

# **Scenario Overview -THE KOKODA TRAIL - Templeton's Crossing**

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

The battle at Ioribaiwa Ridge ended with the remnants of 21st Brigade holding the creek crossing, and the Japanese holding off 25th Battalion, and holding onto the high ground to the east. Brigadier General Eather conceded the Japanese still had the initiative and retreated to Imita Ridge.

Maroubra Force had fought its last battle. Finally, those ragged, bloody, heroes of 21st Brigade were relieved, and sent back to Koitaki on the 26th of September, 1942 to rest and recuperate. Here they were able to get cleaned up, have hot food, and sleep. Brigadier General Potts, who had led the brigade brilliantly during its fighting withdrawal, having been undersupplied and vastly outnumbered, was met by General Sir Thomas Blamey, Commander in Chief of Australian military forces. General MacArthur was not happy with the conduct of the campaign, and had wanted action taken. The Prime Minister and the War Cabinet had sent Blamey to Koitaki to address the "failure" of the Kokoda campaign. General Blamey curtly advised Brigadier General Potts of this, and relieved him of his command. He was not given the opportunity to address his troops, and was sent out on the next plane.

The withdrawal by an AIF brigade from Isuruva, especially after being ordered to attack, and retake Kokoda, was a shock to the Australian War Cabinet, and the commanders back at Port Moresby. The loss of Myola as a supply base was a second shock, especially with no fight being put up to protect it, and again when 21st Brigade was ordered to attack. Finally, the fight at Brigade Hill, and the loss of a full battalion from the brigade could not be comprehended. These "defeats" and constant withdrawals constituted a "failure" of leadership. Even at this point, after the fresh 25th Brigade was forced to withdraw, the Australian high command (with MacArthur's influence) had no grasp on the size of the enemy force, or the difficulty of the terrain the campaign was taking place in.

To add insult to injury, General Blamey then addressed the troops. The troops were expecting congratulations on a great job done under extremely difficult conditions. Instead Blamey tore into them with a derisive speech stating they had been beaten by inferior troops in inferior numbers. He then made a remark of something to the effect of "Remember, it is not the man with the gun that gets shot, it is the rabbit that runs away". This was taken as a charge of cowardice by the troops, and it took all the discipline the officers could muster to keep the men from starting a riot, as they broke ranks, and voiced their disbelief.

This is how the fighting withdrawal of Maroubra Force was recorded and perceived in Australia until many years later. The heroes that saved Port Moresby were regarded as "failures".

At Ioribaiwa Ridge the Japanese could see the lights of their objective, Port Moresby. Even though they have lost many men, and are starving, they are jubilant. One more attack, and the city (and its food) will be theirs. It is not to be, though. The Australians were finally bringing up their own artillery, 251bers, to join the fight, and an additional brigade, the 16th. The Japanese, were finally ordered back to their beachheads at Buna/Gona/Sanananda. General Horii's troops were losing their reinforcements and the majority of the supplies to the Guadalcanal campaign. He was to hold the beachhead until that campaign was decided.

As the Australians advanced on Ioribaiwa, they found it abandoned. The Japanese did not put up any resistance withdrawing back across the Owen Stanley's until they reached Templeton's Crossing. After being told that they were not pushing hard or fast enough because they weren't taking many casualties by MacArthur, the Australians of 33rd Battalion made contact with the Japanese just south of Templeton's Crossing the 12th of October. The 33rd couldn't break through, and the 25th Battalion also moved up and ran into heavy defenses. This is when the scenario takes place. The 25th Battalion has taken the lead and is attacking the Japanese positions on the 15th of October, as the Australians attempt to reclaim the Kokoda Trail.

## Referee's Notes

It is recommended that neither side be allowed to read the other's operation orders before the game. There are some special surprises for both sides.

# Scenario Map



NOTE:NORTH IS TO THE BOTTOM

## Terrain Notes

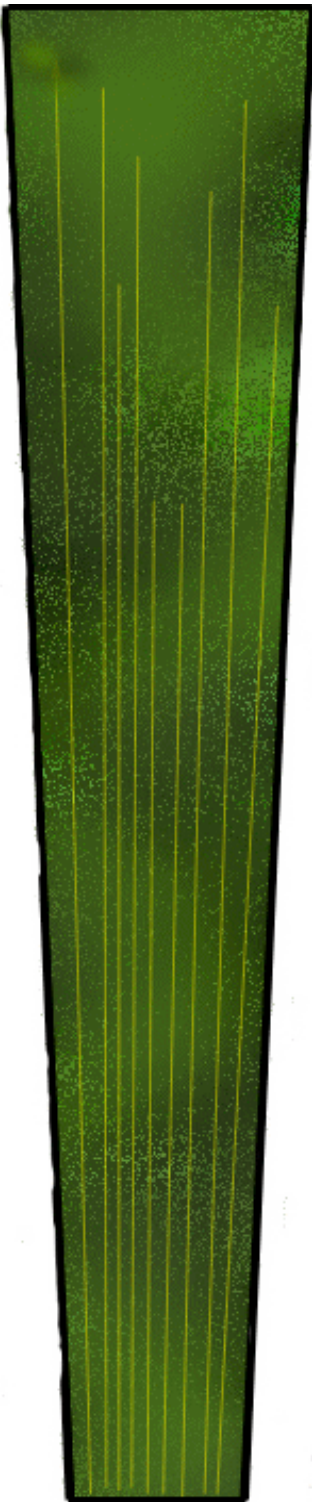
- The map is meant to be played on a 72" by 48" area as indicated on the map above(6' by 4' table). Each division on the side of the map represents 12"
- Contour Lines. The creek is at the bottom of a valley floor with ridges to either side. Higher-level troops receive the +1 spotting modifier. On the Japanese side the ridge is steep and difficult to ascent. Moving toward the South (across the contour lines) is done at 1/2 speed. Moving parallel to the contour lines or down is done at normal speed. This applies to movement along the Kokoda track as well.
- Dug in Positions: Only the Japanese dug-in positions indicated on the main map are known to the Australians. Units in these positions are suspected targets. Each dug-in position can hold one stand.
- 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: impassable except at the ford and the Kokoda track.
- Crossing at the Kokoda Track -2" movement.
- Crossing a ford takes up to 3 movement actions as follows:
  1. 1st action-Move adjacent. The unit moves adjacent to the ford.
  2. 2nd action-Breach. The unit "breaches" the ford. Conform the unit to the line of the creek and place it in the creekbed.
  3. 3rd action-Exit. The unit is placed on the other side of the creek and can move normally.

These actions can be spread over successive turns. If a unit is forced to retreat from a ford, it must start over again. The breach and exit actions are considered movement for triggering op fire.

- Kunai grass: no cover; dense terrain; 3/4 move all; level 1 terrain (i.e. cannot be seen over).
- Village - Two section BUA. Soft cover/Dense terrain.

## Scenario Specifics and Victory Conditions

- South is the TOP of the Map.
- The game lasts 14 turns.
- The Australians move first.
- Japanese deploy first according to their operation orders. Units deployed initially may be suspected by the Australians.
- Australians deploy second.



The Japanese can use the MG grazing rules for their MGs set up in improved or dug in positions. Note that this rule cannot be used by MGs firing through dense terrain. Once an MG moves, it loses this ability.

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 is the first scenario where the Australians are on the offensive. Revenge is sweet.

Scenario Notes: This game was fun to put together. Everything just flowed right, and ended up being an evenly balanced scenario from the beginning. In one of the two trial games and con game, it came down to the last turn to determine the winner, and the other trial game was no blow out.

The difficult part was determining how to deploy the Japanese. On the oral history web site listed under the credits for this scenario, the Aussie veterans talked about how difficult it was to spot the Japanese, and how they would pop out of nowhere. Typically, this would require some type of hidden deployment and record keeping. I despise both, as it really slows down a game, especially a con game with new players and limited time. With the right balance of troop strength, and restricted deployment areas, the deployment method listed under the Japanese Ops Order worked extremely well.

One of the other items that stuck in my head from the oral histories was consistency in the description of the troops having to climb the steep Japanese ridge, and how once they cleared one position, another one just up the ridge opened up on them. This is one of the main feelings I wanted to get out of the game, the never ending desperation of when was it going to end, when would there be no more Japanese just in front of you. I believe this is what comes out of this game. I had a few new campaigners playing the Aussies in this con game, and they were definitely feeling it.

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

Kokoda - Paul Ham, 2004

[http://www.awm.gov.au/units/event\\_296.asp](http://www.awm.gov.au/units/event_296.asp) - Australian War Memorial site. <http://www.kokodawalkway.com.au/interviews.html> - Oral Histories collected from Kokoda Veterans



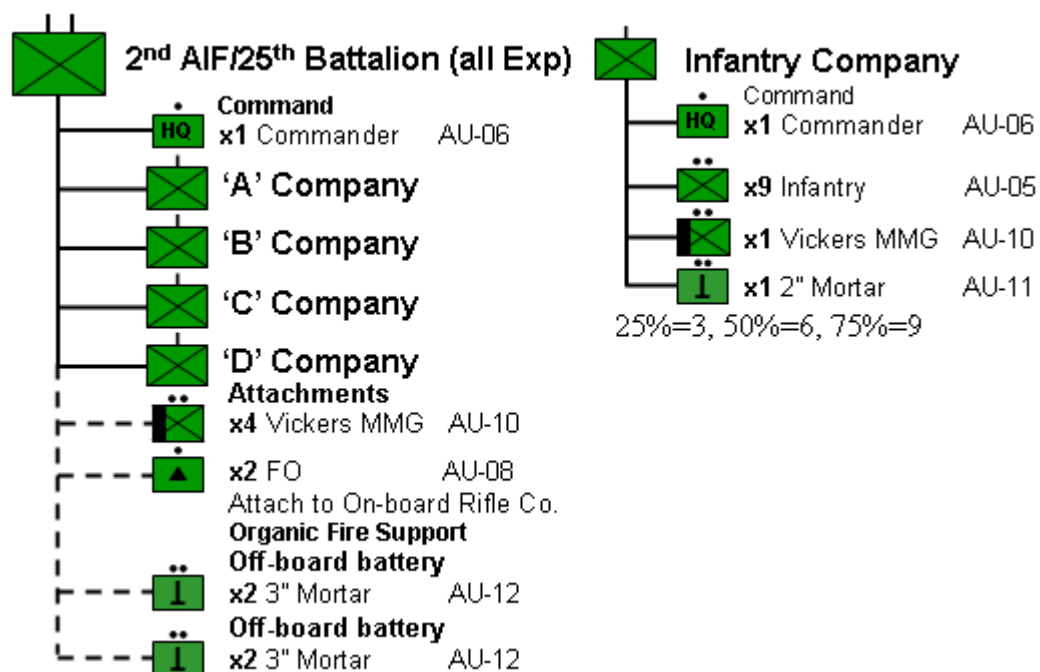
## Briefing for Commander 25 Battalion/2 AIF

### Situation

Enemy forces - At least five battalions with supporting arms are withdrawing. They have left a rear guard consisting of approximately 1 battalion. You have made contact with elements of the rear guard in and around the village and the edge of the clearing.

Friendly forces - The 33rd Battalion is opposing enemy positions further west (off map) with 3rd Battalion in support. They are planning to move around right flank to envelop the enemy further north.

Your force consists of the 25th Battalion of the 2nd AIF



Attachments - none.

## **Mission**

Drive the enemy from the crossing, and secure the track by taking enemy positions astride it.

## **Execution**

'A' Company will attack across the ford to the west.











'B' Company will provide support from the creek's edge, and follow across.

'C' Company will cross the creek along the trail near the village. Secure the village and drive up the trail.

An undefended ford was discovered to the East (left side of the map) 'D' Company has sent one platoon across this ford to feel out and possibly get behind the enemy positions. The rest of the company is to follow up 'C' Company at the crossing, or move down and cross at the eastern ford to outflank enemy resistance if it is too strong.





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|---|---|---|--|---|--------|
|  Dug in position |  Jungle      |  Contour Level |  Kokoda Trail |  Village | N<br>↓ |
|  Light Jungle    |  Kunai Grass |  Open          |  Creek        |  Ford    |        |

**NOTE:SOUTH IS AT THE TOP OF THE MAP**

## Administration & logistics

Not relevant in game terms.

## Command and signal

Not relevant in game terms.

## Setup and Scenario Rules

The game lasts 14 turns. The Australians move first.

See the Scenario Overview for terrain rules.

All Australian Rifle Companies have identical organizations.

Any Japanese units starting in the yellow dug-in positions or the village begin the game suspected. All other Japanese units and positions are hidden.

'B' Company can deploy in the Yellow area.

'C' Company can deploy in the Blue area.

'D' less one platoon (3 stands) can deploy in the Orange area.

The battalion commander can start in any of the deployment areas.

The FOs can be attached to any infantry company. However, an FO does not add to the break &perc; nor does it count against casualty totals.

Each FO can call in a battery (2 sections) of 3" mortars.

The mortars are off board to the South (top of the map), and are organic support. No smoke. Each battery must fire in a single fire mission either as a 2 template shelling mission or a 1 template concentration.

The four MGs must be attached to infantry companies. Unlike the FO's, they do effect the unit breakpoints and are counted as casualties.

Reinforcements:

On turn 2 'A' Company will arrive at the western ford (right side of the map).

Three stands can cross the western ford abreast. Note that the ford to the east works the same way as the western ford, but is only 1 stand wide.

As per the terrain notes, it takes 3 movement actions to cross a ford-move adjacent, breach, and exit.

When 'A' company units make their appearance on turn 2, the first 3 units set up adjacent to the ford, and may breach and exit in turn 2.

Units immediately behind them may move adjacent and breach in turn 2, ending their move in the creek. On turn three, they can exit and move normally. Other units can follow up similarly.

Turn 4:

The three-stand platoon from 'D' Company arrives at the orange line at the edge of the kunai grass in the northeast. It has one action on turn 4.

## Victory Conditions

The Australians must be the last to have occupied the dug in positions near the trail.

Unfortunately, they don't know how many there are, so they must continue to push up the hill.

If the Australians control all the dug in positions near the trail they win.

If the Australians are the last to occupy  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the positions, count up the number of lost stands. If one side has lost 50% more than the other it loses, if not then it is a draw.

If the Australians do not take  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the positions, they lose.

The number of dug in positions is listed on the Japanese victory conditions for review after the game.



## **Elements 2nd Battalion/144th Regiment**

### **Situation**

Enemy forces - At least a battalion of enemy troops are pursuing you from the south.

Friendly forces - 1st and 2nd Companies of 2/144

Attachments - 2 Battalion Mortar Batteries (each 2 mortars) and 2 Forward observers.

All Japanese Rifle Companies have identical organizations:

### **Mission**

Hold the trail and deny the enemy its use.

### **Execution**

1st and 2nd companies will defend their assigned sectors.

### **Administration & Logistics**

Not relevant in game terms.

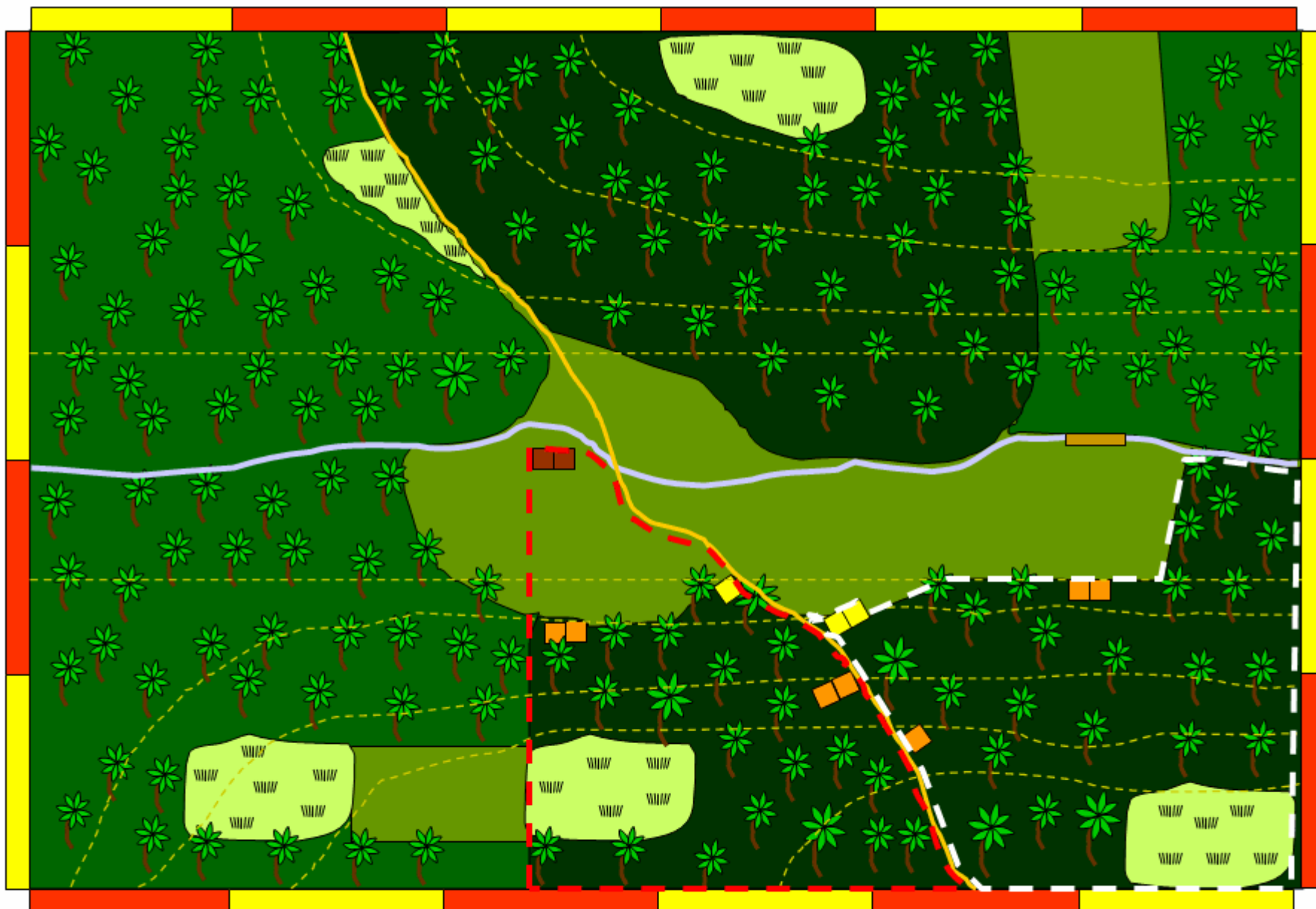
### **Command & Signal**

Not relevant in game terms.

### **Setup and Scenario Rules**

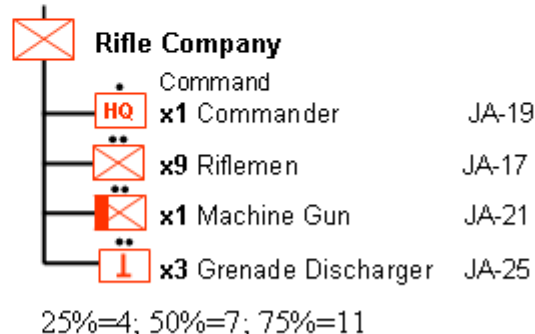
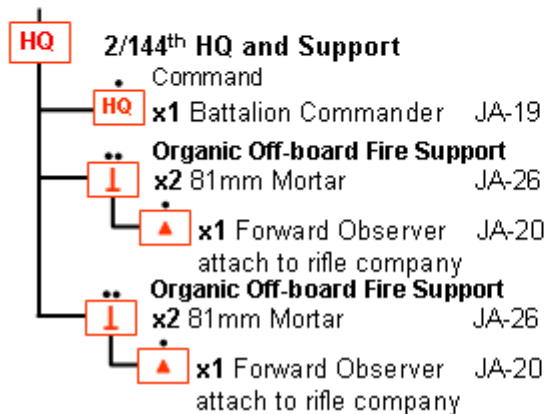
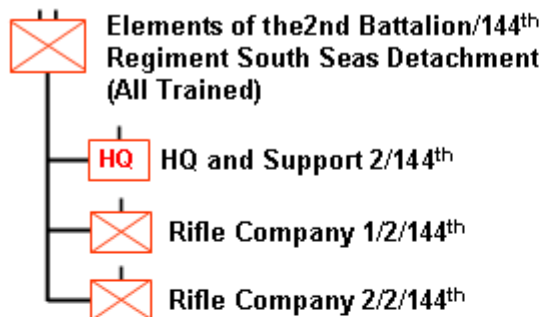
South is at the top of the map.
The game lasts 14 turns. The Australians move first.
See the Scenario Overview for terrain rules

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 |  | Village | N<br>↓ |
|  | Light Jungle    |  | Kunai Grass |  | Open          |  | Creek        |  | Ford    |        |

**NOTE:SOUTH IS AT THE TOP OF THE MAP**



1st Company will deploy in the red area.

2nd Company will deploy in the white area.

Units in the yellow Dug-in positions (not the orange), the village, and in the open ground (if any) start the game on the map. Units in the yellow dug-in positions and the village will start the game as suspected targets. Units in the open start at least as suspected, and may be spotted if Australian units are close enough (note that the Australian deploys after the Japanese and may be able to place Australians in a way to spot units in the open). All other Japanese units start undeployed as described below.

The FO's can be assigned to any infantry company. They do not add to the infantry's break &perc;, nor do they count towards company casualties.

Only the FOs and the initial Battalion Commander (not a replacement) can call for fire. A FO can only call from his own battery, while the Battalion CO can call from either battery. If all potential spotters have been knocked out, the ability to call fire from a battery is lost.

The Japanese must designate the positions of the FOs and the CO, but they need not be deployed unless they start in the village or yellow dug-in positions (generally a bad idea).

Mortars are off board to the North (bottom of map) in organic support, no smoke. Each battery must fire in a single fire mission either as a 2 template shelling mission or a 1 template concentration.

The battalion commander can start anywhere within the Japanese deployment areas, but his position must be pre-recorded.

Units occupying the orange dug-in positions must be designated, but they and the dug-in positions themselves are not deployed until they fire or an Australian unit comes within spotting range (1" in the jungle or 2" at the edge of dense terrain).

The remaining stands are off board and can be placed anywhere within their company deployment area during the game with the following restrictions:

1. Commander units, FOs, and units occupying dug-in positions must prerecord their positions. Other units can be deployed freely. Note that FOs and COs can call-for-fire and give command benefits from their hidden pre-recorded positions without being deployed on the map.
2. Newly deployed units must be placed in jungle or kunai grass.
3. Newly deployed units cannot be placed within 1" of an Australian unit or within 1" of anywhere where the Australians have moved.
4. Newly deployed units can be placed at any time, including during the Australian movement phase.
5. Unless occupying a dug-in position, newly placed units are considered in improved positions when newly deployed. If they move, they lose this status.
6. To move out of the initial deployment area, a unit must first be placed on the board. It can then move normally.
7. To fire, a unit must first be placed on the board. it can then fire normally. Note that a unit can deploy into a position where it can conduct opportunity fire.
8. Once deployed, a unit remains on the map and operates normally until the end of the game.
9. If any Australian unit comes within 1" (or 2" of a unit at the edge of dense terrain) of a pre-recorded position (FOs, COs, or unrevealed dug-in positions), the unit/position is placed on the map. If not in dug-in positions, FOs and COs are placed in improved positions.

## Notes

Fords - The ford is three stands wide. See the scenario overview for the ford crossing rules. All dug-in positions are in the jungle. The yellow ones and those across from the ford and village on the edge of the jungle, so they can see out (dense/edge for spotting purposes).

## Victory

If the Australians are the last to have occupied the six dug-in positions near the trail, they win.

Note that the Australians should not know how many dug-in positions there are.

If the Australians are the last to occupy 2/3 of the positions, then count up the number of lost stands. If one side has lost 50% more than the other it loses, if not then it is a draw.

If the Australians do not take 2/3 of the positions, they lose.