

CORAL SEA – THE FIRST DAY

0600 7 May 1942

Background

The Japanese had run riot in the 5 months after the Pearl Harbor attack, taking Singapore and Java, raiding deep into the Indian Ocean, and besieging the Americans trapped in the Philippines. Now the Japanese focused on Australia and its lifeline through the South Pacific. Cutting that lifeline would be a crushing blow to Allied attempts to strike back from Australian bases. As the first steps in their plans, the Japanese decided to establish an outpost in the southern Solomon Islands and to take Port Moresby, on the south coast of New Guinea, from the Australians.

By 7 May, the Japanese had just taken their Solomon outpost, and their Port Moresby invasion fleet was steaming south to Port Moresby. Opposing them was an Allied naval force built around two aircraft carriers. The two sides groped for each other on 7 May.

Allied Forces	Ship Name	Ship Class	AA Strength
	Yorktown*	Enterprise	5
	Lexington*	Lexington	7
	Portland	Portland	3
	Minneapolis	New Orleans	3
	Astoria	New Orleans	3
	New Orleans	New Orleans	3
	Chicago*	Northampton	3
	Chester*	Northampton	3
	Australia	Australia	1
	Hobart	Leander	1
	Farragut	Farragut	1
	Monaghan	Farragut	1
	Dewey	Farragut	1
	Aylwin	Farragut	1
	Anderson	Sims	1
	Hammann	Sims	1
	Morris	Sims	1
	Russell	Sims	1
	Sims	Sims	1
	Walke	Sims	1
	Perkins	Mahan	1
	Phelps	Porter	1
	Neosho	Medium Merchant	1
		Tanker	

Air Units:	Base:	Aircraft:	Modifiers
	Lexington:	6 F4F-3	0
		3 SBD-2	0 or -2
		9 SBD-3	0 or -2
		4 TBD-1	0
	Yorktown:	6 F4F-3	0
		12 SBD-3	0 or -2
		3 TBD-1	0

Allied Rules

1. The Allied initiative rating is 0.
2. The Allied player organizes his ships into 3 or 4 task forces. These can be placed anywhere within 11 hexes of hex 1417.
3. SBD dive bombing attacks are subject to a **-2** modifier if they take place in a hex with clouds.
4. See the special rules below on the Allied surface striking force and the IJN invasion force.
5. The Allied player may place dummy task forces equal to twice the number of Allied task forces containing real or dummy ships.

6. The Allied player receives the following dummy ships: 1 carrier, 4 cruisers, 8 destroyers. These can be used to form additional task forces or may be added to task forces with real ships.
7. Of the Allied carrier aircraft, only SBDs may search. They must be armed with 500 lb bombs when searching.
8. The Allies also have a land-based search that searches all of the hexes in the area running from hex 0102 to hex 0403 to hex 0408 and then along the xx06 hex row to hex 0106. Searches in this area begin in turn 9 and last through turn 30. They are subject to a **-2** search modifier and search all hexes in the search area simultaneously.
9. Ships with asterisks after their names have air search radar. At least one such ship must be in any task force formed by the Allied player.

IJN Forces	Ship Name	Ship Class	AA
	Shokaku	Shokaku	Yes
	Zuikaku	Shokaku	Yes
	Shoho	Zuiho	Yes
	Haguro	Myoko	Yes
	Myoko	Myoko	Yes
	Aoba	Aoba	Yes
	Kinugasa	Aoba	Yes
	Furutaka	Furutaka	Yes
	Kako	Furutaka	Yes
	Tenryu	Tenryu	No
	Tatsuta	Tenryu	No
	Yubari	Yubari	No
	Asanagi	Kamikaze	No
	Oite	Kamikaze	No
	Mutsuki	Mutsuki	No
	Yayoi	Mutsuki	No
	Mochizuki	Mutsuki	No
	Sazanami	Fubuki	Yes
	Ushio	Fubuki	Yes
	Akebono	Fubuki	Yes
	Shiratsuyu	Shiratsuyu	Yes
	Shigure	Shiratsuyu	Yes
	Ariake	Hatsuharu	Yes
	Yugure	Hatsuharu	Yes
	Tsugaru	Tsugaru	Yes
	Kamikawa Maru	Medium Merchant AV	No
	Akisaban Maru	Medium Merchant	No
	Chowa Maru	Small Merchant	No
	Goyo Maru	Medium Merchant	No
	Mogamigawa Maru	Medium Merchant	No
	Shoka Maru	Medium Merchant	No
	Asakaban Maru	Medium Merchant	No
	Chaina Maru	Medium Merchant	No
	Matsuye Maru	Small Merchant	No
	Mito Maru	Medium Merchant	No
	Nichibi Maru	Medium Merchant	No
	Taifuku Maru	Small Merchant	No
	Hoyo Maru	Medium Merchant	No
		Tanker	

Air Units:	Base:	Aircraft:	Modifiers:
	Shokaku	6 A6M2 6 D3A1 6 B5N2	0 -1 0
	Zuikaku	6 A6M2 6 D3A1 5 B5N2	0 -1 0

Shoho	3 A6M2 1 A5M4 2 B5N2	0 0 0
Kamikawa Maru	2 E7K2	0
Haguro	1 E13A1	0
Myoko		
Aoba	1 E7K2	0
Kinugasa	1 E7K2	0
Furutaka	1 E7K2	0

IJN Rules

1. The IJN initiative modifier is 0.
2. The IJN player can organize his ships into either 4 or 5 task forces. One TF must contain Shoho and any escorts, and no other carriers. One TF must contain one or both of the Zuikaku and Shokaku and any escorts. One TF must contain only the transports and tankers and any escorting destroyers and light cruisers. One must contain Kamikawa Maru and any escorts. The fifth optional task force may contain any combination of cruisers and destroyers, and may also contain Zuikaku or Shokaku if it is not part of another task force.
3. Any task force with transports, Shoho, or Kamikawa Maru in it must start in a rectangle with the following boundaries: the xx06 hex row from 0206 to 0606, the 06xx hex row from 0606 to 0609, the line of hexes 0608, 0509, 0408, 0309, 0208, and the hex row 02xx from 0208 to 0206. The boundary hexes are included in the set-up area.
4. Of the IJN carrier planes, only B5N2s can search. They must be unarmed.
5. In addition to the aircraft on his carriers, cruisers, and seaplane tender, the IJN player receives 2 land based search factors of unarmed aircraft. One of these factors is based at Rabaul (hex 0201) and the other is based, at the IJN player's option, at either Shortlands (hex 0804) or Tulagi (1608). Each of these factors may search a 30 degree arc out to 21 hexes, with the searches starting on Turn 1. They move at normal speed (1 hex per turn). Each factor may only fly one search mission. It must be plotted in advance in the same way as carrier-based search missions.
6. If Kamikawa Maru begins the game at an island hex (0309, 0409, or 0406), her aircraft may fly search missions.

Scenario Rules

1. The game starts on 0600, which is morning twilight. Sunrise is at 0640 – turn 2. Sunset is at 1820 – turn 37. The game ends on game turn 39 – 1900, which is the end of evening twilight.
2. The line of hexes running from 0105 and 0713 is in cloud, as are the four lines of hexes directly south of that hex line.
3. Task Forces may move into hexes 0309, 0409, 0610, but may not move through them. Carriers may not launch or land aircraft if they are in these hexes.
4. Kamikawa Maru is an auxiliary seaplane tender. She is a medium merchant with engines amidships. Her number 3 hold contains aviation gas.
5. The Hoyo Maru is fully laden with fuel oil. The Goyo Maru is a transport/tanker with fuel oil in her forward holds. The Neosho has fuel oil in her number 1 hold.
6. This action was sparked by the Japanese attempt to land at Port Moresby. In the battle the Japanese withdrew their invasion force before the main action was joined, but the IJN player can decide to press on instead. The following special rules simulate this option.
7. If the transports end the game in hex 0610, the IJN player receives 1 victory point for every transport capable of movement at the end of the game.
8. If the transports are intercepted by an Allied surface force moving into the same hex with them, the IJN player receives no points for the transports, the Allied player receives victory points equal to the point value of the force intercepting the transports, and IJN player receives victory points equal to the point value of the transports' escort and any other IJN task force in the same hex.
9. Only ships capable of 75% of their original speed count for engagement points.
10. *Optional: Originally, the Kaga was assigned to support the Port Moresby invasion rather than the Shokaku and Zuikaku. The IJN player may elect to receive the Kaga instead of the Zuikaku and Shokaku, receiving 12 victory points. The IJN player may also elect to receive the Kaga in addition to the Zuikaku and Shokaku, giving the Allied player 18 victory points. The Kaga must deploy with either the Zuikaku and Shokaku (or both). She has an air group of 6 A6M2 AFs, 6 D3A1 AFs, and 9 B5N2 AFs. She has AA. The IJN player announces his choice only after the*

game has ended. Both her D3A1s and her B5N2s have +1 modifiers when dive or torpedo bombing.

Engagement Point Values for the Special Rules:

New Orleans class	5 points	Myoko class	6 points
Portland class	5 points	Furutaka class	4 points
Northampton class	5 points	Aoba class	4 points
Australia class	5 points	Tenryu class	2 points
Leander class	3 points	Yubari class	2 points
DD	1 point	DD	2 points

Victory Conditions

Normal victory points are scored for sunk and damaged ships and lost AFs. In addition, either player may score points depending on the fate of the IJN invasion fleet. Neither player receives a point difference for having the weaker force except as provided in the optional rule for Kaga.

Outcome

When the Japanese realized that there were powerful Allied naval forces in the area, they withdrew their invasion force. The Japanese fleet carriers struck first, but discovered that they had launched a full strike at the Neosho after a search plane mistakenly reported her as a carrier. By the time that they discovered the true location of the American carriers, they had shot their bolt. The Americans at least struck a Japanese carrier force, but it was the support force built around Shoho rather than the main carrier force that they found. She was swamped under by the single most coherent US carrier strike of 1942. The Japanese did try a strike at the American carriers late in the day. They missed their targets, but came close enough to be mauled by the US CAP. Thus the first day ended with a sense that the main act was yet to come.



