

Pacific Theatre

Part 5

“In which we visit Where America’s Day Really Begins”

By Lestrade aka Unpopular Opinion

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There’s no freedom of speech in the UK but I’ll say my opinion anyway



While Pearl Harbour was kicking off, the Saturday morning cartoon villains of Imperial Japan were up to dastardly tricks across the Pacific. The stage is set for the heroic US military to wipe them out, one tropical island base at a time. You will be shocked to learn the Americans might have been telling pork pies* about this as well.

What was initially a “lol wat” moment on Wikipedia about the Battle of Attu has now snowballed into a full-on unravelling of this entire theatre of war. You’ll laugh but I’m still trying to process the idea that Pearl Harbour was made up. Maybe I’ve got a weakness for old war vet guys teary-eyed telling me anecdotes. Just feels like kicking a dog in the face to disbelieve them, but as Miles points out, it is pretty easy for the military to order their men to say X Y or Z and them to stick to it, even after retirement.

I’ve subsequently looked at stuff like [this](#) and [this](#) and [this](#) as a follow-up to try and see if one of the veterans is going to drop some deep insight that will sway me back but... yeah, the testimony screams as useless/false.

In light of this I’m calling it now that the whole bloody campaign is going to be faked. Completely outrageous a claim (to non-regular-readers of this site) on the face of it, given the graveyards and veterans and casualty figures but whatever, I’m riding this tiger now. I’m going to do the job that historians should have done 70 years ago and demonstrate that, one step at a time. Join me, reader, on a liberated Phoenician yacht as we set sail from Hawaii on a voyage across the Pacific. First port: [Wake Island](#).



Wake

is a small coral atoll in the middle of the Pacific, just over 5 square miles in size. It's significant because it has a "9,800-foot (3,000m) runway... the longest strategic runway in the Pacific islands".

From [Wikipedia](#):

"The Battle of Wake Island was a battle of the Pacific campaign of World War II, fought on Wake Island. The assault began simultaneously with the attack on Pearl Harbor naval and air bases in Hawaii on the morning of 8 December 1941 (7 December in Hawaii), and ended on 23 December, with the surrender of American forces to the Empire of Japan."

And:

"The island was held by the Japanese for the duration of the Pacific War theatre of World War II; the remaining Japanese garrison on the island surrendered to a detachment of United States Marines on 4 September 1945, after the earlier surrender on 2 September 1945 on the battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay to General Douglas MacArthur."

A very simple initial observation: we're supposed to believe the US military allowed the Japanese to hold this place for the rest of the war. They literally leave embedded Japanese troops (with American hostages but we'll get to that) behind them, as they advance west. They're fighting on Iwo Jima years later and they still have Japanese back on Wake. What!? Hostages combined with the biggest airstrip in the region is an obvious first strike location and it's ridiculous on the face of it that it wasn't retaken before February of '42.

We read on:

“In January 1941, the United States Navy constructed a military base on the atoll. On 19 August, the first permanent military garrison, elements of the 1st Marine Defence Battalion deployed to Wake Island under the command of Major P.S. Devereux, USMC with a force of 450 officers and men. Despite the relatively small size of the atoll, the Marines could not man all their defensive positions nor did they arrive with all their equipment, notably their air search radar units. The Marine Detachment was supplemented by Marine Corps Fighter Squadron VMF-211, consisting of 12 F4F-3 Wildcat fighters, commanded by Marine aviator Major Paul A. Putnam, USMC. Also, present on the island were 68 U.S. Navy personnel and about 1,221 civilian workers for the Morrison-Knudsen Civil Engineering Company. The workers were to carry out the company's construction plans for the island.”

Note: the base is only built that year, only staffed in late August that year. They have nearly 2,000 people on this island but not enough men to man all the defensive positions... also they didn't bother to equip an air base with radar. Do you really need over 1200 men to build the facilities? I mean, it's literally an island in the middle of the ocean with an air strip. You want radar for a place like that. Check out how flat it is:



You can see the big air strip in the foreground. They can just about fit it in. The rest is flat dirt, shrubs, some sandy beach and the nice blue lagoon in the middle. Not a lot of space, not a lot of cover. We read on:

“The Marines were armed with six 5-inch (127 mm)/51 cal pieces, originating from the old battleship USS Texas; twelve 3 in (76 mm)/50 cal anti-aircraft guns (with only a single working anti-aircraft director among them); eighteen .50 in (12.7 mm) Browning heavy machine guns; and thirty .30 in (7.62 mm) heavy, medium and light water- and air-cooled machine guns.”

Even better: they only have one device for [calculating anti air fire](#). Why even bother stationing troops to defend this place if you're not going to equip them properly? Anyone attacking is going to

either A) shell you from a battleship, B) bomb you from aircraft and C) send in amphibious troops to mop up. You want strong anti-naval defences, anti-air – with the ability to track and shoot properly obviously – and radar to spot the enemy when they approach. Having a bunch of Marines sat around on the atoll seems kind of pointless. Is there a big harbour with a Naval presence? Nah. Anti air? Nah. Congratulations, you've built a sitting duck.

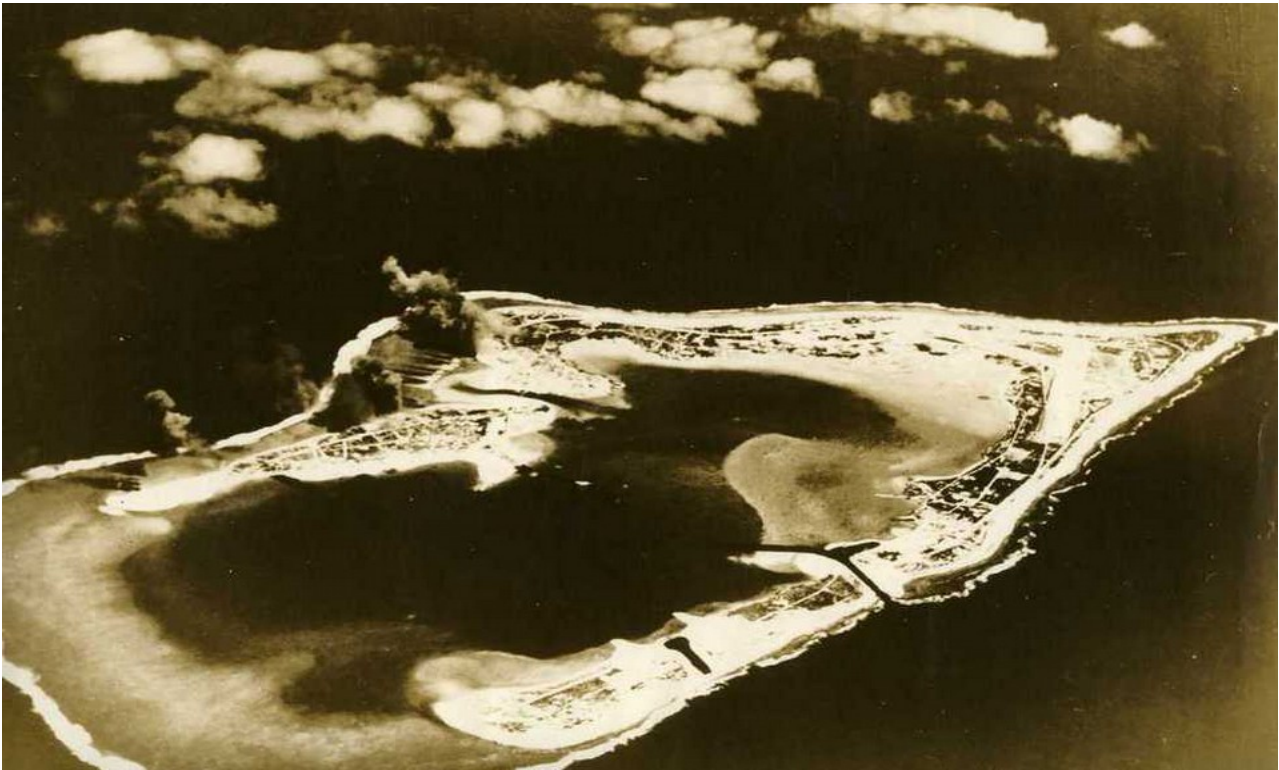


Photo of Wake mid-bombardment. Again you can see how barren it is. No real cover. I like how there was a plane supposed to be taking a snapshot at this point. Presumably from a Japanese fighter? What, is this tied to the underside of the plane with a rope? Or is the pilot clicking away to show the wife and kids back home as a souvenir? Regardless: the smoke clouds are cropped and inserted, this is a paste-up. It might be easier to see what I mean if you look at the bigger resolution image [here](#).

Anyway, I'm getting ahead of myself. From Wikipedia:

*“On 8 December, just hours after receiving word of the attack on Pearl Harbor (Wake being on the opposite side of the International Date Line), **36 Japanese Mitsubishi G3M3 medium bombers flown from bases on the Marshall Islands attacked Wake Island, destroying eight of the 12 F4F-3 Wildcats on the ground and sinking the Nisqually, a former Design 1023 cargo ship converted into a scow. The remaining four Wildcats were in the air patrolling, but because of poor visibility, failed to see the attacking Japanese bombers. These Wildcats shot down two bombers on the following day. All of the Marine garrison's defensive emplacements were left intact by the raid, which primarily targeted the aircraft. Of the 55 Marine aviation personnel, 23 were killed and 11 were wounded.**”*

So 36 planes drop bombs/shoot at the island and hit (of course **eight**) parked up planes, but all the defensive emplacements are left alone. That's nice of them. I like how there are 4 US planes in the air but they don't see the Japanese and the Japanese don't see them (because then the Japanese planes would presumably have blown them out of the sky immediately).

*“Two more air raids followed. **The main camp was targeted on 9 December**, destroying the **civilian hospital and the Pan Am air facility**. The next day, enemy bombers focused on outlying Wilkes Island. Following the raid on 9 December, **the four anti-aircraft guns had been relocated in case the Japanese had photographed the positions**. **Wooden replicas were erected in their place, and the Japanese bombers attacked the decoy positions**. A lucky strike on a civilian dynamite supply set off a chain reaction and destroyed the munitions for the guns on Wilkes.”*

You need a lot of dynamite on a sandy tropical atoll. I love how the Japanese don't just immediately take this island within a couple of hours of December 8th. They have superior numbers, it's a surprise attack, the Marines are unable to shoot back effectively (bombers vs. squaddies with rifles and only 4 ant-air) and the Japanese have cut them off from outside support. They should have been bombed into oblivion on day one. As if 36 bombers (with more to come with reinforcements) can't target and annihilate 4 anti air placements, let alone over multiple days.

Instead, as per [Encyclopedia Britannica](#):

“Wake was bombed on an almost daily basis for the next two weeks.”

What!? What are they even bombing by day 5? Starfish and clams at low tide?

*“On December 11 a Japanese naval task force – including three light cruisers, six destroyers, and two transports – attempted to land **450 Special Naval Landing Force (SNLF) troops on Wake Island's south shore**. **The Japanese suffered a rude repulse from the marines' light coastal-defence guns and the four remaining fighters**. **Two Japanese destroyers were sunk, several other ships sustained damage, and the transports were withdrawn**. **That small engagement, the first tactical defeat experienced by the Japanese navy in World War II, electrified the American people, dispelling much of the gloom caused by Pearl Harbor.**”*

Ah, thank you Wikipedia, that clears it up then. This whole thing is a propaganda piece. Isolated location, check. Heavy military involvement, check. All witnesses are controlled, check. Faked photos (already), check. Fits a useful narrative, check.

How are they still using the remaining four planes after several days of aerial/naval bombardment? The runway would be cratered. The hangers and buildings would be rubble. The ammunition storage would be destroyed, the food stocks destroyed, water supply destroyed, etc. After a couple of days the Americans would be out of water, dehydrated and unable to resist much of anything. The 450 troops they send in (which seems like a low number, given the Japanese tend to throw large numbers around the rest of the time) should have been able to easily take the place. But no, the Americans win, somehow. I guess Marines are just immune to explosives.

*“Humiliated by that setback, **the Japanese navy continued to bomb Wake Island** and eventually sent a much larger task force of approximately **2,000 SNLF troops** to take the atoll. **Nine hundred Japanese stormed ashore before dawn on December 23**. After hours of desperate, close infantry combat, the Japanese **finally forced Wake's defenders to surrender**. **Although the fight for Wake ended in a U.S. defeat, the American people continued to view the atoll as a rallying point**. **The garrison's stand inspired Hollywood's first combat film of the war, Wake Island, which was released in the late summer of 1942.**”*

Yeah. [It got made into a movie as well.](#) Check out [the awesome trailer here.](#) I love how it takes the Japanese 15 days of bombing and over 2,000 troops to fight a couple hundred Marines. USA! USA!



I wonder why if they had 2,000 men they only send in 900? Anyway, if we return to Wikipedia we read about the [initial landing attempt](#) by the Japanese back on the 11th:

“Early on the morning of 11 December, the garrison, with the support of the four remaining Wildcats, repelled the first Japanese landing attempt by the South Seas Force, which included the light cruisers Yubari, Tenryū, and Tatsuta; the relatively old Mutsuki and Kamikaze-class destroyers Yayoi, Mutsuki, Kisaragi, Hayate, Mochizuki and Oite, submarine tender Jingei, two armed merchantmen (Kinryu Maru and Kongō Maru), and two Momi-class destroyers converted to patrol boats that were reconfigured in 1941 to launch a landing craft over a stern ramp (Patrol Boat No. 32 and Patrol Boat No. 33) containing 450 Special Naval Landing Force troops. Submarines Ro-65, Ro-66, and Ro-67 patrolled nearby to secure the perimeter.”

Seems legit, so you'd expect a force like that would have absolutely no trouble in obliterating every man, artillery piece and building on the atoll in the space of five hours. Weird that they waited three days to attack. What were they doing before then? Fishing? Karaoke? I know they're bombing them from the air but clearly this has done nothing. How on earth did the Marines pull off the defence? We learn that their genius tactic was to wait to open fire only when the Japanese “got real close” and then “fired all the guns” and that made the Japanese so scared they ran away. No, really:

“The US Marines fired at the invasion fleet with their six 5-inch (127 mm) coast-defence guns. Major Devereux, the Marine commander under Cunningham, ordered the gunners to hold their fire until the enemy moved within range of the coastal defences. “Battery L”, on Peale islet, sank Hayate at a distance of 4,000 yd (3,700 m) with at least two direct hits to her magazines, causing her to explode and sink within two minutes, in full view of the defenders on shore. Battery A claimed to have hit Yubari several times, but her action report makes no mention of any damage. The four Wildcats also succeeded in sinking the destroyer Kisaragi by dropping a bomb on her stern where the depth charges were stored, although some also suggest the bomb hitting elsewhere and an explosion amidships. Two destroyers were thus lost with nearly all hands (there was only one survivor, from Hayate), with Hayate becoming the first Japanese surface warship to be sunk in the war. The Japanese recorded 407 casualties during the first attempt. The Japanese force withdrew without landing, suffering their first setback of the war against the Americans.

So the Japanese are sending in 450 of their equivalent Marines in landing craft but just... stop... and leave... because two ships of their fleet get sunk? What? So they turn around and paddle away leaving the Marines unharmed? I can see how if you're a red-blooded American waving the flag in

1941 you might fall for this, but in hindsight we can look back and agree it's all very silly. Red flag about the "first Japanese warship to be sunk" – so let's just check on that next shall we.

Here's a photo of the Hayate:



It would have to be number 13, wouldn't it? Either that or 18 or 33. Why does a Japanese ship have 13 in English numbers, not in kanji? Why does it not have the name of the ship on the side of the prow? Or a Japanese flag – is that one right at the back? Why so small? What I'm saying is, is there anything to identify it as a Japanese ship? If I showed you that photo and said "American destroyer on patrol" you'd have nodded along, right? If you look at [the higher resolution image](#), why are the numbers painted in a shadowed font like on a movie poster or billboard? Is that normal for 1940s warships? Or am I looking at an artefact from someone doctoring the image?

Being a historically significant site, you'd assume people would have dived down and photographed the wreck of the Hayate, right? I mean they know pretty much exactly where it went down, they have co-ordinates, confirmed by both the Marines and the Japanese battle reports, it's only about 2 miles south-west of Wake. Probably a History channel documentary on it, right? No? No. But photographed at least? Or divers have mapped it? No? No. If we [read this article](#) we find that, interestingly, despite underwater sonar mapping they only located the one wreck and when investigating it with divers found it wasn't the Hayate, it was the Amakasu Maru No. 1, a Japanese water tanker sunk by the USS Triton on December 24th 1942.

So nobody can find the Hayate, in over 70 years. They've searched its location but there's no wreck. You can also read about it [in this article](#) as well, which confirms:

*"The location of Hayate **remains a mystery**. The team imaged two other possible targets that turned out to be huge rocks."*

There's supposed to be one survivor of the Hayate, who "lived to tell the tale" and, presumably, is the narrative justification for how we know it was the magazine detonation that sank the ship - but I can't find who this is and they don't bother to write about this, get his statement, any of the stuff you'd normally expect. Now I think on it "sunk in 2 minutes after 2 hits" is a bit too neat. All very weird. What about the second Japanese ship to be sunk, the [Kisaragi](#)?



Again with the numbers in English. Teeny tiny Japanese flag right at the back. I would have thought they'd have been it more central/larger as a national pride thing but whatever, I'm not from the Navy in the 1940s. Anyone ever found the wreck? Nope. Any photos of the wreck? Nope. If you want a chuckle have a read of [this article](#) on Henry Elrod which is a lovely piece of US propaganda, one man single-handedly flying at the enemy, totally outgunned, taking out planes and warships solo, returning to base unscathed to a round of applause like he's [Lord Flashheart in Blackadder](#).

Back to Wikipedia:

"After the initial raid was fought off, American news media reported that, when queried about reinforcement and resupply, Commander Cunningham was reported to have quipped, "Send us more Japs!" In fact, Cunningham sent a long list of critical equipment—including gunsights, spare parts, and fire-control radar—to his immediate superior: Commandant, 14th Naval District. But the siege and frequent Japanese air attacks on the Wake garrison continued, without resupply for the Americans."

So the idea is that the Pearl Harbour attack is finished, the Americans are in a state of war, they have the main fleet at Oahu, but for two weeks the Japanese are able to bomb Wake without any US Navy ships getting involved? It's not like the Americans aren't aware this is going on, they are literally radioing the commander on Wake who is making quips to the press. According to [this section](#) the Navy sailed around the area to try and create "diversions" (I have no idea what this means, you either attack the Japanese ships at Wake to relieve the siege or you don't) and then eventually just go back to Pearl Harbour under direct orders from the Commander in Chief of the Pacific fleet William Pye. So another stand down order then **like in Uvalde, Texas, yesterday**.

Anyway, by late December the Japanese drum up some more troops and this time actually land and take the island. We read:

"The initial resistance offered by the garrison prompted the Japanese Navy to detach the Second Carrier Division (Sōryū and Hiryū) along with its escorts 8th Cruiser Division (Chikuma and Tone), and the 17th Destroyer Division (Tanikaze and Urakaze), all fresh from the assault on Pearl Harbor; as well as 6th Cruiser Division (Kinugasa, Aoba, Kako, and Furutaka), destroyer

Oboro, seaplane tender Kiyokawa Maru, and transport/minelayer Tenyo Maru from the invasion of Guam; and 29th Destroyer Division (Asanagi and Yūnagi) from the invasion of the Gilbert Islands, to support the assault. The second Japanese invasion force came on 23 December, composed mostly of the ships from the first attempt plus 1,500 Japanese marines. The landings began at 02:35; after a preliminary bombardment, the ex-destroyers Patrol Boat No. 32 and Patrol Boat No. 33 were beached and burned in their attempts to land the invasion force. After a full night and morning of fighting, the Wake garrison surrendered to the Japanese by mid-afternoon.

Wow, so a) this is insane overkill to take a couple hundred Marines on an atoll and b) they fight the Marines from half 2 in the morning all the way until mid-afternoon, so like twelve hours of assault. This must have been absolute slaughter, I assume we're looking at over 1,000 Americans dead. They must have had to press-gang the civilian construction workers into picking up pistols and spare rifles to give them the manpower to hold out that long. The bodies must have been stacked in heaps by the end of it.

“The US Marines lost 49 killed, two missing, and 49 wounded during the 15-day siege, while three US Navy personnel and at least 70 US civilians were killed, including 10 Chamorros, and 12 civilians wounded. 433 US personnel were captured. The Japanese captured all men remaining on the island, the majority of whom were civilian contractors employed by the Morrison-Knudsen Company.”

Same number wounded as killed, somehow two people are missing (what?), 433 captured. How did they fight for so long and so few lost? There's not a lot of room on that atoll by the morning of the 23rd! Check out [this page](#) to see an estimated breakdown of the casualty numbers:

| United States casualties during the defense of Wake were sustained by Marine, Navy, and civilian personnel as follows: | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|-------|
| U.S. Marine Corps: | | <i>Officers Enlisted Total</i> | | |
| | (Total Personnel) | | | 449 |
| | Killed in action | 5 | 41 | 46 |
| | Wounded/killed in action | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | Missing in action, presumed dead | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| | Wounded in action | 6 | 26 | 32 |
| | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| | Total | 11 | 70 | 81 |
| U.S. Navy: | | | | |
| | (Total Personnel) | | | 68 |
| | Killed in action | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| | Wounded in action | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| | Total | 0 | 8 | 8 |
| U.S. Army: | | | | |
| | (Total Personnel) | | | 5 |
| Civilians: | | | | |
| | (Total Personnel) | | | 1,146 |
| | Killed | | | 70 |
| | Wounded | | | 12 |
| | ----- | | | ----- |
| | Total | | | 82 |
| | ----- | | | ===== |
| | Grand Total | | | 171 |

They managed to fit in a lot of eights, right? 81, 8, 82. 171 total, which is super low given how this is like a 12 hour battle involving thousands of troops out for blood. The canon narrative is of course

that the Japanese are absolutely relentless, vicious fanatics who will machine gun 14,000 Chinese captives by a river over three days for a laugh. The Americans should have all been killed, to a man.

Now check out the Japanese “estimated” losses:

| Incident to aircraft shot down: | <i>Killed Wounded</i> | |
|---|-----------------------|-------|
| 4 carrier planes | 4 | 0 |
| 1 four-engine patrol plane | 6 | 0 |
| 16 two-engine bombers | 80 | 0 |
| Incident to aircraft damaged: | | |
| 51 aircraft damaged by flak | 13 | 13 |
| Incident to surface action of 11 December: | | |
| 2 destroyers sunk without survivors | 500 | 0 |
| 8 ships appreciably damaged by shells or bombs | 80 | 160 |
| Incident to final assault, 23 December: | | |
| Estimated casualties in ground combat | 125 | 125 |
| Casualties aboard Patrol Craft 33 | 7 | 25 |
| Destroyer hit by Battery B's fire | 5 | 10 |
| ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Total estimated Japanese losses: | 820 | 333 |
| | == | == |
| Grand Total: | | 1,153 |

13 and 333. Beautiful. Again with the same numerology markers. Also the idea that 400-odd Marines and a bunch of construction workers killed over 1,000 Japanese troops through 12 hours of fighting and lost less than 200 guys in the process. It's silly.

[Here is a link](#) to an oral history statement from USMC Private Jack Skaggs, who was stationed on Wake. He tries to remember his old Naval Intelligence briefing genuine memories and cheerfully contradicts the narrative (without meaning to, bless him) by stating the Marines spotted the Japanese fleet the night before the attack, then relayed that to Commander Devereux. That would of course make it not an ambush and give the Navy time to respond prior to any aerial bombardment. Whoops. He also talks about the initial assault on Wake as being purely involving battleships, attacking “back and forth” (against what? The US are not fielding any ships, this isn't a naval battle with the Marines watching) rather than mentioning either the multiple days of aerial bombardment prior to naval assault or the Japanese marines trying to land on the shoreline. Later on he talks about the Marines counting “43 battleships” on the horizon ready to assault Wake, which we know didn't happen, it was about 13. They then land at “12 or 1 o clock”, rather than 2:30am. Once again I have the unpleasant duty to accuse a veteran of being a liar. Although I suppose if he's lying then he's not really a vet, so there's that.

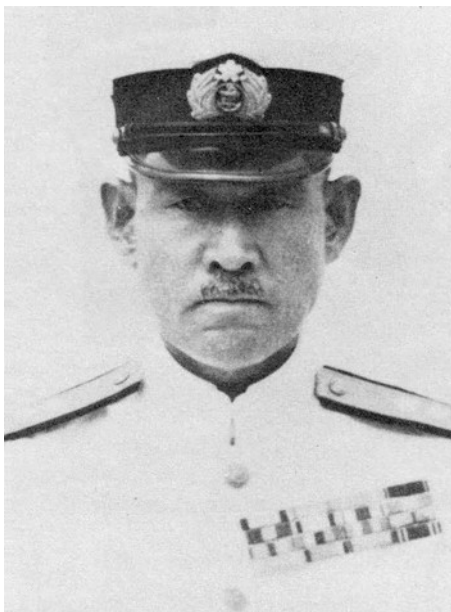
Now, you might be asking how we know what happened during the fifteen day siege? Well:

*“The only Marine to escape capture or death on Wake Island was **Lieut. Col. Walter Bayler** who departed on a United States Navy PBY Catalina on 20 December. He was therefore able to provide an accurate recounting of the actual happenings on Wake Island to the press and people of America, while also providing photos and maps of the island. He was also published in a nationwide magazine about the attack. The only reason Bayler was able to leave Wake Island was*

because he was a radio technician, and thus his services and abilities were greatly needed elsewhere. Therefore, he left in the only plane that was available."

Bayler being a [Peerage](#) name. Possibly a fudge/variant of Baylor/Taylor – a bit like the involvement of Lieutenant Kermit Tyler during Pearl Harbour in the previous paper (which is also [Peerage](#) now I think to check). *It's a Presidential name: Tippecanoe and Tyler too, you know*. I love how the Americans still have functioning planes and an intact runway on Wake as late as the 20th December and the Japanese fleet watches this one guy slowly fly away and don't bother to shoot him down. As per [his Wiki page](#): born 8/04/05, died 8/12/84. He then goes on a PR campaign to drum up more support for the war effort, appears in magazines, etc. As you do. I remember during Iraq War 2 and Afghanistan you were always having US troops flying home and immediately going on a press tour. This thing is so fake it stinks already and I'm not even done.

Who was in charge of the Japanese side? That would be [Admiral Shigeyoshi Inoue](#).



In the Wikipedia bio section for [Overseas Experience](#) we learn:

“Shortly after his promotion to ensign on December 15, 1910, he was reassigned to the cruiser Kurama and attended the coronation ceremonies for King George V in London in 1911. In 1912, he returned to school to study latest naval artillery and submarine warfare techniques and was promoted to sub-lieutenant at the end of that year. In 1913, he served on the cruiser Takachiho, followed by the battleship Hiei. He was promoted to lieutenant at the end of 1915, and transferred to the battleship Fusō. Although Fusō participated in operations in World War I against the Imperial German Navy, Inoue was not in any combat situations. At the end of 1918, Inoue was appointed military attaché to Switzerland, and ordered by the Navy to learn German. In 1919, he was part of the Japanese diplomatic delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, where this knowledge proved to be useful. In 1920, he was appointed military attaché to France, and was then ordered to learn French. In December 1921, he received a promotion to lieutenant commander, and was permitted to return to Japan.”

So he's promoted rapidly, doesn't see much in the way of combat and is constantly moving around Europe learning different languages. Spook? Spook. You'd think he'd get some comeuppance from the Americans when they win in '45, right? Nah. He retires and becomes a music teacher.

“After the war, Inoue became an English and music teacher to children at his house in Yokosuka. The site of his home is now a public park.”



You can see the higher resolution photo of him playing guitar [here](#). I'm not sure if that guitar is flat/drawn in or not but I note his head has a nice thick black line around it so I can only assume his head is cropped in.

Why wasn't an Admiral who attacked Wake pursued by the Americans for a hanging or similar? No idea. Nobody seems to care, it's just treated as "Oh yeah so the war finished so he quit the Navy and took up guitar teaching". Totally standard stuff.

So then you have the whole saga of the Wake Island hostages. The scriptwriters have gotten themselves in a bit of a pickle now because they want an "Alamo of the Pacific" with macho Marines quipping and firing shotguns wildly at the sky in the face of outrageous odds. However, they didn't want a complete massacre and the Japanese grinning, taking selfies with stacks of severed heads on the beach as that would be a bit of a downer for the public back in Ohio. That leaves them with the Japanese somehow disarming them and taking hundreds of them alive.

The Japanese allegedly ship a bunch of them off to "the mines" in Japan (it's not very clear and in an article we'll look at later this shipping process apparently takes batches of men periodically until late '43, which is strange as the Americans have by this point pushed west and should control the seas around Wake). We're told they behead some of the prisoners en-route because they're mean. I don't know how that works in practice when if you have quotas of slaves to bring in for work and your bosses are expecting X number of slaves to arrive on a specific date and then you turn up with fewer men than requested and you shrug and go "Oh we beheaded them" so now the mine is understaffed but that's somehow not a problem. But whatever, I don't think people are meant to think it through like that.

Anyway, the Japanese take the island and then decide to fortify it for their own malicious ends. They use the captured Americans as slave labour, these guys are then stuck on Wake until the war ends in 1945. Here's a photo of the Japanese going through a surrender ceremony:



Very civilised. Are the Japanese in the foreground cropped in? Is this actually just a picture of some Americans raising a flag on a sandy beach? Is the flag cropped in as well and this is a collage of three groups (2 troop clusters, flag) on a sand backdrop? My eyes are going funny maybe. The Japanese with their backs to the camera means we can't even tell they are Japanese troops, I'm just going off of the uniforms. **Yeah, the perspective is wrong, it is pasted together.**

Which villain was running the show on Wake in the intervening four years? That would be [Shigematsu Sakaibara](#).



Here he is (second from the left) signing an agreement to surrender:



The one in glasses is a female. You see, back in the 1940s it was normal for everyone nearby to crowd around when a military/diplomatic meeting was taking place. Just like today: when military commanders are in important meetings or signing treaties you get random Navy crewmen of different ranks hanging around leaning over their shoulder smoking pipes and chatting, just to make sure things are getting done properly. Higher resolution version [here](#). Yes, it is pasted.

Unlike the music teacher Admiral Inoue, Sakaibara doesn't get away with the great injustice of Wake. We read:

"After the war, Sakaibara was taken into custody by the American occupation authorities, extradited to Guam, and sentenced to death by a military tribunal for war crimes in connection with his actions on Wake Island. He was hanged on June 19, 1947. Until the end, he maintained, "I think my trial was entirely unfair and the proceeding unfair, and the sentence too harsh, but I obey with pleasure."

Ridiculous last words are ridiculous. So they hang him two years later, not in the US, not in Japan, but on Guam. Why? If we follow the reference on Wikipedia to [this link](#), an article written about Wake by retired US Major Mark E Hubbs, we learn:

"Soon after the Japanese surrendered Wake Island on 4 September 1945, Admiral Sakaibara and 15 of his officers and men were arrested and sent to Kwajalein to stand trial for the murder of the 98 POWs. Two men committed suicide en route and left statements that implicated the admiral and others. While being held during the trial, which was conducted by a special military commission for war crimes, Lieutenant Ito also killed himself and left behind a signed statement. After being confronted with this statement, Sakaibara finally confessed that he had ordered the murder of the 98 Americans and stated that all responsibility should rest on his shoulders. The trial concluded with a sentence of death for Admiral Sakaibara and Lieutenant Commander Tachibana.

Eventually, a reprieve was granted for Tachibana, whose sentence was commuted to life in prison. Sakaibara, however, was transported to Guam to await his fate. There, on 19 June 1947, he was executed by hanging along with five other Japanese war criminals. Sakaibara's last statement was filled with Japanese stoicism: "I think my trial was entirely unfair and the proceeding unfair, and the sentence too harsh, but I obey with pleasure."

Definitely a thing people would say upon being sentenced to death. I assume they were all cremated and their ashes scattered at sea like with the others we've seen, as a cover for not doing that and letting him retire to a nice seaside resort in Okinawa. I mean this is speculation of course, I can't prove he wasn't killed, I just think it's interesting he is tried in a remote mid-Pacific location unlike Japan, in the war crimes tribunal like everyone else.

What happened to the bodies of the Wake Island men? From Hubb's article:

"Section G of the Punchbowl National Cemetery in Honolulu has a large, flat, marble gravestone, at 5 by 10 feet the largest in the cemetery. On it are listed the names of 178 men. This common grave holds the remains of all the unidentified military and civilian burials repatriated from Wake Island in 1946."

For the record, that's the same cemetery used for the mass graves of Pearl Harbour bodies. So Punchbowl is a good place to bury random skeleton bits when doing ops I take it. Wake is a US territory, or owned by the US or something, so why not bury them there? Or return them to their kin back on the mainland?

*“Many of these men were killed during the siege, and circumstances did not allow proper burial and **identification**. Of these names, 98 represent the men who were murdered by the Japanese in October 1943. After several years of unsuccessful attempts to separate the remains and identify them, they were interred together during a ceremony at the Punchbowl in 1953.*

*Most of the families of the 98 were not notified of the fate their loved ones until January 1946. Letters from the American Prisoner of War Information Bureau stated only the location and date of death but did not explain the circumstances. Other families who may have changed address during the course of the war were more difficult to reach. The family of Archie Pratt did not learn of his fate until **1953**. Some families already had suspected the fate of the 98, as Admiral Sakaibara's trial and sentencing had made the state-side newspapers. The war was over, the murders had occurred more than three years previously, and the public already had been outraged with the news of similar massacres in the Philippines and in the European Theater. **No national acknowledgement of the Wake Island massacre ever materialized.**”*

You can see where this is going. Mass graves, no identification, families not notified until years later. We read on:

“In the dawning hours of 23 December 1941, the Japanese captured 1,603 men with the fall of the island garrison. Among those were 1,150 civilian contractors employed by the Morrison-Knudsen Company, part of a cooperative of eight construction companies called the Contractors Pacific Naval Air Bases.”

That's a much higher number of men captured than the Wiki entry. Maybe Major Hubbs is wrong? Who can say? His number does make sense as we now there were so many construction workers on the atoll and this is supposed to be a surprise attack. Wikipedia mumbles about them “evacuating” but I don't understand how that's possible given they are under aerial bombardment for days.

We then have some anecdotes from diaries, one written by a **Russell**, one written by a Wilcox, because of course more Peerage names. You have these diaries hidden and later found by the Americans used as a historical record of what happened, as recall that it took multiple “suicides” while in military custody for the Japanese to eventually be badgered into agreeing with the narrative of what happened. The magical diaries are what gives us the story – how nice of the Japanese to let their captives have writing supplies and time to keep a journal.

It's a dumb narrative and worth reading in full, but the gist is that very slowly over a period of years the Japanese ship out the Americans to Yokohama until eventually by '43 only 98 men are left on the island. We read:

*“The day-to-day record of POW life at Wake ended when Russell and Wilcox clambered aboard the Tachibana Maru. The routine of the remaining 98 did not change, however. **The monotony was interrupted only by increasing U.S. bombing raids and the loss of one of the 98.** An American was caught stealing food in July 1943. After a brief investigation, a Japanese lieutenant wielded the sword that removed the head of **the unknown American. Rear Admiral Shigimatsu Sakaibara, the new island commander who had been whisked ashore by an Imperial Navy bomber from Kwajalein in December 1942, presided over the murder.**”*

They bomb American POWs, by their own narrative. Not much in the way of outraged news articles or retrospectives on this – it's like nobody cares the military abandoned all these men, for years, then bombed them. Or any veterans being interviewed about internment, come to think of it. You would think there'd be a beat where they'd be like “To be honest it was pretty annoying the air

force kept bombing us, what the hell man”. But no, nothing crops up via DuckDuckGo. I guess “No man left behind” is just a catchphrase. No explanation either for how the Japanese and their captives survive on the island with no resupply but whatever, you’re not meant to think about logistics. How do we know this if the diary-writers have left? No idea.

*“The U.S. Navy also was tightening a noose around the atoll. **Extensive submarine patrols harassed all shipping coming in and out of Wake. This increased attention aggravated the island commander. Sakaibara and his subordinates were certain that an invasion was imminent. In reality, the United States had no intention of forcing a landing on Wake. As with most Japanese-held islands that did not have a tactical or strategic role for further campaigns, they were merely isolated from their source of supplies and left to wither on the vine. Bombings were designed only to deprive the enemy of the use of their airfield, seaplane base, and port facilities.***

*A U.S. carrier task force, which included the USS Yorktown (CV-10), arrived offshore on 5 October 1943. During the following two days the task force dropped **340 tons of bombs on the atoll, and the accompanying cruisers and destroyers hurled 3,198 eight-inch and five-inch projectiles. The raid did extensive damage to the infrastructure on the atoll, and 31 Japanese planes were destroyed on the ground. This was the largest U.S. raid on the atoll up to that time. Sakaibara was certain that the armada assembled offshore included a landing force. So he decided that the troublesome prisoners must be murdered to eliminate the threat they might pose during the coming invasion.***”

Longest air strip in the Pacific... no strategic value. OK. So... the Americans allowed over 1,600 men to be enslaved, for years, with no rescue effort, despite it being adjacent to their main Fleet HQ? But they did bomb the hell out of it. Are 340 tons of explosive insufficient to level an atoll this size? Really? Sakaibara has human shield hostages but he decides to murder them BEFORE the Americans arrive? What!?

*“The Headquarters Company commander, Lieutenant Commander Tachibana, was ordered by Admiral Sakaibara to **move the prisoners from their compound to an antitank ditch on the northern tip of Wake Island. There, in the waning afternoon light of 7 October 1943, Lieutenant Torashi Ito of Headquarters Company, had the Americans lined up and seated along the ditch facing the sea. They were blindfolded with their hands and feet bound. Three platoons of Tachibana's company mowed them down with machine gun and rifle fire. The Americans then were dumped unceremoniously into the ditch and covered with coral sand. The indignity suffered by the prisoners was not complete, however. The following day, a report from an enlisted man that he saw one of the prisoners escape during the confusion of the massacre prompted the disinterment of the bodies. The corpses were dug up and counted, then hastily reburied. The sailor had been correct; one American was missing. That man, whose identity has not been discovered, was re-captured and was beheaded personally by Admiral Sakaibara three weeks later.***”

Just ridiculous. How the hell do you “escape” from being sat in front of a ditch tied up and about to be shot by three platoons of Japanese, in broad daylight? What, he untied himself and ran away? Nobody saw this? How do you then hide from the Japanese on a flat atoll? How we know any of this even happened?

Because... (dramatic pause)
...of a rock.



Yep. That's some raw history there, soak it up.

The idea is that the mysterious ninja who escape being machine gunned and ran away and hid, sneaked BACK to the massacre site after the Japanese had left. He didn't want these men to be forgotten, so he carved the message "98 US POW 5-10-43" in big letters. This is still here, to this day, as a monument to the evil deeds of Wake Island.

Obviously this contradicts the Russell/Wilcox diaries as this talks about 98 men as of July, then one man is beheaded for stealing food, so that's 97, then you have the guy carving the rock still alive to do so, so that's 96 men shot. Not 98. I hate it when they can't get the little details right.

From [Wikipedia](#):

*"On 4 September 1945, the remaining Japanese garrison surrendered to a detachment of United States Marines under the command of Brigadier General Lawson H. M. Sanderson, with the handover being officially conducted in a brief ceremony aboard the destroyer escort Levy**.* ***Earlier the garrison received news that Imperial Japan's defeat was imminent, so the mass grave was quickly exhumed and the bones were moved to the U.S. cemetery that had been established on Peacock Point after the invasion, with wooden crosses erected in preparation for the expected arrival of U.S. forces. During the initial interrogations, the Japanese claimed that the remaining 98 Americans on the island were mostly killed by an American bombing raid, though some escaped and fought to the death after being cornered on the beach at the north end of Wake Island. Several Japanese officers in American custody committed suicide over the incident, leaving written statements that incriminated Sakaibara.***"

Or you know, they just had a normal graveyard on the island and the Americans tortured and killed the Japanese and made them sign false confessions. Or nothing happened and the whole thing is just fiction. After Pearl Harbour, I'm going with the latter.

This [radio broadcast](#) mentioning the fall of Wake treats all the Marines/construction workers as dead already, they don't even get a mention!

This [Newsreel copy via YouTube](#) shows the Americans attacking Wake in '43. Looking at it now I think we're looking at a) an empty atoll, b) a dummy ship used for target practice and c) a dummy plane, possibly remotely controlled. Like with Iwo Jima the Navy get to fire cannon at an empty atoll. You can watch my lame [Bitchute piece](#) on that, which at least has footage of Rocket Trucks (the best thing I've seen in all of World War 2).

Other than the 98(?) that got killed, what about the rest of the 1600-odd men captured on Wake? You can follow [this link](#) to read an article on the POW's of Wake Island. As with everything I read on this event, the little details shift. You're not supposed to really care (or be autistic about it). In this version the commander Devereux walks along the atoll waving a white flag to surrender, the Marines then have time to destroy their equipment before the Japanese arrive (?)

From page 3:

"Eighty-one Marines, eight sailors and 82 civilian construction workers had been killed or wounded"

Aces and eights, all the livelong day. The article is worth a read as it then goes on to explain how the Japanese ship the Nitta Maru transported the POWs from Wake to Yokohama, then on to Shanghai.



Imperial Navy Officer and sailors escorting USMC general James Devereux, Wake Island. 1941

This is supposed to be the Japanese walking the captured men to the transport ship. [Devereux](#) is up front in his nice white suit. Is he smiling? It looks like he's smiling. Again it's late but now I've got my brain itching that this is another paste-up. **It is, a really bad one.** Is Devereux floating? Or that guard in the foreground centre? What's going on with his feet? Also what's going on with the sky and the horizon? Aw man, another fake! Dammit I hate it when it takes me like three days of seeing a photo before I spot this stuff. **See the third man behind the general. He has no mouth. His face has dissolved. And Devereux is a big peerage name.**



Caption reads: “Maj Devereux, as POW in Shanghai, c. 1942.”

Nice of them to let him wear a full uniform and have collared shirts and a tie, while in a brutal prison camp. And shave, with a highly groomed mustache.

Continuing with the article, as always the numbers are different:

“Thousands of miles from home, crammed into Nitta Maru’s dimly lit hold, with several buckets for toilets, no heat or ventilation and confronted by brutal guards, the prisoners’ future was bleak. Even so, they were luckier than the 380 prisoners the Japanese kept on Wake to rebuild the island’s defences. Those unfortunates would slave away until October 1943, when, in retaliation for the strikes on the island by a U.S. Navy task force and fearful of an Allied invasion, the Japanese garrison murdered them all.”

Yeah, so it wasn’t 380, it was 98 killed by the Japanese. Or rather, 96.



This is the prison ship that took the men to Japan. Does this look like a military vessel? Or a regular passenger/cruise ship? Who took the photo? Why does it not have an escort? Why couldn't the men be rescued from a regular cruise liner? Did the US Navy really let them just sail all the way to Japan without any effort to stop them?

What happened to the POWs next? On page 6 we read:

“Once they had reached Yokohama, eight American officers and 12 enlisted men were sent to a prison camp in Japan while the remainder of the men continued on to Shanghai, China.

On the voyage to China, Lieutenant Toshio Sato, commander of the Japanese guard detachment, selected five Americans, three seamen and two Marines, at random, blindfolded and bound them, and took them on deck. There, surrounded by 150 Japanese sailors, the Americans were made to kneel. Sato then read to the Americans in Japanese: ‘You have killed many Japanese soldiers in battle. For what you have done you are now going to be killed...as representatives of American soldiers.’ The bewildered, frightened Americans understood none of his speech. Perhaps it was just as well, for when Sato finished speaking the five unfortunates were beheaded. Their bodies were then used for bayonet practice before being thrown overboard.”

Again with the random executions and burial at sea. So no trace of the bodies then – also how do we know this? Did the Japanese note this in a diary or something? Or the other POWs mentioned it afterwards? No idea. Nobody cares to explain either.

“After landing at Woosung the prisoners were forced to march five miles to what the Japanese called the Shanghai War Prisoners Camp – seven grey, ramshackle single-story buildings with no fresh water or plumbing and limited electricity. To deter escape, the camp was surrounded by barbed wire, electric fences and four constantly manned guard towers.”

OK so the Japanese capture approximately 1,500 men (based on the casualty figures in the chart previously shown), they leave 380 on the island (allegedly) and drop off 20 guys in Yokohama. They kill 5 men randomly on the boat to China and the rest arrive in the Shanghai camp. So that's 1,095 Americans (roughly) to put in... what... seven buildings? Really?

I don't think the writers thought this one through.

“At Woosung the Japanese commissary routinely issued food for only 300 prisoners. Rations provided only about 500-600 calories per man per day. Each of the Wake prisoners would lose at least 60 pounds during his captivity at the prison.”

I'll bet. The fact they only lost 60 pounds (27kg) in about four years of captivity is crazy.



Wake Island POWs

This is supposed to be a photo of Wake Island POWs, but of course we have absolutely no way of confirming this or where it was taken, or who these men are. You could photograph prisoners in an American prison at the time, or take a photograph from a European prison camp and we wouldn't be able to tell. Or take five photos of the thin man at the circus and paste five heads on him. The photo quality is ridiculously bad.

They get moved from Woosung to another camp, Kiang Wang, then get ordered to build a 45ft hill. Later they go from there to various camps – Fentai, transported to Busan in Korea, then taken to work in mines in Hakodate in Japan.

“After they had been at Hakodate for several weeks, however, the Americans noticed that the attitudes of their guards and civilian supervisors changed. The brutal interrogations and beatings ended, prisoners were fed a bit better, and their captors even began to smile cordially at them. One day a Japanese guard explained to one of the prisoners, ‘Very soon we will all be friends again.’

In late July 1945, Japanese officers treated American officers to a formal dinner at which they offered many toasts to their guests, bowed often and professed friendship with the Americans. Finally, a senior Japanese officer stood and proposed a toast to ‘everlasting friendship between America and Japan.’ The other Japanese smiled, nodded and waited for an appropriate response from the Marines.”

Aw, those cuddly Japanese! Maybe the real military objective was the friendship we made along the way? At the end of the war the Japanese suddenly abandon the camp, leaving all the Americans inside to their own ends. They don't kill them to try and cover it up, the Chinese army doesn't arrive to liberate them, they literally wake up and all the guards are gone. You can read about this and many other bizarre things regarding the fate of the POWs [in the article](#) but I won't bother repeating it all here, it's just quite silly. If Miles sees any particular gems from the article he's welcome to add them in here.

I think I'll leave this one alone now, it's obviously just an invented story which doesn't even hold together at face value, let alone with critique/analysis or context that Pearl Harbour is fake. It was a made-for-movie-theatres Alamo adventure story to whip up American audiences. I hope you at least

had a chuckle as I tried to recount this, like a shaggy dog story told down the pub, good over a few pints but a bit weird to pretend it's real in the cold light of morning.

Back on the yacht. We've got a couple more stops before we get to Okinawa.

[Outro music.](#)

* Lies

** Unfortunately the USS Vasa, the USS Rothschild and the USS Jagiellon were busy that day.