

# Army Expansion Firefight 4 - Mount Austen

## American Player Firefight Sheet

**General Situation:** Mount Austen is composed of a cluster of hills in a jungle area known as "The Gifu". U.S. Command has decided that taking Mount Austen is a critical step in the elimination of all Japanese forces from Guadalcanal due to its dominance over the surrounding area and its importance as a Japanese observation post for operations at Lunga.

December 1942 - The Japanese conduct night infiltration raids against Henderson Field. On December 15, a team led by Lieutenant Oho sneak through American lines and destroy several P-39 fighters, culminating in General Patch commanding soldiers of the US Army's 132nd Infantry Regiment to seize Mount Austen as quickly as possible.

The 132nd's initial objective is to eliminate Japanese positions on several hills surrounding Mount Austen. They will then establish an artillery spotting point as well as a staging area to conduct further attacks on The Gifu. The Americans know little of the thick Jungle terrain they are advancing into and in order to advance quickly, many artillery and mortar support weapons are to be left behind.

**Your immediate objective is to have your forward elements, that have become separated in the thick jungle, gain control of the cleared hill tops to orient themselves. You must hold these positions until your support elements arrive to continue your offensive to take Mount Austen.**

**Aftermath:** The area surrounding Mount Austen consists of thick jungle terrain with exposed hills and peaks. Aerial photography of the region did not produce clear images of the landscape. The Japanese primarily defended the area with well camouflaged pillboxes hidden in the dense jungle. Because of these factors, the Americans were not even aware of the Japanese positions at Mount Austen for quite some time. After American patrols ran into Japanese defenders on the slopes near the base of the mountain, they still underestimated the strength of the Japanese forces stationed there.

Dec 17th, after intense area artillery bombardment and airstrikes, Colonel William Wright led the 3rd Battalion of the 132nd Infantry Regiment against several hills leading to Mount Austen. From concealed positions, a Japanese machine gun team surprised the Battalion, killing Colonel Wright and many soldiers. As more hills came under U.S. control, ammunition and supplies ran low. Japanese counter attacks put great pressure on the American positions. They were unable to dig foxholes on these mountains, because of the hard coral directly below the covering sod. Supplies being brought to them had to be hand carried along hacked out jungle paths up steep wooded slopes, and supply carriers were often attacked by Japanese patrols and riflemen hiding within the jungles. American artillery was often ineffective against the Japanese forces manning dug-in pillboxes surrounded by the dense jungle canopy. There are also many reports of artillery spotters that needed to be within a hundred yards from their target just to be able to confirm their hits through the hilly and wooded landscape.

Despite these difficulties, the Americans were eventually able to find a weak point into The Gifu from the west, surrounding Mount Austen and defeating the Japanese defenders. Even after being cut off and surrounded, the Japanese continued to hold sections of the Gifu for several weeks before eventually being overrun. The Japanese remaining within the Gifu did not surrender, but could not conduct an effective defense due to lack of supplies, starvation, and disease. With the Gifu reduced, Japanese command ceased active attacks to reclaim the island and instead attempted to evacuate Guadalcanal with as many men as possible.

### American Firefight Sheet

This Firefight uses a separate U.S. and Japanese Firefight Sheet. Place Hill Overlays 1, 2, and 3 off to the side of the map with the Japanese Control Markers. You do not need to read your Special Rules or Orders to your opponent. Only read the relevant Victory text when those points are gained. Read the text concerning "Low Ammunition" if it is the second Round or later and the Control Marker on H2-06 is not under U.S. control. Only read the text concerning any Control Marker if the relevant Control Marker is under U.S. control.

#### U.S. Force: 3rd Battalion, 132nd Infantry Regiment

**Hill 1:** Enter Round 1 onto any highlighted edge of Hill Overlay 1.



2x Army Reg.

**Hill 2:** Enter Round 1 onto any highlighted edge of Hill Overlay 2.



2x Army Reg.

**Hill 3:** Enter Round 1 onto any highlighted edge of Hill Overlay 3.



1x MMG



1x Army Reg.

**Reinforcements:** At the beginning of Round 1, designate a map edge to your opponent. Your reinforcements will enter from that map edge during Round 2.



2x 81mm Mortar



1x MMG



2x Army Reg.



1x .50 Cal

**Special Rules:** Units cannot make Hasty Defenses.

At the beginning of Round 2, all American Units are subject to the "Low Ammunition" Card.

**Orders:** Take control of the hills near the Gifu and establish forward positions for artillery spotters.

**Victory Points:**

**1 VP - At the end of each Round,** score 1 VP for each Control Marker under U.S. control.

**1 VP - At the end of the game,** score 1 VP for each remaining Mortar, MMG, and HMG.

**Commanders:** 2

**Initiative:** U.S. Army on Round 1

**VP:** U.S. 1

**CAPs per Round:** U.S. 6 CAPs

**Action Cards:** All Action and Bonus Cards except 13 and 30.

**Map Setup:** Map 14 **Overlays:** See next page

**Event Cards -** An Event Draw Deck with Event Cards 1-4 is created and will be used by both sides.

If the **Americans have fewer VPs** than the Japanese at the end of a Round, turn a random Event Card. Read the effect aloud and resolve it.

**Event Card 1:** Add one "No Hit" Marker to the Japanese Draw Pile and gain an Aerial Attack Card.

**Event Card 2:** Gain an M3 GMC Truck that must enter from the chosen map edge. The Japanese gain 1 VP if this Truck is eliminated.

**Event Card 3:** Gain 2 Marine Raider Units that may enter from the chosen map edge. The Japanese gain 1 Bushido for each of these Units if eliminated.

**Event Card 4:** The Japanese player places the Hill 4 Overlay anywhere that does not overlap another Overlay and then places an Infantry Unit and a Control Marker on Hill 4. Covered Units are also placed on Hill 4 on the same relative hex.

This Control Marker is worth 4VP's if under U.S. control at game end. The U.S. player no longer gains VPs for any other Control Markers.

#### Round 1

Plot Art:

#### Round 2

Reinforcements:



Plot Art:



#### Round 3

Firefight Ends

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The American forces are totally disoriented in the heavy jungle and have to fight their way up hilly jungle terrain to be able to orient themselves, map their positions, and spot for artillery.

You begin the Firefight with only the 3 Overlays below on which the Japanese player has placed Units. Once you take a Control Marker, the Japanese player will place that hill onto a pre-designated spot on map 14.

### Hill Overlays

Before the Firefight, the Japanese commander secretly notes the locations on Map 14 of each of the three Hill Overlays.

U.S. Units will enter the Overlays during Round 1. Consider all U.S. Units to be moving starting on L0 height for the purposes of determining movement cost onto the Overlays.

**Round 1:** Combat only takes place on the Overlays. If the Americans take a Control Hex, that Overlay is placed onto Map 14. No Units may exit or enter the Overlays until Round 2. Japanese Units located on Map 14 may still be moved, but may not Attack any Units on an Overlay, even if it has been placed on the Map.

**Round 2:** All Units located on the Overlays and Map 14 can fight. If ANY Unit moves onto or off of an Overlay, that Overlay is revealed and placed onto the Map 14. Only the Japanese Commander will know the location of the Overlays until placed on the Map 14.



### Control Points under Japanese Control

All three Control Markers begin under Japanese control.

**H3-12 Control Marker:** Whichever side controls this marker at the beginning of Round 2 may plot artillery in the pre-round sequence. Japanese plot artillery before Round 1.