

A map of the Pacific region showing the progress of the war. Red crosses indicate Japanese territory or objectives, while yellow crosses indicate Allied territory or objectives. A large red starburst marks the Battle of Midway. The map includes labels for major cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, Hong Kong, and Osaka, as well as geographical features like the Bay of Bengal, Gulf of Thailand, and various seas. The text is overlaid on the map, centered over the Pacific Ocean.

War in the Pacific

Defending Australia

Campaigns in New Guinea and the Solomons

8 October 1942

US Navy wins the Battle of Cape Esperance

Guadalcanal is reinforced by an Army Regiment and a Marine fighter Squadron.

25th Brigade find the Japanese making a stand in front of Templeton's Crossing.

Two Japanese battleships bombard the perimeter with 700 tons of shells in an hour.

The Japanese reinforcement convoy unloads most of its men and some supplies on Guadalcanal but more than half of the ships are sunk.

8 October – Situation Report

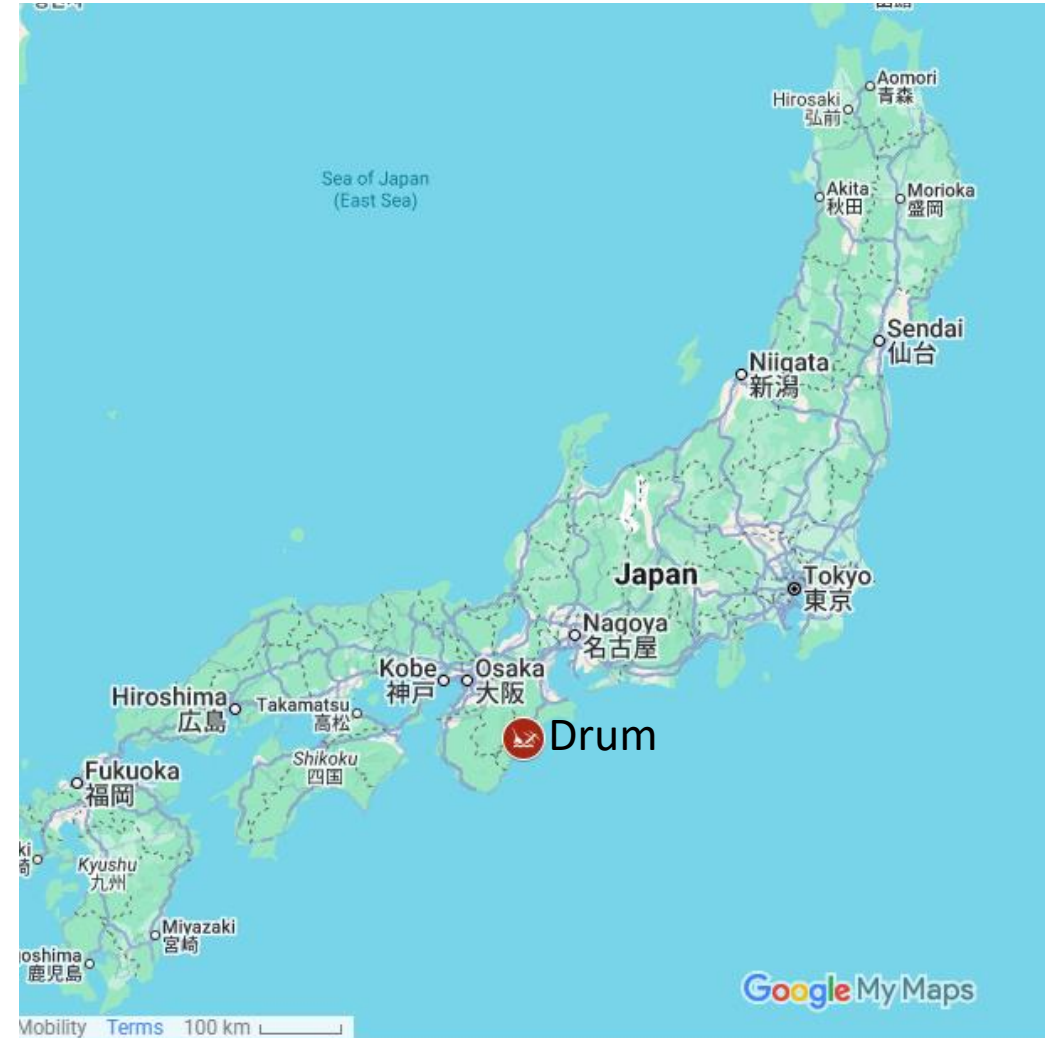
- A major Japanese build up in the Solomons has been detected from many directions.
- At the same time the Japanese threat to New Guinea has been reduced.
- Allied preemptive strikes have been attempted
 - By USS Hornet and 100 Squadron RAAF against the shipping in the Shortlands anchorage
 - By the Marines against Japanese forces west of the Matanikau
 - By the Cactus Airforce against the Tokyo Express, and
 - By the 5th Airforce against the Japanese base at Rabaul.
 - These have had very limited success.
- Guadalcanal is being strengthened with everything available.
- The Allies are pushing forward in New Guinea while Japanese focus is elsewhere.

8 October - Sea

- On 8 October Ghormley ordered Admiral Turner to embark the 164th Infantry of the Americal Division and depart Noumea for Guadalcanal on 9 October.
- It was to be a blockade run in force. Transports Zeilin and McCawley, carrying supplies, 210 men of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and 85 Marine casualties as well as the 2,850 men of the Army regiment, sailed under escort of three destroyers and three mine layers.
- A larger force of four cruisers and five destroyers steamed off the convoy's left flank. These cruisers, San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Helena, and Boise and destroyers Buchanan, Duncan, Farenholt, Laffey, and McCalla were commanded by Rear Admiral Norman Scott.
- Other US Naval forces in the surrounding waters included Rear Admiral George Murray's Hornet carrier group which, had fuelled on the 7th after the raid on the Shortlands, and was now steaming back to the north, some 180 miles southwest of Guadalcanal, and
- Rear Admiral Willis Lee's battleship Washington group about 50 miles east of Malaita

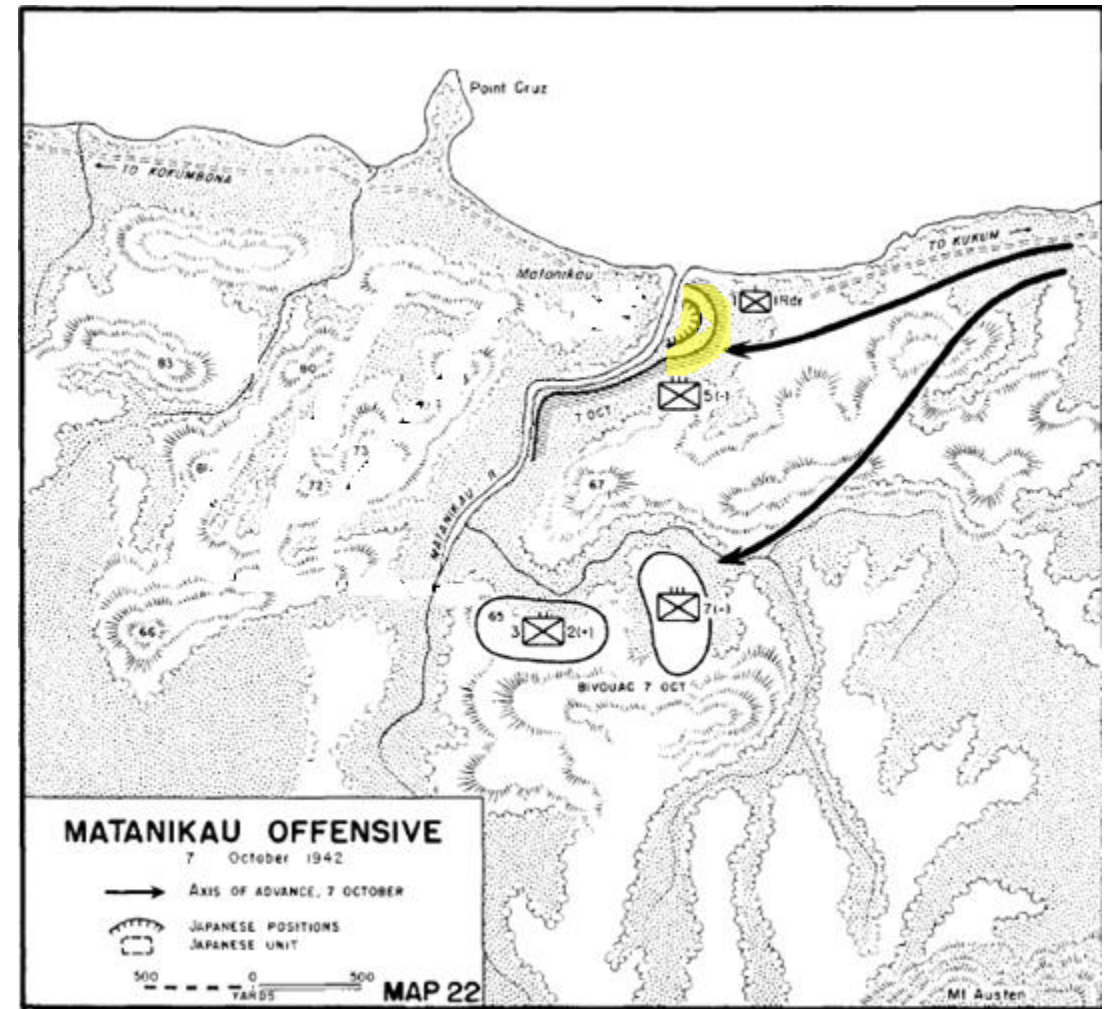
8 October – Sea, North Pacific

- 12 Bombers and 12 P-38's blast Kiska Harbor installations (starting fires in Main Camp), and strafe AA positions, hangars, a corvette (silencing her guns), and a 6,000 ton freighter, which was sunk.
- A passenger-cargo ship of about 6,000 tons was sunk by US submarine Drum at 34-06N, 136-22E.



8 October - Guadalcanal

- Heavy rains began that night and continued into the 8th and the attack had to be postponed, but the 5th Marines and raiders continued to reduce the Japanese positions on the east bank.
- At about 1830 the Japanese, under pressure all day from the Marines, made a final effort to break out of their nearly surrounded bridgehead and retreat across the river mouth.
- Running abreast, the enemy troops charged from their foxholes against the thinly-held Marine right flank where the raiders faced them.
- Front rank attackers engaged the Marines with small arms fire while succeeding ranks pitched hand grenades into the raider positions.
- Some hand-to-hand fighting resulted, and casualties were high on both sides. Twelve raiders were killed and 22 wounded, while counted enemy dead numbered 59.
- Some of the surviving Japanese managed to escape across the river, and the bridgehead was completely reduced.



8 October - Guadalcanal

- Division was warned by higher intelligence sources that the expected strong Japanese counteroffensive, appeared close at hand.
- General Vandegrift accordingly scaled down his planned attack to merely a raid in force so that no major troop strength would be beyond a day's march of the perimeter.

Photo # USMC 51822 Maj.Gen. Alexander A. Vandegrift, USMC, in his command tent on Guadalcanal, 1942



Maj Gen Vandegrift, 1942, in his command tent on Guadalcanal

8 October - Kokoda

- On the 8th (October) it seemed that the Australians had overtaken the Japanese rearguard.
- Both Barnett, and a patrol from the 3rd Battalion under Sergeant Tongs, which had moved via Kagi, encountered Japanese between Myola and Templeton's Crossing.
- Barnett was not successful in dislodging what he estimated to be a Japanese platoon holding astride the track. Wounded himself and having lost two other men wounded and one killed he fell back on Myola.
- Tongs, with only a section on a purely reconnaissance mission, likewise fell back.



8 October - Kokoda

- By this time (8th October) Eather had the main strength of all four of his battalions disposed along the track between Menari and Efogi.
- Menari was in use as a dropping ground and one of Cameron's companies had already prepared an area at Efogi for the same purpose.
- Eather ordered the remainder of the 3rd Battalion to join this company at Efogi North on the 9th;
- Lieut-Colonel Buttrose would lead his 2/33rd Battalion through Efogi that day to cover the main track from Myola;
- on the morning of the 10th the 2/25th would swing left to Kagi to cover the approaches through that area and
- the 2/31st would come forward to Efogi North.



8 October - Kokoda

- The 374th Troop Carrier Group reported:
- Dropping strips were usually about 50 yards by 25 yards. Approaches to those used during the fighting on the Kokoda track as a rule were quite difficult.
- At Menauri, considered the most difficult of all, it was necessary to drop over a 3,900 foot mountain into the valley at 100 mph, with wheels down and throttles all the way back, then slip from one side of the gorge to the other at tree top level in order to come over the dropping area low and slow enough to drop effectively.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

026290

PAPUA, NEW GUINEA. 1942-08. LOADING SUPPLIES ON TO A TRANSPORT PLANE FOR DROPPING TO TROOPS IN THE FORWARD AREA.

8 October - Kokoda

- The aircraft was brought over the area at about 120mph (less if possible) at a height of 200 – 300 feet. When approaching the target the pilot flashed the caution light. A crew of three or four manhandled a portion of the load to the open doorway then pushed it out when the pilot turned on his alarm bell.
- Pulling out of dropping zones like this where it was necessary to climb to 4,300 feet within a very short distance called for maximum power and expert timing from the pilot. Wheels were immediately pulled up and power applied. Propeller pitch was left in climbing RPM at all times during drop missions
- Slight miscalculations resulted in damaging wingtips, ailerons, elevators and rudders and an occasional hole in the wing. A fatal crash occurred at Menauri
- This manoeuvre was repeated for each drop.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

027019

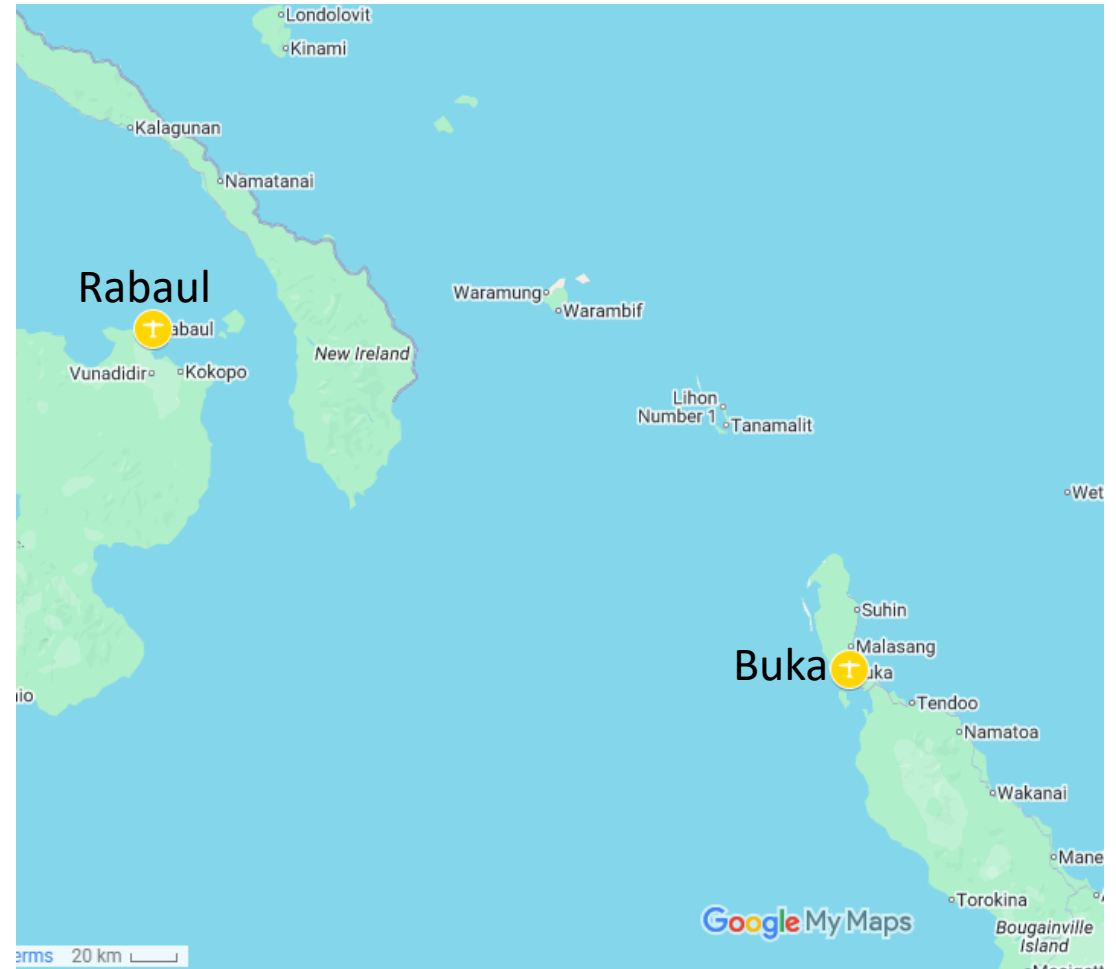
PAPUA, NEW GUINEA. 1942-10. DOUGLAS C47 TRANSPORT PLANE OF THE US AIR FORCE DROPPING FOOD SUPPLIES ON A CLEARED SPACE AT NAURO VILLAGE DURING THE ADVANCE OF THE 25TH AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE OVER THE OWEN STANLEY RANGE.

8 October – New Guinea

- The task of the 32nd U.S. Division was formally defined by New Guinea Force on the 8th October:
- “The role of 32 Div is to attack the enemy at Buna from the east and south-east.”
- The division was immediately to reconnoitre and develop the routes leading to Jaure from Rigo and Abau. ... an overland route from Abau leading to Wanigela by way of the Musa River.
- It was to establish a system of supply by means of small watercraft through Abau.
- It was to locate and maintain at Jaure a force not exceeding two battalions (since no more could be maintained there).
- The definition of its action beyond Jaure was left until later. It was to leave one regiment at Port Moresby—to fill an emergency role there—which would be available later for the execution of the main divisional plan.

8 October – Air

- 3 B-25's bomb Buna area while 3 A-20's pound Buna-Kokoda trail.
- Aircraft from Guadalcanal attacked a cruiser and five destroyers northwest of the island at 18.00. The cruiser was hit by a torpedo and bombs and was last observed burning in the afternoon of 9 October.
- Three allied medium bombers attacked the A/F at Buka on the night of 8/9 Oct, fires were started.



9 October - Government

- On 9 October Curtin holds press conference at which there is:
- ‘an amazing outburst from Curtin against Sir Keith Murdoch over the latter’s article in the *Melbourne Herald* on Tuesday night in which he assailed Forde as Army Minister, and criticised Curtin’s war policy. He said:”
- “Frankly this attack on Forde is silly and unfair. The basis of it was all wrong and what Sir Keith hopes to gain from it is hard to say. But I say it is no good for public morale. I do not like Sir Keith Murdoch. I do not trust him. He is utterly unscrupulous in the way he conducts his newspapers. ... He is full of hot air and witlessness.”



9 October – Sea and Air

- A cargo ship of about 2,000 tons was sunk by US submarine Drum at 33-27N, 136-01E.
- 17 heavy bombers escorted by 10 fighters bomb Kiska Harbor, installations and shipping. Tgts include shipping in Gertrude Cove, small cargo vessels in Kiska Harbor, installations at North Head, hangar, Main Camp area (hit several times), and various shore facilities.
- Major Leonard Davis' VMF-121 of MAG-14. had arrived on Guadalcanal on 9 October with 20 new Wildcats.
- The ship damaged in the Tanimbar islands on the 8th was sunk by medium bombers.



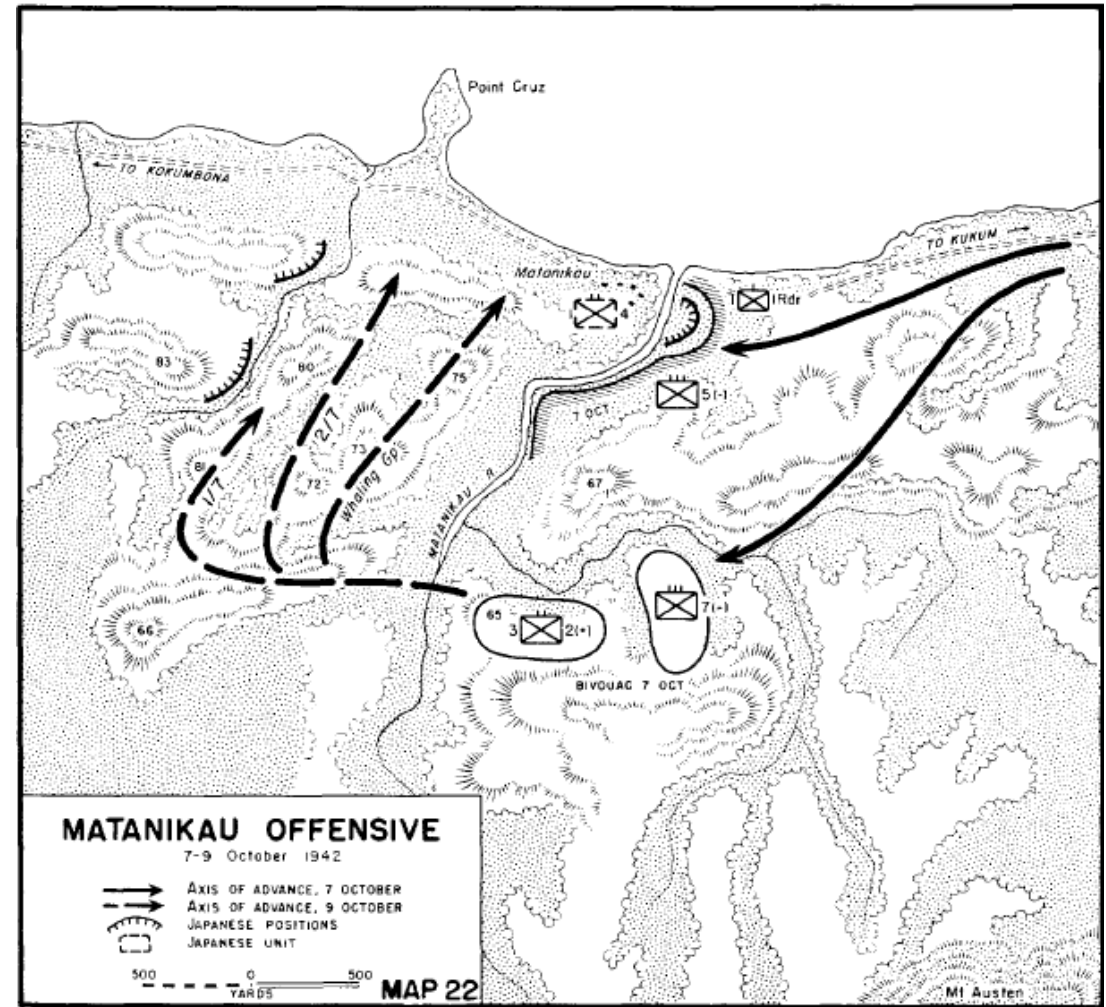
F4F-4s (Wildcats) on Guadalcanal, 1942

9 October – Air

- 14 B-25s and 9 Beaufighters hit A/F at Lae 09.50/9. (Medium bombers and fighters carried out a coordinated attack. Sixteen tons of bombs were dropped and considerable damage was inflicted.)JIC) Debris flying from an explosion in a dump near the wharf area struck one of the Beaufighters but the aircraft was not seriously damaged.
- 30 B-17's pound numerous tgts at Rabaul. (night of 8/9at 04.00 Rabaul was attacked by the largest concentration of bombers yet to operate in the South West Pacific. A preliminary incendiary attack by four RAAF flying boats lit up the target area. Sixty tons of bombs were dropped, and direct hits were made on jetties, machine shops, supply dumps, barracks and AA positions. fires were visible for 80 miles. All planes returned safely despite intense AA fire.)JIC)
- Two out of three intercepting fighters were shot down by a B17 over St George's channel, the B17 suffered some damage.
- Eighteen Blenheims bombed Pakokku A/F and the railway southwest of Mandalay. Chinese reports indicate that Japanese have increased their air strength in the Hankow area to 150 planes.

9 October - Guadalcanal

- On 9 October the envelopment force moved across the Matanikau and attacked rapidly northward to raid the Point Cruz and Matanikau village areas.
- 3/2 moved along the first high ground west of the river;
- 2/7 moved north on a ridge some 1,000 yards further west and
- Puller with 1/7 attacked along another ridge further west.
- The first two columns reached the coast without serious opposition while 1/7 on the extreme left encountered a strong force of Japanese in a deep ravine about 1,500 yards inland from Point Cruz.



9 October - Guadalcanal

- Puller brought artillery and mortar fire down on the Japanese, and his men picked off the enemy with rifle and machine-gun fire as they climbed the far side of the ravine to escape the indirect fire.
- A few enemy escaped up the steep slope, but most of them were either killed by small-arms fire or driven back down the hill into the mortar and artillery concentration.
- Puller and his men kept it up until mortar ammunition ran low. Then they withdrew to the east and by 1400 the combined raiding force had retired east of the Matanikau through the covering positions of the 5th Marines and the raiders.
- The three-day operation had cost the Marines 65 dead and 125 wounded.



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

9 October - Guadalcanal

- More than 800 Marine battle casualties had been evacuated by early October, and malaria continued to take its toll..



1st Marine Division Hospital. Wounded were kept on stretchers to expedite evacuation during frequent air raids or bombardments. Building was former Japanese barracks.

10 October - Kokoda

- By nightfall of the 10th (October) Lieutenant Cox (who had taken over Barnett's patrol) was still not making progress against the Japanese rearguard.
- The 3rd Battalion was in a defensive position at Myola; the 2/33rd was in the same area; the 2/25th was bivouacked at the Kagi-Myola turnoff; the 2/31st, in rear, had arrived at Efogi.
- The slowness of the 25th Brigade was due mainly to two factors.
- Firstly, Eather was trying to nurse his men against the heavy demands the nature of the country itself was making on them;
- secondly he was greatly worried about supply.



10 October - Kokoda

- Shortage of carriers remained one of the biggest problems. When Eather's advance began he tried to build up dumps as he went forward but only 900 natives were available forward of Uberi from the beginning of October and sickness and desertions decreased this number daily.
- The supply of carriers was running out, although the men of Angau were doing all they could to maintain it, casting away the pre-war principles which restricted the numbers of natives who could be recruited for work from particular areas.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

027049

PAPUA, NEW GUINEA. 1942-10. TROOPS AND NATIVE CARRIERS CROSSING THE BROWN RIVER, BETWEEN NAURO AND MENARI, BY MEANS OF A HUGE LOG FALLEN ACROSS THE STREAM.

10 October - Kokoda

- The drastic recruiting policy bore heavily not only on the conscript carriers themselves but on their family, village and tribal groups. Food production fell away and the many tasks which were normally the lot of the able-bodied men remained undone.
- In the early stages of the 25th Brigade's advance carriers were usually allotted on the basis of 40 to each battalion, with a large pool which worked under brigade and divisional arrangements. One Angau representative moved with each battalion, to control and work the carriers.
- In the units the natives carried the heavy weapons and their ammunition, reserve ammunition, medical gear, and signals equipment; they assisted to supply the battalions from the forward supply dump, which was usually about half a day's march to the rear.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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10 October - Kokoda

- After a battalion was committed to action the strain on the carriers increased.
- Each stretcher case required 8 natives to move him back to the nearest advanced dressing station. This probably represented half a day's work. While the natives were carrying wounded they could not carry supplies.
- Action also interfered with their work in other ways. Carriers could not then be sent right forward to battalions, and this obliged the units to draw supplies themselves from dumps established in their rear.
- During the nightly halts the carriers had to be camped as much as 2 or 3 hours' walk to the rear where they were not open to Japanese attack, where their noise could not be heard nor their fires seen by the Japanese.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

013286

10 October - Kokoda

- The soldiers were generally more burdened than the carriers. In the 25th Brigade each man carried up to five days' rations (2 days' hard and 3 emergency), half a blanket, a groundsheet, soap, toothbrush, half a towel, half a dixie, a water-bottle, his weapon and ammunition.
- Each rifleman carried his own rifle and 100-150 rounds of ammunition; one Bren gun a section was carried in turns by each member of the section with 10 magazines a gun distributed among the members of the section; 2 grenades were carried by each man.
- A 3-inch mortar with 15 bombs was carried by natives when these were available, at other times by the mortar crew assisted by other Headquarters Company men, one Vickers machine-gun, with 2 or 3 belts of ammunition, was carried similarly to the mortar;
- Each battalion carried with it also 5 carrier loads of medical gear; cooking gear; 2 picks and 2 axes; 1 machete and 1 spade a section; and signals equipment consisting basically of six telephones and six 108-wireless sets.

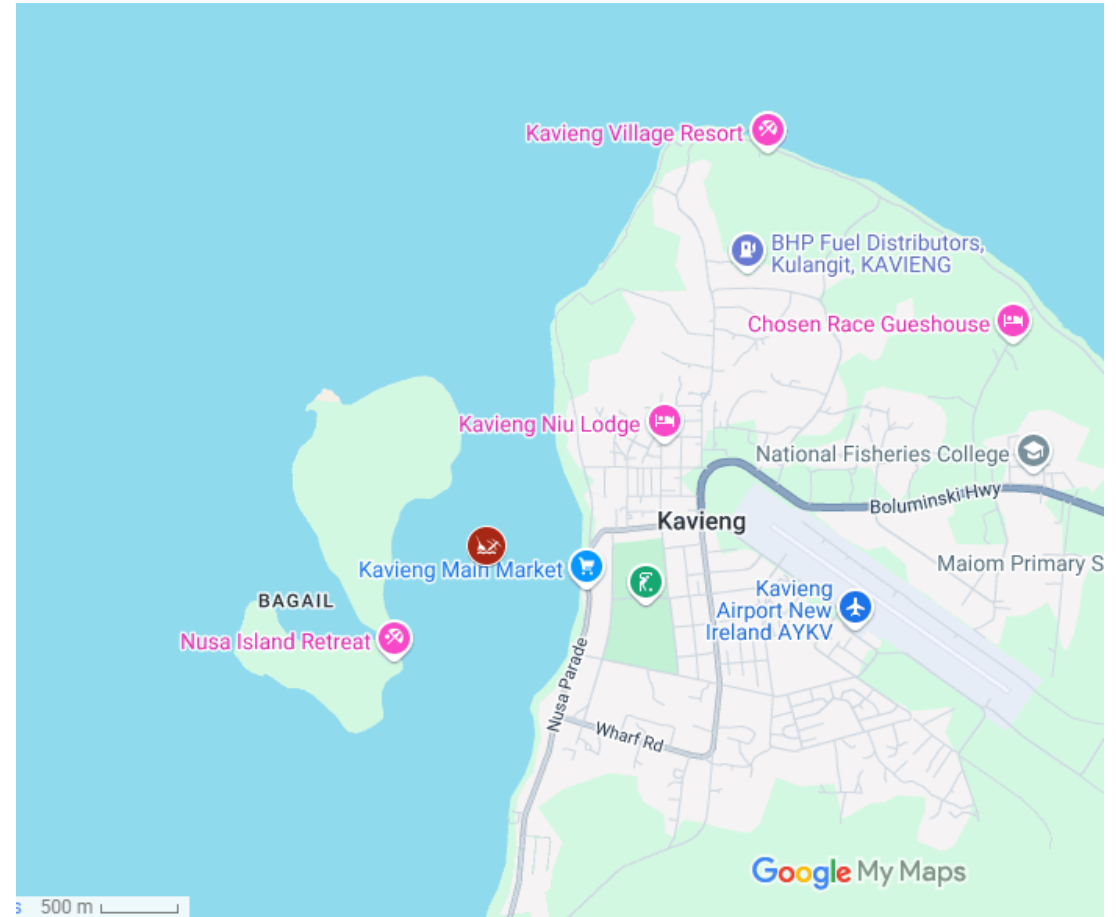


AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

013262

10 October - Sea

- At 06.40/10 a strike of 15 SBDs, 6 TBFs, 15 Wildcats and 8 P39s caught a retiring Tokyo Express of a cruiser and 5 destroyers. Two float Zeros and two observation planes were all shot down but the only damage to the ships was one hit on a destroyer, which continued steaming.
- B-17's sight TF of cruisers and destroyers bearing down on Guadalcanal in the afternoon.
- A cargo ship of about 2,000 tons was sunk by US submarine Seadragon at 1-01S, 117-23E.
- An oiler was torpedoed and sunk in shallow water inside Kavieng Harbour, New Ireland, Papua New Guinea by USS Amberjack.



10 October - Air

- On night of 9/10 Oct seven Australian patrol bombers with incendiaries and 21 B-17's pound Rabaul and nearby Lakunai A/F, causing explosions and starting fires visible from 90 miles.
- Three A-20's hit tgt along Buna-Kokoda trail and,
- Six B25s with P400's, strike (Wairopi bridge and) villages in area of Asisi and Sanananda.
- Three Hudsons attacked Dilli causing numerous fires.
- 14 bombers and 4 P-38's fly missions to Kiska. They bomb and strafe Main Camp area, hit shipping in Trout Lagoon and off South Head, where gun positions and installations are also blasted. Fires are started in the Main Camp and hangar areas.

11 October - Kokoda

- The next few days saw an accelerated program of air supply and, on the 11th (October), Eather ordered Buttrose of the 2/33rd to seize Templeton's Crossing.
- Buttrose sent Lieutenant Innes forward with a platoon to relieve Cox but Innes reported the Japanese positions too strong for him to handle.
- Captain Copp then moved forward with the rest of the company.
- On the same day, guided by Sergeant Tongs to the point of Tongs' previous contact, Lieutenant Heron, with a platoon of the 3rd Battalion, was repulsed by the Japanese south of Templeton's Crossing, losing two men killed.



11 October - Kokoda

- On 11th October Blamey signalled Allen:
- “Your order definitely to push on with sufficient force and capture Kokoda. You have been furnished with supplies as you requested and ample appears to be available.
- In view lack of serious opposition your advance appears much too slow.
- You will press enemy with vigour.
- If you are feeling strain personally relief will be arranged. Please be frank about this.
- Dropping arranged only at Myola 12 rptd 12 Oct. As soon as you can assure more advanced location will arrange to drop there.”



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

013380

GENERAL BLAMEY DISCUSSES THE PROGRAM WITH MAJOR-GENERAL ALLEN BEFORE THE OFFICIAL PARTY BEGINS ITS TOUR OF INSPECTIONS 8 October 1942.

11 October - Air

- Three A20s escorted by eight P39s swept over the Kokoda Buna track, fires were started in a village near Wairopi and in barges on Buna beach.
- Three Hudsons attacked a 10,000 ton aircraft tender escorted by a destroyer 50 miles south of cape St George at 14.45/11. The ship had a full deck cargo including at least 12 Zeros. Flight Lieutenant Manning's crew scored two direct hits and a near miss with 250 lb bombs on the ship. When last seen the ship was stopped and on fire.
- Kiska is hit by 10 B-24's, which blast harbor tgts and Main Camp.



11 October - Sea

- On 11 October, while the *Zeilin* and *McCawley* made for their 13 October anchorage schedule in Lunga Roads, Admiral Scott learned from aerial recon that two Japanese cruisers and six destroyers were bearing down the Slot.
- It was the night's Tokyo Express, Scott decided, and at 1600 he started toward Guadalcanal at 29 knots to intercept the run. His orders were to protect the transports, and to search for and destroy enemy ships and landing craft; he rushed eagerly to work.
- Scott made a simple battle plan. His ships would steam in column with his destroyers at the front and rear of his cruiser column, searching across a 300 degree arc with SG surface radar.
- The destroyers were to illuminate any targets with searchlights and fire torpedoes and the cruisers were to open fire at any available targets without awaiting orders.
- The cruiser's float aircraft, launched in advance, were to find and illuminate the Japanese warships with flares.
- Although *Helena* and *Boise* carried the new, greatly improved SG radar, Scott chose *San Francisco* as his flagship.
- Visibility was poor because the moon had already set, leaving no ambient light and no visible sea horizon.

Photo # NH 102454 Rear Admiral Norman Scott, USN



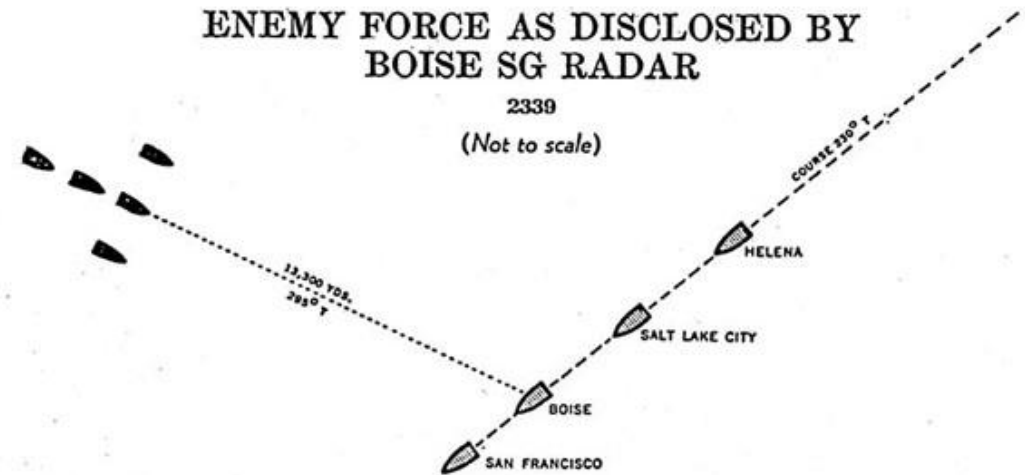
Rear Admiral Norman Scott

11 October - Sea

- At 23.30 a spotting plane from USS San Francisco reported Japanese ships 16 miles from Savo and off Cape Esperance.
- although the Helena earlier had spotted a Japanese ship bearing 315 degrees and at a distance of 27,700 yards, she didn't report this contact for 15 minutes.
- Flagship San Francisco, with rudimentary radar of that early period, had no contacts, and Scott continued to steam toward Savo with his ships in column.
- At about 2340 he reversed course to head back toward the Cape when the Helena, at last confident about the blips from her better radar equipment, announced her fix of a target six miles away. First salvos from the Helena at 23.46 caught the enemy by complete surprise. Scott's ships had usurped Tokyo's turn in Sealark Channel.
- The first American salvo smashed into the leading Japanese ship.
- Scott, unsure who his ships were firing at, and afraid that they might be firing on his own destroyers—ordered a ceasefire at 23:47, although not every ship complied. Scott ordered Farenholt to flash her recognition signals and upon observing that Farenholt was close to his formation, he ordered the fire resumed at 23:51.

11 October - Sea

- *Salt Lake City*, *Boise*, and *Farenholt* quickly added their fire to that of *Helena*, and the leading Japanese ship was quickly hit by up to 40 shells.
- shortly thereafter the U.S. fleet crossed the Japanese "T" (sailed ahead of the Japanese column and at right angles to it) so that a majority of the American guns could bear on each Japanese ship as it came forward.
- The Japanese leader turned to starboard and headed away from Scott's formation on fire. Scott's ships shifted their fire to *the next in line*. At 23:49 she was hit amidships igniting a large fire that attracted even more shellfire from the US ships. At 23:58, a torpedo from *Buchanan* hit *her* causing her to lose speed. During this time, *San Francisco* and *Boise* sighted a *third ship* about 1,400 yd (1,300 m) away and raked her with shellfire, joined soon by most of the rest of Scott's formation. Heavily damaged, she began to sink.



Farenholt received several damaging hits from both the Japanese and American ships, killing several men. She escaped from the crossfire by crossing ahead of *San Francisco* and passing to the disengaged side of Scott's column. *Duncan* engaged in a solitary torpedo attack on the Japanese formation, was also hit by gunfire from both sides, set afire, and looped away to escape the crossfire.¹

11 October - Sea

- Scott's ships turned to pursue the retreating Japanese warships.
- *Boise* and *Salt Lake City* turned on their searchlights to help target the Japanese ships, giving *Japanese* gunners clear targets.
- At 00:10, two shells hit *Boise*'s main ammunition magazine between turrets one and two. The resulting explosion killed almost 100 men and threatened to blow the ship apart.
- Seawater rushed in through rents in her hull opened by the explosion and helped quench the fire before it could explode the ship's powder magazines.
- *Boise* immediately sheered out of the column and retreated from the action.
- *Salt Lake City* continued to exchanged fire with a Japanese ship, each hitting the other several times damaging one of *Salt Lake City*'s boilers, reducing her speed.

Photo # 80-G-40069 USS Boise arrives at the Philadelphia Navy Yard for repairs, November 1942



At 00:16, Scott ordered his ships to turn to a heading of 330° in an attempt to pursue the fleeing Japanese ships. Scott's ships, however, quickly lost sight of the Japanese, and all firing ceased by 00:20. The American formation was beginning to scatter, so Scott ordered a turn to 205° to disengage.

12 October - Sea

- *Boise* extinguished her fires by 02:40 and at 03:05 rejoined Scott's formation.
- *Duncan*—on fire—was abandoned by her crew at 02:00.
- Unaware of *Duncan*'s fate, Scott detached *McCalla* to search for her and retired with the rest of his ships towards Nouméa.
- *McCalla* located the burning, abandoned *Duncan* about 03:00, and several members of *McCalla*'s crew made an attempt to keep her from sinking. By 12:00, however, they had to abandon the effort as bulkheads within *Duncan* collapsed causing the ship to finally sink 6 mi (5.2 nmi; 9.7 km) north of Savo Island.
- American servicemen in boats from Guadalcanal as well as *McCalla* picked up *Duncan*'s scattered survivors from the sea around Savo. In total, 195 *Duncan* sailors survived; 48 did not.
- As they rescued *Duncan*'s crew, the Americans came across more than 100 survivors from Fubuki, a Japanese destroyer, floating in the same general area.
- The Japanese initially refused all rescue attempts but a day later allowed themselves to be picked up and taken prisoner.
- Scott's initial appraisal of his captain's reports indicated three Japanese cruisers and four destroyers sunk. But he added "this estimate may be on the optimistic side" a judgement shared by Nimitz's staff. American losses were 163 killed and 125 wounded. The battle was called the Battle of Cape Esperance.

12 October - Sea

- With daylight the Cactus Airforce took up the battle as the Japanese retired towards Shortland.
- At 07:00, five CAF SBDs attacked *a Japanese cruiser* but inflicted no damage.
- At 08:20, 11 more SBDs found and attacked *two destroyers*. Although they scored no direct hits, a near miss left one destroyer leaking oil, marking a trail for other CAF aircraft to follow.
- A short time later, seven more CAF SBDs plus six TBFs lead by Lt Larsen, accompanied by 14 Wildcats, found the two Japanese destroyers 170 mi (150 nmi; 270 km) from Guadalcanal. In the ensuing attack, Larsen's TBFs scored a torpedo hit on one destroyer, leaving her without power.
- Two destroyers assisting their immobilised sister were attacked by another group of 11 CAF SBDs and TBFs escorted by 12 fighters at 15:45. The SBDs placed a bomb almost directly amidships on *one of the new targets* and scored two more near misses.
- The CAF aircraft also scored several more hits on the stationary destroyer, setting her afire.
- Both immobilised destroyers sank.

12 October - Kokoda

- Next day (12 October) Allen replied:
- My outline plan . . . is designed to capture Kokoda as soon as possible. Apparently it has been misunderstood.
- Nothing is being left undone in order to carry out your wishes and my brigade commanders have already been instructed accordingly.
- The most serious opposition to rapid advance is terrain.
- The second is maintenance of supplies through lack of native carriers.
- Reserve supplies have not repeat not been adequate up to 11 Oct.
- Until information of recoveries today am unable to say whether they are yet adequate.
- Rate of advance does not entirely depend on air droppings. Equal in importance is our ability to carry forward and maintain our advanced troops.
- Notwithstanding that men carry with them up to five days' rations maintenance forward of dropping place is still necessary.
- This country is much tougher than any previous theatre and cannot be appreciated until seen. From all reports the worst is north of Myola.
- The vigour with which we press the enemy is dependent on the physical endurance of the men and the availability of supplies.
- Our men have pressed so far with vigour consistent with keeping them fit to fight.
- With regard to my personal physical fitness I am not repeat not feeling the strain. I never felt fitter nor able to think straighter. I however feel somewhat disappointed on behalf of all ranks that you are dissatisfied with the very fine effort they have made.

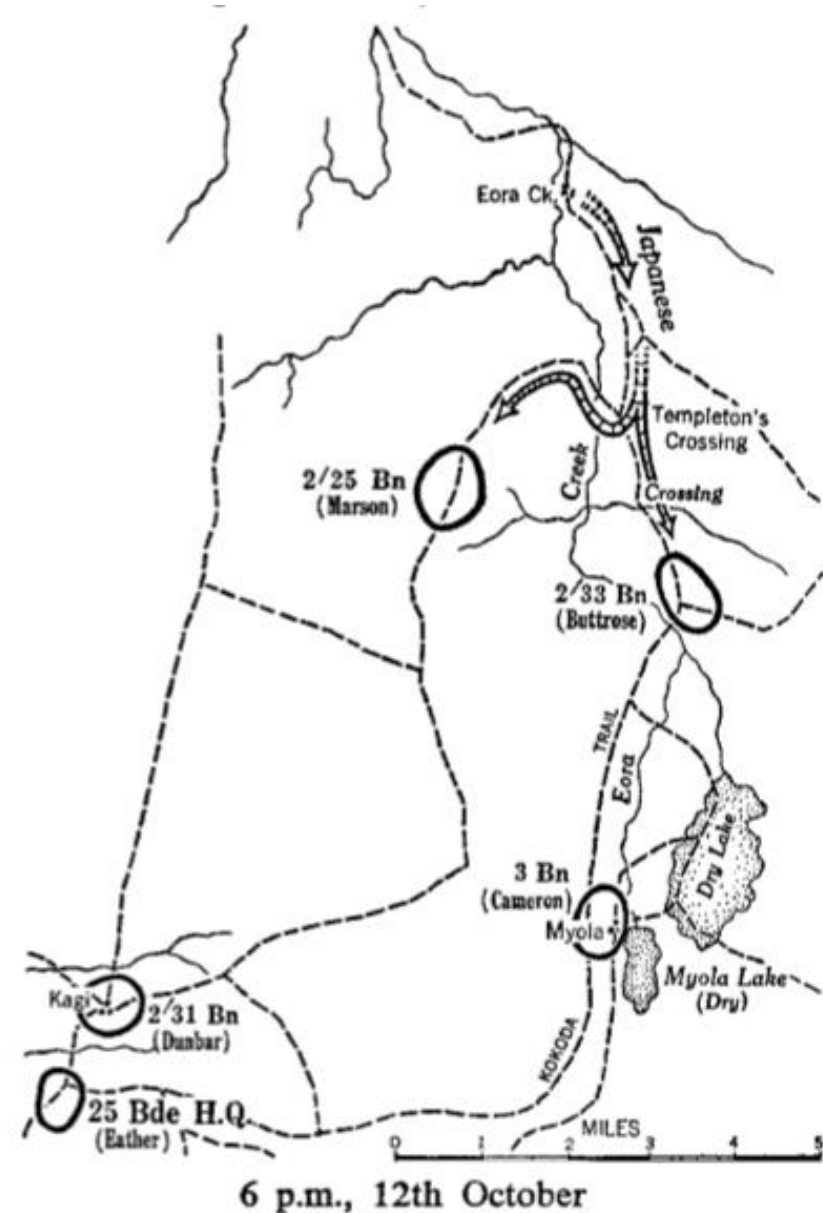
12 October - Kokoda

- While this exchange was taking place
- Allen told Eather
- to aim to keep in touch with the enemy by patrols;
- to consolidate in the area Eora Creek Myola-Kagi with one battalion disposed at Eora Creek, two at Templeton's Crossing and one at Kagi;
- to secure Alola as quickly as possible for use as a dropping ground.
- The 16th Brigade was to defend Myola, to prepare there a landing ground for light aircraft, and to be ready to move through the 25th Brigade to take Kokoda.



12 October - Kokoda

- On the 12th (October) the 2/33rd and 2/25th Battalions were converging on Templeton's Crossing, one along the main track, the other along the track which ran forward from Kagi. In rear Dunbar was moving his 2/31st towards Kagi and Cameron was holding the 3rd Battalion at Myola.
- Soon after midday Buttrose arrived at the point where the Japanese were holding across the track.

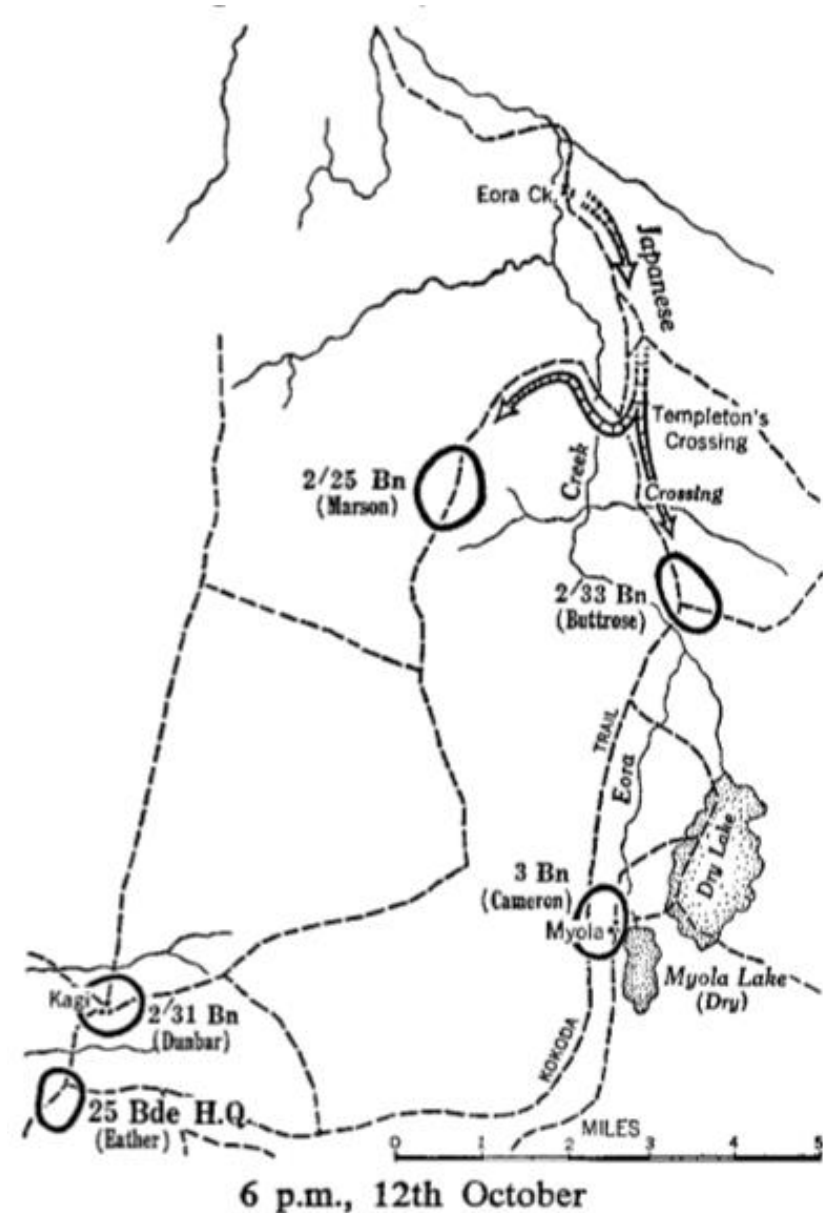


12 October - Kokoda

- There the track passed along the crest of a narrow ridge, densely covered with thick bush, mainly bamboo. The dense growth was almost impenetrable except by means of a few narrow pads which the Japanese had well covered.
 - The defenders held tenaciously from one-man pits which were effectively camouflaged with branches, leaves and grass.
 - Only a well-placed grenade could be relied on to silence the occupants of these pits and, since each pit was only about 2 feet 3 inches across, a direct hit by a grenade was difficult to make.
 - The Japanese moved their automatic weapons frequently from one position to another and the Australians found the origins of hostile fire hard to pin-point.
- Buttrose found that Copp had driven his enemies back about 300 yards for the loss of three men wounded.
- Two of his platoons were then holding across the track while Lieutenant Innes was trying to move through the dense bush and rugged country on the left flank.
- Soon Innes returned, one of his men dead, and said that he had come against about 20 Japanese digging in some 300 yards in rear of their forward positions.
- Buttrose was planning now that Captain Archer should move frontally with his company against the defenders while Copp held where he was and Captain Clowes' company broke a way round the left flank to take the obstructing positions in the rear.

12 October - Kokoda

- But, by nightfall, little progress had been made against the stout defences, which were so sited on the narrow ridge as to force any attack to be a laborious up-hill climb. Archer's assaults had failed to move the defenders and darkness found him still facing them with Copp to his rear.
- There was no message from Clowes although Archer reported that his men had heard firing from the Japanese rear.
- Four men had been killed and nine wounded in addition to the earlier casualties.



12 October - Air

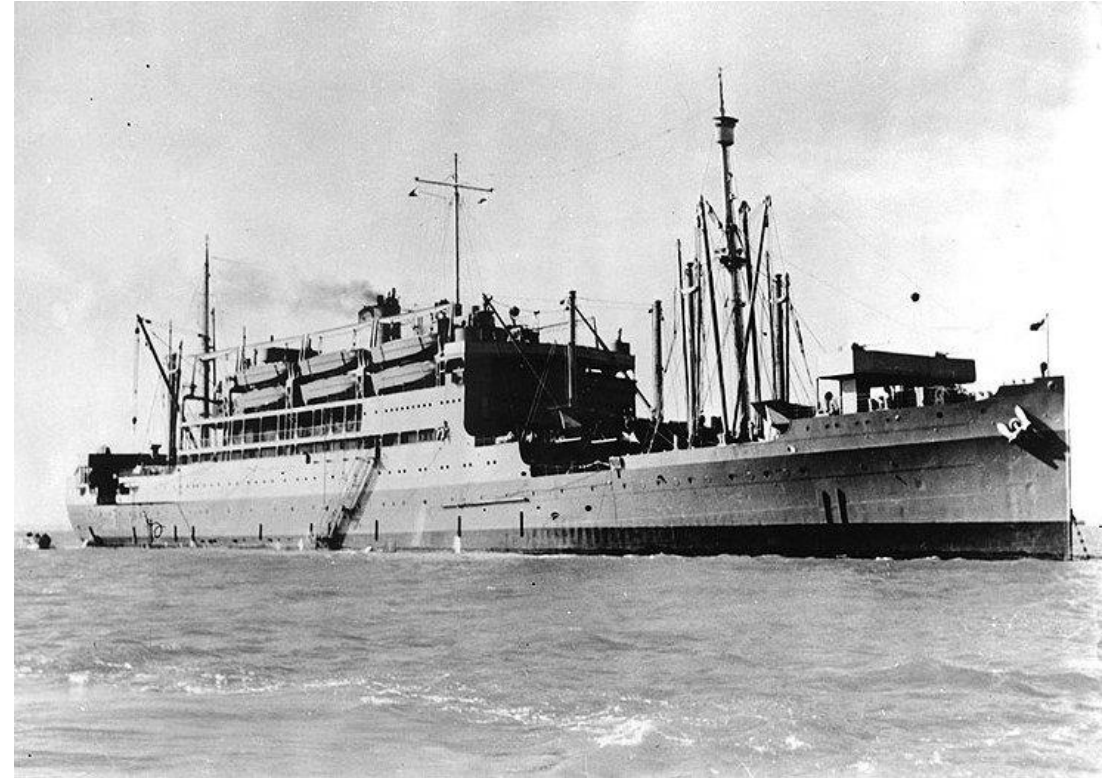
- Lt Col Mangrum was evacuated from Guadalcanal on 12 October. He was the only member of VMSB-232 able to leave Henderson Field under his own power.
- A-20's hit village of Isivita and tgts on trail near Wairopi.
- B-25's bomb Buna, Wairopi bridge, and tgts along Buna-Kokoda trail.
- 5 B-17's bomb installations at Buka.



Maj John L. Smith, LtCol Richard C. Mangrum, and Capt Marion E. Carl pose for photos after returning to the States after service in the Cactus Air Force at Guadalcanal in 1942.

13 October

- Transports *McCawley* and *Zeilen* arrived at Kukum with the Army reinforcements early on 13 October,
- In spite of interruptions, from the air Colonel Bryant Moore managed to get his 164th Infantry ashore, along with the supplies from the transports (on the 13th October). The soldiers then bivouacked in the rear of the landing beaches before taking over a section of the perimeter the following day.



USS McCawley (AP-10, later APA-4), photographed circa 1941-42.

13 October

- Both radar and the Northern Solomons coastwatchers missed an air attack that came over at 12.02, (on 13th October) and the F4Fs couldn't get up in time to hamper the 22 fighter escorted bombers that rained down their bombs from 30,000 feet.
- Both Henderson Field and Fighter 1 were damaged, and fires from the attack burned 5,000 gallons of aviation fuel.
- Between 13.30 and 14.00 a second strike of 15 Japanese bombers caught most of the American planes back on their fields refuelling.
- Some planes were damaged, and the strike undid the repair work that had been started by the 6th Seabees following the earlier raid.
- A few Cactus planes got up to pursue the Japanese, but the only American kill was scored by Captain Joseph Foss.
- The field was not completely out of action, but big bombers were advised to avoid it except for emergencies.

13 October

- The afternoon search mission found a major convoy 200 miles up the slot. Six transports each carrying landing craft and armed with strong anti-aircraft batteries were steering for Guadalcanal escorted by eight destroyers.
- At 18.30 Japanese 150mm howitzers near Kokumbona opened fire. Safely beyond counterbattery range, these weapons began a slow methodical registration on the field and the perimeter.
- The Marines named this new entrant in their war Pistol Pete.
- Pistol Pete was scoring hits on the main runway, forcing flight operations over to Fighter 1.
- Confronted with the new artillery attack after two air raids Vandergrift ordered a General Alert.



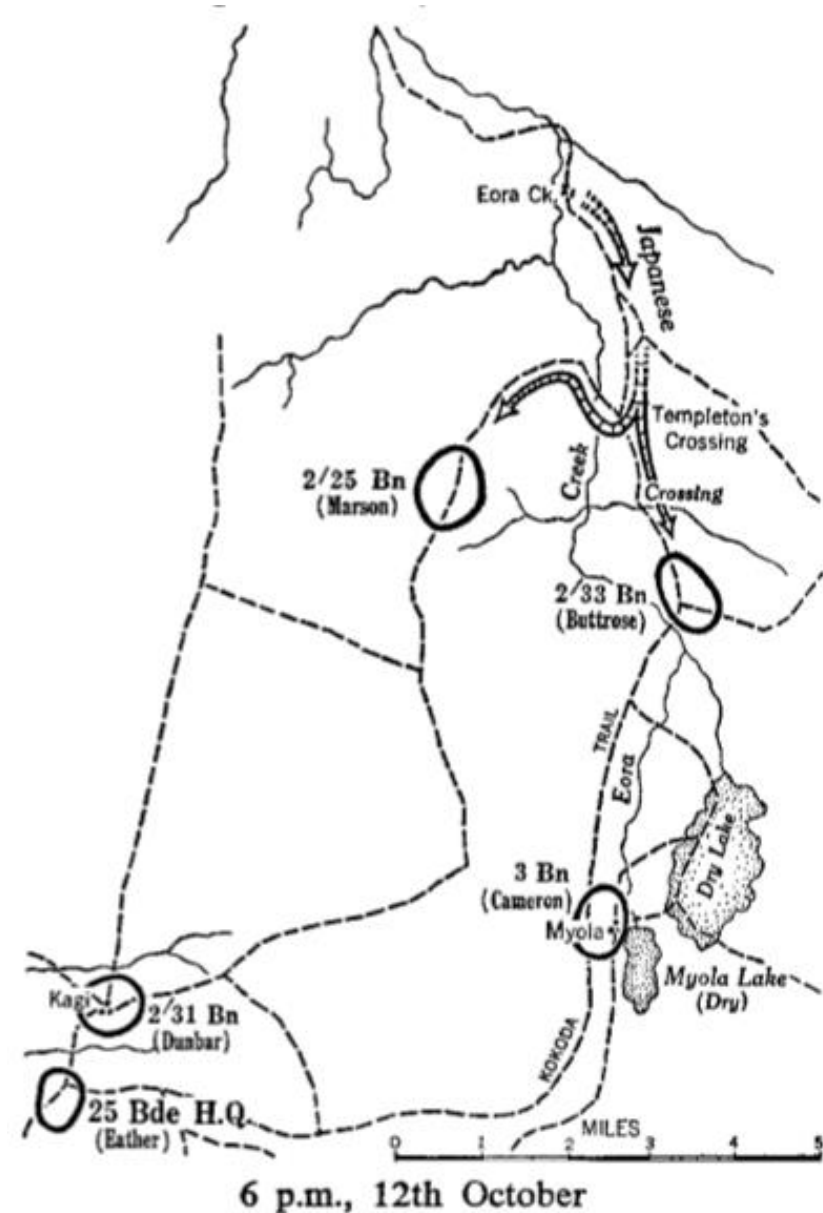
A Japanese Type 96 150mm howitzer in action.

13 October - Kokoda

- On the morning of the 13th (October) Archer began once more to probe.
- Still there was no word from Clowes.
- Late in the morning Lieutenant Power took a platoon along a track on the southern side of the Japanese and surprised them. His men captured a heavy machine-gun and estimated that they shot 30 Japanese for the loss of 1 man killed and 4 wounded.
- But again Archer was held.
- Early in the afternoon Clowes reported back with the news that he had met opposition the previous day. He had attacked at dawn of the 13th along the ridge which was lightly but effectively held for about a mile from Templeton's Crossing.
- Night brought cold rain driving across the gloomy mountain sides and dripping from the bush. Buttrose had lost another man killed, one officer and 11 men wounded and one man missing.
- On the (14th October) he would use Copp's men to attack along the track while Power attempted to repeat his brilliant little performance of that day.

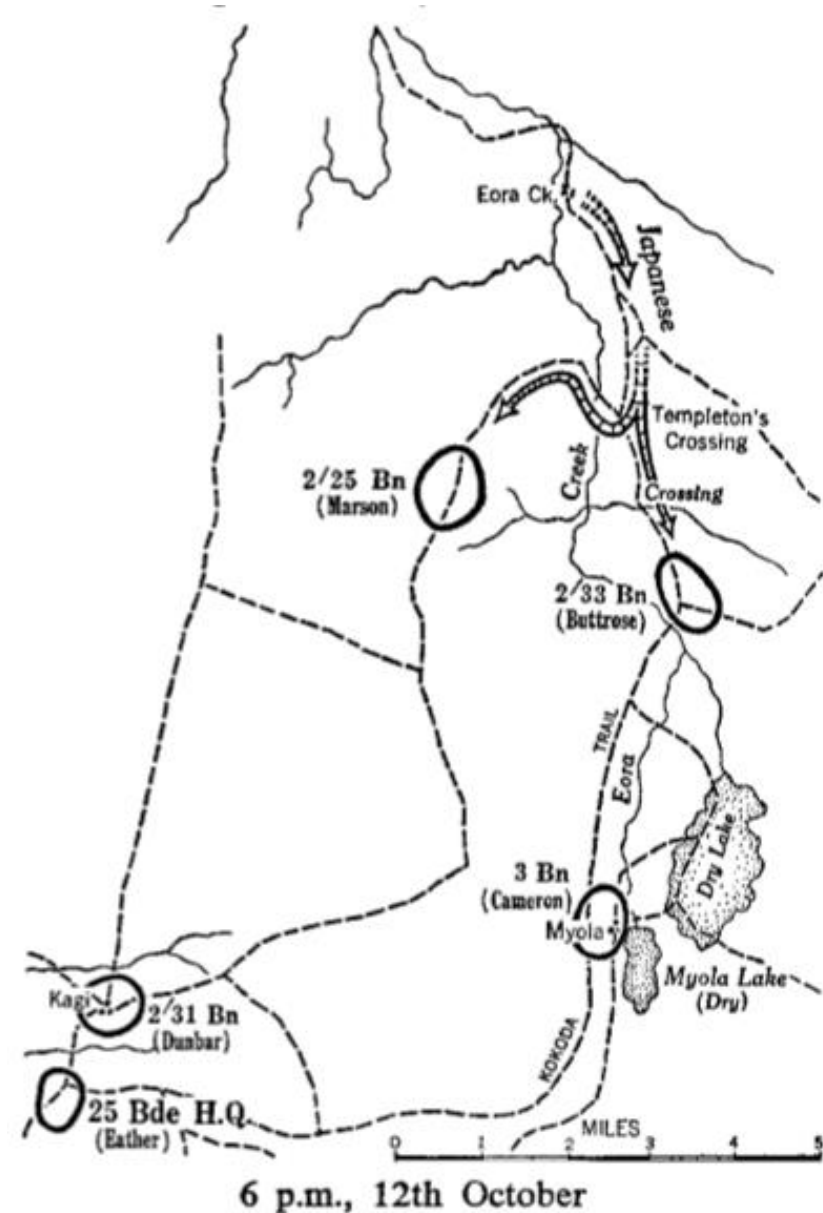
13 October - Kokoda

- While the 2/33rd was thus trying to claw the Japanese out of their holes (? 13th October?) The 2/25th had met opposition. Thrusting forward from Kagi towards Templeton's Crossing their forward scouts were fired on.
- Captain O'Bryen's company and Captain Butler's then pressed up to find that sharpshooters, accurately sniping, screened holding positions and that steep ridges hindered their attempts to outflank.
- Butler's men forced some of the holding strength off high ground on the left of the track but did not win much ground.



13 October - Kokoda

- A section leader of the 2/25th, on patrol, found a parcel of meat which inspired in him distasteful suspicions. He brought it back to be examined by Captain Donnan, the battalion's medical officer, who reported:
- “I have examined two portions of flesh recovered by one of our patrols. One was the muscle tissue of a large animal, the other similar muscle tissue with a large piece of skin and underlying tissues attached. I consider the last as human.” (date not given)



13 October - Air

- In the early hours fifteen B-17's again pound Rabaul, concentrating on Vunakanau and Lakunai A/Fs causing a large fire and explosion and scoring several hits among aircraft.
- A B-17 bombs Buna.
- On night of 12/13 Oct six patrol bombers attacked the A/F at Buka causing several explosions and fires.
- On the 13th (October), Sergeant Butterfield) (pilot) and Sergeant Wilson (observer) were killed while strafing enemy positions in the Owen Stanleys, when their Beaufighter crashed into a hill near Kokoda.

14 October - Guadalcanal

- The darkness brought Japanese aircraft, setting off sirens and sending the Americans back and forth from beds to dugouts and foxholes.
- Louie the louse illuminated the field with flares at 01.33.5, and naval guns cut loose.
- Coconut trees splintered, buildings and huts ripped open and crashed down, fragments and wreckage tore into planes and men, and more gasoline went up in bright fires which helped Japanese gunners stay on target for their systematic coverage of the field with more than 900 rounds of high explosive shells.
- The Japanese ships ceased fire briefly while turning at 02.13, and finally ceased fire at 02.56.

14 October - Guadalcanal

- The perimeter had been bombarded from the sea many times by destroyers and cruisers.
- The Americans ashore this night spoke of The Bombardment as if there had been no other.
- Then, as the ships ceased fire and withdrew east of Savo Island, the planes came back. Night bombers continued their strikes intermittently until daybreak.
- At 05.30 Pistol Pete resumed lobbing shells onto Henderson Field.



The huge crater at the edge of the Henderson Field runway was made by a 14-inch shell fired by a Japanese battleship during the night of 13/14 October.

About a hundred of the shells were type 3 AA rounds which each burst to disburse 470 incendiary sub munitions over a wide swath.

14 October - Guadalcanal

- Two battle ships had fired 973 shells into the perimeter in about 60 minutes. About two 8 shell broadsides per minute.
- Allied intelligence had identified all four “Kongo” class battle ships as present in the south Pacific
- Kongō, the last Japanese capital ship constructed outside Japan, was designed in England and built by Vickers at Barrow-in-Furness, and completed in 1913.
- The three later members of the class were built in Japan.
- The Kongos were fast (31 knots) and had a main armament of eight 14 inch guns.
- Two Kongos had fired 973 14 inch shells, each weighing 1,500 lbs, into the perimeter in an hour.



Kongo circa 1930

Over 700 tons of projectiles in an hour

14 October - Guadalcanal

- One near-miss had flung Vandegrift to the floor in his vulnerable dugout in a heap “without hurt except in dignity”
- “A man comes close to himself at such times” the general later reflected,
 - ... and until someone has experienced naval or artillery shelling or aerial bombardment , he cannot easily grasp a sensation compounded of frustration, helplessness, fear and, in the case of close hits, shock ...
- The bombardment was a withering baptism of fire for the 164th infantry, who had only come ashore yesterday, but they only sustained three fatalities.



General Vandegrift

14 October - - Guadalcanal

- By dawn of 14 October the Cactus Air Force could fly only 42 of the 90 planes that had been operational 24 hours earlier. Forty-one men had been killed and many more -wounded and the airfield was a complete shambles.
- Among the dead were Major Gordon Bell, whose VMSB-141 had finally built up to 21 planes and fliers on 6 October, and four of his pilots: Captains Edward Miller and Robert Abbott and Lieutenants Henry Chaney and George Haley.
- Operations, sorely restricted by the loss of gasoline in the fire, moved to Fighter 1, which was left in better condition than Henderson; and a few B17s which had been operating temporarily from Guadalcanal managed to bounce aloft from a 2,000 yard stretch of Henderson that still was usable and fly back to Espiritu Santo.
- The Japanese "Pagoda," air headquarters since the early days, had been partially wrecked, and General Geiger had it bulldozed away. It had proved too good a registration point, for bombers, anyway.

14 October - - Guadalcanal

- A false air raid alarm at mid morning left the Wildcats sitting on the ground refuelling with gasoline drained from wrecked planes when a raid of twenty six Bettys dumped their bombs on the desolation of Henderson Field.
- A second raid by twelve bombers and fifteen Zeros at 13.00 found every flyable fighter in the air. The Americans claimed nine bombers and three Zeros shot down. The Cactus Airforce lost two fighters with their pilots. Bomb damage was minor.
- By late afternoon (14th October) fliers of the Army's 67th Fighter Squadron, marine and Navy wildcat pilots and 13 dive bomber pilots used Fighter I— and nearly all of Henderson's remaining supply of fuel—to strike back twice at the Japanese by attacking the convoy, then east of Santa Isabel. The SBD crews claimed a number of hits and near misses, but the convoy did not turnback. 52 sorties were flown, the defences splashed one Airacobra and operations claimed a Wildcat and an Airacobra.

14 October - Government

- When the appreciation came before the War Cabinet on 14th October, it was agreed:
- that the Government should request the early return of the 9th Division and cancel the previous approval for the despatch of 6,113 reinforcements to the Middle East; and
- that "Australia should continue to participate in the Empire Air Training Scheme to the extent that this may be practicable, having regard to the total manpower position in Australia and subject to the maintenance of a regulated inward flow of Australian aircrew with war experience, in order to provide an experienced nucleus of pilots and aircrew in all R.A.A.F. units based on Australia."
- The question of the minimum strength of the forces necessary to ensure the defence of vital areas on the mainland of Australia was referred by the War Cabinet to the Chiefs of Staff for further report.

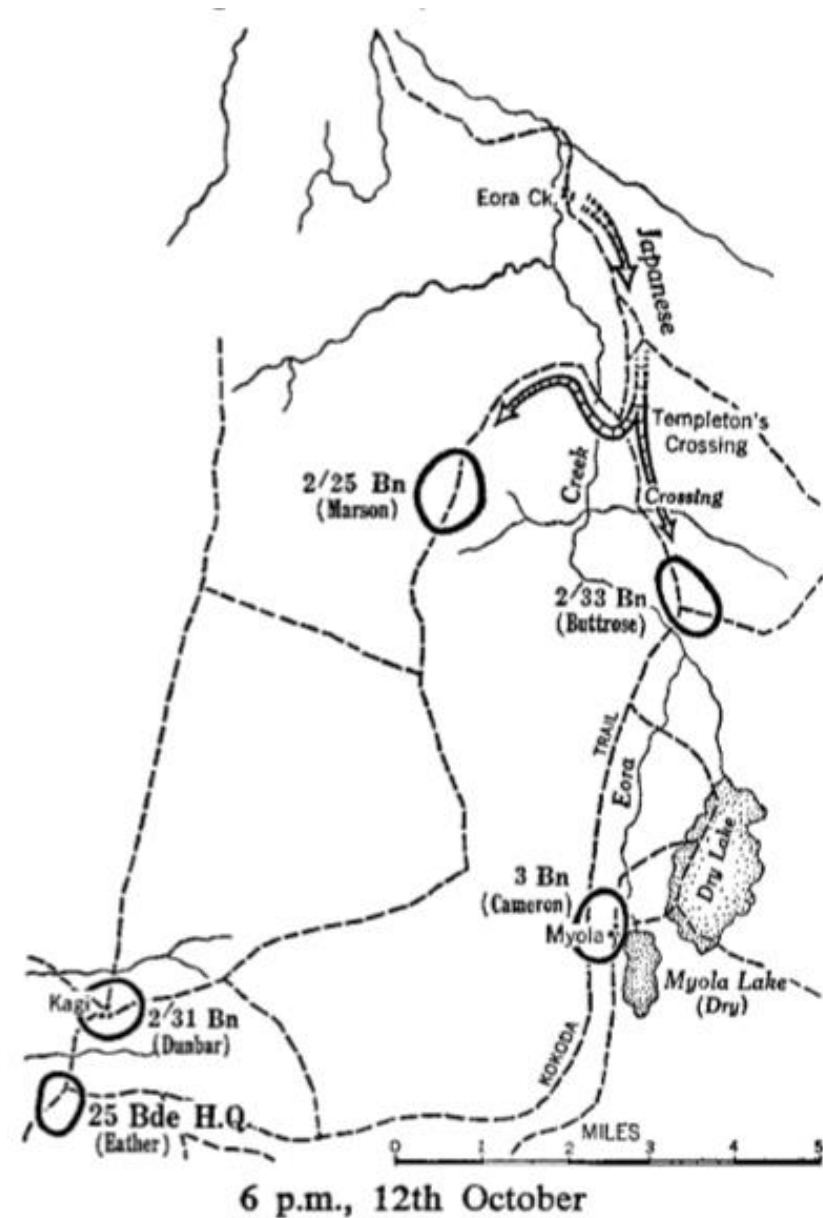
14 October - Sea

- A 7,000 ton transport was sunk by US submarine Finback at 25-22N, 121-15E.
- A cargo ship of about 2,000 tons was sunk by US submarine Sculpin at 3-20S, 150-03E.
- A cargo ship of approx. 7,000 tons was sunk by US submarine Skipjack at 5-35N, 144-25E.
- A 3,000 ton cargo ship was sunk by US submarine Greenling at 39-33N, 142-15E.



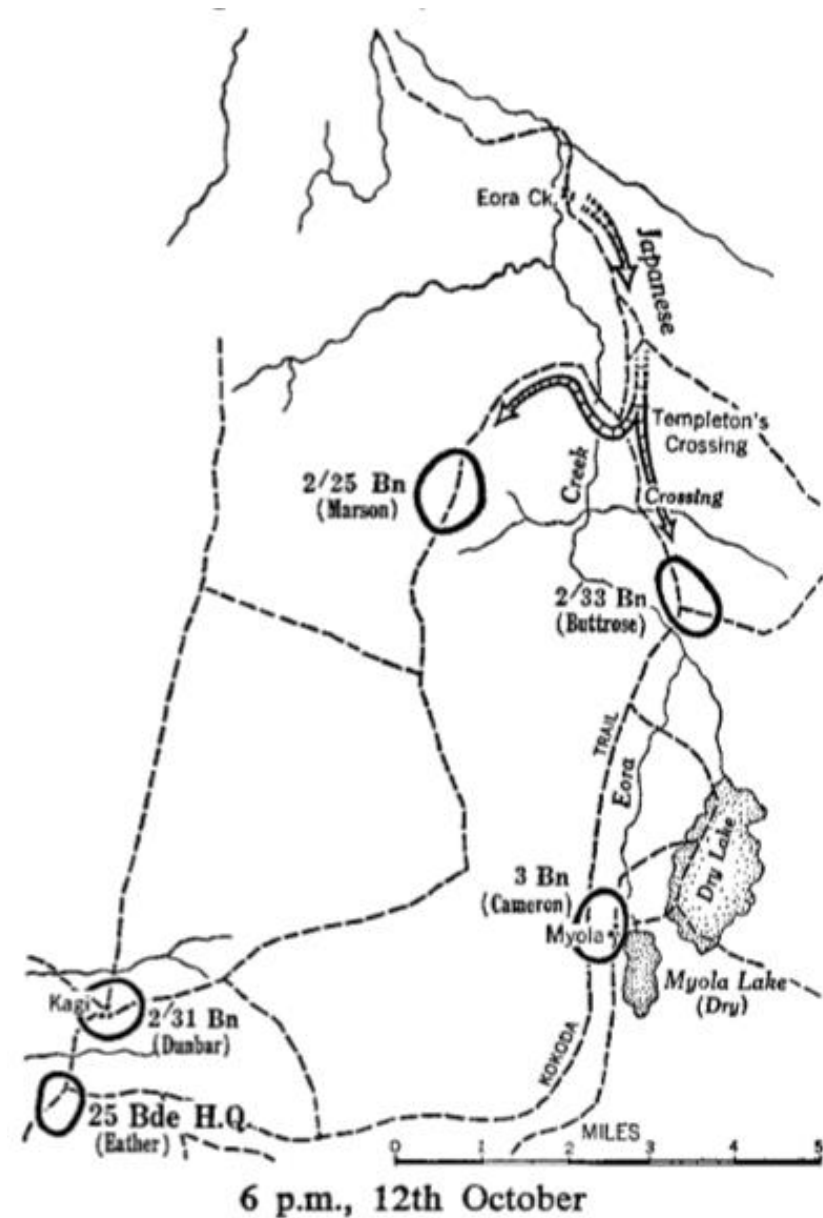
14 October - Kokoda

- Buttrose had not been faring well on the 14th (October).
- Profiting by their lesson of the previous day the Japanese anticipated Power's move and blocked him.
- Before midday Copp was back in Archer's holding position reporting that two of his platoons on the right of the track had been strongly counter-attacked while Lieutenant Warne's platoon on the left had been held early and, trying to edge forward, Warne himself had been killed.



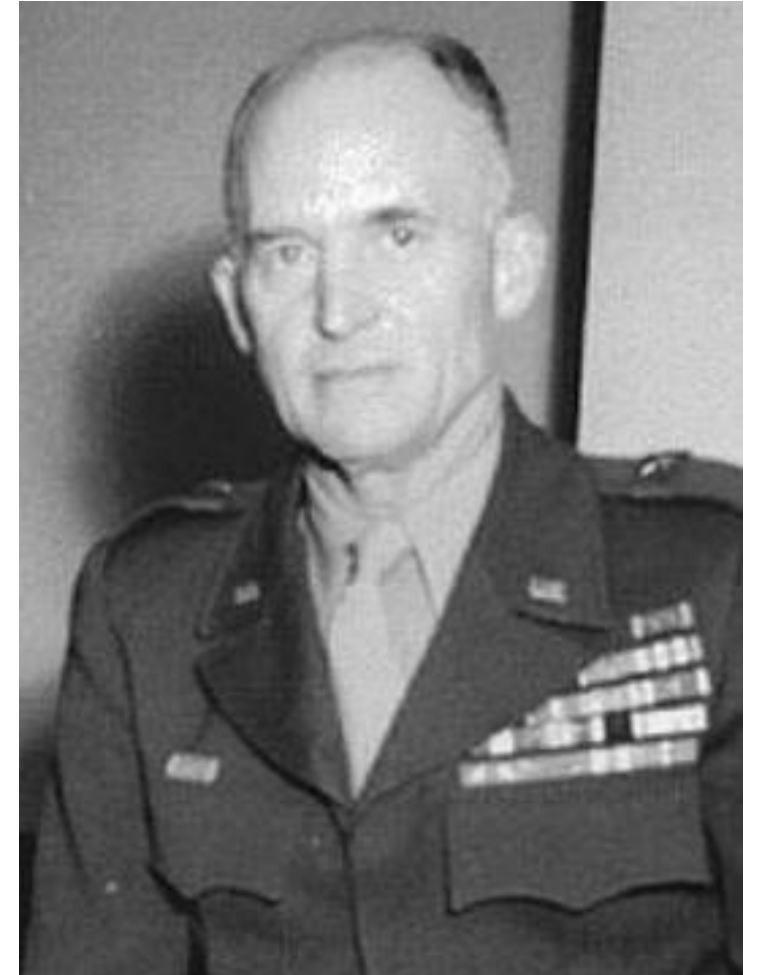
14 October - Kokoda

- Heavy rain then prevented the air strafing attacks which had been planned.
- Buttrose had lost 4 more men killed and 19 wounded and his strength was steadily draining.
- But new hope arrived with the 3rd Battalion; it would attack from the left flank next morning.
- The 2/25th Battalion on (14th October) was sparring for an opening in the wild bush and, although Captain O'Grady with his fresh company took over from Butler, no progress was made.



14 October – New Guinea

- Brigadier-General MacNider was appointed to command the Wanigela force.
- He was ordered to consolidate Wanigela as a sea and air base for supplies, to exploit forward to Buna by sea and land, to institute and develop small craft supply routes from Wanigela to Pongani.
- On 14th October the air move from Port Moresby to Wanigela of Colonel. MacNab's 128th Regiment and the 2/6th Australian Independent Company (less patrol detachments operating in the vicinity of the Kokoda Track) began.



Hanford MacNider was a Public Servant and Soldier serving in the army in both World Wars and as Assistant Secretary of War from 1925 to 1928.

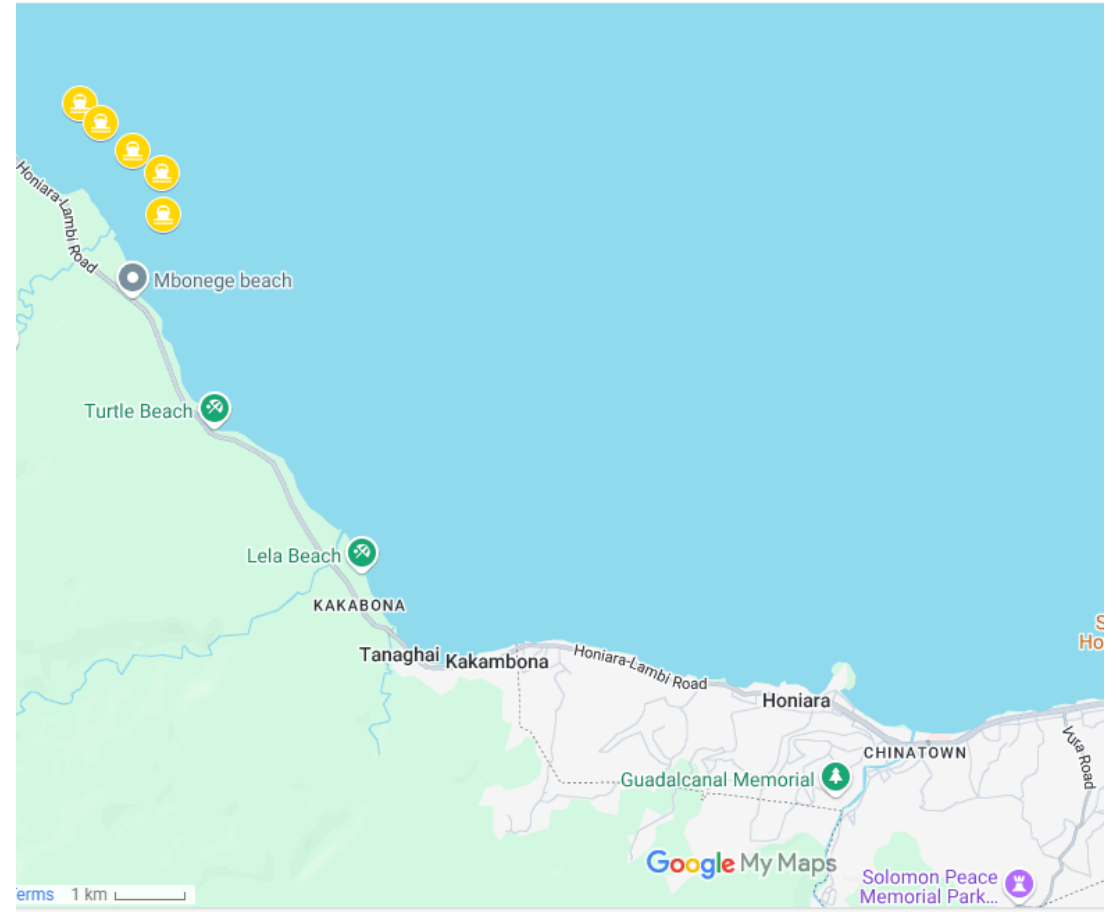
14 October – Air

- New Guinea
- Three B-25's attack Lae, a bridge 40 mi N of Port Moresby, and area of Wairopi bridge.
- Aleutians
- 16 bombers and 12 P-38's (photo) bomb and strafe Kiska installations and shipping. Fire bombs are dropped on hangars and Main Camp area where a large fire is started. 2 torpedo attacks on shipping in Gertrude Cove score no hits. The P-38's destroy 3 float-planes on water. 1 P-38 is shot down.



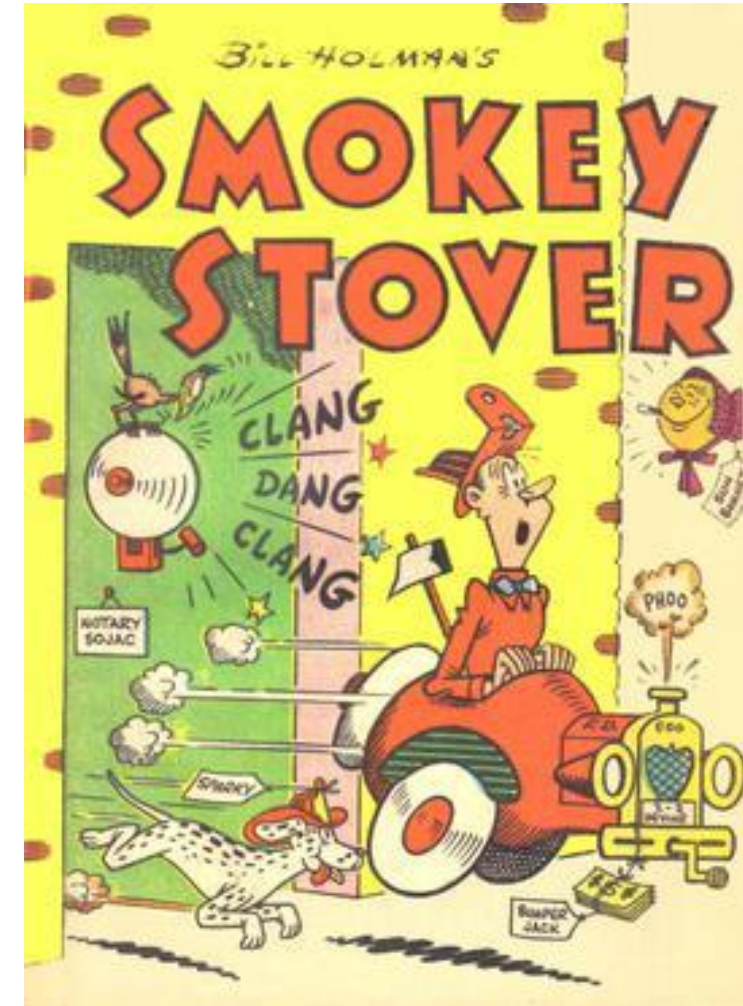
15 October - Guadalcanal

- That night, (14/15 October) two Japanese cruisers moved down the channel to bombard Henderson Field while the Express brought the six transports to Tassafaronga.
- The cruisers fired 752 eight-inch shells at the men around Lunga, and
- by dawn on 15 October five of the enemy transports were clearly visible from the perimeter as they lay off Tassafaronga smugly unloading troops, supplies, and ammunition.
- Relays of Japanese fighters and float planes cruised above the transports.



15 October - Guadalcanal

- At 06.00 a flight of six Wildcats, lead by Major Davis, went up to challenge the Japanese.
- While strafing the transports Lt (jg) “Smokey” Stover of VF-5 collided with a defending float plane.
- Stover returned safely with a section of Japanese wing fabric, including part of the insignia, snagged on his plane. In addition to the collision Smokey’s Wildcat had survived four 25 mm AA hits.
- One Wildcat failed to return.
- Smokey Stover is an American comic strip written and drawn by cartoonist Bill Holman from March 10, 1935, until he retired in 1972[1] and distributed through the Chicago Tribune.



15 October - Guadalcanal

- Cactus fliers, smarting from the two-day hammering, drained gasoline from wrecked planes, searched the surrounding jungle for undamaged drums, and finally collected enough aviation fuel to mount an attack with the three SBD'S that could still fly.
- But one of these planes had to be scratched when it tumbled into a crater on the way to the strip, and Lieutenant, Robert Patterson lost SBD number two when it hit a shell hole while he raced for his takeoff.
- Patterson tried it again with the last dive bomber, and this time he made it. His single-plane attack did not hamper the Japanese much, but while he was flying, the ground crews quickly patched other planes.
- The first four planes were taken up to have a go at the cocky Japanese transports.
- Two minor hits were scored, but General Geiger stopped the assembly line combat action until he could muster more strength.
- Admiral Fitch organised an airlift with Army and Marine transports to provide a survival diet of gasoline. Each R4D/C47 brought ten drums. Each 55 gallon drum would keep a Wildcat in the air for an hour.

15 October - Guadalcanal

- At 1000 (15/10) Cactus was ready with 12 SBD'S, and they went up to drop 500- and 1,000-pound bombs on the transports and then strafe their decks. That attack sank one of the transports.
- Next came attacks from P39s and relic P400's, and fires broke out, on two of the ships.
- After that, fliers from Espiritu Santo began to show up, and B17s and SBDs from the south sank another transport.
- The Tokyo Express was in serious trouble, in spite of 30 Zeros overhead to provide cover.



15 October - Guadalcanal

- Even General Geiger's own pilot, Major Jack Cram, made a run on the transports with two torpedoes slung under the wings of the general's *Blue Goose*, a bulbous PBY-5A. (photo of a PBY)
- Cram got the torpedoes off but then was chased back to Fighter 1 by a clutch of Zeros, and one determined enemy fighter had to be shot away from the smoking *Goose* as Cram landed.
- By day's end three bombed transports of 7,000 to 8,000 tons each were beached and burning off Tassafaronga and the other two had fled back up the Slot. But the Japanese had managed to unload all the men and most of the supplies they had brought to Guadalcanal.
- The Japanese reinforcement obviously was building up for a counteroffensive, and Marines and soldiers worked constantly to strengthen the perimeter and patrol the approaches.



Reconnaissance to the east and south found no indications of a Japanese build-up. General Vandegrift and his staff were aware only of a build up along the coast from the west.