

Scenario Overview

THE KOKODA TRAIL

Brigade Hill

For further information leading up to this scenario, see the campaign overview, and the preludes to the six previous scenarios.

As the leapfrog withdrawal of the Australians from Isurava reached Eora Creek the disposition of their forces were as follows on 31st of August. The 39th had fallen back to the Eora Creek crossing and had taken up defensive positions to hold it while the other units of Maroubra Force withdrew through them. The 14th Battalion had fallen back through the 39th and taken up positions south of them. 'C' & 'D' companies of the 16th Battalion withdrew back to the creek leaving two platoons as a rear guard along the trail. These two platoons soon came under intense pressure from the Japanese and ended up having to escape through the jungle to the east, crossing the creek further down than the rest of the force.

At the crossing the rest of the 16th and the 39th Battalions waited for the rear guard platoons, but the next troops to show up were a Japanese flanking force which cut off the rear guard units, and forced the 16th and 39th into their defensive positions. The 39th was then ordered down the trail to the next holding position, and on September 1st the 14th moved further south leaving the defenses of Eora Creek to the 16th. The night of the September 1st was pitch black with a heavy downpour. The Japanese had attempted to take the positions multiple times. Most of the fighting was at point blank range as visibility was at a minimum. On one instance, a Japanese soldier had grabbed hold of a fixed bayonet to pull himself up, thinking he had a tree branch. The second Aussie in the hole laid his bren atop the first's head and drilled the Japanese soldier as he lifted himself up. On another occasion, a Japanese soldier whispered "Where are you, Digger?" and was answered politely with "Here I am", and was blown away at point blank range. In the flashes of their grenades going off the Australians cut the Japanese down in their repeated attempts to take the position, and by the end of the night there were over 170 dead Japanese just outside the Australian defensive line.

The Australians could not hope to hold of course, once the Japanese brought their considerable numbers and heavy supporting arms to bear. On the 2nd of September, Maroubra Force started withdrawing. The Australians continued along the steeply climbing trail in the ankle deep mud, then sliding down the other side as it crossed ridge lines. This was during the day, when they could see. During the night it was a bone shattering experience falling on rocks and boulders or into muddy bogs all the time getting pelted by a heavy rain as they continued on. First to Templeton's Crossing then onto Myola the Australians stumbled. Myola was the staging area for supplies for Maroubra Force. There was a flat plain where planes could conduct biscuit runs and drop supplies. The Diggers dropped where they stopped late at night on the 3rd and early

morning of the 4th. They woke to the smell of hot food, their first of the campaign. They were also able to clean up, and were provided with new uniforms. Port Moresby had ordered Potts to hold Myola, and start counter-attacking, showing their ignorance of the situation. Not only was Potts outnumbered by over 6-1, Myola was totally undefensible. Additionally, there was another trail from Templeton's Crossing that could completely bypass Myola, and cut off the Australians if the Japanese were to use it.

There was some good news from Port Moresby, though. Brigadier General Potts was informed that his 27th battalion would finally be joining him. Also the 25th Brigade was arriving in Port Moresby. Potts made the decision to fall back to the village of Efogi, but ended up having to move a little further south to Efogi Ridge, which contained Mission Ridge and Brigade Hill, as Efogi was dominated by the mountains surrounding it. After consuming as much of the supplies as they could, the Australians contaminated or destroyed what was left, and headed for Efogi on September 5th.

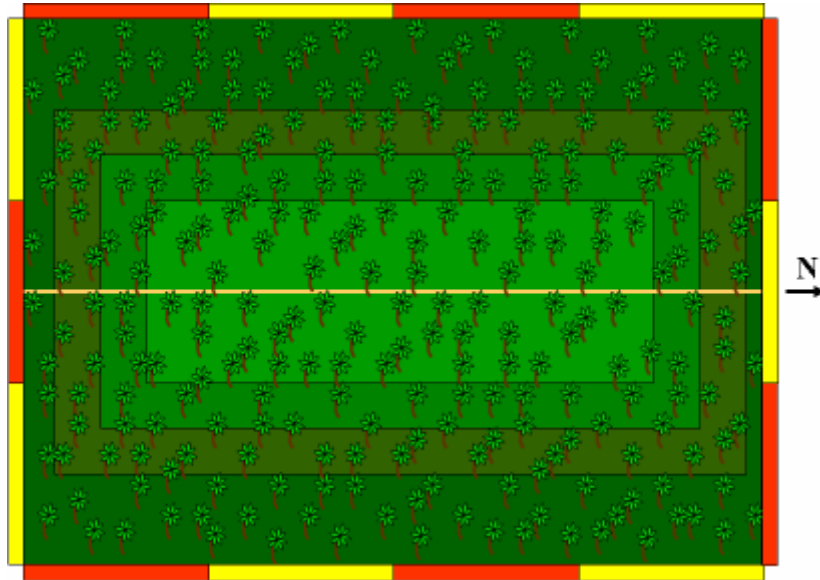
Mission Ridge dominated the ground overlooking Efogi, which dropped down from the village to Efogi creek, then climbed steeply to Mission Ridge. At the southern end of Mission Ridge it dropped down slightly then rose steeply to Brigade Hill, which in turn dropped down steeply to the village of Menari. Along all sides of these positions the ground was heavily timbered jungle and very steep. The 27th battalion arrived on the 5th at Mission Ridge and relieved the 39th. The 39th, who had been in the campaign from the beginning, was officially relieved, and took no further part in the withdrawal along the Kokoda Trail. Of the approximately 500 men that started the campaign for the 39th less than 180 remained, with over 25% of them combat ineffective from wounds and disease. The 14th and 16th Battalions took up positions on Brigade Hill.

The Japanese of Major General Horii's South Seas Detachment pressed the Australians the whole time, even though they too were suffering from starvation and disease. Upon arriving at Myola they gorged themselves on the contaminated food left by the Australians. This would have major consequences later in the campaign.

On the night of the 7th, Brigadier General Potts watched as a never ending Japanese column of lanterns descended the Owen Stanley's towards Efogi with no long range weapons to challenge them. This large force was massing in front of the 27th on Mission Ridge for what would turn out to be one of the most intense and brutal battles for the Kokoda Trail.

Scenario Notes-Steven Lee

Scenario Map



Terrain Notes

- The map is meant to be played on a 48" by 36" area as indicated on the map above (4' by 3' table). North is to the right of the map. Note that the picture may not be exactly to scale—use the measurements along the side as your guide.
- Steep Hill: The top contour is a flat plateau, but the rest of the playing surface is a steep hill, sloping up to the top. The other contour lines are a guide for setting up the terrain, but otherwise do not effect play. The top contour level is treated as "level" (i.e. only the jungle terrain movement modifiers apply to troops on the top level).
While moving on the hill (up, down, sideways) troops pay a 1/2 move penalty in addition to any terrain movement modifiers (jungle) when moving on the hill. Troops that Panic down the hill do not pay the 1/2 move penalty going down, but will suffer it again when they come back up.
Higher level troops do receive the +1 spotting modifier.
- Dug in Positions: Per rules. Note that units in Dug-in positions along the trail facing it can see down the length of the trail and spot units along it as they are in sparse/edge.
- Other than the trail, the entire map is Jungle:
Soft cover; dense terrain; troops 1/2 move;
Note that on the steep hill, this penalty cumulative with the penalty for the steep hill. Units moving on the hill move at 1/4 speed (an infantry unit on the hill would rapid advance only 2").
- The yellow line down the middle is the Kokoda trail. It provides no road bonus, but negates terrain effects.
Troops on the trail count as being in sparse/edge, no cover, in non-open areas.

Scenario Specifics and Victory Conditions

- The game lasts 12 turns.
- The Japanese move first.

They should be deployed no closer than 4" down the steep slope (i.e. two turns (4 full move actions) in their respective deployment areas.



The Australians can use the optional MG grazing rules for their MMGs per their Operations orders.

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

As per each sides Operation Orders. If neither side accomplishes the objectives listed in their respective orders, under Victory Conditions, the game is a draw.

Scenario Notes

Welcome to the seventh scenario on the Kokoda Trail campaign. Brigade Hill follows the remains of the 14th & 16th Battalions in their plight of withdrawing along the Kokoda Trail. This scenario originally started out much bigger to include the fight of the 27th Battalion on Mission Ridge, but time and a desire to reduce the game size brought me to the decision to only do Brigade Hill.

By all accounts, after Isurava, this was the hardest, most intense fight along the Trail. With that in mind, I wanted to keep the action tight and constant. With the Japanese making an unbelievable flank march and surprising the Diggers historically, the scene was set to have constant combat from start to finish.

One item that I constantly debated with myself was the troop quality for both sides. At this time in the campaign both sides had been badly stricken with diseases and famine as well as being completely exhausted, and my first thought was that both sides were going to be rated as Trained. However with most of the Australian troops having just passed through their supply base at Myola, receiving their first hot meal of the campaign, new uniforms, and being able to clean up some I thought it plausible to keep them at Experienced. After all, these were truly Veteran troops but they were just worn down from the campaigning through the hell of the Owen Stanley Mountain Range. Now to the Japanese, who were also truly Veteran troops, but suffering immensely from famine, disease, and bad hygiene. I had thought of leaving them as Trained, but after reading how the Australians were completely surprised, and very impressed by the tenacity and difficulty of the flank march and attack I figured they should still be rated as Experienced as well. As it turns out, having both sides rated as Experienced works well for the scenario.

A couple of notes for GMs that are running this for players that have not gamed the scenario before. Hidden deployment for the Australians is beneficial. It may make the Japanese tentative, thus ticking away the clock, and keep them from concentrating on weak areas of the defensive line that they would not know about without the all encompassing helicopter view. This would include hidden deployment of the dug in positions. I tend to keep away from hidden movement as it slows the game down, and especially for a convention game. Once a unit fires or moves it is placed on the board. Possibly for a pick up game among familiar players hidden movement would be an option. On the other side of the coin, the GM needs to "sell" the Australians on the likelihood that the Japanese are coming from the north. When placing troops out in their commands before the players deploy them, place the Japanese along the north edge of the table off board. Talk a lot about the fight with the 27th on Mission Ridge to the north, and how the 14th and 16th are to hold the trail open for them to fall back on. Point out that

patrols have ran into Jap patrols to the east, but no contact on the west. This will hopefully lead the Australians to deploy their forces evenly on both sides of the trail. If playing with players familiar with the scenario it would be best to require them to split the Australian forces along both sides of the trail.

This is one of the few scenarios so far where the Australians are actually expected to hold, and the Japanese do not have extensive victory points or conditions to achieve a win. Though the conditions are hard for the Australians to actually win, it is most likely a game to end in a draw situation. In the three test runs and convention game run there were three Japanese victories and one draw. The convention game ended up being a decided Japanese victory as one of the Australian commands could not do any damage because of bad die rolls and was getting pummeled by 8-10s, as well as good play by the Japanese player. The other two Japanese wins were closer games not being decided until the last couple game turns.

I did make a change to the scenario as played at the convention. I made the Composite platoon of the Brigade ME for the Australians Veterans vs. Experienced. This was mainly in response in that the Japanese test game wins were over the Australian Brigade ME.

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

Island Fighting - WWII Time Life Books series, 1978.

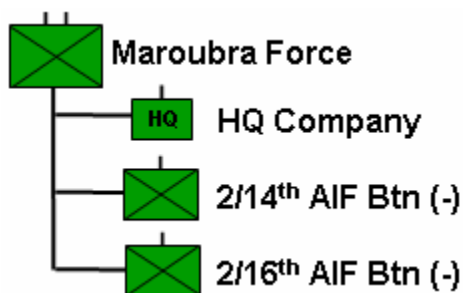
The Readers Digest Illustrated History of World War II - The World At Arms series, 1989.



Briefing for Brigadier General Arnold Potts Commanding Maroubra Force

Situation

Enemy forces - You are being pursued by at least six battalions with supporting arms. Friendly patrols have met and forced back enemy units trying to move along the east side of Mission ridge. No enemy activity on the west side.



Friendly forces - 14th, 16th, and 27th Battalions, 2nd Australian Imperial Force (AIF). The newly arrived 27th Battalion is to the north on Mission Ridge, providing the first line of defense and are not available to help the defend your position. You must hold open their line of retreat. Composite units are being formed along the trail towards Menari from returning troops that have been cut off.

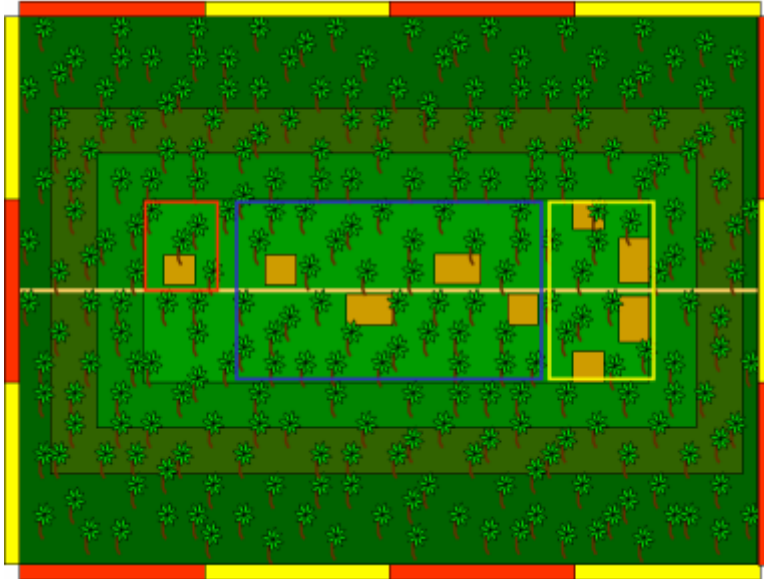
Attachments - none.

Mission

14th & 16th Battalions on Brigade Hill are to hold the hill and keep the Kokoda Trail open for withdrawal.

Execution

14th Battalion will take up positions along the north edge of the hill to hold off any pursuing Japanese as the 27th falls back through the line along the Kokoda Trail. 16th Battalion will hold the center of the hill along the trail as the next line of defense as the 14th withdraws after the 27th. Brigade HQ will be located towards the rear of the hill. They are organizing stragglers into a composite platoon that may be available as reinforcements.



NOTE:NORTH IS TO THE RIGHT. THE TOP OF THE MAP IS WEST.

Administration & logistics

Other than keeping the Kokoda Trail open, not relevant in game terms.

Command and signal

Brigade Command is at the south side of the hill, and will advise when each unit will start its withdrawal. The 14th will be given the word, once the 27th clears the 16th battalion area.

Setup and Scenario Rules

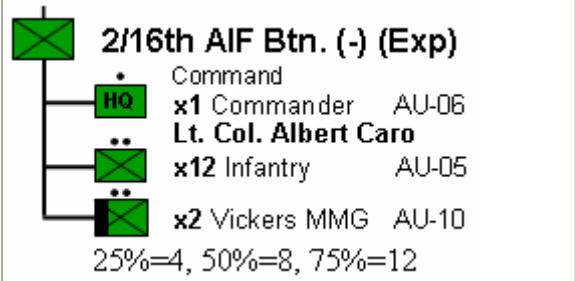
The game lasts 12 turns. The Japanese move first.

See the Scenario Overview for terrain rules.

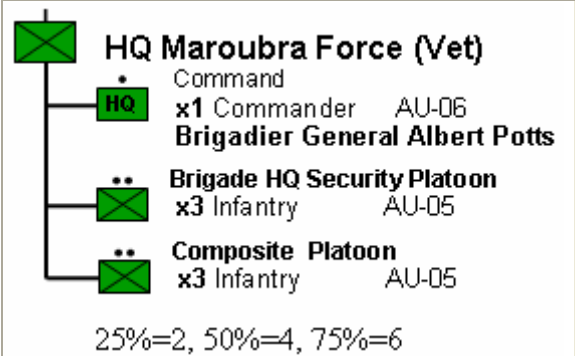
14th Battalion: Sets up in the defensive area as defined by the Yellow box. They have dug in for up to 6 units located in the tan boxes on per the map. The square tan boxes are 1 stand positions, while the rectangular boxes are 2 stand positions.



16th Battalion: All stands set up in the defensive area defined by the blue box. They have dug in for up to 6 units located in the tan boxes on per the map. The square tan boxes are 1 stand positions, while the rectangular boxes are 2 stand positions.



HQ: The Brigade CO, 3 Veteran infantry stands, and 1 dug in position will be deployed in the area defined by the map (Red box) at the beginning of the game.



Reinforcements:

If the Brigade HQ ME that is on board is reduced to 1 stand, or all of it's remaining stands are pushed to the east side of the Kokoda Trail, the Composite Platoon will come on the next Australian move, providing the Brigade HQ ME Manuever Roll permits them an action. They will not suffer any fall back or panic results until on board. They will come in along the Kokoda Trail from the south. Even when they are not on the board, these reinforcing stands are considered part of the HQ element for calculating maneuver roll casualties.

If the MMGs are placed in an improved position in such a way as to fire down the trail, it can use the grazing fire template and rules found in the Prelude section of the scenario until it moves.

Victory Conditions

The Australians must keep the Trail open. This is accomplished by allowing no more than two undisordered Japanese stands within 1" of the Trail at the end of the game. Only count parts of the trail on the top level of the hill, not those on the steep Northern and Southern slopes.

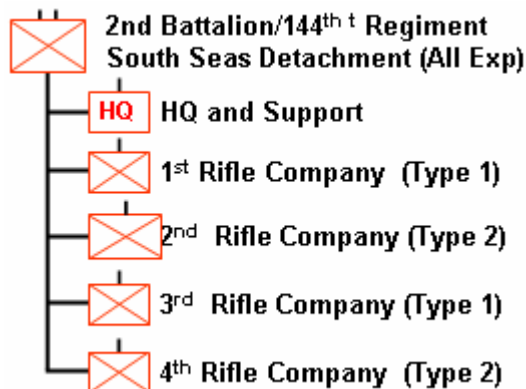


2nd Battalion/144th Regiment Imperial Japanese Army of the South Seas Detachment

Situation

Enemy forces - Depleted enemy battalion holding Brigade Hill. Fresh enemy battalion fighting on Mission Ridge. No supporting arms.

Friendly forces - 2nd Battalion/144th Regiment as shown to the left.



In addition, the 3rd Battalion/144th Regiment is to our left attacking Mission Ridge from the west, the rest of the South Seas Detachment is attacking Mission Ridge from the north and northeast, and the balance of South Seas Detachment are mopping up, and following along the Kokoda Trail. These other forces are not available to support your attack.

Attachments - One platoon from the 55th Engineer Regiment.

Mission

Cut the Kokoda Trail, and deny its use to the enemy for resupply or withdrawal. Then destroy the enemy in detail as the balance of the Detachment drives down from the north.

Execution

We have moved undetected along the western side of Brigade Hill, and will attack the flank of the enemy. 1st Company will attack the southern end of the hill. 2nd and 3rd Companies will attack the center, and 4th Company will attack the northern end.

Administration & Logistics

Not relevant in game terms.

Command & Signal

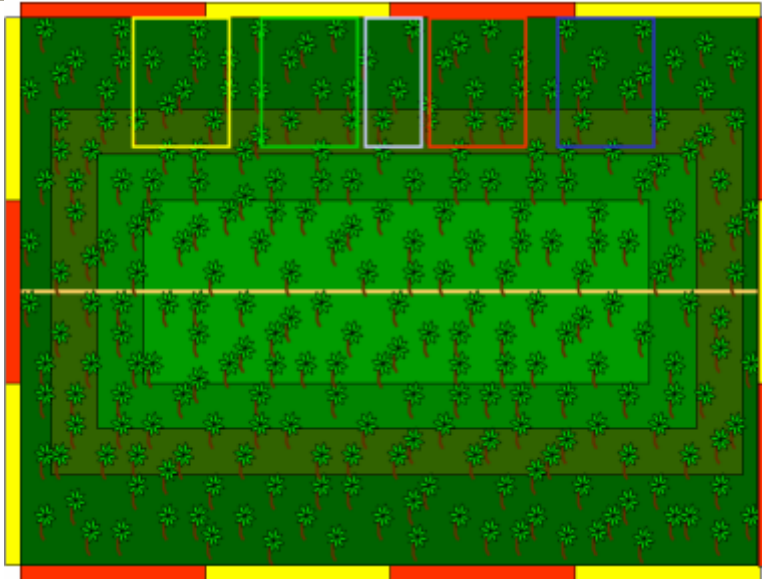
Not relevant in game terms.

Setup and Scenario Rules

The game lasts 12 turns. The Japanese move first.

See the Scenario Overview for terrain rules

See the [Japanese Artillery Tutorial](#) for the knee mortar rules and Japanese call-for-fire table.



NOTE:NORTH IS TO THE RIGHT. THE TOP OF THE MAP IS WEST.

The Japanese deploy second.

All companies will deploy in their appropriate areas as designated by the map:

- 1st Company - yellow box
- 2nd Company - green box
- HQ ME if deployed separately (see below) - gray box
- 3rd Company - red box
- 4th Company - blue box

All units must deploy 4" or more from the edge of the upper plateau.

The HQ ME consists of the Battalion HQ, forward observers for the off-board artillery, and 3 engineer stands.



All Artillery Off-board

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

The HQ company can either be deployed as a unit or broken up and attached to the infantry companies. If broken up as attachments, each infantry company can have up to one engineer and one FO/CO attached. Engineers are treated as regular attachments, but as special rule, attached FO/CO units will NOT change the company Maneuver Roll breakpoints, and DO NOT count as casualties for the company. However, they will suffer the effect of the company's maneuver roll.

There are two types of Japanese Infantry Companies (one has an extra grenade discharger and slightly different Maneuver Roll breakpoints).

Companies 1 and 3 are Type 1



25%=3; 50%=6; 75%=8

Companies 2 and 4 are Type 2



25%=3; 50%=6; 75%=9

Mortars providing Organic support are off board with their fire coming in from the West. They may not fire smoke.

The Forward Observers can start in any deployment area.

Victory Conditions

The Japanese must cut and control the Kokoda Trail. To do this they must have at least 3 undisordered stands within 1" of the trail, controlling a contiguous 5" section at game end. Control means there are no undisordered Australians within 1" of the 5" section. Only count parts of the trail on the top level of the hill, not those on the steep Northern and Southern slopes.