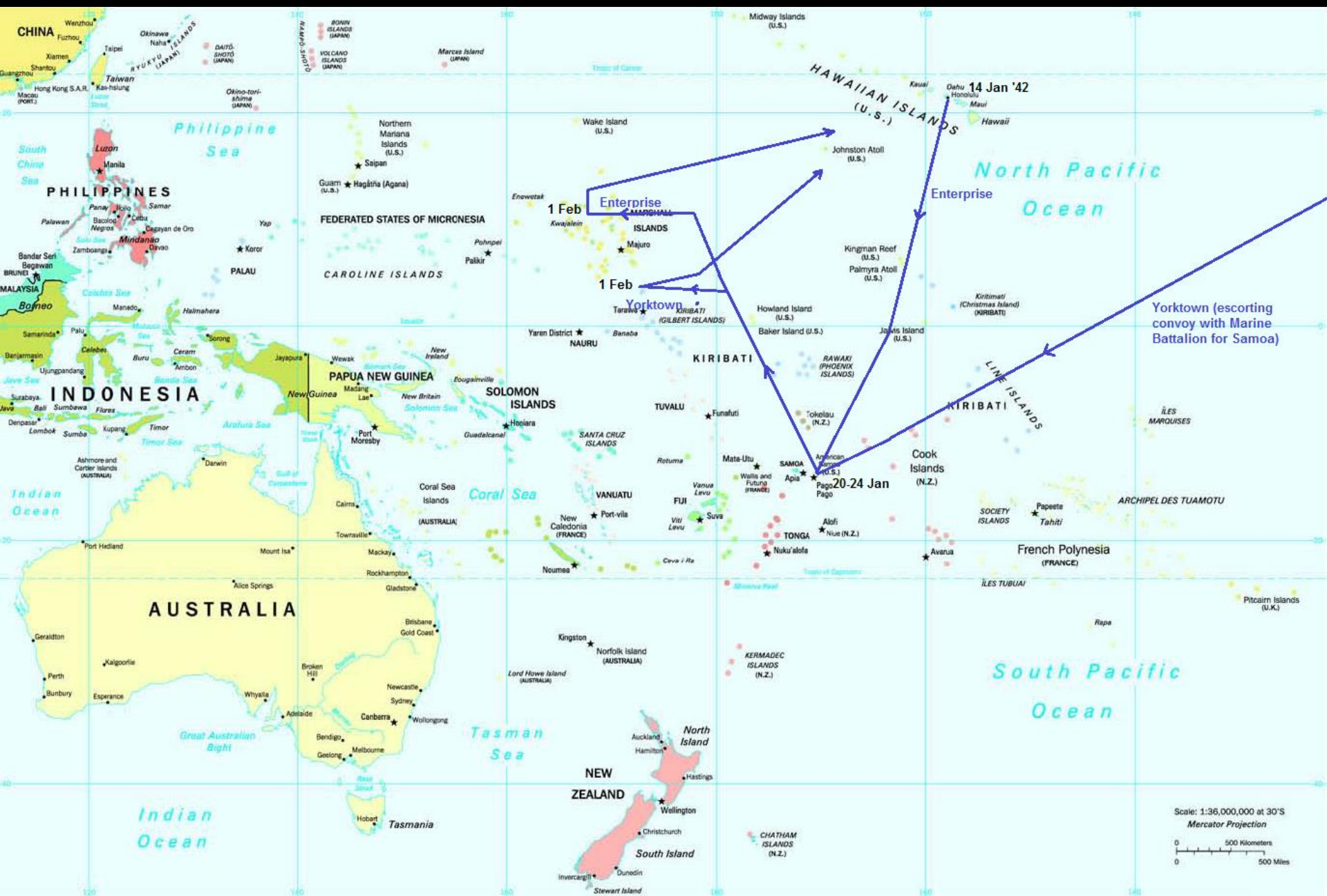
Lexington was to separately raid Wake Island. But that raid was cancelled when the assigned oiler was sunk by a submarine.

Fortunately, USS Yorktown had been transferred to the Pacific. Unfortunately, it was not headed for Hawaii, but escorting a convoy with a Marine Regiment to Samoa.

Halsey and Enterprise would be sent south to rendezvous with Yorktown near Samoa and then they would proceed to raid the Gilbert and Marshalls.

Halsey would be in command of the raids and the plan and timing would be at his discretion.





HAWAIIAN ISLANDS (U.S.)

North Pacific Ocean

1 Feb

Enterprise

1 Feb

Yorktown

Enterprise

14 Jan '42

Hawaii

Oahu Honolulu

Maui

Hawaii

Hawaii

Hawaii

Hawaii

Hawaii

Hawaii

Hawaii

Hawaii

Hawaii

Hawaii

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Hawaii

Enterprise

Yorktown (escorting convoy with Marine Battalion for Samoa)

20-24 Jan

Pago Pago

Samoa

Samoa

Samoa

Samoa

Samoa

Samoa

Samoa

Samoa

Samoa

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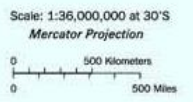
Samoa

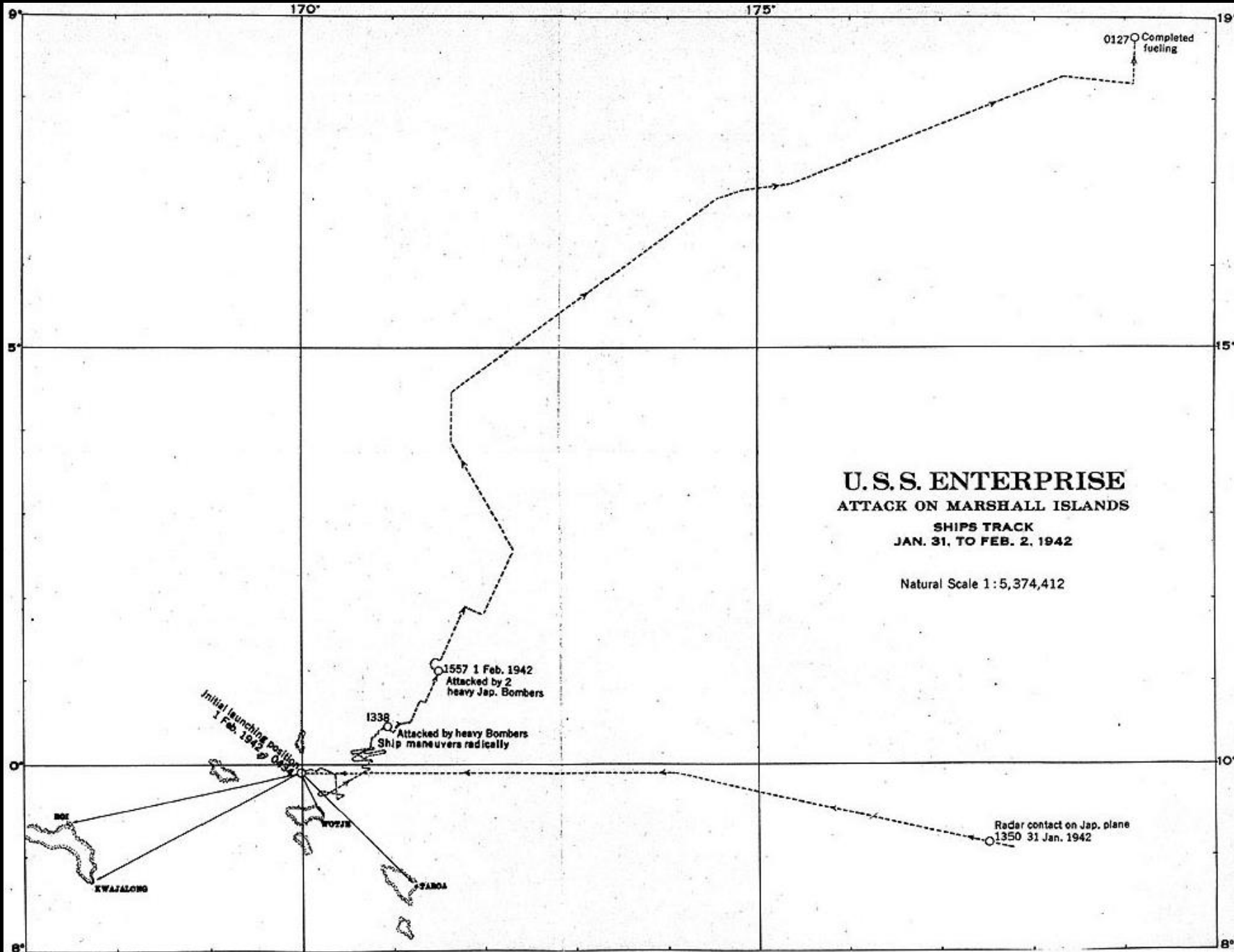
Samoa

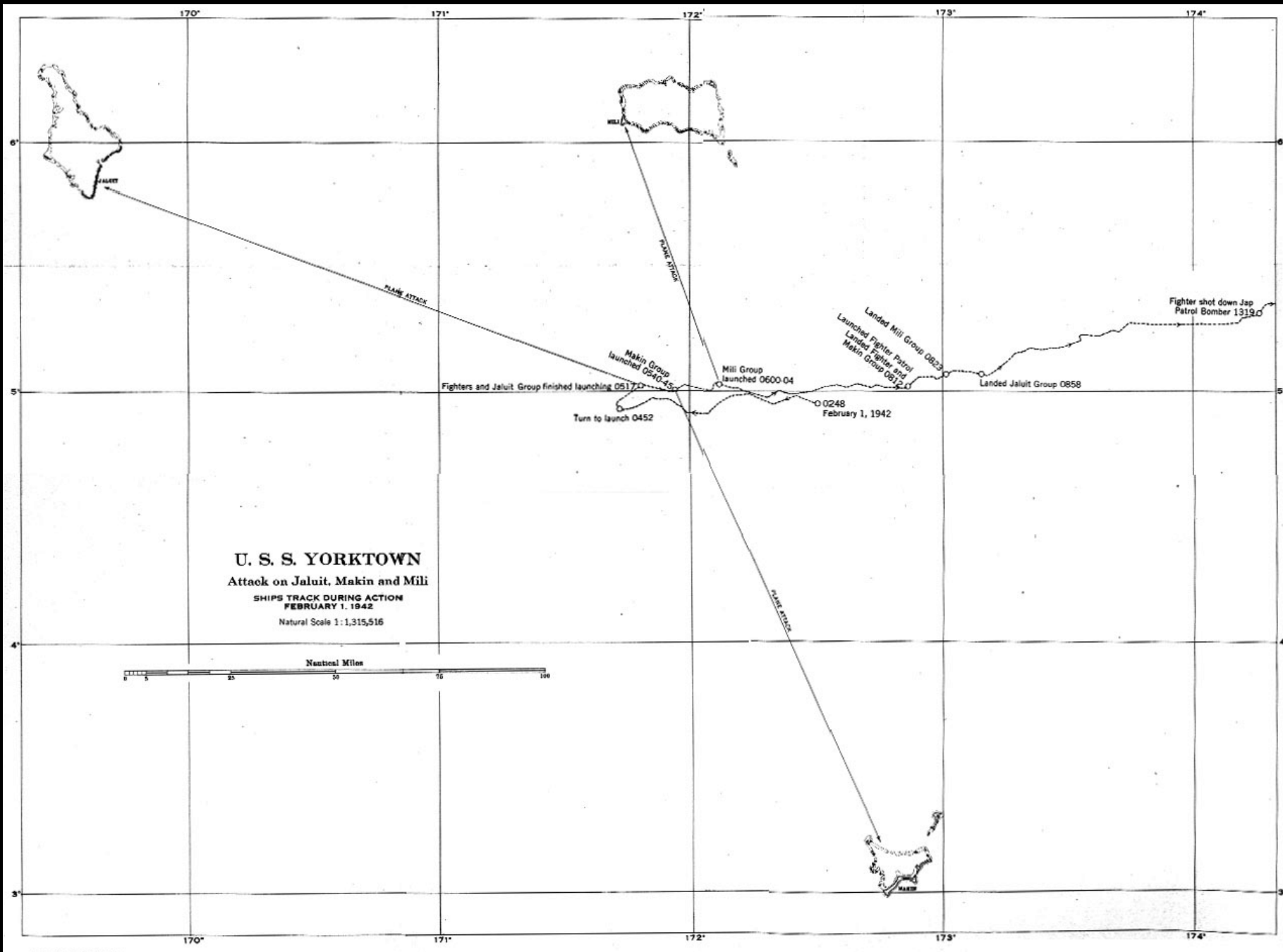
Samoa

Samoa

Samoa







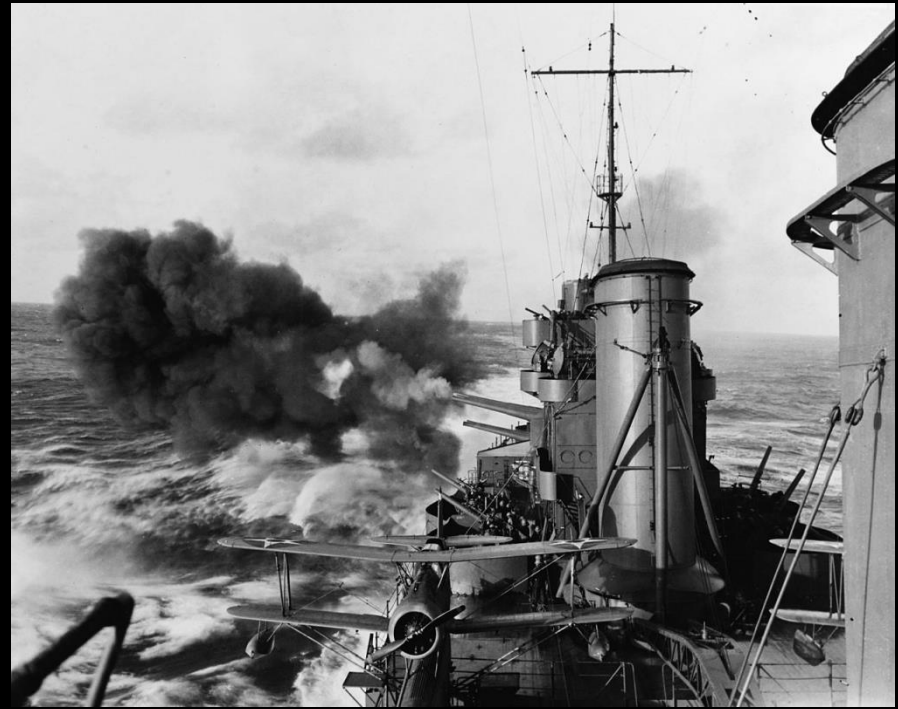
COUNTERATTACK

The air raids were considered a success. The Marshall Islands were believed to be heavily defended and it was not certain whether the task forces could reach them without being detected and attacked.

They were not. Halsey sent a thank you note to the Japanese commander ... on a bomb.

Part of the plan called for Halsey's heavy cruisers (under RADM Ray Spruance) to attack Wotje Island. This part did not work out so well but was more of a joke.

The lookouts kept seeing submarines (that were not there). The ships were moving too fast and maneuvering too much to hit anything accurately. But they got in and got out without a scratch.



COUNTERATTACK

The raids were more a morale booster than a strategic victory. But they had succeeded and, more important in the minds of Halsey and Nimitz, the carriers, flight crews and escorts had gained valuable experience.

By now, the Navy Cryptographers in Hawaii were breaking into JN25. It appeared the Japanese were interested in eastern New Guinea and the Solomons (having just taken Rabaul in New Britain). Yorktown was sent south to join Lexington.

Lexington would raid Rabaul.

Enterprise would raid Wake Island and Halsey had permission to go for Marcus Island, 1,000 miles from Japan.





Scale: 1:36,000,000 at 30°S
 Mercator Projection
 0 500 Kilometers
 0 500 Miles

COUNTERATTACK

The Lexington was spotted and attacked, but not hit. The task force was not yet in range of the target and it was decided it should withdraw. The U.S. could not unduly risk its carriers.

Enterprise had no such ill luck. After raiding Wake, it went on to hit Marcus Island.

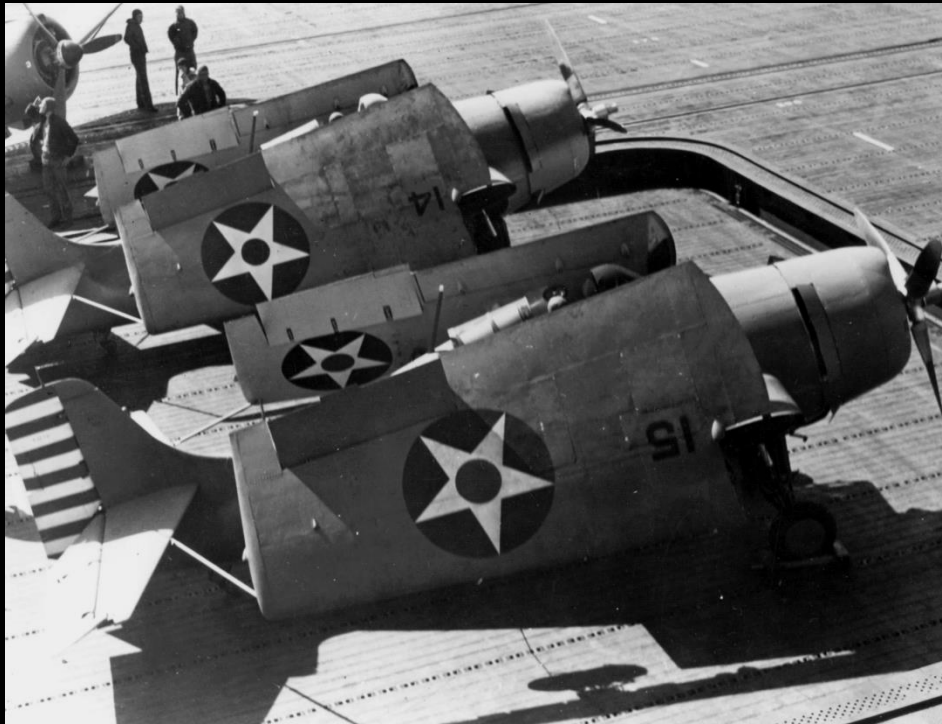


COUNTERATTACK

But where were the Japanese?

They had not appeared to change their plans in light of the U.S. Carrier raids throughout the Central Pacific.

They had noticed. But they were also busy and once they had a plan, they stuck to it until the end...

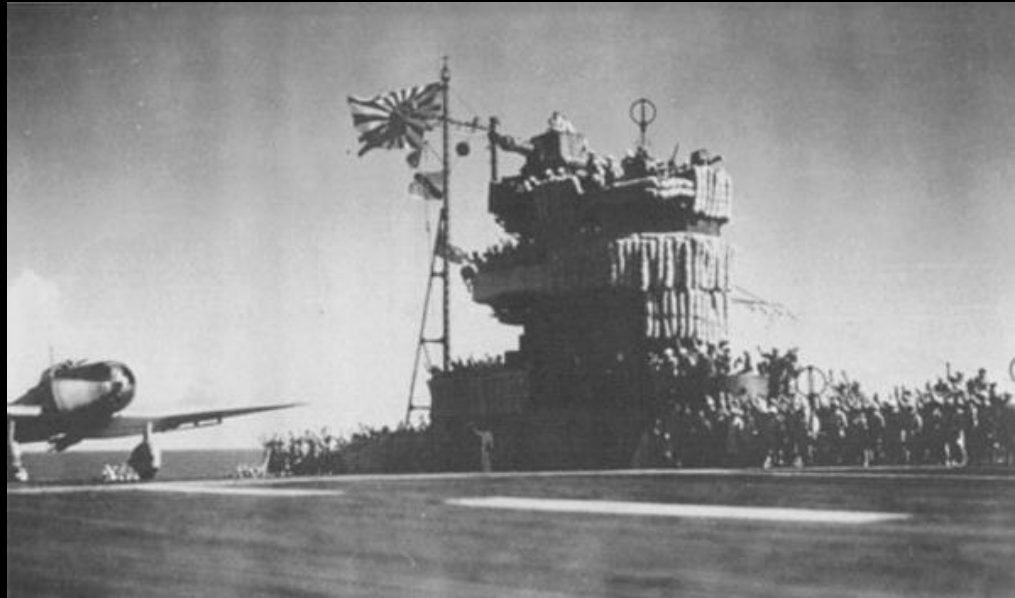


SOUTHEAST ASIA

The Japanese carriers had deployed to Truk in the Carolines in early January to support landings on New Guinea and in the Bismarck Islands. They had sailed towards the Marshalls in response to the American raids but turned back when it was clear the Americans were not staying.

They were then off to the south to support the invasion of Java. On Feb 19th, they launched a massive raid on Darwin Australia to clear it of naval and air threats before heading west to station off Java.

Meanwhile, Japanese cruisers sank most of the ABDA surface force at the Battle of the Java Sea Feb 27 – Mar 1.





6 Japanese Carriers

Feb 2

Jan 20-
Jan 25

Feb 19

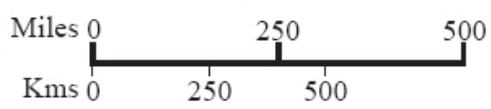
20 Feb-
9 Mar

Battle of the Java Sea A

Scale: 1:36,000,000 at 30°S
Mercator Projection
0 500 Kilometers
0 500 Miles



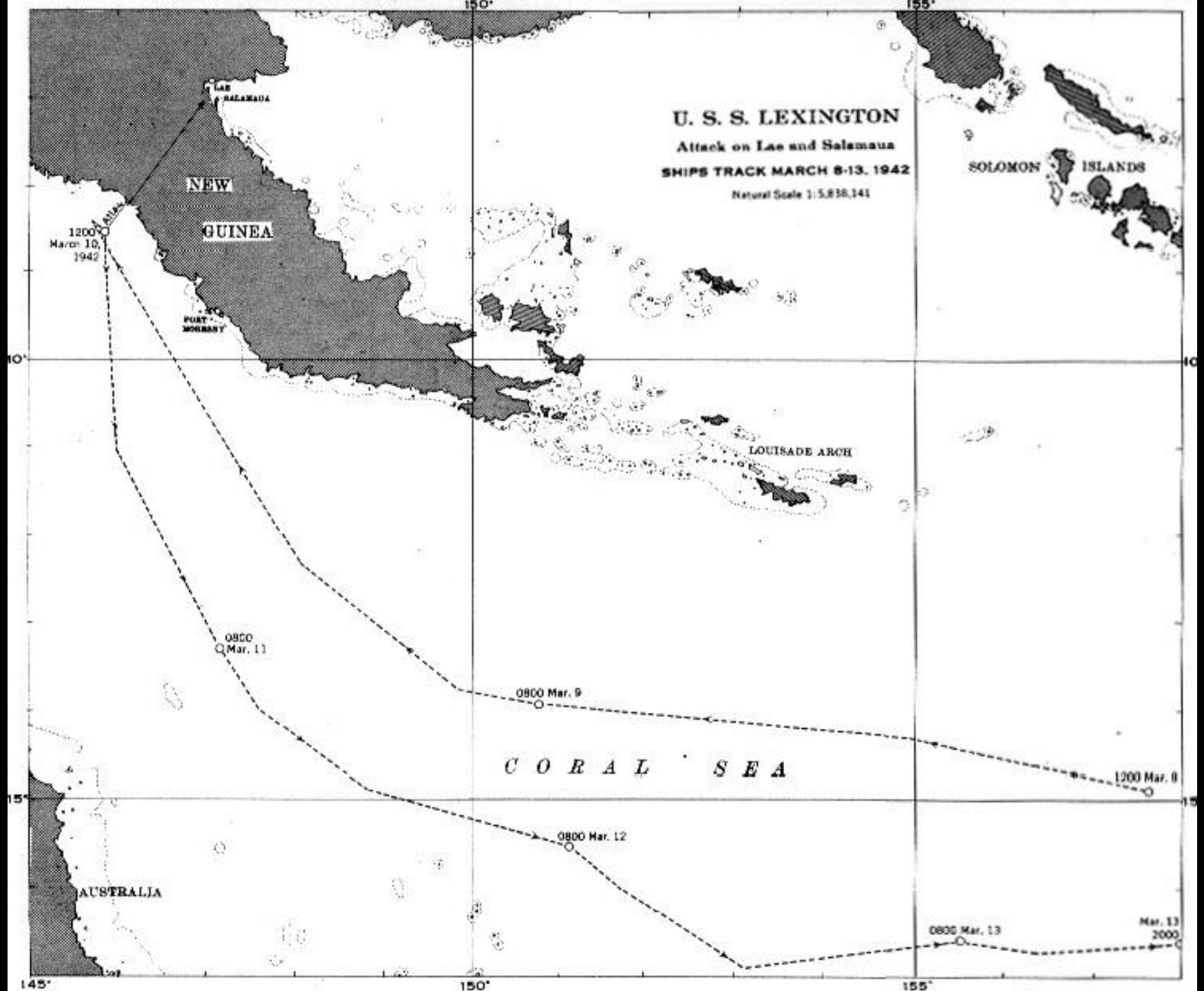
Indian Ocean, March–April 1942



--- Nagumo — Ozawa



U. S. S. LEXINGTON
Attack on Lae and Salamaua
SHIPS TRACK MARCH 8-13, 1942
Natural Scale 1:5,835,141



145° 150° 155°

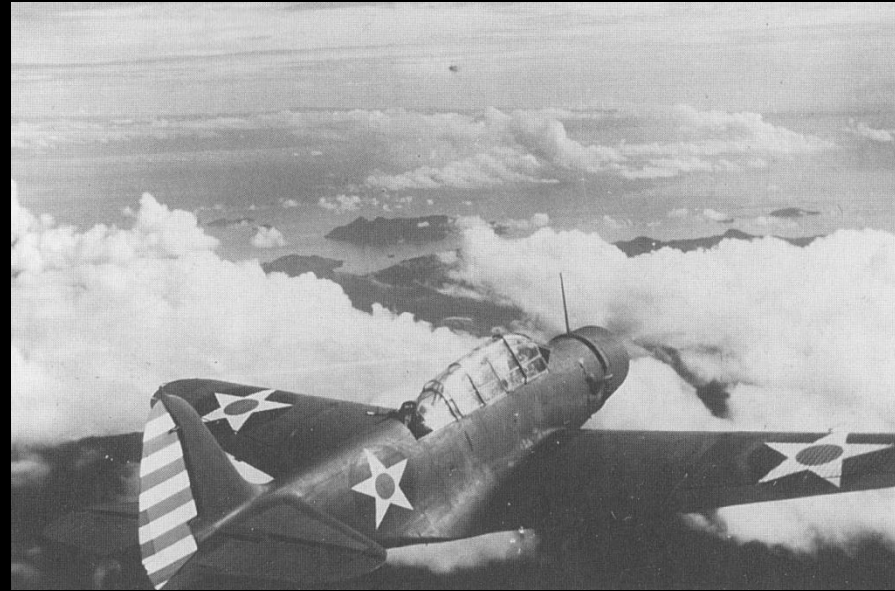
A CHANGING TIDE

The raids had not deterred the ongoing operations to the west or upset the plans in place. But once New Guinea was secure, the plans were nebulous.

The Japanese Navy had wanted to invade Australia, but the Army would not agree. They did not have the manpower, for one.

The Navy Staff had proposed extending to the west taking smaller islands to cut the supply route to Australia and the Army had agreed, but the plans were not yet being prepared.

Yamamoto had other ideas. The American raids, far earlier than expected, meant it was critical to destroy what remained of the U.S. Fleet. He planned for a “Decisive Battle” not in the South Pacific, but at Midway.



A CHANGING TIDE

Yamamoto submitted his plan around March 18th, just days before the Lexington and Yorktown raids against Lae in New Guinea over the Owen Stanley Range. The Navy Staff could not reject it out of hand, but they wanted to and began submitting critiques.

This was to be the second phase of operations. The last key to the first phase was nearing execution, although many weeks behind schedule due to the situation in the Philippines. That key would be an amphibious assault on Port Moresby on the south coast of New Guinea.

Unfortunately, as the forces involved were scattered, the final arrangements were being transmitted by radio.

The Americans could not read JN-25 like a book, but they could read enough.

They knew a major Operation MO was brewing although the final details had not yet been detected. They guessed MO meant Port Moresby.

As the month of April progressed, the Americans gained a clearer picture of Operation MO and a new one MI...

THE DOOLITTLE RAID

The Army Air Corps had a crazy idea.

What if they could fly medium bombers off of a carrier?

A U.S. carrier strike had a maximum range of just under two hundred miles to allow the planes to reach the target, attack and return to the carrier. A B-25 had a range of about 1,400 miles.

The bombers could take off at a range beyond enemy air patrols and certainly beyond the range of any counter attack and hit Tokyo.

The Navy was relieved to learn the Army had no intention of landing their planes on the carrier. The planes would fly to China. The only question then was could the planes take off?



THE DOOLITTLE RAID

The Army said they could, although in truth they were not absolutely certain given that it had never been tried and their training for short take offs had been on land, not from a carrier.

The Navy did not object. After all, that was the Army's problem.

USS Hornet was arriving in the Pacific. It would pick up the Army B-25 bombers in San Francisco. They would be placed on deck by cranes.

However, with the deck loaded with B-25's, the Hornet could not operate its own aircraft. It could not launch patrols to search for enemy ships or fighters to deal with enemy patrol planes.

Another carrier was needed.



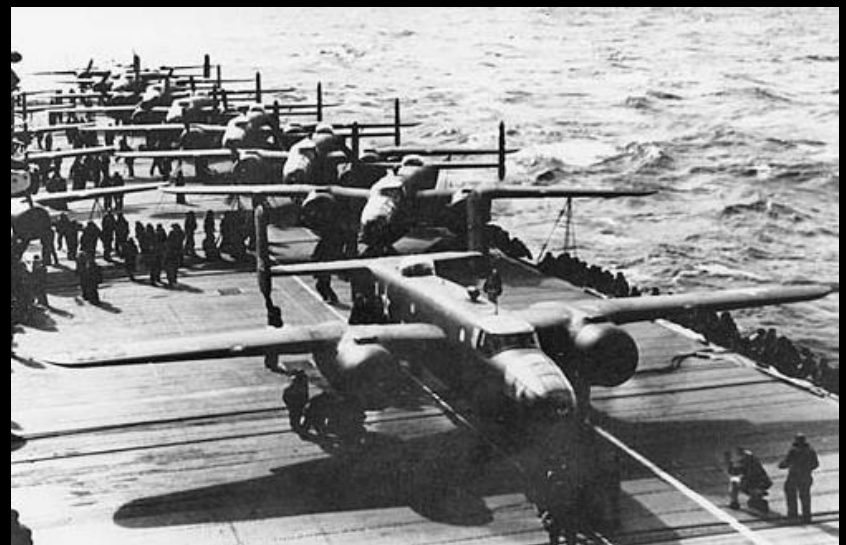
THE DOOLITTLE RAID

Lexington and Yorktown were in the South Pacific waiting to deal with Operation MO. That left Enterprise which left Hawaii to join up with Hornet and provide cover.

Upon joining up, Halsey would take over command of the combined Task Force.

The plan was to launch on April 19th in the late afternoon about 400 miles from Japan. The raid commander – LTC Jimmy Doolittle – would leave about a half an hour before the rest, timed to arrive over Tokyo around sunset.

He would carry incendiary bombs to start fires on the targets. The rest of the raid would arrive after dark.



THE DOOLITTLE RAID

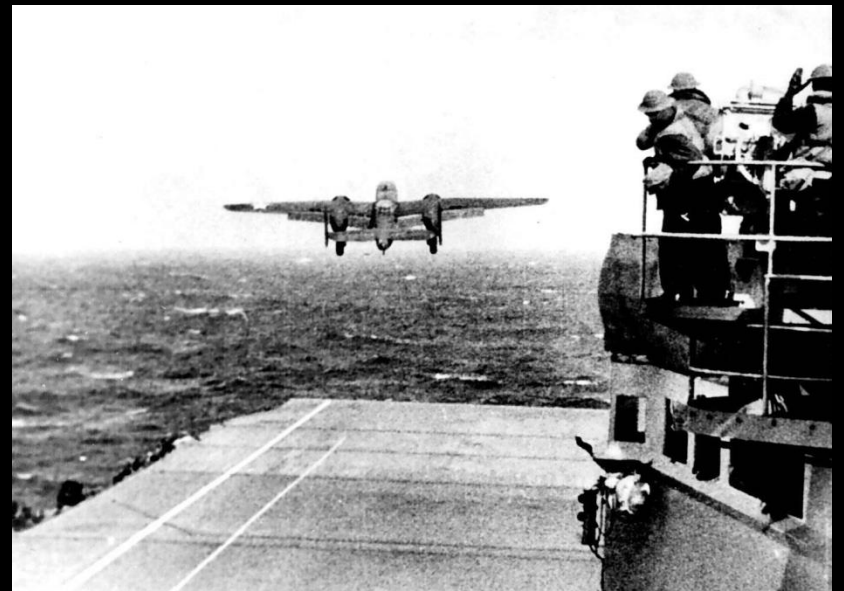
Like all good plans, it did not go that way at all. On April 18th, the task force encountered a Japanese Picket Boat.

“They are beautiful ships, aren’t they?” the Petty Officer on the boat commented to his C.O. seeing the carriers.

“They are indeed. It’s a pity they’re not ours,” the C.O. replied before radioing the report.

The boat was sunk by gunfire, but the word had gotten out and the Task Force knew it (having picked up the message even if they could not decode it.)

The decision was made to launch as soon as possible which would place the entire strike over Tokyo in daylight.



THE DOOLITTLE RAID

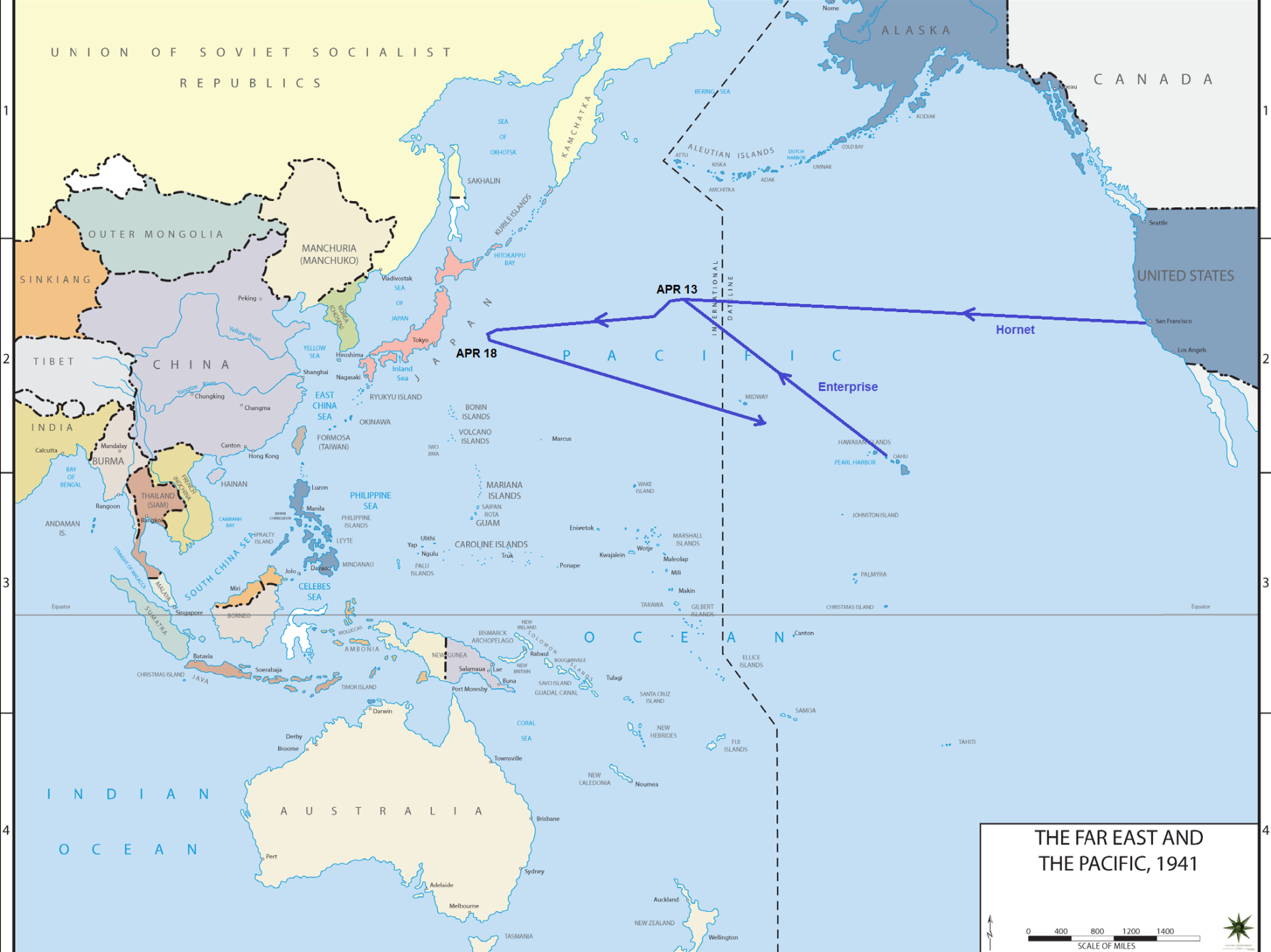
All sixteen of the planes made it off. None had mechanical trouble. As soon as the last was away, the Task Force turned east for Hawaii.

The raid arrived over Tokyo during an air raid drill. The result was no one on the ground was prepared. No planes were shot down although one crewman was killed by ground fire.

13 crews made it safely to China. Two planes crash landed in Japanese held territory and 8 of their 10 crew members were captured. (3 would be summarily executed).

One plane landed at Vladivostok. The crew was interred for over a year. (Russia was neutral in the war with Japan.)





UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST
REPUBLICS

ALASKA

CANADA

UNITED STATES

APR 13

Hornet

APR 18

P A C I F I C

Enterprise

O C E A N

I N D I A N
O C E A N

A U S T R A L I A

THE FAR EAST AND
THE PACIFIC, 1941



1

2

3

4

A

B

C

D

A CHANGING TIDE

The American's had no strategic hopes for the Doolittle Raid. The planes were medium bombers with less than half the bomb load of the B-17 and only about 20% of the load of a B-29. They could not do a lot of damage.

But the raid was not about damage. It was a stunt. (Jimmy Doolittle had been a stunt pilot / test pilot before the war.) The goal was to boost morale in the U.S., not make a material dent in Japan's war making ability.

But to Japan it was a shock, probably far more so than it had been a boost in the U.S. Prime Minister Tojo and the military leadership felt personally shamed.

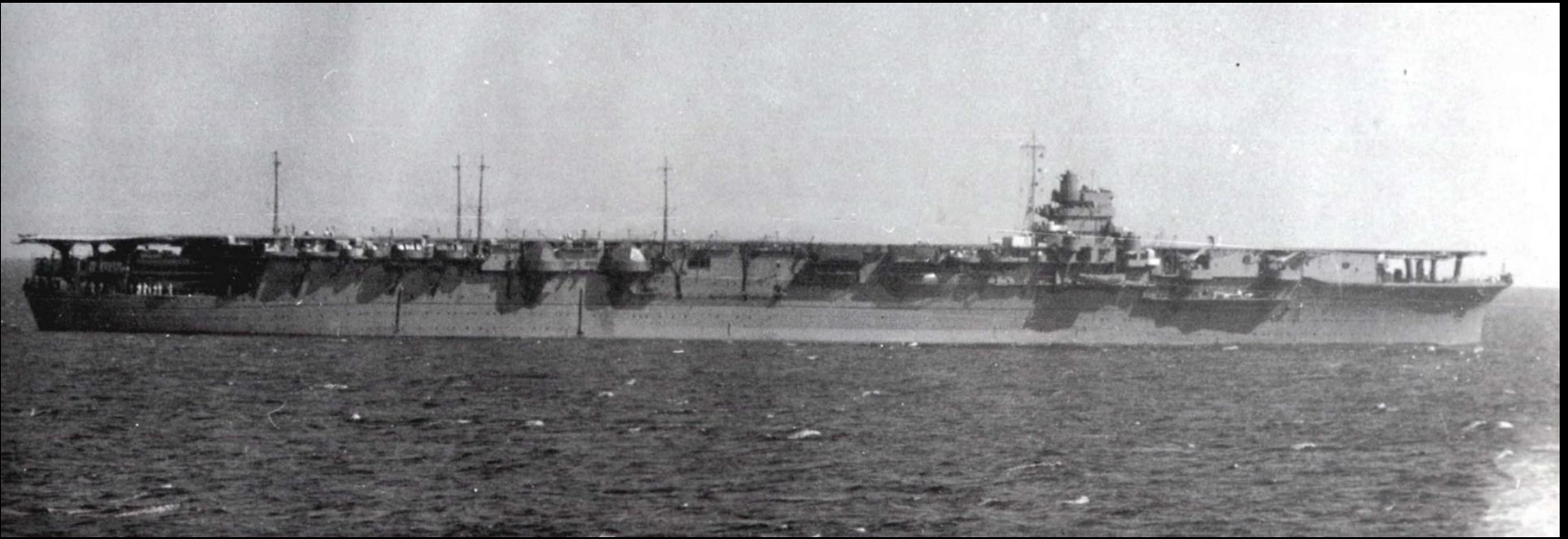
The immediate effect was approval of Yamamoto's plan to deal with the Americans without further questions and without waiting for answers to the questions asked.

And as it was approved, detailed messages were being sent to the scattered units that would need to take part.

The Americans were reading at least parts of it. But for now they were not entirely sure what was coming, just that something was building and it was big.

Hawaii was guessing Midway was the target. Washington thought it was Hawaii again...

THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA



The Japanese plan to take Port Moresby was complex. Four task forces were involved. One had a separate mission to establish a seaplane base at Tulagi in the eastern Solomon Islands.

The Invasion Force was transports with escorting destroyers and a light cruiser. The support force included heavy cruisers for gunfire support and the light carrier Shoho for air support. Finally there was a “covering force.” The Japanese knew at least one U.S. carrier was operating in the Coral Sea and sent two to get it: Shokaku and Zuikaku.

The Americans were concentrated to start and had a simple mission: stop the Japanese from taking Port Moresby.

THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA

Lexington and Yorktown were in the area staging out of New Caledonia. Lexington was the first to deploy with Yorktown a day behind once U.S. patrols had spotted Japanese ships (the Tulagi Force) and the game was on.



When Signals Intelligence in Hawaii confirmed that the major Japanese units were moving – the carrier strike group from Truk – Enterprise and Hornet were sent south from Hawaii.



The battle would be over before they got anywhere near the area.

For the first time in history, control of the sea was decided entirely from the air. No ships ever spotted the enemy. The fight was entirely in the hands of the aviators.

THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA

THE FIGHTERS



Japanese: Mitsubishi A6M "Zero"

Entered Service: July 1940

Speed: 332 MPH

Range: 1,900 miles

The best fighter in the Pacific until 1943 based on performance. However, it gained that at the expense of durability. If hit it was lost.



U.S.: Grumman F4F Wildcat

Entered Service: December 1940

Speed: 320 MPH

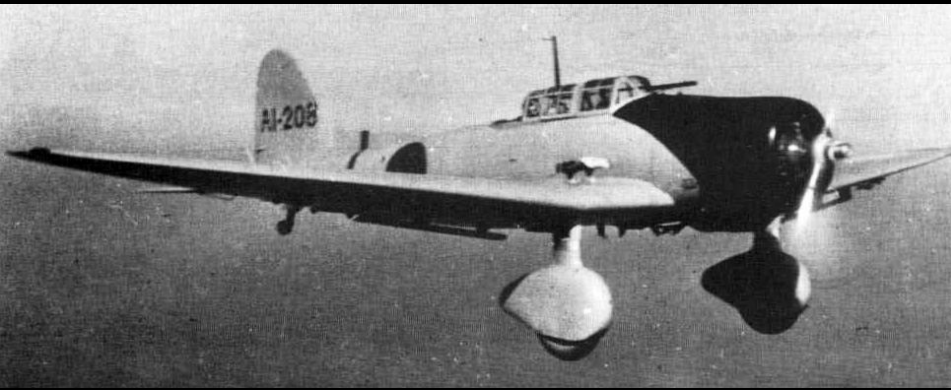
Range: 845 miles

It was slower and less maneuverable than the Zero. It could only outperform the Zero in a dive. But it was far more durable and could take a hit while the Zero could not.

Slight edge to the Japanese.

THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA

THE DIVE BOMBERS



Japanese: Aichi D3A "Val"

Entered Service: Jan 1940

Speed: 267 MPH

Range: 840 miles

Payload: 551 lbs.



U.S.: Douglas SDB Dauntless

Entered Service: May 1940

Speed: 255 MPH

Range: 1,115 miles

Payload: 1,000 lbs.

Only in speed was the Val better. In all other categories, and especially survivability, the Dauntless was superior.

THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA

THE TORPEDO BOMBERS

Japanese: Nakajima B5N "Kate"

Entered Service: 1939

Speed: 235 MPH

Range: 1,200 miles

Payload: 1,760 lbs.



U.S.: Douglas TBD Devastator

Entered Service: 1937

Speed: 206 MPH

Range: 435 miles

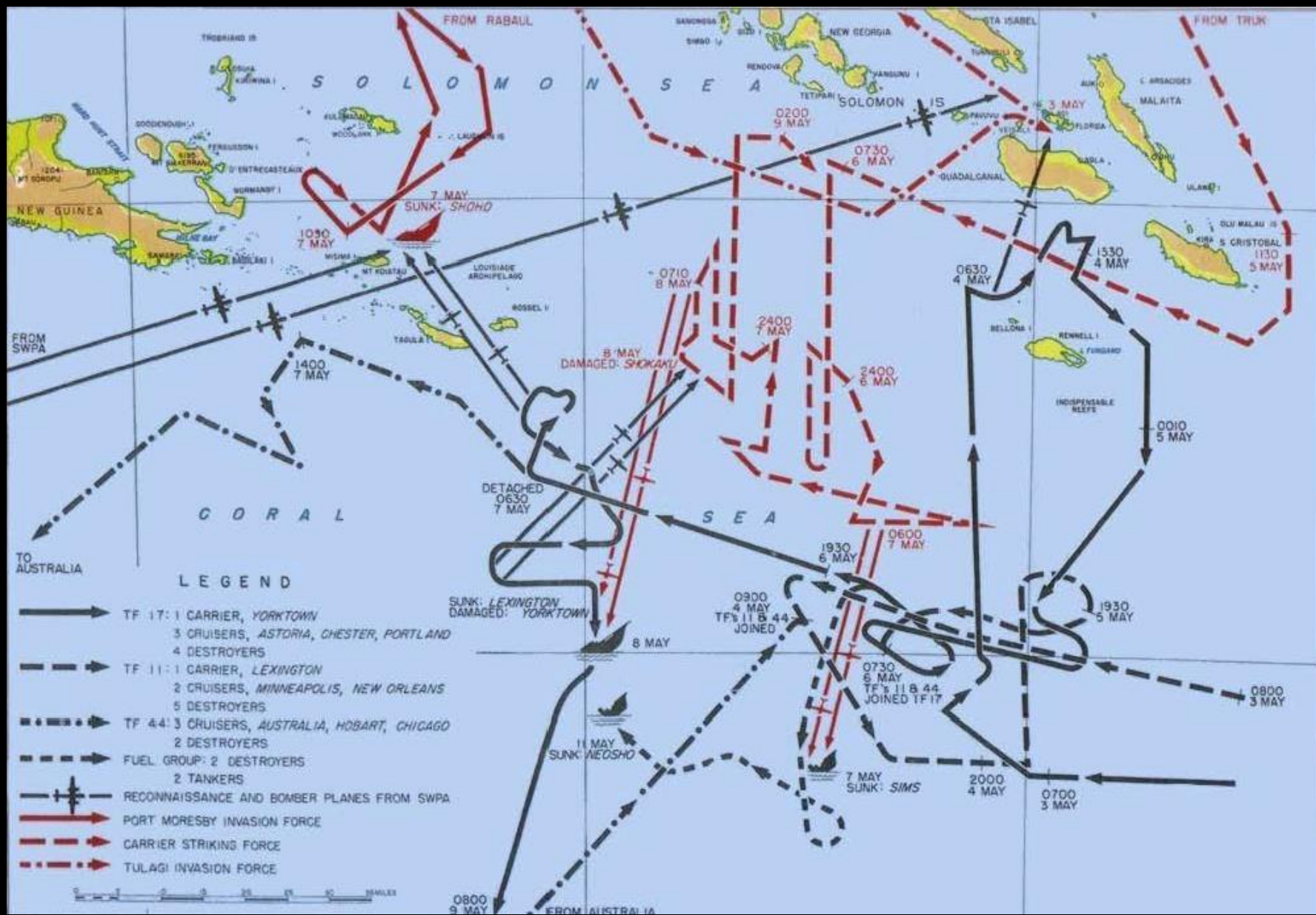
Payload: 1,000 lbs.



There was no comparison. By 1942, the American Devastator was completely outclassed and that is without discussing the superior Japanese torpedo or defective American ones.



THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA



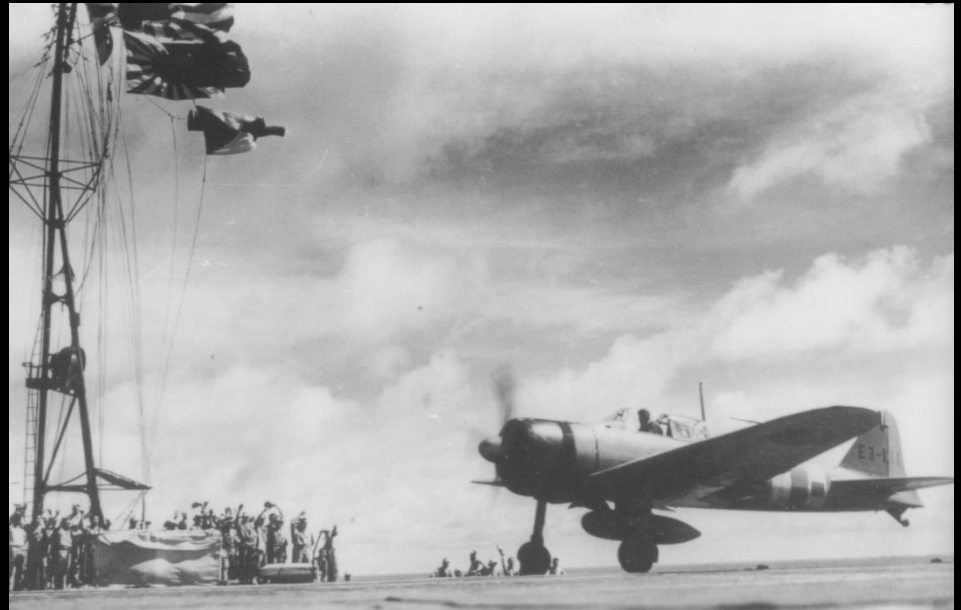
THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA

May 1: Japanese carriers Shokaku and Zuikaku with escorts depart Truk in the Carolines to engage U.S. carriers in the Coral Sea.

May 3: Lexington and Yorktown are about 400 miles south of Guadalcanal. B-17's from Australia acting as scouts spot the Tulagi landing force at Tulagi. Lexington is sent north to deal with it.

May 4: Lexington launches strikes against the Tulagi force. It does damage but not as much as claimed. The seaplane base will be operational within weeks. Yorktown joined by 3 CA, 2DD from Australia.

May 5: Lexington rejoins Yorktown. Zuikaku and Shokaku enter the Coral Sea.



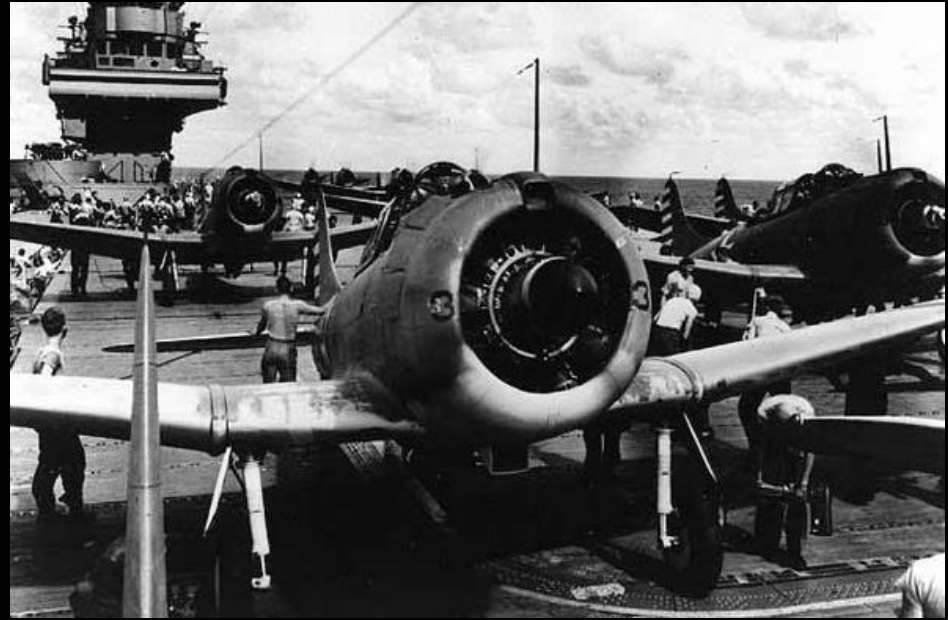
THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA

May 5 – 6: Both sides know the other is around and send out patrols from dawn to dusk searching ... and finding empty ocean.

May 6: B-17 patrols spot the Port Moresby Invasion force steaming south from Rabaul. RADM Jack Fletcher (in Yorktown and overall command), detaches his two oilers with 2 destroyers as escorts. (The Oilers will only slow him down.) He speeds to the northwest to strike at the invasion group (his primary mission).

May 7: U.S. patrols spot the Covering Force with the light carrier Shoho. Fletcher launches everything.

“Scratch one flattop!”



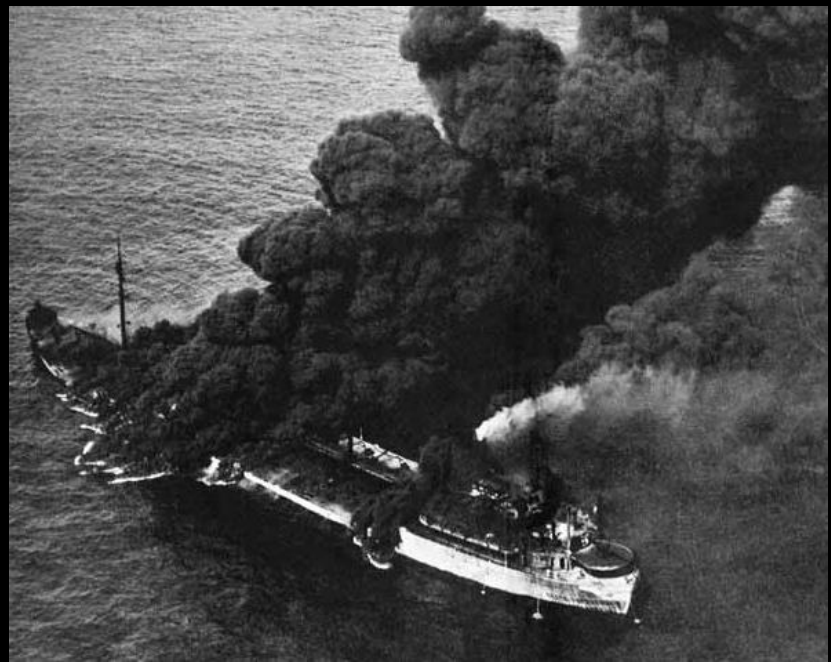
THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA

May 7: Meanwhile, over 200 miles to the east the Japanese strike force had turned south to search for the American carriers now well away to the west and heading away. Patrols report they found the American carriers.

The Japanese launch everything they have.

What they found were the two oilers. Ship recognition would be a problem for both sides for months.

They sink one destroyer (USS Sims) and cripple the oiler Neosho. (Neosho would be scuttled on May 11th.)



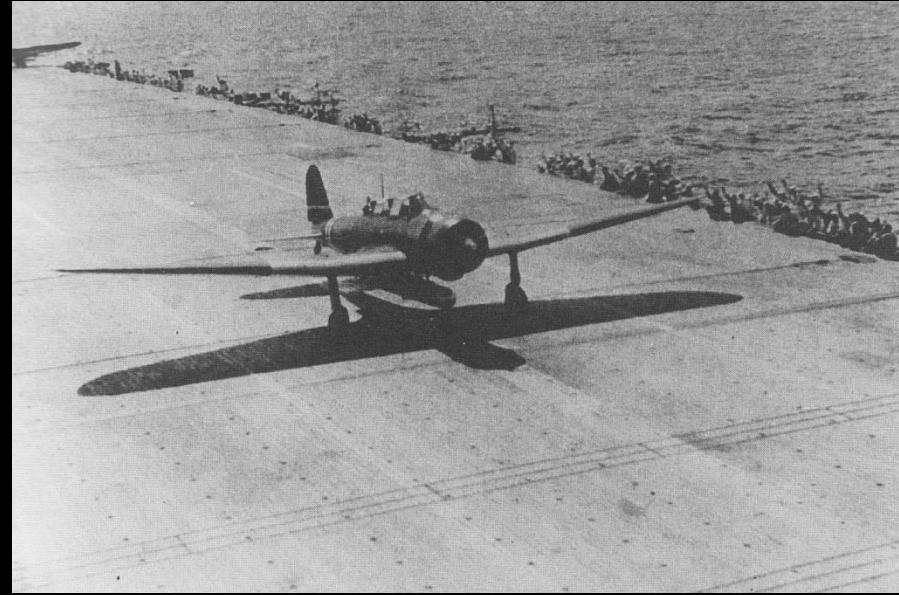
THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA

On May 8, both sides got it right at the same time. Their early morning patrols spotted the opposing carriers at about the same time. They launched their strikes about the same time.

It was early enough that perhaps two more strikes could be launched. It would not work out that way. For both sides this proved to be their only shot.

The strikes passed each other on the way to their targets. Fighters peeled off to engage the other side's strike force.

For the Japanese, this would prove costly...



THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA

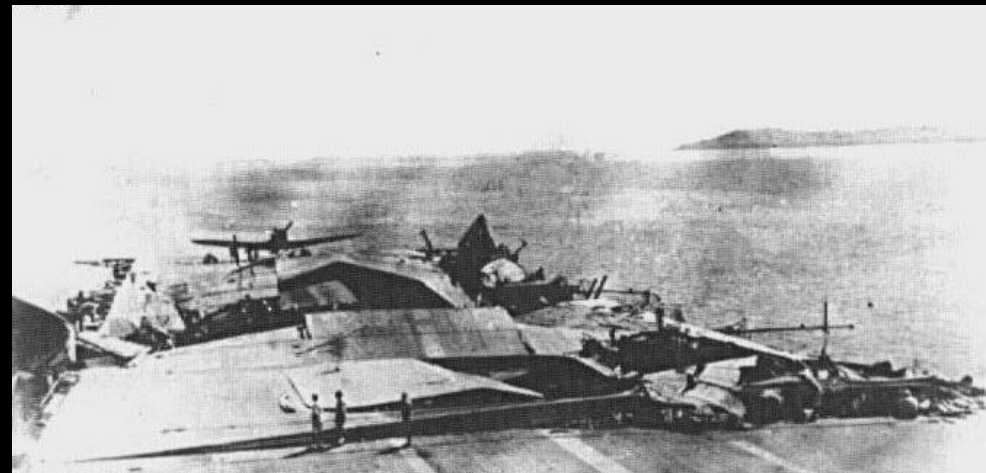
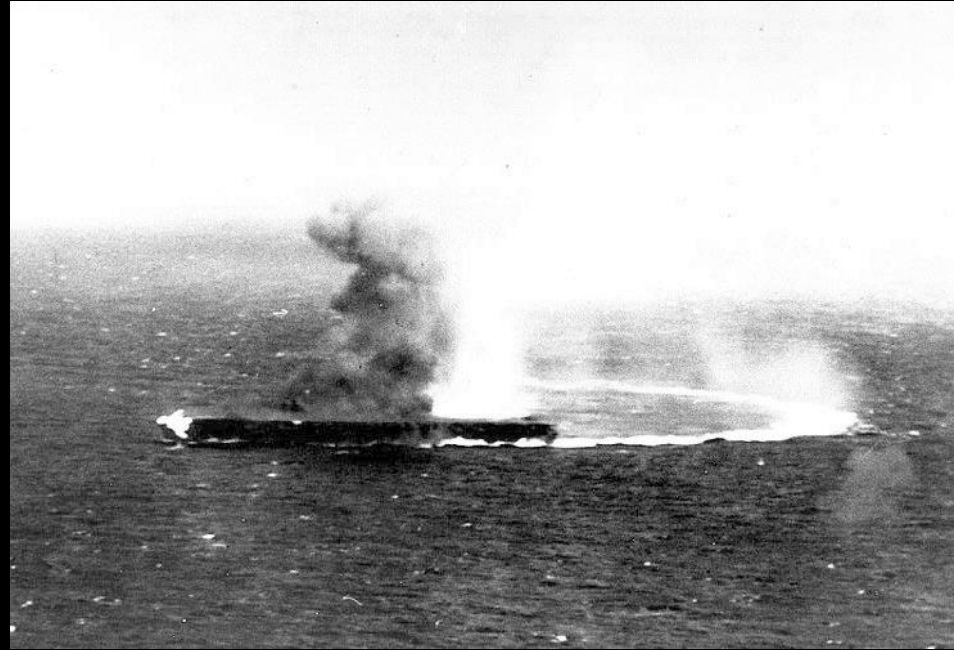
Both strikes arrived over their targets at about the same time. The Zuikaku managed to duck into a rain squall and was not spotted by the American strikes.

Shokaku was not so lucky.

That being said, the American torpedoes either missed altogether or failed to explode and their dive bombers missed far more often than they hit.

But Shokaku was hit severely. It was not at risk of sinking, but its flight deck was a wreck and could not land planes.

Not that it mattered. About half the Japanese planes were lost.



THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA

Both the Lexington and Yorktown were hit in the Japanese attack. Although Lexington was hit harder, Yorktown appeared to be the more severely damaged as 6 of its 9 boilers were knocked out cutting its speed by more than half.

This would make launching problematic as there was little natural wind.

However, neither ship was hit hard enough to put them out of action. What damage there was to their flight decks was repaired by the time their planes returned and they were able to recover all the returning aircraft.

Lexington seemed to be just fine, its damage not affecting its operations...



THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA

As Lexington was recovering its returning planes and while preparing another strike (to be launched once the Japanese were spotted again), disaster struck.

The attack had caused a fuel leak in an unmanned space deep in the hull. It had not been detected. A spark set off an explosion that caused fires but at first did not interfere with the ship's operations.

About a half and hour after the last plane was recovered, a magazine exploded. This started severe fires in the hanger deck, as well as among the planes on the flight deck. When another explosion knocked out the fire mains, the Captain ordered abandon ship.



THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA

At the end of May 8th, the Japanese were down to just 36 operational aircraft. While they thought they had sunk both carriers, they could not hope to defend the invasion against surface ships or land based air attack. The operation was cancelled.

Losses were:

U.S.

Japan

**1 CV Sunk
1 DD Sunk
1 AO sunk
1 CV damaged**

**1 CVL sunk
1 CV damaged**

**69 aircraft lost
35 aircrew lost
656 KIA**

**92 aircraft lost
90 aircrew lost
966 KIA**



THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA

The U.S. Navy had achieved a tactical and strategic victory. On the tactical side it had achieved its mission and inflicted greater overall damage on the enemy fleet and naval air forces.

Operationally, it turned back the invasion force sparing Port Moresby which lacked sufficient forces to confidently throw back an amphibious assault on that scale.

Strategically, in order for Japan to win the war it had to knock the U.S. Navy out of the fight – which it had failed to do at the start and ever since. If it could not achieve the Mahan Decisive Battle, it had to inflict grossly disproportionate losses on the Americans overall and usually in each battle.

In terms of ship losses, Coral Sea was a draw.

In terms of aircraft losses, it was a slight U.S. victory.

In terms of air crew losses it was a significant U.S. victory. Japan was qualifying about 200 carrier pilots per year. The U.S. would soon be qualifying more than 5,000 per year. Japan chose performance over survivability in its aircraft design and could not afford the price of that decision.

THE BATTLE OF CORAL SEA

JAPAN

Tulagi Landing Force:

2 DD
2 minelayers
5 minesweepers
2 patrol craft
1 transport

Invasion Force

1 CL
6 DD
11 transports
1 AO
6 minesweepers

Cover Force

1 CVL (Shoho)
12 fighters
6 torpedo bombers
4 CA
2 CL
1 DD
1 seaplane tender
3 patrol craft

Strike Force

2 CV
46 fighter
42 dive bombers
39 torpedo bombers
2 CA
6 DD
1 AO

U.S.

2 CV

38 fighters

70 dive bombers

25 torpedo bombers

8 CA

12 DD

2 AO

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY

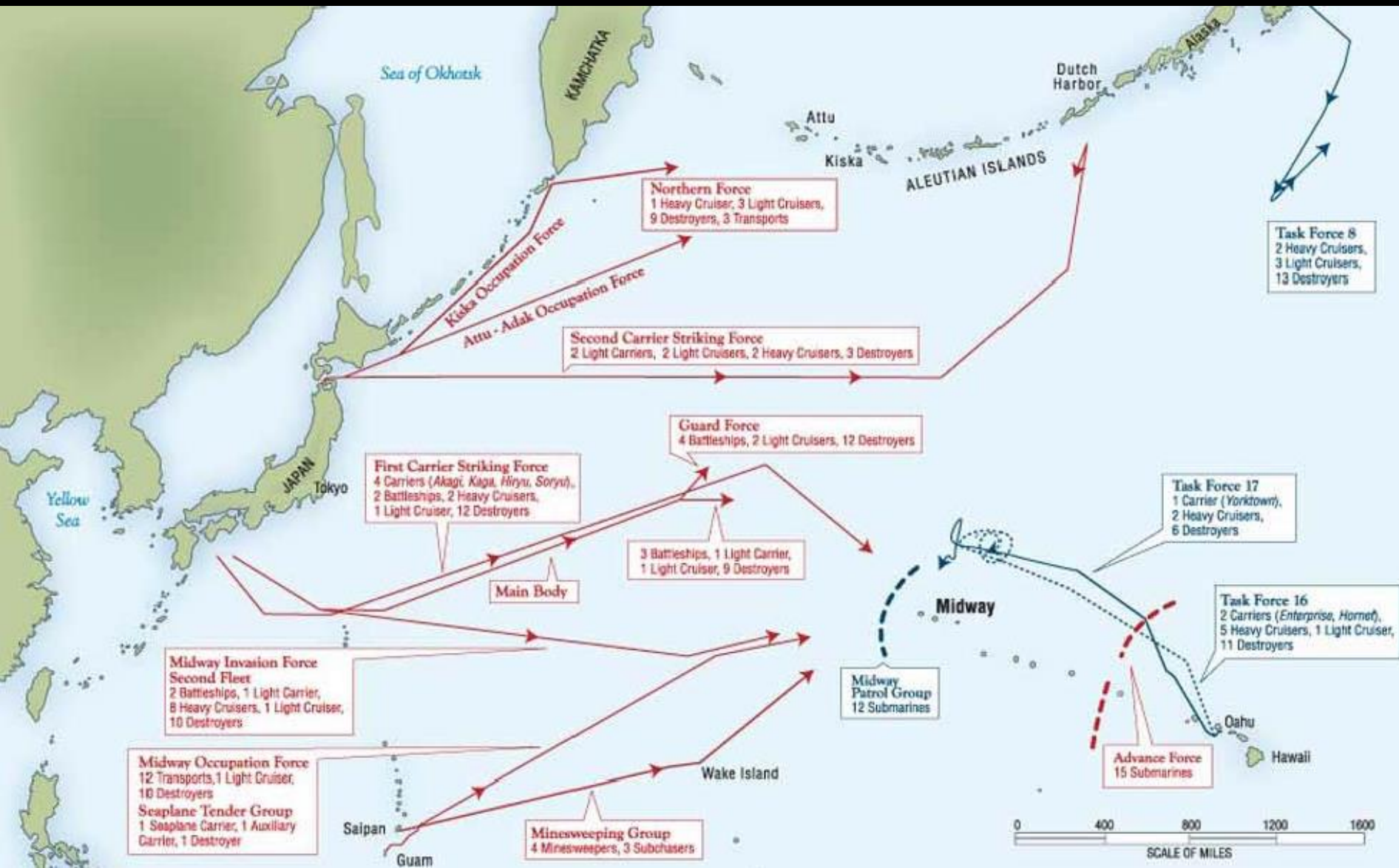
As the Battle of the Coral Sea came to an end, the U.S. Navy was already preparing for another battle almost 3,000 miles away near Midway.

The Navy code breakers had pieced together enough of the Japanese plan; so much in fact that Washington was not sure if it was real or a deception. It was real. The U.S. would not know the full extent until after the war but they knew more than enough. As far as Hawaii was concerned all that was left was the date, which the Japanese had not decided and would not until the damage from the Coral Sea had been evaluated.

(Both Zuikaku and Shokaku were earmarked for the Midway operation.)

The Japanese plan was complex. It included an attack at the Aleutian Islands followed by the main thrust at Midway. (The Aleutian operation was a compromise demanded by the Japanese general staffs. It was not a feint.) The goal was to draw out the remaining U.S. carriers and destroy them and the Japanese correctly assumed the U.S. would defend Midway.

The plan could work. It was flawed. It had far too many parts moving to no purpose. But it had more than enough that would be able to do the job ... provided the Americans reacted exactly when and how the Japanese expected them to react.



THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY

The U.S. knew about the First Carrier Striking Force (aimed at Midway) and knew it would have at least four and possibly five carriers.

They knew about the Second Carrier Striking Force aimed at the Aleutians, its composition but believed it was a decoy although they were less certain of its specific targets.

They knew about the Invasion force (aimed at Midway), and its covering force of 2 battleships and cruisers, but not about the separate support force of 4 cruisers.

They knew nothing about the “Main Body” except the name. Nor were they certain that there would be landings in the Aleutians – and discounted it given that a landing in the Aleutians made no sense whatsoever strategically.

Nimitz and his staff were confident but not certain Midway was the prime objective. The schedule was N-Day plus or minus days with N-Day being the Air Strikes against AF. They did not yet know the date of N-Day (nor had the Japanese set it). They were also in a running argument over AF.

Washington was convinced the Japanese could do nothing before mid June but after that anywhere could be a target and Midway seemed a wasted effort.

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY

Nimitz would plan on Midway. He wanted to ambush the Japanese which meant they could not see it coming.

Hornet and Enterprise were ordered to turn west, towards Japanese held islands and to hold course until they were certain they were spotted. Then they were to make best speed back to Pearl Harbor.

They were spotted. In addition to the goal of convincing the Japanese there were carriers operating off the Solomons – far from Hawaiian waters – it also caused the Japanese to postpone a planned occupation of the Ellice Islands.

Meanwhile, Nimitz focused on strengthening Midway's Defenses.



THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY

On May 19th, PACFLT had a plan to determine if AF was Midway. Midway was called (undersea cable) and told to broadcast it was out of water.

Midway did (not knowing why). The Japanese duly reported that Midway had no water and plans were needed for that the next day.

Now it was just a question of when ... and how many carriers the U.S. would have. Reports were that Yorktown needed three months of repairs.

Halsey arrived on the 27th of May with an incapacitating skin rash that would see him sent back to the States.

Yorktown arrived the next day and the yard was told they had three days to get her out again...



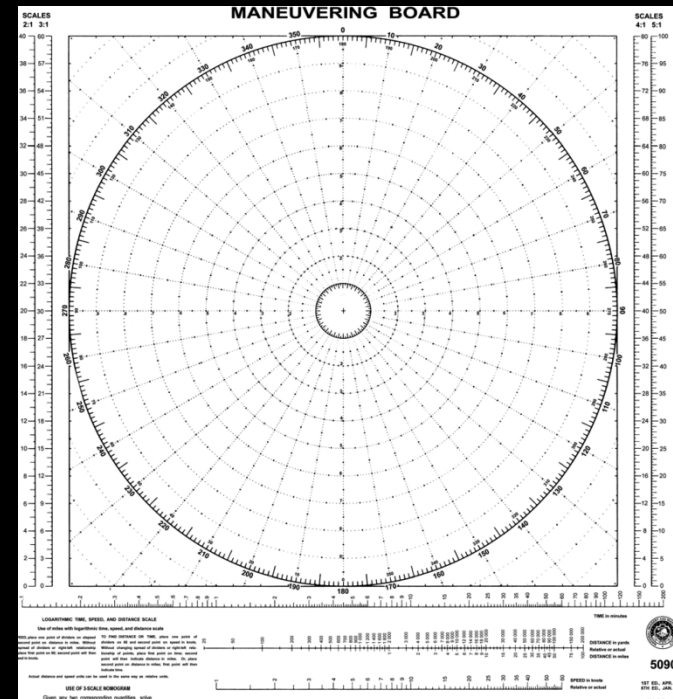
THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY

May 27th 1942 was almost a disaster.

The good news was PACFLT intelligence was confident that N-Day was June 4th, but that gave the yard almost no time to repair Yorktown before it had to leave. And Yorktown was still limping back from the Coral Sea.

But, the Japanese changed their codes. This did not come as a surprise. The Americans knew they were planning to do it because the Japanese had sent out instructions to that effect. But the timing was awful and it meant they had to break it all over again.

And Halsey was out. When asked who should take over he recommended RADM Ray Spruance to command his carriers. Spruance was brilliant, but he was not a pilot. He spent most of his career in destroyers. He went aboard Enterprise with just his aide, a change of clothes and some maneuvering boards...



THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY

Enterprise and Hornet left on May 28th for a point about 400 miles NE of Midway. The same day, radio operators in the South Pacific began broadcasting as if they were a carrier at sea.

Yorktown was repaired enough and sent out to join her sisters off Midway on May 30th. She would join up on June 2nd.

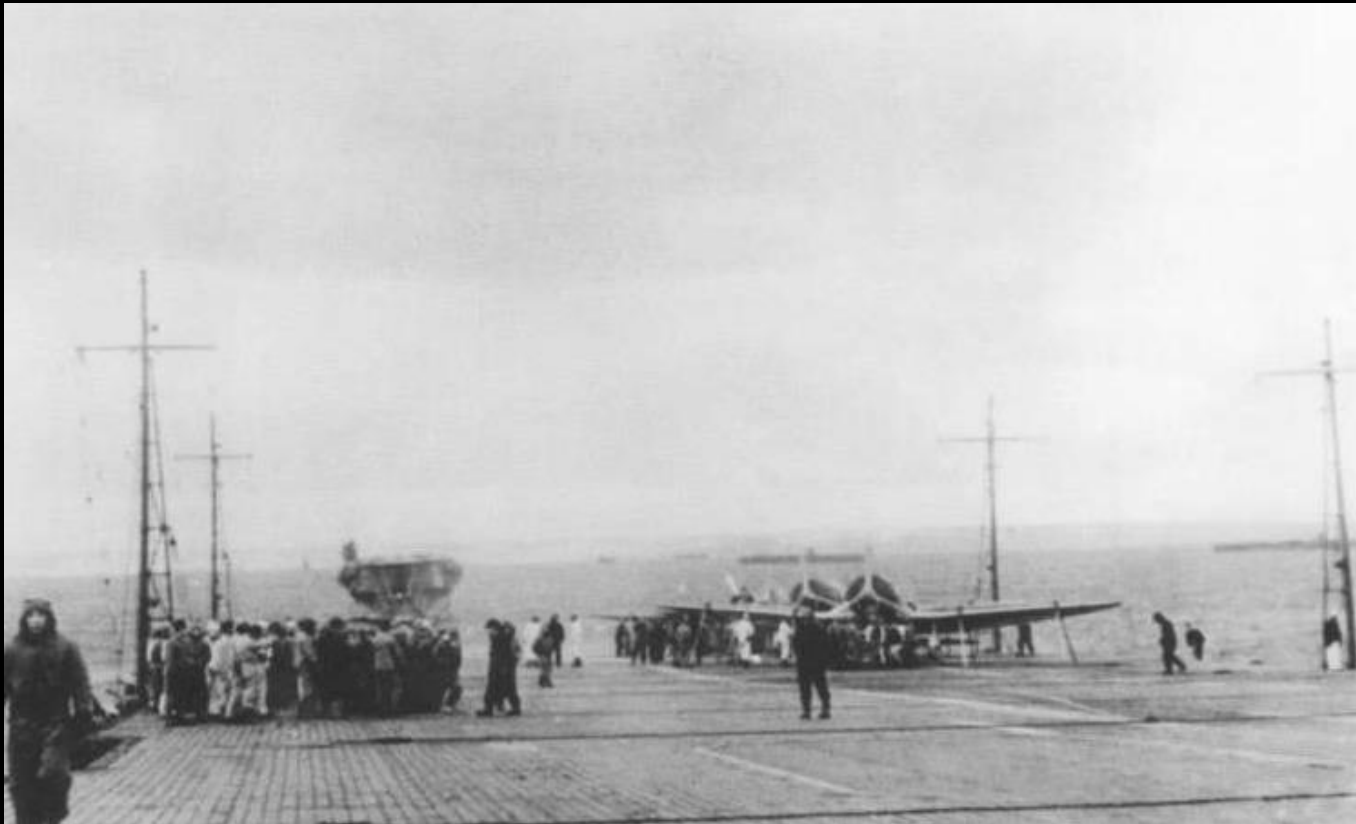
On June 3rd, right on schedule, the Japanese attacked Dutch Harbor, Alaska.

Also on June 3rd almost exactly when and where expected, PBY's from Midway located the Midway Invasion force. B-17's attacked. Claimed numerous hits but scored none.

That night PBY's attacked with torpedoes, which they had never been designed to carry. They damaged an oiler.



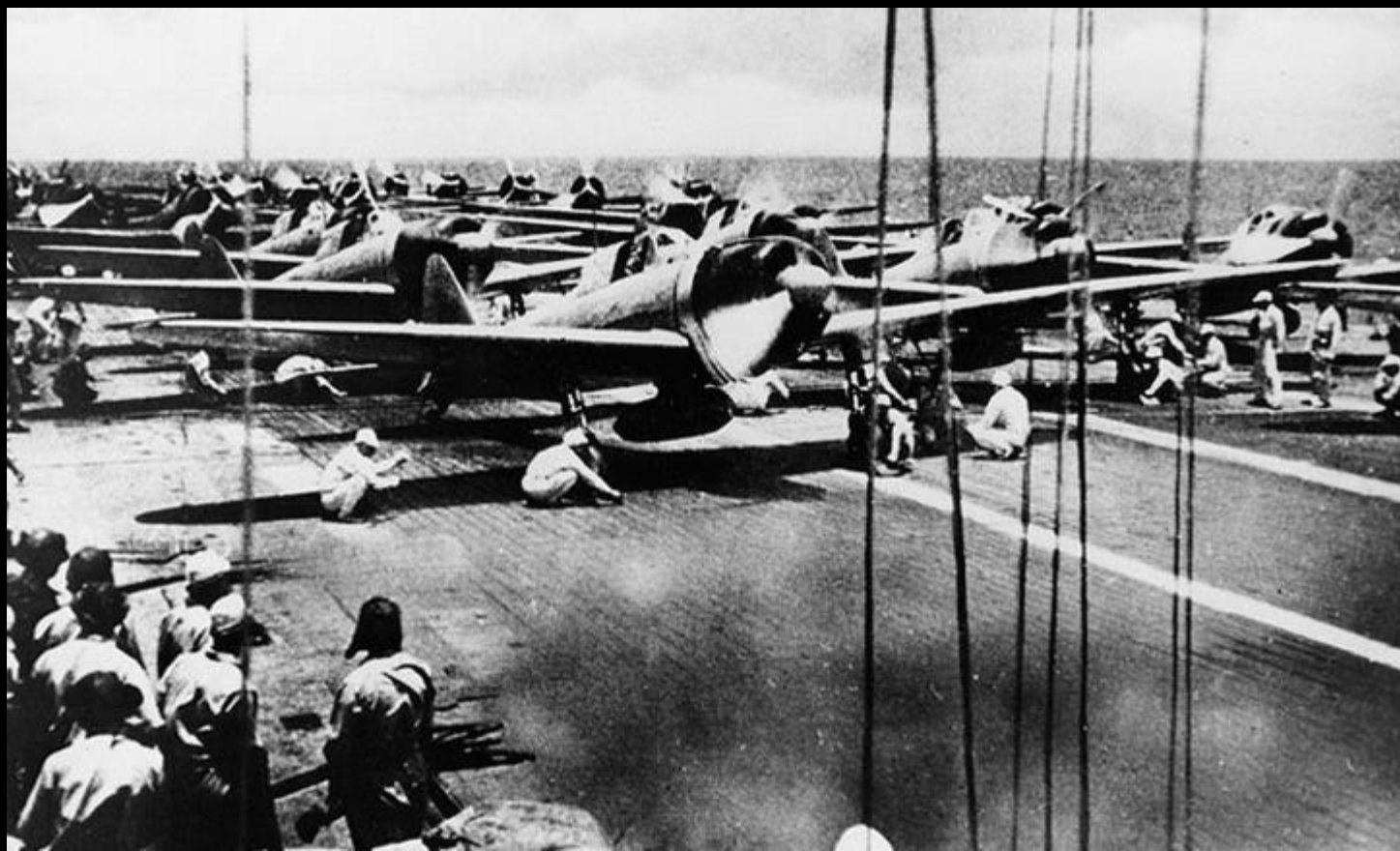
THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



The Japanese did not expect any U.S. ships would be nearby. To make sure, they had planned to send long range seaplanes, via a refueling at French Frigate Shoal by submarine to Pearl Harbor. But the mission was cancelled when the sub reported U.S. ships at the atoll.

The U.S. was unaware of this part of the plan. The ships were there on missions unrelated to the developing battle.

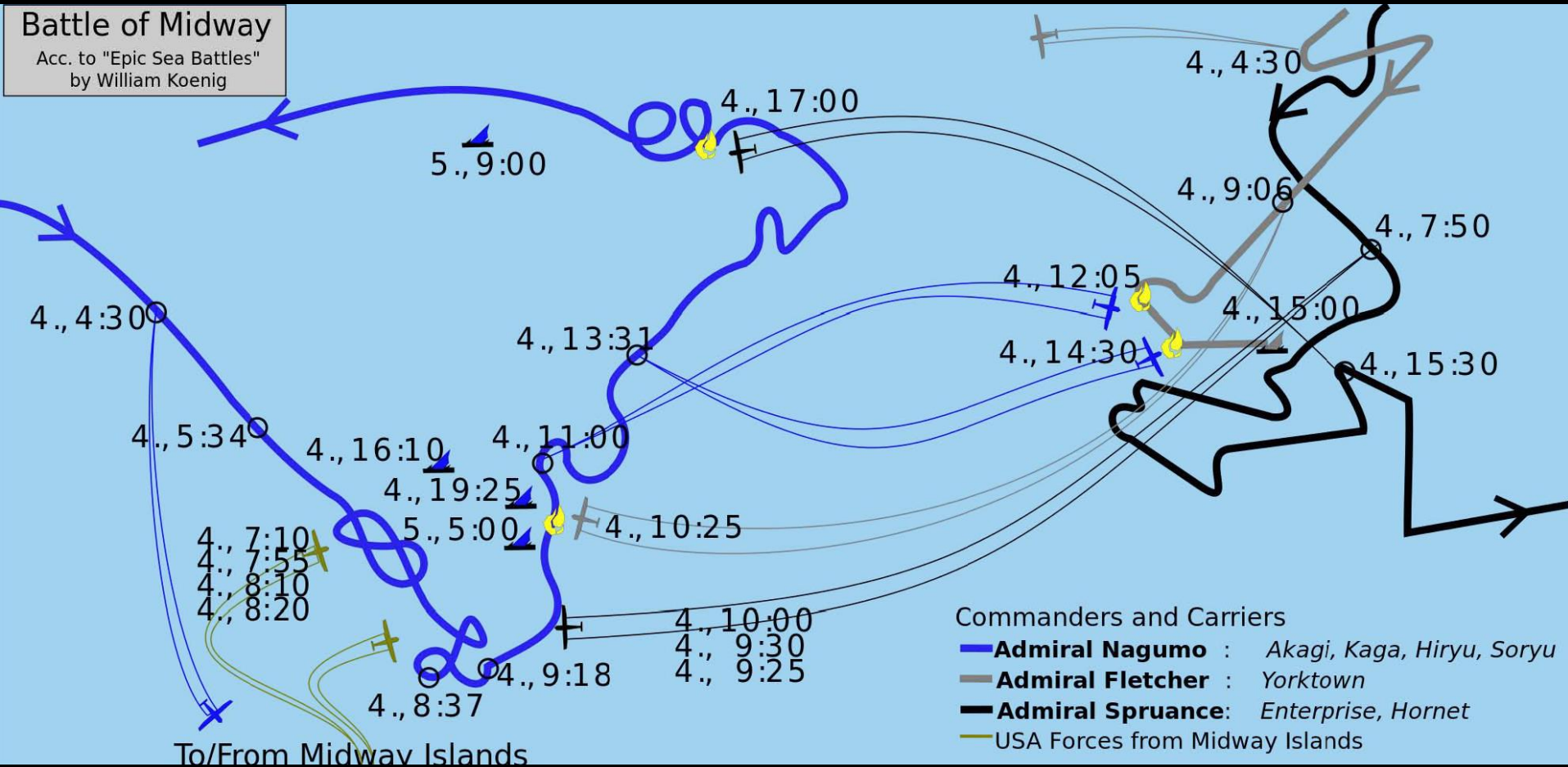
THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



As the Americans were not expected before N+4 (June 8th), the plan for June 4th was to launch half of the planes against midway with the other half in reserve. That reserve would be armed for anti-ship attack but could be rearmed if needed for a second strike on Midway.

Their orders were to support the landings until N+3 and then prepare for the Decisive Battle...

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



At 0430, 4 Jun, the Japanese 4 carriers launched their strike on Midway. At around 0500, the strike was spotted by a PBY which reported it to Midway. Midway began launching planes to clear the field. Bombers (all loaded) were sent to loiter positions about 50 miles away. At 0534, the PBY found the carriers about 5 minutes and 5 miles from where Navy Intelligence had predicted...

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



Spruance, who had general permission to strike from Fletcher if the Japanese were located, took out his Maneuvering Board, calculated the intercept, found he was in range and ordered his carriers to launch. Unfortunately, Halsey's Chief of Staff had not prepared the strike so it was delayed by over an hour...

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY

The Midway bombers were released from their holding positions to attack the Japanese Carriers. At around 0600, radar on Midway picked up the incoming strike and the fighters took off.

The strike arrived at 0630 and lasted about 25 minutes.

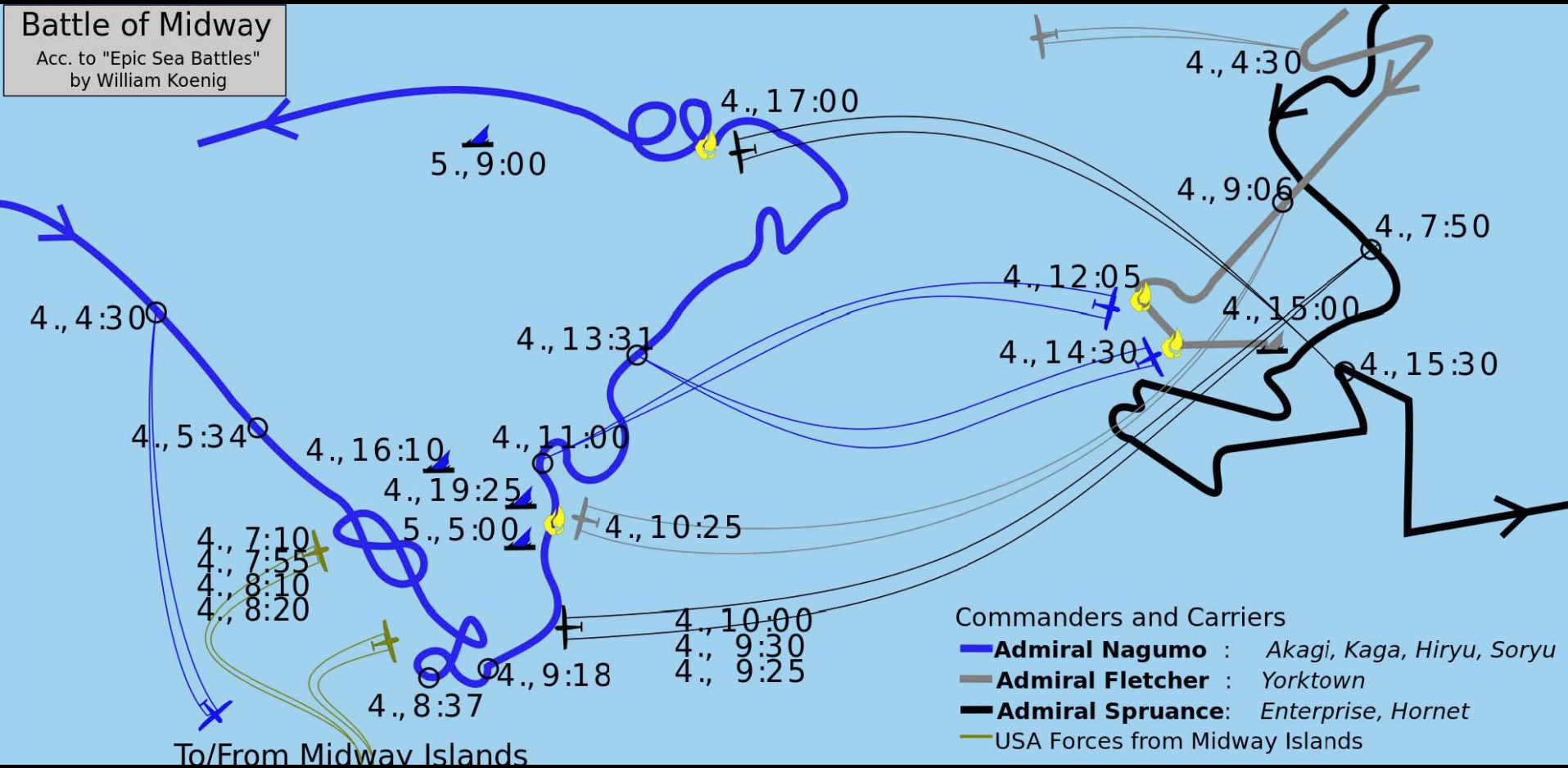
The Japanese lost 6 planes in the raid. 32 were damaged.

Only 2 American fighters survived the fight. 14 out of 26 pilots were lost.

But the attack had not been a success. At 0700, the strike leader radioed that a second strike was necessary. As if to emphasize the point, the 6TBF Avengers and 4 B-26 bombers began their attacks at 0710. (They did not score any hits. 5 TBF's and 2 B-26's were shot down.)



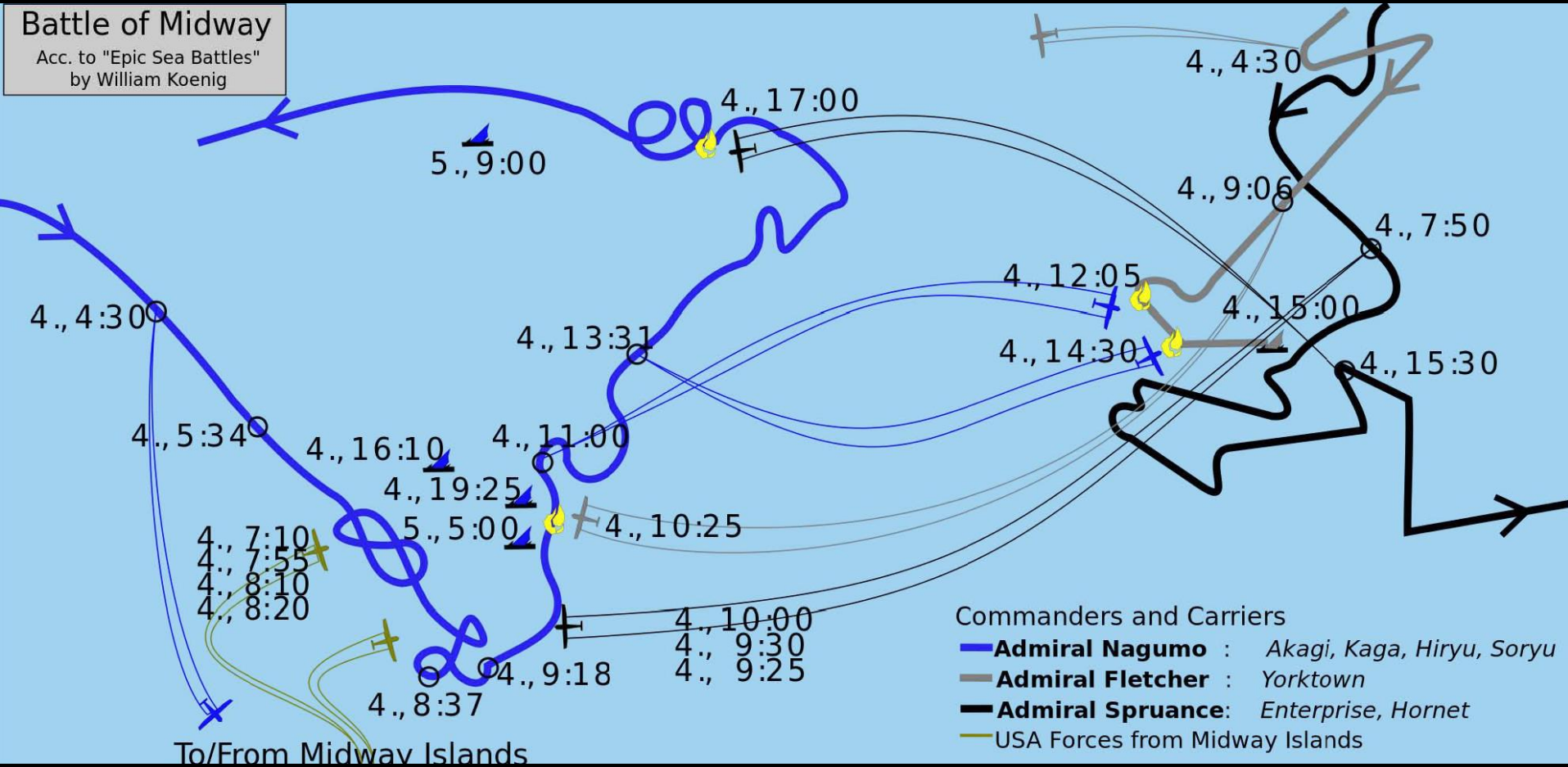
THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



At about 0710, Nagumo ordered the reserve planes to be rearmed for attack against Midway.

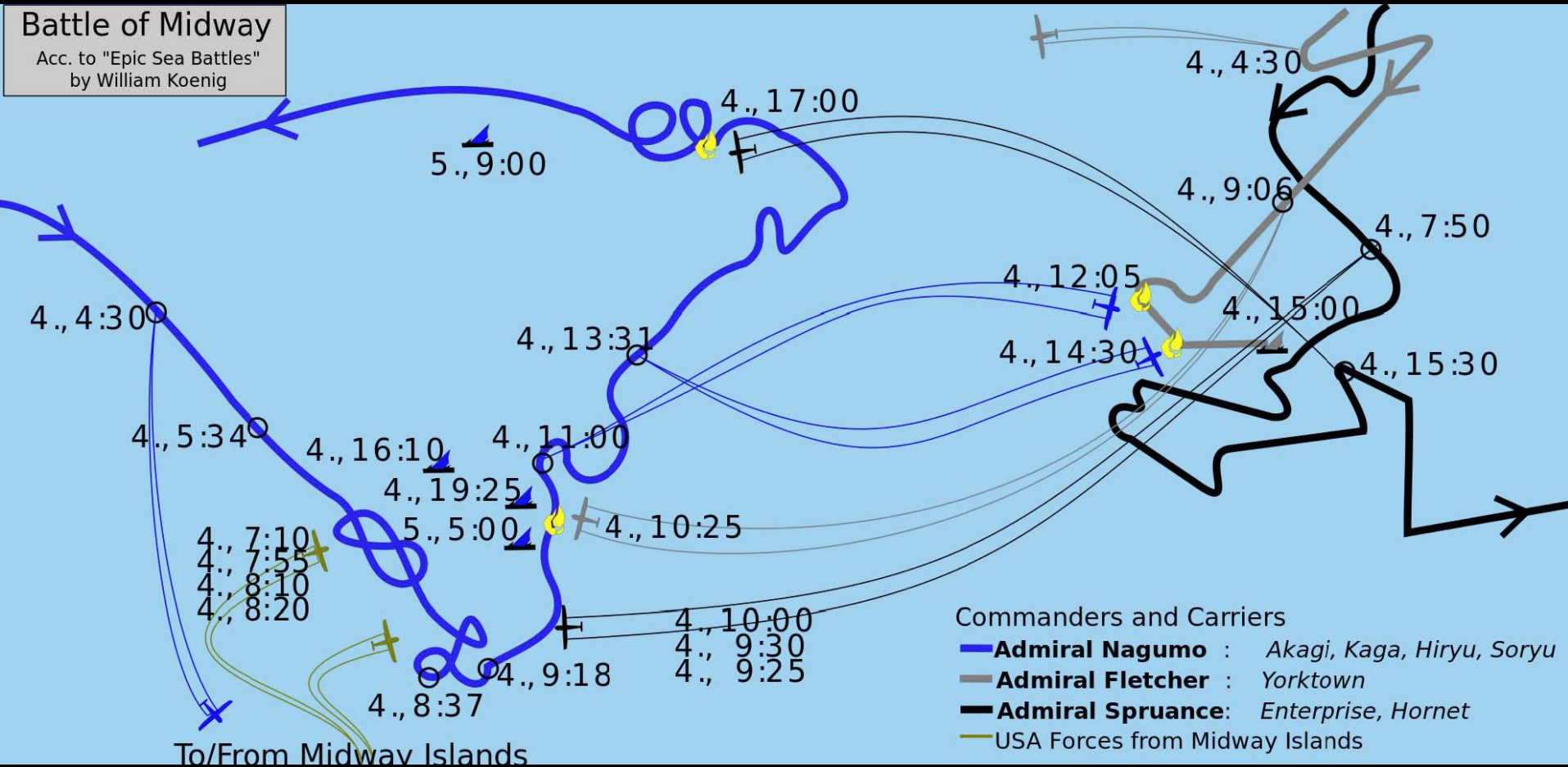
At 0728 a Japanese scout plane spotted 10 ships. At 0745, Nagumo and his staff decided to prepare the remaining planes for a sea engagement, which meant they had to be rearmed with torpedoes.

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



At 0750, Hornet and Enterprise launched their attacks on the Japanese. Between them, they send 20 fighters, 67 dive bombers, and 29 torpedo bombers. Because they were at extreme range, the squadrons went off as they left rather than wait for the strike to form up. This was not the standard method.

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



At 0755, 16 SBD's from Midway attacked the Japanese. They scored no hits on the Japanese. 8 were shot down.

At 0809, the scout plane clarified that he was tracking a force of 5 cruisers and 5 destroyers.

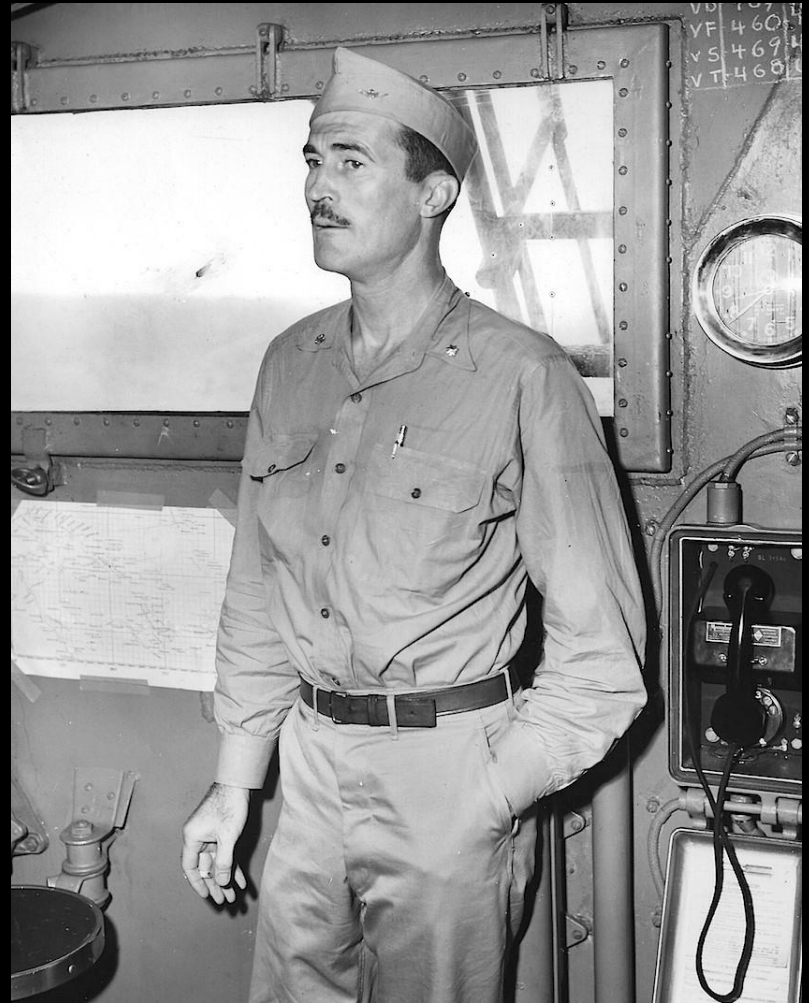
THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY

The orders were to fly southwest to intercept the Japanese. Enterprise's strike did just that. Hornet did not.

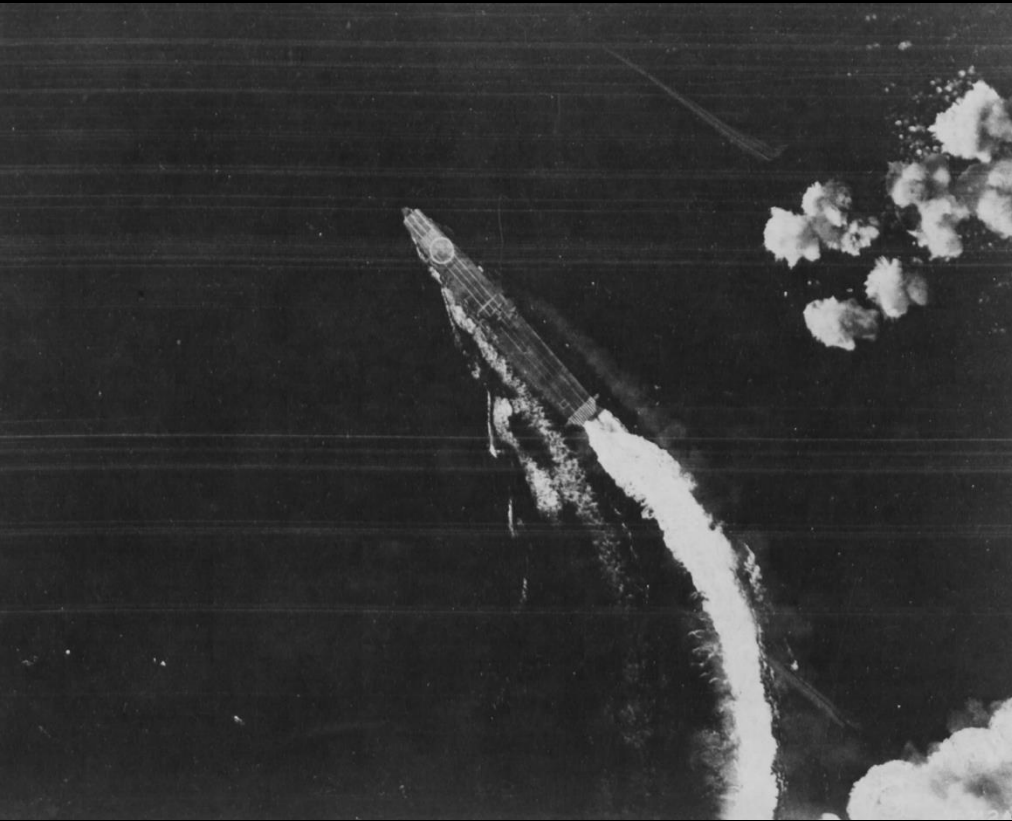
It is not known who decided to ignore the order. Some suggest it was Capt. Marc Mitcher CO of Hornet, others that it was the Air Group Commander Stanhope Ring (right). But Hornet's strike went due west thinking there was another Japanese battlegroup out there (there wasn't.)

Ring was generally despised by his pilots. Early in their "flight to nowhere" LDCR Bill Waldron, CO of the Torpedo Squadron called Ring out over the radio about their course and when disregarded, cussed out his superior and took his squadron out of formation and off to the southwest.

The matter was hushed up. It was technically a mutiny but the head mutineer had died attacking the designated target.



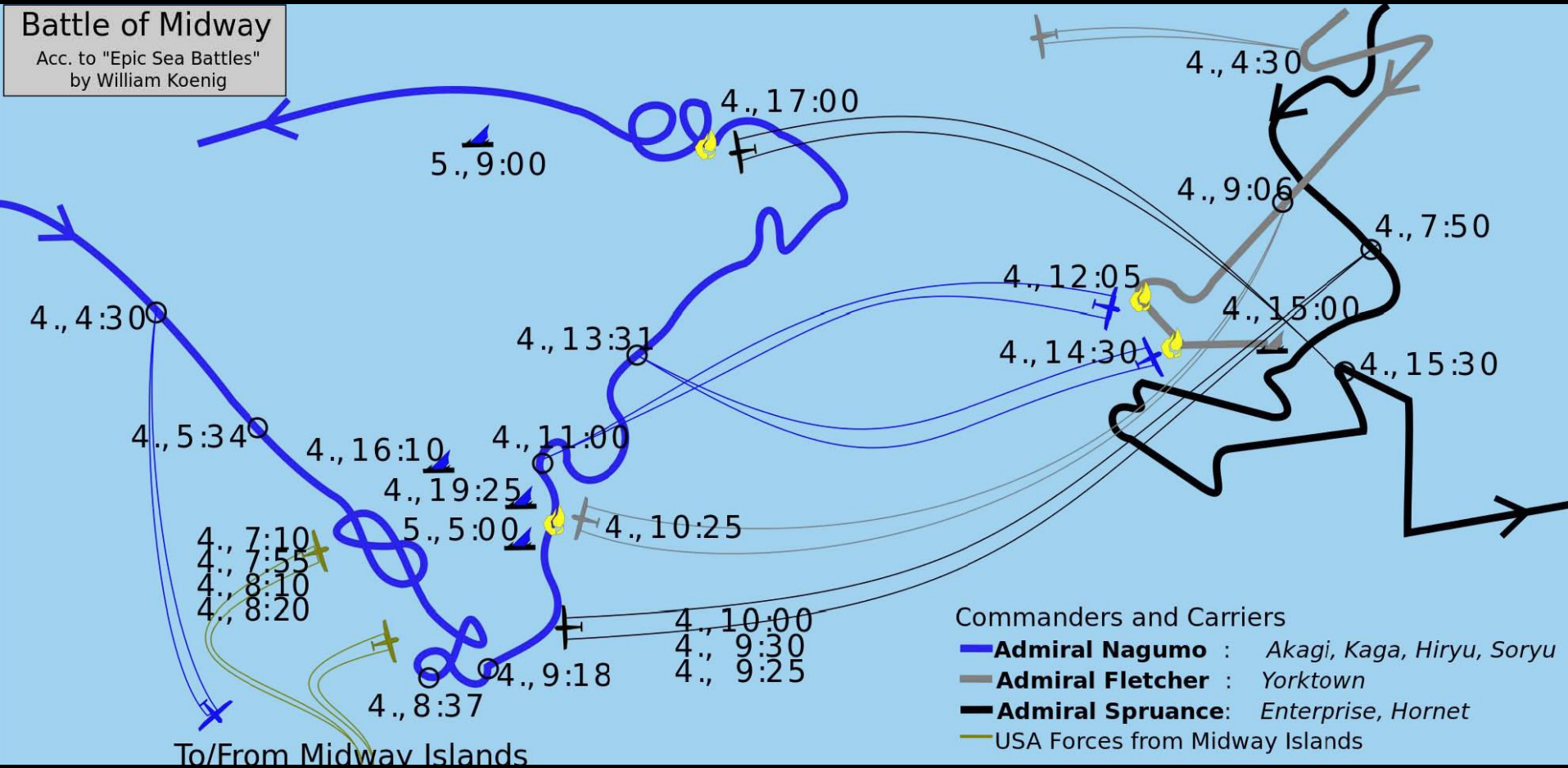
THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



At 0810, the B-17's arrived over the Japanese Fleet. They bombed from 20,000 feet against targets maneuvering at 30 knots. It was impressive, but fruitless. Not one bomb came close. No B-17's were lost, however. At about the same time, the Japanese were attacked by the submarine USS Nautilus. It missed but added to the confusion.

The effect was to convince Nagumo another strike on Midway was necessary.

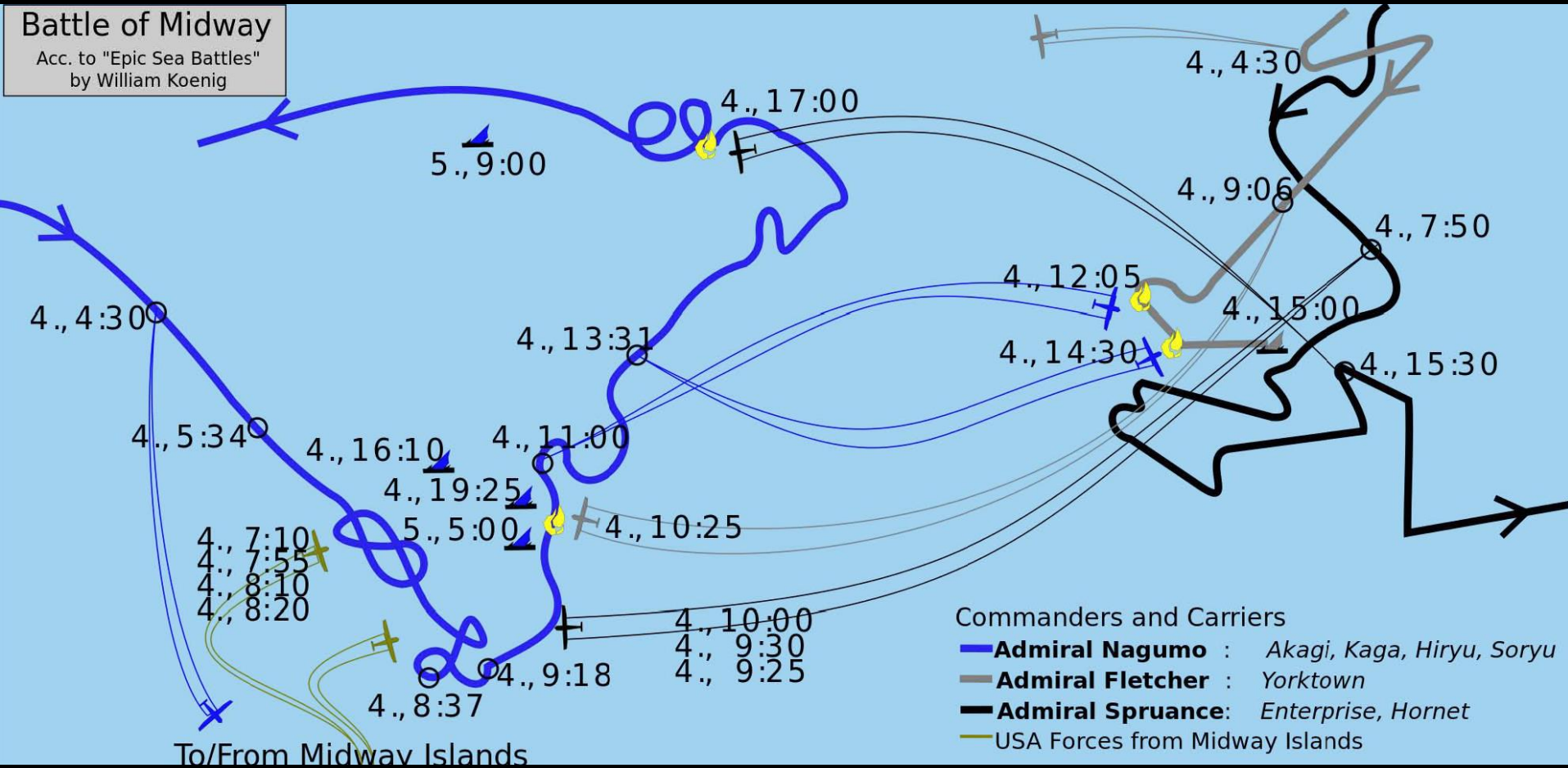
THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



At 0820, The 17 slow Vindicators finally began their attack. They scored no hits but the effects of the prior attacks showed. Despite flying the least survivable planes, only 2 were shot down. 2 others had to ditch from fuel loss.

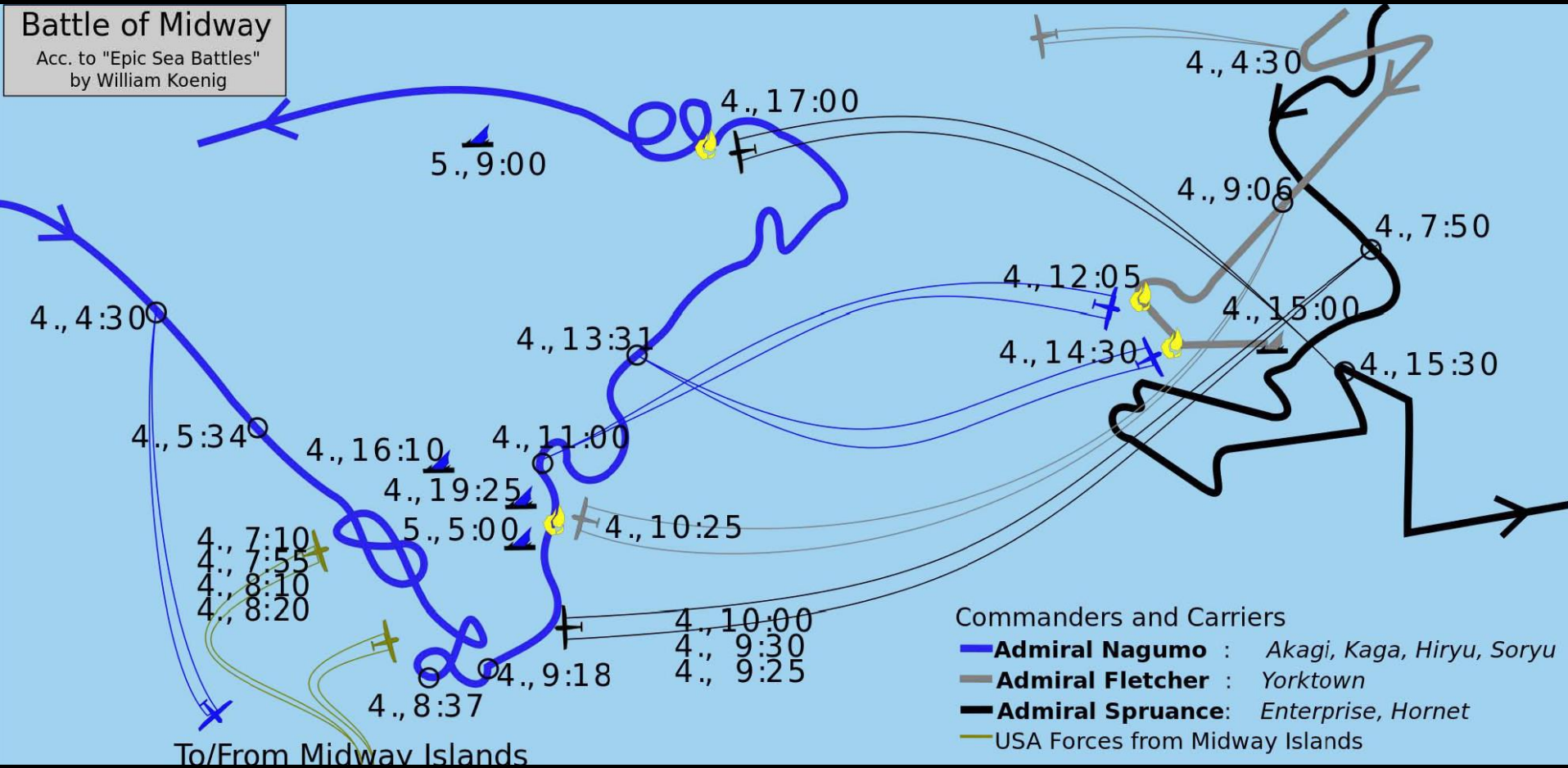
At 0830, the scout plane clarified that the force of 5 cruisers and 5 destroyers also included an aircraft carrier.

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



RADM Yamaguchi recommended an immediate attack with whatever planes were ready no matter how they were armed. (Some were armed for ships, some for land attack). But as he made the recommendation, the first strike was returning and low on fuel. Nagumo decided to rearm for ship attack while they recovered the first wave from the Midway strike.

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



The planes began landing soon there after as crews below decks again began rearming aircraft. The last of the Midway strike planes landed around 0918. He then turned his carriers towards the enemy to close the distance and reported this to Yamamoto who was over 300 hundred miles away on his flagship.

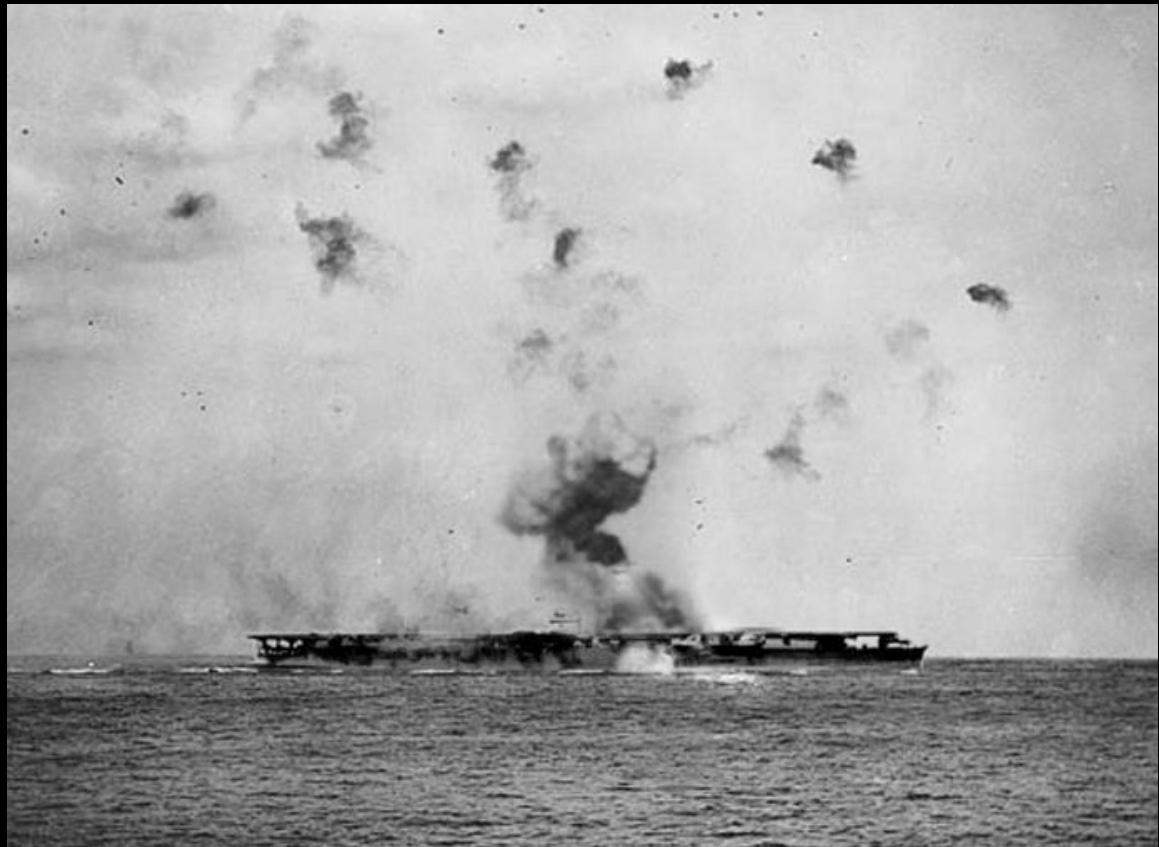
THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



At 0906, Yorktown began launching its strike against the Japanese. It had sent out patrols at first light and “spotting” the deck for a strike had to wait until the patrols returned. It launched 6 fighters, 18 dive bombers and 15 torpedo bombers, retaining the rest of its fighters for combat air patrol and its scouting squadron (Dauntless dive bombers) as a reserve.

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY

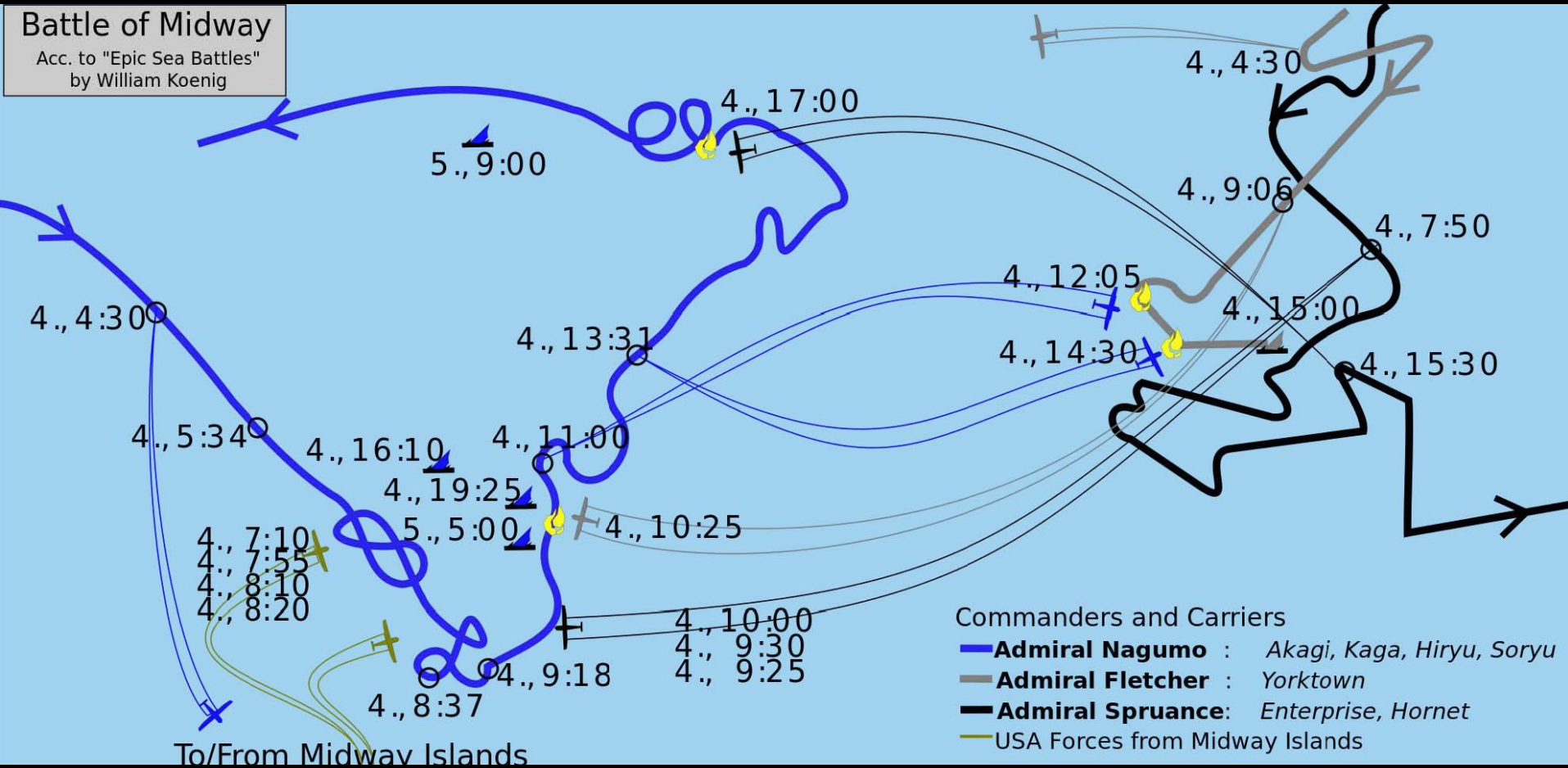
Between 0925 and 1000, the three torpedo squadrons attacked the Japanese carriers. The first two squadrons (from Hornet and then Enterprise) came in without fighter escort. Hornet left them behind, Enterprise had lost contact. The Yorktown attack came in with its handful of fighters. It did not matter. The slow Devastators were mauled. VT-6 (Enterprise) lost 10 of their 14 planes. VT-8 (Hornet) lost all 15 planes and had one survivor. VT-3 (Yorktown) lost 10 of 13 that reached the carriers. (Two turned back with mechanical problems).



Above: Japanese carrier Hiryu, June 4th 1942.

The American torpedo attack scored no hits (or at least no torpedoes detonated). As it ended, the Japanese fighters were either low on fuel or chasing the few survivors...

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



The fighters and dive bombers from Hornet found only empty ocean where they thought Japanese fleet was supposed to be. The fighters turned for Hornet while they still had fuel. The dive bombers turned either for Hornet or Midway – not telling CDR Ring once it was clear he would say no. CDR Ring was the last to turn back ... and the first to land on Hornet.

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



Like Hornet, the two squadrons from Enterprise had found empty ocean where the Japanese were supposed to be. But they turned north and soon found a destroyer charging northeast. (It had been depth charging Nautilus to no effect) They found the Japanese and attacked Akagi and Kaga. At almost the same time the dive bombers from Yorktown arrived and attacked the Soryu. They had hit the Japanese carriers at exactly the worst time (for the Japanese).

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY

The long believed myth is that the torpedo attacks kept the Japanese fighters from defending against dive bomber attacks. This is only partly true. The Japanese combat air patrol had been replaced and gained patrol altitude after each of the first two torpedo attacks. It was Yorktown's third attack that brought the Japanese down and out.

What the torpedo attacks did do was prevent the Japanese from "spotting" their decks with a strike. The carriers could not bring up their strike while they were busy launching and recovering fighters to defend the fleet. The last CAP flight launched just minutes before the American dive bombers began their attacks.

The flight deck logs from all four Japanese carriers survived the war. No one bothered to translate them until the mid 2000's. They recorded all planes on the flight deck during the day and why those planes were there.

All four carriers were busy launching and recovering fighters.

But the hangers were full of armed and fueled aircraft with addition weapons scattered about. Unlike American carriers, Japanese carrier hangers had no access to the outside aside from their elevators. This made them particularly flammable.

(After Midway, Japanese carriers would never fuel or arm planes in the hanger.)

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY

Enterprise was not error free. It sent two dive bomber squadrons VS-6 (LDCR Max Leslie) and VB-6 (LT Richard Best). Leslie had just assumed command of the air group. He had commanded fighters. This was his first mission in a dive bomber.

VS (Scout) bombers were armed with 500 lb bombs. VB (bomb) bombers were armed with 1000 lb bombs.

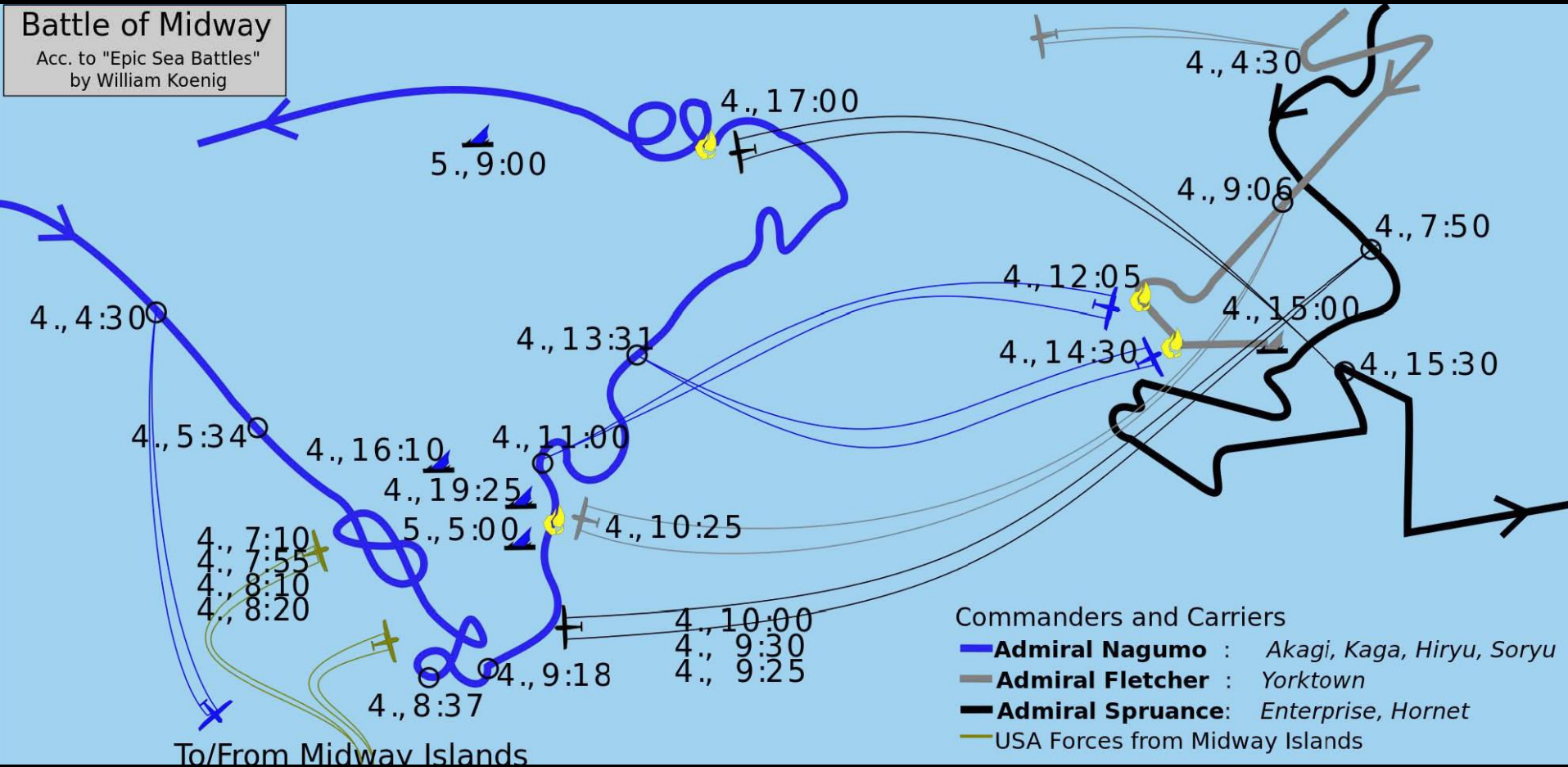
Where two squadrons attacked a target with at least two major warships, the scouting squadron would attack the further target, the bomb squadron the closer. VB-6 was over 5000 ft. below Leslie in VS-6 as their oxygen systems were defective.

When they arrived over the Japanese, Kaga was closest and Akagi was the next closest. By doctrine, VS-6 would attack Akagi which was further away. Instead, it dove through VB-6 just as that squadron started its dive.

Best saw the error, took himself and two others over to the Akagi and set it ablaze.



THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



But Hiryu was undamaged and launched its strike. The strike consisted of 18 dive bombers and six fighters.

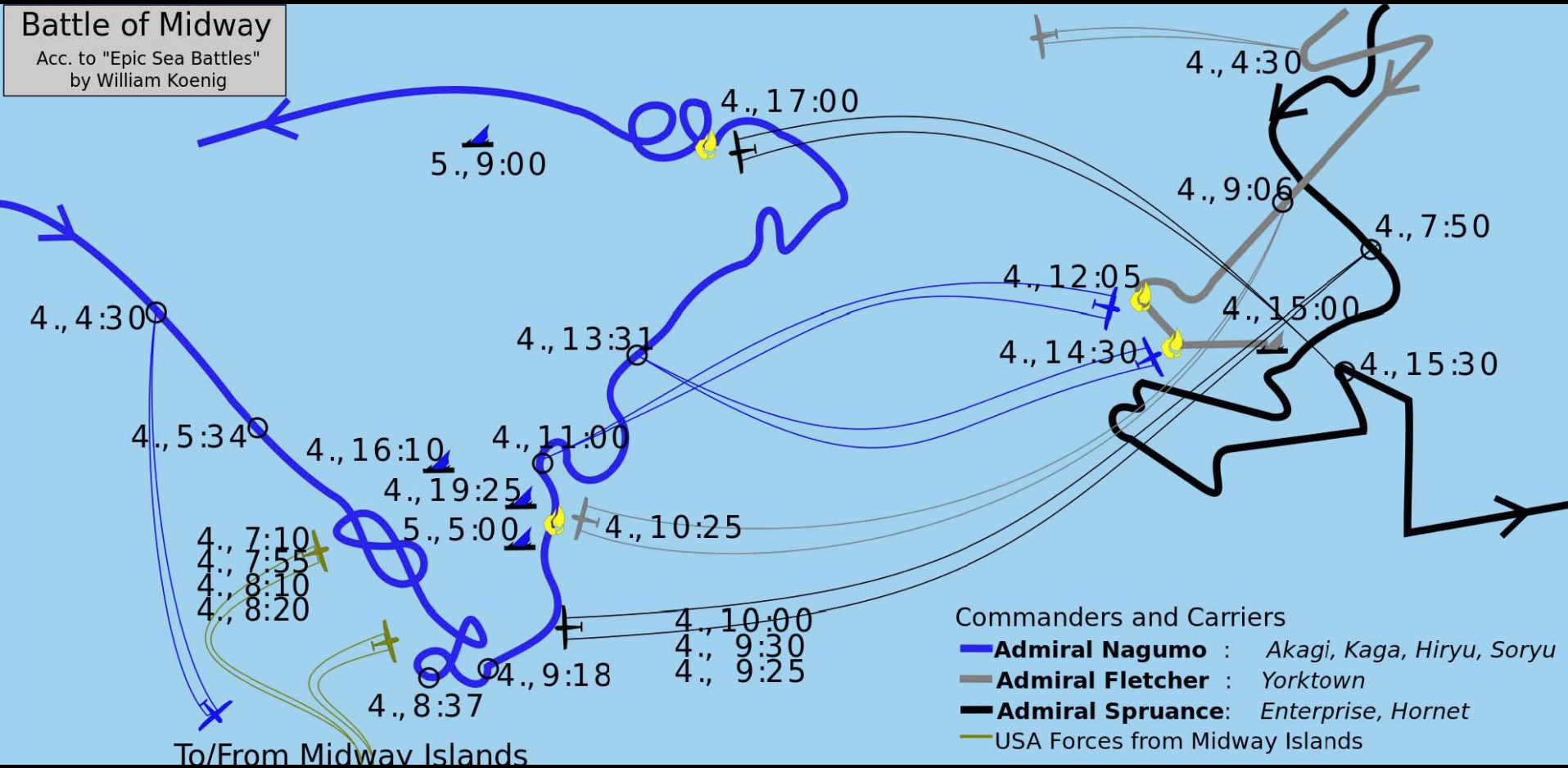
THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



Most of the Japanese were shot down, but Yorktown was hit by 3 bombs, knocking all but 2 boilers offline. The damage was not as severe as at Coral sea. Within an hour the fires were out, fight deck was patched and speed was back up to 18 knots.

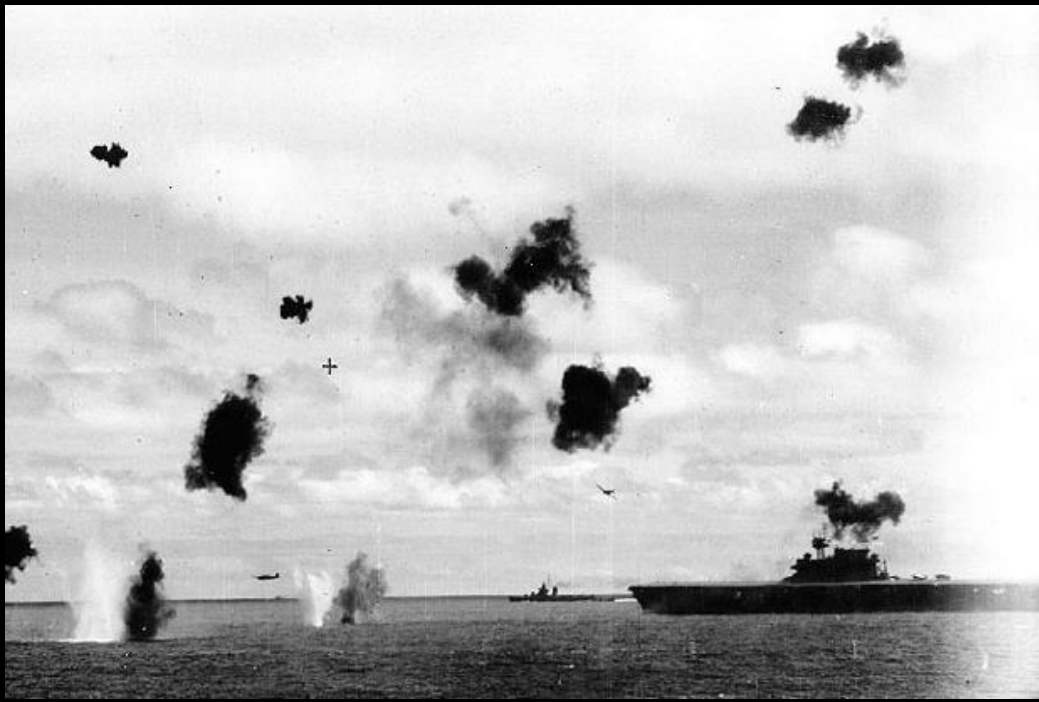


THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



At 1331, Hiryu launched its remaining planes against the Americans: 6 fighters and 10 torpedo planes. It and the few survivors returning from the earlier strike were all that was left of what had been a force of 73 fighters, 72 dive bombers and 81 torpedo planes only hours earlier...

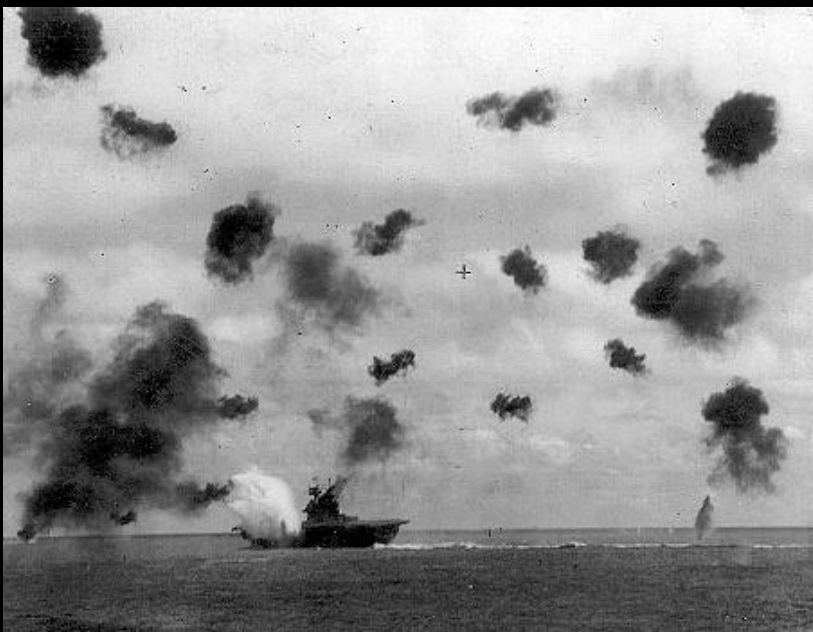
THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



The strike was detected 30 miles out and fighters from Yorktown flew to intercept. Most of the Japanese planes were shot down either by the American fighters or the anti-aircraft fire.

Yorktown managed to evade a couple of torpedoes, but not all.

Two struck its starboard side. Speed fell to nothing and the ship took on a significant list.



The Japanese thought they had hit a second carrier. There was no sign of a burning carrier from earlier and they assumed the first had sunk. But it was the Yorktown again...

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY

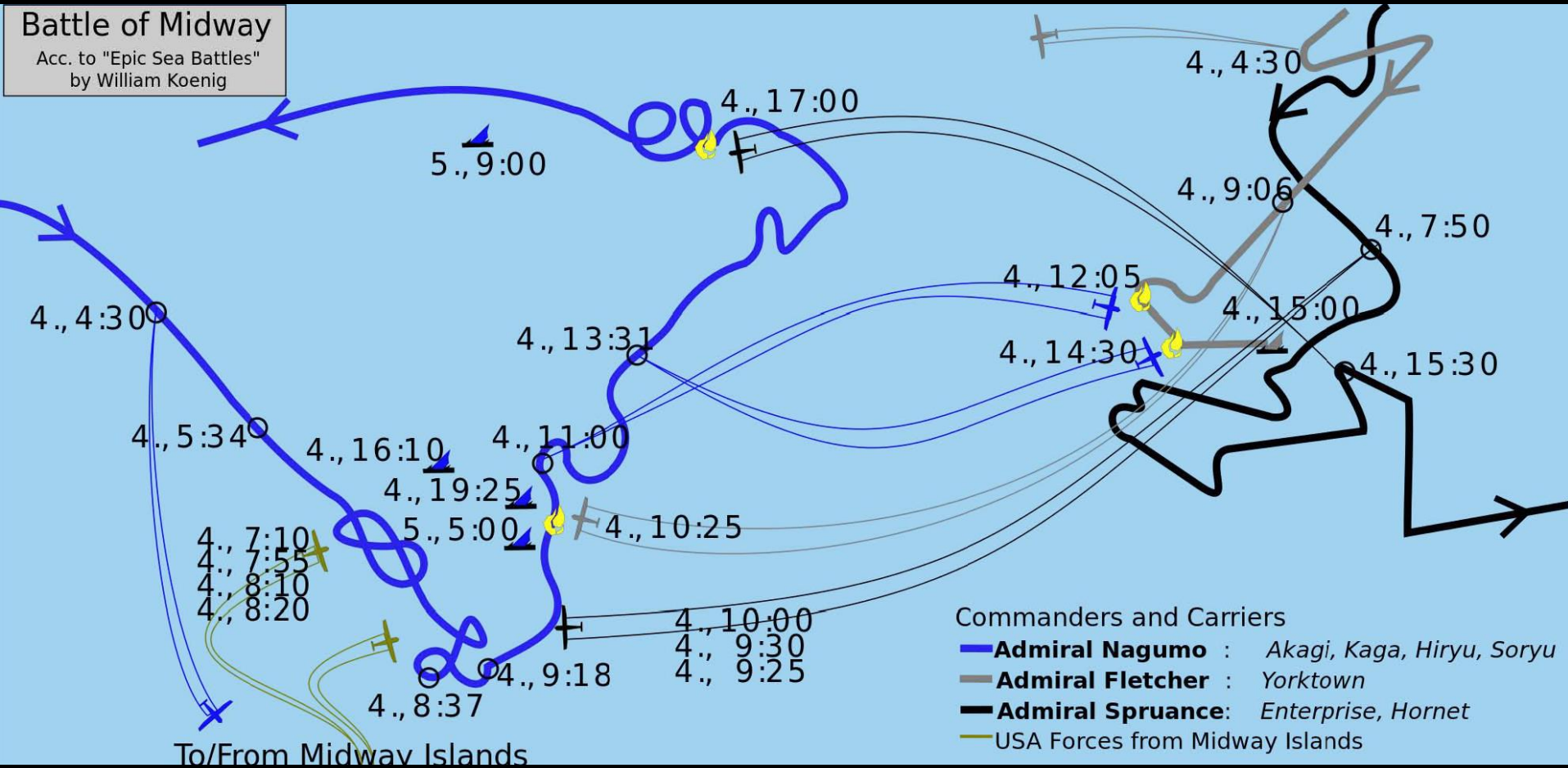


THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



The CO of Yorktown ordered the ship abandoned due to its list around 1500. He then changed his mind and kept about 300 volunteers aboard to attempt to salvage the ship. The ship was taken under tow by one of its escorts. The rest of its escorts formed up with the remaining carriers and steamed off in search of the last Japanese carrier.

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



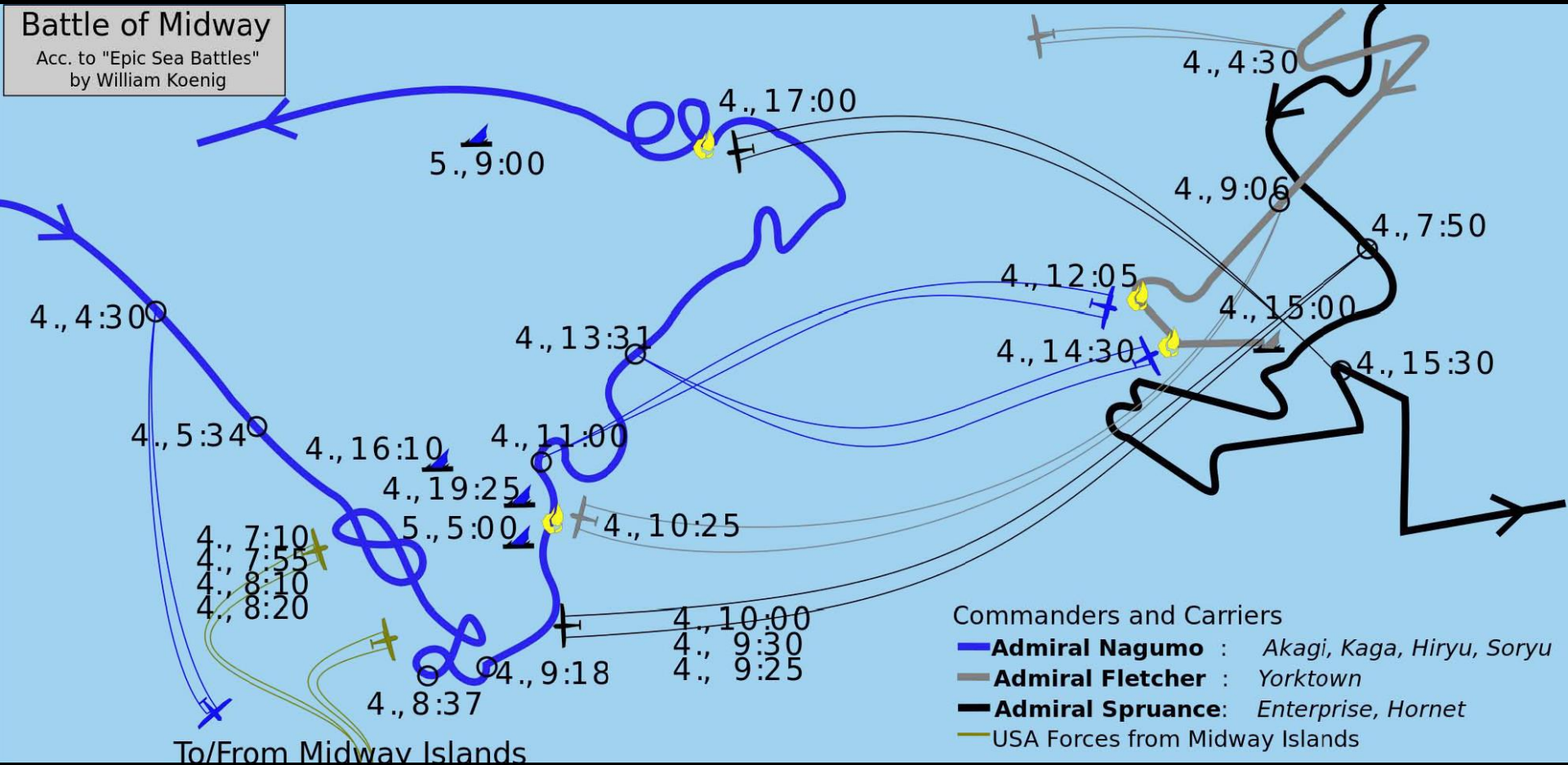
With Yorktown out of action, VADM Fletcher transferred his flag to the cruiser Astoria and turned over command of the battle to RADM Spruance in Enterprise. For the next few hours, the Americans sought to locate Hiryu and finish the job. Finally, around 1600, a search plane from Midway located the last carrier. Spruance launched a half hour later.

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



When the dive bombers from Enterprise arrived (Hornet's were still on Midway), the Hiryo was preparing yet one final strike. But it had no fighters up and was defenseless. It was devastated and abandoned – or so the Japanese thought when they left it to its fate. The engineers, thought lost, managed to get out. A Japanese patrol plane found Hiryo still smoldering the next morning. A destroyer was sent to investigate but by the time it arrive, Hiryo had sunk.

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



After hitting the Hiryu and recovering the strike, Spruance turned east for the night. While he had sunk all four Japanese carriers, his force was still outnumbered and outgunned by what was left and he had no intention of stumbling into the Japanese fleet at night. He turned west again before dawn to resume hitting the Japanese.

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY



June 5th proved frustrating. The Japanese fleet could not be found. A patrol from Midway sighted Nagumo's force and Spruance launched a strike. But all they really found was one destroyer – the one sent to investigate the sighting of the Hiryu. It managed to evade the hail of bombs.

Despite losing his carriers, Yamamoto still felt the battle was his to win provided the Americans could be lured under his guns. He sent four heavy cruisers to shell Midway and bring the Americans into a trap...