

MOTORIZED PATROL, 3 AUGUST 1944 NEAR FINEGAYAN GUAM, MARIANNA ISLANDS.

Introduction

In the morning of 3rd August a motorized patrol composed of elements of the divisional recon company, 3rd Tank Battalion, Company L, 3/21st Marines and engineers from 19th Marines was assembled to execute a reconnaissance in force toward Ritidan point. Various problems caused various delays and even a postponement of the mission until in later afternoon orders were given to proceed at once but to fall back at 18:00 and complete the mission the following day. The patrol cleared the forward position of 1/9 at XX:XX and then moved forward toward Road Junction 177 where it was supposed to turn right and proceed toward Ritidan Point. Instead, due to poor visibility from the leading armoured vehicles the column missed the junction in his entirety and speed up on the main road toward Yago. At 16:10 the lead units of column was stopped by heavy enemy fire having hit the main Japanese position in the area..

Forces

US:

- 1 Motorized Composite Patrol company L 3/21st Marine
 - 1 Late War Marine Platoon
 - 1 Plt Command
 - 3 Marine Squad
 - 1 Bazooka Section
 - 2 M4A2 General Sherman Medium Tanks
 - 1 LVT(A)1
 - 2 LVT 4
 - 1 Jeep with .50 HMG

JAPAN:

- Reinforced Infantry platoon
 - 1 Type B infantry Platoon (reduced)
 - 1 Plt Command
 - 2 Rifle Squads
 - 1 Weapons Squad
 - 1 Sniper
 - 1 70mm Infantry Gun
 - 1 Type 95 Ha Go (a)
 - 1 AT loghouse (47mm)
 - 1 HMG Loghouse

Notes:

(a) The Light tank start the game in prepared position (has shown in the map), but from all the descriptions of the battle of guam Japanese armor there was able to quickly exit their dug-out and operate in a mobile fashion so consider the tank position a man made hull down position according to the rules with a -3 ACC to front and sides (to show the Japense ability in building fortifications). The tank can freely move out of the position.

Map



Setup

The table should be at least 6x4'. The dirt road runs straight from one short side to the other. The area is sparsely covered with bushes and trees. Medium-high grass (concealing) is the defining terrain outside the road (this explains the reason why the column has moved directly on the Japanese position without noticing). A low rise ridge is on the northern side of the road. The Americans are placed in a column facing east, on the road, in the center of the table. The LVT (A)1 is in front, a Sherman follows then the 2 LVT the other Sherman and the jeep. The infantry can be already dismounted. Ideally a wreck should be placed in front of the vehicles (it adds to the "ambush" feel). The Japanese tank is placed in his position and the heavy weapons are placed in their loghouses. A Japanese squad in prepared positions (infantry foxholes, counts as heavy cover) must be placed on the ridge. The rest of the infantry is placed in prepared positions (again foxholes and trenches giving heavy cover) near the two loghouses (often pre-made ones already includes adjoining trenches for the infantry).

Victory Conditions

The main goal of the US player is to retreat avoiding excessive losses. With Japanese positions almost surrounding them there is no way to actually carry the position in any meaningful sense so the trick is to exit from the map while not losing too much forces (and if possible inflicting some losses to the enemy); the game is 6 turns long.

Each American Maneuver Element available (Infantry Squads and Vehicles) is worth one point. Each one who is capable to exit from the American friendly edge (south) is then counted for victory. For each Japanese log house they American destroy 1 it's added to his/her total and 1 is they destroy the Ha-Go. They lose 1 point for each element destroyed and 2 for each Sherman destroyed (bagging a Sherman would have been a big boost for Japanese morale).

Aftermath and notes

A fierce fire fight erupted and ended with losses (including the losses of some vehicles on both sides) before the Americans were able to withdraw to friendly lines. Considering the number and type of Japanese heavy weapons arrayed in the area the largely un-armored American column was lucky to have escaped losing only 1 Halftrack, 1 Jeep, 1 Truck and a damaged Sherman while destroying 2 guns, one tank and several machine gun nests.

This scenario, while based on historical event has been slightly modified and adapted to the DH format and to the usual 180x120 (or 6x4") gaming table. The action start when the leading units have already bumped on the Japanese units and are now trying to withdraw. According to Japanese practice I have created mutually supporting positions and interlocking field of fires for the weapons emplacement, but I have also added a small mobile reserve to allow some maneuvering from their part to allow them to deliver a "coup de grace" to the Americans. In addition I have tailored the deployed units to what is available on the market and to my tastes (I have thus substituted the trucks with LVT and the halftracks with LVT (A)1. If you want you can field the historical vehicles instead of them.

Another note is needed for the Japanese forts... I use the excellent Snapdragon stuff who integrates log bunkers in trench system. I feel that this way they look better on the table, but some fudge are required to use them in the DH fortification system (usually point out at the start of the game what is bunker and what is trench).

Arrigo Velicogna