

Scenario Overview -THE KOKODA TRAIL - Ioribaiwa Ridge

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

At 4:30 am on September 8th, the Japanese started their attack on Mission Ridge. Three companies assaulted Captain Sim's 'A' Company of the 27th battalion. Brigadier General Potts had ordered the 27th to consolidate their positions higher up (southward) on Mission Ridge to reduce their frontage and provide more security on their flanks. The Japanese launched eight attacks that morning and all were bloodily repulsed. The whole 27th had now come under artillery fire from the 75mm Mountain Guns and Battalion Guns on the opposite ridge as well as heavy mortar and machine gun fire. 'B' Company then came under the same intense assault at 7:30 am with the same results. The price was high, though, with lots of Diggers becoming casualties. Additionally, ammunition was running low, and difficult to replenish because of the artillery crashing down along the supply lines.

As the battle erupted on Mission Ridge, Potts was headed to the latrine when a shot rang out, and killed a private already there. This shot rang in the battle for Brigade Hill (Scenario 7). The Japanese had made a very wide flanking maneuver along the western side of the ridge. There was no contact with the Australian patrols that had been sent out. This outflanking movement caught the Australians off guard. Private Bert Ward from Those Ragged Bloody Heroes; "I must admit I had some degree of amazement as to how active they were, to be able to keep going. We were flat, absolutely flat out! Physically exhausted! And so they must have been! Still, when they encircled us at Efogi in an area like that ... Well you'd have to be a qualified mountain goat to be able to do physically what they did - to be able to get right around the Battalion; around Brigade Hill."

21st Brigade Headquarters found itself in a fight for its life. With clerks, cooks, runners, and some security troops they managed to keep from being overrun, if only for the moment. Luckily, the Japanese main line of attack aimed for the center of the trail that was between Brigade HQ and the 16th Battalion. By 10am land lines were cut and communications had to be maintained by unreliable wireless. Lt. Col. Caro was told to take command if the Brigade HQ should be wiped out, and to get the Brigade southward to Menari.

The 14th and 27th Battalions started contracting their positions and moving southward as best they could. The 16th made an attempt with its 'A', 'B', and 'C' Companies (representing not much more than a platoon each) to reach Brigadier General Potts, but was cut down by entrenched Japanese machine gun fire. Eventually twelve men from 'C' Company made it through. 'B' Company of the 14th Battalion was ordered to try to cut through the west side of the track to reach Brigade HQ. They too were met by fierce resistance, but plowed through. Only eight made it, however, with seventeen left behind dead, including the C.O. Captain Nye.

One last attempt to open the line between Brigade HQ and the 16th Battalion, the rest of the Brigade, was thrown back. However, it did relieve some pressure on Potts, and with the arrival of some composite forces from Menari, 21st Brigade HQ was able to extract itself down the trail towards the village of Menari. The rest of the Brigade had a contingency route planned through the jungle to get to Menari. At 4:30pm, the battalions started their withdrawal led by the 16th.

'B' Company of the 27th led by Captain Lee had the rear guard. The Japanese were hot on the Australians tail, who were slowed down immensely by the wounded. Instead of holding a defensive line, Lee counter attacked down the hill, and shocked the Japanese so much that all contact was broken off for the day.

The movement of the stretchers was extremely slow through this secondary trail, and it was so steep that movement had to be made on all fours at times. It was decided that all but two companies of the 14th and 16th Battalions would press on with all speed towards Menari to reach the village before the Japanese. They arrived just before the Japanese bombardment of the village commenced, and were able to hold the village long enough to collect their wounded before having to withdraw.

The 27th was in the rear and didn't reach Menari before the Japanese took the village, slowed by the stretcher cases of all three battalions. They continued through the jungle to the village of Nauro to try and rejoin the rest of the Brigade, but again the Japanese arrived there first, and forced the 14th and 16th to withdraw before the 27th arrived. On September 9th the rations for the 27th had run out. They subsisted on taro root and an occasional yam as they stumbled across native gardens. At one point a wild pig was shot, and everything, the eyes, brains, intestines, even the marrow in the bone was consumed. The men's health rapidly deteriorated. Suffering dengue, diarrhea, pneumonia, and tropical ulcers that ate away the flesh and muscle revealing bone and sinew were common. It was two weeks before the main body of the 27th with the wounded made it back to the base area. The 27th had fought tenaciously at Mission Ridge, not giving one bit of ground until ordered to do so. Now they were a wreck, and had been unavailable to Potts for the rest of the withdrawal to Ioribaiwa.

Down to 300 men and no defensible position between Menari and Ioribaiwa, Potts ordered the withdrawal. Again, a leapfrog process began, though with only small forces holding crossing points to try and delay the Japanese as the rest of the force withdrew. Finally reaching Ioribaiwa the 14th and 16th Battalions passed through the lines of the 3rd Militia Battalion (Commanded by Lt. Col. Cameron, who briefly led Maroubra Force during the ill advised counter attack on Kokoda), and setup defensive positions along side them on a forward spur of the ridge. After "losing" Myola, Efogi, and the 27th Battalion, Division HQ recalled Potts to Port Moresby to report on the situation. Brigadier General Porter was put in charge of the now composite battalion of the 14th and 16th, and the 3rd Militia, until Brigadier General Eather with his 25th Brigade arrived.

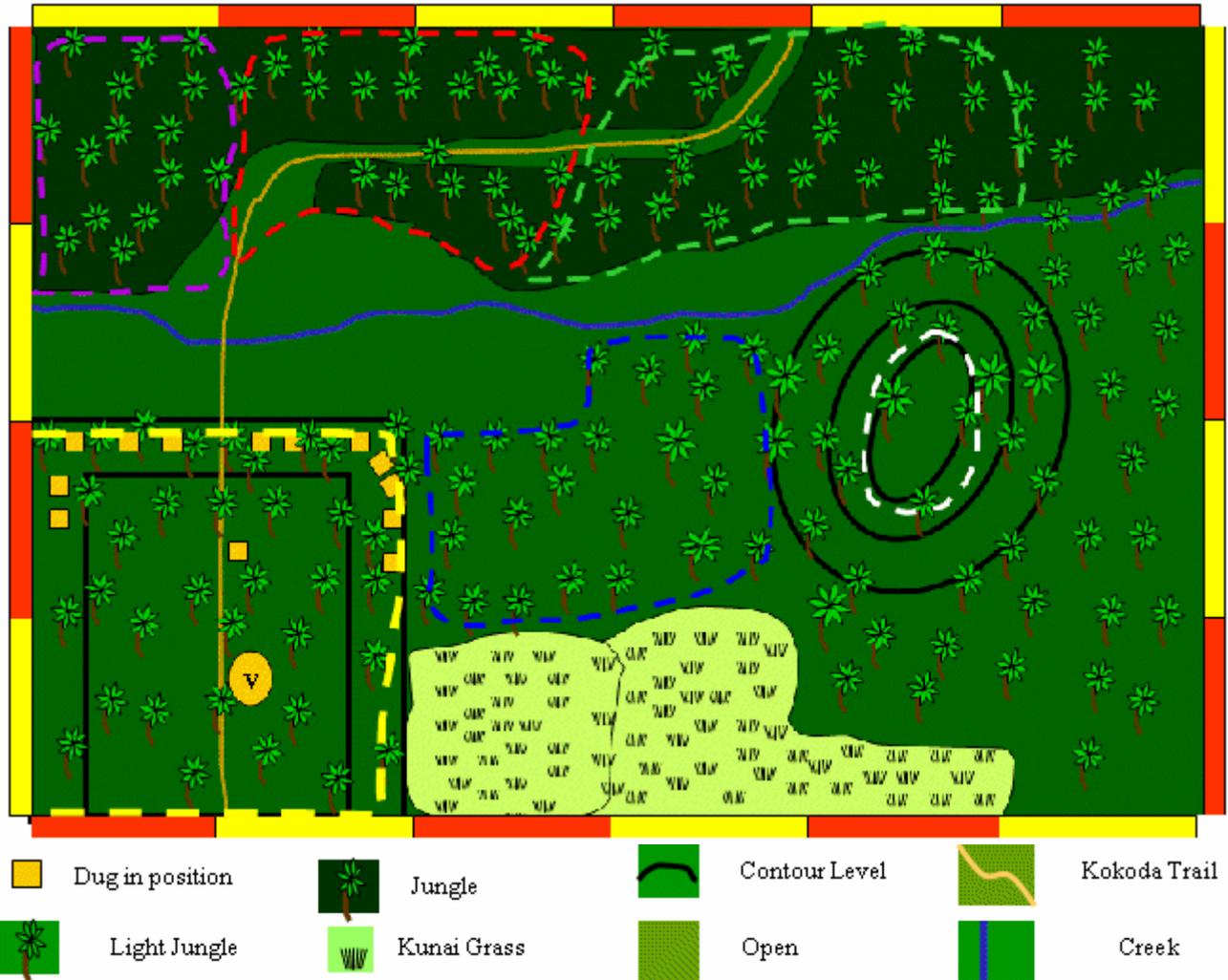
On the 12th and 13th, the Japanese concentrated their heavy weapons fire on the remnants of the 21st Brigade. Afterwards repeated attempts were made to take their positions, but the weary veterans of the combined 14th and 16th Battalions held their ground. Now Eather and his 25th Brigade are ready to launch the long awaited Australian offensive to retake the Kokoda Trail. Eather's 31st Battalion were to circle to the left and envelope the Japanese right flank, while the 33rd was to move to the right of Porter's forces, and the 25th Battalion was to move up the center through the composite 14th & 16th Battalion.

Brigadier General Eather and his 25th Brigade soon found out about some of the difficulties of fighting in the mountainous jungles of New Guinea. The 31st Battalion became lost, and could not find the Japanese. The 3rd Militia Battalion was still digging in when they were attacked by a strong Japanese force. They had left their weapons stacked, and had not put out sentries. They were routed from high ground with not much of a fight, which put Japanese forces between the 33rd Battalion and the rest of

the Australians. Eather called off his attacks, and concentrated on stabilizing the ground he was on. Though his brigade was fresh, the Australians were still significantly outnumbered.

This is where the scenario picks up. Japanese forces are attempting to cross the creek in front of Maroubra Force, and hold the high ground to the east. Australian forces are attempting to retake the high ground, and hold their grip on the Kokoda Trail.

Scenario Map



NOTE:NORTH IS TO THE TOP

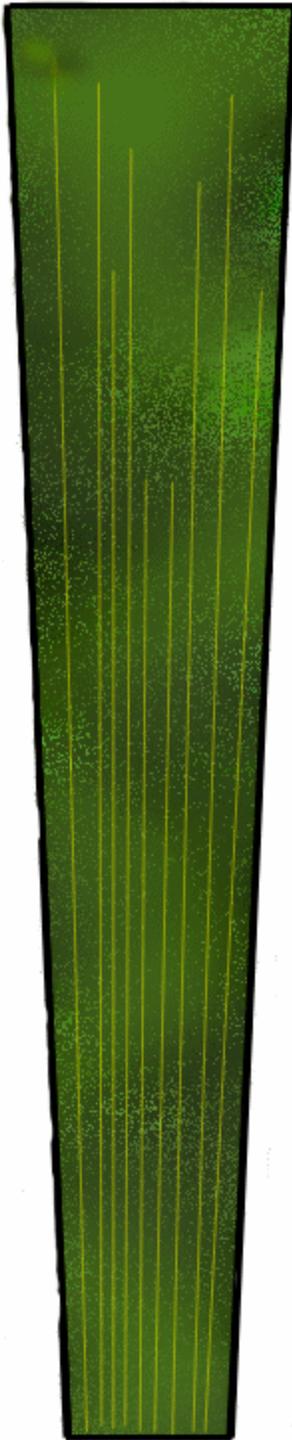
Terrain Notes

- The map is meant to be played on a 72" by 48" area as indicated on the map above (6' by 4' table). Note that the picture may not be exactly to scale-use the measurements along the side as your guide. Each division is 12"

- Hills: Higher-level troops receive the +1 spotting modifier.
- Dug in Positions: Per rules. Note that Australian units in Dug-in positions along the hill/jungle edge in the 14th/16th Battalion deployment area are considered suspected targets.
- Improved positions: Per rules. (Note that in soft cover, they do not give an additional -1 modifier in shooting. They do affect the spotting table however, so that even when shooting the enemy must be no more than 1" away to spot).
- 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.
- Light 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.
- Tracks/Paths: no road bonus, but negate terrain effects. Troops on the trail count as being in sparse/edge (unless in open), no cover.
- Creek: One action to "square off" and breach. Check for bog down. One action to exit to other side. Next action move normal.
- Kunai grass: no cover; dense terrain; 3/4 move all; level 1 terrain (i.e. cannot be seen over).

Scenario Specifics and Victory Conditions

- The game lasts 12 turns.
- The Japanese move first.
- The Australian composite battalion of the 14th and 16th battalions deploy first as per their operation orders. Note that units in the northern most dug in positions start the game suspected.
- Japanese forces occupying the east hill deploy second as per their operation orders.
- Remains of the 3rd Militia Battalion deploy third as per their operation orders.
- Remainder of the Japanese deploy as per their operation orders.



The Australians can use the MG grazing rules for their MMGs setup in improved or dug in positions. Note that this rule cannot be used by MGs firing through dense terrain.

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

This one has turned out completely opposite of history almost every time I've run it. The Australians held the stream crossing with Maroubra force, repelling every Japanese attack, but could not retake the hill historically. Nearly every play test, and the con game ended with the Japanese taking Maroubra force's positions, but losing or struggling to hold the hill.

This was a good one to play fairly open, with no hidden troops, which I tend to like as the game moves faster. One thing to take into consideration is that the player running the Japanese that starts on the hill should be given another command, as the force on the hill doesn't get a lot of play time at the beginning. In fact this whole scenario is almost played in two phases-the attack on Maroubra force, and as that is being decided, the fight for the hill starts to heat up. One thing I did at the con game, and I should have probably done it a turn or two earlier, was to have the forces on that side of the board do double movement, so they could get into it before everything was decided on the other side. For a pickup game with only a couple players per side leaving it as is could work. Each Japanese player could command an ME across from Maroubra force, and another ME in the vicinity of the Japanese controlled hill.

This is the last scenario where the Japanese are on the offensive, so if your playing the Japanese throughout the campaign, be sure to attack with everything you have-it will be your last chance.

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.

[Kokoda Treks website](#)

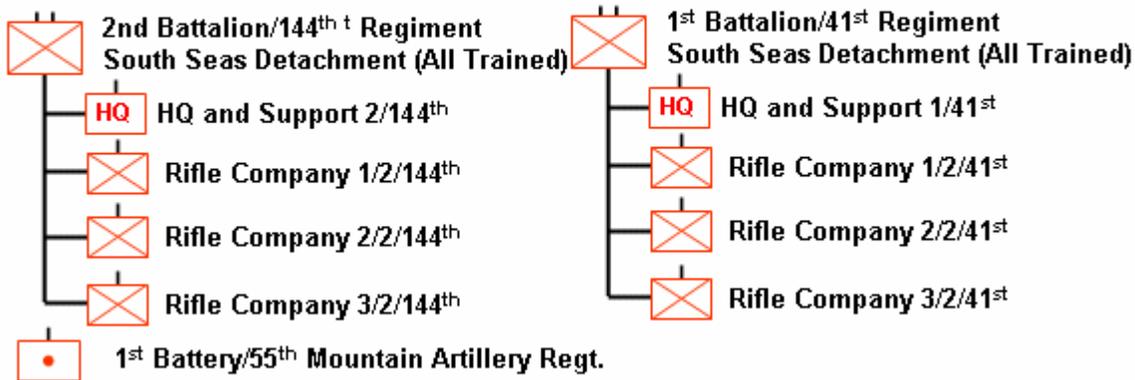


2nd Battalion/144th Regiment and 1st Battalion/41st Regiment

Situation

Enemy forces - Depleted enemy battalion holding Kokoda Trail along the ridge. Enemy force driven off the hill to the east. Weak enemy infantry between the hill and ridge. No supporting arms.

South Seas Detachment



Friendly forces - Balance of South Seas Detachment coming down the Kokoda Trail.

Attachments - 1st Battery 55th Mountain Regiment

Mission

Hold the hill to the east, and drive the enemy from the ridge protecting the creek crossing.

Execution

2/144 will assault and take the ridge across the creek and open the Kokoda Trail.

1/41 will hold the hill, and eliminate any enemy forces between the hill and ridge. Once that area is clear elements of 1/41 are to assist in clearing the ridge if necessary.

Administration & Logistics

Not relevant in game terms.

Command & Signal

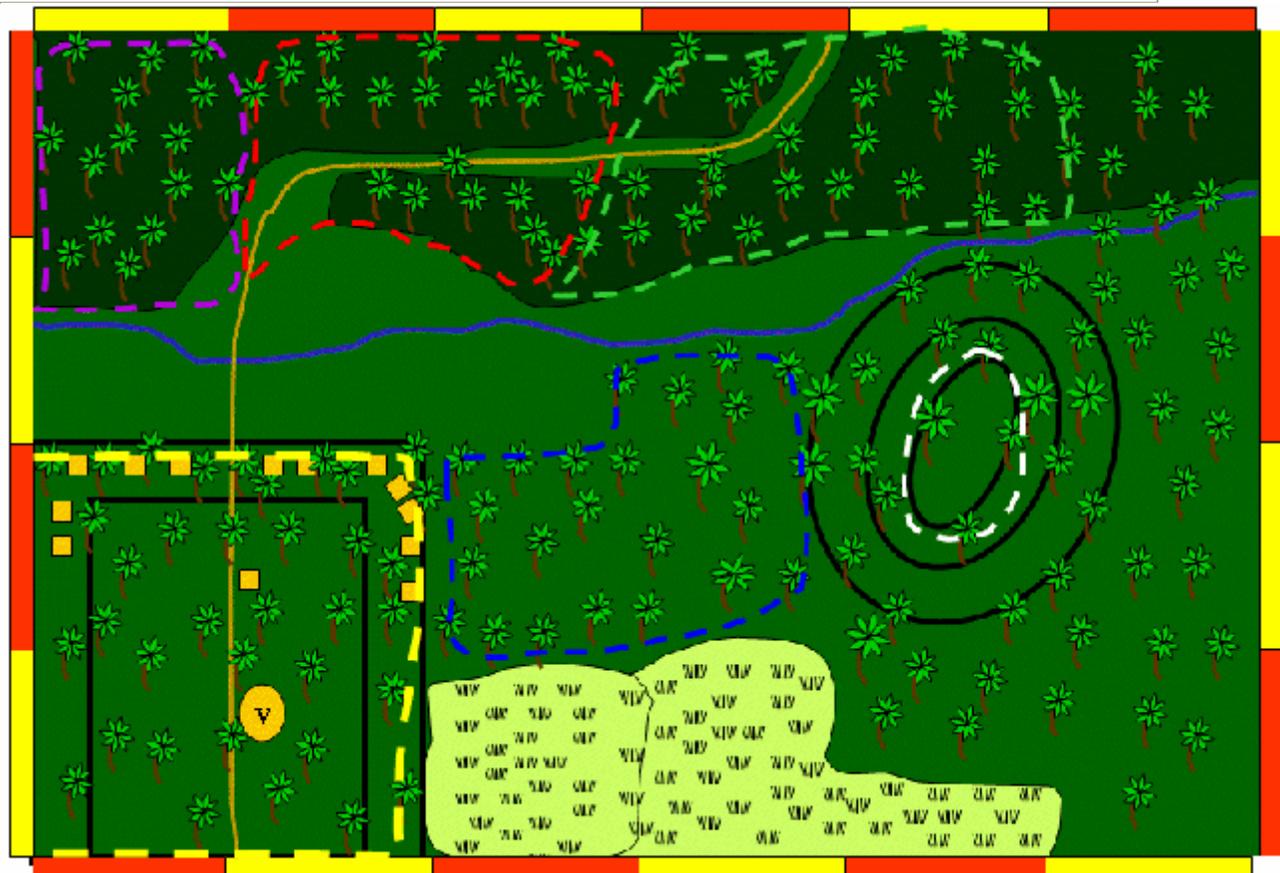
Not relevant in game terms.

Setup and Scenario Rules

The game lasts 12 turns. The Japanese move first.

See the Scenario Overview for terrain rules

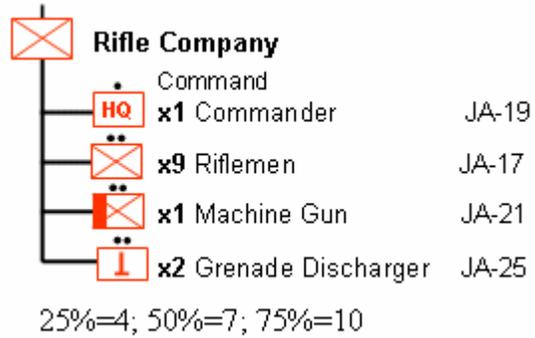
See the [Japanese Artillery Tutorial](#) for the knee mortar rules and Japanese call-for-fire table.



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|---|---|---|--|
|  Dug in position |  Jungle |  Contour Level |  Kokoda Trail |
|  Light Jungle |  Kunai Grass |  Open |  Creek |

NOTE:NORTH IS TO THE TOP

All Japanese Rifle Companies have identical organizations:



One rifle company from 1/41 must deploy on the hill (white dotted line) after the Australians of Maroubra force deploy on the ridge. No battalion guns may initially deploy here. They have 8 improved positions they can place on the hill.

Once the rest of the Australians deploy, the rest of the Japanese deploy.

2/144

1 company, and only 1 company, must be deployed in the jungle to the west of the trail (purple dotted line).

The other two companies of 2/144 and the 2/144 Battalion HQ units (mortars are off board) deploy in the area designated by the red dotted line.



The Battalion guns have been brought up to give direct fire support, and also are to deploy in the red dotted area.

The FO for the mortars can deploy in either deployment area. Mortars are off board organic support.

Note that Battalion HQ units on board are to be attached to rifle companies, but do not count toward their losses (or add into their calculation for break percentages) for Maneuver rolls.

1/41

The rest of 1/41, including the Battalion HQ units (mortars are off board) deploy in the area designated by the green dotted line.



The FO for the mortars can deploy in either deployment area. Mortars are off board organic support.

The Battalion guns can be deployed on or off board. If deployed off board, they remain off board for the duration of the game, and can only provide organic indirect fire support called in from their FO. If deployed on board, the FO and guns do not have to be attached to the same rifle company (see Note below)

Note that Battalion HQ units on board are to be attached to rifle companies, but do not count toward their losses (or add into their calculation for break percentages) for Maneuver rolls.

1/55 Mountain Regiment

These Guns are off board providing direct fire support. The FO can be attached to any rifle company and does not count towards its losses.



None of the artillery/mortar units carry smoke

Victory

There are two objectives in the game, the ridge and the hill. If one side or the other can control both of these at the end of the game, they win.

To control the ridge, you must control the dug in position marked with a 'V', and the majority of the other dug in positions.

To control the hill, you must have 50% more forces than the enemy of undisordered troops on the top of the hill (white dotted line). For example if there are 10 undisordered Japanese stands, you must have at least 15 undisordered Australian stands.

If one side controls one of the objectives, but neither side controls the other one, it is a winning draw to the side with the objective.

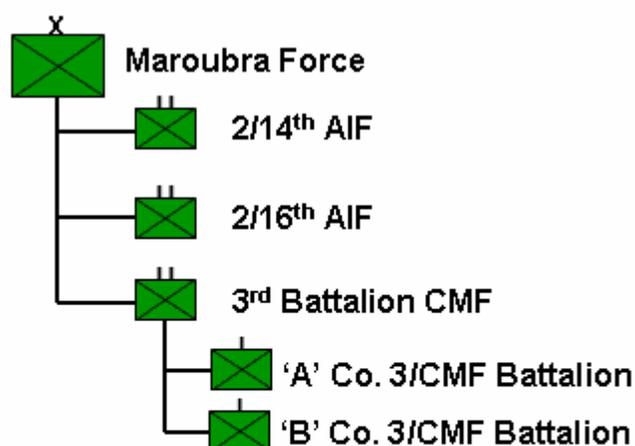
If neither side controls either of the objectives, it is a draw.



Briefing for Maroubra Force – Brigadier General Porter

Situation

Enemy forces – At least six battalions with supporting arms.



Friendly forces – Maroubra Force made up of elements from the 14th /16th combined battalion, 2nd Australian Imperial Force (AIF), and the newly formed 3rd militia battalion. The militia battalion has been run off a prominent piece of high ground to the east. Note that the forces from the 14th and 16th combined battalions are listed as battalions, but have been reduced to company strength by the recent fighting.

'A' Company, 33rd battalion, 2nd AIF is moving in from its flanking attack to clear the Japanese off the hill.

Element of 25th Battalion, 2nd AIF



Attachments - none.

Mission

2/14th and 2/16th are to hold the creek crossing and the Kokoda Trail while the rest of 25th Brigade forms its attack. The balance of 3rd Militia battalion is to hold its position awaiting help from 2/33, which is to retake the hill.

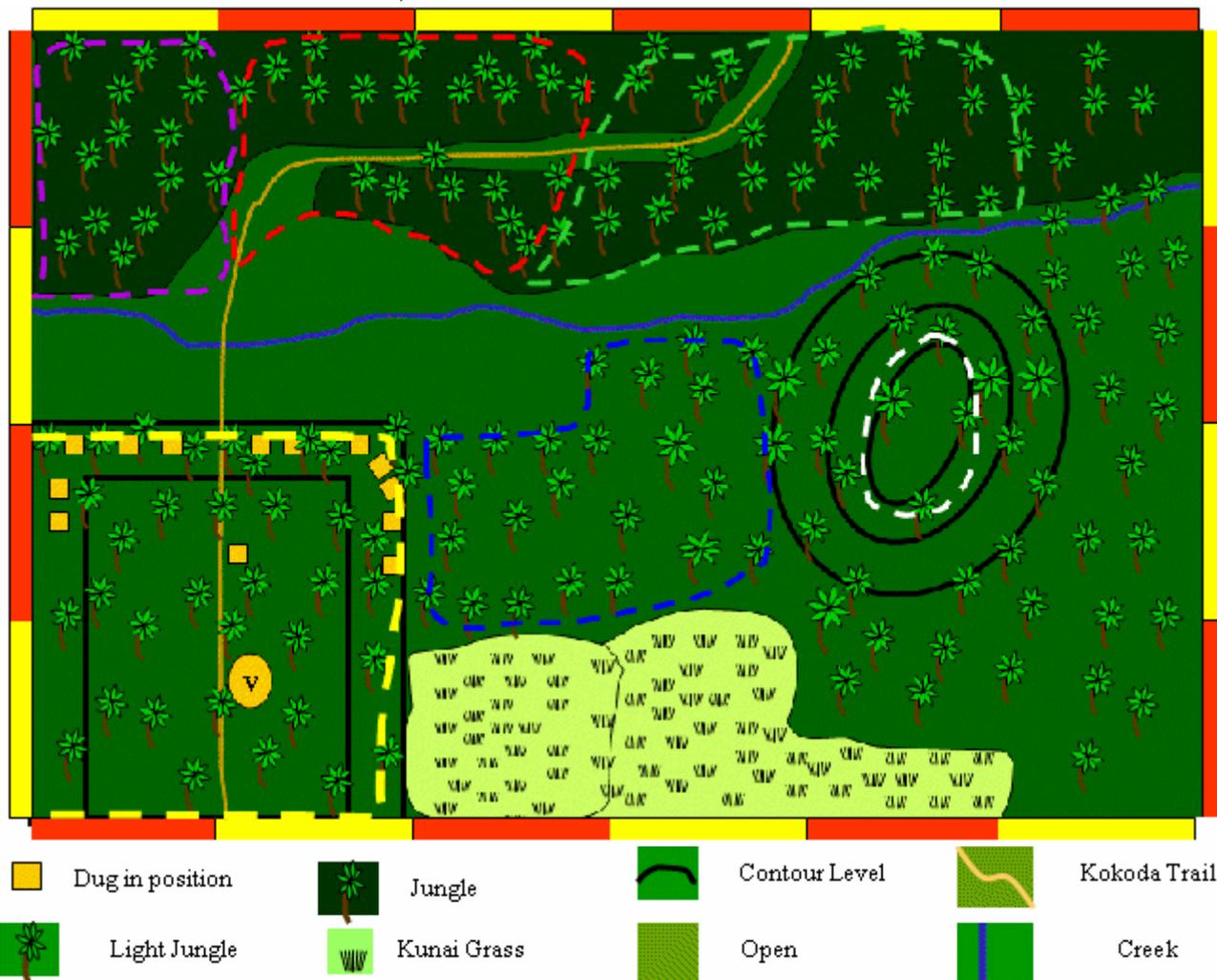
Execution

2/14th will take up positions along the north edge of the ridge to the west of the Trail.

2/16th will take up positions along the north edge of the ridge to the east of the Trail.

The balance of 3rd Militia will hold the ground between the ridge and the hill lost to the Japanese, and provide assistance to 2/33 in retaking the hill.

2/33 will attack from the southeast, and retake the hill.



NOTE:NORTH IS TO THE TOP

Administration & logistics

Not relevant in game terms.

Command and signal

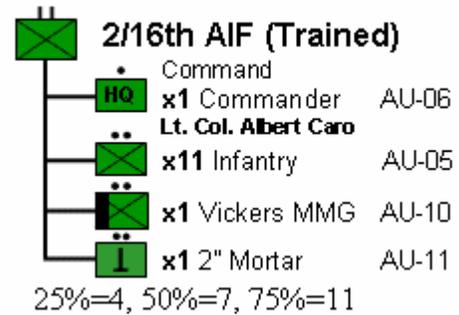
Not relevant in game terms.

Setup and Scenario Rules

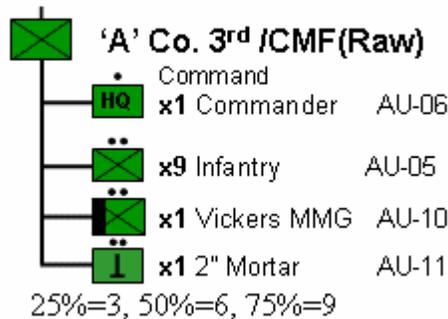
The game lasts 12 turns. The Japanese move first.

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

2/14th and 2/16th Battalion sets up anywhere on the ridge in the south west corner (yellow dotted line).



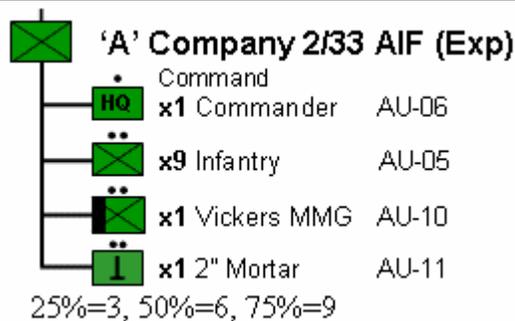
1 Company of 3rd Battalion sets up between the ridge and the hill (blue dotted line). They have 8 improved positions to place anywhere in that deployment area.



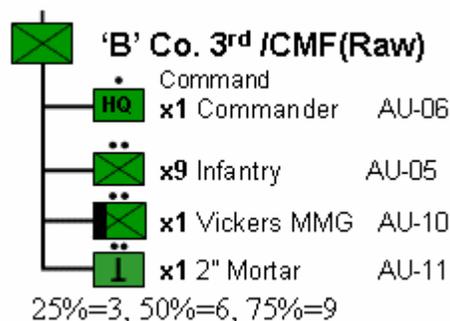
If the MMGs are placed in an improved or dug in position, it can use the grazing fire template and rules found in the Prelude section of the scenario.

Reinforcements:

On turn 1 the 'A' Company, 33rd Battalion enters from the east at the southeast corner (red bar) up to 6" north of the south edge.



Each turn roll a die on the Australian Movement Phase. There is a 20% cumulative chance each turn that the other company from the 3rd Battalion will return. Therefore on turn



one a roll of a 1 or 2 (on a ten sided die), it will arrive. On turn two a roll of 1 through 4 it will arrive, etc.

This company will enter from the south edge at the southeast corner (yellow bar).

Victory Conditions

There are two objectives in the game, the ridge and the hill. If one side or the other can control both of these at the end of the game, they win.

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If neither side controls either of the objectives, it is a draw.