

E-E-Extending BRT

INTRODUCTION

I've just finished my first game at ASL historical module 5, "Blood reef: Tarawa", Campaign game CGIII, the whole stuff.

The game requires quite an effort in planning from both players, and you feel compelled in studying every single hex, in following the steps of every single unit. So taken I have been by the situation, that I designed some add-ons for this module, just to complete the game with things that the designers phased out for practical reasons, with ideas for making the game even more tasty. Here are my proposals, they have not been playtested.

EXTENDED TARAWA

First of all, the Betio island, objective of the assault, is not completely depicted by the game map. In Figure 1 I pasted the picture of an original map of the island with the pictures of the maps present in the module.

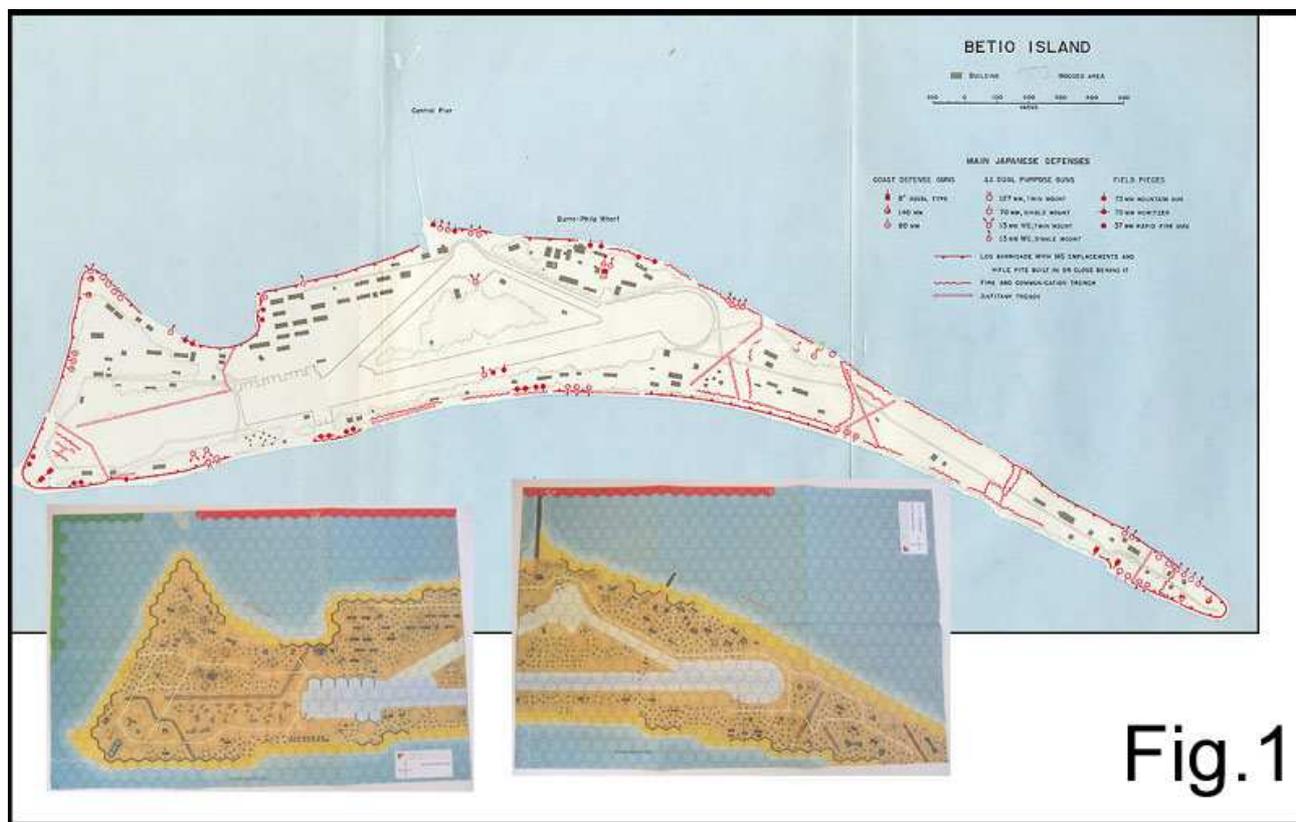


Fig.1

You can see that it has been left out a long, narrow stretch of land. It is a third of the length of the island but only a little portion of the surface, a zone that historically was mopped up last when the battle had already been won on the rest of the objective; sure that it is not influential in the game, and the designers left it out because it would have been a pretty waste of money in producing a third sheet of map almost completely depicting sea.

What about printing it by your own on a plotter? I designed a version of mine with a graphic software. Yes, it is a poor map, the colours are off. This last “useless” sheet of map is to be adjoined to the right of Red Beach Three.

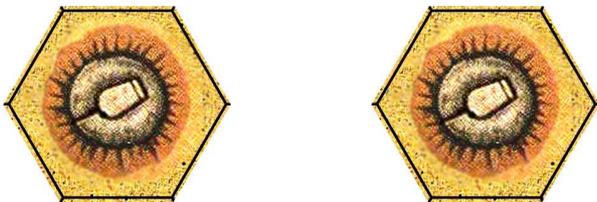
The rules for using it are simple.

The buildings and pillboxes on the “added” map are not counted for victory conditions. The Japanese player will set the reserve pool units there, concealed, in building or fortifications locations.

At start, Japanese player can set up there units from “Elements of island command” and “1st and 2nd companies, 7th special naval landing force” and “Reserve pool”, fortifications and guns from Black Beach Two and Red Beach Three [EXC. Guns and fortifications must set up adjacent to at least one seawall hexside].

In CGIII the added map is subject to an additional 2 hex radius Naval Bombardment.

Please note that the two 8 inch guns placed on the other end of the island (the additional 200L turrets the Japanese player can buy) were faced south and set up more or less in the two three palmed hexes, adjacent to the beach and to the last single house hex before the last bridge at the very end of the island. I made also two sloppy overlays for the emplacements.



EXTREME TARAWA

From the order of battle the playtester left out two battalions of marines of the overall division that assaulted at Tarawa. The reason is that they would have made the USMC player too strong.

Historically, one battalion of marines was wiped out before getting on the beaches and another battalion was diverted from the landing and sent to chase down the Japanese stragglers.

On the other side about the order of battle it has to be said that the USMC receives all the complement of armoured vehicles, while in history it happened that long range gun fire destroyed several landing ship with vehicles on board. The whole light tank force was sunk and even his commander was severely wounded while wading on foot, he avoided drowning by climbing on a pile of submerged corpses and on this gruesome “island” awaited for aid.

If you decide to add these troops I suggest several “variants” to be put in effect. The format is as follows:

Player: the player that makes the decision to put in effect the variant.

When: the moment when to make the choice.

Effect: the effect on game to be implemented.

Balance: effect in the game to counterbalance the advantage given by the variant.

Note: historical note.

VARIANT 1

Player: USMC player.

When: before turn 1 of date 1.

Effect: add the following USMC battalion as “Follow on”.

BLT # EXT1

ID	Group Type
GF1	HQ Company
GF2	Rifle Company
GF3	Rifle Company
GF4	Rifle Company
GF5	HW Company

Balance: the Japanese player chooses three out of these five:

a) Man the Niminoa. Remove 2x448 and 2xMMG and set them aside as “off map machinegun nest”. After set up of any wave on Red Beach Two, resolve three attacks on the IFT on the 8 column against the cloacked counters chosen by the Japanese and apply the results before map entry. During each turn the American player may remove the Niminoa troops if declares an attack against them and then rolls a dr 1-3. The attack is declared if the American recalls two FB with bombs, or after getting battery access cancels a NOBA fire mission. In case of succesful attack against the Niminoa record 2 Japanese CVP.

b) Swim to the wrecks. Before 20 PM date, remove 1x347 and set 4 concealed 137 under four wrecks in reef hexes. This units may fire normally but cannot move, rout, advance and are immune to HOB. They are eliminated if fail a MC, are fired upon with a +2 TEM.

c) Enforce sniper tactics. At start remove three 448, deploy them in HS and set the aside as “detached sniper force”. Until there are troops in the sniper force the Japanese player can reroll any sniper attack that resulted in dr of 3 or 4. If a sniper attack result is a 6, remove one HS from the “sniper force”. When the last HS is removed the japanese player loses the effects of this option and record the 6 CVP as japanese losses.

d) Enforce flanking fire tactics. Each Japanese 448 and 447 that is into a trench and fires against a target in a Beach hex and is going to be covered with a First Fire counter, at Japanese player’s option, may place a Final Fire counter and place a 1 FP fire lane up to 6 hex away instead of place residual

firepower. The firelane must cross at least 2 beach hexes. All fire lane rules apply, malfunction is NA, the Japanese squad does not take other MG peculiarity.

e) Long range gun fire. Raise the acquisition DRM of G13.46, second sentence, to -2 for guns of calibre 76mm or larger.

Notes: The landing ships were not able to get closer to the island for the lack of high tide, the marines of the follow-on force jumped in water at the margin of the reef and tried to wade for 400 meters under heavy fire while the first wave had not been able yet to silence any bunker: they were decimated. The Niminoa was a British steamer that the owner scuttled when the Japanese seized the Gilberts. For two days the Japanese were able to send troops on the hulk and severely harass the landing troops, causing lots of casualties. The marines targeted the Niminoa with machinegun fire and individual soldiers climbed on it to have firefights with the Japanese marines. On the second day air strikes were ineffective against the stranded ship and the gunfire from two battleships eventually annihilated the Niminoa and all personnel aboard. Other Japanese snipers swam to the wrecks of American amphibious tractors and tanks and fired at the passing USMC troops; they too had to be killed one by one.

VARIANT 2

Player: Japanese player.

When: Before the start of 22 AM date.

Effect: add the following USMC battalion as "Divisional Reserve".

BLT # EXT2

ID	Group Type
HF1	HQ Company
HF2	Rifle Company
HF3	Rifle Company
HF4	Rifle Company
HF5	HW Company

Balance: add 3 3x448, 3x447, 3x347, 3x336 to the Japanese reserve. Shorten the 22PM date length to 4 turns.

Note: Japanese survivors abandoned Betio island to flee on foot on the other islands of the Tarawa atoll; a whole battalion was sent after them and the hunt lasted to the Buikiri island, on the opposite side of the atoll, where less than 200 Japanese were put back to the sea and killed with help of air strikes.

EXCESSIVE TARAWA

More options. Some are hypothetical and can be used together with the ones said before. You could apply them in pairs, one for the USMC player and one for the Japanese player.

Japanese options:

f) American confusion.

Until the Wind Change roll in the USMC turn is 3 or less < the number of USMC [DRM: leadership modifier of the best unwounded, GO USMC leader in a Beach hex] controlled Beach hexes, USMC MMC may not move in non-Beach, non reef hexes.

g) Stragglers. On a Wind change roll on Japanese turn, if the coloured die is a “2” the Japanese receive a reinforcement according to the following table:

White die: 1 – Hero, 2 – fanatic 238 HS, 3 – 237 HS, 4 – 137 HS, 5 – 128 reduced inf crew, 6 – 127 vehicle crew. Set up in a controlled Japanese hex in a Japanese Set Up area, RS if more than one exists. NA after 21 PM date.

h) pull the mines from the depot. On the Fortification purchase table on page T15, at line “A-T mine factor”, delete notes “a” and “b”.

i) ICB organized defence. If the legitimate target for a Banzai Charge is a USMC MMC on a ICB “roof” location, the Japanese player can declare a multihex Banzai charge and without the normally needed Japanese leader.

American options.

i) Japanese disillusionment. Count the ICB location controlled by the USMC on the two main maps, counting M45 twice. If the total is “5” or “6”, from the following turn all broken or encircled Japanese MMC check morale at the end of the Rally Phase, passing morale rallies the broken units, failing causes CR.

k) Unload the bazookas. Add 1 BAZ 43 in each USMC HW company,

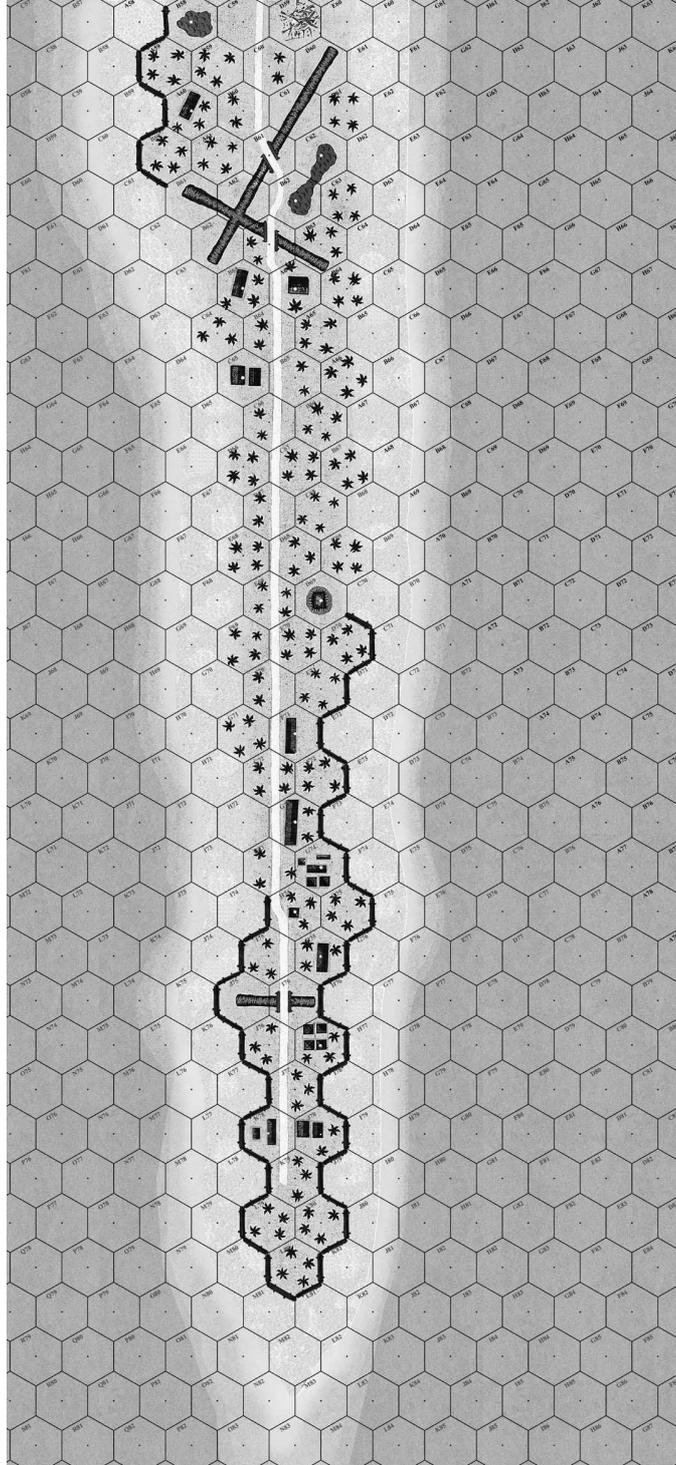
j) AT grenades. LATW inherent to the USMC MMCs. Usable only in PrepFire Phase, counts as a SW usage. Available on a dr 1-2, DRM: +1 id HS, +1 on 20 AM and 20 PM, dr resul 6 pins the user. Fires like a gun without backblast or fate penalties with a +2 DRM for hex of range beyond all other Chapter C DRMs, resolve hit as a HEAT ammunition with TK of 9, HE equivalence of 4. CH possible.

l) Stragglers. On a Wind change roll on USMC turn, if the coloured die is a “2” the USMC player receive a reinforcement according to the following table:

White die: 1 – Hero, 2 – fanatic 248 HS, 3 – 248 HS, 4 – 238 HS, 5 – 238 HS, 6 – 126 crew.

RS one USMC sniper and place the reinforcement in the closest Beach hex controlled by USMC player, choose if more than one available. NA if no controlled Beach hex exists or after 21 PM date.

THE THIRD MAP: To download the add on map, click on this image



or go to: <http://www.openground.it/tarawa/addonmaptarawa.jpg>

The image is a 5.06 Mbyte large .JPG format, 300 dpi.