

The History of the Twentieth Century

Episode 351

“Climb Mount Niitaka I”

Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

Niitakayama, or Mount Niitaka, was the Japanese name for the tallest peak in the Japanese Empire. It stands on the island of Taiwan, which was ruled by Japan at the time. The Chinese call it Yushan, Jade Mountain.

On December 2, 1941, a powerful radio transmitter in Japan sent this message to Navy ships at sea: Climb Mount Niitaka, 1208.

The number 1208 was a date reference: December 8. The meaning of the message was this: “All units proceed according to the plan for December 8.”

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening War Theme]

Episode 351. Climb Mount Niitaka, part one.

As long ago as when Germany invaded Poland in 1939, the Japanese Army favored closer ties with the European Axis powers. They believed Hitler would conquer Europe, then afterward aid Japan in its endless war in China. The top commanders in the Navy disagreed. War between Germany and Britain would not be settled quickly, the United States would inevitably join the conflict on Britain’s side, and if Japan were bound by treaty to Germany, it would find itself at war with the Americans as well.

The Navy Vice Minister went even further. He insisted, vocally and publicly, that if Japan got into a war with the United States, Japan would lose. His name was Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku. We’ve met him before on the podcast. He had been educated at Harvard and served as Japanese naval attaché in Washington. He knew America better than most Japanese. He had seen for himself the automobile assembly lines in Detroit that turned out a new car every few minutes. Japan had nothing like that.

Yamamoto's superiors were afraid he might be assassinated by some ultranationalist junior officer for this unpopular opinion, so they sent him out of Japan by appointing him commander of the Combined Fleet.

At that time, the basic plan the Navy had for war with the United States was to wait for the US Pacific Fleet to make the first move, advancing into Japanese waters where it would be far from its bases. Japanese submarines would harry the Americans along the way; after they arrived, the Fleet would finish them off.

The Navy tried wargaming this scenario. The results showed that the Americans would win, but the admirals clung to this strategy anyway.

Yamamoto observed fleet maneuvers in spring of 1940, and came up with a more promising idea. Japan had formidable carrier-based air units. Rather than wait for the Americans to make the first move, it was now conceivable that the Imperial Navy might be able to extend its reach all the way to Hawaii. One decisive surprise strike against the Americans at their home base would leave their navy in disarray. Japan would be free to move south and seize the resources of Southeast Asia while the Americans struggled to rebuild.

This would be the same strategy as was employed by Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō against the Russians. Tōgō had sent a surprise strike against them at their home base at Port Arthur. The Russian Pacific Fleet had been crippled, forcing the Russians to redeploy their Baltic Fleet, which was then defeated in its turn at the Battle of the Tsushima Strait. Incidentally, then-Ensign Yamamoto had served in that battle. It cost him two fingers of his left hand.

Would it be possible to employ the very same strategy against the Americans? Yamamoto asked for a feasibility study. The conclusion of the study was that an attack on Hawaii would be difficult and risky, but had a reasonable chance of success. There were two necessary conditions: first, that the Navy could send a large carrier task force more than halfway across the Pacific Ocean undetected, and second, that the American Pacific Fleet, or at least a substantial portion of it, would be present at Pearl Harbor.

Yamamoto saw a third necessary condition: better intelligence on Pearl Harbor. So he turned to Naval Intelligence for assistance. They had little in the way of assets in Hawaii, so they groomed a spy: 29-year-old Yoshikawa Takeo, who worked in Naval Intelligence's American Section. Yoshikawa was a handsome young man with an innocent look about him, a champion swimmer, and a devoted student of Zen Buddhism. He was discharged from the Navy, given a new name, and assigned to the Japanese Consulate in Honolulu.

In his free time, he wandered about Honolulu like a tourist, dressed in a loud Hawaiian shirt. He took the six-hour drive around the island of Oahu regularly. One day, in the style of Upton Sinclair, he picked up a lunch box and entered the naval base at Pearl Harbor along with a group of laborers headed to work. No one challenged him, and he spent the day prowling the base. He

attended an air show at the US Army Air Corps' Wheeler Field, where he sat on the grass with other civilians, watching American P-40s do aerobatics.

There were plenty of ethnic Japanese in Honolulu, but he had no luck recruiting any of them. Despite their ancestry and their appearance, they considered themselves fully American, which baffled Yoshikawa.

By April 1941, Yamamoto's attack plan had a name: Operation Z, in honor of the Nelsonesque Z signal given by Admiral Tōgō before the Battle of the Tsushima Strait: "On this one battle rests the fate of our nation. Let every man do his utmost."

Surprise would be the key to Plan Z. How then to get a large naval task force within striking distance of Hawaii undetected? The Americans had their PBY Catalina reconnaissance airplanes which flew routine patrols that covered the seas out to 500 miles, or 800 kilometers, both from Pearl Harbor and from Dutch Harbor in the Aleutian Islands. There was also the risk that a merchant ship might stumble upon the task force in mid-ocean and alert the enemy.

Fuel consumption was also a concern. Japanese naval vessels did not carry enough fuel to travel from the Home Islands to Hawaii and back. This meant the task force would have to include oilers, fuel-carrying ships that could refuel the combat vessels at sea, but these slow vessels would slow down the task force, increasing the odds that the Americans would spot it.

The solution was to send the task force east along the North Forties; that is, at about 40° North latitude. Commercial ships avoided this region of the Pacific in November and December due to rough seas. Those rough seas would make it more difficult to refuel, but Japanese sailors would prove equal to the challenge. An added advantage would be that the US Navy normally held its maneuvers and flew its reconnaissance flights to the south and west of Hawaii; the Americans figured any attack from Japan would originate in the Marshall Islands and approach from that direction. They wouldn't be looking north.

Heading along the North Forties would bring the task force to a point about 900 miles, or 1400 kilometers, north of Hawaii. From there, the task force would wait until dark and steam south at full speed, bringing it within striking distance of Pearl Harbor by dawn.

Other officers were planning attacks on Hong Kong, Singapore, Java, Sumatra, and the Philippines. Here Japanese intelligence operatives found the locals to be more helpful. Many Filipinos still had bitter memories of their failed war for independence forty years ago. Similarly, many subjects of the British and Dutch were eager to overthrow their foreign rulers. In Singapore, Japanese spies concluded that the island was an impregnable fortress on its seafront, but virtually defenseless against an attack from inland Malaya. In Thailand, covert discussions with some high-ranking Thai officials convinced the Japanese that Thailand could be taken without a fight, and it would make an excellent base for operations against Burma.

Soldiers trained for jungle warfare on the southern Chinese island of Hainan, now occupied by Japan. Naval air pilots practiced dropping bombs on painted targets they were not told conformed to the dimensions of American battleships.

In November, the Hawaiian-shirt clad spy, Yoshikawa Takeo, received a questionnaire from Naval Intelligence with 97 questions, including, “On what day of the week are the greatest number of ships in port?” That one was easy. Sunday, of course.

Special torpedoes were built that ran shallow enough for the waters of Pearl Harbor. Special armor-piercing bombs were built, bombs that would pierce the upper decks of a battleship and drop inside before exploding. Yamamoto set the date for the attack: December 8. There would be a full moon, making it easier to launch planes from the carriers. In Hawaii, on the other side of the International Date Line, it would be December 7, a Sunday.

The Pearl Harbor Carrier Strike Force was the largest carrier task force in military history, with six carriers, loaded with 360 airplanes. No other country in the world had the capacity to assemble such a force, except the United States, and America’s carriers were split between the Pacific Fleet and the Atlantic Fleet.

The six carriers were two old ships converted from battleship hulls after Japan signed the Washington Naval Treaty, *Akagi* and *Kaga*. The former name means *Red Castle*; the latter was the name of a Japanese province. *Soryu* and *Hiryu* were smaller but more modern ships. Their names mean *Green Dragon* and *Flying Dragon*, respectively. The final two, *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku* were Japan’s newest carriers, the equals of the most formidable American carrier in the Pacific: USS *Enterprise*. Their names mean *Soaring Crane* and *Auspicious Crane*.

Yamamoto met with the carrier squadron leaders and told them for the first time that their target would be Pearl Harbor. “[Y]ou must not think lightly of your enemy,” he warned them. “America is not an ordinary foe...”

Four Japanese armies, under the overall command of General Count Terauchi Hisaichi, would seize all British, Dutch, and American possessions in Southeast Asia. The 25th Army would take Malaya and Singapore. The 14th Army would take the Philippines.

The ships in the Pearl Harbor force would leave Japanese ports one by one, so as not to call attention to themselves, and rendezvous at sea. The six carriers would be escorted by two battleships, two heavy cruisers, a light cruiser, eight destroyers, two submarines, three oilers, and a supply ship. The force was ordered to maintain radio silence. One of the ship captains asked what they should do if they encountered a Russian merchant ship. “Sink it,” he was told. “Sink anything flying any flag.”

In Washington, US officials were receiving intelligence reports of Japanese forces moving south but the Americans had no knowledge of the task force steaming for Pearl Harbor. The

movements they did know about led the American leadership to conclude Japan was maneuvering toward a strike in the south. General Douglas MacArthur, commander of US forces in the Philippines, was warned of this. He was instructed to prepare his defenses, but to make sure it was Japan who committed the first overt act of war. A similar message was sent to General Walter Short, commander of US Army forces in Hawaii, along with an admonition not to take any action that would alarm the civilian population.

Short, apparently unable to imagine any other way the Japanese could threaten Hawaii, assumed the message referred to sabotage by ethnic Japanese living in Honolulu. You know, the same people the actual Japanese spy was unable to recruit because they were too loyal to America.

The Emperor gave his formal approval for war on December 1. At 2:00 in the afternoon on the following day, Admiral Yamamoto transmitted the message I told you about at the top of the episode: “Niitakayama Nobore,” or “Climb Mount Niitaka.” The strike on Pearl Harbor was a “go.”

Later the same day, at Pearl Harbor, the American naval intelligence officer tasked with tracking Japan’s six aircraft carriers confessed he had lost them. This information was passed on to the commander of the fleet, Admiral Kimmel. Kimmel jokingly asked him, “Do you mean to say that they could be rounding Diamond Head at this minute and you wouldn’t know?”

“I hope they would be sighted by now, sir,” replied the officer.

At about the same time, over at the Japanese consulate in Honolulu, the consul received a coded message from Tokyo. The message asked that the consulate begin sending daily reports on the numbers of carriers, battleships, and cruisers docked at Pearl Harbor, along with observations on whether or not there were barrage balloons in the air and whether or not the harbor was protected by anti-torpedo nets.

Any American intelligence official reading this message would immediately have understood that an attack on Pearl Harbor was imminent. Unfortunately, no American intelligence official read this message. US Naval Intelligence had broken the Japanese diplomatic code, which the Japanese believed to be unbreakable—where have we heard that one before?—but did not have the staff to translate and analyze every message they intercepted, so incoming messages were sorted by priority. Messages to the consulate in Honolulu were deemed low priority, and this one was dropped into the low priority basket, where it sat unread.

On December 3, American military intelligence intercepted a message to the Japanese Embassy in Washington. Now that was a high-priority message and they set to work translating it. It turned out to be instructions to the Embassy to burn all but three of their codebooks and destroy one of their two cipher machines. The Americans realized immediately that this implied at the very least the Japanese were about to break diplomatic relations, and probably go to war. An

Army intelligence officer was sent to the Japanese embassy to observe; he reported embassy staff were burning documents in the building's back yard.

On December 4, a Japanese naval task force, including a large number of transports, left the island of Hainan, heading south. The Japanese Navy changed its code book that day, making naval messages unreadable to the Americans until they learned the new code. Prime Minister Tōjō discussed details of a message to be sent to Secretary of State Hull. This message would not be a declaration of war; it would not even announce the breaking of diplomatic relations. It would merely state that, due to the Americans' inflexible attitude, Japan was ending the peace talks. Nevertheless, it was important to Tōjō that Hull receive the message before the attack on Pearl Harbor. They settled on 1:00 Sunday afternoon Washington time, which would be 7:30 AM in Honolulu, just minutes before the attack.

On December 5, Yoshikawa, our Japanese spy with a taste for loud shirts, was hard at work collecting the information Tokyo had requested. He sent a cable reporting eight battleships, three cruisers, and sixteen destroyers currently docked at Pearl Harbor. This message was also intercepted by US Naval Intelligence, and it also went into the low priority basket.

On December 6, Admiral John Hart, commander of the US Asiatic Fleet based in Manila, General Douglas MacArthur, commander of the US Army in the Philippines, and Vice Admiral Sir Tom Phillips, commander of the Royal Navy's Far Eastern Fleet, based in Singapore, met together in Manila to discuss worrisome signs of an impending Japanese attack. For the past three nights, unidentified aircraft had overflowed Clark Field, the US Army's main airbase in the Philippines. Hart predicted war was imminent; MacArthur remained calm. He assured the two admirals that by April 1942, his command would include 200,000 soldiers, 256 bombers, and 195 fighter planes.

Admiral Hart did not find this reassuring. He said, "Doug, that is just dandy, but how defensible are we right now?" Right now, the Army had 130,000 soldiers, but 100,000 of them were Filipinos with little training. They knew how to salute and the difference between attention and at ease, but that was about it. His current air force was just 35 bombers and 107 fighters.

The Asiatic Fleet consisted of one heavy cruiser, one light cruiser, thirteen First World War vintage destroyers, and twenty-nine submarines. Hart had them battle ready, but they were not much of a force.

The British Admiral, Tom Phillips, had come to Manila because of reports of a Japanese task force headed south from Hainan, in the direction of the Kra Peninsula. He planned to send his own naval force, consisting of the British ships HMS *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse*, to sortie along the east coast of the peninsula, just in case the Japanese were up to something. He was asking the Americans to contribute four destroyers to help escort the two battleships. Admiral Hart agreed. Moments later, a messenger interrupted their meeting with news: a Japanese task force had been spotted off the coast of Thailand.

Hart asked Phillips, "When did you say you were flying back to Singapore?"

"I'm taking off tomorrow morning."

Hart told him, "If you want to be there when the war starts, I suggest you take off right now."

On Saturday, at 8:00 AM, Washington time, the Japanese Embassy received an important notice from the foreign ministry in Tokyo. A fourteen-part message would be cabled to the embassy. The ambassador should be prepared to deliver the message to Secretary of State Hull at a time to be specified later. In order to insure there be no miscommunication with the Americans, the message would be transmitted in English.

The first thirteen parts of the message were transmitted that afternoon. The final, crucial part would not be transmitted until tomorrow morning, along with the details concerning delivery.

At about the same time, over at the Navy Department, Secretary Knox met with senior naval commanders to discuss some urgent news. The British Admiralty had just notified the Americans that a Japanese task force of 35 transport ships, escorted by eight cruisers and twenty destroyers, was headed toward Malaya. The Secretary asked the admirals, "Gentlemen, are they going to hit us?"

One of the admirals replied, "No, Mr. Secretary. They are going to hit the British. They are not ready for us yet."

Elsewhere in town, at the Navy Cryptographic Section, a translator named Dorothy Edgers was on duty. She was a recent hire, which explains why she was assigned the Saturday 8:00AM to noon shift. That didn't matter to Dorothy. To her, the job was still new and exciting, and since there was nothing else to do, she began poking around inside the low priority basket. It seemed to her there were an awful lot of messages to and from the Japanese consulate in Honolulu, so she began studying them more closely. She came across the December 2 request from Tokyo for daily reports on the state of Pearl Harbor, and became intrigued. She rummaged through the basket further and found the replies, describing the comings and goings at Pearl Harbor in detail. Then she found a message from the consulate that said something about taking out an ad on a Honolulu radio station as a way of signaling Japanese ships.

It seemed to Dorothy that these messages must have been important, so she showed them to her supervisor. Her supervisor said it would be too much to translate all these messages before noon, so she should put it off until Monday. Dorothy didn't think that was a good idea, so she set to work translating the messages anyway, even though it meant working past the end of her shift. It took her until 3:00 in the afternoon, but she got them all translated. Soon after, the chief of the Translation Branch, Lieutenant Commander Alvin Kramer, came in for duty. She showed him the translated messages, but he insisted there must be mistakes in her work, and he'd look it over on Monday.

At about that same time that afternoon, in the Japanese Embassy across town, the First Secretary was typing out the decoded message from Tokyo letter by letter. He wasn't a very good typist, but this message was too sensitive to delegate to a subordinate. He quit about dinnertime, with only eight of the thirteen parts decoded, to go to a farewell party the staff was holding for an official who had just been reassigned to an embassy in South America.

At the Navy Cryptographic Section, they were also hard at work decrypting the coded message from Tokyo; in fact, they were decoding it faster than the First Secretary was. Commander Kramer sent copies to the Navy Secretary, the Director of Naval Intelligence, and the White House. The Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Stark, could not be located.

At the White House, President Roosevelt was talking with Harry Hopkins when the decoded message was brought to him. The final part was missing, but what Roosevelt had was a clear enough indication of Japanese intentions. It was a lengthy recapitulation of the negotiations between Japan and the United States, in which Japan's actions were depicted as honorable and peaceful, and the Americans' as hostile and duplicitous. Roosevelt didn't need the missing fourteenth part to take a good guess at what was coming.

"This means war," he told Hopkins.

Hopkins lamented that though war was inevitable, the Japanese would have the advantage of choosing when and how it would begin. It was a shame America couldn't strike the first blow.

"No, we can't do that," said Roosevelt. "We are a democracy and a peaceful people."

On Saturday night in Honolulu, Yoshikawa transmitted his final report to Tokyo on the status of Pearl Harbor: no barrage balloons. No torpedo netting. In the harbor: nine battleships, seven light cruisers, three submarine tenders, and nineteen destroyers. Three aircraft carriers and one heavy cruiser were absent. No sign of air reconnaissance.

Not too far from Hawaii, the Japanese passenger liner *Tatsutamaru* was en route to Los Angeles, until, abruptly and without explanation, the ship turned around and began headed back to Japan, alarming its passengers.

Everyone from Washington to Singapore believed a Japanese attack was imminent; no one expected the first blow to fall on Pearl Harbor.

[music: Beethoven, *Symphony No. 5*]

On December 7 at 8:00 AM in Washington, Commander Kramer received a copy of the decoded fourteenth part, along with a follow-up message instructing the Japanese ambassador to deliver the completed document to Secretary of State Hull at precisely 1:00 that afternoon, Washington time. As he made arrangements to distribute this new information, something struck Kramer. He recalled the communications with Honolulu that Mrs. Edgers had gotten so excited about

yesterday. One PM in Washington would be 7:30 AM in Hawaii. Dawn was traditionally considered the best time to begin an attack. He had served a tour of duty at Pearl Harbor and knew better than most that early Sunday morning would be the quietest time of the week at the base. Most of the sailors would be in bed, or just getting up for breakfast. Hmmm.

The US Navy's Cryptographic Section was on top of the messages from Tokyo, but over at the Japanese Embassy, things were not going so smoothly. Everyone had had a little too much *sake* during last night's party. Then part fourteen of the message and the follow-instructions came in early the following morning. It took the First Secretary until 10:00 AM before he had shaken off his hangover sufficiently to begin work decoding. At 10:30, the ambassador was handed a copy of his follow-up instructions and learned for the first time that he was expected to deliver this message at 1:00 that very afternoon, just two and a half hours from now. Part fourteen wasn't even decoded yet! And when he looked over the typescript of the first thirteen parts, he decided there were too many typeovers and erasures. This would never do; this was supposed to be an official Japanese government communication after all. Word processing hadn't been invented yet, so he had no choice but to tediously type the eleven pages over again. But first he called the State Department to ask for an appointment with Secretary Hull at 1:00 that afternoon. He emphasized that it had to be 1:00. The staff at the State Department told him that the Secretary already had an appointment for that time. "It is a matter of extreme importance," said the ambassador. If the Secretary was not available, perhaps the Undersecretary? They told him to hold for a few minutes. When they picked up again, they told the Ambassador that Secretary Hull himself would meet with him at the requested time.

Army Chief of Staff George Marshall went horseback riding on Sunday mornings. He returned at 10:30 AM and was told about the decrypted Japanese message. He ordered alerts sent to various US Army commands in the Pacific. The message went to the Panama Canal, the Philippines, San Francisco, and Hawaii. Navy chief Stark also sent out warning messages, but they couldn't raise Pearl Harbor on the radio, owing to atmospheric interference. So the Navy's warning went to Honolulu via Western Union.

At 1:15 AM in the waters off the coast of the Kra Peninsula, Japanese Navy ships began bombarding the coast, while the transport ships bearing Japanese soldiers headed for the beach.

It was only 5:45 AM in Hawaii. They had jumped the gun by 75 minutes.

Two hundred miles north of Oahu, Japanese planes began taking off from the six carriers. The commander of the task force ordered a Z flag raised over *Akagi*. It was a replica of the one Admiral Tōgō had raised at the beginning of the Battle of the Tsushima Strait.

The fighters took off first. It would be their job to reconnoiter and, if necessary, engage American defenders over Pearl Harbor. Next came the high-altitude bombers, then the dive bombers, while the torpedo bombers would bring up the rear.

The Japanese planes climbed to an altitude of 4,000 meters. It had taken less than fifteen minutes to launch the entire strike force, a remarkable accomplishment.

Shortly after takeoff, the sun appeared in the east, to the left of the Japanese pilots, a beautiful red sun rising over a golden cloudbank. Most of these pilots had never seen a sunrise from high altitude before. It was hard not to admire its beauty, or not to see the image of the rising sun as a favorable omen for Japan.

The far northern tip of the island of Oahu was Kahuku Point, and there the US Army had set up a radar installation. Radar was still a new and unfamiliar technology, but it showed great promise. That morning, one of the operators noticed a blip: a very big blip. It was nothing like anything he'd ever seen before, so he called over the other operator to have a look. The second operator, who was more experienced, said he never saw anything like it either, and supposed something was wrong with the equipment.

They checked the system, and the equipment seemed in good order. The radar was telling them something large was 137 miles north of them and approaching the island. Should they call headquarters? It took them a few minutes to work up the nerve, but at last they called the Army's Pacific headquarters in Honolulu. They reached a switchboard operator who had difficulty finding anyone on duty to connect them to. She finally found someone, an Army Air Corps pilot named Kermit Tyler. In the time it had taken to connect with Tyler, the blip continued approaching and was now 90 miles from the radar installation.

Tyler knew that a squadron of B-17 bombers was coming in from the mainland today, part of the build-up of American armed forces in the Pacific. He figured this blip must be the approaching bombers, but he couldn't tell the radar operators that because the arrival of the B-17s was classified information. If he had told them about the squadron of B-17 bombers, they could have told him that the blip they were seeing was much larger than could be explained by a squadron of bombers. But he didn't, and they didn't. Instead, he told them, "Don't worry about it," and hung up.

At 12:30 that afternoon, in Washington, the Japanese Embassy was in a state of panic. The Ambassador's appointment with Hull was just a half hour away, the fourteenth part of the message had just been decoded, but the ambassador was still trying to produce a readable copy of the first thirteen parts. The foreign ministry in Tokyo did them no favors; it transmitted two corrections to the text, requiring three pages to be typed over again.

As the Japanese planes approached Oahu, they found most of the island shrouded in cloud. Fortunately for them, Pearl Harbor itself was clear under a bright morning sun. At 7:53 AM, the observer plane at the head of the incoming aircraft radioed, "*Tora, tora, tora!*" *Tora*, the Japanese word for *tiger*, was the agreed code signal that meant complete surprise had been achieved, and the bombers should proceed immediately to their targets. The observer plane also

fired one blue flare, a signal which meant the same thing, for the benefit of the fighters, since they did not have radios.

The Battle of Pearl Harbor had begun.

We'll have to stop there for today. I thank you for listening, and I'd especially like to thank Faith for her kind donation, and thank you to Erik for becoming a patron of the podcast. Donors and patrons like Faith and Erik help cover the costs of making this show, which in turn keeps the podcast available free for everyone, so my thanks to them and to all of you who have pitched in and helped out. If you'd like to become a patron or make a donation, you are most welcome; just visit the website, historyofthetwentiethcentury.com and click on the PayPal or Patreon buttons.

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A I hope you'll join me next week, here on the *History of the Twentieth Century*, as we pick up precisely where we left off today. Climb Mount Niitaka, part two, next week, here, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. There was a precedent for the attack on Pearl Harbor: the British attack on the Italian fleet at Taranto in November 1940. That was also a surprise air strike on an enemy fleet harboring at its base, and it also involved rigging torpedoes specially so they could run in shallow water, although the British solution to that problem was different from the Japanese solution.

The damage done by the attack on Pearl Harbor was far more serious, but then, Taranto involved 21 aircraft. Pearl Harbor involved 360.

The aircraft carrier that had launched the planes that attacked Taranto was HMS *Illustrious*. *Illustrious* was subsequently damaged by German Stukas while escorting a convoy to Malta. After some emergency repairs at Alexandria, Egypt and Durban, South Africa, *Illustrious* was sent to the Norfolk Navy Yard in the United States for additional repairs.

In August 1941, while *Illustrious* was at Norfolk, a new captain was assigned to the carrier. He was the 41-year-old Lord Louis Mountbatten. We've come across him before, in episode 106, when the then-named Prince Louis of Battenberg changed his name during the First World War by anglicizing it to Mountbatten so it wouldn't sound so German.

Mountbatten spent much of his time in the United States on a speaking tour of the country, as part of the British effort to encourage closer ties between the US and the UK. In October 1941,

he visited Pearl Harbor to teach Royal Navy tactics to US Navy officers. The subject of when and how the United States might enter the war came up in one of his classes. Mountbatten pulled down a map of the Pacific Ocean and pointed his wooden pointer at Pearl Harbor. “Right here,” he said. “Without any doubt.” His audience scoffed, and he reminded them of Japan’s surprise attack on Port Arthur and of the Royal Navy’s attack on Taranto.

Later, in Washington, Mountbatten shared his concern with the US Navy’s Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Harold Stark, telling Stark that he was appalled at how unprepared Pearl Harbor was for an enemy attack and suggested improvements. Stark replied, “I’m afraid that putting some of your recommendations into effect is going to make your visit [to Pearl Harbor] very expensive for the US Navy.”

[music: Closing War Theme]