A map of the Pacific region showing military campaigns in 1943. Red starburst icons indicate major battles, with one at Midway in the North Pacific and another in the Coral Sea. Yellow pushpin icons with a cross mark are scattered across Southeast Asia, the Philippines, and the Pacific Islands. Red pushpin icons with a cross mark are located in the Western Pacific and around Australia. The map includes labels for major landmasses like China, Japan, and Australia, as well as various seas and oceans. Text is overlaid on the map.

War in the Pacific

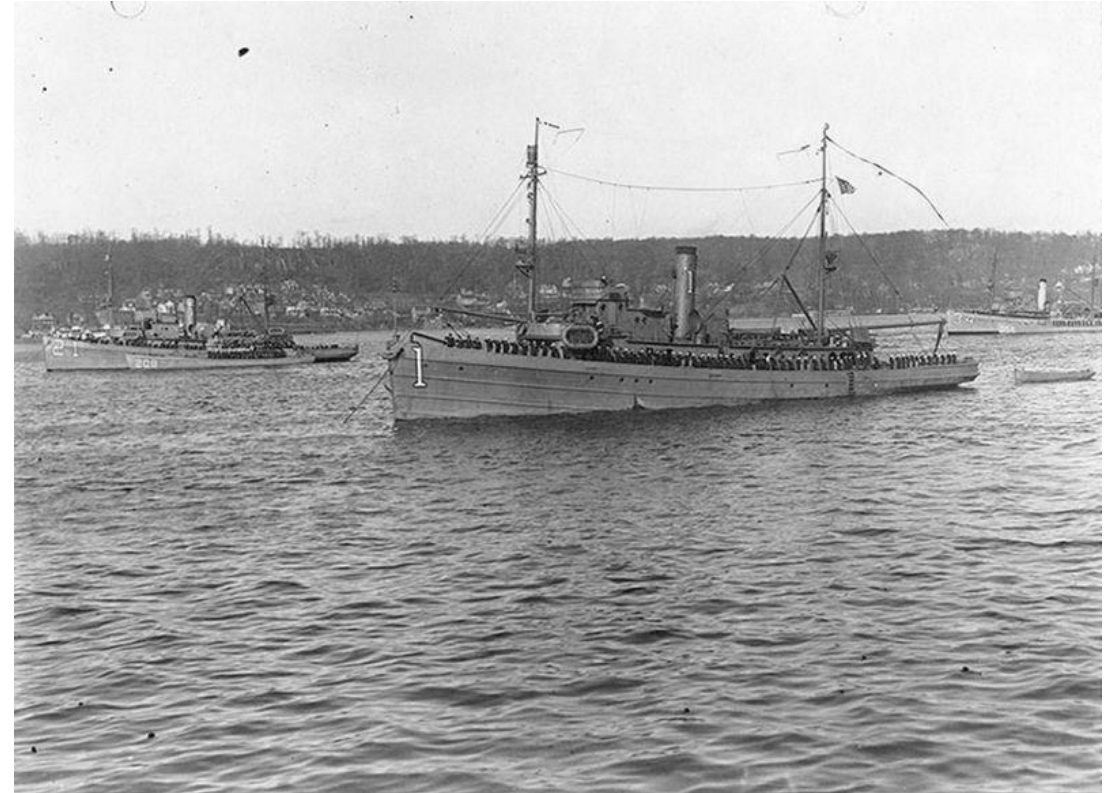
Defending Australia

Campaigns in New Guinea and the Solomons 1943

1 January 1943

1-2 January – Sea

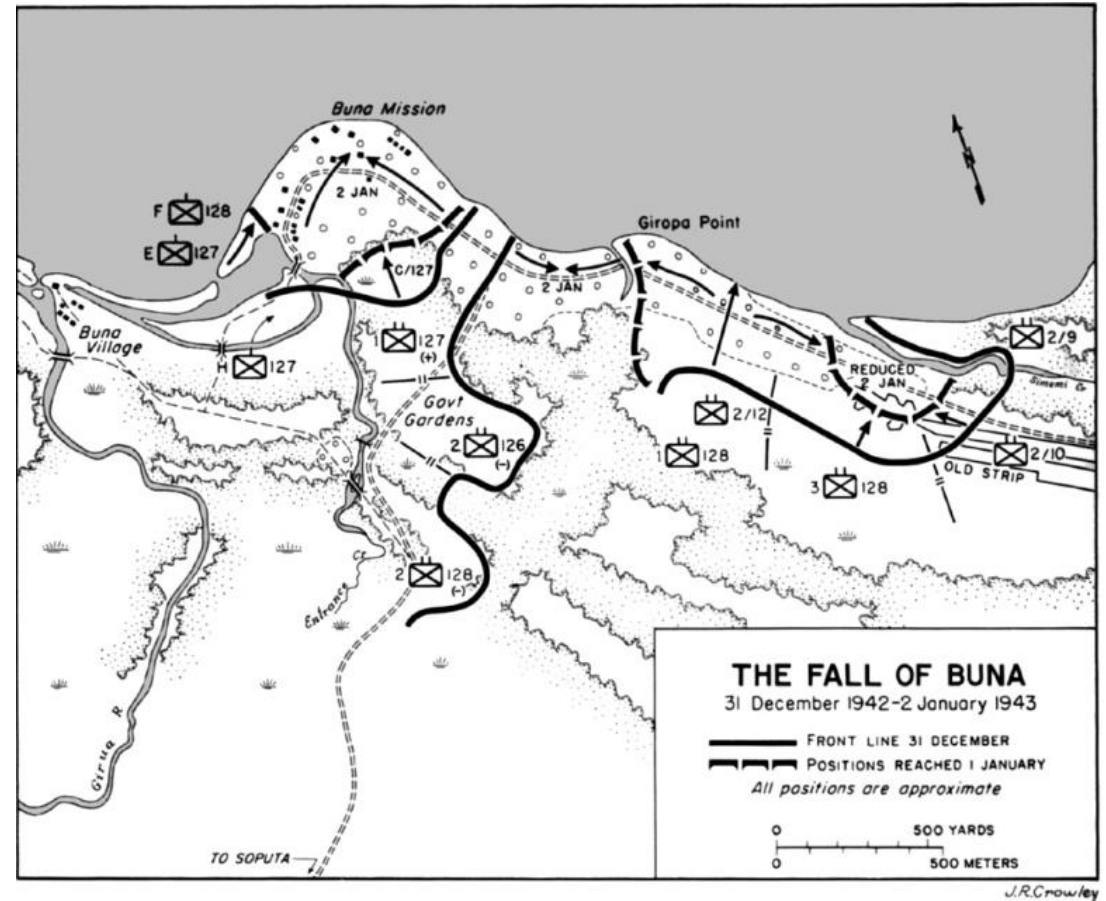
- 1 January The cargo ship Renzan Maru was torpedoed and sunk in the Pacific Ocean off Honshū by USS Porpoise.
- The aircraft carrier HMS Victorious sailed from the Clyde for the United States and the Pacific on 20th December and reached Norfolk, Virginia, U.S.A., on 1st January 1943.
- The Liberty ship Thomas A Edison and the fleet tug USS Grebe, a former Lapwing-class minesweeper, both aground on Vuata Vatoa, Fiji Islands were destroyed in a hurricane on 1–2 January 1943.
- The tug had become grounded while attempting to salvage the Edison on 6 December.



USS *Lapwing* (AM-1) anchored in the Hudson River, off New York City.

1 January – Buna E

- After a heavy artillery and mortar preparation, the troops on the right and left moved out for the attack at 0800, New Year's Day.
- On the left, Companies A and D, 2/12 Battalion, and the six tanks cut northeast through the plantation toward the coast. The 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, followed them.
- Facing north, Companies I, K, and L, 128th Infantry, moved on the dispersal bays off the northwest end from below (south), and the 2/10 Battalion, facing west, remained in position on the Old Strip.

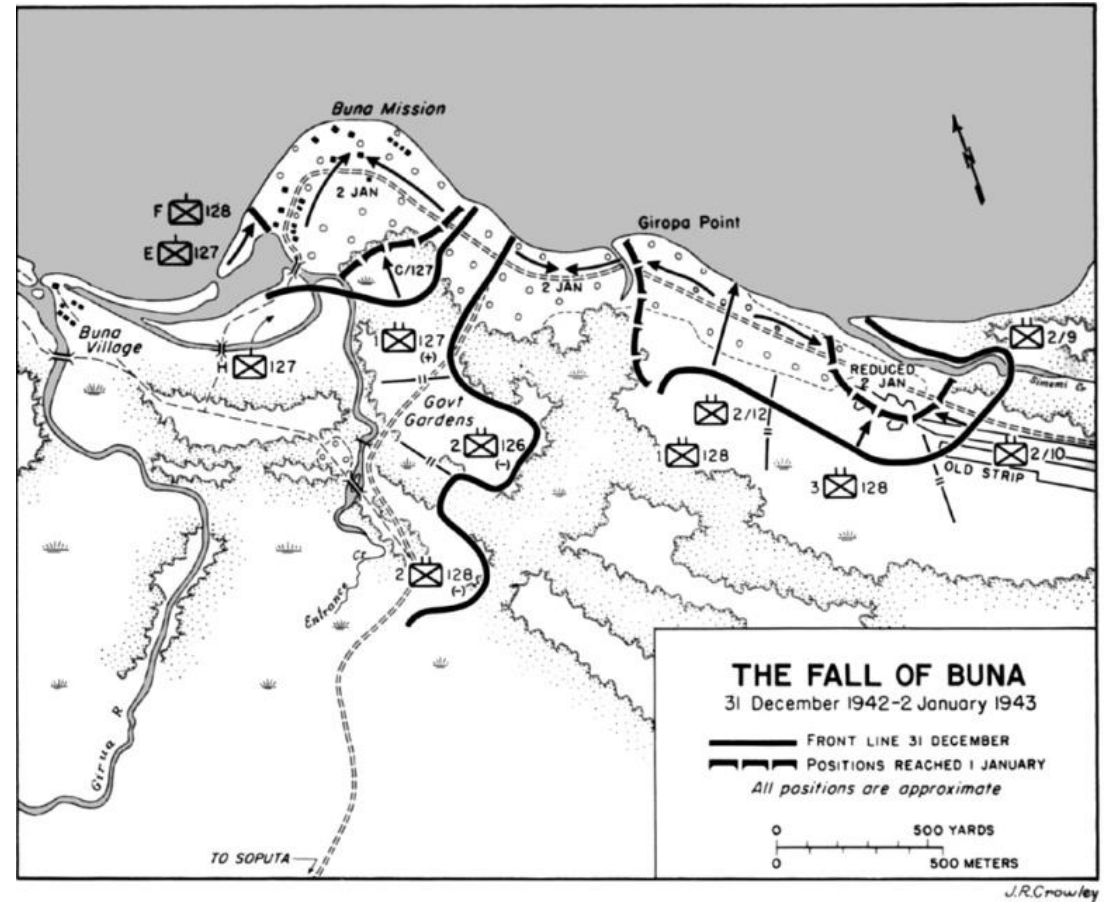


1 January – Buna E

- Without tanks to support it, the attack by the 3d Battalion, 128th Infantry, went slowly. The Japanese in the dispersal bays were well entrenched and fighting hard.
- On the left, the attack made excellent progress from the start. Closely followed by the infantry, the tanks made short work of the enemy defenses in the Giropa Plantation. The leading tank reached the coastal track below Giropa Point at 0830. A half-hour later all the tanks and most of the infantry had reached the coast.
- The 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, moved forward, mopping up pockets of enemy resistance that the Australians had overlooked or bypassed.
- Company A, 2/12 Battalion, with Company D immediately behind it, anchored its left flank on Giropa Creek, just west of Giropa Point, and began to consolidate on a 400-yard front along the shore.
- Companies B and C, 2/12 Battalion, which had been operating to the rear of Companies A and D, began moving eastward and southeastward with the tanks to complete the second phase of the attack.

1 January – Buna E

- Against the stiffest kind of opposition, the tanks and the Australian infantry following them moved steadily forward.
- By evening Companies C and D had cleared out the beach as far as the mouth of Simemi Creek.
- The 2/12 Battalion lost 62 killed, 128 wounded, and one missing in the day's fighting, but the Japanese on the Warren front were finished.

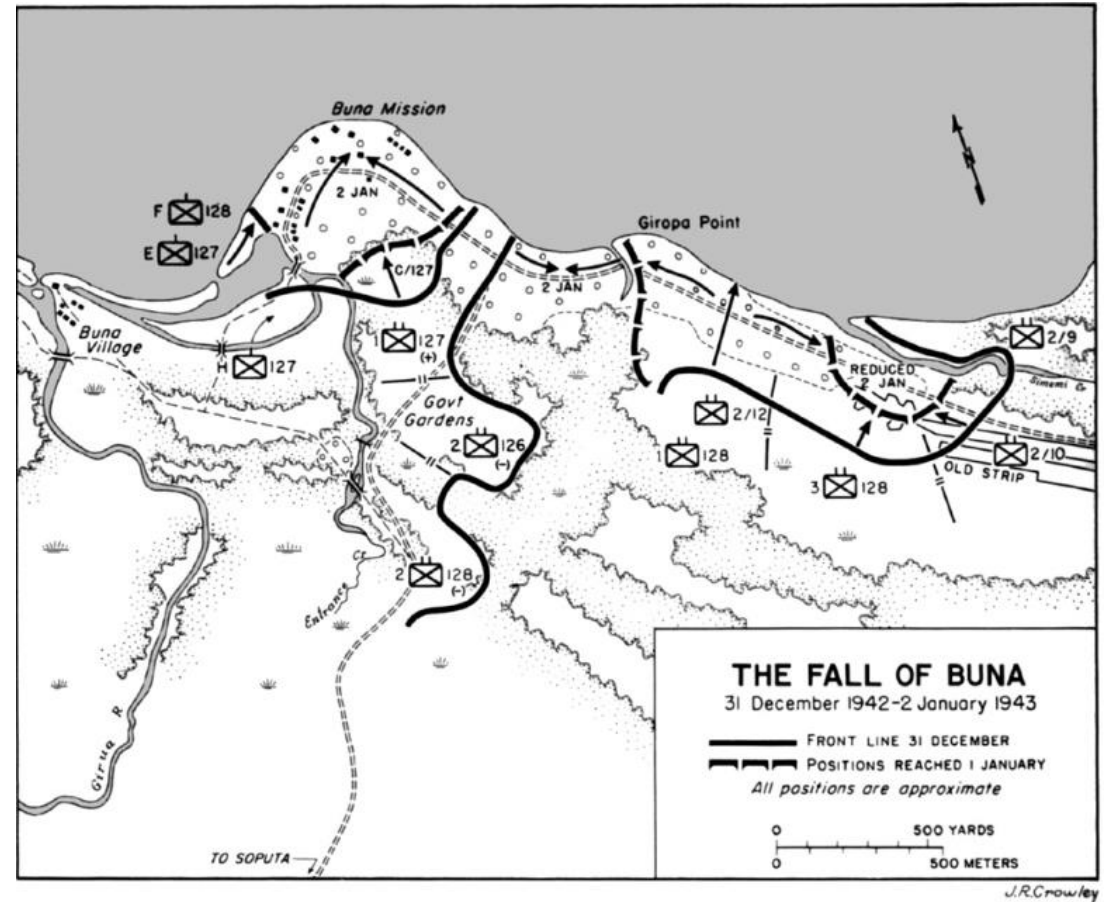


1 January – Buna E

- The Australians had pressed into use that day for the first time a blast bomb of their own invention consisting essentially of a Mills bomb screwed into a two-pound can of ammonal explosive.
- As Colonel MacNab recalls, it was used in the following manner:
- "A tank would knock a corner off the enemy bunker, and while this hole was 'buttoned up' by automatic or rifle fire, a volunteer would creep up to the side of the bunker, heave in the bomb, and duck. The explosion would rock the bunker and stupefy the Japanese inside.
- Then a can of Jap aviation gasoline would be tossed in, ignited by tracers, and the bunker would be burned out."

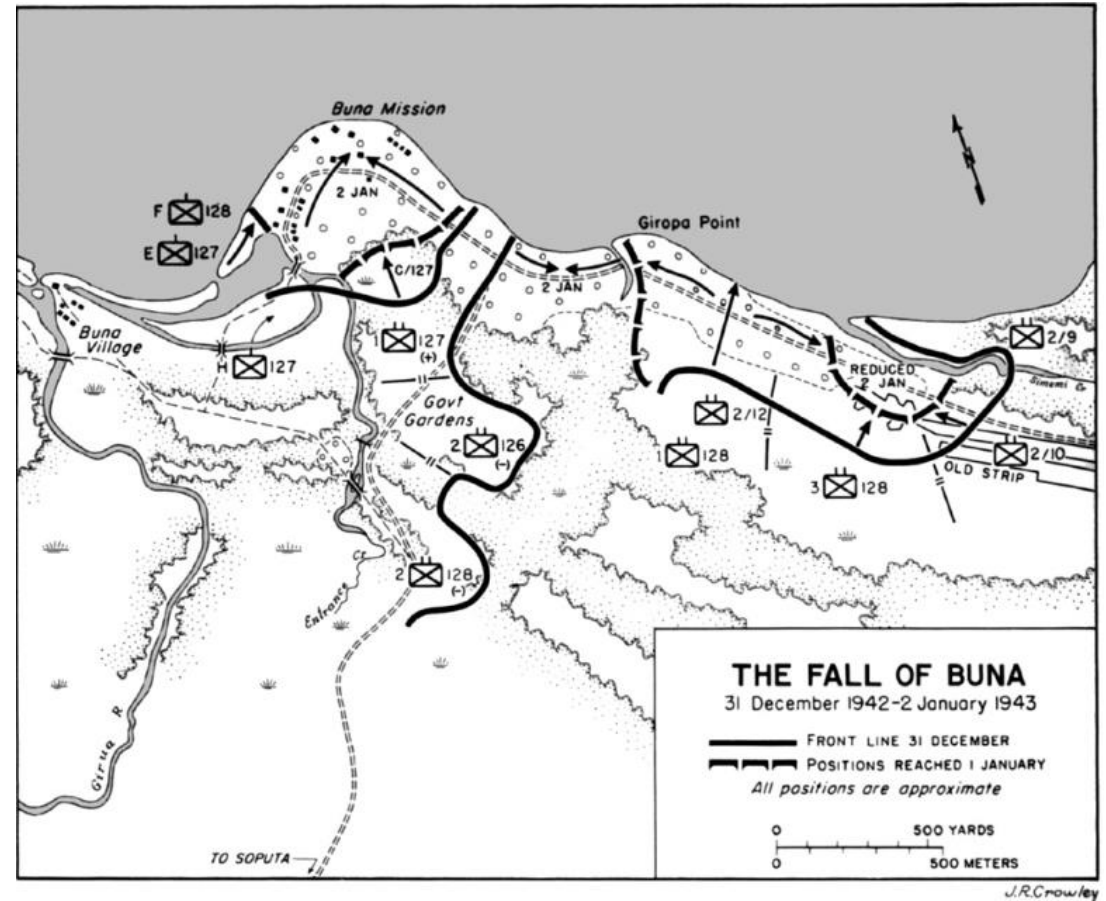
1 January – Buna W

- Early in the morning on New Year's day, while Company B attacked eastward toward Giropa Point, the artillery and mortars laid down a heavy barrage on the mission and the rest of Urbana Force struck at the Japanese line around the mission.
- Captain Cronk attacked from the mission spit, and Major Schroeder's troops, pivoting on Entrance Creek, moved on the mission from the southeast. Some Company B men could already see the tanks on Giropa Point, but the unit was still held up by very strong enemy resistance.
- Company F, 128th Infantry also found itself unable to move forward. In the swamp Company C, supported on the right by Company M, moved forward 150 yards, and the remaining companies to the right of M--F, A, and L, with I and D immediately to the rear--made some progress.



1 January – Buna W

- On the evening of 1 January Colonel Smith of the 2d Battalion, 128th Infantry, and Major Clarkson of the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, established a joint Urbana Force-Warren Force outpost in the no man's land between their two fronts,
- Japanese troops were sighted for the first time trying to swim from the mission.



1 January – Air

- Five B-24's and four B-17's bomb A/Fs at Rabaul, Gasmata, and Lae.
- The two bombers which attacked Gasmata shot down one of five intercepting fighters.
- Two B17s and four B24s which attacked shipping at Rabaul at first light hit two transports and left them burning.
- Dive bombers strafed and bombed Sananda point and Salamaua with effective results.
- Enemy troops were landed at Teop (north east tip of Bougainville island).
- Nine B26s escorted by eleven fighters attacked Munda 07.00/1. A fire was still burning at 12.15/1.
- 6 B-25's attack railroad bridge near Myitnge, claiming several hits on the tgt. The nearby A/F is also bombed.

1 January – Air

- The P38's victory on 27 December, followed by another of comparable proportions on 1 January, inspired General Whitehead to write that “we have the Jap air force whipped.”



2 January - Australia

- 250 workers were prosecuted for absenteeism on new year's day, immediately after the holiday and some hundreds more followed later.

35,000 Take Day Off

SYDNEY, Friday. — Disregarding the advice of their union leaders, and defying the Federal Government's order that January 1 should be an ordinary working day, 35,000 employees in dockyards and war factories did not work to-day.

The reason advanced for the stoppage, the biggest one-day hold up in production since the war began, was that the Government refused to authorise payment of double time for work on New Year's Day.

The Federal Government ordered before Christmas that Monday should be observed as a holiday instead of January 1.

Union leaders, who were unanimous in opposing the strike, said to-day that many workers believed that Monday was allowed as a holiday because Boxing Day fell on a Saturday, and that they were entitled to the New Year holiday.

2 January - Sea

- USS Argonaut, one of the biggest submarines in the US Navy, had departed Brisbane under Lt Cmdr John Pierce to patrol the area between New Britain and Bougainville Island, south of Bismarck Archipelago in December.
- On 2nd January she torpedoed and sank The guard ship Ebon Maru in the Bismarck Sea.



Argonaut was originally designed for minelaying and had also been used for transporting troops. She was 380 feet long and displaced 4,000 tons.

2 January - Sea

- On 2nd Jan a ten destroyer Tokyo Express was sighted by five B17s heading to Buin, which attacked the ships at 14.15 without success.
- The B17s raised the alarm, which brought a strike force of 9 SBDs, 4 Wildcats and 5 P38s to the attack at 18.05.
- One destroyer was damaged by a near miss and seen to turn back with one other destroyer as escort. Two Wildcats and an SBD failed to return.
- Eleven PT Boats were waiting off Guadalcanal, but they were harassed by Japanese float planes, which could evidently spot the PT boats' wakes as soon as they moved to the attack. The boats failed to achieve any success.



An 80-foot Elco PT boat on patrol off the coast of New Guinea, 1943.

2 January - Sea

- On 2nd January 1943, N.O.I.C. Darwin told the Naval Board and Comsouwespac that the total withdrawal of Lancer Force from Timor might be necessary within the near future and requested the allocation of a destroyer for the task.
- Arunta was allocated.
- On 2nd January 1943 Whyalla was at anchor in MacLaren Harbour and Stella and Polaris were under way at the entrance, all on survey work. At 1.50 p.m. they were attacked by six dive bombers escorted by 12 fighters.
- The enemy scored nothing closer than near misses. Two of Whyalla's ratings were badly wounded by splinters. Only slight blast damage was done to the ships.



HMAS Polaris

2 January - Guadalcanal

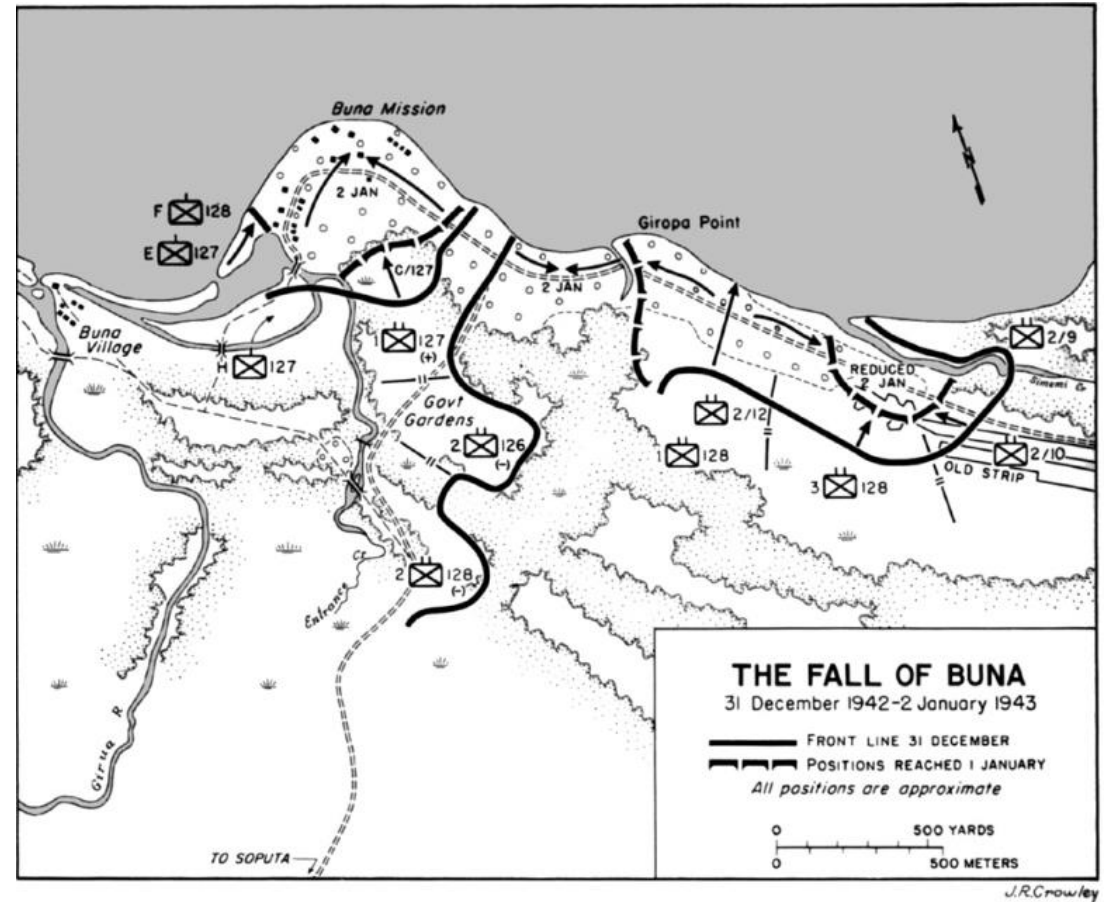
- The 25th Division's 27th Infantry landed on Guadalcanal on 1 January.
- With Guadalcanal clearly out of the shoestring category at last, General Harmon on 2 January designated the Guadalcanal-Tulagi command as XIV Corps.
- General Patch became corps commander and General Sebree, former Americal ADC, assumed command of that division.



Lt Gen Millard Harmon, commanding Army forces in the South Pacific area. Maj Gen Alexander Patch, left, XIV Corps; Maj Gen Nathan Twining, right, 13th Air Force.

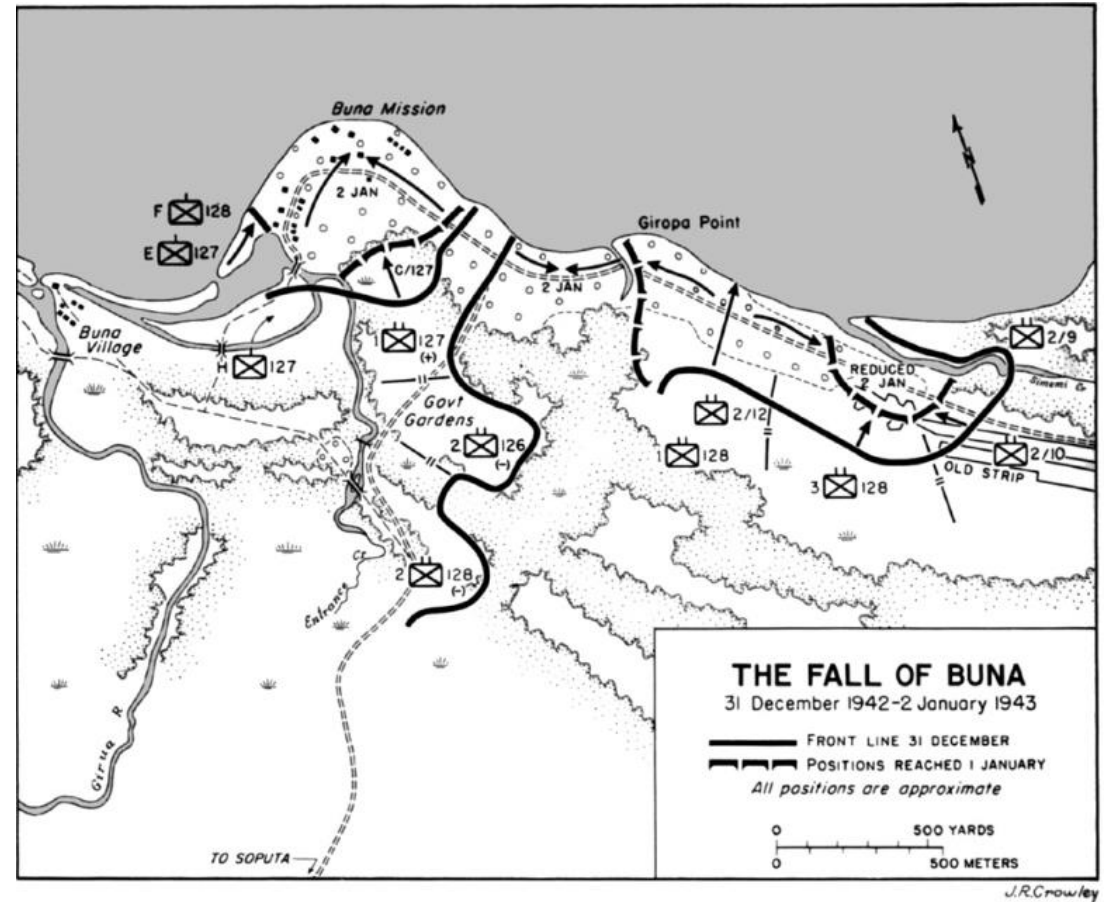
2 January – Buna E

- On the morning of 2 January Major Clarkson's 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, finished clearing out the last pocket of enemy resistance on the left;
- details of the 2/9 and 2/10 Battalions finally cleaned out the enemy emplacements on the island at the mouth of Simemi Creek;
- and Companies C and B, 2/12 Battalion, the 3d Battalion, 128th Infantry, and eight tanks attacked the Japanese in the dispersal bays.
- The 2/10 Battalion, with Allied fire coming in its direction, stayed down out of harm's way.
- The attacks by Colonel Arnold and Colonel MacNab, the one attacking from the west and the other from the south, were soon over.
- As the fire slackened, the officers and men of the 2/10 Battalion rose out of their holes in the Old Strip area and watched the last Japanese positions being overrun.



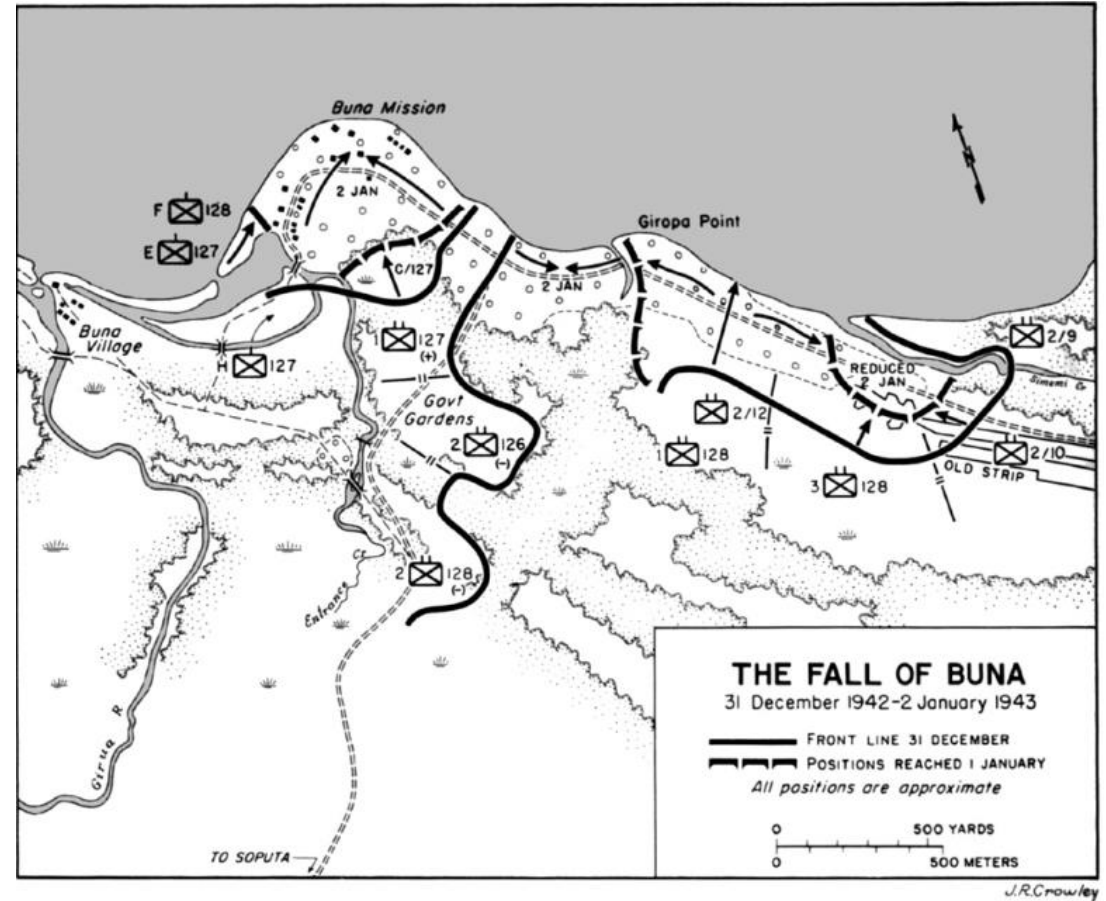
2 January – Buna W

- Just before dawn of the next day (2nd January) twenty enemy soldiers carrying heavy packs and led by a lieutenant made a break for the beached landing barges on the mission spit. They had three machine guns with them and their packs were loaded with food, medicine, and personal effects, as if for a quick getaway.
- Captain Cronk's company turned its machine guns and rifles on them and cut them down to a man.
- At daylight, observers all the way from Buna Village to Tarakena caught sight of large numbers of Japanese in the water. Some were swimming, others were clinging to boxes, rafts, and logs; others were trying to escape in small boats.
- Artillery and machine gun fire was immediately laid down on the troops in the water, and,
- at 1000, the air force began systematically strafing them with B-25's, P-39's, and Wirraways.



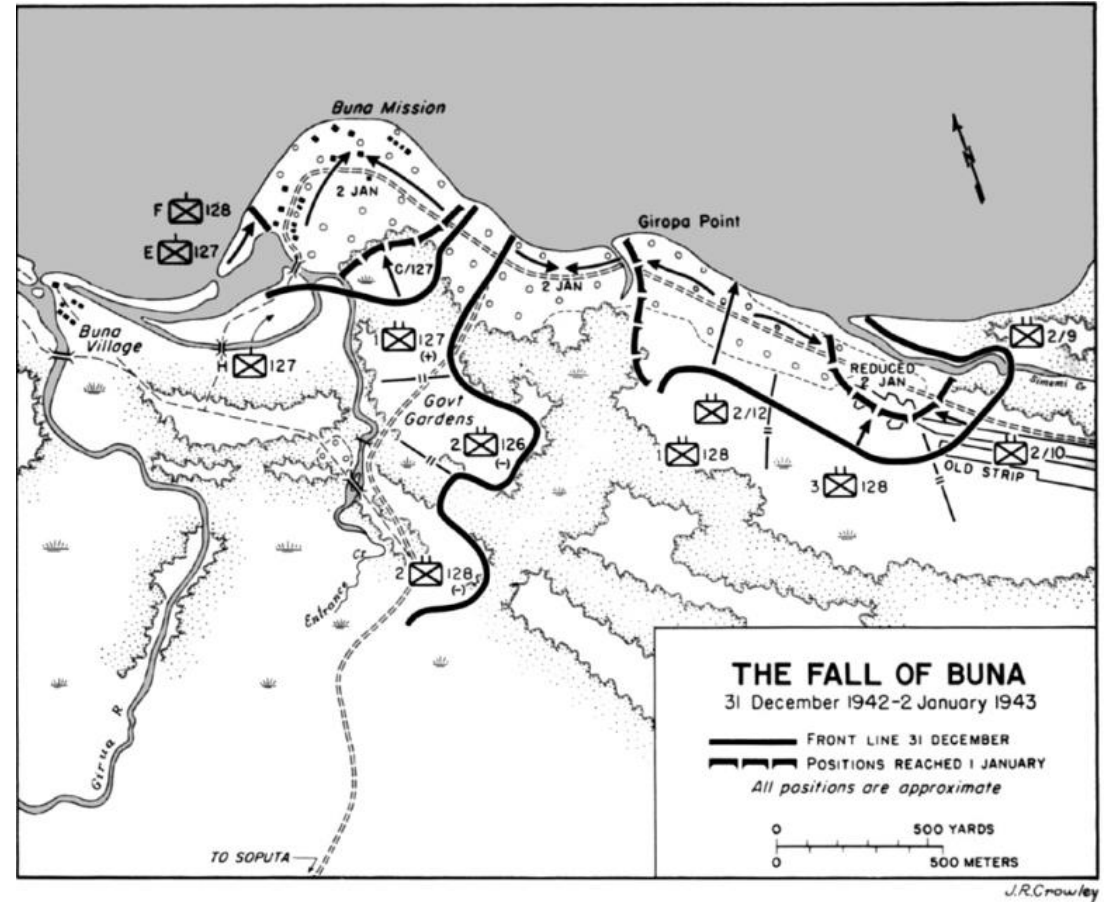
2 January – Buna W

- At 1000, just as the attack was about to open, Major Schroeder, who was in a forward observation post at the time, was struck and mortally wounded by a Japanese bullet. Capt. Runnoe, a member of Schroeder's staff, at once took over command of Schroeder's battalion, and Colonel Grose came up and took personal charge of the coastal drive.
- A heavy artillery barrage and white phosphorous smoke shells hit the enemy before the troops finally jumped off at 1015.
- Captain Cronk's company on the spit attacked southeast. Company C in the swamp, with Company M still on its right, attacked toward the north bridge between the island and the mission. The two G Companies advanced through the Coconut Plantation to attack the mission from the southeast.
- The attack went smoothly from the first. The phosphorous shells set fire to the grass and trees at several points in the mission area and, in one instance, exposed a whole line of enemy bunkers to Allied fire.



2 January – Buna W

- Attempts by the Japanese to flee these exposed positions were met by machine gun fire from the troops on the island and on the mission spit.
- As the phosphorous shells exploded in trees, they also set afire several of the huts in the mission. When enemy troops in dugouts beneath the burning huts tried to escape, they ran into bursts of Allied fire which killed most of them.
- The remaining Japanese continued their dogged last-ditch resistance and had to be rooted out of each dugout and bunker by grenade, machine gun, and submachine gun fire.
- Companies C and G, 127th Infantry made excellent progress, but Company F, 128th Infantry, on the mission spit was held up, as was Company B, 127th Infantry, which had resumed its attack to the eastward.



2 January – Buna W

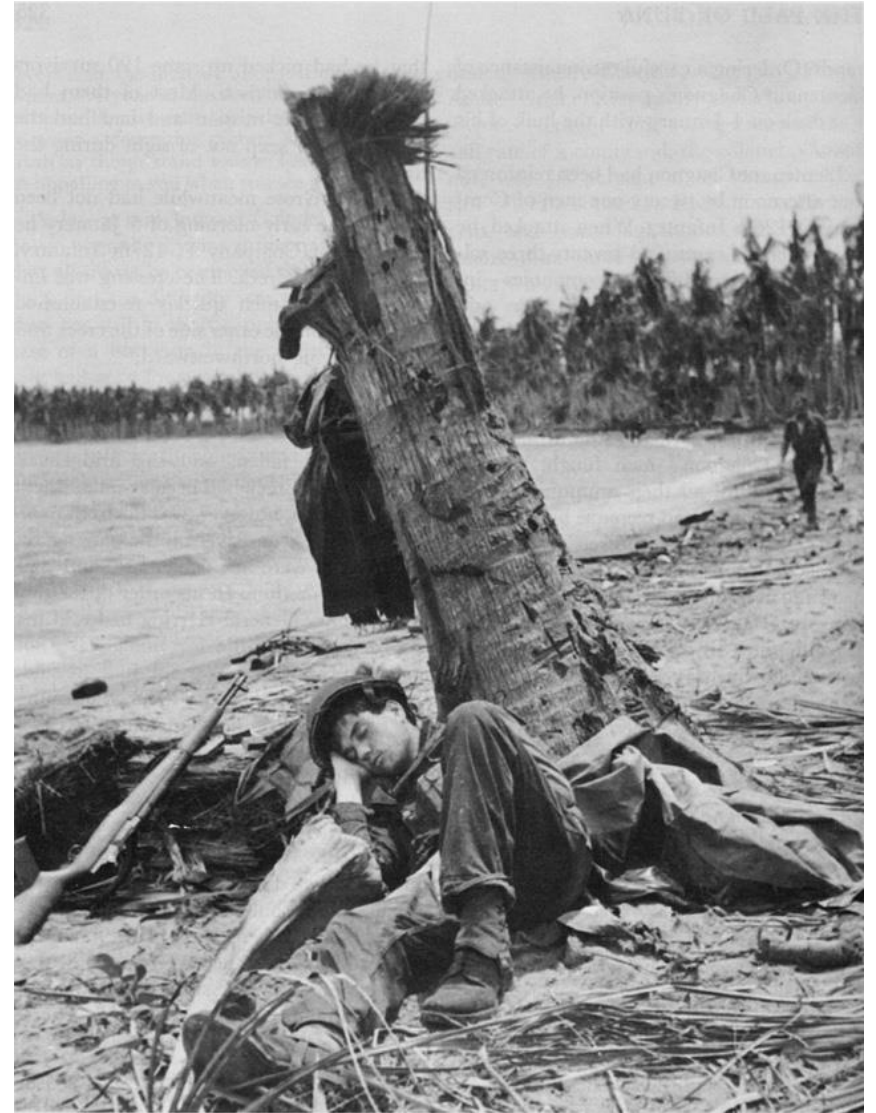
- The mission was overrun by 1632. The remaining enemy troops in the area were either flushed out of their hiding places and killed or entombed in them.
- By 1700 the fighting was over except in a few pockets of resistance near the beach. There a handful of Japanese held out stubbornly and were left to be dealt with the next day.
- The mission was a scene of utter desolation.



(Australian War Memorial)
Wrecked Japanese barges, pieces of equipment and the bodies of the dead littered the beaches at Buna when the fighting ended.

2 January – Buna

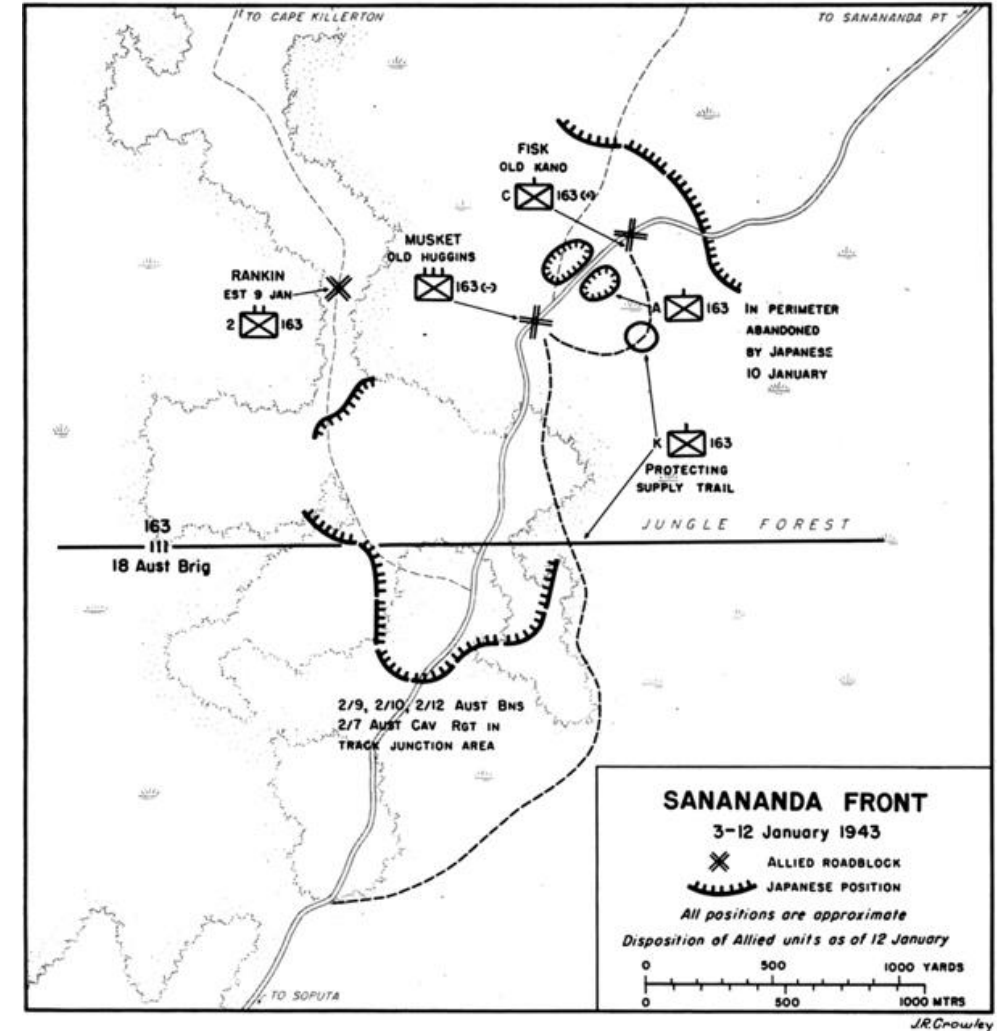
- As soon as he could, General Eichelberger pulled Company C out of the mission area and sent it to the assistance of Company B.
- The two companies launched a concerted attack late that afternoon, cleared out the bunkers, and by 1930 had made contact with the 2/12 Battalion.
- After more than six weeks of fighting, the Buna area in its entirety was finally in Allied hands.
- Allied casualties at Buna were, 620 killed, 2,065 wounded, and 132 missing. The 32d Division sustained 1,954 of these casualties, 353 killed, 1,508 wounded, and 93 missing; the 18th Brigade had 863 casualties--267 killed, 557 wounded, and 39 missing.
- 1,400 Japanese were buried at Buna--500 west of Giropa Point and 900 east of it.



WEARY SOLDIER SLEEPS *after the battle is over*

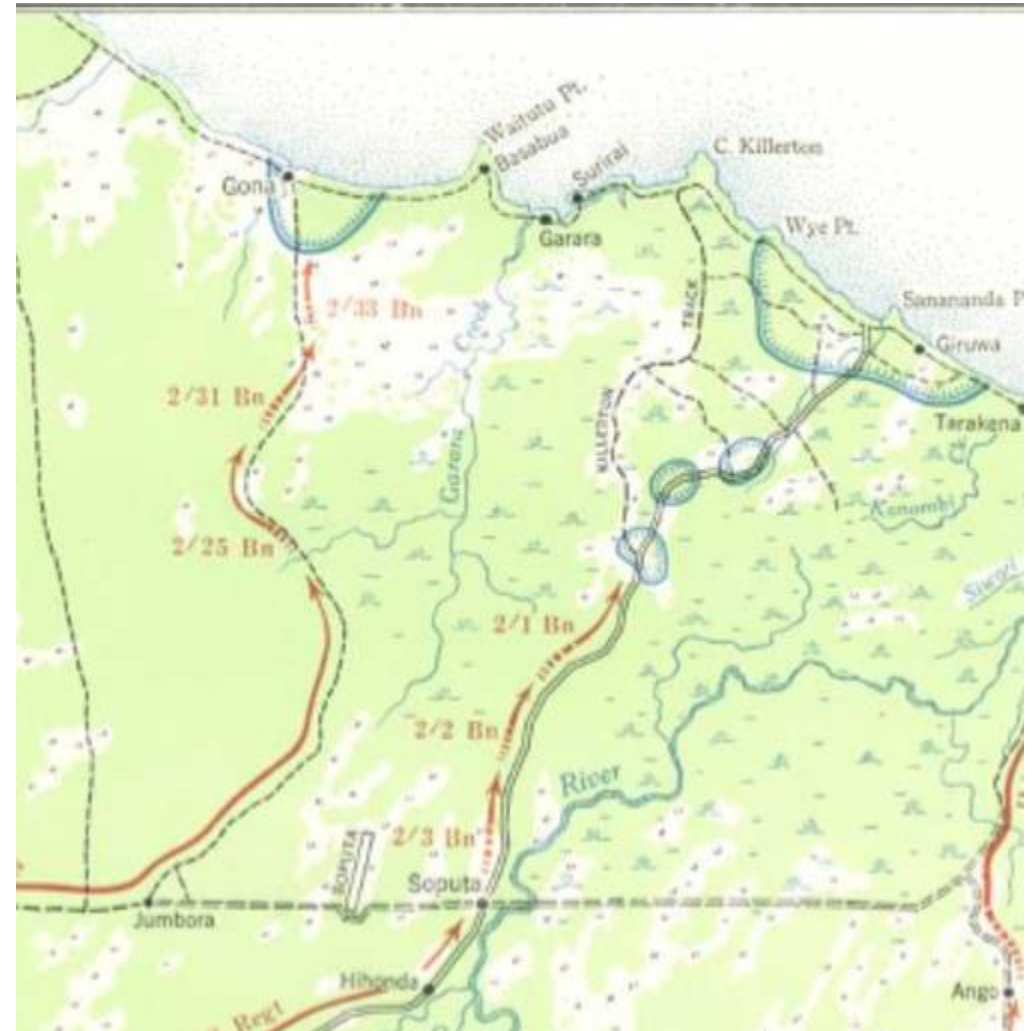
2 January – Sanananda

- On 2 January the newly arrived 1st Battalion 163rd Infantry took over at Huggins and Kano, and Colonel Doe took command of the area from Brigadier Dougherty the next day.
- General Vasey ordered the 39 Battalion, which had been holding the roadblock, the 49 Battalion, which had been guarding the supply trail, and the 2/7 Cavalry Regiment, which had been operating from Kano, to replace the 36 and 55/53 Battalions south of the track junction.
- The 126th Infantry would be relieved as soon as the 18th Brigade could be redeployed from Buna to the Sanananda side of the river.



2 January – Gona

- Upon their relief, the 36 and 55/53 battalions would move to Gona, where they would relieve the depleted battalions of the 21st Brigade.
- The battalions of the 21st Brigade had suffered extremely heavy casualties in this, their second tour of duty during the campaign.
- By late December they were down to less than company strength, the 2/27 Battalion numbering 55 men and the 2/16 Battalion was down to 89.



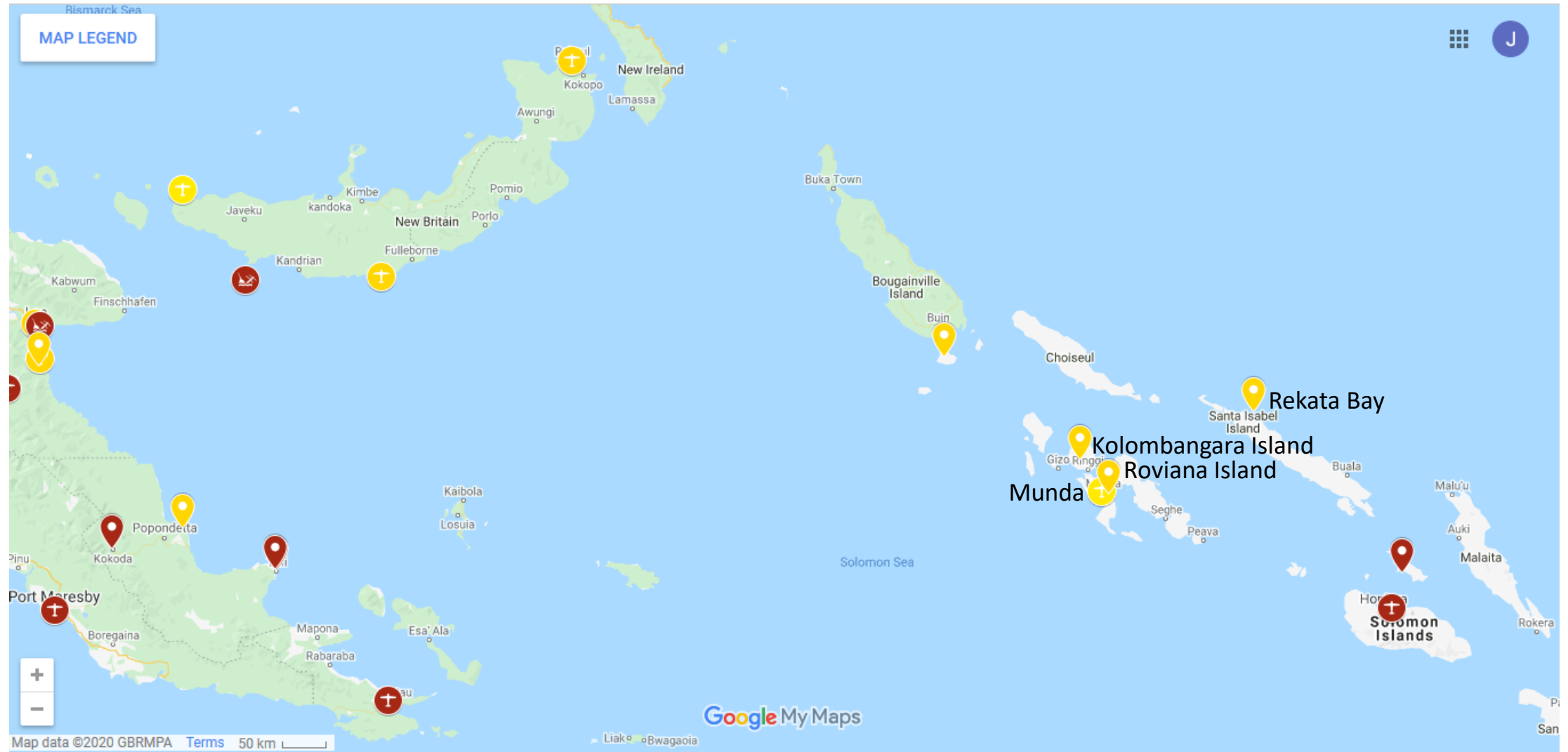
2 January – Air

- Six A-20's, seven Beaufighters, twelve B-25's and B-26's and thirteen fighters hit A/F and Targets of Opportunity at Lae. Many fires were started, including one in a supply dump and an enemy fighter was destroyed on the ground. One Beaufighter is missing.
- B-24's, hit A/F and T/Os at Gasmata.
- Three A20s on the daily attack mission along the Buna - Salamaua coast, and two Wirraways strafed 20 - 30 fugitive Japanese swimming about a half mile offshore from Sanananda Point.
- The government station at Tufi (Cape Nelson) was unsuccessfully attacked by nine enemy dive bombers.

2 January – Air

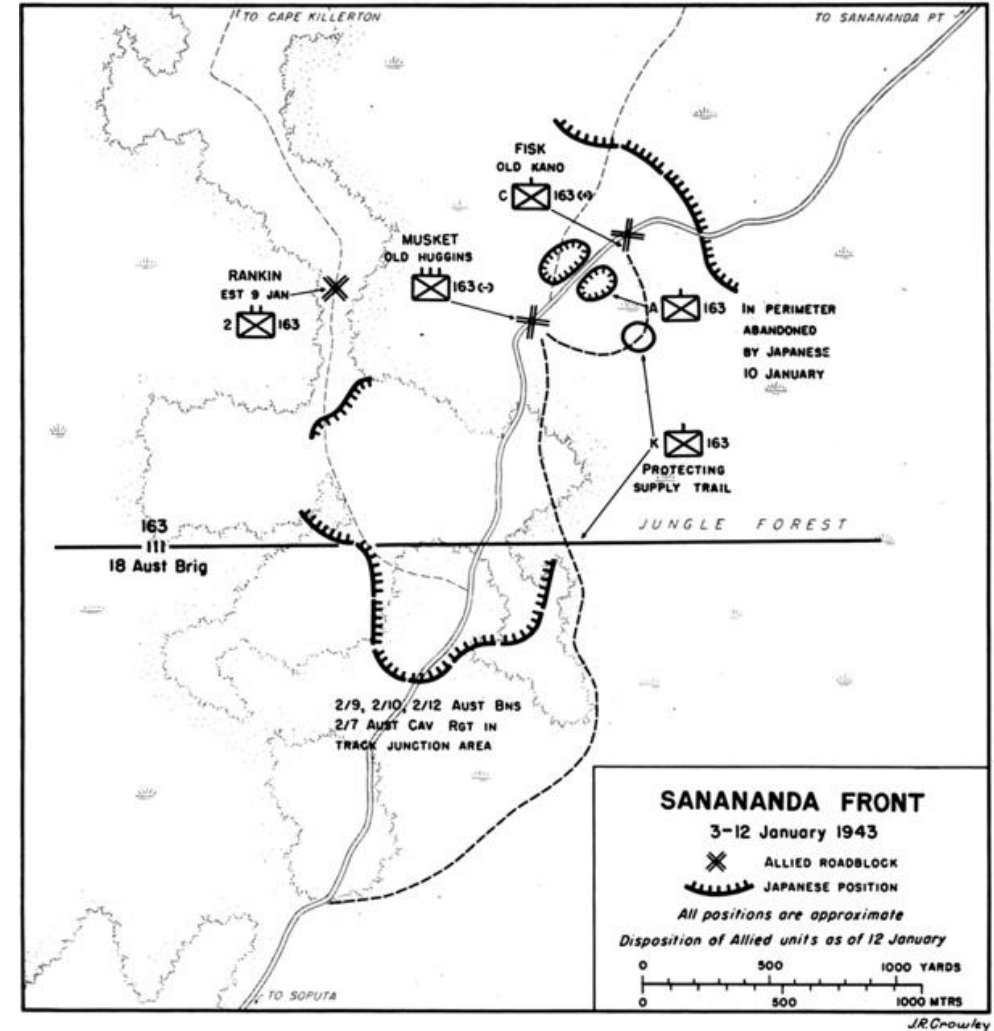
- JIC assesses that the enemy is strengthening his position throughout the Solomons area. Enemy parties were observed at Roviana Lagoon and Kuvukuvu island. The south east part of Kolombangara island is being occupied in force and an estimated 400 men were observed at Vila. Enemy barges were also sighted in Kolo Lagoon.
- Eight medium bombers escorted by eleven fighters strafed enemy float planes and supply installations at Rekata Bay.
- Six B26s and nine SBDs escorted by twenty one fighters attacked Munda.
- CATF Ftrs continue to hit transportation tgts, strafing truck convoy on Burma Road. The strikes begin near Loiwing and cover 30 mi of highway. At least 5 trucks are destroyed and others damaged.
- 6 B25's bomb Monywa A/F.

2 January – Air



3 January – Sanananda

- The 1st Battalion, 163d Infantry, and regimental headquarters took over complete responsibility for the roadblock area on 3 January.
- Colonel Doe, who had given Huggins the regimental code name, Musket, had deployed Company C at Kano.
- Regimental and Battalion headquarters, Company B, and Company D were at Musket.
- Company A covered the supply trail east of the M.T. Road.
- By this time Musket was a well-developed position. Within the perimeter were headquarters, switchboard, aid station, ammunition dump, and the 81-mm. mortars. The entire area was crisscrossed with trenches.



3 January – Sanananda

- On taking over from the Australians, the troops had been troubled by fire from riflemen in the tall jungle trees that overlooked the perimeter. Though experienced intermittently throughout the entire twenty-four hours, the fire was particularly intense at mealtimes.
- Colonel Doe lost no time in devising means to abate these nuisances. He established two-man sniper-observer posts in slit trenches along the forward edge of the perimeter, and in trees on the flanks and rear. Using ladders made of telephone wire with stout wooden rungs, the troops in the trees made it their business to fire systematically on all trees thought to harbor snipers, and were particularly active during such times as the Japanese were firing.
- As soon as the posts in the trees were established, small counter sniping patrols of two or three men, covered by the troops in the trees, began to pick off the Japanese tree marksmen from the ground.
- To stop Japanese sniping at night the counter sniping patrols set out booby traps, consisting usually of two grenades tied to adjoining trees with the pins connected by a cord.
- These measures got results quickly. The enemy marksmen were thinned out and forced back.

3 January – Air

- Four P-40's strafe about 75 troops in waters off Buna as US-Australian ground forces are mopping up in nearby Buna Mission area.
- Six B-26's along with a single B-24, bomb A/F at Lae. Three grounded aircraft were hit and three fires started.
- A B-24 bombs Madang and
- An A-20 hits Salamaua.
- A lone B-24 strafes A/F at Gasmata.
- A B17 attacked shipping at Rabaul 05.35/3. Results not observed but a large oil fire was burning 20 minutes after the attack.

3 January – Air

- There are indications that the enemy are extending land operations from both Madang and Wewak.
- Nine SBDs and eight fighters attacked Munda. Three hits on AA positions.
- A heavy concentration of shipping in the Buin area was attacked by several flights of heavy and medium bombers escorted by fighters. 5 B17s attacked at 13.40. Near misses were scored on one large warship. Very heavy anti aircraft fire destroyed one bomber and damaged others.

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BRISBANE, MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 1943

6 PAGES—2d

ALLIES SMASH LAST BUNA DEFENCE LINE

Heavy Jap Loss At "Mission" Station

ALLIED troops in Papua occupied Buna Government station, known as the Mission, late on Saturday afternoon, virtually completing the capture of the Buna area.

Japanese resistance in this area now is confined to a small pocket west of Giropa Creek, where fighting is going on.

The only area of Papua that now has to be cleared of the Japs lies inland from Saramanda Point, just over two miles north of Buna "Mission." Fighting continues inland along the Soputa track.

Capture of Buna "Mission" was announced in a special statement from General MacArthur's Headquarters yesterday.

Earlier the ordinary communique reported that in a general assault Allied troops "broke the back of Japanese resistance in the Giropa Creek area and were destroying his shattered forces."

The fighting in the past few days has been particularly bitter. The Japanese suffered severe losses, many of their tanks were destroyed and their communications cut. The Japanese were forced to retreat to a small pocket west of Giropa Creek. The Japanese were also forced to abandon their heavy weapons and supplies. The Japanese were also forced to abandon their positions in the Giropa Creek area and were destroying his shattered forces.

Japs Take To The Sea

Japanese troops in the sea trying to swim away from Buna station gave the first indication that the enemy resistance was cracking.

This was the signal for the main fighting country in the final assault by Allied troops. The Japanese were forced to retreat to a small pocket west of Giropa Creek. The Japanese were also forced to abandon their heavy weapons and supplies. The Japanese were also forced to abandon their positions in the Giropa Creek area and were destroying his shattered forces.

MR. CURTIN ASKS FOR MORE AID

WASHINGTON, Dec. 3.—Associated Press dispatch from Australia says that the Prime Minister (Mr. Curtin) is reported to be making official representations for strengthening the Allied Pacific forces.

According to The Sydney Mail, Mr. Curtin's statement was that a small proportion of Allied war effort would be devoted to the Pacific theatre. The statement was also reported by some American officials and a large number of the press. Mr. Curtin's statement was also reported by some American officials and a large number of the press.

CAPTURED BY ALLIES



The Buna Government station (called the Mission), from which the Japanese have been driven by Allied troops. The enemy occupied the station late in July last year, and earned it into a formidable stronghold, which was reduced only after the bitterest fighting. LEFT: Map of the combat area.

MOVE FOR UNITY OF FRENCH

RUSSIANS SWEEP ON IN SNOWSTORMS

LONDON, Jan. 3 (Special and A.A.P.).—Russian tanks, troops, and guns are pouring through the gap in the northern German line caused by the fall of Velikiye Luki.

Despite violent snowstorms they are sweeping west towards the Latvian border, and are within 60 miles of it.

The Russians have reached Novosokolki, which is one of the key points of the German system of communications in Russia, because it is the junction where the Moscow-Kiga railway crosses the Leningrad-Kiev line.

Behind this vital military junction the German forces are in a state of confusion. The German forces are in a state of confusion. The German forces are in a state of confusion.

The city was completely surrounded in the first days of the Soviet offensive on the central front, and the decisive assault had to be made.

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Map shows in steps important towns captured by the Russians in their present offensive.

Naval Fight In Arctic, Says Berlin

LONDON, Jan. 3 (A.A.P.).—A second battle in the Arctic Ocean is reported in a German High Command communique.

The communique states that German naval units on December 31 attacked a British formation of destroyers and destroyers escorting a convoy near Bear Island, 300 miles off the north coast of Norway.

The communique adds: "Great naval units took on charges several destroyers, destroyers, and submarines. A U-boat torpedoed four ships, but none was destroyed."

The German claim follows a British Admiralty report on December 31 of a naval action in northern waters, in which an enemy convoy was damaged and a destroyer lost.

The Admiralty report was that a destroyer was damaged and a destroyer lost.

4 January – Government

- On 4th January 1943 the Special Federal Conference of the Australian Labour Party reassembled.
- The New South Wales, South Australian, Tasmanian and Western Australian executives of the party had sent letters endorsing Curtin's proposal in varying terms. Victoria and Queensland had replied opposing it.
- The proceedings lasted through Monday afternoon and evening and Tuesday morning.
- Calwell and Fallon led the opposition to Curtin's motion.
- In answer to Stewart, a New South Wales delegate, Curtin said "the South-West Pacific for practical purposes would be south of the Equator with its western boundaries unchanged and its eastern boundaries subject to some alteration towards New Caledonia".
- Late on Tuesday morning the time for the rising of the session was postponed to enable a vote to be taken.
- There were 24 in favour and 12 (the delegates from Victoria and Queensland) against. The Labour Party was in favour of conscription for overseas service within the limits of the South-West Pacific Area and, as Curtin subsequently explained, for "the war only".

4 January – COIC

IV. WINTER'S PROBABLE NEXT STEP

- (1) Renewed attempt to re-take Guadalcanal co-ordinated with offensive activities Arafura Sea area.
- (2) Infiltration - Sanananda area.

1. Renewed attempt to re-take Guadalcanal co-ordinated with offensive activities Arafura Sea area.
2. Infiltration - Sanananda area.

FOR A/ASSISTANT C.O.I.C.
C.B.O., S.S.P.A.

4/1/43

4 January – War Department Report to the White House

1. In his operations summary for the 24-hour period ending 1300 GCT, January 3, General MacArthur reports that all organized enemy resistance in the Buna area has been overcome, and our troops are now rounding up individual enemy stragglers. Local advances were also being made toward Sanananda.

4 January – Sea

- On 4 January the CINCPAC daily summary noted that “as the (Japanese) have changed nearly all ciphers our educated guesses are not as reliable as they have been.”
- On 4 Jan 7 transports landed the 161st infantry, the last echelon of the 25th division, the 6th Marines and the HQ of the second Marine Division at Guadalcanal. The transports were supported by Lee’s TF 64 with three fast battleships and escorted by TF 67 of 7 cruisers and 5 destroyers commanded by Admiral Walden Ainsworth.



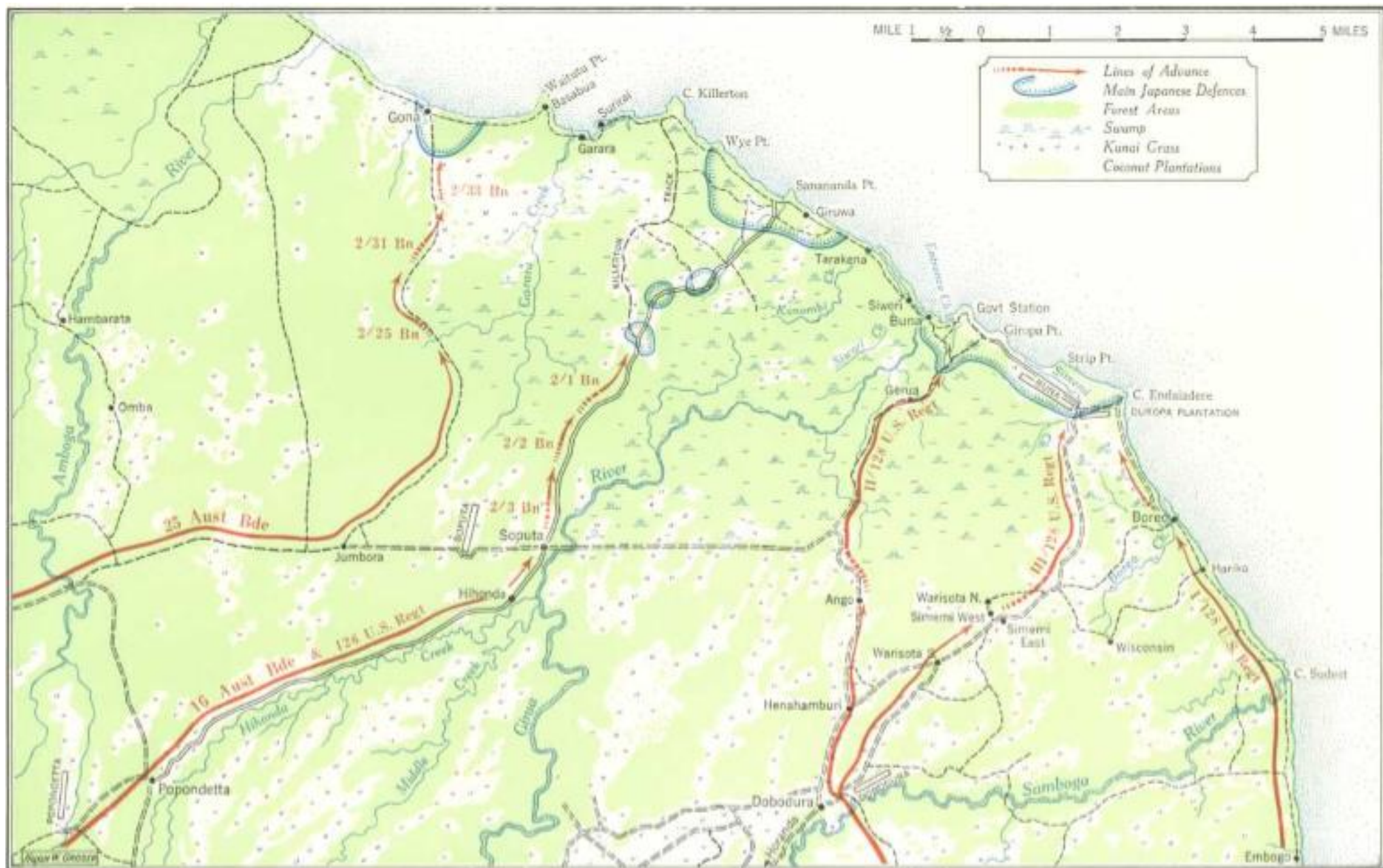
Admiral Walden Ainsworth

4 January – Sea

- After landing the soldiers Ainsworth split his taskforce and took Nashville, St Louis and Helena and destroyers Fletcher and O'Bannon up to Munda at 26 knots.
- A radar equipped Catalina probed ahead and the cruiser floatplanes guarded against enemy interference by sea. Other Catalinas carried spotters from the bombardment ships.
- After passing USS Grayback, acting as a navigation marker, Ainsworth turned broadside to Munda and went to continuous rapid fire at 01.02.
- In 48 minutes the ships fired 4,000 shells, mostly six inch, into the airfield before turning back for Guadalcanal.



Helena obscured by the flash of her guns during a bombardment of Munda



Allied advance on Buna, Sanananda and Gona, 16th-21st November
War in the Pacific 1943 - ©Jerry McBrien - Wk 10

4 January - Buna

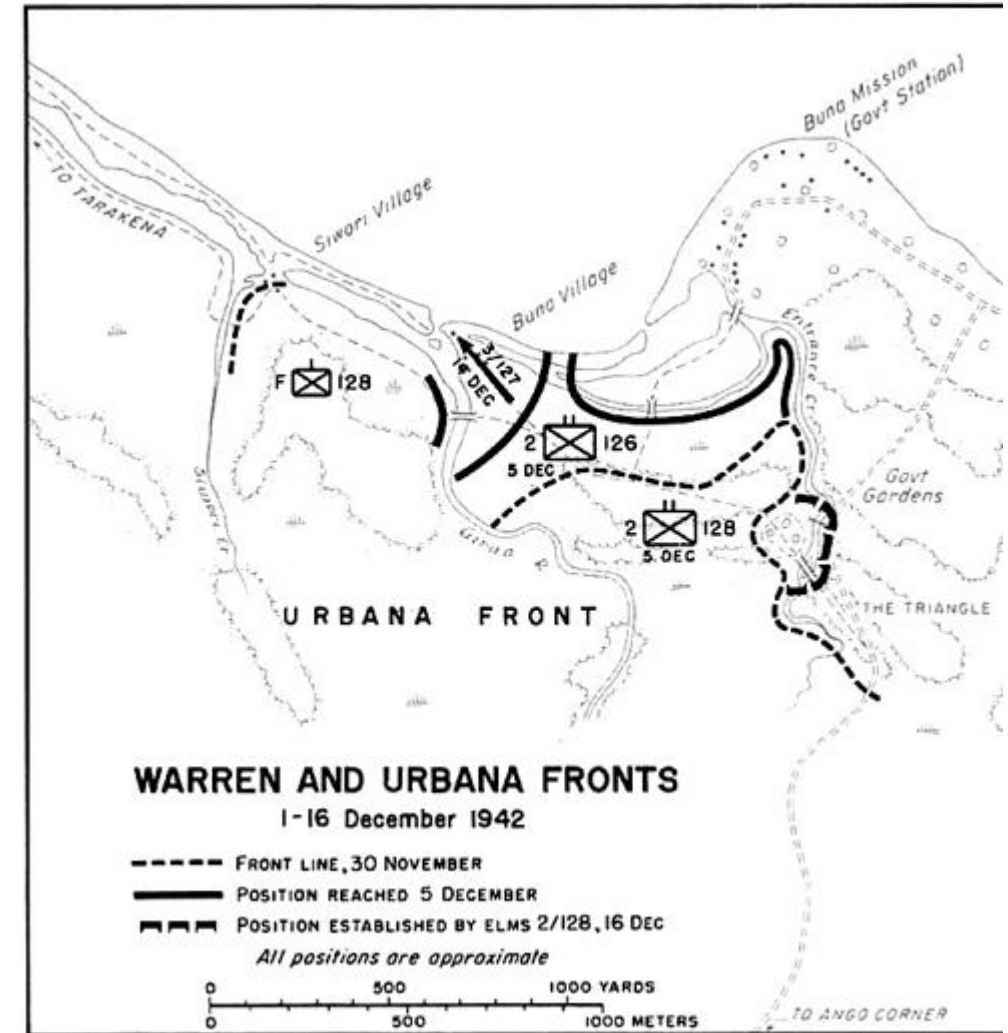
- On 20 December, upon the insistence of General Herring that the left flank be better secured, the force holding Siwori village had been reinforced with another twenty men. Schwartz's force, now numbering thirty-five, began moving on its objective, Tarakena, a small village, about a mile northwest of Siwori Village.
- The men reached Tarakena early on 20 December, only to be thrown out of the place by a superior Japanese force. Schwartz got another 32 reinforcements late in the afternoon and moved on Tarakena at dusk with his sixty-seven men.
- The patrol succeeded in retaking a corner of the village during the night, but the enemy, much stronger than had been anticipated, counterattacked and forced it back across the creek. The patrol suffered fifteen casualties during the encounter, including Schwartz who was wounded.



GENERAL HERRING, *Commander, Advanced New Guinea Force (left), and General Eichelberger.*

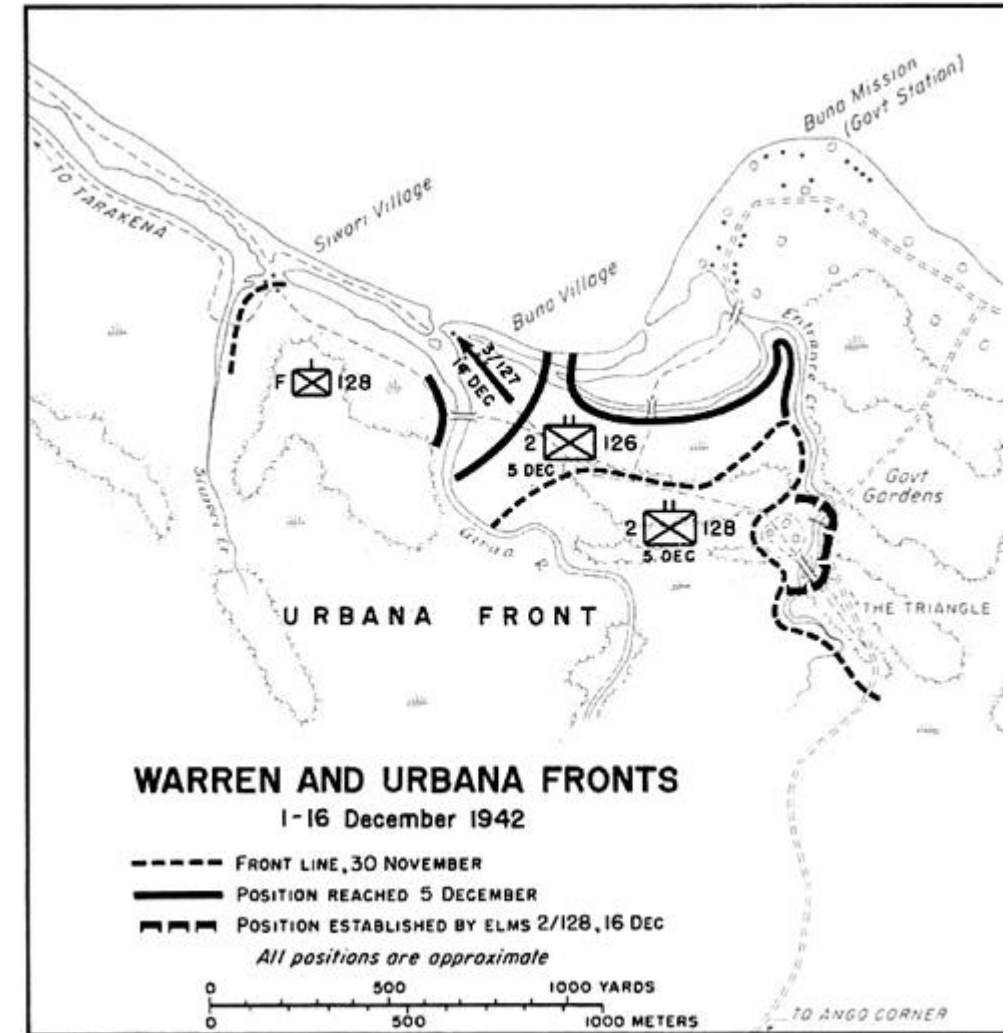
4 January - Buna

- 1st Lt. Chagnon of Headquarters Company, 127th Infantry, took over, bringing with him members of Headquarters Company and the Service Company.
- Since he was outnumbered, Chagnon took up a defensive position a few hundred yards southeast of Tarakena and awaited the enemy's next move.
- Lieutenant Chagnon was reinforced on the afternoon of 4 January by twenty-one men of Company E, 126th Infantry.
- He then had under his command seventy-three soldiers from seven different companies, a 60-mm. mortar, and three light machine guns. The force was short of ammunition and grenades.



4 January - Buna

- The Japanese attacked Lt Chagnon's position at dusk on 4 January.
- The attack came as a complete surprise. Hit from the front, rear, and left, Chagnon's men fought as best they could until all their ammunition was gone and they had no recourse but to swim for it.
- The lieutenant, who retrieved one of the machine guns under fire and continued operating it until it jammed, was the last man out.
- Members of Chagnon's patrol kept straggling into Siwori Village all that night.
- By the following day all but four had come in--a small loss in view of the fact that the Japanese attack had been made in overwhelming strength.



4 January - Buna

- In a check of the health of the 32d Division undertaken shortly after the Buna mop-up was completed, the temperature of 675 soldiers, representing a cross section of the division's three combat teams, was taken.
- Colonel Warmenhoven reported that "53 percent of this group of soldiers were running a temperature ranging between 99 degrees to 104.6 degrees. . . . In order of prevalence, the cause of the rise in temperature is due to:
- Malaria, Exhaustive States, Gastro-Enteritis, Dengue Fever, Acute Upper Respiratory Infection, and Scrub Typhus."
- The average normal sick-call rate of a command, the colonel pointed out, was 3.8 percent of its strength.
- The sick-call rate of the 32d Division was 24 percent, and going higher.
- Some 2,952 men (more than three quarters of them from Buna where the division had made its primary effort) were already hospitalized because of disease and fever, and fifty to one hundred were being evacuated from Buna to Port Moresby daily for the same cause.

4 January - Air

- Six B-26's pound Sanananda Pt area as preparations for allied offensive in that sector get underway.
- Seven Beaufighters strafed Komiatum and Mubo.
- Six B-25's hit A/F, AA positions and buildings at Lae and 6 A20s with P38 escorts attack grounded aircraft.
- B-24's, on single-plane flights, bomb A/F at Lae and attack schooners off Gasmata and Cape Kwoi.
- Enemy bombers again attacked Cape Nelson. One was shot down.
- An enemy reconnaissance plane was also shot down off Goodenough island.



4 January - Air

- Six Beaufighters attack A/F and T/Os in north east Timor.
- HBs from Gaya and Pandaveswar attack marshalling yards at Mandalay. Tracks and cars in S half of the M/Y are heavily bombed, causing fires visible for 70 mi.
- HBs also damage 15,000-ton transport at mouth of Rangoon R.
- 1 B-25 and 9 P-40's hit rail tgts at Naba.



5 January – Report to the White House

1. In his operations summary for the 24-hour period ending 1300 OCT, January 4, General MacArthur reports that Allied forces

are mopping up near Buna and regrouping in the Sanananda area. Advance headquarters of the 41st US Division have been established near Port Moresby; (this division is in training at Rockhampton, Australia).

2. Movement of the 3d New Zealand Division to New Caledonia was virtually completed by the arrival of some 6,500 troops on January 1.

5 January – Sea

- By 09.00 on the morning of 5th January Ainsworth had reunited his taskforce off Guadalcanal.
- The taskforce had slowed to 10 – 15 knots to recover float planes, when they were attacked by four Vals at 09.36.
- Honolulu suffered two near misses and H.M.N.Z.S. Achilles suffered a near miss and a bomb hit which wrecked X turret, killed 13 and wounded eight of her company but left her still able to steam and fight.
- Two of the Vals were shot down,
- one of them is believed to be the first victim of the new VT proximity fused 5 inch anti-aircraft shell.



HMNZ Achilles

5 January – Sea

- British military researchers at the Telecommunications Research Establishment (TRE) conceived of the idea of a proximity fuze in the early stages of the War.
- Their system involved a small, short range, Doppler radar. Tests were then carried out with rockets. However, British scientists were uncertain whether a fuze could be developed for anti-aircraft shells, which had to withstand much higher accelerations than rockets.
- The British shared a wide range of possible ideas for designing a fuze with the United States during the Tizard Scientific Mission in September 1940, a British delegation that visited the United States to obtain the industrial resources to exploit the military potential of the research and development (R&D), which Britain itself could not exploit due to the immediate requirements of war-related production.
- The details of all this research were passed to the United States in accordance with an informal agreement between Churchill and Roosevelt to exchange scientific information of potential military value.



Sir Henry Tizard chemist, inventor and Rector of Imperial College.

5 January – Sea

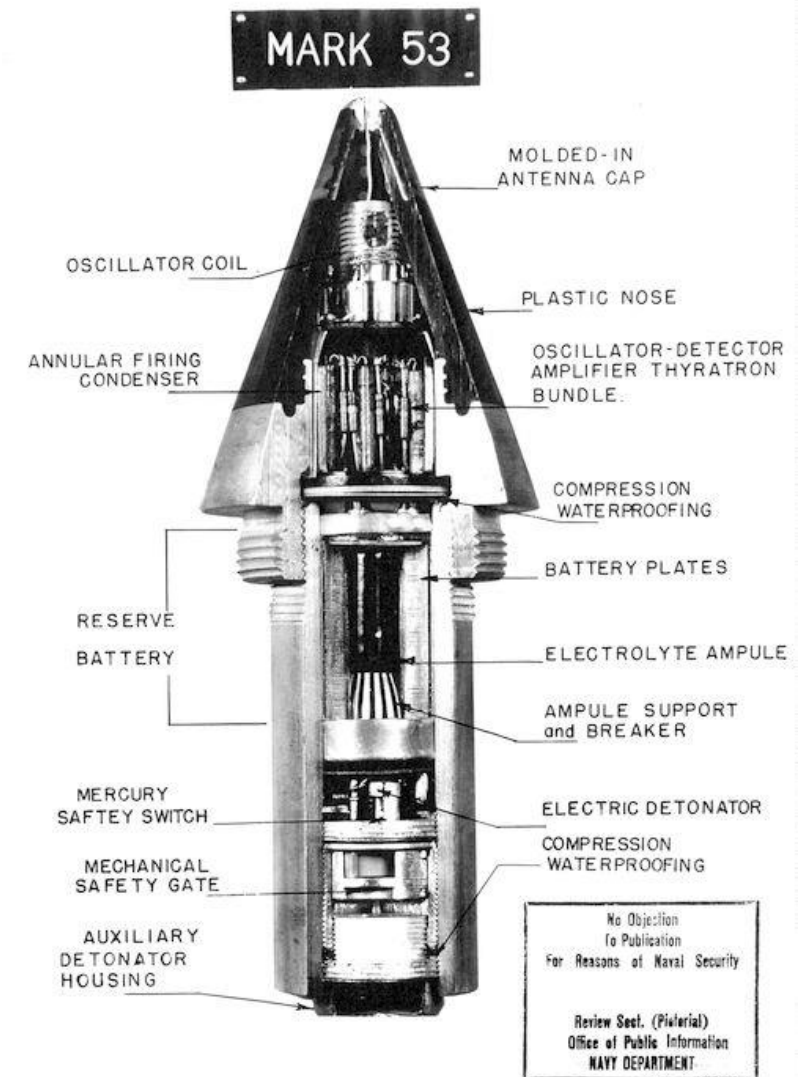
- In the US the National Defense Research Committee focused on radio fuzes for use with anti-aircraft artillery, where acceleration was up to 20,000 g as opposed to about 100 g for rockets. In addition to extreme acceleration, artillery shells were spun by the rifling of the gun barrels to close to 30,000 rpm, creating immense centrifugal force.
- The NDRC assigned the task to the physicist Merle Tuve at the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism. Work on the radio shell fuze was completed by Tuve's group, known as Section T, at The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab.
- Working with Western Electric Company and Raytheon Company, miniature hearing-aid tubes were modified to withstand this extreme stress.
- A simulated battle conditions test was started on 12 August 1942. USS Cleveland tested proximity-fuzed ammunition against radio-controlled drone aircraft targets over Chesapeake Bay.
- The tests were to be conducted over two days, but the testing stopped when all the drones were destroyed early on the first day. The three drones were destroyed with just four projectiles.

5 January – Sea

- The first large scale production of tubes for the new fuzes was at a General Electric plant in Cleveland, Ohio formerly used for the manufacture of Christmas-tree lamps. Fuze assembly was completed at General Electric plants in Schenectady, New York and Bridgeport, Connecticut.
- Over 100 American companies were mobilized to build some 20 million shell fuzes.
- Production of Naval fuzes was contracted to the Wurlitzer company at their barrel organ factory in Tonawanda, New York.
- Procurement contracts increased from \$60 million in 1942, to \$200 million in 1943, to \$300 million in 1944 and to \$450 million in 1945. As volume increased the cost per fuze fell from \$732 in 1942 to \$18 in 1945. This permitted the purchase of over 22 million fuzes for approximately one billion dollars.

5 January – Sea

- The proximity fuze was one of the most important technological innovations of the War.
- It was so important that it was a secret guarded to a similar level as the atom bomb research, some of which was also taken to America by the Tizard mission.
- However the jewel in Tizard's box was the Cavity Magnetron.
- James Phinney Baxter III, Official Historian of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, wrote:
- "When the members of the Tizard Mission brought one cavity magnetron to America in 1940, they carried the most valuable cargo ever brought to our shores".



Proximity fuze MK53 removed from shell. Circa 1950s.

5 January – Buna

- Buna
- By the early morning of 5 January Col. Grose had part of Company F, 127th Infantry, across Siwori Creek.
- The crossing was unopposed. The men quickly re-established themselves on the other side of the creek and began moving northwestward.
- Sanananda
- The first elements of the 18th Brigade, brigade headquarters and the 2/9 Battalion, reached Soputa on 5 January, as did one troop (four tanks) of B Squadron, 2/6 Australian Armored Regiment.



5 September - Air

- On 5 January in a daylight mission 6 B17s and 6 B24s dropped forty 500-pound demolition bombs and 24 x 1,000-pound bombs on shipping at Rabaul from 8,500 feet.
- Five direct hits and numerous near misses were claimed.
- Photographs show one vessel listing and burning and two others on fire.
- Antiaircraft fire was heavy and fighter attack by apparently inexperienced pilots continuous.
- Two B-17's, including one piloted by Brig. Gen. Kenneth Walker, commanding general of the V Bomber Command, were shot down. Walker was posted KIA.



General George Kenney, commander 5th Air Force, and Brigadier General Kenneth Walker, commander V Bombing Command at Port Moresby, 1942

5 January – Air

- Five B-26's pound Sanananda Point area.
- 6 A-20's and 6 B-25's hit A/F at Lae.
- 4 Beaufighters strafed Mubo and Komiatum morning 5/1.
- One Catalina attacked the airfield at Gasmata early morning 5/1.
- Aerial reconnaissance of the Tanimbar Islands shows the Japanese are consolidating and expanding their positions.
- Five B17s attacked a heavy cruiser at Buin. No hits were observed. Six escorting P38s engaged twenty five enemy fighters attempting to intercept and shot down three with two probables for a loss of two.
- Nine B26s dropped 4.5 tons of bombs on enemy installations at Munda. Results were unobserved.
- A third runway appears to be ready for use at the airfield at Ballale.

5 January – Air

- 3 B-25's sink a 6,500-ton cargo vessel previously sighted by a PBY off Holtz Bay, where a weather and armed rcn B-24 sinks another freighter with direct bomb hits shortly afterwards.
- At Calcutta the labor position is improving but municipal services are not back to normal yet. Between 20 and 30 December 350,000 people are estimated to have left the city.

6 January – Government

- The Full Cabinet directed that a special War Commitments Committee should review the implications of the probable delay in fulfilling the manpower requirements for the 1942 programme.
- This committee, consisting of the Prime Minister, the Minister for War Organisation of Industry, the three Chiefs of Staff, the Directors-General of War Organisation of Industry, Allied Works, Manpower, and Munitions and Aircraft Production and the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Allied Supply Council, met for the first time on 6th January 1943.
- The position they found was that at the end of 1942 the Army, Navy, Air Force, Munitions and Aircraft Production and Allied Works Council had not been able to obtain 79,000 men and 42,000 women out of the totals they had wanted to obtain.
- To fulfil the programmes to which they were committed in the first half of 1943 they would require 67,000 men and 22,000 women. This made a total requirement up to June 1943 of 146,000 men and 64,000 women.
- Summarised, the position was that the services wanted manpower at the rate of 16,000 men and 6,000 women a month; and munitions and aircraft wanted a supply of 8,000 men and 5,000 women a month. Against this total monthly demand for 24,000 men and 11,000 women the best that could be hoped for with the most stringent restrictions on civilian industries was 5,000 men and 5,000 women.

6 January – Report to the White House

2. General MacArthur was informed that a bid has been placed in London on behalf of China for 10,000,000 rounds of .303 caliber ball ammunition, and tentative bids for the same amounts for February and March. It appears that 60,000,000 rounds are available in Australia from last year's and prospective surplus production. Heretofore ammunition for China has been supplied from North American production; supply by Australia will save shipping.

6 January – Air

- On the morning of 6 January, Coastwatchers on the south coast of New Britain reported a convoy consisting of two light cruisers, four destroyers, and four medium transports off the south-central coast of New Britain heading west-southwest.
- In a mid day search and destroy mission medium bombers were escorted by 16 P38s, half of them carrying 500 pound bombs. They found the convoy just off Gasmata. The escorting Oscars attacked in a furious air battle. The P38s claimed nine Oscars plus two probables but the bombing wasn't successful.
- General Kenney ordered maximum effort for the morning strike against the convoy.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P01097.013

A captured Ki-43-Ib Oscar in flight over Brisbane, 1943.

6 January – Air

- 6 B-26's pound forces in Sanananda Pt area;
- 6 A-20's hit Lae A/F;
- B-17's and B-24's attack convoy heading SW off coast of New Britain bound for Lae;
- A single B-24 bombs Gasmata A/F.
- Eight B17s and ten fighters attack shipping off Buin. They claim one possible hit and three near near misses on a transport.
- Three Hudsons attack a torpedo boat off the Kai Islands morning 6/1. The boat was last observed dead in the water. A destroyer was unsuccessfully attacked by 5 Hudsons 21 miles NW of Toeal at 1612/6.
- Rcn is flown over Amchitka, the Semichis, Agattu, and Attu. Flotsam sighted outside of Holtz Bay confirms that freighter bombed on previous day sank.
- 6 B-24's, 6 B-25's, and 12 P-38's take off to attack Kiska. Only one B-24 manages to bomb visually the rest are turned back by weather or bomb blind through the cloud.

6 January – Air

- A Catalina from No. 11 Squadron, piloted by Flight Lieutenant Vernon, found the ships when they were south-east of Gasmata.
- While another Catalina, piloted by Squadron Leader Stokes, shadowed the convoy, Vernon turned his attention to Gasmata aerodrome, on which he dropped 20-lb fragmentation bombs and then strafed two grounded Zeros.
- Well after nightfall Vernon, attracted by flares dropped by American bombers searching for the same quarry, returned to the convoy.
- The four transports were steaming in line ahead. After his bomb-aimer, Flying Officer Leslie, had released four bombs from about 4,000 feet, the Catalina crew saw flames rise from the third ship in the line and then a heavy explosion amidships.
- A Japanese destroyer turned on a searchlight and revealed a stricken ship whereupon Vernon promptly descended to low level while his gunners strafed the transport.
- The destroyer quickly extinguished its searchlight and altered course.

7 January - Washington

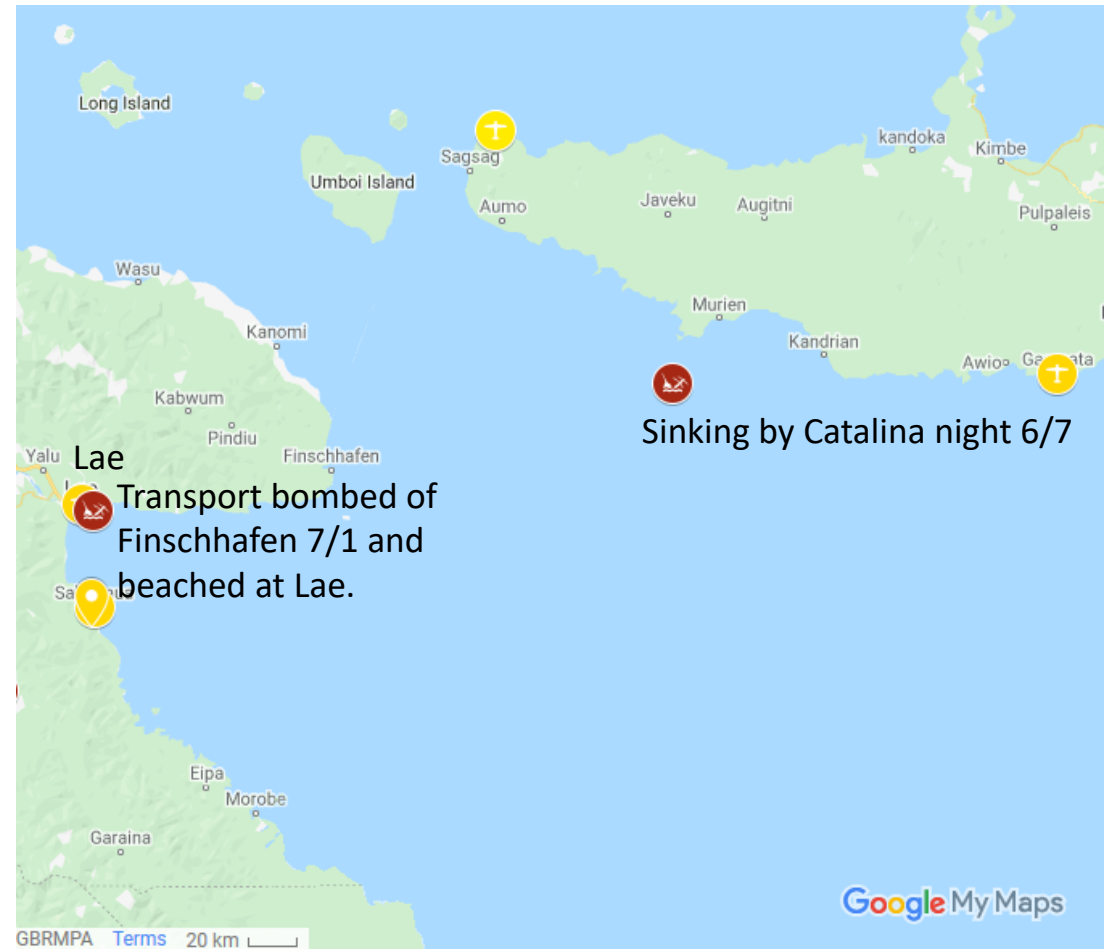
- In his State of the Union address, President Roosevelt detailed no legislative proposals but focused on the war. "Victory in this war is the first and greatest goal before us. Victory in the peace is the next."
- The President reviewed the battles in the Pacific of which he considered that off Midway Island "our most important victory in 1942".
- "As early as one year ago, we set as a primary task in the war of the Pacific a day-by-day and week-by-week and month-by-month destruction of more Japanese war materials than Japanese industry could replace. Most certainly that task has been and is being performed by our fighting ships and planes."
- The period of our defensive attrition in the Pacific is drawing to a close. Now our aim is to force the Japanese to fight. Last year, we stopped them. This year, we intend to advance."
- Turning to the European war, however, he said "it was clear that our first task was to lessen the concentrated pressure on the Russian front".



Vice President Henry Wallace (left) and House Speaker Sam Rayburn stand behind the president.

7 January - Sea

- At 1530/7 9 vessels were reported in Lae Harbour, indicating that one vessel had been sunk in the previous air attacks. The composition of the convoy is not clear, but appears to have originally comprised one light cruiser, four destroyers, and five transports, of which one transport was sunk.
- submarines Grampus and Argonaut were ordered to intercept possible withdrawal routes.



7 January - Guadalcanal

- By 7 January arrival of additional replacements had placed Guadalcanal's combined air, ground, and naval forces at about 50,000.
 - The 2d Marine Division now had a strength of 14,733;
 - the Americal Division, 16,000;
 - the 25th Division, 12,629.
- The Allies at last had the forces to plan attacks that would defeat the Japanese on the island.

7 January - Buna

- During the 5th and 6th the Japanese had made several stubborn stands, retreating only when the Americans were on the point of overrunning their positions.
- By the 7th the two companies were within 500 yards of Tarakena village, and there the enemy again made a stand.
- Company E, under 1st Lt. Fraser, meanwhile moved onto the sandspit with a 37-mm. gun, and began to enfilade the Japanese with canister.
- With this support the two companies again pushed the enemy back on the evening of the 7th.
- They captured five machine guns, including two lost by the Chagnon patrol.



37-MM. ANTITANK GUN in position to fire at the enemy at Buna.

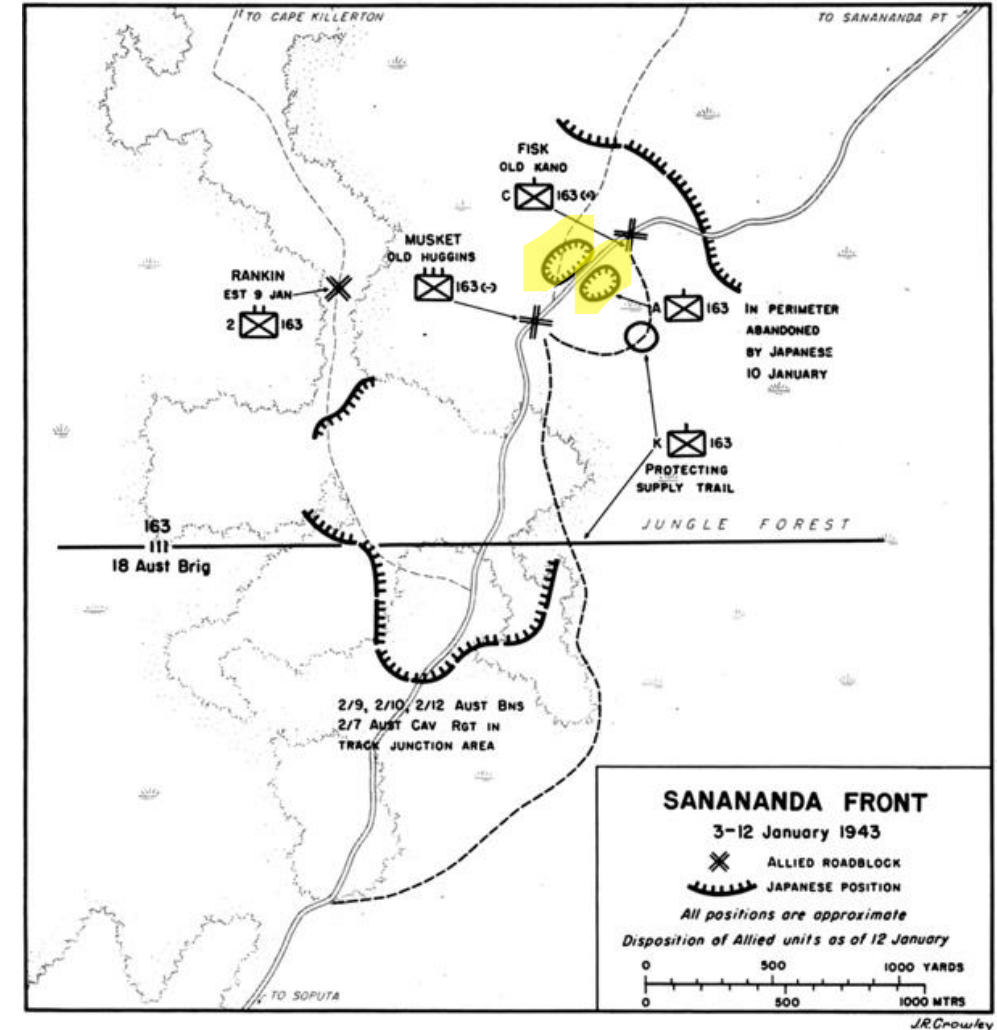
7 January – Sanananda

- The 2/10 Battalion had arrived at Soputa on the 6th.
- The 2/12 Battalion reached Soputa on the 7th.
- The rest of the tanks and the two 25-pounder troops, which had been assigned to General Vasey upon the fall of Buna, were stuck where they were on the eastern side of the river when heavy rain made the roads impassable to vehicles.



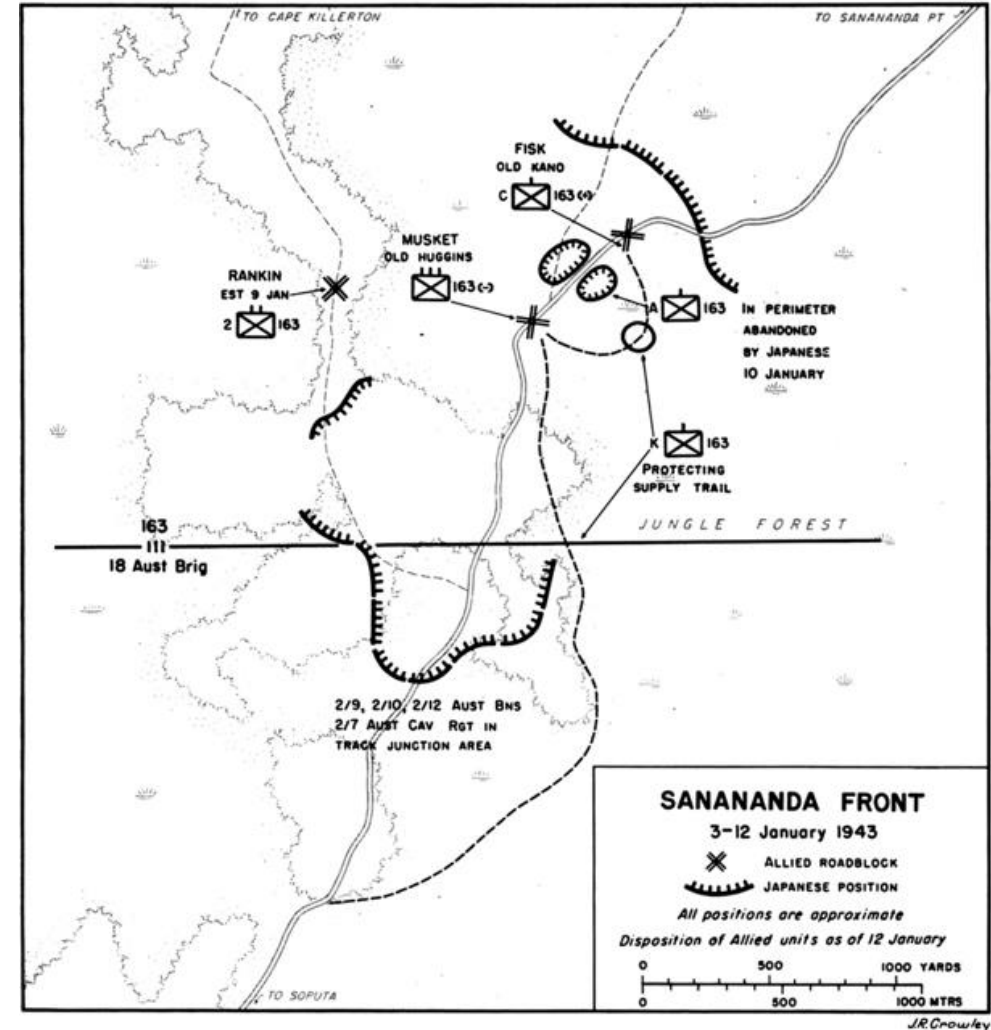
7 January – Sanananda

- The 2d Battalion 163rd, led by Maj. Rankin, reached the front on the 7th. Colonel Doe disposed the battalion along the supply trail east of the M.T. Road and ordered the 1st Battalion to reduce the two enemy perimeters between Musket and Kano the next day.
- Companies B and C were to attack from either flank--Company B, the perimeter west of the road, and Company C, the smaller perimeter east of it.
- Company B would move out of Musket circle west and north and hit the larger perimeter from the west;
- Company C was to hit the smaller perimeter east of the track from the northeast.
- The 25-pounders of Hanson Troop and the machine guns and mortars of the rest of the battalion would be available to support the attack.



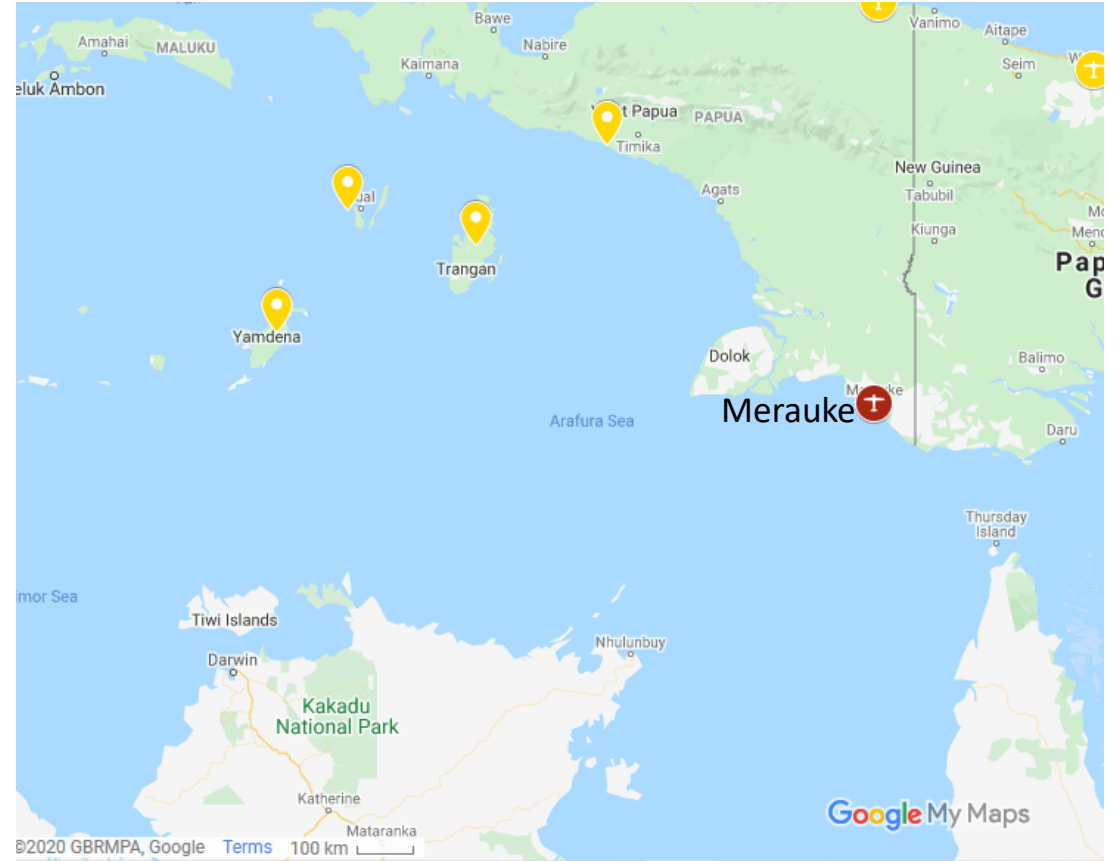
7 January – Sanananda

- On 7 January, with the 2d Battalion, 163d Infantry, and Brigadier Wootten's first 400 replacements at hand, General Vasey issued the divisional plan of attack.
- In Stage I, the 2d Battalion, 163d Infantry, would cut off the enemy in the track junction by getting astride the Killerton trail;
- in Stage II, the 18th Brigade, the 2/7 Cavalry, and the tanks would destroy the Japanese in the track junction, and clear out the area south of Musket;
- in Stage III, the 163d Infantry would move on Sanananda Point by way of the M.T. Road, and the 18th Brigade would do so by first moving north along the Killerton trail and then turning east to complete the envelopment.
- Stage IV would be the mop-up.



7 January - Merauke

- C Company, 62nd Infantry Battalion arrived at Merauke to reinforce the NEI company and RAAF on 7 January 1943.
- Since 6 August 1942 Company F, from the US Army's 46th Engineer Battalion had been in Merauke constructing an airfield.



7 January - Air

- Japanese convoy bound for Lae from New Britain is again attacked by HBs, MBs, LBs, and ftrs (along with RAAF planes) in Solomon Sea off Finschafen and during its progress off S coast of Huon Peninsula through Huon Gulf to Lae. Despite the heavy air resistance the convoy reaches its destination. Transport was reported to have been hit on the stern by one direct hit off Finschafen 0650-0810/7, 11 intercepting fighters were destroyed, 8 probably destroyed, 2 damaged. One B25 and one B26 missing.
- Lae - A20s attacked grounded aircraft morning 7/1. One direct hit on a blast bay, one large fire started and an unidentified bomber set on fire. One A 20 lost. 13 P.38s attacked morning 7/1.
- Gasmata - One PBY attacked early morning 7/1. Several fires started. Grounded aircraft strafed and believed damaged.
- Munda - 4 B26s attacked morning 7/1. A.A. positions believed destroyed.
- Rekata Bay - 6 B26's and 12 P.39s attacked afternoon 7/1. One large fire started. Two aircraft lost.

7 January - Air

- Kai Islands — Two enemy warships (described as destroyers, one apparently towing the other which was leaving an oil slick) were unsuccessfully attacked by 5 Hudsons 9 miles NNE of Toeal at 1146/7. The vessel being towed was apparently the torpedo boat attacked and hit morning 6/1.
- Aleutians - 6 B-25's and 12 P-38's dispatched to Kiska turn back due to cloud cover. 6 B-24's circle over Kiska for 2 hrs until 4 can bomb the submarine base. AA fire damages 3 of the attackers.

7 January - Air

- Reconnaissance next day (7th January) proved that the transport, Nichiryu Maru (5,447 tons), had been sunk. Beaufighters were sent out to attack lifeboats from the lost ships. Their crews later reported finding only a whaler with six men in it and four empty ships' boats all of which were strafed, the whaler being sunk.
- Two formations of Zeros, one of nine and the other of six, intercepted the Beaufighters, two of which, one piloted by Flight Lieutenant Little and the other by Pilot Officer Vial, were damaged by the enemy fighters' gunfire, but were still able to fly back to Port Moresby. They claimed 3 Zeros damaged.
- No. 100 Squadron Beauforts made an attempt to attack the ships on the (7th January) but had been forced to turn back by bad weather.
- On the same day (7th January) five Bostons from No. 22 Squadron were sent in to hit the Lae runway and prevent its use by fighters giving cover to the approaching convoy. Wines again had the experience of flying his aircraft back to base in a badly damaged condition—this time with the hydraulic equipment made unserviceable by anti aircraft fire—and he again crash-landed his aircraft without harm to himself or his observer.

7 January - Air

- That night (7th/8th January) five Hudsons of No. 6 Squadron and five Beauforts of No. 100 Squadron from Milne Bay were sent in to attack the ships off Lae in darkness.
- One Beaufort crew, captained by Squadron Leader Douglas, seeing three ships apparently hove to, dropped four bombs and saw two explosions.
- The Hudson crews were dropping flares and 250lb bombs, the latter with unobserved results except for Flight Lieutenant White and his crew who were credited with a possible hit.



Bristol Beaufort RAAF UV S A9 951 01

8 January – Report to the White House

3. General Lincoln, commanding the Services of Supply of the South Pacific Area, reports that a joint board has found that there

is excessive spoilage of foods packed and procured in Australia. This spoilage is due to insufficient cooking and other causes indicating a standard of processing inferior to our own. General Lincoln has directed that the Joint Purchasing Board in Australia suspend all shipments of canned products to our South Pacific bases pending further investigation.

8 January - Buna

- The next day (8th January) Company G/127 again moved forward. As before Company E was on the right supporting its advance by fire, and Company F in the swamp covered it from the left. The numerous enemy troops in the swamp and the swamp itself made it difficult for Company F to keep up. Spurred on by Lieutenant Coker, the company commander, and S. Sgt. Shaw, in command of the leading platoon, the company caught up with Company G and kept up for the rest of the day.
- At 1600 Company G attacked again. It reached the outskirts of Tarakena village within the hour and captured three enemy machine guns, an enemy mortar, and the remaining machine gun lost by the Chagnon patrol.
- Two fresh companies of the 1st Battalion, Companies C and A, had just come up, and Company C launched an attack that evening and gained its objective quickly. Company C was inside the village by 1830 and the fighting was over by 2130.
- Forty-two Japanese were killed, and a quantity of Japanese ordnance was captured. The 127th Infantry sustained nineteen casualties in the day's fighting, two killed, sixteen wounded, and one missing.
- By this time the three companies that had launched the attack were much below strength. Morale, however, was good. General Eichelberger, who had gone forward to the sandspit that morning to see how things were going, reported to General MacArthur, "Now that the men are living where the Japanese lived, they look entirely different. The swamp rats who lived in the water now have their place in the sun and I even heard some singing yesterday for the first time."

8 January - Sanananda

- Just before noon on 8 January, the Hanson Troop put down a fifteen-minute concentration on both perimeters. The troop now had only shells with delayed fuse, and these, as General Doe recalls, "simply buried themselves in the muck or exploded under the ground surface."
- Although the two companies were covered by all the mortars and machine guns the battalion could muster, neither attack was successful. Hanson Troop, firing from the southeast, could not lay down supporting fire for Company B's flank attack. The result was that the company, forced to attack frontally ran into fire from both perimeters. The company recoiled and was finally forced to dig in that night about thirty yards short of its objective.
- It had rained heavily the day before, and company C, attacking in a southwesterly direction, ran into what had become, since the previous day, a waist-deep swamp. The troops tried to cut through the swamp under heavy fire, but the swamp was too deep and the fire too heavy.

8 January - Brisbane

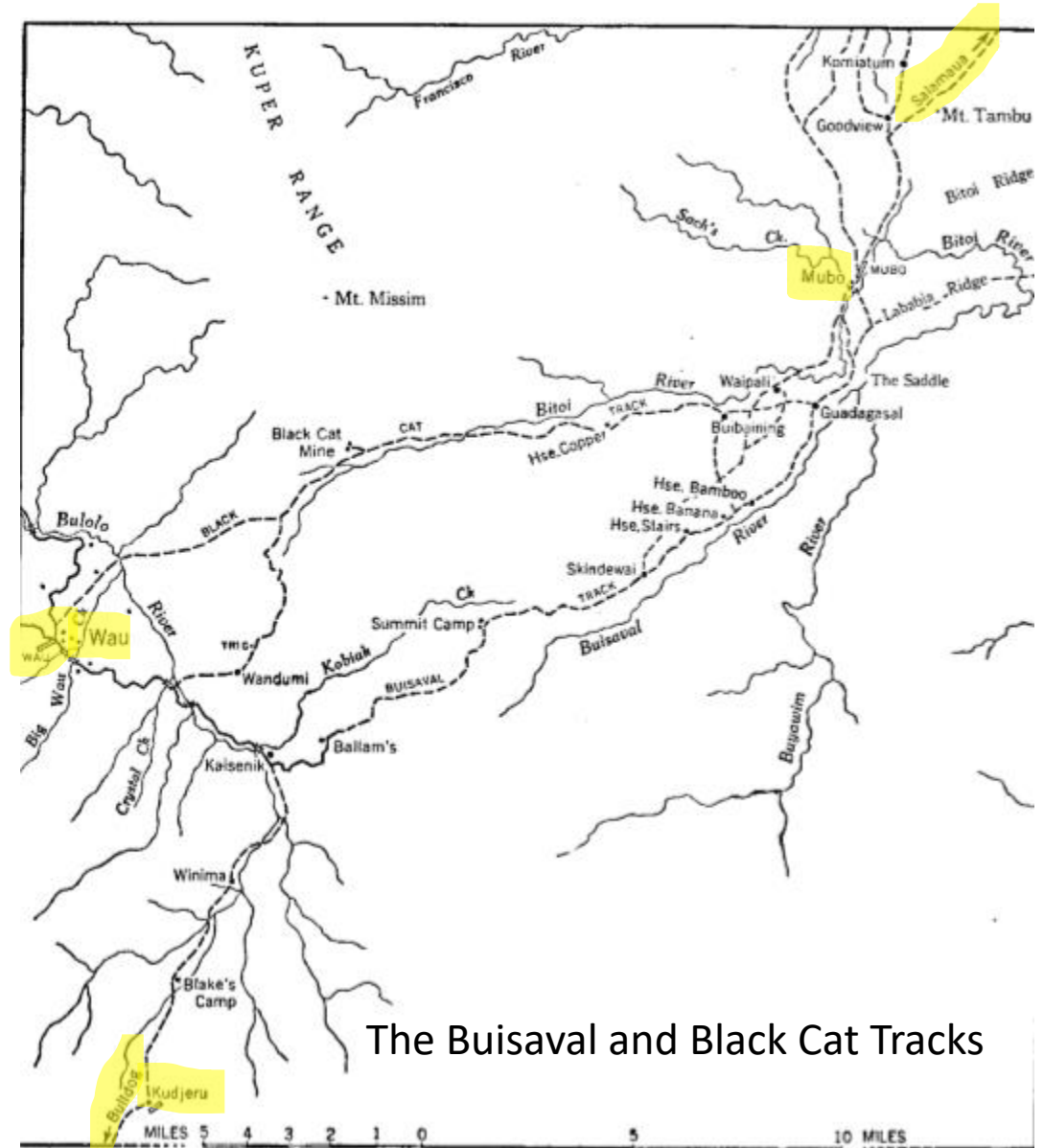
- Satisfied by this time that the tactical situation no longer required his presence, General MacArthur returned to Brisbane on 8 January.
- General Blamey followed him there several days later.



GENERAL MACARTHUR WITH GENERAL KENNEY
*arriving in Australia from New Guinea, 8 January
1943.*

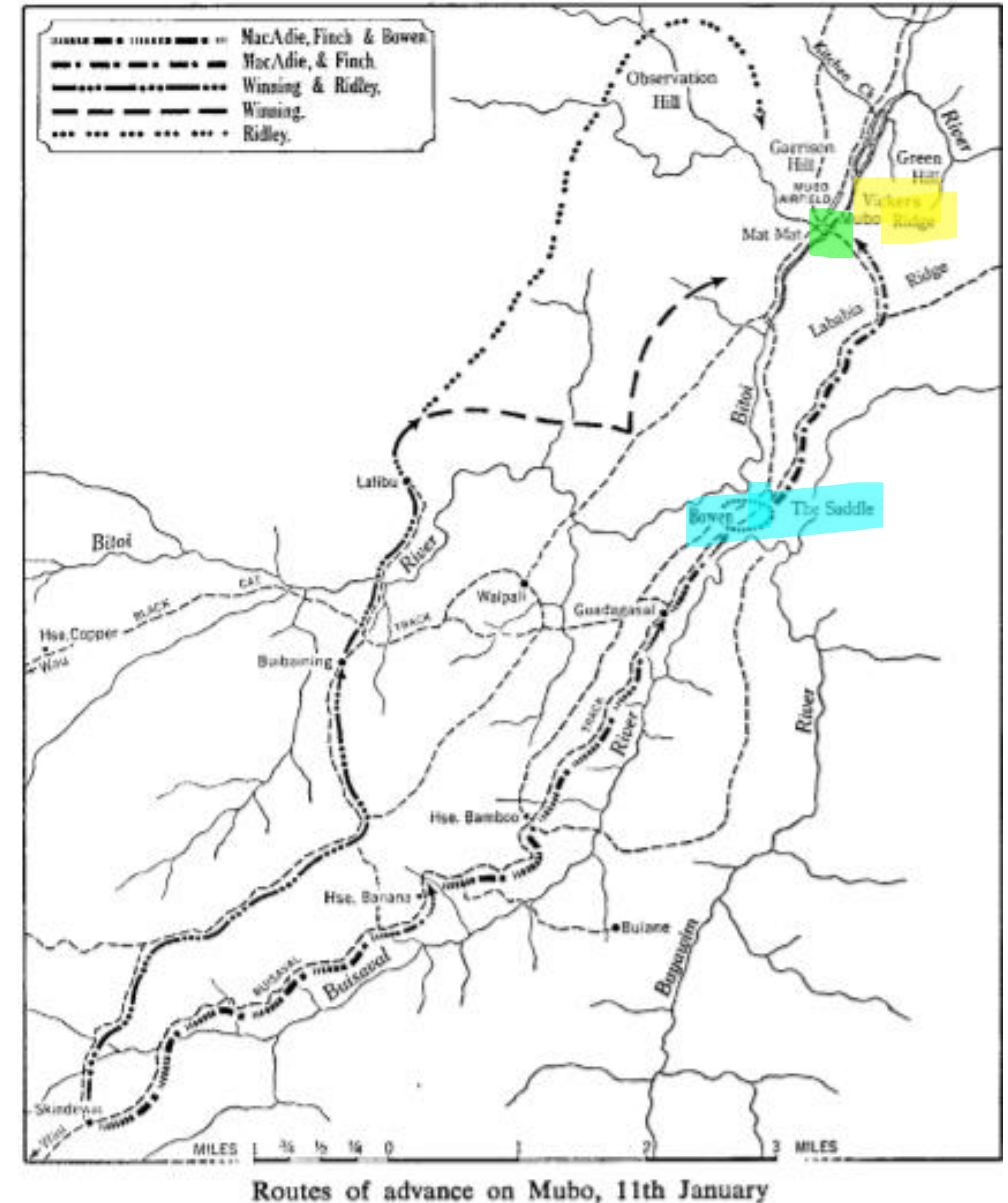
8 January - Wau

- The small band of guerillas which was Kanga Force was hanging close about the Japanese in the Wau-Salamaua-Lae area.
- The New Guinea Volunteer Rifles, after the Japanese landed at Salamaua and Lae in March 1942, established themselves in the bush about the Japanese positions and, in late May, were absorbed into Kanga Force after the arrival at Wau of Lieut-Colonel Fleay and the 2/5th Independent Company.
- With the arrival on 31st August of a strong Japanese group at Mubo; and anticipating that these Japanese would move on further; the Kanga Force men laid waste the Bulolo Valley and moved their centre back to Kudjeru at the beginning of the Bulldog Track.
- Long-awaited reinforcements had reached Kanga Force . On 8th and 9th October Major MacAdie flew into Wau with some 290 all ranks in his 2/7th Independent Company and came under Fleay's command.
- Kanga force was supplied by carriers up the Bulldog track from the south coast and by air into the airfield at Wau



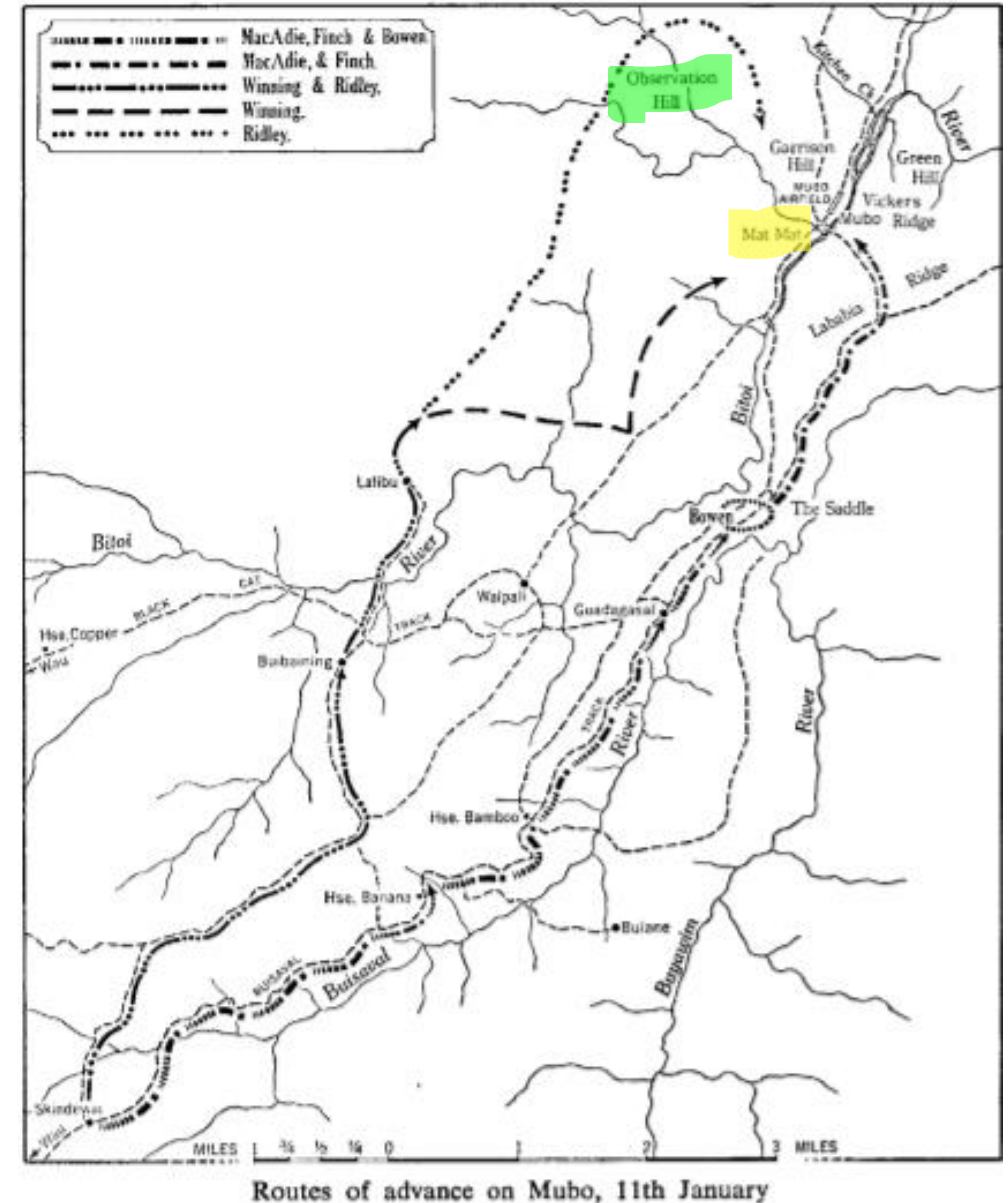
8 January - Wau

- Kanga Force then prepared to strike a hard blow in the most ambitious military operation planned for the Wau-Salamaua-Lae area up to that time . It would involve the use of more than 300 troops and about 400 native carriers.
- Fleay's intention was to destroy as many Japanese as possible and, if the encounter developed favourably, to take and hold Mubo.
- MacAdie, with 60 officers and men, was to seize **Vickers Ridge** which dominated the eastern side of the gorge, dropping 1,000 feet in half a mile and falling sharply then to the river bed over its next 500 feet.
- Captain Finch with 40 all ranks was to take and hold the **kunda bridge** which crossed the Bitoi to link Vickers Ridge with Mubo.
- Captain Bowen and Lieutenant Wylie, with some 80 all ranks from both companies, were to retain the **Saddle** as an extricating position.



8 January - Wau

- Winning, commanding the 2/5th, was to take 100 of his own officers and men to **Mat Mat Hill** which overlooked Mubo by 1,000 feet from the south-west.
- Lieutenants Ridley and Leitch would lead another band of 2/5th men, 50 strong, northward from Mat Mat Hill to **Observation Hill** which thrust steeply down towards Mubo airstrip from the north.
- The actual attack was to begin at 9.30 a.m. on 11th January.



8 January - Air

- HBs, MBs, and LBs, with ftr cover, join RAAF airplanes in continued pounding of convoy as it unloads about 4,000 reinforcements at Lae. Enemy ftr cover and allied aircraft continue fierce air combat.
 - Eleven Beaufighters attacked grounded aircraft morning 8/1.
 - Thirteen A20s attacked troops and equipment morning 8/1.
 - 15 P38s over Lae at 08.10 covering B26s attacked 12 to 15 Oscars and claimed 4 destroyed.
 - That afternoon the attack was repeated. In addition to grounded aircraft the Beaufighters strafed a number of laden barges two of which were left in flames.
 - One Mitchell crew scored a direct hit on a transport and others bombed and blew up an ammunition dump.
 - 10 P38s over Lae at 14.35 covering B25s, B26s and Beaufighters spotted 9 Oscars 2,000 feet below, and dived on them claiming 5 destroyed.

8 January - Air

- 7 P38s over Lae at 18.00 were attacked by 12 or 18 Oscars and Zekes.
- The P38s claimed 7 shot down.
- 2nd Lt. Richard Bong claimed one, which, after his second pass spun down out of control into Huon Gulf about 5 miles off the coast.
- This was his fifth credited victory making him an ace.



Richard Bong

- Thanks for your attention.
- If you have enjoyed this presentation recommend it to your friends.
- I will put the overheads up on the website at jerrymcbrien.com
- My ebook “War in the Pacific The First Six months” is available at all good ebook stores.