



Australia-Oceania :: Wake Island (territory of the US)

Introduction :: Wake Island

Background:

The US annexed Wake Island in 1899 for a cable station. An important air and naval base was constructed in 1940-41. In December 1941, the island was captured by the Japanese and held until the end of World War II. In subsequent years, Wake was developed as a stopover and refueling site for military and commercial aircraft transiting the Pacific. Since 1974, the island's airstrip has been used by the US military, as well as for emergency landings. Operations on the island were suspended and all personnel evacuated in 2006 with the approach of super typhoon IOKE (category 5), but resultant damage was comparatively minor. A US Air Force repair team restored full capability to the airfield and facilities, and the island remains a vital strategic link in the Pacific region.

Geography :: Wake Island

Location:

Oceania, atoll in the North Pacific Ocean, about two-thirds of the way from Hawaii to the Northern Mariana Islands

Geographic coordinates:

19 17 N, 166 39 E

Map references:

Oceania

Area:

total: 6.5 sq km

country comparison to the world: 244

land: 6.5 sq km

water: 0 sq km

Area - comparative:

about 11 times the size of The Mall in Washington, DC

Land boundaries:

0 km

Coastline:

19.3 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

Climate:

tropical

Terrain:

atoll of three low coral islands, Peale, Wake, and Wilkes, built up on an underwater volcano; central lagoon is former crater, islands are part of the rim

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Pacific Ocean 0 m

highest point: unnamed location 6 m

Natural resources:

none

Land use:

arable land: 0%

permanent crops: 0%

other: 100% (2011)

Irrigated land:

0 sq km (2011)

Natural hazards:

occasional typhoons

Environment - current issues:

NA

Geography - note:

strategic location in the North Pacific Ocean; emergency landing location for transpacific flights

People and Society :: Wake Island

Population:

no indigenous inhabitants

note: approximately 150 military personnel and civilian contractors maintain and operate the airfield and communications facilities (2009)

Government :: Wake Island

Country name:

conventional long form: none

conventional short form: Wake Island

Dependency status:

unorganized, unincorporated territory of the US; administered from Washington, DC by the Department of the Interior; activities in the atoll are currently conducted by the US Air Force

Legal system:

US common law

Flag description:

the flag of the US is used

Economy :: Wake Island

Economy - overview:

Economic activity is limited to providing services to military personnel and contractors located on the island. All food and manufactured goods must be imported.

Communications :: Wake Island

Telephone system:

general assessment: satellite communications; 2 Defense Switched Network circuits off the Overseas Telephone System (OTS); located in the Hawaii area code - 808

Broadcast media:

American Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) provides satellite radio/TV broadcasts (2009)

Transportation :: Wake Island

Airports:

1 (2013)

country comparison to the world: 211

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 1

2,438 to 3,047 m: 1 (2013)

Ports and terminals:

none; two offshore anchorages for large ships

Transportation - note:

there are no commercial or civilian flights to and from Wake Island, except in direct support of island missions; emergency landing is available

Military :: Wake Island

Military - note:

defense is the responsibility of the US; the US Air Force is responsible for overall administration and operation of the island facilities; the launch support facility is administered by the US Missile Defense Agency (MDA)

Transnational Issues :: Wake Island

Disputes - international:

claimed by Marshall Islands