



# **Stay the Rising Sun: The True Story of USS Lexington, Her Valiant Crew, and Changing the Course of World War II**

*Phil Keith*

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Her crew called her the "Lady Lex" - see how her fierce battle turned the tide in the Allies' favor.

In May 1942, the United States' first first naval victory against the Japanese in the Coral Sea was marred by the loss of the aircraft carrier USS Lexington. Another carrier was nearly ready for launch when the news arrived, so the navy changed her name to Lexington, confusing the Japanese.

The men of the original "Lady Lex" loved their ship and fought hard to protect her. They were also seeking revenge for the losses sustained at Pearl Harbor. Crippling attacks by the Japanese left her on fire and dead in the water. A remarkable 90 percent of the crew made it off the burning decks before Lexington had to be abandoned. In all the annals of the Second World War, there is hardly a battle story more compelling.

Lexington's legacy did not end with her demise, however. Although the battle was deemed a tactical success for the Japanese, it turned out to be a strategic loss: For the first time in the war, a Japanese invasion force was forced to retreat.

The lessons learned by losing the Lexington at Coral Sea impacted tactics, air wing operations, damage control, and ship construction. Altogether, they forged a critical, positive turning point in the war. The ship that ushered in and gave birth to a new era in naval warfare might be gone, but fate decreed that her important legacy would live on.

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