

Army Expansion Firefight 3 - Shoji's Escape

November 9th, 1942 - South of Koli Point near Gavaga Creek

This Firefight is still in beta and we are eager to hear your feedback on your playthrough. Please provide us with your feedback at this link, <https://goo.gl/forms/U3CsTJ3OJhL6uvh93>

Message from Hyakutake to Shoji - "We cannot lose any more men as a result of the recent failed offensive. You must find a way to escape the Americans' pursuit, and report to the Matanikau area as soon as possible."

General Situation: The Japanese have suffered a crushing defeat at Henderson Field, and Colonel Shoji was ordered to divert his forces towards Koli Point, about 13 miles east of the Lunga River. The Japanese have sent multiple destroyers loaded with fresh troops, machine guns, mountain guns, rations, and ammunition to meet Shoji at Koli Point, where the Japanese intend to build an airfield. The Marines intercepted the Japanese communications regarding this plan, and hope to catch the Japanese shortly after they unload.

U.S. Marine commanders possess documents outlining a Japanese plan to attack the Lunga perimeter from the east, and they do not want to give the Japanese a chance to reclaim the airstrip at Henderson Field. Units from the 7th Marine Regiment were to return to Lunga and then to move to Koli Point by boat. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 164th Infantry Regiment will be approaching the Japanese over land from the west. The plan is to encircle the Japanese forces entirely, and to bombard the pocket with artillery, aircraft, and mortar fire before clearing out the area entirely of any remaining Japanese. The Japanese cannot be allowed to escape and reconcentrate their forces at the Matanikau!

Historical Discussion: General Alexander Vandegrift had the majority of U.S. forces tied up elsewhere on the island, and was only able to send the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Herman Hanneken from Lunga Point to intercept the Japanese at Koli Point. U.S. command was not aware that the Japanese had already abandoned their plan of attacking Lunga from the east, as their documents suggested. On November 3rd, the Japanese destroyers arrive and begin to unload east of Hanneken's force, but Hanneken is unable to contact headquarters to report the landing, and has his forces remain hidden. Eventually, they are discovered by a Japanese patrol, and a small firefight begins. Hanneken's battalion was running low on ammunition and taking heavy casualties and was forced to retreat for some time, which gave the Japanese time to prepare for their escape.

After several days of travel and small skirmishes, the Marine and Army forces converged forces at the coast on November 7th. During this time, Shoji was given the order from Lieutenant General Hyakutake to withdraw from Koli Point, and to begin moving his forces west to join the rest of the Japanese forces, near the Matanikau River. To cover this withdrawal, Shoji had a portion of his force prepare defensive positions near the Gavaga Creek, where mountain guns, mortars, and machine guns would slow the Americans enough to allow him to escape. At the Gavaga Creek, a gap had emerged within American lines, and Shoji intended to use this gap as an escape route. Despite Marine and Army forces coordinating to envelop him from both sides, supported by constant artillery bombardment, Shoji was able to use this gap to avoid the encirclement. After his forces had escaped the maneuver, they were able to travel through the thick inland jungles of the island towards the Matakinau River where the Japanese had a stronger position. The Japanese forces that stayed behind to cover Shoji were entirely overrun and killed by November 12th, but by that point Shoji and the majority of his forces were well on their way. This battle was critical because it allowed the Japanese to have a better chance of defending their positions in the Matanikau, and it demonstrated that the Japanese remaining on Guadalcanal would not be easy to eliminate. Shoji's forces demonstrated a will to fight despite the risk of encirclement, and the Americans had a more difficult task ahead of them.

The infamous "Long Patrol" or "Carlson's Patrol" would follow shortly after this battle, with various U.S. forces chasing after Shoji across Guadalcanal towards the Japanese positions near the Matanikau. Many Japanese survivors from this battle would go on to fight at critical battles such as Mount Austen, The Galloping Horse, and The Sea Horse many days later. U.S. Sergeant (later promoted to Brigadier General) John Stannard later said that the battle for Koli Point was "the most complex land operation, other than the original landing, that the Americans had conducted on Guadalcanal up to that time", and that "the Americans learned once again that offensive operations against the Japanese were much more complicated and difficult than defeating banzai charges".



Commanders: 4 **Initiative:** U.S. on Round 1 **VP:** Japanese 1

CAP Allocation per Round: U.S. Army 1st Round - 3 CAPs, 2nd Round - 6 CAPs, 3rd Round - 9 CAPs **U.S. Marines** 8 CAPs

Japanese: 4 Caps +/- Bushido (A single pool of CAPs and BPs are shared by both Japanese forces that either force may draw from during their turn.)

Action Cards: Shuffle all action and bonus cards 2-13. Each commander receives 1 card in Round 1 and 1 card each Round thereafter.

Each U.S. commander also receives 1 Scout Team Action Card in Round 1.

Hit Counter Piles: Mix 2 'No Hit' Counters into the Japanese Hit Counter pile.

Map Setup: Maps 14 and 15

Overlays: Place Hill 3 so that hex H3-01 is on hex 14-F01 and hex H3-02 is on hex 14-E01

Place Hill 4 so that hex H4-01 is on hex 14-H08 and hex H4-02 is on 14-I07

Place Jungle 3 so that hex J3-01 is on 15-Q11 and hex J3-02 is on 15-P12

Designers Note: This Firefight includes 3 different CAP systems. The U.S. Army starts with only 3 CAPs, but their max CAP supply increases by 3 each Round. The U.S. Marines have a fixed max CAP value like normal. The Japanese have a CAP pool that is shared between both Japanese forces.



1st U.S. Force: 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment

Setup: May enter anywhere along the eastern edge of map 15.



4x Rifle
(Card ?)



2x BAR
(Card ?)



1x M2 Mortar
(Card 41)

Choose one Capability Card that is used by both the Rifles and BAR Units.



2nd U.S. Force: 164th Infantry Regiment

Setup: May enter anywhere along the western edge of map 14.



5x Army Regs



1x M2 Mortar
(Card 41)



1x MMG
(Card 41)

Orders: Destroy the Japanese defenses and do not let the Japanese escape the encirclement.

Artillery: At the beginning of each Round, plot a 105mm artillery strike that lands at the beginning of the next Round.

Air Support: Either U.S. commander may use Weapon Card 48 as an action once.

Victory Points:

American Commanders share VP for this firefight.

3 VP - Immediately, score 3 VP when a bunker comes under U.S. control. It is then automatically destroyed and removed from the map.

3 VP - Immediately, score 3 VP when the Control Marker comes under U.S. control.

1 VP - At the end of the game, score 1 VP for each remaining U.S. unit.



Round 1

Initiative:

Plot art.:

VP:

Round 2

Plot art.:

VP:

Round 3

VP:

Firefight Ends

Japanese Control Marker:

Place a Japanese Control Marker on hex 14-I07. This marker represents Colonel Shoji and his command post, supplies, intelligence documents, etc. Move this control marker 1 hex every time the Japanese Commanders gain Bushido. The control marker cannot enter heavy jungle hexes, and it must move south each time it moves.



1x Bunker
14-I07



1st Japanese Force: 230th Infantry Regiment

Defensive Line: Place on the map as listed.



1x Gren Dis
15-E06



1x 70mm Gun
15-E04



1x LMG
15-I03



3x Bunker
15-I03 15-F04, 15-E06

Hidden Units: Place hidden anywhere on map 15.



3x Infantry
(Card ?)



1x Gren Dis



2nd Japanese Force: 230th Infantry Regiment

Mortar Team: Place on the map as listed.



1x 81mm Mortar
H3-17



75mm Mtn Gun
H3-12



1x Bunker
H3-12

Hidden Units: Place hidden anywhere on map 14.



3x Infantry
(Card ?)



1x Sniper
(Card 62)

Japanese Commanders share VP and BP for this firefight.

Orders: Hold defensive positions long enough for Shoji and his forces to escape through the gap.

Victory Points:

1 VP - At the end of each round, score 1 VP for each bunker under Japanese control.

3 VP - Immediately, score 3 VP when the control marker is moved entirely off of map 14.

3 VP - Immediately, score 3 VP when the control marker is moved off the southern map edge.

1 VP - At the end of the game, score 1 VP for each remaining Japanese Unit.

Bushido Points:

+1 BP - Immediately, score 1 BP when a U.S. Unit is Hit. Also move the Japanese Control Marker.

-1 BP - Immediately, lose 1 BP when a Japanese commander has at least one Fresh Unit and Passes.

-1 BP - As an action, move the Japanese control marker 1 space. This may not be used if the Japanese player has negative BP.