

Second World War at Sea Wake Island Relief Scenario Craig Truesdell

Summary

In short, I played a great PBEM game with Bill (IJN) and David Gee (Umpire). The scenario was the defense of Wake Island just after Pearl Harbor. This is a great scenario especially so if you are just learning to play the game. If you are like me you'll make many mistakes the first time out which actually makes this scenario more realistic because it was so early in the war when lots of mistakes are made. It also made me truly appreciate the SWWAS design. Also, if you can do it, make sure you use the fuel rules if at all possible. They are almost required for this game and will make the game play much more realistic. In general, Fletcher had nothing on me. I didn't spend enough effort on watching my fuel and it hurt me late in the game. I created a spreadsheet to assist me in the future but was too late for this game. Sometimes you'll have to leave the DDs behind for fast maneuvers. This is realistic and was done historically so even the purists can do it without shame.

Initial Strategy

Wake Island will fix the enemy for me. Unless he sinks a CV or prevents me from landing my VFs and Tangier he'll need to land troops. Reading the VPs this isn't required so a IJN player could do the whole landing and hunt CVs. We played with the optional OOBs but I got the historical mission and OOB. This makes this scenario very playable. My basic strategy was to send the VFs in to gain VPs and setup CAP. Then with all 3 CVs gathered I send in the Tangier under cover of night. Then I wait east of Wake for the landings to start. The G4Ms from Marcus keep the USN to one side of the map, you don't want to run into these guys!

Pregame and Approach

I basically put the air units on ASW and had the TFs starting from Pearl sprint out of the harbor to avoid the subs. I used serious fuel here, probably should have braved the subs a bit more in hindsight. Otherwise, everyone will gather close to Wake and wait for the Tangier to catch up. While waiting, the VFs flew to Wake.

Mid Game

The Tangier is in place and the approach is made. The Lexington is jumped by the IJN and is heavily damaged. The IJN carriers were found but almost all flights got lost! Needless to say I was pretty steamed with my boys. I expected to at least cripple 1 CV which would have clinched the game. No chance of landing from transports when the USN has 2 CVs around unopposed. Still, it seemed like he left to retire towards Marcus so I kept the Tangier on course and bit my nails the whole way in and out. I think he found it after it left Wake but the air strike was ineffective. Again, I burned excess fuel because of poor planning. To say the umpire was kind and patient through all of my bungling would be a major understatement.

End Game

Now I just refueled and waited for the transports. No sign of the IJN east of Wake. Then right on time the transports arrive and I have a clear shot at them. I start sending airstrikes to get them on the beaches! Sometimes his CAP intervenes and sometimes not so I know he's close. The large transports can really bring the VPs (24 each), sink them and you cost the IJN some serious VPs. If I had launched 1 more air strike against them, I would have won the game (maybe). I may have lost a CV in the process so who knows? I did get a bit lucky on my last air strike so it may have been a total bust. Still, I bet the Imperial Marines will have something to say to the IJN afterwards!

Post Game

Fueling mistakes and not reading the VP conditions and HOW the VPs will be calculated hurt me in this tight game. I was thinking he'd start the unloading early but he didn't. I should have been ready for this. Watch those oilers and DDs at all times! Sure they CAN move 4 zones in 1 turn but rarely will you be able to manage it unless you want to spend most of the game refueling. Also, because your flights can get lost, rarely can you rush in, launch an air strike, and then rush back out. Expect to be there all day for it to matter. I should have made provisions for a surface daylight attack on the transports. Basically head in with 2 CV task forces and 1 surface force. The IJN can't get them all and the daylight conditions would have helped me against the long lances. Also, the 2 zone restriction for the USN CVs hurt me a bit. I didn't plan well enough at times and it messed me up now and then.

Ideas and Observations

The G4Ms need to have their ranges clipped a bit when attacking moving targets such as TFs with torpedoes. Also, long range air strikes should require 2 turns in the hanger instead of the usual 1.

CAs should be allowed to refuel DDs. I think this was done historically but maybe not. Maybe 1 box for 2 kinda thing.

This was a very cool scenario, play it with the fuel rules if at all possible. I am trying to create some simpler fuel rules for FTF games. Otherwise, they are a bit much.

Referred Pain: I think I'm for this rule when the target is not retreating or aborting. Otherwise I think it makes some units a bit too "brave". We used it for torpedo attacks only and it did impact the effect of my dive bombing on his transports. Not using it for bombs does make sinking transports harder for dive bombers which is probably realistic but again can make transports very "brave" which is unrealistic.