

Tactical Combat Series:

Matanikau

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Matanikau #2-04

A Tactical Combat Series Game

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Introduction

This game covers the fighting along the Matanikau River in the fall of 1942 between the US Marines and the forces of Imperial Japan. The Japanese are attempting to establish a position from which they can launch further attempts to capture Henderson Field. The Marines are trying to expand the perimeter around Henderson Field far enough so as to deny the Japanese any decent staging area for attacks against that airbase.

1.0 General Special Rules

1.1 Command and Control

1.1a Command Prep Ratings.

- The U.S. Command Prep Rating is 4.
- The Japanese Rating is 6.

1.1b US Higher Commander's Intent.

The intent of the U.S. commander throughout the campaign depicted by these scenarios was to maintain control of the east bank of

the Matanikau River as the western defensive line of the Henderson Field Perimeter. Furthermore, General Vandegrift intended to prevent the Japanese from using the areas west of the river as a base of operations.

1.1c Japanese Higher Commander's Intent. The Japanese intent was to establish a presence on the east side of the Matanikau river in order to control the sandspit, the only means of moving tanks and artillery to the east of the river in order to attack the Henderson Field perimeter directly.

1.1d Tanks and Mortar Spotting. None of the handful of tank units in the game (on either side) can spot for any Mortar unit's fires. Only infantry and weapons units of the correct command may spot for mortar fires.

1.2 Set Up & Map Notes

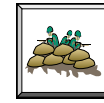
1.2a Order of Set Up. The American player always sets up first

1.2b Bottlenecks. The entry points to the Sandspit and Log Bridge are the only Bottleneck features in the game.

1.3 Artillery Ammo Resupply

On the 2400 turn of each game day, both sides have their artillery ammo allotments replenished by the levels given at start. On that turn, add the at-start values to the stocks remaining from the day's combat. There is no limit to the ammo which may accumulate in this manner. This rule does not apply to scenarios 5.4 and 5.5.

2.0 American Special Rules



2.1 Night Immobility

With the exception of the Whaling Scouts "Wg", all U.S. units instantly have temporary orders restricting them to a **Prepared Defense** during all night turns. These temporary orders in no way negate their original Op Sheet. New orders may be implemented during the night, but they may not begin any operations until morning. Night begins with the 1800 turn and lasts until the conclusion of the 0500 turn. These instant Prepared Defense orders cause the Marine units to be dug in where ever they might be at 1800 and they lose that advantage only when the player issues them new orders the following morning. In other words, upon receipt of this instant Dig In order, they stay that way until they get new instructions. Mark these units with the Dug in markers.

Note that if a Marine unit is forced out of its hex after the auto-dig turn occurs, it remains "hole-less" until it obtains new Prepared Defense orders. Such units must remain as close as possible to their original hex until they do receive new orders.

2.2 Restricted Artillery Ranges

Since the U.S. artillery was deployed within the Henderson Field perimeter off the east map edge, ranges are restricted according to caliber. These range boundaries are only the maximum position of a plotted fire target hex for each type of gun and have no effect on concentration scatter or placement of adjustment points. The range limits are marked on the game map and a battery may fire at target hexes EAST of and including the range line.

2.3 Marines and SYRs

Marine units treat all 'Save Yourself Retreat' results as 'Suppressed' instead. Furthermore, no Marine unit may ever voluntarily conduct a SYR, nor may they ever "flee" in the Fight or Flee decision of an Assault Combat. A player's choice "Suppressed, +1 to Co Morale or SYR" result would become a mandatory Suppressed, +1 to Co Morale instead.

2.4 Whaling Scouts and the Raiders

a) The Whaling Scouts (Wg) were a hand-picked unit trained to operate independently in the jungle using the native trail system. Units stacked with a Whaling Scout unit pay 2 MPs for a Jungle hex instead of the normal 3 MPs. Whaling Scouts units may move freely during the night.

b) Raider units may call for fire from battalion mortars of any Marine battalion in play.



2.5 Higgins Boats

In some scenarios, the American player may land troops from the sea. Five “Higgins” Boats are provided for this function. Each boat can carry seven steps (never a tank or halftrack, though!).

2.5a The Lunga Boxes. On the northeast edge of the map is a pair of holding boxes. Higgins Boats may only enter the Lunga Boxes from the “In” arrow hexsides and must cross both boxes and exit via the “Out” arrow. The actions of entering and exiting these boxes does not cost extra movement points, but it takes a boat a full turn’s movement to move from the first box to the second. Loading or unloading boats does not cost movement points and may be done in either Lunga Box. Units in the Lunga Boxes may never be fired upon by any weapons, likewise no units in the boxes may fire out to hit the map.

2.5b Movement of Higgins Boats. Units may disembark or embark at no MP cost. Embarked units must be in Move Mode. Higgins Boats are always in both Move and Fire Modes—in other words, they are always in both. Higgins Boats can fire Overwatch fires. Boats may never be captured (the Japanese player cannot attempt to sail out to board the Ballard—*regardless* of how many Errol Flynn movies he’s seen!). The boats may stay on the map, sail about, and provide their meager suppressive fire as desired. They may move in any all or partial sea hex, but may never sail up a river or stream feature.

2.5c Higgins Boats and Fire Combat. Higgins Boats are Both-type targets and may be fired upon while at sea. Area fires attack them as if they were the B-type targets with a defense of 1 (even though they technically have a defense of zero). Destroy any passengers if the boat is destroyed while in an all-sea hex. If the boat survives, the passengers are not attacked (just like in halftracks). If the Higgins Boat is fired upon while in a beach hex (partial-sea) follow the same procedures as if the boat were a half-

track. Fires against a Higgins Boat are always treated as if the boat were in Combat Mode in Open Terrain. Passengers may never fire while on a Higgins Boat. Higgins Boats (and the units on them) cannot spot for Mortar or Artillery fires.

2.6 Naval Gunfire Support

The USS Ballard, a converted seaplane tender, can provide naval gunfire support from off map. The Ballard has one 5" gun which functions as a direct fire Area weapon which is **exempt** from range effects. The Ballard must have an LOS to its target hex and the Ballard’s gun is at a 10 meters elevation. The Ballard has a firepower of 20. It gets the morale modifier for being artillery, but may never fire overwatch and never uses the Artillery and Mortar Point Target Table. It can fire once per friendly Action Phase as part of an SFA.

❖ **The Ballard is available only on turns when the Higgins are also available.**

2.7 Air Power

❖ **Do NOT apply these rules during any night turn.**

2.7a Air Spotting Of Artillery Fire. While ground units must function as observer to call for observed fires, air units can contribute. Because of air spotting, the US player (after placing the mission’s Adjustment Point) is always considered to have a good LOS to both the Adjustment Point and the exact target hex—hence, the top line of the Adjustment Table is always used. Unobserved missions are unaffected by this and still use their bottom, “Unobserved” line of the table.

2.7b US Air Superiority and Movement in the Open. Japanese units in open or Sandspit terrain hexes **or to which a Marine unit has an unblocked LOS** (always when adjacent) are subject to possible attack by U.S. air power. The U.S. player may only attempt to spot Japanese units in these hexes **once per hour** (on any one turn of each hour) during the Artillery and Aircraft Fire Phase. For each stack of Japanese units fulfilling the above, roll one die. On a roll of 6 on one die, the stack is spotted and attacked by the aircraft below. Roll for each stack separately.

Attack spotted stacks immediately with a P-400 with the following values:

P-400—

Firepower: 15

Point Ability: 10 or more

Roll for target identification and AA fires normally.

2.8 “Chesty” Puller

This game includes one of the legends of the US Marine Corps—LTC Lewis B. “Chesty” Puller—commander of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines. “Chesty” Puller has the following effects: the 1-7 Mar need not be included on any Op Sheet—it functions completely free from Op Sheet concerns, and all Company Morales of 1-7 Mar are reduced EVERY turn, not just on hour turns.

“Chesty” is not on the map as a counter. “Chesty” never dies.

3.0 Japanese Special Rules

3.1 Japanese Artillery

The Japanese are equipped with 10cm (100mm) and 15cm (150mm) heavy artillery.

3.1a Japanese Artillery Control.

Japanese control of their artillery was almost nonexistent. In addition, the main mission of the Japanese artillery was to bombard Henderson Field, for which mission they hoarded their meager supply of shells. Consequently, the Japanese artillery is restricted by the following rules:

A. Unobserved Missions

The Japanese must wait 5 hours instead of the normal 3 hours to fire an unobserved mission.

B. Called Fire Delay

All Japanese artillery units have a called fire delay of one turn.

C. Adjustment Of Fire

Observed Japanese fire missions **always** use the second (no LOS) line of the Adjustment Table. Unobserved Japanese fire missions remain the same as normal unobserved ones.

D. Battalion Missions

The Japanese player may never fire battalion fire missions.

3.2 Japanese Morale

3.2a When calculating the morale modifier for the Morale Table (never the SYR Table or any other die roll), in addition to the normal modifiers, *subtract one* column for each set of two infantry platoons in the hex (having three platoons in a hex gives no further benefit above what two gives, in other words, it rounds down). For example, if four platoons are stacked in a hex, it would

receive a column shift of -2 for the morale table. In effect, the Japanese get a morale boost for bunching up. There is no upper limit to the total morale modifier gained in this manner.

3.2b Ignore the night combat morale modifier for all Japanese units.

3.2c Ignore all Morale Table Surrender results on Japanese units. Interpret those results to be Banzai Charge. Ignore the Company Morale addition for the original surrender result.



3.2d Banzai Charge. Some morale effects have been modified to simulate the tendency of Japanese units to Banzai charge. If the Morale Table **dice roll is 64 or more (or is a result of Surrender)** a Banzai charge results for the checking stack (ignore the table result for this dice roll entirely) and place a Banzai Mode marker atop it. When a unit or stack enters a Banzai charge, it is no longer suppressed or paralyzed (if it was so already) and enters Move Mode if it was in Combat Mode. A stack in "Banzai Mode" must move toward and assault a Marine hex until the units there are destroyed. If the Banzai Mode unit is too far from any Marine unit to assault during a given Action Phase, the unit must move toward Marines using all of its Movement Allowance until it is close enough to assault. The Japanese player must select the target of the Banzai charge and this choice may be changed at the beginning of any Action Phase in which a unit is in Banzai Mode. No Morale checks or company morale additions are made against a banzai unit after it enters Banzai Mode. Note that the only way out of a Banzai charge for a unit in Banzai Mode is to either be destroyed itself, or to destroy the Marine unit(s) in the selected target hex. If the latter of these conditions occur, the Banzai charge is over, remove the marker and the post-Banzai units are finished moving for the turn (even if MPs remain).

A) Banzai Mode units ignore the usual one-unit-at-a-time restrictions when crossing Bottleneck features—the stack all crosses at once.

B) Units do not have enough MPs to make a Banzai attack directly into Marine hexes across the Matanikau River (even series rule 20.0b does not allow this). Banzai units may attack areas across the Matanikau and can cross from any hexside of the river, PROVIDED the hex they enter on the other side does not contain Marine units.

Important: Weapons units never enter Banzai Mode, such a result against these units is ignored.

3.2e Assault Combats. Ignore all Company Morale additions during an assault combat where the Japanese player is the

attacker. Japanese attackers can quit Assault Combat when they wish (like normal people). Units in Banzai Mode cannot quit (like the guys they are!).

3.3 Battalions

The Japanese Companies are numbered across the regiment. To save counter space and to avoid gibberish like "1-1-4-2" in the set ups, this fact was used to eliminate the battalion designation on the counter. The companies are arranged as follows:

1st Bn: 1, 2, 3, 4 Infantry Companies
2nd Bn: 5, 6, 7, 8 Infantry Companies
3rd Bn: 9, 10, 11, 12 Inf. Companies

4.0 Victory Conditions

Victory points are obtained for the control of certain physical features. Control is defined as the following:

- Matanikau village** is controlled by the last player to have a unit occupy or pass through any building hex of Matanikau village in the absence of any opposing unit in the village.

- Pt. Cruz** is controlled by having a unit physically present in any hex of Pt. Cruz (hexes 23.31, 22.31, 21.32 and further north on the peninsula) at the end of the game. If both players have a unit on Pt. Cruz at the end of the game, control belongs to the Japanese player.

- The **Log (or Nippon) Bridge** is controlled by being the last player to have a unit pass through both hexes at either end of the bridge.

- Hills** are controlled when no enemy units are within the highest contour line surrounding the named hill hex or hexes.

Victory levels are determined by subtracting the total Japanese VPs from the total U.S. VPs and comparing this number to the levels listed at the end of each scenario.

5.0 September Warm Up

The addition of the 7th Marines allowed General Vandegrift to actively interfere with the Japanese planning by the use of large scale reconnaissance in force. 1-7 Marine under Colonel "Chesty" Puller was sent out on 23 September to cross the Matanikau at the Log Bridge and patrol between the river and Kokumbona. They were to be relieved by 1st Raiders at Kokumbona on the 26th.

After a short firefight on the slopes of Mount Austen on the night of the 24th, two companies were sent back with the wounded while the force was reinforced by the 2-5 Marine.

The force advanced to the Matanikau and turned north to the sandspit where an attempt to cross was repulsed by the Japanese.

On the 26th, the Puller force was repulsed at the sandspit again while the Raiders were tied down to the south by a Japanese force which had crossed during the night. A-1-7 and B-1-7 were landed late in the day west of Pt. Cruz in the mistaken belief that the crossing had been successful. Cut off and surrounded, they were eventually rescued.

First Turn: 0600 26 September
Last Turn: 1800 27 September (85 turns)
Map Area: All

US Information:

Set up:
C-1-7 Mar, 2-5 Mar—w/i 3 34.01
5x Higgins Boats—in the Lunga Box

Artillery:
Batteries:
E-2-11 5x 75mm
F-2-11 5x 75mm
N-5-11 3x 105mm
P-5-11 4x 155mm

Ammunition:
75mm: 50 HE, 5 Smoke, 2 Illum
105mm: 40 HE, 4 Smoke, 1 Illum
155mm: 5 HE, no Smoke, no Illum

Reinforcements:
1400 26 September—Raider Bn—Entry Hex A

0600 27 September—rest of 1-7 Mar (less a total of 3 steps from the 81mm mortars). These units are divisional reserve and may be written into any Op sheet as a reserve. In this case, these units enter the map from the east edge on the Government track. Alternatively, the U.S. player may choose to create an attack Op sheet for these units in which case he may have these units appear in the Lunga Box.

Variable Reinforcements:

On a die roll of 12, the U.S. player may receive 2 platoons of Stuart tanks. The U.S. player may roll for these reinforcements once per turn beginning with the first turn. They enter in Entry Hex A.

Historical Orders:

•C-1-7 and 2-5 were to advance along the Matanikau River and clear out Matanikau village. After A-1-7 and B-1-7 were withdrawn on 25 Sept., they were established as a reserve force to be landed astride the Japanese line of retreat between Pt. Cruz and Kokumbona (west map edge). The Raiders were provided as a holding force on the east side of the sandspit.

Japanese Information:

Set up:

1 Bn, 124-18—Anywhere west of 24.xx and north of xx.25, inclusive.

2 Bn, 124-18—Anywhere west of and w/i 2 of the Matanikau River

Wpn-124-18—set up with or among any 124-18 battalion above

Artillery:

Batteries:

21 FA 4x 10cm

Ammunition:

10cm: 20 HE, 2 Smoke, 1 Illum

Reinforcements:

None

Historical orders:

•1 Bn, 124-18 was to defend against a sea-borne assault west of Pt Cruz.

•2 Bn, 124-18 was to defend along the Matanikau.

•Wpn-124-18 is in support of the two line battalions.

•Only 1 Bn, 124-18 and its supports can be in prepared defenses.

Victory Determination

Victory point values:

Matanikau village—25

Control of **all** hexes of Government

Track west of 18.xx—10

Log Bridge—15

per Marine Step Lost during Assault
Combat (attacking or defending)—1 (for the Japanese player only)

Victory Levels:

Massive US victory +40 plus

Major US victory +39 to +22

Minor US victory +21 to +6

Draw +5 to -11

Minor Japanese victory -12 to -27

Major Japanese victory -28 to -44

Massive Japanese victory -45 or less

5.1 Kelly's Heroes

In the mistaken belief that the Raiders had crossed into Matanikau village, the 1-7 was landed west of Pt. Cruz to cut off the supposed Japanese retreat toward Kokumbona. After passing through a recently deserted Japanese battalion bivouac area and upon reaching hill 84, the marines were put under heavy fire and assault. Major Rogers was killed and Captain Kelly took command. Cut off, the Marines held off the Japanese until they could be evacuated by the Ballard which was sent to the rescue in response to a pilots report that he had seen HELP spelled out on the hilltop with the marine's T-shirts.

First turn: 1300 27 September

Last turn: 1800 27 September (16 game turns)

Map Area: West of and including row 24.xx only

US Information:

Set up:

A-1-7 Mar, B-1-7 Mar, D-1-7 Mar (less 3 steps of mortars), 5x Higgins boats—in the Lunga Box.

Artillery:

Batteries:

N-5-11 3x 105mm

P-5-11 4x 155mm

Ammunition:

105mm: 40 HE, 4 Smoke, no Illum

155mm: 5 HE, no Smoke, no Illum

Reinforcements:

1600: Add enough Higgins Boats so that the Marines have five.

Historical orders:

•A and B companies of 1-7 Marine were to land west of Point Cruz and attack the Japanese Matanikau force in the rear cutting off their line of retreat to the west.

American Special Rules:

US artillery is not available until 1520 and have a one turn delay.

Japanese Information:

Set up:

2 Bn, 124-18—Anywhere west of 24.xx and north of xx.25, inclusive.

12 Company, 124-18—Anywhere west of 24.xx and w/i 3 24.19

Wpn-124-18 (2x 37mm AT, 2x 75mm Inf Gun, 1x MG)—with any 124-18 unit

Artillery:

Batteries:

21 FA 4x 10cm

Ammunition:

10cm: 2 HE, no Smoke, no Illum

Reinforcements:

None

Historical Orders:

•2 Bn, 124-18 was to defend against a sea-borne assault.

•12 Company, 124-18 was to defend against a sea-borne assault.

•Wpn-124-18 units are to support the 124-18 line companies.

•All units may have a prepared defense op sheet.

Victory Determination

Victory point values

per Marine Step Lost during Assault
Combat (attacking or defending)—1 (for the Japanese player only)

Control of **all** hexes of Government

Track west of 18.xx—10

Control of hill hexes containing
13.28 (Marine player only)—1 point per turn

Victory levels

Major U.S. victory +16 plus

Minor U.S. victory +4 to +15

Draw -3 to +3

Minor Japanese victory -10 to -4

Major Japanese victory -19 to -11

Massive Japanese victory -20 or less

5.2 Meeting Action

The Japanese had ironically planned an attack the same day as the Americans. 3-1-4-2 had crossed the sandspit during the night while 9-3-4-2 prepared to cross at the Log bridge. 9-3-4-2 would encounter the forward units of the American advance before withdrawing. The entire foray was designed to establish a position on the east bank of the river for the heavy artillery and to guarantee access across the sandspit for the promised tanks.

First Turn: 1000 7 October

Last Turn: 2300 7 October (34 game turns)

Map Area: All

US Information:

Set up:

2-5 Mar—w/i 2 48.20
 3-5 Mar, 1Tk (2x 75mm Halftracks only)—w/i 2 47.25
 3-2 Mar, WG Scouts—w/i 2 29.12
 1-7 Mar, 2-7 Mar—w/i 2 33.13
 3-1 Mar, 5x Higgins boats—in Lunga Box as Amphibious reserve.

Artillery:

Batteries:

A-1-11 5x 75mm
 B-1-11 5x 75mm
 C-1-11 5x 75mm
 D-2-11 5x 75mm
 E-2-11 5x 75mm
 F-2-11 5x 75mm
 N-5-11 4x 105mm
 O-5-11 4x 105mm
 P-5-11 4x 155mm

Ammunition:

75mm: 150 HE, 10 Smoke, 5 Illum
 105mm: 150 HE, 5 Smoke, 2 Illum
 155mm: 30 HE, no Smoke, no Illum

Reinforcements:

A-Rdr—arrive 1540 7 October at Entry Hex A
 1-1Tk M3 Stuart tanks—enter at Entry Hex A at a cost of 30 VPs at the Marine player's option.

Historical Orders:

•5th Marine was to attack across the sandspit into Matanikau village while the 3-2 Marine supported by 7th Marine and Whaling scouts were to cross the Matanikau up stream and turn north to link up with 5th Marine.

•All Marine units may be assigned attack orders except the amphibious reserve which may have no orders at all at start.

Japanese Information:

Set up:

3 Company, 4-2—w/i 1 44.24
 Wpns-4-2, rest of 1 Bn, 4-2—Anywhere west of the Matanikau, north of xx.23, inclusive.
 9 Company, 4-2—w/i 2 24.19
 rest of 3 Bn, 4-2—w/i 2 22.16, west of the Matanikau river
 1 Bn, 29-2, Wpns-29-2—Anywhere west of 24.xx, north of xx.25, inclusive
 2 Bn, 4-2—w/i 3 13.25

Artillery:

Batteries:

21 FA 4x 10cm
 4 HA 4x 15cm

Ammunition:

10cm: 10 HE, 5 Smoke, 2 Illum
 15cm: 10 HE, 1 Smoke, 1 Illum

Reinforcements:

None

Historical Orders:

•1 Bn, 4-2 was to occupy the southeast Point Cruz area and cross the Matanikau at the sandspit. 3 Bn, 4-2 was to cross at the Log Bridge to deny the Marines use of the river as a defensive position. 1 Bn, 29-2 was defending the coast. 2 Bn, 4-2 is in reserve.

•1 Bn, 4-2 and 3 Bn, 4-2 have attack op sheets. 1 Bn, 29-2 has a prepared defense. 2 Bn, 4-2 has no orders.

Victory Determination

Control of **all** hexes of Government Track east of 35.xx to 44.xx (inclusive)—10 per Marine Step Lost during Assault Combat (attacking or defending)—1 (for the Japanese player only)

Log bridge—5
 Matanikau village—20

Victory Levels

Major U.S. victory +30 plus
 Minor U.S. victory +29 to +10
 Draw +9 to -13
 Minor Japanese victory -14 to -34
 Major Japanese victory -35 or less

5.3 October Offensive

The landing of Japanese 15cm guns in late September made it imperative that the Marines drive the Japanese west of the Poha river. The plan of attack called for the 5th Marines to hold the Japanese in place at the sandspit while 7th Marines supported by 3-2 Marine and the Whaling scouts crossed at the Log Bridge and enfiladed the Japanese position. The Japanese planned a similar operation for the same day (7 October). Consequently, they had crossed the river with 1st battalion of the 4th Infantry while 3-4 moved south to cross at the Log Bridge.

5th Marines and 1-4 Japan met on the 7th and the Japanese withdrew during the night with one company left as rearguard. Heavy rains delayed the action on the 8th and at dusk the Japanese rearguard

attempted to break out for the west bank of the river but ran into, and were destroyed by, the entrenched Raiders who had been brought up in support. The Americans crossed on the 9th and ran into little opposition. 3-4 Japan was caught by Puller's battalion in a ravine and virtually annihilated by the combination of battalion heavy weapons, heavy artillery, and air support.

First turn:0600 9 October

Last turn:1800 9 October (37 game turns)

Map Area:All

US Information:

Set up:

3-2 Mar, Whaling Scouts—w/i 3 of 32.05
 1-7 Mar, 2-7 Mar—w/i 3 34.01
 2-5 Mar—w/i 4 29.22, east of the Matanikau
 I-3-5 Mar—w/i 1 35.26
 K-3-5 Mar—33.23 and 32.23
 L-3-5 Mar—34.23 and 34.24
 A-1-Rdr—w/i 2 35.26, east of the Matanikau
 M-3-5 Mar mortars—w/i 3 44.25
 M-3-5 Mar MG—set up with any Raider unit or 3-5 Mar.

The below is optional:

3-1 Mar, 5x Higgins Boats—in Lunga Box at start (as reserve).

Artillery:

Batteries:

A-1-11 5x 75mm
 B-1-11 5x 75mm
 C-1-11 5x 75mm
 D-2-11 5x 75mm
 E-2-11 5x 75mm
 F-2-11 5x 75mm
 N-5-11 4x 105mm
 O-5-11 4x 105mm
 P-5-11 4x 155mm

Ammunition:

75mm: 300 HE, 10 Smoke, 5 Illum
 105mm: 150 HE, 5 Smoke, 2 Illum
 155mm: 30 HE, no Smoke, no Illum

Reinforcements:

None

Historical orders:

•2-5 Mar and 3-5 Mar are attacking to capture Matanikau. 3-2 Mar, Whaling Scouts, 1-7 Mar, and 2-7 Mar were to cross the Matanikau, and advance by battalion on parallel routes to the north coast. The overall intent was to break up the Japanese concentrations on the west bank of the Matanikau.

•All US units may be on attack op sheets, except the reserve (which has none at all).

Japanese Information:

Set up:

3 Company, 4-2—in one or more of the following: 33.25, 33.24, or 32.23

Rest 1 Bn, 4-2, Wpns-4-2—west of the Matanikau and north of xx.23

9 Company, 4-2—w/i 3 25.19

Rest 3 Bn, 4-2—Anywhere w/i 2 and west of the Matanikau river, south of xx.22

2 Bn, 4-2—w/i 3 13.25

The below is optional:

1 Bn, 29-2, Wpns-29-2—Anywhere west of 24.xx and north of xx.25

Artillery:

Batteries:

21 FA 4x 10cm

4 HA 4x 15cm

Ammunition:

10cm: 10 HE, 2 Smoke, 1 Illum

15cm: 10 HE, no Smoke, no Illum

Reinforcements:

None

Historical Orders:

•Japanese units are to defend against an amphibious assault and to secure the Sandspit from the east side of the Matanikau River.

Victory Determination

Victory Point Values

Matanikau village—20

Log bridge—5

per Marine Step Lost during Assault

Combat (attacking or defending)—1 (for the Japanese player only)

Control of **all** hexes of the Government Track east of 35.xx to 44.xx (inclusive)—10

Control of **all** hexes of Government Track west of 18.xx—10

Victory Levels

Massive U.S. victory +40 plus

Major U.S. victory +39 to +22

Minor U.S. victory +21 to +4

Draw +3 to -14

Minor Japanese victory -15 to -32

Major Japanese victory -33 to -49

Massive Japanese victory -50 or less

5.4 Tank Assault

The Japanese combined attack across the Matanikau with tanks and infantry was supposed to coincide with the massive attack on Henderson Field. Due to the communications difficulties, the western commander, Sumiyoshi, attacked on time despite the fact that the Henderson Field force was days behind schedule.

After several probes by Japanese tanks and infantry west of the river, General Del Valle had moved large numbers of artillery west of the Lunga in a position to support the west flank. These gun batteries were assigned east-west strips in the area Japanese forces were likely to concentrate in prior to an attack. These circumstances combined for a disastrous effect on the Japanese as the U.S. artillery was able to concentrate on the attack. The batteries fired ladder and box barrages with devastating effect. The Japanese infantry concentration was completely broken up and only one tank made it across the sandspit only to be eliminated by a 75mm AT Half-track.

First Turn:1800 23 October

Last Turn:0600 24 October (13 game turns)

Map Area:All

US Information:

Set up:

I-3-1 Mar, 2x 37mm AT (from 1 Mar)—

w/i 1 of 34.25, East of the Matanikau

K-3-1 Mar—w/i 1 of 32.23, East of the Matanikau

L-3-1 Mar —w/i 1 of 28.22, East of the Matanikau

M-3-1 Mar—MGs w/i 1 of 35.26, 81mm's

w/i 3 of 43.25, East of the Matanikau

3-7 Mar—w/i 3 of 29.18

1 Tk (2x 75mm Half-track only)—35.26

Artillery:

Batteries:

I-3-10 4x 105mm

D-2-11 5x 75mm

E-2-11 5x 75mm

F-2-11 5x 75mm

G-3-11 4x 105mm

H-3-11 4x 105mm

I-3-11 4x 105mm

N-5-11 4x 105mm

O-5-11 4x 105mm

P-5-11 4x 155mm

Ammunition:

75mm: 60 HE, 5 Smoke, 1 Illum

105mm: 90 HE, 5 Smoke, 2 Illum

155mm: 48 HE, 8 Smoke, 4 Illum

Reinforcements:

None

Historical Orders:

•3-1 and 3-7 Marine held prepared defensive positions supported by antitank halftracks and 37mm AT guns to defend against a crossing at the sandspit.

•All Marine units may be assigned prepared defense op sheets.

U.S. Special Rules:

Hex 34.26 is illuminated at night by searchlights

Japanese Information:

Set up:

2 Bn, 4-2, 1,2,3 Ind Tk—West of

Matanikau River, North of xx.23

1 Bn, 4-2—West of Matanikau River,

South of xx.23

Wpn-4-2—West of Matanikau River

Artillery:

Batteries:

21 FA 4x 10cm

7 HA 4x 15cm

4 HA 4x 15cm

Ammunition:

10cm: 40 HE, 10 Smoke, 2 Illum

15cm: 20 HE, 5 Smoke, 2 Illum

Reinforcements:

None

Historical Orders:

•4-2 supported by tanks and artillery were to attack across the Matanikau.

Victory Determination

The Japanese win if they have any tanks East of the Matanikau River at the end of the game. Otherwise, the US wins.

5.5 Connoley's Defense

The third in a series of uncoordinated attacks by the Japanese, this assault was also supposed to coincide with the attacks at the sandspit and at Henderson Field. The attack itself, led by Colonel Oka, was well coordinated and with support by bombardment was initially successful. 2-7 Mar and 3-7 Mar held the southern flank of the western line. The 2-7 Mar arrived the day before the assault and had just set up their prepared defense when the attack began. However the Japanese failed to

exploit the initial breakthroughs.

After the initial Japanese thrust had successfully penetrated the line, C-1-5 Mar along with a ragtag group of cooks, mechanics, and headquarters personnel drove the attackers off the ridge and succeeded in reestablishing the line.

First Turn:2000 25 October
Last Turn:0700 26 October (14 game turns)
Map Area:East of 33.xx, inclusive

US Information:

Set up:

E-2-7 Mar—w/i 2 of 37.19
F-2-7 Mar—w/i 2 of 47.20
G-2-7 Mar—w/i 2 of 42.19
H-2-7 Mar—81mm w/i 3 of 43.25
H-2-7 Mar—MGs distributed to 2-7

Artillery:

Battery:

I-3-11 4x 105mm

Ammunition:

105mm: 5 HE, 2 Smoke, 1 Illum

Reinforcements:

C-1-5 Mar—0600 26 October enter via Entry hex A.

Historical Orders:

•2-7 defends the ridge line extending east from hill 67.

•All Marine units have prepared defense op sheets.

Japanese Information:

Set up:

3 Bn, 4-2, 1 Bn, 124-18, 2 Bn, 124-18, Wpns-124-18—South of xx.15

Artillery:

Batteries:

21 FA 4x 10cm
7 HA 4x 15cm
4 HA 4x 15cm

Ammunition:

10cm: 12 HE, 2 Smoke, 2 Illum
15cm: 24 HE, no Smoke, 2 Illum

Reinforcements:

None

Historical Orders:

•3 Bn, 4-2 and 124-18 were to attack the ridge from the south to cut off the Marines defending the Matanikau line.

Victory Determination

The Japanese player wins if he controls all hexes inside 50m contour line around hex 37.18 and 43.19. Otherwise, the US player wins.

5.6 Japanese Counteroffensive

It is interesting to speculate as to the effect of a coordinated attack by the Japanese at any time during the Guadalcanal campaign. The attack on Henderson Field provides the opportunity to examine such a scenario. The Japanese player is given the at start forces in the Matanikau area and must deploy them in a concerted way to coincide with the Henderson Field attack while the American artillery and air advantage is thinly spread.

The Japanese mission is to establish a bridgehead on the east bank of the Matanikau river for use against the Henderson Field perimeter.

First turn:1800 23 October

Last turn:1740 25 October (96 turns)

Map Area:All

US Information:

Set up:

I-3-1 Mar, 2x 37mm AT (from 1 Mar)—w/i 1 of 34.25, East of the Matanikau River
K-3-1 Mar—w/i 1 of 32.23, East of the Matanikau River
L-3-1 Mar—w/i 1 of 28.22, East of the Matanikau River
M-3-1 Mar—MG w/i 1 of 35.26, 81mm w/i 3 of 43.25, East of the Matanikau River
3-7 Mar—w/i 3 of 29.18
1 Tk (2x 75mm Half-track only)—35.26

Artillery:

Batteries:

D-2-11 5x 75mm
E-2-11 5x 75mm
F-2-11 5x 75mm
I-3-11 4x 105mm

Ammunition:

75mm: 48 HE, 5 Smoke, 5 Illum
105mm: 20 HE, 2 Smoke, 2 Illum

Reinforcements:

1200 24 October—2-7 Mar at 51.27
0600 25 October—C-1-5 Mar at 51.27

Historical Orders:

•3-1 Mar is defending the east bank of the sandspit from a Japanese crossing. 3-7 Mar holds the southern end of the flank against movement across the Log bridge.

•All Marine units have prepared defense op sheets.

U.S. Special Rules:

Hex 34.26 is illuminated at night by searchlights

Airpower:

U.S. Air Superiority (rule 1.8b) is limited to **three** turns per day. Additionally, the SBD is not available at all.

Japanese Information:

Set up:

1 Bn, 4-2—West of the Matanikau River, South of xx.23
2 Bn, 4-2, 1,2,3 Ind Tk—W of Matanikau river, North of xx.23
1 Bn, 124-18, 2 Bn, 124-18,, Wpns-124-18, 3 Bn, 4-2, Wpns-4-2—West of the Matanikau River

Artillery:

Batteries:

21 FA 4x 10cm
7 HA 4x 15cm
4 HA 4x 15cm

Ammunition:

10cm: 40 HE, 10 Smoke, 2 Illum
15cm: 20 HE, 5 Smoke, 2 Illum

Reinforcements:

None

Historical Orders:

•4-2 and 124-18 are to attack the American Matanikau position in concert with the attack on Henderson Field on 24 October, drive the Marines back and cross the tanks to the east bank.

Victory Determination

Control of **all** hexes of Government Track east of 35.xx to 44.xx (inclusive)—10 per Marine Step Lost during Assault Combat (attacking or defending)—1 (for the Japanese player only)

Control of Hill 67 (above 50m line around hex 29.18)—3

Control of Hill 66 (above 50m line around hex 41.19)—3

Victory Levels

Major U.S. victory	+11 plus
Minor U.S. victory	+6 to +10
Draw	+9 to -13
Minor Japanese victory	-14 to -18
Major Japanese victory	-19 or less

Bibliographical Notes

Before I read Eric Hammel's book *Starvation Island*, I was sure Guadalcanal would be like most Pacific theater battles. Usually, one side or the other holds an overwhelming advantage. Therefore, unless you like digging Japanese out of endless caves or playing Custer (or the Indians) at Bataan and Wake, there is little of interest for a wargame. In Guadalcanal, the aspect with which most of us are familiar is Bloody Ridge. It was an important battle for the Marines to win in that it was the closest the Japanese ever came to retaking Henderson Field. However, as a simulation, it is nothing more than running large stacks of soft targets into unlimited area fire attacks. Not much fun or so I thought. Then I read *Starvation Island* and saw potential for a TCS game. Many of you have had a similar experience of reading an exciting book or article and thinking what a great game it would make.

Starvation Island introduced me to the battles around the Matanikau river that were crucial during the early part of the campaign. The balance of power was equal or slightly to the Japanese advantage during these battles. There was plenty of maneuver. Also, it was Marine success in these battles that guaranteed the Japanese failure on Bloody Ridge. Hammel's book is exciting reading covering the First Marine Division's stay on the Island. He takes the popular approach of focusing on how the individual soldiers perceived the events in which they were involved. I found myself caught up in the action in a way few books have done. I highly recommend *Starvation Island*.

A more recent book on the subject is *Guadalcanal* by Richard Frank. It covers the entire campaign in all its features: air, land and sea. This is an ambitious plan not followed by other authors who either cover only one aspect fully and the others superficially, or cover them in separate volumes. Though more difficult to get through than *Starvation Island*, Frank's *Guadalcanal* is a good overview of the campaign and contains the latest data.

Much was written about Guadalcanal before the publication of the above mentioned books. The campaign was the subject of many books during and immediately after WWII. The most famous

of these is *Guadalcanal Diary* by Richard Tregaskis. It was published even as the fighting continued. As a correspondent on the island from the initial landings until just before Bloody Ridge, Tregaskis provides many insights into the Americans who fought there. He introduces us first hand to the feelings of being bombed and shelled, the uncertainty about the Japanese and about our own General Staff. We sense the "fog of war" that every soldier had to face on a daily basis. Tregaskis is also effective in showing the individual marine's confidence through the hardship and their lighthearted attitude toward their situation.

John Hersey also served as a combat correspondent on Guadalcanal. His book, *Into the Valley*, centered on an action around the Matanikau in which Hersey tagged along with a heavy weapons company on the jungle trail. This book is an excellent place to start if you want to know about combat conditions in the jungle. Another correspondent on the island was Robert Leckie, author of *Helmet For My Pillow* and *Challenge for the Pacific*. It is interesting to hear each correspondent talk about the other. It was a small world on Guadalcanal.

Immediately after World War Two, the various branches of the US armed services set to work preserving the events of that period. Two multi-volume works were completed, one by the Army and one by the Navy. The Army official record was written by John Miller and is entitled *Guadalcanal: The First Offensive*. The focus of this work is primarily strategic and grand tactical (actions of concern to Generals). It makes use of interrogations of Japanese officers and provides information on general movements and supply. Nearly half of the book concerns the Army actions from December to February, but there are good descriptions of the Matanikau battles as well. Copies of the maps in this book appear in many other books on the subject. Miller also authored *Cactus Air Force*, an interesting tale of life for the fliers at Henderson Field.

The History of United States Naval Operation in World War Two by Samuel Eliot Morison includes an entire volume on Guadalcanal (*The Struggle For Guadalcanal, August 1942-February 1943*). This was the last book I read on the subject and I kick myself for waiting so long. I thought it would be about the naval battles and provide little information for my research on Matanikau. However, this book deals in depth with the conflict on the land, and Morison writes with a style unmatched by any other author on the subject. This work can be considered a classic. It might even be a better book to start with than *Starvation Island*.

The official Marine history by Hough, Ludwig, and Shaw is part of *The History of the U. S. Marine Corps in WWII*. The specific volume is *Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal*. Many other Marine histories were written by participants. Griffith, who wrote *The Battle of Guadalcanal*, served as CO of the First Marine Raiders. Jack Coggins's *The Campaign for Guadalcanal* and Zimmerman's *The Guadalcanal Campaign* are similar to Griffith's book. Fletcher Pratt wrote *The Marine's War* right after the war. Though interestingly written, it contains many errors due to the lack of available sources. Miller, Morison, and Zimmerman were, like the correspondents, close to each other during the writing of their histories.

Several books provide insight into Japanese actions and intentions at Guadalcanal. Hoyt's *Japan's War* and the first volume of Toland's *The Rising Sun* both give a great deal of depth on Japanese goals and how racial attitudes led to the eventual downfall of the Japanese Empire. *Kogun: The Japanese Army in the Pacific War* is an interesting source written by a Japanese participant. Japanese weaponry is the subject of J. B. George's book, *Shots Fired In Anger*. George examined captured Japanese weapons and encouraged Japanese POWs to demonstrate their proper use. The book is by a man who loves his guns and provides much insight for those collectors interested in Japanese firearms of this era. It also provided descriptions of Japanese weaponry that is missing from the official histories.

Other useful sources are the many books written on the overall campaign in the Pacific. One recent addition is *The Pacific Campaign* by van der Vat. It is a well-written summary of the action but excessively critical of American strategy. *The Marine Corps in WWII*, edited by S. E. Smith, has a good section on Guadalcanal and the other sections bring additional TCS title possibilities to mind. However, it is generally lacking in detail.

There are plenty of good books on the Guadalcanal fighting. They are not only useful secondary sources but are good reading as well.

Historical Notes

Eight months after Pearl Harbor, the United States began an action that ultimately resulted in the defeat of Imperial Japan. On 7 August 1942, nearly 19,000 US Marines landed on the islands of Guadalcanal and nearby Tulagi. The operation was in trouble from the beginning. The naval defeat of the Allied cruiser force off Savo Island on 9 August gave Japan control of the waters around Guadalcanal. This forced the

Marines' transports to leave with more than half of the equipment and food still in the holds. On the island, the Marines faced the possibility that they would have the same fate as their army comrades on Bataan who surrendered only a few months before. Nevertheless, they went to work setting up a solid defense and finishing the incomplete Japanese airstrip.

Meanwhile, the Japanese were quick to recognize the threat. They had seized Guadalcanal and the Tulagi anchorage during the Port Moresby operation which culminated in the battle of the Coral Sea. They wanted an airstrip there to provide security for the eastward flank of the thrust at New Guinea. It would also provide a forward base for the proposed invasion of New Caledonia, the New Hebrides, and Fiji which would cut Australia's lifeline to the US. Now the airfield represented a danger to the New Guinea operations and the Rabaul and Kavieng forward bases further north. However, the Japanese still suffered from "victory disease". Easy conquest of major Pacific bases of the Western Powers convinced the Imperial Army leadership of their innate superiority. It left them dangerously overconfident. General Hyakutake, 17th Army commander was unwilling to divert significant forces from New Guinea. He began a process of feeding ever larger forces into Guadalcanal in a piecemeal fashion. They were never quite enough to get the job done. The first attempt was a half-regiment sized attack led by Colonel Ichiki. It was a bloody failure that resulted in the death of all but a handful of Japanese. Next, Hyakutake sent General Kawaguchi with a reinforced brigade to oust the Americans.

There were too few Marines on the island to provide a full perimeter defense of Henderson Field. They settled for setting up strong points along the southern, jungle side. Virtually all troops, including service troops, defended either the beach front perimeter or the jungle line. This left few reserves. Fortunately, on 12 September, the major thrust of General Kawaguchi's Brigade fell on the elite Raider battalion led by Colonel "Red Mike" Edson. They defended the position known ever afterwards as "Bloody Ridge". The Americans repulsed the Japanese force after a vicious two day fight that could have gone either way. The result was another 1,000 dead Imperial soldiers. The remnants of the Kawaguchi Force retreated west toward the Matanikau River.

The Matanikau River lives in history with an entirely different connotation than the native meaning. The combat that ensued over the next two months filled all who fought there with memories of "the sinister

river", "river of death", an "evil, ominous" river. The river carried none of these implications when the Marine scouts found the trail that Kawaguchi's men hacked out during their retreat. Several small patrols went to the region west of the Matanikau prior to Bloody Ridge and met only minor resistance. However, the presence of the Japanese was evident when a patrol was massacred in August. The scouts' report on Kawaguchi's trail convinced the Marine commander, General Vandegrift, of the need to secure the west bank of that river. The recent arrival of the 7th Marine Regiment provided the opportunity to achieve that goal.

On 24 September, a battalion of the 7th Marines set out for the Matanikau River. As night fell, the Marines became engaged in a firefight on the slopes of Mt. Austen. This was at the river's headwaters. The Japanese withdrew, yet all but C Company of the 7th Marines returned to the perimeter with the wounded. Supported by 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, C Company advanced to the mouth of the Matanikau. Unable to force the river on the 26th, the Raiders were sent in as support. The 2nd Bn, 5th Marines intended to cross at the mouth of the Matanikau while the Raiders would advance south along the river and cross at the Nippon Bridge. First Battalion, 7th Marines aimed to land behind the enemy after the Raiders had made the crossing.

The plan was similar to two previous battalion sized patrols in the area in August. Those patrols met little resistance and this plan assumed that only scattered remnants of Japanese forces were present west of the Matanikau.

On 27 September, efforts by the 2nd Bn, 5th Marines to cross the mouth of the river were unsuccessful due to fire by dug-in infantry in Matanikau Village. Meanwhile, a Japanese force had crossed at Nippon Bridge and set up a position south of Hill 67 halted the Raiders. At this moment, The fog of war intervened. Misinterpreting a Raider message, the 1/7 went on their seaward enveloping movement. They stumbled into a Japanese battalion bivouac on Hill 84 and were immediately surrounded. Naturally, they had left the radio in camp. A Dauntless "Devastator" scout bomber (SBD) saw HELP spelled out with T-shirts on the hill and radioed the perimeter saving the Marines of 1/7. The Marines fought their way back to the beach. Higgins boats evacuated them and returned them to base. The action had cost 60 KIA and 100 wounded. The silver lining in this fiasco was the positive identification of Japanese forces present in force on the west side of the Matanikau.

That Japanese force was a battalion of

the 4th regiment of the crack "Sendai" division. They had arrived in preparation for the next Japanese attempt on the airfield. The repulse of Kawaguchi's Brigade in September convinced Hyakutake of the seriousness of the situation on Guadalcanal. The veteran 38th "Hiroshima" Division began assembling from Java, Timor, and the Philippines. The Emperor's Own 2nd "Sendai" division, 4th regiment leading, started arriving at Cape Esperance and moving to the Matanikau front. The 4th Regiment was earmarked to establish a bridgehead on the east side of the Matanikau river. Their goal was to control the sandspit as it was the only point allowing the movement of tanks and artillery across the river.

The 4th would then attack east against The Marine perimeter while the rest of the Sendai assaulted from the south. On October 7, following reorganization of the field command structure, the Marines returned to the Matanikau, two regiments strong knowing a sizable force was arrayed against them. The 3/5 Marines immediately met the 1st Battalion of 4/2 (Sendai) which had secured the east side of the mouth of the Matanikau on the 6th. Following a sharp engagement, the Japanese force withdrew during the night, leaving a company as rearguard. The Marines were in position for the big assault on the 8th, but torrential rains forced postponement to the 9th. The night of the 8th, the Japanese company trapped on the east bank attempted to breakout through the 5th Marines and supporting Raiders. In hand to hand fighting, the Japanese entered the Raiders' position—and were annihilated.

Worse was to come for the Imperial forces. Three battalions, 1/7, 2/7, and 3/2 Marines, supported by the Whaling Scout-Sniper group, crossed the Matanikau at Nippon Bridge and advanced in parallel columns, north along the ridges. Chesty Puller's 1/7 Marines ran into the battalion bivouac of the 3rd Battalion of 4/2 (Sendai) in a hollow. Puller called for artillery support while his mortars and machine guns fired into the enfiladed Japanese troops. When his mortar ammunition ran out, Puller joined the other Marine battalions in returning to the east bank. Behind him were nearly 700 dead Japanese of the 3rd battalion, 4th regiment (Sendai). The Japanese commander declared it "zemetsu" (wiped out). The 4th regiment would not figure in the coming offensive, nor would the Japanese tanks and artillery. Ironically, the Japanese had planned a similar attack for the 8th, which was canceled due to rain.

The size of the Japanese buildup west of the Matanikau led Vandegrift to establish a permanent position on the east bank of the

river. This two battalion force was two miles from the Henderson Field perimeter. It was too far to tie in directly which forced them to refuse their eastward “hanging” flank. The 3/1 Marines dug in along the sandspit. They had 37mm anti-tank guns (which could also fire canister) and a pair of 75mm anti-tank half-tracks in support. The 3/7 Marines held the southern flank along the Hill 67 ridge. Their job was to guard against attack from the Nippon Bridge area. On 22 October, under command of Hyakutake, the Sendai division’s southern flanking movement on Henderson Field was still laboring through the jungle, forcing a postponement of the main attack. However, the orders for a second postponement did not reach the Japanese commander on the Matanikau. On the 23rd, General Sumiyoshi, commander of the Japanese 17th Army artillery, was in command on the Matanikau. Sumiyoshi’s force of 4th regiment, Sendai (what remained of it) with a tank company and supporting artillery had made several probes of the American lines during the past few days. This gave Vandegrift reason to consider his “hanging flank”. Marine artillery commander General Del Valle massed nine batteries of artillery in support of the 3/1. Each battery was registered on a 100 yard wide strip of the west bank. It allowed them to use a professional technique known as ‘laddering’. Once registered, the guns’ fire could be walked up and down the ladder by increasing or decreasing the range.

On the evening of the 23rd, Sumiyoshi’s force moved out onto the sandspit, led by the tanks. The result was a systematic slaughter as the Imperial forces approached concentrated Marine firepower. Fire from the 37mm guns and half-track mounted 75s destroyed all the Japanese tanks. The Emperor’s infantry never made it out of their assembly areas which was the same ground as the Marines’ artillery “ladder”. The attack did cause Vandegrift to pull 2/7 Marines out of the line at Bloody Ridge to strengthen the southern portion of the Matanikau flank. Ironically, this and the movement of the artillery is exactly what the Japanese command intended, although not at such a high cost. The 1/7 Marines, supported by a battalion of the 164th Infantry Regiment (US Army), now held the intended point of assault. Unfortunately for Hyakutake, the delay in the southern assault allowed the artillery to re-register in the Bloody Ridge area.

Hyakutake was counting on his nine battalions of Sendai to break the thin Marine line on Bloody Ridge. He wanted to send them reeling back to Henderson Field where they would have to surrender. He did not count on “Chesty” Puller and Gunnery

Sergeant “Manila John” Basilone to hold 1/7 together. The Japanese attack broke on them the night of the 24th. The Imperial troops faced a fire storm of Marine automatic weapons and artillery barrages. Fire from the 2/164th poured in from the left. Yet, by sheer weight of numbers and their famous tenacity, Japanese soldiers established positions within the US lines. However, unlike the Chinese, the Marines did not break and run. They counterattacked and drove the Japanese back. Later, the 3rd battalion of the 164th went into the line piecemeal to contain repeated Japanese attacks. The leadership of men like Puller and Basilone, with the support of the 11th Marine artillery and the 164th Army infantry, prevented a breakthrough. The attacks at Bloody Ridge continued the night of the 25th but never again truly threatened to break the lines.

To the west, it was a different story. General Oka had finally launched his attack on the southern flank of the Matanikau defense. Oka’s force was the 124th regiment of the 18th Imperial Infantry Division. Originally intended to support Kawaguchi’s attack, they arrived at the island without most of their heavy weapons and supplies after severe bombing of their barge transports. Not seriously engaged during the ensuing month, they now attacked in strength at the thinnest part of the line. This was between 2/7 Marines who held the refused left flank and 1/5 Marines on the western edge of the perimeter. The Japanese established themselves in the Marine positions after intensive fighting. However, Sergeant Mitchell Paige of the 2/7 cradled a 30 Cal. machine gun in his arms and led a successful counterattack, winning back the ridge and the Medal of Honor. Eventually, the Japanese force gained a position on the ridge, threatening to enfilade the southern portion of the Matanikau defense. At that moment, Major Odell Connoley collected every Marine he could find to counterattack with C Company of 1/5 Marines. They drove the Japanese back into the jungle, ending the last threat to Henderson Field. Over 3,500 Japanese died in the three day battle, but that was not the end of the struggle. Two naval engagements, the carrier Battle of Santa Cruz and the only surface action between battleships in World War II—the naval Battle of Guadalcanal—took control of the waters around Guadalcanal away from the Japanese. That led to the slaughter of the Japanese 38th Division convoy on November 14. Seven of the 11 transports sank, the remaining 4 were left beached and burning. Only 4,000 battered survivors made their way ashore. Eight thousand men and nearly all the supplies were at the bottom of “The Slot”. The fighting

on Guadalcanal continued until February, but the last hope for a Japanese victory had passed. The battles that occurred on the Matanikau River in October were critical to the American success. By preventing the Japanese artillery and tanks from throwing their weight into the Bloody Ridge assaults, the American forces were able to turn back the determined but unsupported Japanese infantry and save Henderson Field. This bought time for the US Navy to tighten the noose and secure final victory in the southern Solomons.

Guadalcanal not only blocked the Japanese advances in the South Pacific, it also paved the way for the Americans to make advances of their own. Three months after the island was cleared, Guadalcanal became the forward base for MacArthur’s Southwest Pacific advance. Point Cruz was leveled and became a giant dock and warehouse district. Every type of aircraft in the American arsenal flew from the three fighter and bomber strips of Henderson Airdrome and the associated Koli Point Fields. When the Japanese lost Guadalcanal, they lost the initiative and never regained it. Guadalcanal was one of the pivotal moments of the Pacific War.

Players Notes

by Mike Haggett

Marine Notes

The Marines in **Matanikau** have a strong force. Powerful platoons with plentiful support weapons characterize the Marines. In particular, the number of mortar sections, when compared to the Japanese, is impressive. Heavier support, including AFVs, artillery, naval gunfire, and aircraft, is also available in many scenarios. Marine morale is generally better than the Japanese and their command prep rating is better. This results in a force which is more flexible and, at its best, able to literally blow holes in the enemy.

So what could be wrong in paradise? Take a look at the map, particularly the area around the Matanikau River and Matanikau village. Much of the fighting in the scenarios will occur in those areas. The first thing that should strike a Marine is the large amount of jungle. The jungle is *not* your friend, even in those scenarios where you are defending. Jungle slows your units to a crawl (slow reaction times) and limits LOS (no ranged attacks—or artillery spotting). Artillery is limited and airplanes useless. Because of this, be very careful when fighting in the jungle, particularly when defending. Firefights will be vicious, taking place at a

range of one hex. Remember, the Japanese get victory points for killing your Marines in assault. The jungle makes assault more likely to occur. An adjacent Japanese unit that enters banzai mode is going to be on top of you without so much as a by-your-leave. And they don't make morale checks. Or take additions to company morale. Ever. Until you kill them. Or they kill you.

The Marines must therefore be very careful about selecting a site suitable for defense. This is particularly true at night, when your units are dug in, unable to move. Try to select a site that will allow a field of fire and spotting for artillery. Support yourself in depth, if possible. Use your Whaling Scouts as a mobile reserve. Use heavy weapons as strong points in your defense. Nothing shocks an enemy's attack quite so much as a 75mm Cannon on a half-track!

On the attack, make use of your advantages in special units. They provide mobility that is otherwise lacking. Use your Whaling Scouts to take advantage of jungle trails only they can see. Use your Higgins boats to transport forces to the enemy rear. Use the Ballard (known affectionately in playtesting as 'the battle barge') to bombard any Japanese foolish enough to be visible. Use your artillery and air to disrupt the enemy's units. With the use of these tools, you can keep the Japanese off-balance and bring more of your own firepower to bear.

The scenarios for **Matanikau** are usually quite long affairs. Conserve your forces and always keep the long view in sight. Always keep something in reserve to blunt any surprises. Tenacity, perseverance, and a good appreciation of your strengths and weaknesses will go a long way to ensuring that Guadalcanal remains in American hands.

Japanese Notes

Remember all those war movies with "heroic" Marines in foxholes firing automatic weapons like crazy and shouting, "'Japs' on the Wire!"? Well, you're those sorry guys on the wire. If you're careful, you won't end up like your comrades in the movies. First, the bad news. The Japanese Army apparently has never heard of heavy weapons. This is the most pitifully equipped major army in terms of heavy weapons that I have ever seen (including the French in **GD'40!**). If you're fortunate, the Regimental HW Company will make an appearance. A reliance on infantry platoons will be necessary. Second, your troops have an annoying tendency to whip themselves into a suicidal frenzy, bayoneting anything in sight. I count this as a bad thing because any

time you lose control of your troops and what they can or cannot do, it is a bad thing. There are ways to try and make Banzai work for you, but in general it is not something you want inflicted on yourself. Third, forget all those things you heard about special Japanese training for jungle warfare. It works well as an excuse for your enemies getting waxed, but most Japanese troops were as unaccustomed to jungle warfare as their opponents. Your troops move no faster, and fight no better, in the jungle than those Marines. Worse, in fact, because you have no special native scouts to lead you around by the hand. Fourth, while your job is important, it isn't important enough to have your commanders loosen up the purse strings on the artillery ammo. Never count on your own artillery.

All is not hopeless, however. Remember, you are the only army in the world that gets morale benefits for piling into a hex! Emphasize the Marine weaknesses. Fight them in the jungle whenever possible. Close range firefights allow you to get the most from your units while allowing them to close to assault with a minimum of enemy fire. Attack at night when visibility is limited and Marine mobility is non-existent. Don't be afraid to get in close and bayonet the Marines in their holes! The Japanese receive points for killing Marine steps in assault and should take advantage of this. Use the close terrain and your stacking morale modifier to close in. If you banzai, see if you can assault the nearest Marine. While the Banzai unit will probably die, it will probably take some Marine steps with it—and those count as VPs. And always remember, when another one of your platoons has been lit up and is heading for the dead pile and your opponent is chortling with glee, to say, "That's all right, the Tokyo Express will bring me more."

Most of the general comments about the Marines apply to the Japanese as well. Most of the scenarios are long and you should plan accordingly. Your troops are not as well commanded and you should be more careful in your planning of operations. Don't worry so much about a reserve as you do your ability to bring as many troops as you can to the point of attack. Night is your friend and you should plan your big attack operations to occur at night. Give the Marines no time to recover their morale in the quiet hours (not to mention that it also slows down their planning for new operations.)! And, above all, don't worry too much about your casualties. Don't lose men needlessly, but remember fighting the Marines is like wrestling a buzz saw. If you want to inflict casualties and gain VPs in assault, you will have to close with them. Perseverance and a

stoic demeanor (a stoic demeanor always discomfits my opponents...just ask Dean!) are the orders of the day. Hang on, be smart, and play tough.



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Order of Battle and Counter Count

US Marine Forces

5x Higgins Boats

1st Tank Company

HQ: 2x M3a3 (CO, XO), 2x Halftrack w/ 75mm Cannon
1 Platoon: 4x M3a3
2 Platoon: 4x M3a3

Whaling Scouts: 4x Inf

Raider Battalion

A Company: 3x Inf
B Company: 3x Inf
C Company: 3x Inf
D Company: 3x Inf
E Company: 3x Inf
Battalion Weapons: 4x MG, 2x 60mm Mortar

3rd Battalion, 1st Marines

I Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG, 1x 60mm Mortar
K Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG, 1x 60mm Mortar
L Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG, 1x 60mm Mortar
M Company (Battalion Weapons): 4x MG, 2x 81mm Mortar

Regimental Weapons, 1st Marines

2x 37mm AT Gun

3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines

I Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG, 1x 60mm Mortar
K Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG, 1x 60mm Mortar
L Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG, 1x 60mm Mortar
M Company (Battalion Weapons): 4x MG, 2x 81mm Mortar

1st Battalion, 5th Marines

C Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG, 1x 60mm Mortar

2nd 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 (Battalion Weapons): 4x MG, 2x 81mm Mortar

3rd Battalion, 5th Marines

I Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG, 1x 60mm Mortar
K Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG, 1x 60mm Mortar
L Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG, 1x 60mm Mortar
M Company (Battalion Weapons): 4x MG, 2x 81mm Mortar

Regimental Weapons, 5th Marines

2x 37mm AT Gun

1st Battalion, 7th Marines

A Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG, 1x 60mm Mortar
B Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG, 1x 60mm Mortar
C Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG, 1x 60mm Mortar
D Company (Battalion Weapons): 4x MG, 2x 81mm Mortar

2nd Battalion, 7th 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 (Battalion Weapons): 4x MG, 2x 81mm Mortar

3rd Battalion, 7th Marines

I Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG, 1x 60mm Mortar
K Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG, 1x 60mm Mortar
L Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG, 1x 60mm Mortar
M Company (Battalion Weapons): 4x MG, 2x 81mm Mortar

Regimental Weapons, 7th Marines

2x 37mm AT Gun

Imperial Japanese Forces

Independent Tank Company

1st Platoon: 2x Type 98, 1x Type 97
2nd Platoon: 4x Type 97
3rd Platoon: 4x Type 98

4th Regiment, 2nd Division

1st Battalion

1st Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
2nd Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
3rd Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
4th Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
Battalion Weapons: 1x 90mm Mortar

2nd Battalion

5th Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
6th Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
7th Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
8th Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
Battalion Weapons: 1x 90mm Mortar

3rd Battalion

9th Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
10th Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
11th Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
12th Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
Battalion Weapons: 1x 90mm Mortar

Regimental Weapons: 4x 37mm AT, 2x MG, 4x 75mm Inf Gun

29th Regiment, 2nd Division

1st Battalion

1st Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
2nd Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
3rd Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
4th Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
Battalion Weapons: 1x 90mm Mortar

Regimental Weapons: 2x MG

124th Regiment, 18th Division

1st Battalion

1st Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
2nd Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
3rd Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
4th Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
Battalion Weapons: 1x 90mm Mortar

2nd Battalion

5th Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
6th Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
7th Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
8th Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
Battalion Weapons: 1x 90mm Mortar

3rd Battalion

9th Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
10th Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
11th Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
12th Company: 3x Inf, 1x MG
Battalion Weapons: 1x 90mm Mortar

Regimental Weapons: 4x 37mm AT, 2x MG, 4x 75mm Inf Gun

The Gamers