

An aerial photograph of the Sakishima Islands, showing a chain of green, hilly islands extending from the bottom right towards the top left. The water is dark blue in the foreground and lighter shades of blue and green in the background. A small white text overlay is positioned in the upper left quadrant.

The  
Sakishima Islands

*by Ian Jeremiah*

## The Sakishima Islands 1945 map

for IL2:1946 4.09 modded

### Creating the Sakishima Islands for IL2

Why the Sakishima islands? Well my principle interest was to recreate the British Pacific Fleets (BPF) primary area of operation in WWII using an historically accurate map at 1:1 scale.

In April 1945 the BPF was assigned the task of neutralising Japanese airfields on the Sakishima islands in support of the US invasion of Okinawa. This became the BPFs longest period of sustained operations of the war. The US Navy and Marines were also active against the Sakishima's and they provides a rich background for simulating late war carrier operations.

My final reason for making the Sakishima islands is their natural beauty, a string of sub-tropical islands of white beaches, coral reefs, green pasture and tree covered hills. As my first step into map building for IL2 they proved a joy to recreate.

### Installation

The Sakishima Islands a new map for IL2:1946 4.09 and requires a modded version of the game to function. The installer will put the map and texture files to your MODS/MAPMODS/maps/ directory.

For the map to show up in your Full Mission Builder you will need to edit the file called All.ini in your MODS/MAPMODS/maps/ directory. You can do this by opening the text file IJ\_Sakishima.txt and copying the line "IJ\_Sakishima IJ\_Sakishima/load.ini" then open All.ini and pasting the text as an additional line at the bottom, then save the modified All.ini.

The installer adds the following files to your MODS/MAPMODS/maps/ directory:

- IJ\_Sakishima/load.ini*
- IJ\_Sakishima/actor.static*
- IJ\_Sakishima/labels.txt*
- IJ\_Sakishima/Text.txt*
- IJ\_Sakishima/map\_c.tga*



- IJ\_Sakishima/map\_c.tga\_table*
- IJ\_Sakishima/map\_h.tga*
- IJ\_Sakishima/map\_T.tga*
- IJ\_Sakishima/map\_F.tga*
- IJ\_Sakishima/map\_ed\_f*
- IJ\_Sakishima/ed\_m01.tga*
- IJ\_Sakishima/ed\_m02.tga*
- IJ\_Sakishima/map\_R.tga*
- \_tex/land/summer/IJ\_formosa\_fields1.tga*
- \_tex/land/summer/IJ\_formosa\_fields1.trees.tga*
- \_tex/land/summer/IJ\_formosa\_fields1.BumpH*
- \_tex/land/summer/IJ\_formosa\_fields2.tga*
- \_tex/land/summer/IJ\_formosa\_fields2.trees.tga*
- \_tex/land/summer/IJ\_formosa\_fields2.BumpH*
- \_tex/land/summer/IJ\_jungle.tga*
- \_tex/IJ\_Clouds256\_orig.tga*

## Missions & Campaign

The map comes with a six mission USMC campaign and single missions installed in the following directories:

### Missions/Campaign

UM/USS Gilbert Island/Gilbert01  
UM/USS Gilbert Island/Gilbert02  
UM/USS Gilbert Island/Gilbert03  
UM/USS Gilbert Island/Gilbert04  
UM/USS Gilbert Island/Gilbert05  
UM/USS Gilbert Island/Gilbert06

### Missions/Single Missions

USMC/Sakishima/Gilbert01- Escort Duty (F4U-D1)  
USMC/Sakishima/Gilbert02 – Fighter-Bomber (F4U-D1)  
USMC/Sakishima/Gilbert03 – Holy Moses (F4U-D1)  
USMC/Sakishima/Gilbert04 – Hide and seek (F4U-D1)  
USMC/Sakishima/Gilbert05 – Iromote strike (F4U-D1)  
USMC/Sakishima/Gilbert06 – Clearing the way (F4U-D1)  
UM/Sakishima/Sakishima template.mis

### Skins

F4U-D1/F4U-1D/F4U-1D\_USN\_R0NNC0\_1.bmp

TBM-3/TBM-3\_USN\_R0NNC0\_067.bmp

Both skin were created by RONNC0



TBM of VMTB-143 over Nobara airfield

## History of the Sakishima Islands in WWII

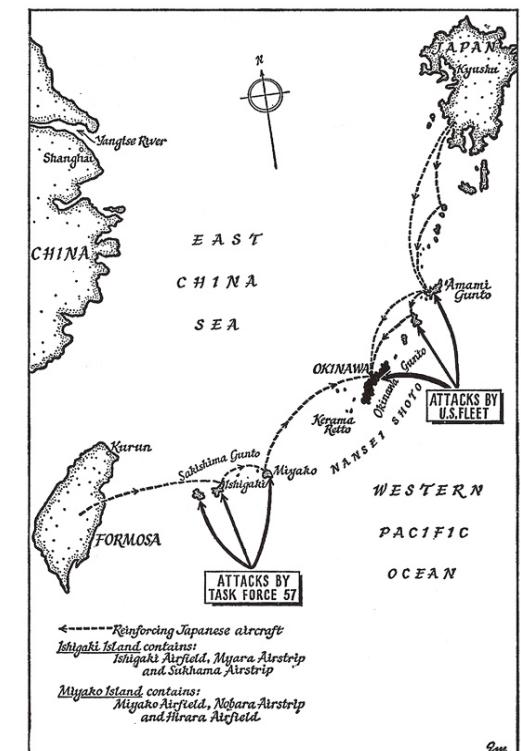
The Sakishima islands are part of the Okinawa chain and are the western most of the Japanese home islands.

During WWII six military airfields were constructed, three each on the main islands of Ishigaki-Shima and Miyako-Jima. A garrison of consisting of the 28th Division of the Japanese 32nd Army was stationed on the Islands as well as some naval units manning barges and light transports. The islands had extensive anti-aircraft defences including radar on both main islands, but there is no evident that barrage balloons were used.

The islands were first attacked by Admiral Halsey's Third fleet in October 1944. This was followed with a second and third series on strikes in January and March 1945.

During planning for Operation Iceberg, the invasion of Okinawa, it was recognised that the airfields on the Sakishima islands would need to be neutralised. This was to prevent the Japanese using them to transfer aircraft and experienced aircrew from China and Formosa to reinforce Okinawa. This task fell alternatively to the British Pacific Fleet (BPF) operating as Task Force 57 under Vice-Admiral Sir Bernard Rawlings and The US Navy escort carriers of Task Unit 52.1.3 under Rear Admiral W. D. Sample.

A plan for the capture of Miyako island was proposed as phase III of Operation Iceberg, but this idea was abandoned after the heavy resistance encounter on Okinawa.





## Order of Battle

Task Force 57 (The British Pacific Fleet)

### Carriers

Indomitable – 29 Hellcats, 15 Avengers

Victorious – 37 Corsairs, 14 Avengers, 2 Walrus

Indefatigable – 40 Seafires, 20 Avengers

Illustrious - 36 Corsairs, 16 Avengers

Formidable (replaced Illustrious 15th April) – 15 Hellcats, 30 Corsairs, 15 Avengers

### Battleships

King George V

Howe

5 Light Cruisers and 11 Destroyers

US Navy TU.52.1.3

### Escort Carriers

Sangamon

Sewanee

Santee

Chenango

6 Destroyer and 7 destroyer escorts

## Operation: April to June 1945

The BPF arrived at a position eighty miles south of Sakishima Gunto on the morning of 26th March 1945. Each of the four fleet carriers conducted out two large bomber strikes a day against enemy airfields as well as operating CAP and fighter sweeps. A routine on two days on station followed by two days refuelling soon developed with the US and British carriers alternating. On the 12th & 13th April the BPF carried out strikes against Formosa but were back operating against the Sakishima's on the 16th. The BPF withdrew for rest and repairs at Leyte on the 23rd April.

On the 4th of May the BPF were once more off the Sakishima's and conducted operations until the May 24th.

At the beginning of June TU.52.1.1 consisting of the escort carriers from the US Fifth Fleet took up the task of pounding the Sakishima airfields. This continued until the end of the month.



## THE SAKISHIMA ISLANDS

By Col. Conrad H. Lanza, army intelligence report 1945



This small group lies east of the northeast coast of Formosa, the nearest being 60 miles off and the furthest 220 miles. There are seven main islands and about sixteen islets. They are an important enemy air base, and several small harbors afford possibilities for minor depots and bases. Unlike the Pescadores, the Sakishima have not previously been used as bases for an invasion of Formosa. They could be so used, however, and would provide good air bases for such a mission.

These islands are non-volcanic, but are flat or hilly. They are the tops of a submerged mountain chain. Their climate is sub-tropical with a corresponding type of vege-

tation, bananas being especially plentiful. It never freezes, but during the winter months the temperature occasionally drops to below 50° F. at night. Maximum temperature in summer seldom exceeds 90° F. Rain occurs in all months but with heaviest falls from June to October, inclusive. The summer monsoon (June to September) blows from the south, the winter monsoon (September to March) from the north. From March to June winds are variable. The regular winds do not interfere with flying. Storms are generally limited to typhoons, which usually occur from May to October. These are very violent, and may completely destroy crops and native villages. There are no reliable statistics as to the average number of typhoons per season for localities.

Total population at the time of the 1940 census was over 98,000, all Japanese or descendants of native races who closely resemble the Japanese. The original native language survives and is quite similar to Japanese. The latter language is in general use. No foreigners have lived in these islands and few have visited them; they are consequently little known to Americans and Europeans.

The inhabitants live by farming and fishing. Standard of life is below that in Japan; poverty has been general. Besides poultry, pigs and goats are common. Food raised is not always sufficient for local needs; in some seasons it has to be imported.

Notwithstanding the rains, water is none too plentiful: rocks are partially of limestone so surface water runs off quickly. Rainfall is collected, and is occasionally transported by water boats from one island to another as required. Due to the shortage of water cleanliness is not so good as in Japan. For invasion troops, a supply of water would need to be provided.

Mosquitoes are common, and the islands are noted for an unusually poisonous snake—the huba—which varies between six and seven feet in length and whose bite is reputed to be fatal unless immediate treatment is received. Local Japanese authorities pay bounties for captured snakes from which anti-venom serums are prepared.

The island nearest Formosa is Yonakuni, which is six miles long from west to east and about three miles wide. At the east end is a 750-foot hill. A lower one is in the southwest corner, which has precipitous sides. In between the hills are a series of plateaus. All coasts are bordered by coral reefs. The population is about 4,500.

Thirty-five miles to the east is Iriomote, one of the three most important islands of the group, with a population of some 9,000. This island is fifteen miles from west to east and about ten miles wide. It is very hilly, being a succession of ridges separated by deep valleys. The west shore is deeply indented by narrow inlets. Both south and north shores are nearly straight. Behind some sand beaches nearly all the coast rises abruptly from the sea, thirty to sixty feet high on the east and north, back of which the land slopes gradually toward the interior. The west and south coasts average over 600 feet high. In general this would be a difficult island on which to land against opposition. Highest elevation is 1,449 feet, on a hill nearly at the center of the island; around this hill are plateaus suitable for airfields. The island's port, Iriomote village, is on the west side.

Due south of Iriomote is Haderuma, a low island three miles long from west to east and two miles wide. Maximum elevation is only 220 feet. Terrain is generally level.

Ishigaki is a bell-shaped island, with a handle pointing northeast. It is fifteen miles east of Iriomote and connected with that island by a coral reef which impedes navigation between the islands. Total length of the island in a SW to NE direction is eleven miles; widest part of the bell (at SW corner) is six miles. There is a bay in the mouth of the bell, with one good beach and Ishigaki port. Around this bay most of the inhabitants live on a plateau about 250 feet above sea level. Off the south shore the coral reefs extend over six miles out to sea. The population of this island is nearly 20,000. The handle of the bell is a plateau about 650 feet high and with steep sides.

Eighteen miles further east is a round island having a diameter of 3 miles. This is Tarama (pop. 3,600). It is about thirty feet high, with one 100-foot hill. The north side is wooded. The entire island is surrounded by reefs. It does not appear to have a military value.

Miyako is the principal island of the group. It lies beyond Tarama, being 54 miles NE of Ishigaki. This island is triangular in shape, with the south side (thirteen miles long) as a base. The irregular west side is twelve miles long, with good harbors in the south center and center at the town of Hirata. The third side of the island extends from NW to SE and is eighteen miles long. Population is 50,000. There is a coastal road on the west side. From Miyako an axis road extends to the southeast end of the island. The island has six ridges parallel to its long side, each about 300 feet high. Each ridge has a steep slope on the northeast side and a gentle slope on the southwest. There are numerous beaches. With its ports, yet undeveloped, it is

the island of main military importance. Miyako town has water and power plants. Destruction of the water plant during winter months might easily lead to a water famine.

Three miles west of Miyako is Erabu, which is really two egg-shaped islands pointing northwest, the northern one being 5½ miles long and the southern 3½. These are flat, low islands suitable for air fields in connection with Miyako. These small islands have 8,500 people, being like Miyako the most densely populated and cultivated of the Sakishima group.

NOTE: In April and May, 1945, the Sakishima Islands have been an enemy air and light naval base for counter-operations against Allied forces in the vicinity of Okinawa, which is about 200 miles northeast. Main enemy airdromes are on Ishigaki and Miyako.



Ishigaki-Shima

GILBERT ISLANDS

LOG ITEMS

# USS GILBERT ISLANDS CAMPAIGN

flying the F4U-D1 with VMF-512



over the Sakishima Islands  
June, 1945



JUNE 1945					
	Number Machine	Duration of Flight	Character of Flight	Pilot	REMARKS
1	TBM-3 6828	3.2	G	LEIDECKER T CATAPULT LANDING	LOVINS GP BOMB & RACKET RETURNED
2	TBM-3 6821	3.7	G	"	STRIKE ON ISHIGAKI SHIMA ACCT-WEATHER 15 X 1000 LB BOMBS 30 MINUTES
3	TBM-3 6821	3.5	G	"	STRIKE ON OKINAWA JIMA (OKINAWA AIRFIELD) 6000' PRACTICE HIGH ALTITUDE
4	TBM-3 6828	3.5	G	"	STRIKE ON OKINAWA JIMA (OKINAWA AIRFIELD) 6000' PRACTICE HIGH ALTITUDE
5	TBM-3 6828	3.0	ASP	"	STRIKE ON ISHIGAKI SHIMA (OKINAWA AIRFIELD)
6	TBM-3 6821	3.5	G	"	ANTI-SUB PATROL 1000' HIGH BY NAME
7	TBM-3 6821	3.5	G	"	STRIKE ON ISHIGAKI SHIMA (OKINAWA AIRFIELD)
8	TBM-3 6821	3.5	G	"	STRIKE ON ISHIGAKI SHIMA (OKINAWA AIRFIELD)
9	TBM-3 6821	3.5	G	"	STRIKE ON ISHIGAKI SHIMA (OKINAWA AIRFIELD)
10	TBM-3 6821	3.5	G	"	STRIKE ON ISHIGAKI SHIMA (OKINAWA AIRFIELD)
11	TBM-3 6821	3.2	G	"	STRIKE ON ISHIGAKI SHIMA (OKINAWA AIRFIELD)
12	TBM-3 6821	3.8	G	"	STRIKE ON ISHIGAKI SHIMA (OKINAWA AIRFIELD)
13	TBM-3 6821	3.8	G	"	STRIKE ON ISHIGAKI SHIMA (OKINAWA AIRFIELD)
14	TBM-3 6821	3.3	G	"	STRIKE ON ISHIGAKI SHIMA (OKINAWA AIRFIELD)
15	TBM-3 6821	3.8	WSP	"	STRIKE ON ISHIGAKI SHIMA (OKINAWA AIRFIELD)
16	TBM-3 6821	3.1	ASP	"	STRIKE ON ISHIGAKI SHIMA (OKINAWA AIRFIELD)
17	TBM-3 6821	3.8	WSP	"	LOCAL ANTI-SUB PATROL
18	TBM-3 6821	3.1	ASP	"	"
19	TBM-3 6821	3.1	ASP	"	"
20	TBM-3 6821	3.1	ASP	"	"
TOTAL FOR NO.					
BROUGHT FORWARD		161.1		81.1	
		925.4		940.8	
TOTAL		976.5		981	
Total time to date,					
The following signatures are approved.					



Vol 1, N

February 19

Total time to date,

by Ian Jeremiah © Adam Lewis

10-200000 OFW



© Adam Leu

## USS Gilbert Islands campaign

a six mission campaign flying the F4U-D1 against the Sakishima, June 1945.

I based this campaign on the wonderful tribute site to the crew of USS Gilbert Island by Adam at [http://www.adamsplanes.com/USS Gilbert Is 1945.htm](http://www.adamsplanes.com/USS%20Gilbert%20Is%201945.htm)

The USS Gilbert Islands CVE107 was an escort carrier of the Commencement Bay class. Her keel was laid down November 29, 1943, she was launched July 20, 1944 and commissioned February 5, 1945. Originally named the St. Andrews Bay, her name was changed to honour the Marines who fought the bloody battle on Tarawa.

She operated one of the first Marine Air Groups to be assign to carrier operation, MCVG-2 under the command of Lt. Col. William R. 'Soupy' Campbell. This consisted of twelve TBMs of VMTB-143 and eighteen F4U-D1s and two photo reconnaissance F6F5P of VMF-512.

After her work up the USS Gilbert Islands join the USN's Fifth fleet off Okinawa on May 25th. On the first of June she was assigned the task of neutralising airfields in the Sakishima Gunto along with the USS Suwannee CVE-27. This she did we great success until the June 16th when she was relieved.

The campaign concentrates on ground attack and to get the fully loaded Corsairs of the limited deck space of a CVE all takeoffs were catapult assisted. This mean you will airstart all missions



## USS Gilbert Islands Campaign

### Mission 01 - Escort duty

2nd June 1945, 0815 hours

90nm east of Ishigaki-Shima

AIRSTART following catapult launch from USS GILBERT ISLANDS (CVE 71).

Aircraft: 4 F4U-1D of VMF-512

Skin: F4U-1D\_USN\_R0NNC0\_1.bmp

Markings: On

Load-out: 100% fuel, 1x154gl fuel tank.

OK, listen-up! This morning we arrived on station off the Japanese Sakishima islands. TBM aircraft of VMTB-143 will bomb Miyara airfield on the southeast coast of Ishigaki island. You'll provide fighter escort to the island and back. Assuming you don't meet any Jap fighters you can help out by shooting up the airfield flak. Good luck, and give them hell!

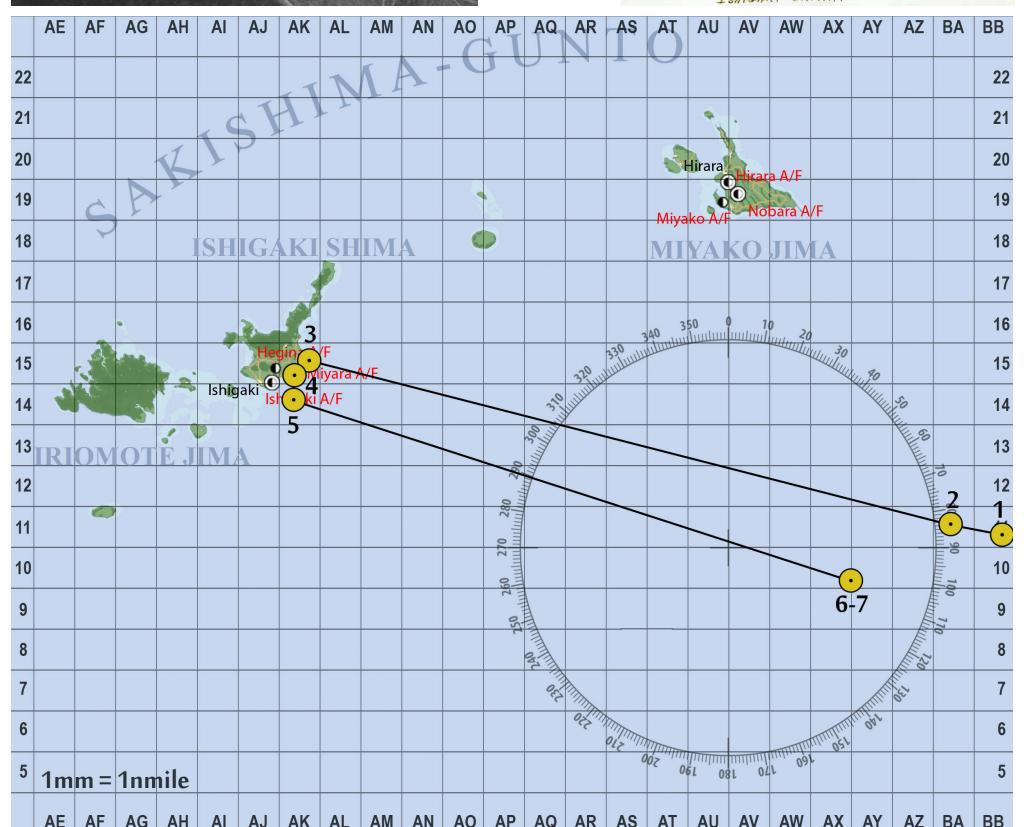
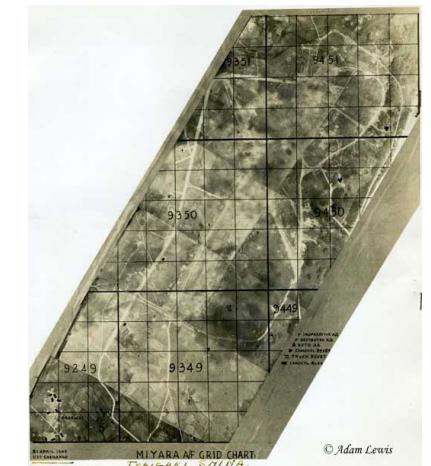
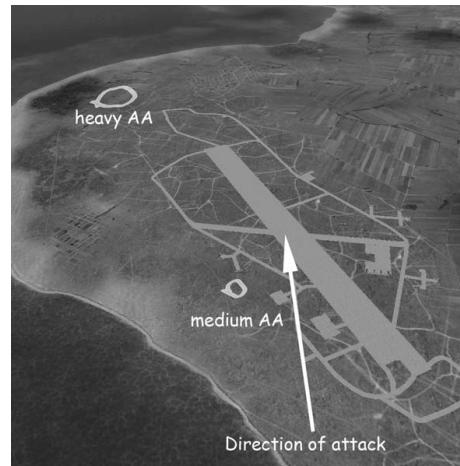
Waypoints:

- (1) AIRSTART, BB-11, 1000ft
- (2) 285deg, 4000ft(1200m), 87nm (161km), 185kts(345kph)
- (3-4) TARGET Miyara airfield, AM-8
- (5) 108deg, 4000ft(1200m), 77nm(142km), 185kts(345kph)
- (6-7) LAND-ON CVE 71, AY-10

Weather: Good

Objectives:

Primary - escort TBM's



## USS Gilbert Islands Campaign Mission02 - Fighter-bomber

3th June 1945, 1535 hours  
50nm South of Miyako-Jima

AIRSTART following catapult launch from USS GILBERT ISLANDS (CVE 71).

Aircraft: 8 F4U-1D of VMF-512  
Skin: F4U-1D\_USN\_R0NNC0\_1.bmp  
Markings: On  
Load: 100% fuel, 2x500lb bombs.

OK, listen-up! The target is Hirara airfield on Miyako-Jima and this time you'll be doing the bombing. Come in at wave top height before popping up at the coast to make a shallow dive on the target. This will be our last mission for a few days as we steam south to avoid a typhoon. Good luck, and give them hell!

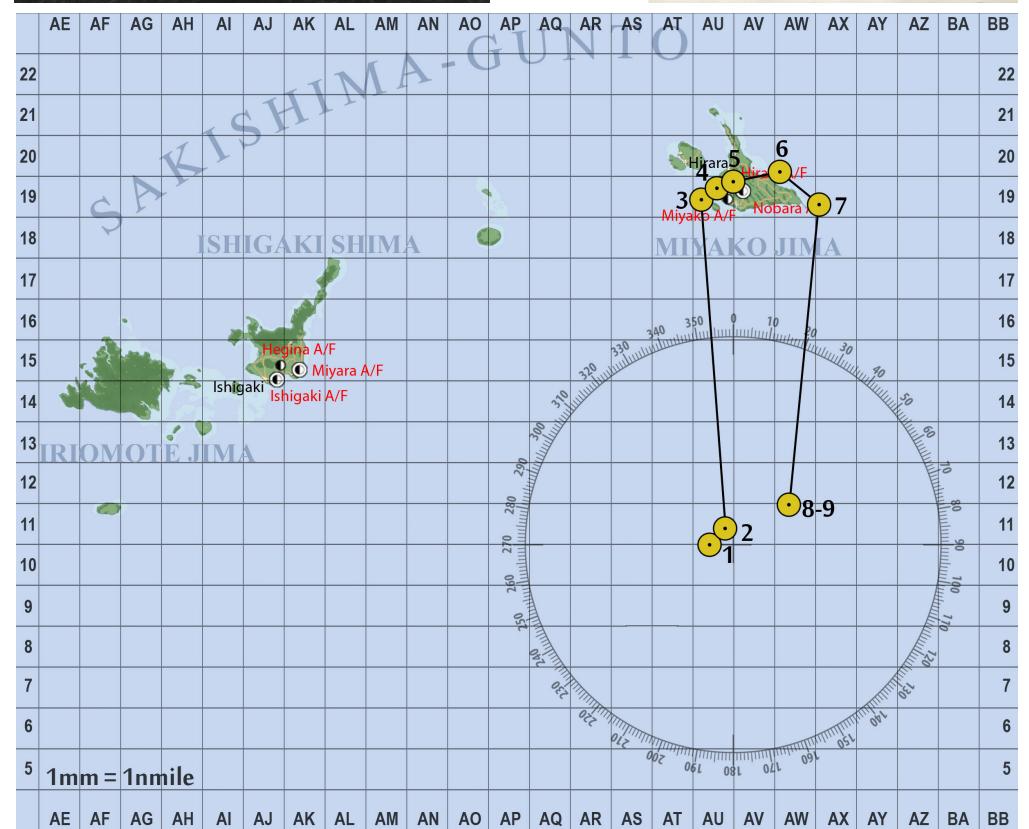
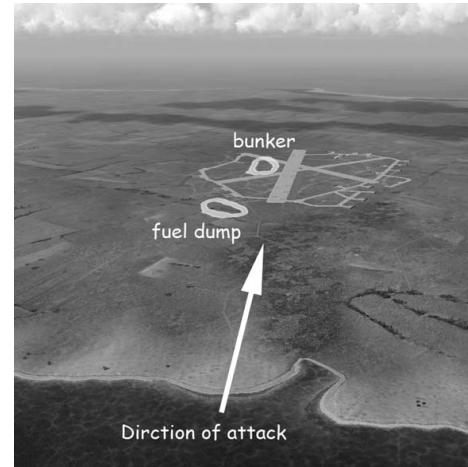
### Waypoints:

- (1) AIRSTART, AU-11, 600ft
- (2) 356deg, 500ft(150m), 44nm(81km), 200kts(70kph)
- (3-6) TARGET Hirara A/F, AU-19
- (7) 186deg, 500ft(150m), 40nm(73km), 200kts(370kph)
- (8-9) LAND-ON CVE 71, AW-12

Weather: Poor

### Objectives:

- Primary - airfield command bunkers
- Secondary - fuel dump
- Hidden - concealed aircraft



## USS Gilbert Islands Campaign

### Mission03 - Holy Moses

6th June 1945, 1115 hours

60nm south of Ishigaki-Shima

AIRSTART following catapult launch from USS GILBERT ISLANDS (CVE 71).

Aircraft: 4 F4U-1D of VMF-512

Skin: F4U-1D\_USN\_R0NNC0\_1.bmp

Markings: On

Load-out: 100% fuel, 8x5" HVAR, 1x154gl fuel tank.

OK, listen-up! Today you're on a fighter sweep around the northern coast of Ishigaki-Shima and then down to Kohama-Jima. You're armed with eight 5" Holy Moses' rockets and you'll be on the look-out for Jap supply dumps on the coast as well as supply barges and other shipping. Avoid overflying the south of Ishigaki where all the flak is located. Good luck, and give them hell!

#### Waypoints:

- (1) AIRSTART, AL-4, 1500ft(450m)
- (2) 356deg, 1500ft(460m), 59nm(109km), 200kts(370kph)
- (3-10) Patrol around the northern coast of Ishigaki
- (11) Reconnoitre Kohama-Jima, AH-15
- (10) 143deg, 1500ft(450m), 55nm(102km), 200kts(370kph)
- (12) LAND-ON CVE 71, AY-10

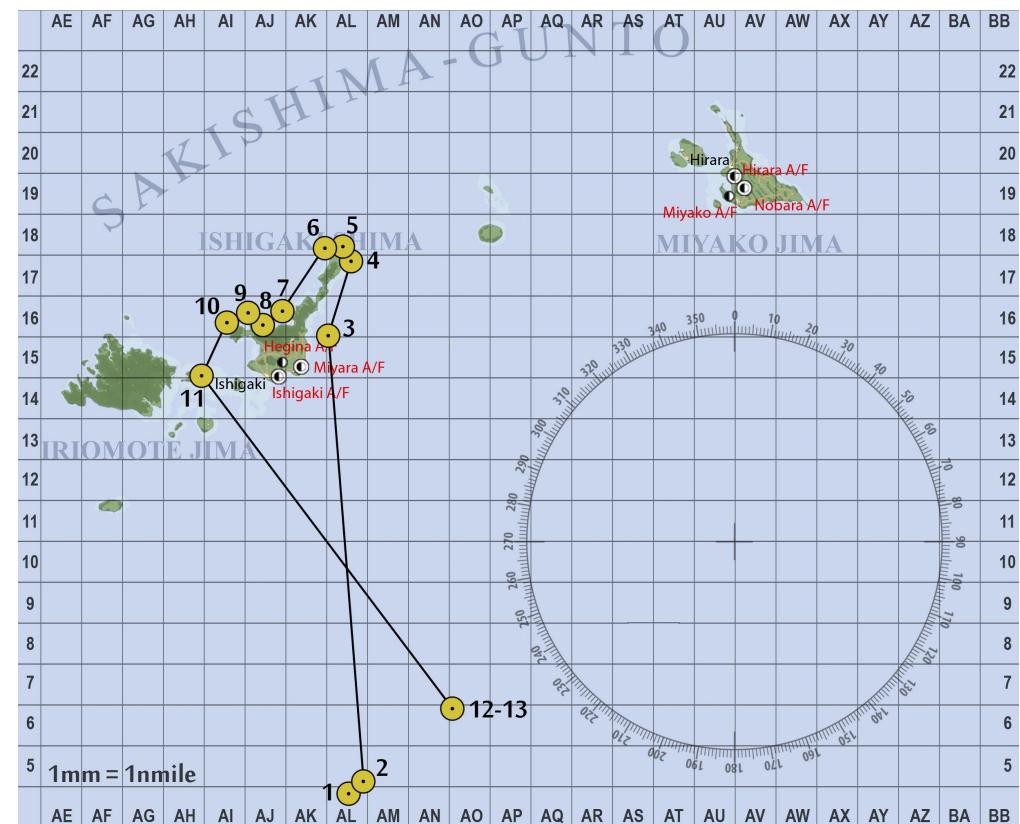
Weather: Hazy

#### Objectives:

Primary - shipping & supply dumps Ishigaki

Secondary - supply dumps at Kohama-Jima

Hidden - transport barge



## USS Gilbert Islands Campaign

Mission04 - Hide and seek

9th June 1945, 0945 hours

60nm SW of Ishigaki-Shima

AIRSTART following catapult launch from USS GILBERT ISLANDS (CVE 71).

Aircraft: 2 F4U-1D of VMF-512

Skin: F4U-1D\_USN\_R0NNCO\_1.bmp

Markings: On

Load-out: 100% fuel, 8x5" HVAR, 1x154gl fuel tank.

OK, listen-up! We're having a hard time locating the Jap radar on Ishigaki-Shima, our intel guys say it's on high ground somewhere in the centre-east of the island. Carry out a low sweep of the area and see if you can spot the radar and destroy it. Good luck, and give them hell!

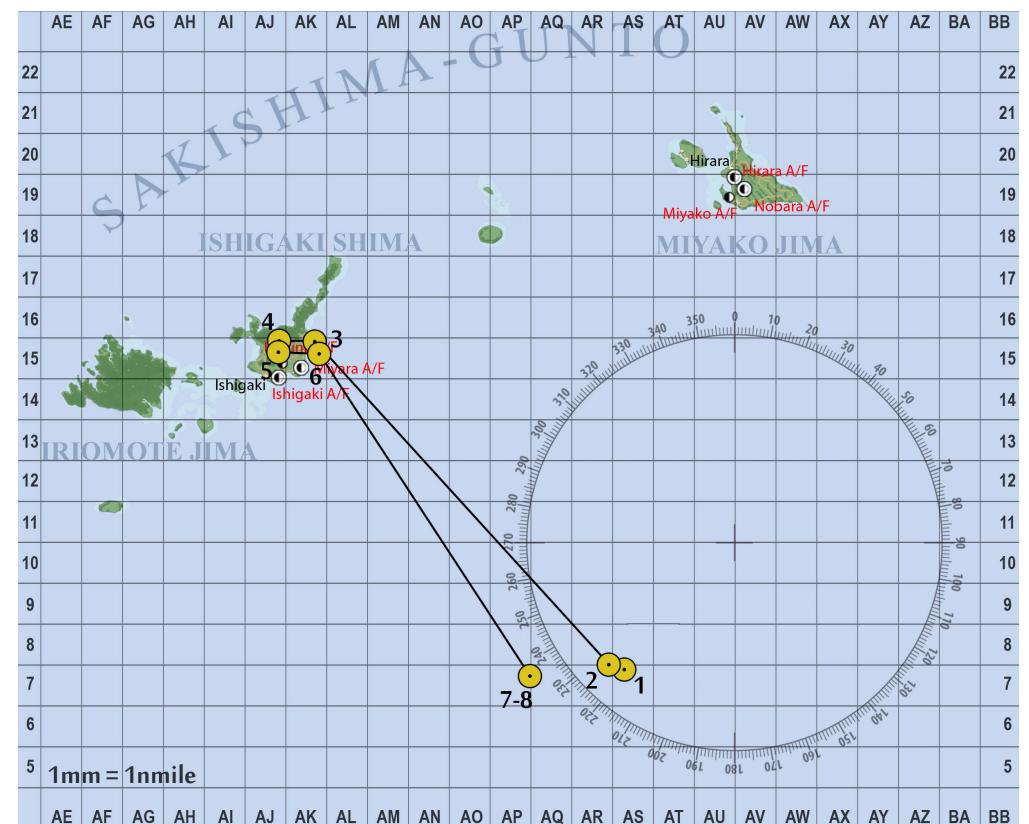
Waypoints:

- (1) AIRSTART, AS-7
- (2) 318deg, 500ft(150m), 58nm(107km), 200kts(370kph)
- (3-5) TARGET radar site, AK-15
- (6) 147deg, 2500ft(750m), 50nm(93km), 200kts(370kph)
- (7-8) LAND-ON CVE 71, AP-7

Weather: Hazy

Objectives:

Hidden - destroy radar site



## USS Gilbert Islands Campaign

Mission05 - Iromote strike

11th June 1945, 1750 hours

50nm south of Iromote-Jima

AIRSTART following catapult launch from USS GILBERT ISLANDS (CVE 71).

Aircraft: 4 F4U-1D of VMF-512

Skin: F4U-1D\_USN\_R0NNC0\_1.bmp

Markings: On

Load-out: 100% fuel, 8x5" Rockets, 2 x 500 lb. Bombs

OK, listen-up! Our Hellcat photo recon planes have located a Jap barracks on Iromote-Jima. Your flight will attack the camp with bombs and rockets. Intel also reports transport barges in that area so keep an eye out. Good luck, and give them hell!

Waypoints:

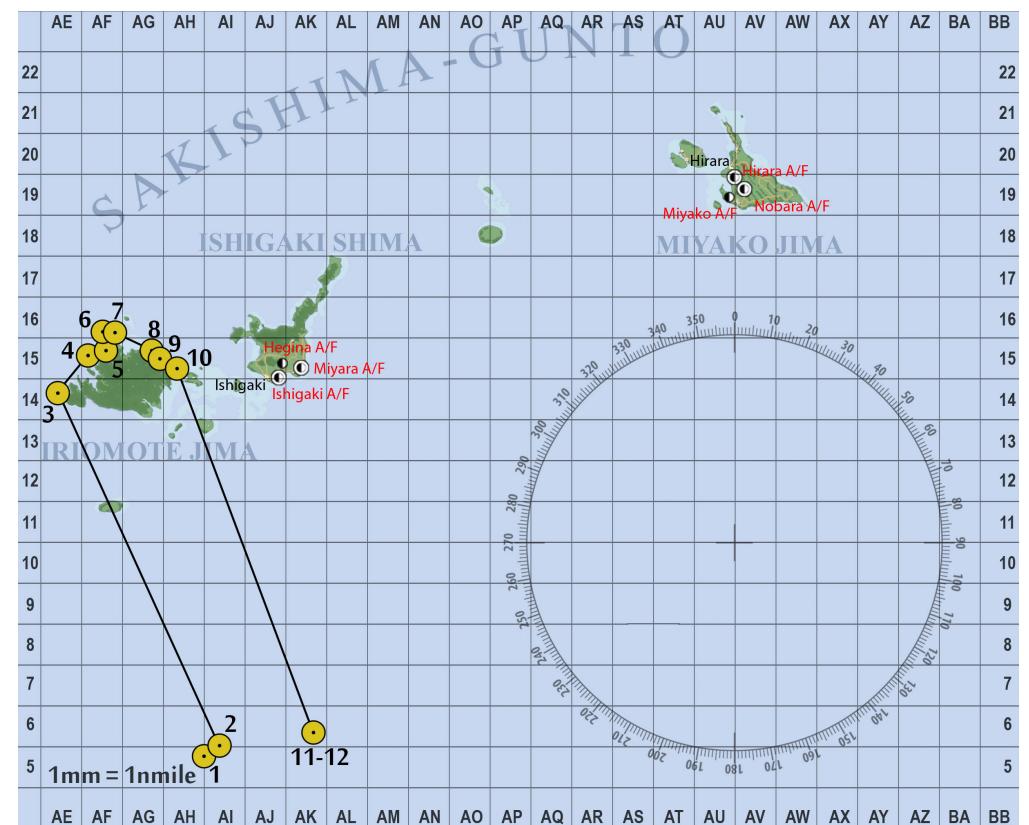
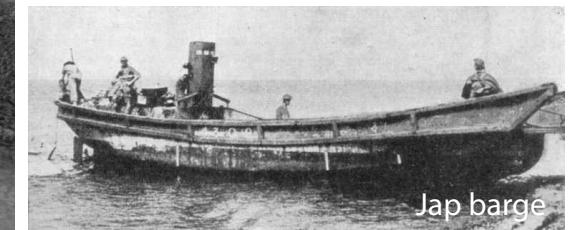
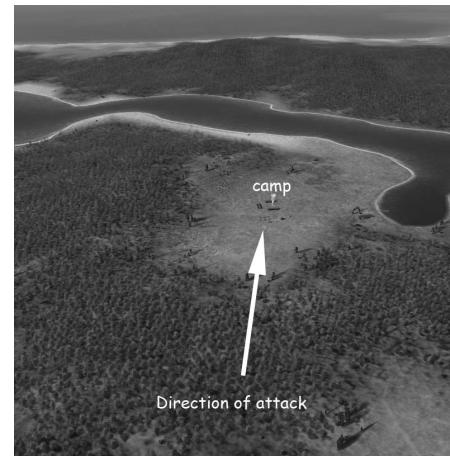
- (1) AIRSTART, AI-5, 2000ft(600m)
- (2) 335deg, 2000ft(600m), 51nm(94km), 180kt(333kph)
- (3-6) TARGET barracks, AF-15
- (7) 116deg, 2000ft(600m), 5nm(10km), 200kts(370kph)
- (8-9) TARGET barges, AH-15
- (10) 160deg, 2000ft(600m), 51nm(94km), 180kts(333kph)
- (11-12) LAND-ON CVE 71, AK-6

Weather: Clear

Objectives:

Primary - Japanese encampment

Secondary - supply barges



## USS Gilbert Islands Campaign mission 06 - Clearing the way

12th June 1945, 0545 hours  
45nm south of Miyako-Jima Jima

AIRSTART following catapult launch from USS GILBERT ISLANDS CVE 71.

Aircraft: F4U-1D of VMF-512  
Skin: F4U-1D\_USN\_RONNC0\_1.bmp  
Markings: On  
Load-out: 100% fuel, 8x5"HVAR, 1x154gl fuel tank.

OK, listen-up! Escort TBM aircraft of VMTB-143 in a dawn attack on Nobara airfield on Miyako-Jima. You'll go in before the bombers and destroy heavy AA battery to the south of the airfield. Good luck, and give them hell!

### Waypoints

- (1)AIRSTART, GRID BB-11
- (2)324, 7000ft(2150m), 43nm(79km), 180kts(333kph)
- (3) TARGET Nobara airfield
- (4) HEADING 169, 4000ft, 45nm(83km), 180kts(333kph)
- (5)LAND-ON CVE 71

Weather: Good

### Objectives:

Primary - destroy heavy flak battery  
Secondary - escort TBM's

