

WAKE ISLAND – MUTUAL SURPRISE**0620 21 December 1941**

Background: In the train of the Pearl Harbor attack, the Japanese set in motion their plans to take Wake Island. When American Marines thwarted their first invasion attempt on the tiny, isolated atoll, the Japanese resolved to return with stronger forces. At the same time, the USN mounted an effort to fly in additional fighters for Wake's airfield, land reinforcements for its garrison, and evacuate civilian workers on the island. This is a hypothetical action between USN forces sent to relieve Wake Island and IJN forces sent to attack it.

The attempt to relieve Wake is a much-debated what-in in the history of carrier warfare. Simply told, the story is this. Rear Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher was sent with a task force built around carrier Saratoga and a mission of flying Marine fighters into the airfield while protecting seaplane tender Tangier (here acting as a supply ship) in its run in to the atoll. Vice Admiral Wilson Brown was tasked with creating a diversion by attacking the Japanese-held Marshall Islands with a Lexington-centered task group.

At the same time, the Japanese had stiffened their invasion forces with six heavy cruisers and carriers Hiryu and Soryu under Rear Admiral Abe Hiroaki. These they sent out with the original invasion fleet for a second attempt on the island.

Despite the convergence of forces, no carrier action took place. Fletcher was delayed in his move to Wake by slow auxiliaries, bad weather, and continued refueling to keep his destroyers' tanks topped up. Brown's raid on the Marshalls was called off, and he was sent north after Fletcher. Before either could close Wake, the Japanese arrived, pounded the defenses, and took the island on December 23. The Americans had arrived too late to contest the invasion, and decided not to mount a counter-strike after the Japanese were established ashore. The first potential clash of the flattops ended in a near miss.

This scenario changes history in sundry ways. First, it has the two American task forces operating together. Second, it assumes that the Americans arrive at Wake just as the Japanese carriers arrive, with neither side aware of the presence of the other. Finally, the Japanese may decide to send a bombardment force to pound Wake.

| USN Forces | <u>Ship Name</u> | <u>Ship Class</u> | <u>AA Strength</u> |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Task Force 14 | Saratoga* | Lexington | 3 |
| | Astoria | New Orleans | 3 |
| | Minneapolis | New Orleans | 3 |
| | San Francisco | New Orleans | 3 |
| | Selfridge | Porter | 1 |
| | Bagley | Bagley | 1 |
| | Helm | Bagley | 1 |
| | Ralph Talbot | Bagley | 1 |
| | Henley | Bagley | 1 |
| | Mugford | Bagley | 1 |
| | Jarvis | Bagley | 1 |
| | Patterson | Bagley | 1 |
| | Blue | Bagley | 1 |
| | Neches | Medium Tanker Aft | 1 |
| | Tangier | Medium Ammo Transport Mid | 1 |
| Task Force 11 | Lexington* | Lexington | 3 |
| | Indianapolis | Portland | 3 |
| | Chicago* | Northampton | 3 |
| | Portland | Portland | 3 |
| | Phelps | Porter | 1 |
| | Farragut | Farragut | 1 |
| | Dewey | Farragut | 1 |
| | Hull | Farragut | 1 |
| | MacDonough | Farragut | 1 |
| | Worden | Farragut | 1 |
| | Dale | Farragut | 1 |
| Monaghan | Farragut | 1 | |

| | | | |
|------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------|
| | Aylwin | Farragut | 1 |
| | Neosho | Medium Tanker Aft | 1 |
| Air Units: | <u>Base:</u> | <u>Aircraft:</u> | <u>Modifier:</u> |
| | Saratoga: | 3 F4F-3 | 0 |
| | | 1 F4F-3A | 0 |
| | | 4 F2A-3 | -1 |
| | | 14 SBD-3 | -1 |
| | | 4 TBD-1 | -1 |
| | Lexington: | 5 F2A-3 | 0 |
| | | 8 SBD-2 | -1 |
| | | 3 SBD-3 | -1 |
| | | 6 TBD-1 | -1 |
| | Wake Island: | 1 F4F-3 | 0 |

USN Rules

1. USN initiative is -1.
2. The USN player organizes his ships into 2, 3 or 4 task forces. The task forces designations given above are historical, but need not be followed.
3. The USN player may place each of his task forces within 6 hexes of hex 1212, but no further west than hex row 09xx and no further south than hex row xx12.
4. The USN player may place dummy task forces equal to twice the number of USN task forces containing real ships.
5. Only SBDs may search. They must be armed with 500 lb bombs.
6. Ships with astericks after their names have air search radar. At least one such ship must be in any task force formed by the USN player.

| IJN Forces | <u>Ship Name</u> | <u>Ship Class</u> | <u>AA</u> |
|------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| | Hiryu | Hiryu | Yes |
| | Soryu | Soryu | Yes |
| | Tone | Tone | Yes |
| | Chikuma | Tone | Yes |
| | Aoba | Aoba | Yes |
| | Kinugasa | Aoba | Yes |
| | Furutaka | Furutaka | Yes |
| | Kako | Furutaka | Yes |
| | Tanikaze | Kagero | Yes |
| | Urakaze | Kagero | Yes |

| <u>Air Units:</u> | <u>Base:</u> | <u>Aircraft:</u> | <u>Modifier:</u> |
|-------------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|
| | Hiryu: | 6 A6M2 | 0 |
| | | 5 D3A1 | +1 |
| | | 6 B5N2 | +1 |
| | Soryu: | 5 A6M2 | 0 |
| | | 5 D3A1 | +1 |
| | | 6 B5N2 | +1 |
| | Tone: | 1 E13A1 | |
| | Chikuma: | 1 E13A1 | |
| | Aoba: | 1 E7K2 | |
| | Kinugasa: | 1 E7K2 | |
| | Furutaka: | 1 E7K2 | |
| | Marshalls: | 9 G3M2 | 0 |

IJN Rules

1. The IJN initiative is -1.
2. The IJN player can organize his ships into either 1 or 2 task forces.

3. The IJN player may place each of his task forces within 4 hexes of Wake Island (0912), no further east than hex row 09xx and no further south than hex row xx12.
4. The IJN player may place dummy task forces equal to twice the number of IJN task forces containing real ships.
5. Only aircraft on Japanese carriers and cruisers may search. Of the IJN carrier planes, only B5N2s can search. They must be unarmed.

Scenario Rules

1. Wake is in hex 0912.
2. The game commences on 0620, which is sunrise. It ends on game turn 48 – 2220. Sunset is on turn 34 – 1740.
3. The first air operation flown by the IJN carriers must be a strike at Wake. The strike must be timed to arrive on or after 0620. It must use half of the A6Ms, D3As, and B5Ns in the IJN force.
4. The first air operation flown by the USN carriers must be the transfer of Saratoga's F2As to Wake. They must arrive at Wake on turn 0620 or later.
5. An American objective in the battle is to have the Tangier unload its supplies at Wake. To receive points for this, the Tangier must begin within 1 hex of Wake (0912) and must be capable of ½ her original speed or more at the end of the game.
6. If the Tangier force reached Wake without being in the same hex with an IJN surface force, and the Tangier is capable of movement at ½ speed or better at game end, the USN player receives 10 victory points.
7. If an IJN force moves into a hex with a USN force (or vice versa), the player with the higher point value receives victory points equal to the difference between the engagement values of the two forces, but not more than the total value of the lower valued force.
8. Only ships capable of 75% of their original speed count for engagement points.
9. Any IJN ships that move into hex 9012 may attempt to bombard Wake, as long as there are no USN ships in the hex. Any Japanese force bombarding Wake is treated as if it was spotted. The IJN receives as victory points half the engagement points of IJN ships bombarding Wake.
10. *Optional: the players may fight engagements using Fire on the Waters rules instead of using engagement point values. Roll 5 D6 to determine daylight base visibility. The gunfire modifier will be -1 for day engagements. For bombardment scenarios, the IJN forces start at the limit of visibility from Wake and the engagement lasts for 10 FOTW turns – equivalent to 2 game turns. For ship-to-ship engagements, both sides are steaming towards the center point on the table -- the USN from the east, the IJN from the west. Randomly determine each force's bearing from the center point within these limits. Players do not receive victory points based on engagement points for any engagements fought under FOTW rules.*
11. The IJN player can launch bombing raids on Wake with his shore-based bombers. The IJN player must record at the start of the game the turns on which the bombers will arrive. Each G3M AF may fly only once per game.
12. This action would have taken place before the widespread use of self-sealing fuel tanks and extensive armor protection by USN aircraft. Use the tables below for air-to-air and antiaircraft combat.
13. The F2A-3 aircraft on Saratoga and the F4F-3 aircraft at Wake are manned by Marines rather than Navy pilots. Double their chance of a landing mishap if they attempt a carrier landing.
14. All USN aircraft may land at the airfield on Wake, but strike aircraft may not re-arm there. Aircraft may refuel there as long as the fuel tanks are operating.

ENGAGEMENT POINT VALUES FOR THE SPECIAL RULES

| | | | |
|-------------------|----------|----------------|----------|
| New Orleans class | 5 points | Tone class | 5 points |
| Portland class | 5 points | Furutaka class | 4 points |
| Northampton class | 5 points | Aoba class | 4 points |
| Porter class | 2 points | DD | 2 points |
| Other USN DDs | 1 point | | |

Victory Conditions

Victory points are determined as in the FFTS rules. Either player may score points depending on the fate of the Tangier as provided in the special rules.

The IJN player receives points for damage caused to Wake, as follows:

- 5 points for putting the airfield out of operation,

- 1 point for each hit on a shore battery.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ point for each hit on beach defenses.

Finally, the USN player receives $\frac{1}{2}$ victory point for each F2A-3 factor flown into Wake from Saratoga.

**AIRCRAFT ATTACK VALUES
PACIFIC: DECEMBER 1941 – APRIL 1942**

| Attacker↓ | F4F | SBD-2 | SBD-3 | TBD | F2A | PBY |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| A5M CAP | 0 | 0 | -3 | 0 | 0 | -1 |
| A6M CAP | 6 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 5 |
| A6M Escort | 5 | 8 | 5 | N | 6 | N |
| Japanese Defensive Guns | -4 | -4 | N | N | -6 | N |

| Attacker↓ | A6M | A5M | D3A | B5N | G3M | E8N E13A |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| F4F CAP | 8 | N | 7 | 8 | 5 | 5 |
| F4F Escort | 5 | 5 | N | N | N | N |
| F2A CAP | 5 | N | 5 | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| F2A Escort | 2 | 2 | N | N | N | N |
| SBD CAP | -3 | -2 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| US Defensive Guns | -4 | -4 | N | N | N | N |

Left column is type of aircraft attacking. Top row is type of aircraft being attacked. Number is hit number used by attacking aircraft. "Defensive Guns" refers to strike aircraft fighting defensively. "N" means no effect.



