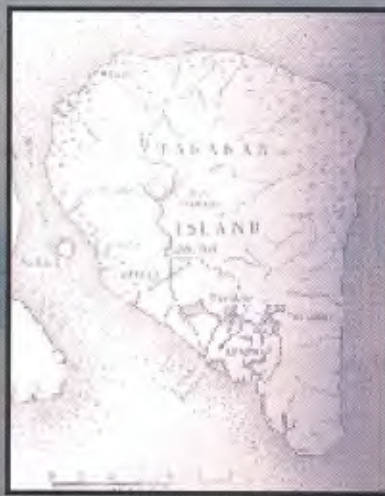


TROPIC THUNDER!

Featuring the battles at Tarakan, Brunei Bay, Labuan, and Balikpapan in Borneo, between the Second Australian Imperial Force and the Japanese. May-August 1945.



Tropic Thunder is a set of 12 scenarios that are compatible with World War 2 Miniature systems. TT! is not an officially licensed or endorsed product. You should own all official products. At a minimum the British and Japanese modules are needed, along with boards: 9, 11, 15, 22, 23, 25, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 50, b, and d, and HGI! 1 and 11.

HEAT OF BATTLE C 2000

Oboe 1, 2 and 6.

As the war in Europe was coming inexorably to its end, a new series of campaigns was beginning in the Western Pacific area. In the Pacific, the names of Iwo Jima and Okinawa were filling headlines around the world, while further south, MacArthur had fulfilled his promise to return to the Philippines and was involved in a bloody and protracted battle to drive out the Japanese. Compared to the climactic struggle to the north, and that now reaching its desperate peak in Europe, little interest outside of Australia was paid to the information that Australian troops were involved in a series of landings in Japanese occupied Borneo.

These landings, designated the Oboe series, were designed to occupy strategic points on the coast of Borneo, clearing the way for a decisive defeat of the Japanese in Java. This would enable the eventual recapture of Singapore, Malaya, and the rest of Indochina, resulting in the isolation of the Japanese forces in the China/Burma/India theatre. Additionally, Borneo was (and is) an important oil producing area, whilst Brunei Bay was an important harbour, and erstwhile home to the Japanese fleet which sailed to destruction at the Battle of Leyte Gulf. Landings were made at three points before the war ended in August 1945, Oboe One at Tarakan, a small oil-rich island on the east coast of Borneo, Oboe Six at Labuan and Brunei Bay, and Oboe Two at Balikpapan, a major oil-producing area and port on the east coast.

The operations were controversial right from the start. Critics argued that they were unnecessary, would be extremely costly, and that the troops involved would be better used in the direct drive to Japan rather than in 'mopping up' operations against bypassed and impotent forces that had little strategic significance any more. Although a relatively large number of troops remained in the area, the strangulation of the Japanese-held islands had left them isolated and poorly supplied, and what few aircraft and naval forces remained to the Japanese in the area posed little threat to operations elsewhere.

However, there were powerful political motives at play. MacArthur was loath to use any but American troops for the recapture of the Philippines, and to enable this Australian troops had replaced Americans in many of the drawn-out battles to contain and destroy the Japanese in places such as Bougainville and the north coast of New Guinea. It was felt that the liberation of countries such as the Netherlands East Indies (now Indonesia), the British-owned areas in Borneo, and Singapore and Malaya should be, as far as possible, undertaken by Australians acting as part of the British Commonwealth. For the same reason, a company of Dutch troops accompanied the landings at Tarakan and Balikpapan. Furthermore, much of the Australian army (though by no means all), including the famous 7th and 9th Divisions, had seen little action since the Huon Peninsula campaigns at the end of 1943, and it was felt that it was important to contribute towards the inevitable victory to ensure a favorable place in the post-war negotiations.

In retrospect, the Oboe landings were strategically pointless. But before we are too quick to judge, it must be remembered that nobody expected the war to end so abruptly. Indeed, although eventual victory was assured, it was thought that it would be at least late 1946, at the earliest, before the war would be over. Reading the various battalion histories and other accounts from the time, one cannot help but feel the great sense of relief that the troops felt about being spared further fighting. It was a job nobody was looking forward to, but which would undoubtedly have been carried out with the same professionalism and devotion to duty so clearly shown during the Borneo campaigns.

Despite misgivings at the top, and grumbings from the bottom, that first-class troops were being given a second-class job, the plans for the Oboe landings were set, and on the 1st of May, 1945, as Russian troops were battling their way through the shattered ruins of Berlin, the veteran troops of the 26th Brigade, 9th Division, Second AIF, opened the first act of the Oboe concerto, the drawn-out battle for Tarakan.

The Troops- The Australians.

For the Oboe operations, the majority of troops would be coming from the 7th and 9th Divisions of the Second Australian Imperial Force (AIF). Both the Divisions had extensive combat experience, originally in the desert of North Africa, where they fought with distinction at Tobruk, Syria and El Alamein. In 1942 they were withdrawn, and the first to arrive back in Australia, the 7th, was rushed to Papua New Guinea to strengthen the forces fighting there in the grinding battles of Milne Bay, Gona and Buna. Here, in the claustrophobic confines of the green hell, the battalions were decimated. Thrown unprepared against well dug-in defenses at Gona and Buna, and wracked by tropical diseases, the 7th Division learnt the art of jungle fighting the hard way.

The 9th Division remained in the desert longer than the 7th, and was to play a vital role in the opening stages of the battle of El Alamein. Acting as the anvil against which Rommel destroyed his armour, the division suffered heavy casualties (when the 2/48th was withdrawn it required only two trucks to

transport the remains of the battalion back from the front). Arriving back in Australia, the 9th Division was allowed time to rest and refit, not least to replace the men lost in the holocaust of El Alamein. This time was also spent in absorbing the lessons learnt in New Guinea, and in training the men for a new battlefield, much different from the wide-open spaces they were used to in North Africa.

During the Huon Peninsula campaigns of 1943 these lessons were put to good use, and the Australians were able to inflict a series of defeats upon the Japanese at places such as Lae, Finckhafen and Sattleberg. These victories did not come without a heavy cost however, in particular due to sickness, and as the campaign finished the troops were withdrawn for an extended period of rest, refitting and training on the Atherton Tablelands in Northern Queensland. Here they were to remain until the first months of 1945, when they embarked for the opening stages of the Oboe operations. Although there was much grumbling about the long period of inactivity, there is little doubt that when they were finally committed to combat again, they were amongst the best-trained soldiers in the world in the art of jungle fighting.

One of the lessons that emerged from the New Guinea campaigns was the importance of close armour support whenever possible. After a disastrous start at Buna, where light tanks, totally unsuited to the dense jungle, were picked off and destroyed by determined defenders, the right balance of tactics, doctrine and equipment was found in the Matilda II, large numbers of which were shipped to Australia when they became obsolete in Europe and North Africa. The Matildas' heavy armour, particularly when combined with the high-explosive power of the 3-inch (76mm) howitzer version, proved a winner in the jungle. The slow speed of the tanks, which so handicapped them in the desert, was not a problem in the 'stop and crawl forwards' style of fighting that was the norm. Many 2-pounder (40 mm) versions were converted to 3-inch versions, but conversions stopped after the introduction of an adequate 2-pounder high-explosive shell.

New versions of the Matilda were developed in response to the needs of the infantry, these included flamethrower and bulldozer versions, as well as one which mounted a 'Hedgehog' naval depth charge thrower on the rear of the vehicle, designed to provide devastating short range fire support. Of these, only the flamethrower, or 'Frog' version was used successfully in combat, arriving just in time for the Oboe landings.

Not only did the infantry now have effective tank-infantry doctrine, for the Oboe operations, the provision of supporting arms such as artillery and air support was on a scale never before seen by the Australians. This was a welcome change for them, and would save many lives in the months to come, although, as everyone involved knew, only the infantry could go in and occupy the ground, and nobody underestimated the ability or the courage of the Japanese in defence.

The Japanese.

Bypassed and isolated, the Japanese were never the less determined to make the Allies pay for every inch of territory gained. While some of the garrisons were poorly trained and equipped, the forces in Borneo were bolstered by good quality trained soldiers, marines and dedicated defence troops. Some areas, such as Balikpapan, were liberally supported by artillery and coastal defence guns, for instance at Manggar airfield west of Balikpapan, where they wreaked havoc on the Australian tanks trying to support the infantry in the open areas around the airfield. One of the major problems for the defence was the sheer size of the area, which left the units in Borneo scattered, trying to defend a long perimeter of strategic points around the coast, while also trying to control major points inland. The people of Borneo were generally not cooperative with their new masters, and the last great wave of headhunting amongst the Dyaks was against the occupying Japanese.

Well known for their tenaciousness in defence, there was widespread unrest at the top of Australian military circles about the wisdom of attacking well-prepared Japanese positions such as Tarakan, from which there could be no retreat. In numerous places throughout the Pacific, the Americans had, when the policy of bypassing such points had not been possible, established heavily armed surrounding areas, and then let the defenders starve into submission. Perhaps the best example of this policy was the huge staging post of Morotai, where outside of the port and airfield area, a policy of non-contact and 'live and let live' was pursued. This reached such an extent that it was rumored that Japanese had been observed creeping through the surrounding minefields to watch the films shown at the outdoor movie theatre.

When containment was not an option, bitter fighting was the invariable result. On Tarakan and Labuan islands, where retreat was impossible, the Japanese fought to the end. Even at Balikpapan and Brunei Bay, where retreat inland was possible, the Japanese ethos meant that withdrawal was not an honourable option, although by this stage of the war, the iron code of Bushido

was beginning to weaken. Some prisoners were taken, these were however few in number until after the formal end of the fighting in August.

Faced with a defensive battle, the Japanese had applied their usual military ingenuity in developing extensive and elaborate defensive systems. The strategic importance of such oil-producing areas as Balikpapan and Tarakan had not been lost on the Dutch, and the Japanese were able to take over existing pre-war concrete fortifications in many places. To these were added such refinements as, on Tarakan, extensive anti-tank ditches filled with oil, which when ignited proved formidable barriers to movement. Extensive minefields and booby traps were laid, although the consensus amongst those who had been in the desert was that the German minefields had been worse. Naval depth charges and mines were buried on roads and likely approaches, and the resulting huge detonations could be devastating - on Tarakan a buried mine hurled a 25-ton Matilda eighteen feet into the air, landing it on its back. The lifting of mines and boobytraps was always a dangerous business, at times overwhelming even the large contingent of engineers supplied in anticipation of just such problems.

When driven inland from the beaches, the Japanese were able to create powerful defences rapidly from the tools at hand, and at Tarakan it took several months to destroy the force there, despite overwhelming superiority in numbers and equipment. As elsewhere, the Japanese preferred to attack at night, and the Australians were forced to become very adept at digging in each nightfall in anticipation of raids and grenade attacks. Generally these had little more than nuisance value, although some, such as the breakout from the 'Pocket' on Labuan, were serious attacks that caused considerable disruption. Faced with certain death, Japanese soldiers were prepared to sell their lives dearly, and suicide attacks were common, again as on Labuan where soldiers charged the Australian lines with aircraft bombs strapped to their backs.

Oboe 1 - Tarakan, commenced 1st May 1945.

The first of the Oboe landings was against the small island of Tarakan, which lies off the northeast coast of Borneo. An important oil-producing area before and during the war, it also had an airfield, from which, once repairs had been made, fighters could be flown to protect subsequent landings in Borneo. The oil produced at Tarakan was of extremely high quality, to such a level that, filtered for water and sand, it could be bunkered directly by the oil-burning ships of the Japanese fleet.

Mostly covered in dense jungle rising from steep clay ridges, the only flat areas were the airfield and around the town of Tarakan in the south of the island. The airfield itself lay almost exactly at sea-level and, as the tide came in, was inundated by seawater. Heavily cratered by Allied bombing, the task of repairing it turned into a nightmare, and it was never operationally used. The only suitable landing beach lay to the south of the township of Tarakan at the small village of Lingkas. Although extensive beach fortifications existed, much of these were neutralized by engineers of the 2/13 Field Company. Faced with compromised beach defences and a massive naval bombardment, the Japanese retired inland, and the initial landings were largely unopposed.

The defenders consisted of over 2000 men, drawn mostly from the ranks of the 455th Battalion, the 2nd Naval Garrison Force, and the tough marines of the Kure Special Naval Landing Force. Well equipped, they were able to hold out against the heavily reinforced 26th Brigade Group of the 9th Division, totalling over 11,000 men.

As the 2/23rd and 2/48th Battalions cleared Lingkas and advanced towards Tarakan township, the 2/24th Battalion began its drive for the airfield. Their advance the next day was repeatedly blocked as the Japanese made extensive use of minefields and prepared defences along the ridges that dominated the road to the airfield (Scenarios *Sturt and Wills*, see also *Peningkibaru Push* from the Paddington Bears 98 pack). Reaching the airfield on the afternoon of the 3rd of May, they pushed across, only to be stopped by determined fire from the Japanese defences (scenario *The Airfield*). The next day was spent in patrolling, and on the 5th it was found that the defences on the ridge across the airfield had been abandoned.

The 2/23rd Battalion had occupied Tarakan Township except for the low, densely jungled slopes of Tarakan Hill, which rose above the center of town. An initial assault on the 3rd of May had met with little success, and on the night of the 5th they were replaced by the 2/4th Commando Squadron, who were under orders to take the hill the next morning. Lacking adequate information regarding the Japanese positions, some attempts at patrolling were made, but little could be done in the dark. The next morning, after mortar and airstrikes, the commandos moved off. The result was a shambles, as the lightly armed commandos were unable to destroy the well dug-in bunkers and tunnels from which the Japanese poured fire onto the attackers. Boosted by a troop of Matildas, some headway was made, and by nightfall the commandos had an uneasy hold on the hill, although there were frequent alarms as bypassed tunnels

and bunkers erupted into life (scenario *Curly and the Brigadier*). Finally the hill was declared cleared the next day, as engineers methodically destroyed tunnels and bunkers with explosives, burying an unknown number of defenders inside.

With the town and the airfield in Australian hands, the Japanese retired into the rugged interior of the island, where they defended the steep ridges and gullies with the desperation of the trapped. The advance to the central stronghold of Fukukaku turned into a series of patrol actions and savage firefights (scenarios *Commandos, not Supermen* and *Fruit and Nuts*), and it was to take nearly two months before the tenacious defenders were finally destroyed. It was during this time that one of the best known figures in the Australian army, Lt. T. C. 'Diver' Derrick, V.C., D.C.M., was killed (*Fruit and Nuts*). When MPs tried to stop an overloaded jeep carrying members of his platoon on their way to his funeral, they were told to "Get out of the way, we are going to the funeral of a MAN".

Even after the fall of Fukukaku, disorganised resistance continued from small groups and individuals refusing to give up. Some were killed as they tried to reach the mainland on improvised rafts. Ironically, the airfield was never used operationally, and the events of the war were soon to prove the bloody capture of Tarakan a waste of lives and effort. And it had been bloody, only around 500 of the Japanese survived, most of whom surrendered only after the war ended. The Australian casualties, consisting of 225 killed and over 650 wounded, had been higher than the entire 6th Division's casualties in the whole of the first Libyan Campaign.

Oboe 6, Labuan Island and Brunei Bay, commenced 10 June, 1945.

The second of the Oboe operations was in reality a series of landings in and around the coastline of Brunei Bay, a British territory in the northwest of Borneo. Brunei Bay, an ideal natural harbour, was, like Tarakan and Balikpapan, also an oil-producing area. Labuan Island is a roughly pear-shaped island controlling the entrance to the Bay, in addition it had two airfields which would be useful in later operations. It also occupied a central position with respect to surrounding future targets such as Indochina, Java and Malaya, and thus was a natural choice for a landing. To the north lay the headquarters of the Japanese 37th Army at Jesselton. Controlling the Brunei Bay area and the nearby towns of Weston and Beaufort would effectively isolate this nerve-centre.

The troops defending the area belonged mainly to the 56th Independent Mixed Brigade, it was believed that there were over 2000 in the area. Facing these was the heavily reinforced bulk of the 9th Division (minus the 26th Brigade at Tarakan). Of these, the 24th Brigade was tasked to capture Labuan Island, while the 20th Brigade was to capture Brunei Bay and surrounding areas. In addition, there were large naval and air task forces available to support the landings and counter any air or naval threat from the Japanese forces in the south-east Asian region.

In the Brunei Bay area, the landings went well, and the initial targets were soon captured in the face of only sporadic resistance by troops largely disheartened by the overwhelming strength of the attackers. The defence stiffened however as the drive north towards Weston and Beaufort began.

The hardest fighting of the initial landings occurred on Labuan Island, where after a textbook landing behind a massive barrage (very heartening for the troops in the landing craft) and a flying visit from MacArthur and the Australian Divisional Commander, General Morshead, the grim realities of combat once again asserted themselves. Advancing north from the landing area at Brown Beach, the 2/28th and 2/43rd Battalions soon began to meet increasing numbers of Japanese. The 2/28th found itself stuck behind a deep canal that crossed the route north, the only bridge having been blown. A sticky situation developed, and only the support of a troop of tanks and some well directed mortars enabled the battalion to cross and capture the dominant high ground on the other side (scenario *Don Company's Canal*). The 2/43rd was able to break out, and by nightfall was moving steadily towards its goal of the airfields to the north, clearing occasional areas of resistance as they went.

By the end of the fourth day, the remaining Japanese were pressed into a small area of rugged jungle covered ridges surrounded on three sides by extensive mangrove swamps. Attempts to clear this area met with heavy losses, and after several costly probes by the 2/28th, it was decided to bomb the area into submission. Consequently, a massive air, artillery and naval bombardment commenced, which devastated the remaining defenders. After several days, an attack was planned and the first of the new Matilda 'Frogs' were brought up to support it.

The Japanese had other plans however, and the night before the attack a company-sized group crept south through the swamps and burst into the supply elements in Victoria township and on Brown Beach. This raid caused havoc, as the Australians and Americans had not been expecting any action of the

Kind. A resolute and quick response by members of the 2/13 Docks Operating Company enabled the attackers to be contained and eventually destroyed (scenario *In the Heat of the Night*).

With dawn, and the situation in the rear under control, the attack into the Pocket was launched on two axes. Machinegun nests and bunkers not smashed by the bombardment were systematically overcome, the first operational use of the Frogs being a great success. The combined-arms assault slowly destroyed the remaining Japanese, and by evening the island was secured (scenario *Frogs in the Pocket*).

The focus of operations changed now to the mainland, where the drive northwards to Weston and Beaufort began. Instead of fighting through the jungle on predictable lines of approach, it was decided to use a more innovative advance along the Padas and Klias rivers (scenario *A Day on the River*). Making good use of the boats and landing craft available, the 9th Division pushed north, securing the towns after some brisk fighting. The remaining Japanese, after some futile attempts to recapture the towns, withdrew towards their headquarters to the north at Jesselton. The end of the war meant that the undoubtedly costly fighting involved in the capture of that area was not required.

Oboe 2, Balikpapan, commenced 1st July 1945.

The Balikpapan landings were the last large-scale land operation of the war, although that was of course not known to any of the participants at the time. It had been a controversial decision, and there was much disagreement about the wisdom of the operation, particularly from the command echelons of the Australian Army. A pet project of MacArthur's, it was felt that it was a risky operation that could cost excessive casualties. As a result of the unrest, naval and air support was given on a scale not seen before by the Australians.

The Balikpapan landings were assigned to the 7th Division, nicknamed the 'Silent Seventh' by its members in response to the publicity given to the 9th Division, the much-publicized heroes of Tobruk and El Alamein. They were, despite their self-deprecating nickname, a formidable unit, and were extremely well trained for the job in hand. Facing them were a mixture of Japanese units, some high-quality naval units and an army battalion newly arrived from Tarakan, others armed laborers and Indonesian and Formosan conscripts. They were strongly supported with well-sited coastal guns and other artillery, plus a very extensive system of beach-obstacles, bunkers, anti-tank ditches and entrenchments running the length of the coast from Balikpapan, situated at the tip of a large headland, east to the important airfield of Manggar.

Balikpapan was a large town by Borneo standards, center of one of the most important pre-war oil-producing areas in Asia. The industrial area of the town, with its extensive docking facilities lies inland from the headland, while the attractive European quarter of Klandasan (also known as Glandesa) is on the lower slopes of a large ridge which dominates the landing beaches along the southern side of the headland. The ridge, marked 'Parramatta' on the Australian maps, was partially topped by oil tanks and an industrial area, largely ruined by the bombing. It was here that the landing was to take place, although a deception plan was used to try and convince the Japanese that the landings would be occurring further east at Manggar. A massive bombardment, both by air and sea, destroyed much of the defences along the coast, and American underwater demolition teams systematically worked to clear the landing beaches.

The bombardment culminated in the pre-landing inferno of the 1st July, and the landings were largely unopposed, although there were the usual mix-ups associated with an operation of this size. Initial objectives were quickly secured, but as the troops following up pushed through, the troubles began. The 2/10th Battalion, tasked with capturing the vital heights of Parramatta, found that the resistance was rapidly stiffening as Japanese troops recovered from the effects of the bombardment and started to filter back into their positions. To complicate matters, most of the promised armour support was bogged on the beaches, and the artillery radio systems were out of order. Nevertheless, the aggressive commander of the battalion, Lieut. -Colonel Daly, decided that waiting would only let the situation get worse, so he pushed his companies forward with what support was available.

In vicious fighting, Hill 87 at one end of the ridge finally fell as the Matildas, including the terrible new Frogs rolled forwards, and by evening the 2/10th were securely in control of Parramatta (scenario H11 87), although all over the front the Japanese responded with sporadic mortar and long-range machine-gun fire. Elsewhere resistance had been mixed, with some battalions securing their objectives almost without loss, while others had to slog against well dug-in Japanese, determined to slow the advance (scenario To Signal Hill). Attempted counter-attacks during the night were beaten off by the light of burning oil-tanks, the smoke from which formed a dark backdrop for the operation. During the next few days the beachhead was extended to occupy all of the town and pushed east along the coast-road towards Manggar airfield.

The relatively open terrain around the airfield provided good fields of fire for

Japanese naval guns emplaced in the hills behind the airfield, and several tanks were destroyed and others damaged attempting to close with them. The infantry crossed the airfield, but were unable to progress further. Atrocious weather, which turned the ground to mud (and caused havoc with the weapons) and persistent Japanese counterattacks led to an extended battle for the area, but, given the massive Allied superiority in artillery and other supporting arms, the outcome was.

Elsewhere, progress was slow and steady, as the Japanese were driven inland in a grinding contest of strength. The Australians were unwilling to suffer too many casualties, so wherever possible heavy concentrations of artillery, including the guns of the supporting fleet were used. Combined-arms advances, especially using the Frogs, proved very effective in clearing the Japanese from the roads inland, although frequent roadblocks and ambushes were a hazard. As elsewhere, the end of the war was greeted with relief, and operations turned towards reconstruction and rebuilding the damage that the Japanese occupation and the invasion had wrought.

Some Ramblings From the Designer

As anyone who has tried to put together an ASL project can tell you, the first thing that one finds out is that it is going to take longer than expected, and this project was no exception. It has, however, been very interesting to try to put together a scenario pack that shows the various aspects of a little-known campaign. I was first inspired to do so after buying the excellent thematically linked scenario packs produced by Time on Target, now, sadly, out of business. The later Heat of Battle SS packs also take a similar thematic approach, while not being constrained by a single historical mapboard.

The Borneo campaigns seemed an obvious choice, being little known outside Australia, while having a variety of actions, equipment and challenges to keep players interested. I have tried consistently to provide each player with a series of challenges in each scenario, as well as providing a variety of differing situations - not always an easy thing. Some hard decisions had to be made in the selection of scenario subjects. Some of these were limited by the nature of the fighting, much of which consisted of section (Squad), platoon, or company sized patrols along jungle paths and trails, followed by slow cautious advances against well-entrenched Japanese positions.

In a campaign where the Japanese were predominantly on the defensive, it has been a challenge to find situations where the Japanese must play a more active role than simply taking what the Australians can dish out. Remember, just because you are on the defence does not mean that you have to be static, as always in ASL it is better to act than to react.

As to hints on playing the scenarios, my first and only suggestion is that the each player will be well served by trying to think historically. The soldiers of each side had (usually!) good reasons for fighting in the manner that they did, and the scenario designs try to reflect this. Use the tools you have available, that is why you have been given them.

I would like to thank all those who have helped in this project, you know who you are. Suffice to say, many people have helped in manners big and small, and it would not have been possible without them all. Lastly, I hope you enjoy this package of scenarios as much as I have making them. Derek Ward, 2000.

Credits.

Heat of Battle would like to thank Derek Ward for this module. He has worked tirelessly to help us bring it to you. You may notice that he is the designer of the entire pack and marks the first time that HOB has used "outside" designers for a product. Hopefully you will be as delighted by this pack as we are. Most importantly, we hope, that you budding designers will feel comfortable enough to trust us with your works of passion. For this hobby to survive we need to have additional outlets for designers and we hope HOB serves as one of those outlets.

Playtesters: Bo Mikklesen, Magnus Hindsberger, Mike Rudd, Stephen Mugford, Steve Linton, Rob Banozic, Scott Holst, Jose Ramos, Jeff DeBraal, Cesar Soria, Phil Pomerantz, Dick Eichenlaub, Sonny Hays Eberts, Greg Dahl, Derek Ward, Eddie Zeman, and Steve Dethlefsen.

Graphic Counter Design: Klaus Fischer. Visit his web site at WWW.fischers-design.de/asl/. All counter artwork is of original design and implemented in original graphic layouts. HOB has a new web site at www.heatofbattle.com please visit us and feel free to offer your opinions and suggestions. HOB can be reached at ERZEMAN@AOL.COM or STEVDETH@incom.net

Project Manager: Steve Dethlefsen

Scenario Design: Derek Ward

Playtest Operations: Ed Zeman

Counter Art: Klaus Fischer

HOB

STURT AND WILLS

TT 1

Design: Derek Ward

Battlefield Orientation: Hexrows A through G are NOT in play.

22	36



Play Balance:

Japanese: Exchange one OB given 1+3+5 pillbox for one 2+5+7 pillbox.

Australian: Add a FT to the Australian OB.

Tactical Objective. The Australians win if at Game End there are no good order Japanese MMC on any level 3 hill hex.

Historical Special Rules

1. EC are Moist, with no wind at start. PTO Terrain is in effect (G.1), including light jungle (G.2.1). [EXC: Roads do exist. All streams are shallow. All buildings are of single story wood construction]. Place overlay 2 on 36 DD8, DD9.

2. Australian 338s are Assault Engineers.

3. The Australian Radio represents one module of 88mm OBA with HE and SMOKE only.



Historical Perspective

Tarakan, 2nd May 1945. On the same day as the Reichstag in Berlin fell to the advancing Russians, and the war in Europe ground to its inevitable conclusion, a new campaign was beginning in the Pacific. With the New Guinea campaign over, and the Americans occupied to the north in the Philippines, it fell to the Australians to conduct the preliminary invasions in Borneo prior to the recapture of the Netherlands East Indies. On the 1st May, troops of the 26th Brigade Group landed on the island of Tarakan off the eastern coast of Borneo. With much of the beach defences dealt with by demolition teams of the 2/13th Field Company, the biggest problem of the landing was the receding tide, which exposed 500 metres of sticky soft mud. Despite this, by nightfall the Australians held the beachhead at Lingkas village and much of the town of Tarakan, and had suffered only light casualties. The next morning, the real troubles began. On the left, the 2/24th Battalion had been charged with the drive for the all-important airfield, but first two hills, nicknamed Sturt and Wills, that overlooked the built-up area, and from which the Japanese were keeping the Australians under fire, had to be taken.

Aftermath. Sturt and Wills were taken by the two lead companies of the 2/24th, but only after a softening up by artillery and a largely inaccurate airstrike. The Sturt feature fell quickly, but resistance was much harder on Wills, where the Japanese had constructed a strong defensive position consisting of pillboxes, trenches and concrete bunkers. In a fierce fight, several resolutely defended strongpoints were burnt out with flamethrowers. One bunker which was destroyed with a flamethrower proved to be an ammunition store; the resulting fire burnt for four days. As elsewhere, the Japanese were proving to be tough opponents, and it would be several more days before the airfield was taken.

TURN

Japanese Sets Up First [ELR: 4] [SAN: 4] [64]

Elements 455th Battalion, and 2nd Naval Garrison Force set up on any level 1 or higher hex of board 36:

10-1	9-0	8-0	4'-4-7	3-4-7
			8	4

2-2-8	2-2-8	2-2-8	2-2-8	2-2-8	2-2-8
2	2	2	2	2	6

1+3+5	2+5+7	Trench
3	4	

Australian Moves First [ELR: 4] [SAN: 3] [178]

Elements 2/24th Battalion set up on any whole hexes of board 22:

9-2	8-1	8-0	4'-5-8	3-3-8	2-4-8
			12	2	2

4-2	4-12	2-7	51	2-11	1PP	24-1	1PP	1PP
2	3	2	2	2				

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9

THE AIRFIELD

HOB

TT 2

Design: *Derek Ward*

Battlefield Orientation: Only rows R-GG on Bds 9/15 and A-P on Bd 38 are in play.



Play Balance:

Japanese: Exchange the OB given 9-0 for a 9-1.

Australian: Add one FT to the Australian OB.



Tactical Objective. The Australian player wins at Game End if he amasses ≥ 8 VPs. (CVPs are earned normally, VPs are earned as per HSR 3). However, the Australian player must also amasses \geq twice the CVPs than earned by the Japanese player.

Historical Special Rules

1. EC are moist, with no wind at start. Place overlays as follows; **Wd 1-** 38 C3; **Wd 2-** 38 K5/J4; **Wd 4-** 38 E2/D1; **Wd 5-** 38 O1/P0. PTO Terrain is in effect (G.1), including light jungle (G.2.1). All roads exist. Due to the very high water-table, tunnels are N/A at level 0. All buildings are wooden.

2. During the set up the Japanese may place one set DC (36 FP) HIP. The DC may only be detonated by a good order Japanese SMC. The 75 mm INF Gun (only) may boresight.

3. The Australian player earns 1 VP for each Aircraft Bay (see SSR 4) that he controls at Game End.

4. Runway hexes that contain a circular or semi-circular extension of the runway (eg 38 N3 and M4) are "Aircraft Bays" Each Aircraft Bay is treated as if it were a vehicular wreck. (i.e. as a +1 LOS henderance/TEM). Hindrance is only counted if the light brown art depiction is crossed by a LOS/LOF (inclusive of hexsides).

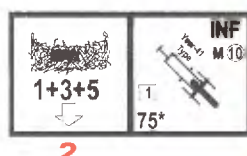
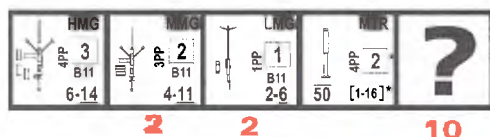
Historical Perspective

Tarakan, 3rd May 1945. On the previous day Lieutenant-Colonel Warfe's 2/24th Battalion had successfully cleared the Japanese from the two hills marked Sturt and Wills on the Australian maps. By that evening they had taken "Essex", the third hill overlooking the road to the airfield. The next morning, a company supported by tanks and mortars moved off towards the airfield, but were soon halted by strong resistance, including a 25mm gun which was found to have fired over 11,000 rounds. With one company engaged in an ongoing battle for the small village of Peningkibaru, the remaining companies were fed into the fight but, with the tanks halted by minefields, made little progress. Under pressure to take the airfield by nightfall, in the late afternoon Warfe ordered his men forward again.

Aftermath. As Warfe watched from a nearby ridge, the Australians swept forward in a "dashing attack", only to see the leading platoon all but disappear in a huge explosion. The Japanese had detonated two depth charges buried in the roadway, the explosion leaving only five men of the platoon standing. As their officer assembled the rest of his men, the other platoons continued forward, braving a converging belt of machine gun fire and the shells of a 75mm artillery piece, and managed to reach the dubious shelter of the aircraft dispersal bays, where they went to ground. As night fell, a withdrawal was organized. The 2/24th had a foothold on the airfield, but the Japanese still controlled "Rippon Ridge", which dominated the far side of the airfield. The next day was spent in careful patrolling and probing of the defenses. Inexplicably, the Japanese used the night of the 4th to withdraw, ceding control of the airfield and one of their best defensive positions. Although the airfield was now in Australian hands there would be much fighting to drive the tenacious Japanese out of the rugged center of the island.

Japanese Sets Up First [ELR: 4] [SAN: 4]

Elements 2nd Naval Garrison Force set up boards 15 and west of hexrow 4 of board 38:

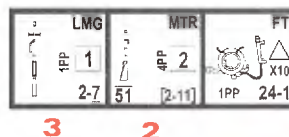


TURN



Australian Moves First [ELR: 4] [SAN: 3] [166]

Elements 2/24th Battalion set up on any whole or half hex of board 9:



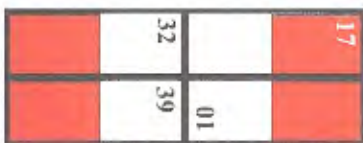
CURLY AND THE BRIGADIER

HOB

TT 3

Design: Derek Ward

Battlefield Orientation:



Only hexrows A-P on Bds 10, 32 and 39, and R-GG on Bd 17 are in play.

Play Balance:

Japanese: Add a 9-1 leader and a LMG to the OB.

Australian: Enter the turn 4 reinforcements on turn 3.



Tactical Objective: The Australians win if at any point they control all 3 pillboxes and 12 of the 18 level 4 hexes on board 39.

Historical Special Rules

- EC are moist, with no wind at start. PTO Terrain is in effect (G.1), including Light Jungle (G.2.1). All roads exist. Buildings 32 C1/D1 and 32 F4 are of stone construction, all others are wooden.
- The Japanese player may place 1 Cave Complex, with a maximum of 3 caves in it. Tunnels to/from pillboxes may end in the complex. Pillboxes/entrenchments must be placed (HIP) on Level 2 or higher hexes of Board 39.
- The Matilda II's have a unlimited HE. The Matilda CS has Smoke 9 and unlimited HE as per British Vehicle Note S.
- The Australian Armor Leader may during any Australian MPh dismount as per D 6.5. Whilst dismounted he may direct the fire of same-hex and/or ADJACENT tanks as if he were mounted in them. Whilst dismounted he may direct the fire of more than 1 tank per phase, in all other manners he is considered an infantry SMC. The Armor Leader may remount during a subsequent MPh, whereupon he becomes a normal Armor Leader again.



Japanese Sets Up First [ELR: 3] [SAN: 5] [130]

Elements 455th Battalion, set up on Bd 39 and Bd 32 west of the board 32 A6-P4 Road:



10 3



2 2 10



2 6 3

TURN

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8

Historical Perspective

Tarakan Hill, Tarakan, 4th May 1945. On April 30th, the day before the landings at Tarakan, the commandos of Kev Garvey's 2/4th Commando Squadron had landed unopposed on the nearby island of Sadau to enable the 2/7th Field Artillery to establish a firebase to support the main landings. Since then the commandos had had a grandstand view of the action on Tarakan, with the added benefit of being at a safe distance. On the 3rd May they were withdrawn from Sadau and landed on Tarakan, where in the evening they occupied positions vacated by the 2/23rd Battalion in front of the dominating slopes of Tarakan Hill, where the Japanese had successfully repelled all attacks. A sketchy reconnaissance was undertaken, and plans made for an assault the next morning. Despite misgivings about the poor nature of the information about the Japanese defences, as the preliminary barrage lifted the first 2 troops of commandos fixed bayonets and moved off. **Aftermath.** The attack went wrong from the start, as the leading sections were hit by heavy rifle and machinegun fire, going to ground in the protection of some concrete buildings and shellholes on the lower slopes. Inevitably, given inaccurate and limited information, casualties began to mount. Troopers Norm Verram and Curly Papworth, carrying two wounded companions, came across a jeep and driver which they, despite protests, commandeered. Moments later they were stopped by MPs and the owner of the jeep appeared. Calling for assistance for the wounded, the officer asked "How's it going up on the hill? I'm Whitehead." He received the reply "I'm Curly...it's pretty rough." Hearing that bayonets and .303s were not suitable weapons for attacking pillboxes, he promised to send some tanks. As the highest ranking officer on Tarakan, Brigadier Whitehead was as good as his word, and soon a troop of Matildas was rolling up the slopes in support of the hard-pressed commandos. Lacking the heavy support weapons available to infantry battalions, the commandos had borrowed PIATs from the 2/2nd Pioneers. With these, the tanks, and a flanking move by the Squadrons' third Troop, the attackers pushed up and over the hill. By nightfall most of Tarakan Hill had been cleared, but isolated pockets of resistance, hidden in caves and tunnels in the undergrowth, continued to hold out for several days.



Australian Moves First [ELR: 5] [SAN: 3] [168]

Elements 2/4th Commando Squadron, set up on Boards 10/17:



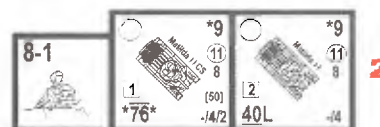
12 4 2 4

Enter on Turn 4 on the eastern edge of Board 32.



6 2 2

Elements "C" Squadron, 2/9th Armored Regiment, enter on turn 5 on 17 Y10 or 32 I10.



2

UP HELEN HILL

HOB

TT 4

Design: Derek Ward

Battlefield Orientation: Only hexrows N to U are in play.



N



Play Balance:

Australian: The Japanese player must exchange the HMG for a MMG.

Japanese: The Australian reinforcements enter on turn 3.

Tactical Objective. The Australian Player wins immediately if all three Japanese Machine-Guns are Captured/Destroyed or if all Japanese units are eliminated from play.

Historical Special Rules

1. EC are Moist, with no wind at start. PTO Terrain is in effect (G.1), including Dense Jungle. Streams are shallow, roads are jungle tracks.
2. Japanese units/Fortifications may set up HIP on level 2 or higher hexes only. Japanese units/Fortifications may not set up adjacent. Only one OB given MG may set up in any one hex and must be possessed by a Japanese OB given unit. Japanese units that enter a level 0 hex are eliminated for VC purposes and immediately removed from play.

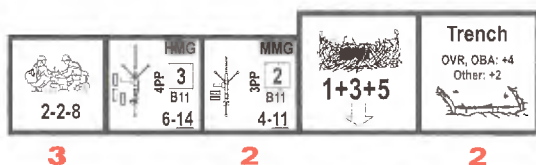


Historical Perspective

John's Track, Tarakan, 12 May 1945. For the Tarakan operations, the three infantry Battalions of the 26th Brigade were augmented by the 2/3rd Pioneer Battalion, engineers trained as infantry. During the second week of operations, they were tasked with clearing John's Track, running across the narrow southern end of the island. Optimistically envisioned as a three day walk to the coast, it soon turned into a nightmare of dense jungle, slippery muddy ridges and staunch Japanese defenders. After initial probes against the feature called Helen had been repulsed, the fresh D Company was brought forward. Following a pounding of the hill by artillery, the lead platoon began to struggle up through a slippery tangle of smashed branches. A second platoon began to work their way around to the left. **AFTERMATH.** Leading the way up was Corporal John Mackay and his friend Lance-Corporal 'Yorkey' Reidy. Pushing through the tangle, they fell into a Japanese position. Mackay killed one with his bayonet, Reidy finishing the others off with his Owen gun. Mackay then charged another machine-gun position, a well placed grenade silencing the gun. Borrowing Reidy's Owen gun, he charged a third position, killing its crew but falling mortally wounded himself. Reidy, by then also wounded, moved forward to help, but found him dead. For their actions, Mackay was awarded the Victoria Cross, Reidy the Distinguished Conduct Medal. Despite their achievement, the advance was halted, and by the time the platoons were withdrawn, over half had been killed or wounded. It would be nearly a week of bitter fighting before signallers as far away as Morotai would pick up the triumphant radio report of "I'm up Helen Hill!"

Japanese Sets Up First [ELR: 5] [SAN: 3]

Elements of Tokoi Force, Fudaki detachment set up on Level 2 or higher hexes (See HSR: 2):



TURN

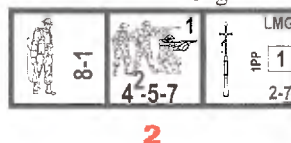


Australian Moves First [ELR: 4] [SAN: 3]

Elements 2/3rd Pioneer Regiment, enter on turn 1 from the southern board edge:



Second Platoon enter on turn two on either the West/south/east board edge.



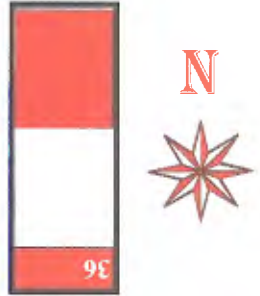
COMMANDOS, NOT SUPERMEN

HOB

TT 5

Design: Derek Ward

Battlefield Orientation: Only hexrows H to R are in play.



Play Balance:

Australian: Add a 9-2 leader to the Australian OB.

Japanese: Add a 4-4-7 to the Japanese OB.



Tactical Objective. The Japanese win immediately if at any time they gain 7 CVP or have sole control of all Level 3 hexes.

Historical Special Rules

1. EC are Moist, with no wind at start. PTO Terrain is in effect (G.1), including Light Jungle (G.2.1). Streams are dry, roads are jungle tracks, the H4 Bridge does not exist.
2. Australians may deploy freely prior to set up, and may set up entrenched (in a foxhole) and concealed. Japanese may set up concealed.









Historical Perspective

Tarakan, 15th May, 1945. By the middle of May, the men of the 2/4th Commando Squadron were beginning to tire. Intended as raiders and scouts, and lacking the heavy weaponry of the regular infantry, they objected to being used in that role for sustained periods. To make matters worse, the Squadron was being parceled out as support where needed, by sections and troops, thus decreasing its fighting strength. One disgruntled trooper remarked that someone had obviously confused “commando” with “superman”. Never the less, there was a job to do, and for the 2/4th it was clearing Snags Track and the Agnes feature, part of the task of encircling the Japanese stronghold of Fukukaku. On the 15th, B Troop was ordered to take and hold a spur jutting out from Agnes. Occupying it without a fight, the men raced to dig in before the Japanese, who could be heard moving in a gully at the bottom of the hill, counterattacked. **Aftermath.** Having dug in, the forward section under Lieutenant Bruce Stanford were preparing to brew up when the Japanese poured up the hill. About 50 Japanese, led by an officer screaming “Banzai!” burst out of the jungle in front of the Australian positions, but were driven back by the fire of Bren and Owen guns. One soldier came to within 3 feet of Trooper Collett, who felled him with a burst from his Owen gun. During a pause in the fighting, another commando tried to search the body, only to have the “dead” man spring up, hurl a grenade and dart into the bush. Ammunition began to run short in the weapon pits, and Troop Sergeant Brian Jagger crawled from position to position, carefully counting the magazines he carried to ensure that all received some. For about an hour the Japanese attacked, fell back to the shelter of the jungle, then attacked again. Unable to dislodge the commandos, the attacks dwindled, and when Australian mortars joined in, conditions became unbearable for the Japanese, who withdrew. Taking their wounded with them, they left over half their force dead behind them, a tribute to the courage with which they had pressed the attack. Despite the intensity of the fighting, the commandos were amazed to find that their losses amounted to only 3 wounded.

Australian Sets Up First [ELR: 5] [SAN: 4]

Elements B Troop, 2/4th Commando Squadron, set up on Level 2 or higher hexes of Hill 604:




	8-1		1-4-9		6-4-8		LMG		1PP	1	2-7	51		2	[2-11]
3															

TURN



Japanese Moves First [ELR: 3] [SAN: 3]

Elements 455th Battalion, set up on Hexrows Q and/or R:

	9-0		8-0		1		2		LMG		1PP	1	B11	2-6
5 2 2														

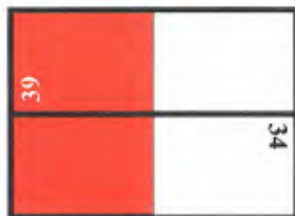
FRUIT AND NUTS

HOB

TT 6

Design: Derek Ward

Battlefield Orientation: Only hexrows 39 R-GG and 34 A-P are in play.



Play Balance:

Australian: Set up within 3 hexes of 34H9.

Japanese: Exchange a 4-4-7 for a 4-4-8.

Tactical Objective. The Japanese win if at game end there are no Good Order Australian MMC in the Australian set up area.

Historical Special Rules

1. EC are Moist, with no wind at start. PTO Terrain is in effect (G.1), including Dense Jungle (G.2.1).
2. Due to the pre-dawn light, there is a +1 LV modifier to all fire attacks [EXC: CC].
3. The pillbox may set up HIP but may only be placed in level one, or higher hill hex. The trench must be set up ADJACENT to the pillbox and may also be HIP as per G.2. Tunnels are NA. The HMGs and 228 crews must set up (HIP) in the pillbox but may be Bore Sighted (the Bore Sighted location may be recorded after viewing the Australian set up).
4. The Australians may set up concealed if in concealment terrain.
5. Any Australian unit/s that cross the road (jungle path) running along 34 A6-H6-J5-P6 are removed from play.



Australian Sets Up First [ELR: 4] [SAN: 4]

Elements B Troop, 2/4th Commando Squadron, and A Company, 2/48th Battalion, set up within 2 hexes of 34 H9:

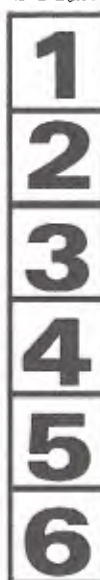


2 3



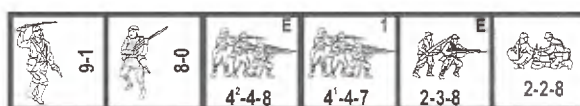
2

TURN

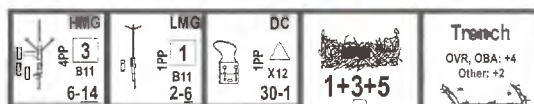


Japanese Moves First [ELR: 3] [SAN: 2]

Elements 2nd Naval Garrison and Tokoi Force, set up on any level 1 or higher hex of Board 39:



2 3 2 2



2

2

1+3+5

Trench
OVR, OBA: +4
Other: +2



Historical Perspective

Tarakan, 23rd May 1945. Although the objectives of the oilfields and the airport were quickly taken, the bitter fighting to destroy the Japanese dragged on throughout May. The Japanese had retreated into the rugged interior of the island, where, from carefully constructed fortifications they contested every advance by the Australians. The Australians had total control of the air, and were able to call on air support, tanks and artillery. In the end it was only the infantry who could go in and dig out the stubborn defenders. The 2/48th Battalion had been tasked with clearing the enemy from the feature known as "Freda", but in a week of fighting had made little progress. Late in the afternoon of the 22nd, an attack by two platoons from A Company, led by the redoubtable Lt Derrick VC, DCM, cleared the Japanese from the area known as "Knoll 2", but losses had been heavy, and further progress that day was impossible. In the darkness, Derrick settled his men into their foxholes and awaited reinforcements, two sections from B Troop, 2/4th Commandos, under the command of an old friend, Lt Bruce Stanford.

Aftermath. As the commandos came in, Lt Derrick positioned them to fill gaps in his thin line. Around midnight firing broke out, but died away again. Just before dawn, the Japanese launched a pre-emptive attack on the Australian positions. To the extreme discomfort of the Australians, they found that their position was overlooked by a large bunker on Freda from which Japanese machineguns began firing on fixed lines. Lt Derrick stood up to assess the situation as a burst from a machinegun swept the area, and he fell back crying that he had been hit in the "fruit and nuts" (rhyming slang for "guts"). Although mortally wounded, he continued to direct the fight, which ebbed and flowed in the pre-dawn gloom. At dawn the Japanese withdrew, as did the Australians, much to the disgust of the tired and bloodied troops who had fought so hard to hold the position. Lt Derrick died the next day, ending a career that had included Tobruk, Tel el Eisa, El Alamein, Lae, Finchhafen, Sattleberg and now Tarakan. News of his death spread like wildfire through the Australians, and his loss was deeply mourned.

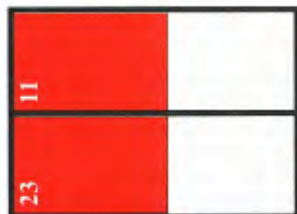
DON COMPANY'S CANAL

HOB

TT 7

Design: Derek Ward

Battlefield Orientation: Only Hexrows R-GG of boards 11 and 23 are in play.



Play Balance:

Japanese: Add a 2-2-8 and MMG to the OB.

Australian: The first Australian OBA fire mission is automatically accurate.

Tactical Objective. Australians win if at any time they have 27 CVP on Board 11 hill hexes.

Historical Special Rules

1. EC are Moist, with no wind at start. Place overlays O3 on 23CC7/DD7, X11 on 23Y8/Z7, RP5 on 23Y6/Z6, O2 on 23AA3/BB3, and G2 on 23 Z1/Z2.
2. PTO Terrain is in effect (G.1), including Light Jungle (G.2.1). All roads exist. All buildings are of wooden construction. Rice paddies are drained.
3. The Canal on board 23 is treated in all respects as a Deep Stream [EXC: may be entered using Low Crawl contrary to A10.52, AFV may not enter canal hexes]. Only the bridge in hex X3 exists, it has been destroyed (place a rubble counter in that hex), and is impassible to AFV, but may be traversed by infantry at a cost of 4 MF, which is considered Hazardous Movement.
4. Japanese have Booby Trap Capability Level B on both boards. Mines may be placed on both sides of the Canal.
5. The Australian Radio represents 1 module of 76+mm Battalion Mortars, with HE and Smoke available.
6. The Matilda II has unlimited HE. The Matilda CS has a Smoke Depletion Number of 9 and unlimited HE as per Brit. Vehicle note S. The Australian Armor Leader may during any Australian MPh dismount as per D 6.5. Whilst dismounted he may direct the fire of same-hex and/or ADJACENT tanks as if he were mounted in them. Whilst dismounted he may direct the fire of more than 1 tank per phase, in all other manners he is considered an infantry SMC. The Armor Leader may remount during a subsequent MPh, whereupon he becomes a normal Armor Leader again.



Historical Perspective

Labuan Island, 10th June 1945. The small island of Labuan sits astride the approaches to Brunei Bay, not only an important oil producing area, but a good anchorage, home to the Japanese fleet which had sailed to destruction at the battle of Leyte Gulf. After a textbook landing, the men of the 2/28th Battalion, hardened veterans of North Africa and New Guinea, moved rapidly inland, meeting little resistance as they swept through the heavily damaged town of Labuan. Not all the Japanese were gone however, and two were shot moments before Generals MacArthur and Morehead (the Divisional Commander) arrived with an entourage of photographers. Ahead of the celebrities, the bitter realities of war started again, with the fighting increasing as the troops pushed north. D ("Don") Company, under Captain Eastman, had been tasked with taking a bridge over the canal that crossed "Baker" route and then gaining the high ground beyond. By mid-morning, Lieutenant Danny Woodward's 16 Platoon was approaching the seemingly deserted canal area, to find that the bridge had been blown. Wary of an ambush, Woodward let fly a string of abuse across the canal in the hope of tempting a response, after a suitable pause, the first section moved onto the ruined bridge. **Aftermath.** As Woodward led his first section across the tumbled cement slabs the waiting Japanese opened fire with rifles and machineguns. The forward section was pinned north of the bridge, whilst the rest of Don Company was raked by fire on the open approaches. To make matters worse for those trapped on the wrong side, the section found that it was lying in an area filled with booby traps, fortunately the wired mortar and artillery shells failed to explode. As one member of the section crawled to the canal to get help, a Japanese was heard to call in good English "Don't worry Aussie, we get you later". South of the bridge tanks, mortars and a section of MMGs were called for, and under cover of their fire the rest of 16 and 17 Platoons were able to cross the canal, albeit with losses. Private Bob Walters of 17 Platoon was so incensed at the casualties that he attacked a Japanese position single handed. Although wounded in the legs, he fought until ammunition for his Owen gun was exhausted, he then harassed the retreating Japanese with grenades. There were later found to be 18 bodies around the post that Walters had taken, he was subsequently awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. With the Japanese in retreat and with the help of the supporting fire, Don Company was able to secure the important high ground to the north of the canal.

TURN

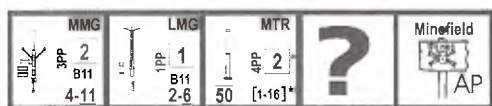


Japanese Sets Up First [ELR: 3] [SAN: 5]

Elements 371st Battalion, 56th Independent Mixed Brigade, set up concealed anywhere north of Canal:



9

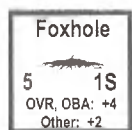


2

2

6

30



5

Australian Moves First [ELR: 3] [SAN: 2]

Elements D Company, 2/28th Battalion and 2/9th Armoured Regiment, enter from southern board edge of board 23 as indicated:

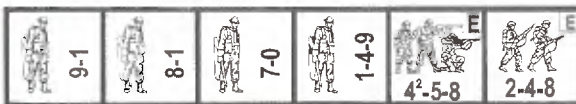
Enter on Turn 1.



3

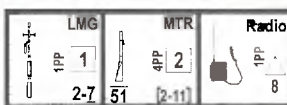
2

Enter on Turn 2.



7

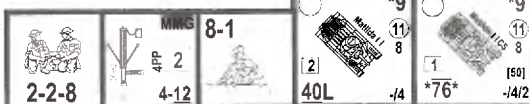
2



3

2

Enter on Turn 4.



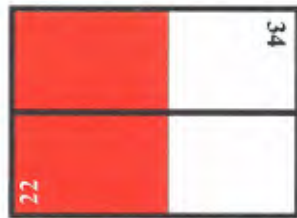
2

2 dm

IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT

HOB

TT 8
Battlefield Orientation: Hexrows 34 A-P and 22 R-GG are in play.

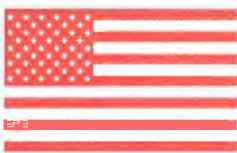


Play Balance:
Australian: Exchange the OB given 7-0 for an 8-1 leader.
Japanese: All kindling DR have an additional + 2 DRM.

Tactical Objective. The Japanese win by accumulating 20 VP. CVP are gained normally, in addition, the Japanese gain 1 VP for each building hex containing a Blaze at Game End.

Historical Special Rules

- 1. EC are Moist, with no wind at start. Night Rules (E.1) are in effect, with a NVR of 2 hexes at start.
- 2. PTO Terrain is in effect (G.1), including Light Jungle (G.2.1). Roads on board 22 exist. All hexes south of the Board 22 stream are considered ocean hexes and may not be entered. All buildings are wooden and single-story.
- 3. Place a Wire counter in hex 22Y8, this represents a POW cage. Place 1 Squad-sized unarmed MMC counter under the wire. These POWs may undertake no action until “freed” by a Japanese SMC/MMC expending 2 MF in an adjacent hex, after which the Prisoner counter is replaced by a Japanese 3-3-6 MMC.
- 4. All Allied units [EXC: the 2-3-7] must set up in building hexes, with no more than 1 MMC per hex. The 2-3-7 HS must set up adjacent to hex 22Y8.
- 5. Japanese have MOL capability versus buildings only (A 22.613) and may attempt kindling without a leader or NTC.



Historical Perspective

Victoria Township, Labuan Island, 21st June, 1945. After the rapid advance in the first few days of the operation, the 2/28th Battalion had pushed the remaining Japanese into an area of rough hills bounded by mangrove swamps known as “The Pocket”. Initial attacks had been repulsed, so it was decided to let the artillery do the job of destroying the Japanese stronghold. For days the defenders were pounded by bombers, artillery and even the 8-inch guns of the cruiser Shropshire. On the 20th the bombardment was intensified in anticipation of an assault the next day, with bombs and artillery raining down, while small patrols infiltrated and located Japanese positions for intense mortaring. Troops were briefed and positioned, and a fearsome new weapon was brought forward flame-throwing Matildas, nicknamed “Frogs”. Finally, the troops settled down in the hot night to snatch what sleep they could. The Japanese however had other plans. A company-sized group had crept through the mangrove swamps, and at 4.30 a.m. they swept into the Australian and American supply elements assembled on the beach and in the town.

Aftermath. The weary troops awoke to the sound of gunfire and screams and shouts as the raiders swept through the town. As always at night, impressions of the combat are fragmentary - one group attacked the soldiers guarding the prisoner-of-war cage, one Australian and two Japanese were killed. The Americans of the Boat and Shore Regiment were hard hit, losing three dead and eight wounded. Gradually resistance began to stiffen, as rear-area troops grabbed rifles and began to fight back. Sergeant Antill of the 2/1st Docks Operating Company gathered a group together who managed to hold off the attackers for some hours, and as dawn broke Antill organised the final clearing of the Japanese survivors. By the time that reinforcements of front-line troops arrived, Antill had the situation firmly under control.

Australian Sets Up First [ELR: 3] [SAN: 2]

Elements 2/1st Docks Operating Company, 2/4th Pioneer Battalion and 593rd Boat and Shore Regiment (USN) set up as per SSR 3 and 4:



2

4

4



6

TURN



Japanese Moves First [ELR: 3] [SAN: 5]

Elements 371st Battalion, 56th Independent Mixed Brigade set up on any whole hex of Board 34:



3

4

2

2

FROGS IN THE POCKET

HOB

TT 9

Design: *Derick Ward*

Battlefield Orientation: Only Hexrows 36 P-GG and 37 A through R are in play.



Play Balance:

Japanese: Pillboxes are worth 2 CVP.

Australian: Pillboxes are worth 4 CVP.

Tactical Objective. The Australians win at any time by gaining 35 CVP. Casualty VP are gained normally also each pillbox controlled by the Australians is worth 3 CVP. (see HSR 5).

Historical Special Rules

1. EC are Wet, with no wind at start. Place overlay 5 on 37 K2/K1, O1 on 36 Y5, and O2 on 36 Y8/Y7.
2. PTO Terrain is in effect (G.1), including Dense Jungle (G.2.2). All roads exist [EXC: vehicle road bonus does not apply]. Treat each Palm hex, including Road/Palm hexes, as Shellholes, with an additional + 1/2 MF/MP for entry costs (simulating the effects of the extensive bombardment). Streams are Shallow.
3. Japanese may set up concealed if in concealment terrain. The two at-start Tank-Hunter heroes may set up HIP, and must each possess one of the DC. The third DC may be placed prior to play as a set DC if desired. Due to the destruction caused by the bombardment, boresighting is N/A.
4. Use Matilda CS tanks to represent "Frog" flamethrower tanks. They have a 32 FP Turret-mounted flamethrower replacing the MA. they have a 1 hex normal range, X11, and a red CS# of 4. The Matilda II tanks have unlimited HE.
5. Japanese troops exiting the board count fully towards Australian CVP.



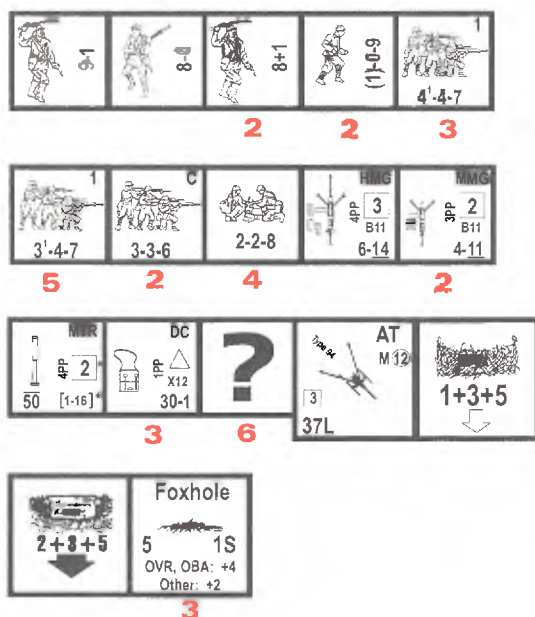
Historical Perspective

"The Pocket", Labuan, 21st June, 1945. After the swift capture of the town of Victoria and the island's two airfields, the remaining Japanese had been compressed into an area of rugged ridges and broken ground surrounded on three sides by mangrove swamps. The first attempts by the 2/28th to penetrate the area had been repulsed, and rather than take further casualties it was decided that the task of reducing the Japanese would fall to the artillery. For four days the area was pounded by field guns, mortars, air strikes by RAAF Beaufighters, and even the 8-inch guns of the HMS Shropshire. By the 20th patrols were penetrating deep into the area, and the final assault was planned for the 21st. The Japanese had other plans, and during the night a raiding party crept through the swamps and into supply elements in Victoria harbor, causing havoc. With dawn the situation stabilized, and a two company attack pressed ahead, this time supported by a terrifying new weapon, "Frogs", Matildas mounting flamethrowers.

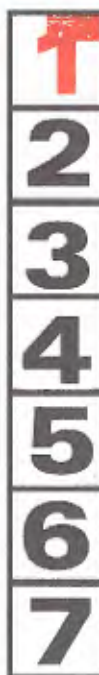
Aftermath. For days, increasingly desperate attempts had been made by the Japanese to escape the merciless shelling. Reports speak of men charging the Australian lines with aircraft bombs strapped to their backs, few made it far. Now, in the face of the terrible new tanks, Japanese resistance crumbled. The Australians moving in from the north and the east pushed the Japanese into an ever smaller area, with the Frogs proving brutally effective as machine-gun posts and strongpoints were methodically destroyed. The battlefield was described as an "inferno", with "the place blown to smithereens", and "semi-demented defenders". The Australians had nothing but praise for the courage of the Japanese, but against the firepower now massed against them, raw courage was not enough. By nightfall, all resistance on Labuan had ceased.

Japanese Sets Up First [ELR: 3] [SAN: 3]

Elements 371st Battalion, 56th Mixed Brigade set up on any whole hex of Board 36:

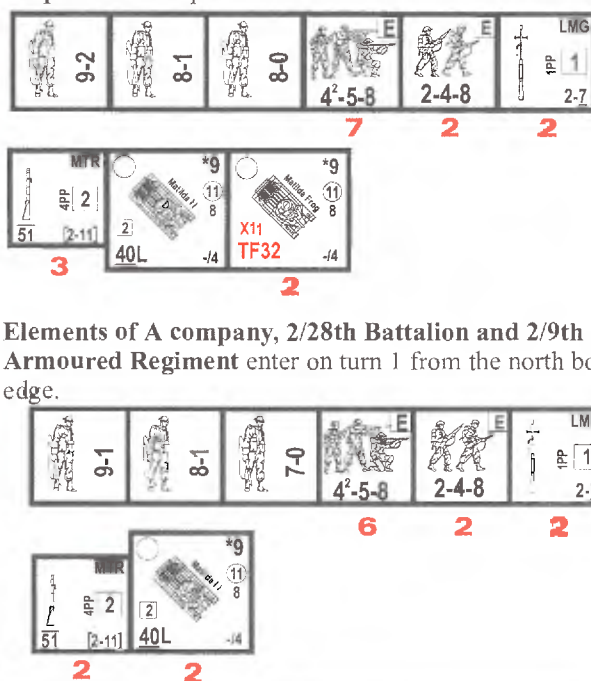


TURN



Australian Moves First [ELR: 3] [SAN: 2] []

Elements D Company, 2/28th Battalion, 2/9th Armoured Regiment and 2/1st Armoured Brigade Reconnaissance Squadron set up on board 37 hexes numbered 3 or higher:



Elements of A company, 2/28th Battalion and 2/9th Armoured Regiment enter on turn 1 from the north board edge.

DAY AT THE RIVER

TT 10

Design: *Derek Ward*

Battlefield Orientation: Only Hexrows H-Z are in play.



Play Balance:

Japanese: Exchange both 3-4-7s for 4-4-7s.

Australian: Exchange the 8-1 for a 9-2s.

Tactical Objective. The Australians win if at game end they control hexes N6, O8 and P8

Historical Special Rules

1. EC are wet, with no wind at start. Place overlay **O5** on hexes O5/P4, and overlay **WD1** on hex O4. PTO Terrain is in effect (G.1), including Dense Jungle (G.2.2). All buildings are of wooden construction. The river is deep, with a slow current towards the south.

2. Australians must enter as passengers.



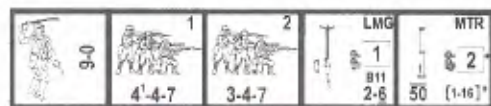
Historical Perspective

Klias River, Brunei Bay, 21st June, 1945. At the same time as the 2/28th and 2/43rd Battalions were fighting on Labuan Island, the rest of the 24th Brigade, the 2/32nd Battalion had been landed at Brunei Bay. Initially meeting little resistance, had cleared the Japanese from around the bay. Inland however, the defenses stiffened, and the 2/43rd was soon transferred to the mainland. The main Japanese force was concentrated around the town of Beaufort, an important road, rail, and river junction. Rather than fight overland through terrain that favored the defense. It was decided that the attack would be mounted from the rivers. A policy of aggressive patrolling was initiated, with the 2/32nd on the Padas River, and by the 2/43rd and 2/11th Commando Squadron on the Klias Peninsular and river. Riding in landing craft, and supported by a specially converted "gunboat", the soldiers of B Company 2/43rd quickly adjusted to the "naval" life.

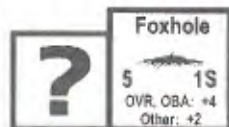
Aftermath. It was estimated that there were between 800-1000 Japanese in the Beaufort area, and these would have to be neutralized before a possible advance northwards towards Jesselton, headquarters of the Japanese 37th Army. The Japanese were, however, scattered and without artillery, whilst the Australians enjoyed massive air-support and even field artillery, which had been brought up the rivers on barges. There were several actions as a result of the Australian patrolling, including one on June 21st, in which two platoons of B Company (the "Marine Company") landed "firing from the hip" to engage a group of Japanese occupying a large white house beside the river. The landing craft had approached the bend in the river at slow speed to minimize noise, then raced for shore to land the troops before the surprised Japanese could react. A sharp engagement followed, with the Japanese put to flight after losing ten dead. The cost for the Australians had been slight, only one man wounded. Maps and documents, weapons and ammunition were found in the house, including Australian rifles. With the capture of Beaufort soon following, the war was nearly over for the 2/43rd.

Japanese Sets Up First [ELR: 3] [SAN: 4]

Elements 56th Independent Mixed Brigade, 37th Army set up on/within 4 hexes of N6:



3 2

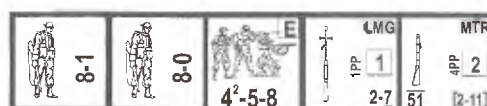


4

2

TURN 1 Australian Moves First [ELR: 4] [SAN: 2]

Battalion Elements B Company, 2/43rd, enter on turn 1 from southern board edge:



6 2



2

1
2
3
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6

FROM BRITAIN TO BORNEO

HOB

TT 11

Battlefield Orientation: Only Hexrows A through P of both HG! boards are in play.



Play Balance:

Japanese: Add a MMG and 2-2-8 to the OB.

Australian: Add a 3-3-8 and FT.

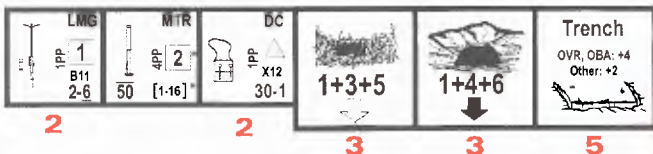
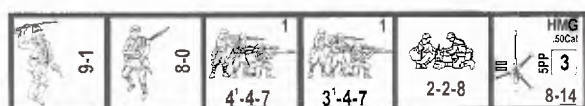
Tactical Objective. Providing they have not lost more than 20 CVP (personnel units only, CVP for tanks other than crew CVP is NA), the Australians win if at game end they have more than 25 CVP. CVP are gained normally, in addition the Australian receives 2 CVP for each pillbox/cave and 1 CVP for each Trench they control at game end.

Historical Special Rules

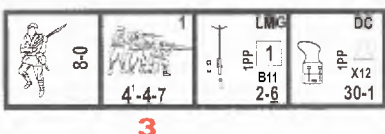
- EC are moist, with a light breeze from the southwest at start. PTO Terrain is in effect (G.1) including Light Jungle (G.2). All roads exist, all Brush is Brush, not Bamboo.
- All Japanese MMC, SMC and SW must set up on Level 1 or higher hill hexes. All units may set up HIP if in suitable terrain (including in entrenchments), however, due to extensive photo-reconnaissance, all entrenchments/pillboxes (not caves) must set up on-board. A minimum of 1 Pillbox and 1 Trench must set up within 2 hexes of ID9.
- Japanese receive 1 module 80+ OBA (HE only) directed by an Offboard observer on Level 1 on the western edge. Australians receive 1 module 100+ OBA (HE and smoke) directed by an Offboard Observer on Level 1 on the southern edge. For the Prep Fire Phase of Turn 1, the Australian may place a Smoke FFE:1 with normal accuracy dr and with Extent of Error dr halved.
- The Australian Armour Leader may during any Australian MPH dismount as per D 6.5. Whilst dismounted he may direct the fire of same-hex and/or ADJACENT tanks as if he were mounted in them. Whilst dismounted he may direct the fire of more than 1 tank per phase, in all other manners he is considered an infantry SMC. The Armour Leader may remount during a subsequent MPH, whereupon he becomes a normal Armour Leader again.
- The Matilda II's have unlimited HE. Use the Matilda CS counter to represents a "Frog" flamethrower tank. It has a 32 FP Turret-mounted flamethrower replacing the MA, with a 1 hex normal range, X11, and a red CS# of 4.
- The Australian 3-3-8s are Assault Engineers.

Japanese Sets Up First [ELR: 3] [SAN: 3]

Elements 1st Battalion, 22nd Naval Landing Force set up on any level one or higher hill hex, (see HSR 2):



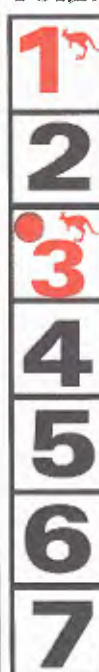
Reinforcements enter on northern board edge on/after Turn 3.



Historical Perspective

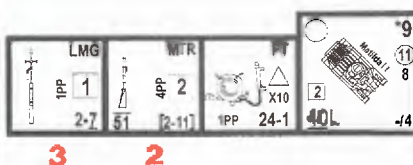
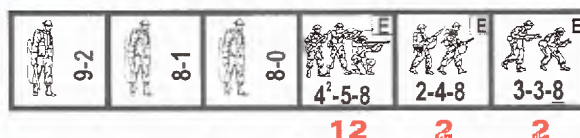
Balikpapan, 1st July 1945. With the fall of Luzon, Iwo Jima and Okinawa, the end was near for Japan. There was little strategic need to take Balikpapan, an oil producing port on the east coast of Borneo, however, despite the misgivings of the Australian General Staff, and dire warnings of possible high casualties, the invasion was to continue. Accordingly, as dawn broke on July 1st, observers were given a huge display of the power of the Allied forces, as wave after wave of bombers and the shells of the gathered fleet pounded the landing area. Against a backdrop of burning oil tanks, some with explosions reaching a thousand feet into the air, the landing craft churned towards the shore. After the usual mixups with landing, the 7th Division pushed inland against disorganized and scattered resistance. The 2/10th Battalion, veterans of North Africa and the savage fighting in New Guinea, had been tasked with taking the ridge line overlooking the landing beaches, codenamed Parramatta. The first objective, at the eastern end of the ridge, was Hill 87. Ample support had been promised, but by mid-morning most of the tanks were still on the beaches, and due to radio problems, much of the artillery was unavailable. Lieut-Colonel Daly decided to wait no longer and ordered C Company to move off towards the objective. Aftermath. Nos 14 and 15 Platoons moved directly up the slope, with the only tank available giving support, whilst 13 Platoon hooked left to deal with an outlying Japanese position. Under cover of smoke fired by the allocated 4.2 inch mortars, and with a platoon of machine-guns spraying the hillside ahead of them, the leading platoon was able to reach within 50 yards of the summit, where Japanese fire pinned them. With casualties rapidly mounting, a desperate push took them to the top of the hill. No. 13 Platoon was engaged in a fierce firefight of its own, losing four men killed, but killing 16 Japanese. Meanwhile, the Japanese were recovering from the effects of the bombardment, and small groups were infiltrating back into their positions behind the leading Australians. Under constant mortar and small arms fire from Parramatta and surrounding hills, the situation was deteriorating when Major Ryrie of the 1st Armoured Regiment arrived with his tanks. Leading them forward on foot, and inspiring the infantrymen with his coolness, the advance began to gain momentum, resistance crumbling under the combined arms attack. By mid-day Hill 87 was secured, and the focus of the advance was shifted to Parramatta.

TURN



Australian Moves First [ELR: 4] [SAN: 4] [178]

Elements C Company, 2/10th Battalion enter on eastern and/or southern board edges of board II on/after turn 1:



Elements 1st Armoured Regiment enter on eastern or southern board edge of board II on Turn 3.



SIGNAL HILL

HOB

TT 12

Design: Derek Ward

Battlefield Orientation:



Tactical Objective. The Australians win if at any time they have exited 22 VP off the western edge of the play area.

Play Balance:

Japanese: Australians must exit 25 VP to win.

Australian: Australians must exit 19 VP to win.

Historical Special Rules

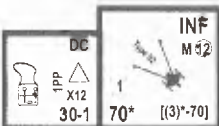
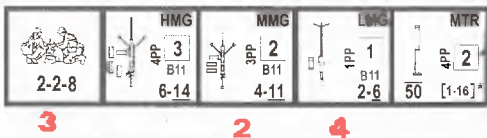
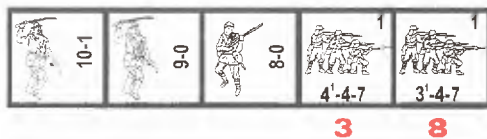
1. EC are moderate, with a light breeze from the southwest.
2. Despite the location of this action PTO Terrain is **not** in effect, all standard terrain rules (B.) are in use.
3. Prior to set up, each player (Japanese first) places 8 Shellhole counters. Each player (Japanese first) then selects 4 to move using a Direction and Extent of Error DR. Replace Shellhole counters with Wooden Rubble counters if they land in a building hex.
4. Japanese may set up 4 MMC, (and any SMC/SW stacked with them), HIP. The HMG, MMG, and 70*INF Gun may Boresight.
5. The Matilda II has unlimited HE. Use a Matilda CS counters to represent "Frog" flamethrower tank. It has a 32 FP Turret-mounted flamethrower replacing the MA, with a 1 hex normal range, X11, and a red CS# of 4.

Historical Perspective

Klandasan, Balikpapan, 1st July, 1945. The 2/9th Battalion had been designated as the Brigade reserve, and as such had landed after the two other Battalions of the 18th Brigade. It had been expected that their job would eventually be to move through the 2/10th Battalion if they proved to be unable to take "Parramatta", a ridge that ran behind the European quarter of Klandasan. Landed safely in American "Alligators", the Battalion waited while the 2/10th was involved in heavy fighting for Hill 87 and Parramatta. Eventually, parts of the Battalion were ordered forwards to overtake positions captured by the leading Battalions, whilst one company, supported by tanks, received orders to move west, clearing the urban coastal area as far as Signal Hill. Klandasan (also known as Glandesa) had been regarded before the war as the most beautiful European town in the Netherlands East Indies. Now, the heavy naval and aerial bombardment designed to neutralize the Japanese defenses had left it devastated. **Aftermath.** Moving west from Petersham Junction which it had occupied after the 2/10th, the company cleared Klandasan house by house, fighting in an environment quite unusual for troops used to the close confines of jungle warfare. Bypassing the Santosa Barracks, which would hold out until the 3rd, the 2/9th otherwise cleared the Japanese from the township by nightfall, and then dug in for the night. The commander of the troop of tanks accompanying the infantry was somewhat put out when, after informing the infantry commander that his tanks were bogged outside the defensive perimeter, he received the reply that "That's all right old man, I've finished with them." The report does not include his reply!

Japanese Sets Up First [ELR: 4] [SAN: 4] [134]

Elements 1st Battalion, 22nd Naval Base Force set up on/west of hexrow J:



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2
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6
7

Australian Moves First [ELR: 4] [SAN: 2] [176]

Elements 2/9th Battalion, and "B" Squadron, 1st Armored Regiment enter on eastern edge on/after Turn 1:

