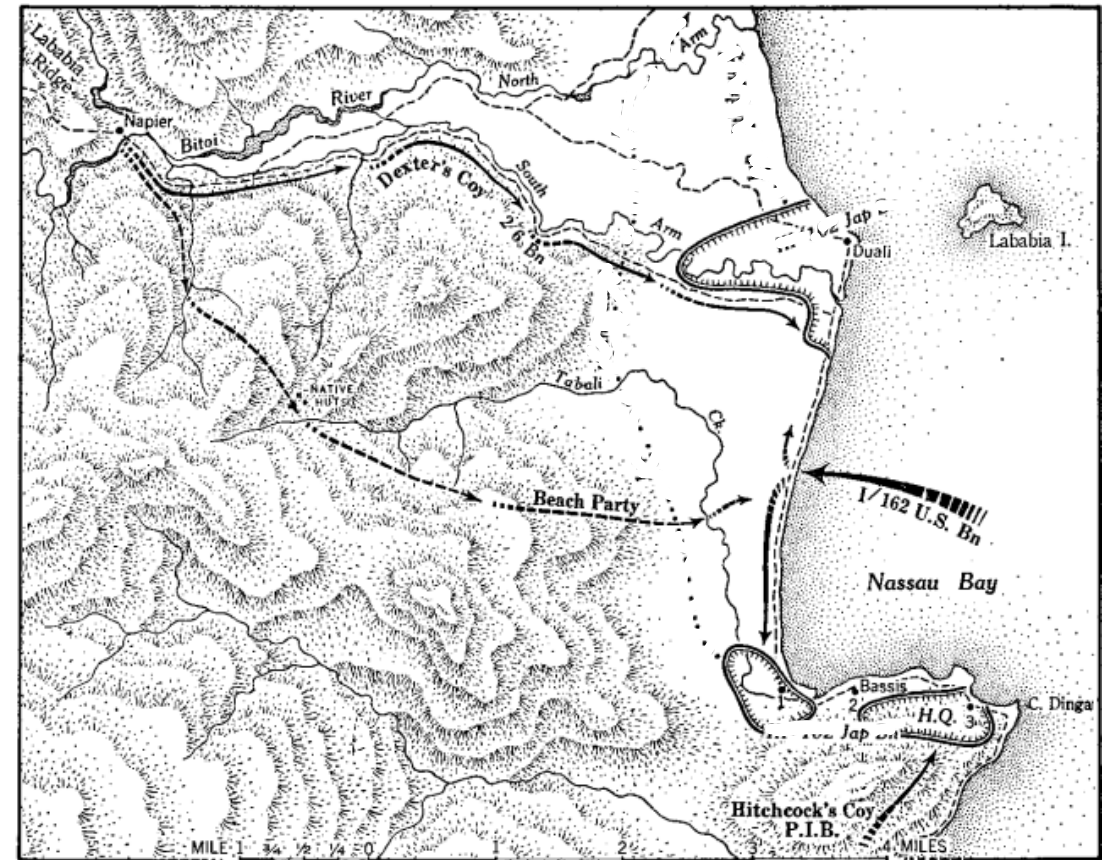


Australia's War in the Pacific 1943



15 June - Wau

- The offensive was to take place in three phases:
- first an American battalion group would establish a bridgehead round Nassau Bay on the night 29th-30th June;
- second, a battalion of the 15th Brigade would capture Bobdubi Ridge while small forces would raid the Malolo and Kela Hill area to distract attention from the attack at Bobdubi;
- third, a battalion of the 17th Brigade and the American battalion group would attack Mubo, not later than 6th July.



15 June - Wau

- The American battalion to carry out the first phase was the I/162nd Battalion (Lieut-Colonel Harold Taylor). This would be the 162nd's first action. It had landed at Port Moresby in February 1943 and later relieved the 163rd in the Buna-Sanananda area.
- At the end of February it began leapfrogging up the coast using mainly surfboats and trawlers, and looking for any Japanese who had survived the Buna fighting.
- By 4th April Taylor had established a defensive position at Morobe. Soon afterwards they were relieved by the III/162nd and moved south to the Waria River for intensive training.
- Captain Hitchcock's company of the Papuan Infantry Battalion was attached to MacKechnie Force, which included detachments of artillery, signals, etc.
- The 2nd Engineer Amphibian Brigade would handle transport between Morobe and the beachhead.



15 June - Air

- New Georgia - 16 Dauntless, 12 Avengers covered by 24 Wildcats attacked Baeroko at 0745/15 starting fires and explosions.
- Choiseul - Sagigai was attacked by 18 Avengers, 12 Dauntless covered by 24 Corsairs at 0830/15, Considerable damage was reported as a result of the attack.
- Rabaul - Lakunai aerodrome was bombed by 18 Liberators and one attacked Rapopo before dawn 15/6. Many fires and explosions were observed at Lakunai and several small fires at Rapopo, Ineffective interception by at least three twin-engined fighters was reported at Lakunai and by one aircraft at Rapopo.
- Lae - Buildings and Installations in the Boana - Maiapit area were strafed by 7 Beaufighters 0950-1010/15.
- Dobodura - Nine Japanese aircraft attacked evening 15/6 damaging groundair communication facilities.
- Kendari - The aerodrome was attacked by 8 Liberators night 15/6. Buildings and one A.A. position were hit, and several fires and numerous explosions started.

16 June - Sea

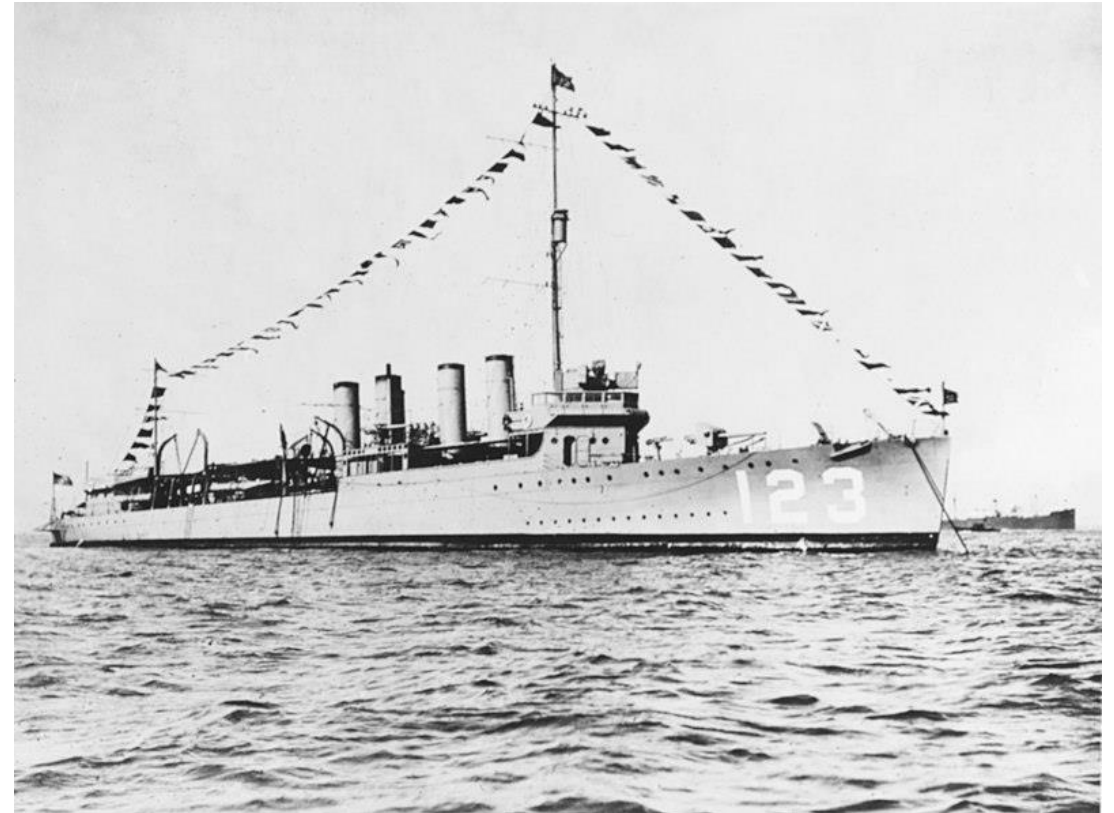
- In “GP55” Portmar (5643 tons, 1919) had straggled badly, and when the convoy was 35 miles east of Smoky Cape at 5.15 p.m. on the 16th, she was trying to pick up station, and was just passing to port of LST469 to take up position ahead of her.
- She was slightly abaft the beam of the L.S.T. when that ship was struck by a torpedo on the starboard quarter, and those in Portmar saw another torpedo approaching from abaft the starboard beam.
- Before evading action was effective this torpedo struck Portmar in the wake of No. 1 hatch. The ship, with a cargo including petrol and ammunition, burst into flames, was abandoned, and sank in about ten minutes with the loss of two lives.
- Seventy-one survivors were picked up by Deloraine, while Warrnambool and Kalgoorlie carried out depth-charge attacks until contact was lost.
- LST469 though badly damaged and immobile—and with 26 killed and missing and 17 injured—remained afloat. Deloraine took her in tow, but deteriorating weather parted the tow, and Deloraine took the Portmar survivors and the L.S.T's wounded to Coff's Harbour, leaving the L.S.T. in Kalgoorlie's charge, while Warrnambool rejoined the convoy.



USS LST-469 during the landing at Lingayen Gulf on 9 January 1945

16 June - Sea

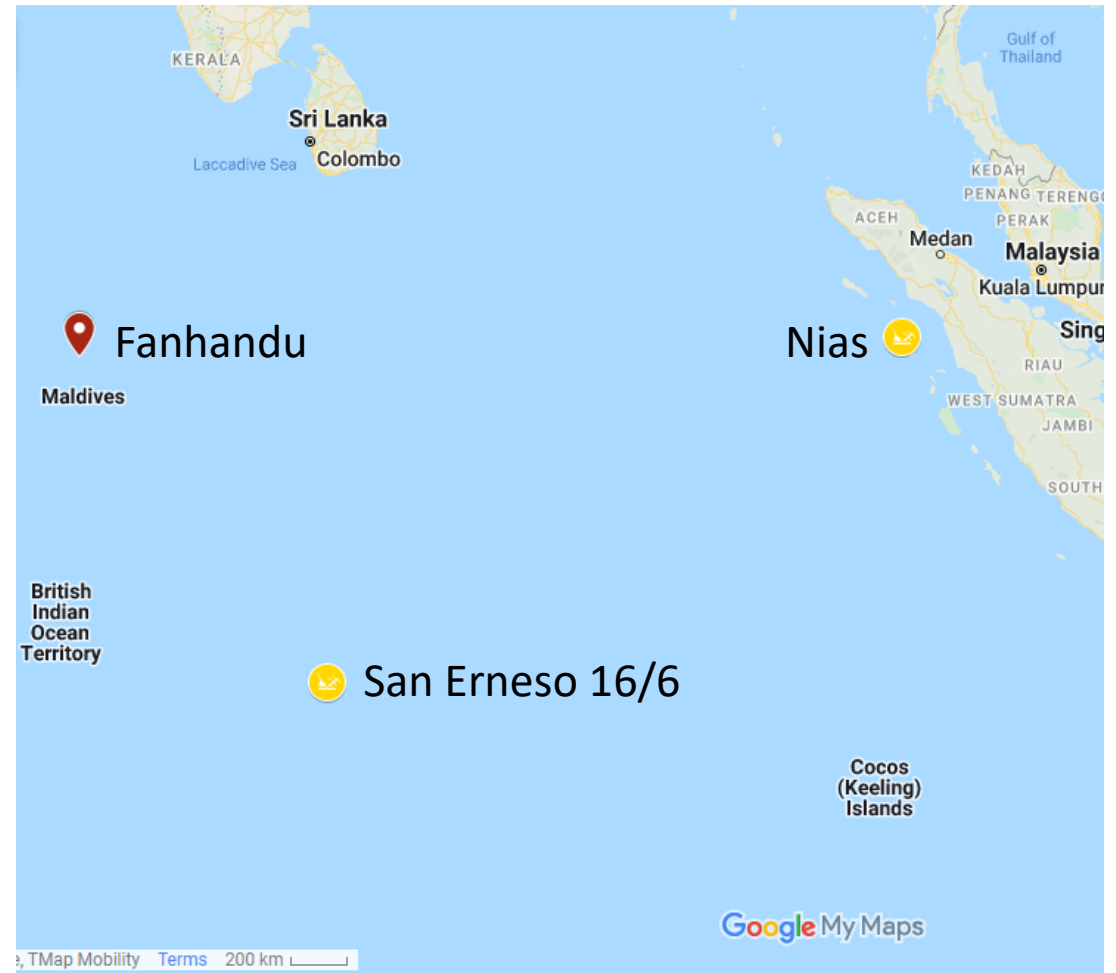
- The US minelayers "PREBLE" and "GAMBLE" en route Sydney to Noumea were diverted to the area of the attack to provide assistance and carry out an A/S search.
- The tug Reserve was dispatched from Brisbane in the evening of the 16th to assist.



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.

16 June - Sea

- The British tanker, San Ernesto, was torpedoed and shelled in the Indian Ocean south east of the Chagos Archipelago (09°18'S 80°20'E) by a Japanese submarine.
- Her master and 22 crewmen are rescued by Alcoa Pointer (United States).
- Twelve other survivors sail in their lifeboats to Fanhandu Island, The Maldives.
- The abandoned ship drifts for 2,000 nautical miles before grounding on Nias Island, Sumatra (01°15'N 97°15'E).



16 June – Sea

- Ararat was laid down by Evans Deakin & Co in Brisbane on 6 July 1942.
- She was launched on 20 February 1943 by the wife of Arthur Fadden, then leader of the Australian Country Party and the Federal Opposition, and commissioned on 16 June 1943.



Photograph of Australian Bathurst class corvette HMAS Ararat.

16 June - Air

- A squadron of Spitfires (No. 79) which had just been formed in Australia and two squadrons of Kittyhawks (Nos. 76 and 77 Squadrons) were ordered to Goodenough Island to support the landings on Woodlark and Kiriwina.
- Hudsons, another Kittyhawk squadron (No. 75) and Beauforts of the R.A.A.F., operating from Milne Bay, were to provide anti-submarine patrols and protection from enemy aircraft for Allied shipping convoys carrying the assault forces.
- The following day (16 June) 76 and 79 arrived on Goodenough. Hewitt had established the headquarters of No. 9 Group at Milne Bay and No. 73 Wing headquarters, commanded by Group Captain McLachlan was set up at Goodenough to control the three R.A.A.F. fighter squadrons based at Vivigani airfield.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

OG0221

VIVIGANI, GOODENOUGH ISLAND, PAPUA. C. 1943-11. THE OFFICE AND DARKROOMS AND VEHICLE USED BY AN RAAF PUBLIC RELATIONS PARTY.

16 June - Wau

- On 16th June Warfe received word that the party had run into a booby-trap, Menzies and three others being wounded. Menzies must have reached the scene of earlier operations in the Mubo area.
- The booby-trap encountered was made with Australian grenades and Australian trip wire.
- Thirty-two native stretcher bearers were required to carry the wounded to Missim.
- The medical officer, Captain Street, met the party on its way in and gave the men what attention he could during an overnight halt at Base 4. Medical orderlies accompanied the party for the rest of the journey.
- Menzies and two others recovered, but Private McDougall, aged 17, died soon after reaching Missim.

16 June - Wau

- Information about enemy movement poured in from Wells O.P.
- On the 15th 486 Japanese were counted moving south along the Komiatum Track.
- At 6 a.m. on the 16th Wells O.P. reported that three heavily laden launches had arrived at Salamaua from Lae the previous evening.
- At midday that 80 Japanese were seen moving south along the Komiatum Track.
- Between 3 and 5 p.m. the men at the observation post saw 173 Japanese and 60 heavily laden carriers moving south towards Komatium and 58 Japanese moving north towards Salamaua.

16 June - Air

- On 16 June the Japanese made their third and largest attack of the month on American positions when they sent down more than a hundred dive-bombers and fighters, which were reported by the coastwatcher at Kolombangara and later picked up on radar.
- One hundred and four Allied fighters were scrambled to meet the enemy and seventy-four made contact.
- Allied fighter control was based on radar plots provided mainly by No. 52 Radar Unit, RNZAF.
- The Allied fighter force was able to break up the enemy escort over the dive-bombers, although a few of the bombing group fought their way through to attack American shipping off Guadalcanal.
- Aircraft of No. 14 NZ Squadron formed part of a patrol covering the shipping area. A dogfight between American and Japanese planes was sighted near Savo Island, and the New Zealand pilots dived into an enemy formation of about thirty-three aircraft.
- In the dispersed engagements which followed four New Zealand pilots claimed five enemy fighters.
- Seventy-seven enemy planes were claimed by Allied fighters and eleven by anti-aircraft fire. Allied losses were six fighters, one cargo ship which was bombed and forced ashore, and one LST set on fire.

16 June - Air

- Shortlands - Eight Liberators attacked Ballale aerodrome night 16/6, One Liberator missing.
- Lae - Boana was strafed by 6 Beaufighters 0743-0806/16.
- Mubo-Komiatum Area - 6 Bostons carried out a strafing attack 1200-1230/16.
- Bena Bena - 18 enemy medium bombers, escorted by 22 fighters, raided the area 1130-1240/16. A few huts were destroyed, but nil other damage.

16 June - Air

- The Type VIIC Uboat, U-97 had torpedoed and sunk the large British Tanker Athelmonarch near Haifa in the Eastern Mediterranean.
- The next day (16 June), Hudson 'T' of 459 Squadron RAAF, piloted by Flt. Sgt. David Barnard, was despatched from Lydda, Palestine, to search for the U-boat. The 40% cloud cover at 3,000 feet was carefully exploited to conceal the white-camouflaged bomber.
- U-97 was spotted, fully-surfaced and with some of the crew apparently sunbathing on deck. Barnard made an immediate depth-charge attack. One depth-charge exploded on U-97's decking, two more went into the water alongside. The U-boat was fatally holed and sank within five minutes west of Haifa, Palestine at (33°00'N 34°00'E). Only 21 of U-97's crew were rescued.
- The Hudson was severely damaged in this attack; blown 400ft higher into the air by the blast from the "dry hit", it was badly bent out of shape. It required great skill to bring it safely back to base and make a good landing. Barnard was immediately awarded a Distinguished Flying Medal.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

MEB0124

17 June - Sea

- The Norwegian tanker, Ferncastle (14,770 tdwt, 1936) en route Esperance for Abadan in ballast, was torpedoed and damaged in the Indian Ocean by LS-4, the German Raider Michel's midget motor torpedo boat. She was then torpedoed, shelled and sunk by Michel with the loss of 24 of her 37 crew at (25.40S-92.00E). Survivors were taken aboard Michel as prisoners of war.
- The IJN auxiliary transport, Myoko Maru, was torpedoed and sunk in the Pacific Ocean 150 nautical miles (280 km) north-north-east of Rabaul, New Guinea (04°04'S 154°03'E) by USS Drum. Thirty-four passengers and a crewman were killed. Survivors were rescued by escorting warships.
- The SC-497-class submarine chaser, USS SC-740, ran aground and sank on the Great Barrier Reef, off the east coast of Australia (15°32'S 147°06'E).



17 June - Air

- Rekata Bay - Rekata Bay was attacked by nineteen (19) Dauntless covered by sixteen (16) Wildcats at 1640/17, scoring hits on A/A positions.
- Madang - The town and aerodrome area were bombed and strafed by 10 B25s, 0743-0755/17.
- Ceram Island - Boela was attacked at 1250/17 by 2 Liberators. Substantial damage was done to buildings and fires were started.
- Kai Islands - Langgoer aerodrome was attacked by four Catalinas night 16-17/6. Fires were started.
- Amboina - Laha was bombed by 3 Catalinas 2252/17. Fires were started.
- Timor - Koepang was bombed by 6 B25s night 16/6, Fires were started.
- Port Moresby - 4 medium bombers ineffectively dropped bombs night 17/6. A/A engaged the aircraft and one was seen on fire and was probably destroyed.

18 June - Sea

- A Beaufort of 32 Squadron RAAF reported sighting and attacking an enemy submarine at 0111/18 approximately 69 miles S.E. of Coffs Harbour.
- No direct hits were scored but the attack caused the submarine to surface. At 0040 another attack was made with 4 x 250 lb, depth charges, by a relieving aircraft, without any direct hits being scored.
- The aircraft then machine gunned the submarine, which returned the fire.
- At the time of the second attack the submarine had turned, to port and was making 10-12 knots. A trail of oil, two miles long and a quarter mile wide, was seen behind it.
- The Kaidai VII type Japanese submarine, I-178 was lost with all 89 hands.
- H.M.A.S. Geelong attacked a possible submarine contact 40 miles N by E of Cape Moreton.



Beauforts being built at the DAP plant in Fishermans Bend, Melbourne. The ASV radar aerial array on the rear fuselage and a small blue/white Pacific Theatre roundel indicates this is a late Beaufort Mk VIII.

18 June - Air

- At 2109/18 Ballale was attacked by two Mitchells and at 2110/18 Kahili was attacked by nine Liberators.
- Mubo-Salamaua Area - Kitchen and Stony Creeks areas were bombed and strafed by 6 Bostons 1600/18.
- Horn Island - A probable four-engined flying boat dropped 9 bombs between Prince of Wales Island and Horn Island 0032-0111/18
- Arafura Sea - A Beaufort intercepted and shot down an enemy recce floatplane 100 miles N. by W. of Cape Wessel at 1003/18.
- Nauru - The aerodrome and barracks area were attacked 2355/18 by 6 Catalinas.



18 June - Air

- Bladin decided to send to Selaru twelve Vultee Vengeance dive bombers of No. 12 Squadron, which up to that time had been engaged almost entirely on searches and escort duties.
- Although interception by enemy aircraft was not likely, six Beaufighters of No. 31 Squadron were to accompany the dive bombers to protect them.
- The dive bombers flew from Batchelor to Bathurst Island where they filled their tanks. One plane could not take off from Bathurst because of electrical trouble.
- The remainder, escorted by the Beaufighters, were airborne by 9.25 a.m. and headed for Selaru on the first bombing attack by Vengeances in the South-West Pacific.
- On arrival there they split into two sections, one led by Flight Lieutenant McPherson, bombed the village of Lingat and the other, led by Flight Lieutenant Keys, bombed the village of Werain at 10.30 on the 18th. It was suspected that airfield workers would be camped in these villages.
- The bombs fell in the target areas and the attacks appeared to be successful although results could not easily be seen because of the dust haze caused by the explosions.
- A lone Japanese aircraft intercepted but did not open fire at any stage. Evidently it was attempting to distract the dive bomber pilots as they aimed at the target.
- The Beaufighters also strafed the villages, and three luggers and two landing barges in the vicinity.

19 June - Sea

- The American Liberty ship, Henry Knox, was torpedoed and sunk in the Indian Ocean off the Maldives (0°01'S 71°15'E) by Japanese submarine I-37.
- Twenty-five crewmen and gunners die in the sinking.
- Survivors sail in their lifeboats to the Maldives arriving on 30 June.
- Thirteen gunners and thirteen crewmen die during the journey, with twelve gunners and 29 crewmen surviving the ordeal.



19 June - Sea

- The Japanese cargo ship, Miyadono Maru, was torpedoed and sunk in the Pacific Ocean by USS Growler during a patrol in the Bismark Solomons area.
- Two cargo ships, Miyasho Maru and Sagami Maru, were shelled and sunk in the Pacific Ocean east of Honshu, Japan by USS Sculpin.
- The cargo ship, Tokiwa Maru, was torpedoed and sunk in the South China Sea off Kyushu by USS Gunnel. One crewman killed.
- The IJN auxiliary gunboat, Hong Kong Maru, was torpedoed and damaged in the South China Sea off Kyushu by USS Gunnel. She sank on 21 June at 33°13'N 128°45'E.
- Cape Orford - At 1410/19 a large submarine with deck cargo passed Cape Orford heading south.



Growler's bent bow before repairs in Brisbane.

19 June - Air

- Nauru was attacked 0245-0420/19 by 6 Liberators.
- Rabaul - Vunakanau Aerodrome was raided 0307-0430/19 by fifteen fortresses and two Liberators. One other liberator bombed the Town area.
- Photographs of the three Rabaul airfields at 1000/19 from 34,500 feet reveal at least 172 aircraft including 73 medium bombers, 30 light bombers or twin-engined fighters, 69 single seater fighters.
- Shortlands - Kahili was raided 2026-2126/19 by 10 Liberators.

20 June - Sea

- The IJN auxiliary transport, Meiten Maru (4,474 tons), was torpedoed and sunk in the Pacific Ocean 225 nautical miles (417 km) west north west of Saipan (15°57'N 140°57'E) by USS Tautog.
- The Japanese troopship, Shojin Maru, was torpedoed and sunk in the South China Sea by USS Seawolf.
- Deloraine returned to the scene of the "GP55" attack and carried out an anti-submarine search with Kalgoorlie throughout the 18th and 19th, being joined in this by H.M.A.S. Vendetta.
- The tug Reserve took L.S.T. 469 in tow and arrived with her in Sydney on the 20th.



USS LST-469 during the landing at Lingayen Gulf on 9 January 1945.

20 June – New Georgia

- Segi was the base and point of insertion for the reconnaissance parties operating around Munda, and to ensure its protection (since Japanese control there would have disrupted all plans) 400 Marines were landed there in the night 20th-21st June from the destroyer transports Dent and Waters, guided in by Kennedy's beach bonfires.



Coastwatcher Donald Kennedy (left) serves tea to U.S. Marine Captain Clay Boyd during one of Boyd's scouting missions to New Georgia before the Allied landing operation. (ISBN 1-59114-466-3).

20 June - Wau

- Captain Hancock (photo) took over Menzies' platoon and his objective. He moved with Sergeant Tomkins and a small party along the ridge of the Pioneers Range in the general direction of Mount Tambu continued directly along the ridge to Goodview Junction. The ridge descended steeply to the enemy track but provided a definite means of access and the terrain permitted an almost "text book" ambush position.
- On 20th June the party took up position—the plan was to capture the last man of any enemy party which passed and to shoot the remainder.
- A long jungle vine was laid between the ambush party and the supporting party on the hill in order to transmit signals between them.
- Just as Hancock was completing the siting of the supporting party three Japanese appeared from the direction of Mubo.
- Hancock gave the signal and, as the Japanese passed, Lamb rushed forward on to the track closely followed by the rest of the party.
- The scrub beside the track was thick enough to give the enemy warning and the Australians were forced to shoot it out with them.
- The Japanese were killed, dragged off the track and relieved of their arms and equipment. The loot included official papers and diaries, which were immediately sent to Missim.

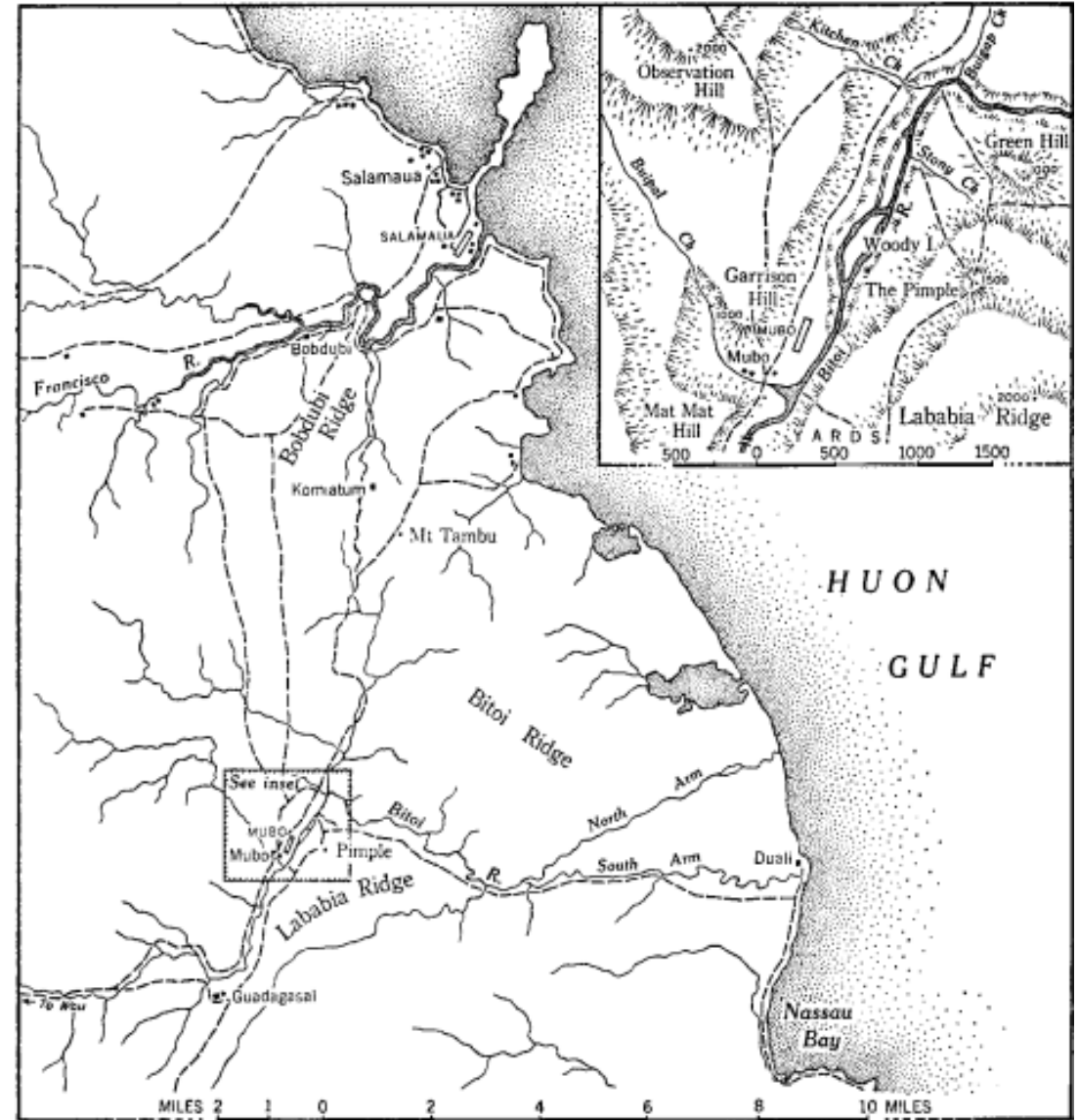


AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P03412.003

20 June - Wau

- From 10.20 a.m. on 20th June Japanese aircraft dive-bombed and pattern-bombed Guadagasal, Mat Mat and the Mubo Valley and Wau.
- In the day 60 enemy aircraft were overhead.
- The bombing caused some casualties and damage, particularly to the 2/6th's "Q" store at the Saddle but the most serious outcome was the dispersal of the brigade's native carriers. They went bush.



20 June - Wau

- Dexter's company was divided between the Lababia camp, Napier, and the Lababia O.P.
- Lieutenant Roach's platoon and Sergeant Hedderman's were slightly forward on the left and right respectively of the Jap Track, just north of its junction with the Lababia Track. Their rear near the track junction was guarded by Lieutenant Exton's platoon from another company.
- West of these three platoons across a small saddle Dexter established his headquarters guarded to the north by Lieutenant Smith's anti-tank platoon working as riflemen.
- Lieutenant Urquhart's platoon was at Napier. Five men from the battalion Intelligence section and the forward company were at Lababia O.P.
- About 200 yards north of Roach's platoon an entrenched section listening post was manned night and day.



20 June - Wau

- At 1 p.m. on 20th June a patrol led by Private Watt moving north along the Jap Track about 50 yards forward of the listening post noticed a few Japanese moving up the track towards the listening post.
- After firing on them and killing the leader, who was giving hand signals to those in the rear, the patrol withdrew under fire.
- Soon afterwards the Japanese began firing indiscriminately from both sides of the track. The Jap Track at this point was very steep with re-entrants on either flank. Corporal Smith, commanding this forward section, was reinforced and although the Japanese made several attempts during the afternoon to get round to the section's flanks they were at a disadvantage for they were on lower ground.
- Enemy pressure continued, however, with the result that Smith was withdrawn to the forward platoon position.
- Private Watt ran forward and, with machine-gun fire, covered Smith's withdrawal. After inflicting heavy casualties Watt saw six Japanese in dead ground on the flank and killed them with two grenades. In the withdrawal he re-set four booby-traps.



20 June - Wau

- At 4.30 p.m. the Japanese withdrew and half an hour later all was quiet. No movement was seen or heard during the night.
- Learning that about 50 Japanese had been engaged, Dexter concluded that they were probably a strong patrol sent out to find the main Australian positions before launching a large-scale attack.
- The Japanese were well camouflaged, wearing greenish uniforms with packs on their backs to which were strapped boughs and green foliage.
- During the afternoon when they were held up they had made a great deal of noise and had held many consultations. Whistles blown before the firing of automatic weapons had helped to indicate Japanese positions to the defenders.



20 June - Air

- Kolombangara - At 0805/20, 36 torpedo and dive bombers escorted by 26 fighters bombed Vila aerodrome area.
- Rabaul - Vunakanau was the main target 0330-0450/20 for 15 Liberators although Rapopo, Keravat and the town were also bombed,
- 17 fighters were over Wau 1010-1050/20 and 2 of them strafed the aerodrome. 7 light bombers attacked Wau again 1200-1210/20. The raids were ineffective and the strip remains serviceable.
- Lae aerodrome was attacked 1635-1640/20 by 9 Bostons Covered by 16 Kittyhawks and 8 Lightnings. One serviceable Zero was caught on the ground.
- Kela Village was attacked 0500-0530/20 by 4 Bostons.
- Cape Gloucester - 4 loaded barges were located and attacked by aircraft at 2230/20 off Lagunen Pt. (8 miles S. by W, of Cape Gloucester). One barge was left sinking and the 3 others were damaged.

20 June - Air

- Hudsons of No. 2 Squadron and Mitchells of No. 18 bombed Koepang and Penfui on the night of 20th - 21st June.
- Six Catalinas of the United States Navy's No. 101 Squadron which had come up from Crawley Bay near Perth were also over Penfui at midnight dropping bombs.

20 June - Air

- At 9.45 a.m. on the 20th the radar stations detected bogies approaching Darwin. The three Spitfire squadrons were ordered to intercept and forty-six machines were airborne a few minutes later.
- They rendezvoused over Hughes airfield at 20,000 feet. The radio on Wing Commander Caldwell's plane failed to work and the fighter sector controller on discovering this, ordered Squadron Leader Gibbs to lead the wing, but Gibbs' engine failed and he had to return to base.
- Thereafter the three squadrons decided to attack independently and were led by Squadron Leader MacDonald (No. 452), and Flight Lieutenants Watson (No. 457) and Foster (No. 54).
- No. 54 Squadron were first to see the enemy bombers which were flying at 27,000 feet over Bathurst Island. Nos. 54 and 452 Squadrons dropped their auxiliary fuel tanks and attacked this enemy force soon after it crossed the coast. No. 54 attacked both bombers and escort and claimed four bombers and a fighter. No. 452 attacked and claimed the destruction of three enemy bombers. Three of No. 452 Squadron's Spitfires also engaged the fighter escort and Flying Officer Mawer claimed one shot down into the sea.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

NWA0404

Strauss, NT. c. June 1943. Pilots of No. 452 Squadron relax in their recreation tent. L to r: Sergeant Coombes; Flt Sgt Turnbull; Squadron Leader H. S. MacDonald; Wing Commander Caldwell (standing); Pilot Officer Tully; FO Pollard; Flt Sgt Padula; FO Adams, and Flight Lieutenant Hale.

20 June - Air

- The enemy bombers, now reduced to fifteen, remained in formation and turned in towards Darwin where the anti-aircraft guns opened fire. Soon after, No. 457 Squadron attacked them and destroyed another bomber which crashed in flames on Cox Peninsula.
- At 10.45 a.m. the bombers dropped forty bombs of the "daisy-cutter" type on the air force and army camps at Winnellie. Three soldiers were killed and eleven wounded. Two huts and a railway truck loaded with sixty drums of oil were also destroyed and the railway line broken in three places.
- At 10.55 a.m. another ten enemy bombers made a tree-top level attack with bombs and cannon fire on the Darwin airfield and at Winnellie. They destroyed one building and damaged the sergeants' mess. The low-flying bombers were seen later by pilots of No. 54 Squadron, who destroyed one of them.
- 46 Spitfires intercepted and claimed five fighters destroyed and two damaged and nine bombers destroyed and 8 damaged.
- Two Spitfire pilots (Pilot Officers Nichterlein and Ruskin-Rowe) were shot down and killed.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

152509

A SPITFIRE WHICH MADE A FORCED LANDING ON THE BEACH DURING A JAPANESE AIR RAID ON 1943-06-20. THE PILOT, AN AMERICAN NAMED HUGHES, WAS NOT INJURED AND, BEFORE HIS FORCED LANDING, HAD SHOT DOWN TWO OF THE 22 ENEMY AIRCRAFT CLAIMED DESTROYED OR DAMAGED.

21 June - Government

- When Parliament resumed on 21st June, the Opposition moved a vote of no-confidence.
- The Government, said Fadden, had no mandate from the people for its "socialist " schemes. Within the Labour Party there was conflict over policy. Criticism was aimed particularly at Ward, and at the Government's failure to subdue "industrial lawlessness". Inadequate manpower had been provided for rural industries; inflation had been allowed to grow unchecked.
- And, finally, the Government was assailed for the continuing "slandorous campaign" conducted by Ward (photo), the Minister for Labour and National Service, that when the Curtin Government took office there was in existence a plan, formulated by its predecessors, for the abandonment of an important section of northern Australia without firing a single shot.



21 June - Wau

- Next morning (21st) around 7.30 firing broke out from enemy positions north of the observation post track. This continued intermittently throughout the morning during which time the Japanese were apparently moving to the flanks in small groups of two and three and assembling for an attack. This movement was harassed by the defenders' fire which scattered several small groups, and by booby-traps.
- At 11 a.m. a large body of Japanese, advancing on either side of the Jap Track, was dispersed by fire from the grenade discharger, Brens, rifles and Tommy-guns. Both the grenade with a 7-seconds fuse fired from a discharger attached to the muzzle of the .303 rifle and the grenade with a 4-seconds fuse thrown by hand were supporting the judgements of units experienced in jungle warfare that the grenade was the Number 1 jungle weapon.
- In the morning Corporal Smith set out with a patrol to hunt the enemy. Coming upon 25 Japanese he hit five before his rifle was shot from his hands. Grasping the rifle of a wounded comrade he kept the Japanese at bay until he was able to pick up the wounded man and carry him back.



21 June - Wau

- Up to 2 p.m. probably 25 Japanese were hit by small arms fire from Roach's and Hedderman's platoons, exclusive of those killed by the supporting weapons, and the booby-traps which were continually being sprung.
- Sensing that a dangerous situation was about to develop, Moten at 1.17 p.m. sent a message to Wood who had left his headquarters at the Saddle to visit Mat Mat: "POSTERN prejudiced by enemy occupation of Lababia Ridge. Take immediate aggressive action to drive enemy back to former location in Pimple area."
- Then, eight minutes later, ordered Lieut-Colonel Conroy of the 2/5th Battalion to send part of one company from Banana to the Saddle to relieve Captain Cameron's company of the 2/6th which would then move to Lababia Ridge.



21 June - Wau

- At 2 p.m. the Japanese began a heavy attack on Hedderman's position between the Jap Track and the Lababia O.P. Track. The attack quickly spread to Roach's and Exton's front. Pouring automatic and mortar fire into the two forward platoons the Japanese pressed harder and harder.
- A bayonet attack along the Jap Track was halted within 10 yards of the forward Australian position.
- Another one on the right flank brought some of the Japanese to within 20 yards of the Australian positions before they were stopped.
- During the attack Hedderman and his runner, Private Smith, found time to carry two badly wounded men to comparative safety where Captain Scott-Young attended to them.
- At 3 p.m. Hedderman's left flank was endangered by a determined enemy assault supported by mortar fire. Moving to the threatened spot he silenced the mortar and dispersed the enemy attack by using the grenade discharger.
- Private Smith meanwhile was distributing ammunition to the weapon-pits and joining in the fight where it was hottest.



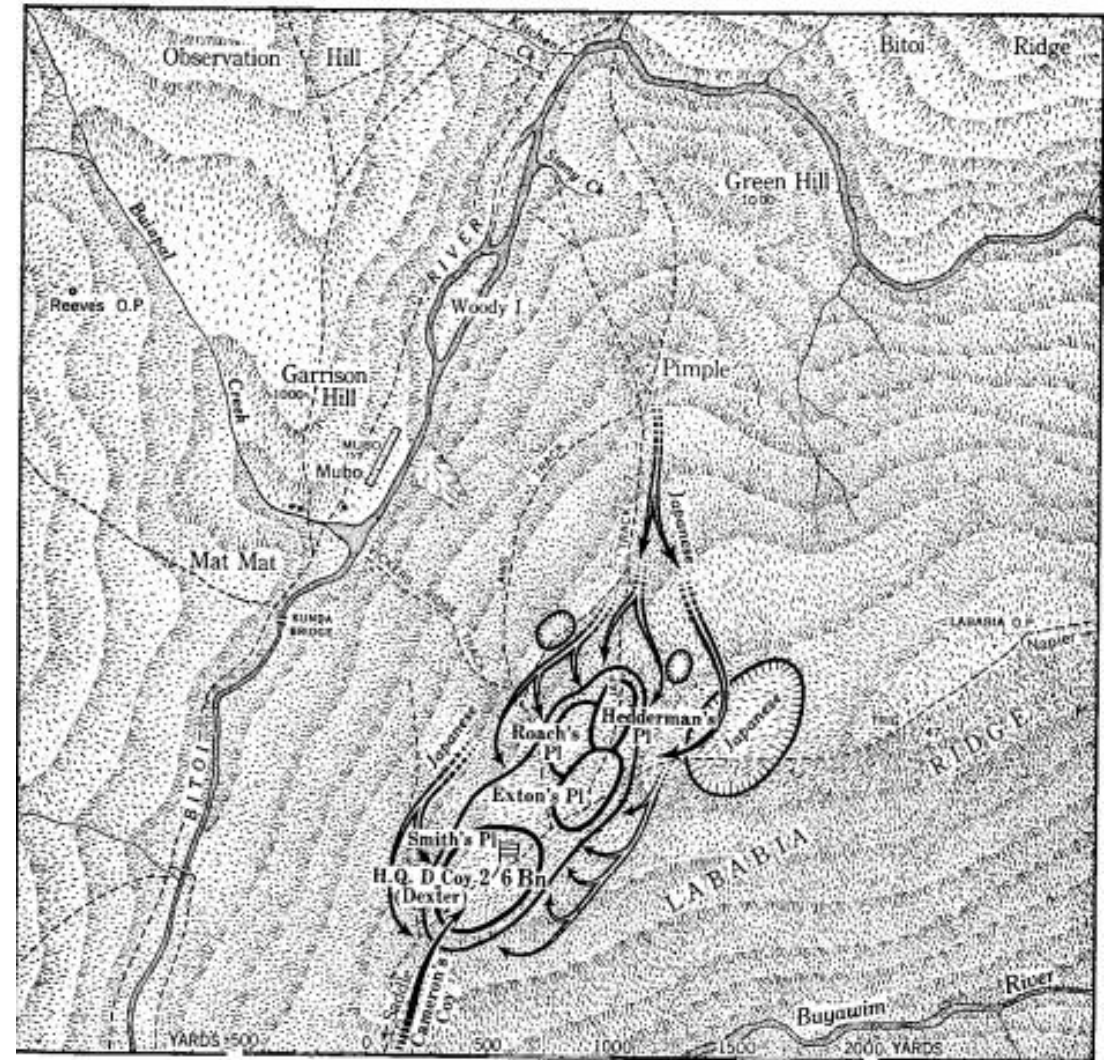
21 June - Wau

- Desperate attacks were then launched against Roach's troops, who fought back with fierce determination although it seemed that so few men could not hold back the large enemy force much longer.
- When all but three of his section had been killed or wounded Private Ryan took command and coolly held off the attack with Bren-gun fire.
- When another machine-gunner was hit Private McGrath picked up his gun, ran to another pit where all the occupants were casualties, and drove off the attackers.
- With the enemy massing for another assault Dexter decided to use part of his small reserve—a few men from his company headquarters—to reinforce Roach's platoon. The reinforcements arrived just as Corporal A. J. Smith and his remaining riflemen, with fixed bayonets, were meeting a Japanese bayonet attack up the Jap Track.
- The determination of Corporal Smith's band were too much for the attackers. Every Japanese in this attack was killed by the bayonets of these men or by fire from the weapon-pits.



21 June - Wau

- The edge of the Japanese attack had now been blunted; it received a large dent when, at 3.15 p.m., Sergeant Mann used the 3-inch mortar for the first time, from a clearing near company headquarters.
- The second bomb caught in a small branch and exploded. The head native climbed up the tree and cut down the limb although bullets were flying through the trees.
- Firing throughout the remainder of the afternoon on the Jap and Lababia O.P. Tracks the mortar caused the Japanese to break on several occasions.
- One of Dexter's main concerns was to conserve his ammunition. Whenever he heard any prolonged bursts from the defenders he was forced to warn his platoon commanders to "keep your bloody fingers off the triggers".
- The problem of supplying ammunition to the weapon-pits of the perimeter was solved by the troops. They took off their socks, put the ammunition in them, and threw them to the various weapon-pits.



21 June - Wau

- The Japanese continued to attack Roach's, Hedderman's and Exton's positions throughout the late afternoon, and, although suffering heavy casualties, it seemed that they might break through Exton's position where their shouting and determined attacks appeared to unnerve one post.
- Exton and Corporal Martine ran forward and rallied the men, who, encouraged by their example, waited until the enemy were within 30 yards before firing.
- It was with some relief that Dexter welcomed Cameron and his company who arrived at Lababia Ridge between 5.15 and 6.15 p.m. along the Lababia-Saddle track which the enemy had not reached. Cameron's men dropped their packs at company headquarters and were sent forward immediately to reinforce Roach and Exton.
- Towards dusk the Japanese attack gradually decreased in intensity. Throughout a night of sleepless expectancy the Australians could hear sounds of the Japanese moving dead and wounded, the eerie howling of a dog, and much moaning and groaning.
- These melancholy cries of the wounded contrasted with the arrogant calls of the Japanese at the height of the fight: "We are Japan; we will win."



21 June - Wau

- Brigadier Moten informed Colonel Wood on 21st June that Lieutenant Burke would arrive at the Saddle next day and would be supplied with direct communication to brigade headquarters until the completion of his task of assisting the American landing.
- Burke had four tasks.
 - to guide the Americans to the landing beach with two red lights 600 yards from one another with a white light in the centre;
 - to protect the flanks of the beachhead with a platoon until relieved by American troops;
 - to provide guides to lead the Americans to Napier; and
 - to inform the Americans where enemy resistance might be met and of the whereabouts of Major Dexter's company.
- Moten also instructed Burke to depart from Napier three days before D-day; ordered that "boats, collapsible" for crossing Tabali Creek would be carried; that there would be no premature reconnaissance forward to the beach to avoid warning the enemy of the landing; and that six runners would be used for communications between the beach and Napier.
- By 4.30 p.m. on the 21st only three of the brigade's native carriers had returned, 578 remained missing.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

140022

MELBOURNE, VIC. 1943-11-18. VX20215 LIEUTENANT D. B. BURKE, MC MM, 17TH AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE.

21 June - Air

- On 21 June Guadagal Saddle area was attacked 1132/21 by 6 Japanese bombers and at 1105/21 by 4 more.
- At 1430/21, Lae and Malahang Strips were bombed and strafed by 12 Bostons while simultaneously Salamaua strip was attacked by 10 Mitchells. Only one possible serviceable fighter was reported on the ground on Lae drome.
- Approximately 30 fighters and 5 medium bombers were encountered over the area by 14 Lightnings escorting the Bostons and Mitchells. 14 enemy fighters were claimed shot down plus another 9 probably. All the Lightnings returned.
- Mubo Area — Enemy positions at Kitchen Greek and Stony Creek were attacked 1130/21 by 6 Bostons.



Colonel Charles H MacDonald and Al Nelson in the Pacific with MacDonald's P-38J Lightning "Putt Putt Maru".

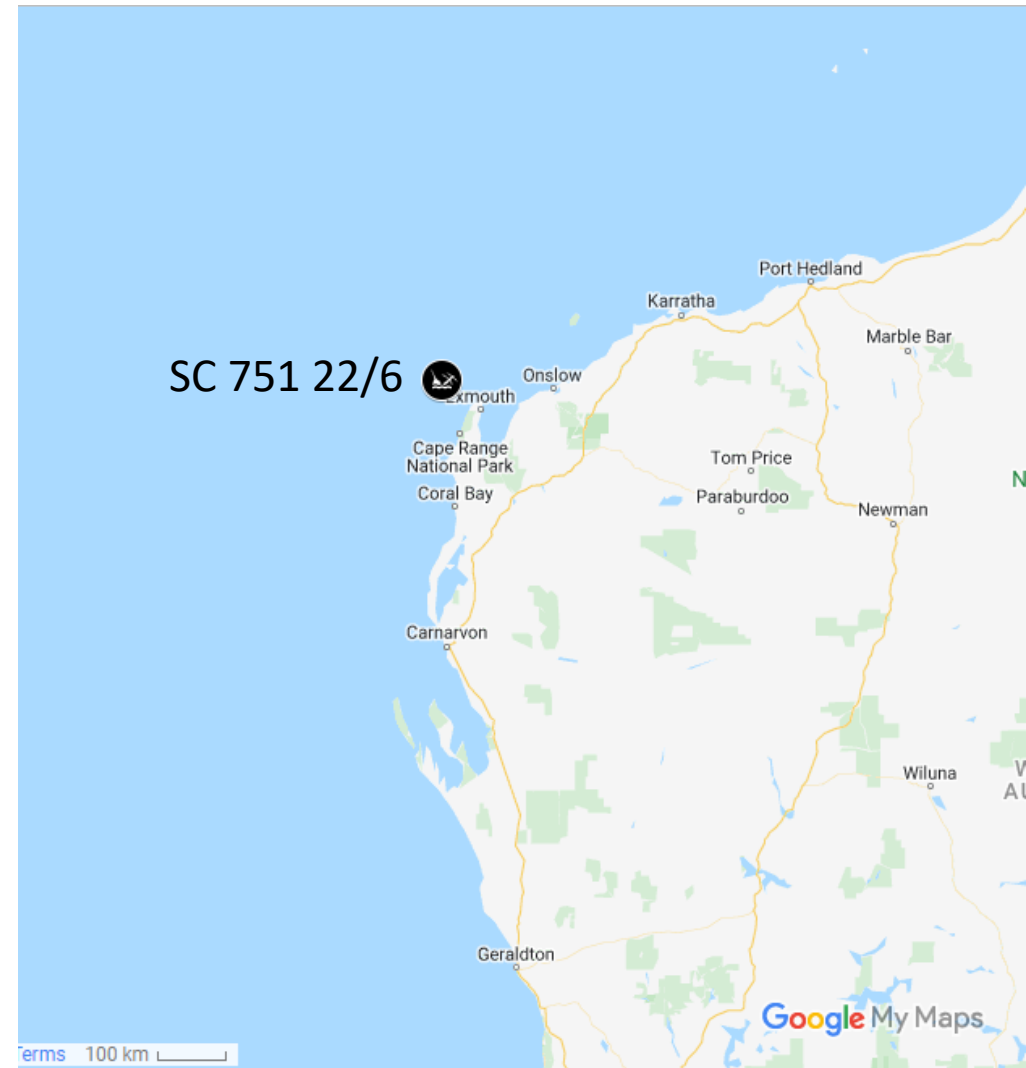
22 June - Government

- During the no-confidence debate on 22nd June, Fadden again called on the Prime Minister to repudiate the "slandorous campaign" conducted by Ward (photo).
- Curtin replied with a general description of the situation that had confronted his own Government when Japan attacked.
- Menzies pressed the point harder: "I put this to the Prime Minister: Every record of the Department of the Army and every relative record of the Advisory War Council have been searched, and there is no such plan before February 1942. That is a fact."
- Curtin answered by interjection: "I said that. I stated that the plan was put to my Government."
- Later in the debate, Ward, while "not contradicting or denying that the available records disclose that the first plan was dated 4th February 1942", added that he was "most reliably informed that one important report is now missing from the official files".



22 June - Sea

- The Junsen III (I-7 class) Japanese submarine, I-7, was shelled and damaged by USS Monaghan, then she ran aground on Twin Rocks, Vega Bay, Kiska, Alaska with the stern sinking. Her bow was scuttled with demolition charges the next day. Eighty-seven crewmen were killed.
- The SC-497-class submarine chaser, USS SC-751, ran aground on a reef off Cape Range, Australia (21°56'S 113°53'E). One officer drowned while all other crew were saved. The ship sank on 16 September during salvage operations.



22 June - Wau

- Desultory fire from both sides began about 6.30 a.m. on 22nd June. From 8 a.m. onwards small parties of Japanese were observed moving round to the Australian left flank and, Dexter feared, to the Lababia - Saddle track.
- These parties were effectively sniped; while the grenade dischargers and 3-inch mortar, always great morale builders or morale lesseners depending on which end of them the troops happened to be, continued to have great effect down the Jap Track judging from the squeals and sounds of stampeding.
- Movement during the morning was confined to the Australians' left flank and the right flank beyond the Lababia O.P. Track, where Australian sniping was most effective.
- Here the Japanese were climbing trees and firing down into the Australian weapon-pits, but they reckoned without Exton, a crack shot. Dexter was on the phone to Exton's platoon sergeant, who said suddenly: "Just a minute —there's a Nip getting up a tree about 100 yards away—Exton's going to have a shot—he's got him and he's bouncing."



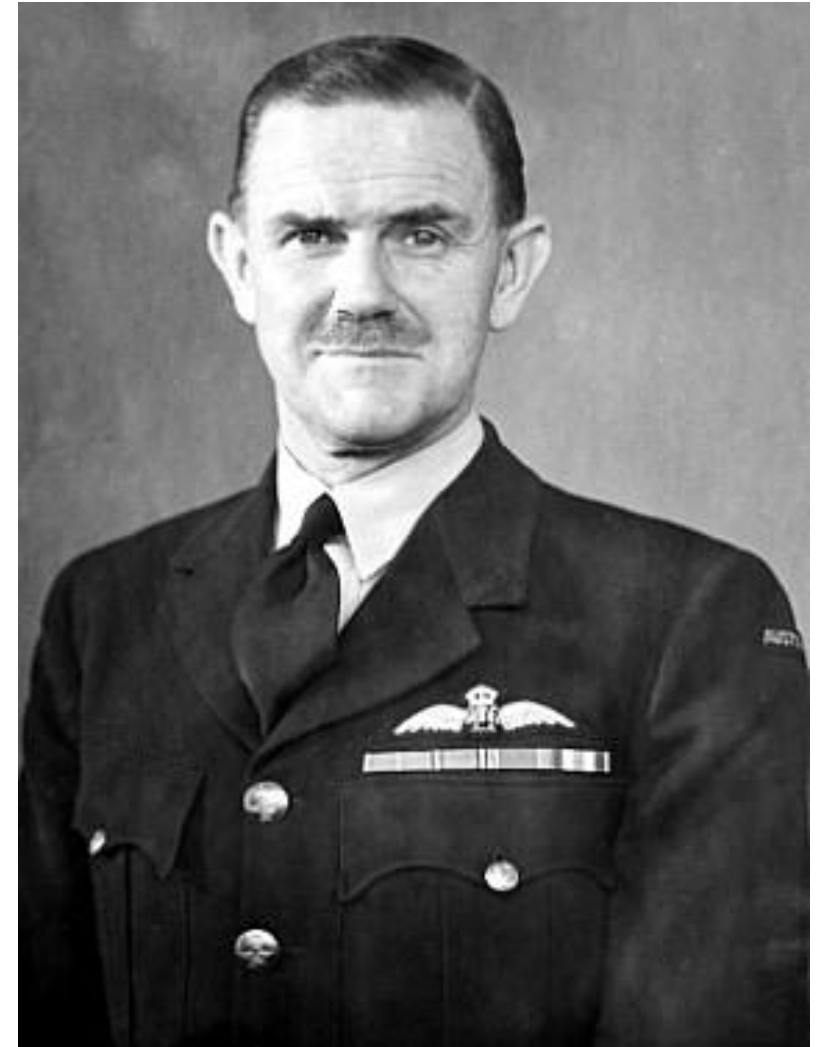
22 June - Wau

- At 2.10 p.m. heavy fire into Lieutenant R.J.H. Smith's position just north of the Lababia-Saddle track. Fire from the Australian defenders, however, again proved too powerful and after five minutes the attack died out.
- Five minutes later a Japanese mountain gun began shelling embattled Lababia. At first the shells landed to the west but soon started to arrive within the company perimeter. One severed the line to battalion headquarters, but it took the hard-pressed signallers only half an hour to fix it.
- That afternoon two patrols tried to find the whereabouts of the Japanese attackers but were unable to pinpoint any targets.
- Japanese casualties for 22nd June were thought to be between 50 and 60, excluding those killed by supporting weapons. One Australian died of wounds and 3 others were wounded making a two-day loss of 10 killed and 12 wounded, mostly caused by light mortar fire or tree snipers.



22 June - Air

- Bladin (photo) ordered another attack against the float-planes at Taberfane on 22nd June using three Liberators of No. 319 Squadron as well as nine Beaufighters.
- Both Liberators and Beaufighters were hampered by rain and cloud and were intercepted when they reached the target.
- The Liberators attacked first at 3 p.m. followed by the Beaufighters at 4.35 p.m.
- The Beaufighters strafed nine float-planes damaging two but immediately became engaged in a fight with Japanese aircraft.
- Two Beaufighters which were damaged in the engagement crashed when landing at Millingimbi but the crews escaped without injury.
- At 1510-1530/22, 5 Bostons bombed and strafed enemy positions in the Mubo area.



23 June - Government

- Sir William Webb (photo), Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Queensland, was commissioned to report to the Commonwealth Attorney General as to “whether there have been any atrocities or breaches of the rules of warfare on the part of members of the Japanese Armed Forces in or in the neighbourhood of the territory of New Guinea or the territory of Papua.
- Australia had been an original member of the United Nations War Crimes Commission (UNWCC) when it was established on 8 December 1942.
- Webb later became the President of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, which tried Japanese war crimes from World War II and a Justice of the High Court of Australia.



IMTFE

- The Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, General Douglas MacArthur, issued a special proclamation establishing the IMTFE.
- The crimes were defined based on the Nuremberg Charter.
- The Tribunal's temporal jurisdiction commenced from the 1931 Japanese invasion of Manchuria.
- Twenty-eight high-ranking Japanese military and political leaders were tried by the court, including current and former prime ministers, foreign ministers, and military commanders.
- They were charged with fifty-five separate counts, including waging aggressive war, murder, and various war crimes and crimes against humanity



The Justices of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, seated, l to r, Justice Patrick, Great Britain; Justice Cramer, United States; Chief Justice Webb, Australia; Justice Mei, China; Justice Zayanov, Russia, standing, l to r Justice Pal, India; Justice Roling, Netherlands; Justice McDougall, Canada; Justice Bernard, France; Justice Northcroft, New Zealand; Justice Jaranilla, Philippine Islands. 29 July 1946.

IMTFE

- By the time the Tribunal adjourned on November 12, 1948, two defendants had died of natural causes and one was ruled unfit to stand trial.
- All remaining defendants were found guilty of at least one count, of whom seven were sentenced to death and sixteen to life imprisonment.



International Military Tribunal for the Far East court chamber

IMTFE

- The seven defendants who were sentenced to death, including Prime Minister Tojo, were executed at Sugamo Prison in Ikebukuro on December 23, 1948.
- Four of those imprisoned died in prison, the others were paroled between 1950 and 1956.
- Thousands of other "lesser" war criminals were tried by domestic tribunals convened across Asia and the Pacific by Allied nations, with most concluding by 1949.
- 984 of these were sentenced to death, 153 of them by Australia.



Defendants at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East: (front row, l to r) Japanese Prime Minister Tojo Hideki, Admiral Oka Takazumi, (back row, l to r) Chairman of the Privy Council of Japan Hiranuma Kiichiro, Foreign Minister Togo Shigenori

23 June - Sea

- The American Crater-class cargo ship, USS Aludra, was torpedoed and sunk in the Solomon Sea 50 nautical miles (93 km) south of the eastern tip of San Cristobal Island (11°35'S 162°08'E) by a Japanese submarine with the loss of two of her 198 crew.
- Its sister ship USS Deimos was also torpedoed but only damaged. She was scuttled by USS O'Bannon at 11°26'S 162°01'E.
- Survivors of both ships were rescued by USS Skylark.
- The IJN auxiliary seaplane tender, Sagara Maru, was torpedoed and damaged off Mikomoto Island south east of Cape Omaezaki Lighthouse, Honshu by USS Harder. She was beached the next day 1.5 nautical miles (2.8 km) south west of Kaketsuka Lighthouse (33°45'N 138°10'E).

23 June

- After a miserable night with heavy rain a series of booby-trap explosions were heard at first light on 23rd June. The few available men, from the company commander to the company clerk, manned the perimeter but no attack developed.
- Soon afterwards ineffective firing along the Jap Track came from the enemy's positions. As on the previous day this firing seemed designed to draw the Australian fire and so to enable the tree snipers to operate: on both days four or five tree snipers had been shot from the trees soon after first light.
- Automatic fire continued from the Jap Track until 9 a.m. by which time the 3-inch mortar was proving effective in breaking up enemy movement.
- Between 9.45 and 11 a.m. the mountain guns joined in the punishment and shelled the Jap Track and Pimple area north of Lababia with great effect. Major O'Hare had used two howitzers throughout the fight and at this stage was O.P.O. (observation post officer) himself, but shortage of ammunition had reduced firing to times when the Japanese were actually attacking. The mountain guns with their 21-lb shells and extreme accuracy were more decisive than the 3-inch mortar which could not shoot close to the perimeter.
- The 2/6th Battalion war diarist wrote, "the morale of our troops which has always been high was raised to the highest pitch by the excellent shooting of the mountain battery".



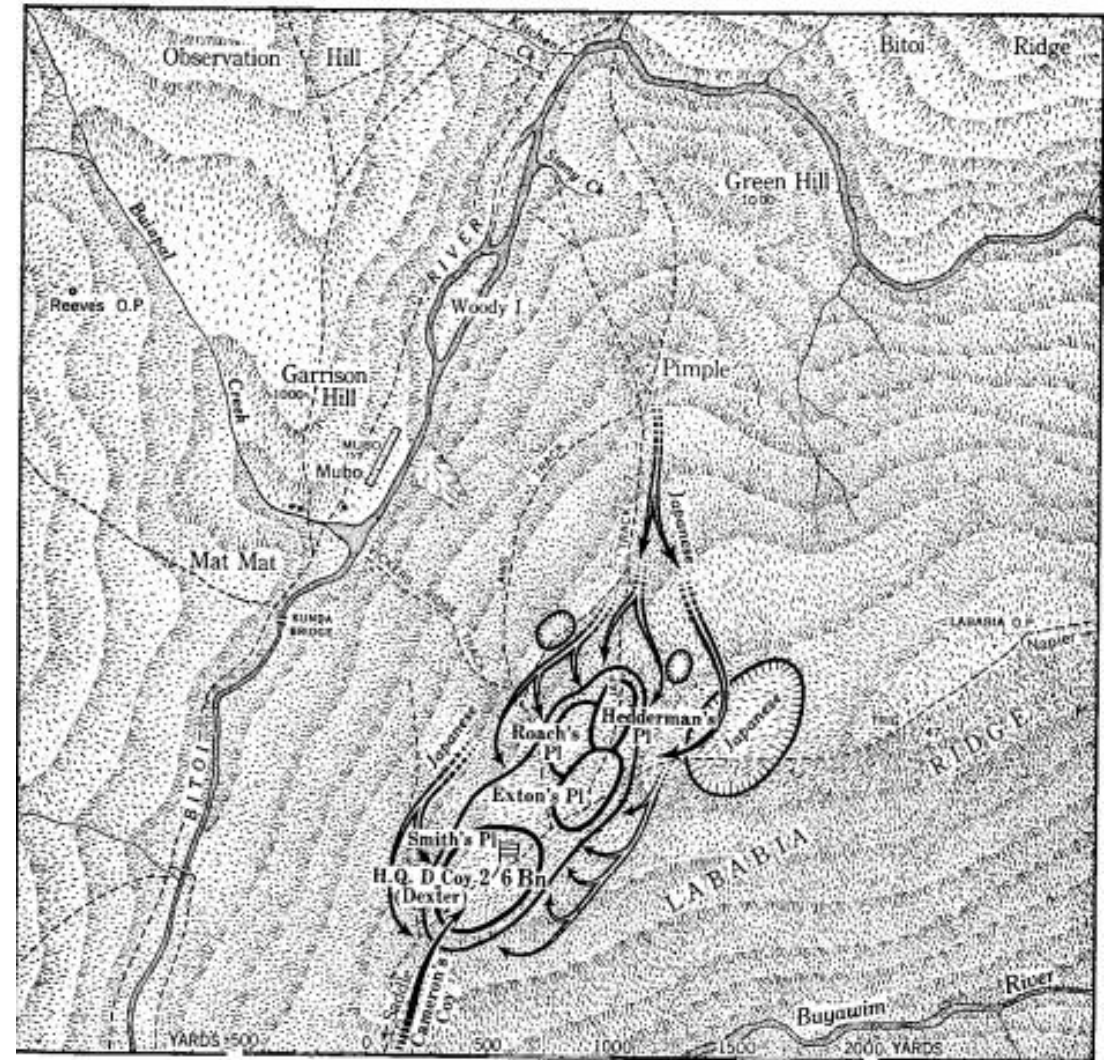
23 June

- At midday when the intermittent Japanese fire from the front and the right and left flanks suddenly increased in volume the 3-inch mortar again caused the Japanese to disperse.
- Wood now rang Dexter and said: "I've got a surprise packet for you. Stop the arty."
- Soon afterwards the delighted troops watched Beaufighters spread their "whispering death" up and down the Jap Track. By 1.30 p.m. the enemy had withdrawn and firing had ceased.
- Lieutenant W. T. Smith's patrol moved up the Lababia Track to the observation post which he reached at 2.45 p.m. without sighting the enemy, although the telephone wire was cut in many places.
- Smith's platoon relieved a seven-man patrol which Moten had ordered Urquhart to lead to the observation post during the Lababia attack. Urquhart had left Napier at 7 p.m. on 22nd June in total darkness, climbed 2,500 feet up the steep track and arrived at 2 o'clock in the morning.



23 June - Wau

- While Corporal Smith re-occupied the listening post, other troops reconnoitred the battle area and found many Japanese dead. Their own comrades buried the Australian dead on Lababia Ridge after a moving service conducted by Padre O'Keefe. The enemy dead were buried by the Pioneer platoon which Wood sent forward for that task.
- Congratulatory messages were received by Wood from Herring and other senior commanders.



23 June - Wau

- The action underlined a development in Australian defensive tactics.
- Previously the teaching had been to camouflage defensive positions and conceal the defenders.
- The Lababia defences, however, had been based—first by the 2/7th and then by the 2/6th on positions which to some extent sacrificed concealment to the clearing of fields of fire.
- Approached from the enemy side, however, there was little to be seen for the enemy had to come up hill and could see nothing until he was on a level with the diggings, and the fire lanes were cleared from the ground up, only leaves, twigs and small shrubs being removed to a height of about four feet.
- "This engagement is noteworthy," wrote Moten (photo), "and is a classic example of how well-dug-in determined troops can resist heavy attacks from a numerically superior enemy. Our troops in Lababia Base totalled 80 and when joined by C Coy 2/6 Aust Inf Bn totalled 150. It is conservatively estimated that 750 Japs attacked our perimeter. Our casualties were 11 killed and 12 wounded. Enemy casualties were estimated as 200."



23 June - Wau

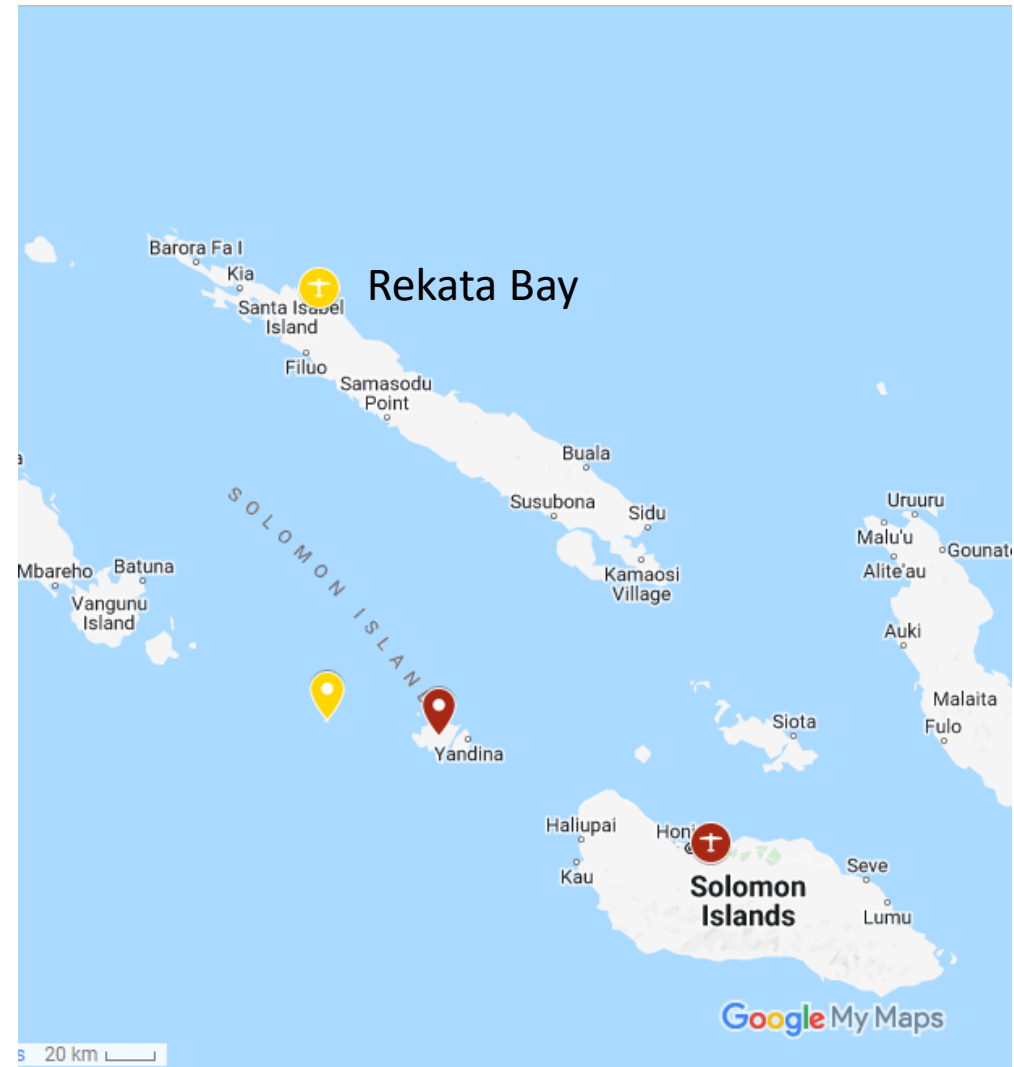
- It took three days for Angau to gather the brigade's native carriers together, and this caused a commensurate delay in moving forward rations, stores and ammunition.
- With D-day 10 days away this time could ill be spared.
- Major Penglase and Lieutenant Watson of Angau said that more Japanese air attacks in the near future would make it impossible to hold the carrier lines.
- Moten requested frequent fighter sorties over the forward areas.



FINSCHHAFEN AREA, NEW GUINEA. 1944-04-25. MAJOR N. PENGGLASE, GREETING MR J. DONOVAN, PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL TERRITORIES, ON HIS ARRIVAL WITH THE HONOURABLE E.J. WARD, MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL TERRITORIES AT FINSCHHAFEN AIRFIELD.

23 June - Air

- Makassar - The wharf area and shipping alongside were successfully attacked at about noon 23 June by 17 Liberators of No. 528 Squadron. Much shipping was observed at Makassar including 4 light cruisers (probably "KUMA" or "NATORI" class), 1 destroyer and 6 other ships. Two direct hits are claimed on one probable cruiser tied up alongside the wharf.
- Rekata Bay - At 0845/23, 30 torpedo and dive bombers escorted by 24 fighters attacked Rekata Bay concentrating on A.A. positions at Suavanau Plantation. Local sources reported that all except one of the batteries were put out of action by the attack but by 1900/24 new guns were stated to have been mounted and tested in all positions.
- Ganongga Is. - Local sources reported, 22 June, 120 Japs at Buri Village, in Koreovuku Harbour (N.E. Ganongga Is). A.M. 23 June, 8 Mitchells and 6 Avengers with 24 fighters bombed and strafed Buri Village.



24 June - Government

- The no-confidence motion was defeated in the early morning of the 24th after three days of uninterrupted debate.

24 June - Government

- After receiving a certificate from the departmental officers concerned and an assurance from the Minister for the Army (Forde), the Prime Minister stated in the House on 24th June that all the records of the War Cabinet, the Advisory War Council, Army Department and Defence Department were complete and no unauthorised person had ever had access to them.
- He added: "The information given to the Minister for Labour and National Service is therefore incorrect. The Minister for the Army and I have discussed the matter with [Mr Ward], who withdraws the statement, which he made in the belief that it was made on reliable information."
- Ward said: "Last night I conferred with the Prime Minister and the Minister for the Army. In the course of the talk I received an assurance from [Mr Curtin] that no document is missing from the files. I unreservedly accept that assurance and I am satisfied that the document to which I was referring on Tuesday night is still in existence. My references to the document have been seized upon by members of the Opposition as a device for disguising the real issue. The real issue is whether my charges against the former Prime Ministers are or are not true. These charges still stand."



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

1 399 24

MELBOURNE, VIC. 1943-11-10. SOME MEMBERS OF THE WAR CABINET MEETING IN THE FEDERAL MEMBERS ROOMS. L TO R: J. A. BEASLEY, MINISTER FOR SUPPLY AND SHIPPING; H. DE VERE (BERT) EVATT, ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS; FRANK M. FORDE, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR THE ARMY; JOHN CURTIN, PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR DEFENCE; SIR FREDERICK SHEDDON, KCMG OBE, SECRETARY DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE AND SECRETARY TO THE WAR CABINET; J. B. (BEN) CHIFLEY, COMMONWEALTH TREASURER AND MINISTER FOR POST WAR RECONSTRUCTION.

24 June - Government

- During a debate on an Opposition motion for adjournment, Curtin, who was clearly embarrassed, repeated that no document was missing and that the information given to the Minister was incorrect.
- The motion failed by 28 to 29, after Coles (photo), the Independent, had been noticed to hesitate before voting with the Government.
- Fadden immediately gave notice of a motion for a Royal Commission. Later in the evening Coles advised Curtin of his opinion that an inquiry should be granted.
- It also became obvious that the Opposition would use Ward's allegations as the grounds for a further challenge to the Government and, late at night, Curtin announced that he was ready to constitute a Royal Commission of Inquiry and that Ward had been asked to refrain from carrying on his duties until the report of the Royal Commission was tabled in Parliament.
- At a still later stage of the meeting of the House Curtin indicated his intention to ask for an almost immediate dissolution.



Arthur Coles, Independent MHR for Henty and founder and Managing Director of G. J. Coles & Co.

24 June - Sea

- The British tanker, British Venture, was torpedoed and sunk by a Japanese submarine in the Gulf of Oman south east of Jask, Iran ($25^{\circ}13'N$ $58^{\circ}02'E$). Five gunners and 37 crewmen were killed. One gunner and eighteen crewmen were rescued by SS Varela.
- The Japanese ship, Kumanoyama Maru, was shelled and sunk in the Pacific Ocean by USS Greenling.
- The IJN fleet oiler, Ose, was torpedoed and sunk in the East China Sea south of Fuchou, China by USS Snook



24 June 1943 - Sea

- By the middle of 1943, Lockwood (photo) had received enough reports from submarine officers to convince him the Mark 6 was significantly flawed.
- On 24 June 1943, he formally ordered all submarines operating out of Pearl Harbor to deactivate the magnetic influence feature.
- Inactivation of the magnetic influence feature stopped all the premature explosions.
- Early reports of torpedo action had included some dud hits, heard as a dull clang. The contact pistol appeared to be malfunctioning, though the conclusion was anything but clear until running depth and magnetic exploder problems were solved.



24 June 1943 - Sea

- A 1915 graduate of the United States Naval Academy, Ralph Christie was trained in torpedo design and implementation and became one of the first members of the Submarine School at New London.
- In 1923 Christie graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with a Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering, specializing in torpedoes.
- During the 1920s, he was involved with project G-53, the highly secret program to develop the Mark 6 (magnetic Influence) exploder and the Mark 14 torpedo.
- After Pearl Harbor, Christie was posted to Brisbane and commanded submarine operations during the Solomon Islands campaign. His command were mainly old S boats armed with old Mark 10 torpedoes.
- He then returned to the U.S. as Inspector of Ordnance at the Newport Torpedo Station.
- Christie was appointed to Lockwood's old command at Fremantle in January 1943.



Captain Christie congratulates Lt Cmdr Moore, CO of USS S-44, on his return to Brisbane after sinking the Japanese heavy cruiser Kako in August 1942.

24 June 1943 - Sea

- Christie (photo) was still committed to the exploder, and ordered Fremantle boats to continue using the influence feature. Submarines operating between the two commands were required to either enable or disable it, depending on which command area they were in. This difference of opinion strained relations between the two admirals.



24 July 1943 - Sea

- Daspit in USS Tinosa carefully documented his efforts to sink 19,000-ton whale factory ship Tonan Maru III on 24 July 1943.
- He fired four torpedoes from 4,000 yd; two hit, stopping the target dead in the water. Daspit immediately fired another two; these hit as well.
- With no enemy anti-submarine combatants in sight, Daspit then took time to carefully maneuver into a textbook firing position, 875 yd square off the target's beam, where he fired nine more Mark 14s and observed all with his periscope (despite the Japanese firing at it).
- All were duds. Daspit, suspicious by now he was working with a faulty production run of Mark 14s, saved his last remaining torpedo to be analyzed by experts back at base. Nothing out of the ordinary was found.

24 July 1943 - Sea

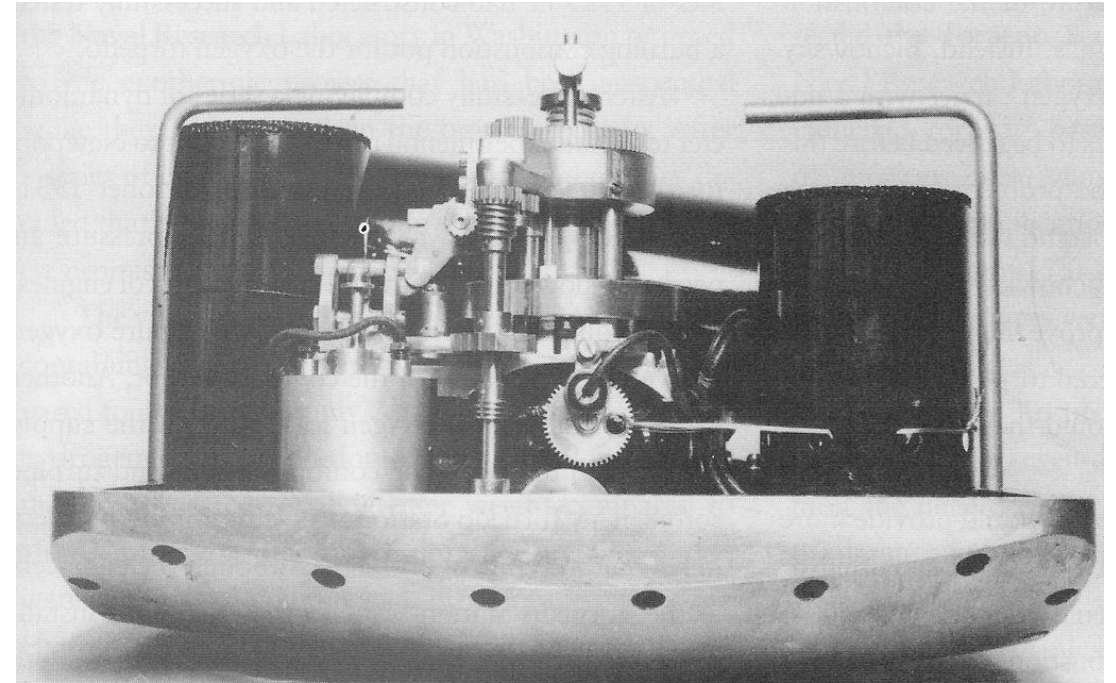
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Lawrence Randall (Dan) Daspit, USN

31 August 1943

- It was now clear to all at Pearl Harbor the contact pistol was also defective. Once the magnetic influence exploder was deactivated, problems with the contact exploder became more apparent. Torpedoes would hit their target without detonating.



Defective, inadequately tested Mark 6 Mod 1 exploder used early in the war. In September 1943, it was replaced with the Mark 6 Mod 5.

31 August 1943

- Daspit's cruise raised enough of an issue that tests were carried out by COMSUBPAC's gunnery and torpedo officer, Art Taylor. Taylor, "Swede" Momsen, and others fired warshots into the cliffs of Kahoolawe, beginning 31 August, the first two exploded, the third did not.
- Additional trials, supervised by Taylor, used a crane to drop warheads filled with sand instead of high explosive from a height of 90 feet (the height was chosen so the velocity at impact would match the torpedo's running speed of 46 knots).
- In these drop tests, 70% of the exploders failed to detonate when they hit the target at 90 degrees. A quick fix was to encourage "glancing" shots (which cut the number of duds in half), until a permanent solution could be found.

September 1943 - Sea

- The Mark 6's contact exploder mechanism descended from the Mark 3 contact exploder. Both exploders had the unusual feature that the firing pin's travel was perpendicular to the torpedo's travel, so the firing pin would be subject to side loading when the torpedo struck its target.
- The Mark 3 exploder was designed when torpedo speeds were much slower (the Mark 10 torpedo's speed was 30 knots), but even then the Mark 3 prototypes had problems with the firing pin binding during the high deceleration when the torpedo collided with the target. The solution was to use a stronger firing spring to overcome the binding.
- The Mark 14 torpedo had a much higher speed of 46 knots, so it would see significantly higher deceleration, but BuOrd apparently just assumed the contact exploder would work at the higher speed. There were no live-fire tests of the Mark 14 torpedo, so there were no live fire tests of its contact exploder. If BuOrd had tried some live-fire tests of the contact exploder during peacetime, it probably would have experienced some duds and rediscovered the binding problem.
- Pearl Harbor made working exploders by using lighter weight aluminum parts. Reducing the mass reduces the binding friction. BuOrd suggested using a stiffer spring, the fix that had worked decades before. In the end, BuOrd adopted a ball switch and electric detonator rather than using a firing pin mechanism.

September 1943 - Sea

- In September 1943, the first torpedoes with new contact pistols were sent to war. "After twenty-one months of war, the three major defects of the Mark 14 torpedo had at last been isolated. Each defect had been discovered and fixed in the field—always over the stubborn opposition of the Bureau of Ordnance.
- It was 16 months after Red Coe sought to bring attention to the problems in May 1942.
- It was no help to Red.
- He was lost when his new command Cisco failed to return from its first war patrol in September 1943.



James Wiggin (Red) Coe, CO USS Skipjack

- Thanks for your attention.