

# War in the Pacific

## Defending Australia

### Campaigns in New Guinea and the Solomons

15 November 1942

7th Div AIF and 32<sup>nd</sup> Div USA pursue the Japanese back into their bridgeheads at Gona, Sanananda & Buna

Curtin proposes changes to permit Militia units to be sent overseas.



# 15 November – Situation Report

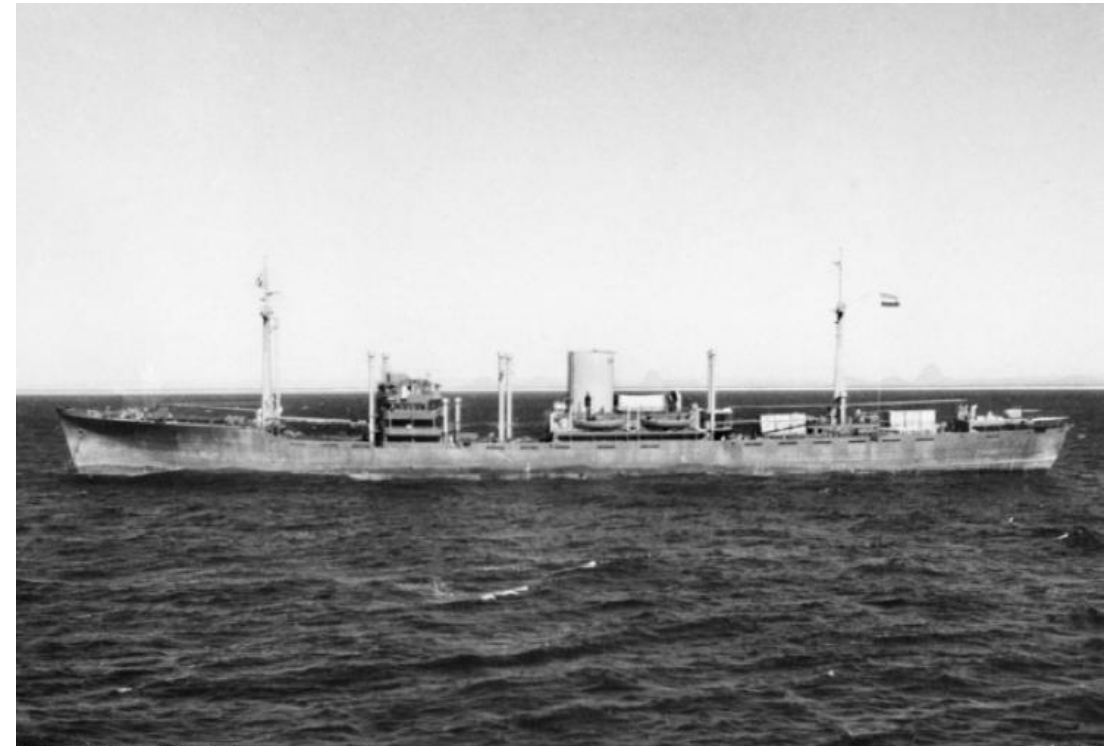
- The US Navy has only one carrier, Enterprise, left in the Pacific and its performance is still impaired after it was severely damaged by direct hits and near misses at the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands.
- In two naval battles off Guadalcanal on the nights of 12/13 and 14/15 November the US Navy warded off two attempted naval bombardments of Henderson Field. The Cactus Airforce, thus preserved, sank or destroyed the Japanese reinforcement convoy to Guadalcanal. These battles cost the US Navy 1,681 men killed, two cruisers and seven destroyers sunk, a cruiser and a destroyer immobilised in Tulagi and a battleship a cruiser and two destroyers so badly damaged they had to go back to the US for repairs.
- The Americans have reinforced and resupplied Guadalcanal.
- President Roosevelt has intervened to ensure that Guadalcanal is being strengthened with everything necessary to hold the perimeter and exploit the success.
- The air battle continues with both sides attacking the opposition's air force and ships and developing their own airfields.

# 15 November – Situation Report

- The Allies are pushing forward in New Guinea and have retaken Kokoda but the Japanese, aided by the terrain, continue to resist tenaciously. Possession of the Kokoda airfield has greatly eased medevac and supply difficulties. General Allen has been replaced in command by General Vasey because of Command unhappiness about slow progress.
- On the Kokoda track the Australian 7<sup>th</sup> Division have now overcome very determined resistance at Gorari and have reached the Kumusi River.
- Preparations for the American 32<sup>nd</sup> Division to mount attacks on Buna by sea from Milne Bay and by air into new strips near Pongani are in train.
- The Australian Government are attempting to disentangle the 9<sup>th</sup> Division AIF from a major offensive in North Africa and bring it home to Australia. This effort is being resisted by both Roosevelt and Churchill.

# 15 November - Sea

- The first LILLIPUT convoy, "to cover reinforcement, supply, and development of the Buna-Gona area upon its anticipated capture", of nine ships left Townsville in the evening of 15th November, escorted by H.M.A. Ships Arunta, Ballarat and Katoomba.
- About 130 miles S.S.E. of Moresby, the convoy was to split. Five ships to proceed to Moresby with Arunta, while the corvettes escorted the remaining four—Japara, Balikpapan, Bantam and JB. Ashe—to Milne Bay, the three Dutch ships to form the first LILLIPUT flight to Buna.
- In mid-November Commander J. L. Sinclair arrived to take up the appointment of Beachmaster, Oro Bay, in anticipation of LILLIPUT.
- Sinclair a former Singapore pilot, as commanding officer of H.M.S. Kedah, had led the withdrawal convoy to Singapore on the night 11th-12th February 1942.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

303447

The Dutch motor vessel Japara which transported troops to Milne Bay in 1942-09. She took part in Operation Lilliput in northern New Guinea. Note the 4 inch gun on the stern.

# 15 November - Sea

- Logistics had been one of the biggest restraints on the Guadalcanal campaign.
- In a global war limited by shipping capacity, on 23 September there had been 86 ships in Noumea harbour, waiting to be unloaded or providing storage that was not available on shore or unable to be unloaded because of lack of high capacity lifting gear.
- Each service separately unloaded their own ships.
- When goods were unloaded they were frequently stacked unsorted and unlabelled around the port exposed to weather and pilfering.
- On November 16 Halsey placed the control of cargo discharge and loading at Noumea in army hands. The skilled and energetic leadership of Brigadier General Raymond Wilkinson started untieing the biggest knot in the South Pacific supply line.



Naval Base Noumea in 1942 at Noumea, New Caledonia.

# 15 November – New Guinea

- On the 15th the crossing of the Kumusi continued slowly. While the engineers worked on a second bridge.
- The flying-foxes could get only about 80 men across in an hour and not more than 150 could cross the footbridge in the same time.
- Battalions of heavily laden troops in their mudstained jungle green and carrier lines of natives in bright coloured lap laps all mingled as they waited their turn to cross.
- The means for crossing were adventurous but were attempted in something of a carnival spirit.
- An extremely flimsy wire suspension bridge gave all users a bath at its sagging middle.
- The high strung flying-fox, whilst efficient, occasionally stopped with the occupant swinging helplessly above the stream.

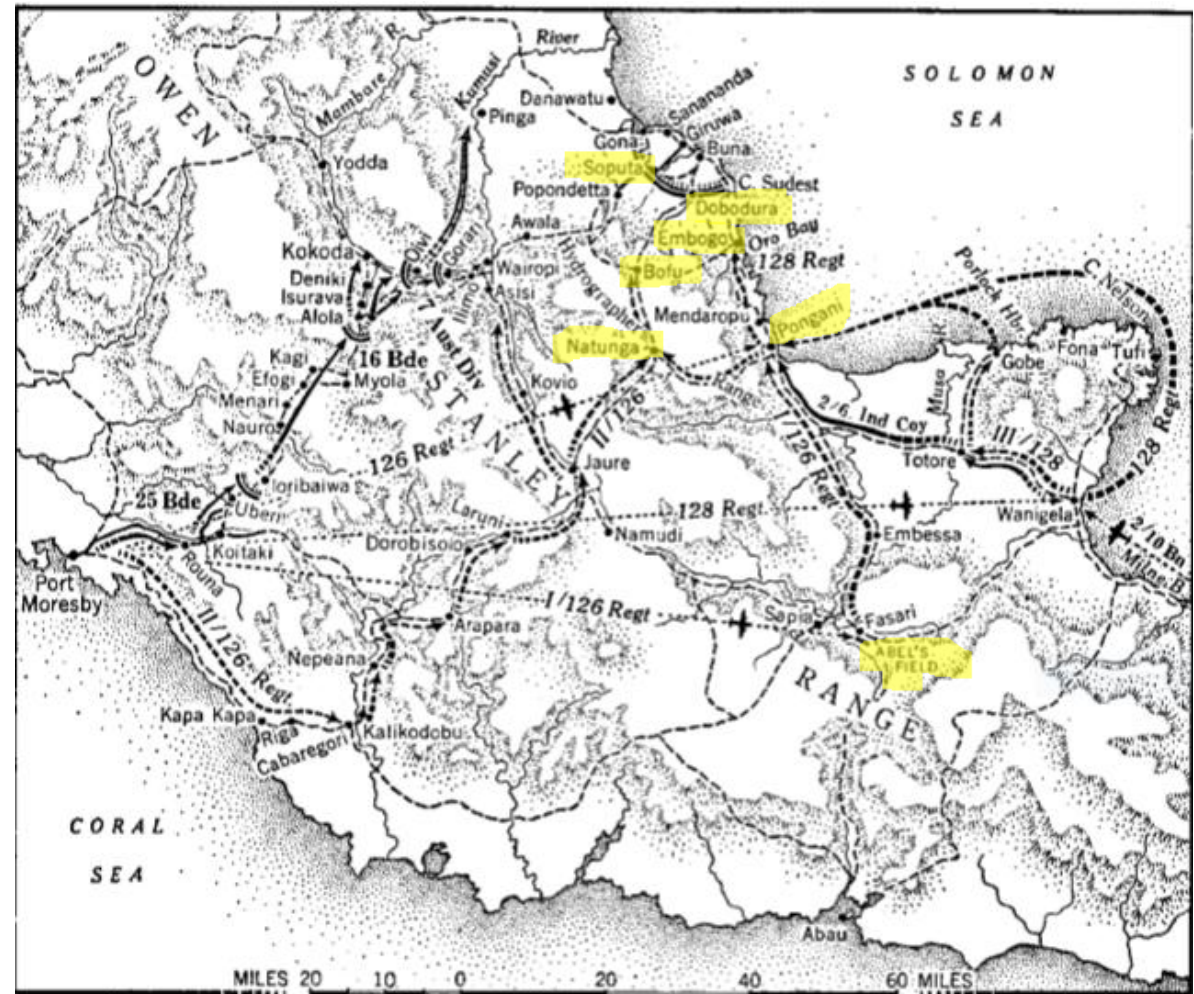


*(Australian War Memorial)*  
Crossing the Kumusi River at Wairopi on a makeshift bridge constructed by Australian engineers. November 1942.



# 15 November – New Guinea

- The 32d Division was to move north in two columns—the 128th Regiment following the coastal track from Embogo to Cape Endaiadere, the 126th an inland axis to Soputa.
- On the 15th, with the move to begin next day, I Battalion of the 126th were just marching into Pongani from Abel's Field,
- II Battalion was at Bofu, and regimental headquarters and the III Battalion were at Natunga after a forced march from Pongani.
- It was decided then to ferry the I Battalion to Embogo and have them march to Dobodura, where they would rejoin the regiment.



Allied advance across Owen Stanley Range towards Buna,  
26th September-15th November

# 15 November – Air

- On the night of 14/15 four patrol bombers attacked the airfield at Buin, destroying at least eight aircraft and one fuel or ammunition dump and starting about ten fires. More than twenty aircraft were machine gunned.
- Photographic recce of Kavieng shows new construction of dispersal bays and five medium bombers and four fighters well dispersed.
- Three A-20's strafe tgts near Gona while
- five B-25's and B-26's escorted by six fighters pound AA positions at Buna and Soputa as US/Australian ground forces prepare to move against the Buna-Gona beachhead.
- Seven B-17's hit shipping at Rabaul scoring one hit which caused a violent explosion in a large unidentified ship.



**The Optical House of**  
**CHAS. SANKEY FRASER**  
Optometrists,  
246 QUEEN STREET  
Nearly Opp. Commonwealth Bank,  
and at Toowoomba.  
**HOURS:** 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., 2 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.  
Sats. 9 a.m. to 12 noon.



No. 2870

(Registered in Australia for Trans-  
mission by Post as a Newspaper.)

# The Courier-Mail

BRISBANE, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1942

90,293 DAILY NET CIRCULATION

6 PAGES—2d

Highest Prices paid  
for  
**DIAMONDS**  
and OLD GOLD  
**WALLACE BISHOPS**  
KING GEORGE SQUARE, BRISBANE

## EIGHTH ARMY 75 MILES PAST TOBRUK

### Air Attacks On Tunis; French Resisting Axis

**ALLIED** air forces in North Africa have made successful low-level attacks on the German-held Tunis aerodrome. They have shot down seven more big Axis planes ferrying between Tunis and Sicily, making 20 in three days.

French resistance to the Germans in Tunis continues, according to Algiers radio. More Germans and a large force of Italians are believed to have landed from sea and air convoys.

Eighth Army forces chasing Rommel are near el Tmimi, 60 miles south of Derna and 75 miles from Tobruk. Fighter-bombers keep up their strafing attacks on the retreating Axis transport, and heavy and medium bombers have attacked Benghazi.

Latest official news of the First Army drive on Tunisia from the west is that the Allied force "is consolidating its new positions."

There is no confirmation of a report from Tangiers radio that American troops have entered Tunisia.

It has been announced in London that the Bona aerodrome, in East Africa, was occupied by British and American paratroops.

They left Britain last Tuesday and arrived in North Africa the next day. They took off again at daybreak on Thursday. All transport craft used in this movement returned safely to Britain.

American despatches from North Africa say that the Eighth Army is near Tmimi means that it has advanced 150 miles into Libya. Tmimi is west of Gazala and on the inland route to Benghazi, which is 150 miles away.

The Courier-Mail's London correspondent says that Montgomery's forces are racing on, and the Allied drive on Tunisia is progressing steadily without provoking any Axis reaction apart from

Aerial view of Tunis, capital of Tunisia, for which Allied forces are driving. The air field is in German hands. Fighting between French Forces and the Germans is reported.



### Wairopi Crossing Taken In Advance Toward Buna

**AUSTRALIAN** troops have captured Wairopi, 43 trail miles from Buna, in Papua. They are now in possession of the main Kumusi River

### BIG NAVAL CLASHES IN SOLOMONS AREA

**FIERCE** naval and air battles are raging again in the Solomons area, where the Japanese have launched another attempt to recapture Guadalcanal Island.

Washington reports that both the American and Japanese forces have sustained losses in a series of engagements which began last Thursday night and still continues.

Tokio radio admits the loss of two Japanese destroyers and damage to a battleship, and that 10 Japanese planes are missing.

It also makes claims of American losses as a result of what it describes as an attack by "powerful Japanese air and naval forces," but says that the battle still continues.

A series of naval engagements which commenced on Thursday night in the Solomons is still in progress, said the United States Navy Department's communique. "Both sides have suffered losses."

"No details will be reported while the battle continues, because to announce details of these actions while the battle is in progress would be to furnish the enemy with information of definite value."

The naval and air battles apparently are the "second round"

in the fight which began towards the end of October, when the Japanese launched an all-out attack to recapture Guadalcanal Island.

Colonel Knox, in announcing on October 30, that the Japanese Fleet retired from the Solomons, said the "first round" was over, and the United States forces were waiting for the second round. "Guadalcanal is as well held as ever, and is being supplied," he added.

After that "first round," the American Associated Press correspondent at South Pacific Headquarters said, a huge Japanese armada left the Solomons licking its wounds. Naval forces, dive bombers, and torpedo bombers had pounded the enemy ships, estimated to number between 40 and 50.

The Japanese ships were divided into two heavy task forces 150 to 200 miles apart, and both forces were roughly handled.

### MacARTHUR GIVES AID

A formation of Flying Fortresses from General MacArthur's command strafed a Japanese convoy off the island of New Georgia (north-west of Guadalcanal) on Saturday.

A 12,000-ton vessel, full of troops, was set on fire by a strafing from low altitude. All our planes returned.

T. J. Fairhall, Courier-Mail war correspondent in New Guinea, reports the attack on the convoy thus:

A large Japanese convoy heading through the Solomons area towards Guadalcanal, was attacked early on Saturday by Flying Fortresses from Major-General Kenney's command, says Fairhall.

There were a number of large transports and warships dispersed over a very wide area off New Georgia Island heading southward. Despite heavy ack-ack from all

the ships the Flying Fortresses dived down for three bombing runs.

The tail-gunner of one Flying Fortress said that he could see Jap soldiers "crowded like sardines" in one ship. One bomb fell within a few yards of the stern of the vessel.

The Flying Fortresses completed their attack by strafing the decks of a 12,000-ton transport, on which a fire was seen, and other vessels. Three single-seater fighters came up to intercept the Fortresses, but did not close for an attack.

### WARNING TO AUSTRALIA

MELBOURNE, Sunday.—A stern warning that an invasion of Australia planned on the outcome of the Solomons battle was given today by the Navy Minister (Mr. Makin). He emphasised that the latest

### RUSSIANS GAIN IN CAUCASUS

**RUSSIANS** are holding the latest German onslaught on Stalingrad and have taken the initiative in the Nakhik (Central Caucasus) area and north-east of the Black Sea port of Tuapse.

Latest Moscow communique says that the Russians in the factory area of Stalingrad repelled several attacks.

"All of the city's defenders are staunchly defending their positions," added the communique. "Scouts south of Stalingrad blew up several blockhouses and German tanks, which were dug into the earth."

North-west of Stalingrad, Russian troops demolished seven dug-outs, silenced four batteries, and dispersed a concentration of infantry.

Russians south-east of Nakhik fought their way forward, inflicting heavy losses. North-east of Tuapse, our troops occupied a strategically important height and repulsed all counter-attacks.

An earlier communique reported that fighting was proceeding at Stalingrad for the recovery of a position, where the Germans had made a slight advance.

### Nazis Fail To Get Oil

The Red Star says that not a single drop of oil has been taken from the Maikop oilfields since the German occupation three months ago. The Germans made several attempts to develop the wells, despite the fact that these and the wells in the Krasnodar area had been completely wrecked.

Germans attempted to reconstruct the Maikop well, but guerrillas smashed the installation. The German garrison in the all-

### Japs Up To Old Tricks

From T. J. Fairhall

**MORE** than 50 per cent of Japanese encountered by our troops in the Owen Stanley fighting either speak English or have been taught to speak set phrases parrot-fashion.

At every opportunity Japanese tried to outwit Australian troops by calling orders such as "Cease fire! Withdraw! Where are you, Digger? or is that you Joe?" in close fighting.

When one burly Australian caught a small surprised Japanese by the scruff of the neck at Aioia, the Japanese struggled, and cried, "Let me go — let me go."

At Oivi, a Japanese called out, "Come here, I am wounded." When the stretcher bearer went over to get him the Japanese opened fire and wounded the bearer with six bullets.

Another trick is to lay a dead or wounded soldier in an area covered by antitank or machine-guns and shoot at any of our troops who go to the aid of the soldier.

### Lost Fliers Found In Mid-Pacific

WASHINGTON, Nov. 15 (A.A.P.).—U.S. Navy fliers have found Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, personal assistant to the U.S. War Secretary, and other occupants of a plane which was lost in mid-Pacific a month ago.

Captain Rickenbacker, American ace of the last war, was on a secret mission when he was lost. It is believed he was investigating a new air route from United States to Australia and New Zealand.

Rickenbacker, Colonel Hans Adamson, and Private John Bartek were found by a Catalina flying boat on a raft 600 miles north of Samoa.

Rickenbacker and Adamson were in good condition. Bartek's condition is serious, but he is expected to recover. Rickenbacker told his rescuers that Sergeant Alexander Caca-

# 16 November – Government

- On 16th November Curtin (photo) replied at length to Roosevelt, reviewing the attempts to obtain the return of the whole of the A.I.F. since the outbreak of war with Japan.
- The attitude of the Australian Government had been quite definite and clear.
- It was now impossible for Australia to dispatch to the Middle East the reinforcements necessary to maintain the division and so it must return to Australia.



# 16 November – Government

- “The decisions on global strategy have been taken by Mr Churchill and yourself (Curtin continued). The Commonwealth Government has shown a ready willingness to cooperate in other theatres at considerable risk to the security of Australia.
- This has been demonstrated by the service overseas of our naval, land and air forces and our continued participation in the Empire Air Training Scheme.
- The Government considers that the contributions it has made to other theatres entitle it to the assurance that the fullest possible support will be given to the situation in the Pacific.
- You will recall that the Military Advisers of the Australian Government consider that three further divisions are necessary in the South-West Pacific Area.
- In view of its responsibilities for the local defence of Australia and in the light of the views of its advisers, the Government feels that the maximum strength of the Australian forces should be concentrated in the South-West Pacific Area to meet all the contingencies of the military situation in the Pacific.”
- At the same time (16<sup>th</sup> November) Curtin communicated with Churchill and with Bruce, informing them of the action taken, and saying that "as the situation for which the 9th Division was allowed to remain has now been cleared up in a most satisfactory manner" early action should be taken to return the 9th Division to Australia.



# 16 November - Intelligence

- At this stage the Allies had no ability to read Japanese army codes.
- Japanese navy codes were again being read, after a break of some months, and these provided some visibility when the navy transported army units or escorted army convoys.
- Central Bureau, MacArthur's signals intelligence operation, were developing some information on the movement of units by traffic analysis but intelligence on the Japanese army was very limited.
- In November SWPA Intelligence assessed Japanese army strength in and in transit to the south Pacific as:
  - New Guinea 12,000
  - New Britain 60,000
  - Guadalcanal 36,000



Blamey visits Central Bureau at 21 Henry St, Clayfield.  
Back: Captain Porter ALFHQ, (Central Bureau Lt Col Doud, USA, Wg Cdr Booth, RAAF, Lt Col Sandford, AIF)  
Front: Brg Gen Rogers, Director Intelligence ALFHQ, Blamey, Spencer Akin, USA, Central Bureau.

# 16 November - Guadalcanal

- On Guadalcanal the rations, never quite sufficient, improved but were always of poor quality. Loss of weight and strength continued.
- At least 90% of the original landing force were suffering from malaria, suppressed but not prevented or cured by Atebrine administered daily.
- In the operation at Koli Point everybody made mistakes. Orders miscarried. Communications failed. Execution was sluggish.
- After 3 months in combat the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division was running on empty.
- On 16 November Admiral Turner announced that the Division would be relieved by army forces at an early date.



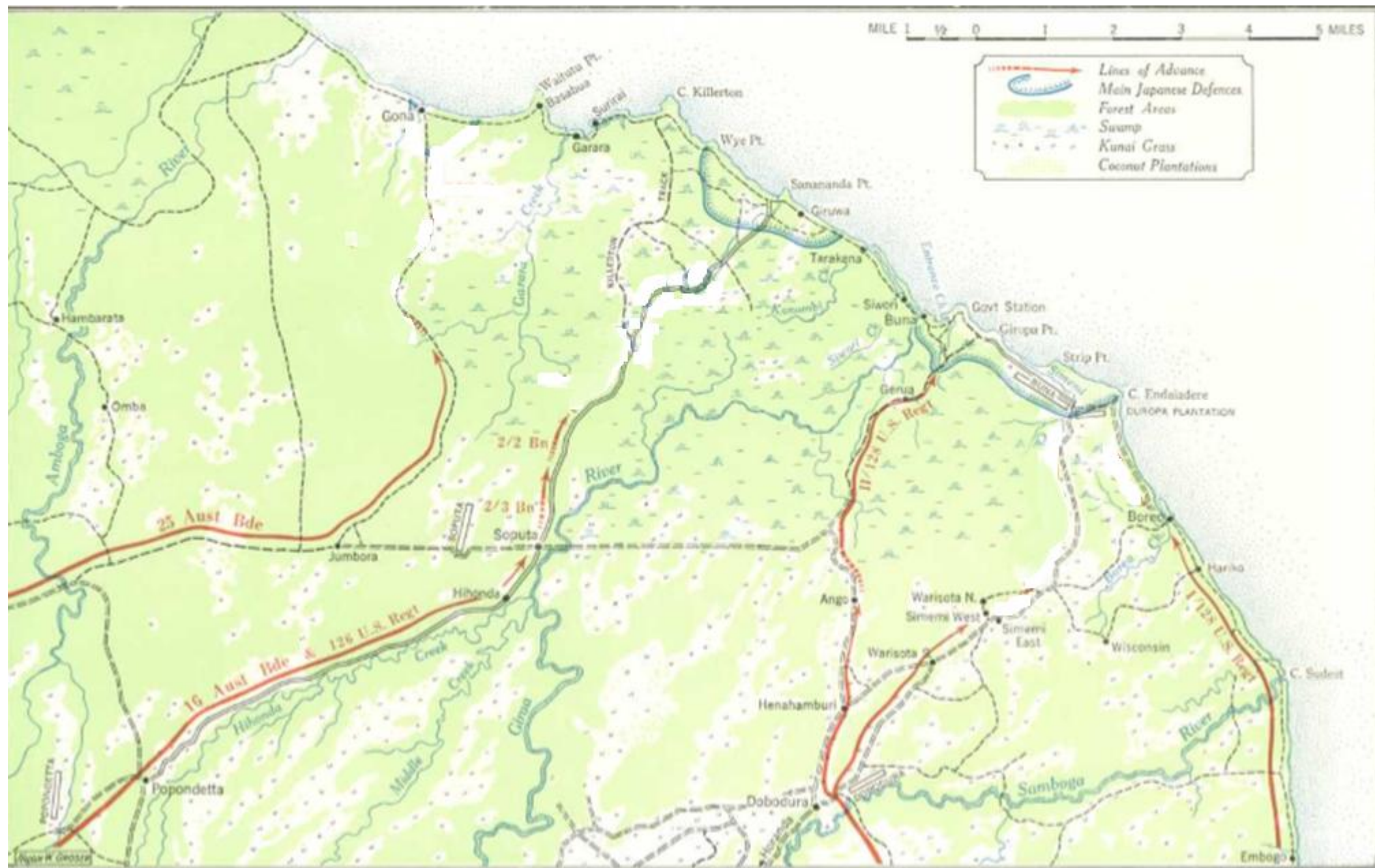
US Marines evacuating a wounded comrade, near Kokumbona River, Guadalcanal.



# 16 November – New Guinea

- At 10.30 (on the 16<sup>th</sup> Edgar's 2/2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion) moved forward for Popondetta with a section well forward and the companies following each other in single file.
- Brigadier Lloyd's headquarters marched behind them, followed by the 2/3rd and 2/1st Battalions.
- The track crossed a number of small streams and deeper creeks, through which the men sometimes waded waist deep, and wound through forests which seemed to hold the heat and press down the humid air.
- The 2/2nd halted for the night at the little village of Mumun.
- The men of the three battalions were tired. They had had a night of hazardous river crossings and a day which had pressed down their sweating loads.
- Their food supply was uncertain as they had received no rations that day. The day's march had covered about six miles of track.
- Both the 25<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Brigades were across the Kumusi by dark on the 16<sup>th</sup>. The 25th Brigade was advancing on Gona, the 16th Brigade on Sanananda.

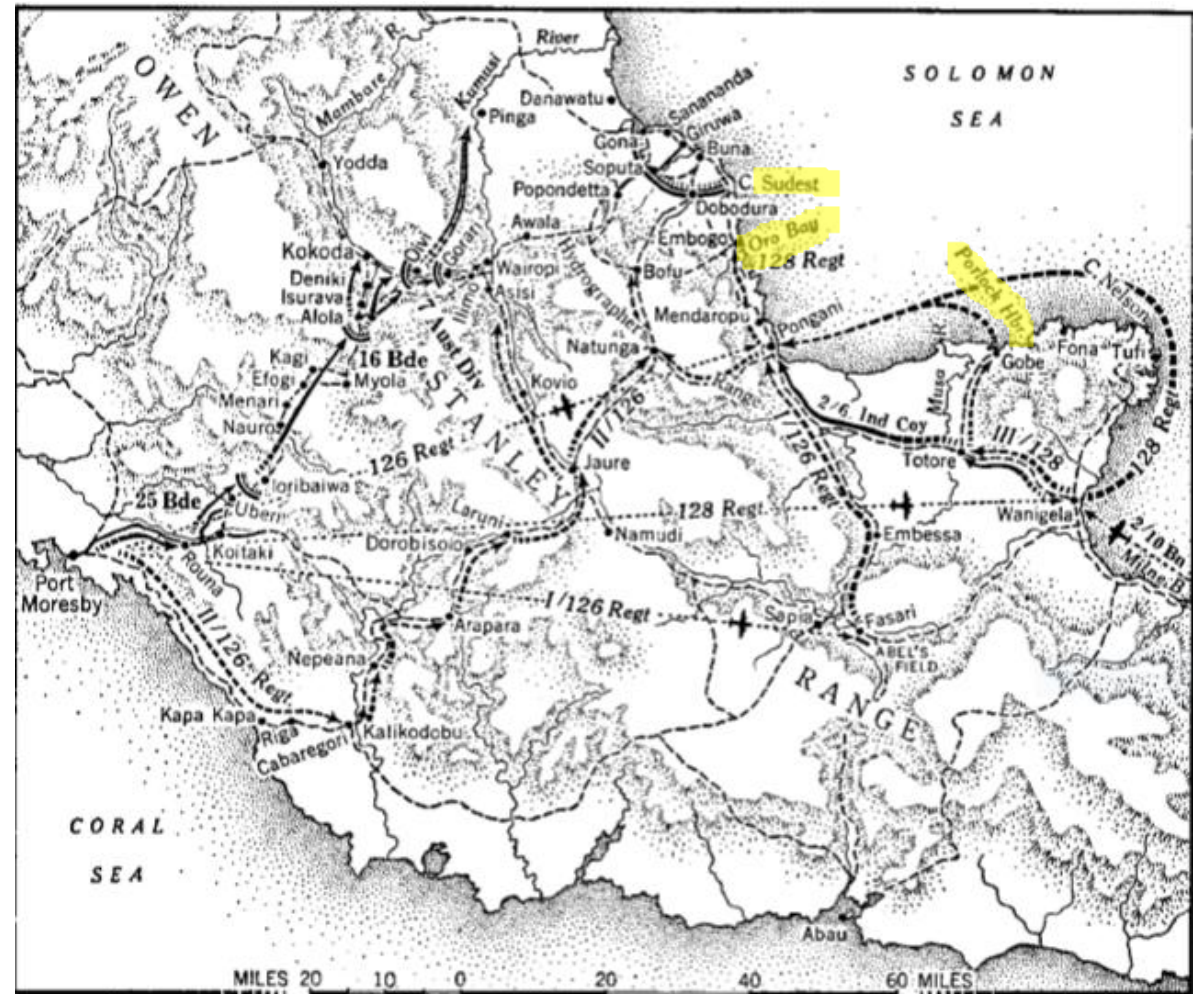






# 16 November – New Guinea

- The (American) forward move began on the 16th
- Ahead of the advanced base at Porlock Harbour the American supply line consisted of seven luggers, and a captured Japanese barge from Milne Bay.
- Late on the afternoon of the 16th, this barge, laden with two 25-pounders of the 2/5th Field Regiment, their crews and ammunition, left Oro Bay for Hariko, just north of Cape Sudest,
- in company with three of the luggers which carried rations, ammunition and men, each towing a boat or a pontoon.
- General Harding was on board one of the luggers, going forward to the front from the command post just south of Oro Bay.



Allied advance across Owen Stanley Range towards Buna,  
26th September-15th November

# 16 November – New Guinea

- As the little convoy rounded Cape Sudest fourteen Japanese Zeros came with the dusk.
- Soon all three luggers were blazing fiercely.
- Then the Australians on the barge watched their turn come. Three times a Zero made its swooping dives. Tracer bullets, leaving searing ribbons of flame in their paths, ripped into the hull of the barge and into the crouching bodies tightly packed aboard it.
- There was little that could be done in defence other than to keep cool and get behind anything offering a scrap of protection. These things the men did.
- A single light machine-gun had been set up on the stern. As the bright coloured rain of death poured down in graceful curves, Gunner A. G. King stood to face the Zero. He fought the plane defiantly with this pitifully inadequate weapon. . . .
- Soon the barge was ablaze. Clouds of dense black smoke billowed upwards. Beneath this canopy the vessel was sinking fast.
- Five of the Australians were killed, sixteen wounded.
- In all, from the four craft, 24 men were lost, many more wounded.
- The survivors, including the general, swam ashore.



General Harding

# 16 November – New Guinea

- This (the loss of the boats) completely disrupted the Americans' supply plans. Until they could establish an airfield at Dobodura they would be almost completely dependent upon supplies dropped from the air.
- General Harding ordered the men who were still to be ferried forward from Pongani off on a 30-mile march with full packs.
- Col Hale's 128th Regiment had already made flickering contact with advanced Japanese elements by nightfall of the 16th.
- Along the coastline, the I Battalion, under Lt Col McCoy, were reported to have found enemy outposts about 400 yards north of Hariko and to have gone into defensive positions.
- Lt-Col Miller's III Battalion, which had gone westward to Dobodura to approach Buna from the south, claimed to have killed three and wounded one of five Japanese whom they met at Dobodura on the afternoon of the 16th.
- They then continued on towards Simemi. Behind them was Lt-Col Smith's II Battalion, in reserve. It arrived at Dobodura with a company of engineers and at once all set to work clearing a landing strip.





# 16 November – New Guinea

- Buna could be approached from the south-east along the very edge of the sea by a narrow strip of sandy soil passing through Duropa Plantation, across the base of Cape Endaiadere
- or by a rough roadway, farther inland, which led in from the south through Dobodura and Simemi.
- This roadway separated two air strips, New Strip on the right, Old Strip on the left.
- Between these the roadway crossed Simemi Creek by a stout bridge, then ran parallel to the creek north-west to Buna.
- Swamp and kunai stretched between these two lines of approach.
- To the west, swamps, sluggishly heaving with the tides and foetid with rotten growth, reached towards the Girua River line.



# 16 November – Air

- Strong forces of B-26's, B-25's, and A-20's and fighters pound areas around Buna, Gona, Soputa, Sanananda, and Giruwa, hitting AA positions, buildings, barges, and troop concentrations as US 32d and Australian 7th Divs move forward against the Buna-Gona beachhead.
- Three allied medium bombers attack Maobisse and three others attack Bobonaro in Timor, without observed results.
- Air reconnaissance showed 53 fighters, ten probable dive bombers and one medium bomber at Lakunai, the airfield on the outskirts of Rabaul, nearby was a new wharf for unloading fighter planes with fighters on it and considerable supplies. Seven seaplanes were in the harbour.
- At night five patrol bombers attacked the airfield at Buin, destroying at least three enemy aircraft and starting large fires followed by explosions.



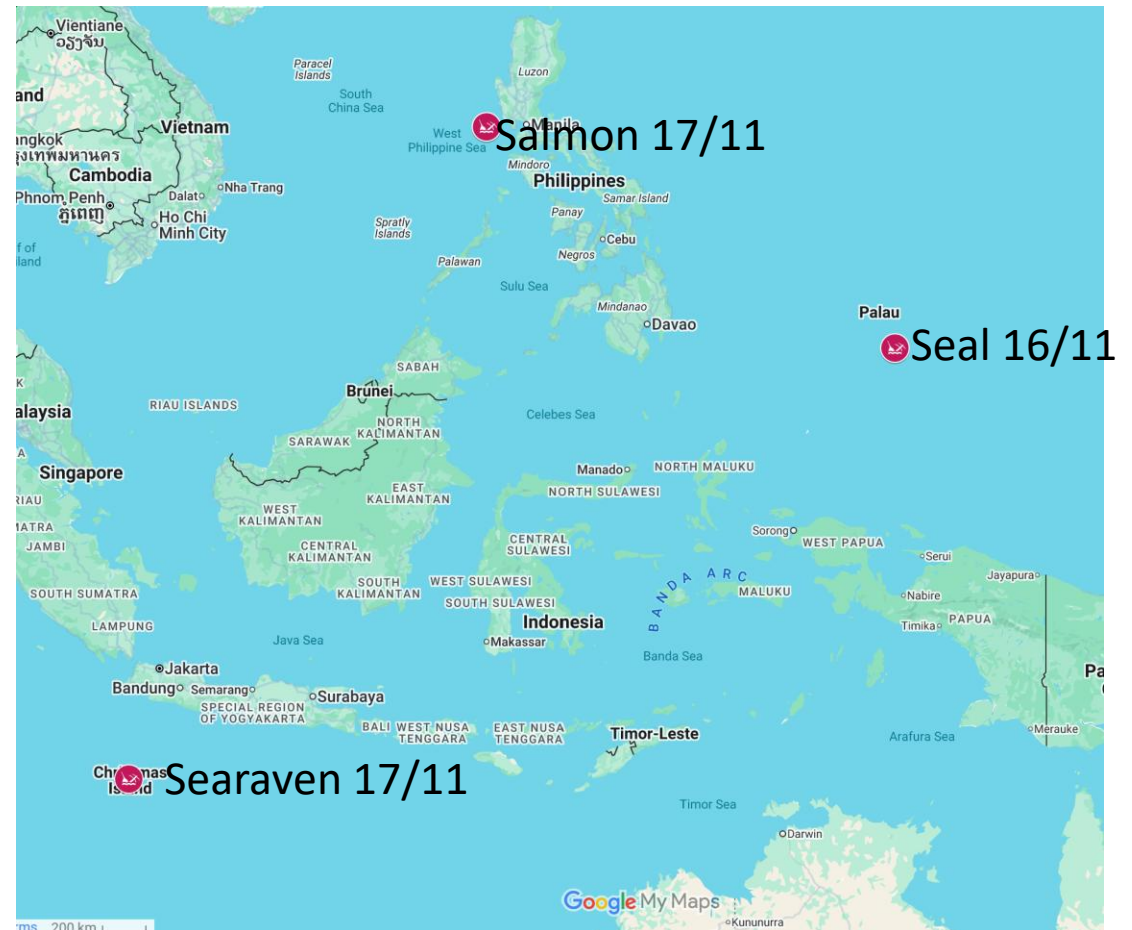
# 16 November – War Dept report to White House

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff notified Admiral Nimitz that Army and Navy air organizations assigned to the Central and South Pacific Areas (and Navy air units assigned to the North Pacific) are subject to deployment and redistribution as he may deem necessary. The purpose of this is to allow the commander on the spot complete freedom in the use of his means to accomplish his mission. Any redistribution thus effected must be reported to Washington for necessary logistic adjustments.

2. In his operations summary for November 14, General MacArthur reports that small detachments of our forces have crossed to the east side of the Kumusi River in the vicinity of Wairopi. Our aircraft

# 16 & 17 November – Sea

- A transport, the Boston Maru, was torpedoed and sunk in the Pacific Ocean south east of Palau (06°16'N 135°19'E) by USS Seal on 16 November.
- The cargo ship Nissei Maru was torpedoed and sunk in Flying Fish Cove, Christmas Island, in the Indian Ocean (10°30'S 105°35'E) by USS Searaven on 17 November.
- The transport Oregon Maru was torpedoed and sunk 36 miles (58 km) west of Olagapo (14°50'N 119°45'E) by USS Salmon on 17 November.
- On the 17<sup>th</sup> strafing Zeros put two more luggers, attempting to reach Oro Bay, out of action.





# 16 & 17 November – Air

- On 16th November three Bostons dropped 16 20-lb bombs directly on the stern of a wrecked ship off Waitutu Point that was thought to be used by the Japanese as a stores depot.
- On the 17th (November) six Beaufighters, with fighter cover, surprised the Japanese (at Lae) and before their batteries were properly in action two Sally bombers were attacked and a number of troops running from them for cover were killed;
- four Zeros were hit—one when attempting to take off—and an encampment at the north-west end of the aerodrome was thoroughly strafed.
- Up to this time all the Japanese planes encountered in the south Pacific, Zeros, Bettys, Kates and Vals, had been Navy aircraft. The Sally is an army aircraft and indicates a change in the enemy forces in the theatre.



Mitsubishi Ki-21 bomber “Allied reporting name Sally”

# 16 & 17 November – Air

- On 16th and 17th November Kenney sent Liberators of No. 90 Group on their first missions in the area but the crews revealed such defects in training that the whole group was then taken out of combat for instruction in navigation and night flying and for practice bombing and gunnery.
- General Arnold was planning to convert all the Heavy Bomber groups in the Pacific to B24s and have an all B17 fleet in Europe.



Consolidated B24 Liberators

# 17 November - Sea

- at 7.45 a.m. on 17th November a Catalina aircraft on reconnaissance flight reported sighting Ondina 220 miles N.W. by N. of Rottnest Island.
- On the same day Bengal arrived at Diego Garcia.
- On the 17<sup>th</sup> November the Combined Operations Intelligence Centre (COIC) added two new “Enemy Probable Next Moves”
  - Diversionary activity in the Aleutians and
  - Increased raider and submarine activity in the Indian Ocean.



# 17 November - Guadalcanal

- Scattered actions took place for the next five days, and on 17 November the main Japanese force at Koli Point, to the east of the perimeter, began withdrawing into the inland hills.
- Carlson's 2<sup>nd</sup> Raider Battalion pursued them.



Native Solomon Islanders guide US 2nd Marine Raiders in pursuit of Japanese forces on Guadalcanal in November 1942

# 17 November – New Guinea

- The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion followed (across the river) on the 17<sup>th</sup>.
- On the 17<sup>th</sup>, through seemingly virgin forests and secondary growth, the track undulated onwards in conditions similar to those of the previous day.
  - Heavy afternoon rains made it a quagmire, turned the area into a vast steam bath, and flooded the creeks, changing their crossing from an inconvenience into a positive hazard.
  - These exacting coastal conditions told so heavily on the men in their weakened condition, which was aggravated by a shortage of food, for again no rations reached them in the day, that fifty-seven of the 2/2nd alone fell out gasping beside the track.
  - Friendly natives helped where they could, handing fruit and sugar cane to the soldiers as they plodded through the villages and often assisting the weaker ones across the streams.
- Blamey wrote Herring (on the 17<sup>th</sup>) that the Japanese were assembling air forces for attack; indications were that they were gathering troops and destroyers to land reinforcements at Buna. It was imperative that both the Australians and the 32nd American Division should push on with the greatest speed to seize the Buna sea-front and destroy the Japanese remaining in the coastal area.



# 17 Nov – New Guinea

- On the 17th the I Battalion edged slightly forward along the shore and the III Battalion on the left entered Simemi.
- General Harding then prepared to attack simultaneously along the water's edge and the Simemi Track early on the 19th, with support from two Australian howitzers, his only available artillery.
- Col Tomlinson's 126th Regiment had been pushing on from the Natunga Bofu area to reach Dobodura by way of Inonda and Horanda to advance on Buna through Ango and the village of Gerua.



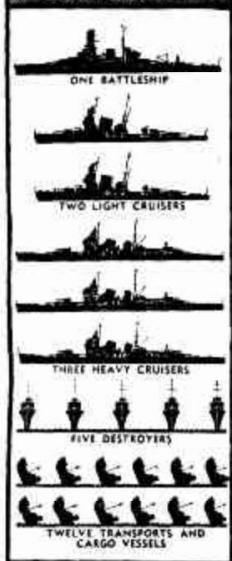
# 17 November – Air

- Five B-26s hit Gona Mission as US 32d and Australian 7th Divs continue to move toward Buna-Gona beachhead. Our planes were unsuccessfully attacked by five enemy fighters.
- B-25s bomb A/Fs at Lae in two separate raids.
  - Eight bombers escorted by eight fighters scored direct hits on the operations building and destroyed five bombers and six fighters.
  - Later three bombers again attacked the same objective destroying another fighter and another bomber.
- Three other B25s attacked Gasmata A/F causing a large explosion.
- A lone B-24 bombs wharf area at Rabaul.
- Beaufighters were over Timor for the first time, while ten Hudsons from Nos. 2 and 13 bombed Maubisse, Dili, Bobonaro, and Baucau. The increase in the number of sorties against Japanese forward positions and bases in Timor, and particularly the strafing of road convoys by the Beaufighters, greatly encouraged the troops on the ground. One of four Beaufighters failed to return.

# JAPAN'S ARMADA SMASHED

## 23 SHIPS, 40,000 MEN LOST IN WORST NAVAL DEFEAT

### U.S. SANK THESE—



### ODDS WERE TOO BIG

NEW YORK, Nov. 17 (A.A.P.)—A dramatic night battle by 40 Americans in flimsy plywood "mosquito" torpedo-boats against 6000 Japanese in a battle-ship, cruisers, and destroyers, in the middle of October, has just been revealed.

The torpedo-boats were commanded by Lieut.-Commander Stan Montgomery, who told the International News Service correspondent: "The Japanese have been raising hell at their leisure."

NEW YORK, Nov. 17 (A.A.P. and Special)—Smashing of the Japanese armada in the great Solomons naval battle is regarded as the biggest single blow that the self-styled "invincible Nipponese Navy" has suffered in its history. It makes a big gap in the enemy's battle strength.

Eleven Japanese warships and 12 transports were sunk, and seven other warships were damaged.

Probably 24,000 Japanese soldiers were drowned in the sinking at sea of eight transports, while Japanese losses in all may reach 40,000.

American warships sunk were two light cruisers and six destroyers. Losses of American personnel were not large.

Fighting was spread over three days—last Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

In contrast to previous battles in the Pacific, aircraft played an important, but not the dominant, role in the victory.

Only a fraction of the huge Japanese force was able to reach the south-eastern Solomons, and it is believed that the result of the battle has clinched American dominance of the area. The Japanese fleet made off northwards.

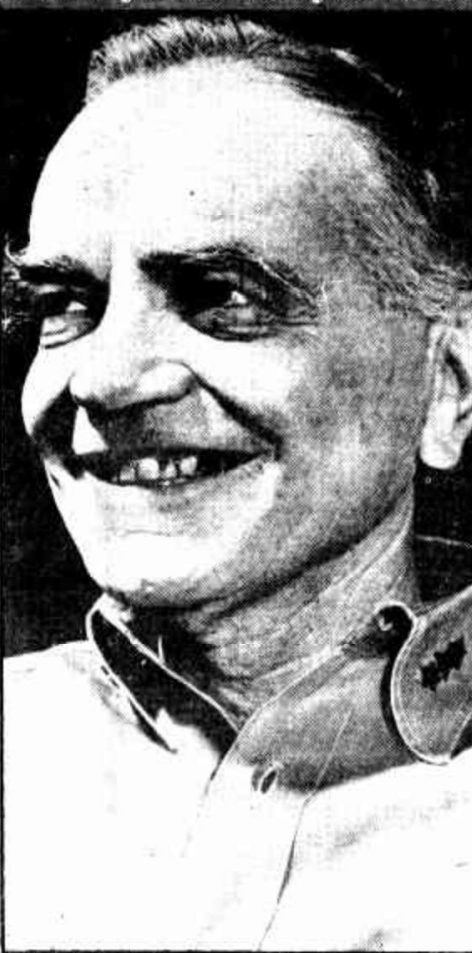
Although it is too early to assess all the strategical implications of the victory, it is expected to be the turning point in the Solomons campaign, and to render Australia's positions more secure.

"History may record that the battle saved Australia from invasion," says the United Press' naval commentator.

### "JAPS UNLIKELY TO TRY AGAIN"

Naval circles in Washington believe that the Japanese are not likely to risk their remaining naval strength in another attempt to retake Guadalcanal.

### Halsey's Victory Smile



Vice-Admiral Halsey, commander of the Allied naval forces in the South Pacific, who scored a smashing victory over the Japanese.

## 8th ARMY MOVING ON BENGHAZI; AIR BATTLES IN TUNISIA

LONDON, Nov. 17.—Little news has been disclosed of the Allied advance in Tunisia, but on the eastern end of the Allied pincers closing on the big Axis base of Tripoli, Derna and Mekili have been occupied by the Eighth Army.

Mekili is on the inland route from Tobruk to Benghazi, and should the British advance be fast enough some of Rommel's fleeing forces may be headed off at Benghazi.

Fighting in Tunisia is mainly between aircraft. Allied headquarters announces that American and British forces are pushing into Tunisia, but says that reports of fighting at the naval base of Bizerta are premature.

Heirut radio says that a big convoy has arrived at Algiers from Britain. Although the tonnage ran into six figures, not a single soldier was lost during the voyage.

The Axis continues to pour German and Italian troops into Tunisia by sea and air, and the German-controlled Paris radio claims that a veritable "air bridge" has been established between Tunisia and Italy.

"Small French military units have begun to co-operate with our eastern and centre task forces," says an Allied Headquarters communiqué.

"The French force at Oran has joined United States troops at their station."

"Clearance and maintenance of ports and harbours proceeds."

"Mediterranean States' units have reinforced the British First Army on the east."

"The Royal Navy maintains control of the western Mediterranean and its approaches. This naval force has suffered losses, but these have been small in proportion to the size of the operations. Casualties, on the whole, have been light."

"We took into custody to-day the officer and crew of a U-boat which was sunk off the North African coast."

Croix de Feu, have escaped from Vichy France to North Africa, where they are assisting in the formation of a Government. M. Marcel Peyrou, a former French Minister for the Interior, has also reached North Africa.

M. Chantepie is said to have been sent to Washington on a special mission.

Another statement issued from Allied Headquarters in North Africa says: "Officials who have escaped from Tunis declare that as soon as the French heard that the Germans were coming to Tunisia they scuttled the ships in the harbours and took away all movable defences, such as anti-aircraft guns, also all transport and petrol."

"They consider that the main object of the Axis forces in Tunisia is to hold the ports in order to enable Rommel's forces to get out of Africa."

The R.A.F. made three separate raids on Tunis on Saturday. The first was at dusk when at least six transport machines and bombers were set on fire and were burnt out. A Heinkel 111 was chased out to sea and forced down, when it blew up.

Later in the night British bombers attacked the aerodrome and caused much destruction.

When German bombers attacked the ports and shipping at Bone and Bougie on Friday 11 of them were destroyed. Four more were shot down on Saturday when the enemy renewed the assaults.

### War Fronts At A Glance

#### SOLOMONS

United States naval and air forces have scored smashing victory, sinking 11 Japanese warships and 12 transports, and driving enemy northwards. United States losses, two light cruisers and six destroyers.

#### TUNISIA

British and American troops moving into Tunisia; no large scale land fighting, but many air clashes. Axis continues to pour troops into Tunisia by air and sea.

#### LIBYA

British Army in its pursuit of Rommel's fleeing troops, has occupied Derna, on the coast, and Mekili, on inland route to Benghazi.

#### NEW GUINEA

Axis still advancing without opposition; now near Awaia, 34 miles south-west of New Guinea. General MacArthur, General Blamey, and Lieut.-General Kenney personally conducting campaign.

#### RUSSIA

Stalinrad defenders have broken strong German attacks on narrow sector in last two days. Rest of the Russian front comparatively quiet.

### Battle Near



...and the Japanese really gave us everything, but we decided about until they had to go on."

The correspondent adds: "The Japanese returned only one night after that, and lost a destroyer to some secret torpedo work."

**Japs' Heavy Naval Loss**

NEW YORK, Nov. 17 (Special).—The following list of Japanese losses since the outbreak of war gives an idea of the battering the Japanese fleet has received at the hands of the United States naval forces:

Lost	Damaged
Battleships	2
Carriers	6
Cruisers	21
Destroyers	39
Submarines	7
Transport	51
Fleet tankers	19
Supply ships	64
Gunboats	9
Armed auxiliaries	2
Miscellaneous	23
Totals	243

In the same period the United States losses were:

Lost	Damaged
Battleships	4
Carriers	4
Cruisers	6
Destroyers	20
Submarines	4
Transport	4
Fleet tankers	3
Supply ships	0
Gunboats	4
Armed auxiliaries	0
Miscellaneous	13

Kongo class battleships—the type battered in the latest Solomon battle—are old type, the hulls having been laid down in 1912-13.

However, the Japanese have done much modernization work on them, improving their armament, and adding torpedo and aircraft protective devices.

The Japanese appear to prefer to gamble with their older battleships when the mission calls for shore work where aviation opposition is likely to be met, thus indicating that the enemy is conserving his newer and harder-hitting capital ships for future, and even more desperate battles.

Naval experts believe that some, if not all, of the five new battleships have probably joined the Japanese battle line since December 12. Reports on these five speculate that they are over 40,000 tons.

...and the Japanese really gave us everything, but we decided about until they had to go on."

The correspondent adds: "The Japanese returned only one night after that, and lost a destroyer to some secret torpedo work."

**Japs' Heavy Naval Loss**

NEW YORK, Nov. 17 (Special).—The following list of Japanese losses since the outbreak of war gives an idea of the battering the Japanese fleet has received at the hands of the United States naval forces:

Lost	Damaged
Battleships	2
Carriers	6
Cruisers	21
Destroyers	39
Submarines	7
Transport	51
Fleet tankers	19
Supply ships	64
Gunboats	9
Armed auxiliaries	2
Miscellaneous	23
Totals	243

In the same period the United States losses were:

Lost	Damaged
Battleships	4
Carriers	4
Cruisers	6
Destroyers	20
Submarines	4
Transport	4
Fleet tankers	3
Supply ships	0
Gunboats	4
Armed auxiliaries	0
Miscellaneous	13

Kongo class battleships—the type battered in the latest Solomon battle—are old type, the hulls having been laid down in 1912-13.

However, the Japanese have done much modernization work on them, improving their armament, and adding torpedo and aircraft protective devices.

The Japanese appear to prefer to gamble with their older battleships when the mission calls for shore work where aviation opposition is likely to be met, thus indicating that the enemy is conserving his newer and harder-hitting capital ships for future, and even more desperate battles.

Naval experts believe that some, if not all, of the five new battleships have probably joined the Japanese battle line since December 12. Reports on these five speculate that they are over 40,000 tons.

**Japs' Heavy Naval Loss**

NEW YORK, Nov. 17 (Special).—The following list of Japanese losses since the outbreak of war gives an idea of the battering the Japanese fleet has received at the hands of the United States naval forces:

Lost	Damaged
Battleships	2
Carriers	6
Cruisers	21
Destroyers	39
Submarines	7
Transport	51
Fleet tankers	19
Supply ships	64
Gunboats	9
Armed auxiliaries	2
Miscellaneous	23
Totals	243

In the same period the United States losses were:

Lost	Damaged
Battleships	4
Carriers	4
Cruisers	6
Destroyers	20
Submarines	4
Transport	4
Fleet tankers	3
Supply ships	0
Gunboats	4
Armed auxiliaries	0
Miscellaneous	13

Kongo class battleships—the type battered in the latest Solomon battle—are old type, the hulls having been laid down in 1912-13.

However, the Japanese have done much modernization work on them, improving their armament, and adding torpedo and aircraft protective devices.

The Japanese appear to prefer to gamble with their older battleships when the mission calls for shore work where aviation opposition is likely to be met, thus indicating that the enemy is conserving his newer and harder-hitting capital ships for future, and even more desperate battles.

Naval experts believe that some, if not all, of the five new battleships have probably joined the Japanese battle line since December 12. Reports on these five speculate that they are over 40,000 tons.

**Japs' Heavy Naval Loss**

NEW YORK, Nov. 17 (Special).—The following list of Japanese losses since the outbreak of war gives an idea of the battering the Japanese fleet has received at the hands of the United States naval forces:

Lost	Damaged
Battleships	2
Carriers	6
Cruisers	21
Destroyers	39
Submarines	7
Transport	51
Fleet tankers	19
Supply ships	64
Gunboats	9
Armed auxiliaries	2
Miscellaneous	23
Totals	243

In the same period the United States losses were:

Lost	Damaged
Battleships	4
Carriers	4
Cruisers	6
Destroyers	20
Submarines	4
Transport	4
Fleet tankers	3
Supply ships	0
Gunboats	4
Armed auxiliaries	0
Miscellaneous	13

Kongo class battleships—the type battered in the latest Solomon battle—are old type, the hulls having been laid down in 1912-13.

However, the Japanese have done much modernization work on them, improving their armament, and adding torpedo and aircraft protective devices.

The Japanese appear to prefer to gamble with their older battleships when the mission calls for shore work where aviation opposition is likely to be met, thus indicating that the enemy is conserving his newer and harder-hitting capital ships for future, and even more desperate battles.

Naval experts believe that some, if not all, of the five new battleships have probably joined the Japanese battle line since December 12. Reports on these five speculate that they are over 40,000 tons.

**MacArthur's Help**

A United States Navy Department communique stated:—

Following is a resume of recent events in the Solomons, based on preliminary reports from the battle area, and is necessarily incomplete.

Air reconnaissance during the early days of November revealed a heavy concentration of Japanese transports, cargo ships, and other combatant units of the enemy fleet in the Solomons region.

On Other Pages.—How Woe U.S. Force Outclassed Japs, Page 3; Sea Power Now Favours Allies, Page 4; Battle for Stalingrad, Page 2; Moderates on Top at A.L.P.

**To Japs**

THIS is the third big battle in the Pacific. The others were:

**CORAL SEA—May 4-8.**  
Ships sunk: Japan, 15; United States, 3.

**MIDWAY—June 7-8.**  
Ships sunk: Japanese 5; United States, 1.

Other battles with Japanese losses have been—

**Savo Island, October 11-12:** Three cruisers, five destroyers, sunk or damaged.

**Stewart Island, October 26:** Two cruisers, two battleships, and three destroyers, sunk or damaged.

In five days from November 11 to November 17 bombers from General MacArthur's command did this in the Solomons and Rabaul areas: Bombed and disabled a transport, hit four troopships, hit two light cruisers, set fire to two transports, hit two other vessels.

The navy's faith in battleships had been justified in the battle, in which they had been used by both sides. "Our battleships contributed considerably to the losses inflicted on the enemy," he concluded.

For the first time in naval and air engagements in the Pacific the reports make no mention of the participation of aircraft-carriers.

Bulk of the destruction was accomplished by the gun crews, says the New York Times Washington correspondent. American warships fought the enemy in slanting engagements of the traditional type.

It is also noted that this is the second American victory since Vice-Admiral Halsey assumed command.

**JAP ATTACK COMPLETE FAILURE**

"Our gallant forces obtained a major victory, either destroying or driving back all the enemy forces," says a communique issued by the Commander-in-Chief of the United States Pacific Fleet (Admiral Chester Nimitz).

"By far the strongest Japanese attempt to recapture Guadalcanal was completely frustrated by the aggressive action of the forces under Vice-Admiral Halsey, Commander of the U.S. Naval Forces in the South-west Pacific.

"The enemy transport force was almost annihilated.

"The battle if any assistance reached the land forces on Guadalcanal.

"The United States commander on Guadalcanal (Major-General Vandegrift) continues to have the situation well in hand.

"Strong enemy escorting and bombardment forces, comprising a large portion of the Japanese fleet, were attacked by our surface forces in two heavy night engagements in the Guadalcanal area. They were also severely damaged by aircraft, submarines, and motor torpedo boats."

**MacArthur's Help**

A United States Navy Department communique stated:—

Following is a resume of recent events in the Solomons, based on preliminary reports from the battle area, and is necessarily incomplete.

Air reconnaissance during the early days of November revealed a heavy concentration of Japanese transports, cargo ships, and other combatant units of the enemy fleet in the Solomons region.

On Other Pages.—How Woe U.S. Force Outclassed Japs, Page 3; Sea Power Now Favours Allies, Page 4; Battle for Stalingrad, Page 2; Moderates on Top at A.L.P.

**To Japs**

THIS is the third big battle in the Pacific. The others were:

**CORAL SEA—May 4-8.**  
Ships sunk: Japan, 15; United States, 3.

**MIDWAY—June 7-8.**  
Ships sunk: Japanese 5; United States, 1.

Other battles with Japanese losses have been—

**Savo Island, October 11-12:** Three cruisers, five destroyers, sunk or damaged.

**Stewart Island, October 26:** Two cruisers, two battleships, and three destroyers, sunk or damaged.

In five days from November 11 to November 17 bombers from General MacArthur's command did this in the Solomons and Rabaul areas: Bombed and disabled a transport, hit four troopships, hit two light cruisers, set fire to two transports, hit two other vessels.

The navy's faith in battleships had been justified in the battle, in which they had been used by both sides. "Our battleships contributed considerably to the losses inflicted on the enemy," he concluded.

For the first time in naval and air engagements in the Pacific the reports make no mention of the participation of aircraft-carriers.

Bulk of the destruction was accomplished by the gun crews, says the New York Times Washington correspondent. American warships fought the enemy in slanting engagements of the traditional type.

It is also noted that this is the second American victory since Vice-Admiral Halsey assumed command.

**JAP ATTACK COMPLETE FAILURE**

"Our gallant forces obtained a major victory, either destroying or driving back all the enemy forces," says a communique issued by the Commander-in-Chief of the United States Pacific Fleet (Admiral Chester Nimitz).

"By far the strongest Japanese attempt to recapture Guadalcanal was completely frustrated by the aggressive action of the forces under Vice-Admiral Halsey, Commander of the U.S. Naval Forces in the South-west Pacific.

"The enemy transport force was almost annihilated.

"The battle if any assistance reached the land forces on Guadalcanal.

"The United States commander on Guadalcanal (Major-General Vandegrift) continues to have the situation well in hand.

"Strong enemy escorting and bombardment forces, comprising a large portion of the Japanese fleet, were attacked by our surface forces in two heavy night engagements in the Guadalcanal area. They were also severely damaged by aircraft, submarines, and motor torpedo boats."

**MacArthur's Help**

A United States Navy Department communique stated:—

Following is a resume of recent events in the Solomons, based on preliminary reports from the battle area, and is necessarily incomplete.

Air reconnaissance during the early days of November revealed a heavy concentration of Japanese transports, cargo ships, and other combatant units of the enemy fleet in the Solomons region.

On Other Pages.—How Woe U.S. Force Outclassed Japs, Page 3; Sea Power Now Favours Allies, Page 4; Battle for Stalingrad, Page 2; Moderates on Top at A.L.P.

**To Japs**

THIS is the third big battle in the Pacific. The others were:

**CORAL SEA—May 4-8.**  
Ships sunk: Japan, 15; United States, 3.

**MIDWAY—June 7-8.**  
Ships sunk: Japanese 5; United States, 1.

Other battles with Japanese losses have been—

**Savo Island, October 11-12:** Three cruisers, five destroyers, sunk or damaged.

**Stewart Island, October 26:** Two cruisers, two battleships, and three destroyers, sunk or damaged.

In five days from November 11 to November 17 bombers from General MacArthur's command did this in the Solomons and Rabaul areas: Bombed and disabled a transport, hit four troopships, hit two light cruisers, set fire to two transports, hit two other vessels.

The navy's faith in battleships had been justified in the battle, in which they had been used by both sides. "Our battleships contributed considerably to the losses inflicted on the enemy," he concluded.

For the first time in naval and air engagements in the Pacific the reports make no mention of the participation of aircraft-carriers.

Bulk of the destruction was accomplished by the gun crews, says the New York Times Washington correspondent. American warships fought the enemy in slanting engagements of the traditional type.

It is also noted that this is the second American victory since Vice-Admiral Halsey assumed command.

**JAP ATTACK COMPLETE FAILURE**

"Our gallant forces obtained a major victory, either destroying or driving back all the enemy forces," says a communique issued by the Commander-in-Chief of the United States Pacific Fleet (Admiral Chester Nimitz).

"By far the strongest Japanese attempt to recapture Guadalcanal was completely frustrated by the aggressive action of the forces under Vice-Admiral Halsey, Commander of the U.S. Naval Forces in the South-west Pacific.

"The enemy transport force was almost annihilated.

"The battle if any assistance reached the land forces on Guadalcanal.

"The United States commander on Guadalcanal (Major-General Vandegrift) continues to have the situation well in hand.

"Strong enemy escorting and bombardment forces, comprising a large portion of the Japanese fleet, were attacked by our surface forces in two heavy night engagements in the Guadalcanal area. They were also severely damaged by aircraft, submarines, and motor torpedo boats."

**MacArthur's Help**

A United States Navy Department communique stated:—

Following is a resume of recent events in the Solomons, based on preliminary reports from the battle area, and is necessarily incomplete.

Air reconnaissance during the early days of November revealed a heavy concentration of Japanese transports, cargo ships, and other combatant units of the enemy fleet in the Solomons region.

On Other Pages.—How Woe U.S. Force Outclassed Japs, Page 3; Sea Power Now Favours Allies, Page 4; Battle for Stalingrad, Page 2; Moderates on Top at A.L.P.

**MacArthur With Blamey And Kenney In Papua**

By GEOFFREY TEBBUTT

PERSONAL command of land and air operations has been taken over by the three Allied leaders.

The following statement was issued yesterday from General MacArthur's Australian headquarters:—

"It can now be revealed that the Commander-in-Chief of the South-west Pacific Area (General MacArthur), with the advanced echelon of his headquarters and the commanders of the Allied land forces and of the Allied air forces (General Sir Thomas Blamey and Lieutenant-General George C. Kenney) are personally conducting the campaign from the coast in Papua."

No reference was made to the high officers of the land forces operating under the direction of General Blamey, or to the air officers immediately subordinate to Lieutenant-General Kenney.

Lieut-General Kenney, who served with the French and American armies in the last war, took command of the Allied air forces in the South-west Pacific after the transfer to America on August 4 of Lieutenant-General M. Brett. He was promoted to his present rank last month.

Announcement of the names of the Allied commanders in the field followed a day after the G.H.Q. statement that the enemy forces in the Buna area were led by Lieutenant-General Tomotake Horii.

**Air Sweeps Guard Advance**

The further Australian and American advance into the Japanese beachhead area of Buna, which takes in a deep inland strip, continues so far without opposition. It is being supported by frequent air attacks on Japanese positions and ways of escape.

The Australians, moving down the trails since they crossed the Kumusi River at Wairopo, are approaching the village of Awa, about 34 trail miles south-west of Buna.

Six bomber and fighter sweeps were carried out on Monday. The task of the bombers principally was to weaken Japanese opposition ahead of our land forces.

North American bombers, in three sweeps, concentrated mostly on the Sopela zone, six miles inland from Buna, and at the junction of the track to Buna and the lorry road to Samarandua.

This appears to be the area in which Japanese anti-aircraft batteries are most strongly concentrated. The bombers cut out to

**Air Sweeps Guard Advance**

The further Australian and American advance into the Japanese beachhead area of Buna, which takes in a deep inland strip, continues so far without opposition. It is being supported by frequent air attacks on Japanese positions and ways of escape.

The Australians, moving down the trails since they crossed the Kumusi River at Wairopo, are approaching the village of Awa, about 34 trail miles south-west of Buna.

Six bomber and fighter sweeps were carried out on Monday. The task of the bombers principally was to weaken Japanese opposition ahead of our land forces.

North American bombers, in three sweeps, concentrated mostly on the Sopela zone, six miles inland from Buna, and at the junction of the track to Buna and the lorry road to Samarandua.

This appears to be the area in which Japanese anti-aircraft batteries are most strongly concentrated. The bombers cut out to

**Air Sweeps Guard Advance**

The further Australian and American advance into the Japanese beachhead area of Buna, which takes in a deep inland strip, continues so far without opposition. It is being supported by frequent air attacks on Japanese positions and ways of escape.

The Australians, moving down the trails since they crossed the Kumusi River at Wairopo, are approaching the village of Awa, about 34 trail miles south-west of Buna.

Six bomber and fighter sweeps were carried out on Monday. The task of the bombers principally was to weaken Japanese opposition ahead of our land forces.

North American bombers, in three sweeps, concentrated mostly on the Sopela zone, six miles inland from Buna, and at the junction of the track to Buna and the lorry road to Samarandua.

This appears to be the area in which Japanese anti-aircraft batteries are most strongly concentrated. The bombers cut out to

**Air Sweeps Guard Advance**

The further Australian and American advance into the Japanese beachhead area of Buna, which takes in a deep inland strip, continues so far without opposition. It is being supported by frequent air attacks on Japanese positions and ways of escape.

The Australians, moving down the trails since they crossed the Kumusi River at Wairopo, are approaching the village of Awa, about 34 trail miles south-west of Buna.

Six bomber and fighter sweeps were carried out on Monday. The task of the bombers principally was to weaken Japanese opposition ahead of our land forces.

North American bombers, in three sweeps, concentrated mostly on the Sopela zone, six miles inland from Buna, and at the junction of the track to Buna and the lorry road to Samarandua.

This appears to be the area in which Japanese anti-aircraft batteries are most strongly concentrated. The bombers cut out to

**MacArthur With Blamey And Kenney In Papua**

By GEOFFREY TEBBUTT

PERSONAL command of land and air operations has been taken over by the three Allied leaders.

The following statement was issued yesterday from General MacArthur's Australian headquarters:—

"It can now be revealed that the Commander-in-Chief of the South-west Pacific Area (General MacArthur), with the advanced echelon of his headquarters and the commanders of the Allied land forces and of the Allied air forces (General Sir Thomas Blamey and Lieutenant-General George C. Kenney) are personally conducting the campaign from the coast in Papua."

No reference was made to the high officers of the land forces operating under the direction of General Blamey, or to the air officers immediately subordinate to Lieutenant-General Kenney.

Lieut-General Kenney, who served with the French and American armies in the last war, took command of the Allied air forces in the South-west Pacific after the transfer to America on August 4 of Lieutenant-General M. Brett. He was promoted to his present rank last month.

Announcement of the names of the Allied commanders in the field followed a day after the G.H.Q. statement that the enemy forces in the Buna area were led by Lieutenant-General Tomotake Horii.

**Air Sweeps Guard Advance**

The further Australian and American advance into the Japanese beachhead area of Buna, which takes in a deep inland strip, continues so far without opposition. It is being supported by frequent air attacks on Japanese positions and ways of escape.

The Australians, moving down the trails since they crossed the Kumusi River at Wairopo, are approaching the village of Awa, about 34 trail miles south-west of Buna.

Six bomber and fighter sweeps were carried out on Monday. The task of the bombers principally was to weaken Japanese opposition ahead of our land forces.

North American bombers, in three sweeps, concentrated mostly on the Sopela zone, six miles inland from Buna, and at the junction of the track to Buna and the lorry road to Samarandua.

This appears to be the area in which Japanese anti-aircraft batteries are most strongly concentrated. The bombers cut out to

**Air Sweeps Guard Advance**

The further Australian and American advance into the Japanese beachhead area of Buna, which takes in a deep inland strip, continues so far without opposition. It is being supported by frequent air attacks on Japanese positions and ways of escape.

The Australians, moving down the trails since they crossed the Kumusi River at Wairopo, are approaching the village of Awa, about 34 trail miles south-west of Buna.

Six bomber and fighter sweeps were carried out on Monday. The task of the bombers principally was to weaken Japanese opposition ahead of our land forces.

North American bombers, in three sweeps, concentrated mostly on the Sopela zone, six miles inland from Buna, and at the junction of the track to Buna and the lorry road to Samarandua.

This appears to be the area in which Japanese anti-aircraft batteries are most strongly concentrated. The bombers cut out to

**Air Sweeps Guard Advance**

The further Australian and American advance into the Japanese beachhead area of Buna, which takes in a deep inland strip, continues so far without opposition. It is being supported by frequent air attacks on Japanese positions and ways of escape.

The Australians, moving down the trails since they crossed the Kumusi River at Wairopo, are approaching the village of Awa, about 34 trail miles south-west of Buna.

Six bomber and fighter sweeps were carried out on Monday. The task of the bombers principally was to weaken Japanese opposition ahead of our land forces.

North American bombers, in three sweeps, concentrated mostly on the Sopela zone, six miles inland from Buna, and at the junction of the track to Buna and the lorry road to Samarandua.

This appears to be the area in which Japanese anti-aircraft batteries are most strongly concentrated. The bombers cut out to

**Air Sweeps Guard Advance**

The further Australian and American advance into the Japanese beachhead area of Buna, which takes in a deep inland strip, continues so far without opposition. It is being supported by frequent air attacks on Japanese positions and ways of escape.

The Australians, moving down the trails since they crossed the Kumusi River at Wairopo, are approaching the village of Awa, about 34 trail miles south-west of Buna.

Six bomber and fighter sweeps were carried out on Monday. The task of the bombers principally was to weaken Japanese opposition ahead of our land forces.

North American bombers, in three sweeps, concentrated mostly on the Sopela zone, six miles inland from Buna, and at the junction of the track to Buna and the lorry road to Samarandua.

This appears to be the area in which Japanese anti-aircraft batteries are most strongly concentrated. The bombers cut out to

**MacArthur With Blamey And Kenney In Papua**

By GEOFFREY TEBBUTT

PERSONAL command of land and air operations has been taken over by the three Allied leaders.

The following statement was issued yesterday from General MacArthur's Australian headquarters:—

"It can now be revealed that the Commander-in-Chief of the South-west Pacific Area (General MacArthur), with the advanced echelon of his headquarters and the commanders of the Allied land forces and of the Allied air forces (General Sir Thomas Blamey and Lieutenant-General George C. Kenney) are personally conducting the campaign from the coast in Papua."

No reference was made to the high officers of the land forces operating under the direction of General Blamey, or to the air officers immediately subordinate to Lieutenant-General Kenney.

Lieut-General Kenney, who served with the French and American armies in the last war, took command of the Allied air forces in the South-west Pacific after the transfer to America on August 4 of Lieutenant-General M. Brett. He was promoted to his present rank last month.

Announcement of the names of the Allied commanders in the field followed a day after the G.H.Q. statement that the enemy forces in the Buna area were led by Lieutenant-General Tomotake Horii.

**Air Sweeps Guard Advance**

The further Australian and American advance into the Japanese beachhead area of Buna, which takes in a deep inland strip, continues so far without opposition. It is being supported by frequent air attacks on Japanese positions and ways of escape.

The Australians, moving down the trails since they crossed the Kumusi River at Wairopo, are approaching the village of Awa, about 34 trail miles south-west of Buna.

Six bomber and fighter sweeps were carried out on Monday. The task of the bombers principally was to weaken Japanese opposition ahead of our land forces.

North American bombers, in three sweeps, concentrated mostly on the Sopela zone, six miles inland from Buna, and at the junction of the track to Buna and the lorry road to Samarandua.

This appears to be the area in which Japanese anti-aircraft batteries are most strongly concentrated. The bombers cut out to

**Air Sweeps Guard Advance**

The further Australian and American advance into the Japanese beachhead area of Buna, which takes in a deep inland strip, continues so far without opposition. It is being supported by frequent air attacks on Japanese positions and ways of escape.

The Australians, moving down the trails since they crossed the Kumusi River at Wairopo, are approaching the village of Awa, about 34 trail miles south-west of Buna.

Six bomber and fighter sweeps were carried out on Monday. The task of the bombers principally was to weaken Japanese opposition ahead of our land forces.

North American bombers, in three sweeps, concentrated mostly on the Sopela zone, six miles inland from Buna, and at the junction of the track to Buna and the lorry road to Samarandua.

This appears to be the area in which Japanese anti-aircraft batteries are most strongly concentrated. The bombers cut out to

**Air Sweeps Guard Advance**

The further Australian and American advance into the Japanese beachhead area of Buna, which takes in a deep inland strip, continues so far without opposition. It is being supported by frequent air attacks on Japanese positions and ways of escape.

The Australians, moving down the trails since they crossed the Kumusi River at Wairopo, are approaching the village of Awa, about 34 trail miles south-west of Buna.

Six bomber and fighter sweeps were carried out on Monday. The task of the bombers principally was to weaken Japanese opposition ahead of our land forces.

North American bombers, in three sweeps, concentrated mostly on the Sopela zone, six miles inland from Buna, and at the junction of the track to Buna and the lorry road to Samarandua.

This appears to be the area in which Japanese anti-aircraft batteries are most strongly concentrated. The bombers cut out to

**Air Sweeps Guard Advance**

The further Australian and American advance into the Japanese beachhead area of Buna, which takes in a deep inland strip, continues so far without opposition. It is being supported by frequent air attacks on Japanese positions and ways of escape.

The Australians, moving down the trails since they crossed the Kumusi River at Wairopo, are approaching the village of Awa, about 34 trail miles south-west of Buna.

Six bomber and fighter sweeps were carried out on Monday. The task of the bombers principally was to weaken Japanese opposition ahead of our land forces.

North American bombers, in three sweeps, concentrated mostly on the Sopela zone, six miles inland from Buna, and at the junction of the track to Buna and the lorry road to Samarandua.

This appears to be the area in which Japanese anti-aircraft batteries are most strongly concentrated. The bombers cut out to

**MacArthur With Blamey And Kenney In Papua**

By GEOFFREY TEBBUTT

PERSONAL command of land and air operations has been taken over by the three Allied leaders.

The following statement was issued yesterday from General MacArthur's Australian headquarters:—

"It can now be revealed that the Commander-in-Chief of the South-west Pacific Area (General MacArthur), with the advanced echelon of his headquarters and the commanders of the Allied land forces and of the Allied air forces (General Sir Thomas Blamey and Lieutenant-General George C. Kenney) are personally conducting the campaign from the coast in Papua."

No reference was made to the high officers of the land forces operating under the direction of General Blamey, or to the air officers immediately subordinate to Lieutenant-General Kenney.

Lieut-General Kenney, who served with the French and American armies in the last war, took command of the Allied air forces in the South-west Pacific after the transfer to America on August 4 of Lieutenant-General M. Brett. He was promoted to his present rank last month.

Announcement of the names of the Allied commanders in the field followed a day after the G.H.Q. statement that the enemy forces in the Buna area were led by Lieutenant-General Tomotake Horii.

**Air Sweeps Guard Advance**

The further Australian and American advance into the Japanese beachhead area of Buna, which takes in a deep inland strip, continues so far without opposition. It is being supported by frequent air attacks on Japanese positions and ways of escape.

The Australians, moving down the trails since they crossed the Kumusi River at Wairopo, are approaching the village of Awa, about 34 trail miles south-west of Buna.

Six bomber and fighter sweeps were carried out on Monday. The task of the bombers principally was to weaken Japanese opposition ahead of our land forces.

North American bombers, in three sweeps, concentrated mostly on the Sopela zone, six miles inland from Buna, and at the junction of the track to Buna and the lorry road to Samarandua.

This appears to be the area in which Japanese anti-aircraft batteries are most strongly concentrated. The bombers cut out to

**Air Sweeps Guard Advance**

The further Australian and American advance into the Japanese beachhead area of Buna, which takes in a deep inland strip, continues so far without opposition. It is being supported by frequent air attacks on Japanese positions and ways of escape.

The Australians, moving down the trails since they crossed the Kumusi River at Wairopo, are approaching the village of Awa, about 34 trail miles south-west of Buna.

Six bomber and fighter sweeps were carried out on Monday. The task of the bombers principally was to weaken Japanese opposition ahead of our land forces.

North American bombers, in three sweeps, concentrated mostly on the Sopela zone, six miles inland from Buna, and at the junction of the track to Buna and the lorry road to Samarandua.

This appears to be the area in which Japanese anti-aircraft batteries are most strongly concentrated. The bombers cut out to

**Air Sweeps Guard Advance**

The further Australian and American advance into the Japanese beachhead area of Buna, which takes in a deep inland strip, continues so far without opposition. It is being supported by frequent air attacks on Japanese positions and ways of escape.

The Australians, moving down the trails since they crossed the Kumusi River at Wairopo, are approaching the village of Awa, about 34 trail miles south-west of Buna.

Six bomber and fighter sweeps were carried out on Monday. The task of the bombers principally was to weaken Japanese opposition ahead of our land forces.

North American bombers, in three sweeps, concentrated mostly on the Sopela zone, six miles inland from Buna, and at the junction of the track to Buna and the lorry road to Samarandua.

This appears to be the area in which Japanese anti-aircraft batteries are most strongly concentrated. The bombers cut out to

**Air Sweeps Guard Advance**

The further Australian and American advance into the Japanese beachhead area of Buna, which takes in a deep inland strip, continues so far without opposition. It is being supported by frequent air attacks on Japanese positions and ways of escape.

The Australians, moving down the trails since they crossed the Kumusi River at Wairopo, are approaching the village of Awa, about 34 trail miles south-west of Buna.

Six bomber and fighter sweeps were carried out on Monday. The task of the bombers principally was to weaken Japanese opposition ahead of our land forces.

North American bombers, in three sweeps, concentrated mostly on the Sopela zone, six miles inland from Buna, and at the junction of the track to Buna and the lorry road to Samarandua.

This appears to be the area in which Japanese anti-aircraft batteries are most strongly concentrated. The bombers cut out to

## Rapid Libya Advance

Occupation of Derna by the Eighth Army represents an advance of 50 miles since the occupation of Martuba airfield, while Mekill is on the inland track leading across the desert to Tunis.

Allied armoured cars waited on high ground overlooking Derna while snipers went ahead to clear the minefields, says a Cairo correspondent.

Derna is one of the most northerly points of the Cyrenaican bulge. Mekill is about one-third of the way along the overland track from Tadmira to Benghazi, its capture is the first official news that our forces are moving along this route as well as along the coastal road.

The New York Times' Bernie correspondent says that, according to unconfirmed reports, Rommel, with General Keitel (Chief of the German Supreme Command), and General Cavallero (Italian Chief of Staff), flew from Tripoli on Sunday night.

References hammering of the enemy's transport columns in Libya does on day after day, says The Times' Cairo correspondent.

There is no sign of any attempt by the enemy to rally. Allied armoured are delivering low-level attacks all the way across the hilly country between Cyrene and Benghazi.

Allied armoured are also concentrating on the open rolling land between Acedabia, south of Benghazi, and el Aghela, on the Gulf of Sidra.



# 18 November - Government

- On the 18<sup>th</sup> November at a Special Federal Conference of the ALP Curtin, without formal notice and apparently without previous discussion with ministers, proposed:
- “That, having regard to the paramount necessity of Australia's defence, as set out in Section 5 of the special resolution adopted in June 1940 by Federal Conference, the Government be authorised to add to the Defence Act, in the definition of the Commonwealth which at present defines the territories to which this Act extends, the following words: "and such other territories in the South-West Pacific Area as the Governor-General proclaims as being territories associated with the defence of Australia."
- Curtin's arguments were that the change was a strategical necessity, that Australia owed it to her Allies to fight beyond Australia and that it was the only way to make the *Repatriation Act* cover the men of the C.M.F. The conference did not approve Curtin's proposal but referred it to the state branches of the party.
- The Federal Opposition declared that Curtin's proposal did not go far enough and complained that a decision had been delayed by referring the matter to State branches of the Australian Labour Party. The militia should be sent to any area where they were needed.

# 18 November - Sea

- Details of the Bengal/Ondina encounter became known when Ondina reached Fremantle on the 18th.
- On 11th November, in approximate position 20 degrees south, 93 degrees east, Bengal, 400 yards ahead, led Ondina at 10 knots on course N.W. by W. 2 W.
- Bengal had a total of 40 rounds of ammunition for her 12-pounder gun.
- Ondina, a motor ship with a maximum speed of 11 knots, was in ballast. She was defensively armed with one 4-inch Q.F. (U.S.N.) gun. Her gun's crew consisted of Able Seaman Hammond, three gunners of the Royal Artillery, four R.N. seamen; and one Dutch merchant service gunlayer.
- The weather was fine, clear and windless; the sea calm; visibility good. At about 11.45 a.m. a ship—subsequently identified as Hokoku Maru was sighted bearing W.N.W., almost dead ahead, distant eight miles, and steering E.S.E.
- Bengal went to action stations, and at 11.50 altered course to N.N.E. and ordered Ondina to take station on her starboard beam.
- Nine minutes after the initial sighting, Bengal sighted a second ship (Aikoku Maru) bearing N.W.5W. distant 10 miles, steering S.E. by E.

# 18 November - Sea

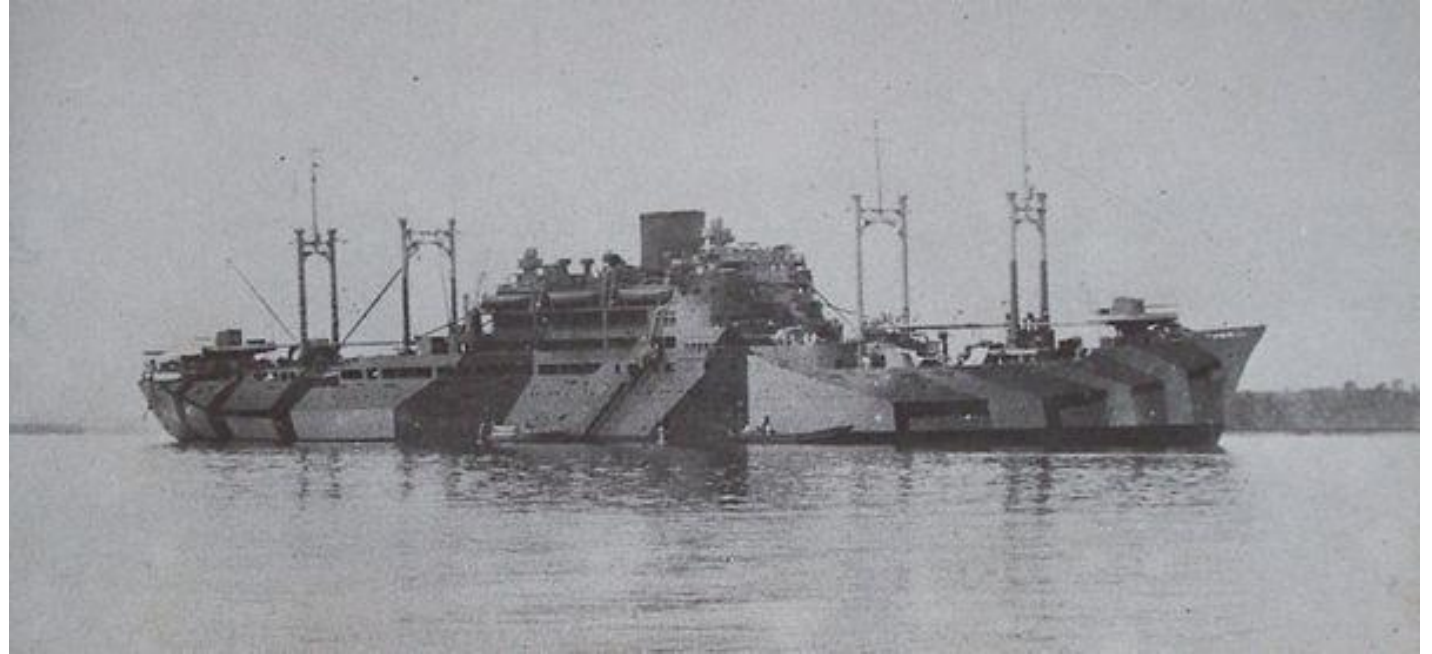
- Bengal signalled a rendezvous for next day and ordered Ondina to proceed independently, and at 11.56 altered course to W. by S. "straight for the first vessel sighted".
- Ondina also altered course four points "on a northerly course".
- Lieut-Commander Wilson's signal to Ondina to act independently was made with the intention that she should make good her escape.
- He was disappointed when she altered course only 90 degrees instead of 180 degrees . . . .
- His decision to steer at full speed directly towards the larger of the two enemy ships in sight was made solely with a view to giving the Ondina time to get away;
- he had little hope that his ship could survive against such odds.



Bengal's sister ship HMIS Bombay

# 18 November - Sea

- At 12.12 Hokoku Maru opened fire on Bengal at approximately 3,500 yards, from a position fine on Bengal's starboard bow.
- Bengal returned the fire, and Aikoku Maru, some six miles to the north-westward, altered course to the southward to intercept.
- Bengal's opening round (according to Ondina's report) was short, and Ondina opened fire on Hokoku Maru at 8,000 yards.
- "First salvo was over, correction minus 400.
- Second shot was short.



IJN *Hōkoku Maru* on 29 July 1942 at Seletar

The fifth shot was a hit on the stern, which caused an enormous explosion there, a yellow-red flame was visible and a heavy bottom part of the stern fell burning into the sea

" Both Ondina and Bengal claimed this scoring hit on Hokoku Maru.



# 18 November - Sea

- Aikoku Maru also opened fire on Bengal.
- Up to this time Ondina had not been fired on, but after being hit Hokoku Maru, which had considerably slowed down, divided her fire, her port guns engaging Ondina, her starboard Bengal.
- The corvette received a direct hit forward. Bengal now altered course to S.S.W. About this time she received a second direct hit, in the stern.
- Her ammunition was nearly exhausted.
- Aikoku Maru was in chase and firing.
- Ondina appeared to Wilson to be getting away to the northward, so he decided to break off the engagement and retire behind smoke, which he did, gradually altering to the west and north-west.



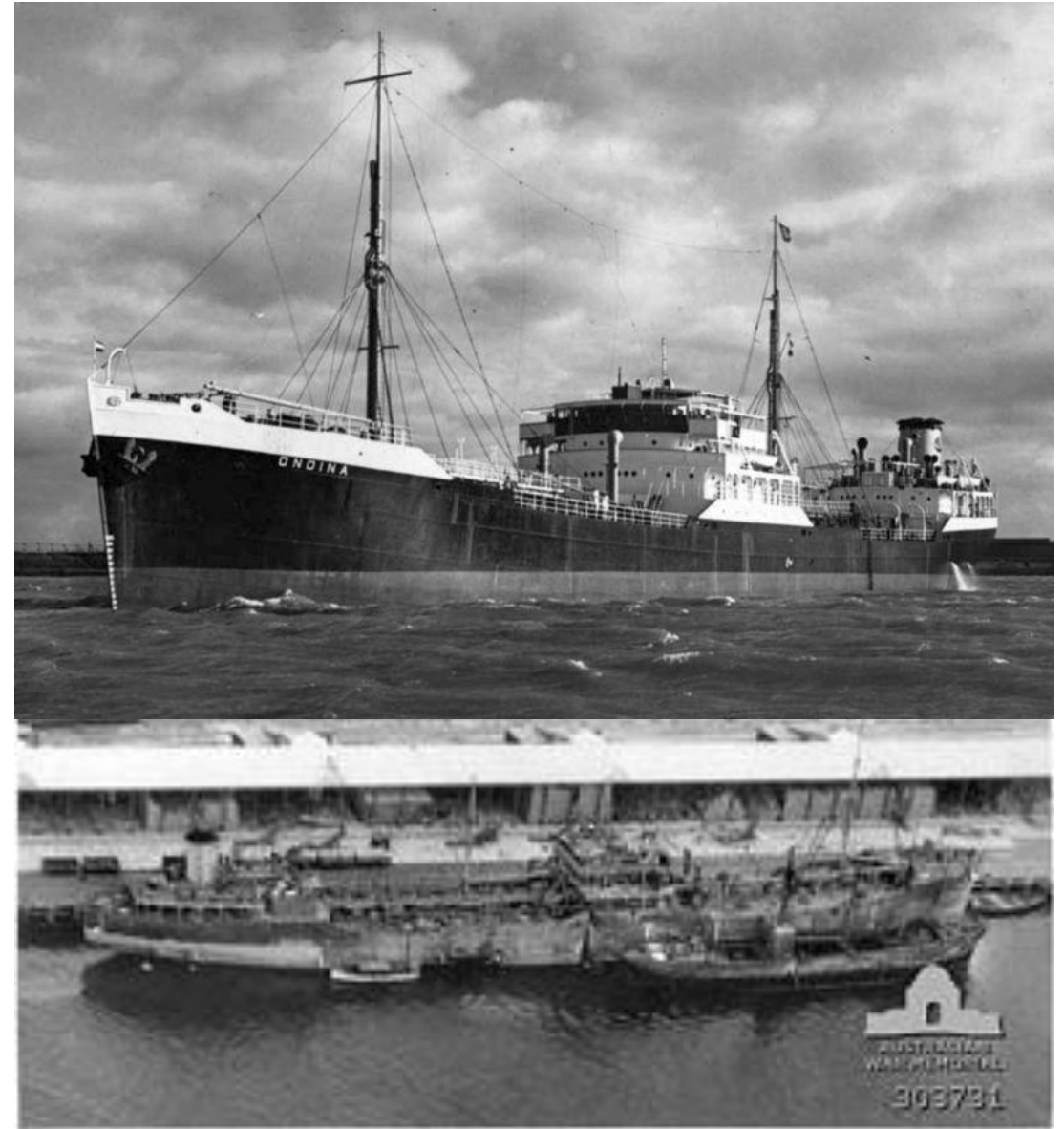
Bengal's sister ship HMIS Bombay

# 18 November - Sea

- Aikoku Maru now shifted her attention to Ondina. She rounded the sinking Hokoku Maru to the eastward, gave chase to Ondina, and opened fire at 4,000 yards.
- Ondina, with only twelve rounds left, had been holding her fire. Now, thinking that Hokoku Maru was again attacking, she fired four rounds at her, and the remaining eight at Aikoku Maru, without scoring any hits.
- She herself received six direct hits from Aikoku Maru's fire, and Bengal, away to the south-westward, recorded at 1.8 p.m.: "Tanker observed hit abaft bridge."
- Soon after, with no ammunition remaining, Ondina's master, Captain W. Horsman, stopped engines and ordered "Abandon Ship". A few seconds later he was killed when Aikoku Maru made a direct hit on the bridge.
- The ship was abandoned, the crew of 56 got away in three minutes in three lifeboats and two rafts.
- Aikoku Maru cruised close alongside and fired two torpedoes into Ondina's starboard side from about 350 yards, rounded her, opened fire with machine-guns on the boats, and killed the chief engineer and three of the Chinese crew.
- Hokoku Maru sank about this time, and her consort steamed to the scene of the sinking, presumably to rescue survivors.

# 18 November - Sea

- After about twenty minutes she returned to Ondina, fired a third torpedo at the port side of the tanker which missed, and then made off to the north east.
- Ondina and her boats and rafts were thus left in sole possession of the battle area.
- The ship had a heavy list to starboard (the torpedoes holed Nos. 2 and 3 tanks) and appeared in imminent danger of sinking.
- But her Second Officer, Third Engineer, Able Seaman Hammond, Gunner Ryan, R.A., and three of the Chinese crew, boarded her, found the engines intact, got the rest of the crew on board, raised steam, righted the ship, and at 9 p.m. got under way for Fremantle.



MV Ondina alongside in Fremantle

# 18 November - Sea

- The LILLIPUT ships reached Port Moresby and Milne Bay on the 18th and 19th November respectively. But meanwhile the capture of Buna was held up, as thus were the LILLIPUT ships in their respective ports.
- On 18th November Kuru made a trip to Timor, to land stores at Betano, and to explore landing places at the Kelan River and Quicras—both some few miles to the eastward of Betano—as alternative landing places if the use of Betano was denied by the enemy.

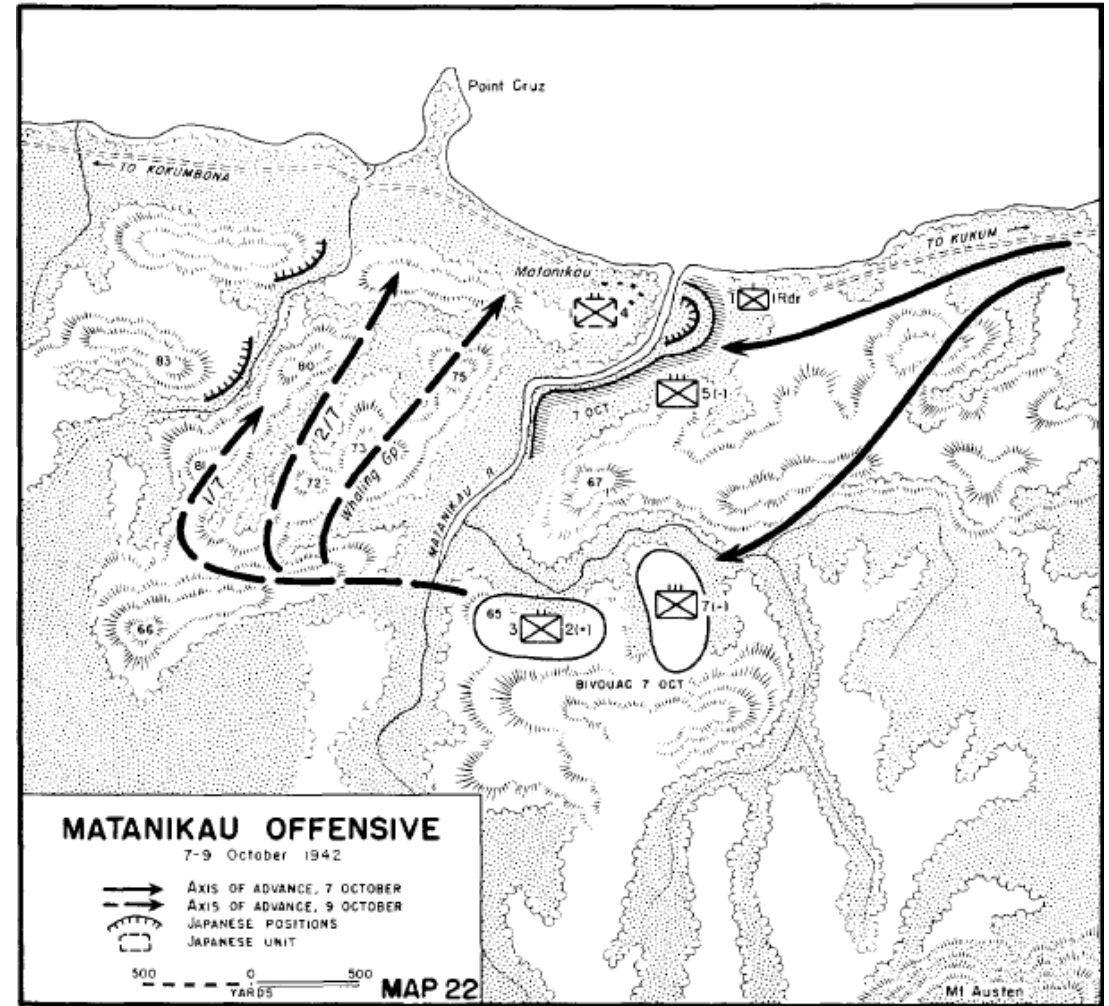


Kuru careened in Francis Bay, Darwin, for maintenance and hull cleaning.



# 18 November - Guadalcanal

- With the Japanese attempt to reinforce decisively stopped, the American ground advance to the west was resumed.
- General Sebree, western sector commander, would be in command. With the troops of his sector—the 164th Infantry, the 8th Marines, and two battalions of the 182d Infantry—the general planned to secure a line of departure extending from Point Cruz inland for about 1,700 yards.
- From this line the attack would press on to Kokumbona and the Poha River where the main Japanese force was concentrated.
- The 2d Battalion of the 182d Infantry crossed the Matanikau on 18 November and took up positions on the south (inland) flank of the proposed line of departure.

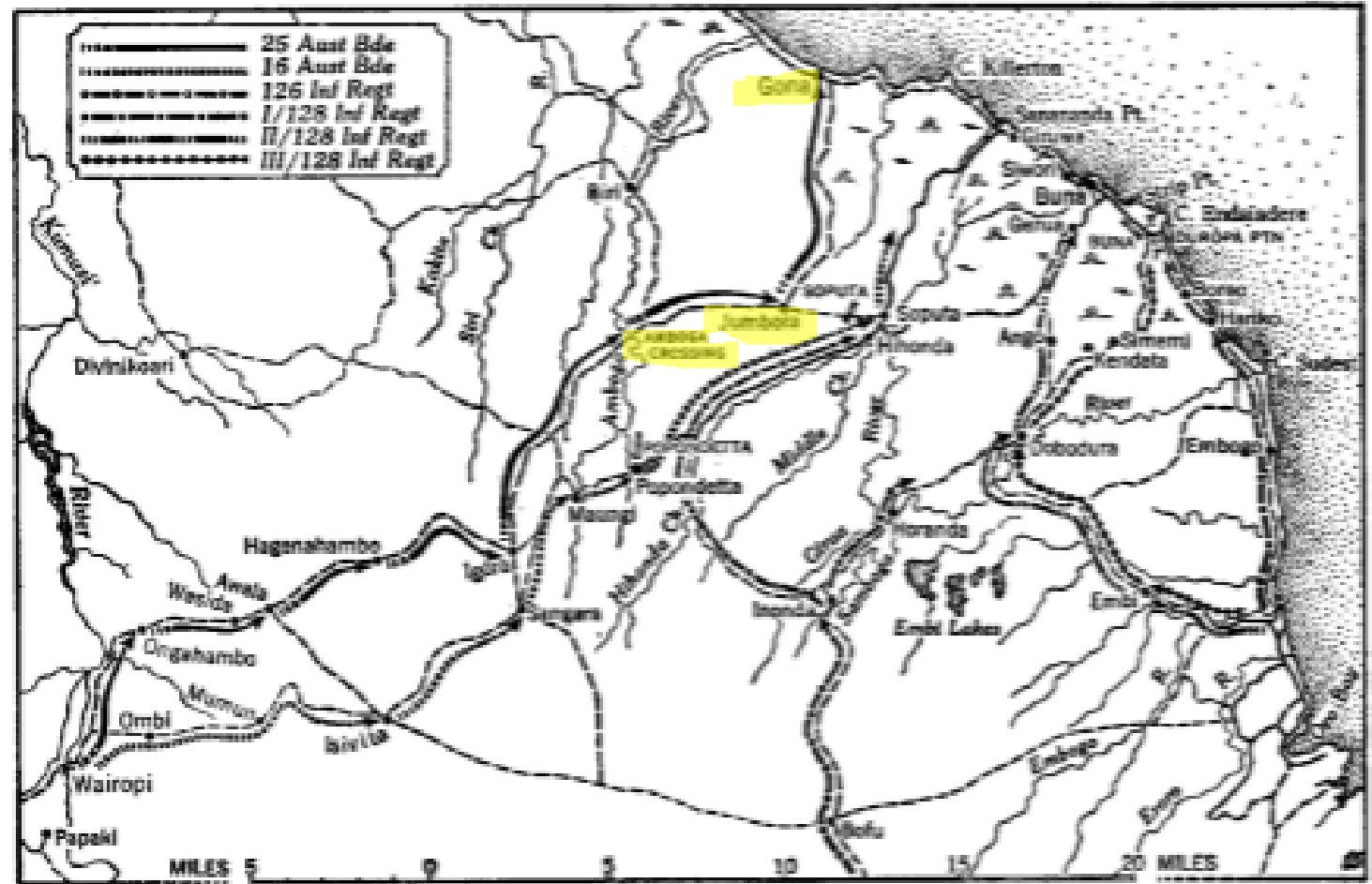


# 18 November – New Guinea

- On the 18<sup>th</sup> November COIC added another “Enemy Probable Next Move”
  - Attempt to reinforce New Guinea – Papua. Ranked second in probability.
- Early on the 18th Harding changed his plans slightly, telling Tomlinson, then at Inonda, to travel by way of Popondetta and Soputa and so forestall the possibility of the American left flank being peeled back by a thrust from the rear.
- Lloyd urged his brigade forward for Popondetta on the 18th.
  - The rain had ceased. The streams had shrunk once more to fordable dimensions.
  - Though the shortage of rations was becoming acute, promises of droppings at Popondetta heartened the men.
  - Night was approaching as he reached Popondetta.
  - Again heavy rain was falling as the 2/2nd tried to make camp.
  - No supplies had been dropped at Popondetta but word came that some would be waiting at Soputa, a good seven miles ahead.

# 18 November – New Guinea

- By the mid-afternoon of 18th November the 2/33rd was at Jumbora where they stopped to prepare a dropping ground in open kunai country.
- Captain Clowes, with sixty men, pushed on, to occupy Gona if the Japanese had gone, or alternatively to report their strength.
- Lieut-Colonel Miller was preparing to pick up rations from Buttrose and pass the 2/31st Battalion through to take the lead.
- Brigadier Eather's headquarters was back at Amboga Crossing where the 2/25th Battalion had been held.



Routes of Allied advance towards Buna-Gona area from mid-November

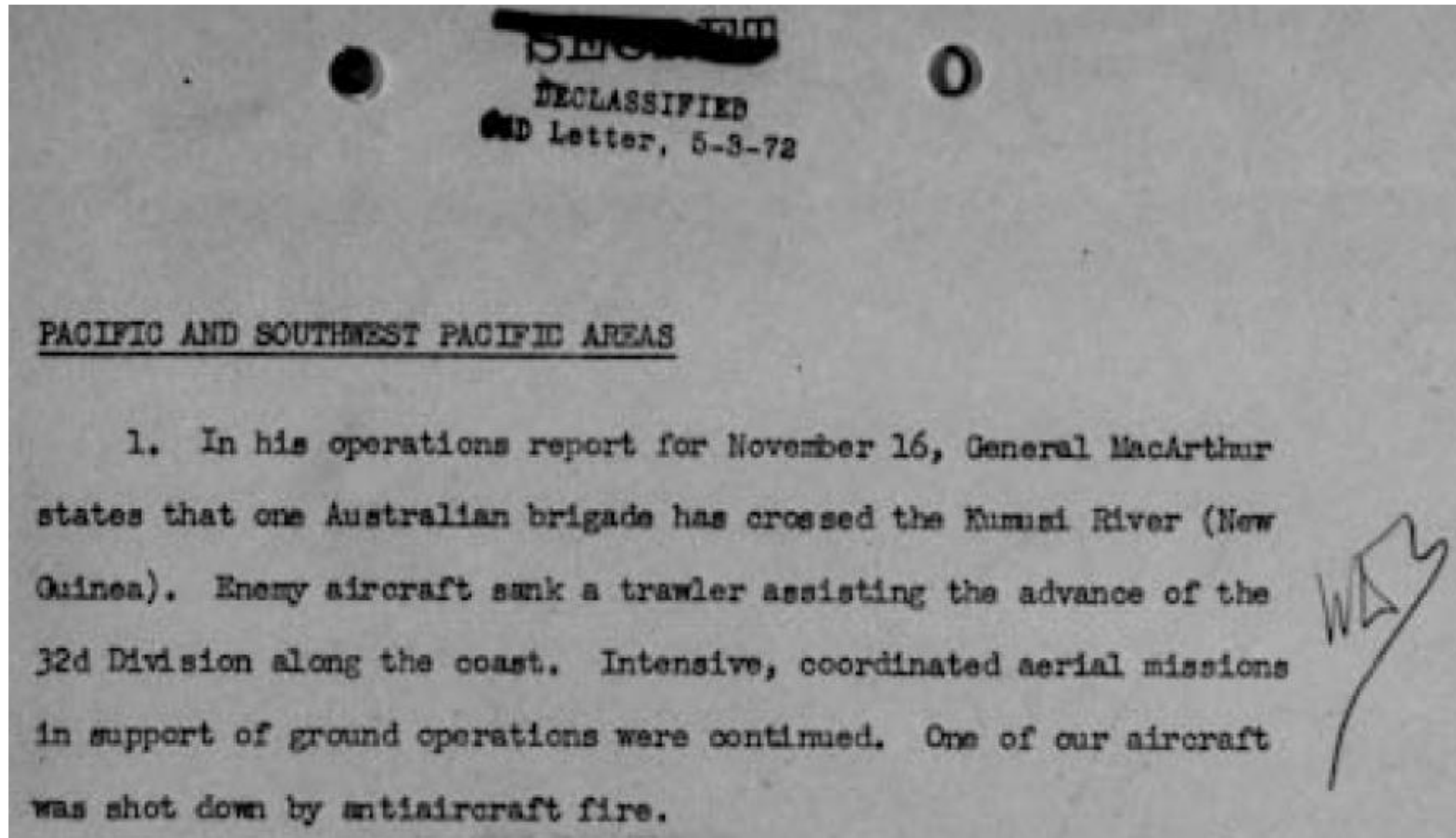




# 18 November – Air

- Ten B-25's made repeated attacks on A/Fs at Lae and Salamaua.
- Next day (18 November) eleven Beaufighters followed a formation of Bostons from No. 89 Squadron in to the target in another attack on Lae. On this attack Walker's aircraft was hit in the tail by a bursting shell. Walker got the aircraft back to base and made a successful wheels-up landing without further serious damage. Another aircraft had to make a crash landing. No member of either crew was injured.
- B-17's attack warships 50 mi SW of Gasmata, 17 mi N of Buna (one cruiser and two destroyers, seven zeros attempted interception, two were destroyed and another damaged.), and between Gona and Cape Ward Hunt (six medium bombers attacked a cruiser two destroyers and barges loaded with troops. One direct hit on the cruiser caused an explosion and fire, probably sinking it. One hit on a destroyer split it amidships and bombs dropped among the barges caused heavy casualties.
- Four B-26's bomb and strafe area between Cape Endaiadere and Buna.
- A US striking force of Eleven heavy bombers four medium bombers and seven fighters attacked enemy shipping in the Buin area. Two hits and a near miss were scored on a cargo ship. About thirty enemy planes attempted interception, thirteen were shot down.

# 18 November – War Dept report to White House



# 19 November – Government

- On 19th November, Roosevelt informed Curtin that he was taking up the question of the return of the 9th Division with the Combined Staffs immediately.
- On the right: King, Leahy, Marshall and Arnold.
- On the left: Pound, Brooke, Portal, Dill and Ismay.



Meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff

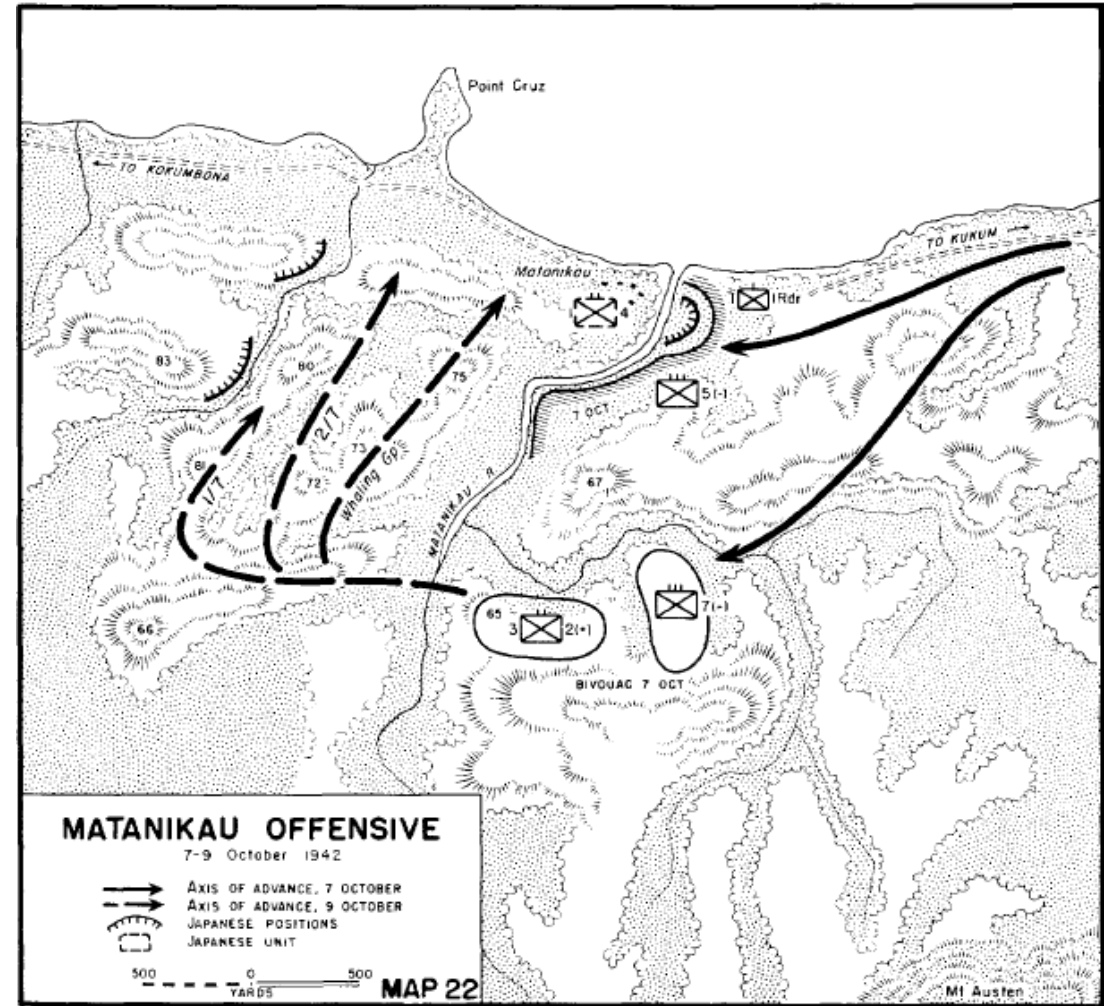
# 19 November – Sea

- After the losses of the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal, King marched to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in Admiral Leahy's words, "with his sword in his hand" to demand the release of ships from the Atlantic and Mediterranean to replace losses in the Pacific.
- He got immediate authorisation to transfer two cruisers and three escort carriers and five destroyers with more to follow later.
- The Saratoga was also now repaired from its damage at the Eastern Solomons and expected at Noumea within days to double the number of operational carriers in the south Pacific.



# 19 November - Guadalcanal

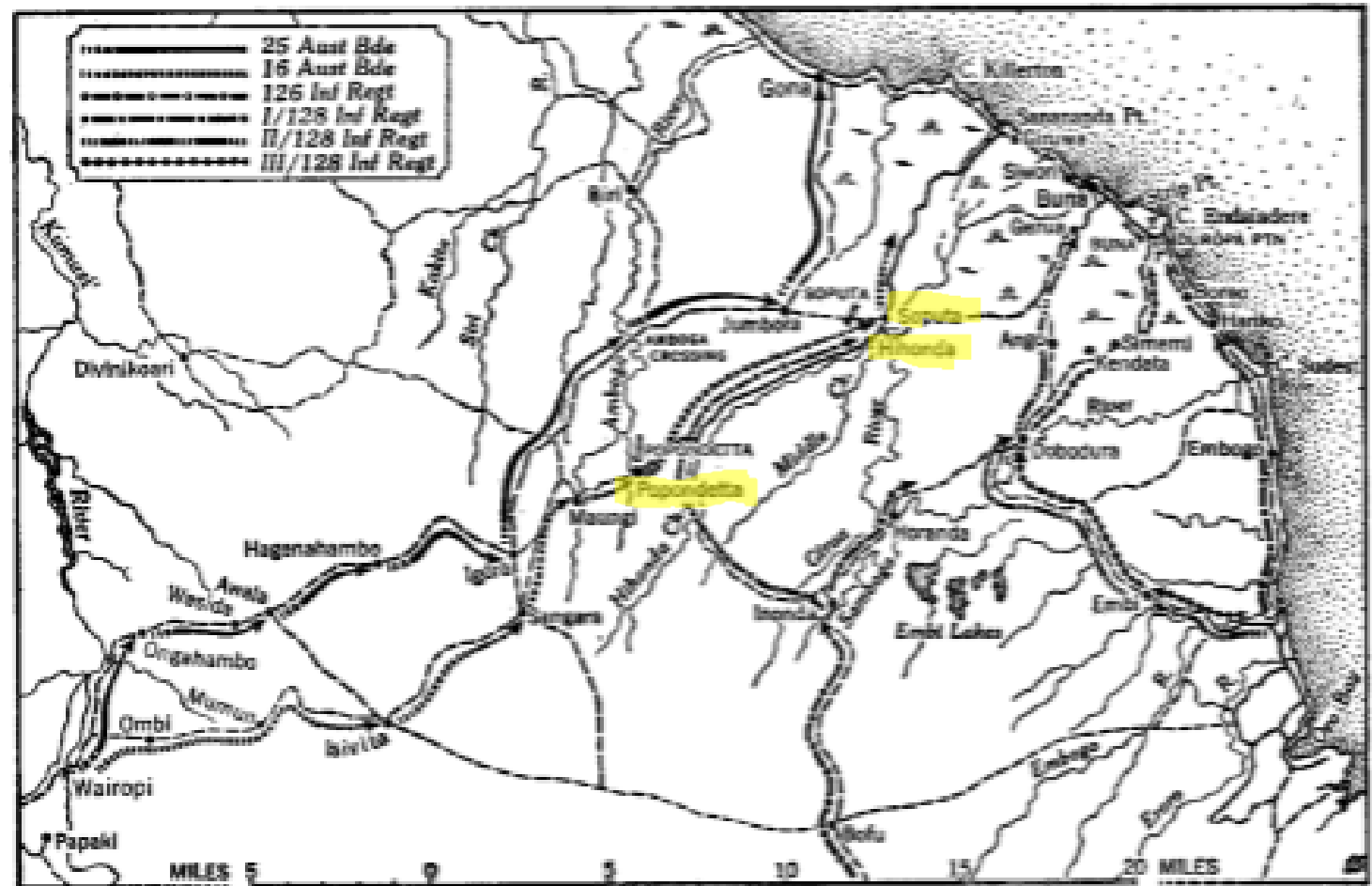
- On the following day (19 November) the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the same regiment (182<sup>nd</sup> Infantry) moved west to take up the right flank position at the base of Point Cruz.
- Company B of the 8th Marines screened the left flank of 1/182's advance, and these two units met sporadic infantry opposition.
- About noon the Army battalion halted, dug in, and refused its inland flank.
- The screening Marine company withdrew to rejoin its regiment east of the Matanikau.
- A gap of more than 1,000 yards separated the two battalions of the 182d Infantry.





# 19 November – New Guinea

- New Guinea Force estimated that a battalion of Japanese reinforcements had been landed at Buna on the night 17th-18th and more were expected the following night. These conclusions were passed on to Harding.
- On the 19<sup>th</sup> November COIC deleted Attempt to reinforce New Guinea as a probable “Enemy Probable Next Move”.
- Tomlinson then sent a strong detachment across the Girua River on the morning of the 19th. This found the Australian 16th Brigade past Popondetta and on their way to Soputa. Tomlinson then reverted to his original instructions. Scarcely, however, had he reached Horanda than he received news that he had been placed under command of General Vasey who wanted him at Soputa.



Routes of Allied advance towards Buna-Gona  
area from mid-November

# 19 November – New Guinea

- On the 19th Major Hutchison led the 2/3rd through to form the new advance-guard.
- His objective was "The sea!" The morning was not far advanced when the 2/3rd began to gather in Japanese stragglers.
- By 10.30 a.m. their first prisoner was being escorted back to brigade headquarters; soon another was being sent after him and the battalion diarist saw a third, "a naked, emaciated creature", squatting on the side of the road under guard.
- It was midday before Captain Fulton's vanguard company caught their first sight of armed foes, who slipped swiftly out of sight.
- About the same time Fulton found four trucks abandoned on the road. Although the Japanese had tried to render these unserviceable some of the Australians had one in working order within an hour. Hutchison then halted his men for lunch.
- Soon after he resumed the advance he lost one man to sudden fire from the bush. Captain Walker swung his company to the right and Captain Gall broke bush round the left, in the quick attempt at envelopment which had now become classic in bush warfare.
- But the small rearguard evaporated and, more cautiously now, the Australians' advance was resumed at 2 p.m. Two hours later, however, Fulton's company, near Soputa, ran sharply against more defiant opposition. Once again Walker and Gall flung wide, but darkness caught their men still groping and, with practised speed, they dug in among the trees.

# 19 November – New Guinea

- When Miller overtook him next morning (19<sup>th</sup>) Japanese riflemen were disputing Clowes' advance through a large kunai patch just south of Gona.
- Miller pushed Captain Thorn's company through but Thorn was barely clear of Clowes' positions when he ran into a regular fusillade.
- Miller then sent his other companies through or fanned them out on either side of the track. By late afternoon, however, all were held in a semi-circle before Gona:
  - Captain Cameron's 2/14th Battalion Chaforce company on the right of the track on the outskirts of the village ;
  - Captain Beazley's company astride the track backed up by Captain Upcher's;
  - Captain L. T. Hurrell's company on the left, with
  - Captain A . L. Hurrell's company to the left again;
  - Thorn's company in reserve in the rear.

# 19 November – New Guinea

- A tenacious defence commanded the kunai clearings in front of and flanking the mission and took toll of the attackers as they emerged from the scrub and swamps of the main approaches, after tree snipers had already harassed them.
- But as the night advanced Miller's position became too difficult. Both food and ammunition were low.
- Thorn was dead, Cameron and Lieutenant Pearce from the Chaforce company had been wounded, L. T. Hurrell and Upcher were down with raging fever.
- Miller had thus lost four of his company commanders, thirty-two of his men had been either killed or wounded, and the rest of the battalion was already wasting fast 'with malaria.
- Just before midnight Eather ordered him to break contact and fall back behind the 2/25th. This he did in the darkness through a protective position established by Clowes, with fortunate early morning rain pattering heavily on leaves and helping to cover the sounds of his men's movements.
- By 8 a.m. the bulk of the 2/31st was back behind the 2/25th.

# 19 November – New Guinea

- The attack planned for the 19th, with the I/128th Battalion along the seashore and the III/128th Battalion along the track from Simemi went ahead.
- Rain poured down as the I Battalion sloshed forward along the track from Boreo towards Cape Endaiadere.
- On the fringes of Duropa Plantation, about a mile below the cape, they ran into machine-gun and rifle fire which, inexperienced as they were, threw them into confusion. The bush and long grass which closed off their view, together with clever Japanese tactics of concealment and swift changes to alternative positions which gave the Americans the impression of being literally surrounded by blazing weapons, bewildered them.
- “Out of rations, and with the greater part of its ammunition used up, the 1st Battalion ended the day a badly shaken outfit. The troops had entered the battle joking and laughing, and sure of an easy victory. Now they were dazed and taken aback by the mauling they had received at the hands of the Japanese.”
- The III Battalion's baptism of fire was even more abrupt. As they squelched forward from Simemi the trail became a narrow strip of corduroy against which the enveloping swamps oozed. As it approached the air strips this corduroy entered completely cleared kunai grass country, little higher than the main swamp level. On the right New Strip was bathed in a blazing sun; the bridge between the strips lay ahead with Old Strip beyond it to the left, and, on the immediate left, a scarecrow growth marked the line of Simemi Creek with grey arms of dead wood.
- As they entered this inhospitable place such intense Japanese fire swept the Americans that, in Colonel Miller's own words, they were "stopped cold".





# 20 November - Government

- At a press conference on 20th November Curtin enlarged on the strategic necessity for "one army under one command".
- In the succeeding days he attended a succession of Australian Labour Party meetings explaining his proposal.
- He had many opponents at the start. The press reports referred to opposition from Senator Cameron, Holloway, Ward, Calwell, Rosevear —his supporters in Parliament— and from Fallon, Federal President of the Australian Labour Party.



# 20 November - Sea

- The new Tribal-class destroyer, H.M.A.S. Warramunga, which was built at Cockatoo Island, had been launched on 7th February 1942 and was commissioned by Commander Dechaineux on 20th November 1942.
- This was the second ship of the class built for the RAN at Cockatoo Island, following Arunta.
- A third was laid down immediately after Warramunga's launch.



# 20 November - Sea

- Juneau's 100+ survivors (out of a total complement of 697) were left to fend for themselves in the open ocean for eight days before rescue aircraft belatedly arrived.
- While awaiting rescue, all but ten of Juneau's crew had died from their injuries, the elements, or shark attacks.
- USS Ballard picked up the sole survivor of one raft on 20 November.
- Signalman 1<sup>st</sup> Class L.E. Zook's account of the dying wounded, the rapacious shark attacks and the madness consequent to privation is one of the grimmest survivor stories of the war.



The U.S. Navy light cruiser USS *Juneau* (CL-52) off New York City (USA), 1 June 1942.

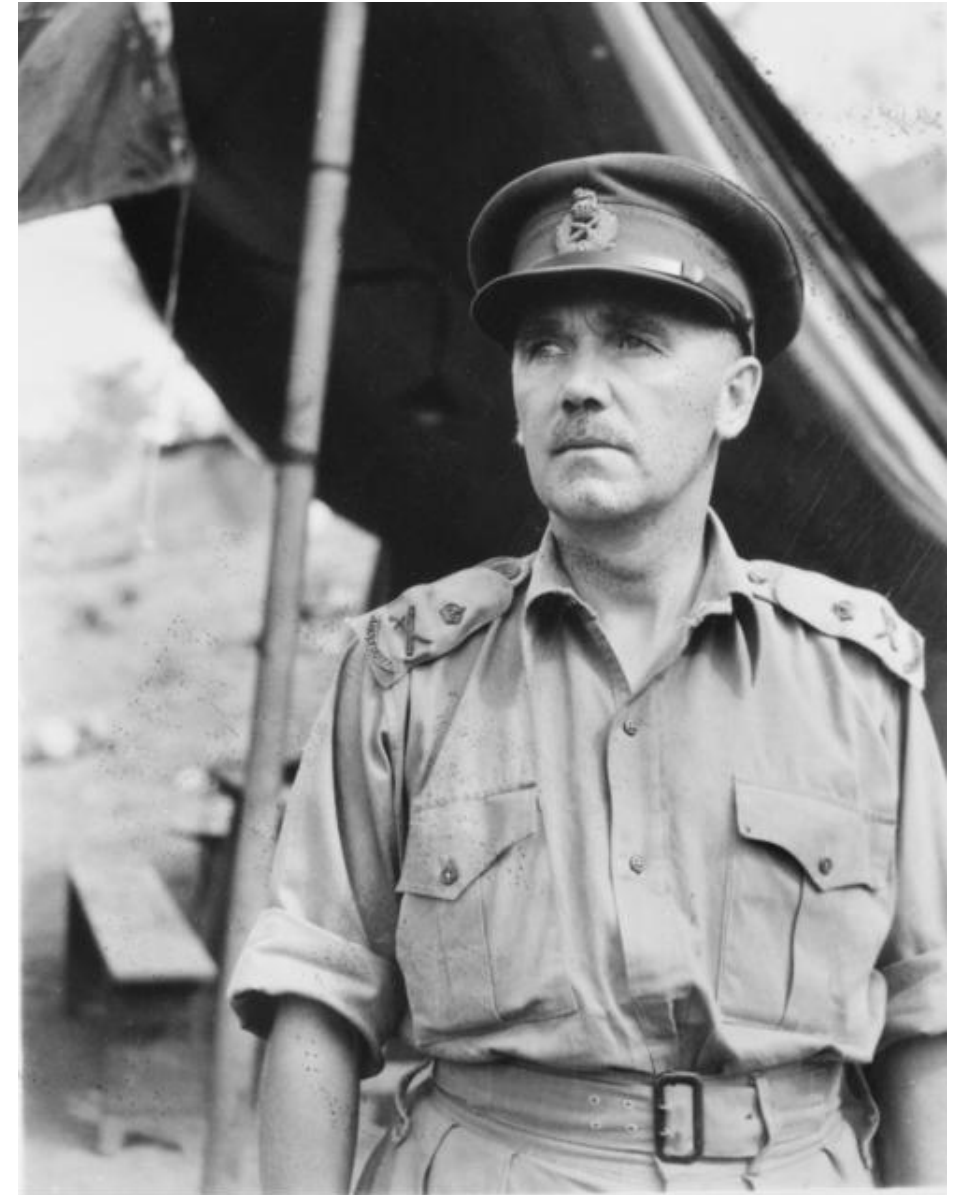


# 20 November - Guadalcanal

- On the night of 19-20 November, the Japanese took up positions facing the two Army battalions west of the river and engaged the Americans with artillery and mortar fire.
- At dawn (20 November) the Japanese struck the inland flank of 1/182. The Army troops gave ground for approximately 400 yards, but this was regained later in the morning with air and artillery support.
- This U.S. attack continued to the beach just west of Point Cruz but halted there in the face of increased enemy artillery and mortar fire.
- By 20 November there were 100 planes on the Guadalcanal fields, 35 F4F4s, 24 SBDs, 17 P-38s, 16 P-39s, 8 TBFs, and one lone and battle scarred P400.
- About this time also, B-17's from two Army Air Force Bomber Groups (the 11th and the 5th) began to operate through Guadalcanal on long-range reconnaissance missions.

# 20 November – New Guinea

- This (transfer of 126<sup>th</sup> Regiment to Vasey) was due to a New Guinea Force decision to attack Japanese concentrations west of the Girua with the maximum force available.
- General Vasey was given the option of taking direct command of the 126th Regiment or shifting the American boundary westward. He chose the former.
- General Harding was then told that his role was to seize and hold a line from the Girua to the coast (including a crossing near Soputa), to prevent enemy penetration into his area, and to secure bridgeheads.
- General Herring (photo) overruled his protests. Reluctantly Tomlinson led his force towards Soputa where it began to arrive on the afternoon of the 20th.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

151139

# 20 November – New Guinea

- The next day (20<sup>th</sup>) saw a very slight improvement on Colonel McCoy's front.
- With assistance from the two mountain guns and several strikes by bombers, the men managed to edge ahead a further hundred yards before they were halted once more—an advance for which Lieutenant John Crow, who was killed, and one of his platoon commanders, Staff-Sergeant Paul Sherney, were chiefly responsible.
- But even this small gain was greater than anything Colonel Miller was able to achieve. Swamp and fire held his I Battalion men precisely where they had been beaten into immobility among the kunai approaches to the bridge the day before.
- By this time General MacArthur, temporarily established at Port Moresby, was restlessly demanding a successful conclusion to the operations on the whole Buna-Sanananda-Gona, front.
- He told General Blamey that his land forces must attack the Buna-Gona area on the 21st November; that "all columns will be driven through to objectives regardless of losses".
- This was passed on to General Harding with information that heavy air support would be laid on for him at 8 a.m. He was to go forward immediately the air program concluded. If weather prevented the aircraft from assisting him his attack would go in just the same—about 8.10 a.m.





# 20 November – New Guinea

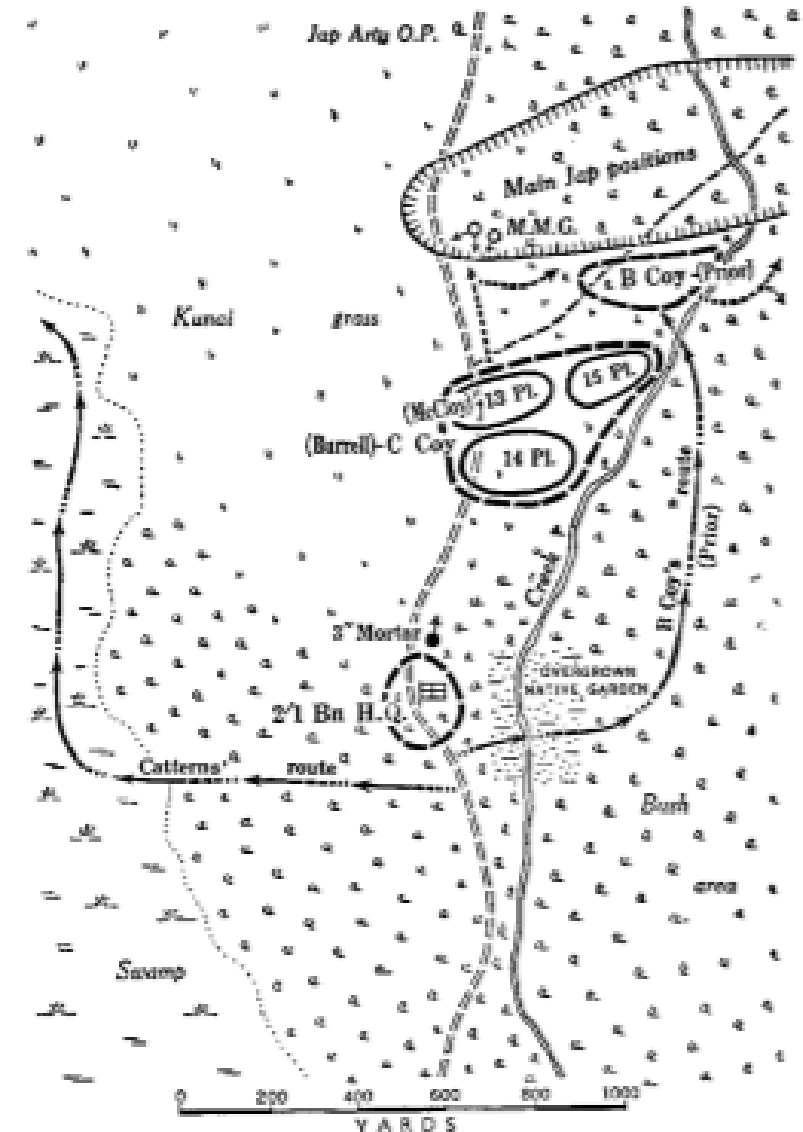
- Early on the 20th, tentative Australian passes eliciting no response from the Japanese positions, the 2/3rd took up the pursuit and, after an uneventful half-hour, began breakfast.
- The smoke from their damp fires was rising when Lt-Col Cullen, now ordered forward, led the 2/1st past them about 8.30 a.m., animated by fresh news that the 25th Brigade was only one mile south of Gona and that the Americans were approaching Buna.
- About a quarter of an hour later his leading men broke out of the narrow bush-enclosed track into a large, open kunai patch through which the track wandered northwards. Very soon afterwards volleys scattered them. Effective artillery fire quickly convinced Cullen that he was coming against strong positions and, when lack of telephone cable forced him to establish his headquarters on the track itself, in the timber just short of the kunai, shells slashed into his headquarters area, sending great divots of the damp earth flying.
- Cullen put Catterns in command of the two remaining rifle companies (Captain Simpson's and Lieutenant Leaney's) telling him to swing far to the left to clear the kunai patch completely and fully exploit the timber cover so that he could burst from the thick growth on to the rear of the Japanese positions and settle himself there astride the track.

# 20 November – New Guinea

- With Catterns still deep in the undergrowth Burrell's company was gaining ground slowly along the track.
- Prior, commanding Catterns' company in his absence, skirted Burrell's right, keeping to the thick bush. About 12.30 he came against the Japanese left flank. He managed to smash through their outpost line but was finally held against their main positions, only some thirty yards separating attackers and attacked.
- When one of the riflemen was severely wounded and lying under heavy fire, the company's quartermaster sergeant, Miller, brought him in.
- Later, a corporal, shot through the stomach, was lying in a forward and exposed position, beyond a bare area that was flailed by criss-crossing fire. It seemed impossible to help him while the daylight lasted, though the cries of the poor fellow's agony were demoralising even to that hardened company whom much fighting had taught to accept wounds or death as their lot. Not only did Miller go forward to what seemed certain death and give the wounded man morphia and dress his wounds, but he returned to cover, had a stretcher made and set off back again, with a brave stretcher bearer, Corporal Kemsley. It took the two twenty minutes to crawl to the dying soldier, the stretcher dragging behind them. Then all three came back through the storm of fire.

# 20 November – New Guinea

- Soon after 2 p.m. Cullen told the brigadier that Prior and Burrell were in difficulties, that he considered the Japanese were employing two mountain guns, two medium machine-guns, one heavy and several light mortars, while he could not even guess at the number of light machine guns.
- He asked Lloyd for more assistance. The latter said that he would send an American company (from Col Tomlinson's 126th Regimental Combat Team, which was then approaching Soputa) when it arrived.
- As the other two Battalions closed up to the fighting Lloyd told Edgar to send two companies to help the 2/1st and these, commanded by Captains Bosgard and Blamey, reported to Cullen at 4.30 p.m. Cullen sent them to his right to strengthen Prior's outflanking effort, but darkness fell as soon as they had linked with Prior.
- As darkness approached echoes of heavy firing came from the north. Then the listeners knew that Catterns had closed in.



Dispositions, 2/1st Battalion, 20th November

# 20 November – New Guinea

- Catterns had made a wide detour to approach the main track at a point about two miles in rear of the Japanese front.
- About 6 p.m. Corporal Albanese and the leading section crossed a faint pad roughly parallel to the main pathway. The pad showed signs of recent use. Nearby ran a small stream which was obviously being used as a watering place.
- Stealthily Catterns and Albanese crept forward through the silent bush. They stopped when they were overlooking a party of Japanese on their left. These were huddled over fires cooking their evening rice. Through further trees, there was much movement on what was evidently the main track.
- Catterns' group was a small one—ten officers and eighty men. The Japanese were obviously occupying main positions and were therefore in strength. The Australians had no communication back to their battalion and so could not call for help either then or later. They had no means of getting the killed or wounded away from the scene of any fight that might develop. Their main object was to slash their way to the track and hold on there.
- They were quiet, and still unseen by their foes, as they assembled, each company in extended order, five paces between each man. Leaney's men were on the right astride the little stream; Simpson's, on the left, used the foot pad as a start-line. At a sign from Catterns they began to move forward through the silent evening. They drew close to their unsuspecting enemies. Still they made no sound. Still their steps had a deliberate slowness, cat-like and intent.
- Scarcely 50 yards separated the two forces when suddenly the Japanese saw them.



# 20 November – New Guinea

- So great was the impact on the Australians of the thunder of their own fire crashing into that silent place almost as one shattering report that, for a moment, the shock of it felled them to the ground.
- And then they were up again, hurling forward straight for the centre of a main defensive position. They smashed through apron fences of vines. They hurdled networks of trenches. They were fighting like wild cats in the midst of the surprised defenders, some of whom, rallying, manned gun-pits and cut swathes through the attackers.
- But there was no stopping the assault and these Japanese died at their guns. Soon the huts were afire. They blazed high. Grenades exploded in the fires and scattered flames and sparks. Dead and wounded littered the area. Those of the defenders who were able to do so ran into the bush, some of them screaming.
- Catterns' men estimated that they had killed at least eighty in that first assault. But they lost heavily themselves. Among their dead were five of the ten officers, including both company commanders. The wounded were laid round a big tree which had thick roots spreading out from it like little walls.
- Quickly the others began to dig in so that soon a sausage-shaped perimeter was developed with the remnants of what had been Simpson's company manning the northern end and Murray's men in the south.