

Admiral Yamamoto's Leadership in The Battle of Midway

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Born on the 4th of April 1884, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto was renowned and a high-ranking military officer in the Japanese imperial navy that carried participated in the second world war. Yamamoto is known for being the planner and executor of the Pearl Harbor attack on the United States on the 7th of April 1941 (Hoyt, 2001). After graduating from the naval academy in Japan, he ventured into service where he worked hard enough to join the staff college and enlisted into the Yamamoto family. He later earned the position of a lieutenant commander that enabled him to travel to the US to study English at Harvard University. It was his tenure while in the U.S. as a naval attaché that he developed a low opinion of the United States naval officers as he regarded them as a club of golfers. Yamamoto developed an interest in America's economic capabilities and began traveling to study the oil production sites and various industries in Detroit and Mexico. This, however, did not affect his academics as he remained a top student in his class.

Upon return to Japan, Yamamoto underwent various training that made him one of the respected aviation officers. He rose in the ranks to a senior admiral responsible for commanding the First Fleet. His military rank enabled him to try various tactics that led him to the use of aircraft carriers rather than the popular battleships that he considered obsolete His ingenuity was responsible for the transformation of naval warfare due to the success of aircraft carriers in warfare. The scholarly treatise analyzes Yamamoto's leadership as the naval commander of the Japanese fleet that attacked Pearl Harbor and was defeated. It focuses on the personality traits of Yamamoto, his warfare strategy, decisiveness, military knowledge, and commanding capabilities.

Leadership qualities

Yamamoto was of an excellent character that was admirable among military officers. He possessed high intellectual capabilities and creativity earning him respect and promotions since his inception into the Japanese Navy (Haulman, 2003). As part of the naval personnel, Yamamoto conducted a series of successful military invasions in East Asia including the Philippines and Malaysia (Hoyt, 2001). The allied forces made up of Americans, Dutch and British forces were defeated in these battles due to brilliant planning and execution. His boldness was illustrated when he opposed the proposal to attack the U.S. as he believed that the U.S. was strong and had an established motor industry. In a letter sent to his friend, Yamamoto categorically pointed out the strategic capabilities that the United States had and ruled out any possibility of success in the event of a Japanese invasion. Yamamoto was however known to be selflessness as he often credited his subordinates and team in the event of a successful operation. He took the responsibility after the defeat of the Japanese naval forces; Yamamoto took the burden of the defeat and sort to apologize to the emperor himself. His moral courage was reproachable by friends and enemies alike as he conveyed his opinions no matter the opposition. Likened to Robert Lee, a respected general in the American forces, Yamamoto possessed a high regard for American and hated fascist ideologies of the Germans and Italians due to the destructive capabilities such policies could impart Japanese people in the event of unification (Hoyt, 2001). There are no personality flaws that Yamamoto possessed that rendered him an unsuitable leader. He was an able leader and military strategist.

Battle experience

Professional knowledge and experience were amongst his superior competencies due to the significant exposure he had in both operations and diplomacy. Onboard NISSHIN, Yamamoto fought as a junior naval officer in the Battle of Tsushima which one of the greatest battles where the Japanese defeated Russia that led to the signing of the Treaty of Portsmouth (Haulman, 2003). His tours to the U.S. made him abreast of the position of the enemy and military prowess. His diplomatic knowledge was illustrated when he opposed Japan from signing of the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance with Germany and Italy. He termed the move as foolish due to America's position that could threaten Japan's economy. Accurately, the United States soon imposed trade embargoes on the the supply of raw material to Japan and later embargo on oil. Yamamoto was abreast of the economic position as well as the military capabilities of the United States. Despite strong resistance from the senior members of the Japanese navy and army personnel, Yamamoto insisted on going on with the plan. His boldness saw him insist on the Pearl Harbor attack plan to the point of making threats of resignation if the plan failed to be adopted.

Yamamoto resulted in bombings as his main plan during the invasion. He had planned a surprise attack that aimed at taking control of the Western Pacific in a period of twelve months of battle (Dahl, 2013). With the support of experienced Japanese naval officers, he launched the attack on the seventh of December, 1941. Yamamoto enjoyed a preliminary success in the attack on Pearl Harbor due to the presence of few naval weapons such as ships, submarines and cruisers were

absent. A poor decision to appoint a torpedo expert as the commanding officer of the aircraft carriers posed a great weakness in his operational competencies. This allowed the American naval intelligence programs to schedule surprise attacks on the widely spread Japanese forces leading to defeat in the Battle of Midway (Dahl, 2013). The Japanese naval aircraft carriers were sailing far much ahead of the rest of the fleet leading to loss of four of the carriers and experienced crews. The appointment of Nagumo was a poor planning operational decision as the admiral was not experienced (Rosenberg, 2003). The attack on the Pearl Harbor attack changed the cause of World War II. Despite the American success in stopping the attack and final assassination of Yamamoto, he was regarded by both Americans and Japanese as the best commander that the Japanese had. Some military strategists attribute his loss to the appointment of Nagumo which was ill-fated and possibly the only cause of the loss (Rosenberg, 2003). Many Americans regarded him as a warlord who deserved no mercy. Yamamoto was a great military strategist that was patriotic to his country leading him to fight in a war he strongly criticized.

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