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R E S T R I C T E D

Narrative by: Captain Winfield Scott Cunningham, USN
History of Wake Island Defense

Considerable background on Wake Island defenses is given in this interesting report by Captain Cunningham. The narrative covers the period from his arrival on the atoll on 28 November 1941 until he left on a Jap prison ship on 12 January 1942. It includes his official report of the gallant defense of the atoll.

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Narrative by: Captain W. S. Cunningham, USN
Commanding Officer, Wake Island

On November 6, 1941, then a Commander, U.S.N., and assigned to duty on the USS WRIGHT as navigating officer, I received orders from the Bureau of Navigation assigning me to duty as Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Station, Johnston Island. On November 15, 1941, these orders were modified by the Bureau of Navigation in a despatch ordering me to temporary duty in "command of all naval activities, Wake Island."

I sailed on board my old ship from Pearl Harbor on Thanksgiving Day, November 20th. After a seven day trip (plus one day for crossing the date line) I arrived and reported at my new station on November 28th. My superiors in command were the Commandant, Fourteenth Naval District, and the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet.

The atoll called Wake Island comprises three islets, by name Peale, Wake and Wilkes. They are arranged around a shallow lagoon roughly in the shape of a horseshoe or wishbone with Wake at the apex. The axis runs about 120 degrees to 300 degrees and is about 2 miles long. The land area is about 3 square miles. The lagoon is open to the northwest. Wilkes, to the southwest, had a natural channel between itself and Wake which the contractor had deepened and widened to make a barge and boat channel, 300 feet by 12 feet in depth. There was also a natural channel between Peale and Wake which the contractor had bridged. The contractor maintained a ferry service between Wake and Wilkes.

Wake had become in 1935 one of the bases for the Pan-American Airways trans-Pacific system. Construction of a naval air station and submarine base began early in 1941. I had visited the island twice before, once for seventeen days in June, 1940, and once for five days in December, 1940. Both of these visits were made in the WRIGHT, which as a seaplane tender was acting as a base for flights of naval patrol planes between Pearl Harbor and Manila. Progress of construction was well advanced by December, 1941, but a great deal remained to be done. There was one landing strip available with dimensions 6,000 feet by 300 feet. The surface of the strip was crushed coral. There were no other facilities for land planes. Seaplane facilities consisted of a limited area in the lagoon for takeoff and landings with a varying number of buoys laid for mooring planes. There was one newly completed ramp where seaplanes might be hauled up on the beach. The projected parking area for seaplanes was partially completed.

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No underground storage was available for gasoline. All gasoline, fuel oil and diesel oil was on the surface in tanks or drums. There were two gasoline tank trucks for transporting gasoline.

Transportation about the island consisted of station wagons, trucks, and an assortment of boats, some Navy, some Pan-American and some contractor's. One fire truck and one ambulance were available.

Communications about the atoll were by means of field telephone with an exchange in the contractor's camp and another in the administration building of the Marine Defense Battalion. This system, adequate in peacetime, was quite unsatisfactory for war purposes. Wiring was all on the surface, much of it on the ground.

Communication with Oahu, 2,000 nautical miles distant, was carried on through several channels. There was a naval communications unit maintaining continuous schedules, before the war, with Pearl Harbor. The Army had a small unit in charge of Captain Harry Wilson, U.S.A., stationed temporarily on Wake, to handle communications connected with the ferrying of B-17s to the Orient. The contractor had a sea phone by means of which he could talk with his offices at Pearl, Midway and elsewhere. Pan-American Airways had their rather extensive system for control of their flights. Their schedule called for a flight each way each week but there were many interruptions and delays. A week before the outbreak of war Ambassador Litvinoff passed through eastbound to take up his duties in Washington. On December 8th (Wake time) a westbound plane one hour out of Wake was recalled when news of the Pearl Harbor attack was received.

No permanent buildings were completed by December 8th. The foundation and structural steel in many of them were well started and one large supply storehouse was near enough to completion so that it could be used. About a million dollars worth of supplies were stored in it. Several magazines were near completion and one was in use for the storage of airplane bombs, five and three inch ammunition, machine gun ammunition and pyrotechnics. There were no mines or depth charges on the island.

The Marine Defense Battalion, commanded by Major J. P. S. Devereux, U.S.M.C., with a strength of 13 officers and 365 enlisted men, was quartered in the old contractor's camp, which was called Camp One. It was located near the barge channel on the south reach of Wake. Personnel was quartered in tents and there were several frame structures in use for such purposes as mess hall, administration building and power plant.

On the northern spur of Wake was located the contractor's camp, called Camp Two. This camp housed about 1,100 civilians and about 60 naval officers and enlisted men. The buildings were of frame construction, adapted to the tropics, and furnished accommodations for the contractor's officers, mess hall and galley, cold storage plant, post office, store, barracks, machine

shop, garage, storehouse, hospital and various other functions. The Navy Communication Unit and aerological station were in the same area. The Superintendent of Construction was Mr. N. D. Teters.

Pan-American Airways was established on Peale. Their establishment was a hotel, several sets of quarters, an office building, radio building and several smaller units such as oil houses. They had a dock extending into the lagoon. Their installation included two large gasoline tanks located across the lagoon on Wilkes. The staff amounted to about 50 persons, under the charge of a Mr. Cooke; of these 50 a considerable number were natives of Guam, called Chamorros.

During the summer of 1941 the Defense Battalion had commenced the installation of 3 batteries of five-inch guns, 2 guns each; one was located near the southeast point of Wake, at Peacock Point; one at the western end of Peale, at Toki Point, and the other at the west end of Wilkes, at Kuku Point. Emplacements for 18 50-caliber and 30 30-caliber machine guns had been made. The majority of these were located along the south shore of Wake and Wilkes, which was the lee shore during normal weather conditions. Others were located near the landing strip at Heel Point on the northeast part of Wake, and a few were kept in the vicinity of the five-and three-inch batteries.

The three-inch anti-aircraft were in 3 batteries of 4 guns each. One was on Wilkes, one on Wake and one on Peale.

Six searchlights were installed in pits, the installations included their own power plants.

Temporary magazines were constructed in the vicinity of the five-inch batteries.

Fire control equipment was incomplete. No radar had yet arrived at the outbreak of war. No listening devices had been received, and there was no general alarm system which could be heard everywhere on the atoll. A continual roar from the surf, which without ceasing rolled against the narrow reef surrounding the atoll, contributed to the difficulties of spreading any alarm. The five-and three-inch guns were so newly installed that no test shots had been fired and their first shots were at enemy planes and ships.

While the contractor had assisted in various ways in the preparation of defenses, at the time of my arrival his instructions were to devote all his facilities toward speeding completion of construction. Consequently most of the work in connection with defense was being carried on by the Defense Battalion. No opportunity to rig the beaches with barbed wire had presented itself and it was not practicable to do this work during the intensive bombing which continued without letup after the outbreak of war.

A number of civilian workers had volunteered to take military instruction with the marines and several periods had been devoted to this end.

During the siege, 186 civilians fought side by side with the marines and shared their labors and their lot in every particular. Others assisted in the work of distributing water and food, construction of revetments for planes and dugouts for personnel, movement of anti-aircraft batteries, handling gasoline and ammunition and in other ways.

For several weeks before December 8th two submarines had been assigned to Wake. These boats maintained a continuous patrol around the atoll and had orders to submerge during daylight. One submarine suffered a casualty shortly after the outbreak of war requiring its return to Pearl Harbor; the other also departed the vicinity of Wake at some later time as yet unknown to me.

No information as to the political situation or the possible imminence of war had been furnished me. The secret arrival of Marine Fighting Plane Squadron 211 on December 4th via the USS ENTERPRISE might have been considered an implicit warning had not all ship and plane movements been so handled for many months. This squadron had a strength of twelve F4F-3 fighters manned by 11 officers and 48 enlisted men of whom 13 were pilots. The squadron was commanded by Major Paul A. Putnam, U.S.M.C.

From December 2nd to 4th there was based at Wake a twelve-plane Navy Patrol Squadron. A small fleet air detachment of 4 officers and 30 enlisted men commanded by Commander Campbell Keene, U.S.N. had arrived via the WRIGHT with me on November 28th. This detachment was charged with the servicing of such patrol planes as might be based at Wake. Personnel were quartered and messed in the contractor's camp. Marine Fighting Squadron 211 was escorted to Wake by a plane from the patrol squadron.

The ten days between November 28th and December 8th were spent by me in familiarizing myself with construction and defenses on the atoll. I had also to give considerable thought to the problems presented in the prospective commissioning of the naval air station and submarine base.

The morning of December 8th dawned as had the ten previous mornings with everything apparently serene and tranquil. This day was a Monday and regular workday routine was in order. Breakfast commenced at 0600. As I was leaving the contractor's mess hall at about 0700, in company with several other officers, a messenger from the communications office arrived with a verbal report that word had come in of the attack on Pearl Harbor. He stated that the operator at Pearl had repeatedly emphasized "This is no drill--this is no drill", and then had abruptly broken off transmission.

Later in the day instructions were received from Com14 to put into effect WPL-46 and to destroy all reserve codes and ciphers which was accordingly done.

Difficult though it was to credit the report that Japan had struck and in such a daring manner, the report was given full credence. Orders were immediately given by me to the Defense Battalion to go to battle stations.

I instructed Major Putnam to maintain a continuous patrol during daylight of four planes and to disperse the remaining eight in such manner as to minimize possible bomb damage. The pursuit of construction being under the highest priority, it was decided to go ahead with the scheduled work of the civilians. It was deemed that danger to civilian personnel would be relatively minor due to their distribution over the whole atoll. I requested Pan-American to recall the clipper which had departed earlier for Guam and upon its return the pilot was directed to unload his plane and to stand by for a sea patrol at 1300. The two submarines could not be contacted until nightfall at which time they would surface.

Though the nature of the initial attack on Wake could be only a matter of conjecture, it was believed that we should not have long to wait. I believed that our air patrol would give us sufficient notice of any attack so that there would be time to warn all hands. I was in my office in Camp Two at 1155 when the sound of explosions began to be heard. Twenty seven Japanese heavy bombers had slipped in over the airfield under cover of low clouds at an altitude of about 3,000 feet. Their approach had been wholly undetected either by lookouts on the ground or in the air. All circumstances favored the Japanese. The entire aviation squadron was on the field preparing the next patrol for takeoff, and had no opportunity to find shelter before the full fury of the attack developed. As a result their casualties were heavy. Twenty-three were killed outright or died before the following morning; eleven were wounded, a total of 34, 62% of the 55 officers and men in the squadron. Of the pilots on the ground, three were killed and one seriously wounded. The three were 1st Lt. G. A. Graves, 2nd Lt. R. J. Conderman and 2nd Lt. F. Holden; the fourth was 2nd Lt. H. G. Webb. Three others, Maj. Putnam, Capt. F. C. Tharin and Sergeant R. O. Arthur, suffered wounds of a minor nature.

In addition to the heavy personnel loss, the material damage suffered at the airfield was exceedingly serious. Due to the low altitude of the enemy attack, and the complete surprise, the bombing and strafing were extremely effective. It appeared immediately that the planes had not been sufficiently dispersed and seven of the eight on the ground were damaged beyond repair. These were in each case burned from the engine to the tail. Some of the engines and propellers were usable later for replacements. The eighth plane, while seriously damaged, was later made serviceable.

Ordnance equipment housed in a tent near the field was considerably shot up. A large stack of gasoline in drums, and a gasoline tank truck alongside it were set afire and destroyed. Several trucks which happened to be in the vicinity were damaged more or less completely. Numerous bomb craters on and near the field were left by the raid. The enemy flight proceeded from the airfield across the lagoon and destroyed almost totally the Pan American installation on Peale Island. The hotel was burned to the ground; and all other buildings and facilities were more or less completely damaged. Five Chamorros on the staff were killed. The clipper, empty and moored at the end of the dock,

had by great good fortune escaped the notice of the Japanese gunners, and was unharmed. The pilot, Lt. John Hamilton, USNR, and the PAA manager proposed the evacuation of the passengers and staff; this proposal was approved by me. At about 1300 the clipper took off for Midway with the white members of the staff and all passengers except one, who did not get the word. This one was Mr. H. P. Hevenor of the Bureau of the Budget, who had arrived the previous day in connection with an examination of expenditures. He was not in the plane when it left for Guam, and was not with the other passengers when it came time to embark. The clipper arrived safely at Midway the same evening.

The Japanese on their swing back from the attack on Peale passed over Camp Two and threw some machine gun fire into that area. As they departed toward the southeast, the 3" batteries were able to bear, and the fighters in the air attacked. Several bombers were damaged and it was believed that all did not succeed in reaching their bases in the Marshalls.

Aid to the wounded was the first order of business. These were taken to the contractors' hospital in Camp Two. The naval surgeon, Lt.(jg) G. M. Kahn (MC), USNR, and the contractors' doctor, L. S. Shank, aided by their corpsmen and male nurses, worked far into the night treating the wounds. Some 25 civilians had also been killed or wounded. Such dead as had not been blown to bits and could be found were placed temporarily in the contractors' refrigerators. On Friday, the 12th, a mass burial was held for 44 dead with honors, attended by a firing squad, Major Devereux, Mr. Teters and myself. A lay preacher read the burial service. A number of bodies found about the island from time to time were buried where found, due to their having become decomposed and mutilated by the numerous rats and hermit crabs which were present in large numbers.

It was apparent after the first bombing that routine work could not be carried on as long as there was lacking an adequate lookout and warning system. Therefore all personnel not assigned to battle stations were ~~FR~~ instructed thereafter to remain clear of all buildings and equipment during daylight and to proceed with the preparation of foxholes and dugouts. Some lives were later lost due to disregard of these orders.

Work was immediately undertaken in the matters of distribution of food and water about the atoll. The mess halls could no longer be used. A limited amount of hot food was prepared in the contractors' galley in the evenings after dark, this being distributed by trucks driven by naval enlisted men and civilians, most of it to the positions occupied by the defense battalion and the aviation squadron. Several makeshift kitchens had been established at various places by the end of the siege, utilizing canned and dried foods. Water was placed along the roads in unused gasoline drums. Gasoline and diesel oil, the latter being used in power plants, were likewise distributed in order to reduce concentrations. Covered latrines were built in numerous places, and orders were issued that no open latrines would be permitted; instructions were given that all excreta should be covered with a foot deep sand covering. A

certain amount of dysentery developed before these measures could be completed, this disorder probably being aggravated by the unbalanced diet resulting from the necessity of largely using canned food. However, these problems had largely been solved by the end of the resistance with the exception that the refrigeration system containing considerable quantities of meats, fruits and vegetables was so damaged by bombing during one of the last raids that it was not operating at the time of the surrender. Several tanks containing diesel oil and distilled water had also been pierced by aerial machine gunning. Loss of water could be corrected by the use of a chlorinating system to purify rain water which was collected and stored in underground tanks. There was no potable water in the ground.

A steel barge with a heavy charge of dynamite was moored in the channel and the landing field was mined with dynamite. These charges were rigged to be set off electrically.

The measures above described were barely commenced when on the morning of the ninth at about 1100 another heavy raid took place. This time the camp areas suffered heavy damage. The aerological station was completely eliminated. The communications building and some radio equipment were well shot up after which a communication station was set up in a half completed magazine, in which I later established my command post. The hospital was bombed, burned down and three patients there killed. New hospitals were set up in two other empty magazines, one for civilians under Doctor Shank and one for military personnel under Doctor Kahn. Refrigerators and lights were installed in each, the power being furnished by motor generators in pits alongside the magazines. During the course of this and later raids, several barracks buildings, the machine shop, garage, supply warehouse, gasoline, fuel oil and diesel tanks, much construction equipment, a number of trucks and station wagons and a large part of the new construction were more or less completely destroyed. Several of the boats were sunk in the lagoon. One airplane of those left, while under overhaul in a pit, was hit by a bomb and destroyed.

The large quantity of supply officer's stores was practically a total loss. I had over half of my personal property and clothing stored in the supply building and this was burned completely.

On the morning of December 11th sometime before dawn a force of Japanese light vessels consisting of one light cruiser, nine destroyers and two transports was seen approaching the south coast. There was a half moon and they could be seen some distance. A request by Major Devereux to use searchlights was denied and several of the ships came close in. I thereupon ordered the batteries on Wake and Wilkes to open fire. Four fighters had meantime taken off and repeatedly bombed and strafed the Japanese. One destroyer was sunk off Kuku Point at point blank range. A light cruiser or destroyer leader was damaged by gunfire and later sank 15 or 20 miles south of Wake after receiving several bomb hits. Another combatant vessel was damaged and may have been sunk, though this has not been confirmed. Two

transports out of gun range were attacked and damaged by the fighters. The force withdrew toward the southwest after about two hours and after throwing a considerable number of shells at the atoll without effecting appreciable damage.

A report of this day's work by the islands' defenders elicited from the Commander-in-Chief and the Commandant, Fourteenth Naval District, dispatches to the effect that the results were "in the highest traditions of the naval service."

Land-based bombers continued to deliver almost daily raids and effected a considerable toll of material damage. Personnel casualties were light after December 9th. Several single plane raids were made by four-engine seaplanes during darkness usually shortly before dawn or after dark. These raids were ineffective excepting for the result of dispersing civilian working parties which had been organized after the daily landplane raid for purposes connected with constructing shelter for airplanes and personnel, moving the AA batteries and distribution of food, fuel and water.

Late in the afternoon of December 12th at about the time the mass burial was taking place, 2nd Lt. D. W. Kliewer, while on air patrol to the south of Wake, spotted a submarine on the surface, attacked with bombs and machine guns and sank it. A day or so later, Major Putnam also found a submarine on the surface but, beguiled by strange markings on the conning tower, was in doubt as to its enemy character and did not attack.

On December 16th Captain F. C. Tharin attacked and shot down a four-engine flying boat which was conducting a lone raid.

The landplane bomber flights varied in strength from a low of 24 to a maximum of 42. No work was attempted during daytime while awaiting the almost daily raid. As soon as the bombing had taken place or toward mid-afternoon on the few days when there were no raids, the contractor's superintendent, Mr. Teters, assisted by his leading men, organized the working parties desired and assigned them to their various tasks. A considerable number of the civilians could not be induced to work from fear of bombing and some others would disappear after reporting for work. The occasional night raids by seaplane bombers had a very adverse effect upon the prosecution of this work. Little could be done in organization after dark. However, Mr. Teters exerted his utmost efforts in cooperating in providing all the civilian assistance requested. It was necessary for me to make addresses to groups of civilians assuring them that we should speedily be relieved though I had no assurance of this until December 20th.

On that day a navy patrol plane commanded by Ensign Murphy, U.S.N. arrived from Pearl Harbor via Midway. He brought secret orders to prepare the evacuation of all but 350 civilians, the latter to be selected by specified trades to continue the more important of the projects. One of these was the

completion of the ship channel across Wilkes. Information was also received to the effect that much needed fire control and other equipment was enroute; that reinforcements including another twelve plane fighter squadron were embarked in a task force consisting of the carrier SARATOGA, three cruisers, several destroyers and the aircraft tender TANGIER. While the date of arrival of this task force was not specified, it appeared that it should arrive on December 23rd or 24th.

The patrol plane left at dawn on December 21st carrying back to Pearl Harbor Major W. J. Bayler who had been on Wake since November 28th in connection with establishing a communication system for Marine Fighting Squadron 211. I sent with the pilot a short report to the Commandant, Fourteenth Naval District of the action to date.

The forenoon of December 21st saw the first raid by carrier-borne aircraft. Each raid was conducted by a fighter and a dive bomber squadron, about 18 planes in each. The attacks were made at low altitude and inflicted further material damage. The attack on December 21st was unopposed except by ground machine gun fire which was ineffective.

When the carrier planes appeared over Wake, Major Putnam was in a dugout at some distance from the airfield. He proceeded by truck to the airfield being twice driven out of the truck, while enroute, by strafing. Upon arrival, he took off in one of the two remaining planes and conducted a long search for the enemy carrier. His conduct throughout this and all other phases of the engagement was of the highest order of courage and resolution.

A raid made on December 22nd was opposed by two fighters which were all that remained. (In addition to the planes lost by bombing, one had had a forced landing on the beach and another had crashed on takeoff, both planes being wrecked though the pilots were not injured). The pilots of these two planes were Captain H. C. Freuler and 2nd Lt. C. R. Davidson. Davidson did not return from this flight. Captain Freuler engaged the Japanese planes and shot down three, his plane being damaged by the explosion of his third victim to such an extent that he was barely able to make the field where he managed to land, having been wounded by two machine gun bullets.

At about midnight on the evening of December 22nd reports were received that gunfire was taking place to the north. This was barely visible above the horizon and appeared to be accompanied by flares from star shells. It was so far distant that its nature could not be determined and what it was is not yet known to me.

At about 0200 on the morning of December 23rd reports came in that landing barges were approaching the south shores of Wake and Wilkes. It was intensely dark, visibility being limited to a few yards. Approaching craft could not be seen until close in. The Japanese succeeded in putting

ashore a large number of troops who landed well equipped for their mission. They soon filtered through to the airfield and on their way cut telephone wires between the command and outlying posts. Within a short time after the landing commenced, there was no communication between the island command post and Wilkes Island; the five-inch battery on Wake was also isolated, as well as the forces on the south shore of Wake.

The aviation squadron, having no airplanes left, joined the ground forces at the airport. Captain H. C. Elrod, executive officer of the squadron, was killed in the ground fighting, as was Sergeant Cowin, Corporal Boyle, Private First Class M. K. Taylor and eight civilians associated with the squadron. The personnel of the anti-aircraft battery on Peale, commanded by Captain Godbold, were ordered to proceed to Wake to reinforce the troops there.

It was not possible to form any accurate estimate of the fortunes of the battle during darkness due to lack of information. The Japanese had by daylight landed in such force as to outnumber the defenders several times. As soon as the light became sufficiently strong, it was seen that two destroyers had grounded on the reef to the south of Wake. These were fired into by the three-inch battery on Peale. They were set on fire but the troops they had brought were long since ashore.

At dawn observers on Peale reported that Wilkes had fallen as Japanese flags were seen in several places. This report turned out to be completely erroneous as it was later ascertained that the marines on Wilkes had killed all but two of the invaders and had captured those. Captain W. M. Platt was the senior officer on Wilkes and his good work was effectively seconded by that of 2nd Lt. J. McAlister, Gunner McKinstry and 65 enlisted men aided by a number of civilians.

It developed that on Wake, which had received by far the brunt of the attack, the several strong points were each cut off from the others and surrounded by strong forces of Japanese. The arrival at dawn of the carrier-based dive bombers and fighters prevented the movement of reserves to reinforce the more hard pressed of the isolated units. To Major Devereux in his command post in a magazine near the airfield it appeared that the task confronting the ground forces was now hopeless and he so informed me by telephone at about 0600. When I asked his opinion as to whether I should be justified in surrendering in order to prevent further and useless loss of life, he responded that such decision was mine to make. I took his information under advisement. At about 0700 he called again, informed me that he could no longer hold out and inquired as to whether I had contacted the Japanese by radio. I replied that I had not but that in view of his representations and the report of the fall of Wilkes I had arrived at the extremely difficult decision to surrender. This decision was indicated to the Japanese by the display of white flags at the various points occupied by United States personnel.

The surrender was made at about 0830 and it took about two hours to notify all the isolated groups on Wake which were still continuing resistance. Major Devereux, escorted by Japanese, was taken by boat to Wilkes and the surrender was completed at about 1400.

Upon receipt of the report that a landing was being made, I was instructed by the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific, to keep him informed as to the progress of the engagement. Shortly after the report of the approaching enemy I sent a dispatch in plain to the submarine which I thought was still present, notifying him of the attack. CinCPac intercepted this and informed me "No friendly vessels are in your vicinity." I sent several dispatches to CinCPac, the last at about 0630 reporting the grounded destroyers and the approach of several more combatant vessels and transports. After daylight the radio could no longer be used as Japanese planes were patrolling the island, bombing and strafing all localities showing signs of life. The antenna for the transmitter was of the mast type and to erect it in sight of the planes would have been suicidal.

When the decision to surrender was made, all codes, ciphers and other confidential matter were ordered destroyed.

A summary of Japanese material losses in the subduing of Wake Island appear to be by conservative estimate:

- 3 destroyers
- 1 light cruiser
- 1 submarine
- 8 twin-engined bombers
- 3 carrier-based fighters
- 1 four-engined seaplane

Considerably greater claims have been made by various witnesses but have not yet been confirmed.

No information is available by which an estimate of enemy personnel losses can be made.

The Marine Fighting Plane Squadron with a strength of 59 had 33 killed and 15 wounded in action. Of two naval enlisted men who worked with the squadron, one was wounded twice. The Commanding Officer, Major Putnam, was twice wounded.

No final data is at hand to make possible a summary of casualties to members of the other naval activities. It is desired that an additional report be made later when reports from all subordinates have been received. So far (January 3, 1946) only that of Major Putnam has come to hand.

On the basis of present information, it is desired to cite the following for eminent and conspicuous service: the entire personnel of Marine

Fighting Plane Squadron 211. In addition to members thereof already mentioned by name, 2nd Lt. Kinney, Technical Sergeant Hamilton, J. J. Jesson, AMMlc, U.S.N., civilians John P. Sorenson, Rex D. Jones, David E. Lilly, Don K. Miller, Fred S. Gibbons, Harry Yeager, Clyde Yeager, Tex Lancaster, Malcolm D. Johnson, another Miller, Joe D. Smith, George F. Gibbons and Leal H. Russell, performed outstanding work in keeping the planes flying. Hesson was wounded twice in action. Of the civilians, the first eight were killed, the ninth wounded in ground fighting on the morning of the Japanese landing, December 23rd, when they took their places alongside the marine and navy combatants.

Of the fleet air detachment, valuable contributions were furnished the defense by Commander C. Keene, U.S.N., Ensigns G. H. Henshaw and B. J. Lauf, U.S.N.R. Of these, Ensign Lauf was wounded on December 23rd. These two ensigns were trained in communications and performed excellent service in straightening out the previously confused codes and ciphers and in coding and decoding. Ensign Lauf was an expert in internal combustion engines. His ability to repair boat engines did much toward keeping needed transportation operating. Several of the enlisted men in this detachment were invaluable in their various duties, particularly in regard to food distribution.

Of the Marine Defense Battalion, the work of the detachment on Wilkes, already described, merits high praise. No information is now available on which to base citations of other individuals or groups of this command.

Many civilians are entitled to commendation and the framing of suitable citations and awards is in hand in the Bureau of Yards and Docks. It is here desired only to invite attention to the excellent cooperation furnished by the General Superintendent, Mr. Nathan D. Teters, and to the magnificent efforts and example of the contractor's surgeon, Dr. Lawton E. Shank.

The treatment of the prisoners by the Japanese was fairly satisfactory considering their standards after about two days during which time they were kept huddled on the airfield insufficiently clad, fed and supplied with water. After that time they were moved into barracks and medical care provided for the sick and wounded. The food issued was mostly stews made from beef heart and liver with some bread, butter and tea with sugar.

I was confined in the contractor's guest cottage from December 23rd until January 12th with Captain W. N. Platt, U.S.M.C., Captain Harry Wilson, U.S.A. and Mr. H. P. Hevenor, civilian from the Bureau of the Budget. In the superintendent's cottage next door were confined Mr. Teters, Major Devereux, Commander Keene and 7 or 8 other officers from the Defense Battalion. While here awaiting transportation I was questioned several times by the Japanese Admiral and members of his staff. Their questioning was mainly directed toward insuring the location of all arms, munitions, mines, if any, etc.

A Japanese Commander with whom I had a long talk one night, mostly concerned with Japans moral justification for launching the war, asked me whether I had sent a dispatch to "Send more Japs." I did not claim the honor and he said "In any case, it is damn good propaganda."

On January 12th at about noon abrupt orders were received to be prepared to embark in a ship within an hour. About 1200 military personnel and civilians were placed on board the liner NITTA MARU, one of Japans more modern liners, leaving about 350 on the island. These were sick and wounded, plus certain civilian workers of selected trades retained for work on Wake. It is believed from recent reports that all but 96 were later removed to Japan or elsewhere and that these 96 were executed on October 7, 1943, by machine gunning in a mass murder ordered by the Japanese naval officer commanding, Rear Admiral Shigmatsu Sakaibara.

Captain Cunningham:

The prisoners of war were embarked on the NITTA MARU and left Wake Island on January 12, 1942, arriving in Yokohama on the 17th. We remained there about a day and a half while the ship was being serviced and while we were being interviewed by the press and members of Japanese Intelligence.

We departed from Yokohama on the 19th and arrived at Shanghai on the 23rd. It was planned to parade the prisoners through the streets of Shanghai but on account of rain this parade was called off. We got down to Woosung the next day, disembarked and were marched about five miles to the prisoner-of-war camp at Woosung. I remained there until March 11, 1942, when, with four others, I escaped from the prisoner-of-war camp and, with the party, attempted to make my way into Free China by crossing the Whangpoo River at its junction with the Yangtse.

Due to the fact that the Japanese had such excellent control over the river traffic we were unable to get a boat and were apprehended the next day by Chinese Puppet Troops.

After about a month's investigation and two month's solitary confinement at the Kiangwan Military Prison awaiting trial, we were tried by General Court Martial and military members of the escape party were sentenced to 10 years confinement.

The place of confinement was designated as Shanghai Municipal Jail. We remained there until October 6, 1944, at which time a party of eight, including myself, escaped again. This time, three of the party managed to reach Free China; the other five, including me, were captured in the city, again investigated, tried by court martial and this time sentenced to life imprisonment. The place of confinement after this court martial was designated as the Military Prison at Nanking. We spent about 6-1/2 months at Nanking from January 19, 1945, until August 1st. On August 1st we were moved by train to Peking and confined in a military prison there until August 18th. On the 18th we were transferred to the Civil Internee Camp at Thanghai (?) outside of Peking. The next day we were moved back into Peking and assigned quarters in two hotels.

On August 20th, we established contact with the Army Liaison party which had dropped into Peking by parachute. They arranged for the release of the military prisoners-of-war and we were taken out of Peking by Army B-24s and moved into Free China. From there I made my way back to the States and arrived in the continental limits of the United States on September 7, 1945.

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