



# Sea – Carrier Battles

- At the Battle of the Eastern Solomons, neither side had been able to defend their carriers against an air attack.
- US Air defence radar and the fighter control, IFF and radio systems all had serious technical limitations.
- The key to winning appears to be to find the opposition carriers before they find yours.
- Finding even something as big as a carrier task force in the Pacific, absent precise intelligence, remains a non trivial problem.



# The Land Battle at Guadalcanal

- The Japanese army counter-attacked the Marines at Guadalcanal at night.
- Marine firepower and prepared defensive positions stopped their first attack.
- The Japanese outflanking effort, through the surf, ran into more prepared positions and was also stopped.
- During daylight American reserves supported by tanks and artillery surrounded the Japanese in a coconut plantation and wiped them out.
- 800 Japanese had attacked 16,000 Americans, it was never going to end well for the Japanese but the Marines had shown an ability to maneuver their units and apply fire power effectively.
- This was the first time since Pearl Harbor that Japanese land forces had been defeated.
- The Marines were using a single line perimeter defence around the airfield with a central reserve inside the perimeter. They were not trying to hold the whole Island.
- Since the beginning of the war the Allies had been trying to defend ownership of real estate and building defences in depth. At the first sign of a Japanese attack the forward positions started withdrawing and the rot set in.
- A Marine, being congratulated for staying at his post and holding the line, shrugged and said “Where would you go”

# Artillery

A search of the battlefield gleaned the division ... three 70mm guns.



Australian

25 pounder weight 1,633 kgs, calibre 3.45 inch (87.63mm)



Japanese

70mm Battalion gun weight 216 kgs

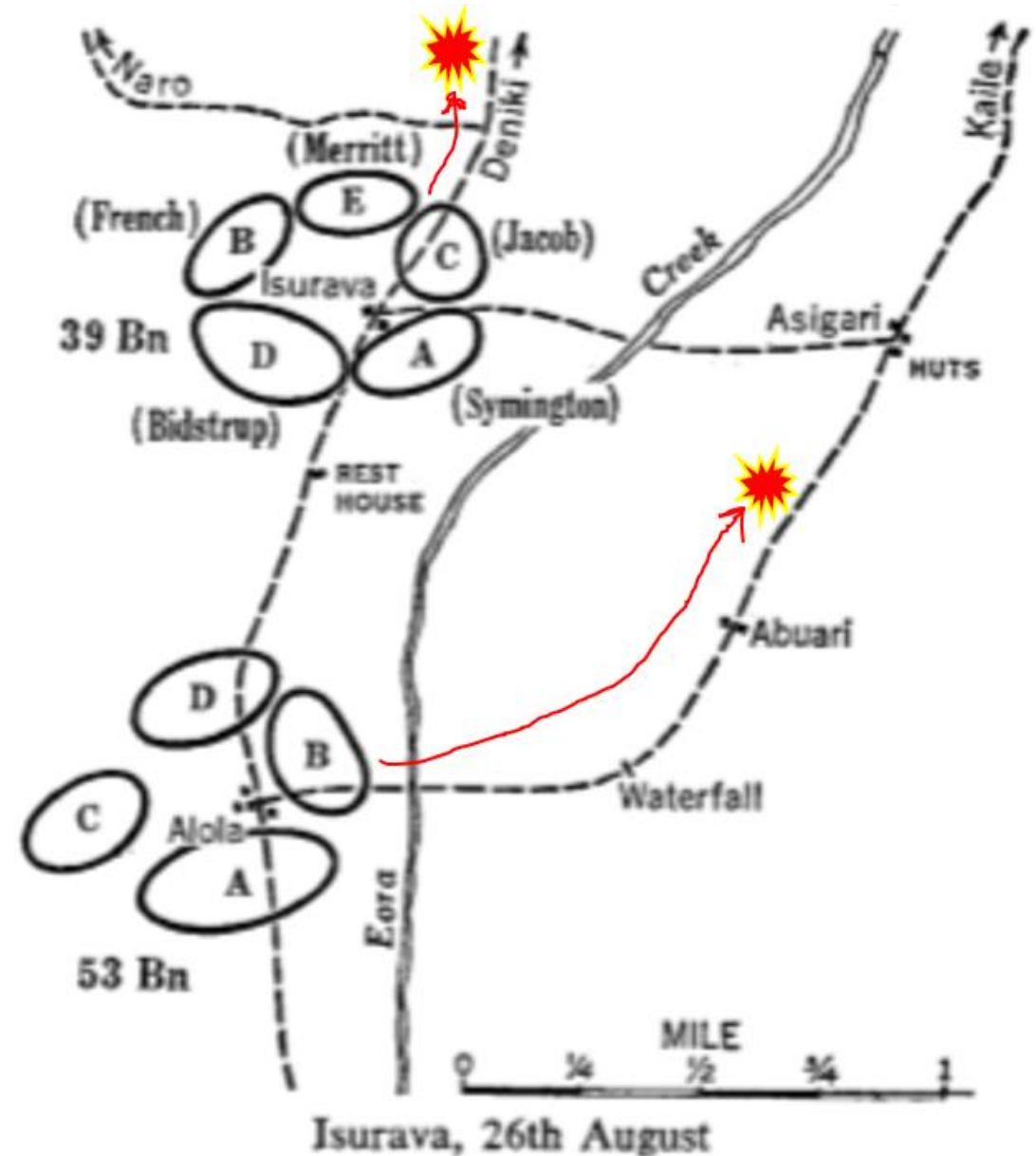
# Sea – Surface Battles

- No naval force was available to defend against a landing at Milne Bay.
- A force of two transports and seven escorts landed a Japanese force in the Bay on the night of 25/26 August.
- Despite modern radar and sonar USS Blue had been destroyed at night by Japanese ships off Guadalcanal on the 22nd.
- This continued a long run of losses of allied ships in surface night actions against the Japanese at
  - Endau,
  - Java Sea
  - Sunda Strait
  - Savo Island.
- It is not clear that an allied naval force such as Task Force 44 would have been able to defend itself let alone prevent the landing.

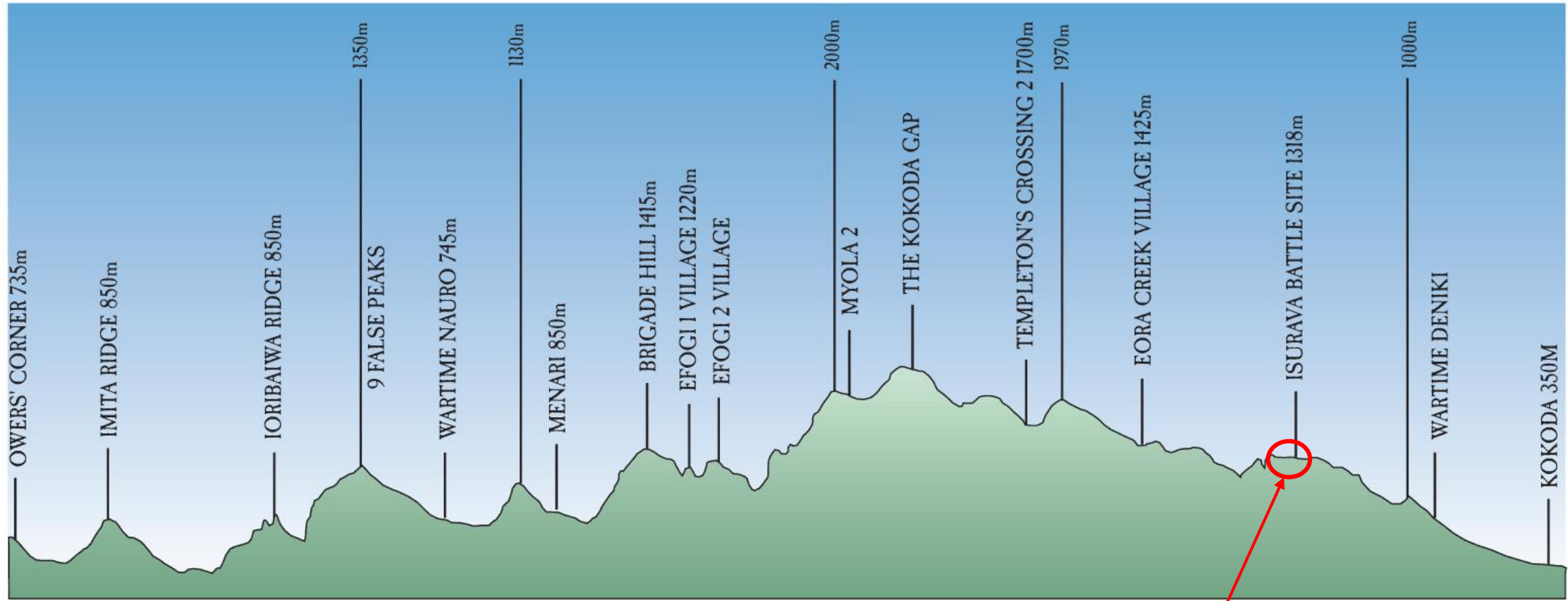


# 26 August – Kokoda

- The 39<sup>th</sup> Battalion had withdrawn to Isurava on 14 August.
- There had been no significant attack on their position since then.
- Additional Japanese forces had been landed on the night of 13/14 August.
- On 26<sup>th</sup> there were signs of pressure building including the artillery fire from a mountain gun.
- Everyone agreed the 39<sup>th</sup> were in poor shape after a months fighting in tropical conditions with a very precarious supply line.
- Potts, the newly arrived commander, had immediately decided: “53rd Battalion training and discipline below standard required for action”.
- The first of the 2/14<sup>th</sup> were arriving to replace the 39<sup>th</sup> on the 26<sup>th</sup>. The 2/16<sup>th</sup> had reached Myola.



# 26 August – Kokoda



OWEN STANLEY RANGE - KOKODA TRACK

39<sup>th</sup> at Isurava and 53<sup>rd</sup> at Alola.

Potts, commanding the 21st Brigade, had devised and implemented the first specific jungle training for Australian troops in the Blackall Range. Exercises indicated that in thick scrub and steep grades communications would break down, and evacuation of wounded would be difficult.

# 53<sup>rd</sup> Battalion

- Up to November 1941 the 53<sup>rd</sup> Battalion had been part of the composite 55th/53rd (New South Wales) Battalion, but was then given separate identity, "specially enlisted for tropical service", and marked for movement to Darwin.
  - At the time of its formation most of the men had had three months ' militia training though about 200 of them had been called up as late as 1st October.
- These Battalions had been built up to strength with detachments from many units and (as often happened in such cases) had been given many unwanted men from those units.
- These reinforcements were very raw and young, the average age of the other ranks being eighteen and a half.
- As its embarkation date approached at the end of December many members of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Battalion were illegally absent, bitter because they had been given no Christmas leave, so that,
  - just before it sailed, its ranks were hastily filled with an assortment of rather astonished and unwilling individuals gathered from widely varied sources.
  - Consequently the 53<sup>rd</sup> Battalion was a badly trained, ill disciplined and generally resentful collection of men when they landed at Port Moresby.
- At Moresby, they were occupied mainly digging defences and labouring on the airfields.
- An American airforce history describes them as the 53<sup>rd</sup> Construction Battalion.

# 26 August – Milne Bay

- A force of two transports and seven escorts landed Japanese land forces on the northern shore of Milne Bay soon after midnight on 25/26 August.
- They landed the force, including a number of barges and at least one tank and withdrew from the bay before daylight.
- The land force were attacking toward the airfields with the tank in action that night. Pushing back the 61<sup>st</sup> Battalion defenders.
- Fighting died down during the day but the Japanese attacked again at 10.00 pm on the 26<sup>th</sup> pushing the defenders further back.



# JIC 27 August 42

Australia-Timor. On 25 August there was an exchange of minor raids resulting in slight damage to the civil airdrome at DARWIN and to TIBESSE (near DILLI), TIMOR.

New Guinea. Allied planes carried out two strafing attacks on BUNA airdrome, one on 24 August, the other on 25 August. In the first attack an A/A position was silenced, one fighter was destroyed, and two others probably destroyed. In the second attack ten enemy fighters were destroyed on the ground.

An enemy convoy consisting of three light cruisers or destroyers, two gun boats, two 8,000-ton transports, and two tankers approached MILNE BAY (S.E. NEW GUINEA) on the evening of 25 August. This convoy was attacked by 13 of our fighters. One gun boat was probably sunk, and the two transports machine-gunned.

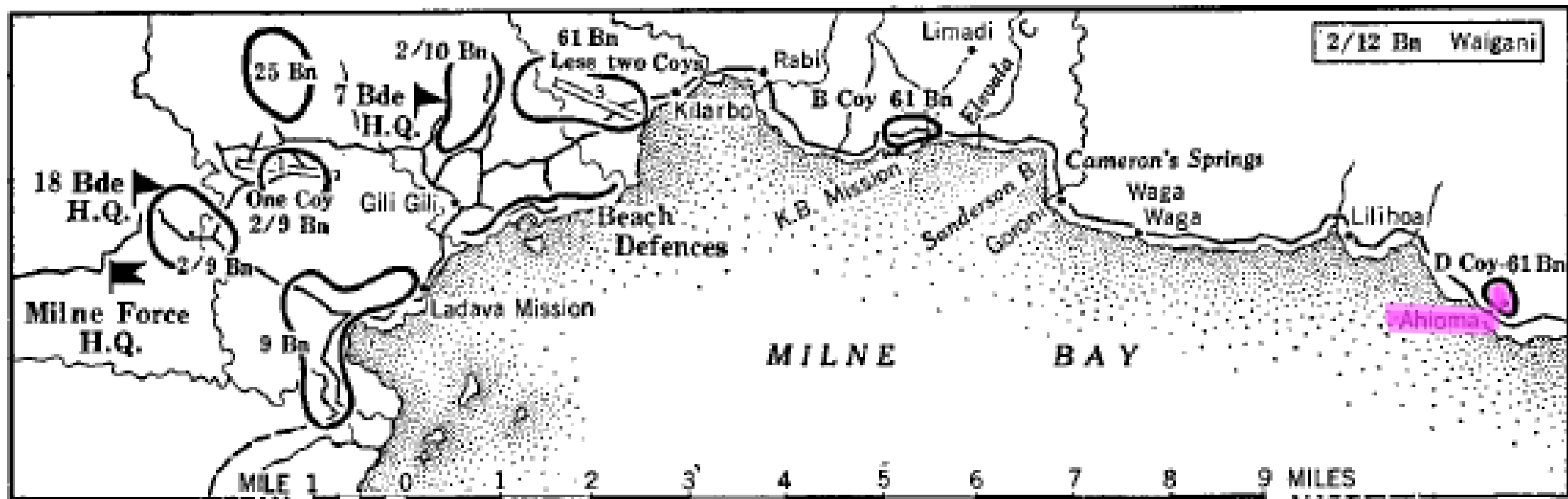
A Japanese force from FONA landed at DALARA (on the South coast of GOODENOUGH ISLAND, D'ENTRECASTEAUX Group) from seven barges. This force was attacked by 12 of our fighters, and it is believed that all the barges and stores were set on fire.

# 27 August – Milne Bay

- In the early hours of the 27th another enemy force entered Milne Bay. There were sounds of gunfire and of movement on the waters in the vicinity of Ahima, but rain and mist curtailed off the landing activities from the defenders, who were uncertain of what exactly had transpired in the darkness.
- The problem which Clowes (photo) faced was how far and where to commit his main force. His vital area was Gili Gili which contained all his supplies and installations including the wharf and the airstrip. He had to consider the possibility of further landings, he must maintain a large reserve until the Japanese showed their hands clearly.
- Finally, however, Clowes decided to commit another battalion and placed Dobbs under Field's command at 2.30 on the morning of the 27th.



# 25<sup>th</sup> August – Milne Bay

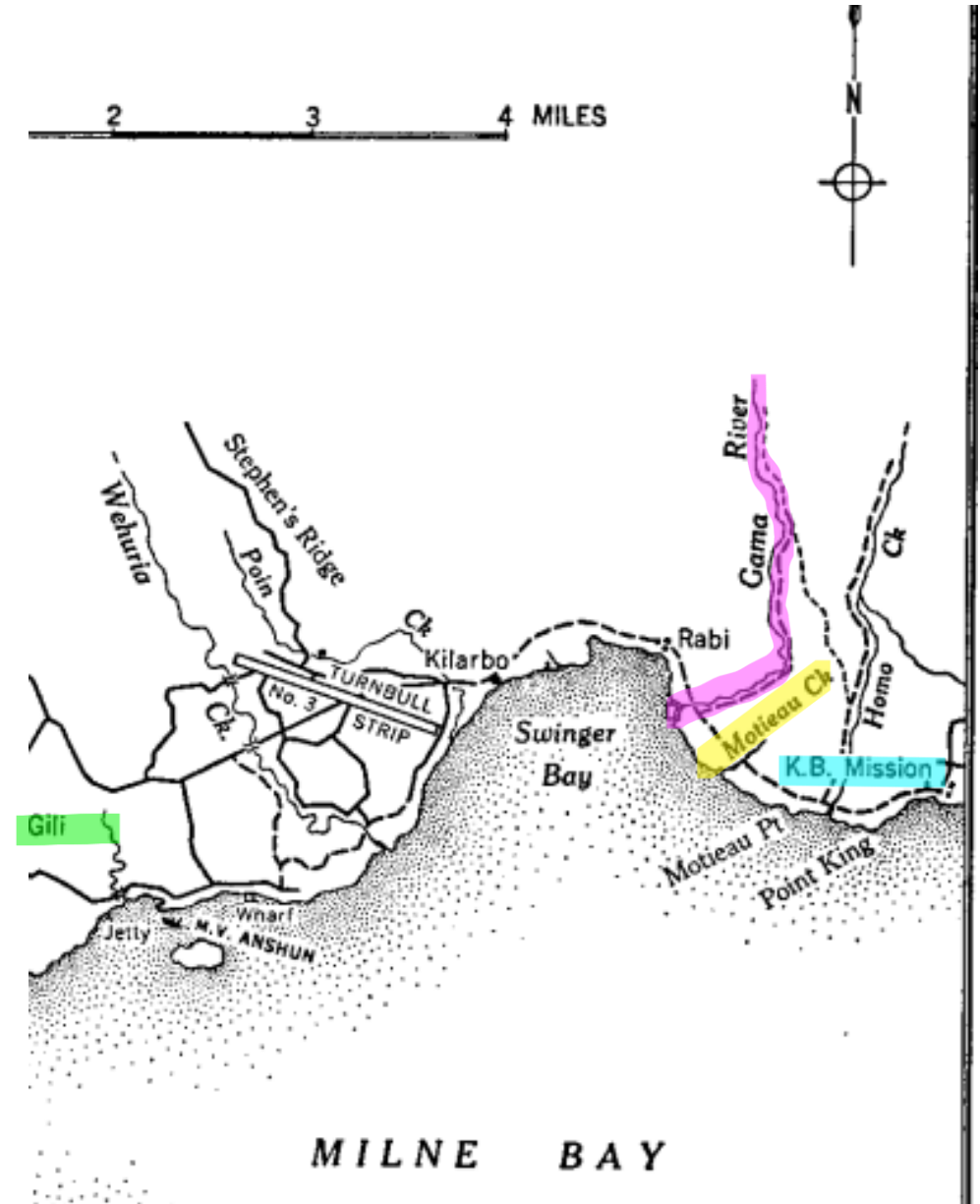


Dispositions, 6 p.m. 25th August.

Milne Force	7 Brigade		18 Brigade	
Clowes	Field		Wooten	
	61 Battalion	Meldrum	2/9 Battalion	
	25 Battalion	Miles	2/10 Battalion	Dobbs
	9 Battalion	Morgan	2/12 Battalion	

# 27 August – Milne Bay

- Quiet followed, broken at intervals by sporadic attacks until about 4 a.m. on the 27th. By that time the Japanese were moving vigorously round the Australian positions on the west bank of **Motieau Creek**, trying to work through the sea (up to their necks) on the one side and wading through the morass on the other.
- As they moved some of them called loudly in English to the Australians to withdraw. About 50 men from the three companies were genuinely deceived by these orders and began to move back to **Gili Gili** by way of the beach.
- By 4.30 Bicks' strength was so depleted, his men—many of whom had had no sleep for 48 hours—so worn, and his anticipation of dawn tank attacks which he could not hope to hold seemingly so well founded, that he held a conference of officers and decided to withdraw to the **Gama River**, a mile farther west. There he hoped to hold the tanks behind that more effective obstacle



# 27 August – Milne Bay

- A covering patrol, moving forward, reported that the Japanese had apparently fallen back beyond K.B. The Australians gathered a quantity of Japanese equipment and weapons, including automatic weapons and a flame-thrower, and then withdrew. Passing through Motieau they found the body of Lieutenant Klingner. He had been shot dead earlier in the night as he fought his mortars. They settled on the banks of the Gama.
- As Bicks inspected his positions there he discovered a number of men suffering so acutely from wounds, malaria, exhaustion and bad feet that he had to send them back.
- Feet remained a major problem in the whole force . There was no chance of getting them dry. The Japanese also suffered badly.
- In the morning the Australians patrolled up the Gama River and as far forward as the mission without meeting the enemy.
- Lt L. M. Klingner, QX36036; 61 Bn. Accountant; of East Brisbane; b. Norman Park, Qld, 7 Oct 1914. Killed in action 27 Aug 1942 .



Port Moresby War Cemetery  
Plot A2. Row D. Grave 23.

# 27 August – Milne Bay

- At a conference with Field on the morning of the 27th Dobbs decided to move with his battalion equipped lightly "as a large-scale fighting patrol" to KB Mission.
- He borrowed additional sub-machine-guns, stripped Captain Brocksopp's C Company (whom he intended to use in the van) of all their Brens, reduced the complement of Brens in Captains Matheson's and Sanderson's companies to one a platoon but left Miethke's company with their full complement; he discarded all his anti-tank rifles, thinking, probably, that 20 sticky grenades which he had issued would be an effective substitute.
- He set out with his battalion streamlined to an approximate strength of 500.



Group portrait of officers of 2/27 Battalion 12  
October 1940. SX2929 Maj (later Lt Col) James  
Gordon Dobbs.

# 27 August – Milne Bay

- About 10.30 a patrol from Dobbs' 2/10th Battalion reached the 61st. The sergeant in charge said that his battalion was moving forward.
- Then the company commander from Ahioma appeared from the hills with some 40 men. These were the part of the company which had not embarked at Ahioma in the *Bronzewing* and *Eleva*. The officer said that he had seen about 5,000 Japanese taking part in the original landings in the vicinity of Lilihoa. He had avoided any contact by travelling through the rough country to the north of the track.
- At 1 o'clock Meldrum telephoned Bicks that the 2/10th would soon reach him.
- About an hour later the A.I.F. unit began to arrive and passed through on their way to K.B. Mission. Dobbs apparently accepted the information brought by the men from Ahioma and passed the news on to his officers that the Japanese numbered about 5,000.
- Bicks says that he warned Dobbs that he thought it would be unwise for him to site his battalion at K.B. as the country there was not suitable for defence and could be seen from the sea, and that the Japanese had tanks which they could use in that area.

# 27 August – Milne Bay

- The 2/10<sup>th</sup> settled into a loose perimeter defence at the mission just as night was falling.
- The men were tired and hungry. Since the first reports of the approach of Japanese ships had been received many of them had made a number of moves as they adjusted their positions, they had had little sleep for two nights, their meals had been irregular, rain for seven days previously had filled the track deep with mud which pulled hard at their feet. Now they had no tools with which to dig in and they settled in groups of three to await the Japanese.

# 27 August – Milne Bay

- At 6 p.m. Bicks was ordered to bring his men out to the rest area near Gili Gili. Gowland and Campbell left first and then Bicks' company, numbering then only 2 officers (Bicks and Robinson) and 32 men. They sank over their knees in the mud of the track in places, each man holding the equipment of the man in front to save himself from being lost in the darkness.
- By nightfall on the 27th the 61st Battalion had lost 3 officers and 12 men known to have been killed, 2 officers and 14 men known to have been wounded (not including any casualties in the Ahioma company).
- The 25th Battalion had lost 3 killed and 2 wounded.
- An uncertain number of men from the 61st were missing.



SIAR-NAGADA, NEW GUINEA. 1944-09-08. QX47482  
MAJOR C.H. BICKS, DSO, 2IC (1) VX5172 LIEUTENANT-  
COLONEL W.R. DEXTER, DSO, CO (2) AND QX48864  
CAPTAIN J.J.S. HOBBS, ADJUTANT (3) OF THE 61ST  
INFANTRY BATTALION.

# 27 August – Milne Bay

- At 7.45 the noise of an engine was heard, and a tank approached through the darkness and the rain, its lights shining brightly. "Put out that light!" yelled an Australian.
- At 8 p.m. the fight began. The tank engaged Miethke's company and about twenty minutes later was joined by a second tank. Meanwhile Japanese infantry were pressing. The strain fell heavily both on Miethke's and Brocksopp's men. The tanks cruised among them, flooding each other with their lights and thus each guarding the other against close attack.
- Tracer and fireflies streaked the darkness and a hut in Miethke's arc was set alight. The exchange of fire was intense, shells from the 25-pounders back near Gili Gili screamed over, and the din of battle grew steadily.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

070238

SX1461 Major Geoffrey Ronald Miethke, 2IC 2/10th Infantry Battalion, pictured with the Adjutant SX1441 Captain Hugh Ross Matheson, resting at Main Stream after their battalion had been relieved at Kankiryo. 10

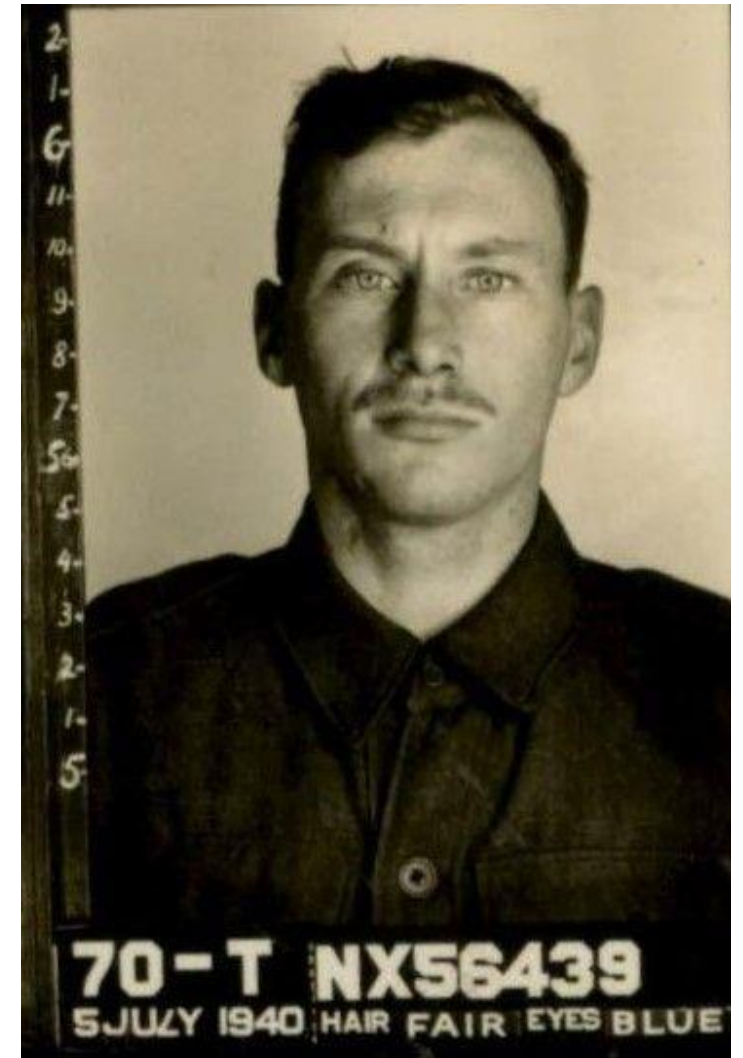
February 1944

# 27 August – Milne Bay

- The tanks moved backwards and forwards through the Australians until about midnight though they never troubled the two rearward companies. They were impervious to small arms fire, tried to run down individuals, paved the way so that their infantry came right among the defenders.
- In Miethke's company Lieutenant Scott attacked one with a sticky grenade which failed to explode. (Mould had grown inside these grenades.) In Brocksopp's positions Mackie and Sergeant Spencer, made similar attacks but the grenades would not stick. Spencer, however, then hurled hand grenades into the following infantry.
- Since the Brens seemed to draw fire Miethke had them passed from one position to another, never leaving them in one place for more than a few minutes at a time.
- Private Abraham, manning one, had his leg riddled with bullets. Private Kotz, in charge of a second, was indefatigable in engaging the attackers from one position after another, and, at one stage charged headlong at a Japanese position fifteen yards ahead and wiped it out with grenades.

# 27 August – Milne Bay

- Brocksopp's men were equally determined. At one stage Private McLennan of Brown's platoon leapt from his firing position and bayoneted between five and eight Japanese. In the same platoon Corporal Schloithe found his section illuminated by a blazing hut as they fought. He led his men into the sea, away from the light, and they fought on grimly from there.
- But the battle was going against the defenders. As midnight approached Miethke had beaten off four separate frontal attacks launched by chanting Japanese. Strong attacking groups were fighting the Australians from many points inside their own defences, however, and the numbers of these groups were constantly increasing. The Australian casualties were mounting, among the killed being Lieutenants Baird and Gilhooley, the artillery observation officers (and with their deaths the rearward communications were lost).



Lieutenant George Joseph  
Esmond Gilhooley. b 11 May  
1916, Hunters Hill.

# 27 August – Milne Bay

- In Brocksopp's right front positions Brown had been wounded and evacuated, a sergeant who then took over had been killed, the men were being forced into a desperate position; on the left Mackie was fighting hard with his platoon. He prepared to counter-attack with Lethbridge's platoon. But confusion was setting in. There seemed to be no contact with Miethke and little with the rest of the battalion.
- Brocksopp ("the coolest man you ever saw", one of the other officers said) began to feel that there was no position left for a counter-attack to restore.
- Dobbs told him to withdraw to the line of scrub 300 yards in rear. This he attempted but began to lose touch with many of his men. He returned to his former positions with a patrol but was recalled by an order from the colonel for a complete withdrawal into the bush. Then he found that he had lost touch with the rest of the battalion.

# 27 August – Milne Bay

- The adjutant, Captain Schmedje, who had been trying to find the other companies and the colonel, said to him "You're on your own !
- What are you going to do? " They gathered 51 of the company together, cut through the scrub and emerged again on the road a few hundred yards east of the Gama River.
- While they were doing this Miethke, in the darkness and rain, was undergoing a similar experience. He had not had the order to retire. His company was breaking up. His second-in-command was dead. He had only about five rounds a man of ammunition left. He mustered about thirty men and, stopping to fire from successive positions, made his way back to the Gama where he expected to find the rest of the battalion holding.
- Ahead of Miethke, Brocksopp had linked at the river with Matheson and Corporal O'Brien, who had secured an anti-tank rifle and four boxes of sticky grenades which had been sent forward by a launch, as the road was impassable past Rabi. Lieutenant Teesdale-Smith, the Intelligence officer said that two militia platoons were coming forward to help.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

070238

SX1461 Major Miethke, 2IC 2/10th Infantry Battalion, pictured with the Adjutant SX1441 Captain Matheson. 10 February 1944

# 27 August - Air

- On the morning of the 27th August the Kittyhawks and Hudsons were airborne as soon as there was sufficient light and, in spite of low cloud and intermittent rain, the air bombardment of the enemy's positions was resumed.
- The squadron's armourers, riggers, fitters, engineers, even transport drivers and messmen joined in the almost ceaseless work of belting ammunition and manhandling bombs and fuel drums.
- They worked with their clothes and bodies caked in mud and sodden with sweat and rain.
- It was now clear that unless the Japanese advance was soon checked the squadron's camps would soon be under fire.
- The camps were therefore moved back to a position adjacent to the main army camp to the west of No. 1 Strip and the operations room was re-established at Milne Force headquarters—a difficult and hampering task.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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RAAF ground crew, No. 75 Squadron RAAF, bombing-up a Kittyhawk, Milne Bay, August 1942

# 27 August - Air

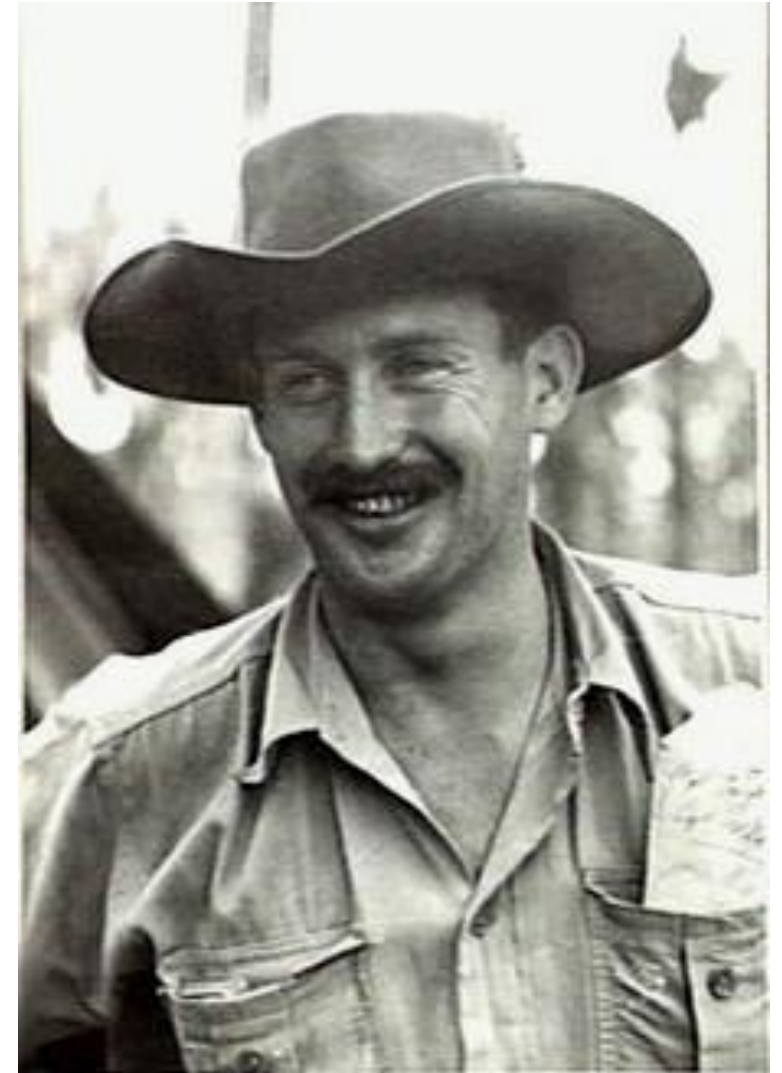
- Soon after 8 a.m. on the 27th (August) Milne Bay received its fourth air attack, from 8 dive bombers escorted by 12 Zeros.
- Two bombs fell close but harmlessly at the side of No. 1 Strip runway and the remainder burst wide of their target.
- Several of the Zeros dived in strafing attacks. They set fire to a Liberator bomber which had made a forced landing on the runway some time earlier but otherwise did no harm.
- Six of No. 75 Squadron's aircraft intercepted the raiders and Flying Officers Watson and Jones shared in shooting down one of the dive bombers, probably destroyed a second and damaged a third.



An American Liberator bomber burns at Gurney Strip, Milne Bay, 27 August 1942.

# 27 August - Air

- A flight of American Marauders that had been seeking shipping targets in the area were intercepted by a number of Zeros. One Marauder crew shot down one of the attackers, the Japanese pilot ditching in the sea close to the shore.
- Two other Zero pilots, seeing the Zero hit the sea, dived on it and opened fire apparently intending to destroy it and so prevent it from being recovered by the Australian forces.
- As they did so Jackson (photo) and Flight Sergeant Riddel, who were returning from a patrol, dived on these two Zeros and shot both of them down.
- Flight Sergeant Munro of No. 75 Squadron was killed when his Kittyhawk was shot down in combat.



# 27 August - Air

- Reports that the enemy were using tanks prompted Turnbull (photo) to make a search in the hope that air attack on them might be possible.
- Accompanied by Flight Lieutenant Kerville he took off about 5 p.m. and flew over the enemy positions, searching carefully wherever the jungle opened sufficiently to give useful visibility.
- The pilots did not detect the tanks but they did detect a detachment of Japanese troops.
- Turnbull immediately put his aircraft into a steep dive and Kerville saw it suddenly flick on to its back when only about 200 feet from the ground, and crash. The cause of Turnbull's death remains unexplained, a probable explanation being that he was hit by small-arms fire from the ground.
- Squadron Leader Peter St George Bruce Turnbull, DFC (9 February 1917 – 27 August 1942) credited with twelve aerial victories, four in North Africa, five in Syria and three in New Guinea. 12/24<sup>th</sup> Light Horse (1938), No. 3 Squadron (1939–1941) No. 75 Squadron (1942), No. 76 Squadron (1942).



# 27 August - Air

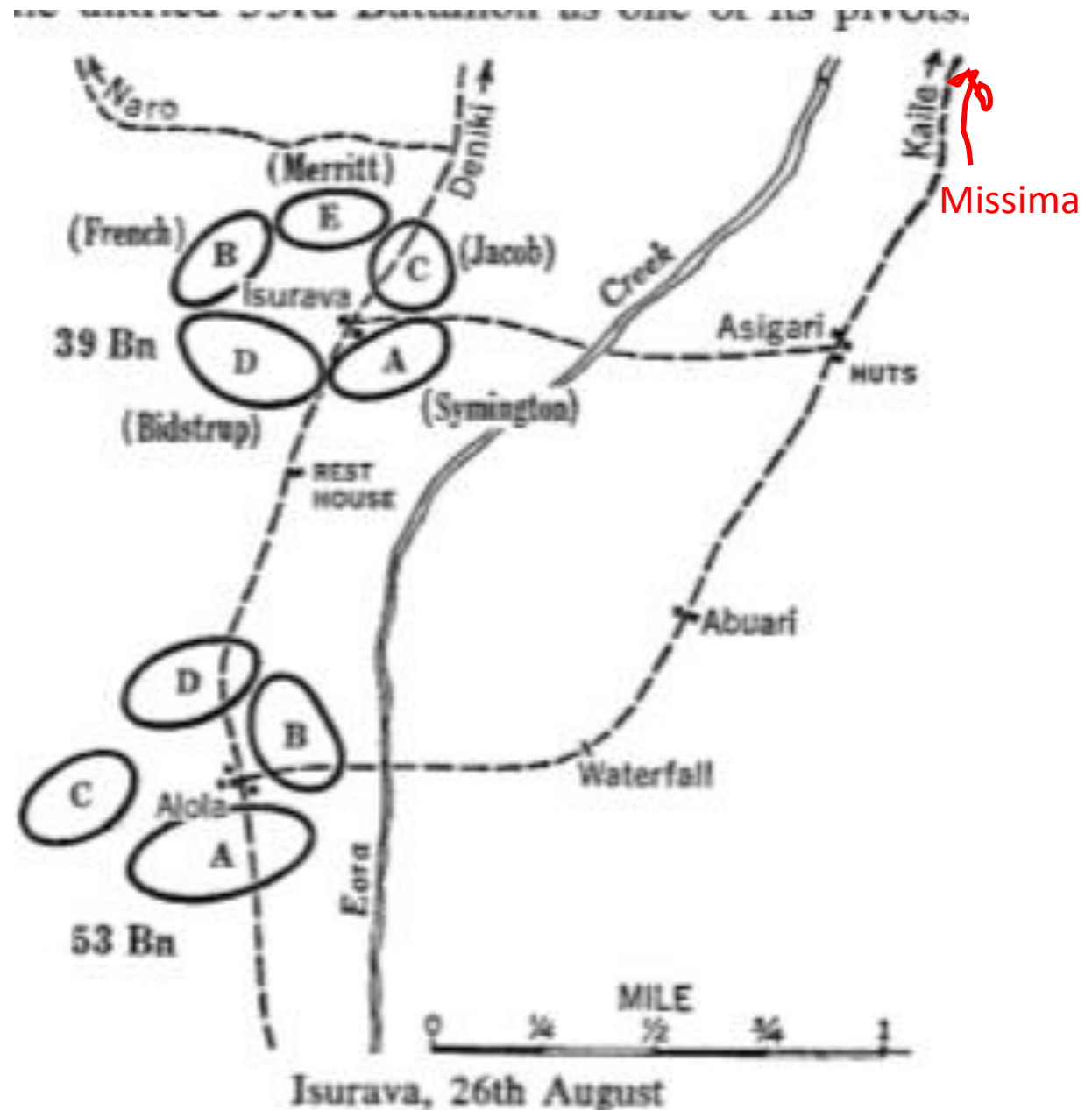
- Truscott succeeded to the command of 76 Squadron.
- Enemy snipers were giving considerable trouble. Equipped with climbing irons, they scaled the tall palms, cut out the centre of the upper fronds, and so made a post from which their fire became more telling and less easily detected. The army called on the Kittyhawks for help and allotted the target area.
- Sortie after sortie was made over that section of the plantation. The pilots could only hope that their raking fire was effective. Army headquarters were well satisfied with the results.
- One observer reported that under the Kittyhawks' gunfire
- "palm fronds, bullets and dead Japanese snipers were pouring down with the rain".



A Curtiss P-40 Warhawk piloted by Squadron Leader Keith "Bluey" Truscott of No. 76 Squadron RAAF taxiing along Marston Mat at Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea.

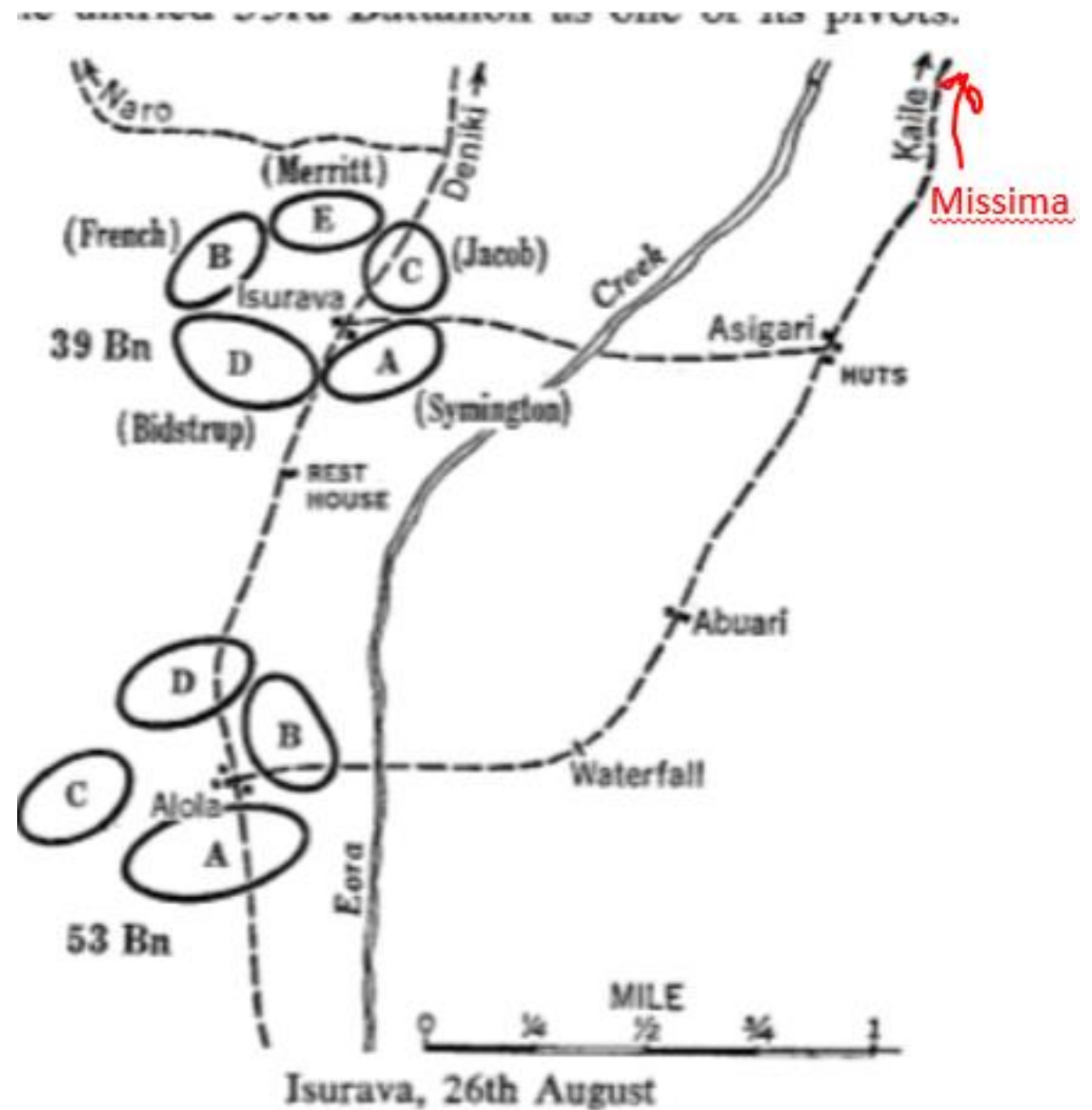
# 27 August - Kokoda

- As the morning of the 27th advanced Potts was growing anxious about the position in the 53rd Battalion sector.
- At 8 a.m. he ordered Colonel Ward to retake Missima and Ward told Captain King to move his "D" Company through Cairns' position for that purpose. King did not start until nearly 10. By 2 p.m. he was moving round Cairns' right flank to attack high ground south-east of Abuari from which fire was reported to be holding up Cairns' advance.
- At 3.30 Ward reported to Potts that the two companies were moving on to Missima and, believing this to be correct, himself set out along the track with Lieutenant Logan. But the two forward companies had failed in their tasks because (the battalion diarist records) of
  - (1) Nature of country
  - (2) Heavy MMG fire by enemy which could not be located
  - (3) Lack of offensive spirit and general physical condition of troops.



# 27 August - Kokoda

- At 3.45 a runner reported to battalion headquarters that Ward and Logan had been ambushed and killed.
- Soon afterward Major Hawkins, administering command of the battalion, told brigade headquarters that the Japanese had come round the waterfall near Abuari and were making for the creek crossing between Abuari and Alola and for Alola itself.
- He was ordered to hold Abuari, the waterfall area and the crossing, pending the arrival of the 2/16th Battalion which, by that time, was moving forward behind the 2/14th. As Hawkins moved another company forward to hold the creek crossing Captain Buckler's "A" Company of the 2/14th took over their old positions.



# 27 August - Kokoda

- The track leading to Kaile was particularly difficult. From Alola it plunged 1,000 feet or more down a bush-covered, rugged, 45-degree slope to the bed of Eora Creek.
- It crossed the torrent by way of a slippery log bridge. Its way up the opposite side of the great V of the Eora Creek was closed in by bush, was treacherous and so steep that in places a climber must use his hands. About 1,500 feet above the creek bed was the Abuari waterfall, where a mountain stream plunged over a rock face which rose almost sheer for about 100 feet; its spray veiled the hillside and the falling water made a great noise.
- The track passed just in front of the main fall and through the spray over a slippery ledge of rock.
- On the other side of the fall it edged round a wall of sheer rock which rose high above it.
- Soon afterwards it came to the little village of Abuari and went on through the bush and over the rough mountainside to Missima and thence to Kaile.

# 27 August - Kokoda

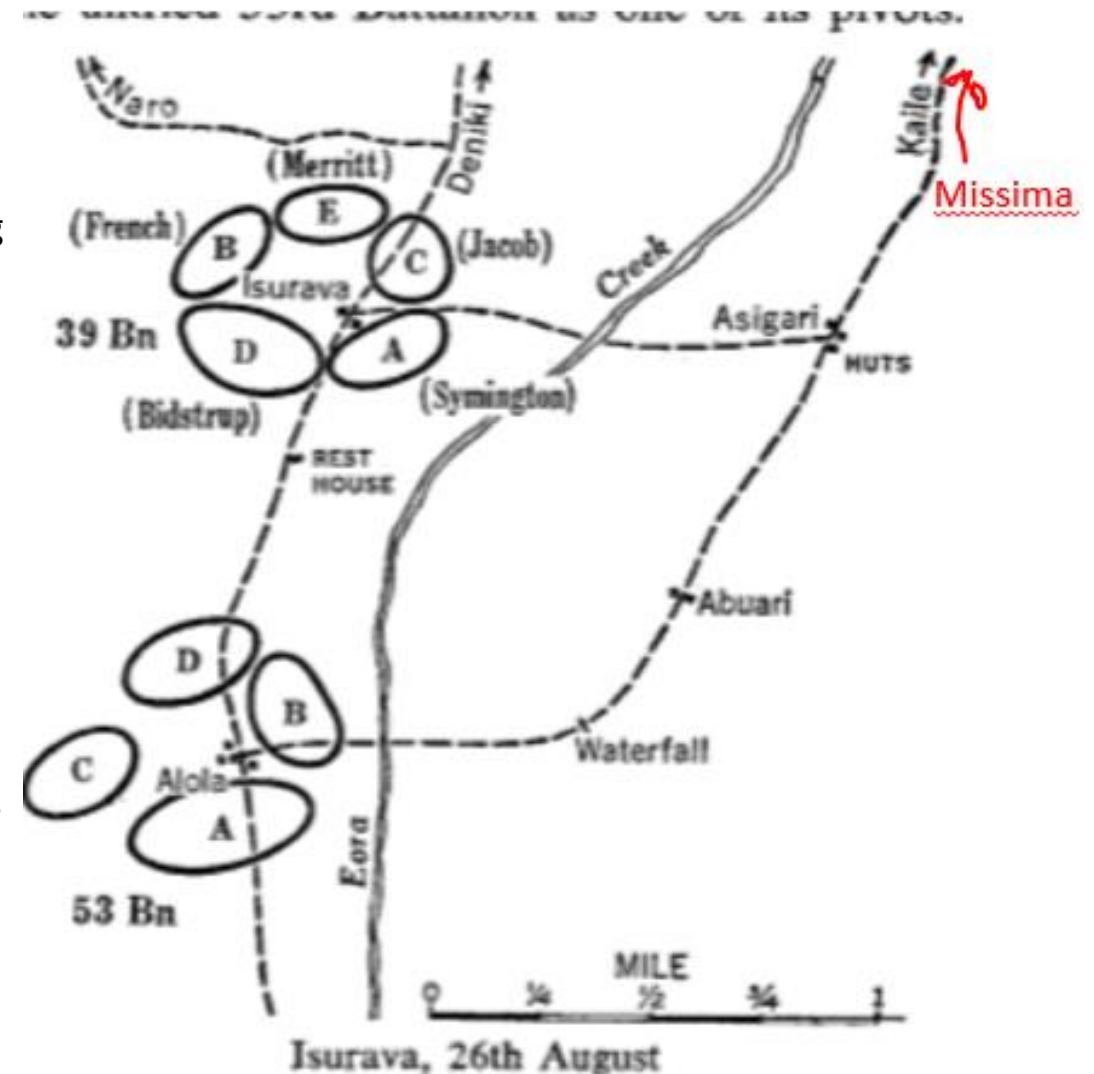
- At first light (27<sup>th</sup>) the Japanese had reoccupied the area which had been cleared the previous evening by Clarke and had cut off the two forward platoons, now commanded by Sword. (Simonson had been wounded fighting off attacks during the night and had been sent back.) These platoons fought on.
- Honner, on Potts' instructions, then attempted to relieve a patrol from Jacob's company, under Lieutenant Pentland, which Potts had ordered the previous day to go out to guard the Isurava-Naro track and bar any enemy approach towards Alola.
- Lieutenant Davis' platoon from Dickenson's company went, guided by Sergeant Buchecker, the Intelligence sergeant of the 39<sup>th</sup>.
- Davis met heavy opposition. He himself was last seen, wounded, trying to make his way back alone, one of his men was killed, and Sergeant Buchecker was badly wounded. Chaplain Earl and Captain Shera moved out into the dangerous bushland and carried the wounded sergeant back.
- Captain Nye's company (of the 2/14<sup>th</sup>) arrived later in the afternoon with orders to push out along the Alola-Naro track. (But Japanese and thick bush prevented their movement and when night came Honner used them to thicken his defences.)



*(Australian War Memorial)*  
Brigadier A. W. Potts (left), commander of the 21st Brigade; Corporal R. Simpson, Potts' driver; Captain J. K. Murdoch, staff captain 21st Brigade; Lieutenant A. L. Salom, liaison officer, 30th Brigade; and Captain C. L. Thompson, adjutant 2/14th Battalion.

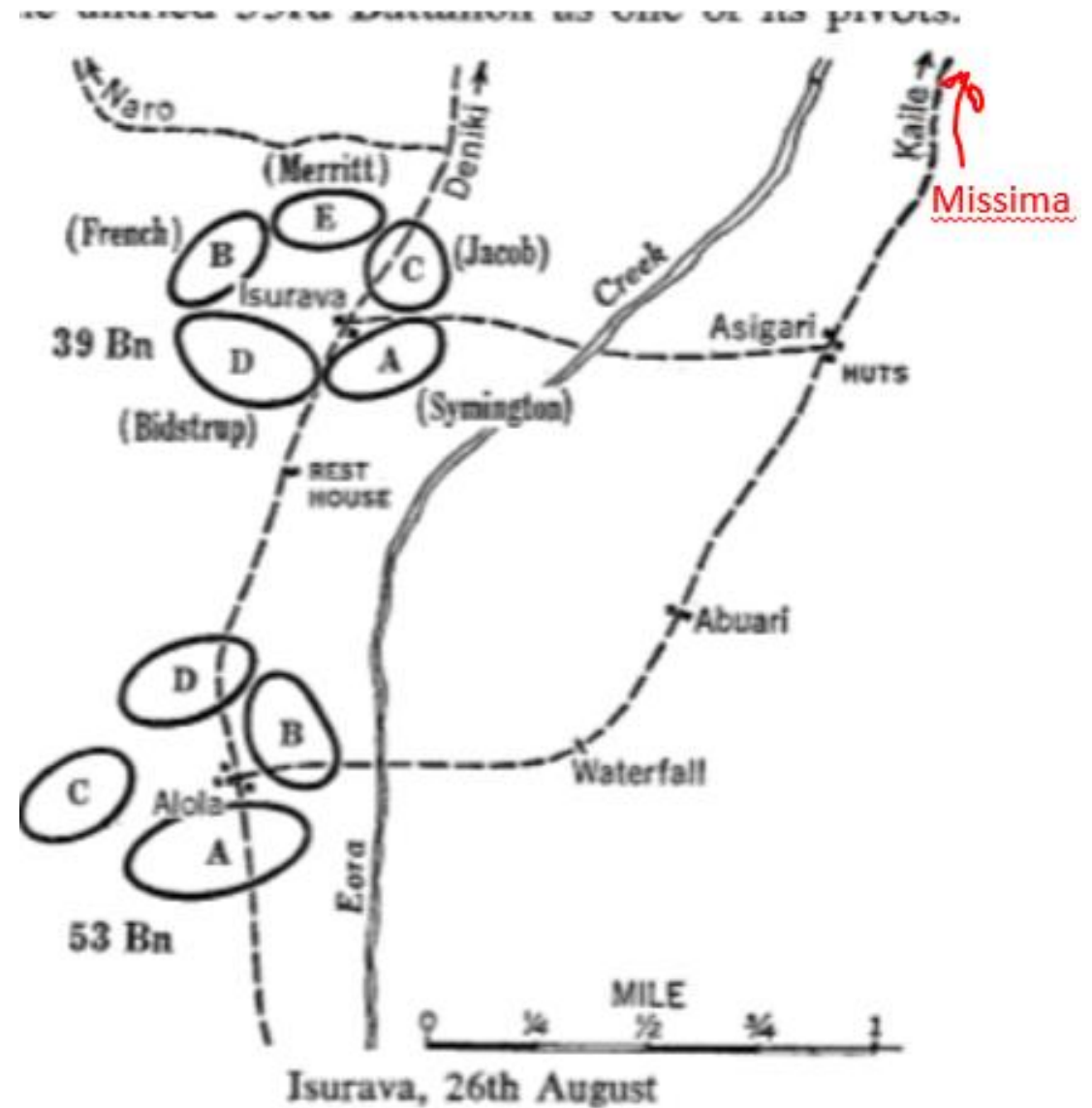
# 27 August - Kokoda

- About 4 p.m., there was a crescendo of Japanese mortar and machine-gun fire, prelude to furious attacks of which the brunt fell on Honner's two left forward companies—Merritt's and French's.
- "Across the creek they [the Japanese] swept in a swift thrust that sliced through "E" Company's thin front line, cut off [Lieutenant] Dalby's left platoon and a section of the right platoon and, swarming behind them, forced them forward out of their posts.
- Through the widening breach poured another flood of the attackers to swirl round the remainder of the right platoon from the rear. They were met with Bren-gun and Tommy-gun, with bayonet and grenade; but still they came, to close with the buffet of fist and boot and rifle-butt, the steel of crashing helmets and of straining, strangling fingers. ... But two quick counter-attacks turned that furious tide.
- [Sergeant] Kerslake's' counter-penetration platoon drove out the enemy breaking through the gap and closed it against further inroads.
- [Sergeant] Murray's mobile reserve raced up to recapture Dalby's position and was immediately successful.
- the intruders were hurled back towards the creek, but the relentless conflict in the shadows went on through the waning afternoon until ... contact was re-established with Dalby's lost platoon ..."



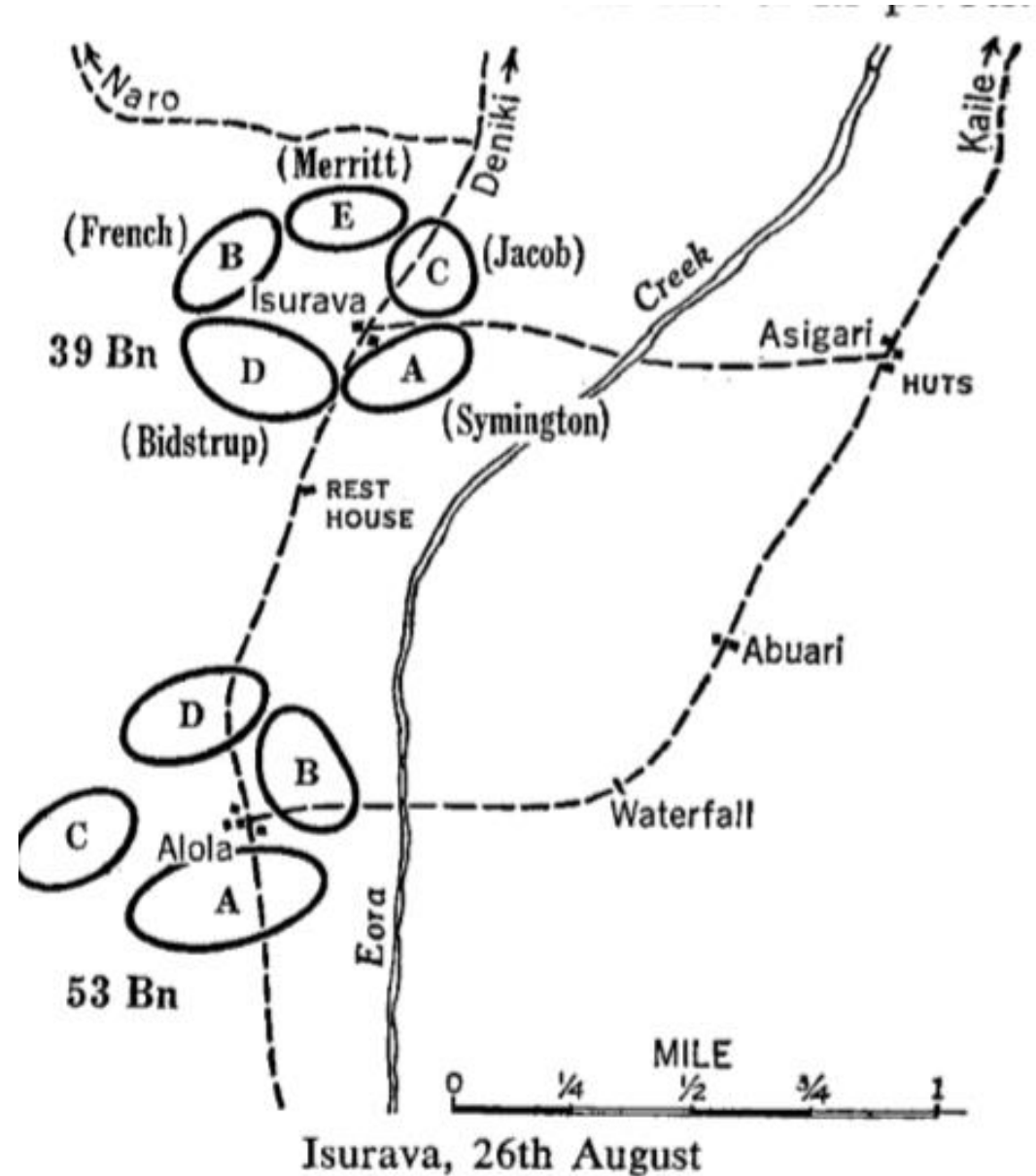
# 27 August - Kokoda

- French was now seriously threatened, his men reeling under a series of hammer blows. But they shot their attackers down until bodies cluttered the small open space in front of them.
- The first of Nye's platoons to return had been sent to strengthen Merritt's left and the second to Bidstrup's right (on the other side of French) so that the reinforced jaws of the companies on French's right and left could force out his assailants.
- The pressure was already easing when Nye's third platoon was placed under French's command and Captain Cameron's "D" Company of the 2/14th arrived about dark further to strengthen Honner's hard-pressed defences and back up Merritt's tired men.



# 27 August - Kokoda

- By nightfall on the 27th, on the right, Cairns and King of the 53rd were out of contact with their battalion and a third company was at the creek crossing.
- With Buckler's company of the 2/14th, the rest of the 53rd, except for about 70 men who had not reported in from patrol, some of whom were later found to have taken to the bush, was in position round Alola and patrolling to the left flank.
- The day had cost the 53rd five killed (including Ward and Logan) and two wounded.
- On the left Honner's battalion was still holding at Isurava with the three companies of the 2/14th.
- From the rear the 2/16th Battalion was moving forward with Lieutenant McGee's "A" Company at Eora Creek and Captain Sublet's "B" Company following closely.



# 27 August - Air

- **Kokoda**
- Seven B-26's escorted by fourteen P-400's bomb A/F at Buna 07.15/27. Ten Zeros intercepted, four claimed destroyed and 5 damaged.
- **Darwin**
- Probably two bombers raided Darwin early am 27/8. Severe damage to civil radio. Some naval stores lost.
- **Guadalcanal**
- On 27 August nine more Army P-400's came in to Henderson Field. Performance of these Army planes was disappointing. Their ceiling was 12,000 feet because they had no equipment for the British high-pressure oxygen system with which they were fitted, and they could not reach the high-flying enemy planes. Along with the Marine SBDS, the P400s spent their time during Japanese air raids off strafing and bombing ground targets, and they returned to Henderson after the hostile planes departed.
- **Aleutians**
- 4 B-17's, 6 B-24's, and 2 P-38's fly weather, rcn and patrol missions over Kiska and Atka.



USAAF Bell P-400 (P-39) Airacobra (80th Fighter Squadron "Headhunters," 8th FG). The P400 was an export version of the P39 lacking the turbo-supercharger, ordered by the British but taken over by the USAAF after Pearl Harbor. Nearly all the aircraft delivered to the British were then passed on to the Russians.

# 28 August - Sea

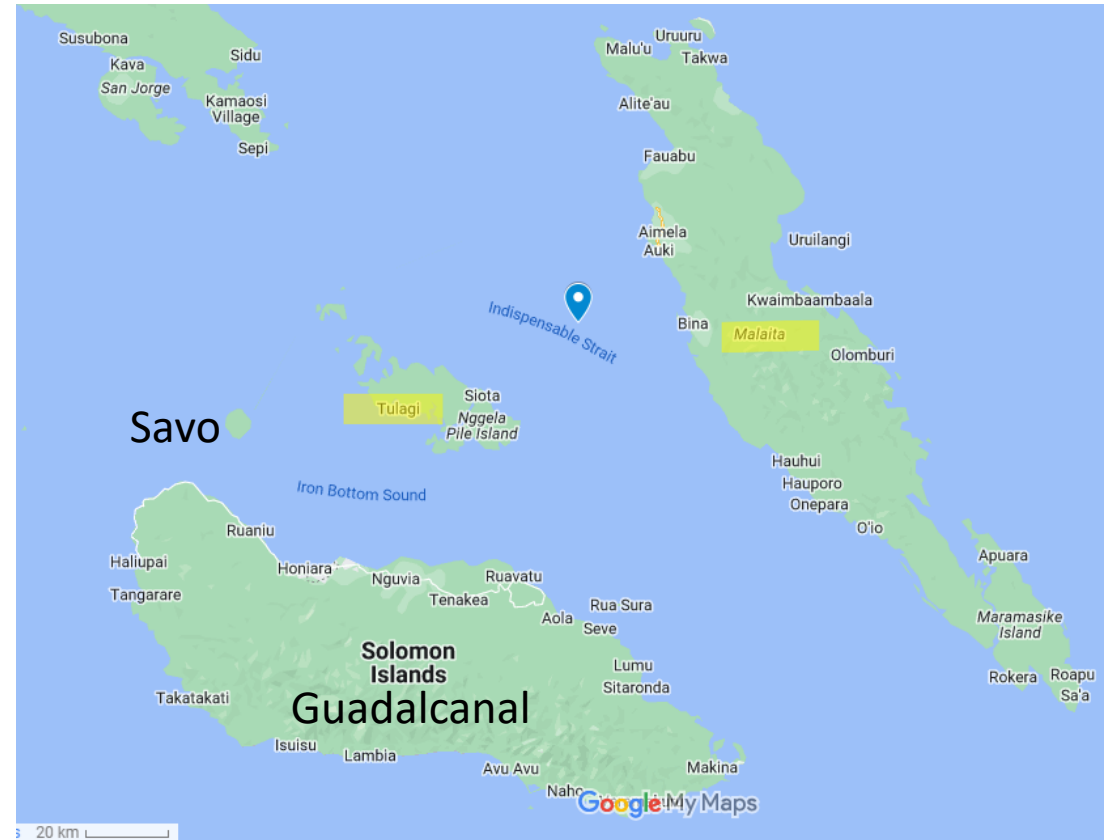
- On the 28th August General MacArthur's headquarters directed that Tasman, under the escort of Arunta, was to return to Milne Bay from Moresby.
- The Allied air forces were to provide the necessary reconnaissance and cover for this move.
- The N.O.I.C. Port Moresby replied, however, that evening, that the G.O.C. New Guinea Force (General Rowell) considered the situation too obscure to warrant this move, and that the ships would be retained at Moresby pending clarification of the situation, or further orders.



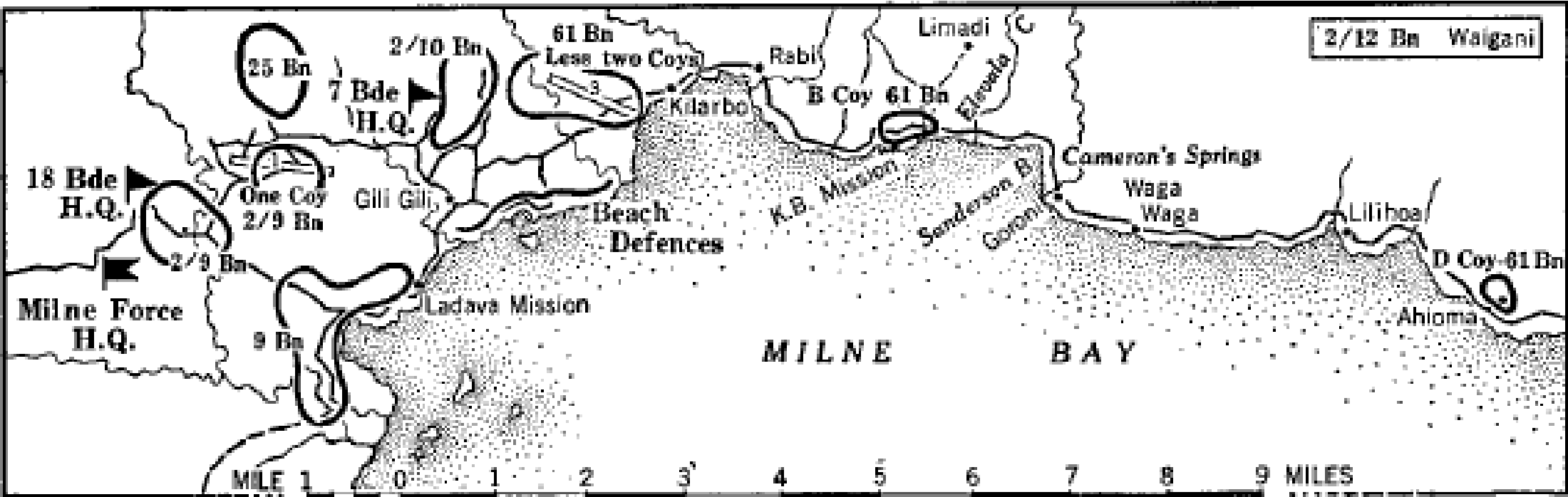
HMAS Arunta was a Tribal-class destroyer of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). Built at the Cockatoo Island Dockyard, laid down in November 1939 and commissioned into the RAN in March 1942. 36 knots, 6\*4.7inch guns and 2\*4inch aa guns.

# 28 August - Sea

- On 28 August it was estimated by Allied Intelligence that there were at least ten Japanese submarines in the Solomon Islands area.
  - "However, the carrier forces have an ample number of screening destroyers and strong anti-submarine air patrols which are maintained during daylight and have been keeping the submarines down and scoring some successes against them."
- In an attempt to land troops on Guadalcanal on the night of 28th August four Japanese destroyers were attacked by Marine dive bombers in Indispensable Strait (between Guadalcanal and Malaita).
- One blew up and sank, and the other three returned to Faisi with the surviving troops.



# Milne Bay



Dispositions, 6 p.m. 25th August.

Milne Force	7 Brigade
Clowes	Field
	61 Battalion
	25 Battalion
	9 Battalion

Meldrum  
Miles  
Morgan

18 Brigade
Wooten
2/9 Battalion
2/10 Battalion
2/12 Battalion

Dobbs

# 28 August – Milne Bay

- Brocksopp and Matheson (of the 2/10th) organised a position on the west bank of the Gama River. Scarcely had they done so when the Japanese came surging down the track, about 2 a.m. on 28th, led by a tank on which a number of infantry-men were riding.
- The Australians engaged them, O'Brien coolly getting off three shots with his anti-tank rifle before he was wounded by a grenade burst. It was difficult to see what was happening in the darkness. The tank was raking the bush with fire, and mortar bombs—or grenades fired from a discharger—were falling among the defenders.
- Then the Japanese seemed to be well across the river, both on the road and on the flanks. Brocksopp, still thinking that they represented a force of 5,000, decided that the rest of the battalion had probably reorganised for the defence of No. 3 Strip and told his men to go back.
- He himself and Schmedje stayed near the river hoping to collect any stragglers from their battalion who might be in the vicinity.



Type 95 Ha-Go tanks in New Britain following the Japanese surrender

# 28 August – Milne Bay

- They watched what seemed to be a continuous stream of the invaders pouring along the track towards the airfield. They thought that, in ten minutes, a whole battalion passed.
- Colonel Dobbs, with most of the unit, had moved north and had waited there for daylight to come, subsequently skirting the track and later re-forming in the Force area those of his men he could muster.



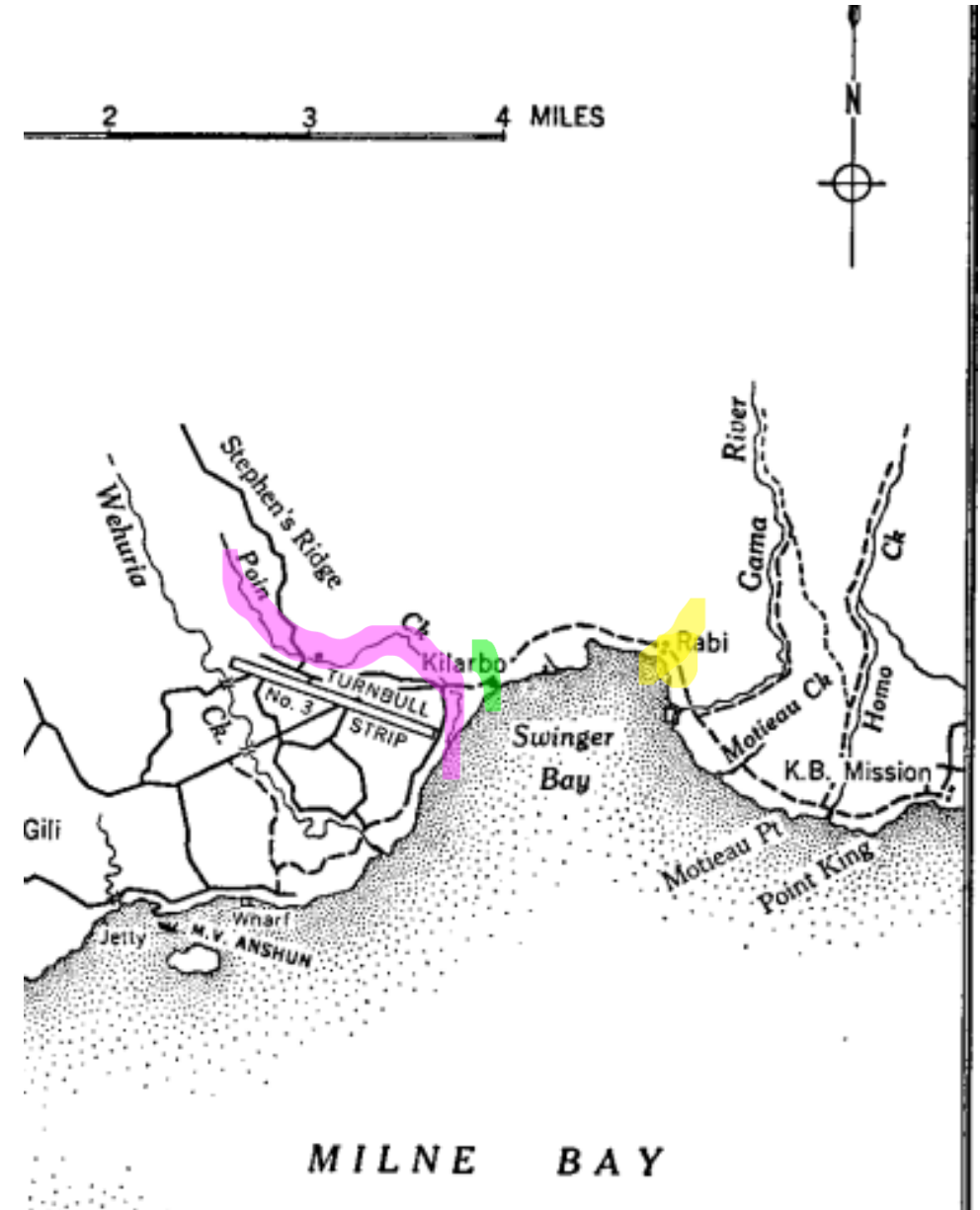
Group portrait of officers of 2/27 Battalion 12  
October 1940. SX2929 Maj (later Lt Col) James  
Gordon Dobbs.

## 28 August – Milne Bay

- In the early morning of the 28th Dobbs had sent back a patrol under Lieutenant Wilson to the K.B. area. This patrol found Private Abraham who had been badly wounded in the night. His platoon, withdrawing, had not been able to find him as he lay unconscious.
- Five times during the fighting in the night a tank had charged him trying to run him under. Unable to use his legs he had evaded it by rolling aside. When the patrol found him he was holding off four Japanese who were engaging him from the cover of a hut. They had originally been ten. He had killed six. Wilson's men killed the other four. Then it took them three days to get him back to Gili Gili. During that whole time, Wilson said, he remained cheerful.

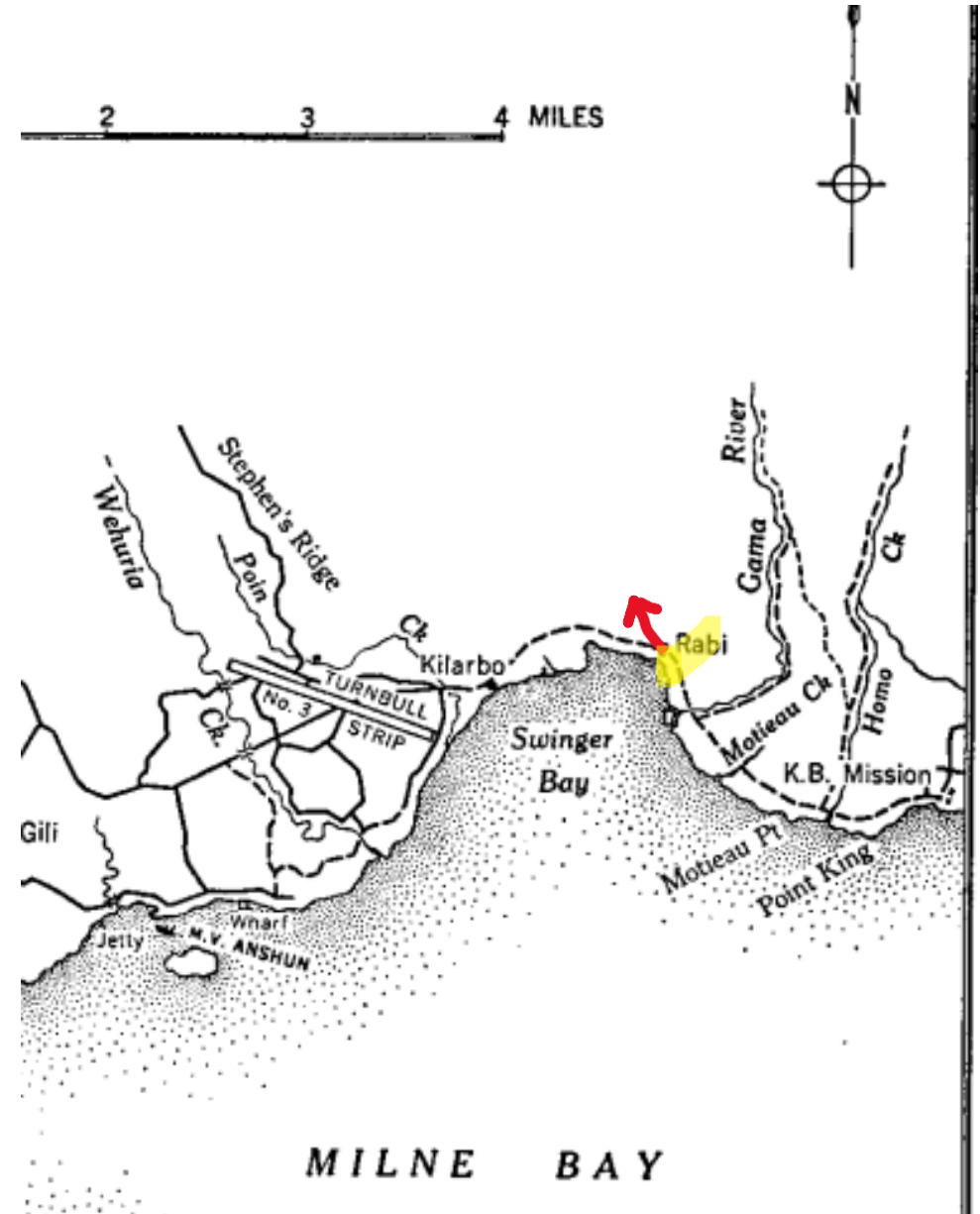
# 28 August – Milne Bay

- Colonel Miles' 25th Battalion were left facing the Japanese after the 2/10th had been scattered. The previous day Miles had taken over the defence of No. 3 Strip and arrangements had been made to send the 61st Battalion back to the Gili Gili area to rest there in reserve.
- Miles then had two companies thrust forward of the strip—Captain Ryan's company at Rabi and beyond, Captain Steel's company round Kilarbo. A minefield had been laid in the vicinity of Kilarbo and one, farther back, covering the strip itself.
- As the night of the 27th and the early morning of the 28th advanced Ryan had a platoon towards the Gama River, a platoon at Rabi with his own headquarters, and Lieutenant Schlyder's platoon along the track in the rear, between Rabi and Diura Creek which crossed the road about half-way between Rabi and Kilarbo. Captain Steel had Sergeant Ludlow's platoon backing Schlyder behind Diura Creek, a platoon in the area of Kilarbo village itself, covering the road and the minefield, with his own headquarters and two sections of the anti-aircraft platoon under Sergeant Parkinson also there, and Sergeant Steele was back towards the strip, adjacent to Poin Creek.



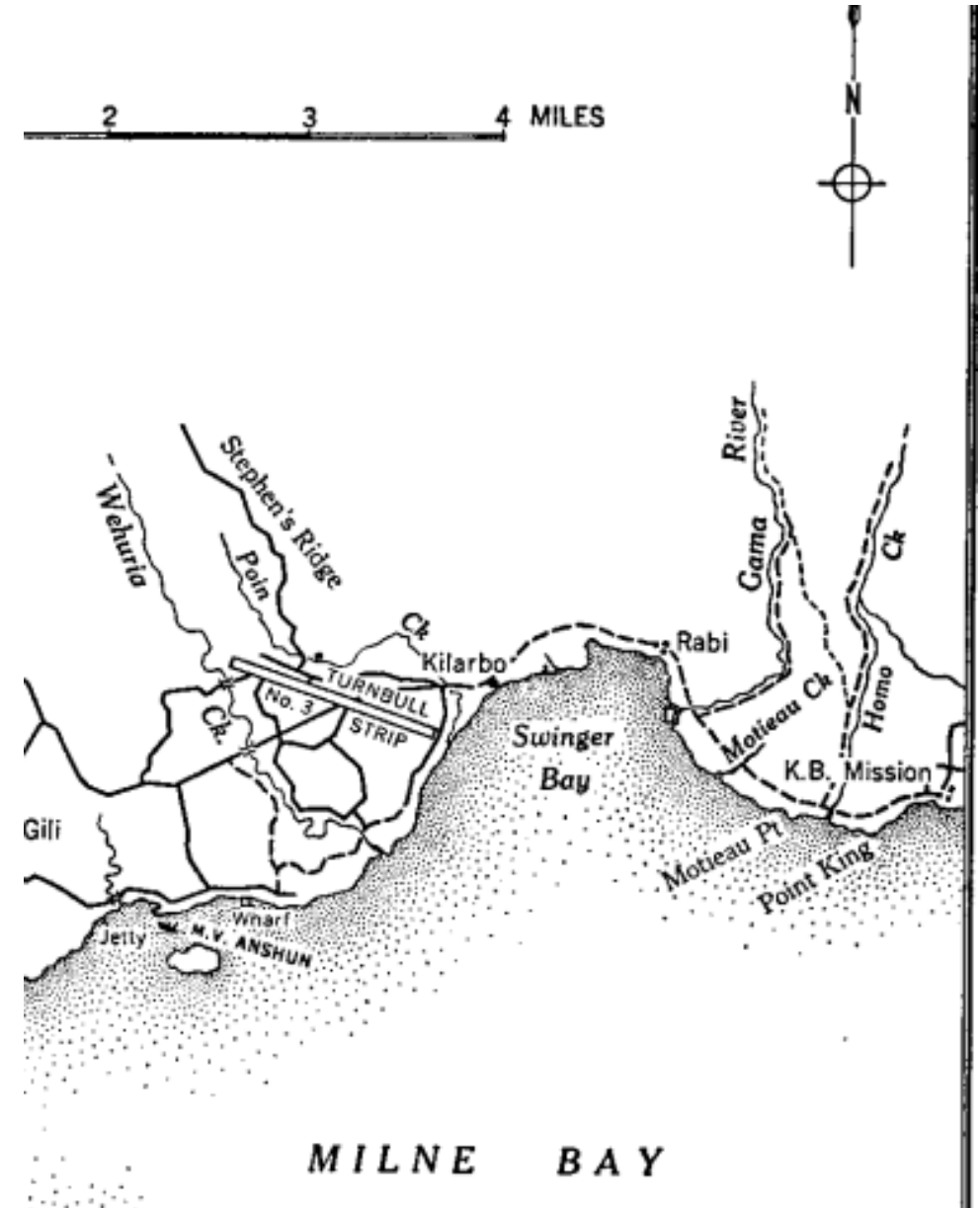
# 28 August – Milne Bay

- The move of the 61st back into reserve was proceeding (but slowly) until only small elements, including battalion headquarters and a detachment of five Vickers guns, were left on the strip.
- When the men of the 2/10th began to come back the Japanese were hard behind them. Some passed through Ryan's forward platoon and then, before the attack of two Japanese tanks, that platoon fell back to **Rabi**.
- There the tanks and accompanying infantry threatened Ryan again so that, after a brief encounter and because he was being assailed from the rear, he moved his main force north-west into the hills.



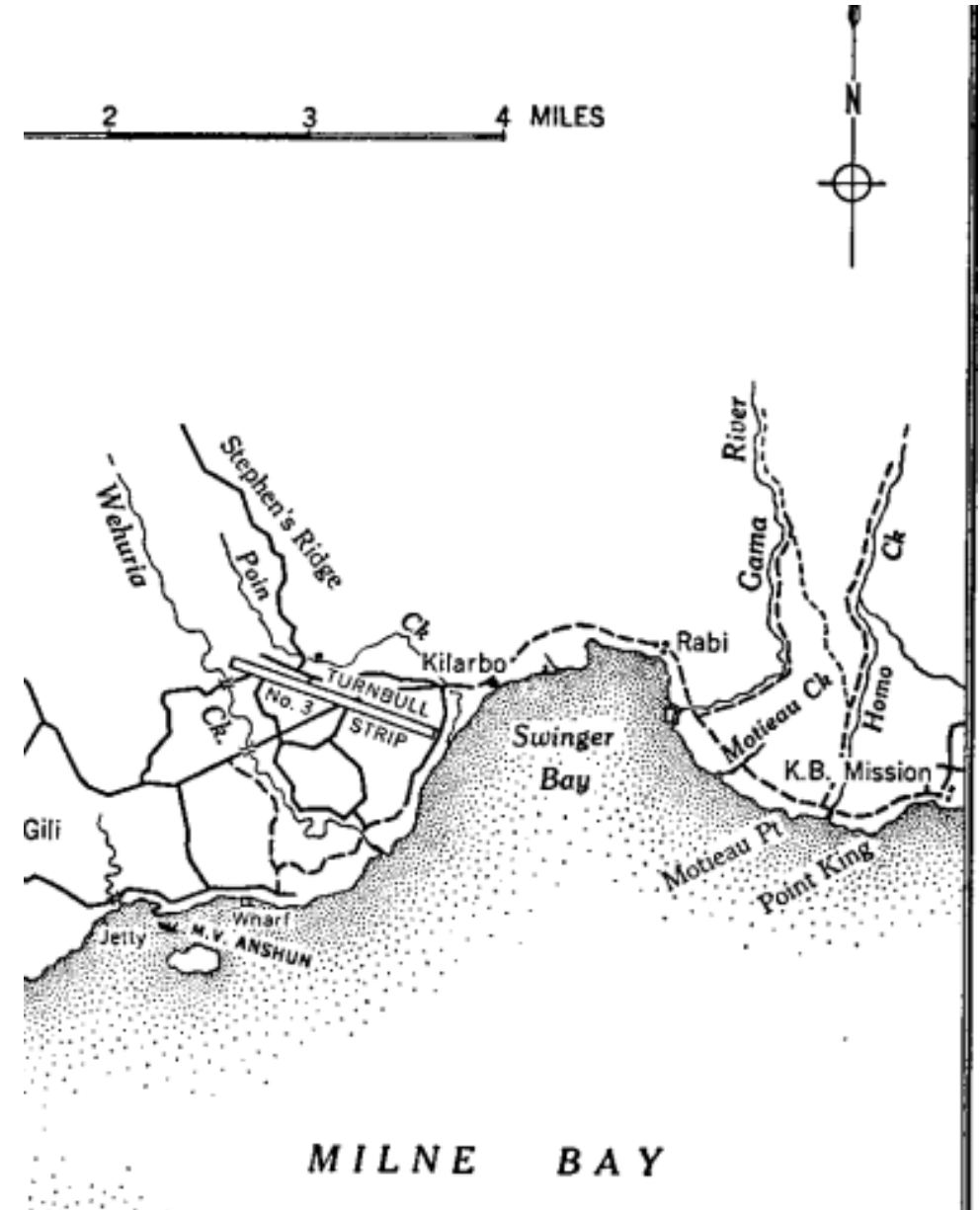
# 28 August – Milne Bay

- Brigadier Field had sent forward to Kilarbo an anti-tank gun from the 101st Regiment to cover the minefield and was trying to get a vehicle laden with sticky bombs, Molotov cocktails, and extra ammunition along the road to Rabi; but the road was a morass and rain poured down. The truck bogged hopelessly between Kilarbo and Rabi. Its crew disabled it and made it into a road-block.
- After Ryan had been forced into the hills Schlyder tried to make a stand round this road-block. But as the Japanese worked round him he fell back to Kilarbo and joined Steel's company.
- The pursuers followed quickly and confused fighting set in. Ludlow's men, who had been detailed to cover the gun, were forced away from it. The Japanese took it, but not before Acreman, the lieutenant in charge, had rendered it useless. The fighting was close before Steel's company fell back, so close that Sergeant Parkinson was mortally bayoneted while manning a machine-gun.



# 28 August – Milne Bay

- Now Sergeant Steele took a hand. Earlier he had cut a field of fire from the road to the coast and had prepared also to fire down a clearing intended for use as an aeroplane bay. He held his ground with about sixteen men. Ludlow, with some of his platoon, joined him and a few other men were gathered.
- Farther back, as the order for artillery fire was about to be given, there came the sound of fighting from about 400 yards forward. The artillery held their fire. Steele and Ludlow were holding firm, cutting down the attackers as they pushed into the cleared areas. They held from about 5 a.m. until nearly 8. Steele thought that his men killed 40 or 50 Japanese.
- While Steele and Ludlow thus took toll of their enemies other men from their company were falling back across the strip to the beach, some of them covered by the steady Bren gun fire of Lance-Corporals Jorgensen and Wise and Private Davis.



## 28 August – Milne Bay

- In the early morning, as the situation had grown tenser, Field had started to bring forward the 61st Battalion again—a slow process because transport was short, rain was still falling heavily, and the roads were bogs.
- A quiet day (28<sup>th</sup>) followed as the Japanese continued with the tactics which they had adopted since they landed at Milne Bay. They rested by day and fought by night.



Brigadier Field, 7 Brigade

# 28 August – Milne Bay



General Sutherland

On the 28th MacArthur expressed to Blamey his dissatisfaction with the scanty information coming out of Milne Bay and with the progress being made there. General Sutherland, his Chief of Staff, wrote:

The Commander-in-Chief requests that you instruct Major-General Clowes at once to clear the north shore of Milne Bay without delay and that you direct him to submit a report to reach General Headquarters by 0800K/29 [8 a.m. 29th] of the action taken together with his estimate of the enemy's strength in the area.

Please further request General Clowes' opinion as to the possibility that a second movement of enemy shipping into Milne Bay was for the purpose of withdrawing forces previously landed.

War in the Pacific - ©Jerry McBrien - Wk 10 – 27 August 1942



*(Australian War Memorial)*

Major-General C. A. Clowes, commanding Milne Force.

# 28 August – Milne Bay



General Vasey

On the same day (28<sup>th</sup>) the Deputy Chief of the General Staff, General Vasey, who was at G.H.Q., wrote Rowell a personal letter.

“The lack of information from you on the operations at Milne Bay has created a very difficult situation here. GHQ get through air sources various scraps of information. The source of these is usually not given, and they generally indicate a lack of activity on the part of our troops in the area. Our view is that these are not worth anything, but in default of authentic information from you we are not in a position to combat GHQ, whose outlook is based on these sundry reports.

...



General Rowell

# 28 August – Milne Bay



You possibly do not realise that for GHQ this is their first battle, and they are, therefore, like many others, nervous and dwelling on the receipt of frequent messages . . .

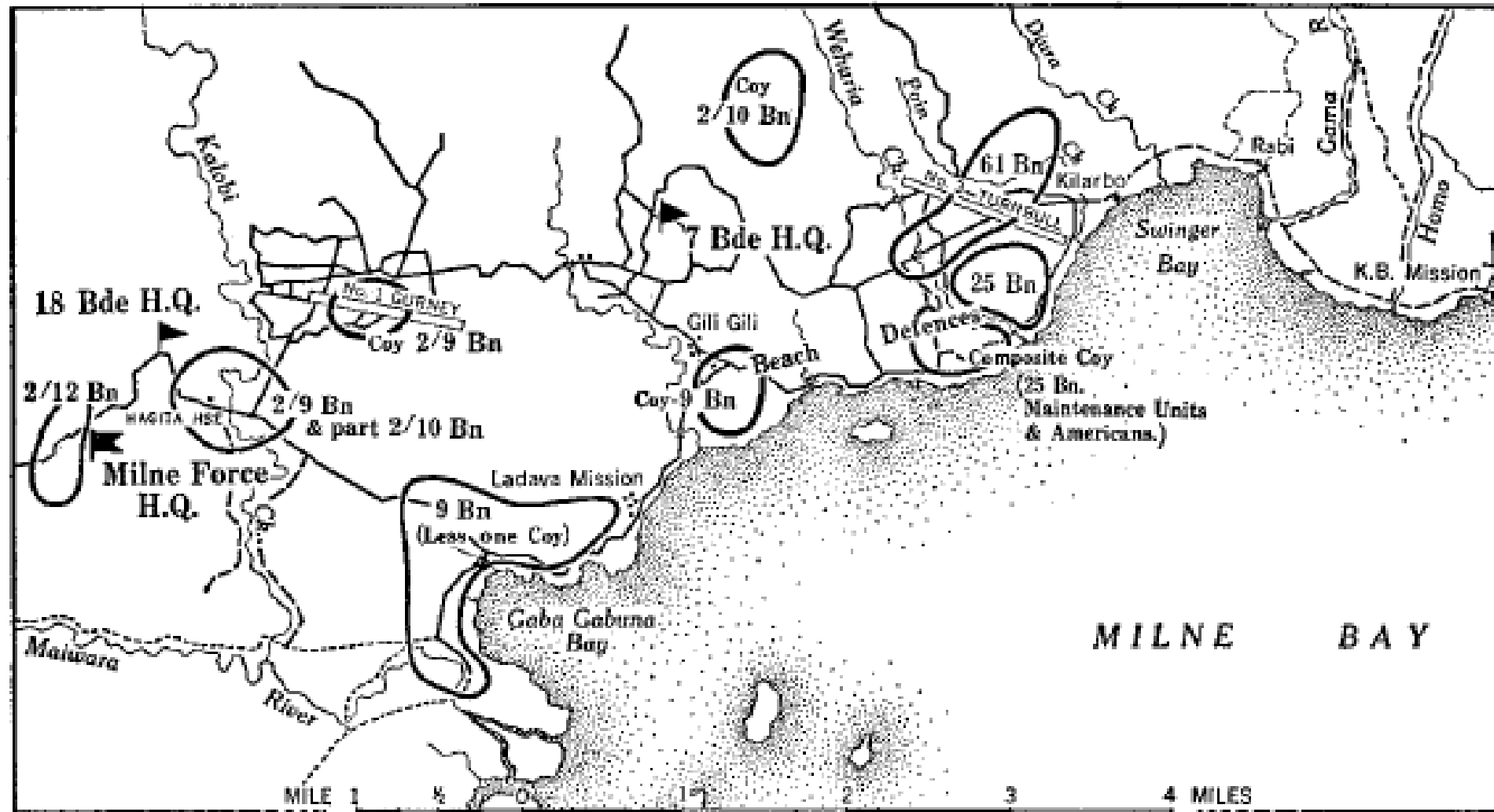
By the tone of this morning's conversation with Sutherland, I feel that a wrong impression of our troops had already been created in the minds of the great, and it is important for the future that that impression be corrected at the earliest possible moment."



He then scribbled an even more personal letter:

"I am now awaiting the result of Cyril's activities yesterday. I'm dying to go to these b—s and say "I told you so—we've killed the b...y lot." . . . One of MacArthur's troubles is that all his navy has gone to the Solomons and he wants information on which to base a request, or demand, on Washington to get it back."

## 28 August – Milne Bay



**Dispositions, 6 p.m. 28th August** From the Australian official history.

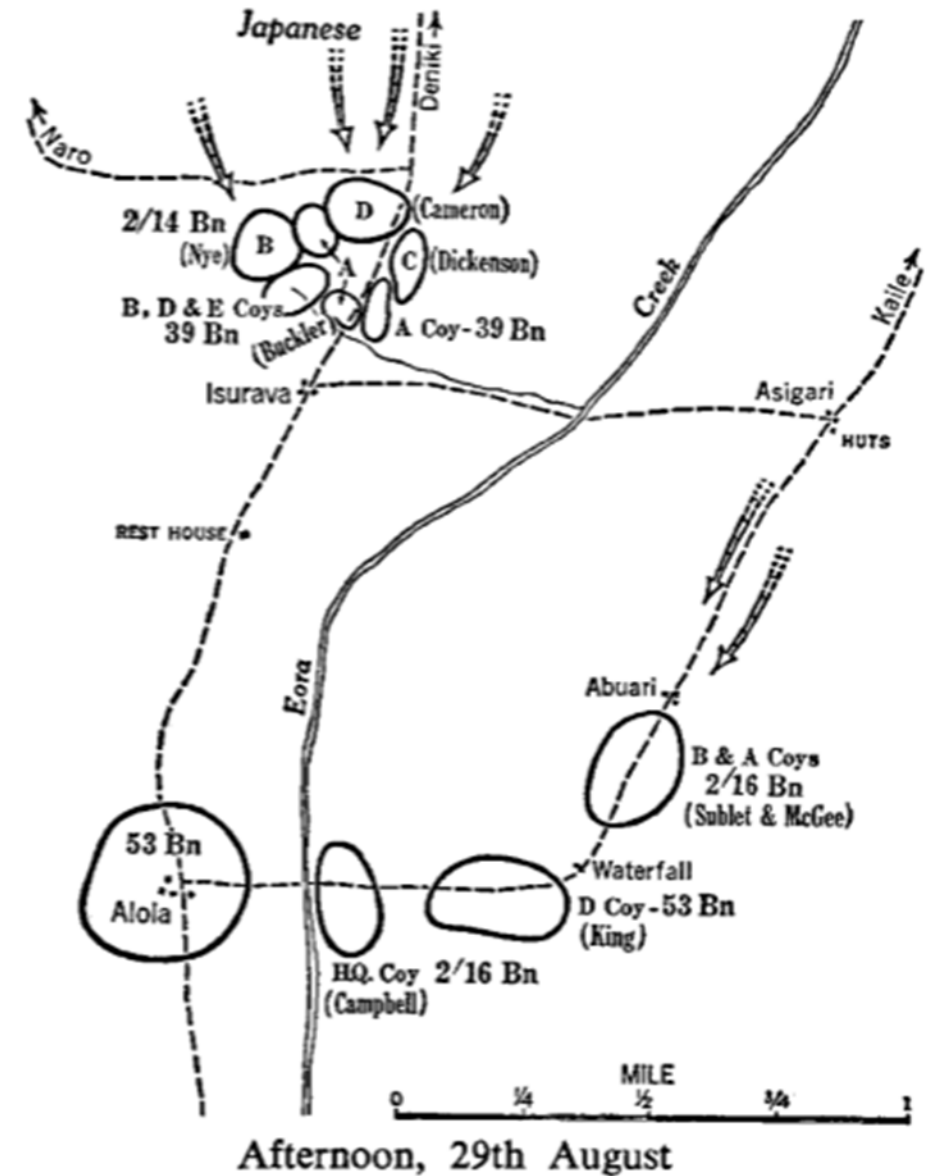
# 28 August – Milne Bay

- By late afternoon the 61<sup>st</sup> battalion was covering the north-western end of No. 3 Strip.
- At its south-east end the 25th Battalion had been re-settled between the sea on the right, the strip itself on the north and Wehuria Creek to the south.
- Across the creek a composite company was in position, formed from elements of the 25th, Australian maintenance units, and some Americans.
- The 2/10th Battalion was re-forming in the 18th Brigade area.
- By the 28<sup>th</sup> (August) ground forces at Milne Bay numbered 8,824 (Australian Army 7,459; United States Army 1,365); the infantry, however, numbered only about 4,500.



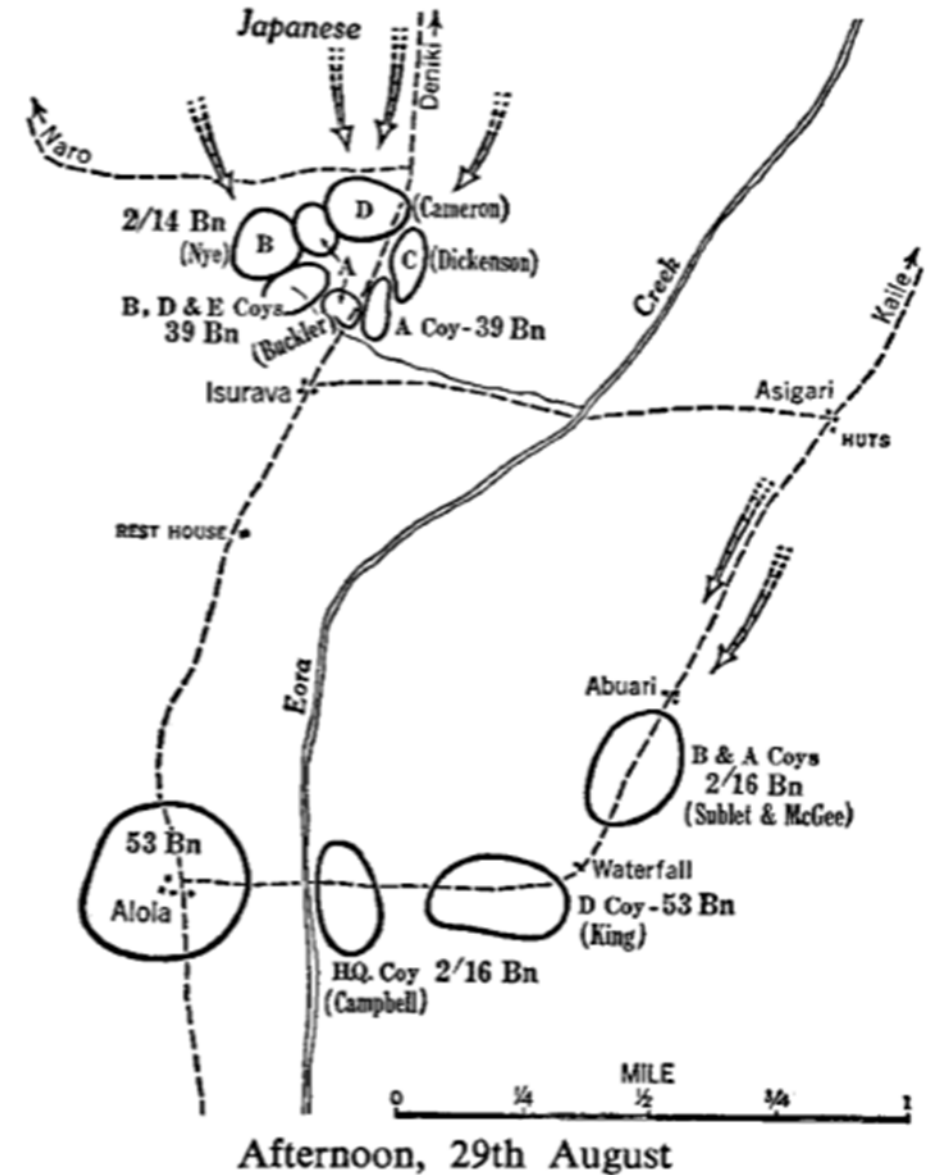
# 28 August - Kokoda

- On the 28th there was little action on the right flank although from Alola Japanese could be seen moving in the vicinity of Abuari. By 8 a.m. 67 men of Cairns' and King's companies had regained touch with the 53rd and were in position on the track to Abuari patrolling forward to the village.
- At 11.30 a.m. McGee arrived and at 2 p.m. was pushed across the creek towards Abuari while Buckler led his men forward to Isurava.
- By nightfall McGee's patrols had entered Abuari without opposition and Sublet was watching his rear.
- Just before dark Captain Ahern reported in from Kaile with eighteen men. He stated that, after Isaachsen's death on the 25th, he had held Kaile until dark and had seen the Japanese carry away fourteen of their dead before he withdrew to an ambush position back along the track from which he ultimately made his way back through the 39th positions. His men were exhausted and hungry.



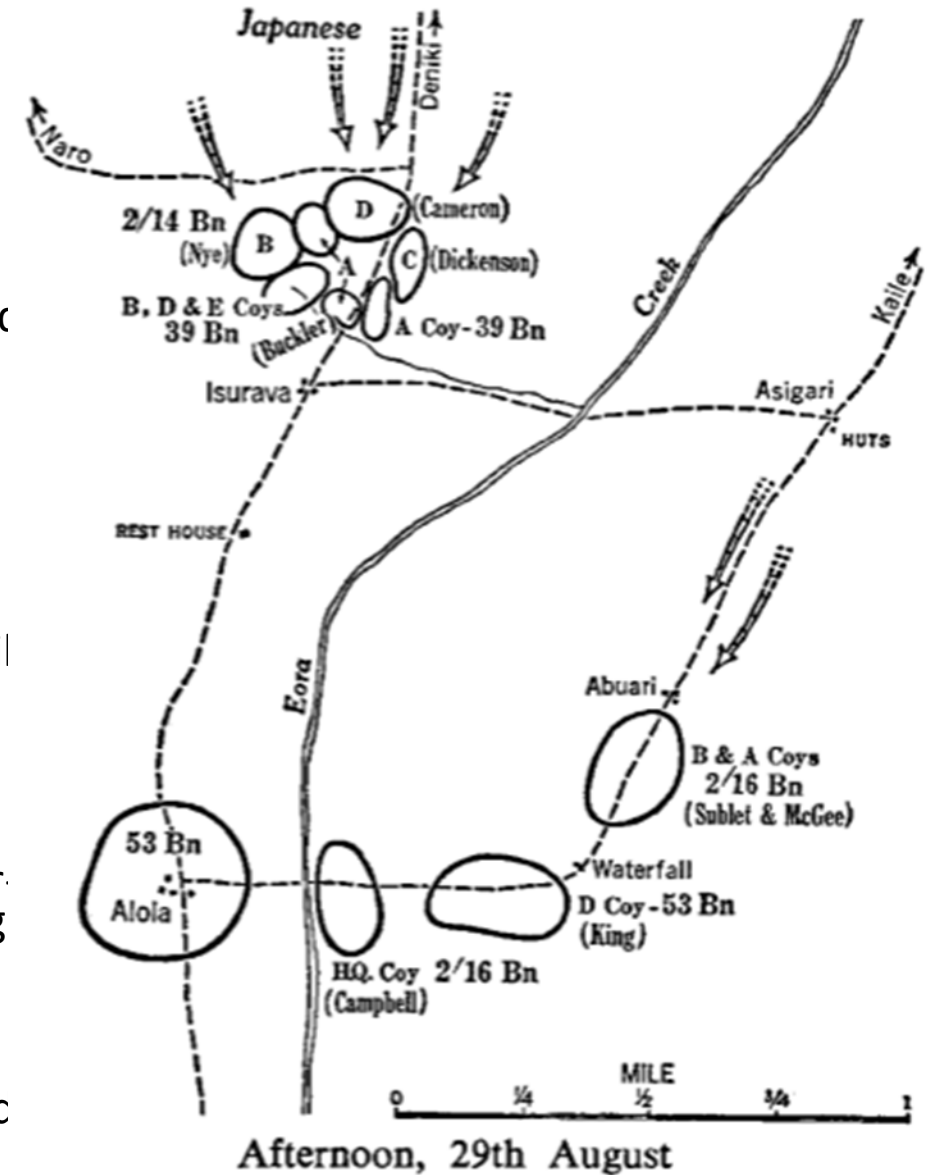
# 28 August - Kokoda

- On the left, however, the 28th was not such a quiet day. It had been preceded by desultory bayonet fighting during a night of heavy rain.
- Japanese fire from dawn until about 8 a.m. prepared the way for a morning attack, probing and testing round the positions. First, two assaults were made on Dickenson's positions. His company thought that each was made by about 100 men. The attackers, soldiers of powerful physique, were supported by wild screeching as they advanced. Dickenson's men thought that they inflicted about 90 casualties.
- Cameron, Dickenson on his right and Nye on his left, also sustained attacks during the morning and made the Japanese suffer heavily .
- Savage and continuous thrusts were made at Nye's company, directed mainly at Lieutenant Moore's platoon. Moore beat them back but was killed in doing so.



# 28 August - Kokoda

- At the end of this busy morning Colonel Key arrived and took over command of the whole area from Honner (although the latter, knowing the weight of the Japanese thrust and reluctant to leave, convinced Potts that he and his men should remain with Key).
- Key maintained Dickenson on the right of the track Isurava-Deniki, forward of Isurava, Cameron in the forward and central position, and Nye covering the battalion's left flank. The 39th, now only about 250 strong, was disposed to cover Key's rear.
- Dickenson and Nye sustained the main afternoon attacks until about 3.30.
- Then the Japanese rushed Cameron's positions and overran part of Lieutenant Pearce's platoon. But Pearce's men fought back grimly until Lieutenant Hutchison's platoon from Buckler's company in reserve to the east of the track, counter-attacked across their positions and swept away the remaining Japanese.
- A clear night found Key's men in good heart, confident of their superiority and adeptly meeting Japanese attempts at infiltration. The battalion had lost one officer and 2 men killed during the day and 12 men wounded. But the Australians considered that they had inflicted far heavier casualties on their enemies.



# 28 August - Air

- **Milne Bay**

- 6 B-26's attacked enemy positions at Milne Bay 14.45/28. Numerous small fires started.
- Clowes and Garing were now concerned about the safety of the Kittyhawks on the ground and decided late on the afternoon of the 28th (August) that all aircraft should be flown to Port Moresby to remain there at least overnight. Twenty aircraft from No. 75 and 10 from No. 76 therefore made the 196-miles flight, Sergeant Cowe, being killed when his aircraft, caught in dense cloud, crashed into a hill near the Seven Mile aerodrome.
- Next morning the squadrons moved back to Milne Bay. On the way Jackson's aircraft, which he had flown almost continuously in operations since the battle began, gave trouble and he had to crash land on the coast. With the aid of natives he succeeded in making his way back to Port Moresby three days later by canoe and lugger.

- **Darwin**

- 3 aircraft bombed Darwin 04.28/28. Slight damage, no casualties.

- **China Burma India**

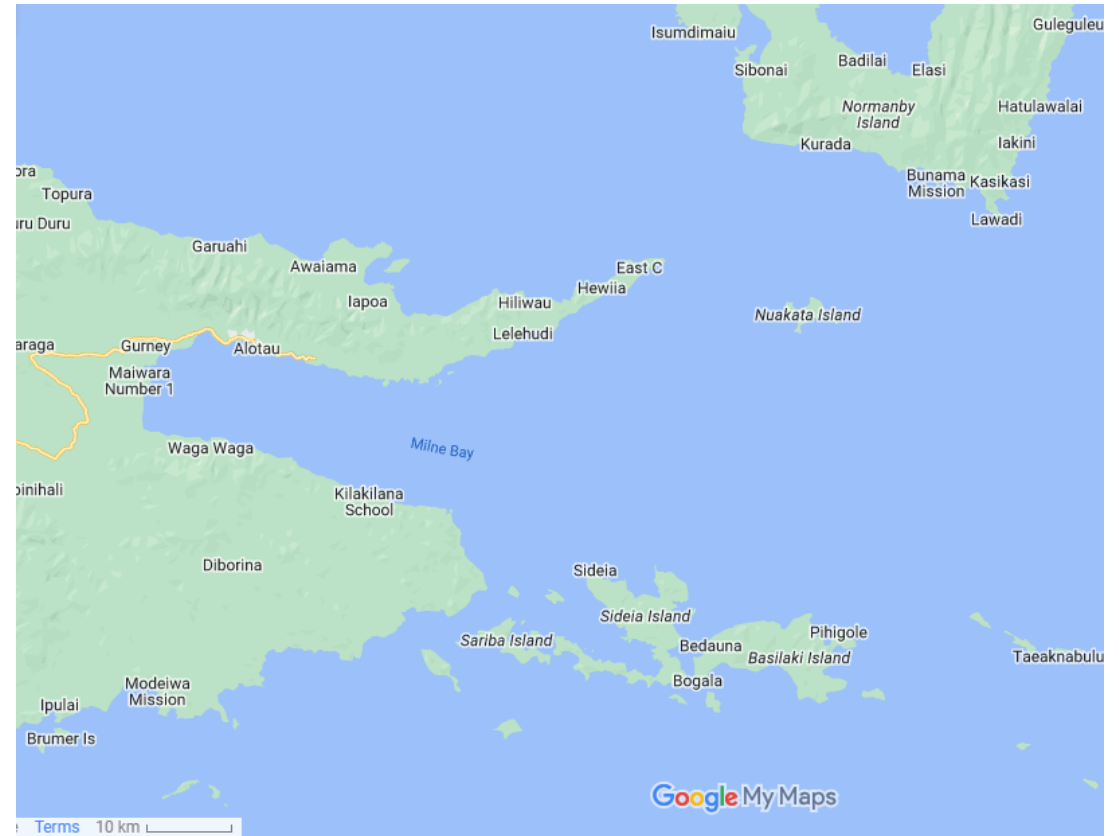
- 8 B-25's hit barracks and ammo dumps at Hoang Su Phi and a fuel dump at Phu Lo. This is the largest force of MBs used by CATF to date, and the first MB mission flown without escort.

- **Aleutians**

- Of 3 B-17's bombing Kiska, 1 fails to return. All available B-24's and 2 flts of P-38's fly naval cover at Nazan Bay. An attack mission to Attu is canceled due to weather.

# 29 August - Sea

- Enemy ships were again in Milne Bay during the night of August 28th-29th.
- On the 29th August Brigadier-General Chamberlin, MacArthur's Chief Operations Officer, issued instructions to Captain Carson, U.S.N., Operations Officer of the Allied Naval Forces, to get merchant ships into Milne Bay at the earliest practicable date as decided by local authority, and meanwhile to send Arunta there to support the defences.



# 29 August - Sea

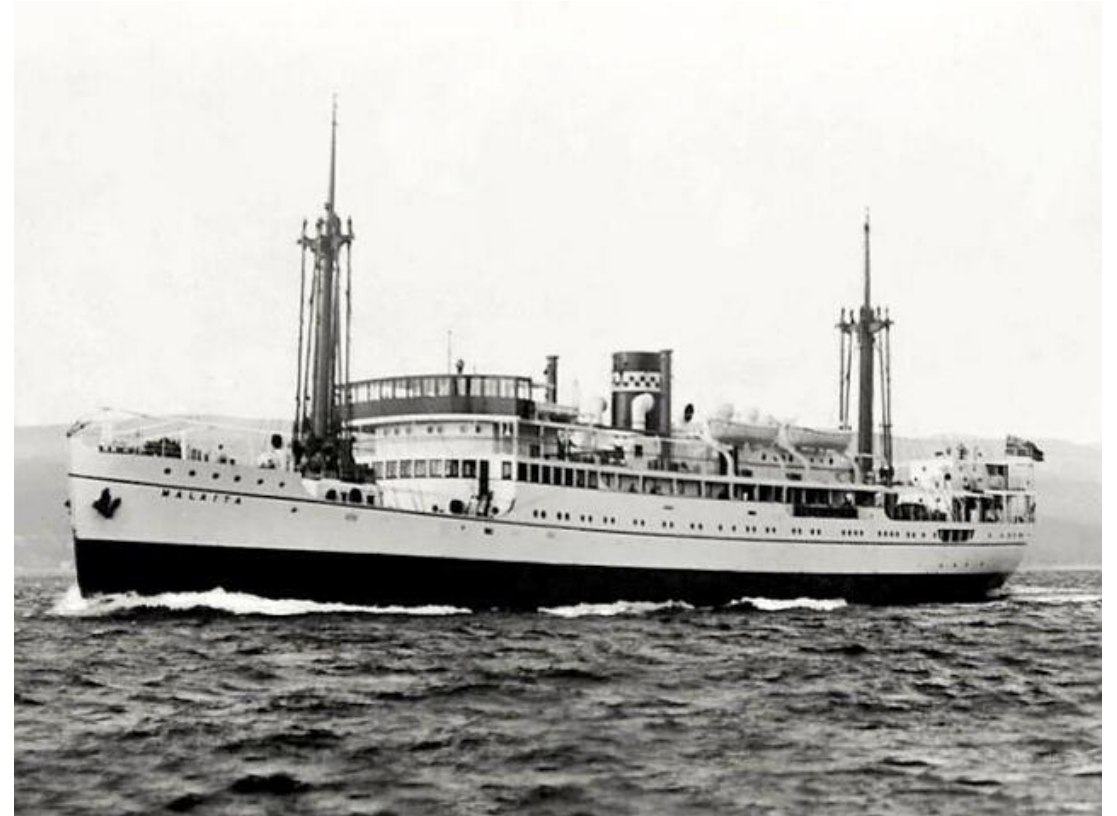
- Arunta meanwhile secured an asdic contact on what was believed to be the enemy submarine, and over a period of one-and-a-half hours, from 1 p.m. to 2.30, carried out four depth-charge attacks. Evidence, continuing over some days, of oil and oil bubbles rising in the position of these attacks convinced Arunta's skipper that a submarine had been destroyed.
- Malaita, still burning fiercely, was towed stern first and anchored in the lee of Manuabada Island.
- The Japanese submarine Ro-33 was depth charged and sunk in the Coral Sea 10 nautical miles (19 km) south east of Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (09°36'S 147°06'E). Lost with all 70 hands.



HMAS Arunta, built by Cockatoo Docks and Engineering Co Ltd, Sydney commissioned 30 March 1942.

# 29 August - Sea

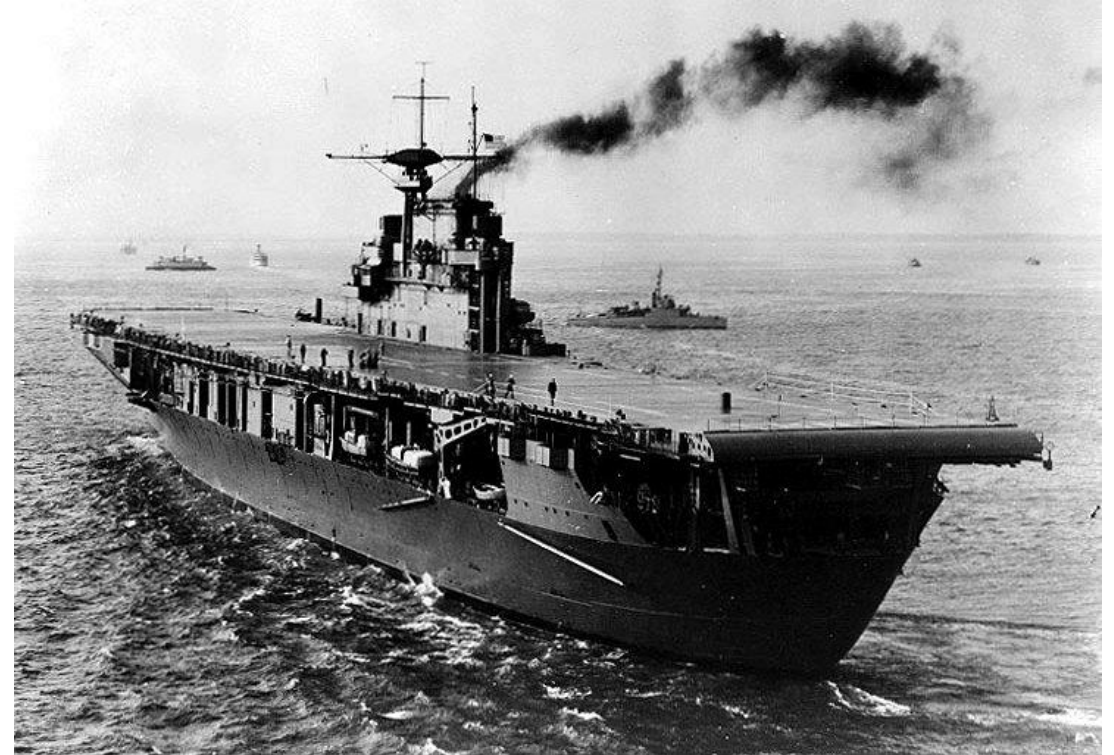
- At 11.15 a.m. on 29th August the Burns Philp motor vessel Malaita sailed from Port Moresby for Cairns. Arunta, who was to escort her clear, followed her out through Basilisk Passage and then took station ahead, zigzagging across the merchant ship's bows. She was only on the second leg of her zigzag when Malaita was struck by a torpedo just forward of the bridge on the starboard side. Weather was fine, with a smooth sea and light airs, and Malaita, though she at once took a 10-degree list to starboard and increased her forward draft from 8 feet to 24 feet, remained afloat.



Malaita II, a motor ship, built in Glasgow in 1933. She was 3,310 GRT, a length of 328 ft with a beam of 47.1 ft. Her diesel engines and single screw gave 12 knots. She accommodated 48 passengers all First Class. Her regular ports of call were" Sydney, Brisbane, Port Moresby, Samarai, Rabaul, Lorengau, Lombrun, Madang, Lae, Sydney. She operated this schedule every six weeks.

# 29 August - Sea

- In the afternoon of the 29th, Allied reconnaissance aircraft reported a cruiser and nine destroyers approaching Milne Bay from the north, and enemy ships were again in the bay that night, their activities shrouded in darkness but including some gunfire, which, did no damage to the defenders.
- For the last few days of August the American carrier groups patrolled the sea routes to the south-east of Guadalcanal. On the 29<sup>th</sup> August the Saratoga and Wasp groups were joined by Task Force 17—aircraft carrier Hornet, three cruisers, and destroyers.
- A Japanese submarine was depth charged and sunk in the Solomon Sea at (09°21'S 160°43'E) by USS *Gamble* on 29 August.



USS Hornet CV8

# 29 August – New Guinea

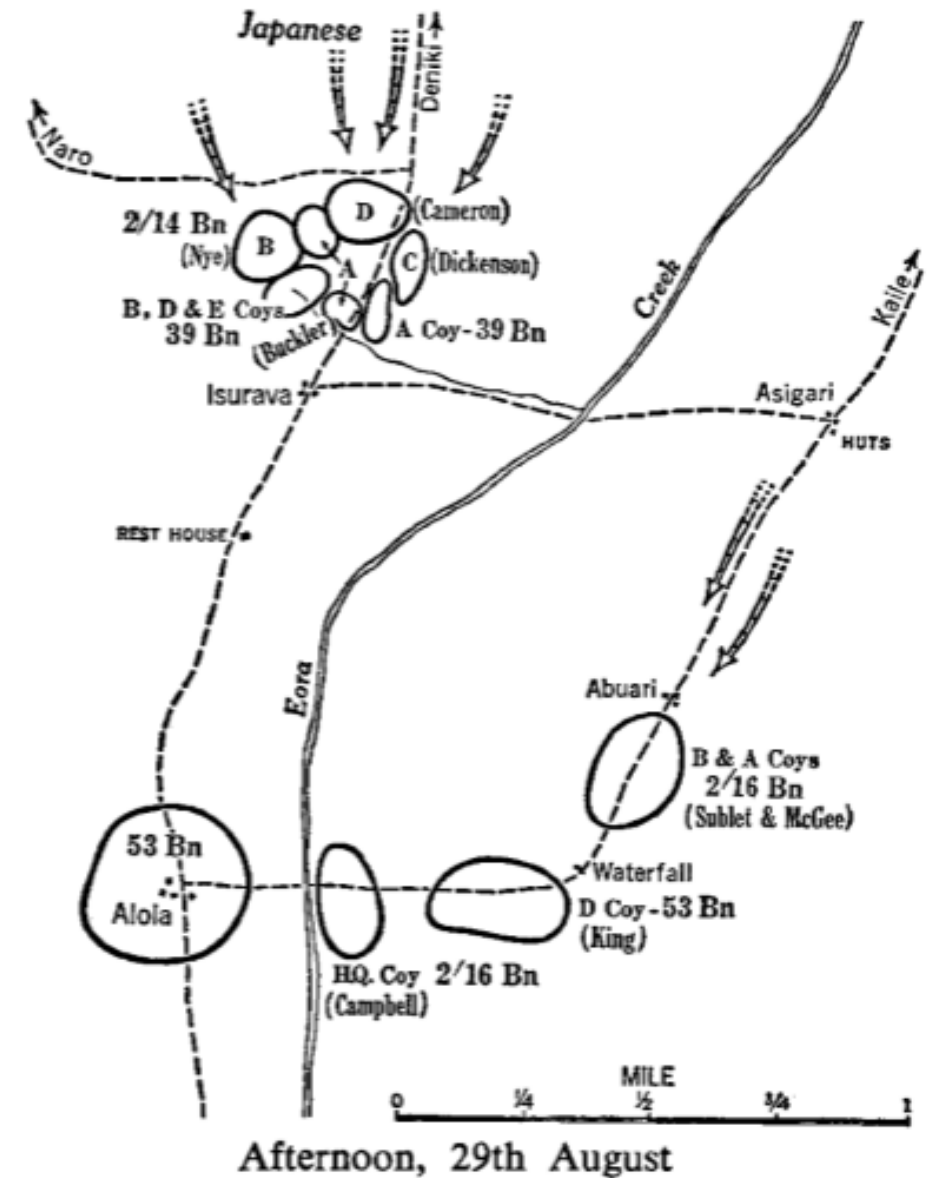
- **Milne Bay**
- The 29th was a day of sporadic action and alarms and patrol activity highlighted by the discovery of two Japanese tanks, bogged and abandoned on the track west of the Gama River.
- At 4.33 p.m. aircraft reported a cruiser and nine destroyers headed for Milne Bay. Clowes, concerned again about possible landings on the southern or western shores, cancelled instructions he had given to Wooten to attack along the north shore as far as K.B. with a view to later mopping up the whole of the East Cape Peninsula.
- Shelling came again from the bay just before and after midnight though it was comparatively light and caused no casualties.
- **Salamaua**
- A 6,000-ton transport, with a destroyer for escort, was in the harbour at Salamaua on the 27th. Several hundred troops and stores, including motor vehicles, were unloaded on the night 28th-29th August.



Japanese light tanks bogged and abandoned at Milne Bay.

# 29 August – Kokoda

- Next day, the 29th, on the right McGee was in contact by 9 a.m. in the vicinity of Abuari, trying to encircle a Japanese force which he estimated to be about 100 strong. The Japanese were stubborn. They seemed to have at least two heavy machine-guns well dug in and protected.
- Sublet moved to support McGee and took command of both companies. His men inflicted casualties but suffered themselves and could not advance.
- At 2.15 Sublet asked that a company of the 53rd go round the waterfall in an attempt to fall upon the Japanese rear. Captain King's was sent.
- Meanwhile McGee was heavily engaged but the fighting died down later in the afternoon and King reported that he would be in a position to attack at dawn next morning.
- The day ended in a stalemate with Sublet and McGee withdrawn into a perimeter, King moving on the right, Lieutenant Campbell with Headquarters Company of the 2/16th holding at the creek crossing.
- During the day the 2/16th companies had lost 7 men killed and one officer and 22 men wounded (mostly from McGee's company) in exchange for an estimated 40 Japanese casualties.



# 29 August – Kokoda

- Heavy attacks on all companies (at Isurava) began early in the morning (of 29 August).
- Dickenson, holding Key's right, early beat back a forceful sortie. But the Japanese there thrust again with even greater determination. Lieutenant Cox of Buckler's company came forward with his platoon. He was killed and his platoon was mauled.
- Corporal Bear (photo) took charge of his remaining men and was reported himself to have killed at least 15 Japanese with his Bren gun at point-blank range. But the Japanese still drove hard at Dickenson's company.
- Lieutenant Boddington and 4 men were killed, many Australians were wounded, and the attackers smashed through the positions which Boddington and Lieutenant Clements had held.
- Privates "Snowy" Neilson and Bowen of Clements' platoon coolly stood firm to give the rest of the platoon a chance to re-form.
- Sergeant Thompson led forward a party from Captain Rhoden's Headquarters Company which had arrived during the morning.



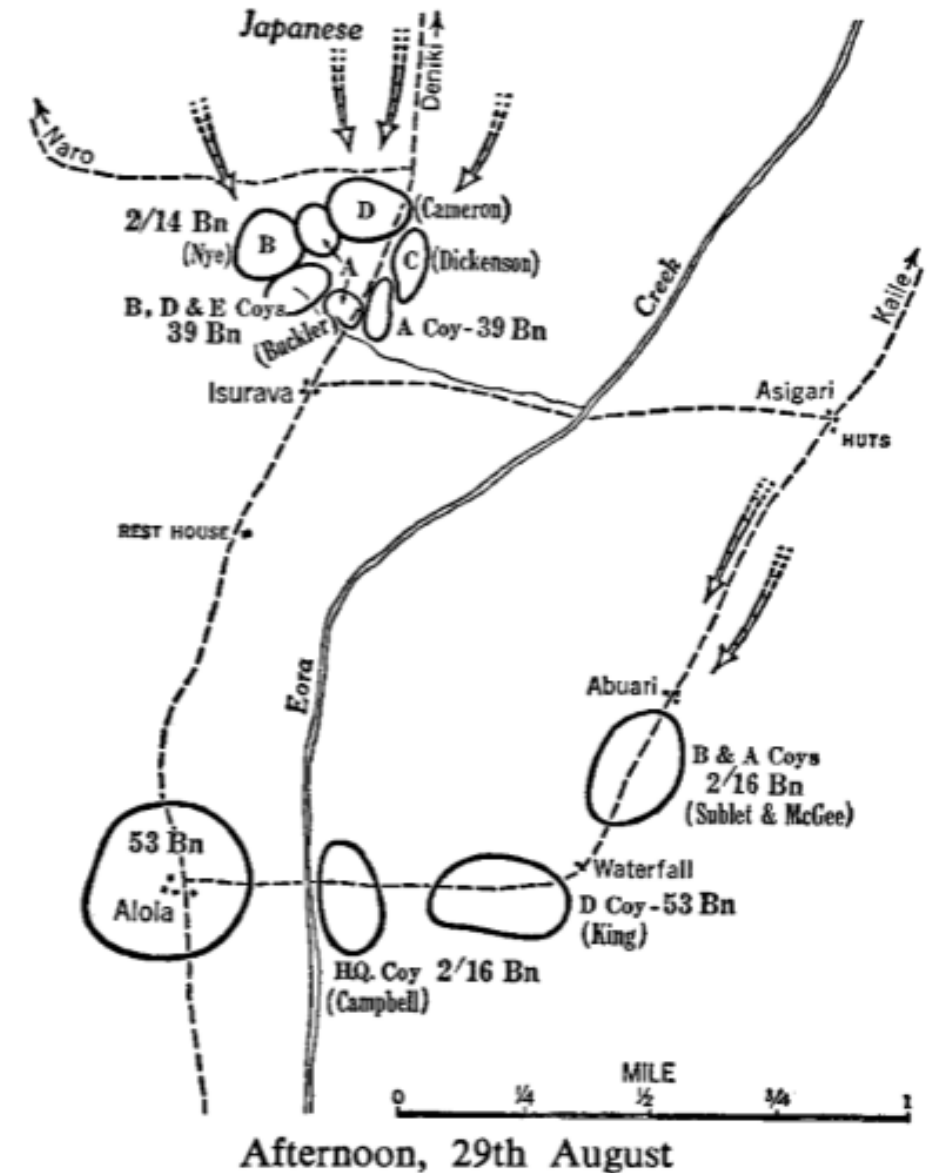
# 29 August – Kokoda

- Corporal Bear and Privates Avery and Kingsbury (photo) of Cox's broken platoon insisted on attaching themselves to Thompson and fought with him.
- Soon after midday the break-through was menacing the whole battalion position.
- Clements drove in a counterattack leading a composite group of his own men, Thompson's men and what had been Cox's platoon. As the counter-attack moved Kingsbury rushed forward firing the Bren gun from his hip through terrific machine-gun fire and succeeded in clearing a path through the enemy.
- Continuing to sweep enemy positions with his fire and inflicting an extremely high number of casualties on them, Private Kingsbury was then seen to fall to the ground shot dead. Mainly as a result of Kingsbury's action the position was then restored.
- Bear was a 21 year old die cast operator from Moonee Ponds, Neilson, 23, was a farm labourer from Albury, Bowen, 23 was a timber cutter from Red Cliffs, Avery was a 25 year old nurseryman from Prahran. Kingsbury, 24, was a real estate agent from West Preston.



# 29 August – Kokoda

- Meanwhile, since dawn, Cameron's men, on Dickenson's left, had been fighting hard, assisted by one of Buckler's platoons. As the pressure increased Buckler himself hurried forward with another platoon. His men beat at the Japanese with grenades and then drove them back with bayonets.
- Farther left Nye was sustaining a series of most determined assaults on his three platoons. Lieutenant Bisset, in the most forward position where Moore had been killed the previous day, beat off attack after attack while Lieutenant Treacy, who had taken over Moore's platoon and was on Bisset's right rear, most skilfully parried every thrust levelled at him.
- The afternoon came. The Japanese continued to attack. Dickenson gave ground. Potts ordered "C" Company of the 53rd forward to strengthen Dickenson's stand.
- The platoons of the 39th Battalion under Sword and Pentland, which had just reported at Alola after having been cut off since the actions of the 27th, hurried back to form a reserve for Key although they were hungry and sick. ("When I saw those poor bastards, tottering on their bleeding, swollen feet, turn round and go straight back to Isurava, I knew they were good," said a member of the 2/16th Battalion afterwards.)

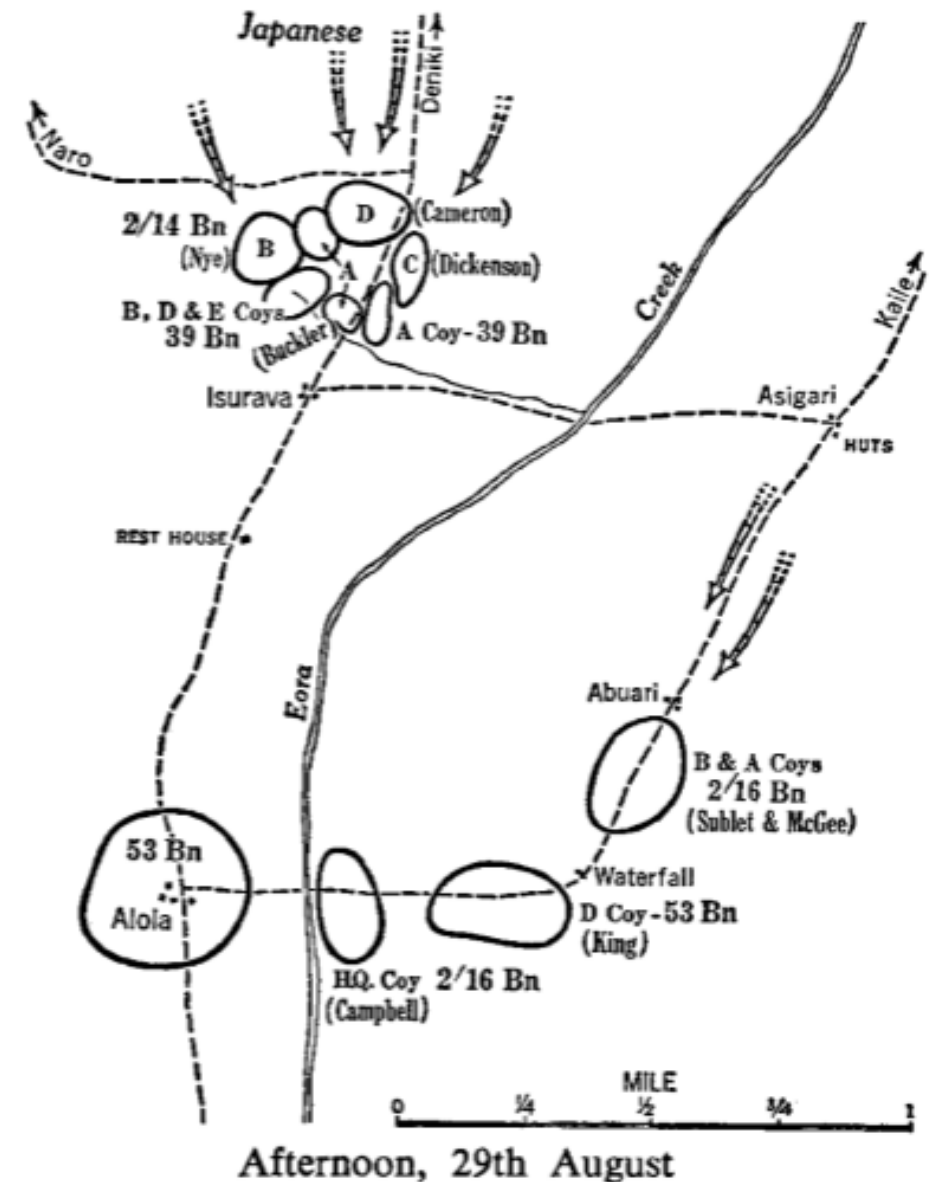


# 29 August – Kokoda

- Lieutenant Johnston (without orders to do so) led forward a party of physically unfit volunteers from the same battalion and reported that he passed 53rd Battalion men on the way. He told Honner, "We heard the battalion was in trouble so we came back".
- Cameron's company had been broken by heavy attacks which began about 3 p.m. There Private Wakefield, almost single-handed, with his Bren gun disorganised several attacks and inspired all about him. But the Japanese came through and swung to the rear of Nye's position.
- Treacy's men swept down and drove them back. Bisset, with Lieutenant Thurgood and some of the fragments of Cameron's company in touch on his right, was heavily assailed about. All told that day his men repulsed eleven separate attacks, each, they estimated, of a company strength. They calculated that they struck down at least 200 Japanese. But, in the latest attack, Bisset himself was hit by a burst of machine-gun fire.
- On his left rear Lieutenant Mason's platoon was being beaten back. Mason's men had taken part in four counter-attacks during the afternoon, swaying and surging in bitter defence and counter-thrust. In that platoon acting-Corporal McCallum had been the dominating figure. Now, with a Bren in one hand, a Tommy-gun in the other, he flailed his attackers covering the withdrawal of his comrades, the Japanese literally reaching for him so that part of his equipment was wrenched off in their hands as he smashed them down. His friends said that he killed 40 Japanese and saved a third of the platoon before he himself came back.

# 29 August – Kokoda

- Key was in an exposed position as night came. He had been forced to re-form his positions and his enemies were menacing him from the high ground on his left.
- At 7.30 p.m. (29 August) Potts who, in view of the desperate circumstances, had decided merely to hold on the right flank and commit all his reserves to help Key, told Key that he would counter-attack with two companies of Lieut-Colonel Caro's 2/16th Battalion at first light.
- But Key could not hold and at 8.45 p.m. asked permission to withdraw to Isurava Rest House ridge (a little less than half-way back to Alola). Honner was sent back to reconnoitre the position to which the withdrawal would take place.
- Captains Goldsmith and Langridge moved their 2/16th "C" and "D" Companies forward to cover Key's withdrawal, which was carried out during the night, the men carrying their wounded with them in conditions of the greatest difficulty. Among these was the dying Lieutenant Bisset.
- During the day Key had lost 2 officers and 10 men known to have been killed, 3 officers and 45 men wounded, while the numbers "missing" were high. Among the missing were Lieutenants Pearce and Gardner with portion of Cameron's company. They and their men had last been heard of, isolated and fighting hard forward of the main company positions. Key claimed some 550 Japanese casualties for the day's fighting.



- Thanks for your attention.