

Saipan 44 Scenario for the Operational Art of War (Ver. 1.0) by Paul Eric Wilson

NOTES FROM THE DESIGNER

1. Although a number of sources were used for this scenario, the most important was Major Carl W. Hoffman's (USMC) *Saipan: The Beginning of the End*. This book, part of the USMC monograph series proved invaluable for finding the information required to put together the scenario.
2. Why I designed some things the way I did:
 - A. Map scale is literally 1.25 Km/h. This is the same scale I used for my Attu scenario.
 - B. Because my map scale is only half of the 2.5 Km that it was supposed to be, artillery only fired half as far as it should. To get around this, I replaced all howitzers with its equivalent long range artillery. In other words, if I needed 75mm pack howitzers, I would use 75mm guns. The attack and defense numbers stay about the same but the firing distance is doubled.
 - C. Order of Battle information for both sides came from *Saipan: The beginning of the End* and information from the Nafziger collection. TO&E structure for the Japanese was taken primarily from *The Handbook on Japanese Military Forces* by the U.S. War Department. Information also came from *World War II: An Encyclopedia of Facts and Figures* by John Ellis (an exclusive book of the Military Book Club). U.S. Army information came from George Forty's *U.S. Army Handbook* and Scott Grasse's *Tables of Organization*. Marine TO&E came from Grasse's *Tables* and John Ellis's book. The Ellis book is invaluable because almost all of its 350 pages is devoted to order of battle information and TO&E.
 - D. Putting together the TO&E for Japanese units turned out to be interesting because of unit size variability. Japanese regiments might have 3000 people or only 300. I had to create a pattern and then cut down the equipment to take into account the size. Since I knew the size of a typical SNLF unit and army regiment, I was able to manipulate the TO&E to produce under-strength or over-strength units.

THE U.S. INVASION OF SAIPAN

An invasion by the U.S. Marine 2nd and 4th Divisions and the Army's 27th Division
by P. Eric Wilson

Date: June 1944

Location: Saipan, Marianas

Map Scale: 2.5km per hex

Time Scale: Full-day turns

Unit Scale: Regiment/Battalion

Length: Up to 24 turns

UNIT COLORS

UNITED STATES:

Army: White on Green

USAAF: Dark Blue on Green

Marines: Red on Blue

U.S. Navy: Light Blue on Blue

JAPAN:

Army: White on Yellow

Marines, SNLF: Red on White

NOTE

1. Modified for TOAW version 1.04.08.

2. Best played from the American side.

NOTES FOR U.S. PLAYER

1. The game will end two turns after the northern end of the island is captured by U.S. forces. If you do not make it there by turn 24, the game will end on that turn.

2. A few turns after you capture Aslito Airfield (hex 13, 23), USAAF P-47's will arrive as reinforcements and start using its runway.

3. Use your naval forces! They are very valuable. Always try to space your ships so that they can attack as many targets as possible. You will want the big guns to help out in as many of your attacks as can be accomplished.

3. VP's have been kept low so that casualties become an issue.

NOTES FOR JAPANESE PLAYER

Keep U.S. forces from reaching the northern end of the island.

HISTORY

Saipan was the first of three major islands of the Marianas chain to be attacked by U.S. forces. The Marianas were important for three reasons: First, by capturing the islands, Truk could be isolated; second, bases of operation could be established near to Japan; and third, runways on these islands could be used to support bombing runs on Japanese cities.

The operation began on June 15, 1944 when the 2nd and 4th Marine Divisions landed on the southern portion of the island. Resistance was stiff at the beaches. Night counterattacks by both Japanese infantry and tanks kept the beachhead from gaining depth. By the next morning, U.S. troops started moving inland. Also, the Army's 27th Division started coming ashore.

Aircraft from a number of carriers and bombardment from battleships and cruisers supported the troops. Unfortunately, after a few days, many of the battleships had to leave to support the Battle of the Philippine Sea which was just getting under way.

On the third day of fighting, Aslito airfield was captured and U.S. P-47's and A-20's started using the field a few days later. At Nafutan Point in the south, heavy Japanese resistance kept that area from being fully cleared out for a week. While one of the 27th regiments worked on clearing out this area, everyone else headed north toward the geographical center of the island.

With the 2nd Marine Division on the left, 4th Marine Division on the right, and 27th Division in the center, U.S. forces headed north only to meet major resistance at Mount Tapochau (the highest mountain on the island), "Death Valley" in the center, and Mount Kagman on the right. The 2nd

Division captured Tapochau and the 4th Division captured Kagman but the 27th Division got hung up at the soon to be named Death Valley. Holland Smith, in charge of the overall operation (Northern Troops & Landing Force), relieved Ralph Smith, commanding general of the 27th, on account of their slow progress. The removal of Ralph Smith led to questions concerning the Army's abilities relative to those of the Marines. The Smith vs. Smith controversy continues to rage in some circles to this day.

Death Valley was captured on D+11. Once the 27th was able to move again, the 2nd Marines captured the major city of Garapan.

Near Tanapag, General Saito, in charge of Saipan forces, ordered his men to go on a major banzai charge. Four thousand Japanese troops participated. Unfortunately for Saito, it achieved little. Saito committed suicide shortly before the banzai charge went into effect.

American troops then took a few days to reorganize before continuing up the island. Holland Smith declared the island secure on July 9 shortly after the capture of Marpi Point Airfield.

When troops reached the northern end of the island, they became witness to a horrible event. Japanese civilians, afraid of being captured, threw themselves over the jagged northern cliffs. American troops on the scene could do little to stop them.

Almost all of Japan's soldiers on the island died (29,000 people). Casualties on the U.S. side totaled 13,500. With the capture of Saipan, U.S. forces could look forward to the capture of nearby Tinian and Guam.