



Principle forces of Yamamoto with thunder in their hearts.



The story in additional pictures.

Japan had the edge in carriers and veteran pilots. A secret, deceptive battle fleet was sent to Alaska to lure and split U.S. forces. In the South Pacific, Japanese forces were running wild. From the Solomons to Anchorage, Alaska, it is 5,577 miles.

Kiska landscape. When it was revealed by Washington DC, it came as a complete surprise. That word surprise was paramount in the Japanese war plan, too. As with Pearl Harbor, the Japanese admiralty relied heavily on surprise.

However, Yamamoto's elaborate planning had one peek-a-boo flaw. In a world of surprise, profound silence and vital secrecy, the Admiral's dangerous campaign was watched by HYPO of Hawaii, his diversion et al—HYPO was America's war intelligence post which surveilled Japan's code systems. HYPO's commander, Joe Rochefort, not knowing which area was to be the eventual target in the Pacific, played a trick to find out—well known today. Joe relayed through an underwater cable that Midway's fresh water supply was limited, and then waited.

Rochefort knew the Japanese were tapping the cable and that these two letters, AF, was the designator for



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something, but nobody knew what AF was.

Within thirty-six hours, the Owada communications Intelligence network relayed to Tokyo a JN-25 coded message that signalled "AF" as Midway (JN-25 code word was "AF") The decoded statement: AF was low on fresh water. Upon notice, the Commander of the Pacific, naval forces central Pacific, Admiral Chester Nimitz, dispatched his three aircraft carriers from Pearl Harbor to Midway. The USS *Enterprise* and *Hornet* had just returned from patrol-cover in the South Pacific. The USS *Yorktown* was a battered ship from the conflict in the Coral Sea; where another carrier, the *Lexington*, went down. The *Yorktown* gave word that she needed some 90 days reservice. The intercepted message stopped that. She was given 72 hours on Nimitz's orders. The American work crews at Pearl Harbor worked like mad.

With a complement of eight cruisers and fifteen destroyers, the U.S. aircraft carriers sailed for Midway. On board the *Yorktown* stood the commander of all tactical operations, Rear-Admiral Frank J. Fletcher. He and Rear-Admiral Raymond Spruance, on board the *Enterprise*, directed the carrier task forces. Admiral Turner was commander on board the *Hornet*. They had charge of over 10,000 American seamen and aviators.

On board the *Enterprise* were Lt. Commander Stephen Jurika and Lt. Commander Mac Gregor Kilpatrick as assistant navigational officers. Jurika was from the Philippines; his mother was beheaded by the Japanese in Manila.

Kilpatrick was from New York. He was an All-American soccer captain in college back home. Now, they were, along with the rest of the world, at war. Most personnel on board the American carriers knew there was an invasion force, with carriers, heading for Midway. There was nothing secret about it on board; yet, what they didn't know was where the Japanese were.