

Scenario Overview -THE KOKODA TRAIL - 300

AUSTRALIANS

In the ill-advised, and ill-planned attack on Kokoda (See scenario The Kokoda Trail-Once More Into the Breach), 'C' and 'D' companies took a licking from the Japanese. Caught along the trails with jungle all around, the Australian militia troops had to fight head to head with the veteran Japanese, whose numbers kept increasing as reinforcements heading up from Oivi arrived. (See the Historical Overview map to get the big picture).

'D' company, led by Captain Bidstrup, made a number of attempts to break through to Kokoda, but found it impossible, and had to retreat back to Deniki at nightfall. 'C' company fared no better, and their commanding officer, Captain Dean, was killed. They too, had to retreat towards Deniki during nightfall.

'A' company, guided by LCpl Sanopa, arrived in Kokoda, and was able to drive out the Japanese troops garrisoning the area. Captain Symington sent LCpl Sanopa back to Deniki to tell Major Cameron that they held the village. Major Cameron radioed Port Moresby and was told those reinforcements that were to be flown in as soon as the airstrip was taken, wouldn't be available until the next day. LCpl Sanopa returned to Kokoda to advise Captain Symington of Port Moresby's response. The fighting continued for two days, and was growing more desperate as more and more Japanese arrived from along the trail. It was apparent that one company was not going to be able to hold off all of the Japanese forces in the area, and that help was not coming. After darkness fell on the 10th of August, 'A' company retreated from Kokoda.

Now, depleted of many good men, with men that are worn and weary, and men low on supplies, Major Cameron had to try to stop the Japanese at Deniki. With reinforcements not anticipated anytime soon, and supplies having to make an eight-day trek across the Owen Stanley Mountain Range, things were looking bleak. 'B' Company was still being disparaged by Major Cameron, and were left back at Isurava, and 'A' Company was combat ineffective after the fight for Kokoda, and sent to Eora Creek to rest. Instead of having five companies to hold Deniki, Major Cameron only had three to fend off the veteran Japanese of Tsukamoto's Advance Force.

Even against such odds, the men of the 39th militia battalion held their ground through the 13th of August. During the 14th, however, the thin Australian line began to crack, and Major Cameron ordered a withdrawal to Isurava.

At Isurava, Capt. Bidsrup had two of his platoons set up in ambush along the trail to give warning of the approach of the Japanese. On the 15th, they were contacted by Japanese forces and were driven in closer to the village. The 16th of August saw yet another Commanding Officer change for the 39th battalion. This one was for the best, however. Lt. Col. Ralph Honner was an AIF officer that had served in Africa, Greece, and Crete. Here is a brief description from Lt. Col. Honner on what he saw when he took over the command.

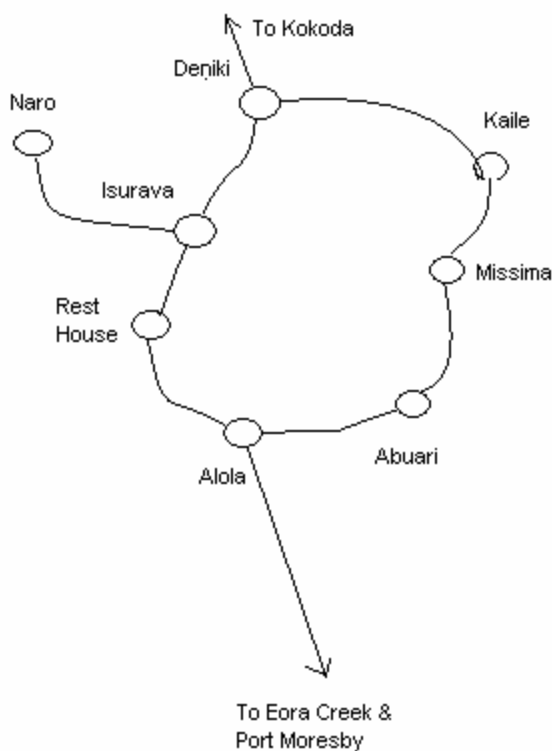
"Physically, the pathetically young warriors of the 39th were in poor shape. Worn out by strenuous fighting and exhausting movement, and weakened by lack of food and sleep and shelter, many of them had literally come to a standstill. Practically every day torrential rains fell all through the afternoon and night, cascading into their cheerless weapon pits and soaking the clothes they wore - the only ones they had. In these they shivered through the long chill vigil of the lonely nights when they were required to stand awake and alert, but still silent."

He could see that the troops were worn and exhausted with little food or supplies, but he knew they were much more than what Major Cameron, General Blamey, or General MacArthur thought of them. He put 'B' company on the left flank, the prime spot for a Japanese attack, and raised their morale immensely by putting his faith in their fighting ability.

Major General Horii spent the time from the withdrawal of the Australians from Deniki (Aug. 14th) to the 25th of August moving the bulk of his South Seas Detachment (3 battalions of the 144th Regiment, and 2 of the 41st Regiment) into position to attack Isurava and drive on to Port Moresby. One battalion went along an eastern parallel flank trail through the villages of Kaile, Missima and Abuari to trap the Australians at Alola, the next village along the track south of Isurava. The rest of his forces would make frontal assaults on Isurava to pin and eventually overwhelm the enemy.

At Alola, the 53rd militia battalion was stationed to prevent the Japanese from cutting off the 39th at Isurava. This battalion had just received their weapons prior to shipping over to Port Moresby, and had received no training. Their first test was to be against some of the most experienced jungle fighters at the time. On the 25th, patrols from the 53rd were scattered as they ran into heavy fighting around Kaile, and upon retreating back towards Missima, found it heavily occupied by the Japanese. They had to leave the trail, and

travel through the dense jungle to escape. A reinforced patrol was then sent on the 26th, and driven back to Alola as they approached Japanese controlled Missima. The Japanese were very close to closing the door on Isurava at Alola. On the way however, was relief in the form of the veteran 21st Brigade led by Brigadier General Arnold Potts. He had arrived at Alola on the 26th ahead of his brigade, with orders to take the offensive and recapture Kokoda. On his hike along the trail, Brigadier General Potts found a number of disturbing signs. There was little preparation along the trail at the main rest areas for his battalions as



they crossed over the Owen Stanley's, and at Myola, the most forward area to accommodate aerial supply drops, there were only 5 days of supplies where there were to be 25. His plans for an offensive were quickly deteriorating. Upon arrival at Alola, he learned that the 53rd had not carried out their orders, and that Alola itself was in danger of falling soon. Also the condition of the men of the 39th was disturbing, along with the strength of the enemy. He was told there were only 4,000 Japanese advancing by Intelligence back at Port Moresby, when in fact; there were over 10,000 crossing the Kokoda Trail. In addition to all of this, his 27th Battalion was still not released pending the outcome of the battle at Milne Bay. Potts was left with no option, but to throw his battalions in piecemeal as they crossed the mountains to try and hold the Japanese.

On the 26th of August the battle began at Isurava. Major General Horii had over 6,000 men in position, and more coming. Only 350 worn Australians stood in his way. The Japanese laid down a bombardment with their mountain guns and mortars. Standing patrols from 'D' Company made contact with the Japanese along the trail from Deniki. One was cut off, and the standby patrol from 'C' Company attempted to break through, but couldn't. Another patrol was sent out through 'B' Company's lines to block the trail to Naro. The fighting amongst the Japanese and these patrols lasted into the late afternoon, when the Japanese bombardment recommenced lasting until darkness. Later in the afternoon the first unit of the Australian 21st Brigade arrived, 'C' Company of the 2/14th, which relieved 'C' Company of the 39th. These men were like giants to the men of the 39th, who were showing signs of malnutrition and disease, and wearing torn khaki uniforms. The men of the 14th were fit, strong, and confident veterans, and had "green" uniforms. They were actually khaki uniforms, just like the militia's, but dyed with local plant extracts that produced a much lighter green than the eventual jungle green they were to be issued later in the campaign.

That night, the men of the patrols that could, returned to Isurava, the others, those trapped or on the trail to Naro had to take to the bush for survival. The Japanese took up positions across from the overgrown garden, and crossed the front creek to the west to assemble on the high ground opposite 'B' Company.

On the morning of the 27th, the men of the 39th Militia Battalion were going to be able to prove their mettle, yet again. In the fighting that takes place here, in the jungles on the mountaintops of Papua, New Guinea, these Australians may earn the right to "Go tell the Spartans" what they did along the Kokoda Trail.

Scenario Notes-Steven Lee

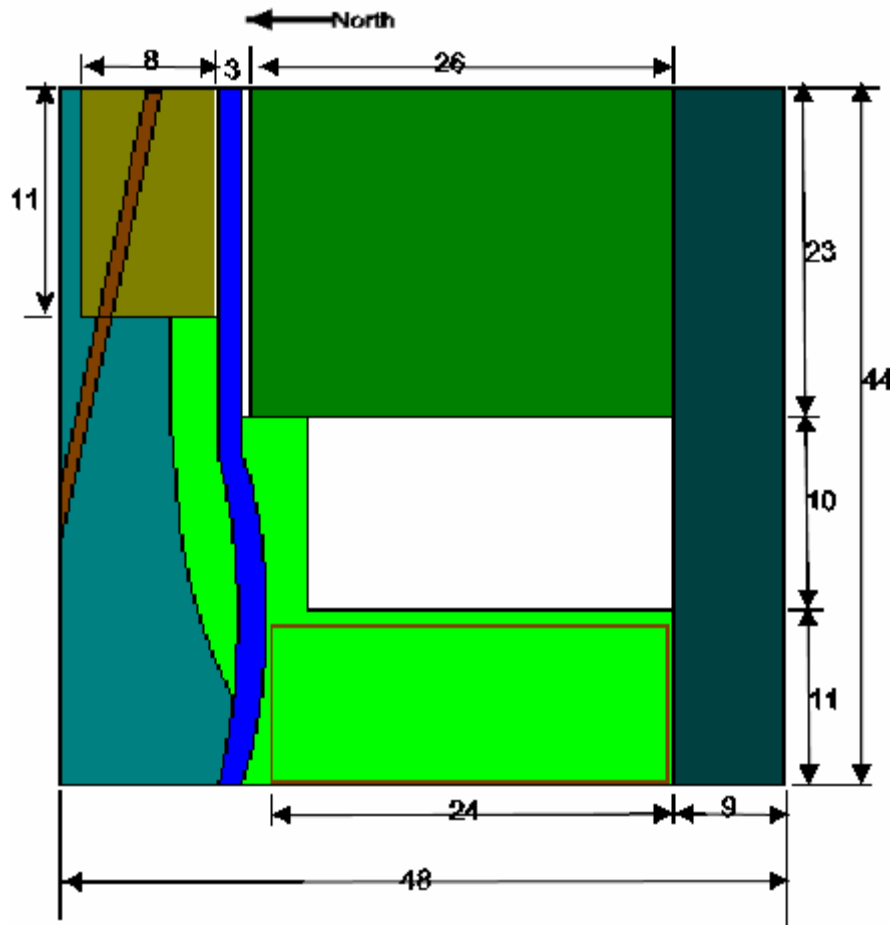
Though there is a separate ME for the Japanese Battalion HQ & supports, I actually attached the Mortars & their FO to one of the companies attacking from the west, and the FO for the mountain howitzer to one of the companies attacking from the north for the games I've run. Unless there is someone that wants a command that will not be too involved, it makes the game move faster.

There are two MEs that come on later in the game, one Japanese, and one Australian. The Australian force ('B' Company 2/14) historically did come to the rescue just in time. The Japanese had plenty of forces to keep throwing men at the beleaguered defenders throughout the day, but they generally attacked with only one company at a time from each direction.

By spreading them out, it allows more players, and puts a little more stress on the Australians as they try to hold on for 8 turns. My original plan for the extra Japanese company was to use it when one of the first 4 MEs became combat ineffective. This would keep the player in the game.

If possible through a GM or maps, the Australian defensive positions should remain hidden until the Japanese can spot them on the spotting table, or they become suspected. The entrenchment placement on the map is designed with the knowledge that the Australians did have defensive positions set on the edge of the jungle, and that there was a vulnerable spot in the northwest corner of the light jungle where the Japanese would have a covered access all the way in. With that, and the victory point system in mind, you can adapt the Australian defensive positions to what ever you have available.

Scenario Map



Terrain Notes

- The map is meant to be played on a 48" by 44" area as indicated on the map above(4' by 4' table). North is to the left of the map.
- Front Creek: Shallow streams. Troops 1/2 speed.
- Overgrown garden: Sparse terrain; no cover.
- Entrenchments: Per rules.
- Improved position: Breach to cross into/assault. Can hold up to six stands.
- Lt jungle: Soft cover; dense terrain; troops 3/4 move; tracked vehicles and small guns 1/2 move; wheeled vehicles and other guns 1/2 move with bog down check.
- Jungle: Soft cover; dense terrain; troops 1/2 move; tracked vehicles and small guns 1/2 move with bog down check. No wheeled vehicles or other guns.
- Hvy jungle: Soft cover; dense terrain; troops move 1/2 move with bog down check each movement (i.e. twice if conducting a rapid advance). No vehicles or guns.
- Kunai grass/Thick scrub: no cover; dense terrain; 3/4 move all; level 1 terrain (i.e. cannot be seen over).
- Tracks/Paths: no road bonus, but negate terrain effects. Troops on the trail count as being in sparse/edge, no cover.
- Hill: Continuous slope, no dead zone. Those uphill receive spotting bonus.

Scenario Specifics and Victory Conditions

- The game lasts 10 turns.
- The Japanese move first.



The Australians can use the optional MG grazing rules for their MMGs setup in defensive positions.

Use the template to the left (print it out and make a copy). To make your own, it is a trapezoid one base wide at the bottom to 2 bases wide at the top and extends 10" in 15mm.

If the template is placed during:

Offensive fire phase: all stands attacked immediately

Defensive fire phase: all stands attacked immediately

Opportunity fire: stands attacked if and when they move, stationary stands attacked during the defensive fire phase.

Beginning of the enemy maneuver phase: stands attacked if and when they move, stationary stands attacked during the defensive fire phase.

- The template can be placed parallel to the front edge, so that the template can be placed anywhere within its front 180 degree field of fire.
- The template can be placed in offensive, defensive, or during opportunity fire against any target that lies within the template. It also may be placed at the beginning of the enemy maneuver phase instead of defensive fire even if no targets are available. Once placed, it remains in place until the end of the current player turn and may not be moved. Note that any designated target must lie within the template.
- The effect of the template does not pass through dense area terrain. It will affect units on the edge of dense area terrain, but not deep or behind it.
- All units, enemy and friendly, which have an aiming point within the template, are attacked with an additional -1 modifier.

Victory Conditions:

Victory Points:

Victory points for positions are awarded to the side which last occupied them. The Australians are considered to have last occupied all positions at the beginning of the game. If units from both sides occupy a position, neither receives points for it.

Terrain	Victory Points
Entrenchments on edge	5 pts each to the side that last occupied them
Entrenchments in second line	10pts to the Japanese and 5 pts each to the Australian
Dug in Position	8 pts for the Japanese, and 5 pts for the Australians.
Per Enemy stand knocked out	3 pts each

At the end of the game, calculate the victory points for each side and subtract the lower total from the higher. If not a draw, the side with the higher total is the winner.

Differential Victory Level

0-20	Draw
21-35	Minor Victory
36+	Major Victory

Credits: Those Ragged Bloody Heroes - From the Kokoda Trail to Gona Beach 1942 - Peter Brune, 1991.

[Into Hell's Mouth](#)

[The Battle for Australia](#)

Island Fighting - WWII Time Life Books series, 1978.

The Readers Digest Illustrated History of World War II - The World At Arms series, 1989.

Wargaming the New Guinea Campaign, 1942-1945 Part One: The Kokoda Track - Miniature Wargames, issue no. 233, October 2002.



Briefing for Lt. Col. Ralph Honner **Commanding 39th Australian Militia Battalion**

Situation

Enemy forces - At least a battalion-sized force has taken up positions just across the North Stream with at least two more battalions in support. They are expected to take up positions on the hill to the west, and attack from that direction as well as the North. They have mortar, heavy machine gun, and artillery support.

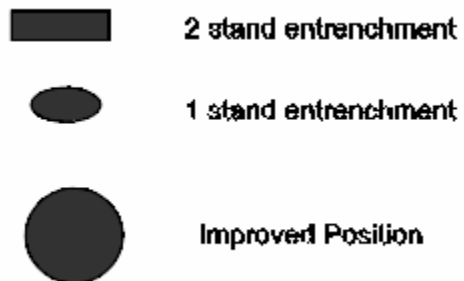
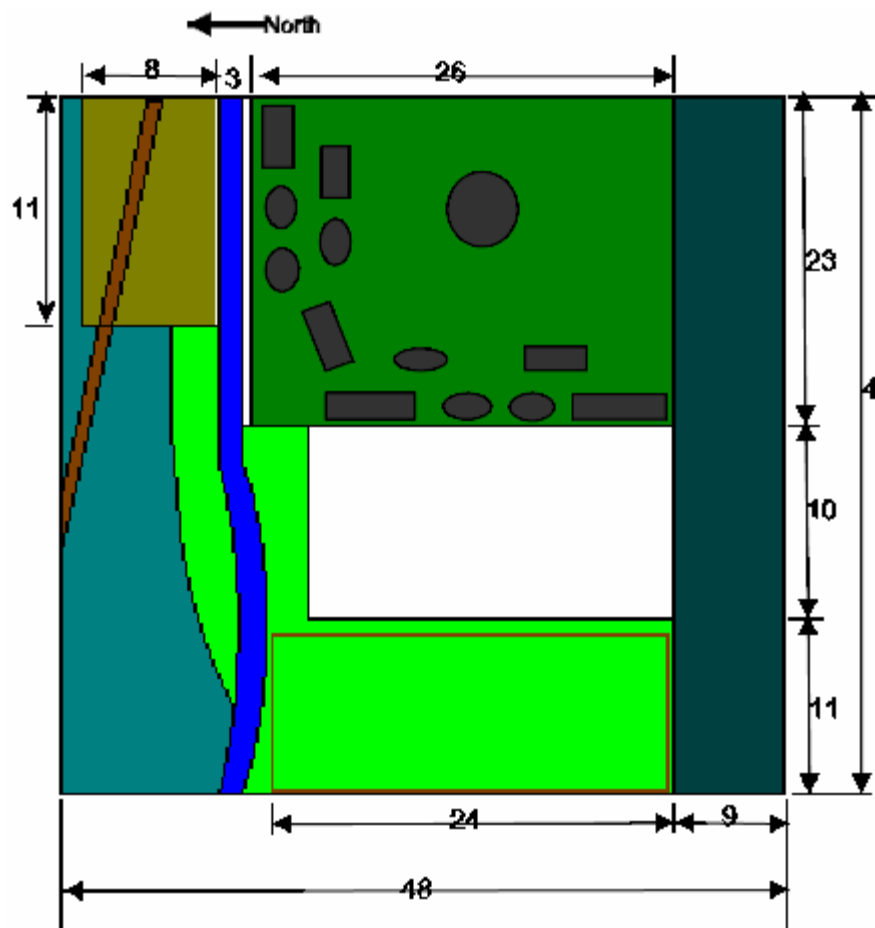


Friendly forces - 39th Australian Militia Battalion with approximately 350 men ('B', 'E' companies, some squads from 'D' company one and a small reserve from 'D' company). 'B' Company 2/14th AIF is cutting a path through the heavy jungle to the south. Runners have been sent to bring them up the Kokoda Trail and join the fight here.

Attachments - none.

Mission

Hold the Japanese here until enough reinforcements arrive to take the offensive.



Setup and Scenario Rules

The game lasts 10 turns. The Japanese move first.

See the [Scenario Overview](#) for terrain rules and victory conditions.

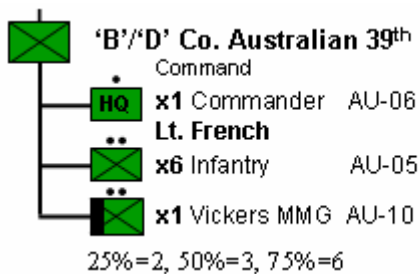
The Australian starts with two groups of entrenchments, one group faces the attack from the North and the other the attack from the West. Each group consists of a "front line" of 2 x 2 stand entrenchments and 2 x 1 stand entrenchments plus a "reserve" of 1 x 2 stand entrenchment and 1 x 1 stand entrenchments. The setup on the map is approximate and the Australian player may vary the exact positions as long as the general location and mix of the entrenchments stays the same.

The front line entrenchments may be placed at the edge of the terrain.

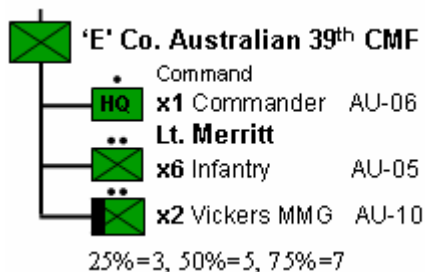
The reserve entrenchments should be positioned 3" behind the front entrenchments

The entrenchments provide -2 protection against direct fire and -1 against indirect fire.

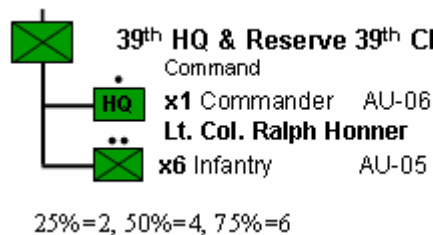
The improved position provides -1 protection against direct fire and 0 against indirect fire.



'B' Company and attachments from 'D' company will hold the positions on the west flank (facing the bottom of the map). It is expected that the Japanese will be coming in force from this direction. This force starts in the entrenchments along the western edge of the light jungle, and/or the in the two reserve entrenchments behind them.



'E' Company will hold the positions in the North, facing the left edge of the map. The north west corner is the weak spot with covered approaches for the enemy into our position. This force starts in the entrenchments along the northern edge of the light jungle, and/or the two reserve entrenchments behind them.



Lt. Col. Honner with a reserve made up of a mix of the remaining companies will be in the improved position in the center of the jungle. If possible, their movement should be kept hidden from the Japanese until they become spotted or suspected.



'B' Co. 2/14 will arrive on the east edge opposite the improved position on turn 6.

25%=3, 50%=5, 75%=8

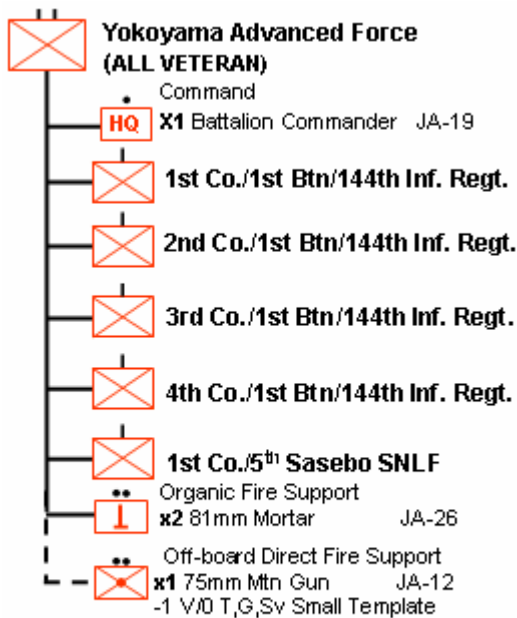


Briefing for Lieutenant Colonel Tsukamoto Commanding Yokoyama Advance Force - 1st Battalion, 144th Infantry Regiment & 5th Sasebo SNLF

Situation

Enemy forces - Insignificant force of approximately two or three depleted rifle companies with no artillery or support assets.

Friendly forces - 1st Btn., 144th Inf. Regt. Consisting of (4) Infantry companies, (1) Mortar platoon providing organic support, and (1) MG company (the MG company has been attached to the individual infantry companies). 1st Company 5th Sasebo is also present.

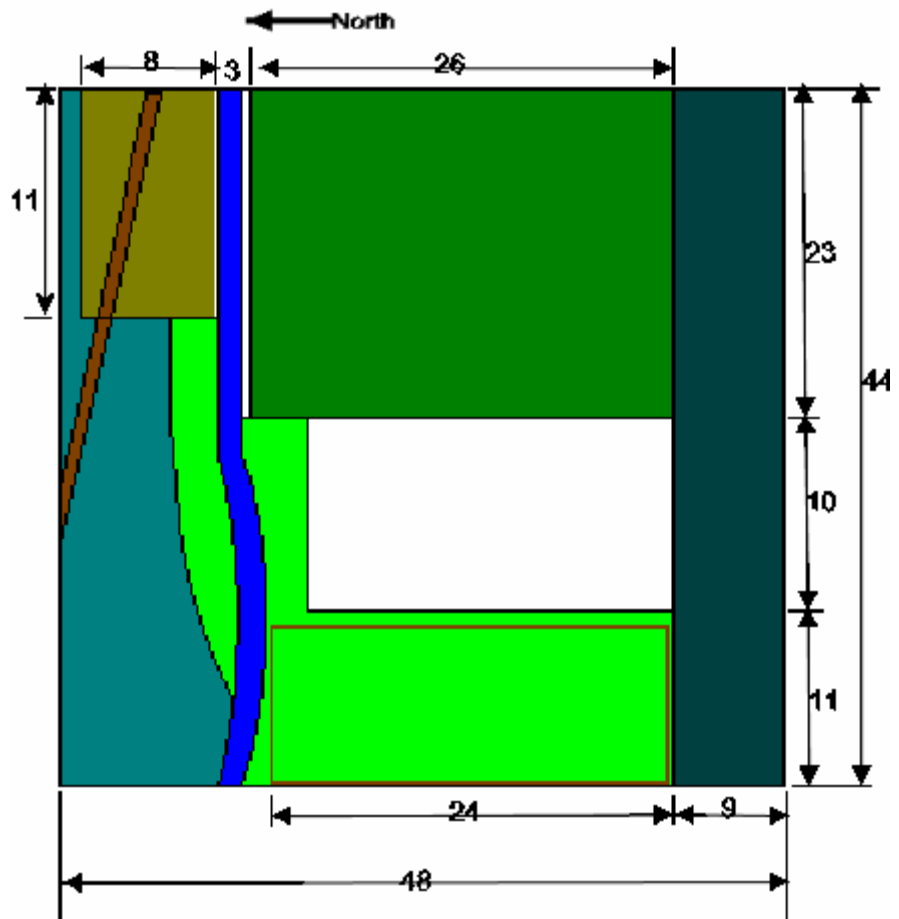


Attachments - 1st Battery 55th Mountain Regiment. Off-board direct fire support.

Battalion Assets only (HQ+mortars)
25%=1; 50%=2; 75%=3

Mission

Overrun the Australian defenders, capture their defensive positions, and clear out the light woods.



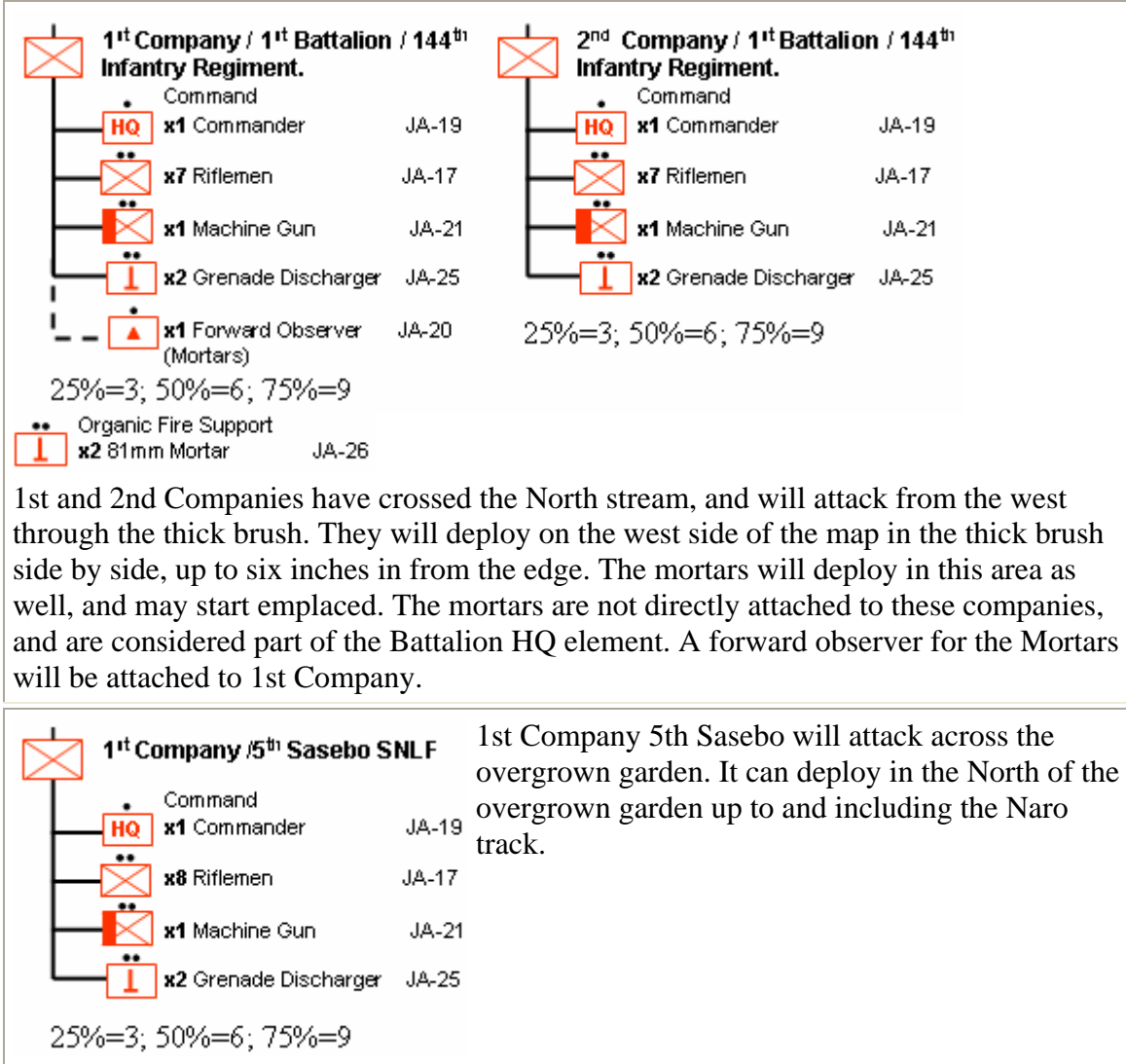
- | | | | |
|---|--------------|---|------------------|
|  | Heavy Jungle |  | Overgrown Garden |
|  | Jungle |  | Front Creek |
|  | Light Jungle |  | Naro Track |
|  | Thick Brush |  | Open |

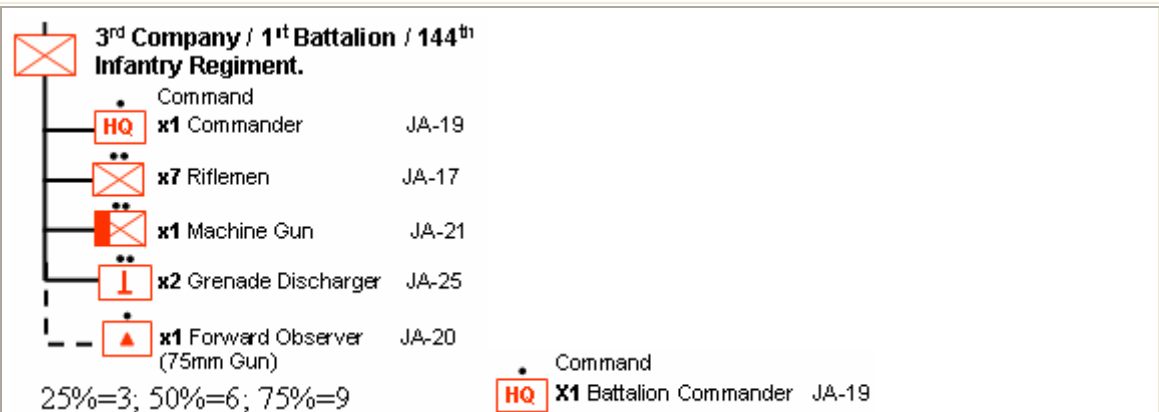
Setup and Scenario Rules

The game lasts 10 turns. The Japanese move first.

See the [Scenario Overview](#) for terrain rules and victory conditions.

See the [Japanese Artillery Tutorial](#) for the knee mortar rules and Japanese call-for-fire table. The Battalion commander can observe for both the mortars and the off-board howitzer. The two forward observers may only observe for their own artillery assets.





3rd Company will deploy to the right of 1/5th Sasebo outside of the overgrown garden and will attack the corner of the light jungle. The overall commander can start between the 3rd company and the 5th Sasebo anywhere up to the Naro track. A forward observer for the Mountain howitzer will be attached to 3rd Company. The artillery is off-board (to the north).

