

Comprehensive Air & Naval Combat Example: Midway



In the May-June 1942 turn, the Axis faction tries to place a CV Strike over Midway (p4519). Doing so will prevent the Allied faction from using Midway as an Air Base or Naval Base, which will open the door for a Beachhead landing against that Strategic Hex.

This operation begins with the Axis faction declaring it will place a CV Fleet in hex p4518, west of Midway in the International Dateline Naval Zone. The Axis must compose a Task Force to represent this support unit, so it makes an Intelligence Roll. The roll is a 2; with the automatic +6 DRM the Axis faction can only assign 8 ships to this Task Force.

From the main Japanese Naval Base in Truk (p3405), the Axis faction selects four CVs (Akagi, Hiryu, Kaga, and Soryu) and four CAs (Kumano, Mikuma, Mogami, and Suzuya). The Axis has powerful BBs like Yamato in Truk, but it declines to select those. Since the support unit's placement hex is two Naval Zones away; all ships in the Axis Task Force will have to make Speed Checks – which the slower BBs are more likely to fail. The Axis faction cannot add an LBA to this Task Force because it lacks an Air Base within three hexes of p4518, but it does have an I-boat (I-168) in its Force Pool to add.

The Western faction contests this placement with a CV Fleet of its own. The Western Intelligence Roll is better – a 4, which becomes a 10 with the automatic +6 DRM. Unfortunately, there isn't much in the way of available ships in Honolulu (p4226) to commit beyond three CVs (Enterprise, Hornet, and Yorktown) and a host of CAs (Astoria, Minneap, N Orleans, Northamp, Pensacola, Portland, and Vincennes). The Western faction does have an LBA in Honolulu (5BC) that it can add to the Task Force, since Honolulu is within nine hexes of the Air Base at Midway.

Now that both sides have created their Task Forces, it's time for Speed Checks. Only two ships have Speeds less than 6 – the Japanese CVs Akagi and Kaga – and they both pass. On to the battle!

The two sides look evenly matched, but the Western faction reveals an ace up its sleeve: the *Naval Intelligence Coup* FoW card. The Western faction rolls a die and gets a 2 – the Major Effect applies! This means the Western faction will get a +1 DRM for its choice of Day or Night Action, and a +1 DRM for its combat die rolls in the first round.

The players begin the Air & Naval Combat Sequence.

Step 1: The Axis faction declares it wants a Night Action, hoping to protect its carriers. The Western faction picks Day and rolls with a +3 DRM (+1 for Day Action, +1 for having a friendly Air Base within three hexes, and +1 for the FoW card). The Axis rolls a 5. The Western roll is a 2, which becomes a 5 with the +3 DRM – and since the Western faction is the non-phasing faction, it wins the tie.

Step 2: Between its four carriers, the Axis faction has 14 Airstrike Factors to assign. The Axis faction chooses to ignore the US LBA (since it would have to assign three Airstrike Factors to get just one die against it), and puts 5 factors on Enterprise, 5 on Hornet and 4 on Yorktown. The Axis faction also has the I-boat to add, but that marker cannot divide its Torpedo Factors, so it will commit its entire attack against Yorktown.

The Axis faction resolves its attacks:

- With 5 dice against Enterprise, it rolls a 3, 4, 2, 2 and 4. Enterprise escapes undamaged.
- 5 dice against Hornet, rolling a 5, 2, 1, 5 and 2. No hits, but Hornet is disabled and moved to the Disabled Box. The multiple disabled results do not have any additional effect.
- 6 dice against Yorktown, rolling a 3, 1, 3, 6, 4, and 6. Two hits! The Axis faction rolls two dice to see how many Damage Points are inflicted. The rolls are 2 and 1 – the sum of 3 is just enough to sink Yorktown. The ship is moved to the Sunk/Destroyed Box. After resolving its attack against Yorktown, I-168 is moved to the Naval Warfare Delay Box.

A reasonable round of fire for the IJN, but the USN gets to shoot back before these results take effect.

Step 3: Between its three carriers and one LBA, the Western faction also has 14 Airstrike Factors to assign. The Western faction spreads its attacks around liberally to take full advantage of the +1 DRM – three factors against each Japanese CV, and one factor against each of Mikuma and Mogami.

The Western faction resolves its attacks:

- With 3 dice (+1 DRM) against Akagi, it rolls a modified 6, 5, and 6. Two hits! The Western faction rolls two dice to see how many Damage Points are inflicted. There is no DRM to these rolls, but the resulting sum of 6 Damage Points is enough to sink Akagi. The disabled result is ignored.
- 3 dice (+1 DRM) against Hiryu, rolling a modified 2, 4 and 6. One hit. The roll of 3 Damage Points is just enough to sink Hiryu.
- 3 dice (+1 DRM) against Kaga, rolling a modified 6, 6 and 4. The two hits combine for 8 Damage Points, and Kaga likewise is sunk!
- 3 dice (+1 DRM) against Soryu, rolling a modified 3, 4 and 6. One hit, and a roll of 4 Damage Points is enough to put Soryu under!
- 1 die (+1 DRM) against Mikuma, rolling a modified 6. The subsequent roll of 5 Damage Points easily sinks Mikuma.
- 1 die (+1 DRM) against Mogami, rolling a modified 5. That breaks the Allied lucky streak, as Mogami is merely disabled.

Step 4: Only now do the combat results take effect. After removing all ships in the Disabled and Sunk/Destroyed Boxes, the Japanese Task Force has only two CAs remaining, while the Western Task Force still has Enterprise, seven CAs and the 5BC LBA.

Step 5: Seeing the overwhelming odds against him, the Axis faction declares it will retire from combat.

Step 6: The result of the battle is determined to be a Stalemate. Although the Axis faction retired from combat after the first Combat Round, it was able to inflict a Disabled or Sunk result against an enemy ship. Following the procedures for Stalemate:

- Both factions' CV Fleet support units are placed in the Naval Warfare Delay Box.
- The remaining undamaged ships in the Line of Battle Box are placed in the Used Box of the International Dateline Naval Zone.
- The US 5BC LBA is placed in the Used Asset Box.