A map of the Pacific region showing the war theater. The map includes East Asia (China, South Korea, Taiwan), Southeast Asia (Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore), and Oceania (Australia, New Guinea, Solomon Islands). Numerous red and yellow pins with crosses are placed across the map, indicating various military locations and events. A large red starburst is visible near Midway. The text is overlaid on the map.

# War in the Pacific

## Defending Australia

### Campaigns in New Guinea and the Solomons

15 September 1942

USS Wasp is torpedoed and sunk by a Japanese submarine south of Guadalcanal.

The 25<sup>th</sup> Brigade is pressed hard at Ioribaiwa and withdraws back to Imita Ridge.

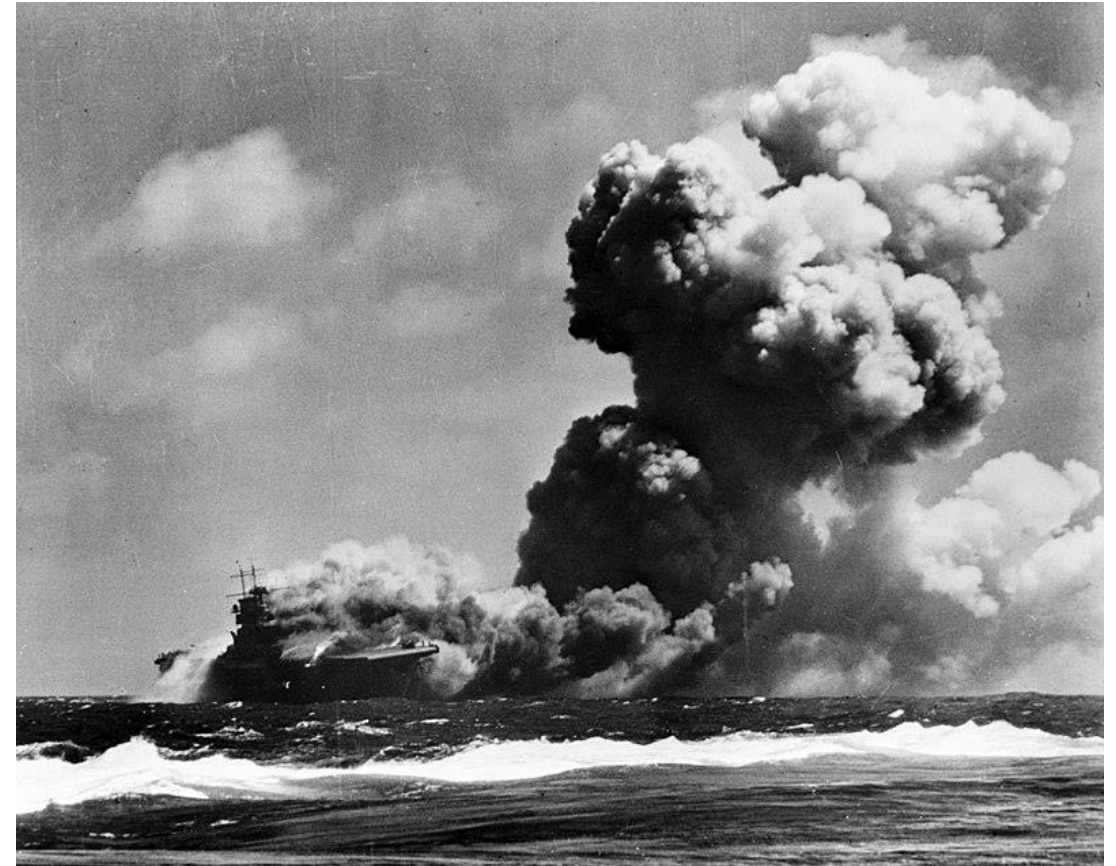
Guadalcanal is reinforced by another Marine regiment and the survivors of Wasp's air group.

The American production juggernaut begins to roll. After three years of enormous shipping losses American shipbuilding achieves a net gain in July and continues to accelerate.

The Allies make the first tentative moves forward on the ground on both the Kokoda track and Guadalcanal.

# 15 September - Sea

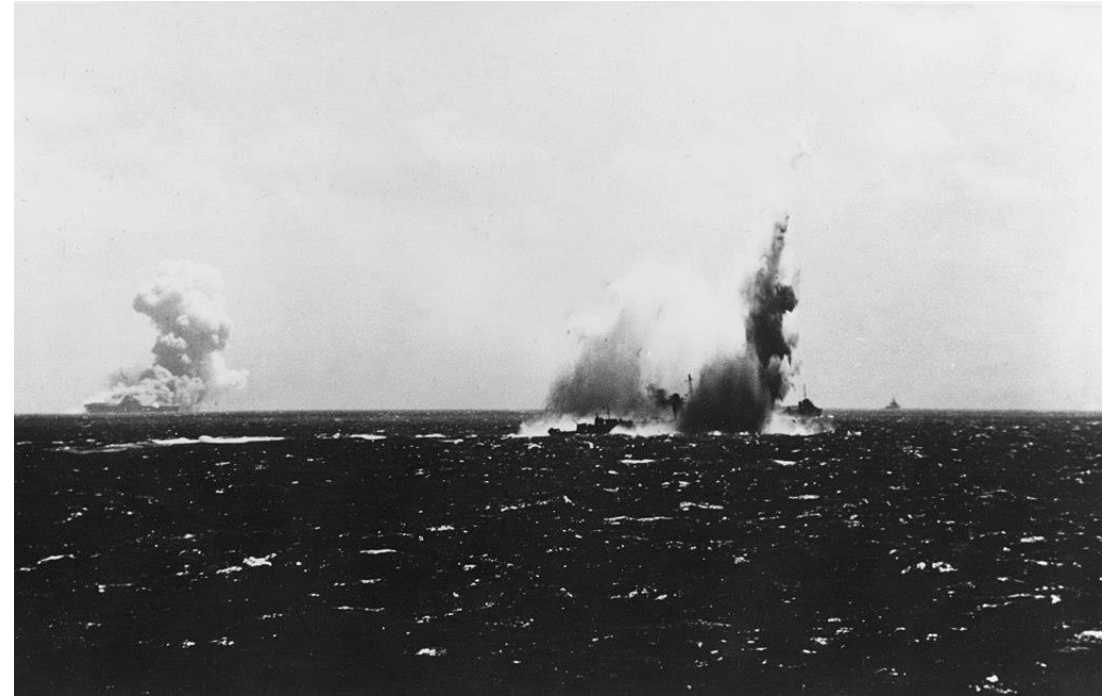
- After a Japanese flying boat found the convoy taking the 7<sup>th</sup> Marines to Guadalcanal, about 11.00 on 15 September, Turner decided to withdraw temporarily to await a more favourable opportunity.
- In distant support to the south of Guadalcanal were carriers *Wasp* and *Hornet*, the only flattops operational in the Pacific (the *Saratoga* and the *Enterprise* were under repair), with cruisers and destroyers and the battleship *North Carolina*.
- In the early afternoon of the 15th *Wasp* was turning back onto her base course after flying off and landing aircraft.
- Ensign Durr pointed out speeding torpedo wakes to Admiral Noyes and declared: "Those have got us."
- *Wasp* was struck by two torpedoes.
- The torpedoes smashed *Wasp's* gasoline storage tanks and threatened the bomb magazine. Both unleashed shockwaves which damaged aircraft in the hanger sending rivers of high octane fuel through the ship. Flames reared up on the hanger deck setting off bombs, depth charges and ready use ammunition.



*Wasp* on fire shortly after being torpedoed.

# 15 September - Sea

- Shortly afterwards a torpedo struck North Carolina, and another blew a gaping hole in the bow of destroyer O'Brien.
- At 15.05 a huge gasoline vapor explosion jetted burning gases up on three sides of Wasp's island, burning Admiral Noyes about the hair and ears. Rear Admiral Scott on San Francisco assumed Noyes was lost.
- With the fire water system destroyed by explosions and flames enveloping the forward half of the ship Captain Sherman ordered abandon ship at 15.20.
- All but 173 of the crew of 2,247 were saved, though 400 were wounded.



Torpedo hits *O'Brien*. USS *Wasp* can be seen burning in the background.

# 15 September - Sea

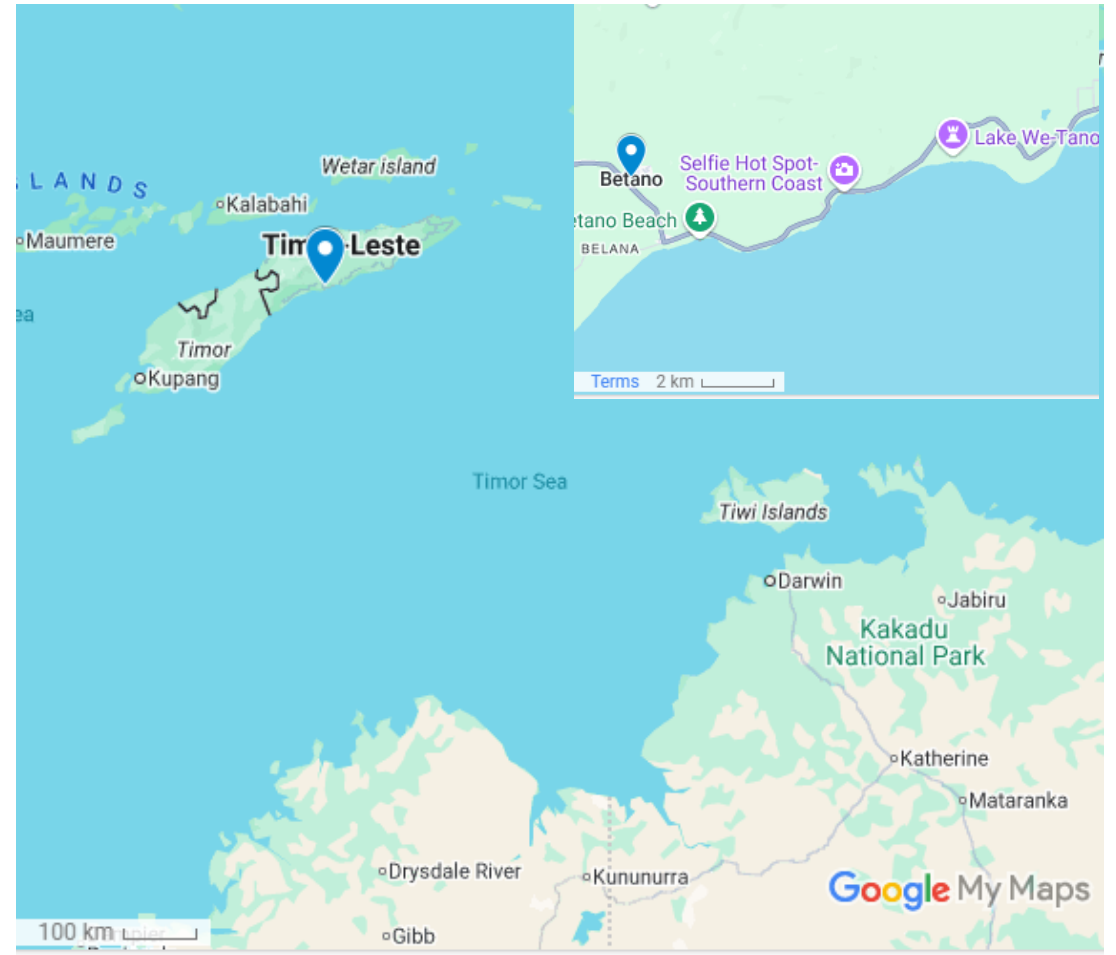
- All but one of Wasp's 26 airborne planes were recovered but 45 planes on deck and in the hangar went down with the ship.
- The US Navy was left with only a single carrier in the Pacific to face six operational Japanese carriers.
- North Carolina had a 32 by 18 foot hole 20 feet below the waterline but maintained 25 knots and damage control corrected a 5 degree list in 5 minutes. While not in danger the battleship did need to go back to Pearl for repairs.
- The damage to North Carolina left only one new battleship, Washington, operational in the Pacific.



USS North Carolina BB55

# 15 September - Sea

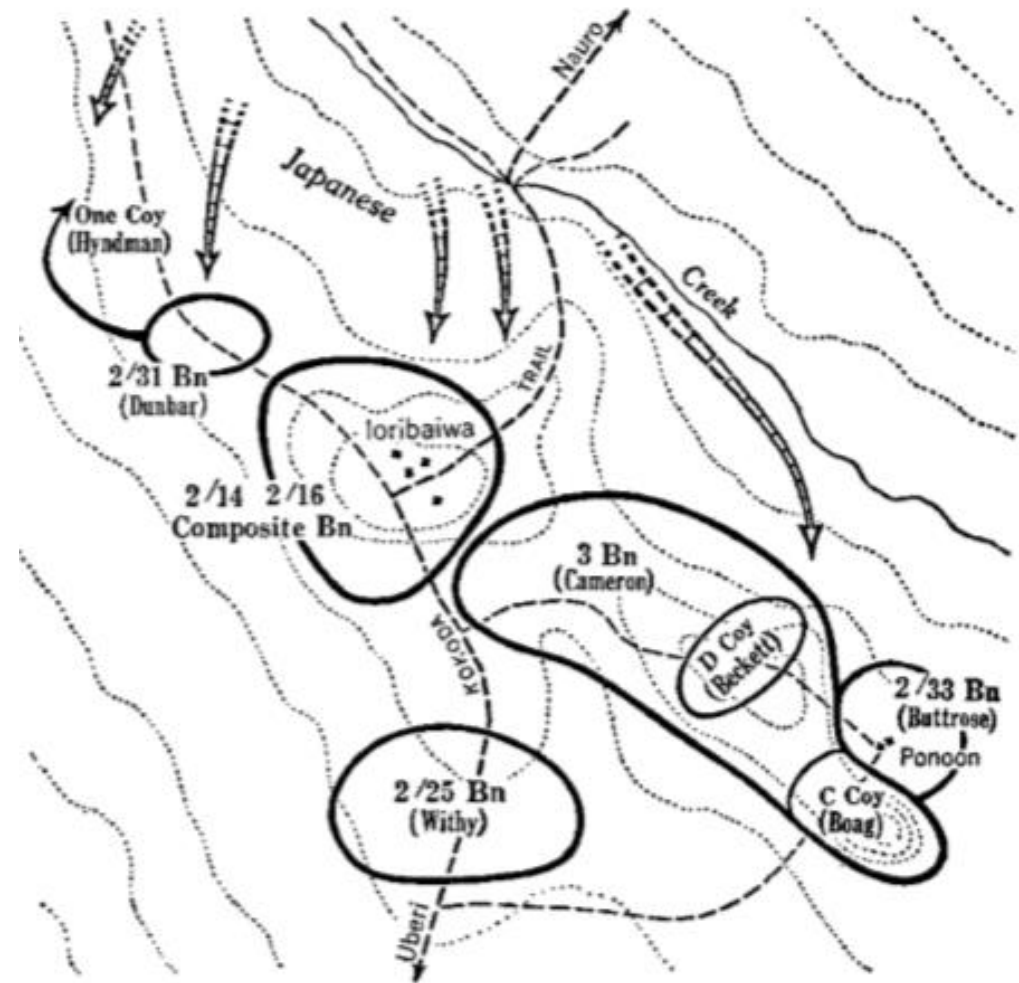
- This (aerial recce) later reported all clear, and Kalgoorlie reached Betano, where she anchored in 12 fathoms only 150 yards from the beach, in the evening of the 15th, sailing again two-and-a-half hours later after disembarking her troops and stores.
- On 15th September Van Heemskerk and Japara, having completed discharging in Milne Bay, sailed for Townsville escorted by Arunta and Stuart.
- On the night of 15/16 September 7 Japanese destroyers landed men and supplies on Guadalcanal then bombarded the Marines.





# 15 September - Kokoda

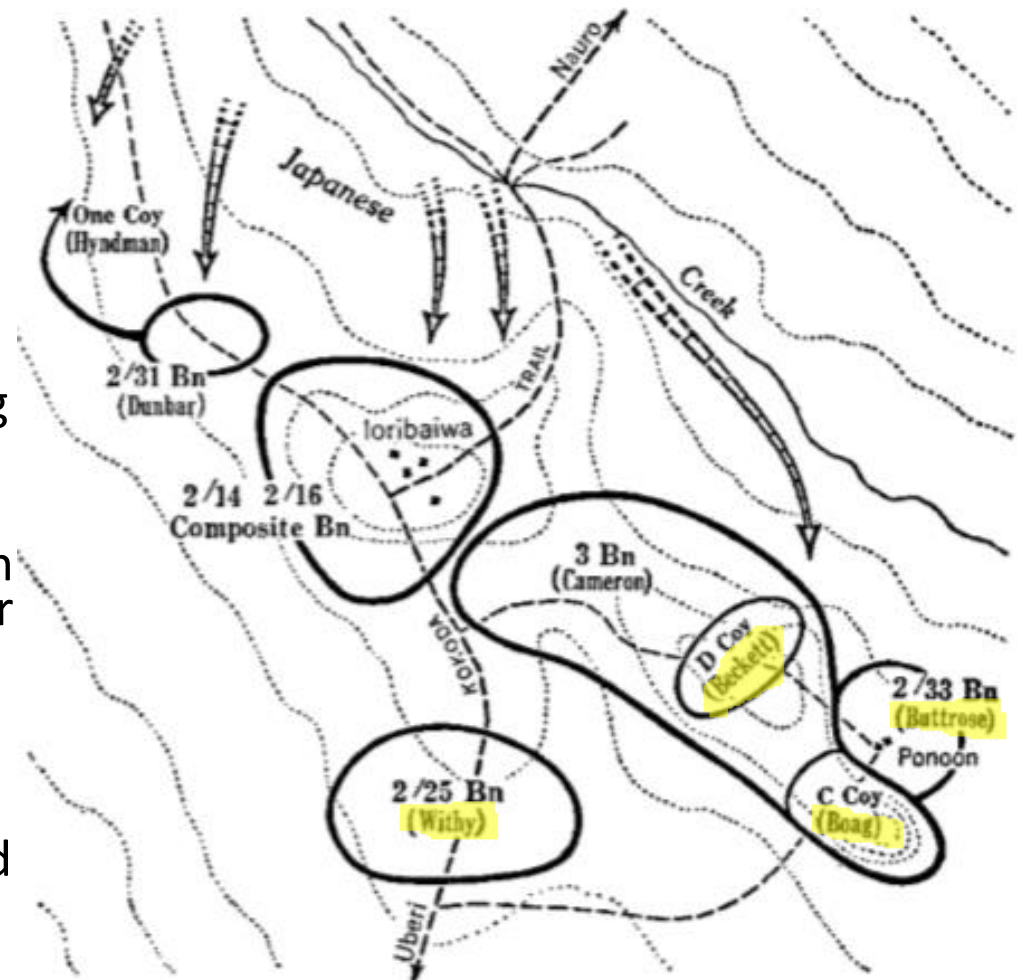
- Dunbar, on the left, had patrols out at first light. But intermittent mortar and machine-gun fire troubled him.
- This, with a skilful enemy who avoided the open and sniped from the cover of trees and bushes, together with the rugged nature of the country, slowed movement.
- A Japanese sortie in the late forenoon cost him some casualties. Lack of water was becoming serious.
- Despite their determination, active patrolling, and the effectiveness of their mortar fire the position of the Australians when night fell was uneasy.



Noon, 15th September

# 15 September - Kokoda

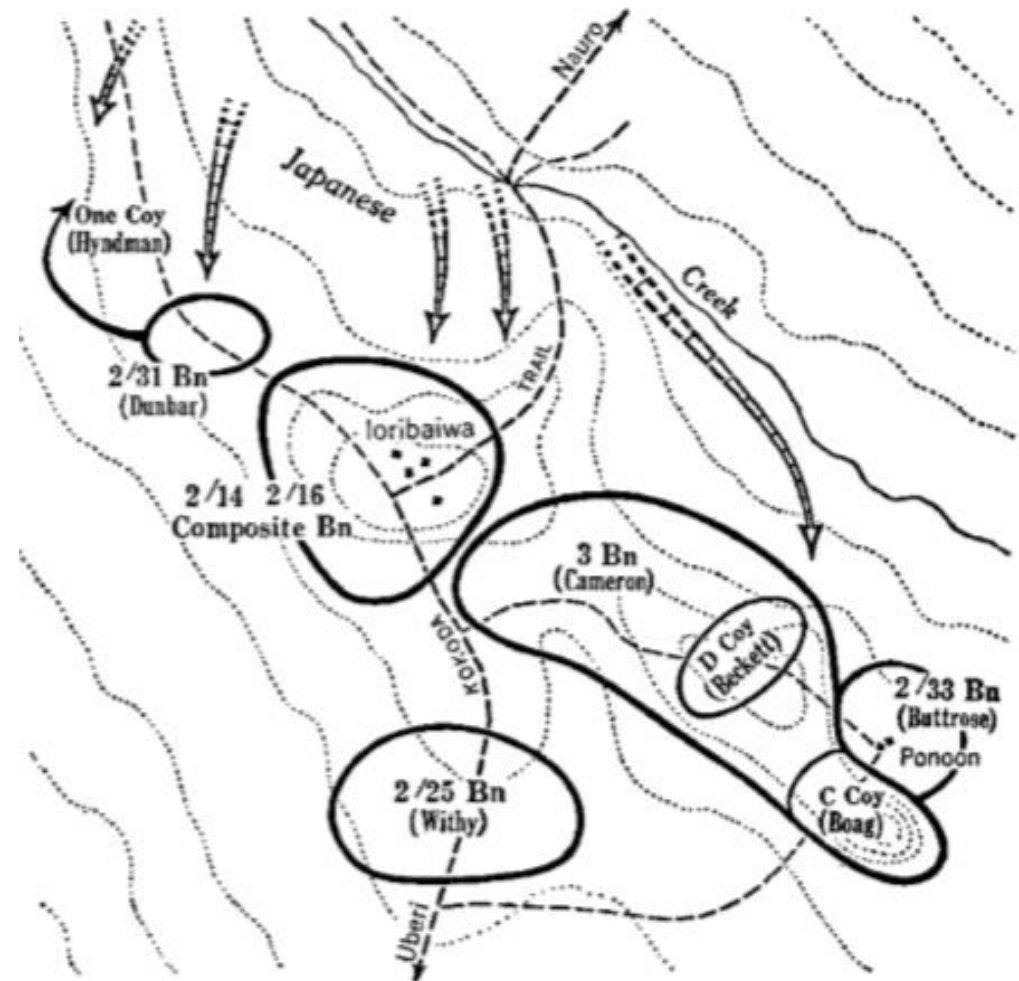
- On the 15th at 2 p.m. a hostile patrol was wedging itself between the left flank of the 2/33rd and Boag's company of the 3rd Battalion.
- Eather, then, having shifted one of Cameron's companies (Captain Beckett's) to strengthen his centre, ordered Withy of the 2/25th to attack towards the high ground on the right with two companies while Buttrose of the 2/33rd drove to the left with one company, the whole effort being designed to pinch off the intruding force.
- But the ruggedness of the country defeated Buttrose's movement while Withy's companies, in hostile contact from 3.30, could not dislodge their enemies from the high ground and were losing men.
- At 5.30 Buttrose sent Captain Clowes' company against the Japanese positions but it could make little headway, lost one officer and two men killed and had five men wounded, and finally withdrew.
- Soon afterwards the intruders surprised one of Beckett's platoons and forced it back. The end of the day, therefore, found Eather's right flank penetrated.



Noon, 15th September

# 15 September - Kokoda

- The centre was under pressure from Japanese who had crept closely upon the 2/16th and dug in during the night.
- The most advanced elements gave a little ground early in the day.
- Then the tired remnants of the 21st Brigade were swept by destructive machine-gun, mortar and mountain gun fire which killed 11 and wounded 29 of the Composite Battalion.
- Late in the day Private ("Pappy") Ransom of the 2/14th reported in and stated that he and Private (Bill) Edwards had been left behind earlier; that Edwards had been killed and that he himself had watched the Japanese setting up weapon positions within 50 yards of his concealment. He had sniped four of them before leaving his position in the late afternoon.
- Acting on Ransom's information Lieutenant Jefferson of the 2/25th then took a patrol out into the night and attacked the weapon posts with grenades and sub-machine-guns.
- He lost none of his own men but considered that he inflicted fifteen casualties on the Japanese.

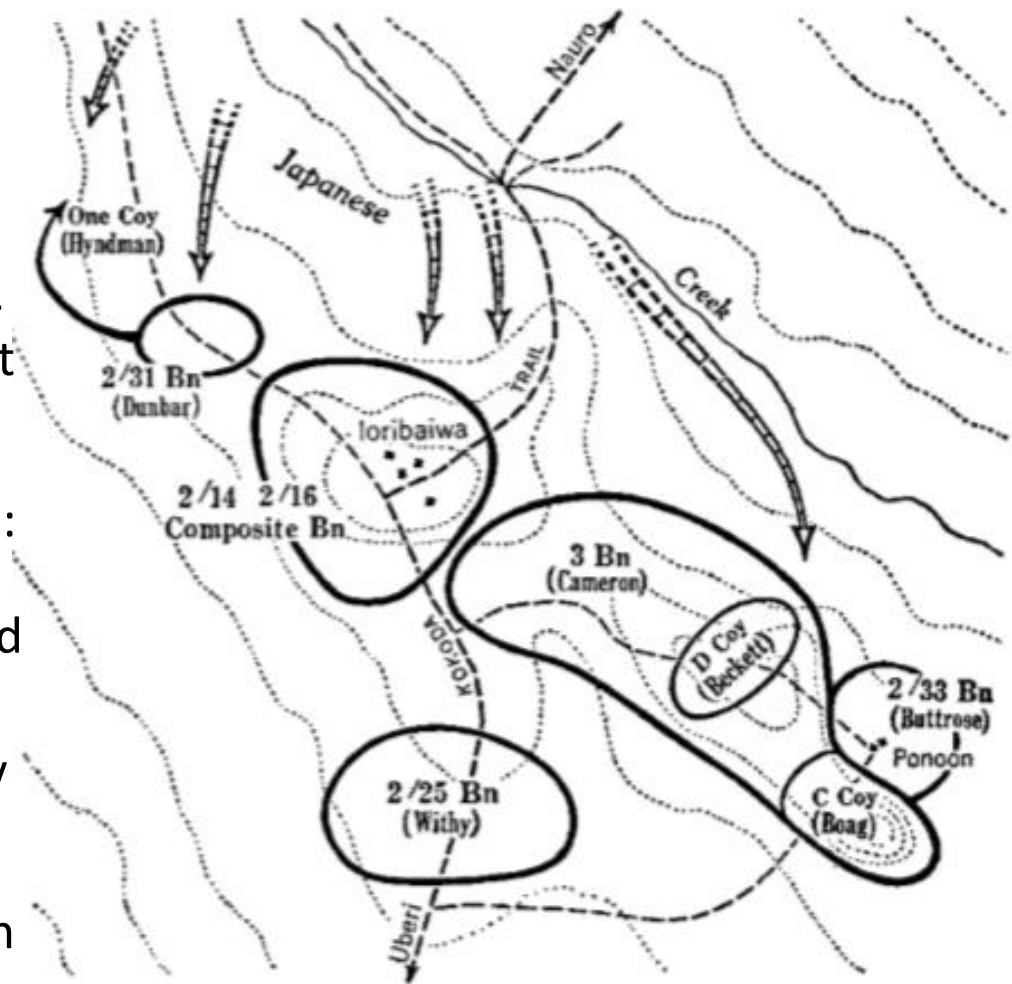


Noon, 15th September



# 15 September - Kokoda

- One of the officers of the 2/14th noted in his diary:
- This evening in the twilight I buried two Headquarters Company chaps. A very sad business as they had been terribly knocked. A shell had caught them in their slit trench. One of the chaps lending a hand fainted for a moment or two at the graveside. No one said a word—we just helped him to his feet. I noticed tears in the eyes of quite a few of the troops.
- That night Eather told General Allen by telephone:
- “I think his [the enemy's] action today is the culmination and putting into effect of a plan based on information he has collected about Porter during the last two days. I consider I have just arrived in time. I think it is going to take me all my time to stabilise the position for the present. Porter agrees.”
- He also said that he had sent out 180 carriers with stretcher cases and had none left for forward support. He wanted a minimum of 200 sent forward at once and said that air supply was not feasible in his present position.



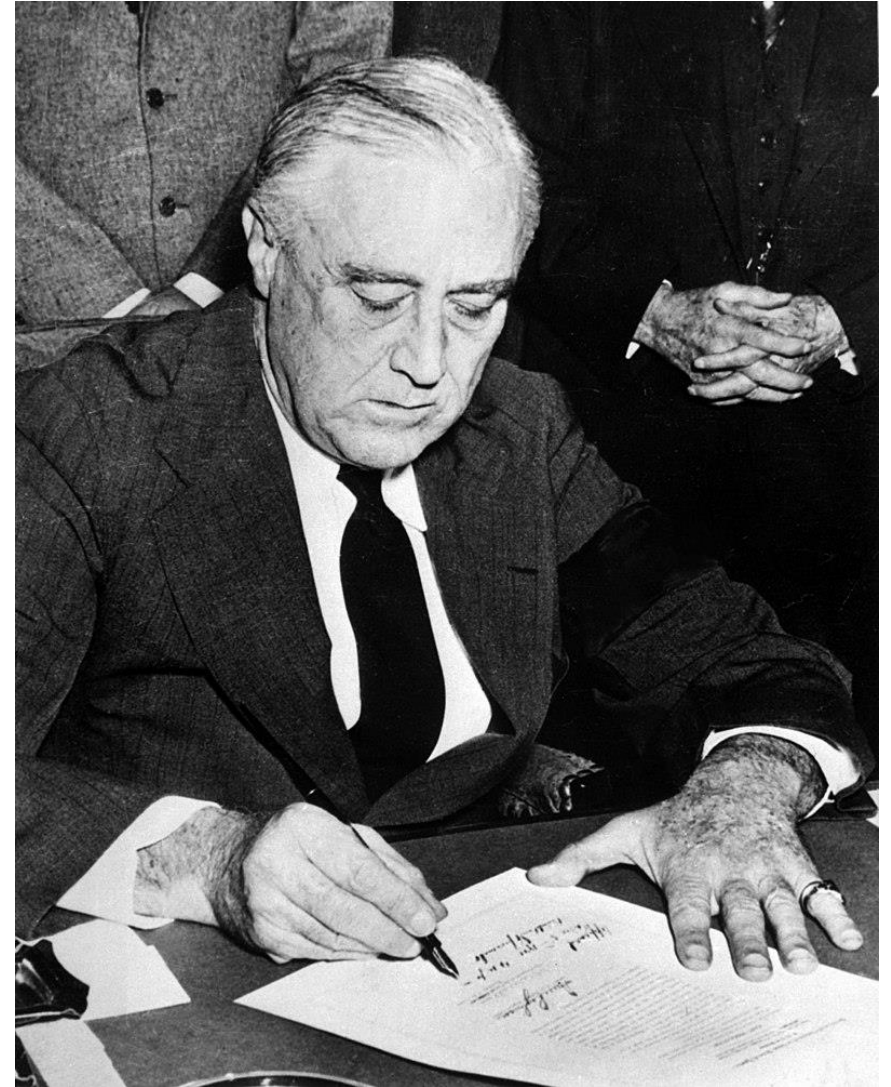
Noon, 15th September

# 15 September - Air

- **SoPac**
- Two B17s on 15/9 bombed the enemy base at Rekata Bay and started fires. No shipping observed.
- On 15th September one squadron of No. 5 Heavy Bombardment Group in Hawaii was ordered to join No. 11 Group at Espiritu Santo.
- **SWP**
- 11 B25s attack Buna and Sanananda and
- one Boston attacks camps at Efogi and Myola and
- 4 B-17's bomb harbor and A/F at Rabaul. 10 to 15 Zeros intercepted, one is claimed destroyed.
- 3 Hudsons obtained one near miss on a vessel in Saumlaki Bay 15/9.
- On the morning of the 15<sup>th</sup> (September), 230 troops of the 126th Regiment together with their small arms and packs were embarked in Douglas and Lockheed transports at Amberley and all were safely carried to Port Moresby that day. Though he sent the rest of the 126<sup>th</sup> by sea, MacArthur was now convinced; he instructed Kenney to collaborate with the American corps commander, Lieut General Robert Eichelberger, in arranging for the air transport of the 128th Regiment beginning on 18th September.
- Aleutians
- 1 B-17 and 1 B-24 fly armed rcn over Kiska, and Fighters strafe Kiska Camp area and down 4 intercepting aircraft.

# 16 Sept - Government

- On 16 September Roosevelt replied that he agreed with the conclusions of the Combined Chiefs of Staff that Australia's present armed forces, assuming that they were fully equipped and effectively trained, were sufficient to defeat the present Japanese force in New Guinea and to provide for the security of Australia against an invasion on the scale that the Japanese were capable of launching at present or in the immediate future.
- The president was said to stay:
- “in charge of his administration...by drawing fully on his formal and informal powers as Chief Executive; by ... ignoring or bypassing collective decision-making agencies, such as the Cabinet...and always by persuading, flattering, juggling, improvising, reshuffling, harmonizing, conciliating, manipulating.”



President Roosevelt

# 16 Sept - Government

- After the failure of the Australian representations, the War Cabinet called for a new appreciation of the Australian defence position and the strength of forces required.
- On the 16th he (Blamey), after his return from Port Moresby, made a broadcast expressing confidence in the outcome (in New Guinea).




AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

022109

General Blamey



# 16 Sept - Government



## Blamey Confident Pt. Moresby Will Be Held

By L. J. FITZ-HENRY, *Courier-Mail War Correspondent*

**C**ONFIDENCE in the ability of the Allies to hold Port Moresby against Japanese attack was expressed by the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Land Forces in the South-west Pacific (Sir Thomas Blamey) yesterday.

He has just returned to Australia from New Guinea.

He added that the further he had got away from Australia, and the closer he had got to the front, the more confidence he had detected among our troops, from their commanders downwards.

"All are certain that the Japanese are not going to get Port Moresby," said General Blamey. "And I think that their confidence is well based."

General Blamey was addressing Australian and overseas war correspondents. In New Guinea he conferred with Allied Commanders and inspected troops in the field.

He said that the landing at Milne Bay on August 26 and the intensification of the pressure in the Kokoda area, which coincided with it, represented a concerted plan to push the Allies out of New Guinea.

He described the Milne Bay battle as "a complete defeat for the Japanese."

### Japs Prefer Our Boots

By L. J. FITZ-HENRY, *Courier-Mail War Correspondent*

**S**OME Japanese soldiers fighting in the Owen Stanley Range are wearing Australian-made A.I.F. boots.

Sir Thomas Blamey, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Land Forces in the South-West Pacific area, disclosed this yesterday.

He said that a number of dead Japanese jungle fighters had been found wearing Australian-made boots instead of the much publicised Japanese two-toed rubber jungle shoe. Probably the boots had been seized from Australian troops in Malaya and Singapore.

The Japanese were in considerable force in the Owen Stanley area, but large numbers of men had not been involved in the fighting, chiefly because of supply limitations.

### Bars To Artillery

He personally doubted the capacity of the Japanese to get heavy artillery across the mountains. So far the heaviest weapons used by the Japanese in the Owen Stanley had been light mountain guns, which had not been very effective because of the difficulty of locating a suitable target in such difficult jungle terrain. Mortars had been used more effectively on both sides.

The Japanese were now meeting with the supply problems that had faced the Australian advance forces at Kokoda.

However, whereas the Australians had had to use native porters, the Japanese had brought with them a small army of Japanese coolies for this work.

Courier Mail 16 September 1942

## REPORT BY BLAMEY FOR WAR COUNCIL

**CANBERRA, Tuesday.**—Recent Japanese advances across the Owen Stanley Range will be discussed at a meeting of the War Council on Thursday.

General Sir Thomas Blamey, who recently visited the area, has submitted a report on operations in the area to Mr. Curtin. Points in this report are expected to be submitted to the War Council.



# 16 September - Sea

- During the 16<sup>th</sup> Turner reassessed the situation.
  - He calculated that the enemy ships off Guadalcanal the previous night would not be able to return on the 16/17<sup>th</sup> and
  - that raids on Rabaul by MacArthur's aircraft should suppress Japanese aircraft.
  - He also got radio intelligence from Ghormley, authoritative but not certain, that the most powerful enemy fleet units had withdrawn to the north.
  - On the basis of this assessment Turner decided at 15.00 to risk the approach to Guadalcanal with no covering forces
- She (Stuart) detached to rendezvous at 5 p.m. on the 16th, 200 miles south of Moresby, with a northbound convoy of five ships escorted by H.M.A. Ships Ballarat and Bendigo.
  - Soon after meeting, the convoys split, and Stuart escorted Van Heutsz, West Cactus (5,581 tons) and Hanyang (2,876 tons) to Milne Bay,
  - while the corvettes took the other two ships to Moresby.
- 13 SBDs and 5 TBFs from Henderson found three enemy destroyers, each towing a barge, heading for Guadalcanal just on twilight on the 16<sup>th</sup>. They sank only one barge and lost an SBD.

# 16 September - Kokoda

- With the morning of the 16th the attackers strained harder at the Australian positions.
- Buttrose thrust through Boag's positions with Captain Archer's "B" Company and gave Clowes the task of ambushing the Japanese if they withdrew. Archer had some local success but lost two men wounded.
- At the same time Withy's two companies, temporarily under Buttrose's command, continued their pressure from the right; but the position was not noticeably eased.
- In the centre the composite battalion, still holding forward, came under heavy fire at 8.30 a.m., and a determined attack half an hour later forced the defenders back some distance. These men were now very battle-worn, after continued bitter, defensive fighting for over three weeks under the most appalling conditions of hardship.
- The 2/14th Battalion diarist recorded:
  - "The strain was beginning to tell on all members of the unit, and some of the lads in forward positions who had stood up to it well and had done a wonderful job right through, began to crack up. Enemy mortar, MG and field piece continued to do deadly work on our forward positions all morning and our casualties mounted.
- On the left the progress of the 2/31st Battalion was still slow in the face of determined opposition.
- The leading company, Captain Hyndman's, which had sustained much of the pressure since the battalion had begun its move, beat off a small but spirited Japanese attack soon after 8 a.m., causing fourteen Japanese casualties, it claimed, for the loss of two men wounded.
- Even the usually imperturbable Eather was taken aback by the situation which was erupting so quickly round him. At 8.15 a.m. on the 16th he signalled to Allen:
  - Enemy feeling whole front and flanks. Do not consider can hold him here.
  - Request permission to withdraw to Imita Ridge if necessary. Porter concurs.

# 16 September - Kokoda

- In a telephone conversation with Allen, which followed at 9.30 a.m., he said that he had no indication of the enemy strength but it was greater than he had anticipated; nor could he give any accurate indications either of his own or the Japanese casualties.
- He said that the Japanese were moving round his flanks and he did not think that he could hold them at Ioribaiwa but would do so if possible.
- He asked Allen whether he felt that if he could not hold at Ioribaiwa he might withdraw to Imita Ridge?
- Allen replied that he must keep on the offensive and must hold the enemy as long as possible. He impressed on Eather the importance of retaining Ioribaiwa but left to him the final decision whether he should withdraw or not.
- Eather then decided to move back, reasoning
  - that if he continued to hold the Ioribaiwa position he would soon have committed all his force to defensive tasks and would have lost any freedom of movement to adopt the offensive;
  - that, as he was obliged to cover Port Moresby, he must keep his force intact;
  - that his supply position was precarious, dependent upon native carriers who would be dispersed by any threat to his lines of communication ;
  - that a withdrawal to the line of Imita Ridge would give him time to establish patrols well forward with a view to advancing again as soon as he had established a firm base.
- With Buttrose still holding on the right Withy began to relieve the composite battalion in the forward positions about 11 a.m. and the small group of men who represented the 2/14th and 2/16<sup>th</sup> Battalions moved back.

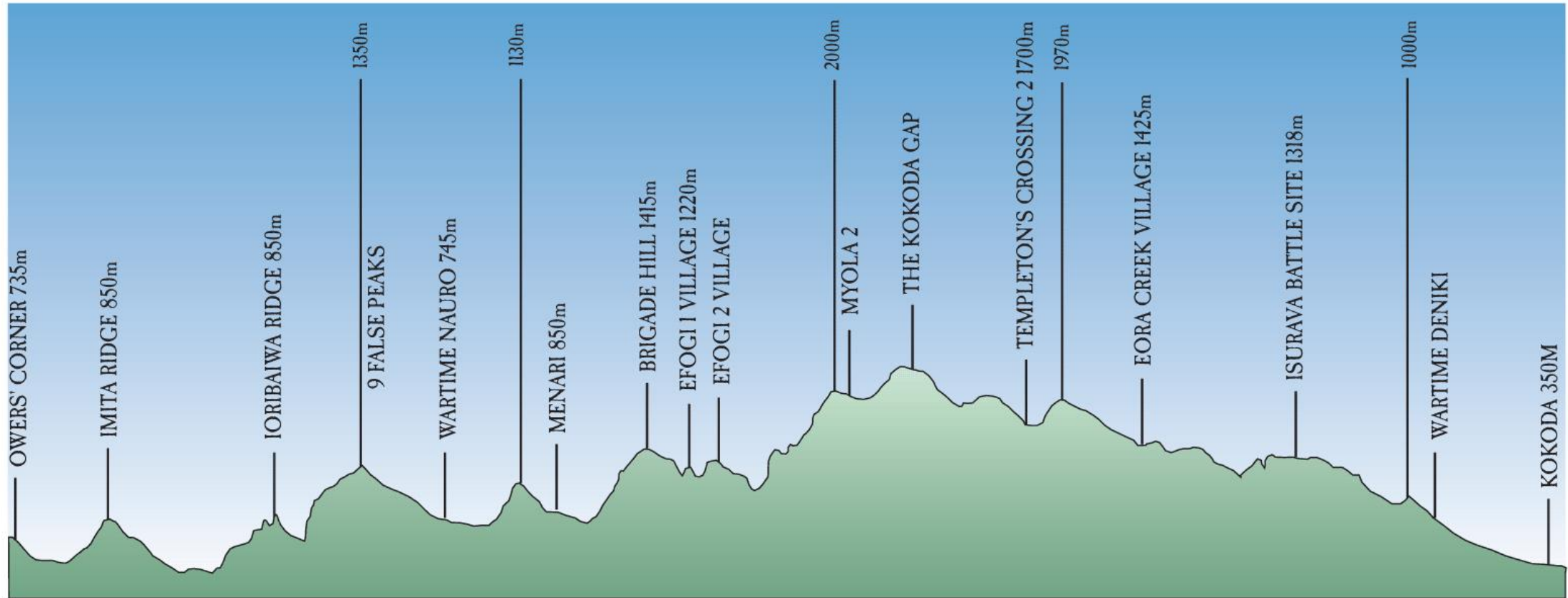
# 16 September - Kokoda

- The 2/25th then remained firm while the other two battalions struck inwards on to the track in their rear. The 2/31st then dropped back.
- At 4.30 p.m. the last of the 2/25th left Ioribaiwa Ridge and passed through the 2/33rd which was thus left on the track as rearguard.
- As night came Captain Miller's company of the 2/33rd formed a rearguard while the rest of the brigade struggled wearily over a slippery track through a night that was made darker by heavy rain.
- Late in the afternoon Allen told Eather that he must fight out the battle on the Imita Ridge.



Brigadier Eather and General Allen

# 16 September - Kokoda



OWEN STANLEY RANGE - KOKODA TRACK

General Rowell, in turn, underlined those instructions in a message to Allen which read: Confirm your orders to Eather. Stress the fact that however many troops the enemy has they must all have walked from Buna. We are now so far back that any further withdrawal is out of question and Eather must fight it out at all costs. I am playing for time until 16 Inf Bde arrives.



# 16 September - Air

- **SWP**
- 4 B-17's bomb wharf and A/F at Rabaul and A/F at Gasmata night of 15/16/9.
- 2 Catalinas attacked Buka A/F night of 15/16.
- *Buna* - 6 Kittyhawks machine -gunned 25 landing barges early 16/9.
- A lone B-17 attacks landing barges in Sanananda area while
- a single A-20 bombs and strafes positions at Nauro and Menari in Efogi area.
- **SoPac**
- 13 dive bombers (photo) and 5 torpedo aircraft (ex Soupac) attacked 3 light cruisers and 4 destroyers. In the Slot at 10.00 /16. One torpedo hit claimed on one light cruiser, and one bomb hit and two near misses on another light cruiser.



A U.S. Navy SBD releasing a bomb. Note the extended dive brakes on the trailing edges.

# 17 September - Government

- **Austerity Campaign**
- The first government action in the austerity campaign was against racing. The purpose was both to check the orgy of betting that had come with the increased circulation of money and to cut down the claims of the racing industry on men, supplies and transport.
- The State Governments were asked to use the power given to them by the Commonwealth to restrict further the number of race meetings. None of the States did so.
- The Commonwealth then brought in restrictions by regulation on 17 September.
- The final decision was to have races only on Saturdays, to have one raceless Saturday each month, to limit the number of events on a race programme, and to restrict the publication of form, comments and tips. The big holiday and carnival meetings in each State were exempted from the regulations.



# 17 September - Government

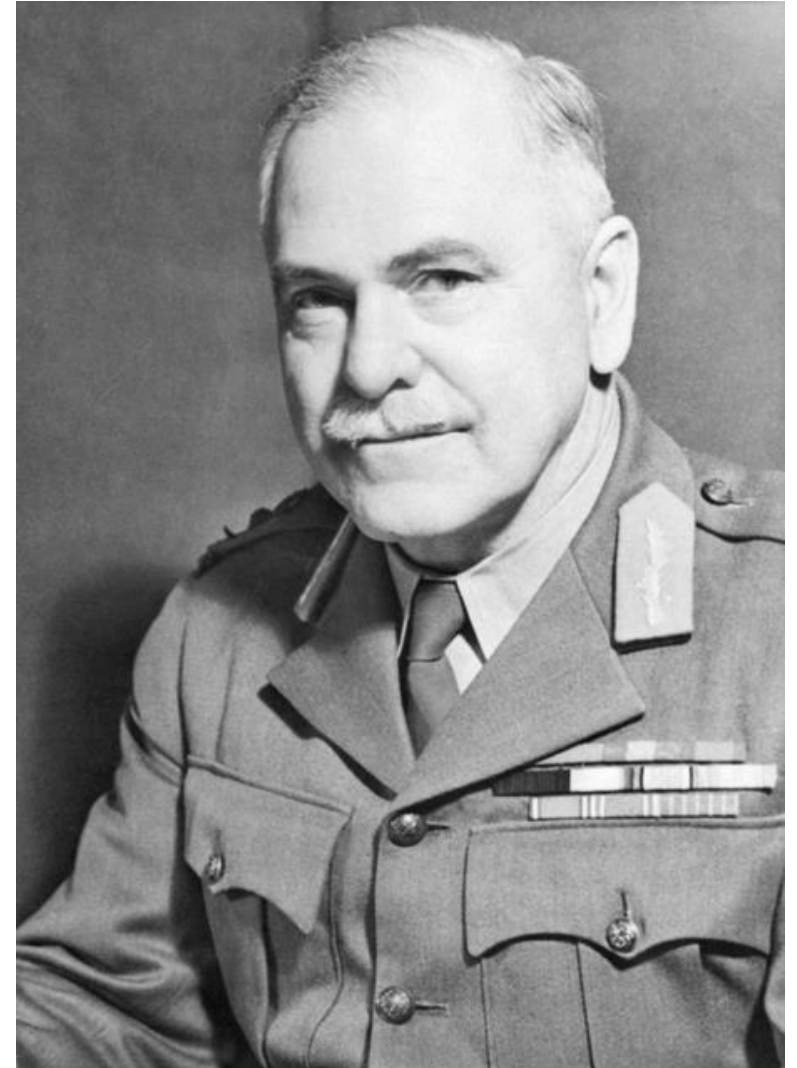
- In a debate on 17th September 1942, Menzies complained about the introduction of compulsory unionism by stealth. He quoted five examples.
  - The Department of Supply and Development had insisted, as a condition of contract, that clothing manufacturers have 100 per cent of union employees.
  - The Departments of Munitions and the Navy had informed their staffs that the benefits of awards and determinations would only be extended to members of unions or associations and to returned soldiers.
  - The Civil Constructional Corps had issued circulars listing a union ticket among the "items of personal equipment" men should bring with them when going to defence jobs and,
  - in the Manpower organisation, the Minister had sought information as to which members of his staff were members of trade unions.
- The debate lapsed under the Standing Orders.



Arthur Fadden, leader of the opposition, (left) and Robert Menzies, opposition back bencher, (right)

# 17 September - Government

- On the 17th he (Blamey) reviewed the operations in Papua and New Guinea before the Advisory War Council. He said that
- the strength of the Allied forces in New Guinea was approximately 30,000, that of their opponents estimated at up to 10,000;
- that the Japanese had a greater number of troops in the forward area than the Australians, their force there considered to be two regiments of an approximate total strength of 6,000;
- that this Japanese preponderance in forward strength was a result of Allied supply difficulties .
- In addition to the 25th Brigade which had recently arrived, the 16th Brigade was on the water, one squadron of light tanks was soon to be sent to Port Moresby with another squadron scheduled to follow; three field regiments, a mountain battery and one horse pack-transport unit were also being sent.
- In addition "a regiment of U.S. troops (approximately 3,500) was being sent to Port Moresby in accordance with the desire of the Commander-in-Chief S.W.P.A. that American troops should obtain experience in operations and in the development of supply arrangements in this area".
- He concluded by saying "Lieut-General Rowell, Major-General Allen and the troops are confident that the Japanese will not be able to take Port Moresby from the land", and that he shared their confidence.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

022111

# 17 September - Kokoda

- Next morning (17<sup>th</sup>) Miller's men were still waiting in carefully-arranged ambush. They held their fire when the Japanese first appeared then poured volleys into an advancing group.
- As the platoons afterwards "leapfrogged" back the pursuing Japanese were fairly caught by mortar fire. When the Australians finally broke contact they estimated that they had shot down fifty Japanese without loss to themselves.
- By 11 a.m. on the 17th the main deployment on Imita Ridge had been completed. The 3rd Battalion was on the right of the track, the 2/25th in the centre, the 2/31st on the left. The 2/1st Pioneers were on the left rear and it was planned that the 2/33rd would fill the right rear position when their withdrawal was complete. The composite battalion, 272 strong was moving to cover Uberi.
- The men, lacking shovels, had dug in with bayonets and steel helmets, screened by the offensive patrolling which Eather had put into operation.
- The patrols were about 50 strong, all ranks. They carried five days' rations, a Bren gun and at least seven sub-machine-guns, and were ordered to harass their enemies, particularly along the lines of communication.
- As they began to operate Eather was getting the breathing space he needed for the Japanese had not followed his withdrawal. Nor had his losses been heavy: 8 had been killed, 84 wounded in exchange, he estimated, for some 200 Japanese killed.





# 17 September - Kokoda

- After consulting with Rowell, MacNider decided they would
  - go via Rigo, a coastal village 40 or 50 miles south-east of Port Moresby,
  - up the valley of the Kemp Welsh River thence to Dorobisolo on the southern slopes of the main range.
  - They would strike then north-east across the range to Jaure on the Kumusi River and
  - follow the line of the Kumusi to Wairopi on the Buna side of Kokoda.
- Over this proposed route a small reconnaissance patrol started on the 17<sup>th</sup> (September), guided by Lieutenant Smith of Angau.



# 17 September - Air

- On 17th September, five days after No. 30 Squadron reached Port Moresby, 12 Beaufighters were sent to attack a concentration of enemy barges at Sanananda Point and along Buna beach. As the aircraft left the target, three of the barges were blazing fiercely, and others were seen to be on fire with their cargoes exploding. A pall of black smoke was seen.
- P-400's, P-40's, and P-39's also strafed and bombed landing barges at Buna and Sanananda Pt.
- B-17's, carrying out single-bomber attacks, bomb airfields at Rabaul and Lae, and hit a beached cargo vessel at Salamaua.
- Moresby suffered its 80<sup>th</sup> air raid but no significant damage was reported.



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

# 17 September - Government

- On the evening of 17 September Curtin Receives telephone call from General MacArthur warning that 'Moresby might be lost' and requesting that General Blamey be sent there to take 'personal control of the battle.
- MacArthur said that he considered that the real reason for the unsatisfactory position there was the lack of efficiency of the Australian troops; that he was convinced that the Australians were in superior numbers to the Japanese in the Owen Stanleys, but despite that, were, as at the beginning of the campaign, still withdrawing;
- that the Japanese, for their part, must be having similar difficulties to the Australians but they were not withdrawing.
- MacArthur felt that, if the Japanese penetration continued, the Allies in New Guinea would be forced into such a defensive concentration as would duplicate the conditions of Malaya.
- The invaders, he said, had not pushed across the mountains with a serious force and the fact that a small force could press such a situation on the defenders was causing him serious unease.





# 17 September - Government

- MacArthur was at pains to point out that his view of the matter was not the view of the Australian military leaders. They were confident of their ability to meet the situation.
- But so far was he from sharing that confidence that he proposed to send American troops to the area by air or sea in order to do everything possible to stem the attack.
- Within a week he expected to have 40,000 men in New Guinea and, if they fought, they should have no trouble in meeting the situation.
- If they would not fight, he said, 100,000 there would be no good. He had been told that he could expect very substantial air reinforcements in the future but the commitments of the British and American fleets had left him without adequate naval support.
- He was affected by the American position in the Solomons which he thought was not favourable. On the whole, he considered, his problem was reduced to one of fending off the Japanese for some months, and the fight to this end must be made in New Guinea.



# 17 September - Government

- MacArthur's most immediate point was that General Blamey should go at once to New Guinea, personally take command there and "energize the situation".
- Not only did he consider this a military necessity but, for Blamey, he thought it was a personal necessity since, if the situation became really serious, it would be difficult for the Australian leader to meet his responsibility to the Australian public.
- MacArthur said he would speak to Blamey in these terms, although he had no authority actually to direct him. He asked if the Prime Minister would follow by speaking to the Australian general himself.
- Mr Curtin said that he would tell General Blamey that he considered he should go to New Guinea and take command there. This he did by phone that day. Blamey agreed.



# 18 September - Government

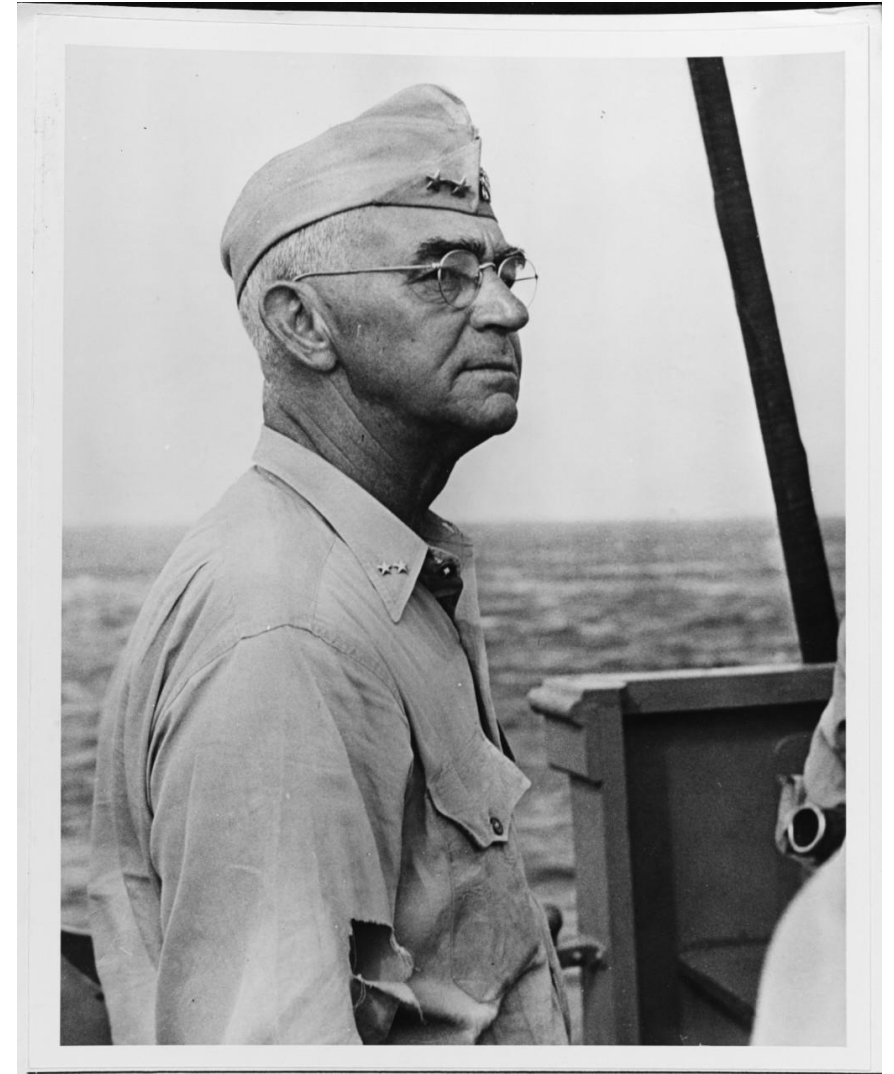
- On 18 September Curtin Holds press conference at which he says that the
- 'position in New Guinea was now much more stable. Fighting had died down and our men were in a much stronger position.
- He thought now that if the ordinary rules held good, we should be able to hold on until we were ready for an offensive'





# 18 September - Sea

- **Guadalcanal**
- Escorted by three cruisers plus the destroyers of the newly formed Task Force 65, Turner's transports spent four days at sea, skirting enemy naval forces in the Solomons waters. The convoy finally anchored off Kukum early in the morning of 18 September.
- While the reinforced 7th Marines unloaded its 4,262 men, three other transports brought in an emergency shipment of aviation gasoline.
- The ships put ashore 3,823 drums of fuel, 147 vehicles, 1,012 tons of rations and nearly all of the 7th Marines' supplies and ammunition.
- Turner's force then took on board the 1st Parachute Battalion, 162 American wounded, and eight Japanese prisoners and departed for Espiritu Santo at 1800.
- After this successful convoy men on Guadalcanal began to draw more adequate rations.
- 8 Japanese warships were also off Guadalcanal after dark on the 18<sup>th</sup>, landing supplies, searching for Turner's convoy then bombarding the perimeter.



Admiral Richmond K. Turner

# 18 September - Sea

- **Milne Bay**
- Stuart and her convoy reached Milne Bay about midnight on the 17th, and the next morning Spurgeon was told by Colonel Litchfield, of General Clowes' staff, that it was desired to land a company on Normanby Island to secure approximately 80 unarmed survivors from the sunken Japanese destroyer.
- Stuart made a hurried trip to Moresby to fuel and Bendigo from that port went to Milne Bay to take over Stuart's antisubmarine responsibilities.



HMAS Stuart, Destroyer Flotilla Leader, built and commissioned in the RN in 1918, loaned to Australia and commissioned in the RAN 1933. Decommissioned and recommissioned twice in the thirties.

# 18 September

- **Kokoda**

- One of the first of the strong patrols to go out on the 18th was led by Captain Dodd of the 2/25th Battalion.
- On the 18th September two companies of the American 128th Regiment arrived at Moresby by air and the rest of the regiment followed in the next few days.

- **Air - New Guinea**

- 1 B-17 bombs Salamaua while
- a B-25 strafes pack trains on Kokoda trail in Andemba-Wairopi-Kokoda area.

- **Air - Guadalcanal**

- On 18 September six Navy TBF's from the Wasp air group arrived at Henderson Field.

# 19 September – Courier Mail

## FORDE HITS A.M.F. SLUR

CANBERRA, Friday.—The use of the name "chocos," as applied to militiamen, was deplored to-day by the Army Minister (Mr. Forde).

He said that with the example of the two militia and aircraft gunners who on Thursday had been awarded Military Medals for bravery, no more should be heard of the term.

The name was usually applied by the ignorant, who had not seen militiamen in action.

Mr. Forde said that he had had very satisfactory reports about the morale, efficiency, and discipline of militiamen.

"I am satisfied," he added, "that we have in the A.M.F. a fine type of soldier. They are all men making a great sacrifice, and it is my aim to see that they are as well treated as possible consistent with the exigencies of the war position."

present system, which imposed restrictions of prices only on retailers, said the secretary of the Queensland branch of the Master Butchers' Federation (Mr. J. Munro).

● Page 3: Attack on Racket.

## No Coupons For Goods; £5 Fine

BEAUDESERT, Friday. — Alfred George Claybrook was fined £5, and ordered to pay £3/14/ costs by Mr. W. P. Wilson, S.M., in the Police Court to-day for having supplied goods without collecting coupons.

The charge was that on August 4 he supplied coupon goods—piece goods—otherwise than against the surrender of the appropriate number of coupons.

Mr. Muir (Commonwealth Crown Solicitor's Office) appeared for the complainant, Mr. S. F. Cochran (Deputy Director of Rationing) and Mr. J. S. Gilshenan appeared for Claybrook, who pleaded guilty.

It was the first case of its kind in Queensland.

## NOTIFICATION

RE BRANDS

AND PACKINGS

CIGARETTES AND TOBACCOS

In response to the request of the Department of War Organisation of Industry, the Directors of W. D. & H. O. Wills (Aust.) Ltd. and the British Australasian Tobacco Company Pty. Ltd. have decided to eliminate a number of brands and packings of CIGARETTES AND TOBACCOS which are now very popular on the Australian market.

It is recognised that many smokers in Australia have supported our brands now to be discontinued, and we express to them our sincere regret for any inconvenience caused to them by this inevitable war measure and trust that they will co-operate by accommodating themselves to our brands remaining on the market.

W. D. & H. O. WILLS (AUST.) LTD.

British Australasian Tobacco Co. Pty. Ltd.



# 19 September – Courier Mail

## **BLAMEY CRITICISED FOR STATEMENT**

**LONDON.** September 17.—General Blamey is criticised by the Star for his statement on New Guinea. The Star says that he stands for the cheerful optimist who always is reassuring.

When the Nazis reached Boulogne his type told us we had the enemy just where we wanted him.

Singapore for them was a fortress that would never fall.

Now they seek to persuade us the Japanese have reached the limit of expansion.

The Japanese in the South-west Pacific endanger the whole world-wide task of the United Nations.

## **NO DELUSIONS, SAYS GENERAL KENNEY**

"I have no delusions about this war," Major-General G. C. Kenney, Allied Air Commander in the South-west Pacific, said yesterday in reply to a suggestion by the New York Herald-Tribune that he was over-optimistic about the progress of the Pacific war.

"Anyone who thinks we have not a first-class fight on our hands should roll over and dream on the other side. If there is anyone who talks of quitting, he need not talk to me, but if talking of licking the Japs is optimism, then put me among the optimists."

# 19 September

- **Sea**
- USS Amberjack torpedoed and sank a Japanese navy transport, estimated as 3,000 tons, in the Bougainville Strait, 11 miles east of Lulaui Point, Bougainville on 19th September.
- **Air –New Guinea**
- 6 A-20's and 6 B-26's strafe and bomb A/F at Lae.
- 3 B-17's attack cargo vessels near Umboi (Rooke) I. Small fire started.
- Vessel is strafed by ftrs off Goodenough I.
- 7 Beaufighters attack enemy positions at Buna.
- Moresby suffers raid No 81. No significant damage is reported.
- **Air – Burma**
- B-25's strike Lungling. The raid is ineffective due to bad weather but results in discovery of much Japanese activity which further rcn reveals as part of heavy movement of enemy and supplies along Burma Road toward Salween front.



# 19 September - Kokoda

- Between Imita Ridge and Ioribaiwa Dodd located a Japanese post in the course of preparation. Before dawn on the 19th he rushed this with grenades, sub-machine-guns and bayonets. On the morning of the 19th he continued skirmishing and then, still forward, rested in ambush waiting for night to come again.
- Apart from this small action the day was uneventful except that the 2/33rd Battalion entered the main positions.
- Eather's force was then concentrated and firm, its main strength numbering 132 officers and 2,492 men made up as follows :
  - HQ 25th Brigade 8 and 70
  - 2/25th Battalion 27 and 520
  - 2/31st Battalion. 26 and 502
  - 2/33rd Battalion. 28 and 490
  - 2/1st Pioneer Battalion. 20 and 540
  - 3rd Battalion. 22 and 347
  - 2/6 Independent Company Patrol 1 and 23.

# 19 September - Guadalcanal

- On 19 September, Vandegrift's operational Plan 11-42 provided for a complete perimeter defence by dividing the defenses into new sectors with increased all-around strength.
- Vandegrift and his staff frankly admitted that the new scheme was a “cordon defence of the worst type”. These had been rejected by staff colleges everywhere, since Napoleonic times, for their vulnerability to an enemy who massed his artillery and infantry against one point.
- The plan also contained the unprecedented statement that “The defense of Guadalcanal will be primarily by air”
- The Marines, based on their own recent experience, believed that the Japanese displayed little imagination in their planning and entertained a faulty concept of the effectiveness of modern massed firepower. The continuous perimeter defence would prevent the Japanese’s favourite infiltration tactics being effective. And they were confident that Marine rifle units in well prepared, well wired positions backed by well prepared artillery and mortars could defeat Japanese attacks even when heavily outnumbered.
- For the first time men and weapons were protected by barbed wire which had come in with the Seventh Marines. No longer would they be dependent on a single strand of trip wire salvaged from coconut plantation fences.
- The Perimeter fire power was boosted by a decision made years ago in Washington to arm each of the Corps’ amphibian tractors with five machine guns, one .5 and four .3s. The amphibian tractor battalion had a hundred of these vehicles giving 500 machine guns, which were quickly transferred from the vehicles to the perimeter cordon.

# 20 September - Command

- In his (Blamey's) letter to Rowell on the 20<sup>th</sup> (September) he wrote:
- The powers that be have determined that I shall myself go to New Guinea for a while and operate from there.
- I do not, however, propose to transfer many of Adv HQ Staff and will arrive by aeroplane Wednesday evening, I hope with Hopkins.
- At present I propose to bring with me only my PA, Major Carlyon, two extra cipher officers and Lieut Lawson. I hope you will be able to house us in your camp and messes.
- I hope you will not be upset at this decision and will not think that it implies any lack of confidence in yourself. I think it arises out of the fact that we have very inexperienced politicians who are inclined to panic on every possible occasion, and I think the relationship between us personally is such that we can make the arrangement work without any difficulty.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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# 20 September -

- **Sea**
- by noon on Sunday, 20th September, Stuart was back in Milne Bay completing preparations for the operation.
- Voyager arrived (in Darwin) on the 20th—to carry the 2/4th Independent Company to Timor.
- **Kokoda**
- The 20th passed quietly. Dodd waited until the day was late but the Japanese showed no signs of advancing. He then started back while a similar patrol from the 3rd Battalion under Captain Atkinson moved forward. Other patrols had little to report.



HMAS Voyager, built 1918 for the RN loaned to Australia 1933.

# 20 September - Air

- **SWP**
- In the Owen Stanley Range, 6 A-20's bomb and strafe troops and installations at Sangara, Arehe, and along the Popondetta-Andemba road, and
- 12 P-40's strafe A/F at Kokoda, bridges on trail near Wairopi, and troops at Myola, Efogi, and Kagi.
- Five Beaufighters attacked a tug and 4/5 barges at Lae 12.40/20. The barges were set on fire And the wharf possibly damaged. No activity was observed on the aerodrome.
- **SOPAC**
- Adm Fitch replaces Admiral McCain as COMAIRSOPAC.



Admiral Fitch

# 21 September - Government

- On 21 September Curtin holds press conference and announces that America and Britain had 'rejected our further appeals for aid'.
- Curtin said he was "'profoundly disturbed" at the replies from the Prime Minister and the President' and 'told the whole story today, reading us the secret cables from Bruce, Dixon and Roosevelt, and he is convinced that nothing can alter the decision, and that it would be useless for him to go to Washington. ...
- The Curtin interview lasted more than an hour. He reiterated that he was "profoundly disturbed" and he seemed glad to talk about his troubles.'





## 21 September - Sea

- 4 destroyers towing barges made a supply run to Kanimbo on the night of 20/21 September. Ten SBDs caught them on the way home on 21<sup>st</sup> and damaged one of the destroyers. Two other SBDs dispatched to attack Gizo became lost and ditched. A Coastwatcher picked up all but one of the four crewmen.
- USS Trout torpedoed and sank a Japanese navy auxiliary of about 1,000 tons, in the Pacific south of Truk on 21st September.
- USS Grouper torpedoed and sank a cargo ship of about 4,000 tons, in the East China Sea off Shanghai on 21st September.
- Another four destroyers made a supply run to Kanimbo on the night of 21/22 September. On a clear night American planes caught and strafed them causing some damage.

# 21 September

- **Kokoda**
- The 16th Brigade AIF had disembarked at Port Moresby on the 21<sup>st</sup> (September) and the headquarters of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division was operational in Port Moresby by then and took over the 30<sup>th</sup> brigade as well as the 16<sup>th</sup>.
- **Air SWP**
- On 21st September the new force was renamed R.A.A.F. Command, Allied Air Forces.
- On 21st September Airacobra pilots of Nos. 35 and 36 U.S. Fighter Squadrons flew in to Milne Bay No. 3 Strip to relieve the Kittyhawk pilots of Nos. 75 and 76. The two Australian units then moved, No. 75 to Horn Island and No. 76 to North-Western Area.
- 10 P-40's bomb and strafe bridges and targets of opportunity along Buna-Kokoda trail.
- 21/9 Moresby raid 82. 24/30 bombers escorted by 10 Zeros attacked Rorona (Rogers) aerodrome 35 miles NW Port Moresby at 1209/21. No damage.
- **SoPac**
- Buka. One Catalina bombed runway and dispersal areas Buka aerodrome 02.00/21. Results not observed.



Troops from the 2/2nd Infantry Battalion of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division enter Bardia, Libya, 3 January 1941. The 6<sup>th</sup> Division had subsequently also fought in Greece and Crete.

# COIC – 22 September

21 September

## 1. 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.

22 September

## 4. ENEMY'S PROBABLE NEXT MOVE

- (i) Continued night infiltration on Guadalcanal by means of destroyers and submarines from the Buin - Paiai - Tonolei Harbour base.
- (ii) Heavy naval and air counter-attacks against allied positions in the Solomons, with a view to re-occupation of Guadalcanal.
- (iii) Heavy attack and attempt at consolidation Milne Bay - Buna area.
- (iv) Attack on Port Moresby area.
- (v) Intensified submarine activity in the S.W.P.A.

## 22 September - Sea

- USS Grunion had torpedoed a Japanese navy transport, off Kiska, Alaska, on 31 July 1942. Only one of three torpedoes that hit having actually detonated. The ship was only damaged and it was towed to Kiska harbour. She was washed ashore and wrecked by a storm on 22 September 1942.
- Troops under Captain Brocksopp of the 2/10th Battalion, embarked in Stuart at Milne Bay whence she sailed at 1 a.m. on the 22nd for Cape Pierson, Normanby Island, where she arrived at 6.30 a.m. The island here is steep to, with over 100 fathoms within one cable of the shore, and Stuart had to anchor in 25 fathoms so close to that there was insufficient swinging room, and she had to be manoeuvred stern to current (about two knots) with main engines. She disembarked her troops in luggers, and returned to Milne Bay, where she arrived about midday.
- At 6 p.m. on Tuesday, 22nd September, Voyager, having embarked 15 tons of army stores, eight army barges, a 14-foot motor skiff, and 250 officers and men of the 2/4th Independent Company under Captain Garvey, sailed from Darwin. Sub-Lieutenant Bennett, who had been to Betano in command of Kuru and Vigilant, was in Voyager to help with navigational knowledge.
- On Normanby Island the Australians were unable to locate the main body of the Japanese. During the night of the 22nd, while Stuart was absent in Milne Bay, two Japanese ships—the soldiers on shore believed them to be a destroyer and small escort vessel—were seen about a mile out to sea, signalling to the beach by morse lamp. Subsequently they swept the beach with searchlights.

# 22 September - Kokoda

- On 22 September Curtin Telephones General Blamey in Brisbane, reiterating previous order to go to Port Moresby.
- The next three days were marked by Japanese passivity under bombardment from guns of the 14th Field Regiment, sited at Owers' Corner, in the face of questing Australian patrols, and on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September, by a cautious movement forward along the track by the 2/25th Battalion. Withy met no opposition although, ahead of him and west of Ioribaiwa, Atkinson's patrol lost four men killed.
- The main body of the 2/27th Battalion, which had lost contact with the brigade on 8 September struggled out of the jungle to the roadhead near Jawarere on 22<sup>nd</sup> September after an arduous journey, suffering from the cold and wet and lack of food. For the stretcher parties, however, the ordeal was not yet over. In the whole operation the 2/27th Battalion lost 39 men killed and 2 missing, believed killed; 3 officers and 43 men were wounded.

# 22 September - Air

- BUKA - 3 Catalinas attacked aerodrome 0001/22. 114 bombs dropped. *One* large fire started.
- 6 A-20's bomb and strafe occupied areas at Menari, Efogi, Nauro, Yodda, and Kokoda.
- 12 P-40s and 4 Aircobras strafe AA positions, huts, and barges at Buna and Salamaua and bomb and strafe Wairopi bridge, strafe buildings at Yodda, A/F at Buna, and AA positions and other tgts along Buna-Kokoda trail.
- 1 B-25 bombs N end of Buna A/F and coastal end of Sanananda track.
- 5 B-17's bomb A/F and shipping at Rabaul 22.00/22. Two probable hits amidships claimed on a large vessel.



# 23 September - Government

- In March 1942 it had been announced that a Women's Employment Board would be established.
- Employers wishing to engage women in work usually performed by men would apply to the board which, if it granted permission, would also set the female rate of pay at a percentage of the male rate, but not less than 60 per cent.
- An attempt at disallowance of the regulation in the Senate had failed in May, when Senator Johnston, a Western Australian Country Party member, voted with the Government, and another Opposition senator was absent.
- On 23rd September, a fortnight after Johnston had died, and with all members present, the Senate, in which the Opposition still had a majority of one, succeeded in disallowance of the regulations constituting the board.



The late Senator Bertie Johnston

# 23 September – Strategy and Command

- **Solomons**
- On September 23 General Arnold, on a visit to the South Pacific, reached Noumea, where he conferred with Ghormley and was appalled by the waste of shipping and obvious mismanagement of logistics.
- Noumea was a logistical bottle neck. It lacked berthing space, storage space, unloading equipment and adequate numbers of skilled or unskilled longshoremen. Each Service competed at Noumea for use of each ingredient of logistical support.
- Shipping, the scarcest strategic resource of the allies, was tied up waiting to be unloaded or even being used as storage in the absence of storage space on land.
- **New Guinea**
- When Blamey arrived at Port Moresby at 5 p.m. on 23rd September Rowell met him, quickly made it clear that he did not welcome him, and it soon became painfully evident that "the arrangement" would not work as Blamey had hoped.



General Arnold, Commanding General, US Army Air Forces

# 23 September – Sea

- She (Stuart) returned to Normanby Island next day, and arrived on the west side of Cape Pierson at 4 p.m. on the 23rd. She re-embarked the troops, plus eight Japanese prisoners, and was back in Milne Bay by 9 p.m.
- Next day (23 September), at 5.45 p.m., Timor was sighted. Voyager, steering westerly to keep two miles off shore, altered northward into Betano Bay at 6.23 p.m.
  - The only sheltered anchorage (at Betano) is in a channel between two reefs in about the centre of the bay. There were no navigational aids or marks on shore to help and Robison had nothing by which to navigate save a very rough sketch plan (with no soundings), his echo sounder, and lead, and such information as Sub-Lieutenant Bennett was able to give him.
  - Voyager felt her way in towards the anchorage between the reefs, with echo sounder, and leadsman in the chains.
  - At 6.28, about two-and-a-half cables (500 yards) from the beach and three-and-a-half to four cables from the main (seaward) reef, Robison stopped the ship and let go starboard anchor.
  - A minute later, when the ship was riding to her cable, apparently with ample swinging room, he gave the order to carry on disembarking troops.
  - About five minutes after anchoring, Robison realised that the ship appeared to be closing the beach.
  - He decided it was advisable to weigh and shift out to deep water.
  - The best way to get out was to swing the stern out by going astern on the port engine. Unfortunately by now disembarkation boats had been lowered, and two army barges, half full of troops, were immediately over the port propeller. Robison could not get the troops to understand the necessity to move the barges quickly. "There was a considerable amount of loud talking, catcalling etc. taking place, and I found it extremely difficult to get my orders through and obeyed." "By going astern on the port engine and ahead on the starboard to endeavour to get the stern out into deep water, I should have upset the boats and army personnel."
  - He decided, therefore to turn the ship to starboard and proceed ahead. The starboard propeller was clear, and I decided to head the ship clear of the reef by moving that engine slow astern.
  - For some 16 minutes Robison manoeuvred Voyager slowly round, using his starboard propeller only. Then at 6.50 p.m. "Half ahead both. Starboard twenty degrees. Ship's head clear of reefs." Less than a minute later, and only 23 minutes after she had anchored and started disembarkation, Voyager took the ground aft.
  - Walker's men (of the Independent Company) did not wait to see the final acts of this drama play out but hurried inland to join the forward troops of the other company.

# 23 September – Sea

- In Darwin on the 23rd the corvette Warrnambool (Lieutenant Barron) returned to base in the afternoon after patrolling the western approaches. She anchored, and obtained permission to cool off furnaces and rebuild cones which had collapsed.
- Efforts to free and float her (Voyager), continued by all possible means were fruitless, and were hampered by a south-east wind rising to moderate force, and raising a moderate sea which bumped the ship on the ground. Depth-charges and heavy weights aft were jettisoned, torpedoes fired. Nothing availed.
- In the evening of the 23rd, Robison told N.O.I.C. Darwin by signal of his plight, and about 1 a.m. on the 24th amplified that signal with news of the failure to refloat the ship, and "intend to wreck ship by demolition if capture seems probable".



*Voyager ashore at Betano, Timor.*  
(R.A.N. Historical Section)

The new USS Lexington, second of the Essex class carriers, was launched on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1942.

# 23 September – Guadalcanal

- Patrol actions had confirmed intelligence estimates that a strong enemy force was operating from the Matanikau village area on the west bank of the river, but that there were few enemy east of the perimeter.
- The division then planned a series of actions to clear the Matanikau sector.
- The first action against this enemy force sent Lieutenant Colonel Lewis Puller's 1st Battalion, 7th Marines into the Mount Austen area on 23 September.
- The Marines were to cross the Matanikau upstream and patrol between that river and the village of Kokumbona. The action was to be completed by 26 September at which time the 1st Raider Battalion was to advance along the coast to Kokumbona where a permanent patrol base was to be established.



Lieutenant Colonel Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, USMC,  
Commanding Officer of 1st Battalion, 7th Marine  
Regiment at Guadalcanal (September 1, 1942)



# 23 September – Guadalcanal



Above - Puller with members of the Guardia Nacional  
Left - First Lieutenant Lewis "Chesty" Puller (center left) and Sergeant William "Ironman" Lee (center right) and two Nicaraguan soldiers in 1931



# 23 September - Air

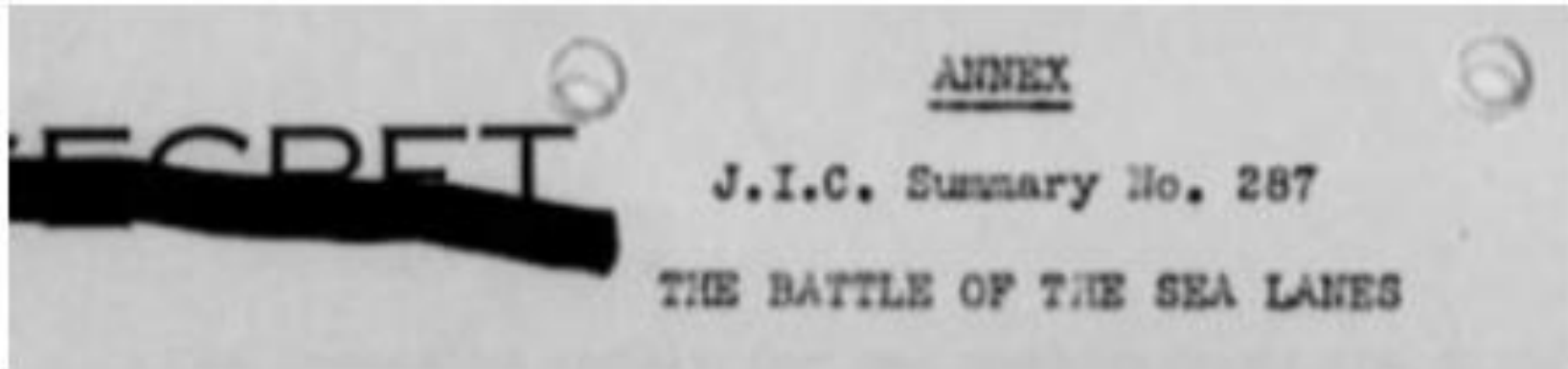
- **SWP**

- On 23rd September seven Beaufighters attacked anti-aircraft positions at Buna. An aircraft piloted by Flight Sergeant Sayer with Sergeant Mairet as his observer, was shot down by ground fire. In the course of this attack the Beaufighter crews noted that about 75 per cent of the Japanese barges along the beaches in the area had been sunk.
- On the same day (23<sup>rd</sup> September), while a second formation of six Beaufighters was making an offensive sweep along the coast to Sanananda, nine enemy dive bombers escorted by six Zeros were sighted over Buna by the crew of one of the Beaufighters. The pilot dived almost to sea-level at 260 knots. Within a mile the Beaufighter had out-distanced the Zeros.
- In 5 separate attacks P-40's, P-39's, P-400's, and B-17's hit tanks, buildings, and airfield at Buna, Wairopi bridge and targets of opportunity on Buna-Kokoda trail, and Taupota Mission near Goodenough Bay.
- 23/9 Moresby raid 83. One enemy aircraft raided Moresby 1944/23. Nil damage or casualties.

- **SOPAC**

- The 72d Bomb Sq (B-17's) of the 5th Bomb Gp joins 11th Bomb Gp on Espiritu Santo from Hawaii.

# JIC 23 September 42



Of the 654,000 gross tons of cargo vessels (representing 118 vessels) lost by belligerent action during August, something like 350,000 tons (representing something like 60 vessels), or somewhat more than one-half, was sunk while in convoy. This includes 9 vessels of 86,000 gross tons sunk during the passage of a convoy from Gibraltar to Malta.

The losses so far reported for the period 1-12 September (not shown below) amount to 37 vessels of 171,000 gross tons. This represents a rate of loss of only 428,000 tons a month, but the reports on which that figure is based probably do not cover all the losses during the period.

# JIC 23 September 42

Gross Tonnage in 1,000's of Register Tons					
Period	Losses from -			New Tonnage Completed	Net Gain (G) or Loss (L)
	Belligerent Action	Other Causes	All Causes		
Before Jan. 1, 1942	8,944	770	9,714	3,413	6,301 L
Jan. 1942	416	84	500	226	275 L
February	670	30	700	257	443 L
March	775	33	808	314	494 L
April	642	30	672	427	245 L
May	714	14	728	575	153 L
June	844	5	849	634	215 L
July	613	1	614	677	63 G
August	654	28	682	680	2 L
First 8 mo. of 1942	5,328	225	5,553	3,789	1,764 L
Total to 8/31/42	14,272	996	15,267	7,202	8,065 L
Monthly Averages					
Before 1/1/42	319	28	347	122	225 L
First 8 mo. of '42	666	28	694	474	220 L

DECLASSIFIED  
JCS Memo, 1-4-74  
By RHP, KLR, Date MAR 11 1974

# 23 September - Industry

- The term "Rosie the Riveter" was first used in 1942 in a song of the same name. The song was recorded by numerous artists and it became a national hit.
- "Rosie the Riveter" recognised and inspired a social movement that increased the number of working American women from 12 million to 20 million by 1944, a 57% increase from 1940.
- By 1944 only 1.7 million unmarried men between the ages of 20 and 34 worked in the US defense industry, while 4.1 million unmarried women between those ages did so.



Women at work on bomber, Douglas Aircraft Company, Long Beach, California (1942)

## 23 September - Industry

- In his state of the union message in January President Roosevelt had promised to build 6 million tonnes of shipping in 1942 and 10 million tonnes in 1943.
- By the 2nd half of 1942 the yards contracted in the first waves of shipbuilding expansion were fully built and those yards had completed three or more ships per building way.
- The time for building the ships fell dramatically as experience was gained by the workers and by management.



Eastine Cowner, a former waitress, at work on the Liberty ship *SS George Washington Carver* at the Kaiser shipyards, Richmond, California

# 23 September - Industry

- One major contribution to getting the productivity so high was the use of welding and prefabrication in which large sections of each ship would be built off the building ways and then moved into position only when the assemblers were ready.
- Wendy the Welder joined Rosie the Riveter as a key contributor to the American war effort.
- This method became so efficient that the time for a Liberty ship to be fully assembled, launched, outfitted and delivered went from a program average of almost 240 days at the beginning of 1942 to only 56 days at the end of the year.

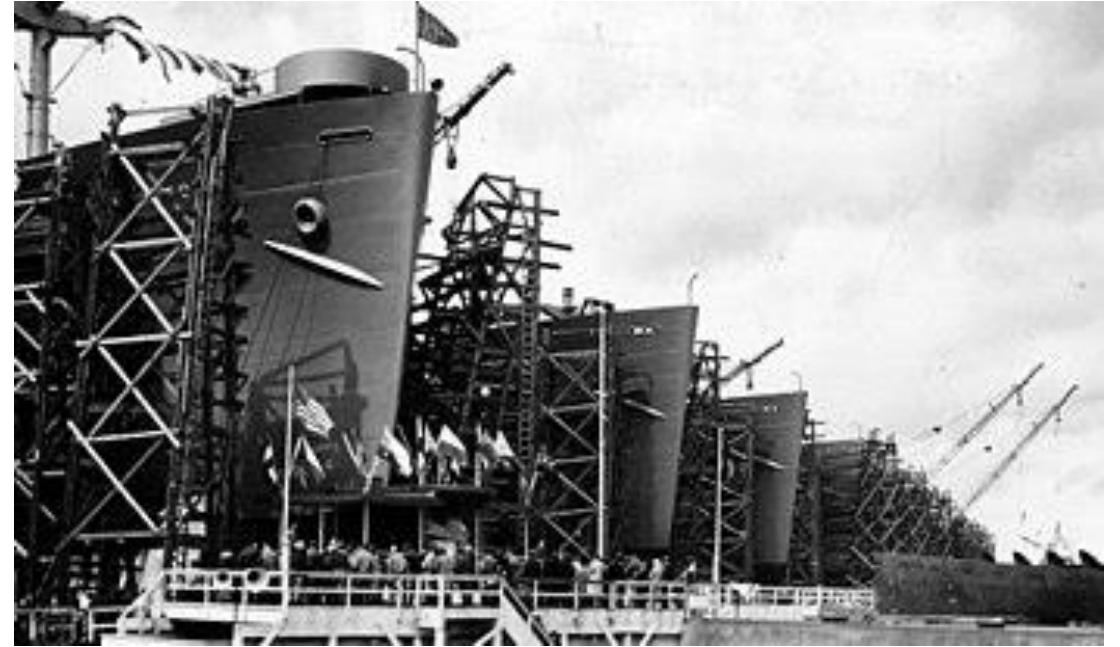


A "Wendy the Welder" at the Richmond Shipyards



# 23 September - Industry

- At the most productive yards on the West Coast, Oregon Ship and Richmond #2, the time a single vessel spent on the ways before launching was only a little more than two weeks.
- On September 23 1942 the Liberty ship SS Joseph N. Teal was launched by Oregon Shipbuilding ten and a half days after keel laying.
- President Roosevelt visited to watch it slide down the ways.
- The ship was delivered fourteen days after keel laying.



Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation, one of the eighteen shipyards building Victory ships.