



War in the Pacific

Campaigns in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands

- The story so far.

1919 Australian Defence Planning

- After the first world war it was accepted that the defence of the Empire depended on the British Navy.
- The Australian Government asked the Admiralty for an expert to report on naval defence. Admiral of the Fleet Lord Jellicoe arrived in Australia in May 1919.
- His report in August 1919, laid great stress upon close collaboration with the Royal Navy. Jellicoe envisaged the creation of a large Far Eastern Imperial Fleet, including battle ships and aircraft carriers, and the establishment of a major base at Singapore.
- Summing up the naval situation in the Far East Jellicoe said:
 - a rising tide of ill-feeling against Britain—which was evident during the war—was reported in Japan, and
 - that danger of invasion of Australia would exist as long as the White Australia policy remained in force, and
 - Japan had ordered eight modern battleships, whereas Britain was building no battleships, and had none in existence quite equal in power, ship for ship, to the Japanese forces, and
 - If Japan were to declare war she would probably do so by means of a sudden surprise attack, similar to her attack on Port Arthur in the Russo-Japanese war.
- Jellicoe proposed construction of an Australian fleet including two battle cruisers and an aircraft carrier.
- Nothing was done to carry out any of the recommendations except maintaining close collaboration with the Royal Navy.



German Rearmament

- A pamphlet *Japan and the Defence of Australia*, published in 1935
 - noted the decline of British naval power and the danger of war in Europe,
 - considered it improbable that British naval aid would be available to Australia either immediately or eventually.
 - This led to warnings not to put a nation's trust in navies, but to rely on land forces and aircraft.
- In June 1935 Germany proposed a naval agreement with Britain on the basis of a strength 35% of that of the British Fleet.
 - This offer was accepted by the British Government on Admiralty advice.
 - The treaty had the effect of authorising Germany to build to her utmost capacity for some years to come
 - and to build larger ships than Britain which was still adhering to the 35,000 ton limit on battleships.
 - This treaty validated construction of a fleet much bigger than the limits established by the Treaty of Versailles.
- There were important implications for Australia in this treaty.
 - As Mr Churchill pointed out at the time,
 - as one result of Germany's naval building the British battle fleet would be "largely anchored to the North Sea . . .
 - that means to say the whole position in the Far East has been very gravely altered."

1938 Australian Defence

- An Australian government briefing in 1937 concluded:
 - the League of Nations is not capable of maintaining peace,
 - the United States remains at heart isolationist, and
 - "Empire security demands ... that no situation shall be allowed to arise in which Germany, Japan, and a power, such as Italy, on the main route between the two, are simultaneously hostile".
- On 27th April 1938, the Prime Minister said "the British Government has decided that it is necessary to revise the British defence policy, and to accelerate the various programmes. The Commonwealth Government is in accord with this decision"
 - Summarising the whole plan, the Prime Minister said:
 - The scheme of Australian defence is related to a wider pattern of Empire defence, and its fundamental basis is Empire sea power and the Singapore Naval Base.
 - The programme provided more than double the sum spent in the previous three years.
 - The air force would get 9 more squadrons, to make a total of 17, but the only aircraft definitely available was the Wirraway.
- The Government invited Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Edward Ellington to make a report on the RAAF. Soon after he arrived the press quoted him as making two sweeping comments:
 - that Australia's first line of defence lay in England—Japan could never attack Australia without overcoming British power, adding that local defence, though necessary, was of secondary importance, and
 - that Australia was safe from attack by air except by seaborne aircraft which would not be effective under present conditions.
- In July 1938 Ellington submitted his report. "I understand," he wrote, "that it is intended to use the Wirraway in replacement of the Demon as a fighter-bomber. I consider that the Wirraway should be regarded as a temporary expedient . . . it can only be regarded as an advanced training aircraft."
- In November 1938, after the Munich crisis, Lyons announced that the defence programme should be accelerated and extended with a further 45% increase in expenditure. The program included an air base at Port Moresby and an extra squadron for the RAAF.

1940 Australian Defence Strategy

- The Chief of the General Staff, recommended that another division (7th) be raised and sent overseas.
 - “It is apparent that the safety of the Empire and of Australia depends on the defeat of Germany.”
- On **28th February** the War Cabinet decided to form the new division. It was decided to equip the 7th Division with rifles, Vickers guns and carriers in Australia, but that it should receive its remaining weapons and vehicles from British sources when it was overseas.
- The War Cabinet made a number of decisions to raise more forces and provide more assistance to Britain.
 - **January** to send to Britain 10 million rounds of .303 ammunition at once and thereafter 5 million a month.
 - **22nd May** it approved the formation of a third division of the A.I.F., to be numbered the 8th, although, at that time, only 6,000 men had been enlisted for the 7th Division.
 - **22nd May** to send 280,000 rounds of artillery ammunition to Britain from local stocks and to release two RN cruisers, scheduled to come to Australia, for use elsewhere.
 - **28th May** to release to the British 49 Hudson aircraft which Australia had on order from the United States and to dispatch an Australian squadron of Hudsons to Singapore to replace an RAF Blenheim squadron for service elsewhere.
 - **3rd June** that the 8 inch gun cruisers *Australia* and *Canberra* could be released from the Australian station to the Admiralty.
 - **25th June** that *Westralia* and *Parramatta* could be released from the Australian station to the Admiralty. *Westralia*, sailed from Fremantle for Colombo the same day. *Parramatta* followed on the 29th of June.
 - It was also decided to send a second squadron of Hudsons and a squadron of Wirraways to Singapore to relieve R.A.F. units.
- A War Cabinet meeting on **12th June** raised the question "should we continue to rely on the pre-war undertaking that a British squadron of capital ships would proceed to Singapore immediately on hostile action in the Pacific"
 - a cable was dispatched to the British Government asking as a matter "of the greatest possible urgency" for information covering the probable alternatives with which the Empire might be confronted, to enable Australia to review her policy on local defence and Empire cooperation, and to decide on the measures to give effect to it.
- **16th June**: The Government decided to raise a larger militia home defence force. The militia had fallen to 60,500, as the result of enlistment of its members in the AIF, and it was proposed to find an additional 140,000 men by calling up four more quotas under the *Defence Act* (75,000 men), by voluntary enlistment (30,000), and by calling up the Militia Reserve.
- A War Cabinet on **18th June** reviewed the situation in the Far East after the fall of France, and whether Australia could do anything to keep Japan out of New Caledonia. General White the Chief of the General Staff said that Japan's attack would be against British naval forces and bases and, with their defeat Japan would bring the Commonwealth to terms by the exercise of sea power alone, without the need for invasion.
- The crisis of the fall of France brought a rush of recruits to the A.I.F. By **25th June** volunteers already exceeded the requirements of the 7th and 8th Divisions and corps troops. However none of the divisions was properly equipped and could not be fully equipped from Australian production.
- At the beginning of **December**, the Australian Government's offer to send a brigade group to Malaya if necessary was gratefully accepted by Mr Churchill, who added that the Australian force would be relieved in May 1941 by the equivalent of a division from India. Arrangements were made for the 22nd Infantry Brigade and attached troops, 5,850 all ranks, to embark for Malaya early in February.

1940 Australian Strategy

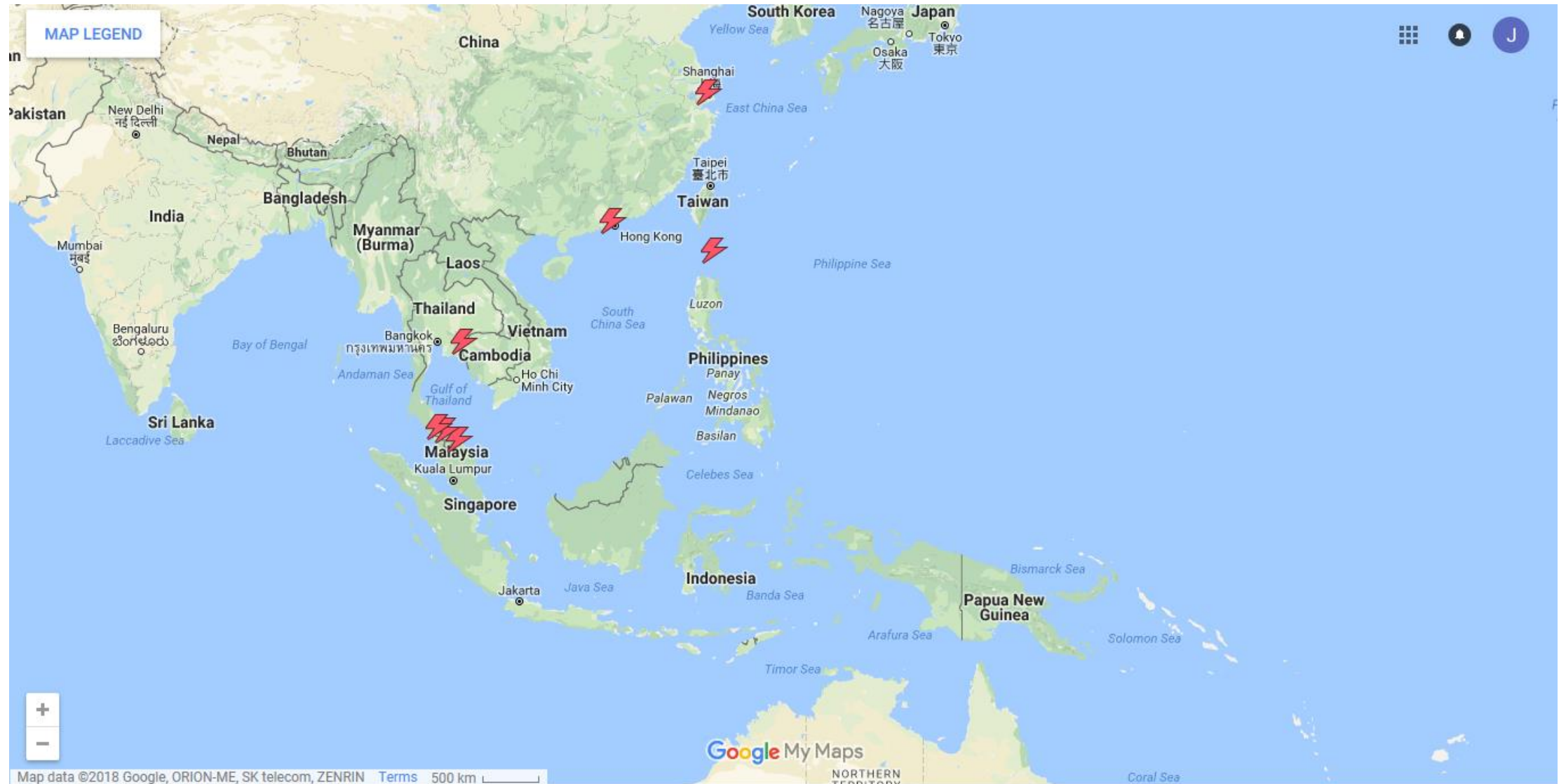
- The opinion of the Australian Department of External Affairs in a submission of **9th July** was that the United States would not come into war if Japan attacked Australia.
- A communication from **Mr Churchill dated 11th August** stated:
 - “If ... Japan set about invading Australia or New Zealand on a large scale, I have the explicit authority of the Cabinet to assure you that we should then cut our losses in the Mediterranean and sacrifice every interest, except only the defence and feeding of this Island, on which all depends, and would proceed in good time to your aid with a fleet able to give battle to any Japanese force which could be placed in Australian waters.”
- The Australian Chiefs of Staff, on **23rd August**, reached the conclusion that:
 - “in view of the assurance given by the British Prime Minister the dominant factor in regard to the defence of Australia was still the security of the naval base at Singapore and its availability for use by the main fleet.”
- On **23rd Sept** the war cabinet, despite the advice above, decided, at the request of the UK, to send the 7th division equipped by Australia to the Middle East and to form a fourth division of the AIF (the 9th) with the intention that it, too, should serve in the Middle East.



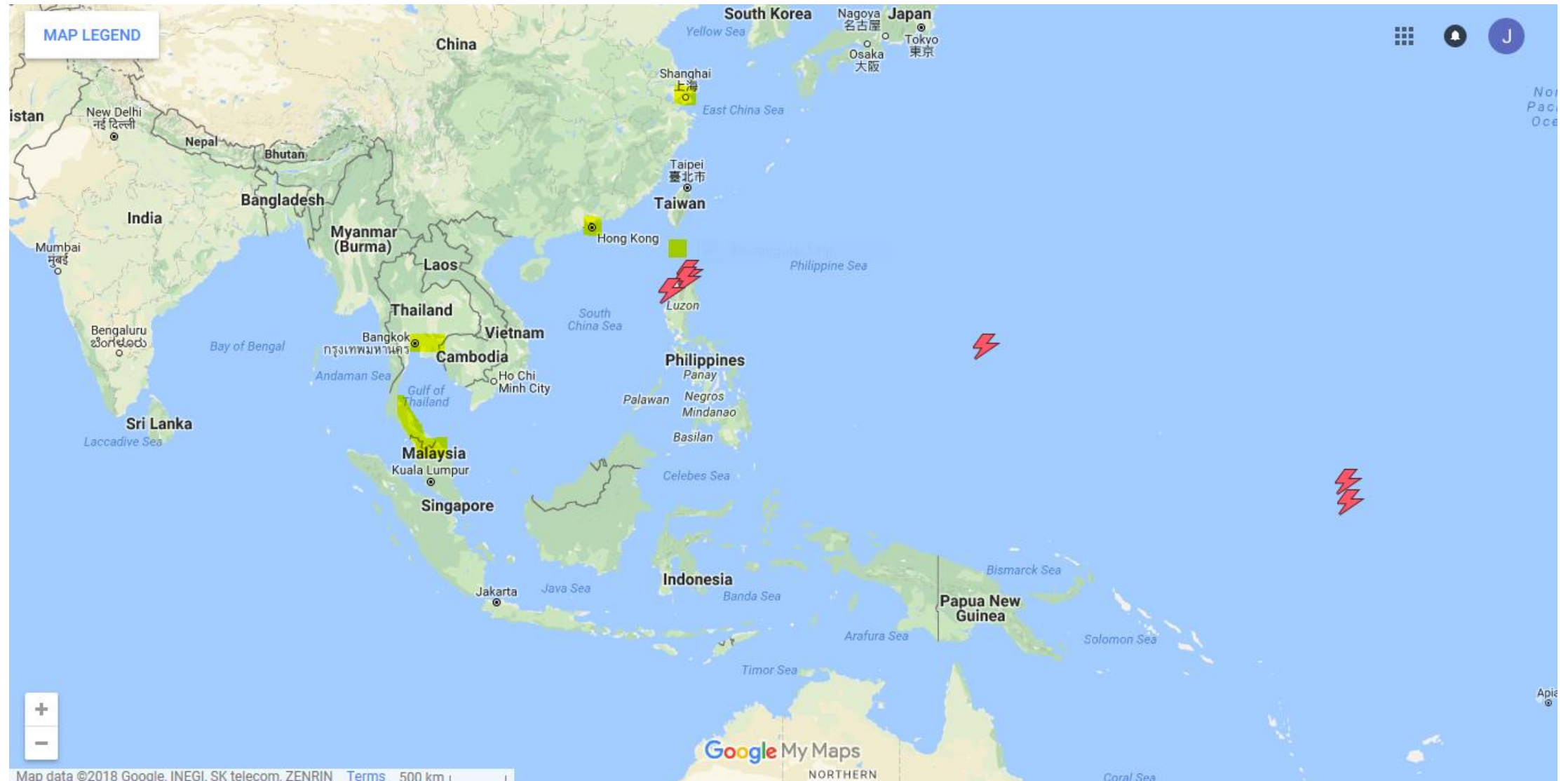
1941 Efforts to Reinforce Malaya

- The Chiefs of Staff in London reviewed the forces available in Malaya, and on **8th January** reported that although 586 would be ideal, 336 aircraft would give a fair degree of security; and in any event no more could be provided before the end of 1941. They would try to form five fighter squadrons for the Far East during the year. (There were then no modern fighters there.) They accepted the requirement for 26 battalions and indicated that this total would be reached by June.
- On **13th January** Mr Churchill minuted the Chiefs of Staff that: "the political situation in the Far East does not seem to require, and the strength of our Air Force by no means warrants, the maintenance of such large forces in the Far East at this time."
- British, Dutch and Australian representatives met in the last week of **February**, and drew up an agreement, without commitment to (by?) their governments, for mutual reinforcements in the event of aggression. Australia would provide troops and an air striking force at Darwin to reinforce Ambon and Koepang if required.
- Brooke-Popham was instructed "Avoidance of war with Japan is the basis of Far Eastern policy and provocation must be rigidly avoided."
- On 2nd February the 22nd Brigade AIF boarded the 81,000-ton Queen Mary in Sydney. They landed at Singapore on **18 February**. In **March and April** the 9th Indian division arrived in Singapore, but it consisted of only two brigades (the third having been sent at the last moment to Iraq) and had no artillery.
- The Australian War Cabinet decided on **10th June** that a United Kingdom suggestion that two additional infantry brigades be sent to Malaya could not be considered apart from a complete review of the manpower situation.
- On **10th June** the British Chiefs of Staff stated that; The majority of the 450 shore-based aircraft which the Japanese can marshal against us are of obsolete types . . . and we have no reason to believe that Japanese standards are even comparable with those of the Italians . . . We fully realise that our air strength in the Far East is below that necessary for reasonable security in the absence of a fleet, but we do not consider that, in the present situation, we are running more serious risks there than elsewhere.
- The arrival of Brewster Buffalo fighters from the United States in **February 1941** had eased the problem of lack of fighter planes somewhat. Altogether 167 Buffaloes were received and by the end of May the formation of four squadrons armed with these aircraft had been authorised.
- On **15th August** the 27th Brigade AIF, with some eight months' training behind it, arrived in Singapore. Having embarked at Sydney and Melbourne in late July.
- Malaya Command planned Operation Matador to counteract a Japanese landing on the Kra Isthmus. It was to be put into action as soon as an attack was imminent. If an enemy attacked or was invited into Siam, troops under British command would rush to Singora and defend it against a seaborne attack.

8 December 1941 – The Wave Breaks

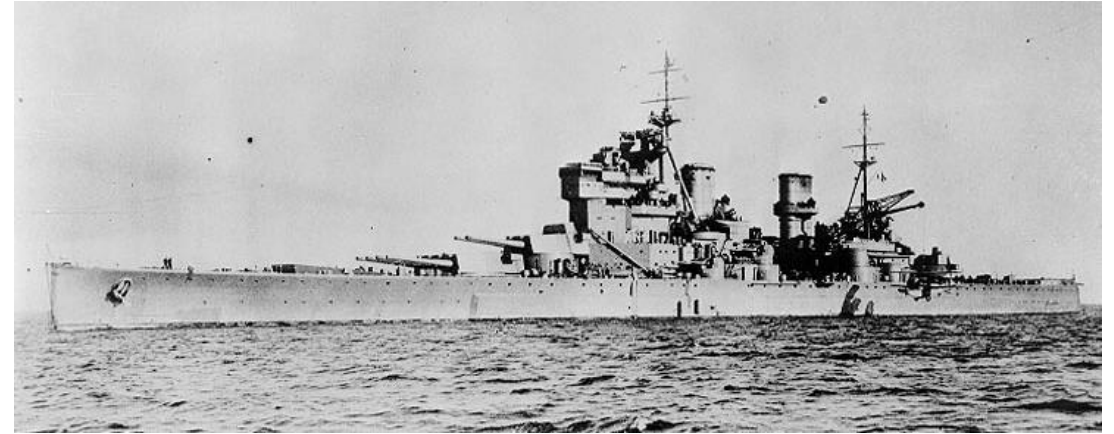


9 to 13 December 1941



9th December

- **South China Sea**
- The fleet rounded the Anambas Islands at daybreak on the 9th. During the morning it proceeded north under low overcast with frequent rainstorms.
- During the day Phillips signalled to his force.
 - “My object is to surprise and sink transports and enemy warships before air attack can develop. Objective chosen will depend on air reconnaissance. Intend to arrive objective after sunrise tomorrow 10th.”
- At about 5.00 pm Vampire reported an unconfirmed sighting of an enemy aircraft.
- At 6.45 p.m. the sky cleared and the fleet was shadowed by at least three aircraft.
- At about 7 pm the Fleet were 300 miles east of Singora, and Phillips altered course to west and increased speed to 26 knots.



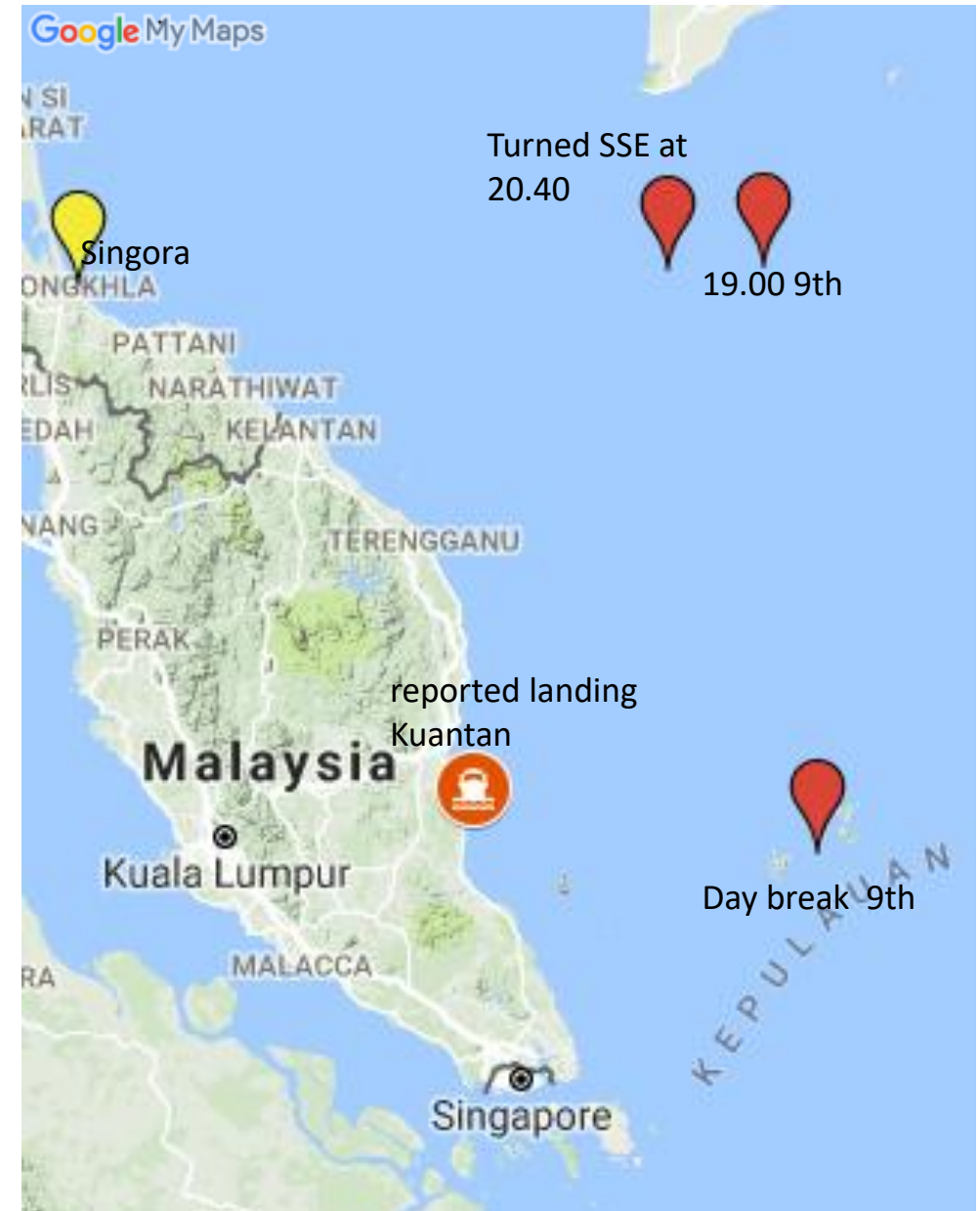
HMS Prince of Wales



HMS Repulse

9th December

- Phillips had decided that, in the absence of fighter cover, surprise was essential. The shadowing of the fleet indicated that surprise was lost and, after a discussion with his staff, he decided to abandon the operation.
 - Speed was reduced to 20 knots; Tenedos was detached to return to Singapore independently, and to signal to Singapore at 8 a.m. the following morning that the force would be off the Anambas Islands on its return passage not earlier than 6 a.m. on the 11th.
 - At 8.40 p.m. course was altered to S.S.E. towards the Anambas Islands.
- Soon after this a signal from Palliser told Phillips
 - that the Kota Bharu aerodrome was in enemy hands and that all northern Malayan aerodromes were becoming untenable due to bombing;
 - that Brooke-Popham "hints he is considering concentrating all air efforts on the defence of the Singapore area"; and
 - that "enemy bombers on South Indo-China aerodromes are in force and undisturbed... They could attack you in five hours after sighting.
 - Two carriers may be in Saigon area."
- Shortly before midnight Phillips received a signal from Palliser:
 - "Enemy reported landing Kuantan, latitude 3°50N."



10th December

- **South China Sea**

- Buffaloes of No. 453 Squadron were standing by to give air cover to the fleet should they be returning to Singapore. In response to Captain Tennant's message, received about midday, ten fighters took off at 12.15 for the scene of the attack 165 miles away. A pair of 243 sqd Buffaloes were also dispatched on receipt of Tennant's message.
- At about 12.20 "torpedo bomber aircraft seemed to appear from several directions" and attacked both big ships. In quick succession Repulse was hit aft and put out of control with a jammed rudder, though steaming at over 20 knots; and then struck by at least three torpedoes, two on the port side, and one on the starboard. She listed heavily to port, and at 12.33 rolled over and sank.
- Prince of Wales, some five miles distant, was also hit by three torpedoes, one at the stem, one aft, and one amidships on the starboard side. She righted from her port list, but settled appreciably.
- When Repulse capsized, Phillips ordered Vampire and Electra to pick up survivors. As Vampire was approaching the survivors a high-level bombing formation was observed coming over Prince of Wales. Prince of Wales fought back with her remaining anti-aircraft batteries. She was straddled by this salvo of bombs and sustained one hit on the catapult deck while "near misses may have caused further damage". Express, went alongside the stricken ship to take off survivors and remained there until the last possible moment. She sank "at 1.15 p.m., in position 3°38'N, 104°281'E."
- The bombers made off and made no attempt to attack the destroyers.
- The two 243 sqd Buffaloes reached the scene just before PoW sank. 453 squadron arrived only in time to witness the rescue operations of the destroyers.

11th December

- **Singapore**

- **Admiral Layton** told the **Admiralty** that his broad policy would be "to hold as much of Malaya as possible, to secure Singapore as a base for the Eastern Fleet, to keep trade moving, to effect the maximum damage by air and submarine on the enemy". He asked for all possible reinforcement of submarines, minesweepers, destroyers and aircraft to carry out this policy, but added: "battleships should not come further than Colombo until accompanied by cruisers, destroyers and aircraft."

- The Dutch put three submarines, K14, K15 and K16 at Layton's disposal.

- HMAS Vampire covered a minelaying operation off Kuantan.

- **London**

- Reviewing the Far Eastern situation, the British Chiefs of Staff decided that the 18th British Division and some anti-tank and anti-aircraft regiments, which were at sea on their way to the Middle East, should be placed at the disposal of General Wavell, then Commander-in-Chief, India.

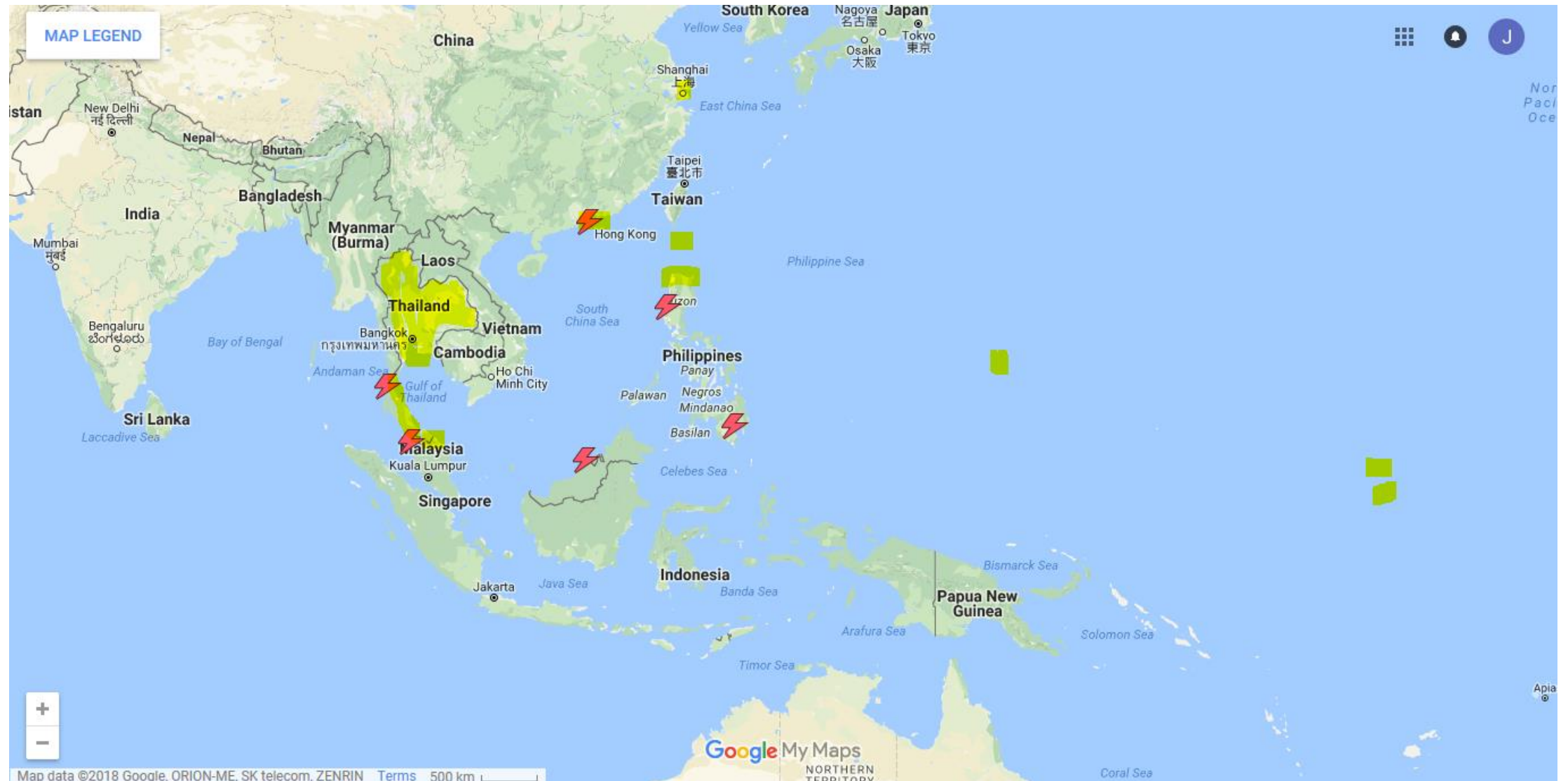
- **Eastern Pacific**

- After many false alarms and too many depth charges wasted on neutral fish the Enterprise task force found a real submarine. 200 miles north east of Oahu, Lieutenant (jg) Edward Anderson flying an SBD from Enterprise spotted a 2,000 ton submarine and dive bombed it. The attack caused so much damage the submarine was unable to submerge and another SBD dive bombing attack sank it.



Vice Admiral Layton

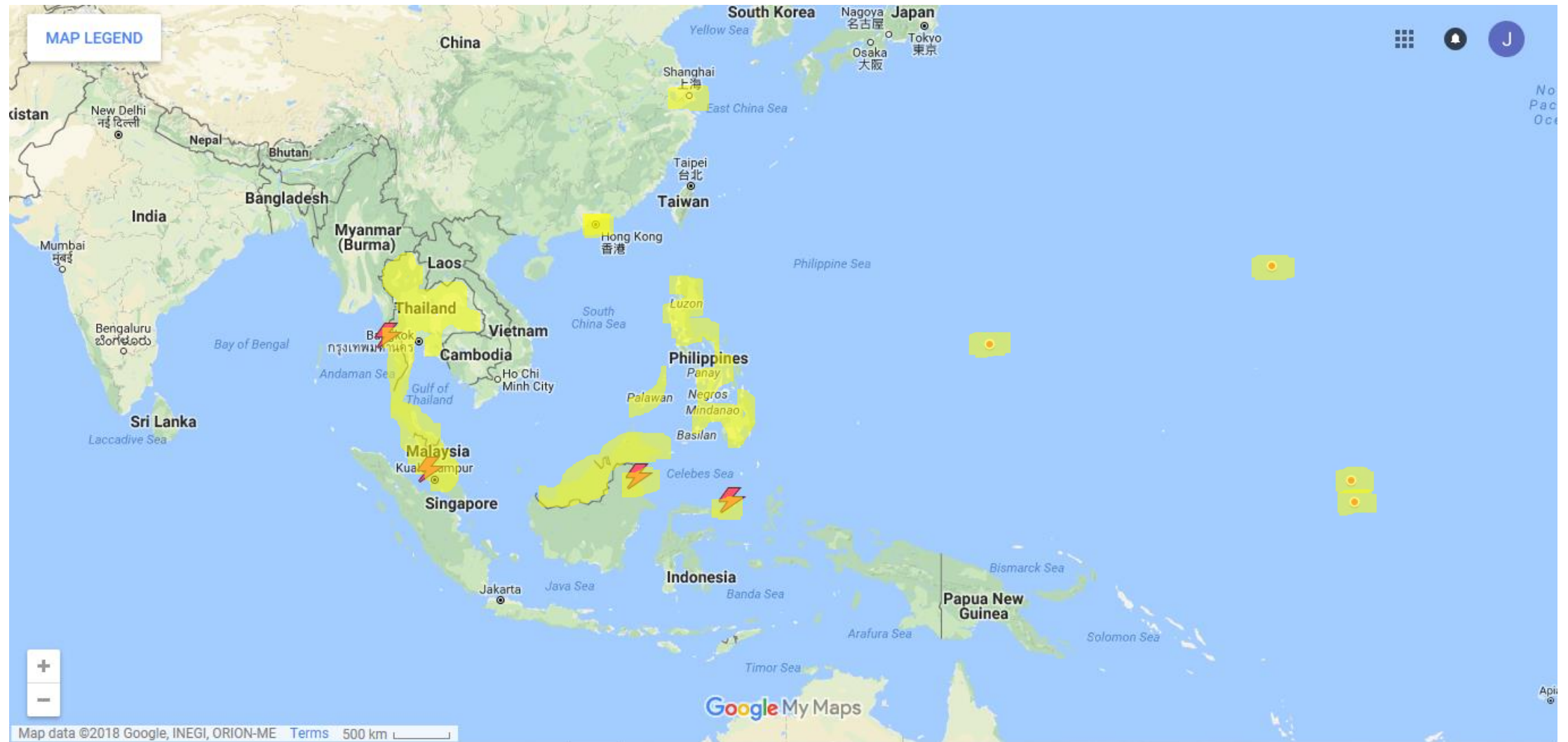
15 to 22 December 1941



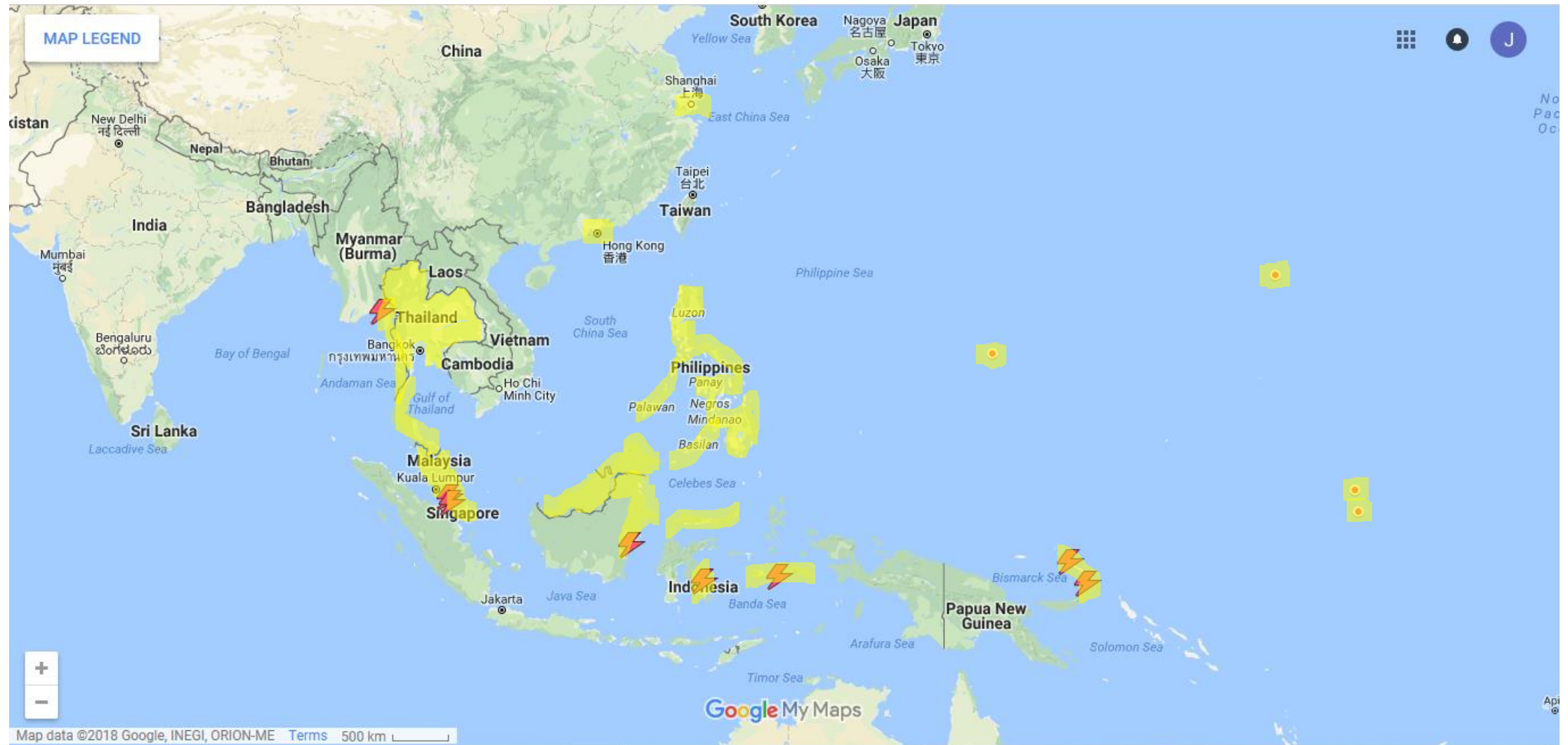
23 to 31 December 1941



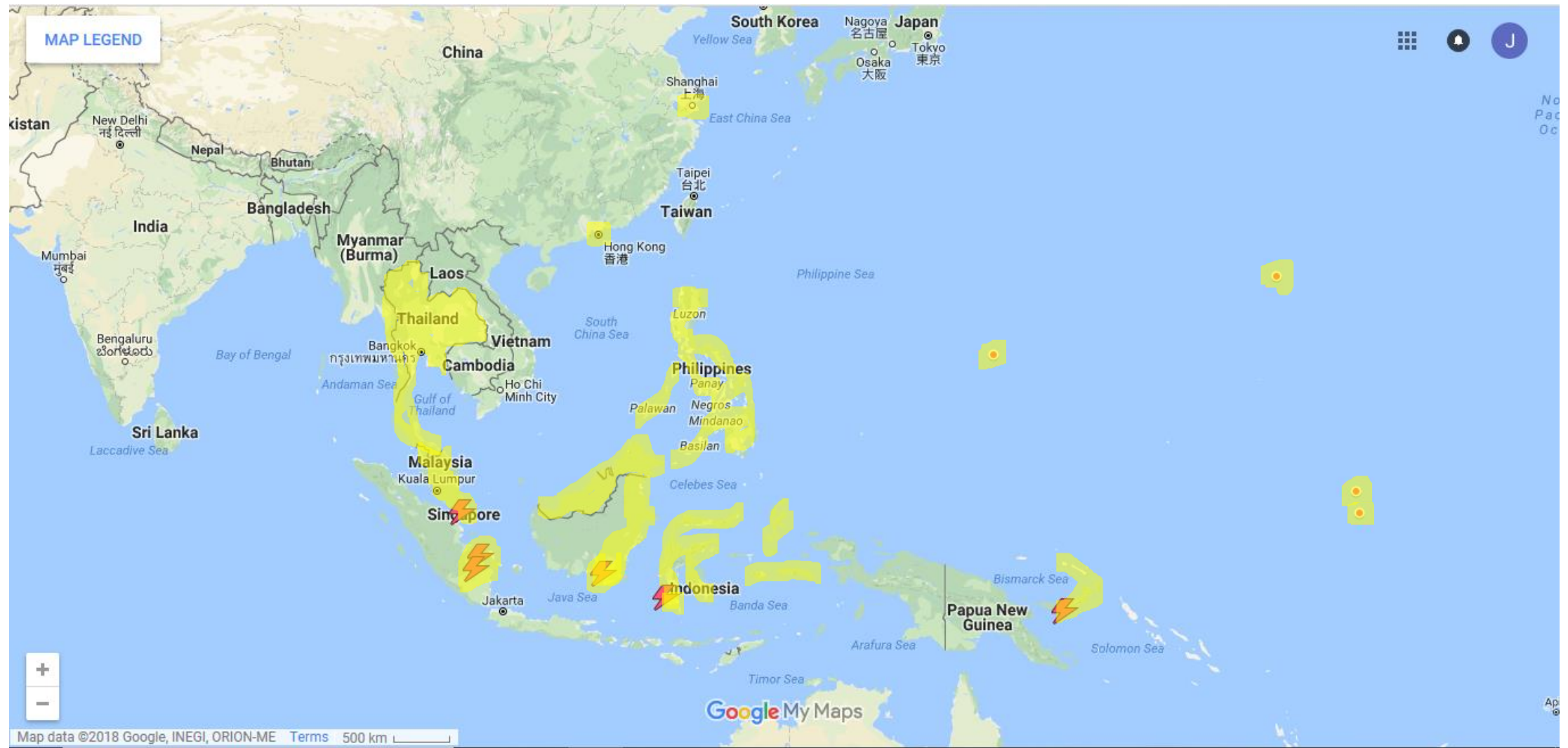
1 to 15 January 1942



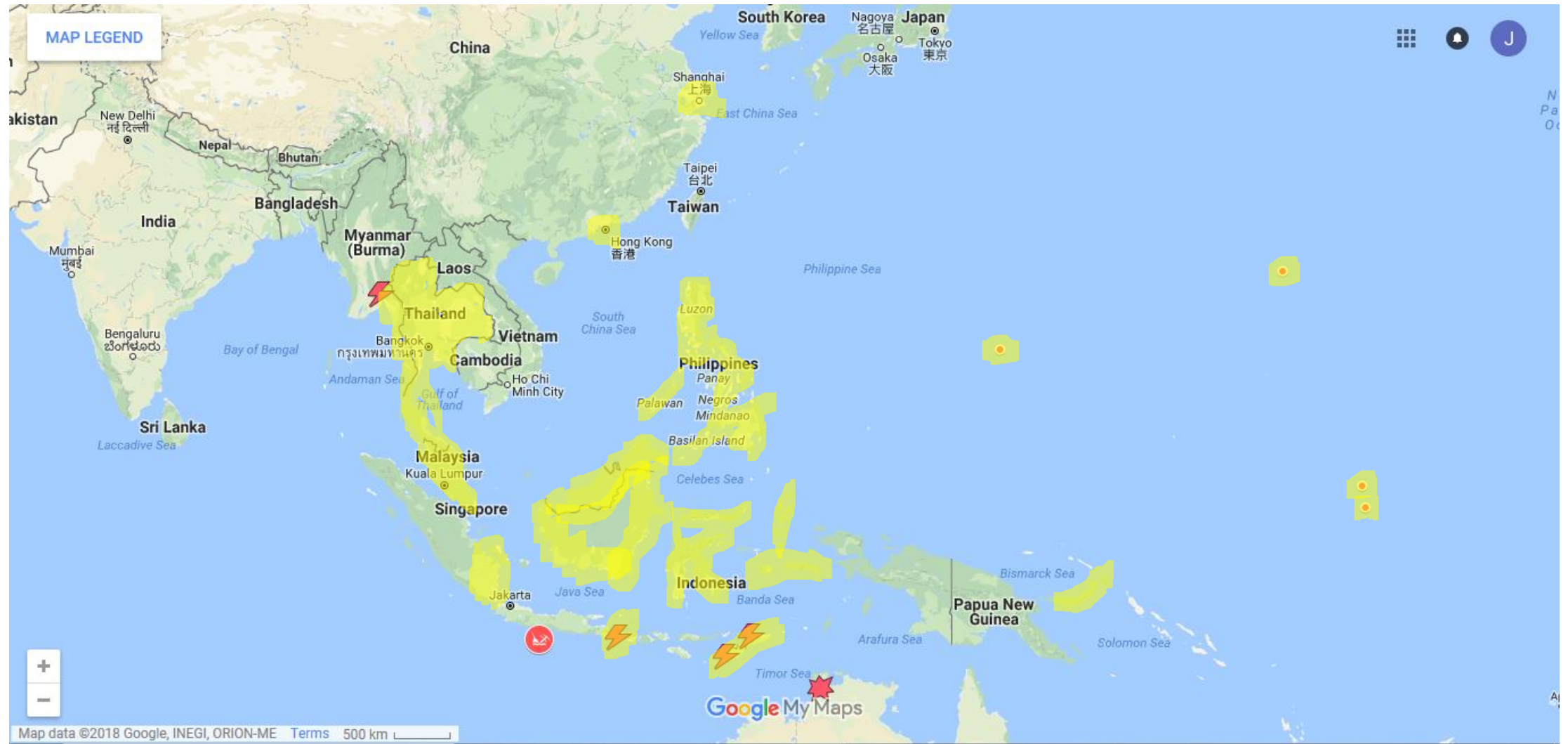
16 to 31 January 1942



1 to 15 February 1942



16 to 28 February 1942



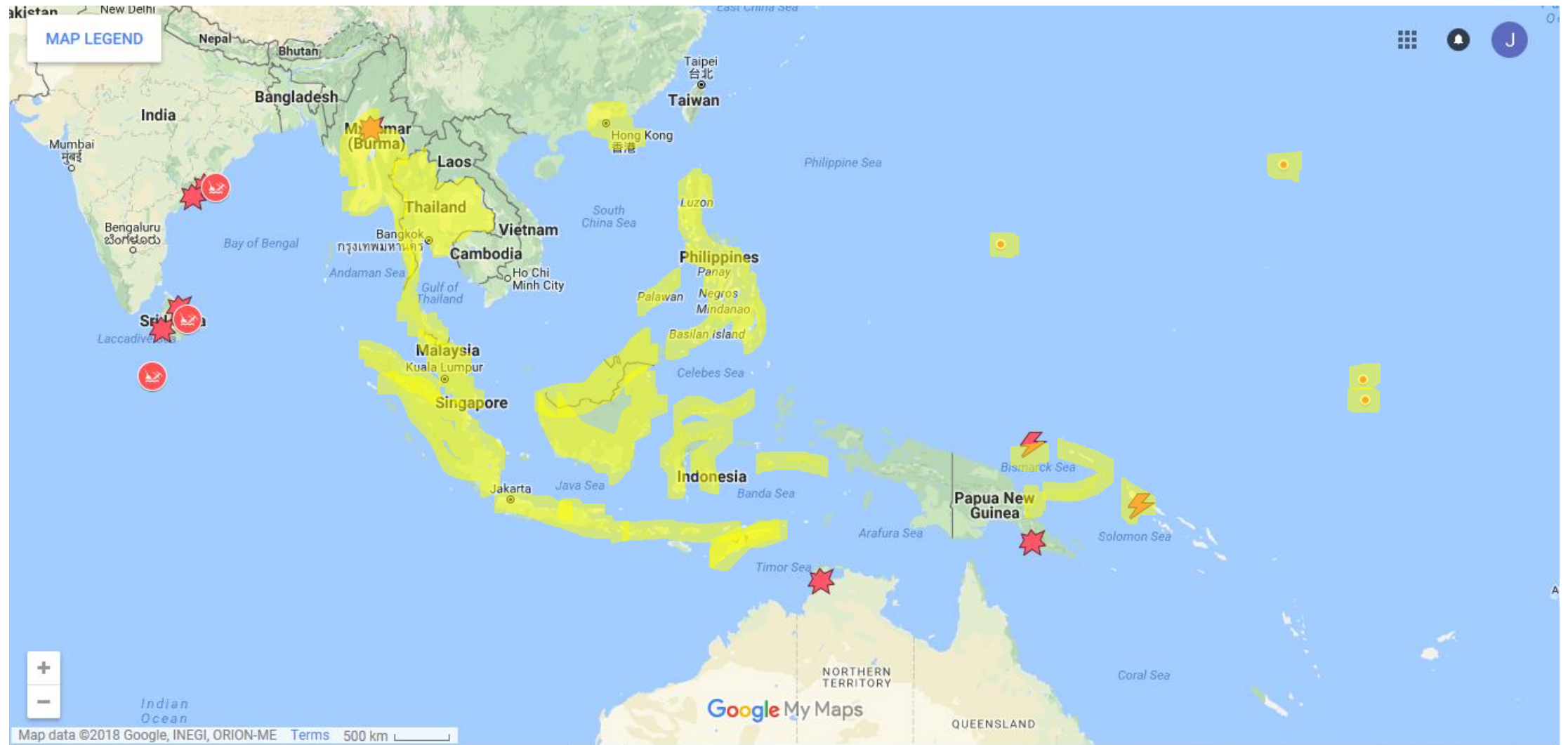
1 to 15 March 1942



16 to 31 March 1942



1 to 15 April 1942



8 April - Sea

- On the morning of the 8th the fleet reached Addu Atoll. Here, Admiral Somerville told his flag and commanding officers that he was convinced of the undesirability of further operations in Ceylon waters
 - in the face of such superior Japanese strength, and
 - in conditions in which the battle fleet, lacking speed, endurance, and gun power, was only a liability.
 - He had decided to send the battle fleet to Kilindini, East Africa, where it could protect Middle East and Persian Gulf communications and do some collective training.
 - He himself, with Force "A" — Warspite and the carriers—would temporarily base on Bombay
 - with the object of deterring the Japanese from attacking Indian Ocean communications;
 - but for the immediate future would avoid Ceylon.
 - Somerville's actions were promptly approved by the Admiralty.
- About 3 p.m. 8th (April) a Catalina reconnaissance aircraft reported a Japanese force of three battleships and one aircraft carrier east of Ceylon steering N by W
 - This report indicated to Admiral Arbuthnot, CinC East Indies, that a dawn raid on either Trincomalee or Madras was to be expected, and he at once instructed the NOIC, Trincomalee to clear the harbour.
 - Ships including the aircraft carrier Hermes, whose aircraft were still ashore, and H.M.A.S. Vampire, were sailed southwards with orders to keep close inshore and to be at least 40 miles from Trincomalee by dawn on the 9th.
 - Dispersal to the south was chosen because the Colombo dispersal had been to the north and there were already 22 merchant ships sheltering in Palk Strait between Ceylon and India.

8 April - Sea



16 to 30 April



1 to 15 May 1942



What became of the Australians?

- About 20,000 Australian troops have been caught up in this avalanche.
- The two Brigades of the 8th Division AIF and divisional troops, which were defending Malaya, surrendered when the British Command surrendered.
- The units of the 7th Division AIF, which were disembarked in Java just before it was invaded, about equivalent to another Brigade in strength, surrendered after the Dutch Command surrendered.
- The three Australian Battalions defending Rabaul, Ambon and Timor have been overrun.
 - Most are prisoners of war,
 - hundreds have been massacred by the Japanese,
 - some died in the jungle of tropical diseases and malnutrition and
 - some escaped and have now reached safety along informal routes.
- Australian crews of sunken navy ships, airmen, nurses and civilians have also been caught up in the disaster, with similarly varied outcomes.



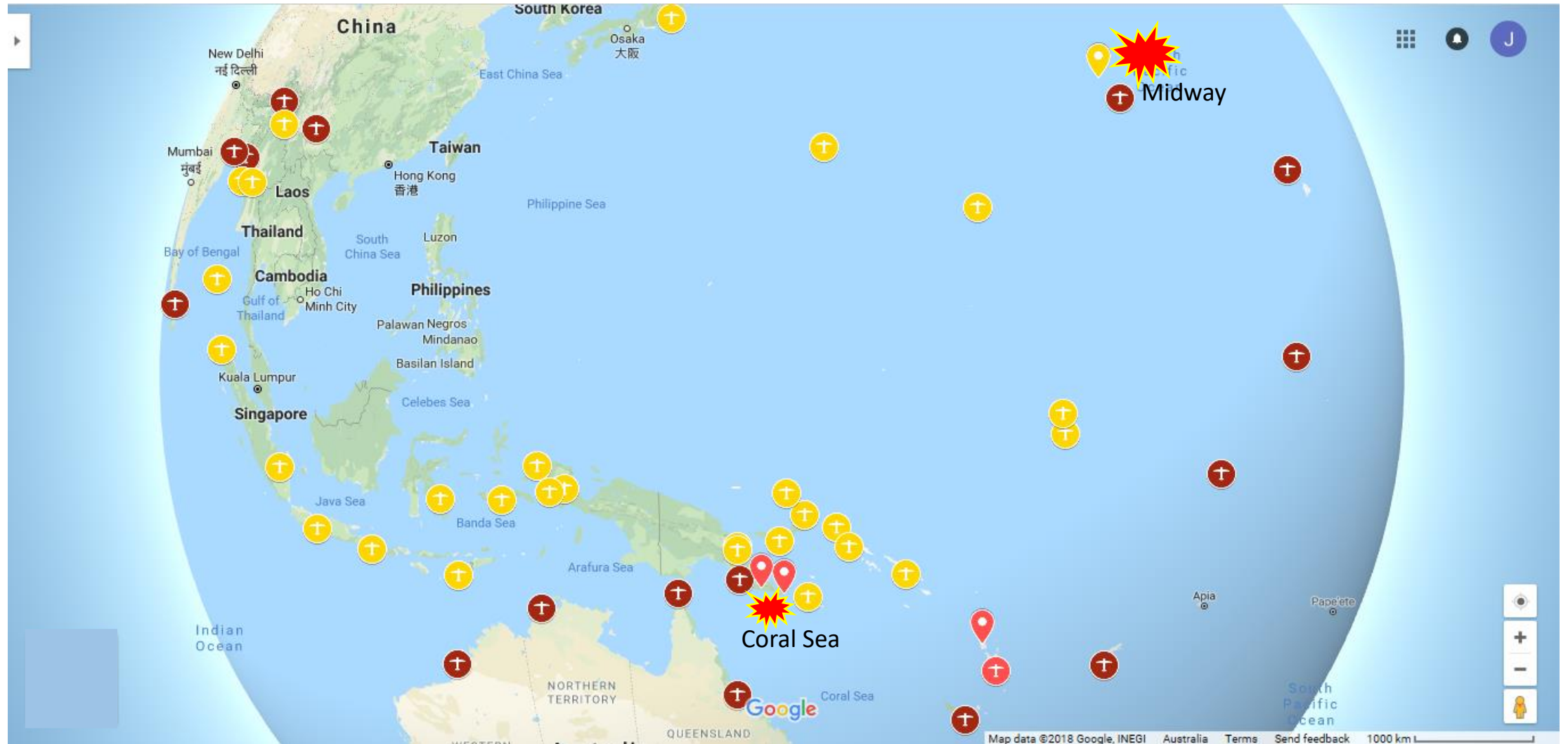
Matron Drummond of the 2/13th Australian General Hospital (right) was machine gunned to death together with nineteen other nurses on a beach on Banka Island on 16 February 1942.

Of 64 nurses, who left Singapore on the same ship, two were killed when the ship was bombed, nine were last seen drifting on a raft, twenty were massacred and the remainder became prisoners, one after surviving the machine gunning.

May June 1942

- After 6 months of defeat and disaster and the destruction of the Western Empires in South East Asia the US Navy has fought a drawn battle in the Coral Sea to defend Port Moresby and won a great victory off Midway Island.
- The victory would not have been won without an American intelligence break into Japanese codes. The code book has now been changed and the Americans are back at square one.
- The extent of the victory is not entirely clear but it seems probable that Japanese losses have reduced their strength in large fast aircraft carriers to approximate parity with the Americans.
- The Japanese continue to outnumber the Allies in all other classes of ship.
- The extent of the Midway victory conceals the fact that it was a very close run thing and there were a number of American tactical disasters and material losses.
- Japanese land forces and navy surface forces have everywhere been tactically superior to the allies.

May and June 1942



Global Strategy

- Strategy
 - The Allied Strategy, agreed between the US and the UK in February 1941 and ratified after Pearl Harbour, is to concentrate on the defeat of Germany and to maintain in the Far East only positions necessary to safeguard vital interests and deny Japan access to raw materials vital to her continuous war effort.
- The Allies are fighting four campaigns against the Germans
 - The War in Russia
 - The War in North Africa
 - The War against the U Boats in the Atlantic
 - The Strategic Bombing campaign against Germany.
- Resources
 - The Americans are making prodigious efforts in industry to build the weapons to win the war and to replace the resources, such as the rubber and cinchona plantations in the far east and the ships in the Atlantic, lost due to failure to prepare an effective defence.



Onboard HMS *Prince of Wales*, in Placentia Bay, Newfoundland in August 1941. President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill seated. Standing Admiral King, USN; General Marshall, U.S. Army; General Dill, British Army; Admiral Stark, USN; and Admiral Pound, RN. At left are Harry Hopkins and Averell Harriman.

The War in Russia

- Of the 217 Divisions in the German army 181 are fighting the Red Army on the Russian Front.
- After the surprise invasion the Germans advanced 800 miles across a 1,200 mile wide front capturing enormous numbers of soldiers and enormous amounts of equipment.
- After the initial onrush, when winter fell, the Russians were able to stabilize the line and push the Germans back a bit particularly on the Moscow front.
- Everyone is now waiting for the German summer offensive to break out.
- The British and the Americans are very anxious that the enormous German army remains committed to the Russian Front.



Operation Barbarossa: the German invasion of the Soviet Union, 21 June 1941 to 5 December 1941:

The War in North Africa

- There has just been a disaster in the War in North Africa
- The three CinCs Middle East had determined in January that they would not again attempt to defend Tobruk as an isolated fortress. This decision had been communicated to the War Office and approved there and communicated to General Brooke the CIGS. No effort had therefore been made to maintain the defences.
- On 14th June Churchill signalled Auchinleck:
- “Presume there is no question in any case of giving up Tobruk. As long as Tobruk is held no serious enemy advance into Egypt is possible...”
- This was reinforced the following day in another signal requiring that he: “leave as many troops in Tobruk as are necessary to hold the place for certain.”
- Tobruk was surrendered on 21st June with the loss of a division (2nd South African), two independent brigades (11th Indian and 201st Guards) the 32nd tank brigade, the 268th artillery regiment with all their equipment and a mass of stores accumulated for the next offensive.
- The British Eighth Army fell back 300 kilometres to Mersa Matruh.
- The 9th Division AIF was hurried from Syria to reinforce the Eighth Army.
- Three of the 217 Divisions in the German army are fighting in the North African campaign.

The Shipping War

- The major restriction limiting the Allies' ability to reinforce threatened fronts was shipping. The US Army had units available but no shipping capacity to move them into active theatres.
- To overcome this limitation President Roosevelt, in his State of the Union Address in January had promised:
 - “In this year, 1942, we shall build 6,000,000 deadweight tons of merchant shipping as compared with a 1941 production of 1,100,000. And next year, 1943, we shall build 10,000,000 tons of shipping.”
- However in January Allied shipping losses had been over 521,000 tons or an annual rate of 6.2 million tons.
- In February losses increased to 706,000 tons or an annual rate of 8.4 million tons.
- The major increases in losses were due to German submarines along the American East and Caribbean coasts and Japanese aircraft in the Far East.
- American forces and armaments cannot be moved to active theatres in the numbers required until these two threats can be controlled.

The Shipping War

- After declining from a record level in April, merchant shipping losses climbed again in May to 730,000 tons or an annual rate of 8,760 000 tons.
- American defences along the US east coast were beginning to become effective but the U Boats moved on and over half the losses were sunk by submarines in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean.
- The shipping resources of the Allies continued to decline month by month further reducing their capacity to transport forces to the battle area.

Strategic Bombing of Germany

- At the start of the war, Bomber Command had no real means of determining the success of its operations. The Air Ministry demanded that a method of verifying results be developed and by 1941 cameras, triggered by bomb release, were being fitted to bombers.
- The Butt Report, released on 18 August 1941, revealed the widespread failure of RAF Bomber Command aircraft to hit their targets. Finding that:
 - Of those aircraft recorded as attacking their target, only one in three got within 5 miles (8.0 km).
 - These figures relate only to aircraft recorded as *attacking* the target; the proportion of the *total sorties* which reached within 5 miles is less than one-third.
- At that stage the Germans were frequently unable to guess what it was the British were trying to bomb.
- By the end of May 1942 the RAF were able to find large targets, like cities, in the Western areas of Germany in good weather and bomb them with several hundred aircraft.
 - Most of the damage caused was done by incendiaries starting fires.
 - There was still no capacity to find, let alone hit, a target the size of an individual factory or railway yard.
- The only strategy available to Bomber Command was to attack the morale of the German population by dehousing them.



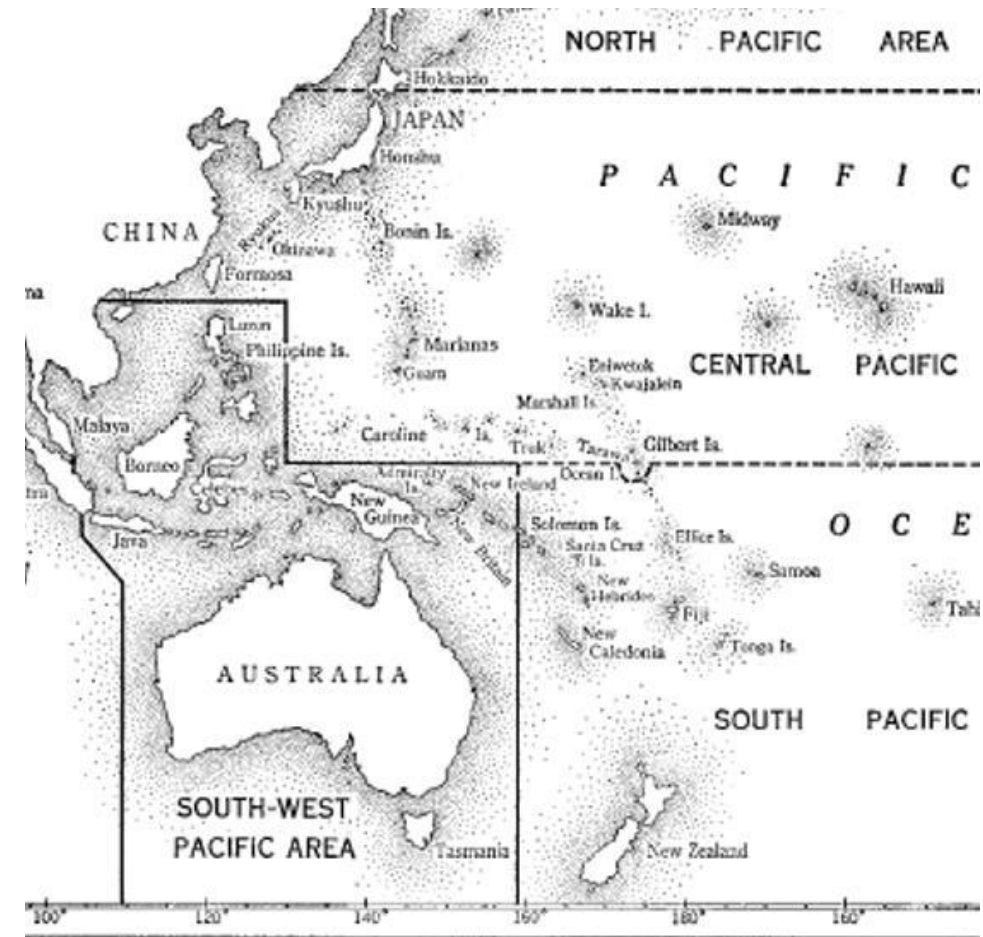
Pacific Strategy

- Command
- In response to Britain's obvious inability to do so, President Roosevelt, on 18th March, has undertaken, to the British, to defend Australia and New Zealand.
- Allied command in the Pacific has been split between the South West Pacific Area, including Australia and New Guinea, and the Pacific Ocean Area
- General MacArthur has been appointed Supreme Commander South West Pacific Area.
- In a report on public morale on 27th April the Censor said that MacArthur and the Americans had made the "outlook brighter". The Censor found that the appointment of General MacArthur had met with "unanimous approval"
- Admiral Nimitz at Pearl Harbour commands the Pacific Ocean Area.



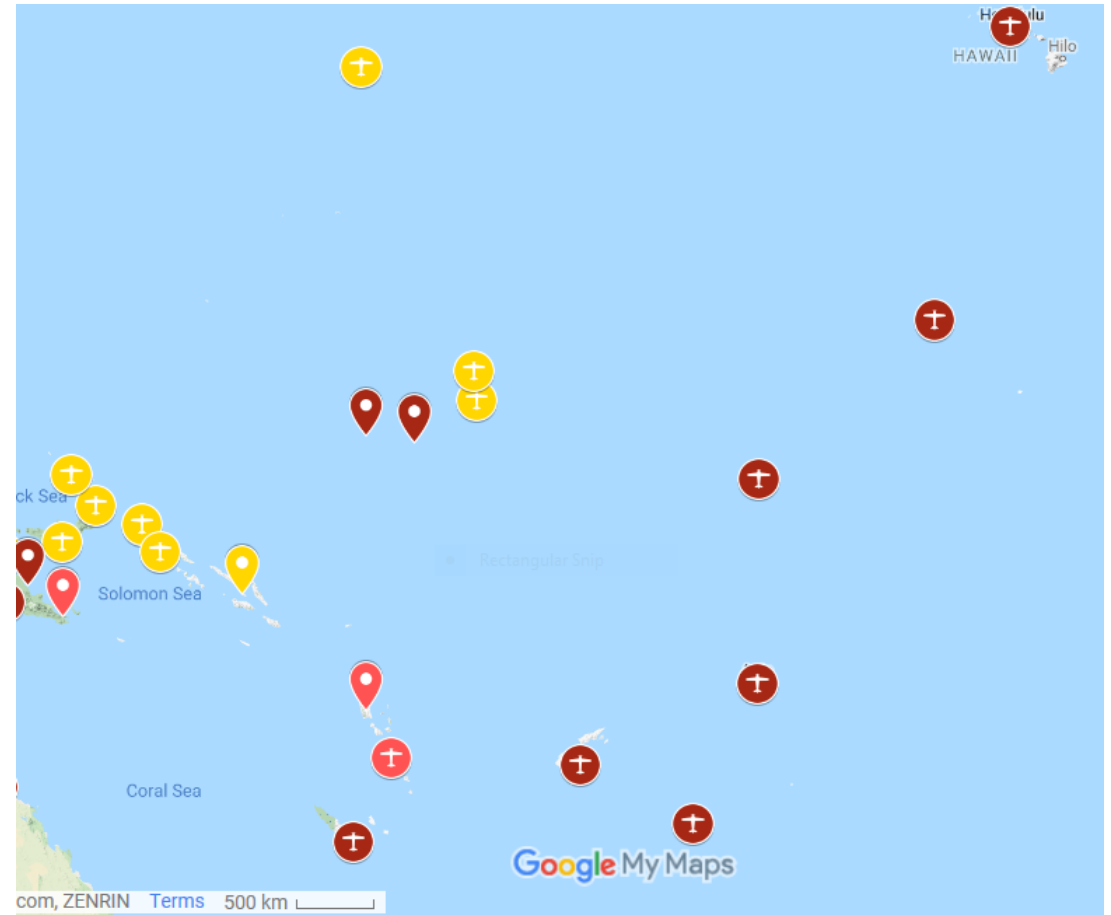
Pacific Strategy

- Forces
- Since the outbreak of the Japanese war Australia has conscripted large numbers to expand the militia. The call up now extends to married men up to 45 and single men up to 60. The militia are only required to serve in Australia and its territories.
- After a lengthy and sometimes rancorous negotiation the Australian Government insisted on the return of two of the experienced Australian divisions from the Middle East to Australia, in the teeth of persistent requests from the British Prime Minister and the American President that they go to shore up the defence of Burma.
- America has reinforced the South West Pacific and South Pacific with land, air and naval forces but they will take time to become effective, and the reinforcements are aimed only at securing the defence of Australia not at pushing the Japanese back.



Pacific Strategy

- Forces
- By June there were in Australia the equivalent of eleven militia divisions, one AIF division and two American divisions. The infantry divisions were reasonably well trained and equipped. The two motor divisions and the armoured division were very inadequately equipped by European or American standards.
- The Americans have installed strong land and air garrisons on New Caledonia, Fiji and Samoa and smaller forces on smaller islands further east to protect the supply line from the United States to Australia and New Zealand. Airfields are under construction in the New Hebrides.



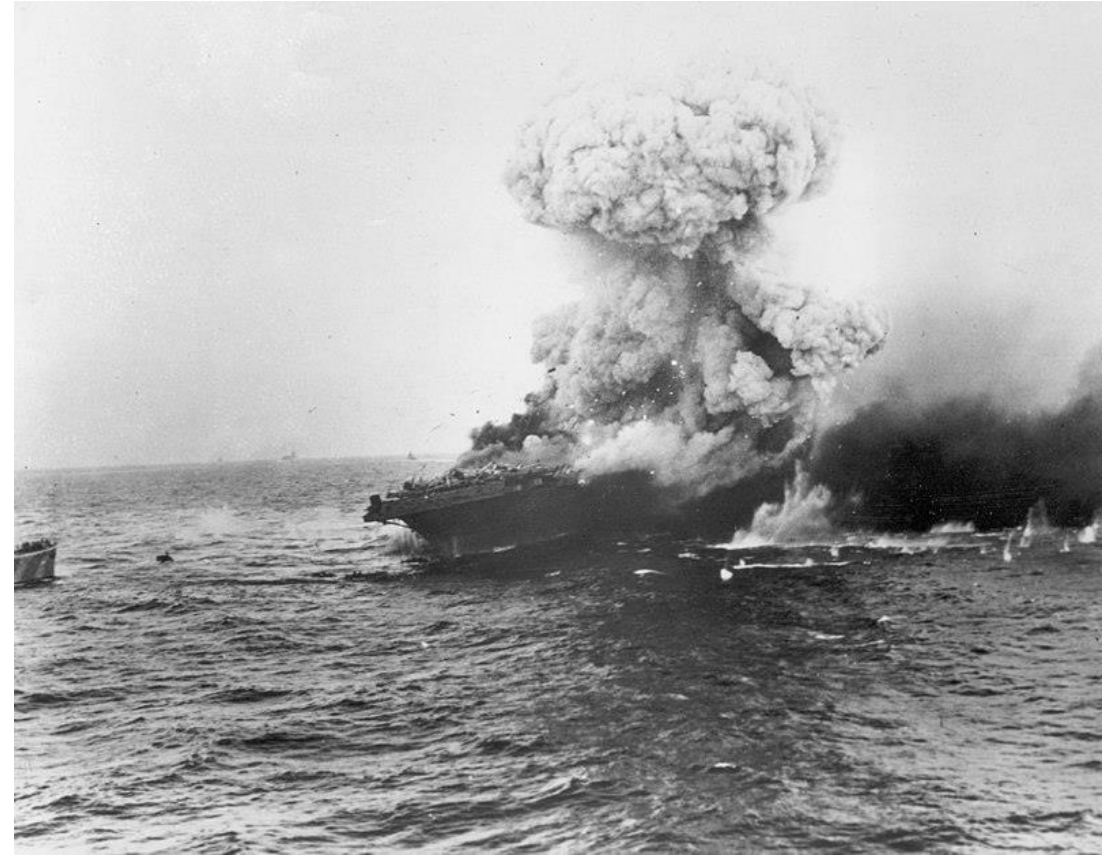
Situation report – June 1942

- Nearly all the Netherlands East Indies is in Japanese hands.
- The Northern islands of Australian administered New Guinea have been captured and key points on the north of the main island, Lae, Salamaua and Finschaven, have also been seized.
- The Japanese have advanced down the chain of the Solomon Islands to Tulagi. The British administrative centre and a good harbour.



Situation report – June 1942

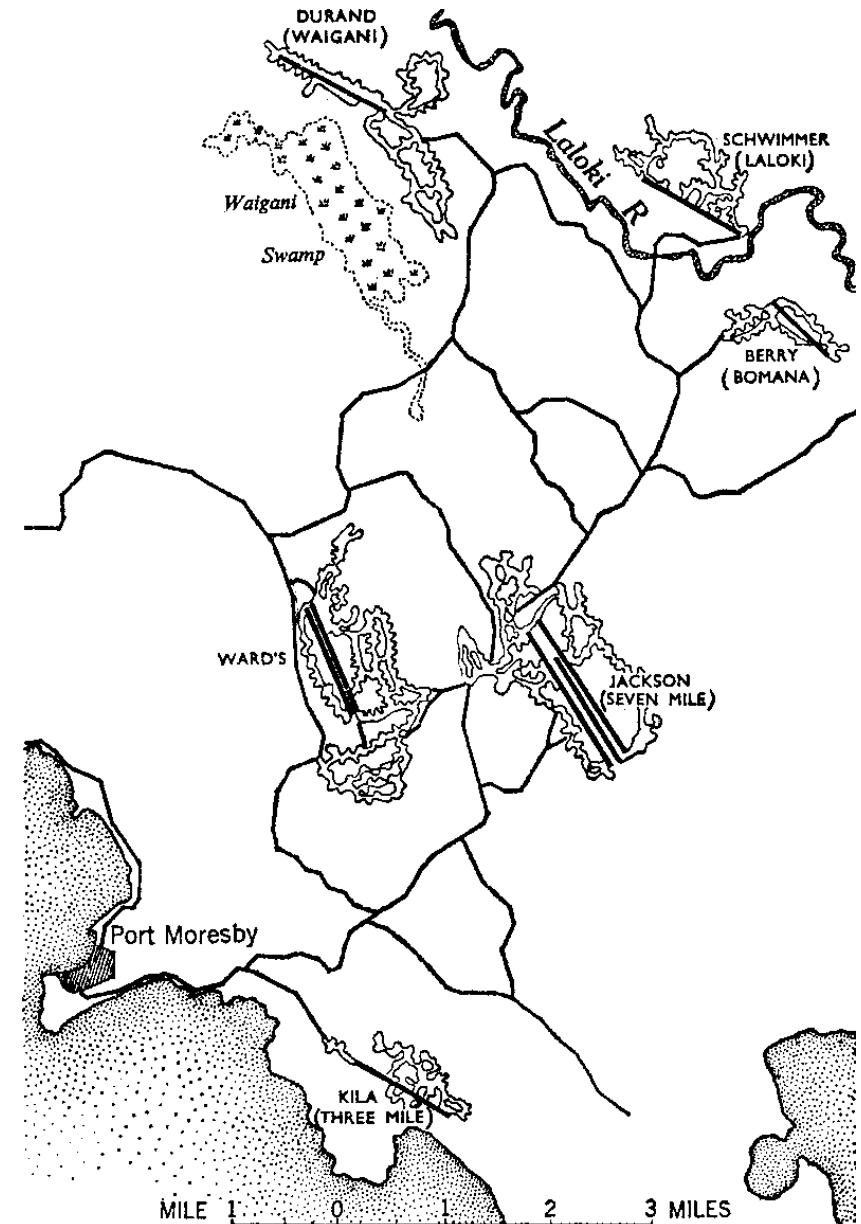
- The US Navy left the Coral Sea to concentrate off Midway.
- Australian Intelligence is predicting ongoing Japanese operations in the Solomons and against Port Moresby.
- Japanese submarines are operating successfully along the Australian south east coast. They have sunk a ship in Sydney Harbour and have shelled Sydney and Newcastle.



A mushroom cloud rises from a heavy explosion on Lexington, 8 May 1942.

Situation report – June 1942

- The air battle continues along the line from Timor to Tulagi with both sides seeking to capture or develop new airbases as well as attacking the enemy's bases.
- Darwin and Port Moresby are being developed into big strong airbases, confronting the Japanese air bases at Rabaul, Lae and Salamaua in New Guinea and Koepang and Dilli on Timor and Kendari in the Celebes.
- The only areas on the Timor – Tulagi line where land forces remain in contact are
 - The outskirts of Lae and Salamaua where the 5th Independent Company has recently been flown into Wau to reinforce the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles, and
 - Portuguese Timor where the 2nd Independent Company remains a force in being.
- The only other areas where Japanese and Allied forces are close enough to continue effective operations are
 - In the Aleutian Islands and
 - the Burma/India border.



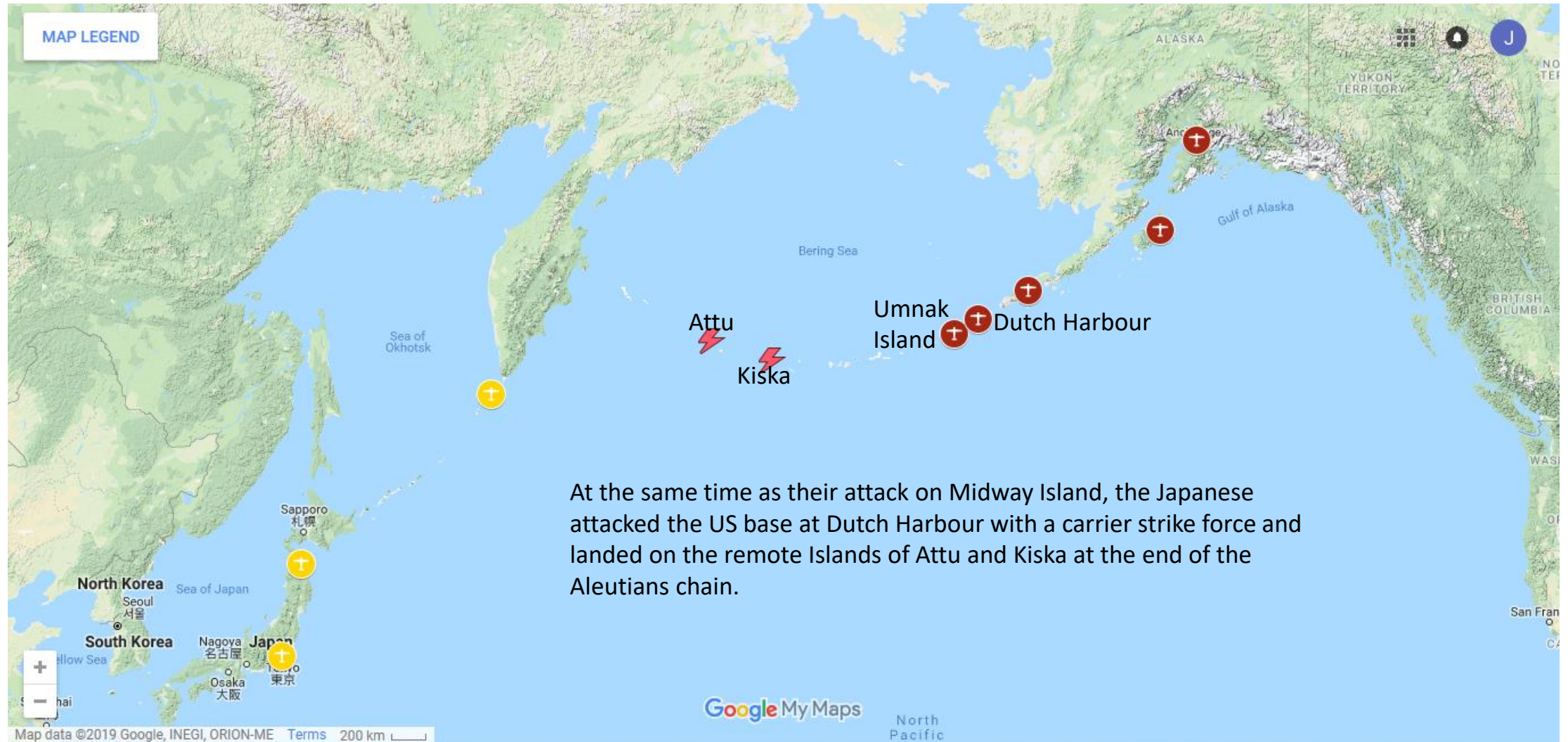
Timor – Darwin – Moresby - Lae – Rabaul - Tulagi



China Burma India (CBI) Theatre

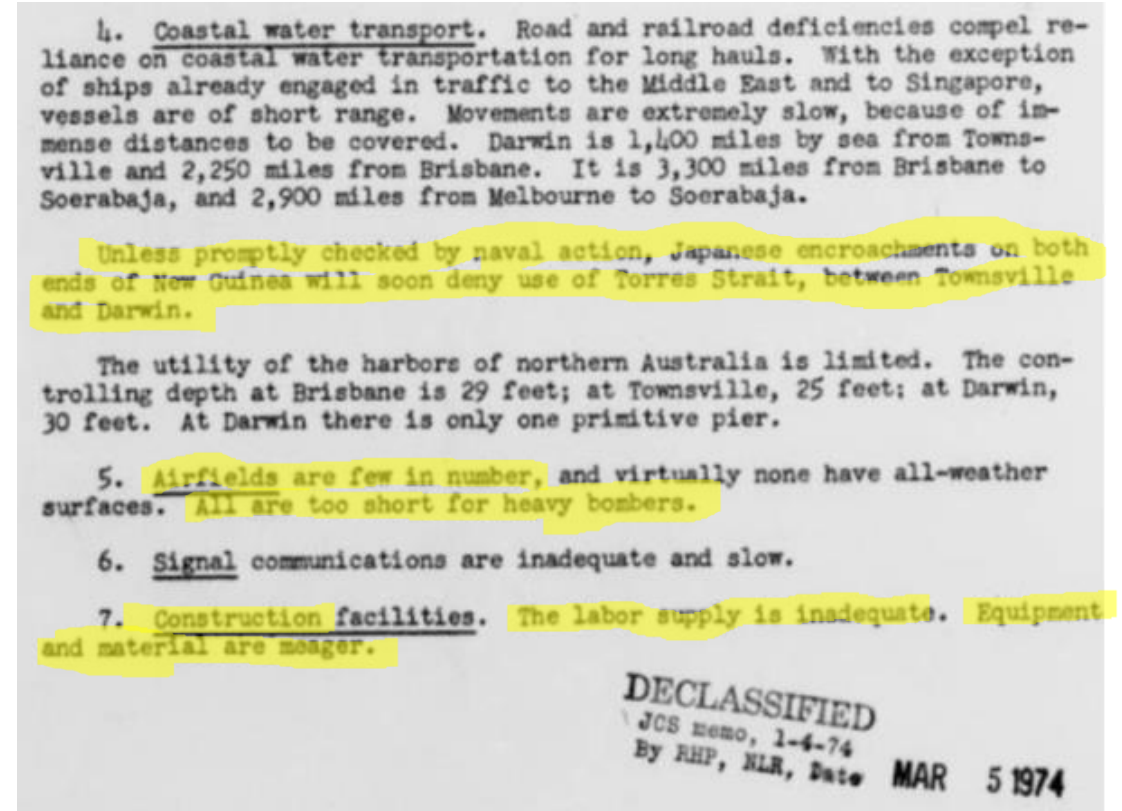
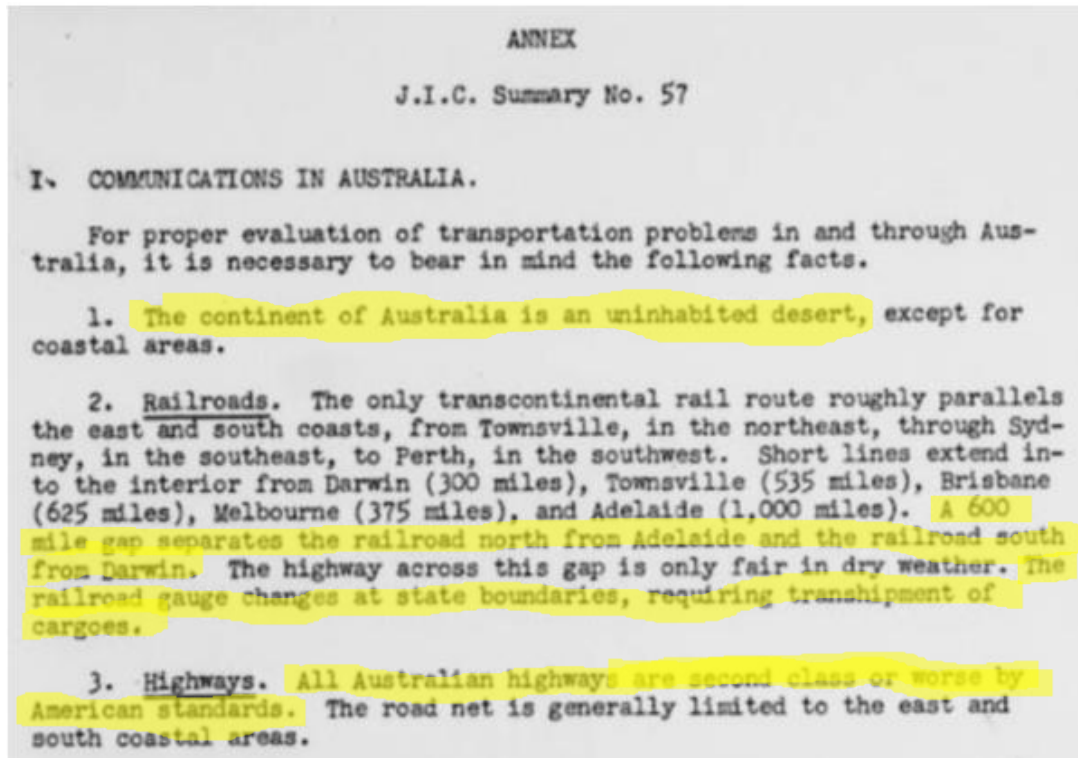


The Aleutian Islands



JIC No 57 – 10 February

The American Joint Intelligence Committee had early identified the difficulties of running the logistics of a war from Australia. Had they analysed New Guinea and the Islands of the South Pacific they would have found them worse logistically and infested by malaria to boot.



Bad as Australia and the South Pacific were, the Aleutian Islands and the India/Burma border were worse.

- In India even for a small force the logistical problem was staggering.
- Unable to use the more direct routes through the Mediterranean and across the Pacific, and forced to sail in convoys for protection against enemy submarines, ships from the United States required two months to make the 13,000 mile voyage.
- Japanese naval and air action in the Bay of Bengal restricted the use of Calcutta and forced incoming ships to dock at the west coast port of Karachi.
- Dependence on Karachi forced a maximum dependence on the Indian railroads.
 - Outside northwestern India, the railway system was not highly developed, and by American standards was grossly inefficient throughout.
 - Four different gauges of track required numerous extra handlings of freight by slow-moving, physically weak native laborers.
 - In eastern India, further delays were imposed by the use of ferries instead of bridges for crossing numerous streams;
 - on the important Calcutta-Assam line of communications, there existed not a single bridge over the Brahmaputra River and its tributaries.
 - The railways, already weakened by a transfer of locomotives and rolling stock to Iran and forced now to haul the products of the industrial centers of eastern India which normally went by sea from Calcutta, were unable to absorb American traffic without countless breakdowns and heartbreaking delays.
 - After a two-month voyage from the United States, equipment generally took six additional weeks in moving from Karachi to Assam.

Bad as Australia and the South Pacific were, the Aleutian Islands and the India/Burma border were worse.

- In the Aleutians,
- The weather is characterized by persistent overcast conditions.
 - Occasional breaks in the overcast occur in spots, but clear weather over large areas is most rare.
 - Attu may enjoy in a whole year no more than eight or ten clear days.
 - Gusty winds blowing across from the great Siberian land mass accentuate difficulties in air navigation caused by fog.
 - A special hazard of the region is the “williwaw,” a wind of hurricane velocity which sweeps down from the naked hills along the north fringe of the islands.
 - Though high winds and fog are an unusual combination elsewhere, they frequently persist together for days in the Aleutians.
 - And always-wind or no wind-there is fog, mist, and overcast to plague pilot, navigator, and bombardier alike.
- Transportation facilities were inadequate.
 - Ports in the Bering Sea are icebound from October to April and
 - the Aleutians offered few good harbors.
- The Aleutians are rocky islands of volcanic origin whose few level areas were covered with a thick layer of tundra or muskeg, incapable of supporting a runway.

8 June –Strategy, SWPA

- Following Midway General MacArthur had suggested to General Marshall on 8th June that
 - he should attack in the New Britain-New Ireland area preparatory to an assault on Rabaul.
 - To achieve this he asked for an amphibious division and a naval force including two carriers.
 - With it he would recapture the area "forcing the enemy back 700 miles to his base at Truk".
- A debate ensued between the Army and the Navy about how the strategic freedom achieved by the Victory at Midway should be exploited.



9 June – New Guinea

- MacArthur wrote Blamey that there was increasing evidence of Japanese interest in developing a route from Buna through Kokoda to Port Moresby and that minor forces might try to use this route either to attack Port Moresby or to supply forces advancing by sea through the Louisiades.
- He asked what Morris was doing to protect the Kokoda area.



12 June - Strategy

- Marshall had presented a plan for a counter attack in the Solomons to Admiral King on 12th June.
 - It required a marine division to make the amphibious assault and
 - three army divisions from Australia—presumably the 32nd and 41st American and 7th Australian—to follow up; and
 - three carriers and their escort.
 - To succeed, Marshall emphasised, the operation must be mounted early in July.
- The Combined Operational Intelligence Centre (COIC) put a “possible attack on the Port Moresby area” back on the list of “Enemy’s probable next moves” on 12th June

12 June – Air War

- **New Guinea**
- A reconnaissance of the proposed areas for the new airfield had led to the conclusion that they were unsuitable; Morris, on the advice of Elliott-Smith, then of the Papuan Infantry Battalion, emphasised that there were better sites at Milne Bay and on 12th June G.H.Q. authorised the construction of an airfield there.
- Three B17s bomb building area and Vunakanau and Lakunai A/Fs at Rabaul.
- **Alaska**
- 6 B17s and 1 B24 bomb shipping in Kiska Harbor. A cruiser is heavily damaged and one destroyer is seen burning.

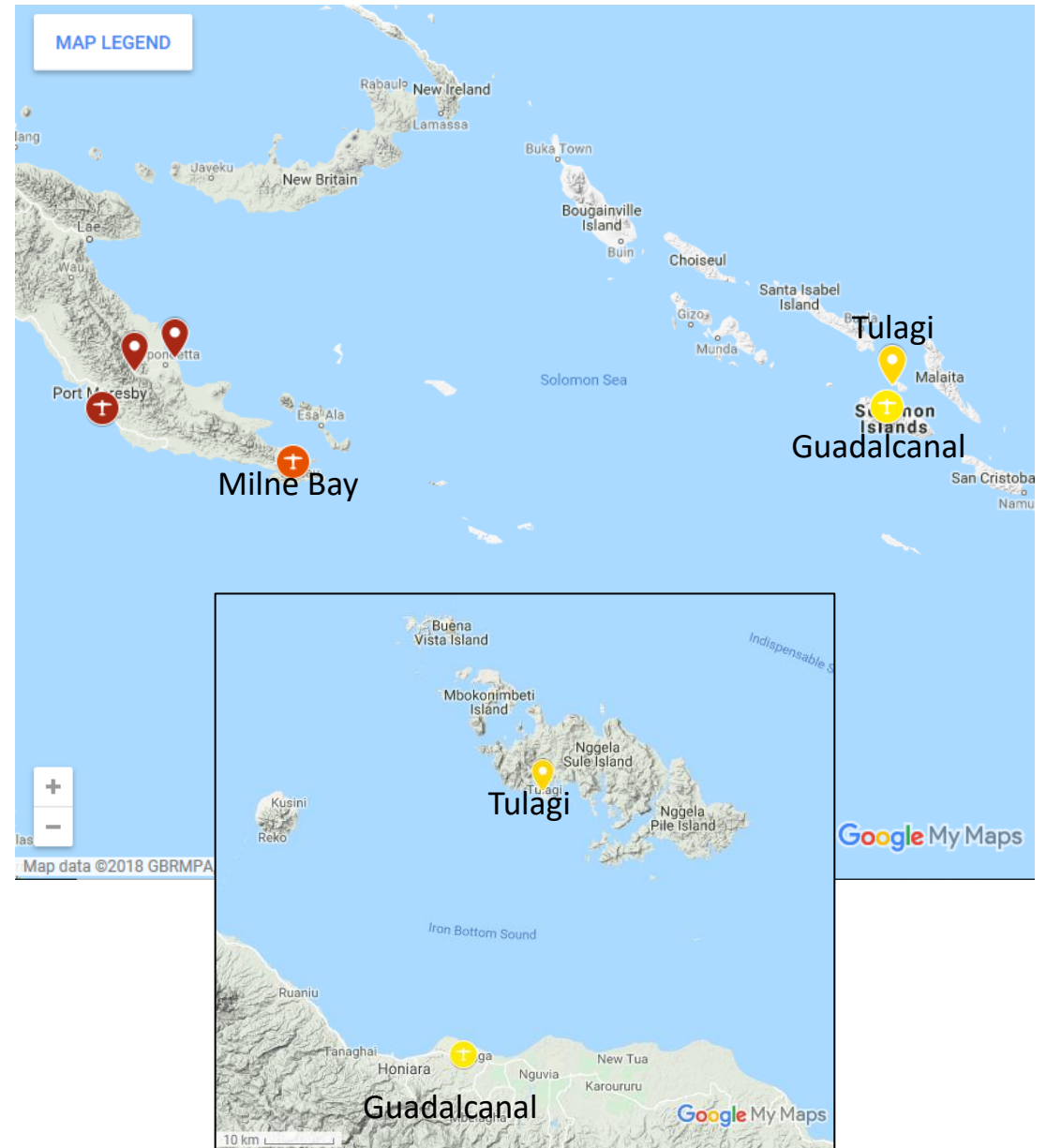


17 June Strategy, SWPA

- In a discussion with the Advisory War Council on 17th June MacArthur said that;
 - since his previous meeting with the council in March there had been a complete transformation of the war situation as affecting Australia.
 - The war in the Pacific had been a battle for land bases for aircraft All the Japanese victories since 8th December had been gained through air superiority, their advance having been made under cover of land-based aircraft.
 - The Coral Sea action was the most crucial incident of the war for Australia. Had the enemy been successful, Australia would have been placed on the defensive indefinitely, or even worse
 - The results of Coral Sea and the successes gained at Midway Island had assured the defensive position of Australia.

20 June - Air

- On 20th June fires were seen to be burning over the whole of the grass plains on Guadalcanal's northern hinterland, suggesting the preparation of airfields.
 - Destroyers lay off Lunga.
 - On the north coast at Kikum and Tenaru, tents were reported.
- 3 B17s bomb runway at Lae 09:28/20.
- Two Catalinas attack dock area at Rabaul night of 19/20 June. Results not observed.
- 1 LB30, 1 B17 and 7 B24s take off on a search and bombing mission over Kiska. 3 aircraft abort mission due to weather, 3 bomb through overcast with unobserved results, and 3 others search in vain for B24 lost on the preceding day.



23 June

- **Strategy**

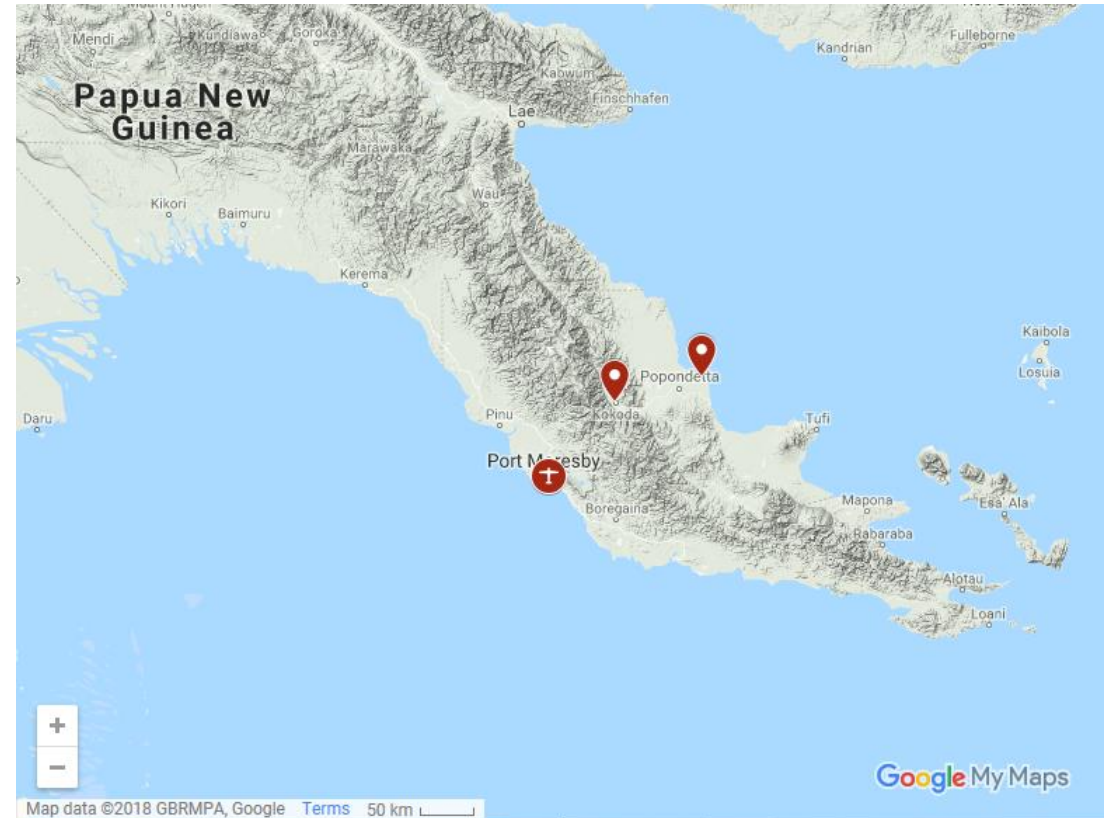
- By the middle of June MacArthur believed the defence of Australia was assured. In these circumstances and having regard to the fact that a German offensive in the Middle East had again placed Egypt in danger, both Blamey and MacArthur advised Curtin and the War Cabinet on 23rd June that the return of the 9th Division should not be pressed at the moment.
 - This view was endorsed by the War Cabinet but, they also decided to stress the urgency of the return to Australia of the two AIF brigades in Ceylon.
- On 23 June COIC restored the occupation of Nauru and Ocean Island to the list of “Enemy’s probable next moves” and rated it the most probable. They also rerated an attack on Port Moresby from the third to the second highest probability.

- **Air**

- By the end of June the Tenth US Air Force in the CBI theatre had 600 officers and 5,000 enlisted men. One Mitchell squadron and 4 fighter squadrons were at Kunming, 2 heavy-bomber squadrons were at Allahabad, the advance parties of 2 fighter squadrons were at Dinjan, and another medium bomber squadron was expected to begin operating from Andal at the end of the monsoon.
- Rommel's forces in Africa were gaining ground to such an extent that on 23rd June Brereton, commander of the Tenth Air Force, received orders to go to the Middle East with all available bombers and assume command of the American forces there.
 - He was authorised to take all needed staff,
 - all the transport and aircraft required, and
 - to appropriate what might be needed from India bound cargoes passing through the Middle East.

24 June

- on 24th June Morris ordered that the 39th Battalion (less one company), the Papuan Infantry Battalion (P.I.B.), and appropriate supply and medical detachments should constitute Maroubra Force, with the task of:
 - delaying any advance from Awala to Kokoda,
 - preventing any Japanese movement in the direction of Port Moresby through the gap in the Owen Stanleys near Kokoda, and
 - meeting any airborne landings which might threaten at Kokoda or elsewhere along the route.
- One company of the 39th Battalion was to leave Iloilo on 26th June.



24 June

- The defence of Port Moresby was Morris' main task.
- He had been loath to throw off detachments which would weaken his main force.
- Because of the supply problem, Morris considered the Kokoda Track impassable for any large-scale military movements; and that in such country the force with the longer supply line would be at a very great disadvantage.
- Therefore (he had said) even if the Japanese do make this very difficult and impracticable move, let us meet them on ground of our own choosing and as close as possible to our own base.
- Let us merely help their own supply problem to strangle them while reducing our supply difficulties to a minimum
- Now he was in a position where, if his men met the enemy, the supply advantage would rest with the enemy.
- The Australians would be separated from their base by roadless mountains which were impassable to wheeled vehicles. They had no transport aircraft based at Port Moresby.
- For their main supply line they would have to depend upon native carriers, the traditional method of transporting supplies in New Guinea.

24 June

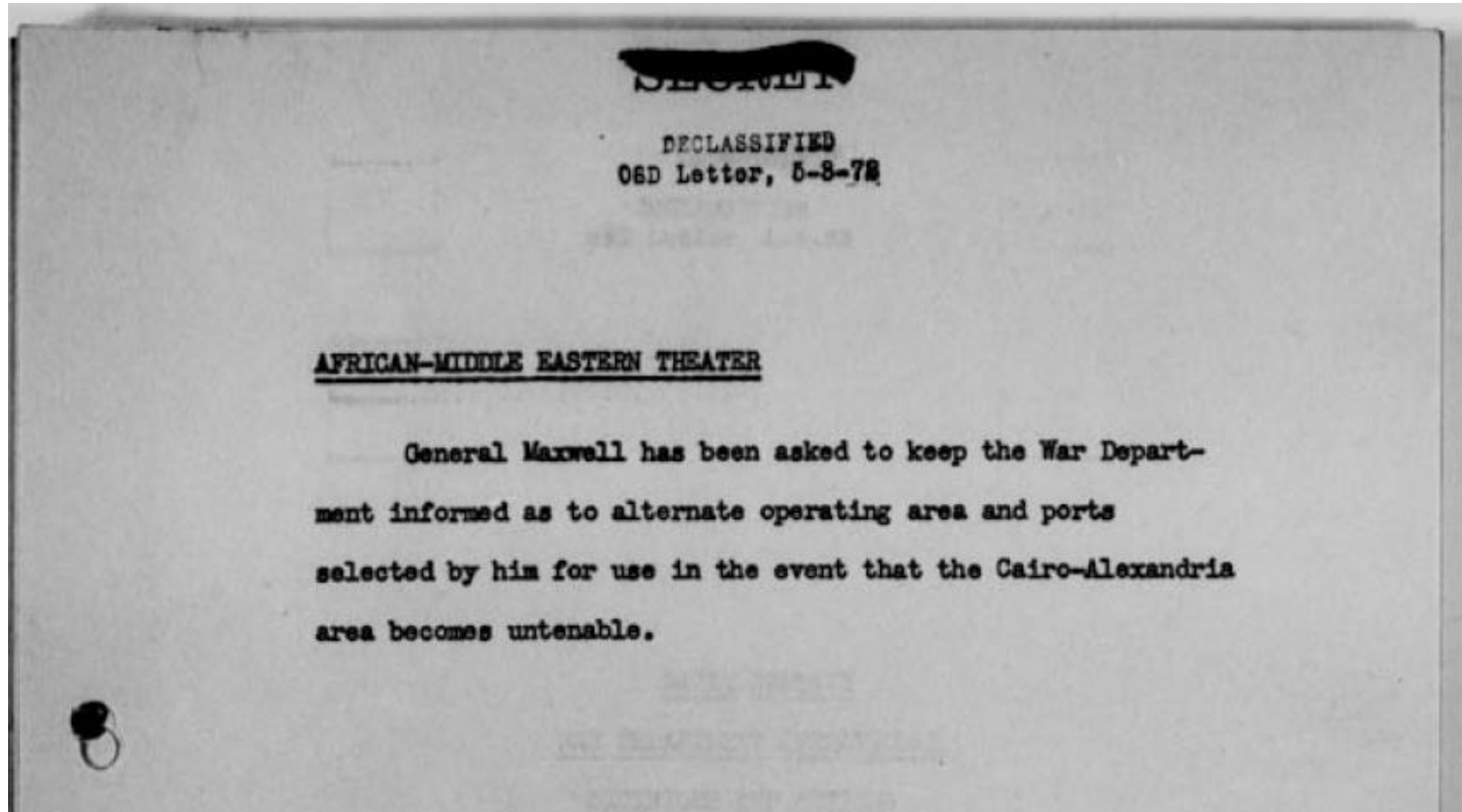
- An impatient King directed Nimitz to prepare to capture “Tulagi and adjacent positions”
- The first convoy to Milne Bay, consisting of Karsik loaded with supplies and equipment, and another Dutch ship, Bontekoe, carrying about 800 troops, including Australian troops and American engineers, escorted by Warrego and Ballarat, sailed from Moresby on 24th June
- B-17's hit Vunakanau A/F. Bomb loads include several bundles of incendiaries which cause intense fires.



(Australian War Memorial)

HMAS Warrego

24 June – War Dept report to the White House



25 June - Air

- Under pressure of heavy and frequent air attacks on Port Moresby the flying boat base was moved to Bowen and Nos. 11 and 20 Squadrons moved there.
- Four aircraft (Catalinas) raided Tulagi on the night of 25th June, descending to low level for gunnery attacks after dropping their bomb-loads.
- The Australian-built Beaufort made its first bombing attack on the night of 25th June. The first unit to receive the new aircraft was No. 100 Squadron R.A.A.F. which had moved to Mareeba in May. On the 25th June seven aircraft staged through Moresby and attacked Lae, Salamaua and shipping in the Huon Gulf. Despite some failures with bomb release gear three aircraft scored direct hits on a transport which was left sinking. One aircraft failed to return.
- B-25's bomb Salamaua.
- 2 B-17's, 4 B-24's and 1 LB-30 fly bombing and weather missions over Kiska, bombing N side of the harbor.

25 June

- The first convoy to Milne Bay, reached Milne Bay at noon 25 June.
- Bontekoe disembarked her troops into local schooners and sailed with Ballarat at dawn on the 26th.
- Karsik berthed alongside at Gili Gili to discharge her cargo, with Warrego, disguised and camouflaged with shrubs and branches, lying near by.
- Captain Rich, of ANGAU, had done his part with an improvised wharf, and Green, in Warrego, found Karsik's discharging "proceeding satisfactorily.
- Locally constructed petrol drum pontoon in use, greatly facilitated unloading.
- AIF working extremely well;
- 250 native boys, recruited by District Officer, Samarai, working exceptionally well. (Payment, one stick of trade tobacco, and one lb of rice per diem.)"
- Work began at once on the site clearing and construction of an airstrip (to be Milne Bay's No. 1 Strip) some three miles west of the improvised docks.

25 June

- Lt Cdr Jimmy Flatley had fought with the Yorktown fighter squadron at the Coral Sea and then returned to the States to form a new fighter squadron. He observed the controversy about the F4F-4 Wildcat while drafting a squadron doctrine for his new squadron.
- He realised that when fighting Zeros the difference in performance between Wildcat 3s and 4s was insignificant but because the folding wing feature permitted more fighters to be embarked that was the way to go.
- On 25 June he submitted a lengthy letter to ComCarPac, copied to Bu Aer, CominCh and CinCPac,
- “What the F4F-4 lacks in climb and maneuverability is more than compensated for by its excellent armament, protective armor, protected fuel system, and greater strength.
- “Let us not condemn our equipment. It shoots the enemy down in flames and gets most of us back to our base.”



25 June

- Admiral King took in a memorandum to General Marshall on 25th June, which proposed mounting an offensive in the South Pacific about 1st August, using the 1st Marine Division, then on its way from the United States to New Zealand.
- An amphibious operation to retake Tulagi had been suggested by Nimitz, to be covered by two carrier task forces he had ready at Pearl Harbour.
- Marshall liked the idea but suggested that the operation be entrusted to MacArthur.



26 June

- to which King replied, on 26th June, (in phrases that became progressively less tactful) that it could not be conducted in any other way than under the direction of CinCPac.
 - The only amphibiously trained troops available were Marines;
 - the only troop lift available was Navy transports;
 - the only covering and supporting force was the Pacific Fleet.
 - And the only assistance that MacArthur could render would be land-based air cover from distant Australian fields.
- King promised to proceed “even if no support of Army forces in the Southwest Pacific is made available”



26 June - Air

- On 26th June he (Brereton) left India, soon to be followed by the heavy bombers. His successor, Brigadier General Naiden, was left with a "crippled air transport system, a skeleton staff and virtually no combat strength outside the task force in China".
- Four aircraft (Catalinas) raided Tulagi on the night of 26th June, descending to low level for gunnery attacks after dropping their bomb-loads.
- 3 LB-30s bomb installations on Wake I. The raid takes place during 26/27 Jun and is staged through Midway.

26 June

- The 1st Marine Division, commanded by Major General Alexander Archer Vandegrift received the WATCHTOWER warning order on 26 June.
- The division, was en route from the United States to Wellington, New Zealand.
- The advance echelon had arrived on 14 June, and the rear was at sea.
- It would land on 11 July.
- Vandegrift had been advised
- that his division would not be called for combat duty prior to early 1943 and had planned to continue training his division in New Zealand.
- The division was understrength by about one third because of detachment of the 7th Marines to Samoa.

Photo # NH 97768 Major General Alexander A. Vandegrift, USMC



Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), Washington

26 June 1942

Melanesia. U.S. heavy bombers attacked VUNAKANAU airdrome at RABAU, securing direct hits on the runway and dispersal areas. Intense fires were visible for 60 miles. Airplanes suffered no losses.

The Japanese were observed burning the grass plains on GUADALCANAL ISLAND, presumably in order to prepare them for airdromes.

Two enemy steel landing barges mounting machine guns were observed patrolling the sea south of FLORIDA ISLAND.

Aleutians. No new developments have been noted.

Aerial photographs taken over KISKA 18-19 June indicated that no docking facilities have been built, and showed no evidence of a landing field. There were, however, extensive earthworks and many paths, suggesting activities over the whole island. It is believed that the Japanese have planned to use KISKA only as a seaplane base.

26 June - War Dept report to the White House

2. Instructions have been issued to the Army Ground Forces and the Services of Supply for the early movement to Egypt of 300 M-4 Medium Tanks, and 100-self-propelled 105 mm howitzers, together with 150 personnel from the 2d Armored Division. General Eisenhower and General Maxwell have been directed to have their Armored units assist in training British troops in the use and maintenance of this equipment.

3. General Stilwell and General Maxwell have been notified that upon arrival in Khartoum the squadron of A-29's (Lockheed Hudsons) will await instructions from the War Department as to their final destination.