STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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THE HISTORY AND STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE MIDWAY ISLANDS

BY

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ABSTRACT

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The Midway Islands (U.S. Pacific Territory) have been the most important United States possession in the Pacific, other than the Hawaiian Islands. Their strategic importance to this country goes well beyond the role that they played in the Battle of Midway in 1942, and that role itself has been largely overlooked. Despite their importance there is virtually no comprehensive written history of the islands and none that could be considered up-to-date.

This Project attempts to: (1) produce the definitive history of the Midway Islands, (2) document and demonstrate their past strategic importance to the U.S., and (3) postulate on their future strategic significance.

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THE HISTORY AND STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE MIDWAY ISLANDS

In the Pacific, as elsewhere,...strategy is dictated by geographical conditions.

—Hector C. Bywater

FROM OBSCURITY TO THE HEADLINES

Sixty years ago this summer the United States turned the tide of the war against Japan at the Battle of Midway. That battle is still recognized as one of the most important victories in our nation's history, but the island that it was fought for is little known. There has been no comprehensive history of the Midway Atoll produced since before the Second World War. This paper attempts to rectify that oversight, for the importance of Midway Island to the security of the United States is belied by its size.

In the years before World War Two, an American historian, speculating about the future of the handful of U.S. Island possessions in the Pacific wrote:

> When man found wings he needed resting places; and overnight these tiny islets sprang from obscurity to the headlines...And with aircraft assuming an increasingly vital place in naval and military strategy, these hitherto scorned land dots have before them an exciting—perhaps terrifying future.[1]

Indeed, Midway's history, much like the history of our nation, has alternated between periods of tranquility, excitement and even terror. Midway proved to be key to our successful prosecution of not just one, but all three of the wars that the United States fought in the Far East in the 20th Century. It remains one of this nation's most valuable possessions beyond our shores.

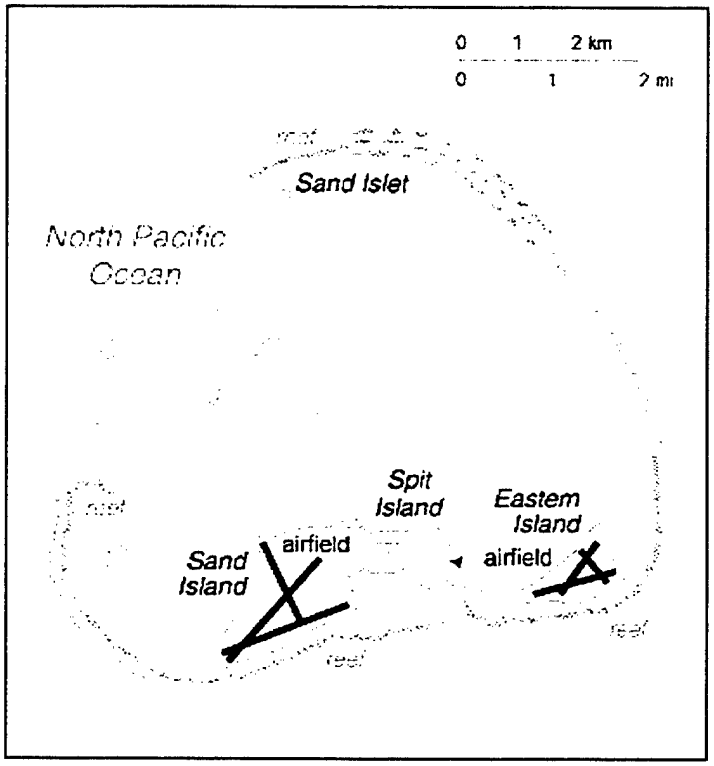
GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

Near the exact center of the North Pacific Ocean there is a roughly circular coral reef which contains several small islands. This reef and the three enclosed islands are called the "Midway Islands" or simply Midway. Midway is just south of a direct line from Los Angeles to Tokyo and actually closer to Japan (2600 miles) than the West Coast of the United States (3200 miles). Distances and directions from Midway to other parts of the world are as follows:

Midway to:	Pearl Harbor	Southeast	1150 miles
	Aleutian Islands	North	1650 miles
	Wake Island	Southwest	1030 miles
	International Date Line	West	100 miles[2]

Geographically and politically, Midway is not always considered one of the Hawaiian Islands, but geologically it is. It was formed 27 million years ago by the same plume of volcanic activity that is still at work in the lower Hawaiian Islands today.[3] At Midway the volcano built up a lava cone to near or just above sea level. This cone was subsequently worn back down to well below sea level. Coral-building animals and plants eventually buried the lava core and built up a ring of coral, leaving an irregular shallow lagoon inside of the reef. The entire atoll is only six miles in diameter, and only a small portion of that is dry land. Over time, the erosive action of waves and wind built up a small island of broken coral and sand, which is now called Eastern Island. Different conditions formed another island out of sand alone, which is appropriately called Sand Island. The sand on that island is so white that Marines stationed there during World War Two were often burned under their chins by the bright sunlight reflected up from the ground.[4]

Of the two largest islets, Sand Island is less than two miles long and encompasses less than 1200 acres. Eastern Island is a little more than a mile long and has an area of about 335 acres.[5] Eastern Island is nearly flat, rising only twelve feet above the Pacific. Sand Island's largest "hill" stands thirty-nine feet above sea level. It is the highest point of land for several hundred miles.[6] A third islet, also called Spit is so small that it has never been inhabited.



MIDWAY ATOLL

Midway is not in the tropics, nor is it a South Sea Island. However, it does have a semi-tropical climate due to the effect of the warm-water Japanese current, which flows north of the island, creating very comfortable year round temperatures. Averages high temperatures are 75° Fahrenheit in the summer and 65° Fahrenheit in the winter. The atoll is too far north to be frequented by tropical storms in the summer and far enough south to be out of reach of the worst Pacific winter storms. The islands lie well protected behind a substantial coral reef that protects them from rough seas and all but the most severe tsunamis. These factors combine to make Midway an attractive location for settlement, despite its

otherwise remote location. When Midway was first discovered, Sand Island had no vegetation. However, Eastern Island was well covered by scaevola, wild grapes and boerhavia.[7] By 1941 both islands had ironwood, banana, and papaya trees, as well as coconut palms and many private gardens.[8]

DISCOVERY AND EARLY SETTLEMENT

Midway has no native inhabitants. Despite its location just south of a direct line between San Francisco and Japan, it also remained undiscovered, or at least unclaimed, until 1859. The existence of a smaller island to the northwest of the main Hawaiian group was merely a rumor to the more than 500 whaling and merchant ships that docked annually in Hawaii during the late 1840's.[9] The atoll was finally claimed when Captain N. C. Brooks of the Hawaiian Bark *Gambia* took possession of the atoll on July 5, 1859.[10] He initially named his discovery the Middle Brook Islands and kept them a secret. He apparently wanted to try to sell them to the North Pacific Mail and Steam Ship Company, which was looking for a mid-Pacific coal depot for their vessels crossing to and from the Orient. His secret did not keep and his plans were thwarted on May 28, 1867 when Secretary of the Navy Gideon Wells ordered the North Pacific Squadron to take over Midway.[11] On August 28, 1867, Captain William Renolds, USN, in command of the U.S. Steamship *Lacawama* took formal possession of the atoll, now known as Midway Island, for the United States.

FIRST ATTEMPT TO DEVELOP AS A NAVAL BASE

Midway was the first island annexed to the United States beyond its shores.[12] The United States realized early Midway's potential as a naval base. In 1869 Congress appropriated $50,000 to dredge a ship's channel into the lagoon between Sand and Eastern Island. The Pacific Mail Steamship Company had lobbied successfully for this appropriation because they wanted to establish a coaling station at Midway for their ships crossing the Pacific.[13] Lieutenant Commander Montgomery Sicard, USN, in command of the *USS Saginaw* towed out the dredges and carried out workers and supplies. The work proved difficult and after seven months the funds were exhausted and the project abandoned. By the time this initial dredging operation was discontinued the channel was only deep enough to admit small boats in calm weather.[14]

SHIPWRECKS AND MAYHEM

It was over thirty years before Midway regained the attention of the United States government. However, those three decades were anything but quiet and peaceful on the island.

Midway seemed to act like a magnet, attracting a number of ships to its reefs where many of them wrecked. More ships have been wrecked on Midway than on any other of its fellow islands of the Hawaiian group.[15] As a result, during the last half of the nineteenth century the flotsam of ships, the booty of smugglers and even the blood of their victims often colored Midway's sands.

The schooner *General Siegel* was wrecked at Midway during a storm on November 16, 1886. Several odd occurrences after this wreck resulted in the death of two crewmen, the murder of the ship's captain, and finally the marooning of the sailor accused of the captain's death. This sailor remained alone on Sand Island for nearly a year. The crew of the British Bark *Wandering Minstrel*, its Captain and his wife then joined him, when their bark was wrecked on Midway during a storm on February 8, 1888. They remained there over a year until their rescue by the Schooner *Norma* on March 26, 1889. Robert Louis Stephenson, foremost chronicler of the nineteenth-century Pacific, based his novel The Wrecker on the experiences of the crew of the *Wandering Minstrel.*[16] Other ships claimed by Midway's reefs during the next thirty years included the *Helene* (date unknown), the *Julia Whalem* (1903) and the *Carlton* (1906).[17]

THE FIRST JAPANESE "INVASION"

In 1900 an event occurred on Midway which was not fully resolved until forty-two years later when it climaxed in an entirely different set of circumstances. That year, the first Japanese turned up on Midway, where they made their living killing the island's native terns, black garnets and albatross birds for their feathers. As the number of Japanese poachers and squatters grew the U.S. State Department became so concerned that twice in 1901 they sent cables to the Japanese government seeking assurances that Japan had no plans to include Midway in their already expanding empire.[18] Finally, President Theodore Roosevelt became so concerned that the Emperor of Japan might lay claim to Midway, that on January 20, 1903, he reiterated the formal claim of the United States to the atoll by issuing an Executive Order which placed Midway under the control of the Navy:

> Such public lands as may exist on the Midway Islands, Hawaiian group, between the parallels of 28 05' and 28 25' North latitude and between the meridians of 177 10' and 177 30' West longitude, are hereby placed under the jurisdiction and control of the Navy Department.[19]

On June 3, 1903, the *USS Irouquois* arrived at Midway to clear the island of poachers. The ship's Captain, Lieutenant Commander Hugh Rodman, USN, using no weapon but his powerful voice and commanding personality, chased them off the island. So ended the

first Japanese incursion on Midway. It would not be the last. The tiny island of Midway had caught the eye of the Japanese and they would be back, in force, several times attempting to regain control of the atoll. The boldest of those attempts would come in the same month, 39 years after their first ouster, in June 1942.

RENEWED U.S. INTEREST AND DEVELOPMENT

President Roosevelt had another reason for placing Midway under Naval jurisdiction. The Pacific Commercial Cable Company had acquired the franchise to lay a cable from Honolulu to Luzon in the Philippines.[20] In order to maintain and operate a submarine cable across the Pacific it was necessary to establish a relay station at Midway. On April 29, 1903, the Pacific Commercial Cable Company's first contingent of workers arrived at Midway and began construction of their compound on Sand Island.[21] All the materials and equipment had to be brought ashore in whaleboats and lighters.[22] Despite the heavy undertaking, they managed to build substantial steel and concrete buildings, water towers, windmills, a very large concrete cistern for fresh water storage, a steam ice-plant, a dock, and other things needed for operating the cable and for the comfort of the men stationed there.[23] Even rich soil was brought in and added. For the next fifteen years each supply ship that docked at Midway also brought soil to the island. Estimates are that over nine thousand tons of topsoil was imported to the island in this manner.[24] This soil enabled Midway's occupants to enjoy verdant gardens within just a few years. The cable itself was soon laid and on July 4, 1903, the first "round the world" cable message was sent by President Roosevelt using the Midway relay station.[25] A section of the cable which stretched from Honolulu to Midway was of immense value to the Navy during the months preceding the Battle of Midway in 1942. The cable handled most of the heavy communications traffic concerning preparations for the forthcoming Japanese attack, allowing the volume of radio communication to remain normal - so that the Japanese did not suspect that the Americans knew what was coming.[26]

In addition to the cable, other improvements were initiated in 1903 that would have major importance in the future. The U.S. Navy set out mooring buoys offshore, built a lighthouse on Sand Island and later that year began to use Midway as a Naval and Marine base.[27] In May 1904 a garrison force of twenty Marines arrived to protect the station. This raised the islands' population to about one-hundred.[28] However, this occupation by the Marines was short-lived as the detachment was ordered away in 1908.

During World War One, Midway was virtually ignored. The United States needed only the fleet facilities at Pearl Harbor, Guam, and San Francisco to facilitate the limited operations it

conducted in the Pacific. However, the sudden rise of Japan as a regional power during that era caused the U.S. military to begin to look for ways to respond to the emerging treat. As early as 1916, planners in the Navy Department acknowledged the possibility of a future war with Japan and the need for equipped and fortified bases in the Pacific.[29]

EFFECTS OF THE WASHINGTON NAVAL TREATY, 1922

In his 1921 book, Sea Power in the Pacific, Hector Bywater, a naval architect and journalist expounded on the strategic potential of Midway. He recommended the conversion of the atoll, and other islands in the Pacific including Wake and Guam, into "fortified oil stations."[30] He theorized that for less than the cost of two battleships such a chain of well-defended naval bases would give the U.S. a decisive advantage in any future conflict in the Pacific.

The Japanese, who were attending the 1921-1922 Washington Naval Conference with Great Britain and the United States, obviously read the book. They mentioned Midway repeatedly at the conference, which became primarily focused on the issue of non-fortification of the Pacific Islands. The settlement of the fortification question was the last serious obstacle to the eventual signing of the Washington Naval Treaty on February 6, 1922.[31] In Article Nineteen of the treaty the United States agreed that, "With respect to fortifications and Naval Bases in the Pacific, there shall be no increase in these fortifications and Naval Bases excepting the Hawaiian Islands..."[32] The treaty had the effect of halting military projects in the Philippines, on Guam, and Midway, since Midway was not considered geographically a part of Hawaii. The treaty did allow commercial enterprises to be continued even where military projects were prohibited. The United States abided by the treaty and did not conduct any military development on Midway until after the Japanese themselves denounced the Washington Naval Treaty in 1934.

RENDEZVOUS POINT IN THE PACIFIC

Despite the prohibition on military construction projects, Midway continued to grow in importance to the United States' expansion in the Pacific during the 1920's. From 1920 on, the Navy routinely stationed an oiler in the deep-water section of the Midway lagoon, known as Welles Harbor to fuel destroyers.[33] In 1921, the Navy began using Midway Island as a rendezvous point for naval vessels on their East-West Pacific runs. In 1924, the Midway Islands were investigated by Commander Rogers of the *USS Pelican* as a possible seaplane base and later in the same year the island area was used as a rendezvous point by the *USS Seagull* and eight submarines, portending Midway's later value as a submarine base.

From 1908, when the Marine garrison was withdrawn, Midway and its commercial tenants led a generally quiet existence, interrupted only occasionally by a supply ship or other Navy vessel. The island's existing infrastructure suffered nearly three decades of complete neglect and there was virtually no new construction during the period. Those peaceful days ended in 1934 when Japan, girding herself for war, denounced the Washington Naval Treaty.

BUILD-UP

Japan's rejection of the treaty marked the beginning of the end of peace in the Pacific and the impact on Midway was almost immediate. In 13 March 1935, the Secretary of the Navy announced that permission had been granted for Pan-American Airways to develop Midway as a seaplane base.[34] Within weeks Pan-American Airways set up a seaplane ramp, new living quarters, and a small hotel on the lagoon side of Sand Island for which were used during their weekly Clipper flights between the U.S. and China. Not surprisingly, the Japanese condemned the whole operation. They reasoned that much of the construction done in support of the seaplane base could quickly be converted into military use. They were correct and in just a few years, it was.

In May of 1935, at the same time the seaplane base was being constructed, the Navy held its Fleet maneuvers around the island. This fleet problem included simulated attacks by aircraft, and the amphibious landing of 750 Marines.[35] Pacifists in the United States regarded this action as a menace to Japan.[36]

WAR PLAN ORANGE

If not a menace, the U.S. Navy most certainly intended on the exercises being a deterrent. The fleet problem and the build-up on Midway were a rehearsal of the tactics that the Navy intended to deploy in the event of a war with Japan. Those tactics supported what the Navy called War Plan Orange, the campaign plan for a counter offensive across the Central Pacific against Japan. Orange envisioned a battleship-dominated theater supporting amphibious landings on a more or less direct route from Hawaii towards the Philippines and Japan.[37] Midway would serve as an important supply point for the fleet and staging base for troops in the drive across the Central Pacific. Plan Orange had several flaws, but its main shortcoming was that it was based upon two assumptions that proved to be false. First, it assumed that the battleship would remain the dominant force in naval warfare, which it did not due to the rise of naval aviation. Second, it did not anticipate the success that Japan would enjoy in its early campaign in the South Pacific, which necessitated a dual axis counteroffensive by the U.S. in both the Central and South Pacific.

DEVELOPMENT IN THE 1930'S

Despite the fact that much of the work done on Midway in the mid-1930's was done in anticipation of supporting a war plan that was not executed, none of that effort was wasted. Massive underground fuel tanks were constructed that were eventually enlarged. When finally completed they were capable of storing 17 million gallons of fuel safe from bombardment. Those tanks and the pipelines that were laid to get that fuel to battleships and cruisers that would be refueled at Midway in support of War Plan Orange were in almost continual use by the Navy for the next sixty years,[38] supporting not just one, but three wars. The preparation of Midway for use as a defense base continued with a joint Army-Navy project in the late 1930's. On May 19, 1938, the *USS Ogala* and the *USS Beaver* arrived with men and materials from the Hawaiian Dredging Company to dredge a channel between Sand and Easter that would be large enough to accommodate seagoing ships. At about the same time the Army engineers blasted a hole in the reef between the two islets.[39]This channel was eventually large enough to allow the passage of capital ships up to and including light cruisers, although the larger ships were forced to back out of the channel in order to make their exit.[40] The *USS Swan*, a mine-sweeper-type aircraft tender, was the first ship to enter the Midway Lagoon by the new channel on March 4, 1940.

THE BUILD-UP ACCELERATES

The Hepburn Report on Pacific bases, which was released on the eve of war in January 1939, concluded that the location of Midway, which stood alone in the center of the North Pacific, made it strategically critical to the United States. That report described Midway as, "second in importance only to Pearl Harbor."[41] At that time Oahu, where Pearl Harbor is located, was considered the strongest fortress in the world.[42] The Hepburn Report recommended an expansive military build-up on Midway including the addition of facilities for two patrol plane squadrons plus channel piers.[43] The Report also recommended that Congress appropriate expenditures in excess of $13 million to bring Midway's defenses to full development.[44] As a result, surveys were conducted and plans made for the construction of base facilities, airfields, and coastal and antiaircraft gun positions.[45] Midway and Wake Islands were also slated for development as forward bases for the U.S. Pacific Fleet's submarines.[46]

The growth of the importance of military aviation during this period contributed greatly to the special attention that was paid to Midway. Though several of the United States' Pacific atolls had an island with room for an airstrip, Midway had the advantage of possessing two islands that were big enough to accommodate an airfield.[47] Next to its prime location, this was

Midway's most strategically important geographical feature. Once the airfields were built, Midway was capable of handling twice as many airplanes as the largest aircraft carrier of the day; and although Midway couldn't be moved, it couldn't be sunk either.

During 1940 and '41 the *USS Sirius* as well as several other destroyers and barges shuttled men and construction materials to Midway where the build up of the island was maintained at a frenetic pace.[48] Naval Air Station Midway was commissioned on August 18, 1941, with Commander Cyril T. Simard as the first commanding officer. One 5,300 foot airstrip for land-based aircraft had been completed on Eastern Island and Sand Island contained a large seaplane hangar, artificial harbor, fuel tanks, and a garrison of 750 Marines.[49] A large dock for seagoing ships was completed on September 1, 1940.[50]

A full battalion of Marines was stationed at Midway beginning in early 1941. The 6th Marine Battalion assumed the defensive occupation of the islands on September 11, 1941, a scant three months before their mettle would be tested.[51] When war came to Midway it was the most heavily fortified small island outpost in the Pacific, with more men, guns and aircraft than the other U.S. possessions of Wake, Johnson, Palmyra and American Samoa combined.[52]

JAPANESE STRATEGIC INTEREST IN MIDWAY

It was fortunate that Midway was so strongly fortified, for the Japanese had continued to demonstrate interest in the island. As mentioned earlier, President Theodore Roosevelt's concerns that Japan would claim Midway directly resulted in the United States' formal acquisition of the territory.[53] A stunningly accurate appraisal of Japan's potential military threat to Midway was made in 1914 at the U.S. Naval War College. There it was predicted that Japan would, in a future war with the United States, attempt to capture Guam, the Philippines, and establish intelligence outposts at Kiska (in the Aleutians), American Samoa, and Midway.[54] In fact, the Japanese developed a detailed plan for the conquest of Midway in 1938, well before the opening guns of the Second World War were fired.[55]

Ironically, Midway also played a role in the final pre-war attempt to keep peace between the U.S. and Japan. On November 9, 1941, the Pan American Clipper arrived from Japan bearing the Japanese Ambassador Saburo Kurusu and his secretary.[56] After being delayed several days by inclement weather, this "peace" delegation departed Midway on 12 November, enroute to Washington, D.C. where, after a month of posturing, their actions would contribute to the infamy of December 7, 1941. [57]

After they left their home waters, the Japanese Carrier Task Force that launched the attack on Pearl Harbor was forced to take a long detour around Midway in order to remain

unseen. In their initial planning for the operation the Japanese favored a direct approach from Japan to Hawaii, but avoided it and settled for a more circuitous route due to their fear that land based aircraft from Midway would spot them.[58] Midway's position astride their most favorable approach to Hawaii would be a problem that they would never solve.

WAR COMES TO MIDWAY

FIRST COMBAT

The inhabitants of Midway received the news of that they were at war at 0630 local time on December 7th.[59] The military members on the island went to general quarters. Daylight faded without incident, but at 2131 two Japanese warships that were operating independently from the Task Force that had launched the attack on Pearl Harbor, arrived off of Midway and began bombarding the island. This Japanese named this task force, comprised of the destroyers *Sazanami* and *Ushio,* the "Midway Destruction Unit."[60] During their bombardment of the island, Midway apparently proved to be a tougher target than the Japanese had anticipated. The Marine battery ashore provided accurate return fire and the destroyers withdrew after taking several hits. The facilities on Midway were slightly damaged and four Marines were killed.[61]

The sudden retirement of this Japanese force was long considered to be one of the major mysteries of the early part of the war. While the fire from the batteries at Midway was effective, the departure of the destroyers still surprised the island's defenders. After the war it was disclosed that the American Submarines Trout and Argonaut were on routine patrol in the waters off Midway and were detected by the Japanese during their bombardment.[62] The accurate fire from the shore batteries combined with the threat of submarine attack was enough to hasten the second Japanese retreat from Midway. It was also the first offensive involvement of American Submarines in the Second World War.

The Japanese had more planned for Midway. They intended on making an air strike on the island using the carriers that had launched the attack on Pearl Harbor, while they were on their way back to Japanese home waters. Fortunately for Midway's defenders, the strike was cancelled due to a combination of Japanese concerns over their lack of knowledge of the whereabouts of the American carriers and bad weather.[63] The "one-two punch" that the Japanese had intended to land on Midway with the destroyer bombardment followed by an air strike provides clear evidence that they appreciated the strategic potential of the island. Their attack on Pearl Harbor was designed to cripple the United States' ability to launch a counter offensive against their other operations in the Philippines, Wake and elsewhere. Their attacks

on Midway were designed to accomplish the same objective. At this point in the war Japan had no intentions of capturing Midway, but they understood that it would be essential to any American counter-offensive against them in the Pacific. In their initial attacks on the island the Japanese were attempting to eliminate Midway's capability to effectively support the Pacific Fleet.

Midway also played a coincidental, but pivotal, role in denying the Japanese their primary objective of destroying at least one American aircraft carrier at Pearl Harbor. The *Lexington* was at sea, not in Pearl, on the 7th because she was on the way to Midway to deliver aircraft to further bolster the island's defenses.[64]

JAPANESE OPERATIONS AGAINST MIDWAY, SPRING 1942

By the early spring of 1942, the Japanese completed their initial program of conquests. The Philippines were neutralized, Wake Island had long since fallen and so had all the other U.S. possessions west of Midway. Less than 100 days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Midway became the westernmost U.S. Base in the Pacific.[65] Japanese interest in the island continued to grow. During that spring they used submarines to keep the island under almost constant observation.[66] Those submarines even bombarded the island on several occasions between December 1941 and June 1942, but they were always driven off by fire from Midway's shore batteries.

The Japanese also used "flying boats" to conduct reconnaissance of Midway and Marine fighter planes succeeded in shooting down at least one of those in March 1942.[67] Only after the war did the significance of that small encounter become known. The Japanese were conducting an experiment to see if they could reconnoiter U.S. Pacific bases, including Pearl Harbor, using seaplanes refueled by submarines.[68] The Midway radar station detected the intruder 45 miles out and it was intercepted and shot down far from the island. The Japanese did not repeat the experiment.

JAPAN PLANS A "SECOND INVASION" OF MIDWAY

Japan's initial war-plan had been to end their eastward expansion at Wake Island. However, several factors combined to make the conquest of Midway Island the objective of the greatest fleet that the Japanese nation would ever launch. First, the Japanese wanted to destroy the U.S. carrier fleet before the industrial potential of the U.S. could be fully mobilized to reinforce them. That opportunity had been denied them when they attacked Pearl Harbor due to the absence of any of the U.S. aircraft carriers. The Japanese reasoned, and correctly so,

that they could draw the Americans into a decisive battle only over something that the U.S. could not afford to lose. That made Midway the perfect bait.

Secondly, the Japanese WarLords succumbed to, what they later ruefully referred to as "Victory Disease." Because of their rather easy string of early victories, the Japanese became intoxicated with the idea that their Army and Navy were invincible.[69] They persisted in that viewpoint even after the Battle of the Coral Sea, which they fought with the U.S. Fleet in May of that year. Although they were forced to withdraw and did not meet any of their objectives, the Japanese Navy insisted that Coral Sea was yet another in their unbroken string of victories.[70] Flushed with "victory disease" their eyes turned towards the tiny atoll of Midway for their next conquest.

Actually by the end of the Coral Sea Battle in May, the planning was already complete for the Midway operation and positioning of some of the fleet for the invasion of Midway had already commenced. It was the Doolittle Raid on Japan on April 18, 1942 that had provided the third factor that increased the Japanese urgency to capture Midway and destroy the U.S. Fleet. Although the raid itself did little material damage to Japan's cities, its impact upon the Japanese psyche was profound. None of the Japanese people was more mortified by the attack than the Commander in Chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet, the legendary Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto. For him, the safety of the Japanese home islands was a matter of the utmost professional and personal responsibility. He correctly concluded that the attack had been launched from an American aircraft carrier that had slipped through the "Midway keyhole" in the Japanese Defense Perimeter.[71] As long as Midway was in U.S. hands, more such raids were possible. After the Doolittle Raid the Japanese Naval Staff decided that the best way to protect the homeland from any more surprise attacks from the U.S. Pacific Fleet was to close the "keyhole" by capturing Midway.[72]

Since he believed that the U.S. Navy would have to defend Midway, Yamamoto saw an opportunity to achieve two objectives with one offensive. He and his staff developed a plan to hit Midway by surprise, occupy the island, and then annihilate the U.S. Pacific Fleet when it rushed out from Pearl Harbor to counterattack. Scarcely three weeks after the Doolittle Raid, on May 5, Yamamoto issued his operation order for the Midway invasion. The plan was flawed from its conception, primarily due to its complexity. It included: a diversionary attack in the Aleutians, an aircraft carrier striking force whose planes would bomb Midway, a fleet of battleships to conduct a ship-to-shore bombardment of the island, and an invasion force of five thousand men to seize and hold the island. When it sallied forth in late May, the Japanese fleet involved in the Midway operation was the largest fleet of ships that had ever sailed. It embraced

more than two hundred ships including eleven battleships, eight aircraft carriers, twenty-two cruisers, sixty-five destroyers, twenty-one submarines and almost seven hundred carrier and shore-based airplanes.[73] The tiny, two-thousand acre patch of coral and sand that was the object of their invasion was smaller than the total deck area of the Japanese ships involved in the operation.[74]

U.S. PACIFIC STRATEGY IN EARLY 1942

Midway Island proved to be of vital strategic importance during the Second World War, but for some different reasons than had been anticipated before the war. In pre-war planning American strategists predicted that Midway would be of great utility since it could serve as a forward refueling base for the surface warship fleet that was expected to dominate the coming conflict, as well as provide security for the vital Army and Navy bases on Oahu. What most American Naval strategists failed to anticipate was that aircraft and submarines would be the decisive forces in the naval war in the Pacific. Fortunately, Midway was even better suited to support the aviation and submarine arms of the Navy than it was to support the large battleships.

The failure of U.S. strategists to anticipate the ascension of aviation into one of the dominant forces in naval warfare resulted in the slow acquisition of an aircraft carrier force.

As a result the Japanese enjoyed a thirteen to three advantage in aircraft carriers in the Pacific in December 1941.[75] Despite the rushed deployment of a couple of carriers from the Atlantic, the U.S. was unable to close that gap during early 1942 due to combat losses.[76] The lack of carriers forced the U.S. to adopt an alternative strategy in the Pacific until the new carriers could be built and delivered.

America could quickly produce combat aircraft, but the first of their new line of Essex carriers were not due to arrive in the Pacific until January 1943. In order to offset Japanese superiority in aircraft carriers the U.S. adopted a defensive strategy based on using the remaining islands in their possession as "unsinkable carriers." The U.S. rushed combat aircraft to the Pacific Island bases that it still held, and kept sending them, until they could handle no more. No base received a higher priority than Midway. Already heavily reinforced in the year before the war began, from December 1941 to the end of May 1942, the number of aircraft at Midway's small airbase almost tripled.[77] The success of American strategy in the Pacific depended largely upon a small remote atoll, which guarded the gate to Hawaii. It functioned as an "unsinkable carrier," or more accurately two carriers, since it was home to 120 aircraft, twice the capacity of the largest of the enemy aircraft carriers. [78]

THE DECISION TO DEFEND MIDWAY

By early 1942 intelligence officers at U.S. Pacific Fleet Headquarters were able to decode and read about 15% of the Japanese Pacific Fleet's coded message traffic.[79] Code named "Magic," this capability enabled them to deduct that the Japanese were planning an invasion of Midway.[80] After U.S. planners learned that the Japanese were intending on occupying Midway a great debate ensued on the Pacific Fleet staff which was not made public until long after the war. Some members of the staff actually advocated that the U.S. allow the Japanese to take Midway. They believed that it would overextend the Japanese who were already struggling with the logistics of supporting the empire that they had conquered. They further reasoned that if the Japanese captured Midway then they would be forced to supply and reinforce their garrison over the vast Pacific where their resupply efforts would be exposed to interdiction by allied submarines, surface ships and aircraft.[81]

It was up to the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, Admiral Chester A. Nimitz to make the decision whether or not to defend Midway. After careful study Nimitz concluded that allowing Midway to fall was entirely too risky. If the Japanese captured the atoll their reinforcement efforts might prove more effective than the planned U.S. interdiction campaign. The Japanese would move quickly to station long-range land-based bombers at the Midway airfields. From there they could easily reach the Naval Base at Pearl Harbor and bomb the U.S. Pacific fleet facilities, virtually at will. If the Japanese controlled Midway, they might neutralize all of Hawaii and the U.S. Pacific Fleet would be forced back onto its own West Coast.

On 2 May Admiral Nimitz personally visited Midway to inspect the island's defenses.[82] What he saw there only strengthened his resolve to hold the island. Upon his return back to Pacific Fleet Headquarters at Pearl Harbor he ordered that personnel reinforcements, armament and supplies be rushed to the island. Efforts to increase fortifications on the island were redoubled and by late May over 1,700 Marines were dug in, defending the sands of Midway.[83] The island's immediate waters were defended by a small number of "PT" or Patrol Torpedo boats that had been stationed there since the early days of the war.[84] The Midway PT "fleet" was increased to 11 boats in May; their targets would be the Japanese troop transports.[85]

THE FLEETS MOVE TO CONTACT

In the latter days of May 1942 virtually all the available ships in the U.S. Pacific Fleet put to sea in a state of "fleet opposed invasion."[86] Even before the forces were joined in battle a major tactical advantage that the Japanese were counting on had been lost. They did not have the element of surprise and instead of having to rush out from Pearl Harbor in response to an

attack on Midway, the American Fleet was already waiting in an ambush position for the Japanese to arrive.

The significance of the island of Midway itself in the outcome of the battle has been largely ignored in many accounts of the victory. Most likely this is due to the remarkable number of circumstances, coincidences and brave men that combined to create the most incredible victory in American Naval history. The American code breaking, missed Japanese opportunities, sacrifice of the American Torpedo Bombers, and timing of the decisive dive bombing attack which knocked out three carriers in six minutes, have deservedly been the facts best remembered by history. However, the importance of Midway itself, the aggressiveness of its defenders, and the Japanese perception of both its strategic importance and tactical value were as decisive as any other factors in the battle.

As the largest armada in history bore down upon her, Midway and her defenders refused to be a passive target and wait for the Japanese to land the first blow. While the ground defenses were being strengthened virtually round the clock, Midway's air fleet conducted reconnaissance far out into the vast Pacific. It was a Midway based PBY that first sighted the invasion force early on the morning of 3 June while it was still over 700 miles south-west of Midway. The report of that sighting had three immediate and significant effects. First, it confirmed that the radio intercepts that the Americans had decoded were not a ruse and that the enemy fleet was approaching from where and when it was expected. Second, it confirmed that the position of the American fleet for an attack on the Japanese carrier force, which would arrive the next day from the northwest, was favorable. And finally, it gave Midway's defenders the opportunity to launch the first blow, which they did. Midway's land based aircraft launched a series of sorties against the invasion force on 3 June followed by more strikes against the carrier force on the next day. Other than damaging one tanker, these attacks did very little to slow the Japanese fleet.[87] However, they had a profound impact on the battle, because of their effect on the decisions that were made on the morning of the 4th of June by Admiral Nagumo.

THE BATTLE FOR MIDWAY IS JOINED

The Japanese opened their pre-invasion attack on Midway early on the morning of 4 June with the launch of 108 combat aircraft from the four carriers of their main striking force. These carriers, the *Akagi*, *Kaga*, *Hiryu* and *Soryu* were under the direct command of Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo who had also commanded them during the attack on Pearl Harbor. The air attack, which arrived over Midway at 0634 hours, heavily damaged facilities on the island, killed eleven defenders and wounded seven. Of the twenty-seven Marine Fighter Planes that took off

from the island to attack the incoming Japanese formations, only seventeen returned. The defenders of Midway took an even heavier toll on their attackers. Thirty-eight of the attackers were shot down and another twenty-nine aircraft were so seriously damaged that they were out of the battle for good.[88] The withering volume of fire from the island prompted the leader of the attack to radio back to Nagumo that the island's defenses had not been diminished. He recommended that a second attack on the island be launched. It was a telling moment.

MIDWAY'S INFLUENCE ON NAGUMO'S DECISION

Nagumo's initial plan had been to only launch one attack on Midway which he thought would soften its defenses enough to ensure a successful landing by the invasion forces. He could then prepare his aircraft to attack any American ships that might be found in the area, or to meet any coming out from Pearl Harbor. However, his fleet and the invasion fleet, with the lightly protected troop transports, were attacked repeatedly by planes that he concluded had to be coming from Midway.[89] As a carrier skipper he knew that the continued attacks from the planes from the airfield at Midway were a significant risk to the safety of his fleet. Having no confirmed information about any American carriers in the area he made the decision to rearm his planes for another strike on Midway. By concentrating the main effort of his carrier planes on bombing Midway and neglecting the possibility of an attack from any U.S. carrier planes he deprived his fleet of the best means of dealing with any opposition carrier force.[90] Further, the time required for the rearming of ordnance from that designed to penetrate ships to that designed for ground targets, meant that most of those bombs and full fuel lines were sitting on his carrier's decks when the American dive bombers arrived overhead.

Nagumo has been justly criticized in a multitude of historical works about the battle for several mistakes that he made that ultimately doomed his fleet. His inflexibility, poor reconnaissance, and neglect of time management were all contributing factors to the destruction of his carrier force. What has been ignored is what might have caused one of Japan's most experienced Admirals to lose his edge at such a critical moment. A review of the works of several Japanese Admirals that survived the war exposes that they relied too heavily on the enemy doing what was expected. Nagumo in particular was unable to cope with surprise. He had sailed into the waters off of Midway expecting a passive target and an easy conquest. The toughness of the island's defenders, both on land and in the air, put him off balance, setting him up for the knockout blow that was delivered from the American carriers.

THE SECOND AND THIRD DAYS OF THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY

Despite the loss of the four carriers from their striking force, the Japanese did not immediately accept defeat. Throughout the 5th of June they considered other means of pressing their offensive, including a surface fleet bombardment of Midway and a rendezvous with their two carriers in the Aleutians. Despite the loss of their four best carriers, the Japanese still had more ships of every class committed to the Midway operation than the Americans had in the entire Pacific. Again, the Japanese respect for the "unsinkable carrier" of Midway played an important part in their ultimate decision to retreat.[91] They knew that despite their air strike on the island, the airfield was still operational and that planes from Hawaii could be quickly be flown out as reinforcements. They gloomily concluded that any surface fleet attacking Midway would be destroyed before it could get close enough to fire a shot.[92]

As the Japanese fleet turned to limp home, another disaster awaited them. Two of their cruisers collided in the darkness and the damage they sustained left them unable to keep up with the rest of their fleet. As a result, when dawn came on the 5th of June they were exposed to one more blow from Midway. Just as they had landed the first punch, three days before, Midway's airmen landed some of the last ones on the 6th. They joined with airmen from the carriers *Enterprise* and *Hornet* in attacking the cruisers *Mogami* and *Mikuma*, eventually sinking the *Mikuma*. During those attacks, the aircraft piloted by one of Midway's airmen, Captain Richard E. Fleming, USMC, was struck by anti-aircraft fire and burst into flames. He deliberately crashed into the Mikuma, causing a fire and considerable damage.[93] He received the Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously; the first Marine aviator of World War Two, and the second defender of Midway to be so honored.[94]

AFTER THE BATTLE

REPAIRS AND EXPANSION

Midway's importance to the war effort did not end with the great battle fought for her soil. The island's facilities had been badly damaged by the Japanese bombing so repairs were begun immediately. The Cable Company buildings were converted into a hospital and construction of another airfield was begun on Sand Island. The anchorage in Welles Harbor was expanded to provide moorings for six cruisers and five destroyers. The Seabees also constructed an underground hospital, expanded the underground fuel storage tanks, and added new shop buildings and a power plant.[95] The island continued to serve as an important supply

base for the drive across the Central Pacific as well as a full service hospital for wounded Servicemembers returning from the front.

SUPPORTING THE SUBMARINE OFFENSIVE

The U.S. Navy continued to use Midway as an important element in pursuing its Pacific strategy during the next two years. Perhaps its most important contribution after the battle was as a submarine base. After completing their patrols in Japanese waters, American submarines were able to refuel and refit at Midway instead of having to make the trip all the way back to the facilities at Pearl Harbor. Being able to refit at Midway cut an average of from six to ten sailing days off the time it would have taken to go to Pearl.[96] That enabled the submarines of the U.S. fleet to spend more time in Japanese waters, where they took a heavy toll on enemy shipping from 1942-45. The effect of the submarine campaign against Japan has been largely overlooked due to the secretive nature of that type of warfare. Perhaps no element of the U.S. military strategy against Japan was more crippling to their war effort than the "blockade" prosecuted by U.S. submarines. The base at Midway made that blockade more effective.

DISREPAIR AND DEMOBILIZATION

Gradually however, Midway began to work itself out of a job. As the war pressed westward and more forward bases were established, parts of Midway began to fall into a state of neglect and disrepair. Although the submarine pens remained active throughout the war other portions of the base, like the airfield were used less and less. Maintenance of old bases was naturally a lower priority than the construction of new ones nearer the fight and the eventual target of the Japanese home islands.

The surrender of the Japanese on August 14, 1945 served to continue the decline of Midway. The rapid demobilization of the U.S. Navy after the war naturally took its toll on the island base, officers and men were transferred without relief, and machinery was left to rust where it stood. Eventually, Eastern Island was completely abandoned. During the post-war period Midway continued to serve as a Naval Operating Base and Airfield, but aside from the east-west air traffic that continued to stop over on the hop across the Pacific, the pace was incessantly slow. However, peace and the respite that it brought did not last long.

THE KOREAN CONFLICT

In the summer of 1950, when hostilities broke out in Korea, the United States again found strategic value in the location of little Midway. The situation in Korea demanded that U.S. Forces and supplies be delivered quickly, and in mass, to South Korea if it were going to survive

the North Korean invasion. Logistically unprepared to fight a war half way around the world from its heartland, one of the first problems the U.S. encountered was fuel. If American warships crossed the Pacific at near top speed, their tankers could not keep up with them to keep them fueled. An-in transient fuel station was needed and Midway was the best solution. The base was quickly fully reactivated and used throughout the war as a fueling station for U.S. Navy ships crossing between Korea and the American West Coast.[97] During this period the base was also the site of the construction of new facilities for military transport aircraft which landed on the island on their Trans-Pacific flights.

GOONEY BATTLES

After the Korean Conflict the pace of military operations on Midway quieted again. However, the islands became the site of another struggle for supremacy. The U.S. Navy was able to quickly drive off the Japanese on two separate occasions, but found it had met its match with the "Gooney Birds." The entire atoll was populated with an average of nearly one million Laysan Albatrosses, nicknamed "Gooney Birds" by the Marines who were stationed on the island because of their often-ridiculous antics.[98] Although spectacular in flight they are uncoordinated on land and have the annoying habit of nesting near the Midway runways and using them for their own takeoffs and landings. The Midway Islands host the largest single nesting ground of this species in the world, over 70 percent of the world's population.[99] During the late 1950's these birds were colliding with the planes using the naval airstrip on the island at a rate of about five hundred times per year.[100] These collisions often caused serious damage and even loss of aircraft and lives. Efforts at relocating, culling or exterminating the gooneys proved unsuccessful and earned the criticism of ecologists. As the cost of the frequent collisions continued to mount it appeared that Midway was going to have to make a choice between guns and "goonies."

VIETNAM

When the United States became involved in its third war in the Far East in less than 40 years, Midway again proved to be an essential base for supporting U.S. operations in South East Asia. It was a key stop for both ships and aircraft for refueling and other services as they traveled between the United States and Vietnam. In 1968, at the height of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War over 300 ships and 11,000 aircraft docked or landed at Midway.[101]

Just over twenty-seven years to the day after the Battle of Midway, in June of 1969, the island was again the scene of a meeting between East and West. This time it was chosen as

the meeting place for U.S. President Richard Nixon and Premier Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam. They met at Midway to forge an agreement on the orderly withdrawal of U.S. Forces from South Vietnam.[102] Once again Midway proved to be the United States' "Bridge to the Orient."[103]

THE COLD WAR

During the Cold War, Midway assumed another prominent role in the defense of the United States when it served as the western terminus of the Distant Early Warning or DEW Line. The DEW line was a line of radar installations and aircraft that covered the area from Midway to Alaska, and continued across Canada, Iceland and Greenland in order to provide early warning of a Soviet attack on the North America.[104] Originally the DEW Line's western boundary terminated at Alaska. However, this left a gap in the coverage. Soviet Bombers possessed the capability to fly an "end around" the Alaska DEW station by crossing the North Pacific.[105] Aided by the Jet Stream they would have been able to reach targets deep within the United States. Again, the location of Midway provided a solution to a strategic dilemma faced by the United States. Beginning in July 1958 BARRIER PACIFIC (BARPAC) became operational at Midway. Every four hours, every day of the year, a plane would launch from Midway to patrol a 1,500-mile corridor in the northern Pacific. Between 1957 and 1965 more than 11,000 BARPAC missions launched from Midway Island.[106] BARPAC remained operational until the advent of Low Frequency Radar, which could operate over the horizon, made the DEW line obsolete.

POST COLD WAR

With the end of the Cold War Midway began a decline into semi-dormancy. Just as transportation requirements had helped to make Midway important, advances in transportation technology contributed to its decline. Ships that once needed coal, then liquid fuel, to make the Trans-Pacific voyage were replaced by nuclear powered vessels, capable of circumnavigating the globe several times without refueling. Although Midway's submarine base remained active servicing the Navy's Polaris submarines,[107] it was no longer needed as a coaling or refueling station for most of the fleet. Likewise, advances in aircraft technology enabled most aircraft to refuel in the air or cross the Pacific without touching down.

Finally, the flocks of sea birds that made Midway their nesting ground contributed to the Navy's curtailment of flights to the island. By the 1980's the island was hosting an astounding two million birds annually. Half of those were "goonies" or Laysan Albatrosses who continued

their annoying habit of colliding with and damaging increasingly expensive Navy aircraft. When the U.S. Congress went looking for bases to eliminate, Midway appeared to be a logical choice for closure. It was costing $7.5 million dollars annually to maintain the islands aging facilities and due to its remote location and small size it was unable to expand further to absorb any units that might be displaced from other locations[108]. In 1989, Congress issued orders to the Navy to initiate the closure of their Base at Midway.[109] In the words of Navy Secretary John Dalton the government was, "trading guns for goonies."[110]

On 31 October 1996, President Bill Clinton signed Executive Order 13022, which formally placed Midway under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior and designated the atoll as a National Wildlife Refuge.[111] An extensive cleanup was conducted before the Navy completed transfer of the atoll to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1997.[112] This cleanup included the destruction of more than 100 buildings on the two main islands, but it still left significant facilities operational for wildlife personnel and visitors.[113]

In December 2000 President Clinton signed a second Executive Order affecting the Midway area. He set aside 84 million acres of ocean around Midway to be designated as the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve.[114] This protective measure prohibits commercial fishing in the area as well as any defense-related build-up on Midway.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service considered near-total abandonment of the island but opted instead to lease the island to a commercial operator. The Midway Phoenix Corporation now operates the atoll as wildlife preserve and tourist attraction, but the number of visitors allowed on the island is strictly controlled. Visitation is limited to 100 at a time, but this apparently only adds to the charm of the island. In their October 2001 issue, National Geographic Traveler Magazine listed Midway as one of the top fifty places in the world to visit.[115]

THE FUTURE OF MIDWAY

Inch for inch, the tiny atoll of Midway has been more important to the United States than any of its other Pacific possessions. Using the same scale, its strategic importance to the U.S. in the 20th century was probably only exceeded by the Panama Canal. Its position has been vital to both the protection of the Hawaiian Islands and our reach towards Asia. However, the combination of technology and a more restrained reach towards the Far East in recent years have combined to relegate Midway's importance. At this point in time it is possible to conclude that Midway's slide into obscurity and obsolesce will be a permanent one, but there are also some indications to the contrary.

Although no longer a Naval Base, Midway still hosts military transport aircraft for refueling and is frequently used as a staging area by U.S. Coast Guard C-130s serving in the North Pacific.[116] Recently both Japan Airlines and All Nippon Airlines initiated research into changing their routes on their Trans-Pacific flights. Although their routes would still be well to the north of Midway, the island might be needed as a stand-by for emergency landings or passenger illnesses. As a result the 7,900-foot runway and other facilities at Midway have been refurbished and certified by the Federal Aviation Administration to handle just such a situation.[117]

In August 2001 the Commerce Department initiated steps to conduct a "legal review" of Clinton's Executive Order establishing the NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve.[118] The Bush Administration would like to see Clinton's Executive Order overturned or weakened. The administration's primary interest in easing the current restrictions is linked to future development and testing of missile defense programs. The U.S. Navy has already named Midway as a possible future launch site for target drones to be intercepted by missiles launched from Aegis cruisers or destroyers.[119]

Midway could also have a future role in America's plan for Theater Missile Defense (TMD), depending upon the technology that is developed as TMD systems are fielded. If TMD is a wholly satellite-based system, a location over the center of the North Pacific Ocean will likely be the optimal location for a satellite to be stationed to intercept and destroy missiles launched from China or Korea. Locating satellite tracking and communications systems on Midway, where infrastructure already exists for such a build-up, may be required to monitor satellites effectively in the North Pacific. On the other hand, if some of the systems for TMD are ground based, then Midway's location astride the flight path between China or Korea and the United States, mark it as one of the best possible locations to place early warning radar and other components of an anti-ballistic missile defensive system.

Midway's future strategic potential naturally is tied to the direction the United States decides to reach. With the anticipated rise of the People's Republic of China into a more dominant role in the Pacific rim over the next two decades, the United States is likely to be drawn into either more engagement programs in that region, or more conflicts. Either way, it is possible that the current inventory of U.S. bases in that region will prove to be inadequate. Midway offers another location option for the staging of forces or material, if required. If the theater remains benign and engagement programs are the norm, then Midway, our "Bridge to the Orient," will be there for us.

A recent chapter was added to Midway's history that called to mind its past and could have provided a hint of the island's potential future. In June 1999, the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Kukui* towed a 140-foot fishing boat into the Midway Harbor. Aboard were 120 illegal refugees from the People's Republic of China, their planned destination unknown.[120] The Coast Guard had found them north of Midway where they had been adrift with a broken propeller for over a month.

The appearance of a few Chinese on Midway may have been coincidental, or perhaps, like the appearance of a few Japanese feather poachers one hundred years before, it may have served as a whisper of things to come. The rise of China as an expansive power in the Orient appears as inevitable as the rise of Japan must have appeared three quarters of a century ago. As the United States and China turn to face each other over the vast expanse of the Pacific, in between them lies an atoll with three very small islands of sand and coral that could once again prove to be some of the most strategically important real estate on earth.

Word Count = 9,907

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[59] Morison, 4: 73.

[60] Paul S. Dull, A Battle History of the Imperial Japanese Navy (1941-1945) (Annapolis, Maryland: United States Naval Institute, 1978), 21.

[61] One of those killed was Lieutenant George Cannon who had been commanding one of Midway's gun batteries. Mortally wounded by enemy fire, he refused to leave his post and became the first Marine of World War Two to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. The Congressional Medal of Honor (Forest Ranch: California: Sharp and Dunnigan Publications, 1984), 277.

[62] Theodore Roscoe, United States Submarine Operations in World War Two (Annapolis, Maryland: United States Naval Institute, 1949), 19.

[63] Admiral Matome Ugaki, Fading Victory (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 47, also Sherrod, 52.

[64] Harry A. Gailey, The War in the Pacific (Novato, California: Presidio Press, 1995), 50.

[65] Morison, 4: 74.

[66] Mochitsura Hashimoto, Sunk: The Story of the Japanese Submarine Fleet, 1941-1945 (New York: Henry Holt, 1954), 57.

[67] Hough, 1: 217.

[68] Sherrod, 53.

[69] Masanori Ito, The End of the Japanese Imperial Navy (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1962) 54.

[70] Walter Lord, Incredible Victory (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 2.

[71] John Keegan, The Second World War (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 271.

[72] John Toland, Rising Sun (New York: Random House, 1970), 347.

[73] Mitsuo Fuchida and Masatake Okumiya, Midway, The Battle that Doomed Japan (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1971), 80.

[74] Edwin T. Layton, "And I Was There": Pearl Harbor and Midway—Breaking the Secrets (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1985), 434.

[75] Dunnigan, 277.

[76] When the Battle of Midway opened the U.S. still had only three operational carriers in the Pacific: *Enterprise*, *Hornet* and *Yorktown*. The *Lexington* had been sunk at the Coral Sea and the *Saratoga* was docked at the West Coast for repairs. Japan had lost only the small carrier *Shoho* at Coral Sea.

[77] Richard W. Bates, The Battle of Midway (Norfolk: U.S. Naval War College, 1948), 7.

[78] Dull, 63.

[79] It can no longer be proven, but it is probable that much of the intercepting of the encoded Japanese Naval traffic about the planned invasion was done on Midway itself. During the early years of the war the westernmost radio intercept stations in the Pacific were located at Midway Island and Palmyra Atoll. Because this project remained Top Secret for so many years after the war it is no longer possible to ascertain which intercepts came from what stations. John Costello, Days of Infamy (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 411.

[80] Fred W. Winterbotham, The Ultra Secret (New York: Dell Publishing, 1975), 251.

[81] James F. Dunnigan and Albert A. Nofi, Dirty Little Secrets of World War II (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1994), 327.

[82] Gordon W. Prange, Miracle at Midway (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982), 38.

[83] Melson, 8.

[84] Captain Robert Johns Bulkley Jr., At Close Quarters: PT Boats in the United States Navy (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1962), 277.

[85] Combat Narrative: Battle of Midway (Washington: Office of Naval Intelligence, 1943), 17.

[86] Lord, 31.

[87] Accounts differ as to the amount of damage caused by the Midway based aircraft, primarily B-17s. In Incredible Victory, Walter Lord claims that no hits were scored by the Midway based aircraft on any Japanese ships. However, the account written from the Japanese perspective, by Fuchida and Okumiya (previously cited) as well as Dull both confirm that the *Akebono Maru,* an oil tanker, was hit on 3 June by planes from Midway.

[88] Dull, 146.

[89] Actually by this time in the battle Nagumo's carriers had already been attacked by both Midway and carrier based aircraft. Due in part to poor reconnaissance he discounted the possibility that American carriers were operating nearby and were a threat to his fleet. He attributed all the attacks to land based planes coming from Midway.

[90] Andrieu D'Albas, Death of a Navy (New York: H. Wolff Limited, 1957), 151.

[91] Fuchida, 216.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Fuchida, 226.

[94] The Congressional Medal of Honor (Forest Ranch: California: Sharp and Dunnigan Publications, 1984), 318. The Medal of Honor Citation for Captain Fleming is incorrect as it states that he, "...crashed to the sea in flames." After the war it was learned from the Japanese that Fleming had actually crashed into the *Mikuma*, they believed deliberately, causing a severe fire and many casualties.

[95] William Reynolds Braisted, Paolo E. Coletta, ed., "Midway Island," United States Navy and Marine Corps Bases, Overseas (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985), 208.

[96] Eugene B. Fluckey, Thunder Below (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 61.

[97] James A. Field, History of the United States Naval Operations, Korea (Washington: Naval History Department, 1962), 77.

[98] "Who's Gooney Now?," Newsweek, 54 (October 26, 1959): 39.

[99] "Man vs. Bird," Time, 74 (October 26, 1959): 74. Also Pousner, K-3.

[100] "Who's Gooney Now?," Newsweek, 54 (October 26, 1959): 74.

[101] Paolo E. Coletta, ed., United States Navy and Marine Corps Bases, Overseas (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985), 208.

[102] "A First Step at Midway," Life, 66 (June 20, 1969), 36.

[103] "Bridge to the Orient, the Navy's New Station of the Midway Islands", Time, 38 (August 11, 1941), 28.

[104] Bartlett, 39.

[105] John B. Lukasiewicz, Stories About Vance: The Pacific Barrier DEW Line, available from <http://www.ussvance.com/Vance/dewline.html>; Internet, accessed 19 January 2002.

[106] Mike Daak, Midway Plaque Dedication, available from <http://www.willyvictor.com/MDYPlaqueDed/MDYPlaqueDed.htm>; Internet, accessed 12 January 2002.

[107] Ronald W. Jackson, China Clipper (New York: Everest House, 1980), 206.

[108] Closing of Midway, available from <http://community.silverlink.net/midway/closing%20Midway.html>; Internet, accessed 8 December 2001.

[109] Michael Mecham, "Midway Island takes on a New Aviation Role," Aviation Week and Space Technology (New York: June 21, 1999), 53.

[110] Howard Pousner, "Midway Atoll: At Peace in the Pacific," The Atlanta Journal-Constitution (Atlanta: August 13, 2000), K-2.

[111] William Jefferson Clinton, "Executive Order 13022—Administration of the Midway Islands," Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents 32 (November 11, 1996): 45 [database on line]; available from UMI ProQuest, Bell & Howell, Accessed 20 Dec 2001.

[112] Shirley Streshinsky, "Return to Midway," American Heritage (New York: April 2001), 75.

[113] Howard Pousner, "Midway Atoll: At Peace in the Pacific," The Atlanta Journal-Constitution (Atlanta: August 13, 2000), K-3.

[114] "Bush Reviewing NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve," Hawaiian Independent Media Center, 16 August 2001. Available from http://hawaii.indymedia.org/display.php3?article_id=484. Internet. Accessed 19 January 2002.

[115] Peter Greenberg, "Paradise Found," National Geographic Traveler, Vol. 18, No. 7 (October 2001), 102.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Mecham, 53.

[118] "Bush Reviewing NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve," Hawaiian Independent Media Center, 16 August 2001. Available from http://hawaii.indymedia.org/display.php3?article_id=484. Internet. Accessed 19 January 2002.

[119] Gregg K. Kakesako, "Niihau is an Important Part of Navy's Plans," Honolulu Star-Bulletin Local News, 13 June 1997. Available from http://starbulletin.com/97/06/13/news/story1.html. Internet. Accessed 12 January 2002.

[120] Howard Pousner, "Tiny Midway is Stage for Immigrant Saga," The Atlanta Journal-Constitution (Atlanta: August 28, 1999), A-3.

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