

Log of Raid on Wake Island

Oct. 5, 1943

2:30 AM - Reveille —

3:45 AM - Went to flight quarters —

5:10 AM - launched first wave of 10 fighters and 5 TBF's.

5:40 AM - Planes 1 minute from Wake Island —

5:45 AM - Ship Went to general quarters —

5:48 AM - Essex planes are over target now —

6:15 AM - unidentified planes approaching from 20 miles away —

first wave of planes report that attack was complete surprise - but encountered heavy Ack-Ack fire —

second wave of 17 dive bombers has just taken off —

6:23 AM - friendly planes approaching on the port bow - 30 miles away.
(good old radar) —

6:30 AM - one unidentified plane 14 miles off starboard beam - fighters are investigating —

friendly planes 27 miles off starboard beam —

6:35 AM - our own planes approaching 32 miles off stbd. beam —

6:45 AM - light ship —

6:48 AM - Lex and Yorktown planes over target —

6:50 AM - one of our planes came in but had to land in water - all 3 of crew were picked up by one of our destroyers —

6:55 AM - friendly planes 30 to 60 miles off Port bow —

7:07 AM - Jap zeroes putting up a fight over Wake Island —

7:30 AM - first wave of Essex planes just landed aboard ship —

7:36 AM - one of Yorktown's TBF's just landed in water off Y's Port Bow - couldn't get his wheels down —

All of our planes from first wave are aboard except 3 fighters which are missing —

7:45 AM - Second wave of Essex planes are now bombing Wake Island and report no opposition At present —

8:37 AM - Second wave of Essex planes are landing on our flight deck—o

8:50 AM - Lexington air group 19 miles off starboard bow—o

8:51 AM - Correction of above statement—

Lex task force 19 miles off starboard bow—o

9:12 AM - Our fighting 9 squadron (first wave) shot down one zero and chased away three others this morning while over the target - no other opposition in the air has been encountered since then—o

9:22 - All Essex planes of second wave are safely aboard - no casualties—o

10:17 AM - third wave is preparing to get underway for attack on Wake Island—o

12:05 PM - third wave is now bombing Wake Island—o

2:15 PM - third wave has returned to ship—o

2:45 PM - Secured from general quarters—o

3:00 PM - Secured from flight quarters—o

Feb. 9, 1996

Mr. Lennon:

I thought you may be interested in the attached Log. I wrote it on Oct. 5, 1943, and it is the story of what happened that day aboard the U.S.S. Essex, CV-9.

At that particular time ~~we~~ we had an officer aboard who apparently had the job to keep the crew informed about what was happening. Almost all the times and information as written were copied by me as he spoke over the ship's speaker system.

This Raid on Wake Island was the U.S.S. Essex Second Combat mission, and we were in the company of 2 other Essex Class Carriers, the new Lexington and the new Yorktown*, and the various other combat ships that make up a task force.

I have no idea where I got that old, thin paper it is written on, or why I ever did it in the first place, but I did.

I wish now I would have done more of this sort of thing, but this is it.

Thank you for your interest.

John A. Yeager

* the "Yorktown" mentioned above is the same old girl in Charleston, South Carolina - J.Y.