

A Tough Nut to Crack

The Pinnacle, Okinawa
April 6, 1945

A Battlefront WWII Scenario by Bill Slavin

Scenario

On April 1, 1945 American forces staged a successful amphibious landing midway on the western side of the island of Okinawa. Driving inland then wheeling south, the 7th Division has encountered the first of a series of outposts ahead of the main Japanese Shuri defensive zone. One of these is The Pinnacle, a dramatic height that dominates the surrounding terrain. The Japanese have chosen to lightly defend this outpost, but they are well dug in and protected by minefields and barbed wire. The 1st Battalion of the 184th Infantry Regiment is tasked to clear this feature. It may prove a tough nut to crack.

Duration

8 turns. The Americans move first.

Scenario specific rules

Japanese Only

1. Machinegun grazing fire. Rules found here <http://www.fireandfury.com/extra/mggrazing.shtml> with the addition that the template needs to be centered on a spotted or suspected target and only "cover" modifiers apply (i.e. suspected target status and smoke do not)
2. Banzai! Panicked Japanese units, rather than retreating will charge the nearest enemy unit within one movement turn and engage in Close Combat at +1 (disordered result still applies). If there are no enemy units within one move simply treat a panic result as "0" (fall back one action or closest cover).

Americans Only

1. Maneuver elements that loose 50% +1, regardless of morale check can no longer advance (although they may displace).
2. Maneuver elements that loose 75% of their units, regardless of morale check must fall back one move and may no longer advance (although they may displace).
3. If all of an attacker's Maneuver elements (other than HQ and rear echelon - e.g. mortar - ME's) are reduced to less than 50% the game is over at the beginning of that player's phase.

Important Note:

There are two pages in this scenario that should not be viewed by the opposing player, as they contain information only one player should know. These are marked at the top of the page.

Briefing for the Japanese Commanding Officer, 1st Lieutenant Seiji Tanigawa, 1st Co., 24th Independent Infantry Battalion

Your orders are simple. Hold your position to the last man. You have two platoons of infantry to defend the feature, supported by heavy machine guns and your 50mm knee mortars. Your third platoon is in reserve to the rear with battalion headquarters and not likely to be released.

But you have had time to prepare your position and your men are well-entrenched with minefields and barbed wire barring the most obvious approaches. This limestone feature has been augmented with caves linked with tunnels, providing cover and easy access from one side of The Pinnacle to the other. The enemy won't be able to blast you off this forsaken pile of rock and will have to fight for every inch.

As you catch glimpses of the first of the enemy working his way up the slopes towards your position, you telephone back to battalion to request fire support. But despite having pre-registered targets around the base of the hill, for some reason support is declined. It looks as if you will be on your own!

Deployment

Your troops and fortifications can be deployed anywhere south of Line A (4" from north side of table.) While fortifications placed in the open should be placed on board, ideally trench lines, weapon pits, log bunkers, minefields and barbed wire placed in areas of sparse concealment should all be indicated with markers or map-marked and only revealed when spotted. (My preference is to place and photograph, then remove all fortifications and troop stands and indicate with small, unobtrusive bits of terrain as a visual reminder for when the enemy comes in contact.)

Fieldworks, Caves and Tunnels

You have the following to place as desired:

- 20" of trench line
- 8" of barbed wire
- 2 mixed minefields 1.5" X 1"
- 4 log pillboxes

Caves (See map) – Position should be hidden and only revealed when spotted. For playtest rules on the use of caves in Battlefront WWII: http://www.fireandfury.com/extra/caves_pacific_war.pdf

Connected caves indicated to the rear (south) of the ridgelines are considered "cave exits", not "cave fighting positions".

Pillbox – 180° front arc of fire, 1" to sides and rear.

Barbed wire – Spotted as 'troops-dug in' in same concealment

Fire Support

You have no fire support other than the company 50mm mortars for this scenario. See below for rules on how to employ these.

<http://www.fireandfury.com/artillerytutorial/artyjapan.shtml>

Victory Conditions

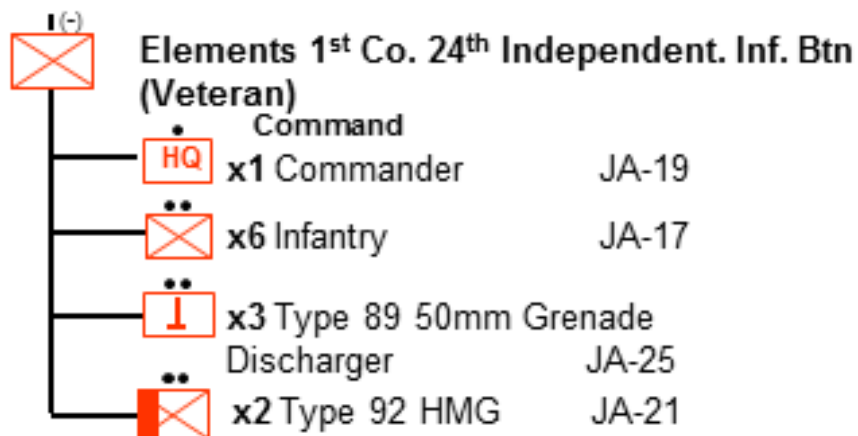
Minor Victory

At least one undisordered friendly unit within 5" of The Pinnacle by the end of the game.

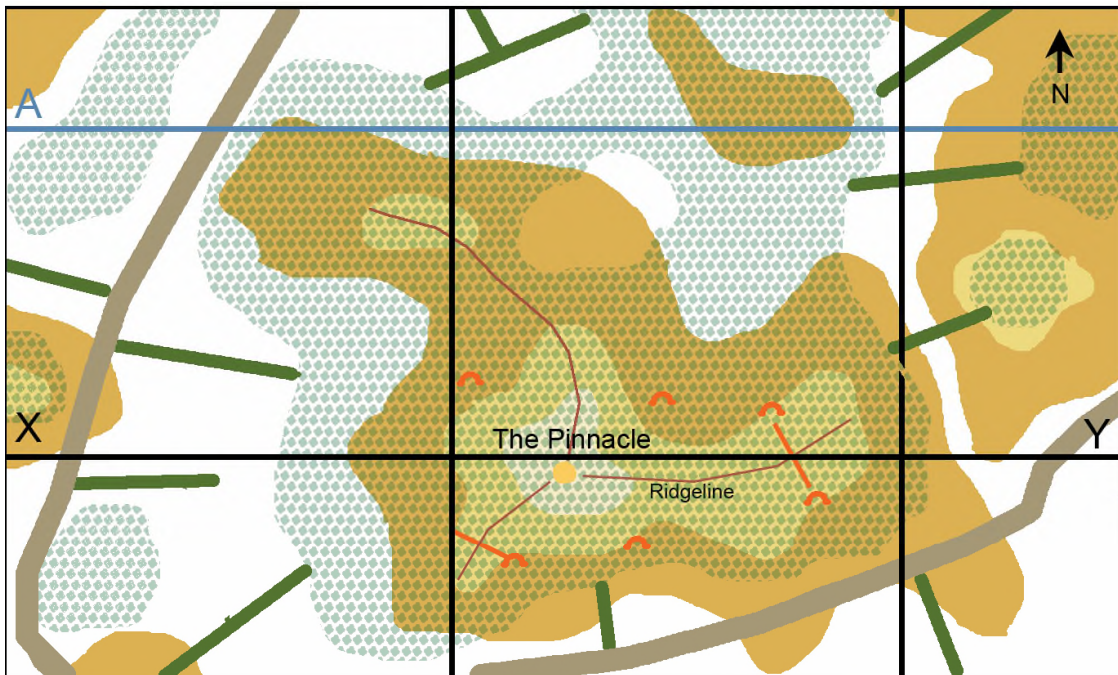
Major Victory









No American units within 5" of The Pinnacle and at least one undisordered friendly unit left within 5" of The Pinnacle by the end of the game.

Japanese Forces



For Japanese Player's Eyes Only!



-  Unpaved Road
-  Low Hedgerow (sparse edge)
-  Rough Terrain (sparse edge/deep)
-  Level 1
-  Level 2
-  Level 3
-  Tunnel
-  Cave

Note: The American

player will not know where the caves and tunnels are located.

Terrain effects

1. Treat all slopes as steep.
2. Units must be aligned to ridgeline in order to spot beyond it.
3. Any Japanese units within 3" of the east/west ridgeline on the reverse (south) slope are immune to off board IDF but may be targeted by mortars.
4. Because of the steep elevation, any unit up-slope of another unit is considered at a higher elevation for spotting purposes.
5. "Pinnacle" area at top of hill blocks line of sight.

Briefing for the American Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. Daniel G. Maybury, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry

Since D-Day on April 1, American forces have rapidly pushed inland, largely uncontested, severing the island of Okinawa at the middle. But as you swing south the troops are encountering growing pockets of Japanese resistance.

One of these is The Pinnacle, a 450-foot high ridge of limestone rock topped by a 30 foot coral spike serving as a watchtower for the Japanese forces. It is fortified and defended by a small force of determined Japanese. These are elements of the 62nd Division, battle hardened veterans that have been fighting since China in 1938. You task B and C Company with the job of clearing the position. After a couple of aborted attempts this morning you are trying once again to root out the Japanese. Your companies have been augmented by combat engineers to help breach the enemy's field fortifications and two medium machineguns from your battalion's weapons company. Some fire support has been laid on to help the attack, but with the enemy well dug in, it will doubtlessly come down to hand to hand fighting in order to drive the enemy out.

Deployment

Your troops enter from the north side of the board on Turn 1. There is no IDF on Turn 1.

Fire Support

Besides your battalion's 81mm mortars, a battery of 105's will be supporting your attack. Fire support originates from the north side of the board.

Victory Conditions

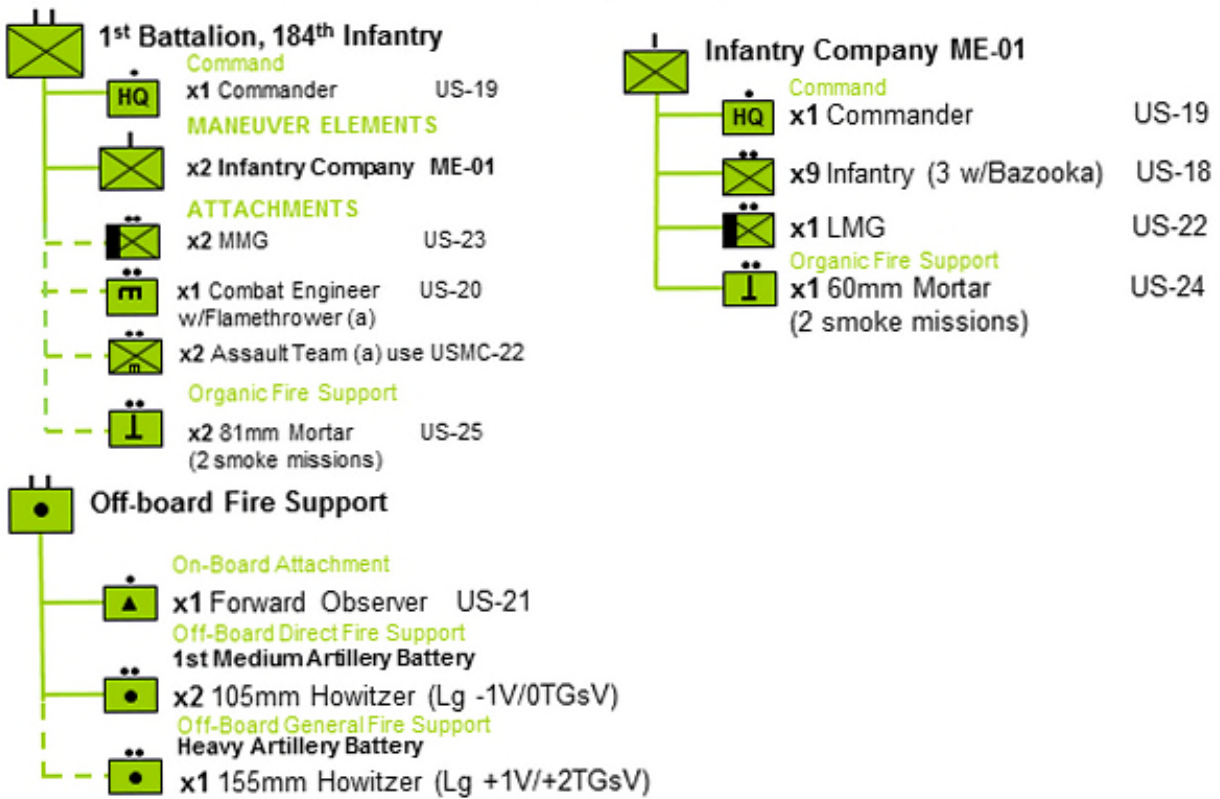
Minor Victory

There is no minor victory possible for the Americans. The Pinnacle must be cleared for the 7th Division to continue its advance south!

Major Victory

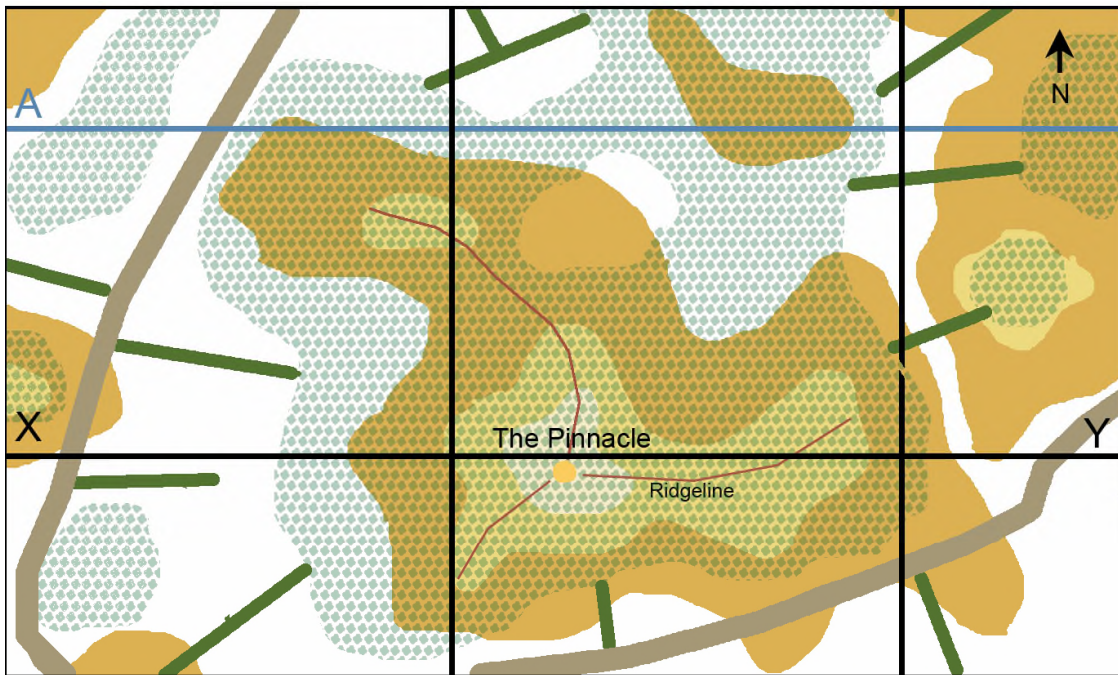
No undisordered enemy units within 12" of The Pinnacle by the end of the game, and at least one American unit within 5" of The Pinnacle.


American Forces (all Experienced)



One Smoke Mission

a) See use of Assault Teams and Engineers in attacking and sealing caves at http://www.fireandfury.com/extra/caves_pacific_war.pdf



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-  Low Hedgerow (sparse edge)
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-  Level 1
-  Level 2
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Terrain effects

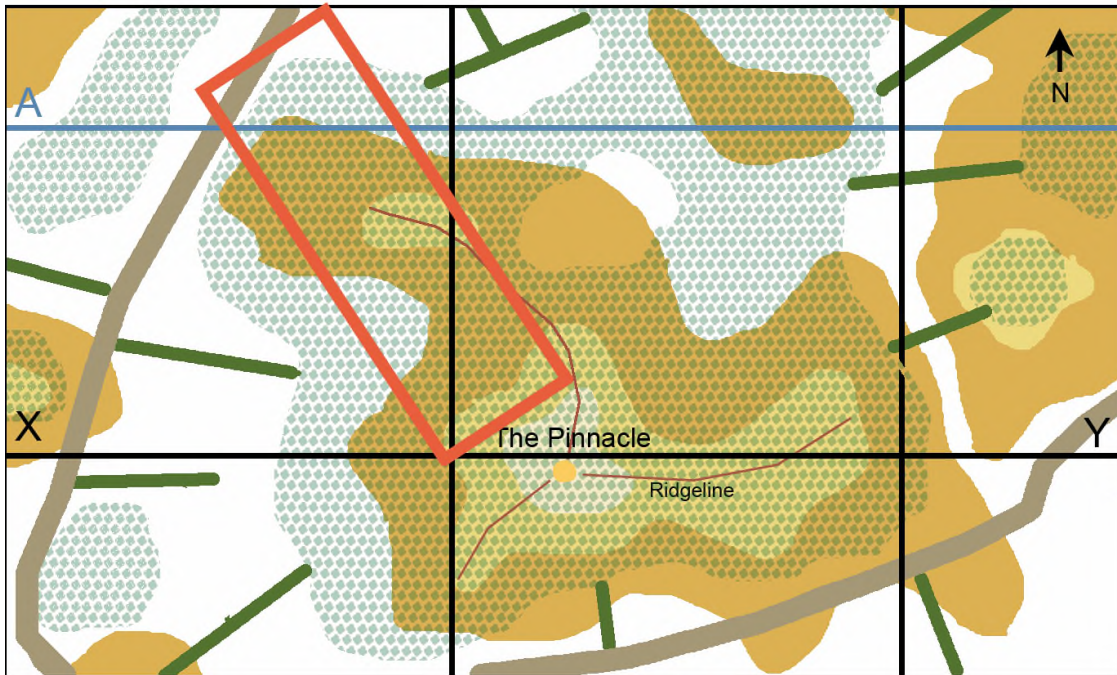
1. Treat all slopes as steep.
2. Units must be aligned to ridgeline in order to spot beyond it.
3. Any Japanese units within 3" of the east/west ridgeline on the reverse (south) slope are immune to off board IDF but may be targeted by mortars.
4. Because of the steep elevation, any unit up-slope of another unit is considered at a higher elevation for spotting purposes.
5. "Pinnacle" area at top of hill blocks line of sight.

For American Player's Eyes Only!

Revealing the Enemy

As a result of the earlier failed attempts by the 1st Battalion to take The Pinnacle, certain elements of the enemy's defense have been revealed. The American player can choose a spot along the edge of the playing area anywhere north of line X-Y to anchor a template 4" wide and 12" deep. Any enemy fortifications and natural features (pillboxes, barbed wire, trench lines, minefields and caves) are revealed and placed on the table. Enemy troops are not.

Revealed fortifications, trenchlines and caves may be targeted by IDF as if spotted (concentrations, regular and mixed shelling missions).



Sample template shown above. One corner of the template is anchored to the table edge. All Japanese fortifications etc. would be revealed and placed on the board within this template.

The Historic Battle

1st Battalion of the 184th made three attempts on April 6, 1945 to overrun The Pinnacle. After a ten minute “softening up” by artillery B Company, supported by C, closed to the top of the ridge only to be driven back by a determined Japanese counterattack. A second attempt, supported by an even more intense barrage and augmented by machine gun and light tank fire, also failed as the Japanese emerged from their underground positions to hold off the attack.

A third attempt, with B Company once more taking the lead in a frontal assault, was supported by C Company working its way up a covered draw to the west. Although B Company was once more driven back C Company made it to the top undetected and preceded to drive the defenders out with phosphorous grenades and flamethrowers. Only 20 Japanese of the 110 man garrison survived.

Despite the defenders having pre-registered artillery firing points around the hill for the 62nd Division field pieces, for some reason Lieutenant Tanigawa’s urgent appeals for support fell on deaf ears. Still, the Pinnacle, undermanned as it was, had proven to be a difficult position to take.

Sources

Okinawa: The Last Battle by Roy E. Appleman, James M. Burns, Russell A. Gugeler and John Stevens

<http://www.history.army.mil/BOOKS/WWII/OKINAWA/index.htm#contents>