



Marine Attack Squadron 211 (VMA 211) was one of the first units to make contact with enemy forces in the war with Japan.

The forward echelon of VMF 211 (as it was designated at that time) departed from the Hawaiian Islands for Wake Island aboard the USS Enterprise, arriving there on December 4, 1941. The detachment consisted of twelve F4F "Wildcats" and twelve pilots.

Japs Attack Wake,

At noon on December 8, a formation of 24 Japanese bombers attacked Wake Island. Although the garrison knew of the enemy attack upon Pearl Harbor the previous day, there were no air warning devices on the island and the enemy bombers caught eight of the available F4F's on the ground and destroyed seven of them.

Two days later Wake Island was approached by a Japanese landing force consisting of twelve warships and two troop transports. The four flyable Wildcats were busy all day attacking the warships. A cruiser was sunk---thus the aerial defenders of Wake were the first to sink a Japanese warship.

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USS Bennington (CVA-20), anchored in Ribault Bay, at the Naval Operating Base, Mayport, Florida, in February

Bennington's First Formal Portrait

