

BOLT ACTION MINI-CAMPAIGN – Australians versus Japanese WWII (Kokoda Track).



SCENARIO 1 - First Contact!

Background – In early 1942, following their occupation of Rabaul on the island of New Britain, Japanese troops began landing on the north coast of New Guinea. Their objective was to secure the island and its capital, Port Moresby, in order to consolidate their position in the South Pacific and provide a springboard for attacking Australia. That May, the Japanese prepared an invasion fleet with the mission of attacking Port Moresby directly. This was turned back by Allied naval forces at the Battle of the Coral Sea on May 4 through 8. With the naval approaches to Port Moresby closed, the Japanese focused on attacking overland, which had worked brilliantly at Singapore. To accomplish this, they began landing troops along the island's northeast coast on July 21. Coming ashore at Buna, Gona, and Sanananda, Japanese troops began pressing inland and soon captured the airfield at Kokoda after heavy fighting. At this point, they were only opposed by Australian and some New Guinea militia in a support role.

Scenario – Two opposing reinforced platoons, each having 1 infantry and 1 heavy weapons section (as outlined below), have been ordered to capture the same objective (the table top). They meet in the jungle on the Kokoda Trail sometime during the fighting of the 17th through the 26th of September, 1942. The Japanese are Veterans and the Australians are inexperienced.

Terrain – the terrain is light jungle (soft cover -1) over the entire board. Visibility is limited to 36", 60" with binoculars (officers and observers).

Setup – Each player will select 800 points for his force (no tanks or guns).

Either player may keep some units in reserve. The Australian Militia are Inexperienced and the Japanese troops are Regular IJA. The opposing forces setup all units 12" from the edge of the long side of the table.

Game Duration – Each conflict will last six game turns. The player with the most victory points wins and the losing player's army must withdraw.

Victory Conditions – players are awarded 1 point for the destruction of a weapon team, 2 points for an Australian rifle squad, and three points for a Japanese rifle squad. If the points are tied the player that inflicted the most pins wins, and failing that, each player rolls a die and the highest roll wins.

Aftermath – If the Australians won: the Japanese will fall back dig in to defend Kokoda airfield. Go to Scenario 3. If the Japanese won: the Australians have been pushed back into Port Moresby. Go to Scenario 2.



Members of the Australian 39th Battalion in September 1942

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SCENARIO 2 – Raid!

Background – After the fighting near Kokoda, which lasted until September 26, 1942, the Australian command realized the army had to fall back to Port Moresby. In a prolonged delaying action the Australian militia, reinforced by the Australian 39th Battalion, slowed the Japanese advance as best they could. The Japanese reached a position from which they could actually see the port city but their supply lines were so over-extended they could not assault the city.

Scenario – in this scenario the effect of supply lines is highlighted by an Australian raid on a Japanese supply mule train. The raid is assigned to a platoon of the 2/6th Independent Company, a highly trained Australian Commando unit that fought in the area.

Setup – The Japanese are setup in march column along the Kokoda Trail, figures 2-3 abreast, mules 1-2 abreast. The head of the column is no more than 24” from the Japanese edge of the board. The Australians may start the game using the Hidden Setup or Reserves rules. Whether Hidden or not, they must setup at least 16” from any Japanese unit. No ambushes are allowed for the Japanese in this scenario because they are following the trail. Each side may choose up to 600 points (no tanks or guns). The mule team of 4 mules and 4 escorts is free and the squad cannot fight as they are too busy with the mules. The Japanese troops are Regular IJA and the Australians are Veteran.

Terrain – the terrain is light jungle (soft cover -1) over the entire board except on the road, which is running down the center of the long length of the board. Visibility is limited to 24”, except on the road, where movement and visibility are unobstructed.

Game Duration – The conflict will last six game turns.

Victory Conditions – One victory point is awarded for each enemy heavy weapons team destroyed, and two for each infantry squad. Two points are awarded to the Japanese player for each mule that makes it off the opposite end of the board. Conversely, one point is awarded to the Australian player for each mule killed. When fired at, the mules are “Inexperienced.” The mule squad is too busy with the mules to fight and when a mule is killed remove the handler figure also. The player with the most victory points wins. If the game is tied the player that inflicted the most pins wins. If the game is still tied the players will each roll a die and the highest roll wins.

Aftermath – If the Japanese win the Australians are forced back into Port Moresby, the objective of the campaign. But unfortunately for them, the Japanese high command decided holding Guadalcanal was a higher priority, and they ordered their New Guinea forces to withdraw northeastward to the coast to dig-in at their original beachheads. Go to Scenario 3.



The Australian 39th Battalion retreating after the Battle of Isurava, which occurred just outside Port Moresby.

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Papuan stretcher bearers carry Allied wounded.

SCENARIO 2A – Reinforcements!

Scenario – This is a twist on Scenario 2. On Game turn 3, 300 points of reinforcements arrive for each side. The Australians receive native support. They were called ‘boonies’ or ‘fuzzy-wuzzies’ by the Allies and by all accounts they were an invaluable and enthusiastic support to the war effort. Many of them were organized into the local militia while others transported supplies, and still others assisted the medical corps with carrying, caring, and transporting the wounded. The Japanese player may choose 300 additional points for his reinforcements (no tanks or guns).

Setup – The Japanese reinforcements are Regular IJA and the Fuzzy Wuzzies are Inexperienced. They arrive on the road from the Japanese player’s edge of the board. The Inexperienced native allies may enter from any side of the board (when they are activated) except within 24” of the Japanese edge. An Order Test is not necessary for either side to enter the board. Other conditions are as above.

Fuzzy Wuzzy Allies Special Rules: *Protection* – in close combat native shields confer a -1 DM to the attackers.

Green – upon the first casualty roll a D6; on a ‘1’ the unit suffers additional D6 pins and goes Down. But on a 5-6 the unit is upgraded with +1 morale for the rest of the battle. Otherwise the unit is unaffected. *Jungle Hunters* – the native movement is 7” (advance) and 14” (Run). Each squad has a squad leader and asst. squad leader. They have no officers.

Rifle Section (0-3 sections, 10 men with bolt rifles)

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Inexp.</i>	<i>Reg.</i>	<i>Vet.</i>	<i>Special Rules</i>
Corporal (1)	various	7	--	--	NCO
Lance Corporal (1)	various	7	--	--	Asst. NCO
Privates (4-8)	.303 Rifles	7	--	--	Per each

Sword and Spear Section (0-3 sections, 10 men with shields and swords or spears)

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Inexp.</i>	<i>Reg.</i>	<i>Vet.</i>	<i>Special Rules</i>
Corporal (1)	various	7	--	--	NCO
Lance Corporal (1)	various	7	--	--	Asst. NCO
Privates (4-8)	.303 Rifles	7	--	--	Per each

Weapons Chart (weapons per model) Swords must be in contact to be used. Javelins may be thrown or used in contact.

<i>Small Arms</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Shots</i>	<i>Pen</i>	<i>Pins</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Swords	0”	1	n/a	n/a	
Javelins	6”	1	n/a	1	no long range

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SCENARIO 3 – Attack on Kokoda!

Background – After the retreat of the Japanese from Port Moresby the Australians pushed their way up the trail to Kokoda. Their objective is to capture the airfield there so supplies can be brought in by airplane.

Scenario - In this scenario the Australians have regrouped and pushed on to Kokoda, close on the heels of the retreating Japanese.

Terrain – the terrain is light jungle (soft cover -1) over the entire board. Visibility and movement are unlimited. The Japanese are Regular IJA and the Australians are also Regular.

Setup – The game is played with opposing forces deploying all units 12” from the edge of the long side of the table (the 6’ length). Each player must select 1000 points for his army but the Japanese player may include sandbag or earthwork defenses. Either player may keep some units in reserve.

Game Duration – The conflict will last six game turns.

Victory Conditions – one victory point is awarded for each enemy heavy weapons team destroyed, two for each infantry squad, and three for a tank. The player with the most victory points wins and the losing player’s army must withdraw. If the game is tied the player who inflicted the most pins wins. If still tied the players will each roll a die and the highest roll wins.

Aftermath – If the Australians won, the Japanese will fall back and dig in to defend Buna-Gona. Go to Scenario 4. If the Japanese won, the Australians have been pushed back to Port Moresby again. Go back to Scenario 2.



A 25-pounder gun of the 14th Field Regiment being pulled through the jungle towards Uberi, on the Kokoda Track, in September 1942.

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SCENARIO 4 – Assault on Gona!

Background – On 16 November 1942, Australian and United States forces attacked the main Japanese beachheads in New Guinea, with three strongpoints at Buna, Sanananda, and Gona from the landward side. The Australians assaulted Buna while the Americans attacked Gona. A combined force assaulted Sanananda. Initially, the Australians had forced their way overland by various jungle trails and captured the airstrip near Soputa. Then it was a matter of flying men and matériel over the Owen Stanley Mountains in order to assault the Japanese along the coastline. When the fighting was over, it became obvious that in order to survive, the Japanese had resorted to cannibalism.

Since arriving on the north coast in June, 1942, the Japanese had built hundreds of well-camouflaged, reinforced bunkers in mutually supporting positions blocking all available approaches. Combined with the forces that had returned from the Kokoda Track, the Japanese initially had nearly 5,500 seasoned troops on the northern coast. But this rose to about 6,500 later in the battle. Both the Japanese and Allied forces were riddled by disease and lacked the most basic supplies, including medicine and food.

Scenario – In this scenario the Allies are attacking from the landward side of the Japanese Beachheads, driving towards the beaches.

Terrain – the terrain is heavy and swampy jungle over the entire board. Cover is -2 and visibility is limited to 12". Movement is considered Rough Ground and is restricted to 'Advance' only (no running).

Setup – both the Japanese IJA and Australian troops are Regular. Either player may keep some units in reserve as described on page six. Each side must setup within 12" of the long side of the game board.

Game Duration – Each conflict will last six game turns.

Setup - Each side may choose 1200 points of figures and Japanese emplacements; both sides are Regular troops. Air and artillery support are not available.

Victory - One victory point is awarded for each enemy heavy weapons team destroyed, two for each infantry squad, two for a light tank, and three for a pillbox. The conflict will last six game turns. The player with the most victory points wins and the losing player's army must withdraw. If the game is tied the players will each roll a die and the highest roll wins.

Outcome - On December 5th after 10 days of fierce fighting and taking severe casualties (425 men killed and over 800 wounded), the Australians captured Gona Village. On January 21st, a combined force of Australians and Americans captured Sanananda.



The Australians assault Buna with M3 Stuart light tanks

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Scenario 5 – Battle of Buna!

During September 15 to 19, 1942, two U.S. regimental combat teams landed at Port Moresby in Papua, New Guinea. They were commanded by the 32nd Divisional HQ led by Major General Edwin F. Harding. Due to poor intelligence, General MacArthur had no clue as to the terrain, Japanese strength, and condition of the men and supplies they needed. The Americans were completely unprepared and ill-supplied for the difficulties ahead. The American units were sent overland or by small boats to support the right flank of the Australian advance. One contingent including the U.S. 126th Regiment, commanded by Lt. Col. Henry A. Geerds traveled overland Trail from Kerekodobo (knicknamed ‘Kalamazoo’) over the mountains to Soputa and then on to besiege Sananada. The Australian 2/6th Independent Commando Company was flown to the Wanigela airfield. They spearheaded the 2nd contingent of the U.S. 126th Regiment when they advanced northeast along the 130 mile Kapa Kapa Trail. Many of the men suffered from jungle ailments such as malaria, dengue fever, bush typhus, amoebic dysentery, bacillary, along with jungle rot, dobie itch, trench foot, athlete's foot and ringworm. Their rate of advance compared to the Australian soldiers was considerably slower (who suffered from the same ailments). At one point, during the battle every single member of one frontline company was running a fever.



This Japanese pillbox in the Buna area had been badly damaged by a tank

Sergeant Bottcher's Breakthrough, December 5th, 1942

Backed by a single 25 pounder artillery piece, the initial attack began on the 16th of November, 1942. On the following 21st the American 126th Regiment was attached to the Australian 7th Division. That day, a shortfall of bombs hit men of the 126th, wounding some of the men and damaging morale. Armed only with light weapons the attack soon bogged down. Frustrated with the lack of progress MacArthur demanded the next day that they continue the attack “regardless of cost.” On the 26th the Allies received a few more guns but were still not able to make any headway. On the

29th of November MacArthur replaced Harding with Major General Robert L. Eichelberger, who was just as ineffective until he could secure much needed supplies for the advance.

On December 5th the Allies finally got a break when Staff Sergeant Herman Bottcher, Platoon Commander G Company, 126th Infantry, led 31 men against the defending and heavily entrenched Japanese forces. He and 18 volunteers waded across a creek under mortar fire. After throwing hand grenades at several enemy pillboxes he and his men were able to advance through the Japanese emplacements between Buna and Buna village, killing forty Japanese on the beach. Bottcher and his men took over enemy machine guns and defended the area for seven days. Bottcher was wounded twice before he was relieved. It is believed that they killed 120 enemy soldiers. He was awarded the rank of Captain and his first of two DFCs.

Meanwhile, the Japanese at Buna had built hundreds of coconut log bunkers. These had mutually supporting lines of fire and were organized in depth. The bunkers were often linked by trenches allowing the Japanese to move at will between them. The Japanese also posted snipers in the trees.

Scenario – In this scenario the Allies are still attacking from the landward side of the Japanese Beachheads, driving towards the beaches.

Terrain – the terrain is heavy and swampy jungle over the entire board. Cover is -2 and visibility is limited to 12". Movement is considered Rough Ground and is restricted to 'Advance' only (no running).

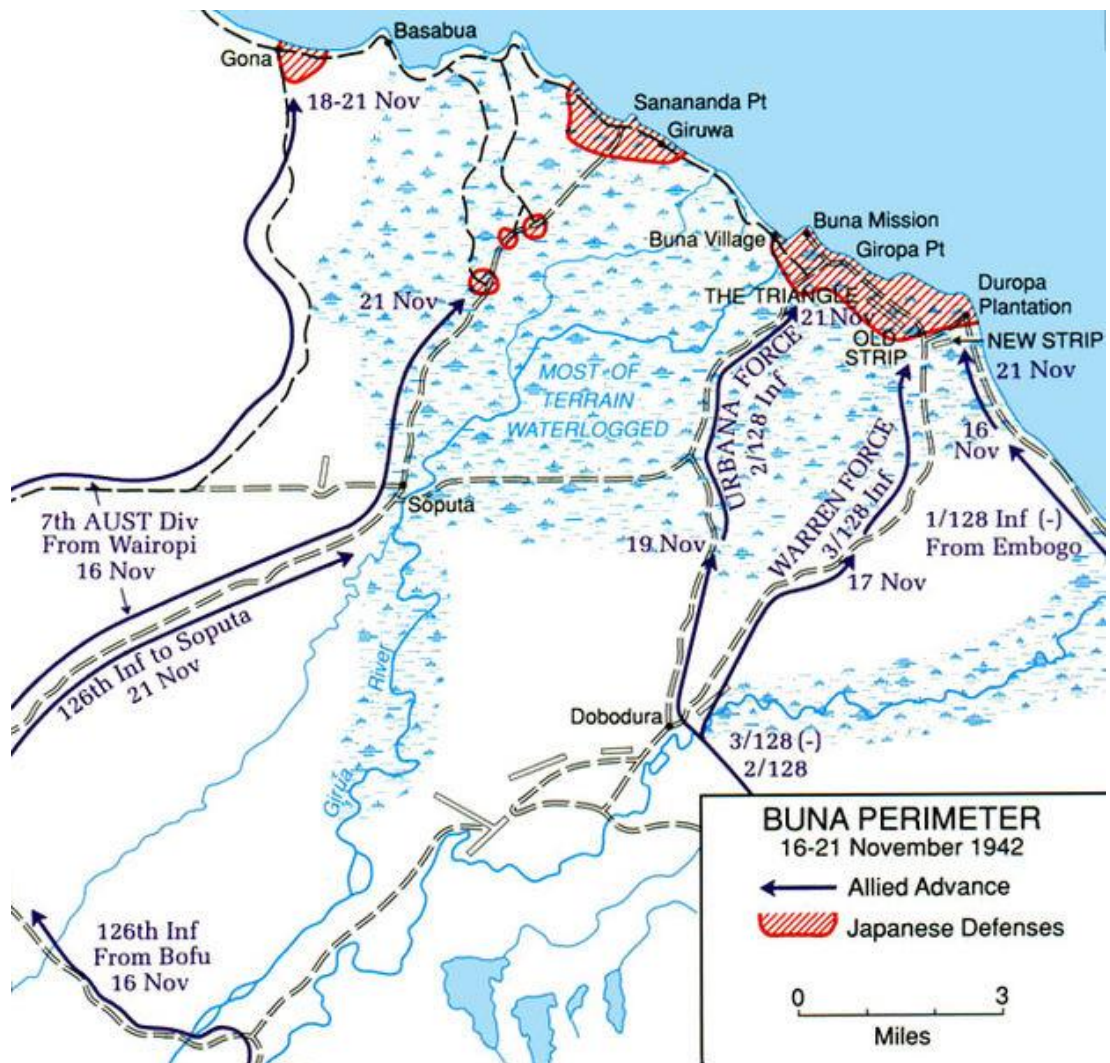
Setup – Each side may choose 1200 points of figures, including tanks, and emplacements; The Japanese are Veteran IJA and the Australians are Regular troops. Air and artillery support are not available. Either player may keep some units in reserve. The American player must setup within 12" of the long side of the game board and the Japanese player has a 6" strip of water and may set up within 18" of his side of the board.

Australian Preparatory Bombardment – this rule is adjusted due to the availability of only one 25 pounder gun. 1-3 = miss, 4 = one pin, 5 = two pins, 6 = two pins and one automatic indirect hit with a +2 penetration value. DMs: units in log pillboxes -1, concrete pillboxes -2.

Game Duration – Each conflict will last six game turns.

Victory - One victory point is awarded for each enemy heavy weapons team destroyed, two for each infantry squad, and two for a light tank, and three for a pillbox. The conflict will last six game turns. The player with the most victory points wins and the losing player's army must withdraw. If the game is tied the players will each roll a die and the highest roll wins.

Aftermath - If the Japanese won the Allies will fall back a safe distance and regroup, resupply and try again. The Japanese have no other recourse except to wait for the next assault. Even with Bottcher's breakthrough the Americans were still unable to capture Buna Mission until two Australian battalions backed by Stuart tanks took it.



Campaign map of the Gona-Buna fighting; the Kokoda Track is the north western most trail, the one that leads from Wairopi to Gona.

Papua New Guinea Theater Troop Selectors

Reinforced Australian Infantry Platoon

1 Platoon Commander (either 1st or 2nd LT)
2 Infantry Sections
Plus additional:
0-1 Captain or Major
0-1 Air/Artillery Forward Observer
0-1 Medic Team
0-2 Signalmen
0-1 Platoon Sergeant
0-4 Infantry Sections
0-2 Medium Machine Gun Teams
0-2 2" Light Mortar Teams
0-2 3" Medium Mortar Teams
0-2 Anti-Tank Teams (Boys Rifle)
0-2 Sniper Teams
0-1 Flamethrower Team
0-1 2# Anti-Tank Gun
0-1 6# Anti-Tank Gun (after June 1942)
0-1 25# Light Howitzer
0-2 Universal (Bren) Carriers
0-2 M3 Stuart Tanks Mark I or II
0-1 Matilda A12 Tank (after October, 1943)

Reinforced Imperial Japanese Platoon

1 2nd LT
1 Radioman
1 Bugler
2 IJA Infantry Squads
Plus additional:
0-1 1st LT or Captain
0-1 Medic Team
0-1 Air or Artillery Forward Observer w Radioman
0-4 additional IJA Infantry Squads
0-2 Medium Machine Gun Teams
0-2 Anti-Tank Rifle Teams
0-2 Suicide Anti-Tank Teams
0-2 Light Mortar Teams
0-2 Medium Mortar Teams
0-1 Flamethrower Team
0-2 Sniper Teams
0-2 Suicide Sniper Teams
0-2 Type 92 70mm Infantry Guns
0-1 Type 94 37mm Light Anti-Tank Gun
0-1 Type 1 47mm Medium Anti-Tank Gun
0-1 Type 95 Ha-go Tank
0-1 Type 97 Chi-Ha Tank
0-1 Type 97Kai Shin-Ho-To Chi-Ha Tank (after 1941)

Emplacements

<u>Type</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Points</u>
5-6" Barbed Wire	4	10
4" Sandbag Section	10	40
6" Log Barrier	6	60
3" Reinforced Trench	10	80
HW Reinforced Gun Pit	2	120
Log/Coral Pillbox	2	150