

Combined Operation Shoestring/Henderson Field Campaign game

© 1998 Markus Stumptner
mst@dbai.tuwien.ac.at

These rules describe how the rules for Air and Naval operations of GMT's *Operation Shoestring* can be combined with the land game of 3W's *Henderson Field* (part of the 3W *Campaign for Guadalcanal* package). A copy of each game is needed. The reason of existence for these rules lies in the complementary drawbacks of the two games. *Operation Shoestring* contains a large, complex land game and, in an attempt to provide the player with the historical background of combined arms decision making in the Guadalcanal campaign, a very simple naval/air game. Unfortunately, while the naval/air game has (completely justifiably from a historical standpoint) a massive influence on victory in the land game, it is quite unrealistic in the resolution of battles and the results are governed by a few die rolls. Ultimately, the outcome of the intricate and time-consuming land game will be massively influenced by the simple and luck-dependent naval game. Conversely, *Henderson Field* is a clean and quick game of the land campaign, but does not cover the naval aspects of the campaign at all, and provides both players with a fixed reinforcement, supply, and bombardment schedule, thus giving them better planning ability than their historical counterparts had.

By combining the *Operation Shoestring* naval/air game with *Henderson Field*, the result is a Guadalcanal campaign game that

- is playable in a single day, but does allow events on land to be influenced by the naval campaign
- makes the luck dependence of the naval rules less of a drawback since the land game is so short.
- fixes *Operation Shoestring's* largest order of battle problem. *Operation Shoestring*, while purporting to give the players the ability to handle all aspects of the campaign, simply omits two thirds of the Japanese 38th division

- all the units that did not arrive on Guadalcanal as a consequence of the naval battles in early November. It seems to make no sense to go to the trouble to provide the air and naval aspects of the campaign but then to hardwire their most pronounced historical effect into the countermix! My impression is that this is an attempt to balance the game against the fact that the naval rules (ahistorically) so drastically favor the Japanese surface forces. see below for a fix to the latter problem. (In the original *Henderson Field* game, the arrival of these units is governed by die roll, so luckily the counters are available.)

Note that except for slightly altering the sequence of play and adding a rule to represent Japanese indecision and fuel restrictions (taken from SPI's *Solomons Campaign*) I have not really attempted to fix all the weaknesses of the *Operation Shoestring* Air/Naval system.

The main limitation of the combined game is that the game cannot be continued past the end of November since the *Henderson Field* countermix does not contain the units required for later US reinforcements.

General

In the following, for all naval operations, use the *Operation Shoestring* Air and Naval combat rules (18, 19, 20, 21, 22). Note some of the rules are modified as specified below.

The land game uses all rules from *Henderson Field* except as outlined below.

Sequence of play

I. Strategic Interphase (Odd-numbered game turns)

Execute the Air/Naval Phase from the *Operation Shoestring* Sequence of Play. Afterwards, determine supply status for both sides.

Important alteration to the Air/Naval Phase: CAP missions for air units in the Strategic interphase must assigned in step I.A.4 instead of

I.A.6. (*This forces players to decide CAP and escort assignments before the search results are known. The original order allowed a player whose opponent failed his search die roll to send all his fighter units on escort missions in the secure knowledge that his carriers cannot be attacked this week. No carrier admiral ever had that assurance.*)

II. Land sequence. Use the *Henderson Field* sequence of play.

III. Automatic victory check. Check for automatic victory according to the *Operation Shoestring* victory conditions.

Modifications to the Operation Shoestring Naval Rules:

See alteration to naval/air sequence of play above.

Japanese mission restrictions: In step I.A.4 (placing naval units and sea zones), the Japanese player must roll for release of his heavy units by the Japanese high command. On a roll of 5 or 6, no BBs and only three CAs can be placed on the map (the heavy units were kept in Truk due to the indecisiveness of the Japanese High Command and the limited amount of fuel available for the Japanese Navy). Other units can be placed normally. On a roll of 3-4, the BBs Kongo, Haruna, Hiei, and Kirishima can be placed on the map, as well as two more CAs. On a roll of 1-2, all units can be placed on the map. *The standard Operation Shoestring rules allow the Japanese to place a huge blob of surface units near Guadalcanal every turn, without the US player being able to do much against it. This simply was not within Japanese logistical capabilities.*

18.3 Transports

Transport capacity in *Operation Shoestring* is measured in terms of companies and supply

points. In the combined game, supply point capacity is measured normally but units are rated differently since most units in *Henderson Field* are larger than company-sized:

Count each infantry or support unit battalion as four companies for naval transport. Artillery/AA/AT battalions or regiments count as two companies.

Use the *Henderson Field* rule for Sea Movement (5.5) for transport along the Guadalcanal coast. Ignore the *Operation Shoestring* rule on Guadalcanal area transport (case 3.) at the bottom of page 11.

Opposed Amphibious Landings: Use the *Operation Shoestring* rule, with the following addition:

7. The Japanese cannot make an opposed landing within five hexes of the location of the 3rd Coastal Defense Battalion.

Modifications to the Henderson Field rules.

12. Reinforcements: Ignore the Reinforcement schedule. The availability of reinforcements on the *Henderson Field* map is determined by the *Operation Shoestring* naval rules.

Bombardment. The availability of air units for bombardment is determined using the *Operation Shoestring* rules on bombardment. Multiply the fire values of *Henderson Field* artillery units by 3 when determining the effects of bombarding *Henderson Field*. Japanese control of Mount Austen is required for bombarding Henderson field with artillery.

The effect of bombardment on ground units near Henderson Field is determined using the *Henderson Field* naval bombardment rule. Every battleship used for bombardment provides a +1 modifier. The use of at least two CAs for bombardment provides a +1 modifier. The modifier for CAs is not cumulative with any BB modifiers, nor does it increase if more than two CAs are present.

Ground support. Ground support can only be flown by aircraft stationed at Henderson Field (regardless of which side owns it). Only units with a bombardment value of 3 or more are capable of flying ground support. The units' number of steps is irrelevant. Ground support is resolved according to the *Henderson Field* rules.

Supply. Use the *Operation Shoestring* supply rules for determining supply status (but not the effects of supply status).

Effects of Supply. A side in No Supply status has the Proficiency Rating of all units reduced by one for all effects (including bombardment, combat, and fatigue).

Use the following table for determining if artillery that has fired becomes available again for fire.

Supply	US	Japan
Full	always	1-4
Low	1-4	1-3
No	1-3	1-2

Use the following table for determining attrition. A die roll within the specified range means a "Yes" for attrition.

Supply	US	Japan
Full	1	1-2
Low	1-2	1-3
No	1-3	1-4

Victory Conditions

The following changes are made to the automatic *Operation Shoestring* victory conditions. Otherwise, their use is as specified in the scenarios. They are necessitated by the changes in unit scale and map area.

Japanese Conditions

1. Treat as before.
3. Replace "Volinavua (Hex 5613)" by "Koli"
4. Destroy 13 steps of US units (not 40)

5. Ignore this condition (the chit is not put in the cup). *The effects of this condition are built into the US setup restrictions.*

6. Ignore this condition (the chit is not put in the cup). *This hex is outside the Henderson Field map area.*

7-10. Treat as before.

US conditions

1. Treat as before.

2. Clear Japanese units from within 7 Hexes of Henderson Field.

3. Ignore this condition (the chit is not put in the cup). *The effects of this condition are built into the US setup restrictions.*

4. Eliminate 13 steps of Japanese units (not 40).

5. Replace "Hex 5613" by "Koli".

6. Ignore this condition (the chit is not put in the cup). *This hex is outside the Henderson Field map area.*

7, 8, 9. Treat as before.

10. Replace "hex 2525" by "hex 1309".

Victory points

The number of victory points for ground unit steps lost is doubled. Otherwise, all victory points are assigned as specified in *Operation Shoestring*. (Note that the original victory point table made an eliminated Marine battalion the equivalent of a sunk fleet carrier. The change above not only adjusts the scale to Henderson Field units but also reduces the ratio somewhat..)

Campaign Game

Game Length: Variable, up to the 30 Nov turn. (Note: The *Henderson Field* counter mix makes it impossible to continue into December and January.)

Use the *Henderson Field* turn track.

To play the Campaign, move the turn marker twice through September, since the turn track contains no spaces for August. The Campaign game ends after turn 33 (30 Nov on the *Henderson Field* track) at the latest.

Tulagi, Gavutu, Tanambogo

Since neither Tulagi nor Gavutu/Tanambogo are on the *Henderson Field* map, use the following simplified rule:

1. The 1PARA and 1RDR Battalions must be carried with the first US invasion, but do not land on Guadalcanal itself. Place them in an unused area of the map. If any US troops remain on Guadalcanal on the second turn after landing, the two units are placed on Guadalcanal as reinforcements, each with one step missing. If no US troops are on Guadalcanal at that time, both units are automatically destroyed (and count for victory points).
2. Until the beginning of November, two Marine battalions must remain at Noumea and may not be moved to Guadalcanal. (Historically, these two battalions were taken from the 2nd Marine regiment and made up the garrison of Tulagi.)

Setup and Reinforcement schedule

Refer to the *Operation Shoestring* setup and reinforcement schedule for **air and naval** units and supply availability. All initial **ground** forces and ground reinforcements specified by the *Operation Shoestring* rulebook are ignored. Use the listings below instead.

US Ground units at start

1/1 Marines
1/2/2 Marines
2/2/2 Marines
3/2/2 Marines
5/1 Marines
11/1 Marine Art
1LVT
1Eng
1Pio
1SW
1Tank
1RDR
1Para
3DB

US September Reinforcements

7/2 Marines
1/11/1 Marine Art

US October Reinforcements

1/147 Inf
2/147 Inf
164 Inf
1/10/2 Marine Art
3/10/2 Marine Art
8/2 Marines
2RDR

US November Reinforcements

3/147 Inf
1/182 Inf
2/182 Inf
2/10/2 Marine Art
244 Art
246 Art
21 Recon

Japanese Initial troops

11CU
13CU
Yokosuka5
2/4
1/124
2/28
2AT
81GDD

Japanese September Reinforcements

1/4
3/4
1/16
2/16
1/28
2/29
2/124

3/124
1/228
2/230
3/230
5 MG
1 Tank
2 Art
6 Art
9 Art
3 Lt Art
2 Mt Art
20 Mt Art
2 Eng
45AA
35 Art

Japanese October Reinforcements

3/16
1/29
3/29
2/228
3/228
10 Mt Art
4-21Art
1/229
2/229
3/229
38 Eng
38 Trans
2 Tank
1/230
39CU
1 SE
2 SE
3 SE
2 Trans
Maizuru
38 AA
47 AA
38 Mt Art
7 Art

Victory

Use the *Operation Shoestring* victory conditions with the alterations described above.

High Water Mark Scenario

The scenario begins on the September 4 turn on the *Henderson Field* track.

Setup

Use the *Operation Shoestring* High Water Mark Scenario for air and naval setup. Use the *Henderson Field* campaign scenario for ground unit setup.

Reinforcement schedule

Use the reinforcement schedule for the Campaign game. Reinforcements arriving in September can be transported by sea on the Strategic interphase of the September 4 turn.

Victory

Use the *Operation Shoestring* victory conditions for this scenario, with the alterations described above.