

# Review: Missions At Leyte Gulf 1.0

Reviewed by Jon A. Blum

Type: World War II fighter simulation/Mission enhancement disk.  
Publisher: Graphic Simulations Corporation/Parsoft, Inc.  
Mail Order: \$20.00  
Requires: Hellcats, 68020 or better processor, 3MB RAM.  
Protection: Un-lock code. (none if Hellcats has previously been unlocked).  
IMG Rating: √√√√

**Background.** Those of you unfamiliar with Hellcats Over the Pacific (or more specifically the first mission set - Pacific Conflict ) will probably not be able to draw too much from this review. Leyte Gulf is an add-on disk, not a stand-alone application. Therefore this review will concentrate only on elements that are new to the simulation.

**The Review.** Well, you know you're an expert at Pacific Conflict and you can't wait for the multi-player version so you can prove it to everyone you've been mouthing off to. Unfortunately, Leyte Gulf fails to bring multi-player support to the South Pacific. You knew that when you bought it, but you didn't care because Hellcats was the best Macintosh flight simulator you've ever played. Will the sequel be able to live up to the original? Let's find out!

**ocumentation.** The box clearly states in several places that Leyte is not a complete game and requires Hellcats. However, it fails to mention that Leyte requires a 68020 processor, but obviously if you own Hellcats, you must already have the appropriate CPU.

Leyte comes with a very nice reproduction of a USC&GS Philippine Islands base map printed in 1945. The map is really not much use in actual game play because it's not centered on the Leyte area, but rather the entire Philippine chain. There is however, the same type of in-flight map present in Pacific Conflict.

The manual is a well-documented 13 page (remember, this is only a mission disk) booklet that clearly describes the installation, changes, and new missions.

**Mission Selection.** Upon launching, you come upon the same pilot roster list as in Pacific Conflict. The first thing you notice is a series of new mission radio buttons. The new mission names are cleverly designed to provoke a smug grin and accurately describe the mission at the same time (see "The Missions"). In addition to the bombs and machine guns of its predecessor, Leyte Gulf sports two new weapons - unguided air-to-ground rockets and air-launched torpedoes. As in Pacific Conflict, these are selected from the mission dialog or during re-arming.

**The Missions.** All missions take place in the Leyte Island and gulf area of the Philippines in WWII. They are all independent of each other and are not designed to be flown in any particular order. Your only reward for successfully completing the mission is a ribbon and the satisfaction of a job well done! It would have been nice if they were linked in some way so that the outcome of one mission directly impacted the ease (or lack thereof) of the next. As in Pacific Conflict, there are eight missions. The new names and basic objectives are as follows:

Big Bang starts you on the deck of a carrier running along the coast of an island. Supplies are run via truck convoy from an ammo dump to an airbase a short distance away. The primary objective is to destroy the ammo dump. Naturally, it won't take much coercion to get the dump to explode! Your carrier and its escort will come under attack by enemy aircraft. Major threats include four AAA batteries placed around the ammo dump.

Mission-X starts you on a richly appointed airbase that you must defend from enemy fighter sweep. After defending your base, you must proceed to an enemy base, destroy the new experimental "Frank" hangar, and return home (one way or the other) - No problemo right?

Lightning Strike begins on the deck of a carrier facing an enemy task group consisting of a single IJN carrier flanked by two cruisers. Your objective is to destroy the three ships and return to base alive. Friendly air power includes two P-38s with the same orders you have. Enemy opposition includes at least 4 aircraft consisting of both Zeros and Franks.

Scramble Two begins with you and your wingman (an F4U Corsair) on the runway of a land base. Your orders are to intercept two Betty bombers on course for a naval base approximately 10 miles from your airfield. The bombers are escorted by one Frank and there is another Frank within a mile of your airfield. Mission Objective is to down both bombers before they drop any bombs on the naval yard and land safely at a friendly base.

Texas Tea starts on a carrier. You are to escort two bombers and other escort aircraft that are targeting an oil storage facility on a nearby island. The bombers will be coming from the south. Mission objective is to protect the bombers enough so that either is able to bomb the target. By the way, hordes of enemy fighters have other plans for you.

Island Storm. In this scenario you are assigned to a carrier off the coast of Leyte Island. You have an F4U wingman at your side and your mission is to protect your advancing armored units which have been brought ashore by landing craft. To do this you must destroy all opposing armored units. Heavy AAA and enemy aircraft are expected to hamper your efforts.

Deep Trouble. You start off on a crippled carrier retired for repairs. Enemy submarines are reportedly moving into surrounding waters. Your mission is to keep your carrier from being sunk. Four subs have been spotted, and each sub carries three torpedoes. Mission is accomplished when all torpedoes are accounted for (sunk with ship, destroyed while running, missed target).

Bridge Out. The river that runs across Leyte Island separates vital enemy supply centers. The only good crossing for supply vehicles is a bridge. Mission objective is to completely destroy the bridge.

**The Environment.** The Leyte terrain is much the same as Pacific Conflict. Large and small islands with scattered friendly and enemy bases and flotilla. However, unlike its predecessor, Leyte Gulf adds moving ships. Yes, that includes carriers. So if you thought you were just getting the hang of landing on a static carrier, you're going to have to go back to school for this one! Moving ships leave a wake of light blue "foam" behind them. Aside from that, the flotilla remains much the same except for the addition of submarines in one scenario. The subs will dive if they spot you, and killing a submerged sub can be a lot more difficult than a surfaced one. In addition there are a variety of small vehicular targets including trucks and tanks in some missions. For the most part, bases in Leyte Gulf are more richly appointed than those in Pacific Conflict. There are more small buildings at airfields which seem to add a great deal to the simulation. In addition, you'll now receive points for destroying some buildings. In one area there is even a friendly port complete with vehicular traffic and anchored ships. The new bases may be pretty, but AAA intensity has been stepped up dramatically meaning you may not be able to admire the scenery as long!

**The Aircraft.** Leyte Gulf introduces a new enemy fighter - the Japanese Ki-84 Ia Hayate (AKA "Frank"). They're equipped with more armor, tighter turning rates, and more intelligent dog fighting abilities than the Zeros in Pacific Conflict. Yes, the bandits have learned not to auger as often! Unfortunately one of the reasons they won't auger is that they won't go below 200 feet in straight and level flight. They'll follow you above and behind, but won't fire or descend to your low altitude. This will definitely have to be tossed into the needed improvements list. Other aircraft participants include the P-38 Lightning, F4U Corsair, A6M Zero, B-17 and Betty bombers. In most missions, friendly planes will fall-in behind you and your wingman as long as there are no enemy planes in the area and they no longer have any mission objectives of their own.

**The Weapons.** Torpedoes may now be carried instead of bombs. Although you cannot have a mixture of bombs and torpedoes, you can have a two torpedo loadout. Historically, torpedo loadouts on Hellcats were never carried beyond the test stage (let alone two of them at the same time). But they should be a welcome addition which all but the most puritanical simulation fanatic will appreciate. Torpedoes must be launched from an altitude under 200 feet and an airspeed of under 200 knots. Also, your pitch should be perfectly level or slightly positive. If any of these factors are ignored, you risk having your precious loadout explode on contact with the water. Upon successful launch, the torpedo will enter the water with a small splash and leave a light blue wake as it streaks towards its target. The torpedoes appear to have a five mile range. If they come into contact with a ship, they produce a large water tower. If they come into contact with land, they produce a coastal explosion similar to a bomb. The attention to detail and realism is amazing. As with bombs, two torpedo hits are not sufficient to sink a Carrier. They have the same destructive power as a 500 lb bomb. It would be nice if there were some sort of random damage multiplier which would allow for an occasional "lucky shot" (such as a hit in a fuel storage area followed by a huge explosion!) In any case, be prepared to take some flak in the delivery. Torpedo runs were extremely dangerous in WWII and the same goes for Leyte Gulf. How to actually hit the target is fodder for IMG's Strategy & Tactics section:

rockets must be loaded out in an "all or none" configuration. That is to say, you can either have all six or none at all. Of course choosing the rockets will add weight (150 lbs each) and drag to your aircraft and therefore reduce performance. Your decision to forgo their use or

not, should be based on the objectives and threats in the mission you decide to run. They are fired in tandem - by hitting the "N" key, you release two rockets (one from each wing). You then see an animated launching complete with smoke trails and sound in true Graphic Simulations splendor. The trajectory of the rockets is affected by gravity, therefore you must aim high, based on distance to the target. The rockets will quickly descend and fall short of the target if you're not careful. Rockets are useless for sinking ships but they make a hell of a mess out of buildings, vehicles, and AAA installations. Remember these are not magic missiles, they are un-guided and crude, but extremely fun to use! The cockpit now has a rocket load indicator to tell you how many you have remaining.

**Summary.** Mission Leyte Gulf not only succeeds in maintaining the high quality and interest holding qualities of the original, but also manages to surpass it in many ways. The addition of new weapons will add many more hours of high-explosive fun, and the increased enemy abilities and defences will only strengthen your resolve to get that mission ribbon! Leyte did fail to address certain bugs present in Pacific Conflict, however it is clearly worth twice the \$20 mail-order price. Graphic Simulations has acknowledged the problems including the enemy aircraft not following you below 200 feet. Although Hellcats was a breakthrough and clearly rated the 5 check IMG treatment, Leyte is more of an incremental upgrade and therefore only rates 4 checks. GSC has promised multi-player support in Hellcats 2.0. Whether this includes modem play as well as AppleTalk has yet to be seen. Whatever the case, you can be sure you'll see it first in IMG!

**Cool little tidbit** - Look for Joe Montana's name in the Leyte Gulf game credits (accessed from the Apple menu). Yes, the 49ers Joe Montana. IMG has learned that he's an avid Hellcats player! Unfortunately, Jennifer Montana hates the game. :-o

#### Pros:

- Reasonably priced.
- Interest holding.
- Fluid, 15 frame per second graphics on most platforms.
- Screen support for every monitor size.
- Supports B&W, 16 and 256 colors.
- Good customer support.
- Good documentation.

#### Cons:

- Missions are not linked and tend to lack enough random elements.
- No multi-player support. (This has been promised for Hellcats 2.0).
- Certain bugs left over from Pacific Conflict have not been resolved.