

War in the Pacific

Defending Australia

Campaigns in New Guinea and the Solomons

1 December 1942

General Eichelberger is sent to take over command of US forces around the beach heads.

Attacks are limited while reorganisation takes place



1 December – Courier Mail

Hit Japan Last, Says Churchill

LONDON, Nov. 20 (Special)—
Mr. Churchill forecast in his world broadcast last night that the war might end in two stages, whereby the Allies, after smashing Germany and Italy, would turn all their strength against Japan.

It was the first time that Mr. Churchill had expressed this view publicly, though he has long held it. He has already made known to Australia both his forecast and the promise that went with it.

The passage in his speech was: "Maybe the war in Europe will end before the war in Asia. "If that should happen, we would bring all our forces to the other side of the world to aid America and China, and, above all, our kith and kin in Australia and New Zealand.

FRENCH SUBMARINE INTERNED IN SPAIN

MADRID, Nov. 30 (A.A.P.).—
The crew of the French submarine Iris (600 tons), which escaped from Toulon when the French fleet was being scuttled, and arrived at Barcelona on Saturday, has been interned.

Missing—A.I.F. Photographer

After having photographed the second Libyan campaign, the siege of Tobruk, the Milne Bay battle, and fighting on the Kokoda track, Lieutenant Thomas Fisher, official A.I.F. photographer, has been listed as missing in action in New Guinea.

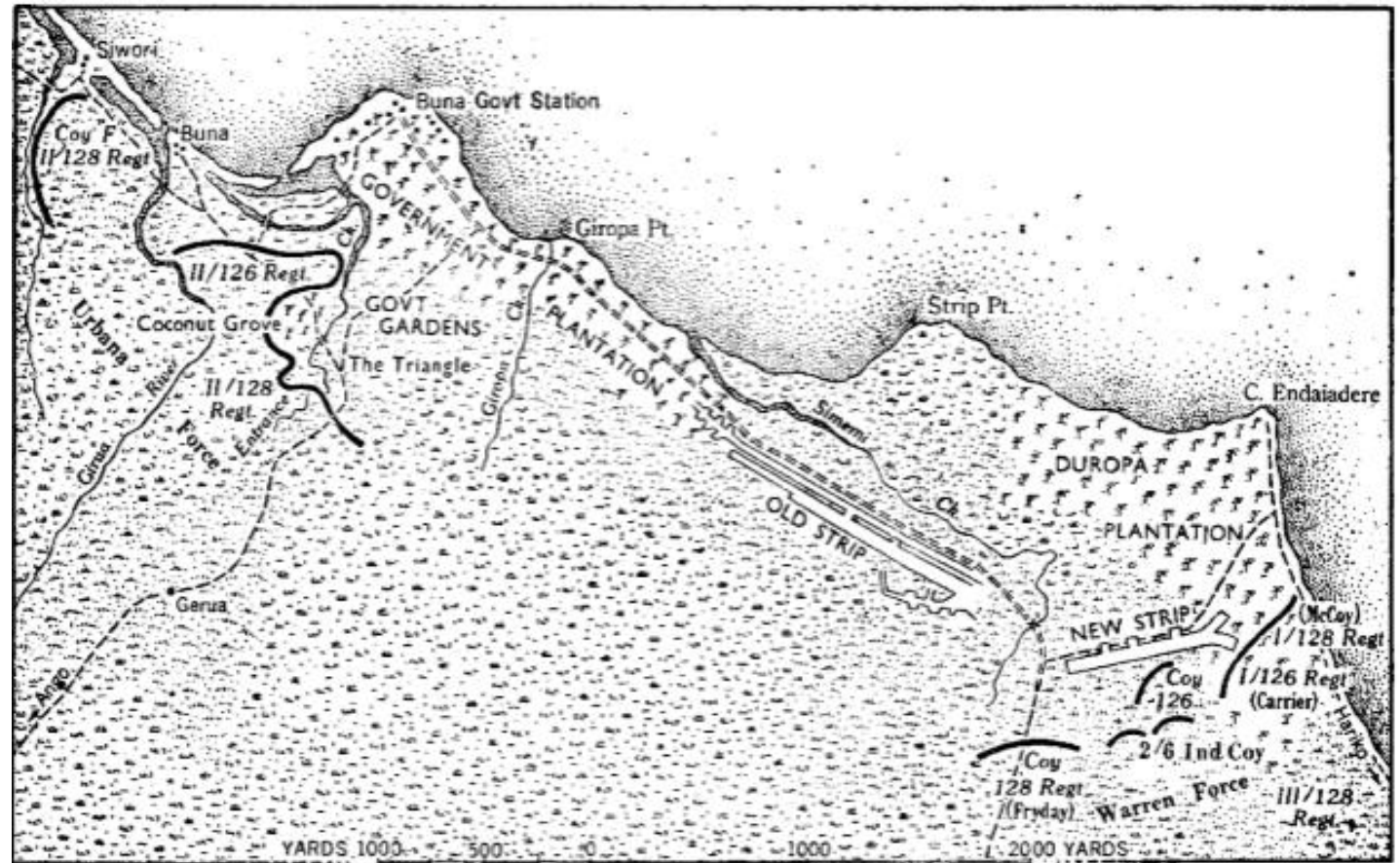
Fisher was on board a small boat heading for Buna when it was strafed and sunk with some loss of life by Zero fighters.

Fisher enlisted in the A.I.F. with an anti-aircraft unit, transferred to a survey company. He was appointed still photographer to the military history and information section after the Syrian campaign.

Before the war he was a staff photographer of the Sydney Morning Herald.

1 December – Buna E

- At 1045 on 1 December Harding ordered Colonel Hale to stop pressing the attack on Cape Endaiadere and to lend all possible support instead to Colonel Carrier in an attack on the New Strip.
- One of Colonel McCoy's companies was to be left in place along the coastal track to hold the position there, and the other two companies were to support Colonel Carrier in his operations against the strip.



Evening, 30th November

1 December – Buna E

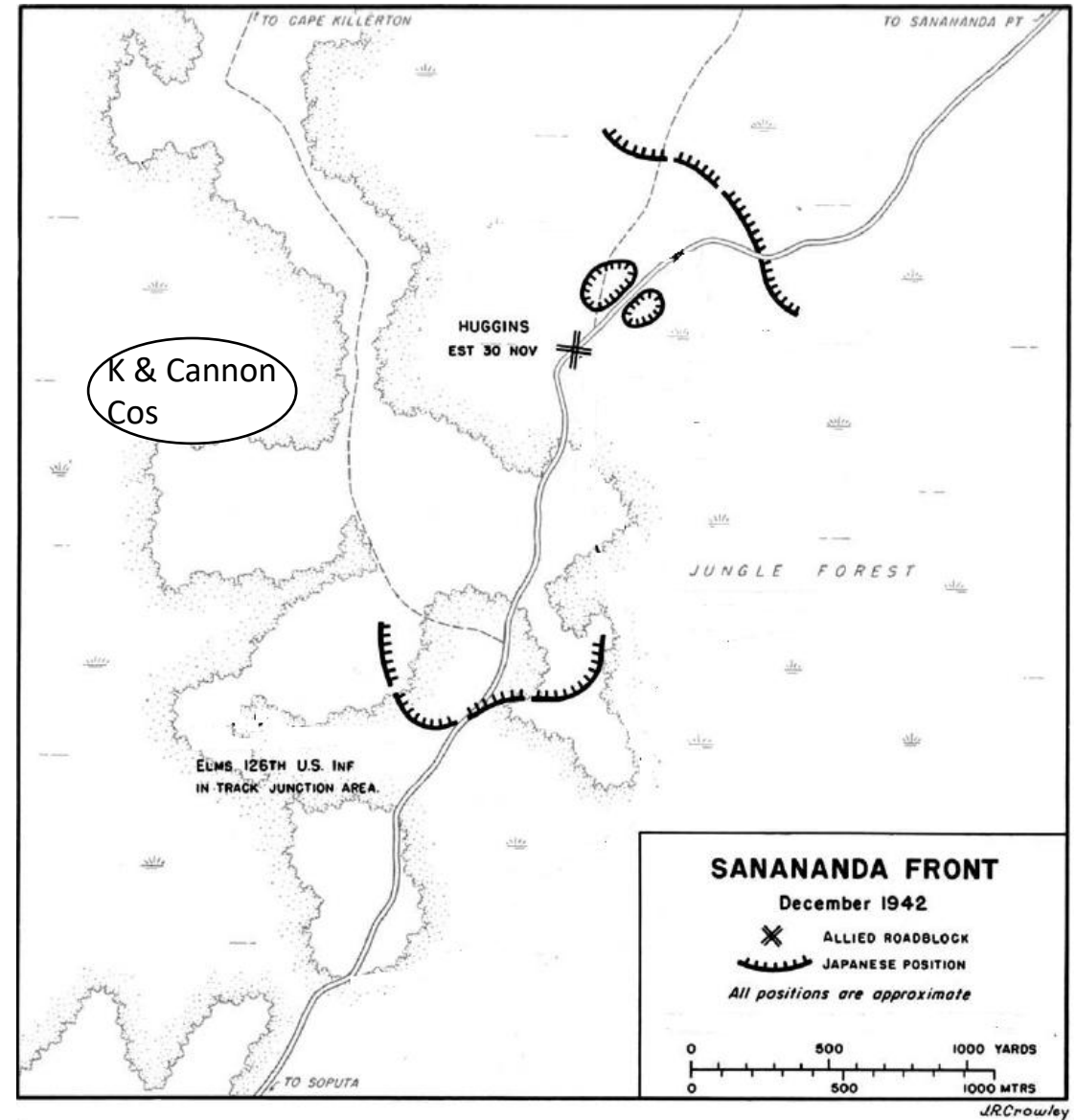
- The plan of action called for Company B, 128th Infantry, to make a series of demonstrations against Cape Endaiadere .
- The real attack would be against the New Strip. Its object was essentially exploratory: to discover a weak spot in the enemy line and to "go all out" if it found a hole.
- Three companies would launch an east-west attack from the coastal flank toward the dispersal bays off the eastern end of the strip.
- At the other end of the strip two companies would attack the bridge between the strips.
- The 2/6 Australian Independent Company would patrol the area facing the strip and serve to connect the forces attacking at its other end.
- drive from east to west would be under command of Colonel McCoy; that from south to north, under Colonel Carrier.

1 December – Buna W

- On the night of 30 November-1 December the artillery and mortars had laid down a desultory fire on Buna Village, but there was actually little action during the night. The exhausted troops, who were expecting a counterattack, got little real rest.
- In the morning Urbana force made another attempt to take Buna Village moving through the relatively open area just below the bridge over the Girua River, instead of directly up the main track. The attempt was preceded by fire from the 25-pounders and from all the available mortars in battery.
- At the start the action went well, and several bunkers were knocked out.
- Pvt. John Combs of Company E distinguished himself for a superb job of scouting, during the course of which he maneuvered himself behind an enemy bunker that had been holding up the advance, killed twelve Japanese single-handed, and enabled his platoon to take the position.
- Then, just as the troops seems to be on the point of going through, Company E, instead of continuing to press forward, withdrew. Whether it did so because there was a mixup in signals or because the men were "jumpy," Colonel Mott was unable to ascertain.
- Although his front line was now less than 300 yards from Buna Village, Colonel Mott decided to make no further attacks that day. His plan was to attack again in the morning.

1 Dec – Sanananda

- Beginning in the late afternoon of 1 December and continuing till after midnight, at least five separate counterattacks hit the roadblock troops from the southwest, north, northwest, and northeast. All were thrown back with only small casualties to the garrison.
- Baetcke decided that he had to keep Company K and the Cannon Company in position west of the roadblock to supply it and guard its tenuous line of communications.

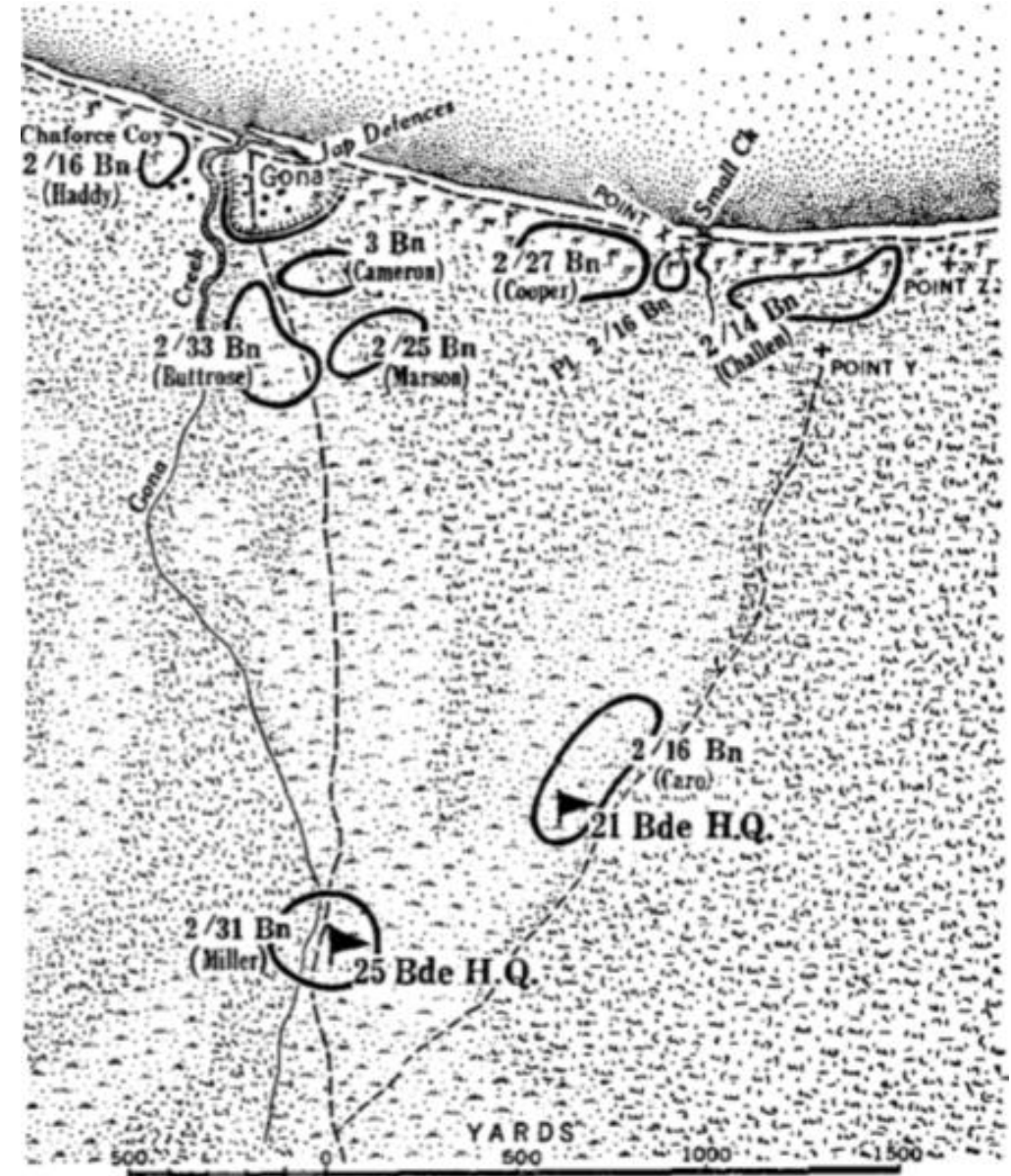


1 December – New Guinea, Sanananda

- Major Zeeff experienced no difficulty moving forward the next day. His men advanced northwest in order to join Shirley in the roadblock. The Japanese, apparently diverted from the threat on their left by the new threat on their rear, had relaxed their pressure, and Zeeff's force moved steadily ahead.
- Early that afternoon Zeeff's troops crossed the track and, moving to a point about 250 yards west of it, surprised and wiped out a party of thirty-five to forty Japanese. Zeeff reported the skirmish to Colonel Tomlinson at 1515 and, told him that he thought his troops had crossed the track.
- To prevent enemy interception of the message Zeeff spoke in Dutch, a language familiar to many of the Michigan troops present, and a Dutch-speaking sergeant at headquarters interpreted for Colonel Tomlinson.
- Zeeff dug in at 16.25 on Tomlinson's orders. Within the hour the Japanese struck from right and front. After a brisk fire fight in which Zeeff lost two killed and three wounded, the enemy withdrew.
- At 21.00 Colonel Tomlinson ordered Zeeff to move back to the east side of the road as soon as he could and to push northward from there to make the desired juncture with the troops in the roadblock. At that point the wire went dead, and Zeeff was on his own.

1 December - Gona

- Brigadier Dougherty agreed that the 2/27th should continue their westward assault next day. The 2/16th's second and only remaining rifle company was transferred to Colonel Cooper's command. The 3rd Battalion would move to protect the left flank of the 21st Brigade, whose companies, attacking westward along the shore, would link with that battalion. Cooper had already reported that he was in direct communication with Cameron.
- At 5.45 a.m. on the 1st artillery and mortar fire began to crash down in the small area of the Japanese defences. At six, with bayonets fixed, the Australians entered the assault under the cover of mortar smoke.
- Cooper's three tattered companies were moving along the shore on the right, Captain O'Neill's 2/16th company formed the left flank with orders to link with the 3rd Battalion, Major Robinson's 2/16th company was in reserve.



1 December - Gona

- Along the beach the 2/27th men, after subduing the foremost position, were checked and withering.
- The 3rd Battalion had seen nothing of the left flank of the attack passing in front of them and had made no movement forward.
- O'Neill had advanced across the 3rd Battalion front and, with part of Lieutenant Egerton-Warburton's 2/27th company (previously Captain Gill's), was ravaging the central Japanese positions in the village of Gona itself.
- Lieutenant Mayberry's platoon was the centre of O'Neill's attack and, by the time they reached the centre of the village, blasting the last of their way there with Brens and sub-machine-guns fired from the hip, had been reduced from eighteen to Mayberry himself and five men.
- These fought on from shell holes for some time although assailed from both north and south—the area Cameron's men were to have cleared—and, through some error of the gunners, under fire from the Australian artillery.
- Then as they tried to withdraw they clashed savagely with a party of Japanese moving back into positions after the bombardment, lost two more very brave men (Privates Sage and Morey), broke westward and crossed Gona Creek to join Lieutenant Haddy's Chaforce platoon on the far side.
- Casualties were mounting fast. Most of the men who had entered the village were now either dead, wounded or missing. O'Neill himself, badly hit, had been left lying on the eastern bank of the creek. Colonel Cooper was wounded and Major Hearman (second-in-command of the 2/16th) had taken over from him.

1 December - Gona

- About the middle of the morning more concentrated fighting boiled up when Major Robinson, with fifteen men from the reserve company, bravely assaulted a strong and troublesome post on the beach. They took the position, but a counter-attack forced them out soon afterwards. Wounded but resolute, Robinson was still fighting when he was again wounded.
- For the rest of the day the Australians tried to clear their casualties from the battleground beneath a worrying fire from the main Japanese positions and unnerving shots from concealed snipers. With the night Corporal McMahon and Private Yeing of Haddy's platoon swam Gona Creek into Japanese territory and brought back the dying Captain O'Neill on a punt from where he had been lying wounded all day.
- The day, which cost the 2/16th alone 3 officers and 56 men, may have hinged on the failure of the 3rd Battalion to move forward and link with the westward attackers. The cause seems to have been that the 3rd was not where Brigadier Eather and Colonel Cameron thought it was, but farther south. Instead of moving forward on its time schedule, it waited for the 21st Brigade's attack to arrive but saw nothing of it and was not waiting where O'Neill expected to make his junction.
- Early in the evening Vasey told Dougherty that too many casualties were being suffered at Gona; that he was considering leaving a force to contain the place while another force moved eastward in a flanking threat to Sanananda.

1 December - Air

- B-26's, A-20's, P-400's, and B-25's made 36 sorties in support of ground operations in the Buna area.
- 4 destroyers detected approaching Buna were attacked by 10 B17s and 6 B25s. The bombers were intercepted by 17 to 20 Zeros and one B17 failed to return. The ships were continuing on course when last seen.
- On 1 December the 1st Marine Aviation Engineer Battalion arrived and relieved the 6th Seabees at Henderson Field.
- CBI
- JIC estimated Japanese air strength in Burma and Thailand as not less than 250 planes. The absence of hostile air activity was put down to conservatism caused by severe losses in the South West Pacific. Major offensive operations from Burma were considered unlikely.
- Twelve P40s bombed and strafed Maingkwan, destroying half the town. Maingkwan had been the base of hostile ground activity in the direction of Assam.
- An airfield under construction at Doig Cuohg (central Tonkin) was bombed and strafed by four P40s, the runway and two steamrollers were damaged.

1 December - COIC

Enemy Forces

- (i) Buna: Sightings indicate that 4 enemy destroyers reached Buna at about midnight last night 1/12 and remained for approx. one hour. The vessels were first sighted at 1000 on course 250° 16 miles S.W. by W. Cape Orford, New Britain. Reports of attacks by our aircraft are not yet complete, but one destroyer was seen on fire at 1110; the fire was, however, extinguished before 1140. At least two attacks were made during the afternoon and evening: one probable near miss was claimed, but no damage was apparent. The 4 destroyers were unsuccessfully attacked on the return journey at 0130, approx. 10 miles N. Buna, and were last sighted 30 miles N. by W. Buna at 0325, on course 090°.

- (ii) New Britain - New Guinea waters: Allied aircraft which were shadowing and attacking the convoy proceeding to Buna were attacked during 1/12. 8 Zeros destroyed, 2 probable, 4 damaged. One B.17 was damaged.

- (iii) Timor: A vessel arrived at Laga (N. Coast Portuguese Timor) and apparently disembarked 500 troops and 30 trucks. All sources assert that there has been a considerable increase in enemy equipment and personnel during the past month in Timor.

1 December – War Dept report to White House

1. In his operations summary for November 29, General MacArthur reports that the 7th Australian Division attacked strongly held enemy positions in the Gona area, making material progress with the assistance of an effective aerial and artillery preparation.

2. General MacArthur was notified that a joint directive is being sent through Navy communications channels providing that the 25th Division will go to the South Pacific Area, and that the 1st Marine Division will move to the Southwest Pacific Area where, after refitting, it will form part of the amphibious force under General MacArthur's command. The details of the transfer of the latter

1 December - USA

- DEC. 1, 1942: MANDATORY GAS RATIONING, LOTS OF WHINING
- Nearly a year after the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor the Americans get around to imposing nationwide gasoline rationing.
- Fuel shortage was not the problem. America had plenty of that. What it lacked was rubber. Both the Army and Navy were in desperate need of rubber for the war effort.
- Imports had fallen off to a trickle, because the traditional sources were now in Japanese hands. The construction of synthetic-rubber factories was just beginning.
- Mandatory gasoline rationing had been in effect in the eastern United States since May 1942, but a voluntary program in other parts of the country had been unsuccessful.



1 December - USA

- The Baruch Rubber Report, presented to President Roosevelt on Sept. 1, 1942, concluded that meeting the military's enormous needs would be nearly impossible if the civilians at home didn't cut out nonessential driving to conserve on tire wear.
- And the best way to do that was to limit the amount of gasoline an individual could purchase.
- Congress pushed for a delay, but FDR would have none of it. Backed by government procurement agencies and military leaders, the president ordered gasoline rationing to begin on Dec. 1 and to last "the duration."

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

1. Coupons can be used only in connection with the vehicle described on the front cover. Detached coupons are VOID.
2. If you stop using your car, this book and all unused coupons must be surrendered to your Board within 5 days.
3. If you sell your car, this book and all unused coupons must be surrendered to your Board. The purchaser will not be issued a gasoline ration unless he presents the receipt which you receive at the time of such surrender.

A BASIC MILEAGE RATION
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

NAME OF REGISTERED OWNER: Sam R. Davis

ADDRESS—NUMBER AND STREET: Gen Del

CITY AND STATE: Lowell - Ore

LICENSE No. AND STATE: 1C46463 Ala YEAR MODEL: 34 Plym

Holder must fill in any blank spaces above before the first purchase of gasoline.

OPA FORM R-525 C (License No.) (State) **A17** **206469** **h**

- Americans had been presented with FDR's fait accompli on Nov. 26, giving them less than a week to prepare. The story shared the top of Page 1 in The New York Times, alongside a report of the Soviet offensive at Stalingrad.
- Americans became acquainted with the ration card, which had to be presented on every trip to the filling station. To be out of ration stamps was to be out of luck. Class A drivers were allowed only 3 gallons of gasoline per week.

2 December - Government

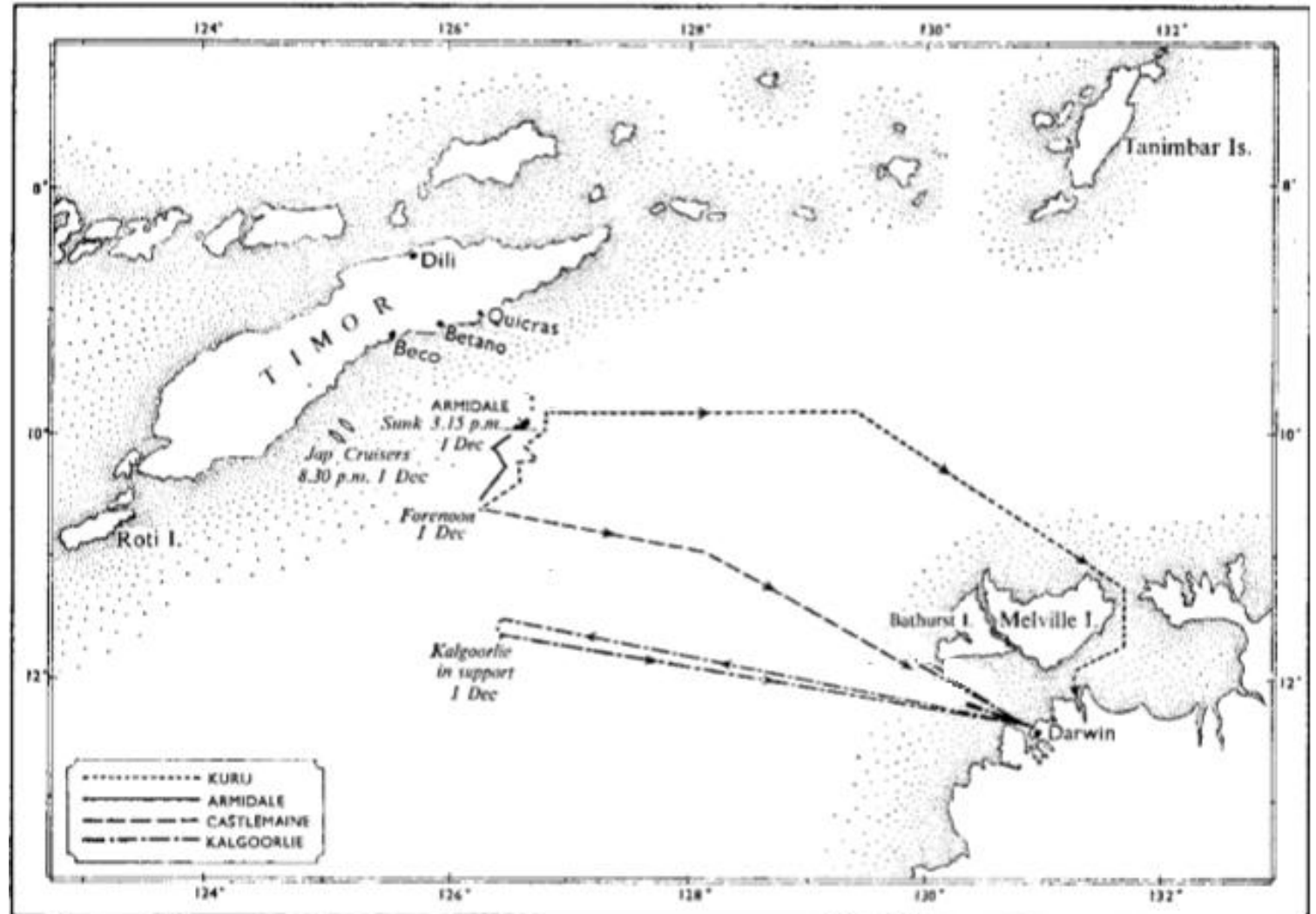
- Churchill replied on 2nd December:
- “I and my professional advisers are very sorry that you continue to press for the move of the 9th Australian Division which we do not consider is in accordance with the general strategic interests of the United Nations. Nevertheless in accordance with your wishes, I shall recommend to the President that the 9th Australian Division return to Australia as soon as shipping can be provided.
- This will probably be early in the New Year. I may say that it will involve a loss to us in personnel shipping lift of 10,000 men in the United States convoys and 20,000 in the Trans Atlantic build-up for the invasion of the continent.
- Reference your paragraph 8 [in which Curtin had assumed that, as in the case of the 6th and 7th Divisions, equipment as well as personnel would be returned] we very much regret that we cannot arrange for the equipment of your division to be returned to Australia. We could not face the cost to our offensive operations of the cargo and motor transport shipping necessary for this movement.
- You will like to know that in response to an urgent request by the Americans for naval help in the Pacific we are proposing to offer them the two modern armoured aircraft carriers Victorious and Illustrious under the command of a British Admiral for service under American orders in the Pacific. These are among the most vital units we possess. We have only four of this class. We are asking for Ranger from the Atlantic in exchange. I hope this movement will provide an additional and important reinsurance for the safety of Australia.

2 December - Sea

- Next morning (2nd December) the Armidale survivors built a raft, using two French floats from the ship's minesweeping gear. It was hoped that Allied reconnaissance aircraft would find them.
- Castlemaine was the first back to Darwin at 9.39 a.m. on 2nd December, followed about three hours later by Kalgoorlie.
- When, by midday, no aircraft had been sighted, Armidale's commanding officer—Lt-Cdr Richards — decided to make for Darwin in the motor-boat for help. The First Lieutenant, Lt Whitting, the only other officer capable of navigating, was paralysed from the hips down, and incapable of taking the boat away. Those in the motor-boat totalled 22— Richards, Whitting, 16 ratings, and four N.E.I. soldiers.
- The boat set off in the afternoon of Wednesday, 2nd December. She had fuel for about 100 miles, but at the outset the motor would not function, and for 28 hours she was rowed. The motor was then started, and she motored for 20 hours.

2 December - Sea

- When the motor-boat set out 80 survivors were left on the rafts and wreckage—55 of the crew, three A.I.F., and 22 N.E.I. troops.
- Armidale's gunnery officer, Lt Palmer, was in charge.
- Among the wreckage was Armidale's whaler, which was badly holed, submerged, and suspended about four feet below the surface by two 44-gallon drums to which she was lashed.
- She gave slight additional support to about 25 men wearing lifebelts.



2 December – Buna E

- The air strafing and bombing of Buna Village, the New Strip, and the bridge between the strips took place between 0800 and 0815, and most of the bombs hit the target area. The last flight, however, forgot to drop flares (the prearranged signal that the air bombing was over), and the artillery and mortars as a result took up the bombardment only after an appreciable interval.
- The troops, who had pulled back temporarily to avoid being hit by friendly fire, jumped off at 0830 but made little progress. The Japanese had not been taken in by the feint toward Cape Endaiadere.
- When the bombing began, they took shelter in the bunkers. When it was over, they emerged from their shelters and laid down such heavy fire that the advance stalled almost immediately and soon came to a complete halt.
- The results of the day's fighting were not encouraging. The heat was intense, and there were as many casualties from heat prostration as from enemy fire. The troops on Colonel McCoy's front knocked out only a few bunkers before they were completely stopped by the enemy. On Colonel Carrier's front the troops initially registered small gains, only to be stopped in their turn by flanking machine gun fire from positions in the western part of the strongpoint between the strips.

2 December – Buna W

- At 0950 the artillery opened a heavy concentration of fire on the bunkers holding up the advance. The artillery was followed by Captain Hantlemann's massed 60-mm. and 81-mm. mortars.
- The artillery fire was accurate, and the mortar barrage intense and well placed.
- As soon as the American infantrymen attempted to move forward, however, they were stopped by heavy bands of fire across every axis of approach.
- Colonel Mott was again forced to call off the attack in order to give his battered troops at least one day's rest before they attacked again.



Papuan stretcher bearers carrying US Army wounded from the Buna front lines, pause to rest themselves and the soldiers in the shade of a coconut grove, *en route* to hospitals in the rear.

2 December – Buna

- Eichelberger and his party landed at Dobodura at 0958 1 December, and, at 1300, General Eichelberger assumed command of all U.S. troops in the Buna Area.
- He planned to go forward in the morning, "to gain a first hand knowledge of the situation."
- On 2 December, Eichelberger, accompanied by Harding, Waldron, and several others, left Dobodura for the Urbana front at 0930. They were able to go only a short distance by jeep; the rest of the way, they had to go on foot.

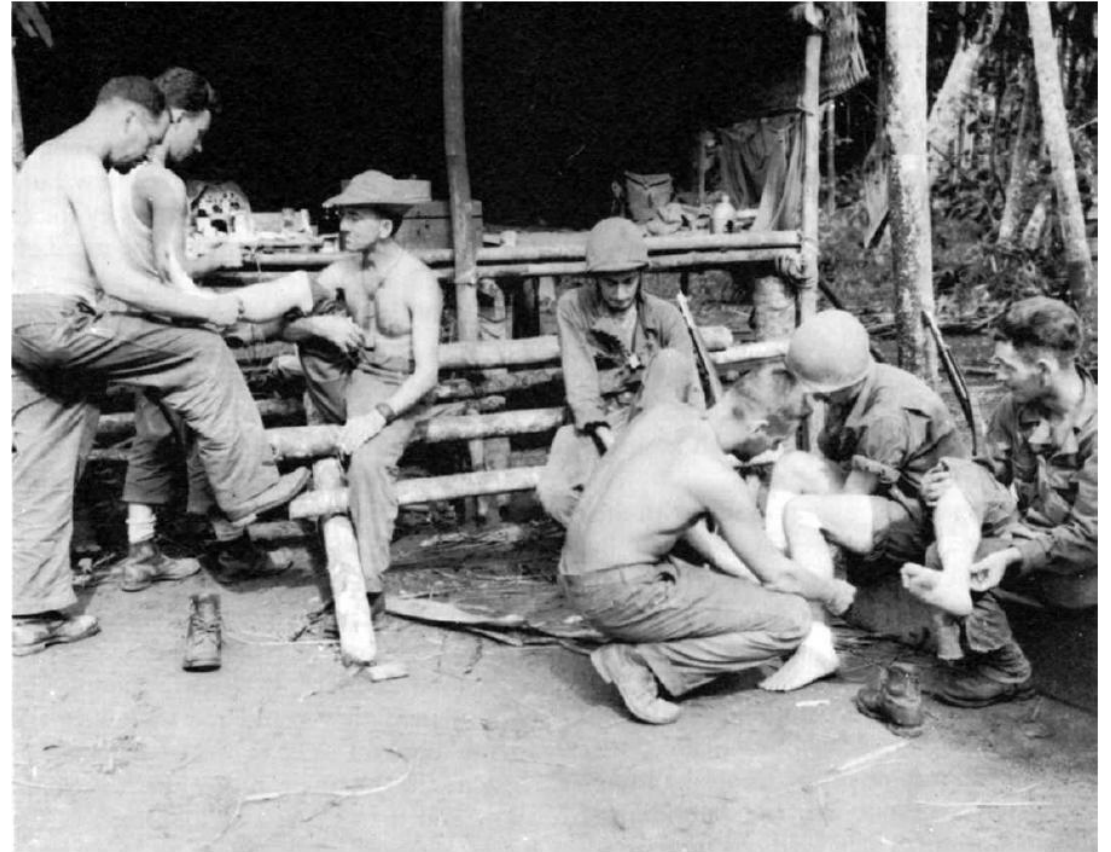


(Australian War Memorial)

Lieut-General Robert L. Eichelberger,
Commanding General I U.S. Corps.

2 December – Buna

- First, Eichelberger stopped at the Urbana force aid station. There he found a number of unwounded men who had been sent to the rear for a few days to recover from dengue fever or exhaustion.
- Some had cracked up in combat. Eichelberger questioned several of them closely as to why they were not at the front. The most common answer was that they had been sent to the rear for a rest, and the same answer was given by two or three other unwounded individuals closer to the front, who either were dozing at the roots of trees or were on their way to the aid station.



FIRST AID STATION, SIMEMI, *November 1942.*

2 December – Buna

- The three generals reached Mott's command post at 11.40. The artillery was still firing, and it was hoped that this time the bunkers which had held up the previous attack would be destroyed. When the news came that the attack had failed, General Eichelberger announced that he was going forward to see for himself how things were.
- General Harding insisted on going with him. The Japanese, after repulsing a whole series of attacks, were not firing, and the two generals were able to inspect the front line without drawing enemy fire.
- Eichelburger had been told that there had been a strong Japanese counterattack. On questioning Major Smith he discovered that there had been no counterattack, only a feeble attempt by a few Japanese to get back into the main strip southeast of the village.
- He noticed both light and heavy machine guns standing in the open neither dug in nor concealed.

2 December – Buna

- He was extremely indignant when he discovered that the front-line troops, though ravenously hungry, had not been permitted to cook some captured Japanese rice lest by doing so they draw enemy fire.
- He was greatly angered that, when he asked for volunteers to see what lay immediately ahead, the troops he spoke to did not respond.
- General Eichelberger interviewed three machine gunners on the front line. In response to his question, they told him that they knew that there was an enemy machine gun immediately ahead because it had opened fire only a few hours ago on the troops who tried to go that way. General Eichelberger asked if any of them had gone down the trail since that time to see if the machine gun was still there. The men said they had not. The general then offered to decorate the man who would go forward fifty yards to find out. Satisfied that the enemy weapon was still there, neither the gunners nor any of the other troops volunteered for the job.
- Instead, Captain Edwards, the general's aide, using a different route and crawling on his belly, made his way to the outskirts of Buna Village and returned without being fired on, an exploit that only deepened the general's irritation with the troops over their failure to show any disposition to fight.

2 December – Buna

- Colonels Martin and Rogers of the Corps staff reached Colonel Hale's headquarters on the Warren front at Hariko about noon.
- After a short visit there, they went forward with Colonel MacNab to the area off the eastern end of the New Strip. Before they came, the fighting had raged fiercely and every available man had been on the line. When they arrived, however, the action had died down to virtually nothing.
- There was no firing, and, as Martin recalls, there were times when the front was "as quiet as the inside of an empty church."
- Having beaten off a succession of American attacks, the Japanese were resting. They were not firing even on targets in plain view. Nor did the Americans seem anxious to stir up Japanese fire. They were content to let well alone and were using the respite to dig in, bring up supplies, and prepare for the next day's attack.
- The inspectors too wondered if there had really been any fighting at all that day.

2 December – Buna

- The inspection team was particularly struck by the poor physical condition of the troops.
- Colonel Rogers described their condition as "deplorable," and took special note of their dirty beards, ragged clothing, and worn-out shoes, and of the fact that they were not getting enough to eat.
- Colonel Martin noted that the morale of the troops was poor, that the men seemed to have a "sorry for ourselves" attitude, and that they appeared to be interested above all else in being relieved.
- Martin was struck that unsanitary conditions had been allowed to develop at the front, and recalls seeing a great deal of unnecessary litter, quantities of unsalvaged equipment, and piles of empty ration tins swarming with flies.



FIRST AID STATION, HARIKO, *November 1942.*

2 December – Buna

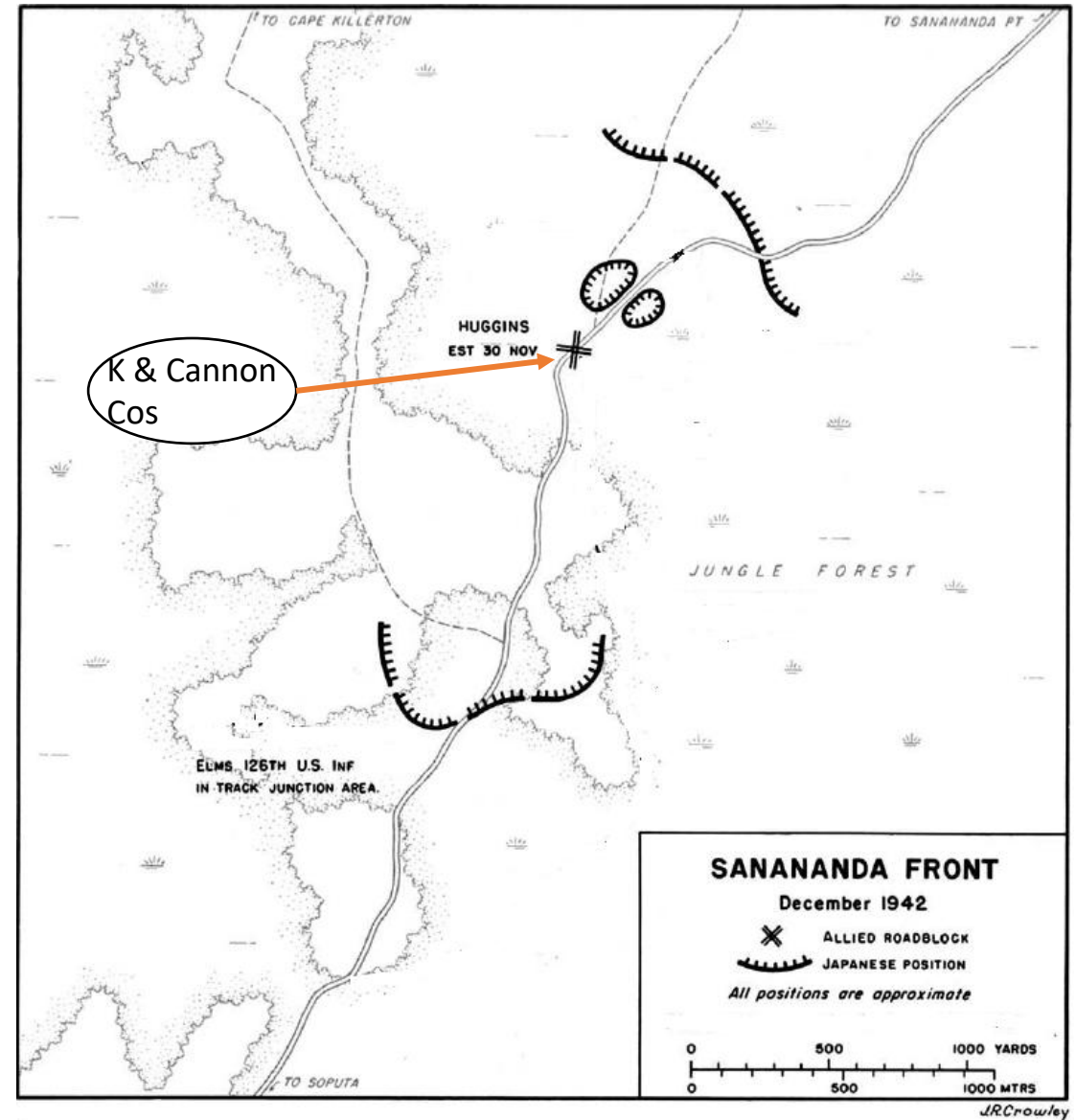
- That evening Eichelburger relieved Harding, replacing him with Brig Gen Waldron, the Division's artillery commander.
- Colonels Hale and Mott were replaced by Col Martin at Warren force and Col Grose at Urbana force. Col McCreary took over the artillery.
- All the new men were from the Corps staff.



GENERAL WALDRON (center, facing forward) discusses plans for the impending battle.
15 November 1942.

2 Dec – Sanananda

- Supplies came up from the rear on 1 December, and the following morning (2/12) Major Baetcke sent out the first ammunition and ration party, under command of Captain Huggins, S-3 of the 3d Battalion, 126th Infantry.
- It had to fight its way into the roadblock perimeter but reached it safely about 1100.
- Shortly afterward, the Japanese launched a heavy counterattack and succeeded in nibbling off fifty yards from the northeast end of the perimeter.
- Captain Shirley was killed at 1240 and Captain Huggins took over command of the roadblock.
- The Japanese attacked the roadblock repeatedly that day but were repulsed.



2 December – New Guinea, Sanananda

- The next morning Zeef began moving from his night perimeter on a north easterly course to recross the track as ordered, carrying his wounded with him. Their movement was no easy task.
- The enemy kept up a steady fire, and it was here that Pvt. Hymie Epstein, one of Zeeff's last medical aid men, was killed.
- Epstein had distinguished himself on 22 November and twice on 1 December by crawling to the aid of a wounded man in an area swept by enemy fire. Epstein's luck did not hold. This morning just before daybreak, Pvt. Russin on the left flank was hit by a sniper. Epstein went to him, . . . but was shot and killed.

2 December – New Guinea, Sanananda

- Toward evening, while the troops were digging in for the night at a new perimeter a few yards east of the track and about 500 south of the roadblock, Sergeant McGee, whom Zeeff had sent out to reconnoiter the area immediately to the northward, came back with discouraging news. Strong and well-manned enemy positions, beyond the power of the Zeeff force to breach, lay a couple of hundred yards ahead.
- Zeeff had scarcely had time to digest the news when the Japanese were upon him again. After a wild spate of firing, the attack was finally beaten off at a cost to Zeeff of five killed and six seriously wounded.

2 December – New Guinea, Sanananda

- By this time Colonel Tomlinson was satisfied that Zeeff could neither maintain himself where he was nor break through to the roadblock. His perimeter was directly in the line of Allied fire, and there was no alternative but to get him out of there as quickly as possible before he was hit by friendly fire or cut to pieces by the enemy.
- The wire had been repaired, and at 2000 that night Tomlinson ordered Zeeff to leave the area immediately, warning him that it was to be mortared the next day. Zeeff was to bring back his sick and wounded but was not to bother burying the dead.
- The job of making litters for the six newly wounded began at once and went on through the night. Saplings were cut and stretchers made. By 0330 the stretchers were loaded and the march began. Walking in single column, and guiding themselves in the dark with telephone wire, the troops moved south for about 900 yards and then turned east toward the familiar little stream that flowed past the banana plantation.

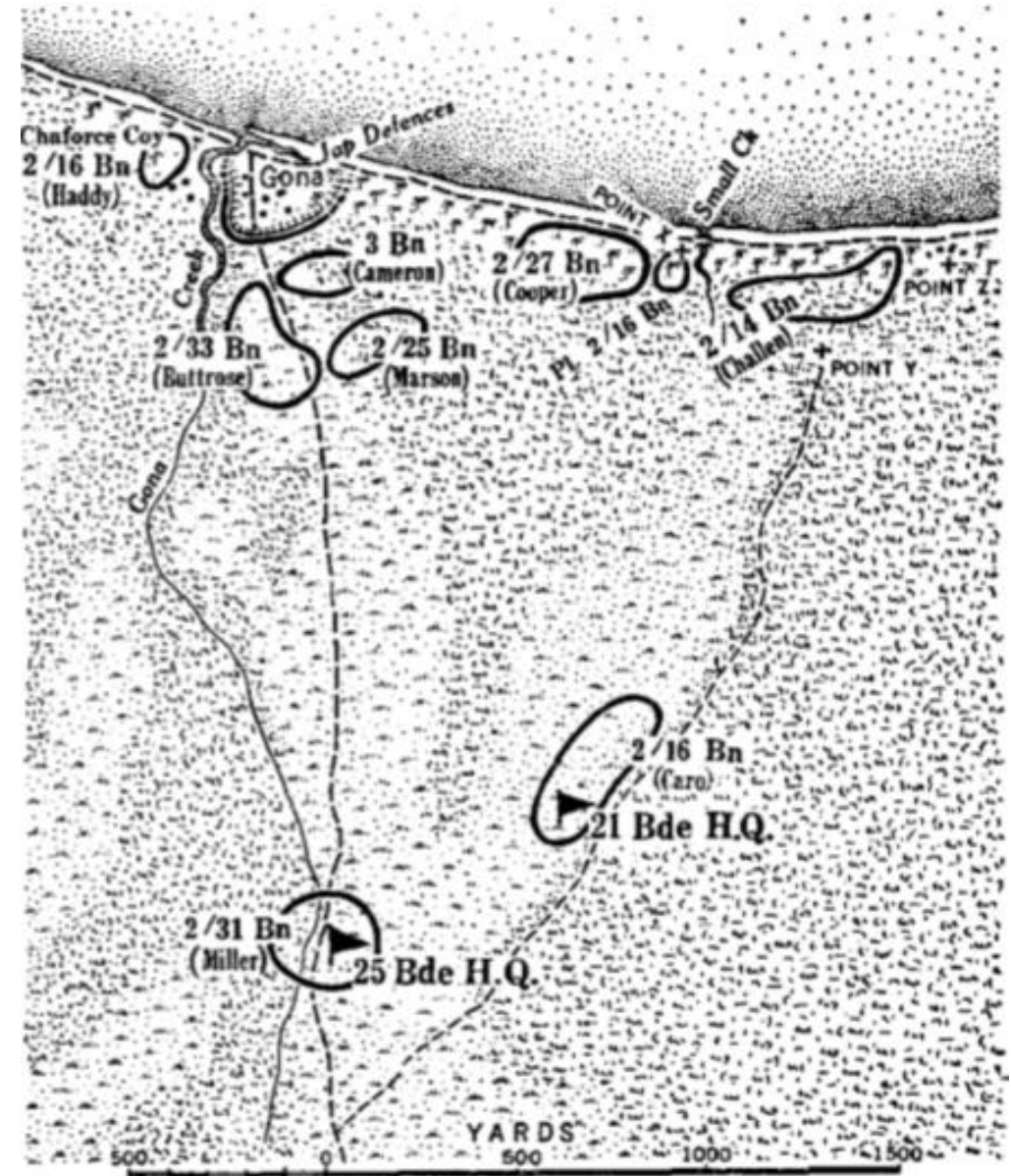
2 December – Gona

- About 0200 on the 2nd the Japanese tried to land three barges about 600 yards east of Gona, but patrols of the 2/27 Battalion drove them off.
- Dougherty (photo centre) sent Challen along the coastal track to Sanananda next morning with instructions to maintain a firm base and confine his operations to fighting patrols.
- But scrub and mangrove swamp blocked Challen's main party beyond Basabua and he was forced to bivouac at Basabua on the night of the 2nd.



2 December – Gona

- At Gona on the same day willing but tired men staged yet another attack as they tried to maintain pressure on their enemies.
- Its minor nature was indicative of the fact that they had temporarily exhausted their capacity for full-scale assaults.
- Lt Hicks and twenty men of the 2/16th Battalion (a platoon of the 2/27th standing by to consolidate), supported by fire from the 3rd and 2/33rd Battalions, tried themselves against the most easterly of the Japanese positions which Major Robinson had tested the previous day.
- They came directly in from the east and pinched off the flanking defences but Hicks himself was mortally wounded and nine more men were shot.



2 December – Gona

- By midday on the 2nd Vasey was conferring with three brigadiers: Dougherty, Eather (whose men for the past few days had been able to do little more than merely hold their positions south of the village), and Porter (whose 30th Brigade was then arriving).
- Vasey had planned to have Porter's brigade relieve Eather's but now said that Eather must continue to contain Gona. The remnants of the 2/16th and 2/27th, forming a composite battalion under Lt-Col Caro, would join Eather.
- The first of Porter's battalions, the 39th, then approaching Gona after flying in from Moresby, would go to Dougherty's command and follow the 2/14th to Sanananda.
- The 39th was still led by Lt Col Honner, it was rested and reinforced; its reinforcements included about 100 of the 53rd Battalion who had joined it just before the amalgamation of the 53rd and 55th Battalions to form the 55th/53rd.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

014308

GENERAL VASEY, GENERAL HERRING AND BRIGADIER
WOOTTEN at Sanananda

2 December - Air

- Night attacks were made on the 4 destroyers off Buna and Gona by the light of flares at 0245/2. As a result of this strike, the destroyers, originally bound for Gona with reinforcements, land the troops near mouth of the Kumusi R 12 mi to the N, but no hits were scored on the ships.
- The Hudsons at Darwin were busy searching for Armidale or survivors.
- Seven attacks totalling 38 sorties (12 Bostons, 5 Beaufighters, 4 Hudsons, 3 Wirraways and 12 fighters) made against A/F and positions in Buna area and between Watutu Pt and Cape Killerton. One medium bomber was lost.
- Six Australian Beaufighters strafed 37 - 45 aircraft at Penefoi airfield (Koepang). At least eight enemy planes were damaged.

2 December - Air

- The work horse at Port Moresby since April had been the 8th Service Group USAAF.
- The 27th Air Depot Group arrived in Port Moresby from Brisbane early in December 1942. This gave some hope of relief for the overburdened 8th.
- Relief was slow, however, because of the difficulties experienced by new units in adjusting to the primitive conditions of an advanced tropical base.
- Upon disembarking from the ships at Port Moresby, the men of one of the 27th's units were carried by truck for seven miles into a desolate area where "every inch of ground was covered by mosquito laden tough fibrous waste *[sic]* high Kunai grass."
- At first the 900 or more men had only their barracks bags and field packs. Other supplies and equipment had to be brought from the ships and uncrated before such essentials as field kitchens could be set up. The only water immediately available was that contained in canteens and Lyster bags.
- The table of basic allowances had not been designed to meet such a situation. A depot repair squadron, for example, was allotted one carpenter's kit, and with that its personnel were expected to clear the area and build whatever buildings were necessary.

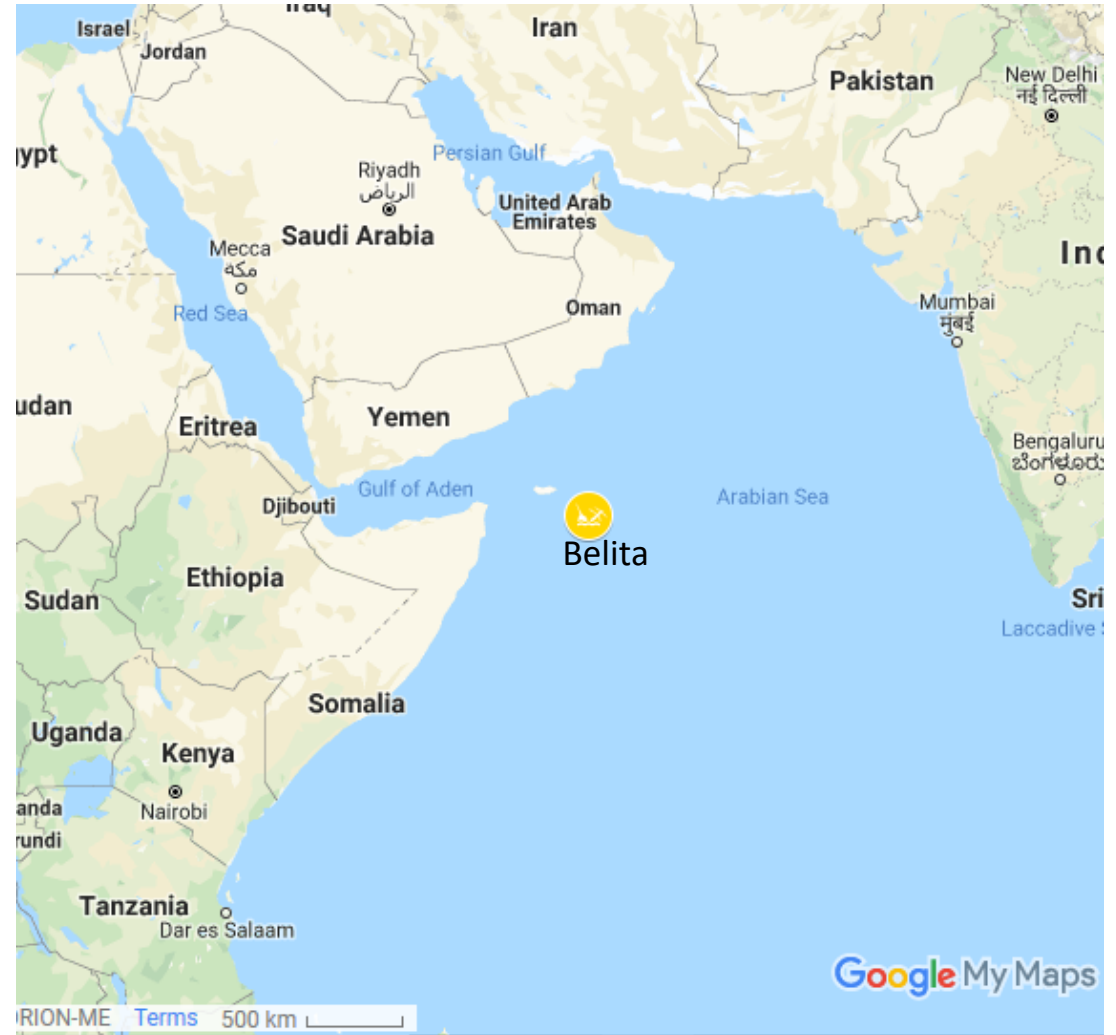
3 December - Government

- On the following day (3rd December) a message was received from Roosevelt extending congratulations on the achievements of the 9th Division in the Middle East and agreeing to its return "in view of the strenuous period of combat service which it had endured and its long absence from home"
- Roosevelt also informed Curtin of the plans for sending the 25th United States Division from Hawaii to Australia during November and December and,
- with this and the 9th Division, he felt that Curtin could be reassured as to the adequacy of the troops available to drive the Japanese away from Australia to such a distance as to make an invasion impossible.



3 December - Sea

- The Tokyo Express destroyers raced down The Slot again on 3 December. The Cactus Air Force was unable to score any hits but there was no bombardment.
- Kuru reached Darwin at 5.26 p.m. on 3rd December.
- On Thursday (3 December) the Armidale survivors managed to haul one end of the waterlogged whaler on to the rafts, to bale out, and to repair her sufficiently to keep her afloat with continuous baling.
- The Norwegian tanker Belita was torpedoed, shelled and sunk in the Indian Ocean (11°29'N 55°00'E) by a submarine on 3 December. All 30 crew survived.



3 December - Buna

- Eichelberger found the Allied units "scrambled like eggs." He at once ordered them regrouped and reorganized.
- The opening of additional airfields at Dobodura and Popondetta, the completion of the Dobodura-Simemi jeep track and other tracks, the arrival of a new flotilla of luggers to replace those which had been destroyed in November began to improve the supply situation, in early December.
- The men ate their first full meal in some time on 3 December, and preparations began for a scheduled attack the next day.
- Col. Grose came in by air on the morning of 3rd and made a hurried inspection of the Urbana front that afternoon.



NATIVES WITH SUPPLIES AND AMMUNITION for the front lines taking a brief rest along a corduroy road.

3 December – Buna E

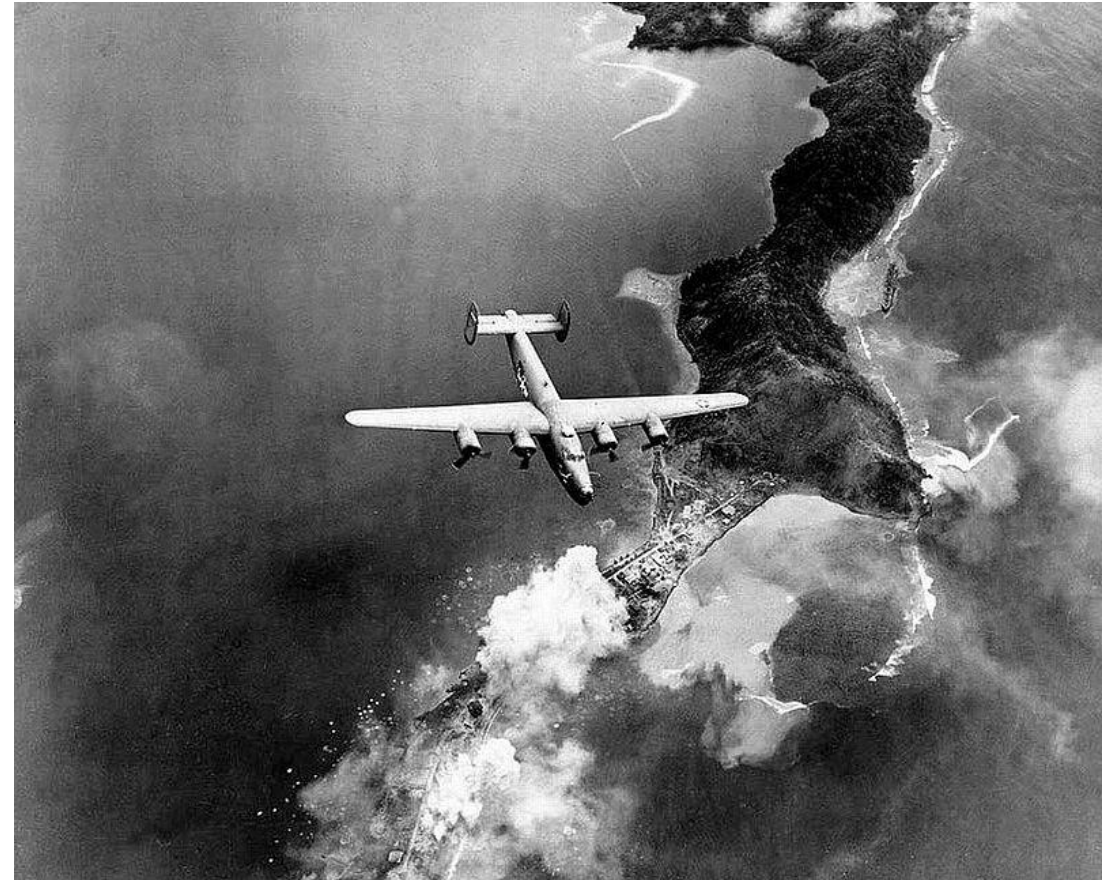
- Colonel Martin told his officers that the men "would be required to do all they could to better their conditions, their personal appearance, and their equipment." Sanitation would be improved. More attention would be paid to the care of equipment, and officers would cease commiserating with the troops and abetting them in the "feeling sorry for ourselves attitude" that he had noticed during his inspection the day before. The command was to be informed that there would be no relief until "after Buna was taken."
- Late on the evening of 3 December a section of five Bren gun carriers arrived by boat from Porlock Harbor. The rest of the cargo included forty tons of food and ammunition. The carriers were quickly unloaded and given to Colonel Martin for use on the 5th in the attack on the Japanese positions in the Duropa Plantation.

3 December – Gona, Sanananda

- The new plan was operating on the 3rd.
- Wary fire from both sides marked the day in the main area.
- Eastwards Challen was finding no enemy but the country was impenetrable. The coastal track shown on the map had faded into scrub and swamp and it was clear that no line of approach could be established through this country, and Dougherty reported this to Vasey.
- Vasey then had no choice but to revise his orders.
- In the early evening he instructed Dougherty to resume command of his own three battalions and to include the 39th with them; to relieve Eather and the entire 25th Brigade (including the 3rd Battalion); and thus become responsible for the whole Gona area.
- The 49th Battalion, which had already begun to march in to Eather's command, was to return to Soputa and revert to command of the 30th Brigade which (less the 39th) would then resume action on the main track to Sanananda.
- At Sanananda the Japanese attacked the Roadblock repeatedly but were repulsed.

3 December – Air

- 15 A-20s, 12 P-400s, 5 B-25s, 12 P40s and 4 Hudsons bomb and strafe Sanananda Pt and Buna areas in four attacks and attack small torpedo boat in Dyke Acland Bay.
- A lone B-17 attacks sub 75 mi SE of Rabaul.
- During 3/4 Dec, B-17's bomb A/Fs at Lae and Salamaua.
- Enemy transports with fighter escort dropped supplies by parachute in the Buna area.
- Aircraft reported a periscope at the entrance to Port Moresby Harbour at 1000/3 and there were indications of an unidentified vessels in the vicinity at 20.00 and 21.00.
- Thirteen enemy fighters were reported at Dilli airfield.



Heavy Bomber (in this case a B24 Liberator) over Salamaua.

3 December – War Dept report to White House

1. In his operations summary for the 24-hour period ending 1500 GCT, December 1, General MacArthur reports that the 7th Australian Division had isolated the enemy at Gona into a small area on the beach. Allied reinforcements have been transported to the forward areas by air. The US 32nd Division was reorganizing, and had advanced slightly at Buna.

The Optical House of
CHAS. SANKEY FRASER
Optician,
246 QUEEN STREET
Nearby Opp. Commonwealth Bank
and at Toowoomba.
HOURS: 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. (Sun. 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.)



No. 2856

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED FOR THE PROPRIETOR BY THE QUEENSLAND PRESS, LTD., AT THE "COURIER-MAIL" PRESS, 111, QUEEN STREET, BRISBANE.

The Courier-Mail

97,198 DAILY NET CIRCULATION

LATE CITY

BRISBANE, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1942.

6 PAGES—2d

Crystals fitted in all makes of
American and Swiss
Watches
WALLACE BISHOP & SON
The Centre is doing very little business

AXIS LOSES 160,000 TO RED ARMY

Important Russian Gains on 2 Fronts

IN their offensives in the last fortnight the Russians have killed or captured more than 160,000 German and other Axis troops and have taken large quantities of booty.

Red Army advances on the central front and round Stalingrad have continued, reports the latest Moscow communiqué.

Moscow radio says that Russian troops south-west of Rjev on the central front have smashed an important enemy centre of resistance after bitter close-quarters fighting.

Capture of an important height near Stalingrad is reported by the Russians. This is one of two dominating hills which had blocked Russian progress north-west of the city.

Latest reports suggest that the Germans south-west and north-west of Stalingrad are being pushed back from a line of hills along which they aimed to halt the Russian drive.

Correspondents say that the latest Moscow communiqué reports that 250,000 Germans are bottled at Stalingrad and surrounded with starvation. They are getting food supplies by air, but Russian planes have had considerable success shooting down German transport planes.

Correspondents say that the latest Moscow communiqué reports that 250,000 Germans are bottled at Stalingrad and surrounded with starvation. They are getting food supplies by air, but Russian planes have had considerable success shooting down German transport planes.

Violent Rjev Battles

THE Russian offensive west of Rjev is gaining impetus, with fresh breaches in the enemy lines. South of Rjev the Russians have overrun another village on the Rjev-Moscow railway.

Correspondents say that the latest Moscow communiqué reports that 250,000 Germans are bottled at Stalingrad and surrounded with starvation. They are getting food supplies by air, but Russian planes have had considerable success shooting down German transport planes.

"U-Boat Killer" For Australia

LONDON, Dec. 3 (Special)—A new type of U-boat killer, the "Libel" missile, has been developed by the Royal Australian Navy. It is a small, fast, and powerful missile which can be launched from a ship or a submarine. It is designed to destroy U-boats by hitting their conning towers or engine rooms.

SIX AXIS SHIPS SUNK

LONDON, Dec. 3.—British Royal Naval forces have sunk six enemy destroyers and four merchantmen in a series of battles in the Atlantic. The battles took place in the North Atlantic, south of Iceland. The British forces were commanded by Admiral Sir John Sackville-West.

Unconquerable Defence Of What's Left Of Stalingrad



Upper Picture: Only the shells of buildings remain in this street in Stalingrad, which is being valiantly defended by the Russians through a long and bitter siege. Below: With guns at the ready, Russian troops await an attack in the outskirts of Stalingrad.—By radio from Moscow to New York and air mail to Brisbane.

GERMAN COUNTER-ATTACK STRONGEST YET MET IN TUNISIA

By radio from Tunis to New York and air mail to Brisbane.

JAPS LOSE 23 PLANES TRYING TO AID BUNA

JAPANESE attempts to reinforce their hard-pressed garrison in the Buna area from the sea cost them 23 planes in one of the most spectacular air-sea battles of the whole campaign.

The battle extended over the best part of 12 hours, between mid-afternoon on Tuesday and day-light on Wednesday morning.

The Japanese naval forces seeking to land troops and supplies were driven back into the waters without their gains. A formation of flying torpedoes was scattered, their sea. Tuesday afternoon, according to reports, ended by the destruction of 23 planes.

In the dog-fights which ensued, in which between 10 and 20 Japanese planes were shot down, the Allies won the day. The Japanese planes were shot down by the Allies' fighters and bombers.

One direct hit, however, was reported to have occurred in the water off the beach. It is believed that the Japanese planes were shot down by the Allies' fighters and bombers.

Seven more planes, it is reported, were shot down by the Allies' fighters and bombers. It is believed that the Japanese planes were shot down by the Allies' fighters and bombers.

At least three of these were hit and one was definitely destroyed. It is believed that the Japanese planes were shot down by the Allies' fighters and bombers.

As their planes were shot down, the Japanese planes were shot down by the Allies' fighters and bombers. It is believed that the Japanese planes were shot down by the Allies' fighters and bombers.

It is believed that the Japanese planes were shot down by the Allies' fighters and bombers. It is believed that the Japanese planes were shot down by the Allies' fighters and bombers.

It is believed that the Japanese planes were shot down by the Allies' fighters and bombers. It is believed that the Japanese planes were shot down by the Allies' fighters and bombers.

It is believed that the Japanese planes were shot down by the Allies' fighters and bombers. It is believed that the Japanese planes were shot down by the Allies' fighters and bombers.

It is believed that the Japanese planes were shot down by the Allies' fighters and bombers. It is believed that the Japanese planes were shot down by the Allies' fighters and bombers.

It is believed that the Japanese planes were shot down by the Allies' fighters and bombers. It is believed that the Japanese planes were shot down by the Allies' fighters and bombers.



Wirraways Help To Strafe Japs

THREE Australian planes, two Wirraways and one observation plane, fought over the Buna area in New Guinea and strafed enemy tanks, barges, and machine-gun nests in the Buna area.

The strafed enemy positions on the Buna beach and another number of barges off Buna beach. The three strafed machine-gun positions on the Buna beach.

State House To Meet On Reform Bill

The Queensland Parliament will hold a special meeting early in January to deal with the Queensland Reform Bill.

The bill was introduced in the Queensland Parliament on December 3. It is a comprehensive bill which deals with a wide range of reforms.

The bill was introduced in the Queensland Parliament on December 3. It is a comprehensive bill which deals with a wide range of reforms.

The bill was introduced in the Queensland Parliament on December 3. It is a comprehensive bill which deals with a wide range of reforms.

The bill was introduced in the Queensland Parliament on December 3. It is a comprehensive bill which deals with a wide range of reforms.

The bill was introduced in the Queensland Parliament on December 3. It is a comprehensive bill which deals with a wide range of reforms.

The bill was introduced in the Queensland Parliament on December 3. It is a comprehensive bill which deals with a wide range of reforms.

The bill was introduced in the Queensland Parliament on December 3. It is a comprehensive bill which deals with a wide range of reforms.

Vital Corner
SARDINIA

Darlan Move

The Communiqué

4 December - Government

- The question of the 9th Division's equipment was referred to Blamey then in New Guinea.
- In a letter to Curtin on 4 December Blamey thought that heavy equipment could be left behind if shipping must be saved and observed that jungle warfare called for a very low scale of transport and reduced strength of field artillery.
- He took the opportunity, however, to draw attention to more serious questions. His experience of warfare in the tropics, he wrote, had made it clear to him that Australia could not maintain in the field even the reduced number of divisions of the reorganised Australian Military Forces and that a further decrease by two infantry brigades would be necessary. The wastage of men in tropical warfare in undeveloped areas was immense. At least a third of the force at Milne Bay was already infected with malaria and, besides malaria, the battle wastage was also considerable.

4 Dec - Government

- Blamey was disappointed too at progress:
- “After the magnificent advance through the most difficult area, the Owen Stanley Range, it is a very sorry story. It has revealed the fact that the American troops cannot be classified as attack troops. They are definitely not equal to the Australian militia, and from the moment they met opposition sat down and have hardly gone forward a yard.”



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

013518

Blamey conferring with Brig Gen McNider

4 December - Government

- The 6th and 7th A.I.F. Divisions needed a prolonged rest out of action as they had a large number of reinforcements to absorb and a large number of sick to return.
- His faith in the militia was growing but his faith in the Americans had "sunk to zero".
- "If the 9th Division is not returned, I fear very greatly that we will have to sit down for a very long time in this area in an endeavour to defend it, mainly by keeping the Jap flotillas away by air action."



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

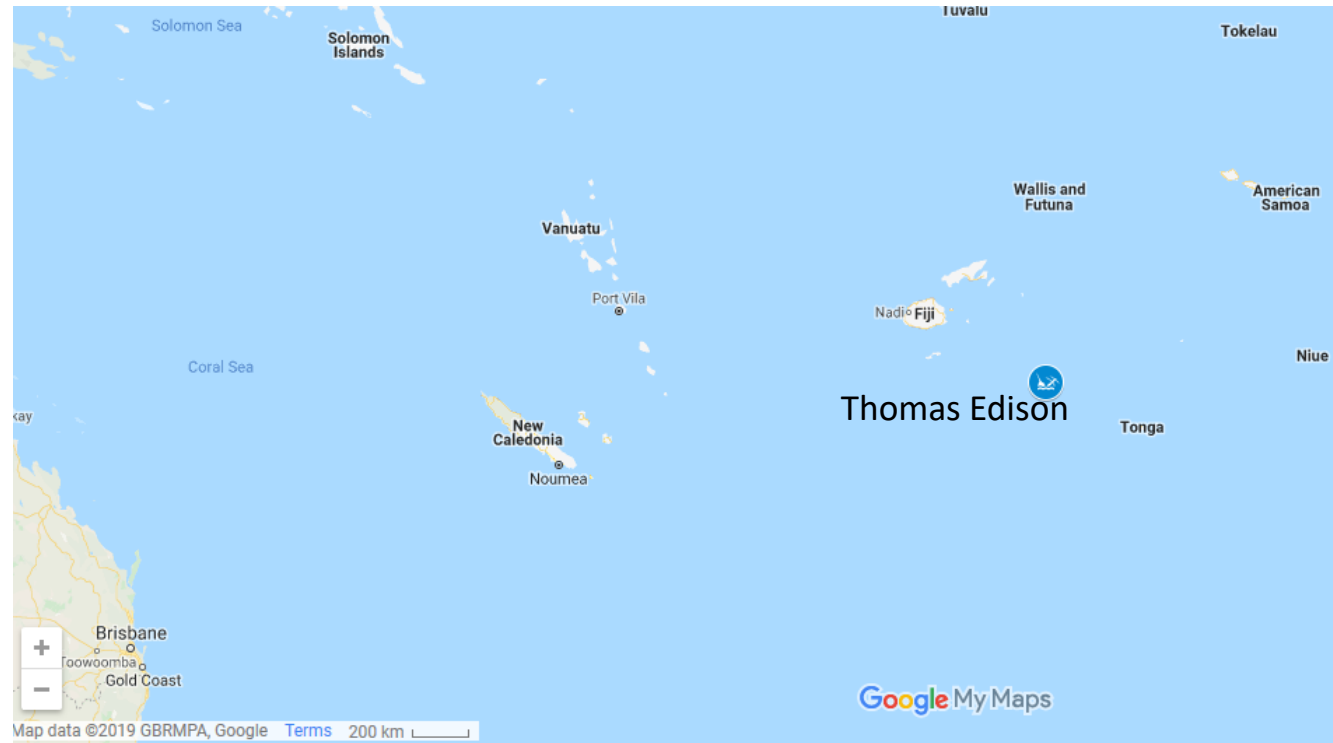
027407

4 December - Politics

- The problem (the riots in Brisbane) was discussed at length in the Advanced L.H.Q. Intelligence Summary of 4th December, when it was decided that factors contributing to the disturbances were
 - (a) drunkenness,
 - (b) the higher rates of pay and the smarter uniforms of the American Army,
 - (c) discrimination in favour of Americans in shops and hotels and by taxi drivers,
 - (d) the spectacle of American troops with Australian girls, particularly wives of absent soldiers, and the American custom of caressing girls in public,
 - (e) the deliberate stirring up of trouble by certain civilians,
 - (f) boasting by some American troops, and their tendency to draw guns or knives in a quarrel,
 - (g) the taunting of Australian militiamen by Americans.
- The summary added that the Americans, used to civil and military police who did not hesitate to display firearms and batons and use them in an emergency, considered the methods of the Australian civil and military police to be namby-pamby.
- Copies of it (the report) were given to MacArthur's headquarters and to Mr Curtin.

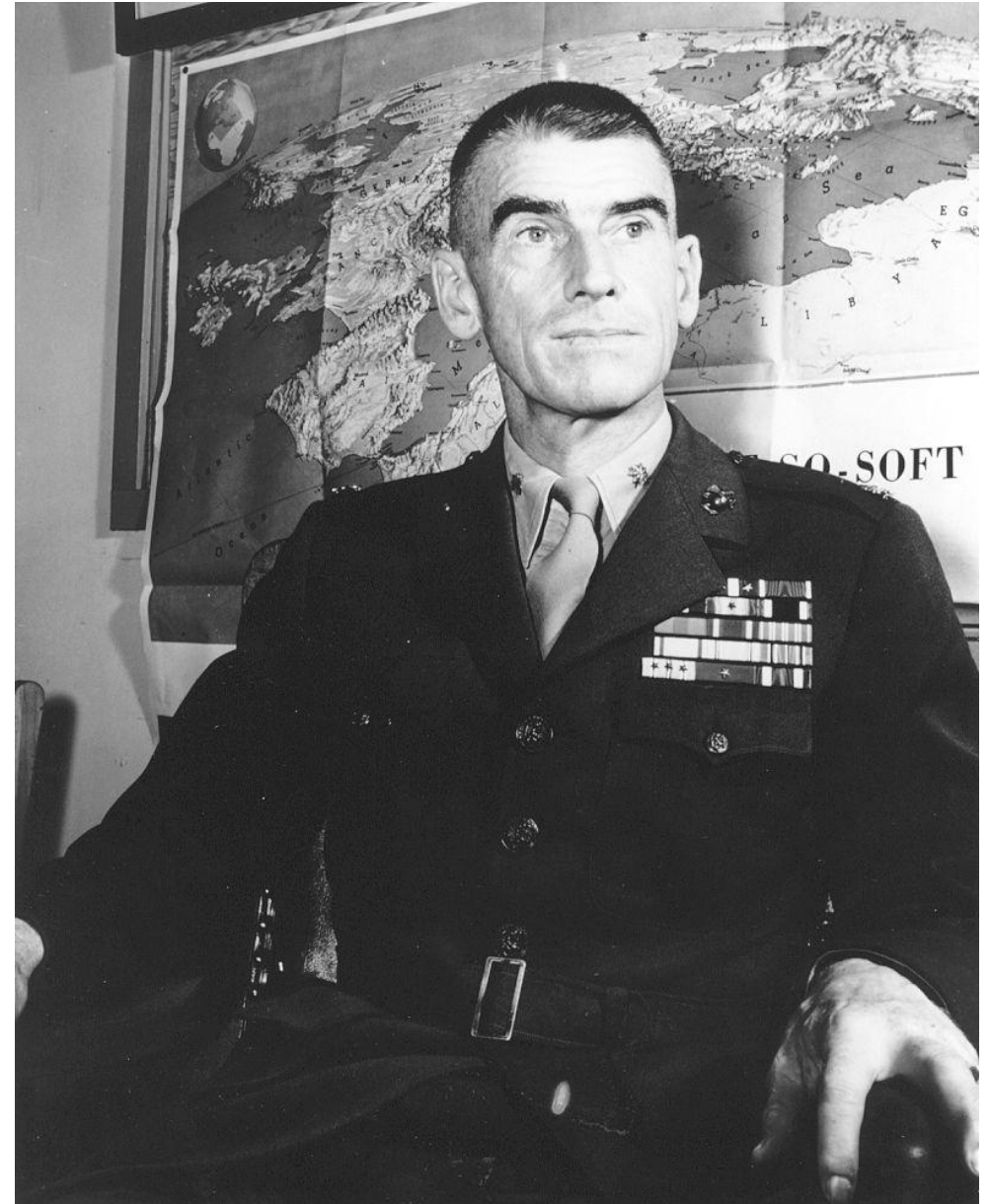
4 December - Sea

- The American Liberty ship Thomas A Edison ran aground on Vuata Vatoa, Fiji Islands on 4 December.
- The Darwin Hudsons continued the search for Armidale or survivors.



4 Dec - Guadalcanal

- Carlson's 2nd Raider Battalion had pursued the Japanese force that had retreated inland from Koli point on 6th November.
- Supported by native bearers they remained in the jungle and ridges until 4 December.
- His patrol covered 150 miles, fought more than a dozen actions and killed nearly 500 enemy soldiers. The Raiders lost 16 killed and 18 wounded.
- During the debrief on the patrol Major John Mather, an Australian officer who accompanied the Raiders, frequently interjected the comment: "He always went by the book. I never saw anything quite like that before"



4 December – Buna E

- Colonel Martin gave Lt. Fergusson, who commanded the carriers, a briefing on the terrain. He stressed the likelihood that his carriers might be "bellied" by stumps and other obstacles in the plantation area.
- The next day (4th) Fergusson made a daylight reconnaissance of the area.
- Though under no illusions about the risk of the attack, Fergusson reported that he believed his carriers could negotiate the ground.
- To provide insurance against unforeseen contingencies he requested additional automatic weapons for his men and was promptly given all the weapons he asked for.
- Reorganization and regrouping were completed on 4 December.



4 December – Buna W

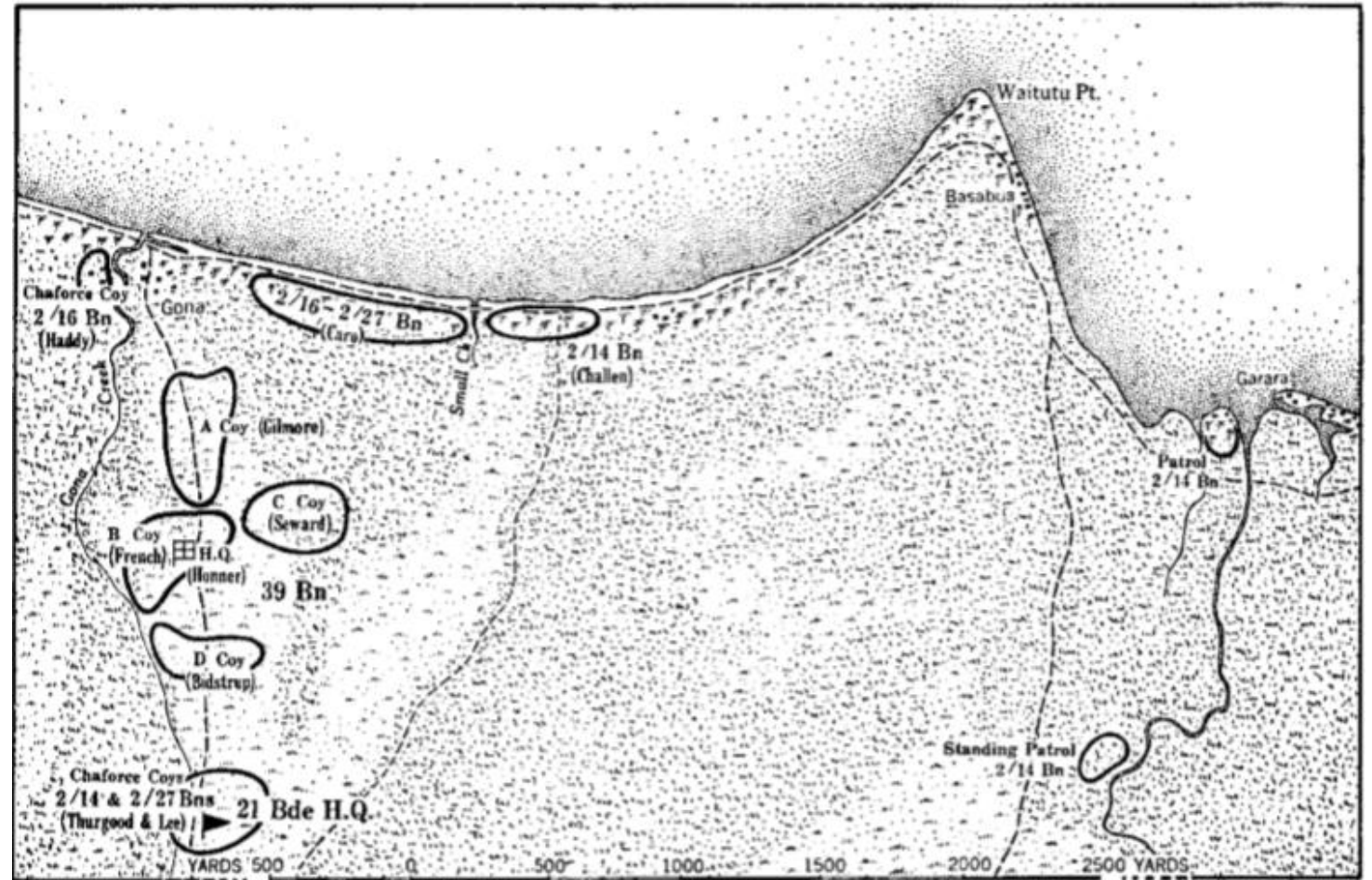
- Next day when he (Col Grose) took command, he found Colonel McCreary supervising a reorganization of the positions, and he asked General Eichelberger to postpone the attack for a day.
- General Eichelberger granted the request, though with considerable reluctance, and the attack there and on the Warren front was set for 5 December



General Eichelburger and members of his staff

4 December - Gona

- Vasey's new plans came into operation. By 4.30 p.m. the 21st Brigade had completed the relief of the 25th Brigade.
- That night the Australians patrolled around Gona. In this shadowy fighting a number of Japanese were killed and the Australians gained useful information.
- At the Sanananda roadblock the garrison had been heavily engaged. The Japanese had thrust from several directions but been repulsed.



Dispositions, 6 p.m. 4th December

4 December - Air

- Nine light bombers (A20s and Beaufighters) bombed and machine gunned enemy installations in the Sanananda area. Fires were started and three barges destroyed. One of our light bombers failed to return.
- Nine heavy bombers attacked the airfields at Salamaua and Lae night of 3-4/12. Bombs were dropped in the target area, but results were unobserved. One B17 missing.
- Three Australian medium bombers carried out an offensive sweep over the north coast of Timor. An enemy schooner was bombed in Wetar passage with unobserved results. A fighter intercepted off Laga and one bomber was badly damaged.
- Hudsons continued the search for Armidale.
- Five patrol bombers attacked the airfield at Kavieng night of 3-4/12. Enemy planes parked on the runway were set on fire.
- A concentration of 300 Japanese motor vehicles at Pyaubwe (75 miles south of Mandalay) was attacked by six B24s with good results.

4 December – War Dept report to White House

In his operations summary for December 2, General MacArthur reports that the Australian 7th Division, against light opposition, moved one battalion some five miles eastward along the coast from Gona. US forces, attacking from the south and east, made some progress against enemy positions at Buna.