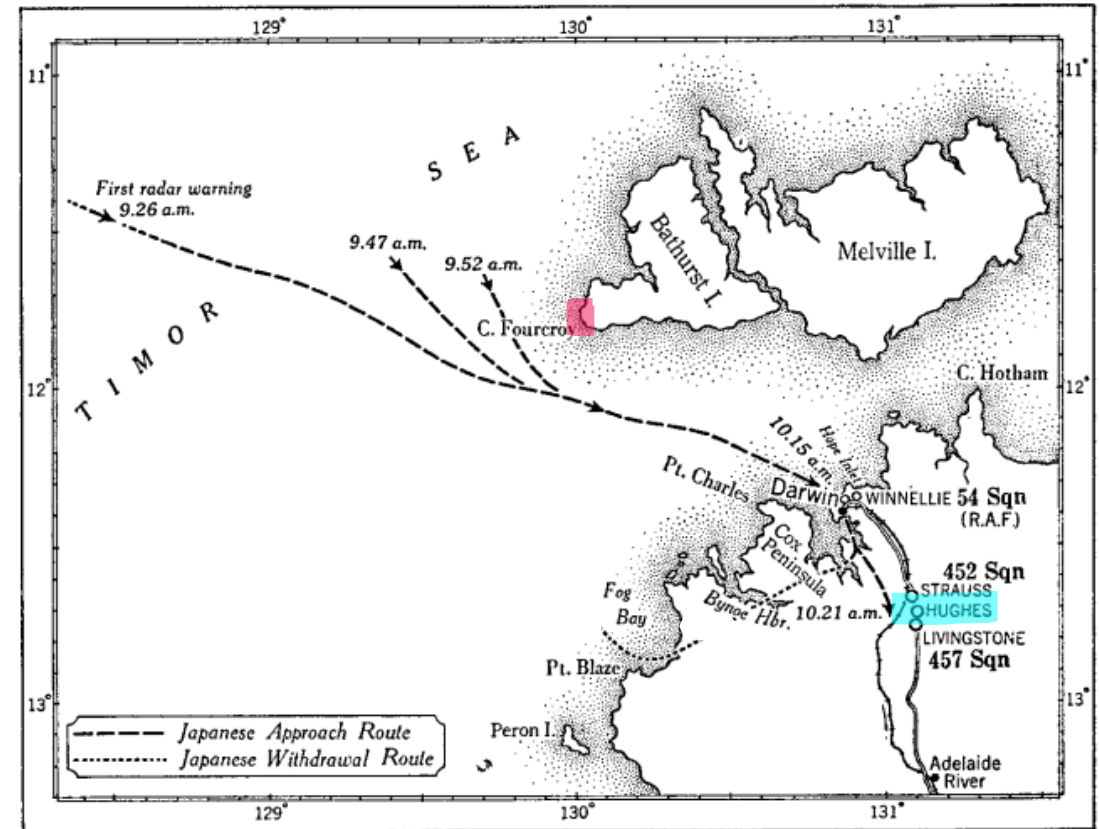


# Australia's War in the Pacific 1943



## 2 May - Air

- At 9.26 a.m. on Sunday, 2nd May, the radar station at **Cape Fourcroy** on Bathurst Island detected aircraft about 160 miles west-north-west of Darwin and warned No. 5 Fighter Sector headquarters at Darwin.
- The radar station now judged that a large number of aircraft were heading towards Darwin and at 9.40 the controller scrambled the three Spitfire Squadrons.
- The three squadrons were ordered to rendezvous over **Hughes** airfield at 10,000 feet. The controller then directed Caldwell, as wing leader, to climb to 30,000 feet to a point 10 miles north-east of Darwin and told him to expect a formation of 20 or more bombers, escorted by a large number of fighters approaching at a height of 25,000 feet.
- Caldwell ordered the wing to turn right and climb as rapidly as possible into the sun. Soon afterwards he gave the controller the "tally-ho" signal.



## 2 May - Air

- The bombers crossed Darwin harbour at 27,000 feet while the 33 Spitfires were 10 miles north-east of the town at 26,000 feet.
- The Spitfires continued to climb but by the time they reached the same height as the bombers the Japanese fighter escorts were in sight 4,000 feet higher.
- The Japanese were in the better position, and Caldwell decided not to attack the bombers before they had dropped their bombs.
- He therefore continued to climb into the sun in order to gain height over the fighters.
- The Darwin anti-aircraft guns then went into action and fired 219 rounds, which reached the correct height but exploded behind or to the side of the bombers causing no damage.
- At about 10.15 the bombers dropped 100 bombs on a line extending from the old Darwin air force station through the south-eastern part of the airfield into the bush, causing slight damage to two buildings and temporarily cutting electric light and telephone lines. One soldier was killed.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

027798

DARWIN, NT. 1942-11-12. VIEW OF GUN POSITION OF 14TH AUSTRALIAN HEAVY ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTERY CAMOUFLAGED WITH PALM FRONDS. THE BATTERY CONSISTS OF FOUR 3.7 INCH GUNS, WITH ONE BOFORS GUN FOR DEFENCE OF THE GUN POSITIONS FROM LOW-FLYING AIRCRAFT.



## 2 May - Air

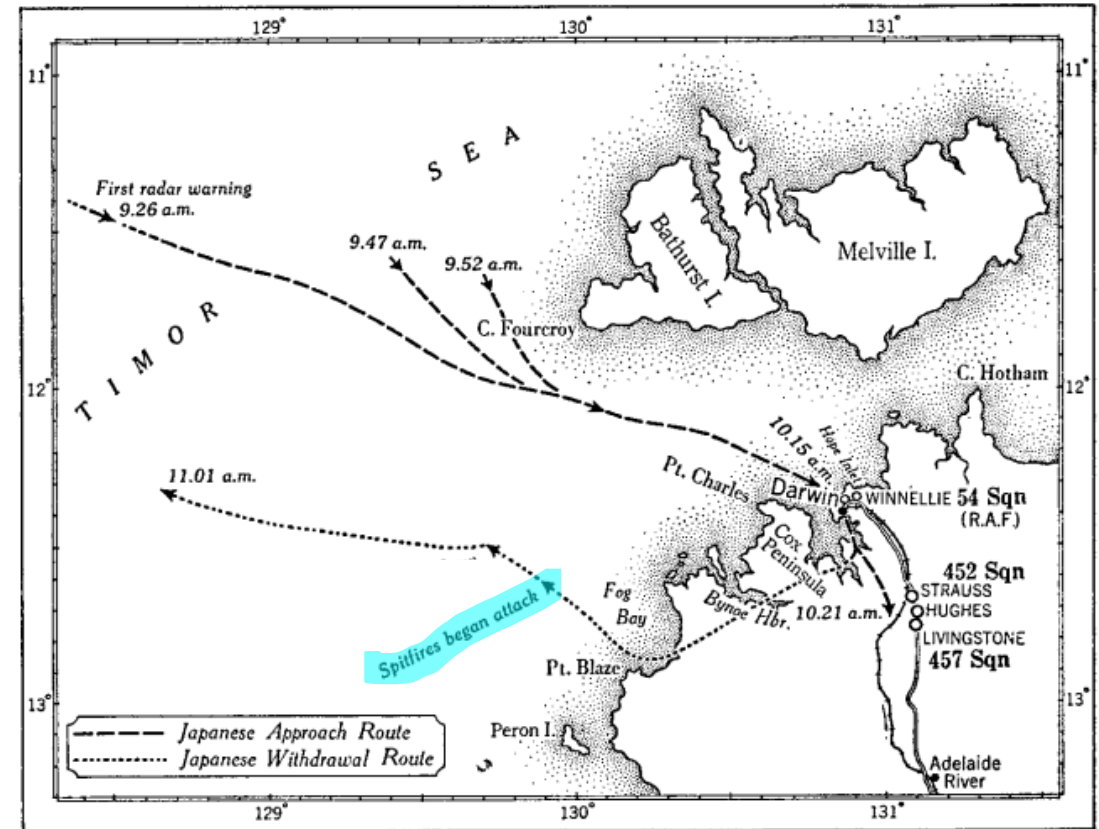
- Caldwell ordered No. 54 to engage the fighters and 457 to attack the bombers out of the sun. After this No. 457 was to climb back into the sun and the squadron leader, at his discretion, was to call on No. 452 to protect him from Japanese fighters during this withdrawal.
- He waited another eight minutes until the enemy aircraft which were flying down-wind and losing height were 40 miles to sea off Point Blaze.
- The Spitfires at 32,000 feet were at this stage 10,000 feet above the enemy fighters and 12,000 feet above the bombers.
- Caldwell then ordered the attack to begin, and the Spitfires came hurtling down at 400 miles an hour in an almost vertical dive.
- No. 457 dived in line-astern to attack the bombers. The angle of dive was about 70 degrees and the speed almost 400 miles an hour.
- The Zekes protecting the bombers turned head on towards the Spitfires, diverting their attack to such an extent that only four of the eleven penetrated to the bombers. Dogfights with the enemy fighters followed.



Darwin area, NT. c. 1944. A Supermarine Spitfire aircraft in flight in the North-West Area.

## 2 May - Air

- The steep angle of attack was an unfamiliar method to the less experienced pilots and tended to upset their aim when they opened fire.
- A Zeke attacked by Gibbs was caught by surprise and went down smoking.
- The formations immediately broke up and dog-fights took place at about 7,000 feet, with aircraft turning figures-of-eight as pilots tried to get on each other's tails.
- Pulling away, Gibbs saw disturbances on the surface of the sea and one of the Spitfires spinning down.
- He climbed and attacked again, in the course of which one of his cannons ceased firing.
- Finding he had only twenty-two gallons of petrol in his tanks he then returned to base landing with only two gallons remaining.



## 2 May - Air

- After No. 457 had attacked, Caldwell led No. 452 into the battle.
- Diving at a steep angle he attacked a Zeke from a range of 350 yards. One of his cannons failed to fire and only ten shots came from the other causing the machine to slew.
- Caldwell missed the Zeke and was immediately set upon by another two Zekes. He dived under these but another one came up behind him.
- This aircraft was seen by **Pilot Officer Fox** who fired on it from above until it turned away. Fox engaged another Zeke but the enemy pilot skilfully turned his machine and scored hits on the engine of Fox's machine.
- Fox turned the Spitfire on its back and parachuted into the sea.
- **Flying Officer Goldsmith**, after scoring hits on a bomber which he believed he destroyed was attacked by a Hap and had his controls shot away. He was flung out of his machine and parachuted into the sea.
- Another pilot got an enemy aircraft in his sights but his guns had frozen and would not fire .

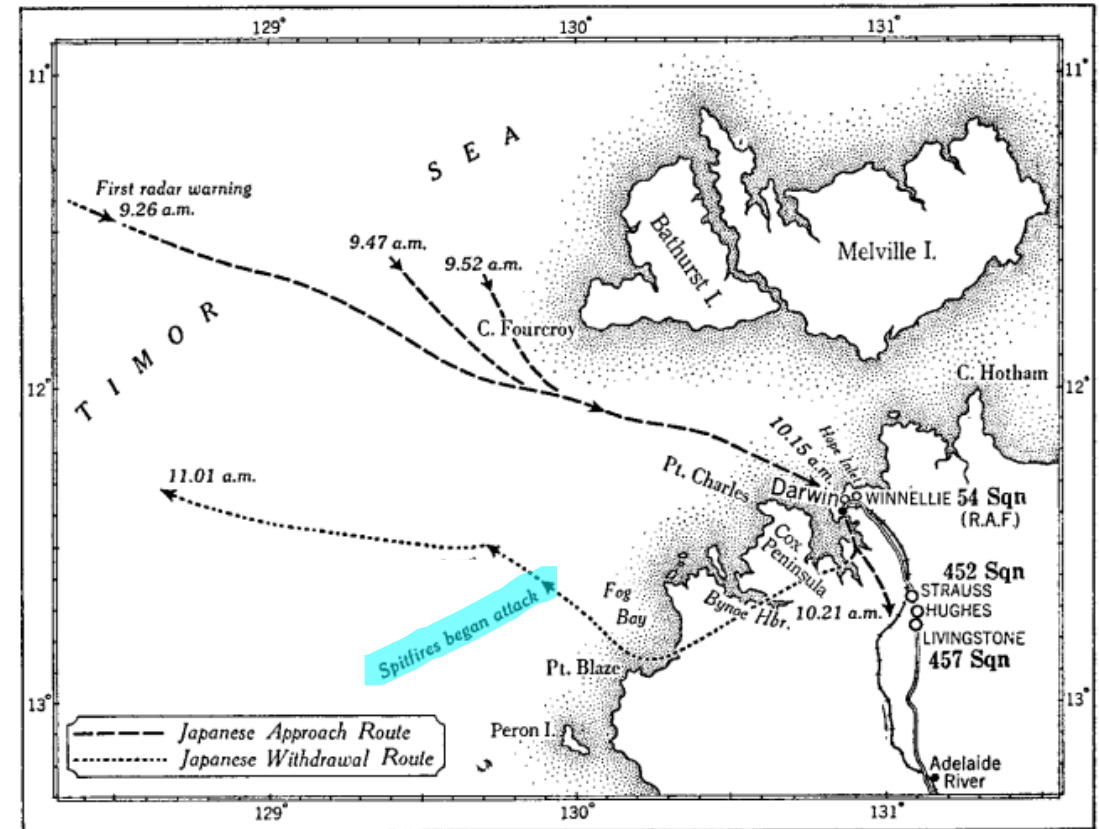


1943-12-25. GROUP PORTRAIT OF MEMBERS OF THE OFFICERS MESS OF NO. 452 SQUADRON, RAAF.



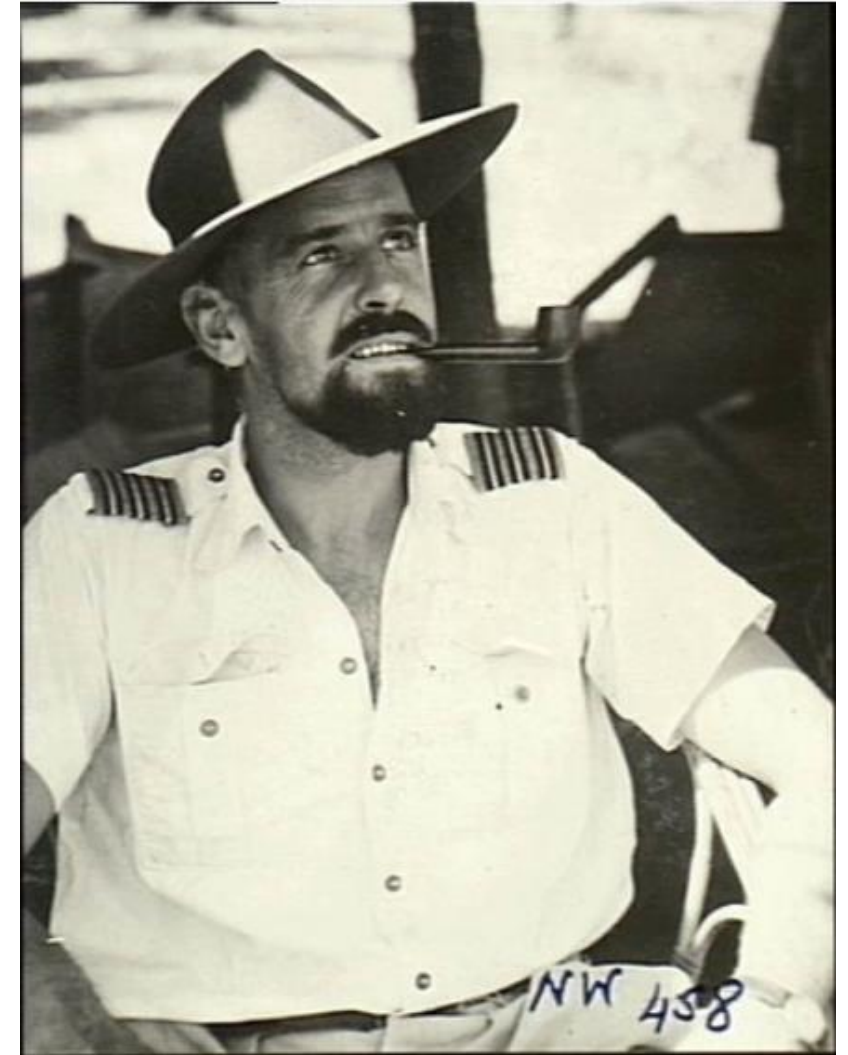
## 2 May - Air

- These are some of the incidents of a brief but furious engagement, in which the Australians claimed that 6 enemy aircraft were destroyed, 4 probably destroyed and 8 damaged.
- At this stage of the fight 5 Spitfires had been lost to enemy action, but the pilots of 3 were in rubber boats in the water.
- At 10.36 a.m., sixteen minutes after the action began, Caldwell warned all pilots to check their fuel and if necessary return to base. This warning was repeated at 10.40 by the controller.
- Under normal conditions all pilots would have been able to reach base but fuel had been used at a high rate during battle climbs.
- This factor, together with keenness and excitement in combat, an adverse wind, and the action of the pilots in circling over the water to discover the exact position of their comrades who had been shot down, led to some delaying their return to base too long.



## 2 May - Air

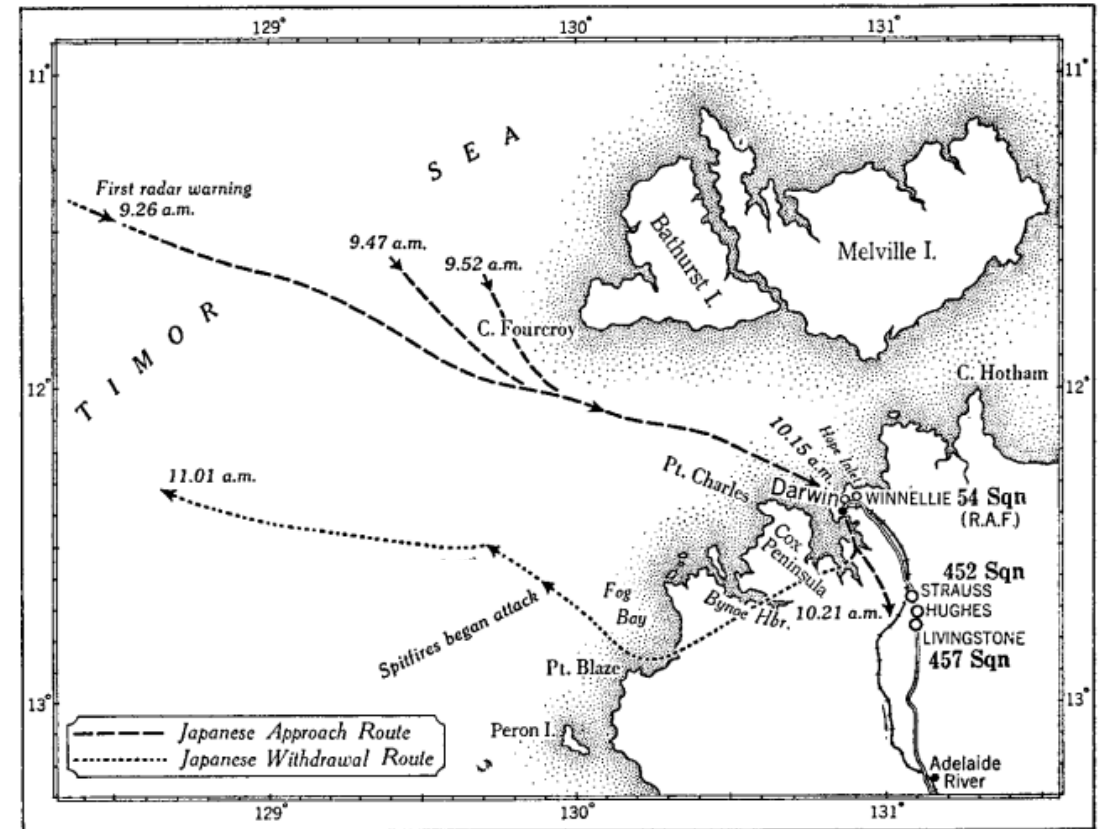
- Another factor was that Caldwell (photo), in manoeuvring for a favourable position, held his attack an unusually long time, which led the Spitfires to be drawn farther away from their base.
- However, in waiting until his whole wing was in position for attack Caldwell was following instructions.
- The Spitfire Wing had been criticised in a previous engagement because "sections, flights and squadrons intercepted the enemy in penny packets with the result that little damage was done and they were heavily outnumbered".
- Caldwell was trying to avoid a piecemeal interception and in this he succeeded.





## 2 May - Air

- As a result of fuel shortage 5 aircraft made forced landings before reaching airfields, but 4 of these were recovered and repaired.
- Three more were forced to land because of engine failure and one of these was a total loss.
- Two men had been killed and 8 Spitfires destroyed during the action.
- Another pilot (Flight Sergeant Stagg) was unaccounted for but was found alive some days later.



## 2 May - Air

- Bladin (photo) ordered No. 31 Squadron to raid the airfield at Penfui, where it was presumed the enemy aircraft would be landing after their Darwin raid.
- Wing Commander Read led four Beaufighters (though one had to turn back soon after because of a hatch opening), taking off from Coomalie Creek just after midday on 2nd May.
- The Beaufighters came in at an extremely low level to attack the airfield line-abreast at 230 miles an hour.
- Read opened fire on two Zekes, one of which was taxiing from a blast-pen, and destroyed them both, probably killing the pilot of one.
- Another Beaufighter pilot fired on two bombers which caught fire, while another got an enemy aircraft in his sights but his guns would not fire.
- When the Beaufighters withdrew they were pursued out to sea by enemy fighters but after thirty minutes pursuit the enemy broke off.
- The Beaufighters landed at Drysdale, refuelled and returned to Coomalie next morning.



Bladin (right) as Air Officer  
Commanding North-Western Area,  
with Admiral Helfrich, c. 1943.

## 2 May - Air

- At night on the 2nd May Bladin sent Mitchell bombers to follow up the destruction at Penfui caused by the Beaufighters.
- Four aircraft of No. 18 Squadron with mixed Dutch and Australian crews bombed the airfield after midnight at five-minute intervals, using flares to light the area.
- Three of their bombs appeared to drop and explode on buildings near the runway.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL NWA0434  
McDonald, NT. 1943. Bladin, (left), the Chief of Air Staff RAAF, Air Vice Marshal George Jones (centre) and Lieutenant Colonel Fiedeldij, CO of No. 18 (Netherlands East Indies) Squadron after arrival for a visit to the composite RAAF/Dutch squadron.



## 2 May - Air

- The new Sakae engine in the Model 32 Zero was slightly heavier and somewhat longer. To correct for this, the engine mountings were cut back by 185 mm to move the engine toward the cockpit. This had the side effect of reducing the main fuselage fuel tank from 518 l to 470 l. The wings were redesigned to reduce span, eliminate the folding tips, and square off the wingtips.
- The new Model 32 Zero was assigned the allied reporting name Hap then Hamp.
- Code names were assigned by Captain Frank T. McCoy of the Allied Technical Air Intelligence Unit (ATAIU) at Eagle Farm Airport, who wanted quick, distinctive, easy-to-remember names.
- The Allied code for Japanese aircraft was introduced in 1942, and McCoy chose "Zeke" for the "Zero". Later the A6M3-32 variant was initially called "Hap". General "Hap" Arnold, commander of the USAAF, objected to that name, however, so it was changed to "Hamp".



A6M3 Model 32, photo shows the squared off wingtips.

# 3 May COIC

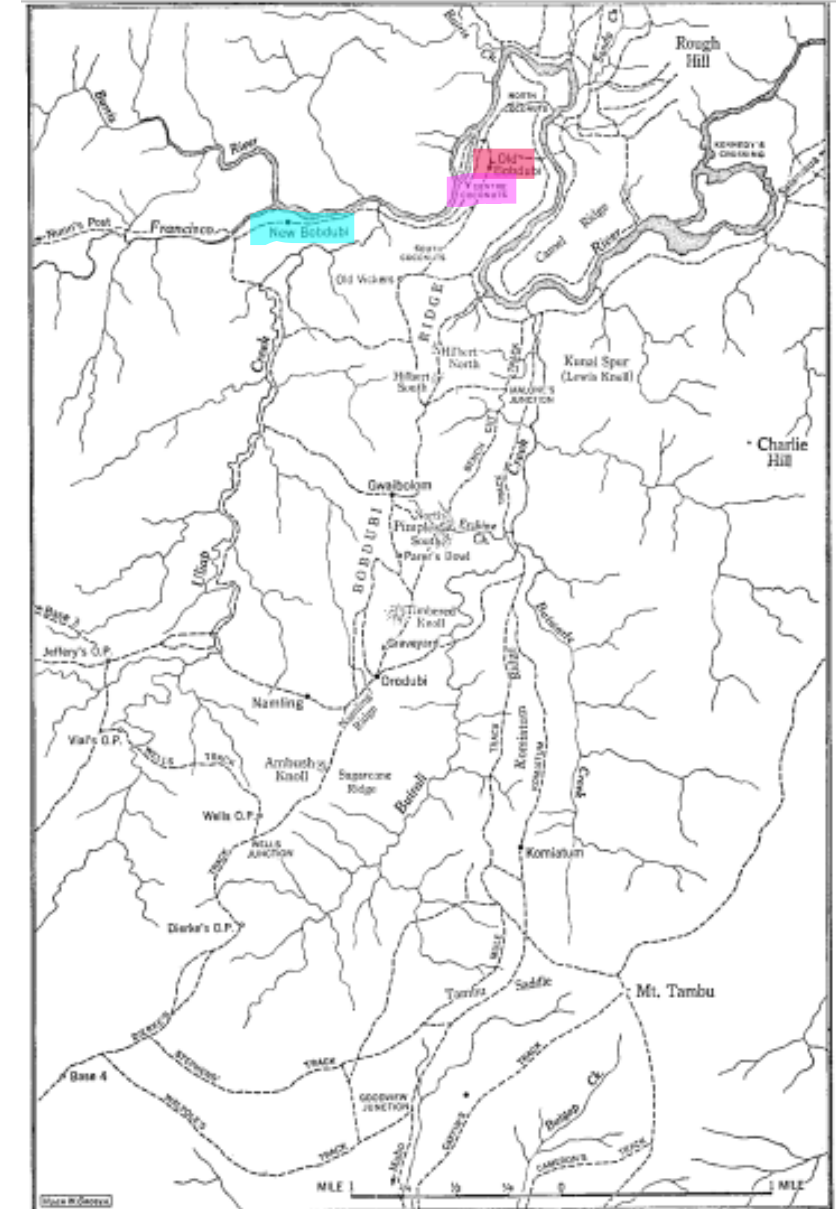
## NAVAL INCIDENTS

- (1) Manokwari - The two Liberators on armed reconnaissance over Dutch New Guinea attacked a 4-5000 ton cargo ship in Manokwari Harbour at 1313/1. One hit was claimed on the stern of the vessel also a near miss (confirmed by photographs) and the vessel was left settling by the stern.
- (2) Brisbane - Further to the report of the attack by a Catalina on a possible submarine 170 miles E. by N. of Brisbane at 2111/1, it is now stated that four bursts of machine gun fire were encountered by the Catalina from the submarine. The report is graded B.2.

It is considered that the submarine was converging for an attack on "WILLARD A. HOLBROOK" but was probably diverted by the attack, during which 3 depth charges were dropped.

# 3 May

- Warfe's attack on the northern part of Bobdubi Ridge began on the 3rd.
- Lieutenant Lillie's section moved forward along the main track to Salamaua and Meares with the rest of his troops headed for the high ground farther south.
- Lillie found New Bobdubi occupied and moved towards Old Bobdubi—two huts near Centre Coconuts—but in the afternoon he was stopped by fire from Centre Coconuts, where the main Missim-Salamaua track crossed the north end of Bobdubi Ridge.
- The Japanese then withdrew towards the crest of the ridge at Centre Coconuts.
- Warfe reported that the attack was "proceeding according to plan".





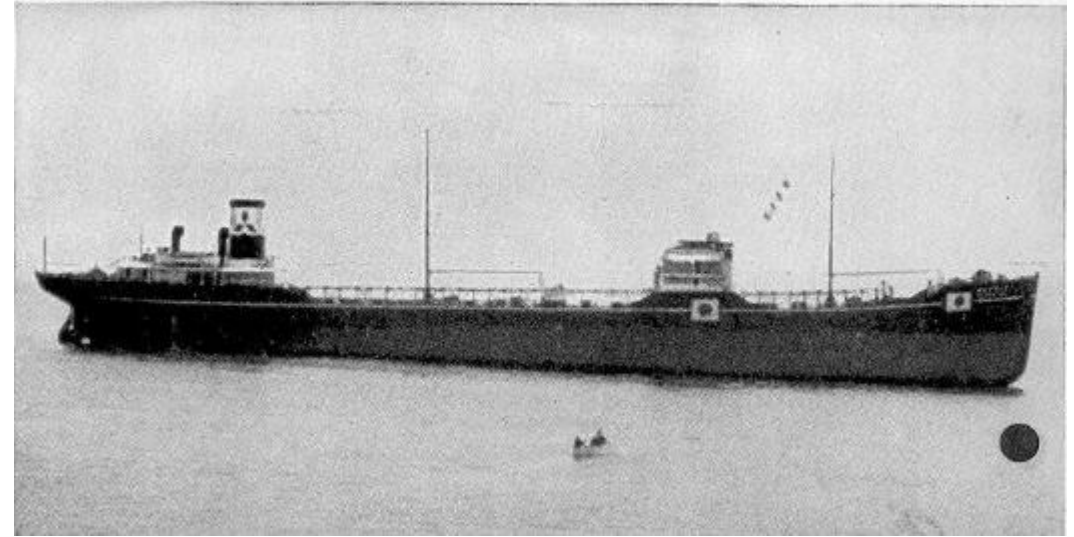
## 4 May COIC

Submarine Activity - Fiji-Tonga Area -- Commander 3rd Fleet reports the following enemy submarine activity. Liberty ship "PETER SYLVESTER" was unsuccessfully attacked in an uncertain position between Vatao Island (180 miles WNW of Tongatabu) and Vavau Island (160 miles N.N.E. of Tongatabu) at 1630/30. It is possible that the vessel was later hit near Vavau Is. At 0615/1 Liberty Ship "P.A. HEARST" was torpedoed 190 miles S.E. of Suva and sank at 1800/1. A third ship "W. WILLIAMS" was hit at 1500/2 36 miles east of the position in which "P.A. HEARST" was attacked, and was reported still afloat at 0800/3.

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## 4 May - Sea

- A Japanese trawler, Noku Maru, was shelled and sunk in the Pacific Ocean by USS Gudgeon.
- The San Clemente Maru-class tanker, San Clemente Maru, was torpedoed and sunk in the Pacific Ocean 50 nautical miles (93 km) south east of Palau (06°50'N 134°28'E) by USS Seal. One crewman was killed. Survivors were rescued by Hoei Maru.



San Clemente Maru 11,180 DWT capacity 85,000 barrels.

## 4 May - Dobo



- The Reverend Leonard Kentish, chairman of the Methodist Northern Australian Mission District, had been a passenger on the Patricia Cam when it was sunk by a Japanese float plane on 22<sup>nd</sup> January.
- Mr Kentish had been abducted from the wreckage of the Patricia Cam by the Japanese floatplane.
- On 4th May 1943 the Japanese executed Mr Kentish at Dobo, in the Aru Islands.



# 4 May - Brisbane

- The General Headquarters press announcement on the raid on Darwin on 2<sup>nd</sup> May (Communique No . 386) after referring to the ground damage caused by the Japanese as being negligible, went on to say that "our own air losses were heavy".
- News of the fight was given wide publicity and the Japanese made propaganda use of it in broadcasts.
- The Melbourne Argus of 4th May stated : "This is the first occasion that any communique issued in this area has reported heavy losses."

Veteran correspondents considered the communiqués, which MacArthur drafted personally, "a total farce" (Time 15/1/51) and they attracted wide spread mockery.

"My battleships bombard the Nips from  
Maine to Singapore  
My subs have sunk a million tons;  
They'll sink a billion more.

My aircraft bombed Berlin last night."  
In Italy they say  
"Our turn's tonight, because it's right in  
Doug's Communiqué . . ."  
And while possibly a rumor now,  
someday it will be fact  
That the Lord will hear a deep voice say  
"Move over, God—it's Mac."  
So bet your shoes that all the news  
that last great Judgement Day  
Will go to press in nothing less than

DOUG'S COMMUNIQUÉ!

## 4 May - Air

- Many discussions and conferences took place between pilots and leaders to analyse the action and draw conclusions. One conclusion was that it was essential that Spitfires should carry a larger fuel supply.
- It was also concluded that it was desirable that interception of raiding aircraft should take place as early as possible.
- Pilots were also later issued with strict instructions not to dog-fight.
- The Advisory War Council, disturbed by news of the engagement, asked the Chief of the Air Staff for a full report dealing in particular with losses due to petrol shortage and engine failure.
- Air Vice-Marshal Jones reported that engine failures were not due to poor maintenance but to the inexperience of pilots in handling their machines under combat conditions, and that the fuel shortages experienced by a number of pilots could "only be attributed to an error of judgment on the part of the wing leader, bearing in mind the inexperience of a number of his pilots".
- In reply to this criticism Caldwell claimed that all pilots were properly directed during the engagement and if they had obeyed instructions would have reached base safely.

## 4 May - Air

- There were a couple of festering sores contributing to the unseemly little storm in this particular teacup.
- Everyone hated the ridiculous deal done by Churchill and Evatt (photo) to send a tiny number of Spitfires to Australia and thereby claim that Britain was contributing to the defence of Australia, and
- Air Vice-Marshal Jones, the Chief of the Air Staff, was in a perpetual bureaucratic war with Air Vice Marshal Bostock, the Commander of RAAF Command, with each pursuing a battle to get the other sacked which regularly required Curtin's intervention.





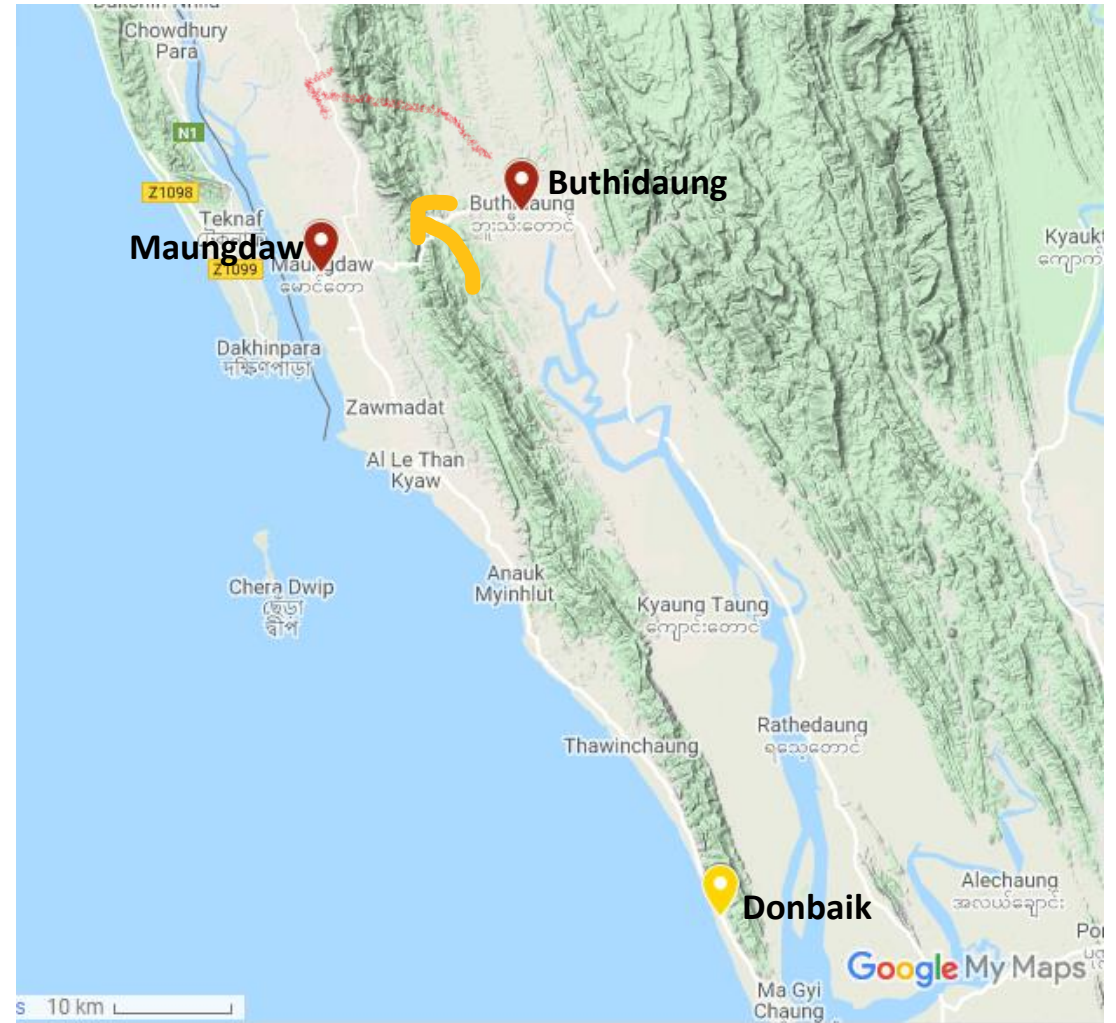
# 4 May - Air

- On the 4th an enemy single-engined fighter intercepted and opened fire on a Hudson of No. 2 Squadron which was returning from a bombing mission to the Kai Islands.
- The same day six Liberators of No. 319 Squadron which bombed Babo airfield in Dutch New Guinea were intercepted twice.
- The first interception occurred over Babo itself and the second by seven fighters over Maikoor Island farther south.



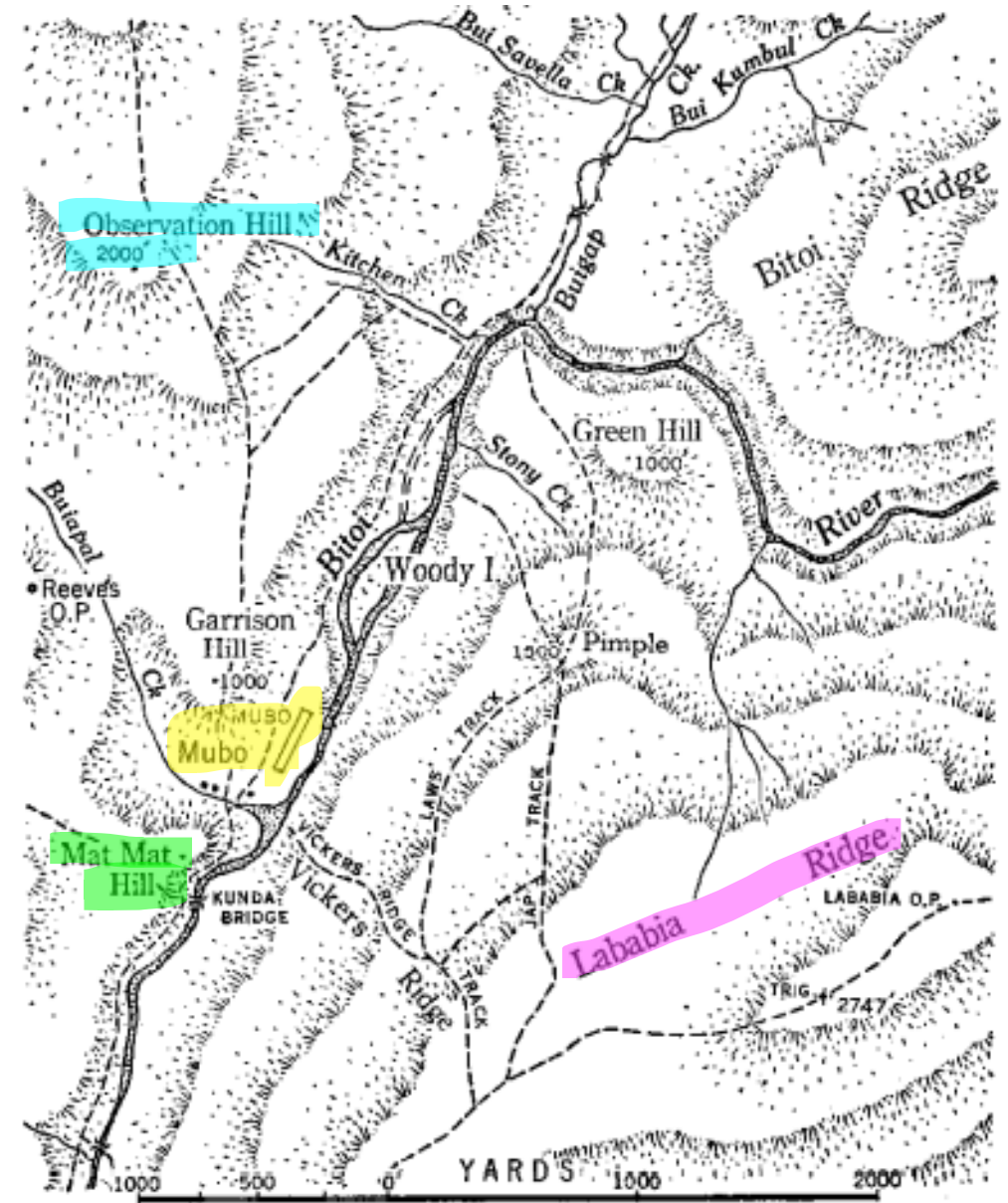
# 4 May - Burma

- In late April, the Japanese attacked northwards, as Slim and Lomax had predicted.
- They met stiff resistance on the flanks and advanced instead in the centre.
- On 4 May as Slim prepared to order two Indian battalions to surround the Japanese, a British battalion defending a hill referred to as Point 551 gave way, allowing the Japanese to cut the Maungdaw-Buthidaung road.
- Counter-attacks failed and the British and Indian troops in Buthidaung and the Kalapanzin valley were cut off.
- As there was no other route for motor vehicles across the Mayu Range, they were forced to destroy their transport before retreating north up the valley.



# 4 May - Wau

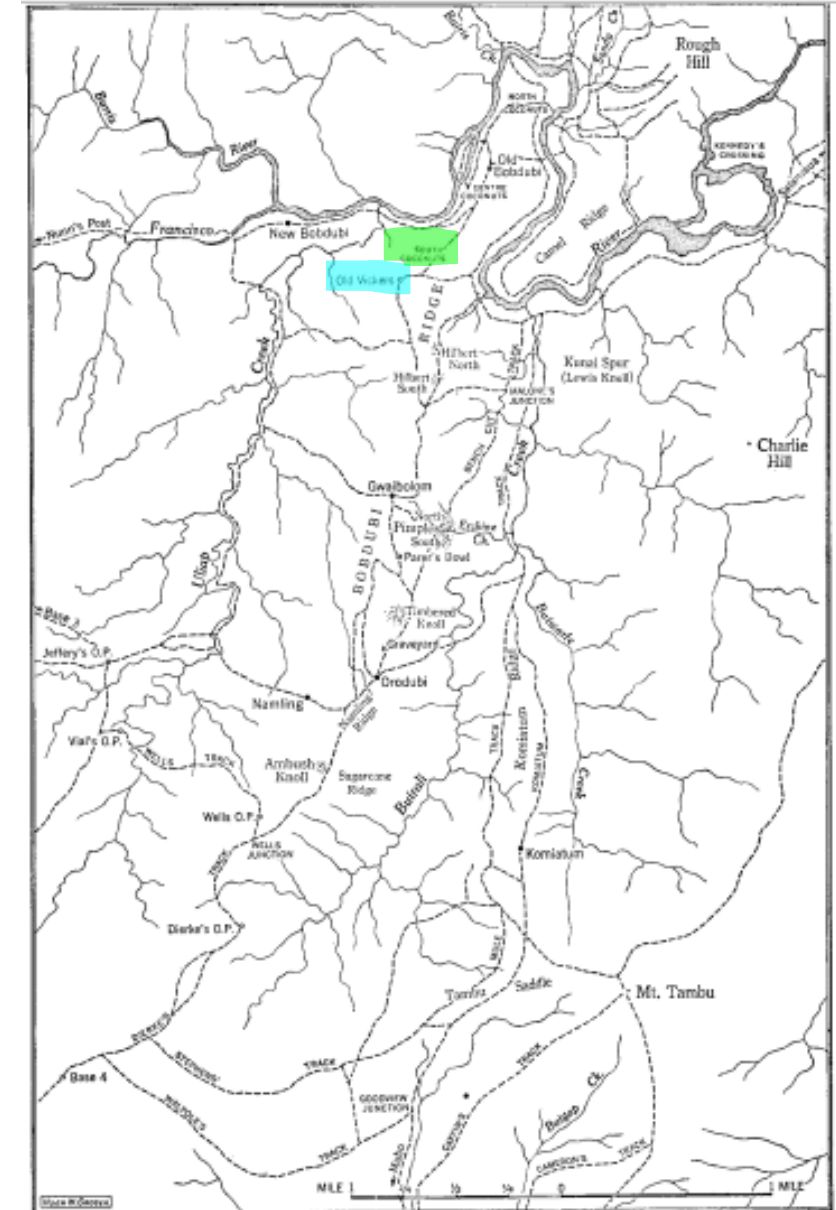
- Moten on 4th May received from divisional headquarters a statement of policy for operations in the Mubo area with which he entirely agreed.
- It said that the securing of the Mubo-Guadagasal-Waipali area and the implication that Lababia Ridge, Mat Mat and ultimately Observation Hill must be controlled, called for aggressive patrolling and a series of minor limited offensives.
- Attacks should not be made against prepared enemy positions in circumstances under which heavy casualties would be incurred without commensurate results.





# 4 May - Wau

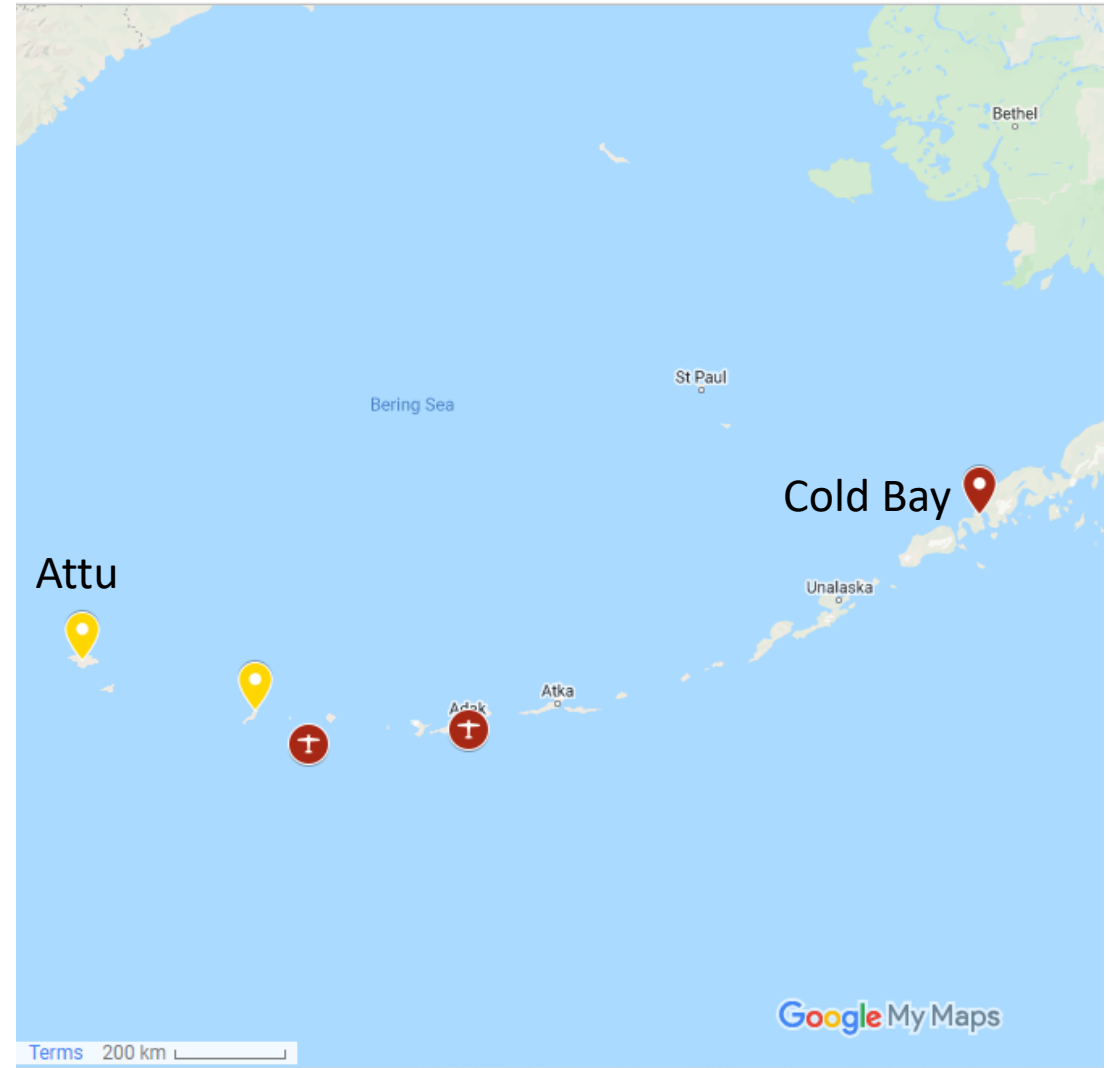
- By 1 p.m. on the 4th May Corporal Muir's section occupied a position about 50 yards south of South Coconuts and set up a Vickers machine - gun on a position later known as Old Vickers.
- Five hours later his men attacked and gained South Coconuts, about 200 yards from Centre Coconuts.
- Old Vickers was the key position on the northern portion of Bobdubi Ridge; from it Muir could see Salamaua, the mouth of the Francisco and part of the track to Mubo.
- That afternoon the Vickers kept up harassing fire on any enemy movement.
- Signs of the enemy's determination to hold the ridge were apparent in the evening when 21 Japanese reinforcements were observed approaching Bobdubi Ridge from the direction of Salamaua.





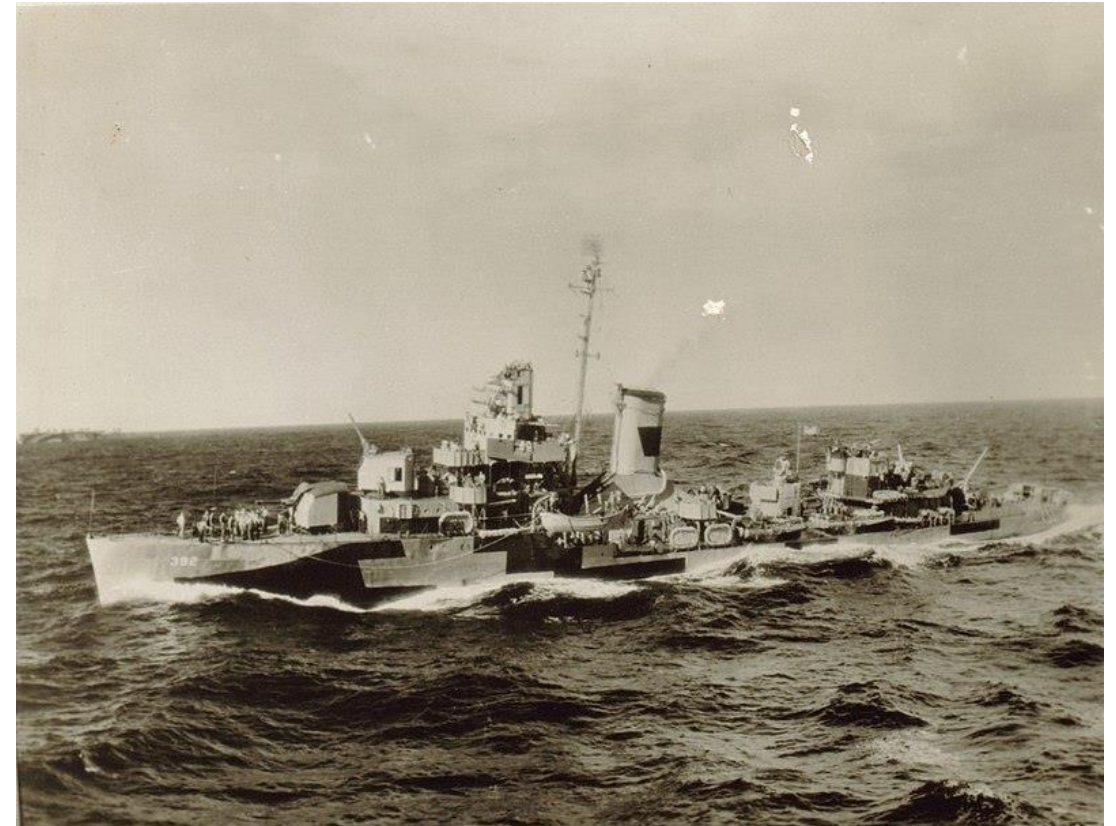
# 4 May - Aleutians

- The attack force (for the invasion of Attu) was originally scheduled to leave Cold Bay on 3 May, but bad weather postponed sailing for a day.
- D-day was then designated as 8 May by Admiral Kinkaid.
- Cold Bay to Attu was 1,050 miles.



# 5 May - Sea

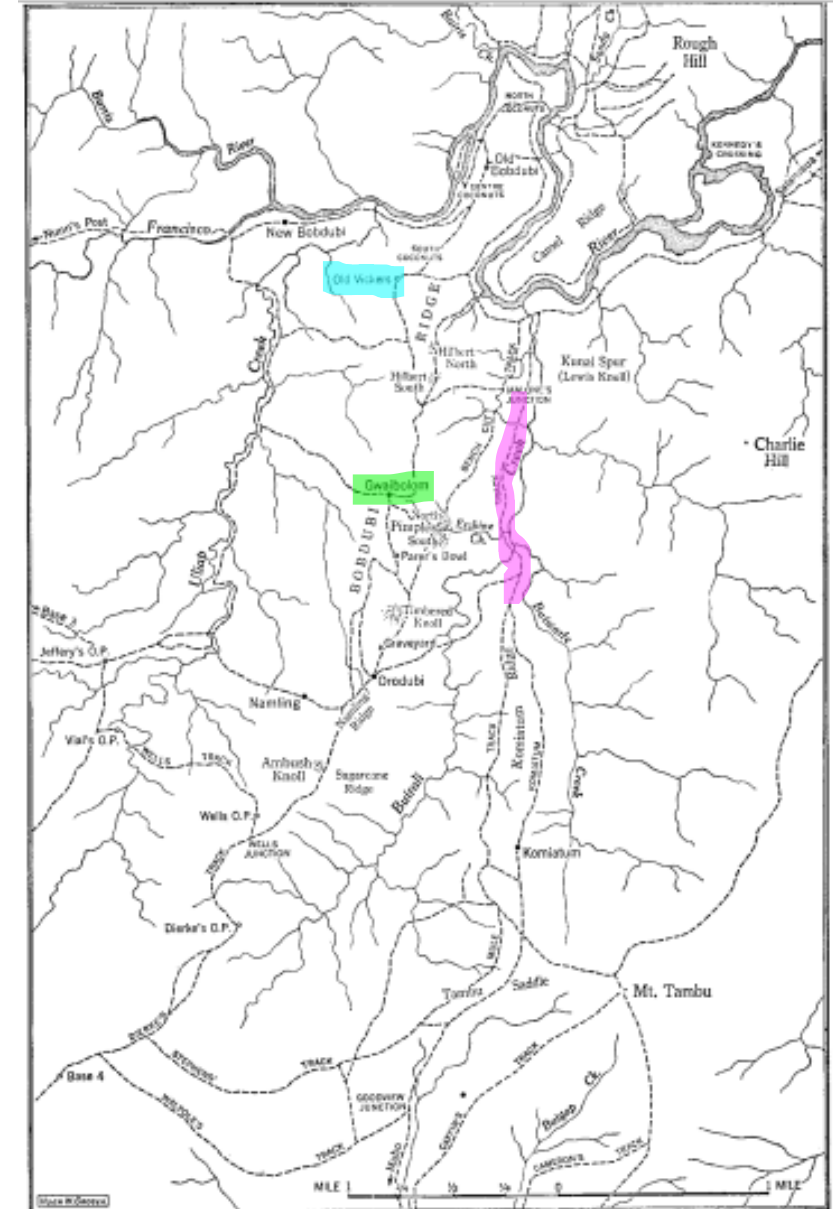
- Two cargo ships, Daifuku Maru and Kinko Maru, were torpedoed and sunk in the Yellow Sea by USS Snook.
- An auxiliary gunboat, Hakkai Maru, was torpedoed and sunk in the Pacific off Ise-Wan, Honshu (34°11'N 137°41'E) by USS Sawfish. 121 passengers and 3 crewmen were killed.
- A cargo ship, Tokai Maru, was torpedoed and sunk in the Pacific Ocean by USS Permit.
- The Norwegian cargo ship, Fingal (2,137 tons) en route Sydney to Darwin with military cargo, was being escorted by U.S.S. Patterson which was zigzagging ahead of her charge while an aircraft gave cover to seaward.
- At 1.35 p.m. off Coffs Harbour, in fine clear weather and smooth sea, a torpedo exploded under Fingal's port quarter. Twenty seconds later a second torpedo hit in the engine room, and the ship sank within one minute.
- Nineteen survivors of her complement of 31 were picked up by the American destroyer after she had delivered a depth-charge attack and searched vainly for some time for the submarine. Fingal's master, chief officer and all the engineers were among those lost.



USS Patterson (DD-392) 1937, 38.5 knots, 4 5 inch guns, 12 21 inch torpedo tubes and 2 depth charge tracks.

# 5 May - Wau

- Before dawn on the 5th a counter-attack forced Muir's men to withdraw from South Coconuts but they held Old Vickers.
- Lieutenant Erskine's engineer section, armed with a Vickers gun, was operating along the Bench Cut behind Stephens, and at midday on the 5th fired on about 60 Japanese moving towards Salamaua from Komiatum and killed about a dozen.
- At 2.30 p.m. Warfe set up a Vickers near Gwaibolom where they could observe about 250 yards of the Komiatum Track from a distance of 700-800 yards, and opened fire on a party of about 80 Japanese moving south along the Komiatum Track, probably killing 15.
- The Japanese, dismayed by this long-distance fire, blazed away wildly, obviously thinking that they were being ambushed by troops close at hand.



## 5 May - Wau

- On 5th May Major Smith of the 2/6th Battalion was appointed to command the newly arrived 24th which had its first action the same day.
- A four-man patrol led by Corporal Gray towards Markham Point was ambushed, had one man wounded but withdrew in good order.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

074526

MADANG, NEW GUINEA. 1944-07-07. VX185  
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL G.F. SMITH, DSO,  
COMMANDING OFFICER, 24TH INFANTRY BATTALION.



## 5 May - Air

- For some time Japanese float-planes had been intercepting Allied reconnaissance aircraft in the Aru Islands area, and on 5 May a bomber crew had noticed several in the water at Taberfane.
- Bladin ordered an immediate attack by available Beaufighter aircraft.
- Led by Squadron Leader Savage, the Beaufighters flew to Millingimbi airfield where they stayed overnight.



Nakajima A6M2-N "Rufe" from Sasebo Air Group

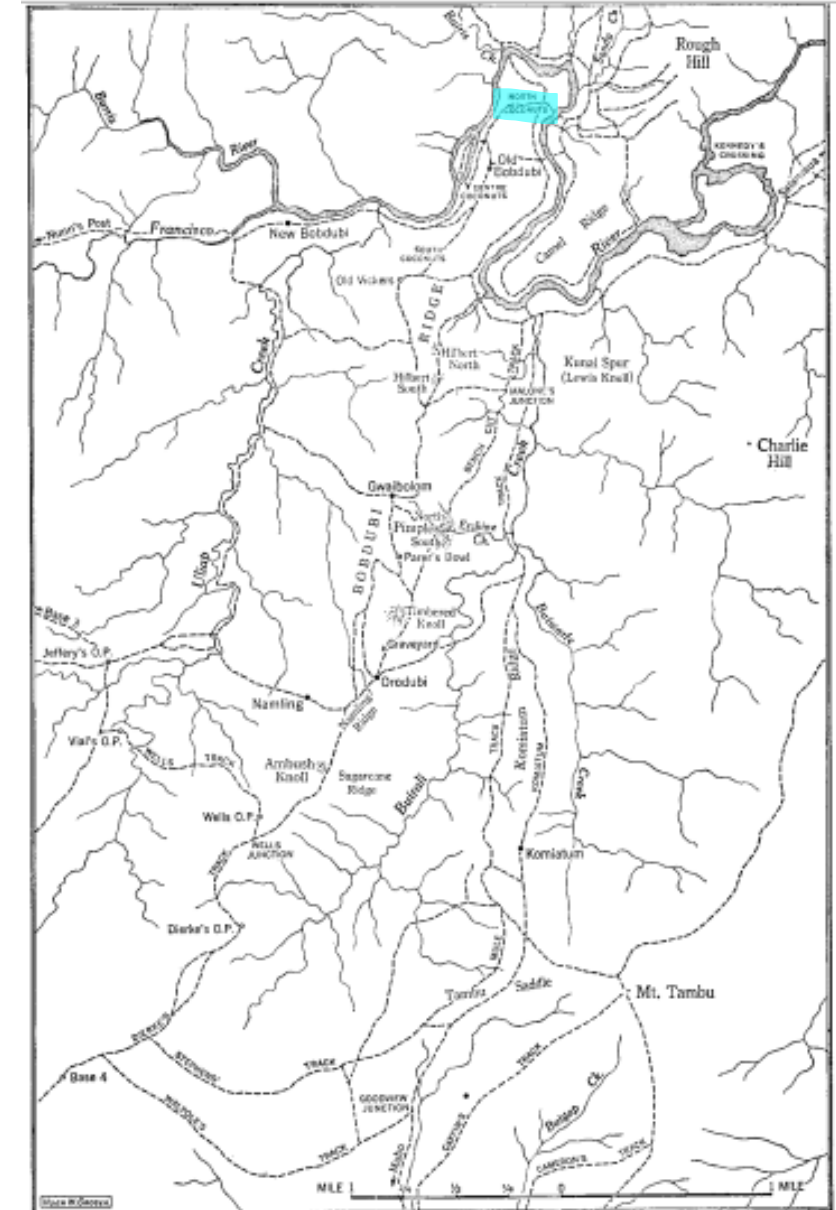
# 6 May - Wau

- The stalemate in the Mubo area caused General Mackay (photo) on 6th May to send General Savige a letter:
- "Unless our attacks, raids and skirmishes are properly organised, supported by fire superior to that of the enemy, and fully driven home in a determined manner, they fulfil no useful military purpose,"
- "Unsuccessful attempts against the enemy tend to lower our own morale and raise his."
- Mackay then directed that patrolling should continue forward of the Guadagal-Waipali area, but positions in strength forward of this line neither could nor should be maintained.



# 6 May - Wau

- By 6<sup>th</sup> May Lieutenant Stephens had reached a position commanding the enemy's approach from Salamaua ready to attack any Japanese using the track.
- On the way along the bank of the Francisco they found an approach to high ground at the northern extremity of the ridge. Next day Hancock the Company's 2iC led a patrol along this position.
- Finding that **North Coconuts** was unoccupied and commanded the enemy positions in Centre and South Coconuts, Hancock established Lieutenant Leviston there.



# 6 May - Air

- No. 15 squadron's first contact with enemy aircraft occurred on 6 May, when two P40s were escorting a Hudson on patrol in an area where enemy planes had recently, frequently been seen.
- The Hudson was at 500 feet with the two fighters at 3000 feet slightly behind. The enemy float-plane was first sighted from the astro-hatch of the Hudson, about three miles away at a height of 1500 feet. Neither of the fighters could spot him, and the Hudson set off after him at full power but lost him in a heavy rainstorm. The fighters groped round in rainstorms and clouds, and finally picked him up.
- The enemy was still three miles away; he had come down to 800 feet and was flying along beside a heavy, black cloud. The fighters were at 1000 feet. They jettisoned their belly tanks and gave chase, overtaking him in two minutes. Until they opened fire, the Japanese pilot apparently had no idea they were there as he made no attempt to dodge into the shelter of the cloud. They approached from slightly below and directly behind, and fired bursts into the float-plane from a range of 200 yards. It burst into flames and crashed into the sea leaving a patch of oil and a floating wing.



Squadron Leader MJ Herrick DFC, commander of No. 15 Squadron, in the cockpit of his Kittyhawk at Guadalcanal, which records five German and one Japanese kills. Herrick, a New Zealander, was a regular officer in the RAF. His 5 German kills were scored in night fighters. He had accounted for three of the four German aircraft destroyed by Fighter Command on night operations during September 1940 flying a Bristol Blenheim.



# 6 May - Air

- On 6 May before sunrise the Beaufighters took off and flew in formation through thunderstorms to Taberfane.
- The float-planes were well silhouetted against the white sand of the beach and two were anchored slightly off shore.
- Savage dived from about 1,300 feet, opening fire with his cannon which set one of the float-planes on fire. A bullet struck Savage's machine, passing through the throttle controls and entering the fuel tank. But the self-sealing compound in the tank stopped the petrol leaking.
- When the Beaufighters returned for a second run they saw columns of smoke rising above the float-planes.
- From then on the pilots passed back and forth and destroyed nine aircraft before all cannons had stopped firing due to faults.
- One aircraft, piloted by Flying Officer Budd, failed to return.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P01160.001

TABERFANE, ARU ISLANDS, TIMOR. NO. 31  
SQUADRON RAAF AIR STRIKE ON THE JAPANESE  
SEAPLANE BASE AT TABERFANE.

# 6 May

- While the Beaufighters attacked the float-planes at Taberfane on 6th May the bombers attacked enemy airfields, Mitchells attacked Dili, in Timor and the Liberators bombed Manokwari and Kai in Dutch New Guinea, and Saumlaki.
- The Catalinas of Nos. 11 and 20 Squadrons added to the weight of the bombardment effort when they attacked Babo.



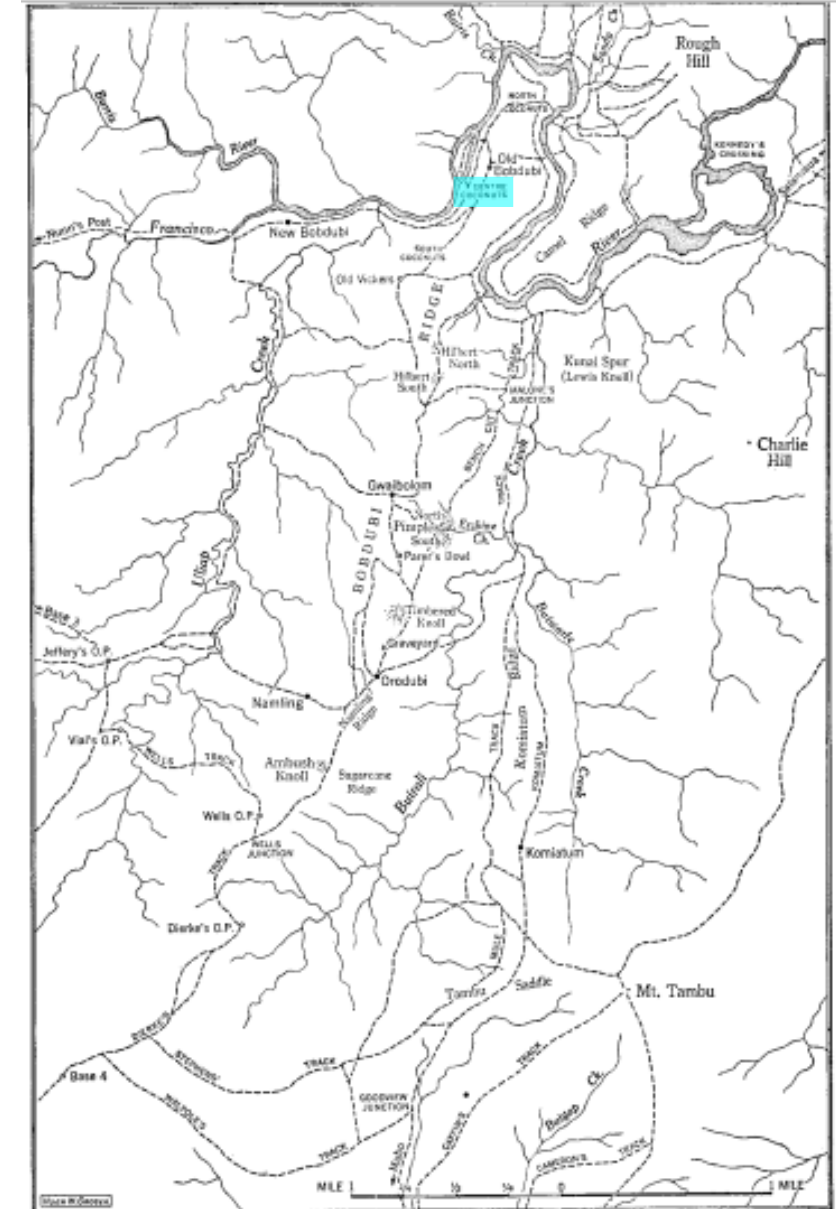
# 7 May - Brisbane

- On 7th May General MacArthur (photo) issued an instruction based on his orders from the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington, outlining the offensive which the forces of the South-West Pacific and South Pacific would carry out in 1943.
- As part of these operations New Guinea Force was given the task of seizing the Lae, Salamaua, Finschhafen and Madang areas.
- Provision was made for an operation in the Salamaua area to take place as a "feint" on 30th June when other operations were due to take place on Kiriwina and Woodlark Islands and on New Georgia in the Solomons.



# 7 May - Wau

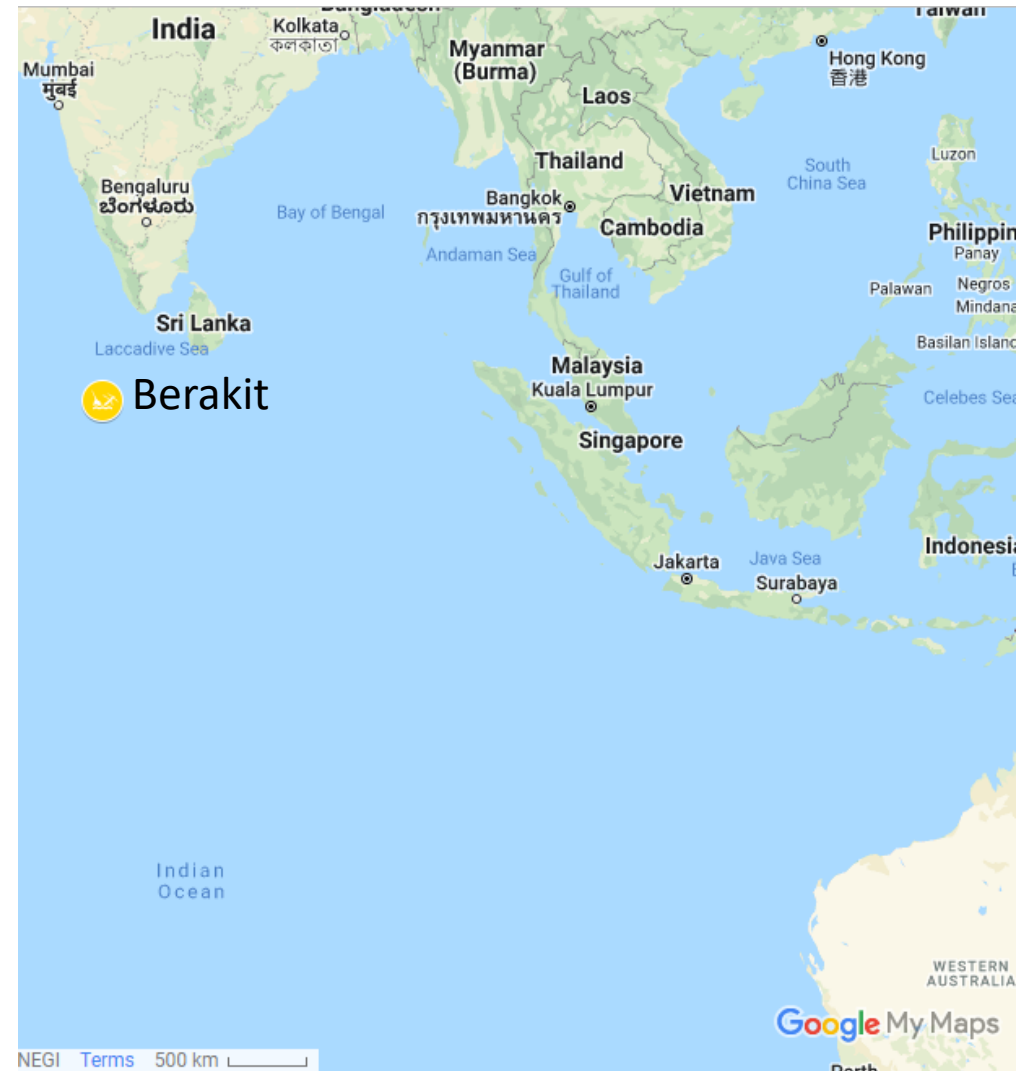
- Early on the 7th Erskine ambushed Japanese moving along the Komiatum Track and killed ten.
- At 8 a.m. Meares began a heavy mortar bombardment of Centre Coconuts. Under cover of this fire Corporal Muir led his section forward, found the Japanese had withdrawn because of the fire and immediately occupied Centre Coconuts.
- An hour later the Japanese, thoroughly aroused, counter-attacked three times, but were driven back, losing seven killed.
- It was not until 10 a.m. that they were able, with the aid of mortars, to force Muir to withdraw.





# 7 May - Sea

- The armed yacht, HMAS Adele, was wrecked on a breakwater at the entrance to Port Kembla, New South Wales.
- The Vichy French cargo liner, Gouverneur General Pasquier, was sunk by mines in the South China Sea off the coast of French Indochina.
- Two cargo ships, Shinsei Maru No.3 and Tosei Maru, were torpedoed and sunk in the Yellow Sea by USS Snook.
- The cargo ship, Tamon Maru No. 5, was torpedoed and sunk in the Pacific Ocean off the Kuril Islands by USS Wahoo.
- The Dutch cargo ship, Berakit, was torpedoed and sunk in the Indian Ocean, east of the Felidhu Atoll in the Maldives at the entrance to One and Half Degree Channel (3°40'N 75°20'E) by the Japanese submarine I-27. Her master was taken as a prisoner of war; four crewmen were killed.



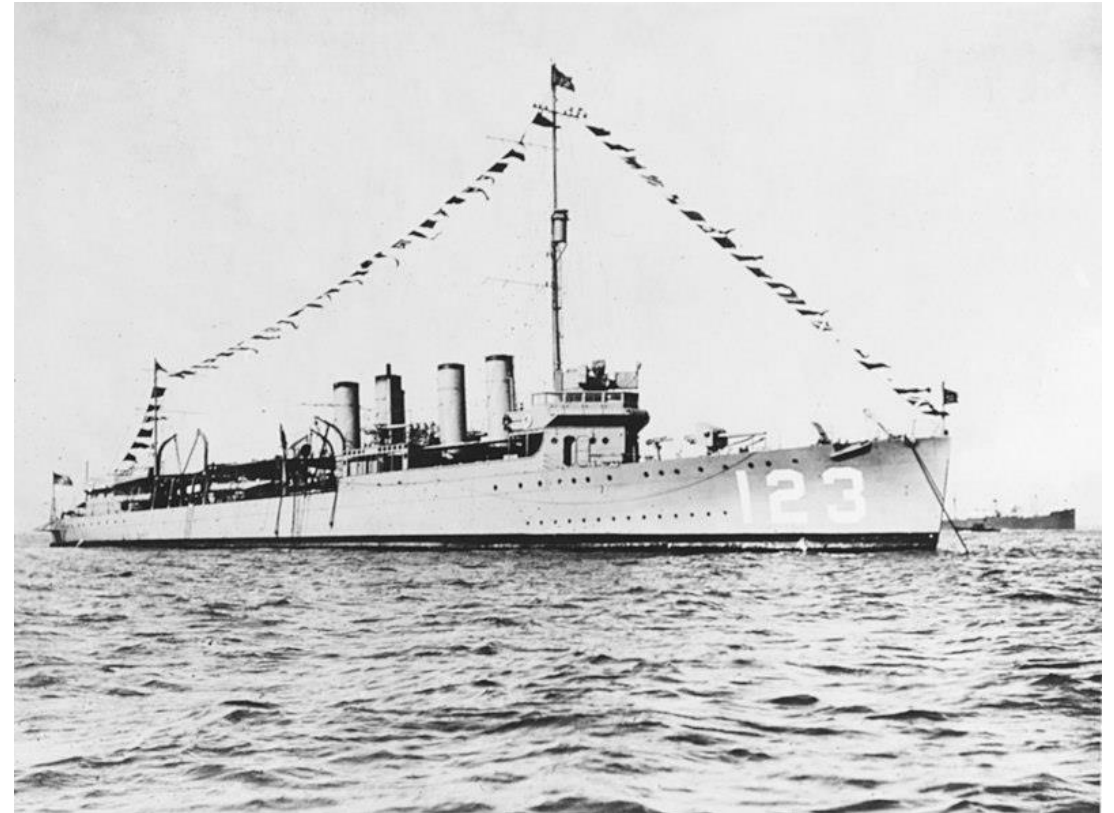
## 7 May - Aleutians

- On the afternoon of the 7th, it appeared likely that surf conditions would be unfavorable on the 8th. D-day for Attu was accordingly put off another 24 hours (to 9<sup>th</sup>).



# 7 May

- On 20 March, the Allies had begun mining operations in the central Solomons using U.S. Navy and Marine Corps torpedo bombers to sow mines throughout the northern Solomons.
- After a month, these operations were briefly suspended in response to Japanese air attacks.
- In May, these operations resumed using navy minelayers.



USS Gamble (DD-123/DM-15) was a Wickes-class destroyer in the United States Navy during World War I, later converted to a minelayer in World War II.

# 7 May - Sea

- Five minutes after midnight on 6 May 1943, 3 WW1 destroyers converted to minelaying, USS Gamble, Preble and Breese, turned simultaneously in rain squalls which broke at times to disclose each to the other in perfect formation.
- Making 15 knots (28 km/h), each ship dropped a mine every 12 seconds, planting over 250 mines in 17 minutes across **Blackett Strait**, the western entrance to Kula Gulf and directly in the favorite route of the Japanese "Tokyo Express."





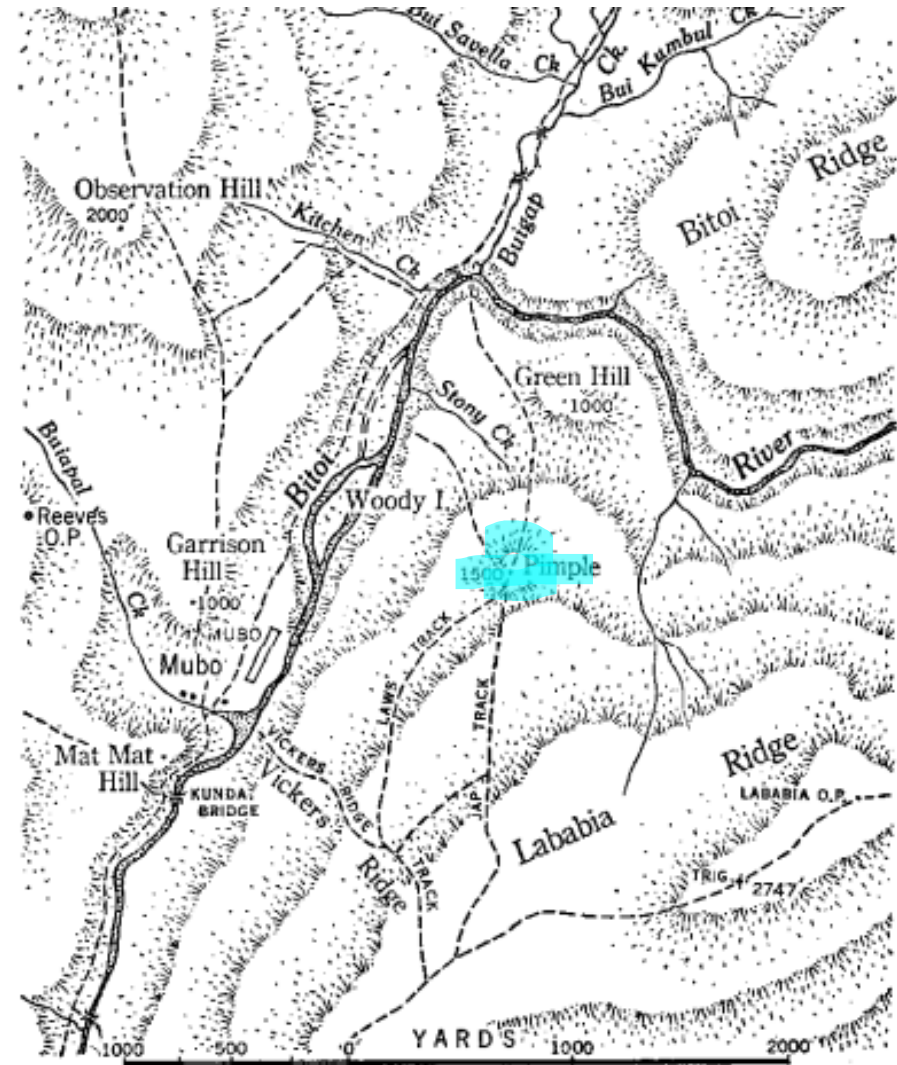
# 7 May - Wau

- After receiving Mackay's letter Savige called for an appreciation of the situation in the Pimple area by Guinn (photo).
- On 7th May Guinn (2/7<sup>th</sup>) reported that the enemy's strength in the Mubo area was approximately one battalion with one company in the Green Hill-Pimple area, part of a company on Observation Hill and the remainder in the Kitchen Creek area and north along the Buigap.
- The enemy had established himself on commanding ground with well-dug and concealed ambushes on the main approaches and a strongly-defended position on the Pimple, and had lightly cleared fire lanes to enable his machine-guns to prevent rush tactics and the use of grenades by the Australians.
- Guinn pointed out that the Jap Track was the only feasible approach to the Pimple.
- He proposed a company attack supported by aircraft and artillery.



# 7 May - Wau

- On the morning of the 7th bombing and strafing straddled the Pimple east and west then one mountain gun shelled the Pimple to cover the movement of Captain Tatterson's company to an attacking position.
- Forty yards from the enemy position in dense jungle the right flank platoon was held up by sniper fire.
- A section sent to neutralise this opposition was confronted by precipitous slopes with enemy fire positions overlooking the only line of approach, and was pinned down, as were the remaining two sections.
- The left platoon was held up by enfilade fire 35 yards from the enemy position.
- Tatterson then sent the third platoon in a wide encircling move to the left, but the Japanese pinned it down by enfilade fire 30 yards from its objective.
- Heavy rain began at 2.30 p.m. and developed into a tropical downpour.
- The position was hopeless and the men were withdrawn after dusk.
- The 2/7th Battalion had lost 12 killed and 25 wounded in attacks on the Pimple.
- It was strange that these pointless attacks continued, despite the views held and orders given by force, division and brigade commanders.



# 8 May - Air

- Madang - Two enemy ships, shown by photos to be a 1000 ton MV and a small coaster with funnel aft, were attacked off Madang between 1400-1450/8 by Beaufighters and B.25's with a cover of 16 Lightnings.
- Eight Beaufighters first strafed both ships at 1410- 1415/8 and then ran over the aerodrome where they burned-up one of four grounded Zeros. They then met interception and were unable to conduct further strafing.
- Nine B25's at 1425-1450/8 dropped 26 500-lb 5 second delay bombs from masthead height. 3 direct hits were scored on the M.V., which was later seen sinking by the stern with the bow out of the water and 2 direct hits and four very close misses on the smaller vessel which was left burning.
- The Beaufighters reported that the deck and superstructure of the M/V were crowded with troops.
- All our aircraft encountered enemy fighters and, in combat, one Zero was destroyed and 2 others damaged. All our aircraft returned.



B-25 bomber 'Fitch's Bitch' and its ground crew, Port Moresby, Australian Papua, early 1943

# 8 May - Sea

- An Australian Coastwatcher on Kolombangara signalled that three Japanese destroyers were in Blackett Strait, one of them apparently on fire and low in the water. One of them, following an explosion, had gone aground on a reef and another was drifting in the strait, very low in the water and obviously crippled. The ships had evidently struck mines.
- Despite very bad weather 19 SBDs and 3 TBFs, escorted by 32 F4Us and 8 RNZAF P40s, took off from Guadalcanal to search for them.
- The TBFs and F4Us turned back because of the weather but the SBDs, escorted by the P40s, carried on and made contact with the enemy destroyers near Gizo Anchorage.
- The New Zealanders attacked first in two sections of four, flying line abreast. In the face of very heavy gunfire they strafed the destroyer which was aground, making their attack at water level and then leapfrogging over the destroyer and back to water level on the other side.
- As the second section made its strafing run the SBDs attacked the ship and scored a hit with a 1000-pounder, which set it on fire.
- The fighter pilots continued their run and attacked landing craft putting troops ashore on a nearby island. They estimated that their fire, delivered from close range, must have caused heavy casualties.
- The three Japanese destroyers, which had all hit mines sank. The *Kuroshio* sank immediately. *The Kagero* and *the Oyashio* sank after the air attack.





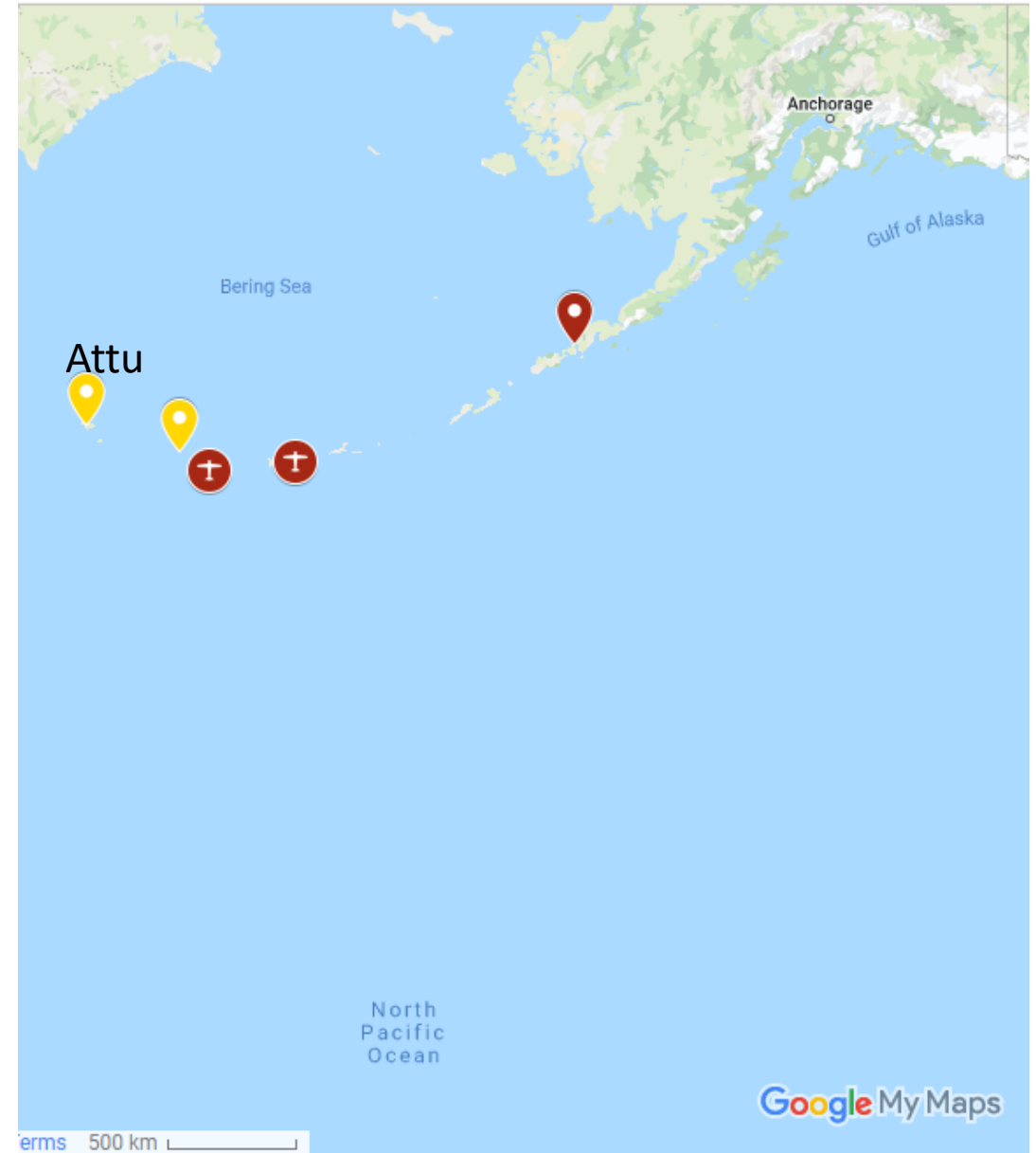
## 8 May - Sea

- In January 1943 Admiral English, Commander, Submarines, U.S. Pacific Fleet, was killed in a plane crash. Admiral Lockwood, commander of submarine operations in Fremantle was appointed to replace him
- On May 8, 1943, Lockwood (photo) made a list of torpedo failures gleaned from ULTRA intercepts.



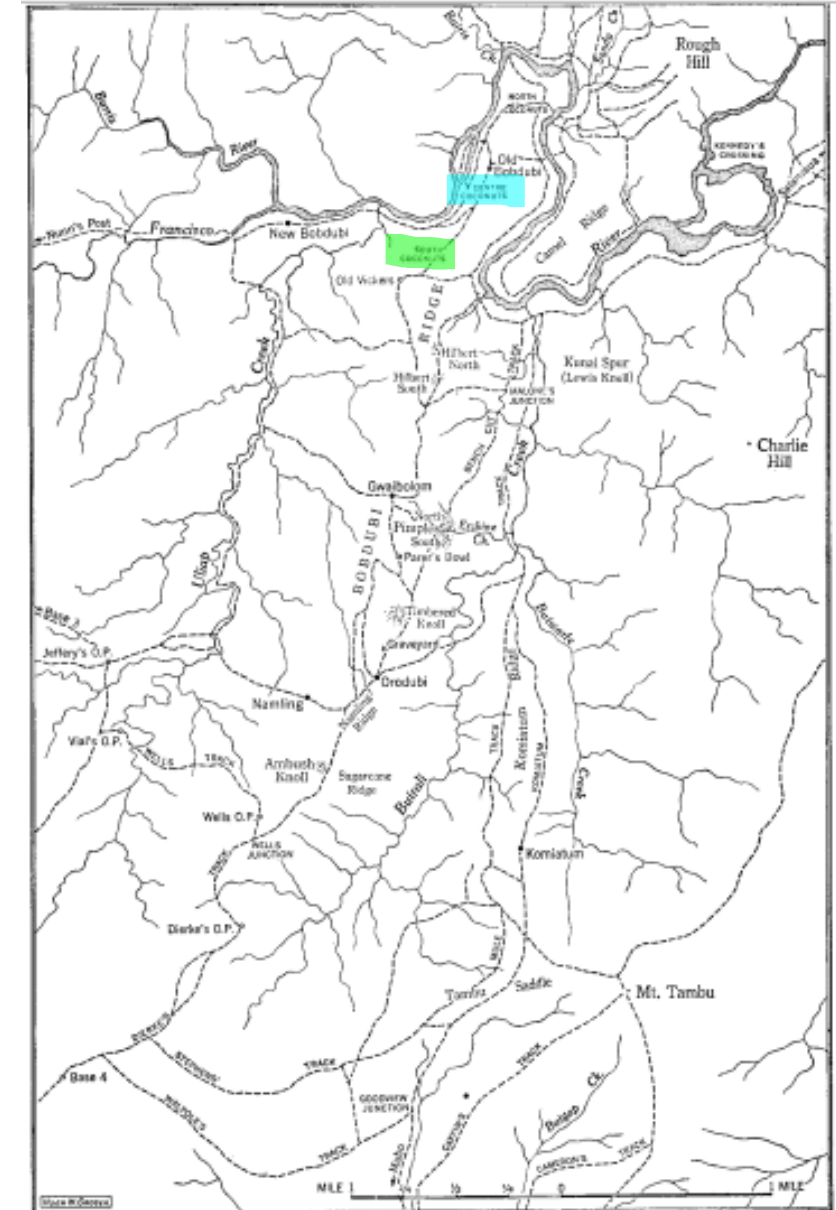
## 8 May - Aleutians

- Weather continued so inclement that D-day was postponed to the 11th.



# 8 May - Wau

- Stephens' men had been waiting for several days in trying conditions—in the unrelieved gloom of dense forest, on flat marshy ground, heavy with mosquitoes, and in earshot of the enemy.
- At dawn on 8<sup>th</sup> May about 60 reinforcements for the Centre and South Coconuts positions were seen approaching from Salamaua. The Australians went into action, killing about 20 and wounding many.
- So ambitious were Warfe's plans at this time, that Savage felt constrained to warn him: "You must appreciate that your troops must conform to a wider plan governing the whole area. Premature commitments in the Salamaua area could not be backed at present by an adequate force."



# 8 May - Burma

- Irwin (photo), Commander of the Eastern Army in India/Burma, wrote to Wavell, CinC India, on the 8th of May.
- “We are about to be faced with the difficult problem of how to explain away the loss of Buthidaung and Maungdaw. From the public’s point of view, undoubtedly it will be the commanders who ... will be held responsible for the defeat. In fact, although the commanders are far from being much good, the cause unquestionably lies in the inability of the troops to fight.”





# 9 May - Sea

- The auxiliary gunboat, Aso Maru, was torpedoed and sunk in the Sulu Sea south of Negros, Philippines (09°09'N 122°50'E) by USS Gar.
- On the night of 9 May 1943, Wahoo was proceeding up the coast with the intention of closing Kone Saki. Radar picked up two targets, soon identified as a large tanker and a freighter in column, evidently making the night run between ports without an escort. The submarine fired a spread of three torpedoes at the tanker and immediately thereafter a three torpedo spread at the freighter. Wahoo had two successful hits, and both ships went down; Takao Maru (3,200 long tons) and Jinmu Maru (1,200 long tons).
- Photos of Madang 1015/9 show a ship, probably the coaster, still burning and aground at Gum River.



# 9 May - Air

- On 9th May Millingimbi radar picked up aircraft approaching seventy miles out at 10.40 a.m.
- Flying Officer Delaporte, pilot of a Beaufighter based at Millingimbi on convoy-escort duty, was ordered to attempt an interception.
- At 11.10 seven enemy Sally-type bombers appeared and dropped "daisy cutters" on the mission, airfield and on shipping, killing a soldier, an aboriginal and ten air force men.
- Ten of the bombs fell on the runway which was not, however, seriously damaged.
- Delaporte climbed to 15,000 feet, by which time the enemy had dropped their bombs, then attacked out of the sun, turning on to the stern of one of the Sallys.
- His cannon fired only for two seconds having become clogged with fine sand grit from the dusty, unsealed airfield.
- Although he chased and easily caught the bombers, the cannon would not fire again.
- Bladin ordered six Spitfires of No. 457 Squadron to Millingimbi to protect the base.



Mitsubishi Ki-21 army bomber allied reporting name "Sally".

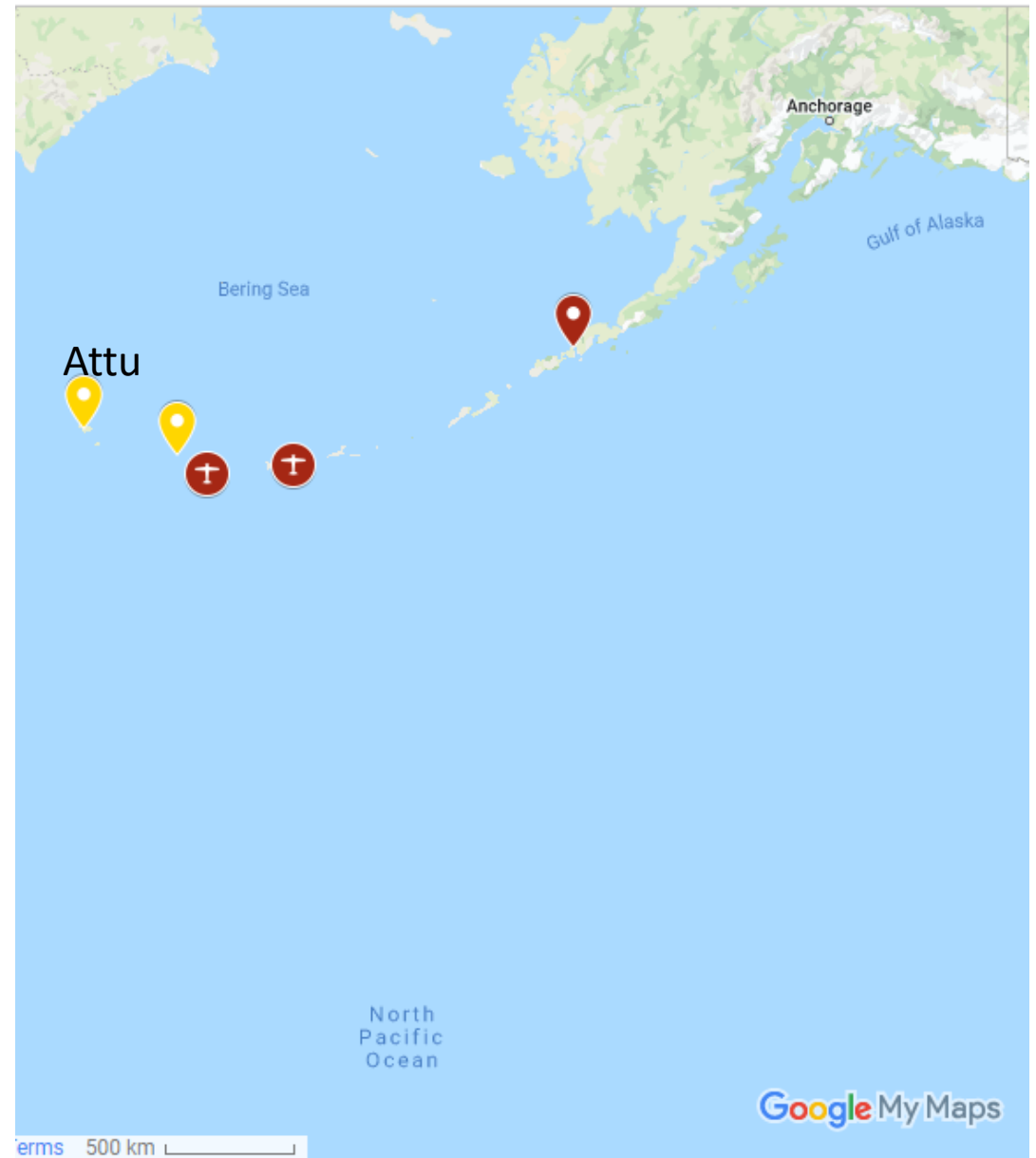
# 9 May - Sea

- During the enemy air attack on Millingimbi by 7 bombers morning 9/5 "ISLANDER" (1600 tons) sustained a near miss causing slight damage. N.O.I.C. Darwin reports that the ship is entirely seaworthy. "ISLANDER" escorted by "LATROBE" is en route Darwin to Thursday Island via Goulburn Island, Millingimbi and Wessel Island.



## 9 May - Aleutians

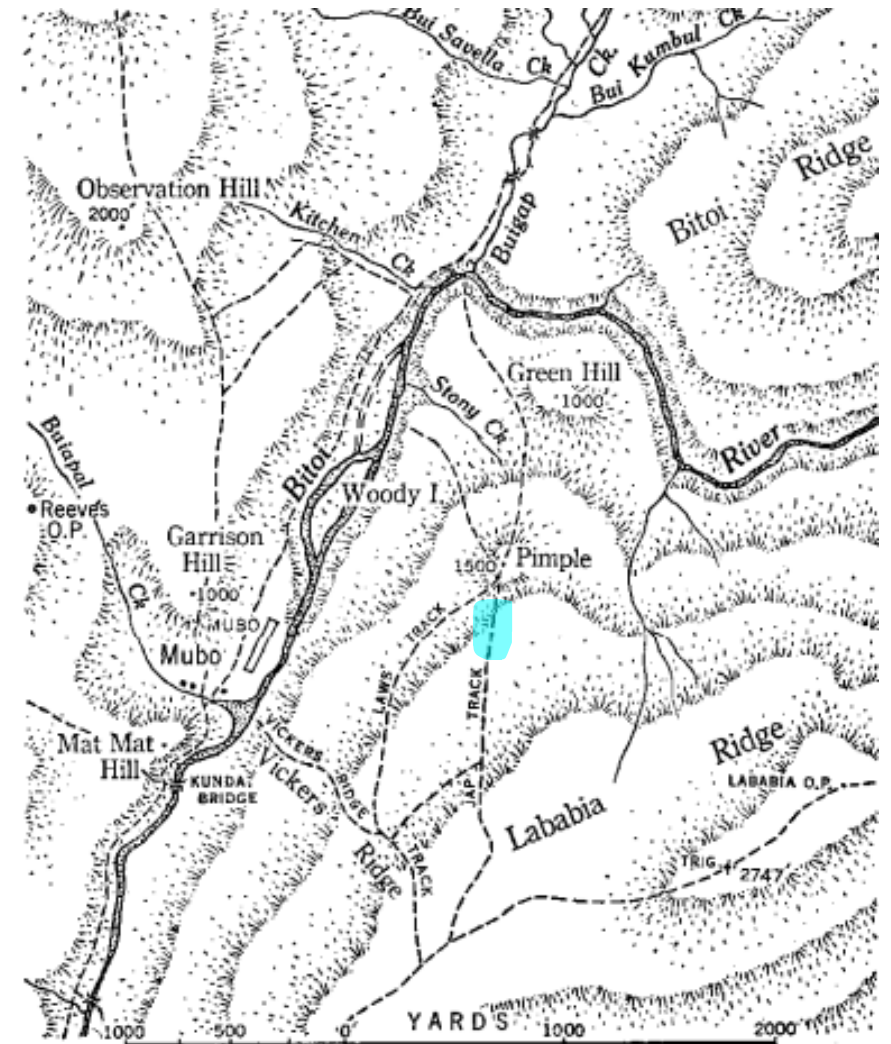
- Weather continued so inclement that D-day was postponed to the 11th.
- The bad weather also seriously reduced the air and naval strikes against Attu.





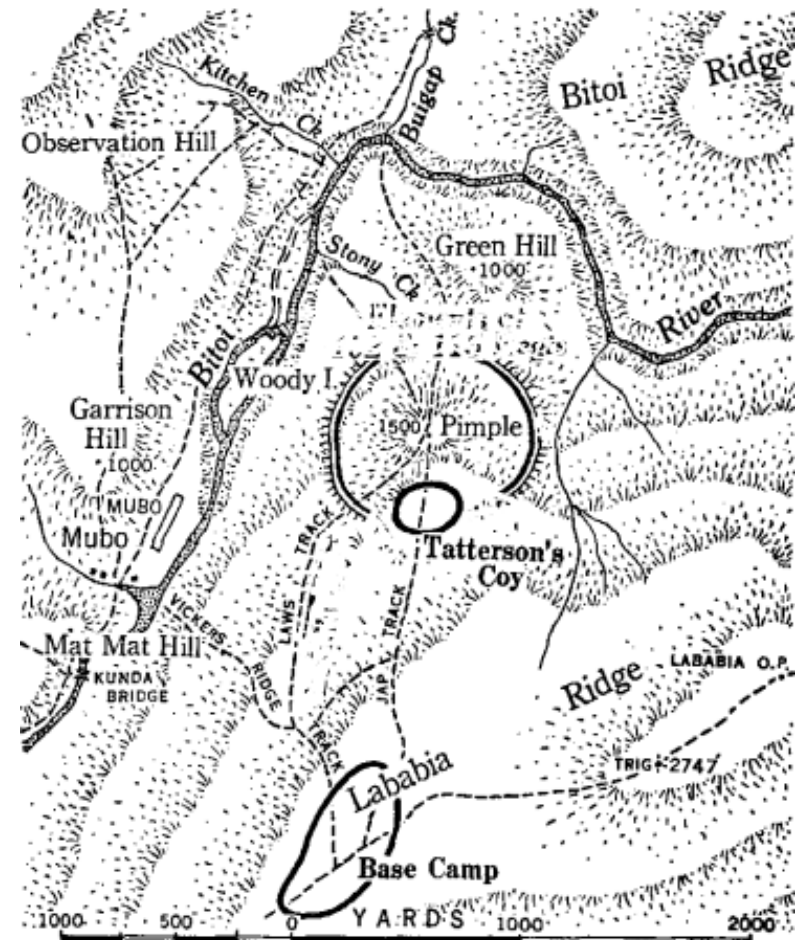
# 9 May - Wau

- At 8.15 a.m. on 9th May a booby-trap suddenly exploded in front of the defensive perimeter of Tatterson's company, 400 yards south of the Pimple on the Jap Track. A reconnaissance patrol investigated while the company stood to.
- It was 15 minutes before movement was noticed and another 15 before the enemy opened up on the company's right flank. At first Tatterson thought that the shooting came from a Japanese patrol, but as it increased he realised that this was a strong attack; the enemy made no attempt to conceal his movements and seemed to be feeling for weak spots. Most of his fire was inaccurate and struck the trees up to 12 feet from the ground.
- Guinn and his runner, carrying ammunition forward, arrived at Tatterson's rear platoon. Realising that the Japanese were trying to encircle the company Guinn rang Tatterson and instructed him to send a small force back along the track to keep it open.



# 9 May - Wau

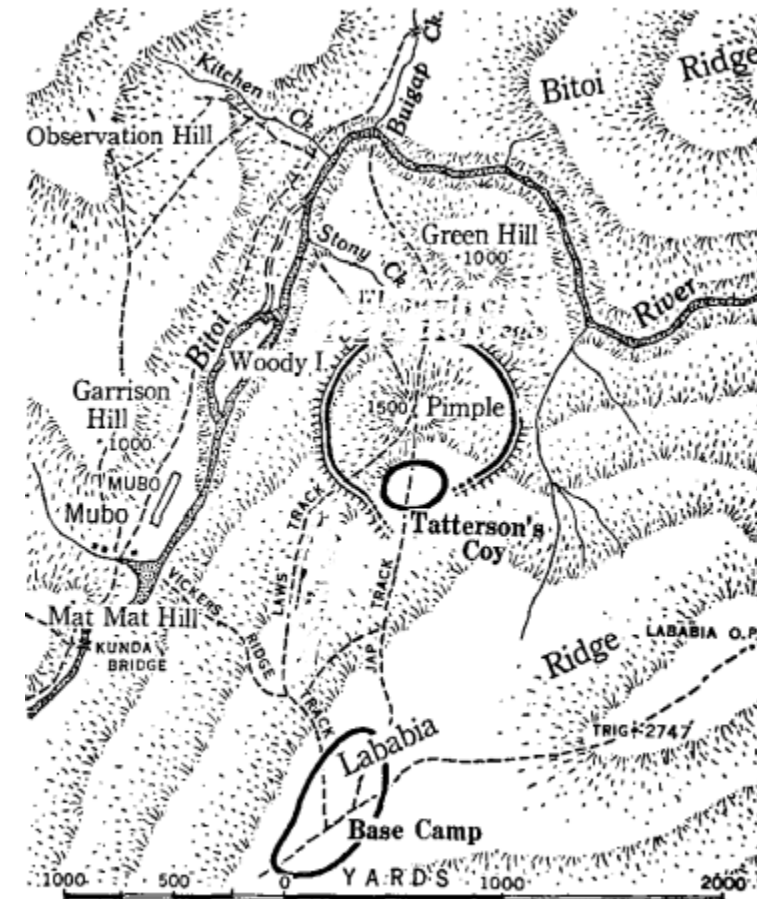
- Japanese progress was slow and steady. While Guinn was talking to Tatterson by telephone at 3.30 p.m. the enemy cut the track and severed the telephone lines to the rear.
- Guinn sent a platoon under Sergeant Hubble forward to assist the encircled company and occupy a defensive position in its rear and bridge the dangerous gap.
- An enemy force astride Tatterson's line of communication pinned down Hubble's platoon. Lieutenant Newton's platoon was sent out to extricate Hubble.
- Major O'Hare's 1st Mountain Battery then shelled the Pimple area which was as near as the guns dared shoot because the forward company had been close to the Pimple and might have moved since losing communication.
- That night (9 May) Guinn signalled Moten that he was confident of restoring the position in the morning.



Encirclement of Tatterson's company, 2/7th Battalion, 9th May

# 9 May - Wau

- On the afternoon of 9th May the isolated company withstood a "fairly solid attack" (as Tatterson called it) from its right flank. Australian booby-traps, good fire control, and the judicious use of grenades forced the enemy to withdraw with casualties.
- The enemy was keeping the forward platoon and right flank engaged while attempting to crush the Australians with a stronger force from the high ground to the right rear. By 4.50 p.m. the Japanese had set up two medium machine-guns in this area.
- At dusk the forward platoon laid telephone lines to company headquarters. "This proved to be a great help," wrote Tatterson in his report, "as movement especially to the forward platoon in daylight was not healthy."



Encirclement of Tatterson's company, 2/7th  
Battalion, 9th May

# 9 May - Air

- On 9th May eight Beaufighters joined ten Mitchell bombers of the Fifth Air Force on a raid to Madang where they were to attack Japanese aircraft on the airfield with cannon fire.
- The squadrons made a rendezvous over Saidor, which was occupied by the enemy, and, as a result of this, the enemy defences were alert when the aircraft arrived over their target.
- The Japanese fired heavily with anti-aircraft guns, and, just as the Beaufighters attacked the airfield, ten enemy fighter aircraft intercepted them, damaging Flying Officer Nicholson's machine.
- A squadron of American fighters had been ordered to protect the Beaufighters and Mitchells but did not appear. The Beaufighters therefore completed one attack on the airfield and then attacked a large ship crowded with enemy troops.
- The Japanese fighters pursued the Beaufighters as far as Saidor on the way back to Moresby but were outdistanced at a speed of between 275 and 300 miles per hour.





# 10 May - Brisbane

- General Herring (portrait) had left New Guinea for leave late in January. On 10th May he returned to Brisbane and there conferred with staff officers of Blamey's Advanced Land Headquarters and with Admiral Barbey, the commander of the American Amphibious Forces.



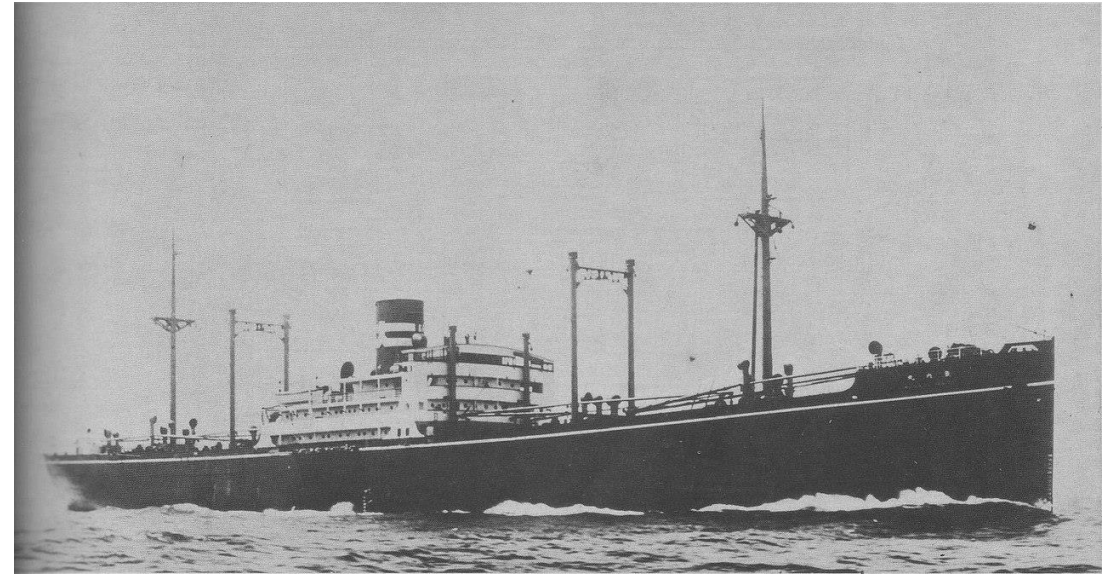
AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

ART22563



# 10 May - Sea

- The Japanese transport, Kinai Maru (8,360 tons, 1930), was torpedoed and damaged in the Pacific 243 nautical miles (450 km) east of Saipan by USS Plunger. Only one crew was killed. About 400 troops and passengers were rescued by the ammunition ship, Tatsutake Maru.
- Tatsutake Maru was itself torpedoed and sunk some hours later by Plunger at 14°29'N 149°23'E. Four crewmen and many former passengers of Kinai Maru were killed.
- Kinai Maru was shelled and sunk by Plunger the next day (14°33'N 149°23'E).



Kinai Maru

# 10 May 43 - Aleutians

- Kinkaid (photo), the commander of Northern Pacific Force, pulled together an imposing armada to support the invasion of Attu.
- In addition to an attack force of 3 battleships, a small aircraft carrier, and 7 destroyers for escorting and providing fire support for the Army landing force, he had 2 covering groups, composed of several cruisers, destroyers, and submarines, for early detection of a possible challenge by the Japanese Northern Area Fleet.
- Reinforcing the naval support, the Eleventh Air Force was to provide 54 bombers and 128 fighters for the operation, holding back a third of the bomber force for use against ships of the Japanese fleet.



# 10 May - Aleutians

- It was learned that an important enemy convoy, protected by a strong naval force, was probably approaching the Aleutians from the west.
- Capt. Buchanan was ordered to take the transports and cargo vessels of the task force and proceed with six destroyers on an easterly course, while the Pennsylvania and two destroyers rendezvoused with the Idaho group.
- The battleships made contact with the Southern Covering Group and searched for the enemy throughout the 9th and 10th, but nothing was found.
- At 1800 on the 10th the battleships rendezvoused with the transports again in a dense fog, while the light cruiser group continued its patrol.



USS Pennsylvania, 31 May 1934.

# 10 May - Air

- Five of these Spitfires were ordered into the air next morning (10<sup>th</sup>) when the radar operators reported "unidentified" aircraft approaching.
- When the Spitfires reached 14,000 feet they saw two Beaufighters which had been sent with four others to Taberfane on what proved an abortive mission.
- The Spitfires returned to base.
- While the Spitfires were coming in to land another warning was passed to them of more "unidentified" aircraft approaching on the same course as the returning Beaufighters.
- There was no system of fighter control at Millingimbi so Flying Officer Hamilton decided to stay on the ground and use his aircraft radio to keep in touch with the other fighters.
- The radar station telephoned information to the signals hut at the runways intersection. The messages were then relayed by a chain of six men to Hamilton in his Spitfire who passed them on to the Spitfires in the air.
- Six Zekes attacked the Spitfires at 9.30 a.m. while they were still climbing and not properly formed up. The Spitfires were forced to engage at the enemy's best height. A furious dog-fight ensued in which Pilot Officers Morse and Watson each claimed a Zeke destroyed.



Milingimbi Airfield 30 July 1941 - 6 Squadron photo via ozatwar.

# 10 May - Air

- Three other Zekes made a series of strafing attacks on the runway.
- Three Beaufighters on the ground were attacked. One caught fire and was destroyed and the other two damaged.
- Another Beaufighter was attacked by a Hap shortly after taking off. The pilot did not realise he was being attacked until he saw tracer bullets flying past him. He then opened the throttle and took evasive action.
- A damaged Spitfire (Pilot Officer Little) landed at Millingimbi not knowing it was under strafing attack but immediately took off again when he discovered what was happening.
- For ten minutes between a height of 300 feet and the ground he engaged a Zeke in a furious battle of steep turns and dives. The fight ended in the Spitfire crashing into the ground.
- It somersaulted three or four times. Both wings and the airscrew were ripped off, yet Little escaped serious injury and walked back to the airfield three miles away.
- P/O Little was credited with a 'probable'.



This photograph of Pilot Officer Bruce Little of 457 Sqn graced the front page of official RAAF magazine Wings dated May 11th 1943<sub>2</sub>



# 10 May - Sea

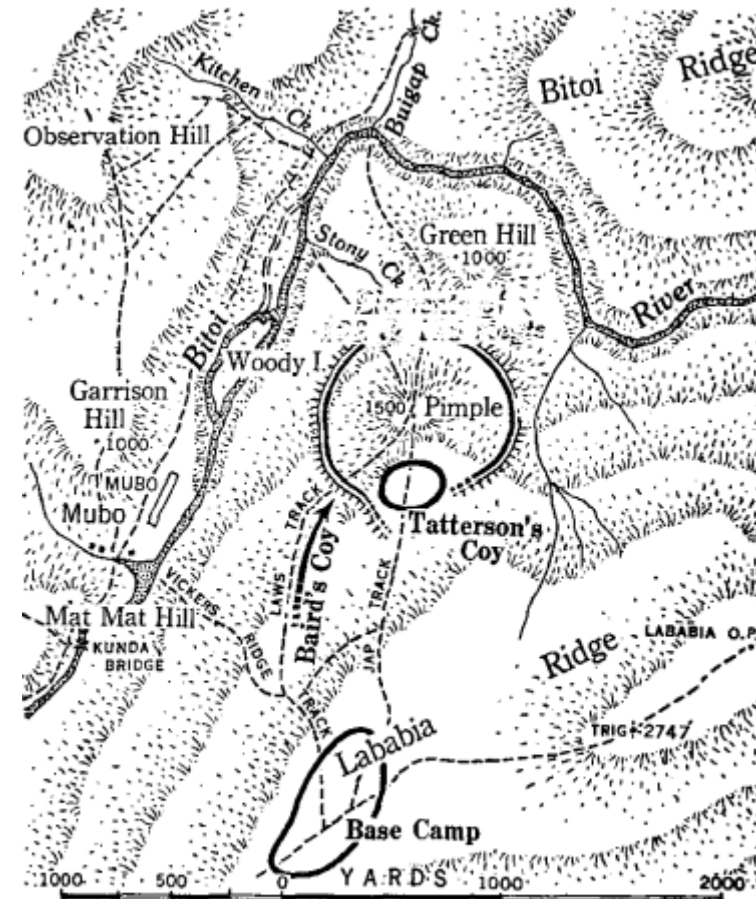
- During the raid on Millmaringimbi by 9 Zero's at 09.28 on the 10th, the enemy attacked the store ship Maroubra, (70 tons) carrying 30 tons of R.A.A.F supplies.
- Their cannon set the vessel on fire and it was destroyed.
- "LATROBE" and "ISLANDER" which were strafed by 3 Zero's near Millmaringimbi at 09.49 on the 10th were not damaged.
- A Spitfire engaged an enemy float-plane which was attacking the ships and this aircraft crashed into the sea.



HMAS Maroubra sinking after being attacked off Millmaringimbi on 10 May 1943

# 10 May - Wau

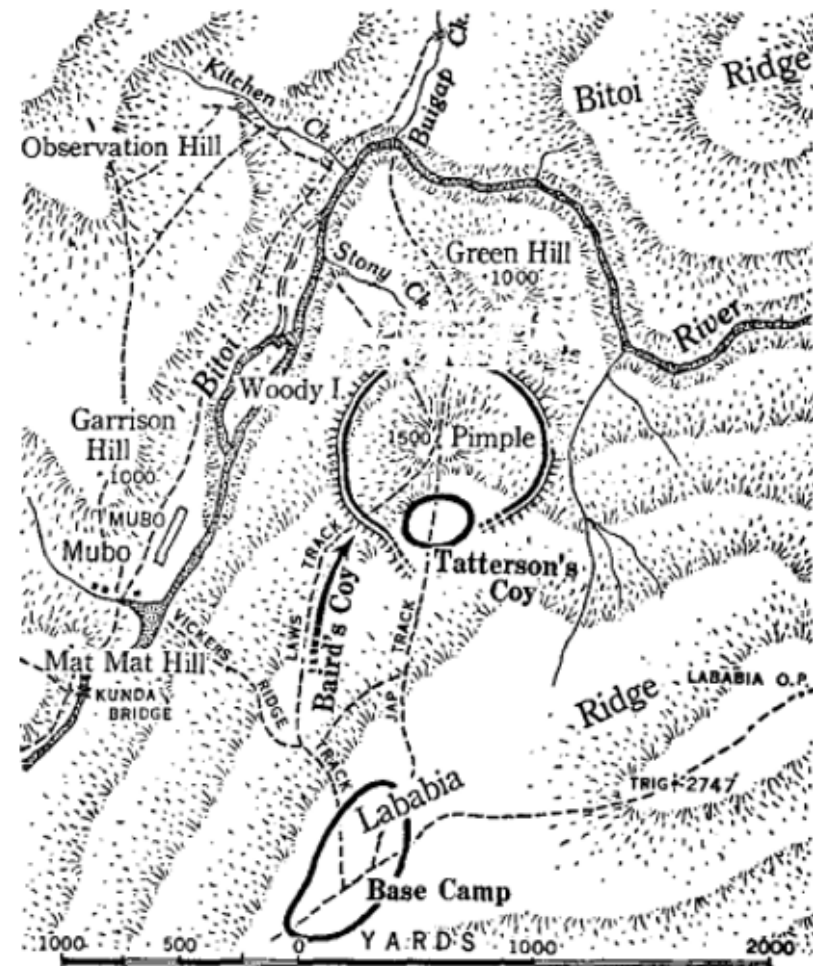
- Next morning (10 May) two fighting patrols sent out by Captain Baird, who was in charge at the Lababia camp, were unable to break the enemy ring.
- The Japanese appeared to be in strength on all sides of Tatterson, and it seemed that the enemy on Observation Hill were being used to aid the Japanese from the Pimple in a general attack on the Australians in the Mubo area.
- At 8.15 p.m. on 10th May Guinn admitted in a signal to Moten that the situation was "grim". He emphasised that one battalion was too small to carry out effectively the role assigned to the 2/7th.
- Moten urged that a strong position should be maintained at the Lababia camp and that relieving parties should be properly coordinated under resolute leaders with good communications.



Encirclement of Tatterson's company, 2/7th Battalion, 9th-10th May

# 10 May - Wau

- Next morning an attack from the rear was beaten off by Tatterson's men.
- In the afternoon of the 10th the enemy made his most determined attack, again from the rear. Using all his weapons and increasing the din by loud orders, yelling and screaming, he poured in heavy fire for an hour and a half.
- Only his riflemen got in close and the entrenched defenders drove them back.
- The next attack, later in the day, was beaten off by steady and accurate fire on a slightly smaller scale from the same position.



Encirclement of Tatterson's company, 2/7th Battalion, 9th-10th May

# 10 May - Wau

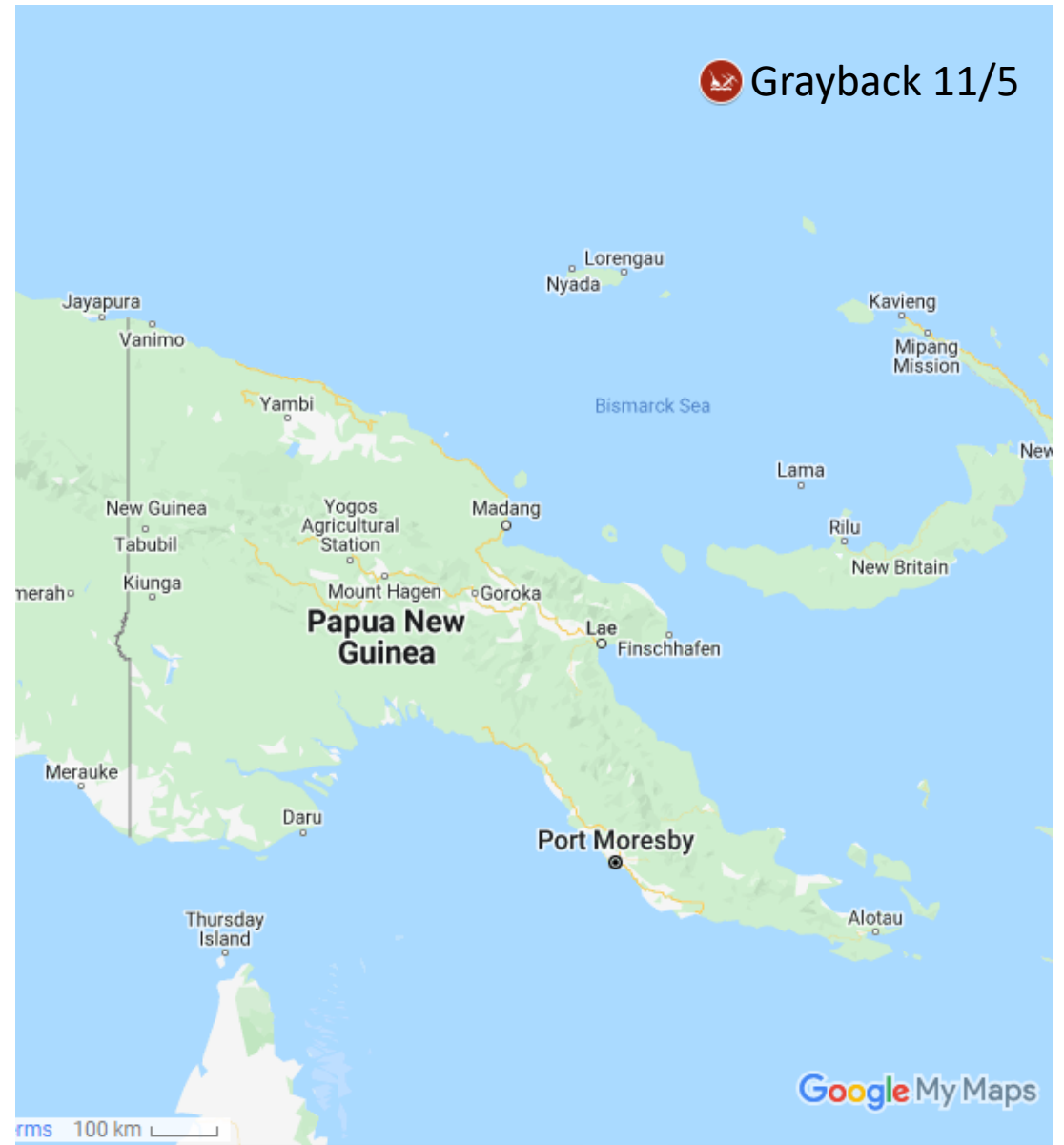
- Major Warfe had been tempted to make an all-out assault on north Bobdubi Ridge, but his orders were to avoid casualties. He was content, therefore, to keep the enemy under constant pressure by harassing fire from Vickers, Brens and 2-inch mortars, and occasionally to carry out grenade and sub-machine-gun raids.
- On the night of 9th-10th May Lieutenant Egan carried out a "terror" raid on the enemy, using flares, screaming and yells.



A portrait of Warfe in 1943 by official war artist Ivor Hele.

# 11 May - Sea

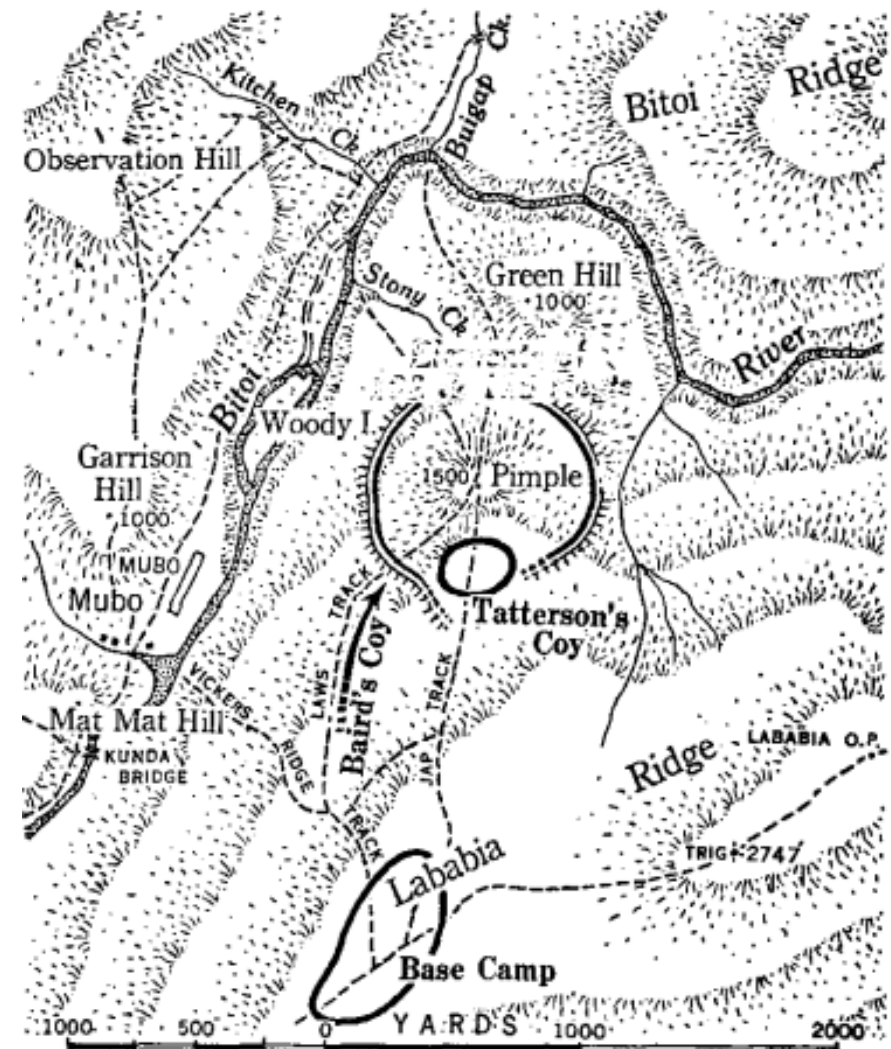
- After departing Brisbane on her seventh war patrol on 25 April, USS Grayback intercepted a convoy, whose position had been radioed to her by Albacore (SS-218), on 11 May, north east of Manus Island at (00°40'N 148°55'E).
- In a night surface attack, Grayback fired a spread of six torpedoes at the seven freighters and their three escorts.
- The three escorts charged, and she had to go deep to elude the attacking enemy. She was credited with the sinking of cargo ship Yodogawa Maru.





# 11 May - Wau

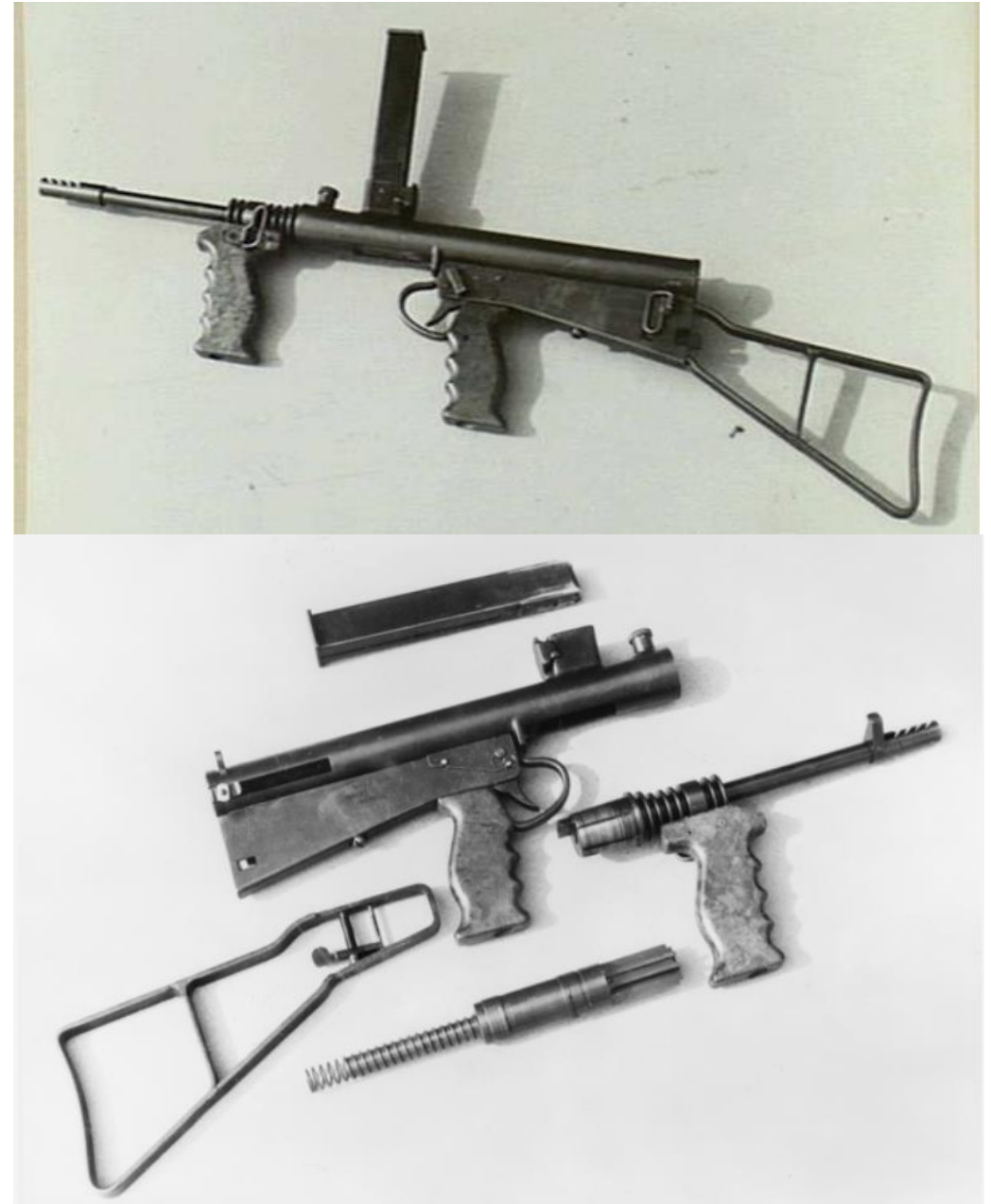
- On 11th May Guinn watched the departure from the track junction of Baird's relieving force of about 60 men, accompanied by Major O'Hare as F.O.O., with orders to "blast a way through even if it takes all your ammunition".
- At 2 p.m. the welcome news was received that they had reached Tattersson.
- The relieving force found the men in the best of spirits and full of fight.
- Private Waters, a Number 1 Bren gunner had been subjected to some of the fiercest enemy fire during the action. On the afternoon of 9th May three enemy machine-gunners engaged in a shooting match with the Australian Bren gunner and, in spite of damage to themselves, they managed to shoot away one of the Bren's bipod legs and the sights, but this did not prevent Waters from continuing to inflict casualties until on the morning of 10th May enemy fire damaged his flash eliminator and wounded him in the arm, forcing him to hand over to his Number 2.
- Guinn reported that a conservative estimate of Japanese casualties was 100, including 50 killed. Australian casualties were about 12.



**Encirclement of Tattersson's company, 2/7th Battalion, 9th-11th May**

# 11 May - Wau

- At this time a few Owen sub-machine-guns were sent forward from LHQ accompanied by a memorandum saying that they were to be tested in the forward areas.
- It was not considered by LHQ that the OSMG would be as popular as the TSMG . Deeming that the men were the best judges, Savage distributed the Owens among the forward sections.
- He was surprised when all sections testing the Owen preferred it to the Tommy-gun.
- The men's reasons were that the Owen was handier to use, it had fewer working parts and, above all, 130 rounds of 9-mm ammunition represented the same weight as 100 rounds of .45 ammunition for the Tommy-gun.
- Thus the Owen came into its own and rapidly superseded the Tommy.
- Photos: THE VARIOUS PARTS OF AN OWEN GUN. THESE FIT TOGETHER BY SIMPLE BAYONET CATCHES and above THE ASSEMBLED GUN.



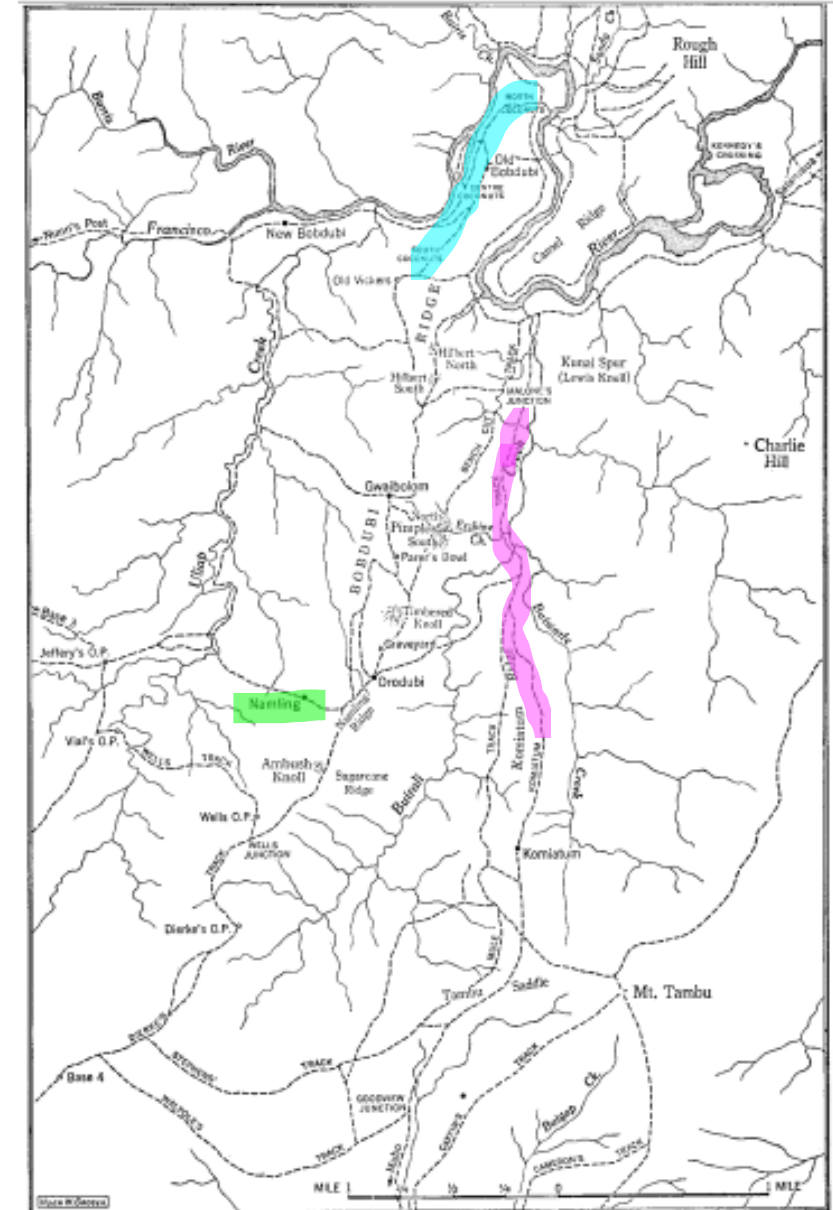
# 11 May - Wau

- From top to bottom:
- A 9mm Owen Mark 1,
- a .45 inch Thompson M1928A1 and
- a 9mm Austen Mark 1 submachine gun.



# 11 May - Wau

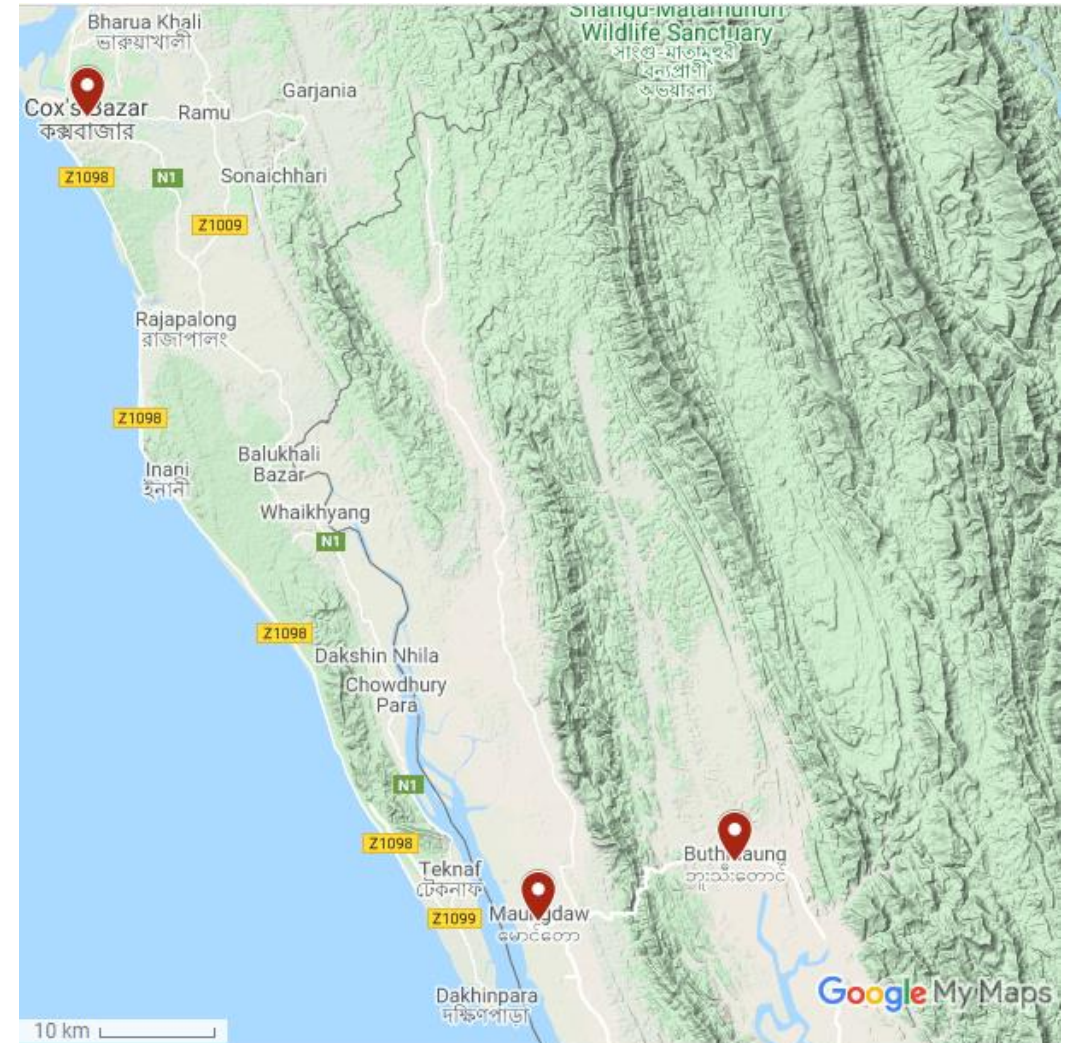
- On 11th May on Bobdubi ridge the enemy seemed unnaturally quiet and a patrol found the entire Coconuts vacated. It was promptly occupied.
- The 2/3rd Independent Company now held Bobdubi Ridge, if extremely lightly, from the Coconuts in the north to Namling in the south.
- Determined to make the most of the situation Warfe turned his attention to the Komiatum Track. Late on 11th May parties of Japanese were observed moving south towards Mubo. Lieutenant Erskine's Vickers gun accounted for five of them.
- The enemy retaliated with heavy machine-gun fire from Komiatum Ridge. Warfe promptly moved the sappers under cover of darkness to a new position near Gwaibolom.





# 11 May - Burma

- Irwin ordered Maungdaw at least to be held but Slim and Lomax decided that the port was not prepared for a siege and that Japanese artillery could dominate the Naf River on which the port stood, preventing reinforcements and supplies reaching it.
- They also feared that the exhausted troops could not be relied upon to defend the port resolutely.
- On 11 May, the port was abandoned and XV Corps fell back to Cox's Bazaar in India, where the open rice-growing country gave the advantage to British artillery.
- The monsoon also descended at this point (Arakan receives 200 inches per annum), dissuading the Japanese from following up.





# 11 May - Burma

- A liaison officer was sent from Slim's headquarters during the first half of May. He visited 4, 6 and 71 brigades and came away with the impression, gained from personal observation and conversations with senior and junior officers, NCOs, men and an escaped POW, that on this front the Japanese soldier, with the notable exception of the gunners, was definitely superior to the troops forming the bulk of our forces in this area.
- “Outstanding was the fact that our troops were either exhausted, browned off or both, and that both Indian and British troops did not have their hearts in the campaign. The former were obviously scared of the Jap and generally demoralised by the nature of the campaign. i.e. the thick jungle and the subsequent blindness of movement, the multiple noises of the jungle at night, the terror stories of Jap brutality, the undermining influence of fever, and the mounting list of failures; the latter also fear the jungle, hate the country and see no object in fighting for it, and also have the strong feeling that they are taking part in a forgotten campaign in which no one in authority is taking any real interest ...
- To sum up the man to man situation - the seasoned and highly trained Jap troops are confronted by a force which, though impressive on paper, is little better, in a large number of cases, than a rather unwilling band of levies. This cardinal factor, especially in jungle warfare, completely nullifies our estimated 5 to 3 superiority.
- It was most noticeable that the majority of C.O.s and the staff of 26 Division had little or no confidence in the men under their command and that one and all considered the fault lay in training and lack of training, i.e. troops being sent to a theatre of war for which they had no practical preparation whatever, together with a large percentage of almost raw recruits.

# 11 May - Air

- Merauke - 9 enemy medium bombers raided Merauke town 1033-1047/11. Some 90 bombs were dropped destroying an ammunition dump, one truck, some fuel and causing a few casualties.
- Portrait is of VX81616 Corporal, later Lance Sergeant (LSgt) Adrian Leslie Dunne of Tocumwal, NSW. Enlisting in June 1942, LSgt Dunne served with the 20 Motor Transport Regiment in the Pacific campaign, He was killed in action at Merauke, Dutch New Guinea, on 12 November 1944, aged 25.
- Even in areas far behind the ground action the risk from random air attacks remained.
- At 0925/11 two enemy floatplanes attacked "ISLANDER" escorted by "LATROBE" 20 miles W.S.W. Cape Wessel, but missed.
- A Beaufighter, piloted by Flight Lieutenant Madden, was over the corvette at the time giving cover and it attacked the float-plane.
- An extract from the report reads:
- "Pilot gave the Beaufighter full throttle and attacked the enemy floatplane which turned east and then north, taking evasive action, and heading into the storm for cover. Beaufighter at a height of 1,000 feet made an attack between 4 and 5 o'clock, giving from 300 yards a burst which hit the engine, which burst into flames; then closed into 150 yards and gave another burst knocking large chunks out of the fuselage. Enemy floatplane went for about 300 yards and then dived into the sea in flames, falling between two ships. . ."



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- Thanks for your attention.
- That's the end of term.
- I am back again on 26 April.