Example of Play: Air-Naval Interaction
Scenario: Coral Sea: "Scratch one flattop!"
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If you're new to *A World at War*, and the rules for air-naval
interactions seem overwhelming, you're not alone. When I
transitioned from *Advanced Third Reich* over to *A World at
War* in early 2001, rules 20-23 were certainly the scariest in
the entire rulebook. This must certainly be the case for
players who are new to the *Third Reich* game system. But
fear not! As with most aspects of the rules, carefully working
through an air-naval interaction, referencing the rules
continuously during play, will help you learn the basics and
learn them correctly. Novice and veteran players who rush through play without carefully consulting the rules – even
when they think they know what they're doing – often play things incorrectly or, worse still, learn things incorrectly.
Unlearning incorrect rules is not fun. Patience and diligence are of the utmost importance when trying to lay down
your foundation of understanding concerning air-naval interactions in *A World at War*. With the Rulebook as our
guide, this Example of Play will hopefully not only walk you through an air-naval interaction, but illustrate how to
constantly reference the Rulebook during play – a good habit, especially for new players, but also for veterans.

Begin by setting up the Coral Sea scenario, which is located in the *A World at War* Scenario Booklet. Note the post-
publication scenario refinement that was made in Fall 2003. The Allied land-based air units in Townsville now begin
the scenario in Cairns:

Coral Sea

Scenario refinement (Fall 2003):

Allied Forces (American unless otherwise indicated):

- Noumea: 10 NAS, *Lexington* (CV), *Yorktown* (CV), CA8, DD1
- Port Moresby: 1 AAF (Aus), 1-2 (Aus)
- Cairns: 2 AAF, 1 AAF (Aus)
- Townsville:CA4, CA4 (Aus), DD1 (Aus)

If you haven't reviewed the latest rule updates, be sure to visit aworldatwar.com. Most of these rule updates are
simply punctuation, spelling, and grammatical errors that slipped through the proofing process. Others are cross-
references or additions for consistency purposes. Still others are clarifications that have arisen due to new players
reading the rulebook and trying to play, but being confused by a rule that didn't clearly say what the designers had
intended. At first the list of updates may seem long and just one more obstacle slowing your attempt to learn how to
play the game. Don't be discouraged. Simply read through the rule
updates once and print them out or note those changes in your
rulebook. These updates are intended to make the rules clearer and
easier to understand, especially for the new player (you!). The
volume of updates will certainly diminish with every 6-month update,
so read up and push forward.

Back to the scenario.

The Coral Sea scenario only requires the east Pacific mapboard, so
you don't need much table space for this scenario. I set up both
Pacific mapboards: the west Pacific map remains folded up, so only
the southern portion of this map is shown; the east Pacific map is
partially unfolded. I prefer to view all of New Guinea and Australia
for this scenario in order to see the larger geographical picture
associated with the historical situation in Spring 1942.

Setting up the counters: See the front page of the Scenario Booklet,
under Scenario Information, for unit designations. I use "eNAS" for

Japanese elite NAS and "1x2" for 1-2 infantry. Other abbreviations are covered under Definitions and Acronyms (3.11).

I've set up the playing counters as follows:
Japanese Naval Status Chart:

TF1: (above) 2 eNAS, 2 eNAS, 2 eNAS; (below) *Shokaku* CV3, *Zuikaku* CV3, CA6, CA2, DD2. This is Japanese TF1.

TF2: (above) 2 NAS; (below) *Shoho* CVL2, CA6, CA2, DD2, DD2.

TF3: (above) 2 NAS, 2 NAS, 2 NAS; (below) *Lexington* CV3, *Yorktown* CV3, CA6, CA2, DD1. This is US TF1.

I'm using the TF3 slot for the US naval forces in Noumea (to save table space).

I then have the following counters on the map:

Truk: Japanese TF1, 1 sub.
Rabaul: Japanese TF2, DD1, 2 AAF, 1n2 (the Japanese marines were accidentally printed as 1n3 counters, but they should be 1n2 counters), 1x2, 1x2.
Lae: 1 AAF, 1x2.
Bougainville: Japanese control marker (a reminder that Japan controls this island).

Noumea: US TF1; 2 NAS, 2 NAS (these NAS will not be used in the scenario, but were historically in Noumea in Spring 1942).
Townsville: US CA4, Aus CA2, Aus CA2, Aus DD1.
Cairns: US 2 AAF, Aus 1 AAF.
Port Moresby: Aus 1 AAF, Aus 1x2.

A Japanese airbase, which may be placed during the Japanese movement phase, is not needed, so it is remains in the forcepool.

Now look at the map and the arrangement of units on both sides. Also consider the victory conditions for this scenario (see the Scenario Booklet).

Victory Points:

+3	Control of Port Moresby
+1	Control of Guadalcanal
+1	Each enemy surface factor sunk
+1	Every two enemy NAS eliminated

To get points, you can try to sink enemy naval units (not including the Japanese sub) or destroy enemy NAS; in addition, you can vie for control of Port Moresby (3 points) and Guadalcanal (1 point).

I have decided that the Japanese will go hard for Port Moresby, since it's worth more points. This will probably lead to a big naval battle when the Japanese try to invade Port Moresby, which should be fun.

Finally, let's setup the Magic cards for both sides (48.23). I have chosen a Tactical card for the 9th US Magic card (see the Coral Sea scenario, under Research and Production, Western Allies). Thus, the Magic card pools for Japan and the US are as follows:

Japan: 1 Submarine Warfare, 1 Tactical, 6 Blank (8 cards).
US: 1 Submarine Warfare, 1 ASW, 2 Tactical, 1 Strategic, 1 Wild, 3 Blank (9 cards).

You should consult the Sequence of Play (SoP), a white player aid card, very carefully throughout the scenario. The SoP helps all players do things in the right order during a turn. Doing things in the correct order is the easiest way to avoid disagreements during play. I will use abbreviations from the SoP (e.g., "5a") for increased clarity.

From this point forward, I will use green text for scenario results and blue text for commentary on results from the scenario. Apologies to those with green-blue color blindness.

Let the scenario begin!

Game turn
C. Ultra and Magic draws.

Japan and the US each draw 4 cards from their respective Magic card pools (48.21B).

Japan: Tactical, Submarine Warfare, Blank, Blank.
US: Tactical, Submarine Warfare, Blank, Blank.

Wow, the Japanese totally luck out: best case for the Japanese, and lousy luck for the US. The only cards drawn that will affect the scenario are the Tactical cards (no submarine warfare in this scenario).

Player turn
5. Movement Phase.
5a. Placement of airbase counters.

The Japanese do not place an airbase (18.142).

AAF have a range of 3 hexes in the Pacific (18.31A). Port Moresby is only 2 hexes away from Lae, so Lae is a good place for the Japanese AAF. Since Lae is a city, 5 AAF may base at Lae (18.12). Since the Japanese only have 3 AAF total, and they plan to operate them all out of Lae, it would be unnecessary to place an airbase in Lae.

If Japan wanted to protect the invasion of Guadalcanal with 1 AAF, Japan could place an airbase in Bougainville and stage 1 AAF there. But Guadalcanal is not a priority in the current Japanese plan.

5b. Staging of air units.

The Japanese 2 AAF in Rabaul stage to Lae (3 AAF total in Lae now).

5c. Attacker announces, then resolves, counterair missions.

AAF operations have a range of 3 hexes in the Pacific (18.31A). Thus, the Japanese AAF in Lae may counterair enemy air units that are based within 3 hexes of Lae.

Japanese 1 AAF (Lae) counterairs Australian 1 AAF (Port Moresby) by moving 2 hexes along the route Lae-HH27-Port Moresby.

Counterair (18.52) is a way to neutralize or eliminate enemy air units that are based within range of hexes that you plan to attack or invade. The Japanese want the Australian 1 AAF in Port Moresby inverted or eliminated before the Japanese try to patrol near Port Moresby or invade Port Moresby. Otherwise, the Australian 1 AAF could break down into 1 search AAS, 1 cover AAS, and 1 attack AAS (23.132) and interfere with the Japanese naval activities (23.11A-D).

To resolve the counterair combat, use the Air Combat Table (19.2) on the brown player aid card. Each side throws 2 dice (19.21). No modifiers will affect the dice rolls because the Japanese Air Nationality DRM, or ADRM, and the Australian ADRM are both 2 (19.31A). If Japan had an ADRM of 3 and Australia had an ADRM of 2, Japan would receive a +1 DRM to its air combat dice roll, and Australia would receive a -1 DRM to its air combat dice roll (19.31A). Both sides use the "1" AF row on the Air Combat Table.

AF AS	Dice Roll										
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12+
1	0	0	0/1	0/1	1/0	1/0	1/1	1/1	1/2	1/2	1/3

Air Combat Table -19.2

Japan 1 AAF   DR 10   1/2 Result

Aus 1 AAF   DR 12   1/3 Result

A "1/3" result means 1 AAF eliminated and 3 AAF aborted (19.2). In this case, each AAF shoots down the other AAF. The abort results are ignored, because there are no other AAF left to be aborted.

High dice rolls by both sides. As long as Japan didn't roll "2" or "3", Japan was sure to get at least a "0/1" result and invert the Australian 1 AAF. So long as the Australian 1 AAF is neutralized, the Japanese player may proceed happily.

5d. Attacker resolves air attacks on patrolling submarines.

Does not apply.

5e. Attacker announces naval base changes, patrols and movement of naval units to and from SW boxes.

Ok, this is where the scenario gets interesting. Patrols (21.41) are an important naval mission to understand, especially in the Pacific. Patrols are a way to effectively base some naval units in a sea hex (the "patrol hex") so that it's easier for these naval units to support friendly naval activities (22.162) – a kind of counter-interception. If enemy naval forces intercept the attacker's naval missions during the movement phase or the combat phase, the patrolling naval units may move up to 3 hexes to support friendly naval activities and join in the ensuing naval combat. Patrols containing fast carriers may also counterair enemy land-based air units en route to the patrol hex (21.415D), as well as attack enemy bases from the patrol hex (21.415H).

For this scenario, first and foremost, the Japanese want to support the seaborne invasion of Port Moresby. If Japanese TF1 patrols in hex HH28, Japanese TF1 will be

- 2 hexes from Port Moresby;
- 2 hexes from Rabaul;
- 3 hexes from Guadalcanal; and
- 4 hexes from Cairns (just out of range of the Allied AAF in Cairns - 18.31A).

Naval units on patrol may counter-intercept automatically any interception hex within 3 hexes of their patrol hex (22.162). Therefore, if the Allies intercept either of the Japanese seaborne invasions, it would be best if Japanese TF1 could be on patrol "nearby" (i.e., within 3 hexes of) both invasion hexes. This makes HH28 an ideal patrol hex for Japanese TF1 in this scenario.

The Japanese invasion forces will move through the following hexes en route to their invasion hexes:

- Rabaul-GG28-HH27-II27-Port Moresby
- Rabaul-GG29-GG30-GG31-Guadalcanal

If the Allies intercept either of these Japanese invasion forces *anywhere* along these hex routes, Japanese TF1, while on patrol in HH28, could counter-intercept automatically. Japanese TF1 could divide into smaller forces to support both invasion forces, if need be

(21.4174). That's the best overall protection that the Japanese player could hope for.

Japan announces that Japanese TF1 (Truk) will go on patrol in hex HH28. The Japanese 1 sub (Truk) will also patrol in hex HH28, although the sub must patrol separately from other naval units (21.4176A). No naval base changes (or SW naval deployments).

With the announcements done, the Japanese 1 sub moves along the path Truk-Rabaul-GG28-HH28. Japanese TF1 does likewise.

5f. Resolve air and naval interactions.

The Allied player must make his first decision now: Should I intercept Japanese TF1 as it moves to the patrol hex? The problem with intercepting the Japanese TF en route to or in the patrol hex is that this would put the Allied naval forces within range of the Japanese 2 AAF in Lae. It's generally bad to fight a naval battle under enemy land-based air units (i.e., within range of enemy land-based air units).

With that in mind, the Allied player decides to wait until the combat phase and intercept the Japanese invasion of Port Moresby. Port Moresby is within air range (3 hexes) of Cairns, where Allied 3 AAF are based. Hence, the naval battle will be fought under both Japanese (Lae) and Allied (Cairns) land-based air units.

No interceptions.

5g. Resolve air attacks from patrolling naval forces.
5h. Resolve harbor attacks.
5i. Initial supply determination.
5j. Air and sea transport and the resolution of air and naval interactions arising out of air and sea transport.

Do not apply. All areas are considered to be fully supplied in this scenario. The other segments from the SoP are not applicable.

5k. Ground unit movement and the execution of overruns.

Japanese 1x2 (Lae) moves to HH26.

This Japanese 1x2 will help with the attack on Port Moresby.

5l. Eliminate units still overstacked from retreat during enemy attrition option.

Does not apply.

6. Combat phase.
6a. Attacker announces land-based air and naval missions.

Now it is time for the Japanese player to make his final decisions on what the composition of the naval invasion forces will be. He knows Japanese TF1 may counter-intercept automatically if the Allies try to intercept. He also knows that the Allied land-based air units in Cairns may interfere with his attack on Port Moresby by providing defensive air support (DAS) for the Aus 1x2 (18.61). Finally, he will have 1n2 + 1x2 (Rabaul) invading Port Moresby, and the 1x2 (HH26) will help with this attack. The 2cd 1x2 in Rabaul will invade a vacant Guadalcanal. And all this, provided the invasion forces aren't turned back by the Allies.

GROUND COMBAT

At this point, it's important to understand the basics of ground attacks (15.2). Each unit has two numbers on it (6.11): a combat factor (1st) and a movement factor (2cd). When you attack a hex, you add up the combat factors of all the defending units in that hex (15.41). In Port Moresby, the Australian 1x2 has a combat factor of "1". Then you calculate the net DM for the Australian 1x2.

- Basic +2 DM (15.32A);
- +1 DM for defending against seaborne invasion (15.32B) *will not apply* because half of the Japanese invasion force will be marines (1n2 + 1x2 in Rabaul);
- +2 DM for defending in a jungle/mountain hex (15.32D).
- Net +4 DM (2 + 2 = 4).

Combat Results Table - 15.6								
	1:4	1:3	1:2	1:1	2:1	3:1	4:1	5:1
1	A	A	A	A	a	Ex	Ex-1	Ex-2
2	A	A	A	a	Ex	Ex-1	Ex-2	d
3	A	A	a	Ex	Ex-1	Ex-2	d	D
4	A	A	Ex	Ex-1	Ex-2	d	D	D
5	A	Ex	Ex	Ex-2	d	D	D	D
6	Ex	Ex	Ex	d	D	D	D	D

Modifier	
+1	For each previous round of combat

The Australian 1x2 will thus defend at 1 x 4 = 4 (15.31).

The Japanese will attack with 3 ground factors: 1n2 + 1x2 + 1x2, or 1 + 1 + 1 = 3 (15.31). Therefore, only including ground units, the attack on Port Moresby will be at 3:4 odds, which rounds down to 1:2 odds. These odds aren't high enough, because seaborne invasions at less than 1:1 odds are prohibited (21.5122). So, Japan needs to increase the ground attack odds to at least 4:4 (1:1 odds).

Now let's look at the Combat Results Table (15.6), or CRT, which is on the brown player aid card. At 4:4 odds (1:1 odds), the possible results range from "A" to "d". "A", "a", and "Ex" results would all mean Japanese defeat. Even an "Ex" result would result in the loss of all 4 attacking factors and all 4 defending factors (the defender's DM is taken into account when determining combat losses - 15.61). This would leave no Japanese ground units to advance into Port Moresby after combat. The Allies would then retain control of Port Moresby (29.23). An "Ex-1", "Ex-2", or "d" result would permit Japanese capture of Port Moresby. Even an "Ex-1" result would only eliminate 3 of the 4 attacking Japanese combat factors, leaving a single 1-factor ground unit to occupy Port Moresby. So, at 4:4 odds, the Japanese have a 50/50 (3 in 6) chance of capturing Port Moresby.

While 4:4 odds are essential to allow for the seaborne invasion (21.5122), an attack on Port Moresby at 5:4 odds would be even better. At 5:4 odds even an "Ex" result leaves 1 Japanese combat factor to occupy Port Moresby. Thus, at 5:4 odds, the Japanese have a 66.6% (4 in 6) chance of capturing Port Moresby.

Better still if Japan can increase the combat odds to 6:4 (1.5:1 odds). Because Japan has a CTL of 2 (41.921A), Japan may conduct 2 rounds of ground combat (15.82A). In the first round, let's say the Japanese roll a "2". On the 1:1 column of the CRT a "2" = an "a" result, which means the attacker loses a number of ground factors equal to half the modified value of the defending units (4/2 = 2 factors lost). After losing 2 factors, Japan could attack again at 4:4 (1:1 odds) in round 2 of ground combat, and at a +1 DRM (15.75). So 1.5:1 odds is only special in that if the attacker gets an "a" result in the first round (which is at 1:1 odds on the CRT), he can attack at 1:1 odds again in round 2 with a +1 DRM (and, perhaps, still win the battle). At 6:4 odds, the Japanese have a 77.7% (28 in 36) chance of capturing Port Moresby.

AIR UNITS IN GROUND COMBAT

There are two ways Japan may increase the ground combat odds at Port Moresby: ground support (18.55) and shore bombardment (21.52). Ground support involves flying AAF or NAS to the attacked hex. Each AAF or 3 NAS adds one combat factor to the attack. Carrier-based NAS may also fly ground support (18.5522). One important note is that land-based air units must be assigned to ground support at the beginning of the combat phase (6a), while carrier-based NAS are assigned to air missions (6h) after naval combat has been resolved between the defender's intercepting forces and the attacker's naval missions (6e). So, for example, if the *Shoho* CVL2 is part of the Port Moresby invasion force, the 2 NAS aboard the *Shoho* CVL2, if they survive the interception naval battle, may be used to provide ground support for the invasion of Port Moresby.

Assuming Japanese TF1 supports the intercepted Japanese invasion force during the *combat phase*, the 6 eNAS on the CV3s in the Japanese patrolling force *may not* be used for ground support (21.4173); they have already been used during the combat phase. However, if a patrol supports an intercepted friendly naval force during the *movement phase* and wins the ensuing naval combat, the carrier-based NAS in the patrolling force *could be used* to provide ground support during the combat phase (21.4173).

The defender may also use his air units to change the odds of ground combat. If the defender flies defensive air support (DAS), each defending AAF or 3 NAS adds one combat factor to defense (18.611). It is important to note that DAS only adds *factors* to the defense of a hex; *DAS is not affected by the DM* of the attacked hex (18.611). Thus, if the Australian 1 AAF in Cairns flew DAS over the Australian 1x2 in Port Moresby, the defense of Port Moresby would be 4 + 1 = 5 (1x2 x 4 DM + 1 AAF DAS = 5 total).

If the defender flies DAS, the attacker may intercept the air units flying DAS (18.56). This results in air combat between the attacking air units that are intercepting DAS and the defending air units flying DAS (18.5631). Any attacking air units flying ground support are not included in this air combat. If, after the final round of air combat, the

attacker's last air combat result did not eliminate or abort all the defending air units flying DAS, these "unaffected" air units may provide DAS (18.5633).

To decide on how to best use the Japanese air units, we must consider how many air units each side will have available at Port Moresby. In this scenario, there are 3 eNAS onboard each of the *Shokaku* CV3 and *Zuikaku* CV3 (6 eNAS total). While the 2 NAS in Rabaul could remain land-based, let's assume these 2 NAS are onboard the *Shoho* CVL2. If the *Shoho* CVL2 is part of the Port Moresby invasion force, that's a total of 8 NAS that will be within range of Port Moresby that could fly ground support. The Japanese also have 2 AAF in Lae.

The Allies have 3 AAF in Cairns, which gives them a 1 AAF advantage over the Japanese. If US TF1 (Noumea) successfully intercepts the Port Moresby invasion force, the US 6 NAS on the *Lexington* CV3 and *Yorktown* CV3 would be a threat in naval combat. Japan will probably need all its carrier-based NAS and eNAS to help fight the Allied naval forces. The Allied player could then retain all 3 AAF (and convert them to AAS to assist in the naval battle involving the invasion of Port Moresby, in an attempt to turn back the Japanese invasion force); or the Allied player could retain 2 AAF for the naval battle and fly DAS with the remaining 1 AAF. But either way, this will be a decision for the Allied player, not the Japanese player. Not knowing what the Allied player will do with his AAF, Japan decides not to commit any AAF to ground support.

SHORE BOMBARDMENT

Because Japan is at a disadvantage with regards to land-based air units (2 AAF to the Allied 3 AAF), Japan will require shore bombardment (21.52) in order to increase the ground combat odds at Port Moresby from 3:4 odds up to 4:4 or 5:4 odds. To provide shore bombardment, naval units must accompany the invasion force as it moves to the invasion hex (21.516). The destroyers carrying the invading ground units may not be used for shore bombardment (21.514), because shore bombardment is a separate naval mission from carrying ground units for seaborne invasion (Naval Activities Table; see the green player aid card); naval units may only conduct one mission per turn (21.31). Every 3 naval factors of shore bombardment increase the attacker's ground combat strength by 1 (21.525). Thus, 6 naval factors, adding 2 to the attacker's ground combat strength (6/3 = 2), would increase the odds at Port Moresby from 3:4 to 5:4. So, the Japanese player decides that he will try to push the invasion force through by winning the naval combat, and then use any remaining naval factors that accompanied the invasion force for shore bombardment.

Remember that if the 2 NAS aboard the *Shoho* CVL2 survive the interception naval battle, they may be used to provide ground support for the invasion of Port Moresby (18.5522). Carrier-based NAS providing ground support may combine with naval factors providing shore bombardment, with remnants from both being added together (18.5521). Thus 2 NAS + 4 factors of shore bombardment = 6 total and, therefore, would increase the attacker's ground combat strength by 2 (6/3 = 2).

In summary, the Japanese player won't have any land-based air to spare on ground support. There may be a few carrier-based NAS remaining for ground support if the invasion force reaches Port Moresby, but that will depend on how the naval battle goes with the Allied forces.

JAPANESE INVASION FORCES

Now let's consider the Japanese invasion forces and this scenario's special rules:

Special Rules:
- Play is restricted to the controlled areas and the sea hexes around them.
- The Japanese naval forces in Truk must form one TF and patrol.
- 10 factors of Japanese naval forces in Rabaul must form one TF and attempt to invade Port Moresby.
- One Japanese destroyer factor in Rabaul must attempt to invade Guadalcanal.

So of the Japanese naval forces in Rabaul (*Shoho* CVL2, CA8, DD5; 15 factors total), 10 factors must form a TF and attempt to invade Port Moresby, while DD1 must attempt to invade Guadalcanal. That leaves 4 naval factors to play with. This small naval force could be a handy counter-intercepting force that may support either invasion force, if need be (22.16). But the Japanese plan prioritizes the invasion of Port Moresby, so let's put these 4 naval factors in the big invasion TF. Thus the Port Moresby invasion force (Japanese TF2) will consist of *Shoho* CVL2, CA8, DD4, and the Guadalcanal invasion "force" will be a single destroyer factor.

[A strict interpretation of this scenario's Special Rules might suggest that the Port Moresby invasion force *must* contain exactly 10 naval factors, and Japanese DD1 *must* try to invade Guadalcanal alone. But that's not how I

interpret the Special Rules, and that's not how it would be played in a normal game situation. So I'm assuming the remaining 4 naval factors may be used at the discretion of the Japanese player, as opposed to being mandated as a counter-interception force that must operate from Rabaul.]

When conducting seaborne invasions, you need to ensure that you have enough destroyers to carry your invading ground units. The requirements are

- DD1 for each ground factor invading an empty beach (21.5131A); and
- DD2 for each ground factor invading a beach defended by an enemy ground unit (21.5131B).

So, Japan has just enough destroyers for the invasion missions.

- DD1 to carry the 1x2 to Guadalcanal; and
- DD4 to carry the 1n2 + 1x2 to Port Moresby.

Given all this analysis, including introductions to ground combat, ground support, defensive air support, and shore bombardment, the Japanese player proceeds by announcing land-based air missions and naval missions (6a).

No ground support. DD1 carries a 1x2 to invade Guadalcanal. Japanese TF2 carries 1n2 + 1x2 to invade Port Moresby. The Japanese invasion forces move through the following hexes en route to their invasion hexes:

- Rabaul-GG28-HH27-II27-Port Moresby
- Rabaul-GG29-GG30-GG31-Guadalcanal
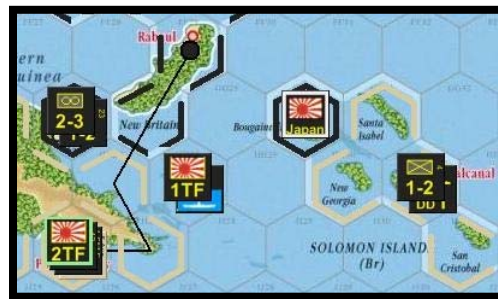
6b. Magic interceptions.

None.

If the US player had drawn a Strategic card from his Magic card pool, or a Wild card that was played as a Strategic card (48.22E), US TF1 could have automatically (without the need for an interception dice roll) intercepted one of the Japanese invasion missions (48.62C).

6c. Resolve counterair missions announced during the combat phase.
6d. Resolve land-based air attacks on naval units in port.

None.

6e. Defender announces air and naval interceptions, defensive air support and opposition to enemy bombing.

Let the fun begin!

From the Allied player's position, it looks as if Japan is going full go for Port Moresby. While it might be nice to use 1 AAF for DAS over Port Moresby, repelling the Japanese invasion force would be even better. At the same time, sending a few naval units to counter the invasion of Guadalcanal would be good too. The Allied player decides to try to intercept both Japanese invasion missions and use the Allied AAF in Cairns to assist in the Battle for Port Moresby (18.63).

- Australian CA2 will attempt to intercept the Guadalcanal invasion force in Guadalcanal along the path Townsville-NN25-Guadalcanal (7 hexes)
- US TF1 (Noumea) and the remaining Allied naval force in Townsville (US CA4, Australian CA2, Australian DD1) will attempt to intercept the Port Moresby invasion force in II27 (one hex east of Port Moresby)
- US TF1 moves along the path Noumea-NN27-II27 (9 hexes)
- The Townsville force moves along the path Townsville-Cairns-II27 (5 hexes)

Interception dice rolls

The Allied 3 AAF in Cairns convert into 3 search AAS, 3 cover AAS, and 3 attack AAS. Use the neutral (gray on white) AAS counters for the Australians.

The 3 search AAS spot (23.11A) for the Allied naval forces in II27, increasing the number of dice rolled for interception by 3 (22.23; see the Naval Interception Table, which is on one of the blue player aid cards). This does not invert these search AAS (23.11A). No Strategic Magic cards are played by either side. The number of dice rolled for the three interception attempts are as follows:

- Australian CA2 (Guadalcanal, 7 hexes): 4 seaborne invasion – 1 small intercepted force + 1 intercept seaborne invasion in mission hex = 4 dice
- US TF1 (II27, 9 hexes): 4 seaborne invasion + 3 search AAS = 7 dice
- Townsville force (II27, 5 hexes): 4 seaborne invasion + 3 search AAS = 7 dice

Note that in the Pacific Theater the interception dice roll is halved (round up) because each hex in the Pacific represents a larger area than in Europe (Naval Interception Table, Explanation). The interception dice rolls are

- Australian CA2 (Guadalcanal, 7 hexes): 4 dice. DR 14/2 = 7. Success.
- US TF1 (II27, 9 hexes): 7 dice. DR 22/2 = 11. Success.
- Townsville force (II27, 5 hexes): 7 dice. DR 30/2 = 15. Success.

The Allied naval forces are placed in Guadalcanal and II27, as the case may be.

6f. Attacker announces land-based air interception of defensive air support.

None.

6g. Resolve air and naval interactions.

The Japanese 2 AAF in Lae convert into 2 search AAS, 2 cover AAS, and 2 attack AAS.

The Japanese 1 sub and DD1, both on patrol in HH28, support the Guadalcanal invasion force and automatically (3 hexes away - 22.162) counter-intercept the Australian CA2 in Guadalcanal.

Remove DD1 from Japanese TF1. Thus, the following naval units remain in Japanese TF1:

Japanese TF1: 6 eNAS, *Shokaku* CV3, *Zuikaku* CV3, CA8, DD1.

The rest of Japanese TF1 supports the Port Moresby invasion force and automatically (1 hex away) counter-intercepts the Allied naval forces in II27.

The Japanese supporting naval forces and the Japanese invasion forces, together, fight the Allied naval forces in a single naval combat (22.161A). The Japanese patrols must counter-intercept the Allies in the interception hex selected by the Allied player (22.162).

If the Japanese naval forces were not on patrol, but instead based in port, and counter-intercepted the Allied naval forces in a hex other than the interception hex, then a naval combat would be resolved first between the counter-intercepting Japanese forces and the intercepting Allied forces; then, if Allied forces remained and the Allied player wanted to continue his interception attempt, between the intercepting Allied forces and the Japanese invasion forces (22.161B).

GUADALCANAL

Let's do the little naval battle in Guadalcanal first. It's important to follow the order of naval combat segments (22.41) carefully while working through naval combat. First, the combatants:

Japan: DD1, DD1 (carrying 1x2), sub.
Allies: Aus CA2.

Round 1

22.41A: Formation of combat groups. Naval units that were not part of a TF combine to form a single combat group.

Japanese CG1: DD1, DD1 (carrying 1x2).
Allied CG1: Aus CA2.

22.41E: Search. Neither side plays a Tactical Magic card. Neither side receives any search dice in round 1 (22.45; see the Search Table, which is on one of the blue player aid cards).

22.41I: Fleet combat. Neither side found the other, so no fleet combat is permitted in round 1 (22.452A).

22.41K: Sub attacks. The Japanese sub cannot attack the Aus CA2 unless it was found during naval combat or revealed its position by attacking Japanese CG1 (22.914). So no sub attacks in round 1.

22.41L: Additional rounds of naval combat. On to round 2!

Round 2

22.41A: Formation of combat groups. No change.

Japanese CG1: DD1, DD1 (carrying 1x2).
Allied CG1: Aus CA2.

22.41st: Search. Neither side plays a Tactical Magic card. Each side rolls 1 die for each previous round of naval combat (22.45).

Japan: DR 4   Nothing.
Allies: DR 1   Japanese CG1 is found!

22.41I: Fleet combat. Allied CG1 may engage in fleet combat with Japanese CG1 (22.512, 22.513A), if the Allied player desires.

This is probably the best situation for the Australian CA2, so they may as well attack Japanese CG1. If Japanese CG1 finds Allied CG1, and Allied CG1 does not find Japanese CG1, then the Japanese sub may get a free shot on the Australian CA2, which would be bad.

Allied CG1 engages in fleet combat with Japanese CG1.

Divide naval units into light, heavy, and screened categories (22.53). *Light* ships include destroyers (not carrying cargo), cruisers, and CVEs. *Heavy* ships include (undamaged) named capital ships. Damaged ships, carriers, transports, and destroyers carrying cargo are all automatically *screened*. A player may also screen any other ships in his naval force (22.53).

Japan: DD1 (light), DD1 carrying 1x2 (screened).
Allies: Australian CA2 (light).

The Allies are the "attacker" because they have more light ship factors (22.54).

Fleet combat sequence

22.54A. The defender ranks his naval units: heavy, light, screened.

Japan: DD1 (light), DD1 carrying 1x2 (screened).

22.54E. Light ships on both sides automatically target each other.

Australian CA2 vs. Japanese DD1

22.54G. Light ships on both sides fire simultaneously at each other.

Like air combat dice roll modifiers, fleet combat dice roll modifiers are equal and opposite; if one side has a +1 DRM, then the other side has a -1 DRM. The Naval Nationality DRMs, or NDRMs, are Japan (3) and Australia (2). Normally, this would result in a +1 DRM for Japan and a -1 DRM for Australia. However, because Japanese CG1 contains destroyers carrying cargo, Japanese CG1 is "carrying out a naval activity which reduces its effectiveness," granting a +1/-1 DRM in favor of Australia. The end result, from the Japanese perspective, is +1 NDRM – 1 reduced effectiveness = 0 net DRM. Each side throws 2 dice (Naval Attack Table - 22.55; see the brown player aid card). Both sides use the "1-2" FF row on the Naval Attack Table.

Aus CA2   DR 10   2 hits   Japan DD1 sunk
Japan DD1   DR 8   1 hit   Aus CA2 damaged

The Japanese DD1 is sunk because it takes 2 hits, but it's only a 1-factor naval unit (20.541); even 1 hit would have sunk the Japanese DD1. The Aus CA2 is damaged because it's treated as a 2-factor named ship (22.531), and a 2-factor named ship takes 2+ hits to sink or 1 hit to damage (20.522). Because the Japanese DD1 carrying the 1x2 was screened, it is not affected by the Allied fleet combat dice roll (22.54H).

22.41K: Sub attacks. The Japanese sub may attack the damaged Australian CA2 because it revealed its position by attacking Japanese CG1 (22.914). There is only one possible target, so the sub may forego selecting a target (22.934). The sub attack modifier is as follows (see the Submarine Attack Table, which is on one of the blue player aid cards): +1 NDRM +3 Japanese torpedo research -3 Allied ASW research +1 damaged naval unit = +2 net DRM. The research results are set forth in the Coral Sea scenario under Research and Production. Two dice are rolled for each sub attack (22.942). The sub attack results are determined by using the Submarine Attack Table (22.942).

Japan 1 sub   DR 7 + 2 = 9   3 hits   damaged Aus CA2 is sunk

Submarine Attack Table - 22.942										
DR	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12+
Sub	*	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	5

Even a "1" sub attack result would have damaged the Australian CA2 again, sinking it. The general rule is that a damaged named ship that is damaged again is sunk (20.512). So, since the Japanese sub had a +2 DRM, the damaged Australian CA2 did not have much of a chance to make it back to Townsville. The Japanese sub, now that it has attacked, must return to port.

The Japanese sub is inverted and returns to Truk (21.4176B). The Japanese 1x2 successfully lands in Guadalcanal (+1 victory point). The Japanese DD1 is inverted and returns to Rabaul (21.311).

Final casualties from Guadalcanal:

Japan: 1 surface factor (DD1)
Allies: 2 surface factors (CA2)

This is about what one would expect from this naval battle. Minimal commitment on both sides forced at least a minor distraction away from the Port Moresby area. The Allies could have committed another DD1 or CA2 to oppose the invasion of Guadalcanal, but that may have weakened the Allied naval forces too much in the naval combat in II27. So the invasion of Guadalcanal succeeds, but Japan uses its only sub to seal the deal.

Let's do a quick victory point count:

Japan: +1 (control of Guadalcanal), +2 (Allied CA2 sunk) = 3
Allies: +3 (control of Port Moresby), +1 (Japan DD1 sunk) = 4

THE NAVAL BATTLE FOR PORT MORESBY

This next naval battle will be much more fun, but there will be many more things to track and consider. As always, it is essential to carefully walk through the naval combat sequence (22.41). First, the combatants:

Japan:

Japanese TF1: 6 eNAS, *Shokaku* CV3, *Zuikaku* CV3, CA8, DD1.
Japanese TF2: 2 NAS, *Shoho* CVL2, CA8, DD4
(carrying 1n2 + 1x2).
2 search AAS, 2 cover AAS, 2 attack AAS

Allies:

US TF1: 6 NAS, *Lexington* CV3, *Yorktown* CV3, CA8, DD1.
US CA4, Aus CA2, Aus DD1.
3 search AAS, 3 cover AAS, 3 attack AAS

Round 1

Any Tactical Magic cards to play by either side (48.52C)?

Japan plays its Tactical card.
The US plays its Tactical card.
Both cards cancel out.

Both sides may forget to play their Tactical cards until it would affect play, when search rolls are made (22.41E). That's what I did! It would be ok to play the Tactical cards right before the search rolls, provided both players forget. But, as 48.52C states, Tactical cards should be played "at the start of a round of naval combat."

22.41A: Formation of combat groups (CGs).

(This is concealed from the opponent.)

Japan CG1 (TF1): 6 eNAS, *Shokaku* CV3, *Zuikaku* CV3, CA8, DD1.
Japan CG2 (TF2): 2 NAS, *Shoho* CVL2, CA8, DD4 (carrying 1n2 + 1x2).

Allied CG1 (TF1): 6 NAS, *Lexington* CV3, *Yorktown* CV3, CA8, DD1.
Allied CG2: US CA4, Aus CA2, Aus DD1.

Remember, normally the formation of CGs is kept secret from the opponent (22.422). TFs (and non-TF naval forces) may be assigned to whichever CG numbers the player wishes; the CG number need not correspond to the TF number.

If Japan had more CGs than the Allies, it would usually be better to put the invasion CG in a "slot" that is not opposite an Allied CG (Japanese CG1 is in a slot opposite Allied CG1, because they both have the same CG number). Thus, if Japan had 3 CGs and the Allies 2 CGs, Japanese TF2 could be Japanese CG3. This would prevent compulsory fleet combat between Japanese CG3 and an Allied CG (22.511).

In the current engagement, if the Allies find Japanese CG2 (i.e., if the Allied player rolls a "2" for search) and the Japanese find Allied CG2, then Japanese CG2, the invasion force, will be forced to engage in fleet combat. This threatens the precious cargo (the invading ground units) and reduces the effectiveness of the fleet factors in Japanese CG2 in fleet combat (22.4242), both of which the Japanese player would like to avoid, if possible.

22.41B: Attacks against enemy bases. This is when carrier-based NAS may counterair enemy land-based air units during naval combat (22.43).

In this situation, neither side wants to use its precious carrier-based NAS (Japan: 8; US: 6) to counterair because the enemy AAF (Japan: 2; Allies: 3) would break down into too many AAS (Japan: 6; Allies: 9 AAS), and the resulting air combat would be even or favor the enemy land-based air units. There are other uses for the carrier-based NAS that would be better for both sides.

22.41C: Allocation of carrier-based air units. Now the Japanese and Allied players secretly allocate their carrier-based NAS to offensive (air strikes) or defensive (combat air patrol, or CAP) missions. On the Naval Status Chart, place NAS in the appropriate boxes.

Japan CG1 (TF1): 2 eNAS CAP, 4 eNAS air strikes
Japan CG2 (TF2): 1 NAS CAP, 1 NAS air strikes

Allied CG1 (TF1): 6 NAS air strikes

You should protect your fast carriers in naval combat. The maximum number of carrier-based NAS that may be assigned to CAP is 1/3 (round up) of the NAS in that CG (23.32). The Japanese CGs have maximally allocated their NAS to CAP, because they're trying to protect their carriers and the invasion force. The Allies are trying a more aggressive strategy in the hope that the US carrier-based NAS can deliver a more potent air strike – perhaps even against the Japanese invasion force. The Allied player does this because he enjoys a slight advantage in land-based air units (3 AAS of each type, whereas Japan only has 2 AAS of each type).

22.41D: Allocation of land-based air units to air cover. This is when each side secretly (22.4421) assigns land-based NAS and cover AAS to cover specific CGs (23.23B). On the Naval Status Chart, place NAS and AAS in the appropriate boxes.

Japan announces the commitment of 2 cover AAS.
The Allies announce the commitment of 3 cover AAS.

Japan 2 cover AAS: Japan CG2 (the invasion force)
Allied 3 cover AAS: Allied CG1 (the fast carrier force)

The AAS counters provided with the game are quite handy at this point. I've moved Allied CG2, the small Allied naval force, to the TF4 location on the Japanese Naval Status Chart. Although there are no Allied cover AAS assigned to protect Allied CG2, this keeps the opponent from guessing that all 3 cover AAS were assigned to Allied CG1.

22.41E: Search. Use one of the blue player aid cards – the one with the Search and Surprise Tables – for the next few calculations and dice rolls. First consider the Search Table (22.45):

Japan rolls 4 dice for search: +2 CGs > 10 factors; +2 search AAS.
The Allies also roll 4 dice for search. +1 CGs > 10 factors; +3 search AAS.

Remember, since there are 2 CGs on each side, only "1" and "2" DRs are important.

Japan: DR 1,3,5,5   Allied CG1 is found; Allied CG2 remains hidden.
Allies: DR 1,3,4,5   Japan CG1 is found; Japan CG2 remains hidden.

22.41F: Revealing combat groups.

Allied CG1 and Japan CG1 are both eligible to be attacked (22.452B).

22.41G: Air strikes against enemy naval units at sea.

- Determine surprise levels
- Air cover – air combat
- CAP – air combat
- Air defense
- Air strikes

22.461A: The player with the greater number of search results (the intercepting player, if tied) *may* launch air strikes by *hidden* carrier-based NAS against *found* enemy CGs. In other words, the player now has a choice whether or not to attack with the carrier-based NAS that he assigned to air strikes.

Both Japan and the Allies had one search result; the tie is broken by the intercepting player (Japan). Remember, the last person to intercept is the intercepting player.
So it was

1. invasion mission (Japan);
2. intercept invasion mission (Allies);
3. counter-intercept the interception (Japan).

US CG2, which remains hidden, has no carrier-based NAS. So Japanese CG2 is the only hidden CG making air strikes this round.

Japan will conduct an air strike using 1 NAS from Japanese CG2, the only hidden CG with carrier-based NAS, against Allied CG1, the only enemy CG found by Japan.

While Japanese CG2 only has 1 NAS assigned to air strikes, the Japanese player decides he may as well try to wear through the Allied NAS/AAS protecting the Allied CGs. 1 NAS won't reach the enemy ships to attack them, but 1 NAS could eliminate 1 enemy NAS/AAS. This may eventually help the Japanese NAS/AAS attack the Allied ships.

22.461C: Determine surprise for the Japanese 1 NAS in Japanese CG2 that was assigned to air strikes. Reviewing the Surprise Table (22.463), there will be a -1 DRM due to the Allied +1 Radar research result (see the Coral Sea scenario, Research and Production, Western Allies).

Japan 1 NAS surprise   DR 6 – 1 = 5

Surprise effects are cumulative – each result includes all lesser effects. These are the effects that apply to surprise levels 1-5.

- The defender does not receive a +1 DRM in CAP air combat.
- Air defense (AD) -1.
- Air strikes receive a +1 DRM vs. enemy ships.
- Only 1/3 (round up) of the defender's NAS/AAS flying CAP or air cover engage the attacking NAS prior to air strikes; the remaining defending NAS/AAS fire on the attacking NAS after the air strikes on defending naval units.

In this case, the defending air are reduced as follows:

Allied 3 cover AAS   3 * 1/3 = 1.
US 0 NAS flying CAP   0 * 1/3 = 0.

Now for the air combat between the attacking Japanese 1 NAS and the defending air (23.412).

The US commits the 1 cover AAS to air combat with the Japanese 1 NAS (23.4121A).

The air combat between the US 1 cover AAS flying air cover and the Japanese 1 NAS is resolved first (23.4121C). If the Japanese 1 NAS is eliminated or aborts, then that ends the air strike.

If the Japanese 1 NAS is not eliminated or aborted by the US 1 cover AAS, then air combat is resolved between any US NAS flying CAP and the Japanese 1 NAS (23.4121D). If the Japanese 1 NAS is eliminated or aborts, then that ends the air strike.

If the Japanese 1 NAS still has not been eliminated or aborted, it is subject to an air defense dice roll (23.42). The air defense roll represents the ships' defenses in that CG. If the Japanese 1 NAS is eliminated by the air defense roll (abort results don't affect carrier-based NAS attacking ships at sea - 23.424), then that ends the air strike.

If, after all this, the Japanese 1 NAS remains unscathed, the contents of the enemy CG are revealed (23.426). The Japanese 1 NAS may then select a target (23.43), either a single named ship or all the light ships together, and make an air attack dice roll (23.44) using the Naval Attack Table (see the brown player aid card).

23.4121C: Air cover combat (using the Air Combat Table - 19.2; also see the brown player aid card). The Japanese and US ADRMs are both 2, so there is no DRM (19.31A).

Japan 1 NAS   DR 8   1/1   US 1 cover AAS eliminated/ 1 AAS aborted
US 1 cover AAS   DR 11   1/2   Japan 1 NAS eliminated

Surplus air combat effects may abort defending air squadrons – even if they didn't participate in the air combat because they were "surprised" (23.4121E).

Once attacking NAS are aborted in air combat, either due to air cover combat or CAP combat, they're done for the rest of the round of naval combat – simple. Yet, defending cover AAS and carrier-based NAS flying CAP that are not eliminated or forced to abort remain in position over their CGs (23.4122B); in other words, they stick around to fight off any subsequent air strikes by carrier-based NAS or air attacks by land-based air units. So it's important to invert NAS flying CAP and cover AAS flying air cover if they're aborted in air combat.

[Carrier-based NAS are never really inverted (21.555), but it's handy to invert them, as I indicate above, during a naval combat round – so you can easily tell which cover AAS and NAS flying CAP have been neutralized by prior air strikes.]

Invert Allied 1 cover AAS (on the Japanese Naval Status Chart, above US CG1, in the Air Cover/CAP box).

That ends the air strike.

23.461E: Now that all air strikes by hidden CGs have been resolved, the 1st player (i.e., Japan, the intercepting player, since both sides achieved one search result) may launch air strikes by carrier-based NAS in his found CGs against found enemy CGs.

Japan will conduct an air strike using 4 eNAS from Japanese CG1 against Allied CG1.

No surprise roll is made (22.461E).

Japanese CG1 was found after all, right? It's hard to surprise someone when they know you're there!

Remember, there were Allied 3 cover AAS, but 1 cover AAS was just shot down, and another 1 cover AAS aborted during the 1st Japanese air strike. So, to review the order, the Japanese 4 eNAS must overcome the following Allied defenses prior to making their air strike:

1. Allied 1 cover AAS flying air cover (23.4121C); then
2. US 0 NAS flying CAP (23.4121D); then
3. Air defense roll (23.42).

Then any remaining eNAS may attack the Allied ships in Allied CG1.

Air cover combat (using the Air Combat Table - 19.2). The Japanese eNAS (i.e., *elite* NAS) enjoy a +1 ADRM, so the ADRMs for the Japanese eNAS (3) and the US cover AAS (2) result in a +1/-1 air combat DRM that favors Japan (19.31A).

It's important to note that *not* all 4 Japanese eNAS engage in air cover combat with the Allied 1 cover AAS. Instead, the Allied 1 cover AAS engages an equal number (1) of Japanese eNAS in air combat (23.4121B). However, surplus air combat results due to the US 1 cover AAS are applied to the remaining 3 Japanese eNAS – even though these other 3 Japanese eNAS didn't participate in the air combat with the US cover AAS (see the example following 23.4122A).

Japan 1 eNAS   DR 6+1=7   1/0   Allied 1 cover AAS eliminated
Allied 1 cover AAS   DR 8-1=7   1/0   Japan 1 eNAS eliminated

CAP combat (using the Air Combat Table - 19.2). The US allocated 0 NAS to flying CAP, so there's no CAP combat.

This leaves Japanese 3 eNAS for the air strike – provided they slip past the ships' air defenses.

Air Defense (23.42). Because Allied CG1 has 15 naval factors in it, its AD level is 2.

AD 2   DR 9   1/1   Japan 1 eNAS eliminated

Because the abort result is ignored (23.424), Japanese 2 eNAS gets through to attack the naval units in Allied CG1.

The contents of Allied CG1 are now revealed to the Japanese player (23.426), and Japan may select either a named ship or the light ships as a target (23.43).

Japanese 2 eNAS target the US *Lexington* CV3.

Carriers are weaker than other naval units when they're attacked, and this is represented by an NDRM modifier (22.552A). The DRM for this air strike is determined by consulting the Naval Attack Table (see the brown player aid card), under Modifiers – Air Attacks on Naval Units.

- Attacker's ADRM: 2 (Japan) + 1 (eNAS) = 3
- Defender's NDRM: 2 (U2) – 2 (American CV) = 0

Thus, a net +3 DRM.

Japanese 2 eNAS   DR 3+3=6   1hit   Nothing.

A "2" naval attack result, which would have required DR 5+3=8, would have damaged the *Lexington* CV3 (20.522), but the US lucks out.

Now it's time for Allied CG1 to carry out its air strikes on Japanese CG1 (22.461F). We'll follow the same procedure that we did for the air strikes by Japanese CG1 on Allied CG1.

The US will conduct an air strike using 6 NAS from Allied CG1 against Japanese CG1.

No surprise roll is made (22.461E).

Now let's look at the Japanese air defenses, in order, that the US 6 NAS must overcome to attack the Japanese naval units in Japanese CG1:

1. Japanese 0 cover AAS flying air cover (23.4121C); then
2. Japanese 2 eNAS flying CAP (23.4121D); then
3. Air defense roll (23.42).

Then any remaining NAS may attack the Japanese ships in Japanese CG1.

23.4121C: Air cover combat. None.

23.4121D: CAP air combat. Japanese 2 eNAS engage US 2 NAS. Remember, if the attacker has more NAS than the defender, an equal number of the attacker's NAS engage the defending NAS (23.4121B). The DRM for this air combat is determined by consulting the Air Combat Table (see the brown player aid card), under Modifiers – Air Combat.

- ADRM: 2 (Japan) + 1 (eNAS) = 3; 2 (US); net +1 DRM favoring Japan
- Combat involving CAP: +1 (Japan)

Thus, a net +2 DRM for Japan and a -2 DRM for the US.

Japan 2 eNAS   DR 6+2=8   1/2   US 1 NAS eliminated/ 2 NAS aborted
US 2 NAS   DR 5-2=3   0/1   Japan 1 eNAS aborted

Invert Japanese 1 eNAS (on the Japanese Naval Status Chart, above Japanese CG1, in the Air Cover/CAP box).

Remember, even though the Japanese eNAS only engaged US 2 NAS in air combat, surplus air combat results apply to the other attacking US NAS.

- US 6 NAS – assigned to air strikes
- US 3 NAS neutralized (1 eliminated; 2 aborted)
- US 3 NAS remain to carry out the air strike (if they survive the air defense roll)

Air Defense (23.42). Because Japanese CG1 has 15 naval factors in it, its AD level is 2.

AD 2   DR 7   1/0   US 1 NAS eliminated

US 2 NAS get through to attack the naval units in Japanese CG1.

The contents of Japanese CG1 are now revealed to the Allied player (23.426), and the US may select either a named ship(s) or the light ships as targets (23.43).

US 2 NAS target the *Shokaku* CV3.

The DRM for this air strike is determined by consulting the Naval Attack Table (see the brown player aid card), under Modifiers – Air Attacks on Naval Units.

- Attacker's ADRM: 2 (US)
- Defender's NDRM: 3 (Japan) – 2 (Japanese CV) = 1

+2 ADRM -1 NDRM = a net +1 DRM.

US 2 NAS   DR 7+1=8   2 hits   The *Shokaku* CV3 is damaged!

Place a Damaged marker next to the *Shokaku* CV3.

A "7" naval attack result would have only scored one hit, which would not have damaged the *Shokaku*. So the Allied player's heavy commitment to air strikes (all 6 NAS) this round paid off!

Also note that, while air strikes are carried out separately, they are presumed to occur simultaneously (22.472). Thus, carriers damaged or sunk by the 1st player's air strikes don't prevent the 2nd player from launching air strikes with NAS aboard the newly damaged/sunk carriers.

22.41H: Land-based air attacks. Now that all carrier-based air strikes have been resolved, the 1st player (i.e., Japan, the intercepting player, since both sides achieved one search result) may launch air attacks by land-based NAS and attack AAS against found enemy CGs (22.481; 23.84). The procedure for land-based air attacks on naval units at sea during naval combat (23.86) is identical to that of air strikes by found CGs, which we just completed.

- No surprise rolls by the attacker.
- Attack AAS engage in air combat with cover AAS flying air cover.
- Attack AAS engage in air combat with carrier-based NAS flying CAP.
- Air defense roll by the defender's ships.
- Air attacks by any attack AAS remaining.

One important difference is that, when attacking ships at sea, land-based NAS and attack AAS that are aborted due to the defender's air defense dice roll (23.42) may not attack enemy naval units. This is different from carrier-based NAS attacking ships at sea, which ignore abort results (23.424).

We will use 23.4121 again as the rule to walk through these air-naval interactions. Japan will make its air attacks first; the Allies will go second.

Japan 2 attack AAS attack Allied CG1.

23.4121C: Air cover combat. Allied 0 cover AAS remain that were flying air cover over Allied CG1, so no air cover combat.

23.4121D: CAP air combat. US 0 NAS were assigned to CAP, so no CAP air combat.

Air Defense (23.42). Because Allied CG1 has 15 naval factors in it, its AD level is 2.

AD 2   DR 3   0 hits   Nothing.

Japanese 2 attack AAS get through to attack the naval units in Allied CG1.

The contents of Allied CG1 are now revealed to the Japanese player (23.426), and Japan may select either a named ship(s) or the light ships as targets (23.43).

Japanese 2 attack AAS target the *Yorktown* CV3.

We consult the Naval Attack Table to determine the DRM for this air strike.

- Attacker's ADRM: 2 (Japan)
- Defender's NDRM: 2 (US) – 2 (American CV) = 0

+2 ADRM - 0 NDRM = a net +2 DRM.

Japan 2 attack AAS   DR 6+2=8   2 hits   The *Yorktown* CV3 is damaged!

Place a Damaged marker next to the *Yorktown* CV3.

Now we'll see how the Allied air attacks go.

Allied 3 attack AAS attack Japanese CG1.

23.4121C: Air cover combat. Japanese 0 cover AAS flying air cover over Japanese CG1, so no air cover combat.

23.4121D: CAP air combat. There is Japanese 1 eNAS flying CAP that remains (that was not eliminated or forced to abort in air combat with the attacking NAS from the US air strikes). So there will be CAP air combat between Japanese 1 eNAS and Allied 1 attack AAS. The DRM for this air combat is determined by consulting the Air Combat Table.

- ADRM: 2 (Japan) + 1 (eNAS) = 3; 2 (US/Aus); net +1 DRM favoring Japan
- Combat involving CAP: +1 (Japan)

Thus, a net +2 DRM for Japan and a -2 DRM for the Allies.

Japan 1 eNAS   DR 8+2=10   1/2   Allied 1 attack AAS elim / 2 attack AAS aborted
US 1 NAS   DR 7-2=5   0/1   Japan 1 CAP eNAS aborted

Invert Japanese 1 eNAS (on the Japanese Naval Status Chart, above Japanese CG1, in the Air Cover/CAP box).

Remember, even though the Japanese eNAS only engaged Allied 1 attack AAS in air combat, surplus air combat results apply to the other attacking AAS.

And that ends that air attack! The better trained Japanese eNAS, as a result of being on CAP, enjoyed substantial advantages in CAP air combat and repelled all the Allied attack AAS.

Congratulations! You've just finished your first set of air-naval interactions. It seems overwhelming the first time you walk through it – and it goes very slowly. But it's important to get it right, and the best way to do that is to proceed carefully and be patient. It does get easier with experience, so rest assured, you'll get the hang of it after you get a few naval battles under your belt.

Now it's time for ships to blow up ships!

22.41I: Fleet combat. Fleet combat (22.5) is pretty common in *A World at War*, and while there are a few different steps (22.54), they're much easier to learn than air-naval interactions. Fleet combat is also pretty fun (it's my favorite part of the game, actually).

In fleet combat, it's important whether CGs are slow or fast. Fast CGs are more flexible and may engage other CGs more easily than slow CGs (22.513). A CG that contains any slow naval units (20.121) is considered to be slow.

Found CGs (22.511): Only a found enemy CG may be engaged in fleet combat (22.512). In this naval combat round, because Japanese CG1 and Allied CG1 were both found and have the same CG number, fleet combat between Japanese CG1 and Allied CG1 is mandatory (22.511).

Allied CG1 and Japan CG1 will engage in fleet combat.

Hidden CGs (22.512): A hidden CG *may* (but is not required to) engage in fleet combat with a found enemy CG if the hidden CG isn't carrying cargo and if it didn't make a surprise roll if it conducted an air strike. Because Japanese CG2 is carrying cargo, it is ineligible to engage in fleet combat. In contrast, Allied CG2 is eligible to engage a found enemy CG in fleet combat.

If Allied CG2 were slow, it could only engage a found Japanese CG2 (22.513B) – that is, the enemy CG with the same number, provided it was found. However, Allied CG2 is fast, so it may engage in fleet combat with any found enemy CG (22.513A) – in this case, Japanese CG1.

The player with the greater number of search results (the intercepting player, if tied) determines the order in which players announce which hidden CGs engage found enemy CGs in fleet combat. Japan is the intercepting player, so Japan goes first, followed by the Allies.

Japan CG2 does not engage in fleet combat.
Allied CG2 joins the fleet combat between Allied CG1 and Japan CG1.

Divide naval units into light, heavy, and screened categories (22.53). *Light* ships include destroyers (not carrying cargo), cruisers, and CVEs. *Heavy* ships include (undamaged) named capital ships. Damaged ships, carriers, transports, and destroyers carrying cargo are all automatically *screened*. A player may also screen any other ships in his naval force (22.53).

Japan: CA8, DD1 (light); *Zuikaku* CV3, damaged *Shokaku* CV3 (screened).
Allies: CA14, DD2 (light); *Lexington* CV3, damaged *Yorktown* CV3 (screened).

The Allies are the "attacker" because they have more light ship factors (22.54).

Fleet combat sequence

22.54A. The defender ranks his naval units: heavy, light, screened.

Japan: CA8, DD1 (light); *Zuikaku* CV3, damaged *Shokaku* CV3 (screened).

22.54E. Light ships on both sides automatically target each other. Destroyers, cruisers, and capital ships are generally called fleets (20.111). Fleet factors (FF) is a term used to describe a group of fleets.

Japanese CA8 + DD1 (9 FF) vs. Allied CA14 + DD2 (16 FF).

22.54G. Light ships on both sides fire simultaneously at each other. The NDRMs are Japan (3) and US/Australia (2). Both sides have damaged naval units, so each would receive the +1 DRM due to "reduced effectiveness" (22.552B); thus, the "reduced effectiveness" modifiers cancel each other out. The net DRM is thus +1 (Japan) and -1 (Allies). Each side throws 2 dice (Naval Attack Table). Japan uses the "7-9" row, while the Allies use the "16-18" row.

Japan 9 FF   DR 4+1=5   1   US CA2 damaged
Allied 16 FF   DR 9-1=8   4   Japan CA2 + DD1 sunk;
                                                    Japan CA2 damaged

Place the damaged US CA2 below the Yorktown CV3 (so that they're both below a Damaged marker). Place the damaged Japanese CA2 next to the *Shokaku* CV3

(and its associated Damaged marker). Remove Japanese CA2 + DD1 and place them in a "casualties" area off the board. Sunk surface factors grant points to the opponent in this scenario.

Naval attack effects against a light force consisting of both cruisers and 1-factor naval units (destroyers, CVEs, ASW, transports - 20.541) are distributed evenly between the cruisers and 1-factor naval units (20.551). The cruisers take the first 2 hits, then the 1-factor naval units take the next 2 hits (if possible), then the cruisers take the next 2 hits again (if possible), and so on. So a light force containing CA8 + DD8 would take its first 9 hits as follows:

1st hit: cruiser damaged
2cd hit: cruiser sunk (the one that was damaged by the 1st hit)
3rd hit: destroyer sunk
4th hit: destroyer sunk
5th hit: cruiser damaged
6th hit: cruiser sunk (the one that was damaged by the 5th hit)
7th hit: destroyer sunk
8th hit: destroyer sunk
9th hit: cruiser damaged

In this case, Japanese CG1 only contained DD1. So the 1st and 2cd hits damaged and then sunk CA2; the 3rd hit sunk DD1; and the 4th hit damaged CA2. The Allied CA2 that was damaged must be a US CA2, because there were more US CA2 than Australian CA2 (20.57).

After fleet combat, NAS must return to their carriers (22.473). With the *Shokaku* CV3 damaged, NAS may no longer land on it (22.473). The Japanese have 4 eNAS remaining (2 that were assigned to CAP and 2 that were assigned to air strikes). 3 eNAS may land on the *Zuikaku* CV3. 1 eNAS that was flying CAP may land at an air base within 3 hexes of the naval combat (Lae, for example), but is inverted for the remainder of the player turn (22.473). Thus, by damaging a Japanese carrier, the Allies manage to neutralize another Japanese eNAS.

Similarly, by damaging the *Yorktown* CV3, the Japanese cut the American NAS short on landing space. There are US 4 NAS remaining, but all 4 were assigned to air strikes. 3 NAS may land on the *Lexington* CV3, but the remaining US 1 NAS is lost (22.473).

Japanese 1 eNAS flies to Lae and is inverted.
US 1 NAS is eliminated.

22.41J: Withdrawal of naval units. After fleet combat, if some form of naval combat occurred, naval units may withdraw from naval combat (22.6). In addition, CGs may be renumbered or recombined (22.423).

For withdrawal, the loser (the side that lost more naval factors; if tied, the side that had more factors damaged; if still tied, the intercepting player) decides whether to withdraw first. Japan lost 3 FF this round, while the Allies lost 0 FF; so Japan is the loser.

Japan has a tough decision now. If Japan withdraws its damaged naval units, the *Shokaku* CV3 and CA2, from Japanese CG1, it will only have 7 naval factors remaining (*Zuikaku* CV3 and CA4). This has two effects:

1. With fewer than 10 naval factors, Japanese CG1 will not generate a search die; search dice are critical in naval combat involving fast carriers.
2. The air defense level of Japanese CG1 remains at 2 if the damaged naval units do not withdraw (23.42); if they do withdraw, there will be fewer than 10 naval factors present, and the air defense level of Japanese CG1 will only be 1.

On the flip side, in this scenario victory points are won and lost based on the loss of surface factors. The *Shokaku* CV3 and CA2 are damaged and, therefore, closer to being sunk. If they are sunk in subsequent naval combat rounds, they may generate enough victory points to clinch the win for the Allies. Also, damaged naval units are slow (20.121), so the damaged naval units will make Japanese CG1 slow and less flexible in terms of engaging in fleet combat (22.513).

The Japanese player decides the damaged naval units are better off out of harm's way.

Naval units that withdraw from naval combat may return to their original base or any base within 20 (Europe) or 10 (Pacific) hexes from the naval combat hex (22.65).

The *Shokaku* CV3 and CA2 withdraw to Truk, their original base.

The Allies decide to withdraw their damaged naval units, the *Yorktown* CV3 and US CA2, because they enjoy an advantage in terms of search AAS. Also, the naval battle is beginning to favor the Allied player, so he decides not to leave his damaged naval units as sitting ducks for air strikes and air attacks.

The *Yorktown* CV3 and US CA2 withdraw to Townsville.

CG renumbering and recombination (22.423). Friendly CGs that engaged the same enemy CG in fleet combat may recombine as one CG, provided the new CG contains 25 or fewer naval factors and doesn't have too many fast carrier factors (22.423B). In this case, the Allied player decides to consolidate his naval forces into one larger CG.

Allied CG2 joins Allied CG1 to form a larger, single Allied CG1. Move US CA4, Australian CA2, and Australian DD1 from TF4 to TF3 on the Japanese Naval Status Sheet.

As for renumbering CGs, Japan may renumber its CGs now if it desires.

This is another tough decision for Japan. The Allies will only have a single CG (CG1), and it's large relative to either of the Japanese CGs. So if both sides roll a "1" for search, fleet combat will be mandatory between Allied CG1 (beefy) and Japanese CG1 (not so beefy, no matter which CG is assigned as CG1).

Yet, if fleet combat does occur between Allied CG1 and the current Japanese CG1 (*Zuikaku* CV3, CA4), the Japanese cruisers will be blown away. To win this naval battle, the Japanese may need to risk their precious invasion cargo and place the invasion TF in CG1. Then, if the Japanese find Allied CG1, and the Allies don't find Japanese CG2, then Japanese CG2 (the *Zuikaku* CV3, CA4) could join Japanese CG1 (the invasion force) in fleet combat against Allied CG1 and, perhaps, have a better chance of winning the naval battle.

The Japanese player decides to risk the invasion cargo.

(This is concealed from the opponent.)

Japanese TF2, the invasion force, is assigned to CG1.
Japanese TF1, the remnants of the patrolling force, is assigned to CG2.

22.41K: Sub attacks. No sub attacks.

22.41L: Additional rounds of naval combat. On to round 2!

Let's do a quick victory point count:

Japan: +1 (control of Guadalcanal), +2 (Allied CA2 sunk), +1 (US 3 NAS elim) = 4
Allies: +3 (control of Port Moresby), +4 (Japan CA2+DD2 sunk), +1 (J 3 NAS elim) = 8

Round 2

Let's review the AAS situation for both sides:

Japan: 2 search AAS, 2 cover AAS, 2 attack AAS.
Allies: 3 search AAS, 1 cover AAS, 2 attack AAS.

22.41A: Formation of combat groups (CGs).

(This is concealed from the opponent.)

Japan CG1 (TF2): 1 NAS, *Shoho* CVL2, CA8, DD4 (carrying 1n2 + 1x2).
Japan CG2 (TF1): 3 eNAS, *Zuikaku* CV3, CA4.

Allied CG1: 3 NAS, *Lexington* CV3, US CA10, Aus CA2, US DD1, Aus DD1.

22.41B: Attacks against enemy bases. This is when carrier-

based NAS may counterair enemy land-based air units during naval combat (22.43).

None.

22.41C: Allocation of carrier-based air units. Now the Japanese and Allied players secretly allocate their carrier-based NAS to offensive (air strikes) or defensive (combat air patrol, or CAP) missions. On the Naval Status Chart, place NAS in the appropriate boxes.

Japanese CG1 (TF2): 1 NAS CAP
Japanese CG2 (TF1): 1 eNAS CAP, 2 eNAS air strikes

Allied CG1 (TF1): 1 NAS CAP, 2 NAS air strikes

Both sides decide to protect their naval forces with maximum CAP this round (23.32).

22.41D: Allocation of land-based air units to air cover. This is when each side secretly (22.4421) assigns land-based NAS and cover AAS to cover specific CGs (23.23B). On the Naval Status Chart, place NAS and AAS in the appropriate boxes.

Japan announces the commitment of 2 cover AAS.
The Allies announce the commitment of 1 cover AAS.
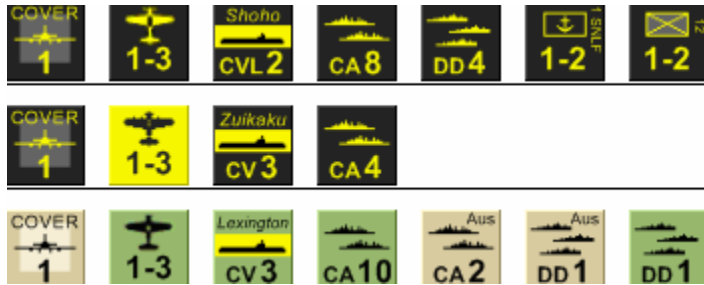
Japan 1 cover AAS: Japanese CG1
Japan 1 cover AAS: Japanese CG2
Allied 1 cover AAS: Allied CG1

22.41E: Search. See the Search Table (22.45):

Japan rolls 4 dice for search: +1 CGs > 10 factors; +2 search AAS; +1 round 2.
The Allies roll 5 dice for search. +1 CGs > 10 factors; +3 search AAS; +1 round 2.

Japan: DR 2,5,5,5   Allied CG1 remains hidden.
Allies: DR 2,2,2,6,6   Japan CG2 is found; Japan CG1 remains hidden.

22.41F: Revealing combat groups.

Japan CG2 is eligible to be attacked; it contains the *Zuikaku* CV3 and CA4 (22.452B).

Did I mention Japan CG2 is about to be blown to bits?

22.41G: Air strikes against enemy naval units at sea.

- Determine surprise levels
- Air cover – air combat
- CAP – air combat
- Air defense
- Air strikes

22.461A: The player with the greater number of search results (the intercepting player, if tied) *may* launch air strikes by *hidden* carrier-based NAS against *found* enemy CGs. In other words, the player now has a choice whether or not to attack with the carrier-based NAS that he assigned to air strikes.

The Allies had 3 search results; Japan had 0.

The US 2 NAS assigned to air strikes could attack, but it makes more sense to preserve the NAS (instead of forcing air combat with Japanese eNAS flying CAP, which would grant Japan a +2 DRM in CAP air combat).

The Allies announce no air strikes.

Japan didn't find the Allied CG, so Japan may not conduct air strikes this round.

Without any air strikes, we proceed to land-based air attacks.

22.41H: Land-based air attacks. The 1st player (i.e., the Allies, since they had more search results) may launch air attacks by land-based NAS and attack AAS against found enemy CGs (22.481; 23.84). The procedure for land-based air attacks on naval units at sea during naval combat (23.86) is identical to that of air strikes by found CGs.

- No surprise rolls by the attacker.
- Attack AAS engage in air combat with cover AAS flying air cover.
- Attack AAS engage in air combat with carrier-based NAS flying CAP.
- Air defense roll by the defender's ships.
- Air attacks by any attack AAS remaining.

We will use 23.4121 again as the rule to walk through these air-naval interactions. Since the Allied CG remains hidden, only the Allies may carry out an air attack.

Allied 2 attack AAS attack Japan CG2.

Why not? Only the loss of NAS awards victory points.
The Allied player hopes to shoot down another Japanese eNAS and maybe score more points.

23.4121C: Air cover combat. Japanese 1 cover AAS flying air cover over Japanese CG2. The Japanese and US ADRMs are both 2, so there is no DRM (19.31A).

Japan 1 cover AAS	DR 7	1/0	Allied 1 attack AAS eliminated
Allied 1 attack AAS	DR 7	1/0	Japan 1 cover AAS eliminated

23.4121D: CAP air combat. Japanese 1 eNAS is flying CAP, so there will be CAP air combat between Japanese 1 eNAS and Allied 1 attack AAS. The DRM for this air combat is determined by consulting the Air Combat Table.

- ADRM: 2 (Japan) + 1 (eNAS) = 3; 2 (US); net +1 DRM favoring Japan
- Combat involving CAP: +1 (Japan)

Thus, a net +2 DRM for Japan and a -2 DRM for the Allies.

Japan 1 eNAS	DR 8+2=10	1/2	Allied 1 att AAS eliminated
Allied 1 attack AAS	DR 9-2=7	1/0	Japan 1 eNAS eliminated

That's it for air attacks. On to fleet combat.

Fleet combat (22.5).

Found CGs (22.511): Only a found enemy CG may be engaged in fleet combat (22.512). In this naval combat round, because Japanese CG2 was found, it is eligible to be attacked; the other CGs are not.

Allied CG1 and Japanese CG1 will engage in fleet combat.

Hidden CGs (22.512): A hidden CG *may* (but is not required to) engage in fleet combat with a found enemy CG if the hidden CG isn't carrying cargo and if it didn't make a surprise roll if it conducted an air strike. Allied CG1 is fast, so it may engage in fleet combat with any found enemy CG (22.513A) – in this case, Japanese CG2.

This was another reason not to launch air strikes on Japanese CG2. With 3 search results on Japanese CG2, the US 2 NAS assigned to air strikes would have enjoyed a +2 DRM to their surprise roll (22.463). This would have increased the probability of reduced air defenses and a more effective air strike.

But by making a surprise roll, this would have disqualified Allied CG1 from engaging Japanese CG2 in fleet combat. And with a 14:4 advantage in light ship factors for fleet combat, why bother with an air strike with only 2 NAS when you can blast the enemy out of the water with your surface ships…

Allied CG1 engages in fleet combat with Japan CG2.

Divide naval units into light, heavy, and screened categories (22.53). *Light* ships include destroyers (not carrying cargo), cruisers, and CVEs. *Heavy* ships include (undamaged) named capital ships. Damaged ships, carriers, transports, and destroyers carrying cargo are all automatically *screened*. A player may also screen any other ships in his naval force (22.53).

Japan: CA4 (light); *Zuikaku* CV3 (screened).
Allies: CA12, DD2 (light); *Lexington* CV3 (screened).

The Allies are the "attacker" because they have more light ship factors (22.54).

Fleet combat sequence

22.54A. The defender ranks his naval units: heavy, light, screened.

Japan: CA4 (light); *Zuikaku* CV3 (screened).

22.54E. Light ships on both sides automatically target each other, *unless* one side has more than 3 times as many light ship factors as the other; in this case, the "surplus" light ships may withhold their fire in the hope of attacking screened enemy ships.

[Surplus light ships may also select enemy heavy ships as targets, but there aren't any heavy ships in this scenario.]

The Japanese light ship factors (4) mandate that at least 12 Allied light ship factors target the Japanese CA4. The other 2 Allied light ship factors could target the *Zuikaku* CV3.

However, the "surplus" 2 Allied light ship factors may not fire on the *Zuikaku* unless the Japanese CA4 are sunk (22.54H). Since the Allies will have a -1 DRM in fleet combat (due to the superior Japanese NDRM), the Allies could only achieve a "4" naval attack result, sinking the Japanese CA4, if they rolled an "11" or "12" on the "10-12" FF row of the Naval Attack Table. That's pretty unlikely (3 in 36, or 8.3% chance), but the Allied player basically has this scenario in the bag, so he decides to indulge himself.

Allied CA12 (12 FF) vs. Japan CA4 (4 FF).
Allied DD2 (2 FF) vs. *Zuikaku* CV3.

22.54G. Light ships on both sides fire simultaneously at each other. The NDRMs are Japan (3) and US/Australia (2). Japan uses the "3-4" row, while the Allies use the "10-12" row.

Japan 4 FF   DR 8+1=9   2   US CA2 sunk
Allied 12 FF   DR 8-1=7   3   Japan CA2 sunk; Japan CA2 damaged

Place the damaged Japanese CA2 next to a Damaged marker. Remove the Japanese CA2 and the US CA2 and place them in the "casualties" area off the board.

Both carriers remain undamaged, so their NAS return to them and land (22.473).

22.41J: Withdrawal of naval units. After fleet combat, if some form of naval combat occurred, naval units may withdraw from naval combat (22.6). In addition, CGs may be renumbered or recombined (22.423).

For withdrawal, the loser (the side that lost more naval factors; if tied, the side that had more factors damaged; if still tied, the intercepting player) decides whether to withdraw first. Both sides lost 2 FF this round, but Japan had 1 FF damaged also. So Japan is the loser.

Japan decides to withdraw the damaged CA2.

Naval units that withdraw from naval combat may return to their original base or any base within 20 (Europe) or 10 (Pacific) hexes from the naval combat hex (22.65).

The Japanese CA2 withdraws to Truk, its original base.

CG renumbering and recombination (22.423).

No recombination is possible this round. Japan could renumber its CGs now if it desired.

Let's do a quick victory point count:

Japan: +1 (control of Guadalcanal), +4 (Allied CA4 sunk), +1 (US 3 NAS elim) = 6
Allies: +3 (control of Port Moresby), +6 (Japan CA4+DD2 sunk), +2 (J 4 NAS elim) = 11

This is only getting worse for Japan. Let's call the scenario now. Japan abandons its invasion of Port Moresby. The Allies win by 5 points, a moderate Allied victory!

So what could Japan have done differently?

Japan was really at a disadvantage with respect to land-based air. A 1-AAF advantage, while not appearing to be a big deal, really helped the Allies enjoy a little more searching ability, a little more air cover, and a little more firepower for air attacks. It wasn't a large advantage, but it did keep the Japanese eNAS from delivering any potent air strikes. If Japan had preserved its 3rd starting AAF, Japan would have enjoyed a better "air umbrella" under which to operate.

But how else would Japan have zapped the pesky Australian 1 AAF that begins the scenario in Port Moresby?

One possibility is to stage all 3 Japanese AAF to Lae, then send a patrol to HH28 (just out of range of the Allied AAF based in Cairns) and launch a counterair attack on the Australian 1 AAF using the 6 eNAS onboard the 2 Japanese CV3s. The Australian 1 AAF would convert into 3 AAS for air combat. Assuming average air combat dice rolls:

Japan 6 eNAS   DR 7+1=8   3/3   Aus 3 AAS eliminated
Aus 3 AAS   DR 7-1=6   1/2   Japan 1 eNAS eliminated

So, on average, at a cost of 1 eNAS, Japan could have enjoyed air parity with regards to land-based AAF (Japanese 3 AAF in Lae; Allied 3 AAF in Cairns).

Of course, the search rolls didn't exactly go Japan's way. But then again, the Magic card draws did. Luck usually evens out in the end – law of averages, I suppose.

Anyway, this is a different way to begin the scenario the next time…

Well, I hope this Example of Play was helpful in terms of walking you through a complex naval battle. The only missing element was capital ships on both sides. Heavy ships make fleet combat a bit more interesting (and a lot more fun!). Look for another Example of Play involving capital ships, land-based air, and light carriers in the Mediterranean in the not-too-distant future…