

The following are disposition/formation diagrams taken from the Japanese history of their carrier force.

The drawings were copied by me from that history:

**Pearl Harbor:** This formation is the one selected by Admiral Nagumo for cruising and the attack on Pearl Harbor. It conforms to that described by Minoru Genda in several papers and also in Sunburst. It is their standard formation for cruising and fighting when the principal enemy is a land target. The carriers are massed, cruising in a box 8km on a side, with screening ships arranged around the boxes. I have used their standard plotting symbols rather than those in Senshi to conform with those in the text.

**Indian Ocean: March April 1942:** This is a cruising formation/order. It is noteworthy, if only because the ships are strung out in a single column. It is not particularly well done either for air operations or ASW protection, where width usually is better than depth.

**Coral Sea: SHOHO group.** The cruisers are placed more for warning than AA support and in the event offered no real support when SHOHO came under attack. It is not a true circular formation as used by the USN at this time.

**Coral Sea:** This is a loose cruising formation. The most notable thing about this arrangement is that the Japanese knew US carriers were in the vicinity yet they had no ships in position to support the carriers in the event of an attack. This conforms to the Japanese notion of dispersal and maneuver as the best defenses against air attack. It was rare that a Japanese carrier in 1942 would be in direct company with more than one or two ships, typically plane guard destroyer(s).

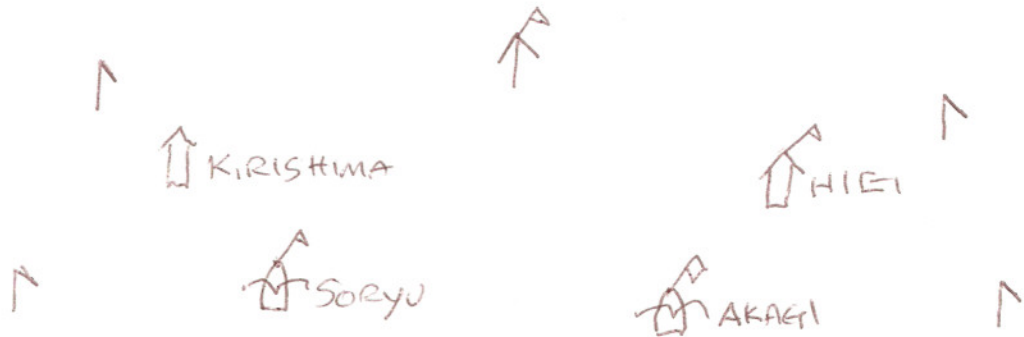
**Midway:** This is the formation the carriers were in on the morning of the Battle of Midway. It is essentially the same as the Pearl Harbor attack formation with SHOKAKU and ZUIKAKU absent; again they assumed they would be attacking a land target. One thing that is noteworthy is how formation discipline broke down once they found themselves in a running fight. By the time the USN dive bombers arrived on the scene there was no formation, with each carrier essentially on its own. Quite a contrast with USN carrier formations.

**Operation AL:** This is the formation the Aleutians group used. It is similar to the Indian Ocean disposition. Each carrier had two destroyers attached.

**Eastern Solomons: RYUJO group.**

**Eastern Solomons: Main Body.** This one of their standard battle dispositions with the battleships and cruisers in a vanguard and the carriers astern, in a modified box (2 ships). The idea was the van would intercept incoming raids and warn the carriers. It would also act as a diversion hoping to draw enemy aircraft onto the heavy surface ships. In Eastern

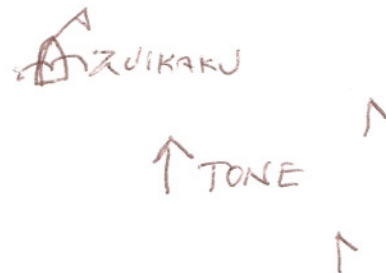
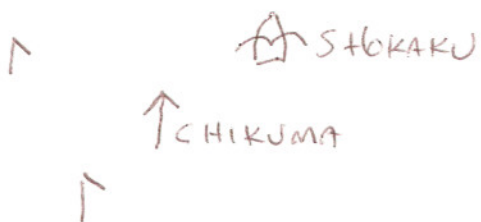
PEARL HARBOR



8 KM

HIRYU 8 KM

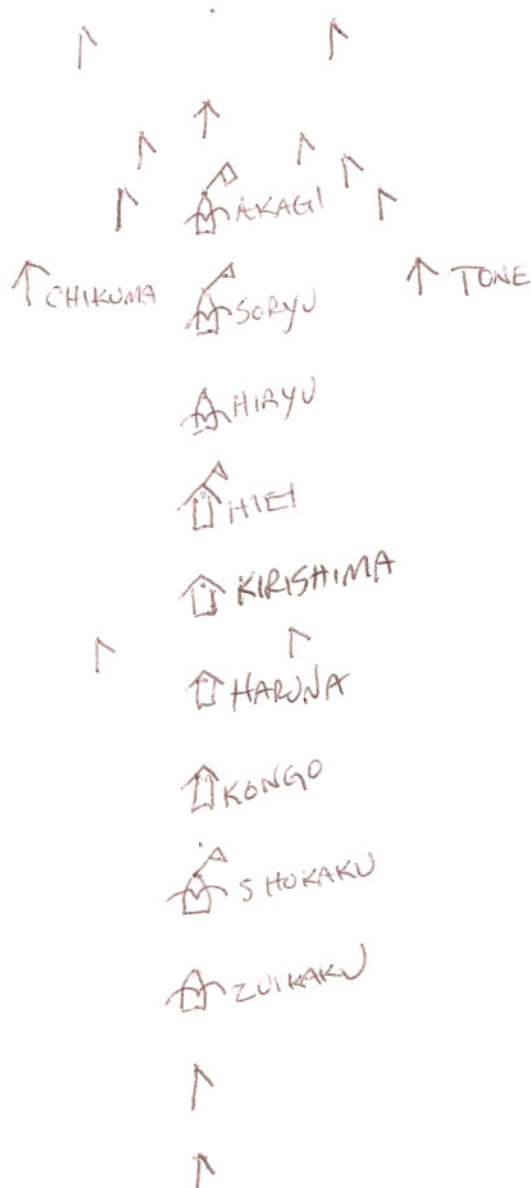
KAGA



- ✚ CARRIER
- ↑ BATTLESHIP
- ↑ CRUISER
- ↑ DESTROYER

SENJAI SOSHO

INDIAN OCEAN  
MARCH/APRIL 1942



⌘ CARRIER  
 ⌘ BATTLESHIP  
 ↑ CRUISER  
 ↑ DESTROYER  
 ⌘ FLEET FLAGSHIP  
 A DIVISION FLAGSHIP

SENJHI SOSHO

CORAL SEA

↑ KINUGASA

↑ Aoba

↑ SITOHO

3000-5000 m

↑ FURUTAKA

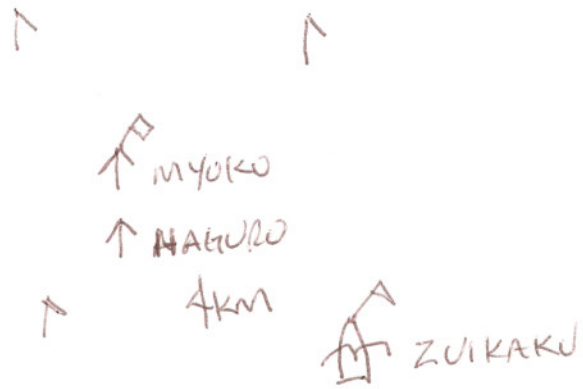
↑ KAKO

↑ CARRIER

↑ CRUISER

SENSHI SOSHO

# CORAL SEA



9km



8km

↑ FURUTAKA

↑ KAKO

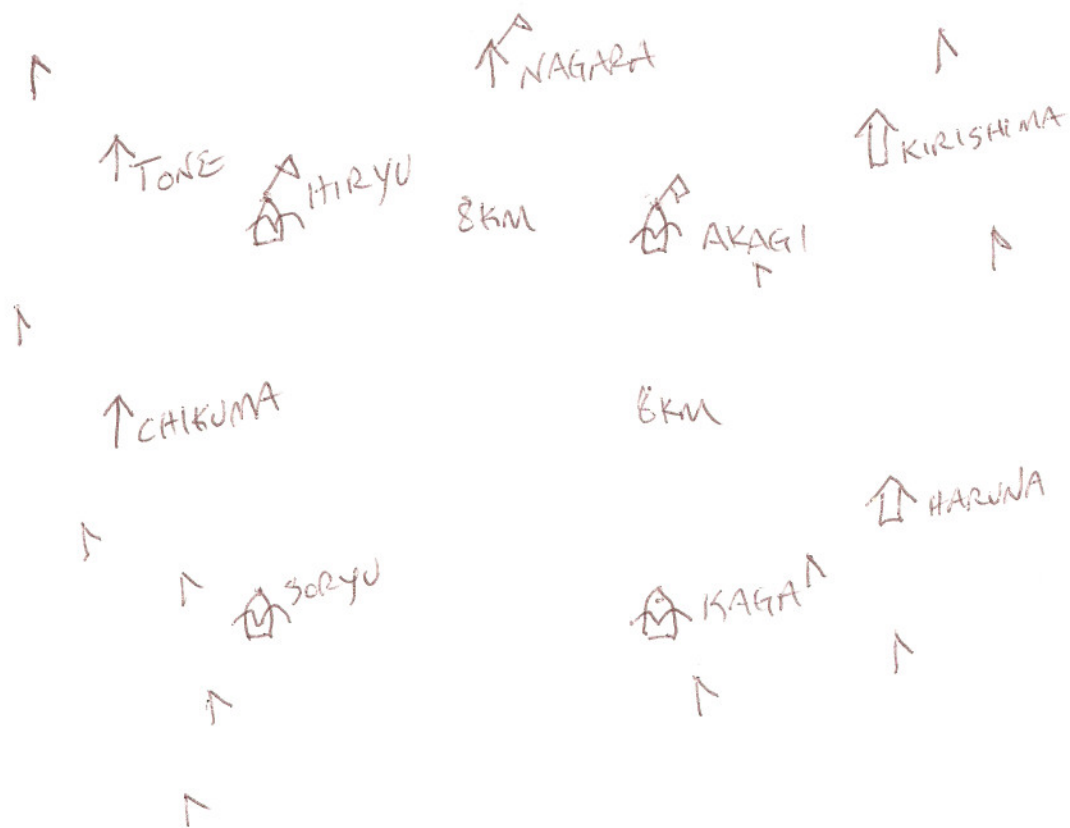
⬆ CARRIER

↑ CRUISER

⬆ DESTROYER

SENSHI SOSHO

MIDWAY



☐ CARRIER

☐ BATTLESHIP

△ CRUISER

△ DESTROYER

SEUS HI SOS HO

✈ RYUJO

✈ JUNYO

↑ TAKAO

↑ MAYA

↑ TEIYO MARU(AO)

✈ CARRIER

↑ CRUISER

SHINJI SOSHIZU

E. SOLS

RYUJO GROUP



RYUJO



✠ CARRIER

↑ CRUISER

↑ DESTROYER

SEUSHI SOSHO



E-SOLS

MAIN BODY

CONFIRM WATANABE  
NOTES IN INTERROGATION  
of JAPANESE OFFICIALS  
P540

↑ 10K SUZUYA    ↑ 10K KUMANO    ↑ 10K KIRISHIMA    ↑ 10K NAGARA    ↑ 10K HIEI    ↑ CHIKUMA

10-20K

↑ SHOKAKU  
5KM  
↑ ZUIKAKU

↑ CARRIER  
↑ BATTLESHIP  
↑ CRUISER  
↑ DESTROYER

SENSHI SOSHO

SANTA CRUZ

↑  
CHIKUMA

↑  
TONE

↑  
HIEI

↑  
NAGARA

↑  
SUZUYA

↑  
KIRISHIMA

100 Km

Junyo  
+ 2 DDs  
→  
100m

↑  
KUMANO

↑  
↑  
↑  
ZUHO

.8K

↑  
↑  
↑  
SHOKAKU

8K

↑  
↑  
↑  
ZUIKAKU

⬆ CARRIER

⬆ BATTLESHIP

↑ CRUISER

↑ DESTROYER

SENSEI SOSITO

Solomons it could be argued that this worked since the Japanese large carriers never came under attack.

Santa Cruz: This disposition represents the latest Japanese thinking post Midway and mirrors that used in Eastern Solomons, with the carriers now even further astern of the vanguard than before. Again the carriers have minimal support; 2 destroyers each. The JUNYO group is well to the west (100 miles). It was originally to have two ships, but HIYO had an engine room fire and had to retire. The Main Body/Advance Force disposition anticipates the disposition they would use in the Marianas.