



# Welcome to Family Day 2019

## *The Story of Colonel Alva Bryan Lasswell*

Alva Bryan Lasswell enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1925 at the age of twenty, and served four years before accepting a commission in 1929. After serving in multiple locations and billets, including duty as a gunnery officer on the USS Arizona and as the Commanding Officer of Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, he was stationed in Japan to study as a Japanese linguist. He later went on to serve as an intelligence officer in the Philippines and China. After the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, Lasswell was assigned to the Fleet Radio Unit, Pacific Fleet (FRUPAC) as one of the few experienced Japanese linguists and cryptanalysts in the Pacific theater. His work there would eventually change the course of World War II.



In mid-1942, Lasswell translated an intercepted and decoded Japanese message that revealed the Japanese Navy's intentions to attack Midway Island. After confirming the location, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet, used the information to prepare his own ambush based on the compromised Japanese plans, and during the subsequent engagement critically damaged the Japanese carrier fleet. The victory at Midway was by many scholarly accounts the turning point of the war, and helped set the stage for the subsequent island-hopping campaigns that eventually secured victory in the Pacific Theater.

Lasswell's work at FRUPAC also yielded other successes. In 1943, he decoded and translated a message that contained the flight itinerary for Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, then Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet. Using this intelligence, Admiral Nimitz had Yamamoto's plane intercepted and shot down by a flight of P-38s from the U.S. Army Air Corps on April 18. Likely in retaliation for the death of Yamamoto, the Japanese Navy attempted to have their submarines sink the transport carrying the Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in the Southwest Pacific Area, General Douglas MacArthur, back to the Philippines. Fortunately, Lasswell deciphered the plan, allowing the U.S. Navy to attack the submarines and neutralize the threat.

After the war ended, Lasswell went on to command the 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division, the Marine Barracks in Yokosuka, Japan, and the ASCOM Supply Depot in Korea, before eventually serving as Chief of Staff at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego until his retirement in 1956. After successful subsequent careers in banking and real estate, Lasswell passed away in California in 1988.





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## *The Story of Colonel John Boyd*

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A fighter pilot and military strategist, Colonel John Boyd was a central driving force behind the evolution of the United States military into a more maneuver-oriented warfighting organization.



During his time in service from 1945-1975, Boyd developed a number of valuable theories and proposals, including the Energy-Maneuverability theory of aerial combat, the project proposal for the Lightweight Fighter program, and a series of briefs and essays that helped shape both the grand strategy for Operation Desert Storm and the Marine Corps' model of maneuver warfare.

His most profound idea, though, was the concept of a fundamental decision-making cycle known as the OODA loop, a series of interactions with the surrounding environment in which a person must Observe, Orient, Decide, and Act in a continuous cycle. Boyd believed the key to victory in any warfighting or decision-making situation was the ability to cycle through this loop of processes faster than one's opponent, as this ensures one is responding faster and more effectively in a situation that is constantly changing. Boyd's OODA loop, and the doctrine and policies it helped inspire, deeply influenced the development of the modern American military, and continue to inform strategies for confronting a highly dynamic and unpredictable national security environment in today's world.