

Isoroku Yamamoto:
A Misunderstood Leader, An Infamous Legacy

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Individual Website

My History Day Project is on Isoroku Yamamoto. **During the 1930's and early 1940's, Isoroku Yamamoto was a military strategist whose different way of thinking led him to oppose Japanese expansion in the Pacific and the plan to bomb Pearl Harbor. His judgment was clouded by his patriotism for his country, which resulted in his infamous legacy of plotting the Pearl Harbor attack, ultimately leading to America's entrance into World War II (WWII) and Japan's eventual defeat.** When I chose my topic, what intrigued me about Isoroku Yamamoto was his circumstances and how he dealt with them. I am focusing on History Day because I enjoyed it during eighth grade and I wanted to revisit it. Since this is not a school required project, I have been spending my personal time, most notably the weekends, working on my project in addition to my school work.

Since I chose a Japanese topic, finding resources proved to be difficult. My research moved me from generic information available on the Internet to books, videos, and Pearl Harbor itself. My most valuable resource was Naomi Shin, the daughter of a WWII Japanese veteran, whom I met during the Annual Pearl Harbor Ceremony on 7 December 2014. She provided the Japanese view in my project. As I furthered my research, I developed a better understanding of Yamamoto and his inner conflict between his beliefs and following orders. This conflict fascinated and motivated me to do more research about him. In my project, I focused on telling Yamamoto's story as honestly as possible, making sure all my evidence and information were accurate and that I explained the different views of Yamamoto. I decided to do a website because I enjoy using and learning about technology and thought a website would expand my knowledge of certain technological tools. Throughout my project, I faced many obstacles, including no time in the school day to work on my project, difficulty in finding evidence, and overcoming my shyness when it came to conducting interviews. I overcame these obstacles by

allocating my free time and weekends to working on History Day. I attended the 73rd Annual Pearl Harbor Ceremonies and met Naomi Shin and Mr. Sterling Cale, a Pearl Harbor Survivor.

My topic relates to this year's theme of Leadership and Legacy in History, because, as the Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Fleet, Isoroku Yamamoto was a highly respected leader in Japan, known for his infamous legacy of planning the attack on Pearl Harbor, which led others outside of Japan into misunderstanding his leadership. During History Day, I learned many skills, such as conducting personal interviews and editing videos. From Yamamoto, I have learned to do what you think is right, no matter what others say, even though Yamamoto did not do it himself. In spite of his infamous reputation, I still admire his insightful leadership. In some ways you could say that I admire Yamamoto as much as he admired Lincoln.