# Navy to commemorate WWII turning point battle

**By Darren Harrison, Naval District Washington Public Affairs**

The 1942 Battle of Midway will be commemorated at the United States Navy Memorial June 4 at 9 a.m. with a wreath laying ceremony followed by a symposium in the Naval Heritage Center.

The battle is considered to be a pivotal moment in the war in the Pacific. The small island of Midway located northwest of the Hawaiian chain was seen as strategically important by Japanese Combined Fleet Commander Adm. Isoroku Yamamoto. Yamamoto hoped to draw the U.S. carriers into a trap in order to prevent a repeat of the April 1942 Doolittle Raid during which bombers launched from *USS Hornet* (CV 12) and bombed Tokyo. The U.S. raid was in retaliation for Japan's attack at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

Prior to Midway, the Japanese commanded naval superiority over the U.S. fleet. But after the battle, the two fleets were essentially equal and the U.S. fleet went on the offensive.

The Japanese plan hinged on faulty intelligence that the United States had only two aircraft carriers at their disposal. They erroneously believed that the aircraft carrier *USS Yorktown* (CV 5) had been sunk a month earlier during the Battle of Coral Sea and that the remaining two carriers, Enterprise and Hornet, were at anchor in Pearl Harbor instead of lying in wait for the Japanese fleet to the northeast of Midway.

Additionally, leading up to the battle, the Japanese and the majority of U.S. Navy personnel did not know that American and British code-breakers had broken the code used by the Japanese Navy (JN-25) and had identified Midway as the target of an attack on either June 4 or June 5, 1942.

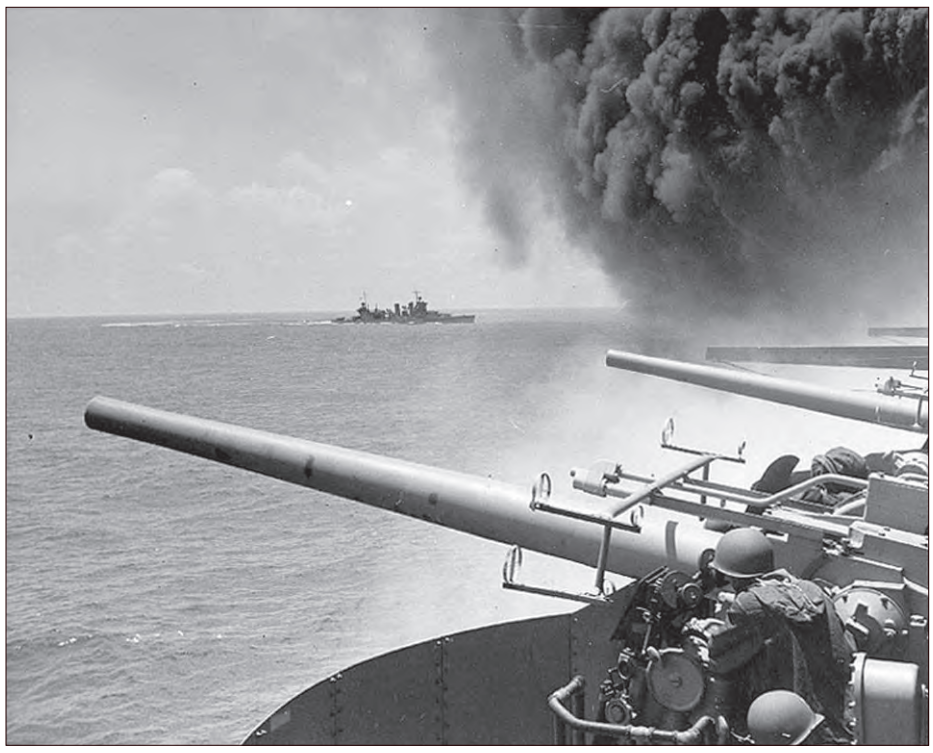
"The Japanese had sent some messages identifying a target using the code AF and we didn't know what AF referred to, only that the Japanese were going to attack it," said U.S. Navy Cmdr. (Ret.) Bob Allen who served on the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise (CV 6) during the battle. "So we sent a message out that Midway was running low on its water supply and the Japanese took the bait and notified everyone that AF was low on water."

"If we had lost Midway, we would have been in deep trouble as the Japanese could have bombed Pearl Harbor [again] at will," said U.S. Navy Cmdr. (Ret.) Cmdr. Verner Utke-Ramsing. "We would have had to operate from the West Coast which would have been very ineffective and add weeks for us to get on station."

Utke-Ramsing was a submariner on *USS Drum* (SS 228) in 1942, and even though he did not see any action during the actual battle, his boat did play a significant role in disrupting the Japanese battle plans.

***USS Yorktown* (CV-5), shortly after she was hit by three Japanese bombs on 4 June 1942. The dense smoke is from fires in her uptakes, caused by a bomb that punctured them and knocked out her boilers.**

**Official U.S. Navy Photograph by PH2 William G. Roy**
**Courtesy of the U.S. National Archives**



***USS Yorktown* (CV-5) Sailors man the 5"/38 gun gallery as they watch *USS Astoria* (CA-34) steam by shortly after the Yorktown had been hit by three Japanese bombs on 4 June 1942.**

**Official U.S. Navy Photograph by PH2 William G. Roy**
**Courtesy of the U.S. National Archives**

*Drum* torpedoed and sank the Japanese seaplane carrier *Mizuho* off the island of Hushu with its compliment of 10 midget submarines in May 1942. The Japanese had planned to use the submarines to attack American aircraft carriers in the battle for Midway. If *Drum* had not sunk *Mizuho*, there would have been an additional 10 Japanese submarines, instead of the four surrounding Midway during the battle. They could have located *Enterprise* and *Hornet*, and the Battle of Midway might have had a different outcome.

During the Battle of Midway, *USS Hammann* (DD 412) was alongside *Yorktown* trying to keep it afloat after a Japanese dive bomber attack and torpedo hits.

On board *Hammann* was U.S. Navy Chief Warrant Officer 2 (Ret.) Edward P. Anderson who was serving below deck when the ship was struck by a torpedo.

"I climbed up the ladder and got to the main deck," said Anderson. "As I got up there, I saw all the crew jumping into the water because we knew the ship was sinking. They say it only took a minute and 36 seconds for *Hammann* to go down."

The fatal blow to the Japanese fleet was delivered by dive bombers from *USS Enterprise*. Though running low on fuel, the pilots opted to trail a Japanese destroyer returning to the fleet following an unsuccessful attempt to depth charge against an American submarine. The dive bombers arrived when the Japanese carriers were at their most vulnerable, their decks full of armed aircraft. In their attack the American planes were successful at destroying three Japanese carriers.

"They caught the Japanese while they were re-arming their planes and so our dive bombers clobbered them," said Allen. "We really thought that Midway was the turning point of the war. We had seriously damaged the Japanese carriers and after the Battle of Midway we went onto the offensive."

Japan lost four of its six fleet aircraft carriers during the battle as well as many of their highly trained aircraft crews during the battle. The Battle of Midway is credited with effectively ending large-scale Japanese expansion in the Pacific.

# DoDEA Japan announces Teacher of the Year

**Bt the Office of the Japan District Superintendent**

The Japan District Superintendent's Office recently announced Michelle Foust as the 2011 District Teacher of the Year.

Foust was selected to represent Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) Japan by a review panel. The panel based their decision on a number of factors to include her interview, recommendation letters, and brief summation of her teaching career.

Foust has a very strong interest in technology and she is eager to share with students and teachers alike.

"We must not only assure that our students be technologically literate and develop collaboration skills as 21st Century learners, but we must also support our fellow educators as we move into a new era in education," said Foust.

According to The Sullivans School Principal Walter Wilhoit, Foust's williness to emphasize modern skills is one of the attributes that set her apart.

"Michelle Foust is a teacher of teachers," said Wilhoit. "She has lead the way at The Sullivans School to build a culture of reflection and professionalism among her colleagues – reflection of student assessment to drive instruction, reflection of student work to improve student performance, and reflection of teacher practices to meet 21st century skills. Michelle is a highly respected professional among her peers and The Sullivans Community. We are proud of her."

Foust works closely with colleagues, parents, and students to ensure that all the needs of the students are met. She believes at looking at the data to determine where each student is academically, then designing a program that will move the student forward in the learning process while meeting the DoDEA standards.

In addition, Foust is a part of the school improvement leadership team which looks at student work and data to determine goals for the school.

Lastly, through Foust's active involvement in youth activities with her children she enjoying helping out in the local community when there is a need for volunteers.

Faust believes that some of her unique qualities are that as a child she attended DoDEA schools, she is involved with the DoDEA schools through the eyes of a parent, and she is a DoDEA teacher, therefore she is able to see DoDEA from all perspectives. Foust will represent the Japan District as DoDEA makes its selection for the DoDEA Teacher of the Year which will be announced sometime in November.