

# MLR1 HANA-SAKU

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## HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

**LOCATION:** Mt. Butler, Hong Kong Island

**DATE:** 19 December 1941

**COMMENTARY:** On 8 December 1941, the Japanese 38<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division under command of Lt.-General Sano Tadayoshi received the code words "Hana-Saku, Hana-Saku" (literally "flowers bloom, flowers bloom") from the 23<sup>rd</sup> Army head quarters. This order signalled the start of the Japanese attack on the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong. Major General C. M. Maltby (GOC Hong Kong) planned to delay the enemy assault on the mainland territories and then fight a prolonged defence on Hong Kong Island. Allied plans depended greatly on the 'Gin Drinkers Line' to extract a large number of casualties on the Japanese infantry. The Gin Drinkers Line consisted mainly of entrenchments linked at intervals to concrete pillboxes and at the time of the attack was woefully undermanned. On 9 December elements of the Japanese 228<sup>th</sup>, 229<sup>th</sup> and 230<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiments sliced through the Gin Drinkers Line with relative ease and then quickly overran the whole of the Kowloon Peninsula. By the morning of 13 December the evacuation of Allied troops from the mainland was complete and the Japanese had won a quick victory with unexpectedly light casualties.

While they paused to reorganise their forces, General Sakai (GOC Japanese 23<sup>rd</sup> Army) sent a request for surrender to General Maltby on the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup> which was refused by the defenders. Later that day Japanese artillery began its pre-assault bombardment on Hong Kong's defences. During the night of 18/19 December the Japanese streamed across from the mainland to Hong Kong Island. In the darkness and rain the men of Colonel Shoji's 230<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment quickly overwhelmed the 5/7<sup>th</sup> Rajput Regiment who were in no condition to resist after the five day bombardment. Early on the 19<sup>th</sup> Brigadier Lawson (Co of Canadian units on Hong Kong) received reports of Japanese infantry moving inland towards the vital Wong Nei Chong Gap (where his brigade HQ was located) and at 2:30 AM he order A Company, and one platoon of D Company, Winnipeg Grenadiers to clear Jardine Lookout and hold Mt. Butler.

In the darkness and confusion of battle the Canadians companies became separated and in the misty dawn Company Sergeant Major John R. Osborn found himself with half the company at the foot of Mt. Butler and a group of Japanese on the summit. Leading a bayonet charge, CSM Osborn captured his objective accounting for six of the enemy himself. For the next three hours this small group held off superior numbers of Japanese attackers until late morning when A Company's position became untenable. Osborn was an inspiration to his men all during the desperate fighting and as he led the remnants of his command back towards the Wong Nei Chong Gap. During the withdrawal his steadfastness under constant enemy fire and nerves of steel kept his small band together. Finally they were surrounded and the Grenadiers prepared for their last stand.

Under heavy fire, CSM Osborn threw back Japanese grenades until one landed out of his reach. Shouting a warning to his men he threw himself onto the grenade and was killed instantly when it exploded, but in doing so he saved the lives of a number of men. Shortly afterwards the Japanese overran the remaining Canadian infantrymen. For his devotion to duty that day and his selfless act of courage CSM John R. Osborn was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross. It was the only VC awarded during the battle for Hong Kong.



## TURN RECORD CHART

|                        |   |   |   |   |   |   |     |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| CANADIAN Sets Up First | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | END |
| JAPANESE Moves First   |   |   |   |   |   |   |     |

## THE BATTLEFIELD AND CONDITIONS



Only hexrows R-GG are playable.  
All woods and grain are brush.  
The road that runs from Z1 – GG5/6 does not exist.  
The building in 15R8 is a level 1½ level building.

EC are Wet, Overcast and Mist with No Wind at start. E3.54 is in effect.

## VICTORY CONDITIONS

The Japanese win if at game end they have amassed  $\geq 5$  Victory Points more than the Canadians. The Japanese receive 1 VP for each CVP amassed and 1 VP for each VP Exit VP exited off between R6 and R10. The Canadians receive 1 VP for each game turn in which they Control Y6, 1 VP for each CVP amassed and 1 VP for each Exit VP exited off between R6 and R10 on/after turn 5.

## SCENARIO SPECIFIC RULES:

- 1 No Quarter (A20.3) is in effect for both sides. The Canadian player may initiate Hand-to-Hand CC (J2.31).
- 2 The Canadian 9-1 SMC is Fanatic. Any SMC/MMC in the same Location as the 9-1 have their Good Order and Broken Morale level increased by 1 provided the 9-1 is Good Order. Any SMC/MMC the 9-1 attempts to rally does so without the effects of Desperation Morale (A10.62).

**Elements 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 230<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment** enter on/after turn one along the north edge. All, some or none of the Japanese force can enter on any given turn.  
**BALANCE:** SW are not dismantled at start.

ELR: 4  
SAN: 3

|            |            |       |      |     |     |                            |               |                       |
|------------|------------|-------|------|-----|-----|----------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| E<br>4-4-8 | 1<br>4-4-7 | 2-2-8 | 10-1 | 9-0 | 8-0 | LMG<br>1PP<br>1 B11<br>2-8 | dm MMG<br>1PP | dm MTR<br>1PP<br>50mm |
| 3          | 7          |       |      |     |     | 3                          |               | 2                     |

**Elements A Company, Winnipeg Grenadiers** set up on any hill hex  $\geq$  level 2 within four hexes of 15AA6.  
**BALANCE:** increase the VP margin to hex  $\geq 5$ .

ELR: 3  
SAN: 3

|            |            |     |     |                   |          |  |
|------------|------------|-----|-----|-------------------|----------|--|
| 2<br>4-4-7 | 1<br>2-4-7 | 9-1 | 8-0 | LMG<br>1PP<br>2-7 | 7 Morale | Foxhole<br>5<br>OUR_OBR: +4<br>Other: +2 |
| 6          |            |     |     | 3                 | 5        | 2  |