

# A Last Banzai

## A Campaign for Fighting Wings

by MK Schwartz

A Last Banzai is a Fighting Wings campaign about a last attempt by the Japanese to damage US war fighting capabilities by destroying the Gatun locks of the Panama Canal using attack aircraft launched from a submarine.

The campaign consists of 3 scenarios:

- An investigation of strange targets (M6A1s) by a standard air patrol.
- An attack against the Gatun locks by those that avoid/survive the investigation
- An attack by P-38Js armed as fighter-bombers as the surviving attackers attempt to be recovered by the submarines and depart.

### Attacking Forces

The actual attack planned to use 4 I-400 class submarines. However, only two were completed. The IJN modified two I-15-class submarines to carry 2 M6A1 apiece. The base force is

- two I-400 class submarines carrying 3 M6A1 each
- two I-15 class submarines carrying 2 M6A1s each

for a total of 10 M6A1.

Modify the actual forces available to the Japanese player by rolling a D100 and consulting the following table to simulate the effects of trying to rendezvous after several thousand miles of hostile ocean and of final efforts in Japan to maximize the assets available.

Japanese pilots may always attempt *kamikaze* or *baran* attacks in an attempt to either destroy their target or to destroy an attacking interceptor.

### Japanese Available Forces Table

D100	Force adjustment
01-05	Lost one I-15 and one I-400 in transit. 5 M6A1 available.
06-15	Lost one I-400 in transit. 7 M6A1 available.
16-25	Lost one I-15 in transit. 8 M6A1 available.
26-74	All submarines made rendezvous. All aircraft working. 10 M6A1s available.
75-78	One M6A1 not working. 9 M6A1 available.
78-80	Two M6A1 not working. 8 M6A1 available.
81-83	Three M6A1 not working. 7 M6A1 available.
84-90	Extra I-15 outfitted for mission. 12 M6A1 available.
92-98	Extra I-400 outfitted for mission. 13 M6A1 available.
98-00	Extra I-15 and I-400 outfitted for mission. 15 M6A1 available.

The Japanese will attempt to execute their attack regardless of how many aircraft are available.

## Campaign Effects

This campaign is effectively one mission, flown with three points of combat. The Japanese submarines are surfaced in Box 0 of the mission chart. The Gatun Locks and the Interceptor base are in Box 2. Box 1 and Box 0 are open ocean.

Generate any US and Japanese pilots from the Average table. US 6<sup>th</sup> AF pilots did not get a lot of combat experience. There was not a large pool of experienced Japanese pilots to choose from. The Japanese should start with at least one Veteran/Hero. Once the Japanese pilots are determined, they stay with their aircraft through the campaign.

Only Japanese aircraft that survive a scenario can advance to the next one. Keep any damage done to the Japanese aircraft in each scenario. Allow scattered aircraft to attack the locks in as many groups as are available, even if they are individual aircraft.

If you wish to fly this campaign as a mission, use the following mission track and tables:

<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Point ZI (launch point) Friendly Border	(open sea)	Enemy Border Panama Canal France Field

### Mission Table

Friendly Border	0	Enemy Border	2
Panamanian Coast	2.1	Interceptors	2.3
Heavy Flak	2.4	EW Radar	2.3
Medium Flak	2.4	Target: Gatun Locks	2.4

### Hostile Aircraft Encounters Table

(Friendly (Japanese) aircraft encounters are not possible)

Fighters		Non-Fighters	
D10	Encounter	D10	Encounter
1-7	One P-38J in LO	1-6	One B-24J in LO
8-10	Two P-38J in ML	7	One C-46 in LO
		8-10	One C-47 in LO

The transport encounters can be ignored.

### ADCs and SDCs

This campaign includes non-standard SDCs and ADCs, available on-line at Uncle Ted's:

- [M6A1 Seiran floatplane](#)
- C-46 Commando and C-47 Dakota [transports](#)
- I-15 and I-400 class [submarines](#)

P-38J Lightning and B-24J Liberator are available with *Over the Reich*.

## Scenario 1: Sure, We'll Check It Out – 16-Jul-45

### Background

The rising sun of 16-Jul-45 found two P-38Js flying a standard, boring CAP patrol, over the Pacific approaches to the Panama Canal, just as had been flown every day, morning and afternoon, for the last thousand days. Their idyllic flight was interrupted by France Field's fighter control asking them to check out an unidentified radar contact.

20 minutes earlier, a flotilla of Japanese submarines that had miraculously avoided contact with US naval forces while crossing the Pacific had surfaced, turned into the wind, and opened its hangar doors. Well-trained crews assembled the wings and tails of the aircraft in seven minutes, and the flotilla launched its cargo over bow catapults – a squadron of swift, armed attack floatplanes.

The two pilots chattered for a few minutes, speculating on what the sighting might be, including a drifting weather balloon, a flock of seagulls, or an off-schedule airliner. They did not expect a formation of swift unknown aircraft bearing the Rising Sun on their wings. After calling in a hasty report, the two fighters moved to intercept.

**Map:** Blue sky (open sea)

**Forces**

USAAF	=	2x P-38J Lightning
IJN	=	All available M6A1 (see Japanese Available Forces Table)

### Setup

- Set up the Japanese aircraft in a flexible formation in elements of 2 or 3 at 9,600 ft, speed 6.0 heading E, in level flight, level bank. Use elements of 3 (shotai); use pairs for remainders. Place the lead Japanese aircraft in 2612.
- Set up the P-38s in flexible formation at 10,000 ft, speed 4.5, any heading between SW and NW, level flight, level bank, starting anywhere east of the 33-row (that is, nn33 or lower).

### Additional Rules

1. Training Levels: USAAF: Reg, Green (or generate from Average chart)  
IJN: Vet/hero + others generated from Average chart
2. Each M6A1 is carrying one 800 Kg bomb and is Loaded. Each M6A1 may attempt to drop its floats before the beginning of the attack.
3. Each P-38 is carrying 2x 250 gal drop tanks. The P-38s may attempt to drop them before combat.

### Special Rules

- The Japanese player scores full VP points for each *Seiran* that escapes carrying its bomb.

## Scenario 2: Air Raid Panama Canal! This is Not a Drill! – 16-Jul-45

### Background

Having escaped total destruction at the hands of the CAP, the surviving *Seiran* press their attack on the Gatun Locks, the Atlantic end of the Panama Canal. Gatun's three lock chambers allow a 140 foot drop from Gatun Lake to Limon Bay and the Atlantic over the length of half a mile. The Panama Canal's engineering avoids the need for pump houses – but allows for Gatun Lake to be emptied if all three chambers were all opened at once.

A ready group of interceptors from France Field were rushed into the skies, and the AAA troops were rushed out to man their positions. Most did not believe this was not another drill despite being told by blaring loudspeakers "Air Raid Panama Canal! This is not a drill!"

The Japanese pilots gritted their teeth and forced themselves to grin. This would beard the Yankee lion in his den!

**Map:** Gatun Locks map. The lock gates (targets) are in hexes 3014, 3018, 3022, and 3026. There are two gates in each hex, one for the east and west lanes. The contour mark is 100 feet (.1 increment).

**Forces**

IJN	=	Any M6A1 surviving the previous scenario
USAAF	=	4x P-38J Lightning

### Setup

- AAA emplacements (6-6 each 40mm emplacement; none for 20mm emplacement):
  - Each end of the spine: 2x twin 40mm Bofors (2006, 2034)
  - Each corner of the locks: 1x quad 40mm Bofors w/radar (1914, 2114, 1926, 2126)
  - Control house roof: 1x 20mm Oerlikon (2020)
- Set up the P-38s first near the center of the map, at the players choice of speed between 4.5 and 7.0, at any altitude between 3.0 and 6.5, with any facing. The four aircraft must be set up within flexible formation parameters.
- Select an entry edge for the Japanese using the Air-ground entry chart from the Tactical Scale tables.

### Additional Rules

- Training Levels:
 

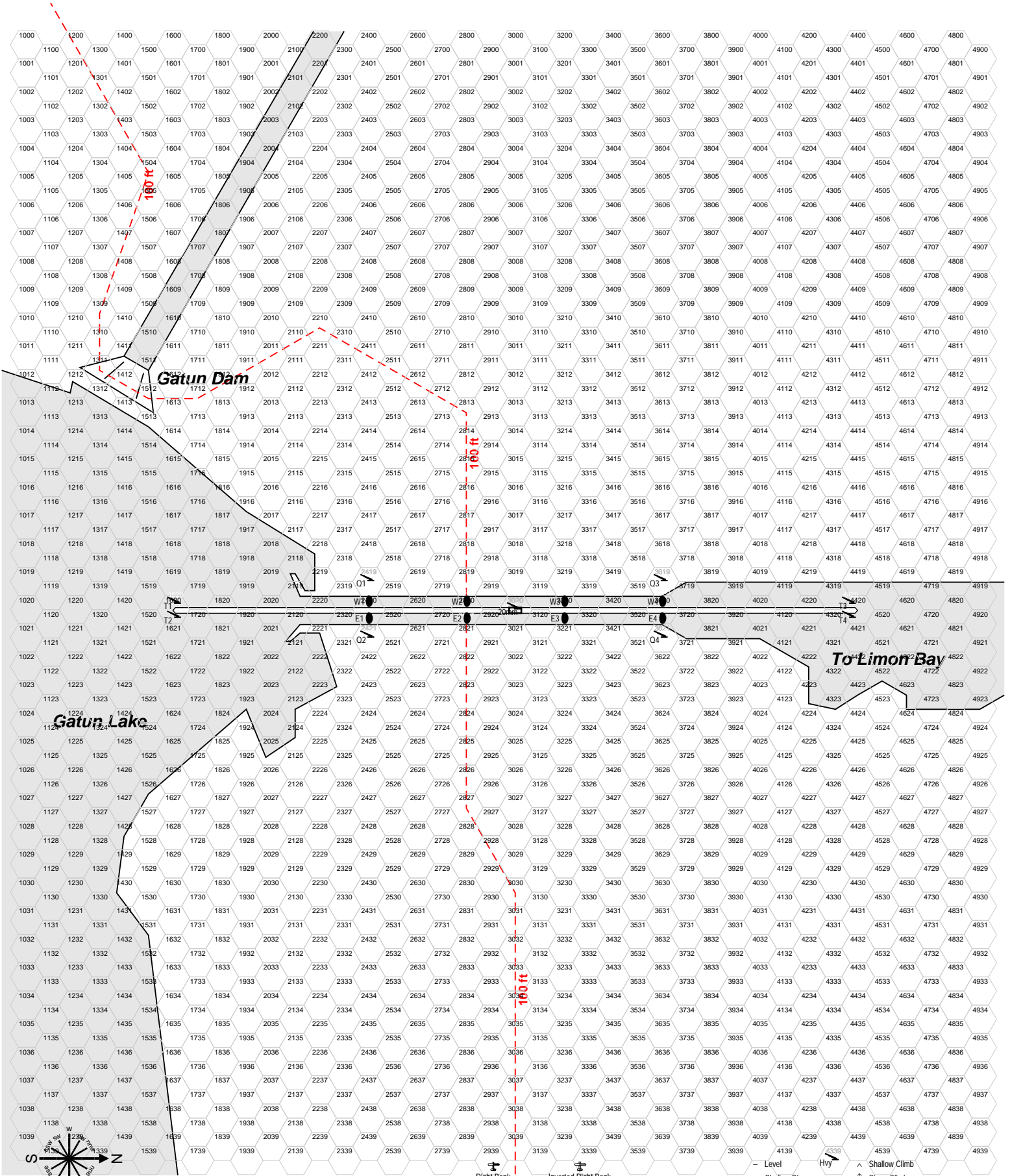
USAAF:	Reg, Green, Reg, Green (or generate from Average chart)
IJN:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For campaign, use survivors from Scenario 1.</li> <li>If standalone, Vet/hero + generate from Average chart.</li> </ul>
- Each M6A1 is carrying one 800 Kg bomb and is Loaded (unless jettisoned in the last scenario). Any M6A1 with floats may attempt to jettison them before combat.
- The M6A1 squadron must undergo an op-scale heavy flak attack between the end of Scenario 1 and Scenario 2.

### Special Rules

- Treat each gate as a hard target, with the target stats of 10-12.
- If played as part of a campaign, any damage or critical hits acquired in the previous scenario continue to affect the aircraft.

**Special Victory Conditions**

<b>If the Japanese destroy...</b>	<b>Victory type is...</b>
no gates	decisive US
1 gate	marginal US (canal traffic is slowed, but can continue)
2-4 gates	marginal Japanese (canal traffic temporarily halted)
all gates for a lane	major Japanese (canal traffic halted for more than a month)
all gates for both lanes	decisive Japanese (canal traffic halted for half a year)



# Gatun Locks

- ⊕ Right Bank
  - ⊖ Left Bank
  - ⊕ Inverted Right Bank
  - ⊖ Inverted Left Bank
- Level
  - ∨ Shallow Dive
  - ↓ Steep Dive
  - ↵ Steep Dive Reversal
  - ⊥ Vertical Dive
  - ◊ Vertical Dive Reversal
  - ⬆ Shallow Climb
  - ⬇ Steep Climb
  - ⬆ Vertical Climb
  - ⬆ Hammerhead
  - Stall
  - ⊗ Spin

## Scenario 3: Destroy All Monsters – 16-Jul-45

### Background

Still shocked by the air raid on the Gatun Locks, a flight of P-38s were quickly armed and sent back along the path of raiders. The flight's intel briefing suggested they look for CVE disguised to look like a cargo vessel, or perhaps a merchantman armed with catapults. The briefing had no basis in fact – it was all the 6<sup>th</sup> Air Force's intelligence staff could think of in the 5 minutes they had to prepare a briefing that might have made its way across the Pacific carrying and launching that many aircraft.

A mere 70 miles off shore, they found the source of their surprise, and suffered another shock – the pilots had never seen submarines so big!

**Map:** Blue sky (open sea)

**Forces**

USAAF	=	4x P-38J Lightning
IJN	=	Any surviving M6A1 <i>Seiran</i> Submarine task force (see Japanese Available Forces)

### Setup

- Place the Japanese submarines at least 5 hexes from each other. All submarines start at speed 0.
- US aircraft carry 2x 1000 lb bomb each. The US aircraft enter as one or two elements per the Air-Surface attack entry rules.
- The Japanese player may select to try to land any surviving M6A1 aircraft or keep them in the air to provide air cover while other aircraft are recovered, and or submarines attempt to submerge. Japanese aircraft selected to remain may be organized as a CAP.

### Special Rules

- If played as part of a campaign, any damage or critical hits acquired in the previous scenario continue to affect the aircraft.
- Japanese score points for 10 points for each recovered aircrew that escapes aboard a submarine. These men will be major heroes if returned home.
- However, it will take time to recover the pilots, depending on how they landed:

Pilot recovered from	Time in minutes/Cbt Turns
A/c with pontoons along side sub	.25 / 4
A/c ditched (per hex away)	1 / 15
Parachute (per hex away)	0.25 / 4 + 1 / 15

All pilot recovery times are doubled if the aircrew is wounded. The time in minutes can be used against a delay by the attacking aircraft. A submarine can maneuver into the hex adjacent to the pilot, but submarines must be stopped (speed 0) to recover a pilot.

A landed aircraft can taxi into the hex with a submarine. Taxi speed is 0.5.

- Parachute landing: In the event that aircrew opts to parachute out of the aircraft rather than land or ditch (due to damage, lack of pontoons, lack of time, or sheer bravado), simulate parachute landing by holding a counter for each crewman approximately 1

meter or yard above the table and drop them. The hexes in which the counters land is their landing point.

Aircrew parachuting in combat scale require 2 turns to fall one increment. In tactical scale, use 600 ft/1 minute turn.

- Japanese player can command submarine movement (see vessel command rules).
- Japanese submarines can try to submerge. Once submerged, they cannot be attacked.

### Special Rules

The standard FW 2.0 rules does not allow for naval vessels to be commanded, that is to move according to a set of orders. However, that was more designed as a means of allowing players to attack ships solitaire. To allow the Japanese player to pick up his pilots, use the following rules to move naval vessels:

**Pre-plotted Movement:** The number of turns ahead that you need to plot is determined by vessel's size - the larger the vessel, the longer the delay between issuing orders and the movement of the ship

Vessel Weight	Turns Ahead to Plot
12001+ tons	7
5-12 K tons	5 (I-400 class)
500-5K tons	3 (I-15 class)
51-500 tons	2
PT class	0 turns ahead (but always move before a/c)

Ships cannot quit a turn that they have committed to. All other movement rules apply, including rolling to increase speed (that is, roll for random movement roll, but only pay attention to whether the speed increases or not).

For example, on turn 1 an I-400 class sub can plot movement for turn 6, and an I-15 class sub can plot for turn 4. On turn 4, the I-15 class submarine moves its plotted move (and plots ahead for turn 7).



## History's End Notes

The M6A1 *Seiran* and the huge I-400 class submarines were actually built, with a mission against the Panama Canal in mind. Various ship and aircraft production priorities put off completion of all the planned I-400s or of the M6A1. The aircrew selected for the mission had been training for about a year for the mission to Panama, even before the aircraft were available. In the late spring of 1945, it was decided to scrap the mission against the Panama Canal as too unlikely to succeed. Japanese submarines had a poor record of survivability against the US Navy.

A kamikaze strike against the Ulithi anchorage in the Philippines was planned instead. Two I-400s sailed on 27-Jul-45, but hostilities ended before the attack could be executed. The force was recalled.

US occupiers were the first to see the M6A1 *Seiran* and the three huge complete I-400 class submarines, whose existence was a surprise to the Allies.

The US 6<sup>th</sup> Air Force spent WW2 defending the Caribbean, and most particularly the Panama Canal. The Canal was considered an important strategic US (Allied) asset, cutting off weeks of time for passage between the US Atlantic and Pacific coasts (not to mention Atlantic port to Pacific destination traffic). The 6<sup>th</sup> Air Force had bases spreading from Puerto Rico and the Leeward Islands through Panama and stretching to the Galapagos, with long-range bombers flying daily patrols throughout the war. Japanese attack was considered a realistic threat for at least the first year of the war, while minor raids were always considered a threat.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Air Force was not the strongest of the US major air units – but it wasn't the weakest either. Still, units of the 6<sup>th</sup> saw no combat during the war, except for a few combats against U-boats in the Caribbean early in the war.

By July of 1945, the US 6<sup>th</sup> Air Force had more than 200 fighters in Latin America – all P-38s.

## Variants

**Alternative Targets:** On the other side on Gatun Lake, the Culebra Cut leads to the Pacific lock chambers: the single Pedro Miguel Lock and the two Miraflores Lock chambers. These can be attacked instead with the following changes:

- Use the alternative maps Pedro Miguel Lock is at .1 altitude.
- The Japanese player can divide the attacking force between the two locks. The USN can divide 4 P-38Js into pairs over Miraflores and Pedro Miguel.

**December 1941:** to run this campaign in December 1941:

- Use P-40Cs (1-4) and P-40Es (5-10) instead of P-38Js.
- Set the Japanese base force to 8 aircraft and 4 submarines. Use only I-15 submarines caring 2 aircraft each.
- Use E13A1s instead of M6A1s. Assume that special E13As have been built for partial disassembly for shipping and re-assembly on scene.

**December 1941 Existing Technology Only:**

- As above, except use E14Y1 aircraft with only a kamikaze pilot crews (otherwise, it could never do enough damage).