



This mod has been in play and received extensive play testing since 2020.... it's had 1000+ hours spent on it, it's been interminable, but I will see it finished and soon...

Here is a summary of where we are now in what I hope is the final version, though I'm happy to correct any minor problems that are found along the way with a further patch later. In addition, there will be a further comprehensive update on the art. This will probably follow in the first quarter of next year; however, there is a massive upgrade to the art in play in the update.

So what are the key differences between Empire and the standard game, and perhaps some other mods?

I will make the comments here mainly from the point of view of Japan, as they hold the strategic initiative until it is lost at an indeterminate time.

Firstly, the game does not deviate too much from the opening moves of the war in the Pacific; that is, you can still attack and should probably attack Pearl Harbour (and Manila). You should also dedicate plenty of resources to eradicating as much Allied air as possible (as they will be in short supply during the first half of 1942 (shorter than stock)).

There is a definite lack of technology at the start; some aircraft models and ships certainly predate the historical start of the conflict. This is entirely by design, as Empire is a game where technology is somewhat lacking at the start (think late 1940, early 41), but then accelerates throughout the game, especially in 1944 and 1945.

There are more ships at the start of the game on the map, almost obsolete types on both sides, but perhaps slightly fewer aircraft units (certainly early war replacements). One thing we wanted to do in this mod was not to clutter the map too much, but to give players an infinite number of upgrade and build options for a wide range of aircraft and to build/upgrade and or convert ships. What I tried to do was remove the opportunity to exploit the simulation with hindsight, so that some of the upgrade paths in ships and, to an extent, aircraft are a little bit more geared towards what was historical policy, tactics, or strategy. As regards the aircraft (and there are many more types and new art on both sides), they all have their plus points and drawbacks, and you should carefully consider the upgrade paths which are free. Other aircraft have their own upgrade paths, but of course, they are costly to convert during the game. This is all by design.

Perhaps most intriguing of all is that Japan is able to build a completely bespoke Navy. Many of the ships depicted are items that could have been built but weren't, or designed

in outline. There is just one or two completely hypothetical ships, but they fit within the parameters of the general strategy.

You can't build everything; you have to think about what direction you want to go in and what ships you will try to get into the game quickly, and those you can live without for a long time. One important thing to remember about shipbuilding is that submarines can now be built for realistic amounts of industry. They come into the game at a very low rate of durability, but then instantly convert to the historical values. There are more Allied submarines and many more Japanese submarines to consider building.

The Allies have more ships as well, many of them being late-war types that arise substantially earlier. The Allies received a huge surge in technology and the availability of late-war aircraft during 1944 into 1945. The key is for the bombers to be able to reach Japanese industry before they have a surge in technology in early 1945, which could bring back a stalemate situation.

The database has had an extensive overhaul based on my experience and other players' experiences over a long period of time. Changes, though, are mainly tweaks; they are not revolutions. This has generally meant that aircraft have slightly higher durability, ships also have slightly more durability and are listed at more realistic average tonnages. There is more progress on mines and mine-laying ships; there is much more progress in the availability of anti-submarine weapons on both sides.

Anti-submarine capability for Japan is much diminished in 1941 and to the end of 1942, but is slightly better than stock in 1944 onwards and much better in 1945. Allied capability has been reduced somewhat throughout because some of the weapons were overrated, which I believe was just an omission from a stock. Remember that the depth charge was a weapon little improved from World War One; it was the radar and other things that tipped the balance. Japan, therefore, retains a much more potent submarine force, especially as they obtain radar in this mod.

Perhaps most important in the DB is the update to the torpedo system in relation to its possibility of belt penetration on very well-armoured ships. Please look at the game notes to see what I've done with that. It seems to be playing out very well.

Japan and the allies have a more realistic torpedo upgrade for planes and for ships. The strange thing is that much of this data was available in the database but not used during revisions and patches. Japan continues to improve its torpedoes during the war; it is the Allies who seriously catch up in 1944 onwards.

Kamikaze aircraft have received a substantial revision to make them a bit tougher to intercept and to make their weapons better. A detailed study of the game shows that the plane will only impact the target if one of its weapons hits. Complete revision to kamikaze OOB.

We have much more interesting progression on float planes, Patrols and scouting aircraft on both sides, but early on it benefits Japan.

All shells and bombs now have a dud rate. Some shells and bombs generally have a higher death rate than others, especially rapid-fire guns, and some of the historically known problems with some ordnance.

Japan develops better medium and light calibre AA guns deployed on ships by mid-1944. Allied ships also deployed some better capabilities by 1944; it's better, but still inferior to the Allies.

The number of available pilots in training, especially early in the war, has been drastically reduced, especially for Japan. Even when Japan starts to receive a reasonable level of replacements, in 1943, the quality drops very substantially; almost all arriving Japanese air groups are not carrier-trained when they arrive, which increases losses.

Japan will have to look away from the homeland for much of its resources towards Korea, China, Formosa, and the DEI and British Empire. This is a significant correction from the stock, which I think is mainly there to help the AI.

Many bases (and potential size), in remote places, have been reduced, and Malaria areas have expanded.

We have some Vichy French forces, an expansive Thai OOB, Portuguese (Goa and East Timor), and even some Polish...Then there is the U-boat (including very late was XXI U-boats) and surface elements of the Kriegsmarine... to spice things up, not too much – just enough. Chinese Partisans, warbands and coastal pirates, river gunboats, sea-going barges, Colonial Refugees, POW/forced labour, Japanese Kampeitai, Russian Volunteers in China, Thai (allied) freedom fighters, more Indian National Army (Japanese), again not much, but they can spice things up.

Note the victory conditions allow for a very balanced outcome, in my opinion, but you don't have to play with it if you don't want to. That goes for all the optional rules; the only one that is very important in this game is that historical research and development should be on. You have to play with the equipment that is available to you. This is not science fiction, though it is fiction.

I highly recommend playing 2-day turns.

More news soon, it's coming!!

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