

# CLASSIC TAG NEWS

A reprint of a popular article from 1992!

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## THE RELIEF OF WAKE

In exploring hypothetical naval scenarios possible during December 1941, the best opportunity for American success is to carry to fruition the historically aborted Wake Island relief operation. In this scenario, all three American carriers: Enterprise, Lexington, and Saratoga were historically involved, and if not for hesitant senior commanders, U.S. forces might well have sunk the Hiryu, Soryu, a couple of cruisers, and some marus.



Admiral  
Husband E. Kimmel

Admiral Kimmel had long predicted a naval action in the vicinity of Wake, and in April 1942, he so informed the chief of naval operations. If the Japanese began the war, he told Admiral Stark, the CNO, they would almost certainly direct one of their initial thrusts at eliminating Wake, an American outpost well inside patrol plane range

from Japanese bases in the Marshalls. "If Wake be defended," Kimmel continued prophetically, "then for the Japanese to reduce it would require extensive operations of their naval force in an area where we might be able to get at them, thus offering us an opportunity to get at naval forces with naval forces."

By December, Wake had been reinforced with one-third strength, but fully gunned 4th Marine Defense Battalion: 388 men; six 5-in. coastal guns; twelve 3-in. AA guns, (lacking radar, proximity fuses, and fire control equipment); and about fifty each 50 and 30-cal. machine guns. On December 4, Adm. Halsey and Task Force 8, the Enterprise group, delivered twelve Wildcats of VMF-211.

The Japanese struck Wake at midday, December 8 (December 7, Pearl Harbor time). Land-based air from the Marshalls caught the Wildcats on the ground, destroying

seven and severely damaging another; twenty-three Marines and ten civilian construction workers were killed. Intense air raids continued for three days.

On December 10, Admiral Kimmel's staff drew operational plans for an expedition to fortify and secure Wake. The 3rd Marine Defense Battalion: 982 men, with a full complement of radar and ammunition, began loading in the seaplane tender Tangier. Strong escorts and covering forces were necessary and at hand, but Admiral Kimmel never made clear as to whether the actual operation was to be one of relief, the seeking of battle, or both, and his successor never asked.

The next day, a Japanese invasion force arrived off the island. Given the importance attached to its seizure, their numbers bordered on the ludicrous, very much a second team. Rear Admiral Sadamichi Kjioka in light cruiser Yubari, flagship of Destroyer Squadron 6, led six old destroyers; two converted destroyer-



Rear Admiral  
Sadamichi Kjioka

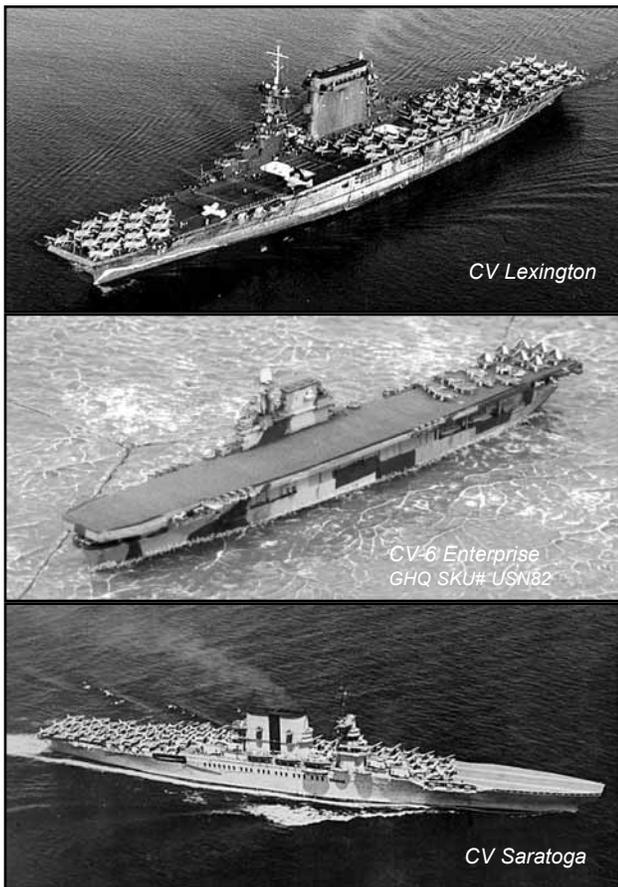
transports carrying 450 special naval landing force troops, and two marus with an army garrison. And if he needed any back up, there was ancient Cruiser Division 18: Tenryu and Tatsuta.

Employing accurate coastal gunfire and strafing Wildcats, the Marines sank the destroyers Hayate and Kisaragi, set fire to several other ships, and shot down three bombers. The Japanese, less 500 dead, withdrew.

Via undersea cable, news of the action arrived at Pearl harbor, sending an incredible elation through the fleet, which at the time was still putting out fires along Battleship Row. Better yet, Admiral Kimmel felt this

temporary repulse of the Japanese at Wake compelled them to commit much larger forces to a second landing attempt, and provided the opportunity for executing his prewar ambush “to get at naval forces with naval forces.”

The plan involved all three carrier groups, but Kimmel erred in not concentrating them to mutually supporting roles. To pin enemy air and surface forces, Admiral Wilson Brown’s newly formed Task Force 11: Lexington, Cruiser Division 4, Destroyer Squadron 1, and fast oiler Neosho, would make a diversionary raid on Jaluit in the Marshalls. This, however, was based on faulty intelligence. There was nothing there except an unfinished seaplane base, and the raid served only to negate one-third of the Pacific Fleet’s striking capability.



The second element of the operation included Admiral Halsey and Task Force 8: Enterprise, Cruiser Division 5, and Destroyer Squadron 6. Their mission was to patrol the western approaches to Hawaii, roughly along the line Midway-Johnston, and serve as long-range support if necessary, for the Wake relief mission. As the force closest to Pearl Harbor, it sailed without an oiler, a fact that must be considered if contemplating an action far from base. Given the dispersed fleet disposition, in part inescapably logistic, Halsey too, had no real operational purpose, save an impotent reserve far from targets of plan and opportunity.

The most important element of the relief operation was the newly formed Task Force 14: Saratoga; heavy cruisers Astoria, Minneapolis, and San Francisco of Cruiser Division 6; and seven destroyers of Destroyer Squadron 4. The carrier, with VMF-221 (eighteen Buffalos) as supercargo, arrived at Pearl Harbor on December 15.

This task force would serve the triple purpose of delivering VMF-221 to Wake; serve as close cover to the seaplane tender Tangier—loading at Pearl with everything the Marines at Wake desperately needed, including the full-strength 3rd Defense Battalion; and, be in an ideal location for launching a counterattack on any Japanese shipping within a 300-mile radius of the island.

But as with the other prongs of the operation, the germ of failure insidiously crept in. Kimmel had but one oiler to accompany Task Force 14, the old 13-knot Neches, whose presence effectively cancelled any protracted high-speed evolutions by the plan’s critical element. The second creeping germ had to do with command. Its logical choice was Saratoga’s flag officer, the aggressive Aubrey Fitch, Commander Carrier Division 1, one of the navy’s most experienced aviators. Kimmel, however, on the basis of seniority only, chose instead the commander of the cruiser screen, ComCruDiv 6, Rear Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher, a man with virtually no knowledge of carrier operations.

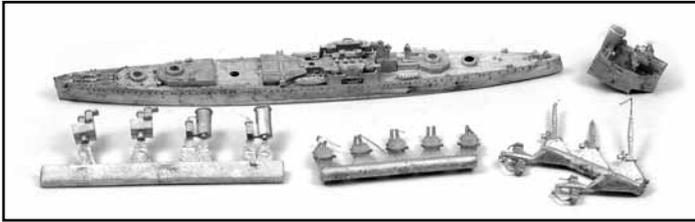


Task Force 11, Wilson Brown, and the Lexington group sailed for its diversionary strike on the Marshalls on December 11. On the 15th, Tangier, Neches, and DesDiv 7 set out for Wake, one day ahead of the heavy ships of Task Force 14. On December 17, Admiral Kimmel was sacked as Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet. his replacement, Admiral Nimitz would not arrive for a week, and temporary command passed to Admiral William D. Pye, Commander Task Force 1, the smoking, sunken wreck of the Battle Force.

Pye had a reputation as a great thinker, but he was no fighter, and the devastating shock of Pearl Harbor had badly shaken his confidence. Pye had never really trusted Kimmel’s plan, especially in its flawed duality. Characteristically unable to seize the initiative, Pye completed the circle of the wrong man at the wrong place at the wrong time.

*“The Relief of Wake” concludes in the next Tac News*

# MODELING WWII MICRONAUTS®

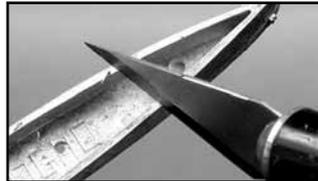


## Prepping and assembling your ship

You will need a sharp bladed hobby knife CA Glue (CLR21 or other "super" glue).

Most of the GHQ 1/2400th scale Micronauts are cast with multiple parts: hull, fore superstructure, mast, guns, etc. Very small parts are cast together on sprues. Although GHQ miniatures do not require cleaning or priming, you may wish to use a small brush to gently remove any production-mold release residue from the castings.

1. The casting process sometimes leaves little bits of extra metal ("flash") that should be scraped off with a sharp hobby knife.



2. Without using glue, test fit the parts together, as in the provided instruction illustration.

3. Glue the superstructure(s) to the hull first. You can use a CA glue accelerator to speed up the drying time.

4. Straighten any bent masts or guns using flat tweezers.

5. Glue the small pieces in place. Don't glue any planes yet - it's easier to paint them while they are still on the sprue. Starting in the center, use the tweezers to place stacks, cranes, and guns. Allow the glue to dry thoroughly.

6. Apply the base color with a brush, airbrush, or you can even use spray paint.

7. Use small brushes to paint the camouflage designs. Apply the colors lightest to darkest.

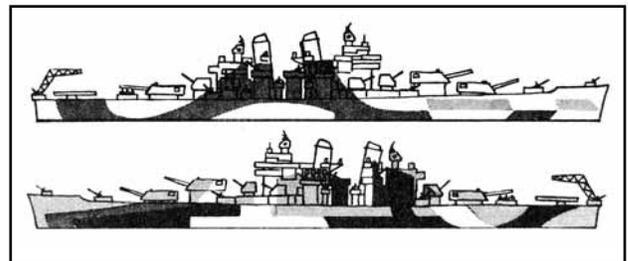
8. Blackwashing provides depth to the painted model. Dilute black ink or paint until it is translucent. "Wash" over the ship with a soft brush. You can add coats to build up to the color you want.

9. Highlight the sculpted details with drybrushing. Use your brush to pick up some white or light gray paint, then wipe most of the paint off on a paper towel or rag. Lightly brush the upper surfaces of the model.

10. Once the paint is completely dry, spray with a protective finish like Testor's Dullcote.

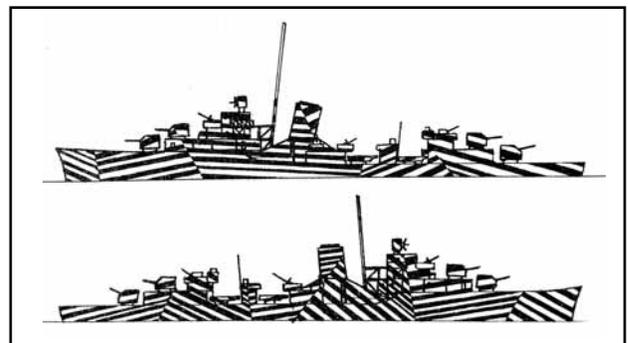
## USN Camouflage 1941/45

Camouflage systems in the US Navy used either contrasting colors to disrupt a ship silhouette, or similar colors to blend a ship into the background. Common to all the systems in service was the use of "Deck Blue" on all horizontal ship surfaces. In this Tac News we present a selection of both complex and simple schemes. The plans have some details omitted for clarity. Individual ships are referred to by their number; classes are by name.



CA-72 USS Pittsburgh (shown above)  
Measure 32/18d 1944

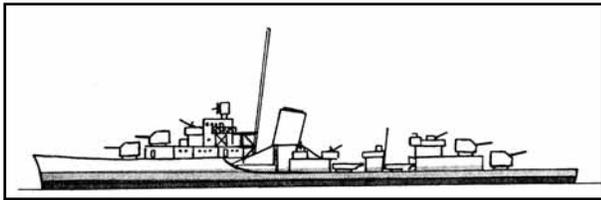
Starboard: (Dark to light) Black, Ocean Gray, Haze Gray  
Port: Black, Ocean Gray, Haze Gray, and White  
We didn't believe it either, but the USN photos proved it.



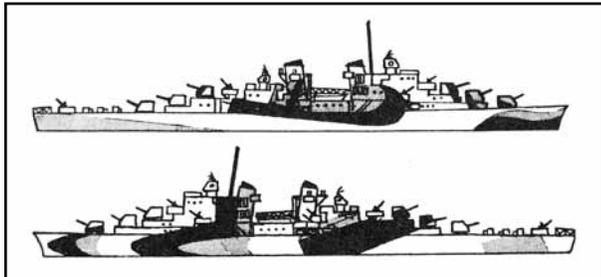
Craven Class DD 1941-45  
Measure 31 1942-45

Black and Light Gray or White.

Used in the Atlantic on the convoy routes during the height of the Battle for the Atlantic to deceive U-boats.



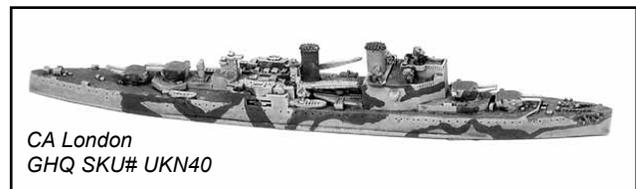
Craven Class Measure 2 1941-45  
 Dark Gray , Ocean Gray, and Haze Gray. An early type of camouflage, it was used in all theaters throughout the war.



CL-54 USS San Juan 1942-45  
 Measure 32/22d  
 Black, Ocean Gray, and Haze Gray.  
 This pattern was used on all of the CLs of this class and was also used on a wide variety of DD classes.

### GHQ Atmospherics® Acrylic Paints

Think of the view from an airplane window or overlooking a vast landscape from a hill top. You will notice that objects have muted, paler tones than they would if you were standing right next to them, due to vapor and particulates in the atmosphere. Keep this in mind as you choose your paint colors, and you'll be rewarded with a very satisfying result when you deploy your finished models. Experienced painters often mix their own colors, but both novice and expert modelers find GHQ's line of custom mixed colors convenient, and easy to use. Our Atmospherics® acrylic paints are specially blended to replicate the washed-out colors of military vehicles as seen from a distance. Acrylic paints dry quickly, (though you can add liquid acrylic medium from a craft or hobby shop to lengthen dry time), and clean up requires only soap and water.



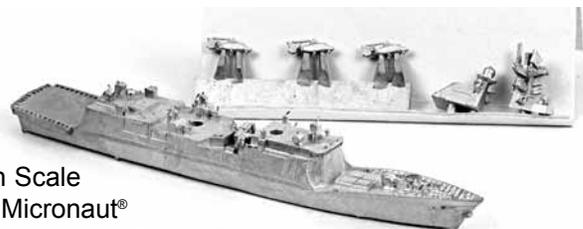
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<b>G575</b>	<b>sIG 33 15cm PzIII</b> - Late-war variant of self-propelled sIG 33. 5/pk	\$9.95
<b>J11</b>	<b>Toku Daihatsu 17m</b> - Carries one Type 97 or 100 men. 1/pk	\$9.95
<b>N553</b>	<b>M1A1 Abrams AIM (SA)</b> - Abrams used by Australians. 5/pk	\$9.95
<b>IS15</b>	<b>Israeli M3 Halftrack</b> - Postwar M5 variant. 5/pk	\$9.95
<b>W92</b>	<b>T-62</b> - All new design work! 5/pk	\$9.95
<b>GWF6</b>	<b>PB Jauréguiberry</b> - French pre-dreadnought. 1/pk	\$13.50
<b>HRC2</b>	<b>Jiangkai II (Type 054A) Class</b> - Guided missile frigate. 1/pk	\$9.95



1/2400th Scale  
 Great War Micronaut®  
 GWF6 - PB Jauréguiberry

Photos not  
 to scale



1/2400th Scale  
 Modern Micronaut®  
 HRC2 - Jiangkai II Type 054A Class



1/285th Scale WWII Micro Armour®  
 G575 - sIG 33 15cm PzIII



1/285th Scale WWII Micro Armour®  
 J11 - Toku Daihatsu 17m

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