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January 28th, 1943 - The Mbomehe

General Situation: After the defeat of the Japanese at Mount Austen, the Marines kept up their drive westwards to eradicate all Japanese resistance on Guadalcanal. General Hyakutake, however, was expecting 50,000 reinforcements and with these he planned to retake Henderson Airfield and drive the Americans off of the island. But before any relief came, the Americans began their own offensive. In mid-January a Composite Army-Marine (CAM) Division was formed, which included the 147th and 182d Infantry joining the 6th Marines along the coast. Their orders were to push Westwards along the narrowing coastal corridor formed by the inland mountains and the coast.

Local guides report a concentration of Japanese troops occupying a grouping of huts along the northern shore of the Mbomehe River. Check these reports and clear the area if Japanese forces are encountered.

Aftermath: The withdrawing Japanese forces continued to contest every step the Americans took as they withdrew westwards towards Cape Esperance. Orders were sent in the name of Emperor Hirohito for the commanders at Guadalcanal to withdraw their men from Guadalcanal so that they could fight another day. The Japanese Navy was sent to evacuate the garrisons and transfer them to the Solomons.

Receiving intelligence that the Japanese navy was concentrating to the northwest, General Patch took steps to guard against overextending his forces in the face of what appeared to be a large enemy reinforcement. He pulled the 25th Division back to bolster the main American perimeter defenses, but ordered the CAM Division to continue its drive to the west. By January 30th, the sole frontline force in the American advance was the 147th Infantry.

The Japanese destroyer transports made their first run to the island on the night of February 1-2. Not to bring further reinforcements, but instead to save as many Japanese soldiers as possible. That first night they picked up over 2,300 men from evacuation positions near Cape Esperance. On the night of February 4-5, they returned and saved most of the Sendai survivors and General Hyakutake and his 17th Army staff. The final evacuation was carried out on the night of February 7-8, when a 3,000-man rear guard was embarked, withdrawing over 11,000 men in three nights!

References for this Firefight: Guadalcanal-Starvation Island, Into the Valley, ibiblio.org, Marine! - The Life of Chesty Puller.
Japanese Reactionary Units may enter from this direction beginning on Round 2.

147th may set up along first full hexes of this row during Setup.