

## **Battle of the Eastern Solomons**

Background. By August 20, 1942, US Marines had been ashore on Guadalcanal Island for almost two weeks. In that time, they had suffered supply shortages, bombing raids and naval bombardments, had annihilated an initial Japanese force sent to dislodge them, but, most importantly, had gotten Henderson Field ready to receive its first aircraft. Those aircraft arrived on this day, just in time to confront the first major Japanese attempt to retake the Island.

It took some time for the Japanese high command to conclude that the US Marines on Guadalcanal were there to stay, rather than just a raiding group. But by August 16, they had a substantial force on the way to the island, on a convoy departing from the big Japanese base at Truk. In addition to these land forces, the Imperial Japanese Navy committed powerful carrier and surface forces to an attack on Guadalcanal.

Three US Navy carriers waited for the Japanese. The Allies knew that the IJN was coming, but not precisely when or in what strength. They cruised in the waters around Guadalcanal with the missions of protecting Allied supply convoys to the island, defeating IJN forces attempting to attack the island, and interdicting Japanese supply efforts. The stage was set for a major carrier clash off Guadalcanal.

Playing Area (All Scenarios). The scenarios are played out on a hex grid 30 hexes from north to south and 20 hexes from east to west. A sample of the grid is attached to this scenario description. Truk is in the northwest corner of the area, in hex 0101. Rabaul is in hex 0113. Shortlands is in hex 0515. Guadalcanal is in hex 1017. Espiritu Santo is in hex 1622. The Santa Cruz Islands are in hex 1618. Noumea is in hex 1630, at the bottom of the playing area. There are minor islands, controlled by Japan, in hexes 0213, 0314, 0414, 0615, 0716, 0816 and 0917. The US controls minor islands in hexes 1118 and 1218, as well as the Santa Cruz Islands.

Special Scenario Rule – Weather. Weather during this period was particularly bad, resulting in greater than normal instances of missed sighting opportunities and strikes gone awry. Use the following tables rather than the normal weather tables.

Weather in zone is clear:

Die Roll	Result
1-3	Clear
4-5	Cloudy
6	Stormy

Weather in zone is cloudy:

Die Roll	Result
1-2	Clear
3-4	Cloudy
5-6	Stormy

Weather in zone is stormy:

Die Roll	Result
1	Clear
2-4	Cloudy
5-6	Stormy

Initiative. For all scenarios, the Allied player has a -1 initiative modifier.

Carrier Pools (Optional).

- *Allies: The Allied player draws 7 cards; the IJN player then draws 2 cards. If Long Island is not drawn, her planes start at Espiritu Santo or on any Allied carrier with room to accommodate them. The Allied player then secretly chooses 1 Allied carrier of all drawn to return to the pool.*
  - *K♥ – Enterprise*
  - *Q♥ –Saratoga*
  - *J♥ – Wasp*
  - *10♥ – Hornet*
  - *9♥ – Long Island*
  - *4-8♥ – Dummies*
- *IJN: The IJN player draws 8 cards; the Allied player then draws 3 cards. The IJN player then secretly chooses 1 IJN carrier of all drawn to return to the pool.*
  - *K♥ – Zuikaku*

- Q♥ – Shokaku
  - J♥ – Junyo
  - 10♥ – Hiyo
  - 9♥ – Ryujo
  - 8♥ – Zuiho
  - 2-7♥ – Dummies
- *Carriers received through pool draws are received as in the location and at the time that any carrier for that side was received under the set-up directions given below.*

Long Battle. This covers the period from August 16 through August 27, 1941.

Scenario Length. 35 turns.

Imperial Japanese Navy Order of Battle.

At Truk:

Light Cruiser: Jintsu

Destroyers: 3 x Kagero

Other: 2 x APD, Boston Maru, Daifuku Maru, Kinryu Maru

At Rabaul:

Heavy Cruisers: Chokai, Aoba, Furutaka, Kinugasa

Destroyers: 2 x Mutsuki

Air Units: 2 A6M2, 2 A6M3, 5 G4M1

Available at Truk at the start of Turn 4:

Battleship: Mutsu

Heavy Cruisers: Atago, Takao, Maya, Myoko, Haguro

Light Cruiser: Yura

Destroyers: 3 x Shiratsuyu, 2 x Kagero, 1 x Asashio

Other: Chitose

Available at Truk at the start of Turn 9:

Carriers: Shokaku, Zuikaku, Ryujō

Battleships: Hiei, Kirishima

Heavy Cruisers: Tone, Chikuma

Light Cruiser: Nagara

Destroyers: Akizuki, 2 x Yugumo, 3 x Kagero

Air Groups:

Shokaku: 3 A6M2, 3 D3A2, 2 B5N2

Zuikaku: 3 A6M2, 3 D3A2, 2 B5N2

Ryujō: 3 A6M2, 1 B5N2

Available at Truk at the start of Turn 11:

Heavy Cruisers: Kumano, Suzuya

Available at Rabaul at the start of Turn 11:

Air Units: 2 G4M1

Available at Truk at start of Turn 13:

Carrier: Kasuga Maru

Battleship: Yamato

Destroyers: 2 x Fubuki

Air Group:

Kasuga Maru: 1 A6M2

Submarines: 2 blocks, within 6 hexes of Guadalcanal

### Imperial Japanese Navy Scenario Rules.

1. Air strikes from IJN carriers are subject to limits. Any strike from Zuikaku or Shokaku is limited in size to 5 air units, no more than 3 of which may be bombing units. Any strike from Ryujo is limited to 2 air units, no more than 1 of which may be a bombing unit. A "bombing unit" is any air unit with a P, M or A attack strength. All IJN ships are fully fuelled on the turn of their appearance.
2. The IJN player receives VPs for cargo unloaded at Guadalcanal. Cargo may be transported by Boston, Daifuku and Kinryu Marus, by the APD units, and by units with D defense strengths. D units transporting cargo (other than the APD units) have their offensive D and T strengths halved. All D units transport 2 VP of cargo. Marus transport VPs equal to their cargo ratings. The IJN player may use the TRANSPORT counters provided with the game to track D units carrying cargo. Units must start in Rabaul or Truk to carry cargo. The 3 Marus may only be used to carry cargo once.
3. The IJN player may elect to receive any ships up to 4 turns before their scheduled turn of appearance, but pays a VP penalty equal to 1/5 the VPs received for sinking the ships received for each turn in advance of the scheduled turn that the ships are received.
4. Rabaul and Shortlands cannot refuel any TFs containing carriers or battleships.
5. The IJN player must always retain 1 A6M unit at Rabaul as a CAP.
6. IJN strikes at ranges of more than 8 hexes may be cancelled due to weather. After announcing such a strike, the IJN player rolls D6. On a roll of 3 or less, the raid is cancelled. The aircraft committed to the raid may not be used for any other purpose in the strike phase.
7. The IJN player may set two refueling rendezvous hexes within 6 hexes of Truk.
8. All IJN units are fully fueled on the turn of their appearance.

9. The IJN player may have up to 15 TFs in play, any number of which may be dummies. The IJN player may always place dummies at Truk, even if there are no ships there.
10. The IJN places TF and submarine blocks on the map after the Allied player.
11. The IJN player may have 2 dummy TFs and the following dummy cards in play: 6 ♦, 6 ♣, 2 high ♠, 2 low ♠, 2 ♥.

#### Allied Order of Battle.

At sea south of hexrow xx 17 and at least 10 hexes from Rabaul, or at Espiritu Santo:

Carriers: Saratoga, Enterprise, Wasp

Battleship: North Carolina

Heavy Cruisers: Minneapolis, New Orleans, Portland, San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Helena

Light Cruisers: Atlanta, San Juan

Destroyers: Phelps, Balch, 2 x Farragut, 3 x Benham, 2 x Benson, 1 x Bristol, 1 x Gridley, 1 x Bagley

Air Groups:

Saratoga: 3 F4F-4, 4 SBD-3, 2 TBF-1

Enterprise: 3 F4F-4, 4 SBD-3, 2 TBF-1

Wasp: 3 F4F-4, 3 SBD-3, 2 TBF-1

Available at Espiritu Santo:

Other: Alhena, Curtiss, Mackinac, 1 x AVD, 3 x APD

Air Units: 2 F4F-3P

Available at Espiritu Santo at the start of Turn 5:

Carrier: Long Island

Air Group:

Long Island: 3 F4F-4 (range 3), 2 SBD-3 (P strength 4)

Available at Noumea at the start of Turn 5:

Other: Fomalhaut

Available at Noumea at the start of Turn 7:

Heavy Cruiser: Australia

Light Cruiser: Hobart

Destroyers: Selfridge, 1 x Bagley

Submarines: 1 block (speed 2) within 4 hexes of Rabaul, 1 block (speed 3) within 4 hexes of Truk

### Allied Scenario Rules.

1. Air strikes from USN carriers are limited in their potential composition. Any P weapon bombing units in excess of 3 launched by a carrier in a single strike must be units with 2P attack strengths.
2. Aircraft cannot engage in CAP or strike missions from Long Island. Aircraft that begin based on Long Island may fly from the carrier but may not land on it. Long Island can be used to transport aircraft to bases.
3. No air unit may be flown to Guadalcanal until Turn 9. Only air units with a "G" designation may fly strike missions from Guadalcanal. Other air units may land at Guadalcanal, take off from there, and mount CAP missions from there.
4. Mackinac and the AVD units may search from any Allied-controlled island hex. They must be stationary in the hex to be searched. They may not be attacked by submarines when stationary in an island hex.
5. All Allied bases have radar.
6. The Allied player may set as refueling rendezvous 2 hexes with 4 hexes of Espiritu Santo.
7. All Allied ships at bases or refueling rendezvous are fully fueled on the turn of their appearance. All other ships have used 10 turns of endurance.
8. The Allied player may have up to 15 TFs on the map, any number of which may be dummies.
9. The Allied player places TF and submarine blocks on the map before the IJN player.
10. The Allied player may have 2 dummy TFs and the following dummy cards in play: 4 ♦, 4 ♠, 1 high ♣, 2 low ♣, 2 ♥.

Short Battle. This covers the period from August 23 through August 27, 1942. Prior to this period, both the Allies and the IJN had successfully reinforced their forces on Guadalcanal. The main Japanese convoy still hovered north of the island, waiting for IJN air cover before running down to discharge its cargo.

Scenario Length. 10 turns.

Imperial Japanese Navy Order of Battle.

In a single TF north of hex row xx13:

Light Cruiser: Jintsu

Other: 2 x APD, Boston Maru, Daifuku Maru, Kinryu Maru

At Rabaul:

Heavy Cruisers: Chokai, Aoba, Furutaka, Kinugasa

Destroyers: 1 x Mutsuki

Air Units: 2 A6M2, 2 A6M3, 7 G3M1

At Shortlands:

Heavy Cruisers: Chokai, Aoba

Destroyers: 1 x Mutsuki

North of hex row xx09 (Group A):

Heavy Cruisers: Atago, Takao, Maya, Myoko, Haguro

Light Cruiser: Yura

Destroyers: 2 x Shiratsuyu, 2 x Kagero, 1 x Asashio

Other: Chitose

North of hex row xx09 (Group B):

Carriers: Shokaku, Zuikaku, Ryujo

Battleships: Hiei, Kirishima

Heavy Cruisers: Tone, Chikuma, Kumano, Suzuya,

Light Cruisers: Nagara

Destroyers: Akizuki, 2 x Yugumo, 3 x Kagero, 1 x Asashio

Air Groups:

Shokaku: 3 A6M2, 3 D3A2, 2 B5N2

Zuikaku: 3 A6M2, 3 D3A2, 2 B5N2

Ryujo: 3 A6M2, 1 B5N2

In a single TF within 3 hexes of Truk:



Carrier: Kasuga Maru

Battleship: Yamato

Destroyers: 2 x Fubuki

Air Group:

Kasuga Maru: 1 A6M2

In a single TF within 4 hexes of Truk:

Battleship: Mutsu

Destroyers: 1 x Shiratsuyu

Submarines: 2 blocks, within 6 hexes of Guadalcanal

### Imperial Japanese Navy Scenario Rules.

1. Air strikes from IJN carriers are subject to limits. Any strike from Zuikaku or Shokaku is limited in size to 5 air units, no more than 3 of which may be bombing units. Any strike from Ryujo is limited to 2 air units, no more than 1 of which may be a bombing unit. A "bombing unit" is any air unit with a P, M or A attack strength. All IJN ships are fully fuelled on the turn of their appearance.
2. The IJN player receives VPs for cargo unloaded at Guadalcanal. Cargo may be unloaded from Boston, Daifuku and Kinryu Marus and the APD units. The APD units transport 2 VP of cargo. Marus transport VPs equal to their cargo ratings.
3. Rabaul and Shortlands cannot refuel any TFs containing carriers or battleships.
4. The IJN player must always retain 1 A6M unit at Rabaul as a CAP.
5. IJN strike at ranges of more than 8 hexes may be cancelled due to weather. After announcing such a strike, the IJN player rolls D6. On a roll of 3 or less, the strike is cancelled. The aircraft committed to the strike may not be used for any other purpose in the strike phase.
6. The IJN player may set two refueling rendezvous hexes within 6 hexes of Truk.
7. IJN ship units in Group A have used 6 turns of endurance. IJN ship units in Group B have used 4 turns of endurance. The ships in the groups with Yamato and Mutsu have used 3 turns of endurance. The ships with Jintsu have used 9 turns of endurance, but have their endurance doubled due to the presence of a slow ship. All IJN units are fully fueled on the turn of their appearance.
8. The IJN player may have up to 15 TFs in play, any number of which may be dummies. The IJN player may always place dummies at Truk, even if there are no ships there.

9. The IJN player places TF and submarine blocks on the map after the Allied player.
10. The IJN player may have 2 dummy TFs and the following dummy cards in play: 6 ♦, 6 ♣, 2 high ♠, 2 low ♠, 2 ♥.
11. *Optional. As an alternative to the endurance used by ships in Group A and Group B as stated in Rule 7 above, roll D12 for each task force composed of ships from these groups. The number rolled is the endurance used by the TF at the start of the scenario.*

#### Allied Order of Battle.

At sea south of hexrow xx 17 and at least 10 hexes from Rabaul, or at Espiritu Santo:

Carriers: Saratoga, Enterprise, Wasp

Battleship: North Carolina

Heavy Cruisers: Minneapolis, New Orleans, Portland, San Francisco, Salt Lake City

Light Cruisers: Atlanta, San Juan

Destroyers: Phelps, Balch, Selfridge, 2 x Farragut, 3 x Benham, 1 x Benson, 1 x Bristol, 1 x Gridley, 1 x Bagley

Air Groups:

Saratoga: 3 F4F-4, 4 SBD-3, 2 TBF-1

Enterprise: 3 F4F-4, 4 SBD-3, 2 TBF-1

Wasp: 3 F4F-4, 3 SBD-3, 2 TBF-1

At Guadalcanal:

Destroyers: 1 x Bagley

Other: Fomalhaut, Alhena

Air Units: 2 F4F-4 (range 3), 2 SBD-3 (4P strengths)

At Espiritu Santo:

Other: Curtiss, 4 x APD

Air Units: 2 F4F-3P

At any Allied-controlled island hex:

Other: 1 x APD, Mackinac

### Allied Scenario Rules.

1. Air strikes from USN carriers are limited in their potential composition. Any P weapon bombing units in excess of 3 launched by a carrier in a single strike must be units with 2P attack strengths.
2. Only air units with a "G" designation may fly strike missions from Guadalcanal. Other air units may land at Guadalcanal, take off from there, and mount CAP missions from there.
3. All Allied TFs starting at an Allied base other than Guadalcanal or at a refueling rendezvous are fully fuelled. All other ships have used 6 turns of endurance.
4. Alhena has unloaded its cargo, but Fomalhaut has not. The Allied player receives VPs equal to Fomalhaut's cargo value if the ship successfully unloads in the Guadalcanal hex.
5. The Allied player may have up to 15 TFs on the map, any number of which may be dummies.
6. The Allied player places TF and submarine blocks on the map before the IJN player.
7. The Allied player may have 2 dummy TFs and the following dummy cards in play: 4 ♦, 4 ♠, 1 high, 2 low ♣, 2 ♥.
8. *Optional: As an alternative to the endurance used by ships at sea as stated in Rule 2 above, roll D12 for each task force composed of ships from these groups. The number rolled is the turns of endurance used by the TF at the start of the scenario.*

Outcome. In a confused series of actions, the USN carriers sank Ryujo and damaged Chitose but missed inflicting any damage on the big Japanese fleet carriers. US Marine aircraft at Guadalcanal pounded the convoy to the point that it reversed course. The Japanese fleet carriers put in a strike that damaged Enterprise, but Saratoga was not engaged. Wasp and her escorts had been sent south to refuel, and missed participating in the battle.

