

Tactical Combat Series:

Bloody Ridge

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Introduction

Bloody Ridge portrays the fighting that occurred around "Bloody Ridge" on the island of Guadalcanal from 12 to 14 September 1942 between US and Imperial Japanese forces. The Japanese are attempting to recapture Henderson Field, the airstrip they abandoned when the Marines first landed on August 7th. The Marines are trying to hold the perimeter south of Henderson Field to prevent the Japanese from recapturing the airstrip.

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1.0 General Special Rules

1.1 Special Terrain

1.1a Bottleneck features. The entry points to the Lunga bridge (8.12 & 8.13) and the Log Bridge (16.09 & 17.10) are Bottleneck features (see TCS v3.1 20.1c).

1.1b Jungle. Jungle is assumed to be 20m high for spotting and LOS.

1.2 Indirect Fire and Illumination

1.2a Spotting for Indirect Fires. Unless assigned to a Prepared Defense Op Sheet, only Infantry Platoons can serve as spotters for indirect fires (both mortar and artillery).

1.2b Illumination (Illum). Illum markers are removed at the beginning of each friendly Action Phase (instead of the Clean Up Phase) following the removal of Good Shoots. Mortar and Artillery Illum scatters like mortar smoke according to the Mortar & Inf Gun Smoke Scatter Table.

1.3 On-Map Artillery

Ignore TCS v3.1 25.5c for On-Map Artillery. The US artillery units on map are treated as four-step units, each step representing one gun. Each of these notional guns can fire direct fire as an IG according to the value printed on the counter (6). If any gun fires an SFA the whole unit is marked as fired (so you might as well fire all remaining guns!). These guns can be destroyed normally, but use step reduction markers to indicate losses.

No ammo is expended when these guns fire direct, as there was a great deal of ammo that was being saved for emergencies, and having enemy units in direct LOS of a battery certainly qualifies as such.

Naturally, on-map artillery may fire normal indirect fire missions at targets

within their LOS and spot for these fires themselves if desired. In other words, they may choose to fire using direct fire as described above or normal indirect fire at targets within their LOS.

If On-Map artillery units move they must wait one hour before they can participate in indirect fire.

1.4 Battalion Morale

Roll for Battalion Morale only on every full hour, not every turn. On night turns, roll on even hour turns only as usual (cf. TCS 27.1d).

1.5 Air Power

1.5a Air Spotting of Artillery Fire. During day turns, the U.S. player is always considered to have a good LOS (three hexes or less) to any clear terrain hex for artillery firing due to aerial spotting.

1.5b Air Sorties. During each daytime turn the US player rolls on the Aircraft Availability Table to determine how many air sorties he may use that turn (exception, on 0600, the number available is always the same, see the Aircraft Availability Table).

The US player can only conduct air sorties against spotted hexes. These include all clear terrain hexes (due to air spotting) or any hex to which a US unit can trace line of sight. This effectively means that air sorties cannot be used to attack Japanese units out of LOS in the jungle.

1.6 Exiting the map

Units which exit the map for any reason (voluntarily or because of an SYR) are eliminated and never return.

1.7 Night

Players are strongly encouraged to study the night rules in *TCS* v3.1 27.0. While some of these rules are modified, the main point is to use much more precision and detail in your Op Sheets than may normally be the case. Night operations are extremely difficult to control so precise routes of attack must be specified.

Be glad there are no rules on getting lost in the jungle!

2.0 American Special Rules

2.1 Command and Control

2.1a Commander's Intent. Colonel Merritt "Red Mike" Edson is to hold his position on and around the high ground south of the Henderson Field in order to prevent the capture of the airfield. This must be done at all hazards.

2.1b Command Prep Ratings. The US Prep Rating is 4 (Exception: 1st Raider Bn Battalion has Prep Rating of 1).

2.1c Marine 5/11 Artillery. New Op Sheets may be assigned to the Marine artillery only if they fail their beginning Op Sheet. Units of the 5/11 may never move further south than hexrow xx.30.

2.2 Marine Morale

In assault-style combat Marine units ignore all Suppressed and SYR morale results. In all other situations, Marine units treat SYR results from the Morale Table as Suppressed instead. Marine units may conduct voluntary SYRs normally.

Marine units do not double their morale in close combat.

Note: The Marine Parachutists are not covered by this rule until Torgerson takes command, see 2.3.

2.3 Marine Parachutists

The 1st Parachute Battalion's defense was completely unraveled until Colonel Edson relieved the battalion commander, Major Charles Miller, and put Capt. Harry Torgerson in charge. The Parachute Battalion has one (1) point of unrecoverable Battalion Morale until Torgerson takes command. This occurs instantly when the Parachutists reach a Battalion Morale of 3. At this point, Torgerson takes over, the battalion immediately recovers one (1) Battalion Morale point and is treated as a normal Marine unit using the Marine Morale rules from 2.2 above.

2.4 Marine Raiders and Paratroopers

Marine Raider and Paratrooper units can call for fire from battalion mortars of any Marine Battalion.

2.5 Red Mike Edson

This game includes one of the U.S. Marine Corps' greatest fighting men — Colonel "Red Mike" Edson, commander of the 1st Raider Battalion. In recognition of his outstanding leadership at Bloody Ridge, Edson was awarded not only the Navy Cross but also the Medal of Honor.

Edson has the following effect: the battalion has a Command Prep Rating of "1" and the battalion may roll to reduce Battalion Morale every turn, not just on hourly turns. Edson is not represented on the map with a counter. Red Mike never dies (though he came close on two occasions at the Ridge).

2.6 Marines at Night

On the first night turn each day, any US Attack Op Sheets that do not have the goal of recovering lost ground (i.e. areas previously occupied by US units on a Hasty Defense or Prep Defense Opsheet) automatically fail. In addition, no such Op Sheets can be implemented on night turns, though they can be drawn up and accrue weighted turns. The net effect is that the US player can only try to recover lost ground during night turns and not conduct other attacks.

2.7 Marine Pioneers

The Marine Pioneer Battalion was not under Edson's command and had orders to protect Edson's flank. For this reason, the Marine Pioneer Battalion may not be assigned to a new Op Sheet unless it suffers at least one step loss. Any new Op Sheets must be defensive in nature (either Hasty Defense or Prep Defense) and no Pioneer unit may enter a hex east of the 08.xx hexrow.

2.8 2/5 Marines

In Scenarios 5.4 and 5.5, the 2/5 Marines become available at 2400 13 Sept. They have an implemented reserve Op Sheet and can be committed normally at this point. The US player is not forced to commit them and may keep them off map as long as desired. The advantage to doing so is that the US player gains a victory level shift by not committing them.

3.0 Japanese Special Rules

3.1 Command and Control

3.1a Commander's Intent. Major General Kiyotake Kawaguchi is to retake Bloody Ridge and reoccupy Henderson Field.

3.1b Command Prep Ratings. The Japanese Prep Rating is 6.

3.2 Japanese Artillery

3.2a Naval Bombardment. In some scenarios the Japanese receive naval gunfire support. These are treated as normal artillery missions that must be pre-plotted. BEFORE the US player sets up, the Japanese player writes down the target hex for each mission. He must be able to trace a LOS from the western edge of the map to each target hex. The notional spotter is considered to be 10m in height. This effectively means that clear hexes at 10m or higher that have a LOS to the west map edge are eligible targets. All Naval Bombardment is assumed to be 7+ hexes away when resolved on the Adjustment Table.

3.2b 70mm Infantry Guns. Each game turn, at the Japanese player's discretion, each 70mm gun may be used as either a mortar or an Infantry Gun. For direct fire as an IG, use the values on the unit counter. For indirect mortar fire, each has a firepower of 1 with a maximum range of 14. All normal mortar rules apply. The 70mm guns may not fire either smoke or Illum.

3.3 Japanese Morale

3.3a When calculating the morale modifier for the Morale Table, the Japanese receive a -1 modifier for having 8 steps in a hex, with an additional -1 for every additional 4 stacking points (rounded down). Thus 8-11 steps is a -1, 12-15 steps a -2, 16-20 steps a -3 and so forth. Any final morale level lower than 0 is treated as 0.

3.3b Ignore the Night Combat morale modifier for all Japanese units for morale purposes.

3.3c Japanese units do not double their morale in assault-style combat.

3.4 Assault-style combat

The Japanese were very successful with direct assault (i.e. Banzai) in China, but found that these tactics were less successful against the Marines on Guadalcanal. To represent the Japanese tactic of direct assault, use the following:

3.4a Any Japanese Infantry Platoon that begins its Action Phase adjacent to a US-

occupied hex and is already in or enters Move Mode can only conduct an assault combat as its first action before undertaking any other actions that phase. Should the units in question no longer be adjacent to a US-occupied hex during the course of the Action Phase for whatever reason, it is released from this restriction for the Action Phase. Use the included Banzai markers as reminders if desired.

3.4b Japanese units which initiate assault-style combat must remain in Move Mode during the whole assault.

3.4c When Japanese units initiate assault-style combat, change any morale results suffered by them as follows:

- a) For each Suppression result, the stack loses a step instead and is not Suppressed.
- b) For each Paralyzed or SYR result, ignore it and instead roll one die and divide by 2, rounding normally. The result is the number of steps lost.
- c) Units that surrender are wiped out and removed from play.

3.5 Special Units of the 35th Brigade

The Brigade Guard Company, the 6th Independent Radio Platoon, and two platoons of the 15th Independent Engineer and 7th Engineer Regiments are treated as a single battalion for Op Sheet and Battalion Morale purposes.

4.0 Victory Conditions

Victory points are awarded to the Japanese player for the control of certain physical features. The Japanese player gains control of map locations by being the last player to completely occupy (both hexes if there are two) the feature as defined below with the number of VPs awarded:

- A. Hill 123 (15). (18.16 and 17.17)
- B. 1st Mar Div HQ (10). (15.23)
- C. The Log Bridge (5). (16.09 and 17.10)
- D. Hill 80 (8). (20.11 and 21.12)

5.0 Scenarios

5.1 Set-Up Notes

The U.S. player always sets up first.

5.2 The Planned Assault

Major General Kiyotake Kawaguchi planned on launching his big assault at 2000 on 12 September, but because of the “devilish” jungle, all three of his battalions reached their assembly areas late. In the moonless night, his men stumbled forward and lost their sense of direction. Only two of Kawaguchi’s three battalions (the I/124 & III/124) made contact with the Marines this night (the II/4 got lost entirely). With surgical skill, Major Kokusho’s I/124, sliced through Colonel Edson’s right flank west of the ridge occupied by the Raiders of Company C. Encircled at several points, the Marines pulled back to the ridge minus twelve of their comrades. The momentum of Kokusho’s attack, however, was thwarted when his battalion became entangled with Lieutenant Colonel Watanabe’s III/124 after midnight. Fearing a loss of control, Kokusho halted his attack and regrouped west of the Lunga River. But by the time this task was complete it was nearly dawn. Shortly after daylight, Kawaguchi recalled his battalions to make preparations for an attack the following night.

Kawaguchi blew his big chance at victory. On this night neither were Colonel Price’s 105mm howitzers of the 5/11 registered to the south nor were any reserves, such as the 2/5, in position to render support. Had Kawaguchi managed to launch an effective and coordinated attack, he probably would have taken Henderson Field.

General Information:

First Turn: 2000, 12 September

Last Turn: 0600, 13 September

Map Area: All

First Player: Japanese

Number of Turns: 11

US Information:

w/i 1 of 19.15:

A-1st Raider Bn, E-1st Raider Bn MG

w/i 2 of 19.11:

B-1st Raider Bn, E-1st Raider Bn MG

w/i 2 of 14.08:

C-1st Raider Bn, E-1st Raider Bn MG

14.17:

D-1st Raider Bn

16.16:

E-1st Raider Bn 1x 60mm mortar

w/i 2 of 22.13:

A-1st Para Bn

w/i 2 of 25.18:

B-1st Para Bn

w/i 2 of 21.16:

C-1st Para Bn

w/i 3 of 8.12:

1st Pioneer Bn

w/i 2 of 13.20:

11th Special Wpns Battery

Artillery Available: None

Artillery Ammunition: None

Op Sheets: Prep Defense

Historical orders:

1st Raider Bn, 1st Para Bn and 1st Pioneer Bn held prepared defensive positions on or near Bloody Ridge to prevent the Japanese from capturing Henderson Field.

Japanese Information:

w/i 3 of Entry Hex A, east of Lunga River:

1-124-18; 124-18 (1x 70mm IG, 1 2x 37mm AT)

w/i 5 of Entry Hex B:

3-124-18

Naval Artillery Support, 2100:

CL Sendai

DD Shikunami

DD Fubuki

DD Suzukaze

This naval fire must be preplotted before the US player sets up, see 3.2a. Each ship fires as an artillery battery using the value on the counter.

Op Sheets: Attack

Historical Orders:

The Japanese were ordered to breakthrough the Marine positions at or near Bloody Ridge and capture positions around Henderson Field.

Victory:

Major Japanese Victory: 23+

Minor Japanese. Victory: 13-22

Draw: 10-12

Minor US Victory: 8-9

Major US Victory: 0-7 VPs

5.3 The Planned Assault (extended)

This scenario uses the same setup as 5.2 but continues through 1400 to allow the Japanese to continue pushing. Use all the reinforcements and rules for 5.2 and add those below. Historically they regrouped during the day, so this is something of a 'what-if' scenario.

General Information:

First Turn: 2000, 12 September

Last Turn: 1400, 13 September

Map Area: All

First Player: Japanese

Number of Turns: 35

Additional US Reinforcements

0900 13 Sept:

w/i 1 of 16.31:

N-5-11 105mm arty

w/i 1 of 17.31:

O-5-11 105mm arty

w/i 1 of 18.31:

P-5-11 105mm arty

Battery Availability:

O-5-11

Artillery Ammunition: 5 HE

Note: Only O-5-11 may fire indirect missions. The other two batteries were assigned to support different parts of the perimeter and thus were not available for indirect fire missions for Bloody Ridge. They may self-spot for direct fire missions should Japanese units come into their LOS.

Japanese Reinforcements:

0600 13 Sept:

Entry Hex A:

35th Bde Guard Co. (3x Inf, 1xMG)

15th Ind. Eng. Regt (1x Inf)

7th Eng. Regt (1x Inf)

6th Ind. Radio Pl (1x Inf)

Southern map edge between and including Entry Hexes A and B:

1-4-2

Victory:

Major Japanese Victory: 28+

Substantive Japanese Victory: 20-27

Minor Japanese. Victory: 15-19

Draw: 10-14

Minor US Victory: 8-9

Substantive US Victory: 5-7

Major US Victory: 0-4 VPs

Shift victory one level higher if all steps of 5/11 Marine artillery are destroyed.

5.4 Bloody Ridge

Red Mike Edson was convinced that the previous night's attack was nothing more than a probe and expected an even larger attack on the evening of 13 September. Unfortunately, the Japanese attack the previous night carved a large salient in his right flank. Unable to retake this ground on the morning of the 13th Edson ordered his composite battalion of Raiders and Parachutists (aided by a company of engineers), to pull back 400 yards. This new front line would not only present the Japanese with a unfamiliar front but also force the Japanese to advance over open ground on the ridge.

As Edson expected, General Kawaguchi attacked again at dusk. Once again, Major Kokusho's battalion hit Edson's right flank, this time against the Raiders of Company B. Like the night before, the Raiders were overwhelmed and were forced to give up their ground. But artillery fire, disorientation, and the death of Kokusho prevented the Japanese from exploiting this success. At 2200, the 5th and 7th Companies of Major Masao Tamura's II/4 charged up the ridge and slammed into the Marine front. In spite of murderous artillery fire, Tamura's men pushed the Marines back to Hill 123 where Edson made his final stand. Supported by pinpoint 105mm artillery fire from Price's 5/11, Edson's composite battalion was able to stave off Japanese efforts to drive the Marines off of Hill 123. Only Tamura's 6th Company and Watanabe's III/124 Machine Gun Company were able to push through to the outskirts of the airfield. This battle was the closest the Japanese ever came to recapturing the airfield.

General Information:

First Turn: 1800, 13 September

Last Turn: 1400, 14 September

Map Area: All

First Player: Japanese

Number of Turns: 37

US Information:

w/i 2 of 12.11:

A-1st Raider Bn, E-1st Raider Bn MG

w/i 2 of 18.14:

B-1st Raider Bn, E-1st Raider Bn MG

w/i 2 of 16.16:

C-1st Raider Bn, E-1st Raider Bn MG, E-1st Raider Bn 1x 60mm mortar

17.18:

D-1st Raider Bn

w/i 2 of 23.19:

A-1st Para Bn

w/i 2 of 22.15:

B-1st Para Bn

w/i 2 of 25.18:

C-1st Para Bn

w/i 3 of 8.12:

1st Pioneer Bn

w/i 2 of 13.20:

11th Sp Wpns Co

w/i 2 of 12.20:

C-1-Eng

w/i 2 of 14.12:

D-1-Eng

w/i 1 of 16.31:

N-5-11 105mm arty

w/i 1 of 17.31:

O-5-11 105mm arty

w/i 1 of 18.31:

P-5-11 105mm arty

Battery Availability:

O-5-11

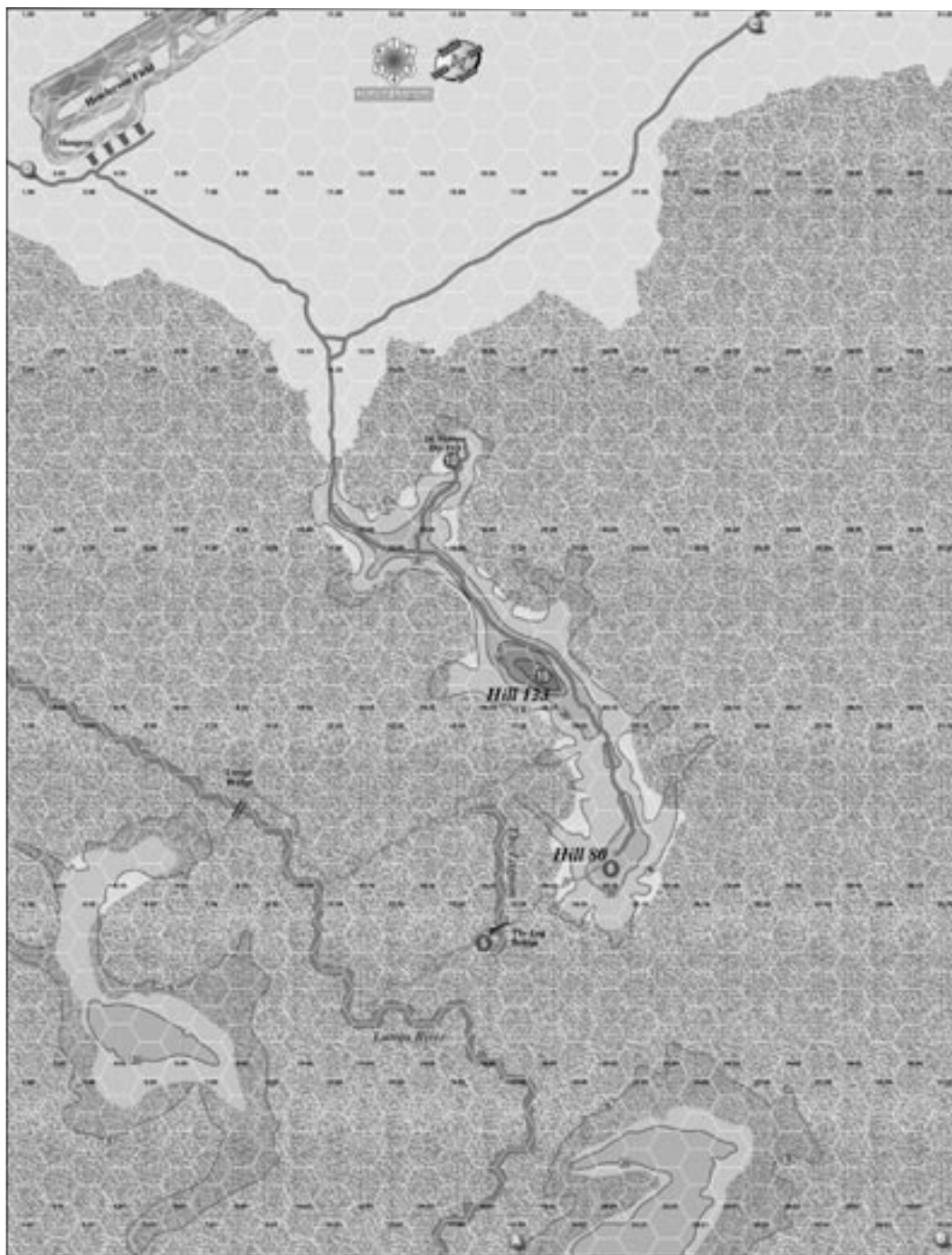
Ammunition: 100 HE, 2 Smoke, 5 Illum

Op Sheets: Prep Defense

Reinforcements:

2100 13 Sept:

N-5-11, P-5-11 become available for indirect fire missions spotted by other US units.



**Op Sheet
Bloody Ridge 2-14**

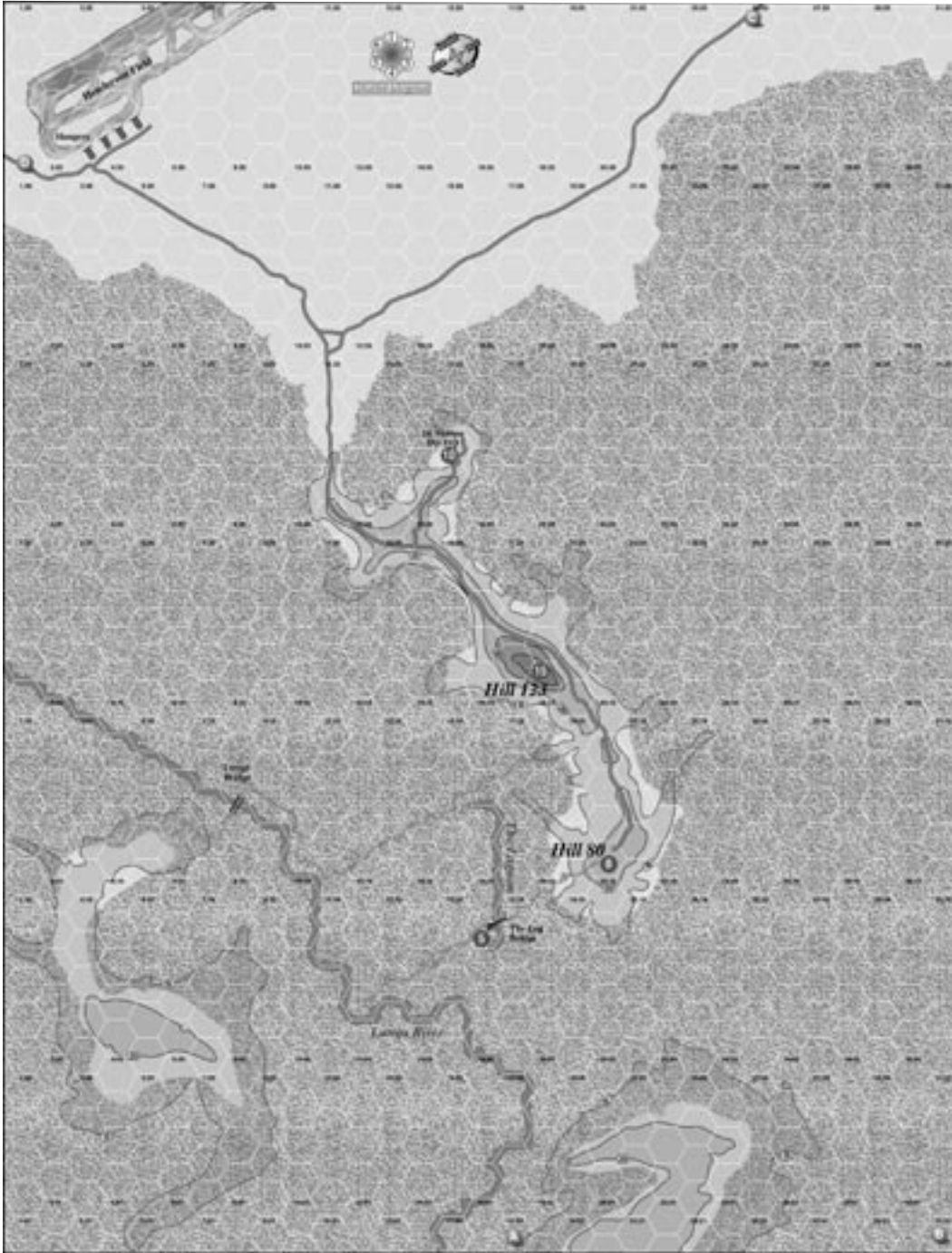
Time:
Type:
Size:

**Task
Organization:**

**Failure
Instructions:**

Written Notes:

Players have permission to photocopy this sheet for personal use.



**Op Sheet
Bloody Ridge 2-14**

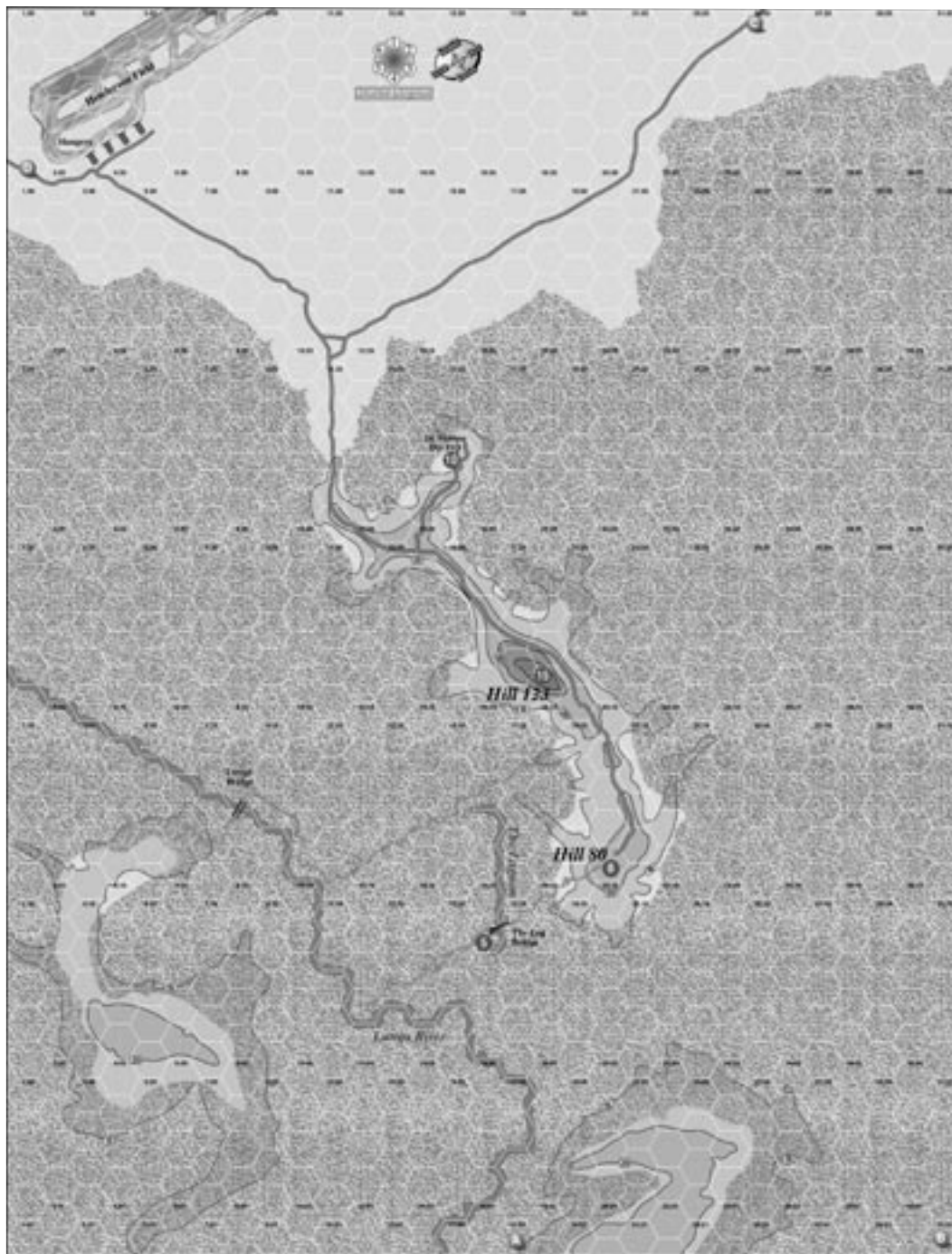
Time:
Type:
Size:

**Task
Organization:**

**Failure
Instructions:**

Written Notes:

Players have permission to photocopy this sheet for personal use.



**Op Sheet
Bloody Ridge 2-14**

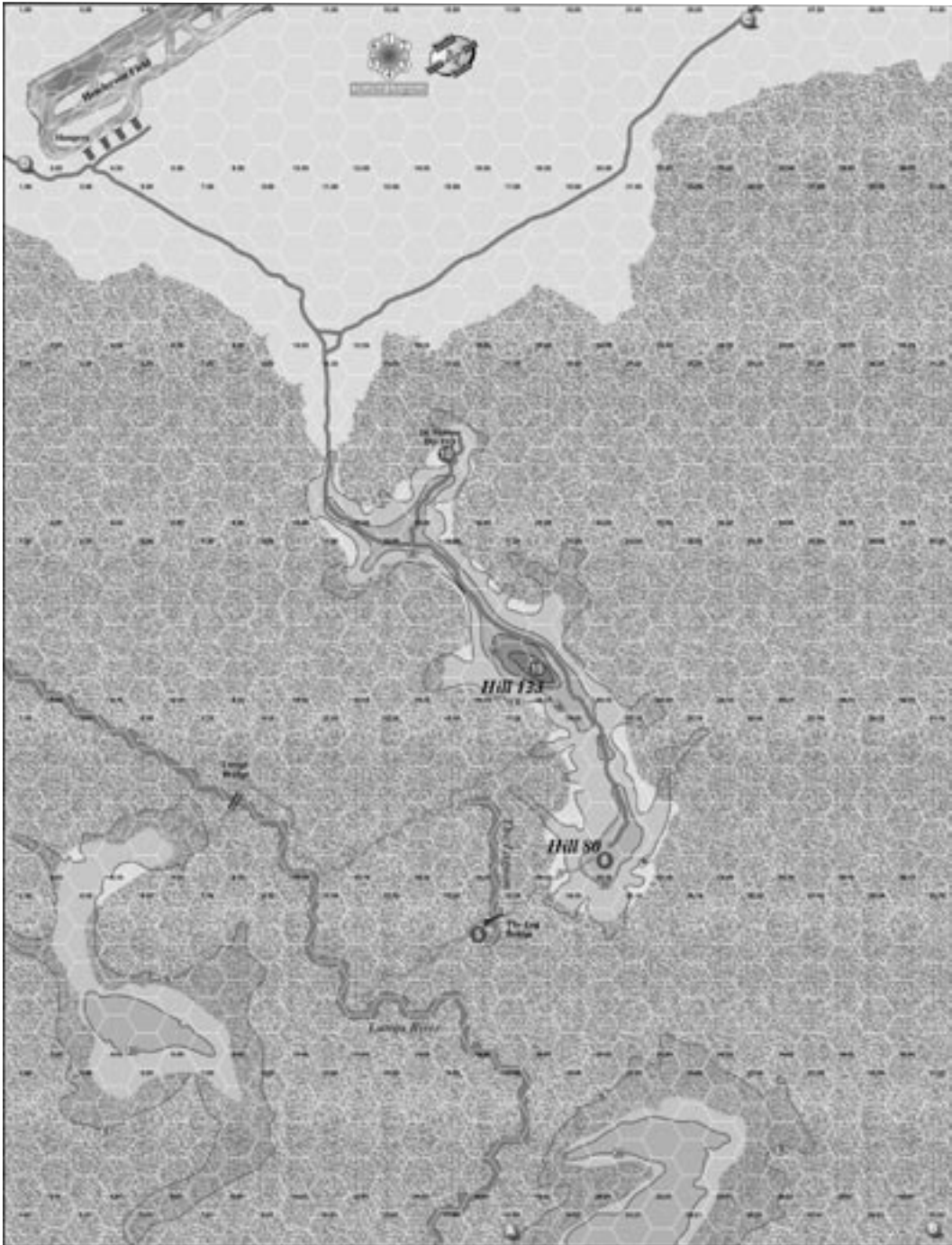
**Time:
Type:
Size:**

**Task
Organization:**

**Failure
Instructions:**

Written Notes:

Players have permission to photocopy this sheet for personal use.



**Op Sheet
Bloody Ridge 2-14**

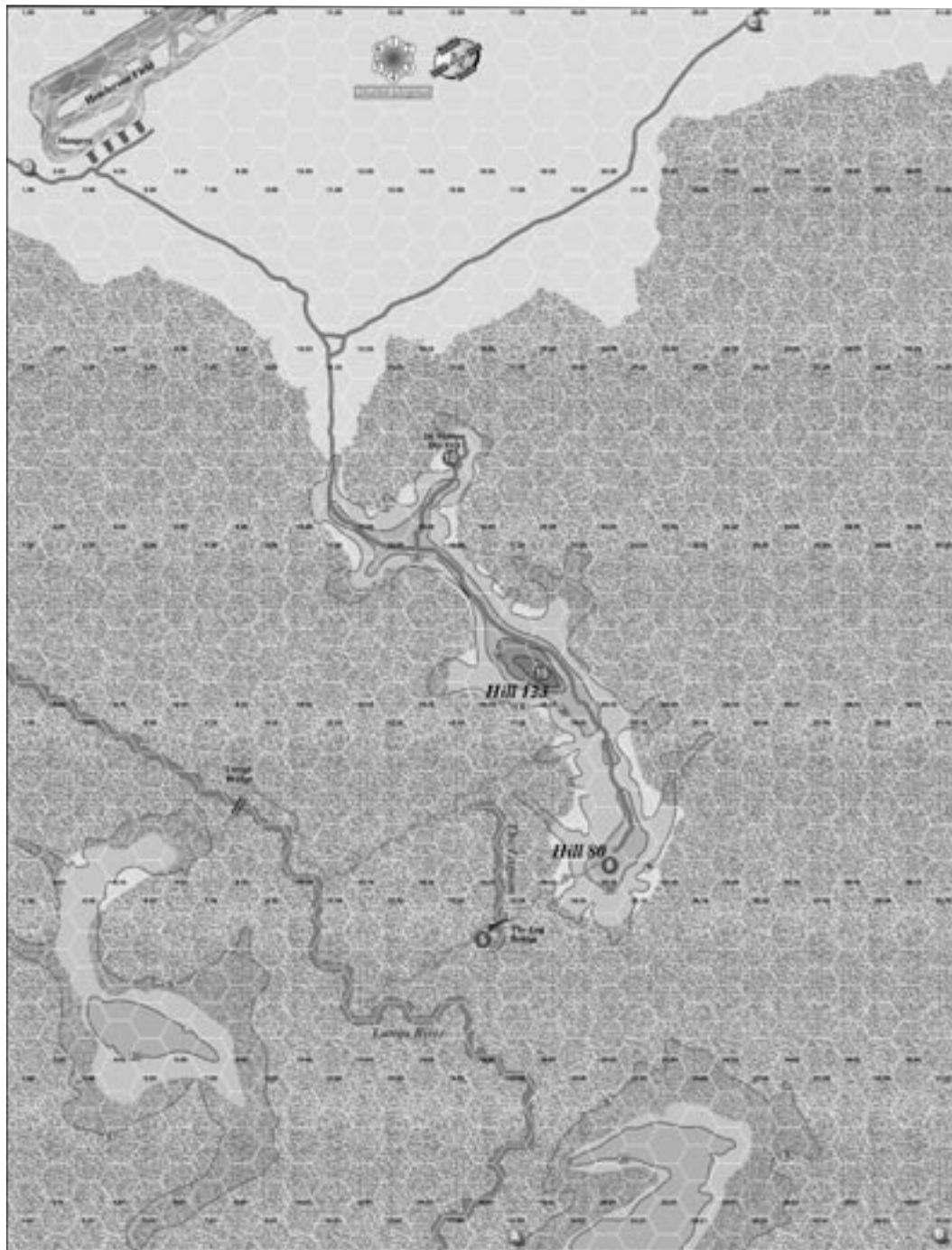
Time:
Type:
Size:

Task
Organization:

Failure
Instructions:

Written Notes:

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**Op Sheet
Bloody Ridge 2-14**

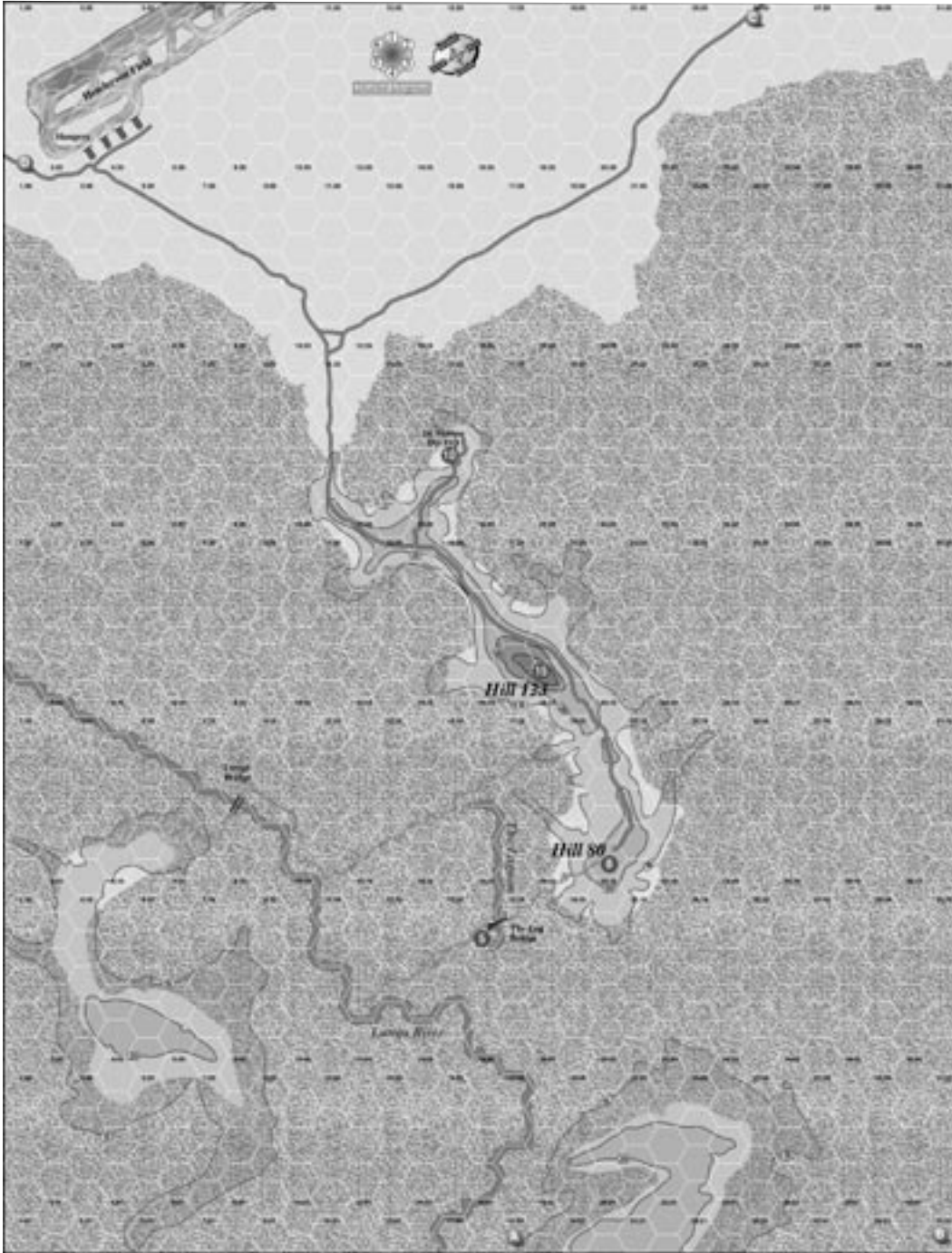
Time:
Type:
Size:

**Task
Organization:**

**Failure
Instructions:**

Written Notes:

Players have permission to photocopy this sheet for personal use.



**Op Sheet
Bloody Ridge 2-14**

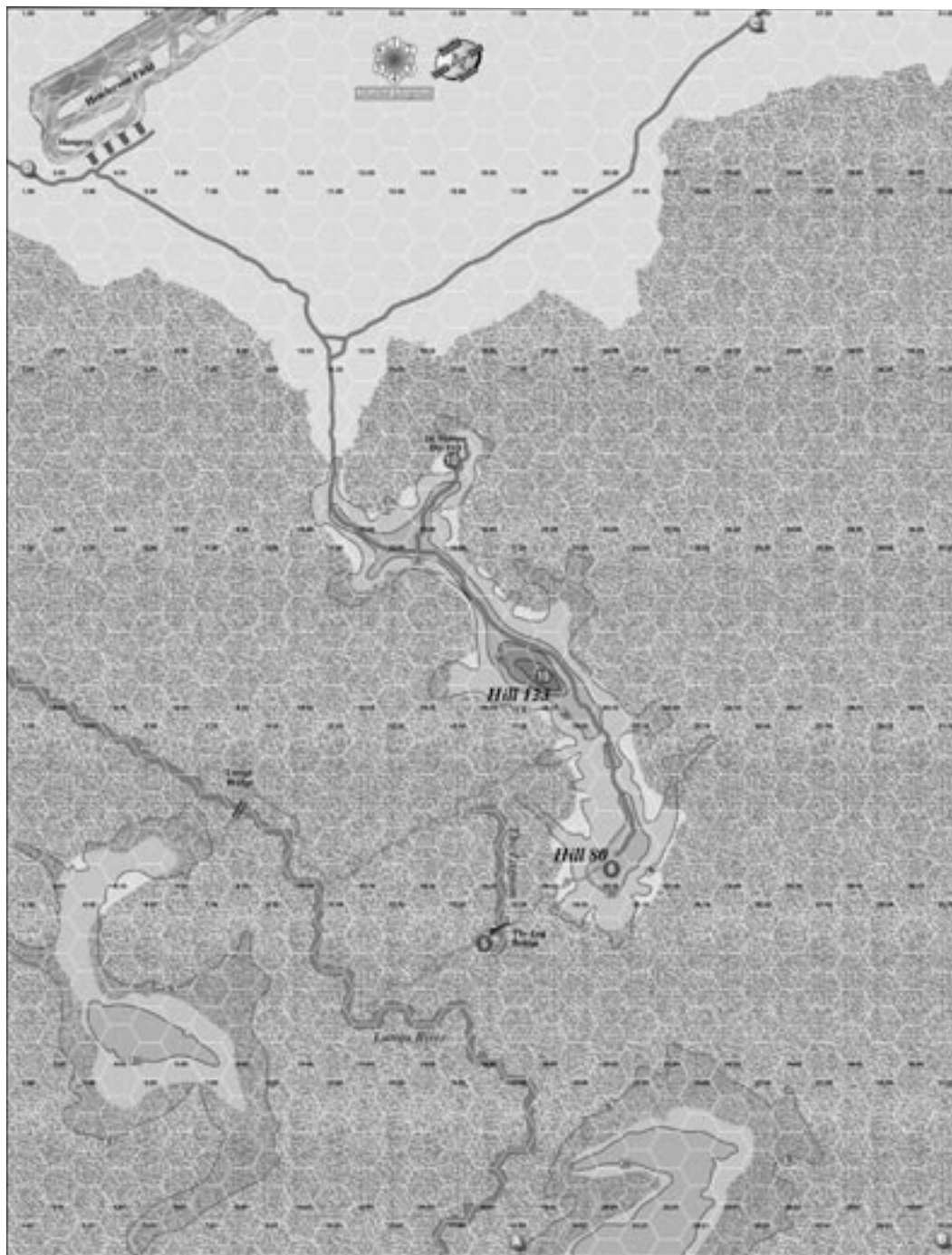
Time:
Type:
Size:

**Task
Organization:**

**Failure
Instructions:**

Written Notes:

Players have permission to photocopy this sheet for personal use.



**Op Sheet
Bloody Ridge 2-14**

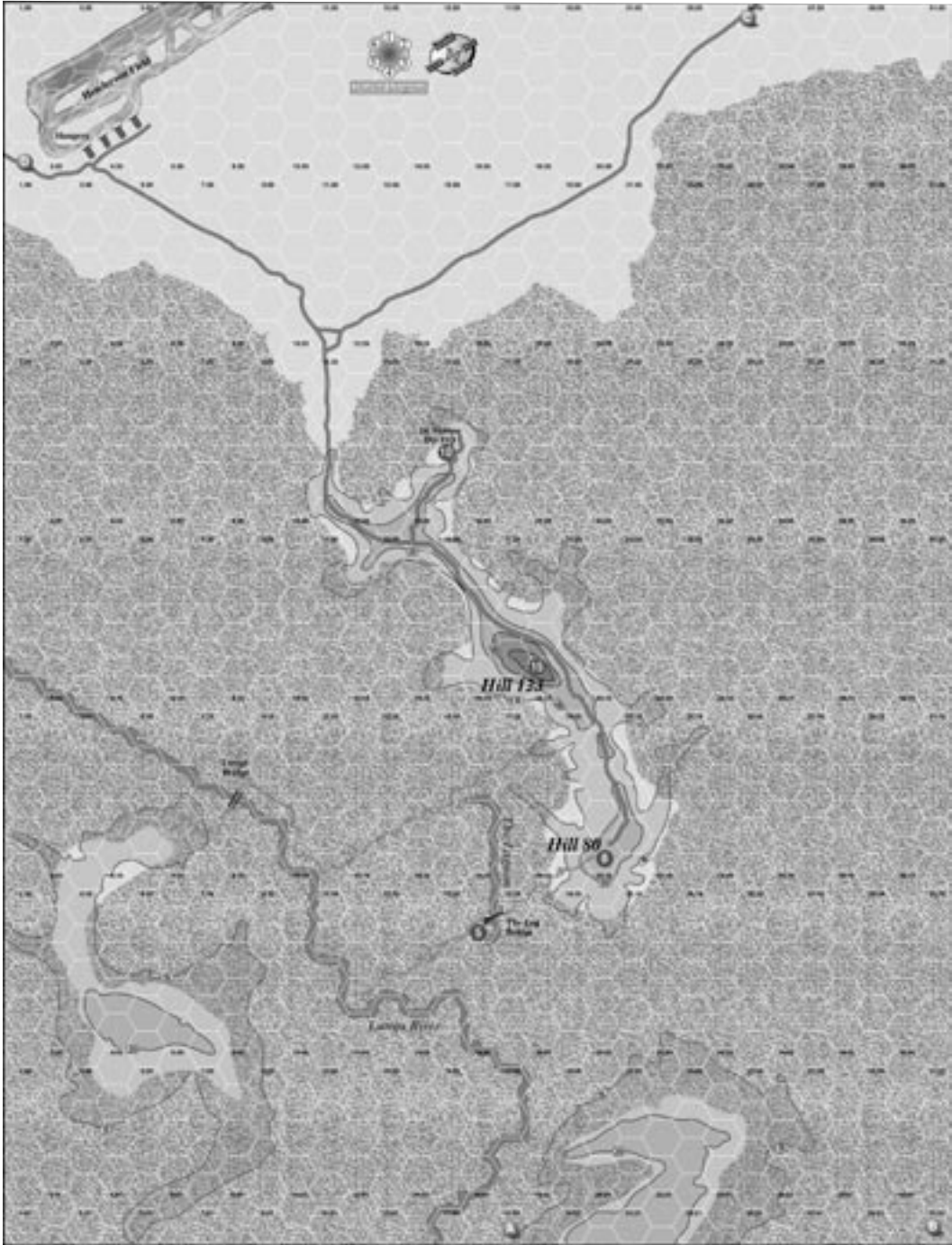
Time:
Type:
Size:

**Task
Organization:**

**Failure
Instructions:**

Written Notes:

Players have permission to photocopy this sheet for personal use.



**Op Sheet
Bloody Ridge 2-14**

Time:
Type:
Size:

**Task
Organization:**

**Failure
Instructions:**

Written Notes:

Players have permission to photocopy this sheet for personal use.

2400 13 Sept:

2/5 Marines

2/5 Marines begin with an implemented Reserve Op Sheet but may not begin work on a new Op Sheet until they become available. They enter the map (if desired) through Entry Hex D once they successfully execute their reserve Op Sheet or implement a new Op Sheet.

Historical orders:

All Marine units held prepared defensive positions on or near Bloody Ridge to prevent the Japanese from capturing Henderson Field.

Japanese Information:

Note: No Japanese units may begin adjacent to a US-occupied hex.

w/i 3 of 16.10:

1-124-18; 124-18 (1x 70mm IG, 1 2x 37mm AT)

w/i 3 of 21.10:

2-4-2

w/i 3 of 27.10:

3-124-18

w/i 2 of 19.05:

35th Bde Guard Co (3x Inf, 1x MG)
15th Ind. Eng. Regt (1x Inf)
7th Eng. Regt (1x Inf)
6th Ind. Radio Pl (1x Inf)

Artillery Available: None

Op Sheets: Attack

Reinforcements: None

Historical Orders:

The Japanese were ordered to breakthrough the Marine positions at or near Bloody Ridge and capture positions around Henderson Field.

Victory Determination:

Major Japanese Victory: 38+
Minor Japanese. Victory: 28-37
Draw: 23-27
Minor US Victory: 13-22
Major US Victory: 0-12

The Japanese already control the Log Bridge and Hill 80 for 13 VPs.

Shift victory one level in favor of Japanese if the 5/11 Marine artillery is completely destroyed.

Shift victory one level in favor of US if 2/5 Marines do not enter the map.

5.5 Bloody Ridge (Campaign Scenario)

General Information:

First Turn: 2000, 12 September

Last Turn: 1400, 14 September

Map Area: All

First Player: Japanese

Number of Turns: 83

US Information:

As in 5.2

Artillery Available: None at start

Artillery Ammunition: None at start

Op Sheets: Prep Defense

Reinforcements:

0600 13 Sept:

3xP-400, 3x F4F (in lieu of normal Air Sortie roll)

0900 13 Sept:

w/i 1 of 16.31:

N-5-11 105mm arty

w/i 1 of 17.31:

O-5-11 105mm arty

w/i 1 of 18.31:

P-5-11 105mm arty

Battery Availability:

O-5-11

Artillery Ammunition: 5 HE

Entry Hex C:

C-1-Eng, D-1-Eng available with implemented Reserve Op Sheet.

1400 13 Sept:

100 HE, 2 Smoke, 5 Illum

2100 13 Sept:

N-5-11 available

P-5-11 available

2400 13 Sept:

2/5 Marine available with implemented Reserve Op Sheet. May enter via Entry Hex D.

Historical Orders:

All Marine units held prepared defensive positions on or near Bloody Ridge to prevent the Japanese from capturing Henderson Field.

Japanese Information:

As in Scenario 5.2

Artillery Batteries: None

Naval Artillery Support, 2100:

CL Sendai
DD Shikinami
DD Fubuki
DD Suzukaze

This naval fire must be preplotted before the US player sets up, see 3.2a. Each ship fires once and is treated as a HE battery of the caliber on the counter.

Op Sheets: Attack

Reinforcements:

0600 13 Sept:

Entry Hex A:

35th Bde Guard Co (3x Inf, 1x MG)
15th Ind. Eng. Regt (1x Inf)
7th Eng. Regt (1x Inf)
6th Ind. Radio Pl (1x Inf)

Southern map edge between and including Entry Hexes A and B:

2-4-2

Historical Orders:

The Japanese were ordered to break through the Marine positions at or near Bloody Ridge and capture Henderson Field.

Victory Determination:

Major Japanese Victory: only achievable via shift from destroyed US artillery
Substantive Japanese Victory: 38 VPs
Minor Japanese. Victory: 28-37 VPs
Draw: 23-27 VPs
Minor US Victory: 13-22 VPs
Substantive US Victory: 5-12 VPs
Major US Victory: 0-4 VPs

Shift victory one level in favor of Japanese if the 5/11 Marine artillery is destroyed.
Shift victory one level in favor of US if 2/5 Marines do not enter the map.

Order of Battle and Counter Manifest

US Marine Forces

1st Raider Battalion

A Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
 B Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
 C Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
 D Company: 1x Inf
 E Company (weapons): 3x MG, 1x 60mm mortar

1st Parachute Battalion

A Company: 2x Inf, 1x MG
 B Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG, 1x 60mm mortar
 C Company: 2x Inf, 1x MG

1st Pioneer Battalion

A Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
 B Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
 C Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG

1st Engineer Battalion

C Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
 D Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG

2d Battalion, 5th Marines

E Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG, 1x 60mm mortar
 F Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG, 1x 60mm mortar
 G Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG, 1x 60mm mortar
 H Company (Heavy Weapons): 4x MG, 2x 81mm mortars

5th Battalion, 11th Marines

N Battery: 4x 105mm howitzers
 O Battery: 4x 105mm howitzers
 P Battery: 4x 105mm howitzers

Special Weapons Battery, 11th Marines

4x 20mm AA guns, 3x MG

Imperial Japanese Forces

124th Infantry, 18th Division

1st Battalion

1st Company: 3x Inf, 1 MG
 2d Company: 3x Inf, 1 MG
 3d Company: 3x Inf, 1 MG
 4th Company: 3x Inf, 1 MG
 1st MG Company: 4x MG
 1st Battalion Gun Platoon: 2x 70mm IG
 1st Mortar Platoon: 1x 81mm mortar

3d Battalion

9th Company: 3x Inf, 1 MG
 10th Company: 3x Inf, 1 MG
 11th Company: 3x Inf, 1 MG
 12th Company: 3x Inf, 1 MG
 3d MG Company: 4x MG
 3d Battalion Gun Platoon: 2x 70mm IG
 3d Mortar Platoon: 1x 81mm mortar

124th Infantry Regimental Weapons

1x 75mm IG, 2x 37mm AT

4th Infantry, 2nd Division

2d Battalion

5th Company: 3x Inf, 1 MG
 6th Company: 3x Inf, 1 MG
 7th Company: 3x Inf, 1 MG
 2d MG Company: 4x MG
 2d Battalion Gun Platoon: 2x 70mm IG

35th Brigade (including attached units)

Brigade Guard Company: 3x Inf, 1 MG
 6th Independent Radio Platoon: 1x Inf
 Platoon of the 15th Independent Engineer Regiment: 1x Inf
 Platoon of the 7th Engineer Regiment: 1x Inf

Historical Notes

On 7 August 1942, nearly 19,000 U.S. troops of the 1st Marine Division landed on Guadalcanal. The primary objective was a large airstrip located on the north-central coast. Capture of both it and the nearby island of Tulagi was a relatively simple triumph achieved in only two days. General Vandergrift knew that the Japanese would not sit still so he ordered speedy completion of the airstrip and a defensive perimeter erected around it. The airstrip was complete on August 20 and named Henderson Field after a Marine pilot who lost his life in the Battle of Midway.

Vandergrift's plan paid off because the Japanese 17th Army wasted little time in drafting a retaliatory strike to retake Guadalcanal. The elite 28th Detachment under Colonel Ichiki was chosen to accomplish this task. Denied the opportunity to emblazon his name in fame after the Midway debacle, Ichiki was elated in this assignment. However, Japanese intelligence erroneously estimated American strength on the island at only 2,000. This faulty intelligence coupled with Ichiki's confidence and contempt of American fighting abilities had all the elements of a disaster in the making (his arrogance was further illustrated by his plea to also retake Tulagi Island!) On the evening of August 21 Ichiki, with only half his command (one battalion of 2/28) attacked

U.S. positions along the western bank of Alligator Creek. Hopelessly outnumbered, Ichiki and his men were encircled and slaughtered. Ichiki's haughtiness cost him and over 770 of his men their lives. News of Ichiki's defeat at Imperial Headquarters was first met with shock and disbelief. Ichiki was highly decorated and was considered by many to be one of the brightest officers in the Imperial Army. Underestimating American strength and firepower would be a problem that would plague the Japanese throughout the entire campaign and prove to be a contributing factor to their failure.

After hearing of Ichiki's defeat, the 17th Army selected Major General Kawaguchi's 35th Brigade to attack the Americans next. Numbering over 6,000 men, Kawaguchi planned his offensive on the evening of September 12. In typical Japanese tradition, Kawaguchi divided his force three ways. The main thrust consisted of the First while Third battalions of the 124th Regiment and the Second Battalion of the 4th Regiment would strike from the south, with a simultaneous attack from both the eastern and western sides of the perimeter. Colonel Oka and the Second battalion, 124th Regiment would jab from the west. Major Mizuno, commanding the First Battalion, 28th Regiment, the other half of Ichiki's detachment, and the brigade artillery unit would punch from the east.

It was a plan that looked good on paper, but in reality was difficult to execute. The Japanese underestimated the thickness of the jungle impeding movement and hampering effective coordination and control. These combined difficulties all but negated the principle element of Kawaguchi's plan timing. Completely exasperated, Kawaguchi exclaimed that because of the devilish jungle, the brigade was scattered all over and completely beyond control. "In my whole life I have never felt so helpless."

Because of these obstacles only one-third of Kawaguchi's personal command attacked on the 12th and were easily rebuffed by Colonel Edson's 1st Raider Battalion. It was a frustrating day for the Japanese, but things would only get worse. After Kawaguchi's probe, Edson was certain that the Japanese would attack again the following night so he had his entire front realigned to create confusion for the Japanese. While Edson maneuvered, Kawaguchi gathered his scattered command and planned the next attack at nightfall. However, Kawaguchi was unable to gain control of the 3/124 which was essentially lost in the jungle. He attacked anyway. Aided by star shell illumination, the Japanese sent repeated

waves of infantry charging up Bloody Ridge. Heroic efforts were made by each side. Perhaps the most heroic was made by Edson himself whose leadership at the critical junction prevented a complete rout. Reinforcements from Second Battalion, 5th marines also helped blunt the attack. The Japanese 3/124 managed to get a single company into the action that attacked the Paratroopers along the Marine's left flank. Had this battalion been at Kawaguchi's disposal, he probably would have achieved a complete breakthrough and victory. Elements of the Japanese 2/4 actually fought past the ridge and made it to the outskirts of Henderson field but were quickly eliminated at daybreak.

This battle, known as "Bloody Ridge" or "Edson's Ridge", resulted in the death of over 1,000 Japanese. It won Edson the Congressional Medal of Honor and a prominent place in Marine Corps history. For Kawaguchi, failure won him enemies at 17th Army Headquarters that would eventually lead to his downfall later in the campaign. The Battle of Bloody Ridge was the closest the Japanese would ever come to recapturing Henderson Field.

Kawaguchi's two wing units also experienced frustration and defeat. The Right Wing Unit, commanded by Major Mizuno, attacked LTC McKelvy's Third Battalion, First Marines at 2330 on 13 September. Two companies charged an outpost manned by elements of Company K, but became entangled in barbed wire and were cut down. The Japanese dead included Mizuno. At 0945 the following morning six Stuart tanks swept the area looking for Japanese, but were mauled in short order by anti-tank fire. Repeated attempts were made by the Japanese during the nights of the 14th and 15th, but these also failed. Mustering only two companies, Oka's attack from the west was completely ineffective and was easily repelled. Clearly the Japanese were facing a different American enemy—an enemy totally unlike the one they had faced on Bataan.

The defeat of the 35th Brigade finally convinced the commander of the Japanese 17th Army, General Hyakutake, of the seriousness of the situation on Guadalcanal. Previously he had considered Guadalcanal an annoyance, a distraction from New Guinea, which was his real obsession. Next, a grand-scale offensive would be planned. The offensive would be keyed by the 2nd (Sendai) Division, one of the finest in the Imperial Army. To ensure success, Hyakutake would personally land on Guadalcanal to oversee the offensive.

Aircraft from Henderson Field main-

tained U.S. air superiority during daylight hours and was making supply and reinforcement efforts increasingly difficult for the Japanese. With this in mind, Admiral Yamamoto master-minded a joint land-sea effort. The Tokyo Express would land part of the division at night using destroyers with the main element transported by a large high-speed Convoy. To cover the Sendai's offensive, a fleet would sortie to draw the Americans into what was hoped would be the great decisive naval battle. The key element of the whole plan was the neutralization of Henderson Field. This air-land-sea effort would be accomplished by long range 150mm artillery (soon to be known derisively as "Pistol Pete" by the Americans), a stepped-up air offensive, and a nighttime battleship bombardment.

The supply and reinforcement efforts went very well for the navy. Runs commenced September 28 via destroyers and seaplane tenders. A bombardment by the battleships KONGO and HARUNA on October 12 effectively put Henderson Field out of operation for a week. This enabled the convoy to unload most of its cargo including two regiments of infantry, tanks and artillery during daylight hours in full view of Vandergrift and his Marines. The veteran 38th (Nagoya) division began assembling at Rabaul. Clearly the critical point of the campaign had been reached.

Luckily, Vandergrift received badly needed reinforcements on October 12. However, the reinforcements were not Marine, but Army in the form of the National Guardsmen of the untried 164th Regiment of the "Americal" Division (so named because this division was formed in New Caladonia, 'Americans from Caladonia'). They would play a critical role in just a few weeks.

In the midst of the buildup, a catastrophe occurred for the 17th Army on October 7. Vandergrift ordered an offensive to deny the Japanese access to the Matanikau Sand Spit, the only fordable point across the river for tanks and heavy artillery to attack the perimeter directly. The offensive was a smashing success inflicting over 700 deaths upon the 4th Regiment. Losses on the eastern side of the Matanikau had a disastrous effect on the planned 17th Army offensive forcing a major revision.

General Maruyama, commander of the Sendai Division, quickly revised his plan. As a diversion, General Sumiyoshi would lead elements of the 124th and 4th Regiments aided by tanks and artillery against the Marines positioned along the eastern bank of the Matanikau river (see the TCS release of Matanikau). It was

hoped that Sumiyoshi's efforts would distract Vandergrift's attention to the coastal corridor, while the division surprised and attacked the Americans from the south. At least in this respect the jungle would aid movement by cloaking it from prying American eyes. The attack date was set for October 22.

Maruyama's main assault consisted of two regiments of infantry divided equally among two wing units. The 29th Infantry Regiment, under Major General Nasu and considered to be one of the finest in the Imperial Army, was designated the Left Wing Unit. The Right Wing Unit under Kawaguchi consisted of elements of the 230th (actually part of the 38th Division) and 124th Infantry Regiments. The 16th Infantry and 2nd Engineer Regiment, led by Maruyama himself, were designated as the divisional reserve.

Once again, the denseness of the jungle was underestimated, delaying the Sendai's attack date two days. Unfortunately for the Japanese, Sumiyoshi never received word of the delay and attacked as planned on the 23rd. Sumiyoshi was driven back with heavy losses (including almost all of his tanks) along the Matanikau Sand Spit by ten batteries of Marine artillery, and McKelvy's Third Battalion, First Marines. Additional bad news for the Japanese was to come. Any hope of a surprise attack was squashed on the 23rd when Japanese cooking fires were spotted to the south. Sensing Sumiyoshi's efforts as only a diversion, Marine artillery batteries re-registered their guns to meet this new threat. However, it was too late to redeploy the Marine infantry battalions. LTC Lewis B. 'Chesty' Puller's First Battalion, 7th Marines would have to hold the south by itself.

Meanwhile, bickering between Kawaguchi and Maruyama on the eve of battle led immediately to Kawaguchi's dismissal. Colonel Shoji was appointed as his replacement on the evening of the 23rd. This would prove to have disastrous consequences for the Japanese.

The Sendai Division finally commenced their offensive early on the morning of October 25. The 29th Regiment and the First Battalion, 230th Regiment attacked Puller's battalion. After nearly five hours of bloody fighting, men like Sgt. John Basilone and reinforcements from Colonel Hall's Third Battalion, 164th Regiment were able to contain the Japanese and restrict their gain to only a small salient of 150 yards. Basilone would be awarded the Medal of Honor for his efforts this night.

After being repulsed the night before, Maruyama planned another assault on the

evening of the 25th. For this attack, Nasu was given command of the divisional reserve, the 16th Regiment. Expecting another attack, Puller and Hall's battalions separated themselves during the day and formed a new front. Puller's battalion occupied positions on and directly adjacent to Bloody Ridge. Hall's 3/164 was positioned on Puller's left flank. The 16th Regiment launched their assault at 2000 hours after a light and ineffectual artillery barrage. Both US battalions inflicted massive casualties on the Japanese as they charged into a mass of machine gun and canister fire. Over 250 Japanese died along a single trail covered by two 37mm anti-tank guns of the 7th Marines. Shoji's Right Wing missed this night's action entirely to cover an imaginary U.S. threat from the east. In spite of being outnumbered, the American position was never seriously threatened by the Japanese. The last great Japanese offensive of the campaign ended in bloody failure and fiasco.

The Japanese were determined, but slow to learn from their mistakes. Preparations were made to land the 38th Division in mid-November for another try to take Henderson Field. A large convoy of eleven troopships would transport the division to Guadalcanal. The key to the plan, like the convoy in mid-October, was the neutralization of Henderson Field by battleships. However, the U.S. Navy intervened decisively in a three day air-sea battle known collectively as the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal. Two efforts to bombard the airstrip failed with heavy losses, including two battleships. Consequently, seven troop-ships of the convoy were sent to the bottom of The Slot. It was a decisive U.S. victory which further sapped Japan's limited resources and her will to retake the island. Heretofore the only efforts by the Tokyo Express would be to supply and feed their existing forces on the island. The November air-sea battle was the decisive battle of the campaign—and the turning point of the war. Japan was beaten! Never again would she wage an offensive campaign during the war.

Bibliographical Notes

Guadalcanal has been a popular subject of historians throughout the years. One of the newest works was written recently: Richard Frank's magnificent *Guadalcanal: The Definitive Account of the Landmark Battle*. Frank's book is perhaps the finest single volume account of the campaign that has ever been written, and was the book I turned to most. Few books are as informative and comprehensive as his. Particularly noteworthy is an appendix identifying the complete Japanese Order of Battle

information which has only recently come to light. This information was derived from original Japanese sources. Frank's account presents the campaign in chronological order and comprehensively covers events on land, air and sea. It is well-written and is presented from the perspective of both sides. Frank's book is monumental and is a must for any enthusiast of the campaign.

Eric Hammel's three volume work on the campaign is also excellent. Hammel is a superb writer with a knack for captivating the reader. The volume covering the land battles, appropriately titled *Starvation Island*, provides many insights, but sometimes lacks the detail and accuracy of Frank's book. Nevertheless, Hammel's work is an important contribution to the body of works covering this campaign.

One of the most popular accounts was written and published during the war: *Guadalcanal Diary* by Richard Tregaskis. As a correspondent on the island during August and September 1942, Tregaskis provides many fascinating insights about life on the "Canal" from the American perspective. Despite its age this work has held up well both for its literary excellence and historical accuracy. A very popular movie of the same name was also produced in 1943.

The Official U.S. Army history of the campaign entitled *Guadalcanal: The First Offensive* is a must for anyone interested in the campaign. Not surprisingly, a large portion of the book focuses on the Army offensives of December and January, and provides an excellent account of the fighting that took place then. However, the battles fought earlier in the campaign by the Marines are covered very well and is worth looking into. The book's real value, in my opinion, lies in the outstanding maps and photographs. The aerial photographs and map of the islands topography is first-rate and cannot be beat in any other book.

Jack Coggins' *Campaign for Guadalcanal* provides a textbook approach to the campaign. Throughout his book Coggins provides the reader with beautiful drawings of battle scenes and equipment that were used by both sides. Maps are also provided for every battle on land and sea that was

fought including Carlson's month-long trek from Aola bay to Lunga Point and the air/naval Battle of Rennell Island. TO&Es of Japanese and American infantry divisions are also included. Overall it is a very entertaining and informative work!

John Toland's two-volume history of the Pacific War entitled *The Rising Sun* provides an excellent account of the fighting from the Japanese perspective. Part IV of his book, entitled "Isle of Death", is dedicated solely to the Guadalcanal campaign and is absolutely superb. Detailed insight is provided by Japanese war correspondent Gen Nishino who covered the fighting by Major General Kawaguchi and his 35th Brigade. Rare photographs of the campaign can be found in this book as well.

Technical data on Japanese weapons and TO&Es were derived from the *Japanese Army Handbook* by A.J. Baker. His book has almost everything you ever wanted to know about organization, tactics and weapons. Fellow wargame designer Masahiro Yamazaki also provided valuable information on the Japanese Order of Battle and TO&Es.

Developer's Notes

Those of you who have been following the development of TCS games will know that Bloody Ridge has been many years in the making. Originally submitted sometime in the 1990s, it took a back seat to other TCS designs (such as *Semper Fi*, *A Raging Storm*, *A Frozen Hell*, and most recently *Screaming Eagles*). In the meantime, TCS rules changed from version 2 (which was in effect when the first design was completed) to 3.0 and then to 3.1. When I took over as developer to get this puppy out the door, I contacted Michael Smith to discuss turning it from a 1-map largish design to a 1/2 map smaller design. He agreed to the proposal, and in the meantime had written a book on the battle himself. So using his new research for his own book as well as the excellent comments of Len Ludtke, Michael resubmitted a complete redesign in 2001. Put on hold during the acquisition of the Gamers by MMP, it is now ready for the light of day. The playtesters were universal in their praise for this game which played very well "out of the box" as a playtest kit. Since it is not every author who also designs a game based on their research, I also need to add Michael's own book to the list of sources, even though it was not yet written when the first design and notes were completed:

Smith, Michael. *Bloody Ridge: The Battle that Saved Guadalcanal*. 2000.

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