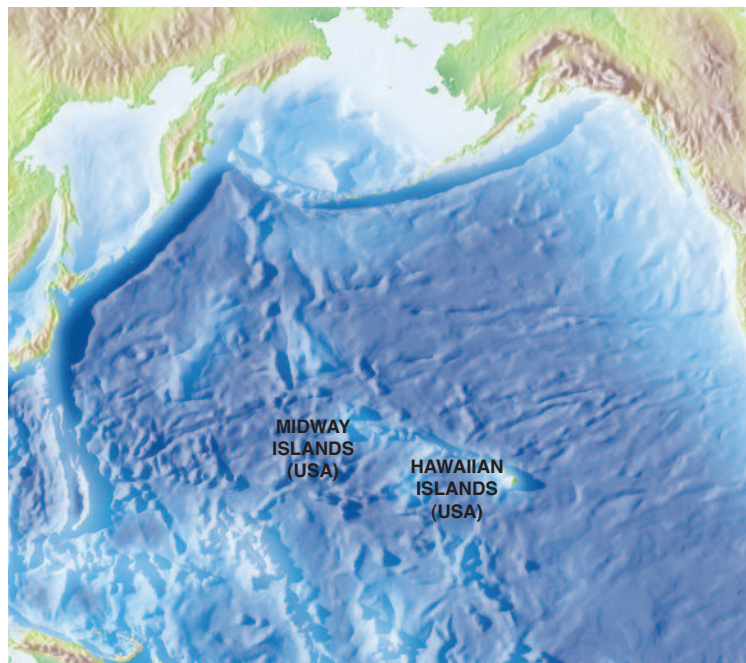


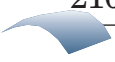
## A Miracle at Midway

God's Hand guiding in the battle has been seen throughout history. A vivid example is seen in the battle for control of Midway

In 1942, during World War II, Isoroku Yamamoto was Commander in Chief of the Japanese fleet. Yamamoto's goal was to gain control of the Pacific. Admiral Chester W. Nimitz was Commander in Chief of the American fleet in the Pacific.

That spring, the number of Japanese messages increased. The American intelligence had broken enough of the Japanese code to know that another major attack was being planned. But, where would the Japanese attack? Some thought they might attack Hawaii again. Some thought it might be the west coast of the United States. Or was it the American base on Midway Island?





The Japanese messages referred to AF as their target. But where was AF?

The United States Commander, Admiral Nimitz, thought the Japanese would probably attack either Midway or Hawaii, or perhaps both. The Americans needed to know. The American fleet had been weakened by the attack on Pearl Harbor and a recent battle in the Coral Sea. If they knew the place of the attack, they could be better prepared to defend themselves.

Knowing that the Japanese were listening to the American messages, plans were made to trick the Japanese into revealing their target. A radio message was sent from Midway, falsely announcing a problem with their water system and they had a limited supply of water. The Japanese, not knowing that the Americans could understand their code immediately sent a message. The message warned that AF was short of fresh water. The

Americans had their answer: the Japanese were planning to attack Midway.

If the Japanese could take Midway Island, they would be only a short distance from the United States base in Hawaii. Taking Hawaii would put them even closer to the mainland of the United States.

Japanese messages revealed June 4 as the date planned for the attack. Preparations were immediately begun to defend Midway. The American ships moved without using any radio messages, so the Japanese would not know they were near. The Japanese thought the American fleet was in Hawaii and were not aware of the preparations which were being made.

The Japanese had four aircraft carriers commanded by officer Nagumo. Using the airplanes, they planned to attack and take Midway.

The Japanese Commander Yamamoto was on board one of three new Japanese battleships.

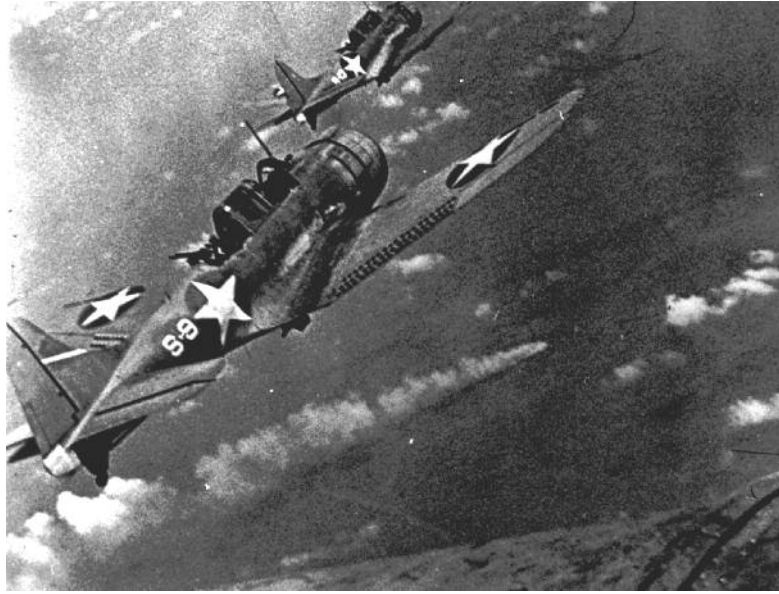
These new battleships were being held out at sea for a later attack on the American fleet. Yamamoto thought the huge, well-equipped battleships would not be needed in the attack against Midway.

American planes searched the ocean, hunting for the Japanese fleet. But the Japanese carriers could not be seen under the dense clouds and fog. Early on the morning of June 4, the first Japanese planes began bombing Midway. The Americans were ready and the Japanese were met with gunfire. When the Japanese planes returned to their aircraft carriers to refuel, their plan was to make a second wave of attack on Midway.

When the Japanese pilots spotted the American fleet, Nagumo could not believe their reports. The American fleet was supposed to be in Hawaii. Nagumo immediately changed the plan of attack. Rather than striking again at Midway, he loaded different bombs with

which he planned to attack the American fleet.

While the Japanese were preparing for their next attack, the American planes were sent to attack the Japanese fleet. The battle was long and hard. In spite of the great strength of the Japanese fleet, the Americans were able to claim the victory. "The American victory was a miracle. American losses were one carrier and one destroyer sunk, 307 men killed, 147 aircraft lost and extensive damage to Midway installations. Japanese losses, on the other hand, were so severe as to change the course of the war in the Pacific: four carriers and one heavy cruiser sunk, another heavy cruiser damaged badly, 322 planes destroyed and 2,500 men killed, including many experienced pilots."<sup>75</sup> If Yamamoto had taken his great battleships into the battle, the results would probably have been far different.



The battle for Midway was the first defeat for the Japanese fleet and was a turning point in the war.

The war continued until 1945. As the Allied armies won battle after battle in Europe, Hitler realized he could not win and took his own life. Germany was forced to surrender and the war in Europe came to a close.

Japan continued to fight. The war with Japan ended only after America dropped two atomic bombs on that country. At last, the Japanese surrendered and World War II came to an end.

In God's Providence, the United States was spared from invasion or destruction. It remains "the land of the free and the home of the brave."