

# Bag the Jap

## Sakai Over China: First Combat

By Uncle Ted & adapted by Chuck Hamack

### BACKGROUND: 21 MAY 1938

The newly graduated Sakai is transferred to a fighter unit in Formosa, who rotates him to a forward unit in China. On his first mission over Hankow Air field, his escorting squadron of 15 Claudes were astounded to see 3 Russian I-16s take to the skies as the raid was commencing. The Russian fighters climbed level with the Claudes - and attacked.

*THEN SUDDENLY THEY WERE AT OUR ALTITUDE, BIG, BLACK, AND POWERFUL. WITHOUT WARNING - AT LEAST TO MY ASTONISHED MIND - ONE OF THE ENEMY PLANES WHIPPED OUT OF FORMATION AND BORE IN WITH ALARMING SPEED AT MY FIGHTER. ABRUPTLY, ALL MY CAREFUL PLANS OF WHAT I WOULD DO IN MY FIRST COMBAT EVAPORATED.*

*SABURO SAKAI, SAMURAI!, CHAPTER 4*

IJN = 1x A5M2 Claude	Japanese pilot is "Sprog"
Soviet Air Force = 1x I-16 Type 10	Russian pilot is "Regular"

### SETUP:

Set Sakai up in altitude 4.0, speed 5.0, heading west.  
Set the Soviet up at 4.0, speed 4.0, heading NNW.



### **GAME LENGTH:**

**10 turns**

### **SPECIAL RULES:**

At the end of 10 turns, the other IJN pilots will grow bored of watching and will pitch in against the I-16. The Russian must either shoot down the Claude or escape by then.

### **THUMBNAIL BIOGRAPHY**

Saburo Sakai was born in 1916 to an impoverished Samurai family eking out a living on a small farm near Saga in southern Japan. After less than sterling success as a student in Tokyo, Sakai joined the Imperial Japanese Navy in 1933, and went to its extremely thorough Tsuchiura flight school in 1937, and then qualified as a carrier pilot. In 1938, he was posted to the Kiukiang air wing in China and was introduced to actual air combat. He was sent home for about a year after being wounded in an air raid, returning in to Formosa in time to train up with the new A6M1 Zero, which was tried out flying cover over IndoChina as Japanese troops occupied key facilities in early 1941. In the summer of 1941, Sakai helped combat-test the Zero with the Hankow Air Wing against the Chinese Air Force.

In November, 1941, Sakai was transferred to Tainan and the 11th Air Fleet, which attacked the Philippines in December, 1941. In January, 1942, he was transferred to Tarakan in Borneo. In February, Sakai participated in combat in the Dutch East Indies. In March, he went to Rabaul and then in April, to the fighter base at Lae.

From April to the beginning of August, 1942, Sakai was involved with very intense air combat over New Guinea. In August, most of the surviving fighters were pulled back to Rabaul. On August 7th, Sakai was badly wounded over Guadalcanal, barely surviving the long flight back to Rabaul. He lost an eye. He spent the next 5 months in hospitals.

After a year spent training new pilots, in April, 1944, Sakai was assigned to the Yokosuka Air Wing, which transferred to Iwo Jima in June. Its thirty fighters engaged with massed carrier air elements of the US Fleet that attacked Iwo Jima to prevent it being used to support Saipan. By the end of July, all thirty (and most of the 50 others stationed on Iwo Jima at the time) were destroyed.

From September to December, 1944, Sakai (now a commissioned Ensign) helped test the Shiden. In January, he was assigned to the Mastuyama Air Wing under Captain Genda. From March until August, 1945, Sakai flew the Shiden against B-29 raids.

### **SAKAI SCENARIO**

Saburo Sakai was the greatest Japanese ace to survive World War 2 with 62 air claimed combat kills. This page includes several scenarios based on his exploits as described in *Samurai!* by Saburo Sakai, Martin Caidin, and Fred Saito.

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## Sakai Over the Philippines

By Uncle Ted & adapted by Chuck Hamack

### BACKGROUND: 8 DECEMBER 1941

Saburo Sakai is trained on the wonderful new IJN fighter, the A6M2, and is then sent to join the Tainan Air Wing, part of the 11th Air Fleet. He took part in the initial strike on Clark Air Field. Due to a lack of aerial targets, Sakai brought his vic in to strafe the field, when they were jumped from behind by a flight of P-40s.

*WITH MY TWO WINGMAN TIED TO ME AS IF MY INVISIBLE LINES, I PUSHED THE STICK FORWARD AND DOVE AT A STEEP ANGLE FOR THE GROUND. I SELECTED TWO UNDAMAGED B-17S ON THE RUNWAY FOR OUR TARGETS, AND ALL THREE PLANES POURED A FUSILLADE OF BULLETS INTO THE BIG BOMBERS. WE FLASHED LOW OVER THE GROUND AND CLIMBED STEEPLY ON THE PULLOUT.*

*FIVE AMERICAN FIGHTERS JUMPED US. THEY WERE P-40S, THE FIRST AMERICAN PLANES I HAD EVER ENCOUNTERED.*

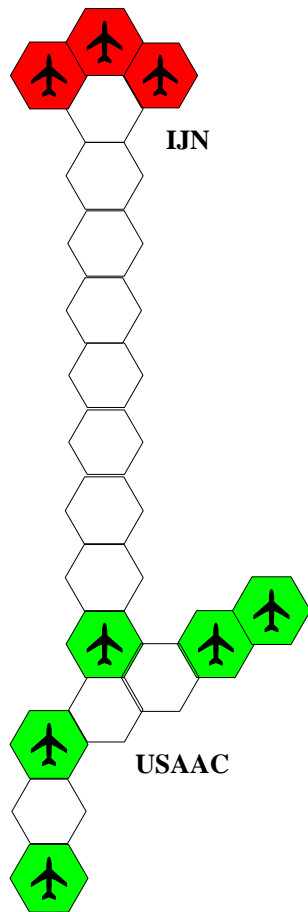
*SABURO SAKAI, SAMURAI!, CHAPTER 7*

IJN = 3x A6M2 Zero	1 x Junior Ace, 2 x Veteran
USAAC = 5x P-40E	3 x Regular, 2 x Sprog

### SETUP:

Set the IJN up in a vic at altitude 2, Speed 7, heading West.

Set the USAAC up at altitude 2, Speed 7, heading West.



**GAME LENGTH:**  
20 turns

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## Sakai and the Seventeen

By Uncle Ted & adapted by Chuck Hamack

### BACKGROUND: 24 JANUARY 1942

While waiting in Borneo before the IJN moved on the Dutch Indies, Sakai and his wingmates encountered unescorted B-17Ds operating from Java several times. They had been attacked by B-17s and did not like being under the rain of bombs. When they had encountered them in the skies, however, their Zeros did not seem able to make much of an impression on the lumbering behemoths.

AGAIN. DIVE, ROLL, CONCENTRATE ON ONE BOMBER! THIS TIME I CAUGHT ONE! I SAW THE SHELLS EXPLODING, A SERIES OF RED AND BLACK EXPLOSIONS MOVING ACROSS THE FUSELAGE. SURELY HE WOULD GO UP NOW! CHUNKS OF METAL - BIG CHUNKS - EXPLODED OUTWARD FROM THE B-17 AND FLASHED AWAY IN THE SLIPSTREAM. THE WAIST AND TOP GUNS WERE SILENT AS THE SHELLS HAMMERED HOME. NOTHING! NO FIRE, NO TELLTALE SIGN OF SMOKE TRAILING BACK... THE B-17 CONTINUED ON IN FORMATION.

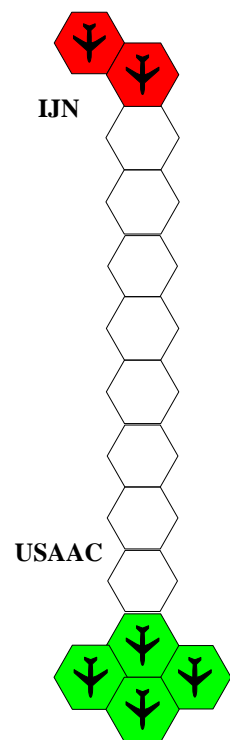
SABURO SAKAI, SAMURAI!, CHAPTER 9

IJN = 2x A6M2 Zero	1 x Junior Ace, 1 x Veteran
USAAC = 4x B-17c or B-17d	All Regular

### SETUP:

Set the USAAC up in a diamond formation. All are at altitude 5, speed 4, heading east in a fixed formation. Having just completed their bombing mission, they are unloaded. The bombers fly straight ahead and maintain formation unless one cannot due to damage.

Set the IJN up at altitude 5 speed 7.



**GAME LENGTH:**  
**20 turns**

# Bag the Jap

## Sakai Over Surabaya

By Uncle Ted & adapted by Chuck Hamack

### BACKGROUND: 19 FEBRUARY 1942

After the Phillipines, the Tainan Air Wing was sent to the Dutch East Indies. There was a large air battle over Surabaya, where 23 Zeros took on "50-60 P-36s, P-40s, and Buffalos" flown by Dutch, American, and British pilots in a large, mesy furball.

WE REACHED SURABAYA AT ABOUT 11:30 AM, FLYING AT 16,000 FT. THE ENEMY FORCE ANTICIPATING OUR ARRIVAL WAS UNPRECEDENTED. AT LEAST 50 ALLIED FIGHTERS FLYING AT ABOUT 10,000 FT., MAINTAINED A LARGE COUNTER-CLOCKWISE SWEEPING OVER THE CITY. THE ENEMY PLANES EXTENDED IN A LONG LINE, COMPOSED OF THREE WAVES OF V GROUPS WHICH OUTNUMBERED US BY MORE THAN TWO TO ONE... SIGHTING OUR FORCE, THE ALLIED FIGHTERS BROKE OFF THEIR CIRCULAR MOVEMENTS AND AT FULL SPEED CLOSED TOWARD US... LESS THAN A MINUTE LATER, THE ORDERLY FORMATIONS DISINTEGRATED INTO A WILD SWIRLING FIGHT.

SABURO SAKAI, SAMURAI! , CHAPTER 10

IJN = 6x A6M2 Zero	1x Junior Ace 2x Veteran 1x Regular 2x Sprog
Allies = 4x Hawk 75A-6 (Dutch) 5x P-40E (American) 6x F2A-2 Buffalo (Brit&Dutch)	2x Sprog, 2x Regular 2x Sprog, 3x Regular RAF- 1x Sprog & 1x Regular Dutch (B-339D) 2x Sprog, 2x Regular

### SETUP:

Set the IJN up at altitude 4, speed 5 in vics:

The IJN are deployed as two elements (shotai of 3)

Set the Allies up at altitude 4, in 3 great waves of Vs:

Hawk 75A-6s: speed 4, deployed as one element (one flight of four)

P-40Es: speed 5. US P-40s, deployed in two elements (a vic and a pair)

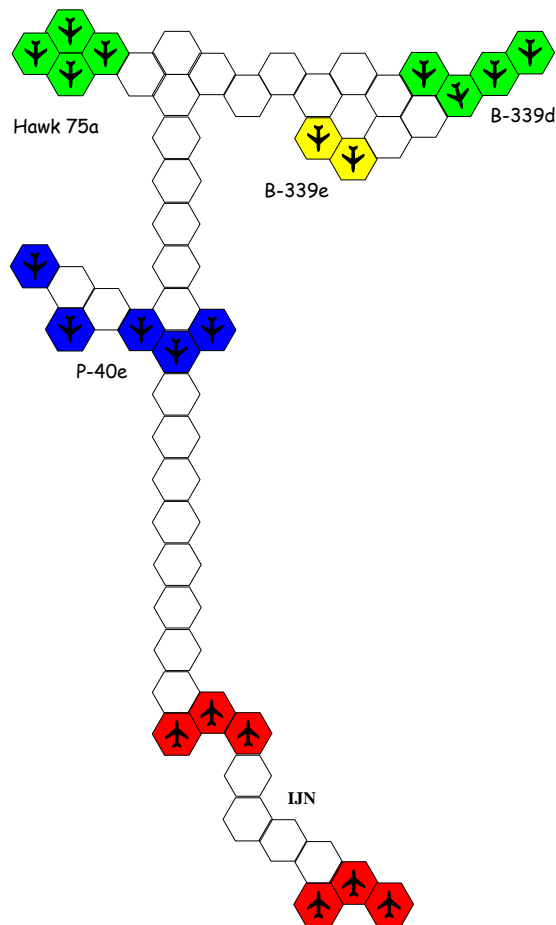
Brewster Buffalos speed 5:

Dutch B-339D: deployed as one element (one flight of four)

RAF B-339E: are deployed as one element (one pair)

### GAME LENGTH:

20 turns



### Variants:

To play with different numbers: (Original, Half-size, 1/3, Micro)

A6M2 Zero (23, 12, 9, 3)

Hawk 75A-6 (16, 8, 5, 2)

B-339D & B-339E Buffalo

(Keep ratio of ~2 D:1 E) (20, 10, 7, 3)

P-40E Warhawk (16, 8, 5, 2)

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## Sakai Over Moresby

By Uncle Ted & adapted by Chuck Hamack

### BACKGROUND: 2 MAY 1942

After a short break, Sakai's Sentai was sent to Lae. He made his first trip to Port Moresby on 11 April, 1942.

NINE OF US FLEW TO MORESBY, SPOILING FOR A FIGHT. WE GOT ONE. NINE ENEMY FIGHTERS, P-39S AND P-40S, WAITED FOR US OVER THE ENEMY AIRSTRIP, WILLING TO FIGHT! HARDLY WERE WE IN SIGHT WHEN THEY BROKE OFF THEIR CIRCLE AND ROARED HEAD-ON AGAINST OUR PLANES.

SABURO SAKAI, SAMURAI, CHAPTER 13

IJN = 9x A6M2 Zero	1x Top Ace, 1x Junior Ace, 2x Veteran, 3x Regular, 2x Sprog
USAAC = 5x P-40E Warhawk 4x P-39D Airacobra	3x Regular, 2x Sprog, 2x Regular, 2x Sprog

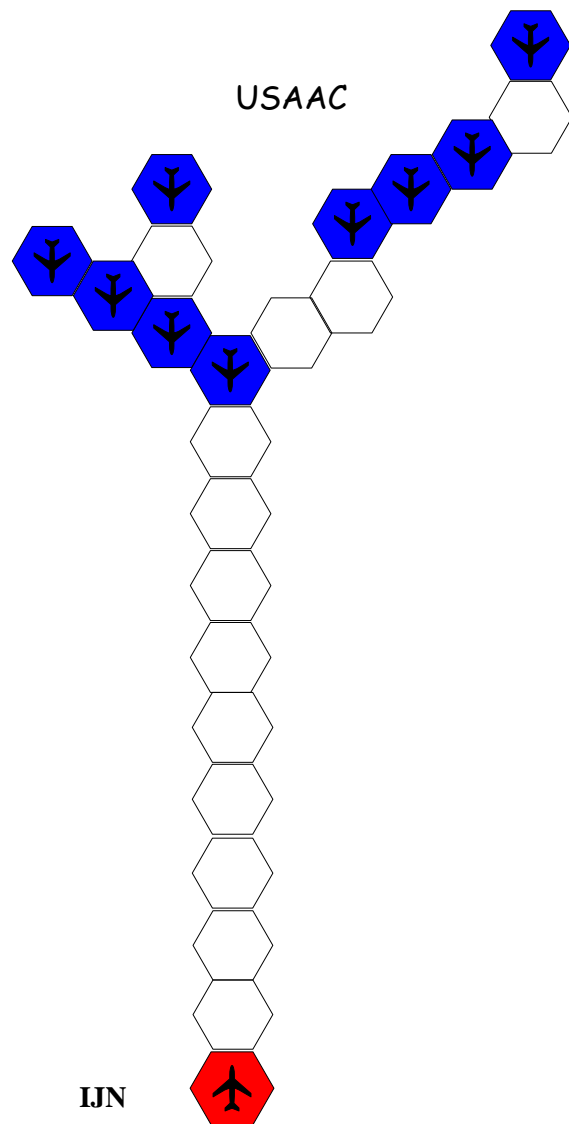
### SETUP:

Set the IJN up in 3 vics at altitude 4, speed 5, near hex 2025; (leader in hex, all others in formation behind).

Set the P-40s in hexes 2015, 1914, 1814, 1713, 1912, at altitude 4, all speed 6.  
Set the P-39s in hexes 2213, 2312, 2412, 2310, at altitude 4, all speed 5.

### GAME LENGTH:

20 turns



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## Sakai Over Buna

By Uncle Ted & adapted by Chuck Hamack

### **BACKGROUND: 22 JULY 1942**

During the invasion at Buna, the Zeros of the Tainan Sentai at Lae drew the duty of mounting a small CAP over the area. On 22-Jul-42, the day after the invasion, the patrolling Zeros were slowly circling 7,000 ft over the area when they were shaken by an explosion and a greasy black cloud that appeared over their ammo dump. Searching frantically, they spotted a small dot moving away along the coast and began an immediate chase. The dot dove to pick up speed and extend the chase.

The six Zeros ran down the dot into an Australian Hudson bomber that had popped out of the cloud ceiling and hit the ammo dump. The Hudson was flown by Warren Cowan of the No. 32 Squadron RAAF, flying out of Rabi (Milne Bay).

Just as they came in range, Sakai fired. Here the Hudson sprang its first surprise - it pulled up into a steep, climbing turn and turn right through the Zero formation, firing its nose guns! The Zeros scattered in all directions, and then attacked as individuals.

"ALL OF US FAILED TO SCORE A SINGLE HIT. THE BOMBER ROLLED UP AND SAWED UP AND DOWN INVOLUNTARY MANEUVERS, WITH THE TOP GUNNER FIRING STEADILY AT OUR PLANES. "THE ZERO PILOTS WENT WILD WITH FURY. OUR FORMATION DISINTEGRATED AND EVERYMAN WENT AT THE HUDSON WITH EVERYTHING HE HAD. I MADE AT LEAST FOUR FIRING PASSES, AND WAS FORCED TO BREAK OFF MY ATTACK BY OTHER PILOTS WHO SCREAMED IN WITHOUT REGARD FOR THEIR WINGMATES. FOR NEARLY 10 MINUTES WE PURSUED THE HUDSON, POURING A HAIL OF LEAD AND EXPLOSIVE SHELLS AT THE AMAZING PLANE."

SABURO SAKAI, SAMURAI! , CHAPTER 20

IJN = 6x A6M2 Zero	Sakai (Top Ace) Lt. Sasai (Regular) Nishizawa (Junior Ace) 2x Regular, 1x Sprog
RAAF 1x Hudson Mk IIIA	Warren Cowan (Veteran)

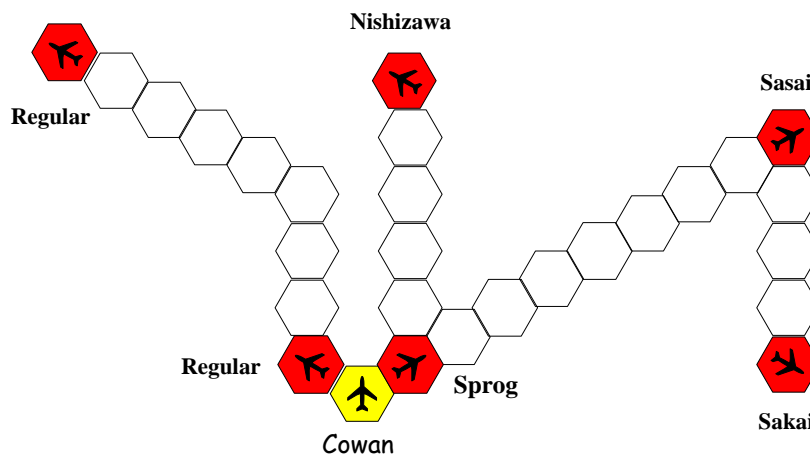
### GAME LENGTH:

20 turns

### SPECIAL RULES:

Double any VPs earned by the Hudson

### SETUP:



### HISTORY:

For ten long minutes, Cowan and his crew fought the astonished Japanese pilots. "I caught a glimpse of Lieutenant Sasai. His jaw hung open in astonishment at the audacity of the enemy pilot" said Sakai in his autobiography.

The turret gun was firing nearly all the time. Eventually, Sakai got a shot at the turret gunner, silencing him, then closed up on the Hudson, and shot it down, killing Cowan and his crew.

But it been a frantic ten minutes, and quite surprising for the Tainan pilots. And this is before the consternation of the Japanese at Buna is taken into account.

While writing up his memoirs with Henry Sakaida later in 1970,

**"I RECOMMEND THAT PILOT OFFICER WARREN F. COWAN BE POSTHUMOUSLY AWARDED YOUR COUNTRY'S HIGHEST COMMENDATION. I HAVE ENCOUNTERED MANY BRAVE PILOTS IN MY LIFE BUT WARREN F. COWAN STANDS ALONE." – SABURO SAKAI**

[On reading about this incident in Sakai's memoir Samurai (Chap 20), I felt for sure that this had to be a misidentification for the aircraft, as surely no Hudson could maneuver well enough. But a visitor to Uncle Ted's, James Oglethorpe of Sydney, Australia, set me straight and sent me a link to the Australian Stories Article. So, I updated the note, eventually ginned up an ADC for the Hudson, and designed this scenario. - Uncle Ted]

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## Sakai Over Guadalcanal

By Uncle Ted & adapted by Chuck Hamack

### **BACKGROUND: 7 AUGUST 1942**

The morning of 7-Aug-42 found the Tainan Sentai at Rabaul, where they had been pulled for a few days rest. While arming and fueling to escort the daily bombing mission over Port Moresby, the Japanese naval command was stunned to hear reports of a sudden air raid and landings at Tulagi and Guadalcanal, where an airfield was being built at the southern end of the Solomons Island chain. The bombing mission was hastily re-routed and sent to hit the invasion force off Guadalcanal - 560 nautical miles away! This was the longest escort mission flown up to that point in the war. Sakai was one of the 18 Tainan pilots sent on the mission.

Assigned to close escort, Sakai was with the attacking force as it broke out of the clouds at 12,000 ft and found both the US invasion fleet and some of the CAP. That battle is generally described in Opening Day. As part of that battle, after the bombers turned and were heading back through the cloud cover toward Florida Island, the 3rd chutai of the escort came down. Saburo Sakai's wingmen had already left formation. Sakai spotted them a few thousand feet over the sea chasing down a lone F4F-4. This was Lt. James Southerland, leader of Scarlet 2, already damaged and mostly out of ammo.

FINALLY I SPOTTED THEM SOME 1,500 FEET BELOW ME. I GAPPED. A SINGLE WILDCAT PURSUED THREE ZERO FIGHTERS, FIRING IN SHORT BURSTS AT THE FRANTIC JAPANESE PLANES. ALL FOUR PLANES WERE IN A WILD DOGFIGHT, FLYING TIGHT LEFT SPIRALS. THE ZEROS SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO TAKE THE LONE GRUMMAN WITHOUT ANY TROUBLE, BUT EVERY TIME A ZERO CAUGHT THE WILDCAT BEFORE ITS GUNS, THE ENEMY PLANE FLIPPED AWAY WILDLY AND CAME OUT AGAIN ON THE TAIL OF A ZERO. I HAD NEVER SEEN SUCH FLYING BEFORE.

I BANKED MY WINGS TO SIGNAL SASAI AND DOVE. THE WILDCAT WAS CLINGLY GRIMLY TO THE TAIL OF A ZERO, ITS TRACERS CHEWING UP THE WINGS AND TAIL. IN DESPERATION, I

SNAPPED OUT A BURST. AT ONCE THE GRUMAN SNAPPED AWAY IN A ROLL TO THE RIGHT, CLAWED AROUND IN A TIGHT TURN, AND ENDED IN A CLIMB STRAIGHT AT MY OWN PLANE...  
 SABURO SAKAI, SAMURAI! , CHAPTER 22

LJN = 1x A6M2 Zero	Junior Ace
USAAC = 1x F4F-4 Wildcat	Veteran

**GAME LENGTH:**

10 turns

**SPECIAL RULES:**

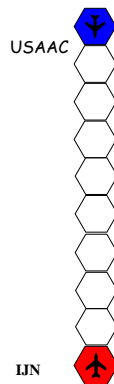
Southerland's F4F is damaged:

USN player secretly rolls and records 1 D10 Critical Hit.

USN player determines the critical. Reroll any hits that outright destroy the aircraft or kill the pilot.

Southerland has already been in combat: The USN player secretly rolls 1 D10 and marks off that much ammo.

**SETUP:**



**HISTORY:**

After a vicious, tight turning fight, Southerland tries to break off an run. Sakai spends 200 rounds shooting at the Wildcat, then over shoots him - only to find that Southerland was out of ammunition, wounded, and on the verge of collapse. He shoots the Wildcat again, and Southerland bails out, and survives.

Sakai heads back up for more targets and meets his own fate - He mistook TBFs for SBDs and found their .50 cal MGs nearly fatal, flying all the way back to Rabaul with a terrible head wound that kept him out of combat for the next eighteen months...