

The Battle of Kangaw: Hill 170

No.1 Army Commando's Defence of Objective 'Brighton'

31st January 1945

(Crescendo of the Third Arakan Campaign, Burma)

A Scenario for Battlefront: WWII

By R Mark Davies



'Jap dead were inter-locked with our own in proportion of at least 3 to 1. The back slopes of the hill were thick with the victims of our 25pdrs and 3in mortars which respectively fired at positions 100 and 40 yards ahead of our own troops! It was a real epic. I never saw dead so thick... I am convinced that no British troops ever fought better than ours on that day.' Brigadier Peter Young

'...To win a battle the enemy must be killed. Every man will kill no less than three enemy. Kill, kill, kill!' Extract from a special order of the day issued by Major General Miyazaki, Commanding the Imperial Japanese 54th Infantry Division.

Historical Background

During the first quarter of 1944, the Japanese 28th Army in the Arakan had the dubious honour of suffering one of the very first land defeats for the Imperial Japanese Army. Operation *Ha-Go* had begun in the usual Japanese manner – the Japanese units would travel light, swinging wide around their enemy's flank, traversing 'impassable' terrain, then cutting their enemies' lines of communication and finally descending upon their enemy's vulnerable rear.

However, this time was different: the British and Indian units had stood their ground, resisted every attack made against them, supplied their isolated units by air and then manoeuvred fresh divisions to isolate and destroy the Japanese attackers. The rules had changed. Under the inspirational leadership of General 'Bill' Slim, the British XIV Army had learned to beat the Japanese at their own game and also to teach them some new tricks of their own – namely the decisive use of tanks in the jungle, the equally decisive use of artillery and air power, the movement of supplies and troops by air and the use of long-range penetration formations to strike at the enemy's rear.

The Japanese defeat in the Second Arakan Campaign would soon be eclipsed by an even greater defeat at Imphal and Kohima, but the British-Indian XV Corps now found new confidence – they had proved that the Japanese were not invincible. Indeed, the Japanese 28th Army was only saved from a truly crushing defeat in the Second Arakan Campaign by the fact that the two main Indian striking divisions (5th and 7th) were transferred by air from the Arakan to Imphal.

The coming of the monsoon in May would normally bring an end to the annual 'campaign season', but 1944 was different. The Allies had announced their intention to fight through the monsoon and the defeated Japanese would be given no respite: retreating units were pursued mercilessly through the jungles and mangrove swamps, while patrols aggressively kept Japanese units pinned to their fortifications.

With the end of the monsoon in August, XV Corps once again went on the offensive: 25th and 26th Indian Divisions advanced down the coast, taking Foul Point and the fortified town of Rathedaung at the end of the Mayu Peninsula – the scene of a previous failure by XV Corps during the First Arakan Campaign. Moving parallel to this, the newly-arrived 82nd (West African) Division advanced down the Kalapanzin River, while the 81st (West African) Division repeated its advance down the Kaladan River. The two West African Divisions then combined for the assault on their final objective of Myohaung.

With Myohaung finally taken in December, the line of retreat for the Japanese 54th and 55th Divisions was now cut. Those elements of the Japanese 28th Army still west of the Kaladan River were now forced to escape as best they could down the coast. However, the Allies were hard on their heels; as 82nd (West African) Division fought its way down the coastal Myohaung-Tamandu road against the Japanese 54th Division, 3 Commando Brigade and the two Indian Divisions were moving by sea to 'leapfrog' down the coast and to get ahead of their retreating enemy. On 3rd January 1945, 3 Commando Brigade and 26th Indian Division landed on Akyab Island, to find it and its strategically-vital airfield completely deserted.

With Akyab secured and with the RAF already deploying aircraft forward to their new airfield, 3 Commando Brigade moved on to their next objective: The Myebon Peninsula had been identified as a potential concentration point for the remnants of 28th Army. Myebon also dominated the mouths of two large rivers; the Kyautsin and the Myebon. Possession of the Myebon Peninsula would close those waterways to incoming Japanese supplies and escaping troops. 3 Commando Brigade landed at Myebon on 12th January and with tank support from the Indian 19th Lancers, cleared several Japanese hilltop strong-points. 25th Indian Division took over the task of clearing of the peninsula on 18th January and 3 Commando Brigade once again moved on to its next objective.



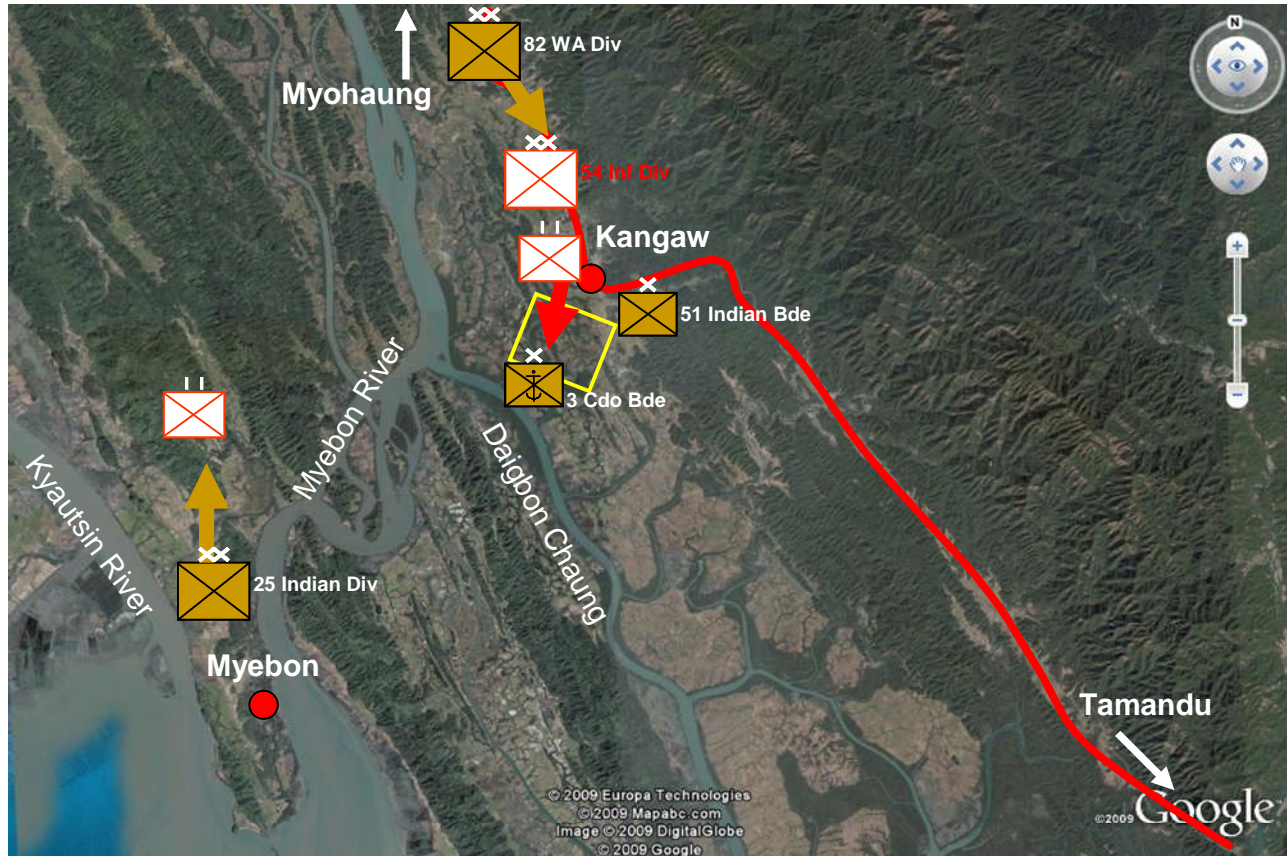
3 Commando Brigade lands at Kangaw

The only remaining escape route left open to the Japanese 54th Division was now via the Myohaung-Tamandu road, which led down the coastal plain and then cut into the cover of jungle-covered hills at the river-port of Kangaw. 82nd (West African) Division was continuing to meet fierce resistance along the road. 3 Commando Brigade was given the task of securing a beachhead west of Kangaw, allowing the 25th Indian Division to land and advance inland, thereby trapping and destroying the Japanese 54th Division.

Picking its way carefully through the maze of chaungs and mangrove swamp, the flotilla of assorted landing craft, river barges, lighters, sloops, motor launches, gunboats and other vessels slipped into the Daingbon Chaung on the morning of 22nd January. At 1300hrs, without any prior artillery or air preparation to announce their arrival, 3 Commando Brigade waded quietly ashore behind the cover of a smokescreen, achieving complete surprise over the unsuspecting Japanese. No.1 Army Commando quickly moved inland, occupying a 170 foot high and 700 yard long wooded ridge which overlooked the landing site, designated Objective 'Brighton'. 44 Royal Marine Commando pushed further inland and with 24 hours had secured Objectives 'Milford' and 'Pinner', encountering only slight enemy resistance.

However, the Japanese reaction was swift and brutal; during the night of 23rd/24th January the Japanese attacked 'Pinner' and pounded the British positions with a storm of artillery, the likes of which had not been seen in Burma and which continued for four days. At this stage of the campaign, the Japanese clearly had nothing to lose by firing off their remaining stocks of artillery ammunition!

On the 26th the Indian 51st Brigade (25th Indian Division), with a single troop of Shermans from the 19th Lancers in support, passed through 3 Commando Brigade as planned, relieving 'Pinner'. On the 28th and 29th the Indians moved on to attack Objectives 'Melrose' and 'Perch', to the east of Kangaw, as well as Kangaw itself. However, Japanese resistance was now stiffening. Nevertheless, Kangaw was captured and the Tamandu road was now dominated by Indian machine guns – the 54th Division was now trapped!



However, the Japanese were far from beaten. During the night of 30th January, the divisional reserve force, designated comprising the reinforced 2nd Battalion, 154th Infantry Regiment and designated 'Matzu Detachment', was quietly moved into position to launch an all-out attack at dawn on the 31st. General Miyazaki had ordered them to go straight for the jugular – the Allied bridgehead on the Daingbon Chaung. To do that, they would first have to remove No.1 Commando from their position on Hill 170...

The scene was now set for one of the fiercest battles of the entire Burma Campaign...



A Sherman of the 19th Lancers moves forward with Indian infantry

Briefing for Lieutenant Colonel Ken R S Trevor, Commanding No.1 Army Commando

Situation – Hill 170, 0730hrs, 31st January 1944

Brigadier Hardy has ordered you to dig in deep on Objective 'Brighton' (Hill 170). A strong Japanese attack has been expected since yesterday and it now finally seems to be developing. The Japs have been shelling your positions sporadically since 0545hrs this morning, but the shelling is now reaching a crescendo and the sound of machine gun fire tells you that the battle is beginning.

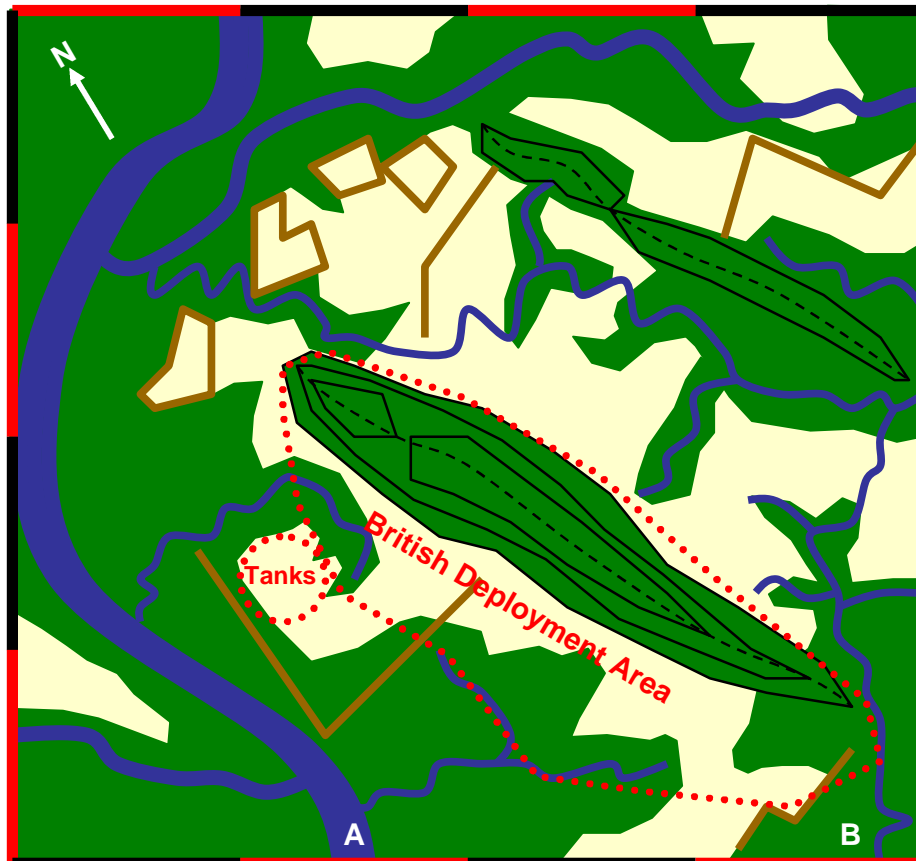
Mission

You are to defend 'Brighton' at all costs, with the intention of protecting the beachhead.

Execution

General Outline

- You may deploy your forces as Hidden Unit Markers anywhere within the area shown on the map.
- The tanks must be deployed on table within the tank laager area marked on the map and may not be hidden. The tanks must be deployed in all-round defence (i.e. back to back).
- Two Commando Infantry units should be deployed with the tanks to provide security.
- You may also deploy 10 Dummy Unit Markers.
- All your forces are dug in except for the tanks.
- Field defences consist of individual slit-trenches and weapons pits – there are no connecting trenches.
- Your MMGs may use the optional Grazing Fire rules (see website Optional Rules section).



Friendly Forces

- Your forces are detailed in the order of battle diagram at Annex A below.
- To your rear is the beachhead and 42 RM Commando, as well as the battle-worn and somewhat shaken 44 RM Commando.
- Your right flank is covered by 5 Army Commando and 51 Indian Brigade.
- Your left flank is protected by the impassable Kangaw Chaung.

Enemy Forces

- The composition of the attacking enemy force is unknown. It could be anything up to the entire 54th Division!
- The enemy artillery component is very strong – stronger indeed than XV Corps has ever encountered before.
- Enemy air power is non-existent. The RAF has finally won complete air supremacy.

Artillery Support

- 37/47 Field Battery is floating offshore on a Z-Craft, ready to fire in Direct Support of your position. Their FO, Lieutenant Guild is in position and is ready to call down fire as targets present themselves. However, the battery is only at half-strength.
- Note that any British troops may call for the 25pdrs as Direct Fire Support. However, only the FO may call for fire onto pre-registered targets and claim the +1 modifier.
- The FO may call for fire onto the pre-registered targets even if he cannot directly see them (this was standard practice – once an enemy attack started, Defensive Fire shoots would be fired speculatively into likely enemy approach routes that had been pre-registered). However, the 5.5s may only be called onto observed targets.
- 6 Medium Regiment has guns in place at Myebon and they are ready to fire in General Support – either to thicken a shoot by the 25pdrs or to fire a battery mission in their own right. Note that only the FO may call for these – if you lose the FO you lose the 5.5s!
- Your FO may pre-register three targets before the Japanese player deploys his forces.
- 1 Commando's Mortar Platoon may fire as Organic Fire Support.
- Once 42 Commando arrive as reinforcements, their Mortar Platoon may be called by members of 1 Commando as Direct Fire Support (or Organic Fire Support if members of 42 Commando call for fire).
- Your artillery and 3-inch mortars may each fire one round of smoke. The 2-inch mortars have unlimited smoke, but it always counts as Dispersing Smoke.

Air Support

- A Forward Air Controller will arrive with the reinforcements from 42 Commando.
- Once the FAC arrives, air support will become available in the form of RAF Thunderbolts (BR-P86). The amount of air support is only limited by the FAC's ability to call it in.
- Once a Thunderbolt has attacked with bombs, it may return in the next turn to strafe any Spotted or Suspected targets, provided it was not Suppressed or Disordered during its bombing run.

Reinforcements

- The 42 Royal Marine Commando Battlegroup will arrive on turn 10 and will move onto table between Points 'A' & 'B', as shown on the map.
- On Turn 10, an LCA landing craft, mounting Bren Guns, will sail onto table up the Kangaw Chaung from Point 'A' to provide direct fire support to the left flank. The LCA is treated as an ME and may move 6 inches per action, moving as a vehicle. It is automatically spotted by any unit with line of sight and it has armour of 2/2.

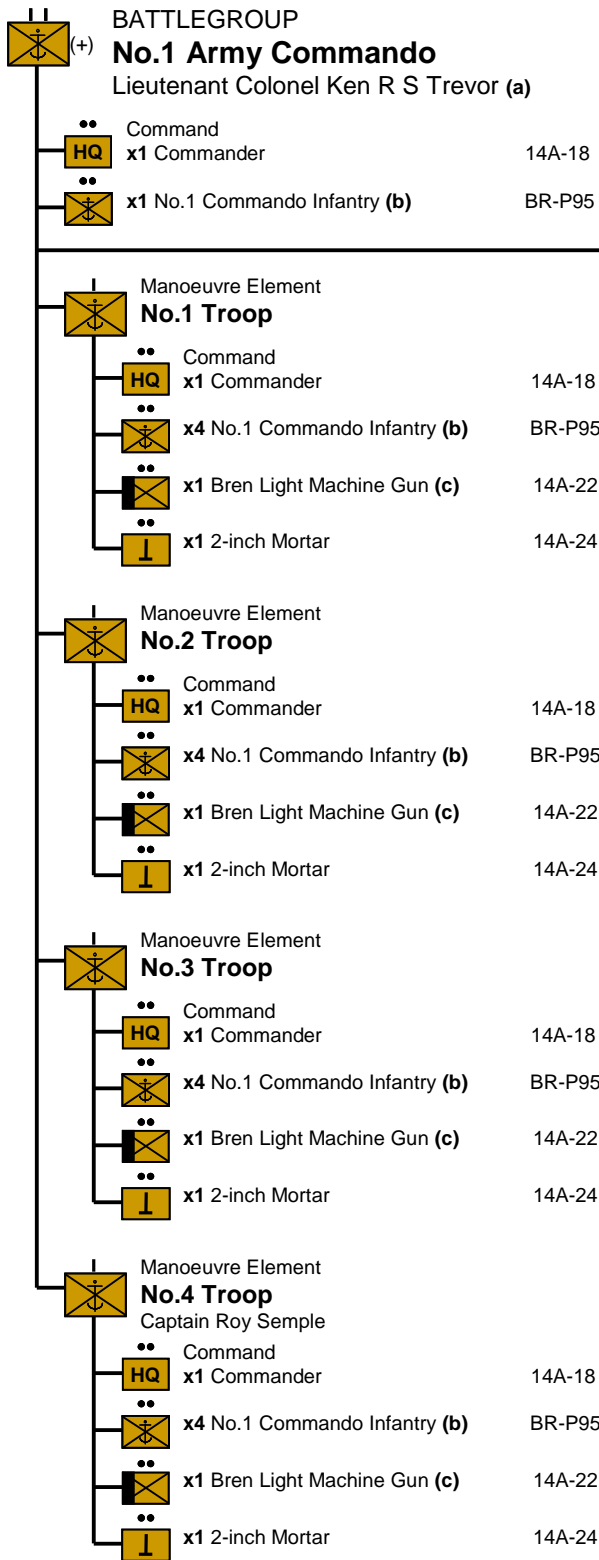
The LCA is classed as 'Veteran' and uses the same fire factors as an LMG-armed vehicle such as a Jeep. The LCA may not engage or be engaged in Close Combat.

Game Sequence

- The scenario lasts 20 turns.
- The Japanese have the first turn. They also have an additional two rounds of pre-game bombardment before Turn 1 commences.

Victory Points

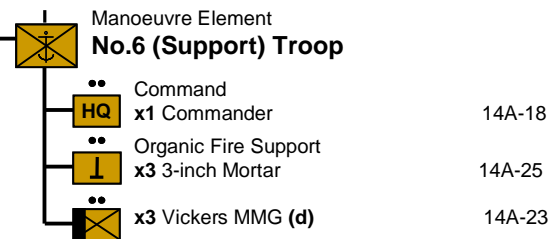
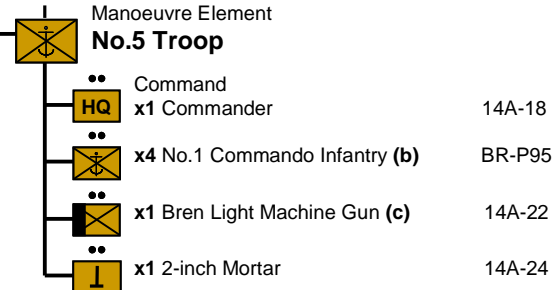
- **1 VP** for each enemy Manoeuvre Element with greater than 25% casualties OR each knocked out Gun.
- **2 VP** for each enemy Manoeuvre Element with greater than 50% casualties.
- **3VP** for each enemy Manoeuvre Element with greater than 75% casualties.
- **3 VP** for having the only un-disordered units within 5 inches of the ring-contour at the northern end of Hill 170.
- **5 VP** for having the only un-disordered units within 5 inches of any part of Hill 170.
- **Total Victory** – for having more than 11 VPs or more than the enemy.
- **Partial Victory** – for having 6-10 VPs more than the enemy.
- **Draw** – for having 0-5 VPs more (or less) than the enemy. The side with the higher number can claim a 'Winning Draw'.



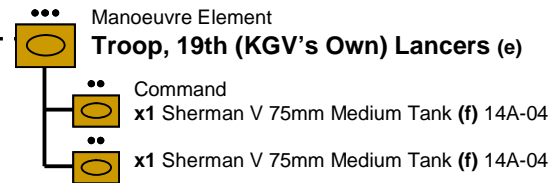
Army Commandos



50 Indian Tank Brigade



ELEMENTS, 50 INDIAN TANK BRIGADE



(a) All elements of No.1 Army Commando are classed as 'Elite'. All other elements of 3 Commando Brigade are classed as 'Veteran'.

(b) No.1 Army Commando were unique among British units in that their standard rifle was the American semi-automatic M1 Garand. Combined with the usual Bren LMGs and Thompson SMGs, these gave No.1 Commando a distinct firepower advantage, as shown on prototype card BR-P95.

(c) The units of 3 Commando Brigade apparently beefed up their firepower by adding extra Brens to the Support Sub-Sections, hence the extra Bren unit in each Troop.

(d) The Vickers MMGs may alternatively be attached directly to MEs.

(e) The 19th Lancers and Royal Artillery units present are classed as 'Experienced'.

(f) The divisional-sized force landed at Kangaw was supported by just a single troop of the Indian 19th (King George V's Own) Lancers, attached from 50th Indian Tank Brigade. This troop comprised only three tanks, so should actually only be represented by a single model. However, one solitary tank of this troop made a massive impact on the battle after its two colleagues were knocked out and I therefore think that two models is justified in this scenario. Class as 'Veteran'.

25 INDIAN DIVISION FIRE SUPORT ELEMENTS



Indian XV Corps



25th Indian Division

(a) 37/47 Field Battery was a half-sized composite battery, firing from Z-Craft (large, motorised, flat barges). These craft were capable of negotiating the shallow mangrove swamps and creeks ('chaungs') of the Arakan and could bring the 25pdrs close to where they were needed.

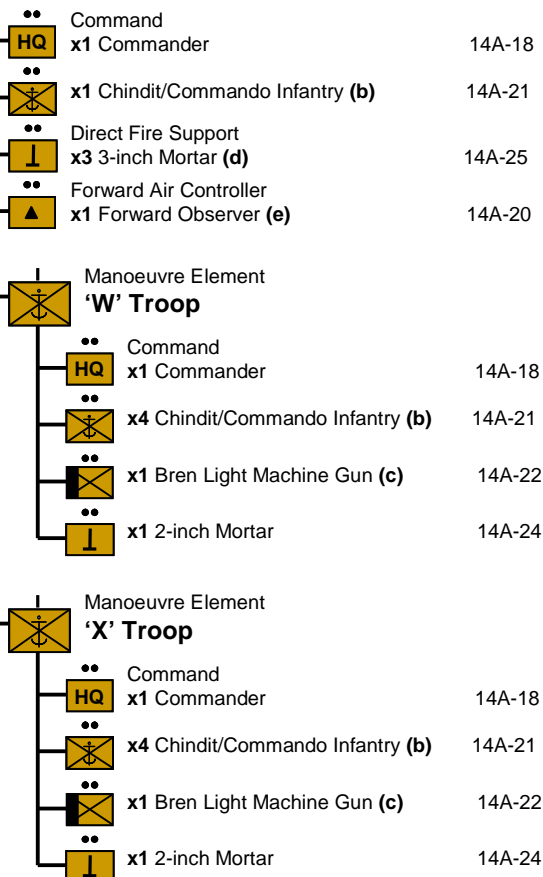
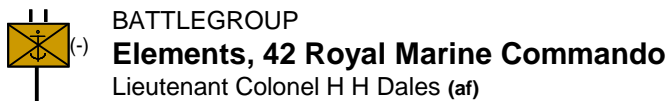
(b) The FOO attached to No.1 Commando at Kangaw was Lieutenant Stuart Guild (class as 'Veteran').

(c) The 5.5s of 6 Medium Regiment were firing from the Myebon Peninsula, some 12km distant. There were also a pair of Indian Navy gunboats firing in general support of 3 Commando Brigade, but this naval gunfire support can be assumed to be 'factored in' to this Medium Battery.

INDIAN XV CORPS FIRE SUPORT ELEMENTS



3 COMMANDO BRIGADE REINFORCEMENTS



Royal Marine Commandos

(a) 'W' & 'X' Troops of 42 RM Commando were committed to the fight some two hours after the initial Japanese attack. This BG therefore arrives as reinforcements on the British table edge between Points 'A' & 'B' on Turn 10. All elements of 42 RM Commando are classed as 'Veteran'.

(b) Unlike No.1 Army Commando, these men used the standard Lee-Enfield .303 rifle, so the usual Chindit/Commando card is used.

(c) The Commando Support Sub-Sections were beefed up with extra Bren LMGs in Burma.

(d) Once they arrive on Turn 10, the 3-inch Mortar Platoon of 42 RM Commando may support No.1 Army Commando as Direct Fire Support or 42 RM Commando as Organic Fire Support. The defensive fire plan was very well coordinated in this battle and 42 RM Commando's mortars were firing long before 42 RM Commando itself became engaged in the battle.

(e) Once the FAC arrives, air support will become available in the form of RAF Thunderbolts (BR-P86). The amount of air support is only limited by the FAC's ability to call it in. Once a Thunderbolt has attacked with bombs, it may return in the next turn to strafe any Spotted or Suspected targets, provided it was not Suppressed or Disordered during its bombing run.

(f) When 42 RM Commando arrives on table, an LCA landing craft armed with Bren LMGs will arrive on the chaung at Point 'A' to provide direct fire support to the left flank. The LCA is treated as an ME and may move 6 inches per action, moving as a vehicle. It is automatically spotted by any unit with line of sight and it has armour of 2/2. The LCA is classed as 'Veteran' and uses the same fire factors as an LMG-armed vehicle such as a Jeep. The LCA may not engage or be engaged in Close Combat.

Briefing for Major Matzu, Commanding 2nd Battalion, 154th Infantry Regiment

Situation – Kangaw, 0730hrs, 31st January 1944

The situation for the 54th Infantry Division and the 28th Army as a whole could not be more grave. The whole army is in full retreat, having been pushed out of the Mayu Peninsular, the Kaladan and Kalapanzin Valleys, Akyab Island and the Myebon Peninsular. But now an even greater threat has emerged – the British have landed from the sea behind our forces and have cut our sole line of communication with Tamandu and the rest of 28th Army.

The key to this new enemy position is the long ridge south of Kangaw, marked on your British maps as Point 170. The division's artillery regiment has been pounding this hill for the last few days and now General Miyazaki has given you his orders – you are to take back Hill 170 and push the enemy back into the sea, or die trying.

May the Emperor live for a thousand years!

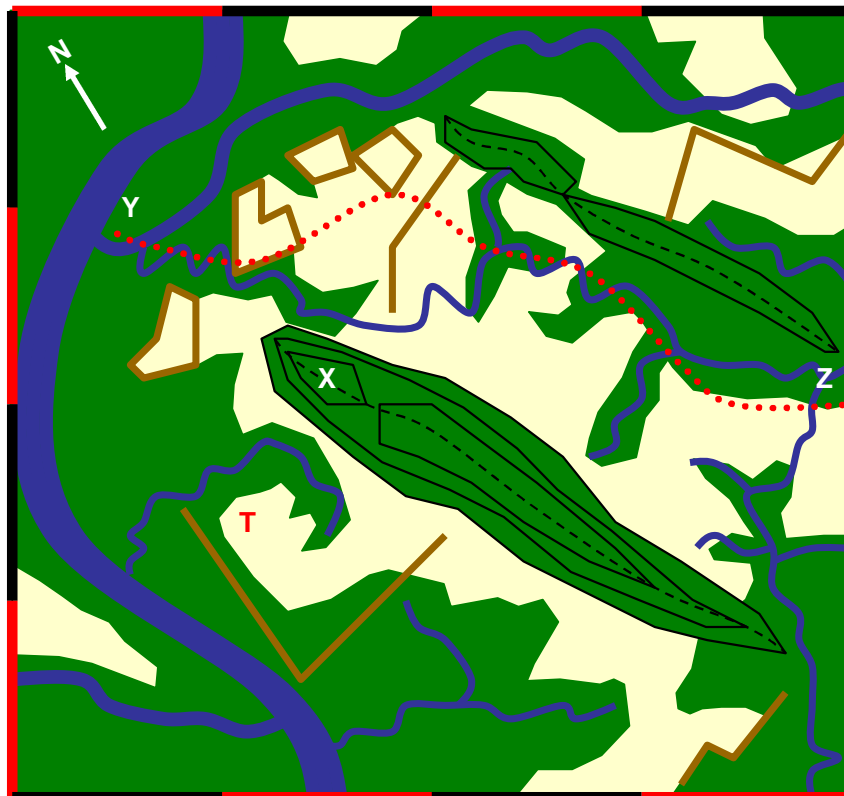
Mission

You are to take Hill 170 at all costs, with the intention of dominating the enemy beachhead beyond.

Execution

General Outline

- Following a massive preparatory bombardment by divisional artillery, your battalion group will assault the Hill 170 position at dawn – 0730hrs.



- During the night you have managed to infiltrate two small groups close to the enemy positions:
 - Group 1, consisting of volunteers from the Regimental Pioneer Unit, have infiltrated close to the location marked 'T' on the map, identified by your scouts as the night-time harbour for the enemy tanks. The pioneers have equipped themselves with mines and pole-charges and intend to destroy the enemy tanks in their harbour area. This tank-busting group may be deployed within 4 inches of the enemy tanks.
 - Group 2, consisting of volunteers from one of your rifle companies, has managed to infiltrate close to the northern end of the ridge and from there will launch a surprise attack at dawn, thus creating a gap in the enemy defence, through which the rest of your battalion will pour. You have equipped many of

them with green berets taken from the enemy dead as a deception measure. This 'Forlorn Hope' group consists of **x5** units from a rifle company of your choice and may be deployed within 2 inches of the forward British positions north-east of the ring-contour marked 'X'.

- The remainder of your forces are deployed to the northeast (i.e. toward the top of the map) of the line Y-Z.

Friendly Forces

- Your forces are listed in detail at Annex A to this order (below).
- Your group is the only Imperial unit south of Kangaw at this time. The rest of the division is attempting to hold back the African division on the Myohaung Road. You can therefore expect no reinforcements beyond those which you have already received.

Enemy Forces

- Your enemies are known to be 'Commandos' – the élite British version of our Special Naval Landing Force. They are present in approximately regimental strength and have approximately one battalion in place on Hill 170. They are worthy enemies.
- The hills beyond your left flank are held by at least three battalions of Indian infantry. These men are also seasoned troops and it is these men who took Kangaw village and cut the road south.
- Enemy artillery support is fairly light – not surprising given that they landed in a mangrove swamp and are probably having difficulty getting artillery ashore and into position. However, heavier guns have been firing from Myebon.
- The enemy air forces roam they sky at will, untroubled by our own airmen, who are now conspicuous by their absence!

Artillery Support

- General Miyazaki has graciously granted your attack the attention of the entire divisional artillery regiment. The entire 54th Field Artillery Regiment will fire a barrage onto targets selected by you for three turns prior to the start of the attack (including Turn 1). The British player will not have the opportunity to rally from the Suppression or Disorder caused by this barrage until his Turn 1 (if this seems severe, the Japanese barrage actually went on for two hours prior to the assault).
- The barrage will continue into Turns 2 and 3. The 2nd & 3rd Battalions of the 54th Field Artillery Regiment will then stand down from supporting your attack. However, the 1st Battalion will continue to provide Direct Fire Support to your group – its FOs are deployed forward with your troops.
- The 154th Regimental Gun Company is deployed forward with your group and is standing ready to fire in Direct Support. It will not take part in the preparatory barrage, but will respond to calls for fire on targets of opportunity.
- The Battalion Gun Platoon is similarly standing ready as Organic Fire Support. Players' Note: You may exchange the 70mm Battalion Gun for an 81mm Mortar, as the unit may have had either.
- No Japanese fire support elements have smoke in this scenario.
- Given the unusual amount of Japanese fire support in this scenario, I recommend first having a good read of the Japanese Artillery Tutorial on the www.fireandfury.com website. There is an argument to be made that the advanced artillery techniques used at Iwo Jima and Okinawa mentioned in the article, were also being used in the Third Arakan Campaign. The Battles of Myohaung and Kangaw both featured decisive use by the Japanese of large artillery concentrations, which was noted as most unusual.

Air Support

- The enemy has complete air supremacy. You can expect no air support.

Game Sequence

- The scenario lasts 20 turns.

- The Japanese have the first turn. They also have an additional two rounds of pre-game bombardment before Turn 1 commences.

Victory Points

- **1 VP** for each enemy Manoeuvre Element with greater than 25% casualties OR each knocked out Vehicle or Gun.
- **2 VP** for each enemy Manoeuvre Element with greater than 50% casualties.
- **3VP** for each enemy Manoeuvre Element with greater than 75% casualties.
- **3 VP** for having the only un-disordered units within 5 inches of the ring-contour at the northern end of Hill 170.
- **5 VP** for having the only un-disordered units within 5 inches of any part of Hill 170.
- **Total Victory** – for having more than 11 VPs or more than the enemy.
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- **Draw** – for having 0-5 VPs more (or less) than the enemy. The side with the higher number can claim a 'Winning Draw'.

BATTLEGROUP
 (+) **'Matzu-Butai'** ('Matzu Group')
 2nd Battalion (+), 154th Infantry Regiment (a)
 Major Matzu



- **HQ** x1 Commander JA-19
- x1 Riflemen JA-17

ATTACHMENTS

- Organic Fire Support
 x1 Type 92 Daitai-Ho 70mm Btn Gun (b) JA-10
- Transport
 x1 Pack Mules

- Manoeuvre Element
5th Company
- **HQ** x1 Commander JA-19
 - x9 Riflemen JA-17
 - **I** x3 Type 89 Grenade Discharger JA-25
 - **V** x1 Type 97 20mm Antitank Rifle JA-23

- Manoeuvre Element
Engineer Tank-Busting Group
- **HQ** x1 Commander JA-19
 - **m** x3 Combat Engineers (e) JA-24
 - **m** x3 Type 99 Anti-Tank Mine Unit JA-23

- Manoeuvre Element
6th Company
- **HQ** x1 Commander JA-19
 - x9 Riflemen JA-17
 - **I** x3 Type 89 Grenade Discharger JA-25
 - **V** x1 Type 97 20mm Antitank Rifle JA-23

- Manoeuvre Element
9th Company (c)
- **HQ** x1 Commander JA-19
 - x9 Riflemen JA-17
 - **I** x3 Type 89 Grenade Discharger JA-25
 - **V** x1 Type 97 20mm Antitank Rifle JA-23

- Manoeuvre Element
7th Company
- **HQ** x1 Commander JA-19
 - x9 Riflemen JA-17
 - **I** x3 Type 89 Grenade Discharger JA-25
 - **V** x1 Type 97 20mm Antitank Rifle JA-23

- Manoeuvre Element
10th Company (c)
- **HQ** x1 Commander JA-19
 - x9 Riflemen JA-17
 - **I** x3 Type 89 Grenade Discharger JA-25
 - **V** x1 Type 97 20mm Antitank Rifle JA-23

- Manoeuvre Element
8th Company
- **HQ** x1 Commander JA-19
 - x9 Riflemen JA-17
 - **I** x3 Type 89 Grenade Discharger JA-25
 - **V** x1 Type 97 20mm Antitank Rifle JA-23

- Manoeuvre Element
2/154th Battalion MG Company
- **HQ** x1 Commander JA-19
 - x6 Type 92 Heavy Machine Gun (d) JA-21

(Fire Support Elements on Page 2)

(a) 'Matzu-Butai' was a reinforced battalion group formed from 2nd Battalion, 154th Infantry Regiment. Matzu was probably the name of the battalion commander. All elements are classed as 'Veteran'.

(b) The 70mm Battalion Gun may be replaced with:
 Type 97/99 81mm Mortar JA-26

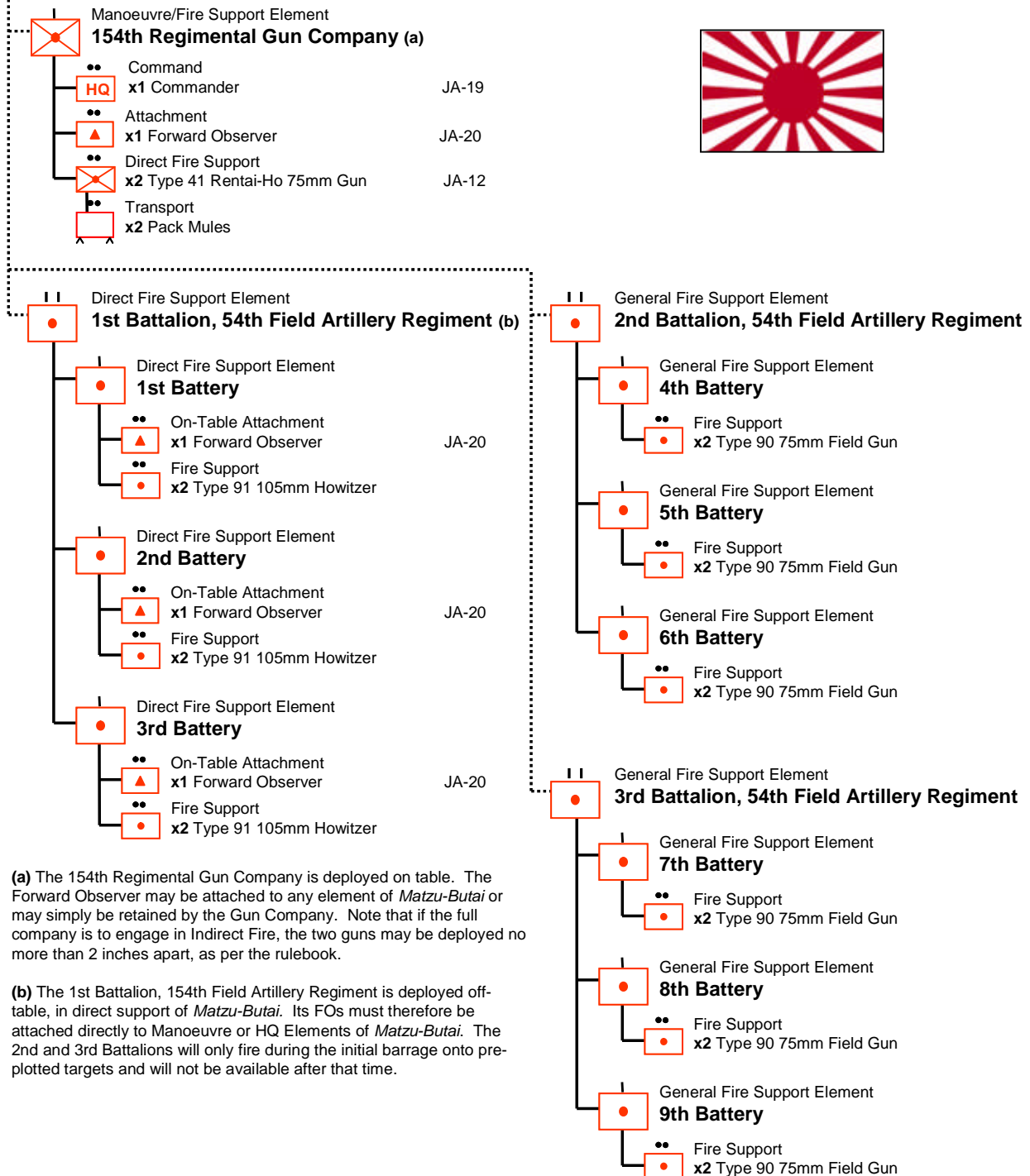
(c) Matzu-Butai was reinforced to around 1,000 men. However, there is no information on what form these reinforcements took, apart from the attached engineer unit. Lacking suitable orbat information, I have therefore arbitrarily added two rifle companies from the 3rd Battalion, 154th Infantry Regiment

(d) x4 MGs may alternatively be directly attached, one each to the battalion's rifle companies, leaving the MG Company with x2 MGs.

(e) There is no evidence for the Japanese having used flamethrowers.

Fire Support Elements Assigned to *Matzu-Butai*

(Continued from previous page)



Terrain Effects

Dry Paddy - Open Terrain.

Woods - Dense Area Concealment. Soft Cover. Full speed for Troops. Half speed & Bog Check for Vehicles and Guns.

Hill 170 - This has very steep sides and is therefore half-speed for Troops and is impassable to all other troop-types. The hill had largely been blasted clear of vegetation, so class the hill and the woods within the immediate vicinity as Sparse Area Concealment and Soft Cover.

Crest Line - Blocks line of sight. Knife-edge ridges are standard-issue in Burma.

Narrow Stream - Treat as a Shallow Gully: Sparse Edge Concealment. Hard Cover. Half speed for Troops. Breach for Vehicles. Breach & Bog Check for Guns.

Wide Stream - As above, though Troops must Breach, while Vehicles and Guns must Breach & Bog Check.

Low Banks - Some of the paddy areas were edged by significant banks that could provide cover and concealment. Sparse Edge Concealment. Hard Cover. Half Speed for Troops. Breach for Vehicles. Breach & Bog Check for Guns.

River - The larger river running up the left-hand edge of the map is impassable to all but boats.

Scenario-Balancing Options

Favouring the Japanese

- Increase the strength of the Tank-Busting Group and/or the Forlorn Hope to a full company apiece.

Favouring the British

- Deploy a full Commando Troop to defend the tank harbour area.
- Mount one Troop of Commandos on the LCA – these may be landed on the riverbank to outflank the Japanese attack.
- Allow 2/2nd Punjabis to launch a counter-attack with two companies against the left flank of the Japanese attack.

Modelling Notes

At the time of writing, there are no suitable models available in 15mm to represent the Commandos in the Arakan. Their uniform and kit in 1945 was of the 1944 Pattern, with a long lightweight jacket, redesigned webbing including a US-style water bottle and jungle boots with canvas uppers – all in Jungle Green. Headgear was exclusively the green Commando beret. To add to the modeling problems, as mentioned above, No.1 Commando used the M1 Garand in lieu of the usual Lee-Enfield .303 rifle.

However, Peter Pig's excellent 14th Army figures are reasonably close, as are Battlefront Miniatures' Italy British. Peter Pig also produce separate heads, so if you're feeling keen you could do some head-swaps for berets.

The Shermans of the Indian 19th Lancers had a unique marking scheme, which is detailed in my 'British Armour in Burma' painting guide, which is available for download at www.fireandfury.com

The newly-arrived RAF Thunderbolts were painted in the dark earth and dark green camouflage scheme already used on 'Hurribombers' in the Far East. Undersides were light grey. Roundels and tailfin flashes were painted in dark blue and light blue, which was then the standard scheme for SEAC. A white stripe was also painted across the tailfin, tailplane stabilisers and wings as an additional recognition measure in the manner of 'invasion stripes'.

If you want to field the LCA, Skytrex produce an excellent model (with the added advantage in my opinion, of being a single-piece casting).

For the Japanese, I recommend Peter Pig's excellent range of Japanese infantry and QRF's Japanese artillery.

Umpire's Eyes Only

The deployment of the Japanese infiltration groups is probably going to need umpire intervention to set up properly. The tanks in particular should be close enough to the edge of the woods to allow at least some of the Japanese tank-busting teams to close assault them in a single-action move. So feel free to move the British deployment slightly to ensure that this scripted event happens.

In reality the tank troop lost two of its three Shermans to the surprise dawn attack, but the third survived and continued to give sterling support for the rest of the battle.

In the case of the 'Forlorn Hope', ensure that the Japanese infiltrators are VERY close to the northern tip of the British defence line. If the British for some reason decide not to occupy the ring-contour, these Japanese troops will occupy it and will have created Improved Positions there by dawn.