

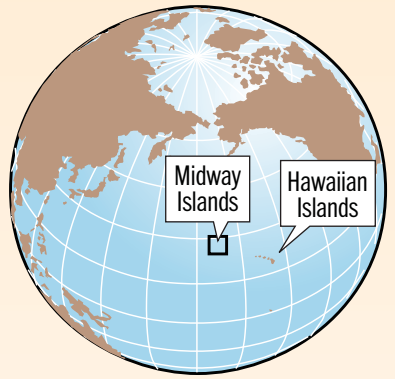
MIDWAY: TURNING POINT IN PACIFIC NAVAL WAR

On June 4, 1942, the Americans won a stunning victory at Midway, primarily because U.S. intelligence had broken Japan's naval code and knew Japanese plans. Defeat in this battle marked the end of Japan's advantage in the Pacific. After Midway, the war at sea was fought by more evenly matched forces.

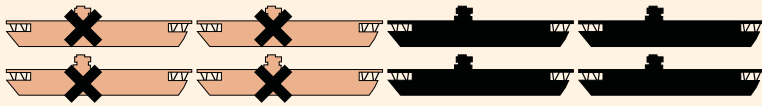
Japanese naval strength

The entire fleet under Adm. Isoroku Yamamoto was committed to the offensive. Only the first strike force under Vice Adm. Chuichi Nagumo engaged the U.S. task forces under Adm. Chester Nimitz.

Part of first strike force
 Lost at Midway



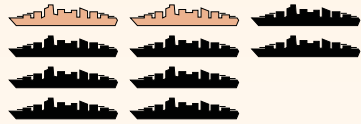
Aircraft carriers



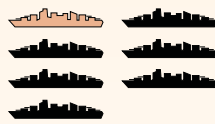
Battleships



Heavy cruisers



Light cruisers

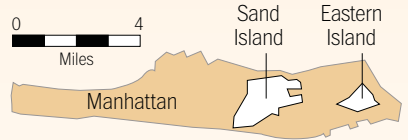


Destroyers



Midway Islands

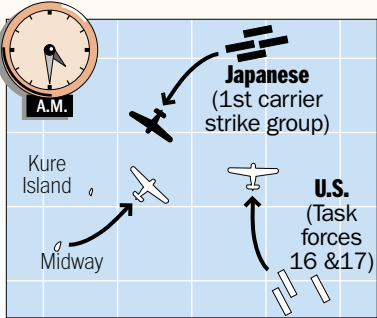
Located 162 miles northwest of Hawaii, the Midway Islands are comprised of two islands: Sand and Eastern. Both could fit in New York City with room left over.



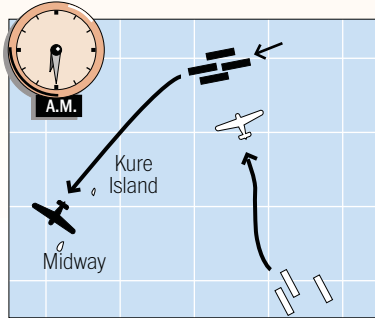
Air losses

Japan lost 250 aircraft, mostly because of carriers being sunk. The U.S. lost more than 100 planes during combat missions.

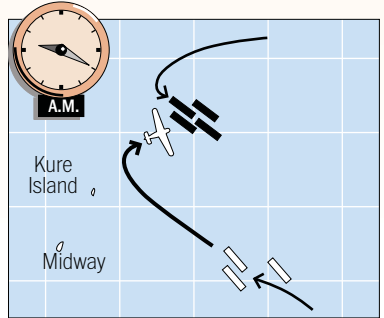
June 4: How the battle progressed



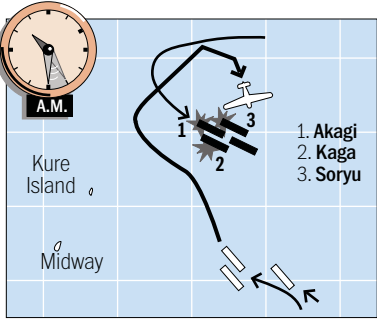
4:30 a.m.: U.S. search aircraft leave Yorktown carrier and Midway atoll as Japan launches a bombing force against Midway.



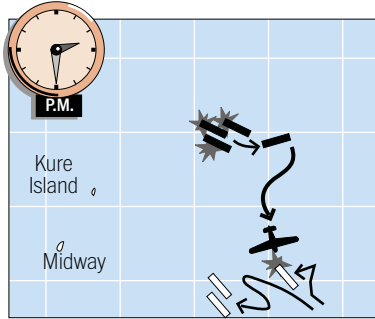
6:30 a.m.: Japanese fighters begin bombing Midway. U.S. attack forces are airborne; Midway airfields survive the Japanese attack.



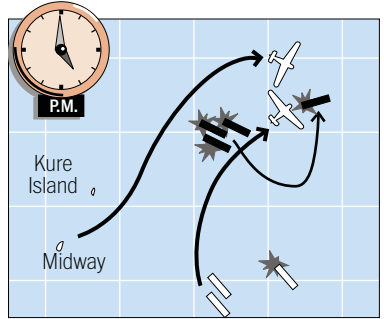
9:20 a.m.: 24 U.S. torpedo bombers are shot down while attacking Japanese warships. The attack fails, but the Japanese fleet is disorganized.



10:25 a.m.: Turning point in battle: U.S. dive bombers from the Yorktown and Enterprise destroy Japanese carriers Akagi, Kaga and Soryu.



2:30 p.m.: Japanese aircraft from the carrier Hiryo attack the Yorktown. Two torpedoes render the ship dead in the water. It is then abandoned.



5:00 p.m.: U.S. dive bombers from the carrier Enterprise and the Midway airfield attack and destroy the Japanese carrier Hiryo.

Source: Times Atlas of Second World War; "The Second World War," by John Keegan; "World War II: America at War 1941-1945"; history.navy.mil

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