

# War in the Pacific

## Defending Australia

### Campaigns in New Guinea and the Solomons

1 - 8 September 1942

Milne Force drive the Japanese back to their landing area whence the survivors are evacuated by their navy.

Australian defenders on the Kokoda track are forced back from Eora Creek beyond Efogi with heavy losses.

Curtin launches his Austerity campaign.

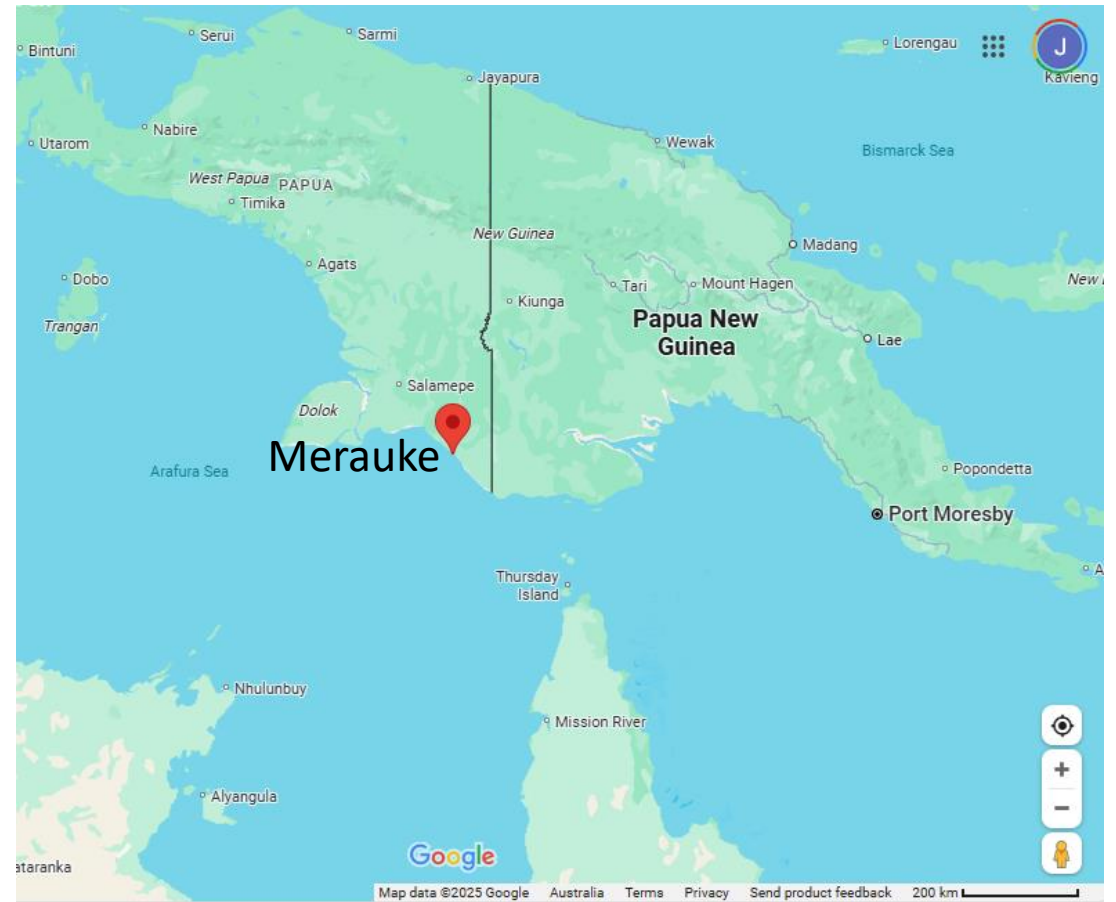
Intelligence predicts Japanese heavy attacks and consolidation in the Milne Bay – Buna area.

The Japanese navy remain able to penetrate Solomon and New Guinea waters and land troops and sink ships at night.

Mac Arthur is increasingly impatient of the performance of Australian troops.

# Earlier

- In mid-1942, Merauke, on the south coast of Dutch New Guinea was one of only a few parts of the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) that had not been occupied by Japanese forces.
- It was garrisoned by a company of infantry from the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL), equipped with the majority of the heavy weapons available to the KNIL.
- The strategic location of Merauke on the western flank of Allied forces in Papua led Allied commanders to order the building of an airfield there.
- On 6 August 1942, Company F, from the US Army's 46th Engineer Battalion arrived to commence construction.



# 1 September - Sea

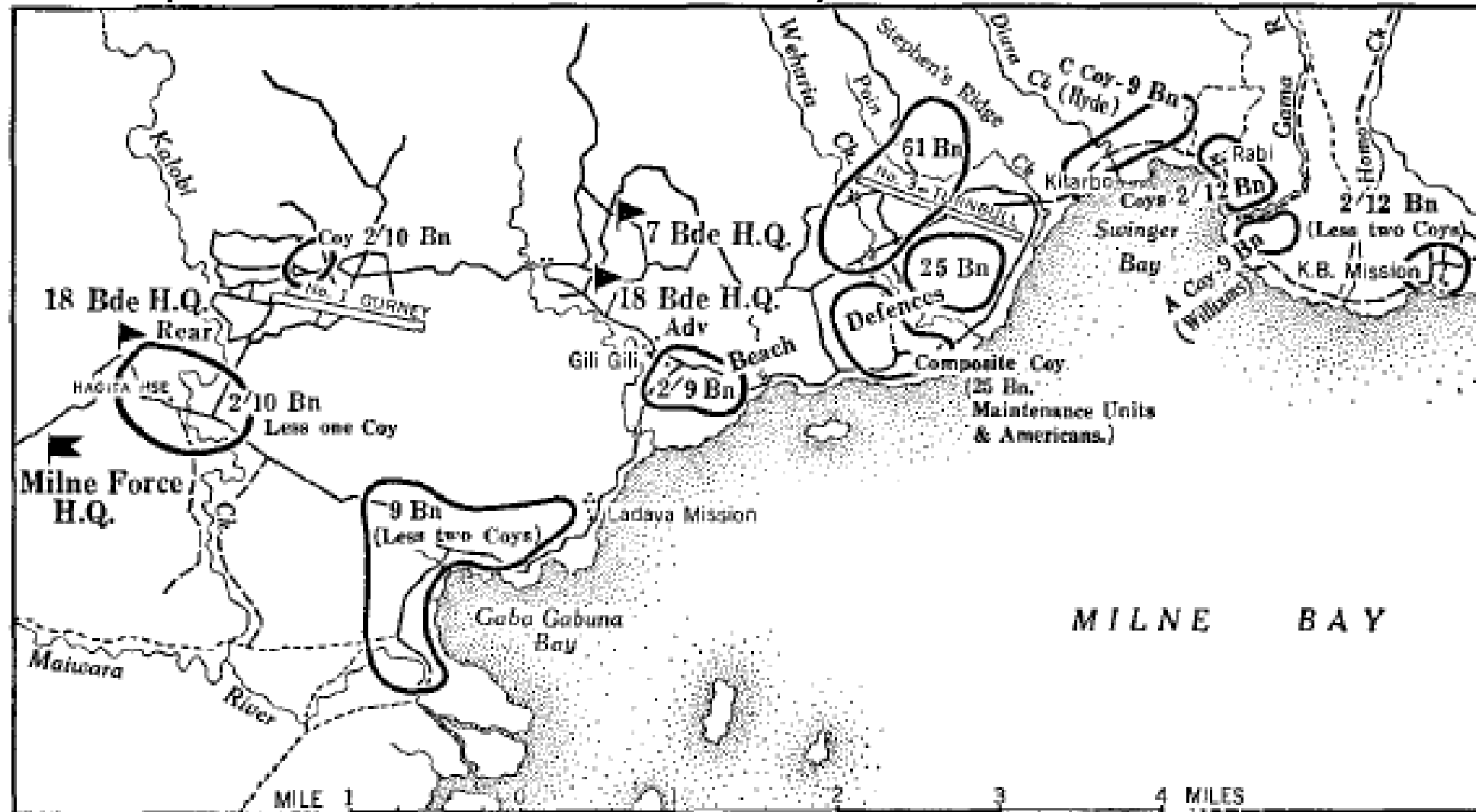
- Next morning (1<sup>st</sup> September), when Tasman and Arunta were in China Strait, air reconnaissance reported two cruisers or destroyers east of the Trobriand Islands apparently heading for Milne Bay, and Comsouwespac ordered Arunta and her charge to remain south of China Strait until the situation was clarified.
- On 1st September, some 300 miles east of Brisbane, the American Paine Wingate (7,000 tons), reported having sighted the wake of a torpedo.
- A possible enemy submarine was reported off Coffs Harbour by land observers at 14.12/1. The report is not highly graded.
- The Dutch vessel “Bloemfontein’s” distress signal at 20.45/17/8 at 33south 154east is now cancelled. It is learnt that the tanker “China” mistook Bloemfontein” for a submarine and opened fire.
- On 1st September, the Combined Operations School, H.M.A.S. Assault, was commissioned at Port Stephens, just north of Newcastle.



# 1 September – Milne Bay

- During 1st September the Australians patrolled forward up to a mile east of the mission. They were assisted by the willing fighter pilots whose zeal so outran their knowledge of the ground positions that Arnold's diarist wryly recorded: "Planes strafed enemy positions and also own troops." With the night small Japanese parties caused unrest around the perimeter and killed and wounded a number of the defenders.
- One of the company commanders (reported) of a mine-laying patrol he sent out from K.B. The night pressed blackly. Sergeant Jim Hosier was there and someone ran a hand over his face. Jim cursed him and a Jap jabbered. . . . We lost three men and found them dead next day. It was so dark men walked holding on to the next man's scabbard. They walked right through "D" Company and a platoon of "A" Company before they knew where they were. The sergeant, Hosier, heard a man speak quietly, recognised the voice and then knew where he was.
- With the 2/12th established at K.B. on the 1st September Clowes arranged that Wootten should land there the 2/9th Battalion (Lieut Colonel Cummings). But he received a signal from MacArthur at 9 p.m. to
  - "Expect attack Jap ground forces on Milne aerodromes from west and north-west supported by destroyer fire from bay. Take immediate stations."
- As a result of this signal all units were ordered to "stand-to" throughout the night and Clowes told Wootten that he could not count on the 2/9th being available for operations on the north shore next day.

# 1 September – Milne Bay

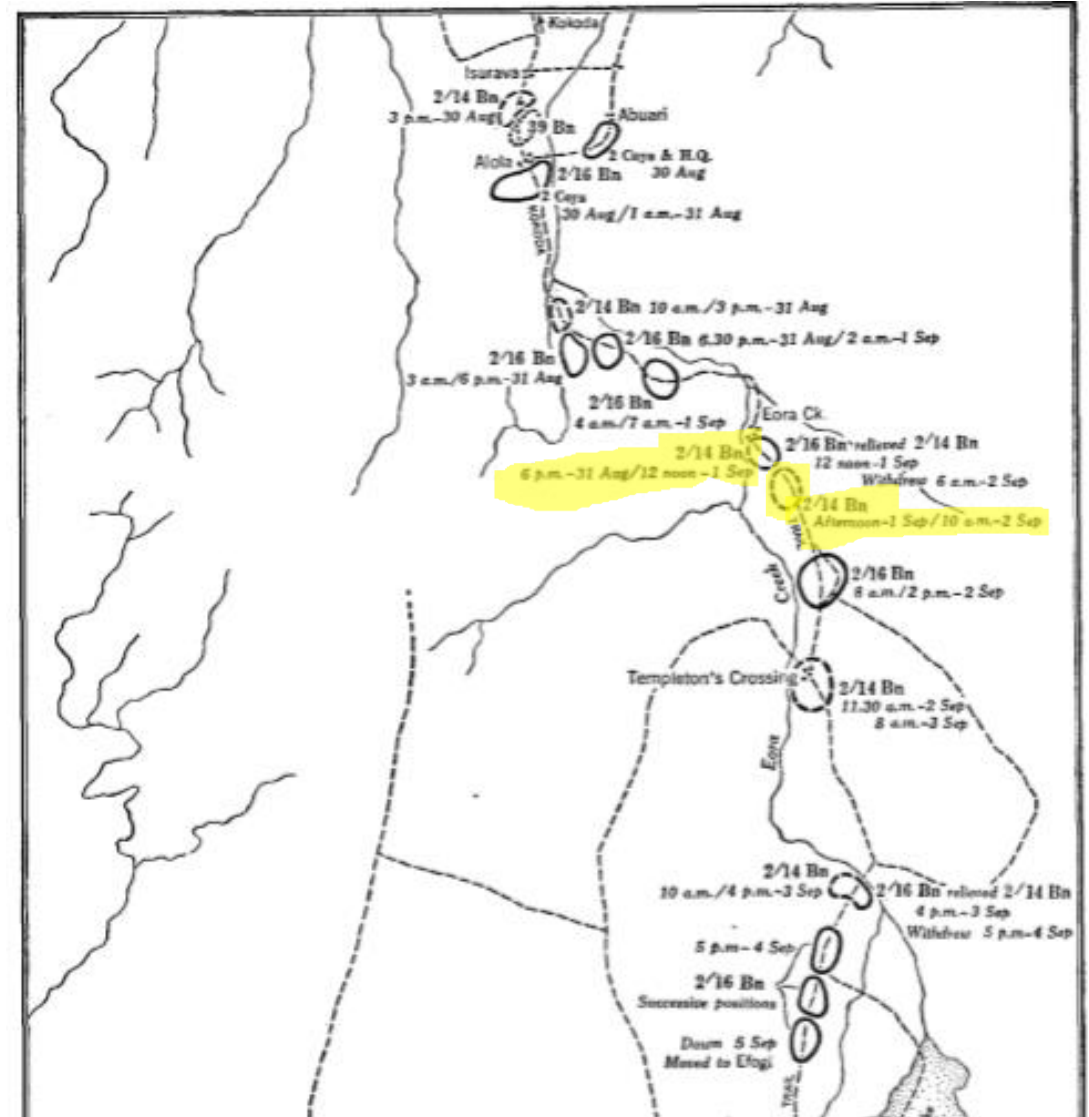


Dispositions, 6 p.m. 31st August



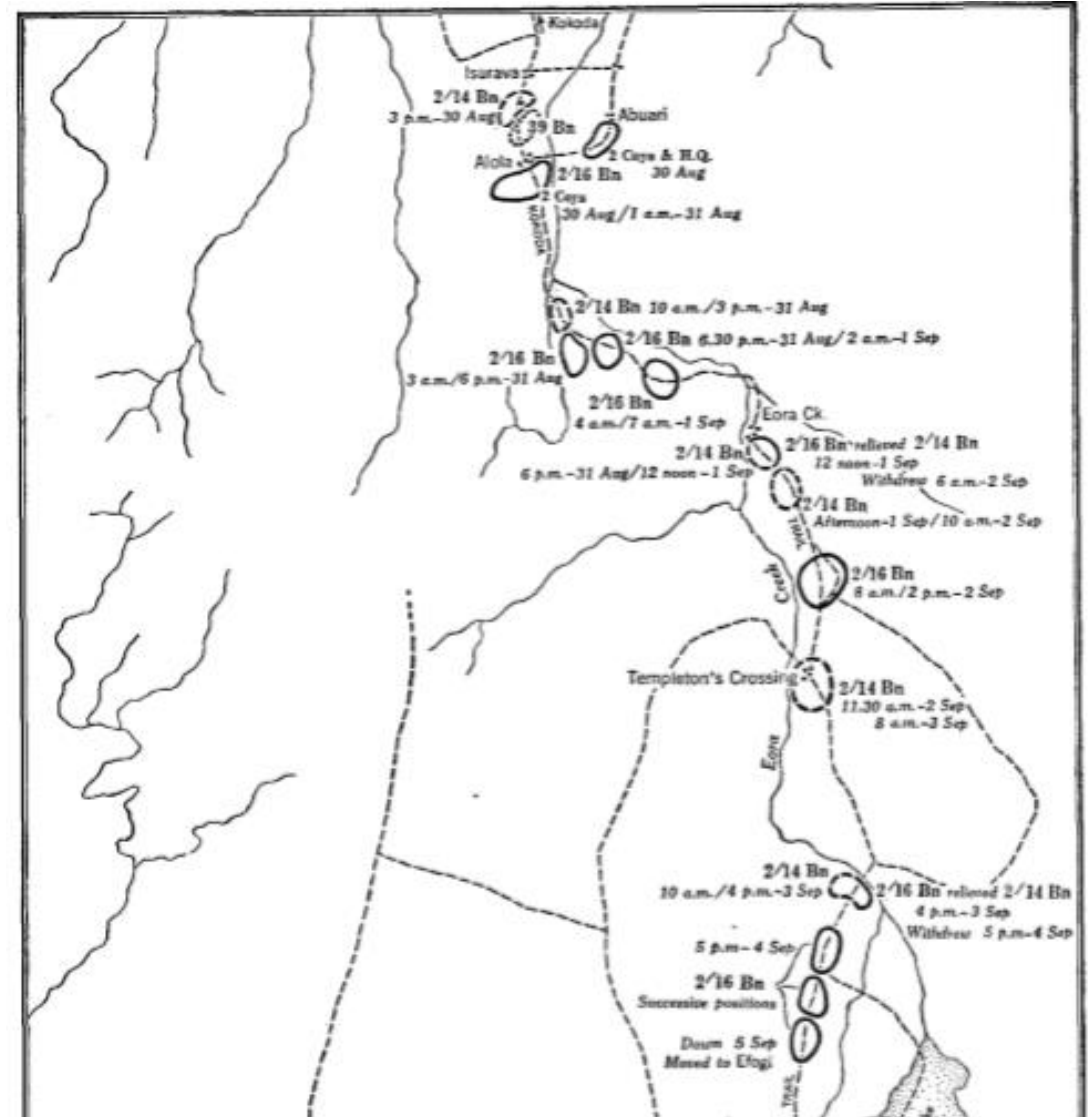
# 1 September - Kokoda

- By the morning of 1st September Caro of the 2/16th had his men in a new position farther back toward Eora Creek with Goldsmith's company forward.
- Goldsmith was under increasing stress when the battalion began to withdraw again through Honner's front to the high ground above Eora Creek and was subsequently cut off with 75 of his troops.
- Fire whipping the crossing killed Lieutenant Paterson of Langridge's company and wounded several of his men after they had covered the passage for others of their battalion.
- By midday the main body of the battalion was overlooking the village, where Lieutenant Gerke and his platoon, who had been missing since 30th August, rejoined them; they had killed several Japanese on their way back and brought with them the 53rd Battalion signalmen who had been surprised at Missima on the 24th and had been wandering in wild country, bootless, without arms and very hungry.



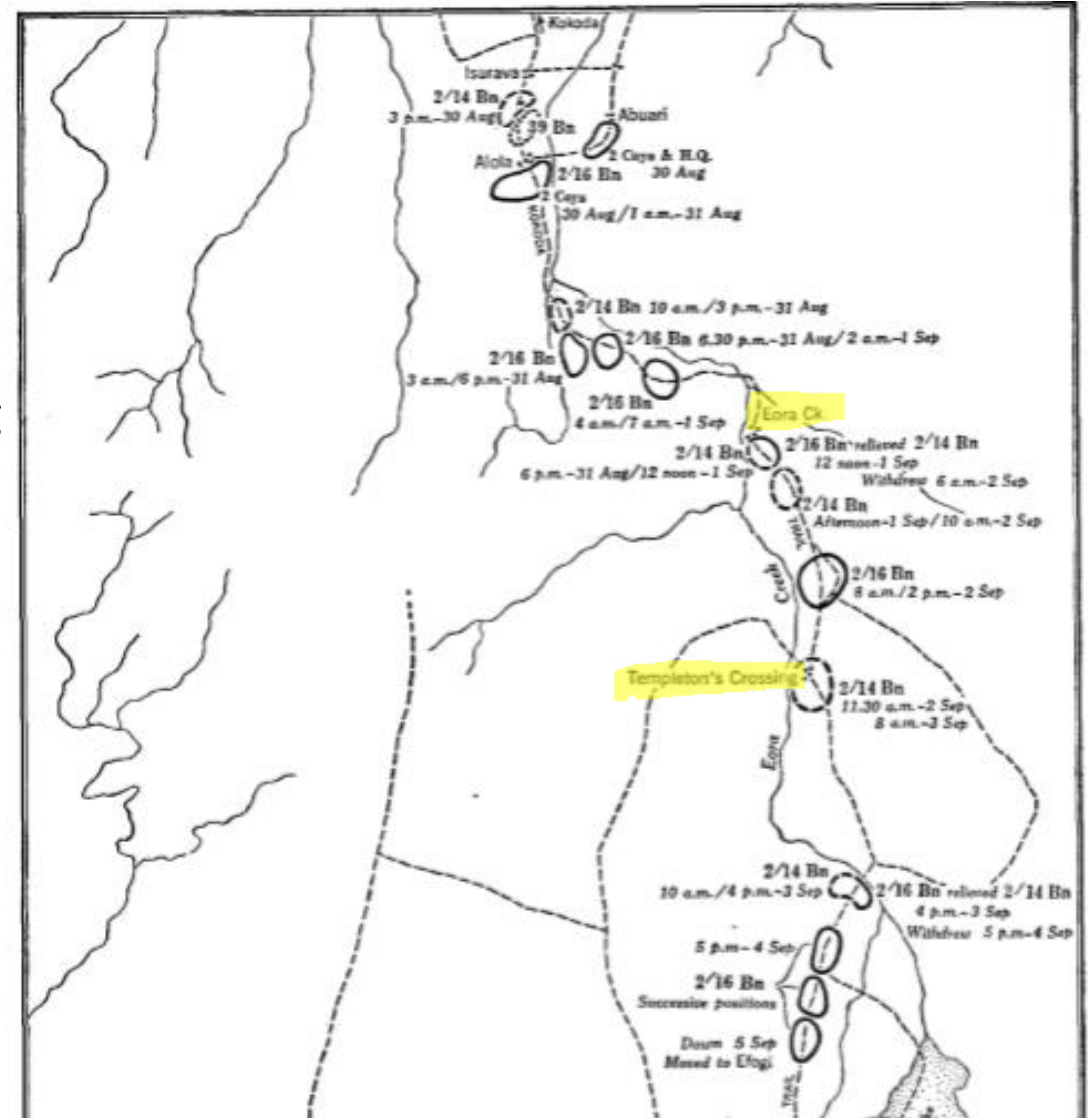
# 1 September - Kokoda

- During the day the Japanese toiled increasingly against the 2/16th who, on the high ridges, were cut off from the water below and suffered greatly from thirst.
- Most of the weight of the attacks was directed towards Langridge's company in the right forward positions.
- The Japanese stormed at them again and again until midnight. There Sergeant Duncan and his platoon bore much of the brunt and Warrant-Officer Haddy proved himself a cool leader. The 2/16th held, as ordered, until 6 o'clock next morning.



# 1 September - Kokoda

- The 2/14th (Captain Rhoden now acting as commander) had fallen back behind Caro's battalion and was half-way between Eora Creek and Templeton's Crossing.
- From that point Rhoden sent out Lieutenant McIlroy and 20 men to watch the old track along the ridge west of Eora Creek to Kagi. They were to remain in position there for three days or until relieved, whichever was the sooner.
- Honner had been ordered to Kagi to reconnoitre and cover the tracks leading through there and was moving his men rapidly in a forced march.
- The 53rd were making a dispirited way to Myola where, on arrival on the 2nd, they were to be relieved of all automatic weapons, rifles and equipment and whence, leaving one company for carrying and guard duties, they were to continue to Port Moresby.
- In a personal letter to Rowell on 1st September, General Vasey wrote: "GHQ is like a b-----y barometer in a cyclone—up and down every two minutes. . . . They're like the militia—they need to be blooded."





# 1 September - Air

- **Solomons**

- On 1 September the ground crews got more help. Five officers and 387 men of the 6th Naval Construction Battalion (Seabees) landed with two bulldozers. They would " . . . help make an airfield out of Henderson and . . . clear a short grassy strip a mile to the east called Fighter 1."
- Four Japanese destroyers landed troops at Taivu point to the east of the marines' perimeter. Three SBDs took off in the dark and attacked them claiming some near misses. One SBD became an operational loss.
- A B17 on recce over Faisi was attacked by four enemy fighters. One Zero probably damaged.

- **New Guinea**

- That day (1<sup>st</sup> September) Jackson had led seven Kittyhawks from 75 Squadron in an attack on what was believed to be the Japanese headquarters to the north of Waga Waga. The jungle in the area was so dense that the pilots had no sure knowledge of the result of their attack.
- 16 P-400's strafe Kokoda and Kokoda Pass in the Owen Stanley Range.
- No. 9 Operational Group, RAAF was formed, under the leadership of Group Captain Garing on 1st September to command all Australian operational air units serving in New Guinea.

- **Aleutians**

- US forces complete occupation of Adak.

## 2 September - Government

- On 2 September Churchill pointed out that the plans of the Chiefs of Staff provided for a combined strength of over 1,100 aircraft in Australia by 1st April 1943, and this should be adequate for the defence of Australia, especially as another 1,000 aircraft were to be provided for the South Pacific.
- The best the United Kingdom could do was to try to ensure that the R.A.A.F. had a fair share of the 1,100.



## 2 September - Sea

- On 2nd September, when Arunta and Tasman arrived at Milne Bay, General Rowell told MacArthur's headquarters, "that patrol activity discloses only small scattered enemy forces have been found in the vicinity of Milne Bay. . . . safe as far as Army is concerned, to put ships into Milne Bay." And added that there were only 20 days' rations there, and that every effort should be made to clear ships in as fast as possible.
- A US Army B17 of the 11th Bomb Group bombed and sank a Japanese converted destroyer off Santa Isabel Island on 2<sup>nd</sup> September
- USS Guardfish torpedoed and sank a 2,000 ton cargo ship off Kinkasan Harbour, Honshū on 2<sup>nd</sup> September.



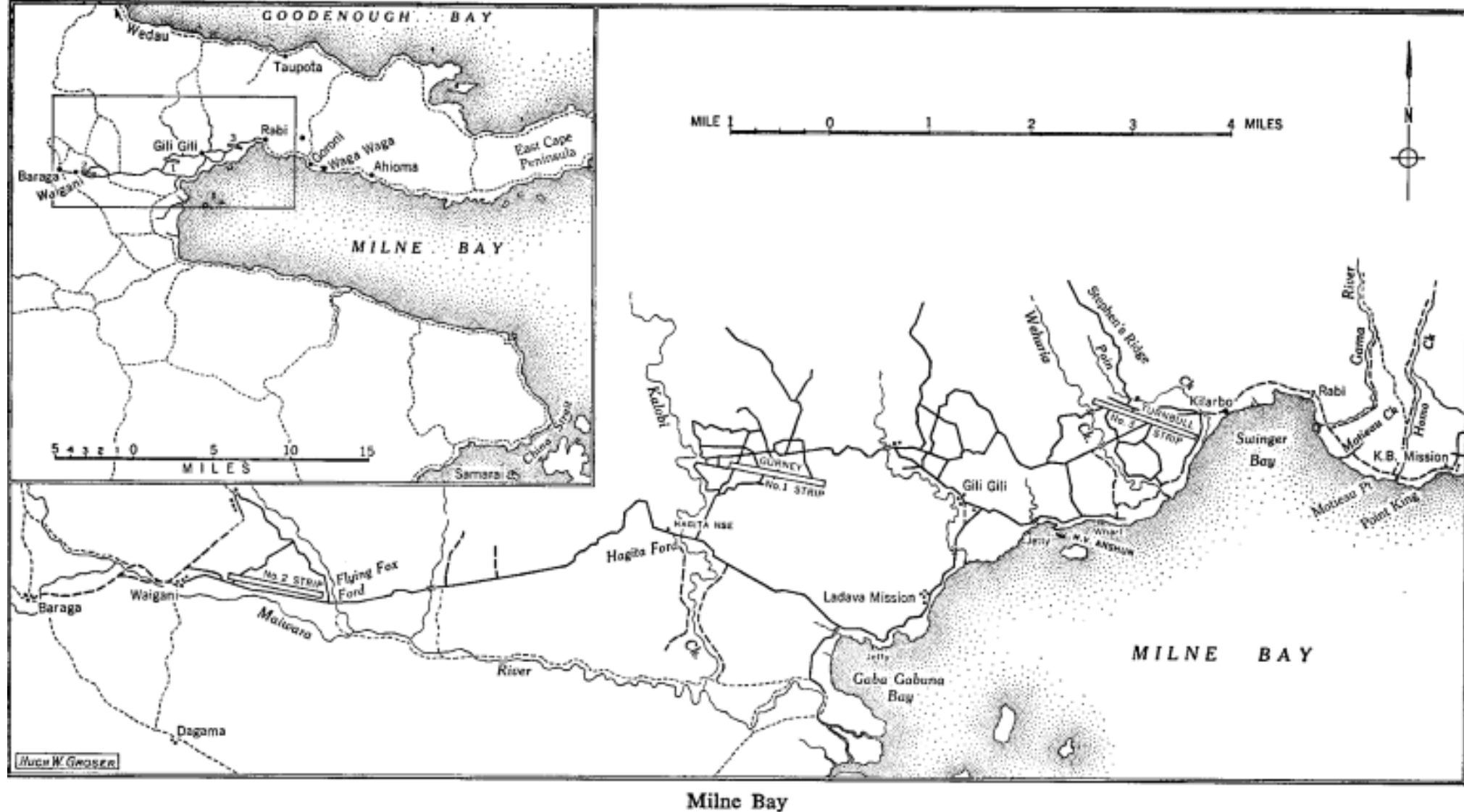
HMAS Arunta

## 2 September – Milne Bay

- On the 2nd the 2/12th pressed forward with Kirk, Gategood, Boucher and their men while Steddy's "commandos" worried the Japanese, drove them from some smaller positions and killed nine of them.
- When night fell Kirk and Gategood were settled on the fourth ford east of the mission and the rest of the battalion was at K.B.
- There they had been joined during the afternoon by Colonel Cummings and his first two companies as, after the previous quiet night at Gili Gili, Clowes (photo) had told Wooten to send the 2/9th forward across the bay in the two small boats then available.



## 2 September – Milne Bay





## 2 September - Kokoda

- At this stage Potts' brigade was pathetically depleted. They had had nearly a week of constant fighting and during that time most of them had been unable even to brew themselves a mug of tea and certainly had not had a hot meal.
- Now, shelterless, their feet pulpy and shrivelled from the constant wet, they were soaked by continuous rain. They were worn out by fighting in a country where movement alone for even unencumbered men was hardship.
- They were burdened by their own wounded; desertions by carriers aggravated that difficulty and the supply problem. Potts felt that he could not hold any position for long unless he was heavily reinforced and until the Japanese lines of communication and supply were so extended as seriously to embarrass them.
- He told Allen this and of his intention to withdraw to Templeton's Crossing. He felt that he must soon establish a firm base from which he could hold and considered that a position half-way between Myola and Efogi, with the Kagi track junction held, was the most suitable.
- Accordingly, at dawn on the 2nd, the move to Templeton's Crossing began.



## 2 September - Kokoda

- By 8 a.m. the 2/16th was settling one hour's march north of Templeton's Crossing with the 2/14th forward of it. The 2/16th had been strengthened once more by the return of Goldsmith's men who had been cut off the previous day.
- Rhoden led the survivors of the 2/14th through the 2/16th about 10 a.m. without having been in contact.
- About 11 a.m. their pursuers were seen moving towards a standing patrol consisting of Corporal Willis and six men who had been sent out by Sublet from the left forward positions where he was holding. Willis reported back that his patrol had shot ten of the Japanese.
- Soon Sublet reported that his main positions were in contact and that the Japanese were moving round his left flank. Caro decided that they were coming in behind him and prepared to move out by leaving the track and following the ridges to the east. This he achieved as the day was dying although disaster nearly overtook him at the last moment.
- Evidently the Japanese saw the Australians moving. Quickly they plunged forward. Their officers stood with drawn swords directing and encouraging their men who screeched as they attacked. The Australians yelled insults and stood their ground.
- Sergeant Duncan and his platoon, assisted by Sergeant Morris who rushed his men down the track to join in, stopped the rushes as they came. The Australians lost 2 men killed and one wounded at this awkward time but thought that they saw some 30 Japanese fall.

## 2 September – Air, Solomons

- With the frequent raids, fire was always a dangerous possibility, and a field fire brigade had been organized around two Japanese trucks which had been repaired by the 1st Marines.
- They got their baptism on 2 September when a bomb from a heavy Japanese raid hit an armed SBD parked at the edge of a coconut grove where ammunition was stored. The Bomb could not be removed from the burning SBD, and when it exploded it spewed flaming gasoline in all directions.
- One 90mm shell dump was ignited, and the fire brigade could not do its best work with all the explosions that resulted. Several of the fire-fighters were injured, and the trucks seemed to be making little headway since they had to take turns dashing off to the Lunga River, the closest supply of water.
- If the fire expanded much more it would set off a chain reaction and all the ammunition in the area would be lost. The blaze was eventually brought under control, however, and the loss was serious but not critical. After this, large water tanks from coconut plantations were spotted around the ammunition dumps.
- 2/9 This bombing raid, by eighteen Bettys escorted by twenty zeros, had arrived at 1135, and while the fire department below worked to save the ammunition dumps, Cactus fliers were up among the bombers. They claimed three twin-engined bombers and four Zeroes shot down without a single loss of their own.

## 2 September – Air

- **SWP**

- Late on the afternoon of the next day (2nd September) a Hudson crew sighted, and for a time shadowed, several Japanese warships in the approaches to Milne Bay. With darkness approaching and the weather closing in, it was not possible to mount an attack. Enemy warships again shelled the shore defences that night.
- P-400's bomb and strafe forces in Kokoda and Alola areas as Japanese continue to push toward Port Moresby.
- 4 Catalinas attack Buka airfield and shipping early am 2/9. Results unknown.

- **SOPAC**

- The mission of the 67th Ftr Sq P-400's on Guadalcanal is shifted from air defence to close support for Marine ground forces and attacks on shipping, tasks for which they are better suited.

- **CBI**

- P-40's hit barges and junks carrying rice in the Poyang Lake region, strafe HQ and runways at Nanchang A/F, attack railroad stations and warehouses at Hua Yuan, and sink a launch, damage 4 junks, and wreck a train on Wuchang Peninsula.

- **Aleutians**

- 6 bmrs and 12 P-38's fly cover and photo rcn over Nazan and Kuluk Bays, and Amchitka and Semisopochnoi Is.

## 2 Sept - War Dept report to the White House

2. The Services of Supply were directed to activate an Officer Candidate School faculty and overhead for shipment to Australia. The school will have a capacity of 500 candidates.

3. The 43d Division began its movement from Camp Shelby, Mississippi, to the South Pacific Area. This Division together with certain Engineer, Signal Corps, Coast Artillery and service units has been assigned to reinforce our troops in that area. Admiral Ghormley has been asked to designate the destination of these units.



# 3 September - Government

- The Mutual Aid Agreement was signed in Washington on 3rd September.
- The government had been extremely concerned about potential criticism from export industries of the commitment to free trade after the war, which would require the dismantling of the Imperial preference schemes.
- In the event scarcely a newspaper saw the significance of that part of the agreement, and in the debate in the House not a single member referred to it.
- Negotiation of the agreement had been managed by Ben Chifley, the Treasurer.



# 3 September - Government

- Curtin also announced, as part of the arrangements for raising a loan of £100,000,000 on the home market, the launch of an Austerity Campaign—a campaign for a new way of life that would strip away "everything that, in any way, resembles a peacetime way of living"
- On the third anniversary of the outbreak of the European war the campaign was launched by a national broadcast by the Prime Minister, preceded by a grim presentation over the air of the story of three years of war.
- He said:
- Our fate is in the balance as I speak to you. The Battle of the Solomons is not only vital in itself, but, as part of a continuing action which will go on, it represents a phase of the Japanese drive in which is wrapped up invasion of Australia.
- At this stage it would be mischievous to conjecture as to whether the outcome of the Battle of the Solomons will give us a further breathing space or whether it will mean disaster, followed swiftly by a direct Japanese threat and thrust at our shores.
- But I do tell you that we are faced with an enemy of great power, devilish ingenuity and regimented efficiency. We cannot expect to rely on strokes of luck nor to survive mistakes.
- The Japanese are waging war to the death. We seven millions of Australians . . . must, individually, wage a war to the death, just as though we were, man for man, engaged in bloody combat.



## 3 September - Sea

- On the night of 2/3 September 5 Japanese ships landed men or supplies at Guadalcanal.
- USS *Guardfish* on its first war patrol torpedoed and sank three cargo ships, estimated as 2,000 tons, 5,000 tons and 4,000 tons, off Kinkasan Harbour, Honshū on 3rd September.



ADM Chester Nimitz awards Navy Cross to Commander Thomas Klakring, *Guardfish*'s CO

# 3 September – Milne Bay

- On the morning of the 3rd Kirk and Steddy went ahead along the shore until they came against Japanese defences about 800 yards ahead of the fourth ford and centred round another little stream just west of Elevala Creek.
- Their men killed about 20 of their opponents, as nearly as they could estimate, but suffered rather severely themselves.
- Two companies of the 2/9th then arrived—Captain Marshall's and Captain Anderson's.
- Marshall found that the Japanese positions covered the track from the coast to about 150 yards north in close bush, a machinegun and a 20-mm field piece commanding the main approach. The position seemed to be a delaying one, strong in fire-power.
- He sent Lieutenant Fogg's platoon to attack on the right of the road and Lieutenant Heron's on the left. The attack went in with about 60 men at 10 a.m. and, within three minutes, 34 of those had been shot down, the stream, two feet deep, slowing them up as they entered the final 30 yards of their charge.
- Fogg was struck in the head and was at first left for dead in the creek. But his batman, Private Reid, dragged him from the water and dressed his wound though his own right arm was shattered by a bullet as he did so.
- Heron, leading his platoon, was wounded, as were his sergeant and a number of men.
- Corporal Gordon took over the platoon and, with his own section, fought a grim battle with the Japanese on the eastern side of the creek, he himself, with his sub-machine-gun, killing about six including one soldier with whom he duelled at about five yards' range, each of them behind a tree. Gordon was a 35 year old grazier from Glenmorgan, Qld.

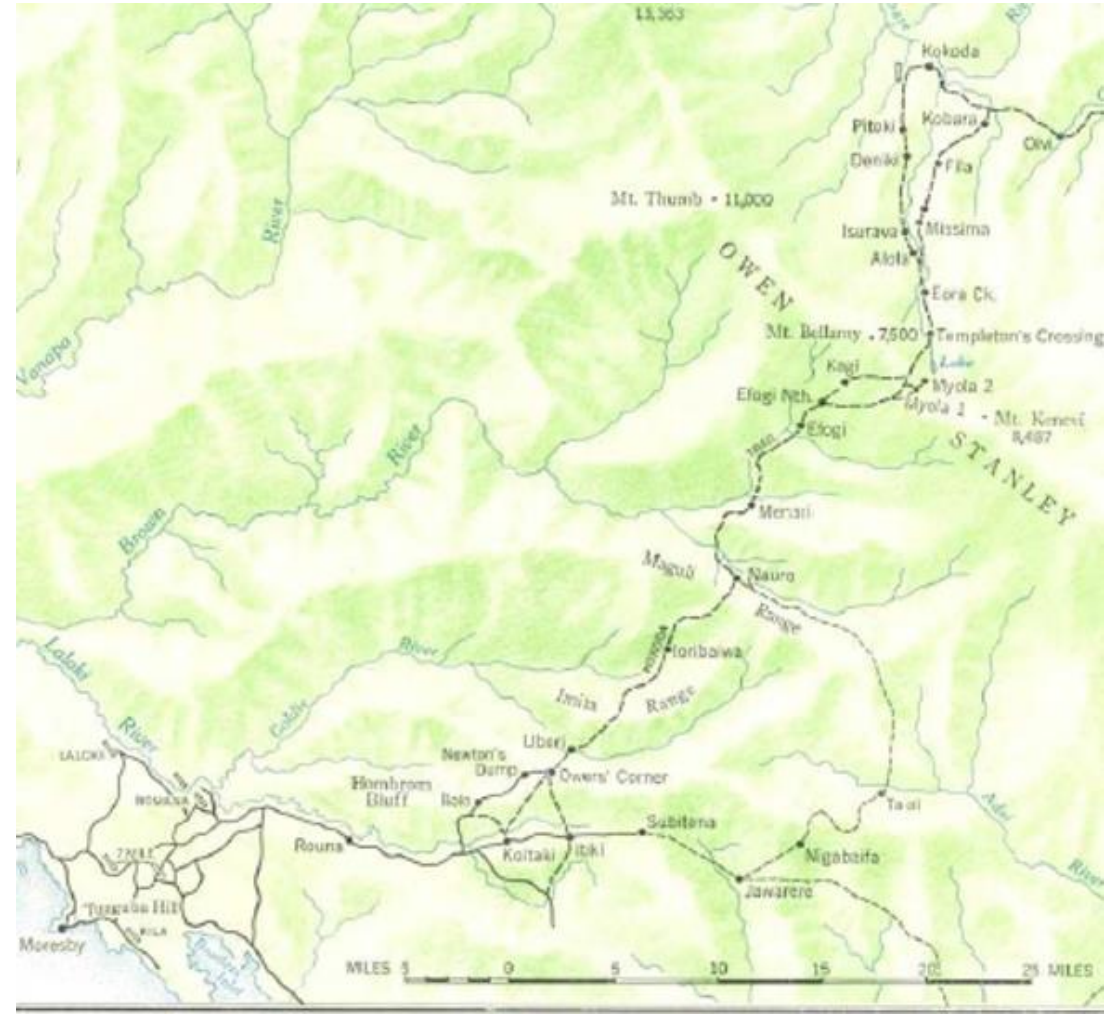
# 3 September – Milne Bay

- Lance-Corporal Ball's body was found later 25 yards across the stream, right among the Japanese machine gun positions—so far across, that he had outstripped all others and none had seen him die. There was no mark on him and it was thought that he had thrown an anti-tank bomb and that the blast had killed him.
- Lance-Corporal Allen lay dead almost at the muzzles of the guns.
- Ball was a 23 year old labourer from Maroochydore, Allen a 34 year old labourer from Dubbo.
- Captain Hooper then came forward with the third company of the 2/9th. He led his men up the steep slope to Marshall's left then came down in the rear of the Japanese positions. His men killed one of their enemies. The others had gone.
- Hooper's and Anderson's men then pushed on about half a mile to Sanderson Bay where they went into perimeter defence for the night. Behind them the rest of the battalion formed another perimeter.
- At night Japanese ships came into Milne Bay again. Shells fell on the north shore area but caused no casualties.



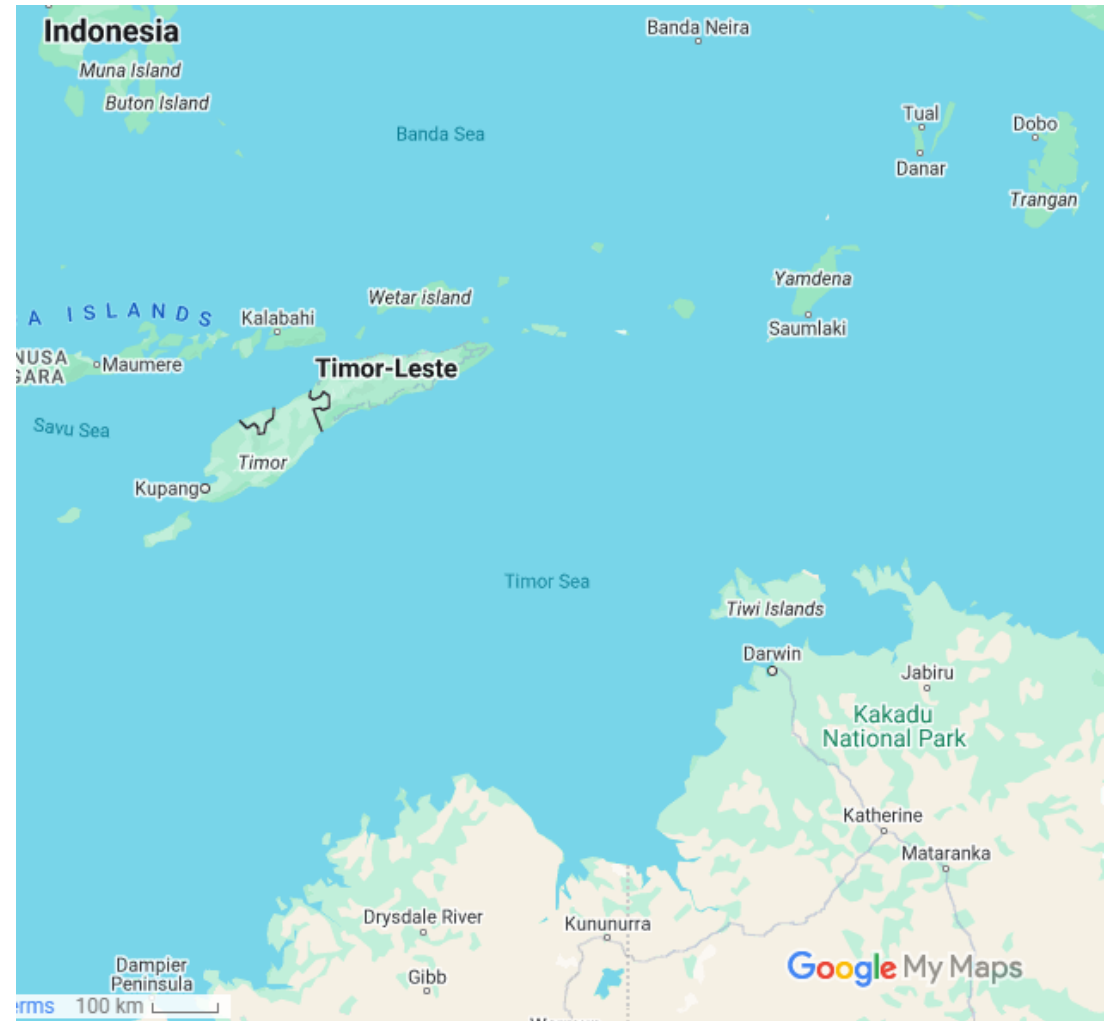
# 3 September – Kokoda

- (On 3<sup>rd</sup> September) The 2/16th struggled over the rough country as Rhoden waited between Templeton's Crossing and Myola. They were nearly exhausted. Hunger worried them. They had to tear their way through thick bush. They drank the water which oozed from the moss-covered trees.
- About 4 p.m. on the 3rd they emerged into the 2/14th area whereupon that battalion fell back on their way to Myola.
- With them went Lieutenant Bisset and 12 men, who arrived in the wake of the 2/16th after having been missing since the 30th August when they were swept off the track with Colonel Key.
- Of the other members of Key's party they brought little news because they said it had split into small groups soon after its initial misfortune.
- Finally his (Rowell's) representations, the pressure of circumstances, and the passing of the crisis at Milne Bay, bore fruit, and he was told on 3rd September that the destination of the 25th Brigade had been changed to Port Moresby.



# 3 September – Timor

- On Timor troubles with the natives threatened to become increasingly acute. These took the form in late August and during September largely of clashes between Portuguese and the natives.
- The Japanese were obviously fomenting the disorders.
- The war diarist of the Independent Company wrote on 3rd September.
- “The private local war, Portuguese versus native, still goes on its bloodthirsty way and provides some humour for sub-units here and there. One of our patrols near Mape, out hunting the Jap, encountered a Portuguese patrol out hunting some natives; they exchanged compliments and went their various ways. Coy HQ witnessed the spectacle of about 3,000 natives, all in war dress and armed to the teeth, also complete with drums and Portuguese flags, returning from the hunt with many of them nonchalantly swinging heads of the unfortunate in battle.”



# 3 September – Air, Solomons

- On the morning of the third the SBDs caught up with the five Japanese ships which had run supplies into Taivu Point on the night of 2nd/3rd before the ships got out of range and claimed a near miss on a fast minelayer.
- Morning and afternoon search missions out to the 200 mile operating radius of the SBDs now compelled the Japanese to rely on fast warships to transport and supply their forces on Guadalcanal.
- Also on 3 September the search planes found a convoy of 60 barges loaded with troops coming down the “Slot” and 11 SBDs strafed it in the morning and a second shift of 7 SBDs and 2 Wildcats strafed it in the afternoon.
- After dark on 3 September an R4D (Navalised DC3) landed by the light of Jeep headlights and brought in the command echelon of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.
- The commander Brigadier General Roy Geiger and his chief of staff, Colonel Louis Woods.
- Geiger established his command post near that of General Vandegrift in a Japanese building the Marines called the Pagoda.



THE PAGODA AT HENDERSON FIELD, headquarters of Cactus Air Force flyers throughout the first months of operations from the captured airfield. (USMC 50921)

# 3 September – Air, SWP

- The Fifth US Army Air Force, which General Kenney was to command while retaining his appointment as Commander, Allied Air Forces, came into being on 3rd September 1942.
- With headquarters at Brisbane, it had eight groups plus one photographic-reconnaissance squadron.
- There were three groups of fighters and five of bombers.
- The headquarters of the Fifth Bomber Command were established at Townsville.
- Kenney established an advanced headquarters—Advanced Echelon or Advon—at Port Moresby under General Whitehead, whom he appointed as deputy commander of the Fifth Air Force.



Generals Kenney (centre) and Whitehead (right).

# 3 September – Air

- **SWP**
- P-400's bomb and strafe Kokoda Pass area, hitting A/F at Kokoda and in the vicinity of Alola, Isurava, and Missima.
- 4 B-25's and 7 A-20's pound Mubo-Busama-Salamaua area. Fires observed in Busama area.
- A B17 strafes seaplanes at Faisi I.
- A Catalina attacked Buka airfield night of 2/3 9. Hits on runway, large fires started.
- **Aleutians**
- The 21st Bomb Gp arrives at Umnak. Of 6 bmrs and 5 P-38's off to bomb Kiska and flying air cover over Kuluk Bay, 5 bmrs and 3 ftrs abort due to weather. The others strafe seaplanes and boats in Kiska Harbor and nearby installations. Between 1 and 4 seaplanes are claimed destroyed on the water. This is the longest over-water attack flight thus far in World War II. The 2 ftrs which reach the tgt area return from the 1,260 mi round trip with only 40 gallons of fuel.
- **CBI**
- 1 B-25 dumps bombs and pamphlets on Hanoi in first US raid against that city. Munitions, supplies, and several parked aircraft are destroyed or damaged. 9 interceptors pursue the B-25 for about 30 mi but fail to make contact.



# 4 September - Strategy

- At a conference in Ghormley's flagship at Noumea on 4th September, when an attempt was made to adjust the situation as between Sopac and S.W.P.A., Nimitz told MacArthur's representatives—Sutherland and Kenney—that he could not spare MacArthur any ships, additional air cover, or trained amphibious troops, which Sutherland said were needed for any attempt to occupy the north coast of New Guinea.
- Unless Sopac itself was reinforced "the enemy could recover Guadalcanal whenever he really tried".
- In Noumea at the time, the American Under-Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal, was impressed with the situation and returned to Washington to seek reinforcements for Ghormley and Vandegrift.



Forrestal with Admirals King and Nimitz

# 4 September - Strategy

- On 4th September, the Chief of the General Staff, drew attention to the fact that the 9th Division was again engaged in active operations and might be called upon in the near future to take part in active operations for an extended period.
- After quoting representations made by the G.O.C., A.I.F., Middle East, Lieut-General Morshead, he asked for approval for the dispatch of about 6,113 additional reinforcements.
- A convoy escort arranged in connection with the dispatch of 5,000 New Zealand troops to the Middle East would be available at the end of September.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

003657

General Sir Vernon Sturdee, CGS. On 10<sup>th</sup> September 1942 he was posted to Washington and replaced as CGS by General Northcott.

# 4 September - Sea

- On Friday, 4th September, Admiral Crutchley with Task Force 44 arrived at Brisbane.
- MacArthur on 4th September, ordered Comsouwespac to dispatch all available surface and submarine forces urgently to the vicinity of Milne Bay to prevent further Japanese reinforcement of Milne Bay, to clear enemy naval forces from the general area east and north-east of the bay, and to cover supply of the Milne Bay garrison. Moves towards that supply were also initiated on the 4th, when Arunta left Moresby to join H.M.A.S. Swan escorting the merchant ships Anshun (3,188 tons) and 's Jacob from Townsville to Milne Bay.
- The Intelligence MacArthur had of a possible large scale Japanese reinforcement of their forces on 12th September, led to his instructions to Leary on 4th September to use all available naval forces to cover the convoys (to Milne Bay) and prevent enemy reinforcement.
- USS Growler torpedoed and sank a Japanese navy transport, estimated as 4,000 tons, in the South China Sea off the east coast of Formosa on 4th September.
- On the 4<sup>th</sup> of September, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, authorised the formation of the VII Amphibious Force.

# 4 September – Milne Bay

- On the 4th Colonel Cummings of the 2/9th planned that Hooper should move astride the road to a point where the coastal strip widened and then swing out to the left flank to search the bush and give flank protection to Major Peek's company. Peek was to advance astride the track.
- Little over an hour after he had set out, however, Hooper came up against Japanese positions at Goroni. He swung wide to the flank but then withdrew, having lost contact with Lieutenant Scott and his platoon.
- Cummings then ordered him to move north for some 600 yards, with his two remaining platoons, then east for a similar distance, and fall upon the Japanese right rear, expecting this attack to take place between 11 and 11.30. But at 12.30, having heard nothing of Hooper, he called Anderson forward and planned to attack with Peek's company and Anderson's. Scott meanwhile had appeared out of the rough country to the north of the track and was to strengthen the attack.
- Shortly before the assault was due to go in Hooper arrived back and reported that he had penetrated between one and two miles to the Japanese rear, had found supply dumps, had been fired on and had withdrawn.
- Cummings decided to press home the attack with the other two companies and, from Scott's platoon position, preliminary artillery and mortar fire was brought down.
- At 3.15 p.m. the attack drove forward, Peek astride the road and Anderson to cross the river which fronted the Japanese positions in an attempt to take the Japanese positions from their right rear. Peek made some progress but Anderson fared badly. His men crossed the river, through five feet of water about 20 yards wide. They turned to go downstream through coarse kunai grass and scrub, which rose above their heads. As they moved on they encountered Japanese sentries.
- Lieutenant Paterson shot two of these men and the Australians advanced against the main positions but were beaten back.
- With Anderson wounded, Paterson, assisted by Warrant-Officer Boulton, took over the company and left Sergeant De Vantier to lead his platoon.
- They reorganised 100 to 200 yards back, on the edge of the kunai and scrub which they had left to make the attack over comparatively open ground. They attacked again, and again they were beaten back. But, as the Japanese came out of their positions to harry them, the Queenslanders moved forward to meet them and a heavy fire developed from both sides.

# 4 September – Milne Bay

- The advance of Corporal French's section was held up by fire from three enemy machine-gun posts, whereupon Corporal French, ordering his section to take cover, advanced and silenced one of the posts with grenades.
- Armed with a Thompson sub-machine-gun he then attacked the third post firing from the hip as he went forward.
- He was seen to be badly hit by fire from this post, but he continued to advance. The enemy gun was heard to cease fire and the section then pushed on.
- It was found that all members of the three enemy gun crews had been killed and that French had died in front of the third gun pit.
- Corporal French was a 28 year old hairdresser from Crow's Nest, Qld.



Corporal John French

# 4 September – Kokoda

- Rhoden's men rested at Myola on the morning of the 4th September.
- They had a hot meal. They washed and were given clean clothes to replace the stinking garments which had remained unchanged on most of them since they had first set out over the mountains.
- They exposed their puffed and leprous-looking feet to the sun. From some the socks had to be cut away. Corporal Clark, the unit chiropodist, pared off rotten tissue.
- But their break was short lived. Word came that the 2/16th was heavily committed and Rhoden moved to cover Caro's attempts to extricate his unit.
- The 2/16th had been engaged again almost before the 2/14th had left the area on the previous day—the 3rd. A wet and only mildly disturbed night followed.
- About 2 p.m. on the 4th Lieutenant Hicks who had been patrolling to the west reported that Japanese were rounding the left flank. Soon afterwards McGee's company, in the forward position, was fighting hard.
- Sublet, in the absence of Caro and his second-in-command, Major Hearman, who were back at Myola on reconnaissance, decided to withdraw to better positions. He seemed to be beset by about 300 determined men.
- As he withdrew, his two rear companies (Goldsmith's and Langridge's) were ambushed, but McGee, who had been waiting, helped them through.



# 4 September – Kokoda

- Their pursuers lunged again when the Australians had scarcely reached their new positions. Darkness broke the contact and Hearman, who had now returned, led the men towards Myola.
- They slipped and fell in the night. They struggled to get their wounded back. Each man held the clothing or the bayonet of the man in front so that he would not lose his way, but finally they had to stop and wait for the daylight to come.
- The first two companies of the 2/27th Battalion had arrived at Kagi on the 4th and Potts had been told that the 21st Brigade Composite Company were available as reinforcements whenever he required them.
- Photo: Brigadier Arnold Potts (left), forward area, September 1942

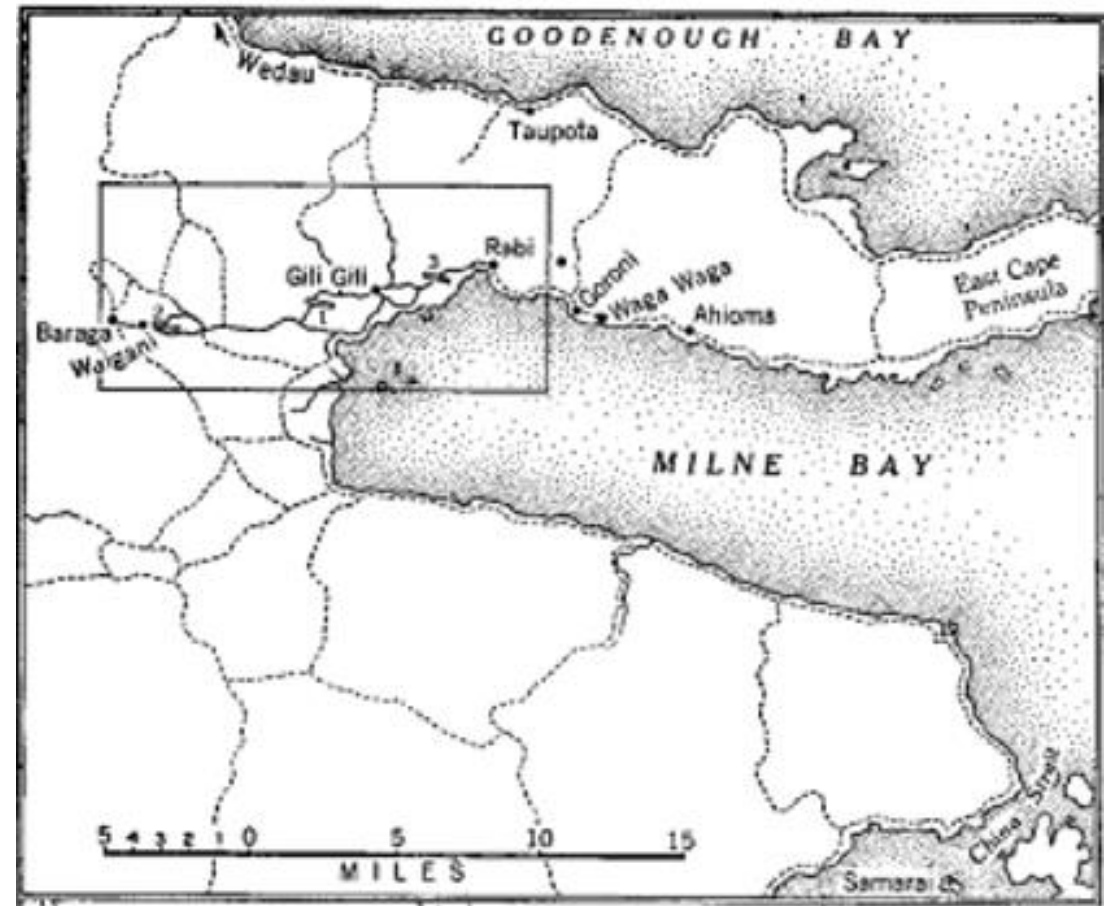


AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

026716

# 4 September – Air

- **Solomons**
- On the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> 13 SBDs found the barge convoy again, despite Japanese efforts to beach and camouflage the boats. The pilots thought they had holed about a third of them. Two encores were flown in the afternoon in lesser strength.
- **New Guinea**
- 6 P-40's bomb and strafe forces in Milne Bay area at Goroni, Wagga Wagga, Ahioma, and N of Lilihoa.
- **Aleutians**
- 2 bmrs and 1 P-38 bomb and patrol Nazan and Kuluk Bays, but bombing of Kiska is canceled due to weather.



## 4 September – Industry

- After Firestone had produced the program's first bale of synthetic rubber on April 26, 1942, Goodyear followed on May 18.
- United States Rubber Corporation produced the first bale from the third synthetic rubber plant on September 4 1942.
- Total production to date was less than a thousand tonnes.
- After the Japanese over ran the vast majority of the world's natural rubber production it had been calculated that a production rate of 400,000 tons a year of synthetic rubber was needed by July 1943 or the war would have to be called off.



The first U.S. government synthetic rubber plant to go into production, Akron, OH, April, 1942.

# 5 September – Sea, Solomons

- On the night of 4/5 September 12 Japanese warships were off Taivu Point landing troops and supplies. Three destroyers then started to shell the airfield.
- The two old Destroyer transports Little and Gregory had been transporting troops from Tulagi to Guadalcanal. By the time they completed that task, it was very dark and hazy and their commander deemed the entrance to Tulagi harbour too hazardous to attempt and he chose to remain at sea.
- Just after 01.00 on the 5<sup>th</sup> the ships were illuminated by flares dropped by a US PBY in an attempt to assist the Marine coast defence gunners.
- The Japanese destroyers illuminated with searchlights and opened a devastating gunfire, which left Little and Gregory wrecked and sinking in minutes.
- Boats from Guadalcanal picked up the survivors in the morning. Losses among the crews were 33 dead, including both captains, and 70 wounded.



USS Colhoun APD2, a destroyer converted to a fast transport, sister ship to Little and Gregory. The conversion involved removing half the guns and half the engines to obtain transport capacity, leaving them easy prey for modern Japanese destroyers.

# 5 September – Sea

- SS “Perthshire” collided with the troopship “Van der Lijn” 10 miles off Cape Cleveland during the night 4/5 September. Both ships proceeded to Townsville. “Van der Lijn” was considerably damaged and is unable to continue her voyage. Casualties one killed, 6 Injured, the troops on board have been disembarked and will board Katoomba or Cremer for transport to Port Moresby.
- SS “Perthshire” is also considerably damaged.
- Next day (5<sup>th</sup> September) Crutchley, in Brisbane, was told by Leary that Task Force 44 would proceed at earliest date on these missions (protect allied and prevent Japanese reinforcement of Milne Bay).
- On the 5th, Arunta was told by signal from Comsouwespacfor to hold the convoy (Q2) south of China Strait, as Japanese ships were expected in Milne Bay that night, but to take Anshun into the bay next morning, leaving Swan and 's Jacob south of China Strait until further orders.



Clan Buchanan a sister ship of Perthshire

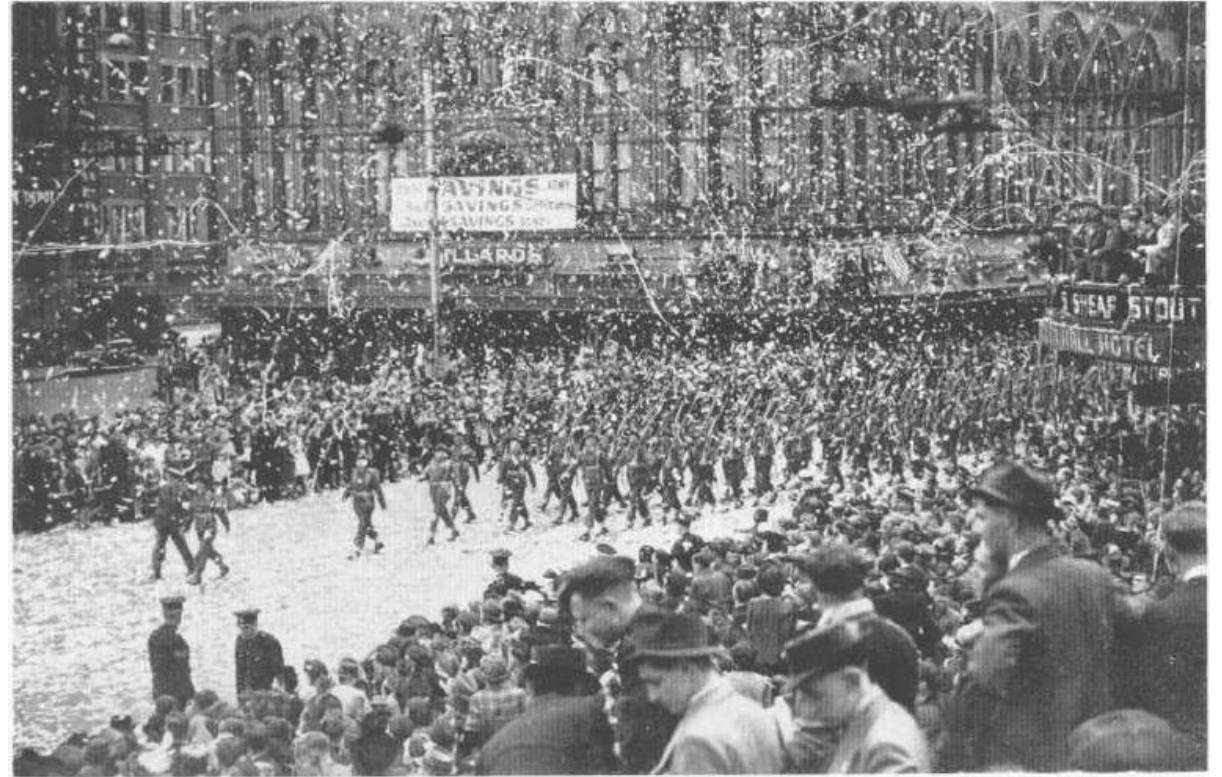
# 5 September – Milne Bay

- On the 5th patrols of the 2/9th Battalion were early astir. One, led by Scott, found Paterson who had been lying wounded in the bush all night. One reported having reached Waga Waga without incident.
- At 9.15 Lieut Colonel Cummings began to advance once more with his main force. Hooper's company, with Captain Barnes now in command, went forward astride the road with Peek on their left, while Marshall occupied Waga Waga.
- At 11.20 Barnes' men clashed with Japanese in positions near a creek crossing about half a mile beyond Waga Waga.
- Lieutenant McDonald led his platoon forward across the creek . When he was about 80 yards beyond the stream he found himself in the centre of Japanese positions and under attack from about 80 of his enemies. For about five minutes the two opposing groups beat at each other with heavy fire.
- On McDonald's left Sergeant Roberts' platoon, and on his right Lieutenant Scott's, were also fighting. The Australians were losing men fast and were ordered back about 400 yards.
- McDonald had lost 4 men killed and 15 wounded and had only eleven men left in his platoon. In Scott's platoon seven men had been wounded including himself.
- Cummings now brought Marshall's company forward again and planned that Marshall and Barnes would attack later in the day with Peek moving round the flank to come against the Japanese right rear.
- R.A.A.F. fighters made strafing and bombing runs until about 2.30 after which the artillery and mortars began to plaster the track.
- At 3.10 the attack went in. But the opposition had melted away.
- A quiet night now settled over the forward Australian positions.



# 5 September – Milne Bay

- At 9 p.m. he (General Clowes) received a signal from Blamey which told of expectations that the Japanese would land more troops in Milne Bay that night and that more Japanese reinforcements would arrive on the 12th.
- Little more than an hour later he was told that the remnants of the Japanese forces would be withdrawn in the darkness and that he could expect a fresh landing by two hostile battalions on the 10th.
- As the night went on Japanese ships came again to Milne Bay and the busy sound of boats hurrying between ships and shore was heard by the forward troops.



*Australian War Memorial*

Sydney gave the 16th Brigade a tumultuous welcome on its march through the city on 5th September 1942. The brigade was newly returned to Australia after hard fighting in the Middle East and a period of sixteen weeks when it was retained in Ceylon (together with the 17th Brigade) for the defence of Colombo.

# 5 September – Kokoda

- At first light on the 5th the 2/16<sup>th</sup> went on to Myola where the 2/14th covered them.
- There they were refreshed as the other battalion had been and ate their fill of the stores which were being destroyed and which littered the area as the work of demolition went on.
- Then, crawling, sliding and edging their difficult way through the rain, they took the road to Efogi where they began to arrive in the early afternoon of the 5th. The 2/14th followed and the two battalions, too worn to travel farther, bivouacked with protective patrols out.
- While the 2/14th and 2/16th Battalions were withdrawing from Myola they made contact with the advanced forces of the 2/27th Battalion which Colonel Cooper had been moving into position.
- Cooper himself, with Captain Sims' "A" Company and Captain Lee's "B" Company, had arrived at Kagi on the 4th and found Honner there with his battalion, then numbering 185.
- From there, on orders from Potts, Cooper moved back to high ground just south of Efogi and had his whole battalion (588 strong) in position on Mission Ridge by 2 p.m. on the 5th.
- He then took over the automatic weapons and other equipment of the 39th Battalion and Honner moved his men off for Port Moresby.
- Cumulative totals of voluntary transfers from C.M.F. to A.I.F. were 54,874 by 5th September.



# 5 September - Air

- **Solomons**
- At 06.40 on 5 September 2 P400s of the Cactus Airforce found the barge convoy again as it approached Guadalcanal. They lined up 15 barges for savage strafing runs and 6 Wildcats soon joined them. The troops packed in the barges managed to splash one of the Wildcats with small arms fire but the strafing took a terrible toll. Some of the barges managed to reach the shore by 07.40.
- 27 Bettys escorted by 15 Zeros attacked Guadalcanal on the 5<sup>th</sup> September. Thick cloud resulted in the bombs missing the airfield. The American fighters claimed one bomber and one fighter but lost one of their own.
- Early in September supply and evacuation flights to Guadalcanal were initiated by twin-engined R4D's (C47'S) of Marine Aircraft Group 25, Flying daily from Espiritu Santo and Efate, the cargo planes each brought in some 3,000 pounds of supplies and were capable of evacuating 16 stretcher patients.
- **SWP**
- On the afternoon of the 5<sup>th</sup> (September) the Kittyhawk pilots supplemented a heavy artillery and mortar barrage by Australian gunners at Milne Bay. The target area was along the coastal road to the point of the Japanese landings. It was raked by repeated bombing and gunnery sorties. 4 P-400's strafe Kokoda, Kaile, Isurava, Alola, Buna, Sanananda, and Buna-Kokoda trail.
- A/F at Buna is strafed and bombed by P-400's and A-20's in 3 separate attacks. Two AA positions were silenced and two landing barges destroyed.
- **Aleutians**
- 3 B-24's abort bombing of Kiska due to overcast.

# 5 September – Air, Australia

- On 5<sup>th</sup> September an order constituting the Coastal Command, to exercise operational control of the Australian squadrons assigned to Allied Airforces, then performing defensive and anti-submarine duties around the coast of Australia, and designating Bostock as its air officer commanding, was issued from Kenney's headquarters.
- While the units in this command would be largely R.A.A.F. squadrons, they might include any number of squadrons from the Fifth Air Force. Conversely, RAAF squadrons or groups might operate with Fifth Bomber Command or Fifth Fighter Command as, indeed, several were now doing in New Guinea.
- This arrangement lead to a contest between Bostock and Jones, the Chief of the Air Staff, for control over the RAAF, which absorbed a lot of the Prime Minister's and Air Minister's time and effort. Jones' letter to the Minister gives the flavour:
  - "Since his appointment as Chief of Staff to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock has consistently endeavoured to obtain control of certain aspects of administration and organisation of the RAAF and has shown great resentment when his efforts in this direction have been checked. He has allowed his attitude to be known widely throughout the service and the effect of this on discipline is now assuming serious proportions. . . ."



Air Vice Marshal Bostock



# 6 September - Strategy

- In a personal message to Marshall on 6th September MacArthur urged
- “that attack to clear the north coast of New Guinea be undertaken as soon as possible. If defensive attitude only is maintained the situation will soon become serious.
- The enemy attack has developed and is now revealed as infiltration from the north in ever-increasing pressure.
- Adverse weather and other conditions make it impossible to prevent his landing with great freedom on the north shore. . . .
- Due to lack of maritime resources I am unable to increase ground forces in New Guinea as I cannot maintain them.
- I have temporary air superiority there. It is imperative that shipping and naval forces for escort duty be increased to ensure communication between Australian mainland and south coast of New Guinea.
- With these additional naval facilities I can dispatch large ground reinforcements to New Guinea with the objective of counter infiltration towards the north at the same time making creeping advances along the north coast with small vessels and marine amphibious forces.
- Such action will secure a situation which otherwise is doubtful. If New Guinea goes the results will be disastrous.
- This is urgent.”



# 6 September - Sea

- During the night of 5/6 September five Japanese destroyers landed men or supplies at Taivu point.
- USS Growler torpedoed and sank a 2,000 ton cargo ship in the South China Sea off the east coast of Formosa on 6th September. The ship split in two and sank in two minutes.
- It is learned from a prisoner of war captured at Milne Bay that Hokodate Maru was sunk at Rabaul 11/8 and 500 troops were lost. Also, that Nankai Maru (8461 tons) was sunk at Milne Bay 26/8 with approx 300 troops.
- **Milne Bay**
- Arunta and Anshun entered Milne Bay in the morning of the 6th (as did the hospital ship Manunda) and Anshun berthed alongside, port side to, at Gili Gili pontoon jetty at 8.30, disembarked troops and commenced unloading.
- Her engines were kept at "Stand By", and sea watches were maintained against an emergency.
- The day before, Morrow had told Anshun's master, Captain Miller, that Arunta would escort him to sea at about 4 p.m. on the 6th, but Miller now received verbal orders from local authorities to continue discharging until completed.
- Arunta did not remain in Milne Bay, as Morrow considered his responsibility was to screen 's Jacob and Swan and therefore went to sea about 3 p.m. and spent the night with them south of China Strait.



# 6 September - Sea

- Anshun continued discharging after dark by the light of her own cargo clusters.
- Just after 10 p.m. she came under fire from a cruiser at a range of one-and-a-half to two miles.
- Communications between bridge and engine room failed, and the ship's lights continued burning for two minutes or so before a messenger could get down with orders to pull the main switches.
- The enemy cruiser then illuminated by searchlight. Anshun's guns were manned, but received direct hits when the enemy started firing, and were not fired.
- Anshun received about ten hits, quickly settled by the head, and slowly capsized to starboard and settled on her beam ends.
- Her casualties were all of guns' crews—two American gunners killed and one wounded, and one of the ship's company (gun's crew) wounded.



*(R.A.N. Historical Section)*

*Anshun capsized at Milne Bay, 6th September 1942.*

- The Japanese also shelled Australian shore positions at Gili Gili and Waga Waga, causing some casualties.
- Manunda, wearing her hospital colours and lights, was illuminated by Japanese searchlights, but not molested.

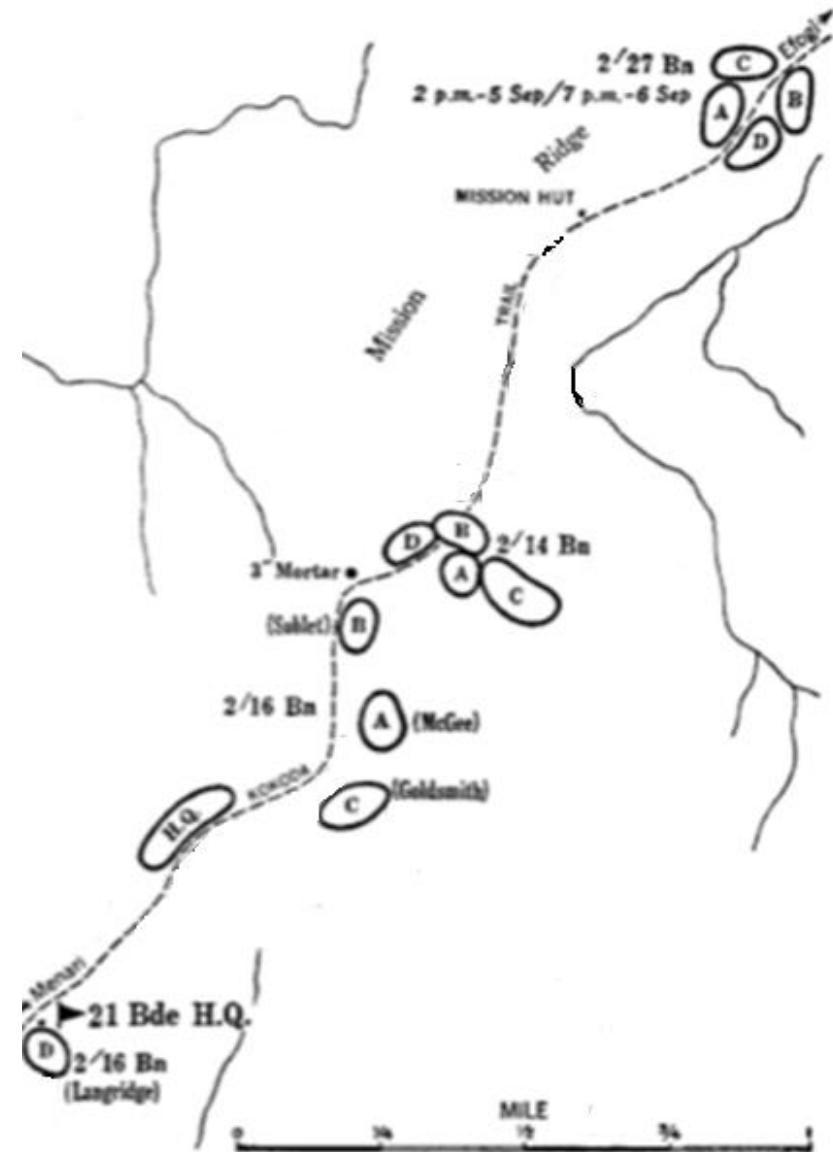
# 6 September – Milne Bay

- On the 6th the 2/9th fought isolated skirmishes. They were now in the middle of what was obviously the Japanese main base area, from Goroni to Lilihoa. Dumps and base installations and all the scattered paraphernalia of a broken force marked the area. Patrols went as far as Ahioma without hindrance.
- MacArthur made the following comments in his message to Marshall:
- "The enemy's defeat at Milne Bay must not be accepted as a measure of relative fighting capacity of the troops involved. The decisive factor was the complete surprise obtained over him by our preliminary concentration of superior forces." and
- "The Australians have proven themselves unable to match the enemy in jungle fighting. Aggressive leadership is lacking."



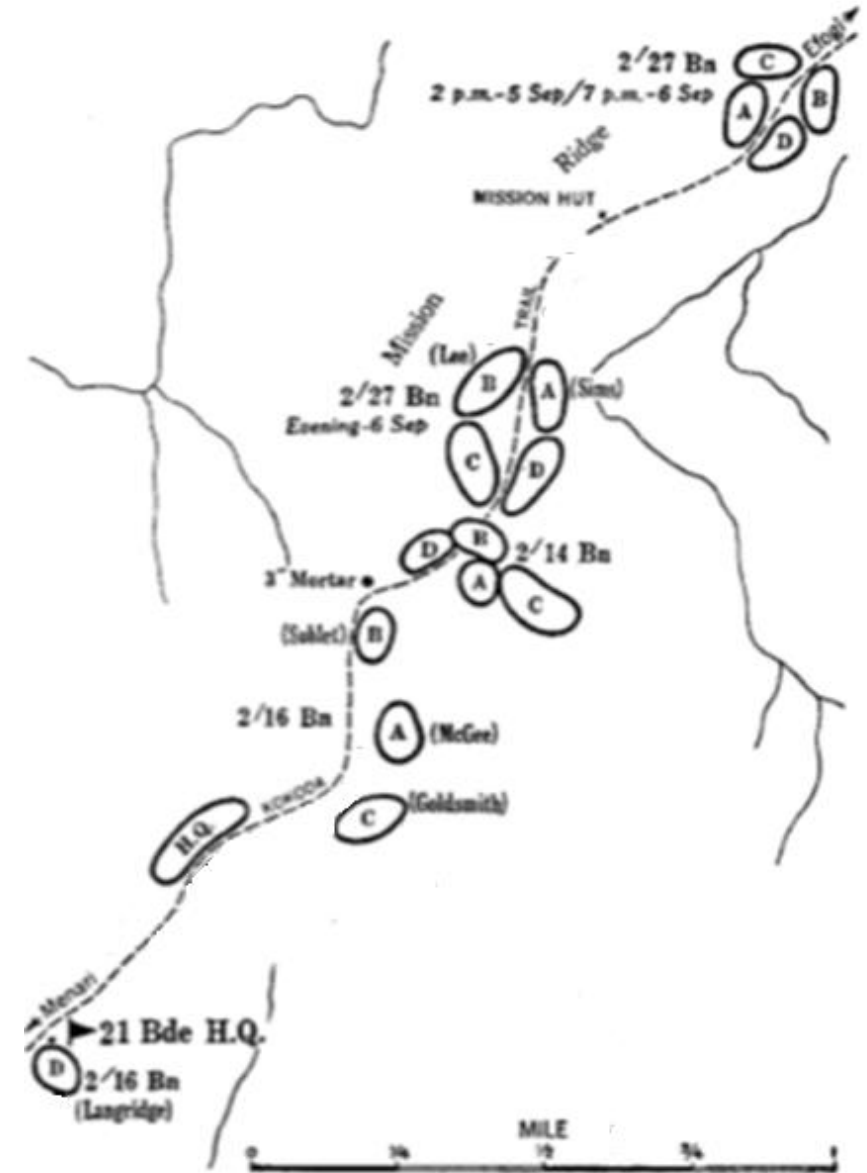
# 6 September – Kokoda

- On the morning of the 6th Caro and Rhoden led their weary men through the fresh battalion and occupied a position in rear, Rhoden forward of Caro.
- (Here Rhoden was rejoined by Lieutenants Pearce and Gardner — the latter wounded — and some of their men. They had been missing since the fighting at Isurava on 29th August.
- Pearce reported that they had beaten off a number of attacks, had killed Japanese in doing so, and that he had sent Sergeant Irwin ahead with the main party while he had fought a rearguard action himself to enable the others to get clear; but there was no word of Irwin.)



# 6 September – Kokoda

- At 7 a.m. on the 6th Cooper sent Lieutenant Bell with a patrol to the junction of the Kagi-Myola tracks. He was to replace a patrol from part of the 53rd Battalion which had been left in the area originally for supply duties.
- Through an error the 53rd patrol was pulled out before Bell arrived. Bell's patrol was ambushed, Bell was wounded, and, when he arrived back at the battalion about 3.30, he reported that one of his men had certainly been killed, one other was believed to have been killed, 3 others had been wounded and 8 were missing.
- He said that he had counted seven Japanese platoons moving down the Myola-Efogi track.
- Soon afterwards Cooper, on Potts' orders, drew his men back a little to a position with less exposed flanks.



# 6 September - Air

- **New Guinea**
- P-400's, A-20's strafe and bomb positions, troops, and shipping at Myola, Mubo, Kokoda and Eora Creek.
- 3 B17s attack an enemy naval force in the vicinity of Milne Bay at 10.43/6. No results observed.
- **Aleutians**
- A B-24 flying patrol and armed rcn over Tanaga sinks a mine layer and strafes a tender as well as nearby tents and buildings.





# COIC – 7 September

## 4. ENEMY'S PROBABLE NEXT MOVE

6 September

- (i) Heavy naval and air counter-attacks against allied positions in the Solomons, with a view to re-occupation of Guadalcanal.
- (ii) Attack on Port Moresby area.
- (iii) Intensified submarine activity in the S.W.P.A.

## 3. ENEMY'S PROBABLE NEXT MOVE

- (i) Heavy naval and air counter-attacks against allied positions in the Solomons, with a view to re-occupation of Guadalcanal.
- (ii) Heavy attack and attempt at consolidation Milne Bay - Buna area.
- (iii) Attack on Port Moresby area.
- (iv) Intensified submarine activity in the S.W.P.A.

*Rousby*  
FOR DIRECTOR C.O.I.C.

7/9/42



# 7 September - Sea

- On 7 September Ghormley created task force 64 for screening and attack missions with three cruisers and seven destroyers.
- Arunta returned to Milne Bay in the early morning of the 7th, discovered that enemy forces had sunk Anshun and ordered Swan to proceed with 's Jacob to Port Moresby then embarked the survivors from Anshun and proceeded to Townsville at 4.25 p.m.
- Japanese ships again entered Milne Bay on the night of the 7th and shelled the Gili Gili wharf area and the vicinity of No. 1 Strip, causing some casualties. And, as on the previous night, Manunda, still there, was illuminated by searchlight, but not otherwise troubled.
- Crutchley, with Australia, Phoenix, Selfridge and Bagley, sailed from Brisbane on 7th September, with Captain Clay, Torres Strait pilot, embarked as pilot in Selfridge. (Hobart and Patterson both undergoing repair)



HMAS Australia

# 7 September – Milne Bay

- Next day (the 7th), spurred by the warnings he had received regarding the Japanese intentions, Clowes began to concentrate the 18th Brigade once more in the Gili Gili area, having instructed Arnold and Cummings to destroy all Japanese material which they could not quickly salvage. With the night Japanese naval forces were again in the bay. There was shelling for about fifteen minutes, near midnight, mostly of the Gili Gili wharf and No. 1 Strip areas, and the Australians suffered some casualties. Again the searchlights played on Manunda but no harm was offered her.
- On the 7th, from K.B., where he had been left while the rest of his battalion moved in the wake of the 2/9th, Suthers took most of his company to Limadi, a village in the rough mountain country a few miles north-east of K.B. where he had been told some 250 Japanese were in hiding. He found a small but determined party there with two machine guns in position. His men killed about 5 Japanese and some escaped. Lieutenant Brown was killed at the head of his platoon. Brown was a 27 year old insurance clerk from Launceston.
- That day (7<sup>th</sup>) Corporal Condon, forward with Ivey's company, was attacked by two Japanese armed with rifles while he himself had only a machete as he went about his work. He was said to have killed both of them with this primitive weapon. Condon was a 32 year old labourer from Rockhampton.
- In the 2/9<sup>th</sup> (on the 7<sup>th</sup>) Corporal MacCarthy and three friends poked forward looking for souvenirs just before the battalion returned to Gili Gili. No one else knew that they had gone. Suddenly the quiet was broken by sounds of fighting so that other men, swimming or working, leaped to their arms thinking a new attack had begun. But MacCarthy's party had merely "flushed" five Japanese whom they killed.

# 7 September – Kokoda

- The column which Bell had seen moved on to occupy Efogi and from 9 p.m. on the 6th to 5 a.m. on the 7th a procession of lights moving down the track from Myola and Kagi indicated that a stream of Japanese was flowing to a concentration in front of the Australians.
- Early in the morning of the 7th eight Marauder aircraft strafed and bombed the Japanese positions. But the Japanese probed and felt for the Australians as the morning went on and subjected them to fire from what Potts' men thought to be a long-range mortar or a field piece.
- The Australians patrolled but with largely negative results until a party of the 2/27th under Sergeant Johns reported at 5 p.m. that they had killed 6 Japanese and captured a light machine-gun and grenade discharger, without loss.
- The long-range fire opened again about 5.30 and killed 2 men and wounded 5.



# 7 September – Kokoda

- Next day (7<sup>th</sup>) he (MacArthur) conveyed similar sentiments (lack of aggressive leadership) to Vasey with a request that Vasey inform Rowell of the necessity to "energize combat action".
- This Vasey did and, writing to Rowell personally, he referred also to a complaint by Rowell that the news being given out regarding the fighting in New Guinea did not satisfactorily represent the position.
- He said that this was due to two reasons:
  - firstly the time-lag between the actual events and the issue of communiques (which MacArthur wrote himself),
  - secondly "General MacArthur's own personal outlook and actions". Of the latter he wrote:
- My information . . . comes from Howard our Press Relations L.O. [Liaison Officer] at GHQ. He says that MacArthur will not admit that any serious operations are going on in New Guinea and, as you probably know, all press articles must bear out the tone of the official communique . . . . The reasons for this attitude of MacArthur I do not know—nor does Howard.

*Here, too, is told the saga bold  
Of virile, deathless youth  
In stories seldom tarnished with  
The plain unvarnished truth.  
It's quite a rag, it waves the flag,  
Its motif is the fray,  
And modesty is plain to see in  
Doug's communiqué.*

*"My battleships bombard the Nips from  
Maine to Singapore;  
My subs have sunk a million tons;  
They'll sink a billion more.  
My aircraft bombed Berlin last night."  
In Italy they say  
"Our turn's tonight, because it's right in  
Doug's communiqué. "*

*And while possibly a rumor now,  
Someday it will be fact  
That the Lord will hear a deep voice say,  
"Move over, God—it's Mac."  
So bet your shoes that all the news  
That last great Judgment Day  
Will go to press in nothing less than  
Doug's communiqué!*<sup>5</sup>

# 7 September - Air

- Next afternoon (the 7th) (September) aircraft from the two Kittyhawk squadrons took part in the first attack from Milne Bay by Australian Beaufighters and Beaufort torpedo bombers.
- Six Beauforts from No. 100 Squadron, then based at Laverton, Victoria, had been flown to No. 1 Strip arriving on the 5th September.
- Next day three Beaufighters from No. 30 Squadron, the first Australian unit to be equipped with these long-range fighters, arrived from Bohle River near Townsville.
- The Beaufighters were armed with four 20mm cannon and six .303 machine guns. Compared with the P40 these gave nearly twice the projectile weight of shot for a burst of the same duration and 85% of it was explosive rounds.



A Beaufighter of No. 30 Squadron RAAF adjacent to Hombrom's Bluff near Port Moresby, 1942.

# 7 September - Air

- A Hudson crew from 6 Squadron had sighted an enemy cruiser and destroyer 17 miles east-north-east of Cape Karitahua, on Normanby Island.
- Three Hudsons and 16 Kittyhawks with the Beauforts and Beaufighters were assigned to attack these ships. With the Kittyhawks flying as top cover the Hudsons led the way to the target area and scored two near misses at the stern of the destroyer.
- One of the Beaufighters crashed on take-off but the other two flew in to divert the warships' fire—the squadron's first combat sorties—while the Beaufort crews, who were making their first torpedo strike in combat, made their runs. None of the torpedoes found its mark.
- With no fighter opposition the Kittyhawk pilots made strafing runs over the ships, but when the attacks had ended neither vessel appeared to have suffered serious damage.
- That night two enemy ships—a cruiser and a destroyer (presumably those the R.A.A.F. had attacked)—entered Milne Bay and again the base was shelled, for about a quarter of an hour. There were several Australian casualties.



# 7 September - Air

- **New Guinea**
- A-20's and P-400's strafe and bomb positions at Myola Lake and Efogi in Owen Stanley Range in four separate attacks.
- 27 Bettys attacked Port Moresby escorted by 24 Zeros. Over the target they met allied fighters. One Betty failed to return. 3 direct hits on runway others in dispersal area. Nil casualties, slight damage to P400s.
- **Aleutians**
- 3 B-24's patrol and bomb Kiska Harbor and camp area and also patrol Tanaga. They are attacked by 3 sea ftrs of which at least 1 is downed.



Mitsubishi G4M bombers, Allied reporting name "Betty"

# 8 September – Milne Bay

- The 2/9th completed their movement by sea on the 8th and, late that day, the last of the main elements of the 2/12th, who had been left to complete the demolition of the Japanese stores and equipment, marched in from K.B. in the darkness.
- By the time they were concentrated again at Gili Gili the 2/9th had lost approximately 30 killed and between 80 and 90 wounded; the 2/ 12th had had 35 killed and 44 wounded.
- Clowes then busied himself with preparations for the new attacks he had been told to expect.
- Thus far the defence of Milne Bay had cost the Australians 373 battle casualties. 12 officers and 149 men were killed or missing.
- The Americans had lost one soldier of the 43rd Engineers killed and two wounded in the ground actions; several more were killed or wounded in air raids.
- Of the Japanese casualties Clowes reported: "It is conservatively and reliably estimated . . . that enemy killed amount to at least 700.



Major General Cyril Clowes at Milne Bay 1942